I 无名古戒
我吃西红柿 著
WORKS
无名
没落家族少年
偶得无名古戒
他已无 | 笑江湖
没钱色 | 淘江东
天才之路
自此开启
纪念版

Coiling Dragon #1 - #808

1. Intro
2. Chapters
    1. Intro
    2. Chapter 1 – Early Morning at a Township
    3. Chapter 2 – The Dragonblood Warrior Clan (part one)
    4. Chapter 3 – The Dragonblood Warrior Clan (part two)
    5. Chapter 4 – Growth (part 1)
    6. Chapter 5 – Growth (part 2)
    7. Chapter 6 – Coiling Dragon Ring (part 1)
    8. Chapter 7 – Coiling Dragon Ring (part 2)
    9. Chapter 8 – Magical Beast – Velocidragon!
    10. Chapter 9 – Magical Beast – Velocidragon! (part 2)
    11. Chapter 10 – Dance of the Fire Serpents (part 1)
    12. Chapter 11 – Dance of the Fire Serpents (part 2)
    13. Chapter 12 – The Will of the Mighty (part 1)
    14. Chapter 13 – The Will of the Mighty (part 2)
    15. Chapter 14 – The Battle in the Sky (part 1)
    16. Chapter 15 – The Battle in the Sky (part 2)
    17. Chapter 16 – Catastrophe (part 1)
    18. Chapter 17 – Catastrophe (part 2)
    19. Chapter 18 – The Coiling Dragon Spirit (part 1)
    20. Chapter 19 – The Coiling Dragon Spirit (part 2)
    21. Chapter 20 – Earth-Style Magic (part 1)
    22. Chapter 21 – Earth-Style Magic (part 2)
    23. Chapter 22 – Spring Ends, Autumn Comes (part 1)
    24. Chapter 23 – Spring Ends, Autumn Comes (part 2)
    25. Chapter 1 – Magical Beast, Shadowmouse
    26. Chapter 2 – A Clumsy Method (Part 1)
    27. Chapter 3 – A Clumsy Method (Part 2)
    28. Chapter 4 – The Ernst Institute
    29. Chapter 5 – ‘Bebe’ the Shadowmouse (part 1)
    30. Chapter 6 – ‘Bebe’ the Shadowmouse (part 2)
    31. Chapter 7 – Fenlai City
    32. Chapter 8 – The Magical Aptitude Test (part 1)

33. Chapter 9 – The Magical Aptitude Test (part 2)
34. Chapter 10 – The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome (part 1)
35. Chapter 11 – The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome (part 2)
36. Chapter 12 – Instructions
37. Chapter 13 – A Congregation of Talents
38. Chapter 14 – The Bros of Dorm 1987 (part 1)
39. Chapter 15 – The Bros of Dorm 1987 (part 2)
40. Chapter 16 – Wind-Style Magic
41. Chapter 17 – A Learning Period (part 1)
42. Chapter 18 – A Learning Period (part 2)
43. Chapter 19 – Who is Number One? (part 1)
44. Chapter 20 – Who is Number One? (part 2)
45. Chapter 21 – The Proulx Gallery (part 1)
46. Chapter 22 – The Proulx Gallery (part two)
47. Chapter 23 – A Wonderful Surprise
48. Chapter 24 – The Straight Chisel School
49. Chapter 25 – Six Years
50. Chapter 1 – Stone Sculpting (part 1)
51. Chapter 2 – Stone Sculpting (part 2)
52. Chapter 3 – A Night at the Jade Water Paradise
53. Chapter 4 – The Price (part 1)
54. Chapter 5 – The Price (part 2)
55. Chapter 6 – The Invitation
56. Chapter 7 – The Journey (part 1)
57. Chapter 8 – The Journey (part 2)
58. Chapter 9 – The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts (part 1)
59. Chapter 10 – The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts (part 2)
60. Chapter 11 – Wolf Pack (part 1)
61. Chapter 12 – Wolf Pack (part 2)
62. Chapter 13 – Danger (part 1)
63. Chapter 14 – Danger (part 2)
64. Chapter 15 – Cruelty
65. Chapter 16 – Cruelty (part 2)
66. Chapter 17 – Bebe’s Prowess (part 1)
67. Chapter 18 – Bebe’s Prowess (part 2)
68. Chapter 19 – The Black Dagger (part 1)
69. Chapter 20 – The Black Dagger (part 2)

70. Chapter 21 – The Foggy Gulch (part 1)
71. Chapter 22 – The Foggy Gulch (part 2)
72. Chapter 23 – Her Name Was Alice (part 1)
73. Chapter 24 – Her Name Was Alice (part 2)
74. Chapter 25 – Violet in the Night Wind (part 1)
75. Chapter 26 – Violet in the Night Wind (part 2)
76. Chapter 1 – Coming Home (part 1)
77. Chapter 2 – Coming Home (part 2)
78. Chapter 3 – Hogg
79. Chapter 4 – The Price of a Sculpture
80. Chapter 5 – The Rose in Winter (part 1)
81. Chapter 6 – The Rose in Winter (part 2)
82. Chapter 7 – Experts Everywhere (part 1)
83. Chapter 8 – Experts Everywhere (part 2)
84. Chapter 9 – Cracks (part 1)
85. Chapter 10 – Cracks (part 2)
86. Chapter 11 – A Meeting
87. Chapter 12 – The Desolate Snow
88. Chapter 13 – Ten Days, Ten Nights
89. Chapter 14 – Liquefy
90. Chapter 15 – Returning to the Foggy Valley
91. Chapter 16 – Forbidden the Skies
92. Chapter 17 – The Gloomy Depths
93. Chapter 18 – The Armored Razorback Wyrm
94. Chapter 19 – Viciousness
95. Chapter 20 – The Draconic Crystal's Transformation
96. Chapter 21 – The Dragonblood Warrior
97. Chapter 1 – The Mysterious Magical Formation
98. Chapter 2 – The Four Higher Planes
99. Chapter 3 – Piercing the Heavens
100. Chapter 4 – Grandmaster Sculptor?
101. Chapter 5 – Sword Training
102. Chapter 6 – Applying For Graduation
103. Chapter 7 – Second in History
104. Chapter 8 – The Upper Classes of the Yulan Continent
105. Chapter 9 – Abduction
106. Chapter 10 – Status

107. Chapter 11 – A Lack of Money
108. Chapter 12 – Rage
109. Chapter 13 – The Old Master
110. Chapter 14 – The Auction
111. Chapter 15 – A Sky-High Price
112. Chapter 16 – An Owner Found
113. Chapter 17 – Going Home
114. Chapter 1 – The Dusty Affairs of the Past
115. Chapter 2 – The Decision
116. Chapter 3 – Assembling at the Township
117. Chapter 4 – A Nighttime Chat
118. Chapter 5 – Writ of Nobility
119. Chapter 6 – Tomes of Magic
120. Chapter 7 – Heavy Casualties
121. Chapter 8 – An Excessive Desire to Kill
122. Chapter 9 – The Engagement
123. Chapter 10 – Captured
124. Chapter 11 – The Man Behind the Curtain
125. Chapter 12 – The Investigation
126. Chapter 13 – Secrets Exposed
127. Chapter 14 – Imprisoned
128. Chapter 15 – To Be Wronged
129. Chapter 16 – Limits
130. Chapter 17 – The Plea
131. Chapter 18 – The Visit
132. Chapter 19 – The King of Killers
133. Chapter 20 – Poison
134. Chapter 21 – The Trial
135. Chapter 22 – The Enormous Fine
136. Chapter 23 – The Bloodrupture Poison
137. Chapter 24 – Breakthrough
138. Chapter 25 – Producing the Powder
139. Chapter 26 – The Scheme
140. Chapter 27 – The Wine
141. Chapter 28 – Mother's Life or Death
142. Chapter 29 – Kill However Many Come!
143. Chapter 30 – Even if I Die – I'll Kill You!

144. Chapter 31 – Won't Accept it
145. Chapter 32 – In Dire Straits
146. Chapter 1 – A Hope of Living
147. Chapter 2 – The Divine Boon Descends
148. Chapter 3 – Would Definitely Die?
149. Chapter 4 – A Giant Foot
150. Chapter 5 – Apocalypse Day
151. Chapter 6 – Deity-Level Combatant
152. Chapter 7 – Fleeing in Panic
153. Chapter 8 – One Hand
154. Chapter 9 – Interspatial Ring
155. Chapter 10 – A Terrible Situation
156. Chapter 11 – The Titanic Black Python
157. Chapter 12 – The Rescue
158. Chapter 13 – A Major Treasure
159. Chapter 14 – The City of Hess
160. Chapter 15 – The Clan of the Violetflame Warriors
161. Chapter 16 – The Furnace
162. Chapter 17 – The Heavy Sword – 'Bladeless'
163. Chapter 18 – A Missing Hand?
164. Chapter 19 – With Bated Breath
165. Chapter 20 – The Full Story
166. Chapter 21 – Fate
167. Chapter 22 – Passing Away
168. Chapter 23 – Crazed
169. Chapter 24 – Stillness
170. Chapter 25 – Departure
171. Chapter 1 – Thunderbolt
172. Chapter 2 – The Howling Worldwolf
173. Chapter 3 – A Slaughter
174. Chapter 4 – The Black Shadow
175. Chapter 5 – The Mysterious Black Panther
176. Chapter 6 – Another Transformation
177. Chapter 7 – A Battle of Speed
178. Chapter 8 – Leaving the Mountains
179. Chapter 9 – Olivier
180. Chapter 10 – A Single Sword

181. Chapter 11 – Hands
182. Chapter 12 – Blackrock City
183. Chapter 13 – Persuasion
184. Chapter 14 – Repeated Assassination Attempts
185. Chapter 15 – The Apothecary
186. Chapter 16 – The Yulan River
187. Chapter 17 – Poison Gas Fluttering in the Wind
188. Chapter 18 – The Prefectural City of Cerre
189. Chapter 19 – Search and Seizure
190. Chapter 20 – The Summer Inferno
191. Chapter 21 – Gift
192. Chapter 22 – The Vast Earth
193. Chapter 23 – The Cardinal
194. Chapter 24 – Zassler
195. Chapter 25 – When Experts Join Forces
196. Chapter 26 – Mutual Trust
197. Chapter 27 – Secrets of the Church
198. Chapter 28 – Flower-Like Sisters
199. Chapter 29 – Investigation
200. Chapter 30 – The Five Year Agreement
201. Chapter 31 – Concealed by the Night
202. Chapter 32 – The Decision
203. Chapter 33 – The Four Bros' Paths
204. Chapter 34 – In Dire Straits
205. Chapter 35 – The Profound Truths of the Earth
206. Chapter 36 – True Experts
207. Chapter 37 – The Undying Warriors
208. Chapter 38 – The Church's Strategy
209. Chapter 39 – Time Passing Slowly
210. Chapter 40 – Undying Warrior Transformation
211. Chapter 41 – The Power of the Hundred Layered Waves
212. Chapter 42 – An Appointment Kept
213. Chapter 43 – The Gathering in Basil
214. Chapter 44 – Neighbors
215. Chapter 45 – Vicious Acts
216. Chapter 46 – A Change of Plans
217. Chapter 47 – The Angel Battle Formation

218. Chapter 48 – The Four-Winged Angel
219. Chapter 49 – Saint-Level Dragonblood Warrior
220. Chapter 50 – An Appointment
221. Chapter 51 – Wharton
222. Chapter 52 – The Beirut Clan
223. Chapter 53 – Guest
224. Chapter 54 – Personal Disciple
225. Chapter 55 – A Saint-Level Battle
226. Chapter 56 – The Magicite Core
227. Chapter 57 – Yet Another Saint-Level
228. Chapter 58 – Blumer's Request
229. Chapter 59 – The Brothers Meet
230. Chapter 1 – A Powerful Supporter
231. Chapter 2 – A Breakthrough in Spiritual Energy
232. Chapter 3 – Provocation
233. Chapter 4 – The Blade Named 'Slaughterer'
234. Chapter 5 – The Colosseum
235. Chapter 6 – The Duel
236. Chapter 7 – Intending to Inflict Serious Wounds
237. Chapter 8 – The Prodigy Sword Saint
238. Chapter 9 – Linley vs. Olivier
239. Chapter 10 – The Two Geniuses
240. Chapter 11 – The Challenge
241. Chapter 12 – Front Courtyard as Busy as a Marketplace
242. Chapter 13 – Caylan's Arrival
243. Chapter 14 – An Exchange Between Geniuses
244. Chapter 15 – The Results
245. Chapter 16 – Congratulatory Gift
246. Chapter 17 – Stepping Onto the Stage
247. Chapter 18 – Experts of Other Planes
248. Chapter 19 – A Choice
249. Chapter 20 – The War God's College
250. Chapter 21 – The Eldest Disciple
251. Chapter 22 – The War God's Summons
252. Chapter 23 – Pulseguard
253. Chapter 24 – Olivier vs Haydson
254. Chapter 25 – As Resilient as a Monolith

255. Chapter 26 – A Time and a Place
256. Chapter 27 – The Yulan Empire's Special Envoy
257. Chapter 28 – Delia
258. Chapter 29 – Meeting Ten Years Later
259. Chapter 30 – Delia's Protector
260. Chapter 31 – The Anticipation of the Crowd
261. Chapter 32 – Desperate
262. Chapter 33 – Astonishment
263. Chapter 34 – Fame Spreading Far
264. Chapter 35 – Target: Anarchic Lands!
265. Chapter 36 – Reynolds' Crisis
266. Chapter 37 – Grievous News on the Wedding Day
267. Chapter 38 – Is it True?
268. Chapter 39 – The Cover-Up and the Truth
269. Chapter 40 – The Secrets of the Yulan Continent
270. Chapter 41 – The War God's Favor
271. Chapter 42 – The Southeast Administrative Province
272. Chapter 43 – The Corpse
273. Chapter 44 – Enslaved
274. Chapter 45 – Cruelty
275. Chapter 46 – The Order
276. Chapter 47 – Establishing a Base in the Anarchic Lands
277. Chapter 48 – Administration
278. Chapter 49 – The Mysterious Mountain Village
279. Chapter 50 – Linley and Olivier
280. Chapter 1 – Delia and Linley
281. Chapter 2 – Two Letters
282. Chapter 3 – Expanding Power
283. Chapter 4 – War Machine
284. Chapter 5 – Heading Out
285. Chapter 6 – Third Bro?
286. Chapter 7 – Desri
287. Chapter 8 – The Terrifying Power of Grand Magus Saints
288. Chapter 9 – Sparring
289. Chapter 10 – Forget It!
290. Chapter 11 – The Order Comes Down
291. Chapter 12 – A Sudden Change of Events

292. Chapter 13 – Linley's Return
293. Chapter 14 – Downfall
294. Chapter 15 – The Fierce Battle Against Osenno
295. Chapter 16 – Baruch
296. Chapter 17 – Homecoming
297. Chapter 18 – (title hidden)
298. Chapter 19 – Kingdom
299. Chapter 20 – A Procession of Arrivals
300. Chapter 21 – The Laws of Light
301. Chapter 22 – The Four Sided Gathering
302. Chapter 23 – The Wedding
303. Chapter 24 – That Night
304. Chapter 25 – Twelve Years in the Blink of an Eye
305. Chapter 26 – Blueheart Grass – Dragon's Blood
306. Chapter 27 – A Heated Battle
307. Chapter 28 – Submission
308. Chapter 29 – Glory
309. Chapter 30 – Discovery
310. Chapter 31 – Magicite Gemstone Mine
311. Chapter 32 – Joining Forces
312. Chapter 33 – Calling the Troops – Summoning the Generals
313. Chapter 34 – A Beast of Burden?
314. Chapter 35 – The Call to Assemble
315. Chapter 36 – The Door
316. Chapter 37 – The Power of Magicite Cannons
317. Chapter 38 – Explosive Fury
318. Chapter 39 – Battle to the Death
319. Chapter 40 – Meat Grinder
320. Chapter 41 – Trump Card
321. Chapter 42 – An Utter Catastrophe
322. Chapter 43 – The Ratmageddon Wave
323. Chapter 44 – Meeting Invitation
324. Chapter 45 – Shameless
325. Chapter 46 – A Falling Out
326. Chapter 47 – Downfall of Many Saints
327. Chapter 48 – Beirut
328. Chapter 1 – Founding of an Empire

329. Chapter 2 – Breakthrough
330. Chapter 3 – Bebe's Heritage
331. Chapter 4 – Deity Level Magical Beast
332. Chapter 5 – Bebe's Revenge
333. Chapter 6 – Everyone Assembled
334. Chapter 7 – The Metallic Castle
335. Chapter 8 – Three Corridors
336. Chapter 9 – The Necropolis' Sculptures
337. Chapter 10 – Moving Cautiously
338. Chapter 11 – Plant Lifeforms
339. Chapter 12 – The Ba-Serpent Awakens?
340. Chapter 13 – True Awakening! The Impending Calamity!
341. Chapter 14 – The World of Snow
342. Chapter 15 – Eight Years in the Necropolis
343. Chapter 16 – The Flame Tyrant
344. Chapter 17 – The Tunnel's Location
345. Chapter 18 – The Fate-Determining Strike
346. Chapter 19 – Three Divine Artifacts
347. Chapter 20 – The Magical Beasts in Action
348. Chapter 21 – The Queen Mother, 'Lachapalle'
349. Chapter 22 – Regrowth
350. Chapter 23 – Fast, Slow?
351. Chapter 24 – Myriad Swords Converge – the Pearl of Life!
352. Chapter 25 – Entering the Eighth Floor
353. Chapter 26 – The Beholder King
354. Chapter 27 – A Hospitable Host
355. Chapter 28 – Thorium Devil
356. Chapter 29 – Abyssal Blade Demon
357. Chapter 30 – Grand Magus Saint
358. Chapter 31 – Necropolis of the Gods – the Eleventh Floor!
359. Chapter 32 – The Blood Stained Underground
360. Chapter 33 – Life and Death
361. Chapter 34 – Death?
362. Chapter 35 – Fleeing For His Life
363. Chapter 36 – One Against a Million
364. Chapter 37 – Divine Spark
365. Chapter 38 – Desiring a Divine Spark?

366. Chapter 39 – The Predictions of Beirut
367. Chapter 1 – Coming Home
368. Chapter 2 – Becoming a Deity?
369. Chapter 3 – Dividing the Treasures
370. Chapter 4 – A Major Event
371. Chapter 5 – The Apocalypse War of Ten Thousand Years Ago
372. Chapter 6 – Slaughtering a Path to the Sacred Isle
373. Chapter 7 – Judgment Day Descends
374. Chapter 8 – The Great Six-Point Battle Formation
375. Chapter 9 – The Descent
376. Chapter 10 – Lord Chiquitas!
377. Chapter 11 – One Night
378. Chapter 12 – New Variables
379. Chapter 13 – Meditative Training Begins
380. Chapter 14 – A Visit From Yale
381. Chapter 15 – A Sudden Change
382. Chapter 16 – Five Years
383. Chapter 17 - Mysterious Religions
384. Chapter 18 – Guidance
385. Chapter 19 – Controlled
386. Chapter 20 – Discarding a Piece
387. Chapter 21 – Soulsilk
388. Chapter 22 – (title hidden)
389. Chapter 23 – The Elemental Sea
390. Chapter 24 – Violet Blood, Coiling Dragon
391. Chapter 25 – Must Go
392. Chapter 26 – The Coiling Dragon Ring
393. Chapter 27 – Battle to the Death
394. Chapter 28 – The Grand Warlock's Treasure
395. Chapter 29 – The Disposition of the Divine Sparks
396. Chapter 30 – Haeru
397. Chapter 31 – The Deity-Level Expert, Muba
398. Chapter 32 – Divine Artifacts and Divinities
399. Chapter 33 – A Wave of Refugees
400. Chapter 34 – Accepting the Heavy Burden
401. Chapter 35 – Claws and Fangs
402. Chapter 36 – Olivier Has Arrived

403. Chapter 37 – The Great Botha Levee
404. Chapter 38 – Smiling Meekly
405. Chapter 39 – Creating a Catastrophe!
406. Chapter 1 – Planar Prison
407. Chapter 2 – Departure
408. Chapter 3 – The World Changed
409. Chapter 4 – Ferocious
410. Chapter 5 – Sound
411. Chapter 6 – A Legend
412. Chapter 7 – Willingly Surrender
413. Chapter 8 – Downfall
414. Chapter 9 – Timely
415. Chapter 10 – Foundation
416. Chapter 11 – Desri's Divine Spark
417. Chapter 12 – Desri's Decision
418. Chapter 13 – The Millennial Cycle
419. Chapter 14 – Two Powers Join Forces
420. Chapter 15 – Unwilling to Admit Defeat
421. Chapter 16 – Turned Back
422. Chapter 17 – Mental Message
423. Chapter 18 – Bebe Becomes a Deity
424. Chapter 19 – Profound Mysteries – High and Low
425. Chapter 20 – The Invincible Highgods
426. Chapter 21 – Four Mighty Gods
427. Chapter 22 – Intimidation
428. Chapter 23 – Sadista
429. Chapter 24 – The Mountain Range of Death
430. Chapter 25 – The Profound Mysteries of Death?
431. Chapter 26 – Homeland
432. Chapter 27 – The Lord of Mount Copper Gong
433. Chapter 28 – Mount Copper Gong
434. Chapter 29 – Elemental Training
435. Chapter 30 – A So-Called Spar
436. Chapter 31 – The Throbbing Pulse of the World
437. Chapter 32 – Earth and Wind
438. Chapter 33 – An Implacable Rage
439. Chapter 34 – Darkness and Flame

440. Chapter 35 – Paying Respect
441. Chapter 36 – Secret
442. Chapter 37 – For the Clan
443. Chapter 38 – Attacked On the Way Back
444. Chapter 39 – Drawing Legs on a Snake
445. Chapter 40 – Creek – Ocean?
446. Chapter 41 – An Abrupt Change
447. Chapter 42 – Beirut's Power
448. Chapter 43 – Extreme Joy Turns to Grief
449. Chapter 44 – Only One Person
450. Chapter 45 – Indigo Prefecture
451. Chapter 1 – Mirrormoon Cliff
452. Chapter 2 – Inkstone
453. Chapter 3 – Black Dragon Tribe
454. Chapter 4 – Royalwing City
455. Chapter 5 – Fiend Medallion
456. Chapter 6 – Red-Eyed With Greed
457. Chapter 7 – A Bloody Battle
458. Chapter 8 – Survival of the Fittest
459. Chapter 9 – Omnipresent Danger
460. Chapter 10 – The Three Castles of Royalwing City
461. Chapter 11 – The Third Floor
462. Chapter 12 – Instant Refining
463. Chapter 13 – Planning to Commit Violence?
464. Chapter 14 – Fiend Castle
465. Chapter 15 – Royalwing Fiend
466. Chapter 16 – The Full God Level!
467. Chapter 17 – Profound Mysteries Fused – Power Greatly Strengthened
468. Chapter 18 – Moon Lake
469. Chapter 19 – The Pink Mist
470. Chapter 20 – Cannon Fodder
471. Chapter 21 – Chaos
472. Chapter 22 – Deathgod Golem
473. Chapter 23 – Moon Ring
474. Chapter 24 – Black-Robed Guards
475. Chapter 25 – Nowhere to Run

476. Chapter 26 – You Can't Kill Me
477. Chapter 27 – Highest Bidder Takes It
478. Chapter 28 – Wild Revenge
479. Chapter 29 – Penitent Flames
480. Chapter 30 – Inventory Checking
481. Chapter 31 – Escort Mission
482. Chapter 1 – The Fiends Assemble
483. Chapter 2 – Extremely Heavy Casualties
484. Chapter 3 – Probe
485. Chapter 4 – Strength in Numbers
486. Chapter 5 – Sword Intent
487. Chapter 6 – The Ancient Castle of Sand
488. Chapter 7 – To Choose
489. Chapter 8 – Many Dangers
490. Chapter 9 – Blue Water Drop
491. Chapter 10 – Meeting
492. Chapter 11 – Secret
493. Chapter 12 – A Breakthrough in Wind
494. Chapter 13 – Re-Employment
495. Chapter 14 – The Scorching Volcano
496. Chapter 15 – News of Olivier
497. Chapter 16 – Golden Magma
498. Chapter 17 – The Fight Over the Priceless Treasure
499. Chapter 18 – Salomon's Rage
500. Chapter 19 – Kiss
501. Chapter 20 – Talisman
502. Chapter 21 – Sovereign's Might
503. Chapter 22 – Water Drop – Sovereign's Might?
504. Chapter 23 – Execution
505. Chapter 24 – Insight
506. Chapter 25 – A Trillion Years of Depression
507. Chapter 26 – Head Out – Stay Behind?
508. Chapter 27 – Disaster Descending From the Skies
509. Chapter 28 – The Essence of Fire
510. Chapter 29 – The Amethyst Mountains
511. Chapter 30 – The Fog Sea
512. Chapter 31 – Blessing – Curse

513. Chapter 32 – Violet Light Rising to the Heavens
514. Chapter 33 – The Strange Fog Sea
515. Chapter 34 – Highgod
516. Chapter 35 – Amethyst Beasts
517. Chapter 36 – The Storm Caves
518. Chapter 37 – The Rescue
519. Chapter 38 – Juvenile Beast
520. Chapter 39 – Fleeing For Their Lives
521. Chapter 40 – Life in the Amethyst Mountains
522. Chapter 41 – Trapped Five Hundred Years
523. Chapter 42 – 108
524. Chapter 1 – Black Stone
525. Chapter 2 – Ten Years of Harvesting
526. Chapter 3 – Saturation
527. Chapter 4 – Out To Sea
528. Chapter 5 – That Powerful Man
529. Chapter 6 – Knifeblade Island
530. Chapter 7 – Hidden Expert
531. Chapter 8 – Blackstone Prison
532. Chapter 9 – Emotions
533. Chapter 10 – Ganmontin
534. Chapter 11 – So It Was Him
535. Chapter 12 – A Great Battle
536. Chapter 13 – Unbindable
537. Chapter 14 – Drifting For Twenty Years
538. Chapter 15 – Miluo Island
539. Chapter 16 – Familiar Face
540. Chapter 17 – A Confrontation
541. Chapter 18 – The Blood-Colored Miluo Insignia
542. Chapter 19 – War God – Cesar
543. Chapter 20 – With Child?
544. Chapter 21 – I Want Him Dead!
545. Chapter 22 – All Who Bar My Path Shall Die!
546. Chapter 23 – Turning the World Upside Down
547. Chapter 24 – Life and Death – Two Paths
548. Chapter 25 – Red-Robed Elder
549. Chapter 26 – Scryer Records

550. Chapter 27 – Secret Area
551. Chapter 28 – The Secret
552. Chapter 29 – Unable to Leave!
553. Chapter 30 – Sledgehammer
554. Chapter 31 – Purgatory Commander
555. Chapter 32 – The Might of a Sovereign
556. Chapter 1 – Training Speed
557. Chapter 2 – Travelling to Indigo Prefecture
558. Chapter 3 – Azure Dragon Clan
559. Chapter 4 – Seize Them
560. Chapter 5 – Baruch
561. Chapter 6 – The Weakest – Smallest Branch
562. Chapter 7 – The Clan's Crisis
563. Chapter 8 – The Secrets of the Ancestral Baptism!
564. Chapter 9 – Eighty Years
565. Chapter 10 – Dragonize Pool
566. Chapter 11 – Innate Divine Ability
567. Chapter 12 – The Might of the Dragon Roar
568. Chapter 13 – Greed!
569. Chapter 14 – The Challenge
570. Chapter 15 – Life-And-Death Duel
571. Chapter 16 – No Mercy!
572. Chapter 17 – Prestige
573. Chapter 18 – 'Punishment'
574. Chapter 19 – Elder
575. Chapter 20 – Conclave of Elders
576. Chapter 21 – The Grand Elder
577. Chapter 22 – Comfort
578. Chapter 23 – Receiving the Order
579. Chapter 24 – Give Me a Ride
580. Chapter 25 – Blood Splattering the Skies
581. Chapter 26 – Spiritual Chaos
582. Chapter 27 – Bestowal
583. Chapter 28 – Freedom
584. Chapter 29 – Joining Forces
585. Chapter 30 – Surrounded And Attacked
586. Chapter 31 – A Battle of Sovereign's Mights

587. Chapter 32 – Wanting to Steal a Chicken, Instead Losing the Bait
588. Chapter 33 – Bulo – Unwilling to Give Up
589. Chapter 34 – The Eight Great Patriarchs
590. Chapter 35 – A Tremendous Threat!
591. Chapter 36 – Decision
592. Chapter 37 – Calmness and Savagery
593. Chapter 38 – Most Powerful Attack
594. Chapter 39 – Firmament Splitter
595. Chapter 40 – Betrayal
596. Chapter 41 – A Mysterious Visitor
597. Chapter 42 – Nobody There
598. Chapter 43 – Wade
599. Chapter 44 – Catching a Ride
600. Chapter 45 – A Frantic Battle
601. Chapter 46 – Spare No One!
602. Chapter 47 – Begging for Salvation
603. Chapter 48 – Their Proposals
604. Chapter 49 – Three Months
605. Chapter 50 – Between Life and Death!
606. Chapter 51 – Beirut's Abilities
607. Chapter 52 – Two Drops of Sovereign's Might
608. Chapter 53 – Putting on a Performance
609. Chapter 54, Nowhere to Run
610. Chapter 55 – Beirut's Craftiness
611. Chapter 56 – Vitality
612. Chapter 57 – Dangerous
613. Chapter 58 – Unwillingness
614. Chapter 59 – Suspicion
615. Chapter 60 – A Major Event
616. Chapter 61 – Group Battle
617. Chapter 62 – The Thorn in Their Side
618. Chapter 63 – A Turn Of Events
619. Chapter 64 – Supremacy
620. Chapter 1 – What Type of Weapon?
621. Chapter 2 – Mirage
622. Chapter 3 – Goals
623. Chapter 4 – Ironknife Gorge

624. Chapter 5 – Back to the Yulan Continent!
625. Chapter 6 – After Two Thousand Years, Even Seas Can Become Plains!
626. Chapter 7 – Parting Words
627. Chapter 8 – Marvelous Treasures
628. Chapter 9 – Battle!
629. Chapter 10 – The Manner of Death
630. Chapter 11 – A Pleasant Surprise
631. Chapter 12 – Entering the Netherworld
632. Chapter 13 – Northbone Prefecture
633. Chapter 14 – Sayant
634. Chapter 15 – Throwing One's Life Away
635. Chapter 16 – Abyssal Mountain
636. Chapter 17 – Abyssal Fruit
637. Chapter 18, The Young Red-Haired Lady
638. Chapter 19 – Warning, Snakes and Trees!
639. Chapter 20 – Lost
640. Chapter 21 – Green Snakes
641. Chapter 22 – The Gray Fog Region – Slaughter!
642. Chapter 23 – A Strange Situation
643. Chapter 24 – Fortune? Misfortune?
644. Chapter 25 – The Abyssal Fruit Appears
645. Chapter 26 – Choice
646. Chapter 27 – Sovereign's Emissary
647. Chapter 28 – Repercussions
648. Chapter 29 – Invincible
649. Chapter 30 – Unable to Help
650. Chapter 31 – The Chief Sovereign of Death
651. Chapter 32 – The Netherworld Heart
652. Chapter 1 – Desire
653. Chapter 2 – Flamebone Mountain
654. Chapter 3 – Target
655. Chapter 4 – Redcliff Lord
656. Chapter 5 – Sudden Emergence
657. Chapter 6 – Unstoppable
658. Chapter 7 – A Blaze
659. Chapter 8 – The Storm Gathers

660. Chapter 9 – A Battle Between Supreme Experts of the Earth
661. Chapter 10 – The Final, Supreme Technique!
662. Chapter 11 – Victory and Defeat
663. Chapter 12 – Four Badge Colors
664. Chapter 13 – Dangerous
665. Chapter 14 – Ambushed
666. Chapter 15 – A Choice
667. Chapter 16 – Murderous Blows!
668. Chapter 17 – Hemmers
669. Chapter 18 – List of Names
670. Chapter 19 – An Untended Willow Grows
671. Chapter 20 – A Tranquil Heart
672. Chapter 21 – Flee on Sight
673. Chapter 22 – Sixty Years in the Planar Battlefield
674. Chapter 23 – Three Person Squad
675. Chapter 24 – A Dead End? A New Beginning!
676. Chapter 25 – Innate Divine Ability
677. Chapter 26 – The First Battle
678. Chapter 27 – A Change
679. Chapter 28 – Five Hundred Years
680. Chapter 29 – Four Against One
681. Chapter 30 – Canteen?
682. Chapter 31 – The Number One Clan
683. Chapter 32 – What's This?
684. Chapter 33 – A Battle
685. Chapter 34 – A Battle of Attrition?
686. Chapter 35 – A Rock
687. Chapter 36 – Blood Binding, Crown
688. Chapter 37 – Supreme Technique
689. Chapter 38 – An Inch of Land, A Foot of Sky
690. Chapter 39 – Bluefire
691. Chapter 40 – Will
692. Chapter 41 – High Spirits
693. Chapter 42 – A Nightmare Descends
694. Chapter 43 – Attacked and Killed
695. Chapter 44 – Results
696. Chapter 45 – Arrangements

697. Chapter 46 – The Unfinished Battle
698. Chapter 47 – Suicidal?
699. Chapter 48 – The Death of Linley
700. Chapter 49 – The Line Between Life and Death
701. Chapter 50 – A Terrifying Tenacity
702. Chapter 51 – Metamorphosis, Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly!
703. Chapter 52 – The Path to the Peak
704. Chapter 53 – Spiritual Power!
705. Chapter 54 – Disappearing In a Blink of an Eye
706. Chapter 55 – The Experts By the Banks of the Stellar River
707. Chapter 56 – Bebe's Request
708. Chapter 57 – The Final Battle
709. Chapter 58 – Linley's Power
710. Chapter 59 – The Duel Above the Stellar River
711. Chapter 60 – The Most Powerful Technique!
712. Chapter 61 – Gathering Point
713. Chapter 62 – Who Is Alive – Who Is Dead?
714. Chapter 63 – Return
715. Chapter 64 – Gathered From Many Places
716. Chapter 1 – Father and Son
717. Chapter 2 – An Inescapable Calamity
718. Chapter 3 – Power
719. Chapter 4 – The Clan's Changes
720. Chapter 5 – Refusal
721. Chapter 6 – Overgod Artifact
722. Chapter 7 – Olivier
723. Chapter 8 – Whither To?
724. Chapter 9 – Bonin
725. Chapter 10 – Right and Wrong
726. Chapter 11 – The Lord Prefect of Skymount
727. Chapter 12 – Not Dead
728. Chapter 13 – The Secret of the Nine Pearls
729. Chapter 14 – True – False
730. Chapter 15 – The Sovereign Descends
731. Chapter 16 – A Tribulation
732. Chapter 17 – Too Hot to Handle

733. Chapter 18 – Joke
734. Chapter 19 – Parchment
735. Chapter 20 – After A Millennium, An Astonishing Change!
736. Chapter 21 – Four Divine Powers Fuse
737. Chapter 22 – Real and Fake
738. Chapter 23 – Red Caltrop Diamond
739. Chapter 24 – Status
740. Chapter 25 – A Sudden Shockwave
741. Chapter 26 – The Struggle
742. Chapter 27 – The Critical Point
743. Chapter 28 – Toyed With
744. Chapter 29 – Begging to be Spared
745. Chapter 30 – Overgod Decree
746. Chapter 31 – The Chief Sovereign Descends
747. Chapter 32 – I'd Rather Die! A Change of Events
748. Chapter 33 – Descent
749. Chapter 34 – Hiding One's Strength
750. Chapter 35 – Coercion
751. Chapter 36 – Nine Supreme Experts
752. Chapter 37 – Infiltration
753. Chapter 38 – Lionheart City
754. Chapter 39 – Relief Sculpture
755. Chapter 40 – The Red Caltrop Diamond Emerges!
756. Chapter 41 – Two Preparations
757. Chapter 42 – Linley's Terrifying Strength
758. Chapter 43 – Utterly Exasperated
759. Chapter 44 – Whither To?
760. Chapter 45 – Beirut's True Power!
761. Chapter 46 – Beirut, Sovereign?
762. Chapter 47 – Battle
763. Chapter 48 – Success
764. Chapter 1 – The Overgod of Life
765. Chapter 2 – The Eighteenth Floor of the Necropolis of the Gods
766. Chapter 3 – Ten Thousand Years Ago – The Truth
767. Chapter 4 – Sovereign Linley
768. Chapter 5 – Magic Compilation, Fusion Sovereign!
769. Chapter 6 – Entrusted

770. Chapter 7 – Dragonblood Continent
771. Chapter 8 – Entreaty
772. Chapter 9 – The Next Five Thousand Years
773. Chapter 10 – Sword Intent
774. Chapter 11 – Hunt and Kill, A Storm Brews!
775. Chapter 12 – The First Display of Power
776. Chapter 13 – Punishment
777. Chapter 14 – The Gathering of the Sovereigns
778. Chapter 15 – Covetous Intent
779. Chapter 16 – The Verdict
780. Chapter 17 – Tenfold Victor's Reward
781. Chapter 18 – Divine Beast, Sable Leviathan
782. Chapter 19 – Orloff's Invitation
783. Chapter 20 – Fight, Kill!
784. Chapter 21 – Outside of One's Expectations
785. Chapter 22 – Trump Card
786. Chapter 23 – Twelve-Winged Angel
787. Chapter 24 – Nine Rounds
788. Chapter 25 – Revisiting the Divine Light Plane
789. Chapter 26 – An Extremely High Price!
790. Chapter 27 – Memories
791. Chapter 28 – Beginning to Act
792. Chapter 29 – Windhunter
793. Chapter 30 – Sovereign's Emissaries
794. Chapter 31 – A Meeting
795. Chapter 32 – Gathering Point
796. Chapter 33 – The Bula Race
797. Chapter 34 – Samsara
798. Chapter 35 – Thousand Years
799. Chapter 36 – The Final Battle
800. Chapter 37 – Eye-Catching
801. Chapter 38 – Lies!
802. Chapter 39 – Linley's Fiery Rage
803. Chapter 40 – A Battle of Chief Sovereigns
804. Chapter 41 – Can He Actually Be…?
805. Chapter 42 – Earth Fire Water Wind
806. Chapter 43 – A New Name (part 1)

807. Chapter 44 – A New Name (part 2)
808. Afterword – By Author, ‘I Eat Tomatoes’
809. RWX’s Afterword

Description

Coiling Dragon

Empires rise and fall on the Yulan Continent. Saints, immortal beings of unimaginable power, battle using spells and swords, leaving swathes of destruction in their wake. Magical beasts rule the mountains, where the brave – or the foolish – go to test their strength. Even the mighty can fall, feasted on by those stronger. The strong live like royalty; the weak strive to survive another day.

This is the world which Linley is born into. Raised in the small town of Wushan, Linley is a scion of the Baruch clan, the clan of the once-legendary Dragonblood Warriors. Their fame once shook the world, but the clan is now so decrepit that even the heirlooms of the clan have been sold off. Tasked with reclaiming the lost glory of his clan, Linley will go through countless trials and tribulations, making powerful friends but also deadly enemies.

Come witness a new legend in the making. The legend of Linley Baruch.

Chapter 1 – Early Morning at a Township

Book 1, Chapter 1 – Early Morning at a Township

The town of Wushan. An ordinary little town located within the Kingdom of Fenlai, west of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the largest mountain range within the Yulan continent.

As the morning sun rose, in the town of Wushan, there remained a slight hint of the cold, pure pre-dawn air. However, virtually all of the citizens of this small town had already come out to begin working. Even the six or seven year old children had already gotten out of bed and were preparing to begin their traditional morning exercises.

On an empty area in the eastern region of Wushan town, the warmth of the rays of the morning sun passed through the surrounding trees, leaving behind scattered spots of light on the empty ground.

A large group of children could be seen there, approximately one or two hundred in number. These children were separated into three groups, each group divided into several lines. All the children stood there silently, their faces solemn. The northernmost group of children were approximately six years old. The group in the middle, approximately nine to twelve years old. The ones in the south, the thirteen to sixteen year olds.

In front of this large group of children, there were three sturdily-built middle-aged men. All three of them wore short-sleeved shirts and roughly cut trousers.

“If you want to be a powerful warrior, then you must work hard from youth.” The leader of the middle-aged men, head raised high, hands clasped behind his back, said to them coldly. He swept his cold, fierce gaze across the northernmost group of children. All of those six and seven year olds tightened their lips. Gazing at this man with their big, round eyes, none of them dared to make a sound.

The leader's name was Hillman (Xi'er'man). He was the captain of the guard for the Baruch (Ba'lu'ke) clan, the noble clan which owned Wushan town.

"All of you are commoners. Unlike those noble families, you won't have access to any secret manuals teaching you how to cultivate battle qi [dou qi]. If you want to become someone of worth, if you wish to be respected, then all of you must use the most ancient, most simple, and most basic ways of improving yourselves – through exercising your bodies, and building up your strength! Am I clear?!"

Hillman swept the group of children with his gaze.

"Understood." The voices of the children replied brightly in unison.

"Good." Satisfied, Hillman coldly nodded. The eyes of the six year old children displayed their confusion, while the eyes of the teenagers became very determined. They understood the meaning behind Hillman's words.

Virtually every male in the Yulan continent would exercise very hard from a very young age. If anyone slacked off, in the future, they would be looked down upon by others! Money and power – these were the things that determined a man's status! A man without power would be looked down upon even by women.

If one wanted their parents to be proud of them, wanted women to worship them, wanted to live a glorious life?

Then they must become powerful warriors!

All of them were commoners. None of them would have access to any of those precious manuals which taught the arts of cultivating battle qi. Their only road to glory was through exercising from a young age, and gathering strength! Bitterly hard work! They would work harder than those nobles, spend more of their energy and blood in strengthening themselves!

“When the sun rises in the morning, all things begin to thrive. This is the best time to absorb the natural energy from your surroundings and improve the conditioning of our bodies. Same rules as always – Legs spread apart, as wide as your shoulders! Both knees bent slightly, both hands pressed down at the waist. Assume the ‘Qi Building Stance’. When assuming this stance, remember – ‘Focus your concentration, maintain a calm mind, and breath naturally.’” Hillman coldly instructed.

The ‘Qi Building Stance’ was the most simple, yet most effective way of exercising one’s body. This was based off of the experiences of generations of forefathers.

Immediately the nearly two hundred children assumed the ‘Qi Building Stance’ position.

“Remember, focus your concentration, maintain a calm mind, and breath naturally!” Hillman said coldly as he walked amidst the children.

At a glance, he could tell that the teenagers in the southern group all were maintaining the stance calmly and breathed naturally. At the same time, all of them attained the goals of being stable and steady in their stance. Clearly, they had attained some degree of proficiency in the ‘Qi Building Stance.’

But glancing at the northernmost group of children, with their waists and knees crooked at odd degrees, their legs relaxed and loose, it was clear to Hillman that they were standing unstably and without any power.

Hillman said to the two other middle aged men, “The two of you, take charge of the south group and the middle group. I will go take care of the youngest children.”

“Yes, Captain.” The two middle aged men immediately obeyed, paying close attention to those two groups. Every so often, they would kick the legs of those teenagers, checking to see who was standing firmly and who was not.

Hillman walked towards the northern group of children. Those children

immediately became nervous.

“Crap, the Head Monster is coming!” A golden-haired child with large, bright eyes named Hadley (Ha’de’li) said in a low voice.

Hillman strode into the midst of the children. Staring at them, his face was cold, but in his heart, he was sighing. “These kids are just too young. They are just too lacking in both wisdom and strength. I can’t demand too much from them. However, it’s still good to get them exercising from a young age. If they work hard from a young age, in the future, when they are on the battlefield, they will have a higher chance of survival.”

And to teach young children…getting them interested was the most effective way! If he forced them too hard, it would have the opposite effect!

“All of you, stand firm!” Hillman coldly harrumphed.

Immediately, all of the children straightened, sticking out their chests and staring straight ahead.

A hint of a smile played at Hillman’s lips. He then moved to the front and took off his shirt. The lines running across the powerful muscles on his body made the eyes pop out of all of the kids. Even the children in the middle group and southern group couldn’t help but stare at him, admiring his physique.

Aside from his perfect musculature, on Hillman’s bare upper body, there were countless knife scars, sword scars, and dozens of other old wounds. All of the children stared at those wounds, their eyes shining.

Knife scars. Sword scars. These were a man’s medals!

In their hearts, they were filled with veneration towards Hillman. Hillman, a mighty warrior of the sixth rank, a warrior birthed from life and death struggles! Even in large cities, he would be an amazing individual. In the tiny town of Wushan, he was a man who every single person venerated.

Seeing the ardent gazes of the children, Hillman couldn't help but let a slight smile escape. He wanted to stir up a feeling of worshipfulness in the children, a desire to be like him. That way, they would work harder and be more motivated!

"Let's add some more fuel to the fire!" Hillman secretly grinned, then walked in front of a giant boulder, which weighed three or four hundred pounds.

With one hand, Hillman grabbed the boulder. In a very relaxed manner, he began brandishing it about. That three hundred pound boulder, in Hillman's hands, seemed to be as light as wood. All of those children's jaws dropped, and their eyes widened.

"Too light! Lorry (Luo'rui), if you have some free time after training, go and get some larger boulders for me." With a casual toss, Hillman sent the boulder flying several dozen meters. Crash! It smote the ground next to a large tree, and the entire ground trembled. Hillman casually walked in front of some random stones.

"Hah!"

Hillman breathed deeply. All of the veins on his muscular body popped out prominently, as Hillman directly struck at a nearby bluish boulder. His fist shattered the air, creating a howling sound that made all of the watching children widen their eyes even further. Hillman's mighty fist smashed directly onto the boulder.

Crash! The sound of the fist smashing into the boulder made the hearts of all the children tremble.

That was an extremely hard bluestone boulder!

The bluestone boulder trembled. Suddenly, six or seven giant cracks appeared on it, as with a 'peng' sound, it split into four or five pieces. But on Hillman's fist, not the slightest injury could be seen.

“The Captain is as formidable as ever.” Lorry, one of the two other middle-aged men, laughed, as Hillman walked back towards them.

The other man, Roger (Luo’jie), also walked over. Usually, when the children practiced the ‘Qi Building Stance’, it was time for the three of them to relax and freely chat, while paying attention to any child who decided to slack off.

Hillman laughed as he shook his head. “No way. In the past, when I was in the army, every day I would train like crazy, while on the battlefield, I engage in bloody close combat. Nowadays, all I’m doing is relaxing and stretching my muscles a bit in the morning. I’m not filled with as much energy as in the past.”

All of the children stared worshipfully at Hillman.

That huge bluestone boulder was shattered by a single blow from his fist. What sort of power was this? And that three or four hundred pound boulder was so easily tossed with a flick of the arm. What sort of power was this?

Hillman turned his head. Staring at the children, he was very satisfied with the children’s reactions.

“Remember, even if you aren’t able to cultivate battle qi, in principle, if you reach your body’s fullest potential, you can still become a warrior of the sixth rank! And a sixth ranked warrior, upon entering the army, can easily become a mid-level officer, and easily obtain the military manuals which teach one how to cultivate battle qi! Even if you cannot become a warrior of the sixth rank, and can only become a common warrior of the first rank, you will still be qualified to enter the military. Remember! If a man isn’t able to become even a warrior of the first rank, that man can’t be considered a man at all!”

“If you are a man, then you must raise your chest high, welcome any and all challenges, and fear nothing!”

Upon hearing these words, smiles appeared on the faces of all the six and

seven year olds. All of them forced themselves to remain expressionless. These words were Hillman's often-repeated mantra, and he repeated these words endlessly to the children.

"All of you, stand straight. Look at your elders to the south, then look at how you are standing!" Hillman censured them.

All of the six year olds immediately tried to adjust their stance to be more stable.

After a while, the six and seven year olds began to wobble. All of the kids felt that their legs were cramping fiercely, but they gritted their teeth. But after holding out for a short period of time, the children began to collapse and sit on the ground, one after the other.

Hillman's face was cold and callous, but in his heart, he secretly nodded. He was still very satisfied with the performance of these six and seven year olds.

After a short period of time, some of the ten year olds in the middle group also could no longer hold out, and one by one, they began to fall as well.

"Hold out for as long as you can. I won't force you. But if in the future, you are weaker than your peers, then you'll have no one to blame than yourselves." Hillman coldly said.

"Hmm?" Lorry suddenly stared, astonished, at the northern group.

At this point in time, many of the kids in the middle group had fallen down, but in the northern group, a six year old child had held strong.

"This must be Linley's [Lin'lei] first day at training. Who would've thought he'd be so formidable?" Lorry said, amazed. Next time him, Roger and Hillman also noticed. Looking in that direction, they saw that to the north, a single brown haired boy was still holding firm. His lips tightened, the boy stared determinedly in front, both fists tightly clenched so hard that his fists were white.

A look of pleased surprise appeared in Hillman's eyes.

"Good kid!" Hillman secretly praised. Despite being just six years old, he could maintain the 'Qi Building Stance' for as long as the ten year old kids.

Linley, full name Linley Baruch, was the eldest son and heir to the Baruch clan, which ruled over the Wushan town. The Baruch clan was an extremely old clan. Once, it was extremely prosperous, but after thousands of years, it had only three members remaining. The clan leader, Hogg [Huo'ge] Baruch, and his two sons. The elder son was Linley Baruch, six years old. The younger son, Wharton [Wo'dun] Baruch, was just two years old. As for his wife, when she gave birth to the younger son, she died in the midst of childbirth. Linley's grandfather also was dead, having lost his life in battle.

Linley's legs were trembling. Although his willpower was strong, his leg muscles were strained to their utmost and were beginning to tremble uncontrollably. He finally collapsed and sat down.

"Linley, how do you feel?" Smiling, Hillman walked towards him.

Linley cracked a smile, revealing his small canines. "I'm fine, Uncle Hillman." As captain of the Baruch clan's guardsmen, Hillman had watched Linley grow up. Naturally, the two of them were very close.

"Well done. You acted like a man." Hillman patted Linley on the head. Immediately, the hair on Linley's head became tousled like windblown grass.

"Haha." Linley grinned widely. In his heart, he felt very happy at being praised by Hillman.

After resting for a while, they continued their exercises. The training regime for the six and seven year olds was a lot more relaxed. But for the teenagers, the training regime was terrifyingly strict.

The large group of children, including the six and seven year olds, were

lying down with their heads and their feet each on top of a flat rock, relying solely on the strength in their waists to keep straight.

“The waist and the thighs form a triangular region.” Hillman gestured with his hands to show the area he was describing. “This area is a person’s nucleus. Speed and power all come from this triangular nucleus, making this region extremely important.”

As Hillman spoke, he continued to walk about, carefully inspecting the youths to see if their movements were correct.

“Tighten that up! Your waists need to be straight!” Hillman thundered.

Immediately, the waists of many youths straightened. This was Linley’s first day of training. His tiny head and his feet were both flat on the rocks, but by this point in time, Linley could already feel his waist growing tight and hot.

“Hold, gotta hold. I’m the best!” Linley kept encouraging himself. Linley’s body had always been very strong, even as a baby. He had virtually never gotten sick. Given that he also worked very hard, for him to excel was nothing special.

“Thud!” The first child fell down.

However, the stones they were using as a pillow and footrest were only twenty centimeters high, so although the child fell down, it didn’t hurt much. (In the Yulan continent, the goldsmiths used standardized lengths of 1 meter = 10 decimeters = 100 centimeters = 1000 millimeters.)

“Thud!” “Thud!” As time went on, more and more children could no longer hold out.

Linley gritted his teeth. He could clearly feel that the tightness in his waist had already reached the limits of his endurance, to the point where it was almost going numb. “My body feels so heavy. I’m almost unable to control it. Hold, gotta hold for just a bit more.” By this point in time, of the six to

eight year olds, only Linley remained.

Staring at Linley, Hillman couldn't help but be filled with surprise and joy.

"Lorry." Hillman suddenly shouted.

"Captain." Lorry immediately straightened, awaiting his orders.

Hillman commanded, "Tomorrow, prepare some special dyes. When they are practicing their waist strength, put a branch under all of their waists, and dye the branches. If any of them slack off and let their waists touch the branch, their body will be dyed as well. Their training regime will double in difficulty."

"Yes, Captain." Lorry acknowledged the order. He couldn't help but let his lips tug up in a smile. He secretly laughed, "The Captain is always filled with so many devilish ideas. Those punks are really gonna get it now."

Wasn't that just so?

Looks of pain appeared on the faces of all the ten year olds. Normally, they could still make slight adjustments and slack off. But with Hillman's idea, they would have no chance to do so.

Hillman continued coldly, "Let me tell you all, when a warrior practices his battle qi, the battle qi is stored in a fist-sized location directly beneath the navel. You should understand that this is part of the triangle I was talking about. I expect you all now should understand the importance of strengthening the triangle region! This is your core. If it fails, then your body fails, no matter how strong the other parts of it might be."

A good instructor is of paramount importance to the children.

And Hillman really was a formidable warrior. He knew the important parts of training, and also knew how to increase the difficulty one step at a time. He knew what sort of tools to use with what ages. If it was too hard, it could make a child's body collapse.

“Battle qi?”

Upon hearing these words, all of the youths, including the youngest children resting off to the side, stared at Hillman with wide eyes.

All of the commoners were extremely eager to learn battle qi. Even Linley, this scion of a noble house, was extremely eager.

“Thud!”

Linley could finally hold out no longer, but he still used his arms to prop himself on the ground as he slowly rolled off.

“That feels good!” Linley could feel that his waist felt a numbness which pierced through to the bone, so comfortable that his eyes crinkled slightly.

“How long was I able to hold out?” Linley opened his eyes wide, looking around him.

All of the six year olds had collapsed. Even half the ten year olds had collapsed as well. All of the fourteen year olds, however, held on. Hillman’s face remained as cold as ever.

“All of you must remember. Your body is like a vessel, like a wineglass. Battle qi is like the wine! The amount of wine a vessel can hold is dependent on the size of the vessel. Same goes for the body; a person’s ability to practice battle qi is based on the extent of his training. If his body is too weak, even if he gains access to powerful battle qi manuals, his body won’t be able to hold much battle qi, and he still won’t become a powerful warrior.” Hillman imparted many important bits of advice to the children.

Many warriors, due to not having received proper guidance in their youth, only understood the connection between battle qi and body strength much later in life. But by that age, there wouldn’t be much progress when they trained.

Many forefathers had gone on many wrong paths and gained much experience. Hillman continued to impart these experiences, like the spring wind imparting life-giving rain, deeply etching these important experiences in the minds of these children. Hillman didn't want these children to go on wrong paths as well.

After practicing the 'Qi Building Stance', the waist, back, thighs, shoulders, and other parts of the body would be harmonized. Now, almost all of the children were sitting, relaxed, on the ground. Hillman's training program was nearly perfect in the difficulty levels he assessed on each age group.

"Today's training ends now," Hillman announced.

Wushan town's training regimes were regulated. Every day, it happened twice, once at dawn, and once at dusk.

"Uncle Hillman, tell us some stories!" As training ended, the children immediately began to call out. Every day, after the dawn lessons, Hillman would tell them stories of his army days, or some events which had happened on the continent.

The children, all of whom had lived in the town their entire lives, thirsted for stories about the military.

Hillman smiled. He enjoyed telling stories to the children. This was a way to make the kids eager to train. Hillman had always felt that only by making the children voluntarily train would the children have great results.

"Today, I will tell you about the legendary Four Supreme Warrior bloodlines which everyone in the continent knows about." A look of awe appeared on Hillman's face.

The children's ears immediately perked up, and their eyes brightened. Linley, sitting on the ground, felt his heart thump furiously. "The legendary Four Supreme Warriors?" Linley's ears couldn't help but perk up as well, as he stared unblinkingly at Hillman.

In Hillman's eyes appeared a hint of excitement. His voice, however, remained calm. "On our continent, thousands of years ago, there appeared four powerful Supreme Warriors. All four of these Supreme Warriors possessed power comparable to an enormous dragon. They could wander amidst an army of millions at leisure, and easily take the head of any general! These Supreme Warriors were known as the Dragonblood Warrior, the Violetflame Warrior, the Tigerstriped Warrior, and the Undying Warrior!"

"Warriors are divided into nine ranks. I, a mere warrior of the sixth rank, can easily shatter boulders and kick down a large tree! But a ninth rank warrior, even within our country of Fenlai, would be considered a top level expert. But above the ninth rank warriors are the Four Supreme Warriors. They have surpassed the ninth rank warriors and can be considered the pinnacle of warriors. They belong to the level of legendary Saint-level warriors!" Hillman's eyes were filled with excitement. "The legendary Saint-level warriors can melt giant icebergs, make the boundless sea roar with angry waves, make tall mountains crumble, make cities with millions of people collapse, and make meteors fall from the sky! They are absolutely undefeatable, the highest possible power."

Silence. All of the children were stunned.

Hillman pointed at a mountain to the northeast.

"Look at Wushan. Isn't it huge?" Hillman smiled.

After hearing Hillman's words, many of the kids had been scared silly. They all immediately nodded. Wushan was over a thousand meters high, and thousands of meters in circumference. In the eyes of men, it would definitely be considered a huge mountain.

"But Saint-level combatants can destroy Wushan in the blink of an eye." Hillman said firmly.

A sixth-ranked warrior can only smash a boulder. But a Saint-level warrior can smash an entire mountain! All of the children's mouths dropped, and

their eyes widened. All of them were shocked, and their hearts were suddenly filled with an unspeakable dread towards these Saint-level combatants. But, their hearts were also filled with longing.

“Destroy a mountain?” Hillman’s words had a huge impact on Linley.

After a short period of time, the stunned children returned to their homes. Hillman, Roger, and Lorry were the last to leave. Watching the children depart in clusters of three or five, a smile appeared on Hillman’s face.

“These children are the hope and future of Wushan,” Hillman said with a smile.

Roger and Lorry also gazed at the group of children. On the continent, virtually all of the children of commoners had to train hard from an early age. Seeing the kids, Roger and Lorry reminisced back to their own youth.

“Captain Hillman, you are definitely much more formidable than ole Potter of bygone years. Under your guidance, I believe that Wushan town will become the strongest town in our region, surpassing the other ten or so towns,” Lorry said with a smile.

The strength of a teacher determined a place’s future.

“Oh, Captain, how do you know about the power of Saint-level warriors, or the Four Supreme Warriors?” Lorry suddenly remembered to ask.

Slightly embarrassed, Hillman grinned, “Well, um, actually, I’m not too clear about exactly how powerful the Four Supreme Warriors are. After all, they are the stuff of legends. It’s been years since any were seen.”

Lorry and Roger were astonished. “You don’t have any idea, and yet you lied to the kids?”

Hillman smiled slightly. “Although I’m not clear about the exact strength of the Four Supreme Warriors, I know this – a Saint-level mage maestro, which is to say a mage which has attained the Saint-level, can execute

forbidden magical techniques and eradicate an entire army of tens of thousands, or an entire city. Since Saint-level mages are so powerful, I expect that Saint-level warriors can't be that much weaker."

"More importantly, the reason I told the children these stories was to make them work harder. Couldn't you tell how amazed those children were after hearing the stories?" Hillman smiled delightedly.

Lorry and Roger were both speechless.

…..

"See ya later, 'Ley!"

"See ya, Hadley!"

Bidding farewell to his good friend Hadley, Linley went back, alone, to his home. After walking for a while, he saw the Baruch estates.

The amount of land the Baruch manor was built upon was actually quite large. Moss was growing on the walls, and all sorts of ivy creepers twined up the walls as well. The scars of time were very apparent on the walls. The Baruch manor located in Wushan town was the ancestral home of the Baruch clan. An ancestral home which had existed for over five thousand years and endured countless renovations continued to stand here.

But, with the decline in the clan's fortunes, the Baruch clan's finances had taken a turn for the worse as well. Towards the end, it could only consume its previous gains. Over a hundred years ago, the then-leader of the Baruch clan determined that all the members of the clan would live in the front courtyard, which took up a third of the space of the manor. The rest of the manor would no longer be maintained. That way, a great deal of money could be saved.

But despite these measures, by this period in time, Linley's father, Hogg Baruch, still needed to sell off family possessions in order to keep the family afloat.

The towering doors to the manor were open.

“Saint-level warriors?” While walking, Linley was still thinking about that. “In the future, will I be able to become a Saint-level warrior?”

“Linley.” Hillman’s voice sounded from behind him. Hillman, Roger, and Lorry had finally caught up to him.

Linley turned around and immediately said happily, “Uncle Hillman!”

Following this, Linley sucked in a deep breath. Raising his head to look at Hillman, his voice filled with eagerness, he said, “Uncle Hillman, are Saint-level warriors really that powerful? Then what about me? Is it possible that I will become a Saint-level warrior?” In Linley’s heart, there was a desire which all children possess.

Hillman was stunned. Besides him, Roger and Lorry were also speechless.

A Saint-level warrior?

“This kid really has the daring to dream big. The country of Fenlai has millions of citizens, but even so, after countless centuries, it hasn’t produced a single Saint-level warrior. To want to become a Saint-level warrior…” In Hillman’s mind, he fully understood how difficult it was to become a Saint-level warrior.

It required someone to work extremely hard from a young age, the support of a noble clan, and also a high amount of natural talent. It also required luck. How could it be easy to become a Saint-level warrior?

Hillman knew quite well how much he himself had to suffer in order to become a sixth-ranked warrior, and how many life-and-death battles he had to experience. Even a warrior of the sixth rank was very difficult to become. A seventh, eighth, and ninth ranked warrior was of course only harder. As for a Saint-level warrior? Even in his dreams, Hillman didn’t dare imagine himself as one.

But he was facing Linley's earnest gaze.

"Linley, Uncle Hillman has faith in you. I'm sure you'll become a Saint-level warrior." Staring at Linley, Hillman spoke firmly. These words of encouragement caused Linley's eyes to shine. In Linley's heart, as well, a desire arose.

A desire which had never been so ardent!

"Uncle Hillman, from tomorrow onwards, can I participate in the training sessions with the ten year olds?" Linley suddenly asked.

Hillman, Roger, and Lorry all stared at Linley in surprise.

"My lord father always told me, if you want to become a man without peer, then you must work harder than other men." Linley unconsciously mimicked his father's manner of speech.

Hillman suddenly smiled. He had seen the results of Linley's training today. Although Linley was only six, his body conditioning could compare with nine year olds. He immediately nodded, smiling. "Fine. However, you'd best not slack off. You'd best realize that this isn't a one day or two day commitment. This will be a long-term regime."

Linley raised his small head proudly. Self-confidently, he smiled. "Uncle Hillman, you just wait and see."

This was a very normal morning for Wushan town. Afterwards, every morning was the same as this one. The group of Wushan youths would follow Hillman, warrior of the sixth rank, and train hard under his guidance. The only difference was, the six year old Linley was placed in the central squad of ten year olds.

Chapter 2 – The Dragonblood Warrior Clan (part one)

Book 1, Chapter 2 – The Dragonblood Warrior Clan (part one)

In the blink of an eye, another half year had passed. Training hard and strengthening his body, Linley passed through the gentle, warm spring, the blazing summer, and the chilly autumn. The white poplar tree next to the empty training field of Wushan would always scatter some dried leaves onto the ground whenever the wind blew. The leaves slowly whirled down, covering the entire training ground.

The sky had slowly grown dark.

Today, there was an exceptionally large number of people on the training grounds, nearly three hundred.

“Today’s evening training session ends now.” Hillman smiled. “Before leaving, however, everyone needs to first congratulate this next crop of children who are about to leave Wushan and join the army.”

With autumn’s end came the season of military recruitment. With the entire continent engaged in an age of warfare, every youngster viewed becoming a mighty warrior as a badge of honor. Naturally, there were also those who wished to become mages, but becoming a mage is an extremely difficult task. Perhaps only one person in ten thousand had the necessary qualifications to become a mage. With such a low probability, the average person wouldn’t even consider it.

Becoming a warrior was much easier. Upon turning sixteen, as long as they were at least warriors of the first rank, they could easily enter the army.

“Uncle Hillman, thank you!”

A hundred and twenty six children, all age seventeen, respectfully bowed

towards Hillman. These youngsters normally did not attend training. They had all become adults, and had their own jobs to do. But since they had all been trained by Hillman since they were toddlers, they all considered Hillman to have been their benevolent master.

Before joining the army, they all came here to say farewell to Hillman.

Staring at this group of energetic, eager seventeen year olds, Hillman was filled with countless mixed feelings. This was because Hillman knew that all of these children were eager to join the army, but after ten years of military service, how many of them would come back alive?

“I hope at least half of these hundred and twenty six will be able to return alive,” Hillman prayed silently.

Hillman stared at the children, and said in a clear voice, “Brats, listen up! You are all men of Wushan town. The men of Wushan town must straighten their chests and welcome any challenges, and accept no fear. Am I understood?”

All of those seventeen year old youths straightened their chest, their bodies ramrod straight. Their eyes filled with a hot ardor for military life, they all responded in loud unison, “Understood!”

“Good!” Hillman stood ramrod straight as well. His cold gaze was filled with a military aura.

“Tomorrow, all of you will depart. Tonight, prepare well. I know how strong all of you are. All of you will be able to easily enter the army! I, Hillman, will wait here for all of you to make your glorious return to Wushan town!” Hillman said in a bright voice.

The eyes of those youths shone bright.

Returning home with honor. This was the dream of every youth.

“Now, I order all of you, go home immediately and begin your preparations.

Disperse!” Hillman said in a cold, fierce voice.

“Yes sir!”

A hundred and twenty six youths respectfully saluted, and then departed. They were followed by the worshipful gazes of the nearly two hundred youths that remained. Tomorrow, they would begin a brand new journey.

“I have two more years. When I become of age, I also want to join the army.”

“I really want to live the exciting, heart-throbbing life of a soldier. If I had to live here for my entire life, in Wushan town, even if I lived forever, it would be pointless.”

…..

A group of thirteen year olds chatted amongst each other. All of them longed for that exciting life, a life filled with vigor. All of them wanted to accumulate merits and establish a reputation. They wanted to be adored by the girls and the esteem of their relatives.

This was their dream!

“Linley, your father, Lord Hogg, has some extremely important business with you. Don’t go off playing with the other kids. Come home with me.” Hillman walked to Linley’s side. Gazing at him, Hillman felt very proud.

Linley was exceedingly smart. Under the tutelage of his father, Hogg, since a young age, he had learned many words and could read most books.

Reading was a very luxurious thing. Usually, only the scions of noble houses could read. The Baruch clan was an extremely old clan, and it held a large number of books.

“Uncle Hillman, I know already. My lord father already reminded me three times. My lord father has never been so insistent about anything. I won’t go

off and play.” Linley grinned, revealing his pearly white teeth, perfect but for the fact that one was missing.

Linley was already beginning to grow permanent teeth.

“That’s enough. You are missing one of your front teeth. When you smile, you let the wind in.” Hillman laughed. “Go, go home.”

…..

In the ancient front courtyard of the Baruch manor, after the family finished dinner, Linley was playing around with his younger brother.

“Big brother, hug, hug!”

Little Wharton was staring at Linley with a look of pure, simple love. Walking unsteadily, he extended a small, pudgy hand towards Linley, trying to hug him. Linley stood not too far away, quietly waiting for little Wharton to reach him.

“Wharton, you can do it!” Linley encouraged him.

Little Wharton’s wobbly footsteps made people fear he would fall with each step. But in the end, little Wharton managed to rush into his big brother’s embrace. His smooth skin, as soft as water, was slightly pink. His big round eyes stared at his elder brother, and in a baby voice, he said, “Big brother, big brother.”

Looking at his baby brother, Linley’s heart was filled with a boundless warmth and love.

No mother, no grandparents. Although he had his father and the family caretaker to take care of him, Linley, who had matured early, was extremely loving and protective towards his little brother. In Linley’s eyes, as the big brother, it was his job to take care of his little brother.

“Wharton, what did you learn today?” Linley asked, smiling.

Wharton frowned, an extremely cute expression. After pondering, he excitedly said, “Today I learned about using rags!”

“Rags?” Linley’s face revealed an uncontrollable smile. “What did you wipe?”

Counting on his fingers, little Wharton said, “First I used the rags to wipe the floors, then the toilet chamber pots, and lastly I wiped….wiped….right, I wiped the plates!” He looked excitedly at Linley, awaiting Linley’s praise.

“You wiped the chamber pots, and then wiped the plates?” Linley’s eyes were huge.

“What, did I do it wrong? I really wiped them clean.” In little Wharton’s tiny head, his eyes were filled with an uncomprehending look as he stared at his big brother.

“Young master Linley, your father is looking for you. Let me carry young master Wharton.” A brandy-nosed old man walked over. This brandy-nosed old man was the Baruch clan’s housekeeper, Hiri (Xi’li). In the entire manor, aside from the housekeeper, there wasn’t even a serving girl.

Linley no longer had any time to chat with Wharton. He immediately handed Wharton over to Grandpa Hiri, and went towards the guest hall.

“I wonder why father summoned me?” Although he was young, Linley could sense that this time, his father had called him for something important.

Entering the guest hall, in one corner there was a desk clock that was higher than Linley was tall.

This desk clock can be considered a high quality object. Generally, only wealthy or noble families had such a clock. At this moment, Linley’s father was seated next to the fireplace. The flames in the fireplace burned, constantly crackling and popping.

“Um? Why did father change his clothes?” Seeing his father, Linley was filled with astonishment. While at home, his father normally wore only very simple clothes. Just then, while eating dinner, his father wore normal clothes. But now, he had switched to a set of very noble, beautiful apparel.

Hogg’s entire body emanated an ancient, noble aura. That aura wasn’t the sort that money could buy. It was something which an ancient noble clan cultivated in its heirs. A clan which had survived for five thousand years. How could an ordinary noble clan compare?

Hogg stood up. Turning around, when he saw Linley, his eyes lit up.

“Linley, come with me. Let’s go to the ancestral hall. Uncle Hiri, you know about the matters of my clan, so you can come as well.” Hogg smiled.

“The ancestral hall?” Linley was astonished.

The members of the Baruch clan only stayed in the front side of the manor. The areas in the far back, virtually no one went there to clean. Only the ancestral hall in the back did they ever visit, once a month, to clean.

“But this isn’t the time to sacrifice to our ancestors. Why are we going to the ancestral hall?” Linley had a belly full of questions.

Exiting the guest hall, Hogg, Linley, and Uncle Hiri, who still held Wharton, followed the blue stone path towards the back manor.

Deep autumn. The night was as cold as water.

The cold wind blowing, Linley couldn’t help but shiver. But Linley didn’t make a sound, because he could feel that something was different today. Following his father, Linley entered the ancestral hall as well.

“Clack.” The door to the ancestral hall closed.

With the candles in the hall becoming lit, the entire hall immediately

became very bright. Linley could instantly see the many spirit tablets placed in the very front of the hall. That thick, dense cluster of spirit tablets spoke volumes as to the age of the Baruch clan.

Hogg quietly stood in front of the spirit tablets, not saying a word.

Linley felt very nervous. In the entire hall, aside from the sounds of the whispering candles, no sound was heard. The quiet was terrifying, creating an oppressive feeling on the heart.

Suddenly, Hogg turned and focused his gaze on Linley. In a weighty voice, he said, “Linley, today, there are many things that must be done. But first, let me tell you some of the history of our Baruch clan.”

Linley could feel his heart thumping frantically.

“Our clan’s history? What can it be?” In his heart, Linley was eager to know, but he didn’t dare to make a sound.

A look of pride appearing on his face, Hogg said in a clear voice, “Linley, our Baruch clan has existed for five thousand years. Even scanning the entire Kingdom of Fenlai, I don’t believe we can find a second clan which is as ancient as ours.” Hogg’s voice contained an absolute pride.

Ancient. This was a word which some noble clans viewed with great importance.

“Linley, have you heard of the legendary Four Supreme Warriors of the Yulan continent?” Turning his head, Hogg looked at Linley.

Eyes brightening, Linley nodded. “I know. According to Uncle Hillman, the legendary Four Supreme Warriors are the Dragonblood Warrior, the Violetflame Warrior, the Tigerstriped Warrior, and the Undying Warrior.”

Satisfied, Hogg nodded. Smiling, he said, “Right! Now, I am going to tell you something. The Four Supreme Warriors actually represent four ancient

clans. And our Baruch clan is the ancient clan which contains the exalted bloodline of the Dragonblood Warriors!”

Chapter 3 – The Dragonblood Warrior Clan (part two)

Book 1, Chapter 3 – The Dragonblood Warrior Clan (part two)

“The Dragonblood Warrior Clan?!” Linley felt as though his entire head was buzzing.

In Linley’s eyes, his clan was nothing more than just an ancient clan which had fallen on hard times. How could it be related to the legendary Dragonblood Warrior?

“You don’t believe me?” A trace of arrogance could be seen on Hogg’s face. “Linley, go up and take a close look at those spirit tablets. By now, you can read all the words on them. On the back of every single spirit tablet is the history of those departed forefathers. The three spirit tablets at the very top, are three who are Dragonblood Warriors!”

Hogg took Linley by the hand. “Come.”

Hogg led Linley towards the area behind the many spirit tablets. Lifting him up, Hogg said, “Take a close look at those characters behind.”

Linley widened his eyes and began to read.

The words carved onto the uppermost tablet were etched very deep and very clearly. Those five thousand year old characters told of an astonishing story!

“Baruch, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4560 of the Yulan calendar, outside the walls of the city of Linnan, Baruch did battle against a Black Dragon and a Titanic Frost Wyrm. In the end, he slew both the Titanic Frost Wyrm and the Black Dragon, causing his fame to be spread across the world. In the year 4579 of the Yulan calendar, along the coastline of the northern sea of the continent, Baruch did battle

against a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor. On that day, the waves crashed unceasingly and nearby cities crumbled, but after a vicious fight lasting a full day and night, Baruch finally executed the Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor….finally, Baruch founded the Baruch clan, and became the first leader of the Baruch clan!"

"Ryan [Rui'en] Baruch, the second Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4690 of the Yulan calendar, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he defeated and subdued a Saint-level Golden Dragon, and became known as the Golden Dragonrider Saint! In the year 4697…"

"Hazard [Ha'ze'de] Baruch, the third Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. Born in the year 5360 of the Yulan calendar, in his very first battle, he fought fiercely with a Saint-level Bloody-eyed Maned Lion in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. He defeated the lion, forcing it to scurry away and flee, causing Hazard to become famous throughout the world…"

….

One mighty name after another, one amazing story after another, made the blood in Linley's veins pump all the more vigorously.

"My clan, is actually the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors?" Linley was extremely excited.

Beside him, Hogg said in a low voice, "The first three generations of the Baruch family were all Dragonblood Warriors. Upon becoming a Dragonblood Warrior, one's life expectancy would dramatically increase. The second generation Dragonblood Warrior didn't get married or have children until after he was seven hundred years old."

"And afterwards?" Linley wondered. "Father, why doesn't our clan have any more Dragonblood Warriors?"

Hogg nodded. "To become a Dragonblood Warrior, the most important thing is the density and thickness of the dragonblood which flows in our

veins. The higher the density, the better. After many generations, the density of the dragonblood in our veins has grown thinner and thinner. However… that isn't an absolute. Because as time goes on, sometimes, out of nowhere, a descendant will possess a very high density of dragonblood."

"After Hazard Baruch, the fourth Dragonblood Warrior appeared, nearly a thousand years later. And then, after fifteen hundred years passed, which is to say tens of generations later, the fifth Dragonblood Warrior finally appeared in our clan. But in the thousand years from then until now, not a single Dragonblood Warrior has shown up."

Hogg shook his head and sighed. "The fifth Dragonblood Warrior only stayed on the Yulan continent for around two centuries, before he disappeared. In the thousand years since then, our Baruch clan has totally decayed."

After a thousand years, even the most illustrious of families could decay.

"However, our clan still has hope. Perhaps in the future, one of our descendants will have the requisite density of dragonblood in their veins, and meet the requirements to become a Dragonblood Warrior. If they meet the requirements, after just a few decades of training, they would be able to become a true, full Dragonblood Warrior. And at that time, the Baruch clan would once more be restored to the glorious days of yore, when we were known as the Dragonblood Warrior Clan!" Hogg's eyes shone. "Linley, you are six and a half now. According to our rules, at your age, the test to see if your blood has a high density of dragonblood will be fairly accurate. Today, I am going to test you."

Linley was stunned. "Testing the density of dragonblood in my veins? Test me?" Linley fully understood the implications of his father performing this test. This test would show whether or not he met the requirements for becoming a Dragonblood Warrior.

"Linley, wait here. I'll go get the 'Dragonblood Needle'." Hogg clearly was very excited, as he immediately departed the ancestral hall for a nearby private room.

“Dragonblood Warrior? Will I really become a Dragonblood Warrior?” Linley was mentally fidgeting.

Standing there, Linley’s mind was a confused mess. He was filled with both eagerness and fear. He feared that the density of dragonblood in his veins wasn’t high enough.

“If I fail, I guess father will be extremely disappointed.” Linley couldn’t help but think. Having grown up with his father and his younger brother, Linley didn’t want to disappoint his father. But the density of dragonblood in his veins wasn’t something he could decide.

After just a short period of time, Hogg returned with a twenty-centimeter long needle that was extremely thin as he walked out from the private room.

“Dragonblood Needle?” Linley guessed, as he stared at the long needle in his father’s hands.

“Alright, Linley. This needle will just barely break the skin when it goes in. It won’t hurt at all. Stretch out your hand.” Hogg smiled, and Linley nodded. Taking a deep breath, Linley stretched out his right arm. The slight trembling in his arm showed that Linley really was very nervous.

Not just Linley. To tell the truth, even Hogg was very nervous.

“Hold it.” Holding the translucent Dragonblood Needle, Hogg lightly pricked Linley’s ring finger with it, easily piercing the skin. Linley felt a piercing pain, and the translucent needle immediately turned crimson as well.

Hands shaking, Hogg immediately lifted the Dragonblood Needle up and inspected it carefully.

Raising his head, Linley stared at his father, feeling extremely agitated. “Is the density of dragonblood in my veins sufficient? Why has father stared at the Dragonblood Needle for so long?” Linley had a bad premonition…

“Sigh…” with an exhaled breath, Hogg placed the Dragonblood Needle off to one side.

Hearing his father’s sigh, the nervous Linley knew that the density of dragonblood in his veins clearly didn’t reach the required level. His tears immediately began to flow.

“Linley, why are you crying? Don’t cry, be good, don’t cry.” Hogg immediately hugged Linley. Seeing Linley cry, Hogg felt sick at heart. After all, Linley was still just six and a half. He was just a child.

“I won’t cry. Yeah. Won’t cry.” Linley sniffled twice, then forced himself to calm down. “Father, I’m sorry. I’ve let you down.”

Hearing Linley’s words, Hogg felt a warm feeling in his heart. He couldn’t help but hold Linley against his bosom. “Linley, don’t feel bad. I actually didn’t raise my hopes too high. Over a thousand years and tens of generations, no one has become a Dragonblood Warrior. It doesn’t matter that you also failed. Father doesn’t blame you.”

Feeling the warmth of his father’s chest, Linley’s tightened chest gradually loosened.

By this point, the two year old Wharton had long since fallen asleep in Grandpa Hiri’s arms.

“Linley, at this point in time, the Baruch family just consists of you, me, and your little brother. I don’t have any extravagant hopes. I’ve never dared to dream of becoming a Dragonblood Warrior.” Hogg laughed at himself satirically. How could becoming a Dragonblood Warrior be an easy task?

Linley raised his head, staring at his father.

Linley rarely saw his father speak to him in such a manner. Normally, his father was always very strict and unyielding.

Staring at the rows of spirit tablets, Hogg's eyes were filled with a dreary sadness. "My true goal is actually to recover the ancestral heirloom of the Baruch clan, passed down across the generations."

"Our ancestral heirloom? What's that? Why have I never heard about it?" Linley asked curiously.

Hogg proudly said, "Our ancestral heirloom – the warblade, "Slaughterer". This was the weapon used by the very first leader of the Baruch clan, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. Alas…his descendants were unfilial. Six hundred years ago, because of poverty, a descendant who loved luxury actually sold our ancestral weapon for money."

As he spoke, Hogg was filled with so much fury that his body actually trembled.

Shaking his head helplessly, he said, "Afterwards, every single generation tried to recover the warblade 'Slaughterer', but despite six hundred years of trying, none of us have succeeded. After all, when we sold the warblade 'Slaughterer', it was for the price of 180,000 gold coins of gold. 180,000 gold coins of gold! We aren't able to produce such a vast sum, but even if we were, the current owner wouldn't be willing to sell to us."

The ancient clan of the Dragonblood Warriors, actually had sold off its own ancestral heirloom.

This was a humiliation!

The humiliation of the ancient clan of the Dragonblood Warriors!

Every succeeding generation had attempted to come up with ways to regain the warblade 'Slaughterer', but despite six hundred years of trying, they had never succeeded.

As the current clan leader, Hogg also had this desire, but the clan's economic situation was in dire straits. 180,000 gold coins of gold? Even if

they sold off the manor and all their possessions, they might not be able to produce such a vast sum.

The ancestral heirloom was lost. This humiliation constantly weighed on Hogg's heart. He felt ashamed and helpless, and unable to face his forefathers.

Seeing the look on his father's face, Linley consoled him, "Father, don't be unhappy! I promise that one day, I will recover our family's heirloom and bring it back to this manor."

"You?" Hogg chuckled. Eyes filled with love, he ruffled Linley's hair.

In his heart, Hogg secretly said, "Linley. Do you know, these words you just said…all those years ago, I said these same words to your grandfather as well." Six hundred years of efforts had all failed. How could it be easy to accomplish? After all, the person who had purchased the warblade 'Slaughterer' couldn't be any ordinary person.

Why would they be willing to sell?

Even if they were willing to sell, how could the decrepit Baruch clan afford the cost?

"Father, you don't believe me?" Raising his head, Linley looked at his father questioningly.

"I believe you, I believe you," Hogg laughed.

Father and son held each other close. Only three members remained of the ancient Dragonblood Clan in this era. When would this decaying clan be able to regain the glory and honor it had in prior years? At this moment, lying against his father's chest, Linley's fists were clenched tightly!

Chapter 4 – Growth (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 4 – Growth (part 1)

The spring wind came, turning green the poplar trees near the empty space outside of Wushan town. On the empty ground, a group of youths were ardently training. Almost a year had passed since the Dragonblood test, and Linley was eight years old now. Over the course of this period of time, Hillman clearly saw that Linley had only become even harder working!

“Well done, Linley! Hold it, hold it!” Hillman encouraged from the side.

Right now, Linley was only wearing trousers. His upper body was covered with sweat, and his body, as taut as a drawn bowstring, was lying on the ground. His hands were pressed fiercely to the ground, as straight as tree trunks, while the rest of his body was motionless. He was supporting himself from a push-up position, with just his hands and the tips of his toes! His entire body was taut!

The ‘Static Tension’ training exercise!

A very simple yet very effective training exercise. If a person could reach the level of being able to maintain this pose for an hour, then his body would no longer fear ordinary swords or sabres.

Drip, drip!

Beads of sweat rolled down from Linley’s forehead. The sweat entered Linley’s left eye, and he couldn’t help but wince at the pain.

“Ley is really amazing. Just eight years old, but he’s able to match the thirteen year olds in doing the ‘Static Tension’ exercise.” Some of the children who had already given up were sprawled on the ground, chatting as they watched Linley.

“Ley, keep it up! Keep it up for the rest of us! Beat those thirteen year olds!” The golden-haired Hadley shouted from the side.

“Yeah, keep it up, Ley!” The other children started to chant as well.

Linley was on extremely good terms with the other kids. Although Linley was the child of a noble house, he was extremely kind to the children of commoners, and often helped them train as well.

“Gotta hold it. Gotta hold it.” Linley constantly said to himself.

In the back of Linley’s mind, the words his father said a year ago constantly echoed. “Linley, we are the family of the Dragonblood Warriors. As a member of the Dragonblood Warriors clan, you have an advantage, but also a disadvantage! The advantage is, even though the density of Dragonblood in your veins hasn’t reached a sufficient level, your body will still be much stronger than those of most ordinary people. It might be very difficult for others to become a warrior of the sixth rank through training alone, but for you, it will be somewhat easier.”

“However, your disadvantage is this. The descendants of the Dragonblood clan are not able to train battle qi according to normal manuals. This is because the blood in our veins is only suited to the training method inside the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’. It conflicts with all other types of battle qi cultivation methods. Unfortunately, only those who have reached a certain density of Dragonblood are able to practice using the method within the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’. Therefore, you will not be able to cultivate battle qi at all.”

“Also, although in theory, anyone training the body can reach the sixth rank, that’s just in theory. In practice, the number of people who accomplish this is very low. But for us, it is different. Even if the amount of Dragonblood in our veins is low, our starting level will be higher than others. Just from training alone, we can become warriors of the sixth rank. Your great grandfather, based on training alone, managed to become a warrior of the seventh rank!”

Linley remembered his father's words very clearly.

Linley growled to himself, "I'm stronger than everyone else now, only because of the Dragonblood in my veins. But since I can't practice battle qi, my only options are to work hard, and to work harder! Since great grandfather was able to become a warrior of the seventh rank, then I shall… I shall become a warrior of the eighth rank. Or even the ninth rank! Nothing is impossible!"

A warrior of the eighth rank!

A warrior of the ninth rank could be considered the most powerful expert in the entire country of Fenlai. A warrior of the eighth rank, although unable to restore the Baruch family to its former glories, would be able to dramatically improve its current situation.

"Gotta hold!" Linley gritted his teeth.

By this point, his muscles felt like they were being chewed on by countless ants. His entire body was quivering, and every single muscles on his entire body trembled. Every single trembling muscle could be seen visibly.

After a long time, in the end…

Thud!

Linley, exhausted, collapsed to the ground.

"That feels wonderful." Flat on the floor, his entire body relaxed, Linley could clearly feel how numb his entire body was. All the muscles on his body, after undergoing that training, were slowly growing. Although the growth wouldn't be noticeable from just one or two exercises, after a long period of time, the effects would be pronounced.

Hillman, off to the side, nodded with satisfaction.

And then, Hillman's face grew cold as he turned to look at the fourteen and

fifteen year olds. “All of you had better hold on! Linley’s only eight years old, while all of you are almost adults. Don’t let an eight year old get the better of you!”

…….

After morning exercises ended, Linley bid farewell to his group of friends and went towards the Baruch clan manor. If a stranger had seen him, the eight year old Linley surely would have been assumed to be eleven or twelve years old, and not just a mere child of eight.

The descendants of Baruch truly were different from other men.

“Big brother!” Upon seeing Linley, the healthy-looking Wharton rushed over.

“That’s enough, Wharton. My entire body is covered with sweat. Let me wash myself first.” Linley patted Wharton on the face and laughed.

Wharton hmphed. “I know that as soon as you wash up, you’ll go take lessons from father.”

As a member of a noble house, Linley’s education began from a young age. The five-thousand year old Baruch clan was even stricter regarding educational matters than even the royal families of most kingdoms were.

“Enough, Wharton. I’ll play with you around noon.” Linley laughed.

Wharton was only a child, while Linley was much more mature.

After washing up and changing into some fresh clothes, Linley entered the study. At this moment, his father, Hogg Baruch, was sitting in front of a desk, his back ramrod straight. In front of Hogg were three thick tomes.

“Father!” Linley respectfully bowed.

Hogg coldly nodded, and Linley quickly walked next to him.

“Yesterday, I explained the history of the countries of the Yulan continent to you. Repeat it back to me.” Hogg said coldly.

This was the real Hogg.

Instances like the time when he was holding the crying Linley in his arms were extremely rare. Normally, Hogg’s attitude towards Linley could be summarized in one word: ‘Strict’. In all things, Hogg strove for perfection. He wouldn’t let Linley get away with any mistakes.

“Yes, father.” Linley said calmly.

“In the Yulan continent, there are three dangerous areas. The number one mountain range, the ‘Mountain Range of Magical Beasts’. The second mountain range, the ‘Mountain Range of the Setting Sun’. And, the number one forest, the ‘Forest of Darkness’. The space these three dangerous regions take up is incomparably large. The ‘Mountain Range of Magical Beasts’ runs across the entire continent, from north to south, covering over ten thousand kilomters. Within it are countless magical beasts, including Saint-level beasts which have the power to ‘destroy the heavens and ravage the earth’. Because of the ‘Mountain Range of Magical Beasts’, the Yulan continent has been divided into different regions.”

“West of the ‘Mountain Range of Magical Beasts’, there are twelve kingdoms and thirty-two duchies. Within these kingdoms and dukedoms, there are two major divisions. The first is the Holy Union, with the kingdom of Fenlai being the principal kingdom. The second is the Dark Alliance, with the kingdom of Heishi being the principal kingdom. These two alliances are opposed to each other and constantly battle because one is controlled by the Radiant Church, while the other belongs to the Cult of Shadows.”

“East of the ‘Mountain Range of Magical Beasts’, there are four empires, six major kingdoms, and countless duchies! These four empires are enormous, and are not influenced by the Holy Union or the Dark Alliance. In these four empires, the rule of the emperors is absolute. Any of the four

empires are comparable to the Holy Union."

"The four empires are the central Yulan Empire, the southeastern Rhine [Lai'yin] Empire, the eastern Rohault [Luo'ao] Empire, and the northern O'Brien [O'Bu'Lai'En] Empire." After having said all this at one go, Linley let himself relax slightly.

"Just this?" Hogg frowned.

Linley was about to immediately continue, but Hogg cut him off. "Let me ask you, within our Holy Union, how many kingdoms and duchies are there?"

"Within our Holy Union, there are six kingdoms and fifte…sevente…" Linley suddenly frowned.

How many duchies were there in the Holy Union? Linley's memory was a bit hazy. He wasn't sure if it was fifteen, or if it was seventeen. He couldn't be sure.

"Hmph!"

His face cold and harsh, Hogg pulled out a wooden stick, and Linley obediently stuck his hand out.

His eyes narrowing, with a 'WHAP' sound, Hogg whacked Linley's hand with the stick. A red line immediately appeared on Linley's hand, but Linley could only clench his teeth, not making a sound.

"Linley, you must remember, we are currently living within the Holy Union. You must know everything about the Holy Union!" Hogg coldly looked at his son. "In the entire Yulan continent, the most important entities are the four empires and the two alliances."

Linley nodded.

Although his father's words were simple, Linley clearly understood the

deeper meaning.

“At the far northern end, the Holy Union shares a border with the O’Brien Empire. While at the southern end, the Dark Alliance intersects with the Yulan Empire. Under the guidance of the Radiant Church, the unity of our Holy Union isn’t one whit inferior to that of the empires.”

Listening to his father’s words, Linley agreed.

Yesterday, he had read many books. Clearly, the Holy Union could be considered the ‘cultural center’ for the entire Yulan continent. At the same time, in terms of economic strength, it was on par with the Yulan Empire, making the two of them the most economically powerful entities in the world.

In addition, it had the support of the Radiant Church.

The Holy Union truly was very formidable.

“Today, we will study art,” Hogg said coldly. “As the descendent of a noble family, you must have a thorough understanding and appreciation of art. Art is what gives noblemen an aura of gravitas!” Hogg pulled out a large tome as thick as a fist, immediately opening it.

“In the year 3578 of the Yulan calendar, the grandmaster stone-sculptor Proulx [Pu’lu’ke’si] was born….”

Off to the side, Hogg solemnly taught while Linley strove hard to memorize. He wanted to meet his father’s requirements.

Chapter 5 – Growth (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 5 – Growth (part 2)

Time flew by quickly, and in the blink of an eye, the grandfather clock within the hall rang eleven times, signifying that it was now 11 in the morning.

“Is Hogg at home?” A clear voice rang out. The Baruch manor had no guards, so clearly, this person had already arrived within the manor grounds.

Hogg frowned, placing down the thick tome in front of him. “Linley, today we’ll come to a stop here.” Revealing a wisp of a smile, Hogg turned around and walked towards the guest hall.

“Ah, Hogg, my dear friend! Just the other day, I heard the clothspinner bird’s cry, and I just knew that something good was going to happen. Indeed, by noon, I received your missive, and as soon as I read it, I was overjoyed.”

“Dear Philip, I am very happy to see you as well. Hillman, quickly go and bring me the stone sculpture, ‘Fierce Lion’. Philip, come, let’s go to the main hall and wait. The sculpture will be here shortly.”

Hearing these words, Linley felt his heart twinge.

“We’re selling off more family belongings?” Linley knew that the ‘Fierce Lion’ sculpture was one which his father deeply liked. But the Baruch clan, which took very little taxes from Wushan township, really was in dire economic straits.

Fortunately, the Baruch clan was an ancient one, and by virtue of its age, had stored many rare and precious items.

Unfortunately, even the vastest of hoards could not withstand so many years of auctions and sales. By this point in time, the number of valuable items within the clan was very few. Linley couldn't help but turn to stare at the grandfather clock. "I wonder how long it will be before even this clock has to be sold off."

A middle aged man with long, golden hair and a nobleman's aura strode into the hall by Hogg's side. Linley immediately was able to guess that this middle-aged man must be 'Philip'.

"Oh, this adorable child must be your son, right Hogg?" Philip smiled very warmly at Linley. "Linley Baruch, right? May I address you as Linley?"

"It would be my honor, sire." Linley placed his right hand against his breast and respectfully bowed.

"What an adorable child." Philip seemed very pleased.

By his side, Hogg laughed. "Philip, stop wasting time with the child. Look, the 'Fierce Lion' you have desired for so long has arrived." As he spoke, Hillman easily carried in the large sculpture into the hall, and then easily set it down.

It was a nearly thousand-pound stone sculpture, but in Hillman's hands, it seemed like naught but a toy, clearly showing Hillman's strength.

"Mr. Hillman, your strength amazes me. My own manor doesn't have anyone as fierce as you, guard captain, even though I control twelve towns." Philip smiled as he spoke, but the implicit meaning in his words was quite clear; he wanted to invite Hillman to work for him.

Hillman said coldly, "Wushan town is my home, sire."

"Forgive me." Philip quickly apologized.

Philip turned to look at Hogg. "Hogg, I must say, although I like this stone sculpture very much, the artisanship of this 'Fierce Lion' sculpture cannot

be considered to be top tier, much less the masterpieces of those grandmaster sculptors."

"Philip, if you don't wish to buy it, then forget about it." Hogg was quite succinct.

Philip's eyes couldn't help but narrow, but then he laughed. "Haha…Hogg, don't be angry. I'm not saying that I don't wish to buy it. I'm just telling the truth. How about this. I'll buy this sculpture for five hundred gold coins. What do you think?"

"Five hundred?" Hogg frowned.

This price was much lower than what Hogg had hoped for. He had been hoping for at least eight hundred.

In the Yulan continent, one gold coin equaled ten silver coins equaled a thousand copper coins. The average commoner would be able to earn twenty or thirty gold coins in a year. Even the average army soldier would only earn a hundred or so gold coins.

"The price is too low." Hogg shook his head.

"Hogg, you must know that in all the ten thousand plus years of the Yulan continent, there have been countless sculptures made. The true value of a sculpture is in terms of its artisanship. As far as the artisanship of this one….well, heh, suffice to say, I just like it. Five hundred gold really is my highest offer. If you don't accept, then let's just forget about it."

Philip laughed as he turned to look at the grandfather clock in the hall. His eyes gleaming, he said, "Hogg, if you were to sell this clock, however, I would be willing to pay a thousand gold."

Hogg's face grew cold.

"Ahem, two thousand gold would be acceptable as well. This would be my highest offer." Philip hurriedly said.

Hogg sternly shook his head firmly. “The grandfather clock is not for sale! As for the sculpture, six hundred gold. Take it or leave it.”

Philip carefully studied Hogg for a moment, then chuckled. “Fine, Hogg. I’ll give you some face. Six hundred gold it is. Housekeeper, bring me six hundred gold.” The caretaker for his manor, who had been waiting outside the entire time, immediately ran over with the gold.

Six sacks of yellow gold.

“Six hundred gold, Hogg. You can count it, if you want.” Philip smiled.

Hogg hefted the sacks. Just based on weight alone, Hogg was certain that there really were six hundred gold coins in them, a hundred gold per sack. Hogg smiled and nodded. “Philip, how about staying and having dinner with us?”

“No need, I still have some business back home.” Philip laughed.

Philip’s housekeeper subsequently instructed two powerfully built warriors to lift and carry away the sculpture, which they did with difficulty.

After Philip and his entourage had departed, Hogg stared at the six sacks of gold, a dim look in his eyes. This time, he sold the stone sculpture. Next time? Although the manor still had many things remaining, sooner or later, they would have nothing left.

“Father, I want to learn to be a sculptor!” Linley suddenly said.

Linley knew very well that in the Yulan continent, those famous master sculptors could produce works valued at tens of thousands of gold pieces each. Some famous sculptures could even reach a hundred thousand gold pieces. And wealth aside, the societal ranking of these sculptors was also very high.

“If I can become a master sculptor, then…then father will no longer have to

sell our family possessions." This is what Linley was thinking.

"Sculpting?" Hogg glanced at Linley, his eyes cold.

"Linley, do you know that amongst the hundreds of millions of people in the Holy Union, there are at least several million who have studied sculpting. But in the entire Holy Union, the number of true masters can be counted on one hand. In addition, if you don't have a good instructor, you simply cannot succeed on your own."

"The inner circle of sculptors is not one which ordinary people are allowed into. You only see the sky-high valuation of the works of the masters, but do you know that the vast majority of sculptors only make a few dozen gold coins each year?"

Hogg's voice was very fierce.

Linley was so frightened, he immediately knelt down. Just now, he only spoke because he thought that sculpting could improve his family's situation. He didn't expect his father to say so much and lecture him so sternly.

"Enough. The ancestral hall needs some cleaning. After lunch, go and clean it up." Hogg said coldly.

"Yes, father." Linley said respectfully.

Looking at Linley, Hogg sighed in his heart. "Sculpting? Oh, child. Do you know that in the past, I also practiced sculpting? I spent ten full years of my life trying to learn. But unfortunately, my sculptures weren't worth a single coin." Hogg, too, had once foolishly dreamed of becoming a master sculptor and thereby improving his clan's situation.

But in his heart, he felt very helpless. Despite spending ten years training, his sculptures were still worthless. The field of sculpting could be described as a pyramid.

Those famous master sculptors were at the top of the pyramid. They enjoyed a high status, and each sculpture they made was worth hundreds of thousands of coins.

But the valuation of the work of the countless low level sculptors at the bottom of the pyramid was soul-crushingly low. Most of their works would just be bought by commoners for just a few silver coins to use as decorations in their homes.

Chapter 6 – Coiling Dragon Ring (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 6 – Coiling Dragon Ring (part 1)

Underneath the setting sun, the rosy clouds seemed to cover half the sky, casting their red hue upon the entire world.

“Cleaning the ancestral hall is pretty easy.”

Departing the ancestral hall, Linley had to admit that he had over-prepared. He had slotted an hour for this job, but in just fifteen minutes, he was finished cleaning.

On the Yulan continent, each year was divided into twelve months, each month thirty days, each day twenty four hours, and each hour sixty minutes. Most noble families owned grandfather clocks, and were able to accurately tell time. Some extremely wealthy or extremely high-status individuals might even own meticulously calibrated wrist watches.

“The ancestral hall is cleaned every month. Frankly speaking, in just a month, the ancestral hall won’t get too dirty. All I have to do is just casually wipe it down. I have almost an hour before training starts. What should I do?” Bored, Linley looked around in all directions.

The ancient Baruch mansion had five thousand years of history.

The front courtyard was cleaned every day, but the rooms in the much-larger back courtyard, aside from the ancestral hall, were all covered in dust, and even the walls were cracked. Wild grasses and dark green lichen covered the floors and even ran up the walls.

“Heeeeey…” Seeing the decrepit architecture, Linley’s eyes slowly brightened. “Lots of places in the back courtyard haven’t been visited in over a century. I wonder if there’s any ancient, valuable items there?”

Upon coming to this realization, Linley's heart began to pound.

"If I am able to find some valuable things and give them to father, no doubt he will be very happy." Linley took a deep breath, then immediately entered a decrepit room next to the ancestral hall. Step by step, he walked carefully, wielding a sturdy wooden stick in his hands, which he used to strike down the cobwebs, allowing himself a more careful examination.

Immediately upon entering the room, a rotten scent wafted past Linley's nose. Thick cobwebs could be seen in each corner, and spiders could even be seen clambering about.

Many spiderwebs were covering decorative curtains and furnishings. Upon closer examination, all of these curtains appeared very ancient. Unfortunately, the curtains were tattered beyond belief, just barely holding together in the semblance of a curtain.

"If these curtains weren't ruined, no doubt they would be worth a lot of money." Linley helplessly shook his head. He continued to inspect the room, using his stick to brush aside the layers of cobwebs as he carefully searched.

He searched the floor, the cabinets, and even to see if there were any secret passageways on the walls.

"According to the books I've read, it is quite common for walls to contain hidden levers or passages." Linley carefully rapped the walls, listening to the sounds.

Linley very much enjoyed this feeling of searching for treasures in the ancient room. But he had forgotten something. If he could come up with this idea, wouldn't his father, his grandfather, and the other elders of the Baruch clan also have thought of this?

These ancient rooms had long ago been scoured clean by the deceased elders of the Baruch clan.

Linley was only eight years old, after all. Although the strict education of the clan helped him mature quickly, there was still a large gap between him and an adult. Naturally, he wouldn't be able to consider things from a more complete point of view.

"Nothing in this room. Next one…" Linley exited the first room and entered the second.

There were actually many rooms in the back courtyard. After all, the front courtyard which Linley resided in constituted only a third of the entire manor. The back courtyard was far larger. Linley would probably have to spend an entire day in order to finish searching the entire back courtyard.

"All these decorations are ruined. There isn't a single one worth money." Linley exited yet another empty room.

He stared up at the sky.

"Eh, looks like it's almost time for training. I have another fifteen minutes or so at most." Linley turned his head around and stared at an extremely large room. "I'll just look at that last one, that big one. I'll spend about ten minutes searching. If I can't find anything, I'll go off to training."

Having made up his mind, Linley raced towards the large room.

This ancient room was much larger than even the main hall in the front courtyard. Stepping inside, Linley carefully scrutinized the place. "I bet hundreds of years ago, this was the dinner hall for our Baruch clan." From the ornaments and furniture, Linley could tell that this was a living hall.

A huge, grandiose-looking hall.

"Search the ground first."

Same as before, Linley lowered his head, widened his eyes, and began carefully searching the room one part at a time. Upon seeing anything interesting, he would tap it twice with his stick. If it was made out of stone,

he would ignore it. Since he didn't have much time left before training was to start, his searching speed increased as well.

"Time to search the walls and the curtains. Oi. Last, best hope." Linley grimaced as he scanned the surroundings. "Clan elders, I really hope you guys left one or two things behind for me to find. Even if it is just a small thing."

Linley carefully searched the walls, even peeking behind the tattered curtains.

On the ancient walls were many rotted wooden cabinets, each of which had many drawers. Linley pulled open each and every drawer, but the drawers were totally empty, almost immaculately so. The only thing inside of them? Some dust.

"Alas!"

After pulling open the last drawer, Linley felt bitter disappointment in his heart.

"After searching for all this time, I didn't even find a single valuable item. All I did was cover myself with sweat and dust." Linley stared at his clothes. They really were filthy, now. Linley couldn't help but feel discontented.

Linley's gaze once more flashed across the room.

"Hmph. I'm leaving." Linley angrily used the stick in his hand to strike hard against a nearby cabinet, as though he wanted to give vent to all the anger which had built up over an hour of fruitless searching.

"Thud!" The stick solidly struck against the cabinet.

The cabinet was extremely ancient. After having been chewed on by mites for a hundred years, it couldn't withstand any weight. After having been struck so fiercely, it began to creak and groan.

Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but look behind him in alarm. "Oh no, it's going to collapse!" While searching the other rooms, Linley had also destroyed a few other pieces of furniture, so by now, he was very experienced.

Linley hurriedly dodged to one side.

In the end, the cabinet, which was twice as tall as Linley himself, collapsed. With a crashing sound, the cabinet smashed against the floor, breaking into seven or eight pieces, covering the room with even more dust. But hidden amidst the dust, unseen by Linley, was…

Upon the shattering of the cabinet, a black ring which had been hidden within the wooden supports came tumbling out, falling to the ground.

"Ew, ew!" Linley spat out the two words as he hurriedly tried to escape the wave of dust.

"How unlucky! My entire body is covered with dust now, and I bet training is about to start. I'd best go take a quick shower and put on some new clothes." With a wave of his arm, Linley pushed open the door and departed the ancient room.

Chapter 7 – Coiling Dragon Ring (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 7 – Coiling Dragon Ring (part 2)

That black ring had rolled forward, landing precisely in front of the doorway.

When Linley had strode forward by three steps, reaching the doorway, he came to a sudden halt, because he could clearly feel that he had stepped on something hard.

“Just now, I searched the ground and didn’t see a single rock. This must have come from the shattered drawers.” Thinking about the collapsed drawers, Linley couldn’t help but feel angry, and he viciously stomped on the piece of ‘shattered wood’ beneath his feet.

Based on Linley’s thinking, if it was a piece of shattered wood, it should be stomped into fragments. But in reality…

“Whoah, it’s hard! What’s under my foot?” Linley felt that the item underneath his foot was extraordinarily tough, and immediately stepped aside to take a closer look.

He saw a jet-black object in the shape of a ring lying peacefully on the ground. It was covered by a layer of dust, and was not at all catching to the eye.

“Oh, a ring?” Linley’s eyes were bandit-sharp. He happily plucked the ring up, then used his filthy sleeves to give the black ring a vigorous rub-down. Only then could Linley make out what this item really looked like.

This black ring was made of a material that seemed to have properties of both wood and stone. On the body of the ring, there was a very faint carving of an indistinct object as well…

“Earthworm?” Linley suspiciously looked at the carving on the ring.

At first glance, Linley felt that the sinuous carving on the ring seemed to be that of an earthworm.

Linley laughed to himself, “The carving skill for this ring is really terrible. I bet even an average carver could make something more attractive. Alas, what a waste. This black ring doesn’t even have a single diamond on it, much less any valuable magic crystals.”

Most rings were adorned with either diamonds or magic crystals.

Unfortunately, this black ring seemed to have been made out of a material that had properties of both wood and stone. Not even the shadow of a gemstone could be seen. Clearly, it was worthless.

But for some reason, upon seeing the ring, Linley immediately felt that he had taken a liking to it. He suspected that it was most likely because this was the only thing he had discovered after spending a prodigious amount of effort in searching the manor.

“Hm, this ring is really thick. There’s no way to wear it on my finger without it slipping off. I’ll string it through with silk and wear it around my neck.” Linley’s eyes brightened.

The eight-year old Linley’s hands, after all, were much smaller than the hands of an adult. There was no way he could wear the ring on his fingers.

“Now, what name should I choose for this black ring? Earthworm Ring? No way, that sounds terrible.” Linley mumbled for a few moments, then his eyes lit up. “Haha, that sinuous object can also be considered a ‘dragon’, right? A dragon curled around the ring…then let’s call it, the Coiling Dragon Ring!” Although in his heart, Linley felt like the carving looked more like an earthworm, but he still chose the name ‘Coiling Dragon Ring’ for it.

“Coiling Dragon Ring!” Lifting up the dark, unadorned ring, Linley felt

exceptionally pleased.

“Wait, crap! It’s almost time for training!”

Linley suddenly remembered. He frantically stared at his filthy clothes, covered in dust and grime. He looked like a beggar. “Oh no…” Linley had no time to think. He immediately ran out of the ancient courtyard and charged straight for the washroom.

The sound of rushing water.

Linley dumped water over himself. His skin was bright and vigorous, and muscular lines were already beginning to develop. This was the result of Linley’s training. Underneath the rushing water flow, the dust was quickly washed away.

Using the least amount of time possible, Linley washed himself clean, then hurriedly put on his training clothes.

“String, string…” Linley hurriedly looked about for a thread on which he could hang the Coiling Dragon Ring. Suddenly, Linley’s gaze fell on a ruined old washcloth. His eyes lit up, and he immediately pulled a string out from within the washcloth.

Although the washcloth was very ordinary, it was very sturdy and durable. The string, too, would be very resilient.

He quickly strung on the Coiling Dragon Ring, then immediately wore his makeshift necklace.

“I’m gonna be late. This is my first time being late!” Linley bolted out like a roaring flame. As he ran, he tucked the Coiling Dragon Ring into his clothes. Feeling the coolness of the ring against his chest, Linley couldn’t help but feel happy.

In exchange for being late, he gained the Coiling Dragon Ring.

Linley felt very happy.

In a flash, Linley rushed out of the Baruch clan manor, and then immediately ran towards the empty training ground east of Wushan town. By this time, most of the commoners had already returned home, leaving the streets empty, but as they saw Linley run, they were able to guess the reason.

“Young master Linley, careful, don’t hurt yourself!”

“Master Hillman is extremely rigorous. I’m afraid young master Linley is going to be punished.”

…..

The kindness which the Baruch clan had showed the commoners caused them to also be filled with love and goodwill towards Linley.

“How will Uncle Hillman punish me?” Even as he hurriedly rushed forward, Linley was still thinking about this question. At this point, Linley had no time to chat or pay respects to any of the uncles or aunties nearby. In a short period of time, Linley arrived at the training field of Wushan town.

By this time, all three squads had already lined up. Hillman was speaking, but upon hearing Linley’s footsteps, Hillman’s cold gaze couldn’t help but shoot towards him.

Linley ran towards the training squads. Taking position next to the squads, he nervously awaited Hillman’s instructions.

“Today’s training exercises will be doubled for you. Return to your team!” Hillman calmly said.

“Yes sir!” Linley raised his head high and said in a bright voice.

The youngsters nearby couldn’t help but stick out their tongues. He was just late by a short amount of time, but was punished with double duty training.

Today, Linley probably wouldn't have any time to go home and eat dinner.

Just as Linley began jogging towards his usual position in the team, suddenly…

THUD! The entire earth seemed to tremble slightly, but with regularity. It was as though a giant creature was walking on the earth, causing it to tremble with each step.

"East. It came from the east." Linley immediately discerned the direction.

Not just Linley. Hillman, Roger, and Lorry all turned towards the east, their expressions growing solemn. The vibrations were growing stronger and clearer. All of the youths present could clearly feel that the regular vibrations were coming from an enormous creature headed their way.

Each of the thunderous footsteps seemed to caused a vibration powerful enough to shake Linley's heart.

What giant creature was causing this?

Linley widened his eyes and stared east…

Chapter 8 – Magical Beast – Velocidragon!

Book 1, Chapter 8 – Magical Beast – Velocidragon!

The giant creature that caused the earth to shake finally revealed itself.

Upon seeing this enormous creature, Linley and the rest of the children were scared silly. Hillman, Roger and Lorry's reaction speeds were very quick; they immediately stood in front of the group of kids and carefully watched the enormous creature.

"A magical beast of the seventh rank. Velocidragon*!" Hillman's facial expression contorted, while Lorry and Roger, by his side, felt their legs grow weak.

"So bi, bi, big! Is, is this a legendary magical beast?" Linley was totally stunned.

Since he was born, the largest creature which Linley had ever seen was the warhorses that sometimes passed by Wushan township. Those large, powerful horses were 1.8 meters tall. But in front of this giant creature, they seemed like nothing more than a babe in front of a giant. The difference was truly astounding.

This creature was easily two stories high and at least twenty or thirty meters long.

Magical Beast – Velocidragon!

The Velocidragon's entire body was covered by huge, fire-red scales, each scale glittering with the reflected cold, golden light. The scales alone were stunning and frightening to behold. The Velocidragon's four scale-covered long legs were even more terrifying in their thickness. Two fully grown men would barely be able to surround them with their arms. The flame-red Velocidragon was entirely crimson in color, with the exception of its cold,

deadly looking black claws.

The Velocidragon's long, scale covered tail made up over half of its total body length. Like a whip, it swept across the ground. Each time it struck the ground, a deep thud could be heard emanating from below.

"Grrr…"

With a low-throated growl, white steam erupted from the nostrils of the Velocidragon, carrying with it the stench of sulfur. Those diamond-like eyes, nearly the size of a lantern, were also, strangely enough, red as well. The huge head of the Velocidragon turned towards Linley and the children. It's cold gaze terrified all of the children, freezing them in their tracks.

"Tchhh. Tchhh." The Velocidragon's mouth tensed, revealing two rows of enormous, saw-like teeth. Each teeth was ivory white, and the sight of them caused everyone's hearts to grow cold. No one dared to question its sharpness.

Linley felt as though his heart had stopped beating. Right now, it seemed as though all sound had faded away.

"Too terrifying. Is there anyone who can possibly defeat such a creature?" Linley was scared stiff.

Just from looking at this huge magical beast, Linley felt as though its power was irresistible. Linley believed that with but a swipe of its enormous tail, most likely even the sturdiest stones of the houses of Wushan town would be disintegrated.

"Is this Wushan town?" Suddenly, a cold voice emanated from on top of the Velocidragon.

All of the terrified children looked up, astonished. Upon the Velocidragon's enormous, scaly back, a mysterious man wearing violet robes was sitting cross-legged. The Velocidragon was simply too huge in size, and its back was extremely broad. There was more than enough space for someone to

stand, sit, or even roll around.

“Lord Magus, this is indeed Wushan town. Is there anything we can help you with, Lord Magus?” Hillman’s voice rang out.

Upon hearing Hillman’s voice, everyone seemed to find their bearings again, and recovered from the state of stunned terror. But everyone present, including Roger and Lorry, didn’t dare make a single sound. They all stood behind Hillman and fearfully looked at the terrifying Velocidragon and the mysterious, violet robed magus.

“Wushan town. Looks like I didn’t get lost.” The violet-robed man said in a low voice.

And then the mysterious, violet-robed man didn’t say anything else. After gazing at Linley and the rest of the group with its cold eyes, the Velocidragon continued forward, two more lines of smoke appearing from its nostrils. Seeing the Velocidragon go in the direction of the township, the expression on Hillman’s face changed.

“Everyone, stay here.” After he spoke, Hillman immediately chased after the departing Velocidragon.

“Uncle Lorry, what is that? Is that a magical beast?” Linley was the first to ask.

Lorry cleared his throat, a look of terror still in his eyes. But he still nodded. “Yes, it is. But it’s a very powerful one, a magical beast of the seventh rank. A Velocidragon!”

“Velocidragon?”

Linley memorized the word, forever etching it in his mind.

The Velocidragon’s huge body, hard scales, sharp claws, and powerful tail served to create a terrifying appearance. Linley believed….a single Velocidragon could most likely annihilate the entire Wushan township.

“The defensive power of the Velocidragon’s scales is astonishing, and its attack power is terrifying as well. In addition, it is proficient in destructive fire magic!” Lorry’s heart was filled with fear as he explained to Linley and the others. “If faced with a terrifying magical beast such as the Velocidragon, most likely even a platoon of a thousand soldiers would be wiped out, unless it had a number of sixth or seventh ranked warriors and magi who could unite to penetrate the Velocidragon’s scales.”

Linley’s heart trembled.

Even a platoon of a thousand soldiers would be wiped out?

“However, the most terrifying thing is not the Velocidragon…it is the mysterious violet-robed man.” Lorry took two stabilizing breaths, calming his agitated heart.

By his side, Roger nodded as well. “Right. In order to subdue a Velocidragon, one must force the Velocidragon to willingly submit to being a servant. In other words…the violet-robed man must be significantly more powerful than the Velocidragon. Based on his clothing, he should be a magus.”

“At least a magus of the seventh rank. Perhaps even a magus of the eighth rank!” Roger’s fists couldn’t help but tremble as well. “I never imagined such an important individual would come to our home.”

Linley could also feel the fear which was in the hearts of Roger and Lorry.

Velocidragon, a magical beast of the seventh rank. And a mysterious magus whose power dwarfed that of the Velocidragon? This definitely was enough to cause terror.

“The magus was even more powerful than the Velocidragon?” Linley found this somewhat hard to believe.

The Velocidragon’s huge body, hard scales, sharp claws, and powerful

tail…all seemed to dwarf that small human figure of the magus.

“Roaaar!”

Suddenly, an angry roar erupted from the middle of the township.

“Crap!” Lorry and Roger were stunned. Linley and the other children grew worried as well. Was the Velocidragon’s angry roar caused by Uncle Hillman, or by Wushan township? Nobody knew.

“All of you, stay here.” Lorry and Roger, although terrified, still raced towards the center of the town.

Linley gritted his teeth. “Uncle Hillman!” Linley was also worried for Uncle Hillman, as well as the citizens of Wushan town. He also ran in that direction. At this moment, Lorry and Roger were both panic-stricken at the thought of the Velocidragon, and didn’t notice Linley following behind them.

In but a few moments, they arrived in the middle of the town. Hillman was standing far away, watching.

“Why did you come?” Hillman reprimanded in a severe tone.

But upon seeing Linley follow behind Lorry and Roger, Hillman frowned even further. “Linley, it’s far too dangerous here. Go back immediately.” Only now did Lorry and Roger notice Linley had followed them.

“Linley, why did you…” Lorry and Roger didn’t know what to say.

“Uncle Hillman, I’m not going back.” Linley wasn’t willing to return.

Hillman helplessly shook his head. He knew how stubborn Linley could be, and how hard it was to force him to change his mind. “Fine. Then stay behind me, do not go too far. As long as you stay next to me, I am confident that I can protect you.”

“Thank you, Uncle Hillman. I definitely won’t run around.” Linley was overjoyed.

At this point in time, Hillman’s group was roughly a hundred meters away from the Velocidragon. They quietly watched the events in the center of town unfold. In front of the huge Velocidragon, a group of youngsters could be seen. Four men, three women.

Chapter 9 – Magical Beast – Velocidragon! (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 9 – Magical Beast – Velocidragon! (part 2)

“Captain, what’s going on up ahead?” Lorry said in a quiet voice to Hillman.

A hint of a smile played at Hillman’s lips. “That mysterious magus seems to be at odds with that party over there. Just stay here and watch. No need for us to interfere.” Hillman himself was only a warrior of the sixth rank. In truth, he didn’t dare to interfere either.

The Velocidragon alone was something he would not be able to fight off, much less the mysterious magus.

The strength of the seven-man party in front of the magus was not weak either. Five of them were warriors, while the other two were magi. The leader of their party was a powerfully built man with tousled red hair, who rode a pitch-black iron bull. The two sharp horns of the iron bull glittered under the light, dark and deadly.

Its blood-red eyes gave testament to the true nature of this bull – “Vampiric Iron Bull”, a magical beast of the fifth rank.

With a snort, smoke began to emit from the bull’s nostrils as well.

Of the seven people in the party, four were men, three were women. Both of the magi were women, while the third woman was an archer. Aside from the Vampiric Iron Bull, a huge griffin floated in mid-air.

“Griffin” – a magical beast of the fourth rank!

It had the head of a lion, but a pair of enormous, powerful wings. For a party to have two magical beasts and two magi, clearly this adventuring

party was no ordinary one.

“Youngsters, it’d be better if you handed the [De’Pei’Luo’Ying] d’Bero shadow diamond over.” The mysterious man seated on the Velocidragon said a second time, his voice cold.

“Lord magus, we don’t wish to be your enemy, but in order to acquire this d’Bero shadow diamond, we spent countless amounts of time and effort. The value of it exceeds a hundred thousand gold coins, but you, lord magus, want to buy it from us for just seven hundred coins. This…this is impossible.” The red-headed leader of the group said in a solemn voice.

Listening to the conversation from far away, Linley, by Hillman’s side, now understood everything.

So this mysterious magus wanted to spend seven hundred gold to purchase this d’Bero shadow diamond which was worth a hundred thousand.

“Wow, the price of that diamond…” Linley was shocked. “For it to be worth so much money, clearly this d’Bero shadow diamond must have some significance attached to it. Otherwise, it wouldn’t cause this magus to be willing to lower his status and try to forcibly buy it.”

An offer of seven hundred gold, for an item worth a hundred thousand. No wonder the small party was unwilling to accept.

“Hmph.” The mysterious magus coldly harrumphed.

“I only have seven hundred gold on me. Right now, I’m still willing to use money to buy it from you. If you lot don’t know how to take a few steps back and do what’s best for you…then not only will you not receive a single gold coin, you will also lose your little lives.” The magus’ said in a frozen voice.

“Grrrrrrrr.”

The Velocidragon, taller than most of the houses in the town, let out a deep

growl, causing all the houses nearby to shudder.

“Captain, we risked our lives to obtain this d’Bero shadow diamond. How can we so easily cower in front of this guy and give it away?” A woman in black said coldly. As an experienced adventuring party, these seven people had experienced many battles and wouldn’t easily submit.

The red-haired captain said in a solemn voice, “Honored lord magus, I am of the Kingdom of Fenlai’s ‘Cayley’ clan…”

This captain wanted to use his background to force the opponent down.

But unfortunately, powerful magi usually were eccentric and didn’t give a whit about noble families.

“You all have chosen death.” The mysterious magus sneered coldly.

“Careful.” In a flash, the seven person party raised its guard. The four warriors charged in front, the female archer in behind pulled out her strongest bow, and the two female magi began to prepare magic.

“ROAAAAR!”

The huge Velocidragon opened its mouth, and an enormous plume of fire erupted from its fangs, headed directly for the party.

Where the fire came near, the very stone road underneath the fireblast began to warp, crack, and even shatter from the intense heat as the entire road charred black.

“Careful.”

The red-haired leader said in a deep voice, as his entire body became suffused with red-colored battle-qi. The other three warriors activated their battle qi as well.

The red-haired leader wielded an enormous claymore in his two hands.

With rapid speed, he fiercely swung it against a nearby stone wall, and with a thundering sound, the stone wall collapsed, as hundreds of rocks rolled down to the floor and dust exploded outwards.

Just at this time, the fire from the Velocidragon enveloped the four men, who used their battle-qi to resist it.

“Hah!”

The red-haired man kicked a large rock nearly half a meter long at the magus.

The other three warriors did the same, also kicking large rocks with the speed and power of enormous slingshots. The four rocks split the air, howling as they pierced forth towards the magus seated on the huge Velocidragon.

“Swish! Swish! Swish!”

One after another, a barrage of rocks assaulted the magus. In the twinkling of an eye, all the rocks from the collapsed wall were used up.

Seeing this battle from afar, Linley’s hands were tightly clenched.

“How incredible. They actually dare to use their feet to kick such huge rocks.” Watching the four men unceasingly kick the huge rocks, he felt all the more in awe of warriors in general. “Although, the Velocidragon is even more terrifying!”

Staring at the Velocidragon, Linley watched as its whip-like tail snapped about, dancing in front of it.

“Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!”

One giant rock after another was smashed into smithereens. The rocks couldn’t even come close to harming the magus on the Velocidragon’s back.

“Swoosh!” The Velocidragon’s tail seemed to be totally unimpeded. It covered an enormous area, and whenever it casually passed by a stone house, it sliced through it as though the house was made of mud. The stones would be shattered without any resistance. As one house after another began to collapse, stones rolled about everywhere and the entire area was bathed in dust.

“Roaaaar!” Even in the middle of the dust storm, the Velocidragon’s mighty roar could be heard, and it continued to vomit fire from its jaws.

This entire time, the two female magi in the back of the party were continuously mumbling magical incantations in a light voice. The words of magic were totally different from the common tongue spoken on the Yulan continent. It was much more awkward-sounding and complex. Before too much time had passed, the two female magi finished their incantations!

“Protective Icy Carapace!”

The two female magi chanted out in a low voice. Bright light erupted from their bodies, with four rays covering the four male warriors with a translucent, crystalline armor.

The red-haired leader was delighted. With the protective icy carapace supporting his battle-qi, he now felt more confident in this battle.

“Attack!” The red-haired leader ordered.

The four warriors shot out four more rocks at nearly the same time, attacking the mounted magus simultaneously. Immediately following, the four warriors charged forward like arrows released from bows as they shot towards the Velocidragon.

Chapter 10 – Dance of the Fire Serpents (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 10 – Dance of the Fire Serpents (part 1)

“ROAR!” The flames erupting from the Velocidragon’s mouth encompassed a diameter of tens of meters of the surrounding area, bathing them in a sea of fire.

“Hiss…..”

The Velocidragon’s fire danced around the bodies of the four warriors, but guarded by the Protective Icy Carapace and their own battle-qi, the four warriors definitely would be able to resist the heat.

As for the archer, by this point, she had already mounted the Griffin and taken to the skies, her bow nocked.

The Vampiric Iron Bull stood there like an iron wall, protecting the two female magi.

“Swish! Swish! Swish!”

Her eyes filled with a fierce cold gleam, and her hands as steady as a rock, the Griffin-mounted archer shot out three arrows in a row. The target – the mysterious magus on the back of the Velocidragon!

“Whoosh!” The Velocidragon’s whip-like tail shot out like lightning, moving even faster than the arrows. In the blink of an eye, it shattered the arrows released from the archer’s triple shot. Immediately afterwards, its tail swept back towards the four charging warriors. The howling sound generated from the tail shattering the air with its movement caused the expressions on the faces of the four warriors to change dramatically. They immediately tried to leap backwards, like agile monkeys.

But the draconic tail didn’t move in a purely straight pattern; it oscillated

and curved strangely, with no fixed pattern.

“Crash!”

One of the four warriors didn’t manage to dodge in time, and was directly struck by the draconic tail on the waist. Both the Protective Icy Carapace and his own battle-qi were smashed into nothingness in the blink of an eye. With a slight flick, the tail curled around him and tightly wrapped him up.

“Luke!” (Lu’jia). The red-haired warrior by his side howled angrily, his eyes filled with pain.

“No!” Luke was also screaming in terror.

With but a flick, the draconic tail tossed Luke directly towards the Velocidragon’s mouth. The Velocidragon opened its jaws, revealing its bloody maw, and chomped down. With a terrifying crunching sound, the last thing escaping Luke’s throat was an anguished scream.

Ground beneath the Velocidragon’s saw-like teeth, Luke’s entire body was turned into mincemeat. Half of one bloody leg escaped the Velocidragon’s mouth and fell down to the ground. Gleaming white bone could be seen protruding from the bloody half-leg.

“Don’t look.” Hillman covered Linley’s eyes.

That sudden display was simply too bloody. Even a fully grown adult, when faced with such a terrifying scene for the first time, would be panicked. Linley was just an eight year old child.

But it was too late. Linley had already seen everything.

“Huff. Huff.” Linley felt as though his heart was being compressed by a giant boulder. His breathing was growing labored, and he started to pant. But in his mind’s eye, he replayed the sight of the young man named Luke being eaten, over and over again.

His belly was ripped open, and his intestines had been shattered. His skull had been crushed, and half his leg had dropped to the ground!

All of these things made it hard for Linley to breathe, and he felt dizzy.

This was the first time Linley had seen a fight become so vicious and cruel. It was also the first time Linley had seen someone being eaten alive by a huge Velocidragon. The half-eaten leg, in particular, deeply buried itself in Linley's mind.

Hillman, Roger, and Lorry exchanged troubled glances as they watched Linley.

What sort of harm to the psyche would this bloody affair cause an eight year old child? Would it serve as a constant psychological trauma? Once a youth becomes traumatized by battle, his future accomplishments would be dramatically impacted.

"Killing someone. No big deal. No big deal." Linley forced himself to think these words repeatedly. "When I grow up and join the army, I too will have to kill people. Gotta hold on. Gotta hold on."

Linley really was intelligent. He had read many books, and knew what path he had embarked on for the future.

On the Yulan continent, when a man grew up, it would be very likely that he would experience life-and-death struggles. But since Linley was just a child who had not done so yet, he had to repeatedly tell himself to calm down. And slowly, the terror and horror in his heart really did begin to lessen.

In fact, much the opposite; in just a short period of time, Linley felt as though his blood was beginning to surge.

"That battle really is incredibly fierce. It really is exciting." For some reason, that bloody battle just then made Linley's blood boil with excitement, filling his heart with desire – a desire to battle and kill!

“Is it because of the Dragonblood in my veins?” Linley didn’t know.

But Linley suddenly discovered that he was actually very eager to participate in these bloody struggles. Linley immediately stepped to the side, bypassing Hillman’s protective arm, and continued to watch the battle which was still going on a hundred meters away.

“Linley, don’t watch.” Hillman saw that Linley was intending to continue watching, and was shocked.

“Uncle Hillman, I’m not afraid.” Linley turned his head to glance at Hillman.

Hillman suddenly noticed a red gleam of excitement in Linley’s pupils. Surprised, he no longer tried to prevent Linley from watching. As Linley continued to watch the battle from afar, he saw that it was reaching an even bloodier climax.

“ROAR!” With a howl, the Velocidragon turned its head and bit down towards a warrior, while its huge claws swept towards another one. Its lightning-fast, whip-like tail, as well, struck out, aiming at the third warrior.

The warriors were pressed to the point of abandoning their assaults and instead retreating.

The mysterious magus on the back of the Velocidragon still hadn’t moved. He let the Velocidragon deal with the threats as his lips continued to mumble.

“Dance of the Fire Serpents!”

The cold voice of the mysterious magus suddenly rang out, and in the blink of an eye, seven enormous fire serpents, each spanning tens of meters long, appeared. Howling, they erupted away from the magus in all directions. Each fire snake appeared to be a real, living creature, with distinct scales and enormous bodies that inspired fear in all who saw it.

Everyone who was watching was stunned.

A Fire Element spell of the eighth rank – Dance of the Fire Serpent!

It now became clear that this entire time, the mysterious magus was mumbling the words to a magical incantation. He was preparing this terrifying Fire Element spell of the eighth rank – Dance of the Fire Serpent! This spell could unleash seven enormous fire serpents, each of which had a simply astonishing attack power. Even the terrifying defensive ability of the Velocidragon would not be proof against it; if struck, even if it survived, it would be badly injured.

If dealing with a magus of the seventh rank, the small squad might be able to hold on for a while longer, but dealing with a magus of the eighth rank, and a Velocidragon as well? They simply did not have the power to resist.

Only now did they understand that this mysterious magus was a master of the eighth rank!

“It’s the Dance of the Fire Serpents. Quick, run away!” The red-haired warrior’s facial expression changed dramatically, and he shouted in a loud voice.

The six remaining members of the small squad were now all filled with terror.

“Too late. Prepare for the baptism of death!” The mysterious magus said in a cold, cruel voice, which pierced like a cold dagger at the hearts of the members of the small squad.

Chapter 11 – Dance of the Fire Serpents (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 11 – Dance of the Fire Serpents (part 2)

The seven fire serpents flew at a very high speed, and wherever they passed through, the stone houses nearby immediately began to blaze. The burning flames towered towards the high heavens, an absolutely catastrophic scene. Seeing their homes be disintegrated from afar, the denizens of Wushan township, who had long since fled and hidden far away, all felt pain and sorrow in their hearts.

In front of the seven giant fire serpents, their stone houses seemed like naught but toys. They were easily demolished, and the flames in the wreckages rose towards the sky.

“Run!” The female archer no longer cared about anything else. She immediately directed her griffin to fly to a higher altitude.

There was a limit to the distance at which a fire-element magus would be able to control the seven fire serpents. If the archer and her mount could fly beyond that point, she would be safe.

“Whoooooosh.” Two of the blazing fire serpents enveloped the two female magi and the Vampiric Iron Bull as well. Almost instantaneously, the sound of burning, crackling flesh could be heard, and Linley thought that he could smell hair burning.

“Big brother Kerry [Kai’lai]! Save us!” The desolate cry of a female magus sounded out, filled with pain, from within the middle of the fire serpent.

“Snort. Snort.” The eyes of the Vampiric Iron Bull were terrifyingly red, and every single muscle in its body was quivering nonstop. It continuously roared in anger, wanting to charge past through the encircling fire serpents, but unfortunately, the restrictive power of each fire serpent was simply too great.

“Louisa [Lu’yi’sha]!” The red-haired warrior howled angrily, his voice filled with anguish.

Very shortly afterwards, both female magi and the Vampiric Iron Bull were reduced to naught but gray ash. But the red-haired warrior no longer had even the opportunity to cry out. He and the other two warriors each had to face an enormous fire serpent of their own as well. In front of the titanic flaming body of the serpents, they seemed to be nothing more than children, incapable of the slightest resistance.

They had the power to split stone with a single punch, but so what? While constricted by a huge flaming serpent, what could they do?

“Ahhhh!” Surrounded by flaming serpents, the three warriors couldn’t help but let out torturous cries.

As they shouted, their battle-qi vanished, having been demolished. The hissing sound of burning flesh once again could be heard. The muscles on the faces of the three warriors twitched, and their eyes bulged out. All the hair on their bodies was burnt clean in the twinkling of an eye, and following that their skin, their flesh, and their bones. Nothing could withstand the terrifyingly high temperature of the fire serpents.

In a very short period of time, the three formidable warriors had also been reduced to nothing more than dust.

“Huff…huff…”

The female archer’s breath was ragged, but she had finally escaped the boundaries of the Dance of the Fire Serpents.

“Luke…Louisa…big brother Kerry…I will definitely avenge you all. Definitely.” The female archer cried bitterly, and as she did, she directed her griffin to fly still higher.”

“ZZZZT!”

An enormously thick bolt of lightning struck down from the clear, cloudless skies, striking directly down on the totally unprepared archer. Her entire body was turned directly to dust from that strike, while her griffin was scorched black as well. The two of them fell down from the sky, heavily crashing into the stone ground of the town as they crashed through a wooden roof and into the base of a dwelling.

“Want to run? Hmph.” The mysterious magus let out a deep snort.

Over a hundred meters away, Hillman swallowed hard, his own heart filled with a thread of inescapable fear. “Not only is he a magus of the eighth rank…he is a dual element magus!”

….

“That spell was called Dance of the Fire Serpents?” Linley was still standing there, totally awestruck.

The sight of those enormous fire serpents and the inferno they had cast had totally shocked Linley, like he had never been shocked before. Each of the fire serpents was as terrifying as the Velocidragon. Seven of them together? They represented an utter apocalypse. Even the stone houses were disintegrated by their flames.

In the blink of an eye, those four mighty warriors, those two magi, and that archer, as well as their two magical beast companions were utterly destroyed, with the possible exception of that griffin.

The seven fire serpents had disappeared by now, but Linley could still feel the terrifying, seismic presence and power emanating from the area. The entire battlefield had been annihilated, leaving nothing left but the finest of debris. The debris all radiated tremendous heat, as though testifying to the power of the battle they had just endured.

“Ama…amazing.”

Linley's breathing slowly began to stabilize. Swimming in his mind were images of those seven fire serpents, and how they had descended on the battlefield like a catastrophe of power.

Compared to that vision, even the Velocidragon was not as impressive as before.

Linley's gaze suddenly turned towards the mysterious magus on the back of the Velocidragon. By appearances, the magus was much smaller and much weaker.

"Just then…just then, was he the one who cast the 'Dance of the Fire Serpents'?" Linley really found it a little hard to believe. A person who seemed a full size smaller than Uncle Hillman was actually able to cast such an apocalyptic spell.

Linley's heart was suddenly filled with dread, as he stared at that far-off, distant figure.

"This…this is what a magus is?" For the first time, the concept of a magus clearly imprinted itself in Linley's mind.

At the same time…

Linley suddenly had a powerful urge to become a powerful magus as well.

"If one day, I too was capable of such a powerful attack…" Fantasizing about it, Linley felt the blood in his veins boil to the limit. He was in a state of tremendous excitement.

Right at that moment?

Linley knew the path that he would take in the future.

To pursue the peak, the pinnacle of power.

"Father!" Linley suddenly saw that his own father, Hogg. Seeing how

Wushan township had just suffered an unmitigated catastrophe, as the lord of Wushan township, Hogg's heart was filled with helplessness.

"Don't make a sound." Hogg glanced at Linley, conveying that message with his eyes.

Hogg turned towards the magus, his heart filled with ruefulness. "He's actually a magus of the eighth rank. And a dual-element magus! Perhaps the entire kingdom of Fenlai has only a handful of people more powerful than him. Someone like him actually came to our little town…"

Hogg's only desire, at this point, was that the mysterious magus would leave as soon as possible, and let Wushan town return to its normal tranquilness.

The mysterious magus suddenly leapt down directly from the back of the Velocidragon. He was at least two stories up, but he descended easily with a single jump.

Striding up to the ashes of the red-haired warrior, the mysterious magus waved his hands, and the gray ash parted. A violet, almost translucent-looking diamond suddenly appeared. With a flick of the wrist, the mysterious magus plucked out the d'Bero Shadow Diamond.

"Haha, the d'Bero shadow diamond. I searched for you for ten years. Who would have thought that just because today, I decided to pass by this town, I would actually meet you by accident? Haha…Heymans [Hai'man'si], now that I have this shadow diamond, once I socket it into my staff, I want to see how you will possibly stand against me next time. Haha…" The mysterious magus began to laugh wildly.

Hogg and the other residents of Wushan township simply watched quietly from afar, not daring to make a sound, for fear of angering this powerful, mysterious magus.

"Wushan town, eh…who leads Wushan town?" The mysterious magus suddenly said.

“Father…” Linley was shocked.

At this point, Hogg had no choice but to stiffen his spine and step forward. He respectfully said, “Mighty lord magus, I am the leader of Wushan town.”

“Oh.” The mysterious magus’ face was still covered by his violet robes, preventing anyone from seeing his face. He lightly said, “Your town suffered some serious damages today. I annihilated this small adventuring party. On their bodies, there is sure to be a good amount of gold coins. The gold coins, no doubt, have been melted and reforged by my ‘Dance of the Fire Serpents’, but they are still worth some money. Just consider them yours, as my recompense for what Wushan town just went through.”

Hearing the words of the mysterious magus, Hogg felt a sense of relief.

This mysterious magus probably wouldn’t go kill-crazy now.

“I, Hogg, on behalf of the entire Wushan township, would like to thank you for your kindness, lord magus.” Hogg respectfully bowed down.

The mysterious magus lightly nodded, then turned and walked towards the Velocidragon. The Velocidragon immediately knelt down, stretching out his foreleg. The magus stepped onto the Velocidragon’s leg, walked two steps, then easily jumped onto the Velocidragon’s back.

“Hmph.” The Velocidragon let out a lazy snort, as two plumes of white smoke once more emanated from its nostrils.

And then, the Velocidragon once more began walking, its heavy footsteps shaking the earth. Watching the enormous creature and the mysterious magus on its back walk far away and disappear off into the distance, all the citizens of Wushan township finally felt their hearts begin to calm down.

Chapter 12 – The Will of the Mighty (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 12 – The Will of the Mighty (part 1)

Only after seeing the magical beast of the seventh rank, the Velocidragon, and its mysterious magus master depart, did Hogg calm down.

“Uncle Hiri.” Hogg immediately turned to look at his housetaker Hiri. “Immediately order some people to recover all of the melted gold from within those piles of ashes. This adventuring party was quite extraordinary as well. No doubt, they had a great deal of wealth on them. I hope they had enough to recompense the losses we have suffered today”

Hogg stared in all directions, seeing how so many houses had been reduced to rubble.

“Yes, milord.” Hiri nodded.

“Hillman.” Hogg turned to look at Hillman. Smiling, he said, “What do you think?”

Hillman nodded as well. “I was absolutely terrified. When I saw that magical beast of the seventh rank, the Velocidragon, and that mysterious magus, I knew that Wushan township didn’t have the slightest ability to fight back in any way. If such an exalted personage as a magus of the eighth rank decided to destroy our town on a whim, I doubt anyone would dare to criticize him, much less sanction or punish him.”

Magi had extremely high social standings.

Normally, even an ordinary magus had the same social standing as a noble.

And a magus of the eighth rank? Even if he was in the presence of a king, he would not need to kneel or show obeisance. He could just chat while staying standing. From this, one could tell how exalted a level an eighth

rank magus held.

“Right. So, we should all celebrate the fact that not a single person from Wushan town perished today.” Hogg laughed.

“It definitely is worth celebrating,” Hillman nodded and laughed as well.

“Hillman, take some men to assist Uncle Hiri. After finishing up, please address the issue of the commoners who lost their houses.” Hogg instructed.

“Yes, lord Hogg.” Hillman assented.

Hogg looked behind him carefully, then asked Hillman suspiciously, “Hm? Where did Linley go? He was just here a moment ago.”

“No idea. Didn’t notice.” Hillman shook his head as well.

“My lord, young master Linley has already went home.” Hiri said from the side. “Although, when he left, he seemed to be in a daze. No clue what he was thinking about.”

Hogg thoughtfully nodded.

==========

If there was one thing which the Baruch clan manor did not lack for, it was rooms. In the days of the Baruch clan’s glories, hundreds of people lived here. The population now was much lower than before. Even an eight year old child such as Linley had his standalone quarters.

Within Linley’s bedroom.

Linley was kneeling on the bed, his brow furrowed in thought.

Again and again, the terrifying power of the ‘Dance of the Fire Serpents’ swam about in his mind’s eye. Those seven huge fire serpents and the tempest of flame they generated repeated in his mind over and over again,

as well as how they instantly turned everything around them to ash, including the powerful warriors and magi of the small adventuring group.

“Magi are so powerful.”

Linley felt a thread of desire in his heart. “Although I am a member of the Dragonblood Warriors clan, the density of Dragonblood in my veins is too low. The fact that anyone with Dragonblood is totally unable to utilize any other battle-qi cultivating methods is something which will hold back my ability to develop my warrior abilities to the maximum. I wonder if it would be possible for me to be a magus, instead.”

Linley suddenly had the desire to become a magus.

“That Velocidragon was terrifyingly powerful as well. If I were to have a Velocidragon, then…”

Linley began to think back to the awe-inspiring might of the Velocidragon.

It’s lightning-fast, whip-like tail had so easily shattered the stone projectiles aimed at it, and had demolished any houses it touched. Its enormous body resembled huge siege weapons which armies might field in a war. Once it charged forward at a fast pace, considering how tough its scales were, the Velocidragon really would be a terrifying opponent.

“Magical beasts…I wonder how someone acquires a magical beast.” Linley desired to have a magical beast of his own as well.

For whatever reason, as he lay on the bed, Linley simply couldn’t fall asleep. He tossed and turned, his mind filled with images of the Velocidragon and the ‘Dance of the Fire Serpents’ which the magus had displayed.

“Linley, what’s wrong?” A familiar voice said.

Linley scrambled to his feet. Raising his head, he saw that it was his father, Hogg. At the moment, a smiling, praising look was on Hogg’s face as he

watched Linley.

“Father.” Linley said respectfully. Suddenly, Linley felt confused. “Why is father smiling at me? And with this sort of expression?”

Hogg was extremely strict with Linley, and rarely smiled at him in such a intimate manner. His current expression made Linley feel all the more astonished.

“Not bad, not bad,” Hogg said proudly as he looked at Linley. “You really are a scion of our Dragonblood Warrior clan. You have our superior qualities. If a descendant of the Dragonblood Warriors were to be terrified of death, terrified of blood, of slaughter, then it would be an absolute joke.”

Upon hearing these words, Linley immediately understood. His father was happy at how he had not been terrified by the sight of the Velocidragon eating Luke alive.

Linley said, surprised, “Father, you saw everything?”

“That Velocidragon caused such a stir. How could I not? As soon as the Velocidragon arrived at Wushan township, I came out as well, but I was off to a different side. I could clearly see the expressions on your face and on Hillman’s,” Hogg nodded.

Linley grinned.

Back then, aside from the initial bit of panic, he later only felt his blood boil and surge, filling him with a thirst for bloodletting. Linley, as well, had wondered at the time if it was because of the Dragonblood in his veins.

Hogg laughed. “Linley, did the events of today astonish you so much that you even forgot about dinner?”

“Dinner?” Linley was startled.

“Rumble.” Linley’s belly sounded in agreement at this time. Only now did

Linley realize that the evening training hadn't even begun before the Velocidragon and the mysterious magus arrived.

By all rights, it was now time for dinner.

But Linley's mind was still preoccupied thinking about that 'Dance of the Fire Serpents' and that Velocidragon.

"Father, I'd like to ask, is it possible for a member of the Dragonblood Warrior clan to become a magus?" Linley's hands unconsciously balled up, clenching his bedsheets. He stared hard at his father.

Hogg was startled, but in the next moment he immediately understood. Looks like his child now wanted to become a magus.

"It is possible." Hogg nodded.

Linley couldn't prevent a look of joy from appearing on his face.

Hogg waved his hand, motioning for Linley to calm down, before saying, "Linley, there have been magi in the lineage of our Dragonblood Warrior clan. However, there's only been two in total. Linley, you should know that the most important thing for a magus is 'natural talent'. Normally, only one person in ten thousand has the talent to become a magus. One in ten thousand! The chance really is very low. So, you'd best not have too much hope."

Linley shook his head.

"Father, so long as there is any hope, I will persevere." A solemn look was on Linley's face.

Hogg looked at the serious expression on his eight year old boy's face. By all rights, a young child being so serious was an amusing thing. But Hogg did not laugh.

Hogg considered for a while, then said, "Linley, every year, when the army

recruitment drive begins in deep autumn, in the royal capital of Fenlai City, there is a magus student recruitment testing drive. If you really wish to go, when autumn comes around, you can go take the test."

"Late autumn? Isn't that just half a year away?" Linley's eyes were filled with excitement.

Chapter 13 – The Will of the Mighty (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 13 – The Will of the Mighty (part 2)

At dinnertime, the three members of the Baruch clan and their housekeeper, Hiri, all shared dinner together. Little Wharton raised a cute ruckus at the dinner table, filling it with laughter. By the time dinner came to an end, the old housekeeper carried Wharton back to his room, while Linley and his father, Hogg, began to chat.

“Right. Father, which one is stronger? A magus, or a warrior?” Linley was curious.

Hogg glanced at Linley. Chuckling, he shook his head and said, “Linley, magi and warriors each have their own strengths. At the same rank, a magus is perhaps slightly stronger than a warrior. But the most important thing is that the status of a magus is a full rank higher than that of an equivalent warrior. For example, that dual-element magus of the eighth rank, in terms of social standing, is perhaps slightly superior to even a warrior of the ninth rank.”

“If they are only slightly more powerful, why is there such a big discrepancy in status?” Linley was curious.

Hogg laughed. “Before discussing this, first you should understand the ranking system of the magi. There are nine ranks. First rank and second rank magi are considered junior magi. Third and fourth rank magi are considered mid-level magi. Fifth and sixth rank magi are considered senior magi. The three ranks above them; seventh, eighth and ninth? These are all terrifyingly powerful people. And of course, above the magi of the ninth rank are the Saint-level magi!”

“The reason why magi have such social standings is because the destructive potential their spells have is enormous.” Hogg picked up a glass of juice and continued talking while sipping at it.

“Destructive potential?” Linley looked at his father.

Putting down the glass of juice, Hogg nodded. “A single warrior, even a Dragonblood Warrior, can at most kill a hundred people with the swipe of a sword. When faced with a million man army, at best he could kill their leader, but when a leader dies, he can simply be replaced. But a Saint-level magus? If he chooses to utilize one of those powerful forbidden spells, he can annihilate an entire town or wipe out an army of hundreds of thousands. With an entire army destroyed, even if its leader survived, what’s the use? Thus, to a kingdom, a Saint-level magus is more terrifying than an entire enemy army.”

Linley immediately understood.

“Let’s not discuss Saint-level magi for now. Even a magus of the eighth or ninth rank would be capable of using spells which contain shocking power and are able to change the course of a battle. This is why magi have such a high social standing.” Hogg said with a light chuckle.

Linley quietly nodded.

In the war-torn land of the Yulan continent, one could imagine how important the magi were to a kingdom.

“Oh, right. Father, I read in one of the books that compared to a warrior, a magi’s physical strength is much weaker. But just then, I watched that magus jump down from the back of the Velocidragon with ease. How could his body be physically weak?” Linley pursued.

Hogg replied, “Let’s discuss this question later. Linley, you should know that in the Yulan continent, an average person’s lifespan is around 120-130 years. Powerful magi and warriors can live for longer, usually up to two or three hundred years, or sometimes even four hundred years. The absolute limit to a person’s lifespan is five hundred years. Only those who have attained the legendary power of Saint-level combatants can live eternally, unbound by the dictates of time.”

Linley nodded.

He had read of this in his books as well.

“But Linley, do you know the reason why powerful warriors and magi enjoy such a long life-span?” Hogg followed with a question.

Linley was startled.

Linley had always considered it to be a fact of life that powerful warriors and magi could live for three or four hundred years. He had never considered the reason.

Looking at the expression on Linley’s face, Hogg couldn’t help but laugh. “Linley, first of all, I must tell you that in this world, there are elemental powers. Fire-type element, water-type element, wind-type element, earth-type element, lightning-type element, light-type element, and darkness-type element. Warriors and magi both rely on absorbing these elements from nature as part of their training. Both magic spells and battle-qi are fueled by and determined by a specific elemental type. If you had carefully observed, you would have been able to notice that in the adventuring party you saw earlier today, for the four warriors, the red-headed leader had fire-type battle-qi. The other three had either wind-type battle-qi, or water-type battle-qi. And just like battle-qi, the spells of magi also have elemental types!”

This was the first time that Linley had ever heard about this. Only now did he learn that both magi and warriors relied on absorbing natural energy from the elements.

“The reason why powerful magi can live so long is because when magi absorb natural elemental energy into their body to generate pure mageforce, when the elemental energy flows through their body, it will naturally refine their apertures, their joints, and their flesh, making their bodies stronger and stronger. With a stronger body, naturally they will live longer. By the same logic, when warriors cultivate their battle-qi, they also absorb natural

energy, which flows through their body and strengthens it. The more powerful a warrior is, the stronger his body will be. Naturally, he will live a long life." Hogg explained everything in detail.

Linley felt as though only now did everything become crystal clear.

Based on his father's words, the bodies of magi had also been strengthened by elemental power and would therefore naturally be very strong.

"But father, why is it that people say magi have weak bodies?" Linley was confused.

Hogg shook his head. "Can't you think this through yourself? Magi only have weak bodies in comparison to warriors of the same rank, and not in absolute terms. For example, a magi of the eighth rank might have the same physical strength of a warrior of the second or third rank, even if he never engaged in any physical training. But of course, compared to a warrior of the eighth rank, his body would be very weak indeed!"

Linley slapped himself on the head, then laughed, somewhat embarassed.

How could he not have realized this simple logic? His thoughts really had been too rigid.

"Although, despite the fact that magi are vulnerable in melee combat, they do have their own ways to address this deficiency. One method is utilizing magical protective spells, such as the 'shield of earth', 'shield of ice', 'shield of wind', or 'shield of light' spells. First, they would use their magic to defend; then, they would use their magic to strike back!"

"And truly powerful magi have another method. Using 'magical beasts'!"

Hearing these words, Linley's eyes shone.

Linley wanted a magical beast of his own as well, such as a powerful Velocidragon.

“A powerful magical beast can protect the body of his magus, preventing enemies from getting close. This way, the magus can immediately cast his attacking spells to kill his opponents.” Hogg smiled as he spoke.

Linley immediately asked, “Father, how can a person acquire a magical beast companion?”

Seeing the expression on Linley’s face, Hogg couldn’t help but laugh. “There’s only two ways to acquire a magical beast companion. The first is to make the magical beast willingly subordinate himself to you and serve you. The second way is to use a soul-binding magical array to enslave the magical beast.”

“The requirements for the former are very difficult. For a magical beast to willingly subordinate himself to you, perhaps the only way is to defeat the magical beast in direct combat. Only then would he willingly follow you. For example, if you wanted to subdue a Velocidragon, you would first have to be able to defeat that Velocidragon in battle.” His father’s words rendered Linley speechless.

He wanted a Velocidragon of his own, but how could he possibly have the power to defeat one?

“As for the second method, it is extremely complicated to set up a soul-binding magical array. Only a magus of the seventh rank, at the very least, could set up such an array.” Hogg said in a composed voice.

Linley was stunned. “Father, by what you say…only a magus of the seventh rank or higher can enslave a magical beast?”

“No, not necessarily. If you have enough money, you can purchase a soul-binding scroll. When the time comes, all you have to do is to tear it apart, and it will automatically generate a soul-binding magical array. However, a soul-binding scroll is amazingly expensive,” Hogg said with a self-deprecating laugh.

“How expensive is it?” Linley pursued the topic.

“Last I heard, the going price was around ten thousand gold coins. And what’s more is, even if you had the money, there’s almost no market for it due to its rarity.” Hogg’s words forced Linley to laugh bitterly at himself.

The hardest part to acquiring a magical beast companion was in defeating it.

Of course, you could always acquire a weak magical beast as a companion, but what would be the point? But for a powerful magical beast, do you have enough power of your own to subdue it? If you were to defeat it using traps and trickery, how could the magical beast possibly be willing to serve?”

It isn’t an easy thing to convince someone to whole-heartedly subordinate themself to you.

As for the second method of using a soul-binding array, it was clear that this option was only available to powerful magi or to wealthy people. Not even many noble clans would be willing to part with the extravagant sum of ten thousand coins for a single soul-binding scroll.

Chewing on his lips, Linley furrowed his brows in thought.

“If I really want to acquire a magical beast companion, based on my family’s economic situation, I would have to become a magus of the seventh rank first. That’s the only way.” Linley secretly pondered all the possibilities, but he knew very well how difficult this would be.

And the first barrier to this plan? The question of whether or not he even had the natural talent to use magic!

After all, he only had a ten-thousand in one chance. If he didn’t have the natural talent for it, then there was no way he could become a magus.

Chapter 14 – The Battle in the Sky (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 14 – The Battle in the Sky (part 1)

Dawn the next day.

Just like every other day, the empty ground east of Wushan township was filled with youths. Hillman and the other two teachers had not yet arrived, and so all the children were noisily and energetically chatting together. Naturally, the topic of their conversation was yesterday's shocking battle.

"That magical beast yesterday was so powerful. When Uncle Hillman and the others were standing up in front, I was behind them, sneaking peeks from afar. You guys have no idea. When that huge magical beast simply scraped its claws against the ground, the stone road was shattered into countless pieces. And those houses collapsed like they were made of mud." In the midst of all the children, Hadley, ever the most talkative of them, was narrating glibly and wildly, waving and gesticulating as though he had seen everything with his own eyes.

All the children were staring at Hadley with wide eyes.

"Hadley, yesterday you were with us on the east side as well. You didn't dare go over. How could you see all this?" A thirteen year old brown-haired child snorted.

These slightly older children weren't as easy to cozen as those seven and eight year old kids.

Hadley turned to stare at the thirteen year old youth. His eyes widening, he said, "Faura [Fu'la], you don't believe me? When have I, Hadley, ever tricked anyone?"

That brown-haired child named Faura said with a sneer, "Everyone knows what a big talker you are. When do you ever speak the truth? Hey everyone,

why don't you guys speak for yourselves; has Hadley ever told the truth?" Faura said to the children next to him.

Those twelve to fifteen year old children all began to laugh. "Right on. This little scamp Hadley is always filled with nonsense."

A number of slightly older children stood on Faura's side.

Hadley immediately said urgently, "You guys don't believe me? Fine, don't believe me!" Furious, Hadley turned around, searching everywhere until he found Linley. His eyes brightening, he immediately said, "But everyone here knows that aside from Uncle Hillman and the other two, Linley also went. Linley saw everything with his own eyes. Linley's words should be true, right? Let Linley tell you if I spoke the truth or not."

"Young master Linley?" The youths turned to look at Linley.

In the eyes of the children of Wushan township, Linley had some stature amongst them. First of all, he was the heir to the Baruch clan, and secondly, as an eight year old child, Linley could match the thirteen and fourteen year olds in training. In the wartorn land of the Yulan continent, Linley's prowess caused all of the children of Wushan township to admire him.

"Young master Linley saw everything with his own eyes. Naturally, we would believe whatever young master Linley says." Those youths nodded.

Those thirteen and fourteen year olds were more mature as well. They knew that Linley was a noble and not like them. Almost all of them addressed him as 'young master Linley'. Only Hadley and the rest of the rascally seven and eight year olds still continued to directly address him as 'Linley', without regard for propriety.

"Tell'm, Linley! Was I lying? Tell'm what happened!" Hadley rushed towards Linley, tugging Linley's hand and secretly winking towards Linley.

Linley couldn't help but feel helpless. How was it that Hadley's nonsense roped him into this conversation as well?

“That magical beast is known as a ‘Velocidragon’, and is a magical beast of seventh rank. It is incredibly powerful. Its entire body is covered in extremely hard scales, impenetrable to normal weapons. It is also armed with a sturdy, whip-like tail and with sharp claws. Those tough road stones and floor foundation stones were ripped apart like paper by its tail and claws. It was even able to breath fire from its mouth, fire so hot that even the stones cracked apart.” Linley said truthfully.

All of the children listened quietly to Linley.

“Actually, all of you knew how powerful the Velocidragon was from the moment you saw it. No need for me to elaborate.” Linley said with a smile.

All of the older children nodded.

As soon as they saw the Velocidragon the previous day, they had been scared stiff. Its huge body had seemed as massive as a mountain cliff, and those huge red scales on its body left nothing to the imagination with regards to how tough they must be.

“You hear that? I told you, that Velocidragon creature is really powerful!” Hadley began shouting loudly.

That youth named Faura glanced at him, and was about to say something.

“Uncle Hillman is coming.” Linley saw Hillman, Lorry, and Roger walking towards them from afar, and immediately spoke up. Immediately, all of the children calmed down and in a very orderly fashion, lined up into three groups.

The empty training field immediately settled down. Only the footsteps of Hillman and the other two could be heard.

Hillman and the other two walked to the front of the three groups, facing the children. Hillman smiled and directly addressed what was on everyone’s mind. “Everyone should know about what happened yesterday, right?”

“We do.” Hearing Hillman’s words and seeing how relaxed Hillman was, all of the children immediately replied vigorously.

“Great.” Hillman’s facial expression suddenly turned serious. “That huge creature is known as a Velocidragon. The magus on top of the Velocidragon is incredibly powerful. But everyone should know one thing!”

Hillman’s gaze immediately sharpened as it swept across the faces of each child. “Even that mysterious magus gained his power one step at a time, starting from the bottom ranks. In order to subdue that powerful Velocidragon, he had to spend many years of toil and hard work! If you guys want to subdue a Velocidragon of your own, to be as powerful as that mysterious magus, then all of you have to work hard without fail!”

“Every single person has the potential to become mighty. The only question is, are you willing to work hard enough at it?”

Uncle Hillman’s words were as clear and as hard as nails. His gaze was fierce and cold.

Immediately, all the children quieted down, but all of them still had their own imaginations running wild, and their gazes shone with their different thoughts.

“Now, time to do our morning exercises. Same as always – face the sun, and begin the ‘qi-absorbing exercise’.” Hillman crisply began the day’s program, and immediately the three groups of children began to practice the ‘qi-absorbing stance’.

Based on each squad’s ability, Hillman assigned different exercises. Under the guidance of the three adults, each child studiously completed each exercise. Today, the training atmosphere was totally different. Almost none of the children complained of being tired.

Every single one of them had some fire in their belly today, and they trained hard!

"…fifty…fifty one…" Linley counted mentally as he laid horizontal to the ground, supporting himself with just the fingertips of one hand and the tips of his toes. His entire body was tense. He was in the middle of training through five-finger pushups.

This exercise could not only train his palm strength, it could also improve his finger strength and his elbow strength. This method was simple and effective.

If someone wanted to be a mighty warrior, normally they would have to practice cultivating battle-qi. The ability to cultivate battle-qi, in turn, was determined by how strong and sturdy one's body was, as a stronger body would be able to enjoy a more powerful battle-qi.

"Since my body has Dragonblood in its veins and is unable to practice battle-qi, my only option is to far outstrip everyone else in bodily strength." Linley's eyes were firm, and his fingers jutted into the ground, as tough and unyielding as old roots. He did one pushup after another, amazing many of the already-exhausted youths around him.

"Ninety eight, ninety nine…"

Linley continued to persevere.

"Morning exercises are over." Hillman said in a loud voice, facing the children.

After saying these words, Hillman took a deep breath as he thought to himself, "What story should I tell them today?" Every day, when morning exercises were completed, Hillman would tell the children stories. This had turned into a routine."

“Uncle Hillman, we-”

A child’s voice rang out.

But just at that moment, halfway through the child’s words, Hillman, who had been lookingly slightly downwards as he collected his thoughts, suddenly felt a strange feeling. He lifted his head up. Right now, all three groups of children were all staring east, eyes wide and jaws dropped. Roger and Lorry had also turned to stare east, and their gazes were also filled with awe.

“Eh?” Surprised, Hillman couldn’t help but turn around as well and stare to the east.

In the east, not too far away, perhaps two or three hundred meters in the air, an enormous, ebony-colored dragon lay coiled in the sky, its body at least a hundred meters long. The enormous black dragon’s giant eyes were the size of cartwheels. Its sparkling black scales were huge enough to fill any man’s heart with dread. And its hundred-meter long wings were gently flapping, but with movement contained incredible powerful.

Magical beast – Black Dragon!

Chapter 15 – The Battle in the Sky (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 15 – The Battle in the Sky (part 2)

Black Dragons were ranked amongst the most powerful magical beasts in the world. The Black Dragon race were generally at least magical beasts of the ninth ranks. Powerful members of this race could even reach the stage of being Saint-level combatants. But regardless of whether a Black Dragon was of the ninth rank or Saint-level, it would indubitably be incomparably more powerful than the Velocidragon.

At present, the group of children and the three instructors were about several hundred meters away from the Black Dragon. To see a hundred-meter long Black Dragon from such a close distance is an awe-inspiring experience which simply can't be explained with words.

The most terrifying thing of all?

On top of the head of the Black Dragon, a gray-robed man stood, arrogant in demeanor. The wind howled about him, but although the man's gray robes fluttered a bit, he himself maintained a ramrod straight posture, as though he were a carved sculpture. His gaze was focused on a middle-aged, green-robed man who hovered in the middle of the air in front of him. The green-robed man wore a sword behind his back.

The gray-robed man mounted on the Black Dragon and the sword-bearing green-robed man were staring at each other.

Hovering in the sky!

Aside from wind-type magi who were able to use the seventh-ranked spell, 'Soaring Technique', only Saint-level combatants were able to stand and hover in the sky. The sword this green-robed middle-aged man bore on his back gave testament to his true status.

Warrior. A Saint-level warrior.

“A man in gray who was able to subdue a Black Dragon? And a Saint-level combatant who can fly?” The eight year old Linley was totally stunned, even after having witnessed the previous day’s amazing battle. Not only him; even Hillman, a warrior of the sixth rank, was totally flabbergasted.

“Saint-level combatants. Actual Saint-level combatants.” Hillman was mumbling, his entire body trembling.

Hillman, being a man who had been tested in trials of blood and death, was the first to recover and clear his mind. But even after recovering, Hillman still felt as though he were in a dream. “Yesterday, a dual-element magus of the eighth rank came. Today, something even more amazing; two Saint-level combatants, and a Black Dragon! In my entire life, I’ve never seen anything so amazing.”

Hillman felt slightly dizzy.

Black Dragons were amongst the most powerful of magical beasts, at least ninth-rank in power. Someone who was able to subdue one was almost certainly a Saint-level combatant. And from the looks of it, the person facing off against him was also a Saint-level combatant.

This was ample proof that the gray-robed man was a Saint-level combatant as well.

Hillman and the others were hundreds of meters away from the Black Dragon. No matter how sharp their ears were, there was no way for them to hear the words being exchanged by the two parties.

Not knowing what was being said, they just watched, until suddenly…

“Roaaaaaaaaaar.”

Suddenly, the enormous Black Dragon let out a furious roar as its two huge wings began to flap vigorously. It emanated a terrifying pressure, causing

everyone, Hillman included, to feel their legs grow soft and to feel as though they couldn't breathe.

"Is this dragonsfear?" Linley also felt as though his heart was being squeezed by a huge stone, making it impossible for him to breathe, but nonetheless, Linley felt extremely excited, and his blood was beginning to boil.

The Black Dragon was simply too powerful.

"Rudi [Lu'di]! Don't go overboard!" That green-robed man suddenly let out a powerful shout. The explosive sound of his words reverberated in the air as though it were thunder. Not only did Hillman hear these words clearly; every single person in Wushan township heard the words clearly.

Hillman paused. He mumbled the words, "Rudi? Rudi?"

But Hillman quickly realized what was going on. Rapidly turning around, he shouted fiercely at all the children, "Everyone, go home right now! Go home and hide! NOW!" Hillman's loud roar and his urgent expression stunned every child present.

Hillman's thought processes were very clear.

These two Saint-level combatants obviously were engaged in some sort of dispute. Apparently, they were about to come to blows.

When Saint-level combatants were about to engage in a fight, the children standing there watching the fight would not be able to protected whatsoever. The slightest side reverberations could kill all the children present. Saint-level combatants were reputed to have the power to shatter the heavens and obliterate the earth.

Even if that reputation was slightly exaggerated, they definitely did have the power to obliterate a city or a tall mountain.

"Quick, let's move. Don't stand there in a daze, move!" Hillman shouted

loudly while shoving some children away.

Only now did the rest of the children awaken from their stupor. Although they didn't understand why Hillman was pushing them to go back to their homes and wanted to continue watching the Saint-level combatants, Hillman's awe-inspiring presence was still enough to send all of the children running speedily for their homes.

"Lorry, Roger, quick, take the six and seven year olds back home. Quickly! If Saint-level combatants clash, when the side-effects of their struggle reach us, the aftermath will be…."

Hillman's face was filled with urgency.

"Understood, Captain!" Lorry and Roger totally understood what their captain was thinking.

Lorry and Roger immediately turned around and lifted up the children who were slow runners. They carried two in each arm and two on their backs as well. Hillman joined them as well, quickly beginning to pick up child after child.

"Linley, go home, quick!" Hillman, still carrying several children, shouted towards Linley, who was also running.

"I know, Uncle Hillman!" Linley replied loudly.

Although Linley was only eight years old, his running speed was on par with fourteen year olds. While running, Linley would often turn back to stare at the sky. That huge coiled Black Dragon and those two Saint-level combatants had fully captured his attention.

"Captain, Lord Hogg ordered us to come assist you!" Twelve warriors had come flying out of the Baruch clan manor. As soon as they saw Hillman, they shouted at him.

"Quick, take these children home!" Hillman immediately ordered.

“Yes, Captain!” The warriors hastily replied, and quickly began sending the six and seven year olds to their homes.

“All of you, go home! Go home and hide! Protect yourselves!” Hillman shouted again in a loud voice.

Hillman possessed a great deal of authority in Wushan township. Upon hearing his words, many of the villagers who had been terrified at the sight of a Black Dragon knew immediately what to do. Right now, the entire Wushan township had turned into a frenzy of activity. All of the children and all of the workers fled to their homes. At this point in time, the only thing which could protect them was the sturdy stone of their houses.

Linley directly charged into his own residence.

“Quick, hide in the cellar beneath the storage room.” Hogg was standing in the middle of the courtyard. Upon seeing Linley, he immediately ordered him in. The cellar beneath the storage room was the largest, most sturdy cellar within the Baruch clan’s manor. Anyone hiding there definitely would be able to survive.

“Yes, father!” Linley repeatedly nodded, and immediately ran in the direction of the storage room.

While running as fast as he could, Linley’s mind returned to the Black Dragon, its gray-robed rider, and the green-robed man. He couldn’t help but turn once again and look back at the eastern sky. Since all the buildings in the small town were fairly low in height, he could clearly see for hundreds of meters.

Right now, the Black Dragon was growling in a low voice nonstop.

“Dillon [Di’long], if you are going to be so stubborn about this, then don’t blame me for my actions.” A cold voice emanated from the sky. Immediately afterwards, the Black Dragon began to let out a series of angry roars and belching forth smoky black fire from its mouth.

“Rudi, today I’m going to see exactly how powerful of a Saint-level magus you are!” The green-robed man shouted angrily.

Chapter 16 – Catastrophe (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 16 – Catastrophe (part 1)

Clearly, the swordsman wearing green was named Dillon, while the gray-robed man was named Rudi.

The Black Dragon beneath the gray-robed man breathed out a huge plume of black flame, surrounding the green-robed man and swirling like smoke. Suddenly, the green-robed swordsman's eyes shone with a fierce green light, and then his entire body was surrounded by a protective green aura, preventing the flames from injuring him in the slightest. At the same time, the ringing sound of a sword could be heard.

That ringing sound was even louder and more pure than the dragon's roar, encompassing the heavens and the earth.

The green-robed man struck out with his longsword, and suddenly, a huge, indistinct sword tip spanning tens of meters in length appeared and slashed outwards into the air, fiercely attacking the gray-robed man. The gray-robed man stared coldly at that sword of light. Not moving in the slightest, he just constantly mumbled magical incantations.

"Is this the tip of a sword? The tip of an enormous sword?" While running to the warehouse, Linley was still watching with his head turned. "How is that gray-robed man going to block? Using the Black Dragon?"

"Crash!"

The Black Dragon didn't block at all, and allowed the enormous sword-tip to come crashing down directly on the body of the gray-robed man. The man's gray robes immediately exploded in all directions, but after having done so, a suit of shining protective battle armor was revealed underneath it. The battle armor was so shiny, it was piercing to the eye, as though it were made of diamonds.

The sword-tip's collision with the battle-armor had actually done no harm at all to the gray-robed man.

"How is that possible?!" Linley was truly scared silly.

Since he wasn't watching where he was running, Linley suddenly stumbled on a stone and went crashing to the floor. But even on the floor, Linley was still continuing to watch that battle in the eastern sky. "What sort of armor is that? How could its defensive abilities be so strong?"

"Linley, hurry! Stop daydreaming!" Seeing Linley, Hogg couldn't help but let out a furious roar.

"Yes, father!" Linley was startled awake. He immediately clambered to his feet and began running in the direction of the warehouse again.

"Rumble, rumble…" Suddenly, a terrifying sound could be heard from the heavens, followed by a terrifying screech which shook the entire Wushan township. Linley couldn't help but once again turn his head towards the eastern sky to take a look. That single glance stunned him once again.

The eastern sky had suddenly become densely filled with giant flying boulders, every single one of them the size of a house.

"Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh!"

All of those house-sized boulders were covered with flashing light, the color of yellow dirt. They flew through the air at astonishing speeds as they struck like meteors towards the green-robed man. Every single stone had to be tens of millions of pounds in weight. Each one of these boulders were uncountably times heavier and larger than the stones used by catapults in times of war.

Even the walls of a city could not resist such a powerful boulder.

A single giant boulder carried such powerful force, but now, the entire sky

was filled with them, as countless boulders were arcing towards the man in green. Every single person in Wushan township was stunned by the sight.

“Crash!”

As the first boulder struck the man in green, the amount of green light covering his body suddenly increased dramatically, transforming him into a green sun, emanating piercing rays of green light in all directions.

Countless boulders converged on the green man, like drops of water in a rainstorm.

In the blink of an eye, it seemed as though he had become completely surrounded by boulders. The green light could now only be seen through tiny ‘cracks’ in that wall of boulders.

“Shatter!”

With a thunderous cracking sound, one boulder after another began to explode, as the boulders began to be shattered into tiny pieces by that terrifyingly powerful battle-qi. Each and every boulder, originally the size of a house, was shattered into much smaller pieces, and shot outwards in every direction.

They were hundreds of meters in the air to begin with. When shot out with the force of that battle-qi, the rubble shot out with tremendous power to an extremely far distance.

“Oh no.” Hogg’s face had turned white. Hillman, who was still on the streets of Wushan township, saw this and his face turned white as well. They all understood…

A catastrophe was descending upon Wushan township!

Countless rocks, ranging in size from two meters in diameter to man-sized, fell down in all directions, with no rhythm or pattern. Each boulder had produced tens, if not hundreds, of pieces, and perhaps twenty percent of

them were shooting in the direction of Wushan township.

“Quick, go inside, quick!” Hogg was so agitated, he roared with fury.

At this moment, Linley was still tens of meters away from the warehouse. Hearing his father’s angry roar, Linley paid attention to nothing else and ran towards the warehouse at top speed. As he did, he could hear one ‘crash’, ‘crash’, ‘crash’ after another. The sound of countless stones raining on Wushan township had begun.

It was like an earthquake was occurring. A picture of absolute disaster.

“Whoosh!” A boulder that must’ve weighed hundreds of pounds shot right past Linley, coming to a crashing rest not too far away from his feet, creating a huge crater. Linley felt cold sweat pour down his back. Just a tiny bit of a difference in trajectory, and his little life would’ve been over.

“Crash!” “Crash!” “Crash!” “Crash!”

The sound of stones smashing apart houses could be heard. The sound of stones colliding with the ground, the sounds of stones shattering wood, the sounds of people howling in pain…all sorts of sounds mixed together unceasingly, forming the symphony of disaster.

“Swoosh!” Another huge rock slammed into the ground in front of Linley, forcing him to rapidly jump backwards.

But if he kept on having to dodge like this, how would he manage to hide within the warehouse?

“Young master Linley, hurry!” A man came charging out from within the warehouse. It was Uncle Hiri, the housekeeper. His body was currently covered with red battle-qi, and he ran directly towards Linley.

“Big brother, hurry!”

At the door to the warehouse, four-year old Wharton stood crying as he

yelled towards Linley.

“Wharton, go inside now!” Linley roared back angrily.

“WHOOSH!” A huge rock nearly two meters in diameter came flying in their direction from far away, headed directly towards the warehouse. Linley immediately realized that when this giant boulder smashed into the warehouse, Wharton would either suffer serious injury, or even die!

“Quick, Wharton, inside!” Linley’s eyes were opened so wide as to appear bloodshot, and he howled angrily as he ran towards the warehouse at top speed.

He no longer paid any attention to the raining stones, nor did he try to avoid them. He ran directly towards the warehouse in a straight line.

Hiri was facing Linley, and simply couldn’t see the giant boulder headed towards the warehouse. But Linley saw everything clearly. When the boulder descended and shattered the room, how could little Wharton survive?

“Young master Linley?” Seeing how Linley was acting, Hiri couldn’t help but feel shocked.

Three more boulders came crashing down near Linley, but moving like a panther, Linley continued to charge forwards, his gaze fixed on little Wharton as he finally entered the warehouse. Hiri, turning around, only now became aware of that two-meter long boulder descending towards the warehouse. His face immediately turned white.

“Lie down!” Linley roared angrily, his face fierce.

Wharton had never seen his big brother look so angry before, and was so terrified that he immediately lay down. His eyes filled with tears, he looked at Linley and mumbled, “Big brother…” But with a flying hug, Linley tackled Wharton and covered him with his own body.

Almost just at that instant…

“CRASH!”

The sound of the boulder crashing into the warehouse. That enormous boulder had smashed into the warehouse roof with terrifying power. Although the stone roof of the warehouse was sturdy, when slammed into by such a huge boulder, it still broke apart. Even the floor of the warehouse was shattered apart by the vibrations from that collision.

“Young master-“ Housekeeper Hiri’s eyes immediately turned red. The battle-qi in his body exploded, and like a bolt of red lightning, he flew towards them. Using his own body as a protective barrier, he also used his two hands to push at a huge piece of the falling roof which was going to fall on Linley’s body. Hiri and that collapsing ceiling arrived next to Linley at almost the same time.

“Rumble, rumble…”

In the blink of an eye, Wharton, Linley, and Hiri were totally trapped and pressed down under the falling rubble.

Hogg was in the courtyard, wielding an enormous sword, deflecting one boulder after another. But when he turned his head towards Linley, he saw Linley risk everything to protect Wharton, and then Housekeeper Hiri fly towards them to protect them both. His mind immediately went blank.

The warehouse collapsed, and rubble poured down into it.

“Linley!” Hogg’s eyes turned red.

Right now, there was no way for Hogg to tell if Hiri had managed to position himself in front of Linley in time, or if the falling rocks had slammed into Linley first.

Chapter 17 – Catastrophe (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 17 – Catastrophe (part 2)

“Thud! Thud! Thud!”

A few more crashing sounds continued to sound out from within Wushan township, but a short period of time later, no more stones fell from the sky. All of the boulders had been thoroughly demolished by the green-robed swordsman. But by now, no one in Wushan township had any spare energy left to pay attention to their battle.

“Lord Hogg, Wushan township is in bad shape. Just then-….Lord Hogg? What’s wrong?” Hillman rushed into the manor. Just as he was beginning to report on the town’s situation, he saw that Hogg was standing there in a daze, not making a single sound.

Hogg’s body trembled. Only then did he regain his usual faculties. “Linley.” Hogg charged violently towards the warehouse at an astonishing speed. Seeing this, Hillman guessed what had happened and immediately followed Hogg.

“Smash!” Before Hogg had arrived, the rubble covering Hiri, Linley, and Wharton had been blasted apart.

Housekeeper Hiri stood up from within the rubble.

“Uncle Hiri, what’s the situation?” Hogg’s voice was trembling. At the same time, he stared at the prone bodies. The first thing he saw was Linley, head covered with blood. The sight of the blood was so piercing to the eye that Hogg felt his head grow foggy, and his body swayed, almost falling down.

Up til now, Linley’s body was still elevated from the ground, as he had been using his fists in a push-up position, so as not to crush Wharton.

“Father.” A youthful voice emanated from beneath.

Wharton slowly crawled out from under Linley. His body was small, and he had been fully covered by Linley, so he didn’t experience any injuries at all.

“Big brother, big brother, what’s wrong?” Wharton tugged at Linley’s body.

“Linley. Linley!” Hogg’s voice was quavering.

Housekeeper Hiri said from off to the side, “I was still a little too slow. There was one piece of rubble that I managed to block, but before it struck young master Linley in the head. Although I believe that the strike shouldn’t have been too heavy.”

“I…I’m fine.” A low, hoarse voice. Linley forced himself to lift up his head and stare at Hogg, managing a weak smile.

At this moment, upon seeing Linley’s smile, Hogg’s tears came spilling out.

Linley straightened his body and sat up. His clothes were covered with blood, as was his face and his hair. When the stone had struck him, it had caused a great deal of blood loss. At the moment, Linley also felt slightly woozy. Still staring at his father, Linley said in a weak, low voice, “Father, you are crying.”

“I, I’m fine.” An excited smile appeared on Hogg’s face.

“Wharton? Why were you at the doorway earlier?” Linley rubbed his little brother’s head and said in a reproving tone.

Wharton also knew that he had made a mistake. Lowering his head, he said, “Big brother, I’m sorry.”

Housetaker Hiri, off to the side, said, “This was my fault. This disaster came too suddenly, and as soon as I had taken Wharton into the warehouse, I saw young master Linley in great danger, so I immediately rushed forward

to help him. I didn't imagine that in just that instant, a huge boulder would head for the warehouse. This was my fault."

"RUMBLE!"

Suddenly, a huge tremblor shook the earth.

Everyone's facial expressions changed as they stared towards the eastern sky. A giant had appeared, hovering in the sky, over ten meters tall, muscles bound tightly, with a ruthless expression on its face. Its entire body was the color of yellow earth. At the moment, this earthen giant was engaging in a fierce battle with the green robed swordsman, and their every exchange of blows created a sound like crashing lightning or roaring thunder.

The sound of the blows alone gave testament to how mighty the earthen giant was. Every single one of its blows was more powerful than the combined force of those countless boulders from earlier.

Linley stared at this battle in awe. "This earthen giant must have been conjured by the magic of the gray-robed magus." Linley could easily come to this conclusion, since the gray-robed magus was a mighty magus, after all.

"Linley, how are you feeling?" Hogg said with concern.

Linley squeezed out a smile. "I'm fine. There's just a cut on my head, is all. I just lost some blood."

"Young master Linley, you actually lost quite a bit of blood. If you lose too much, you could die." Housekeeper Hiri immediately retrieved some white gauze from within the warehouse and wrapped it around the injury on Linley's head.

Hogg took a close look at Linley. "Uncle Hiri, how does his injury look?"

Uncle Hiri smiled at Hogg. "Not bad. Linley is in excellent physical shape, and he hasn't fainted. There shouldn't be too much to worry about. In the

coming days, he just needs to eat more meat to replenish his blood, and he'll be fine."

Only now did Hogg secretly let go of a breath he had been holding.

Just then, when he saw Linley charge over to protect Wharton, Hogg had truly been scared silly. He had truly been terrified that his sons would've died, just like that.

After taking a deep breath, Hogg looked at Hillman. "Right, Hillman, you were just saying that Wushan township was in bad shape. How bad of a shape is it in?"

"I can't say with exact precision as to how bad the condition is," Hillman said, his face grim. "But from what I could see, some people must have died, and many were injured or even crippled! This catastrophe came simply too quickly. Even though I shouted for everyone to hide, many people didn't have the chance to barricade themselves in their cellars."

"It really did come too fast." Hogg turned his head to stare at the eastern sky.

Saint-level combatants were on a totally different level than the people of Wushan township. A Saint-level combatant could wipe out the entire town with the wave of a hand. Earlier, the rain of boulders and the green-robed man's destruction of said boulders was nothing but the opening gambits of these two combatants.

But even the side effects of just those initial, testing blows were enough to cause an utter castastrophe to Wushan township.

"The legendary earth-style incantation of the tenth rank, a forbidden spell – the earth element 'World Protector'. The power of this 'World Protector'is extremely terrifying. It's considered the most powerful offensive spell available to an earth-style magus." Staring at the earthen giant, Hogg's face had grown cold as he spoke.

Hogg was a member of the Dragonblood Warrior clan. Although the Dragonblood Warrior clan had fallen on hard times, their five thousand years of history meant that within their family archives, there was information about all of the most powerful magical attacks used by the most powerful people in history. Hogg naturally could tell what was going on at a glance.

“An incantation of the tenth rank…” Linley took a deep breath.

Linley badly wanted to one day also ride a Black Dragon and utilize apocalyptic incantations of the tenth rank. His thoughts naturally turned to the magical testing and recruiting event. “The test will only be held in autumn in the capital. There’s still half a year left…”

From the bottom of his heart, Linley was eagerly awaiting the magical ability examination in half a year.

“Hillman, in a little while, accompany me in inspecting the situation of the residents of Wushan township.” Hogg said, and then looked at Hiri. “Uncle Hiri, after these two Saint-level combatants depart, take Linley home to change his clothes and make sure he gets some rest.”

“Yes, lord.” Hiri nodded.

Hogg turned back to look at Linley, who was enraptured watching the exciting battle between two Saint-level combatants. Laughing, he said, “Oh, Linley, you little rascal. Even though you are injured, you still want to watch Saint-level combatants fight. Fortunately, given that the Saint-level magus has unleashed the ‘World Protector’, this battle is about to come to a close soon.”

Absorbed in the shocking battle going on off in the distant, Linley didn’t notice at all that around his chest area….

Since his head was injured, the so-called ‘Coiling Dragon’ ring he wore underneath his clothes had also been stained by blood. But the blood on the Coiling Dragon ring seemed to have disappeared, like water into an endless

ocean, as the strange black material slowly absorbed it all.

And then, the Coiling Dragon ring actually began to shine with a faint, dim light.

But since it was being worn underneath his clothes, no one could possibly notice the faint light coming off from the surface of the Coiling Dragon ring.

Chapter 18 – The Coiling Dragon Spirit (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 18 – The Coiling Dragon Spirit (part 1)

In the eastern sky, the gray-robed man still stood on the head of the Black Dragon which lay coiled in the sky. A self-assured smile was on his face, as he watched the green-robed man battle against his earthen giant.

“Sschhhhwiing!”

A piercing sound split the air as the green-robed man’s sword pierced directly into the earthen giant’s head. “Rumble!” The earthen giant’s head split apart, but the earthen giant didn’t collapse. It’s boulder-like fists directly slammed onto the green-robed man’s body.

“Ah!” Then green-robed man spat out a mouthful of blood, his entire face turning ashen white.

And then, the earthen giant’s shattered head began to reform and regenerate, as though no damage had been done at all!

“Dillon, you’d best just hand it over. The World Protector that I summoned isn’t something that you can overcome.” The gray-robed man riding the Black Dragon said calmly.

The green-robed man stared coldly at the gray-robed man. He suddenly said in a fierce voice, “Rudi, if I can’t have it, then you won’t either!” A bright green light began to shine from within the green-robed man’s hands. Upon seeing this, the gray-robed man who had previously been standing so calmly on the head of the Black Dragon immediately grew startled and anxious. “Stop!”

“Splatter!”

The green-robed man’s arms suddenly shone as bright as the sun. An

explosive sound could be heard, and then immediately disappeared.

“Dillon, you-!” The gray-robed man pointed angrily at the green-robed man, but couldn’t say anything.

The green-robed man’s face was ashen white as he stared at the gray-robed man, whose face had also turned white. “Now, nobody has it. Rudi, I’ve been injured, but if you want to kill me, that’s still going to be quite hard to accomplish!” With a cold laugh, the green-robed man transformed into a beam of green light as he flew off at a fast speed into the northeastern skies.

The gray-robed man watched him fly off. He only frowned, and did not pursue.

The earthen giant by the gray-robed man’s side also slowly disappeared.

“The ‘Stellar Sword Saint’ Dillon? Pity. I can’t kill him yet.” The gray-robed man said in a low voice. And then the Black Dragon underneath his feat, as though knowing his master’s wishes, flapped its enormous wings and went flying off into the southeastern direction.

In the blink of an eye, these two Saint-level combatants had disappeared.

But Wushan township was still filled with the sight of utter devastation. Nearly a thousand houses had collapsed, and screams of pain, angry curses, and sorrowful, pain-filled cries filled the air. In a short period of time, the previously peaceful township had turned into a disaster area.

…….

Within the Baruch clan manor courtyard, there was only Hogg.

Hogg was seated at a table, his forehead furrowed. As the controller of Wushan township, he absolutely had to think carefully about how to take care of his people.

Footsteps. Uncle Hiri emerged from within the living room. “Lord.”

“How is Linley?” Hogg immediately turned his head and asked.

Hiri chuckled. “Lord, please be at ease. I’ve already washed and cleaned young master Linley’s wounds, then re-bandaged them. I’ve made him eat a big meal, and then change his clothes and go to bed. By the time he wakes up, he’ll be much better.”

Only now did Hogg feel relieved, and he nodded. But his forehead was still furrowed.

“Lord, are you worrying about the people of Wushan township?” Hiri asked.

Hogg nodded. Smiling wryly, he said, “Uncle Hiri, most of the people in Wushan township aren’t like us. Wushan township’s men won’t be too bad off, as most of them are warriors of the first or second rank, but the women aren’t. For so many boulders to come raining from the skies non-stop, it would be hard for them to block any at all!”

Hiri nodded as well.

The number of people in Wushan township who were able to utilize ‘battle-qi’ could be counted on one hand. Just now, thousands of rocks had descended from the heavens. If people hadn’t managed to hide in cellars early on, or use thick shields to block, then as soon as the stones came crashing down…

“There’s nothing we can do now, aside from waiting on Hillman’s report.” Hogg felt extremely restless.

After a long time, urgent, rushed footsteps could be heard entering the manor.

Hogg’s eyes brightened. Turning, he saw Hillman striding quickly into the manor.

“Hillman, what’s the situation in Wushan township?” Hogg quickly asked.

Hillman let out a pain-filled sigh. “We just ran some calculations. Over three hundred people died, and a thousand were injured.” The entire township only had a population of five thousand. This meant the casualty ratio was about 20%! And this was for those who lived in stone houses. This really was a diaster.

“So many casualties?” Hogg couldn’t help but begin to grow worried.

Food was the lifesblood of any nation, and a small town was the same. For their workforce to suddenly decrease dramatically, but the number of injured and crippled to skyrocket…the economic situation of the town was going to worsen even further.

“Ugh!” Hogg let out a long sigh.

He wanted to lower their taxes, but Wushan townships tax rate was already very low. Right now, his own clan’s survival had already become a problem. How could he assist the commoners of the town? The situation was different from those other towns, where taxes were so high that many commoners died of exhaustion and misery.

“Lord Hogg, all the commoners in Wushan township greatly appreciate your kindness and generosity. Everybody knows how much you have done for us. Please don’t be too vexed.” Hillman said from the side.

Hillman himself was born in Wushan township.

Based on his status as a warrior of the sixth rank, even in the capital, he could be the guard captain for a noble family. But because Hillman felt gratitude towards the Baruch clan due to their kindness and generosity, after Hillman retired from his army career, he directly became the captain of the guard for this decaying old noble Baruch clan.

“Hillman, lead the guard squad to do some more scouting about the township. Uncle Hiri, go and get some rest.” Hogg directly instructed.

“Yes, lord.” Hillman said.

Housekeeper Hiri also bowed respectfully and departed. After Hillman also left the pavilion, once again, the only person left remaining was Hogg.

….

Within Linley’s bedroom.

Due to Linley’s head injury, Hiri had instructed everybody not to bother Linley and to let him get some rest. While Wushan township was a whirlwind of activity, Linley’s bedroom was peaceful and quiet. Linley himself had been drawn deeply into a world of dreams.

“Ding!”

A gentle, chime-like sound could be heard as rays of light began to leak out from Linley’s chest area. And then, a cage of light surrounded the pitch-black Coiling Dragon ring, which slowly flew out from under Linley’s pajamas and began to hover roughly ten centimeters away from him.

The ring began trembling more strongly, and the glow from the Coiling Dragon ring began to grow as well.

Fortunately, there was no one in Linley’s bedroom right now. Anyone entering the room would have been stunned. Linley, however, was still blissfully asleep, and didn’t notice at all that the Coiling Dragon ring was now floating.

“Ting!” The glow surrounding the Coiling Dragon ring suddenly began to contract rapidly, and then a single ray of hazy light flew out from within the ring. Descending next to Linley’s bed, it transformed into a person’s image.

The image was of an amiable looking old gentleman with moon-white robes and a long white beard.

At this point in time, the Coiling Dragon ring directly fell back onto Linley's chest, powerless. Linley's eyelids flickered, and then slowly opened. Upon seeing an old man whom he had never met before at the head of his bed, he couldn't help but feel shocked. "You…who are you?!"

"Hello, kiddo. My name is Doehring Cowart [De'lin Ke'wo'te]. I am a Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant [Pu'ang] Empire!" The amiable looking old man said with a smile.

Linley's eyes suddenly turned round. "You…you are a Saint-level magus instructor?"

The white-haired old man nodded confidently.

"No way. Gramps, you just said you are from the Pouant Empire. The Pouant Empire that was eradicated over five thousand years ago?" Linley was quite familiar with the history of the world, and he knew very well that the Pouant Empire had ceased to exist before his own clan had even came to be. In the modern era, the Pouant Empire was not one of the four great empires of the world.

Chapter 19 – The Coiling Dragon Spirit (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 19 – The Coiling Dragon Spirit (part 2)

The Pouant Empire had lasted for an extremely long period of time, and had been erected over eight thousand years ago. The entire Pouant Empire had lasted for three thousand years, but in the end, it was still destroyed. The domain which the Pouant Empire had previously held sway over was approximately the combined borders of the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance.

In other words…

The entire Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the twelve kingdoms, and the thirty-two duchies all once belonged to the Pouant Empire. From this alone, one could tell what a vast empire it had been.

But the Pouant Empire had been destroyed long ago!

“Over five thousand years ago?” The white-haired old man was momentarily stunned, and then let out a sigh. “There’s no way for me to sense the passing of time from within the Worldring. I didn’t expect that by the time I left the Worldring, over five thousand years would have passed since the destruction of my country.”

“Gramps, what are you talking about? I’m confused.”

Linley felt as though his entire mind had been turned muddy. This old grandpa had suddenly appeared out of nowhere, and claimed that he was a Grand Magus from the era of the Pouant Empire, which had been destroyed five thousand years ago. What could be more ridiculous than this?

Linley even wondered if he was in a dream!

“Kid.” The white-haired old man looked at Linley. Smiling, he said, “The

ring you wear next to your chest is the Divine artifact I once used – the Worldring!"

"Wait, wait, wait!"

Linley immediately peered up at him and said, "What 'Worldring'? This ring around my chest was left behind by elders of my ancestral clan. Its name is the 'Coiling Dragon Ring'!"

"Coiling Dragon Ring? It was originally named the Coiling Dragon Ring?" The old man said in surprise.

Linley was stunned.

"Original name? What do you mean, original name?" Linley looked questioningly at the old man.

Only now did the old man begin to laugh. "Oh, 'Coiling Dragon Ring' must be the name you gave it. Or perhaps the name an elder of yours gave it. When I originally discovered this ring, I searched through all sorts of documents but couldn't find any information about it. Thus I gave myself the authority to title it the Worldring. But as to what it was originally called, even I have no idea."

"Oh, gramps, you chose the name for it yourself as well. But now it belongs to me, and I named it the Coiling Dragon Ring." Linley was quite stubborn.

"Fine, fine, call it the Coiling Dragon Ring if you wish." The old man chuckled, not wanting to debate with Linley.

"Gramps, can you tell me why you just appeared from within the Coiling Dragon Ring?" Linley questioned.

The old man smiled. "In year 4280 of the Yulan calendar, I-"

Upon hearing this, Linley was secretly shocked. "Year 4280? This year is year 9990!"

“In year 4280 of the Yulan calendar, I encountered an old foe of mine, a Saint-level Grand Magus named Hamelin [Ha’mu’lin], and the two of us began to fight. I didn’t expect yet a second Saint-level combatant to ambush me and sneak attack me. In the end, I was defeated, and my body was destroyed. I didn’t wish for my spirit to be captured and tortured by my enemy, Hamelin, so I sealed myself within this Worldri-, ahem, this Coiling Dragon Ring.” The old man explained what had happened in the past.

“The Coiling Dragon Ring is an extremely amazing object. It doesn’t appear to emanate any magical aura, but in usefulness it can even compare with Divine artifacts. When I sealed my soul within the ring, Hamelin and the other searched a long time for me, but weren’t able to find me. This, too, is thanks to the Coiling Dragon Ring.” The old man smiled as he spoke.

Linley secretly nodded.

The Coiling Dragon Ring, by appearances, really did look quite plain. As the member of an ancient clan, Linley had a rather appraising eye.

Normally, precious items would have at least some sort of elemental aura. But this Coiling Dragon Ring seemed like nothing more than plain, inert wood.

“Gramps, you said that five thousand years ago, you were ambushed by a Saint-level Grand Magus and a Saint-level combatant, and then you were self-sealed within this ring? And that this ring is an artifact which is comparable in power to a Divine artifact?” Linley finally said.

“Right.” Seeing that Linley understood, the old man couldn’t help but smile and nod.

“Then Gramps, how is it that you appeared from within the ring just now?” Linley looked doubtfully at the old man.

Laughing, the old man explained, “Actually, when I sealed my spirit within the Coiling Dragon Ring, I interwove my very existence into the Coiling

Dragon Ring. Only when a person becomes the new owner of the ring would I be allowed to depart it."

"Becomes the new owner of the ring?"

"Right. Through dripping blood onto the Coiling Dragon Ring." The old man laughed.

Linley frowned while mumbling, "Dripping blood onto the ring?" Frowning as he tried to recollect when that had happened, Linley suddenly remembered that when the rock had cut his head open, fresh blood had suffused his clothes and his chest. Most likely, it was around then that the blood had dripped onto the ring.

"Oh. Then that makes me the owner of the Coiling Dragon Ring." Linley nodded.

"Right. Only now, after you became the owner of the Coiling Dragon Ring, am I able to depart the ring and once more experience the air of the Yulan continent." A hint of a smile was on the old man's face. "Right. Kid. I just told you my name, but what is yours?"

Linley smiled brightly. "My name is Linley! Linley Baruch!"

"Linley, a fine name." The old man smiled.

"Gramps, are you going to be forever bound to the ring and unable to ever regain your freedom?" Linley felt rather bad for him.

The old man smiled and nodded. "Linley, you must know that when most people die, their spirits will enter the Nether Realm! But because I was a Saint-level Grand Magus at the time of my death, my mental energy had obtained physical form. That was the only reason why I could temporarily resist the call of the Nether Realm and seal myself within the Coiling Dragon Ring. Right now, there is only one way for me to leave this ring – exhaust all of my remaining mental energy."

“Exhaust all your remaining mental energy?” Linley didn’t quite understand.

“What men called mental energy, ghosts might call ‘spiritual energy’. When a person’s mental energy was utterly exhausted, his soul would naturally dissipate. In other words…when my soul dissipates, it will leave the confines of this Coiling Dragon Ring.” The old man said calmly. “But the current situation is fine also. Although I am confined by the Coiling Dragon Ring, preventing me from ranging more than three meters away from it, this isn’t too bad.”

Linley’s heart trembled.

Suddenly, in his heart, Linley felt some pity for this old man.

“Heh heh, Linley, I’m already very satisfied. You don’t know this, but…if my spirit had been captured by Hamelin, it would have been a fate worse than death.” The old man sighed.

“Gramps, you said your name is Doehring Cowart? Can I address you as Grandpa Doehring?” Linley suddenly said.

Doehring Cowart was a mighty Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire, and thus had an extremely high personal status. Back then, he would have ranked amongst the top five personages in the Yulan continent. He fell only because he had been despicably ambushed by Grand Magus Hamelin and another Saint-level combatant.

However…

Doehring Cowart had never had a child, nor grandchildren. Upon hearing Linley address him as Grandpa Doehring, Doehring Cowart’s heart, which had been lonely for thousands of years, suddenly felt warm.

“Yes, yes.” Doehring Cowart felt extremely happy.

A look of excitement suddenly appeared in Linley’s eyes. “Grandpa

Doehring, just now, you said that you are a Saint-level Grand Magus. Then, can you teach me how to use magic?" Linley's heart was frantically pounding. The person in front of him was a five thousand year old Saint-level Grand Magus.

In Linley's mind, the huge body of the Velocidragon, the terrifying spectacle of the Dance of the Fire Serpents, and the countless boulders falling from the sky began to play over and over again, along with the spectacle of that proud man who stood on top of the Black Dragon.

He deeply desired that one day…

He, too, would step on top of the head of a Black Dragon and make the heavens tremble.

Doehring Cowart stroked his white beard. His eyes shining, he said, "Of course I can! Your Grandpa Doehring is a Saint-level Grand Magus of the almighty earth style…and amongst all of the elements, the element of earth is the mightiest of them all!" As he began to discuss magic, Doehring Cowart began to get excited.

Chapter 20 – Earth-Style Magic (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 20 – Earth-Style Magic (part 1)

Linley's anticipation was about to erupt like a volcano as he immediately became suffused with excitement.

"Grandpa Doehring, can you really teach me to become a magus?" Linley excitedly looked up at old man Doehring.

Doehring Cowart, seeing the state Linley was in, stroked his white beard. "Linley, your Grandpa Doehring is a Saint-level Grand Magus. Even if you don't have much natural talent, I can still teach you magic. Of course…if your talent is low, your accomplishments will be low as well."

If any other magus had been present and heard his words, they would have been astonished.

Amongst the society of magi, the most important thing is talent. No talent meant no possibility of becoming a magus. Many people believed this!

But Doehring Cowart dared to claim that even if his student's talent was poor, he still had the ability to make a magus out of the student. If anyone else had made this claim, they would be viewed as just wildly boasting… but the man who said these words was a five-thousand year old Saint-level Grand Magus!

"Low talent, low accomplishments?" Linley felt his heart tremble.

The reason he wanted to become a magus was because he wanted to restore glory to the Baruch clan. Even if he couldn't accomplish this, he hoped to at least accomplish the one task which generations of clan elders had strove to achieve for centuries – reclaiming their ancestral heirloom. If he could accomplish this, it would be enough.

But to do so, power was an important component.

“Linley, don’t be worried. Your aptitude for magic hasn’t even been assessed yet. Who knows if it will be high or low? Perhaps you will have a tremendous talent for magic.” Doehring Cowart stroked his white beard as he smiled.

Grandpa Doehring’s tranquility brought calm to Linley as well.

“Grandpa Doehring, how does one test for magical aptitude?” Linley couldn’t help but grow eager.

“It is actually quite easy to test for magical aptitude.” Just as Doehring Cowart spoke, suddenly –

Footsteps could be heard from outside the door. Hearing them, Linley immediately grew nervous. He quickly said to Doehring Cowart, “Grandpa Doehring, quick, hide. Someone is coming.” If this five-thousand year old Saint-level Grand Magus of the bygone Pouant Empire was discovered, it could be disastrous.

Doehring Cowart only smiled, not moving at all.

“Grandpa Doehring!” Linley was beginning to grow impatient.

“Creaaak.” The bedroom door swung open, and Housekeeper Hiri stuck his head inside. Seeing that Linley was awake, he couldn’t help but smile. “Young master Linley, I didn’t expect that you would have already awoken. How do you feel, young master?”

Linley immediately forced out a smile. Nodding, he said, “Thank you for asking, Uncle Hiri. I’m much better now.”

Linley felt extremely agitated. He couldn’t help but turn to look in the direction of Doehring Cowart, but Doehring Cowart was still standing there, grinning. “What’s going on with Grandpa Doehring? Ugh. We’re about to get discovered. It’s going to be so annoying to have to explain.”

“Young master Linley, it’s time for dinner. Since you are already awake, come eat dinner with us.” Uncle Hiri smiled as he spoke.

“Oh. Got it.” Linley snuck another peek at Doehring Cowart, his heart filled with questions. “What’s going on. From Uncle Hiri’s expression, it seems as though he can’t see Grandpa Doehring at all.”

Seeing Linley constantly glance at the corner of his bed, Uncle Hiri asked curiously, “Young master Linley, why are you staring at the side of your bed? Did you drop something? I can help you look for it.”

“No-, nothing.” Linley immediately crawled out of bed. “Uncle Hiri, let’s go eat dinner.”

Although he found Linley’s reaction to be a bit odd, Uncle Hiri didn’t think too much of it, just nodding and smiling. Linley dressed himself, but still couldn’t help but sneak a peek at Doehring Cowart. But just as he did so, Doehring Cowart, who was still grinning at him, suddenly disappeared from Linley’s field of vision.

“He entered the Coiling Dragon Ring.” Linley could now clearly feel that a spirit was now residing within the Coiling Dragon Ring.

Unlike in the past, Linley had now soulbound the ring with his own blood, giving him a deeper level of understanding.

“Linley, no need to speak aloud. Just speak to me mentally. As the master of the Coiling Dragon Ring, you can directly engage in spiritual communication with me, as I am a spirit within the ring.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

This greatly surprised Linley.

“Grandpa Doehring?” Linley tested the mental link.

“I hear you.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind as well.

Linley's heart was immediately filled with joy. But as he engaged in conversation with Doehring Cowart, he didn't pay attention to where he walked, and he tripped over the doorway. Uncle Hiri, walking ahead of him, turned and laughed. "Young master Linley, watch where you walk."

"Got it, Uncle Hiri," Linley laughed in reply.

While excitedly engaging in mental conversation with Doehring Cowart, Linley entered the dining room and sat down. Today's dinner was actually quite sumptuous, including a fragrant smelling roasted sheep. Hogg glanced at Linley. Smiling, he said, "Linley, have some." As he spoke, Hogg personally tore off a strip of meat from the sheep's lower hindlegs for Linley.

"Thank you, father."

Linley felt quite surprised. His family was in poor economic straits, so normally their dinner was quite spartan. But today, they even had roast sheep?

What Linley didn't know was…when the rain of stones descended on the town, aside from men and women, even many animals were killed. The Baruch clan aside, even some poor families who rarely ate meat were enjoying an extravagant meal today.

"Grandpa Doehring, why didn't Uncle Hiri see you just then?" Linley mentally asked Doehring Cowart.

"Linley, I must inform you that aside from you, nobody can see me. Because right now, I'm just a spiritual projection, which has no matter. I'm invisible to the eye. Only you, as the master of the Coiling Dragon Ring, can see me." Doehring Cowart explained in detail.

Linley suddenly understood.

Previously, Grandpa Doehring had said that he had died long ago, and only

his spirit now remained.

“Grandpa Doehring, in the future, doesn’t that mean you can always appear by my side?” Linley felt extremely happy.

Just as Linley spoke, he saw that next to him, a white-haired old man suddenly appeared out of nowhere. It was Doehring Cowart. But Hogg, Housekeeper Hiri, and his younger brother Wharton still continued to eat and chat, not noticing Doehring Cowart’s existence in the slightest.

“Wow…”

Hearing and seeing were two different things. When he personally witnessed all the other people at the dinner table be unaware of Grandpa Doehring’s presence, Linley felt deeply astonished.

“There’s still some people who can sense my presence. Those whose spiritual presence are on par with me can feel my presence. But naturally… if I hide within the Coiling Dragon Ring, they definitely won’t be able to sense me.” Doehring Cowart’s voice sounded within Linley’s head.

“On the same spiritual level as Grandpa Doehring?” Linley chewed and thought at Doehring Cowart at the same time.

“Those who have the same spiritual power as me are most likely Saint-level combatants. Only Saint-level combatants can sense my presence, if barely. But of course, the prerequisite is that I appear outside the Coiling Dragon Ring. Once I enter the ring, there is no way they can find me.” Doehring Cowart smiled as he spoke.

Linley mentally nodded as he grabbed a roasted leg of mutton and chewed on it.

“Linley, eat more slowly.” Hogg saw how fast Linley was eating and couldn’t help but laugh.

Linley grinned at his father, but continued to devour his food with haste. In

the twinkling of an eye, he had stripped the leg of mutton of all flesh. Linley let out a comfortable burp, then used the napkin to wipe his lips. Standing, he said, “Father, Uncle Hiri, I’m done eating. I feel like my head is still a bit dizzy, so I’m going to go and get some more rest. Wharton, see ya.” Linley was the first to finish eating.

“Still feeling dizzy? Then go and get some rest.” Hogg hurriedly said.

The earlier events of the morning had left a lasting impression on Hogg. There was a moment when he even thought Linley had been crushed to death. After experiencing such an event, Hogg’s attitude towards Linley clearly had improved substantially.

“Big brother, see ya.” Chubby little Wharton waved at Linley with a grease-covered hand.

Chapter 21 – Earth-Style Magic (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 21 – Earth-Style Magic (part 2)

Linley ran directly back to his room, and then tightly shut the door behind him.

He quickly removed his shoes, then jumped onto the bed and sat down. “Grandpa Doehring, come out now. Help me test my magical aptitude.” Linley was extremely impatient. When he was eating dinner just now, all of his thoughts were turned towards this.

A misty ray of light shot out from within the ring, falling onto the floor and transforming into Doehring Cowart.

Grinning, Doehring Cowart said, “Linley, don’t be so impatient. First, I must tell you that because I don’t have any specialized magical aptitude testing equipment with me, I can only test whether or not you have any talent for earth-style magic. Since I have no tools, there’s no way for me to test and see if you have aptitude for any other magic.”

“You can only test for my aptitude for earth element magic?” Linley felt a little disappointed.

He had also heard that in order to test for magical aptitude, special tools were needed, but since Grandpa Doehring was a Saint-level Grand Magus, Linley had been hoping Doehring might have some special methods.

“What’s wrong with the earth style? Linley, let me tell you, amongst the elements of earth, fire, water, wind, thunder, light, and darkness, earth is the mightiest style of them all.” A look of pride was on Doehring Cowart’s face. Clearly, he was filled with confidence. After all, he was a Saint-level Grand Magus of the earth element style.

Linley found this somewhat hard to believe.

Each style should be equal. How could the earth style be the mightiest?

“Grandpa Doehring, I heard that fire-style elemental attacks are the most powerful? And that darkness-style elemental attacks are the most unpredictable? How could the earth style be the mightiest?” Linley frowned.

The formerly amiable Grandpa Doehring suddenly turned angry as he grumbled, “Linley, let me tell you that when it comes to attack power, each elemental style has its strengths!”

“For example, the forbidden fire-style spell of ‘Heavenly Fire Burning the Fields, Earthly Fire Burning the Cities’ can burn an entire city to ashes, true. But the water-style has the forbidden spell of ‘Absolute Zero’, which when unleashed can freeze to death hundreds of thousands of people. Thunder-style’s ‘Heavenly Lightning of Absolute Destruction’ can unleash tens of thousands of lightning bolts, which no one can survive. Wind-style’s forbidden spell, ‘Annihilating Tempest’, can fill the entire sky with blade-like gusts of wind…”

Doehring Cowart let out a long sigh.

Linley’s heart was trembling.

He had thought that the fire-style’s attacks were the most powerful, but from the sound of it, that was an absolute joke. Every single elemental style, at the level of forbidden spells, contained astonishing destructive power.

“And earth-style?” Linley didn’t forget about the earth-style elemental magic.

Doehring Cowart self-confidently said, “How could the earth-style be weak? When the earth-style’s forbidden spell, ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’, is executed, countless enormous boulders will rain from the sky and reduce a city to rubble in the twinkling of an eye. It also has the

forbidden spell, ‘Heaven Collapses, Earth Shatters’. When this spell is used, the earth itself will begin to roil about like waves in the ocean. Houses will collapse, the earth itself will split apart, and magma will spew out from the cracks, killing countless people.”

Linley didn’t dare to even breathe.

“Simultaneously, the earth-style also has the wide-ranging protective spell, ‘Pulsating Guard’. Once the Pulsating Guard is used, the area above, below, and around an entire city will become protected from all attacks. Even if an opponent uses the ‘Heavenly Lightning of Absolute Destruction’, this spell can fend it off.”

Doehring Cowart began to speak faster and faster while laughing. “But of course, I’m just speaking of wide-range destructive spells, and not one-on-one battle magic.”

Linley nodded.

He could tell that Grandpa Doehring was exclusively talking about wide-range, castatrophe-level magic.

“Grandpa Doehring, it seems like the earth-style has lots more forbidden spells? Why is that?” Linley said curiously.

Doehring Cowart said confidently, “Linley, there’s something you aren’t understanding. Actually, each elemental style is roughly balanced, but in different environments they will have different effects. For example, in the water-rich environment of the ocean, water-style magic will be extremely strong. In some places where the wind blows powerfully, wind-style magic will be very powerful as well.”

Linley began to understand.

“Linley…in the entire world, isn’t it true that most battles and most magi are on the earth? And when used while standing on the earth, earth-style magic is extremely effective.” A smile was on Doehring Cowart’s face. “As

you stand firmly on the boundless earth, an earth-style magus will have an extremely effective assistant."

Linley now understood!

Each elemental style of magic was more effective in certain places.

But the battles fought by the magi of the Yulan continent were virtually all on land, meaning that earth-style magi were almost always at an advantage.

"Amongst all the styles of magic, as the earth-style allows us to absorb earth elemental essence into our bodies, earth-style has the most benefit for improving your physical form. Mother Earth is most benevolent towards us." A look of veneration was on Doehring Cowart's face. "When we earth-style magi sit upon the ground, we can feel the vastness of the earth, feel its pulse, and feel Mother Earth's love for us."

"When it comes to attacks, earth-style magic has the one-on-one 'World Protector' forbidden battle spell, and also the destructive spells of 'Heavenly Meteor's Descent' and 'Heaven Collapses, Earth Shatters'. When it comes to defense, amongst the forbidden spells, there is the wide-ranging protective spell, 'Pulsating Guard', as well as the personal protective spell, 'Earthguard'. When it comes to personal protection, nothing beats earth-style elemental spells!"

Doehring Cowart appeared very confident.

"Personal protection? Grandpa Doehring, you're saying that the earth-style has the strongest personal protection spells?" Linley looked questioningly at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart laughed as he said, "At the earliest levels, earth-style magi have access to simple spells such as a shield of earth, or a wall of earth. Upon becoming a magus of the fifth rank, you will gain access to the 'Earthguard' spell, which will continuously grow in power along with you."

"When utilized by a magus of the fifth or sixth rank, it will cover your

entire body with a layer of stone armor. But upon reaching the seventh rank, it will transform into an armor of jadeite. Upon reaching the eighth rank, this Earthguard armor will be made up of crystal jade. And upon reaching the ninth rank, it will be composed of platinum. Finally, when a Saint-level magus executes the Earthguard spell, the protective armor will be made out of diamonds. The defensive power of this spell…" as he spoke, a smile appeared on Doehring Cowart's face.

Linley couldn't help but sigh inwardly.

This earth-style element really was a mighty one. When the Earthguard spell reached the Saint-level of power, it was composed entirely of diamonds! Linley knew that diamonds were an extremely hard and unyielding substance. And the 'diamonds' composing the Earthguard were no ordinary diamonds, but ones formed from magic, making them even tougher than real diamonds.

"Oh, right…"

Linley suddenly remembered the two Saint-level combatants who were fighting in the sky. He remembered how the green-robed man had landed that huge hazy sword-tip attack on the gray-robed man, whose robe shattered and revealed a diamond-like armor beneath it.

That Saint-level magus named 'Rudi' had relied on that diamond armor to block the attack by Dillon.

"That must have been a Saint-level Earthguard spell." Linley felt secretly shocked.

It was powerful enough to take a direct blow from a Saint-level combatant. From this, one could tell how powerful it was, defensively.

"This is why I told you that earth-style magic is the mightiest elemental style of them all." Doehring Cowart's white beard fluttered about, making him look all the more self-satisfied.

After all, all men survived by living on the earth. They lived on the earth, and they made war while on the earth. Naturally, earth-style magi would always have an advantage.

Chapter 22 – Spring Ends, Autumn Comes (part 1)

Book 1, Chapter 22 – Spring Ends, Autumn Comes (part 1)

Actually, all of the elemental styles, including earth-style, had their own particular strengths. But as a Saint-level Grand Magus of the earth-style, it was only natural that Doehring Cowart would strongly praise the earth-style. The eight year old Linley, upon hearing Doehring's words, was filled with eagerness.

"Grandpa Doehring, hurry up and test me and see if I have any aptitude for becoming an earth-style magus." Linley was feeling extremely anxious.

Doehring Cowart began to laugh. "Fine, I'll test you right away."

"First, let me tell you that the test for magical aptitude is a two-part test, so the test I am administering will also have two parts." Doehring Cowart was behaving in an unusually generous manner. After having been trapped along in the Coiling Dragon Ring for five thousand years, of course he was now in a wonderful mood when faced with such a cute little child.

"Magical aptitude is divided into two parts – the strength of one's magical affinity for certain elements, and the strength of one's mental energy." Doehring Cowart began to explain the basics of the test.

"What are these two parts good for?" Linley asked curiously.

Doehring Cowart said in a kindly voice, "Linley, before answering this, let me ask you, if a magus is about to cast a spell, what does he rely upon?"

"Magical incantations!" Linley immediately said.

Linley had seen how the magus who rode the Velocidragon first mumbled many magical words before casting his spell.

“Wrong.”

“I’ve seen magi cast spells. All of them recited magical incantations first.” Linley immediately argued.

Doehring Cowart stroked his white beard, and contentedly said, “When casting spells, the most important thing for a magus is his ‘mageforce’ and his ‘mental energy’. If his mental energy is sufficiently powerful, he can even instacast spells, without need for any incantations. Magical incantations only serve a supplemental function.”

“Oh? Instacast?” Linley looked questioningly at Doehring Cowart. Linley felt as though suddenly, the huge world of sorcery was slowly opening up before his very eyes, but still remained hazy and indistinct. Doehring Cowart, however, was dissipating the mysterious façade behind this world of magic.

Smiling, Doehring Cowart nodded. “Right. To cast a spell, your body must be able to provide a sufficient amount of mageforce, and then use mental energy to control that mageforce to summon sufficient elemental essence to form it into a spell!”

“Elemental essence?” Linley was surprised. “Grandpa Doehring, are you saying that in order to cast magical spells, we need to draw upon external elemental essences?”

“Haha. Of course. Linley, did you think that a powerful magus could simply rely on the elemental essence already in his body? Impossible! Let’s look at forbidden-level magical spells. The mageforce in the body of a Saint-level magus can only provide 1% of the amount of essence needed. The other 99% can only be provided by natural, elemental essence.”

“Let me put it to you like this…a magus’ so-called ‘mageforce’ is really just pure, highly-refined elemental essence. Mageforce can be described as a ‘general’, whereas nature’s elemental essence is the soldiers. A magus summons his mageforce and uses it to direct nature’s elemental essence to

form amazing spells. Understood?" Doehring Cowart smiled as he looked at Linley.

Linley couldn't help but frown.

"Oh…I understand." Linley laughed and nodded. "The 'mageforce' inside a magus is kinda like Uncle Hillman, while elemental essence is like our group of kids. Uncle Hillman, all by himself, directs our entire group in training, or in attacking, or engaging in battle!"

Doehring Cowart smiled and nodded. "Right. Therefore, the 'mageforce' of a magus is extremely important. If he doesn't have enough mageforce, he will not be able to cast a spell."

Linley nodded.

"Compared to mageforce, however, mental energy is even more important!" Doehring Cowart smiled as he spoke. "By now, you should have realized that so-called mental energy is really spiritual energy, a form of controlling energy!"

"Linley, a large amount of mageforce draws out an even larger amount of elemental essence. If such a huge amount of force is not controlled by spiritual energy…what do you think the end result would be?" Doehring Cowart stroked his white beard as he quietly watched Linley.

Linley frowned, pondering.

"Grandpa Doehring." Linley said in a low voice as he frowned. "In some books, I read about some military tactics. In it, one of the things it said was…to subdue an enemy, first subdue their king. For example, bandits. If you first kill the bandit leader, the bandit army will naturally crumble to pieces and fall apart. So spiritual energy should serve a similar purpose as the 'controlling energy' which the bandit leader exerts on his subordinates. Without spiritual energy to control a large amount of mageforce and elemental essence, this power would run wild."

Doehring Cowart laughed.

“Haha, Linley, you are very smart.” Doehring Cowart was laughing happily.

“Right, a large amount of mageforce and elemental essence, when controlled by spiritual energy, can be formed into a spell! Sometimes, in order to execute a particularly powerful spell, too high of a demand is placed upon one’s spiritual energy. Thus, the assistance of magical incantations is needed.” Doehring Cowart smiled as he spoke.

Linley felt as though a huge, important principle of magic had suddenly become crystal clear to him.

Smiling at Linley, Doehring Cowart continued, “Of course, that’s just the basic theory. The world of magic is far more complicated than you can imagine! The question of exactly how one uses mageforce and elemental essence to form ‘magic’, now that’s the real issue!”

“What’s the point of having mageforce, if you don’t know exactly how to shape it into a magical spell?” Doehring Cowart let out a long sigh. “The world of magic is an extremely complicated one. Magical research is very difficult and dangerous. But due to intra-empire struggles, countless magi engage in the research of new types of spells.”

“Actually, every single empire researches new ways of using different matrices of mageforce and elemental essence to produce different spells! But magical research is extremely dangerous. The more destructive a spell potentially is, the harder it is to research. Sometimes, it can even catastrophically backlash upon the researchers.”

Doehring Cowart laughed as he spoke. “In most magus academies, you can only study spells up to the sixth rank. Spells of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks, as well as Saint-level spells, are considered secrets. Only if you join a kingdom will you gain access to those special spells.”

Linley had read many books and therefore understood this principle.

“If you have no instructor? No matter how much mageforce you have or how high your spiritual energy is, you won’t be able to execute a single spell!” Doehring Cowart smiled faintly. “The profound secrets of every magical spell lies in how to control mageforce and elemental essence to form the spell.”

“After countless years of magical experimentation, the magical system has essentially been perfected.” Stroking his white beard, Doehring Cowart laughed loudly. “Linley, don’t worry. In the future, there’s no need for you to bend the knee to any kingdom or any lord, because…I can teach you seventh, eighth, ninth, and even Saint-level spells!”

Linley took a deep breath.

He could feel himself embarking on a new path.

Under the guidance of Grandpa Doehring, he had no need to continue to follow the path of the warrior. He would now embark on the more mysterious, more powerful way of the magus.

“Come, let’s begin the test of the strength of your elemental affinities. Sit down with legs crossed, close your eyes, and enter a meditative state.” Doehring Cowart said gently.

“Meditative state?” Linley felt his heartbeat quicken.

How would his affinity rate?

“Don’t worry. Just carefully try and see what you can sense, and whenever you sense something, just tell me.” Doehring Cowart smiled encouragingly towards Linley. Linley immediately closed his eyes and tried to force himself to calm down.

“Don’t worry. Just do as I instruct.” Doehring Cowart said in a gentle voice.

…..

Meditation was one of the basic underpinnings of all magus'. It was needed for both absorbing elemental essence to transform it into mageforce, and for improving one's spiritual energy. The first time entering a meditative state was the most difficult and dangerous one, but of course, under the guidance of a Saint-level Grand Magus, Linley wouldn't find it too difficult.

After half an hour of instruction, Linley finally entered the meditative state for the first time.

Seeing Linley in a meditative state, Doehring Cowart let out a faint smile, then waved his hand.

Immediately…

A large amount of earth essence began to swirl around Linley. Normally, most places only had an ordinary density of earth essence, but right now, Doehring Cowart was using his powerful spiritual energy to increase the density of earth essence near Linley by a hundredfold.

"If he still can't sense any earth essence around him even under these conditions, then there's no hope for him at all." Doehring Cowart said to himself.

Even a totally ordinary person should sense something, given that the density of earth essence was a hundred times greater than normal.

Right now, Linley, still in a meditative state, felt extremely happy and excited. He had never realized…that around him, there were so many amazing things. Countless earth-colored specks of light were floating around him, in such a high density as to be shocking.

Chapter 23 – Spring Ends, Autumn Comes (part 2)

Book 1, Chapter 23 – Spring Ends, Autumn Comes (part 2)

“Linley, can you feel it?” Doehring Cowart’s voice gently sounded in Linley’s mind.

“Grandpa Doehring, I can feel it. There’s so many specks of earth-colored light. So many…too many. They are clustered so densely, thousands, no, tens of thousands. A hundred earth-colored specks of light just floated past my hand. There’s too many.” Feeling the large amount of earth-colored specks of light floating around him, Linley felt extremely happy.

Hearing this news, Doehring Cowart was immediately ecstatic.

“Very good. Now, slowly, do as I say. Don’t think about anything. Quietly…” Doehring Cowart droned almost hypnotically, helping Linley to depart the meditative state. At the same time, he released the control he was exerting over the earth essence. Immediately, the earth essence density around them returned to normal.

After awakening from the meditative state, Linley felt as though he was full of energy, totally different from before. Even while fully awake, Linley felt as though he could still sense some of the oscillations from the nearby earth essences, even though he couldn’t sense them as clearly as when he was in the meditative state.

“Grandpa Doehring, I can still feel the movements of those earth-colored specks of light. Really! Even though it’s not as clear now, I can still somewhat feel them.” Linley was feeling extremely excited.

This was his first step into the world of magic. Linley was filled with amazement.

“What did you say? You can still sense it?” Doehring Cowart was very astonished, because the nearby density of earth essence had returned to normal now, and Linley was no longer in a meditative state. If he could still sense the nearby earth essence, even while awake…then his affinity for earth essence…

“Grandpa Doehring, why aren’t you talking? How is the strength of my affinity for earth elemental essence?” Linley said nervously.

Linley didn’t know if he had done well or poorly.

“Good. Extremely good. Your affinity for earth elemental essence is extremely high.” Doehring Cowart’s face was wreathed in smiles. “Based on what I know, only perhaps one in a thousand magi would have as strong an affinity for earth elemental essence as you. Truly.”

Linley felt his heart began thumping frantically. He was so excited he didn’t know what to say.

“But naturally, elemental affinity is just one part. Spiritual energy is the most important of all! After all, given enough time, mageforce will naturally strengthen. But it’s extremely difficult to improve the spiritual energy of a magus.” Doehring Cowart said solemnly.

Linley took a deep breath and nodded.

“Now, it’s time for the second test, to test your spiritual energy.” Doehring Cowart looked at Linley solemnly.

Linley also knew that this test of spiritual energy was an extremely important one.

“Grandpa Doehring, what do I need to do?” Linley stared at Doehring Cowart, mentally preparing himself.

“Nothing at all.” Doehring Cowart laughed.

“Uh…” Linley was startled.

“I am the spirit of the Coiling Dragon Ring, while you are the master of the Coiling Dragon Ring. I am totally capable of sensing the strength of your spirit! There’s no need to test it at all. I can tell you right now!” Doehring Cowart smiled at Linley.

“I…how is my spiritual energy?” Linley held his breath.

The strength or weakness of a person’s spiritual energy determined one’s destiny.

“Your spiritual energy is ten times stronger than the average person of your age.” Doehring Cowart smiled as he spoke.

Linley felt a sense of excitement in his heart. Ten times!

That wasn’t a small number.

But Doehring Cowart continued, “Generally speaking, only one in ten thousand can become a magus, principally because there’s a high requirement when it comes to spiritual energy. The absolute minimum requirement for a magus is having five times more spiritual energy than someone of the same age. Ten times puts you roughly in the middle of the pack, as far as the average magus goes.”

Linley’s earlier excitement was immediately dampened.

“If it was anyone else instructing you, at most you could become a magus of the fifth or sixth rank. However…since the person instructing you is me, the situation is now different.” Doehring Cowart stroked his beard contentedly, a look of self-confidence in his eyes.

Linley suddenly came to the same realization.

Right. Doehring Cowart was a Saint-level Grand Magus!

“As long as you work hard, Linley, I am fully confident that you can reach the eighth rank. But as to whether or not you can become a magus of the ninth rank, or even a Saint-level magus? That will depend on your own comprehension and your experiences.” Doehring Cowart said seriously. “If you do not work hard, I’m afraid you might not even become a magus of the sixth rank. At that point in time, you’ll have no one else to blame.”

A good instructor in magic was just one part of the equation.

The most important part was still one’s own effort.

“Grandpa Doehring, please don’t worry. I won’t disappoint you, or my father, or the Baruch clan.” At this moment, Linley’s mind was filled with the image of the spirit tablet in front of the ancestral hall, and those illustrious names and stories engraved on the back.

To renew the former glory of the Baruch clan!

Linley’s chest was filled with boiling heat!

“Good. Starting tomorrow, I will begin to instruct you.” Doehring Cowart looked at Linley, his eyes gleaming. Right now, Doehring Cowart’s body was once more emanating the self-confidence and pride which a Saint-level Grand Magus possessed!

….

Starting the very next day, Linley began to live an extremely tough, arduous life.

He couldn’t reveal the existence of Doehring Cowart to his father. Every morning and evening, he still needed to attend physical training, while later in the morning, he would have his lessons with his father on politics, religion, religious rites, warfare, geography, art…and all sorts of other lessons.

Only in the afternoon, during his previously spare time, would Linley run

towards Mt. Wushan, east of the township, hide in a quiet place, and begin to learn the basics of magic under the guidance of Doehring Cowart. He studied hard, while entering the meditative state to absorb and process mageforce.

In addition, each day, after eating dinner, Linley would spend a large amount of time in the meditative state.

Every day, Linley would spend only six hours sleeping. All of his other time was spent in physical training, intellectual studies, magical instruction, and meditation. Six hours of sleep a day, frankly speaking, was simply not enough. In truth, entering the meditative state was extremely taxing, far more tiring than most people's lives. Every day, Linley entered a very deep sleep for those six hours.

Filled. His time was absolutely filled.

With each day passing like this, day after day, Linley's improvement was very evident, to the point where it wasn't just improvement, but a form of transformation!

As he was hard at work training…

He experienced, for the first time, the joy of absorbing elemental essence into his body, and then transforming it into mageforce.

He experienced, for the first time, entering so deeply into the meditative state that he almost became unconscious.

And he experienced, for the first time, the excitement of performing earth-style magic, even if it was nothing more than generating a tiny 'Earth Spike' that was only twenty centimeters high.

…..

Hard work, day after day…

Linley's effort and the speed of his improvement caused even Doehring Cowart, that five-thousand year old Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire, to sigh with amazement.

Due to his daily physical training exercises, Linley's body was growing sturdier and sturdier. Because he often entered the meditative state and absorbed earth essence, Linley became calmer and more tranquil. Linley's transformation caused his father Hogg and Hillman to both be amazed and overjoyed.

….

Spring ended, and autumn came. In the blink of an eye, it was now autumn.

There was only one month remaining before the magus affinity testing and recruitment event.

In the ancestral hall within the Baruch clan manor.

"Whew. All done cleaning. Time to go do some more magical training. Yesterday I actually managed to successfully execute the 'Earth Tremor' technique. That was wonderful." Right now, Linley was in an extremely good mood. He quickly strode out of the ancestral hall and closed the door.

Walking on the blue tiled steps of the stone walkway, Linley's footsteps were firm and swift, but made little sound.

This was an ability that virtually all earth-style magi possessed. Because their power was derived from the earth itself, they could mask virtually all sound from their footsteps.

"Eh?" Linley frowned.

His ears twitched as he turned and stared towards a far-off building. "I heard something?" He immediately stealthily walked in that direction. His footsteps made almost no sound. Normally, just while walking ordinarily, he could mask his footsteps. Now that he was intentionally trying to hide

them, he made even less noise.

He crept closer, step by step.

When Linley reached the door to the building and took a peek inside…

“What’s that?” Linley’s eyes widened.

He saw a 20-centimeter long black mouse chewing on a piece of stone rubble. And then, in the blink of an eye, the black mouse appeared tens of meters away in a different direction, and began to nibble on a piece of blue tile. The black mouse’s fur appeared very soft. Its eyes were guileless, and its paws were furry. In a word, it looked very cute.

It even hopped around just on its two hind legs for fun.

“What an adorable little mouse. And how amazingly fast!” Hiding by the doorway, Linley exclaimed silently.

Most mice wouldn’t reach such a size, and most mouses were loathsome creatures, but this mouse seemed particularly adorable. Its eyes seemed to be full of meaning, as though they could speak. Most importantly of all…it was astonishingly fast.

“Such speed…I bet even Uncle Hillman, a warrior of the sixth rank, can’t catch it. How can it be so fast?” Seeing the cute mouse move tens of meters in just the blink of an eye, Linley felt astonished.

Doehring Cowart flew out from within the Coiling Dragon Ring. Standing next to Linley, he looked at the black mouse with some surprise. “A magical beast, a Shadowmouse? And judging by its size, a Shadowmouse infant.”

“A magical beast? Shadowmouse? It is so big! How can it be an infant?” Linley stared at Doehring Cowart in surprise.

Aside from the Vampiric Iron Bull, the Griffin, the Velocidragon, and the Black Dragon magical beasts he had seen, this was the first time Linley had

seen any other magical beasts. This adorable black mouse was actually a magical beast? A magical beast, with magical abilities?

Chapter 1 – Magical Beast, Shadowmouse

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 1 – Magical Beast, Shadowmouse

“Magical beast ‘Shadowmouse’? Grandpa Doehring, what special qualities does a Shadowmouse possess, and what rank does it have amongst magical beasts?” Linley and Doehring Cowart were mentally communicating, but at the same time, Linley was staring excitedly at him.

Doehring Cowart smiled. He pretended to hem and haw for a few seconds, then slowly said, “The magical beast ‘Shadowmouse’ cannot easily be hemmed into a particular rank. This is because it represents an entire race of mice. Amongst rat-type creatures, there’s two major types; the Stoneater Rat, and the Shadowmouse. But both the Stoneater Rat and the Shadowmouse are omnivores. They can eat anything, whether it is stones, bones, or even meat.”

Linley mentally nodded.

Just now, he had seen that black Shadowmouse nibbling on a rock.

“Magical beasts are divided into nine ranks. Magical beasts of the first rank are the weakest. And of course, above the ninth rank are magical beasts at the Saint-level!” Doehring Cowart smiled at Linley. “Linley, the weakest type of Stoneater Rat is the Grey Stoneater Rat. Stoneater Rats of the first to third ranks are all grey in color, with some minor shading differences. A Stoneater Rat, upon reaching the fourth rank, will see its fur turn pure silver. Upon reaching the seventh rank, its fur will turn gold! A gold-colored Stoneater Rat will at least be a magical beast of the seventh rank, and at most a magical beast of the eighth rank.”

“Linley, the Stoneater Rat race is an extremely terrifying race, primarily because they have huge numbers, and extremely sharp teeth, far sharper than the Shadowmouse race. When large numbers of Stoneater Rats appear, even an army of a hundred thousand people cannot hope to withstand

them.” Doehring Cowart sighed as he spoke.

Doehring Cowart was recalling a catastrophe he had witnessed long ago.

The Stoneater Rat was not as fast as the Shadowmouse, but its body was as tough and durable as steel. The higher ranked a Stoneater Rat was, the tougher its body would become, and the sharper its teeth would become. Its body seemed small, but that was deceptive; in large numbers, they were absolutely terrifying.

“The weapons used by most armies cannot kill a Stoneater Rat, but a Stoneater Rat can easily kill and devour a soldier.” Doehring Cowart sighed again.

In Linley’s imagination, there appeared the image of a vast, endless flood of Stoneater Rats descending from the wilderness or mountains and attacking an army of men. Imagining that flood of Stoneater Rats devouring the entire army, Linley’s heart shivered.

Absolutely terrifying.

“Amongst the two races of rat-type creatures, the Stoneater Rat has an extremely tough defense, sharp teeth, and huge numbers. But Shadowmice? There are quite a large number of Shadowmice as well, but their numbers are far less than Stoneater Rats.” Doehring Cowart seemed like an encyclopedia, all-wise and all-knowing.

“And Shadowmice? How powerful is a Shadowmouse?” Linley asked.

There was a Shadowmouse not too far from him. Naturally, Linley wanted to know more about how powerful they were.

“The weakest Stoneater Rat is a beast of the first rank. But the Shadowmouse is different! The weakest Shadowmouse is a magical beast of the third rank, with jet black fur. When its entire body turns blue in color, that is a sign that it has reached the fifth rank. And when all of its fur has turned violet, that means it has at least reached the seventh rank, and at

most the eighth rank." Doehring Cowart's words were clear and precise.

Linley nodded inwardly.

Based on potential power, a Shadowmouse was not inferior at all to a Stoneater Rat.

"Grandpa Doehring, based on what you just said, a Shadowmouse of the third or fourth rank would have pure black fur. Only upon reaching the fifth rank would its fur turn blue. So are you saying that little guy there is a magical beast of the third or fourth rank?" Linley followed up with more questions.

"This black colored Shadowmouse is not ordinary."

Doehring Cowart frowned as he spoke. "The Stoneater Rat is famed for its toughness and its sharp teeth, while the Shadowmouse is famed for its speed and its sharp teeth! Speed is thus a very good way to determine the strength of any particular Shadowmouse."

"It moved really fast, tens of meters in the blink of an eye. But since it is a Shadowmouse, I guess that isn't out of the ordinary." Linley still remembered its earlier movements clearly.

Doehring Cowart nodded. "Shadowmice are indeed very fast, but for an infant Shadowmouse to already have reached the speed of an adult Shadowmouse is definitely out of the ordinary." A hint of a smile was on Doehring Cowart's face.

"Out of the ordinary?" Linley looked at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart continued, "Right. For an infant Shadowmouse to have reached the speed of an adult Shadowmouse of the fourth rank means that when it grows up, it has the possibility of becoming a violet-colored Shadowmouse of the seventh rank. I suspect…that it is the child of a Violet Shadowmouse."

“The child of a Violet Shadowmouse?” Linley said questioningly. “But its fur is black.”

Doehring Cowart laughed. “Linley, Violet Shadowmice and Blue Shadowmice, when born, all start off with black fur. Only as their strength grows will the color of their fur slowly change! The color of their fur is proof of their power!”

Linley suddenly understood. “So that is how it is!”

“Grandpa Doehring, then based on your words, this Shadowmouse is really amazingly fast. The Shadowmouse in front of me is slightly faster than even Uncle Hillman, but you are telling me that it is comparable to a Shadowmouse of the fourth rank. For a magical beast of the fourth rank to be faster than a warrior of the sixth rank…” Linley couldn’t help but sigh in amazement.

Doehring Cowart laughed. “Linley, if they weren’t so fast, why would they be called Shadowmice?”

At the same rank of power, a Shadowmouse, when running, was far, far faster than a human warrior.

“A Shadowmouse is a rare prize as magical beasts go, especially the seventh-ranked Violet Shadowmouse. Many a magus would want a Violet Shadowmouse, but they are simply too fast. An adult Violet Shadowmouse is valuable, but extremely hard to catch and tame. It is much easier to catch and tame an infant Violet Shadowmouse, but it is extremely rare for one to be able to meet an infant Violet Shadowmouse by itself.” Doehring Cowart smiled as he looked at Linley.

Linley could imagine it as well.

A Violet Shadowmouse was a magical beast of the seventh rank at least, which meant that at the very least, they had a Velocidragon’s level of power.

“Linley, a Violet Shadowmouse is considered a king amongst rats, and can

command a large swarm of Shadowmice. Although Shadowmice are not as numerous as Stoneater Rats, they are still quite numerous. An infant Violet Shadowmouse would therefore be protected by many adult Shadowmice."

Doehring Cowart glanced sideways at that distant black Shadowmouse, still chewing some rocks.

"To be so powerful when still so young, eight or nine times out of ten, means that it is the infant of a Violet Shadowmouse. I really wonder how he managed to make his way to your clan's manor, without a single adult Shadowmouse guard." Doehring Cowart said with an air of amazement.

Linley also agreed with Doehring Cowart's words.

"Linley." Doehring Cowart suddenly looked at Linley with a strange look in his eyes. His voice carrying a hint of enticement he said, "Regardless of why the the infant Violet Shadowmouse is here…would you want to collect it as a companion? Shadowmice grow very rapidly, especially Violet Shadowmice. In ten years or so, it will finish its growth cycle. By that time, you would have a magical beast companion of at least the seventh, and possibly even the eighth rank."

Hearing his words, Linley's heart fluttered.

Taming a magical beast of the seventh or eighth rank is extremely difficult. But taming them when they are in the infant stage is far easier.

In addition, not all infant magical beasts are the same. Some grow up very quickly, while some grow up very slowly. Amongst the 'dragon' type magical beasts, some can take a thousand years to mature. Most humans simply don't have the ability to wait so long. Shadowmice were one of the types of magical beasts that grow up fairly quickly.

But encountering an infant Violet Shadowmouse is simply too rare of an occasion.

After all, the more powerful a magical beast is, the more importance it

attaches to protecting its young. Although it wasn't too clear why this young Shadowmouse had appeared within his manor, it was an indisputable fact that it was indeed here, alone.

"Linley, possessing a Violet Shadowmouse is equivalent to possessing an entire Shadowmouse army!" Doehring Cowart smiled at Linley. "This is why the Violet Shadowmouse is a far more precious magical beast than many other beasts of the seventh or eighth rank."

Doehring Cowart continued to try and entice Linley.

How could a seven or eight year old Linley resist?

"Grandpa Doehring, how would I tame this Violet Shadowmouse?" Linley looked excitedly at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart felt very happy. "If little Linley really can tame this Shadowmouse, in the future, I can be a bit more at ease." Doehring Cowart knew very well that as a spirit, he had no mageforce of his own at all. A Saint-level Grand Magus without mageforce really didn't have many attacking abilities.

There was no way for him to protect Linley.

But after the past half year, he had already begun to consider this pure, hard-working child as his own grandson. Naturally, he wanted to come up with ways to improve Linley's strength.

"Linley, you must be calm." Doehring Cowart said solemnly. "Even if this is just a Violet Shadowmouse infant, his speed is comparable to a mature Shadowmouse of the fourth rank. Even your Uncle Hillman won't be able to catch him. You simply don't have the ability to forcibly subdue him, and you also are not able to utilize a soul-binding magical formation.

Linley was startled.

His overheated mind suddenly calmed down. Laughing bitterly, he said,

“Now I remember. To tame a magical beast, the first way is to forcibly subdue him, and the second way is to use a soul-binding magical formation, which can only be utilized by a magus of the seventh rank, at least.

Linley couldn’t help but feel a bit disappointed.

Alas, he was too weak. Even though he had the good fortune to encounter a Violet Shadowmouse infant, he didn’t have the ability to tame it.

Chapter 2 – A Clumsy Method (Part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 2 – A Clumsy Method (Part 1)

“Linley, don’t be discouraged. I only meant to say that there is no way for you to forcibly subdue him, I didn’t say that it is impossible to tame him at all.” Doehring Cowart laughed self-indulgently. “If he was an adult Shadowmouse, I probably wouldn’t be able to help, but…he’s just a baby Shadowmouse. As a Saint-level Grand Magus, I have some methods which can be effective in dealing with a baby Shadowmouse. In addition, there is no need for a soul-binding magical formation.”

Linley’s calm mind immediately grew agitated again, and he turned to look at Doehring Cowart with shining eyes.

“Grandpa Doehring, quick, tell me, what’s your plan?” Linley excitedly spoke to him mentally.

Doehring Cowart said with a self-satisfied smile, “It’s simple. The ‘soul-binding’ technique used by the soul-binding magical formation creates a master-servant bond. And naturally, if one can subdue a magical beast, one is qualified to become its master. Right now, there’s no way for us to initiate a ‘master-servant bond’, so we can only take a step back…and initiate a ‘bond of equals’ with the Shadowmouse.”

“Bond of equals?” Linley said curiously. “What is that? I’ve never heard of it.”

“It’s normal for you not to have heard of it. Even five thousand years ago, during the era in which I lived, very few people know about the ‘bond of equals’.” Doehring Cowart’s eyes crinkled as he smiled. “A bond of equals represents that you and the magical beast share the same status in the relationship, with no one being the master or being the servant. As a matter of fact, a ‘bond of equals’ will give you a more intimate relationship with your magical beast, and your magical beast will more whole-heartedly

assist you, giving the two of you superior teamwork."

Linley now understood.

"Oh? Grandpa Doehring, from your words, it sounds like there's a lot of advantages to this 'bond of equals'. Why don't most people use it?" Linley queried.

Doehring Cowart laughed loudly. "Because, the 'bond of equals' is not initiated by people. Rather, it is initiated by the magical beast."

"Initiated by the magical beast?!" Linley was stunned.

No wonder there was no need for setting up a soul-binding magical formation. This bond was initiated by the magical beast itself. Doehring Cowart continued, "Every single magical beast, upon birth, has the ability to initiate a 'bond of equals', but in their entire life, a magical beast may only enter this bond a single time. It isn't like the soul-binding master-servant relationship, where once the master dissolves the relationship, someone else can use another soul-binding technique to tame the beast again."

Linley nodded.

"But it is extremely difficult to convince a magical beast to willingly initiate the 'bond of equals'," Doehring Cowart continued more seriously. "You need to convince a magical beast that you are like family and make it decide that it cannot bear to part from you. Only then would it willingly enter a 'bond of equals' with you."

Linley slightly nodded.

"Adult magical beasts have very high intelligence, so if you want to move the heart of an adult magical beast and make it view you as family, it is almost impossible." Doehring Cowart sighed. "But juveniles are different. It is much like how human babies have low intelligence and can easily be tricked into liking you by, say, giving them some tasty food. The

intelligence of magical beast babies is even lower. As long as you often feed him, he will like you. Then, spend some time playing with him. In a short period of time, this magical beast will come to adore you. This is especially true for an infant magical beast who has been separated from his community. Those are even easier to tame."

Hearing Doehring Cowart's words, Linley felt as though a great weight had been lifted from him.

"So it's just a matter of coaxing a little kid." Linley laughed.

He was extremely experienced in this. Ever since he was young, he accompanied his younger brother, Wharton, playing with him and coaxing him. Linley was very much a master in the art.

"Linley, don't be too cocky. If you want to coax an infant magical beast, you have to pay attention to many details. If you aren't careful, this little Shadowmouse might just give you a bite." Doehring Cowart reminded.

"Give me a bite?"

Linley looked at the far-off Shadowmouse. The sound of it crunching through rocks could be heard from afar. The Shadowmouse was chewing through it as easily as he normally would've chewn through bread. Linley didn't question the sharpness of the teeth of this Shadowmouse in the slightest.

"Then what should I do?" Linley immediately lost his confidence.

"Relax. Based on my method, you won't have any problems at all. Based on this 'clumsy idea' that I have, all you need is time and patience. Don't get agitated or impatient." Doehring Cowart slowly began to explain his 'clumsy idea'. "Linley, a Shadowmouse is an omnivore; it will eat anything. Bones, rocks, meat. But its favorite food is still meat, especially roasted meat. This is based on the experience of elders."

"Therefore, just go up Mt. Wushan to kill some beasts, then place the

cooked meat far away from him on the ground. Remember. Do not try to get near him. Each time he eats, wait for him to approach you." Doehring Cowart laughed. "If you try to approach him, it might cause him to attack you out of fear! But if he approaches you, then there won't be any danger at all."

"This method is clumsy, but very safe." Doehring Cowart said with a smile.

Linley understood.

This method really was a bit clumsy, but it was also simple and direct.

"Grandpa Doehring, won't this Shadowmouse run all over the place?" Linley was worried that if he went and got some roasted meat, he might come back to find the Shadowmouse had gone. There would be nothing he could do then.

"Who can say? It all comes down to your luck. But I believe that in a short period of time, it won't go anywhere." Doehring Cowart said.

"Fine, I'll go kill some wild beasts." Linley nodded, then quickly ran towards Mt. Wushan. His footsteps were very sure, but strangely made no sound at all. This was the proof of one's ability as a earth-style magus.

After departing from the back gate of the manor, Linley began to run at a normal pace, and his footsteps began to sound again.

"Young master Linley, headed to the back mountain again?" Uncle Hiri, broom in hand, was dusting the floor. He saw Linley and smiled at him.

"Yup." Linley assented as he sped up his pace.

Over the past half year, Linley had been going to Mt. Wushan to train in magecraft almost every afternoon. No one else knew that he was training in magecraft, of course. But they all knew that in the afternoons, Linley liked to spend his spare time playing in the mountains.

…..

Autumn. Most of the trees on Mt. Wushan had shed their leaves, but there were still many evergreen trees, as well as some maple trees covered in deep red leaves.

A vigorous, nimble shadow could be seen piercing through the mountain forests. Linley ran silently but nimbly and fast. After having absorbed earth essence for half a year, Linley didn't just possess mageforce; his physical strength had been raised as well.

By this point in time, Linley's body was comparable to the average 15-16 year old in Wushan township, and possessed the strength of a warrior of the first rank.

There were many squirrels and rabbits on Mt. Wushan, while there weren't many fierce beasts. This was the reason why most adults didn't worry too much about their children playing in the mountain. After all, Mt. Wushan was a fairly small mountain, with very few large animals, much less magical beasts.

Linley's footsteps suddenly halted, as he saw up ahead a dull-yellow colored rabbit eating grass.

Even a very cautious wild rabbit wasn't able to detect Linley in the slightest.

"Wild rabbits have a fast reaction time, and run fast also. Best if I use magic." Linley immediately began to chant the words to a magical incantation.

Linley felt that in the center of his chest, a small gust of earth-style mageforce began to throb. Most warriors stored their battle-qi approximately 10 centimeters below their navel, but magi stored their mageforce directly in the middle of their chests, at the middle of a line between their nipples. But spiritual energy, of course, was stored in their head.

It didn’t make much of a difference if a magical incantation was mumbled or shouted. The only thing that mattered was making sure one’s spiritual energy was guided by the energies released by the incantation.

In scant seconds, Linley finished his incantation, and his eyes lit up as he stared at the hare.

Earth-style, magic of the first rank – Earth Spike!

Poof!

A sharp spike of earth erupted from directly beneath the wild hare, piercing directly into its chest. Scarlet blood flowed out, dying its soft fur. Shocked at the ambush, the hare immediately began to struggle, but all it succeeded in doing was make itself lose blood even faster.

Chapter 3 – A Clumsy Method (Part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 3 – A Clumsy Method (Part 2)

Linley immediately ran over and grabbed the rabbit by the throat with one hand. CRACK! The rabbit, previously struggling in agony, twitched twice, then went still. Ever since watching those two battles half a year ago, the 'bloodthirsty' nature of the Dragonblood in Linley's veins had been in full sway.

"I am both a warrior of the first rank and a magus of the first rank, but in terms of attack power, my magic is stronger." Grabbing the wild rabbit, Linley couldn't help but laugh and sigh.

Magi were divided into nine ranks, and becoming a magus of the first rank was easy. But later on, it would become much harder, and take more time to attain each new rank! Many powerful magi of the seventh or eighth ranks would spend hundreds of years and still find it hard to attain a higher rank.

But for the first rank, half a year would be enough for someone talented. Even if one didn't have much talent, as long as they met the basic requirements for becoming a magus, two to three years would be sufficient for them to become a magus.

The rabbit in his clutches, Linley immediately began running down the mountain.

"Linley, why aren't you cooking it? Although the Shadowmouse will eat raw meat, his favorite is cooked meat." Doehring Cowart's voice sounded in Linley's mind.

"Grandpa Doehring, I bet you never coaxed any kids before." While running, Linley replied in a teasing voice.

Doehring Cowart was startled. He had never had any grandchildren, and

why would a revered Saint-level Grand Magus like himself stoop to coaxing other kids?

“Um, no, I haven’t.” Doehring Cowart was forced to admit.

Linley self-confidently said, “I often have to coax little Wharton. Lemme tell ya, if you want to give a kid something, you can’t give them something too good, right off the bat. Otherwise, in the future, they’ll expect something really good every single time, or something even better. Right now, the Shadowmouse is chewing on rocks. If I give him some raw meat, he’ll be really happy. I’ll give him raw meat for seven or eight days, and then I’ll give him cooked meat. That will make him even happier.”

Doehring Cowart immediately understood.

The older one got, the craftier one got. How could he fail to understand this logic? It was the same method he had used in dealing with subordinates. First, giving them just a little taste, and then giving them more later. If you gave them too much too early, it would be hard to satisfy their urges in the future.

“I read about this as well in a book regarding raising monkeys. ‘Saying three in the morning and then raising to four in the afternoon’ is much more effective than ‘saying four in the morning and then lowering to three in the afternoon’. Linley grinned.

Doehring Cowart suddenly felt that although Linley was only eight, he wasn’t any inferior to many young adults.

“Looks like the educational methods of the Baruch clan are rather effective after all.” Doehring Cowart silently sighed with praise. Education can raise a person’s intelligence, but most commoners didn’t have access to education. Most commoners could not meet either the entry requirements or the fee requirements for good magus academies or warrior academies.

…..

None of the people of Mt. Wushan found it strange for Linley to be running home with a wild hare in hand. In truth, ever since Linley had learned the ‘Earth Spike’ spell, he often brought wild hares home.

“Young master Linley is so formidable. He caught another wild hare.” The commoners in the town grinned as they watched him pass by.

Linley also politely smiled back at them as he walked past them on the street.

“I wonder if the Shadowmouse will eat something which is provided by another.”

Taking a deep breath, Linley entered his family’s manor and went to the back courtyard, and one careful step at a time, approached the location where the Shadowmouse had appeared, his footsteps not making a single sound. In a short period of time, Linley returned to his earlier position.

“Where’s the Shadowmouse?” Linley stared at the ancient building, but aside from some rubble and rotting leaves, he didn’t see anything.

Some of the stones still showed signs of being chewed on, but despite scanning inside the entire building, he couldn’t see even the shadow of the Shadowmouse. Linley couldn’t help but feel despondent and miserable. “Grandpa Doehring, the Shadowmouse isn’t here anymore. It was just an hour. Did it leave already?”

A ray of light shot out of the Coiling Dragon Ring and transformed into the white-robed Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart also frowned in confusion. “That shouldn’t be the case. It was just an hour. Did it really leave already?”

Suddenly!

“Crunch, crunch.” That familiar, soft crunching sound could be heard once again. Linley’s eyes brightened, and he immediately turned and headed

towards an ancient courtyard nearby. Arriving at the entryway, he clearly saw the black Shadowmouse chewing on stones in one spot, unmoving. He seemed almost like a sculptor, as he chewed each rock into surprising, bizarre shapes.

Linley stood at the doorway.

Tap! Linley purposefully let his foot bang into the doorway and make some sound.

“Eek!”

The black Shadowmouse immediately moved and in the blink of an eye, appeared over ten meters away. His two guileless eyes stared towards the doorway, and he immediately saw Linley. His eyes were filled with caution.

“Here, this is for you to eat.”

Linley smiled at the Shadowmouse, then tossed the wild hare in front of the doorway. Perhaps the Shadowmouse couldn’t understand human speech, but Linley understood that an intelligent magical beast should be able to understand the meaning of a smile.

After all, magical beasts weren’t like wild beasts. Their intelligence levels were only slightly lower than humans, and some powerful magical beasts were incredibly crafty.

“Don’t rush it, don’t rush it.” Linley kept on telling himself, and then forced himself to slowly walk away.

The Shadowmouse saw Linley depart, and then looked at the wild hare. He only managed to resist for a short period of time, then he scurried like a flash to the doorway while still staring at the now-distant Linley. Only then did he look at the dead hare. The Shadowmouse immediately grew ecstatic and was so happy that he began to hop about.

“Squeak, squeak!” The Shadowmouse began to make a happy sound.

And then he immediately began to eat the wild hare. His sharp teeth chewed at an incredibly fast rate. Although the Shadowmouse had a small body, this wild hare which was physically larger than the Shadowmouse was fully devoured by it, aside from the fur. Even the bones weren't spared.

"Buuuurp!" The little Shadowmouse made a belching noise, and then, in a very human-like gesture, rubbed its belly, extremely content.

Compared to stones, raw meat clearly was a much tastier treat.

After finishing his meal, the Shadowmouse glanced again in the direction which Linley had departed to. The baby Shadowmouse immediately felt a degree of kinship for this young fellow. After all, he was just recently born, an infant magical beast. The baby Shadowmouse even felt a bit of anticipation. Would this young man return in the future with another wild hare?

That same day, before dinner.

"Wonder if the little Shadowmouse ate it or not." Linley was currently in the back courtyard of the manor, and walked towards the area where he had tossed the wild hare earlier.

"Linley, don't worry. That's just a baby magical beast. It's always very hungry." Doehring Cowart's laughter echoed merrily in Linley's mind.

Linley nodded slightly. He quickly arrived at the doorway, and saw that at the doorway, there was some rabbit fur splattered with blood. But the rabbit's flesh and bones were all gone. Seeing this, Linley's eyes immediately shone.

"Wonderful!" Linley clenched a fist.

The first step was a success. The only thing left to do was to persevere!

The next afternoon, Linley killed another wild hare as well as a wild

chicken. He gave the wild hare to Uncle Hiri to prepare for dinner, and then tossed the wild chicken in the exact same location as he had tossed the hare; at the doorway to that courtyard.

“The Shadowmouse is actually here staring at me.” Linley chuckled as he saw that Shadowmouse inside the courtyard watch him approach.

“Linley, looks like things are progressing smoothly. He didn’t run away immediately upon seeing you, which means that he doesn’t feel much hostility towards you.” Upon seeing this, Doehring Cowart secretly felt joy for Linley. Linley really was lucky to have met such a powerful juvenile magical beast.

“I really wonder what this young fella’s parents are up to.” Doehring Cowart was secretly suspicious.

After placing the wild chicken at the doorway, he said a few words to the young Shadowmouse, smiled, and then retreated. But this time, he didn’t depart, just standing off to the side and watched. Shortly afterwards, the young Shadowmouse scampered out. Looking around himself, when he saw Linley’s far off presence, he wasn’t too scared. He immediately lowered his head and began to eat the chicken.

….

Day three. Day four. Day five.

These acitivities continued. Day after day, Linley continued to undergo meditative training while preparing wild rabbits and other animals for the little Shadowmouse to eat. Nobody in the entire Wushan township, including Hogg and Hillman, knew that Linley was learning magic. Similarly, none of them knew that Linley was taking care of a juvenile magical beast that already possessed power of the fourth rank!

Only Doehring Cowart was aware of this all, as he watched Linley mature.

“There’s no way that tiny little Wushan township is big enough for Linley.”

Watching Linley enter the meditative trance to practice magic, Doehring Cowart felt a hint of excitement. “Sooner or later, he will bring an adult Violet Shadowmouse and step onto the endlessly broad stage that is the world of the Yulan continent.”

Chapter 4 – The Ernst Institute

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 4 – The Ernst Institute

As time passed, the little Shadowmouse, which had not known much love from others, began to fear Linley less and less. By the eighth day, when Linley put down the rabbit, he moved away only two steps, and that little Shadowmouse still immediately ran over to eat, and even squeaked twice at Linley.

The tenth day!

“Right, today I’ll give the little Shadowmouse some cooked meat.” Linley covered a wild chicken with a cloth sack, and then happily went to the back of the ancient courtyard in the manor.

Doehring Cowart was walking by Linley’s side as well, but aside from Linley, no one else could see him. Doehring Cowart was smiling so widely that his white whiskers were leaning horizontal. “Linley, over these past nine days, the little Shadowmouse has lost all fear of you. Today, you are even giving him cooked meat. He’s going to be extremely excited and will become even closer to you.”

Hearing his words, Linley couldn’t help but grin as well.

Just as Linley walked into the courtyard….

“Squeak, squeak!” The little Shadowmouse immediately ran up to Linley, and began hopping up and down while squeaking at him.

“I haven’t even taken the food out, and he’s already run up to me. He really isn’t afraid of me at all.” Linley felt joy in his heart.

Next to him, Doehring Cowart smiled merrily at the little Shadowmouse, which didn’t notice his presence at all. Doehring Cowart said with a smile,

“Looks like he’s already feeling quite close to you.”

“Squeeaaaak!” The little Shadowmouse looked at Linley with its innocent black eyes and began to squeak with impatience, as though telling Linley to hurry up and give him the food already.

“Don’t be impatient.” Linley took the roasted chicken out of the clothsack.

Upon smelling the roasted chicken, the little Shadowmouse’s eyes shone, and then it looked at Linley pitifully. Seeing this, Linley couldn’t help but laugh until his stomach hurt. In the past, when Linley gave good food to little Wharton, little Wharton would say, “Big bro, I want!” while staring at him in a pitiful manner.

Now this little Shadowmouse was doing the same!

“Hehe, all yours!” Linley gave the cooked chicken to the Shadowmouse.

The little Shadowmouse squeaked with joy, immediately seizing the roast chicken. After taking a single bite, the little Shadowmouse began to eat faster and faster. In a very short time, the roast chicken, which was about the same size as the Shadowmouse itself, had been completely devoured.

“I really don’t get how his stomach can contain so much. How can he swallow that much food?” Linley laughed while sighing.

It seemed as though this time, the little Shadowmouse had enjoyed his meal very much. He was so happy that he immediately began to hop up and down while squeaking at Linley, while even hugging Linley’s leg with his own front arms. Linley couldn’t help but feel pleased; this was the first time that the little Shadowmouse had acted so intimately towards him, even after eating.

“Linley, try and use your hand to smooth his fur. Usually, most magical beasts like their family members to groom them and stroke their fur.” Doehring Cowart advised.

Linley tentatively stretched his hand out and placed it on the little Shadowmouse's head. The little Shadowmouse didn't dodge in the slightest. Instead, it contentedly half-closed its eyes. Linley immediately felt more confident, and began to stroke his fur, causing the Shadowmouse to feel so comfortable that it began to snore.

"This little guy is so adorable." Linley was really beginning to like this little Shadowmouse more and more.

"Grandpa Doehring, magical beasts are so strange. That Velocidragon is so huge and has such tough scales, making it a magical beast of the seventh rank. But this little Shadowmouse, when he grows up, will also become a magical beast of the seventh rank. Both of them have the same rank, but why is there such a big difference between them?"

While petting the little Shadowmouse, Linley couldn't help but feel amazed.

"You can't judge them just based on their appearances. Perhaps an ordinary old geezer that you meet on the street is able to ride a flying dragon and level a mountain with the wave of a hand." Doehring Cowart laughed merrily.

Linley understood this logic.

But unconsciously, he still used appearances to judge.

For example, that Velocidragon. Seeing how huge body was and seeing how its scales gleamed with a frozen golden light, anyone could tell how powerful it was.

"I really wonder when this little Shadowmouse will initiate a 'bond of equals' with me." Linley mumbled. There was nothing he could do. The 'bond of equals' could only be initiated by magical beasts, so he could only passively wait.

Doehring Cowart laughed. "Things are progressing very well. Remember.

You must have patience."

"Right. I got it." Linley laughed as well.

…..

In the blink of an eye, time passed. Linley had fed the little Shadowmouse for twenty days now, and the little Shadowmouse was behaving extremely familiarly with Linley. But for some reason, even though the two of them had become extremely close, the little Shadowmouse still had not initiated the 'bond of equals'.

Darkness covered the land, and the entire Wushan township was very quiet.

Within the Baruch clan's living room, candlelight flickered from within as Linley and his family, along with Housekeeper Hiri, were enjoying supper together on the long dining table.

"Linley, I hear that you've often been bringing roasted hares to the back courtyards?" Halfway through the meal, Hogg put down his utensils and turned to Linley.

Linley was startled.

"Looks like it is time for me to confess." Linley said to himself, then looked at Hogg and nodded. "Father, recently I discovered a cute animal living in our back courtyard, an extremely cute animal. So I often bring him some food."

"A cute animal?" Little Wharton's eyes shone.

"Oh."

Hogg nodded. "People rarely visit the back courtyard, so its normal for there to be animals there. Right. In a week or so, the Fenlai City is going to begin another round of magical aptitude testing and magus recruitment. Do you want to participate?"

“Oh, the magus testing and recruiting event?” Linley suddenly remembered this event.

The ray of light which only Linley could see shot out from within the Coiling Dragon Ring, turning into the white-bearded Doehring Cowart. Doehring Cowart laughed at Linley, “Linley, the magus testing and recruiting event is optional for you. Under my guidance, will you achieve less than at a magus academy?”

Linley agreed with this line of thought.

Doehring Cowart was a Saint-level Grand Magus. Would any magus academies require a Saint-level Grand Magus to teach there?

“What, you don’t want to go?” Hogg’s face, previously smiling, immediately grew cold as he frowned.

Hogg remembered clearly that ever since the battle between the dual-element magus of the eighth rank and the small party, Linley had very much wanted to become a magus. Why was he hesitating now? In Hogg’s heart, he too hoped that his son could become a magus.

“Father, I…”

“No, Linley, accept your father’s offer.” Doehring Cowart frowned and hurriedly said.

Linley’s words died unspoken on his lips. At the same time, he suspiciously asked, “Grandpa Doehring, I have you to teach me, right? With you teaching me, why would I need to go to a magus academy? Isn’t that a waste of family resources?”

“No.” Doehring Cowart said seriously. “I haven’t interacted with the Yulan continent for over five thousand years. Five thousand years, Linley! You must understand that many magi in the world have been continuously researching and developing new spells during this time period. Who knows

how many new spells have been developed in the interim."

Linley suddenly understood.

"And Linley, you must know that Wushan township is not the stage on which you will perform. You must step onto a far wider stage." Doehring Cowart said seriously.

"A far wider stage…"

Linley couldn't help but be moved.

He couldn't help but remember that huge Velocidragon, and the destructive power unleashed by the 'Dance of the Fire Serpents', as well as the Saint-level Grand Magus 'Rudi', who effortless controlled those countless boulders to cause an absolute calamity.

"The future…"

Linley's heart began to beat faster. If he could one day step atop the head of a dragon and control cataclysmic power, if he too could feel the power of standing at the very pinnacle of mankind, that must be an amazing feeling. When he thought of this, Linley felt his blood begin to boil.

"Linley, what are you thinking about?" Hogg was beginning to grow unhappy. When he was talking to Linley, Linley was daydreaming.

"Oh, nothing!" Linley immediately looked at Hogg and quickly nodded while saying solemnly, "Father, in my heart, I really want to become a magus. In a week, please arrange for me to go to Fenlai City to take part in the magus testing and recruiting event."

Upon hearing these words, Hogg finally smiled.

"Magus, ooo, ooo, like that fire-breathing magus?" While listening, little Wharton clapped his little hands together.

“Wharton, that was just a circus trick! Don’t mix up circus tricks and real sorcery.” Hogg said seriously.

“Oh.” Little Wharton pouted and stopped talking.

Linley chuckled, then turned to look at Hogg. “Father, there must be many magus academies. Which ones are good? Right, are there any combined magus academy/warrior academy schools?”

Hogg laughed as well. “Actually, all four of the major empires and both the major alliances have their own elite academies. You should know that one of the four major empires, the O’Brien Empire, is the empire with the strongest military power.”

Linley nodded. Everyone knew that.

“The most elite school in the O’Brien Empire is the O’Brien Academy, which is reputed to be the number one warrior academy in the entire Yulan continent. But as far as magus academies go…” Hogg chuckled. “The number one magus academy in the entire Yulan continent belongs to our Holy Union. Its name comes from a legendary Holy Emperor of the Holy Church, ‘Holy Emperor Ernst’. The ‘Ernst Institute’.”

Chapter 5 – ‘Bebe’ the Shadowmouse (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 5 – ‘Bebe’ the Shadowmouse (part 1)

“The Ernst Institute is the number one magus academy in the world. All of the graduates of the Ernst Institute are at least magi of the sixth rank, and there’s even many who are of the seventh rank! If our Baruch clan was able to produce a magus of the seventh rank, we at least would stand a chance of recovering our ancestral heirloom.”

While speaking, Hogg looked at Linley eagerly.

Linley could feel the hope which Hogg was placing on him.

“Our ancestral heirloom. For our ancestral heirloom to be lost to us is a humiliation that must be washed away.” Linley could also feel his heart grow heavy.

As a scion of the ancient Dragonblood Warrior clan, he felt proud of his ancient and mighty lineage. But the mighty Dragonblood Warrior clan had lost its own ancestral heirloom. What a humiliation! Hogg and countless elders who had passed away had all felt ashamed whenever they thought about it.

Unfortunately, the type of family which could collect the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ was not an ordinary one, and the current Baruch clan was far too weak.

“Ernst? The legendary Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church?” The nearby Doehring Cowart started.

“What is it, Grandpa Doehring?” Linley asked questioningly. “I bet all of the hundreds of millions of citizens in the six kingdoms and fifteen dukedoms of the Holy Union know about the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst of the Radiant Church.” Linley, also, knew much about the affairs and

history of the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst.

He had dramatically raised the profile of the Radiant Church, and single-handedly created the Holy Union.

“I didn’t imagine that kid, Ernst, ended up having such accomplishments. And he even became a legendary Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church!” Doehring Cowart sighed.

“Grandpa Doehring, you knew Holy Emperor Ernst?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

But then, Linley thought things through.

That’s right. In the past, when the Pouant Empire was still unified, the Radiant Church, the Cult of Shadows, and even the Pavilion of Divinities all had many churches within the empire. But all of those churches were under the control of the Pouant Empire.

“Naturally. Ernst was a genius who entered the Saint-level when he was merely fifty or so years old. But in my age, he could only be considered a promising latecomer.” Doehring Cowart said calmly.

When Doehring Cowart was still alive, Ernst had still been developing himself. When Ernst had finally entered the Saint-level, Doehring Cowart had already been standing at the very pinnacle of the Yulan continent for a long time. Even amongst Saint-level combatants, Doehring Cowart would have been considered one of the greatest.

Doehring Cowart had an extremely high status within the Pouant Empire, which Ernst didn’t come close to matching, at the time.

If Ernst had run into him, he would have had to courteously bow and pay his respects.

“I didn’t expect that after I died, Ernst would become so incredible.” Doehring Cowart laughed faintly.

Linley couldn't help but feel a deep sense of veneration for Doehring Cowart from his heart. A Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire, and one of the most powerful persons in the Yulan continent. And now, Doehring Cowart was carefully instructing himself in magic. How fortunate Linley was!

As dinner progressed, the conversation amongst the Baruch clan manors was quite cheerful.

"Linley, in a week's time, I'll arrange for Uncle Hillman to take you to Fenlai City and attend the magus testing and recruiting event." Hogg smiled towards Linley.

"Yes, father."

Linley nodded.

"Young master Linley, I'm sure that you will be able to enter the finest of magus academies." Housekeeper Hiri chortled.

"The finest. Oh. The finest!" Little Wharton's hands were covered in grease from eating, but still beamed as he waved his greasy hands.

Hogg smiled faintly as he said, "Becoming a magus is no easy thing. Perhaps only one in ten thousand has the talent. The requirements for entering the Ernst Institute are even higher. Only someone with an extremely high aptitude for magic will be admitted. If Linley can become a magus, I will be very satisfied, regardless of what academy he is accepted to."

"I won't let you down, father." Linley's words were filled with confidence.

Because Linley, after all, was already a magus of the first rank.

…..

As time flowed onwards, in the blink of an eye seven days had passed.

Linley was lying on the grass near the back courtyard, while the little Shadowmouse was hopping up and down around Linley. It was squeaking nonstop, but Linley paid him no mind.

The little Shadowmouse rolled its eyes, then stood up on its hind feet and placed its front feet on top of Linley's body.

"Squeeeeak." The Shadowmouse called out with displeasure.

Linley rubbed the little Shadowmouse's head. "Alright, stop making a fuss. Tomorrow, I'm going to leave home and go to the capital. After the magus recruitment event is over, I'm going to be going to a magus academy. I'm afraid we won't have many chances to meet after that."

There was no way he could bring a little Shadowmouse into a magus academy.

Not a single student in a magus academy was an ordinary one, and there were many powerful magi there as well. If they found a little Shadowmouse there, they would probably immediately subdue and tame him. Even magi of the seventh and eighth ranks were present in magus academies. Catching a little Shadowmouse wouldn't be too hard.

After all, he hadn't bonded with the little Shadowmouse yet, so anybody could subdue and tame him.

"Sniff, sniff…" Hearing Linley speak, the little Shadowmouse also began to sniff in a low tone.

"You don't even know what I'm saying," Linley shook his head helplessly.

"I don't know how much time I will have to spend in a magus academy, or how many years I will be there for. Will we ever meet again?" Linley stroked the little Shadowmouse's fur, somewhat unwilling to part from it. After playing with the little Shadowmouse for the past month, he had really

come to care for the cute little Shadowmouse.

The little Shadowmouse enjoyed the petting so much that its eyes grew half-lidded as it squeaked quietly in contentment.

…..

The next day, after lunch. The Baruch family's front courtyard.

Hogg stood there, straight as a ramrod. Staring directly at Linley, he said, "Linley, Wushan township is located fairly close to the capital, just ninety or so kilometers away. You should be able to make it to the capital before nightfall. Remember, when you reach the capital, don't cause any trouble. There are too many rich and powerful people in the capital."

"Yes, father." Linley bowed as he said.

"Hillman, I entrust Linley to you." Hogg looked at the nearby Hillman.

Hillman smiled as he said, "Lord Hogg, please set your mind at ease."

"Alright, you can go now." Hogg laughed.

"Farewell, father." Linley said respectfully, and then smiled at little Wharton. "Wharton, your big brother is gonna leave now."

Little Wharton immediately squinted towards Linley. In a sad voice, he said, "Big brother, bye bye!"

Linley glanced at the back courtyard, thinking to himself, "I'm afraid no one is going to come bring meat to the little Shadowmouse in the next few days." Hillman, who was next to him, said to Linley, "Linley, let's go!"

"Yes, Uncle Hillman."

Linley didn't think about it anymore, and immediately followed Uncle Hillman as they departed from the manor.

“Squeak.” On the rooftops above the living room of the Baruch clan manor, the little Shadowmouse watched Linley and Hillman depart. The little Shadowmouse’s mind was filled with questions. In his eyes, this was the time when Linley should be going off to kill a wild hare. Why had he taken up a bag and headed off with someone else?

The little Shadowmouse really liked Linley.

Over the past month, the friendless little Shadowmouse had really come to view Linley as family.

“Squeak!”

The little Shadowmouse’s body flickered and in the blink of an eye, disappeared from atop the eaves of the Baruch clan’s manor. In two or three movements, it moved, reappearing on top of a nearby peasant’s house, still watching Linley and Hillman. As it followed behind Linley, the little Shadowmouse soon had left Wushan township.

Chapter 6 – ‘Bebe’ the Shadowmouse (part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 6 – ‘Bebe’ the Shadowmouse (part 2)

The little Shadowmouse had previously watched Linley go hunting rabbits in the mountain, but this time, Linley wasn’t headed for the mountain. He was headed off in a totally different direction, traveling on a road. The little Shadowmouse immediately panicked.

“Squeak, squeak!”

The little Shadowmouse suddenly rushed in Linley’s direction.

Just as Linley was walking, he suddenly discovered that his legs had been hugged from behind. Lowering his head, he saw that it was the little Shadowmouse. The little Shadowmouse was standing up on his hind legs, his two forelegs tightly clenched around Linley. He stared at Linley with two quavering, pitiable eyes, as though he were about to cry.

“Uh, what’s the little Shadowmouse doing here?!” Linley was somewhat surprised.

Next to them, Hillman turned his head towards them. Upon seeing the little Shadowmouse, he was shocked. “A magical beast! Is it a Stoneater Rat?” Hillman didn’t know too much about the various types of magical beasts, but there once was an entire army which had been devoured by Stoneater Rats, so most soldiers knew and feared rat-type magical beasts.

“Linley, be careful!” Hillman immediately rushed towards them. Linley only saw a blur, and then Hillman was there, right next to the little Shadowmouse.

But the little Shadowmouse was even faster, and in the blink of an eye, scurried on top of Linley’s shoulder.

“Uncle Hillman, hold it!” Linley finally managed to react.

Hillman was startled.

“Uncle Hillman, he’s the pet that I’ve been feeding and raising in the back courtyard.” Linley hurriedly said. “Little Shadowmouse, isn’t that right?”

The little Shadowmouse seemed to understand Linley’s words, and his small head nodded.

Hillman looked at Linley with shock. “Linley, are you saying that you’ve been raising, raising a magical beast?”

“Uncle Hillman, wait a sec. Lemme tell him to go home.” Linley cupped the little Shadowmouse in his hands and said to it, “Little Shadowmouse, I am going to leave with Uncle Hillman to the capital. You cannot go to the capital. Understood?”

The little Shadowmouse just stared at Linley with pitiable sad eyes, as though he were about to cry

Linley placed the little Shadowmouse on the floor, then waved his hand at it. “Go back.” And then he pointed to the road. “I’m going that way. To the capital.”

After waving his arm, Linley began to continue going forward.

“Squeak. Squeaaaaak!” The little Shadowmouse stood there, watching Linley.

“Uncle Hillman, let’s go. Hehe, the little Shadowmouse is smart. He knows what I’m saying.” Linley said to Hillman. Hillman, who had been watching this spectacle with amazement, chuckled and then continued walking forward with Linley.

Seeing Linley and Hillman slowly disappear, the little Shadowmouse still stayed there, unmoving.

“Squeak squeak….”

The little Shadowmouse suddenly gave out a loud squeak, and then turned into a black blur, traveling twenty or thirty meters in the blink of an eye. His speed was absolutely shocking, as was his agility. Linley and Hillman were chatting while walking on the road, but Hillman suddenly felt something was quickly charging them from behind and couldn’t help but look back.

“Whooosh!”

Hillman wasn’t even given enough time to react. That blur suddenly landed next to Linley’s legs, and immediately chomped down on Linley’s right leg.

“OW!” Feeling the sudden, fierce pain, Linley immediately jumped up in the air.

Looking down, he saw that it was actually the little Shadowmouse. At the moment, the little Shadowmouse was staring up at Linley with its pitiable, sad little eyes. Linley rubbed his leg, and noticed that he was actually bleeding. He couldn’t help but grow unhappy. But seeing how sad the little Shadowmouse was, he couldn’t grow angry at him.

“Linley, are you okay?” Hillman said.

“I’m fine,” Linley chuckled.

Suddenly –

A thick, dense black light began to emanate from the little Shadowmouse’s body. A droplet of fresh blood suddenly flew out from the corner of its mouth. That droplet of fresh blood had both Linley’s blood as well as the little Shadowmouse’s blood. That blood suddenly, bizarrely transformed into two opposite, interlocking black triangles, which the thick black light merged with, forming a strange magical formation which gave off a dark aura.

Linley and Hillman watched, stunned.

“Is this..can this be?” Linley had a wild guess in his heart.

From within the Coiling Dragon Ring, Doehring Cowart flew out. His white beard fluttering happily, he said, “Linley, the little guy is setting up a ‘bond of equals’ formation.”

“It really is the ‘bond of equals’?” Linley’s heart clenched. Even though he had guessed as much, he still felt stunned and excited.

The strange black magical formation separated into two, with one of the three black triangles flying into Linley’s body, and the other one flying into the little Shadowmouse’s body. Upon seeing this, the nearby Hillman was filled with shock and fear.

“Linley, are you okay?” Hillman was starting to fear for Linley.

“I’m fine. I’m wonderful!” Linley could feel his spirit and the little Shadowmouse’s spirit interlinking.

Standing on this quiet road leading out of Wushan township, Linley and the little Shadowmouse stared at each other, engaging in their first communication.

“Little Shadowmouse, what is your name?” Linley mentally asked him.

The little Shadowmouse said, somewhat excitedly, “Bei….bei….”

Linley stared at the little Shadowmouse.

“What’s the little Shadowmouse saying?” Linley didn’t really understand.

His white beard flowing, Doehring Cowart floated next to him and mentally said ,”Linley, this little Shadowmouse is still an infant. He can’t form precise sounds yet. Even when engaging in mental communication with

you, for now, he can only communicate simple intentions."

Due to their spiritual link, Linley could feel the little Shadowmouse's excitement, but the little Shadowmouse simply couldn't speak at all.

"Okay. You were saying 'Bei'…. 'Bei'….then I'm going to call you 'Bebe'. How's that?" Linley grinned as he watched the little Shadowmouse.

The little Shadowmouse seemed to ponder for a while, and then happily nodded.

"Bebe." Linley was grinning so widely, his face was about to split.

"Squeak squeak." The little Shadowmouse immediately began to jump up and down.

"Bebe!"

"Squeak squeak."

"Bebe!"

"Squeak squeak."

….

An eight year old child and a little Shadowmouse were both excitedly shouting.

"Linley, this…what…what is this?" Only now did Hillman recover from his stupor. His eyes couldn't help but grow round with shock. "Linley, what was that black magical formation just now? What just happened? Are you okay?"

Hillman had heard that for darkness-style magic, there were many curses and hexes involved.

Could it be that Linley had just been hexed?

Hillman, who only knew an inkling about magic, couldn't help but feel shock and fear.

"Haha, I'm fine. It's just that Bebe has become my magical beast, now." Linley was extremely happy. "Come, Bebe, hop onto my shoulder." Immediately, the little Shadowmouse let out a happy squeal, then scurried onto Linley's shoulder.

"You…tamed him?" Hillman was stunned.

Hillman was a worldly man, and of course he knew that taming a magical beast was an extremely difficult, extremely arduous matter. But just now, Linley had actually subdued a magical beast.

Hillman felt totally bewildered. "You…you don't have a soul-binding scroll, how…how did you?"

"That's enough, Uncle Hillman," Linley chortled. "Let's hurry, we have a lot of road to make up. The capital is still really far away." As he spoke, Linley pulled Hillman by the hand, not allowing him to speak as they continued heading towards the capital.

And the little Shadowmouse, 'Bebe', stood happily on Linley's shoulders and squeaked.

And with his squeaks to accompany them, Linley, Hillman, and the Shadowmouse disappeared off into the distance.

Chapter 7 – Fenlai City

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 7 – Fenlai City

Next to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance. And the capital kingdom of the Holy Union was the kingdom of Fenlai!

Fenlai City, in turn, was the capital of the kingdom of Fenlai.

In addition, it also served as the 'Holy Capital' of the Holy Union, because the Radiant Church itself was headquartered in the western part of Fenlai City.

The entire city of Fenlai was divided into two parts; East Fenlai City, and West Fenlai City. East Fenlai City was governed by the King of Fenlai, while West Fenlai City was managed by the Radiant Church. Because Fenlai City was both the kingdom's capital as well as the Holy Capital, the opulence of Fenlai City could be matched by extremely few cities in the entire Yulan continent.

Fenlai City took up a huge amount of space, and had more than a million denizens living within its area. In the entire Yulan continent, it could be considered one of the top five megacities.

As nightfall came, Linley and Hillman entered the Fenlai City.

"Wow."

As they walked on Fragrant Pavilion Road, the primary road of East Fenlai City, Linley felt as though his eyes were dazzled. The litle Shadowmouse Bebe had been instructed by Linley to hide within his clothes, but he also took a sneak peek at the surroundings, and then began to squeak in shared excitement.

Fortunately, the entire road was filled with all sorts of noises and gaudy things, so nobody noticed the sound.

“Quiet!” Linley gently tapped the little Shadowmouse, which obediently went silent. But through its shared mental connection with Linley, it continued to express its excitement.

The entire Fragrant Pavilion Road was constructed from symmetrical limestone tiles, wide enough to allow multiple horse carriages to cross simultaneously. On each side of the tiles were hotels, clothing stores, weapon stores, nightclubs, and all sorts of other places. In addition, both sides of the Fragrant Pavilion Road were lined with pine and cypress trees.

Rich madames and young ladies, all wearing fashionable new clothes, were chatting and smiling as they walked along the road.

Seeing Linley’s reaction, some of the nearby noble ladies began to titter quietly amongst themselves while pointing at Linley. Clearly, Linley’s reaction was that of a ‘country bumpkin entering the city’. The nobility of the capital had a clear sense of innate superiority towards those country bumpkins.

“Hmph. How uncultured.” Linley frowned, feeling very unsatisfied by the pointing and laughing of those noble ladies.

Having been nurtured and educated by the clan since his earliest days, Linley quickly managed to subdue his sense of excitement, making the expression on his face much more tranquil, at least superficially.

“Linley, how do you feel about Fenlai City? This is the largest city in our entire Holy Union.” Hillman walked alongside Linley, occasionally seeing some warriors and even one or two magi pass by. He couldn’t help but sigh, “Linley, in Fenlai City, mighty warriors and mighty magi are a very common sight.”

Linley laughed while nodding. “In the books, it is said that Fenlai City is the political, economic, and cultural capital of the entire Holy Union.”

“This is heaven for rich people or people with status.” Hillman nodded and sighed.

The Fragrant Pavilion Road, bustling with activity, often had many opulent carriages pass through it. After wandering the Fragrant Pavilion Road for a time, Hillman and Linley headed directly for an ordinary guesthouse to settle down.

There was a small restaurant near the guesthouse, so Linley and Hillman decided to have dinner there.

That night, within the guesthouse.

Linley and Hillman were staying in the same room. There were two beds in this room. Immediately upon entering, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, leapt out from within Linley’s clothes and immediately began circling around Linley while squeaking loudly.

“I know, I know, you’re hungry. Eat up.” Linley threw the roast duck he had brought back from the restaurant onto the floor, and Bebe immediately excitedly ran to it and began chewing.

“Linley, get an early night’s rest. Tomorrow morning, you will participate in the magus assessment and recruitment event.” Hillman instructed.

“Understood, Uncle Hillman.” Even as he spoke, Linley walked to a nearby window and pulled it open.

The guesthouse was three stories tall, and Linley was staying on the third floor. There were no three story high buildings in Wushan township at all, but in the capital city of Fenlai, they were a common sight. The capital even had seven or eight story tall buildings.

Peering out through the window, Linley saw that the streets were still filled with people.

“Whew. It’s been quite a while since I’ve been in a large city.” A hazy white light shone out from the Coiling Dragon Ring, transforming into a white-bearded old man. Doehring Cowart and Linley stood side by side as they stared at the street below.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley immediately greeted him.

“Linley, how does it feel to be in a big city?” Doehring Cowart laughed as he spoke.

“No big deal.” Linley quirked his mouth.

Doehring Cowart sighed emotionally, “You haven’t been here very long. You don’t know much about how large cities like this work. This place will have countless lavish places to spend money, like large auctions, where some magnates would spend even hundreds of thousands of gold coins, or perhaps even millions of gold coins to purchase just a single item.”

“A million gold coins?” Linley felt his throat go dry.

How enormous a sum was that? His own family’s possessions, all added together, probably wouldn’t even total a million gold coins.

“There’s many rich families here. Money, power, beauties…the fight for these things is fierce. Every day, someone dies here. The poor ditch-diggers of Fenlai City will often find buried bodies, which perhaps used to belong to a noble family.”

Doehring Cowart chuckled calmly. “But in order to stand up in that sort of world, you must have some sort of personal power.”

“Don’t hope to be able to rely on the benevolence of others. Everything will rely on yourself, and yourself alone.” Doehring Cowart looked at Linley.

In truth, the Dragonblood flowing through Linley’s veins also made him thirst for battle and blood.

“If anyone threatens me or my family, I will kill them.” Linley said resolutely. After having read many history books about the rise and fall of noble families, Linley knew very clearly that showing mercy to enemies was the same as being merciless to oneself.

If you let an enemy off the hook, they might one day murder your family.

“However, right now my power is very weak.” Linley couldn’t help but recollect how, when he had first entered Fenlai City, those noble ladies had looked down upon him. In the eyes of those upper class people, he was nothing more than an impoverished little country bumpkin.

With a calm smile, Linley sat down on the bed and entered the meditative trance, beginning to gather energy.

The meditative trance was a good way to train one’s spiritual energy. The way it worked was, it used all sorts of methods to exhaust one’s spiritual energy to a bare minimum, and then allow rest to recover it!

Within the dantian in the chest…

A misty earth-colored haze billowed about within the dantian. This misty haze was the mageforce which had been derived from natural earth elemental essence. Based on Doehring Cowart’s teachings, from the first to sixth ranks, mageforce appeared as a haze. As a magus continued to progress, the quality of the mageforce would rise, and so too would its density.

Upon reaching the seventh rank, the mageforce of a magus would condense into a liquid.

Thus, between the sixth rank and the seventh rank, there was a major leap to be made!

“This kid, Linley, is so hard working. Even at night, he is training his mental energy.” Seeing Linley seated cross-legged with his eyes closed, Hillman couldn’t help but silently praise him. Mental energy was extremely

important to both magi and warriors!

…..

Early next morning, on East Fenlai City's Greenleaf Road. One of Fenlai City's principal roads, the buildings constructed on each side of Greenleaf Road were lavishly made and decorated. Some of those buildings were actually owned by the kingdom. And the tallest building of them all? It was the Cathedral of the Radiant Church.

The Radiant Church controlled the entire Holy Union, which comprised of the six kingdoms and the fifteen dukedoms.

The Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church had an extremely high status. He had the authority to depose any of the kings of the various kingdoms! This is why in Fenlai City, the tallest building was the Cathedral of the Radiant Church.

This morning, many people were gathered around the entrance to the Cathedral of the Radiant Church. The vast majority of the people there were richly dressed noblemen. Countless carriages filled up the space in front of the Radiant Cathedral, and the various nobles chatted to each other.

Linley and Hillman had arrived here as well.

"Uncle Hillman, there's so many people here today. Many nobles brought their children here." Linley laughed towards Hillman. At this time, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was hiding within Linley's clothes, occasionally peeking out to see his surroundings.

Hillman laughed calmly, "Nobles? Every single student of the Ernst Institute can easily become an earl in any kingdom."

"An earl in any kingdom?" Linley immediately understood.

It wasn't hard to be conferred a noble title in any kingdom, but to become an imperial noble would be extremely difficult. After all, any of the four

great empires were a match for the entire Holy Union. The kingdom of Fenlai couldn't come close to comparing to them.

"Oh, Lord Doyle [Dao'er], you came as well?"

"Eber [Xi'bo], I'm here because of my child, of course. Hess [He'si], come pay your respects to Uncle Eber."

Not too far away, a group of nobles were chatting amongst themselves. The testing fee alone at this magus testing and recruiting event was ten gold coins. And if a student was accepted to a magus academy, then the school fees would be even higher. Most magus academies charged hundreds of gold coins each year! Ordinary families simply couldn't afford the fees. But if their children were selected, naturally they would be able to find a noble patron to pay for them.

However, not all magus academies had expensive tuition fees.

For example, the number one magus academy, the Ernst Institute. Because it admited so few students, any students who hailed from the Holy Union did not have to pay any fees at all! After all, everyone who could be admitted to the Ernst Institute had to be genius-level. In the future, their possibilities were limitless.

"Hmph. Those commoners and country bumpkins have also come. Aren't they just dreaming?" A far-away noble laughed.

There were some commoners amongst the hundreds of people crowding the square, and some countryside nobles such as Linley. Usually, those nobles from small countryside noble families were also looked down upon. The nobles of the capital were an arrogant lot who generally looked down on people.

"Linley, don't pay any attention to the likes of them." Hillman said in a low voice.

Glancing at the group of nobles, Linley chuckled quietly. "Uncle Hillman, I

won’t pay any mind to their likes.” Under the tutelage of his father Hogg, Linley wouldn’t pay too much heed to that group of self-centered, arrogant nobles.

The entire square was clearly delineated into two camps. A circle of nobles who conversed casually, and another with commoners or countryside nobles.

At the moment, two armor-clad warriors were standing in front of the Radiant Cathedral, barring all entry.

After a while, a black-robed official stepped forth from the cathedral doors. Stopping in front of the doors, he smiled and said in a bright voice, “The magical assessment ceremony is about to commence. All of the recruiters for the various major magus academies are ready as well. Everyone who is here for the test, please follow me into the main hall.”

Chapter 8 – The Magical Aptitude Test (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 8 – The Magical Aptitude Test (part 1)

Under the guidance of the church official, all of the people in the square were walked into the main hall of the cathedral.

Within the cathedral.

The great hall of the cathedral had a floor paved with marble, and hanging above was a massive crystal chandelier. It could easily fit the hundreds of people who entered yet still feel spacious.

In the very front of the great hall, there were a line of chairs, seated upon which were representatives and recruiters of each of the great magus academies. Directly in the middle of the great hall was the testing location.

The black robed church official smiled and said in a clear voice, “The testing location is right in the center. All testees, please come one at a time. No one else can enter the circle in the center. All testees, please get in line. Family and friends, please step to one side.”

“Linley, here is the examination fee. Here is your proof of identification. Go quickly. Oh, and right, let the little Shadowmouse stay with me. It will be difficult to have the little Shadowmouse with you as you take the test.” Hillman said.

“Bebe, stick with Uncle Hillman for now. I’m going to take the test.” Linley mentally instructed the little Shadowmouse, who somewhat unwillingly shuffled around a bit under Linley’s clothes. But after multiple requests from Linley, the little Shadowmouse directly scurried into Hillman’s clothes.

Linley then accepted the ten gold coins and headed towards the line. The youths there ranged in age from six or seven years old to seventeen years

old. These children organized themselves into two long lines, while the cathedral pursers collected the fees from each of them.

The central circle was ten or so meters wide, and there were three adults within it. Two of them were responsible for administering the test, while one was responsible for recording the results. The testing equipment consisted of a crystal sphere and and a complicated, six-sided magical formation.

“First.”

The bald old man pointed at the crystal ball and said, “Place your hand atop the crystal ball. We will test your elemental essence affinities.”

The first testee was a twelve or thirteen year old young man. That young man nervously placed his right hand atop the crystal ball. Immediately, the entire crystal ball began to emanate a hazy, light red glow, with the occasional hint of green mixed in.

The bald elder glanced at the scrap of paper in his hands, and emotionlessly said, “Age, twelve. Elemental essence affinities – Fire, average affinity. Wind, low affinity.

“Now, step into the magical formation. Time to test your spiritual essence. Remember, stand there. Don’t kneel or fall down. Let’s see how long you can take it.” The bald elder remained as cold as ever. The young man nodded, then stepped into the six-cornered magical formation. A holy white aura immediately emanated from the bald elder, which shot into the middle of the magical formation.

Light-style elemental magic – Overawe!

“Looks like the testing procedures in this era is the same as it was in the past.” Doehring Cowart flew out of the ring and appeared next to Linley.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Seeing Doehring Cowart, Linley felt himself calm down.

“In the magical aptitude test, the elemental essence affinity test is secondary. The spiritual essence test is the main one. After half a year of meditation, your spiritual essence should be sixteen or seventeen times that of most people your age.” Doehring Cowart chuckled at Linley. “For you, this test will be extremely easy.”

In a short period of time, the youth in the middle of the magical formation could no longer hold on.

“Spiritual essence, two times stronger than the average person of the same age. Not qualified to become a magus.” The bald elder coldly announced as the magical formation deactivated, and the youngster quietly departed.

A burst of noise from nearby.

“Silence.” The bald elder coldly said, and immediately a large group of nobles no longer dared to speak. “Next.”

Doehring Cowart watched with interest from the side.

One after another youngster was tested. Of the first ten, none met the requirements. Right now, there was a young lady in the magical formation, who had been able to hold out for longer than any of the ten before her.

“Hrm?” The bald elder’s eyes shone, and he immediately increased the power of the magical formation.

After a long period of time, the young lady finally dropped down to one knee.

The bald elder nodded in a satisfied manner. A hint of a smile on his face, he said, “Spiritual essence, eight times stronger than most people your age. The minimum qualifications for becoming a magus have been met. You also possess average elemental essence affinity. You can become a magus!” The judgment of the bald elder had just determined the fate of this young woman.

“Oh, how wonderful!” The first person to shout with joy was not the young woman. Rather, it was the young woman’s father, a bald, middle aged, gentlemanly looking person.

“Quiet!” The bald elder snapped in a cold, unhappy voice.

Immediately, the ushers came and escorted the girl and her father to where the line of magus academies recruiters sat.

Many envious eyes were cast towards the young woman.

As time went on, the people in the main hall grew more and more numerous. The magical testing event would go on for seven days, so most people didn’t see the urge to come right away at the beginning. When Linley’s turn came, the line of test-takers had already stretched out the main doors of the cathedral.

“Next.” The bald elder said again.

Linley calmly walked into the center, with Doehring Cowart remaining by his side. In Doehring Cowart’s eyes, only a Saint-level combatant could, just barely, detect his presence. These ordinary magi definitely couldn’t detect him.

Linley placed his right hand on the crystal ball.

Instantly!

The crystal ball suddenly burst forth with light, as though it were the sun! Earthen rays of light intersected with green rays of light, and there were even some thin lines of red spaced in between. That eye-piercing brightness forced even the people nearby to squint their eyes.

Seeing the sun-like brightness emanating forth from the crystal globe, everyone in the great hall was stunned.

The bald elder quivered as he stared at the piece of paper in his hands. It was written clearly on top that Linley was eight years old.

“Age, eight. Elemental essence affinities – Earth and Wind, affinity level of exceptional for both! Fire affinity, average.” That bald elder felt his heart thumping wildly. Most magi had average elemental essence affinity. Even high elemental essence affinities were quite rare, and as for exceptional affinity…exceptional affinity was ridiculously rare!

By way of explaining, an ordinary magus might take ten hours to produce a certain amount of mageforce, but Linley would only require a single hour to get the same result.

“Oooooooo.”

The entire hall was shocked. Not only was the kid’s elemental essence affinity of the exceptional level, it was for two different elements! This was simply too terrifying.

“Exceptional affinity for the wind element?” The nearby Doehring Cowart was shocked.

“Whoah, I, I have affinity for the wind-style as well?” Linley was stunned. He couldn’t help but turn to look at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart squeezed out a smile. “Linley, I did tell you early on that I could only test for the earth elemental essence affinity. Right. When you absorbed natural elemental essence, did you never sense any wind essence?”

“Wind elemental essence?” Linley was stunned. “The first time you taught me to process elemental essence, you told me to not be distracted, so although I did notice some green-colored specks of light around me, I didn’t pay any attention to them. But later on, when I began to absorb earth elemental essence, I would be surrounded by earth essence and the green specks would no longer appear.

Doehring Cowart now understood.

When training mageforce, especially dual-element mageforce, if one only focused on training one element such as earth, all the nearby earth elemental essence would be drawn near while all other essences, including wind, were pushed aside.

“Afterwards, whenever I trained, I only sensed earth elemental essence nearby. I didn’t think about those green specks of light.” Linley was feeling extremely happy as well.

Because he knew how powerful a dual-element magus was; far more powerful than a single-element magus.

After the elemental essence affinity test, the spiritual essence test!

Chapter 9 – The Magical Aptitude Test (part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 9 – The Magical Aptitude Test (part 2)

“Remember, when engaging in the spiritual essence test, you must hold strong. Resist for as long as you can.” Doehring Cowart said solemnly. “I don’t know much about the wind-style, so you absolutely must go to a magus academy. With such strong elemental essence affinities, it would be an absolute waste for you not to train in the wind-style.”

Linley understood this as well.

“Please enter the magical formation.” The bald elder actually used the word ‘please’ in addressing Linley.

Even the nearby nobles began to look at Linley with a new light in their eyes. For a person to have exceptional elemental affinity meant that they could generate mageforce in an extremely short period of time. The rest of the time could be spent on cultivating spiritual energy. His future prospects would therefore be unlimited.

Linley stepped into the magical formation.

The magical formation immediately glowed with a white aura, and then a sense of pressure immediately flooded into Linley’s spirit.

Light-style elemental magic – Overawe!

“How weak. Compared to the overawing presence of the Black Dragon from half a year ago, it simply isn’t even close to being on the same level.” Linley was relaxed enough to even think about that.

As time went on, the aura of the magical formation grew stronger and stronger, and the overawing presence grew stronger and stronger as well. Everyone in the great hall held their breaths, as everyone watching knew

very clearly that in the future, this plainly dressed youngster would definitely become a powerful magus.

“Does anyone know that youngster? What clan does he belong to?” The nobles in front were all whispering to each other.

If they had made friends with this youngster of amazing potential, they would have acquired, in the future, an extremely formidable ally.

“His name is Linley?” Some of the magus academy recruiters learned his name from the test administrators.

The entire group of magus academy recruiters, who had previously been sitting there, smiling, all ran over enmasse to watch. Which magus academy would not want to recruit a genius such as this?

Standing alone in the magical formation, Linley continued to resist the overawing presence.

Linley was breathing heavily, and at the moment, his entire mind felt hazy. That powerful spiritual pressure was pressing down on him like a mountain, and the strength of the pressure was continuing to rise. But Linley was continuing to persevere….

“The longer I can hold on, the better an academy I can enter.” Linley gritted his teeth.

And then, when the pressure had reached a certain height, Linley finally could no longer resist. He dropped to one knee, his hands clenching into fists on the floor.

Everyone’s gaze turned to the bald elder.

His face suffused with happy red glow, the bald elder announced in a clear voice, “Spiritual essence, eighteen times that of his peers, high-level. High spiritual essence, exceptional elemental affinity.”

At this point in time, all of the magus recruiters charged forth. “Hello, Linley. I come from the Lander [Lan’de] Magus Academy. Our Lander Magus Academy sincerely would like to admit you into our school. As long as you enroll with us, your entire tuition will be free, and every year we will even provide you with a thousand gold coins for living expenses. We will also invite an especially skilled magus teacher to personally train you.”

“Linley, I come from the Welling [We’lin] Magus Academy. We…”

…..

Seeing the swarm of people around him and how warmly they were treating him, Linley was stunned for a long moment, while in his heart, he sighed with amazement. In the blink of an eye, so many recruiters had learned his name. This was really too amazing.

“Hey, everyone, please return to your seats. We need to continue the test.” The bald elder said in a kind voice.

He could be arrogant towards those common folk, but he had to be courteous to the representatives of mighty magus academies.

“Linley. Our Ernst Institute would sincerely like to invite you to become one of our students.” From far away, another voice sounded out, and when it did, the entire hall went silent. Even the bald elder stopped speaking.

Linley turned around.

A white-robed middle-aged man walked over. Smiling, he said, “Exceptional elemental affinity, high spiritual essence, and dual-element. Linley, our Ernst Institute would very much welcome you to join us. I don’t know if you would be willing to enter our Ernst Institute?”

Hillman, nearby, had been staring in stunned silence. He immediately ran over next to Linley, so excited that his hands were quivering.

The Ernst Institute?

Enter the Yulan continent's number one magus academy, the Ernst Institute? What did that represent?

That represented that immediately upon graduation, even if he was just an average student, he could easily become an earl in any of the nearby kingdoms. If he was a superior student, even the four great empires would sincerely welcome him to join them.

Across the entire massive Yulan continent, each year the Ernst Institute only enrolled a scant hundred students!

A hundred students a year. What did this mean?

Every single student who enrolled into the Ernst Institute could be described as a genius!

"Linley, agree to him." Hillman excitedly said.

Linley also felt extremely excited, but his head was extremely clear, and he also looked very calm on the outside. Linley knew very well that upon becoming a member of the Ernst Institute, and with the guidance of Doehring Cowart, in just a few decades, it would not be too difficult to become a magus of the seventh or eighth ranks.

His clan would once again flourish.

"Sir, it would be my honor to enroll within the Ernst Institute." Linley said courteously.

Surprised at Linley's equanimity, the white robed man still smiled. "Linley, I will inform the Institute of your biographical details. When the time comes, just bring your proof of identity to the Institute and take a second, correlating test. Then, you will become an official student of our Institute."

It was pointless to try and get someone else to take the test for you, because each school would do a backup test as well.

“Each academic year is divided into two semesters, with the first semester beginning in February 9th. As long as you arrive by February 9th, you will be fine. This is your proof of identity. It can also be considered your proof of admission.” The white robed man withdrew a sealed red envelope from within his sleeves.

In fact, immediately upon knowing Linley’s test results, he had recorded Linley’s details into the paperwork in the envelope. Because the white robed man believed without a doubt – no one would refuse an offer from the Ernst Institute!

“Thank you.” Linley accepted the envelope.

Linley didn’t look too excited on the outside, but Hillman was uncontrollably excited. A student at the Ernst Institute. Who amongst them were not venerated? Linley’s future accomplishments could already be predicted.

“Uncle Hillman, let’s go.” Linley placed the red envelope into his clothes, and then left the main hall with Hillman.

Despite being packed, everyone in the main hall, from the commoners to the nobles, all discreetly made way for him to move through. Even those nobles who had previously scorned Linley as a country bumpkin were all now smiling at him in a friendly manner. Their attitudes were amazingly good.

This was a simple demonstration of the status which an Ernst Institute student held!

Watched by a crowd of nobles, commoners, and church officials, Linley and Hillman departed the cathedral.

“Squeaaaaak!” After exiting the cathedral, the little Shadowmouse shouted out, sensing Linley’s excitement.

Only now did Linley let the excitement he felt show on his face. His hands suddenly clenching into fists, his eyes shone with energy. Turning to look at Hillman, he rapidly said, “Uncle Hillman, let’s go, let’s go back! Back to Wushan township! I’ve gotta let my father know the news!”

Chapter 10 – The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 10 – The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome (part 1)

Wushan township. The Baruch clan manor.

Hogg had just finished lunch not too long ago, and was currently sitting down, relaxed, on a sofa, while leisurely reading a book.

Two shadowy blurs suddenly entered the manor. It was Linley and Hillman, who had rushed the entire way back from Fenlai City. At the moment, both their faces contained uncontrollable excitement, and Linley began to shout from far away, “Father, I’ve returned!”

“Lord Hogg.” Hillman was very excited as well.

Hogg raised his head. Seeing the wild excitement on the faces of Linley and Hillman, he had a positive premonition. He immediately stood up. Staring at Linley and Hillman, his voice quavered as he said, “How did the magus assessment test go?”

The Baruch clan had been in a downward spiral for too long. This ancient clan needed a mighty personage to restore it to its former glories!

“Lord Hogg, the Ernst Institute! It’s the Ernst Institute! Linley was accepted by the Ernst Institute!” Hillman said excitedly.

Hogg seemed to have turned into a statue. At the moment, Hogg felt as though his brain had suddenly been deprived off oxygen, as everything went blank for a moment.

“Ernst…lord? Lord?” Hillman called out twice.

Hogg, slowly regaining his mental faculties, suddenly hurried walked towards Linley and Hillman. In a disbelieving tone, he said, “Ernst, did you just say, Ernst Institute?” Right now, Hogg’s eyes were bulging and round.

“Father, here’s the acceptance letter from the Ernst Institute.” Linley directly handed the admissions envelope to his father. Hogg was stunned for a moment, then quickly accepted the red envelope and removed the letter from within it. He carefully scanned the letter.

Several names in bright red particularly stood out – “Ernst Institute” “Linley”.

“Haha, hahahahaha! Elders of the Baruch clan, there is hope for our clan again!” Hogg suddenly lifted his head to the sky and laughed wildly, so hard that his entire body was trembling, so hard that tears began to flow. “There is hope for our Baruch clan again!”

That wild laughter and those coursing tears absolutely stunned Linley.

“Father…” Linley said in a soft voice, as though afraid to disturb his father.

Linley had never seen his father act so wildly before, and his father’s tears made Linley’s heart quaver as well.

Housekeeper Hiri came over as well. He was also stunned by Hogg’s reaction. Hiri had no idea what had just happened.

Hogg took a deep breath, then looked at Linley, his eyes filled with boundless excitement. “Good, good.”

“Hillman, Uncle Hiri!” Hogg looked at the two of them. “Tonight, I am going to host a banquet. Quick, make the arrangements! Tonight, I am very happy, extremely happy. To have such a son, even if I die, I will be able to proudly face the elders of the Baruch clan.”

“Yes, Lord Hogg,” Hillman and Hiri responded.

“Squeak squeak!” Suddenly, the little Shadowmouse ‘Bebe’ scurried out from within Linley’s clothes. He hopped onto Linley’s shoulders to stare at Hogg, his little eyes filled with anger.

Mentally sensing the little Shadowmouse’s emotions, Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

As it turned out, the little Shadowmouse had fallen asleep next to Linley’s chest, but Hogg’s explosive laughter startled him awake. An infant Shadowmouse spent a great deal of time napping, and hated being awakened. At this moment, naturally he was extremely furious.

“Shadowmouse. A magical beast, Shadowmouse?” Upon seeing the little Shadowmouse with Linley, Hogg’s facial expressions changed dramatically.

“Father.” Linley was afraid that his father would strike, so he hurriedly said, “The little Shadowmouse and I have already entered a soulbinding pact.”

Hogg seemed to have been thunderstruck. He stared dumbly for a long moment. “You, you subdued and tamed this magical beast Shadowmouse?”

The two ways to tame a magical beast were 1) Subduing it by force, and 2) Setting up a soulbinding magic formation.

Hogg naturally knew very well that Linley’s physical strength was very weak. And even the weakest Shadowmouse was of the third rank of power. And in addition, there was no way for Linley to set up a soulbinding magical formation, so that couldn’t have happened at all.

“Yes, father, I’ve tamed him.” Linley said seriously.

Hogg only felt that his own son seemed to have dramatically changed, totally changed!

“Lord Hogg, Linley really did tame this Shadowmouse. I personally witnessed it. This little Shadowmouse is also the reason why in recent days, Linley has often caught wild animals to feed to the ‘adorable pet’ he had

behind the back courtyard.” Hillman explained.

“He was feeding this ‘pet’?” Hogg thought for a moment, then stared at Linley disbelievingly. “Magical beast Shadowmouse. This is the ‘cute animal’ you told me you were feeding in the back courtyard?”

Linley nodded honestly.

Hogg didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. The ‘cute pet’ was actually a magical beast?

Although he had many questions about how Linley might have entered a soulbinding pact with the little Shadowmouse, Hogg didn’t worry too much about it. Right now, he was in a wonderful mood.

“Fine, enough of that topic. Uncle Hiri, Hillman, lead the guards to make the arrangements right away. Tonight, I am going to host a magnificent banquet.” Hogg laughed loudly. Right now, his laughter was extremely full and carefree.

Linley stared at his father. From as far back as he could remember, he had never seen his father so happy.

…….

That very night.

It was extremely noisy inside the Baruch clan manor. Even the ten-plus bodyguards and their families had all been invited. There were five full tables placed in the main courtyard of the manor, and the entire Baruch manor was filled with laughter and joy.

“Yummy, yummy.” Little Wharton first grabbed this, then grabbed that, eating excitedly.

“Young master Linley, congratulations on being admitted to the Ernst Institute. In the future, young master Linley will no doubt become a mighty,

powerful magus.” A clan guard laughed as he toasted Linley politely.

During this banquet, Linley was the main attraction.

Upon hearing that Linley had been admitted to the Ernst Institute, everyone present had become excited. One could easily understand that entering the Ernst Institute meant entering a certain destiny. In the future, Linley definitely would not be constrained by tiny little Wushan township.

“Big brother, all of them are toasting you. I want to also.” Little Wharton grabbed his juice cup.

Seeing little Wharton’s greasy hands, Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. But he still raised his own glass of juice and tapped it against little Wharton’s cup.

“Come, we’re brothers.” Linley grinned as he lifted his cup as well.

….

Late night, the Baruch family ancestral hall. Only Linley and his father were present.

The door to the ancestral hall was closed, and a row of candles was lit in the entire hall, making it quite warm. At this moment, Hogg was staring at the spirit tablet in the middle of the hall. His voice low, he said, “Linley, after the fifth Dragonblood Warrior was born, our Baruch clan began to weaken, generation by generation, to the point where even our hereditary, ancestral heirloom was lost. Every time I think of this, I can’t help but feel absolutely ashamed. We’re supposed to be the noble Dragonblood Clan!”

Linley stood behind him without making a sound.

He felt the shame as well.

An ancient clan which had lasted five thousand years. The Dragonblood Warrior clan. Linley felt pride in his heart. But their ancestral heirloom had

been lost.

“Linley.” Hogg suddenly turned and looked at Linley solemnly. “From today forward, I will no longer treat you as a child. I will view you as the sturdiest pillar in the future of our Baruch clan! Our clan’s hopes for the future will all rely on you, now.”

“Yes, father.” Linley resolutely nodded.

“Wait a moment. I am going to get something.” Hogg suddenly turned and entered a hidden room next to the ancestral hall. Shortly afterwards, he returned with a thick book in hand. “Linley, take this and give it a good read. Memorize everything.”

“This is?…”

Linley looked suspiciously at the thick book he had just accepted. There were no words on the cover, but when he opened it, there were four big words printed on the first page – Secret Dragonblood Training Tome.

Chapter 11 – The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome (part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 11 – The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome (part 2)

“The Secret Dragonblood Training Method?” Linley couldn’t help but look strangely at his father.

Hogg smiled. “Not only is it the Secret Dragonblood Training Method. This tome also discusses many things related to our Baruch clan. The Secret Dragonblood Training Tome is included within, as well as the method to create and control the Dragonblood Needles, as well as the history of some of the elders of our clan.”

Linley carefully flipped through it.

Indeed, the tome was divided into four sections. The first part was regarding the ‘Secret Dragonblood Training Tome’, while the rest were regarding other matters pertaining to the clan.

“Linley, even if this tome falls into the hands of outsiders, it would be useless to them, as there is simply no way an outsider can train in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Training Method. As for our family history, so what if someone learns about it? What’s more, we have multiple copies of this tome as well. This one is also just a copy. After so many years have passed, the original has long since turned to dust.” Hogg laughed as he spoke.

Linley immediately laughed as well.

“Makes sense. Even if someone acquires it, it would be useless.” Linley immediately began to more curiously flip through the pages of the tome and read through each section.

Secret Dragonblood Training Tome, Chapter 1.

“If one wants to utilize the Secret Dragonblood Training Method, one must be able to call forth the blood of the Dragonblood Warriors flowing through their veins. There are two ways of calling forth the Dragonblood. The first method requires the density of the Dragonblood having reached a certain level. But if the density is insufficient, there is still a second method…”

Reading this, Linley was stunned.

Aside from a high density of Dragonblood, there was another method? Why hadn’t anyone in the family succeeded in all these years, then?

“The second method is to take a deep drink of the blood of a living dragon, or of the blood of a dragon that just died a few minutes ago. The longer a dragon has been dead, the lower the chance of awakening the Dragonblood! A deep drink of dragon’s blood can activate the inherent Dragonblood flowing in each member of our clan’s veins. For the best results, drink the blood of a Saint-level dragon. If one only drinks the blood of a dragon of the ninth rank, the chances of activating one’s Dragonblood is rather low.”

Reading through this, Linley was stunned.

“Our clan elders really were formidable. They actually came up with the idea of drinking the blood of a living dragon in order to utilize the Secret Dragonblood Training Method.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“Drink the blood of a living dragon, and a Saint-level one at that? Linley, your ancestors really were extremely formidable.” Doehring Cowart had appeared by Linley’s side and was reading the Tome as well. Seeing the introductory paragraphs, he couldn’t help but feel shocked as well.

Hogg, of course, couldn’t discover Doehring Cowart’s existence at all. Hogg laughed bitterly at Linley. “Linley, did you see that? Based on our ancestor’s method, the Dragonblood is lurking hidden within all of our veins. To call it forth, there are just two methods. But the second method

requires one to drink the blood of a living dragon. How can that be an easy task? What's more…Linley, flip to the back and take a look."

Linley flipped the page.

"However, this second method of drinking live dragon's blood is extremely risky. Dragon's blood is extremely forceful. When it is rubbed on one's body, it has the effect of improving the quality of one's body, rapidly increasing one's strength. However, it will also cause pain comparable to one's skin being peeled off. And this is just a topical application. If one actually drinks dragon's blood, then one's body will feel as though it is being scorched, to the point where one can actually be burned to death, with veins exploding, causing immediate death."

Upon seeing this part, Linley was utterly speechless.

"Father, who wrote this Secret Dragonblood Training Tome? Since it is so dangerous, why did he even include it?" Linley didn't know what to say.

Hogg said with a solemn face, "Linley, this Secret Dragonblood Training Tome was written by our founder and first ancestor, the very first Dragonblood Warrior to appear in the Yulan continent, Baruch! He naturally must have had his own reasons for writing this down. Nonetheless, in our family history, there have been two descendants who drank the blood of a Saint-level dragon, and in the end, both of their veins erupted and they died."

"There's been people who have actually drank the blood of a Saint-level dragon?" Linley was somewhat shocked.

But actually, it was quite normal.

In the past, when the first, second, and third generation of Baruch clan members were all Dragonblood Warriors, the clan was in its glorious ascendancy. At that period in time, it wasn't impossible to procure the blood of a Saint-level dragon.

“The events of the past happened too long ago. The real secrets of that era, this book has not revealed. All I know is that because of this, the dragon race sent representatives to engage in discussions with our Baruch clan’s clanlord. After this, our descendants no longer attempted this method. Later on, when our family line weakened, even when we wanted to drink dragon’s blood, we no longer were able to.” Hogg shook his head and sighed.

Linley nodded.

The arrogance of the dragon race was something discussed in many books.

Capturing a live Saint-level dragon to engage in bloodletting? How great a humiliation would this be for the dragon race? It was quite lucky for the Baruch clan that the dragon race didn’t exterminate them in a fiery rage. However, from this, one can imagine how powerful the Baruch clan was at that time.

“This can’t be right, father. If no one has ever successfully become a Dragonblood Warrior as a result of drinking dragon’s blood, then why did our ancestor write that it is possible to use dragon’s blood to refine our own? And even say that the blood of a dragon of the ninth rank would also have some effect?” Linley was really puzzled.

Hogg was startled.

“Linley, don’t ask too much. Honestly, I only know a little bit about our family history as well. As far as what happened four thousand years ago, there’s no way we can clearly know what happened.” Hogg laughed towards Linley.

Linley nodded.

But in his heart, Linley was still suspicious. If no one in history had ever successfully become a Dragonblood Warrior by drinking dragon’s blood, then why would this method be written down in the Secret Dragonblood Training Tome?

“Linley, it’s getting late. You should go back and get some rest.” Hogg laughed.

Linley nodded.

Night.

Linley had returned to his own bedroom and was reading the tome, but his heart was still full of questions.

“Grandpa Doehring, what do you think. If no one has ever succeeded using this method, how could it have been discovered?” Linley simply couldn’t understand the logic.

Doehring Cowart was so old that he had become as crafty as a fox. Stroking his white beard, he said in a self-satisfied manner, “Linley, the answer is simple. Based on what I know, the dragon race is extremely proud, and also extremely large and powerful! I wager that drinking the blood of a live dragon is probably an effective method, but your clan came under tremendous pressure from the dragon clan, and therefore altered the contents of this book.”

Linley immediately understood.

This was very possible.

Under pressure from the dragon race, the Dragonblood Warriors of the Baruch clan were undoubtedly forced to stop catching live dragons for bloodletting.

“But of course, that’s just my conjecture.” Doehring Cowart said placidly. “And Linley, based on what I know, drinking the blood of a live dragon is not necessarily a road to death. As long as you combine it with some Blueheart Grass, the negative effects of dragon’s blood will be negated. But I bet there’s very few people nowadays who know this secret.”

Linley was stunned.

And then, he was wildly overjoyed. “Grandpa Doehring, are you saying that fresh dragon’s blood, when mixed with Blueheart Grass, is safe to drink?”

Doehring Cowart confidently nodded. “Of course. In the past, in the Pouant Empire, when a princess acquired a serious disease, in the end, the only method of curing her was a medicine that included a mixture of fresh dragon’s blood and Blueheart Grass. As a matter of fact, I was the one who personally caught a Saint-level dragon.”

“I remember the master physician who provided the prescription saying that everything in this world has its equal and opposite. For every single ingredient, there was another that would match with it. In that era, the only person who knew how to mix fresh dragon’s blood with Blueheart Grass was that old physician. Since six thousand years have gone by, no doubt no one knows it any longer.” Doehring Cowart said calmly.

Linley nodded.

“Fresh dragon’s blood and Blueheart Grass…” Linley’s eyes shone with excitement. “In the future, when I am powerful enough and become a magus of the ninth rank or even higher, I will use fresh dragon’s blood and Blueheart Grass to let little Wharton become a Dragonblood Warrior.”

Linley even hoped that…

If he had the chance, he himself would use this recipe.

If he could become both a Saint-level magus and a Dragonblood Warrior….but of course, that was just a dream. To even be able to catch a Saint-level dragon was a distant, untouchable dream.

“The road ahead is still long. Time to sleep, time to sleep. I need to train tomorrow.”

Chapter 12 – Instructions

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 12 – Instructions

Time flowed on, and in the blink of an eye, months had passed. Many new trees had begun to sprout on Wushan township, filling the area with a feeling of spring.

Beneath a pine tree.

Linley was seated cross-legged in a meditative trance, generating mageforce.

After having entered the meditative trance, Linley could clearly sense large amounts of earthen specks of light and green specks of light. These countless specks of lights continuously swirled into his body, and through his limbs and his bones, were purified and stored within the central dantian in his chest.

Within his central dantian, there was a smoky earthen mist intermingled with a smoky green mist.

The earthen mist was his earth element mageforce, while the green mist was his wind element mageforce.

“Whew.” Slowly releasing a breath, Linley exited his meditative trance.

Doehring Cowart, wearing a moon-white robe, was seated cross-legged next to him, a smile on his face as he enjoyed the surrounding scenery. Seeing Linley awaken, he laughed. “Linley, tomorrow you are heading to the Ernst Institute, yet you are still hard at work today?”

Linley’s lips curved up in a smile. “Grandpa Doehring, I believe you were the one who said that strong combatants must work hard every single day, and not relax for even an instant. Only long term training will produce

astonishing power."

"Little punk, so now you are going to give me instructions?" Doehring Cowart laughed while 'grumbling'.

"Hehe," Linley chortled.

"Woosh!" A black shadow from far away came flashing towards them, appearing on Linley's shoulders in the blink of an eye. It was the Shadowmouse, 'Bebe'. Young Bebe leaned towards Linley, making a chewing motion with his mouth, while pointing at a nearby dead hare.

Just from the look on Bebe's face, Linley knew what was up.

"You want me to cook it?" Linley laughed as he spoke.

Bebe nodded repeatedly.

"Linley." The nearby Doehring Cowart mentally spoke to him. "This little Shadowmouse is really quite strange. It's been months, but judging from his size, it's almost as though he hasn't grown at all. For an infant Shadowmouse, the early childhood growth rate should be quite noticeable."

"I have no idea either." Linley shook his head.

Although Shadowmouse 'Bebe' did not increase in size, his speed was improving quite remarkably.

"It really is bizarre." Doehring Cowart looked at Bebe. Right now, Bebe didn't have any idea that a spirit was mentally weighing him.

"It's getting late. I'll need to start warrior training soon." Linley stood up and grabbed the dead hare as he began heading down the mountain. Doehring Cowart flew by his side, unhappily saying, "Linley, in the future, you will be a magus. Why are you still engaging in warrior training?"

Linley laughed, "Grandpa Doehring, I've discovered that warrior training

can increase my endurance, and with increased endurance, my spiritual essence can increase as well."

"I know that, of course." Doehring Cowart said, dissatisfied. "But how could those basic training methods compare to the meditative trance in turns of how fast one's spiritual essence increases?"

Linley shut his mouth and no longer spoke.

While it was true that fighter training allowed one to improve one's spiritual essence, that wasn't the real reason.

The real reason that Linley continued his fighter training was this. "In the future, if I have the chance to drink fresh dragon's blood, I will be able to practice according to the Secret Dragonblood Training Tome. I have to keep up my physical training. The body is like a vessel, while battle-qi is like wine. The body is extremely important. The earlier I begin building my fundamentals, the faster my improvement will be when I study the Secret Dragonblood Training Tome in the future."

Actually, based on Linley's affinity for elemental essences, each day, he didn't have to spend too much time or effort to gather and generate mageforce.

Most of his time was spent in the meditative trance, training his spiritual essence.

But spending significant amounts of time training spiritual essence was exhausting. Warrior training served as a form of rest and alternative exercise.

……

The next morning, all of the commoners of Wushan township gathered on the main road in town, all for the purpose of sending off Linley. It was definitely an incredibly glorious thing for Wushan township to be able to produce a magus who would attend the Ernst Institute.

Each year, the Ernst Institute only accepted a hundred students from across the entire Yulan continent.

At the moment, Linley was still within the Baruch clan manor, while Hillman and the others were all outside. The only people within the manor were Hogg, Linley, little Wharton, and Housekeeper Hiri.

“Linley, today you are going to go to the Ernst Institute and formally become an Ernst Institute student. When you graduate from the Ernst Institute, you will be a powerful magus! Before you depart, as your father, I want to say to you…” On this last day, Hogg had a belly full of things he wanted to speak to Linley.

But after pausing for a long time, Hogg only said a few simple sentences. “Linley, remember the ardent desire that the elders of the Baruch clan have held for centuries, and remember the humiliation of the Baruch clan!”

Hogg’s face was turning slightly green.

“When you graduate, you will be at least a magus of the sixth rank. If you work hard and train hard, it won’t be too hard to become a magus of the seventh rank. And in addition, you are a dual-element magus! A dual-element magus of the seventh rank would definitely be a major force in the Kingdom of Fenlai. In the future, you will definitely be capable of retrieving our clan’s ancestral heirloom. If you do not, even if I die, I will not forgive you!” Hogg fixed a deathly stare on Linley.

“Even if I die, I will not forgive you!”

These words made Linley’s heart tremble.

These were the instructions his father gave to him upon their parting.

“Father, don’t worry. So long as I live, I will ensure that the ancestral heirloom of our Baruch clan is restored to us. I so swear!” Linley promised, meeting his father’s steely gaze, his own eyes filled with resolve as well.

Hogg's eyes began to shine, and he patted Linley on the shoulder with a mighty clap.

"I believe in you, son!"

….

On the road headed east of Wushan township, Linley turned his head saw the hundreds of familiar faces which had come to send him off, with his father, Hogg, and his younger brother Wharton standing in the lead.

"Big brother, bye bye!" Little Wharton waved mightily.

Seeing his father and his younger brother, Linley also waved, his eyes turning red.

"Father. Wharton." Linley's heart was filled with longing.

Ever since he was born, Linley had never left home for an extended period of time, but this time, he would be gone for extremely long. At this moment, the little Shadowmouse, 'Bebe', was obediently perched on Linley's shoulders, not making a sound, as if he sensed Linley's thoughts. The nearby Doehring Cowart, in spirit form, also looked encouragingly at Linley.

"Linley, let's go." Hillman said. Hillman was escorting Linley to the Institute, acting as his bodyguard in the event they met with any bandits.

Linley unwillingly took one last glance at his family, and then finally forced himself to turn away and begin traveling in the direction of the Ernst Institute.

"Farewell, my family. Farewell, my home."

Yulan calendar, year 9991. The nine year old Linley, accompanied by the

young Shadowmouse, ‘Bebe’, and the Baruch clan’s guard captain, Hillman, departed from Wushan township.

Chapter 13 – A Congregation of Talents

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 13 – A Congregation of Talents

Ernst Institute. The finest magus academy in the entire Yulan continent.

The Ernst Institutewas located in a rustic area approximately twenty kilometers south of the Holy Capital of Fenlai City. The Ernst Institute was founded and financially supported by the Radiant Church. Naturally, it was wealthy and knew how to throw around money. They took up a very large space, with a circumference of ten kilometers. Such a huge academy was nearly the size of a city.

Outside of the Ernst Institute, few visible signs of human presence could be seen, just an empty mountain range.

Restaurants, clothing stores, bars, and other sorts of service industries were all located on the campus itself. It could be said that the students of the Ernst Institute spent their entire lives within the campus.

“What an imposing style.” Linley stood at the gateway to the Ernst Institute. He couldn’t help but sigh with emotion.

The main gate of the Ernst Institute was fully fifty meters wide. Above the great gate was an enormous, crescent moon shaped construct, covered with all sorts of magical scripts which one could tell at a glance were amazingly complicated. Just from seeing how complicated the scripts were, one could imagine how powerful and mighty the magical formation protecting the Ernst Institute was.

Right now, the main gate of the Ernst Institute was a very lively place. There was an row of academic staff, and a single youth who had brought his admission letter and his proof of identity and had begun to be processed for intake. Linley immediately grabbed his own documents and headed in for processing as well.

“School officially starts February 9th. Today is February 8th. Based on the notification, students must arrive before February 9th. Since the young man in front of me is also just arriving today, no doubt he also lives rather close to the Institute.” Linley thought to himself.

The young man in front of Linley could actually be more precisely be described as a child. He was half a head shorter than Linley, and there was an old man by his side.

“Hi there. I’m from the O’Brien Empire, and my name is Reynolds [Lei’nuo].” The student being processed for intake in front of Linley suddenly turned his head and warmly greeted Linley.

Hearing that he came from the O’Brien Empire, Linley was startled. “The O’Brien Empire?”

The O’Brien Empire, one of the Four Great Empires, was located to the east of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, while the Ernst Institute was located west of it. In order to reach the Ernst Institute, one had to circle around the entire Mountain Range of Magical Beasts from the north or the south. After all, aside from combatants of the ninth rank or Saint-level combatants, no one dared to directly cross that mountain range.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was over ten thousand kilometers long.

For someone to come from the O’Brien Empire, the entire trip would have consisted of at least twenty thousand kilometers worth of travel. If they came from the eastern part of the Empire, the journey would have been even longer.

It probably would’ve taken about a year or so to travel twenty thousand kilometers.

“My name is Linley. I’m from Fenlai Kingdom.” Linley courteously said to the boy called Reynolds.

Reynolds blinked, and sighed emotionally. “Fenlai Kingdom? Then you had it nice and cushy. It took me a full year just to get to Fenlai Kingdom from my home. It didn’t take you too much time.”

“Right. From my home to here, I travelled for about half a day.” Linley honestly replied.

“Whoah…” The expression on Reynolds face was priceless.

One of them travelled for over a year. The other, for just half a day.

“Students, hurry up.” One of the test administrators nearby urged.

One of the intake processes for new students was to retake the magus test. After all, the Ernst Institute was afraid that someone might steal an admissions letter and falsely enroll.

“Coming.” Reynolds went to take the test.

Upon seeing the results, Linley couldn’t help but feel shocked.

This boy named Reynolds had high elemental essence affinity…and as for his spiritual essence…

“Reynolds, eight years old. Spiritual essence, thirty-two times higher than students his own age. Exceptional level.”

Hearing these numbers, Linley’s eyes briefly bulged. But the test administrator seemed to be very calm, and not the least bit surprised.

“Linley, what is it? Amazed just by this?” Reynolds said dismissively. “This is the Ernst Institute. Each year, they accept only a hundred students from across the entire Yulan continent. Which one of them is not an amazing talent? My results can only be considered average, across the student base.”

“But the Ernst Institute does show some favoritism to the Holy Union. They

accept fifty students from the Holy Union, and only fifty more total from the other Four Great Empires. It is so unfair." Reynolds sighed.

Linley chuckled when he heard this.

The Ernst Institute was founded by the Radiant Church. Of course it would show favoritism towards the Holy Union.

"My turn." Linley ran towards the test giver as well.

Reynolds wrinkled his little nose. "This fellow called Linley is from the Holy Union. He no doubt had a much easier time being accepted than me. I bet he isn't as talented as I am." Reynolds was extremely confident.

But when the test administrator reported Linley's results, Reynolds was shocked.

"High spiritual essence, exceptional elemental essence affinity? And dual-element affinity for earth and wind?" Reynolds was totally speechless.

Exceptional elemental essence affinity was already extremely rare, but Linley was not only dual-element, but had exceptional affinity for both the wind and the earth elemental essences. This was a true talent, one rather more formidable than even himself. After all…dual-element magi were extremely powerful.

"Reynolds, don't just stand there looking silly. Let's go." Linley laughed.

"Oh." Reynolds was a year younger than Linley, but judging from appearances, seemed three years younger.

Linley and Reynolds accepted their Ernst Institute student ID's, then acquired their residence keys. At the Ernst Institute, all students, regardless of wealth and economic background, had to live together. Tuition fees and residence fees were totally waived.

However…

“Hey, you have to pay tuition?” When Linley saw the old man accompanying Reynolds pull out the tuition money, he couldn’t help but feel shocked.

Hillman, besides Linley, laughed. “Linley, the tuition waiver and rent waiver provided by the Ernst Institute is only for members of the Holy Union. All others have to pay an extremely high fee.”

Reynolds nodded also.

The old man next to him smiled at Linley. “That’s right. This isn’t just the rule for the Ernst Institute; the number one warrior academy in the Yulan continent, the O’Brien Academy, does the same. They provide a full tuition waiver for their own Empire’s students, but charge an astronomical fee for students coming from other places.”

Linley wasn’t stupid. He immediately understood.

“Linley, my young master has the same residence key as you. The two of you should be living in the same residence. I hope that in the future, the two of you can help each other out.” The old man said.

Reynolds said unhappily, “Okay, Grandpa Lomu [Lu’mu], you can go back now. I’ve already arrived at the Ernst Institute.”

“Uncle Hillman, you can go back as well. I can take care of myself.” Linley smiled as he spoke to Hillman, and Hillman nodded back, satisfied. “Linley, then I’ll go back now. Work hard.” Hillman encouraged.

Linley smiled and nodded.

“Linley, let’s go.” Reynolds warmly grabbed Linley by the hand, and began to run into the Institute.

“Farewell, Uncle Hillman.”

Hillman and the old man both watched the children enter the Institute. Only after a long time did they depart.

After saying his farewells to Uncle Hillman, Linley and Reynolds entered the Ernst Institute together. The Ernst Institute was filled with shady groves, lakes, stone bridges, ancient buildings…an ancient aura permeated the entire place. Just from the size of the giant trees, which seven people would have to surround in order to hold hands, one could imagine how old the place was.

“It really is something. It isn’t nearly as gaudy as some of the newer institutes. This is what is known as ‘sophistication’.” Reynolds curious eyes took in their surroundings while he spoke.

Within the Ernst Institute, as a one-time event, there were many instructional signs telling students where each location was. Clearly, this was intended to help assist the new students.

“Linley, let’s go find our dorm.” Reynolds, pulling Linley’s hand, began hurrying in the direction of the dormitories.

Dorm number 1987.

Linley and Reynolds had completed their intake processes at the same time, one after another. Most dorms held four students. When Linley and Reynolds arrived at the dormitory area, they couldn’t help but sigh in amazement. At first glance, there appeared to be thousands of stand-alone dormitories.

Amongst the thousands of dormitories, there were even a few two-story apartment style dorms.

“1987, 1987…” Linley and Reynolds inspected the dorm numbers, running south nonstop.

The dorm area was numbered very logically, beginning from 0001, with each row housing 100 individual dorms. When Linley arrived at row 20, he

saw dorm 1901. And then, as they continued running east, Reynolds began to pant for breath, until finally, they arrived at dorm 1987.

Chapter 14 – The Bros of Dorm 1987 (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 14 – The Bros of Dorm 1987 (part 1)

“Whew, I’m exhausted. Linley, how come you are in such good shape?” Reynolds was panting for breath, but Linley didn’t feel anything.

“What, you are tired already?” Linley started to laugh. How short a distance had they just run?

He didn’t even feel too tired after running from Wushan township to the Ernst Institute.

“Hey, just put it down there. Right. Put the box down there. Put it down carefully. If you break it, there’s no way you can afford to compensate for it!” From within dorm 1987, the clear voice of another youth could be heard. Linley and Reynolds glanced at each other, then entered curiously. Immediately upon entering, they saw several muscular men busily moving things about.

A gaudily-dressed youth was standing in the center of the room, directing their moves.

Immediately upon seeing Linley and Reynolds, the young man’s eyes brightened, and he excitedly ran over. “Haha, you guys are my dormmates, right? I’ve waited so long for you guys. Up til now, it’s just been me here. Lemme introduce myself. My name is Yale [Ye’lu], and I suppose I just barely qualify as a member of the Holy Union.”

“What do you mean, you just barely qualify as a member of the Holy Union?” Reynolds mumbled, and then said, “My name is Reynolds. I’m from the O’Brien Empire.”

“My name is Linley. I’m from the Holy Union’s Kingdom of Fenlai.” Linley smiled as well.

As long term dormmates, in the future, they would be together for a long period of time.

“Oh, Reynolds, Linley, I am so happy to see you fellows. Hey, where did my exercise equipment go?” Yale turned his head and stared at his servants.

“Exercise equipment?” Reynolds blinked at Yale. “Yale, what do you have those for? Are you going to be a warrior?”

Yale wrinkled his nose as he chortled. “Although I am a dignified magus, I still need to work out and have a good physique. Otherwise, how will I be able to seduce beautiful women? There’s many beautiful women amongst the ranks of the magi. And the female magi of the Ernst Institute are not only pretty; they are also very classy. Plus, there’s a lot of face to be gained by being able to brag to others that I have an Ernst Institute student as my girlfriend.”

“Uh…” Reynolds was speechless.

Linley didn’t know what to say either. Seeing the exercise equipment, Linley wanted to go work out, but he didn’t expect that these were the tools which Yale planned to use to do bodybuilding to seduce pretty girls.

“I’m eight years old. How about you, Yale?” Reynolds clearly was very open-minded.

Yale was extremely tall. The nine-year old Linley was already 1.5 meters tall, but Yale was half a head taller than even Linley.

“Me? I’m ten. Haha, but I’m not getting any younger. My elder brother lost his virginity at age twelve. I’ve got to do some advance preparations as well.” Yale’s eyes shone.

“What does ‘losing virginity’ mean?” Reynolds looked questioningly at Yale.

“Yeah, what’s ‘losing virginity’?” Linley also looked curiously at Yale.

Staring at his two dormmates, Yale became momentarily speechless as well. Besides Linley, the ghostly form of Doehring Cowart was holding his belly as he laughed uproariously. This made Linley ask him curiously, “Grandpa Doehring, why are you laughing?”

“Young master, we’ve arranged everything.” An extremely muscular man said respectfully.

“Mm. You can leave now. Go back and tell my father that in the future, if there isn’t something urgent, not to bother me. Oh, right. Remember…every year, he can’t forget to transfer money into my magicite card. He should know very well that a magus needs a lot of money for his magistaff and socketable gems.” Yale said loudly and casually.

“Yes, young master.” The man said respectfully.

Yale nodded, satisfied, then dismissed the men with a wave of his hand, as though he were a general.

“Magicrystal card?” Reynolds stared at him in amazement. “The magicrystal card is only offered by the ‘Golden Bank of the Four Empires’, which all four of the great empires established together. I heard that the processing fees for requesting a card totals a hundred gold coins.”

“Right on.” Yale was quite knowledgeable about this. “The minimum starting balance for a magicrystal card is at least a thousand gold coins. But I’m afraid that a thousand coins wouldn’t be enough to even sustain a month’s worth of expenditures for me.”

Linley, upon hearing these words…

“Rich guy.” Linley sighed to himself.

His own father gave him only a hundred gold coins each year for living costs. In fact, in Linley’s eyes, a hundred gold coins was more than enough.

After all, most commoners would only make twenty or thirty gold coins in wages after a year of hard labor.

“You really are a rich guy. My dad only gives me two hundred gold coins a year.” Reynolds mumbled. “And he even said that he wants me to spend my time focused on studying magic.”

“Just a hundred for me,” Linley laughed. “But for a simple life, it’s enough.”

“Bah, bros, my money is your money. If you run out, just come find me! In the future, we’ll probably be living together for decades. We’ll be bros for decades. Why quibble about ‘yours’ and ‘mine’?” Yale was extremely expansive, but just as he finished speaking…

Linley and Reynolds both started.

“Decades?” Linley stared at Yale in shock.

Yale said casually and naturally, “Linley, you can only graduate from the Ernst Institute if you reach the rank of a magus of the sixth rank. For a magus, the higher you progress, the harder it becomes. For most people, it takes a couple decades to become a magus of the sixth rank.”

Linley frowned.

Decades? He was going to be a fiscal burden to his father for decades?

“Grandpa Doehring, why didn’t you tell me this?”

Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in his mind. “Linley, relax. For most people, decades will be needed to reach the sixth rank, yes. Under my tutelage, I can let you become a magus of the sixth rank in just ten years.”

Ten years.

In ten years, Linley would only be nineteen years old. Only now did Linley

relax.

“Is everyone here already?” A clear voice rang out, as a child walked into the room. Approximately the same height as Reynolds, this child looked a bit more mature. “Hello, everyone. My name is George [Qiao’zhi]. I’m ten, and I’m from the Yulan Empire.”

Yale, Reynolds, and Linley all gave basic introductions about themselves to the newcomer.

“The Yulan Empire?” Linley was startled.

The Yulan Empire. The most ancient of the empires of the Yulan continent. When the Yulan calendar was first started, ten thousand years ago, the Yulan Empire controlled the entire Yulan continent. And then, as time passed, the Yulan continent began to fall into war, causing the Yulan Empire to fragment as well.

By this era, the Yulan Empire had become just one of the Four Great Empires.

But despite this, the Yulan Empire was still the most economically powerful of the empires, and it was also filled with magi. The magus academy of the Yulan Empire was second only to the Ernst Institute.

“George, the magus academies of the Yulan Empire aren’t that bad. Why did you rush all the way here?” Yale said in amazement.

George smiled. “Although the magus academies of the Yulan Empire are very good, they are still a bit weaker than the Ernst Institute. If you’re going to go to school, you should go to the best. Although the journey was a bit long, it could be considered a form of training as well.”

“George, you are ten? But you look the same as me.” Reynolds said to the side.

George immediately began to laugh.

The eight-year old Reynolds and the ten-year old George were of the same height. Both were the shortest in the group. Linley was half a head taller than them, while Yale was the tallest of them all.

“Enough of that topic. I just found out from the admissions office that every one of the hundred new students have at least high levels in both elemental affinity and spiritual essence. I even discovered guys who have ‘exceptional’ levels in both elemental affinity and spiritual essence. What monsters.” George seemed to have good inside information.

Yale pursed his lips. “That’s very normal. Which student in the Ernst Institute is weak? Myself, my elemental affinity and spiritual essence are both high level, putting me towards the bottom of the pack of our one hundred. If it wasn’t for the fact that my old man has a special relationship with the Radiant Church, I probably wouldn’t even be able to make it in.”

Linley couldn’t help but stare at Yale in shock.

This Yale fellow’s dad surely was something quite amazing, to have a special relationship with the Radiant Church.

“The person in our dorm with the highest natural talent is Linley. But have you guys heard of the unmatchable talent who is studying at the Ernst Institute?” Yale glanced at the other three.

Linley and Reynolds both shook their heads.

But George smiled as he nodded. “I’ve heard of him. The number one genius of the Ernst Institute, ‘Dixie’ [Di’ke’xi], a talent that appears once in a century. He is a dual-element magus, and has exceptional levels of elemental affinity and spiritual essence. But his spiritual essence is especially amazing; 62 times that of others his age. Usually, reaching 30 times is considered ‘exceptional’ level, so his precise level should be ‘super exceptional’, but since the highest level is ‘exceptional’, that’s what he is classified as.”

Linley understood.

Dual-element. Exceptional elemental affinity and spiritual essence.

“I’m just ten-something times that of other people my age, but that genius has 68 times the spiritual essence of people his age.” Linley sighed in amazement.

The Ernst Institute really did have as many talents as there were clouds in the sky. It could also be said to have congregated all of the magical geniuses of the Yulan continent. Here, Linley could only be considered above average. However…behind Linley, there was a five-thousand year old Saint-level Grand Magus!

Chapter 15 – The Bros of Dorm 1987 (part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 15 – The Bros of Dorm 1987 (part 2)

Most of the students of the Ernst Academy would stay at the Institute for decades, so usually by the time of graduation, fellow dormmates would be extremely close friends. Although Yale, Reynolds, Linley and George were all more mature than most others their age, at heart, they were still children.

After just chatting for a short period of time, the four of them immediately grew very close.

“Everyone, let’s spend the day getting to know our campus better. Tonight, I’ll treat you all to dinner! Haha.” Yale slapped his chest and said enthusiastically.

“This guy even has a magicrystal card. If we don’t take advantage of him, who else would we take advantage of?” Reynolds laughed.

George and Linley were both still children, and they immediately grinned evilly.

“Squeak squeak!” At this moment, the little Shadowmouse, ‘Bebe’, suddenly popped his head out from within Linley’s clothes. Having just woken up, the little Shadowmouse was feeling lonely, so he popped his head out.

“Whoah, what’s that?” Reynolds was so startled he jumped.

“Bebe, you woke up?” Linley laughed as he stroked Bebe’s little head. Bebe closed his eyes in contentment, and then opened his little eyes and peered at Reynolds, Yale, and George. His little nose snorted three times, as though he looked down at them.

“Magical beast, it’s a magical beast! I’ve seen them in books.” Yale

suddenly shouted.

“Linley, you have a magical beast companion?” Reynolds and George were also shocked.

They were all children. How could one of them make a magical beast submit to them?

“Bebe is just a baby magical beast. I just gave him some food, which made him like me. So I entered a soulbinding contract with him.” Linley laughed.

“Good heavens, that’s a magical beast! Linley, you are really formidable. I’ve dreamed of having one since I was young.” Yale stared at Bebe, his eyes shining. “Although I have access to soulbinding formation scrolls, I don’t have the ability to force a magical beast to submit to me.”

Yale said in a depressed voice.

“You aren’t able to subdue a magical beast? Not even an infant?” Linley laughed.

Yale shook his head. “I’m not even a magus of the first rank yet. Based on my strength, maybe I could train a magical beast of the first or second rank, but what would I do with such a weak critter? And the infants of magical beasts of the seventh or eighth ranks are extremely hard to acquire. What’s more, the infants of those beasts are more powerful than me, even as babies.”

Linley agreed with him silently.

The little Shadowmouse, ‘Bebe’, currently was as strong as a magical beast of the fifth rank. He was far stronger than Linley. But having been together with Bebe for half a year, he could tell that Bebe didn’t grow larger at all. This was what confused both Linley and Doehring Cowart.

“Linley, this little Shadowmouse is named Bebe? Can you have Bebe allow me to cuddle him?” Reynolds gaze was glued to the little Shadowmouse.

“Bebe?”

Linley immediately asked Bebe through their soul link.

“No, no way.” Bebe could also express some simple intentions to Linley through their soul link. At the same time, Bebe flashed his fangs towards Reynolds. “Squeak squeak!” He squeaked loudly, clearly very angry.

Reynolds couldn’t help but pucker his lips in disappointment.

“Reynolds, I’ll tell you a secret. Bebe loves to eat roast meat. If in the future, you can feed him some roast ducks or roast chickens, I believe that he won’t be very hostile to you.” Linley laughed upon seeing Reynolds eyes shine.

“Can do.”

Reynolds suddenly frowned as he turned to Yale. “Yale, if in the future I run out of money, you’ve got to lend me some. When Grandpa Lomu comes, I’ll pay you back.”

“No problem.” Yale said magnanimously.

“I bet everyone hasn’t had a chance to get a good look at the campus yet, right? Let’s go for a stroll and familiarize ourselves, shall we?” George smiled as he spoke.

Of the four bros, George was the most amiable and steadiest boy. Reynolds was the most childish one of them. Yale…was the playboy type. As for Linley, in the eyes of the other three boys, he was the most mysterious.

Dual-element magus, exceptional affinity, and a magical beast companion.

He really was mysterious.

The ancient Ernst Institute was filled with countless buildings which were

thousands of years old. In front of some of them, there were even introductory placards.

The youngest of them eight, the oldest of them ten. The children stared worshipfully at each famous name, especially at the histories of the Saint-level combatants, which caused their hearts to beat faster. All of them dreamed of one day becoming a Saint-level combatant.

But a voice right next to Linley's ear kept on grumbling. "Nothing more than some promising latter-day youths. This guy is actually bragging about killing a Violet-Tattooed Black Bear? A Saint-level combatant who can only kill ninth level magical beasts and not Saint-level magical beasts can only be considered a newbie Saint-level."

Many famous graduates of the Ernst Institute were bashed by Doehring Cowart as not worth mentioning.

….

The four bros of dorm 1987, along with the little Shadowmouse 'Bebe', strolled about the entire campus, gaining a basic level of familiarization. That very night, the four of them went to a lavishly decorated hotel next to the dormitory area and had themselves a feast. But of course, all they drank was juice.

The next day. February 9th. School started.

There were no classes this day; those would start on February 10th. February 9th was meant to go and listen to the exhortations of school management to work hard. This group of six-to-twelve year olds filled the auditorium. They didn't know exactly who the people speaking to them were, so many of the children began to daydream. When the ceremony concluded, all of them happily departed.

After dinner, the four bros of dormitory 1987 were all seated on chairs inside the dorm and discussing their classes.

“It’s so easy here. Just one class a day. Oh, Linley is dual-element, so he has two.” Yale sighed. “But the Ernst Institute is really relaxed. If you want to attend class, you can. If you don’t want to, you can skip.”

George calmly smiled. “Yale, don’t grow complacent. Although there aren’t formal requirements for students, every year, there will be an ability test. Only if you advance a rank in power can you advance a grade. If you don’t work hard, do you plan to stay here for a century? What’s more, the Ernst Institute has a rule that if one does not become a magus of the sixth rank in sixty years, one will be expelled, no exceptions.”

Reading the various regulations of the Institute written on the introductory packet, Linley nodded silently.

Although the school had lax supervision, allowing one to not study at all for sixty years, once you reached the end of those sixty years, if you still had not become a magus of the sixth rank, you would be directly expelled.

“Expelled?” Yale stared. “If I really were to be expelled, my old man would probably kill me.” Expulsion by the Ernst Institute would result in an unbearably humiliating reputation. No one would be willing to shoulder it. After all, to have been accepted meant they were all talented people.

“Class starts tomorrow. I wonder how the teachers are. If they aren’t even as good as my Grandpa Lomu, I’ll have come for nothing.” Reynolds mumbled.

“Reynolds, your Grandpa Lomu is a magus?” Linley asked, somewhat surprised.

“Of course. On the long road from the O’Brien Empire to the Ernst Institute, Grandpa Lomu had already begun to teach me magic.” Reynolds said proudly.

When Linley and the other three were chatting with each other, they all felt very excited.

“The earth element class isn’t that important. In terms of understanding the earth element, how could any of the teachers at the Ernst Institute compare with Grandpa Doehring? The most important class is the wind element class. I wonder what wind magic is like?”

The day had already begun to grow dark, but the sounds of laughter and chatter continued to sound out from the four children within dormitory 1987.

Chapter 16 – Wind-Style Magic

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 16 – Wind-Style Magic

For the academic calendar of the Ernst Institute, every month, the first twenty eight days had classes. Only the last two days were free.

Earth magic classes were taught from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM in the morning, fire magic was taught from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM in the afternoon, water magic from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM in the afternoon, wind magic from 4:30 PM to 6:30 PM in the afternoon, lightning magic from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at night, and light magic from 9:30 PM to 11:30 PM at night.

But since the majority of students were single element, they only had to take two hours of classes a day. Linley was dual-element, which meant each day he had just four hours of classes. But because these classes were on a voluntary basis, if you didn't want to go, no one would force you.

The school of earth magic was divided into six classes, with each class having its own building. New students and first rank magi attended the first grade class, magi of the second rank attended the second grade class, magi of the third rank attended the third grade class…and so on, up until the sixth rank who attended the sixth grade class.

Magi of the sixth rank could choose to graduate at any point in time. But naturally, if they elected not to, they could continue to study.

February 10. Within the classroom of first grade classes.

The classroom for first grade earth magic was extremely large, and was capable of seating hundreds of students. Twenty students had already arrived, and Linley selected a seat located relatively in front, sitting down. At 8:00 AM, there were around fifty students present.

“I expect only part of the students present are new. I wonder how long the others have spent here.” Linley wondered to himself.

After all, for a new student to reach the second rank, usually they would need to train for several years.

“Greetings, everyone.” An amiable, kindly looking brown-haired middle aged man stood in front of the class. “My name is Wendi [Wen’di], and I will be your instructor in earth magic. Today, we have approximately twenty new students. So, same as always, first we are going to have our new students introduce themselves, so that we can all get to know each other.”

Immediately, one new student after another began to introduce themselves.

“My name is Gerhans [Ge’er’han]. I come from the great grasslands to the far east.”

Upon hearing Gerhan’s self-introduction, Linley was shocked. “The students here really do come from all over the Yulan continent. There’s even someone from the great grasslands in the far eastern part of the Yulan continent.”

In the great map of the Yulan continent…

The Holy Union and the Dark Alliance were located west of the Yulan continent’s Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. East of the range were the Four Great Empires, but even further east of the empires was a vast grassland, which contained three kingdoms of its own. The distance between the great grasslands and the Ernst Institute was unbelievably great. A one way trip alone would take at least three years!

“My name is Linley. I’m from the Holy Union.” Linley as well walked to the front of the classroom and gave a basic introduction of himself.

After the self-introductions were complete, the earth-style magus Wendi began to brag about earth-style magic’s power. Only in the second hour of

the class did he actually begin to instruct in earth-style magic.

Linley and the group of students just listened quietly. Next to Linley, Doehring Cowart appeared as well.

“This fellow has a very solid foundation. Although he isn’t very strong, in terms of teaching magi of the first rank, not even magi of the eighth or ninth rank would necessarily be a better teacher.” Doehring Cowart nodded as he sighed in praise.

Linley knew a great deal about earth-style magic by now, so listening to the lecture was very easy for him.

“But Grandpa Doehring, although his foundation is solid, he isn’t able to distill the profound into simple words like you. He seems to make it more complicated.” Linley said.

Doehring Cowart laughed self-confidently. Stroking his white beard, he said, “Naturally. A Saint-level Grand Magus’ understanding of magic is far greater than that of a magus of the eighth or ninth rank. The Saint-level is a totally new realm of existence. Naturally, my teachings regarding magic are more profound and point more directly to the underlying nature of magic.”

After listening to this class, Linley made a decision.

“From today forward, I will only attend the earth magic class once a month.” Linley didn’t want to waste his time.

Linley had it all planned out. Every day, he would spend some time outside training in magic. As for the place he would do the training…Linley had already chosen a place, a mountain located right behind the Ernst Institute. Being located near a mountain range, naturally there were many mountains near the Institute.

Four in the afternoon.

Linley was intently listening to the teachings being given in the wind-style

magic class.

“Greetings, everyone,” a handsome, yellow-haired youngster said with a smile. “I am a sixth grade student, Trey [Te’lei]. From today onwards, I will be responsible for teaching you wind-style magic. I live in dorm 0298, so if you have any questions after class ends, you can come find me there.”

Sixth grade students, being magi of the sixth rank who could apply for graduation at any time, were fully qualified to teach students of the first or second grades.

“Before this, let’s all first introduce ourselves.” Trey smiled.

This was a basic rule to start off every class for the first time. All of the students gave self-introductions.

“Hey, Linley, have you noticed? There’s lots of cute girls amongst the wind-style students. Check it. That little blonde girl just smiled at you.” Doehring Cowart, next to Linley, pointed as he spoke. “Based on what that little blonde girl just said, her name seems to be Delia [Di’li’ya]. Delia. Such a cute name. Based on my 1300 years of experience, when this little girl grows up, she’ll be a beauty for sure. Linley, smile at her and build a good foundation. That way, in the future, you’ll be able to advance the relationship.”

Right now, Linley was totally ignoring Doehring Cowart.

Linley was focused on the wind-style magus instructor ‘Trey’, and closely listening to Trey’s teachings.

“Wind-style magi are the fastest, most nimble magi in the world. In addition, we are the only magi who can fly before reaching the Saint-level!” Trey’s words and mannerisms all conveyed the love which he felt towards wind magic. “Do you wish to use your own power to fly above the skies? To soar in the air and gaze down upon countless mountains? How wonderful the feeling is, and how many people desire it!”

The eyes of many of the children who were seated below, listening, began to shine.

Fly?

Who wouldn't want to?

"A Saint-level magus can fly, yes, but the Ernst Institute can perhaps produce just one, at most, in a century! But we magi of the wind-style can, upon attaining the fifth rank, immediately execute the 'Floating Technique'." Trey said confidently, "And wind-style magi are extremely fast. When they execute the 'Supersonic' technique, they can dramatically increase their speed."

"But of course, those are just common techniques. The legendary forbidden technique, 'Annihilating Tempest', is the most powerful destructive technique of them all. There's also the legendary forbidden technique, 'Dimensional Edge', which is the most powerful one-on-one attacking technique." Trey's voice was filled with reverence.

Many of the youths stared wide-eyed.

"Hmph, how can the Annihilating Tempest be considered the most powerful destructive technique? What about my earth-style's 'Heaven Collapses, Earth Shatters' and 'Heavenly Meteor's Descent'?" Doehring Cowart, upon hearing these words, was somewhat unhappy.

"Grandpa Doehring, what is this 'Dimensional Edge' technique?" Linley asked.

Given that Grandpa Doehring had not mentioned the 'Dimensional Edge' spell, Linley believed that perhaps it really was the most powerful one-on-one attacking technique of them all.

"The Dimensional Edge spell? It can slice through the dimensional walls which separates matter itself. Of course it is powerful. But although it is ridiculously strong in one-on-one combat, it's still only a one shot spell.

How can it compare to our earth-style's 'World Protector', which can battle nonstop with the enemy?" Doehring Cowart was quibbling and equivocating.

But Linley could tell.

This Dimensional Edge spell clearly possessed a terrifying power. And most likely, it wasn't as simple as Grandpa Doehring made it out to be. A one-shot technique? Even a one-shot technique could be enough, if the opponent couldn't dodge.

"If I can become both a Dragonblood Warrior as well as utilize wind-style magic, then…" Linley's heart was moved.

And then, he just continued to listen to the class. Linley became more and more intrigued by wind-style magic. Of the four elements of earth, fire, water and wind, each contained profound mysteries which were as deep as the sea. The ocean of magical knowledge was an endless one. And now, Linley had begun to wade into its depths.

Chapter 17 – A Learning Period (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 17 – A Learning Period (part 1)

Spring left and autumn came. In the blink of an eye, Linley had spent half a year at the Ernst Institute.

During those days in school, Linley was like a thirsty man of the desert, frantically drinking up the basic fundamentals to magic. With regards to wind-style magic, Linley's knowledge and strength continued to rise as well, and Doehring Cowart would give him pointers every so often as well.

Today, the sunlight was bright and beautiful.

The four bros of dorm 1987 had just finished lunch. They were wearing a set of sky-blue robes, the school uniform of the Institute. Because of constant physical training, Linley appeared all the more mesmerizing, with his elegant form covered by the sky-blue robes. This was why quite a few of the young girls in the wind magic class liked to chat with Linley.

At this moment, the four bros were walking while chatting idly.

"Right, Linley, today the rest of us are going to attend the new students fellowship. Are you going?" George chortled.

George loved to participate in student unions and fellowships, and he was excellent in ferreting out news and making new friends. Although he had only been in school for half a year, amongst the first grade students of the Ernst Institute, George had become a mover and a shaker.

"Nope." Linley's answer was succinct and direct.

"Haha, I knew Linley definitely wouldn't go." Reynolds laughed loudly.

Putting his arm around Linley's shoulders, Yale sighed, "Linley, my man,

there's no need to be this diligent when it comes to studying. Based on your talent, if you just expend a bit of effort, in thirty years you can easily become a magus of the sixth rank. Why do you have to work so crazy hard? You should learn to relax and enjoy life. There's a lot of cute girls who will be at the fellowship, you know."

"Right. Really cute girls." Reynolds opened his eyes wide and nodded.

Linley could only sigh helplessly.

Under the guidance of the Yale, that innocent youngster, Reynolds, had begun to go astray.

"Yale, you pervert, stop tugging at me. Alright, time for me to go train. Tomorrow is the end of the month, I'll hang out with you guys then." Linley laughed. The last two days of each month, Linley let himself take two days break.

Knowing Linley's temperament, Yale, Reynolds, and George all nodded.

Linley immediately walked off, quietly but quickly heading towards the mountains behind the school. There were thousands of students at the Ernst Institute, and there were also many magi who were researching new spells here. There were also many servers. In short, the Ernst Institute was a well-populated place.

On the road to the mountains, many students wearing blue gowns could be seen as well.

"Growl…" A low roar sounded.

Linley turned aside to look, and his eyes brightened. "A magical beast!"

A flowing mane, slick cyan fur, and four thick, forceful limbs. A pair of eyes filled with wildness, viciousness, and a cold fierceness. Those coldly flashing golden claws made onlookers' hearts tremble.

The magical beast, ‘Windwolf’.

A terrifying magical beast that moved as fast as the wind itself.

The most terrifying thing one could encounter in a forest of magical beasts was a pack of Windwolves. If you encountered them, based on their speed, there was no way you could escape.

A handsome, black-haired man was seated atop the Windwolf. The young man was staring delightedly around him, seeming to be very proud of having such a fine magical beast.

“This should be a magical beast of the fifth or sixth rank,” Linley decided.

At the Ernst Institute, there were indeed quite a few people who had magical beasts. Aside from the magi who had been invited to come to the Institute, some fifth and sixth grade students were able to buy soulbinding formation scrolls and had managed to tame some magical beasts to serve as their mounts.

“It’s just a magical beast. Why be so cocky about it?” Linley looked somewhat contemptuously at the self-pleased youngster.

After departing from the school, Linley entered the mountain in the rear.

The mountain behind the Ernst Institute was an extremely wide ranging one. Long, long ago, magical beasts used to live in this mountain, but as time went on, all of the magical beasts were exterminated by the magi of the Institute. By now, there were only a few normal beasts still living here.

Upon entering the mountain, Linley’s speed increased dramatically.

He naturally began to use the wind-style ‘Supersonic’ spell, turning his entire body as light as a leaf. Like a spirit, he wound his way through the mountains. After running for several kilometers, Linley reached his target destination, an empty area next to some flowing water.

“Squeak squeak.” Bebe chirped at Linley.

Linley chuckled and said, “You want to go out and play again? Fine, but don’t run off too far.” Linley had a lot of faith in Bebe. A year had passed since he had met the little guy, but although Bebe still hadn’t grown larger, and was still just twenty centimeters long, his speed had dramatically improved.

“Magi? Perhaps a warrior of the eighth rank would be able to catch the little Shadowmouse, but only a Saint-level magus would be able to do the same.” Linley knew very well how strong the bodies of most magi were.

The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, scurried into the mountain forests.

“Grandpa Doehring, please come out and instruct me.” Linley immediately said mentally.

A mist flew out, transforming into Doehring Cowart. Doehring Cowart blinked and glanced at Linley. “Linley, what’s going on? In the past, haven’t you always ignored this old fellow and entered the meditative trance first? Why are you calling me out now? I was having a wonderful nap just now, hmph. You ruined my beautiful dream.”

Linley quirked his lips.

Although Grandpa Doehring was a Saint-level Grand Magus, after getting to know him, Linley realized that although he looked kindly and amiable on the outside, on the inside, he was a playful scamp.

“Grandpa Doehring, I feel like I have reached the level of a magus of the second rank. I want you to take a look and see for yourself.” Linley finally said.

“A magus of the second rank?”

Intrigued, Doehring Cowart ran some calculations. “Hmm, right, about a year has passed since you started learning with me. Right, first, perform the

introductory spell of ‘Shattered Rocks’. Do your absolute best, understood?”

‘Shattered Rocks’ could be considered a spell which scaled.

There was a ‘Shattered Rocks’ spell of the first rank, but there was also a Saint-level spell for the ‘Shattered Rocks’; only, the name for it was called ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’. Naturally, when the strength of an earth-style magus increased, his power in using the ‘Shattered Rocks’ would also increase.

“Yes, Grandpa Doehring.”

Linley immediately began to quietly mouth the words to a spell. The words had long since been memorized by Linley to the point where he could recite them without thinking. As the words to the spell continued, Linley could feel his entire spirit enter a special mode.

The earth-style mageforce in his chest began to roil about, and natural elemental essence began to gather there as well.

Suddenly, the nearby earth began to crack and shatter.

Five skull-sized pieces of rock flew up and began to circle around Linley’s head. These five rocks were all covered with earthen specks of light, and as Linley’s eyes began to shine, he let out a deep shout. The five rocks rapidly shot off to a far distance, carrying a gust of wind with them.

“SMASH!”

The five stones covered in earthen light smashed into a thick tree trunk. The tree swayed, but its trunk did not shatter. In the end, the five stones still came tumbling down to the ground.

“Yeah, not bad.” Doehring Cowart’s eyes lit up. “To be able to control five stones at once with such impressive speed shows that you do, in fact, have the power of a magus of the second rank.” Doehring Cowart was very much

satisfied with Linley's performance.

Linley couldn't help but reveal a hint of a smile on his face as well.

He had just taken another step towards his goals.

Linley would never be able to forget the words his father had said to him when he left. "If you cannot bring it back, even when I die, I won't forgive you!" These words had pierced Linley's heart like a sharp knife, and he was constantly reminded of them.

Right now, Doehring Cowart was chortling happily. "But Linley, you must understand that a magus of the second rank counts for little. Based on our ranking systems, magi of the first and second rank are all considered 'entry-level magi'. Magi of the third and fourth ranks are considered 'mid-level magi', and fifth and sixth ranks are 'high-level magi'. A magus of the seventh rank is called a 'senior magus', a magus of the eighth rank is a 'master magus', and a magus of the ninth rank is a 'arch magus'. These ranks of seven through nine are the highest. The road you have to travel is a long way."

"I know." Linley nodded.

"Good. Train hard." Doehring Cowart once more entered the Coiling Dragon Ring.

Linley collected himself, suppressing his excitement at becoming a magus of the second rank. He once more tranquilled sat and entered the meditative trance. The strong became strong one step at a time and through achieving many accomplishments.

Approximately three kilometers away from Linley.

Linley's wind-style magus instructor, the sixth-ranked magus Trey, frowned. "Hmm, the earth magic spell, 'Shattered Rocks'? Based on its power, it should be of the second rank. An entry-level magus has come to the mountain to train? Who is it?"

Just then, Trey had utilized the ‘Windscout’ spell, and had sensed the earth-style magic which Linley had just cast.

Based on the magic vibrations, Trey was able to determine what spell it was.

Trey curiously walked in that direction. Based on his prowess as a magus of the sixth rank, his execution of the ‘Supersonic’ spell was far stronger than that of Linley’s. Like a passing fog or cloud, Trey easily and tranquilly flowed through the mountain.

In the blink of an eye, Trey had reached a spot two hundred meters next to Linley.

Standing next to a large tree, Trey saw Linley from afar.

“It’s him?”

Naturally, Trey recognized his own student. “This kid called Linley never talks in class. Even when experimenting in new spells, others will try them out, but he will just stand and watch from afar, never showing his strength. It seems…this kid called Linley is already a magus of the second rank. I remember him being one of our new students. Didn’t expect him to be so talented.”

Linley already knew how to cast spells, so of course when the instructors told the other students to give it a try, he would just stand and watch.

Never participating in any group activities, Linley’s secretiveness was acknowledged by everyone who knew him.

“Hehe, looks like I have a genius amongst my students. Mm. Looks like this year, I should receive a reward when the first grade student competition commences.” A brilliant smile was on Trey’s face. As for Linley, right now, being in a meditative trance, he couldn’t sense anything more than a hundred meters away from him.

Chapter 18 – A Learning Period (part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 18 – A Learning Period (part 2)

A month had passed after Linley had become a magus of the second rank.

Within the first grade wind magic classroom.

Linley would only go to the earth magic class once every month or so, but he attended every single wind magic class. Today, Linley was seated in his usual spot.

“Linley, you came.” Just as Linley sat down, a very adorable young lady sat down next to him.

Seeing the girl, Linley smiled. “Delia, you came pretty early. There’s still quite some time before the next class starts.” Sitting together with a beautiful girl was of course something enjoyable. Naturally, Linley wouldn’t push her away.

Delia was no ordinary person.

Her brother, Dixie, was the number one genius of the entire Ernst Institute, and described as a talent which would be found once in a century at most. He, too, was a dual element mage, and his elemental essence affinity was exceptional. But what’s more, he was a supreme talent with 68 times the spiritual essence of an ordinary person.

As the sister of Dixie, Delia naturally was pretty exceptional as well.

“It’s because I know you always come early.” Delia beamed, her eyes crinkling.

The two sat together and chatted. Time passed quite quickly, and before they realized it, class had started. Instructor Trey energetically explained in

front, and Linley sat beneath him, listening intently. But Delia, every so often, would sneak a peek at Linley.

“Alright, today’s class is over for now. But before class ends, there’s something I must inform you all about.” Instructor Trey smiled as he spoke.

All of the students immediately began to buzz.

“The older students all know that our Ernst Institute has a tradition. At the last two months of every year, a yearly tournament will be held. The yearly tournament is always the most noisy, energetic time at the Ernst Institute. The students who achieve victory in the yearly tournament will likely have a higher chance of being rated ‘superior’ upon their graduation. When they graduate, most likely they will be invited by the Four Great Empires.” Instructor Trey laughed.

All of the students below immediately began to grow excited.

At the Ernst Institute, talents were as common as the clouds. And the number one problem that all talents shared was that they didn’t like to admit inferiority to others!

Thus, the yearly tournament had become a way for talents to become famous. Close to 90% of the students would pay attention to the tournament, and everyone with some ability would participate.

“Naturally, we wind magic practitioners will also do battle. Everyone interested in enrolling, please speak to me.” Instructor Trey smiled as he spoke, but his gaze drifted towards Linley.

“Instructor, I wish to enroll.” Many students below immediately began to clamor to enroll.

“Great.” Instructor Trey took out a duck feather quill pen and began to record down names, but after taking down ten or so names, he realized that Linley was busy chatting with Delia, apparently not interested in enrolling at all.

Trey walked over.

Linley involuntarily glanced up and immediately called out respectfully, “Instructor Trey.” The nearby Delia also paid her respects.

Trey smiled and nodded. “Linley, this yearly tournament is an excellent opportunity to train one’s self. I expect all of the elites of the first grade students will attend. Why aren’t you enrolling? This is a rare opportunity.”

“I’m not interested.” Linley said directly.

Instructor Trey couldn’t help but start.

“Linley, you no doubt are unaware that the victors of the tournament will receive some rewards.” Instructor Trey said enticingly.

“Rewards?” Linley was in desperate need of money.

His clan’s economic situation was in such terrible shape. If he could win some money, he wouldn’t mind attending the yearly tournament.

“Right. You should know that most students live in ordinary dorms, those single unit ones. But the top three victors of the tournament are all qualified to live in those two-story high buildings for a year. That’s a proof of status. The rooms are much more comfortable as well.” Instructor Trey continued.

Linley understood.

There weren’t many two-floor dorms, and most of those belonged to powerful magi of the seventh or eighth ranks. From what he was now hearing, the top three students in each grade also were allowed to live in them.

Housing conditions?

Linley didn’t care about it at all.

“I’m not attending.” Linley still said.

Instructor Trey grew somewhat impatient. As a sixth grade student, if one of Trey’s student became one of the top three in his grade, not only would he be rewarded, he would also gain a lot of face. Young people all cared about face.

Instructor Trey leaned in towards Linley, saying in a low voice, “Linley, are you concerned about revealing your ability? I know that you are a magus of the second rank.”

Hearing these words, Linley couldn’t help but look up at Trey in surprise.

How did Instructor Trey learn about his current level of power? After all, it was hard to judge one’s abilities from external appearances.

Seeing the expression on Linley’s face, Instructor Trey thought that he had hit the mark. Laughing, he said, “Linley, if you have ability, you shouldn’t hide it. Even if you decide not to attend the competition for fear of revealing your ability, I might just decide to expose you myself.”

“Whatever. Still not going.”

Linley stood up unhappily, and then politely paid his respects. “Farewell, instructor.”

And then, ignoring the stupefied look on Trey’s face, he immediately left.

“Bah. This kid.” After recovering, Trey couldn’t help but laugh. The nearby Delia couldn’t help but cover her mouth and giggle as well.

…..

By the time the wind magic class had ended, it was almost six at night. The sky was growing dark. Linley ran back towards his dorm. The bros of dorm 1987 shared strong affection towards each other, and at night they always

ate together.

“Linley, you’re back.” A curly haired youngster from dorm 1986 said warmly to Linley.

“Harry [Ha’li], have you eaten dinner?” Linley smiled back in response.

Linley was on excellent relations with most of the nearby neighbors. Harry laughed and nodded. “Of course I have. Your three bros are all waiting for you inside.”

“Linley’s back. Let’s go, everyone, time to eat!” Yale’s voice sounded out.

Clearly, from inside their dorm, Yale had heard Linley’s voice. Yale, Reynolds, and George all walked out and waved to Linley. The four bros proceeded towards the dining areas. The Ernst Institute contained some luxurious restaurants, but after being persuaded by Linley, Reynolds, and George, Yale no longer took them to those places.

The dishes in the small dining hall were simple and fresh, very pleasing to eat.

After ordering some food, the four bros began to chat amongst themselves.

Linley got most of his news regarding the Institute’s going-ons from his three bros, as Linley, who spent all his time training in the mountain, probably would be totally in the dark otherwise.

“Man, in about a month, the school year is coming to an end. The last two months of each year, the entire Institute will engage in the yearly tournament. The top three students in each grade are all allowed to live in those two-story dorms for a year.” Yale said.

“The yearly tournaments?” Linley began to laugh. He had just heard about this from the classroom.

“Haha, I’m definitely attending,” Reynolds said confidently.

Yale pursed his lips. “Punk, you became a magus of the first rank on the road from the O’Brien Empire to the Ernst Institute. I wager that by now, you aren’t too off from becoming the magus of the second rank. That really is unfair.”

Reynolds spent a full year traveling from his home to come here.

On the entire journey, Reynolds’ family housekeeper had been teaching him magic, which is why he had become a magus of the first rank even before the journey ended.

George smiled towards Linley. “Hah, you are forgetting about Linley. Linley was a magus of the first rank by the time he entered the Institute as well. What’s more, he’s crazy about training, and he’s a dual-element magus. I think he’s probably the strongest person in our dorm.”

Linley quirked his lips in a smile. “George, don’t flatter me.”

“Linley, have you gained your second rank yet? Be honest?” George stared at Linley.

“How could he gain his second rank so quickly? From an introductory student to the first rank, based on our talent, a year is necessary. But from the first rank to the second rank, at least two years is needed.” The nearby Reynolds frowned as he spoke.

“Not necessarily. I also feel Linley’s been really sneaky.” Yale also looked at Linley. “Linley, have you become a magus of the second rank?”

Linley casually nodded.

What was the big deal about becoming a magus of the second rank? Even before the magus testing event, he had already become a magus of the first rank. A full year had passed since then. If he still had not become a magus of the second rank, then all his hard work would’ve been totally pointless.

“You really reached it?” Yale, Reynolds, and George’s eyes all bulged out. None of them expected it to be true.

“Go enlist in the yearly tournament, Linley. You’ve gotta take part. Give those guys a good trampling and gain some prestige for dorm 1987.” Yale immediately said.

By now, the servers had brought the dishes they ordered.

“Eat, eat! I’m not interested in the yearly tournament.” Linley had no interest in competing with those weaker than himself. Those tournament battles were nothing more than exercises in showing off!

Yale and the other three traded glances.

They all knew how hard Linley trained. Although in their year, there were geniuses who had exceptional levels of elemental affinity and spiritual essence, in terms of being hard-working, none of them could match Linley. And with Linley being dual-element…in their hearts, all of them believed that Linley was most likely the most powerful amongst the first grade students.

“It would be such a waste if you didn’t participate. Someone else is going to get the glory, once again, in the yearly tournament.” Yale mumbled. “Too bad I’m not strong enough. If I had your strength, Linley, I would’ve given a dazzling display long ago. Then, I would be able to seduce some pretty girls.”

Linley laughed. “That’s enough. Let’s eat. Stop fantasizing.”

Linley really didn’t care about the yearly tournament in the slightest. But the vast majority of the students at the Ernst Institute were extremely excited about it. And not just the students. Even some of the full magi residing at the Ernst Institute would pay close attention to the tournament results.

Chapter 19 – Who is Number One? (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 19 – Who is Number One? (part 1)

The mountain behind the Ernst Institute, a place of tranquility.

Linley sat cross-legged next to flowing water. Listening to the murmurs of the water, he naturally entered the meditative trance, and all the nearby earth essence and wind essence immediately began to shine. Everything within ten or so meters around Linley became extremely clear to behold.

Earth and wind essence entered his body through his four limbs, as his flesh, bones, and organs all slowly absorbed nourishment from the essences. Slowly but resolutely, the strength of his body was continuing to climb.

Additionally, a large portion of the wind and earth essences, after purification, came to rest with the 'central dantian' in the middle of his chest.

"Splash, splash." The flowing water murmured unceasingly.

Next to him, the little Shadowmouse, 'Bebe', was chewing on a wild duck. The scene was a peaceful as a painting, as though it had come out of a painting.

But while it was peaceful here, the Ernst Institute was extremely rowdy. All of the thousands of students, as well as many of the magi, and even many important people from the outside world were all at the Ernst Institute, watching the various battles.

The yearly tournament.

All of the students of the Ernst Institute were prideful heaven-blessed talents!

Each and every single battle was amazing to behold. Amongst the first grade students, balls of earth, flashes of lightning, and blades of wind flew hither and to. But the battles of the third and fourth grade students were really astounding. Various supportive spells and area of effect spells were used. Spells such as ‘Shattered Rocks’ now caused dozens, approaching a hundred, of large stones to smash upon the heads of the opponents, and lightning forked down without stopping.

And the fifth and sixth graders? That was all the more terrifying.

All sorts of astounding spells continuously flashed, filling the compound with unending sounds of explosions. The watching students all were all roaring nonstop, as the energy was reaching a crescendo. Virtually all of the people in the Institute were here.

……..

The yearly tournament went on for a bit over a month, which naturally was the wildest, most rowdy month each year at the Ernst Institute. During this frenetic period, Linley would only occasionally watch the battles of the fifth and sixth grade students. All of the rest of his time, he would quietly train by himself.

“This tournament actually requires one to not intentionally try and kill one’s opponent. How can this sort of competition be considered a real competition, when one’s hands and feet are tied?”

Under the influence of Doehring Cowart, Linley, too, began to view the competition with disdain.

“Linley, your current assignment is to train hard and build up your strength. As far as combat experience goes, when you become a magus of the fifth rank, you should enter the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and enter a series of genuine life-and-death experiences.” Doehring Cowart persuaded Linley.

……..

The Huadeli Hotel, the most expensive hotel and restaurant within the Ernst Institute. Tonight, Yale was hosting the four bros of dorm 1987 to a lavish meal at the Huadeli Hotel.

On the first floor of the Huadeli hotel.

The floor of the hotel was as slick as a mirror. A row of beautiful waitresses stood there politely, ready to answer at a moment's notice.

There were many men and women dressed in student attire at the Huadeli Hotel. Those who were able to afford this place were generally those who had strong economic backgrounds. A casual table of dishes might cost a few dozen gold coins. If Linley had come by himself, he definitely wouldn't be able to afford it.

The yearly tournament had just ended, and all of the students at the hotel were discussing it. Most of the people here were youngsters, but one table was filled with four children.

"I'm pissed just thinking about this year's competition. It was so close! I was so close to entering the semifinals. Maybe I would've been able to enter the top three." Reynolds was extremely dissatisfied. Reynolds was the youngest of the four, and also the proudest of them.

Yale laughed. "It really was a shame. I didn't expect Rand [Lan'de] to become number one in the end."

George chuckled but didn't speak.

George was a friendly fellow and offended almost nobody.

"Rand? Right. I've heard you guys discuss him before. He was one of the new students who had exceptional elemental affinity and spiritual essence, right?" Linley remembered the name 'Rand'.

George laughed and nodded. "Right, him. He has very high talent. Even

before training, his spiritual essence had reached the level of a magus of the second rank. All he did this year was accumulate sufficient mageforce. It isn't too hard for someone with the power of a magus of the second rank to become number one in the tournament amongst first grade students."

"Relying on his talent alone? When it comes to talent, can he compare to our Institute's number one genius, Dixie?" Yale quirked his lips. "I look down upon Rand. He won the first grade tournament, so what. Linley, you didn't see how self-satisfied he looked upon winning. I really can't imagine how he would look if he actually were to win the fifth or sixth grade tournaments in the future."

The stronger a magus became, the harder it was to progress even further.

This was why the large majority of students at the Ernst Institute were high-level magi. The higher one's grade was, the fiercer the competition was.

Reynolds nodded as well. "I also don't like him. Our school's number one genius, the third grader Dixie, won the third grade tournament. Look at how composed he was! The difference between the two is too huge. What's more, the strongest amongst us first graders isn't Rand."

"Right. Third bro, you didn't participate. If you had, hmph…" Yale harrumphed.

Based on age and seniority, the four of them had begun to address each other as 'second bro', 'third bro', and so on.

"Hey, what are you guys saying?"

Linley and Yale turned their heads. Four youths in the same hotel were making their way down from the second floor. Their leader, a golden-haired youth, stared at Linley's group coldly.

Yale said loudly, "Oh, so it's Rand. What, didn't you hear what we were saying?"

Linley couldn’t help but laugh helplessly to himself.

Yale feared neither heaven nor hell, and cared tremendously about face.

“Hmph, don’t think I didn’t hear,” Rand said coldly.

The brown-haired youth next to Rand sneered as well. He arrogantly said, “Rand, don’t quibble with these four useless things. It’s not worth your time. Reynolds, what do you think you are looking at? What, you aren’t satisfied with the way you lost in the tournament?”

Reynolds stared at the brown-haired youth, his mouth quirking in disdain. “And what do you think you are? You just got lucky and beat me once. Why so cocky?”

The brown-haired youth’s face grew cold.

George smiled at everyone. “Rand, enough. It was wrong of us to so casually discuss you. Let’s just forget about it.”

“Shut your mouth, George. This is none of your business.” Rand stared at Yale. “Yale, last time I saw you at the Fragrant Elm bar, your arrogant manner pissed me off. And now, this time, you dare to be so arrogant in front of me. If you have the ability, come and fight me. Why don’t you have the balls to fight?”

After speaking, Rand intentionally laughed mockingly a few times.

Although Yale was somewhat furious, he knew that he wasn’t as strong as the opponent.

Immediately, many gazes from all over the hotel focused on this altercation. Many of the high-level students of the Ernst Institute stood up and stared at the two parties with curiosity. Clearly, both parties were just ten year olds.

“I know that golden-haired kid. His name is Rand. He won the yearly tournament amongst first graders. I expect in the future, he’ll have some

accomplishments."

"The brown-haired kid next to him is called Rickson [Rui'sen]. He was number three amongst the first graders. I know him. In terms of strength, Rand's party is stronger than their opponents. This should be fun."

The group of magi of the fifth and sixth ranks all chatted and laughed, watching the two parties.

Seeing others notice him, and hearing them praise him as the winner of the first grade tournament, Rand's face became even more arrogant, and he looked at Linley and the others even more contemputously.

"Hmph." Rand glanced at the table where Linley and the others were sitting. "Juice? You guys are still drinking juice? Oh, Yale, I really feel embarassed for you. The four bros of my dorm are all drinking victory wine. You guys are drinking juice?"

Seeing how Rand went on endlessly, Linley couldn't help but begin to frown.

"Rand, we four bros are eating here. Get the hell out." Linley's face sank down, and he stared coldly at the four of them.

If he was training and was disturbed by beasts, he would immediately kill them.

"Oh, and this one." Rand's eyes shone as he stared at Linley. "How come I never knew that in Yale's dorm, there was someone such as you?"

Linleys' gaze grew cold.

Like a wild rabbit, he shot forward with incredible speed. Rand's eyes only had time to widen. "You-!" Before he could even react, Linley grabbed Rand by the chest and, just based on physical strength, hoisted him in the air.

“Wha, uh, uh…” Rand couldn’t make any noises come from his throat, and his eyes were filled with fear.

Linley stared coldly at Rand. Rand, heart filled with fear, felt as though he would be killed at any moment.

At this moment, Linley felt the Dragonblood in his veins begin to blaze, as his bloodthirsty nature began to awaken. Linley couldn’t help but frown as he tried to calm down. “This is the Ernst Institute. I can’t kill someone for no reason.”

The three students next to Rand were all stupefied and frightened as well.

“F*ck off!”

With the wave of an arm, Linley slammed Rand to the floor, as though he were nothing more than a beanbag.

Chapter 20 – Who is Number One? (part 2)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 20 – Who is Number One? (part 2)

By now, Linley had nearly reached the peak of the second rank for warriors. Given that the strength of an ordinary warrior of the first rank was enough to raise a hundred pounds, a warrior of the second rank could casually throw about hundred pound objects.

“You…cough…cough…” Holding his throat, Rand coughed a few times, and then stared furiously at Linley. “You…you actually…”

“Yeah!” Yale suddenly shouted loudly, his face filled with excitement. “That felt so good. Third bro, I didn’t expect you to be as strong as that!”

“That kid is pretty small, but he is so strong…”

Those magi of the fifth and sixth ranks were all astonished. There were some magus instructors in the hotel as well, and all of them were staring at Linley with surprise.

A kid who appeared to be perhaps twelve or thirteen years old was able to casually toss a 90 pound person with one hand.

And this youth was a magus!

“Hey, Rand, weren’t you bragging about how you were number one amongst the first graders?” Yale mocked.

Rand’s face went red, as his heart was filled with fury and shame. Staring at Linley, he shouted fiercely, “You, are you a magus? If you have the skills, compete with me using magic. What sort of behavior was that? A noble magus actually used the lowly skills of a warrior.” Rand was filled with anger and humiliation. He had just won the yearly tournament for the first graders, but just now, when Linley seized him by the throat and hoisted him

up, he had been filled with the terrifying sense that his life was in the hands of another.

“Right, if you have the skills, compete using magic! Are you even a student of the Ernst Institute?” Rand’s nearby friends immediately called out in support.

But towards Linley, the four of them felt some dread in their hearts. Linley’s astonishing display of strength just now had shocked them.

“Magic?”

Reynolds immediately began to laugh loudly, as he said arrogantly, “Rand, do you actually believe that just because you won the first grade tournament, you really are the strongest amongst the first graders? Dream on. The number one first grader is our dorm’s third bro. You? Step off to the side.”

“Third bro, show’m a bit of your power.” Yale urged as well.

George had just been yelled at by Rand, so right now, he was in no mood to give Rand any face either. “Rand, let me tell you something. Know your own limits. Many of the experts in our school simply don’t deign to participate in the yearly tournament. Don’t really believe that you are something special.”

Rand’s face grew uglier and uglier.

“You’ll know the truth upon dueling. Rand, compete with them.” Those fifth and sixth grade students called out laughingly. They viewed the struggles of the first graders as nothing more than an amusing diversion.

Rand was just ten years old, after all, and had been called a genius since he was little.

Even at the Ernst Institute, he was amongst the top tier. When had he ever suffered such humiliation?

“Number one?” Rand ground out. “Number one isn’t something that is simply proclaimed. It comes through competition. If you have the ability, then come duel with me.” Rand was very confident in his magical ability. After all, he had won the yearly tournament for first graders.”

“Hey, why isn’t the manager of this hotel coming in to calm things down?” Some of the onlookers felt surprised and curious about this.

In fact, the Huadeli hotel manager was standing far away, but he didn’t want to interfere.

Because he recognized these students.

Even aside from the fact that these were students from the Ernst Institute, based on the status of these students, he didn’t want to anger them. Especially…Yale.

“Young master Yale is here? Ugh. Forget it. He can do as he wishes. Even if he smashes the entire hotel, it’s none of my business.” The hotel manager rubbed and shook his head helplessly. He couldn’t dare to offend young master Yale.

And upon entering the Ernst Institute, Yale’s status amongst his family had only increased even more.

“Well spoken. Number one isn’t self-proclaimed. It’s won.” Linley stood up as well, his face cold as he stared at Rand. “Rand, if we are going to engage in a magical duel, let’s make it exciting. If you win, when I see you in the future, I’ll have to take the long way and avoid crossing paths with you. If I win, you need to do the same.”

Rand couldn’t help but sneer, “You call that exciting? When the loser meets the winner, not only does he have to take the long way around, he also has to give a hundred gold coins. How about that?”

Linley frowned.

A hundred gold coins?

He only had a hundred gold coins each year for living expenses. He wasn't rich like some people.

"Haha! Rand, just a hundred gold coins? Aren't you embarassed, saying such a number? How about this. Loser pays ten thousand gold. Deal?" The nearby Yale said loudly.

"Ten thousand gold?"

Upon hearing these words, many students in the hotel sucked in a cold breath. Ten thousand gold coins was not a small sum. There were perhaps only a very few number of students in the hotel who could so casually, calmly bring out such a large sum.

"Ten thousand gold?" Rand couldn't help but feel his heart shake.

Although his clan was a large one, each year, he only received three thousand gold in living expenses. He didn't come spend money at the Huadeli Hotel every day. Today, he only came to celebrate him and Rickson becoming the number one and number three victors of the tournament.

"Haha, don't have the balls?" Yale pulled out a magicard, waving it around as he spoke.

"Rand, agree to him." Rickson said. "We four bros should be able to pool together ten thousand gold coins. I refuse to believe that this little punk who came out of nowhere can be a match for you."

Rand and his three bros glanced at each other.

"Fine! Ten thousand gold it is!"

Rand said loudly, and then sneered towards Linley, "Let's go. This place is too small. We'll go to the arena where the tournament was held. If you have

courage, follow me!" After speaking, Rand arrogantly left the hotel, and his three bros followed him.

"Let's go." Yale's eyes were shining.

Reynolds and George were also excited. Linley nodded as well as he calmly chuckled, "Someone wants to give us ten thousand gold? How can we refuse?"

Linley, Yale, Reynolds, and George all left the hotel as well, directly heading for the arena.

The entire hotel was now in an uproar. A duel with a ten thousand gold coin wager on it was rarely seen, even by sixth grade students. And what's more, of the duelists, one was the person who had just won the yearly tournament for first graders, Rand, and one was a mysterious kid that no one knew.

Immediately, many people paid their tabs and headed off in that direction as well.

….

The arena floor was made of limestone and extremely sturdy.

Right now, Rand and Linley were each standing on a separate side of an arena dueling area.

Beneath the upraised dueling area was a large group of people. After all, this was dinnertime, so on the way here from the Huadeli Hotel, one person became ten, and ten became a hundred. In a short period of time, a large group of people had been gathered. This exciting duel with a ten thousand gold wager was more than enough to attract many onlookers.

Seeing how many people had come and how noisy it had become, a look of confidence appeared on Rand's face.

"Today, I am going to engage in a magical duel with this kid Linley, with

the loser paying ten thousand gold coins and having to avoid the other in the future. Everyone, please be my witnesses." Rand said. He enjoyed the feeling of being watched by many. He didn't suffer from any stage fright at all.

Immediately, many cheers exploded from below. During the yearly tournament, Rand had many supporters, while in contrast, very few people were supporting Linley.

But Linley just stood there on the dueling area quietly.

"Said enough?" Linley said calmly.

Rand smiled arrogantly. "Let's go."

Rand and Linley almost simultaneously began to chant the words to a spell. As both were magi of the second rank, the spells they used were all of the first and second rank and were easy to cast, requiring just a word or two.

"Whoosh!"

Seven sharp blades of wind sprang into existence, slicing directly towards Rand.

"A magus of the second rank?" The experienced onlookers could immediately tell.

But Rand had released a spell at the same time, and five balls of dull red flame shot towards Linley as well. The blades of wind were much faster than the fireballs, however, and Rand was forced to dodge in a rather sorry fashion. But Linley casually and effectively sidestepped the fireballs. And, while doing so, Linley's lips continued to move as he executed his second spell.

Earth style magic – Earth Tremor!

"Rumble…."

Rand felt the limestone beneath his feet begin to tremble violently. Under these circumstances, Rand couldn't focus enough to chant any spells. Immediately afterwards, Linley released his third spell, and five fists of earthen-colored stone shot out rapidly towards him.

Rand couldn't even maintain his footing on the shaking earth. He just barely dodged two of the stones.

"Thud."

One stone smashed into Rand's stomach, immediately causing him to vomit fresh blood. Rand hurriedly used his arms to cover his chest. Two more striking sounds were heard, and Rand was directly thrown off the dueling area, his entire body covered with dust.

Magic duel, Linley, victorious!

Linley calmly glanced at Rand once. Linley was very clear about the attack he had just used. With just a month's recovery time at most, Rand would be fine. If he, Linley, had decided to be merciless, he could have directed the stones at Rand's head and most likely finished him.

"A dual-element magus of the second rank. We have such an expert amongst us first graders?"

The onlooking first graders called out, astonished. For a second rank magus to appear amongst the first graders was a rare event, much less a dual-element magus, who would be the absolute strongest amongst them.

"This kid controlled his mageforce very precisely, and his body movements were very nimble."

Some of the fifth and sixth graders were a bit surprised. Just now, when facing the fireballs, Linley had been able to dodge while continuing to chant the words to a spell. From this one could tell how agile Linley was.

“Haha, Rand, did you really think you were number one? Our dorm’s third bro, just using magic, is still able to easily trample you.” Yale laughed loudly.

“Cough, cough.” Rand stood up, clutching his chest.

Rand knew in his heart that just then, Linley had shown mercy.

“Yale, tomorrow, bring Linley. I’ll go with you to the Golden Bank of the Four Empires local branch to transfer money. Ten thousand golds. I’ll keep my word.” Rand took a long look at the distant Linley. This defeat at Linley’s hands had totally woken Rand up from the arrogant haze of being a genius.

Even if one was talented, if one wasn’t strong enough, he would still be defeated by others!

“Linley, thank you!” Rand said, bowing, causing Yale and others to be startled. And then, Rand stared at Linley and said resolutely, “But there will come a day when I will defeat you.”

And then Rand, still clutching his chest, left with the help of his bros, returning to his own residence.

“Linley, you are too awesome. You won your bros a lot of face!” Reynolds immediately ran over and embraced Linley, who had stepped down.

Linley glanced around.

Many people were now staring at him and discussing him. Most of the talented people at the Ernst Institute had become well-known already. Nobody expected such an individual to appear out of nowhere amongst the first graders and easily defeat Rand, the tournament champion.

“Hi Linley, my name is Danni [Dan’ni], a water magus of the first rank. I’m glad to meet you.” Immediately, a golden-haired girl with a tall, slender figure walked over and said to Linley with a smile.

“Hi, my name is Linley.” Linley didn’t have the habit of talking to strangers much. “Sorry, I’m going to go train and enter the meditative trance now.”

After speaking, Linley glanced expressively at his three bros. Yale and the others knew what he was thinking, and immediately, the four bros ignored everyone around them and departed, leaving behind that young lady, Danni, who frowned unhappily.

Chapter 21 – The Proulx Gallery (part 1)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 21 – The Proulx Gallery (part 1)

The Golden Bank of the Four Empires was a bank that had been jointly established by the Yulan continent's Four Great Empires. People who were capable of opening a magicrystal card account with the bank were undoubtedly people of great wealth. Given that the card itself cost a hundred gold coins, normal people wouldn't be willing to part with such a high sum.

Ten thousand gold coins, if divided into hand-sized pouches, would fill a hundred pouches. Even a burlap rice sack would be half-filled and very heavy.

"A hundred gold coins, gone like that." Walking out from the local branch of the Golden Bank of the Four Empires within the Ernst Institute, Linley couldn't help but sigh to himself. Now, next to his chest, was a magicrystal card of his own.

Linley knew that while he continued to live at the Ernst Institute, if he put a huge pile of gold coins in his dorm, it wouldn't be safe. The safest option was to put them all in a magicrystal card.

It must be known that the cost to create the card was not low. It had taken master goldsmiths centuries to develop, and each card responded to the fingerprints of its owner alone. Thus, every single magicrystal card could only be used by its original owner.

This was the reason why magicrystal cards cost a hundred gold coins.

"With these ten thousand gold coins, my living expenses at the Ernst Institute will be more than sufficiently covered, with lots left over. I can help father as well." Linley felt very happy.

Yale's arm was around Linley's shoulders, and he whistled a little tune while delightedly peering at the nearby Rand and his bros.

Rand and the other three had taken out their living expenses money, and the four of them had perhaps only a thousand gold coins left. But fortunately, the school year was about to end.

Reynolds and George were both calmly smiling as well, and were joking with Linley to the side.

But in truth, neither Reynolds nor George had suffered much in the past.

"Second bro, third bro, fourth bro, tomorrow, at the end of the month, my father will come over. At that time, I will arrange for carriages and guardsmen to be brought over. Where should we four bros travel to?" Yale suggested.

"The Holy Capital?"

Reynolds, George, and Linley's eyes all shone.

Fenlai City, the Holy Capital, was no ordinary city.

"The Holy Capital is a great idea. On the way here from the O'Brien Empire, I stayed at Fenlai City for two days. I haven't had a chance to visit many places yet." Reynolds hurriedly said.

George and Linley both nodded.

"The Holy Capital has lots of places to visit. Tomorrow, I'll take you guys out and expand your horizons." Yale said mysteriously.

……..

At dawn the next day, Yale and the others all had breakfast together, and then directly went to the Ernst Institute's main gate and began waiting for Yale's escorted carriage.

After waiting for two hours, the carriage still had not arrived.

“Squeak squeak.” Bebe, perched on Linley’s shoulder, began to squeak.

“Bebe is getting impatient. Yale, you pulled us all here early in the morning, but the carriage still hasn’t come.” Reynolds said unhappily, while Yale laughed apologetically. “I don’t know either, they should be here by now.” Linley just stroked Bebe’s little head.

“There they are.” Yale suddenly shouted loudly.

George, Reynolds, and Linley, all of whom had almost fallen asleep, turned to look. From afar, there really was four carriages and hundreds of mounted guardsmen hurrying towards them en masse. Above the formation, there were even seven or eight Griffons, and of the hundreds of riders, over ten were riding magical beasts such as the Vampiric Iron Bull or Windwolves.

“So Yale’s clanguard divisions are so formidable,” Linley couldn’t help but feel shocked. The eyes of Reynolds and George also shone.

Doehring Cowart was seated next to Linley, enjoying the sun. Upon seeing the cavalry division, his eyes lit up as well. Very shortly, the four carriages and hundreds of riders arrived at the main gate. Three magi came out to greet them at the gate.

A middle aged man stepped forward in front of the four carriages. Before even speaking to the three magi, he strode towards Yale.

“Second Uncle, what took you guys so long?” Yale said unhappily.

This ‘Second Uncle’ of Yale’s immediately laughed and said, “Haha, did you grow impatient? Alright, your carriages are all ready. The last one is filled with some goods, I’ll have them clear them out so you have a place to sit. You are going to the Holy Capital, right?”

“Cass [Ka’qi], take three others with you. You are responsible for protecting

young master Yale." This 'Second Uncle' ordered.

Off in the distance, a bald rider immediately dismounted, walked in front of Yale, and bowed. "Cass pays his respects to young master Yale."

Next to Linley, Doehring Cowart's eyes lit up and he said to him, "Linley, this brother of yours definitely is extraordinary. Based on how he dismounted and his eyes, I can feel that this Cass is an expert who is a good deal stronger than even your Uncle Hillman. In addition, that hawk on his shoulder should be a magical beast of the seventh rank – the "Blue-eyed Thunderhawk."

For Cass to be praised by Doehring Cowart as an 'expert' meant that he definitely was out of the ordinary.

"Linley, let's go. Enter the carriage quickly. Let's go to the Holy Capital." Yale beckoned.

Linley and the other three entered the carriage together. The interior was very spacious, and the four of them weren't cramped at all. Immediately, the carriage driver began heading towards the direction of the Fenlai City, the Holy Capital.

Cass and the other three riders all followed from behind.

In the cabinets within the carriage, there were actually fruits, honey, and wine. The four bros began to eat and drink and chat within the carriage. The Ernst Institute was only twenty kilometers away from Fenlai City, so after about half an hour or so, they arrived.

They left the carriage.

Under the protection of Cass and the other three, Linley's group began to roam Fenlai City.

"Hey, where is everyone going? Fenlai City has an incredible amount of places to have fun. East Fenlai City has lots of luxurious places to spend

money with lots of beautiful waitresses, while West Fenlai City has many art museums, such as the famous Proulx Gallery." Yale was very familiar with Fenlai City.

"Beautiful waitresses? Okay okay, let's go to East Fenlai City." The eyes of that mischievious scamp Reynolds had begun to shine.

"It's only the afternoon. Those places are only fun in the evening. But of course, we can go now as well." Yale said laughingly.

Linley felt some reservations about those types of places, and so he said, "Yale, forget it, what's the point of us kids going to those places? Just now, you mentioned the Proulx Gallery? Since the Proulx Gallery names itself after the famous Grandmaster Proulx, it must be extraordinary. Let's go check it out."

Proulx, the number one sculptor in the history of the Yulan continent.

"Grandmaster Proulx? I've heard of him as well. In the past, one of his sculptures was sold for the price of several million gold coins. The name of that sculpture was 'Hope'. Millions of gold coins, my god. So rich." Reynolds sighed.

George laughed confidently. "In the history of sculpture, from the beginning til now, there have been countless stone sculptures made. Of the top ten sculptures, any one of them would be worth a million gold coins. And of those top ten sculptures, three were made by Grandmaster Proulx. He can be considered the number one person in the history of stonesculpting!"

Linley sucked in a breath of cold air.

Millions of gold coins?

What an enormous sum that was. Even if his clan sold off their ancestral home, they most likely would only be able to scrape up a hundred thousand gold coins.

“Let’s go check it out.” Linley immediately said.

Chapter 22 – The Proulx Gallery (part two)

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 22 – The Proulx Gallery (part two)

The Proulx Gallery.

The number one art gallery for sculptures, each of the largest cities in the Yulan continent had a Proulx Gallery branch. The Proulx Gallery took up an extremely large space, and a great majority of those entering the gallery were people of culture and breeding.

Within the Proulx Gallery, if you had too many ostentatious magic rings on your hands, the likely result would just be you being mocked and derided for having no class.

Art, sophistication!

This place valued these things the most.

The entry fee to the Proulx Gallery was one gold coin per person.

A ding-dong sound, as clear as the sound of a mountain spring, rang out from within the Proulx Gallery. The sound of it made listeners feel at peace. Countless people traversed the gateway, with many noblemen, noblewoman, and beautiful young girls, all dressed very tastefully.

And commoners, in front of the Proulx Gallery, would almost unconsciously comport themselves.

When Linley and his bros, along with Cass and the three guardsmen, arrived at the Proulx Gallery, anyone who was a decent judge of character could recognize the Ernst Institute clothing that they wore. Upon seeing the Blue-eyed Thunderhawk on Cass' shoulders, they naturally would become very courteous and polite.

“Uncle Cass, come in along with us. The other three can wait for us outside.” Yale instructed.

Linley, his three bros, and Cass thus entered the gallery. In the main hall of the Proulx Gallery, there was a large, man-shaped sculpture. This sculpture was precisely that of the number one grandmaster sculptor, Proulx.

The entire Proulx Gallery was extremely quiet.

Virtually everyone, regardless of status, spoke in hushed tones, so as to avoid bothering anyone else.

Yale, Reynolds, George, and Linley viewed one stone sculpture after another, and in their hearts they felt as though these sculptures truly were incomparably beautiful.

“The Proulx Gallery’s exhibits are divided into three halls; the main hall, the experts’ hall, and the masters’ hall. This main hall is filled with sculptures that some sculptors arranged to be placed here, to be valued and bought by others as they see fit. Each work is exhibited for a month, and after a month, the highest bid wins the sculpture. These ordinary sculptures are mostly just worth a few gold coins, with particularly good ones worth a few dozen coins.”

Yale laughed as he explained. “But the experts’ hall is different. The experts’ exhibition is divided up into many individual rooms, with each sculpture in a room by itself. Generally speaking, an ‘expert’ is someone whose sculpting ability has received general acclaim, and most expert sculptures are worth around a thousand gold coins or so.”

“As for the masters’ hall, that’s even more amazing. In the innermost sanctum of the gallery, there are a very small number of masters’ sculptures. The price of these sculptures is frighteningly high. Any of them are easily worth tens of thousands of gold, and some of the masterpieces which first brought fame to their master sculptors are easily worth hundreds of thousands of gold pieces.” Yale explained to his three bros in detail.

Linley's breath stopped.

Any masterpiece by a master sculptor was worth tens of thousands of gold coins. To a master sculptor, money really meant nothing at all.

"But it is quite difficult for a master sculptor to produce a masterpiece, since they naturally don't want to make any mistakes at all." Yale sighed as he spoke. "A masterpiece that is worthy of being venerated throughout the ages, requires talent, ability, and sometimes a sudden spark of genius."

"The works in this main hall are just a bit pleasing to the eye, is all. Let's go inside." Yale led them deeper within.

Walking within the quiet Proulx Gallery, and listening to that peaceful music, Linley felt as though he were swimming in a sea of culture. And just at this time, Doehring Cowart flew out from within the Coiling Dragon Ring and began to appraise the art nearby.

"Terrible, terrible. How can people have the face to bring out artwork of this quality to show others?" Doehring Cowart said unhappily.

"Grandpa Doehring," Linley turned to look at Doehring Cowart. "This is just the main hall of the Proulx Gallery. There is an experts' hall up front, as well as a masters' hall."

"Proulx Gallery?" Doehring Cowart started, and then actually stopped talking.

"Grandpa Doehring, Grandpa Doehring?" Linley mentally called out a few times. But seeing that Doehring Cowart was still lost in his thoughts, Linley no longer tried to call to him. He followed Yale, Reynolds, and George to the experts' hall. This hall really was different, as within the center of the main hall, each and every artist had their information recorded and the location of their displays recorded.

Yale, Linley, and the others began to enter the individual display rooms.

Although he didn't know much about sculpture, Linley could still clearly feel that the sculptures of the experts were clearly different than those in the main hall. They seemed to carry within them some sort of ineffable grace and culture.

Just as Linley was falling into a reverie while enjoying the sculptures, Doehring Cowart's voice sounded out in his mind once again.

"Not bad. These at least can be considered accomplished." Doehring Cowart sighed with praise. "But compared to the works of Proulx, there's still quite a way to go."

Linley was speechless.

"Doehring Cowart, how can these people possibly compare to Grandmaster Proulx?" Linley shook his head and laughed helplessly. Proulx was the number one sculptor in the entire history of the Yulan continent.

Doehring Cowart frowned. Stroking his beard unhappily, he said, "What is it? Do you think that Proulx was a grandmaster from birth? He, too, started as an ordinary sculptor and worked his way up, and becoming a true grandmaster sculptor in the end."

Linley was stunned.

There was some logic to Grandpa Doehring's words.

After finishing inspecting the experts' hall, Linley and the other three headed for the innermost masters' hall.

"Everyone, remember, while within the masters' hall, don't touch anything. If you break anything, it would be disastrous." Yale reminded them.

Entering the masters' hall. Silence.

The masters' hall was extremely large, but there were only very few sculptures inside. After all, only so many masters had ever existed, and each

master had only four or five works of art on display. In the entire hall, there were only twenty or thirty works on display.

But although there were very few sculptures, when Linley and the others saw these sculptures, they felt a spirit emanating from them, as though these sculptures had life.

“Oh, not bad, not bad. I didn’t expect that in five thousand years, the art of stone-sculpting would reach such a height.” Doehring Cowart said in amazement. “If these can improve a bit more, they will be able to approximate Proulx’s level.”

Silently mesmerized within the art gallery, Linley and the others felt their spirits be uplifted.

…..

Night. The Ernst Institute’s main gate. Linley and other three dismounted the carriage.

“Second bro, third bro, the two of you, ugh. I planned for us to have a good time tonight in Fenlai City, but you…ugh, you guys are so thin-skinned. I started having fun in those places when I was six years old.” Yale was still unhappily grumbling nonstop.

“Right on, right on,” Reynolds said from the side.

George and Linley glanced at each other, and couldn’t help but chuckle bitterly.

“Quick, open the gate!” A furious, urgent shout rang out.

Linley and the others couldn’t help but swivel to take a look. They saw a curly-haired youth carrying another bloody youth, with a pretty girl by his side. The bloody youth’s face was ashen white. His left arm was broken, with white bones sticking out, and chest covered with claw marks.

“Looks like some of the trainees who went to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts were wounded. What group is this? We haven’t even been at the Ernst Institute for a year, but we’ve seen so many high level students who were injured outside.” Yale said casually.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was east of the Holy Union.

As a matter of fact, it was quite close to the Ernst Institute, perhaps just a hundred kilometers away. Generally speaking, those in good shape would be able to jog from the mountain range to the Ernst Institute in about half a day.

“Here at the Ernst Institute, I’ve seen so many magical beasts. Wow, man, there are flying beasts, running beasts, and all sorts of beasts. But most of the people who have magical beast companions at the Ernst Institute are magus instructors, and a few high level students.” George sighed in admiration.

Just as the four bros arrived at the main gate, suddenly –

“Linley.”

A familiar voice sounded out. Turning his head to look, surprised joy appeared on Linley’s face. “Uncle Hillman.”

Chapter 23 – A Wonderful Surprise

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 23 – A Wonderful Surprise

Hillman was standing in a corner near the gate. Smiling, he walked over. "The Ernst Institute has extremely strict management. They actually denied me entrance and just had a guard go looking for you. I didn't expect you would actually be outside."

"Yale, you guys go on ahead, I'll join you later." Linley turned his head and said.

Yale, George, and Reynolds all smiled at Hillman, then entered the Ernst Institute.

"Uncle Hillman, why are you here? I thought you would only come here to pick me up after the semester ends?" Linley said questioningly.

"Let's talk over here." Hillman pulled Linley off to a side, a look of irrepressible excitement appearing on his face. "Linley, I have wonderful news for you, extremely wonderful news."

Linley's eyes shone.

"What news?" Linley urged him.

Hillman smiled. "Linley, do you remember little Wharton's date of birth?"

"Of course. January 3rd. What, does this have something to do with his birthday?" Linley questioned.

Hillman laughed. "It is December right now, so little Wharton is almost six years old. Just last night, your father tested little Wharton for the density of Dragonblood in his veins in the ancestral hall. And the test result was… haha…" Hillman once again began to laugh.

Linley's heart rate sped up dramatically.

The Dragonblood density test result was…

Could it be…

Linley asked, "Did the Dragonblood density in little Wharton's veins reach the cutoff?"

Hillman laughed loudly and nodded. "Right. Your father was absolutely ecstatic. He excitedly drank wine with me until midnight. Your father said that his two sons are the absolute prides of his life. One is a mighty magus, and the other is a Dragonblood Warrior. Haha…"

"Wonderful."

Linley's heart was full of excitement.

The five-millennium old legendary Dragonblood Warrior clan's prospects, prior to Wharton being tested for the Dragonblood density, had previously been carried on Linley's shoulders alone. The greater their former glory was, the heavier the burden Linley had been carrying.

But now….

His own little brother's Dragonblood density was sufficiently high that with just a few decades of hard work, he could become a world-renowned Dragonblood Warrior.

"I came here today to tell you this wonderful news. Your father said to me that right now, the strongest people in Wushan township are myself and him. We are both warriors of the sixth rank! Our level of expertise isn't enough to provide good tutelage for your little brother, and the training methods of your clan are written down but unclear." Hillman's face grew solemn. "Thus your father has decided to send your little brother to the O'Brien Empire's 'O'Brien Academy' to study. In that mighty military

Empire, in the finest military academy, your little brother will receive the best tutelage available."

Linley agreed as well.

A person who only had tremendous brute strength but lacked in technique and experience could only be considered a big, dumb ape.

"Wait." Linley frowned as he looked at Hillman. "Uncle Hillman, that O'Brien Academy's tuition must be extremely high. Although they will allow their own students to study free of charge, no doubt they are extremely merciless in charging out-of-empire students." Linley clearly remembered how much Reynolds had paid to be admitted to the Ernst Institute.

Hillman nodded. "The O'Brien Academy's yearly tuition is approximately five thousand gold coins. Your father intends to have Housekeeper Hiri escort Wharton there and take care of him. The tuition fee really is high. In ten years, it'll be fifty thousand gold coins."

Fifty thousand gold coins would approximately equate to the entire value of all of the Baruch clan's possessions, if sold off.

"Right! Uncle Hillman."

Hillman looked questioningly at Linley as he watched Linley withdraw a magicrystal card from his pockets. Hillman was shocked. "A magicrystal card?" Previously, when he was a soldier, he had seen magicrystal cards before.

"Linley, how do you have a magicrystal card? Not even your father has one." Hillman looked at Linley with surprise.

Linley tugged Hillman and said, "I won this magicrystal card from a rich kid who lost a magic duel with me. Let's go to the Golden Bank of the Four Empires." Right now, the guards at the Ernst Institute's entrance no longer attempted to bar Hillman's passage, because they recognized Linley, who

had left earlier this morning.

To Linley, this extra money didn't have too much usage. If he could use it to help his family, that would be enough.

….

Wushan township, within the Baruch clan manor's main hall.

Hogg was pondering.

Since his clan had produced a descendant with the requisite density of Dragonblood, he must be given the best upbringing. Even if they had to beggar themselves, it would be worth it. This was without question!

"Who should I sell the stone carving screen in the bedroom to? Philip is too stingy, he won't give a good price." Hogg was pondering nonstop.

The tuition needed to send little Wharton to the O'Brien Academy was astonishingly high. The question in Hogg's mind right now was how to sell his clan's possessions for a sufficiently high price.

Suddenly, footsteps sound out.

Turning his head, Hogg said, "Hillman, you are back. Uh, what's that on your shoulders?"

Hillman tossed the bag across his shoulders onto the floor. The bag collided into the floor with a heavy thud sound. Clearly, it was very heavy.

"Lord Hogg, Linley asked me to bring this to you." Hillman opened the bag and then poured everything out. One small, gold-colored sack after another formed a small mound on the floor, and the sound of gold coins clinking within the gold-colored sacks was very clear and crisp.

These gold-colored sacks were used solely by the Golden Bank of the Four Empires. Each bag generally contained a hundred gold coins.

“Gold coins? So much gold. There must be at least ten thousand gold coins here.” Hogg stared at Hillman, astonished. “Hillman, you say that Linley asked you to bring this here?”

Hillman said solemnly, “In total, nine thousand, nine hundred gold coins. Linley asked me to bring this to you. At the Ernst Institute, a rich young fellow engaged in a magical duel with Linley, and in losing, also lost ten thousand gold coins. Linley stored them into a magicrystal card, and now, has withdrawn the entire balance.”

Hillman still remembered the words that Linley had said to the attendant at the Golden Bank of the Four Empires. “Withdraw everything!”

“9900 gold coins? Linley’s?”

Staring at the mound of gold-colored sacks, Hogg immediately grew silent.

Chapter 24 – The Straight Chisel School

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 24 – The Straight Chisel School

Many days later, at the Ernst Institute.

It was morning. Linley had eaten breakfast, and was now headed to the back mountains, preparing to begin training.

While walking on the road out of the Institute, the little Shadowmouse was on Linley's shoulders, scanning about in all directions. There were quite a few people at the Ernst Institute who had magical beast companions, and thus no one cared at all that Linley had a little Shadowmouse as a companion. But just at that moment…

"That guy is Linley, the number one magus amongst us first graders." A clear voice rang out from not too far up ahead.

Linley couldn't help but stare at the direction of the voice, and saw two cute girls chatting to each other while staring at him. When Linley glanced at them, the two girls began to titter in a quiet voice.

"I've become famous." Linley mocked himself.

Over the past few days, he would often run into people discussing him. Since he had defeated Rand, the victor of the first grade tournament, everyone had tacitly agreed that he was the number one expert amongst first graders.

"Oh, in front is?" Linley suddenly saw a slender, small frame up ahead.

Short golden hair, with a body as slender as that of Reynolds. A cold aura emanated from him as he calmly walked along the road.

"Dixie?" Linley's pupils contracted.

Dixie was nine years old as well, and in fact was actually a month younger than Linley. But this nine year old child had already become a magus of the third rank. Although it became harder and harder to progress in the higher ranks, a nine-year old magus of the third rank was still very astonishing.

“It’s Dixie. I heard that yesterday at the annual magus assessment test, Dixie showed that he had already reached the requirements for the fourth rank.” A number of seventeen and eighteen year old girls said from the side.

Most of the students in the third grade were more than sixteen years old, with only the genius Dixie as a clear exception!

“A magus of the fourth rank!”

Linley felt his heart violently shudder. They were both nine years old, and Dixie was even a month younger than him. But he had already become a magus of the fourth rank, while Linley was only of the second rank.

Demeanor as cold as ice, Dixie walked past Linley.

The absolute genius, Dixie. No one his age could come close to matching him.

A white line shone out of the Coiling Dragon Ring, and Doehring Cowart appeared besides Linley, smiling. “Linley, there actually isn’t a huge difference between you two. When Dixie enrolled, his spiritual essence was 68 times that of his peers. This means that even before training, his spiritual essence had reached the level of a magus of the third rank. That’s why in his first year, all he had to do was accumulate sufficient mageforce for him to become a magus of the third rank. By now, he’s been at the Ernst Institute for almost two more years, so it is very normal for him to become a magus of the fourth rank.”

Linley understood this in his heart.

This person simply had too much natural talent. He was born with

tremendous spiritual essence, and he had exceptional elemental affinity as well. Clearly, he must have accumulated mageforce very quickly as well.

“Although his training speed right now is fast, I expect him to need another three or four years to advance from the fourth rank to the fifth rank. And to go from the fifth rank to the sixth rank, he will need four or five years.”

“Right now, you are a magus of the second rank, while he is of the fourth rank. But I am confident that in ten years, you will catch up to him.” Doehring Cowart said confidently.

But Linley didn’t believe it.

“Grandpa Doehring, the more natural talent one has, the faster one will progress. He has much more talent than I do, and holds two more ranks than I do. How could I possibly catch up to him in ten short years?” Linley was no fool. His studies at the Ernst Institute had made him aware of how difficult it was for a magus to advance a rank.

In the past, Doehring Cowart had told Linley that he would become a magus of the sixth rank in ten years, but Linley had always had reservations about that claim. After all, to date, his rate of improvement was clearly insufficient.

As he said these words, Linley had already left the gates of the Ernst Institute and entered the back mountains. As he passed through the mountain forests, Doehring Cowart suddenly said, “Linley, go to a place next to the mountainside.”

“Next to a mountainside?” Linley was confused.

“Don’t ask too many questions. When you arrive, I’ll explain.” Doehring Cowart laughed.

Most of the back mountain was covered with wild grass and many different large trees. But after a while, Linley found a place that satisfied Doehring Cowart’s requirements. The place was a mountain peak that rose hundreds

of meters into the air. At the base of the peak, Linley stood.

“Grandpa Doehring, what do you want me to do here?” Linley said questioningly.

Laughing, Doehring Cowart said, “Linley, do you disbelieve my claim that I can let you reach his level in ten short years? Haha…Linley, as a mighty Saint-level Grand Magus, I, in fact, am in possession of a method to improve one’s spiritual essence.”

“A method to improve one’s spiritual essence? Isn’t the meditative trance enough for that?” Linley stared at Doehring Cowart questioningly.

Doehring Cowart smiled calmly. “Linley, I will admit that the meditative trance has very good results. But after meditating, one will feel extremely tired.”

“Of course I would feel tired. The meditative trance involves me using my spiritual essence non-stop. After totally exhausting my spiritual essence, I would then allow it to recover. It’d be strange if it wasn’t exhausting.” Linley frowned.

Doehring Cowart proudly said, “But my method is different. It doesn’t cost spiritual essence at all. In fact, it is a form of entertainment.”

“Entertainment?” Linley was dazed.

“Right. This form of entertainment is – stonesculpting!” A prideful look appeared on Doehring Cowart’s face.

“Stonesculpting?” Linley said, astonished. “Like the sculptures in the Proulx Gallery?”

Doehring Cowart smiled and said, “Right. When others sculpt stone, they will exert a lot of energy and exhaust themselves. But my stonesculpting method is different. Although it is also tiring when you first begin to train in it, towards the end, it will have extremely good results.”

“Are you serious?” Linley couldn’t quite believe it.

Doehring Cowart stared at him. “Linley, you don’t believe me? As a venerable Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire, in the past, there were several sculptures I made which nobles offered a million gold coins to purchase. But how could I, a Saint-level Grand Magus, be willing to give the sculptures which I was the most proud of to others?”

“You were that good? How come I’ve never heard of your name amongst the other grandmaster sculptors, then, Grandpa Doehring?” Linley said suspiciously.

Doehring Cowart said awkwardly, “Well, I hid all of my works in an underground vault which no one knew about. After five thousand years, I’m no longer even sure where it is located.” Five thousand years is enough for a sea to turn into farmland. The entire Pouant Empire had been eliminated. Who knew where the vault was now?

“Oh ho, so no one’s ever heard of you?” Linley began to chortle.

“You don’t believe me?” Doehring Cowart stared at him. “Back in the day, when Proulx was just a young kid, he came to me and earnestly begged me to allow him to view my sculptures. After analyzing my sculptures, that kid Proulx had a mental breakthrough which in the end allowed him to become a grandmaster sculptor. As a matter of fact, he can even be considered a student of mine.”

Linley was stunned.

“Proulx?” Linley was truly terrified now.

Proulx, the man who had been acclaimed throughout the ages at the finest sculptor in history, could be considered a student of Doehring Cowart.

“Of course, if one can describe Proulx’s works as being in pursuit of perfection, my works are in pursuit of a different extreme. I named my

sculpting method the ‘Straight Chisel School’. The Straight Chisel School is totally different from all other sculpting methods. It pursues a totally different extreme. This method, in the beginning, is very exhausting, but as one masters it, you will realize its true fruits.” A look of absolute confidence was on Doehring Cowart’s face.

Glancing at Linley, a smile appeared on Doehring Cowart’s face. “ But of course, in the past, I was the only member of the Straight Chisel School. From today forward, you will be a second member.”

In his heart, Linley had total confidence in Grandpa Doehring, so of course he had decided to study sculpting with him.

And what’s more…

If Grandpa Doehring’s words were true, and he could grow stronger while also becoming a master sculptor, just based on his sculpting skills alone, he would be able to support his little brother’s tuition.

“Written, recorded history goes back only a few tens of thousands of years at most. In the long ages before then, before the writing system had even been invented, stonesculpting had already existed.” Doehring Cowart said with a sigh. “Hundreds of thousands of years, or even millions of years ago, our ancestors would record their memories and their visions in sculptures. This is the most ancient method of recording culture and history.”

Linley nodded as well.

There was no form of culture at all which was older than stonesculpting.

“Throughout the ages, sculpting has always been very hard to do. And creating a sculpture with a unique aura is even harder. The harder something is to do, the more valuable a success would be.” Doehring Cowart sighed emotionally.

Linley agreed in his heart.

If you wanted to paint a single stroke, you could easily do so. But if you wanted to carve out a paint-stroke, it would be extremely difficult, because stone is too unyielding.

“A stone’s appearance, quality, grains, and coloration impact not only its appearance, but its entire potential and true form. We use chisels to remove the excess parts and allow its natural beauty to be revealed. This is stonesculpting.”

“The stonesculpting way is really a way of controlling space and appearance. When stonesculpting, one must carve from the outside to the inside, one step at a time, slowly drawing out a ‘form’ from within. And then, slowly, one would remove the excess parts, allowing the form to become more and more clear. This will allow the sculptor to naturally feel as though his work of art is ‘evolving’ beautifully.

….

Once he started, Doehring Cowart couldn’t stop talking about carving.

But Linley could clearly tell how much Doehring Cowart revered this art.

“Most stonesculpting methods use many tools, such as the butterfly chisel, a straight chisel, a skew chisel, a triangular chisel, a jade bowl knife, hammers, saws, and more. The reason there are so many tools is because stone is very firm and hard. Thus, they will use a butterfly chisel to draw the form, the straight chisel for the initial cuts, the triangular chisel….”

Listening to him speak, Linley began to understand more about the basics of stonesculpting.

Doehring Cowart suddenly laughed. “But my stonesculpting method is totally different from that of others. This is because my stonesculpting method uses only a single tool – the straight chisel! This is why I have named my sculpting method, the ‘Straight Chisel School’!”

“How is that possible? You carve just using a straight chisel?” Linley

immediately argued. “You just said yourself that more tools are needed. For example, the scales of a fish. How would you use a straight chisel to carve that? Isn’t that totally impossible?”

“Wrong. Although others cannot, we earth-style magi can!”

Doehring Cowart said confidently, “Earth-style magi can totally sense the entirety of a rock’s form. With sufficient wrist strength, we can sculpt stone using just a straight chisel. But of course, the ‘Straight Chisel School’ is not a simple one to enter. Today, your mission is to go purchase a sufficiently sharp straight chisel. From today onwards, every day, I will spend three hours guiding you in learning how to sculpt stone.”

Chapter 25 – Six Years

Book 2, Growing Up, Chapter 25 – Six Years

The flowing water continued to swirl as Linley sat cross legged next to it. In his hands, he held a straight chisel and a rock the size of his palm.

“Begin with the basics. I’ll start with this little rock as I begin my training…”

Linley sat there alone in the mountains behind the Ernst Institute. Under the tutelage of Doehring Cowart, he began to study the art of stonesculpting. As he began to understand more and more about this art, Linley also began to understand why in the later stages, the Straight Chisel School could assist in improving one’s spiritual essence.

When others carved, they needed to use a large pile of tools.

They had to spend a huge amount of time and mental energy just considering what tools to use where. Naturally, this would be exhausting. Every single work of art represented their blood and painstaking effort.

But the Straight Chisel School was different.

The only tool used was a straight chisel, so there was no need to consider what tool should be used for what. Naturally, the difficulty level was greatly heightened due to the use of just one tool. For example, using the straight chisel to carve out the parts normally reserved for the jade bowl knife required an extremely perfect understanding and grasp of the basic form of a stone.

In addition, great strength was needed.

If one tried to use just a straight chisel on some larger pieces which normally would require a saw to cut through, one would need sufficient

strength.

One could use an earth-style magus' unique connection to the earth to understand a stone's essence. But wrist strength had to be trained. As a magus of the second rank, Linley's wrist strength was not bad, but it was only enough to carve some smaller pieces. If he wanted to carve anything large, his wrist strength would not be enough.

However…

Right now, Linley was just working on the basics.

…….

When the school year came to an end, Linley returned to Wushan township.

After the New Year, little Wharton and his older brother, Linley, had only a few days to spent in each other's company. And then, under the auspices of Housekeeper Hiri, Wharton headed towards the O'Brien Empire. Linley had no choice but to wistfully watch little Wharton depart. Crying nonstop, six year old Wharton parted from ten year old Linley and headed off.

Time passed.

Linley continued to be a solitary figure at the Ernst Institute. The vast majority of his time each day was spend in arduous training at the back mountains.

Entering a young adult's growth period, Linley's appetite increased enormously, and he began to grow taller as well. Naturally, his physical strength and musculature also improved rapidly. In the art of stonesculpting, with Doehring Cowart's guidance and his own hard work, Linley continued to make progress.

……..

Spring went, autumn came. Flowers blossomed, flowers withered. In the

blink of an eye, three years passed.

At a waterfall in the mountains behind the Ernst Institute.

“Roar, roar.” Like a solid sheet of water, the waterfall poured down in torrents, smashing into the deep pool of water.

Linley was right next to the waterfall, wielding a thirty-centimeter straight chisel in his hand as he constantly chipped away at a man-sized block of stone. The straight chisel in his hands danced in an almost illusionary fashion. Every place the straight chisel passed saw scraps of stone detach and fall down. An embryo of a statue was beginning to take shape from the stone.

He continued from morning until evening, and the statue’s form began to grow clearer and clearer.

Linley’s gaze was totally fixed upon the stone. At this moment, his entire being was focused on the stone and permeated it, as his heart had become one with the inside of the stone. This marvelous feeling caused Linley not to even notice the passage of time. This sensation of being totally one with nature actually caused Linley’s spiritual energy to begin to regenerate, and even grow organically.

But Linley himself did not notice this, as he continued to wield the straight chisel and unceasingly work on the statue.

Pieces of excess stone continued to fall down, causing each detail of the statue to grow more pronounced. By the time the sun had set, the straight chisel in Linley’s hands finally came to a halt.

“Whew!”

Linley let out a soft breath and brushed away some small pieces of excess stone still remaining. The entire statue had taken shape. A half-meter long lively-looking mouse stood in front of Linley. At a glance, one might mistake it for a real mouse. This caused the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, to

begin squeaking wildly.

From start to finish, this was done at one go!

“What an amazing feeling.” Only now did Linley realize that his spiritual essence had improved dramatically.

A white-robed Doehring Cowart smiled at him cheerily from the side. “Linley, starting today, you can just barely be considered to have mastered the basics. Have you felt that special feeling yet? But your work can only be considered to be a superficial pseudo-artwork. It’s only worthy of being placed in the standard hall at the Proulx Institute. If you show it off there, I would be humiliated. Destroy it.”

“Yes, Grandpa Doehring.”

The straight chisel in Linley’s hand flashed many times, and the statue suddenly became divided into more than ten pieces. This year, Linley finally had mastered the basics of stonesculpting!

And this year, Linley was thirteen years old!

Day after day, year after year.

After mastering the basics of stonesculpting, Linley’s spiritual essence began to improve at a much more rapid pace. Specifically, when Linley was nine and a half, he had become a magus of the second rank, and when he was eleven, he had become a magus of the third rank. And when he was thirteen, he had become a magus of the fourth rank!

Magi found it harder and harder to advance in ranks as they grew more powerful. Logically speaking, from the fourth to the fifth rank, it should have taken Linley at least three years.

But in reality…

In year 9996 of the Yulan calendar, when Linley was fourteen and a half, he

reached the rank of a magus of the fifth rank. From the fourth rank to the fifth rank, he only spent a year and a half. It was even faster than when he advanced from the third to the fourth rank.

This was the benefit of entering the Straight Chisel School!

…..

Year 9997 of the Yulan calendar was the seventh year Linley had spent at the Ernst Institute. This year, Linley was fifteen years old.

Wearing a sky-blue robe, Linley was walking on a road within the Ernst Institute. On Linley's shoulders, the little Shadowmouse 'Bebe' continued to stand. Although six or seven years had passed, Bebe's body hadn't changed in the slightest.

By now, Linley was 1.8 meters tall and gave off a very steady, stable air. Earth and wind elemental essences had continuously nourished his body. Combined with Linley's nonstop training, and the advantages provided by his Dragonblood Warrior heritage, Linley had already become a warrior of the fourth rank.

He could easily lift boulders which weighed hundreds of pounds, and shatter rocks with his punches.

His study of the Straight Chisel School of stonesculpting had also caused Linley's spiritual essence to constantly improve ever since he was thirteen.

At the start of year 9997 of the Yulan calendar, Linley entered the fifth grade class at the Ernst Institute, the same grade as the Ernst Institute's number one genius, Dixie. It had taken Dixie three years to advance from the fourth rank to the fifth rank, but up until now, he still had not been able to advance from the fifth rank to the sixth.

Fifteen years old. A magus of the fifth rank!

Linley and Dixie both could definitely be considered freaks of nature. But

in the hearts of the vast majority, Linley was even more of a freak, because since the day he took the ability assessment for the fourth rank, he had spent only a year and a half before attaining the fifth rank.

Linley's astonishing rate of improvement had shocked everyone.

Now, Linley was ranked along with Dixie as being the publicly acknowledged 'Two Ultimate Geniuses' of the Ernst Institute.

"Look, it is Linley. Two years ago, he became a magus of the fourth rank, and just last year, he became a magus of the fifth rank in just one year! Too amazing. I predict that Linley will become a magus of the sixth rank before Dixie does."

"Linley spends every day training in the back mountains. I hear that recently, Dixie has also begun to train hard at the rear mountains. Most likely, he's being influenced by Linley."

"Very possible. Given Linley's astonishing rate of improvement, very possibly he will supplant Dixie and become the number one genius of the Ernst Institute."

…….

On the street, there were many people who, upon seeing Linley, began to discuss him amongst themselves. As the acknowledged genius of the Ernst Institute, no matter where he went, people would discuss him. But although Linley's strength continued to increase, he still refused to participate in the yearly tournaments.

"Genius?" Linley mocked himself.

Linley had never considered himself a genius. His strength came from intensive training every single day. For six years, he had been as steadfast as he was the first day. And that, combined with guidance from Grandpa Doehring, was what gave him his current accomplishments.

“But right now, my strength is actually less than that of Bebe’s.” Linley glanced at Bebe on his shoulders. “Bebe, what rank of power have you reached?”

“Squeak squeak.” Bebe smirked at Linley, then said to him mentally, “I don’t know either, since I’ve never competed against any other magical beasts. But you definitely aren’t a match for me, hehe.” Bebe was extremely self-satisfied.

Totally ignoring the worshipful gazes aimed at him by bystanders, Linley calmly left the Ernst Institute by the back gate and entered the mountains, once more beginning his solitary training. Those six years which went by like one day were the reason for his success.

Linley quickly and casually floated through the forests, while the little Shadowmouse ‘Bebe’ continued to chat with him nonstop through their mental link. “Boss, when are we gonna go to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to test our strength? You are already a magus of the fifth rank. You can begin to test yourself. And I, Bebe, will finally be able to show my awesome abilities.”

“No rush.” Linley’s reply was very short.

“You are breaking my heart, man. I’m a magical beast, but I haven’t gone to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts a single time. What a tragedy!” After six years, Bebe’s abilities at self-expression had improved dramatically.

“Quiet. If you keep on making a fuss, then today I won’t help you cook meat.” As soon as Linley spoke these words, Bebe immediately shut his mouth and didn’t make a sound.

After entering the mountains, Doehring Cowart appeared by his side. Watching Linley, Doehring Cowart felt extremely gratified in his heart.

“Linley.” Doehring Cowart suddenly said.

Linley turned his head and smiled at Doehring Cowart as he engaged in mental conversation. “Grandpa Doehring, is something the matter?”

Doehring Cowart smiled. “Based on your last few works of art, I can formally inform you that your abilities in stonesculpting have met the threshold.”

Linley’s eyes involuntarily shone.

His Grandpa Doehring had an eccentric temperament. Any works of art which didn’t reach his exacting standards had to be destroyed immediately. Per his words, “If these works of art were to appear in the world, they would lose face for my Straight Chisel School, and lose face for me, an honorable Saint-level Grand Magus.”

Thus, Linley had been forced to destroy every single sculpture he had made, even though they could have been sold for some money.

“Met the threshold? Grandpa Doehring, do you mean?…” Linley stared at Doehring Cowart in amazement.

Doehring Cowart happily nodded. “Right. Starting today, after you finish a stone sculpture, you don’t need to destroy it. They are worthy of remaining in this world. Naturally, if you wish, you can deliver your sculptures to the Proulx Gallery to sell them and thus begin to build up a reputation for our Straight Chisel School. At the same time, you can make a bit of gold for yourself.”

Chapter 1 – Stone Sculpting (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 1, Stone Sculpting (part 1)

The warm, comfortable rays of the spring sun shone down upon the bros of dorm 1987, who were resting in their backyard.

Yale, George, and Reynolds were all engaged in idle conversation. By now, Yale and George were both 16 years old, while Reynolds was now 14. The three of them had quickly gained in height, and even the shortest Reynolds was now 1.6 meters tall. The tallest of them was Yale, at an astonishing 1.9 meters.

“George, stop faking in front of the two of us. Even fourth bro has lost his virginity. Why are you and third bro still faking? How about this, at the end of this month, why don’t you and third bro both go to Fenlai City’s “Jade Water Paradise”. I’ll handle the expenses. I guarantee that both of you will be extremely comfortable, and I’ll also guarantee that the girl will also be a virgin. Deal?” Holding two small stone weights, Yale was doing a chest workout while laughing as he spoke.

Those two stone weights each most likely weighed around 20-30 pounds. Linley generally disdained such light weights.

George laughed as well. “Boss Yale, stop trying to force us. Why don’t you guys go to the Jade Water Heaven while third bro and I go drinking. Isn’t that a better idea?”

Reynolds mocked from the side, “George, you, simply aren’t a man at all.”

George could only laugh helplessly.

Suddenly, footsteps could be heard from outside the courtyard. Yale put down the two stone weights and headed towards the courtyard exit while

saying, “I bet it is third bro. C’mon, time to eat…” Before he finished his words, Yale suddenly went silent.

He saw Linley stride forward, carrying a huge rock on his shoulders, at least three feet high and a hundred pounds heavy.

But Linley clearly was carrying this boulder into the dorm with ease. Yale, George, and Reynolds all stared, slack-jawed. Linley casually set down the giant rock in a corner of the courtyard, and the weighty sound of the rock slamming into the ground made all their hearts tremble.

“What the hell? Third bro, I know you are strong, but how are you this strong?” Yale stared at the boulder. “Is the boulder hollow or something?” As he spoke, Yale moved forward and stretched out his hands, giving the boulder a test.

“Hrrrrrngh!”

Yale used all of his strength, and his entire face flushed dark red, but that giant boulder seemed to be rooted into the earth as it didn’t budge at all.

“Boss Yale, stop wasting your energy. There’s no way you can move it.” Linley laughed.

Yale’s physical strength was weaker than that of even a warrior of the first rank. How could he lift it?

Reynolds stared at the boulder with round eyes. Letting out a few surprised breaths, he suddenly turned his head and stared at Linley questioningly. “Hey, Linley, why did you bring such a huge boulder into our dorm? Oh, I know!” Reynolds eyes lit up. “I’ve seen powerful warriors use their hands to lift up giant boulders as a form of weight training. Are you preparing to start weight lifting, Linley?”

“Such a huge boulder could smash me into meat paste.” George stared at the boulder, also letting out a few surprised breaths before turning to look questioningly at Linley. “Third bro, why did you bring this giant boulder

into our apartment?”

Linley smiled at his three bros, and he said two words: “Stone sculpting!”

Based on what Doehring Cowart had said, his sculptures were now qualified to be placed within the standard hall. But it took a lot of time to carve each piece, and usually a day wasn’t enough. In the past, he could casually carve at the rear mountains without worrying about making mistakes, but now things were different.

“Stone sculpting?”

Reynolds, George, and Yale all stared at Linley, shock in their eyes.

“What, is this really shocking?” Linley looked back at his three bros.

Reynolds hurriedly said, “It isn’t shocking, no. It is extremely shocking! We four bros have lived together for six or seven years now, but I’ve never seen you sculpt stone before. Are you planning to start training today?”

Linley laughed, “Who says I’ve never been trained before? I’ve been practicing stone sculpting in the rear mountains for over five years now, but this time, after I finish this piece, I plan to take it to the Proulx Gallery and display it there and see if it can be sold for any money.”

In order to come up with a sufficient amount of money to allow his little brother, Wharton, have sufficient funds to go with Housekeeper Hiri to the O’Brien Empire to request admittance and training, the Baruch clan had virtually exhausted all of its funds.

But despite this, Hogg was still very happy.

So what if his family had bankrupted itself? His elder son, Linley, was a student at the Ernst Institute, and upon graduation would definitely become a powerful magus. And his younger son, Wharton, had the possibility of becoming a Dragonblood Warrior.

Hogg could already foresee the dawning splendor of the Baruch clan!

“The Proulx Gallery?” Upon hearing this, Yale and the other two looked at Linley in shock.

Linley was the pride of their dorm, dorm 1987. Despite being just fifteen years old, he had entered the fifth grade at the Ernst Institute, and had been acclaimed alongside Dixie as one of the ‘Two Ultimate Geniuses of the Ernst Institute’. Yale and the others all acknowledged Linley as being a genius, but…

Stonesculpting was an extremely profound art form.

Many people would painstakingly train for decades, but still only be considered ordinary sculptors. As an extremely ancient and long-lived art form, how could it be easy for stonesculpting to be mastered? How did Linley dare to dream that his artworks would be exhibited in the most venerated of art galleries, the Proulx Gallery?

“Third bro, don’t get too carried away.” George joked in a consoling manner.

“Linley, I’m worried…your sculpture, will anyone actually buy it?” Reynolds frowned, a look of disbelief on his face.

Yale laughed loudly. “Why are you guys acting like this? Third bro, go ahead and put on an exhibit. As long as you have an exhibit, I’ll spend ten thousand gold to buy it and help spread your fame.”

“I’m telling the truth.” Linley retrieved a straight chisel from his clothes.

“Straight chisel?” Reynolds said in surprise. “Linley, looks like you’ve made some preparations. But in the past, I was also prepared to learn stonesculpting, so I know that lots of tools are needed, including the straight chisel, the butterfly chisel, the triangular chisel, the jade bowl knife, and tools like saws. What, did you only prepare a single tool?”

George, Reynolds, and Yale all knew at least some rudiments about art.

Linley didn't say too much.

Wielding his straight chisel, Linley naturally entered a tranquil mental state. His spirit could feel the earth essence flowing through the boulder in front of him, and could even sense, just barely, the veins in it. Smiling, Linley began to use the chisel.

The flashing chisel reflected the light of the sun, causing the nearby Reynolds and the others to squint. But all of them continued to stare at the boulder.

"Whoooooosh!"

Wherever the shadow of the chisel fell, large pieces of stone began to fall as well.

"How is this possible?" Yale watched in astonishment. "To remove such a large piece of rock, a saw should be used to chop it. He actually removed it with just a straight chisel. How astonishing must his wrist strength be?" Next to him, Reynolds and George both fell totally silent.

Wrist strength?

To do this in such a manner as casually as Linley did, with every cut being perfectly even, was not something which could be accomplished just with strong wrists.

Linley was as tranquil as a pond of still water. The straight chisel in his left hand stretched out, quickly carving through all parts of the boulder, and pieces of excess stone continuously rained down. The natural, elegant manner in which Linley carved was a treat to watch.

"Third bro, he…."

Yale, George, and Reynolds exchanged glances. At this moment, they all

felt in their hearts that perhaps Linley truly was an expert stone sculptor.

Tranquil. Natural. Peaceful.

Linley very much enjoyed the feeling of stone sculpting. At his current level, Linley didn't have to consider how much effort or strength should be used in any particular place. The straight chisel in his hands would naturally attain the most perfect usage of force. This was a subconscious effect.

Compared to the 'Straight Chisel School'?

None of the other schools of stone sculpting could be so effortless. All the experts of the other schools had to consider which of the many various types of tools should be used for each part of the sculpture. This alone was exhausting.

In this natural, unrestrained manner, Linley's stonesculpting led his spiritual essence to rapidly grow, like the grass after a rain. That sensation of natural growth was extremely wondrous to Linley, making him feel comfortable from his very core.

Linley's right hand suddenly halted.

The flying dust and specks of stone took a bit longer to settle, but the outline of a crawling creature could be seen from the boulder.

"Why are you guys standing there in a daze? All shocked?" Linley laughed as he turned to look at Yale and the others. "I've just made a simple outline. There's a lot more time and effort I'll have to spend later. Come on, let's get lunch."

Yale, George, and Reynolds all glanced at each other.

Just based on what Linley had just shown them, all three of them were sure of one thing:

"Genius." Yale said admiringly.

“A genius amongst experts.” George added.

Even amongst stone sculptors, for someone to be able to reach Linley’s level of proficiency in just five or six years was an event which occurred perhaps once in a century.

Chapter 2 – Stone Sculpting (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 2, Stone Sculpting (part 2)

Within the Huadeli Hotel.

Per Yale, “Since we just found out today that Third Bro is an expert stonecarver, we absolutely must go out and celebrate. Let’s go to the Huadeli Hotel.” And just like that, the four of them had gone to the Huadeli Hotel. As soon as they stepped foot within, many students patronizing the hotel turned to stare at them.

The vast majority of the students’ gazes were focused on Linley.

Dixie, Linley!

The most prominent, standout geniuses of the Ernst Institute. Any place they went became a focal point of attention. From far away, many students began to chat amongst themselves in lowered voices.

The four bros were seated, now, and the dishes had just arrived.

“Squeak squeak.” Bebe, who had been napping lazily this entire time, stuck his little head from out of Linley’s robes. His pair of slick, devilish little eyes stared at a gleaming roasted chicken on the table. Reynolds immediately grabbed the chicken and offered it to Bebe. “Bebe, c’mere.”

“Boss Linley, I’m gonna go eat.” Bebe immediately said mentally to Linley.

Before Linley even had the chance to reply, Bebe leaped onto the table, grabbed the chicken, and began to chomp down on it. In less than ten seconds, the entire roasted chicken had been totally devoured by a little Shadowmouse that was a full size smaller than it.

“Third bro, each time when I see how fast Bebe eats, my heart can’t help but shudder.” Yale laughed.

After eating, Bebe turned around to look at Linley. Seeing grease cover Bebe’s paws, Linley couldn’t help but frown.

“Squeak squeak.”

Bebe intentionally chirped out twice towards Linley, and then half-closed his eyes in a very self-delighted manner, while at the same time, his entire body radiated a black glow. The black aura expanded, and then, in the blink of an eye, disappeared. But Bebe’s two previously oily paws as well as tail was now absolutely clean.

Rubbing his small face, Bebe stared at Linley and chirped once, while saying mentally, “Boss Linley, clean enough for ya?”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“Whoosh.” With a flicker, Bebe once more burrowed his way into Linley’s clothes.

And then, the four bros began to chat and eat.

“Right, third bro, if you intend to deliver your sculptures to the Proulx Gallery, there’s a few things you need to keep in mind.” Yale reminded Linley.

“Oh, what do I need to remember?” Linley asked.

Linley didn’t know a single thing about the system through which the Proulx Gallery accepted new sculptures.

Yale smiled. “For most sculptures, on the lower left corner, the artist must leave an inscription of his name or pseudonym, signifying that this is your art. That’s the first thing. The second thing is that when the sculpture is delivered to the Proulx Gallery, it must be totally sealed and boxed. This is

to prevent the sculpture from being damaged while being delivered to the gallery. When the sealed sculpture is delivered to the Proulx Gallery's warehouse, there will be people who will inspect it to see if it is in good condition, as well as take down a detailed recording of your own information. Usually, within three days or so, your artwork will be ready to be displayed at the standard display hall within the Proulx Gallery."

Linley nodded.

Leaving behind one's name on one's artwork was done in order to prevent others from falsely claiming the work was their's.

Linley could also understand the reasoning for requiring the sculpture be boxed and sealed. "Some sculptures are carved very exquisitely and delicately. In the shipping process, it is entirely possible that the sculpture might be damaged. If I totally seal it off, and also add lots of paper and cloth padding, it should be much safer."

"What about pricing and bidding? How does the Proulx Gallery handle this?" Linley asked.

The whole point of delivering the sculpture to the Proulx Gallery was for the sake of making money, so as to improve his family's economic situation.

Yale said delightedly, "The sculptures are placed within the standard hall, and potential buyers are allowed to set any price they want. After a month, the highest bidder will receive the sculpture, while you will get your compensation. Naturally, the Proulx Gallery will receive a 1% transactional commission, with a hard limit of ten gold coins. If your sculpture exceeds a thousand gold coins in price, the commission of the gallery will still remain just ten gold coins."

Linley understood now.

"Third bro, don't worry. I'll arrange for some people in Fenlai City to take care of everything. I guarantee it'll all be to your satisfaction." Yale smiled

towards Linley as he spoke. “If the third bro of our dorm delivers a sculpture to the Proulx Gallery and it sells well, I’ll gain a lot of face as well.”

Off on the side, George couldn’t help but sigh with praise. “Third bro, by now, you are a fifth grade student. In the future, you’ll no doubt also be a master sculptor. Your future is boundless. You’ll no doubt do much better than us.”

“A master sculptor? Don’t flatter me.” Linley laughed at himself.

The four bros chatted as they continued to drink and eat.

“Living in the Ernst Institute really is comfortable,” Yale suddenly sighed, putting down his wine cup. “I remember when I was young and I lived at home, our family rules were extremely severe.”

Reynolds quirked his lips as well. “We are all students of the Ernst Institute. According to Grandpa Lomu, right now, the world is very chaotic. In the outside world, there is constant warfare and slaughter. The Ernst Institute is backed by the Radiant Church, so no one dares offend it. That’s the reason why our lives are so comfortable. In the future, when we go out and train in the real world, we’ll see how cruel the world can be.”

“Absolutely correct.”

Linley nodded and sighed. “I’m a fifth grade student now. Many of my fellow classmates have already gone training in the real world. From what they say, some students die in battle outside, and many are crippled or wounded. Without experiencing real life-and-death battles, it will be hard for us to grow.”

“We are just like the pets of the noble families. Our lives might be easy, but how can they compare to the viciousness of the real world?” George also sighed. “I really look forward to the bloody life and death battles which the high level students will engage in. Those exciting, blood-boiling lifestyles must be extremely stimulating.”

George, Yale, Reynolds, and Linley were now all fifteen years old. In all of their hearts, there was a thirst for the exciting events of the outside world.

But Yale and the others were far too weak. If they embarked now on that lifestyle of life-and-death battles, their chance of death was far too high.

“Linley, you are a fifth grade student now, yes?” Reynolds suddenly said.

Yale and George also looked at Linley, their eyes gleaming.

Linley took a deep breath, and nodded. “Right. I am now a magus of the fifth rank. I can be considered a high level magus now. In June, I plan to embark on a two month trip to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, returning only in August.” Linley had decided long ago.

“The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?”

Yale, George, and Reynolds all sucked in a cold breath.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the largest mountain range in the Yulan continent, lay less than hundred kilometers east of the Ernst Institute. Many high level students did indeed venture there for their second or third training missions. But most students, for their first training expedition, would select some more ordinary locales.

For example, they might take on some low-risk assignments like being a bodyguard or escorting a caravan.

“Linley, you plan to go to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for your very first training expedition?” Reynolds couldn’t help but ask. George and Yale were also worried.

“Relax. I have full confidence.”

Linley was rather confident in himself. As a magus of the fifth rank and a warrior of the fourth rank, he possessed great speed as a warrior which

could be further supported by the wind-style spell, ‘Supersonic’. Based on his current speed, when combining his speed with this spell, Linley could reach the speed of a warrior of the sixth rank.

And even more importantly…

Linley could utilize the high-level wind spell, “Floating Technique.”

Chapter 3 – A Night at the Jade Water Paradise

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 3, A Night at the Jade Water Paradise

Time flowed on, and in the blink of an eye, it was now the end of May.

During the past two months, every day, Linley spent part of his free time in the meditative state, and the rest either practicing stonecarving or reading. The Ernst Institute's library held an enormous amount of books within it, and through reading these books, Linley was able to increase the breadth of his knowledge.

May 29th. Morning.

Linley, Yale, George, and Reynolds stood in the square in front of the Proulx Gallery. A nearby carriage contained within it three wooden crates. During these past two months, Linley had actually managed to produce nine new sculptures, but since this was his first time delivering art to the gallery, Linley just wanted to get a taste of how it all worked and thus only brought three.

"Carry those three boxes," Yale directed.

Some servants from Yale's clan began to lift and move the crates.

"Third bro, come with me." Yale clearly was quite familiar with this road, and he headed directly towards the side of the Proulx Gallery. The Proulx Gallery took up a very large amount of space, and off to the side of the main entrance, a few hundred meters away, there was an unremarkable door, with a middle-aged man dressed in warrior attire standing in front of it.

When the middle-aged man saw Yale stride towards him, his eyes lit up and he immediately hurried over. Smiling, he paid his respects and said, "Young

master Yale, welcome!”

Yale smiled and nodded. “I imagine you already know why I am here. This is my good friend, Linley. These three sculptures are his. Where are your servants? Have them carry the sculptures inside.”

“Please wait.” The middle aged man smiled and nodded.

Very soon, several movers emerged from the corridor, and the middle aged man smiled towards Linley. “Young master Linley, per the rules of our Proulx Gallery, you need to leave behind your proof of identification. All you need to do is let us take down the details of your Ernst Institute student identification.”

The student identification of the Ernst Institute was more than enough proof.

Linley withdrew his student identification.

Accepting the identification papers from Linley, the middle aged man glanced through them, and his eyes immediately lit up. Shocked, he raised his gaze back to Linley. “Fifth grade?” Linley’s grade was very visible on the identification papers. For someone so young to reach the rank of a magus of the fifth rank was quite surprising indeed.

Yale couldn’t help but say proudly, “This brother of mine is one of the two ultimate geniuses of the Ernst Institute. Last year, when he was only fourteen years old, at the end-of-year exams, he reached the title of magus of the fifth rank.”

One of the two ultimate geniuses of the Ernst Institute?

In his heart, the middle-aged man knew quite clearly that the future prospects for this young man standing in front of him, Linley, were boundless. His attitude immediately became much more obsequious. After recording down Linley’s biographical details, he made a mark on each of the three crates.

“Young master Linley, everything is handled. All you have to do, young master, is to come back in a month and collect your renumeration.” The middle aged man smiled.

“In a month? I don’t have any time next month. Can we delay it to three months hence?” Linley asked. Linley was planning to head to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts in a week or two, and on this trip, he was planning on spending two months or so there.

“No rush. As long as your sculptures find buyers, you can come back at any time to collect your fee.” The middle aged man nodded.

Yale frowned. “Hrm? What’s going on. I remember that in the past, before accepting sculptures, you would first inspect the contents of the crate. Why aren’t you doing an inspection this time?”

The middle aged man said, “The reason we inspect the insides of the crates is to prevent unscrupulous people from sending us some already-damaged sculptures. If we are unable to detect the damage, they might claim that the damage was caused by the gallery and try to extort us. But since these three particular sculptures have been delivered by young master Linley and you, young master Yale, I have no concerns. I am confident that someone like you, young master Yale, would not stoop to such actions.”

The middle aged man knew exactly what he was doing.

What sort of person was Yale?

Extort the Proulx Gallery? The amount of money that he might be able to extort probably wouldn’t even be enough to count as pocket change for him. And the creator of these sculptures, Linley, was known as one of the two ultimate geniuses of the Ernst Institute. How could people like them lower themselves to such base actions?

…..

Day turned to night. On East Fenlai City's main road, the Fragrant Pavilion Avenue. The third floor of the Jade Water Paradise. Linley and the other three had a room of their own.

The nights at Fenlai City were always quite busy.

But the nights within the Jade Water Paradise were even more bustling, having reached a peak of busy-ness. The coquettish laughs of women could be heard nonstop, while the roaring, heroic laughter of men also constantly sounded out. Within the private room, the four bros drank while making idle conversation, and by each of their sides was a delicate and pretty girl.

"Second bro, third bro, I'm going to go to bed, and fourth bro is as well. The two of you…" His arm draped around a girl with long, green hair, Yale's breath smelled strongly of liquor.

"That's enough, boss Yale. Stop talking, alright?" Linley interrupted Yale's words.

Yale and Reynolds exchanged glances, then looked at Linley and George with contemptuous gazes. And then Yale and Reynolds, each of them with an arm around the waist of their respective companions, left the private room. For two years now, Linley and the gang had often come here.

Generally, Yale and Reynolds would go off to have fun, while Linley and George would at most drink a little and chat with the girls.

"Young master Linley, we've known each other for two years now, but you…." The green-haired girl seated next to Linley said in an unhappy voice.

Linley couldn't help but feel a headache coming.

"Ira [Ai'la], if you are tired, you can go back and get some rest. I guarantee that when the time comes, you won't receive a single copper coin less than you deserve." Linley had no choice but to say coldly, causing the girl named Ira to no longer dare speak. It really was quite rare to see someone

come to the Jade Water Paradise but only drink.

A white light shone forth from the Coiling Dragon Ring, and transformed itself into Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart, face wreathed in smiles, looked at Linley. Jestingly, he said, ‘Hey, Linley. Why do you have such a foul look on your face with such a girl in front of you? Alas, I, a venerable Saint-level Grand Magus, am now just a bodiless spirit. I can’t touch a woman, even if I want to. And you, you punk, act in such a way?”

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley frowned unhappily as he said mentally to Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart pursed his lips. “You’ve never gotten a taste of a woman. If you had, you wouldn’t be acting in such a way.”

Linley raised his head and stared outside the window, no longer paying any attention to that lecherous old Doehring Cowart. The cold outside air blew on his face, helping Linley to calm down.

“The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. What is it like, inside it?”

In one or two weeks, Linley was going to head off on his journey. Within the Ernst Institute, Linley had heard many legends regarding the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and had also heard much from Doehring Cowart. However, Linley had never gone himself. Thus, Linley had only his own imagination to rely on when trying to picture the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“In a week, let’s go.”

Staring outside the window, seeing the boundless night sky, Linley made up his mind.

Chapter 4 – The Price (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 4, The Price (part 1)

Within the Proulx Gallery. Elegant music wafted over everyone present, as all of the visitors silently inspected one sculpture after another.

The gallery was divided into the main gallery, the expert's gallery, and the master's gallery.

The main gallery took up an enormous amount of space, and also contained the most works of art. Towards the northeast corner of the gallery, there were three works of art, all of which emanated a very unique aura. Anyone who had spent time studying the art of sculpting would immediately sense the aura.

But there were more than ten thousand works of art in the gallery, and these three sculptures were thus like needles hidden within an ocean. It was quite difficult for anyone to pay them any mind.

"Most of these sculptures feel hollow. They have a shape but no soul."

The 180-year old Count Juneau [Zhunuo] was slowly making his way through the main hall, his gaze flickering past one work of art after another. Count Juneau didn't have any other hobbies; the only thing he liked was sculptures. Every day, he would spent his morning strolling through the Proulx Gallery.

But within the main gallery, there were very few sculptures capable of attracting Count Juneau's interest.

"Milord Count, have any sculptures struck your fancy?" A beautiful attendant by his side said to him. Because Count Juneau came here every morning, all of the attendants working at the Proulx Gallery had become quite familiar with him.

Count Juneau shook his head and laughed. “Haven’t found any yet.”

“Milord Count, the quality of the sculptures here is much inferior than that of the sculptures in the hall of experts and the hall of the masters. Why do you spend every morning here?” The female attendant said curiously.

Count Juneau intentionally let out a mysterious laugh. “You don’t understand. There are countless sculptures within this main hall. Perhaps hidden within there are some good works. The feeling of panning for gold by sifting through mud is quite marvelous.”

“Oh?” The attendant looked at Count Juneau questioningly.

Count Juneau didn’t explain any further. He continued to appraise one sculpture after another without stopping, but when he reached those three works of art sculpted by Linley, his eyes lit up. Having appraised sculptures for over a century, he could immediately discern that these three sculptures were special.

“Cool, natural, proud and aloof…”

Count Juneau couldn’t help but praise.

The word was ‘essence’. For a work of art to be termed a ‘good’ work of art, it had to have that certain special essence to it. At a single glance, Count Juneau could tell that these three works of art emanated a cool, proud, and aloof aura. It was this unique aura which had stopped Count Juneau in his tracks.

“Come over here and help me place a bid. For these three sculptures, I am willing to bid a hundred gold coins each.” Count Juneau said to the female attendant.

The female attendant beamed and immediately pulled out a records book. After recording down the registration number of each sculpture, she took out three pieces of paper and placed them next to the sculptures, with each

piece of paper bearing the words ‘hundred gold coins’ on them.

While the female attendant was doing her administrative work, Count Juneau continued to savor these three sculptures.

“Wait a second!” Juneau’s shadowy eyes suddenly lit up again as he stared fixedly at the sculpture of the ‘Velocidragon’. “How is it possible that the scaly armor on the back of the Velocidragon shares the same outline and line with the leg, as though it were all done as part of one series? Logically speaking, the scaly carapace should have been carved by a butterfly chisel, while the leg should have been carved using the straight chisel. No matter how careful one is, a sculptor can’t possibly make the lines flow together 100% perfectly!”

Count Juneau had studied sculpture for over a century.

Originally, he wasn’t a particularly wealthy noble, but based on his keen sight, he had collected many sculptures at a low price which he would later sell at a much higher price. This was how Count Juneau had become one of the wealthy nobles of Fenlai City.

“Can it be that it was carved using a single tool? Impossible, aside from the butterfly chisel, what tool could possibly have been used to carve out such perfect, exquisite details in each protruding scale?” Count Juneau frowned, concentrating fiercely. He had never seen something so queer.

“Milord Count?” Seeing him in a daze, the female attendant couldn’t help but call out to him softly.

Count Juneau’s eyes flickered. He said to himself, “I didn’t expect that I would encounter such a unique work of art in the main hall of the Proulx Gallery. I can’t let others notice it. If I bid a hundred gold coins, some people will take special notice of it. It might cause the price to dramatically increase.”

Count Juneau immediately made his decision.

He would leave these sculptures alone for a few days, and come back later to bid on it during the final two days.

“Help assist me in cancelling my offer.” Count Juneau directly said to the woman next to him.

“Cancel?” The female attendant was startled. Based on their normal rules, once a bid was made, it could not be retracted. But Count Juneau was a very old, longstanding customer of the Proulx Gallery, and so the female attendant very matter-of-factly removed the three bidding stickers.

“Might I ask milord Count why you have retracted your bid?” The female attendant asked.

Count Juneau smiled mysteriously. “No need for you to ask. Oh, right, I want to ask you, how many days have these three sculptures been on display?”

The female attendant flipped through her records, then smiled. “These three sculptures will be on display until June 30th. They were just brought here to the main hall yesterday.”

Count Juneau nodded fractionally.

“Alright, I’ll wander around a bit. You can go ahead and do what you need to do.” Count Juneau smiled.

But in his heart, Count Juneau secretly rejoiced. In his appraisal, the true valuation of these three sculptures should be in the range of three thousand gold pieces. An ordinary sculpture by an expert was worth around a thousand gold pieces, and these three sculptures were all carved in a very unique manner. Just based on that alone, the actual valuation would be doubled.

……

Count Juneau continued to visit the gallery every day. Indeed, just as he had

expected, because the Proulx Gallery had so many sculptures, nobody else had managed to discover these three sculptures. Even if someone had, they only felt that the sculptures looked nice, and couldn't see the true value of these sculptures.

June 10th.

Count Juneau once more arrived at the Proulx Gallery. Casually strolling about the main hall, he browsed through the selections. But once he reached the three sculptures, his face tightened. Next to each of the sculptures, there was a bidding slip.

Three stone sculptures, each one with a bid for three hundred gold coins.

Seeing this bid, Count Juneau inwardly seethed. "Fool! Even if you saw the true value of the sculptures, why would you bid such a high price right off the bat? This will just draw more attention to it." Count Juneau's heart was filled with rage, but there was nothing he could do. He didn't have the authority to retract someone else's bid.

Everything unfolded just as he predicted and feared.

June 12th. Count Juneau once again reached the three sculptures. By now, the price had changed once again.

"Five hundred gold coins?" Count Juneau's eyes narrowed to slits. "Seems like there's quite a few people who know quality when they see it."

Chapter 5 – The Price (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 5, The Price (part 2)

Count Juneau still refused to make a bid. He planned to make his bid on June 30th. As time flowed past, the valuation of the three sculptures continued to rise, but because even an expert crafter's work was valued at around a thousand gold, the price rose rather slowly.

500 gold coins. 510 gold coins. 515 gold coins.

The bids continued to rise slowly. By June 29th, they had only risen to 625 gold coins.

June 30th.

Count Juneau actually did not appear this morning, which was quite a rare occasion. He waited until nightfall, because the Proulx Gallery did not close until midnight. Linley's three sculptures would also be removed from the gallery at midnight.

"The price yesterday was 625 gold coins. I'll make my bid at the end." Count Juneau smiled as he walked towards the three sculptures.

"900 gold coins? What idiot made this bid?" Upon seeing the highest bid, Count Juneau's heart exploded with fury.

The price yesterday was just 625 gold coins, but in a day, the price had risen so dramatically. Although Count Juneau was furious, there was nothing he could do. He decided to wait patiently, and after a long period of time, he finally looked up to see the clock up above.

"It's already 11 PM. In an hour, the place will close." Count Juneau revealed a hint of a smile.

In Fenlai City, Count Juneau could be considered a middle-class noble. When he was young, Count Juneau was actually quite poor. Later, it was due to his shrewd investment in and collecting of sculptures that helped him slowly gain wealth. His current net worth was in the hundreds of thousands of gold coins. He could be considered a rather well off noble.

“Count Juneau, you are here as well?” A whiskered middle-aged man in a swallow shirt smiled as he walked over.

Upon seeing this person, Count Juneau’s countenance changed, but he still was able to smile calmly. “Count Demme [De’mu]! It’s almost eleven. Why are you here?” But in his heart, Count Juneau felt that things had just taken a turn for the worse.

Count Juneau and Count Demme were both considered rather famous collectors of sculpture within the noble circles of Fenlai City.

“Me? For these three sculptures, of course.” Count Demme stroked his whiskers, then said contentedly, “Count Juneau, take a look. The lines and aura of these three sculptures are so very mesmerizing. The expert who was able to produce such a unique aura must surely also be a unique person.”

Count Juneau’s heart trembled.

Indeed…

This Count Demme had also seen the value of these three sculptures. For him to arrive at eleven o’clock most likely meant he had the same idea as Count Juneau.

“Miss, come over here, please.” Count Demme said quite courteously to a nearby female attendant, who walked towards them with a smile. Count Demme pointed at Linley’s three sculptures. “I’m willing to pay a thousand gold coins for each one of these sculptures.”

The attendant said courteously, “Just a moment.”

She took out a record book and made some notations before placing the bidding slips next to the sculptures.

“A thousand gold coins?” The facial muscles on Count Juneau’s face twitched.

Count Demme said to him with a smile, “Count Juneau, these three sculptures really are exceptional. Right, what brings you out here so late at night, rather than resting at home? Are you here for these three sculptures as well?”

Count Juneau let out a light hum.

“I didn’t expect that Count Demme would be so interested in these three sculptures. Honestly, I hadn’t paid them much attention yet. Let me take a good look first.” Count Juneau smiled, then turned and began intensely studying the three sculptures, totally ignoring Count Demme.

Seeing the scene before him, Count Demme sneered mentally. “Old fellow, do you really think you can hide your thoughts from me?”

Like the murmurs of a river, the music continued to play in the main hall of the Proulx Gallery Count Juneau and Count Demme both quietly viewed various sculptures. The gallery remained as quiet as ever.

“Dong. Dong.” The clocks on the walls began to chime.

It was now midnight.

“Miss, please come here.” Count Juneau said to the attendant, who immediately ran over.

“These three sculptures, I am willing to buy for 1010 gold pieces.” Count Juneau made his bid at the last moment.

The attendant saw that the current bid on the sculptures was 1000 gold pieces. She couldn’t help but glance sideways at Count Juneau. It was quite

fortunate that Count Juneau had added ten pieces, and not just one.

“Please wait a moment.” The attendant took out her record book.

“Count Juneau, you actually just overbid by ten gold pieces? I’ll offer 1100 gold pieces!” Count Demme’s voice rang out. Count Juneau frowned as he turned to stare at Count Demme, who was casually striding over with a jocular air, an arrogant look in his eyes.

As it turned out, Count Demme had been paying attention to Count Juneau this entire time, and as soon as Count Juneau made his bid, he came over.

“I bid 1200.” Count Juneau said in a low voice, his fury clearly visible. Seeing the oncoming struggle between the two nobles, the attendant closed her record book and stood off to the side, happily watching the battle. The attendants of the Proulx Gallery loved to see customers enter bidding wars.

Count Demme glanced at Count Juneau with ‘astonishment’. “Count Juneau, even the sculptures in the hall of the experts is worth only around a thousand gold coins. How could a frugal man such as you be willing to pay 1200 gold?”

Frugal?

Miserly was the word! Count Juneau was notorious for his miserliness.

“Count Juneau, if even you are willing to bid 1200, then I can’t be stingy either. 1300 gold pieces!”

Count Juneau’s gaze was ice cold. “The only reason why I am willing to offer a high price for these three sculptures is because I am fond of them. Their real value is only around a thousand gold or so. 1500 gold pieces! If you, Count Demme, are willing to make a higher bid, then you can take them.” Count Juneau made his final offer.

In all honesty, Count Demme was not as insightful as Count Juneau. He didn’t discover the unique, strange aura to these statues.

In Count Demme's eyes, these statues didn't hold any secrets. They were just three good pieces of art, worth a thousand gold or so. If he raised the price any further, there wouldn't be much point.

"Haha." Count Demme laughed. "It's so rare for Count Juneau to be so refreshingly magnanimous in his bidding. In honor of this occasion, I certainly can't rob a man of his beloved possessions. These three sculptures are all yours, Count Juneau."

Only now did the attendant step forward again and begin recording the bid into her book.

"Milord Counts, it is already midnight. The gallery is about to close. Count Juneau, tomorrow I will arrange for people to deliver the sculptures to you." The attendant smiled. Only now did Count Juneau also smile.

Count Juneau flicked a glance at Count Demme, feeling scornful. "Kid. How many years have I spent analyzing stonesculpting? You don't have any insight, and you still want to bid against me?"

Chapter 6 – The Invitation

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 6, The Invitation

“Hrm, there were three sculptures in the main hall which sold for 1500 gold pieces each?” Austoni [Ao’Si’Tuo’Ni], a manager at the Proulx Gallery, stared at the records in astonishment. After flipping through the biographical details of the sculptor, Linley, he couldn’t help but be even more amazed. “These three are all made by Linley, and he’s only fifteen?”

The world of sculpture was definitely that of a pyramid.

The entire Holy Alliance had only five or six master level sculptors who stood at the peak of this field, and perhaps a hundred or so expert sculptors. From this, one could imagine how rare these experts were. Usually, someone who could be termed a ‘expert sculptor’ was someone who had an understanding of life and whose skill in this art was such that he could infuse this understanding into his sculptures. Only then would their sculptures have special auras.

A fifteen year old expert sculptor?

All but unheard of!

“And this Linley fellow is a student at the Ernst Institute?” Austoni was growing more and more shocked. The Ernst Institute was the number one magus academy in the entire Yulan continent. “And he is a student of the fifth class? A fifteen year old student of the fifth class?”

Austoni sucked in a cold breath.

Genius!

“Even if these three sculptures were only worth a thousand gold apiece, based on the age of the sculptor alone, the true value of these sculptures

would definitely be several times greater." Austoni became absolutely convinced of this.

For a fifteen year old sculptor to be able to produce sculpture at this level meant that the value of his artwork would be exponentially greater.

For this fifteen year old sculptor to also be a student at the Ernst Institute meant that he was a genius amongst geniuses. Once again, this would multiply the value of his sculptures.

"This afternoon, I am going to the Ernst Institute. It has been quite some time since the Proulx Gallery has enrolled a new expert sculptor amongst our ranks." Austoni made his decision. By virtue of the fact that all three of his sculptures had fetched a high price, Linley clearly had proved his worth.

He was fully qualified to be invited to have his sculptures displayed in a private booth in the hall of experts.

That very afternoon.

A horse carriage drew up outside the main gates of the Ernst Institute. It was Austoni and two guards. Arriving at the main gate, Austoni took out his identification showing himself to be a manager at the Proulx Gallery. The Ernst Institute actually deployed one of their own guards to escort him.

At the instructional areas for the fifth grade students at the Ernst Institute.

"Mr. Austoni, this is where most of the instructors for the magi of the fifth rank congregate." Smiling, the escort pushed the door open. Currently, around ten or so magi were here, chatting and laughing. To be qualified to instruct magi of the fifth rank, one would be a magi of the seventh or perhaps even the eighth rank."

As the door opened, these magi of exalted rank all turned to look.

"Milords, this is Mr. Austoni of the Proulx Gallery. He has some business which he would like to beseech your aid for." The escort said respectfully.

The magi all nodded calmly.

The Proulx Gallery had multiple branches in all of the kingdoms and empires in the Yulan continent, and it possessed astonishing power and influence. Thus, even proud, arrogant magi would be fairly cordial when dealing with the Proulx Gallery.

“Milords magi.” Austoni said with a smile. “I’m here in search of a student named Linley?”

“Linley?”

All of the magi laughed. Amongst them, a purple robed magi said with a smile, “Linley? That’s one of the two utmost geniuses of the Ernst Institute. He is a dual-element magus, wielding earth and wind. Go speak with his wind-element instructor. He might know.”

“You can forget about the earth element instructor. This Linley fellow, in the past three months, has only shown his face twice in our earth element classes.” A whiskered old man said unhappily. “But Linley attends virtually every single wind element class.”

Another bearded elder said with a smile, “I am Linley’s wind element instructor. I’m fairly knowledgeable about him. If you have any questions, you can ask me.”

Austoni nodded. “A month ago, Linley brought three sculptures over to the Proulx Gallery. His sculptures already possess the grandeur of a expert. Based on the price it fetched this month, we have determined that Linley is qualified to have his sculptures displayed in a private booth in the hall of the experts. Thus, I have come to gift him with a silver magicard.”

“A private booth?”

Those magi were all amazed.

These proud, lofty magi were all fairly knowledgeable when it came to sculptures. They all knew that it was extremely hard to even carve a physically perfect sculpture, much less one with a special aura or essence. To have a private booth at the Proulx Gallery was the dream of countless sculptors.

“Are you sure it was Linley? This Linley fellow is normally quite diligent and hardworking in his studies. And he is only fifteen years old.” Linley’s wind element instructor, that silver haired, white robed old man said disbelievingly.

Austoni smiled. “This is beyond any question. At the Proulx Gallery, we recorded down all of Linley’s biographical data. And, based on our data, he came to the Proulx Gallery in the company of young master Yale.”

Those magi all nodded.

And then, they all began to talk amongst themselves animatedly. One of the two utmost geniuses of the Ernst Institute was actually a expert sculptor as well. For a genius magus to be able to secure a private booth at the Proulx Gallery was something which would rarely occur even a single time over the course of a thousand years.

Naturally, these magi were all amazed.

“Milords magi, can any of you inform me where Linley is residing?” Austoni asked.

That silver haired, white robed elder said, “Linley resides in dorm 1987.”

“Dorm 1987?” Hearing this, Austoni was about to head there right away.

The silver haired, white robed elder continued, “But please wait. Although Linley lives in dorm 1987, I happen to know that three weeks ago, he departed from the school to engage in training. Thus, unfortunately, I’m afraid you came here for nothing.”

“Training?” Austoni started.

Austoni knew quite well that magi of the fifth and sixth ranks were qualified to engage in real world field training. The Ernst Institute also strongly encouraged this practice.

Austoni couldn’t help but sigh.

He didn’t expect that despite rushing to the Ernst Institute so enthusiastically, this would be the end result.

“Then milords magi, I will take my leave.” Austoni bowed respectfully. Those magi all nodded casually towards him, signifying acceptance, and no longer paid him any heed. All of them began to excitedly chat amongst themselves.

“I didn’t imagine that this kid Linley is so formidable…”

All of these magi instructors were unable to stop praising Linley who, without anyone knowing, was able to qualify to have a private booth at the Proulx Gallery.

Chapter 7 – The Journey (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 7, The Journey (part 1)

Let us go back in time a few weeks, to June 5th.

This afternoon, Linley bid farewell to his three bros. Carrying a leather sack on his back, Linley headed on the road to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“Squeak squeak!” The little Shadowmouse squeaked happily from his perch on Linley’s shoulders.

“Boss, we’re finally headed to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Wow, I’m so excited!” The little Shadowmouse’s voice rang out in Linley’s head. Linley just smiled. At this time, a white ray of light shone out and transformed into Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart instructed, “Linley, when travelling alone, you must be careful. Perhaps you will meet with bandits.”

“I know, Grandpa Doehring.” Linley laughed.

Grandpa Doehring had already repeated his warnings over and over about the dangers of traveling solo. Right now, Linley was dressed in sturdy cloth slacks and a sleeveless shirt. Just judging from his bulging alone, anyone would definitely be certain that he was a warrior.

Per Grandpa Doehring, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, a mage’s robes would be rather unwieldy and get in the way.

Linley moved very quickly. Although the road from the Ernst Institute to the mountain range was rather rough, based on Linley’s stamina as a warrior of the fourth rank, in a single hour he easily traversed forty

kilometers. Just at this time, he suddenly saw three people up ahead.

“Hrm?” Linley’s gaze focused on one person in particular.

That person was actually dressed in the robes of a student of the Ernst Institute. Of the other two, one was extremely muscular and bore a giant warblade on his back. The other man was extremely skinny, and had a shortsword sheathed by his side. That skinny man alertly turned his head and stared at Linley.

Linley couldn’t be bothered to pay attention to them, and just sped up, preparing to pass them by.

“Linley, is that you?” A voice suddenly said.

Linley turned his head questioningly. That man dressed in the robes of a magus of the Ernst Institute smiled and called out, “Linley, I’m Delsarte [De’sha’te], remember me?”

“Oh, Delsarte, it’s you!” Linley came to a halt.

Linley actually knew this Delsarte.

Delsarte, like him, was a wind magus of the fifth grade class. Although they couldn’t be considered to have a deep friendship, they were classmates after all.

Delsarte brought the two warriors over, smiling as he warmly said, “Linley, I didn’t expect that you, a magus, would be dressed like this. I barely recognized you. Only when I saw that little Shadowmouse on your shoulder did I realize it was you.”

“Kava [Ka’wa], Matt [Ma’te], let me introduce you. This is Linley, one of the two ultimate geniuses of our Ernst Institute. He’s only fifteen years old, but he is already a magus of the fifth rank.” Delsarte enthusiastically introduced.

Kava was that muscularly built warrior, while Matt was the skinny warrior.

“I’ve long heard Delsarte talk about the two ultimate geniuses of the Ernst Institute. I didn’t expect that today we would have the good fortune to meet you.” Matt said courteously, while Kava’s eyes widened as round as an ox. “You are a magus? Why do you look like a warrior to me?”

Linley didn’t explain. “All of you are heading to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?”

Delsarte nodded. “Right. Kava and Matt travelled with me last year for field training. We have good teamwork. This year, we plan to do some exploration around the borders of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Linley, you should come with us. In a group, we’ll all be safer.”

Linley nodded.

“I’ll travel with them for now. Delsarte is a classmate of mine, so he should be trustworthy. When we reach the mountains, we’ll split up.” After making his decision, Linley and Delsarte’s trio all headed towards the mountains together.

The four of them travelled at very high speed.

Even the physically weak Delsarte was able to move rapidly through usage of the wind-style spell ‘Supersonic’. Thus, their group moved quickly through the barren roads.

Kava’s loud voice rumbled, “Linley, if you join with us, then we would have two magi of the fifth rank. When the four of us work together, we might even be able to kill a magical beast of the sixth rank. The magicite cores of magical beasts of the sixth rank are worth around a thousand gold apiece. If we kill a few of them, we won’t have to worry about our living expenses for a century.”

For most people, in a year, ten gold pieces was more than enough for living expenses.

A thousand gold coins was an enormous sum.

Linley's heart was swayed. In the back of his mind, he suddenly was reminded of the books regarding magical beasts he had read. These books had discussed the energy core all magical beasts had within them; the magicite cores.

"These magicite cores will solidify in the bodies of beasts of the third rank and higher. But for beasts which have not reached the sixth rank, the value of the cores is not high. They probably aren't even worth as much as one of my sculptures." Linley thought to himself.

However, the magicite cores of magical beasts of the sixth rank were still only worth about a thousand gold.

Based on Doehring Cowart's calculations, Linley's sculptures were definitely qualified to be displayed in the hall of the experts, with a valuation of around a thousand gold or so each. Killing a magical beast of the sixth rank, in terms of difficulty and danger, was something that was far deadlier than sculpting.

"At the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, my primary goal is to train myself. Acquiring magicite crystals? That's just a side benefit." Linley said to himself as he looked at the other three.

Delsarte and the others were engaged in enthusiastic speculation. Clearly, they were very excited about acquiring magicite cores.

"The magicite cores of magical beasts of the third, fourth, and fifth ranks aren't worth much. Even cores from beasts of the sixth rank are just worth a thousand or so." Delsarte said, shaking his head unconcernedly. "If we can kill a magical beast of the seventh rank, then we will be rich." When he said these words, Delsarte's eyes gleamed.

Just like humans, where between magi of the sixth rank to the seventh rank was a huge gap, magical beasts of the sixth rank had a huge gap in power

compared to magical beasts of the seventh rank.

The magicite cores of a magical beast of the seventh rank were worth tens of thousands of gold pieces.

If they could kill just one, in the countryside, they would be considered extremely wealthy and not have to worry about money for the rest of their lives.

“A magical beast of the seventh rank? Based on our ability, that would be a deathwish.” Linley said casually.

Linley had witnessed the power of the Velocidragon, a magical beast of the seventh rank. Linley, at his current rank, probably couldn’t even break through the Velocidragon’s terrifyingly protective scales. If he couldn’t even pierce its defense, how could he possibly try to kill a magical beast of the seventh rank? How was that possible?

That sly-looking fellow, Matt, nodded. “It’s hard to say if the four of us would even be able to defeat a magical beast of the sixth rank. Fighting with a magical beast of the seventh rank is suicide.”

“I’m just making small talk.” Delsarte rubbed his head as he pursed his lips.

Just as the four of them were talking and laughing, in a mountain forest a hundred meters behind them, a man wearing green clothes and with leaves covered all over his face was staring coldly at them.

This man’s mouth was moving nonstop, apparently mumbling the words to a magical spell.

At the same time, the longbow in his hands had been pulled to the limit. Suddenly, the arrow shot out, flashing with a cold blue light. It tore through the air at a terrifyingly rapid speed, traversing the hundred meters in the blink of an eye.

Linley, who was engaging in idle talk with the group, suddenly felt all the

hairs on his body stand up. His heart immediately reached a maximum level of tension.

“Danger!”

Linley quickly dodged to the side. “Whooosh!” That high speed arrow shot past him like a bolt of lightning, piercing through the body of the robed Delsarte. It pierced through his torso, leaving behind a gaping hole as it flew another few dozen meters before halting.

Clutching his throat, Delsarte’s eyes turned round. Some indistinct words gargled in his mouth as fresh blood spewed forth from the wound in his chest.

“Urg…urg…” Delsarte’s eyes were filled with a longing for life. They were filled with horror and fear, but as the blood continued to pour out from the gaping hole in his chest, quite quickly, all life fled from Delsarte’s eyes, and he collapsed.

Linley, Kava, and Matt all quickly flattened themselves against the grass as they alertly looked behind them.

Chapter 8 – The Journey (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 8, The Journey (part 2)

“A wind-element magus-archer. Based on how that arrow of his melded both the ‘Supersonic’ and ‘Precision’ spells, this wind-element magus-archer must have at least reached the fifth rank.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “Based on this fellow’s prowess, if he gets within fifty meters of you, even if you are able to dodge, you will still suffer a severe injury. Flee!”

Linley’s heart trembled.

“Give up all your valuables, and I’ll spare your lives.” A cold voice rang out, and then over ten men dressed in dark green burst out of the forest. All of them were wielding longbows, with shortswords at their waists. These ten people stared coldly at Linley and the other two while pressing closer and closer.

But the speaker did not appear.

Linley and the others glanced at each other. They didn’t hand over their valuables. They only watched warily as the archers approached.

“Fire!” That cold voice rang out again. The wind-element magus behind them was quite decisive. Since Linley and the other two didn’t immediately surrender, he immediately issued the order to kill.

“Twang” “twang” “twang” “twang”.

With abruptness, the archers all shot their arrows, and the arrows soared towards Linley’s group, who hurriedly dodged. In addition to dodging, Kava also used the huge warblade in his hands to block some arrows.

Linley executed the wind-style spell ‘Supersonic’, allowing himself to dodge aside easily while still maintaining enough presence of mind to watch the other two. Matt was dodging nonstop, quite precise and quite careful, while also using his shortsword to deflect arrows.

But Kava was not as agile. While wielding a giant warblade, he clearly could not move very quickly. He was primarily using his giant warblade as well as a thin layer of battle-qi to defend himself. And indeed, the threat of those arrows was not too high; a warrior of the fifth rank could withstand them.

“Raaawr, die!” Kava roared furiously, charging forward towards the archers with his warblade in hand.

Seeing this, a killing gaze appeared in the eyes of the wind-style magus-archer hiding in the forest. He once more drew the bowstring to his longbow and began to chant the words to the ‘Supersonic’ and ‘Precision’ spells, causing his longbow and arrow to glitter with gold and blue light.

Roaring furiously, Kava continued charging towards the archers, but halfway there, he suddenly sensed a blue gleam flash before him. Before he was able to react, the arrow was right there, in front of him, terrifying him to the point that cold sweat instantly drenched his clothes. He immediately lifted up his giant warblade to block. But however…

“Argh!”

The arrow pierced straight into his skull.

“Ah…” Kava stood there stupidly, his eyes filled with disbelief. He clearly had been able to use his warblade to block the arrow. How did it kill him? His eyes filled with disbelief and questions, all the light faded from his gaze and he toppled down, like a collapsing mountain.

The far away Linley felt his heart tremble.

“The wind-style supportive spell, ‘Precision’. It really is precise!” As a

wind-style magus, Linley knew very well that this supportive spell, ‘Precision’, when used to support an archer, could cause the archer’s arrows to undergo minute course corrections enroute to its target.

For example, just now, Kava did indeed get his warblade up in time to block, but just by adjusting its direction slightly, the arrow went straight through Kava’s skull.

“Wind-style magic, when paired with a longbow, really is terrifying.” Linley felt secretly shocked, but in the next instant, he immediately began to chant the words to a magical spell.

“The two of you had best surrender obediently.” That cold voice rang out once more from the forest, and the ten or so archers also laughed arrogantly. A wind-style magus-archer required both powerful magical abilities as well as sufficient physical strength to utilize a longbow properly.

A wind-style magus-archer was an extremely terrifying long-range attacker.

A murderous gaze flashing through Linley’s eyes, as he stared at those ten archers as though they were just corpses.

“Crack!” “Crack!” “Crack!” “Crack!”

Suddenly, the earth trembled, and one earthen spear after another erupted from beneath the ten archers. One sharp, gleaming stone spear after another pierced into the legs and chests of the archers, filling the ground with fresh blood and the air with their screams.

Earth-style spell of the fifth rank – Earthen Spear Array!

“Ahhh!” Miserable cries split the air.

Dozens of earthen spears had erupted simultaneously from beneath them, each spear over a meter high. In the blink of an eye, the troop was pierced by the dense array of spears, which had caught them unawares, like a devastating ambush. All of the ten archers entered a state of pain and

despair.

“Leader, save us, save us!” A man who had been impaled in the stomach cried out miserably.

“Ah, ah!” Another archer who had been pierced through in his thighs also cried out with pain.

Of the troop of archers, four died on the spot, while nearly ten of them were severely injured. Their combat ability had essentially been destroyed.

“An earth-style magus!”

The archer hidden in the woods felt greatly shocked. Him and his men had been hidden here, on the outskirts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, for quite some time now, ambushing and killing travelers, and had accumulated quite a bit of treasure.

Generally, when he launched his ambush, he would first kill the enemy’s magus!

An enemy magus, after all, could also launch long range attacks. Therefore, they posed the greatest risk. He didn’t expect that after killing one magus, another one would show himself.

“Let’s go.”

Taking advantage of his opponent’s being caught off guard, Linley immediately utilized the ‘Supersonic’ spell to increase his speed to its maximum limits, hurriedly scurrying away and disappearing off into the distance. Linley knew quite well that he had no way to attack the magus-archer hiding in the woods.

Their distance was too great, and even magic had range limitations. But if he closed in on the magus-archer, he perhaps wouldn’t be able to block the assault of a wind-element magus-archer.

Running away at maximum speed, Linley fled nearly thirty kilometers.

“Boss, why’d you run away? That magus-archer might’ve posed some risk to you, but if I were to attack, I would’ve killed his *** easy. Why didn’t you let me kill’m?” The little Shadowmouse ‘Bebe’ mentally grumbled angrily to Linley.

Linley knew quite well how powerful the little Shadowmouse ‘Bebe’ had become.

When Linley was just eight years old, the little Shadowmouse already had a speed surpassing that of a warrior of the sixth rank. But seven years later, with Linley fifteen years of age, although Bebe’s physical size had not changed, his speed was almost on par with that of a warrior of the ninth rank!

Based on the little Shadowmouse’s speed, that magus-archer probably wouldn’t even be able to aim at him.

“This is my training excursion. I should try to resolve everything based on my own ability.” Linley explained.

Jumping onto Linley’s shoulders, the little Shadowmouse scratched at Linley as angry squeaking sounds came from his sharp teeth. Mentally, he was angrily shouting at Linley, “Boss, you are going too far! I also need to train, I also need to fight!”

Looking at the little Shadowmouse, Linley couldn’t help but laugh. “Fine, when we reach the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, if we run into any powerful monsters, I’ll let you fight them, deal?”

“That’s more like it.” The little Shadowmouse sat up, folding his little paws over his chest. His little nose wrinkled as he beamed happily.

Just at this moment, the dark, grim sky was shattered with a ‘crash’ as bolts of lightning lit up the world, followed by the echoing thunder.

“Looks like it’s going to storm hard soon.” Linley frowned.

Linley immediately sped up, hastening towards the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. By the time Linley was just ten or so kilometers away from the mountains, the first drops rain began to fall, followed by torrential showers which flooded the land.

“Rumble…”

The sound of thunder sounded out again and again, while the torrential rain continued to cover the lands with water. It felt as though the entire world had been flooded.

But not much rain fell on Linley, who continued to forge ahead with rapid speed. This was because ten centimeters above Linley, there was a ‘wind shield’ of approximately one meter in diameter. The defensive ability of the ‘wind shield’ spell was quite high. Linley only had to use a tiny bit of mageforce in order to allow it to block the rain constantly.

As the wind itself was formless, the wind shield, as well, appeared like just a translucent, faint blue streak.

From far away, one simply couldn’t tell that there was a wind shield there. Thus, using this wind shield, Linley rapidly forged ahead. After a bit of time, Linley saw a long, sinuous range of mountains, running north to south with no end in sight. This mountain range, which virtually split the Yulan continent into two halves, was the number one mountain range in the world – the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Seeing the titanic mountains just a few kilometers away, Linley couldn’t help but hold his breath.

“What a huge mountain range…”

This mountain range was simply too enormous. Based on the naked eye, as far as one could tell, the mountains were limitless, and as far north and as far south as one could see, there were mountains. Seeing the boundless

mountains in this mountain range was like seeing the boundless water in the sea.

It stretched into infinity!

“This is the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the number one mountain range in the continent. How many magical beasts does it hold? How many Saint-level magical beasts, for that matter?” At this moment, Doehring Cowart appeared by Linley’s side, his gaze distant and lofty. “It has been a long time since I have come to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.”

A look of excitement shone from Linley’s eyes.

“Let’s go!”

Filled with a heroic air, Linley charged through the all-encompassing rainstorm towards the mountain range, while the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, squeaked excitedly from Linley’s shoulders. Under the cover of the rainstorm, Linley quickly entered the endless mountains.

Chapter 9 – The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 9, The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts (part 1)

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was vast and boundless.

Within it, Linley could see ancient pines that were centuries or millennia old, blotting out the landscape. All sorts of various grasses filled the land, and thistles and thorns were equally commonplace. Dry leaves covered the land, with each step, they crackled and popped. Ancient vines and weeds could be seen everywhere.

“With all of these weeds, dense vines, and trees which have been around for who-knows-how-long, even if a magical beast were just ten meters away from me, I still probably wouldn’t sense it.” Linley grew apprehensive.

Grandpa Doehring appeared by his side as well.

“Ten meters? Linley, even in the grass right in front of you, there could be a magical beast in wait, such as a giant snake.” Doehring Cowart laughed as he spoke.

Linley involuntarily glanced at the grassy area in front of him, which was almost half as tall as him. Such thick, tall grass really could hide a snake. Taking a deep breath, Linley stood there as he began to mumble the words to a spell.

Suddenly, a gentle gust of wind emanated from Linley, spreading about in all directions before finally dissipating.

Wind-style magic – Windscout!

Generally speaking, a magus of the third rank would be able to execute the

Windscout spell. But of course, the more powerful a magus was, the wider an area the Windscout spell could cover. The Windscout spell of a magus of the third rank would only affect an area of around ten or so meters around him, but the Windscout of a magus of the fifth rank had a diameter of over a hundred meters.

“Within a hundred meters, the only magical beasts around are a magical beast of the first rank, a Bubblerat, and a few magical beasts of the second rank, ‘Earth Scorpions’.” Linley said confidently.

The Windscout spell could discern the aura and lifescent of any living creature.

“Don’t be too cocky. A powerful magical beast could burrow under the earth, and some Saint-level magical beasts can even disguise their power level.” Doehring Cowart reminded, but then he chuckled. “But of course, if they wanted to deal with a little fellow like you, would a Saint-level magical beast bother to hide its power?”

But upon hearing these words, Linley grew all the more cautious.

“Ambush through disguising power levels? In some books, it was said that the intelligence of magical beasts rivals that of man’s. Looks like it’s true.” Linley said to himself. Glancing at the little Shadowmouse, ‘Bebe’, on his shoulders, he thought, “This little fella, Bebe, already has a really high level of intelligence. I can’t let my guard down.”

Air swirled around Linley’s feet. This was part of the byproduct of Linley’s ‘Supersonic’ spell.

Linley quietly passed into the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. He carefully surveyed his surroundings, while on his shoulders, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, also perked up and stared in all four directions, his beady little black eyes peering about him. Slowly, the two of them travelled deeper and deeper into the mountains.

“The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is over ten thousand kilometers

long, with an average width of seven or eight hundred kilometers. In the outermost hundred kilometer region, the magical beasts are mostly of low rank. If we go more than a hundred kilometers deep, we'll meet lots of magical beasts of the fifth and sixth ranks. If we go still deeper inside, we will see many beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks, and perhaps even Saint-level magical beasts."

Doehring Cowart once more began to lecture Linley about the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

"But of course, nothing is absolute. Perhaps a magical beast of the ninth rank might be bored and go for a stroll in the outer territories." Doehring Cowart said. "And perhaps you might be so unlucky as to meet with a huge, ten-thousand unit strong pack of wolf monsters. If that happens, all I can say is, you have terrible karma."

Hearing Doehring Cowart's words, Linley's lips pursed.

That went without saying!

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was enormous. How could he be so unlucky? But if he was, Doehring Cowart, who survived only as a spirit, would not be able to assist him in any way. A Saint-level Grand Magus without mageforce had no way to attack.

"Grandpa Doehring, I know this already. Be quiet and don't distract me." Linley said discontentedly.

Doehring Cowart immediately chuckled. Stroking his white beard, he no longer spoke.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was a place of deep mountains and ancient trees. The trees were so thickly clustered that virtually all of the rain was blocked, with just a few drops occasionally sprinkling down. After walking for a period of time, he realized that this outer region was indeed not that dangerous.

Linley exerted some strength with his legs, and almost as if he were floating, leapt up on top of a seven or eight meter high tree branch as he carefully scanned about.

“Boss, far away to the right, there’s a wild pig.” Bebe’s voice sounded out in Linley’s mind.

Hearing these words, Linley couldn’t help but turn and look. Indeed, approximately a hundred meters away, a wild boar with a single horn was carefully scanning his surroundings. If Linley didn’t have such a high vantage point, Linley perhaps wouldn’t have been able to see this Unicorn Boar.

“Unicorn Boar, a magical beast of the third rank, an earth-element creature. The only technique it has is that of the ‘Earth Spear’ technique.” Some information regarding the Unicorn Boar came to Linley’s mind.

“Even though it’s just a beast of the third rank, at least it will serve for dinner. Boar flesh is quite tasty.” Nimbly and vigorously, Linley crept through the trees as he stealthily approached the boar. Due to the density of the local flora, the boar had not noticed Linley either.

When he got within ten meters of the boar, Linley lay down flat in the grass. Peering through the dense grass, he could still make out the outline of the Unicorn Boar.

Whoosh!

Like a serpentine dragon leaving its lair, Linley leapt out from the grass. When the Unicorn Boar turned his head and stared in shock, Linley fell down upon it like a gust of wind. The Unicorn Boar let out an indignant roar, and thrust its long, thick horn straight at Linley.

“Hrrg!” Linley reached out with his left hand and grabbed the horn and gave a tremendous tug.

That huge Unicorn Boar, weighing several hundred kilograms, was tossed

up seven or eight meters up into the air by Linley, who then began to fiercely kick at it with his left leg, using it like a giant claymore and slamming it into the boar's head with thunderous power and speed.

"Thud." With a sickening, bone-crunching sound, the Unicorn Boar was kicked into a tree. When it fell down to the ground, the very earth shook. The bones of the Unicorn Boar had already been shattered, and brain matter had already begun leaking out from its shattered skull. A trail of fresh blood streamed forth from its mouth. Its four limbs quivered momentarily, then grew still.

Just based on his prowess as a warrior, killing a Unicorn Boar was not a tough feat for Linley.

"Although the magicite core of a magical beast of the third rank is only worth ten or so gold coins, I can't let it go to waste." Linley withdrew the straight chisel from his backpack, and with just two or three simple slices, he cut the boar open. An entirely unremarkable earth-colored magicite crystal rolled out. Linley wiped it off on the grass, then placed it in his backpack.

And then, with practiced ease, Linley skinned the boar and cut off the boar's legs.

After casually chopping down a few branches, with a flick of his wrist, Linley summoned forth a small flame. As the fire began to grow, Linley began to roast the boar legs.

The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, began to drool. His eyes were fixed on the boar legs. "Boar legs are delicious. Boss, hurry up, hurry up. Why don't you just directly use your fire-element magic to roast the boar, wouldn't that be faster?"

"Fire-element magic? I only have a bit of fire element mageforce. And what's more, when it comes to cooking, using higher temperatures isn't necessarily superior." Linley smirked as he spoke, withdrawing some coarse salt and other ingredients from his backpack.

When Linley had originally tested for magical aptitude, he had exceptional affinity for both earth and wind elemental essence, but just average affinity for fire elemental essence. Honestly speaking, for an ordinary person, average affinity for an elemental essence was quite good. But for someone like Linley, he couldn't be bothered to spend time and energy working on his fire magic.

After all, if he wanted his abilities in fire magic to match his abilities in wind and earth, he would probably have to spend ten times as much time.

Thus, Linley would usually just casually refine a little bit of fire element mageforce. He did, however, definitely have enough to generate some fireballs without any problems.

After finishing roasting two boar legs, Linley and Bebe each shared one while Linley began to work on roasting the other two.

"Wow. Delicious." Bebe chatted while eating enthusiastically. "This wild boar tastes so much better than those farm-grown hogs. It tastes so fragrant. But naturally, your roasting abilities also played a big role, boss." Bebe was so happy that he even began flattering Linley a bit.

Linley couldn't help but start to laugh.

"Boss, I want more." After finishing one leg, Bebe looked at Linley with a pitiful expression.

Seeing Bebe's sad gaze, Linley didn't feel sorry for him in the slightest. He sternly lectured, "This boar leg is way larger than a roast duck. One leg is more than enough for you. The other two legs will be dinner." After speaking, Linley turned away and ignored Bebe's pitiable face.

After finishing roasting the two legs, Linley used two large leaves to wrap them up, and then placed them within his backpack and began hurrying along the road with Bebe.

Chapter 10 – The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 10, The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts (part 2)

Within the countless peaks of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts were innumerable ageless trees and forests that made travel through the range very difficult. What made it even more difficult was the constant need to pass through one peak and ravine after another, or perhaps take a circular path.

“When traveling within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, don’t carve out a path through the pre-existing thorns and brush. It’s best to take an alternate path.” Doehring Cowart continued to provide the benefit of his experience to Linley.

Linley listened carefully as he proceeded forward.

“Remember, the biggest mistake you can make in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is to constantly make noise. This will cause many magical beasts to pay attention to you. Even if you are forced to make some noise, you need to immediately leave the nearby area.” Doehring Cowart continued. “Remember, if you are injured, you must immediately do your best to staunch any loss of blood. The stench of blood will attract beasts as well. The noses of magical beasts are far more sensitive than we humans.”

Linley nodded.

The massive crowns of countless trees covered the entire sky. Looking at them, Linley was reminded of some information that he had gleaned from books at the Ernst Institute. In a place like this, where even the sun was all but blocked out, one had to learn how to distinguish north, south, east, and west.

As agile as a monkey, Linley leapt past a series of disorderly tree roots and vine growths, but just as he walked past…

“Whoah.” Linley sucked in a cold breath as he saw something not too far away.

The corpses of three men and two women were a few dozen meters away from him. The five corpses had not yet rotted much, but the bite marks on them were very visible. The corpses had all been dismembered. A male corpse had half its leg eaten, and a giant hole ripped in its belly, with his severed intestines laying strewn about. Half of a female corpse’s head had been eaten, leaving behind a single eyeball and a white skull bone with a few strands of hair attached.

Linley’s face turned pale, and he forgot to breathe.

“They should’ve died three or four days ago.” Doehring Cowart appeared next to Linley, carefully inspecting the corpses. His face was still quite calm. “Linley, take a close look. On the chest of every single person, there are some similar, unremarkable wounds. If my guess is correct, these five should’ve been killed by humans, and most likely, by a single person.”

Linley started.

“Doehring Cowart, you’re saying that a person killed them?” Linley looked at Doehring Cowart, shocked.

Doehring Cowart smiled calmly. “Linley, this is your first visit to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Once you’ve been here a bit longer, you will come to realize that in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, in addition to dealing with the attacks of local beasts, you also have to guard against the attacks of other humans.”

“The attacks of humans? Why would other humans attack?” Linley felt a bit of rage beginning to grow in his heart.

In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the local monsters already held a

huge advantage by virtue of their countless numbers. He didn't expect that the humans here would fight amongst themselves as well, instead of helping each other.

"This is very normal. Why do humans venture into this mountain range? The vast majority come here in the hopes of acquiring magicite cores. If they kill a magical beast, they will only acquire a single core, but if they kill a human being, that person might have several magicite cores in their backpack, or even more." Doehring Cowart stroked his white beard.

Linley finally understood.

Greed!

It was all due to greed. Some people here wanted to easily acquire a large number of magicite cores, and indeed, killing the other human beings here was a good way to do so.

"Linley, you must be careful. Based on what I'm seeing, the person who killed these five must possess astounding ability. If you look closely at these people's clothing, you can see that four of them should be warriors, while one of them was a magus. But all five of them were killed at about the same time by a clean blow through the heart. The ruthless precision of this assault is chilling. However, since we don't know how strong these five people were, it's hard to estimate the strength of their killer." Doehring Cowart frowned. "But for these five to be willing and able to brave the dangers of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts suggests that they were not weak. From this alone, we can safely say that the person who killed them is, at the very least, no weaker than you."

Linley stepped forward to take a closer look, then nodded in agreement.

The killing blows were very clean and direct.

"This is still just the outer perimeter of the mountain range. Hurry on in." Doehring Cowart laughed.

Linley nodded, then continued on his journey deeper into the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. On his journey, the sight of corpses of both men and monsters became quite common, as well as many rusted weapons. Linley also occasionally ran into a few weak monsters.

Nightfall. Linley and the little Shadowmouse were resting while each munched on a leg of boar. Linley was seated on the ground, while the little Shadowmouse was seated on his shoulder.

“At night, one cannot light a fire in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.” Doehring Cowart once again instructed.

“Understood, Grandpa Doehring.” Linley knew quite a bit about the basics of survival here. This place was no ordinary wilderness, and the beasts here would not be afraid of fire.

Seated on the ground, Linley calmed himself down and closed his eyes, while beginning to sense the flow of earth essence and wind essence around him. The feeling of elemental essence around him was akin to the feeling of being in one’s parents’ embrace.

Due to his exceptional affinity with earth essence and wind essence, Linley could sense them quite clearly.

“The Pulse of the Earth. The Flow of the Wind.” A peaceful smile was on Linley’s face, as he began to drift off into sleep. Linley had total confidence that any tremors on the ground caused by something approaching, or any disturbances in the wind caused by something moving rapidly to him, would immediately awaken him.

These were the abilities possessed by earth magi and wind magi.

The night slowly grew deeper. Curled in front of Linley, the little Shadowmouse ‘Bebe’ also began to emit extremely light, quiet snoring sounds. The night wind grew cool as well, but right now, it was summer in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Only at night would it feel cool and refreshing. In the day, it felt stiflingly hot.

Late at night. All was dark.

“Rustle, rustle.” The soft sounds of something rustling against the grass could be heard.

A pair of powerfully built Windwolves with gleaming blue fur were pacing about within the forest. Their green-tinted eyes were carefully inspecting their surroundings as their powerful limbs silently stalked through the area.

Their cruel white fangs gleamed with a cold light in the night.

Chapter 11 – Wolf Pack (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 11, Wolf Pack (part 1)

Still seated cross-legged, Linley's eyes suddenly snapped open and he immediately stared southwards. But there was nothing to the south aside from a mass of vines and rattan growth. This was one of the reasons why Linley selected this location for resting. With so much forest growth, even if a magical beast neared Linley, they might not notice him.

"Two magical beasts are nearing me, and right now they are around forty meters or so away." Based on the vibrations from the disturbances in the local air elemental essences, Linley was certain that there were two beasts.

Linley silently walked to the edge of the mass of vines. Peering through the vines, he saw that thirty meters away, a pair of powerfully built Windwolves were slowly pawing towards him. Based on their route, they would come very close to him. Suddenly, Linley felt a weight settle on his shoulders, and he knew that Bebe had already arrived on his shoulders.

"Boss, it's just a pair of Windwolves. We've seen them several times at the Ernst Institute." Not worried in the slightest, Bebe chatted casually with Linley.

Linley's gaze was fixed on the two Windwolves. "Yes, they are Windwolves. Amongst the wolf packs, there are three major types: Fangwolves, Windwolves, and Frostwolves. Frostwolve packs are the strongest type, while Fangwolves are the weakest. Windwolves are squarely in the middle. In a pack of Windwolves, even the weakest will be a magical beast of the fourth rank, while elites might be of the fifth or sixth rank. Supposedly, the strongest a Windwolf can be is a magical beast of the eighth rank."

Even an ordinary Windwolf was of the fourth rank. A Unicorn Boar simply

wasn’t on the same level.

My power as a warrior is just of the fourth rank. Based on physical skills alone, I can’t overcome these two Windwolves.” Linley was feeling a bit excited. “But this will make it a challenge.”

Watching the two Windwolves draw nearer, Linley’s lips began to mumble the words to a magic spell as his eyes grew cold.

“Shrrrk! Shrrk! Shrrrrk! Shrrrk!”

A deep roar noise could be heard as within the dark night, ten or so large rocks, each at least one meter long and earthen-colored, suddenly flew towards the Windwolves, smashing at them. But the Windwolves quickly raised their head. Seeing the danger, they immediately began to flee at high speed.

The low thud of an impact.

In the short period of time before the rocks struck, the Windwolves were able to respond with uncanny swiftness. Of the two Windwolves, one had a back leg smashed, while the other managed to adroitly dodge every single rock.

“They live up to the name of ‘Windwolves’. They are so fast!”

Linley thought to himself, even as he began mumbling the words to another spell, the wind-style ‘Supersonic’ spell. Simultaneously, he pulled out his straight chisel blade, then charged directly forward at high speed at that injured, retreating Windwolf.

A warrior of the fourth rank, aided by the Supersonic spell, had roughly the same level of speed as the uninjured Windwolf. Naturally, the injured one was much slower than Linley. The injured wolf frantically fled in terror while baring its fangs.

“Swish! Swish! Swish!”

A string of knives of air appeared out of nowhere and hacked at Linley.

“Hrmph, all wolves have heads as hard as copper and tails as hard as steel, but their waists are as soft as tofu.”

Linley was extremely agile. With three simple motions, he dodged the wind knifes and drew even closer to the injured Windwolf. Like a tornado, Linley kicked out with his left leg, snapping forward viciously like a whip onto the Windwolf’s waist.

“Woooo!” The Windwolf was sent flying by the kick, and he let out an agonized howl.

With another step, Linley once again drew close to the injured Windwolf. The straight chisel in his hand flashing with a beautiful, cold, pitiless light, he chopped at the Windwolf’s chest. Linley felt as though the straight chisel in his hand had struck a tough, resilient cloth. He was only able to just barely cut through, causing blood to spurt out.

“The Windwolf’s waist is fairly weak, but its fur is quite tough. Or perhaps a better way to put it is my straight chisel isn’t sharp enough. It can cut through simple stone, but the fur and skin of a magical beast of the fourth rank is a tougher matter.” Linley thought to himself as he carefully kept his gaze on the other Windwolf.

The other Windwolf didn’t actually move. It was just standing there, staring at Linley. Within its cold green eyes was a murderous aura, and low growls were constantly coming from its maw.

“If the Windwolf isn’t injured, then just based on my prowess as a warrior of the fourth rank, there’s no way I can kill him. That’s just a dream.” Linley knew quite well that Windwolves specialized in speed. If he hadn’t been assisted by a wind magic spell, he wouldn’t be able to match it in speed.

Linley immediately began to mumble the words to another spell, but

halfway through, his face suddenly changed.

“Not good!”

The low howl of the Windwolf echoed in all directions, and it was matched by howls from all directions as well. Linley swept his gaze across the area, and as he did, it was met by one pair of cold green eyes after another, hidden in the darkness.

“It isn’t just one Windwolf…it’s a pack!”

Linley’s heart immediately tightened. Even Bebe, who up til now had just been sitting off to the side and feigning boredom, sat up, all his fur straightening as well as he carefully looked in all directions.

“Boss, looks like it’s getting dangerous.”

“Grandpa Doehring, your prediction was way too prescient…” A bitter expression was on Linley’s face.

In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, running into a pack of Windwolves was just as lethal as running into an extremely powerful magical beast.

“Prescient my ***. I was talking about encountering a pack of tens of thousands of Windwolves. In a situation like that, unless you can fly, there’s no way you’ll be able to survive. The current situation is a bit better. At most, there’s twenty or thirty of them.” Doehring Cowart’s voice was casual, but his face was solemn. “But Linley, you must understand, I’m just a spirit without any mageforce. I can’t help you. It’s all up to you.”

Linley felt miserable.

“Twenty or thirty Windwolves, all at least of the fourth rank. Windwolves are very fast, and they can use magical attacks. I’m just a magus of the fifth rank.” Linley felt enormous pressure. Right at this moment, the howls of the surrounding Windwolves ceased.

From within the pack of Windwolves, two exceedingly powerfully built Windwolves strode out. In terms of size, they were at least one size category larger than the previous Windwolves Linley had seen. The one which had been lucky enough to survive was respectfully walking besides these two, and even whining in a low voice, saying something to them.

Their body and even their eyes were a full category larger than the others. This made Linley feel even more nervous as he began to consider what to do next.

“These are definitely elites amongst Windwolves. At the very least, they are of the fifth rank. I hope they aren’t of the sixth rank!” Linley’s heart was tight, and he quickly began to contemplate how to deal with these opponents.

Even if they were just of the fifth rank, a pair of Windwolves of the fifth rank, with the assistance of a pack of magical beasts of the fourth rank, all attacking Linley…Linley didn’t feel too confident. Even a Windwolf of the fourth rank had the same speed as Linley’s absolute maximum. Most likely, even using the Supersonic spell, Linley would not be able to match a Windwolf of the fifth rank in speed.

The two leading Windwolves stared at Linley with their cold eyes, a murderous intent emanating from them.

“Looks like I’ll have to go all out this time.” Surrounded by a pack of wolves, Linley’s forehead and back were all drenched with cold sweat. His heart tight in his chest, he began to chant a magical spell with even greater speed.

“Hoooooowl!”

Of the two clear leaders of the pack, one of them suddenly let out a low howl. Immediately, the twenty or thirty powerful Windwolves charged forward, as fast as the wind. Their white fangs bared, they snarled at Linley

as they ran. At the same time, over a hundred deep green blades of wind appeared out of nowhere, carrying great power within each blade.

Chapter 12 – Wolf Pack (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 12, Wolf Pack (part 2)

Linley was currently surrounded by around twenty Windwolves, and over a hundred deep green blades of air virtually locked Linley in, preventing him from fleeing.

There was no way to flee!

Linley suddenly moved. At high speed, he launched off the ground and, like an arrow, shot up in the air, aiming to land on a sturdy tree branch. But because there were simply too many wind blades, over ten of them still landed on Linley's body.

"Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!"

The wind blades slashed at Linley's sturdy leather armor, knocking him off course midair. Linley frantically grasped at a thick tree branch, and with a somersault, flipped onto the tree and began to climb up. Only after hurriedly climbing up twenty or thirty meters did he come to a halt and look downwards.

"That was really dangerous."

Linley let out a breath. Right now, Linley's body was suffused with a layer of stone-like armor which was in turn covered by a layer of earth elemental essence emanated a faint rocky glow.

Earth-style magic: Earthguard!

The Earthguard required the user to at least be a magus of the fifth rank. When magi of the fifth and sixth ranks used this spell, they used a large amount of earth elemental essence to form a rocky armor which had fairly

strong defensive abilities. It could defend against multiple attacks from an opponent of the same level.

These wind knife spells only possessed the strength of the third or fourth ranks.

“Roaaar!” A fierce howl split the air.

Linley stared downwards, and saw that the wind was beginning to gather beneath the feet of those twenty Windwolves. All of them suddenly leapt up into the air, with the two leaders managing to leap up ten meters, landing on a large branch. Their powerful talons dug into the branch, giving them a very stable footing.

Windwolves possessed a tremendous sense of balance, so climbing trees was actually not too hard for them.

“I’m not afraid of you guys climbing trees. I’m only afraid that you wouldn’t climb up.” Linley felt the blood in his veins begin to boil. The more dangerous the situation was, the more potentially lethal it was, the more excited Linley got.

In terms of climbing ability, Windwolves were somewhat inferior to humans. Linley agilely clambered from one tree to another, while the pack of Windwolves howled with fury as they gave chase.

In the outer regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, a pack of Windwolves was definitely the most powerful organization around. Even most warriors of the sixth rank, when faced with a pack of Windwolves, would elect to retreat. After all, no matter how tough they were, physically, even the body of a warrior of the sixth rank could not stand a direct blow from a Windwolf’s claws.

Linley and the twenty or so Windwolves thus began a game of hide and seek on the trees. The two Windwolf leaders were faster than Linley, and so Linley had no choice but to constantly change direction to dodge. Suddenly, the leading Windwolves shot out numerous wind blades, and Linley

immediately was forced to change direction to dodge.

“Crack!” A tree trunk was severed by the wind knives, and the tree began to topple.

“Crash!”

The claws of one of the leading Windwolves reached Linley, raking at his back. The Earthguard armor trembled a few times, and the elemental essence flashed and flickered.

“Crash! Crash! Crash!”

The Windwolf leaders were simply too fast, and they were also extremely agile. Their fierce claws reached Linley’s back several times, as well as his head and other extremities, but fortunately, because the Earthguard armor was formed from elemental essence, it could be manipulated in terms of shape. Linley was currently using it to form a helmet as well. But under the repeated assault from the Windwolf leaders, the elemental essence on top of the armor was starting to flicker.

“These Windwolf leaders are simply too fast. The Earthguard armor won’t hold much longer.”

Grinding his teeth, Linley climbed higher and higher up. By weight, he was much lighter than the Windwolves, and his climbing abilities were also superior. By the time Linley reached the height of around eighty meters, the Windwolves could no longer climb any higher. All they could do was spit out one wind knife after another at Linley. Linley dodged the best he could; only if he absolutely couldn’t dodge did he allow his Earthguard to take the blow.

“If you fell from such a height, wouldn’t you die?” Linley was murmuring the words to a magic spell. To be able to maintain his calm under such a dangerous situation was something Linley accomplished thanks to constantly training his mental fortitude.

“Crash!”

A wind knife smashed against the Earthguard armor. Previously teetering at the edge of destruction, the Earthguard armor finally broke apart into countless specks of elemental essence, sparkling in the air. This knife was immediately followed by another one, which Linley detected right away.

“Most wind knife spells from these wolves are equivalent to a third level magus spell. They won’t be able to kill me, given that I’m a warrior of the fourth rank.” Linley continued to chant the words to his spell, allowing the wind knife to slash his body. “Swish, swish.” Blood erupted from the slash, as a terrifying wound appeared on Linley’s chest, leaking fresh blood.

Linley only frowned slightly, continuing to chant the words to his spell.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Over a hundred sharp rocks coalesced, gleaming with earth elemental essence. The densely packed stones shot out at the twenty Windwolves, with thirty stones centered on the heads of the two leading Windwolves. Both of the Windwolf leaders were knocked to the ground. The stones were simply too densely packed. With one crashing sound after another, the Windwolves were knocked to the ground, one after another. Even the tree branches were smashed through as they fell.

After using this technique, the vast majority of the Windwolves were smashed to the ground. But these Windwolves were very agile, and their fur was very thick. Although they were smashed downwards, many of them managed to get a clawhold on a tree branch, while others just suffered some superficial injuries. None of them died.

“This injury looks bad, but it’s actually just a skin wound. Still, I can’t let it keep on bleeding like this.” Linley’s left hand suddenly blazed with flame, and then he pressed it against his wounds. A crackling sound could be heard, and Linley couldn’t help but wince and suck in a deep breath. The smell of cooking flesh wafted out from Linley’s chest. Just like that, Linley had ‘sealed’ the wound with flame, leaving behind a very ugly scar.

While doing the above, Linley also took the opportunity to quickly flee, jumping from one tree branch to another. In the blink of an eye, he fled very far, and then directly threw himself towards the ground. Linley directly fell around eighty or so meters, but as his body was surrounded by a flow of air, his speed of descent was not too fast. By the time he reached the ground, Linley had already finished mumbling the words to yet another spell.

That pack of Windwolves had also chased towards him, and quite soon, they drew close.

The two Windwolf leaders were the first to draw near. Howling, they stared at Linley, a look of suspicion in their ice cold eyes. Why did Linley stop fleeing? These highly intelligent magical beasts were now suspecting that Linley had prepared some trap.

"Growl…" One of the two Windwolf leaders let out a low growl. Immediately, as though responding to an order, a Windwolf of the fourth rank directly leapt towards Linley.

Linley suddenly leapt up and pointed at the distant group of Windwolves. In a low voice, Linley said, "Supergravity Field!"

Earth-style magic – Supergravity Field!

This was an extremely terrifying earth-style spell. Through controlling and utilizing a large amount of earth elemental essence, this spell allowed the user to manipulate the strength of the gravity in a localized area, causing opponents to suffer dramatically from the increased gravity. Only a magus of the fifth rank was capable of utilizing the Supergravity Field spell.

And the more powerful an earth-style magus was, the more powerful the effect his Supergravity Field would have.

"Rumble…"

The very air trembled. With Linley at the epicenter, a circular area with a

diameter of 100 meters suddenly began to glow with earth elemental essence. All of the Windwolves within this diameter suddenly felt an astonishingly powerful pull of gravity. That Windwolf which was charging Linley was also affected by it, causing him to collapse to the ground in mid-leap. All the other Windwolves felt rather shocked as well. The two Windwolf leaders let out furious howls, and ignoring everything else, directly charged towards Linley. But clearly, these two Windwolves now possessed less than half of their original strength.

“Your speed has been halved, but mine is unimpaired.” Earth elemental essence was glowing and swirling around Linley as well, seemingly paired perfectly with the earth elemental essence glowing over the ground.

The earth elemental essences used by the Supergravity Field utilized certain unique vibrations. Each individual earth-style magus would utilize it in a slightly different manner, and would have different frequencies of vibrations. If one could totally control the oscillations of the earth elemental essences, one could nullify the influence of the Supergravity Field.

With the opponent’s speed halved, his own speed, comparatively, was now much higher. Linley agilely dodged his enemy’s attacks, while quickly beginning to mumble the words to another spell.

“Rumble! Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!”

Dozens of earthen spears erupted from the ground beneath the feet of the Windwolves. Those fiercely sharp edges directly penetrated into the chests of seven of the Windwolves, causing them to bleed profusely. Several of the other Windwolves were also seriously wounded by the earthen spears.

“Hoooooowl!”

The two Windwolf leaders were growing frantic.

Within the area of effect of the Supergravity Field, they had less than half of their original speed. They simply had no way of stopping the agile, nimble Linley. If they fought him head on, they could kill Linley, but they simply

couldn’t get near him! Based on Linley’s ability as a magus of the fifth rank, dealing with them wasn’t too difficult.

“Hoooooowl!” A low howl.

Without any hesitation, the two Windwolf leaders turned tail and ran. The ten or so surviving Windwolves also fled with them. Covered by darkness, in the blink of an eye, the Windwolves disappeared from Linley’s field of vision. Seeing this, Linley quickly ran over and caught up to three heavily injured Windwolves that hadn’t managed to flee in time.

“Crash! Crash! Crash!”

Linley landed three successive kicks on the skulls of the heavily wounded Windwolves. The sound of splintering skulls could be heard, and the three Windwolves immediately collapsed. Including the seven Windwolves that had been stabbed in the chest by the earthen spears, a total of ten Windwolves had been slain. But because Linley had just exerted himself too vigorously, the wound across his chest had split open once again, and fresh blood began to flow out again.

Chapter 13 – Danger (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 13, Danger (part 1)

“Whew. They finally left.” Linley finally let out a deep breath.

Linley knew very well that he only had the prowess of a warrior of the fourth rank. Engaging in close quarters combat with Windwolves of the fifth rank was tantamount to suicide. Only by using magic could he hope to survive. But if it weren’t for the fact that he had sufficient speed, how would he have the chance to cast any magic spells. Fortunately, he was quite fast, and so he managed to get this favorable result.

“Even if a magus of the sixth rank was present, he wouldn’t necessarily have done better than me. A magus of the sixth rank, in terms of speed, wouldn’t have been able to shake off the pursuit of those Windwolves. When surrounded and attacked by a pack of Windwolves, he might not even have the chance to cast any spells.” Linley felt all the more certain that his decision to not let up on his physical training was a very wise decision.

Linley glanced at the Coiling Dragon Ring on his left hand. Ever since he had grown up, he had begun wearing the ring on his fingers.

“And it’s a good thing that I have this Coiling Dragon Ring! Otherwise, how would I have been able to utilize so many spells of the fifth rank?”

For the average magus of the fifth rank, after utilizing two spells of the fifth rank, they would most likely be out of mageforce. But Linley was different. He had just used six spells of the fifth rank; three casts of ‘Shattered Rocks’, one cast of ‘Supergravity Field’, one cast of ‘Earthguard’, and one cast of ‘Earth Spear Array’.

The reason for this? The Coiling Dragon Ring.

In years past, Doehring Cowart had come across this ring by accident. One

time, when Doehring Cowart cast a spell, he found out, to his astonishment, that a spell which was cast through the Coiling Dragon Ring would only require a sixth as much mageforce and spiritual energy to achieve the same effect.

Clearly, through the Coiling Dragon Ring, one could more clearly sense and manipulate elemental essence. Additionally, it placed a much lower demand on spiritual energy and mageforce.

A sixth. What did that represent?

A Saint-level magus could normally just utilize the terrifying ‘Annihilating Tempest’ spell a single time. But with the aid of the Coiling Dragon Ring, he could use the spell six times! Such a terrifyingly powerful treasure caused Doehring Cowart to be uncontrollably excited. He considered this discovery to be the blessing of the earth mother, which is why he named the ring the ‘Worldring’.

The divine treasure, ‘Worldring’.

This was the name which Doehring Cowart had bequeathed upon it. Based on what Doehring Cowart had said, although the Yulan continent had some exceedingly powerful treasures which could make it much easier for a magus to cast spells, there were virtually none which were had the same degree of effect as the ‘Worldring’.

But after obtaining this Coiling Dragon Ring, when training with it, Linley discovered something.

“Not just earth-style magic! Wind-style magic, and even my miniscule amount of fire-style magic, when channeled through the Coiling Dragon Ring, only requires a sixth as much spiritual essence and mageforce.” Looking at the ring, Linley felt happier and happier.

Doehring Cowart also chose this moment to appear besides Linley.

“Don’t look at it. In my era, after obtaining this Coiling Dragon Ring, I

never dared to inform anyone about it. If anyone found out about it, most likely a large number of Saint-level combatants would come to try and take it from me. But I must say, even I did not imagine that it could also assist fire-style and wind-style magic users." Doehring Cowart sighed.

Linley nodded. "In the future, I will never dare to reveal this secret either." Linley knew very well how precious this ring was. If its secret was leaked out, most likely he would be dismembered by all the Saint-level combatants of the Yulan continent.

"Boss, you done?" The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, chose to speak at this moment. He was standing atop a grassy place not far away. Just then, Bebe had not joined the battle, just watched from afar.

Linley smiled.

"Oof, that hurts." Seeing the wound on his chest and how his clothes had been torn and stained by blood, Linley began to carefully dress his wound while also using elemental essence to close the wound.

Bebe was staring at Linley's wound as well, seemingly quite concerned.

"Boss, next time something like this happens, I'm gonna take action." Bebe suddenly said to Linley mentally.

"No need, not unless you believe I'm in a situation where I am powerless to resist and am definitely going to die. Only then can you act. Otherwise… what's the point of me doing training here?" Linley's voice was firm and unyielding. Bebe immediately no longer dared to speak. Bebe had long ago wanted to engage in a slaughter, but Linley never agreed.

Right now, hiding in the grass thirty meters away from Linley, a black shadow lay in ambush.

"Just now, in that battle, from start to finish, he utilized six spells of the fifth rank. Although the spells only had the power of the fifth rank, given that he was able to cast six of them, he most likely is a magus of the sixth

rank. His combat prowess should be that of a warrior of the fourth rank. Based on the fact that his movements were assisted by wind-style magic, he most likely also possesses affinity for wind magic. In summary: A dual-element magus of the sixth rank, and a warrior of the fourth rank."

The distant dark shadow was calculating.

"90% chance of killing him successfully. I can make my move." The dark shadow made his decision.

Linley had just finished with one large battle. Naturally, he would be a bit more relaxed. That dark shadow still remained unmoving. In the dark night, he was nothing more than just another shadow. Not even the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, had the slightest idea he was there, much less Linley.

The layer of glowing elemental essence on the ground had vanished.

The Supergravity Field had expired!

"Now!" The dark shadow, which had been lying in ambush this entire time, suddenly flew out silently, flying at astonishing speed towards Linley like an illusionary shadow.

Linley suddenly felt a sense of panic, and he immediately dodged at high speed while turning his head to look behind himself. He saw a dark shadow stabbing at him with a sharp knife, the knife emanating a cold light which made Linley's heart turn to ice. Those cold, callous, murderous eyes in the dark shadow also made Linley's heart tighten.

"How incredibly fast!" Linley hurriedly retreated, but clearly the shadow was even faster. The flashing black knife had almost reached his eyes.

"Clang!"

Linley wielded his straight chisel to block the opponent's knife, and the black knife of the opponent viciously collided with the straight chisel. With a cracking sound, the straight chisel was totally shattered, with some of the

shards of the straight chisel cutting into Linley's face, leaving bloody lines over him.

"Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!"

Seven or eight blades of wind suddenly appeared next to Linley and chopped at the dark shadow. Based on Linley's current level of ability, he was totally capable of subvocally casting the wind blades spell. Those seven or eight wind blades all chopped at the dark shadow, but once they came into contact with the black light emanating from the shadow, they all disappeared.

"Darkness-style battle-qi!" Linley immediately made the deduction.

Although these seven or eight blades of wind had not managed to block the dark shadow, they had managed to distract him momentarily. Linley immediately turned around and shot forward like an arrow from a bow. The dark shadow had fast reflexes, however, and chased after Linley, vaulting forward towards Linley at an even higher speed.

In midair, facing Linley, the dark shadow pierced at Linley with his knife once again, still aiming directly for Linley's heart. At this moment, in the back of Linley's mind flashed the image of those five corpses he had seen just before entering the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. All five of them had been killed by stabs to the heart.

"Die."

The dark shadow was totally confident. His knife, covered with a black glow, had already reached Linley's chest. In midair, there was no place for Linley to go or to hide. The only option he had was to instacast the most protective defensive spell available to him; the shield of earth! A small shield of earth, only a third of the size of a normal one, suddenly appeared in front of Linley's chest.

"Hrmph!"

The dark shadow sneered. The knife in his hand pierced through the shield at an even greater speed. To someone on the dark shadow's level, a shield of earth posed no barrier at all.

After having been shrunk in size, the shield of earth actually had quite respectable defensive abilities, but when faced with the attack from this knife, all it could do was slow it down and not stop it. Linley felt some pain in his chest as in just a few moments, the knife pierced all the way through his shield of earth.

"Raaaaawr!"

A terrifying, high-pitched scream could be heard as the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, suddenly appeared next to the dark shadow's wrist. The Shadowmouse's mouth was large enough to chomp down on a human hand, while his sharp teeth, were totally capable of chewing through anything. Bebe bit down hard on the dark shadow's wrist. With an anguished cry, the dark shadow lost his hand at the wrist.

All that was left was half of a hand, still grasping the dagger that had pierced through the shield of earth and penetrated Linley's chest.

Chapter 14 – Danger (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 14, Danger (part 2)

“Ah….ah!!!” His wrist had been totally bitten off. The pain caused the dark shadow to scream in misery.

With a flash, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, suddenly arrived right in front of the dark shadow. The dark shadow stared with terror and amazement at the pet-sized Shadowmouse. “What…what…what freak is this?” The dark shadow definitely couldn’t believe that this was a Shadowmouse. He had seen Shadowmice before, and none were this terrifying.

The dark shadow forced himself to ignore the pain from his severed wrist as he generated a dark layer of protective battle-qi while also moving to flee.

The dark shadow only seemed to see the little Shadowmouse flicker in front of him. And then, he felt sudden, excruciating pain, as the little Shadowmouse had lunged forward and bit him directly on the throat. Even his protective layer of dark battle-qi was chewed through.

“CRUNCH!”

That person’s quavering scream suddenly cut off. Half his neck had been bitten off. His head was only attached to his body by a thin strip of flesh. The eyes of this dark shadow gradually lost all life, and his body slumped down to the ground.

At this time, Linley also landed on the ground. He immediately pulled out the dagger, blood already pouring from the wound in his chest, staining his clothes red. Seeing the wound in his chest, Linley felt his heart quiver. If his opponent’s knife had went in just a few more centimeters, his heart would have been penetrated.

“So close. Just a bit further, and my life would’ve been gone.”

After this narrow shave, Linley couldn't help but turn to look at the little Shadowmouse, Bebe. Bebe urgently said, "Boss, what's the situation?"

"Not too bad. I didn't lose my life." Linley smiled at Bebe. If it weren't for Bebe, he really would've died.

Hearing these words, Bebe's face was no longer as frantic as it was earlier. At the same time, he also began to grow cocky. The fur on his back stood up straight, and he began wagging his posterior at Linley. After wagging a few times, he delightedly said to Linley through their mental bond, "Boss, you are way too weak. You keep on saying that you want to train yourself, but look! You almost just got yourself assassinated by that guy." There was no way that the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was going to give up this opportunity to mock Linley.

Linley only chuckled.

"Bebe, thanks. You saved my life just then." Looking at the those two terrifying wounds on his chest, Linley couldn't help but sigh. "And this was just the first day!"

Doehring Cowart appeared as well, also sighing in surprise. "This assassin's subterfuge abilities were really terrifying. This time, the little Shadowmouse really saved the day. If it weren't for him, Linley, you would've been done for. As for me, this useless old fellow, all I have left is my spirit. There's no way for me to rescue you."

Linley understood that Doehring Cowart, despite being a Saint-level Grand Magus, only had his spirit left.

"Doehring Cowart, how could that assassin move so quickly? Even with the assistance of wind-style magic, I couldn't outpace him." Linley didn't really understand.

Doehring Cowart explained, "That assassin should've been a warrior of the sixth rank, but he specialized in the strange, secretive ways of darkness-

element battle-qi. In addition, he should've received special training in subterfuge and concealing his aura. A warrior of the sixth rank who has received special training should have higher combat ability than the average warrior of the sixth rank. Darkness-element battle-qi is quite strange and secretive. Most likely, he specialized in a certain darkness-element technique that boosted his speed."

Linley nodded slightly.

Darkness-element magic or battle-qi was forbidden in the Holy Union. In the Four Great Empires and in the Dark Alliance, however, the darkness styles were not forbidden. Similarly, in the Dark Alliance, light-style magic and battle-qi training was forbidden.

"Boss, get over here quick!" The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, began jumping out and down next to the corpse of the assassin.

Linley glanced over questioningly. "Bebe, what is it?"

"This assassin had a pouch on his back." The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, said excitedly. Linley walked over to the assassin's corpse. The black clothes on the assassin's back had already been ripped apart. Clearly, this was the doing of the little Shadowmouse.

Beneath the torn back clothes, a backpack was tightly strapped to the assassin's back.

"Linley, I'll wager that those five we saw earlier was killed by him as well. Based on his ability, who knows how many he has killed? His pouch most likely has quite a few magicite cores." Doehring Cowart smiled as he spoke.

Linley couldn't help but feel excited. Based on this assassin's prowess, he perhaps was able to kill even your average warrior of the sixth rank. Most likely, he had quite a few possessions.

"Squeak squeak!" The little Shadowmouse grabbed the backpack with his

teeth, and with a bound, leapt on top of Linley's shoulder.

Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but feel secretly surprised. "Bebe's speed really is incredibly fast now. Even though that assassin was very fast as well, he was only a bit faster than me. But Bebe's speed is fast enough that I don't even have the ability to react to him. No wonder that assassin was bitten to death by Bebe without even having the chance to dodge or block."

"Squeak! Squeak!" Holding the backpack by his teeth, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, shook it a few times. "Boss, hurry up and open it up to take a look!" He said rather urgently to Linley through their link.

Bebe was very curious as to what was inside the pouch.

Laughing, Linley accepted the pouch. This was a pitch-black backpack, also made from leather, but clearly of far higher quality than Linley's own leather backpack. Most likely, it was made from the skin of some high-rank magical beast. He opened the backpack.

Seeing the items inside, Linley's eyes lit up. Within the backpack, there was a set of clothes, some dried rations, and a sack of gold coins. Inside the backpack, the largest space was reserved for a large sack of items. Opening up the sack, Linley couldn't help but suck in a cold breath of surprise.

"How many people and how many magical beasts has this assassin killed?" Linley was somewhat stunned. The contents of this large sack were all sparkling, rainbow-colored magicite cores, and even a few large magicite gems mixed in.

"So many magicite cores! There's got to be at least a few dozen cores here." Linley felt excited.

Linley immediately began to count the number of cores, and also differentiate them by value. Differentiating the amount of magical energy contained within a magicite core was quite easy for a magus. In a short while, Linley had completed his accounting of the various cores within the pouch.

“A total of 102 magicite cores and 7 magicite gems. For the magicite cores, there are five magicite cores of the sixth rank, 26 magicite cores of the fifth rank, and 71 magicite cores of the fourth rank. No cores of the third rank. For the magicite gems, six are medium-grade magicite gems, while one is high-grade.”

Linley could feel his heart beat frantically. What Linley didn’t realize yet was that this assassin had also acquired magicite cores of the third rank; he just didn’t bother keeping any of them.

As for the magicite gems?

Magicite gems were usually affixed to a magestaff to help the magus rapidly recover his mageforce. All of them had been acquired after the assassin had killed a magus and torn the magicite gem from the magestaff.

“The 102 magicite cores are probably worth around 13,000-14,000 gold coins, while the seven magicite gems are worth around 1600 gold coins at least. All together, the value of these things is about 15,000 gold coins.” After reaching this calculation, Linley couldn’t help but feel surprised and overjoyed. In a single backpack from an assassin, he had suddenly gained so much wealth.

As for his clan?

Previously, in order to acquire the funds to send his little brother Wharton off to the O’Brien Academy, the clan had virtually exhausted all of its savings. Even if you asked the Baruch clan to produce just ten thousand gold coins, it would be extremely difficult.

“This is just my first day in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and I’ve already acquired so much. How much will I have gained after two months?” Linley’s heart was filled with anticipation.

But Linley also knew quite well that there was no way he would constantly meet with such a ‘fat sheep’ for slaughtering. In addition, most ‘fat sheep’

were quite powerful as well. This time, Linley had nearly died. Thinking back to what had just happened, Linley couldn't help but touch the wounds on his chest as well as the wounds on his face caused by the shattered straight chisel.

Linley suddenly turned to stare at the ten dead Windwolves.

"Ten or so magicite cores of the fourth rank, combined, are worth several hundred gold coins as well. Can't let'm go to waste." Holding the assassin's knife in his hand, Linley went over to the Windwolf corpses and began digging out the magicite cores, one after another. Upon using the knife, Linley came to the realization that it was much sharper than the one he had been using.

Chapter 15 – Cruelty

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 15, Cruelty

Within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, next to a spring, Linley dressed his wounds as he also began absorbing earth elemental essence to heal his wound. The ever-benevolent Mother Earth is always kind and selfless. Standing on the earth, Linley felt his wounds slowly heal, filling his heart with peace.

By now, Linley had already exchanged backpacks. His own backpack, in terms of both quality of leather and quality of workmanship, was far inferior to the assassin's. In addition, the assassin's backpack had an interior which was meticulously laid out. Once the lock was tightened, all of the items inside the backpack would be securely fastened, and the backpack itself would not impede movement in the slightest. And that assassin's black dagger was also extremely sharp, and Linley found that it was quite easy to wield.

"Whoosh!"

With a flicker, Linley's body moved, and he suddenly disappeared into the mountain forests. Linley didn't even bother to pay any attention to magical beasts of the first or second ranks. The most commonly seen beasts were of the third and fourth ranks. But if he ran into a magical beast of the fifth rank, Linley had confidence in at least giving them a good tussle.

As he drew deeper and deeper into the mountain ranges, Linley encountered one bloody, cruel battle after another. He experienced many ambushes and assassination attempts. After all of these battles, the wounds and scars on Linley's body grew more and more plentiful as well, while Linley's spirit grew more and more tenacious.

These life-and-death battles caused Linley's mind to become tougher, and his actions to become more merciless.

In the blink of an eye, a month had passed since Linley had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

……..

A month later, on top of a large tree located next to a mountain spring.

There was a long scar on the left side of his face. Linley's back was arched, and he was hidden on top of the tree like a panther lying in ambush.

Right now, Linley was hidden in the middle of many leaves, staring straight down at the ground. Just a few dozen feet away from the tree which Linley was hiding in was a small creek, and drinking water from the creek was a powerfully built Bloodthirsty Warpig. A single, blood-colored horn protruded out from above the Warpig's nose, and muscles bulged throughout its body, like the gnarled roots of a tree.

Bloodthirsty Warpig, a magical beast of the fifth rank, fire-element!

"This Bloodthirsty Warpig has a tough, thick skin. It's defensive abilities are exceedingly strong. Most likely, the earthen spear techniques wouldn't be able to penetrate its skin."

Linley had a sudden insight, and began to formulate a plan. Immediately, his lips began to move silently as he soundlessly began to mouth the words to a spell. Slowly, the wind elemental essences around Linley began to swirl about him, forming into a bluish, translucent javelin in front of him. The translucent javelin's tip had gusts of wind flowing about it.

Wind-style magic of the fifth rank – Windhowl!

"Swish!"

A piercing sound could be heard as the Windhowl javelin shot downwards with terrifying speed. At the same time, Linley jumped down from the tree's crown, leaping down with as much speed as the javelin.

Upon hearing the noise, the Bloodthirsty Warpig stopped drinking water and stared up, but the Windhowl javelin was simply too fast. In the blink of an eye, it traversed the distance and was only a few meters away from the Warpig. The javelin's speed really was frighteningly fast, and its tip was covered with gusts of wind.

"Grrrr!" The Bloodthirsty Warpig let out an angry howl, and it used the horn above its snout to strike viciously at the Windhowl javelin.

"Crash!"

The javelin formed from the Windhowl spell crashed directly onto the horn of the Bloodthirsty Warpig. The Windhowl javelin immediately dissipated, but at the same time, after taking a hit from a spell of the fifth rank, the Warpig couldn't help but half-kneel from the force of the blow, with a bloody scar appearing on its forehead as well.

"Woosh!"

Before the Warpig had a chance to react, right behind the Windhowl javelin was Linley, who with all his might, struck down at the center of the head of the Warpig with his newly acquired black dagger. The dagger penetrated directly into the skull of the Warpig, and as it did, Linley immediately dodged.

"Roar!"

Having been stabbed in a vital spot, the Bloodthirsty Warpig roared furiously. Flames began to arise on its body, and it also began charging forward with no regard for anything. But after rushing a few dozen meters, it collapsed. Its four legs quivered a few times before coming to a stop, and all of the fire on its body began to die as well.

"Amongst the magical beasts of the fifth rank, much like the Vampiric Iron Bull, the Bloodthirsty Warpig is considered a beast of rather low intelligence." Linley walked to the corpse of the Warpig, pulled out his

dagger, and removed the magicite core from within the Warpig's corpse.

Thinking back to his recent life in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley couldn't help but admit to himself that although he was still a magus of the fifth rank and a fighter of the fourth rank, his actual combat ability had increased tremendously compared to when he had first entered the mountains.

After multiple life-and-death struggles, his body was covered with scars which symbolized painful lessons learned over this month.

Especially…

On his chest, there was an extremely horrifying wound. That time, he really was at death's door. In the end, it was the little Shadowmouse who once again saved the day.

This wound wasn't given to him by a magical beast. It was given to him by an extremely adorable young lady.

"Back then, I really trusted her. I really believed that her friends had all been killed, and that the only one left was her, injured and alone." Thinking back to the events of two weeks prior, Linley once again felt a stab of terror. That girl had seemed so kind, so pure.

When Linley discovered her, three other men and another girl had all died. Only she was left, filled with terror.

Linley couldn't help but go comfort her, help her, take care of her. That girl had seemingly suffered a huge mental blow. Every night, she insisted that Linley hold her, as only in Linley's arms did she feel safe enough to go to sleep. Every night, upon seeing the peaceful look on her face as she went to sleep, Linley felt joy in his heart. Three days passed in such a fashion. On the fourth night, she once again was sleeping quietly in Linley's bosom.

But suddenly, this adorable girl pulled out a dagger and stabbed directly at Linley's chest, with Linley caught totally offguard.

And then, the enraged Bebe had suddenly, bizarrely, doubled in size. His enormous jaws bit off the girl's head with a single bite, immediately killing her. And then, Bebe returned to his normal size.

But Linley couldn't staunch the flow of blood from the deep wound in his chest. In the end, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was forced to use some special darkness-type magic techniques to close the wound.

"Back then, I should've listened to Grandpa Doehring's advice. I lacked experience." Linley thought to himself and sighed. Originally, Doehring Cowart had warned him several times about the girl. In the end, seeing that Linley was stubbornly set on assisting the 'helpless' little girl, there was nothing that Doehring Cowart could do. But he still tried to insist that even if Linley was going to help her, that he absolutely must not allow her to get near him.

But at the time, the girl was extremely 'terrified', and wasn't able to fall asleep without Linley holding her. In the end, in order to comfort her, Linley held her in her arms, and they both went to sleep.

"I really didn't expect that her acting abilities would be so good. I treated her so well, but she could be so merciless to me." Linley sighed again in his heart. When that girl had stabbed him in the chest, he had seen the vicious look in her eyes, and his heart had grown cold.

What had caused this girl to be so heartless and merciless?

Could it be that despite taking care of her for three full days, she hadn't been moved in the slightest?

"Fortunately, thanks to Grandpa Doehring warning me over and over again, I didn't reveal Bebe's true capabilities to her." Linley couldn't help but admit that his life had been preserved thanks to Doehring Cowart and Bebe.

"Linley, what are you thinking about? Are you thinking about that girl again?" Doehring Cowart appeared by Linley's side.

Seeing the look on Linley's face, Doehring Cowart was able to guess what he was pondering. That stab from the girl had injured Linley deeply, not just in the flesh, but also in his heart. From that day onwards, Linley no longer would easily trust others.

From the very beginning, Doehring Cowart had sensed that there were some problems with the girl. How could someone with the courage to enter the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts be so totally discombobulated by the sight of death?

Unfortunately, Linley was still totally convinced by the girl's performance, and really felt that the girl was very 'pitiable'.

"Linley, that girl's performing abilities was nothing. Back in my time, in the Pouant Empire, I saw so many plots from enemy countries, plots which involved decades of subterfuge and lies which were totally undetectable. Their acting abilities are beyond your comprehension." Doehring Cowart smiled faintly as he spoke. "Remember, don't easily lower your guard when dealing with a stranger."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Squeak, squeak!" The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, began to call out from next to Linley.

Linley looked up.

Right now, the little Shadowmouse was leaping up and down atop the Warpig's corpse.

"Boss, when are we gonna go to the central areas of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?" Bebe mentally spoke to Linley in a somewhat unhappy tone. "In this current area, the strongest creatures that we can meet are magical beasts of the sixth rank. They aren't much of a challenge. I want to challenge magical beasts of the seventh rank, boss! I want to challenge magical beasts of the seventh rank!"

Linley glanced at the little Shadowmouse. “That’s enough. Don’t get too cocky. You are bragging that magical beasts of the sixth rank are too easy? Do you remember that Bluewind Hawk from the other day? Was there anything you could do to him?”

“That’s not my fault!” Bebe rubbed his head with his tiny paws as he said unhappily, “Boss, you saw yourself. That Bluewind Hawk stayed in the skies and refused to come down. He just kept on throwing magical wind knives at us, as though they didn’t cost him any mageforce at all. I couldn’t just let him attack me without end, could I?”

Linley laughed.

Over the course of the past month, Linley had become very familiar with the little Shadowmouse’s abilities. In terms of speed, Bebe had reached a terrifying level indeed. But because he was physically small and only had his claws and teeth as offensive weapons, although Bebe was capable of dealing with magical beasts of the sixth rank, he most likely would find it quite hard to deal with a magical beast of the seventh rank.

Just at this moment, Linley suddenly frowned. He cautiously turned his head and saw a blurred human outline appear in the wilderness.

Chapter 16 – Cruelty (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 16, Cruelty (part 2)

“Linley, it’s actually you! This is great!” A happy voice rang out, and a skinny young man began jogging towards them at high speed. This youth was the skinny warrior whom Linley had met on his way towards the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Of the other two people he had met, his classmate Delsarte and the big, burly Kava had both died.

Back then, when facing the wind-style magus-archer, Linley had utilized the earth-style spell ‘Earthen Spear Array’. The skinny warrior of the fifth rank, Matt, had seized the opportunity to immediately flee. But Linley didn’t really care that he had ran away. After all, him and Matt didn’t have any special relationship.

Honestly speaking, of the three people he had encountered, the only one Linley genuinely felt friendly towards was his own classmate, Delsarte. That big fellow, Kava, had also made a good impression on Linley. Linley didn’t have any special feelings for Matt.

“Oh, it’s Matt. I didn’t expect that the two of us would meet again in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts after a month had passed.” Linley was still quite calm.

Matt appeared very excited. “This is wonderful. This month, on numerous occasions, I was almost overcome by the magical beasts here. Fortunately, my luck was not too bad. Whoah – is that a Bloodthirsty Warpig? Linley, you were able to kill a Bloodthirsty Warpig? You really are formidable!”

Linley smiled.

“I’m getting a bit hungry. I’ve heard that the flesh of both the Bloodthirsty Warpig as well as the Vampiric Iron Bull are both extremely flavorful, and that it has a wonderfully chewy texture as well. I haven’t had lunch yet. You

wouldn't mind sharing some Warpig flesh with me, would you?" Matt joked.

The Bloodthirsty Warpig was huge in size, with its corpse weighing at least several hundred kilograms. Even ten people wouldn't be able to finish it all.

"Of course not." Linley withdrew his knife and began slicing off parts of the Warpig.

"Linley, no need to trouble yourself. This Bloodthirsty Warpig corpse is part of your spoils of war. How can I trouble you to butcher it as well? Let me do it. My roasting abilities are quite formidable." Matt immediately headed towards the Warpig corpse and withdrew a knife from his side.

Playing with the knife, Matt began to expertly butcher the Warpig, although he only cut off the four legs, tongue, and tail. He then began to wash these pieces in the nearby spring.

"Boss, he seems to be quite skilled. He doesn't seem to be any weaker than you in this respect." The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, leapt onto Linley's shoulders and mentally said to Linley.

Glancing at the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, on his shoulders, Linley couldn't help but sigh with gratitude. When others saw this little tiny black mouse, perhaps they would just think that it was an ordinary little Shadowmouse, of little threat. But in reality…

Linley could still recall how the terrifying sight of how the enraged Bebe so easily slaughtered that dark assassin, as well as that 'kind' young girl.

"Can't judge a person by his appearance. Same goes for magical beasts." Linley sighed to himself.

Matt quite quickly began to set up his roasting apparatus, and also withdrew some rough cooking salts and seasonings from his pouch. "Linley, these Warpig legs will definitely be very tasty. Its tongue, as well, is both soft and fragrant. The flavor of a Warpig tail is quite good as well."

As he spoke, Matt had chopped both the tail and the tongue into multiple pieces. Linley watched as Matt used flints to light a fire, not stepping in to help despite being in possession of fire-style mageforce. He watched Matt quickly and constantly roast each piece.

After a period of time.

“It’s about time. Have a taste.” Matt quite enthusiastically handed a large chunk of Warpig leg meat to Linley.

But in turn, Linley flipped the Warpig meat around and offered it to Bebe. Bebe immediately accepted it happily, and began to chomp away in earnest. This Warpig leg was perhaps three or four times larger than Bebe, but in a short period of time, Bebe totally devoured all of the meat.

This sight caused Matt to gape in astonishment.

“He really is a magical beast. Even a little black Shadowmouse can eat so much.” Matt sighed while offering a piece of roasted Warpig tongue to Linley. “Linley, have a taste of my artisanship.”

Linley smiled as he declined. “No need. I’m not used to eating tongues. Some of that leg meat will do just fine.” Linley took one of the other legs and began to eat without any reservations. Next to him, Matt laughed. “Then I won’t force you. If you won’t eat it, I will. Haha.”

As though enjoying himself very much, Matt began to eat the roasted Warpig tongue and tail.

By the time that Linley had finished eating the Warpig leg, Matt hadn’t taken a single bite of it yet.

“You are done already? Haha, fine then. I’m half-full now anyhow. I’ll save this Warpig leg for when I am hungry.” Matt withdrew an oilcloth from his backpack and placed the Warpig leg inside it, then replaced the cloth within his backpack.

Linley glanced at Matt.

It seemed as though Matt wanted to travel alongside him.

“Matt, here in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, I’m fine training by myself. Let’s part ways here.” Linley said directly.

Matt immediately frowned. “Linley, this place is extremely dangerous. It’d be much safer if we travelled together. Honestly speaking, during this past month, I’ve been frightened during every combat encounter. I’m not even able to sleep well.”

“Then do as you wish.”

Linley didn’t mince words. He immediately headed deeper into the mountains, while Matt, smiling, followed him. But when his gaze fell upon the backpack Linley was carrying, a slightly sinister light shone in his eyes.

“This backpack is different from the one Linley was carrying a month ago. And it seems much fuller as well.” Matt sneered to himself, but he still smiled in a very friendly manner. Matt was not the same as Linley. Before entering these mountains, he had trained himself in other places for many times.

Matt sped up his pace. Smiling, he said, “Linley, you really are a wonderful fellow. Travelling with you, I feel much safer. After all, two people together are much stronger than two people separate. At night, the two of us can take turns sleeping. There’s no need for us to both be on full alert at night.”

Linley was silent. His gaze was always focused on his surroundings, carefully keeping an eye out for the magical beasts in these mountains.

….

They slowly made their way north, as Linley no longer dared to go further east. If they travelled further east, they would be entering the dangerous

parts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Currently, in this area, Linley would only encounter magical beasts of the fifth or sixth rank.

This entire time, Matt followed by his side, seemingly quite happy.

Two days later.

It was late at night, and the world was dark. Linley and Matt continued going forward in a single file line.

“Linley, do you think it’s about time for us to go back yet? Honestly speaking, we’ve spent about enough time here in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.” Matt said in a soft voice as he followed Linley’s trail.

Linley just calmly shook his head, not making a sound.

Matt felt a hint of anger. “Every night, this Linley fellow is extremely careful. He isn’t giving me any opportunities at all.” Matt didn’t have any confidence in his ability to kill Linley. After all, being able to survive here for so long was a proof of Linley’s abilities.

“Hrm?” Linley seemed to have noticed something special. He turned around and stared at a copse of trees not too far away. Within that copse of trees, there was a hidden, indistinct shadow lying in wait.

Matt, next to Linley, saw him turn his head, presenting his back to Matt. A look of greed appeared in Matt’s eyes, as well as a look of excitement. In a practiced manner, Matt suddenly drew his dagger and without any hesitation at all, stabbed towards Linley’s back….

Linley suddenly turned and grabbed Matt by the wrist of his right hand, which was holding the dagger. At the same time, he stared coldly at Matt. His voice even colder, he asked, “What do you think you are doing?”

“You!” Matt was shocked. He couldn’t believe that his attempted sneak attack had apparently been noticed and blocked.

Matt immediately smiled at Linley instead. “What do I think I’m doing? O mighty genius magus, let me tell you…I am going to kill you.” Matt was totally confident in himself. With the two of them in such close proximity, how could he, a warrior of the fifth rank, be unable to kill a magus of the fifth rank?

Matt suddenly exerted some strength with his right arm, and he began to blaze with battle-qi, forcibly shaking off Linley’s grip.

“Die!” Matt stared at Linley as he stabbed again at Linley with his dagger.

“Rawr!!!!”

A terrifying sound! “What?!” Matt heard the noise, and he couldn’t help but shudder. And then, Matt saw a very small black shadow appear in front of him.

“What…what is this?” Matt could tell that this black shadow was actually the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, which spent every day on Linley’s shoulders. The little Shadowmouse opened his mouth wide, revealing a mouth filled with a horrifying number of sharp teeth, and directly chomped down towards Matt’s face.

“Nooo-!”

Matt immediately tried to retreat at high speed, while also jerking his head away.

“Crunch!”

The little Shadowmouse’s speed was far faster than Matt had imagined. How could Matt dodge? The little Shadowmouse reached out with his right paw, waving his sharp, knife-like talons at Matt’s head. With but a single swipe, half of Matt’s neck was removed from his body, and blood spurted out wildly.

“Urk…gurgle…” Clasping a hand to what remained of his neck, Matt’s

eyes were as wide as an ox. His disbelieving, terrified eyes were fixed upon the little Shadowmouse, and in his heart, he was utterly shocked. “Shadowmouse? Is this a Shadowmouse?”

As he fell into death and as his consciousness dissipated, Matt was still filled with terror and disbelief. He had prepared so long to make this move, but he hadn’t figured the little Shadowmouse into his plans.

A dark-colored Shadowmouse was the weakest level of Shadowmouse.

But at the moment of his death, Matt finally realized that the adorable little Shadowmouse was actually a terrifying monster.

“Thud!”

Matt’s hands fell lifelessly from his throat to his sides, and then he himself collapsed as well. His fresh blood stained his clothes and stained the ground.

Chapter 17 – Bebe's Prowess (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 17, Bebe's Prowess (part 1)

Standing in front of Matt's corpse, Linley couldn't help but heave a sigh. At the same time, he couldn't help but rub the scar on his chest.

The scar here was one which had almost taken his life.

"Compared to Nina [Ni'na], you are far too inferior." Linley shook his head and sighed. This Matt actually didn't have much of a friendship with him, and they were nothing more than temporary travel companions who met on the road. There was no way Linley would place too much trust in him.

What's more…

After having experienced Nina, how could Linley so casually present his back to others?

"Squeak squeak!" The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, came over carrying the backpack which was on Matt's back. He urgently said to Linley through their link, "Boss, hurry up and take a look and see how many magicite cores there are here. In this month, all of the other assassins combined didn't have as many magicite cores as that first assassin."

Doehring Cowart appeared by Linley's side as well.

"Linley, it seems like this little Shadowmouse that you've raised really enjoys counting magicite cores." Doehring Cowart chuckled.

"It does seem that way, just a bit." Linley accepted the backpack and opened it while joking with Bebe, "Bebe, this time when you killed that Matt fellow, I believe you used your claws, instead of your sharp teeth. Why didn't you use your fierce little teeth?"

Bebe sat up straight, let out a few arrogant squeaks, then said mentally, “Boss, I, Bebe, have incredible prowess. My sharp claws are no less fierce than my teeth. And that Matt fellow was too vile. Biting him would sully my teeth.” After saying this, Bebe intentionally put on a display of ‘spitting’ out a mouthful of saliva.

The image of the little Shadowmouse spitting out a mouthful of saliva was simply too human-like. Upon seeing this, Linley immediately started laughing.

“That’s enough, oi, Bebe. Look, that Matt fellow had a lot of magicite cores in his backpack. There’s around thirty. Looks like he didn’t waste much time during this month. But the best core in these thirty is just a core of the fifth rank.”

Linley carefully began inspecting the cores.

During these thirty days, he had killed a number of magical beasts, as well as some people who wanted to kill him. All combined, he had nearly three hundred magicite cores, with a total valuation of perhaps around forty thousand gold coins!

“Forty thousand gold. If father knew…then…” Fantasizing about his father’s reaction when he gave him all that gold, Linley couldn’t help but feel overjoyed.

“It makes sense that you were able to acquire so much,” Doehring Cowart said. “Aside from those magical beasts you killed, of those three hundred magicite cores, virtually all of them came from other people’s backpacks.”

Linley nodded in agreement.

That very first assassin ended up donating him 15,000 gold coins worth of magicite cores. The others, all combined, had just a bit more than that first assassin.

“The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is extremely dangerous, so most people here have grouped up with others. But assassins rarely are willing to attack groups, because they generally specialize in killing someone instantly, which is why they prefer to fight one on one.”

Doehring Cowart suddenly began to laugh, his white whiskers floating about. “Linley, look at yourself. Yes, you might be tall and strong, but your face is still filled with a childish air. And that fuzz above your lips? All of those prove something…”

“You are just a kid!”

Doehring Cowart laughed uproariously. “Linley, in this huge mountain range, when those assassins find a kid here for his first training exercise, with such a childish face, how can they possibly not make their move against you? That’s why, in a single short month, you’ve run into so many assassins.”

“But those people travelling in groups might not encounter a single assassination attempt in a month. Of course, those five people we ran into that first day were exceptions. First of all, they were too weak. And secondly, their killer was really strong. But in the end, that assassin died by Bebe’s claws.”

Linley laughed and nodded as well.

He was only fifteen years old this year, after all. Although he was 1.8 meters tall, anyone with a good eye could tell that he was just a kid.

“Most magi of the fifth and sixth rank would probably only acquire a few thousand gold coins worth of magicite cores in a month here. And all of those cores would be acquired through life-and-death struggles. After all, the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is incredibly dangerous.” Doehring Cowart sighed emotionally.

Linley nodded in agreement. “It is dangerous. I’ve stayed in the outer regions this entire time, and at most I have run into magical beasts of the

sixth rank. But I've been injured several times already. If it weren't for the Coiling Dragon ring, if it weren't for the fact that I'm both a dual-element magus of the fifth rank and a warrior of the fourth rank, and if it weren't for the fact that I have Bebe, I probably would've been done for, travelling on my own like this."

He turned to look at the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, who was currently playing with a magicite core.

Calming himself, Linley collected the various cores, and then headed off once again, with Bebe in tow. He was going to continue his training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. After all, based on his original plans, he was going to stay here for two months.

…..

Each day, Linley would fight against local magical beasts, and his abilities in merging his abilities as a magus with his abilities as a warrior grew better and better. He was also growing in practical experience in using earth-style and wind-style magic in battle. Gradually, Linley began suffering fewer and fewer wounds in battle. Naturally, as Linley gradually drew closer and closer to the core regions, magical beasts of the sixth rank began growing more and more plentiful, and Linley began to be more cautious as well.

On the 46th day of Linley's entry into the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

"Swish!"

Ripples began to appear on the surface of the quiet little lake. A human figure suddenly emerged from within. It was Linley. Linley was using a piece of cloth to casually wash himself.

The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, stood on the shore, watching Linley bathe with an envious look in his eyes. After squeaking a few times, he began hopping up and down before diving directly into the lake. Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but chuckle, and then he continued to bathe himself.

“Haha, that’s enough, Bebe, haha, that’s enough!” Linley suddenly broke out into uncontrollable laughter.

“Oh, boss, you are afraid of being tickled?” The little Shadowmouse rose up into the surface of the water, guileless black eyes gleaming with a hint of mischief.

Chuckling, Linley walked onto the lakeshore. Removing a clean set of clothes from his backpack, he put the new clothes on. Changing clothes after a nice bath was a very luxuriant event. And then, Linley began to wash the just-removed clothes in the lake, then hung them onto a tree branch to dry off. With a leap, Linley landed onto another branch on the tree. Lying down, he watched Bebe mess around in the lake water.

He watched as Bebe joyfully leapt about in the water. Sometimes, Bebe would dive to the lake bottom, while at other times, Bebe would lie on his back on the lake surface.

“Rumble” “Rumble” “Rumble” “Rumble”.

The ground suddenly began to shake ever so slightly. Based on the rumbling rhythm, Linley surmised that it should’ve been caused by something walking. Linley couldn’t help but feel startled, and he looked directly towards the south, in the direction the rumbles were coming from. He saw a large, indistinct shadow appear from within the southern side of the lake, but after a short period of time, Linley was able to clearly see the figure.

It was at least two stories high, and covered with large, flame-red, shield-like scales, which also extended over and covered its four limbs like scaly armor. Its long tail was roughly half as long as its entire body, as nimble and as agile as a whip. Its two sinister, ruby-like eyes, each the size of a lantern, stared at the surface of the lake. Two plumes of white smoke continuously wafted out from its nostrils.

Linley was in total shock, and his body froze, even as his heart sped up.

“Velocidragon. Magical beast of the seventh rank – Velocidragon!”

Chapter 18 – Bebe's Prowess (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 18, Bebe's Prowess (part 2)

From his earlier years until now, the only magical beast which he was genuinely fascinated by was the Velocidragon, which he had seen that one time. That time, when the Velocidragon had demonstrated its terrifying power in the middle of Wushan township, it seemed to be an invincible force. With its terrifying power, it had wiped out one house after another…

Linley couldn't help but feel his heart quake.

When he was eight years old, Linley was just a child. But now, at age fifteen, he was a dual-element magus of the fifth rank.

"Boss! Boss! This one is mine!" The excited voice of the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley turned to look at the surface of the lake, and saw that Bebe was so excited that all of the hairs on his body were sticking up as straight and stiff as needles. Even all of the muscles on his body were pulsing with energy. His fierce claws and head had grown in size as well. The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was previously around 20 centimeters in size, but now he suddenly elongated to a size of half a meter. This half-meter long size was the largest that Linley had ever seen Bebe grow to.

But despite this, the half-meter long Bebe was nothing more than a speck in comparison to the Velocidragon.

The Velocidragon's huge, lantern-like red gaze was fixed coldly on Bebe's form. It let out an angry snort that reverberated within the mountains. In reply, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, also raised his head and let out a high-pitched shriek.

The sound of the low, growling snarl and the high-pitched shriek clashed.

Linley, who was watching all of this atop the tree next to the lake, suddenly felt as though the Velocidragon and the little Shadowmouse were two equally matched adversaries having a staredown.

“Raaaaaawr!” A thundering roar!

An all-encompassing, blazing flame suddenly erupted from the Velocidragon’s maw, covering the entire area of dozens of meters ahead of it in flame. The lake began to hiss as the surface water instantly began to boil. But Bebe didn’t move at all, despite being bathed in flames; he just let the flame burn as it might.

From within the blazing flame, one could see that Bebe was not harmed in the slightest.

“Although Bebe is physically small, his defensive abilities are incredible. The power of this flame is approximately on par with a fire-style magus spell of the fifth rank, but it isn’t able to harm him at all.” Linley quietly watched. Despite having been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for so long, Bebe had yet to meet a genuinely worthy opponent to do battle with.

Bathed in flames, Bebe was motionless. But then suddenly, he moved!

“Shkkkkkkkkreeee!”

With a terrifyingly high-pitched howl, Bebe transformed into a black shadow that sped towards the Velocidragon with vicious speed. The Velocidragon, which had continued to breathe out flames this entire time, suddenly widened its enormous, lantern-sized red eyes, while suddenly slapping forward with its long, whip-like draconic tail.

The incredible speed of the tail of the Velocidragon actually approached the speed of the little Shadowmouse’s movement.

“Whoosh!” Bebe’s movements were extremely bizarre, and he was actually able to dodge the hyper-fast attack of the Velocidragon’s tail, and immediately tried to bite at the Velocidragon’s throat. But the Velocidragon, in turn, immediately turned his head down and then tried to bite back at Bebe.

But clearly, Bebe was still a bit faster. As he gave the Velocidragon a vicious bite on the neck, a sharp ‘crack’ sound could be heard, as one of the thick scale on the Velocidragon’s neck was actually broken, and then swallowed whole by Bebe. Bebe was a creature that was capable of even devouring stones and bones. This Velocidragon scale proved to be edible by him as well.

But just at this time, the Velocidragon’s tail swept towards Bebe. “Thwack!” A high-pitched slapping sound could be heard, causing Linley to shiver. But Bebe had long since dodged and scurried away again.

“This Velocidragon has such a huge, thick neck. That bite Bebe gave it was nothing more than a light wound.” Linley breathlessly watched this battle between creatures of totally different sizes. “This Velocidragon’s tail moves in such an unpredictable manner, and it’s able to twist in turn at high speeds as well.”

The tail of a Velocidragon was not only fast, it was also agile and unpredictable.

“Shkreee!”

Bebe once more turned into a vicious black shadow. Erupting out from the water, Bebe once more dodged the draconic tail. But just as he dodged, the tail suddenly changed directions in a rapid, unpredictable manner. With a sudden twist, it struck Bebe a direct blow.

The vicious black shadow was sent flying into the faraway woods.

“Bebe!” Linley’s chest tightened.

But the Velocidragon only stared cautiously at the forest, as though keeping an eye out for a dangerous foe. Suddenly, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, came flying down at him from atop a particularly tall tree. The Velocidragon's tail immediately twisted to strike at him, but this time, Bebe had learned from the previous painful lesson. With a twitch of his tail, he too suddenly changed directions in mid-air.

The little Shadowmouse was a blur. The draconic tail was also a blur!

The two blurred shadows chased each other about in mid-air. The little Shadowmouse would occasionally be sent flying by the Velocidragon, but every so often, he would also manage to land a vicious bite on the Velocidragon as well. They continued their fight, fighting all the way from the lakeshore to the forests. One mighty tree after another was knocked down by the Velocidragon's tail as the Velocidragon and the Shadowmouse continued to fight without pause.

"From what I can see, it seems as though Bebe has a slight advantage."

Linley nervously watched the fight. By this point in time, the huge Velocidragon had already lost seven or eight scales, and blood continuously flowed from seven or eight wounds, covering half of its body in blood. The Velocidragon's enraged roars continued unabated.

Its tail whipping back and forth, any tree touched by the Velocidragon's tail was snapped in half. One mighty tree after another toppled over, and an area with a diameter of approximately two hundred meters around the two combatants was totally cleared.

"But can Bebe keep on being hit like that, by the Velocidragon's tail?"

Linley began to worry. The offensive power of the Velocidragon's tail was very high. If it smashed into a stone, the stone would crumble; if it smashed into a tree, the tree would snap. This sort of offensive power made Linley's heart grow cold. Linley knew that if he was struck so much as a single time by that tail, his life would be gone.

“Whack!” Bebe was sent flying again, but in the blink of an eye, Bebe once more transformed into a furious black shadow as he charged into the fray again, screeching.

By now, the Velocidragon was covered with blood, with many damaged scales throughout its body. It looked to be in a bad way.

“Raaaawr!”

With an angry roar, the Velocidragon actually turned and began to leave. At high speed, it began to run towards the core areas of the mountains. In a short period of time, the Velocidragon disappeared from Linley’s vision. Bebe actually pursued it for a while as well before turning around and coming back to Linley.

Linley dropped down from his tree just as the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, also ran over to him, his body shrinking back to its normal size.

“Bebe, are you okay?” Linley immediately asked him through their mental link.

Bebe jumped onto Linley’s shoulder and stood erect on his hind legs, as he looked arrogantly at Linley with his beady little black eyes. “Boss, what sort of magical beast do you take Bebe to be? How could I be afraid of a Velocidragon?” Pride and self-delight suffused Bebe’s adorable little face.

But suddenly, Bebe twitched his tail. Shaking himself, he said, “But that Velocidragon’s tail really is a rather nasty piece of work. My entire body hurts.”

Seeing this, Linley couldn’t help but chuckle. The Velocidragon’s tail wasn’t just a ‘rather nasty piece of work’. It was an extremely nasty piece of work. Linley was extremely glad that Bebe was able to withstand so many blows from it without sustaining any serious injuries.

“And this Velocidragon’s scales and meat really is thick. Even at my maximum size, I couldn’t bite through him.” Bebe sighed. “But I’m

confident that if we kept on at it, I, Bebe, could've bled him to death. This Velocidragon was pretty sly though. It kept on moving about and never let me bite it on the same location twice."

Linley secretly laughed.

There was a huge gap between the sixth rank and the seventh rank, in terms of combat ability as well as other factors. Most likely, that Velocidragon's intelligence was not much less than a human being's. How could it possibly allow the little Shadowmouse to bite it in the same place twice?

No matter how thick the scales and flesh of the Velocidragon were, it couldn't withstand being bitten by Bebe multiple times. This Velocidragon most likely also realized that he wouldn't gain any benefit from continuing to fight, which was why it fled.

"Bebe, want to give a magical beast of the eighth rank a go?" Linley mentally teased.

Bebe's little eyes suddenly turned round as the moon. "Boss, don't mess with me like that. Dealing with that magical beast of the seventh rank was exhausting enough. I hear that magical beasts of the eighth rank are ten times as powerful as magical beasts of the seventh rank. Even if their movement speeds aren't as high as mine, most likely their attack speeds are higher."

Movement speed and combat attack speeds were two different speeds.

For example, the Velocidragon was perhaps much slower in terms of movement speed, but its tail was able to attack at an astonishing speed. Although some larger magical beasts appeared to be slow and clumsy, when they really started to fight, they were as fast as lightning!

After all, if they were mighty enough to be described as a magical beast of the eighth rank, they definitely would overmatch a magical beast of the seventh rank.

“Heh, looks like you know when to be humble after all.” Linley chuckled while stroking Bebe’s little head. “Alright, my clothes should be dry by now as well. Let’s go take a rest on top of the tree, then eat some food. After a while, we’ll continue onwards.” As he spoke, Linley leapt up seven or eight meters onto a branch, and then he continued to lightly jump up, before leisurely coming to a rest at about twenty or thirty meters above the ground.

Chapter 19 – The Black Dagger (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 19, The Black Dagger (part 1)

The fifty first day in the mountain ranges.

“Do all of these killers think that I’m easy meat?” Linley glanced at the corpse of the female assassin, dressed in black. This woman only was a warrior of the fifth rank. Assisted by his magic, Linley was able to kill her by himself.

Doehring Cowart laughed. “Anyone who sees you will be able to tell that you are just a kid, a stupid kid who doesn’t know how high the heaven is or how deep the earth is, a kid that dares wander these mountains alone. Why wouldn’t they want to get an easy kill like you?”

Linley felt helpless.

He was still just fifteen. Despite having the physical size of a fully grown man, his face still betrayed his youth.

“This woman wounded me as she died. It’s not a big deal that I have another scar, but she ruined my clothes as well. Now I only have one set of clothes remaining.” Seeing the giant, gaping hole in his clothes, Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Linley had managed to acquire several sets of clothes from attempted assassins, but he had lost even more, here in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“Boss, the magicite cores in this person’s bag are worth a couple thousand gold coins. Can a set of clothes be worth that much?” Bebe immediately argued.

Hearing these words, Linley laughed.

After having spent well over a month in these mountains, the scars on his body had grown more and more plentiful, but so too had the number of magicite cores in his backpack.

“Forget it. From now on, I’m going naked from the waist up. I’ll save my last set of clothes for when I go back. No one will see me anyhow, here in these mountains.” Linley determinedly tossed aside the ruined set of clothes, going bare-chested. His black dagger in hand, he marched onwards.

During this period of time, this black dagger had provided quite a bit of assistance to Linley.

After walking for a while, Linley began to casually murmur the words to a spell. After a short moment, a gust of wind began to swirl around the area, with Linley at the center. This was the Windscout spell once again. In an area with a diameter of 300 meters centered on Linley, nothing could escape Linley’s attention.

Generally speaking, after walking for an extended period of time, Linley would be cautious and cast the Windscout spell. After walking for a while, Linley once again cast the Windscout spell.

“Ah, a group of people? Why are those people hiding on top of that tree?” Linley felt curious.

At this moment, about a hundred meters south of Linley, around ten or so people were hiding on top of an enormous old tree, with a girth so wide that seven people had to link hands to surround it. Curious, Linley couldn’t help but quietly sneak closer.

Slowly, carefully, Linley crept into a patch of tall, thick grass, from whence he had a vantage point to peer at the ten people on the tree.

Those ten or so people were all wearing black clothes, and each of them had a black dagger sheathed at their waists.

“Black dagger?” Linley’s gaze fixed upon one black dagger in particular.

In terms of both shape and coloration, it was identical to the one in Linley’s hands. In addition, the ten or so people hiding on top of the tree gave Linley a similar, sinister feeling, very much like when Linley encountered that first assassin.

“The same black clothes, and the same black dagger, and…” Linley noticed that the backs of all of these men were bulging slightly.

Linley couldn’t help but think back to that first assassin, who had his backpack tightly strapped to his back, beneath his clothes. It was only because Bebe had ripped the assassin’s clothes open that they had discovered the backpack.

“They belong to the same organization.” Even an idiot would come to this conclusion.

Linley’s heartbeat involuntarily began to speed up. At this point in time, the people hiding on the tree were talking in a low tone.

“Why haven’t #18 and #7 come back yet?” One of the black-garbed men said unhappily.

“Possibly dead.” Another black-garbed man said coldly.

“Watch the time. We’ll wait until night falls. If they aren’t back by nightfall, then regardless of whether or not they are still alive, they will be considered to have failed.” Another black-garbed man said coldly. Hearing his words, the other black-garbed men fell silent.

Hidden within the grass below, Linley could guess that the person who had just spoke was the leader of this group of black-garbed men. He felt secretly startled. “The person who tried to kill me originally was a warrior of the sixth rank, specializing in the darkness-style. Most likely, their leader is even stronger.”

Linley immediately moved to retreat, but after just taking a few steps back…

The leader suddenly frowned and swerved, staring directly at Linley.

“Swish!”

A black blur shot out at Linley at high speed, shocking Linley. He realized, “I’ve been exposed!” He immediately utilized the wind-style Supersonic speed, and at the highest speed he could muster, fled deeper in the forest.

As far as Linley was concerned, the deeper one went into the mountains, the more dangerous it was. The opponent, upon seeing him run into the deep, dangerous mountains, might hesitate and refrain from chasing him. Linley had already made up his mind that after going a bit deeper in, he would change directions and leave.

Seeing the black backpack on Linley’s back and the black dagger in his hands, the expression on the face of the leader of the group changed.

“#2, deal with him.” The black-garbed leader ordered.

The higher the ranking number was, the stronger one was. The leader had already been able to accurately gauge Linley’s strength from Linley’s movements just then.

“Yes, lord.” One of the black-garbed men immediately jumped down from the tree, and began to pursue Linley with astonishing speed. But because Linley had a significant head start, and was quite far from him to begin with, the two of them started off at a 70 meter distance.

But this black-garbed man really was very fast, seemingly a bit faster than even the first assassin.

“What astonishing speed.” Linley agilely made his way into the mountains, sometimes crawling, sometimes jumping.

But from behind, the black-garbed man continued to coldly pursue, and the distance between the two continued to shrink. 60 meters. 50 meters. 40 meters. 30 meters. The longer Linley fled, the closer the pursuing assassin got.

10 meters. 9 meters. 8 meters. 7 meters!

Apparently terrified out of his wits, Linley headed directly for the deepest parts of the mountains.

“Wind-style magus?” The black-garbed man could tell that Linley was being aided by wind magic. “Even aided by wind-magic, he’s so slow. Looks like he’s a warrior of the fourth rank, at most the peak of the fourth rank.” Totally confident in his ability to kill Linley, the black-garbed man continued to draw closer.

On the surface, Linley seemed terrified, but in reality, he was quite calm and steady.

“We’ve run a few kilometers. Those ten assassins shouldn’t be able to see us from here.” A cold look suddenly flashed through the fleeing Linley’s eyes, and at the same time, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, which had been crouched over, ‘terrified’ on Linley’s shoulders, suddenly moved.

Whoosh!

The little Shadowmouse suddenly expanded in size before the assassin’s eyes, and in the blink of an eye reached him. The assassin could clearly see the little Shadowmouse’s fiercely sharp teeth…

Chapter 20 – The Black Dagger (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 20, The Black Dagger (part 2)

The dark-robed man, just five or six meters away from Linley, had considered the dark Shadowmouse beneath notice, but upon seeing Bebe's amazing speed, his cold face showed an expression of astonishment. "What is this speed?!" The dark-robed man hurriedly waved his dagger to block.

Clearly, this dark-robed man was somewhat stronger than the original assassin. At least when facing Bebe, he had the presence of mind and speed to wield his dagger.

"Swish!" Bebe swung his sharp claws fiercely.

"Clang!"

As Bebe's claws slammed into the assassin's dagger, the black dagger exploded into fragments, while Bebe's claws, undamaged, immediately slashed violently against the dark-robed man's head, directly shattering it. The man died on the spot.

"The gap between the sixth rank and the seventh rank really is enormous." Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but sigh.

Bebe was a terrifying Shadowmouse who could even force the mighty Velocidragon, a magical beast of the seventh rank, to flee. Based on the power of Bebe's sharp claws and sharp fangs, killing a warrior of the sixth rank was as easy as eating rice.

"Rip!" Linley ran over to the corpse and tore the dark-garbed man's clothes apart, immediately grabbing the hidden backpack. Without doing anything else, he immediately turned and fled northwards. Gusts of winds arose around his legs, and he began moving with such grace and agility that he

left almost no trail in his wake.

After a while, a second group of dark-garbed men finally arrived. Seeing the injury on #2's head, all of them frowned.

"A magical beast?" The images of many different magical beasts suddenly began to swim about in the mind of a dark-garbed man. "A Blue Shadowmouse of the sixth rank? Or a Violet Shadowmouse of the seventh rank? Or a Gold Stoneater Rat of the seventh rank?" This fierce but tiny claw mark must have been left by a rodent-type magical beast.

In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, some people believed that the most terrifying possibility was encountering a magical beast of the eighth or ninth ranks. Others believed that it was encountering a terrifying swarm of pack-type magical beasts. But in the heart of the dark-garbed man, the most terrifying possibility was encountering a Stoneater Rat swarm or a Shadowmouse swarm.

The Stoneater Rat had formidable defense, sharp teeth, and sharp claws.

The Shadowmouse had high speed, sharp teeth, and sharp claws.

If a swarm of thousands or tens of thousands of Shadowmice or Stoneater Rats attacked, even an army might be totally devoured, much less the ten of them.

"We're going back now!" Without hesitating in the slightest, the dark-garbed leader issued his order.

……

Amidst towering mountains and ridges, Linley continued to run, winding his way atop of a mountain peak. After having run over a hundred kilometers at once, Linley believed that his pursuers would no longer be able to catch him.

"Boss, hurry up and open the backpack and see what's inside!" Bebe

immediately urged.

Linley's heart was filled with anticipation as well. The more powerful an opponent was, the more magicite cores he should have in his backpack. That original assassin had left behind 15,000 gold coins worth of magicite cores and magicite gems. How much would this second assassin, who had been addressed as #2, have on him?

He opened the backpack.

"Two more sets of clean clothes." Linley glanced at the clothes in the backpack, then withdrew two bulging pouches from within the backpack. This "#2" had been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for a month longer and was a bit stronger than the original assassin, so logically speaking…

Seeing how many magicite cores these pouches contained, Linley couldn't help but suck in a cold breath.

"So many? And most of them are magicite cores of the fifth rank. There's plenty of magicite cores of the sixth rank as well." After having seen so many magicite cores, Linley was now capable of recognizing the general rank of a magicite core at a glance. Linley immediately began to do a careful accounting of the cores.

"9 magicite cores of the sixth rank. 56 magicite cores of the fifth rank. 12 magicite cores of the fourth rank. Seven magicite gems. The total value, all together, would be roughly….20,000 gold coins. Adding this to the 50,000 gold coins worth that I already have, means that I should now hold at least 70,000 gold coins worth of magicite on me." After tabulating his total wealth, Linley couldn't help but take a deep breath.

70,000 gold coins!

If he placed this prodigious sum in front of his father, his father would most likely be stupefied.

Over the course of the 51 days he had spent in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, that assassin's organization alone had 'donated' 35,000 gold coins to him. The other attempted killers he had run into had 'donated' a further 30,000 gold coins, while he himself had killed enough magical beasts to earn 5000 gold coins worth of cores as well.

Doehring Cowart appeared from within the Coiling Dragon ring, laughing as he watched the look on Linley's face.

"I finally understood why so many people in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts like to try and kill other humans. After spending a full month working so hard, I only earned a few thousand gold coins, but when I killed someone else, I gained the fruits of their two months of labor." Linley placed the two pouches into his own backpack, then tossed the extra backpack into the grass.

"Of these 70,000 gold coins worth of magicite, only 5000 came from me killing magical beasts. The rest all came from assassins and killers." Linley shook his head and sighed.

Doehring Cowart stroked his white beard while chuckling. "Looks like your youth actually helped you. If you looked just a bit more mature and experienced, there probably wouldn't have been so many killers trying their luck against you."

"Hehe." Linley couldn't help but laugh.

"Grandpa Doehring, just now, based on the words being exchanged by the people in that squad, it seems like they were on a training mission here in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?" Linley was rather curious.

Doehring Cowart smiled faintly. "Linley, every single one of the major powers of the Yulan continent has to have its own base of martial power in order to maintain its strength. But martial power has to be trained and cultivated. Many of the larger powers will often send groups of its subordinates out to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to train."

Linley nodded.

“Linley, this continent has many powerful organizations which you don’t have a clue about. To be honest…even I don’t know about them. In the past five thousand years, all of the powers which existed in the era of the Pouant Empire have most likely collapsed.” Doehring Cowart said self-deprecatingly.

Linley didn’t ask too much. At this moment, Linley felt enormous pressure. The Yulan continent was far more complicated than he had imagined.

After organizing his possessions, Linley put on a shirt before continuing on his way. Making his way agilely through the mountain forests, sometimes skipping over fallen rocks, sometimes crawling over fallen trees, Linley pressed onwards. But after Linley crossed a particularly large mountain….

He saw that this mountain was hundreds of kilometers long. There were many trees here. Standing at the peak of the mountain, Linley could tell that there was a distance of hundreds of kilometers from here to the next peak, if he wanted to directly fly across the gap.

“What a bizarre canyon.”

Linley noticed that the canyon walls of these two mountain’s cliffs drew closer and closer to each other at the edges. Linley immediately began to jog down from the mountain peak. The farther down he jogged, the closer the canyon walls appeared to be. After jogging for five or six kilometers, the gap between the two mountains was only a meter across. One could cross it with a single step.

“It’s like this on this side. What is it like on the other side? The same?”

With one foot on each cliff, Linley peered across. Off in the distance, he seemed to see the two cliffs draw even closer, then become one.

“Bizarre. Bizarre.”

Having been in these mountains for some time, Linley had seen many things, but he had never encountered such a weird canyon. Looking down through the canyon gap, Linley only saw a white fog, so blurry that he couldn't see anything at all.

"Immeasurably deep." Linley felt extremely curious, but was also rather wary what lay within the belly of this mountain gulch.

Making his way along the edges of the canyon, Linley continued peering down, as though hoping he could see what was hidden by white fog. Aside from how close the canyon walls were, there was another oddity to this ravine.

It seemed that the farther down the ravine was, the farther apart the canyon walls drew again.

For example, towards the top of the ravine, the distance between the canyon walls was perhaps a hundred meters or so, but from what Linley could tell, towards the bottom, the distance was perhaps a few thousand meters, or even tens of kilometers.

"Hrm? That's…"

Linley looked as though he had been struck by lightning. He carefully stared at a small patch of grass that was hidden beneath the fog beneath him. The small patch of grass growing alongside the cliffside was dark green, but the patch of grass emanated a faint blue aura.

"Blueheart Grass. It's Blueheart Grass!" Linley had seen a picture of Blueheart Grass at the Ernst Institute's library, and he remembered it clearly. His eyes shone. That ultra-rare, precious grass growing from the cliff was able to counteract the harmful effects which live dragon's blood would have on the body. Blueheart Grass!

Chapter 21 – The Foggy Gulch (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Chapter 21 – The Foggy Gulch (part 1)

If one desired to train using the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’, one must rouse up the Dragonblood in one’s veins. But there were only two possible ways by which one could agitate the Dragonblood in one’s veins. The first was to reach a certain minimum level of Dragonblood density in one’s veins. The second was to drink fresh blood from a live dragon.

But drinking blood from a living dragon was very dangerous.

Dragon’s blood, even when applied topically, would cause terrible pain, to say nothing of drinking it. However, everything in the world had its equal opposite. Blueheart Grass, when paired with dragon’s blood, made for an extremely potent mixture. But Blueheart Grass was extremely rare. Linley had previously asked about the price.

A single patch of Blueheart Grass was worth tens of thousands of gold coins. What’s more, it was a rare item that often couldn’t be bought even if one had the money. Doehring Cowart had once said: “Live dragon’s blood is incredibly powerful. Usually, a single patch of Blueheart Grass is insufficient. If you are going to drink a large amount of live dragon’s blood, you will need even more Blueheart Grass.”

A single patch of Blueheart Grass was already that expensive. How could Linley afford it? Perhaps his entire fortune of 70,000, acquired over this month, would only be enough to buy a single patch.

“Blueheart Grass, Blueheart Grass! Heaven is being so kind to me.” Linley felt unspeakable joy.

Linley energetically leapt down directly, falling several dozen meters before landing against the cliff on the other side. And then, he immediately began

to mumble the words to a spell. In a short time, Linley's entire body was surrounded by flowing air elemental essences, and flows of air began to surround him as well.

Wind-style spell of the fifth rank – Floating Technique.

At his current level, Linley was only able to allow his body to float, rather than actually fly. Floating meant allowing himself to float up or down vertically. Taking a step forward, Linley stood in mid-air before slowly beginning to float down, gradually descending into the deep, foggy canyon. Bebe enviously stood on Linley's shoulder as they descended. Although Bebe was rather powerful, he wasn't capable of flight. He wasn't a flying-type magical beast, thus he would only be able to fly upon becoming a Saint-level magical beast.

This canyon was filled with the white fog, which roiled about. The deeper Linley went, the greater the distance between the canyon walls became. Quite soon, Linley landed near the Blueheart Grass.

"Blueheart Grass is deep green in color, but emanates a faint blue light. Blueheart Grass is cool to the touch. When the blades of grass are torn apart, they will leak out a dark green fluid which is very cool when drunk." Linley remembered quite well this explanation in the Ernst Institute library about Blueheart Grass.

Staring at the Blueheart Grass growing out from the cliff, rustling gently in the wind, Linley took a deep breath, then carefully uprooted the Blueheart Grass.

"It really is cold." When he touched the Blueheart Grass, he felt as though he had touched a piece of ice. He immediately placed the Blueheart Grass into his backpack, and then looked all around. "I wonder if there is any more Blueheart Grass here!"

A place which was capable of giving birth to one patch of Blueheart Grass was capable of giving birth to a second.

Using the Floating Technique, Linley continued to drift downwards into the roiling white fog. At the same time, Linley kept a close eye out, despite the fog making everything blurry. He could make out countless vines twisting about the cliffs.

“That’s huge!”

The farther down into the canyon he went, the more Linley realized how enormous this place truly was. At the top of the canyon, the distance between the two walls was perhaps only a few hundred meters, but by now, Linley was certain that the distance was absolutely at least several thousand meters. He continued to float close to the wall. Using his vision, his flotation speed, and his angle against the wall, he was able to guesstimate this distance.

“Roar…”

“Grrr….”

All sorts of low-pitched growls emanated from below, occasionally sounding out. They came from all over the place. Just judging from the sound alone, there had to be over a hundred magical beasts below. Linley couldn’t help but feel his heart quail. “Magical beasts. There are many magical beasts below!” Just from hearing the sound, Linley could tell.

Linley fixed himself against the cliff walls while gripping onto the vines with his hands as he descended more slowly and more carefully.

“Boss, I can sense great danger below.” Bebe suddenly said to Linley through their mental link.

Linley also felt as though his heart was tightening. The further down he went, the clearer the growls of the magical beasts became. Those low growls were powerful. Clearly, they were coming from magical beasts of large size. Generally speaking, large magical beasts were not weak. Powerful magical beasts weren’t necessarily large, but large magical beasts were generally powerful.

“Blueheart Grass!”

Linley suddenly saw that directly below him, far away, was another patch of Blueheart Grass. Surrounding the Blueheart Grass was many green vines and shrubs. As Linley was not a fearful person to begin with, upon seeing the Blueheart Grass, Linley began float down while keeping his hands gripped to the rattan vines.

But at this point in time, Linley totally failed to notice…

Coiled up amidst the green vines surrounding the Blueheart Grass was a giant green python snake, at least twenty meters long and thick enough that it would take two men to put their arms around it. That giant python was very green and also coiled up like a rattan vine. Given that it was also covered slightly by the fog, Linley didn’t notice that it was there at all.

As he descended, Linley drew nearer and nearer to the Blueheart Grass.

“Boss, careful! That’s a monstrous python!” Bebe suddenly, urgently said to Linley through their link.

“Python?” Linley was startled.

Virtually all python-type magical beasts were exceedingly powerful. Even the weakest Trihorn Python was a magical beast of the sixth rank. Linley immediately surveyed his surroundings carefully. By now, Linley was roughly around a hundred meters away from the giant python. After carefully searching for it, he quickly located the giant python.

“Whoah.” Linley sucked in a deep breath.

That thirty-meter long python, as thick as a water barrel, made Linley’s heart quail. “Green Tattooed Python. A magical beast of the seventh rank – the Green Tattooed Python.” The information he knew about this type of Python immediately sprang to mind.

By now, Linley also realized why it was that this canyon had so much white fog.

“The Mist Technique is just a water-style technique of the first rank. A single Green Tattooed Python, a magical beast of the seventh rank, can generate enormous, almost unlimited amounts of white mist in its surroundings. With this canyon having so much mist of such density, there’s definitely more than one Green Tattooed Python here.”

Linley immediately came to this realization.

The canyon had a depth and width of around ten kilometers long. For such a huge canyon to be totally covered in white mist, one could only imagine how many Pythons were here. That Green Tattooed Python which lay hidden amidst the vines suddenly moved. Its enormous head turned to stare at Linley, and its two cold eyes stared death at him.

“Grrrr….”

A terrifying sound rumbled out from the Green Tattooed Python’s maw, and at the same time, it shot forward at high speed.

“Rawr!” “Hiss!” “Grrr!” The entire canyon began to fill up with the calls of various beasts. At the same time, loud, sonorous movement sounds could be heard. Glancing below, Linley saw that over ten enormous creatures were moving towards him. And, Linley could tell that these ten made up just a tiny fraction of the creatures in this gorge.

“Flee!”

Faced with the attack by the Green Tattooed Python, Linley immediately began floating up at maximum speed. Controlling the force of the wind, he was able to make the flotation pressure exceed his body weight, causing him to rocket upwards at an astonishing speed. While flying upwards, Linley could already see a monstrously large Green Tattooed Python crawl up after him along the cliff walls. Its cold, serpentine eyes stared at Linley, promising death while the serpent itself hissed nonstop.

“Screech! Screech!”

A high-pierced bird cry split the air, and from below, dozens of giant birds suddenly charged forward in pursuit of Linley.

“Dragonhawks! Those are Dragonhawks!” Linley’s face immediately turned paper white.

Chapter 22 – The Foggy Gulch (part 2)

Book 3, The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 22, The Foggy Gulch (part 2)

Over ten Dragonhawks, each larger than a Griffon, were flying in fast pursuit of Linley. Through the Coiling Dragon ring, Linley immediately expended his mageforce to make himself rise even faster, while at the same time beginning to mumble the words to the Earthguard spell.

“Whoosh!”

Only the roaring wind could be heard. Linley had long since left the Green Tattooed Python behind, but the Dragonhawks flew at an amazing speed, and were drawing closer and closer to Linley. Even after Linley flew out of the canyon, those ten Dragonhawks continued in hot pursuit of Linley, following him outside.

Running at his maximum speed, Linley made his way through the forest as quickly as possible, but no matter how fast his legs were, how could he compare with the speed of the winged Dragonhawks?

“Screeeech!” The Dragonhawks issued piercing cries.

The wingspan of the Dragonhawks, at maximum extension, was over twenty meters long. These ten-plus Dragonhawks blotted out the sky as they all flew directly at Linley. Linley felt as though the entire world was growing dark. As the Dragonhawks descended upon Linley, they all opened their beaks and belched forth plumes of flame at him, immediately turning the surrounding trees into blazing pyres.

Fortunately, the Earthguard armor which Linley summoned continued to protect him, covering his entire body.

“Crackle, crackle.” The fires roared and blazed against the Earthguard

armor. Earth-colored elemental essence swirled all about Linley.

Amongst the dragon-type creatures, Dragonhawks and Landwyrms were the weakest of their kin, but even they, the weakest of dragon-type creatures, were magical beasts of the sixth rank. What's more, Landwyrms and Dragonhawks were pack-type beasts. Faced with an aerial assault from over ten magical beasts of the sixth rank, even a warrior of the seventh rank would flee.

The Dragonhawks charged forward, descending upon Linley….

"Smash!" A Dragonhawk's sharp talons smote Linley's Earthguard armor a mighty blow. The Earthguard armor shuddered visibly, and specks of golden light began to gently flicker on top of it.

"I can't take those hits head on!"

That clawed attack terrified Linley. At the highest speed he could muster, he scurried deeper into the forest, charging into the densest, hardest-to-traverse area. Jumping, leaping, crawling…Linley went all out in his attempt to flee. But those Dragonhawk's continued to strike viciously at Linley's head with their vicious claws.

"Hissss!"

Bebe let out a fierce screech of his own, and then he rose on his hind legs, suddenly transforming in size from twenty centimeters to half a meter tall. But compared to the Dragonhawks, with their 20-meter long wingspans, Bebe was still just a small speck.

"Swish!" Bebe leapt off of Linley's shoulders, transforming into a black blur as he shot directly towards the closest attacking Dragonhawk.

The terrifying sound of bones splintering could suddenly be heard, along with the agonized cries of the Dragonhawk. That Dragonhawk directly fell from the sky, but before it did, Bebe used it as a launchpad to leap at the next closest Dragonhawk. With two vicious bites, he directly bit this one to

death as well.

Dragonhawks were just beasts of the sixth rank, while Bebe was able to force a magical beast of the seventh rank, a Velocidragon, to flee in defeat.

What's more…

There was a huge gap in difficulty to advance as well as in power from the sixth rank to the seventh rank. Bebe wasn't capable of flight, but once he got into physical contact with a Dragonhawk, it was as good as dead. In a few short moments, three of the ten-plus Dragonhawks were dead.

The other Dragonhawks all flew higher in terror. Seeing them fly higher, there was nothing that Bebe could do either, as he himself could not fly.

Those Dragonhawks hovered around Linley for a while, before finally letting out a few mournful cries as they began flying back towards the canyon.

"What a terrifying gorge." Only now did Linley finally let out a sigh.

While collecting the magicite cores of the three dead Dragonhawks, Linley pondered the question of the Foggy Gorge.

"Grandpa Doehring." Linley suddenly called out, and Doehring Cowart flew out of the Coiling Dragon ring. Still appearing to wear a pristine, moon-white robe, Doehring Cowart smiled as he spoke to Linley. "Linley, is there something you need?"

Linley had not yet calmed down.

"Grandpa Doehring, just now, I entered a foggy gorge. I didn't expect the place to be brimming with magical beasts. There was a Green Tattooed Python there, and huge crawling creatures. I didn't get a good look at them, but in terms of size, they definitely were not any smaller than a Velocidragon. There were Dragonhawks there as well…and I could tell that this was in just a small portion of the gorge. I have no idea how large the

entirety of the Foggy Gorge was."

Thinking back, Linley felt a surge of fear again. He had actually stumbled into such a gathering spot for magical beasts in that gorge.

"Oh?"

Doehring Cowart seemed rather surprised. "This Foggy Gorge had so many magical beasts? Interesting. Generally speaking, only magical beasts of the same type will gather together, but the magical beasts you just mentioned were all of different types. They actually all gathered together in this Foggy Gorge? Interesting. How interesting. If I were still alive, I would most likely go inside and take a look myself."

Linley shook his head helplessly and laughed, "That gorge even contained Blueheart Grass. There was one patch that I didn't have time to gather. I was only able to gather one."

"Blueheart Grass?" Doehring Cowart's eyes lit up. "Any place where Blueheart Grass can grow definitely is no ordinary place. There definitely must be some sort of precious treasure within that Foggy Gorge, or perhaps some extremely powerful magical beast, such as a magical beast of the ninth rank, or even a Saint-level magical beast. However…"

Doehring Cowart began to frown. "Generally speaking, powerful magical beasts are very territorial. If there was a powerful magical beast there, they probably wouldn't permit creatures like Dragonhawks and Green Tattooed Pythons to live there as well."

"But Dragonhawks, Green Tattooed Pythons, and those huge crawling beasts you mentioned are all able to live there together? Bizarre. How bizarre." Doehring Cowart couldn't understand either. This Foggy Gorge seemed to be full of contradictions.

Linley laughed. "Grandpa Doehring, don't overthink it. When I become a magus of the seventh rank, I'll be able to use the 'Soaring Technique'. At that time, we'll come for another investigation.

Upon becoming a magus of the seventh rank, his Earthguard would have reached the level of generating jadestone armor. The additional speed granted by the Supersonic spell would also dramatically improve. By then, Linley would have full confidence in his ability to deal with the Dragonhawks. And with the ability to use the Soaring Technique to fly, Linley would be able to easily enter and leave the gorge.

“Magus of the seventh rank? You are only a magus of the fifth rank right now. You have a long way to go.” Doehring Cowart said, pouring cold water over Linley’s enthusiasm.

In his heart, Linley knew this as well.

Perhaps becoming a magus of the sixth rank wouldn’t be too hard, but there was a huge gap between the sixth rank and the seventh rank.

“All roads are traversed one step at a time.” Linley smiled. “It’s been about two months since I entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. It is about time for me to go back. It’ll take several days to get back anyhow. I’ll use that time to do some more training.”

With Bebe on his shoulders, Linley embarked on his return trip back home.

Chapter 23 – Her Name Was Alice (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 23, Her Name Was Alice (part 1)

On the return journey, the magical beasts which Linley encountered grew progressively weaker. By the time Linley stepped into the outer regions, all of the monsters he encountered were of the third and fourth ranks. They posed no threat to him at all. But despite this, Linley didn't dare to relax his vigilance.

Doehring Cowart travelled alongside Linley, but in his mind, Doehring Cowart was worrying. Right now, Linley carried within him a steady, stable presence, but when he made his move, he showed no mercy at all. His eyes also carried within them a cold, forbidding aura.

Doehring Cowart still remembered how, when he first entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley's eyes were filled with sincerity. He was a very trusting person.

After hesitating for a while, Doehring Cowart mentally spoke to Linley. "Linley."

Making his way through the mountains, Linley turned his head to look questioningly at Doehring Cowart. "Grandpa Doehring, what is it?"

Doehring Cowart nodded as he spoke seriously. "Linley, before entering the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, I had warned you that people were not to be easily trusted, as people's intentions are not easily understood. I told you to be wary of others, to have a cautious mind."

Linley nodded. "Grandpa Doehring, your words were very correct. One really cannot easily trust others. If I had listened to Grandpa Doehring's words early on, my chest most likely wouldn't have this knife scar."

Doehring Cowart shook his head. “Although one cannot easily trust others, one also cannot be over-cautious. The way you are currently, how will you be able to interact with people in the future? Remember, you can’t be too cold and callous towards others, even if you can’t be overly trusting either. Trust is something which is built up through a long period of time. Do not easily trust the words of others.”

Linley was very smart. Both at home and at the Ernst Institute, he had read many books. Upon hearing Doehring Cowart’s words, he somewhat understood. But the merciless life he had experienced over these past two months, the human cruelty he had witnessed and experienced, was something he had seen so clearly. For him to trust people again would be very hard.

“Doehring Cowart, I understand.” Linley nodded.

Doehring Cowart secretly sighed, but at the same time, he was also happy. “It’s a good thing that Linley has this little Shadowmouse, Bebe, for a companion, as well as those friends of his at the Ernst Institute. At least he shouldn’t become excessively unfeeling.”

Doehring Cowart could still remember how, thousands of years ago, when the Pouant Empire was still around, another Saint-level combatant of the Pouant Empire who also dressed in white. That white-robed man was a famous Sword Saint, and he was also an extremely proud, reclusive person.

“Grandpa Doehring, when father sees all of these magicite cores, what do you think his reaction will be?” Linley suddenly looked at Doehring Cowart, smiling as he asked the question. At this moment, Linley’s eyes were filled with eagerness for his father’s praise.

He looked just like a kid who had just performed stellarly on a test and was awaiting his father’s praise.

“Linley, are you planning to give all of this money to your father?” Doehring Cowart asked with a smile.

Linley nodded. “Of course. These magicite cores are worth around 70,000 gold coins. All I need is enough to feed myself. A few dozen coins each year is enough. But father needs to manage all of our clan’s affairs, and also provide for Wharton’s tuition. Of course I’ll give these magicite cores to father.”

Linley didn’t want to personally sell these magicite cores. After all, in terms of buying and selling, he had no experience at all. He probably wouldn’t even know if he got cheated.

“Haha, I trust your father will be so excited that he’ll be jumping up and down,” Doehring Cowart said, laughing loudly.

Linley couldn’t help but grin as well. He immediately sped up the pace on his journey back.

By now, Linley couldn’t even be bothered to kill magical beasts of the third and fourth ranks. He quickly made his way through the mountains. When he arrived next to a small creek, he paused as he heard the furious bellows of a magical beast, intermixed with the shouts of humans engaged in battle with it.

“Hrm? If they dare come to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, they must be at least combatants of the fifth rank. But in the surrounding areas, the local beasts are of the third or fourth ranks at most. How could the battle sound so prolonged and frenetic?” Linley was rather curious.

Within the inner areas of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, where beasts of the fifth, sixth, and sometimes even the seventh rank would appear, there would often be many frantic battles. But in the outer areas, this was quite rare. Battles would generally end extremely quickly.

With a jump, Linley leapt 7-8 meters up. Landing on a tree, he began tree-walking his way towards the scene of the battle.

Upon arriving, Linley surveyed the battle from his position on the tree.

He saw that there were two young men and two young women engaged in a bloody battle with a Bloodthirsty Warpig. One of the youths, wearing a white armor, was shouting out loudly while directing the course of battle. “Second bro, don’t run around so wildly! Protect Alice [Ai’li’si]! I’ll draw this stupid pig’s attention away. Niya [Ni’ya], don’t panic, aim your arrows at its vitals!”

These four people clearly were very inexperienced. Upon encountering danger, they had panicked. Only the leader wearing the white armor seemed a bit more capable.”

“These four really have some guts. That youngster in white armor should be a warrior of the fifth rank, while the other three are just combatants of the fourth rank at best.” Linley shook his head. Those other three really were daring, to come here without even having reached the fifth rank.

A red-haired youngster began to shout frantically, “Big brother Kalan [Ka’lan], didn’t you say that the outer regions only had magical beasts of the third or fourth ranks? This is a magical beast of the fifth rank!”

The leader of the group of four, the fifth ranked warrior Kalan, also felt helpless. As a warrior of the fifth rank, it shouldn’t have been a dangerous affair for him to bring a number of friends to the outer regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. But he didn’t expect to run into a magical beast of the fifth rank.

“Whoosh!” More than ten earthen spears suddenly erupted from the ground beneath the Warpig, and three of them even pierced into the Warpig’s body, but they were all broken and shattered by the Warpig’s tough hide.

“Roar!”

The Bloodthirsty Warpig immediately turned its enraged attention upon the only magus in the group, before charging forward at the magus rapidly. The Warpig’s charge was truly too fearsome, and what’s more, flicks of flame could be seen coming from its nostrils. Immediately, it caused the remaining youngster to panic.

“Run! Alice, quick, dodge!” Kalan shouted loudly.

The girl named Alice had a head full of long, golden hair and a pair of hazy eyes. Seeing the danger, Alice, too, tried to flee in panic, but the Bloodthirsty Warpig was a magical beast of the fifth rank, after all. Although it was not very intelligent, it was much smarter than a normal animal.

The Bloodthirsty Warpig chased after Alice.

Seeing the Warpig charge after her, Alice was going to flee, but as she did, she slipped and tripped on a vine and fell face-forward into the ground. Turning her head, she saw the furious eyes of the Warpig draw closer and closer to her. Based on Alice’s weak physical conditioning, the Bloodthirsty Warpig probably was capable of killing her with just one stomp.

Alice was struck dumb with terror.

The other two boys and the girl were also stupefied, not knowing what to do. There was no way they could rescue her in time.

“Alice!” The youngster called Kalan shouted loudly with anguish. Although he was a warrior of the fifth rank, he simply didn’t have enough experience.

“Rumble!”

Seven or eight sharp earthen spears suddenly jutted out of the ground. Although the Bloodthirsty Warpig, a magical beast of the fifth rank, did have thick skin, two of the spears still managed to penetrate its thick skin and into its flesh, causing fresh blood to flow from the wound.

But alas…

The earthen spears only pierced its flesh. They didn’t actually cause any injury to its vitals or organs.

“Grrrrrrrrr!” The Bloodthirsty Warpig lifted its head up and bellowed in pain.

“Swish!” A black dagger suddenly fell down from above, piercing into the Warpig’s eye like a bolt of lightning. The Warpig’s eyeball exploded, and the black dagger penetrated directly into the Warpig’s brain. Agonized, the Warpig’s entire body shuddered as it collapsed. Shortly afterwards, it no longer moved.

Kalan, Niya, and Alice were all so terrified, their hearts almost leapt out of their bodies.

They watched as a powerfully built young warrior dressed in blue used the knife to extract the magicite core of the Warpig in a very practiced manner, and then turn to leave. But Kalan was the first amongst the four to recover, and he immediately shouted out, “Friend, please stay!”

Chapter 24 – Her Name Was Alice (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 24, Her Name Was Alice (part 2)

“Hrm?” Linley turned around, frowning.

Kalan immediately walked over to thank Linley. “My name is Kalan. I very much would like to thank you for your support. If it wasn’t for you, Alice most likely would’ve died just then.”

That girl named Alice ran over as well. Clearly, she was still panicked, and she was panting so heavily her chest rose and fell with each breath. But her soft, hazy eyes were fixed on Linley. “Thank you for saving my life. I’m Alice. My full name is Alice Straf [Si’da’fu]. I’m also a magus of the earth-style.”

Linley’s gaze paused for a moment on Alice.

He had to admit, Alice was a very refined-looking young lady. She had an aura which would naturally make men want to cherish and protect her. She was the sort of girl who didn’t need to use her voice or cosmetics to improve herself.

“Linley, when you see people in danger in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, you usually don’t assist, right? What’s going on today?” Doehring Cowart’s jesting voice rang out in Linley’s head. “Oh, I get it, you must have taken a fancy to that Alice girl.”

Linley frowned.

“Grandpa Doehring, in the past, it wasn’t that I didn’t want to help them. It was that within the inner regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the monsters which people were dealing with were at least magical beasts of the sixth rank, sometimes even the seventh rank. I didn’t have the ability

to help them. Killing a beast of the fifth rank isn't too hard, which is why I went ahead and helped." Linley immediately explained to Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart chuckled and no longer spoke.

"My name is Tony [Tuo'ni]. Milord magus, what is your name?" The other male youth also spoke.

Linley calmly glanced at this group of people. "How long have you been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?"

"This is the first day," Kalan admitted helplessly. "I didn't expect that on our very first day, we would encounter a magical beast of the fifth rank. We really were too unlucky. Based on what the books said, the outer region should only have magical beasts of the third and fourth ranks. The four of us shouldn't have been in any danger."

"Foolish." Linley shook his head and spoke.

That female archer named Niya immediately got angry. "Hey, why are you being so cocky? You saved Alice, but that doesn't give you the right to insult people!"

"Niya!" Kalan immediately shouted.

Linley directly explained, "I really very much admire your courage, that all of you dare to barge into the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts like this. But at the same time, I have to say that you are very lucky. You didn't run into any bandits on your way to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts."

"Bandits?" Kalan and the others looked at each other. They really hadn't encountered any bandits.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was over ten thousand kilometers long, after all. There were many routes by which one could enter. To not encounter any bandits was very normal.

“Let me tell you this. If you don’t want to die, then immediately depart these mountains.” Linley directly said.

“Why? Are there a lot of magical beasts of the fifth rank in the outer regions as well?” The younger named Tony said curiously.

Linley calmly explained, “In these mountains, especially in the outer areas, the most danger comes not from magical beasts, but from other humans. The four of you are both weak and inexperienced. I trust that certain greedy people will not let you slip away. I expect that the only reason why you haven’t been discovered yet is because today is your first day in these mountains. Otherwise, the four of you would have been killed by now.”

“The most danger comes from other humans?” Kalan frowned, but shortly afterwards, his face changed.

Kalan respectfully said to Linley, “Milord magus, we just entered these mountains and only know a little bit about this area. We made a private decision to come here. I hope you can assist us, milord magus, and escort us out of these mountains.”

Linley couldn’t help but frown.

He hated trouble. But if these people were to encounter bandits on their way home, they really would be in for it.

“Milord magus, we beseech your aid.” Alice also begged.

Linley glanced at Alice. Seeing the look of appeal in her eyes, and imagining her being killed by bandits, Linley’s heart softened. Nodding, he said, “Fine. I’m headed back anyways. I’ll take you along with me. But if we really do encounter bandits on the way back, I can only promise to try my best. If you end up getting killed, there’s nothing I can do.”

Kalan immediately joyfully nodded. “For you to be willing to aid us, milord magus, we are extremely grateful already.”

Linley nodded, then immediately headed forwards. His back towards the four of them, he said, “Follow me.” Kalan and the other four began following Linley. Under Linley’s protection, they departed the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and headed in the direction of the city.

…..

On the road back, Kalan and the others learned Linley’s name. That Alice, also an earth-style magus, was filled with admiration for Linley. She, too, was only fifteen years old, and she was considered the number one genius at the Wellen [Wei’lin] Institute.

But despite this, Alice was only a magus of the fourth rank. This sort of accomplishment, at the Ernst Institute, would only be considered average.

A break in the journey. Linley, Kalan, Alice, and the others were all eating. Linley and Alice were seated together.

“Big brother Linley, you really are too amazing. You became a magus of the fifth rank when you were fourteen. I probably will be twenty when I reach the fifth rank.” Alice stared worshipfully at Linley.

“I’m nothing. The number one genius at our institute, Dixie, became a magus of the fourth rank when he was nine, and a magus of the fifth rank when he turned twelve.” Linley said casually. He didn’t disclose…that when he was thirteen, he had also been a magus of the fourth rank. But by age fourteen, he had become a magus of the fifth rank.”

In just one short year, he had advanced as much as Dixie had in three.

“A magus of the fourth rank at age nine? I’m fifteen, but I just became a magus of the fourth rank. And I’m considered the top genius at my school. Our Wellen Institute really can’t compare at all to your Ernst Institute.” Alice sighed.

“Big brother Linley, it felt like to me that your Earthen Spear Array was

very powerful and formidable, even more so than the other magi of the fifth rank at my school. Why is that?" Alice was also an earth-style magus. Naturally, she noticed the differences in Linley's spell.

Linley smiled faintly. It wasn't just power. The speed at which it erupted was also very fast.

"Earth-style magic's origin lies in the essence of the world…" Linley began explaining to Alice. To be honest, in terms of understanding earth magic, Linley had a much deeper grasp and understanding than even the earth-style instructors of the Ernst Institute. After all, he had a Saint-level Grand Magus as his personal tutor.

Alice stared at Linley, totally focusing and concentrating on him.

One listened while the other spoke. As they talked, the two of them drew closer and closer to each other. Totally absorbed in magical theory, Linley only noticed after taking a break that their faces were now so close that only a fist's worth of distance separated them.

Linley was startled. This was his first time being so close to a girl. Being so close, he could clearly see Alice's two hazy, soft eyes, her pert nose… Linley even thought that he could feel her breath on him and smell the fragrance of her body.

"Big brother Linley, why'd you stop talking?" Alice asked curiously. But moments later, Alice realized what happened. She immediately pulled back, and her face immediately flushed as red as an apple.

Linley forced himself to calm down, and then stood up to face the others. Pretending that nothing was amiss, he said, "Alright, everybody eat up. We're going to continue to travel soon. Let's do our best to arrive at the city early."

Chapter 25 – Violet in the Night Wind (part 1)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 25, Violet in the Night Wind (part 1)

On the Greenleaf Road of Fenlai City, the capital of the Kingdom of Fenlai, a member of the Holy Union, there were many noble manors clustered together. In front of one particular manor, over ten people were clustered together.

“The Debs [De’bu’si] clan would like to thank you, Linley, for your assistance. If it wasn’t for you, this child of ours, Kalan, probably would’ve suffered greatly.” A distinguished looking old man with flowing silver hair smiled towards Linley. By this old man’s side was Kalan, Alice, Tony, and Niya. Behind them were the servants of the Debs clan.”

Turning around, the old man nodded at one of the servants, who took out a small golden sack from within his clothes.

Taking the gold sack, the old man turned to Linley with a smile. “This is a hundred gold coins. Although it isn’t much, it represents the gratitude of our Debs clan. I hope, Linley, you will accept it.”

“No need. It didn’t take any effort on my part.” Linley said quite courteously. “I should be heading off now.”

The old man didn’t persist. Smiling, he watched Linley depart.

“Tony, you three should go home as well. Your parents are no doubt extremely worried.” Smiling, the old man spoke. After bidding farewell, Alice, Niya, and Tony all headed back to their own homes.

When Kalan and the silver-haired old man returned to their own living room, the old man’s face suddenly turned cold. In a voice filled with frozen rage, he barked out, “On your knees!”

With a thud, Kalan immediately fell to his knees. “Second Grandpa, it was wrong of me. This time, I brazenly took three of my friends to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts without clearly investigating all of its associated dangers. Second Grandpa, please punish me.”

“Hmph! Brazen?”

The old man’s cold glare stared daggers at Kalan. “Kalan, you are already an adult. In addition, you are the heir and successor to our Debs clan. How can you make such a foolish, such an utterly moronic mistake? How could you possibly imagine how dangerous the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is? You dared to traverse it without so much as even informing the clan? Hmph! I’ll let your own father decide what punishment would be suitable. Just let me remind you of one thing – in the future, if you continue to act so foolishly, even if the clan is handed over to you, you will wreck it!”

Hanging his head, Kalan didn’t dare to speak.

The Debs clan could be considered one of the three top clans in the Kingdom of Fenlai. The reason the Debs clan was so powerful was not because it had a high rank of nobility; it was because the Debs clan was the direct trading partner in Fenlai of the Dawson Conglomerate, one of the three greatest trading unions in the Yulan continent.

The wealth of the Dawson Conglomerate could match an entire kingdom’s wealth. It’s business stretched across the entire continent.

Any of the three trading unions on the Yulan continent possessed a terrifying amount of both wealth and power. Here in the Kingdom of Fenlai, many clans wanted to do business with them, because being able to do business with the Dawson Conglomerate meant being able to ride atop a titanic war-machine.

For the Debs clan to be able to do business with the Dawson Conglomerate was an extremely impressive thing.

After all, even the two major alliances and the Four Great Empires had to do their best to watch their step around the trading unions and to do their best to make them happy.

…..

After departing Fenlai City, Linley took the road towards the Ernst Institute. Bebe was perched on Linley's shoulders, keeping watch, while Doehring Cowart was also walking side by side with Linley.

"Grandpa Doehring, have you ever felt that this world is a terrifying place?" Linley said mentally.

Doehring Cowart nodded, but he didn't speak. He just quietly listened.

"In the past, when I visited Fenlai City, I didn't notice anything. But upon returning from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, I've learned so much. The ruthlessness and mercilessness of the mountains is naked and open. It's bloody, without any concealment."

"If we look at the high ranking magi and warriors, as well as the nobles, of Fenlai City, on the surface, they all seem to be polite and courteous. They make the entire Fenlai City seem so splendid. But the class system in Fenlai City is so severe, so callous."

"Even the law itself gives nobles far more privileges than the commoners. Although Fenlai City is very prosperous and gaudy, filled with laughter, its unspoken rules are far more binding than those of the mountains. In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, there are no such things as nobles or commoners, only the strong and the weak."

Linley was slowly beginning to understand the world.

In this world, the nobles had all the advantages, while the commoners were trampled upon. No matter how gentlemanly and refined the nobles acted, or how benevolent they behaved, there was no way they could alter the severe

inequality that existed in the world as a whole. If you wanted to have status as a commoner, your only choice was to become a powerful warrior or a powerful magus.

If you didn't strive hard, you would be discarded.

"Human society is far more complicated than the world of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. They just hide the same brutality which exists in the mountains under a beautiful set of clothes. But sometimes, this set of beautiful clothes can be very useful." From the bottom of his heart, Linley felt contempt for those nobles who pretended to be kind but really were not.

After seeing the cruelty of the mountains, as well as the splendor of Fenlai City, Linley's mentality had begun to change upon seeing the great contrast.

"Are you afraid of struggling?" Doehring Cowart suddenly asked.

Linley smirked. "Afraid? No. I enjoy it. If there were no struggles in the world, and everything was calm and peaceful, how boring would that be? I like struggle, especially struggle that is exciting. Dancing on the edge of a knife…that's the sort of life which is the most exhilarating."

"Squeak squeak!" Bebe let out two cries as well.

….

They stepped into the Ernst Institute.

After having travelled into the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and after having witnessed the cruelty of mankind, Linley cherished the genuine friendships he had formed at the Institute even more than before. Upon entering his dorm, he heard these words….

"Boss Yale, Linley still isn't back yet. Could he have run into a dangerous situation in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?"

"Shut your stinking mouth, fourth bro. Third bro will definitely come back

to us safely. Come on, let's go eat…" As he raised his head, Yale saw that familiar shadow standing in the doorway. He paused, stunned. George and Reynolds were stunned as well. But then, immediately afterwards, the three of them charged forward towards Linley.

"Haha, third bro, you finally came back!" Yale was the first to reach Linley, wrapping his arms around Linley in a bear hug.

Reynolds also shouted out happily, "Wow, Linley, do you know that Boss Yale and George have been muttering about you every day? They were all worried about you. I was the only one who was totally sure you'd make it back safe."

"Fourth bro." George stared at him. "Just now, you were talking about being worried that Linley had encountered something dangerous."

"Me?" A look of 'confusion' was on Reynolds' face. "Did I say such a thing?"

Seeing his three bros together, Linley's heart instantly felt warm. Yale immediately waved his arm ostentatiously and said, "Alright, enough chitchat. Third bro's safe return from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is a major event! Let's go have a good celebration!"

"Second bro, fourth bro." Linley laughed as well. "Let's go. We have to all go and have some drinks. My treat!"

"Whoah." Reynolds stared at him. "Your treat?"

Yale laughed loudly. "Right, third bro has to treat us. Don't forget that a while back, those representatives from the Proulx Gallery contacted us and send us that letter of invitation. Those three sculptures of third bro managed to sell for over 4000 gold coins. We have to have a good celebration."

"A letter of invitation from the Proulx Gallery?" Linley was startled.

Yale hurriedly explained, "Third bro, your sculptures sold for high prices.

The Proulx Gallery has already totally recognized your abilities as an expert sculptor, which is why they are now inviting you to start up a private booth at their ‘Hall of the Experts’. Right, let me give the letter to you.” Yale immediately ran towards the interior of the dormitory.

Reynolds said in a very secretive way towards Linley, “Linley, you wanna know something? Ever since that guy from the Proulx Gallery came to our school, the news that you’ve been invited to have a private booth at the gallery has spread across the entire institute. You fame has tremendously increased.”

“It’s been spread across the entire institute?” Linley was somewhat numb with surprise. He himself had just found out, after all.

“Right. In the entire institute, you might be the last one to know about this, actually.” George chortled as well.

“Linley, this is the letter of invitation the Proulx Gallery sent us.” Yale came running out of the dormitory with a white enveloped that had a golden seal affixed to it.

Chapter 26 – Violet in the Night Wind (part 2)

Book 3, Mountain Range of Magical Beasts – Chapter 26, Violet in the Night Wind (part 2)

Night time. The four bros of dorm 1987 were walking along a dark, silent street of the Ernst Institute, casually talking about what had happened over these past two months.

“As vicious as that?” Reynolds, amazed, tugged aside Linley’s shirt. Seeing all the crisscrossing scars across Linley’s chest, he couldn’t help but hold his breath. The nearby George also went silent. Only Yale was able to laugh, “Haha, you guys have no experience. When I was a kid, I saw way worse than this.”

“Boss Yale, are you serious?” Reynolds said in astonishment.

Yale smiled cockily. “Of course I’m serious. And I’ve seen more than a few as well. For example, killing prisoners by torture. Or real people fighting against magical beasts with their bare hands. When they fought barehanded against the beasts, they were surrounded by a ring of rich spectators. The sight was really bloody.”

Hearing Yale’s words, Linley was able to picture the scene in his mind.

“It’s good to be on campus,” George sighed.

Linley also nodded in agreement. By this time of the night, many couples could be seen walking together on the road, some holding hands, others seated together on the backs of a magical beast. Campus life was very leisurely.

“Right. Boss Yale, aren’t you going to go spend tonight with your girlfriend? Why aren’t you getting ready to leave?” Reynolds suddenly said.

Yale said with dissatisfaction, “Girlfriend? My bro has just come back from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts after encountering so many near-death situations. And I’m going to go spend time with my girlfriend? Reynolds, you have to remember these words: Bro’s are like your arms and legs, while girls are like your clothes. They’re just good for playing with.”

A look of contempt immediately appeared on Reynolds’ face.

“Linley!” A surprised voice suddenly rang out from far away.

Linley and the others all turned their heads and watched as a tall, slender, beautiful young woman with golden hair ran towards them happily. Upon reaching Linley, she exclaimed in surprise, “Linley, you’re back from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts? This is wonderful. You disappeared for two full months this time. I was so worried. Are you injured?”

“Delia, I’m fine,” Linley laughed as he responded.

Delia was also someone whom Linley had met just as he had enrolled in school. They were on very close terms with each other. When he was together with Delia, Linley felt as though he could totally relax, and be without any mental pressure. It was just like when he was with his three dear bros.

“Delia, Uncle’s carriage is outside waiting for us. Let’s not waste any time.” A cold voice rang out.

Turning his head, Linley saw a youth dressed in long robes standing some distance away. It was Delia’s elder brother, Dixie, one of the two geniuses of the Ernst Institute. Dixie’s robe was extremely clean and neat, without a single blemish or stain. His eyes also seemed very clear and tranquil.

“Oh.” Letting out a disappointed sound, Delia looked at Linley. “Linley, father asked me and my brother to go back. Our carriage is outside waiting for us. I have to go back now.”

“Alright, Delia. We can chat when you come back.” Linley smiled as he

replied.

“Right. Bye.” Delia clearly felt rather disappointed at not having more time to chat with Linley. Dixie walked over to them as well. He only glanced at Delia, and Delia immediately began walking towards him. But then, Dixie turned to look at Linley. “Linley, I heard you successfully returned from your training exercise in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Congratulations.”

Linley was stunned.

This Dixie was actually speaking to him?

Dixie’s coldness and aloofness was legendary at the Ernst Institute. Most people would feel themselves to be under enormous pressure next to Dixie, especially when his cold, clear eyes fell upon them. That sort of psychological pressure was enough to cause some to break under the strain.

“Oh. Thanks.” Linley replied.

Dixie barely nodded, and then escorted his sister Delia to the school gates.

….

Austoni carefully looked at Linley, sighing in amazement, “Linley, I must say, you really are a genius, a super genius! A fifteen year old youngster who is a genius amongst the geniuses at the number one magus academy in the entire Yulan continent, and also someone who has reached an incredibly high level in the art of stonesculpting.”

“For you to be able to accomplish all this is a miracle.”

“Putting aside the fact that you are a genius magus, even in the world of artists, in this day and age, most sculptors who qualify to be invited by us to open up a private booth in the Hall of Experts are at least forty years old. You are the youngest one. Even in our entire history, there are only two unparalleled geniuses who are a match for you. But the difference is…not

only are you a genius sculptor, you are also a genius magus. Wow…what a genius."

Austoni's words of praise caused Linley to be embarrassed and not know what to say.

"Austoni, stop wasting time. Hurry up and finish. We four bros are going to go out and have some fun." Yale urged.

Only now did Austoni seem to come to himself. He hurriedly pulled over a stack of documents and withdrew a silver magicrystal card. Smiling, he presented it to Linley. "Linley, this silver magicrystal card was specially designed by the Golden Bank of the Four Empires. It represents that you are one of our expert sculptors. In the future, any and all proceeds from sales of your art will be directly transferred by us into the balance for this card."

"Right now, this silver magicrystal card doesn't have an owner imprinted. Use your fingerprint to seal it to you. In the future, you can use it." Austoni respectfully handed the magicrystal card to Linley, then said in an eager voice, "Linley, might I ask if you brought any sculptures for us this time?"

Linley nodded his head slightly. "I have. Three in total."

Austoni's smile immediately became even more radiant.

….

Night time. Within the Jade Water Paradise. Linley, George, and two courtesans were there by themselves, drinking while talking and laughing. By now, Reynolds and Yale had long since retired to their rooms with their courtesans.

"Jeeze, those two, Boss Yale and fourth bro…" Linley drank a cup of wine as he spoke to George, who was in the middle of laughing and chatting with his girl. "Second bro, my head is getting a bit dizzy. I'm going to go out to cool off a bit."

“Sure.” George replied, then continued to chat with his companion.

Heading downstairs, Linley directly left the Jade Water Paradise. Upon departing the lively premises, Linley suddenly felt a cold, refreshing night wind blow past him, helping to clear his mind. Compared to the Jade Water Paradise, the outside was much calmer and more tranquil. Linley began to take a casual walk around the streets of Fenlai City.

The cool night breeze was very refreshing.

There were some noble estates lining the streets, but compared to the Greenleaf Road, the estates on this street, Dry Street, were clearly on a lower level. And on the balcony of one two-story estate in particular, Alice was standing, enjoying the night breeze.

Staring up at the bright moon in the empty sky, Alice couldn’t help but think about Linley, who had saved her life.

At that moment, when she had fallen into despair, he had descended from the heavens and vanquished that Bloodthirsty Warpig and saved her life. That action had shaken her deeply. It could be said that that event had left a deep impression on her soul.

“Big brother Linley is a bit taciturn, but when he gets into discussing magic, he’s rather handsome.” A faint smile appeared on Alice’s face as she reminisced.

Suddenly, Alice saw a figure walking on the streets below. His frame seemed very familiar. Taking a closer look, she immediately recognized him, and a smile lit her face up. She hurriedly waved while shouting, “Big brother Linley, big brother Linley!”

Linley, who was walking on the street while enjoying the cool night, looked up suspiciously as he heard someone calling his name.

A distant balcony, a shadowy form dressed in violet, the bright moon illuminating from behind. The violet clothes fluttered in the night breeze,

and under the glow of the moon, seemed to radiate. Long hair fluttering alongside the violet clothes. Suddenly, Linley seemed to smell Alice's fragrance.

That fragrance, was so mesmerizing…

"Alice…" Linley couldn't help but walk towards that balcony.

Chapter 1 – Coming Home (part 1)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 1, Coming Home (part 1)

The walls around Alice's manor were not too high, only around two meters high. Walking to the walls, with a single jump, Linley leapt on top of the walls. Then, with a single leap, he descended in front of Alice, as though he had flown to her.

"Quick, lie down." Alice urgently tugged at Linley.

Suspicious, Linley obediently sat down.

"Shhh." Alice cautiously looked around before finally letting out her breath as she turned to Linley. "Good thing everyone's asleep. If someone saw something, then I would be in for a lot of trouble."

Linley suddenly understood.

"Let's sit down. If we talk while sitting down, the wall will prevent anyone from seeing us." Alice smiled delightedly, like a sly little fox. She casually wiped down the floor with a nearby cloth, then sat down alongside Linley.

Linley was also very delighted to be able to run into Alice again.

"Big brother Linley, what are you doing out here on the streets so late at night? Right, didn't you say you are a student at the Ernst Institute? What are you doing here in Fenlai City?" In one breathe, Alice asked several questions.

Why was he in Fenlai City?

Linley felt rather awkward. After all, he couldn't say that he had come here to visit the Jade Water Paradise with three friends, could he?

“I came with a few close friends to have fun in the city. At night time, I thought it was really stuffy inside, so I came out for a stroll.” Linley could only give this rather unclear answer.

Alice nodded.

“Alice, what are you doing up awake so late at night?” Linley asked.

Alice chewed her lower lips helplessly. “I fell asleep really early, but just as I was enjoying my rest, I got woken up out of a beautiful dream by my father, who drank too much and was totally smashed. You don’t know how excessive my father is. He goes gambling every day and drinking every day. After getting drunk, he causes trouble at home. I’m so annoyed!”

“To have a father like this, all I can say that is that I’m unlucky. How about you, Linley? What is your father like?” Alice was looking at Linley, who was seated across from her.

“My father?” Linley couldn’t help but think about his own father. “My father doesn’t gamble. Although he does drink, he doesn’t get drunk. But my father is extremely strict. He’s been like that since I was young.”

Alice sighed with jealousy. “Big brother Linley, you are so lucky. Unlike me.”

Under the moonlight, a young man and a young woman were chatting happily on a balcony. From the topic of fathers, they switched to education, then to their schools, and then to each other’s friends. Finally, they started talking about things they did with their friends…

Linley was very happy while chatting with her. The more they chatted, the more Linley began to understand what Alice’s life was like.

Slowly, the night wore on, and the first rays of light began to peek out from the east. The entire earth began to be filled up with the fresh morning air. But Linley and Alice, both happily immersed in conversation, didn’t notice the passage of time at all. Only when the sky was bright did the two of them

realize how much time had passed.

“Oh, it’s day already.” Only now did Linley notice the time.

Alice finally realized as well. “I’m so embarrassed, big brother Linley. I’ve forced you to keep me company all night.”

Suddenly, Linley and Alice stopped talking. They felt a bit awkward.

“Right. Time for me to go.” Linley could feel that the atmosphere was a bit strange. He couldn’t help but suddenly feel nervous, and so he immediately stood up.

“Big brother Linley, in the future, will you come back to Fenlai City?” Alice asked.

“I will, as long as I have free time.” Gripping the railings with his hands, Linley somersaulted over, landing on the wall, then with a leap, jumped down to the street below, almost ten meters away from the wall.

Linley didn’t look back, just casually, weakly waving goodbye.

Alice watched as Linley departed. Only after he disappeared into the streets did she rather forlornly return to her own room.

….

The summer sun in August was like a huge ball of flame, baking the land. After having lunch with his three bros, Linley headed directly towards his hometown, Wushan township. He carried with him his backpack with over 70,000 gold coins worth of magicite cores.

“Squeak squeak.” On Linley’s back, Bebe began to excitedly squeak as well.

Linley glanced at Bebe, then began laughing as well. He mentally said, “Bebe, you are excited about going back to Wushan township as well, eh?

Right, I've never asked you before, but how and why did you appear in my family's courtyard, back then?"

"I dunno either." Bebe helplessly shook his little head. "As far back as I can remember, I was there in your family's back courtyard. I don't know who my parents are either. But I do remember one thing; a voice, which seemed to say, 'Stay here, don't run around.'"

"Stay here, don't run around?" Linley heart throbbed.

Could that voice have been that of Bebe's father or mother?

"At the beginning, I just ate rocks. I obeyed that voice, so I didn't leave your family's courtyard. But then, boss, you found me and fed me a wild hare. In the whole wide world, there isn't anybody who treats me better than you, boss. I don't want to ever leave ya, boss." Bebe wrinkled his little nose.

Linley, too, reminisced about what had happened before.

Back then, Bebe really did hesitate for a while at the entrance to Wushan township, but in the end, upon seeing Linley really was going to leave, Bebe had made the decision to bite Linley and initiate their soul binding contract.

"Alright, Bebe, we'll always be together, okay?" Linley lovingly stroked Bebe's little head, and Bebe, comforted, closed his little eyes happily.

Linley didn't walk too fast, traveling around twenty kilometers per hour. By the time he arrived at the borders of Wushan township, it was already night. As he made his way into town, he heard a familiar voice…

"All of you, straighten and tighten up those waists! Don't bend! If anyone's buttocks touches those branches and gets stained by the dye, they'll be considered to have broken the rules. Double training for them!" Hillman's voice could be heard from far away.

Linley stared towards him.

On that familiar, empty field in the east side of Wushan township, next to a row of trees, a group of kids from age six to sixteen were standing in three divisions. Under the strict supervision of Hillman and the other two, they were engaged in tough training. Sweat had totally drenched all of the children's clothes.

"Back in the day, I did this training as well." Seeing this, Linley felt very moved.

"Linley?" Hillman saw Linley from far off. After giving some instructions to Roger and Lorry, he immediately ran over towards Linley, immediately giving Linley a big bear hug.

"Uncle Hillman, long time no see!" Linley was very happy as well.

"Haha, let's go! Let's go home first. Lord Hogg will be so happy to see you." Hillman chortled as he spoke, and then led Linley into Wushan township proper.

"Young master Linley." Roger and Lorry greeted Linley warmly from afar.

"Uncle Roger, Uncle Lorry." Linley also waved at them happily, and then followed Hillman towards his own manor.

"Linley, you brought a backpack with you? It seems heavy. What's inside?" Hillman noticed the backpack on Linley's back, and asked with a laugh.

Linley smiled mysteriously. "A present, a present for my father!"

Chapter 2 – Coming Home (part 2)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 2, Coming Home (part 2)

Within the Baruch clan manor, Hogg was reclining in a chair, carefully reading an exceedingly thick book.

“Lord Hogg, dinner is prepared.” A female servant said respectfully.

Ever since Housekeeper Hiri had gone off to accompany Wharton to the O’Brien Empire, the Baruch clan no longer had any servants in their employ. But Hogg was the clan leader of the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors. He couldn’t do all the servant’s work himself, right? So he forced himself to hire a female servant.”

“Oh.” Hogg closed his book and glanced at the female servant. In his heart, he sighed, “Fortunately, now that these other nobles know that my son is a genius magus at the Ernst Institute, they are willing to loan me money again. Otherwise, life would be even tougher.”

Based on the low taxation rate in Wushan township, Hogg was only able to just barely pay his bodyguard’s salary and also pay his yearly tithe to the kingdom. Hogg felt unhappy just thinking about it. By the time the clan had fallen into his hands, virtually all things of value had been sold off.

Fortunately…

He, Hogg, had two sons, two wonderful sons.

“Linley is already a magus of the fifth rank. He will graduate soon. By then, I can hand the position of clan leader to him, and I’ll be able to do some things I have always wanted to do.”

Hogg stood up, preparing to head towards the dining room, when suddenly…

“Lord Hogg, Lord Hogg!” Hillman’s voice rang out from afar.

Hogg looked questioningly towards the main gate. In a short period of time, Hillman ran in, and right besides Hillman was a tall, sturdily built young fellow.

Upon seeing the young fellow, a smile blossomed upon Hogg’s face. Laughing loudly, he advanced. “Linley, you are back. Haha, this is wonderful. This is an enormous surprise!”

“Agatha [A’jia’sa], please prepare a more sumptuous dinner.” Hogg intimately patted Linley on the shoulders. “Nice, kid. You are almost as tall as me now. Oh, right. I thought you were usually only allowed to come back at the end of each year. This time?…”

Linley smiled secretly. “Father, I’ll tell you later, during dinner.”

“So mysterious?” Hogg intentionally frowned at Linley.

Hillman, next to them, laughed, “Lord Hogg, Linley wouldn’t tell me either, but he’s prepared a mysterious gift for you. I asked him what, but he refused to say.”

“Uncle Hillman!” Linley frowned at Hillman.

“Alright, I’ll be quiet, I’ll be quiet.” Hillman laughed loudly.

Darkness fell upon the world, blanketing the earth in shadows, but the Baruch clan manor’s dining room was brightly lit with many lanterns. After finishing dinner, the serving girl Agatha cleared the table, leaving behind only Linley and Hogg in the room. Only now did Linley place the backpack in front of his father.

“This is?” Hogg stared suspiciously at Linley.

“We’ll open it in a bit.” Linley stood up and closed the door to the room.

Hogg couldn't help but chuckle. "As secretive as all that? You even went to close the door."

Linley sat down confidently. "Father, you can open the backpack now."

"Hrmph, let me see just what you have in here." Hogg curiously opened the backpack, but much to his surprise, there was another sack inside the backpack. The mouth to the large sack was closed tightly, and it was bulging with the magicite cores that were hidden within it.

Rubbing his hands against the sack, Hogg said suspiciously, "What a large sack. It doesn't feel like gold inside. Can it be pebbles?" Hogg didn't understand what was going on. As he spoke, he opened the sack up.

As soon as the sack opened…

Gaudy, beautiful, multicolored magicite cores all gleamed with rainbow light. Hogg couldn't help but feel dazed upon seeing them. This sack was filled to the brim with magicite cores. In all his life, Hogg had never seen so many.

"These are magicite cores?" Hogg's eyes were round, and he stared at Linley in astonishment. And then, he slowly swallowed. Hogg had seen magicite cores before, but he had never seen so many in one place. So many magicite cores in one sack really did have the capacity to astonish its viewers.

Linley nodded. "Right. This bag is filled almost exclusively with magicite cores. There's a very small number of magestones inside as well. Based on what I read, these magicite cores should be worth a total of around 70,000 gold coins."

"Seventy thousand gold coins?" Hogg felt his heart pump frantically.

All these years, Hogg had been suffering from the restrictions of money. By now, even if one just wanted Hogg to produce 500 gold coins, Hogg would probably have to go borrow money. One could imagine how dire their

straits were.

Seventy thousand gold coins!

What sort of wealth was this? 70,000 gold pieces definitely could keep the entire Baruch clan fed for over a hundred years.

“Of course, 70,000 is just the book estimate, and these prices were previous prices. I expect that this will be enough to reach 80,000 gold prices.” Liney said honestly.

Staring at the gaudy magicite cores, Hogg felt as though he were living in a dream. His entire body was floating.

“Haaaaah. Haaaaah.”

Hogg took two deep breaths, finally calming himself down.

“Linley, where did you get these magicite cores?” Hogg finally thought of this. He stared at Linley with a deadly stare. “Did you go to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?”

Linley nodded. “Yes, father. I got all of these from Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.”

“You…you…” Hogg was somewhat angry now. “The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts is one of the most dangerous places in the entire continent. Entering it is a major endeavor. Why didn’t you discuss it over with me before going inside? Do you know how dangerous it is in there?”

Just as he finished speaking, Hogg began to laugh at himself.

Linley had gone inside, after all. He definitely now knew how dangerous it was.

Hogg lowered his gaze, and was silent. Seeing Linley with an earnest “listening to himself being lectured” expression on his face, he couldn’t

help but shake his head and sigh. “Linley, it’s not that I, your father, want to yell at you. But you must know that you are currently a genius magus studying at the Ernst Institute. In the future, your potential will be limitless. The heavy burden of stewarding the Baruch clan will rest on your shoulders. After all, your brother is still young. Who knows how long it would take before he becomes a real Dragonblood Warrior? All my hopes rest on you for now, as well as all of the hopes of the Baruch clan. This is why you can’t treat your life as a joke.”

Linley didn’t dare to speak.

“Take off your clothes. Let me see if you have any injuries.” Hogg suddenly said.

Take his clothes off?

Linley hesitated. Others couldn’t tell with his clothes on, but Linley himself knew very well how terrifying the sight of all the crisscrossing scars on his body was.

Hogg frowned. “Take them off.”

After hesitating another moment, in the end, Linley still undressed, taking off his shirt and baring his upper body. Upon his robust chest, there were countless scars, and even several wounds that appeared to be fatal wounds!

Seeing the terrifying scars on Linley’s body, Hogg could feel his own heart quivering.

Hogg reached out towards Linley’s chest with a quivering hand. Seeing those near-fatal wounds on Linley’s chest, Hogg couldn’t help but feel his heart turn sour. How much pain had his son had to endure, how many near-death experiences had his son experience? Hogg didn’t even want to think about it.

“Linley, you…” Hogg choked up.

“Father, look, I’m fine.” Linley immediately said comfortingly.

Hogg stared at the pile of magicite cores, which represented a huge sum of money, then turned to look once more at the terrifying scars on Linley’s body. Hogg’s entire body began to quiver.

He was filled with hate!

Hate for himself for being useless, for being incapable!

Taking a deep breath, Hogg finally fell silent, staring at the sky. In the end, he finally said in a low voice, “Linley, you’ve spent an entire day on the road. You must be tired. Go get some rest.”

“Yes, father.”

Linley quietly left, leaving Hogg alone, sitting quietly by himself, in that dining hall lit by candles…

Chapter 3 – Hogg

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 3, Hogg

The next morning, while seated at the dining table in their dining hall, Linley was astonished to see his father looking radiant, with energy levels seemingly like Linley had never seen.

Putting down his knife and fork, Hogg smiled as he looked at Linley. "Linley, this time you should stay at home a bit longer. It's been quite some time since I have seen you. The two of us, father and son, need to spend some quality time together."

His father was asking him to stay at home longer?

Linley was a bit astonished. After all, in all these years, his father had never said these type of words to him. Originally, Linley was planning to go back to Fenlai City to stroll about and maybe visit Alice. But upon hearing these, he put all thoughts of visiting her aside.

"Okay, father." Linley happily nodded.

Hogg nodded with pleasure, but in Hogg's eyes, there seemed to be an hint of something indecipherable.

….

This time, Linley stayed for ten full days in Wushan township. Even when the start date for the next semester at the Ernst Institute arrived, he still didn't go back, and Hogg didn't rush him either.

Upon the mountain peaks of Mt. Wushan, rain clouds drifted hither and to. Linley was seated in a meditative pose, refining mageforce.

Earth elemental essence and wind elemental essence swirled around Linley,

entering his body from every direction and being absorbed into his muscles, his skeleton, and his veins, improving his body's strength. After part was absorbed, the rest was transformed into mageforce and stored in his central dantian.

Like an ocean being fed by a hundred rivers, all of the flows of elemental essence in his body would eventually end up here.

Linley just sat there for half a day. By the time Linley opened his eyes, it was already sunset.

"Time to go back to school." Linley rose to his feet and took a deep breath. "Ever since I gave those magicite cores to my father, my father has changed for the better. He's been much closer to me as well."

These ten days Linley had spent here had been the closest ten days he had ever spent with his father.

"What caused father to change so much? The magicite cores? I don't think father would have changed just because of money. Perhaps…it was the scars on my body?" Linley pondered, but in the end, he still couldn't fully understand why his father's attitude towards him had changed so much.

'Asking if one was cold, worried that one might be hot'; this idiom expressing concern perfectly captured how considerate and caring Hogg was towards Linley.

After entering the Baruch clan manor, Linley immediately saw his father, book in hand. "Father, it's getting dark. Why don't you finish the book tomorrow?"

"Oh, Linley's back." Laughing, Hogg closed the book. "Your words have merit. I'll finish it tomorrow."

"Linley, after spending all this time training, you should be thirsty." Hogg poured a glass of hot water from the tea carafe he kept by his side. "Here, have something for your throat. The temperature of this water is just right,

not too cold, not too hot."

"Thanks, father." Linley's heart felt warm.

This was how Hogg had treated Linley during these past ten days; incomparably well. While in the past, Hogg was always strict and solemn. Rarely would he show his affectionate side.

While drinking the water, Linley said, "Father, I've been at home for some time now. I'm planning to go back to school tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" Hogg paused for a moment, seemingly stunned, but then nodded. "Alright. Come back earlier for your end-of-the-year holiday this year."

"Sure." Linley assented.

Hogg said in a soft voice, "Linley, your father doesn't have much ability. In the future, our clan will depend on you. By giving me these magicite cores, your little brother's tuition expenses are guaranteed as well. I am already extremely satisfied. But in my mind, I still constantly think about our family's humiliation. I hope that you will never forget that our ancestral heirloom is still in the hands of others."

Linley could sense his father's faith being placed in him. Taking a deep breath, he nodded slightly.

"Right now, I don't have any other desires. I only hope that before my death, I will be able to see with my own eyes the 'Slaughterer' warblade." Hogg's voice became even more quiet.

Linley could feel that something was amiss. He immediately said, "Father, don't be so gloomy. You are only forty years old this year. You have lots of time left. I have confidence that within ten years, I can definitely bring our warblade 'Slaughterer' back, and once more place it within the ancestral hall in our manor."

“Ten years. Good, good.” Hogg gently nodded.

….

The second day, after lunch, Linley departed from Wushan township. That night, in the main hall at the Baruch manor, two people sat together. Hogg, and Hillman. The door to the hall was closed, and on the main table in that hall, the sack of magicite cores was on display.

Hillman had been totally stupefied by this sack of magicite cores. Finally, Hogg spoke. “Hillman, I plan to sell off these magicite cores. I want to entrust that gold into your safekeeping.”

Hillman immediately recollected himself. He hurriedly said, “Lord Hogg, no. How can you hand such a vast sum of money to me? Why don’t you take care of it?”

“Hillman, don’t call me Lord Hogg. You can just address me as big brother Hogg again.” Hogg laughed in a very kind way.

Suddenly, Hogg stood up, facing the east. “Me, take care of it? Haha… Hillman, perhaps there is nobody besides you who knows more about the affairs of the Baruch clan…and about me.”

Hillman started. He didn’t know why Hogg had suddenly said this.

“That affair has been buried in the deepest reaches of my heart for eleven years now. For eleven years, I’ve felt as though my heart has been chewed on by ants. I’ve been suppressing it all this time. Suppressing it, one day after another, one year after another…and in the blink of an eye, eleven years went by.”

Hogg’s entire body began to tremble.

Hillman’s face changed. He suddenly stood up, saying in astonishment, “Lord Hogg, are you going to…?!”

“Right. I am going to investigate what happened that year. I must get vengeance for Lina [Lin’na].” Hogg’s face was fierce and violent, filled with baleful aura.

“Lord Hogg.” Hillman hurriedly said. “Didn’t we investigate it back in the day? The opponent has tremendous power. Just the small part of it that we encountered was already terrifying. If you keep investigating, it’ll mean the death of you.”

Hogg let out a low growl. “Death? You think I fear death? Hillman, you have no idea how much pain I’ve been in these past eleven years, the sort of mental torment I’ve been under. I’ve had enough. The value of the magicite cores should be worth around 80,000 gold coins or so. This will totally be enough to pay for Wharton’s tuition. With this sum of money, I have no worries or cares at all now.”

“All these years, I’ve been suppressing myself, why? Because of my two sons. Now that Linley has grown up, and Wharton has reached the O’Brien Empire, I have nothing to worry about anymore.”

Hogg tightly clenched Hillman’s shoulders with his hands, staring into Hillman’s eyes. “Hillman, although you have always addressed me as Lord Hogg, after all these years, the two of us have developed genuine brotherly affection towards each other. For the sake of that brotherly love, I hope you can help me.”

“Hogg, you…” Hillman was frantic.

Hillman knew very well that once Hogg really went to investigate that affair, he would very likely lose his life.

“My mind is set. Hillman, you must understand, this life I have been living is worse than death.” Hogg’s eyes were turning red. Seeing Hogg like this, Hillman felt helpless. He could understand how Hogg felt.

Why was it that over these years, Hogg had become so solemn, so cold?

Others might not know, but Hillman knew very well. Before the birth mother of Linley and Wharton, Lina, had died, Hogg was a very easy-going, open-minded person. But after Lina's death, Hogg's character and disposition had changed.

Although Hogg had told others that Lina had died in childbirth, Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri knew the truth.

"Hillman, don't try to persuade me. I just want to ask you – will you help me, or won't you?" Hogg fixed his gaze upon Hillman.

Staring at Hogg, in the end, Hillman let out a long sigh. "Fine. I'll help." A hint of a smile blossomed on Hogg's face. The smile of relief and liberation.

Chapter 4 – The Price of a Sculpture

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 4, The Price of a Sculpture

On the Dry Road of Fenlai City, Alice was standing on the balcony of her two-story house. Her hands cupped her face as she stared down at the street and the people on it.

Ever since Linley had departed, Alice would come here almost every day to watch the people on the street, hoping that Linley would come again. But…

“School starts again tomorrow. I have to go back today.” Alice secretly sighed, taking another glance at the street.

She had hoped that Linley would come see her again, but over the past ten or so days, Linley hadn’t come even a single time. By this time, the voice of her good friend, Niya, could be heard from below. “Alice, hurry up.” Niya, Tony, and Kalan were all down at her door, waiting for her.

Kalan, Niya, and Tony were all students at war academies, and their school was located fairly close to Alice’s magus institute. Given that, and the fact that all four of their families were located in Fenlai City, they were on very good terms.

“Okay, coming!”

Alice glanced at the street one last time before putting on her backpack and going downstairs.

….

On the third night after Alice had departed the city, Linley arrived in front of Alice’s residence. Raising his head to look up at the little balcony, he saw that no one was there.

“Hey, what are you doing here?” A middle-aged guard in front of the residence shouted at Linley.

Turning his head, Linley smiled as he replied, “Hello. I’m from the Wellen Institute. Alice is a good friend of mine. Is she still at home?”

“Oh.” Hearing these words, the guard immediately was all smiles. “Miss Alice has already left for school three days ago. She’s long since headed back to school.”

“Oh, got it. Thanks.” Linley said courteously.

Turning around, Linley left via the Dry Road. After departing on the Dry Road, he turned his head and glanced at the balcony on the second level of the house. In his heart, he felt a bit helpless.

…….

On the road in front of the Ernst Institute.

A white light shone out of the Coiling Dragon ring and transformed into a white-robed old man, the white-bearded Doehring Cowart. Smiling, Doehring Cowart said to Linley, “Linley, you’ve fallen for Alice?”

“A bit.” Linley didn’t deny it.

Doehring Cowart stroked his beard, laughing loudly. “I didn’t think that you, you little punk, would finally fall for a girl. But Linley, you and Alice are at different magus institutes. With the two of you living in separate places, it will be very hard for your relationship to advance.”

“I know. It’s up to fate. If we are meant to be, we will. If not, then forget it.” Linley couldn’t help but think about what being together with Alice would be like.

He thought back to that terrified look on her face during the battle with the Bloodthirsty Warpig.

On the road back from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, that shy look on her face as the two of them talked.

And under the moonlight, her moving appearance, seemingly the goddess of the moon herself.

…..

“This must be what one’s first crush is like.” Linley said to himself self-deprecatingly. By his age, all the other bros in his dorm had dated, with Yale and Reynolds having found girlfriends long ago.

As far as relationships went, Linley actually was somewhat excited about it.

…..

At the Ernst Institute, Linley was still as studious and hard-working as ever. Every day, he would spend at least part of his time training in the Straight Chisel School of sculpting. In terms of both spiritual essence and mageforce, his power continued to grow both stably and quickly.

In the blink of an eye, a month passed.

Per their previous arrangement, Linley and his bros brought three new sculptures to Fenlai City, where they were received at the Proulx Gallery by manager Austoni.

“Almost 15,000 gold coins? That much?” Linley was somewhat astonished by the price his three previous sculptures had fetched.

Austoni laughed loudly. “Linley, this is normal. The value of most expert sculptors is around a thousand gold coins. But the Proulx Gallery would of course introduce you and your status as a fifteen year old genius magus who is also an expert sculptor. Just based on your personal status alone, the value of your artwork will be multiplied.”

“More importantly than that though…your sculptures have a very unique aura. Although other people’s sculptures are also beautiful, in terms of smoothness, there will always be some flaws. The lines of your sculptures are very smooth. For example, when comparing where you used the straight chisel and where you used the butterfly chisel, people actually can’t tell. They flowed together very perfectly.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh on hearing this.

Traces of switching tools?

From start to finish, his sculptures were carved with the usage of the straight chisel. He didn’t use any other tools at all. Naturally, the lines would be very perfect and smooth.

“This unique point, along with the innately lofty, arrogant aura your sculptures possess, and combined with your personal status, caused each sculpture to rise to the price of five thousand gold coins. The only thing preventing the price from rising even further was that there were still some minute imperfections in your patterns.” Austoni explained and praised.

In his heart, Linley understood.

“Minute imperfections?” Linley mentally shook his head. He only used a straight chisel. Although he could manage to carve out some unique patterns with it, in terms of effectiveness, naturally it would not be able to compete with specialized tools such as the butterfly chisel or the oblique knife.

At the same time, Linley couldn’t help but sigh.

Those three sculptures were able to reach a price of 15,000 gold coins. This money came so easily. If Linley spent all his time carving, in a month, he could definitely produce ten sculptures.

Ten sculptures meant 50,000 gold coins!

“In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts I spent two months and encountered countless dangers and experienced countless life and death situations. After killing all those assassins, I ended up with just 70,000 gold coins or so. Being a sculptor is like stealing money.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh.

The value of Linley’s sculpture was considered high even amongst experts.

“If expert sculptors are practically stealing money, then grandmaster sculptors…” Linley couldn’t help but be moved.

The deeper Linley began to understand this profession, the more amazed he was. The circle of sculptors had an incredible disparity in terms of income. In the entirety of the Holy Union, there was perhaps just a hundred or so expert sculptors. One could imagine how rare they were.

“Linley, work hard. I have faith that one day, you will become an amazing grandmaster sculptor.” Austoni said encouragingly.

Not only did grandmaster sculptors possess amazing wealth, they also had an exceedingly high social status. They stood at the very top of this ancient artistic form. Even most powerful nobles, upon meeting them, wouldn’t dare to be arrogant.

Grandmaster!

This was a very incredible designation.

It wasn’t something one could acquire through money or power. Only when a person had received universal acclaim as being on top of a particular field would one be honored with the designation of ‘grandmaster’.

Chapter 5 – The Rose in Winter (part 1)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 5, The Rose in Winter (part 1)

That evening, Linley and his bros all walked out of an inn together. Per their usual habits, they would head to the Jade Water Paradise together.

“Boss Yale, you three go on ahead without me. I’m going to take a walk.” Linley said to them after leaving the inn.

Yale, Reynolds, and George all stared at Linley in surprise.

“I really don’t like the atmosphere all that much at the Jade Water Paradise. You guys go on ahead. In about two or three hours, I’ll meet up with you.” Linley explained, and then Bebe, standing on top of Linley’s shoulders, let out two squeaks. Mentally, Bebe said, “Boss, you headin’ to Alice’s?”

Since he was always by Linley’s side, of course Bebe knew everything.

Although Bebe didn’t seem to grow larger, his intelligence by now was the match of any human youth.

“You little…” Linley glanced at Bebe, annoyed.

“Alright, third bro, you go out for your walk. But don’t walk for too long.” Yale laughed. Linley bid his three bros farewell, then started to walk in the direction of the Dry Road.

The Dry Road didn’t see too much traffic, and thus it seemed very quiet. On both sides of the road were various restaurants and inns, with most of the customers inside being locals.

As he drew close to Alice’s residence, Linley looked up at the balcony on the second floor.

The balcony was still empty.

Linley laughed at himself. In honesty, he had only a shred of hope that she might be here. Linley immediately turned and headed into a nearby bar, selecting a window seat. Through the window, Linley could see Alice's balcony.

"One bottle of jade wine and two cups." Linley casually ordered.

"Yes, sir."

Although the servant was rather curious as to why Linley wanted two cups, he didn't ask.

"Bebe, drink slowly." Linley poured a cup for Bebe and set it to the side. Bebe immediately hopped onto the table and, imitating Linley, began to sip the wine.

Holding his cup of wine and staring at the balcony, Linley sipped slowly.

Just like that, the two of them, a man and a magical beast, drank quietly, polishing off three bottles over the course of two hours. Only then did Linley pay his tab, and the two of them left the bar.

"Boss, are you really disappointed?" On Linley's shoulder, Bebe messaged him mentally.

Linley reached out to stroke Bebe's little head. Laughing, he 'berated', "You little punk." And then Linley began walking towards the major roads of Fenlai City towards the direction of the Jade Water Paradise, enjoying the night scenery.

The second day, September 30th, Linley and his three bros left the city and returned to the Ernst Institute. That night, Alice, Kalan, and the others returned to Fenlai City.

The reason for this 'coincidence' was that the Ernst Institute and the Wellen

had different break days for the students.

The break days for Ernst Institute students was on the 29th and 30th of each month, while for Wellen Institute students, it was on the 1st and 2nd of each month. Thus, Alice only got home on the 30th.

Sadly…

Although Alice stood there on the balcony, watching the crowded streets, occasionally getting excited when someone who looked similar to Linley walked by, in the end, she was always disappointed.

The afternoon of October 2nd, she had no choice but to return to school.

….

October 29th, Linley once again went into town to deliver three more stone sculptures. At night, Linley once again went to that bar on the Dry Road. He once more selected the same window seat, ordered the same jade wine, and began drinking with Bebe.

“Boss, looks like you are gonna be disappointed again.” Bebe looked at Linley, his beady little black eyes rolling as he mentally spoke.

“No big deal. I guess it wasn’t meant to be.” Throwing his head back, Linley polished that cup of wine off. By now, him and Bebe had finished two bottles of jade wine. But on the balcony, Linley still could not see the figure he was waiting for.

By now, the server came over.

“One more bottle of…” Halfway through his sentence, Linley paused, and his eyes lit up, his gaze focusing on that little balcony on the second floor of Alice’s house. A female figure dressed in white had suddenly appeared.

“Bill, please.” Linley immediately stood up.

The server, already preparing to grab another bottle of wine, was momentarily baffled, but he quickly recovered. After paying the bill, Linley walked out, with Bebe leaping from the table to his shoulders.

By now, it was almost eight at night. The Dry Road was getting dark. Because it wasn't a main road, there were very few people there at night.

"It's Alice." Linley was absolutely certain.

"Whoah, Boss, you finally are gonna meet that beauty again. Haha! Are you happy? Are you excited? Are you impatient?" On Linley's shoulders, Bebe continued speaking delightedly.

Linley didn't even pay attention to Bebe. Quite agilely, he flipped over Alice's wall, and with a push of his hands, he transformed into a black blur, landing directly onto the balcony.

Alice had been watching Linley make his way over to her past the wall this entire time.

"Big brother Linley!" Alice immediately recognized him. Her heart rate immediately sped up and, nervous, her face turned red as well. But in her heart, she was filled with joy.

Last time, she hadn't managed to catch Linley. Upon returning to the Wellen Institute, she had asked around and found out that the Ernst Institute's vacation days were on the 29th and the 30th. Thus, Alice had skipped class and come home two days early.

"Big brother Linley, what a coincidence." Alice said with a smile.

Linley was briefly stunned. "Alice, yeah, what a coincidence."

Alice couldn't help but laugh, before she recovered and immediately tugged Linley to sit down. "Quick, sit down, don't let anyone see you." Linley sat down. The two of them hid in the corner of the balcony, quietly chatting with each other.

Doehring Cowart appeared at this time.

“Linley, Linley.”

“Doehring Cowart, what is it?” Linley was a bit unhappy.

Doehring Cowart laughed loudly. “Kid, don’t talk too much with this girl about irrelevant things. Be a bit friendlier, a bit more forward. You idiot. Judging from the look of her, this Alice girl is interested in you too.”

“No rush, no rush.” Although Linley had no fear of death, at this moment in time, he was a bit unsteady and a bit wobbly, mentally speaking.

“You really are stupid.” Doehring Cowart said impatiently.

Linley began to totally ignore Doehring Cowart’s advice, only talking to Alice about irrelevant, casual topics.

Watching the two of them, in the end, Doehring Cowart could only shake his head and disappear back into the Coiling Dragon ring. While chatting with Alice, Linley didn’t notice the passage of time in the slightest.

“Big brother Linley, you are so amazing! You must have lots of girls chasing after you at the Ernst Institute, right?” Alice intentionally said these words in a casual manner, but upon hearing them, Linley’s heart began to beat faster.

“Not too bad, not too bad.” While chatting with Alice, sometimes Linley spoke without thinking.

“You idiot.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Chapter 6 – The Rose in Winter (part 2)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 6, The Rose in Winter (part 2)

Together with Alice, Linley felt truly joyful from the bottom of his heart. In this manner, an entire night passed away. Neither Linley nor Alice felt tired at all, despite having been up all night.

As the sun began to rise, the horizon began to glow with a soft, blue color.

“The sun is rising. Alice, I have to go.” Linley stood up.

“Okay.” Alice replied.

Alice also stood up, looking at Linley with a somewhat reluctant to part expression. Linley grinned, waved at her, then floated down to the street like a leaf, his body surrounded by flows of air.

After Linley arrived at the Jade Water Palace, he waited for his bros to get out of bed, at which point he was ‘interrogated’ by Yale and the other two.

After returning to the Ernst Institute, Linley continued to be as studious as ever. But when he was relaxing, he would often think of Alice. Linley had a certain feeling; he had been struck in the heart by the gods of love.

Yulan calendar, year 9997, November 29th. Evening.

Alice had gotten up very early to wait outside her family’s door. After waiting for a while, she saw Linley’s familiar figure making his way up from the Dry Road. Immediately, she ran to him.

“Big brother Linley.” Alice shouted rather excitedly. They hadn’t seen each other for a month. After finally being able to see him, Alice was somewhat unable to control her excitement.

In his heart, Linley was feeling excited as well. After all, it had been a month since they last met. But today, he felt especially happy. “Even though I didn’t tell Alice when I would see her again, she came outside to wait for me today.”

Last time, after chatting with Alice, Linley discovered that the Wellen Institute’s vacation days were on the 1st and 2nd of each month. Alice was skipping class in order to meet with him. Linley fully understood what that meant.

“Linley, keep at it! This time, you have to be a bit braver.” Doehring Cowart’s voice sounded out in Linley’s mind.

Linley secretly also made up his mind. After all, he didn’t want to wait another month.

“Alice, why are you outside today, instead of on your porch?” Linley and Alice were walking side by side on the street. Alice laughed. “We can’t always be hiding on my balcony, can we?”

Thinking back to how the two of them were hiding in the corner of a balcony, Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“Right. If you don’t go back home at night, isn’t your father going to be worried?” Linley asked.

“Him?” Alice pouted. “My father is a drunken sot, and also a compulsive gambler. He might not even know when he himself will be home, much less me.”

“Big brother Linley, I grew up in Fenlai City as a child. Fenlai City is a very big city. You probably haven’t been to many places. Come on, I’ll show you around.” Alice laughed.

Linley and Alice walked together on the streets. It was winter now, and on the Yulan continent, December and January were the two coldest months of the year. The night wind was very cold as well. There weren’t too many

people on the streets.

But as Linley and Alice walked and chatted, they totally ignored the people who were on the streets.

“Oh, it’s snowing?” Alice raised her head up to stare at the night sky and watched as white flecks gently drifted down. “I love snow. This is the first snow of this year’s winter.”

“I also like snow.” Linley lifted his head up, allow the snow to collect and then dissolve upon his face.

To be able to take a walk with the girl he liked on a snowy night was quite romantic. The two of them continued their slow stroll in the streets of Fenlai City.

“Big brother Linley, do you have a girlfriend?” Alice suddenly asked, before saying in a soft voice, “Big brother Linley, you are so amazing, you must have one already.”

“I do not, definitely do not.” Linley quickly said.

Hearing his words, Alice fell silent.

“Alice, do you have a boyfriend?” Linley dithered for a while, but finally got the question out.

Alice’s face immediately turned red. Even her neck turned red. But in the dark night, there was no way for Linley to see. “How could I have a boyfriend? Who would want me as their girlfriend?”

“Oh.”

Linley took a deep breath, then suddenly said, “Then how about, you be my girlfriend?”

“Um…” Alice looked up at Linley in surprise, as though she had been

stunned silly. Linley was just chatting normally with her earlier. All of a sudden, he asked this question of her, catching her totally offguard.

In the Holy Union, it was very normal for young people to have boyfriends or girlfriends. Many of Alice's female classmates already had boyfriends, and she had also thought about having one.

But she didn't expect that Linley would ask her in such a direct manner.

"You want me to be your girlfriend?" Alice asked.

Right now, Linley felt that his heart was pounding so frantically that it was going to burst out of his chest. Even when facing life and death battles in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts he had never been so frantic. "Yes. Are you willing?"

Alice's face was totally red by now. She stared at Linley. "Big brother Linley, honestly, maybe I'm not as good of a person as you think I am."

"I trust my judgment. Alice, I asked you already. Are you willing?" Linley was about to go crazy. He wanted to know Alice's reply right away. Even Linley's voice was quivering.

Alice was quiet for a moment, and then she gently nodded.

"Yes."

Excited, Linley couldn't help but enfold Alice in a deep embrace. Embarrassed, Alice buried her face against Linley's chest. Just then, Linley noticed that there was a flower shop next to them.

Moments later…

"Alice, here." Alice lifted her head up in response, and she did, she saw a brilliantly beautiful rose in front of her.

Her face blushing, Alice accepted the rose. Looking at Alice, Linley thought

that the red rose complimented her blushing pink face perfectly. She was an unspeakably moving picture. This image was burned into Linley's mind forever.

Holding Alice by the hand, the two of them continued their walk.

The snowflakes continued to fly about. The two youths slowly strolled about the night streets of Fenlai City. The rose in Alice's hand was so beautiful, so vibrant.

In one of the superior rooms of the Jade Water Paradise, there were seven people; Yale, George, Reynolds, and four beautiful ladies.

"I don't know what's gotten into Third Bro. Last time he went missing for an entire night also. This time, he hasn't come back even now." Yale shook his head helplessly.

"Hey, that guy looks like Third Bro." Reynolds, who was seated next to the window, suddenly let out a surprised shout. "And he's holding hands with a girl. Damn! Third Bro managed to find himself a beauty behind our backs."

"Whoosh!" Yale and George also ran to the window, staring down at Linley below them.

At this moment, Linley, who was drunken in the beautiful throes of young love, didn't even notice that they had reached the Jade Water Paradise! Linley and Alice walked right past the Jade Water Paradise, continuing onto the Fragrant Pavilion Road.

"Man, when did Third Bro become so formidable? Yale's eyes were sparkling.

George and Reynolds were both excited as well. Reynolds immediately suggested, "Haha, when Third Bro comes back, we have to give him a proper interrogation."

….

The next morning, Linley happily returned to the superior room in the Jade Water Paradise. Per their usual habits, Reynolds and Yale should've each retired to their own private rooms with their beauties. But…

Upon opening the door, Linley stared inside with surprise. "Boss Yale, why are you all here?"

"You ask me why we are all here?" Reynolds began to chortle. Scheming looks were on the faces of George and Yale as well, and they began to creep closer to Linley.

"Tell!" Reynolds stared at him. "Who was that beauty who was with you last night?"

"Quick, tell!" Yale and George also demanded.

"Whu…..you guys…?" Linley was totally flabbergasted.

Chapter 7 – Experts Everywhere (part 1)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 7, Experts Everywhere (part 1)

Under the forced interrogation of his bros, Linley was very honest and revealed the entire story behind him and Alice. This story made those two playboys, Yale and Reynolds, sigh in amazement.

Ever since becoming boyfriend and girlfriend with Alice, although he was separated from her physically during the school term, they made an agreement to meet with each other at the end of every month.

In the blink of an eye, another month passed. December 28th, Linley was in an exceptionally good mood, because he was going to meet with Alice again in Fenlai City.

“Hey, Linley.”

“Yo, David [Da’wei].”

Walking along the road within the Ernst Institute, Linley greeted a number of familiar faces in a friendly fashion.

“Boss, you’re as happy as this, just because you sealed the deal with Alice?” On Linley’s shoulders, Bebe wrinkled his nose. Condescendingly, he said, “Look at that stupid grin. This entire month, you’ve been smiling like an idiot.”

In the past, although Linley wasn’t exactly cold and emotionless, he wasn’t particularly friendly either. But this month, Linley was in an extremely good mood, and so he was often laughing and smiling.

“You little punk, what do you know?” Linley glared at Bebe, before strolling casually into the library. After flipping through two books on

wind-style magic, Linley entered a reading booth and began to read.

The reading room was extremely quiet, and in the entire reading room, there was perhaps just twenty or thirty people, spaced far apart from each other.

Linley selected a location off to the side and began to read. At the Ernst Institute library, Linley would read almost anything regarding history, magical beasts, politics, magic…but most of his time was still spent on wind magic.

After all, Linley primarily relied on earth-style and wind-style magic. His earth-style magic had a Saint-level Grand Magus for a personal trainer in the form of Doehring Cowart, but the same couldn't be said for wind.

While reading, Linley continued to learn and improve, and he often nodded unconsciously.

In the reading room, two hours passed by very quickly. Linley closed the book in front of him. "Grandpa Doehring, it would be a very difficult task to understand all of the profundities of wind-style magic, much less devise a brand new spell of my own."

When casting magical spells ,usually one would need to have the assistance of a magical incantation to stabilize and launch the spell. Generally, one would just recite the incantation as taught, without needing to understand it. But if one was able to understand the principles behind a spell or perhaps even refine the words to an incantation, or perhaps further refine the usage of spiritual essence, one could allow the efficacy and power of one's mageforce to reach new heights.

"Naturally. Do you think spells are so easily created?" Doehring Cowart's voice sounded in Linley's mind.

"Forget about inventing them for now. I wish I could at least see or learn some spells of the seventh rank. Unfortunately, the Institute is too stingy. Spells of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks are restricted and not open for

public viewing at all." Linley was rather dissatisfied, but he also knew very well that behind the Ernst Institute was the Radiant Church. The Radiant Church was not willing to disseminate its most powerful spells to people from other countries.

Linley was fortunate. Thanks to Grandpa Doehring's guidance, at least for earth-style magic, he had nothing to worry about.

Flipping through the other book on wind magic, Linley continued to read…

"To summarize, all styles of magic, including wind magic, share a commonality in that their spells are formed from mageforce. For example, our wind style's 'Wind Blades', the higher level 'Chain of Wind Blades', or the even higher level 'Wild Dance of Wind Blades', all the way up to the ninth level spell, 'Void Extermination Technique', are all considered to be in one chain of spells. But of course, if the 'Wind Blades' spell was developed and advanced in a different direction, down that path, in the end, it will transform into the 'Dimensional Edge' spell, that fabled forbidden spell…"

Upon reading this portion which provided details on the 'Wind Blades' spell, Linley grew interested.

This book was written from a viewpoint at the highest levels of magic, that sought to classify it systemically. This book was extremely useful to someone who had a narrow grasp of the fundamentals, as it would help them gain a more complete, thorough, systemic grasp of magic.

"The Floating Technique is actually a very simple technique, but using it isn't simple. That's because this technique has a strong emphasis on one's elemental affinity for wind essence. The higher the affinity, the easier one will find it to control wind mageforce and wind elemental essence. This will allow their Floating Technique to be much faster. But by comparison, the 'Soaring Technique' is a level higher than this technique. The Floating Technique only allows one to levitate up or down, while the Soaring Technique allows one to soar and fly in the air. Although it looks like it's omnidirectional, in reality, the Soaring Technique just has a few extra

components compared to the Floating Technique, allowing the user to also go forwards, backwards, left, and right. For example, if you want to fly down and right, all you have to do is to control yourself to go both down and right. Frankly speaking, from this line of training, and based on the incantation the Floating Technique uses, in principle it should be fairly easy to figure out what the incantation to the Soaring Technique is."

Upon reading this, a light went on in Linley's mind.

Right. The Soaring Technique, compared to the Floating Technique, really just added the additional directional components of left, right, forward, and backward. In essence, it was still controlling wind elemental essence around the body to propel one in the various directions.

"Right, it just adds the components of forwards, backwards, left and right. If this hypothesis is correct, shouldn't be too hard to extrapolate the incantation for the Soaring Technique." Linley immediately began to try and mentally work out what the incantation should be.

But of course, whether or not the extrapolated incantation would be correct was something which only experimentation could prove.

Previously, Linley had been under the impression that the Soaring Technique had to allow a person to fly in any which way, and thus the incantation would be quite complex.

But now, given that it just had four more directions compared to the Floating Technique, the level of difficulty for extrapolating the Soaring Technique was much lower.

Linley continued to read, excited.

"Of course, high level magical incantations that could be easily extrapolated are in the minority. For example, the a higher level variant of the Soaring Technique is the Airwings spell, which forces the surrounding air elemental essences to form giant, invisible wings around the caster. This is far more difficult, and its incantation is very different from that of the Soaring

Technique. There's simply no way to extrapolate it at all."

Linley nodded as well.

The more he read, the more confident Linley was that the author of this book was an expert in researching magical spells, because the explanations this book gave were almost all rooted solidly in the fundaments of magical theory. It gave advice on how to truly understand the mechanisms behind controlling elemental essence and in understanding each magical incantation. But it didn't say anything about how to improve the power of one's spells.

Most people, upon seeing how deep and in depth this book went with regards to magical theory and usage of elemental essence, wouldn't bother to read further.

But Linley understood that if he could understand the reasoning behind each spell, he would naturally also learn how to better control his magic. At that time, the power behind each of his spells would be greater.

"Linley." Just as Linley was getting absorbed with this book, a clear voice sounded out by his side.

Lifting his head, Linley looked off to the side, where he saw a tall, slender, beautiful girl standing next to him. It was Linley's good friend, Delia. But the expression on Delia's face wasn't too happy.

"Hey Delia, what's up?" Linley laughed.

Delia bit her lower lips. She was silent for quite a while, before finally asking, "Linley, I hear…you have a girlfriend?" Delia's eyes, beautiful and large, were firmly fixed upon Linley.

Chapter 8 – Experts Everywhere (part 2)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 8, Experts Everywhere (part 2)

Linley was slightly startled. He hesitated. In his mind, many thoughts flashed by. But in the end, he still nodded. “Yes. Her name is Alice.”

Delia’s eyes immediately turned red. “Congratulations.”

Delia hurriedly turned away, unable to prevent her tears from coursing down her face. She quickly ran out of the reading room.

But Linley himself did not see Delia’s tears.

“Sigh.” After directly telling Delia the truth, Linley felt restless and annoyed. But at the same time, he also felt relaxed.

After this event, Linley had no desire to keep reading. After noting down the name of this book, he returned it to the shelf.

On his way back to his dormitory, Linley couldn’t help but feel rather grumpy.

“Boss, I get it. You also like that Delia girl, right?” Bebe said, engaging in a bit of schadenfreude. “You know, I think Delia is a great gal. She’s better than Alice, y’know.”

“Shut your mouth.” Linley yelled at him mentally.

“Hrmph, hrmph, I was right on the money, wasn’t I.” Bebe said delightedly.

Linley let out a deep sigh. After a while, a hint of a smile appeared on his face. “Forget it. Since I’ve made things clear to Delia, this won’t be on my mind anymore. Mm, right. I’m meeting with Alice again tomorrow. I have

to prepare a present."

As he began thinking about Alice, Linley felt much more happier and relaxed.

……

December 29th. Evening. Linley split apart from Yale and his other bros, and headed off by himself to Alice's house for his rendezvous. This time, Linley was going to be able to spend some extra time with Alice.

The first day of the first month of each year was known as the 'Yulan Festival'. This was the biggest holiday in the entire Yulan continent. On this day, every year the Radiant Church would organize a huge religious mass.

As Fenlai City was known as the 'Holy Capital', with the headquarters of the Radiant Church located in West Fenlai City, naturally the religious mass in Fenlai City would be the largest one in the entire Yulan continent. When the time came, the Holy Emperor himself would officiate over the proceedings. This was always an incredible mass, and many, many people attended each year.

January 1st.

West Fenlai City, the headquarters of the Radiant Church. The Radiant Temple. This was a huge building that rose up nearly a hundred meters. Anyone at any place within Fenlai City could see it in the skyline.

In front of the Radiant Temple was an enormous city plaza, over a thousand meters in length. The plaza was paved with smooth, equally sized white stones. At this moment, the plaza was filled with a sea of people, and Linley and Alice were amongst them.

Many mounted knights of the Radiant Church were there as well, keeping order amongst the crowd. But in general, all of the people there were very orderly and obedient.

“Big brother Linley, at eight o’clock, a group of high-level officials of the Radiant Church will appear, including the Holy Emperor himself.” Alice said to Linley in a soft voice.

Linley nodded, glancing at the knights of the Radiant Church maintaining order. “Alice, look at all of these guardian knights here. There’s got to be at least a few thousand of them, and from the looks of it, none of them are weak.”

“Of course. This is the Yulan Festival. The ones who are guarding the event are the elite knights of the Radiant Church. Every single one of them present is at least a warrior of the fifth rank.” Alice, having grown up in Fenlai City, clearly knew much more about it than Linley.

Linley’s heart skipped a beat.

All knights of the fifth rank or higher? Such a powerful troop of knights, all consisted of knights of the fifth rank, would possess inconceivable power. As a mere magus of the fifth rank, he was nothing in front of their might.

Alice pointed at some magnificently dressed people in front. “Look, many of the highest ranking nobles have come today. In a bit, the royal clans of the six nations of the Holy Union will come as well.”

Time passed very quickly. In the blink of an eye, it was eight.

Suddenly, that hundred-meter high Radiant Temple began to radiate light, bathing the plaza in white. The enormous statue of an angel, located in the middle of the plaza, also began to dimly glow. At the same time, the entire plaza was suddenly filled with a beautiful song that seemed to have come from the realm of the gods.

At this point in time, from a building to the side of the Radiant Temple, a group of people walked out. In front of them were several rows of men clad in gleaming white armor and helmets with red plumes. These were the guardian knights of the Radiant Temple itself. Each and every one of them was a majestic, knightly sight to behold. This group of nearly a hundred

knights all marching in perfect unison made for an awesome, high-pressure sight which quickly silenced the entire crowd.

“I didn’t realize the Radiant Church had this much power. Those hundred or so knights must all be warriors of the seventh rank at least.” Doehring Cowart appeared next to Linley, carefully inspecting the people present. “And there are even Saint-level combatants here today? Forget it, best I hide inside the ring.”

And then, Doehring Cowart promptly disappeared again.

“Saint-level combatants?” Linley couldn’t help but also carefully inspect that group of people.

Behind those hundred guardian knights of the Radiant Temple, there were ten or so people dressed in long, flowing white robes. And behind them, surrounded by several Cardinals wearing crimson, was a bald-headed old man dressed in silver robes.

“The Holy Emperor!”

Clearly, the bald-headed old man dressed in silver was the center and heart of this group of people. Linley couldn’t help but focus all of his attention on this man. The Holy Emperor was a tall man, perhaps almost two meters tall. In his left hand, the Holy Emperor was wielding a scepter that was nearly as tall as he himself was.

Behind the Holy Emperor and the Cardinals, there were four old men all dressed in black, as well as over a hundred warriors dressed in violet. This group of people walked in an orderly fashion to the center of the plaza. None of the hundred thousand people gathered in the plaza dared to make a sound.

“Grandpa Doehring, you said there are Saint-level combatants present. Which of these are Saint-level combatants?” Linley asked mentally.

“I could tell at a single glance. That Holy Emperor as well as one of those

four old men in black are both Saint-level combatants. They are quite self-confident, it seems; they didn't attempt to mask their power in the slightest. I didn't expect that after five thousand years, that little Radiant Church which was hiding within the Pouant Empire would develop to such a level." Doehring Cowart sighed nonstop.

"Not mask their power?"

Startled, Linley looked at the group of people again. Honestly speaking, when looking at the Holy Emperor, the Cardinals, and the four old men in black, Linley only felt they were imposing and majestic, but didn't sense any powerful aura emanating from them at all.

But Doehring Cowart had just said…that those two Saint-level combatants weren't masking their power at all?

"Linley, you have a long way to go. In the Yulan continent, a magus of the fifth rank isn't much. Only upon reaching the seventh rank are you qualified to be considered 'powerful'. But a combatant of the seventh rank, in front of one of the mightiest forces in this continent, is only a small fry as well."

"On this continent, the Radiant Church, the Cult of Shadows, the Four Great Empires, and various other secretive organizations, all combined, have far more experts than you can imagine. Right now, you have very little power. You haven't had any contact with people of this level. In the future, you'll understand." Doehring Cowart chuckled as he spoke. "Your biggest advantage is your youth. The strength of those powerful people was cultivated over many years of constant, bitter training. In the future, you will also become powerful."

Linley nodded slightly.

Because at the Ernst Institute, he was praised as a genius, in his heart, Linley really did think rather highly of himself. But these words by Doehring Cowart startled him and woke him up. In comparison to the Yulan continent as a whole, Linley really didn't count for much.

By the time the Holy Emperor's group arrived, everyone on the plaza began discoursing amongst themselves quietly.

"Big brother Linley, look. The six royal clans have all arrived. That one in front is the royal clan of our Fenlai City, while that big, golden-haired man is his Royal Majesty, who also happens to be a powerful warrior of the ninth rank." Alice whispered quietly into Linley's ears.

Chapter 9 – Cracks (part 1)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 9, Cracks (part 1)

“His Royal Majesty?” Linley looked over.

Dressed in resplendent golden armor, built tall and muscularly, the king was a middle-aged man with a full head of lion-like golden hair. This man was not only the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai, he was also a warrior of the ninth rank. This was inconceivable.

As a citizen of the Kingdom of Fenlai, Linley had long ago heard others speak reverently about the pride of Fenlai, the legendary ‘Golden Lion’, Clayde [Ke’lai’de]. For a kingdom to have a king that was an extremely powerful warrior was, without a doubt, a huge source of pride to the citizens of that country.

At the Radiant Temple’s plaza, over a hundred thousand people were there, watching. In front of the angel statue, the Holy Emperor, the Cardinals, the white-robed attendants, and the guardian knights of the Radiant Temple all quietly stood. Amongst all of those people, without a question, the Holy Emperor was the most dazzling figure.

The members of the six royal clans of the six kingdoms, as well as all the dukes of the various duchies, all quietly stood there as well.

Suddenly.

With the Holy Emperor at the center, a wave of pure, billowing light suddenly emanated outwards, spreading across the entire plaza. The entire plaza full of people fell silent, and on everyone’s face, a calm, peaceful smile appeared, as they felt their hearts and minds be comforted.

“How terrifyingly powerful, for him to be able to so easily emit a wave of light that ensconced over a hundred thousand people.” As a magus himself,

Linley could immediately tell how mighty this Holy Emperor really was.

The entire plaza was now so quiet that the sound of wind could be heard.

“In the name of the Lord!” The Holy Emperor said quietly, but his voice penetrated everyone and shook everyone’s souls.

Everyone present at the plaza could sense the majestic presence now emanating from the Holy Emperor. Linley, too, didn’t have any chance to resist this pressure, and he obediently bowed. The strength of this awesome presence emanating from the Holy Emperor was even more terrifying than the presence which emanated from those two Saint-level combatants who did battle in the sky over Wushan township, and more terrifying than that Black Dragon as well.

This sort of presence did not need to compel others to do anything. Its very nature caused people’s souls to feel worship and veneration towards it.

It was a deity’s presence!

In the entire plaza, aside from the Holy Emperor, everyone else, including all hundred thousand onlookers, the Cardinals, and the kings, all bowed reverently to hear the Holy Emperor speak.

“May you be blessed with the love, the kindness, and the benevolence of the Lord.”

The Holy Emperor’s voice didn’t seem to be too loud, but it shook the heavens and the earth, causing everyone’s soul to tremble.

Countless patterned rays of holy light suddenly emanated forth from the top of the Radiant Temple, bathing every single person in its radiance. Everyone in the plaza felt their hearts suddenly grow calm, and their bodies feel more comfortable than they ever had before. Everyone was extremely solemn and respectful.

“May the Lord bless you with peace and love.”

At the same time, a glorious aura began to emanate from the Holy Emperor himself. “Children of the Lord, let us admit our sins. Let us genuinely reflect and repent for our mistakes in thought, action, and speech. May the Lord take pity on us and pardon us our sins, and grant us eternal life.”

Instantly.

The entire world seemed to be filled with the sound of a holy song, which all the adherents of the Radiant Church immediately began to chant along with. The sound of the adherents singing, combined with the holy song emanating from the heavens, filled everyone’s hearts with reverence and solemnity.

…..

The mass was an extremely complicated one. It started with repentance, proceeded to God’s pity, went on to songs of praise, was followed by prayers, then words of thanks, before finally ending with a choir.

The vast majority of the people on the plaza were followers of the Radiant Church, and bathed by the radiant glow from the Radiant Temple, almost everyone was silent. Even those people who didn’t really believe in the Radiant Church were sincerely moved by the sight. When the choir songs came to an end, everyone finally woke up. By now, it was mid-day.

With the mass concluded, everyone present began to leave.

Hand in hand, Alice and Linley were walking together. “Big brother Linley, how do you feel? Don’t you feel very comfortable?”

But Linley shook his head. “I was influenced by the atmosphere, to the point where I couldn’t even think clearly. Perhaps those who are not mentally strong and need something external to rely upon would really like that feeling, but personally speaking, I do not. I dislike being influenced by outside factors.”

He had to admit, during the mass itself, Linley had been affected, and he had lost himself within that comfortable, embracing aura.

But Linley had, after all, fought his way through and survived the deadly Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. After the mass ended, he immediately woke up. Thinking back to what just happened, he was terrified. The seductive power of the Radiant Church was really too frightening.

“Influenced? No. The Lord is like our father and mother. We are all the Lord’s children, and we are all blessed with the Lord’s benevolence and love. Big brother Linley, how could you think such a thing?” Alice was somewhat unhappy.

Alice had grown up in Fenlai City since she was little. As the Holy Capital, each year during the Yulan Festival, Fenlai City would put on this sort of large-scale mass. The vast majority of the citizens in Fenlai City were followers of the Radiant Church. Alice, as well, had been a believer in the Radiant Church since she was a child. This sort of spiritual belief was not something that would be easily changed.

“Alice, you can’t think of it like that. The power and abilities you currently have, aren’t they all a product of your own hard work and training? How can it have been bequeathed to you by the Lord? If the Lord is benevolent to you, why would he give you a father and mother like the ones you currently have?” Linley knew very well what Alice’s family situation was like.

Alice couldn’t help but fall silent. She stared at Linley.

“Big brother Linley, I’m going home now. There’s no need for you to walk me back.” Turning, Alice immediately headed in the direction of her home. Watching Alice depart, Linley felt unhappy and stifled. Turning his head, he looked back at the Radiant Temple, which rose into the clouds. “This Radiant Church really does cause lots of harm.”

…..

It was quite normal for young lovers to quarrel. By the next time Alice and Linley met, they were madly in love with each other again. Both of them wisely decided to refrain from discussions of religion. While they originally met twice a month, at the depths of their ardor, they even upped it to meeting four times a month. Their relationship grew so close that they even began sleeping together, although they never did break that final barrier.

Per Alice: “My first time has to be on my wedding night.” That second year, during the first half of year 9998 of the Yulan calendar, was a high point in the relationship between Linley and Alice.

But of course, any long-term relationship would have some small problems.

Year 9998 of the Yulan calendar, September 29th.

“Eh…there’s something Alice is hiding from me and doesn’t want to tell me.” Linley was walking with his three bros on the streets of Fenlai City. Thinking back to the unhappy parting him and Alice had last time, Linley felt very helpless.

Alice and Linley grew up in very different circumstances, and also had many different thoughts on things. Most importantly of all…Alice was a very independent, strong-minded girl. She definitely wasn’t the sort that would easily compromise with others. What made Linley the most helpless of all was that Alice was a closed gourd who hid her thoughts.

“Third bro, you and Alice are quarreling again?” Yale teased from the side.

George and Reynolds began to chuckle as well. Reynolds patted Linley on the shoulders and said, “Linley, I feel like you care a bit too much about this Alice. Careful that you don’t let your heart be hurt too badly if you break up. Look at me; I’ve had over ten different girlfriends by now. How relaxed and easy my life is!”

Linley glanced at Reynolds, speechless.

“Fourth bro, watch your words. Third bro is intending on making Alice his

wife.” Yale chortled. Afterwards, he patted Linley on the shoulders as well. “But third bro, I have to say, as a man, there’s plenty of women out there waiting for you. No need to restrict yourself so much.”

Linley smiled but didn’t speak.

Within Fenlai City, Linley bid farewell to his three bros and headed towards the Dry Road and Alice’s residence.

“Uncle Hudd [Ha’de].” Linley warmly called out to the guard who stood in front of Alice’s house. Over this period of time, Linley and Alice had grown extremely close, and so he had also gotten acquainted with the guard.

Hudd laughed as he saw Linley. “Oh, it’s Linley. Are you here to see Miss Alice? Alas, Miss Alice isn’t back yet. She should have been back already. I’m not sure what’s going on.”

“Not back yet?” Linley was stunned.

But then, Linley smiled at Hudd. “Then I’ll just wait for a while over here. I bet she’ll be back soon.” Linley then headed straight for the bar located next to Alice’s residence, made an order of his preferred jade wine, and then began to drink while quietly waiting.

Chapter 10 – Cracks (part 2)

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 10, Cracks (part 2)

The sky grew dark, but Linley continued to sit there and slowly drink. Alice still did not show up, and the people in the bar grew fewer and fewer in number. By his side, Bebe was very much enjoying all the alcohol, as normally, Linley didn't let him drink too much. This was the first time that he was able to drink to his heart's content.

"Sir, we are about to close." The waiter said respectfully to Linley.

"Close?" Linley was startled.

"Oh. What's the bill?" Linley stood up, but he was feeling very woozy.

Linley had already finished six bottles of jade wine. Fortunately, Linley had a strong constitution and was able to hold his liquor. An ordinary person probably would've collapsed long ago. Next to him, Bebe had drank an even more ridiculous amount, polishing off a full dozen bottles.

After paying his tab, Linley left the bar. By now, it was late at night. The Dry Road was almost deserted and devoid of people.

"This was the first time that Alice missed our appointment." Linley let out a long sigh.

Taking one final look back at the two story house shrouded in darkness, Linley headed directly for the Jade Water Paradise.

At the Jade Water Paradise.

"Third bro's probably having fun with his girl right about now." Yale, George, and Reynolds were all chatting, laughing, and enjoying their wine.

“Hey, Boss Yale…do you think Linley’s still a virgin?” Reynolds chuckled.

Yale wrinkled his nose. Quite confidently, he said, “That goes without saying. Just by looking at him, you can tell that he’s a 100% virgin. Bah… Fourth Bro, let’s go get some rest.” As he spoke, Yale pulled his beauty by the hand and moved to leave the room, quickly followed by Reynolds.

“Crack.”

The door to their room suddenly opened.

Yale and Reynolds stared in surprise. Shocked, Yale said, “Third Bro, why’d you come back?”

“No reason. Come on, Boss Yale, Fourth Bro, Second Bro, keep me company and have some drinks with me.” Linley’s voice was a bit low and quiet.

Reynolds, George, and Yale all looked at each other. Yale was the first one to laugh and say, “Wonderful. It’s rare to see Third Bro in such a frank and straightforward mood. Tonight, we bros are gonna keep you company and drink with you.” Yale, Reynolds, and George all sat down and began to drink with Linley.

The next day, Linley once more went to Alice’s house, but once again, Alice did not show up.

…..

Within the Ernst Institute.

“Alice really is mad at me this time?” Linley was walking on the roads within the Ernst Institute, and his mood was not very good.

While walking, Linley noticed a particular shop located in the middle of the Institute, and saw various notices and advertisements outside of the shop. Linley’s gaze suddenly fixed upon an advertisement for a crystal ball. In his

mind, he suddenly remembered some words Alice had once said to him. “Big brother Linley, we’re living in different places. Every time I see other couples on campus, I’ll think about you and miss you, but it’s so hard for us to meet each other. Alas…how wonderful it would be if the two of us could always be together.”

Linley’s heart suddenly moved.

Heading directly to the shop counter, he spoke with the storekeeper. “How much do the memory crystal balls here cost?”

“800 gold coins.” The storekeeper’s eyes lit up. Memory crystal balls were extremely luxurious items. “We have some extremely high quality memory crystals here. These memory crystals were specially manufactured for us by water-style magi of the eighth rank, right here in the Institute.”

Linley had a thorough understanding of the fundaments behind the construction of a memory crystal ball.

The water-style’s “Floating Scryer Technique” would be embedded into the crystal ball through the usage of alchemical methods. When the memory crystal ball was activated through a small amount of mageforce, the spell would automatically activate and automatically record a long scene. After the recording was completed, the next time mageforce was used to activate the memory crystal ball, the crystal ball would automatically play back the previously recorded scene.

After negotiating over the price, Linley managed to procure two memory crystal balls at the price of 1200 gold coins.

“I’ll use one memory crystal ball to record what I do at the Institute, while I’ll give the other to Alice and let her do the same. That way, even if I’m not able to see her, I’ll be able to watch her through the memory crystal ball.” Seeing the two crystal balls in his hands, Linley couldn’t help but let a smile blossom.

….

Stonesculpting in the dormitory, training in the mountains, attending classes at the Institute…Linley recorded everything down, until the memory crystal itself was totally filled up and could not record any more. And then, excited, at the middle of October, Linley took the two memory crystals with him to Fenlai City, only to find…Alice still did not show up.

October 29th.

The four bros once more headed together towards Fenlai City. Within the city, Linley separated from his three bros.

Reynolds, Yale, and George watched as Linley departed, the expressions on their face solemn.

“In the past seven years that I’ve known Third Bro, he’s always been an outstanding genius, both in the field of magic as well as in the field of stoneshaping. But clearly, Third Bro highly values the relationship between him and this Alice. If this results in heartbreak, I’m afraid that Third Bro will be deeply hurt.” Yale frowned as he spoke.

Reynolds nodded as well. “I have the same feeling. That Alice girl hasn’t shown up for three of their meetings now. I’m afraid there must be some trouble.”

“Honestly, breaking up isn’t necessarily a bad thing,” Yale laughed. “As a man, if you don’t experience the pain of a breakup, how will you mature? I’ve always felt that Third Bro dotes on that Alice too much. If it was me? Shit. If a girl acts up towards me, I’d drop her in a heartbeat.”

George laughed. “Boss Yale, honestly, I rather appreciate how Third Bro behaves. Your point of view is really a bit too…” George shook his head.

“I myself am inclined towards how Boss Yale thinks.” Reynolds smirked.

“Enough chitchat, let’s go to the Jade Water Paradise.”

Yale, Reynolds, and George headed directly to the Jade Water Paradise, but halfway to their destination, Reynolds suddenly, secretively nudged Yale and George. “Boss Yale, George, wait a second. Take a look over there. See who that is?”

Yale and George both turned to look in the direction towards which Reynolds was gesturing. Immediately, the expressions on the faces of both Yale and George changed.

Chapter 11 – A Meeting

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 11, A Meeting

The Fragrant Pavilion Road was filled with people, but Yale, George, and Reynolds clearly and distinctly could tell who a certain female was, not too far away from them. Since Linley and Alice had been together for a long time now, Yale, George, and Reynolds had all been formally introduced to Alice. Naturally, they recognized her.

“It’s Alice.” George said in a low voice.

Right at this moment, Alice was walking hand-in-hand with another young man, a hint of a smile on her face. If Linley was here, he would definitely have been able to recognize that this young man was Kalan.

“Bastard.” A murderous look was on Yale’s face.

Reynolds was furious as well. “These past two months, Linley has been going to her home time and time again, waiting bitterly for her. He’s been recording all of his activities down in a memory crystal as well, like an idiot. And he even told us that in the future, he was going to marry this Alice. F*ck this!”

“In what way is our Third Bro not worthy of her?” George was starting to get upset as well.

Yale let out a sneer. “It’s not convenient for us to interfere. We’ll go to the Jade Water Paradise, and we’ll talk to Third Bro about it when he’s back. The most important thing for us to do now is to help Third Bro mentally prepare for this. If he doesn’t prepare? I’m afraid that he won’t be able to take this blow.”

George and Reynolds all nodded as well.

……

Within their private room at the Jade Water Paradise, Yale, George, and Reynolds all sat, frowns on their faces. They didn't ask for any courtesans to accompany them, and the only thing in their cups was juice. They were afraid that they might get drunk, and would not behave appropriately when dealing with Linley.

"I know Third Bro all too well." George said worriedly. "He normally doesn't say much, and he's very hard working as well. There are so many girls at our school who are pursuing him. He's never accepted a single one of them. But a guy like him, once he falls for someone, he will fall much harder than you, Boss, or you, Fourth Bro."

Yale and Reynolds both nodded.

To Yale and Reynolds, losing a girl just meant getting a new one. It was no big deal at all. But in this past year, every day, when they were joking with Linley, they could tell from Linley's reactions that he had really developed genuine feelings for Alice.

"This is pissing me off." Yale drank all the juice in his cup at one go.

Reynolds snorted. "Boss Yale, don't be too pissed. It's just a girl. Third Bro will be in a lot of pain this time, but after he's over it, everything will be fine."

Yale nodded as well.

Yale, Reynolds, and George were all members of large clans, and thus they were influenced accordingly since youth. For Reynolds and George, it wasn't too bad, as their clans had strict rules. But Yale had been buried in women since he was a kid.

Time passed on, one second at a time, one minute at a time. Yale and the others all sat there quietly.

One in the morning. With a creak, the door swung open. Linley walked in, reeking of wine. “Hey. All of you guys are still here?”

Yale laughed loudly. “We were waiting for you.”

“Third Bro, you weren’t waiting for that Alice this entire time, were you?” George said in an intentionally casual manner.

Linley nodded silently, and then sat down. “You guys aren’t drinking alcohol tonight?” Bending down, Linley retrieve a flagon of strong liquor from a chest, and immediately poured himself a cup.

“Third Bro, we need to talk to you about something.” Yale said with a grin.

“Talk.” Linley was in a very foul mood.

Yale said softly, “Tonight, when we were on the streets, we saw a girl. She looked a lot like your Alice. Honestly. We were a bit far away, so we couldn’t clearly tell. But that girl was holding hands with another guy.”

“Lies.” Linley said in a steely tone that brooked no argument.

Yale couldn’t help but start.

Reynolds clapped Linley on the shoulder with a laugh. “Third Bro. We’re all men. As men, how can we let women ride on our heads? Alice hasn’t shown up several times now. If I were you, I would’ve thrown her off a long time ago. Even if she knelt in front of me, I wouldn’t pay her any mind.”

“Fourth Bro, you’re just a punk ass kid. What would you know?” Linley said with a laugh, and then he drank a large cup of liquor. “Come, enough chitchat. I’m in a foul mood. Drink with me.”

Reynolds, Yale, and George all exchanged glances. They couldn’t do anything besides sit down and drink with Linley.

Early next morning, Linley, Yale, George, and Reynolds were all sleeping, stretched across the table. Linley was the first one to wake up.

Seeing his three dear friends, a bitter smile was on Linley's face. In his heart, he murmured to himself, "Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro…all of you accompanied me in drinking and said so many words of encouragement to me. I understand what you guys are thinking. For Alice to miss our appointment these past two, three times, I too had a bad feeling, but…I don't believe it. I'm not willing to."

Linley walked over to the window, looking down.

It was five or six in the early morning. The city of Fenlai seemed to have just woken up as well. Only a small number of people were walking about, preparing to work. The vast majority of people were still sleeping.

"Linley." Doehring Cowart flew out from within the Coiling Dragon ring.

Doehring Cowart was forever dressed in those pristine, long white robes. His white beard was forever long.

"Grandpa Doehring." Upon seeing Doehring Cowart appear, Linley suddenly felt as though he himself was a lonely boat that had finally reached the harbor.

Glancing at the sleeping dorm mates, Doehring Cowart laughed. "Linley, you have three really good friends. As far as the affairs of the heart between men and women? I can only say this. In the 1300 years when I was alive, from what I've seen, perhaps only one time out of ten would I see a person's be successful in his first love."

"Grandpa Doehring, I get it." Linley barely nodded. "But…I trust her."

Doehring Cowart nodded as well. He no longer spoke.

….

In the middle of November, Linley put on his backpack, making sure to secure the two memory crystals within, and then headed towards Fenlai City again, once more arriving at the two story house.

“Uncle Hudd, has Alice come back yet?” Linley said courteously to the guard named Hudd.

Hudd shook his head. “No. It’s been over a month since Miss Alice has come back. She hasn’t returned a single time.”

“Not a single time?” Linley frowned, furrows appearing in his forehead. “Then Uncle Hudd, I’ll head out now.” Linley courteously bid farewell.

Walking alone on the Dry Road, Linley walked over to the bar, but did not enter. Bebe mentally said to him, “Boss, don’t be so worried. For Alice to not appear, maybe she just has some important things going on? For example, maybe she went to do training. That’s always a possibility. Don’t stand here thinking idle thoughts.”

“Right. Maybe she’s busy dealing with something and can’t get free.” Linley’s eyes suddenly became alive again.

Seeing this, Bebe couldn’t help but wrinkle his little nose. “Boss, you are so love-struck that you’ve gone dumb. Just a few words of encouragement and you’re incredibly excited.”

“You little punk. No alcohol for you today, as punishment.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

But Linley also had to admit that after joking around with Bebe, his mood improve a little.

……

November 29th. This was a blizzard day, and snow covered everything in white. Linley, Reynolds, Yale, and George were all seated within a carriage. The driver was someone belonging to Yale’s merchant clan, and behind

them there were several knights escorting Linley's sculptures.

"Third Bro. In the next few days, the end-of-the-year exams will be coming. I wonder if that fellow who was once proclaimed the number one genius of our institute has become a magus of the sixth rank yet." Yale chuckled.

George and Reynolds were all extremely proud.

Because in the previous week? Linley had reached the realm of the sixth rank.

In truth, Linley had reached the fourth rank when he was 13, the 5th rank when he was 14, and by now, he was almost 17. After two and a half years, Linley finally made the transition from being a magus of the fifth rank to the sixth rank.

Two and a half years!

What about that Dixie, who was previously regarded as the ultimate genius of the Institute?

Dixie became a magus of the fifth rank when he was twelve, but now he's also around seventeen. It's been five years. Honestly speaking, Dixie's progression was also extremely fast. However, in comparison with Linley, who was assisted by the Straight Chisel School's technique of stonecarving, he was much slower.

If, at the end-of-the-year exams, Linley had reached the sixth rank while Dixie had not, then Linley would be known as the indisputable number one genius of the Ernst Institute.

"Third Bro, try and smile. Becoming a magus of the sixth rank is something you should be happy about." Reynolds said encouragingly.

Linley quirked his lips.

"You call that a smile?" Reynolds intentionally tried to tease Linley.

Linley finally let out a smile. “Alright, Fourth Bro, let me be quiet for a while.” Linley had already decided that this time, no matter what, he was going to meet Alice. If he couldn’t see her in Fenlai City, he would go directly to the Wellen Institute to look for her.”

No matter what, he had to have a face-to-face with Alice and sort things out.

Opening the carriage window, Linley let a cold gust of air inside. He couldn’t help but squint. Outside, everything was blanketed in white, and the sky itself was filled with feather-like plumes of snow. While enjoying the winter scenery, the time passed quickly, and they arrived at Fenlai City.

After delivering the three sculptures to the Proulx Gallery, the four of them had a meal, then temporarily parted ways.

By now, Linley’s income was very high. Almost each month, he was able to collect around 20,000 gold pieces. Thus Linley didn’t really care much about money anymore. Carrying his backpack with two memory crystals, Linley headed directly to Alice’s home.

“Boss, if I recall correctly, this is the fourth time that you’ve headed to Fenlai City with these memory crystals, right?” Bebe said disapprovingly. “How about you give them to Delia instead? I rather like Delia.”

From October until now, this indeed was the fourth time that Linley had carried these memory crystal balls to Fenlai City.

“That’s enough, Bebe.” Linley said with a frown.

Walking on the snow-covered street, crunching noises could be heard with each step Linley took. In short order, he arrived at that familiar, two-story house.

After seeing and briefly speaking with Hudd, Linley could only turn and depart.

“Once again, not back.” Linley was frowning severely. “Wellen Institute!” Linley immediately decided to head off to the Wellen Institute.

Fenlai City. The Fragrant Pavilion Road.

Alice was walking on the streets, holding hands with Kalan. Kalan gently said, “Alice, are you not planning to make things clear to Linley?”

“Maybe later.” Alice shook her head.

Kalan nodded and no longer spoke.

His eyes on Alice, who was holding hands with him, Kalan couldn’t help but smile. He had grown up with Alice and was childhood sweethearts with her. In his heart, he had always liked Alice, but he didn’t expect that Alice would get together with Linley so quickly.

When he first discovered that Alice and Linley had started dating, Kalan was exploding with rage.

Ever since he was a kid, Kalan had always regarded Alice as his. Even if Linley had previously helped him, when it came to love, Kalan wasn’t going to back off. Thus…he used a few small tricks to achieve what he wanted.

“Love at first sight? The hero rescuing the damsel in distress?” Kalan was filled with contempt. “When faced with reality, all of that is as flimsy as a piece of white paper.”

Holding Alice’s hand, Kalan was totally content.

“Alice, when do you think you’ll make things clear to Linley?” Kalan asked again. Kalan really didn’t want Alice and Linley to stay entangled much longer.

Alice shook her head. “I don’t know either. But I believe that if I don’t meet

with big brother Linley for a long period of time, in time, the feelings will fade. By then, if I say goodbye to him, he won't have as strong a reaction."

"You're right. After all, Linley saved us once." Kalan nodded.

As they walked, they reached the intersection between the Dry Road and the Fragrant Pavilion Road. Kalan noticed that Alice suddenly came to a halt. He couldn't help but look curiously at Alice, but Alice, looking stunned, was looking at a place on the Dry Road. Her face was ashen. Kalan also turned his head….

A young man, dressed in a moon-white robe, was standing there, not moving in the slightest. He was staring at them, stunned. His face was devoid of all color, as white as snow.

"Linley!" Kalan immediately frowned.

Chapter 12 – The Desolate Snow

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 12, The Desolate Snow

Alice had previously believed that she no longer held too deep of an affection for Linley, but when she saw him once again face to face, especially when she saw the disbelieving look on his face, she felt pain in her heart.

“Big brother Linley.” Alice called out to him.

Linley’s snow-white face held not a speck of blood. He stood there, stunned, for a long time.

“Swish!” Letting out an enraged scream, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, transformed into a vicious black blur and charged directly towards Alice and Kalan. Although Bebe was now highly intelligent, he was still a magical beast, and still possessed the vicious cruelty of beasts.

He could keenly sense the disbelief and despair in Linley’s heart. He was going to get revenge.

Bebe’s body suddenly enlarged by one size, and in the blink of an eye, appeared by Kalan and Alice. Bebe’s sharp claws gleamed with cold light, freezing the hearts of those two. They didn’t even have the chance to dodge or to speak!

“Return!” Linley’s voice suddenly rang out.

The dark blur that was Bebe shuddered, then landed on the snow, brushing right by Kalan’s face. Bebe turned his head to stare at Linley. “Squeak squeak!” He called out, while at the same time he began to argue mentally with Linley.

Linley slowly, but firmly, shook his head.

Bebe glanced at Alice and Kalan with his cold, cruel eyes, then turned. Once more mysteriously shrinking back to his usual size, he transformed into a cruel shadow once more and leapt onto Linley's shoulders. Just judging from his superficial cuteness, no one could've imagined how terrifying he actually could be.

"Huff, huff." Only now did Kalan began to gasp for breath. Sweat was beaded on his forehead, and with terror, he stared at Bebe, perched on Linley's shoulders.

Alice stared at Linley. She took a deep breath. "Big brother Linley, I know that right now, in your heart, you must be in a lot of pain. It's not convenient for us to talk about this on the street. Let's go to a nearby tavern and have a good talk there. Okay?"

Linley nodded. He did not speak.

…

On the Dry Road, within a lavish hotel. Linley and Alice each sat on opposite sides of a table. As for Kalan, he quite intelligently ran off to sit in a corner of the room, not daring to get close enough to disturb them. He had just barely escaped with his life from Bebe's near-assault. Kalan really was terrified of Linley.

The table was made of polished black marble. On it were two cups of warm fruit wine.

Linley and Alice were facing each other silently.

After a long silence, Alice let out a tiny sigh. "Big brother Linley. I've wronged you terribly in this affair. This entire time, I've refused to meet with you because I wanted you to be mentally prepared. At the very least, I didn't want the two of us to part ways as enemies."

"Enemies?" In his heart, Linley laughed bitterly, but he didn't speak. He

just quietly listened, looking at Alice.

Alice continued. “Big brother Linley. I admit that in the beginning, I really, really liked you. I had also thought about us getting married and having kids. But after we were together for a long time, I realized that in many ways, we really weren’t a good fit.”

Linley finally spoke. “In many ways? Alice, I don’t just like your strengths, I also accept your weaknesses. I believe that when two people are together, they should make allowances for each other and try to understand each other. No two people will be a perfect, flawless couple without a hint of discord.”

Alice bit her lips. With her two hands, she picked up her cup of fruit wine and took a sip.

“Back when we were younger, when we first met, I was fifteen.” Alice spoke only after a long period of collecting her thoughts. “In my heart, you were the hero who saved me, descending from the heavens. I once thought you were my earth, my sky, my whole world, but I now realize that isn’t the case. Aside from these things, family is important as well.”

Linley was startled.

“Big brother Linley, you’ve always been so filled with vitality, and you are also very good to me. You are very hard working as well. I must admit that you are very perfect. But…this isn’t enough. For example, this time, when my father went gambling, he lost several hundred thousand gold coins! But all big brother Kalan had to do was ask his family to help, and this matter was easily resolved.”

Alice looked at Linley. “Big brother Linley, this is something you aren’t capable of doing. Although my father is a gambler and an alcoholic, he’s still my father.”

“Just because of this?” Linley said gently.

“No.” Alice continued. “Not just this. I’ve discovered that big brother Kalan has always been very good to me as well. He grew up alongside me, and I’m very familiar with him. But with regards to you, I’ve always felt as though you’ve been shrouded by a layer of mist. I can’t see you clearly.”

“You are a genius magus at the number one magus institute in the continent, and at age 15, you were able to have your own private exhibition booth at the Proulx Gallery. By the sound of it, you are very perfect, but because of that perfection, I feel like I can’t see you clearly.”

Alice’s voice grew lower. “The most important thing is, the two of us are always in separate places. At the beginning, it wasn’t so bad, but as time went on, I got tired. I’m used to always having someone by my side, just like how big brother Kalan is always by my side.”

After saying all of these things, Alice fell silent.

Linley was silent as well.

After a long time passed, enough for the wine to grow cold, Linley spoke. “Alice, do you remember what we once said to each other? I once said to you, I can directly come live with you. But you told me, no. You don’t want to interrupt my training.”

“But now, you say that I’m never with you?” A very pained smile was on Linley’s face.

Alice wanted to speak, but there was nothing she could say.

Everything she had just said was just excuses.

Looking at Alice, Linley continued. “Alice, do you remember that first time we were together in a hotel, you said to me, you hoped that if my love for you disappeared, I would tell you and wouldn’t hide it from you. You would quietly leave me.”

Linley suppressed his agitation, forcing himself to remain calm. “Back then,

I also said, if you ever feel like you've lost your feelings for me, I too would hope that you would tell me directly and not lie to me. I, too, would quietly leave."

Alice's eyes grew moist.

"It isn't a big deal that you are now with Kalan. But I wish you didn't deceive me. For you to now be with Kalan behind my back and not openly explain things to me, to let me continue to harbor hope in my heart, to let me wait for you time and time again….do you know how it feels to wait for someone like that?"

Linley's body began to tremble. "September 29th, that was the first day you missed our meeting. I waited from midnight until nearly dawn. Every minute, every second, was hard to endure. When I returned to school, I was thinking, was it because I made you angry the previous time? So I wanted to make you happy. Like an idiot, I went to buy memory crystals to record the scenes of all the places around the Institute. I hoped that when we were not together, when you missed me, you could watch me."

"Carrying these two memory crystal balls, in mid-October, I once again went to you, my heart filled with hope. But once again, you weren't there."

"In my heart, I started to grow restless. But I held firm. Because I remember that promise that we made each other. I believed that if you were going to leave me, you would let me know first. That's why I held firm. The end of October, mid-November, I went as well. But in the end…"

Linley stood up, regarding Alice with a bitter smile on his lips. "I came again today. But I'm lucky. This time, you didn't continue to deceive me."

The tears were welling up in Alice's eyes.

"Big brother Linley-"

Linley opened up his backpack and removed those two memory crystal balls. As he did so, Linley couldn't help but think back to how he had gone

everywhere in his school to record scenes. Thinking back to it, he felt himself to be such a fool.

“These two memory crystals, I’ve carried from the Ernst Institute to Fenlai City four times now. But now…they are meaningless.”

Linley was holding a memory crystal ball in each hand. Those two crystal balls suddenly collided….

“Smash!”

Countless cracks appeared on the surface of each crystal ball. Linley’s hands went limp, and the two crystal balls dropped to the floor. “Crash!” With a splintering sound, they each split into over ten pieces, rolling about on the floor of the hotel. The splintering sound was very clear and high, and caused all the patrons of the hotel to turn and look at them.

Alice could no longer restrain her tears, which began to pour down her face.

“Big brother Linley, in the future, will we still be friends?” Tears blurring her vision, Alice raised her head to look at Linley.

On his feet, Linley looked at Alice, but he didn’t answer her question. After a while, a faint smile appeared on his face. “Alice, if I’m not mistaken, we started our relationship on November 29th of last year. Today is also November 29th. It’s been a full year. Thank you. At least you’ve given me some beautiful memories.”

Suddenly turning, Linley directly left via the front door of the hotel.

The entire hotel was silent. Kalan, previously in a corner, hurriedly ran over to Alice. As he did so, he ran over and stepped on some pieces of the shattered crystal balls. The crystalline sounds of the memory crystals being further shattered echoed in the hotel.

“Alice, are you okay?” Kalan embraced Alice comfortingly.

But by this time, Alice had been reduced to a puddle of tears. Despite being in Kalan's arms, she still turned her head to watch as Linley departed. At this moment, in her mind, she began replaying every moment she had spent with Linley, but Alice knew….

From this moment onwards, Linley would never treat her like that again. Perhaps he would never see her again.

…..

The Fragrant Pavilion Road was covered with white snow, and some snowflakes still fluttered about in the air.

Walking on the Fragrant Pavilion Road, Linley's shadow seemed very desolate. Raising his head to look at the sky, Linley allowed the snow to cover his face with a layer of coldness. Right now, Linley's heart was trembling. He couldn't help but fiercely clutch at his chest.

His heart hurt. Deeply.

The pain penetrated his heart!

Within Linley's mind, one moving scene after another floated through his consciousness.

That set of violet clothes. That beautiful, spirit-like appearance under the moon.

Hiding in the corner of the balcony, warmly talking to him in soft tones.

While the snow flew about, she had hidden her face bashfully in his chest.

At the hotel, she had lain coquettishly in his embrace.

…..

Linley had once believed that he would forever be together with Alice. But

today, his dream was shattered. And with it, Linley's resilient, tough heart shattered as well.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaah!"

Standing in the middle of the Fragrant Pavilion Road, Linley couldn't refrain from letting out a pain-filled howl. That howl was like the howl of a wolf separated from his pack, a howl of desolation, of despair. All the people nearby looked at him in shock, and all of them slowly backed far away from him.

These people all looked at him as though he were an idiot.

Two rivers of tears flowed down silently from Linley's face.

Idiot. He really was an idiot.

An idiot who believed in promises!

"Smash!" Linley suddenly, painfully, knelt to one knee, clutching his chest hard.

His heart hurt. Hurt so bad, it was as though it had been stabbed with needles.

Hurt so much, even his hand started to hurt. Hurt so much his ten fingers had lost all feeling. Linley could only tightly clutch at his chest with his hands. It seemed as though this was the only way he could lessen the pain.

"Haha!"

Tears flowing down his face, Linley suddenly stood up and started laughing wildly. Laughing at his own stupidity. Laughing at his naiveness.

At this moment…

That savage pain in his heart caused Linley to begin coughing, so hard that

he felt like his chest was being stabbed by knives. But Linley continued to cough, so hard that he curled up in the street like a caterpillar.

“Cough, cough!”

With a particularly vicious cough, a mouthful of bright, fresh blood was splattered onto the snow.

Staring at the fresh blood on the snow, Linley suddenly felt that this blood was like a rose, a blood-colored rose. In Linley’s mind, he couldn’t help but think back to an image from a year ago, an image of Alice holding a red rose.

“The moon’s reflection in the water, the flower in the mirror, the man in a dream. In the end, all of it is illusionary, is reduced to nothingness. Haha…” Linley began laughing wildly on the Fragrant Pavilion Road, as though no one else was there. But his laughter was so desolate…

Doehring Cowart, dressed as ever in his snow-white robes, stood quietly by Linley’s side. He didn’t speak, only looked sadly at Linley. In his heart, he sighed, “Oh, Linley…in the end, you’re still just a kid.”

This year, Linley was only sixteen years old.

“Third Bro!”

Suddenly, a frantic shout could be heard. Yale, Reynolds, and George all ran over from not too far away. It wasn’t too far from this place to the Fragrant Pavilion Road, and so the three of them had also noticed Linley standing in the middle of the road. Upon seeing Linley spit out a mouthful of blood, all of their faces changed.

“Third Bro, are you okay?”

“Linley.”

George, Yale, and Reynolds all hurriedly propped Linley up.

Linley looked at his three bros. He minutely shook his head. “I’m fine. Don’t be worried about me.” Linley looked up at the sky. “In the past, I liked the snow. But now, I feel as though the snow is very desolate, very cold.”

“You guys can stay here. I’m going back.” After speaking these words, Linley headed directly towards the end of the Fragrant Pavilion Road.

Yale, Reynolds, and George all looked at each other, their eyes filled with concern and worry. And then, all three of them chased after Linley…

That day, the snow continued to fall. Gradually, that rose-shaped stain of blood was covered up by the snow, with no traces of it left behind.

Chapter 13 – Ten Days, Ten Nights

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 13, Ten Days, Ten Nights

Upon returning to the Ernst Institute, Linley just got his usual backpack from his room, then directly headed to the mountain behind the Ernst Institute. Within the backpack, there was just his clothes, his magicrystal card, and a straight chisel.

“Second Bro, Fourth Bro, watch after Third Bro.” Yale instructed.

George and Reynolds both nodded. They, too, were worried about Linley.

“Boss, what are you going to do?” Reynolds asked.

Yale’s eyes flashed with a frozen look. “Me?”

“I’m going to investigate and see why Alice, that blind girl, decided to betray Third Bro. And I’m going to see what little bastard dared to steal my bro’s woman.” As he spoke, Yale stood up. “I’m heading to Fenlai City right now. You guys help me take care of Third Bro.”

“Got it.” Reynolds and George nodded.

And then, Yale left, taking with him his clan’s guardsmen, heading directly out of the Ernst Institute to Fenlai City. As for Reynolds and George, in the middle of this icy winter night, they hastened to the mountain behind the Ernst Institute.

……

Riding a fine stallion, Yale led his guards charging across the snowy plains. Quite soon, they returned to Fenlai City. Upon entering the city, Yale headed directly to one of his clan’s headquarters in Fenlai City.

This was a nine-floor building, a famous hotel in Fenlai City.

Behind the hotel, there were a number of small buildings that were not open to the public. Yale directly charged into a smaller, two-floor tall red building. As he did, five extravagantly dressed middle-aged men came out. Upon seeing Yale, they all respectfully called out in unison, “Young master Yale!”

“Walt [Hua’te], where is my Second Uncle?” Yale immediately asked.

Amongst the five middle-aged men, there was one named Walt. He was the only one of them dressed in long black robes. Walt respectfully replied, “His lordship returned to our main headquarters seven days ago. For now, the affairs in the Holy Union are under my management.”

Walt knew very well that ever since this second young master became a pupil of the Ernst Institute, his position within the clan’s hierarchy had skyrocketed.

Yale was not like one of the ordinary clan members, because Yale was in the direct line of descent. Even Walt’s highest supervisor, the ‘Second Uncle’ in charge of all of the affairs of the Holy Union, wouldn’t dare to be discourteous to Yale.

“Young master Yale, if you have anything you need handled, please just let me know.” Walt said respectfully.

Yale was quiet for a moment, then gave direct instructions. “Go and do some investigations for me. On Fenlai City’s Dry Road, there is a girl called Alice. She should be sixteen years old this year. She’s also a student of the Wellen Institute. Recently, she’s been together with a man. Provide me with all of the information regarding this man.”

“Yes, young master Yale.” Walt smiled slightly. “Young master Yale, do you like this Alice? If you do, then I can…”

“No need.” Yale’s face was cold and dark. “What I need is information, as

fast as you can provide it. Understood?"

"Yes." Walt could sense that this young master Yale seemed to be truly enraged this time.

…..

That same night. Candles flickering.

Yale was sitting at a table, pouring himself a cup of wine, his face unhappy. But clearly, his mind was elsewhere and not on the wine.

Suddenly, urgent footsteps could be heard. Walt suddenly hurried inside, along with a woman in her 20's who looked as cold as ice. Upon entering the room, Walt bowed respectfully. "Young master Yale, we have clearly investigated this Alice and her male friend."

"Speak." Yale said coldly.

Walt looked at that cold woman, who bowed respectfully. "Young master Yale, that Alice has two male friends. The first one is named Linley Baruch, who was born in Wushan Township…"

"Stop. Discuss the second one." Yale frowned.

"Alice's current boyfriend is named Kalan Debs. He was born in Fenlai City, and is currently seventeen years old. He's a student at the Wellen Warrior Academy, a warrior of the fifth rank! This Debs clan is a major clan in the Kingdom of Fenlai, and Kalan Debs will be the direct successor to the clan leader."

"Kalan Debs…the Debs clan?" Yale frowned. "Just a small clan within a kingdom?"

Walt, seeking to ingratiate himself with Yale, said, "In the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Debs clan can be considered a major clan. But of course, in the Yulan continent as a whole, it can only be considered a very unremarkable

little clan."

"Oh. I want to severely punish this Debs clan. What would you recommend?" Yale looked at Walt.

"That's easy!"

Walt began to laugh. "Young master Yale, you don't know this, but this Debs clan is actually the working partner of our Dawson Conglomerate here in Fenlai. In the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Dawson Conglomerate makes the big money, while their Debs clan gets some of our scraps. After all these years though, those scraps have fattened up the Debs clan."

"Oh, this Debs clan is actually the working partner of our Conglomerate here in the Kingdom of Fenlai?" A hint of a smile appeared on Yale's face.

Walt nodded. "Yes, young master Yale. You should know very well that our Dawson Conglomerate doesn't seek to gain all the benefit from every single trade. In the Four Great Empires and in the dozens of various kingdoms, we always have a working partner. Naturally, we have to give them some benefit as well."

Yale nodded.

He knew this very well. The Dawson clan controlled the Dawson Conglomerate, which was one of the three titanic trading unions in the Yulan continent. Even the Four Great Empires and the two alliances did not dare to look down on them. This was the reason why Yale was able to enroll in the Ernst Institute.

Behind the Ernst Institute was the Radiant Church. On the surface, they claimed that the enrollment standards were fair and open.

How could an ordinary clan manage to get someone in through the backdoor of the Radiant Church?

The creed of the Dawson Conglomerate was this: "When there's money to

be made, everyone gets a share."

In the Four Great Empires, the two alliances, and the various other kingdoms and duchies, the Dawson Conglomerate always would have some trading partners, and would allow them to make some profit as well.

To be able to work alongside the Dawson Conglomerate was the same as getting on top of a massive money-making war machine. In the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Debs clan only get a small fraction of what the Dawson Conglomerate made, but it was enough to make them fabulously wealthy by the standards of the Kingdom of Fenlai.

"Young master Yale, there are always many clans in the Kingdom of Fenlai who clamor to replace the Debs clan as our local partner here. The only reason we still work with the Debs clan is because they have been fairly decent partners, which is why we haven't given any other clans the opportunity." Walt smiled.

Yale understood Walt's intentions.

"Immediately change our local partner here in the Kingdom of Fenlai. As for the Debs clan? Suppress them!" Yale's voice was as cold as ice.

"Yes, young master." Walt replied respectfully.

This was nothing more than an issue of working partners in a small kingdom. Even Walt, who was just the second-in-command of the Dawson Conglomerate here in Fenlai, had the authority to make this decision. Much less Yale, a clan member who was in the principal family branch.

"Poor Debs clan." Walt secretly said to himself.

…..

In the mountain behind the Ernst Institute, the snow covered everything with a layer of silvery white clothes. Within the dense trees, there were some large stones. At an empty spot in the mountain, Linley was standing

quietly, eyes closed, on top of one of those giant stones.

The Shadowmouse, Bebe, was next to him, standing in the snow, quietly protecting Linley.

George and Reynolds looked at each other with concern.

“George. What is Linley doing? He’s been standing there on that boulder for a full day and night now. When we call out to him, he has no response. And he hasn’t eaten or drank anything. If this continues…” Reynolds was starting to grow frantic.

George slowly shook his head. “Don’t be impatient. Third Bro is a magus of the sixth rank, and a warrior. His body is extremely strong and tough. It has been fortified by the absorption of nature’s elemental essences. Even if he goes several days without food or water, it shouldn’t be a problem. Let’s just watch him for now. I trust that Third Bro isn’t the sort of person who cannot recover from a setback.”

Reynolds nodded slightly.

None of them had any idea as to what Linley’s current condition was like.

In fact, Doehring Cowart was there, by Linley’s side as well. Only Reynolds and George could not, of course, see him. Doehring Cowart quietly watched Linley. In his heart, he was secretly surprised. “This Linley fellow seems to have entered a higher mental realm.” As a grandmaster sculptor, Doehring Cowart was able to guess what sort of state Linley had entered.

Linley was staring at that boulder. This boulder was over two meters tall and three meters wide.

He was staring at the lines on the boulder. The rocky lines and craggy patterns covering this boulder were all extremely complex. But as Linley continued to stare at it, a number of those lines and patterns seemed to drift off from the boulder and rematerialize in Linley’s mind.

These lines and patterns seemed to form into five human images.

Suddenly, those five images transformed themselves in to Alice. All sorts of scenes appeared in Linley's mind as well. In his mind's eye, this boulder suddenly transformed itself various sculptures. In the end, it transformed into five female statues.

"George, look! Third Bro is moving!" Reynolds said in surprise.

From within his backpack, Linley retrieved his straight chisel. Wielding it in his right hand, staring at the boulder, Linley suddenly began to move. The straight chisel transformed into a blur, and immediately, excess stone and rubble began to fly off from the boulder.

His soul had become one with the earth, had become one with the wind.

Linley's soul could clearly sense every single crevice, every single line of that boulder. He wielded the straight chisel as though it were like the wind, blowing pieces of excess stone away from the boulder. Every single chop of his chisel seemed to be perfect in movement, not too much, not too little, accurate to the point of perfection.

Sometimes, the straight chisel would move slowly, while at other times, it would move very quickly. Sometimes, it would leave traces and lines as it flowed through the stone; at other times, it would directly chop off an entire piece of rock.

"I still remember how you looked that year, that pitiable look when you were being attacked by the Bloodthirsty Boar."

A perfect mental image of that scene and of Alice formed in Linley's mind. All of his emotions and feelings were concentrated into his chisel. The snow began to settle and coalesce around Linley, and as it did, Linley felt his soul merge with the earth and with the wind as it never had before, as earth elemental essence and wind elemental essence rapidly began to enter Linley's body.

Linley didn't think about anything else. Right now, he was focusing on those bygone feelings.

Slowly, the leftmost 20% of the statue began to transform into the image of a woman. The basic structure of the sculpture was beginning to take shape. Linley neither ate nor drank, continuing to carve nonstop. Occasionally, he would wield his chisel several dozen times in a row. At other times, he would spend several minutes carefully carving a single, perfect line.

…..

Linley, having totally subsumed himself and his feelings for Alice within his straight chisel, totally did not notice that this was the first time he had entered such a state since he had first started to learn carving.

In the past, regardless of whether or not it was his early days or his later days, Linley wouldn't be totally, 100% subsumed into the carving.

At the very least, he would spend several days carving a statue. He could stop at any time and continue the next time.

But this time was different. Linley was totally submerged in those bygone feelings, and totally subsumed into energetically carving. He didn't even think about stopping, couldn't even notice that he hadn't eaten or drank anything. This sort of total immersion and concentration caused Linley to become one with nature as he never had before.

That sort of absolute oneness with nature caused Linley's spiritual energy to rise at a terrifying, previously unseen speed.

Right now, Linley's growth in spiritual energy was rising a thousand times more rapidly than an ordinary person's.

"He's totally become one with nature, and has reached the level of forgetting oneself. What a wonderful surprise." Doehring Cowart's eyes lit up.

One day after another passed, with Linley totally absorbed still in his work. Earth elemental essence and wind elemental essence still continuously poured into his body, replenishing the energy that he had lost.

Like the blink of an eye, ten days passed, with Linley absorbed in sculpting the entire time.

“Puff!”

With Linley at the center, the snow suddenly swirled outwards in all directions. Straight chisel in hand, Linley stared quietly at the giant sculpture in front of him. Linley had put all of his effort into making this sculpture. This was the largest sculpture he had ever made, and it was also the most successful one.

This sculpture was made up of five images of a woman. In all five images, the woman was the same. Alice.

There was one showing the pitiable look she had when she faced danger.

There was one showing the adorable look on her face when she was secretly chatting on the balcony.

There was one showing the look of shyness on her face when they first started dating.

There was one showing how mesmerizing she looked when they were in the throes of their love for each other.

And there was one showing that hint of heartlessness on her face when they broke up!

“In a year’s time, everything has passed on, as though it were nothing more than a dream. But now, the dream has come to an end. Let this sculpture, then, be called ‘Awakening From the Dream’.” Staring at his sculpture, Linley felt his spirit was more at peace now than ever before. It was as

though all of his previous emotions had been entrusted within this sculpture.

‘Awakening From the Dream’. This sculpture had been brought into the world!

Chapter 14 – Liquefy

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 14, Liquefy

Reynolds, George, and Yale all stared dumbly at the statue. They had been totally awed by this stone sculpture, and to their eyes, the five human shapes in the statue seemed to all have souls.

The image on the left, carried within it a soft, tender, vulnerable air that made anyone who saw it feel pity.

The second image one carried within it a cute, adorable air that stirred the hearts of viewers.

The third image seemed to be just like a real girl, who was blushing with shyness right in front of you.

…..

All five of the figures within this statue carried their own unique aura.

Linley stared at the statue, and as he did, he felt like he was seeing a fantasy. These five figures seemed to be figures from his dreams. But now, he had awoken.

“Linley.” Doehring Cowart walked over to him. His moon-white robe was still spotless, without a speck of dust.

Linley looked at Doehring Cowart.

A look of gratification was on Doehring Cowart’s face. “In terms of stonesculpting ability, you have already reached the level of masters. And this statue of yours that you just created, is totally worthy of being a sterling paragon of an example of our Straight Chisel School’s sculpting. After having experienced this, I believe that your understanding of stonesculpting

has also dramatically deepened.

Linley slightly nodded.

Only after completing this sculpture did Linley realize why it was that each master sculptor might perhaps only have a single work of art which would be acclaimed and passed down throughout the ages. It wasn't due to them not having enough ability; rather, it was because those 'divine' sculptures were something which occurred out of nowhere and could not be forced.

For example, Linley had just completed this statue, 'Awakening From the Dream'. But if you were to ask him to do another one like it, it would perhaps be impossible.

When a 'divine' sculpture came into existence in the world, it did so only through a unique combination of exquisite skill, marvelous inspiration, and sudden, all-encompassing emotion. Only when someone was absolutely emotionally moved, 100%, could a 'divine' sculpture be born. Because only then would they hold nothing back and produce such a stunning, soul-stirring sculpture.

Linley had completed this sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'. But who could possibly guess as to how long it would be before he might be able to produce another one of this quality?

However….

Throughout those ten days of non-stop carving, Linley's soul had already clearly keenly attuned with that perfect sensation of being one with the universe. And thus, in terms of sculpting ability, Linley had dramatically improved. If Linley were to carve another sculpture right now, although it wouldn't be able to match the quality of this 'Awakening From the Dream', it would be much better than his previous sculptures which were worth around 5000 gold each.

"Linley, have you felt the change in your spiritual energy?" Doehring Cowart said with a delighted smile.

Linley started.

Spiritual energy?

This sculpture had forced him to exert far more spiritual energy than he normally did, and now, his spiritual energy was far stronger than before. If ten days ago, Linley's spiritual energy was like a small tree, by now, it was like a gloriously flourishing giant oak.

"How could it have increased this much?" Linley was totally amazed.

Doehring Cowart laughed delightedly. His white beard flourishing, he said, "Ten times! Your spiritual energy increased by ten times! It's received such an incredible boost; in ten days, it has increased by about ten times! In ten short days, the benefit you gained was equivalent to what others might get after tens of years of training. Your level of spiritual energy directly leapt out of the level of the sixth rank and has reached the level of a magus of the seventh rank at one go."

Linley, as well, felt that this was inconceivable.

It increased by way too much! Ten times!

"The effect is quite good, right? Hrmph, the effectiveness of Doehring Cowart's Straight Chisel School is unquestionable and unfathomable. However…I really am jealous of you." Doehring Cowart was grinning as he looked at Linley. "Linley, you should know that upon entering a state of absolute emotion, where your soul totally becomes one with nature is extremely rare and extremely hard to achieve."

Linley nodded in agreement.

If that sort of state was easy to enter, then perhaps a 'divine' sculpture would be commonplace.

"In the 1300 years of my life, I've only entered that state three times, and

during those three times, I completed the three sculptures which I am the most proud of." A look of pride was on Doehring Cowart's face as he continued. "But the sculptures that I made, each took me two, three, and four days respectively. All together, I only spent nine days in that state, which was less than this one session you had."

Only upon hearing Doehring Cowart's words did Linley realize that he had spent ten days and ten nights during this stonesculpting session.

"This sort of state is the fastest way through which members of the Straight Chisel School can increase their spiritual strength. This sort of state usually sees you grow a thousand times faster than normal people! This state is what we dream of. The longer you can remain in this state, the better, and therefore the larger a statue you are inspired to carve, the greater the benefits are to you."

Linley agreed in his heart.

The 'Awakening From the Dream' was a giant work of art, encompassing fully five different figures. This was a statue of a size that was very rarely seen.

Doehring Cowart let out a long sigh. "But when your soul has been moved to produce a certain type of sculpture, you really have no control over it at all."

Linley understood.

Just like how when he saw that giant rock and saw those lines and patterns on it, when combined with his already agitated condition, his mind naturally summoned forth the image of five people. That was a sort of energy and excitement which allowed him to forget everything else in the world, including himself. The only thing remaining was the sculpture!

All of his energy, all of his emotions, were poured into the sculpture.

Upon entering this state, he had no excess energy to think about anything

else, such as, ‘I want to work on a large statue’. He couldn’t divide any attention at all. If he had divided his attention, then he would have shattered that perfect state.

“Linley, I want to ask you a question. Does this sculpture have a name?” Doehring Cowart asked.

“Awakening From the Dream.” Linley replied.

Doehring Cowart mused for a while, then nodded slightly. “Well done. Good name.”

That rarely seen blizzard had finally come to an end. The world was blanketed in white, and the entire mountain was covered with a thick layer of snow, as high as one’s knee. This sort of snowstorm was rather rarely seen. After the snow, the temperature dropped further.

Yale, George, and Reynolds had erected a tent to ward off that freezing weather. Yale had ordered some servants to deliver food to them regularly, and they had waited there, watching over Linley.

At this moment, Yale and the other two were still staring speechlessly at Linley’s carving.

“Boss Yale, Third Bro has successfully completed his carving. Why is he still standing there?” Reynolds was getting a bit worried. He had no idea that Linley was mentally chatting with Doehring Cowart, and of course none of them could see Doehring Cowart’s spirit form.

Yale slightly shook his head. “I don’t know either. But this sculpture of Third Bro’s can definitely be considered to be almost on par with the sculptures of Grandmaster Proulx.”

At least in Yale’s eyes, Linley’s sculpture was earthshakingly brilliant, capable of stirring men’s souls.

“Boss Yale. Second Bro. Fourth Bro.”

Linley's voice suddenly rang out, causing Yale, George, and Reynolds all to be startled. Reynolds immediately shouted back excitedly, "Linley, you finally speak! It's been eleven days, eleven full days! You haven't eaten or drank anything for eleven days!"

Linley had first stood there silently in front of the boulder for a full day, and then spent ten more on his carving. This was, in fact, the eleventh day.

An ordinary person who didn't eat or drink for eleven days would've died by now. Even an ordinary magus of the fourth or fifth rank would be extremely weak after not eating or drinking for that long. But right now, Linley only felt slightly thirsty, and he didn't feel uncomfortable in the slightest.

Because upon entering that special state, upon becoming one with the universe, earth and wind elemental essence had constantly entered his body, nourishing him and replacing all of his spent energy, while strengthening Linley's body at the same time.

"Eleven days, eh? Yeah, I am a bit hungry." Linley laughed.

"Hungry?"

George was the first one to excitedly rush to the nearby tent, where he pulled out two fur-wrapped cases. Those furs were used for temperature control. Removing the furs, he pulled out two metal boxes from inside. Inside those two metal boxes was a sumptuous feast.

"Wait, we can't eat without having any wine to drink, can we?" Yale laughed loudly.

Watching one of his bros scurry around preparing the food, while another ran around preparing the rice, and a third pour wine, Linley suddenly felt an unspeakably warm feeling.

They had accompanied him for 11 days. How can Linley not be moved?

But Linley hid all of these feelings deep in his heart.

“Boss, Second Bro, Fourth Bro. We will be good brothers for all our lives.” Linley said determinedly.

“Third Bro, come, eat up!” George said warmly.

“Alright!”

On top of the snow-covered mountain behind the Ernst Institute, Linley and his three bros began to eat and drink, and the laughter and merriment they shared continued unabated. Next to them, the Shadowmouse, Bebe, also happily began to eat and drink.

After eating.

“Boss Yale, please help me store this sculpture.” Linley stood up, casting his gaze upon the snow white surroundings. “When I was fifteen, I went for training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Logically speaking, in July and August of my 16th year, I should’ve gone for training again. But because of Alice, I didn’t go. Right now, I’ve made up my mind to go and get some good training done.”

George, Yale, and Reynolds were all stunned.

“Third Bro, you are heading to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?” Yale grew frantic. Reynolds and George as well.

To them, Linley had just suffered a huge emotional blow, and had gone eleven days without food or water. Just as his mood had improved slightly, he was going to go off to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, one of the three most dangerous places in the entire Yulan continent? How could they not be worried?

Linley laughed. “Alright, don’t be worried. I’m very level-headed right now. If I hadn’t walked past my pain, I would’ve gone ahead and destroyed

this ‘Awakening From the Dream’ sculpture.”

As he spoke, he turned his head to ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

Staring at it, Linley felt as though he was staring back at bygone days. Linley felt absolutely calm and peaceful in his heart.

“This is nothing more than a memory, nothing more than setback in my life. Because of Alice, I had already slowed down my pace of training. I can no longer afford to waste any time.” Linley smiled at his three bros, then picked up his backpack. “I’m going to head out immediately. I won’t go back to the Institute.”

“Boss, Second Bro, Fourth Bro.”

Linley stared at his three good friends, smiling slightly. “I really am grateful to all of you. I, Linley, am so fortunate to have three good brothers like you.”

After speaking, Linley put on his backpack, picked up Bebe, and began to walk east, away from the mountain.

Yale, Reynolds, and George all watched as the image of Linley’s back grew more and more distant, until finally it disappeared into the snowy white landscape.

…..

Within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Tall, majestic trees. Dense vines and rattans. Wild grass and shrubs. Dried leaves. The entire Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was so primeval, so natural. Linley was in the meditative position, absorbing wind and earth elemental essence from the world and transforming it into mageforce.

Linley’s spiritual energy had already reached the level of a magus of the seventh rank, but his mageforce was still only that of a magus of the sixth

rank.

Linley had already spent a full month within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Within the past month, Linley sometimes would kill magical beasts, while at other times he would analyze the seventh level wind-style spell, the Soaring Technique. The rest of the time, he spent in the meditative state gathering mageforce.

The Ernst Institute didn't teach or train anyone in spells of the seventh rank. But since the Soaring Technique was virtually identical in principle with the Floating Technique, according to the book on magical theory that Linley had found in the library, Linley had constantly been applying wind-magic principles to test out the Soaring Technique using various magical incantations.

After a full month of research and tests, Linley could already easily fly about in the sky.

Although Linley didn't know if the magical incantation he had puzzled out was identical to the one used in the rest of the world as a whole, Linley was already fairly satisfied with his current speed of flight.

There was a huge gap between the sixth rank and the seventh rank, but the biggest part of that gap lay in increasing one's spiritual energy. Since Linley had already increased his spiritual energy, all he needed to do was to spend some time refining more mageforce.

As Linley's elemental affinity was exceptional, his speed of refining mageforce was also extremely quick.

The Shadowmouse, Bebe, was cautiously walking around the area near Linley, protecting him as Linley remained in the meditative position, gathering mageforce.

Within the central dantian in Linley's body.

Those specks of earth-colored elemental essence and that bluish-jade elemental essence had already reached an astonishing density, but for now, they still remained in a gaseous form within his central dantian. But as the density of particles grew still greater…the density of the gaseous elemental essences had reached a critical point.

A drop of earthen-colored liquid and a drop of bluish-jade liquid suddenly coalesced within Linley's central dantian.

And then, more and more drops of liquid began to form, as one drop turned to ten, and ten drops turned to a hundred, a thousand…

The biggest difference between a magus of the sixth and the seventh ranks was this – the condensation of mageforce into liquid form!

Chapter 15 – Returning to the Foggy Valley

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 15, Returning to the Foggy Valley

Beneath him was a roiling, watery white mist. Standing at the precipice of the cliff, there was simply no way to see the bottom.

Straight chisel in hand, Linley was peering down into the Foggy Valley. Linley had spent three thousand gold coins to purchase straight chisel, and in terms of sharpness, it even exceeded that black dagger Linley previously used. After all, to Linley, the straight chisel was more suited to his hand than daggers.

Linley had already been inside the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for over a month and a half. He felt that right now, he was at the peak of his strength, in the best possible condition.

A dense layer of earth-elemental essence began to swirl around Linley as Linley softly chanted the words a magical spell. Finally, it formed into a seemingly simple set of armor, but if one took a closer look at it, one would find that the material it was formed from looked very much like jadestone, with the only difference being that this jadestone armor emanated with earth elemental essence.

Earth-style spell of the seventh rank – Earthguard armor (Jadestone level).

A magus of the seventh rank was far more powerful than a magus of the sixth rank. The power of the defensive spells alone multiplied tenfold.

“Now, if I run into those Dragonhawks again, just using my jadestone armor, I’ll be able to easily handle their blows.” Linley felt very confident. Next, Linley began to mutter the words to a wind-element spell. Air began to swirl about Linley’s body, until finally, Linley lifted up into the air and began to drift into the Foggy Valley.

Linley was actually quite confident when it came to investigating the Foggy Valley.

“I now have both jadestone armor and also the Soaring Technique. In addition, my physical fitness level is that of a warrior of the fourth rank. When aided still further by a Supersonic spell of the seventh rank….survival should not be a problem.” Linley slowly made his way through the Foggy Valley, not at all rushing.

This was because….

Of the Blueheart Grass!

Blueheart Grass was extremely important to Linley. Aside from procuring Blueheart Grass, Linley was also extremely curious as to why so many magical beasts were all living here, especially given they all belonged to different categories of beasts.

“Boss, be careful. Don’t forget how you were almost hunted down last time.” Bebe mentally reminded him.

“Don’t worry.”

The further down Linley flew, the greater the gap between the two cliffs grew. Clearly, this valley was astonishingly large. Within the misty fog, Linley flew very carefully while inspecting his surroundings. Bebe was also watching with extreme caution. Both of them were looking to find more Blueheart Grass.

The first target Linley aimed at was naturally the place he had seen that Blueheart Grass last time, where he did not have the chance to gather it.

Hugging the cliff, Linley proceeded forward with caution.

“Boss, I see Blueheart Grass. It’s right there!” Bebe’s eyes were very sharp. Linley took a look as well, and instantly his eyes lit up.

The grass blades were green, but a faint current of blue emanated and flowed throughout them.

“There aren’t any Green Tattooed Pythons, are there?” Linley didn’t dare to be too rash. Although he no longer feared the Green Tattooed Python, once he began to fight with it, most likely many other magical beasts would be drawn here as well. He definitely didn’t have sufficient confidence in dealing with an army of magical beasts.

As the Green Tattooed Python was green in color, it was very easy to miss it in the surrounding green vines, so Linley had to be absolutely careful.

After closely inspecting his surroundings and verifying that there was no Green Tattooed Python nearby, Linley carefully flew closer.

Gathering the Blueheart Grass, Linley once more felt its icy cold in his hands. A hint of a smile appeared on Linley’s face. This chilling sensation was proof that this grass was indeed Blueheart Grass. Linley carefully stored it inside his backpack, and then continued to make his way forward in search of more.

“Growl…”

“Shriiiiek…”

All sorts of howls from magical beasts emanated from below. Their wild, mixed roars caused Linley’s heart to quiver. Those howling sounds came from below. Just judging from the roars alone, there must be an enormous number of magical beasts below!

Peering through the thinning white fog, Linley could now vaguely make out the rich grassland below.

“Boss, be careful. I don’t want to be attacked and chased and flee in all directions.” Bebe reminded.

“I know.” Linley was at maximum alert, and his eyes constantly scanned his surroundings, especially the green vines near the cliff walls. Linley was very much concerned that a Green Tattooed Python might be hiding amidst the vines. Being discovered by a single magical beast was the same as being discovered by all of them.

“Dragonhawk.” Linley discovered that far away, a large, flying magical beast was lazily soaring through the air. Hurriedly, Linley flew away from it.

Fortunately, the valley was filled with white fog, causing distant objects to have only a faint silhouette. The Dragonhawk was huge and easy to notice, but Linley was comparatively much smaller. Naturally, he had something of an advantage in this regard.

“Shriek, shriek!” Suddenly, a series of strange howls could be heard, and even worse, the howls were heading in Linley’s direction.

“Not good.” Linley’s facial expression changed.

Linley, who had been in close contact with Dragonhawks before, knew that this was the call of a Dragonhawk. Looking in the direction of the origin of the noise, he saw the hazy outlines of roughly two or three dozen giant Dragonhawks flying in this direction.

The Dragonhawks were simply too huge in size. Twenty or thirty of them flying in a row made for a formation that blotted out the sun and covered the skies.

With so many Dragonhawks present, there was virtually nowhere Linley could hide.

Right now, Linley had three choices. The first was to do battle with these Dragonhawks. The second was to fly up and flee for his life. The third….was to fly down, deep into the belly of the mountain.

“Whoosh!”

Without hesitating at all, Linley immediately threw himself downwards, blazing his way through the white mist. In the space of a breath, Linley had transformed himself into an arrow, shooting himself into the middle of the grassy plains. And then, not moving in the slightest, he threw himself face-down, hiding in the grass.

Linley carefully began to crawl to the edge of the plains. At the edge of the grass, he peered out, carefully assessing the valley.

This was an enormous valley, filled with rivers as well as huge grassy fields, appearing like a pristine utopia. But, this pristine utopia was filled with countless gigantic crawling creatures.

Two stories tall, and thirty meters long, with rocky, stone-like carapaces, each scale the size of half a person.

The relevant information immediately sprang to Linley's mind.
"Landwyrm. Magical beast of the sixth rank. Fire element."

"If there was only one Landwyrm, it wouldn't be much of a threat, but…" Linley scanned the area. "There's over a hundred Landwyrms here. If a hundred Landwyrms all attacked, there'd be no way to block them."

"But they aren't fast enough. To me, they shouldn't pose much of a threat." Linley looked towards the other magical beasts.

Within the valley, Landwyrms only made up a small part of the total magical beast population. There were also a large number of… Velocidragons. Velocidragons were not pack animals, and so most of them were spaced out in various places in the valley. At the same time, the skies were filled with Dragonhawks. If one looked carefully, within the various grassy plains, gigantic boas could also be seen slithering about.

And these were just what Linley could see at a glance.

"Just from that short glance, I can at least be sure that this valley runs from

east to west. In the north, I can just barely make out the cliff walls." Linley turned his head and looked back. From the west, he could also see the cliff walls. It was only the cliff walls to the east that he could not see clearly.

Especially that east-west running river, which was continuously flowing to the east.

"Bebe, you be careful too." Linley executed the supporting wind-style Supersonic spell, and then carefully made his way through the grass. There were many grassy areas within this valley, possibly because all the magical beasts here were carnivores which did not eat grass.

While carefully making his way forward, Linley suddenly noticed something.

"What an extremely high density of natural elemental essence. The density of the natural elemental essence here is at least six or seven times higher than in the outside world." Upon entering the valley, Linley was extremely keyed up, and actually didn't notice this fact until now.

"I wonder what has caused this place to have such a high elemental density?"

Linley carefully crawled eastwards through the valley. Landwyrms, Velocidragons, Green Tattooed Pythons, and Dragonhawks were all exceedingly large creatures. Thus, the little speck which Linley was in comparison to them wasn't very visible at all.

"This valley is really long!"

After crawling nearly 20 kilometers eastwards, Linley still hadn't come to the end of the Valley. At the same time, Linley discovered some new magical beast packs.

Magical beast of the sixth rank, Winged Pegasus. Magical beast of the seventh rank, Thunderwing Pegasus.

All sorts of pegasi were flying about in the air, while others slowly walked about in the valley, eating the grass.

“Boss, there’s all sorts of underbrush here. How should we get across?” Bebe was worried.

Linley was starting to frown as well. The underbrush in front of him was all over the place, and it rose up half the length of his leg.

“The distance on the ground is too long. There’s no way to crawl there. I’ll have to go by air.” Linley carefully backed up about a few hundred meters, as far away from the pegasi flocks as possible, and then exercised the Soaring Technique.

“Whoosh!”

Directly soaring into the air, Linley immediately scurried into the dense white fog. Within the dense white fog, only occasionally would a pegasus draw near. After all, pegasi were fairly small and didn’t take up too much space, thus when they did draw near, Linley could dodge them.

Carefully flying eastwards, Linley kept close to the southern walls while carefully inspecting the cliffs for Blueheart Grass. But as Linley continued going forward, he began to frown again.

“Aside from that first patch of Blueheart Grass, I haven’t found any more at all.” Linley was starting to grow impatient.

But Linley continued flying eastwards. After flying roughly ten kilometers, Linley noticed that he was no longer seeing any pegasi in the upper reaches, and so he once again descended to the valley floor.

“Linley, there’s all sorts of magical beasts here. Many of the creatures here normally never travel in packs, such as the Velocidragon or the Black Bear, or the agile Dragoncat. Doehring Cowart wafted out of the ring, appearing by Linley’s side as they went forward together.

Linley carefully snuck forwards, while Doehring Cowart leisurely walked with him.

“Ah!”

As though struck by lightning, Linley suddenly halted and stood there stupidly. Roughly fifty meters ahead of Linley, in a knoll of grass with a diameter of roughly seven or eight meters, there was one patch of green-colored grass after another.

The fact that the grass was green was not of surprise. What mattered was… these grassy patches all emanated a blue aura.

“Blueheart Grass. All of it is Blueheart Grass!”

At this moment, Linley’s very heartbeat stopped. Heavens. A single patch of Blueheart Grass was worth tens of thousands of gold coins, and it would be considered a priceless item that would rarely even be seen on the market. But fifty meters in front of him, within that seven or eight meter wide patch of grass, there were at least a hundred patches of Blueheart Grass.

“So much! I could grab them seven or eight at a time!” Linley sucked in a deep breath.

Doehring Cowart’s eyes lit up. “Linley, for the purposes of drinking live dragon’s blood, most likely four or five Blueheart Grass would be enough. To have so much Blueheart Grass in one place is inconceivable. However… the area around the Blueheart Grass is empty, with no place to hide. How will you get there?”

Perhaps Blueheart Grass was inimical to normal grass.

In a 30 meter area around Blueheart Grass, there wasn’t a single blade of normal grass.

“There aren’t too many magical beasts around here, and the ones that are here are not pack beasts. They’re scattered all over the place.” Linley

carefully observed that large cluster of Blueheart Grass and also the surrounding area. “There’s only seven magical beasts located near the Blueheart Grass. As long as I move fast enough, I shouldn’t have any problems escaping with my life.”

Linley forced himself to calm down, letting himself reach the maximum state of readiness.

“Boss, are you stupid? Have you forgotten about me, Bebe?” Bebe suddenly mentally said to Linley.

Linley started. Turning to look at Bebe, he saw Bebe delightedly winked at him. “Boss, my speed is much faster than yours, and my body is much smaller as well. How about I go do the gathering? There won’t be any problems at all. All you have to do is open your backpack and wait to get the grass.”

“Whoosh!”

Transforming into a black blur, in the blink of an eye, Bebe scurried into the middle of the grassy patch, and then using his sharp little claws, Bebe began agilely and voraciously digging up all the Blueheart Grass. As his little claws danced, quite soon that grassy patch became totally empty, while next to Bebe, there was now a pile of Blueheart Grass that was almost as tall as Bebe himself was.

Chapter 16 – Forbidden the Skies

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 16, Forbidden the Skies

Still lying down in the middle of the grass, Linley held his breath as he watched. “That mound must have at least fifty or sixty Blueheart Grass.” Linley forcibly tamped down on the wild joy he was feeling. But the thing which astonished Linley the most was…

Bebe seemed to feel that wasn’t enough, and continued to pull out more and more Blueheart Grass.

“Will Bebe be able to carry over that huge mound with those two small claws of his?” Linley was growing confused. He immediately reached out to Bebe mentally. “Bebe, that’s enough. Get back here.”

Bebe raised his head and glanced at Linley, and then wrinkled his cute little nose. “No rush. There’s a lot more to go.”

Right at this moment, a Velocidragon which was drinking water by a nearby river just so happened to look over in this direction. Its gaze falling upon Bebe, it clearly noticed him, and it rose up from the water, snorting out a plume of smoke as it fixed its icy cold gaze fixed upon the little Shadowmouse.

“Not good.” Linley’s heart immediately tightened.

If Bebe began an all-out battle with the Velocidragon, perhaps even more magical beasts might be attracted here. By then, the situation would become even worse.

Bebe also noticed the Velocidragon. Upon seeing it, Bebe seemed to be terrified, and immediately hid near the Blueheart Grass, ‘trembling’.

“Growl…” The Velocidragon let out a satisfied roar, and then immediately

lay back down again and continued to drink water from the river.

“What a big stupid lump. It’s so easy to fool it.” Bebe delightedly spoke to Linley mentally.

At this moment, Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. He didn’t expect little Bebe to ‘feign weakness’. Linley knew very well that a year and a half ago, Bebe was capable of forcing a Velocidragon to flee. After another year and a half of growth, Bebe should now be even stronger.

Bebe definitely had no fear of a Velocidragon.

But Bebe was also very smart. He knew that if he caused too much of a ruckus, Linley would be easily exposed.

Humans!

Magical beasts were very much antagonistic towards humans.

In the eyes of that Velocidragon, Bebe was nothing more than an extremely small and weak magical beast. Seeing how terrified Bebe was, naturally it wouldn’t bother to kill Bebe. After all, the Velocidragon knew that amongst Shadowmice, only the lowest level mice had black fur.

But the Velocidragon had no idea that one of his ‘comrades’ had been mauled quite badly by little Bebe.

“Formidable.” Linley gave Bebe a big thumb’s up.

Bebe laughed delightedly. “Naturally. I, Bebe, am an extremely intelligent Shadowmouse.” Taking a look at the large pile of Blueheart Grass next to him, Bebe suddenly expanded his body size dramatically, from twenty centimeters to nearly half a meter.

Now that his size had increased, Bebe was able to easily use his two large paws to press that pile of Blueheart Grass against his chest. Then, with a flex of his legs….

Whoosh!

Bebe suddenly landed in the grass, directly next to Linley.

“Boss. All in all, there’s 160 clumps of Blueheart Grass here. Having me, Bebe, take action was the perfect, flawless plan.” Bebe arrogantly puffed out his little chest.

Linley lovingly rubbed Bebe’s little head, and then put all of the Blueheart Grass in his backpack.

“Let’s keep going. I’m growing more and more curious about this valley.” Linley’s eyes shone as he looked east. “For this valley to have so many magical beasts, and also to have such a thick density of elemental essence….mmm, I feel like the elemental density here is even higher than when we first came down. The elemental essence density here is about ten times higher than in the outside world.”

Linley had a feeling…

Whatever strange factor was causing the elemental essence in this valley to be so much higher than normal, must have came from the eastern side of the valley.

Linley continued heading east, moving his way through the dense grass. With the assistance of the supportive wind-style spell Supersonic, Linley was able to move at a very fast speed. A seventh-level magus using the Supersonic spell was capable of allowing someone to move three times faster than normal!

Three times Linley’s normal speed as a warrior of the fourth rank.

“Whoosh. Whoosh!”

Linley quickly scurried from one hiding spot to another, dodging one magical beast after the other. Fortunately, aside from that part which had an

abundance of pegasi, the rest of the valley was filled with abundant grass, tall enough to totally hide Linley within it.

“From the point where I entered the gorge until now, I’ve perhaps gone east almost a hundred kilometers.”

Linley was very astonished.

The entire Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was around a thousand kilometers or so wide, so for a valley to be over a hundred kilometers long was very astonishing. Based on distance, Linley should have begun to draw very near to the core regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“Hey, Boss. There’s very few magical beasts here.” Perched on Linley’s shoulders, Bebe was constantly scanning in all directions as well.

Linley nodded.

In an area around them with the radius of several kilometers, only two magical beasts could be seen. It was very strange for the density of magical beasts to be so low here. The two magical beasts present were both gigantic Velocidragons. Most importantly…these two Velocidragons were both resting on the ground, apparently asleep.

“Just two Velocidragons, and sleeping besides.” Linley laughed in a self-mocking way. “This section will probably be the easiest section to traverse ever since I got in here. But I must say ,these two Velocidragons are rather different compared to your average Velocidragon.

Linley noticed that these Velocidragon’s bodies were even larger than that of most Velocidragons. Because they were lying down, it was hard to be certain, but these two Velocidragons, even while lying down, were almost as tall as most Velocidragons were while standing up. In addition, their body length was double that of an ordinary Velocidragon.

While lying down on the ground, those two large Velocidragons looked very much like two small mountains.

In order to be extra cautious, Linley went so far as to carefully pass the two large Velocidragons via a patch of grass that was over twenty meters away from them. But Linley didn't notice that when he passed through the grass, making a soft 'swishing' sound, the ears of the two Velocidragons twitched, even though their eyes remained close and they didn't move.

When traveling through the grass, of course there would be some noise.

But Linley didn't pay too much heed to that, because as Linley saw it, even the wind blowing through the grass would cause some swishing sounds. It would only just be a bit quieter than the sound of a person traveling through the grass, was all. Linley had crept through the grass for so long now without any trouble.

"Swish!"

A sudden blur sliced through the air and directly smashed towards Linley. Linley, even while boosted by the Supersonic technique, was only able to just barely stop in time.

"Whack!"

A long, dragon tail, as fast and flexible as an iron whip, heavily struck the ground right in front of Linley, perhaps just half a meter in front of him. The earth itself split apart from that blow, as a meter-wide crevice appeared in the ground. Linley hurriedly exerted force with his legs and began to run.

"I've been discovered." Linley's heart shuddered.

"Growl!" "Growl…."

Two roars in succession. The two Velocidragons that had been sleeping suddenly both rose to stand up. Both of them were four stories tall, and their body length alone was around forty meters, with their tails making up another forty meters in length. Their size was absolutely astonishing.

“They are so huge! These must be elites amongst the Velocidragon race. Most likely magical beasts of the eighth rank.” Linley’s heart trembled.

These were the first magical beasts of the eighth rank which Linley had met here in the valley. As a magus of the seventh rank now, Linley had confidence to tussle with even magical beasts of the seventh rank. But upon encountering a magical beast of the eighth rank, he didn’t even dare to entertain the thought of fighting, because at the higher ranks, the differences in power for each rank grew even more pronounced.

Just from the value of magicite cores, one could tell.

A magicite core of the sixth rank. 1000 gold coins.

But a magicite core of the seventh rank could be worth up to 50,000 gold coins! The gap between the sixth and the seventh ranks was thus easily imagined.

A magicite core of the eighth rank? The price could reach up to 500,000 gold coins!

As for a magicite core of the ninth rank? The value was an astonishing 5,000,000 gold coins!

“These were just the general estimates based upon the books in the libraries. In reality, the magicite cores of some particularly large and powerful magical beasts are extremely rare, and thus even more valuable. Often, you won’t even be able to find them on the market.”

A magical beast of the eighth rank was far more powerful than a magical beast of the seventh rank.

“Growl.” “Growl!”

The two Velocidragon’s of the eighth rank exchanged glances. A look of amusement actually appeared in their eyes, and then they turned, charging at Linley at high speed.

The intelligence of a magical beast of the eighth rank was definitely no less than that of any human being.

“Whoosh!” At maximum speed, Linley began to frantically run eastwards while immediately beginning to chant the words to the wind-style Soaring Technique spell. But since it was a magical spell of the seventh rank, the incantation was quite complex as well, and had to take quite a bit of time to perform.

At this point in time, Bebe didn’t dare to try and show off either.

He could defeat a Velocidragon of the seventh rank, but a Velocidragon of the eighth rank? Just based on their size alone, which was a full size larger than ordinary Velocidragons, Bebe knew very well that his teeth might not even be able to bite through the scales and reach their flesh.

Their huge size signified that they had thick scales as well. Each scale of these Velocidragons of the eighth rank were more than half a meter thick, and beneath that was an even thicker layer of muscles.

To injure them was an extremely difficult proposition.

Possessing the speed of a warrior of the fourth rank boosted by the Supersonic supportive spell, Linley’s traveling speed was still somewhat faster than the rather slow Velocidragons. These huge creatures were rather slow and lumbering, but each step they took covered a large amount of distance. Each step of theirs covered as much distance as ten of Linley’s.

Most importantly…

The iron-whip-like tails of these Velocidragons of the eighth rank. Possessing the speed of lightning, they were even faster than the tails of Velocidragons of the seventh rank. With a flash and a flicker, they could move dozens of meters, and were approximately on the same level as Bebe’s own speed.

The earth shook as those two huge, ponderous creatures continued to chase after Linley. Every so often, the two of them would exchange a strange look with each other.

“Whooosh!”

Linley suddenly flew into the sky. He had finally completed the incantation for the Soaring Technique.

“I’m finally safe.” Linley quickly flew higher. Seeing the two enormous Velocidragons beneath him, Linley finally let out a sigh of relief. “These two Velocidragons of the eighth rank were really sinister. They intentionally feigned sleep in order to lure me in.”

Actually, what Linley didn’t realize was that the two Velocidragons were not baiting him in at all, earlier.

But these two Velocidragons of the eighth rank were extremely sensitive to their surroundings. They were very used to the sound of the wind rustling through the grass. When they heard the frequency of the rustling suddenly change, of course they would immediately become suspicious.

“Growl…”

The two Velocidragons of the eighth rank watched as Linley flew away. They didn’t appear angry in the slightest. Instead, they raised their heads high and roared. That roaring sound seemed almost…happy.

Linley was able to differentiate between a roar of rage, and a roar of pleasure.

“Growl…” “Growl…” “Growl…” “Growl…”

Suddenly, the air above Linley was split with draconic roars as well, one draconic roar following the other. Just from the number of roars, one could tell that there was an extremely large number of magical beasts present.

“They’re above me.” Halting in mid-air, Linley looked up, startled. From within the white, foggy mists, one enormous draconic beast after another began to emerge, every single one of them around seventy or eighty meters long, and with an enormous wingspan of around fifty or sixty meters long as well.

Multiple huge, draconic figures hovered there in the white mist. Linley could tell at a glance how many there were.

“At least a few dozen.” Linley felt as though he couldn’t breathe.

One enormous flying draconic beast after another descended from the skies. Their flame-colored scales were so resplendent, and flames seemed to flicker around their entire bodies.

“Fire Dragons!” Linley knew that the situation had just become catastrophic.

Fire Dragons were considered middle-class dragon-type beasts. Most Fire Dragons were magical beasts of the eighth rank, while elite members of the race could reach the ninth rank in power.

“Two magical beasts of the eighth rank were able to give me so much trouble for so long. Now, I’m dealing with ten that can fly.” Linley felt extremely miserable right now.

And right at that moment….

“Growl…” “Growl!”

Another series of roars began to emanate from a different direction. And then, one flying creature after another, each approximately the same size as a Fire Dragon, began to spread their massive wings and fly in this direction. These enormous, flying draconic beasts had dark green scales that were as clear as jasper.

These flying draconic beasts with green jasper scales were not the slightest

bit fewer in numbers when compared to the Fire Dragons.

The two Velocidragons of the eighth rank below Linley began to roar in amusement as well, their eyes filled with a sinister maliciousness.

“Now I know why when I entered this area, I only saw the Velocidragons of the eighth rank and didn’t see anything else.” Linley felt miserable. “Most likely, only magical beasts of the eighth rank are permitted to reside in this area. Magical beasts of the seventh rank don’t dare to enter. This Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons are all pack-type draconic beasts of the eighth rank. Most likely, these two Velocidragons were just toying with me this entire time. When they saw I was about to fly away and escape, they immediately roared out to have the Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons to come as well.”

Over a hundred massive flying dragons were circling above him in the sky. Only now did Linley realize what was going on.

But by now, the way out through the skies was forbidden to him!

“Boss, what are we gonna do?” Bebe’s pitiful voice rang out in the back of Linley’s mind.

Chapter 17 – The Gloomy Depths

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 17, The Gloomy Depths

His head raised, Linley watched the hundred-plus dragons circle above him. The flames surrounding the Fire Dragons raised the temperature around them, while those jasper-scaled Emerald Dragons seemed to emanate a soul-chilling aura.

An amalgamation of the opposites, frost and flame!

Beneath Linley, those two enormous Velocidragons were watching him with amusement. Right now Linley, who was 70-80 meters above the ground, had nowhere to flee. At the same time, those hovering, circling dragons also watched Linley with amusement.

The intelligence of a magical beast of the eighth rank was definitely not inferior to that of humans. Linley knew all too well that to these countless flying dragons, he was like nothing more than an ant. His opponents weren't at all concerned with whether he lived or died, only….if he could provide them with a bit of amusement.

A game!

Just like how humans might like to play with ants. When they were bored, they would crush him to death.

"Bebe, I don't want to be an ant." Linley glanced at Bebe. "Get ready to run."

"Swish!"

Linley's body shot downwards, allowing his natural body weight to combine with the Supersonic spell to rocket him forward towards the ground, and then, just before hitting the ground, he brought his body to a

sudden halt. This sort of sudden change from high speed to a halt disrupted the flow of blood in his body, causing him so much pain that he spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Good thing I’m not just a magus, I’m also a warrior of the fourth rank and my body can take it.”

“Right now, behind him there were two enormous Velocidragons, while above him there were over a hundred giant flying dragons. He didn’t have the time to care about anything else. Linley immediately began charging towards the empty wasteland in front.

“Roar…” The two Velocidragons began to roar.

“Roar!” “Roar!” “Roar!”

Over a hundred dragons swooped down from the skies. The Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons were roaring, and the two giant Velocidragons began chasing after Linley, the earth shaking with each step. The hundred plus dragons were also swooping towards Linley, causing the sky to darken as they blotted out the sun.

A single dragon was already enormous, to say nothing of a hundred. They totally covered the sky with their mass. And then, the dozens of dragons all opened their giant maws and began blasting giant balls of flame at Linley.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

One giant fireball after another, each the size of Linley or larger, began smashing down from the heavens. The ‘fireballs’ generated by the Fire Dragons were not like ordinary balls of flame; they contained within them a mixture of magic as well as the innate dragonflame which all Fire Dragons held within them. Their temperature was so high that even the tough scales of Velocidragons of the seventh rank would most likely crack from the heat.

“Boom!”

A particularly large fireball just barely brushed past Linley. The fleeing Linley instantly could smell the smell of burning hair.

“Boss, your hair got burnt.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley himself knew very well that his hair hadn’t actually been touched by that ball of fire. It was just that the temperatures the fireball generated was way too high.

Just by passing by him, the temperature was raised high enough that his hair was burnt. Like an agile little monkey, Linley began to run about in unpredictable patterns, constantly dodging those fireballs.

Those Fire Dragons also didn’t just charge forward to kill him. They were just playing around, using fireballs to toy with Linley.

“The difference in power is too great. Even though I’m a dual-element magus of the seventh rank, when facing a magical beast of the eighth rank, I would definitely be destroyed.” Linley could sense how terrifyingly hot those fireballs were, and yet those Fire Dragons could casually blast them out from their mouths, one after the other.

Fortunately, the Fire Dragons weren’t actually trying to kill him as quickly as possible.

Suddenly, Linley felt a cold aura. His body, which had just begun adjusting to the heat, suddenly clenched with the cold.

“Swish!” A translucent, faintly green spear passed by Linley, and then shattered, releasing a terrible, cold aura that forced Linley to instantly and quickly dodge away.

In the skies above, those dozens of Emerald Dragons had also opened their maws and begun vomiting frozen arrows at Linley. To the enormous Emerald Dragons, these projectiles were perhaps just arrows, but to the comparatively small Linley, these three meter long projectiles were not arrows; they were terrifying frozen spears.

With balls of flame and spears of ice raining down upon him from the skies, Linley had to use all of his wits to constantly dodge and dart about in all directions.

It was exhausting!

Linley was feeling mentally exhausted. His mental energy was being worn down to the point of exhaustion. For a short period of time, this level of energy expenditure was fine, but in the long run, he would definitely suffer from mental exhaustion. Linley also had to expend enormous amounts of physical energy in sprinting around so frantically.

“Boom!” A ball of fire clipped Linley on his left shoulder.

A shattering sound could be heard as the Earthguard jadestone armor covering Linley began to splinter and crack. Earth elemental essence began to swirl about the armor, attempting to repair the damage.

“The attack power is terrifying. If struck head on, I expect my jadestone armor will only be able to take one blow.” Faced with certain death, Linley’s latent potential seemed to explode, and he once more upped his speed as he ran about and dodged wildly.

Even Linley himself was amazed at his dodging abilities.

This really was Linley at his absolute peak performance. But unfortunately, even at his peak, there was no chance of success when faced with over a hundred dragons.

“Roar!” “Roar!”

The hundred-plus Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons in the sky watched Linley with amusement. Seeing him constantly dodge, they felt more and more interested in him. Even the two Velocidragons chasing after Linley would occasionally wave their tails to threaten him.

At this point in time….

Linley was like an ant, an ant being toyed with by an entire group of giants.

If he made just the slightest mistake, Linley would die. These titanic dragons didn't care in the slightest about whether Linley lived or died; they only cared about one thing. "How long will this little human creature be able to hold on?"

Five minutes!

Linley had managed to survive for five entire minutes as they toyed with him!

Five minutes, ie 300 seconds!

It sounded like a short period of time, but Linley felt as though it had passed extremely slowly. Every single second was a second in which his life was on the line.

"This group of bastards. If I didn't dodge fast enough, I would have been killed by them, and then they would leave without caring in the slightest, continuing with their leisurely lives." Linley knew very well that he was nothing more than a slight diversion for these giant dragons.

In actuality, Bebe possessed even higher speed than those giant dragons. If he were alone, he definitely would be able to escape. Bebe was currently perched on top of Linley's shoulders, his eyes staring at the fireballs and ice spears falling from the skies, telling Linley where the danger would be.

"Boss, careful! Three fireballs!" Bebe urgently warned.

Linley's facial expression changed.

"Boom!"

A fireball directly struck Linley on his back, and then exploded. The

jadestone armor covering Linley suddenly shone with an earthen light, and then with a crack, shattered into its component elemental essence.

“Hiss!” Linley’s hair was, in the blink of an eye, all burnt, and his face was painfully scorched by the heat.

Without the protection of the jadestone armor, if Linley took another blow, regardless of whether it was a fireball or an icy spear, he would definitely die.

“I won’t be able to hold out much longer.” Linley could feel all his muscles quivering, and even his head was splitting. Linley knew that he had already reached his limit. If he continued under these circumstances, he would definitely collapse.”

“Linley, up ahead, 120 meters, there’s a 20-meter high hill. Beneath it is a very deep tunnel. The hill doesn’t actually totally block the tunnel; there’s enough space to fit two people in. Hurry and flee there, it could save your life.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out.

While he was being pursued by the dragons, Doehring Cowart hadn’t said a single word, but as soon as he did, Linley found new life and new hope.

Somehow, unbelievably, Linley managed to increase his speed even further. The hope of survival brought incredible things out of people.

Those hundred-plus Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons circling above all stared at Linley with rather odd looks.

“Hrm?”

When they realized where Linley was going, those hundred-plus dragons, previously amused, all roared with fury. Without any coordination, they simultaneously began to angrily blast out balls of fire and icy spears at the same time, covering an entire area of 20-30 meters.

“Ah!”

At Linley's current speed, in about 2-3 seconds, he managed to reach the hill. It was just about at this time that the fireballs and icy spears arrived as well.

"There's the crack!" Linley instantly saw the two-meter wide cave entrance. Without any hesitation, Linley dove inside.

But before he managed to make it inside, a large ball of fire came blasting down at him. The fireballs travelled at much higher speeds than the icy spears. By the time the fireball came within 20-30 centimeters of Linley, Linley's clothes began to burn.

"Screech!"

Bebe suddenly enlarged himself, and then used his own body to accept that vicious blow from the fireball. Only then did Linley luckily manage to make it inside the tunnel. But Bebe, in turn, was buried by an avalanche of those fireballs and icy spears.

"Oof!"

Linley fell all the way down, perhaps seventy or eighty meters, before smashing into the tough ground. This place was very gloomy and dark, with the only light coming from that small hole up above. But Linley had excellent vision, and that dim light was enough for him to see his surroundings. And right now…

Linley's hair had been burnt, and there were two or three spots on his face which had also been burnt black.

His face had been ruined, and he had been scarred!

But right now, Linley couldn't bother to care about these things. The only thing he was worried about was Bebe.

"Swish!" A black blur fell down, smashing directly in front of Linley.

“Yeowch! That was comfortable! First cold, then hot. That felt so incredibly nice.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley joyfully embraced Bebe. “Bebe, are you okay?”

Bebe’s face was extremely dirty, but he still wrinkled his nose delightedly. “Of course! I, Bebe, am much stronger than I was a year ago. Even if I were to fight head on with a magical beast of the eighth rank, I wouldn’t be afraid, much less a little fireball or ice spear?”

Linley laughed. Now that he knew Bebe was fine, Linley was no longer worried.

“Then why didn’t you go out and tussle a bit with those giant dragons?” Linley teased.

Bebe said unhappily, “How could I, Bebe, be afraid of them? But their scales are simply too thick, and my size is too small. My mouth is also small. I can’t bite through those scales. It’s too hard for me to kill them, but they can forget about killing me as well.”

Linley began to chuckle.

“Boss, your face…your face is ruined!” Bebe’s mental shout suddenly reminded Linley.

Stretching out his facial muscles, Linley felt a fiery pain. He had no choice but to sneer at himself, “Bebe, although I’ve trained up my physical strength, no matter how much I train, I can’t possibly strengthen my facial muscles. My defensive abilities weren’t strong enough.”

“Oof, Bebe, let me rest for a bit, I’m so tired.”

Linley let go of Bebe, then lay down on the ground.

Just then, Linley had stretched himself to the absolute limit, both in terms of physical energy as well as his mental energy. It wasn’t so bad when facing

danger, but now that he was safe, Linley felt endless waves of exhaustion crashing upon him. Linley wanted to rest.

Within the valley. Those hundreds of giant, coiling dragons and those two Velocidragons of the eighth rank were all staring at the hill.

“Growl…” Suddenly, a particularly large Fire Dragon let out a roar.

All of the giant dragons and Velocidragons retreated. Only that large Fire Dragon remained, staring at that hill with a mixture of terror and alarm in his eyes.

One of the main entrances to that underground area was previously extremely large, large enough for even a dragon to go inside. But then, the Fire Dragons and the Emerald Dragons had received an order to move a small hill to block off that tunnel.

To those enormous dragons, that two-meter wide crevice was nothing. Based on their size, there was no way they could get in.

But to Linley, it was very easy to slip inside.

“Having entered the forbidden area, this human will die without question.” That particularly large Fire Dragon rose directly into the air and flew away.

This was the forbidden area of the Foggy Valley. Forget about humans; even Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons dared not trespass there.

Nothing which went in would come out alive. This was the iron rule of the Foggy Valley.

Chapter 18 – The Armored Razorback Wyrm

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 18, The Armored Razorback Wyrm

Within the underground cave, Linley laid down and rested for a while. After feeling that he had recovered, he stood up. That situation just now, where he had been attacked by over a hundred flying dragons, was the most dangerous which Linley had ever been in. Virtually every second, he was in fear for his life. After escaping from that calamity with his life, Linley had finally managed to take a breather, but in his heart, he also had an ardent desire – the desire to increase his power!

In front of those giant dragons, he was nothing more than a toy. He had no ability to resist at all.

“Boss, there’s no way out from above. The only option we have is to keep going down. Next to us, there’s a very wide path.” Bebe mentally transmitted to Linley while jumping on Linley’s shoulders.

Off to the side of Linley, there was a very wide, crooked road, several dozen meters wide and almost ten meters tall. But this road was curved and crooked, heading off into an unknown location in the east. After silently pondering for a while, Linley decided to venture forth with Bebe into that gloomy darkness.

The cave tunnel grew darker, the further in they went. After a while, nothing could be seen but darkness. Linley couldn’t even see the tunnel, and so he had to carefully make his way in by feeling his way through the wall.

“Boss, where the heck are we. Why was this tunnel covered up by that hill?” Bebe asked Linley.

Linley shook his head.

“There’s over a hundred flying dragons overhead. If we go up, we’re just committing suicide. We can only keep going down.” Linley also didn’t have the ability to tunnel his way to escape through this maze-like rocky tunnel. His only choice was to follow it to whatever unknown destination it led to.

Following Linley, Bebe was also on maximum alert, inspecting his surroundings out of fear that a magical beast might pop up out of nowhere.

“There’s light up ahead.” Within the darkness, Linley saw a dim glow coming from up front. He unconsciously sped up his pace to head towards it. Slowly, Linley discovered the exit to this tunnel, and that it was the exit which was glowing with a dim red light.

Suddenly…

“Haha, Sartius [Sa’di’e’si], weren’t you very arrogant? Those things you did to me three hundred years ago, I will repay you manifold today.” An extremely deep voice rang out from the exit, sounding as deep and powerful as a peal of thunder.

Linley couldn’t help but feel shocked. “A person!”

“No matter what, it’ll be easier negotiating with a person than with a magical beast. And I have no other path I can take. But this fellow’s voice is really loud.” Sticking next to the tunnel walls, Linley walked towards the exit. But when he got within 20 meters of the exit, he could already see what was going on at the other side through the exit hole.

This was the end of the tunnel. There was an extremely large cave here.

This cave was at least several kilometers wide, and at least several dozen meters high. But what shocked Linley was….

From his current vantage point, Linley could clearly tell that there was a huge black bear standing in mid-air, at least ten meters high, with all the fur on his body appearing as though it were made from steel. This black bear was covered with countless violet tattoo-like paterns, making him look very

bizarre.

This black bear that was standing in mid-air was the source of the ‘human’ words Linley had heard.

“This…this…” Linley couldn’t breathe.

It was as though his consciousness was being repeatedly struck by lightning.

“A Saint-level magical beast!” Linley instantly understood.

Upon reaching the Saint-level, magical beasts would usually be able to fly, and also be able to speak using human languages. These were the defining characteristics of Saint-level magical beasts. Saint-level magical beasts were extremely terrifying creatures. Most human Saint-level combatants were not capable of defeating a Saint-level magical beast. Only the strongest Saint-level human combatants had enough power to kill a Saint-level magical beast.

A Saint-level magical beast was capable of shrinking his physical size; a hundred meter large Saint-level magical beast could shrink himself to the size of a small snake.

Naturally, though…there was no way for a Saint-level magical beast to assume the form of a human being.

Perhaps only a magical beast which possessed the power of a deity would be able to able to assume human form.

“A Saint-level magical beast. I’ve actually encountered a Saint-level magical beast.” Linley didn’t even dare to breathe loudly. He carefully watched the cave opening. “This is a Violet Tattooed Bear. Violet Tattooed Bears are magical beasts of the ninth rank.”

Violet Tattooed Bears were considered a very powerful race of magical beasts. Naturally, they were capable of reaching the Saint-level in some

cases.

“But this Violet Tattooed Bear is blind in one eye.” Linley suddenly noticed the terrifying injury that was over the left eye of the Violet Tattooed Bear that was standing in mid-air. Clearly, this bear was half-blind.

“Sartius, all these years, I’ve been waiting for my chance to get revenge. Haha, so what if you ended up seizing this place for your own? Although the elemental essence density here is a hundred times higher than that of the outside world, I was still the first to reach the Saint-level. Haha.”

Clearly, the Violet Tattooed Bear was extremely excited.

“Where is this Sartius that this bear keeps talking about?” Linley stealthily retreated, then crept closer to the other wall of the tunnel. Indeed, from the other side of the tunnel, he was able to see another magical beast. This one was a magical beast that made Linley’s heart shudder yet again.

This magical beast was ten meters long and three meters high.

Its entire body was densely covered with pitch black scales, and all of the scales on its body were patterned in a very orderly, regimented manner. Every single scale was roughly the size of a human palm.

But the densely patterned scales were arranged together in such a way that for some reason, it struck fear into the hearts of whoever saw it.

On its back, there were many sharp spikes that were thirty centimeters long, which spread all the way from its back to its neck.

The most terrifying of all were its eyes….

Its eyes were a dark gold color, so cold that it could cause someone to utterly freeze.

“The Armored Razorback Wyrm, the most terrible dragon-type beast of the ninth rank.” Linley’s heart began to tremble, and within his mind, he

naturally began to recollect the information he had previously acquired on Armored Razorback Wyrms.

Armored Razorback Wyrms: Magical beasts of the ninth rank, darkness-type. The smallest dragon-type beast in physical size, amongst dragon-type beasts of the same rank, the Armored Razorback Wyrm possessed the most powerful defense, the highest agility, and also possessed extremely sharp claws with incredible offensive power.

Without question, amongst dragon-type beasts of the same rank, the Armored Razorback Wyrm would definitely be one of the most powerful creatures.

"It's actually an Armored Razorback Wyrm!" Only now did Linley finally understand everything.

A Violet Tattooed Bear was an extremely terrifying combatant. Not only did it inherit the massive strength inherent to all bear-type beasts, it was also extremely nimble.

Amongst magical beasts of the ninth rank, there weren't many which were more powerful than a Violet Tattooed Bear…but an Armored Razorback Wyrm was, without question, one of them.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm swept its icy gaze across Linley.

Linley felt as though the season had turned to winter, and in the midst of that winter, a bucket of cold water was poured over his head. The fear he now felt far surpassed the fear he had felt when he was a child at Wushan township and saw that Black Dragon of the ninth rank.

Although the Armored Razorback Wyrm had discovered Linley, it didn't pay him any mind. Because right now, its greatest opponent was this Violet Tattooed Bear in front of it. Although amongst magical beasts of the ninth rank, an Armored Razorback Wyrm was indeed an indomitable tyrant, when faced with a Saint-level magical beast….

“Growl….” The Armored Razorback Wyrm let out a deep growl.

“Sartius, you say that I’m just a new Saint-level beast? That you aren’t afraid of me? Haha, true, I just recently entered the Saint-level. As soon as I entered the Saint-level, I became consumed with the urge to kill you! Hmph, even if I’ve just entered the Saint-level, you still aren’t a match for me.” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear had a look of total confidence on its face.

“Armored Razorback Wyrms. You really are a species of dragons which advance very slowly. You’ve dominated this place for so long, and enjoyed the benefits of a location where the elemental essence density is a hundredfold that of the normal world. But you still remain at the peak of the ninth rank and still haven’t been able to take that final step. But today, I will let you know the power of the Saint-level.” The Violet Tattooed Bear’s aura began to dramatically increase in power…

Although the Violet Tattooed Bear talked a big game, in his heart, he knew very well how terrifying an Armored Razorback Wyrm could be.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm had the strongest defensive abilities amongst dragon-type creatures. What’s more, Sartius was at the peak of the ninth rank, only one step away from becoming a Saint-level Armored Razorback Wyrm. In terms of defensive ability, Sartius definitely could compete with most Saint-level dragons. But aside from his defensive power, there was also his offense to watch out for!

The twin talons of the Armored Razorback Wyrm were incomparably sharp!

“Nonetheless…I have entered the Saint-level, after all.” The Violet Tattooed Bear was very confident in himself.

“Upon reaching the Saint-level, one advantage is the ability to fly, while the second advantage is that I’m able to send the power of my soul outside of my body. Most magical beasts rely upon their vision to do battle, but Saint-level combatants are able to use their soul sense to clearly detect their opponent’s movements in battle. Thus, in combat, they definitely have a big

advantage."

Most importantly, upon reaching the Saint-level, one's offensive power would also increase.

Barely breathing, Linley continued to watch through the exit hole as the two terrifying magical beasts stared at each other.

An Armored Razorback Wyrm at the peak of the ninth rank, against a Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. Linley could feel his blood begin to boil. For some reason, whenever Linley saw those icy, merciless eyes of the Armored Razorback Wyrm, Linley felt that he was more afraid of the Wyrm than of the Bear.

"It's begun." Linley's eyes lit up.

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear landed on the ground, while at the same time, it began to emanate a roaring sound. All of the muscles on the Bear's body began to swell, while at the same time beginning to emit crackling, popping sounds. The Violet Tattooed Bear, previously around ten meters in height, suddenly increased its height by two meters. Twelve meters tall now, it had the same waist as before, but its legs were a full size larger now.

"Die, Sartius!"

With a mighty growl, the Violet Tattooed Bear swept towards Sartius like a blur, appearing directly in front of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. The Wyrm, which had been a state of readied action this entire time, suddenly, viciously smacked the earth with its tail, sending its entire body flying far away through the tremendous counterforce which had been released.

A gigantic, meter-long paw viciously slammed into the ground where the Armored Razorback Wyrm had been just a heartbeat ago. "Bam!" Linley could clearly see that the ground itself rippled for at least two or three meters in a radius around the Bear's paw, and within that area, the stone floor itself was partially turned into dust, to a depth of half a meter. And

outside of that area, within a radius of several dozen meters, the ground itself split with seven or eight terrifying large cracks appearing.

“How terrifying.” Linley’s heart had gotten stuck in his throat.

The Violet Tattooed Bear suddenly turned around, focusing its bizarre, red gaze upon the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm just stared back at it with its cold, dark golden eyes, not actively attacking at all.

“Sartius. You are afraid.” The Violet Tattoed Bear laughed delightedly. And then, its entire body began to dimly emanate a dark aura. “Whoosh!” With a strong kick to the floor, the Bear launched itself into the air, and then began to descend in a bizarre pattern, directly at the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm stared at the Violet Tattooed Bear with its cold eyes. And then, it’s iron-whip-like dragon tail suddenly swept out…

“Swish!” It sliced through the air, causing a screaming sound so high that Linley’s ears were hurting. “This draconic tail is far more powerful than the tails of those Velocidragons. I bet even I, Bebe, couldn’t take a blow from it.” At this time, Bebe’s eyes were as round as round could be.

The Violet Tattooed Bear’s left paw, glowing with that strange dark energy, directly reached out to snatch at the dragon’s tail. A Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear’s paw had incredibly powerful offensive power, and it also was extremely strong defensively as well.

“THUD!”

The dragon’s tail directly collided with that huge paw, with an incredibly deep striking sound. The Violet Tattooed Bear’s giant left paw shuddered slightly, and the dragon’s tail retreated as well.

But when they had exchanged blows just now, the Violet Tattooed Bear’s right paw had already struck out and arrived at the Armored Razorback

Wyrm's body. The Armored Razorback Wyrm did not try to dodge. Instead, it inclined its body and pointed that row of sharp spikes on its back towards the paw.

This Armored Razorback Wyrm and the Violet Tattooed Bear were old foes. Naturally, the Bear knew how fierce this particular tactic by the Wyrm was.

Not only did the Armored Razorback Wyrm possess extremely high defensive power, its body was also designed extremely well. If the opponent smashed down on it with a palm, the Armored Razorback Wyrm could easily move its body and dissipate the strength of the blow across its entire body.

"Sartius. I'm no longer that old magical beast of the ninth rank." A malicious, cruel look was in the eyes of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. Suddenly, a freezing black light emanated from the giant paw of the Violet Tattooed Bear, and that extremely fast paw began to move even faster than before, viciously striking down upon the spikes of the Armored Razorback Wyrm with even greater force than before.

"Bang!" The Armored Razorback Wyrm's entire body was smashed deep into the ground by that blow, and in a radius of a hundred meters around it, the stone floor splintered and shattered. Upon the dense row of sharp spikes on the back of the Armored Razorback Wyrm, a single spike had been shattered by the force of the blow. And from the mouth of the Armored Razorback Wyrm, a mouthful of fresh blood was suddenly spat out.

Chapter 19 – Viciousness

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 19, Viciousness

“What a waste! That’s dragon’s blood from a magical beast of the peak of the ninth rank!” Linley couldn’t help but say to himself upon seeing the blood splash onto the ground. According to the Secret Dragonblood Manual, blood from a living Saint-level dragon could definitely rouse the Dragonblood in his body, while blood from a dragon of the ninth rank would have a somewhat lower chance of success.

This Armored Razorback Wyrm was, after all a dragon-type beast of the peak of the ninth rank, just one step away from becoming a Saint-level dragon. What’s more, Armored Razorback Wyrms were considered one of the most powerful type of dragons. When faced with any dragon of the same rank, the Armored Razorback Wyrm would be more powerful.

“This Wyrm is both at the peak of the ninth rank and is an exceedingly powerful type of dragon. The effect of its blood shouldn’t be much weaker than that of a Saint-level dragon. Unfortunately, there’s no way for me to get it.” Linley didn’t dare at all to step within this cave, because if he did, any random blow from these two combatants which happened to land on him would crush him to a pulp.

“Boss, is this Armored Razorback Wyrm gonna die? It seems like he isn’t able to defeat that big stupid bear.” Bebe said mentally to Linley.

Linley didn’t make a sound. He just stared fixedly at the cave, watching the battle between these two major magical beasts.

“Haha…” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear let out an excited laugh, while at the same time, struck out with his massive, furry black paw, turning it into a fist as he did. That meter-long fist carried with it almost 15000 kilograms of force, and it forcefully smashed against the Armored Razorback Wyrm which was buried underground.

While it was ill, go for the kill!

“Bang!”

The giant furry fist smashed into the middle of the ground, causing the entire cave to shake and rubble to fall down.

“Hrm?” That lone remaining eye of the Violet Tattooed Bear began to glow with a red light.

Right now, that Armored Razorback Wyrm, which had been smashed deep into the ground by the Bear, was now burrowing through the ground like an earthworm, scurrying about at the speed of lightning. Wherever the Armored Razorback Wyrm passed by, the stony ground itself would tremble and crack.

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear had missed with his punch, only landing a hit on the Wyrm’s tail, allowing the Wyrm to immediately burrow underground.

“Haha, Sartius. Are you actually going to just hide underneath the ground and not come out?” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear stared at the ground as he laughed.

The Violet Tattooed Bear knew that when it came to underground burrowing, even though he had reached the Saint-level, he wasn’t a match for the Armored Razorback Wyrm. Thanks to its sinuous, spiky body and its razor-sharp claws, the Wyrm was much better at burrowing than the Bear was. If the Armored Razorback Wyrm really decided to stay underground and not come out, then the Violet Tattooed Bear really would have no recourse.

However, the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear believed that Sartius wouldn’t have been scared to the point of hiding underground and not dare come out to do battle.

This was because…Sartius was an Armored Razorback Wyrm.

“Everyone always says that you Armored Razorback Wyrm’s are extremely arrogant and won’t allow themselves to suffer any humiliation at all. Even in the face of certain death, you’ll still make up your mind to fight to the death with their opponent. But now, from the looks of it, that doesn’t seem to be the case. You, Sartius, are an absolute coward.” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear said in a bright voice. Right now, he was using words to agitate his opponent.

Hiding within the tunnel, Linley just quietly watched this affair progress.

“Dragons are generally very arrogant and very conceited. Armored Razorback Wyrms, in turn, are the most conceited and most arrogant of dragons.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

“Grandpa Doehring, why don’t you come out?” Even as Linley asked the question, he laughed at himself.

His head was totally muddled. Doehring Cowart’s aura could easily be detected by a Saint-level combatant, and a Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was of course such a combatant.

“Can’t come out. Right now, in their eyes, you punk, you’re just an ant. Although they’ve both noticed you, they can’t be bothered to care about you. But if I come out, once they sense my aura, then you’ll be in trouble.” Doehring Cowart remained hidden within the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley nodded slightly, but his gaze was still firmly locked on the cave.

That Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was engaged in nonstop ridicule, but the Armored Razorback Wyrm seemed to have disappeared completely, as there was no sign of it at all.

“It’s laughing?” Watching the battle, Linley noticed that there was a delighted smile on the face of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear, but he didn’t understand its meaning.

Suddenly, the dragon tail which had been compressed into a drill shape suddenly burst out of the ground at high speed, piercing through the air with a terrifying hissing sound as it directly stabbed at the Violet Tattooed Bear's waist.

The speed was so fast that there was no time to react at all.

"Whap!"

The Violet Tattooed Bear seemed to have foreknowledge of this attack. Just as the tail burst out of the ground, the huge bear quickly retreated, while at the same time reaching out with its huge furry paws and grabbing onto the tail.

"Haha…."

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear began to laugh wildly. Its hands firmly fastened around the tail, with a mighty tug, it forcibly ripped the Armored Razorback Wyrm from the earth, then, after waving it about in the air, began to viciously slam the Wyrm directly into the stony ground.

"Bam!"

Like a dancer performing with a whip or a ribbon, the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear brandished the Wyrm in the air, slamming it into the ground time and time again.

"Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!"

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear wildly brandished the Armored Razorback Wyrm, smashing it into the ground without pause. The body of the Armored Razorback Wyrm had turned into a blur, as in the time it took to take a single breath, the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear had slammed it into the ground over a hundred times.

The constant, high-velocity impacts made Linley's heart quail.

“And it’s still not dead?” Linley couldn’t help but feel nervous.

“Haha, Sartius, this is for your arrogance, for taking one of my eyes. Haha…” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear continued to laugh wildly as its two-meter wide hands continued to wave the Armored Razorback Wyrm about, slamming it into the ground.

More and more cracks appeared on the ground, and countless crevices over three meters deep began to appear.

The stony ceiling of the cave had also began to shake loose rocks, but those falling rocks weren’t of the slightest hindrance to the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear.

“I hope he doesn’t collapse the tunnel.” Pebbles began to fall down on Linley’s head as well, causing him to silently curse at this Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. The only option he had was to silently murmur the words to the Earthguard spell to summon a jadestone armor to protect his body. Only then was his physical safety ensured.

“Growl…” “Growl….”

One roar of fury and pain erupted from the Armored Razorback Wyrm after another. Based on its terrifying defensive power, logically speaking, the rocky ground shouldn’t cause any harm to it at all, but being slammed at such a high speed was a different matter!

A rock itself didn’t have much offensive power, but when a rock was propelled to extremely high speeds, it could even penetrate a steel board.

Speed was also a form of offensive power!

Bear-type magical beasts were all born with tremendous strength, so naturally the strength of this Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was terrifyingly high. Based on this Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear’s terrifying wrist power, when slamming the Armored Razorback Wyrm into the

ground, it could produce an astonishingly high speed. And so, at high speed, the Armored Razorback Wyrm continued to impact with the ground.

This sort of slamming attack was extremely terrifying.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm was continuously coiling around like a snake, letting the impact be spread across his entire body.

“Dragon’s blood, dragon’s blood everywhere.” Linley saw how the Armored Razorback Wyrm was leaving blood all over the ground.

To the Armored Razorback Wyrm, however, the physical injuries were a smaller matter. The more important problem was that it was starting to get extremely dizzy!

Being whipped around at such high speed was starting to make the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s mind go blank. If this continued, even if its body was able to hold on, its mind wouldn’t be able to.

“Sartius, you idiot, did you think that by ambushing me from underground, I wouldn’t be able to react in time? Haha. Have you forgotten? Saint-level combatants all have the ability to soul sense outside of their bodies. I saw every single movement you were making underground. And you thought you could ambush me? Haha…”

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was unspeakably delighted with itself.

For over three hundred years, it had nursed this hatred. Every time, when he looked into the water and saw the reflection of his ruined eyes, his heart would be filled with unspeakable rage. He had stewed in this hate, in this rage, for over three hundred years, until he had reached the Saint-level.

“Crack!”

A strange noise was heard, and suddenly, the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s body flew out in the air, colliding with the wall several hundred meters away, creating a giant crater before it landed onto the ground.

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear only stared at the dragon tail in its hand in astonishment.

“You…you broke off your own tail?” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was very astonished, but after recovering, it began to laugh uproariously. “Haha, Sartius, you actually are in such a pathetic state that you chose to break your own tail off. Wonderful! Wonderful!” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was extremely delighted at having been able to force the Armored Razorback Wyrm into such a state.

Linley also stared at the Armored Razorback Wyrm in astonishment, that it was ruthless and cruel enough to break its own tail. The importance of the tail to a dragon could not be understated. Breaking off its own tail carried and required the same courage and viciousness that a human cutting off his own hand would have to have.

Behind the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s posterior, there was nothing aside from a meter-wide round injury. This was where its long tail had previously been connected. This enormous wound was leaking out a huge amount of blood. But the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s dark golden eyes were still as cold as ever, fixing the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear with its deathly glare.

“How vicious. But there’s no doubt that you are still going to die.” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear casually threw the tail away with a wave of its giant paws, his face filled with confidence.”

No tail, and suffering from severe blood loss.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm had suffered a huge loss in combat power. In such a situation, if the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear still was not able to kill the Armored Razorback Wyrm, it would be a huge joke.

“Roar!” A low growl. The Armored Razorback Wyrm flexed its four limbs and transformed into a cruel blur, throwing itself at the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear’s two huge paws once

more glowed with a dark aura, and then the Bear struck viciously at the Armored Razorback Wyrm with them.

Based on the power of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's paws, it should definitely be able to send the Armored Razorback Wyrm flying.

However…

Faced with the oncoming strike from the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's paws, the Armored Razorback Wyrm opened its jaws and viciously launched onto one of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's arms. The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's arms were extremely durable; although the Armored Razorback Wyrm was able to bite into them, it wasn't able to bite through them.

"Ahhh!" The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear let out a howl of pain, as it definitely had not expected the Armored Razorback Wyrm to do this, because by doing this, it was as good as offering its head to the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. "You want to die!" The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear roared with rage as it slammed its other paw towards the Armored Razorback Wyrm's eyes.

Once the meter-long fingers penetrated into the Armored Razorback Wyrm's eyes, it would shatter the Armored Razorback Wyrm's brains and kill it.

But right at that moment…

"Swish!" "Swish!" "Swish!"

The Armored Razorback Wyrm's entire body began to clatter, and then, like water being released from a sieve, every single spike on its back all flew out, piercing into the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's body like so many bolts of lightning.

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's entire body was riddled with spikes now, and even its face had a spike put through it.

“Ah! Sartius, you…” The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear’s eyes were filled with disbelief.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm’s two most formidable aspects were its “armor” and its “razorback”. The word ‘armored’ reflected its astonishing defensive capabilities, while “razorback” referred to that line of dense spikes on its back, which most people didn’t even know had a use.

If it needed to defend? It’s powerful, thick carapace was more than enough.

If it wanted to attack?

How could the razor spikes on its back be used to attack? Even if it wanted to, it would have to do so in a passive way.

There were very few magical beasts that knew the Armored Razorback Wyrm had this technique of shooting out all of the razor spines along its back at once, which was the technique an Armored Razorback Wyrm would use when it intended to perish alongside its opponent. Those spikes shot out with such speed that its penetrating power was even greater than that of its claws.

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear had no idea at all that this Armored Razorback Wyrm actually possessed such a technique. With the two of them so close to each other, and with the spikes shooting out at such a high speed, there had been no way for him to dodge at all.

“Gurgle…” Its body riddled with spikes, the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear could feel as life began draining away from its body. Unwilling to die like this, it raised its head and roared with rage.

Chapter 20 – The Draconic Crystal's Transformation

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 20, The Draconic Crystal's Transformation

Even Doehring Cowart, back at the height of his powers as a peak Saint-level Grand Magus, didn't have any real means of preserving his life after his body was destroyed.

Once the body was destroyed, one would definitely die.

Only someone with the power of a god would be able to repair his body easily.

The life ebbing out of his body, the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear could also feel his soul being called to the nether realm, and could sense that in a few minutes, it would enter it. "Sartius!" The very last action the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear took on the Yulan continent was to wildly smash its two massive paws against the skull of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

One of the Armored Razorback Wyrm's eyes were smashed, while scales around its neck and forehead were totally smashed, and fresh blood began to leak out.

But the Armored Razorback Wyrm didn't try to resist in the slightest, because the Armored Razorback Wyrm had also reached the end of its road. After having shot out all of its razor spikes, the life force was beginning to ebb out of the Armored Razorback Wyrm as well.

"I am unwilling to die!"

A furious howl!

"Thud!" That massive, twenty-meter tall body slumped over, falling to the

ground. By now, the soul of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear could no longer resist the call of the nether world, and it forever vanished from the physical realm of the Yulan continent.

Linley looked at the fallen Violet Tattooed Bear, and then at the Armored Razorback Wyrm which was still biting at the Bear's arm. "Is this a double defeat?" The Armored Razorback Wyrm was also at death's door. Fresh blood constantly flowed out, both from its severed tail as well as from its neck. Its eyelids slowly closed as well.

Then suddenly.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm opened its one remaining eye. That remaining, dark golden eye remained as cold and emotionless as ever, and it was focused on Linley.

"Ah!" Faced with this cold gaze, Linley's heart began to beat frantically.

Both the Armored Razorback Wyrm and the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear both had noticed Linley long ago. Only, they didn't bother with him.

However…

The Armored Razorback Wyrm didn't want its body to be defiled after its death by this human. Dragons were a proud race, and Armored Razorback Wyrms were the proudest, most conceited dragons in existence. Even in death, it wouldn't want its opponents to get off too easy, much less allow its corpse to be mutilated by a human.

"Not good." Without hesitating at all, Linley immediately turned tail and began to run.

"It's almost dead, and it still wants to kill." Linley was feeling rather pissed.

The Armored Razorback Wyrm stared a deadly gaze at Linley with its one remaining dark golden eye. And then, emitting the most furious roar it had ever let out in its existence, it transformed into a blur and appeared next to

Linley almost instantaneously, sweeping its merciless claws towards Linley.

Feeling the sudden rushing air from behind, Linley instinctively wanted to lie down, as he knew that a dragon claw would come swiping in. When it did, even a magical beast of the ninth rank would perish, much less him. That jadestone armor on his body would not prove to be any deterrent to the Armored Razorback Wyrm's sharp claws.

"Swish!"

Emitting an ear-piercing shriek, Bebe's tiny, weak little body collided head-on with the Armored Razorback Wyrm's sharp claws.

"Bebe!" As he was spiritually linked with Bebe, as soon as Bebe had moved, Linley sensed it, and instantly Linley's heart began to tremble with fear.

"Whap!"

A clear striking sound. Bebe's body was sent flying by the Armored Razorback Wyrm's vicious claws, and it was shot backwards at an incomprehensible speed, smashing into the tunnel wall a few dozen meters away, creating a deep crevice.

On the outside of that crevice, there was a spot of bright blood.

"Bebe's blood." At this moment, Linley was filled with boundless pain, pain which was a thousand, no, ten thousand-fold the pain he had felt upon losing Alice.

Within his mind, one image after another of him and Bebe together swam to the forefront.

He remembered the first time they met, how Bebe had hidden behind that decrepit old stone house and stared at Linley in terror.

He remembered Bebe's self-satisfied look, and adorable Bebe looked upon

wrinkling his nose.

He also remembered how Bebe would lie down for a nap inside his clothes, and how cute he looked asleep.

….

From when Linley was 8, until now.

The one who had truly always been by his side was Bebe. Although he liked to boast and brag, and also liked to mock, in Linley's heart, Bebe had occupied an extremely important position.

"Graaaaaw…." That huge maw of the Armored Razorback Wyrm bit down at Linley.

"Aaaaargh!" Linley let out a deep howl, his eyes now totally bloodshot. When the Armored Razorback Wyrm's giant fangs drew near to him, Linley's speed attained a previously unreached level, and he opened his own mouth wide and bit down at the Wyrm's neck as well.

"Crush." A large part of the flesh on Linley's shoulder was bitten off.

But Linley's own teeth were also firmly locked onto the wounded area on the Armored Razorback Wyrm's neck!

"Die, die, die with me!"

Having entered a berserk, crazed state, Linley wildly drank the blood of this living dragon and wildly bit at the exposed flesh.

"Aaaargh!"

When the dragon blood splashed on Linley's body, Linley felt as though all of the skin on his body had been painfully scalded by boiling water. But this was only a secondary thing. The dragon blood that he drank into his stomach made Linley's entire body jerk, spasm, and tremble.

Pain! Incredibly fierce pain!

The pain of dragon blood splashing on his body, Linley could withstand. But the dragon blood entering his stomach, entering his body? One's internals, after all, were much more vulnerable than one's skin. This sort of pain was an internal, constant, non-stop stabbing pain.

He was in agony. But Linley had forgotten about what agony was, at this point.

The last, desperate, full-strength attack of this peak ninth rank Armored Razorback Wyrm…one could imagine how terrifying it was. The fierce sharpness of the Armored Razorback Wyrm was legendary. Even a magical beast of the ninth rank would be rent by it. And Bebe?

Linley could still see that bloodstain on the tunnel wall.

Once Bebe's tiny body had its protective fur and skin torn apart, how could he survive? Most importantly of all, Linley could already sense that Bebe's life force had already grown so weak as to be all but undetectable.

"Arrgh!" His heart filled with grief, Linley savagely bit at the dragon's flesh, drank the dragon's blood. He allowed the blood to boil as much as it wanted of his organs, allowed his entire body to be in such agony that it shuddered. Linley simply didn't care.

"Linley, stop, stop!" Doehring Cowart was howling at him. "Use the Blueheart Grass, quick, use the Blueheart Grass! If you keep doing this, your body will fall apart!"

But it was useless. Linley continued to devour the dragon's blood. Suddenly, some sort of icy cold crystalline entity entered Linley's throat, then passed into his stomach. Instantly, the pain intensified still further, and Linley's entire body began to convulse uncontrollably.

Pain?

Linley wanted himself to feel pain. This sort of physical pain was able to, just barely, lessen the terrible pain he felt in his heart.

“Linley!” Doehring Cowart was at his wit’s end.

“Bo…Boss!” A very weak voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley’s entire body trembled. He suddenly came to a stop, no longer chewing at the dragon’s flesh, nor drinking any more blood.

“Bebe?”

The entire tunnel was silent, now. Stunned, Linley stared at Bebe, who was inside the deep crevice created by his impact. He could feel that Bebe’s life force was beginning to strengthen. Seeing Bebe’s body slowly crawl out of that deep crevice, Linley felt an unspeakable joy. But immediately afterwards, another terrifying wave of pain engulfed Linley’s very soul.

“Quick, eat the Blueheart Grass!” Doehring Cowart roared with rage.

Only now did Linley react. He ferociously tore the backpack open, grabbed a large handful of Blueheart Grass, and directly swallowed it. This handful had at least ten patches of Blueheart Grass. When he ate it, Linley only felt a cool sensation enter his body, and that earlier, intense burning pain began to lessen.

But Linley could feel that in one part of his stomach, there was still an incredibly intense pain. After the burning sensation in the other parts of his body had lessened, the intense pain in that location became all the more pronounced.

Without hesitating at all, Linley grabbed another handful of Blueheart Grass and quickly ate it as well.

Immediately afterwards, Linley assumed the meditative position and allowed the Secret Dragonblood Manual’s inscriptions on how to rouse the

Dragonblood of the Dragonblood Warriors come to mind. He began to agitate his blood in accordance with the instructions in the book, and as he carried out these secret techniques, the blood of the Dragonblood Warriors which lay deep in Linley's veins began to show itself.

"Success."

The chance of success through using a dragon of the ninth rank was a bit lower than a dragon of a Saint-level dragon. But the Armored Razorback Wyrm was both a peak ninth rank dragon, and also an extremely powerful dragon. Its small physical size also was an indicator that the quality of the blood it had should have been extremely high.

"Woosh." "Whoosh." The Dragonblood in Linley's veins was beginning to transform as well, as wave after wave of it was being transformed into Dragonblood Battle-qi.

But whenever he reached that part of his stomach which hurt the most, for some reason the pain remained the same, no matter how much Blueheart Grass he ate. What Linley hadn't realized is that what he had actually swallowed was, alongside everything else, the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

Realistically speaking, that crystal was ten thousand times more terrifying than dragon's blood. Even after having eaten so much Blueheart Grass, all it served to do was to blunt the bad effects. The pain it was causing was incredible.

However, the blood of the Dragonblood Warriors was no ordinary bloodline either!

The lineage of the Dragonblood Warriors hailed from the very first Dragonblood Warrior, Baruch. In the past, when Baruch had mastered his abilities, he was even able to kill a peak Nine Headed Serpent King of the Saint-level. That sort of power he had, to walk about the Yulan continent totally unmatched, was incredibly great.

Even the mighty dragon race didn't want to do direct battle with Baruch and his clansmen, despite the fact that Baruch had captured several Saint-level live dragons and fed their blood to his clansmen.

This was the terrifying true power of the Dragonblood warriors!

As far as the secret manual handed down in the Baruch clan, where it said that no one could drink dragon blood and live, this was just a case where the truth was hidden because of the dragon race. Baruch had actually used this method to produce a great many Dragonblood Warriors.

The unique blood of the Dragonblood Warriors and their descendants, when compared even to the noble blood of dragons, was far nobler.

Even when just a little bit of it was hiding in the veins, it was capable of allowing a human potentially reach the level of being a Saint-level combatant. From this, one could imagine how powerful the blood of the Dragonblood Warriors was!

And right now, the blood of the Dragonblood Warriors was beginning to stir. When the Dragonblood Warrior blood met with the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wyrm, a strange transformation occurred! A draconic crystal was the purest distillation of a dragon's energy, making this crystal the pure, distilled essence of an Armored Razorback Wyrm at the peak of the ninth rank…while the density of Dragonblood in Linley's veins was too low….

"Pant, pant."

Vicious pain erupted from every fiber of Linley's body, and Linley painfully reared his head up and howled. On top of Linley's skin, bizarre black scales began to emerge, and those sharp little black scales split Linley's clothes apart.

Linley's thighs and arms also saw these scales slowly emerge. This sort of absolutely inhumane pain caused all of the veins in Linley's body to protrude out, and his facial expression was contorted to a terrifying degree.

Suddenly, another wave of even greater pain crashed down upon Linley, as a sharp, keen spike erupted forth from Linley's forehead…

Chapter 21 – The Dragonblood Warrior

Book 4, The Dragonblood Warrior – Chapter 21, The Dragonblood Warrior

Linley's entire body was in such pain that it was convulsing. Linley's very spine was straining as if trying to pop out, and then one small spike after another did begin to slowly grow out of his spine, piercing through his skin and flesh and rising to form a line on his back.

This extreme pain caused Linley to begin letting out guttural howls. His entire body was covered in sweat, but even as the sweat came out, so too did one black scale after another, each and every scale very much similar to the scales of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. The only difference was that they were smaller in size.

Grinding his teeth, his throat trembling with every guttural, pain-filled roar, Linley did his best to forcibly will himself to begin utilizing the secret methods contained within the Secret Dragonblood Manual.

The draconic crystal was being constantly eroded away by the Dragonblood in Linley's veins, and it was slowly growing smaller. At the same time, the Dragonblood in Linley's veins was constantly devouring the astonishing darkness-type elemental force contained within the draconic crystal. The pace of his body's evolution actually began to pick up even further…

"Graaawr!" A blood-covered, black-scaled draconic tail slowly began to protrude from Linley's tailbone. This draconic tail was of the size and hardness of a steel whip.

"What, what is going on?" Feeling his entire body transforming, especially those spikes popping out from his spine, and those black scales, Linley was totally flabbergasted.

Per the records of the Secret Dragonblood Manual, a Dragonblood Warrior had three forms.

Under the third form, ‘Dragonform’, the Dragonblood Warrior’s entire body would be covered with azure scales, and a horn would sprout from his forehead as well. This was the most powerful form available to a Dragonblood Warrior…but currently, Linley’s physical transformation was totally different from that which was described in the Secret Dragonblood Manual.

The scales which were covering Linley’s body were all black, not azure. The spikes protruding from Linley’s spine should not be there. Linley couldn’t help but suddenly think of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

The second form, ‘Demidragon’, was not quite as strong as the ‘Dragonform’ transformation, as it only allowed part of his body to transform.

As for the first form, that was the normal human form. In most situations, a Dragonblood Warrior would be in this form. This was also the weakest form available to a Dragonblood Warrior.

Per the Secret Dragonblood Manual, the first time a Dragonblood Warrior successfully trained the usage of Dragonblood battle-qi, his body would uncontrollably enter the third form, the Dragonform. This first transformation would be incredibly painful, but afterwards, the transformations would no longer hurt at all.

Within Linley’s body….

A surge of deep blue liquid seemed to have merged with a black liquid and spread itself throughout his body. Every single muscle, every single vein was constantly absorbing energy from these liquids, causing Linley’s physical attributes to all start improving at a terrifying pace. But this rapid strengthening of the body was causing Linley excruciating pain as well.

“Damnable dragons.” Linley was beginning to curse at them mentally. “It must have been you guys. Otherwise, our clan definitely would have written in much greater detail about the aftereffects of drinking live dragon’s blood

and the things to be careful about."

The more Linley thought about it, the angrier he became.

His own clan's Secret Dragonblood Manual clearly was filled with contradictions. If it was true that no one had ever successfully used live dragon's blood to rouse the Dragonblood in their veins, then why would the book be so confident that this method would be successful? This was a clear contradiction.

And how could Linley know what the situation in the clan was, 4000-5000 years ago!

"It must have been that due to the pressure of the entire race of dragons that our ancestors were forced to skimp on the details of this method of using live dragon's blood to rouse the Dragonblood in our veins." Right now, Linley had no idea what he should do.

His 'Dragonform' was clearly different from the authentic 'Dragonform' which had been mentioned in the Secret Dragonblood Manual.

"I am far too mentally resilient. I really hope I'll faint soon." Linley actually was begging for himself to faint, as once he fainted, his pain would be over.

"Aaaargh…"

Linley's entire body trembled once again. All ten fingers and all ten toes suddenly were wracked with a bone-deep pain, as the fingernails and toenails suddenly began to grow sharp, like miniature dragon claws. The pain of sharp claws forcibly growing out of his fingers and toes really, finally, caused Linley to begin to lose all consciousness.

As his head grew foggy, Linley's eyes began to close, and then all consciousness fled.

"Thud."

Linley's body collapsed to the ground.

"He's passed out." Doehring Cowart stood next to Linley, watching him. He couldn't help but let out a small sigh. "How bizarre. I can't imagine how Linley's ancestor, Baruch, could have developed such a strange ability of transforming into a Dragonform."

Frowning, Doehring Cowart mumbled to himself, "Honestly speaking, it's bizarre. It seems that aside from the Dragonblood Warriors, there's also three other bloodlines of Supreme Warriors. But when I was alive, there was no such thing as a Supreme Warrior. But shortly after I died, these four bloodlines arrived on the scene."

Despite his thousand-plus years of experience and wisdom, Doehring Cowart was unable to puzzle out how and why this occurred.

"If he was able to slay a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor, then in all likelihood, Linley's ancestor, Baruch, was no weaker than I am, and perhaps stronger." Doehring Cowart knew full well how powerful a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor was. Nine-Headed Serpents were an extremely formidable race of magical beasts, and for a Nine-Headed Serpent to receive the title of 'Serpent Emperor' meant that, without question, it was a peak Saint-level magical beast.

Even he himself would not have the confidence to say that he could slay a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor.

"And that little Shadowmouse is no ordinary creature either." Doehring Cowart turned his head to stare at the little Shadowmouse Bebe, who was still lying and resting in that crevice his body had created earlier. "An Armored Razorback Wyrm is amongst the most powerful dragon-type beasts of the ninth rank, and this Sartius fellow was at the peak of the ninth rank. His dying blow should be able to shatter the bones and rend the flesh of magical beasts of the ninth rank, but somehow, this little Shadowmouse managed to survive it."

Doehring Cowart couldn't help but feel astonished.

In fact, he was starting to suspect…

"Could it be that this little Shadowmouse isn't a Shadowmouse, and is actually a Stoneater Rat?"

Doehring Cowart knew very well that of the two major rodent-class magical beasts, the Stoneater Rats were far more populous than the Shadowmice. The weakest Stoneater Rat was of the first rank, while the most powerful was of the seventh or eighth rank. As for Shadowmice, although they started at the third rank, they also topped out at the seventh or eighth rank.

The advantage of the Shadowmouse was its speed and its sharp claws, while the strength of the Stoneater Rat lay in its defensive abilities and its sharp claws.

"The Stoneater Rat is physically small, but its defensive ability is the most powerful of any magical beast at the same rank. The defensive power of a Stoneater Rat of the eighth rank could most likely compare with the defensive power of an Armored Razorback Wyrm!" Doehring Cowart knew very well how terrifying Stoneater Rats could be.

Although physically small, the defensive power of its fur was formidable to an extreme.

Across all the myriad types of magical beasts, be it dragon-types, bear-types, serpent-types, or any other types, the tiny little Stoneater Rat had the highest defensive power at the same rank!

"Bebe's power should be at the eighth rank now. If he's a Stoneater Rat of the eighth rank, I would find it conceivable that he could take a hit and not die. But he's not a Stoneater Rat. A Stoneater Rat of the eighth rank should have golden fur." Doehring Cowart's mind was full of questions.

"Black fur and terrifying speed, and also such amazing defensive power? How bizarre."

Suddenly, Doehring Cowart's eyes glazed over.

A terrifying name suddenly appeared in the back of his mind!

"Could it be that this little Shadowmouse is…is related somehow to 'that one' in the Forest of Shadows, in the northeast of the Yulan continent?" Doehring Cowart was trembling with fear now. Back in the days when Doehring Cowart was alive, in the Yulan continent, there were only two entities powerful enough that he wouldn't have any hope of fighting against them.

In those years, Doehring Cowart really had been ranked amongst the top five most powerful figures in the Yulan continent. Aside from the first and the second, there wasn't much difference amongst the rest of the five in terms of power.

But the power of the number one and number two experts of the Yulan continent was without question.

As for who exactly was number one and who was number two, nobody knew for sure. One of the two was the pillar and foundation of the Yulan Empire. As long as he was alive, even if the Yulan Empire grew weak and decrepit, it would never fall.

And the other, was the one who lived in the Forest of Shadows.

The Yulan Empire had unified the entire Yulan continent and also initiated the Yulan calendar that year, year one. After almost ten thousand years, the continent had now fragmented to its current state, resulting in the two major alliances and the Four Great Empires. And even as far back as when the Yulan Empire ruled over the entire continent, that human expert's name was famous throughout the world.

"That one in the Forest of Shadows is the undisputed strongest magical beast in the world. I heard that he is extremely fond of rodent-type magical beasts. Could it be that this strange little Shadowmouse was brought up by

him?" Doehring Cowart was wondering to himself.

But Doehring Cowart also knew that the information he had about the experts of the Yulan continent were five thousand years out of date.

Five thousand years ago, the Yulan continent had exactly two ultimate super-combatants; one human, and the other a magical beast. The other Saint-level combatants could only admire them from afar.

But five thousand years later?

"Perhaps there have been mutations to the rodent-type beasts. That's also a possibility." Doehring Cowart consoled himself.

Doehring Cowart once again glanced at Linley and Bebe, then nodded. "A descendant of the Dragonblood Warriors, and a mutated Shadowmouse. What will the two of them accomplish together?" Doehring Cowart was rather excited to see. Perhaps, by Linley's side, his future days wouldn't be too lonely either.

The entire tunnel was absolutely silent.

The unconscious Linley's body was still transforming, and the Dragonblood battle-qi was slowly gathering three inches beneath his navel, crystallizing into a pattern similar to a draconic crystal. Bebe's wounds, in turn, were also slowly healing.

….

Three days later.

Linley opened his eyes and suddenly rose to his feet.

Right now, Linley was absolutely naked. All of the clothes he had previously been wearing had been torn asunder long ago by that first Dragonform transformation he had undergone. But now, after having returned to human form, Linley seemed no different from any other

humans.

“I’ve finally changed back.”

Although according to the Secret Dragonblood Manual a Dragonblood Warrior was able to transform back into human form, only after it actually happened did Linley feel at ease. After all, his ‘Dragonform’ and the authentic ‘Dragonform’ as described in the manual was different.

“Boss, you woke up.” That bright, chipper voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

With surprised delight, Linley turned his head to look, and as he did, Bebe jumped into his arms. Embracing Bebe, Linley finally felt his heart at peace. When Bebe had suffered that vicious wounding deathblow of the Armored Razorback Wyrm, Linley had truly been afraid.

He was afraid that the little Shadowmouse he had grown up with was dead.

“Bebe, are you okay?” Linley carefully inspected Bebe’s body. Upon doing so, Linley saw an unassuming scar directly on Bebe’s chest…but Linley could also tell the rest this scar appeared unassuming was because the fur on Bebe’s chest was blocking much of it.

Bebe chortled, “I’m fine. How could I, Bebe, be afraid of a little worm?”

“Boss, hey! Your body no longer has any scars? Same with your face. You don’t have any scars at all, now!” Bebe suddenly said in astonishment.

Only now did Linley pay some attention to his own body.

“Ah, so this is indeed as the Secret Dragonblood Manual described. The first time one undergoes the Dragonform transformation, one’s entire body is transformed, and even the skin is changed.” Right now, there wasn’t a single scar anywhere on Linley’s body, and it was in perfect condition.

Sensing the boiling power now within his body, Linley couldn’t help but feel excited.

“What tremendous physical power.” Linley could feel that his current power was at least several dozen times greater than before. After having roused the Dragonblood in his veins, the physical characteristics of his body had all been tremendously enhanced. Even in his human form, he was much stronger than before he had roused the Dragonblood.

Clenching his fist and generating a field of Dragonblood battle-qi, Linley suddenly delivered a powerful punch to the nearby stone wall.

“Bang!” As though struck by a steel rod, a large hole was punched into the stone tunnel wall as rocks began flying in every which way.

“Sixth rank. Linley, in your human form, you already have the power of a warrior of the sixth rank!” Doehring Cowart flew out of the Coiling Dragon ring, laughing as he spoke to Linley.

Chapter 1 – The Mysterious Magical Formation

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 1, The Mysterious Magical Formation

Linley, too, could feel that his body was now far stronger than it had been in the past. Previously, his body was that of a warrior of the fourth rank, but now, he had suddenly reached the sixth rank. This was the inherent ability of the Dragonblood Warriors. Thinking back to the pain he had just suffered to reach this, Linley couldn't help but shiver.

"Linley, give your Dragonform a test." Doehring Cowart said with interest.

"Boss, give it a test!" Bebe was excited as well.

Linley slightly nodded. He, too, wanted to get a sense of what level of power his body now possessed when under the Dragonform transformation. Immediately, Linley began to exert his control over the Dragonblood battle-qi that had been compressed into a quasi-crystal at the dantian location, below his navel. Suddenly….

One stream after another of black liquid began to flow from his dantian to his body, his limbs, and his bones.

"Rrrrrgh." Letting out a deep growl, Linley watched as a dense layer of small black scales began to sprout on top of his skin, while at the same time, a row of spikes began to appear on his back, and a long, iron-whip-like tail sprouted out from his tailbone.

Compared to the Armored Razorback Wyrm, those spikes running along Linley's spine were slightly fewer in number and slightly shorter.

"I feel as though my body is filled with limitless power." Linley couldn't help but begin to grow excited. He felt so incredibly powerful. The Dragonblood Warrior, one of the Four Supreme Warriors of the Yulan

continent. He had just begun his training in this area, but he already possessed enormous strength.

The Supreme Warriors really lived up to their name!

“The power I have right now, must be several tens of times greater than the power I had in my human form.” Linley stretched out his right arm, which was currently covered with scales, and saw that his fingernails were now as sharp as knives.

Linley suddenly leapt off the ground with a mighty kick…

As fast as a streak of fire, Linley charged into middle of the wide cave, then delivered a powerful blow to the cave wall. With an earth-shaking sound, rocks begin to fall down from the cave walls. His arm pierced all the way into the stone wall, and to Linley, it felt as though it was as easy as piercing his arm into soft mud.

Such incredible power.

“Harrgh!” Letting out a loud, excited shout, Linley lashed out with two mighty kicks at the wall as well, immediately blasting a huge hole into it, causing rocks to rain down from even the ceiling.

With a kick of his legs, Linley sent himself flying in the air…

And then, with his twin fists, Linley gave the cave ceiling a mighty smash.

“Bam!” The ceiling of the cave cracked like the shell of a turtle, and one giant boulder after another began to fall down from the ceiling. But Linley wasn’t afraid in the slightest. These boulders wouldn’t do any harm at all when slamming into his body. The black scales protecting his body right now were far more powerful than even the jadestone armor his Earthguard spell provided.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Linley's body transformed into a vicious black blur. Sometimes he would land on the ground, while at other times, he would rise into the mid-air. Sometimes, he would use all of his strength while smashing his legs into the wall with ferocious kicks, while other times he would viciously pummel the cave ceiling with his fists and allow the rocks to fall on his body.

After a while…

Linley landed on the floor, then directly leapt to the tunnel entrance.

"Grandpa Doehring, what do you think?" He asked.

Most people would find it very difficult to accurately assess a warrior's strength unless a battery of tests was used. Linley, at least, didn't have the ability to make this assessment. But the highly experienced Doehring Cowart should have been able to estimate his strength through the destructive power he had just unleashed.

"In terms of power alone…you should have just crossed over the threshold of being a warrior of the eighth rank." Doehring Cowart seemed a bit uncertain. "But your movement speed was very fast. Perhaps you have inherited the high movement speed inherent to Armored Razorback Wyrms. Your speed should be on par with highly agile warriors of the eighth rank. As for your defensive abilities, there's no way for me to judge at this time, since there was nothing to see."

Linley nodded slightly.

He knew that this Dragonform of his had some sort of connection with the Armored Razorback Wyrm, so it made sense that this Dragonform of his was similar in many ways to the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

"For the Dragonblood Warriors of our clan, the more powerful one is, the less of a difference there is between the three forms. Right now, I'm a warrior of the sixth rank, and so my Dragonform can reach the early eighth rank in power. According to the books that I read, once a Dragonblood Warrior has reached the early ninth rank of power in human form, then in

Dragonform, he will possess the power of an early Saint-level combatant. But once his human form reaches the Saint-level, then in Dragonform, he will still only be a Saint-level. His battle ability, however, will be somewhat improved."

Linley was quite clear about the nature and origins of the Dragonform ability.

The purpose of assuming the Dragonform was because early on, a normal human being would not be able to utilize all of the power held within the Dragonblood in his veins. Only after using the Dragonform would they be able to summon forth all of their power.

But once they reached the Saint-level, and had totally mastered and harnessed the effective power of their Dragonblood, then when they assumed the Dragonform, their increase in power would be fairly small.

"Linley. Hurry up and dispose of the corpses of those two magical beasts. The two of them have a Saint-level magicite core and a draconic magicite core of the ninth rank." Doehring Cowart immediately urged.

Linley's heart suddenly shuddered.

Cores of the ninth rank and Saint-level?

Linley knew that the value of a magicite core of the ninth rank was worth up to five million gold coins, an incredible amount of money. In Fenlai City, some of the relatively large clan's entire net worth might be around that much.

But the core of a Saint-level magical beast? That was a priceless treasure.

"Right." Maintaining his Dragonform, Linley immediately rushed over to the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's corpse. Because Linley had caused so much damage to the walls and the ceiling, even the Bear's corpse had been buried under falling rubble.

With a wave of his black-scale-covered right arm, Linley knocked over ten large pieces of rubble away, revealing the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's upper torso and head.

Using his set of two knife-sharp claws, Linley directly tore at the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's fur.

"Oooof!" Linley used as much force as he could, but the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's fur wasn't damaged in the slightest.

"Linley, this is a Saint-level magical beast. Even under the effects of the Dragonform, you are only a warrior of the early eighth rank. If you want to split open this Bear's fur, there's no way you can do it alone." Doehring Cowart laughed.

Linley was forced to admit that this was the truth.

"But Linley, look. There's many sharp spikes on the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's body. These spikes are all extremely sharp. Based on your current ability, there's no way you can use the spikes to cut open the fur either. But there's a spike located very close to the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear's eyes. What you need to do is pull that spike out, then stick your claws into that wound and go digging. I'm confident that you should be able to pull out that Saint-level magicite core." Doehring Cowart instructed.

To the enormous Armored Razorback Wyrm, these spikes were nothing more than spikes!

But to the much smaller Linley, these spikes were like massive drills which were twenty centimeters in length. After pulling the spike out, a huge, gaping wound would be revealed near the eyes of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. Going digging for the magicite core through that gaping wound should be an easy task indeed.

After all, as tough as the fur of a Saint-level magical beast might be, its brain and organs weren't too tough.

Using all his strength, Linley forcibly tugged out the giant ‘drill’, and then extended his black scaly arm into the wound, digging for the magicite core. This Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear’s head was really large as well, over a meter long. Linley had to extend his arm into the wound all the way past his elbows before he was able to locate and pull out the Saint-level magicite core.

The Saint-level magicite core was still covered in blood and gore.

A black, fist-sized magicite core.

“It actually doesn’t have even a hint of darkness-style aura.” Linley was very surprised. If he hadn’t already known that this fist-sized black stone was the magicite core of a Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear, he would’ve never been able to guess.

“The energy within a Saint-level magical beast’s magicite core is highly dense and reserved. Frankly speaking, the magicite core of a magical beast of the ninth rank is as well.” Doehring Cowart explained.

Linley nodded.

“The entire body of a Saint-level magical beast is a treasure. For example, the leg bones of this Saint-level magical beast definitely possesses an astonishingly resilient strength.” Doehring Cowart let out a sigh. “Unfortunately, you simply don’t have the ability to break through the powerful defensive barrier of its fur.”

Linley also nodded helplessly.

This Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear was simply too huge. He didn’t have the ability to bring the corpse of this Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear back either.

“What a waste.” Bebe said intentionally, off to the side.

Linley chuckled. “We’ve already done quite well. The most valuable part of a magical beast is its magicite core. A single Saint-level magicite core is already a truly priceless treasure. I am already very satisfied at having acquired it. What’s more, I also have a draconic crystal of the ninth rank.” Linley laughed as he walked over to the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s corpse.

The corpse of the Armored Razorback Wyrm had a gaping wound on its head. Finding the draconic crystal shouldn’t be too much of a problem.

Linley plunged his sharp claws directly into the wound on the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s head.

“Eh?”

After carefully sifting around in the Armored Razorback Wyrm’s skull for a while, Linley couldn’t find anything. This made Linley feel suspicious.

“Why is there no draconic crystal? What bizarreness is this?” Linley frowned.

“Impossible. A magical beast can’t be without a magicite core, and this dragon must absolutely have a draconic crystal as well. After a magical beast dies, there’s no way that the magicite crystal will disappear.” Doehring Cowart couldn’t believe it either.

But Linley suddenly remembered something…

Earlier, when he was raging and drinking the dragon’s blood of this Armored Razorback Wyrm, he had swallowed an icy cold object into his stomach. But at that time, due to his rage and his sorrow, he hadn’t paid it any attention. And then, when he had eaten the Blueheart Grass, the pain in the rest of his body had faded, except for that one place where the object was.

“No way….was that the draconic crystal?” Linley thought to himself.

Linley could still recollect that sensation of having that ice cold object pass through his throat into his stomach.

“I ate a draconic crystal? This…how could this have happened? In the Secret Dragonblood Manual, there only is a discussion on drinking dragon’s blood. Can it be that eating a dragon’s draconic crystal core also works?” Linley totally didn’t know what was going on. But no matter what, it seemed he had indeed swallowed the core, and from the looks of it, he wasn’t suffering from any particular bad aftereffects.

Linley chuckled.

“What I ate wasn’t just a draconic crystal core. It was five million gold coins.” Linley sighed to himself.

“Boss, lu, lu, look!” Bebe’s excited voice rang out.

Linley glanced at Bebe, who was standing in the middle of a pile of rubble, staring dumbly up at the ceiling of the cave. Linley immediately left the tunnel and returned to the cave, and also looked up at the ceiling.

“…what is that?”

At the top of the cave, a large, circular black platform had been revealed. This circular black platform had been embedded into the ceiling, and even now, a large part of it was covered with stone. Clearly…Linley’s wild attacks on the ceiling earlier had caused so many rocks to fall down that the circular black platform had been revealed.

Linley wasn’t too surprised by the black platform. What did surprise him was….

On the black platform, there was an extremely complicated pattern of magical marks. All sorts of marks were on the platform, and the pattern was complicated to an extreme. Clearly, on the top side of the black platform, there was some sort of magical array formation, but Linley had never, ever, seen such a complicated magical array formation.

If one described the magical array formation covering the front gates of the Ernst Institute as a single ‘wind blade’, then this mysterious magical formation was the ‘Annihilating Tempest’ spell.

In particular, in the direct center of this black circular platform, there was a violet-covered sword plunged into the platform.

“This magical formation…how is this possible?” Doehring Cowart appeared by Linley’s side as well. Lifting his head up and staring, he said, “Impossible. How could there be a magical formation such as this here, and with this bizarre sword as a focus.”

Doehring Cowart, who in the past had always been calm and composed, had now totally been shocked. In his thousand plus years of life, he had never seen such a terrifying magical formation. Although this magical formation was currently dormant and not active, he could already tell what terrible power this magical formation contained.

“Grandpa Doehring, is this magical formation very powerful?” Linley asked.

Doehring Cowart looked at Linley. “Very powerful? We can’t even use the word ‘powerful’ to describe it. The power of this magical formation is even greater than that of any forbidden spell. You tell me, is it ‘powerful’? In my entire life, I’ve never seen such a complicated magical formation, such a powerful magical formation. And what’s more, it is borrowing power from that strange sword to supplement the power of the formation itself. What, did the creator feel the power of this formation alone was not great enough?”

Chapter 2 – The Four Higher Planes

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 2, The Four Higher Planes

Linley was totally stunned by Doehring Cowart's words.

"Grandpa Doehring was a Saint-level Grand Magus of the era of the Pouant Empire. If even he has never seen such a complicated, powerful magical formation before, and is certain that the power of this formation is even greater than that of forbidden spells, then…" Linley felt a thread of trepidation.

What exactly was this mysterious magical formation doing here?

"Linley, take a closer look and try to get a feel for the formation, as well as that violet longsword." Doehring Cowart said to Linley.

Linley nodded slightly. He immediately gathered wind elemental essence to him and used it to sense the aura of that magical formation and the violet longsword. Closing his eyes, Linley could sense an aura of weight and density emanating from the black platform's magical formation, so heavy and oppressive it was stifling.

At the same time, this black platform, or perhaps the magical formation anchored on the platform, emanated waves of incredibly dense elemental essence.

"No wonder the elemental essence here is so dense, almost a hundred times that of the outside world. So the reason is this." If he hadn't directly and clearly attempted to probe the black platform, Linley wouldn't have been able to understand that the platform was the origin, as the elemental essence constantly came down in waves.

In actuality, the center of the cave was where the elemental essence was the densest.

“Amongst the seven elemental essences, the darkness-type elemental essence is the strongest. No wonder both the Armored Razorback Wyrm and the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear both liked this place. Both of them were darkness-type magical beasts.” Linley nodded to himself.

“That violet longsword.” Linley carefully tried to sense out any details on the violet longsword plunged into the middle of the black platform. “Darkness-type element…but so reserved and introverted.”

Stroking his beard, Doehring Cowart smiled at Linley. “Linley, I can tell you something. The value of that violet longsword is most likely not at all inferior to a Saint-level magicite core.”

Linley stared at Doehring Cowart questioningly.

Linley knew very well that generally speaking, a warrior’s weapons were not very valuable. As long as some extremely hard metals were used along with some other alloys, a weapon could be made. Even his Baruch clan’s family heirloom, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, only cost a few tens of thousands of gold coins to make.

Afterwards, the successors to the Baruch clan sold the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ for 180,000 gold coins, but that was primarily because of its connection to the famous Dragonblood Warriors.

Unfortunately, it had been many years since a Dragonblood Warrior had surfaced, and thus the fame of the Dragonblood Warriors was no longer worth as much. If it had been sold in the days when the Dragonblood Warriors had roamed and dominated the lands, the price would have been much higher.

The weapons of warriors weren’t worth much. But the magistaff of a magus was a different matter.

The higher quality a magistaff was, the more precious the materials for making it needed to be.

For example, the ‘divine treasures’ used by a Saint-level Grand Magus, such as a powerful magistaff, would use the magicite core of a magical beast of the ninth rank, or a Saint-level magical beast, to serve as the energy source. Next, complicated and powerful magical formations would be carved onto the magistaff, in order for it to reach its maximum potential.

A magistaff which was hailed as a ‘divine treasure’ definitely was a priceless treasure. After all, a Saint-level magicite core by itself was considered a priceless treasure.

But of course…

When discussing the relative worthlessness of warrior’s weapons, that was with respect to material weapons forged in the Yulan continent. If a weapon came from another place, such as one of the Four Higher Planes, then its value would be different.

“This violet longsword has a very unique aura. If my guess is correct, it should come from one of the Four Higher Planes. Most likely, the Infernal Realm.” Doehring Cowart said musingly.

Linley asked curiously, “The Four Higher Planes?”

His white beard fluttering, Doehring Cowart said, “If we consider the Yulan continent as a whole, at your current level of power, you can nominally be considered to be in the upper tier. I can begin telling you a few things now. Linley, you should know by now that in this universe, there is more than just one plane of existence.”

Linley nodded. “Of course I know. For example, the Netherworld.”

“You know very little.” Doehring Cowart shook his head. “In reality, within this vast, infinite universe, there are countless planes, with material, physical planes just one of the most basic, elementary types of planes. Amongst all of these countless planes, there are Four Higher Planes of existence. These planes are the Netherworld, the Infernal Realm, the Life

Realm, and the Celestial Realm." Doehring Cowart explained carefully.

Linley attentively listened, as this information was perhaps known only to the absolutely most powerful people of the Yulan continent.

"Linley, by now, you should know what a so-called 'god' is, right?" Doehring Cowart grinned as he looked at Linley.

Linley nodded. "Those who have surpassed the existence of 'Saints' are what we call Deities or Gods." Having read many books, Linley knew that in many books discussing power which transcended the level of the Saints, this level of power was described as the power of the Gods. A power that was so great, it was irresistible.

"Right. But above the level of the Deities, are the Sovereigns. And above the Sovereigns, there are the Overgods!" Doehring Cowart sighed. "These Four Overgods are truly eternal presences which surpass everything else in existence."

This was the first time Linley had ever heard of the existence of the Four Overgods.

"Overgods? Are they more powerful than the Radiant Sovereign?"

"Haha, the Radiant Sovereign?" Doehring Cowart began to laugh. "Regardless of whether we are discussing the 'Radiant Sovereign' of the Radiant Church, or the 'Shadow Sovereign' of the Cult of Shadows, they are nothing more than Sovereigns. To us, and to any ordinary Deity, a Sovereign is an all-powerful entity. But they still require the power of faith from their followers."

"But the Four Overgods are different. They neither require followers, nor require faith. Their power is all-encompassing and all-ruining. Sovereigns such as the Radiant Sovereign or the Shadow Sovereign most likely would only be worthy of being servants for the Four Overgods. And that would be only if the Overgods found them worthy." Doehring Cowart spoke with absolute certainty.

Linley's heart trembled.

"The Netherworld, the Infernal Realm, the Life Realm, the Celestial Realm. These Four Higher Planes were created by the Four Overgods. In the past, I had once had the chance to sense the aura of these Four Higher Planes, which is why, immediately upon seeing that violet longsword, I felt certain that it hails from the Infernal Realm."

Doehring Cowart stared suspiciously at the violet longsword plunged into the round black platform. "But I, too, am suspicious. How did something from the Infernal Realm come here?"

"Linley, think about it. This is a magical formation which is more powerful than even forbidden spells. For it to rely on this violet longsword as a supplemental source of energy, in terms of energy levels, this sword should at least be on par with this magical formation. I strongly recommend…that you drip your blood on it and see if you can bind it to you." Doehring Cowart's eyes were gleaming.

"Bind it?" In Linley's heart, there arose a desire to acquire this treasure.

"Don't be afraid. No matter what this magical formation is meant to do, for such a huge formation to be activated would take a long period of time. This will give you enough time to run far away. First drip your blood onto it and see if this sword already has a master. If it has no master, you can take it away with you. There definitely won't be a problem, and no one will find out." Doehring Cowart said with absolute confidence.

A divine sword which could be bound with blood was no ordinary thing.

When worn, nobody would be able to tell what it was. In the eyes of others, it would be as ordinary as the Coiling Dragon ring.

"Alright." Linley exerted control over his Dragonblood battle-qi, and instantly, the scales on his arms and his upper body began to vanish.

The second form of the Dragonblood Warriors: the Demidragon form.

Linley could now totally control which portion of his body would transform. The rest of his body was now the same as a normal person. After using his teeth to cut his finger, Linley directly leapt up and flicked that drop of blood onto the violet longsword, which had been there for who knows how many years.

The drop of Linley's blood landed on the dust-covered violet longsword, which had been there for countless years. It absorbed his blood like a sponge, easily drinking it in. At the same time…

"Ting!" That violet longsword rang out with a clear sound, and at the same time began to tremble.

All of the dust stuck to its surface suddenly flew away, and at the same time, a strange, bloody aura began to circulate on top of the sword, as though fresh blood was flowing all around it.

"An item with no master." Seeing this, Doehring Cowart felt surprised and pleased.

Doehring Cowart knew very well that if this sword had a master, then Linley would've had no hope at all. But if the sword had no master, then in the future, Linley would possess an extremely useful tool.

"Linley, quick, pull the sword out, and then immediately get out of this place!" Doehring Cowart urged.

"Got it."

Linley once more leapt up, this time directly grabbing the violet longsword and giving it a powerful tug. "Shrrrring!" With a clear ringing sound which seemed to carry boundless joy, it came out.

Earlier, when Linley's blood had been absorbed by the violet longsword, Linley immediately knew….that this was a flexible sword!

But upon exerting battle-qi, mageforce, or any other sort of force through the sword, it could instantly become firm and rigid! It could be flexible or hard!

Pulling the sword out from the black platform, Linley landed on the ground. As he landed, with the flick of his wrist, Linley wrapped the violet longsword around his waist, using it like a belt!

“Bebe. Let’s go.”

Picking up his backpack with one hand, Linley immediately ran for the tunnel exit. At the same time, he began to cover his entire body with scales once more. Bebe, as well, instantly jumped atop of Linley’s shoulders.

In the Dragonform, Linley possessed the power of a warrior of the early eighth rank. But in terms of speed, he was a match for a particularly fast warrior of the eighth rank.

“Seventh rank Supersonic!” Linley immediately cast the wind-style supportive spell, ‘Supersonic’.

A Supersonic spell cast at the seventh rank could increase the speed of a warrior of the fourth rank by up to three times. However, Linley’s current base speed was already extremely fast, and so even with the assistance of the Supersonic spell, his speed only improved by another 50%.

But even a 50% increase was already a terrifying increase.

……

The white fog continued to flow about in the air above the Foggy Valley. As for those giant flying dragons that were previously circling about in the air, aside from a very small number of them still in the air, all of the dragons were now resting on the ground. However, without question, all of them were staying far away from that small hill.

The tunnel covered up by that hill was forbidden grounds!

These giant dragons still remembered how, days ago, that pitiful human had entered the forbidden grounds. Most likely, that pitiful human had died long ago.

“Whoosh!”

A black blur suddenly shot out from within the tunnel, and then directly rocketed into the sky.

“What was that?” Those hundred-plus dragons all noticed the human-sized blur.

A fast warrior of the eighth rank could definitely match the speed of a giant flying dragon of the eighth rank. And now, with Linley utilizing the Supersonic spell to assist himself, his speed had been increased by 50%. Right now, Linley’s speed was definitely on par with a warrior of the ninth rank. Even compared to Bebe, he wasn’t much slower.

“Roar!”

Those hundred-plus dragons immediately began to roar with rage.

A human had actually dared to trespass on the territory of the dragons? One giant dragon after another spread their wings, taking off and chasing after Linley, but Linley’s current speed was simply too fast. Even that largest Fire Dragon could do nothing save watch as Linley’s form grow farther and farther away from them. In just a short amount of time, Linley had thrown them off and disappeared from their sight.

“That doesn’t seem to be a human.” That largest Fire Dragon coiled about in mid-air, musing to itself, confused.

Although it hadn’t been able to catch Linley, it could tell quite clearly that this creature was human-shaped, but was covered with scales.

“A human-shaped magical beast?” That Fire Dragon wondered to itself.

…..

Within the underground cave, atop the black platform, the countless crisscrossing lines and patterns of the magical formation slowly began to glow. Each line seemed to have a line of glowing silver emanate from it. Slowly…the entire magical formation began to shine, so brightly as to hurt one’s eyes.

“Boom!”

A deep rumbling sound could be heard, and the magical formation began to grow even brighter. Those rumbling sounds grew more and more frequent, more and urgent. “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” Like a series of drumbeats, those booming sounds continued, and that mysterious magical formation continued to grow brighter.

“CRACK!” That black pavilion, made out of an unknown material, suddenly cracked, with three cracks appearing.

Chapter 3 – Piercing the Heavens

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 3, Piercing the Heavens

After the three massive cracks appeared on the round black platform, the light from the entire magical formation suddenly flashed as the drumbeat-like booms reached a crescendo, beating faster and louder.

“BOOM!” “BOOM!” “BOOM!” “BOOM!”

Like a series of unabated thunderclaps, capped off with one final “BOOM!” the entire round black platform exploded into fragments. Naturally, the magical formation atop of it disintegrated as well. Suddenly, one patterned crack in the air itself after another began to appear, clear and visible to the eye, spreading out in all directions.

……

While the flying dragons of the Foggy Valley were still busy wondering about that man-shaped aberration, they suddenly felt the ground itself tremble. All of the giant dragons were startled, and immediately spread their wings and took to the air. Just a few moments later…

“BOOOOOM!”

The ground for kilometers around suddenly exploded. That entire hill which had sealed off to the underground tunnel was reduced to smithereens.

“Growl…” A deep roar emanated from underground.

Where the round black platform had been, space itself was suddenly ripped apart like a piece of paper, revealing a gaping hole of nothingness. And from within that hole, stepped forth a handsome, devilish looking young man, wearing a long, dark gold robe and carrying three little kittens in his arms.

At this moment, the young man looked to be in quite bad shape, and his face was covered with blood.

“Whoosh!”

That gaping hole in reality suddenly vanished. The space nearby, however, was still very unstable, and wild bolts of energy would occasionally appear and disappear.

“I…have finally escaped.” The young man stared at the unstable space, a look of wild joy on his face.

“Haha…how many years, now? I’ve finally escaped that damnable place.” Right in the middle of the young man’s forehead, there was a slit that appeared almost like a knife wound. Suddenly, that ‘scar’ opened, revealing a gold-colored third eye.

This golden eye radiated light in every which way.

“This is….this is actually the Yulan continent?” The devilish young man began to laugh in amazement and joy. “This is just wonderful.”

“Father, I’m hungry.” One of the little kittens in the young man’s arms suddenly said.

“I’m hungry too.”

The other two kittens also echoed.

Kittens that could speak?

Could they actually be Saint-level magical beasts?

“Alright. Haha, there’s around a hundred or so little dragons flying up ahead. You guys can go and have a good meal.” The devilish young man laughed loudly.

“Oooo!”

Those three little kittens began meowing in excitement. Suddenly, they transformed into three bolts of lightning and streaked into the sky. As they flew, their bodies suddenly expanded as well, growing larger and larger… smiling, the devilish young man took a single step, and appeared in the middle of the Foggy Valley.

…..

Within the Foggy Valley, over a hundred giant dragons were circling in the air. They had no idea as to what caused the earth to explode just then.

“What’s that?”

They saw three huge blurs streak into the air above the Foggy Valley. Each of the three creatures were over thirty meters tall and a hundred meters long. They looked like lions, only magnified by several dozen times. But these creatures were not, in fact, lions, because these three creatures each had a pair of enormous wings, and also had six eyes each.

Six eyes, two wings. Physically as large as one of those legendary Behemoth creatures.

But even Behemoths were not as terrifying as these three creatures.

“RAWR!” Those three strange creatures opened their bloody maws wide and let out a mighty roar. Instantly, their mouths seemed to have turned into a vortex, generating an astonishing pulling force towards the flying dragons.

These hundred-plus dragons wanted to flee in terror, but this sucking force was simply far too strong. The strangest thing was, the pull seemed to only affect them, and didn’t disturb any of the rocks on the cliffs near them in the slightest.

“Roaaaar!”

Those hundred-plus dragons began to bellow in fear and rage, but in the face of that terrifying attractive force, they were helplessly sucked away. One giant dragon after another fell into the gaping maws of those six-eyed monsters.

The thing which scared the dragons the most was…

The bellies of these monsters seemed to have unlimited capacity. Although the dragons were slightly smaller in size than these monsters, one should be more than enough to fill the stomachs of these monsters. But as soon as one dragon was sucked into a monster’s belly, the monster would began sucking in another.

One dragon….another dragon…

The pulling force from the maws of those three monsters was simply too terrifying. The eight-ranked dragons were totally unable to resist it. One dragon after another was sucked into the bellies of those six-eyed aberrations. In a short period of time, every single one of them had been devoured by these three monsters.

“That was great!” One of the aberrations laughed loudly. “It’s been so many years since I’ve had a proper meal.”

“I thought I was going to die in that damnable place and never come out again. Unfortunately…number four and number five…” Another one of the aberrations said with a low sigh.

All three of the aberrations fell silent.

They thought back to the thousands of years they had spent in that damnable place. They couldn’t help but feel their hearts grow cold. No future. No hope. They could’ve died at any time. If it hadn’t been for their father, the three of them most likely would’ve been killed long ago. But even despite the efforts of their father, their fourth brother and fifth brother,

the weakest of the five, had both died.

“Father’s coming.”

The three aberrations watched as that devilish young man walked towards them in midair. Their bodies shrinking, they once again transformed into three ordinary little kittens. The only thing was, their fur was now rainbow-colored and beautiful to behold. Their two little wings were also much more beautiful than the wings of the dragons.

But those three sets of eyes still would shock anyone who saw them.

“Father.” Those three aberrations excitedly flew to their father’s side. By now, there was no longer a hint of blood on the devilish young man’s face, and the dust on the dark golden robe he was wearing had all disappeared as well. A smile was still on his face.

“Did you have a good meal?” The devilish young man laughed. “Oh, and there’s two more magical beasts of the eighth rank here as well.”

The devilish young man looked towards the west side of the Foggy Valley, while at the same time, a burst of quad-colored energy radiated west. In a short time, the burst of energy had wrapped around those two giant Velocidragons, and pulled them over in mid-air.

Those two Velocidragons seemed to know that the end was nigh. All they did was moan in a low voice, begging for mercy.

They were Velocidragons. Although they were also magical creatures of the eighth rank, like Emerald Dragons and Fire Dragons, due to the fact that they were different races of dragons and also did not fly, they usually stayed far away from the Emerald and Fire Dragons.

When those three aberrations had been happily devouring the flying dragons, they hadn’t paid any attention to those two far-away Velocidragons.

“Over a hundred flying dragons were just devoured.” The hearts of the two Velocidragons were trembling.

Their opponent was far too strong, and those three kittens, now at a ‘normal’ size, could even talk.

“You wanted to flee?” That devilish young man smiled at the two Velocidragons.

The two Velocidragons were physically huge. That devilish young man was just a tiny speck by their side. And yet, the hearts of the two Velocidragons were quailing, and they were panting hoarsely nonstop. In the language of the dragons, they said, “Lord, we wouldn’t dare, we wouldn’t dare.”

The devilish young man seemed to understand the draconic tongue. Smiling, he nodded. “Very good. I’ve just arrived in this plane, and I’m in a very good mood. I’ll spare you two. You two…shall serve me now.”

The energy chains around the two Velocidragons disappeared, causing the two of them to land heavily on the ground. Upon smashing into the ground, they traded glances, then immediately prostrated themselves flat on the ground, their heads lowered in a sign of obedience.

Dragons were extremely arrogant creatures, but in the face of such overwhelming power, they had no choice but to submit.

Facing this devilish young man, these two Velocidragons strongly suspected that they could be killed with a single wave of his pinky.

“The Yulan continent.” The devilish young man surveyed his surroundings, his face all smiles. “What a wonderful place. I trust that I won’t be as unfortunate as I was, five thousand years ago.”

…….

Within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Having returned to his human form, Linley was only wearing a pair of slacks and an undergarment. This was the beginning of February, when the temperature was extremely low. But Linley was only carefully inspecting the violet sword.

Right now, Linley had no idea what a huge calamity he had unleashed upon the world by pulling out this violet longsword!

The ignorant knew no fear!

But while Doehring Cowart did have some idea as to what would happen, to Doehring Cowart, no matter how great the disaster might be, it wouldn't have too much impact on Linley. After all, even if the heavens collapsed, the ultimate experts of the Yulan continent would be able to stave off calamity. What was there to fear?

Only an idiot would see a treasure there for the taking and not take it.

"Grandpa Doehring, what do you think these two words here mean?" Linley asked Doehring Cowart.

On the hilt of this violet longsword, there were two angular characters, written with many complicated strokes.

"This…" Doehring Cowart's eyes lit up upon seeing these two words. "These words are from the common tongue used in the Infernal Realm. Years ago, shortly after I became a Saint-level magus, I studied this tongue. These two words should be 'blood' and 'violet', respectively."

"Blood Violet?" Linley murmured quietly. "Can it be that the name of this longsword is Bloodviolet?"

Linley carefully inspected this flexible sword, Bloodviolet. Bloodviolet was as thin as a cicada's wings. Precisely because it was so incredibly thin, even though it was made from special materials, it was quite light, perhaps only five pounds or so. To Linley, a five pound sword was absolutely nothing at all.

As he channeled the Dragonblood battle-qi from his body into the sword, Bloodviolet instantly became hard and straight.

With a wave of the hand…

“Swish!” The whisper-thin Bloodviolet very easily sliced through a huge tree with a trunk which would require three men holding hands to surround. Despite being cut through, the tree didn’t budge at all. But Linley knew very well that in reality, the tree had been cut into two halves.

But Bloodviolet was too fast, too sharp, which was why the tree didn’t move at all.

With a mighty leap, Linley flew into the air, and then kicked at one of the branches of the tree in mid-air. Immediately, the tree began to tremble. After smashing several large branches, the entire tree slowly slid and fell to the ground.

Linley took a glance at the place where Bloodviolet had made its cut. “How smooth.” The cut area didn’t have any coarseness or any splinters.

“That sword is awesome.” Munching on a roast duck he was carrying, Bebe stared with wide eyes.

Linley chuckled, then turned to stare at the flexible sword, Bloodviolet. In his mind, he said, “With such an agile, sharp weapon, even if I encounter a thousand or ten thousand foes, I won’t fear them.” Linley immediately began to brandish the flexible sword about.

With incredible agility, Linley danced amidst the forest, easily waving Bloodviolet to and fro amongst the trees.

Sharp! Fast!

As thin as an insect’s wings! This caused Bloodviolet to be virtually unimpeded by air resistance, allowing its speed to reach terrifying heights.

And its lightness allowed Linley to transform even more of his physical strength into a fast swing speed.

“Linley, although this flexible sword, Bloodviolet, is quite sharp, its sharpness isn’t all that shocking.” Doehring Cowart’s appraising skills were much better than Linley’s. At one glance, he could tell what the true strength of this Bloodviolet sword was.

Linley couldn’t help but stare suspiciously at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart laughed. “If you just want to use this Bloodviolet sword to chop down an ordinary tree, then of course it would be unstoppable. But in facing an expert opponent, such as a warrior of the seventh rank using a shield infused with battle-qi, I’m afraid you wouldn’t be able to cut through it so easily.”

Linley was startled.

“The true value of this Bloodviolet longsword lies in two different areas. The first is that it can be either firm or flexible, and thus it would be extremely hard for an opponent to defend or protect against it in battle. And the second is….its durability! Most weapons aren’t able to withstand too much battle-qi, as they would crumble. But this precious sword of yours will not.” Doehring Cowart explained.

Linley nodded slightly.

A sword that was very sharp and very hard probably would also be fragile and unable to take too much force. This Bloodviolet flexible sword was very sharp, but not ridiculously so. Its true strength lay in it being both flexible and firm, while possessing astonishing speed and innate durability.

“Speed? Flexibility?”

Linley’s heart was moved. He no longer channeled his Dragonblood battle-qi into the sword, and instead began to channel his wind-element mageforce into it.

At the same time, he began to brandish the sword about. After having been filled with wind-style mageforce, the already fast Bloodviolet sword was able to reach an even higher level, while also the trajectory of its movement became erratic and unpredictable. The sword was sometimes straight, sometimes curved, causing one to not know how to handle it.

Linley instantly understood.

“For me right now, this is perhaps the most suitable way to utilize this flexible sword, Bloodviolet!”

Chapter 4 – Grandmaster Sculptor?

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 4, Grandmaster Sculptor?

Shortly after the Ernst Institute began the new school semester, Hillman arrived at the Ernst Institute in search of Linley.

In front of the Ernst Institute's main gate, Hillman was frowning while pacing. Clearly, he had a belly full of bad thoughts. The Ernst Institute was under very strict management, and as an outsider without any particular status or power, he didn't have the qualifications needed to enter.

After a while, Yale and Reynolds, both dressed in sky-blue robes, stepped out and walked towards him.

"You are Linley's Uncle Hillman, right? I met you before." Yale spoke out warmly.

Hillman had previously seen Linley's three bros before. Upon seeing Yale and Reynolds, he immediately went over and asked them, "Hey…I know that you are classmates with Linley, and I wanted to ask, why didn't Linley come back to celebrate the New Year? Every year in the past, he would come back."

"Uh…" Yale and Reynolds exchanged glances.

That Linley had his heart broken wasn't a happy event. It wouldn't be good for them to reveal it to Linley's elders.

Reynolds reaction speed was the fastest. Smiling, he said, "Uncle Hillman, Linley's totally focused on his training, and long before the end-of-the-year examinations, had already reached the rank of magus of the sixth rank. And then, he once more entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for training. Man, he's so hard-working…he didn't even bother coming back for the yearly examinations. That Dixie fellow was assessed as a magus of

the sixth rank this year. Some people are now saying that Dixie has surpassed Linley."

"Third Bro has no care for these superficial things. Right, Uncle Hillman, Linley headed off to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts last December. He should be back very soon. Is there something important? If there is, you can tell us. We'll definitely let him know when he's back." Yale said very courteously.

Hillman was silent for a while, then shook his head, a smile on his face that didn't seem like a smile. "No…nothing important. It was just that Linley had always come back every year, and so this year, when he did not, the family grew worried and wanted to check up on him. Since we now know that Linley has entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, we're satisfied."

"Uncle Hillman, don't worry, when Third Bro comes back, I'll definitely tell him to go home early so that you won't be worried." Yale immediately said.

Hillman shook his head. "No need, no need to rush him back. Let him focus on his training. When he has some free time, he can come back then. Nothing big is going on back home anyways. Thanks, the two of you. I'll head off now."

Watching Hillman depart, Yale and Reynolds smiled, then turned to leave as well.

Suddenly…

"Young master Yale, young master Reynolds!" From far away, an exceedingly friendly voice called out.

Yale and Reynolds turned to stare outside of the Institute. From far away, they could see a parked carriage guarded by four armored knights. Frowning, Yale said questioningly, "Who is calling out to me? Oh. It's Austoni." Yale saw Austoni poke his face out of the carriage.

Austoni was the first out of the carriage. He smiled humbly at Yale, and then respectfully stood off to the side. At this time, the screen door to the carriage was once more pushed open, and a very distinguished-looking bald gentleman with a cane slowly made his way out.

Yale and Reynolds exchanged glances.

“Who is this old geezer? Seems distinguished.” Reynolds said beneath his breath.

Yale shook his head. Also beneath his breath, he said, “I don’t recognize this old geezer either. But based on Austoni’s actions, he should be an important individual. Austoni is a high level manager at the Proulx Gallery who has fairly high status himself.”

Accompanied by Austoni, that distinguished looking old man walked over to them, smiling.

“Little Yale, hello.” The bald man smiled as he spoke to Yale. “I ran into your father not long ago. Your father was full of praises for you. Haha, for Mr. Dawson to have a son such as yourself at the Ernst Institute is a very proud thing.”

Yale looked questioningly at the bald man.

“He says he knows my father? And seems to be close to him?”

Austoni said from the side, “Young master Yale, this is the managing director of our Proulx Gallery. You can call him Director Maia [Mai’ya].”

“No need, just call me Uncle Maia. I’ve been friends with your father for decades.” The bald old man said with a smile.

Yale felt secretly shocked.

The Proulx Gallery was the holy land for the arts. Every single large city in

the Yulan continent had a branch of the Proulx Gallery. Even here at Fenlai City alone, the total value of all the sculptures stored at the local Proulx Gallery would come to an astounding figure.

And that wasn't the half of it.

The most important thing was status. To be the managing director of the holy land for the arts meant that the circle this Director Maia travelled in composed of the highest tier of people in the entire Yulan continent, and he might even be on friendly terms with Saint-level combatants. How could anyone look down upon someone like this?

What's more, the Proulx Gallery had a extremely formidable armed force, as otherwise, how could they protect their valuable treasures?

"Uncle Maia." Yale said humbly.

The bald Director Maia turned to look at Reynolds. "And this is?"

"This is a good bro of mine – Reynolds." Yale immediately replied. Quite elegantly, Reynolds also said, "Very pleased to meet you, Director Maia."

Director Maia nodded slightly. From Reynolds movements, he could tell that Reynolds had received excellent tutelage from when he was young.

"Uncle Maia, why have you come here, if I might ask?" Yale asked.

Although he was asking, in his heart, Yale already suspected the answer. "80% chance he's here because of that sculpture of Third Bro – Awakening From the Dream." The last time the Ernst Institute had a holiday break, due to the fact that it had been quite some time since Linley had sent any sculptures to the Proulx Gallery, Austoni had come over to see what the situation was.

But upon arriving at Linley's dormitory, by chance, Austoni had caught a glimpse of that sculpture, which they had placed in the dorm.

Upon seeing it, Austoni had been totally stunned.

As a high level manager of the Proulx Gallery, Austoni's eyes were exceedingly sharp. From that glimpse, he was absolutely certain that this sculpture of Linley's was qualified to be described as standing at the pinnacle of the entire art of stonesculpting. It definitely was qualified to stand on the same pedestal as the Ten Great Sculptures.

The most important thing was, this sculpture of Linley's was enormous, on par with five separate sculptures of most people.

Just like in the art of painting, the value of a sculpture was related in part to its size. Such an enormous sculpture would've required an incredibly large amount of effort. This sculpture which contained five lifelike images of people had already contained within it a unique soul and was on a totally different level.

Seeing that sculpture was the same as seeing five real-life beautiful women.

In the entire Yulan continent, there were very few master-level sculptors. But this sculpture by Linley had already surpassed the level of 'masters'; it was qualified to be ranked amongst the works of the most venerated grandmaster sculptors in history, such as Proulx, Hope Jensen [Hu'pe Jin'sen], and Hoover [Huo'fu].

Those who were granted the title of master were able to produce sculptures of exceedingly high quality, with their own distinct aura and the ability to stir the soul of the viewers.

But their works, when compared to the works of Proulx, Hope Jensen, and the other sculptors who had received the title of 'Grandmaster', was still slightly inferior. Although the gap was very small, it still determined a difference in status.

Stonesculpting had a history of hundreds of thousands of years, and during that period of time, the vast majority of sculptures had been destroyed by the passage of time. Only a few special statues made of special materials

could survive and be passed down to the present generation. Thus, of the so-called Ten Grandmasters, nine of them lived within the past hundred thousand years.

Ever since the Yulan Empire unified the Yulan continent, there had been only two sculptors that could be put on the same level as those ancient grandmasters: Proulx and Hope Jensen.

Hoover was a Grandmaster from over a hundred thousand years ago, and his famous sculpture, the Bloody-eyed Maned Lion, had survived all those years due to the unique properties of the material it was made from, thus ensuring Hoover's fame would live on.

In the past ten thousand years, there had only been two Grandmaster sculptors. Now, of course, Proulx was actually the most formidable sculptor in all of history, and three of the Ten Masterpieces belonged to him. Not all of the Ten Grandmasters had produced sculptures which numbered amongst the Ten Masterpieces.

Of course, this was just the judgment of the later generations. In terms of actual sculpting ability, all of the Ten Grandmasters were about the same.

A new Grandmaster had been born…and he was a 17-year old youth!

What an amazing event this was! And this was the reason why the managing director of the Proulx Gallery himself had hurried over here, all the way from the Proulx Gallery located in the Dark Alliance.

"No rush. Let's go to a private room in a hotel and have a nice, quiet chat." Director Maia wasn't in too big of a rush.

A Grandmaster sculptor?

What a joke!

Although Austoni's eyes were keen, whether or not a sculpture was capable of being passed down the ages required extremely formidable judgment.

The work of a master sculptor and that of a Grandmaster lay in its unique aura and soul.

Whether or not a work of art was qualified to be considered a Grandmaster-level piece of art was an extremely deep field of study.

…..

Within a deluxe room at the hotel.

In front of the four of them, there was a kettle of light tea. Laughing, Director Maia said, “This kid, Austoni, upon seeing Linley’s sculpture, insisted that it was on par with the Ten Masterpieces. Haha, isn’t that the same as saying that we now have a seventeen year old Grandmaster?”

‘Grandmaster’ was a title representing a certain status, representing that someone was at the peak of this art form.

But in casual conversation, most people would address someone as ‘master’, for example, ‘Master Proulx’.

“Grandmaster sculptor?” Yale was somewhat amazed. “I don’t know if Linley’s sculpture qualifies or not. After all, my experience is limited. But I am absolutely sure that this sculpture of Linley’s is, at the very least, comparable with the sculptures you have on display in your hall of the masters.”

“Oh?” Director Maia laughed. “Well-spoken. After all this chitchat, I suppose it’s best I take a look. I don’t know where this sculpture is. May I take a look?”

“Of course.” Yale smiled.

“Little Yale, even if this sculpture isn’t at the level of the Ten Masterpieces, I’ll wager it isn’t too far off. You have to protect it and make sure it isn’t stolen.” Director Maia reminded.

Yale confidently said, “Uncle Maia, please set your mind at ease. Right now, I’ve secreted the sculpture into the secret underground room within the Huadeli Hotel, and I have experts of the Dawson Conglomerate protecting it. What’s more, there are very few people who even know of the existence of this statue to begin with.”

“You’ve moved it to the hotel?” Austoni was somewhat surprised. The last time he saw it, it was in their dormitory.

Yale pursed his lips. “I trust my bros, but I don’t trust you.”

Austoni could only let out a few awkward chuckles.

“Uncle Maia, let’s go. I’ll lead you there.” Yale said warmly.

The Huadeli Hotel was actually a property under the banner of the Dawson Conglomerate. This was the reason why the upper-level management of the Huadeli Hotel knew Yale’s status.”

With a large stand-alone room inside the Huadeli Hotel, there were several seats as well as three experts who had been standing guard every day.

“Young master Yale.” The three warriors of the seventh rank bowed respectfully.

Yale nodded and smiled slightly. “Uncle Maia, please view to your heart’s content.” As he spoke, Yale gave a sharp tug to the heavy covering over the sculpture, revealing the enormous work of art. Those five beautiful women were incomparably immaculate and fine. One an image of tender love, another an adorable innocence, a third all bashful and shy, the fourth passionate and stirring, and the last…heartless.

All of them seemed to be as real as an actual person.

Seeing these five human shapes within the sculpture, Director Maia’s mouth hung open, and he stared at it, stunned, for a long time.

After a long time…

“Incredible. Incredible.” Only now did Director Maia awaken from his stupor. “This sculpture is at the master level, at the very least. A sculpture which links together five different human figures, all totally lifelike? How much effort did this cost? In terms of carving time alone, at least a year must have been spent on it.”

Director Maia knew very well how much effort sculpting took.

It took so much effort that sometimes, in the middle of carving a sculpture, a master sculptor might suddenly vomit blood and pass out from the exertion. In history, there were people who died in the middle of their sculpting. Sculptures such as this were formed from blood and effort.

“For a seventeen year old to be able to produce this sculpture is simply… simply…” Director Maia was at a loss for words. He excitedly walked closer to the sculpture for a closer examination. “Whether or not this sculpture is on par with the Ten Masterpieces requires further inspection from multiple angles.”

As he spoke, Director Maia glued himself next to the sculpture, beginning to carefully inspect every single carved line.

Chapter 5 – Sword Training

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 5, Sword Training

Without making any sound, Director Maia carefully inspected every single inch of this sculpture, Awakening From the Dream, as though he had been possessed.

“Boss Yale, it’s been two hours already.” Reynolds looked at Yale with an unhappy expression.

Yale shook his head and said softly, “Don’t be impatient. Let Uncle Maia do a close inspection. As the managing director of the entire Proulx Gallery, he must be one of the descendants of Master Proulx himself. I believe that his abilities at judging sculpture must be extremely high. I wonder what level this sculpture of Third Bro’s has reached.”

Reynolds nodded slightly as well.

After over three hours had passed, Director Maia straightened his waist, letting out a long breath.

“I hear that the name of this sculpture is, Awakening From the Dream?” Director Maia asked.

Yale nodded. “Correct. Third Bro gave it this name himself.”

Director Maia let out a soft sigh. After taking another good look at the sculpture, he praised, “I must say, this brother of yours, Linley, is without question a genius sculptor. A genius who is comparable to Master Proulx himself.”

“Although on a technical level, his sculpture is just a tiny bit weaker than Master Proulx’s, in terms of the soul or the aura of this sculpture, Linley has definitely reached the same level.” Director Maia sighed with praise.

“Technical level?” Yale said questioningly.

Director Maia nodded. “Right. But although this sculpture does have minor technical flaws, at the same time, it has amazing strengths of its own.”

“The flaws are, some of the indentions and some of the soft lines were not handled with perfect adroitness. But this sculpture of Linley’s is extremely smooth and flowing as a whole, and the feelings it invokes are definitely on par with several of Master Proulx’s finest. And most importantly of all, this sculpture is huge.”

Director Maia sighed in praise. “For a sculpture to pass down throughout the ages, in every single aspect, it requires a tremendous amount of effort. A single error can ruin the entire sculpture. To be able to sculpt a single human-shaped sculpture is already quite an accomplishment. But Linley was able to sculpt five! The most admirable thing is that all five of the people in this sculpture have their own unique aura, but yet everything is still linked up in a story. If I guess correctly, your brother must have suffered a romantic heartbreak.”

Based on Director Maia’s astuteness, he could clearly tell at a single glance the story behind these five figures.

“Awakening From the Dream. It is really amazing that Linley was able to carve a sculpture such as this.” Director Maia couldn’t stop praising it.

“Director Maia, tell me, what level is this sculpture of my bro at, exactly? Is it on par with the sculptures of Master Proulx?” Reynolds asked.

Director Maia frowned. “To be frank, I’m not sure either. Let me put it to you like this. On the technical side of things, this sculpture can only be considered to be an expert level sculpture, despite being on the same level with Master Proulx in terms of invoking emotions and telling a story. But there is a unique point about it…”

“The carving strokes of this sculpture were very clean, very agile. From

start to finish, it can be said that these five figures were inseparable parts of a flawless whole. This unconventional feeling is something I have never even heard of before, much less seen." Director Maia praised.

Yale said urgently, "Uncle Maia, so what level is this sculpture at?"

Director Maia was helpless. "I can't say for certain. From a traditional evaluation standpoint, this sculpture should be considered to be on the master level. After all, the uniqueness of its aura is unquestionable, and the quality of the work is on clear display from the grace the statue emanates."

"From a traditional evaluation standpoint?" Yale and Reynolds both looked questioningly at Director Maia.

Director Maia nodded. "The traditional evaluation method has been universally agreed upon as a fair, impartial evaluating mechanism for countless years. But I feel that…when actually viewing Linley's sculpture, it appears to be a very perfect whole, without any apparent flaws."

"The whole point of having sculptures is for viewing them. The actual viewing determines everything. Let me put it this way. Linley perhaps cannot be termed a Grandmaster sculptor, but the value of this sculpture will most likely be incredibly high, on the same level as the Ten Masterpieces." Director Maia laughed.

A sculpture not produced by one of the Ten Grandmasters with the valuation on the same level as the Ten Masterpieces. This was something totally unheard of.

But Director Maia couldn't help but to admit that this was very likely to occur.

"Oh." Yale and Reynolds nodded.

This was the one flaw of the Straight Chisel School, honestly speaking. When just using a single tool, the straight chisel, in terms of precision when carving out certain curves, couldn't match some more specialized tools. The

technical appearance created by Linley's usage of the straight chisel was perhaps comparable with a normal expert sculptor.

When judging it against the standards of a master sculptor, the weaknesses became readily apparent.

But the Straight Chisel School had its own strengths as well. For example, the continuity of the carving, and…others, when carving, had to constantly switch tools, but the Straight Chisel School only required an earth-style magus to become one with the earth as he carved, which actually increased the speed at which he raised his spiritual energy.

"Where is Linley?" Director Maia asked.

Yale shook his head. "Third Bro is a student magus, after all. The vast majority of his time is spent in training. Right now, he is engaging in a practical excursion in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and we're not sure exactly when he'll be back."

"Then, Yale, can you act on behalf of Linley in permitting our Proulx Gallery to auction off this sculpture?" Director Maia suggested.

"Can't be done." Yale was very blunt. "Without Third Bro's express permission, it isn't convenient for me to make that decision."

Director Maia frowned, and continued. "Then what about exhibiting it? There shouldn't be too much of a problem in allowing our Proulx Gallery to exhibit it, would there? After all, Linley's previous sculptures were all exhibited in our Proulx Gallery before being auctioned off."

But Yale knew very well how much symbolic importance Linley placed on this sculpture.

This represented an extremely painful period of heartbreak in Linley's life. It was hard to say if Linley would have agreed to exhibit it if he were here. He didn't want to make Linley uncomfortable.

“Can’t be done. I’m only responsible for safeguarding this thing. As far as exhibiting it or selling it, we’ll have to wait for Third Bro to return.” Yale’s voice was resolute.

…..

Within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Exactly two months had passed. During this time, Linley had been immersed in studying the Bloodviolet sword. The Bloodviolet sword was the finest sword Linley had ever seen. Just based on its sharpness alone, most magical beasts of the sixth rank couldn’t handle it. But the sharpness was only a small specialty of the Bloodviolet sword.

The strengths of the Bloodviolet sword were – Unpredictability, speed, and also a certain baleful aura.

That’s right. A baleful aura.

Linley only discovered this baleful aura after killing quite a few magical beasts. The material making up this Bloodviolet sword contained within it a unique energy. With each chop of the blade, a unique baleful aura was released.

This baleful aura was very similar to a dragon’s terrifying presence. Naturally, it wasn’t nearly as terrifying, but in battle, this baleful aura could be put to very good use.

Night. In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, surrounded by a pack of hundreds of Windwolves. The Windwolf pack leader stared at Linley with its greenish-yellow eyes. Letting out wild howls, one Windwolf after another pounced towards Linley. But moving as agilely as the wind, Linley slipped through the attacks of the pack, the sword in his hand glowing with a blue light.

After being activated by wind-style mageforce, the Bloodviolet Godsword’s speed increased even more. The Godsword flickered about, not impeded by

air resistance in the slightest.

“Whoosh!”

Within the darkness, a streak of violet intermixed with blue was flickering about at high speed. It floated about in bizarre patterns, and every time it flickered, a Windwolf was split into two part. Windwolves, after all, were only magical beasts of the fourth rank. In this pack of Windwolves, some of the stronger ones were beasts of the fifth rank, and only the two leaders were beasts of the sixth rank.

Right now, Linley remained in human form, in which he possessed the power of the sixth rank.

Frankly speaking, even a warrior of the seventh rank might not dare to directly fight with a pack of hundreds of Windwolves, much less a warrior of the sixth rank. After all, a hero could still be brought down by numbers, and Windwolves possessed extremely sharp claws. Even Linley’s body, when scratched by a Windwolf, would most likely bleed. Unless, of course, he entered the Dragonform.

“Howl!” A Windwolf leapt at him with high speed, bloody maw wide open.

“Swish!”

The Bloodviolet Godsword flashed. The Windwolf was instantly bisected from head to tail.

“Perhaps this Bloodviolet Godsword of mine would have some problems piercing the armor of a Velocidragon. But you guys?” The Bloodviolet Godsword in Linley’s hands was beginning to move even faster and even more agilely.

The reason why a pack of Windwolves was a terrifying thing was because of their speed as well as numbers. If over ten Windwolves suddenly snapped at you, even a warrior of the seventh rank would be hard pressed to block them all at once. His only option would be to use his battle-qi to tank

the blow.

But Linley was different.

“Swish!” The Bloodviolet Godsword flashed again, and yet another Windwolf was cut in twain.

The Bloodviolet Godsword was simply too fast, so fast that all the Windwolves could see was a blur. After Linley had slaughtered over a hundred Windwolves without suffering any injury at all, the pack of Windwolves finally began to be filled with fear.

They weren’t afraid of death, but they weren’t willing to die senselessly either.

“Hoooooowl!” Those two large Windwolves that had been hiding in the back finally began to howl angrily. All of the remaining Windwolves lowered their heads, then turned and retreated at high speed. Their angry, saddened howls could be heard from far away. Clearly, it was caused by the fact that they had lost so many of their comrades, but no gain at all.

With a flick of Linley’s wrist and a violet flash, the Bloodviolet Godsword wrapped around Linley’s waist into a belt shape again.

“Against the likes of them, there’s no need to use Bloodviolet’s real power.” There was a hint of blood on Linley’s robes, but all of it came from the Windwolves.

During the entire battle, from start to finish, the Bloodviolet Godsword had been straight. Against the likes of a Windwolf pack, just relying on the sharpness of the Godsword was already enough. But once the Bloodviolet Godsword began to fluctuate between being straight and being flexible, the offensive power would multiply.

“Boss, you are starting to get more and more powerful.” Bebe was lying on Linley’s shoulders.

Linley laughed. “You aren’t weak either.”

After taking a deep breath then releasing it, Linley glanced around at his surroundings, then took a look at the three bags on his back. In the past two months, through analyzing and training with this Bloodviolet Godsword, Linley had already filled up three sacks with magicite cores.

“After spending two months in training, I’ve already reached a bottleneck in my ability to use Bloodviolet. If I want to get better, for now, I’d have to rely on improving my own arm strength and wrist strength.”

During these two months, Linley had trained in the movements of drawing the sword, striking with the sword, cutting with it, stabbing with it, hacking with it, and all sorts of other skills. The purpose of Linley’s training was all to improve his speed, to as high a level as was possible. What’s more, with Linley’s proficiency in wind magic, Linley could with relative ease discern the secrets of using the sword.

Just now, when faced with over a hundred Windwolves, Linley wasn’t injured at all. This was the result of his accomplishments.

In the past, Linley wouldn’t have dared to imagine what it would be like, at this level.

“Now that I’m at a bottleneck, there’s not much more point to me being at the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Time to go back.”

…..

Morning. The early rays of the sun shone upon the earth. With Bloodviolet wrapped around his waist, carrying three sacks of magicite cores, and wearing a slightly blood-stained blue robe, Linley arrived at the main entrance to the Ernst Institute, Bebe on his shoulders.

“Finally back.” Seeing the main gate to the Ernst Institute, Linley felt his heart was at peace.

The Ernst Institute and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts were two opposite extremes. Here, no one dared to kill wantonly, and everyone was amiable. But the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was a world which belonged to magical beasts. The strong were revered, while the weak were cast out. Murder could happen at any time.

“It’s Linley.” The guardians at the main gate of the Ernst Institute all recognized this famous figure, Linley. Naturally, they would not stop him.

Linley slightly nodded towards the guards, and then walked into the Ernst Institute. On the roads within the Institute, quite a few students on their way to classes began to talk amongst themselves in hushed tones when they saw Linley.

“Look, it’s Linley. He’s covered in blood. He should’ve just gotten back from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. I heard that last year, he went to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and skipped the end of the year assessment. This has been four months. He’s so amazing, to be able to survive there for four full months.”

“Dixie was assessed as a magus of the sixth rank last year. But Linley didn’t go for an assessment at all.”

…..

Hearing these hushed murmurs, Linley only smiled as he headed towards his own dormitory. Right at this moment, Yale, George, and Reynolds were preparing to breakfast together.

“Oh, Third Bro, you’re back.” Reynolds was the first to excitedly call out to him.

Yale, George, and Reynolds all excitedly rushed over to him. Linley, as always, grinned upon seeing his three bros.

Chapter 6 – Applying For Graduation

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 6, Applying For Graduation

Within the Huadeli Hotel.

Linley, George, Yale, and Reynolds were all casually seated at a long table, which was covered with over ten exquisitely prepared dishes. Next to the dishes were fruit wine, liquor, and more. Right now, the four bros were drinking wine while casually chatting about recent events.

“Linley, last year, you should’ve attended the end of the year testing ceremony before going to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Last year, during the examination, Dixie showed that he had also reached the sixth rank. But you didn’t attend at all. Some people are saying that you are inferior to Dixie. Damn. Only the four of us know that you reached the sixth rank long ago.” Reynolds grumbled.

Linley drank a cup of wine, chuckling.

Magus of the sixth rank?

Ever since he entered that rare state of oneness and carved out the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, over the course of ten days and ten nights, his spiritual energy had increased tenfold, helping Linley to vault almost directly from the sixth rank to the seventh rank.

In fact, just looking at spiritual energy, Linley would be an above-average magus of the seventh rank.

“Fourth Bro, you should know by now that Third Bro doesn’t care about this sort of stuff at all. If he cared, then he wouldn’t have skipped the annual competition every year.” Yale chortled. “Right, Third Bro, when this school semester just started, your Uncle Hillman came looking for you.”

Linley started. Looking at Yale, he immediately asked, “What did Uncle Hillman want?”

In the past, Linley had always gone home for the New Year. This previous year was the first and only year in which Linley spent the end of the winter and early spring in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“Nothing really. Most likely, he was wondering why you didn’t go back for the New Year and was worried something had happened to you.” Yale said casually, then added, “Right. Something else we have to tell you. That same day your Uncle Hillman came to visit, the managing director of the Proulx Gallery came as well. The purpose of his visit was to see sculpture of yours, ‘Awakening From the Dream’.”

Linley coughed in shock. “The managing director? How did he know about ‘Awakening From the Dream’?”

Somewhat embarrassed, Reynolds said, “It’s all my fault. When Yale instructed people to carry your sculpture out of the mountain, I figured nobody knew how valuable it was, so I just had them leave it in our dormitory. That way, we bros could admire it from time to time. But I didn’t expect that Austoni would come looking for you, and came directly to our dorm. He managed to catch a glimpse of ‘Awakening From the Dream’, and then he informed the managing director of the existence of this sculpture.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Linley, the managing director wants to know if you’d be willing to auction off your sculpture within the Proulx Gallery? If you aren’t willing to auction it off, he still hopes that you would be willing to put it on display in the Proulx Gallery. Will you agree?” Yale looked at Linley.

Without hesitating in the slightest, Linley shook his head.

“For now, I don’t wish to publicize the existence of ‘Awakening From the Dream’. And I don’t need money either.”

To Linley, ‘Awakening From the Dream’ represented a period of love and loss. But of course, after completing this sculpture, Linley had mentally transformed as well.

Especially during this period of time within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. He had experienced the siege of over a hundred giant dragons, then watched two extremely powerful magical beasts battle to the death, and then nearly died himself before successfully drinking dragon’s blood and transforming into a Dragonblood Warrior.

After having experienced so much, the affairs of him and Alice seemed to be nothing more than a distant memory.

Linley had also learned to cherish the present.

“If Father knew that I could now assume Dragonform, how excited must he be?” Linley thought of his father.

Hogg’s greatest lifelong desire was to see one of his son’s become a Dragonblood Warrior. Little Wharton’s density of Dragonblood in his veins was sufficiently high, true, but Linley was capable of Dragonform, and even of reaching the eighth rank of power in Dragonform.

If this news reached Hogg, that his son had become a Dragonblood Warrior, he would be bursting with pride, no doubt.

…….

Linley could guess as to how much this sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, would be worth. He also knew very well that storing such an enormous sculpture in Wushan township would not be safe. This was why he asked Yale to help him safeguard this sculpture.

To the enormous Dawson Conglomerate, this was nothing but a trifle.

After leaving the hotel, Linley and his bros were walking on the Shady Grove Street.

“Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro. There’s something that I must inform you about.” Linley spoke after a period of silence.

Seeing how serious Linley looked, Yale, George, and Reynolds all focused their attention on him.

“Within these next few days, I intend to apply for graduation.” With difficulty, Linley forced out these words.

Graduating meant leaving the Ernst Institute and leaving his three bros behind. Linley had entered the Ernst Institute when he was nine years old. He was now seventeen. He had spent eight years here. Friends made during these innocent years, without any consideration of gain or ulterior motives, would always be true, genuine friends.

Linley couldn’t bear to part from his bros.

But in life, one must have some accomplishments. Upon graduating, he would have the chance to begin to gain titles, writs of nobility, a fiefdom, and perhaps an army. By then, he would be able to advance himself in leaps and bounds.

“Graduate?”

Yale, George, and Reynolds were all stunned. Yale was the first to recover. “Third Bro, why are you in such a hurry to graduate? What’s the big deal about graduating from the Ernst Institute early anyhow? Isn’t it great, we four bros being together here? And the Ernst Institute is far more peaceful than the outside world.”

George and Reynolds also hurriedly tried to dissuade Linley.

Linley shook his head. “Nah. We can’t always be hiding within the walls of the Ernst Institute and not interact with the outside world.”

“Third Bro, right now, you are only a magus of the sixth rank. Although a

magus of the sixth rank is considered an expert in the outside world, there's many people who are stronger than you. How about…you wait until you reach the seventh rank, and then you graduate." George suggested.

Based on what George knew, there were two major hurdles for a magus to overcome in his training. The biggest hurdle, of course, was crossing from the ninth rank to the Saint-level. But the second biggest hurdle was from the sixth rank to the seventh rank.

From the ninth rank to the Saint-level, even if one had sufficient spiritual energy and had a powerful reserve of mageforce, one could still spend countless years without being able to break through that last hurdle. It was something which required luck and opportunity, a stroke of luck which allowed someone to suddenly comprehend the way.

And from the sixth to the seventh ranks, even geniuses would normally need ten or so years.

"I am already a magus of the seventh rank." Linley told them directly.

"A magus of the seventh rank?"

The three bros of Linley stared at him, seemingly thunderstruck. Even a genius such as Dixie only became a magus of the sixth rank upon turning sixteen. If he worked extremely hard, perhaps when he was around thirty years of age, he would reach the seventh rank.

But Linley…

Linley was only seventeen years old!

"Third Bro, did you just say that you've reached the seventh rank?" Yale couldn't believe it at all.

"Third Bro, you better not be tricking us." George was also in disbelief.

Reynolds was silent. He only stared at Linley, not saying a word.

“Squeak squeak!” Bebe, on Linley’s shoulders, began to squeak excitedly towards Linley’s three bros while baring his fangs. Linley could hear Bebe’s voice in his head. “Boss, these three punks think you’re lying! Boss, use a spell of the seventh rank on’m, show’m!”

Linley glanced at Bebe. “Bebe, enough.”

A ‘wronged’ look on his face, Bebe glanced at Linley then fell silent.

“Bebe’s performing skills are pretty good, actually.” Linley secretly laughed, and then he looked at his three close friends. “Boss Yale. You three don’t believe me. When I go tomorrow to apply for graduation, you’ll see.”

Yale, George, and Reynolds all knew what sort of person Linley was. Linley wasn’t the type of guy to lie.

“Third Bro, you really accomplished it?”

Linley nodded slightly. “How about, I show you the Soaring Technique.” Linley began to mumble the words to a magical incantation, while Yale and the others quietly watched. After a while, wind-type elemental essence began swirling around his body, lifting Linley into the air.

Linley rose very slowly, hovering perhaps only twenty centimeters above the air. Someone looking from far away wouldn’t be able to tell that he was in mid-air at all.

“This is the Floating Technique.” Reynolds said.

The Floating Technique only allowed one to rise up and down.

“Watch closely.” Linley suddenly shot up into the air at an incline. Upon reaching the height of several tens of meters, he suddenly dropped down at high speed again. But once he reached the height of 20 centimeters, he once more came to a halt, maintaining a hovering height.

After maintaining this state for a few moments, Linley landed.

“The Soaring Technique?” Yale and the others were truly astonished.

Although this demonstration of Linley’s was seemingly simple, it also showed one thing very clearly. Being able to rise at an incline was definitely something only the Soaring Technique would allow.

“Hey, Linley! Long time no see! Didn’t imagine that I’d find you here, showing off your jumping skills.” From far away, a young man laughed as he walked over. From far away, Linley’s movement did indeed seem like he was jumping in the air.

To a very powerful warrior, jumping several dozen meters was not too difficult.

And a large majority of the people at the Ernst Institute knew that this genius, Linley, was not only a magus, he was also a mighty warrior. There had been people who had seen him easily carry a thousand-pound boulder inside his dormitory.

Linley, Yale, and others exchanged pleasantries with the fellow, as he was a neighbor living next door to them.

“Third Bro, you’ve really become a magus of the seventh rank. This can’t… can’t be possible? But just now, I…” George was the first one to say excitedly after the neighbor left.

“A seventeen year old magus of the seventh rank. My heavens. Has there ever been such a genius in the entire history of the Yulan continent?” Reynolds was getting excited as well.

Looking at Linley, Yale’s eyes were shining. “Even I am starting to look forward to Third Bro’s graduation ceremony. I want to see the looks on the faces of those test givers…”

….

The next morning. On the empty magical ability examination fields of the Ernst Institute, thirty instructors were standing in a line. In truth, four magus instructors were enough for a graduation test, but most instructors at the Ernst Institute had a lot of free time. Upon hearing that Linley was going to apply for graduation, they all came over to watch the fun.

After all, generally speaking, most students would only apply for graduation after being confirmed as a magus of the sixth rank. After spending some time at the sixth rank, only then would they apply for graduation. In a situation like that, there was no need for an actual graduation examination. Thus, a graduation examination was quite a rare event.

Thirty instructors, plus three students – Yale, George, and Reynolds.

Amidst the thirty or so instructors, there was even Vice Chancellor Deland [De'lan'te], who came here out of interest. As Deland had put it, "If one of the two greatest geniuses of our Institute is applying for graduation, of course I must be here to witness it."

"Linley, utilize the earth-style spell, 'Earth Spear Array'. Based on the size and speed of the earthen spears, we will be able to assess your level." One of the test-givers spoke.

If his spell power had reached the sixth rank, then naturally he would be able to graduate.

Linley slightly shook his head.

All of the onlookers couldn't help but feel suspicious. Vice Chancellor Deland spoke out. "Linley, aren't you applying to graduate? What is going on?"

"I want to use wind-style magic." Linley said with a smile.

Vice Chancellor Deland and the onlookers all laughed. They knew that

Linley was a dual-element magus of wind and earth. But the test of magical strength was primarily a test of spiritual energy. It made no difference which element was tested; the underlying spiritual energy wouldn't change.

"Go ahead." Vice Chancellor Deland and the thirty odd instructors all grinned at Linley.

Linley immediately began to mutter the words to the seventh-ranked wind-style spell, 'Soaring Technique'. After a while, a gust of wind began to swirl around Linley's body. Linley's body soared into the air, and then he began to agilely glide about in the air, sometimes turning, sometimes diving, sometimes flying straight at high speeds.

"So…Soaring Technique?!"

The thirty odd magus instructors were all shocked. They all knew what was implied by the usage of the Soaring Technique.

"A seventeen year old, dual-element magus of the seventh rank. This…" Vice Chancellor Deland immediately understood that the quiet Ernst Institute would perhaps no longer be quiet for a long, long time.

Chapter 7 – Second in History

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 7, Second in History

A dual-element magus of the seventh rank, compared to the Yulan continent as a whole, could only be considered someone who had just stepped into the field of the powerful figures.

But if you added the words ‘seventeen year old’ in front of the words ‘dual-element magus of the seventh rank’, the effect was totally different. The Radiant Church probably wouldn’t care too much about a dual-element magus of the seventh rank; after all, there were plenty of powerful figures in the Yulan continent.

However…

A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank? Leaving the Radiant Church aside for now, perhaps each and every major power on the Yulan continent would be jealous to possess this.

“Genius. Genius!” Vice Chancellor Deland, a magus of the eighth rank, was extremely excited.

All of the watching magus instructors were in shock as well. All of them understood exactly what a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank represented. This was a miracle! At the very least, it was the Ernst Institute’s miracle!

“Heh heh.” Yale, George, and Reynolds all started to snicker.

They had all been anticipating the expressions on the faces of these magi. And it was as priceless as they had hoped.

In terms of power, Vice Chancellor Deland couldn’t even rank amongst the top three, here at the Ernst Institute, but he had significant amounts of

experience. He quickly was able to tamp down his excitement, and was the first to walk to Linley's side. "Linley, do you know what being a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank represents?"

"Heh, does he have to ask?" At this time, Doehring Cowart flew out of the ring, delightedly stroking his long, white beard. "How could the pupil of I, Doehring Cowart, not be outstanding?"

All of the teachers currently present were quite far from the Saint-level. Naturally, none of them were able to detect the presence of Doehring Cowart's spirit.

"Seventeen years…" Deland sighed with praise. "In the entire history of the Ernst Institute, based on age, amongst all of the students to attain the seventh rank, you, Linley, are the youngest. The previous record holder, a genius who attained the seventh rank at age 19, went on to become a Saint-level Grand Magus."

A silver-haired elder next to him spoke out. "Let's not discuss the Ernst Institute for now. If we look at the Yulan continent as a whole, and look at the records of the continent as a whole, you are the second-youngest genius in all of recorded history to reach the seventh rank."

The Yulan continent as a whole had been around for countless years, and also covered a huge amount of territory. There was no way for the Ernst Institute to match it in terms of records.

"The second in history?" Linley was rather surprised as well.

How many countless geniuses had the Yulan continent produced, over these years? For himself to be able to be the second youngest in history was a terrifying accomplishment.

"The youngest magus in the entire history of the Yulan continent to reach the seventh rank was a Saint-level Grand Magus who lived over 8000 years ago. He became a magus of the seventh rank when he was 16 years old. The previous second youngest, who has just become the third youngest, became

a magus of the seventh rank when he turned 18. In the end, he topped out at the ninth rank. This was because afterwards, he suffered a huge setback, and his personality changed. We can put it like this…aside from you, of those top ten young geniuses who reached the seventh rank earliest, six of them became Saint-level Grand Magi, while the other four became arch magi of the ninth rank."

Generally speaking, a magus of the seventh rank was given the title of 'Senior Magus'.

A magus of the eighth rank would be respectfully titled 'Master Magus'.

A magus of the ninth rank would be honored with the title of 'Arch Magus'.

And a Saint-level magus could be venerated as a 'Grand Magus'.

"Put another way…based on your talent, becoming a magus of the ninth rank is going to be virtually no problem at all. All you need is time. But if you continue to strive hard, you have the great potential to become a Saint-level Grand Magus. After all, you are the second youngest magus of the seventh rank in all of history." That silver-haired elder looked at Linley solemnly.

Linley had some degree of eagerness towards eventually becoming a Saint-level magus, but that eagerness wasn't too excessive.

This was because Linley knew very well that it was even harder for a magus to advance in power than it was for a warrior.

True, warriors and magi both needed spiritual energy. But they had different requirements as to how much spiritual energy was needed.

Magi didn't train their bodies, focusing exclusively on spiritual energy. The vast majority of their time was spent building up their spiritual energy, because spiritual energy impacted their ability to gather mageforce, as well as to direct and control elemental essences. A mighty magus also needed a terrifying amount of spiritual energy.

But warriors were different.

To a warrior, the most important thing was still their body. Spiritual energy and battle-qi were both secondary. Only once they had a powerful body would they be able to contain lots of battle-qi. Spiritual energy was only used to more finely control the usage of that battle-qi.

If you compared a magus of the seventh rank and a warrior of the seventh rank, the different in spiritual energy could be as much as ten times more for the magus.

“Even if in the future, I reach the level of Saint-level Grand Magus, I surely would have taken a tremendous amount of time. By contrast, based on my inherent talent as a Dragonblood Warrior, I will reach the Saint-level at a much faster pace.” Linley knew very well his clan’s history. Dragonblood Warriors usually only needed a few scant decades to reach the Saint-level of power.

What’s more…

A Dragonblood Warrior who had reached the Saint-level in power was extremely formidable. Even amongst Saint-level combatants, a Dragonblood Warrior would be considered an ultimate-tier combatant.

“Linley, you are the most successful student in the entire history of our Institute. For these next few days, we ask that you please remain here at the Institute. We will invite some the absolute best painters and sculptors to come and paint paintings and carve sculptures of you, which we will keep in the Institute as mementos.” Vice Chancellor Deland immediately said.

As the second youngest magus to reach the seventh rank in the entire history of the Yulan continent, Linley naturally was the pride of the entire Ernst Institute.

“A painting?” Linley was stunned.

He realized that in front of these painters and sculptors, he would have to stand still for a very long period of time. As he realized this, Linley couldn't help but think to himself, becoming the second youngest magus to reach the seventh rank in the entire history of the Yulan continent was perhaps not as wonderful as it sounded.

…….

The number one genius in the history of the Ernst Institute, and the number two genius in the history of the Yulan continent. A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. This astonishing news quickly spread across the entire Ernst Institute.

"A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank? How is that possible?"

"There's no way this news is fake. So many of the Institute's teachers were present at that time, and Vice Chancellor Deland has even invited painters to come and paint pictures of Linley, with the intention of forever enshrining his image within our Institute."

"My heavens, a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. Based on this speed, he should reach the eighth rank in ten years, and the ninth rank in twenty. He'll be ninth-ranked Arch Magus in his forties. Most likely, within a century, he will become a Saint-level Grand Magus."

"I just flipped through some of the books in the library. Aside from Linley, of the top ten geniuses in history, six became Saint-level Grand Magi, while the other four all became Arch Magi of the ninth rank. Linley is way too incredible."

…..

The entire Ernst Institute was shaken upside down by this news. If a student was perhaps just slightly better than his peers, perhaps he would be viewed with jealously. But once a student's achievements reached a level as high as this, becoming the second youngest magus to reach the seventh rank in the

entire history of the Yulan continent, they would only be filled with respect and veneration.

In their eyes, Linley's future prospects were limitless. There was no way for them to compare with him.

In the past, there were still some people who claimed that Dixie was the number one genius of the Institute. Now, no one said such a thing.

Without question, the number one genius of the Ernst Institute was Linley. And it wasn't just now; Linley was the number one genius of the Ernst Institute in all of its five-thousand-year-long history. Dixie was currently just a magus of the sixth rank. Who knew how long it would take before he could reach the seventh rank?

"Linley, a magus of the seventh rank?" Having just completed his meditative training, Dixie fell silent upon hearing this news from his sister Delia.

After having 'surpassed' Linley when he became a magus of the sixth rank, Dixie had felt some sense of satisfaction. But this new bit of news seemed to push him into a deep abyss. Linley's speed of improvement was simply too astonishing. Even when he chased after Linley with all his might, it seemed like he was still being thrown farther and farther behind by Linley.

"Big brother." Delia said in a soft voice. She was a bit concerned about her big brother.

Delia knew all too well that ever since he was young, her big brother had been an extremely proud person. He was very cold to others, and also extremely strict with himself. Her big brother never submitted to anyone, but ever since Linley had rocketed up from the fourth rank to the fifth rank, her big brother had felt threatened.

Her big brother had worked extremely hard, and in the previous year had managed to cross the threshold of the sixth rank.

But Linley actually…

“Don’t worry. I’m fine.” Dixie slowly shook his head. “Delia, I suddenly feel as though there’s not that much point in remaining here at the Institute. I also plan to apply for graduation. In the upcoming days, I’ll return to the Empire and return to the clan.”

Delia was startled.

……..

Within a private area inside the Huadeli Hotel, there were four bedrooms and two living rooms. It was quite large. Linley and his three bros were currently living here.

Ever since the news that Linley had become a magus of the seventh rank had spread out, dorm 1987 hadn’t had a single peaceful day. Huge amounts of people came to pay their respects to Linley, forcing Linley to hide here, within the Huadeli Hotel. Due to the deep background and connections possessed by the Huadeli Hotel, few people dared to trespass here.

“Third Bro, when you are quiet, you are very low-key, but when you finally make your move, by the heavens do you cause a ruckus!” Yale sighed.

Linley chuckled.

Actually, this was a decision which he had arrived at after serious discussions with Doehring Cowart. After all, currently, the Baruch clan was still weak. If they wanted to strengthen it rapidly, the best way to do so was to quickly spread the word that he already possessed the might of a magus of the seventh rank.”

A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank! This would cause every organization in the continent to send people inviting him to join them. Naturally, they would offer exceptional conditions as well.

And thus, Linley would do better and better in the future.

“Third Bro, I’m no longer going to hide this information from you. The Dawson Conglomerate, one of the three great trading unions in the Yulan continent, belongs to my clan. Are you interested in joining the Dawson Conglomerate?” Yale looked at Linley. In all honesty, Yale was very much hoping that Linley would become a member of the Dawson Conglomerate.

The number two genius in the entire history of the Yulan continent. If a genius like this entered the Dawson Conglomerate, his future status would unquestionably be very high. Naturally, this would also be hugely beneficial to Yale’s status within his clan.

“The Dawson Conglomerate?!” Reynolds let out a startled yelp. “Wow, Boss Yale, I always knew you were a member of the Dawson clan, but there are way too many clans with the name ‘Dawson’. But the Dawson clan you belong to is actually the Dawson clan behind the Dawson Conglomerate? The Dawson Conglomerate! My goodness, you are rich!”

George also looked at Yale.

“Boss Yale, this…” Linley hesitated.

“Don’t worry. You are my bro, first and foremost. I won’t force you.” Yale laughed. “I can’t guarantee other things, but what I can guarantee is that if you do decide to join the Dawson Conglomerate, then money will not be an issue. At the very least, we can provide you with a hundred million gold coins.”

“A hundred million gold coins?!” Linley, George, and Reynolds were all flabbergasted.

A hundred million gold coins. What a terrifyingly large sum that was.

Perhaps all of the combined assets of the richest clan in Fenlai City wouldn’t add up to a hundred million gold coins.

“Linley, the clan of this bro of yours is really too wealthy. A hundred

million gold coins, damn…" Even Doehring Cowart was stunned.

Even a master sculptor's most famous, legacy-making sculpture would only be worth a million gold coins at most. This was already a terrifying sum of money, and how many master sculptors were there?

"Third Bro, I can honestly tell you that aside from the other two trading unions, in the entire Yulan continent, not even the Four Great Empires or the two major alliances would be able to produce such a vast amount of money at once. As for those kingdoms…hmph." Yale was very certain of his words.

The Four Great Empires and the two major alliances both had their own Saint-level combatants. But the Four Great Empires and the two major alliances had to pay the upkeep for their huge armies as well as provide for the entire country. Although they were wealthy, asking them to produce a hundred million gold coins all at once would be very difficult for them. At the very least, it would require lengthy, complicated internal deliberations.

For someone who wasn't (yet) a Saint-level combatant? They wouldn't be willing to do it.

Only the three major trading unions, with their terrifying amount of wealth, would. Although they possessed a staggering amount of money, in terms of military power, although they were strong, they were much weaker than the Four Great Empires and the two major alliances. Thus, they all urgently needed experts to join their ranks.

"Knock!" "Knock!" "Knock!"

Suddenly, the sound of their door being knocked on could be heard.

Yale frowned and walked over to the door. Opening it, he said, "I thought I gave instructions for us not to be disturbed?"

The manager of the Huadeli Hotel said awkwardly, "Young master Yale, a Cardinal of the Radiant Church, along with three clerics and a troop of

Knights of the Radiant Temple, have arrived outside the hotel."

Yale started.

One of the Cardinals, whose position and authority in the entire Radiant Church was second only to the Holy Emperor himself? The rank of each and every Cardinal was much higher than that of one of the kings of a kingdom. If a Cardinal had personally come, leading a troop of people, there was no way that he, a young master of the Dawson Conglomerate, could possibly block the way.

"Looks like Third Bro has quite a powerful appeal!"

Chapter 8 – The Upper Classes of the Yulan Continent

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 8, The Upper Classes of the Yulan Continent

Within the formal reception area for the Huadeli Hotel, two seventh-ranked Knights of the Radiant Temple were standing on each side of the main hallway, while Linley and the other three entered the formal reception area from another entrance. Their footsteps on the smooth marble floor, so polished that it could serve as a mirror, produced clear, ringing sounds.

When Linley, Yale, and the others stepped into the reception area, the seven people already inside the reception area turned to look at them.

“A Cardinal, three Vicars, and three Knights of the Radiant Temple.” Linley immediately could tell each person’s status, and could also immediately sense that all seven of these people were extremely powerful. Based on what Linley already knew….

Within the Radiant Church, the position of the Cardinals was second only to the Holy Emperor himself. In order to become a Cardinal, one needed to not only have sufficient fame, but also have the power of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

“An Arch Magus of the ninth rank?” Linley couldn’t help but carefully scrutinize this Cardinal in front of him.

This Cardinal appeared to be a middle-aged man, with a head full of curly silver hair. His nose was high and sharp, while a hint of a smile played about his lips. He seemed quite amiable.

“Hello, Linley. And you, young Yale.” The Cardinal smiled as he rose to his feet. “Let me make some brief introductions. These three Vicars are my assistants, while these three Knights of the Radiant Temple belong to the

‘Glory’ division. They are, respectively, Commander Marcus [Ma’ku’si] and his two Deputy Commanders. As for myself…you can just go ahead and call me Guillermo [Ji’er’mo].”

Cardinal Guillermo.

Linley had previously heard that the Holy Union had a total of eight ace regiments of knights. One of them was the ‘Glory’ division. Each of these Eight Ace Regiments was extremely powerful and possessed astounding offensive ability.

“Lord Guillermo, Lord Marcus. All the other lords present. Might I ask why you have come?” Linley said with humility, while at the same time, Linley began to check out Marcus.

Marcus was an extremely powerful-looking bald man. Sitting there, the impression he gave was that of a mountain at rest, immovable by any outside force. In this seven-man delegation from the Radiant Church, Marcus and Guillermo held the highest ranks. Marcus, in his capacity as the Commander of one of the Eight Ace Regiments, most likely was not any weaker than Guillermo, and his personal status was roughly on the same level as well.

Marcus’ lips cracked open, and his deep, weighty voice rang out. “I heard Guillermo say that our Holy Union has produced an incredible genius. A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. I was very much curious what this genius looked like. Today, now that I’ve had a chance to see for myself…haha…I like what I see.”

Based on Marcus’ experience, at a glance, he naturally could tell that Linley was a warrior as well.

“Kid, what rank are you as a warrior?” Marcus asked directly.

Guillermo just sat there ‘obediently’, seemingly not at all displeased by Marcus’ interruption.

Linley modestly said, “This year, I just reached the sixth rank as a warrior.”

“Oh.” Marcus’ eyes lit up. “A seventeen year old warrior of the sixth rank. That’s already extremely impressive. I, Marcus, rarely am in awe of anyone, but I must admit that you definitely are a genius. Not only have you become an incredibly talented magus, you are an excellent warrior as well.”

Linley smiled very humbly.

The two Knights seated to each side of Marcus also had looks of surprise on their faces.

Guillermo chuckled. “Enough, Marcus. Yes, it is quite impressive that Linley is a warrior of the sixth rank at age seventeen, but let’s be honest, we can find one or two of those in virtually every single warrior academy. His true worth still lies in his talent as a magus.”

The training difficulty for a warrior was somewhat lower than that of a magus to begin with.

For those who trained hard and worked out since they were young, and (if they came from good families) trained in battle-qi since youth, becoming a warrior of the sixth rank at age seventeen wasn’t too difficult.

“Linley, as a member of our Holy Union who possesses such astounding abilities, you make me, a Cardinal of the Radiant Temple, feel extremely proud. I want to ask you, have you given any consideration to joining the Holy Union? I think, based on your natural ability, if you join us, I can guarantee that you will immediately receive the rank of Vicar of the Radiant Temple. In the future, becoming a Cardinal should not be a problem.” Guillermo put his offer directly on the table.

The number two super-genius in all of history. There should be a better than 90% chance that Linley would end up becoming a Saint-level Grand Magus. The 10% chance only existed because it was possible that due to suffering some sort of mental setback, Linley would decide to stop improving.

A potential Saint-level combatant. Even if Linley didn't train very hard, becoming an Arch Magus of the ninth rank should be guaranteed. A talent like this had to be absorbed.

"Lord Guillermo, to me, this news is a little too sudden." A modest, shy smile had appeared on Linley's face. "I'm only seventeen years old this year. I haven't given a lot of thought to these affairs. A high rank and great power also symbolize heavy responsibilities which I'm currently afraid to take on. Could I…wait a few years?"

Linley was declining.

Guillermo frowned.

The number two genius in the entire history of the Yulan continent, a person who most likely would be a Saint-level combatant in the future. Even if they couldn't make use of him, they wouldn't allow enemies to make use of him either.

"Linley, I know that you are young, but you are a member of the Holy Union, and you are a genius. As a genius, you should get used to and accept the fact that your dazzling brilliance will bring you burdens, rather than try and decline them." Guillermo reproved him kindly.

"In addition, you can become a Vicar under my direct authority. I can guarantee that you will have the freedom to do whatever you please. As long as you do not act against the interests of the Radiant Temple, I definitely will not interfere with your freedom of action. Is this acceptable to you?"

"In addition, you can also join any single kingdom belonging to the Holy Union, and we can even guarantee that you will receive a Dukedom." Guillermo, it must be said, was acting in a very sincere manner.

Linley was silent for a while.

Guillermo's three assistant Vicars were beginning to frown, but Guillermo continued to smile, watching Linley with a gaze filled with hope.

This gaze alone made it very hard to refuse him.

Next to Linley, Yale, Reynolds, and George were all silent. At a point in time like this, even Yale didn't dare to make a noise. This was a Cardinal of the Radiant Church!

In the pyramid-like hierarchy of the Holy Union, the Cardinals stood at the very apex. Their power exceeded that of any king, and even Yale's father wasn't comparable to them. How would he, a young master of a trading union, dare to butt in?

Linley was thinking nonstop, while Doehring Cowart had begun advising Linley as soon as they had entered this room.

The Four Great Empires and the two major alliances were constantly struggling for advantage in very fierce, cruel ways. 'If I cannot have it, I cannot allow my enemies to have it either.' This was a fairly common point of view.

"Lord Guillermo." Linley finally spoke.

Guillermo's eyes lit up. Smiling, he said to Linley, "You've decided?"

Linley nodded. "Lord Guillermo, I've grown up in the Kingdom of Fenlai since I was a child, so naturally, I am a member of the Holy Union. I can guarantee that as long as the Holy Union doesn't turn its back on me, I definitely will not betray the Holy Union either. I definitely will not join any foreign power, no matter who they are."

"What do you mean to say?" Guillermo looked questioningly at Linley.

Linley continued, "What I mean to say is, right now, I don't want to make a decision in a hurry. Please allow me to discuss this matter with my father, and then I'll tell you my choice. What I can guarantee is…I definitely will

not join with the Four Great Empires, or the Dark Alliance."

Smiling, Guillermo nodded slightly. "Right. Such an important decision must be discussed with your father. I'll wait for your reply."

As he spoke, Guillermo rose to his feet. The three Vicars by his side, as well as Marcus and his two Deputy Commanders, also stood up. "Since we've come to an agreement, then I won't disturb you any further. The Radiant Temple's sincerity is true and genuine, and so is our patience. I only hope that you, Linley, won't end up making me wait ten or twenty years for your decision. Haha…" As he spoke, Guillermo began to laugh.

Linley and the other three stood up as well, watching Guillermo and the others leave.

Only after the delegation from the Radiant Temple had departed did Linley and his bros finally calm down.

"Whew. I was scared to death just now. I didn't even dare to breathe out loud." Reynolds let out a long sigh.

George nodded as well. "Although that Cardinal behaved in a very friendly fashion towards us, I still felt that my heart couldn't settle down."

Yale began to laugh. "Naturally. After all, he is a Cardinal, one of the most powerful people in the entire Holy Union. Hey, Third Bro, what are you thinking? The Radiant Church isn't easy to fend off. After all, we are in the territory of the Holy Union and are under their control."

"No rush, no rush." Linley laughed. "When you see the power of others, you also need to see your own strengths. Although I can't compare to them, as long as I don't throw in with those five other groups, the Radiant Church won't move against me. After all, I did say I was going to discuss it with my father. As long as I don't go meet with my father right away, then I can drag this out a while longer, right?"

As he spoke, he looked at Yale. "Yale, I want to ask a favor of you."

“Speak.” Yale looked at Linley.

Linley said in a low voice, “This is somewhat humiliating to say. One of the ancestral heirlooms of the Baruch clan, the weapon of our very first clan leader, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, should be in the hands of one of the larger noble clans of the Kingdom of Fenlai. I hope that you can help me investigate who is currently in possession of the warblade ‘Slaughterer’.”

“An ancestral heirloom? This absolutely must be found. Third Bro, do you want me to directly acquire it for you?” Yale immediately said.

Linley laughed. “Boss Yale, if you can help me locate it, that would be more than enough. What’s more, right now, money is not a problem for me.” By nature, Linley hated owing others.

……

Two days later. Early morning.

Part of Linley’s room was covered with a layer of earth-colored light. This earth-colored light did not cover a very large area, only perhaps a circle with circumference of two or three meters. Anyone who stepped into that area would sense a tremendous gravitational force.

Earth-style magic – Supergravity Field!

Having reached the seventh rank as a magus, the power of Linley’s Supergravity Field was now much stronger than before. The strength of the local gravity field within the circle was four times normal gravity. Under four times the normal gravity, even the blood vessels in one’s body would suffer severe damage, to say nothing of the rest of the body.

Linley wasn’t using any earth magic to counteract the force of this gravity field. Instead, he was using his body’s physical strength alone to resist that terrifying gravity. Right now, his entire body was upside down, and he was holding himself up with his fingers alone, constantly exercising his finger

strength and wrist strength.

"…725. 726."

"Drip. Drip." Beads of sweat were constantly rolling down from Linley's temples, falling onto the ground.

The door to the room suddenly banged open, and Yale excitedly charged into the room. "Hey, Third Bro, I have news regarding the search for the 'Slaughterer' that you entrusted me with." As he spoke, Yale accidentally entered the area of the Supergravity Field.

"Yale!" Slapping the floor with his palms, Linley immediately flipped himself upright and immediately pulled Yale out of the Supergravity Field.

"Huff…puff…" Yale was breathing heavily. Staring at Linley in surprise, he said, "Third Bro, you created a Supergravity Field within your bedroom? I got caught by it. That feeling just now was absolutely terrible. It felt like my heart was about to stop."

Fortunately, the time he had spent within the field was miniscule, as otherwise, Yale's body would indeed have suffered negative consequences.

"Right, Boss Yale, didn't you just say something about the 'Slaughterer'?" Linley's attention was totally fixated on that mention of his ancestral heirloom. For his father's entire life, his father's greatest desire was the recovery of this ancestral heirloom which had been passed down from five thousand years ago.

Yale nodded slightly. "Oh. I just received word that your clan's warblade, 'Slaughterer', is in the hands of a large clan within Fenlai City itself. That clan is called….uh…" Yale couldn't help but frown, as he momentarily couldn't recall the name of the clan.

"Hey, Third Bro, Boss Yale, that Director Maia came in person again." Reynolds voice called out from beyond the doorway.

Chapter 9 – Abduction

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 9, Abduction

Within the living room.

“My deepest apologies, Director Maia,” Linley said humbly, “But for now, I really do not wish to put this sculpture on auction, nor do I wish to display it. But I can guarantee that if in the future I do desire to auction it off, or to put it on exhibit, I will beseech the Proulx Gallery to assist me.”

Leaning on his cane, Director Maia smiled at Linley. “Oh, that’s fine. This time, asking you to consider displaying your sculpture in our gallery was only a secondary purpose. My primary purpose was to come see this sculpting genius, the likes of whom we might see once in a trillion years.”

Just at this time, the manager of the hotel came over.

This manager humbly smiled towards Director Maia, then turned to Linley and Yale. “Young master Yale, young master Linley, representatives from the Rhine Empire are outside the hotel. They wish to meet with young master Linley.”

“Haha.” Laughing, Director Maia stood up. “Linley, seems like you’re quite busy nowadays. Then I won’t disturb you for now. I’ll take my leave.”

As he spoke, Director Maia led his attendants out of the hotel.

Linley looked at the hotel manager. “Please help me block them. Right now, I do not wish to meet with representatives of the Four Great Empires or the Dark Alliance.” Linley very bluntly refused to meet with any of the people who had come to see him. Linley knew very well that if he were to meet with representatives of the Four Great Empires or the Dark Alliance, that would cause great dissatisfaction with the Radiant Church.

After all, as soon as he met with them, even if he refused their offer in the end, the Radiant Church would still be suspicious of him, as they would have had no one present during the meeting.

And the Radiant Church had tremendous power throughout the Yulan continent. It was no weaker than any of the Four Great Empires. There was no need for Linley to join with the Four Great Empires or the Dark Alliance.

……..

Three days later. Within a carriage headed towards Fenlai City were Linley and Yale, while Reynolds and George remained at the Institute.

“Third Bro. You are wise indeed. These past two or three days, representatives from the Dark Alliance and the Four Great Empires constantly tried to meet with you.” Yale laughed. The people who had come to meet with Linley were all people with some authority and influence within their respective organizations, albeit they were based in the Holy Union.

None of those people, however, were major figures. After all, the news of a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank would take a fairly long period of time before making its way to the Four Great Empires and the Dark Alliance. This was because the distance was simply too far.

All of those people who attempted to meet with Linley had made the decision to contact him on their own authority.

Unfortunately, all of them were stopped at the door by Linley’s directive.

“Yale, that family which collected the ancestral heirloom of my clan, that “Lucas” [Lu’ka’si] clan…if I try to get back the ‘Slaughterer’ from them, is it really going to be that difficult?” Linley was heading off to Fenlai City for the express purpose of taking care of this affair.

Yale nodded. “Right. At first, I was so eager to share the news that I didn’t

look any deeper into this clan. But now, it appears this Lucas clan is quite extraordinary."

Linley nodded slightly.

A clan which had purchased his own clan's ancestral heirloom hundreds of years ago clearly was not a recently established minor clan.

"The Lucas clan is also a fairly ancient clan, with about a thousand years of history. In the entire Kingdom of Fenlai, their wealth can only be considered middling, but in terms of influence amongst the nobility, they are quite powerful. Most importantly of all…the clan leader of the Lucas clan is an extremely obstinate old man, and a serious hoarder. That ancestral heirloom of your clan was the personal weapon of the very first Dragonblood Warrior. Although it's been over a thousand years since a Dragonblood Warrior has appeared, this weapon is still something quite special. And what's more, that weapon of your clan is worth at least a few hundred thousand gold coins."

"But even if you had the money, based on the obstinate nature of the clan leader of the Lucas clan, you most likely will still find it hard to acquire it."

Yale sighed as he spoke.

Some people couldn't be moved by money alone.

"Linley, if my Second Uncle lends a hand and utilizes the connections that our Dawson Conglomerate has, giving that old geezer some pressure, then the level of difficulty would drop significantly." Yale suggested.

Linley knew that Yale spoke out of good intentions, but Linley truly did not wish for anyone else to assist in this matter.

"Let me try first. If I absolutely cannot convince him, then I'll ask you, Boss Yale, to help out." Linley laughed.

Suddenly, Linley felt a shudder next to him. And then, Bebe's tiny form

popped out from the side, staring sleepily at Linley and Yale. At the same time, Bebe mentally said to Linley, “Boss, this carriage is so slow. I’ve slept for a good while now, but we still aren’t at Fenlai City yet.”

Hugging Bebe, Linley said, “Alright, that’s enough. After a while, we’ll be there.”

Suddenly….

“Aaaah!” A miserable scream. The carriage came to a sudden halt.

Seated with the carriage, Linley and Yale both felt the carriage suddenly shake. The look on Yale’s face changed. “Not good.”

“We would like to invite young masters Linley and Yale to step out.” A rather piercing voice emanated from outside.

Linley and Yale exchanged glances. For their opponent to be able to surround and stop them without them even knowing demonstrated that the opponent clearly was more powerful than them. Without any resistance, they stepped out of the carriage.

Right now, their two bodyguards of the seventh rank had both collapsed onto the ground, staining it with their blood. Even the carriage driver had collapsed. For a warrior of the seventh rank to be killed without even being able to react was a clear indication of their opponent’s strength.

“Young masters Linley and Yale, we come without any ill intentions. We just want to invite Linley to come be our guest for a little while. As far as you, young master Yale, naturally we won’t harm you.” Not far away, three men were standing in greenish-black clothes. Their leader, a man covered in knife scars, was the one who had spoken.

Yale was furious at the deaths of his bodyguards of the seventh rank, but he didn’t give vent to his rage. After all, he could tell how much stronger these opponents were.

The scarred man smiled towards Linley. “Linley, don’t resist. My subordinates can easily capture you, let alone myself. Right now, the only thing you have to do is to obediently follow us. Are you willing? Or must we use force.”

Linley glanced alongside at Yale. Linley really did not want to cause Yale any misfortune.

“Third Bro, don’t go with them.” Yale said frantically.

In his heart, Linley knew very well that these three combatants were either from the Dark Alliance or the Four Great Empires. Based on their strength, even if he and Bebe went all out to resist them, it most likely wouldn’t be enough. What’s more, the purpose of these people in seeking him out was to have him join them, so they probably wouldn’t go so far as to harm him.

“Alright, I’ll follow.” Linley nodded.

The knife-scarred man couldn’t help but grin. “That’s great to hear. Young master Yale, we hope you’ll forget all about what just happened here.” As he spoke, the knife-scarred man glanced at the two next to him. Those two instantly scurried at high speed next to Linley.

“Let’s go.” The knife-scarred man instructed.

…….

Holding onto Bebe, Linley began heading southeast under the escort of those two men by his side.

“Boss, let’s kill these two guys. I’m confident in my ability to kill the two surrounding you. But as to that knife-scarred guy, I’m not so sure.” Bebe said mentally.

Linley knew that Bebe’s senses were usually extremely accurate.

He, too, was able to extrapolate that these two people by his side were most

likely warriors of the eighth rank. And that knife-scarred leader of theirs was most likely a warrior of the ninth rank. An organization capable of sending out a warrior of the ninth rank and two warriors of the eighth rank was no ordinary organization.

“Bebe, don’t be rash.” Linley held him back.

“Where on earth did all these experts start popping out from?” Linley felt helpless.

Doehring Cowart appeared by his side, grinning as he glanced at Linley. “Right now, your status is different from the past. Naturally, the experts you encounter will now also be at a higher level. I told you long ago that only upon attaining the seventh rank will you be considered to have entered the countless ranks of the strong. In each and every one of the Four Great Empires, there might only be a few Saint-level combatants, but there will be at least a few dozen combatants of the ninth rank. Mobilizing one of them for the purpose of dealing with you is no big deal.”

An Empire or one of the major alliances would have hundreds of millions of citizens.

For there to be a few dozen combatants of the ninth rank amongst hundreds of millions of people meant that for every ten million or so, there was one combatant of the ninth rank. In honesty, combatants of the ninth rank were still quite rare.

“Where are they heading to?” Linley stared questioningly at Doehring Cowart.

“If my guess is correct, these three should belong to the Dark Alliance. Most likely, they are trying to first enter the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and then change directions from within to go directly south, hurrying towards the border with the Dark Alliance.” Doehring Cowart said quite confidently.

Linley thought for a while, then agreed.

The Four Great Empires and the Dark Alliance both had stationed some military units in each other's territory, but none in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. After all, to most magical beasts, the ordinary soldiers were nothing more than food.

To an ordinary warrior, the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was extremely vicious.

But to a warrior of the ninth rank and two warriors of the eighth rank? It was a very easy path to traverse. As long as the three of them didn't enter the central areas of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, there shouldn't be any danger.

…..

Where the battle had occurred just now, Yale remained, staring at the corpses of the three men. Letting out a long sigh, he began to head towards Fenlai City. But just as he left, a man dressed in black suddenly appeared. The man in black glanced in the direction where Linley had been taken, then immediately withdrew a vertical black flute from his clothes.

"Swiiiiish." A strange, piercing sound emanated from the flute.

This sound was extremely strange. If four people in four different locations were to hear it, the one standing in the direction of Fenlai City would hear it a thousand times more loudly than the one standing on the opposite side, away from Fenlai City.

This flute seemed to concentrate all sound in one direction, and it in fact didn't seem to rely on sound; rather, it relied on a unique vibratory mechanism.

….

Holding Bebe, Linley very obediently followed those three men. The knife-scarred man was very satisfied with Linley's cooperativeness.

But once they reached a location approximately three kilometers away from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the expression of the knife-scarred man changed.

“Huh.” The knife-scarred man instantly retreated to Linley’s side, and then icily stared at his surroundings. “Come out.”

Instantly, six men in tight black clothes. The knife-scarred man didn’t seem to care too much about these six men, as his gaze was fixed upon the distance, where an old man dressed in black and an old man dressed in burlap slowly were making their way over.

“Linley is a member of our Holy Union. You, a Judicator of the Dark Alliance, dare to seize a member of the Holy Union? Aren’t you disrespecting the Radiant Church just a little too much?” That old man dressed in black said icily.

The knife-scarred man chuckled. “I didn’t expect to draw your personal attention, Deputy Arbiter. Oh, and you’ve even invited an Ascetic to come as well. And several judicial Executors. Looks like you fellows really value this Linley very highly.”

The knife-scarred man was very clear as to the power of his opponent’s, but he didn’t seem frightened at all.

“All I wanted to do was invite Linley to come have some fun with us in the Dark Alliance, but since all of you have come to prevent that, then forget it.” The knife-scarred man looked at the black-robed elder. “Deputy Arbiter, I want you to agree to something. I’ll spare Linley, and you spare my two subordinates. What do you say?”

The black-robed man knew very well that the knife-scarred man in front of him was a Judicator of the Dark Alliance, someone with tremendous power which would be extremely hard to kill by himself. But this time, he had also invited an Ascetic of the Radiant Temple to come along with him. To kill this opponent wouldn’t be too hard.

But…Linley was in the opponent's hands.

"Fine. I guarantee by my own personal honor that you and your subordinates will be permitted to leave. But Linley must stay behind." The black-robed old man didn't really want to get into a major fight with these opponents right now either.

"Fine. We'll go."

The knife-scarred man immediately turned to leave, while at the same time saying warmly to Linley, "Linley, if you have some free time and the opportunity, you can come visit us at the Dark Alliance whenever you wish. Haha…our Dark Alliance will always welcome you."

After finishing these words, the knife-scarred man and his subordinates suddenly moved at high speed, transforming into three human-shaped blurs as they vanished.

Chapter 10 – Status

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 10, Status

Linley turned to look at his group of saviors. That leader, the black-robed elder, and the ‘Ascetic’ by his side were both exceedingly strong. Otherwise, that Judicator of the Dark Alliance wouldn’t have fled without even fighting.

The black-robed elder seemed to emanate a chilling aura.

“Deputy Arbiter? After all these years, it seems like the Radiant Church hasn’t changed its internal structure. This Deputy Arbiter should belong to the ‘Ecclesiastical Tribunal’.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “Comparatively speaking, that ‘Ascetic’ fellow is more formidable.”

Ascetic?

Linley couldn’t help but turn his gaze towards the ‘Ascetic’.

Wearing clothes made from rough hemp, that barefooted, long-haired old man emanated a simple, ancient aura. When this ‘Ascetic’ looked at Linley, Linley seemed to sense the warmth of the spring breeze.

“Truly powerful.” Linley thought to himself.

Looking at Linley, a rare smile appeared on the face of the black-robed elder. “Linley, why don’t you come back with us to the Holy Capital. When you reach the Holy Capital, those organizations will not dare to bother you.”

Fenlai City, the Holy Capital of the Holy Union. The Radiant Church was based in Fenlai City. Both in the open as well as in the shadows, it possessed tremendous latent power. Neither the Dark Alliance nor the Four Great Empires would dare to cause trouble in the Holy Capital.

….

East Fenlai City. Within a manor on Greenleaf Road, Linley and Yale were seated in the living room discussing the issue of the warblade ‘Slaughterer’.

“Third Bro, I’ve already sent some people to make inquiries. That clan leader of the Lucas clan is totally unwilling to sell the ‘Slaughterer’. Per his words, his clan doesn’t lack for money.” Yale frowned. “I think it might be better if you personally went and paid a visit. But of course, first he would have to be made aware of your status.”

The second greatest genius magus in the history of the Yulan continent, someone who had a high chance of becoming a future Saint-level Grand Magus, was someone whom perhaps even the clan leader of the Lucas clan, no matter how obdurate, would have to give some face to.

“Then tonight, I’ll pay a visit to this leader of the Lucas clan.” Linley viewed the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ as something which absolutely had to be claimed.

How could the ancestral treasure of the clan continue to remain outside the clan? What’s more, recovering it was the long-standing desire of both his father and his ancestors.

The words which his father had said to him when Linley had first left his home and headed to the Ernst Institute still rang out in Linley’s mind.

“Linley. Remember the centuries-long desire of generations of the Baruch clan. Remember the shame of the Baruch clan!”

“After you graduate, you will at least be a magus of the sixth rank. As long as you work hard, becoming a magus of the seventh rank won’t be too hard. What’s more, you are a dual-element magus! A dual-element magus of the seventh rank is definitely going to be a major figure in the Kingdom of Fenlai. In the future, you will definitely have the potential of recovering our ancestral heirloom. If you do not recover it, even in death, I will not forgive

you.”

…..

“Even in death, I will not forgive you.” His father’s words hammered at Linley’s consciousness.

Linley did not dare to forget these words. As long as he had the ability to do so, he would recover the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, no matter the cost. This wasn’t just for the sake of the clan. It was also for his father’s sake.

“No matter what, I have to reclaim it.” Linley’s mind was set.

If soft persuasion didn’t work, he would take harder measures.

But of course, it would be better if he could reclaim his ancestral heirloom openly and above-the-board. He would do his best to have the current owners hand it back.

“Boss. How about you just have me act instead and just take it back.” Bebe suddenly piped up in Linley’s mind.

Linley glanced at Bebe, napping on Linley’s legs. He couldn’t help but pat Bebe’s little noggin. “Don’t make trouble.” Bebe couldn’t help but wrinkle his nose. With a hmph, he laid back down on Linley’s leg and went back to sleep.

At this moment, footsteps could be heard from outside. A blue-robed middle-aged man entered and bowed. “Young master Yale, a Minister of Fenlai Kingdom, Lord Calvin [Ka’li’wen], is outside. He wishes to meet with young master Linley.”

“Calvin? Who’s that?” Yale frowned.

Yale generally didn’t bother with meeting an ordinary kingdom’s Minister.

“Young master Yale, recently, haven’t you been focused on the Lucas clan?

This Calvin is a member of the Lucas clan as well." The blue-robed man chuckled. "The current leader of the Lucas clan is, in fact, his uncle."

Yale's eyes lit up. "Quick, let him in."

"Third Bro, it seems as though your chances of recovering your clan's ancestral heirloom just went up." Yale chuckled at Linley.

In his heart, Linley was feeling rather pleased as well.

Linley was looking towards the door as well. A short moment later, a golden-haired man stepped inside the room, smiling. Upon seeing Linley and Yale, he immediately bowed courteously. "Calvin pays his respects to young masters Linley and Yale."

"Calvin, why have you come to meet with my bro?" Yale asked bluntly.

Calvin didn't mind in the slightest. Smiling, he said, "The purpose of my visit was to serve as the representative of his Majesty. Young master Linley, have you given any consideration to serving as a court magus for the Kingdom of Fenlai? His Majesty would also be willing to enfeoff you with the title of Marquis and the territory to match."

Linley laughed.

He still remembered the conditions offered by that Cardinal of the Radiant Church; he could choose to serve in any kingdom of the Holy Union, and even receive a Dukedom. He didn't have to have any responsibilities, just to enjoy life.

"Calvin, I must say, when I was at the Ernst Institute, a Cardinal of the Radiant Church personally came to invite my bro to join the Radiant Church, and the conditions he offered were much higher as well!" Yale smirked.

Calvin chuckled and continued, "Conditions can always be negotiated. His Majesty only hopes that Linley can remain within our Kingdom of Fenlai."

After all, each of the six kingdoms in the Holy Union had different amounts of power. If the Kingdom of Fenlai acquired Linley's support, then in the future, Fenlai's status within the Holy Union would be further solidified.

After all…

The Radiant Church had the authority to depose any king within the Holy Union, or even exterminate an entire royal clan! The power of the Church far exceeded the power of the royals.

Thus, it was extremely important for a royal clan to have a powerful base of support.

"Calvin."

Linley finally spoke.

Calvin immediately bowed slightly, appearing to listen very carefully.

"You belong to the Lucas clan, correct?" Linley immediately went to the principal topic for him.

Calvin nodded. A trace of pride on his face, he said, "Correct. The clan leader is my uncle."

"I belong to the Baruch clan." Linley looked at Calvin. "An ancestral heirloom of my Baruch clan, known as the warblade, 'Slaughterer', has been lost to my clan for centuries now. Right now, I hope to recover this warblade, 'Slaughterer'. Based on what I know, my clan's ancestral heirloom is currently residing with your Lucas clan."

After saying these words, Linley no longer spoke.

Calvin couldn't help but frown.

"The warblade 'Slaughterer', the weapon of the original Dragonblood

Warrior?" Calvin looked at Linley.

Calvin was silent for a while, then said, "Young master Linley, honestly speaking, the person with the most authority in the clan is my uncle, but my uncle is getting on in his years. He isn't responsible for most of the clan's affairs. His biggest hobby is being a collector. This warblade, 'Slaughterer', is an item which he often shows off to visitors. This treasure which is worth nearly a million gold coins is the most valuable item in our clan's collection as well. It would be fair to say my uncle values this item as much as his life. To have him give it up…this will be difficult."

Linley frowned.

The warblade 'Slaughterer' had originally been sold for only 180,000 gold coins. Although due to inflation, the value of gold centuries ago was much more than it was now, at most the selling price would be equivalent to nearly 400,000 today. But Calvin had just claimed the value was nearly a million gold coins.

From the looks of it…

That 'disgrace to the family' who sold the warblade, had sold it far too cheaply.

"Calvin. This warblade, 'Slaughterer', is after all the ancestral heirloom of my clan, passed down over five thousand years. You can imagine the importance my clan places upon it. To outsiders, it might merely be a collectible item, but to my clan, the loss of this heirloom is a humiliation." Linley's face was dark and forbidding as he spoke.

"I absolutely must wipe this stain off of our clan's honor. In order to recover this warblade, 'Slaughterer', I am willing to pay any price. Do you understand what I am saying?" Linley stared at Calvin.

Calvin sensed that things were heading in a very wrong direction.

He, too, had heard of the history of the Baruch clan. After all, his clan had

several items related to the Baruch clan.

To a clan which had once dominated the entire Yulan continent, the importance of their ancestral heirloom could be imagined. In the past, the Baruch clan was too weak and could be ignored with impunity. But now, this Linley had appeared out of nowhere…forget about the future Linley, even the present Linley would not find it too difficult to deal with their clan.

If Linley said just a few words to the Radiant Church, suggesting that he wanted to recover the 'Slaughterer' to cleanse this humiliating stain on his clan, most likely the Lucas family would have to obediently hand it over.

But once the Radiant Church got involved in this matter, things would get more complicated for everyone involved.

"I understand your meaning, young master Linley." Calvin was growing a bit nervous.

Smiling, Linley looked at Calvin. "I hope the Lucas clan can understand the difficult position I am in. As a descendant of the clan, I have no choice here. Calvin, why don't you go back and have a chat with your uncle first. Tonight, I will personally pay a visit to your clan."

"Our Lucas clan will gladly welcome young master Linley's arrival." Calvin was already beginning to mentally map out the way by which he would persuade this obstinate uncle of his.

Watching Calvin depart, Linley felt a slight sense of superiority.

Although he hadn't taken up any official position, just based on his fame, with a few words, he was able to unsettle a kingdom's Minister's mind. This was all due to his status, and his status came from his personal power.

….

That very night.

The welcoming room of the Lucas clan was extremely tastefully adorned, and the ten people within it were, without a doubt, ten extremely important people within the Kingdom of Fenlai. The lowest ranked amongst them was a Count. And the reason all of them were here, was to meet with Linley.

Linley, the newest star of the Kingdom of Fenlai.

Although Linley was only seventeen, and although Linley had not received a writ of nobility, not even the Dukes of the kingdom dared to treat him lightly.

After all, no matter how high their stations were, they were only capable of displaying their power within the Kingdom of Fenlai. But Linley? This was a person who was highly valued by the Four Great Empires and the two major alliances. Perhaps a few decades from now, Linley would become a Cardinal of the Radiant Church, with a status higher than even their king.

It was best for them to build good relations with Linley while he was still of comparatively low rank. And building good relations with Linley was naturally an important matter.

Amonst those ten or so people, only the clan leader of the Lucas clan, Marquis Jebs, [Je'bu], felt rather uncomfortable. He was already getting on in years, and didn't have any other hobbies. The thing which he loved the most was that weapon of the first Dragonblood Warrior. It was his pride and joy.

But…the descendants of this weapon's clan had come to retrieve their treasure.

"Mr. Linley, please enter."

"Mr. Yale, please enter."

The voices of the attendants outside could be heard. Instantly, all of the ten or so people in the room turned to smile at the door. Even the unhappy Marquis Jebs squeezed a smile onto his face.

This was the first time Linley had been addressed as ‘Mr.’, a title he was a bit unused to. He saw an old man with gleaming silver hair walk over to him, beaming as he said very courteously, “Very happy to welcome Linley and Yale to my clan’s home. As the leader of this clan, I, Jebs, feel deeply honored.”

Linley couldn’t help but show a hint of a smile on his face.

Looked like there was a chance!

Chapter 11 – A Lack of Money

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 11, A Lack of Money

Within the audience hall of the Lucas clan, the room was dazzlingly lit, and beautiful serving girls brought out tray after tray of delicacies. Everybody was toasting each other and chatting quite amicably.

Since he was young, Linley had received strict instruction from his father, and so he knew how to comport himself. On the surface, he was engaged in idle conversation with the nobles, but in his heart, he was still rather impatient with it all.

“Duke Bonalt [Ba’na], by your leave.”

Linley bid a farewell to this Duke Bonalt in front of him, then headed directly to the Lucas clan’s leader, Marquis Jebs. Seeing Linley walk in his direction, he knew that he could no longer avoid the topic of the warblade, ‘Slaughterer’.

Linley and Marquis Jebs both took seats at a table in the corner of the audience hall.

“Marquis Jebs, I expect your nephew has already informed you as to why I came here today.” Linley said courteously.

Marquis Jebs sighed. “Linley, I’m already an old geezer. I really can’t bear to part with my collector’s items.”

“Marquis Jebs, my Baruch clan has over five thousand years of history, and I have always been proud of the fact that I am a descendant of the Baruchs. But for the ancestral heirloom of our clan, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, to be lost to us, is a humiliation. Marquis Jebs, I can openly assure you that for centuries now, our clan has labored to recover the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. One of the main reasons why I trained so hard since my youth was out of

my desire to recover our ancestral heirloom."

Although Linley's voice was very calm, the 'absolute resolve' in his voice was unmistakable.

"I understand, I understand." Marquis Jebs, with a major effort, produced a smile.

Of course the Baruch clan would want their ancestral heirloom back. Marquis Jebs also understood that if he was dead-set on refusing to return the warblade 'Slaughterer', then his Lucas clan would truly draw the ire of this seventeen year old young man.

Marquis Jebs was fully aware of how much influence this young man now possessed.

Even putting aside the Radiant Church for now, the Dawson Conglomerate alone could easily devastate his family.

"Linley. The warblade 'Slaughterer' is an extremely valuable treasure. In the past, someone offered me a million gold coins to buy it from me, but I couldn't bear to part from it." Marquis Jebs turned to the subject of 'money'. "Our Lucas clan is an ancient one, but to be frank, we actually don't have a huge amount of money."

Linley understood this point quite well. Based on what Yale said, the Lucas family was a very old one, with a great deal of influence within Fenlai City. But in terms of financial resources, they were far and away less wealthy than, say, the level of Kalan's Debs clan.

To force a not-so-wealthy clan to suddenly hand over a treasure worth a million gold coins as a gift wasn't too realistic.

"So he wants money for it?" Linley relaxed.

If it was just a matter of money, things wouldn't be too difficult.

“Marquis Jebs. In the past, your clan spent good, solid gold in order to acquire this warblade, ‘Slaughterer’. Naturally, I too must give you a figure that would satisfy you. But of course, I do hope that Marquis Jebs won’t try to take a huge lion’s bite out of me.” Linley chortled as he spoke.

A hint of a smile was revealed on the face of Marquis Jebs.

No matter what, eventually he would have to hand over the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. At the very least, though, he had to get some gold for it.

“Linley, since you have acted so sincerely towards my Lucas clan, then my Lucas clan also has to give you face. Although this warblade ‘Slaughterer’ is worth around a million gold coins, as long as you can offer us six hundred thousand gold coins, then you can take the ‘Slaughterer’ away with you.” Marquis Jebs said forthrightly.

Six hundred thousand gold coins?

Compared with the actual value of the warblade, ‘Slaughterer’, this really was not a high price.

But right now, Linley had only managed to procure around 200,000 gold coins from his work as a sculptor. This trip to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he did indeed obtain a large amount of magicite cores. But the value of these cores was only around a 100,000 gold coins or so. He didn’t have enough money.

The most valuable thing Linley possessed was…

Blueheart Grass and the magicite core of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear!

Linley had over a hundred clumps of Blueheart Grass left, and each clump was worth several tens of thousands of gold coins. But of course, the price of the Saint-level magicite core was incomparably more valuable. A Saint-level magicite core was an invaluable, priceless treasure, worth far more than the magicite core of a magical beast of the ninth rank.

In the past, according to what the books Linley had read said, the standard valuation of a magical beast of the ninth rank's magicite core was around five million gold coins. In reality, these days the price would nearly reach ten million gold coins!

But as far as a Saint-level magicite core went, perhaps even if one tried to offer a hundred million gold coins, it still wouldn't be enough.

A priceless treasure!

Naturally, Linley was not willing to simply sell off the Saint-level magicite core. At the same time, the Blueheart Grass was going to be very important to the future of his clan. Every single clump was to be cherished.

The sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'!

Linley's mind suddenly drifted to the stone sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'. Linley felt very torn about it, and in fact usually didn't even want to look at it. This was why Linley continued to let Yale safeguard it.

"Sell it." Linley suddenly came to this decision, and in fact, in the bottom of Linley's heart, this thought flashed by: "I wonder what Alice would think, once she sees this sculpture?"

Linley consulted with Doehring Cowart.

"Linley, it's best if you go ahead and sell off this sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'," Doehring Cowart advised. "You don't want to look at this sculpture, but if you keep it with you, you'll always have it on the back of your mind. Best to just sell it off. Also…this will serve to broaden the fame of the Straight Chisel School that I founded."

Linley chuckled.

"Marquis Jebs, rest your mind. Very shortly, the 600,000 gold coins will arrive. I only hope that while you are waiting for me, you won't sell off this

warblade, ‘Slaughterer’, to anyone else.” Linley said with sincerity.

Marquis Jebs hurriedly replied, “Linley, be at ease. Even if someone else offered me two million gold coins, I still wouldn’t sell it.”

Indeed, if it weren’t for Linley’s particular status, how could Marquis Jebs bear to part with it?

…..

Within the office of Manager Austoni at the Proulx Gallery.

“What?! You are willing to auction off that sculpture?” Austoni’s eyes were wide with amazement and wild joy.

Linley nodded slightly. By his side, Yale cast a helpless look at Linley.

Yale had grown up alongside Linley, and so he understood Linley’s temperament very well. Linley was a person who cared deeply about friends, and was extremely loyal to them. But at the same time, Linley hated owing others. This time, Yale was preparing to loan Linley a few hundred thousand gold coins.

But as Linley put it, “I don’t want to see this sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, anymore. Best that I sell it.”

Yale secretly thought to himself that if this sculpture was auctioned off, Linley’s fame would be broadcast far and wide, which would also improve Linley’s status. This was a good thing. Thus, Yale didn’t try to force Linley to accept his money.

“Wonderful. Wonderful.” Austoni was extremely excited. “Linley, don’t worry one bit. For this sculpture of yours, our gallery won’t collect so much as a single gold coin in transaction fees.”

“I need to auction this sculpture off within the next seven days.” Linley directly stated his requirements.

Austoni said confidently, “Be at ease. Starting tomorrow, our Proulx Gallery will arrange for a five-day major exhibition event, as well as spread the news of this sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, to every single wealthy clan. On the seventh day, we will begin the auction.”

Linley nodded.

“Boss Yale, let’s go.” After formally handing the sculpture over to the Proulx Gallery, Linley could feel something missing in his heart, but at the same time, Linley also felt as though his mind was a bit more relaxed now.

….

Within the main hall of the Proulx Gallery.

Count Juneau still visited the Proulx Gallery virtually every morning. First, he would admire the sculptures in the main hall, before progressing to the hall of the experts and the hall of the masters. But this morning, once Count Juneau stepped into the main hall, he discovered….

“Hey, why are there so many people congregating over there at the hall of the masters?” Count Juneau felt a bit puzzled.

The hall of the masters always had just those few sculptures that everyone had seen before. After being on display for so long, the number of viewers had become rather low. Unless, of course, a new work had been produced by a master sculptor. Only then would the hall of the masters be a bit more lively.

“Can it be that a new work has been produced by a master?” Excited, Count Juneau also headed directly to the hall of the masters.

Currently, it was eight in the morning. Logically speaking, there shouldn’t be many people at the Proulx Gallery. But there were already several dozen people squeezed into the hall of the masters. What’s more, all of these people were staring in astonishment at a sculpture placed dead center in the

hall of the masters.

What's more, this exhibit had eighteen powerfully built guards standing around it.

"So popular? I wonder which master has produced a new work?" Count Juneau forced his way to the front to take a closer look.

Count Juneau's eyes immediately widened, and his gaze locked onto the sculpture in front of him. For an instant, Count Juneau thought that he was looking at five living persons. A person madly in love, an adorable person, a shy person, a mesmerizingly beautiful person, and an icy, heartless person.

Count Juneau remained in that half-drunken stupor for a long moment before awakening.

"What a godly sculpture! The work of a Grandmaster!" Count Juneau's mind instantly became agitated.

Based on Count Juneau's hundred-plus years of appraising art, he naturally could sense how spiritually stirring this sculpture was, but upon taking a closer look, Count Juneau's eyes began to shine. "This sculpting style… isn't it that of that genius magus of the Ernst Institute, Linley?"

Just from the sculpting style alone, Count Juneau could tell who had carved this sculpture.

Count Juneau was very familiar with Linley, because the first time Linley had placed three sculptures for sale in the Proulx Gallery, he had been the one to purchase them. And then, when Linley's artworks began appearing in the hall of the experts, the price of each sculpture had reached six thousand gold coins.

The genius of the Ernst Institute who was only seventeen years old!

On that business transaction alone, Count Juneau had turned a profit of over ten thousand gold coins. Naturally, Count Juneau would pay tremendous

attention to Linley.

“It really is him.” Count Juneau saw the two characters for ‘Linley’ written on the lower corner of the statue.

And on the placard next to the sculpture, there was an explanation of who Linley was…

“The sculptor of this sculpture is named ‘Linley’. This year, he is seventeen years old, a graduate of the Ernst Institute, and a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. In this day and age, he is, without a doubt, the number one genius magus in the entire Yulan continent, and even if we look at the history of the Yulan continent as a whole, he is still the number two genius magus in all of history.”

“But Linley isn’t just a genius magus. In the field of sculpting, he also has made amazing accomplishments. Although only seventeen, this sculpture of his, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, already carries the grandeur and the spirit of a Grandmaster level sculpture, especially considering the fact that this sculpture is so huge. Naturally, its value is all the more priceless. When you factor in the reality that this seventeen year old sculptor is also an ultimate genius magus…the value of this sculpture is simply unimaginable.”

“Our Proulx Gallery has the privilege to be authorized by Linley to exhibit this sculpture for five days. On April 21st, after the exhibition has completed, the Proulx Gallery will carry out the auction.”

Seeing this introduction, Count Juneau understood…

“The various nobles, magnates, and royals will all be moved and intrigued…” Count Juneau knew very well that this sort of sculpture definitely wasn’t something which a person of his level could hope to purchase.

“A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank?” Upon rereading this part of the introduction, Count Juneau couldn’t help but sigh

in amazement as well.

At the same time, Count Juneau's admiration of this Linley deepened.

A person who was able to achieve such accomplishments in two different fields was definitely worthy of admiration.

"This sculpture should on roughly the same level as the sculptures of Grandmaster sculptors. Adding the fact that it is huge…and the status of the sculptor, a seventeen year old who is the number two genius magus in the entire history of the Yulan continent…the price is going to be sky-high." Count Juneau made a mental prediction.

"April 21st!" Count Juneau was already beginning to anticipate this day.

As time passed, the people coming to visit this hall of the masters grew more and more in number. Many of the extremely wealthy families in the Holy Capital began to receive word of this as well.

….

Within Austoni's office.

"Please inform his Majesty, King Wylder, that I don't have the authority to make this decision. If his Majesty really would like to purchase this sculpture, we would like to invite him to attend on the 21st." Austoni sent off the royal herald from a king.

When that herald left, Austoni's face sank.

"What a joke. He actually dared to offer just a million gold pieces to directly buy this sculpture? In his dreams! Just yesterday, his Royal Majesty, King Clayde of the Kingdom of Fenlai, offered three million gold coins!"

After being on exhibition for just three days, over ten important personages had made offers to directly buy the sculpture.

“On the 21st, I’m afraid that we really are going to see a sky-high price.” Austoni secretly mused.

Chapter 12 – Rage

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 12, Rage

Within the Debs clan's private garden, Alice and Kalan were sitting together and discussing the question of marriage.

"Alice." Kalan's face was all smiles. "I've already discussed this with my father. Our engagement ceremony will be on June 18th, and our actual wedding ceremony will be on January 1st of the next year. Which is to say, it will be on the Yulan Festival day of next year."

A hint of a smile appeared on Alice's face as well.

"Next year, next year will be year 10000 of the Yulan calendar, right? For us to hold our wedding on the Yulan Festival of year 10000 of the Yulan calendar, that'll be…so, so perfect." The more she spoke, the happier she felt. Alice, too, began to beam.

Seeing Alice smile so happily, Kalan felt very content.

"Alice, hurry up and discuss this with your father, then prepare the list of guests from your family's side for me so I can make arrangements as soon as possible." Kalan urged.

"Okay." Alice nodded slightly.

Kalan gently stroked Alice's soft hair, his heart content.

But when he thought about the dire circumstances his clan was in, Kalan's heart began to grow frantic. Not long after him and Alice started their relationship, the Debs clan suffered a painful blow like they had never suffered before. The Dawson Conglomerate had cut them off!

The current success and glory of the Debs clan was inextricably linked to

their relationship with the Dawson Conglomerate.

But then, last December, the Dawson Conglomerate publicly announced the dissolution of their business relationship with the Debs clan. What's more, they also reached out to every business union and trading clan within Fenlai City and informed them that they were looking for someone to replace the Debs clan in their previous position.

Additionally…

The Dawson Conglomerate's actions weren't just limited to that. The Dawson Conglomerate even began to suppress the business activities of the Debs clan, causing every single business operated by the Debs clan to suffer losses.

"Why is the Dawson Conglomerate suppressing my clan like this? The Debs clan hasn't offended the Dawson Conglomerate." Kalan felt extremely vexed. As the next heir and successor to the clan, Kalan naturally cared greatly about this affair.

And because these issues occurred soon after Kalan and Alice started their relationship, there were quite a few clan members who now believed that Alice was the bearer of disastrously bad luck.

Otherwise, why would the Dawson Conglomerate, whom they had worked alongside with for so many years, suddenly turn on them?

Fortunately, over all these years, the Debs clan had managed to accumulate massive wealth. Although their losses were great, the foundation of the Debs clan was still intact. But the leader of the Debs clan was aware that, due to unclear reasons, the Dawson Conglomerate was now suppressing their businesses. This was causing the Debs clan to have lost all hope in the 'business' side of their activities.

After all, no one was willing to offend the massive behemoth which was the Dawson Conglomerate.

Thus, the only choice the Debs clan had was to embark on a certain other route.

Shaking his head and casting these thoughts aside, Kalan laughed as he looked at Alice. “Alice, I heard that yesterday, the Proulx Gallery began to exhibit an extremely incredible work of art. Supposedly, it’s on the Grandmaster level. Many people have gone there to take a look. Would you like to go with me?”

Alice was feeling bored as well. “Alright.”

…..

Kalan and Alice were riding in a carriage towards the Proulx Gallery.

“This sculpture is supposedly extremely extraordinary. These past few days, I’ve been so busy arranging our engagement and wedding that I haven’t had the chance to take you to check it out.” Kalan was the first to leap off the carriage, and then, in a very gentlemanly fashion, helped Alice out as well.

Side by side, Alice and Kalan walked towards the Proulx Gallery.

“Big brother Kalan, look at all those people!” Alice’s eyes were shining as she pointed.

Deep within the Proulx Gallery, at the hall of the masters, there was a sea of people. But within the hall of the masters, everything was extremely orderly, entering from one door and exiting from another. Every person was only permitted three minutes or so of viewing time.

After three minutes, the people currently in the hall of the masters were forced to leave. If they wanted to view it again….

Fine! Go back and wait in line again!

“What a long line.” Kalan felt somewhat amazed as well. In all these years, he had never seen the Proulx Gallery so packed with people before.

Kalan and Alice both obediently got in line and waited for nearly twenty minutes. Only then was it their group's turn to go and enter the hall of the masters. In one large group, they were ushered into the hall of the masters. Immediately, all of them headed towards the front.

Curious, Kalan and Alice naturally rushed to the front as well.

But that moment when Alice first spotted the sculpture, she froze as though she had been struck by lightning. Standing there, she stared stupidly at that enormous sculpture. Those five beautifully, immaculately carved female figures, each of them carrying a unique aura of their own.

Others were absorbed in contemplating the meanings hidden within this 'Awakening From the Dream'.

But when Alice saw this giant sculpture, her mind couldn't help but begin to replay memories of every single event she had previously experienced with Linley.

The first time, just as she was despairing, Linley had descended like a god from the heavens.

On the balcony, the two of them hiding in the corners and chatting an entire night away.

….

One scene after another played in her mind. Alice was totally dumbstruck. She really had no idea that this famous Grandmaster-level sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream', had her as the subject.

"Lin….Linley…" Alice's current emotions were extremely complicated.

She stared at the introductory text on the side.

"The sculptor of this sculpture is named 'Linley'. This year, he is seventeen

years old, a graduate of the Ernst Institute, and a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. In this day and age, he is, without a doubt, the number one genius magus in the entire Yulan continent, and even if we look at the history of the Yulan continent as a whole, he is still the number two genius magus in all of history."

"But Linley isn't just a genius magus. In the field of sculpting, he also has made amazing accomplishments. Although only seventeen, this sculpture of his, 'Awakening From the Dream'…."

Seeing those lines of words, Alice was dumbfounded yet again.

"It's Linley. It's Linley." Alice stared at the placard unbelievingly. "A dual-element magus of the seventh rank? He's already a magus of the seventh rank? But…but just last year, he was just a magus of the fifth rank."

Alice had no idea that before they had broken up, Linley had become a magus of the sixth rank. Only…Linley had never been given the chance to let her know.

"Awakening From the Dream. This sculpture is called, 'Awakening From the Dream'." Staring at the five female figures in the sculpture, especially that last one with the slight aura of heartlessness, Alice suddenly understood the true reason why Linley had given this sculpture the name, 'Awakening From the Dream.'

"The dreamer…has awakened?" Alice felt that her mind was a total mess.

As the first man she had ever truly cared for, in the bottom of Alice's heart, there was always a special place reserved for Linley. But when she discovered that Linley had given this sculpture the name, 'Awakening From the Dream', she suddenly felt as though something had disappeared from her heart.

That sort of feeling…was very difficult to bear.

Alice suddenly noticed that by her side, Kalan's fists were knotted, and an

extremely unpleasant look was on his face. His veins were bulging out, and his face was terrifyingly grim. His eyes flashed with dark light as he stared a deathly gaze at this sculpture.

“Big Brother Kalan!” Worried, Alice called to him.

But Kalan paid her no mind.

“Linley, you…you go too far.” Kalan was filled with boundless, fiery rage. In the past, Kalan was rather well-disposed towards Linley. But in the depths of his heart, Kalan somewhat looked down on Linley. As far as Kalan was concerned, no matter how hard Linley worked, he could never be able to match Kalan’s clan.

After all, his clan was hitched to the enormous war machine that was the Dawson Conglomerate.

But in what, just five months?

His Debs clan had been abandoned by the Dawson Conglomerate. And Linley? Out of nowhere, he became a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. What’s more, he was acclaimed as the number one genius magus of this age.

Even in the long history of the Yulan continent, there was only one person slightly better than Linley.

“A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank, and a sculptor approaching the level of the Grandmasters.” Kalan suddenly felt enormous pressure.

This person was simply too incredible.

But shortly after, Kalan only felt boundless fury.

Because the inspiration for this sculpture was his fiancée!

“Hey, take a look. Isn’t this girl really similar to the woman in this sculpture?” A voice suddenly rang out within the hall of the masters, and instantly, over ten heads turned to stare at Alice. The hall suddenly became a hotbed of commotion and discussion.

Linley’s sculpting abilities were simply too amazing. He had totally captured Alice’s grace and charm in this sculpture.

From their very first glance at Alice, those viewers had the feeling…that the girl in front of them and the female carved into ‘Awakening From the Dream’ were incredibly similar. In fact, they could totally be considered the same person. That unique gaze. That slightly sharp, arched nose.

“Miss, dare I ask what your relationship is with Master Linley?” An old man with a head full of white hair, at least a century old, asked very courteously towards Alice.

In the field of sculpting, Linley had already reached the level of master.

Linley’s skill in sculpting was enough to cause these collectors who had decades or centuries of experience in sculpting to prostrate themselves in admiration. Respectfully addressing him as ‘Master’ was something which came from their hearts. Based on this old man’s century-plus years of experience in appraising stone sculptures, he naturally could tell that the woman carved into the sculpture was most likely a person whom Linley had shared a period of turbulent love.

Alice felt rather awkward, and couldn’t help but turn to look at Kalan.

“Oh, Kalan, you are here as well.” The old man looked at Kalan. Old people naturally being as sly as a fox, the old man naturally could tell that Kalan and Alice’s relationship was not a simple one. “Kalan, who is this young lady?”

Although Kalan felt extremely unhappy, he still modestly bowed and said, “Milord Duke Berner [Ba’na], this is Miss Alice, my fiancée.”

“Fiancée?” Duke Berner cast a meaningful glance at Kalan and Alice, then laughed, asking no more.

….

Pulling Alice by the hand, as through running for his life, Kalan quickly fled back to the Debs clan’s manor.

The leader of the Debs clan, Kalan’s father, Bernard, stared at his son in disbelief. “What did you just say? The inspiration for that sculpture being exhibited in the Proulx Gallery is Alice?”

Bernard was generally rather doting towards his son.

When his son said he was going to marry Alice, Bernard didn’t object. But just a few days after his son had firmed up his relationship with Alice, the Dawson Conglomerate had suddenly decided to break off relations with the Debs clan for no apparent reason at all. With regards to this affair, Bernard had been constantly begging to meet with the upper level management of the Dawson Conglomerate for a meeting.

Over the past few months, Bernard had been busy dealing with this issue, and was so busy that he hadn’t even had the free time to bother going about to viewing the sculptures at the Proulx Gallery.

“Alice. The inspiration is Alice?” The expression on Bernard’s face immediately grew ugly.

Kalan nodded. “Yes, father. Although Alice and I haven’t yet gotten formally engaged, once we do, Alice will be formally introduced to many of the nobles in the Holy Capital. That sculpture of Linley’s, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, will definitely make us the laughingstock of the city.”

Bernard was silent for a while, and then frowned as he asked Kalan, “How bad is it? Is there anything shameful or degrading about this sculpture?”

“Father, in the past, between Linley and Alice, they had a period of…”

Kalan explained in a fuzzy manner. “And this sculpture is about the affairs of Linley and Alice.”

Bernard no longer spoke. He only began to frown severely.

After a while, Bernard said to his son, “Kalan, if I ask you to give up Alice, would you be willing?” Kalan resolutely shook his head. After all, he was only eighteen years old.

Bernard nodded slightly. “Don’t worry about Alice. I will handle this matter. You don’t need to worry about it.”

Kalan nodded, then suddenly he gritted his teeth. Staring at his father, he said, “Father, Linley is definitely unhappy at the fact that Alice and I are together. What’s more, Linley’s potential is too great. I think…that we should perhaps consider if we can figure out a way to kill Linley?”

Chapter 13 – The Old Master

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 13, The Old Master

“Kill Linley?” Bernard looked at his son. “Kalan, why should we kill this Linley? He’s just a master sculptor. Will he impact the Debs clan somehow?”

The news of Linley becoming a magus of the seventh rank hadn’t been widely publicized in Fenlai City yet. In addition, recently Bernard had been absorbed in dealing with the frustrating affairs of his clan, which was why he didn’t know anything about Linley.

Kalan nodded. “Father, Linley is seventeen years old this year, but he’s already produced a Grandmaster-level sculpture. More importantly…he is currently the number one genius magus of the Yulan continent. Even looking back at all of history, he is still the number two genius magus of all time of the Yulan continent. Because he…is a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank.”

“A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank?”

Bernard sucked in a cold breath of air. His intuition was telling him that this Linley would be a threat to his clan.

“This Linley cannot be permitted to live.” Bernard immediately said.

Hearing these words from his father, Kalan couldn’t help but smile. But then, a heartbeat later, Bernard frowned. “Wait. The number two genius magus of all time will definitely be an extremely incredible person in the future. How could the Radiant Church, the Cult of Shadows, and the Four Great Empires possibly let someone like this slip through their fingers? It’s quite possible that Linley has already struck up a relationship with the Radiant Church.”

“Kalan, this Linley, cannot be killed by us.” Looking at Kalan, Bernard spoke in a serious tone.

“Father, he’s just a dual-element magus of the seventh rank.” Kalan’s face was a mask of urgency. Suddenly, he lowered his voice. “Father, we don’t need to necessarily dirty our own hands to get rid of Linley. We can spend some money to invite others to do the deed. Just like when we killed that Court Minister.”

Bernard was silent for a moment. “Kalan, you don’t need to interfere in this matter anymore. I will handle everything.”

Bernard wasn’t saying that he would kill Linley. This made Kalan extremely irritable and unable to be at ease.

……

The dark of the night. Bernard had arrived at a pre-reserved deluxe room within a hotel, and there was a white-haired old man there waiting for him.

“Mr. Bernard.” Upon seeing Bernard, that white-haired old man couldn’t help but grin at him.

Bernard nodded. “Mr. Bayonet. This time I have come to see you for the purpose of asking your assistance.”

“Speak, speak. You are an old customer.” The white-haired old man was still beaming.

Bernard spoke bluntly. “Two things. First, I hope you can destroy for me that ‘Awakening From the Dream’ sculpture currently on display within the Proulx Gallery.” Bernard was quite clear that actually spiriting this sculpture out of the Proulx Gallery was an impossibility.

But destroying it was a task of much lower complexity.

“Destroy the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’?” The white-haired

old man said, startled.

“What, is your organization, ‘Saber’, not capable of carrying this mission out?” Bernard laughed lightly.

Of the four major assassin’s guilds of the Yulan continent, each was unique in their own way. This one, Saber, possessed an exceedingly strong force. As long as the price was enough, they would even dare to assassinate a Cardinal.

But of course, if the contract was to assassinate a Saint-level combatant, that was perhaps a level of difficulty that was a bit too high.

“Could it be that even you are afraid offending the Proulx Gallery?” Bernard was somewhat suspicious.

“No. Of course we don’t care about a branch of the Proulx Gallery. Go ahead and advise us as to your second requirement.” The white-haired old man suddenly said.

An assassin’s guild, by its very nature, was going to offend people. They even dared to offend the Radiant Church. Who wouldn’t they dare to offend?

Bernard suppressed the curiosity in his heart. “The second matter is, I hope that you can assassinate Linley.”

The white-haired old man finally laughed helplessly. Shaking his head, he said to Bernard, “Mr. Bernard, please forgive us, but we won’t be able to accept either of your two missions. My deepest regrets.”

“Unable to accept?” Bernard rose to his feet violently, staring at the white-haired old man in disbelief. “Mr. Bayonet, I know how much strength your organization has. Since when did you become unwilling to dare to accept a small mission such as this?” Bernard totally could not accept that this was the end result of his trip here.

After all, this organization dared to even assassinate senior ministers of the Four Great Empires and Cardinals of the Radiant Church. But they didn't dare assassinate Linley?

"It isn't that we don't dare, it's that we don't wish to accept this mission. As for the reason why, our organization has no need to tell you, right?" The expression on the white-haired old man's face had turned cold.

Bernard hurriedly smiled. "Forgive me, Mr. Bayonet. Since you are unwilling to accept this mission, then I must take my leave."

The white-haired old man nodded.

After Bernard departed, the white-haired old man slowly rose to his feet, mumbling to himself, "This Bernard. Out of all the missions he could ask us for, why did he have to try and destroy a sculpture? And he even wants to assassinate Linley? I absolutely must report this affair to the Old Master. I imagine once the Old Master learns that we turned this mission down, he will be quite pleased."

The white-haired old man was one of the founding elders of the Saber organization.

However, precisely because he was too old, he didn't carry out any missions anymore. Most of his time, he spent his life enjoying everything this megacity, Fenlai City, had to offer. On occasion, he would receive visitors from some of the wealthier nobles.

But as for the 'Old Master' he was referring to…

Within the Saber organization, the Old Master was a person of legend. Even when the guild leader of Saber met the Old Master, he would very respectfully hail him as 'Old Master'. In the entirety of this organization, there was perhaps no one who was more senior than this Old Master.

…..

Within the Proulx Gallery. The fourth day of the exhibition of the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream.’

In the middle of the hall of the masters, something quite bizarre was happening. Based on the usual rules of the Proulx Gallery, each visitor to the hall of the masters should only be allowed three minutes of viewing time per visit before leaving to allow someone else to come in. If they wanted to view the sculpture again, they would have to get in line again.

But within the hall of the masters, one particular guest had already been there for nearly two hours. This was totally against the rules!

This guest appeared to be thirty or forty years old. He wore a loose-fitting long robe, and his arms were hidden by the sleeves of the robes and crossed over his chest. That long, black robe was casually loosened, and he appeared to be very much absorbed in viewing the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream.’

And right now, the several extremely powerful-looking guards standing in front of ‘Awakening From the Dream’ were all discussing this black-haired man in a low voice.

“What sort of relationship does this man have with Mr. Austoni? We were actually instructed not to shoo him away. For him to be here for such a long period of time in the hall of the masters is against the rules.”

“Don’t worry about it. Let’s just quietly protect the statue.”

“What are you afraid of? The Gallery has set up a magical defensive formation around the sculpture. It is totally impossible for someone to attempt to steal it, especially given how large it is. Who can possibly steal such a large sculpture out from under our eyes?”

The guards were all in a relatively relaxed mood.

After all, stealing this huge sculpture would be an extremely hard task, while damaging it was of no benefit to anybody. Who would do such a

thing?

“Wow, what an excellent sculpture. It really has flavor.” The thirty to forty year old man knitted his brows as he carefully inspected the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’. And then, he glanced once more at the introduction. “A seventeen year old kid. I really anticipate his future progress.”

Time passed. One group of people after another entered the hall of the masters.

But this man continued to stand in that one spot, carefully viewing and enjoying the sight of this sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

“What smoothly flowing lines and marks, so clean without any sign of hesitation.” A slightly enchanted look was on this man’s face. “How absolutely mesmerizing. And this girl! Her unique characteristics were completely drawn out by the sculptor, to the point of being more attractive than a real person.”

Within the hall, groups of visitors continued to arrive and depart.

Many of the visitors were lining up multiple times and viewing the sculpture multiple times. A Grandmaster-level sculpture such as this, to those genuine aficionados of sculpture, was something they could admire for an entire day without feeling bored.

“Time’s up! Next group!” The employee of the Proulx Gallery called out loudly. Instantly, a large group of people began heading for the exit obediently, while the next group of people began to come in. But just at this disorderly moment…

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

Several explosive sounds could be heard, and suddenly, the hall of the masters was covered with a layer of thick fog. The previous guests totally began to run wild, screaming in fear or cursing angrily. The air was filled

with noise.

At this time, the guards charged with protecting the sculpture also grew nervous.

“Not good.” Seeing this spectacle, the guards knew that something was happening.

“Goddamit.”

The man dressed in a loose robe frowned, cursing in an annoyed manner. His previously drowsy eyes cleared and scanned forwards. At this time, four blurs suddenly charged towards that sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

When these four blurs made their charge, the guards had already drawn their weapons, while at the same time, many experts of the Proulx Gallery hidden around the area came charging forward as well. If the sculpture currently on display within the Proulx Gallery was destroyed, then this would be an unmitigated disaster!

“Whoosh!”

One of the four blurs, a white blur, moved in an extremely bizarre manner. Like a piece of white paper, he floated about, easily dodging past the attempted blockade by the guards. At the same time, he stretched out with his black dagger, aiming a stab at the sculpture.

Based on his attack power, with this stab, the entire sculpture would be shattered.

“Thud!” ‘Awakening From the Dream’ suddenly glowed. The dagger landed on the glow surrounding the sculpture, but did not damage it.

“Lightguard?” The white blur muttered. The dagger in his hand suddenly flushed with a layer of blood-red color, and he stabbed at the sculpture with it once more. Instantly, a clear ringing sound could be heard as the

Lightguard spell was totally shattered.

“Not good.” The four guards were getting desperate. Even the protective magic set up by a light-style magus of the seventh rank had been so easily broken. And, because the situation was too chaotic, many of the Gallery’s experts were not able to reach or block in time.

But these guards next to the sculpture were being blocked in turn by the other three blurs.

That man in a loose-fitting robe who hadn’t moved this entire time, suddenly radiated a fierce look from his previously drowsy-looking eyes.

“Swish!”

A very soft noise could be heard, while at the same time, the white colored blur suddenly twitched. Then, with a ‘rip’ sound, he suddenly split into two pieces, and fresh blood spurted out from his bifurcated body. Even the three people entangling the bodyguards suddenly split into two pieces. All of them were as dead as dead can be.

…..

Shortly afterwards, the Proulx Gallery returned to normal, while that man in a loose robe slowly departed from the Proulx Gallery. Outside the Proulx Gallery, there was a carriage waiting for him, and another person as well.

It was the person whom Kalan’s father, Bernard, had addressed as ‘Mr. Bayonet’.

Upon seeing this thirty or forty year old man come towards him, the elder immediately said in a voice of respect, “Old Master.”

“Mm. You did a good job this time.” The thirty or forty year old man laughed as he praised. But then, he said in an unhappy voice, “I didn’t expect that the Bloodrose organization would sink to such depths. Could it be that they don’t know what a huge sin it is to attempt to destroy such a

precious work of art?”

The Bloodrose organization, like the Saber organization, was one of the four primary assassin’s guilds.

“Old Master, where should head to, today?” That Mr. Bayonet asked.

The man thought for a while, then said, “It’s been a year or two since I’ve visited the Jade Water Paradise. In the past, I’ve always had those girls come out to my place instead. This time…I shall visit the Jade Water Paradise in person. Only when I spend some time with young ladies will I, as well, feel young at heart. Haha…” He began to laugh loudly.

“Yes, Old Master.” The white-haired old man said courteously. In Mr. Bayonet’s heart, he actually was always curious about one thing; how old, exactly, this middle-aged man was. This was because, amongst all the assassins produced by the Saber organization, he himself was in the final group of assassins to be personally trained by the Old Master himself.

As for the very first group of assassins trained by the Old Master, either they had all been killed, or they had died of old age!

“What are you thinking about? Move it!” From within the carriage came the sound of the man’s voice.

Mr. Bayonet immediately began to drive the carriage forward, heading towards the Jade Water Paradise.

Chapter 14 – The Auction

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 14, The Auction

Within the private reading room of Bernard, leader of the Debs clan.

“What? You failed?” Bernard stared at the woman in the red robes. “Even if you failed, why can’t you continue making further attempts? Since when did the Bloodrose organization give up so easily?”

Bernard was extremely dissatisfied.

When he went to ask for the help of the Saber organization, he was refused. He successfully enlisted the services of Bloodrose, but Bloodrose was only willing to agree to destroy the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’. As for killing Linley, the price they demanded was far too high, as high as the price for an assassination of a Cardinal! Such an astronomical price, the Debs clan was unable to pay.

Per the words of Bloodrose, assassinating Linley would cause them to simultaneously offend both the Radiant Church as well as the Dawson Conglomerate.

What’s more…

Nowadays, Linley was a master sculptor. A master sculptor held an exalted societal status, and many people with rank and power esteemed master sculptors. Killing Linley meant killing a master sculptor, which would generate a degree of hatred towards Bloodrose amongst those sculpture aficionados.

This was why the cost they demanded to assassinate Linley was actually on par with the cost to assassinate a Cardinal.

“We are no longer willing to accept this assignment. We are willing to

return the compensation you gave us.” The red robed woman said, her face cold.

“Can you tell me the reason why?” Bernard had no idea what was going on.

The destruction of a sculpture shouldn’t be too difficult. How could they give up after failing just a single time?

“If we tell you the reason, then we will no longer return the fees you provided to us. Do you agree?” The red robed woman said calmly.

An assassination organization was also a type of information broker. They were willing to sell information as well.

“Done.” As the leader of the Debs clan, Bernard could be magnanimous.

That red robed woman said softly, “I can tell you this. Amongst the admirers of that sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, there is a person whom our organization definitely does not wish to offend. And this person is not someone whom your Debs clan is able to offend either.”

“Alright. My report is complete.” With a smile, the red robed woman immediately departed.

Bernard was incredibly angry.

This red robed woman wasn’t even willing to disclose the identity of this person Bloodrose didn’t wish to offend. But Bernard understood one thing: Someone capable of causing trepidation for Bloodrose was definitely an incredible person. A report on such a person would definitely also be incredibly expensive.

……

Year 9999 of the Yulan calendar, April 21st. Within the dedicated auction hall at the Proulx Gallery.

This auction hall was split into three levels. The first level had ordinary seats, while the second level had stand-alone booths which only major nobles and extremely wealthy people were qualified to enter. The price to enter those booths was terrifyingly high. As for the third level, it was just a single, extremely large hall, also decorated very lavishly.

At this moment, the hundreds of seats in the first level were beginning to get filled up, despite the fact that the price of each seat here was a hundred gold coins. As for the ten or so private booths on the second level, based on the locations of the seats, the prices varied from a thousand to ten thousand gold coins.

But the third level? That wasn't opened to the public at all.

The fame of this sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream', was extremely resounding now. Many of the people currently in the auction hall were some of the wealthiest, most powerful noble families in the Yulan continent. But precisely because there were only so few seats while there were so many nobles present, these standard seats, which supposedly cost a hundred gold coins each, were being sold by scalpers outside for a ridiculous sum of money.

The Debs clan, as a local clan, had a special relationship with the Proulx Gallery, and were able to acquire seats in the private booth with the poorest positioning.

In truth, aside from the Debs clan, all of the others who were present in the second level booths belonged to extremely famous and wealthy clans throughout the Yulan continent. They were far more powerful than the Debs clan, for example…the Dawson clan of the Dawson Conglomerate. Even they were only on the second level. But of course, the representatives of the Dawson clan here were not members in the direct line of descent and succession.

"Alice, walk on the inside."

This time, six people had come from the Debs clan. Alice was walking

between Kalan and Kalan's mother, and was even wearing a hat that was pressed down on her head. Very quickly, the six of them reached the second level.

Within this second level were the greatest clans of the Yulan continent.

Upon seeing who was in the second level hallway, Bernard, leader of the Debs clan, immediately began to modestly greet everyone present. Here, the Debs clan meant absolutely nothing. It was like the evaluation Yale had once given them in private; they were a 'minor clan'.

Right. In the eyes of these clans whose influence spanned the entire Yulan continent, if a clan's area of influence was limited to a single kingdom, then that clan was nothing more than a minor clan.

The six people from the Debs clan entered their booth.

"There will come a day when my Debs clan will be like those clans. No; we will be even stronger." Kalan said to himself.

For the Debs clan, during this trip, failure was not an option.

No matter what, it was better to have this sculpture located within their own manor, rather than the manor of an outsider. After all, in June, Kalan would be having his engagement ceremony with Alice, and by then, many people would know that Alice was becoming a member of the Debs clan. But even though 'failure was not an option', in reality, their financial ability to succeed was a major issue as well.

"Big Brother Kalan." Alice took a seat next to Kalan.

In a place like this, surrounded by hugely powerful clans, Alice, too, felt rather constrained and pressured. After all, in this place, even the Debs clan counted for little, much less a minor noble like Alice and her clan.

"Don't worry. Inside this booth, the people below won't be able to see you at all. That Linley really has gone too far. He actually…" Whenever Kalan

thought of that sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, he would burst with rage. Anyone with some understanding of sculpture would be able to guess that Linley and Alice had a romantic history together.

After all, if they hadn’t shared a period of true love, how could Linley have produced such a godly work of art?

If Kalan were to really marry Alice, there would most likely be many people who would secretly speculate about what the relationship between Alice and Linley was like. For someone of Kalan’s social status, how could he bear such embarrassment?

……

The third level of the auction hall.

Inside, there were only four people. The Proulx Gallery’s Managing Director Maia, Austoni, Linley, and Yale.

“Haha, Director Maia, which one is Linley?” A loud, exuberant laugh boomed out.

Leaning on his cane, Director Maia went over to welcome the man, while Linley and Yale both immediately went to welcome him as well. “Your Majesty!”

The person who had come was the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai. He was the pride of the kingdom; the Golden Lion, King Clayde. Being both the king of Fenlai as well as mighty warrior of the ninth rank was indeed something worthy of admiration.

Linley carefully inspected this Clayde.

This king was built extremely muscularly, and his head of long, golden hair billowed about him wildly, giving off the aura of a lion with enormous explosive power. His entire person naturally radiated a domineering aura that made hearts quail in fear.

Clayde looked at Linley. “If my guess is correct, this one must be Master Linley.”

“Your Majesty, please, just call me Linley.” Linley immediately said.

As a matter of fact, Linley felt quite helpless. Ever since the sculpture ‘Awakening From the Dream’ had been put on display, many people, upon seeing Linley, would humbly address him as ‘Master Linley’. This was not feigned courtesy. Even Marquis Jebs of the Lucas clan, who really was not willing to part with the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, was still filled with the utmost admiration for Linley.

“Good enough.” Clayde was extremely blunt. “And this must be Yale, right? Yale, how’s your father doing?”

“My father is doing very well. Unfortunately, he isn’t currently within the Holy Union, as if he was, he definitely would’ve come in person.” Yale said modestly.

Clayde nodded slightly.

“Director Maia, who else has come today?” Clayde called out casually.

Director Maia smiled. “Let’s wait a while longer. I expect that Cardinal Lampson [Lan’pu’sen] and Cardinal Guillermo will be arriving as well.”

Generally speaking, the third level was only used for welcoming guests which the Proulx Gallery held in the highest regard.

The windows of the third level were made with a special type of glass. Those on the outside were unable to see inside, but those on the inside could clearly see the outside. This sort of glass was specially designed and produced by alchemists, and was extremely expensive. Most places weren’t able to afford such materials.

“Lords Guillermo and Lampson have arrived.” Director Maia’s position

allowed him to see the outside hallway.

Linley, Yale, and even King Clayde all went to welcome these two men with great warmth and enthusiasm. In a group, they went to greet these two Cardinals of the Radiant Church. Cardinal Guillermo and Linley had met once before, while Cardinal Lampson was rather pudgy. When he laughed, his eyes turned into a thin slit. He seemed very adorable.

“Linley. Right?” Lampson immediately gave Linley a big, warm hug.

“Lord Lampson.” Linley said respectfully.

And then, the seven people within the third floor, being Cardinal Lampson, Cardinal Guillermo, Maia, Yale, Austoni, King Clayde, and Linley all sat down together, peering out of the windows at the spectacle below.

From their vantage point, they could even see into what was going on in the booths on the second level.

“Third Bro, look.” Yale lightly nudged Linley by the arm and nodded below.

Following Yale’s gaze, Linley looked over as well. Suddenly, he discovered that within one of the second level booths, Kalan and Alice were both present. Right now, Alice and Kalan were holding hands while seated together on a sofa, engaging in conversation.

“I didn’t expect her to come.” Yale said softly to Linley.

Linley only smiled calmly.

“Linley, what are you guys talking about?” The pudgy Cardinal Lampson chortled at Linley.

“Nothing.” Linley shook his head.

Guillermo patted Clayde on the shoulder. “Clayde, I must say, your

management of the Kingdom of Fenlai has been stellar. You've actually managed to produce an incredible talent like Linley. Before this, I really had no idea that this genius magus, Linley, also had reached such an incredible level of achievement in the art of stonesculpting."

Yale, Linley, Clayde, Guillermo, Lampson, and Director Maia continued to engage in idle conversation while watching the activities below.

All of the seats on the first floor of the auction hall were now filled.

On the main platform, the sculpture 'Awakening From the Dream' was placed, covered with a piece of cloth. On the platform, a beautiful serving girl stood on each side of the sculpture, while a golden-haired gentleman walked onto the platform with a smile. Looking around himself, he said in a bright voice, "Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome all of you to this auction for Master Linley's sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'."

This middle-aged man behaved extremely leisurely. Slowly, he said, "Every single guest who has come today has a grand reputation. In particular, our Gallery was fortunate enough to be able to invite Lord Cardinal Guillermo to attend as well." This middle-aged man bowed slightly towards the third level.

Instantly, everyone below rose to their feet, filling the auction hall with the sound of their applause.

"We also have Lord Cardinal Lampson present." Another round of energetic applause.

"His Majesty, the ruler of our Kingdom of Fenlai, has arrived as well."

"Additionally, the genius magus and genius sculptor, Master Linley, is present today."

This auctioneer rattled off one name after another, and each time he did, there was a storm of applause. To these nobles, a Cardinal of the Radiant Church, the ruler of a Kingdom, and that genius of a level which the Yulan

continent would rarely seen in its entire history, all were worthy of their admiration.

“Master Linley?”

Within her booth, Alice stared out of the window at the third level, but unfortunately, all she could see was black glass.

But on the third level.

Linley could clearly see Alice’s face…and the slightly lost look in her eyes.

Chapter 15 – A Sky-High Price

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 15, A Sky-High Price

Standing in the middle of the platform, that golden-haired, middle aged man continued to boast, “When discussing the Ten Masterpieces, in this day and age, the lowest valuation of one of the Ten Masterpieces is 5.28 million gold coins, while the highest is the ‘Bloody-eyed Maned Lion’, which recently was auctioned off in the Proulx Gallery branch at the Yulan Empire for a price of 13 million gold coins!”

All of the nobles and wealthy merchants below grew silent.

These prices were downright terrifying.

“The materials for the sculpture, ‘Bloody-eyed Maned Lion’, were collected from an actual, Saint-level ‘Bloody-eyed Maned Lion’, while the sculptor was Grandmaster Hoover from over a hundred thousand years ago. In the past ten thousand years, our Yulan continent has produced just two Grandmaster level sculptors; Master Proulx, and Master Hope Jensen. These two both reached the level of Grandmaster.”

The golden-haired man let out a sudden laugh.

“However, from what I know, every single Grandmaster sculptor in history….no…let’s not discuss Grandmasters for now…even the vast majority of master sculptors were only acclaimed as ‘masters’ after their first century of life. Even if they hadn’t reached a hundred, they were at least in their seventies or eighties. Has there ever been anyone who became a master before the age of thirty?”

The golden-haired man looked at his audience. “In the past, no. But now? There is.”

“The incredible Master Linley is a genius. He is seventeen years old! He is

a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank. In the field of magic, he is the number two genius in the entire history of the Yulan continent. But his accomplishments in the field of sculpting, despite only being seventeen years of age, is well known by everyone here as well."

As he spoke, the golden-haired man turned to stare at the sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'.

The two female attendants stepped forward and removed the covering cloth, revealing the actual sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'.

"This is the sculpture produced by Master Linley. Based on the investigation performed by our Gallery, this sculpture was completed last December, during the days of that huge blizzard. In other words, it was completed when Linley was still sixteen years old." The golden-haired man laughed. "At the time, I had been wondering why that blizzard was so unnaturally fierce. But now, thinking back, I imagine it must have had something to do with the impending birth of this sculpture of Master Linley's."

Instantly, all of the nobles and magnates below laughed.

"Alright, enough with the small talk." Pointing at the sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream', the golden-haired man said, "This sculpture has absolutely reached the Grandmaster level. More importantly, this sculpture is extremely large. To be absolutely honest, we could actually chop it into five pieces and auction each piece off separately."

The wealthy nobles below all roared in laughter as they began to chatter.

"I'm just joking, of course. Each of the figures pictured in this sculpture has its own aura and charm. When put together, they seem to form a wondrous love story. I believe many connoisseurs of stonesculpting who are present can sense the sad but beautiful love story behind this sculpture."

The golden-haired man sighed. "Each of these five figures have been carved at the Grandmaster level. When put together, they will give the

viewer a very unique, very special sensation. I am absolutely unable to guess what the price for this sculpture will be."

"And most importantly of all, when Master Linley finished this sculpture, he was sixteen! Just sixteen years old!" The golden-haired man's voice began to boom. "I have never, in my life, found myself at such a loss for words. I have no way of verbally expressing the admiration I feel for Master Linley. He…is a true genius!"

These words caused yet another commotion amongst the watching nobles.

For a sixteen year old to complete a sculpture like this was nothing short of a miracle.

But in their booth, the Debs clan was totally silent.

"That detestable bastard." Kalan was filled with rage and hatred towards this golden-haired auctioneer. After that little speech of his, the bidding war for this sculpture was sure to become even more extreme.

"I simply cannot imagine Master Linley's future accomplishments. And that is precisely why this sculpture, the first sculpture made by Master Linley to shock the world, is so valuable! Alas…unfortunately, I myself don't have much money, as otherwise, even if I had to sell off all my family's possessions, I would still buy this sculpture." The golden-haired man said with a laugh. "Alright, let's start the auction. Bids will start at 1 million gold coins. I trust no one will object?"

A million gold coins!

That was the starting point for this auction?

Many of the lesser nobles who had been hoping to get lucky were suddenly brought to their senses. If they weren't members of an extremely wealthy, powerful clan, they shouldn't even think about trying to fight over this sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'.

“Each bid must be at least 100,000 gold coins higher than the last.” The golden-haired man added. “Alright. The auction for Master Linley’s sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, now officially begins!”

Immediately, the auction hall fell silent.

“1.5 million!” A noble seated in the bottom row immediately made a bid.

Linley was watching the bidding going on below from the third floor. From Linley’s clothes, the little Shadowmouse, Bebe, also stuck his head out to watch the proceedings.

“Boss, in the future, I can eat all the roast chicken and roast duck that I want, and drink all the wine I want as well.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

“No problem.” Linley rubbed Bebe’s little head.

As far as he was concerned, Bebe was just like a brother to him.

“Yeah! In the future, life will be sweet.” Bebe was so excited that his eyes gleamed. Craning his neck, he leaned over to look down. “Whoah. Two million gold already. Higher, higher please.” Bebe constantly urged the price to go higher. Watching Bebe, Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

King Clayde, the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai, warmly clapped Linley on his back. “Linley, let me help give you a boost!”

“Austoni, five million gold coins!” Clayde instructed Austoni.

Austoni walked over to a speaking platform, then said in a bright voice, “His Majesty, Clayde, bids five million gold coins!”

“Thank you, Majesty.” Linley immediately said.

“Haha, no worries.” Clayde put his arm around Linley’s shoulders in a friendly manner. “Linley, regardless of whether or not you choose to join

me, there's no reason for us to constantly maintain decorum as ruler and subject." Clayde spoke very casually and freely.

Linley was beginning to feel well-disposed towards Clayde.

He truly was a very magnetic, charismatic leader.

"Your Majesty, please forgive me, but I would like to go back and consult with my father first. If nothing out of the ordinary happens, I intend to remain in the Kingdom of Fenlai." Linley said with a smile.

"Yes, you absolutely should talk this over with your father." Clayde frowned very slightly. "But Linley, from what I hear, your father has left Wushan township. I spent some time investigating, but couldn't figure out where your father has gone to. It is as though…he's disappeared."

As soon as Linley's fame had exploded, as part of his plan to pull Linley to his side, Clayde sent some people to meet with the family of Linley.

But Hogg was no longer at Wushan township.

"My father isn't currently at Wushan township?" Linley felt a bit suspicious, but then he laughed. "Perhaps my father has gone somewhere else for a while. Father can't always be at Wushan township."

"Perhaps." Clayde didn't continue with this topic.

Hogg truly had hidden himself quite well. Otherwise, if the ruler of a kingdom wished to find someone, how could they fail to?

…..

Within a private booth on the second level.

"Five million gold coins?! Dogshit!" Kalan swore foully, something he rarely did.

Bernard, clan leader of the Debs clan, had a gloomy look on his face. He said in a low voice, “Kalan, you should know what sort of situation the clan is currently facing. Right now, the clan’s future is uncertain. We can’t waste too much money on this affair. Based on our clan’s deliberations, at most we can spare eight million gold coins for you. This is our bottom line.”

Kalan nodded.

Kalan knew very well that his clan’s entire total net worth was only around a hundred million gold coins, and most of that net worth was bound up in illiquid assets. Their liquid assets were, at most, around twenty million gold coins or so. The clan couldn’t possibly waste all of their liquid reserves on a single sculpture.

It was already very kind of the clan to not force Kalan and Alice to separate.

“5.3 million gold!” Someone in another second-level booth made a bid.

That golden-haired, middle-aged man began to grow excited. “5.3 million gold coins! The lowest valuation of one of the Ten Masterpieces was 5.28 million gold coins, but now, the list of the Ten Masterpieces has changed. I can formally announce that the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, has officially joined the ranks of the Ten Masterpieces!”

“Young master Yale of the Dawson Conglomerate bids six million gold coins!” Austoni once again announced from the third level.

Upon hearing this price, Kalan’s face was beginning to turn black.

The price had reached six million gold coins so quickly. This truly had exceeded Kalan’s expectations. Based on Kalan’s predictions, given that the cheapest of the Ten Masterpieces was valued at 5.28 million gold coins, the eight million gold coins he had prepared should have been more than enough.

But…

Kalan wasn't a true collector. He didn't have a deep understanding of the field of stonesculpting.

Those true connoisseurs could totally sense the unique, soul-stirring aura of this sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream', especially when viewing all five images together. Such a thing was extremely rare. In the entire history of the Yulan continent, there had never been a case of five figures carved into a single sculpture, especially in such a manner as to evoke a sad, beautiful feeling in the viewer.

What's more, the sculptor was only sixteen years old when this was completed. And he was a genius magus!

"I cannot allow the price to continue rising like this." Kalan frowned.

He knew that if the price continued to rise slowly, his chances of winning the auction would grow slimmer and slimmer.

"Eight million gold coins!" Kalan's loud voice announced his bid.

From six million gold coins to eight million gold coins. A sudden increase of two million gold coins. This sort of explosive increase was enough to stun everyone present. After all, even the Ten Masterpieces were only worth so much. Even those three precious sculptures by Proulx were only worth around seven million gold each.

True collectors didn't collect just for the sake of collecting; they had a keen eye for value as well.

Otherwise, if they just wildly threw their money around, they would bankrupt the clan.

The golden-haired, middle-aged man immediately shouted loudly, "The Debs clan bids eight million gold coins! Such a nice, tidy, neat increase to eight million gold coins. From this, one can tell that they are determined to win this auction for this sculpture! I can already imagine how, in the future, once Master Linley becomes a Saint-level combatant, this sculpture's price

will no longer just be eight million gold coins. Most likely, by then, it will be worth sixteen million gold coins!"

This golden-haired man's promotion ability was really very fierce.

But none of those who were present were fools. All of them were pondering…after all, even if they had money, it had to be spent in a meaningful way.

….

On the third level of the auction hall, Linley, Yale, King Clayde, Cardinal Guillermo, and Cardinal Lampson were all engaged in idle chatter and laughter as they watched the below events.

"Third Bro, that Kalan has made his bid." Yale said in a low voice.

Linley couldn't help but turn to look at Kalan's booth. He could clearly see Kalan holding hands with Alice inside their booth. Judging from Kalan's expression, he was very agitated.

"Third Bro, let me give him a bit of pressure. No matter what, we can't allow your sculpture to fall into his hands." Yale said in a soft voice.

"No need." Linley slowly shook his head.

Linley was staring directly at Alice. Sitting there in the booth, Alice looked like a pitiable little girl who had suffered some sort of mistreatment. All of the other members of the Debs clan were looking at Alice with a hint of dissatisfaction in their eyes. After all, their clan was spending an enormous amount of money for Alice's sake.

"If they really want it, let them have it." Linley said emotionlessly.

Sitting next to him, Guillermo and Lampson exchanged glances, then chuckled.

…..

Within the private booth.

All the members of the Debs clan were feeling very nervous. But of course, Alice and Kalan were the most nervous of all.

“Relax, Alice. Eight million gold coins is already an extremely high price. It won’t get any higher.” Kalan comforted Alice…but who was going to console him? Because the clan had only authorized him to bid up to eight million gold.

That golden-haired middle-aged man lifted up a small hammer. “The Debs clan has bid eight million gold. Is anyone going to outbid them? If not…I am going to begin the countdown.”

“Ten million gold.”

A rather lazy voice sounded out from one of the seats in the middle of the first level. Up till now, virtually all of the bids for this sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, had come from those extremely powerful clans seated in the second level. They were the ones who were really engaged in this bidding war. Those nobles sitting below were just there to watch the excitement. Nobody expected one of them to make a bid as well.

“None of you have any insight. From what I can tell, this ‘Awakening From the Dream’ can be considered to be the start of an entirely new style of stonesculpting. Its carving style is totally different from every other sculpture, and what’s more, it has five images with totally unique yet connecting auras. It definitely is worth ten million gold coins.” That man who bid ten million gold coins said casually.

From the loose, baggy long robes of this thirty to forty year old man, everyone could sense his lazy, indolent nature.

“Ten million gold coins?”

Within their private booth, Alice and Kalan were both stunned.

Chapter 16 – An Owner Found

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 16, An Owner Found

“Big brother Kalan.” Alice called out in a low voice, while looking at him with urgency in her eyes.

Perhaps others would feel pride at being the inspiration for a Grandmaster-level sculpture. But this ‘Awakening From the Dream’ of Linley’s was different. Anyone who had ever spent any time analyzing sculptures would easily be able to tell from the aura given off by those five figures that there was a romantic history between Linley and Alice.

If Alice had just married into a small clan, that wouldn’t be as much of an issue.

But…she was marrying into the clan of Kalan Debs.

Kalan was the future successor to the leadership of the Debs clan, and the Debs clan was one of the top three clans of the entire Kingdom of Fenlai.

“Calm down, calm down.” Kalan comfortingly held Alice’s hand.

But Alice could feel that Kalan’s hand was covered in sweat.

“Father…” Kalan turned towards his father, Bernard, then looked at his mother. His parents both doted on him exceedingly, which was why they were willing to spend eight million gold coins on Kalan’s behalf. After all, even to the Debs clan, eight million gold coins was an exceedingly large sum.

“Kalan, don’t even think about it. The clan can’t possibly hand over ten million gold coins just for the sake of your fiancée.” Bernard said, his face extremely solemn.

Kalan was stunned. Even Alice turned her head to look at Bernard, her eyes filled with worry and a hint of supplication.

“We’ll act in accordance with our previous discussion.” Bernard totally ignored Alice’s silent appeal as he coldly pronounced his judgment.

Kalan froze for a long moment, while by his side, Alice tightly clutched his hands, staring into Kalan’s eyes. Alice fully understood what Bernard meant by his words just now. Alice was extremely unwilling to accept this result.

Kalan glanced at Alice. He let out a helpless sigh, then slightly shook his head.

“Big brother Kalan, I’m not willing…” Alice said in a small voice.

Kalan clasped Alice’s hands. He gently shook his head again. “There’s no other way. Alice…I am the heir to our clan. I have to put the considerations of the clan first. I hope you are willing to sacrifice a little bit for me as well. I promise you that my heart towards you will never waver.”

Alice fell silent.

The heir to the clan!

These five simple words guaranteed that every single action of Kalan’s would reflect upon the honor and glory of the Debs clan. Although Bernard loved and doted on his son very much, no matter what, he could not permit Alice to become Kalan’s principal wife.

That’s right. There was no way she could become the principal wife.

In other words, any children which Alice bore Kalan in the future would not be able to become a heir, or be considered to be direct line of descent.

In truth, ever since the ‘Awakening From the Dream’ had been viewed by many people, the elders of the Debs clan had been constantly urging Kalan to give up Alice. Even if Kalan insisted on marrying her, they didn’t wish

for Alice to become his principal wife. But Kalan had remained steadfast.

In the end, Bernard, the doting father, compromised. He decided that if they were able to purchase this ‘Awakening From the Dream’, then this matter would more or less be at an end.

But from the looks of it…

“Big brother Kalan!” Alice looked at Kalan, her eyes turning moist. At the same time, she turned to look at the other members of the Debs clan. But at this moment, neither Kalan, nor Bernard, nor Kalan’s mother, paid Alice any mind.

At that moment, Alice felt her heart grow cold.

She suddenly thought back to everything she had experienced with Linley, how Linley had protected her and unstintingly cherished her. In the past, she had always taken Linley’s constant yielding to her for granted, but at this moment, how she longed for that feeling!

Raising her head, her gaze passed through the glass window to stare at the third level. But all she could see was the black glass.

“Ten million gold! Ten million gold! Is anyone willing to bid higher?” That golden-haired man was calling out from the platform.

The man dressed in the loose robes casually glanced around. And then, he directly addressed that golden-haired auctioneer. “Hey, stop wasting time. Hurry up and start counting.” The nobles nearby all began to laugh.

How could an auctioneer possibly obey the commands of one of the bidders below?

Based on their understanding of this golden-haired auctioneer, they knew him to be someone who would constantly escalate the bidding wars until the price reached an extremely high level.

But upon hearing the words of the man in the loose robes, the auctioneer seemed to have been hypnotized. Very naturally, he said, “Okay, then I’ll start counting! Three, two…”

“10.1 million gold coins!”

An ancient-sounding voice rang out from one of the second-level private booths.

Everyone’s attention turned towards that booth. Even that man dressed in the loose robes turned to stare at that booth in astonishment. In that second level booth, aside from the Debs clan, every single clan present was one of the major, world-spanning clans of the Yulan continent.

The wealth of those clans was far higher than that of the Debs clan.

“Whoah, so there’s someone here who appreciates value after all. But raising it by just 100,000 is a bit too stingy. 10.3 million gold coins.” The man in the loose robes said casually, grinning.

Linley and the others on the third level all noticed the man in the loose robes now, but from their current angle, they could only see the man from the side, and were unable to see his face clearly.

“Hrm?”

Cardinal Guillermo and Cardinal Lampson of the Radiant Church both suddenly rose to their feet. Frowns on their face, they walked to the opposite end of the glass, carefully looking down at the loosely-attired man below.

Just at that moment…

The loosely robed man seemed to have discovered the presence of the two Cardinals, as he raised his head upwards and glanced towards them.

“Him?”

The faces of the two Cardinals suddenly turned bone white.

Guillermo and Lampson exchanged glances, then they both shook their heads. In truth, the Radiant Church had already come to a decision about this auction. They had decided to spend a very large sum of money to purchase this sculpture, and thus improve the relationship between them and Linley.

But upon seeing this man, both Guillermo and Lampson silently decided to change their course of action.

“It’s best that we not get into a bidding war with this madman.” Cardinal Guillermo said softly.

Cardinal Lampson nodded as well. “I definitely don’t want to agitate that madman either.”

Although they both referred to this person as a ‘madman’, the fear they felt towards him was fear which was etched into their bones. Both Lampson and Guillermo were very much aware as to how terrifying that thirty or forty year old man could be. Lampson, in particular…

Because if it wasn’t for this madman, Lampson probably wouldn’t have had the opportunity to be promoted to the rank of Cardinal.

There were only five Cardinals at any time within the Radiant Church. Precisely because this madman had casually killed one of the previous Cardinals, Lampson had the opportunity to be promoted to his current position. But even though he had killed a Cardinal, the Holy Emperor was still unwilling to be enemies with this madman.

“10.4 million gold coins.” That old voice rang out once again from the second level.

The loosely robed old man raised his head up, glancing up with a frown. “You really are irritating. 11 million gold coins.”

“11 million, this gentleman is willing to bid 11 million gold coins. Is anyone willing to bid any higher?” That golden-haired auctioneer was growing excited. After all, even the ‘Bloody-eyed Maned Lion’ sculpture, the greatest of the Ten Masterpieces, was only worth 13 million.

On the third level, Guillermo asked Lampson quietly, “Lampson. Do you know which clan is situated in that booth? They actually dare to struggle with that madman? Are they tired of living?”

“Director Maia.” Lampson called over Director Maia, seated not too far from them.

Director Maia immediately came over.

“Director Maia. Do you know which clan is located within that booth?” Lampson asked. “The one where the leader is a young woman, I believe.” Being on the third level, Lampson naturally could see the people seated on the sofas in the second level booths.

As for that elderly man, he seemed to be that woman’s servant.

Director Maia took a glance, then laughed. “Lord Lampson. Lord Guillermo. This young lady is a female in the principal line of inheritance for the Leon clan of the Yulan Empire. This booth was reserved under the name of the Leon clan.”

“The Leon clan?” Lampson and Guillermo were both startled.

In the Yulan Empire, the most ancient Empire in the Yulan continent, the Leon clan was ranked fifth amongst the major clans. A clan which could rank in the top five of the Yulan Empire was capable of easily destroying the Debs clan.

What’s more, the majority of the descendants of the Leon clan all lived within the Yulan Empire, and thus in the Yulan Empire, they had an enormous web of influence.

“Guillermo, I believe that in our Ernst Institute, there was someone formerly known as the number one genius of the Institute by the name of ‘Dixie’. He seems to be from the Yulan Empire’s Leon clan, correct?” Lampson asked.

Guillermo was comparatively more familiar with the affairs of the Ernst Institute.

“Right, and not just Dixie. He has a sister as well, whose name I can’t recall. These two siblings both requested to be allowed to study at our Ernst Institute. Just a few days ago, though, this Dixie applied to graduate.” Guillermo directly revealed what he knew.

Lampson nodded as well.

“Seems like this girl is Dixie’s younger sister.” Lampson looked towards that booth.

Within the Leon booth in the second level. Dressed in violet and blue, and seated on the sofa, Delia had a tranquil expression on her face. Through the window, she stared down at the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

“Miss, stop fighting. That person below isn’t someone that you can afford to anger.” The old man was beginning to grow frantic.

As one of the elite clans of the Yulan Empire, the Leon clan was very clear as to the various super experts as well as hidden powers. They knew very well that although they were an elite clan, there were some people whom they simply could not afford to offend.

For example…that thirty or forty year old man below.

The old man knew very well that although he himself was already four hundred years old, even before he had been born, the loosely attired man below looked the way he currently did.

“Don’t worry, Grandpa Shaw [Xiu]. Just help me send this letter to him, ok?” Delia took out a pen and quickly wrote a few words down on a piece of paper, before handing it to this old man.

The old man received the piece of paper. Upon seeing its contents, he was stunned.

“Miss, you…this…” The old man was totally flabbergasted by this letter.

“Don’t worry about it. Just hand this letter to him.” Delia didn’t hesitate in the slightest. The old man did, but after a moment, he still left the booth and headed to the first floor.

“12 million gold coins!”

Delia’s clear voice rang out from within the booth.

The loosely attired man below frowned, and a baleful aura seemed to gather between his furrowed brows. But just at this moment, the old man named ‘Shaw’ walked over to the loosely attired man. Upon reaching his side, he respectfully bowed. “Milord, I am a servant of the Leon clan. This is the letter my young mistress has sent to you.”

Furrowing his brows with surprise, the loosely attired man accepted the letter with some curiosity.

“Uh…” Upon seeing the contents of the letter, the loosely attired man’s eyes lit up, and then he began to laugh.

“Fine, fine, I won’t fight it, I won’t fight it.” The letter in the loosely robed man’s hands turned directly to dust, and then he sat back down again, grinning. He even raised his head to look up at Delia, seated on the sofa within her booth on the second level.

At this moment, within the third level of the auction hall.

Upon hearing that clear voice call out the words ‘12 million gold’, both

Linley and Yale were stunned. That voice was simply too familiar. Linley had known the owner of that voice since the first day he had entered the Ernst Institute.

“It’s Delia.” Yale said with amazement.

Linley immediately walked forward towards the glass, to a vantage point where he could look into Delia’s booth. Indeed, Delia was dressed in a conservative violet outfit and seated on a sofa, staring at the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

“Three…two…one…” “Bang!”

The golden-haired man slammed the mallet down, then excitedly called out, “Congratulations to the Leon family for using 12 million gold coins to win this auction and acquire this sculpture of Master Linley’s. I now have the honor of announcing that this sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, has the third highest price amongst the Ten Masterpieces. Only Master Hoover’s ‘Bloody-eyed Maned Lion’ and Master Proulx’s ‘Hope’ have valuations surpassing that of ‘Awakening From the Dream’.”

The entire auction hall began to be filled with commotion, and a raucous applause could be heard as well.

But Linley continued to stand there, next to the window on the third level, staring at Delia. And then, he turned to look at Alice, seated in the other booth. Both of these women were seated on sofas, but on Delia’s face, there was a hint of a smile, while Alice’s face was drained of all color.

Chapter 17 – Going Home

Book 5, The Godsword, Bloodviolet – Chapter 17, Going Home

Both sides of the auction hall were filled with wealthy nobles. The groups of nobles separated into two sides in order to open a corridor for the departure of the Cardinals Guillermo and Lampson of the Radiant Church, King Clayde of Fenlai, Director Maia of the Proulx Gallery, young master Yale of the Dawson Conglomerate, and of course, the genius magus and genius sculptor, Master Linley.

These people walked in the middle corridor, chatting and laughing amongst themselves as they headed towards the exit of the Proulx Gallery.

“Lord Guillermo. Lord Lampson.”

“Your Majesty.”

“Master Linley.”

…..

All of the surrounding nobles and magnates were smiling and greeting them with modesty and goodwill. The Debs clan, however, had been squeezed into a corner. Her head covered firmly by her hat, Alice couldn’t help but to raise her head and take a peek at Linley, who was buried within a sea of well-wishing nobles and magnates.

In this day and age, Linley had become a legendary genius.

A seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank whose achievements in the field of sculpture rivaled that of Proulx, Hope Jensen, Hoover, and the other Grandmasters. A genius such as he was would naturally be viewed as the most glittering star in the sky, worthy of everyone’s admiration. Slowly, the two Cardinals, King Clayde, Linley,

Yale, and the others disappeared in the distance.

Only then did all of the nobles and wealthy moguls leave as well.

“You must be Alice.” A clear voice suddenly rang out.

Several members of the Debs clan looked behind them into the hall.

A beautiful, golden-haired woman walked over to them, while by her side was an old man with a warm smile on his face. But both this woman and the old servant had an aura of nobility that emanated from their bones, naturally making others feel inferior to them.

Seeing her, Bernard immediately said modestly, “Lord Shaw, this must be Miss Delia. I’ve long heard that the Leon clan’s legendary Miss Delia is so devastatingly beautiful that she can cause the downfall of a kingdom. Today, upon seeing her, I must say that she is even more beautiful than the legend.”

The influence of the Debs clan was limited to the Kingdom of Fenlai. Compared to the continent-spanning Leon clan, they were incomparably minute.

“Oh, clan leader Bernard of the Debs clan?” Delia glanced at Bernard.

Bernard modestly nodded.

“And this must be your son Kalan’s fiancée, correct?” Delia looked at Alice, who was hiding behind Kalan.

Bernard immediately smiled. “Her? No, she’s not the principal wife of my son Kalan.”

“Not the principal wife?” A cold smile appeared on the face of Delia, and she slowly walked towards Alice. Bernard didn’t dare to block her way. When Delia neared Kalan, Kalan actually puffed out his chest and tried to courageously block her path.

But when he met Delia's frosty gaze, Kalan suddenly felt his heart grow cold.

When he reminded himself that this was a young mistress of the Leon clan, Kalan felt all the more uneasy. Right now, the relationship between the Debs clan and the Dawson Conglomerate was already terrible. If they offended the Leon clan as well…it would be simply too easy for the Leon clan to deal with the Debs clan.

"Alice." Delia stared into Alice's eyes.

Alice raised her head, forcing herself to match Delia's gaze, doing her best to calm her beating heart.

But Delia only laughed. In a soft voice, she said, "Alice…I really don't know why Linley fell for you?" Alice's face grew pale, but she replied, "That's none of your business!"

"None of my business?" Delia let out a calm chuckle. "Right. It's none of my business. But I really feel pity for you. You actually gave up Linley, but the result of that was? You aren't even going to be a principal wife within this Debs clan. I imagine you feel regret…but unfortunately, you'll never have that chance again. Because a person like you will never, ever have the chance to interact with Linley again. In the future, you two will belong in different worlds. Do you understand?"

Delia totally ignored the ugly look on Kalan's face, and she turned directly to look at Bernard.

"Forgive me for disturbing you." Delia said extremely courteously.

Bernard immediately bowed modestly. "Miss Delia, by your leave."

That old man by Delia's side cast a look at Kalan, who still had that ugly look on his face. With a cold sneer, he followed Delia out. But Bernard continued to watch them leave with a courteous smile on his face. Only

after Delia and her servant had left did he turn, fixing Alice and Kalan with a deadly glare.

“Absolutely disgraceful!” Bernard viciously snapped at them.

Neither Kalan nor Alice dared to make a sound. Under this aura of oppressiveness, the Debs clan returned home.

……

Within the Lucas clan’s mansion in Fenlai City.

“Master Linley, no, no, there’s no need.” Marquis Jebs was hurriedly trying to refuse Linley. “There’s really no need for the 600,000 gold coins. Master Linley, I am so incredibly sorry. I really had no idea that you had reached such an incredible level in the field of sculpting.”

Jebs, that obstinate old man. Right now, when he looked at Linley, his eyes were filled with something akin to veneration for an idol.

Marquis Jebs didn’t have many hobbies. The one thing he loved to do was collect items.

Naturally, he felt deep veneration for those Grandmaster-level artisans of each field. Perhaps even if the King of Fenlai was present, he wouldn’t feel as much awe as he did now towards Linley.

“How about let’s just name the price at 180,000 gold, is that fine? My clan originally bought it for 180,000 gold coins, so that would still be fair. Master Linley, I really am not willing to make money off of you. If I took advantage and earned money from you, Master Linley, I wouldn’t be able to sleep well at night.”

That adorable old man, Master Marquis, was extremely stubborn.

“Marquis Jebs, in the past, when your Lucas clan bought this warblade ‘Slaughterer’ from my clan, the price you paid was 180,000 gold coins,

true. But after all these centuries, due to inflation, the 180,000 gold coins you paid then is worth much more now." Linley wasn't willing to take advantage of the Lucas clan either.

But Marquis Jebs only stubbornly stared at Linley.

"Haha, you guys…you guys are just so…" Next to them, Yale was laughing so hard that he was clutching his belly. "The seller is frantically trying to lower his product's price, and would rather give it away for free. But the buyer is trying to raise the price higher. I have never seen something like this before."

Linley let out a helpless laugh as well. "Marquis Jebs, how about this. Centuries ago, that 180,000 gold coins had a purchasing power comparable to around 360,000 gold in this era. Let's just go with 360,000 gold coins. Don't refuse any longer! If you do, I'll just throw down my magicrystal card and leave."

Linley withdrew his magicrystal card from his breast pocket.

Marquis Jebs looked unhappily at Linley, but finally nodded. "Fine, then."

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

Marquis Jebs suddenly laughed a bit shyly as well. "Master Linley, I have a small favor to ask, if I might?"

"Go ahead." Linley laughed, looking at the Marquis.

Marquis Jebs gestured at his servants, who quickly carried over an erect stone tablet from deeper within his mansion.

"Master Linley, I only hope that you can put your signature on this tablet. If you do, I will treasure this forever." Marquis Jebs looked at Linley with hopeful eyes.

Linley chuckled, then withdrew his straight chisel from his breast pocket.

With a casual flick of the wrist, the chisel began to fly about in a blur as stone dust began to fall off from that stone tablet. In the time it took to take three breaths, Linley was finished and withdrew his chisel. Gently blowing air on the tablet, all of the remaining dust flew away from it, revealing a name artistically written, as though it were a flying dragon or a dancing phoenix.

LINLEY

Staring at that word, Marquis Jebs' eyes were shining. "What an elegant carving technique, and what beautiful letters. This word is far more valuable than 360,000 gold coins."

Hearing this, Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

…….

On the road from Fenlai City to Wushan township, the path was lined with redwood trees on either side. Riding a large stallion, Linley was galloping forward with a huge case on his back. This case was several hundred pounds heavy. Fortunately, this stallion was a particularly fine one that had been provided by the Dawson Conglomerate. Normal horses wouldn't be able to move quickly when carrying such a burden.

Behind Linley, a troop of over a hundred Knights was following him.

This troop had been gifted to Linley by the Radiant Church via Cardinal Lampson and Cardinal Guillermo. What the Radiant Church claimed was that Linley's safety was of paramount importance to them, which could be seen from the recent abduction attempt. The weakest member of this troop was a warrior of the fifth rank. It belonged to one of the ace regiments of the Knights of the Radiant Temple.

Over a hundred warhorses galloped behind, kicking up a cloud of dust.

From far away, the image of Wushan township drew closer and closer to

Linley's sight. In his mind, he couldn't help but think back to the events of his youth, such as the training he had undergone in the training grounds, as well as that terrifying sight of the Velocidragon.

In the past, in Linley's eyes, a Velocidragon was the symbol of utter invincibility. But now, to Linley, a Velocidragon was no longer much of anything.

"Rumble, rumble."

The earth shook as this troop of elite knights and warhorses continued on their way. The shudders could be felt from far away.

"What a mighty troop."

While walking in the middle of Wushan township, Hillman couldn't help but turn and stare. The sound of the hoof steps was orderly, fast and forceful, striking fear into Hillman's heart. Even when he was in the army, he had never encountered such a high-quality force of knights.

The lowest of the knights present was a warrior of the fifth rank. How could a troop belonging to one of the ace regiments of the Radiant Church be of low quality?

The sound of their warhorses galloping alone could strike fear into many.

"Who is that?" Hillman instantly saw that there was a person riding ahead of the troop.

"Linley." The expression on Hillman's face changed, and he quickly ran at high speed towards the Baruch clan manor.

After entering the bounds of Wushan township proper, Linley instructed his troop of knights to lower their speeds. Linley, only, continued to move at a relatively fast speed towards his clan's manor. Seeing from afar that vine-wrapped, scarred wall, Linley thought back to one event after another of his youth.

“The Baruch clan, my roots, my foundation!” Carrying the warblade, ‘Slaughterer’, on his back, Linley’s heart was filled with pride.

Linley could still clearly remember, the first time he had left for the Ernst Institute, what his father had said to him. Linley believed that he would never, ever forget these words from his father.

“Linley, remember the centuries long desire of generations of Baruch elders. Remember the shame of the Baruch clan!”

“After graduating, you will at least be a magus of the sixth rank. As long as you train hard, becoming a magus of the seventh rank shouldn’t be too hard. In the future, you will definitely have the ability to regain our clan’s ancestral heirloom. If you fail to do so, even in death, I will not forgive you.”

“Even in death, I will not forgive you!”

…..

That voice reverberated in Linley’s mind. But this time, feeling the weight of the ‘Slaughterer’ on his back, Linley only felt a surge of pride.

“Father, I’m coming back”!

“Father, I have brought back our warblade, ‘Slaughterer’!”

Linley flew off his horse’s back and directly charged into his clan’s courtyard.

“Father!” Linley shouted loudly.

“I’m back! I brought the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ back!” Linley was filled with joy and excitement. The elders of his clan had labored for centuries. His father had pined for it his entire life. And now, he had finally fulfilled his father’s desire!

“The warblade, ‘Slaughterer’?” A voice rang out.

Linley turned and looked behind him. It was Hillman.

“Uncle Hillman, where’s father? Quick, have him come out. Haha, I’ve finally brought back the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. Honest! I have the ancestral heirloom of our Dragonblood Warrior clan. I’ve finally brought it back. Quick, tell me where my father is. Once my father finds out, he will be so ecstatic. Tonight, we are absolutely going to get drunk. Uncle Hillman, don’t worry, tonight, I’m not going to shirk my duty. I’ll definitely get drunk with you. If we aren’t drunk, we won’t stop!”

Linley was so excited, he continued to babble without stopping. He even removed the case from his back, holding it in his arms as he stared at Uncle Hillman.

But….

There was no hint of joy in Hillman’s face. In fact, there was a hint of misery.

“Un….Uncle Hillman?” Linley began to frown. Staring at Uncle Hillman, he said, “Uncle Hillman, where is my father?”

Looking at Linley, Hillman forced out a smile. “Linley, you’ve brought back the warblade, ‘Slaughterer’? If your father knew, he definitely would be ecstatic. Definitely.”

“Where is my father?”

“Your father. He. He passed away three months ago.” Hillman took a deep breath, then finally, slowly said these words. As he did, his eyes turned moist.

Linley suddenly felt as though countless thunderbolts had went off by his ears. His brain went blank.

“CLANG!”

The case in Linley’s hands fell heavily to the ground. The lid to the case flew open, revealing a giant warblade which emanated a killing aura and was tinted with a slight, bloody red color. That cold, killing aura and that bloody aura filled the entire hall in an instant.

“Dead?”

Linley stared disbelievingly at Hillman.

Hillman nodded slightly.

Suddenly, Linley laughed. “Haha, Uncle Hillman, you must be lying to me. Haha, I’ve brought back the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. Look, Uncle Hillman, I’ve brought back the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. How could my father be dead? He is going to view this warblade first.”

With one hand, Linley reached out and picked up the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. Instantly, that bloody aura filled even Hillman’s heart with trepidation.

“Uncle Hillman, look. I brought back the ‘Slaughterer’. And I have to tell my father that I am now capable of transforming into a Dragonblood Warrior.” Scales began forming around Linley’s hands, and in a short while, Linley’s hands transformed into draconic claws.

Grabbing onto Hillman’s shoulders with his two draconic claws, Linley stared into Hillman’s eyes. “Uncle Hillman, look, I can already transform into a Dragonblood Warrior. I’ve brought home the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ to our clan. It’s true. Where is father? My father!”

“I am going to show the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ to him!”

“I haven’t yet had the chance to tell him that I can become a Dragonblood Warrior!”

Those draconic claws gripped Hillman by the shoulders, but the owner of those claws, Linley, stared beseechingly into Hillman's eyes.

"Uncle Hillman, I'm begging you, tell me, where is my father?" Like a poor, lost orphan child, Linley stared at Hillman, his eyes begging. Like a drowning man clutching at a stalk of grass, Linley clutched at Hillman.

Hillman gently shook his head. "Linley, your father…is dead!"

Linley laughed. Laughed so desolately. "No…no way. I have to show him the warblade 'Slaughterer'. I have to tell him that I can transform into a Dragonblood Warrior. And tonight, I'm going to drink wine with him."

As he spoke, tears began to cover Linley's face.

Staring at Linley, Hillman couldn't help but lower his face, and then two rivers of tears began to flow down his own face.

"Impossible. Impossible!"

Gripping onto Hillman fiercely with his two claws, Linley stared a deathly stare at Hillman. His eyes even took on that same, icy, dark golden color of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. The entire hall was suddenly filled with a baleful aura that was even more terrifying than the one emitted by the warblade 'Slaughterer'.

A low, hoarse growl emitted from Linley's throat…

"Tell me….where is my father?"

Chapter 1 – The Dusty Affairs of the Past

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 1, The Dusty Affairs of the Past

Hillman was being gripped so tightly by Linley's claws that his clothes were torn open. Scarlet blood slowly leaked out, staining his clothes red.

But Hillman didn't notice in the slightest.

Staring at Linley, Hillman said in a downcast voice, "Linley, calm down first."

"Tell me." Linley was staring at Hillman.

Hillman said solemnly. "The troop of Knights following you is about to arrive. For now, let's not allow others to know about the affairs of your clan. Come with me first." Hillman shook his shoulders loose of Linley's claws, then grabbed Linley's scaled arms and with the intention of pulling him to the ancestral halls…only to find that he was unable to budge Linley.

"Linley!" Hillman turned his head, a spark of anger in his eyes.

"Uncle Hillman, I know how to act."

Linley's face was deeply sunken, but he took a deep breath, retracting the scales on his arms into his body, returning to normal. Just as he once more returned the 'Slaughterer' to his case and held it, Linley could hear the sounds of hoof steps outside drawing near.

The troops of Knights of the Radiant Temple had finally arrived.

Linley turned, glancing at them coldly, but paid them no mind. He said directly to Hillman, "Uncle Hillman, lead the way."

"Alright."

Seeing that Linley was able to calm down, Hillman felt a little bit better. He immediately led Linley into the ancestral hall's direction. Linley's face remained sunken. At this moment, aside from Linley himself, perhaps nobody knew that beneath that calm expression, there lay hidden an incredibly deep, painful wound.

Neither the Shadowmouse Bebe nor Doehring Cowart made a sound.

They were connected to Linley's soul. Naturally, they could feel the unimaginable grief and pain which Linley was currently suffering.

The wind rose, catching up and hurling into the air countless leaves which had been lying on the unimaginably ancient stone tiled grounds.

"Creaaaak."

Hillman pushed open the door to the ancestral hall, then turned to look back at Linley. Holding the warblade 'Slaughterer', Linley stepped inside, his face calm. But his gaze was fixed upon those rows of spirit tablets placed in the middle of the ancestral hall. With Linley's current vision, he could clear read the words on the newest spirit tablet, located at the front.

There were only two words on the front. "Hogg Baruch."

Linley felt his mind growing dizzy, as though he were having a hallucination. But he still stood there, unmoving. And then, still carrying the 'Slaughterer', Linley stepped forward to the stone platform in front of the spirit tablets, placing the 'Slaughterer' on top of the platform.

Linley looked at the spirit tablet, a peaceful smile appearing on his face. In a soft voice, Linley said, "Father. I'm back."

"I know that all your life, your greatest desire was that we recover our ancestral heirloom, as well as regain the bygone splendor of our clan, the Dragonblood Warrior clan." Linley spoke very carefully, as though he were afraid to startle someone. His voice was so gentle, so careful.

Linley stared at the spirit tablet. “I didn’t disappoint you. I have already brought back to the Baruch clan, to the Dragonblood Warrior clan, our ancestral heirloom, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’.”

“Now…I have already brought back the ‘Slaughterer’. And very soon, I will restore our Dragonblood Warrior clan to glory. I will make sure the entire Yulan continent knows of the splendor of our Dragonblood Warrior clan, and will make sure everyone in the Yulan continent knows your name.”

“All of this, I will accomplish. I so swear.”

Suddenly, a fiendish look appeared on Linley’s face. “But of course, before I do all of these things. I will avenge you.”

There was no question at all in his mind. His father, Baruch, had been killed by someone.

Otherwise, based on his father’s prowess as a warrior of the sixth rank, as well as a man in the prime of his health, he couldn’t have died due to any ordinary illness. And what’s more, if he had died of illness, Hillman wouldn’t have acted so secretively. Linley’s intuition was telling him that his father’s death was no ordinary death!

“The person who caused you to die. I will make sure he dies as well!”

Within Linley’s eyes, once more there seemed to be a hint of that cold, dark gold color of the eyes of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. That terrifying dark golden color.

Linley fiercely turned to stare at Hillman. “Uncle Hillman, tell me. How did my father die, exactly? In addition, where was my father buried? Also, you said my father died three months ago? Why didn’t you tell me?”

Hillman opened his mouth, but did not speak.

“Linley, first calm down,” Hillman finally said slowly.

Calm down?

How could he calm down?

“I wish so much that my father could be here and personally see this warblade, ‘Slaughterer’, with his own eyes. I long to tell my father that I have become a Dragonblood Warrior. I deeply desire to see my father’s smile, hear his gratified laughter. See the pride on his face when I assume the Dragonform! However…all of this is now impossible.”

Linley felt as though his heart had been sliced by knives.

And Hillman was asking him to calm down?

Linley wanted to angrily rebuke Hillman, but he restrained from doing so. Taking in a deep, unwilling breath, he swallowed his rage. Staring at Hillman, Linley said, “Uncle Hillman, tell me everything which happened. I want to know everything.”

“Your father died three months ago. But before he died, his instructions to me were that only after you had the power of a warrior of the seventh rank could I tell you. Otherwise, I cannot tell you the circumstances surrounding his death.” Hillman said solemnly.

“A warrior of the seventh rank?”

“Yes.” Hillman nodded slightly. “This was the reason why I went to the Institute to look for you, but didn’t inform you of your father’s death or why he died. Your father’s dying wishes were that I was not to allow you to know of his death, so that you could calmly focus on your studies.”

Hillman looked at Linley. “Linley, it isn’t that I’m not willing to tell you. It’s that this was your father’s dying wish. I cannot go against it. Only if you are able to become a warrior of the seventh rank, would I be willing to tell you everything.”

Linley understood.

A warrior of the seventh rank?

Linley withdrew a leather-wrapped book from his clothes and handed it to Hillman.

“This is?” Hillman looked at it with surprise.

“A magus’ proof of rank.” Linley’s face was calm.

Every single magus, from the day he began to be evaluated, would be issued a certificate with his proof of rank. Each time he advanced a rank, there would be a record of it.

Hillman opened the book and saw that under the ‘wind-style’ and ‘earth-style’ entries, there were seven stars.

“Seventh rank…a seventh rank dual-element magus?” Hillman was stunned. He stared disbelievingly at Linley.

How old was Linley?

Only seventeen.

What did a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank represent? Hillman wasn’t too clear on the specifics, but he knew that in the entire Kingdom of Fenlai, the most powerful magus present was a magus of the eighth rank. But that was an old man, well over a hundred years old.

Hillman remembered how, when he joined the army, there was a magus of the seventh rank who had arrived at the same time. He remembered the glory, the pomp of it all.

But now, little Linley, whom he had watched growing up, had become in the blink of an eye a dual-element magus of the seventh rank.

“This…this is real?” Hillman asked an extremely stupid question. Hillman knew very well that this certificate of rank definitely couldn’t be fake.

“Uncle Hillman. Now you can tell me what happened, right?” Linley stared at Hillman.

Hillman nodded, then headed for the private room behind the ancestral hall. A few moments later, he came out. Walking over to Linley, he withdrew an envelope from his clothes. Presenting it to Linley, he softly said, “This was left behind by your father, right before he died. Once you read it, you will understand.”

His hands trembling, Linley reached out and accepted the envelope.

There weren’t any words on the envelope.

He opened the envelope and withdrew the letter. The letter had two full pages of content.

“Linley: By the time you actually read this letter, I most likely would have died a long, long time ago.”

“Towards you and Wharton, my heart is filled with boundless remorse, but there is no way for me to do right by you two any longer. I only hope that you two will be able to live for a long period of time in peace, which is why I have instructed your Uncle Hillman to only provide this letter to you when you have become a warrior of the seventh rank.”

When he read this, Linley’s heart felt sour.

“Let me live for a long period of time in peace? I imagine that father never had expected me to become a magus of the seventh rank so quickly. After all, based on the normal rate of progression, from the sixth rank to the seventh rank would take a considerable amount of time.”

“Linley, within my heart, I have held a secret for many years. Your mother

did not actually die when giving birth to Wharton."

These words from his father caused Linley's heart to shudder.

Ever since he was a child, Linley had known that his mother had died when giving birth to Wharton. But apparently…that was a lie.

"That year, when your mother was pregnant with Wharton, both of us were very happy. But the medical facilities at Wushan township were simply too poor, so I went with your mother to Fenlai City. Within Fenlai City, your mother safely gave birth to Wharton. Little Wharton was very adorable, and both of us were overjoyed. Shortly after he was born, filled with joy, your mother and I took young Wharton to the Radiant Temple to pray for Wharton to be blessed. That day, both your mother and I were extremely happy. Afterwards, we left the Radiant Temple and stayed overnight at a hotel in Fenlai City."

"That night, a group of mysterious people came to the hotel and forcibly abducted your mother. Totally outnumbered, I was only able to protect young Wharton…but I did see that on the arm of one of the assailants, there was a red, spider-like birthmark."

As he read this, Linley himself felt as though he had been transported back to that night, ten years ago.

Under the combined attack of many assailants, unable to ward them all off, his father had only been able to protect Wharton, and could only watch powerlessly, unable to save his beloved wife.

"I know that this group of people was definitely not an ordinary group of people. The weakest of them was a warrior of the fourth rank, while the strongest was even stronger than me. Fortunately, their target was only your mother, as otherwise I would've died long ago. Someone capable of mobilizing a squad such as this, definitely would be a major figure in Fenlai City. I didn't dare to go public on this affair. I took little Wharton back home and told everyone else that your mother died in childbirth. Only your Uncle Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri know this secret."

Seeing this, Linley's mind was filled with questions.

Within that gang of people, the strongest was even stronger than his father, but they didn't care about his father, only about abducting his mother. But why was his mother worth their time to abduct?

"I couldn't let you know about this. During these past ten or so years, I have always buried this secret deep in my heart. I didn't dare tell anyone…and I couldn't even go by myself to investigate your mother's whereabouts, or to find out if she was alive or dead, or who that group of people was. I didn't dare."

His father's words caused Linley's heart to feel so much pain that it clenched.

"I am the successor to the leadership of the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors. At the very least, I had to raise you until you were grown. I cannot allow the Baruch lineage to come to an end in my hands. Year after year, I could only secretly endure…but every night, I found it difficult to fall asleep. The question of whether your mother was alive or dead constantly tormented me. I have endured…I have endured eleven years!"

"Linley, you have made me incredibly proud. First, you became a student at the number one magus institute in the Yulan continent. And then, you became one of the top geniuses there, at the Ernst Institute. I am filled with confidence towards you. What's more, even little Wharton's density of Dragonblood in his veins has reached the requisite level. I am extremely proud. For both of my sons to be so outstanding…I feel that I have done right by the ancestors of the Baruch clan! But despite all of this, I still did not dare to investigate your mother's whereabouts, because Wharton still needed a large amount of gold to sustain his costly studies."

"And so I have endured for eleven years. But when you came back from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and gave me that large sack of magicite crystals, I knew…finally, I could give up everything and go investigate whether your mother is alive or not. Although your mother has not come

back in the past eleven years, and there is a probably 80% to 90% chance that she is dead, I am unwilling to give up. Even if I die, I will avenge her."

Seeing this, Linley's hands began to tremble again.

Linley understood now. In the past, because he had to support the burden of Wharton's tuition, his father didn't dare to risk his life in investigating his mother's whereabouts. But when he, Linley, had brought back that sack of magicite crystals worth 80,000 gold coins, his father no longer had any burdens left.

"Finally able to go investigating, I altered my appearance and put on a disguise as I snuck into Fenlai City. I began investigating what happened that year."

"But too much time had passed. Knowing that one of the assailants had a red spider birthmark on his upper arm, I spent an entire year searching. Finally, I found that man with the red spider birthmark. Following up on this clue, I continued to investigate. Slowly…I found out who it was that had stood behind this group of assailants."

"This group of assailants were directed by a member of the current royal clan of the Kingdom of Fenlai. And that person…is none other than the younger brother of the King of Fenlai: Duke Patterson [Bo'de'sen]!"

Chapter 2 – The Decision

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 2, The Decision

In the Yulan continent, only an Emperor of an Empire had the authority to give his siblings the title of ‘Prince’.

The status of a ‘Prince’ of an Empire was roughly equivalent to that of a ‘King’ in one of the kingdoms. At most, a King could confer the title of ‘Duke’ upon his siblings. That was the limit.

The ‘Grand Dukes’ ruling over the Duchies were in fact nothing more than Dukes as well.

Empire. Kingdom. Duchy. The ranks progressively went down at each level.

Duke Patterson?

The younger brother of the King of Fenlai?

Linley knew very well that the Boleyn clan, the royal clan of the kingdom of Fenlai, was an extremely powerful clan. Both of the Boleyn brothers were extremely powerful warriors. King Clayde was known as the pride of Fenlai, precisely because he was also a warrior of the ninth rank.

As for Patterson, although he couldn’t match up to his older brother, he too was a warrior of the seventh rank. At the very least, he was considered a powerful person.

“Duke Patterson?” Linley’s heart was filled with a hint of a killing intent.

Linley continued to read. “Disguising myself as a servant, I snuck my way into Duke Patterson’s manor. After experiencing countless dangers and using a few special methods, I was able to kidnap the leader of that

mysterious group, a warrior of the seventh rank. After I used some special interrogation methods, he finally confessed…that his actions were done at the direction of Duke Patterson. But according to what this man said, after they kidnapped your mother Lina, she was sent away under Duke Patterson's orders via a different troop. Clearly, behind Duke Patterson as well, there was another figure controlling things."

"Before I was able to finish the interrogation, the disappearance of the warrior of the seventh rank aroused the suspicions of Duke Patterson. Although I had made preparations, over the course of killing several experts and fleeing from Fenlai City, I was heavily wounded as well. I carefully snuck back home. Aside from your Uncle Hillman, I didn't let anyone else know. I knew that my injury was too severe, and that I wouldn't have too much time left. That's why I ended up leaving this letter for you."

"Linley, your father wasn't a good father. I've always been too cold and severe with you. I don't ask for your forgiveness; I only hope that you will be cool-headed. Now that you have the power of the seventh rank, most likely you will have the ability to do some investigating. But you must be careful, careful, careful. Neither I nor your mother Lina wish for you to die because of us."

"Linley, I'll be leaving now. As of now, you are the leader of our Baruch clan. I entrust the clan and everything in it to you."

"At this moment, how dearly do I desire to see the warblade, 'Slaughterer', with my own eyes. But I know now that this was just a wild hope. Linley… work hard. The clan now depends on you and little Wharton. In your father's life, the thing which he is the most proud of is you, and little Wharton. Two wonderful sons."

On the signature, there was a bloodstain.

Flames erupted from Linley's hands.

"Hiss…" In the blink of an eye, this letter was burnt to ashes.

Hillman, standing off to the side, looked at Linley.

Linley had just burnt the last testament of his father to ashes. But Hillman wasn't angry; in fact, he secretly nodded in approval. Although this letter was a legacy, it also contained many secrets. If it fell into the wrong hands, it would be catastrophic.

Linley turned his head to look at Hillman. "Uncle Hillman. I want to entrust you with something."

"Go ahead." Hillman looked at Linley.

Hillman had already made up his mind to assist Linley in getting vengeance.

Linley stretched his arms out, picking up the warblade 'Slaughterer', then turned to look at Hillman. "Uncle Hillman, this warblade, 'Slaughterer', is the ancestral heirloom of our Baruch clan. I hope that you can hand this warblade, 'Slaughterer', to my little brother Wharton in the O'Brien Empire. I want you to personally deliver it!"

"O'Brien Empire? Then here…" Hillman was beginning to worry about Linley.

Linley said seriously, "Uncle Hillman, don't be worried. As a dual-element magus of the seventh rank, even the Radiant Church holds me in extremely high regard. Even King Clayde, the ruler of Fenlai, was extremely courteous to me. My safety is not something you need to be concerned about."

Hillman was just a warrior. He didn't fully understand the what being a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank truly meant.

In fact, he didn't even know that Linley was now a master sculptor approaching the level of Proulx and Hope Jensen, with an extremely high status.

“If that’s the case, then…” Hillman frowned.

“After you hand this warblade, ‘Slaughterer’, over to my younger brother, assist Grandpa Hiri and stay by my younger brother’s side. Everything here, I can and will handle by myself.” Linley’s voice was deep, and it carried a hint of frost.

In the entire Holy Union, he was alone now. He had no family here anymore. What did he have to fear?

Linley had already made up his mind to avenge his father, as well as find out what happened to his mother. Was his mother alive or dead? In the depths of his heart, Linley was still hoping that his mother was alive. Although the chances were beyond slim, Linley was not willing to give up.

“Stay in the O’Brien Empire?” Hillman was quiet for a moment. After all, he had family here in Wushan township.

But for him, as a warrior of the sixth rank, anywhere in the world he went, he would be able to make a living for himself.

“Uncle Hillman, you can take your entire family with you. In addition, take this magicrystal card with you. This magicrystal card has not been imprinted yet, and has a million gold coins within it. Take this magicrystal card with you, all the way to the O’Brien Empire.”

From within his clothes, Linley withdrew a single magicrystal card and handed it to Hillman.

“A million gold coins?” Hillman stared at Linley in astonishment.

A million gold coins was an absolute fortune. When Hogg was still alive, for the sake of a few thousand gold coins, he had to sell off his clan’s possessions. Even if he sold off the entire ancestral home, he might not be able to come up with much more than a hundred thousand gold coins. But now, in the blink of an eye, Linley was handing over a magicrystal card with a million gold coins on it.

“Linley, you…where did you get this money from?” Hillman had to ask.

“Uncle Hillman, you don’t need to ask. In the future, you will know.” Linley’s heart, at this moment, was filled with grief and rage. He was in no mood to brag about his accomplishments as a sculptor.

Hillman nodded slightly.

“Linley, wait a moment.” Hillman once more ran into the private room, then came back out with an urn, handing it to Linley.

“This is?…” Linley’s gaze couldn’t leave the urn. He seemed to have already guessed what this urn contained.

Hillman instructed, “Linley, these are your father’s ashes. When your father died, we didn’t dare to publicly announce it. We didn’t even dare to bury him. Our only choice was to place his cremated ashes within the private room as we awaited your return.”

Linley accepted the cremation urn. He felt that it was heavy. So heavy.

……

The desolate wind howled. Not too far from Wushan township, there was a cemetery filled with countless tombs. At this time, though, an extremely lavish tombstone had just been erected. The short-haired Linley was currently quietly seated cross-legged in front of it.

Linley had spent a full night erecting this tombstone. Based on Linley’s current level of ability, carrying a few boulders was child’s play. And, given that Linley already had reached the level of a master in sculpting, naturally he was able to carve the boulder into a lavishly beautiful tombstone.

The desolate wind howled. Linley just sat there quietly.

“Linley.” Hillman was carrying the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ on his back in

the case. He appeared in front of Linley.

Linley didn't open his eyes. He only said, "Uncle Hillman, I've entrusted the warblade 'Slaughterer' to you. I entrust my younger brother, Wharton, to you and Grandpa Hiri as well. Be safe on your way there. I won't send you off."

Hillman looked at the back of Linley, still seated cross-legged. Then he took another look at the tombstone. Finally, he nodded, then silently departed.

Hillman left.

He had left, taking the warblade 'Slaughterer' with him.

From this day forward, with the ancient ancestral manor of the Baruch clan, there was no one left aside from Linley and the servants.

Suddenly…Linley opened his eyes. He stared at the tombstone.

"Father. I swear to you that I will make them pay a heavy price." Linley immediately turned and left. The Shadowmouse, Bebe, still stood on Linley's shoulders, but he seemed to be afraid to make any noise at all.

"Lord Hogg has passed away? This…this is…" A group of citizens of Wushan township were currently in mourning for Hogg's passing.

"What a wonderful nobleman he was. How could he die like this? Who knows what the future of Wushan township will be like, now. All these years, Lord Hogg has maintained such a low taxation rate. Sometimes, he would even have to pay out of pocket to the kingdom. Where will anyone possibly find another such wonderful noble?" All of the citizens of Wushan township remembered and were thankful for Hogg's benevolence.

Currently, in front of the Baruch manor, strips of white funeral cloths were hung. Linley was dressed in a set of mourning clothes as well. He was silently kneeling in front of the memorial spirit tablet set up in front of the main hall. The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was also kneeling next to Linley,

not making a sound. It was as though he could feel the pain Linley was suffering.

Seven days of ritual filial mourning.

Despite the filial mourning being late.

This was the first day of mourning.

“Master Linley, Lord Guillermo is currently waiting for you.” The captain of that squad of Knights of the Radiant Church said softly by Linley’s side.

Linley turned his head, glancing at him coldly. The captain couldn’t help but feel his heart shudder.

“Seven days of ritual filial mourning. Within these seven days, I will not pay attention to anyone or anything.” Linley said coldly, and then he fell silent again.

The captain couldn’t help but feel helpless.

But he knew what Linley was feeling right now. His father had just died. For his son to observe the ritual filial mourning rites was heaven’s law and earth’s principle; a matter of course. The captain of the knights immediately left the main hall, then instructed his subordinates to head to Fenlai City and report Linley’s current situation to the Radiant Church.

“Young master Linley, don’t be too sad.”

The citizens of Wushan township came through in a steady stream to kowtow in front of Hogg’s memorial spirit tablet. All of them remembered the benevolence Hogg had shown when he was alive.

Linley didn’t speak. He only bowed in thanks to every single visiting citizen.

…..

This news quickly reached the Radiant Church, but Cardinal Lampson and Cardinal Guillermo weren't too shocked.

"Linley's father has passed away?" Guillermo nodded slightly. "No wonder back when Linley became a dual-element magus of the seventh rank, when I sent people to inquire about Linley's father, we weren't able to find anything. So he had already passed away."

The Radiant Church had a total of five Cardinals. Linley's matters were mostly handled by Cardinal Guillermo and Cardinal Lampson.

"Guillermo, let us quickly prepare some things, then go and pay our respects to Linley's father." Lampson suggested.

Guillermo nodded as well.

Actually, based on Hogg's own status, how could a Cardinal of the Radiant Church go to pay their respects to him? But Hogg was Linley's father, after all, and Linley's future prospects were unlimited. He had already been designated as an important future cornerstone of the Radiant Church by the church.

"Alright. It's already dark now. Then…let's head off early in the morning, tomorrow."

Once Hogg's death became openly known, due to the fact that the Kingdom of Fenlai had already designated Linley as a highly important figure, the news of his death quickly reached the royal palace of Fenlai. The speed by which they received this news was only slightly slower than the Radiant Church.

"Linley's father died?"

Clayde nodded to himself as well. When Linley had become a dual-element magus of the seventh rank, he too had sent people to inquire about Linley's father, and he had in fact even told Linley that his father had gone missing.

As it turned out, Linley's father really had passed away after all.

"Tomorrow morning, I'll go pay my respects." Clayde reached the same decision.

Aside from Clayde, many of the most important people in Fenlai City received this news from the royal palace. Many of them venerated Master Linley, while others wanted to make friends with him. Every single one of them decided to go early next morning to that little backwater, Wushan township, to pay their respects to Linley's father.

While all of this was going on, Linley remained within his ancestral home in Wushan township, quietly observing the rites of mourning.

Chapter 3 – Assembling at the Township

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 3, Assembling at the Township

Late at night. Linley's bedroom.

The sound of muscles and bones rumbling could constantly be heard coming from Linley's body, while Linley's very skin was rising, then falling. Beads of sweat were pouring out of every single pore on Linley's body, but Linley's face was very calm and peaceful.

At this moment, Linley was training in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual.

The first time Linley activated the Dragonblood in his veins, he was vaulted directly to the rank of warrior of the sixth rank. According to the records contained within the Secret Dragonblood Manual, the first time one trained is when one's Dragonblood would be at the highest density, which is why the improvement would be so fast.

The further down the road the training continued, the harder it would become.

Especially upon reaching the ninth rank, if one wished to break through to the Saint-level, the amount of time that would be needed was probably more than all the other time spent combined.

"Right now, the Radiant Church highly values me. Given my status as a master sculptor, my personal status has dramatically increased. But my own personal power isn't enough yet. Although they are courteous to me, that is primarily because of my potential. If I am to gain revenge, I don't yet have enough personal power."

Linley knew full well that he currently didn't have enough power. After all, he couldn't afford to assume the Dragonform and transform into a

Dragonblood Warrior when he wanted to kill someone.

Unless the situation was critical, Linley definitely did not want to enter the Dragonblood Warrior forms. Because once it was discovered that he could transform into a Dragonblood Warrior, it would become very dangerous for him. After all, the fame of the Dragonblood Warriors was simply too great.

Once a Dragonblood Warrior entered the Saint-level, he would definitely be a peak-tier Saint-level combatant.

“Boss, you’re working too hard.” Lying on the bed, Bebe was watching Linley train.

Aside from Bebe, Doehring Cowart was also watching from the side. Doehring Cowart could clearly tell what sort of mental state Linley was in. His father had suddenly died, and he had also found out that his mother hadn’t died in childbirth after all, and had been abducted. These two pieces of news had suddenly descended upon Linley.

This sort of mental blow was far more vicious than Alice’s change of heart.

Doehring Cowart could feel the boundless hatred and murderous desires in Linley’s heart. Doehring Cowart knew very well that if Linley didn’t find an outlet for that hatred, he could very well turn into a murderous demon.

“I hope that Linley will be able to get his vengeance quickly. Otherwise, if he remains in this state for too long, the changes to his heart will become greater and greater.” Doehring Cowart was beginning to worry.

…..

The next morning.

Within the Baruch clan’s manor, many servants were preparing all sorts of edibles. As soon as Linley stepped out of his bedroom, he saw them bustling about.

“Linley, the people who are coming today are most likely important people. Is this how you intend to receive them?” Doehring Cowart appeared by Linley’s side.

Linley and Doehring Cowart had both guessed correctly. The important people of Fenlai City and of the Radiant Church had quickly received word of Linley’s father’s death. 80% to 90% of them had come to pay their respects to Linley’s father, so naturally, Linley would have to receive them.

The materials that Linley had prepared could be considered not bad, but the skill of the chefs was too poor. There were only two chefs in the entire Wushan township whose cooking skills could be considered adequate.

“You are going to have these two chefs of this small township receive these major personages?” Doehring Cowart laughed.

“Let them taste some of the local dishes of my homeland. This is already quite enough.” After speaking, Linley immediately went to eat breakfast. After breakfast, Linley continued to kneel in front of the memorial spirit tablet, observing the rites of filial mourning. By seven in the morning, hoof steps could be heard from outside the Baruch clan’s manor.

An extremely lavish carriage parked itself outside the manor.

“Third Bro!” A familiar voice called out.

Still kneeling in the main hall, Linley turned his head and saw Yale, George, and Reynolds rush inside. Having suffered two heavy blows, Linley was currently feeling extremely depressed. But upon seeing those three bros whom he had grown up with at the Ernst Institute, a hint of a smile appeared on Linley’s face.

Upon entering the main hall, Yale, George, and Reynolds all knelt down on prayer mats in the middle.

“Third Bro, I got the news last night about your father’s passing. Overnight, I called over Second Bro and Fourth Bro to come along with me. I guessed

that today, there are going to be many nobles present, so I also brought along several chefs from Fenlai City to come overnight as well." Yale said in a soft voice.

"Thank you." Linley could imagine how busy his three bros must have been in the past few hours.

Recruiting chefs, preparing the carriage convey. Most likely, Reynolds and George had hurried over to here directly from the Ernst Institute, meeting Yale on the road at night and then arriving here together.

"Third Bro, don't be too heartbroken." George gently patted Linley on the shoulders.

Reynolds was also by Linley's side. "Linley. No matter what happens, you will always have us three bros. No matter what happens, don't allow yourself to be struck down. Remain strong."

Linley looked at Reynolds, a hint of a smile appearing on his face.

Linley felt very warm in his heart upon hearing Reynolds, normally the most mischievous of them all, saying such words.

No matter what or when, he would always have these three bros.

"Thank you all." Linley looked at Yale. "Boss Yale, I'd like to hand over the responsibilities of hosting these nobles to you. I have no experience in this area."

Yale nodded. "Don't worry. I've brought quite a number of people over. They will definitely do a good job of receiving them."

….

The quiet little Wushan township was not quiet at all this day. Time after time, the citizens of Wushan township would gather together and discuss the nobles who had just passed by.

“That group in the morning had at least four horses, and that carriage was huge and magnificent. All of those brave knights, wow…I’ve never seen such an awesome looking troop of knights.” An old man sighed with praise as he stared at the troop stationed outside the Baruch clan’s manor.

The locals nearby also nodded in praise.

In such an ordinary little town, how often would they have the chance to encounter a wealthy noble? That troop of knights which Linley had brought with him when he had returned, by itself, was already a source of endless discussion amongst the locals.

“What do you guys think? Is young master Linley also a powerful nobleman in the outside world?” A woman guessed. “Two days ago, I saw Linley lead that powerful troop of knights on his return.”

Wushan township was filled with constant chatting and speculation.

And then, in the middle of the day, around eleven or so…the earth began to shake again. All the denizens of Wushan township could feel that dense, orderly sound of galloping hoof steps.

This time, the density of the hoof steps was far heavier than when Yale came.

Wearing brilliantly gleaming armor, an extremely powerful mounted unit first galloped through. Behind them were two extremely lavish carriages which were being pulled by four handsome stallions. The people driving the carriages were all extremely powerful-looking warriors.

Behind these two carriages were a series of carriages filled with gifts, also under escort by a unit of knights.

All of the citizens of Wushan township craned their necks to watch.

The majestic aura of the ace regiment of Knights of the Radiant Church

charging through made all of the citizens of Wushan township felt like a mountain was pressing down on them. All of the citizens felt their heart was trembling, and all of the beautiful, lavish carriages gleamed so much, it made them squint their eyes.

“What sort of people are these?” The citizens of Wushan township were filled with shock and surprise.

This carriage procession finally came to a halt in front of the Baruch clan’s manor.

At the Baruch clan’s manor, there were many people who were prepared to station and stable these horses and carriages.

“Lord Cardinals Guillermo and Lampson, have arrived!”

That loud, high-pitched voice rang out from within the Baruch clan’s manor, causing a huge commotion amongst the denizens of Wushan township.

It was actually two Cardinals!

In the eyes of the citizens of the Holy Union, the Cardinals of the Radiant Church were all lofty figures. In their hearts, the Cardinals were like the stars in the night sky, beautiful to behold, but untouchable. But today, two Cardinals of the Radiant Church had actually come to Wushan township.

“Clatter!” “Clatter!” “Clatter!” Hoof steps could be heard yet again. Shortly after the troop with the Cardinals had entered the township, another very similar troop arrived as well, with carriages that seemed even more lavish, with beautiful female attendants and palace attendants with skin as white as any woman.

The carriage was golden and extremely extravagant.

The mighty knights were exhibiting their top-notch riding skills. The hoof steps were so much in lockstep, they sounded like a single great drumbeat,

shaking the hearts of the citizens of Wushan township.

The denizens of Wushan township were stupefied.

“Who…who are these people?” Many denizens hadn’t seen these people in their entire lives.

When this new troop arrived outside the Baruch clan’s manor, that voice once more rang out from within the manor. “His Majesty, King Clayde of Fenlai has arrived!”

“His Majesty the King!”

All of the citizens of the town looked at each other.

To the citizens of a kingdom, the king of a kingdom was the brilliant sun shining in the sky, with the power over life and death. But his Majesty the King, who should have been in his palace, had actually come to the tiny little Wushan township.

The nonstop clatter of hoof steps.

One troop of soldiers came after another. One carriage after another pulled up in front of the Baruch clan’s manor.

“Duke Bonalt of the Kingdom of Fenlai has arrived!”

“Marquis Jebs of the Kingdom of Fenlai has arrived!”

“Count Juneau of the Kingdom of Fenlai has arrived!”

“Miss Delia of the Leon clan of the Yulan Empire has arrived!”

“Lord Bernard of the Debs clan of the Kingdom of Fenlai has arrived!”

That voice rang out again and again, causing the citizens of Wushan township to be totally speechless. What was going on? Why were so many

members of the upper class congregating here at Wushan township? But the citizens of Wushan township could guess the reason.

The only major event which had occurred at Wushan township was Hogg's death.

But Hogg was just the noble of a minor township. Could his passing cause his Majesty the King as well as two Cardinals of the Radiant Church to come? These citizens couldn't help but think back to the triumphant image from a few days ago of Linley returning with a troop of knights at his back.

"All of this must have something to do with young master Linley."

Although these common citizens didn't know the specifics of Linley's situation, they were able to guess.

……

Within the Baruch clan's main hall, Linley was still kneeling on one side.

The Cardinals, the King, the Dukes, the Marquises, the Counts, all either bowed or knelt down with sincerity, paying their respects. Although the likes of Cardinal Guillermo only bowed, without question, the only people they ever even bowed to were tremendously important figures.

But today, they were bowing to the departed Hogg.

"Linley, don't be too heartbroken." Guillermo said softly by Linley's side.

"Thank you." Linley bowed fractionally.

"Linley, your father's passing truly fills us all with regret." King Clayde also comforted Linley.

After a while.

"Linley, don't be too heartbroken." A clear voice.

Raising his head, Linley saw that Delia, dressed in simple clothes, was there, her face filled with concern.

“Thank you.” Linley said in a soft voice.

Delia nodded fractionally before being led away by servants as well. One noble after another came in to pay their respects to Linley’s father. Even that Bernard, leader of the Debs clan, had come to pay his respects.

“Master Linley, don’t be too heartbroken.” Bernard said courteously.

Linley responded with the same courteous thanks. “Thank you.”

…..

“Duke Patterson of the Kingdom of Fenlai has arrived!” Suddenly, the announcing voice rang out from outside.

Linley frowned very slightly.

His father’s death was linked to this Duke Patterson. But Linley knew very well that his father had disguised himself before entering Duke Patterson’s manor. Most likely, Duke Patterson had no idea that Linley’s father was the person whom had succumbed to the severe injuries caused by his subordinates.

Patterson looked extremely similar to Clayde. Both of them had long, golden hair, with eyes that seemed hawk-like. His waist was straight as a ramrod, and he had the aura of a noble.

Entering the main hall, Patterson bowed respectfully in front of Hogg’s memorial spirit tablet.

“Master Linley, don’t be too heartbroken.” Patterson walked over to Linley and said with sincerity.

Linley raised his head and glanced at Patterson. Seeing the sincere look on Patterson's face, he still responded with the same courteous, "Thank you." From the surface, one couldn't tell that Linley's treatment of Patterson was any different from his treatment of anyone else.

Chapter 4 – A Nighttime Chat

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 4, A Nighttime Chat

“Patterson!”

Linley silently uttered this name to himself. His mother had been taken away by Patterson’s men years ago, and now, eleven years later, his father had been injured and killed by Patterson’s men as well over the course of his investigating his mother’s whereabouts.

The murderous intention in Linley’s heart was hidden, like the lava in the bottom of a primed volcano. But one day, it would erupt.

“Boss, let me kill this Patterson for you.” Kneeling next to Linley, the little Shadowmouse spoke mentally.

“Don’t move.” Linley shouted back mentally.

Linley remained kneeling inside the main hall, while one noble after another came inside, paying their respects to Linley’s father.

……

That night’s banquet, Linley didn’t attend for a single moment. He remained kneeling inside the hall, observing the rites of filial mourning.

Many of the nobles eventually left Wushan township late in the afternoon, hurrying back to Fenlai City. But there was still a number who remained behind at Wushan township.

For example, Cardinal Guillermo. For example, Delia.

…..

Ritual filial mourning had to last for seven days.

That night, Linley ate some random food, then returned to his bedroom, preparing to begin his training.

“Linley, do you plan to take revenge for your father?” The white-robed Doehring Cowart appeared by his side.

Linley glanced at Doehring Cowart. “Grandpa Doehring, I absolutely must take vengeance for the death of my father. Although I know that it was Duke Patterson who sent people to pursue and kill my father, aside from taking my revenge, I also need to investigate what happened to my mother, and find out if she is alive or dead.”

Killing Patterson was easy.

But killing him in a way which would prevent anyone from finding out was much harder. After all, after killing Patterson, Linley needed to continue searching for his mother.

Doehring Cowart nodded slightly. “You can make your own decisions in your personal affairs. Only, I hope you won’t act rashly. After all, your current strength is still too weak, compared to the real top-tier combatants. Even Patterson…all of his soldiers combined are a force that you cannot handle.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Patterson was the younger brother of Clayde. How could he not have a large number of subordinates?

“I expect within a year or so, I should be able to reach the seventh rank as a warrior. I can’t waste any more time.” Linley sat cross-legged on the ground. The Dragonblood battle-qi in his body once more began to circulate throughout his entire body, and all of his muscles and bones began to tremble.

Linley could feel his muscles and his bones slowly rise in power, as the tiny Dragonblood cells also began to merge with his muscles and bones, raising their durability and toughness.

Once one first began to train in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual, the pace of improvement was very fast.

In this training state, Linley didn't notice the passage of time at all.

At roughly around eleven at night.

"Knock!" "Knock!" "Knock!"

The sound of knocking on the door. At the same time, a familiar voice. "Linley. It's Delia. Can I come in?"

Linley was startled.

"Whew." Linley let out a deep breath. All of his trembling muscles returned to normal, and the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body was once more retracted to his dantian region. Linley looked towards the direction of the door. In his mind, he couldn't help but question, "Why did Delia come here to speak with me so late at night?"

As he wondered to himself, Linley verbally responded, "Come in."

Pushing the door open, Delia stepped inside.

Upon seeing Delia, Linley's eyes couldn't help but brighten. At this moment, Delia's golden hair was bound in a simple way. Those few tassels hanging down made her light purple dress seem all the more graceful. Linley had to admit…Delia was a very mesmerizing person.

Especially given that she was in the primary line of descent for the Yulan Empire's Leon clan. Delia had an aura of nobleness which Alice couldn't match.

“Linley, are you okay?” Delia asked in a gentle voice as she walked over to Linley’s bed and sat down. She stared at Linley with concern.

Linley couldn’t help but feel warmth in his heart. Smiling, he said, “I’m fine.”

Delia nodded. “In Fenlai City, I heard about your father’s passing. I was a little worried. But…you really are as resilient as I’ve always felt you are.”

“Thank you.”

Linley continued, “Delia, is there something you wanted to discuss, this late at night?”

“You idiot.” Next to him, Doehring Cowart was secretly cursing at Linley.

A beautiful girl had come over this late at night to talk with you and comfort you. And you actually were asking her what she wanted?

Delia laughed, slightly nervously. But then she regained her usual calmness. “What, if I don’t want something, I can’t come over to chat with you? I’ve known you since our very first year together at the Ernst Institute. Since when did you decide to keep me at such a distance?”

“No, that’s not what I meant.” Linley hurriedly said.

Delia couldn’t help but laugh in delight, but then she let out a long sigh. “Linley, there really is something I want to talk to you about, which is why I came over so late at night.”

“Go ahead.” Linley couldn’t help but begin mentally guessing at what Delia was going to say.

Delia said helplessly, “Linley, you should know that this is year 9999 of the Yulan calendar. In eight more months, it will be year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. The first day of each year, the entire Yulan continent celebrates the Yulan Festival. You can imagine how important an event the celebration of

the 10000th Yulan Festival will be."

Linley nodded.

But Linley didn't understand why Delia was saying these things.

"Although the entire Yulan continent holds the Yulan festival in high importance, our Yulan Empire holds it in even higher esteem." Delia continued.

Linley understood why. After all, the first year of the Yulan calendar was the year when the Yulan Empire had unified the continent. The 10000th Yulan Festival would naturally be an extremely important day within the Yulan Empire.

"My clan has sent out an order. For this Yulan Festival, I must return home. For this Yulan Festival, our Yulan Empire will carry out an empire-wide celebration. Naturally, we main-branch descendants of the Leon clan must return to participate." Delia looked at Linley. "Linley, the Yulan Empire is very far away from the Holy Alliance. This round trip will most likely take one or two years. Tomorrow, I'll have to leave and return to my motherland."

Linley understood Delia's meaning.

In other words, within this next year or so, he probably wouldn't have a chance to meet with Delia again.

Staring at Linley, Delia bit her lips, then suddenly said, "Linley. Before I leave, can I hug you?"

"Hug?" Linley was stunned. He stared at Delia.

Linley knew very well how Delia felt towards him. But because the two of them interacted too often, ever since the first year they studied together at the Ernst Institute, in Linley's mind, Delia had become a close female confidante. And especially after that affair with Alice, Linley's heart had

been frozen and locked.

Seeing the look in Delia's eyes, Linley nodded.

A smile appeared on Delia's face, and she immediately reached out with her arms, embracing Linley by the neck, then pulled herself firmly against Linley's body. Delia pressed her face gently against Linley's face as well.

Linley seemed to be able to feel their mutual breaths…

He could also smell the enchanting fragrance on Delia's body. In particular, when their faces touched, he could feel the warmth of her skin…all of this caused Linley to feel a very unique sensation.

"Linley. Thank you." Delia murmured into Linley's ear.

Linley didn't make a sound.

Releasing him, Delia slowly rose to her feet, her eyes still locked on Linley's. But halfway to her feet, Delia came to a halt. There was only two inches of distance between her eyes and Linley's.

Suddenly, Delia bent down.

Delia's lips just so happened to land and brush against Linley's, causing Linley to be stunned.

Delia didn't give Linley the chance to react, as she then quickly stood up. Taking one last look at Linley, she quickly ran out of Linley's bedroom.

"Boss, you just got kissed by force!" From the opposite side of the blanket, Bebe popped his tiny head out, staring at Linley.

"You. Go back to sleep." Linley mentally shouted at Bebe.

Bebe let out a few disgruntled squeaks before returning to the blanket. But Linley still stared at the closed door through which Delia had left. His nose

still seemed to be filled with the fragrant aura of Delia's perfume. His face seemed to still feel the warmth of Delia's face.

Rubbing his lips, Linley felt a soft, warm feeling in his heart. The feeling was very similar to the feeling he had that night, when he had hidden with Alice on her balcony and talked the night away.

"Delia…"

Shaking his head, Linley cast away all of these extraneous thoughts.

"Linley." Doehring Cowart looked at Linley with interest. "When you were young and first entered the Ernst Institute, and first saw this Delia girl, didn't I say to you, then and there, that this was a beauty in the making? I told you from the very beginning to chase after her. Feeling regretful yet?"

Linley frowned as he looked at Doehring Cowart.

"Alright, I'll stop talking now." With a twirl of his beard, Doehring Cowart transformed into a beam of light and retreated into the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley didn't think about this anymore. Once more seating himself cross-legged, he entered the meditative trance to distill mageforce.

Early the next morning, Delia led the delegation from the Leon clan away from Wushan township, but Linley didn't send her off. He continued to kneel there in the main hall, maintaining his vigil and observing the rites of filial mourning.

In the blink of an eye, the seven days of filial mourning had passed.

In the Wushan township, aside from Linley's bros, there were only two other major personages remaining: Cardinal Lampson and Cardinal Guillermo.

As Cardinals of the Radiant Church, Lampson and Guillermo didn't have anything they had to attend to. After all, most small matters could be

handled by their subordinates, making their lives very relaxed. These few days, they spent their time sightseeing around Wushan township, while occasionally going into Mt. Wushan itself.

Morning. The citizens of Wushan township were all watching on each side of the street.

The delegation from the Radiant Church and from the Dawson Conglomerate were beginning to depart.

“Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro. There’s something I need to go discuss with Lord Guillermo’s party.” Linley told his bros, and then left the Dawson Conglomerate’s carriage, then entered the carriage of Lord Cardinal Guillermo.”

Lampson was in the carriage as well. The two Cardinals and Linley shared the carriage amongst themselves.

But this carriage had been specially designed for the Cardinals of the Radiant Church. It was extremely spacious. There was enough space for all three of them to even lie down and sleep, if they so desired.

“Linley, you’ve made up your mind?” Guillermo laughed as he looked at Linley.

Previously, Linley had told Guillermo that he needed to discuss the matter of joining the Radiant Church with his father. But now, his father had passed away. Naturally, there was no one else for Linley to discuss this with. By now, he should have an answer for them.

“Lord Guillermo, Lord Lampson. I am still young. I wish…to temporarily assist his Majesty, King Clayde. For now, I think it would be best that I not take up a formal position within the Radiant Church. If in the future, the Radiant Church has need of me, I can be enlisted into your service at any time.” Linley said.

Both Guillermo and Lampson laughed.

Serve King Clayde? Clayde was the ruler of the Kingdom of Fenlai, while the capital of Fenlai, was also the Holy Capital of the Holy Union. What's more, the ruler of Fenlai was under the direct authority of the Radiant Church.

For Linley to serve King Clayde was the same thing as declaring his allegiance to the Radiant Church.

"Very good." Lampson was the first to begin laughing. "Linley, this is an extremely wise decision."

But neither Lampson nor Guillermo knew that the reason Linley had come to this decision was because he wanted to investigate his mother's whereabouts. Only through inserting himself into the national affairs of the Kingdom of Fenlai would he have even more opportunities to deal with Duke Patterson in the future.

Guillermo laughed as well. "Then from this moment forward, you can be considered a member of our Radiant Church. Oh, right. You don't have any incantations for earth and wind style spells of the seventh, eighth, or ninth ranks, or any of the forbidden spells, right?"

"Correct." Linley nodded. "I was only able to develop the incantation for the Soaring Technique through analyzing magical theory."

Guillermo said with satisfaction, "It isn't too hard to extrapolate the incantation for the Soaring Technique, but it is still quite impressive that you were able to extrapolate it from the incantation of the Floating Technique. Linley, don't worry. Once we return to the Church, we will send people to deliver all the incantations for spells of the seventh rank and higher to you."

Chapter 5 – Writ of Nobility

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 5, Writ of Nobility

The Ernst Institute did not make public high level magical incantations of the seventh rank or higher.

If you wanted to learn these higher rank spells, you would have to decide to join a faction.

“Thank you, Lord Guillermo, Lord Lampson.” Linley said thankfully.

Linley couldn’t help but think back to the power of the higher ranked wind spells as described in the books he had read. The higher ranked the spell, the more terrifying its offensive potential, especially in the wind-style. Its offensive spells, in fact, could be considered the number one amongst all styles.

For example, the forbidden-level ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell, or the ninth-ranked spell “Void Extermination” spell.

“Linley, how about this. When we return to Fenlai City, I will send someone to inform Clayde of your decision. Clayde will, in short order, confer a writ of nobility upon you, and grant you a manor as well.” Guillermo laughed.

Linley nodded.

“Linley.” The nearby Lampson patted Linley on the shoulders. “You don’t need to worry about any official matters for now. The only thing you need to do is train hard. I very much want to see our Radiant Church have yet another Saint-level combatant in our midst within fifty years.”

“Fifty years?”

Linley was confident that within fifty years, he could become a Saint-level

Dragonblood Warrior. But as for becoming a Saint-level Grand Magus in fifty years, the difficulty was too great.

“Work hard.” Guillermo also patted Linley on his shoulders in a friendly way.

As the resplendent carriages made their way through the village roads, the nearby trees and lakes soon receded into the distance. In front and behind the carriages, there were rows of knights. Under this resplendent escort, they reached Fenlai City by lunchtime.

Fenlai City. Within the Debs clan’s manor.

“Alice, can you forgive me?” Kalan was holding Alice’s hands, staring into her eyes.

A look of helplessness was on Alice’s face. She gently nodded.

What else could she do?

“Rowling [Luo’lin] is about to arrive.” Alice said softly. “I’m about to go back.”

Despite everything, as of right now, Alice and Kalan still were not formally man and wife. Even if they got engaged, they still would not yet be husband and wife. Only after the formal ceremony would they become husband and wife. Before the wedding, Alice still had to observe the proprieties. Every day, she would go back to her own home.

“Rowling?” Kalan couldn’t help but frown upon hearing this name.

Rowling was Kalan’s principal wife.

Because of the fame of the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, that female figure who was the inspiration for the sculpture had also been deeply imprinted into everyone’s mind. Once Kalan formally announced his engagement, many people would be able to recognize Alice as that

inspiration. In a very short period of time, the Debs family had already selected a principal wife for Kalan.

“Kalan.”

A happy voice rang out. A golden haired girl, her hair in pleats, ran over to them happily. This girl looked extremely pure and innocent, yet still possessed the aura of nobility. Especially those large, liquid eyes; they made her seem all the more adorable.

“Rowling. You came.” Kalan forced a smile on his face.

Kalan had to admit that Rowling was a very adorable girl. Perhaps nobody would refuse to be together with Rowling. Only, in Kalan’s heart, the one he truly loved really was Alice.

“Where’s Uncle Bernard?” Rowling swept the area with her big eyes.

“Father went out to handle some affairs. I expect he’ll be back soon.” Kalan replied.

Kalan knew exactly where his father had gone and what he was doing. Thanks to the pressure of the Dawson Conglomerate, the businesses of the Debs clan in the city of Fenlai had reached the point of collapse. Every day, they were losing money. If they continued suffering such losses, they might be able to hold out for another year or half year, but as time went on, even their deep pockets would eventually run dry.

What’s more, the clan couldn’t just sit there and do nothing. After all, many of the other clans in Fenlai City were eying them covetously and circling around them.

Thus…his father, Bernard, had made a very dangerous decision. To engage in the illicit mining and smuggling of water jade.

Water jade was a type of extremely valuable gemstone. Generally, it was inlaid on top of magistaffs, and was very beneficial to water-style magi. In

the Kingdom of Fenlai, there was a fairly large amount of water jade deposits, and the Kingdom of Fenlai had generated an astonishing amount of wealth through water jade mining.

Because water jade was so precious, naturally there were many people who tried to engage in water jade smuggling.

But his Majesty, King Clayde, bitterly detested the smuggling of water jade. Every single merchant whom had been discovered to be smuggling water jade, King Clayde had ordered to be put to death. But because the profit margin for the smuggling of water jade was simply too enormous, perhaps 500% to 600%, there were still always merchants who were willing to brave this risk.

In the past, there was no need for the Debs clan to take such a dangerous route. But now, things were different.

Since all normal business paths had been sealed off by the Dawson Conglomerate, the only choice for the Debs clan was to smuggle!

“There shouldn’t be any problems.” Kalan said to himself. “The business partner which father has selected is the Minister of Finance for the Kingdom of Fenlai, the younger brother of his Majesty, Duke Patterson. With him as our partner, the chance of there being any problems should be fairly low.”

Patterson was the Minister of Finance for the entire Kingdom of Fenlai.

Clayde naturally had selected the person he himself trusted the most to assume the weighty responsibility of being in charge of managing the finances of the entire kingdom.

“Uncle Bernard is back.” Rowling’s bright voice sounded out.

Kalan raised his head.

Bernard, his face covered with smiles, walked through the door. Seeing

Rowling, he laughed. “Rowling, you are here? Have you had dinner yet?”

“Not yet,” Rowling replied.

Bernard nodded. “Tonight, stay here and have dinner with your big brother Kalan. Oh, right, there’s something I need to discuss with your big brother Kalan. Why don’t you and Alice have a nice chat? Later, I’ll have your big brother Kalan spend some time with you.” As he spoke, Bernard flicked a glance at Kalan.

Kalan obediently followed by Bernard’s side as the two entered a private room.

Closing the stone door, they lit the lamps.

“Father, what is it?” Kalan asked hurriedly.

A hint of satisfaction was on Bernard’s face. “I’ve already completed my discussions with Duke Patterson. He’s already agreed. But we will have to split the profits on this endeavor, fifty-fifty.”

“Fifty-fifty?” Kalan stared. “Father, this Duke Patterson is too greedy. Our clan is carrying out the actual smuggling work and spending all of the upfront costs. We are even paying for the horses out of pocket. All he’s doing is arranging some safe smuggling routes for us.”

It wasn’t that Kalan didn’t understand the importance of these smuggling routes.

But for this project, the Debs clan truly had invested a massive amount of money, while Duke Patterson didn’t have to spend a single coin. All he had to do was to use some of his official powers, and he would earn a huge amount of money.

“Fifty-fifty is within our range of acceptability.” Bernard laughed calmly. “Duke Patterson isn’t just providing us with safe smuggling routes. More importantly, he’s betraying his country and betraying his elder brother. If

King Clayde found out, even though Duke Patterson is his own younger brother, he most likely wouldn't be merciful to him."

Kalan nodded slightly.

Their partner was a Duke and the Minister of Finance. With him taking on such enormous risks for the sake of arranging a safe smuggling route for their clan, it was fair that he claimed half of the profits.

Bernard and Kalan exited the secret room and returned to the living room. Alice and Rowling were currently engaged in conversation.

"Oh, right. Kalan. I just heard from Patterson that in three more days, his Majesty will personally confer a rank of nobility upon Linley in the royal palace." Bernard instructed, "Prepare a gift for me. In a few days, I will give it to Linley."

Kalan nodded.

Alice, who was chatting with Rowling not too far away, couldn't help but turn her head and glance at them.

"Big brother Linley is being conferred a rank of nobility?" Alice murmured to herself.

Within the royal palace of Fenlai City.

Dozens of important ministers were lined up in orderly fashion in the court, while King Clayde was sitting up high, overlooking at everyone below.

"Everyone. Today, I have something important to announce." The smile on Clayde's face was radiant, and he spoke in a bright voice. The major ministers who had received the news in advance all knew what King Clayde was going to say. Clayde glanced at an attendant by his side. Instantly, the attendant shouted in a loud voice, "Linley Baruch, enter the palace!"

His voice echoed in the palace. Shortly afterwards, Linley, dressed in black

and gold magus robes, entered the palace. All of the nobles and ministers in the palace turned to look at him.

“I pay my respects to his Majesty.” Linley bowed as he spoke.

Clayde looked at Linley, and a smile appeared on his face like a flower blooming. “Linley, for you to be willing to labor on behalf of our kingdom is something I am extremely gratified about. I now confer upon you the title of Prime Court Magus, and also bequeath upon you the rank of Marquis.”

“Does anyone have an objection?” Clayde swept the court with his gaze.

All the nobles and ministers stared enviously at Linley, but none of them voiced any objections.

“Your Servant thanks you, Majesty!”

Actually, per what Cardinal Guillermo of the Radiant Church had originally said, the Radiant Church could let Linley instantly become a Duke. But Linley had felt this would be too amazing and draw too much attention to himself, especially given that he previously never had a rank of nobility. If he rose in rank too fast, that wouldn’t necessarily be a good thing.

That’s why they decided to go a step lower and confer the rank of Marquis.

“Linley, as the Prime Court Magus and as a Marquis, naturally you can no longer reside as a mere guest of the Dawson Conglomerate. I have already arranged for an extremely peaceful, secluded estate to be granted to you. It is on the Greenleaf Road, not too far from the palace.” Clayde said with a smile to Linley.

Linley immediately once more thanked the king for his generosity.

In reality, Clayde had already discussed the question of conferring rank and land to Linley with Linley. Today, they were simply openly announcing it in court.

Upon leaving the palace, Linley engaged in some idle conversation with the other ministers.

The highest level of power in the Kingdom of Fenlai was mostly occupied by the Minister of War, the Left Premier, the Right Premier, the Inspector General, and other people on the similar plane. These people virtually governed the entirety of affairs in the Kingdom of Fenlai.

Most of these people had the rank of Marquis. Even the lowest ranked amongst them, the Inspector General, was a Marquis.

On Greenleaf Road.

Linley was seated within his carriage, closing his eyes while quietly training.

“Lord Linley, we’re here.” The servant’s voice rang out from outside the carriage.

Linley opened his eyes, then pushed the curtain to his carriage open. Bebe directly leapt from the carriage seat onto Linley’s shoulders.

“Wow, what a big estate!” Bebe’s eyes were gleaming as he stared at the mansion.

Linley was also carefully inspecting the estate which the ruler of Fenlai had gifted him. This estate took up a vast expanse of land, and the main gate alone was over ten meters wide. Through the open gate, Linley could see there were many male servants, female servants, and also many Knights of the Radiant Temple.

“Not bad.” Linley nodded as he entered.

“Milord.” Seeing the gatekeeper bow respectfully, instantly all of the male and female servants in the courtyard suddenly stopped whatever it was they were doing and bowed respectfully towards Linley.

It was important for them to give Linley a good first impression. These servants all knew how incredible their new master was.

“Master Linley, congratulations, congratulations!” Suddenly, a very familiar voice rang out from not far away.

Linley turned his head. “Mr. Bernard.”

The person who had come was the leader of the Debs clan, Bernard Debs. Bernard smiled at Linley. “Master Linley, what a coincidence. My clan’s manor is also on Greenleaf Road. We’re only one house over. In the future, it will be quite easy for us to visit each other.”

“Oh.” Thinking back to when he had first rescued Alice and delivered her and Kalan back to Fenlai City, it did seem as though Kalan’s manor was not too far away.

“But Master Linley, your manor is much larger than mine. This manor of yours used to be where his Majesty himself lived.” Bernard said admiringly.

Linley also felt that this manor was astonishingly large, much larger than his ancestral mansion. To have such an enormous estate in Fenlai City, where each inch of land was as valuable as an inch of gold, was not something which simply having money could accomplish. So it turned out this was the former residence of his Majesty, King Clayde. No wonder it was so large.

“Mr. Bernard, I have to head back now. In the future, we’ll be able to chat quite often.” Linley smiled modestly, then turned his head and walked towards his own manor.

Right at this moment, at the gate to the Debs clan’s manor, Kalan, Rowling, and Alice were standing and watching from afar.

Chapter 6 – Tomes of Magic

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 6, Tomes of Magic

In terms of both furnishings and layout, this estate was definitely first rate.

Linley was particularly fond of the Hot Springs Garden.

The Hot Springs Garden within the estate was the place where his Majesty would engage in training when he lived here. Clayde was a warrior of the ninth rank. In order to become such a mighty warrior, naturally he didn't rely solely on his personal ability. He also spent years of painstaking effort.

The right half of the Hot Springs Garden was covered of a large, grassy area, filled with all sorts of exercise equipment.

On the left side of the Hot Springs Garden, next to a man-made hill, was a hot springs pool. The hot springs within this pool came naturally from underground. After a day of wild training, spending some time relaxing in the hot springs pool definitely was a godly, wonderful feeling.

Linley was currently bathing nude within the pool. The bubbling hot water rushed against his skin, making Linley feel so comfortable that his eyes began to close.

"Boss, when are we going to kill that Patterson guy? Last night, during the dinner, I really wanted to kill him for you already." Bebe hopped out of the pool, all the fur on his body wet.

"Don't be impatient."

Exiting the hot springs, Linley changed into a clean set of training clothes, then walked over to the grassy area while beginning to mumble the words to a spell. After a few moments, an earthen glow began to cover the ground beneath Linley in a certain area as earth elemental essence began to swirl

about him.

Earth-style magic – Supergravity Field.

Linley immediately leapt into the air, then inverted himself, head pointed down, feet pointing up. Using his two hands, he kept himself upright. Next, he moved to holding himself up with just one finger on each hand. Relying on just one finger, under the pressure of the Supergravity Field, Linley began to push himself up and down.

“One. Two…”

Linley counted silently. Each time he reached a thousand, Linley would change to a different finger.

The most important thing for a fighter was the quality of his body. Only a strong body would be able to accommodate a high amount of battle-qi. Only through this method would he be able to quickly grow strong! Even though he was now a Dragonblood Warrior, he still needed to maintain his daily training regime.

“Hrm?”

After training for about half an hour, Linley returned to the normal upright position. Linley stared coldly at the attractive female attendant who had just entered the Hot Springs Garden, carrying a tray with tea and fruit on top of it.

“My…my lord, this is your tea and fruit.” The female attendant was made somewhat uneasy by Linley’s stare, and she stammered a bit.

“Who instructed you to come in?” Linley said coldly.

The female attendant started. Stammering, she said, “Milord, I…I was worried that you were thirsty.”

“Thirsty?” Linley glanced at her expressionlessly.

“Attend to me!” Linley shouted.

Instantly, four burly warriors rushed in from outside the Hot Springs Garden. These four warriors all belonged to the Radiant Church. After all, the Radiant Church had dispatched over a hundred knights to safeguard Linley.

“Mercy, milord!” The attendant was so scared, she fell to her knees.

In the Yulan continent, nobles had a much higher status than commoners, especially high ranking nobles, who could casually kill a commoner without repercussion. As for Linley, whom even the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai treated courteously, without question Linley was one of the highest ranking nobles in the Kingdom of Fenlai.

Linley glanced at the attendant. In a cold voice, he said, “Remember, in the future, when I am in the Hot Springs Garden, no one is permitted entry. Anyone who does enter will be punished with twenty strikes of the military rod.”

“Twenty strikes of the rod?” The attendant’s face turned pale.

Military rods were extremely heavy. Even most muscular warriors would not be able to move for ten days or half a month after receiving twenty strikes of a military rod. A physically weak female attendant might very well die from such a beating.

“Mercy, milord, mercy!” The female attendant hurriedly pled.

Linley continued, “Since this is your first time committing this offense, I sentence you to twenty lashes of a rattan whip. If you make this mistake again, I definitely will not be merciful.”

“Thank you milord! Thank you milord!” The female attendant felt relieved.

In terms of pain, the strikes from a rattan whip might even be more painful

than that of the military rod, but it would cause nothing more than a superficial wound. It wouldn't cause any harm to the bones or to the organs. It would hurt, but it wouldn't kill.

"Remove her." Linley ordered the four warriors.

"Yes, Lord Linley." Two of the warriors stepped forward, pulling the attendant away and frog-marching her out. As for the tea and the fruit on the tray, those were all left on the floor.

Linley turned and once more returned to the grassy area.

The Bloodviolet Godsword was one of Linley's secret weapons. Although whenever he trained with it, Linley usually made sure to keep it straight and hard, on occasion, Linley would also let it remain flexible and wield it in a bizarre, flowing manner. Linley had to make certain that this secret of the Bloodviolet Godsword was not discovered by anyone.

Naturally, he could not allow anyone to watch him train.

With his right hand, Linley stroked his waist. Instantly, with a cold, violet flash, an extremely thin, violet blade appeared in Linley's hands.

"Swish!"

From within the Hot Springs Garden, one ray of violet light after another began to appear, while Linley roved back and forth within the garden like a wandering dragon. Having totally merged the support of the wind-style Supersonic spell with his own power, not only was Linley's movement speed fast, it was also extremely agile.

Through the usage of the Secret Dragonblood Manual, Linley trained his body. When he was relaxed, he would engage in the carving of sculptures to raise his spiritual energy, while he would enter the meditative trance in the middle of the hot springs to refine his mageforce.

His training permeated his every daily activity.

Only, Linley still had not been able to find the best time to make his move against Patterson. After all, he had relatively few encounters with Patterson. If Linley went directly to Patterson's manor, or Patterson came to Linley's residence, once Linley killed Patterson, within perhaps just half a day, King Clayde would know what had happened.

No matter how great Linley's potential was, if he murdered King Clayde's own brother, Clayde definitely would not be gentle with him.

Within the main hall, Linley was gracefully eating lunch.

After he finished his lunch, Linley once again began thinking about Patterson. "This Patterson fellow hasn't come to visit me at all. Seems like I'll have to personally pay a visit." Linley decided to no longer be the hunter setting a snare for the rabbit. He would head directly to the Patterson manor.

"Milord." Just at this moment, an attendant ran over from outside. "Milord, Lord Cardinal Guillermo of the Radiant Church has arrived."

"Guillermo?"

Linley's body trembled, and then he immediately headed for the door, going out to personally welcome Guillermo.

Within the main hall.

"Linley, I hear that recently, your life has been leisurely and carefree. Every day, either you are training, resting in the hot springs, or engaging in stonesculpting. This sort of life really makes one envious of you." Guillermo said with a laugh to Linley.

Linley nodded and laughed as well.

"But Linley." Guillermo said solemnly, "I must remind you that although your sculptures are worth money, the thing which truly determines a

person's status is power! Just look at that nearby Debs clan. Don't they have money? But in terms of status, they are inferior to you."

Linley understood this rationale as well.

True, money was a useful thing.

But when one's power reached a certain level, the uses of money would grow fewer and fewer. For example, to a Saint-level combatant, money was nothing more than a worldly possession. This was also why the Dawson Conglomerate had been willing to offer a hundred million gold coins to acquire Linley and have him join them.

To these trading unions, the support of a super-combatant was simply too vital.

"Lord Guillermo, I thank you for your reminder." Linley said with a smile.

Linley didn't say, of course, that it was stonesculpting that was the true reason behind him becoming a seventeen year old dual-element magus of the seventh rank.

"I'm just making small talk. After all, when you need to rest, you should." Guillermo glanced at one of the Vicars behind him, who immediately opened the package he had been carrying on his back. After opening the silver-white package, a stone case was revealed within.

The Vicar then placed this stone case between Linley and Guillermo.

"Lord Guillermo, this is?" Linley already had an idea as to what this was.

Guillermo laughed with self-satisfaction. "Linley. Open it up yourself."

Linley slowly opened the stone case, lifting up the lid. Within the stone case, there were two tomes made from silk thread. Both of these two tomes appeared to be colored a dark gold color."

“This is?…” Linley looked towards Guillermo.

“Linley, didn’t I previously say that I was going to give to you books regarding magical incantations for wind-style and earth-style spells? That’s what these two tomes are.” Guillermo laughed.

Linley couldn’t help but feel excited.

Magical incantations and the proper method by which one cast the spell were both very important. Otherwise, even if one had enough spiritual energy and mageforce, one still wouldn’t be able to cast more powerful spells.

Linley immediately withdrew one of the two books and opened it up.

“Wind-style!” Upon reading the first page, Linley saw that the first page was a general summary regarding this tome.

After the summary, it began to describe one wind-style spell after another. This tome explained everything in great detail, and also clearly explained what to focus on for every single spell.

Linley flipped directly to the section on spells of the seventh rank.

Linley felt astonishment as he read about one powerful, intricately designed spell after another. Linley had to admit, the bygone people who had invented these spells in the past were, without a doubt, absolute geniuses.

“Spell of the ninth rank – Windshadow Technique. It was derived from a combination of the ‘Supersonic’ spell and the ‘Airwings’ spell. It possesses the special effects given by the Airwings spell, great speed, and great agility. It can be described as perfect…”

Seeing the deep, in-depth explanation of the Windshadow spell within this tome, Linley felt all the more excited.

A brand new world of magic was beginning to open up in front of him.

In the future, with his prowess in earth-style and wind-style magic, as well as the power of a Dragonblood Warrior, his future offensive potential would be enough to cause anyone to shudder in their heart.

Seeing how Linley had become totally absorbed with these magical tomes, Guillermo didn't make a sound as he quietly left by himself.

….

Within the Hot Springs Garden.

Linley was seated cross-legged on the grass, all of his muscles and bones quivering as that special Dragonblood battle-qi was permeating every part of his body with its force, causing Linley's entire body to experience a constant strengthening.

"Boss, Patterson will be arriving tonight. You still are in the mood to train?" Bebe mumbled, lying next to Linley.

Linley opened his eyes and looked at Bebe.

"In the mood?"

Linley felt bitter in his heart. Early this morning, that Duke Patterson had sent word via messenger that tonight, he wanted to come have a one-on-one visit with Linley. As the Minister of Finance, naturally Duke Patterson felt the need to have good relations with all the other important nobles. These past few days, he had been handling and worrying over the issue of illegally mining and smuggling water jade, which was why he hadn't had the time to visit Linley yet.

"I'm not in the mood, no, but I must train. Only when I have enough strength will I have confidence." Linley said to himself.

Per his current plans.

Within the next half year, he would kill Patterson as well as find out who the person behind Patterson was.

After finding out who the person behind Patterson was, Linley would, before the next anniversary of his father's death, find out what happened to his mother, or kill the person behind Patterson.

"Swish! Swish!"

"Ahhhh!" Outside the Hot Springs Garden, a miserable scream.

With a leap, Linley jumped atop the man-made hill within the Hot Springs Garden. Standing on the top of the hill, he could clearly see that the bodies of those ten or so Knights of the Radiant Church had begun to decay. They screamed in agony nonstop as their blood began to stain the ground.

At the same time, from every direction, a dense black fog began to billow at high speed towards the Hot Springs Garden. Wherever this black fog passed, everything, be it animal or human, would begin to corrode, then die.

Linley looked up into the sky.

The sky above him, as well, was now covered with that dense black fog. The surrounding black fog swept towards him at high speed.

"Someone's here."

Linley could sense that within that dense black fog, there were several black blurs that were charging towards him at high speed.

At this moment, there was nowhere for Linley to flee!

"Haaaargh!"

At a high speed, Linley descended from the man-made and, as though he were a fish, jumped into the hot springs pool.

Chapter 7 – Heavy Casualties

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 7, Heavy Casualties

The hot springs water bubbled about. By now, Linley was at the bottom of the hot springs.

This hot springs pool wasn't very deep, at most around two meters or so. Right now, Linley was pressing his body against the bottom of the pool. The water of the springs was very clear, and Linley could vaguely see what was going on outside.

"Who are these people? Why were the warriors of the Radiant Church outside unable to take a single blow from them?" Linley's mind was full of suspicions. No matter what, at the very least the warriors of the Radiant Church outside were of the fifth rank. Every one of them possessed the ability to use battle-qi.

Could it be that for some reason, these warriors were not able to use battle-qi to block that black fog?

Linley didn't understand what was going on, so for now, he did not dare to come out and directly resist the black fog!

"Linley, that black fog should be a fairly common darkness-style spell known as the 'Corrosive Fog'. You can definitely use battle-qi to resist its effects." Doehring Cowart's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

"But those warriors of the Radiant Church…"

"They should have been attacked by a different sort of spell that bewilders the mind, preventing them from utilizing their battle-qi in time to defend against the spell." This was Doehring Cowart's deduction.

"Gurgle, gurgle."

From around Linley's body, a gust of wind began to billow outwards. It was the wind-style spell, Windscout. Linley could totally sense everything which was going on outside.

"Quick, no matter what the cost, we have to kill Linley." The leader in black said coldly.

The other five black robed men all nodded, charging towards the hot springs at high speed.

Right at this moment…

"Swish!"

Like an arrow, Linley shot out of the pool into the air, splattering beads of water everywhere. And then, Linley descended from above them like a fierce tiger leaping down from the mountains, his five fingers formed into claws as he ripped towards the head of one of the black robed men.

"Hmph." That black-robed man's body quivered slightly, as he prepared to use his left arm to forcibly block Linley's claw attack, while stabbing out with the sharp knife in his right hand.

A hint of a vicious smile appeared on Linley's face.

Suddenly, a bluish-black Dragonblood battle-qi covered the right arm of Linley, which was attacking with a claw hand. The layer of Dragonblood battle-qi was very thin. Given its thinness and the fact that the surrounding area was full of the dark 'Corrosive Fog', it wasn't very visible at all. Most importantly…sharp claws suddenly appeared from where Linley's fingernails had been.

"Shiiiiirk!" Linley's right hand easily pierced through the black-robed man's shoulder blade. At the same time, Linley once again used force on his right hand, giving it a fierce twist.

“Crack!”

The entire left chest of the black-robed man exploded, casting fresh blood everywhere. The black-robed man instantly died, but right before his death, he stared in disbelief, because his knife had stabbed Linley’s body but didn’t leave a mark at all.

“A seventh rank Earthguard armor is made out of jadestone. Do you think jadestone is so easily overcome?” Linley said to himself. “Much less, aside from the layer of jadestone armor, the skin on my body can instantly transform into the Dragonblood Warrior’s scales.”

Right now, when under the full Dragonblood Warrior state, Linley had the power of a warrior of the early eighth rank.

And when using the ‘Dragonform’, Linley had inherited the hallmark property of the Armored Razorback Wyrm; incredible defensive powers. Linley’s black scales were much stronger than the jadestone armor. Judging from the power of that stab by the black-robed man, he had most likely been an expert of the seventh rank.

Unfortunately, the defensive abilities of that expert of the seventh rank were totally unable to defend against this claw attack by Linley. Those were the draconic claws of a transformed Dragonblood Warrior. And what’s more, this was only the Demidragon state.

“How is that possible?” The other four black-robed men were stunned.

Based on their information, Linley was a dual-element magus of the seventh rank, and his warrior abilities were far weaker. They didn’t expect that an assassin of the seventh rank couldn’t withstand a single blow from him.

“Our intelligence was wrong!” The leader of the black-robed men standing in the very back cursed in his heart.

But Linley only nodded mentally to himself. “It seems that when using a

partial transformation, one can catch the opponent off-guard and make them suffer a serious loss."

"You Cult of Shadows bastards!" Furious roars could be heard ringing out from outside, travelling at high speed towards the Hot Springs Garden. Linley understood that another group of the Knights of the Radiant Church charged with his protection had arrived. Only ten or so people had been killed just now, while his total guard numbered over a hundred.

The expression on the face of the leader of the black-robed men changed.

"No matter the cost, kill Linley!" The black-robed leader shouted.

And then he led the four remaining black-robed men to surround and attack Linley. The black knives in their hands gleamed with a dark aura, as they seemed to have infused every last bit of their power into the knives in their hands.

An attack which they were willing to give up their own lives to make!

"Warriors of the seventh rank, right?"

Seeing the group attack of these black-robed men, Linley didn't dodge or hide at all. With his right hand, Linley gently touched his waist. Suddenly….

A cold, fierce, brilliant violet light flashed.

At the same time, Linley retreated at high speed towards the back. Of the five people attacking Linley, four remained at their original spots, while the fifth, the leader, hurriedly retreated at high speed.

"Shirrrrrrrrrrrk!"

The stomachs of those four black-robed men were sliced open. Their stomach and intestines fell to the ground, and blood sprayed everywhere.

“Fast. And sharp.” The leader of the black-robed men stared in astonishment at Linley.

A single sword stroke killing four warriors of the seventh rank. This example was really too terrifying.

Linley knew very well how sharp this Bloodviolet Godsword was, but just based on Bloodviolet’s natural sharpness alone, it might be difficult to penetrate the defense of a magical beast of the seventh rank. Similarly, if a warrior of the seventh rank was to use battle-qi to protect his body, at the very most, Linley would only be able to heavily injure them, not kill them.

But just then, those four black-robed men had been using all of the energy on their attacks!

They didn’t expect Linley to have such a sword on him.

“If I want to enhance the power of Bloodviolet, I would have to activate it via my Dragonblood battle-qi. But if I use the Dragonblood battle-qi, the speed of Bloodviolet will be slower than if I used my wind-style mageforce to activate it.” At this moment, Linley was pondering the pros and cons of each.

Just then, it was true that Linley had used a single strike to kill the four of them.

What he relied on was his astonishing speed, an attack so fast that his opponents weren’t able to respond to it!

But just relying on speed and the sharpness of his sword would generally only be enough to kill a warrior of the sixth rank, or to heavily wound a warrior of the seventh rank. Only if the warrior of the seventh rank were to act like these four assassins and concentrate all of their battle-qi on their attack, not caring about their lives and sparing nothing for defense, would he be able to kill them.

“But the leader didn’t suffer much of an injury.” Linley looked at the leader

of the black-robed men.

This black-robed man's power should most likely have exceeded the seventh rank.

Using wind-style mageforce on Bloodviolet could make Bloodviolet move faster and make its movements more smooth. But it couldn't raise the attacking power! But if he were to use Dragonblood battle-qi on Bloodviolet, he could increase the attack power but wouldn't be able to increase his attack speed.

"You pieces of trash!"

Angry roars erupted from right outside the Hot Springs Garden. Clearly, these Knights of the Radiant Church had just seen the corpses of their companions and were all furious now.

"Linley, you are even more formidable than we thought you were. But unfortunately, you have sided with the Radiant Church. Thus…" The black-robed leader seemed to pay no attention at all to those who were outside, as he spoke in a soft voice to Linley.

The black-robed leader's voice seemed to carry a certain unique timbre to it. At first, Linley didn't notice anything, but by the time the black-robed man was halfway through his words, Linley could feel his mind grow a bit blurry and his focus waver.

"You must die!"

The black knife of the black-robed man arrived almost instantly at Linley's chest.

"Linley!" Doehring Cowart's mental roar echoed in Linley's mind, instantly bringing Linley back to his senses.

"Crunch!"

The black-robed leader stared at his waist in astonishment. His waist had suddenly been bitten almost in half. His exposed muscles were still trembling, and blood was pouring out in a torrent. The black-robed man could clearly feel that his entire body had lost all strength. His life-force was quickly draining away.

“This Shadowmouse…”

The black-robed leader stared stupidly at the black Shadowmouse by Linley’s side.

A black Shadowmouse should at most be a magical beast of the third or fourth ranks. To this black-robed leader, as a warrior of the eighth rank, a black Shadowmouse shouldn’t be able to injure him at all. This was why the black-robed leader hadn’t paid any attention to it.

But…

Just then, that little black Shadowmouse had flown over, quickly transformed his jaws into a larger size, then taken a vicious, giant bite out of his waist.

“Hmph! Let’s see you be cocky now. You should consider it an honor to have died by the hands of I, Bebe.” Bebe stood near the corpse of the black-robed leader, his little head raised proudly.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Bebe was a freak of nature that could even withstand the dying final blow of an Armored Razorback Wyrm. Bebe was capable of even biting and breaking the tough, massive plated scales of a Velocidragon of the eighth rank! In terms of both offense and defense, Bebe was now extremely powerful.

The only weakness was…his size was too small.

Even if Bebe was able to bite those giant magical beasts, Bebe might not be

able to totally chew through their thick massive scales or skin at one bite.

“Bastard!”

Those angrily howling Knights of the Radiant Church charged to Linley’s side. Just as they prepared to do battle with their opponents…they saw the ground littered with corpses.

“Milord, are you alright?” The leader of the knights immediately asked.

Right now, Linley’s appearance was very frightening. Both his face and his body were covered with blood.

“I’m fine. I only suffered some light wounds.” Linley said. “You dispose of the corpses. I’ll go take a rest.” As he spoke, Linley immediately walked out of the Hot Springs Garden. And now, when the knights lowered their head to stare at the corpses, they couldn’t help but begin to frown.

The corpse of the black-robed leader was missing half of his waist, as though it had been bitten off, or perhaps cut off by claws.

The other four black-robed assassins had been cut cleanly in half, while for the last one, it seemed as though his left chest had entirely exploded, revealing his bones.

“What…how…”

The group of knights stared dumbly, their jaws slack. They didn’t imagine that Linley, a magus, could cause his enemies to die like this.

……

At the top level of the Radiant Temple.

The long, skinny form of the Holy Emperor was covered by a long, whitish-silver robe. He reclined on a chair, leisurely flipping through some books. His bald head shone dazzlingly like the sun.

“Holy Emperor.” The red-robed Guillermo bowed obediently in front of him.

“Hrm?” The Holy Emperor twitched his eyelids, glancing at Guillermo.

Being watched by the Holy Emperor was like being under pressure from a thirty thousand pound boulder. Guillermo respectfully said, “Holy Emperor, just now, the Cult of Shadows made an assassination attempt against Linley. But fortunately, Linley’s abilities as a warrior are quite profound. He managed to kill all of the attackers, suffering only a light wound.”

“Killed them?”

The Holy Emperor looked at Guillermo with his jade-blue eyes. With a light laugh, he said, “Guillermo, the Cult of Shadows is aware that Linley is a dual-element magus of the seventh rank. Could it be that they didn’t send a sufficiently competent force?”

“Holy Emperor, this group of assassins was quite powerful. The lead assassin should also have been a specialist at using mind-bewitching darkness-style magic.” Guillermo hurriedly said.

The Holy Emperor didn’t say anything else, only faintly smiled as he looked at Guillermo.

“Guillermo, are you proposing….?”

Guillermo nodded. “Right. Linley is an important individual who needs to be trained well by the Radiant Church. More importantly, not only does Linley possess high natural talent, he is also an extremely hard worker. I believe that after another fifty years, it is very likely that Linley will become a Saint-level combatant. And in a hundred years….Linley will be one of the ranked Saint-level combatants of the Yulan continent.”

If a man did not prepare for the future, his present would be filled with problems.

Both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had existed for many years now. Even back when the Yulan Empire had unified the Yulan continent, they had existed.

The reason they were able to last for so long, was because they both understood the importance of one thing: Cultivating talent!

Constantly expanding, constantly converting believers, constantly cultivating talent.

Perhaps right now, Linley wasn't too powerful, but a century later? Perhaps he would be an individual approaching the level of the Holy Emperor. To a Saint-level combatant, a hundred years was nothing at all.

"That's why I wish for Linley to receive even better instruction, as well as better protection. In other words…I wish for Linley to go train alongside Lord 'Fallen Leaf'." Guillermo said.

"Fallen Leaf?"

The Holy Emperor was startled, but then he nodded. "Fine, then. But first, you must go seek his approval. I certainly am not able to make a decision on behalf of Fallen Leaf."

"Yes, Holy Emperor."

Guillermo paid his respects and left.

The Holy Emperor glanced at the departing Guillermo with his jade-blue eyes, and then stared at the sky outside the window. "He killed all of the attackers? Baruch…Baruch….hrm. It seems as though the Baruch clan was one of the clans of the Four Supreme Warriors. The Dragonblood Warrior clan."

Chapter 8 – An Excessive Desire to Kill

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 8, An Excessive Desire to Kill

During the recent assassination attempt, Linley's side suffered the losses of eighteen Knights of the Radiant Church, four female attendants, and two male attendants. As a result of this, the Radiant Church further strengthened and enlarged the security detail within the estate.

That same night of the assassination, within the manor.

"Linley, are you okay?" King Clayde asked solicitously.

"I'm only slightly wounded, your Majesty." Linley's arm was wrapped with medical gauze.

Actually, Linley hadn't been injured at all during this attack, but he didn't want others to know exactly how powerful he was. Thus, he lightly injured himself on purpose, using his straight chisel to cut himself on his arm.

To Linley, who had previously suffered the pain of the initial Dragonform transformation, this sort of pain was nothing.

"As long as you are fine, Linley." Duke Patterson, who was by King Clayde's side, laughed.

Linley looked at Duke Patterson.

Tonight should have been the night for the meeting between Linley and Duke Patterson, but because of the assassination attempt, the two of them no longer would have the chance to have a private conversation tonight.

"Second brother, it's best that we don't disturb Linley any further. Let's allow him to have a good rest." Clayde turned his head and said.

“Yes, your Majesty.” Patterson glanced at Linley, and then followed King Clayde out.

Linley felt as though there were a hint of helplessness in the look Patterson had given him. Clearly, per Patterson’s original plan, there were some things he wished to discuss with Linley in private during their scheduled one-on-one meeting.

But clearly, this was no longer an appropriate time.

In the next few days, the estate once more returned to normal.

“Boss, today is May 18th, right?” Bebe, who was enjoying lunch alongside Linley, suddenly spoke mentally to Linley.

“Right. What is it?” Linley looked at Bebe.

Bebe wrinkled his little nose. Quirking his mouth, he mentally said, “Boss, have you forgotten? That Bernard fellow, the leader of the Debs clan, told us that June 18th would be the date of his son’s engagement ceremony. He invited you to attend as well. It’s now May 18th. You only have a month left.”

“Engagement?”

Linley was startled.

A month from now, Alice and Kalan would be getting engaged.

“That’s none of my business.” Linley quickly returned to his usual calm demeanor, lowering his head and continuing to eat.

Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled around three times, and then he used his tiny little paws to rub at his chin. A look of suspicion on his face, he said, “Could it be that I, Bebe, am mistaken? Shouldn’t be the case. I’m so awesome, after all. My judgment is excellent. In his heart, the Boss certainly cares about this affair. If it were me, Bebe, I would smash that

little Kalan's skull in with a single paw."

"Lord Linley."

One of the guardian knights entered the main hall. "Lord Linley. Cardinal Guillermo has come."

"Guillermo?" Linley hesitated for just one moment, then he immediately put down his utensils and went to the door.

In the entire hierarchy of the Radiant Church, the person whom Linley was most familiar with and had the best relationship with was probably Cardinal Guillermo. When someone treated Linley as courteously as Guillermo did, Linley naturally wouldn't act in a high, arrogant manner, as though he thought himself better.

"Linley, there's something I must tell you." Upon seeing Linley, Guillermo began to chuckle with joy as he spoke.

Linley looked at Guillermo questioningly. "What is it?"

Beaming, Guillermo said, "Linley, are you aware that within our Radiant Church, we have a special group of people known as…Ascetics?"

"Yes, I am." Linley nodded.

Previously, when he had been kidnapped by those experts from the Cult of Shadows, it was the Deputy Arbiter of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal as well as an Ascetic and several Executors who had scared the opponents away. Only then had he been able to return to the city of Fenlai.

"Within our Radiant Church, there have been many people obsessed with magic or fighting skills who have enlisted within the ranks of the Ascetics. Put another way, neither the Knights of the Radiant Temple, nor the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, have as many experts amongst their ranks as the Ascetics do."

Guillermo beamed as he patted Linley on the shoulders. “What I am about to tell you is that you have the chance to become the disciple of a legendary Ascetic.”

“A legendary Ascetic?” Linley frowned.

Guillermo smiled faintly. “This legendary Ascetic is considered to be at the highest levels, even amongst the Ascetics. He also possesses an extremely high status within our Radiant Church. As for his power, even if we look at the Yulan continent as a whole, there are perhaps only those three freaks of nature who can surpass him in power.”

“Three freaks of nature?” Linley instantly grew curious. “Lord Guillermo, who are these three freaks of nature that you speak of?”

While chatting, the two of them walked back to the main hall.

Guillermo didn’t reply right away. He glanced at the Vicar next to him, and the Vicar instantly escorted everyone present away, then obediently stepped out himself, closing the door.

In the entire main hall, only Linley, Guillermo, and Bebe were now present.

“Linley, in the future, it’s possible that you will meet with these people, so it isn’t a big deal if I tell you about them now.” Guillermo said, putting on a mysterious air.

Linley looked at Guillermo curiously.

Guillermo sighed. “Here in the Yulan continent, there are three individuals who have surpassed the existence of the Saint-level combatants. The three ‘freaks of nature’ I talked about, are precisely those three freaks.”

“Those who ascended past the level of Saints? That would make them Gods?” Linley was shocked.

“Right. You can refer to them as Gods.” Guillermo nodded.

Linley immediately perked up his ears to listen closely.

Guillermo slowly said, “Across the entirety of the Yulan continent, there are only three such freaks. The first freak is the ‘High Priest of the Living Temple’ of the Yulan Empire. Many people simply refer to him as the ‘High Priest’. I, at least, have no idea how old the High Priest is. He has been alive for simply too long.”

Linley nodded.

“This second freak has been alive an extremely long time. He is the true ruler of the third most dangerous place in the Yulan continent, the Forest of Darkness. This freak is supposedly a magical beast in nature, but he has already reached the level of being able to transform into a human. Linley, you should already know that when a magical beast reaches the Saint-level, he can transform his body enough to speak in human tongues, but is not able to transform into a human form. You can imagine for yourself how terrifying a magical beast who can transform into a human must be.”

Linley nodded slightly.

He had previously heard Doehring Cowart speak of these two individuals. Even back when Doehring Cowart was alive, these two had been invincible presences.

“And the third person?” Linley asked.

Guillermo sighed. “This third person is also someone who I revere greatly. He was the founding Emperor of the O’Brien Empire, the most militarily powerful empire in the Yulan continent. People call him the ‘War God O’Brien’.”

“O’Brien?” Linley memorized this name.

Given that the O’Brien Empire was named after this person, one could imagine how amazing he was.

“Five thousand years ago, the War God quickly rose to prominence, defeating one Saint-level combatant after another. In that era, there were many super-combatants, such as the Four Supreme Warriors, who appeared during that time period.” Guillermo smiled at Linley.

Linley thought back to his own ancestor, Baruch.

The first leader of the Baruch clan had appeared almost exactly five thousand years ago as well.

“Back then, the Four Supreme Warriors were extremely powerful, but their brilliance was totally eclipsed by the War God. The War God defeated one powerful Saint-level combatant after another, and in the end, even engaged in a great battle with the High Priest, in the air above the Yulan River. During the course of their battle, the shockwaves alone killed over ten thousand people. In the end, both the O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire gave up a large amount of territory, allowing it to form into three independent kingdoms which served as buffer zones between these two great Empires.” Guillermo sighed emotionally.

“Linley, in the minds of many, the High Priest is the most powerful human alive. But the War God was actually able to fight to a stalemate with the High Priest. But how few years had the War God been alive for? This is why so many people are in awe of him. Who knows what level of power the War God is now at, after five thousand years of training.” Guillermo sighed with praise.

Linley secretly nodded as well.

“This War God. He fought the High Priest to a stalemate?” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “How is that possible?”

Back in Doehring Cowart’s era, the High Priest’s brilliance eclipsed everyone in the world.

In Doehring Cowart’s heart, the High Priest was invincible and

undefeatable.

“Grandpa Doehring, every era will see super-combatants emerge. If you, Grandpa Doehring, hadn’t died back then and had continued to train, perhaps one day you would’ve also broken past the Saint-level and become an expert on the same level as the High Priest.” Linley mentally said.

Doehring Cowart let out a low sigh and no longer spoke.

“Enough talk about those three freaks. The person I am about to have you meet is only inferior to those three. If you can become his disciple, it will be of great benefit to you as you attempt to increase your power in magic.” Guillermo said.

Linley laughed inside.

As far as someone who was only inferior to those three freaks…wasn’t his own Grandpa Doehring someone who was at the peak of the Saint-level?

“What is the name of this Ascetic?” Linley asked.

“His name is…Fallen Leaf.”

Within one of the slums of Fenlai City. Only now did Linley realize that within Fenlai City, one of the largest, most prosperous cities in the Yulan continent, there was such an impoverished, desolate place. It was far worse off than even his own hometown of Wushan township.

At this moment, Linley and Guillermo were walking shoulder-to-shoulder within a foul, dirty alley.

“Lord Guillermo, the Lord Fallen Leaf that you spoke of lives here?” Linley couldn’t believe it.

“Right.” Guillermo nodded. “Linley, remember, this Lord Fallen Leaf detests those nobles who think themselves better than others. Thus, you must be modest and courteous, even towards these poor people.”

Linley glanced at the poor people lining the streets.

Not too far away, he saw a seven or eight year old child, malnourished to the point of being skin and bones, who wore a foul, oily black rag as his clothes. This child was staring at Linley with fear in his eyes.

Due to his skinniness, his sunken eyes seemed particularly large.

Those innocent eyes made Linley's heart tremble.

Linley didn't do anything, just continued to walk forward alongside Guillermo. On the road, Linley saw one poor child after another. None of them wore any proper clothes, and all of them were extremely poor.

"Here we are." Guillermo suddenly said.

Linley couldn't help but turn his head to look.

They were standing in front of a casually erected metal frame-like dwelling. An old man who looked like a beggar sat in the middle of the building. The old man was so skinny that it made one's heart quiver, and all the skin on his body was sagging down. His hands were like the claws of a chicken, only skin and bone.

This old fellow was looking at Linley with curiosity.

"Lord Fallen Leaf." Guillermo said respectfully.

"He really is Lord Fallen Leaf?" Linley wasn't sure in his heart, but seeing Guillermo behave in such a manner, he was forced to believe it.

But could this old man in front of him, who looked like a beggar that could be blown down by a good gust of wind, really be the high Saint-level combatant, Lord 'Fallen Leaf'?

"Guillermo, this is the one you mentioned to me, the so-called kid with

talent?" The old beggar asked.

"Yes, Lord Fallen Leaf." Guillermo said respectfully.

"Grandpa Fallen Leaf, Grandpa Fallen Leaf, quick, help save my mother. She was beaten and injured by someone!" A youthful voice rang out, then a girl came running in, carrying her skinny mother on her back.

The old beggar immediately turned around and stretched his right hand out.

Surrounded by a holy light, that heavily wounded woman began to heal at an astonishing speed.

The old beggar turned back to look at Linley. "I will only teach those with kind hearts and pure souls. But you…your heart is filled with an excessive desire to kill. I will not teach you."

Guillermo couldn't help but be astonished by these words.

"An excessive desire to kill?" A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face.

The need to seek vengeance on behalf of his parents had caused unspeakable pain and torment to Linley. Every minute, he desired to kill Patterson, but he continued to force himself to be calm and to not be rash. But this sort of constant self-repression did indeed cause Linley's killing urge to only grow greater and greater.

"Then, Lord Fallen Leaf, I take my leave." Linley bowed slightly, then turned and left.

The old beggar had originally wanted to say a few extra words. Upon seeing Linley turn and leave so cleanly and bluntly, he couldn't help but be startled. But then, a hint of a smile appeared on his face.

Chapter 9 – The Engagement

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 9, The Engagement

“Lord Fallen Leaf.” Seeing how impolite Linley had been, Guillermo hurriedly apologized, “Lord Fallen Leaf, this Linley is only seventeen years old this year. Lord Fallen Leaf, please forgive his discourtesy.”

Guillermo knew very well what a great amount of influence this Fallen Leaf had within the Radiant Church. This Lord Fallen Leaf could be considered the spiritual leader of the entire Ascetic branch. Even the Holy Emperor himself didn’t have the ability to force him to go against his own will.

Using his skinny, chicken-claw like right hand, Fallen Leaf stroked his straggly beard. With curiosity, he watched Linley’s departing back. “Discourtesy? No, no. He wasn’t exactly discourteous. It can only be said that this kid acts very firmly and unwaveringly.”

Guillermo was startled.

He didn’t expect that this Lord Fallen Leaf, who initially had a poor impression of Linley, would now praise him.

“Guillermo.” Fallen Leaf looked at Guillermo.

“Lord Fallen Leaf, I await your instructions.” Guillermo said respectfully.

Smiling, Fallen Leaf said, “This Linley’s heart is filled with murderous intent, and he is firm and unwavering. I think a person like him will never hesitate in his actions, whether it be in killing or in anything else. A person like this is very much suited to be the sharp sword of the Radiant Church.”

Guillermo understood what Fallen Leaf meant.

Although the Radiant Church urged people to follow their better natures,

towards the followers of other religions, the Radiant Church was ruthless and merciless. Naturally, this would require ruthless and merciless people. This was why the Ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Church was originally formed.

“Perhaps in the future, this kid, Linley, will become the new Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.” Fallen Leaf said softly.

Guillermo couldn’t help but turn to look at Linley’s departing back.

Become the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal?

Guillermo knew very well that the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal could be considered the second highest ranking person within the Radiant Church. In fact, from some standpoints, it could be considered that the position of the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal was on par with that of the Holy Emperor.

The Holy Emperor was, on the surface, the leader of the Radiant Church who wielded the most power.

But the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal was the dark underside of the Radiant Church, the leader of the most powerful military force within the Church!

“Lord Fallen Leaf, are you willing to guide him?” Guillermo suddenly asked.

But Fallen Leaf still shook his head.

“Why?” Guillermo was confused. Since Fallen Leaf appreciated Linley, why wasn’t he willing to train him?

Fallen Leaf shook his head. “My training methods are not suited for him. My way requires a pure heart, and is suited for someone whose heart faces the light. But as for him…the path he walks is the path of slaughter.”

Guillermo nodded.

“Guillermo, there’s no need for you to find another master for him. A truly powerful person will rely on himself to find a path most suitable for himself. The teachings of others are, after all, based on their own ways.”

Fallen Leaf looked at Guillermo. “You are an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. Why, then, have I never instructed you? It’s precisely because of this reason. Even if I tell you about what I have comprehended and my insights, you still will not succeed, because only after countless personal experiences will your soul transform, allowing you to comprehend deeper levels of mysteries. Only then will you succeed.”

“Remember. Rely on yourself.” Fallen Leaf smiled.

Guillermo nodded.

He hadn’t yet entered the Saint-level, so there was no way for him to comprehend what the difference between the Saint-level and the ninth rank was. Although at times, he wondered if Fallen Leaf was intentionally withholding valuable guidance from him, upon seeing Fallen Leaf’s sincere gaze and hearing his sincere voice, he believed him.

“Perhaps I really do have to rely on myself.”

Guillermo had been held at the ninth rank as a magus for a long time, now. He deeply desired to make a breakthrough.

After all, between the ninth rank and the Saint-level, the difference between the two was like that of the heavens and the earth.

Within Linley’s manor. The Hot Springs Garden.

Next to the hot springs pool, Linley was quietly seated in the meditative trance.

“Shudder, shudder.” Linley’s entire body was constantly emitting strange

noises, as his bones and muscles continuously shuddered. Beads of sweat constantly flowed down his body.

Training in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual was ten times more effective than using ordinary battle-qi training methods.

But this was only natural. After all, the requirements for one to be able to use the Secret Dragonblood Manual were also extremely intense.

“Why is training for humans so difficult? You even require all sorts of secret manuals that require different body types.” Lying next to Linley, Bebe’s little head turned to look at Linley, his mind full of questions.

He was a magical beast, and his training was very simple. He would directly absorb darkness-style elemental essence from the outside world, drawing it into his body and into his magicite core.

There weren’t any secrets. It was just a very natural absorption process.

…..

Linley continued to live this sort of quiet life, spending most of his time each day in training.

Using several high quality training methods at the same time, he pushed his body’s capacity for punishment to the maximum.

In the blink of an eye, over ten days passed.

“Whoosh!”

Wielding the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hands, Linley tested out one attack after another.

Which angle allowed the sword to strike out the fastest?

How to control the vibrations of Bloodviolet to reduce the hindrance of the

natural air friction, and to make his sword move faster?

Time and time again, he painstakingly trained in striking with his sword.

Each time Linley made his move, a brilliant violent flash would appear.

The speed of these blows was enough to make one's heart quail.

But Linley was still not satisfied. He constantly pursued improvement, perfection. Using his understanding of wind elemental essence which was granted to him by his wind magic, he trained hard to make Bloodviolet move even quicker and more fluidly.

"Milord!" A voice called out from outside the Hot Springs Garden.

Linley paused. With a movement of his hand, the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hand disappeared. Nobody could notice that this Bloodviolet sword had wrapped around Linley's waist now.

Even if a normal person paid attention to his belt, they would only think it to be a purple belt.

"Enter." Only now did Linley speak.

Instantly, a beautiful maid came running in at high speed. A look of worship on her face, she looked at Linley, and then immediately lowered her head and said respectfully, "Milord, the Debs clan has sent someone over with an invitation card." As she spoke, she offered the invitation card to Linley.

Linley looked at the invitation card.

The invitation card was red in color, while the trimmings were golden. The words 'invitation card' were written on top in bright, bold characters.

"Invitation card?"

Linley accepted the invitation card, and then opened it. Indeed, the contents

of the card were exactly what he had thought it would be.

“On June 18th, Kalan, Rowling, and Alice will carry out their engagement ceremony. Who is this Rowling?” Staring at the invitation card, Linley frowned.

“You can leave now.” Linley said calmly.

“Yes, milord.” The attendant said respectfully, then she departed from the Hot Springs Garden.

“Boss, is that Debs clan arranging the engagement ceremony for Alice?” Bebe leapt onto Linley’s shoulders, then stretched his little head out to peer at the card.

“Uh, Rowling? Who is Rowling?” Bebe looked at Linley suspiciously.

Doehring Cowart also appeared next to Linley. Seeing the invitation letter, a hint of a smile appeared on his face.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley turned to look at Doehring Cowart.

“Are you wondering who Rowling is?” Doehring Cowart really was someone who had only gotten craftier with age. He instantly understood. “It’s simple. Your sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, made many people familiar with Alice’s appearance. Although they don’t know who Alice is, once the engagement ceremony is publicized, many people will see Alice. By then, they will definitely recognize her as being the mold for your creation of ‘Awakening From the Dream’. The love story contained within your sculpture is clearly visible to anyone who has ever analyzed stonesculpting. And precisely for this reason, the Debs clan definitely is not willing to allow Alice to become Kalan’s principal wife. This Rowling is most likely going to be Kalan’s principal wife.”

Linley was stunned.

Alice. Wasn’t going to be Kalan’s principal wife?

In the Yulan continent, the principal wife held a high status in the household, while the secondary wives held a much lower status.

“Because of me?” Instantly, Linley’s emotions grew complicated.

Because of his sculpture, Alice could no longer be Kalan’s principal wife.

“Linley, do you intend to go to this engagement ceremony?” Doehring Cowart asked.

“Yes. Of course.” Linley’s eyes hardened, and then he laughed. “Bernard has invited me several times now. This time, he specially sent over an invitation card. How could I refuse?”

Linley stared up at the blue sky, where wisps of silk-like clouds were floating about.

Long ago, he had sat on the grass alongside Alice and stared up at this sort of blue sky.

June 18th.

According to the priests of the Radiant Church, this was an extremely propitious day. Thus, the Debs clan chose to hold the engagement ceremony on this day.

This day, the front of the Debs clan’s manor was jam packed with carriages and people.

Major nobles, wealthy magnates, beautiful noblewomen, dazzling young noble ladies, handsome noble youths…today, it could be said that the Debs clan’s manor had more nobles present than any other place in Fenlai City.

“Lord Marquis Linley has arrived!”

The voice of the receiver for the Debs clan shot up two octaves as Linley,

dressed in a black gentleman's outfit, strode into the main hall of the Debs clan.

Virtually all of the nobles within the main hall stopped their conversations and turned to look at Linley.

Linley glanced around the room, a slight smile on his lips. Linley's demeanor was totally in keeping with the magnificent presence of the upper nobility.

"Lord Linley, welcome!"

Bernard, who was previously chatting with some other guests, quickly walked towards Linley's direction. Kalan, who was the leading role for this event, came by as well at Bernard's side.

"Mr. Bernard." Linley smiled. "Congratulations on your son's engagement, to two beautiful women, no less."

"Thank you, thank you." Bernard said warmly.

Kalan also said respectfully, "Lord Linley, welcome to our home. I hope you will enjoy yourself today."

Linley glanced at Kalan, but only nodded. Without speaking to him, Linley looked back at Bernard. "Lord Bernard, please feel free to take care of your other guests. I'll just find a place to stand."

…

The main hall of the Debs clan was extremely large. Hundreds of nobles and magnates were within it, but they didn't feel the slightest bit crowded. The rich noblewomen and the rich young noble ladies were all attired beautifully, strutting through the crowd like proud peacocks.

Especially after Linley arrived. Many of the rich young noble ladies 'unconsciously' drew closer to him.

“Lord Linley, you are so amazing. I’ve trained in stonesculpting for three years now, but I’m not even able to sculpt a basic shape yet.” A young noble lady with a head of beautiful brown hair said warmly to Linley. “Lord Linley, you are really so incredible. You are only a bit older than us, but you’ve already approached the level of Proulx and Hope Jensen. Lord Linley, can you help teach me?”

This young noble lady looked hopefully at Linley with her big, beautiful eyes.

“Stonesculpting requires sufficient wrist strength. For such soft, beautiful ladies like yourself, it’s actually better if you just learned how to paint.” Linley said with a superficial smile.

As he spoke, Linley felt helpless.

Perhaps it was because all of these young noble ladies all knew that Linley was not yet married, but they all came to bother Linley, one after another.

And of course, the parents of these young noble ladies were more than happy to just sit and watch.

Because virtually all of the nobles within the Kingdom of Fenlai knew that if someone could become in-laws with Linley, their clan would rise in stature by leaps and bounds!

What sort of a figure was Linley?

He was already the Prime Court Magus, but virtually all of the nobles knew that he was only serving the Kingdom of Fenlai in name. In the future, he would definitely become an important figure within the Radiant Church. In the future, his position might be higher than that of even the ruler of Fenlai!

“Linley.” A bright voice rang out.

Linley turned around. “Your Majesty.”

The young noble ladies surrounding him all made their curtsies, no longer daring to entangle him. Only now did Linley secretly let out a breath as he headed towards Clayde. When he was alongside the king, at least those young noble ladies wouldn't dare to bother him.

"Linley, see anyone you fancy?" Clayde whispered teasingly into Linley's ears as Linley drew near.

Linley couldn't help but cast a helpless glance at Clayde. "Your Majesty, there's no need to tease me like this, is there?"

"Haha…" Clayde couldn't help but break into a loud laugh.

Suddenly, the entire main hall fell silent. Clayde also turned his head to stare at the door to the main hall, his eyes shining. "Hey. There's the leading females for tonight."

Linley turned to look as well.

Kalan was holding a beautiful woman's hand on each side. Both of these women were wearing beautiful full dresses, while the beautiful adornments in their golden hair shimmered brightly.

One was Rowling. The other was Alice.

"Alice."

Linley's gaze rested for a moment on Alice. Alice was more beautifully made up today than she had ever been before. But this time, the person holding her hand was Kalan.

"Oh, my goddess! Isn't this the 'goddess' which Master Linley carved into 'Awakening From the Dream'?" Suddenly, a noble let out a startled shout.

The main hall was instantly filled with clamorous discussion.

Aside from the few people who already knew what Alice looked like, the vast majority of the people present had no idea what Alice's appearance was. But they had seen the sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream'. Many of the people had even designated the woman within the 'Awakening From the Dream' as the goddess of their dreams.

But at this moment, their 'goddess of their dreams' suddenly appeared before them at this engagement ceremony.

Chapter 10 – Captured

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 10, Captured

The main hall of the Debs clan was in an uproar.

“This…this…”

Many nobles were absolutely stunned upon seeing Alice. Linley’s extremely high level of sculpting abilities, unfortunately, was to blame for them to so easily be able to recognize Alice as the inspiration for ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

Linley had already surpassed the level of ‘skill’; through his sculpture, he totally was able to bring out this woman’s charm and mesmerizing qualities. All of these nobles, at the very first glance, were able to be absolutely certain that Alice was the ‘goddess’ of their dreams.

Many nobles looked at Alice, then turned to stare at Linley.

Silence!

All of a sudden, the entire main hall became deafeningly quiet, as though all of the nobles present suddenly understood something, while also understanding that now was not the time to discuss this.

But this silence…made Alice all the more embarrassed and frantic.

From the corner of her eyes, Alice glanced at Linley. Linley, who was standing right next to the King of Fenlai. Still as calm as ever. He was just quietly looking at her.

Towards Linley…

Alice’s emotions towards him were very complex. There was regret. There

was hatred. Hatred for the fact that Linley's sculpture had prevented her from being the principal wife, and also for making her feel so embarrassed now. But at the same time, that sculpture…had also let her truly understand how Linley had felt towards her.

Kalan felt extremely awkward as well.

"Everyone, let me make the introductions." Bernard's voice rang out, his face all smiles. "My son Kalan is now becoming formally engaged with Miss Rowling and Miss Alice."

As he spoke, Bernard walked over to Kalan's side. Pointing at Rowling, he said, "This is Miss Rowling, the principal wife of my son Kalan. And this is Miss Alice."

Instantly, the main hall became filled with quiet murmurs. Every so often, someone would sneak a furtive look at Linley.

"Everyone, let's begin the banquet!" Bernard laughed merrily.

All of the nobles in the main hall entered the banquet area. During the banquet, the members of the Debs clan were extremely friendly and warm to everybody. But nonetheless, there were still many nobles who would continue to glance at Alice, then glance at Linley.

Holding a glass of wine, Linley walked over to a secluded corner of the main hall, casually seating himself in a sofa.

"Boss, I can hear so many people chatting about you." Bebe leapt onto Linley's legs.

Linley gently sipped the wine in his glass. "Let them talk if they wish to. I'm fine with it. Only…Alice most likely is suffering."

Nowadays, towards Alice, Linley's emotions were calm and peaceful.

Only now did he understand what a huge influence this sculpture,

‘Awakening From the Dream’, had upon Alice’s life.

Seated in that corner, Linley quietly watched as Kalan, Alice, and Rowling moved from table to table, meeting with guests. He quietly drank his wine by himself.

“Lord Linley, why are you here drinking wine all by your lonesome?” A beautiful young lady with jade hair and snow white skin walked over, sitting down quite naturally next to Linley while extending her glass of wine towards him.

Linley clinked glasses with her.

“My name is Sasha [Shasha]. Before the banquet began, I had been hoping I would have a chance to chat with you, Lord Linley. But it seemed as though you attracted quite a lot of attention from the girls. I didn’t have a chance at all.” Sasha laughed.

Linley looked at Sasha.

Sasha was very tall and slender, and her laughter was rich and vibrant. Her eyes also held a bewitching, intoxicating gaze. Compared to those young noble ladies, a female like this had a more feminine charm.

“The girls? Can it be that yourself aren’t a girl, Sasha?” Linley asked with engrossed ‘curiosity’.

Sasha took a light sip of wine, then laughed. “A girl? I’ve been married for eight years now. How could I be a girl?”

Linley couldn’t help but be startled.

“However…my husband died on the day of our wedding.” Sasha glanced at Linley as she spoke in a soft voice.

“Uh….” Linley stared at Sasha in astonishment.

Seeing the look on Linley's face, Sasha couldn't help but begin to laugh a charming laugh, and then she raised her glass and had another sip of red wine. Smiling, she said to Linley, "Lord Linley. You really…are too cute."

Linley couldn't help but laugh as well.

This Sasha really was an interesting person.

"Sasha. What are you doing here?" Duke Patterson walked over with a laugh.

Sasha glanced back at Duke Patterson. Feigning anger, she said, "Lord Duke, I just started chatting with Lord Linley. Fine, fine. Go ahead and have your talk with him." As she spoke, she winked at Linley, then left.

Duke Patterson stared at Sasha's departing silhouette for a moment before sitting down next to Linley.

"Linley, what do you think?" Duke Patterson said to Linley.

"What do I think about what?"

"Sasha, of course." Duke Patterson looked at Linley suggestively. "Linley, amongst the circle of nobles, Sasha is a beautiful lady who is chased after by many. Look at Sasha's figure, her eyes, her little mouth. Oh…"

Linley could only laugh.

"Let me tell you, Sasha should be very interested in you. If you seize this opportunity, you should be able to get her into your hands." Patterson patted Linley on the shoulders.

Linley glanced at Patterson. "Not interested."

Patterson stared at Linley in surprise.

"Linley." Patterson lowered his voice as he spoke to Linley. "Tonight, after

this banquet is over, don't leave in a rush. There's something I wish to discuss with you."

Linley was startled.

As secretive as that?

"You wouldn't not give me face, right?" Patterson feigned anger.

Linley glanced at Patterson, musing to himself, "I want to see what you are up to." Linley rather wanted the chance to get a bit…closer…to Patterson as well.

"Lord Duke, don't worry. Tonight, I will wait a while for you." Linley smiled as he replied.

Eight o'clock that night. Many of the nobles had already left, but Linley was in no hurry. He still remembered his appointment with Patterson.

"I want to see what you are up to."

Linley waited quietly in the main hall.

"Linley, I'll leave now." Clayde said to Linley as he left. The people in the main hall grew fewer and fewer. Getting rather impatient, Linley left the main hall, stepping onto the outside balcony to enjoy the cool night wind.

Right at this moment, a manservant quietly walked up to him.

"Lord Linley. The Lord Duke is inviting you for a walk." The manservant said quietly.

"As secretive as this?" Linley was a bit surprised.

"Lead the way." On the surface, Linley looked calm. Bebe remained curled up inside Linley's robes. The manservant led Linley to a very dark, secluded alley. Judging from the appearance of the road, this was a place

where people rarely came.

“Where are we going?” Linley said in a low voice.

The manservant said respectfully, “Lord Linley, this is in accordance with the Lord Duke’s instructions. No one is to see you, Lord Linley.”

“Oh?”

Linley furrowed his brows. But Linley wasn’t afraid. He continued to follow the servant forward, as the two of them made their way through the dark, secluded alley, then passed through a small copse of trees. A secret door was opened, and they arrived at a small building.

“So the Debs clan has a place as secretive as this.” Linley said to himself.

Unless someone was capable of flight, it would be quite difficult indeed to spot this hidden little building.

The manservant led Linley directly into the main hall.

“Lord Duke, Lord Linley is here.” The manservant called out respectfully as they reached the main hall’s doorway.

“Haha, Linley is here?” Dressed in a long black robe, Duke Patterson stepped out of the main hall. Seeing Linley, a gleam of excitement appeared in Duke Patterson’s hawk-like eyes, and he hurriedly walked over. “Linley, come in, quick.”

The manservant respectfully said, “Lord Duke, I’ll be leaving then.”

“Yes, you can go.” Patterson said casually.

The manservant respectfully bowed and turned to leave. But then, the smiling Duke Patterson suddenly shot out his right arm at high speed, viciously piercing through the manservant like a knife, from his back to his chest.

“Ah!” The manservant disbelievingly turned his head and stared at Duke Patterson. He totally couldn’t understand why the powerful Duke Patterson would stoop to killing someone like him!

Unfortunately, with his heart totally shattered, in just a few seconds, the light fled from his eyes.

“Lord Duke, the meaning of this is…?” Linley, off to the side, still managed to maintain his calm.

Duke Patterson was a warrior of the seventh rank. For him to kill a manservant who was at most a warrior of the first or second rank was indeed very easy.

From within his clothes, Duke Patterson drew out a handkerchief, using it to wipe off the blood from his hand. And then, he casually tossed it on the ground.

“Linley. It’s nothing. I just didn’t want anyone to know that you and I met.” Duke Patterson chortled.

Linley looked suspiciously at Duke Patterson. “You don’t want anyone to know?”

Duke Patterson nodded confidently. “Don’t worry at all. This secret meeting place was arranged by Bernard per my instructions. Bernard only knows that I’ll use this place, but he doesn’t know who I meet with. The only servant who knows that we have met is dead now. Thus, no one will know that we have met.”

Linley made up his mind. He stepped into the main hall.

“Duke Patterson. This matter seems to be quite important.” Linley smiled at Duke Patterson.

Patterson nodded. “Of course. And, I have arranged for a decoy as well. In

the eyes of others, I have returned to my estate long ago. Aside from Bernard and my housekeeper, I'm afraid you are the only one who knows I am here."

"A decoy?"

"Duke Patterson, what exactly do you intend to do, for you to meet with me here so secretively?" Linley asked with some curiosity.

Duke Patterson looked around the area, then closed the door to the main hall.

"Come. Let's chat inside." Pulling Linley by the hand, Duke Patterson headed for a room within the main hall. After entering the room, Duke Patterson activated a mechanism. With a grinding sound, the stone wall began to move, revealing a stone passageway.

So within this secret little building, there was a secret underground room as well.

"Linley. Come in." Patterson smiled at Linley.

Linley nodded and stepped inside.

The inside of the underground room was pitch dark. Patterson lit three candles, then turned to smile at Linley.

"There's nothing for it. Neither my Duke's manor nor your own manor is suitable. There are too many spies in both places. It's not safe." Duke Patterson let out a long breath.

Linley also knew that his manor was under constant surveillance from the Radiant Church as well as Clayde.

Because this manor was gifted to him by Clayde. The servants belonged to Clayde as well. It was quite normal for the place to be filled with Clayde's spies. At the same time, his guard corps belonged to the Radiant Church.

Frankly speaking, Linley's actions within his manor was under the constant, watchful eye of these two parties.

"Duke Patterson. Today, the topic of our conversation seems to be quite important. Go ahead, tell me what this is all about." Linley smiled.

Patterson withdrew a magicrystal card from his clothes. "Linley. There are ten million gold coins in this card."

"Ten million gold coins?" Linley waited for Patterson's explanation.

Patterson said helplessly, "Linley, I'll tell you the truth. After my elder brother tasked me with the position of Minister of Finance for the kingdom, I have used my authority to accumulate wealth for myself. Up until now, my activities have been hidden perfectly, but this time, the smuggling activity I engaged in with another clan was simply too large-scale. Based on what my sources tell me, my elder brother…may have already found out."

Patterson still held to his, as he did not reveal that the clan in question was the Debs clan.

"The smuggling was on too large a scale? But does this have anything to do with me?" Linley laughed as he looked at Patterson.

Patterson hurriedly said, "Of course this has something to do with you. Although I am King Clayde's younger brother, I know very well that when he makes his move, he never shows any mercy at all. I must find a path of retreat. After all, over the course of all these years, I have done too many things. Once this affair comes to light, many other affairs will be dug up as well."

"Thus…I want you to speak on my behalf with young master Yale of the Dawson Conglomerate. I know that you are good friends with Yale." A hint of a smile appeared on Patterson's face.

"Yale?" Linley began to understand Patterson's intentions.

Patterson said helplessly, “In the future, when these events come to pass, there are not many local powers capable of rescuing me from Fenlai City. But the Dawson Conglomerate is definitely one of them. The Kingdom of Fenlai does not dare to offend the Dawson Conglomerate! At the same time, the Radiant Church will not go to loggerheads against the Dawson Conglomerate for the sake of a minor corruption scandal.”

“As long as the Dawson Conglomerate is willing to act, they can easily rescue me. However, I spoke with the Dawson Conglomerate, and they were not willing to offend King Clayde on my behalf.” Patterson looked hopefully at Linley.

“Linley, Yale is the son of the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate. His words are extremely influential. What’s more, the Dawson Conglomerate values you quite highly as well. As long as you are willing to help me, there definitely won’t be any problems.” Duke Patterson begged. “If you don’t help me, I most likely am going to die. I beg of you, please help. No one will know that you and I have spoken.”

“As long as you are willing to save me, these ten million gold coins are yours, Linley. I beg you.” Patterson’s words were very sincere. His eyes were filled with hope!

Linley laughed.

“No one will know?” Linley’s smile was incandescent.

“Right. No one will know.” Patterson hurriedly nodded. A look of joy had already appeared in his eyes.

Suddenly, Linley’s body began to transform at a high speed. Black draconic scales began to come out of his body, while a single black horn sprouted out of his forehead. His two hands transformed into draconic claws. His pupils also transformed from their original color to the dark, golden color of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

“You…” Duke Patterson’s face changed. Knowing that something was

wrong, he hurriedly roused his own battle-qi, and all of the muscles of his body began to tighten.

“Whoosh!”

Linley’s iron-whip-like tail slashed through the air with a terrifying howl. Given Duke Patterson’s reaction time and speed, he was unable to avoid it, and it landed a vicious blow on his body.

“WHACK!”

Patterson, warrior of the seventh rank, was sent flying. Blood splattered everywhere.

But then in the next instant, that whip-like tail wrapped around Patterson. The sounds of bones clattering could be heard as Patterson’s entire body was bound tightly, preventing him from moving in the slightest. Patterson struggled as much as he could, but his arms were unable to break free from his bonds.

Linley controlled his draconic tail to pull Patterson towards himself.

Linley was now under full Dragonform. His cold, merciless, dark golden eyes stared death directly into Patterson’s eyes. A hint of a cruel smile played about the corners of Linley’s lips. “You say….no one will know? Haha. That’s just perfect. I’ve waited so very long for this opportunity.”

“You…you…” Patterson had been absolutely scared stupid by this sudden development.

Chapter 11 – The Man Behind the Curtain

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 11, The Man Behind the Curtain

His entire body was covered in black scales, while sharp black spikes jutted out from his elbows and his knees. His entire back was lined with a row of sharp spikes coming from his spine. And his eyes had turned a dark golden color. Just seeing that cold, dark, golden set of eyes staring at him was enough to terrify Duke Patterson.

“Who are…who are you?” Duke Patterson was so terrified that his face was ashen white. His mouth flapped for a long while before he managed to say these words.

What was this monstrosity in front of him?

“Who am I?” Linley’s cold gaze was fixed on Patterson.

“Squeak, squeak.” The sounds of bones chattering emanated from throughout Patterson’s body, as Linley continued to apply force through his iron-whip-like tail in constricting Patterson. No matter how hard Patterson struggled, he couldn’t budge at all.

Pain began to spread from his arms to the rest of his body.

“You are from another plane?” Patterson’s eyes were filled with terror. From what he could tell, based on Linley’s current appearance, only a different species from another plane could do what Linley had just done. “Linley, I beg you, spare me, spare my life. I definitely will keep your secret, definitely.”

Transfixed by Linley’s dark golden gaze, Patterson had totally lost his equanimity.

“Spare your life?” A hint of a cold smile appeared on Linley’s face. “That’s

not impossible. I want to ask you something. Around twelve or thirteen years ago, did you send some people out to kidnap a woman."

Patterson was startled.

He immediately frantically tried to recollect the affairs of twelve or thirteen years past, but twelve or thirteen years was an extremely long period of time. Most importantly… "Linley, no, Lord Linley, I…I can't remember." Patterson said frantically.

"That was a long time ago, and I often would have women I took a fancy to captured and brought to my mansion. I don't know exactly which one you are talking about."

That murderous intent in Linley's heart began to grow.

This Patterson actually often abducted women?

From Linley's face, Patterson had no idea as to the transformation that was currently occurring in Linley's heart. Having completely undergone the Dragonform, Linley appeared totally cold and emotionless, terrifying sinister.

"A woman who had just given birth not long beforehand, who had just finished a pilgrimage to the Radiant Temple, and then returned to her hotel." Linley still stared icily at Patterson. His voice didn't rise at all.

Hearing Linley say these things, Patterson's entire body went stiff. And then he stared at Linley in astonishment.

"You remember now?" Linley said coldly.

Of course Patterson remembered now. Throughout all these years, he had only abducted women who had just given birth on two occasions. His memories of these affairs was quite keen. Especially that one time, thirteen years ago. That time, the person whom had instructed him to act had severely warned him to maintain secrecy.

“I really can’t remember.” Patterson said, terrified. “Lord Linley, I beg you, spare me. I really don’t know. You must be mistaken.”

Linley’s dark golden eyes flashed.

“You want to die?” Linley’s voice grew even colder.

“Ahhhh!” Patterson’s screamed in terror as Linley’s tail increased the pressure around him. This greater pressure was causing all of the bones in Patterson’s body to moan in protest.

“Clatter. Clatter.” The sound of bones nearly cracking was enough to make one’s heart shudder.

But Linley still only stared coldly at Patterson.

“Crunch!”

“Ahhhhh!”

The crisp sound of a bone snapping, mixed with the tortured screams of Patterson. His left arm bone had actually been snapped clean by this terrifying pressure.

“Not bad.” Linley’s lips quivered slightly. As though he were smiling.

But Patterson didn’t view it as a smile. Under the Dragonform, the slight curve of Linley’s lips only filled Patterson’s with even more fear.

“You know what matters and what doesn’t. The vast majority of your battle-qi has been used to protect your vital organs. Only a small amount of battle-qi was used to protect your arm. It’s true. A broken arm isn’t a life-threatening condition. But if your organs were to rupture, then you really will lose your life.” Linley’s voice was very calm.

Patterson felt his throat go dry.

He had never imagined that Linley would have such a terrifying side.

“Now, do you remember yet?” Linley asked again.

Patterson really wanted to answer him, but when he thought about the punishment which would await him if he spoke, he couldn’t help but shudder. His face growing still more pitiful, he cried out miserably, “Lord Linley, I beg of you, don’t torture me. I really don’t know. Even if you kill me, I still don’t know.”

Patterson firmly believed that, with this affair having been over thirteen years ago and Linley being so young, there was no way Linley could be certain about what had happened.

Most likely, Linley had received some sketchy details and was not absolutely certain. As long as he clenched his teeth and refused to speak, perhaps Linley would believe him in the end.

“Lord Linley, if I knew, I would’ve told you long ago, and avoided all this suffering. Lord Linley, I beg of you, please investigate this matter clearly.” Tears began to pour out of Patterson’s eyes, and his face was a picture of sincerity. If it weren’t for the fact that Linley had read that letter from his father, he might really have hesitated.

Staring at Patterson, Linley’s lips began to curve upwards even more.

Patterson’s heart felt a sudden chill.

“Good. Wonderful.” Linley’s tail was still wrapped around Patterson. Suddenly, the draconic tail sent Patterson smashing directly, viciously into the stone floor. Fortunately, though, Linley smashed Patterson feet-first, rather than head-first.

Linley gave full reign to the power of his draconic tail!

Patterson’s two legs smashed against the stone floor.

“Crush!”

The sound of bones splintering instantly, mixed with Patterson’s terrifying, high-pitched howls of agony.

On Patterson’s left knee, the shattered white bone was visible to the eye, piercing both through his leg and his pants. His right leg, even worse off, simply lay limply on the ground, while blood stained his pants around the ankles in particular.

“Ahhh! Ahhhh! Ahhhh!” Patterson was screaming nonstop.

This level of pain was killing him. Fortunately, though, his organs had been protected by his battle-qi, and so his life was not yet in danger.

“Demon. Demon.” Patterson was cursing nonstop in his heart. He knew what a tremendous force Linley was using. Based on his strength as a warrior of the seventh rank, he was only just barely able to protect his internal organs with his battle-qi, and couldn’t protect the rest of his body.

Patterson didn’t want to die.

Crippled legs?

Not a problem. With enough money, he definitely could invite an Arch Magus of the ninth-rank of the Radiant Church to use the ‘Song of Life’ on him. As long as he didn’t already die, any wound, no matter how serious, could be healed!

“Do you remember yet? That woman you abducted?” Linley’s voice was still very calm, not rising in the slightest.

But the terror in Patterson’s heart was growing.

“I remember. I remember.” Beads of sweat were flowing down Patterson’s face. Not from pain. From fear.

Patterson knew very well that in this sealed underground room in which he and Linley were currently in, nobody outside could hear anything, no matter how loud the screams. Perhaps someone directly outside, leaning against the stone door, could just barely hear something.

But who would be outside of this secret little room, pressing their ears against the stone door?

No matter how loud he screamed, no one would know.

“If you said so earlier, wouldn’t you have suffered less?” Linley’s dark golden eyes stared peacefully at Patterson. “Speak, then. Explain what happened to me.”

Patterson hurriedly nodded. “Lord Linley, that year, that woman was extremely beautiful. I was bewitched, and hatched an evil plot to abduct that woman and bring her back to my place. I wanted that woman to sleep with me, but she was too headstrong. She committed suicide by ramming her head against the stone wall.”

Stuttering as he spoke, Patterson looked at Linley.

In Patterson’s opinion, there were very few people who knew what had really happened to that woman. Linley shouldn’t have had any clue.

“You continue to lie!!!”

Linley finally grew angry. Those dark golden eyes seemed to slowly turn red. Using his draconic tail, Linley brought Patterson directly before him. Linley all but pressed his face directly against Patterson’s, coldly staring into his eyes.

Pressed against Linley, seeing Linley’s black scales and the black horn on his forehead, Patterson grew even more terrified.

“I’m not lying! I’m not lying!” Patterson hurriedly said.

Linley's hands, already transformed into claws by the Dragonform, suddenly delivered a mighty slap to Patterson's face.

"THWACK!" Five pieces of flesh were ripped from Patterson's face, and blood began to flow out in a steady stream. Fortunately, Linley wasn't trying to kill him. Otherwise, he would've crushed Patterson's brain to a pulp with this blow.

"Sob…sob…sob…" Patterson was in so much pain that his voice changed.

Linley stared coldly at Patterson. "Patterson, listen closely. I already know very much about what had happened, which is why it's best for you not to lie to me. Otherwise, the torment you will suffer definitely will not be limited to just this. Let me tell you this. The woman that you abducted was my mother!"

"Mother?" Patterson was stunned, even forgetting his pain for the moment.

"I am very clear about what happened that day with my mother, and I have been investigating this entire time. Thus, it's best if you tell me everything about what happened to my mother. Otherwise…you will definitely die." Linley's voice grew even more freezing.

Actually, no matter what Patterson said, he was still definitely going to die.

Because Linley's father had been pursued and heavily injured by Patterson's men, and had died as a result. Patterson didn't yet know that the person he had sent people out to hunt and kill was Linley's father. If he had known…perhaps Patterson would be reacting in a totally different way.

"Tell me. Who did you give my mother to?" Linley stared at Patterson.

"You knew?" Patterson's face turned pale.

Linley actually knew that he had given the woman away to someone else?

“Tell me his name, but you’d best not lie to me. If I discover that you have lied to me, I will make your life worse than death.” Linley’s voice was very calm again, not rising in the slightest.

Patterson hesitated for a moment.

“There’s no use for me to tell you. You can’t kill him.” Patterson said in a low voice.

“Can’t kill him?” Linley stared coldly at Patterson. “Patterson, listen to me. All you have to do is tell me who that person is. As for whether or not I can kill him, that’s none of your concern. Do you think you know what my real level of ability is?”

Hearing these words, Patterson secretly agreed.

The ‘Linley’ in front of him was too terrifying. The power he had previously displayed had already made others believe he was an absolute genius. But apparently, Linley’s real power was far greater than that of a warrior of the seventh rank. In front of Linley, he didn’t have the slightest ability to resist.

Patterson began to furiously calculate in his mind.

Linley didn’t rush him, only fixing Patterson with his dark golden gaze.

After pondering a long time, Patterson gritted his teeth and looked at Linley. “Linley, I’ll tell you who he is, but you have to guarantee that you definitely won’t let anyone know that I was the one who told you! And, you have to promise you won’t kill me.”

Linley’s face was still as cold as ever. “Fine. I guarantee that I will not tell anyone that you were the one to tell me. And, I guarantee I will not kill you.”

Only now did Patterson secretly let out his breath.

“About twelve years ago, on one occasion, we members of the royal clan of Fenlai went to pay a visit to the Radiant Temple. Within the Radiant Temple, we saw your mother. Afterwards, I sent people to abduct your mother.” Patterson immediately said, “But that wasn’t actually my own intent. I was obeying the orders of another.”

“Who?” Linley asked.

Patterson glanced at Linley. He slowly said, “The orders came from my elder brother. The current ruler of the Kingdom of Fenlai. King Clayde.”

“Clayde?” Linley was startled.

The pride of the Kingdom of Fenlai, the ‘Golden Lion’, Clayde? The warrior of the ninth rank, Clayde?

“Yes. It was Clayde.” Patteron said with certainty. “But I know that Clayde valued your mother highly. He even told me that no matter what, I couldn’t let this information out, as if I did, I would definitely die.”

Linley looked at Patterson.

“He should be telling the truth.” Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “I can sense the vibrations of his soul.”

Linley made up his mind.

Patterson looked beseechingly at Linley. “Linley, can you spare my life? I guarantee that I definitely won’t say a single word about what happened today to anyone.” Patterson’s eyes were filled with hope.

“Fine. I’ll keep my promise.” Linley’s draconic tail loosened.

Patterson’s body dropped to the floor. A look of wild joy appeared on Patterson’s face, and he looked at Linley with eyes filled with gratitude.

Right at this moment, a black blur flashed by.

“Crunch.”

The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, bit Patterson’s neck. Patterson stared with terror at Bebe. He had just escaped from death’s door, but now, he could already seem to feel the call of the Netherworld. Patterson could tell that the little Shadowmouse was the one which was always on Linley’s shoulders.

Disbelievingly, Patterson stared at Linley.

“I said I wouldn’t kill you. But I never said my magical beast wouldn’t kill you.” Linley looked coldly at Patterson, whose throat was spurting out blood. “Let me tell you something else as well. Several months ago, there was a man who snuck into your Duke’s mansion. Afterwards, you sent people after him to kill him. And that man…was my father!”

Chapter 12 – The Investigation

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 12, The Investigation

Just before his death, Patterson finally understood.

He had, after all, participated in Linley's father's funeral. He knew that Linley's father was already dead.

The funny thing was, just now, he had been hoping that he could leave with his life. But now, he completely understood why Linley had done what he had done. Deep in Patterson's heart, he was unwilling to be resigned to dying like this. Based on his prowess as a warrior of the seventh rank, it wouldn't be too hard to live for another two or three hundred years.

His life should still be long.

"I'm dying, but Clayde, your life won't be much better." As Patterson's soul was drawn to the Netherworld, it contained a thread of hatred, hatred for his brother Clayde.

…..

After watching Patterson die, Linley returned to his normal form.

"Clayde. So the man behind this event was Clayde." Linley frowned deeply.

Clayde himself was a combatant of the ninth rank. Even if Linley was in full Dragonform, he would be at most an early eighth rank combatant.

Clayde was on a totally different level compared to him. Even if Linley were to ambush him, he simply could not harm a warrior of the ninth rank. The gap between them was too great.

And Clayde had tremendous power at his disposal as well.

As the revered ruler of Fenlai, how could he not have many fighters under his banner? And, having been the ruler for many years of the Kingdom of Fenlai, the leading kingdom amongst the six kingdoms of the Holy Union, he had a very close relationship with the Radiant Church. His roots were extremely deep.

In terms of both strength as well as forces available, Linley could not compare to Clayde.

“Perhaps my only advantage right now is that I am operating hidden in the shadows.” Linley constantly pondered how to deal with Clayde.

Doehring Cowart appeared from within the Coiling Dragon ring. He immediately urged Linley, “Linley, don’t waste any more time here. What you need to do right now is to destroy anything that might reveal you were here. Get back to your own estate immediately, otherwise, if you return too late, when they begin investigating who killed Patterson, they might suspect you.”

Linley was startled awake.

Right!

His only advantage was that he was operating from within the shadows. No matter what, he couldn’t allow Clayde to be on guard against him.

“Time to burn the evidence to ashes.” Linley immediately generated several dozen fireballs which surrounded Patterson’s body. Based on his current spiritual energy, the temperature of his fireballs was quite high.

Patterson’s body quickly began to burn, while at the same time, an extremely foul odor began to fill the air. After a while, only a few charred yellow bones and ashes remained.

That foul odor made Linley frown.

“Linley, your clothes.” Doehring Cowart reminded.

Linley looked down at his clothes. Indeed. After having gone through the Dragonform transformation, his clothes had been totally ripped apart. Linley retrieved his things, and then removed his outer jacket and pants without the slightest hesitation. Instantly, he burnt his clothes to ashes as well.

Linley immediately activated the mechanism.

“Rumble rumble.” The stone door once more opened, and Linley hurriedly walked out, then closed the door again.

No matter what, it was best for the stone door to be closed. Otherwise, with the door open, that smell of burnt flesh would quickly draw people’s attention.

“There should be clothes within this room.” Linley glanced down at his underwear. Clearly, he couldn’t walk out just in his ruined underwear like this. That would definitely arouse suspicion. Linley immediately went to another room on the side, opening up a dresser.

The dresser was filled with sets of clothes.

Linley selected a set of black clothes, rather similar to the outfit he had worn to the engagement ceremony. Putting the clothes on, Linley then once more used his wind-style spells to blow away the nearby specks of blood as well as that foul odor of burning flesh.

“Best to go back early. Can’t let anyone notice anything.” Moving at high speed, Linley leapt straight through the courtyard, arriving at the front courtyard in a matter of minutes.

At this point in time, there were still a few nobles remaining, engaging in idle conversation.

“Oh, Lord Linley. You haven’t left yet?” Count Juneau was heading out as

well. Seeing Linley not too far away, he warmly greeted Linley.

Linley smiled. “Right. Just then, my stomach felt a bit queasy, so I went to the privy.”

Count Juneau walked out shoulder-to-shoulder with Linley.

“Lord Linley, I must say that I am a big fan of your sculptures. I was the one who bought your very first three sculptures that you exhibited at the main hall of the Proulx Gallery.” Count Juneau said proudly to Linley. The thing which Count Juneau was proudest was most likely the fact that he had been the one to purchase the first three sculptures which Linley had put on display.

Those three sculptures of Linley’s, just judging from the outside, was perhaps only worth six or seven thousand gold coins.

However…Linley’s status was now very different. He was the master sculptor who had carved ‘Awakening From the Dream’. In terms of status, he wasn’t too much off from the levels of Proulx and Hope Jensen. How could the price of the very first three sculptures a person such like this exhibited be low?

Based on his calculations and the implicit value, these three sculptures which Count Juneau had collected were most likely each worth at least a hundred thousand gold coins!

This was perhaps the collection which Count Juneau was the most delighted over, ever. Count Juneau had decided that these three items needed to be kept in his collection. He believed…as Linley’s future accomplishments became greater and greater, the value of these three sculptures would rise as well.

“Lord Linley, have a safe trip.” The housekeeper for the Debs clan said respectfully at the gate for the Deb’s clan’s manor.

Linley nodded. Bidding farewell to Count Juneau, he entered his own

carriage.

“Go back.” Linley gave a calm command upon entering the carriage.

“Yes, milord.”

The Radiant Church warrior of the seventh rank who served as a driver bowed in acknowledgment, then immediately began driving the carriage towards Linley’s manor.

“I probably spent around fifteen minutes or so with Patterson.” Linley took out his pocket watch and took a glance.

This was one of the gifts that the many well-wishers of his had sent him upon him being conferred the rank of Marquis.

“Fifteen minutes or so. Count Juneau and the rest were amongst the last pack of guests to leave. If they don’t investigate extremely carefully, it shouldn’t be possible for them to suspect me.” Linley said to himself. “The other problem is, Patterson said that his housekeeper knew that he was going to meet with someone, but not exactly who.”

Linley frowned. “But I can’t totally trust his words. Perhaps his housekeeper did in fact know he was going to meet me, but Patterson wanted me to relax and trust him and thus claimed no one else knew.”

Linley had considered this possibility.

Patterson’s housekeeper!

This definitely was a flaw.

What’s more…if there really was an investigation, people might discover that Linley had disappeared for fifteen minutes at the end. But during that period of time, all the nobles were engaged in casual conversation and were leaving haphazardly. It would most likely be extremely difficult to clearly investigate a single person, given those circumstances.

“At least no one personally witnessed my meeting with Patterson. The one attendant who did see was killed by Patterson.” Linley said to himself.

At most, others might suspect him. But there was no actionable evidence against him.

“Boss, what are you thinking about?” Bebe was lying on Linley’s legs. Raising his little head, he looked at Linley.

“Nothing.” Linley rubbed Bebe’s little head, having totally calmed down.

“Milord, we have arrived.”

Linley pushed open the carriage curtains, then raised his head and stared up at the boundless sky. Right now, the night sky was filled with stars. Linley couldn’t help but feel a carefree joy in his heart, while at the same time, his resolve to kill Clayde grew still more firm. “Patterson died today. Next one up is Clayde.”

Patterson had disappeared for a day or two. Aside from Patterson’s housekeeper, no one noticed that something was amiss.

Within the Debs clan’s manor, there was only Bernard and a jade-haired middle-aged person.

“Bernard, on the night of Kalan’s engagement, did the Lord Duke depart from your manor?” The jade-haired middle-aged man asked. This man was Duke Patterson’s housekeeper, named Lodi [Luo’di].

Bernard was forced to hold in his aggrieved feelings and refrain from saying, “Your Duke disappeared, and you are asking ME about it?” That night, Patterson hadn’t even told Bernard whom he was going to meet, nor did he say a word when he left. How would he, Bernard, know anything?

“The Lord Duke left. The Lord Duke is not in my manor.” Bernard replied directly.

The very day after the engagement ceremony, Bernard had sent someone over to dispose of the servant's corpse. His servants didn't find any trace of Patterson within that small building.

"Oh." Lodi frowned, then stared at Bernard. "Bernard, if you find any trace of my Duke, you must let me know immediately. This affair might be minor, or it might be major. If it becomes a major affair, even the smuggling affairs of your Debs clan might come to light."

Bernard's face changed.

"Alright, I'll go back now." Lodi left with a heavy mind.

Seeing Lodi's departing back, Bernard felt somewhat unsettled, and made the decision to immediately go visit that building which Patterson had used.

Within that secretive building inside the Debs clan's estate.

Bernard had entered alone. The corpse of that dead servant had long since been removed and disposed of by the people Bernard had sent. Looking at the building, Bernard frowned. "Duke Patterson said he was going to meet with a guest, but in the end, he didn't return home. Could it be…"

Bernard suddenly thought of one possibility.

Very few people even in the Debs clan knew about the secret underground room. Naturally, those people he had sent to dispose of the corpse wouldn't know either, nor would they go investigate.

But Bernard had told Duke Patterson of the secret underground room. He had also told the Duke that there was definitely no one who could eavesdrop on any conversations within.

"Impossible. There's no way something like that could've happened." Bernard hurriedly ran into the main hall, then directly went to the mechanism and activated it.

“Rumble, rumble.”

That wall-like ‘stone door’ slowly opened, while at the same time, a foul, bloody odor that smelt like burnt flesh wafted out.

The look on Bernard’s face grew ugly.

Hurriedly walking into the secret room, he saw that on the granite floor, there were still traces of blood and scratches. To the side, there was a pile of charred human bones as well as ashes.

“Someone died here.” Bernard was absolutely certain.

And then, the person who died had been burnt to ashes. But there was no way for Bernard to tell who it was for certain.

“Ring!” Bernard suddenly saw within the pile of ashes a dirty, grayish-silver ring. Upon seeing the ring, Bernard felt that it looked extremely similar to the ring which Duke Patterson liked to wear.

Instantly, all the blood fled from Bernard’s face.

“Patterson is most likely dead.” Bernard’s thoughts were a chaotic mess.

The Debs clan had spent over half of their capital and a large amount of manpower in order to carry out this water jade smuggling operation with Duke Patterson’s help. This was an extremely important business operation for the Debs clan. But if the smuggling became exposed…it wouldn’t just be a problem of losing money. Most likely, the entire Debs clan would be exterminated by the furious King Clayde!

The entire Debs clan….was quite possibly finished.

“No, not possible. Duke Patterson was a warrior of the seventh rank. How could he die so easily? Given his careful personality, there is no way that he would meet in private with someone who was more powerful than him.”

Bernard couldn’t accept what he was seeing.

It was true. Patterson was an extremely cautious man. Sadly, Patterson didn’t have an accurate understanding of Linley’s power.

…..

The entire city of Fenlai was peaceful. Linley continued to train quietly at his manor every day. But then, after Duke Patterson had disappeared for half a month, the previously calm and sedate King Clayde finally began to issue orders. The first step was to captured the Duke’s housekeeper, Lodi. The next was to investigate the Duke’s whereabouts on a wide scale.

Within the main hall of Linley’s manor.

“Lord Linley, per his Majesty’s decree, he would like Lord Linley to pay a visit to the palace.”

Staring at the royal decree brought by the palace attendant, Linley felt a bit unsettled. Why was King Clayde summoning him?

“Please wait a moment. Allow me to change my clothes, and I’ll head to the palace immediately afterwards.” Linley smiled as he replied.

Chapter 13 – Secrets Exposed

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 13, Secrets Exposed

The night was pitch-dark.

The sound of the carriage could be heard on the quiet road leading to the palace. Linley was sitting alone in the carriage, with Bebe on his legs. Next to the carriage, there were over ten knights on fine stallions, and leading them was the palace servant who had come.

Within the carriage.

Linley was frowning as he considered. “It’s quite late already. But King Clayde suddenly summoned me to his palace. What is this about?” As the saying goes, only those who were blameless would always be relaxed.

Linley had just killed Patterson, and now he was very much aware that in the past, it was Clayde who had instructed Patterson to send people to abduct his mother. In other words, there was a deep enmity between him and Clayde.

Naturally, Linley was very careful around Clayde.

“I heard two days ago, Clayde seized the housekeeper of the Duke’s manor, and has begun a wide scale investigation of Patterson’s affairs. Patterson said that he hadn’t told anyone about his meeting with me. But can I trust those words?” Linley felt uncertain.

Perhaps that housekeeper already knew about Patterson and Linley’s meeting.

If that Duke’s housekeeper informed King Clayde of the meeting, then naturally, Linley would be at the precipice of danger.

“Linley, don’t worry.”

Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind, reassuring him. “Linley, even if that Duke Patterson told his housekeeper that he was meeting with you, you would still be fine.”

“Fine?” Linley looked questioningly at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart nodded confidently. “Naturally. Even if Clayde guessed that you killed Patterson, he still won’t openly address it.”

“Because…Clayde doesn’t know the reason why you killed Patterson.” Doehring Cowart’s face was filled with confidence.

Linley was startled. Even if Clayde didn’t know why he killed Patterson… he still would know Linley was the killer, right?

“It’s simple. Judging from the conversation you had with Patterson in that underground room, his relationship with Clayde wasn’t very good. While he was the Minister of Finance, Patterson engaged in widespread corruption. In his heart, Clayde probably didn’t feel much affection for Patterson. What’s more…Clayde doesn’t know that there is enmity between the two of you. Thus, he won’t act against you without cause. Because if he wishes to punish you, or to kill you, he would have to first get permission from the Radiant Church.” His eyes gleaming, Doehring Cowart looked at Linley.

“Hrmph, can that Clayde really be considered a king? The Radiant Church has the authority to depose him from his rule. But you are someone whom the Radiant Church values highly. Would he dare to casually act against you?” Doehring Cowart consoled Linley.

Linley nodded.

He understood this logic.

However…

Linley truly did not wish for Clayde to be on his guard against him. If Clayde became wary of Linley, how would Linley investigate his mother's whereabouts or take revenge on behalf of his mother?

"Open the door! It's me!" The palace attendant shouted in a shrill voice.

Hearing this, Linley immediately knew that they had already reached the palace gates. Like a giant beast, the gates squatted there, hulking. In just a half hour's time, countless carriages had entered and left the palace.

One of those carriages was Linley's. Another belonged to Bernard. And still others were carrying other nobles.

Within the business discussion hall of the palace.

Aside from the two guards standing at the door to the hall, everyone else present in the hall were nobles of high rank. In total, there were eight people present. These were Bernard, leader of the Debs clan. The Prime Court Magus, Linley. The Left Premier, Duke Bonalt. The Inspector General, Hampton [Han'pu'dun]…

"Linley, you came." Bernard greeted him warmly.

All of the nobles already present instantly greeted him as well. Seeing all of these nobles, Linley couldn't help but suddenly feel calm. It seemed that he had not been specially summoned after all.

"Milords, I wonder if any of you know why his Majesty has summoned us?" Linley immediately asked.

Duke Bonalt, as the Left Premier, knew a great deal of information.

"Most likely, this summons is related to the disappearance of Duke Patterson." Duke Bonalt replied with a warm laugh.

Bernard, off to the side, immediately asked, "Lord Duke, what does Duke Patterson's disappearance have to do with me? I don't have any important

responsibilities at court."

"Today, his Majesty isn't summoning his entire court, merely investigating a matter. Otherwise, why would I be here, but not the Right Premier, and only a single Inspector General?" Duke Bonalt saw things quite clearly.

Bernard nodded.

But Bernard still felt very uneasy.

Ever since Patterson had disappeared, Bernard had been filled with unease. He feared that the involvement between his Debs clan and Duke Patterson in the water jade smuggling operation would be brought to light. If this affair was revealed, then the Debs clan would really be finished.

"His Majesty has arrived!"

Suddenly, the shrill voice of the palace attendant sounded out. From a side door to the hall, Clayde walked in, heading directly for a seat in front and sitting down, two palace attendants respectfully at his side.

"All hail his Majesty!"

All of the nobles present bowed and chanted.

Clayde glanced at the nobles. He calmly nodded, then said, "It's quite late at night already. I originally didn't wish to disturb all of you, but this issue regarding the disappearance of my second brother, Patterson, is too important. I was forced to summon all of you to come here."

"Might I ask, your Majesty, what Duke Patterson's disappearance has to do with your summons for us?" Linley immediately asked.

Of the eight people present before Clayde, perhaps only Linley would dare to speak to him in such a manner. Because while everyone else present was subordinate to Clayde, in reality, Linley was the subordinate of the Radiant Church, and was only a servant of the Kingdom of Fenlai in name.

“Linley, I just wish to clearly investigate this affair.” Clayde smiled, and then said in a loud voice, “Bring out the Duke’s housekeeper, Lodi.”

Lodi? The Duke’s housekeeper?

Both Linley and the Deb clan’s leader Bernard felt their hearts start to pound.

The entire meeting hall was silent. Everyone quietly awaited Lodi being brought forward to testify. Linley still stood there, with the Shadowmouse Bebe on his shoulders.

After a short while…

Under escort by palace guards, a middle-aged man with jade-like hair walked in. This man looked very fragile, with mussed hair and a bewildered look on his face.

Bernard recognized this man at a single glance. This man in front of him was indeed Lodi, the housekeeper for Duke Patterson.

“Lodi, explain everything in detail.” Clayde shouted towards Lodi.

Lodi clearly had already explained once to Clayde already. This explanation clearly was for the benefit of Linley and the others. Lodi said very honestly, “Your Majesty, on June 18th, when the Debs clan held that engagement ceremony, the Lord Duke also went to attend. But after the ceremony, the Lord Duke never came back.”

“Lodi, stand to one side.” Clayde said coldly.

“Yes, your Majesty.” Lodi clearly was terrified. He hurriedly scurried off into a corner.

Clayde swept the eight nobles with his gaze.

“Based on the information from my investigations, the night of the engagement ceremony at the Debs clan, you all were amongst the last to leave. What I want to ask is, did any of you encounter Duke Patterson?” Clayde’s question was very simple.

“Right after the banquet, Patterson departed.” The Left Premier, Lord Bonalt, said in a loud voice.

Linley nodded as well. “I, too, saw Patterson departing quite early.”

The others either said they didn’t see him, or that Patterson left very early.

Hearing everyone speak, Clayde smiled and nodded, and then turned to Lodi again. “Lodi, continue.”

“Yes.” Lodi continued. “That night, before going to the Debs manor, Duke Patterson told me that he was going to be meeting with an extremely important person, but to the importance of the discussion topic, nobody could know about it. Thus, he ordered me to arrange for a double to impersonate him and leave the manor. In truth, the Lord Duke would remain within the manor.”

“The Lord Duke also said that the Debs clan would arrange for a safe, secret place for his meeting.” Lodi added.

Upon hearing these words, Bernard Debs’ face immediately turned white.

“Your Majesty! Your Majesty!”

Bernard hurriedly said, “This has nothing to do with me. The Lord Duke told me he wanted to meet with someone, so I arranged a meeting room for them. I couldn’t refuse him.”

“Bernard. Don’t be hasty. I won’t wrongly blame someone.” Clayde smiled.

“Thank you, your Majesty.” Bernard quickly stepped back, but his face was still pale.

Clayde turned to look at Linley and the others. “If Patterson was going to meet with someone, the person he was going to meet with should have some status. Who would that person be? I think…it must have been one of the last guests to leave.”

Linley’s heart trembled.

Duke Bonalt, Count Juneau, Marquis Hampton, and the others all stared at Clayde in astonishment. By now, they could guess why the king had called them here.

His Majesty was suspicious of them!

“Your Majesty, I definitely did not meet with him.” Count Juneau, Marquis Hampton, and the others hurriedly said.

Clayde smiled. “I only have my suspicions. If none of you did anything to be guilty of, why be so nervous? Look, Linley’s the calmest one here.”

Linley smiled but didn’t make a sound.

Clayde glanced at this group of people, laughing coldly in his heart. “I couldn’t give a damn about who made Patterson disappear. In fact, I’d rather thank that person for giving me such a wonderful opportunity to eradicate all the secret connections Patterson has built up.”

As the long-time Minister of Finance, Patterson had erected an enormous, dense web of connections. His influence was extremely large. Clayde didn’t dare to casually investigate Patterson either, as he didn’t want to cause too many problems in the kingdom.

This was also the reason why the Debs clan had decided to work alongside Patterson.

But now, Patterson had disappeared. The group of dragons no longer had a leader.

Acting as fast as lightning, Clayde used various ruthless techniques to quickly clip off Patterson's wings and shatter the web of influence which Patterson had spent so long building up.

Without Patterson's guidance, those collaborators of his naturally would be in for a terrible time if they resisted. There was no way they could resist the pressure exerted by King Clayde.

Clayde looked at Linley and the others. Laughing, he said, "The disappearance of my second brother, Patterson, is something I must look into. But what surprised me was, I ended up discovering quite a few things. Lodi, in particular, spilled many secrets."

Linley couldn't help but look at Lodi.

"Lodi, tell them." Clayde smiled at Lodi.

Right now, Clayde was feeling extremely satisfied. The death of a brother, to Clayde, was no big deal at all. More importantly…all of the power within the Kingdom of Fenlai finally rested with him again.

Lodi respectfully said, "Your Majesty, that day, when Duke Patterson attended the engagement ceremony at the Debs clan, the reason he needed to meet with that mysterious person was that he wanted to start a relationship with the Dawson Conglomerate. Thus…the person he went to see absolutely has to have some sort of connection to the Dawson Conglomerate.

"The Dawson Conglomerate?"

Linley felt his heart shudder violently.

"Does everyone want to know why it was that my second brother wished to start a relationship with the Dawson Conglomerate?" Clayde laughed as he looked at the people present. "Lodi, continue."

“Yes.” Lodi clearly had been totally cowed by Clayde, saying whatever he was told to. “Over these years, Duke Patterson had betrayed his country in many ways for his own profit and for his own selfish motives. In these past few months in particular, he initiated a large-scale water-jade smuggling program with the Debs clan. In the entire history of our kingdom, this is the largest water-jade program that has ever existed.”

“Smash!”

The leader of the Debs clan, Bernard, immediately knelt down, his knees smashing into the ground. He hurriedly said, “Your Majesty, I am being framed! Our Debs clan has always operated our businesses in an open, aboveboard manner. We’ve never acted in a way which was against the best interests of the kingdom. Our Debs clan is being framed!”

“Framed?” Clayde flicked a cold glance at Bernard.

“Bring in the Lanseer brothers!”

Upon hearing the words ‘Lanseer brothers’, the face of Bernard, clan leader of the Debs clan, lost all blood.

Chapter 14 – Imprisoned

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 14, Imprisoned

For the sake of this water jade smuggling operation, the Debs clan had paid a very high price. Bernard ordered his Third Brother to be responsible for this affair, and the Lanseer brothers were his Third Brother's right and left hand men.

Standing in the middle of the meeting hall, Linley remained calm. The Shadowmouse, Bebe, also quietly stood on Linley's shoulders.

The man and the magical beast both just stood there as though nothing were happening, quietly watching it all. Even though he saw the begging look Bernard had trained on him, Linley didn't react in the slightest.

After a while…

The sound of heavy chains could be heard. Two golden-haired men in shackles entered the meeting hall, under escort from the palace guards. These two men were shackled by the feet and by the hands as well. Just judging from the thickness of those leg-irons, the shackles must have been one or two hundred pounds heavy.

Such heavy shackles were used expressly for collaring those warriors with powerful strength.

"Milord clan leader."

Upon entering the discussion hall and seeing Bernard who was kneeling on the ground, strange smiles appeared on their faces. They actually called out to Bernard respectfully.

Standing to the side, Linley understood.

Most likely these Lanseer brothers were two of the major leaders in the smuggling operation who most likely had some secret connection with the Debs clan.

“The Debs clan is going to be in trouble now.” Linley just quietly watched.

Seeing those two shackled golden-haired men, Bernard reacted with confusion. “Uh? Lanseer and Langmuir [Lan’mu’er], why have the two of you been imprisoned by his Majesty? Didn’t I give the two of you a 100,000 gold coins a few months ago and tell you to go enjoy life?”

Those two golden-haired men were briefly startled, then they laughed.

“Milord clan leader, are you jesting?” Lanseer laughed.

Next to him, Langmuir snickered as well. “What, lord clan leader, do you still think that you can lie and hide? Forget it. You might as well admit your guilt.”

A look of rage appeared on Bernard’s face. He suddenly rose to his feet, staring angrily at Lanseer and Langmuir. “Lanseer, Langmuir, my Debs clan has raised you and cultivated you since you were little. The two of you should know very well how I have treated you.”

“It’s true, you have treated us brothers very well. But the two of us have also risked our lives for the Debs clan for many years now.” The elder brother, Lanseer, said coldly.

Bernard’s rage grew. With a trembling hand, he pointed at the Lanseer brothers. “The two of you truly forget favors and violate justice. True, you two have worked on behalf of the Debs clan for many years now, but all these years, you have been acting corruptly so as to gain money that belonged to the clan. After that event half a year ago, considering that the two of you had worked for us for so long, I spared your lives and even gave you a 100,000 gold coins and told you to go home and enjoy your lives. But…but you…not only are you not grateful, you’ve now participated in smuggling? And after getting caught, you sully the Debs clan?”

Lanseer and Langmuir were totally caught off-guard, and they stared at Bernard in bewilderment.

“We…we were corrupt? You…you gave us 100,000 gold coins?” Lanseer and Langmuir were totally flabbergasted.

Bernard’s rage exploding, he suddenly turned and knelt before Clayde. His tears cascading onto the ground, he said, “Your Majesty, these two are nothing more than a pair of insatiable wolves. When they were young, I saw that they were two pitiable orphans and so I took them in, and later gave them important positions. But they only acted to shovel my clan’s wealth into their own pockets. Despite that, considering the many years of affection between us, I spared their lives and even gave them 100,000 gold coins. This can be considered to be extremely benevolent and merciful of me. But now? Now they actually come here to sully and frame my Debs clan. They want to destroy the Debs clan! How vicious! Your Majesty, my heart is broken. My heart is broken!”

Seeing the miserable cries of Bernard, many of the nobles in the meeting hall did indeed begin to wonder if Lanseer and Langmuir really were framing the Debs clan.

“Bernard, you…you…” Lanseer and Langmuir were so enraged that their faces turned red, but they weren’t able to say a single word.

How much had these two brothers sacrificed for the Debs clan?

They were even willing to engage in smuggling for the clan, precisely because the two of them didn’t fear death. If it weren’t for the fact that this time, the offer from King Clayde was simply too enticing, they wouldn’t have betrayed the Debs clan.

But everything which Bernard was saying now was false!

“Oh? There’s an event such as this?” Clayde glanced at Bernard.

Clayde could sense that Bernard had come prepared, as otherwise, he wouldn't have suddenly come up with all these lies. If he were to investigate, most likely he wouldn't be able to find any flaws.

"Hrmph. It's a pity that Third Brother of Bernard's leapt into the river. We weren't even able to find his corpse. Otherwise, with his Third Brother in front of him, Bernard would have nothing to say." Clayde was furious.

Smuggling water jade.

Water jade mines were part of the national wealth of the kingdom. Which was to say, it was part of Clayde's wealth.

Illegally mining and smuggling water jade meant stealing from him, Clayde. Naturally, Clayde would feel furious.

But that Third Brother of Bernard's had leapt into the river to commit suicide, while Bernard had seemingly been prepared for Lanseer and Langmuir's betrayal.

"Bernard, I won't unjustly accuse an innocent man." Clayde said solemnly.

"Thank you, your Majesty! Thank you, your Majesty!" Bernard's face was covered with tears.

But Clayde announced coldly, "However, I also won't forgive a person who has betrayed the interests of his kingdom. Based on the intelligence that I have, it seems that the person responsible for this smuggling operating was your Third Brother."

"My Third Brother?" Bernard stared questioningly at Clayde.

Clayde stared coldly at Bernard. "What, do you have something to say?"

A wounded look on his face, Bernard said, "Of course I do. Your Majesty, I really don't know why you said what you just said, but over a year ago, my Third Brother left the Kingdom of Fenlai and began on a training excursion

tour to various other countries. Just a few days ago, he sent a letter back to us."

Clayde's gaze grew colder.

His men had personally reported that when they were in the process of apprehending Bernard's Third Brother that the man, being heavily wounded, had elected to throw himself into the river. They couldn't find any trace of him.

"Your Majesty! Your Majesty! You must deliver justice!"

Bernard cast a furious glare at Lanseer and Langmuir. "You simply cannot believe the lies of these two despicable men and cast aspersions on the heart of a clan which is loyal to the kingdom."

"Bernard, you! You!" The furious and anxious Lanseer brothers didn't know what to say.

Clayde suddenly rose to his feet, staring coldly at Bernard. "I've already said that I will not unjustly accuse an innocent man, nor forgive a man who has betrayed the interests of his kingdom. Based on the evidence I have at hand, there is at least a suspicion that your Debs clan has betrayed the kingdom. Guards!"

Bernard's face instantly changed. "Your Majesty! Your Majesty! I am loyal and faithful to the Kingdom!"

Two palace guards rushed into the meeting hall.

"Bernard." Clayde smiled at Bernard.

Bernard raised his head, looking beseechingly at Clayde, as though he were a child looking at his parents.

"Whether or not your clan is loyal is a question that will only be settled by evidence. I will give you a chance. I will not exterminate your clan right

away."

In his heart, Bernard let out a sigh of relief. What he feared the most was that the Debs clan would instantly be exterminated. "Fortunately, I found those ashes and those remains within the secret room. It gave me the chance to prepare." Ever since that day, Bernard had been preparing. He had in fact made multiple levels of preparations.

"Guards, deliver Bernard as well as the successor to the Debs clan to the Blackwater Jails. As for this case involving the smuggling operations of the Debs clan, let the Right Premier Merritt [Mei'li'te] investigate." Clayde ordered.

Immediately, those two guards took Bernard away.

"Your Majesty! I believe in your Majesty's wisdom!" Bernard called to Clayde, even while being dragged away.

That night, the Greenleaf Road became a very energetic place.

Hoof steps and shouts unabated. Hundreds of knights directly surrounded the Debs clan's manor, terrifying all of the members of the Debs clan present.

"What are you doing? What are you doing? Do you know what place this is?" Kalan's second granduncle, the second uncle of Bernard, immediately shouted at those palace guards.

The leader of the knights said coldly, "Do you dare to go against the dictates of his Majesty?"

But this second granduncle only raised his head proudly. "The orders of his Majesty? Who knows if you are falsely claiming that you have an order from his Majesty? Speak! What do you want?"

"Second Granduncle, what's going on outside?"

By now, many of the members of the Debs clan had rushed over.

Even Alice and Rowling had gotten dressed and rushed over. In the Yulan continent, after the engagement ceremony, the fiancée normally would begin to live with the fiancé. But generally speaking, only after the marriage ceremony would the two of them enter their bridal chambers.

Naturally…

There were cases of people sharing a bedroom prior to the wedding as well, as long as both were willing.

“Big sister Alice, what’s going on outside?” Rowling was holding onto Alice’s hands.

Alice was bewildered as well. “I’m not sure.”

The hundreds of people within the Debs clan’s manor all streamed out, and most of them seemed bewildered. Only the core members of the clan who knew the truth about the smuggling operations began to feel frightened.

This smuggling operation of the Debs clan was an extremely large scale one.

Just to carry out the operation, they had used several tens of millions of gold coins. If they were successful, the profits would be several hundred million gold coins. What the Debs clan’s elders thoughts were, once would be enough.

But it seemed this one operation had proved problematic.

“Big brother Kalan, what’s going on?” Rowling asked Kalan as well.

Kalan shook his head, indicating he didn’t know.

The squad of palace knights had assembled outside the manor. Their leader, the knight-captain, upon seeing so many members of the Debs clan present,

withdrew the tablet of command from his clothes, shouting in a bright voice, “His Majesty orders that, as the Debs clan is under suspicion of engaging in the smuggling of water jade, the leader of the Debs clan as well as his successor are to be immediately jailed within the Blackwater Jails.”

Instantly, the faces of every member of the Debs clan changed.

The faces of those core members of the Debs clan turned even more ashen, even paler. But Alice, Rowling, and those other members of the clan only felt astounded and bewildered.

Several guards stepped forward and grabbed Kalan.

“Take him away!”

The leader of the knights shouted.

At this moment, Kalan felt as though his limbs had gone soft. He allowed those guards to march him towards the gate. But once he reached the gate, he suddenly woke up and, turning his head, frantically called out, “Second Granduncle, Alice, you two have to save me, have to save me!”

Allowing Kalan to shout as much as he wanted, those palace guards emotionlessly escorted him off towards the jails.

Alice, Rowling, and the other members of the Debs clan could only watch as Kalan was taken away, unable to help. Their clan was powerful, true, but how could they resist against the king?

By the next morning, the news that the Debs clan was suspected of having engaged in water jade smuggling had spread across the entire noble circle of Fenlai City. Many of the nobles of Fenlai were paying special attention to this matter.

What’s more, this case was being personally handled by the Right Premier of the Kingdom of Fenlai, Duke Merritt.

Within Duke Merritt's manor.

Lord Duke Merritt was already over seventy years old, but as a fairly powerful warrior, he looked as though he were only in his middle years. His short golden hair was slick and gleamed.

Right now, Duke Merritt was seated on a chair. He casually flicked a glance at his visitor from the Debs clan – the second granduncle of Kalan, Nimitz [Ni'mi'si].

"Lord Merritt, our clan has definitely been unjustly accused. I hope, lord, that you will be just to our clan."

As he spoke, Nimitz pulled out a book from his side. "Lord Merritt, I know that you love to collect holy scripts. This holy script was issued by the Radiant Church over three thousand years ago. It's a rather rare one."

"Oh, a holy script?"

Merritt casually accepted it, but while flipping through it, Merritt suddenly noticed that stuck within the pages, there was a flat card. A flat card produced by the Golden Bank of the Four Empires. A magicrystal card!

A hint of a smile appeared on Merritt's face.

Nimitz was carefully observing Merritt's reactions. Merritt closed the holy script, putting it to the side, then smiled. "Nimitz, you should know that aside from holy scripts, I'm also a big fan of sculptures. A while ago, when I saw that 'Awakening From the Dream', I liked it very much. During your clan's engagement ceremony, I saw that Alice. Oh, she looked so very similar to that person in the sculpture. I wonder…if it would be possible for me to have a private chat with Alice."

Chapter 15 – To Be Wronged

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 15, To Be Wronged

Have a private chat with Alice? Whether or not the Debs clan had engaged in the smuggling of water jade, what use would a private chat with Alice be to make that determination? Clearly, this Merritt had other designs. Nimitz was a person with significant worldly experience. Naturally, he knew exactly what was going on.

Nimitz's eyes narrowed as he stared at Merritt.

But Merritt only casually reclined on his chair, even closing his eyes as he relaxed himself. He didn't even look at Nimitz. Merritt's attitude spoke for itself: If you want your family's 'grievance' to be washed clean, then have Alice come talk to me about it.

Nimitz was quiet for a moment, then laughed. "So Lord Merritt is a fan of Master Linley's 'Awakening From the Dream'. It is understandable if you want to have a chat with Alice. Fine, I'll go back and speak with her."

Upon hearing these words, Merritt opened his eyes, smiling at Nimitz. "Haha, then Nimitz, you can go back now. If Alice is willing to have a good chat with me, I think I will have a better understanding of your Debs clan."

Nimitz immediately stood up, bowing modestly. "Then Lord Merritt, I take my leave. I entrust the affairs of our Debs clan with you."

Merritt nodded slightly.

Nimitz immediately departed.

Leaving behind Duke Merritt, alone in that living room.

Toying with his wine cup, Merritt mumbled in a low voice, "My goddess…

Alice…" There was a look of satisfaction and anticipation on his face.

As the Right Premier of the Kingdom of Fenlai, and as a Duke, Merritt had an extremely exalted status. The number of people with a higher status than him in the Kingdom of Fenlai could be counted on one hand.

A person like him had experienced virtually any sort of woman he wished.

Merritt really was a lecher, despite being in his seventies. Warriors of his level could live to be over three hundred. Right now, he was only in his seventies and in the prime of his life. Merritt publicly had twelve wives to his name, but there was a common viewpoint amongst nobles; one's own wives at home weren't as interesting as having lovers outside, but having lovers outside weren't as interesting as those you couldn't get. Those whom you couldn't get were the best of all.

But given Merritt's status, there were very few women he was unable to get. At the same time, there were very few women who could truly move him.

But Alice was definitely one.

Ever since that sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream' had become famous, in the hearts of many, the woman of the sculpture had become an untouchable, lofty goddess. For someone of Merritt's stature, naturally he would deeply desire to get a goddess like Alice beneath his thighs. But this was really too difficult.

But now. An opportunity had come.

"Alice. The goddess?" Merritt was unable to repress his smile. Turning his head up, he drained all of the red wine from his glass.

Sitting within his carriage on the way home, Nimitz was frowning deeply.

Alice was Kalan's fiancée!

If he were to ask Alice to get meet privately with Merritt, then he definitely

would be essentially pushing Alice into a disaster. In the future, when faced with Kalan's questioning, it wouldn't be a big deal. But if word of this were to spread, the impact it would have on the Debs clan's standing would be tremendous.

"Ugh. If the clan is finished, then what will its reputation matter?" Nimitz shook his head, sighing.

Right now, the Debs clan had reached a critical juncture. If the Debs clan was found to have been guilty of smuggling, then the entire clan would be exterminated, and all of its possessions would be taken by the King of Fenlai. Although the Debs clan had left behind some roots outside the kingdom, preventing it from being totally wiped out, almost all of its possessions were in the Kingdom of Fenlai.

If it was all lost, who knew how many years it would be before the Debs clan would return to its former glory?

Compared to the clan's future, a little bit of mockery and humiliation wasn't a big deal. After all, since when did the circle of nobles lack for embarrassing stories?

"But this has to be of Alice's own free will." Nimitz was a bit worried. "I can't forcibly deliver her to the Right Premier's manor, after all."

Nimitz didn't care at all about Alice's purity. She was just a woman, after all!

But Nimitz knew…

"This Alice has a special relationship with Linley. If I were to force her, and then Linley found out…" Just thinking about it made Nimitz frightened. Linley had a very special status within the Kingdom of Fenlai.

Although he had the rank of Marquis, in actuality, Linley belonged to the Radiant Church. In the past, when Clayde had invited Linley to join the ranks of the nobles in the Kingdom of Fenlai, he had even said that between

the two of them, there was no need to observe the normal protocols between king and subject.

Clearly, Clayde desired to pull Linley closer to him.

And all of the nobles of the Kingdom of Fenlai knew that if Linley were willing, he could probably easily become a Vicar of the Radiant Church. In a few dozen years, it would be quite natural for Linley to become a Cardinal.

The status of a Cardinal was even higher than that of the King!

“Can’t force her.” Nimitz felt a headache coming. He was worried that Alice would refuse. He pondered things from Linley’s point of view.

Alice was, after all, previously Linley’s first love! If he, Nimitz, were to force Alice to meet Merritt, and she were to lose her chastity, how could Linley not explode with rage?

Within the Debs clan’s manor.

The clan hall was filled with many members of the Debs clan. Alice and Rowling were there as well. All of them were awaiting the return of Nimitz.

They were all worrying about the future of the Debs clan!

“Second Uncle is back! Second Uncle is back!” A middle-aged man standing in the doorway saw Nimitz and began to call out.

Instantly, all of the members of the Debs clan rushed out towards Nimitz en masse. Alice and Rowling exchanged glances, then rose and went to welcome him as well.

“Second Uncle, what’s the situation?”

Nimitz looked at the group of people in front of him. Squeezing out a smile, he said, “The situation isn’t too bad yet. Everyone, go back to your

residences. Alice, stay. I need to talk to you."

Within the clan, Nimitz had a great deal of authority. Hearing his words, everyone departed.

Alice was somewhat confused, confused as to what Nimitz wanted to talk to her about.

"Big sister Alice, I'll go back to my room now." Rowling waved towards Alice and said in a quiet voice. A short period of time later, the person left in the hall was Alice.

Nimitz stepped into the hall.

"Second Granduncle, what's wrong?" Alice stuttered.

Nimitz looked at Alice. Suddenly, he smiled warmly towards her. "Alice, don't be nervous. Sit down first. Let's have a good talk." As he spoke, Nimitz sat down as well.

Why was Nimitz, who previously was so stern to her, who seemed to always look down on her, being so warm to her now?

Alice couldn't help but feel suspicious.

"Come, sit." Nimitz's smile was so kind, so warm.

Alice nervously sat down.

Nimitz let out a long breath. Worry appeared between his brows. "Alice, we didn't expect that this would happen so soon after you and Kalan got engaged. I don't know who is secretly framing our Debs clan. If I did, I would kill him." A baleful aura appeared on Nimitz's face, but then it transformed into a look of helplessness. "But right now, the most important thing is to cleanse this stain from our name, and rescue Kalan and Bernard."

Alice nodded.

But in her heart, Alice was suspicious. “Why is Second Granduncle saying these things to me?”

Staring at Alice, Nimitz said with sincerity, “Alice, there is something I must beg of you.”

“Beg me?” Alice was so startled, she rose to her feet.

Such as Nimitz’s standing within the clan that even the clan leader would be respectful to him. But now, Nimitz was saying that he had to beg her to do something. How could Alice not be shocked?

“Alice, Lord Merritt is in charge of investigating this allegation that the Debs clan was engaged in the smuggling of water jade. Lord Merritt is very intrigued by you and wants to meet with you privately.”

Nimitz said urgently to her, “Alice, this is a rare, wonderful opportunity to improve our relationship with him. Only by managing to have a good relationship with Lord Merritt would you be able to help our clan. Alice, you grew up alongside Kalan. You don’t want to see him in jail either, right?”

Alice was stunned.

A private meeting?

Alice was someone who had lived in a noble clan as well, and knew all too well about the shameful things which occurred amongst the nobility. She instantly could guess that this meeting with Lord Merritt would be more than a simple meeting.

“I…I…” Alice stuttered.

Nimitz begged, “Alice, our entire Debs clan is relying on you. I can even guarantee that so long as you can pull Lord Merritt to our side, you will be Kalan’s principal wife.”

Alice felt as though her mind was in shambles.

Alice was still pure and chaste of body.

She had refused to cross that last barrier with both Linley and Kalan. Even after getting engaged to Kalan, Alice still insisted on being married before she would enter the bridal bed with him.

But now she had to go deal with Lord Merritt…

“Alice, I’m begging you.” Nimitz gritted his teeth, leaving his chair and falling to his knees before her. “Alice, Kalan’s life is in your hands.”

“Kalan’s life?” Alice trembled.

Kalan had grown up alongside her. In recent days, in the face of ridicule and scorn from the other members of the Debs clan, it had been Kalan who protected her.

“Alright. I agree.” Alice gritted her teeth.

A look of surprised joy appeared on Nimitz’s face, then he hurriedly said, “Wonderful. How about this. Tomorrow at dusk, I’ll arrange for you to be brought to Lord Merritt’s manor.”

But right now, Alice’s face was extremely pale. She didn’t respond at all.

That next evening. Escorted by twelve knights, a carriage departed from the Debs clan’s manor, slowly rolling towards the manor of Lord Merritt. Within the carriage was only one person. Alice.

Alice quietly sat within the carriage, chewing on her lips. Her nervous hands were tightly gripping her dress.

The carriage continued to roll forward. Quite soon, it arrived at the main gate to Lord Merritt’s manor.

“Miss Alice, we’re here.” The voice of the carriage driver rang out from outside.

Hearing his words, Alice’s heart trembled. Her right hand drifted down to her waist. The firmness of the steel dagger by her side helped to slightly calm her mind down.

Taking a deep breath, Alice pushed open the carriage to the door and stepped out.

Within the welcoming hall of Lord Merritt’s manor.

Wearing a jacket on top and a skirt beneath, Alice was dressed relatively conservatively. Step by step, Alice managed to enter the hall relatively calmly. Alice looked around her, but saw nobody there within the hall.

“Hrm?” Alice couldn’t help but frown.

Just at this moment, a female attendant ran over. Respectfully, she said, “Miss Alice, the Lord Duke is in his study and would like to invite you there as well.”

“His study?” Alice shuddered slightly.

But under the urging gaze of the attendant, Alice still began to walk forwards with her.

The study was in a very quiet, secluded area. There were very few people here. Arriving at the door to the study, Alice saw a seemingly middle-aged, golden-haired man standing in front of a study desk, staring at some papers.

“This is Merritt?” Seeing Merritt, Alice’s first impression was that this was a very fierce person. Even when he sat down at his desk, his back was ramrod straight, and his eyes were sharp.

“Lord Duke, Miss Alice has arrived.” That female attendant said

respectfully.

Only now did Merritt raise his head. Seeing Alice, he excitedly rose to his feet. “Haha, Miss Alice, you came? I’ve waited for quite a long time. Come, Miss Alice, please sit.” As he spoke, he left his seat and walked towards Alice.

Alice stepped into the study.

Alice looked around her. Towards the right side of the study, there were many bookshelves, covered with countless books. On the left side of the study, there was a bed.

“Often, when I’m reading or taking care of government affairs, I’ll get tired and will rest there.” Duke Merritt said with a smile. At the same time, he walked towards the study door and shut it.

Seeing the door to the study shut, leaving behind only her and Merritt in the room, Alice grew nervous.

“Lord Merritt, it’s better if we leave the door to the study open. I’m not accustomed to dark environments.” Alice hurriedly said.

Chapter 16 – Limits

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 16, Limits

As he closed the door to the study, Merritt heard Alice's words. He couldn't help but turn to Alice with a smile. "Miss Alice, we're going to discuss the affairs of the Debs clan. We can't discuss those openly and publicly, can we? If his Majesty were to find out, then I would be in serious trouble. You should know that I'm taking on serious risks on behalf of your Debs clan. Best we leave the door closed."

Alice was stunned.

In terms of wordplay, how could Alice match this Lord Merritt, who had engaged in the highest levels of court intrigue for so long?

Smiling, Merritt walked past her. In front of the bookshelf, there were two chairs around a round table. Merritt would often chat with some of his friends here.

Merritt first sat down, then looked at Alice. "Alice, you should sit."

"Thank you, Lord Merritt." Alice secretly let out a sigh of relief, then sat down on the opposite chair. The thing which made Alice the most nervous in this study was that bed.

"Please wait a moment."

Smiling, Merritt rose to his feet, then pulled out a bottle of red wine and two wine cups. He poured himself and Alice a cup of wine each.

"Alice, this is the Bluerain red wine from the Yulan Empire, a sixty-year old vintage. The flavor isn't bad. Have a taste." Merritt smiled as he raised his glass to her.

Alice was somewhat afraid that some sort of knockout drug had been mixed into the wine. But, under Merritt's gaze, Alice was forced to raise her own glass as well. Only, she just barely touched the wine with her lips.

Merritt didn't force her. Changing the topic, he said, "Alice, you and Kalan have already become engaged. I expect you know quite a bit about the affairs of the Debs clan. Did you know they were engaged in smuggling?"

"No, I didn't. I think Kalan wouldn't engage in smuggling." Alice hurriedly said. "Lord Merritt, the Debs clan is quite powerful. I think they wouldn't engage in this smuggling business."

With a smile that wasn't a smile, Merritt looked at Alice. "Hard to say."

"Ah!"

Merritt seemed to have seen something, and all of a sudden, he moved next to Alice, so close that his face was mere centimeters away from Alice's face.

Startled, Alice hurriedly retreated.

"Don't move." Merritt's shouted carried a hint of a command.

Born from long years of being accustomed to power, Merritt's commanding voice froze Alice in her tracks, as ill at ease as she was. Merritt carefully inspected Alice's hair, then looked down at Alice.

Upon lowering his head, his face was now only a few centimeters away from Alice's. This made Alice hurriedly bend her head away from him.

Seeing this, Merritt laughed, then returned to his original seat. He let out a helpless sigh. "Just then, I saw a single white hair on your head, but after you moved, I couldn't see it anymore."

A strand of white hair?

In her heart, Alice began to grow irritated. She lived together with Rowling now, and every morning, when they were bored, they would comb each other's hair. Often, she would find some white hairs on Rowling's head. But Rowling often expressed envy towards Alice, as she could never find white hair on Alice's head.

Rowling couldn't find any white hair despite combing Alice's hair every day. How could Merritt have found any?

But Alice didn't dare to say this.

"Alice, you are still young. Don't be too upset. If you are upset, you'll age faster, and thus have white hair." Merritt said solicitously.

Alice only quietly listened to him as he spoke.

Merritt nudged his chair in Alice's direction, then fixed his gaze upon Alice. "Alice, you are quite beautiful, you know. Your charm and aura of refinement is really quite mesmerizing to behold."

Alice couldn't help but feel shy and nervous.

Merritt leaned forward slightly, staring intensely at Alice. "Alice. Those wives of mine, all they care about are superficial things like money and glory. They seem so vulgar, so low. But you are totally different. Truly, you are, you know. The very first time I saw you, I was stunned."

"I very much regret that I ended up marrying women such as them." Merritt suddenly reached out and held Alice's hand. Alice's eyes suddenly widened. Merritt continued to look at Alice. "Alice, if I…if I were to tell you that I love you from the bottom of my heart, that I am smitten with you, would you believe me?"

Alice hurriedly stood up…but Merritt maintained his tight grip on her hand.

"Lord Merrit, Lord Merritt. I'm the fiancée of Kalan!" Alice struggled, and only after three attempts was she able to break free from Merritt's grip.

Merritt looked at Alice with a smile. “As you say, you are only a fiancée, which means you aren’t married yet. You totally can marry another. As for Kalan, what does a kid like him know about having fun?”

As he spoke, Merritt once more moved nearer to Alice, while Alice continued to move back.

But in her nervousness, Alice didn’t notice in the slightest that Merritt was pressuring her into the direction of the bed.

“Alice. I really have fallen for you. I swear!” Merritt stared soulfully at Alice.

Merritt wasn’t lying. Over the course of admiring the sculpture ‘Awakening From the Dream’, and then upon seeing Alice herself, he really did fall for Alice. But this sort of ‘falling for’ was only a desire to possess.

“Lord Merritt!” Alice was growing frantic.

Suddenly, Alice’s back legs collided with the bed. Knocked off balance, Alice fell backwards onto the mattress.

A hint of a smile appeared on Merritt’s face. He immediately threw himself on top of Alice, all but pressing his body against hers. “Alice, my goddess, please satisfy the desires of this mortal who has been mesmerized by you. If you satisfy my desires, I’ll satisfy yours as well and clear the unjust stains from the Debs clan.”

Clear the stains of the Debs clan?

Staring at Merritt who was right on top of her, Alice couldn’t help but suddenly think back to a night she had been with Linley at a small hotel. The two of them had entangled themselves lustfully, but at the very end, she had stopped Linley.

How could she give up her chastity to this man in front of her?

“My goddess, come to me.” Merritt’s voice was very soft, as though he was trying to hypnotize her.

“No. No!”

Alice suddenly pulled the dagger from her waist and thrust it at Merritt. At the same time, the stones on the floor flew at Merritt.

Alice was an earth-style magus, after all!

But Merritt himself was a powerful warrior. His reflexes were very fast, and he quickly dodged to one side while at the same time slapping the dagger out of Alice’s hand.

Alice instantly dodged towards the other side, running for the door.

But with a flicker of his body, Merritt appeared between her and the door. With a smile that was not a smile on his face, he looked at Alice. “Alice. Do you still want to resist? Based on your prowess as a magus and that little knife, you want to resist me?”

“Lord Merritt, let me leave.” By now, Alice was firm in her resolve.

“You no longer wish to save the Debs clan? You don’t wish to save your fiancé, Kalan?” Merritt asked.

Alice’s eyes were determined. Gritting her teeth, she said, “Although I do wish to save them, this is not the way to do it. You beast!”

“Beast?” The expression on Merritt’s face changed. He coldly said, “Originally, I wanted for the mood to be a bit more romantic, but since you refuse to cooperate, then I’ll show you what a beast really looks like.”

Alice’s face turned pale.

“Merritt. Don’t go too far.” Frightened, Alice quickly retreated, grabbing

the chair next to her and smashing it at Merritt.

With a single fist, Merritt easily broke the chair apart.

“Don’t resist. This place…is my manor.” Merritt said with a soft laugh.

Watching Merritt draw step by step closer to her, Alice gritted her teeth and said wildly, “Merritt! You’d best not forget that I once was Linley’s woman!”

These words halted Merritt in his tracks, stunning him.

Alice really did not want to say these words. She knew that her actions of the past had wounded Linley very deeply, and she didn’t want to have anything more to do with him. But at this point in time, she could think of no other way.

“Linley?” Standing there without moving, Merritt frowned.

Biting her lips, Alice stared at Merritt. “Merritt, I can pretend that nothing at all happened today. But if you go too far, then don’t blame me when I also go all-out afterwards. I trust you know how influential Linley is now.”

Merritt looked at Alice.

He really had been enchanted by Alice, but Merritt knew very well that Linley’s relationship with Alice was very special. Just from looking at that sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, one could tell how deep Linley’s affection for Alice had been.

“Linley’s feelings towards Alice really were in the realm of true love. If Linley were to find out…” Merritt’s head began to hurt.

Linley.

Very hard to deal with!

The current Linley already possessed incredible influence. Although he, Merritt, was powerful, in the end he was only the Right Premier of a single kingdom. To the Radiant Church, perhaps deposing one of the rulers of a kingdom was something it would do only after serious consideration, but they wouldn't even think twice before dealing with the Right Premier of a kingdom.

All Linley had to do was to ask the Radiant Church for their assistance. Dealing with him, a Right Premier, wouldn't be a problem.

But in the future, Linley would only be more formidable. This was one of the reasons why not a single member of the nobles of the Kingdom of Fenlai had dared to plot against Linley or make attempts against Linley's life, which was why, in front of Linley, they all behaved so courteously.

"Alas…" Merritt let out a long sigh. "Alice, I really, truly, have fallen for you from the depths of my heart, so much so that I lost my sense of rationality."

Merritt smiled apologetically at Alice. "I apologize. I've come back to my senses now. Since you aren't willing or able to have feelings for me, of course I cannot force myself on."

"Lord Merritt, I'll take my leave, then." Alice quickly scurried to the door, opened it, then rushed out.

Seeing Alice depart, the apologetic look dropped from Merritt's face, and his gaze grew vicious and cold. With a cold sneer, he spat out the word, "Bitch!"

By the time Alice had returned to the Debs clan manor, it was now totally dark.

Right now, all of the members of the Debs clan were in the middle of the main hall, eating dinner. Only, the atmosphere wasn't very good. The clan could be exterminated at any time, after all.

“Alice. You returned?” Rowling suddenly saw Alice running inside.

Nimitz and the others all stood up as well.

“As fast as that?” Nimitz frowned. Alice had come back far too early, much earlier than he had expected.

“Alice, eat dinner with us.” Rowling immediately called to her.

On the walkway past the main hall, Alice glanced at the people inside and said apologetically, “I’m not feeling well. I’ll go back to my room and rest first.” Alice’s voice was very low and hoarse.

Rowling felt that Alice wasn’t acting normally.

“Let me go see how Alice is doing.” Rowling smiled at everyone, then left the hall, leaving behind Nimitz, who was frowning with suspicion.

Alice and Rowling, in their room.

Upon entering the room, Alice had immediately thrown herself into her bed. She could no longer hold back her tears, which poured out. Her heart was filled with wrongs and injustices.

“What did I do wrong? Lord, why must you punish me so?”

Alice was howling with rage in her heart.

“I never asked for much, only that I could have a simple, peaceful life. I want my parents to have a peaceful life, for myself to have a peaceful life. Why, why must you punish me so?” Alice’s heart was filled with misery. True, the Debs clan perhaps was going to be finished.

But what did that have to do with her?

Why did they have to send her to deal with Merritt?

Why did she have to be forced to the point where she had to shout out the words, “I once was Linley’s woman?” How difficult had it been for her to force these words out! Alice truly hadn’t wanted to say that!

“Big sister Alice, what happened?” Rowling ran into the room. Seeing Alice sobbing to the point where there was a huge wet spot on the bed, Rowling grew frantic with worry.

Rowling immediately went over and began to stroke Alice’s back. “Don’t cry, don’t cry. Whatever it is, you can tell me. Tell me.”

Alice immediately turned and threw herself into Rowling’s arms, bawling even fiercerly. It wasn’t as bad without anyone there to comfort her, but now that someone had come, Alice felt all the more aggrieved and wronged.

Rowling comforted Alice for more than half an hour before Alice finally became somewhat calmer.

“Big sister Alice, what exactly happened? Tell me.” Rowling looked at Alice.

Alice took a deep breath, then slowly explained the injustice that had been done to her. “Little Rowling, you are also aware of the current situation with the Debs clan. Yesterday, Second Granduncle came and wanted to have a private chat with me. He wanted me to…”

The more she heard, the more fury Rowling felt.

She was angry at Nimitz’s behavior. She was angry for what Alice had suffered. And she felt rage towards that beast-like Merritt’s behavior. At the same time, she felt sympathy for Alice.

“I don’t want to get involved, get involved anymore. I just want to live out a peaceful life.” Alice said, sobbing sporadically.

Over these past few days, Rowling had been considering what the best way to help the Debs clan was. But upon hearing Alice’s story, she suddenly

understood a few things.

“Big sister Alice, don’t be sad. No matter what, you definitely cannot let that Merritt destroy your chastity.” Rowling comforted her.

Alice nodded.

“But we still have to come up with a way to save Kalan and the others.” Rowling said. “Big brother Kalan is our fiancé, after all.”

Alice also wanted to save him, but she didn’t know how.

“We still have an option.” Rowling looked at Alice. “But…I don’t know if you would be willing to take it, sister Alice.”

“Rowling…” Looking at Rowling, Alice had already guessed what she was going to say.

Rowling nodded. “Right. Go ask Linley for help. Today, as soon as you mentioned his name, that Merritt no longer dared to touch you. Clearly, Linley is extremely influential. Based on what I know, not only does Linley have a relationship with the Radiant Church, he also has a relationship with the Dawson Conglomerate. Even his Majesty, King Clayde, treats Linley as he would a friend, rather than an ordinary subject. If Linley is willing to speak out, we would have a much greater chance of rescuing big brother Kalan.”

Currently, in the Kingdom of Fenlai, without question, people were more willing to defer to Linley than to anyone else.

Even the Left Premier and the Right Premier couldn’t compare with him.

Because, as one could easily tell, in the future Linley would be a high level person within the Radiant Church. Even right now, he was viewed as an extremely important potential talent who needed to be cultivated and trained. For the sake of Linley, those two Cardinals of the Radiant Church had even gone to Hogg’s funeral and paid their respects to him. From this,

one could easily see how important they viewed Linley as being.

“Big brother Linley?” Alice’s emotions were very mixed.

In truth, in Alice’s heart, she knew this was a possibility long ago, but she didn’t want to confront it. She truly didn’t wish to go beg Linley. She felt that she didn’t have the face to see him again.

She knew that she had wounded Linley too heavily. That moment when she had seen that sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, Alice understood how deeply Linley loved her. Or at least, how deeply he had once loved her.

She was ashamed to meet him!

“Big sister Alice, I understand your feelings.” Rowling tightly gripped Alice by the hands. “But, big sister Alice, big brother Kalan and his father are very likely to lose their lives. I beg you, please just suffer a bit on our behalf. At least Linley won’t act the way that Merritt did.”

Alice’s heart was filled with pain.

“No face? Is my self-respect more important, or are the lives of big brother Kalan and his father more important?” Alice asked herself this question. She had no other choice.

“Big sister Alice.” Rowling stared beseechingly at Alice.

Alice took a deep breath, forcing herself to calm down. Looking at Rowling, she nodded. “Alright. I’ll go see big brother Linley tomorrow.”

Chapter 17 – The Plea

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 17, The Plea

At the manor of the Prime Court Magus. Within the Hot Springs Garden.

An earthen glow emanated from a patch of grass within the Hot Springs Garden. Earth-style magic – Supergravity Field. Right now, Linley was dressed only in a pair of long pants, his upper body bare as he trained in the grass.

Those muscles on his bare upper body rippled like water. There wasn't a trace of excess flesh. Right now, Linley's body, organs, veins, and arteries were all being forced to withstand a gravity four times stronger than normal.

Fortunately, after becoming a Dragonblood Warrior, Linley's body had reached new heights in power.

Linley's legs were arched in a bow-drawing stance, and his two hands were raised parallel by his sides, each holding up a giant boulder. Each of these boulders weighed over a hundred pounds. Under the quadruple gravity field, the two combined weighed nearly a thousand pounds.

His legs as taut as steel cables, Linley's body was as straight as a quill. His gaze, fixed in front of him, didn't waver either.

One drop of sweat after another rolled down Linley's body, covering his entire body in sweat. But Linley persevered….

Despite being designated the Prime Court Magus for the kingdom, Linley continued to train non-stop every day. His guards stood solemnly outside, alongside two female attendants who were ready to answer Linley's call at any moment. The door to the Hot Springs Garden, however, was closed.

Whenever Linley was training, no one was permitted to enter.

Once, his majesty King Clayde, ruler of Fenlai, had come to the manor. The palace attendant ignored the guards at the Hot Springs Garden and charged in directly, instructing Linley to meet with his Majesty. Linley immediately issued an order for that attendant to receive twenty strikes of the military rod. That physically weak attendant ended up being beaten to death.

But afterwards, King Clayde didn't blame Linley in the slightest. On the contrary, he berated his subordinates, telling them that while at the Hot Springs Garden, they absolutely must obey Linley's rules.

"Lord Linley always is so hard-working when he trains. He's spent an entire day in there. When he's not engaging in warrior training, he is engaging in magus training. I think the only time he ever rests is the time he spends in his stonesculpting." One female attendant said in a low voice. The other female attendant also nodded. "I've never seen such a hard-working noble before. In the previous household I worked for, the instructor for the warriors himself only spent four hours a day training."

The nearby guardian knights of the Radiant Church also felt a great deal of admiration for Linley. Most geniuses, after their initial glory, would begin to fall behind. Each year, the Radiant Church would train a good number of geniuses. However, not only were none of those geniuses as outstanding as Linley, once their status had risen, they would become totally distracted by the material pleasures of the world and fall behind.

"If Lord Linley continues like this, in all likelihood, he will be the youngest combatant of the ninth rank in history, and the youngest Saint-level in history as well." One of the guardian knights said softly.

The other guardian knight also nodded.

All of these people very much admired Linley's painstaking diligence in training.

Only…."Lord Linley is a bit too strict and severe." One of the female

attendants said in an unhappy voice.

In their hearts, Linley was handsome, young, had high standards for himself, and powerful. He had a future! A person like him could be considered to be all but perfect. Only, he was extremely severe towards others. Even when dealing with female servants like them, he didn't act with any gentleness or affection.

What these people didn't know was that although Linley did engage in stonesculpting, he wasn't really resting; when he was stonesculpting, he was increasing his spiritual energy at the fastest rate possible! Linley's was increasing his power at every moment!

Within the Hot Springs Garden.

"Whew."

An hour of warrior's training had come to an end. Linley began to activate the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body, and that tired, weary feeling disappeared. From a nearby box, Linley withdrew a straight chisel, then walked over to one of those two boulders he had dropped onto the grass. These were used by Linley when stonesculpting.

Staring at these boulders and their internal lines and structure, Linley began to mentally design a sculpture. In the blink of an eye, a mental image of a warrior's face was formed.

A hint of a smile on his face, the straight chisel in Linley's hand began to move.

In a very rhythmic pattern, the straight chisel flew and chopped about, causing shattered bits of stone to fly everywhere. Linley knew exactly what he was doing, and so each chop was made with absolute confidence, and the strength he used was just right.

What a wonderful feeling!

Linley's spirit became submerged within the ebbs and vibrations of the surrounding earth elemental essence, allowing him to sense the lines and cracks of the stone. Linley's spirit also submerged into the surrounding wind elemental essence, allowing every single stroke of the knife to reach the peak of perfection in accuracy.

Nature!

Linley's soul had become one with nature, and like a benevolent mother, nature surrounded Linley's soul, allowing it to grow, to strengthen.

"Whew."

Letting out a breath, Linley withdrew his straight chisel.

After spending two hours, this giant boulder had been transformed into a rough outline. As for the fine details, Linley planned to finish those tomorrow. Every day, Linley set limits on how much time he could spend on his stonesculpting.

He had to use the right complement of training regimes to achieve the maximum effect in terms of raising his power!

Training started every day at five in the morning, while now, it was eight o'clock. It was time for Linley to eat breakfast.

Putting down his straight chisel, Linley stepped out of his pants and into the hot springs pool. Lying within the hot springs, feeling the hot springs water rush against his muscles, Linley closed his eyes comfortably, finally allowing himself some time to rest.

"Enter." Linley suddenly shouted.

Those two female attendants who had been quietly standing outside the door this entire time immediately entered with two trays. Those round trays were covered with all sorts of delicacies and fruits.

“Lord Linley.” Those two female attendants put the two round trays down on the nearby table, then respectfully awaited Linley’s commands.

While obediently standing to the side, those two female attendants couldn’t help but sneak peeks at Linley. Linley’s naked, muscular, reclining male body was indeed a source of fascination to them.

“You can go for now.”

Linley said calmly.

“Yes, milord.” The two female attendants immediately left respectfully.

From start to finish, Linley had not glanced at them even once.

Next, Linley stepped out of the pool, put on a set of clean underwear and clothes, then sat on a chair and began to eat breakfast.

“Swish.” A black shadow rushed out from the faraway grassy fields. It was Bebe. Before this, when Linley was training and stonesculpting, Bebe was napping.

“Boss, it’s time for breakfast, eh? Alright, this big piece of roast meat is mine.” Bebe’s eyes instantly were drawn to a particular large piece of roasted magical beast meat.”

Linley chuckled.

“Grandpa Doehring, do we really have no method available to us to deal with that Clayde at present?” Linley mentally said to Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart flew out of the Coiling Dragon ring. Seating himself on another chair, he smiled at Linley. “Linley. Clayde is a warrior of the ninth rank. The gap between the two of you is too vast. Even if you assume the complete Dragonform, you are only a warrior of the early-stage eighth rank. Oh, wait, now that you are currently a late-stage warrior of the sixth rank, when you assume the Dragonform, you can be considered to be a late-stage

warrior of the eighth rank. But nonetheless, you are far from being a match for Clayde."

Linley felt very unwilling to accept this. He knew, now, that the person who had instructed his mother to be abducted by Duke Patterson was King Clayde. But right now, he had no chance of dealing with Clayde at all.

"The only choice I have is to continue training hard." Linley unconsciously balled his fists, with the fork in his hands warping from his strength.

In the early ranks, the extra boost provided by the Dragonform transformation was especially large. As a warrior of the late-stage sixth rank, based on his current training regime, in about half a year, there was hope for Linley to reach the seventh rank. Upon reaching the seventh rank of power, when using the Dragonform, Linley would be able to step into the early-stage ninth rank.

"Lord Linley." The voice of a female attendant could be heard from outside.

"Come in." Linley said calmly.

Only now did the female attendant rush in. Respectfully, she said, "Lord Linley, outside, there's a young lady named Alice who wishes to meet you."

"Alice?" Linley's eyelids flickered. He looked at the female attendant. "Bring her to the guest hall. I will be there shortly." Linley stood up as he spoke.

"Yes, Lord Linley." The female attendant didn't dare to tease Linley in the slightest. They all knew how legendarily severe Linley was with his subordinates.

……

Alice was clutching a glass of water, seeming very ill at ease. For her to come beg Linley was asking a lot of her. But she had no other choice.

Footsteps could be heard.

Alice's entire body shook, and she immediately turned her head to look.

Dressed in a loose, long robe, Linley smiled as he entered from an inner hall. Seeing Alice look at him, he immediately nodded and smiled back. "Alice, long time no see." As he spoke, Linley sat down at the host's seat.

Alice could clearly feel that Linley's attitude was now totally different from a year ago. A year ago, Linley was still very young and immature.

But now, Linley carried himself with the unconscious noble grace and poise. Just from that faint smile, one could sense his grandeur, a grandeur which only came from someone being assured of his high status.

"Big brother Linley." Alice forced her voice to sound calm, but even despite that, her voice still trembled slightly.

"Would you like to eat some fruit? I remember that you loved to eat olives." Linley glanced at one of his female attendants.

A short time later, the female attendant returned with a plate of fruit.

"Thank you." Alice picked up an olive and took a small bite. At this moment, Alice couldn't help but think back to when she and Linley had eaten olives together. Back then, Linley had fed them to her.

Alice couldn't help but turn to look up at Linley, only to find that Linley was smiling at her.

"Big brother Linley." Alice put down the fruit, looking at Linley. "There's something I want to ask your help with."

"You need my help?" Linley had already guessed at the reason behind this visit of Alice's.

"Go ahead." Linley said directly.

Alice took a deep breath, then looked at Linley seriously. “Big brother Linley, you already know about what is happening with Kalan’s clan. I think…Kalan and the others are innocent. I hope you, big brother Linley, can help them and say a few words on their behalf to his Majesty. I hope you can wash away these unjust accusations and return their innocence to them. I know that his Majesty will definitely give you face.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh helplessly.

Innocence?

Others might not be aware, but how could he, who had killed Patterson, be unaware? When he had killed Patterson, Patterson had personally told him about this smuggling affair. There was an 80% to 90% chance that this was with regards to the Debs clan!

“Wash away these unjust accusations? Why do you believe they are innocent? Alice, how much do you really know about the Debs clan?” Linley looked at Alice.

Alice was startled.

It had taken her a tremendous amount of courage to force out those words just now. But after Linley answered her with a question, she had a feeling… that Linley wasn’t going to help!

She suddenly wanted to cry. She felt extremely miserable.

Alice stood up. Curtseying towards Linley, she said, “Big brother Linley, I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have come here today. I know that in the past, I hurt you very deeply. For me to come now and ask you to help save the Debs clan is really excessive of me. It’s okay if you don’t help. I won’t blame you.” As Alice saw it, Linley and Kalan were rivals in love. It was already very kind of Linley not to throw more stones in the drying well, to kick him when he was down.

As he looked at Alice, Linley's heart was very calm

With regards to his failed relationship with his first love, Linley now regarded it only as a bygone dream. The current Linley had already experienced the battle in the Foggy Valley, the transformation into a Dragonblood Warrior, and the death of his father. And now, he had embarked on a dark road of vengeance!

On the road to vengeance, the thing which Linley had to do was to suppress himself, to be cruel, to be cold, to not slacken in the slightest. The current Linley was, mentally, far stronger than he had been a year ago, and far more mature as well. That young, naïve Linley of a year ago couldn't compare at all to the current Linley. He also wasn't the Linley that Alice thought he was.

After having experienced so much, he had matured! Linley had experienced far too much!

"Big brother Linley, I'll leave now." Alice immediately stood to leave, her tears at the precipice of coming out.

"Alice." Linley stood up as well, stretching his hand out and resting it against Alice's shoulders.

Alice turned her head to stare at Linley in amazement. Linley was gazing at her. In a serious voice, he said, "Alice, there's so much that you don't know. Whether or not the Debs clan is innocent isn't something that you can determine. However, since you made up your mind to come ask me for help, I won't just stand by and watch. But…whether or not I'll be able to succeed in saving them is another question."

Chapter 18 – The Visit

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 18, The Visit

Alice felt her heart suddenly tremble. A warm feeling suddenly rushed into her heart, a sensation of thankfulness mixed with a boundless regret.

“Big brother Linley, thank you. Thank you.” Alice couldn’t help but repeat herself. Her tears were already beginning to shimmer in her eyes. The tears of excitement.

Linley smiled. “Go back. This afternoon, I’ll pay a visit to his Majesty at his palace.”

Linley could feel that right now, his heart was very calm when he saw Alice. When seeing Alice, all he was seeing was a female friend whom he was on good terms with. Nothing more.

“Alright. Thank you.” Alice glanced at Linley one more time, then turned her head and left, her thoughts extremely complicated.

Originally, Alice was afraid that because in the past, she had hurt Linley, Linley would feel hatred for Kalan, which would cause Linley not to help save Kalan. But Linley’s reaction had been totally out of her expectations. Linley wasn’t agitated at all. He was very calm.

Watching Alice’s departing back, Linley sat down. Grabbing a fruit, he began to casually eat it. At this time, Bebe popped out as well.

“Boss, you’re gonna help that Alice? If it were me, I would’ve kicked her out long ago. Heck, it’s enough that you didn’t just slap her to death with one palm!” Bebe said unhappily.

Linley glanced at Bebe. “Bebe, humans aren’t magical beasts.”

At this time, Doehring Cowart flew out of the Coiling Dragon ring. Looking at Linley with an approving gaze, he said, “Linley, you performed very well. I was a bit worried that you’d have a child’s temper and shoo her away, throwing another stone into a drying well.”

“A child’s temper?” Linley was startled.

In Doehring Cowart’s eyes, such behavior was indeed that of a child.

“That’s right. Women, psh. They are all over the place.” Doehring Cowart chuckled.

Linley was instantly speechless. He was very much not in favor of Doehring Cowart’s viewpoint on women, which was rather similar to the viewpoints of Yale and Reynolds.

“Alright, enough chat. I need to continue my training.” Linley immediately rose and returned to the Hot Springs Garden.

As far as Linley was considered, Alice was nothing more than a side-episode, incapable of affecting his mood. Right now, the only thing Linley cared about was…avenging his father.

…..

“His Majesty is in his study, laboring over affairs of state. Lord Linley, please come with me to the study.” The palace attendant said respectfully.

Linley nodded.

Bebe standing on his shoulders, Linley followed the attendant towards the study. After a while, they finally arrived.

“Your Majesty! Lord Linley has arrived!” The palace attendant called out loudly from outside the door to the study.

Clayde, who had been absorbed in reading some texts, raised his head.

When his tiger-like gaze landed upon Linley, his eyes shone excitedly. Laughing loudly, he said, “Linley, quick, come in. There’s no need for the two of us to stand on so much ceremony.”

“Yes, your Majesty.” Linley laughed faintly as he entered the study. Clayde, in Linley’s eyes, really was a bold, straightforward man, and was incredibly polite when interacting with Linley, never using his position as the king to try and bully him.

“If it wasn’t for my father’s death,” Linley mused to himself, “Perhaps you and I would’ve become friends. But there will come a day where I must kill you. Right now, the only thing I am lacking is an opportunity.” Linley had never hesitated in his determination to kill Clayde.

As soon as he had the opportunity, he would definitely kill him.

Clayde clinked wine cups with Linley in a toast, took a sip, then said, “Linley. It is quite rare that you voluntarily come pay a visit to the palace. What business do you, my Prime Court Magus, have to discuss with me today?”

Linley chuckled.

The Prime Court Magus actually had quite a few responsibilities, but Linley had never undertaken any of them. He allowed the other court magi to assume many of the responsibilities, and Clayde had never given him any pressure. After all, Linley was only a servant of the Kingdom of Fenlai in name. All he was doing…was showing that he, Linley, considered himself to be on Clayde’s side.

“It’s true that I came here today to discuss something.” Linley smiled as he looked at Clayde. “With the Debs clan under suspicion of smuggling water jade, your Majesty ordered that Kalan and Bernard be seized, right?”

“That is so.” Clayde frowned as he looked at Linley. “What, you’ve also come to speak on their behalf?”

Over this period of time, quite a few nobles had come to speak on behalf of the Debs clan. The reason they had done this was because the Debs clan had made use of their fortune.

“If you really want to save their clan, I can indeed give you face.” Clayde said forthrightly.

The only thing Clayde really wanted to do was to break the power structure that had been erected by his younger brother Patterson. As for the Debs clan, he was going to dispose of them just as a matter of course. He was totally willing to pardon the Debs clan in exchange for Linley now owing him a favor. After all, even if he were to pardon the Debs clan, he could also squeeze them for quite a hefty price in the process.

“No.” Linley only shook his head. “I haven’t come to speak on their behalf.”

“What?” Clayde looked curiously at Linley.

Linley said casually, “Your Majesty, the question of whether or not the Debs clan engaged in the smuggling of water jade naturally has to be handled in a fair, aboveboard manner.”

“Oh?” Clayde looked questioningly at Linley. “Then Linley, the reason you came today was because…”

Linley laughed. “I’m thinking that it’s enough for you to have seized the clan leader, Bernard, due to your suspicion that the Debs clan engaged in the smuggling of water jade. As for his son, there’s no need to seize him. After all, what’s the point of seizing a successor? If you seize the first one, they’ll still have a second one. As long as their clan isn’t exterminated, someone will continue the line.”

“Linley, you mean to say…” Clayde looked at Linley.

Linley looked back at Clayde. “Your Majesty, I hope you can release Kalan.”

“Oh, release Kalan. I heard that you and Kalan…?” Clayde had done a very thorough investigation on Linley. Naturally, he knew of the complicated history between Linley, Kalan, and Alice.

Linley let out a helpless laugh. “Your Majesty, that was a long time ago.”

Clayde reminded him, “Linley, I must remind you that based on my investigations, this Kalan fellow is a very vicious, narrow-minded person who can hold a grudge.”

“I know.” Linley nodded slightly.

Based on the few interactions he had with Kalan, Linley had already sensed that Kalan viewed him with hostility. And…Linley knew that during the seven day exhibition of his sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, someone had desired to destroy it.

Destroying a sculpture was an act which benefited nobody.

Aside from Kalan, Linley couldn’t think of anyone else who would want to destroy ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

“Then why do you help him?” Clayde continued.

“Your Majesty. Do you believe a narrow-minded man of limited vision such as him is someone I would be concerned about?” Smiling, Linley looked at Clayde. Clayde blinked, then laughed as well.

“Right. In the past, it could be said that you and Kalan were old acquaintances. But now, not only does he not wish to befriend you, he even harbors enmity towards you. It is his father who continues to try and befriend you. Compared to his father, Kalan’s vision really is very limited.” Clayde laughed loudly.

Clayde patted Linley on the shoulders. “Don’t worry. I’ll instruct Merritt to handle this case fairly and to investigate everything thoroughly. The Debs

clan definitely won't suffer any injustice. But if the Debs clan really was guilty of smuggling water jade, I won't allow them to escape punishment either." "Right. Handle the case fairly." Linley nodded.

On the way back home in the carriage, Bebe was lying atop of Linley's thighs.

"Wow, Boss, you are so evil. The leader of the Debs clan definitely engaged in smuggling. Later on, his clan will be finished. Even if Kalan is able to escape for now, in the future, he'll still be in terrible straits!" Bebe said excitedly.

Bebe had wanted to destroy Kalan a long time ago. Linley shook his head with a laugh. "Whether or not the Debs clan really will be finished is hard to say. For example, they could give the majority of their clan's fortune directly to King Clayde, and perhaps Clayde would give them a way out. But no matter what, now that they've fallen into Clayde's hands, even if they don't die, they'll lose several layers of skin and flesh."

Linley fully understood how dark the world of nobles could be. Although on the surface, they talked about handling things fairly, that was nothing more than a sham. "Compared to Clayde, the Debs clan is too weak." Linley shook his head.

That puny little Kalan was someone Linley had never worried about. Kalan simply wasn't even close to being on the same level as Linley. The one Linley wanted to deal with was Clayde!

"Milord, we have arrived." The driver said respectfully.

Linley pushed open the carriage door and stepped out. With a leap, Bebe hopped onto Linley's shoulders again. Just as Linley was about to enter his manor, a gate guard said respectfully, "Lord, a guest just came by. He's currently in the main hall waiting for you."

"A guest? In the main hall?" Linley felt suspicious.

There often would be nobles coming to visit Linley, but without his permission to come in, all of them would quietly wait outside. Only people with a very high status, such as Duke Patterson or King Clayde, or Cardinal Guillermo, would directly head to the main hall, instead of waiting outside.

“Who is it?” Linley couldn’t help but ask.

“No clue, but in his hands, he was holding the medal of a Cardinal.” The guard said respectfully. As a Knight of the Radiant Church, he was very familiar with the insignias of the Cardinals.

Each Cardinal only had a single medal. Naturally, some extremely powerful Ascetics had medals as well. Possession of a medal implied a certain status, representing that this person’s position was no less than that of a Cardinal.

“An insignia?” Linley was startled.

Without hesitating at all, Linley immediately went towards the main hall. By the time Linley passed through the walkway and reached the main hall, he was shocked by who he saw.

Within the main hall was a middle-aged, black-haired man wearing a long, loose robe. Judging from appearances, he was in his thirties or forties. He gave off an indolent, lazy aura.

When Linley saw this middle-aged man, that middle-aged man seemed to sense him as well. He immediately looked over towards Linley, a look of excitement in his eyes. “Master Linley, you came?”

“Master Linley?” Linley’s mind was full of questions, but he quickly entered the main hall.

“You are…oh, I remember now. You were that one who made the bid of ten million gold coins.” Linley remembered now. During the sculpture auction of ‘Awakening From the Dream’, this middle aged man was the one who had bid ten million.

The middle-aged man nodded excitedly. “I didn’t expect Master Linley to remember me. This makes me so excited. Oh, right. Let me introduce myself. My name is…Cesar [Xi’sai].”

“Cesar?” Linley had never heard this name before.

“Cesar?!” Doehring Cowart’s voice suddenly boomed out in Linley’s mind. “I didn’t imagine that little freak Cesar would still remain on this plane, in the Yulan continent.”

Linley was startled.

Grandpa Doehring knew this Cesar? Grandpa Doehring was from a long gone era! If he knew this man, then how old would this Cesar be?

“Linley, this Cesar is a total freak. His rate of improvement in strength is extremely fast, and he kills without blinking. When I was alive, he had already entered the Saint-level. Although back then, he was only an early-stage Saint-level, after five thousand years, based on his rate of improvement, he is most likely far more powerful now.”

Linley’s heart clenched.

The man in front of him appeared to be only thirty or forty, but was actually already a Saint-level combatant during Doehring Cowart’s era. Doehring Cowart had only lived for a thousand years before dying, but this Cesar, if one were to count accurately, had been alive for nearly six thousand years now.

A six thousand year old freak!

“Master Linley, what is it?” Cesar said with concern. “Your face seems to have a rather unpleasant look.”

“Nothing, Mr. Cesar. Please, sit.” Linley forcibly calmed himself down, but whenever he thought of who this person in front of him was, he couldn’t help but be stunned.

A six thousand year old freak, a super-combatant who had survived from the era of the Pouant Empire until the modern era. He had already been a Saint-level combatant back then. And now?

“Master Linley, I am very much in awe of your sculpting skills. If it weren’t for the fact that Delia, that little girl, begged me, that day I definitely would’ve bought your sculpture.” Cesar pursed his lips as he spoke, but then his eyes lit up. “So Master Linley, when are you and that Delia girl getting married?”

“Married?”

No matter how stunned Linley had been by Cesar, upon hearing these words, Linley’s eyes bulged out of his sockets as he stared speechlessly at Cesar.

Chapter 19 – The King of Killers

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 19, The King of Killers

Cesar stared at Linley suspiciously. “What? Can it be that the little girl of the Leon clan isn’t your fiancée?”

“Fiancée?” Linley mouthed the words.

Seeing Linley’s reaction, Cesar seemed to understand something. Laughing, he said, “Haha, how amusing, how amusing! Master Linley, I must say, that little Miss Delia of the Leon clan has spent quite a lot of trouble on your half. She’s spent a lot of time, a lot of effort, and also gold in order to buy that sculpture of yours, ‘Awakening From the Dream’.”

Linley stared questioningly at Cesar. “Mr. Cesar, can you perhaps tell me where you heard that Delia was my fiancée, and that we were going to get married?”

Cesar stroked his goatee. Delightedly, he said, “Mustn’t say, mustn’t say.”

But in his mind, Cesar thought back to the contents of the letter which Delia had her servant deliver to him. He mused to himself, “For a girl to have the courage to act in such a way shows that her feelings towards Linley are genuine. Best I not say anything, lest I end up embarrassing that little girl, Delia.”

Cesar knew that when a girl told him certain things, it would be rather morally wrong for him to spread it to others as well. He, Cesar…was a very principled man.

Linley buried his curiosity. After all, Cesar describing Delia as his fiancée was a small matter. This man in front of him was a six thousand year old freak. This was what mattered.

“Mr. Cesar, for you to be here with one of the medals of the Radiant Church, does that mean you have come to me on the business of the Radiant Church?” Linley intentionally tried to probe the reason the man had come.

Cesar sat down with a dramatic gesture, then shook his head. “The Radiant Church? Don’t lump me in with those fellows from the Radiant Church.”

“Then this medal?” Linley stared questioningly at Cesar.

Cesar casually said, “Oh. It’s from back when I killed that Cardinal. I figured this medal would eventually come in handy, so I took it from his corpse. On occasion, I’d take it out and present it. I’ve got to say, it really has come in handy over the years.”

“Killed a Cardinal, then casually swiped his medal?” Linley’s heart trembled, and he couldn’t help but feel cold.

This Cesar in front of him really was an extremely forceful person.

Doehring Cowart’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind again. “Linley, back when I was alive, Cesar had already entered the Saint-level. At that time, the Radiant Church wasn’t too powerful. After five thousand years, Cesar is definitely at an extremely terrifying level of power. The Radiant Church wouldn’t offend him just because he killed a Cardinal.”

“After all…Cesar is a Saint-level assassination specialist. A Saint-level combatant such as him is far more dangerous than your ordinary Saint-level combatant. What’s more, an assassination specialist, upon reaching the peak of the Saint-level, is even more dangerous.”

After hearing Doehring Cowart’s words, Linley began to understand.

In the past, when he was in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he had encountered assassins as well. Linley knew very well that despite only being of the sixth rank as well, a specially trained assassin of the sixth rank could be far more dangerous than other combatants of the sixth rank.

Because assassins specialized in ‘ambush’ and in ‘one-hit kills’. When they killed someone, they acted with no scruples or honor at all.

Most Saint-level combatants, on the other hand, cared greatly about their personal honor and reputation.

A peak-stage Saint-level combatant who had no shame and who was an assassin possessed terrifying power.

“That’s the reason why the Radiant Church has never tried to recover the medal from Cesar. This is also the reason why Cesar is able to live so openly in the Holy Capital, Fenlai City.” Doehring Cowart sighed. “This Cesar is really living a rather comfortable life.”

Hearing these words from Doehring Cowart, Linley couldn’t help but feel admiration for Cesar.

“What, are you afraid?” Cesar saw that Linley had fallen silent. He couldn’t help but grin at Linley. “Relax, that was a long time ago. It has been quite a while since I’ve last killed someone.”

Quite a while? How long a period of time was that? Remembering that the man in front of him was a six thousand year old assassin, Linley wasn’t too sure.

“I’m fine. I’m just amazed by Mr. Cesar’s prowess, that you could kill a Cardinal of the Radiant Church, but still live openly here in the Holy Capital.” Linley smiled.

Cesar’s eyes lit up, and he clapped Linley on the shoulders, nodding. “Not bad, not bad. You really are a master sculptor; your mental fortitude is far stronger than most others. Despite knowing my power, you aren’t frightened in the slightest.”

“Master Linley, I’ve come to pay you a visit because I wish to ask something of you.” Cesar looked at Linley, speaking with sincerity.

Linley quickly said, “Mr. Cesar, please speak. As long as it is within my capabilities, I will definitely assist.”

But Cesar put on a stern look, saying, “Master Linley, I, Cesar, have always hated owing favors to others. Since I’m asking a favor of you, naturally I will assist you with something as well.”

Linley felt joy in his heart.

A favor of an assassin who had reached the Saint-level over five thousand years ago was priceless. In Linley’s mind, a thought quickly flashed by – Kill Clayde!

This entire time, Linley had been bitterly trying to come up with a way to deal with Clayde, or perhaps capture and interrogate him. Linley absolutely had to find out what happened to his mother. But in terms of both personal power and total forces available, Clayde was far more powerful than Linley. He had no way at all to deal with Clayde.

But now, Linley had a way.

“If I were to invite this Cesar to go kidnap Clayde, that shouldn’t be too hard.” Linley began to grow excited. This problem had already vexed him for a long time. It seemed as though he could resolve it now.

“Mr. Cesar, please tell me what you need.” Linley said seriously.

Cesar said boldly, “Fine, then I’ll just say it outright.”

Rubbing his goatee, Cesar’s attitude was that of chatting with an old friend. “I don’t have too many hobbies. Women, I like. In the past, killing was also a hobby. But after I got bored of killing, I began to take an interest in art. And naturally, I am most infatuated by stonesculpting, that highest of art forms. Master Linley…last time, I felt a great deal of regret for being unable to purchase your sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’. When I went back, I couldn’t even sleep well at night. After tossing and turning many times, I decided to come pay a visit to you in person.”

“Mr. Cesar, what are you trying to say?” Linley’s brow was furrowed.

He had already sold off the sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’. Delia had been the one to buy it.

“I was hoping to ask you, Master Linley, to help me carve a sculpture.” Cesar looked hopefully at Linley.

“Easily done.” Linley quickly agreed. Every day, he spent a few hours training himself by carving sculptures. To spend some of that time carving one for Cesar was an easy task.

“I have a few secondary requirements for this sculpture.” Cesar stood up, looking a bit embarrassed.

Embarrassed!

Right, this six thousand year old freak seemed a bit embarrassed.

“Mr. Cesar, feel free to explain.” Linley looked at Cesar with curiosity.

Cesar chortled. “Master Linley, I hope…this sculpture will be of me, and will capture my unique aura.”

“Use you as my model? Your unique aura?” Linley was startled.

Seeing the look on Linley’s face, Cesar quickly said, “What, will that be hard?”

“No. That isn’t it.” Linley shook his head, frowning. “Using you as the model is very easy. Having seen you once, it’s easy for me to remember what you look like. I can sculpt you without any problems. But it’s a bit more complicated to imbue the statue with your unique aura as well. This is because every person has a different aura at different times, such as one aura for when they are angry, another when they are happy, still another when they are sad, or wounded, or both angry and sad…”

Cesar immediately laughed. “Easy. The aura I want…is the aura I have when I am at my manliest.”

“Your manliest?” Linley looked questioningly at Cesar. “Mr. Cesar, when do you feel you are at your manliest?”

Linley was beginning to wonder if this six thousand year old freak had some mental problems.

Cesar said confidently, “I believe that I appear manliest when I am killing someone! My nickname is the ‘King of Killers’ for a reason, you know!”

Cesar, the ‘King of Killers’!

This was a very terrifying name in the Yulan continent. Neither the Four Great Empires nor the two major alliances wished to offend this individual. Even the four major assassin’s guilds, if they were forced to nominate the most outstanding person within their ranks, would without question select this person who had dominated the Yulan continent for over five thousand years. Cesar, the ‘King of Killers’.

A peak-stage Saint-level combatant, and specialized in assassination techniques! In terms of the numbers and complexity of assassination techniques he possessed, he had already reached the pinnacle of perfection in this field. Those people who had received some training from Cesar went so far as to say his assassination techniques had reached the field of artistry.

The strongest assassin. The King of Killers!

Although there were quite a few people in the Yulan continent who had become peak-stage Saint-level combatants, such as the Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church, or the Dark Patriarch of the Cult of Shadows, or that Lord Fallen Leaf of the Radiant Church. And of course, the Four Great Empires each had their own peak-stage Saint-levels.

But without question, every single one of these combatants were wary of

the King of Killers, Cesar.

Because in terms of assassination, none of them could match him.

The power of the peak-stage Saint-level ‘King of Killers’ was simply too terrifying. Even the Four Great Empires and the two major alliances held fast to the principle of, ‘do not offend him if it is at all possible to avoid doing so’, much less the other major clans of the Yulan continent.

Originally, during the auction, Cardinal Lampson and Cardinal Guillermo had been prepared to bid an extremely high price so Linley would feel grateful towards them. But upon seeing Cesar make a bid, they were so scared they no longer dared to bid at all. Even that old servant of the Leon clan, Shaw, had been terrified upon seeing Cesar, the King of Killers. Afterwards, only after Delia had wrote Cesar a letter and obtained his agreement did Delia dare to make another bid.

From this, one could tell how truly formidable this ‘King of Killers’ was.

Despite him having a medal of a Cardinal for so many years, the Radiant Church had never tried to regain it, and allowed Cesar to use it to deceive others as he pleased without a peep of protest. This was their show of goodwill towards Cesar. As for that Cardinal he had killed, the only thing that could be said was that he died in vain.

“When killing someone?” Linley shook his head. “Mr. Cesar, I’ve never seen you kill anyone. How would I know what you are like when you kill someone?”

At present, Linley still knew very little regarding the names of the Saint-level combatants of the Yulan continent. Even the world famous ‘King of Killers’, Cesar, he had never heard of before.

“That’s easy. I’ll just show you right now what it looks like when I kill someone. Watch carefully.” Cesar’s attitude instantly changed.

“Wait!” Linley hurriedly shouted out in alarm. “Mr. Cesar, please don’t kill

anyone in my home."

"Who said I was going to kill someone? I'm just going to show off the way I look when I kill someone, that's all."

Cesar glanced at Linley rather sourly.

Linley laughed awkwardly.

In his heart, he was filled with a great deal of trepidation towards this 'King of Killers', Cesar. When he heard Cesar say he was going to show how he looked upon killing someone, Linley was instantly frightened and wanted to stop him.

"Watch carefully. Pretend my target is that flower vase in front of us." Cesar said calmly.

Cesar's previous attitude had totally changed. He became calm. In the blink of an eye, that lazy, indolent aura of Cesar's totally disappeared, and he became someone without a hint of an aura, without a hint of power, without a hint of emotion.

Cold. Calm.

Linley didn't see anything at all. He only felt the air tremble slightly, and then the flower vase in front of Linley suddenly started to disintegrate, one inch at a time.

Right. As clearly as can be, the flower vase had disintegrated, one inch at a time!

This sensation totally stunned Linley.

"So this is the King of Killers?" In Linley's mind, he firmly memorized this moment. When making his move, Cesar's expression hadn't changed in the slightest. At that moment, Cesar had seemed totally emotionless, and he had coldly stared at everything in the manor. It was as though in his eyes, all life

was nothing more a blade of grass.

Killing someone was nothing more than cutting a blade of grass.

But Linley also had the feeling that, when Cesar had made his move, all of his attention had been focused on that flower vase.

As though the entire universe had been reduced to the flower vase, and nothing else had existed.

That strange, bizarre feeling made Linley want to vomit blood.

“Did you see it?” Cesar once more became energetic and animated. Casually sitting down, he crossed his legs and looked up at Linley. “What do you think? Do you agree that I look the manliest at that type of moment? I’ve relied on this technique to win the hearts of quite a few young ladies, you know.”

Chapter 20 – Poison

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 20, Poison

Linley firmly etched this scene into his mind.

Faced with Cesar's questions, Linley nodded. "Very charismatic. I've already committed that scene to memory. However, I'm afraid it will be quite difficult for me to make a carving on the same level of 'Awakening From the Dream' again."

A 'Masterpiece' level sculpture appearing in the world was a rare event indeed.

In the past, Linley had been thoroughly heartbroken, and had poured all of his emotions into that carving, allowing himself to forget everything else in the world and attain that most mysterious of states. Only then was he able to complete such a sculpture. For him, in his current state, to attempt to carve another sculpture of that level was virtually impossible.

"As long as you, Master Linley, are the sculptor, I'll be satisfied. I don't ask that it be on the same level as 'Awakening From the Dream', only that it is on the same level as most master level sculptures." Cesar said with a laugh.

Linley nodded.

If that was the case, Linley had total confidence in his abilities.

"Mr. Cesar, how about this. I will produce the sculpture you requested in about a month. What do you say?" Actually, Linley only needed three days, but he wanted to give himself sufficient time.

Cesar nodded. "Alright. One month is a very short period of time. I'm not in a hurry. I have all the time in the world. Haha."

“Master Linley, if you have anything you want me to help with, feel free to tell me. As long as I can accomplish it, I will definitely do it for you.” Cesar said magnanimously.

Linley couldn’t help but feel rather nervous.

With Patterson killed by him, the only target in Linley’s mind now was Clayde. To kill or to capture Clayde wasn’t something which Linley was currently capable of.

But Cesar, the King of Killers, definitely was capable!

“Mr. Cesar, if I were to ask you to capture one of the rulers of a kingdom belonging to the Holy Union, would you agree?” Linley resisted the urge to be rash, and instead first sounded Cesar out.

Cesar was startled. He stared questioningly at Linley. “Capture a king?”

Linley nodded heavily. “Yes.”

Cesar frowned. After a short pause, he looked at Linley. “How about this. Let me ask you something first. If I were to help you capture this ruler, would you kill him?”

“Most likely!” Linley replied honestly.

Lying to a ‘King of Killers’ would most likely be quite unwise. As for killing Clayde, if his mother really had died in Clayde’s hands, how could Linley not seek vengeance?

Linley had a dark premonition. There had been no trace of his mother for so many years. Most likely, she was dead, or perhaps imprisoned somewhere. No matter what the case, he would seek vengeance for his mother.

“Kill a king?” Cesar looked at Linley.

Linley looked back with hope in his eyes.

In Cesar's heart, he understood that although in terms of status, a Cardinal was somewhat more important than a King, the impact caused by the murder of a King would be greater than that caused by the murder of a Cardinal.

A dead Cardinal could instantly be replaced by the Radiant Church.

But the death of a King would cause countless battles and strife within a kingdom. At the same time, the Radiant Church would yet again be unhappy with him.

"This request of yours…forgive me for being unable to fulfill it." Cesar looked seriously at Linley. "Linley, the impact caused by the murder of a King is too great. And, this entire time, the Radiant Church has treated me quite well. I don't wish to set the Radiant Church and my Sabre organization up as enemies just for the sake of a sculpture."

Behind Cesar, the King of Killers, was the Saber organization, one of the four great assassin's guilds.

Cesar knew what was important and what was not.

A single sculpture wasn't worth allowing cracks to appear in the friendly relationship between himself and the Radiant Church. All these years, the Radiant Church had treated him with courtesy, something Cesar understood in his heart. He couldn't be a selfish wolf who repaid the Church's kindness by acting against one of their kings.

"Change your request." Cesar said apologetically.

Linley suddenly felt powerless. Perhaps in terms of power, Cesar didn't care about Clayde at all, but Clayde's status had convinced Cesar to stay his hand.

Linley forced himself to remain calm.

“Mr. Cesar, I would like to ask, do you have any method by which I, a magus of the seventh rank, can kill a combatant of the ninth rank.” Linley asked.

Cesar glanced at Linley. After a short silence, he said, “I have quite a few assassination methods. But one which would allow a magus of the seventh rank to assassinate a combatant of the ninth rank? This…is challenging.” As he spoke, Cesar began to consider this question. In the mind of this ‘King of Killers’ who hadn’t killed anyone in a long time, one assassination method after another began to speed through his mind.

Linley didn’t dare to disrupt Cesar’s train of though. He stood there quietly.

Suddenly, Cesar turned to look at Linley. “The combatant of the ninth rank, would this be a warrior or a magus? If this person is a magus, I have a method.”

“Warrior.” Linley immediately said.

Dealing with a warrior and dealing with a magus required totally different methods. Hearing Linley explain that this was a warrior of the ninth rank, Cesar’s head began to hurt.

Linley could only wait there urgently.

“Oh. I have an idea.” Cesar’s eyes suddenly lit up, and he turned to Linley. “Haha, a long time ago, I stumbled upon this method by accident. I didn’t imagine that eight hundred years later, I’d still remember it.”

“What method?” Linley immediately grew excited.

Heavens!

This King of Killers actually had a way for a magus of the seventh rank to kill a warrior of the ninth rank.

“The King of Killers is full of assassination techniques. Indeed, he knows

far more than I do in this field. Although, if I lived for five thousand more years, perhaps I would still know more than him." Doehring Cowart's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley couldn't help but force a laugh. Grandpa Doehring never liked admitting inferiority to anyone.

"The method is…" Cesar smiled at Linley. "Using poison!"

"Using poison?"

Linley was startled. He thought it must've been some sort of good method…but a king's food was always tasted and tested. How could using poison be effective?

"Master Linley, don't underestimate the power of poison. The art of using poison is an extremely deep, subtle method of assassination. This world is filled with countless ingredients, which can be used to make countless types of poisons. Who in this world can dare say that he knows all of the poisons in the world? Or that he can detect any sort of poison?"

Linley couldn't help but nod.

He agreed with this. For example, Doehring Cowart knew about using Blueheart Grass to counteract the forceful effects of dragon's blood.

"This poison that I'm talking about was specially designed for use against warriors. As long as the warrior is not at the Saint-level, upon being affected by this poison, his strength will decrease by more than 90%. What's more, to this very day, there's been no antidote invented for this poison. Only by spending a year of time can one slowly use his battle-qi to purge the poison from his system." Cesar clearly had a very clear memory regarding this poison. "And this poison is both odorless and tasteless. There's no way to detect it at all. Only after having been poisoned would one realize that one had ingested it."

Less than 10% of strength would remain? No way to test for it?

Linley's eyes lit up.

Clayde was nothing more than a warrior of the ninth rank. Once he was impacted by this poison, based on Linley's current level of power, wouldn't he be able to easily trample Clayde into the ground?

"Do you have this poison, Mr. Cesar?" Linley quickly asked.

Linley could guess that this poison was extremely rare and valuable. That was without question. A poison which was effective against all warriors short of the Saint-level, and which was odorless, tasteless, and undetectable, would of course rare and precious. If not, all the warriors in the world would be dead already. "Master Linley, didn't you hear what I just said? This is something I recalled learning about eight hundred years ago. I just glanced at that recipe back then. After all, this poison was of no use or threat to me." Cesar frowned. "I only know this poison was primarily formed from eight major ingredients, but I don't recall the exact ingredients clearly."

"You don't remember?" Linley was so frantic, he could kill someone.

Cesar laughed towards Linley. "Master Linley, don't worry. Although I'm not sure, the recipe for this poison was stored within my organization long ago. I can order some people to make a copy of it and bring it to me. However, the base of my Saber organization is in a place with very few people. From here to there and back, most likely it would take a month or two of time."

A month or two. That was acceptable!

Linley nodded towards Cesar. "Mr. Cesar, might I ask if your organization has any of this poison already in stock?" Linley didn't want to waste time looking for ingredients to mix the potion.

"We do not." Cesar shook his head. "In this entire world, perhaps only the Deathgod's Hands has this poison in stock."

“Deathgod’s Hands?”

In the past, while chatting with Yale, the topic of conversation had turned to the four major assassin’s guilds. These were known as Saber, Bloodrose, Scarlet Moon, and Deathgod’s Hands. Each assassin’s guild had its own specialty. The Deathgod’s Hands specialized in using all sorts of queer, exotic assassination techniques.

“Right. In the past, if it weren’t for the fact that the Deathgod’s Hands had a favor to ask of me, perhaps they wouldn’t have given a copy of such a precious recipe to my organization.” Cesar nodded.

Something which could kill virtually any warrior below the Saint-rank. The value of such a poison was unimaginable.

“Then…would it be possible for me to purchase this poison from the Deathgod’s Hands?” Linley said hopefully.

“Impossible.” Cesar laughed. “The Ten Ultimate Poisons of the Deathgod’s Hands is something they never give to any other organizations. The reason they gave us this recipe was probably because they expected that we would never actually use it.”

“Never use it?” Linley looked questioningly at Cesar.

“Because the price is simply too high. It isn’t worth it.” Cesar chuckled. “Two of the ingredients, in particular, have already been totally cornered off the market by the Deathgod’s Hands. The price of the poison would most likely be more than the commission of the assassination mission.”

Linley understood.

But to him, no matter how much gold it cost, it would be worth it.

“How about this. I’ll go back now, and arrange for some people to deliver a copy of this recipe to you. But Master Linley, a month from now, you need

to have my sculpture ready." Cesar laughed as he spoke to Linley.

"Of course." Linley felt a knot in his heart unclench.

After sending off Cesar, Linley, who had been worrying this entire time about how to deal with Clayde, finally relaxed. That night, he finally had a sound rest and a beautiful dream, something very rare for him.

That next afternoon.

Linley was calmly seated cross-legged on the grass, cultivating his Dragonblood battle-qi. That azure-black Dragonblood battle-qi in his body was constantly roiling about, as the unique power of the Dragonblood constantly was drawn deep into Linley's bones, muscles, and tendons, causing his body to become more and more powerful.

Linley believed that if he continued at this rate, there would come the day that his body would be as powerful as that of a real, Saint-level dragon. He would resurrect the fallen glory of the Dragonblood Warriors.

"Lord Linley." A female attendant's voice from outside.

Linley took a deep breath, allowing the Dragonblood battle-qi to return to his dantian.

"Enter." Linley said calmly.

Only then did this serving woman come in. Respectfully, she said, "Lord Linley, there are several guests from the Debs clan outside. They say they have come to thank you, Lord Linley."

"Thank me?" Linley was momentarily stunned.

But then, Linley quickly understood. Clayde had given him face and freed Kalan Debs.

"Thank me? I'm afraid it isn't as simple as that." Linley said to himself.

There was a better than 80% to 90% chance that the Debs clan, seeing Linley help out once, had shamelessly come to ask for Linley's help to save the Debs clan yet again.

"Let them enter." Knowing of the existence of the poison, Linley now felt much calmer and more assured of himself. With his mind relaxed, he now had the leisure and patience to pay attention to the affairs of the Debs clan.

"The Debs clan? Even if they aren't exterminated, they'll be totally beaten down." Linley could already totally predict the future of the Debs clan.

Within the main hall.

Nimitz was the leader of this delegation. Kalan's two uncles, Kalan himself, Rowling, and Alice were the members of this six-person delegation. No one in Nimitz's delegation had dared to sit. They all were standing respectfully.

Seeing Linley walk towards them from afar, Nimitz and the others immediately smiled, and Nimitz even cupped his hands in salute. "Lord Linley!"

"I just finished my training exercises. If you could just wait a moment, I'll take a quick bath and change my clothes first." Linley said with a faint smile. And then, no longer paying any attention to the courtesies being paid to him by Nimitz and the others, he headed directly to another room on the other side of the hall.

Nimitz and the others were briefly stunned, but they could only smile and stand there, respectfully awaiting his return.

Chapter 21 – The Trial

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 21, The Trial

Nimitz, Kalan's two uncles, Kalan himself, Rowling, and Alice didn't dare to seat themselves with their host absent. They simply waited quietly in the main hall.

"Kalan, when Lord Linley returns, you must remember to be a bit more humble." Nimitz glared coldly at Kalan.

Kalan nodded. "Second Granduncle, I know."

In actuality, Kalan's heart was still filled with enmity towards Linley. After knowing the reason why he had been released from jail, he felt even more rage towards Linley!

"I would rather stay in that jail than have Alice go beg him!" Kalan's heart was filled with fury.

In the past, when Linley and Alice had been together, Kalan began to hate Linley. After he took Alice back, he felt a bit smug. In his eyes, although Linley was quite formidable, when compared to his Debs clan, Linley was not even close to being on the same level. But after just a few months, Linley's status had totally changed, becoming the brightest star within the Kingdom of Fenlai at one leap. Even his Majesty the King of Fenlai, and Cardinals of the Radiant Church, treated Linley with warmth. Even his own father acted so humbly towards Linley. All this filled Kalan's heart with even more hatred.

They were both young men. Why was he so inferior?

Especially this time!

He had languished in prison. Although he ended up escaping, it had

required Alice, the woman he loved dearest, to go beg Linley to free him.

This caused Kalan to feel humiliated. He very much wanted to not accept Linley's kindness and continue to stay in that jail. How he wished he could angrily curse at Linley, or even kill Linley!

But for the sake of the clan, he, Kalan, had come humbly to Linley's manor, and couldn't even act the slightest bit disrespectfully.

Footsteps could be heard.

Kalan immediately cast aside his angry musings. Forcing a smile onto his face, he made himself appear courteous and modest.

"Forgive me for keeping everyone waiting." Linley's clear voice rang out.

Nimitz and the others all turned to look. Clearly, Linley had just washed. His hair was wet, and he was casually wearing a loose robe.

"You can all sit." Linley comfortably sat down, gesturing casually with one hand.

Nimitz and the others all quickly expressed their thanks, then sat down. Nimitz was the first to smile and say, "Lord Linley, the purpose of our visit this time was to thank you. If it wasn't for you, Kalan most likely wouldn't have been able to get out this quickly. Kalan, hurry up and thank Lord Linley!"

Kalan was forced to rise to his feet again. Suppressing the anger in his heart, he forced himself to act humbly. "Thank you, Lord Linley."

Linley smiled at Kalan. "Kalan. No need to thank me."

"Mr. Nimitz. Very shortly, I'll have to attend to some important affairs. I don't know if you had any other purposes behind this visit? If you do, I hope you can speak of them now." Linley smiled towards Nimitz.

In truth, Linley simply didn't want to waste any time with these people. His time was meant to be reserved for training.

Nimitz was startled, but then he quickly adjusted. In a low voice, he said, "Lord Linley, our Debs clan has been framed and falsely accused of engaging in the smuggling of water jade. At this point, it's very possible that our Debs clan will be entirely eradicated. Thus, our clan would like to beg you, Lord Linley, for your assistance. Once our clan overcomes this critical threat, we definitely will not forget your great kindness to us."

As he spoke, Nimitz pulled out a black box from his side.

"Lord Linley, this is a very small gift from us to you as our thanks for your rescuing of Kalan. If our clan manages to survive this tribulation safely, we will once again show our gratitude towards you." Nimitz sincerely held out that black box for Linley to look at.

"Swish."

The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, suddenly scurried in front of Nimitz, and actually directly grabbed the box, then jumped onto Linley's legs, planning on opening it up.

"Bebe!" Linley let out a low shout.

Bebe raised his head, staring at Linley unhappily. He didn't open the box, only let out a few 'hmph' sounds, then fell silent.

"Mr. Nimitz, Bebe is rather naughty and mischievous. I'll accept this gift, then, and offer my thanks to you." Laughing, Linley put the black box off to one side, not even glancing at it.

Nimitz could sense that Linley was getting impatient.

Immediately, Nimitz glanced meaningfully at his companions, then was the first to stand up and bow. "Lord Linley, we won't disturb you any further. This case involving our Debs clan will be tried a month from now. I hope

that at that time, you can assist us, Lord."

Linley casually nodded.

Nimitz and the others immediately left. That entire time, neither Alice nor Rowling had said a single word. Nimitz was the primary speaker.

Watching the group leave, Linley laughed coldly. "Nimitz, you old scoundrel. Did you think that by bringing Alice, I'd give you more face?" Linley flipped open the cover to the black box. Within it was a magicrystal card and a letter.

"A letter?"

As he toyed with the letter in his hands, a burst of flame suddenly erupted from his palms, incinerating it and turning it to ash. Linley couldn't be bothered reading the letter.

Time passed quickly. September arrived.

This entire past month, Linley had focused on his training. His strength, agility, and other aspects of his body had all improved. The Dragonblood battle-qi in his dantian had become more pure as well.

Linley had the feeling that he had reached the late-stage of the sixth rank.

As far as his growth in spiritual energy, although Linley's advancement rate was extremely rapid, even a genius would normally need around twenty years of training to advance from the seventh rank to the eighth rank. Despite his rapid improvement, a few months of growth wasn't very noticeable.

The path of the magus was indeed a long, difficult one.

Within the Hot Springs Garden, the shadow of a chisel could be seen, and a human-shaped sculpture was become more and more clearly defined. Bits of rubble flew about in every direction, falling onto the grass. Suddenly,

Linley came to a halt, withdrawing his chisel.

“Whew. Finally done.” Looking at the sculpture in front of him, Linley nodded with satisfaction.

This sculpture, which Linley had named the ‘King of Killers’, had truly cost Linley a great deal of effort. Each time, Linley had forced himself to totally enter the right state, so as to more perfectly carve out the statue of Cesar making his move.

The statue in front of him was as tall as a person.

Those two cold, calm eyes in particular gave people the sensation of being watched by a god. The aura emanating from this sculpture was the aura of a God of Death. Under the gaze of this sculpture, viewers would unconsciously feel a terrible, cold dread.

“Although this sculpture isn’t comparable to ‘Awakening From the Dream’, it is the most perfect statue that I can make while in a normal state.” Linley was extremely satisfied with this sculpture. He had spent an entire month on it, carefully, attentively sculpting. At last, it was completed.

Putting down his straight chisel, Linley soaked for a while in the hot springs, then put on a loose robe and sat on top of a chair. He was eating the breakfast which his attendants had brought him.

“Linley.” Doehring Cowart flew out by his side.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley looked at Doehring Cowart.

Laughing, Doehring Cowart said, “Linley, there’s two days left before the trial of the Debs clan’s case. Do you plan to go watch?”

“The trial?” Linley was startled.

This month, he had been absorbed in his bitter training. Linley had totally forgotten about everything else, including the Debs clan’s case. If it weren’t

for Doehring Cowart's reminder, Linley probably wouldn't have remembered it at all.

"Yes, of course I'll go." A hint of a smile was on Linley's face.

Year 9999 of the Yulan calendar. September 9th. Within the Blackwater Jail of Fenlai City.

The Blackwater Jail was the most famous jail in the Kingdom of Fenlai, and it was the most securely guarded jail. The cases awaiting trial at the Blackwater Jail were also the most important cases in Fenlai.

Within the Blackwater Jail's courtyard, today there were many nobles congregating. Even his Majesty, King Clayde, had arrived, and was seated to the side, watching. Naturally, Linley came today as well.

"Lord Linley." One noble after another greeted him warmly.

"Linley, come, sit with me." Seated in front, Clayde gestured toward Linley. Linley smiled at Clayde, then walked over.

Linley sat down next to Clayde.

Merritt, his hair gleaming, sat at the judge's seat. His waist and back were ramrod straight. He really did give the impression of being fair and impartial. "Everyone, please sit." Merritt nodded and smiled towards the noble spectators who had gathered here. In particular, Merritt smiled modestly towards the direction of Linley and Clayde.

The noble spectators all sat down quietly. Today, more than ten people had come from the Debs clan. All of them were seated together, nervously watching the proceedings.

"Bring Bernard." Merritt ordered directly.

Very soon, under escort by two soldiers, Bernard was dragged to the court, hands and feet both shackled.

Merritt glanced at a nearby official, who quickly strode forward. In a loud voice, he proclaimed, “Duke Patterson, when he was the Minister of Finance, acted in many ways against the benefit of the kingdom. In particular, he is suspected of colluding with the Debs clan in the smuggling of water jade. The scale of this smuggling operation is larger than any since the founding of our Kingdom of Fenlai. We have already discovered that the valuation of the smuggled water jade was greater than fifty million gold coins!”

In actuality, the Debs clan had just begun their smuggling program. Although the valuation was fifty million gold coins, in reality, the Debs clan had only spent a few million gold coins thus far. From this, one could tell what enormous profits lay in the smuggling trade.

But just as their smuggling activities had begun, Duke Patterson had died, resulting in this being revealed.

The official continued, “Based on our investigations, one of the main organizers of this smuggling activity jumped into the river, while the other two were the brothers Lanseer and Langmuir.”

Finishing, the official sat back down.

Merritt looked at Bernard. “Bernard, do you have something to say for yourself?”

Bernard nodded. “Yes, lord, I do. First of all, it was not our Debs clan which engaged in smuggling. Secondly, the Lanseer brothers had been expelled by our clan long ago. Thirdly, the primary mover behind this smuggling operation should’ve been that person you said jumped into the river. There is no link to our Debs clan at all.”

Merritt nodded and laughed. “The organizer of this smuggling operation was your third brother. And you say this has nothing to do with you?”

“Third brother? My third brother is still adventuring in the wilds. How

would he have the chance to engage in smuggling?" Bernard continued to insist on this point.

"Your third brother is engaging in adventuring?" Merritt's face grew cold. "Then let me ask you, if your third brother is outside adventuring, then why, despite me ordering your Debs clan to summon him back, hasn't he returned after such a long period of time?"

Bernard said confidently, "My third brother is adventuring in other kingdoms. Most likely, he's travelled too far. It is normal for us to need more than a year to find him."

Merritt glanced at Bernard, chuckled, then said coldly, "Bring in Catson [Ka'te'sen] and the other two."

"Catson?" Bernard was suspicious. Who was Catson and who were the other two?"

Very shortly, three very cowering youths entered the court, falling to their knees immediately as they said respectfully, "Greetings, Lord."

These three youths clearly were peasants who had seen very little of the world before.

Merritt said calmly, "Catson, clearly explain what you saw happen."

"Yes, Lord." The leader of the youths said respectfully. "On June 28th, we three bros were fishing on the river, but suddenly, we saw a richly dressed noble lord clutching onto a dead tree trunk float by us. This noble was covered in blood and had already passed out."

Upon hearing these words, the expression on Bernard's face changed.

"The day that we pursued the leader of the smugglers was June 28th as well. As it just so happened, the leader jumped into the river." Merritt looked at Bernard. "Bernard, are you willing to admit guilt yet?"

“My third brother is adventuring in distant lands. He definitely wasn’t organizing any smuggling activities. My Debs clan is definitely innocent.” Bernard still held his head up high and maintained his innocence.

Merritt laughed coldly, then said, “Bring Kanter [Kan’te] Debs.”

Hearing the name ‘Kanter Debs’, the faces of Bernard as well as the members of the Debs clan present all immediately turned white.

Chapter 22 – The Enormous Fine

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 22, The Enormous Fine

“This Kanter Debs should be that third brother of the Debs clan.” Clayde laughed softly towards Linley, and Linley nodded. Linley and Clayde merely watched these proceedings, while the Debs clan’s members all felt terror.

All of those viewers from the Debs clan were now so nervous that they were trembling.

“Clatter!”

The sound of shackles rattling could be heard, as under the escort of two soldiers, a thin, ashen-faced, golden-haired middle-aged man entered the court. The gazes of everyone in the court were drawn towards him, including Bernard, Kalan, and Nimitz.

Seeing that golden-haired man appear, Bernard let out a long sigh, then shut his eyes.

“It really is the third brother of the Debs clan, Kanter!” From the watcher’s gallery, the sound of discussion could be heard. Many of the nobles present recognized and knew Kanter Debs, due to his position within the Debs clan.

By now, the Debs clan had no further hope of trying to dissemble.

Seated up in the magistrate’s chair, Merritt looked towards Clayde, who nodded.

“Bernard.” Merritt looked at Bernard. “As things stand, do you still have something to say for yourself?”

But Bernard didn’t look at Merritt. He turned his head to look at his third

brother, Kanter, fixing Kanter with his gaze. Kanter, too, was staring at his elder brother Bernard. The gazes of these two brothers met.

“Third bro, why did you do this?” There was disbelief in Bernard’s eyes, as pain and rage caused his entire body to shake.

“I’m sorry.” Kanter said softly.

Bernard laughed bitterly, then shook his head. In a solemn voice, he said, “It isn’t me you should be sorry to. It’s the entire Debs clan. How many years has the Debs clan existed? It was only thanks to countless generations of hard work and effort by our ancestors that we enjoy our current level of success. But you….you…” Bernard was in so much pain that he couldn’t speak.

“Thud!”

Kanter fell to his knees within the court, and two streams of tears began to flow.

“Big brother, I deserve to die!”

He slapped his face severely with his shackled hands. Crying miserably, he said, “Big brother, I’m sorry. This is all my fault. I was greedy and wasn’t satisfied with that little bit of authority and wealth I had within the Debs clan. That’s why I used the clan’s gold to engage in this smuggling operation. This is all my fault. Big brother! This is all my fault!”

This scene startled everyone present.

Linley and Clayde both raised an eyebrow, while the sentencing magistrate, Merritt, frowned.

“Since things have already developed to this extent…” Bernard raised his head, forcing his tears to stop. He seemed very desolate. “Third bro, it’s no matter a question of whose fault it is. Your actions have caused our entire clan to be in danger of annihilation. I, Bernard Debs, as this generation’s

leader of the Debs clan, will not be able to face our ancestors, even in death."

As he spoke, Bernard's tears once more began to fall.

Bernard suddenly turned to look at Clayde, kneeling in his direction. Crying miserably, he said, "Your Majesty. It is the greatest misfortune possible for our Debs clan to have given birth to this miserable, petty traitor to the kingdom. As the leader of the Debs clan, I, Bernard Debs, cannot escape responsibility. I, Bernard, am willing to use my death in order to beg you, your Majesty, to spare the Debs clan. After all, the vast majority of people within our clan are innocent!"

Clayde looked at Bernard.

And then he looked at Merritt, nodding once.

Merritt understood Clayde's intentions. Immediately, he called out, "Fifteen minute recess! Fifteen minutes later, we will announce the final sentence!"

……

All of the nobles present had to leave the court, and could only come back fifteen minutes later. The direction this case was heading towards had become very clear. As for how the Debs clan would be punished for its crime of smuggling, that was totally up to his Majesty.

Such a large-scale smuggling operation could definitely impact the entire clan. Even if the clan was exterminated, it would be understandable.

But of course, Clayde could also be more benevolent and merely punish the Debs clan but allow it to survive.

The result would be entirely up to Clayde.

….

Outside the court, Duke Bonalt was chatting with Linley.

“Linley, did you see that? These main branch descendants of the Debs clan are really quite good. That Kanter had been captured quite a few days ago. But, instead of committing suicide, he waited until today to put on that show just now.” Duke Bonalt laughed.

Linley nodded in praise as well.

“If Kanter had killed himself, then the Debs clan would be in an even worse, more passive situation.” Linley laughed as well.

If Kanter had committed suicide, then his corpse would have been used as evidence proving the guilt of the Debs clan in engaging in smuggling. The Debs clan would have had no way to argue against it. But now, Kanter himself was acknowledging that he had acted alone, giving the Debs clan a chance at life.

But of course, whether or not the Debs clan would live was entirely up to his Majesty.

“Kill’em, kill’em all.” Bebe, on Linley’s shoulders, bared his fangs while mentally speaking to Linley. “This Debs clan is too good at playing games. I, Bebe, can’t stomach them.”

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“Squeaaaaak.”

The door to the court opened. Fifteen minutes had passed. All of the nobles outside made their way back into the court, all of them quietly assuming their previous positions. Just then, the only people present in the court had been Merritt, King Clayde, and a few other people.

“Linley, take a guess. How do you think I will sentence him?” Clayde smiled towards Linley.

“No clue.” Linley replied succinctly.

Clayde grinned secretively.

“All rise!”

Saying these words, Merritt rose solemnly, and all of the nobles in the court followed his lead. His head raised high, Merritt said in a solemn, clear voice, “This is the sentence of this court: Kanter Debs, a member of the Debs clan, did flagrantly engage in the large-scale smuggling of a huge quantity of water jade, and is therefore sentenced to execution by hanging, with the sentence to be carried out on October 11th.”

“The total value of this smuggling operation was in excess of forty million gold coins. We sentence the Debs clan to receive a punitive fine of double that amount, eighty million gold coins. Bernard Debs is to be released. Court adjourned!” After hearing these words from Merritt, Bernard, Kalan, and Nimitz all let out a sigh of relief, but in their hearts, they felt very helpless.

Eighty million gold coins!

What a terrifying sum!

The entire net worth of the Debs clan was only around a hundred million gold coins, and that was including all of their illiquid assets. For them to be able to pay such a huge fine would certainly require them to sell off many of their illiquid assets. Such a large-scale auction, in term, would definitely result in a great deal of lowballing and haggling from the buyers.

Although their illiquid assets were worth eighty million gold coins, the chances of them actually receiving eighty million gold coins was really too low.

“Linley, what do you think?” Clayde looked at Linley.

Linley laughed and nodded. “Admirably done, admirably done.”

The fine which Clayde had levied against the Debs clan was carefully calibrated, precisely because the valuation of the Debs clan's illiquid assets worth around eighty million or so. If Clayde really were to sentence the Debs clan to extermination, then without a doubt, he wouldn't have been able to get his hands on a single coin of their liquid assets.

But if the penalty fine was too high, perhaps the Debs clan would even risk extinction rather than pay the fine.

The fine of eighty million gold coins was neither too high nor too little. It was just right.

"Father." Kalan and the others instantly went to help Bernard to his feet.

But Bernard only stared at his third brother, Kanter. A gloomy, calm look was on Kanter's face. He only nodded towards Bernard. After he had been exposed in leading the smuggling operation, Kanter knew that he would die, without a question. But now that he was dying on behalf of the clan, the clan would most likely treat his son and his wife well.

Bernard nodded towards Kanter as well.

Two brothers. From a single exchange of glances, they knew what the other was thinking.

"Let us…go back." Bernard said with a sigh.

After experiencing this tribulation, the Debs clan had suffered a major blow to its vitality. At absolute best, they would have a tenth of the economic power they previously had. From this day forward…the Debs clan had toppled from its previous position of power at the highest levels in the Kingdom of Fenlai. They could only be considered a fairly wealthy clan, now."

…..

Within Linley's manor, in the Hot Springs Garden.

Linley was seated on a chair, quietly staring blankly.

"Linley, what are you pondering?" Doehring Cowart came out of the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley glanced at Doehring Cowart. Sighing, he said, "Today, when I saw the Debs clan be sentenced, I suddenly thought of my own clan. My clan was once a clan which dominated the entire Yulan continent, but now, after all these generations, who is left? My father died, and my mother's whereabouts are unknown. Little Wharton is now in the O'Brien Empire. In the entire Holy Union, I am alone with no kin."

Linley was gripped by a powerful, lonely melancholy.

His parents were gone, and he was engaged in a mission of revenge that couldn't be revealed!

On this road to revenge, Linley's heart was tightly spun up, and he didn't dare to slacken off in the slightest.

Looking at Linley, Doehring Cowart felt surge of pity. Although superficially Linley seemed very mature, and didn't have any problems at all dealing with those important nobles…Linley was still only seventeen years old this year. He had just graduated from the magus academy not too long ago.

"Linley, relax. Don't give yourself too much pressure. You have plenty of time." Doehring Cowart encouraged him.

Linley looked at Doehring Cowart. On this lonely road he had been travelling, it was good that he had Grandpa Doehring with him, along with that mischievous rascal, Bebe.

"Thank you, Grandpa Doehring." Linley said gratefully.

Doehring Cowart began to chuckle.

“I really want to know what happened to my mother as soon as possible. I want to kill Clayde as soon as possible.” Even if they ignored the fact that Clayde had abducted his mother, the fact that he had caused his mother to be separated from their family for over ten years, resulting in the death of Linley’s father, meant that without a doubt, Clayde had to die.

“Who knows when that ‘King of Killers’, Cesar, will bring that poison recipe.” Linley was beginning to grow impatient.

…..

Each day, Linley had been urgently awaiting the return of Cesar, the ‘King of Killers’. But each day passed with no news of Cesar. Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, it was now October. During this past month, the Kingdom of Fenlai had been fairly tranquil. The only major affair was the large-scale auction carried out by the Debs clan.

Many clans seized the opportunity to try to haggle with or lowball the Debs clan. However, the value of the Debs clan’s illiquid assets really were very high, so there were quite a few bidders from other clans as well. Thus, the price at auction wasn’t too low, in the end. The assets, previously valued at around eighty million gold coins, ended up selling for around seventy million gold in total.

After paying the fine of eighty million gold coins, the Debs clan could finally be considered as having escaped from danger.

But after this affair, the net worth of the Debs clan had essentially shrunk by 90%.

…..

October 10th was the day before Kanter’s execution. This day, Linley remained in the Hot Springs Garden, training as he always did.

“Lord Linley, Lord Cesar has come!” A female attendant called out in a high-pitched voice from outside!

Linley had instructed that he must be immediately alerted if Cesar came.

“Cesar came?” Linley quickly threw on some clothes and immediately rushed out of the Hot Springs Garden. Given Linley’s current speed, in ten seconds, he arrived outside the main hall. Right now, Cesar, still dressed in those long, loose robes, was seated lazily with one leg crossed. He was drinking a cup of tea.

“Mr. Cesar.” Linley called out from afar. Three steps later, Linley entered the main hall.

Seeing Linley, Cesar’s eyes lit up, and he immediately rose to his feet. “Master Linley, my truest apologies for only coming today.” As he spoke, Cesar withdrew an envelope from his clothes. “Linley, this is the recipe I mentioned. It’s all yours.”

Chapter 23 – The Bloodrupture Poison

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 23, The Bloodrupture Poison

Linley looked at the two female attendants outside the main hall. He called out coldly, “Leave. Without my orders, no one is to be permitted inside.”

“Yes, milord.”

The hearts of those two female attendants shook, and they quickly left.

“Master Linley, you are quite cautious.” Cesar laughed.

Linley felt helpless.

Cautious?

How could he not be cautious? He was going to use this recipe to kill Clayde.

“This Cesar probably knew all along that I am intending to kill Clayde.” Linley understood this point. Previously, he had told Cesar that he wanted to kill one of the six rulers of the kingdoms of the Holy Union. And then, he said he wanted to kill a warrior of the ninth rank.

As long as Cesar wasn’t a total idiot, he would easily be able to connect these two points to understand that Linley wanted to kill a king of the Holy Union who was also a warrior of the ninth rank. In the entire Holy Union, the only one who fit these criteria was Clayde.

“Cesar, this old freak, wouldn’t go curry favor with Clayde by selling me out.” Linley felt quite confident.

What sort of person was Cesar? Would he deal with someone like Linley using tricks like these?

“Linley, you do indeed have to be careful. That person you intend to deal with is highly valued by the Radiant Church.” Cesar said in a low voice by Linley’s side. “And he has many guards as well. If you are to try and poison him, it will be quite hard.”

Linley glanced at Cesar. “Thank you for your advice, Mr. Cesar.”

Poison Clayde?

If Linley was willing to risk his life, he definitely would be able to succeed. All he had to do was to invite Clayde to his manor, and then serve Clayde some wine. In his own manor, lacing the wine was an extremely easy task. But if he did this, he would be revealing himself as the perpetrator.

He had to find an opportunity to kill Clayde without anyone knowing about it.

Such an opportunity was quite rare.

“I can’t always rely on being lucky, like that time with Patterson insisting on meeting with me in secret.” Linley said to himself. That private, secret meeting with Patterson really was an unexpected, wonderful surprise for Linley, but such surprises could only be wished for, not relied upon.

As he was considering this, Linley opened the envelope.

There was a piece of paper within the envelope, filled with countless words.

“Drug name: Bloodrupture Poison

Ingredients: Astralagus fruit, white ginseng, turmeric, fog grass, cloud fungus, bitterskin, cardamon kernels, Blueheart Grass.

Effect: Bloodrupture poison, when dissolved into wine or water, has no odor and no taste. To this date, no way of detecting it has been discovered. Once it is ingested, it will seep into the blood and then into the dantian,

preventing battle-qi from being generated, causing a warrior to have less than 10% of his strength left. Anyone below the Saint-rank is vulnerable to this poison, and there is no cure. Only by using battle-qi over a long period of time to cleanse the poison from the bloodstream can one cure one's self.

Instructions: In order to produce one gram of Bloodrupture poison, one needs to have thirty grams of Astralagus fruit, twelve grams of white ginseng, ten grams of turmeric, fifteen grams of fog grass, twelve grams of cloud fungus, one gram of bitterskin, twelve grams of cardamon kernels, and one gram of Blueheart Grass. First use the twelve grams of ginseng, the fifteen grams of fog grass, and the gram of bitterskin. Place them into the alchemist's pot and boil them until the fog grass begins to emit whit mist, then stop. Filter out the concentrated juice, then place it into the mixing pot and add in the Blueheart Grass, the turmeric, and the cardamon kernels….

Storage method: ……"

This paper very clearly detailed every aspect of the manufacture and usage of the Bloodrupture poison. Just from examining the concocting procedures, Linley quickly understood how difficult it would be to produce this poison. If a single mistake was made in any of the procedures, the entire potion would be worthless.

The way to store it and preserve it was also very complicated.

The cost of a unit of Bloodrupture poison was more than a million times that of an equivalent weight of gold.

"Of the eight ingredients required to concoct this Bloodrupture poison, five of them aren't that rare. Astralagus fruit, white ginseng, turmeric, bitterskin, and cardamon kernels. The prices of these five shouldn't be considered too high for you. But the other three are very rare. That fog grass generally only grows in the far eastern plains, east of the Four Great Empires. It is extremely rare, and is rarely found in the marketplace. As for the other two ingredients, their rarity is even greater than that of fog grass!" Cesar explained carefully.

“Both Blueheart Grass and cloud fungus are virtually un-purchasable and cannot be found in the market, even if you have money. Supposedly, a while ago, someone tried to offer a hundred thousand gold coins to buy Blueheart Grass, but still was not able to do so. Cloud fungus, as well, hasn’t appeared in the market for a long time.”

Cesar patted Linley on his shoulders comfortingly. “Linley, it will take you quite a bit of effort to gather these eight ingredients.”

Linley still felt a degree of confidence.

Of these eight ingredients, five wouldn’t pose any problem at all. As for fog grass, even though it was rare, it shouldn’t be too hard to buy it. As for Blueheart Grass…he had it already. There was no need to buy it. Right now, the only problem was the cloud fungus!

“Once I acquire the cloud fungus, I’ll be able to produce some Bloodrupture poison. And that day will be the day of Clayde’s death.” Linley said to himself.

Linley could no longer endure any longer. If in the future, he still couldn’t find an appropriate opportunity, he would go all out and kill Clayde, even if it meant exposing himself as the killer. If worst came to worst, he would go ask Yale for help and have the Dawson Conglomerate aid him in fleeing from the Holy Union.

Based on the influence and power of the Dawson Conglomerate, it wouldn’t be too hard for them to help Linley escape from the Holy Union.

“Right now, what’s important is finding these eight ingredients.” Linley was still very happy right now.

At least he now had a goal to work towards.

“Linley. Linley.” Cesar called out to him. “Ahem, Master Linley!”

“Uh?” Only now did Linley end his pondering and turn to look at Cesar.

“Mr. Cesar, is there something you need?”

Cesar chortled. “Linley, are you perhaps forgetting something?”

Linley immediately understood. Laughing, he said, “Haha, Mr. Cesar, you are referring to the sculpture, right? I finished the sculpture you asked for a full month ago. Come, please, this way.” Linley immediately led Cesar towards a side room.

In the corner of this side room, there was a man-shaped sculpture which radiated a cold, killing aura. Those two eyes contained within them a disdain for all life and an arrogance that forced viewers to feel awe and terror.

As for the facial features, the facial details were carved even more accurately. The sculpture looked exactly like Cesar.

“Wonderful, wonderful!!!” Cesar was so excited, he said the word wonderful twice.

“Master Linley, you truly are a master sculptor. In such a short period of time, you were able to produce such a flawless sculpture. In my mind, this sculpture is ten thousand times better than even that ‘Awakening From the Dream’ of yours.” Staring at his sculpture, Cesar was grinning so widely that his face threatened to split.

The more he looked at this sculpture, the happier Cesar felt.

“This King of Killers is perhaps a bit too narcissistic.” Seeing the grin on Cesar’s face, Linley couldn’t help but think this to himself.

…..

“Lord Linley.” A nearby housekeeper bowed politely.

Linley pulled out a piece of paper and handed it to the housekeeper. “Go purchase these twelve ingredients for me. The exact amount I need for each

is written on the paper."

"Yes, Lord Linley." The housekeeper accepted the piece of paper.

Of the twelve ingredients on the list of paper, six of them were the ones which Linley needed, while the other six were just some normal, random ingredients Linley had scribbled on as well. Of the twelve ingredients, only fog grass was relatively expensive. As for the Blueheart Grass and cloud fungus which the Bloodrupture poison required, Linley didn't even bother writing them down on this piece of paper.

Linley wasn't actually worried about these ingredients being made public.

After all, the secret formula for Bloodrupture poison was one of the secret formulas of the Deathgod's Hands. Aside from the Saber organization, most likely no one else knew this formula. And there were many other formulas that also used those ingredients.

After all, Linley didn't write down the two most critical ingredients; Blueheart Grass and cloud fungus.

"Find and purchase these ingredients for me as soon as possible." Linley instructed.

After giving his orders to the housekeeper, Linley immediately sent someone to invite Yale, Reynolds, and George to come meet with him at his manor. Whenever they had a chance, the four bros would meet and have food together, thus this wasn't out of character for Linley.

The next morning.

This was the day of Kanter Debs' execution by hanging, but Linley couldn't be bothered to go watch. He was in his manor, drinking wine and chatting with his three bros. Only after they finished drinking did Linley bring up what he wished to discuss.

"Boss Yale, there's something I want to ask you to help me with." Linley

said.

“Third Bro, just let me know what you need.” Yale said boldly.

Linley withdrew a piece of paper. “Boss Yale, I need two types of ingredients. One is fog grass, the other is cloud fungus. These two herbs are extremely rare, and are virtually unavailable on the market. I was hoping you could help me, Yale.” Yale was supported by the Dawson Conglomerate, after all.

As one of the three great trading unions of the Yulan continent, the Dawson Conglomerate was a massive organization with astonishing abilities.

It would be much simpler for them to look for cloud fungus and fog grass than for Linley to do so on his own.

“Two types of herbs? Don’t worry about it. I’ll handle it for you.” His tongue slurred from wine, Yale pounded his chest and promised. At the same time, he took the piece of paper with the two herbs written down on it from Linley.

“I’ve seen fog grass at home when I was young. It is a very fun type of grass. Under the hot morning sun, it will emit white mist.” Reynolds immediately said.

Linley’s eyes lit up. However, Reynolds’ clan was back in the O’Brien Empire. From his clan to the Kingdom of Fenlai would require at least a year of travelling time. Linley didn’t have that much time to wait. Only if he absolutely couldn’t find it would he be forced to wait patiently.

“How long would it take us, if we were to wait for you to get fog grass from your home, Fourth Bro?” Yale snickered. “Third Bro, I’ll go talk to my Second Uncle right away and have him help you find these two ingredients.”

Yale really did handle Linley’s matters with high importance. That very day, he went to find his Second Uncle.

That night, with a private deluxe room, the brown-haired Myron [Mai'lon] Dawson was casually draped in a bathrobe. Bare-chested, he was lying on a reclining chair, while two beautiful young ladies were by his side, attending to him.

"Second Uncle, Second Uncle!" Yale's voice sounded out from the other side of the door.

Myron curled his lips helplessly. Stroking the fragrant hair of the two beauties, he chuckled. "My dears, the two of you can go outside and wait a while." Those two beautiful women left the deluxe room very obediently, and then Yale rushed in.

"Yale, you are already a grown up now. How can you act like this?" Myron Dawson said with a frown.

Yale chortled. "Second Uncle, don't be angry. I've come today to ask for your help with something. This is something on behalf of my Third Bro, Linley."

"Your Third Bro? That Linley fellow?" Myron immediately sat up straight. "Go ahead, what is it?"

Yale withdrew that piece of paper from his clothes. "Second Uncle, my Third Bro is in urgent need of these two types of herbs, which is why I'd like to ask you, Second Uncle, to help out and see if we can find them." As he spoke, he delivered the paper to Myron.

"Fog grass, cloud fungus?" Upon seeing the words on the paper, Myron Dawson nodded. "I'll send some people to investigate and see if there's any to be bought nearby."

"Haha, thanks, Second Uncle!" Yale was excited. "Then I won't disturb you, Second Uncle, from your festivities. I'll leave now."

"You little punk." Myron Dawson chuckled, then looked back at the piece

of paper. “Fog grass and cloud fungus? What does this Linley need these two ingredients for?”

……

Linley had to admit, the Dawson Conglomerate was an astonishingly efficient machine.

“Third Bro, within the various branches in the Holy Union of our Dawson Conglomerate, we only have a small amount of fog grass. As for cloud fungus, we had some a while ago, but it’s already been shipped towards our headquarters. The headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate is the place where we have the most herbs and ingredients. Here, let me give this fog grass to you first.” Yale directly handed Linley a pouch.

Within the recipe, the amount of fog grass needed was measured in grams, but the pouch which Yale handed to Linley contained nine full clumps of fog grass. This amount was more than enough.

“So there’s no cloud fungus available?” Linley accepted the pouch.

Yale nodded. “Third Bro, if you are in a hurry, I can have my Second Uncle send experts to ride flying magical beasts to head to our headquarters as soon as possible. Riding flying beasts is quite fast. From here to our headquarters, three months is more than enough.”

Chapter 24 – Breakthrough

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 24, Breakthrough

Linley was silent for a moment, then smiled and nodded apologetically at Yale. “Boss Yale, sorry for the hassle.”

“It’s no hassle.” Yale chortled. “It’s just sending someone to make a delivery is all. No big deal. Our Dawson Conglomerate often sends people to deliver letters to the headquarters. We’ll get several things done.”

Linley nodded.

“Third Bro.” Yale’s voice became solemn as he looked at Linley. “Tell me the truth. Why are you in such a rush to get these herbs?”

If it were someone else asking him, Linley totally could’ve lied and claimed that he was using it to make a medical lotion which would help him increase the speed at which his body gained strength. After all, it wasn’t unheard of to bath in medicinal waters as part of training. But facing one of his bros, Linley didn’t wish to lie.

“Boss Yale, right now, I can’t tell you yet. When the time is right, I will tell you.” Linley patted Yale on the shoulders as he spoke.

The bros of dorm 1987 had been together since they were young. They ate together, lived together, played together. They were as close as real brothers.

“Understood, Third Bro. But if you need anything at all, make sure you let me know.” Yale didn’t ask anything else.

The next day, Linley’s housekeeper brought over the herbs which Linley had asked for, except he hadn’t been able to find any fog grass. Based on what the housekeeper said, there was no fog grass available on the market

at all. If they wanted to buy some, they would have to send someone to buy it from the Four Great Empires.

After all, fog grass was cultivated from the great plains to the far east. Some of the market centers of the Four Great Empires fairly close to the great plains did have a small amount of fog grass for sale.

“Right now, of the eight ingredients I need to produce Bloodrupture poison, seven are ready. All I’m missing is cloud fungus.” Within his secret study, Linley had put all of the various herbs in front of him on a table, pondering what to do. Of the eight ingredients, there were three that were rare. Fog grass had been procured by the Dawson Conglomerate, while he already had enough Blueheart Grass.

“If I wait three months, then at that time, the people from the Dawson Conglomerate will come and deliver the cloud fungus.” Linley felt very confident.

At most, three months. At that time, he would have all the ingredients that he needed, and would thus be able to prepare a few mixtures of Bloodrupture poison.

But Linley wasn’t the sort of person to sit around waiting.

“Help me spread the word. Let it be known that I am preparing to begin a period of training with the usage of herbal baths, and need cloud fungus as one of my components. I’m willing to pay up to a million gold coins for it.” Linley instructed his housekeeper.

Although Linley wouldn’t lie to his bros, he had to give a good excuse to the rest of the world.

Cloud fungus, in and of itself, was not a poisonous plant. It actually was greatly beneficial to the body. But all herbs possessed their own wondrous properties. When these eight herbs were all refined and processed together, they would be able to produce a poisonous powder like the Bloodrupture poison.

“Yes, Lord Linley.” Upon hearing the words, ‘a million gold coins’, the housekeeper’s heart trembled.

To Linley, a million gold coins really wasn’t much. When he had auctioned off his sculpture, ‘Awakening From the Dream’, the price was twelve million gold coins. Afterwards, when Patterson had secretly met with him, he had gifted Linley another ten million gold coins. After Linley’s rise to prominence and appointment to the rank of Prime Court Magus, the Radiant Church, King Clayde, and many other nobles had all given Linley many valuable gifts.

And just a short while ago, the Debs clan had gifted Linley with a magicrystal card that had one million gold coins on it.

Linley’s current net worth was well over twenty million gold coins.

And this wasn’t even counting the Saint-level magicite core that Linley had acquired from the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. That core, which Linley was keeping hidden, was a priceless treasure which probably was worth more than even a hundred million gold coins.

The news that Linley was seeking to buy cloud fungus for a million gold coins originally only spread amongst herbal merchants, but shortly afterwards, all the various nobles of the Kingdom of Fenlai learned of it as well. All of those nobles now knew that Master Linley needed cloud fungus.

If they could provide Linley with the cloud fungus, not only would they receive a million gold coins, they would also have a chance to build up a relationship with Linley.

Many nobles began to wrack their brains for methods by which they could locate cloud fungus.

But alas, cloud fungus was far too rare, and far too expensive.

After ordering this news to be spread out, Linley continued his life of solitary, pitiless training within his manor. In the blink of an eye, November arrived, and with it the temperature began to drop as well. The leaves of the trees within the Hot Springs Garden began to turn yellow and fall, filling the grass with sallow leaves.

“Haaaaa!”

Linley, who had been engaging in one-finger vertical push-ups suddenly exerted strength through his fingers, flipping himself into the air. Somersaulting easily through the air, Linley landed on the ground, his bare upper chest covered in sweat.

Aided by the Supergravity Field, after having trained for so long, even Linley’s powerful body was beginning to feel tired.

“Whew.”

Standing normally again, Linley felt the muscles in and near his fingers, arms, and shoulders all feel numb and sore. He found this feeling to be very comfortable, as he knew that in this situation, his muscles and bones were slowly strengthening.

The way to train one’s body was to exceed one’s limits time and time again, so long as one didn’t exceed the limits by too much each time.

Seating himself cross-legged, Linley immediately began to train in accordance with the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’, allowing the liquefied Dragonblood battle-qi in his dantian to begin to rush out. In a short while, the mighty Dragonblood battle-qi had filled Linley’s entire body.

Training, time and time again. Each time, the Dragonblood battle-qi would become a bit more pure, and Linley’s bones and flesh would become a bit stronger.

The azurish-black Dragonblood battle-qi entered his dantian again, then spread out again. The dantian was the nucleus for a Dragonblood Warrior.

Linley had reached the late-stage of the sixth rank long ago, and in September and October, he had reached the peak of the sixth rank.

Right now, Linley had reached a plateau. He could break through any day now.

“Crack. Crack.” All sorts of strange sounds began to emit from Linley’s body. Linley’s muscles seemed to have a mouse buried beneath them, as they began to ripple up and down nonstop. Even his veins were popping out, and throughout Linley’s body, beads of sweat and beads of blood were beginning to come out!

“I’m finally about to break through.” Linley was shocked and pleased.

He had waited far too long for this day.

“Bubble, bubble.”

That azurish-black Dragonblood battle-qi began to roil about strangely, filling Linley’s entire body with pain. But within his dantian, that liquefied Dragonblood battle-qi began to condense itself yet again, increasing in density by several factors. The Dragonblood battle-qi was being drawn back into the dantian nonstop. And then, it would once again be emitted from the dantian yet again, forming a circle.

Whenever the Dragonblood battle-qi entered the dantian, it would transform.

After roughly an hour’s time had passed, all of the Dragonblood battle-qi in Linley’s body had undergone this transformation. Although there was theoretically only a thin barrier between the peak of the sixth rank and the early seventh rank, Linley’s strength was now several times greater than it had been in the past.

Linley opened his eyes, a look of uncontrollable excitement within them.

“Haha, I’ve finally entered the realm of a warrior of the seventh rank.”

Linley was extremely excited.

As long as he were to agitate the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body, he would be able to assume the Dragonform. The training speed of the Dragonblood Warriors was extremely high, especially in the earlier stages. Linley had spent just about half a year before advancing from the sixth rank to the seventh rank. This sort of advancement was extremely astounding.

But Linley estimated that to progress from the seventh rank to the eighth rank, he would need several years, most likely.

The farther along one was, the harder the road would become. But nonetheless, most Dragonblood Warriors only needed a few decades to reach the Saint-level in power.

Bebe, who had been sleeping nearby this entire time, opened his sleepy eyes, which suddenly brightened. Excitedly, he spiritually said to Linley, "Boss, you reached the seventh rank?"

"Yeah." Linley nodded happily.

"Then doesn't that mean, once you Dragonform, you have the power of an early-stage ninth rank?" Bebe was excited. "Looks like your power is gonna be more than mine now, Boss!"

Linley began to laugh as well.

In the early stages, the boost to power provided by the Dragonform was quite dramatic. For example, as a warrior of the seventh rank, in the Yulan continent, he could only be considered an unremarkable fellow. But upon using the Dragonform, he would be an early-stage ninth rank warrior, who was qualified to be considered a notable figure in the world.

However, the more powerful one grew, the weaker the boost provided by the Dragonform would be.

Dragonform, after all, was nothing more than forcibly drawing out the

Dragonblood which a weak Dragonblood Warrior hadn't been able to fully absorb.

"Early-stage ninth rank, and your Dragonform was influenced by the Armored Razorback Wyrm. The Armored Razorback Wyrm specializes in speed and defense, while you also possess strong defense and unquestionably high speed." Doehring Cowart appeared from the ring at this time.

Linley was very confident in his own speed.

Because after taking on the Dragonform, not only did he have the natural high speed of a Dragonblood Warrior, he could also utilize wind-style magic and boost himself with a Supersonic spell of the seventh rank, which would increase his speed by a good amount.

Linley was so pleased that he just stood there, grinning stupidly.

"Boss, stop laughing like an idiot. Look at yourself, you're filthy. Take a bath, jeeze." Bebe intentionally put a disgusted look on his face while covering his nose and jumping up and down as he bared his fangs at Linley.

Linley looked at himself.

At this moment, his body was covered in both sweat and blood. He really did look dirty.

"Splash!"

Linley jumped directly into the hot springs pool. The water in the hot springs was constantly flowing, so Linley didn't worry about getting it dirty. After having experienced the sensation of his entire body transforming, then having the hot springs water rush against it, Linley felt so comfortable that he lay within the hot springs pool, eyes closed.

He fell asleep.

He felt so comfortable that he actually fell asleep.

Just as Linley was enjoying a beautiful dream, a voice rang out from outside. “Lord Linley. Lord Linley.” The female attendant’s voice clearly sounded rather anxious.

Linley’s eyes suddenly opened. Hearing the voice, he couldn’t help but frown. “Come in.”

Only then did that female attendant dare to enter the gardens. Standing at the side of the hot springs pool, she snuck a few looks at Linley’s naked body, then respectfully said, “Lord Linley, a herald from the palace is waiting outside. He says that he has come at the command of his Majesty, who is inviting you, Lord Linley, to make a trip to the palace.”

“By command of his Majesty?” Linley hesitated slightly, then directly clambered out of the pool.

“You can leave now.” Linley always dressed himself, as he didn’t like the female attendants helping him dress.

“Yes.” Her cheeks scarlet red, the female attendant quickly lowered her head and fled the Hot Springs Garden.

…..

Seated in a carriage, headed for the palace. Outside the carriage, aside from sixteen palace soldiers, there were sixteen knights from the Radiant Church. Linley’s entourage was larger than that of even the Left Premier or the Right Premier.

“Lord Linley, his Majesty is currently within the East Flower Garden.” The shrill voice of the palace attendant rang out.

“Lead the way.” Linley said abruptly.

The palace attendant was very deferential towards Linley, smiling at him

the entire way.

“Who else has his Majesty invited this time?” Linley asked.

“Just you, Lord Linley.” The palace attendant replied.

“Just me?” Linley began to feel suspicious, but he didn’t ask anything further. Under the guidance of the palace attendant, Linley finally arrived at the palace’s East Flower Garden. As it was now already November, there were very few flowers which were still in bloom. But the countless flowers in the East Flower Garden of the palace were still vibrant and beautiful.

And that ‘Golden Lion’, King Clayde, was currently chatting with his Queen in the garden.

“Haha, Linley, you came.” Clayde greeted Linley in a very friendly manner. “Come, sit.” “Your Majesty. Queen.” Linley paid his respects, then sat down.

Clayde and the Queen exchanged glances, and then he grinned at Linley. “Linley, I heard that you have been looking for cloud fungus in order to create a medicinal bath for yourself?”

“Yes.” Linley nodded.

Suddenly, Linley had an idea as to why Clayde had specially requested his presence at the palace. But Linley didn’t quite dare to believe it. He was searching for this cloud fungus for the sake of dealing with Clayde. Could it be that Clayde was going to…

“Haha, I knew you were searching for this cloud fungus, so I sent my men out to do a search. By a stroke of good fortune, my palace storehouse just so happened to have a single clump of cloud fungus.” Clayde glanced at a nearby female attendant, who immediately presented a golden brocade box she was holding to Linley.

Linley was really, truly stunned.

The cloud fungus that he had been so desperately seeking, had been provided to him by King Clayde!

Chapter 25 – Producing the Powder

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 25, Producing the Powder

Cloud fungus. The true reason why Linley was seeking cloud fungus was to use it to produce Bloodrupture poison powder. And the reason why he wanted to produce Bloodrupture poison was because he was going to use it on Clayde.

But in the end, it was Clayde who provided the cloud fungus to him.

“Can it be that hidden deep within the world, there really is such a thing as the cycle of karma?” Linley suddenly thought of the teachings of the Radiant Church, one part of which discussed fate. In the past, Linley had never believed in any religion, but this affair really had developed in a very bizarre way.

Given that the cloud fungus had just been delivered into his hands, how could he not take it?

“Thank you, your Majesty.” Linley smiled, bowing in thanks while accepting the cloud fungus.

But in his heart, Linley was laughing coldly. “Since you’ve given it to me, this means that the heavens themselves desire your death. You can’t blame me.”

Linley had virtually no memories of his mother, but that didn’t stop Linley from deeply desiring to have had a mother’s love. Due to never having known his mother, Linley had always been a bit lonely. Whenever he saw someone else’s mother and felt a bit unhappy, he would think silent, lonely thoughts of his mother.

Upon capturing Clayde, he definitely would be able to discover his mother’s whereabouts!

“Linley, I’ve invited the Right Premier for lunch today. Stay here and have lunch with us, why won’t you.” Clayde beamed at Linley.

“Yes, your Majesty.” Linley’s attitude was very humble.

The Queen nodded gracefully to Linley, then said to Clayde in a gentle voice, “Your Majesty, you and Master Linley can remain here. I’ll go back now.” Clayde nodded calmly as well. In the Kingdom of Fenlai, the King’s authority vastly outstripped that of the Queen’s.

November. The temperature was getting cold.

But Linley and Clayde were both dressed lightly, not afraid of the cold in the slightest. Linley was now a warrior of the seventh rank, while Clayde was an even mightier warrior of the ninth rank.

“Your Majesty, why did you invite Merritt to dine with you?” Linley was chatting naturally and casually with Clayde.

Hearing Linley’s words, a very satisfied smile appeared on Clayde’s face. He glanced at the nearby palace maids, who very obediently left. Only then did Clayde say in a low voice, “Linley, are you aware that Merritt has recently married his thirteenth wife?”

“Thirteenth?” Linley was stunned.

He didn’t know that this apparently serious, solemn judge, the Lord Right Minister, was so fickle in love.

“His new wife is an extremely flavorful woman.” Clayde revealed a smile towards Linley, a type of smile all men understood.

Seeing that expression on Clayde’s face, Linley couldn’t help but be startled.

“Haha…” Clayde patted Linley on the shoulders. “Linley. Next year, you

will be eighteen. Don't tell me you've never tasted a woman before."

Linley couldn't help but feel awkward.

Clayde sighed, "Merritt, that kid, was actually able to acquire such an intoxicating little vixen. It really does make one jealous. But since I've taken a fancy to her, that intoxicating little vixen is mine. Merritt won't even dare to touch her from now on."

Clayde openly spoke of such affairs to Linley.

"Your Majesty? Is that…is that appropriate?" Linley was a bit surprised.

She was, after all, the wife of the Right Minister. But from the sound of it, Clayde was going to directly seize her for himself.

"What's inappropriate about it? Merritt only climbed to his current position through women to begin with. He should know very well what his place is. But Linley, that day when Merritt got married and had his banquet, I think you didn't attend." Clayde said questioningly.

During this period of time, Linley had been pondering the question of alchemy and herbal ingredients. He had no inclination to go to a wedding at all. Generally speaking, Linley declined all banquet invitations from nobles.

The wedding banquet of the Right Premier?

Declined all the same!

"Linley, how about today, during lunch, you take a look at Merritt's new wife, Windsor [Wen'sa]. If you like her, I don't mind giving her to you. I can guarantee that no matter how daring and audacious Merritt might be, he won't dare to touch Windsor a single time." Clayde said confidently.

Clayde possessed absolute authority within the Kingdom of Fenlai.

The day of Merritt's wedding, Clayde had taken a fancy towards Windsor.

That very night, Clayde had sent someone to bring Windsor to a manor outside, and he, Clayde, had thoroughly enjoyed himself.

As for Merritt, he didn't dare to show any hint of temper.

What's more, ever since that night, Merritt no longer dared to touch Windsor.

Some of the major ministers in the Kingdom of Fenlai had risen to their ranks through their abilities. Those were truly capable ministers indeed. But some ministers had clawed their way to their current ranks through some unsightly deeds.

Linley was secretly surprised at Clayde's forcefulness.

But then again, Clayde, the one whom men named the 'Golden Lion', had always been as forceful as a lion. One could imagine how despotically he could act if he so chose.

"Your Majesty, Duke Merritt and the Duchess have arrived." A palace attendant ran over and said respectfully.

"Haha, come, Linley." Clayde immediately stood up.

Holding the packaged cloud fungus, Linley could only follow Clayde out. But shortly afterwards, they arrived at a very graceful, light red courtyard within the palace.

Merritt and that Madame Windsor were there, waiting at the gate to the courtyard.

Linley couldn't help but glance at the Madame Windsor who had drawn Clayde's interest.

Madame Windsor's body was extremely slender. Although she was dressed very conservatively, her tight clothes accentuated every curve and every line of her slender body. Her waist was so slender, and yet her bosom was

so full.

Her dark red hair was so alluring.

In particular, this Madame Windsor's eyes were soul-beguiling. Anyone who saw her would unconsciously begin to think improper thoughts.

"Your Majesty. Lord Linley." Merritt said, and that Madame Windsor echoed him in her gentle voice.

"She really is quite an enchanting vixen." Linley said to himself.

Clayde cast a delighted glance at Linley. In a low voice, he said to Linley, "What do you think? Do you feel a bit a bit of an urge to…?"

"Your Majesty, let's go in and have lunch." Linley said in a low voice.

"Haha…" Clayde began to laugh loudly.

That Windsor couldn't help but turn to stare at Linley with her beguiling eyes, seemingly quite interested in Linley. If Merritt and Clayde hadn't been there, perhaps she might have gone directly up to Linley and struck up a conversation with him.

"Wow, what a beautiful lady." Bebe, on Linley's shoulders the entire time, said, his eyes growing round.

"Swish."

Bebe actually leapt off of Linley's shoulders, landing directly…on Windsor's bosom.

"It's so big…" Bebe's voice sounded out in Linley's mind.

Linley was flabbergasted.

"What an adorable mouse!" Windsor excitedly cuddled Bebe, who used his

little head to rub himself against her ampleness, seeming to enjoy himself very much.

….

“Whew.”

Bebe in hand, Linley managed to finally leave the palace. This entire time in the palace, that Windsor kept on using her beguiling eyes to stare at him. Even Linley found it hard to endure.

They entered the carriage.

“Return.” Linley snapped an order to his guards, and the carriage immediately began to move. “Hey, Boss, what’s the rush? Right, didn’t that Clayde say he was willing to give Windsor to you? You should accept.” Bebe’s beady little eyes stared at Linley.

Linley couldn’t help but smack Bebe on his head. “You perverted little mouse.”

“Hrmph, I’m about to be of age, y’know.” Bebe said unhappily.

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

But thinking back to what he had gained from this trip to the palace, Linley couldn’t help but let a hint of a smile appear on his face. He took out the case by his side.

Within this case was a clump of cloud fungus.

“Now that I have the cloud fungus in hand, all eight ingredients are ready. I have what I need to produce the Bloodrupture poison powder.” Linley had already decided that he would immediately start to produce the powder when he got back home.

“Boss, I feel like that Clayde is rather brotherly, stand-up guy. Are you

really going to kill him?" Bebe said in a low voice.

Frowning, Linley turned to look at Bebe.

"Bebe, Clayde is the ruler of a country. As long as he has any brains at all, he would naturally try to build a good relationship with me. He is friendly and does right by me, only because of my status and my potential. If I didn't have potential, then Clayde probably wouldn't even bother to notice me. Perhaps if I had a beautiful wife, he would directly take her for his own pleasure. Just like with that Merritt."

Linley understood Clayde quite well.

A person like Clayde was actually quite heartless. But he could still be considered a capable ruler. At least, he was able to distinguish between capable ministers and useless ones.

"In fact, I even am beginning to wonder if, in the past, Clayde saw that my mother was beautiful and therefore wanted her for himself." Upon seeing Windsor, Linley had thought of this possibility.

Based on Clayde's personality, this was not impossible.

"Bebe, tell me, how can I spare Clayde?" Linley looked at Bebe. Just thinking about that possibility filled Linley with a boundless desire to kill.

Perhaps because he could feel the killing desire Linley was feeling towards Clayde, Bebe instantly said, "Kill him, kill him. I, Bebe, will be the first to act against him." Bebe rose to his feet, waving his two paws around while baring his fangs, demonstrating to Linley the deep hatred he, too, felt for Clayde.

"No need for you to act. After finding out about my mother's whereabouts, I will be the first to act." Linley said coldly.

Within the secret room in Linley's manor, under the light of eighteen lanterns, the entire room was bright. Linley was carefully following the

procedures for producing Bloodrupture poison powder.

The procedure for producing this powder was extremely complicated. Each step required caution, caution, caution.

If there was even the slightest error, then the ingredients would have been wasted.

Right now, on the table within the secret room, there were alchemist's tools, and the eight ingredients, all chopped up into many small pieces.

"Gurgle, gurgle."

Linley filtered the herbal juice out from the alchemist's pot, then placed this juice into a new, clean pot and began to boil it. At the same time, Linley began to carefully add the three remaining ingredients to the mixture.

"Can't get the order wrong. I should put in the Blueheart Grass, then the turmeric, then the cardamon kernels."

Staring at the alchemy pot, Linley focused all of his concentration onto it, carefully watching it for any reactions. Each step had to be controlled with extreme precision.

An entire night passed.

"I've finally produced a single liquid dose." Linley carefully strained the small amount of clear liquid out of the alchemist's pot, pouring it into a white tray.

"This translucent liquid seems to be just like clear water. There's no distinguishable difference at all." Linley sighed emotionally.

Based on the instructions for producing Bloodrupture poison powder, this final liquid dose could already be considered a form of Bloodrupture poison. However, only allowing it to dry into powder form would it reach its highest level of potency.

By now, this liquid dose had already been boiled once, and not much water remained within it. Most likely, within ten days time, it would totally dry and transform into the Bloodrupture poison powder.

“The first dose was a success. Tomorrow, I’ll make a second dose.” Linley was very careful.

He didn’t dare to use all the materials on a single attempt. After all, if he were to fail, it would be disastrous. By dividing the materials into multiple attempts, at least a single failure wouldn’t be too disastrous.

A single dosage of poison powder should be enough. But, to be cautious, Linley had decided to prepare multiple doses.

Year 9999 of the Yulan calendar. The end of November.

The six doses of Bloodrupture poison which Linley had produced had completely dried into powder form. Just by looking at its translucent, crystalline form, it was hard to imagine something which could so dramatically cripple the power of a warrior of the ninth rank.

“Whew. Although I’ve used up all my ingredients, these six doses of poison powder should be enough.” Looking at the six packets of powder on his table, Linley let out a long breath.

For the sake of this Bloodrupture poison powder, Linley really had expended a great deal of time and effort. And now, he had succeeded.

“Now, the only thing that I am missing is an opportunity to make my move against Clayde.” Linley couldn’t help but begin to ponder a way to poison Clayde and capture him without anyone suspecting that it had been Linley who did it.

Chapter 26 – The Scheme

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 26, The Scheme

This would be difficult!

If it was within the palace, Linley would have to first find an opportunity to use the poison, and then both question and kill Clayde within the confines of the palace.

“Even if I don’t worry about the issue of being discovered to be the murderer, upon killing Clayde, it will be very hard to escape the palace.” In Linley’s mind, one possibility after another appeared, then was discarded.

Linley finally reached a conclusion…

“To use poison within the palace and then escape afterwards is virtually impossible.” Linley discarded this possibility entirely. After all, there were simply too many experts in the palace. Only if he used the Dragonform would he be able to cut his way out.

But Linley was not willing to expose the secret that he could Dragonform.

“It has to be outside the palace.” Linley felt his head hurt.

A place outside the palace, where Clayde would be willing to be alone with him. And, the place had to be a standalone place. This was extremely difficult. Clayde was, after all, the king. If someone wanted to meet with him, they would go in person to the palace.

Linley couldn’t, after all, send someone to the palace and ask King Clayde to come meet him.

Linley had never heard of a situation where a subject would request a ruler to come see them. This clearly was unfeasible. Even if Clayde gave him

face and agreed, Clayde would most likely be suspicious and on guard.

As soon as Clayde became on his guard, the chance of success would be lowered.

“I have to find an opportunity to be with him alone in a place outside the palace.” Despite having been in Fenlai City for so long, Linley had never been in a one-on-one situation with Clayde before.

Generally speaking, they would only meet at banquets.

But Linley couldn’t make his move at a banquet, in front of an audience of countless people, could he?

“What to do?”

Linley was beginning to feel vexed.

Early December. The temperature of Fenlai City suddenly dropped, and the first snow of this winter came as well. The entire Fenlai City was covered white, and the cold bite of the air caused many nobles to hide inside their homes, unwilling to venture outside.

Still dressed in loose robes, Linley was strolling on the snow-covered streets, escorted by two guards.

“Crunch. Crunch.” The sound of footsteps on the snow.

The snow-covered Fenlai City was exceptionally alluring. On the gates of the noble manors on each side of the Greenleaf Road were countless icicles. The reflected rays of the sun glittered off of them, making them seem all the more beautiful to behold.

The towering, snow-covered pine trees in front of the manors seemed exceptionally beautiful as well.

The scene was a beautiful one.

But Linley's mood was foul.

"That Clayde is already a warrior of the ninth rank. Although advancing from the ninth rank to the Saint-level is very hard, perhaps one day he will suddenly break through. By then, it will be even more hopeless." Linley really didn't want to wait any longer.

The earlier he made his move against Clayde, the greater his chance of success.

But he needed an opportunity.

"Boss, look. Many of the nearby manors have been renovated and redecorated." Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

While walking on the road, Linley's thoughts were elsewhere, so naturally he hadn't noticed. But upon hearing Bebe's words, Linley noticed that the manors alongside Greenleaf Road were now different from before.

"This is…" Linley said questioningly.

"Hang it up. Good. Now move it a bit to the left." A servant of the nearest manor was busy hanging up various decorations under the instruction of a nearby man.

"Those are…Yulan flowers!" Linley noticed the decorations hanging next to the door and what patterns they had. The patterns looked like Yulan flowers.

Suddenly, Linley understood what was going on.

"Right! It's already December. The Yulan Festival will be coming quite soon. And it will be the 10000th Yulan Festival!" Linley knew the importance of this particular Yulan Festival.

Year 10000 of the Yulan calendar, January 1st. That would perhaps be the

most festive day in the history of the Yulan continent. No wonder every single noble clan was putting up so many decorations.

“Crunch!”

One of the steps on a ladder which the servant was standing on while hanging up decorations suddenly broke. The servant lost his footing, wobbled, and then fell down, first banging against the ladder, and then slamming into the stone ground head-first, his fresh blood staining the ground red.

The nearby servants all were frightened.

“Are you okay?” All of them ran forward to help the man up.

“A bit…a bit dizzy…” That wounded man said in a weak voice. Fortunately, the ladder wasn’t too high, and so the force with which he struck the ground wasn’t too great either. That was the only reason he had survived.

“Alright, that’s enough for you for today. Go home and rest. Kohl [Ke’er], go take care of him. Jeeze, you weren’t even that high up, but you managed to smash yourself this badly.” The manager shook his head helplessly.

The servant named Kohl immediately helped prop up the wounded servant and began to assist him back to his home.

Seeing this, Linley was stunned.

“Lord…Lord Linley?” Only now did that manager notice Linley, and he quickly went forward to pay his respects to Linley. This manor was the manor of Duke Bonalt, and Linley had come here before. Naturally, this manager recognized Linley.

“Good morning, Lord Linley,” the manager said with a bow.

Only now did Linley recover from his stupor. An excited smile appearing

on his face, he looked at the man and chuckled. “Haha, good morning to you as well. Haha, alright, time to go home.”

Excited, Linley immediately turned around, leading his guards back.

“Hey, why is our lord so happy?” Those two warriors began to chat with each other in low voices.

They had seen what a foul mood Linley had been in this morning, so what had suddenly caused him to be so excited?

“This method is so simple. Why didn’t I think of it? Haha!” Linley couldn’t help but slap himself on the head. He really had obsessed so much that his brain had gone bad.

Linley had already come up with a surefire method to bring Clayde to visit him. This method was…receive an injury!

“I’ll pretend that when I was training battle-qi, I suffered some internal injuries by accident. If I’m wounded, from what I’ve seen thus far, Clayde will most likely come to visit me.”

Linley was feeling unbelievably happy. As long as he made his move within his own manor, it would be very easy for him to plot against Clayde.

“As for the status and wealth granted by the Holy Union, I’ve never cared too much. After I find out what happened to my mother and kill Clayde, I will use the backchannels of the Dawson Conglomerate to flee from the Holy Union’s domain.” Linley had already come to a firm decision.

The Holy Union held no attractions for Linley.

Right now, his one and only family member, little Wharton, was staying in the O’Brien Empire. There was nothing in the Holy Union preventing Linley from leaving.

To kill Clayde in a way which wouldn’t raise any suspicions was virtually

impossible. Since this was impossible, the only choice Linley had was to accept that he would have to make a small sacrifice. To Linley, the Holy Union held no further attractions, after all.

Linley's manor. The Hot Springs Garden.

Linley was seated cross-legged within the grassy area, cultivating Dragonblood battle-qi. Like the ferocious waves of the ocean, the Dragonblood battle-qi burst forth, clashing against every blood vessel in his body.

In truth, the average warrior of the seventh rank wouldn't be able to withstand such training. But Linley was different. He had drank blood from a living dragon. Generally speaking, when dragon's blood was applied to the outside of one's body, it would acquire an astonishing durability. But Linley had actually drank it into his stomach, which caused all of his blood vessels to also gain an incredible degree of resiliency.

"Paagh!"

Linley suddenly vomited out a mouthful of fresh blood, and his face turned white.

"Aaaaargh!" A painful, guttural roar ripped out from Linley's mouth.

Right now, all of the female attendants outside the Hot Springs Garden could faintly hear that low roar of Linley's, and they all rushed against the door, pressing their ears against it to listen carefully.

"Lord Linley…seems to be in a lot of pain?" One of the skinnier attendants said questioningly.

"Seems like it." Another, chubbier attendant nodded.

But none of them dared to go inside.

"Lord Linley?" That skinnier attendant called out.

“Come…come in…” Linley’s voice rang out.

Those two attendants exchanged glances, then immediately pushed the door open and ran inside. But upon arriving at the grassy area, they were both frightened. There was a large pool of blood on the ground, and Linley was collapsed on the ground, his face pale.

“Assist me to my room.” Linley said in a low voice.

“Yes. Yes.”

The two female attendants were a bit frantic. Each of them helping hold Linley by an arm, they immediately assisted Linley all the way to his private bedroom.

“Milord, should we ask for the light-style magi to come?” The skinnier female attendant asked.

“No need. My injuries are internal. Magic won’t be able to help. I have to quietly recover.” Linley took a deep breath, then assumed the meditation position on the bed, his eyes closing. “The two of you can leave now.”

“Yes, milord.” The two female attendants bowed respectfully and left.

Both the light-style and the water-style recovery spells were spells of a reparative nature, allowing physical wounds to heal. But to damage done to internal organs, they wouldn’t be of much assistance.

……

Within Linley’s room. Only him and Yale were present.

“Third Bro, you aren’t injured?” Yale was confused. “If you aren’t injured, why are you pretending to be injured? And asked to meet with me so urgently.” Even before he feigned injury, Linley had sent someone to ask for Yale.

Linley said in a low voice, “Boss Yale, this affair has to do with my revenge. Boss Yale. I can tell you now. That Clayde is most likely the person who killed my mother.”

“The person who killed your mother?” Yale stared. “Third Bro, you are planning to…?”

“Right. Get revenge.” Linley didn’t hide anything from his bro.

“That Clayde is a warrior of the ninth rank. How are you going to get revenge on him? And he’s the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai as well.” Yale was growing frantic with concern for Linley.

Linley said solemnly, “Don’t worry. I already have total confidence in my ability to deal with him. However, after I kill Clayde, then even if the Radiant Church spares me and doesn’t kill me, my life will most likely be made miserable. Thus I have decided that after I kill Clayde, I will immediately leave the Holy Union.”

“Leave the Holy Union?” Yale was startled, but then he quickly understood. “Right. You do need to leave. Leave this to me. The mercantile power of our Dawson Conglomerate is spread over every major city in the Holy Union. It will be very easy for us to smuggle a person out of the Holy Union with no one the wiser.”

“What’s more, our Dawson Conglomerate has master disguisers as well.” Yale was totally confident.

Linley knew full well how powerful the Dawson Conglomerate was. How could one of the three major trading unions of the Yulan continent be trifled with?

“I know. That’s why, Boss Yale, I want for you to arrange for someone to wait for me at that hotel at the end of the Greenleaf Road. When I arrive there later, you can help arrange for me to be smuggled outside the Holy Union.”

Linley was very confident that after killing Clayde, he would be able to easily make his way to this hotel.

“No worries.” Yale nodded.

“Third Bro.” Yale frowned, looking at Linley. “You have to be careful.”

Linley smiled at Yale. “Boss Yale, you must have faith in me.”

The news that Linley had been injured quickly spread out. The first to receive this news was not the ruler of the Kingdom of Fenlai; it was the Cardinal of the Radiant Church, Guillermo.

But very quickly, King Clayde and the various nobles of Fenlai received the news that Linley had suffered an injury when training. Although injuries caused by training were rather rare, they weren’t unheard of. Generally speaking, only someone who trained too hard and exceeded his body’s maximum limits would suffer such an injury, and sometimes even harm the organs. “The only thing to do now is to wait for King Clayde.” Wearing a loose robe, Linley sat on a chair in his bedroom, his face ashen.

Bebe was standing on a nearby chair as well.

“Lord Linley.” The female attendant from outside ran in.

Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. But then, Linley immediately returned to presenting himself as ‘weak’. Looking at the attendant, he said calmly, “What is it.”

“Lord Cardinal Guillermo has arrived.” The female attendant hurriedly said.

“Oh?” Linley’s heart was suddenly gripped with worry.

Although Guillermo’s visit had been expected, Linley suddenly thought of something…what if Guillermo was present when King Clayde arrived as well? Then it would be very difficult for him to act against Clayde.

After all, Guillermo was a magus of the ninth rank. That Bloodrupture poison was used primarily against warriors to weaken their power, and didn't have much of an impact on magi.

"Linley!" Just at this moment, Guillermo's voice sounded out from outside the room.

Chapter 27 – The Wine

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 27, The Wine

Linley couldn't help but turn his head to the door.

Guillermo was there, dressed in a long, red robe, a smile on his face, his waist straight. His eyes, however, were very fierce and resolved. Under the escort of the two Vicars, Guillermo strode into the room.

"So Guillermo has already arrived. I hope Clayde will be a bit slower." Linley was filled with anticipation.

The only weakness in this plan of his was the possibility that Clayde and this magus of the ninth rank would come at the same time. After all, the Bloodrupture poison was of no use against a magus.

Linley immediately began to stand up. "Lord Guillermo."

"Linley, look at yourself. Your face is so pale. Sit, sit." Guillermo immediately took two quick steps forward to stop Linley from rising.

"Lord Guillermo, I'm fine. Although I suffered some internal injuries while training battle-qi, I can still walk and act normally. Only, it's a pity that for a period of time, I won't be able to train battle-qi any more." Linley said with a long sigh.

"At a time like this, you are still thinking of training battle-qi?" Guillermo said angrily. "External injuries are easy to heal, but internal ones are much more dangerous. If you don't heal them properly, it's possible that they'll cause harm to you for your entire life."

"Thank you, Lord Guillermo, for your concern."

In truth, Linley had a very good impression of Guillermo. He couldn't help

but cast a glance to the entranceway. “I hope this Clayde will arrive a bit later.”

Yesterday’s blizzard had caused Fenlai City to become very cold, and there were very few people on the road from the palace. But right now, a hundred-man strong contingent of guards were currently protecting and escorting a lavish golden carriage out of the palace.

“Crunch. Crunch.”

The wheels of the carriage crushed through the snow.

“Ransome [Lan’sai’mu], open the door.” Clayde ordered.

The carriage was extremely spacious, and could easily fit five or six people very comfortably. This Ransome was one of Clayde’s personal bodyguards, and he immediately said, “Yes, your Majesty.” He quickly pulled open the curtain-door, letting in a blast of that frigid air.

But neither Ransome nor Clayde felt the cold in the slightest, despite the fact that Clayde was just wearing a jacket over some undergarments, while Ransome was wearing the traditional uniform of a palace servant.

“This Linley actually managed to damage his vitals due to over-training battle-qi. Jeeze.” Clayde couldn’t help but laugh while sighing.

Ransome said in a low voice, “That Lord Linley is still very young, yet he still has such accomplishments. No matter how talented a person is, one still needs to train hard. For a warrior to be able to injure himself internally due to over-training battle-qi shows to what extent he goes to when he trains.”

The limits to a person’s body’s endurance might perhaps be very high.

But each time one tried to stimulate one’s potential, one couldn’t go too far. Although it was true that hard work was beneficial to a warrior in training, one couldn’t go overboard either. The body wouldn’t be able to handle it.

“Right. This Linley’s future accomplishments will be unimaginable.” Clayde nodded as well.

Seeing the look on Clayde’s face, Ransome sighed secretly.

As Clayde’s personal bodyguard, naturally he had a deep understanding of his master. With the forceful personality that Clayde had, it was very rare for Clayde to be so courteous to someone. But towards Linley, Clayde had never stopped being courteous for a single moment.

“It’s a pity that, in that year, his Majesty…alas. His Majesty knows that he has no hope of entering the Saint-level, which is why he views Linley with such importance.” Ransome knew Clayde’s secret.

Although Clayde was a warrior of the ninth rank, Ransome knew…that unless the Radiant Sovereign was to bestow his divine power upon Clayde, Clayde would never be able to reach the Saint-rank, no matter what.

“Your Majesty, we have arrived at Lord Linley’s manor.” Ransome said softly.

Through the open door, the gate to Linley’s manor could be seen quite clearly. At this moment, there were two powerfully built warriors standing guard outside the gate. These two warriors were elite members of ace divisions of the Knights of the Radiant Church.

“Crunch.” The carriage came to a halt.

Ransome was the first to leave the carriage, then respectfully waited for Clayde to step out as well.

“Your Majesty!” Those two guards bowed respectfully.

“Oh, someone arrived before me?” Clayde noticed that there was another luxurious carriage stationed outside, along with a group of Knights of the Radiant Temple standing outside.

“Right. Lord Guillermo has already arrived.” One of the two warriors guarding the gate said respectfully.

“Lord Guillermo has arrived? That’s fine.” Clayde glanced back at his own squad. “All of you stay here. Ransome, come with me.” After issuing these orders, Clayde made his way through the gate, his personal bodyguard behind him.

……

Right now, Linley was still engaged in conversation with Guillermo. Neither of them knew that Clayde had already reached the gate.

“This Guillermo still isn’t leaving?” Linley was beginning to grow impatient.

If Guillermo intended to keep on chatting with him like this, who knew how much longer this would go on for? The longer this went on, the more complicated things would get. Growing anxious, Linley suddenly put a hand to his mouth.

“Cough. Cough!” Linley let out a few coughs, coughing so hard that his white face turned red.

“Linley.” Guillermo was very surprised.

He didn’t imagine that Linley’s injury would be as severe as this.

“Linley, you must properly use this medicine I have brought you. They have the effect of assisting the body in healing its internal organs.” Guillermo hurriedly said. “Your body isn’t in good shape right now. Get some rest. I won’t disturb your rest any further.” Guillermo stood up.

After coughing, Linley’s ashen face was even paler than before, without a hint of blood.

“Lord Guillermo, my sincere apologies.” Linley said apologetically.

“It’s fine. Get some rest. Your body is what’s important.” Guillermo reminded him yet again, before leaving the room along with his Vicars.

Just as Clayde and Ransome walked through the gate to Linley’s manor, they heard a voice call out from behind them.

“Your Majesty. Your Majesty.”

Clayde turned around questioningly, only to see Merritt quickly jump out from a carriage. “Your Majesty.”

“Merritt, you came as well?” Clayde chuckled, coming to a stop as he looked at Merrit.

Merritt ran to Clayde. Respectfully, he said, “Lord Linley’s been injured. How could I not come? Your Majesty, how could you go inside with just Ransome? It isn’t safe!” Merritt hurriedly said.

When a ruler paid a visit to one of his subject’s, usually he would bring all of his guards directly inside as well.

The first reason was to protect the safety of the ruler. The second was to display the ruler’s authority and power.

“No need. I’m just checking up on Linley. No need to raise the flag high and all that.” Clayde chuckled. “Much less, within the city of Fenlai, who is capable of posing a threat to me, hrm?”

Clayde’s self-confidence wasn’t without merit.

First of all, Clayde wasn’t worried about most combatants of the ninth rank. The only type of person which Clayde truly feared was a Saint-level combatant, but would a Saint-level combatant come to assassinate him, a king? What’s more, this was Fenlai City, the Holy Capital of the Radiant Church!

Who would dare to act rashly within the confines of the Radiant Church's headquarters?

"Right, right. Your servant was being too cautious." Merritt hurriedly said.

"Let's go. We can go inside together." Clayde entered along with Merritt and Ransome.

"Your Majesty, Linley is currently recuperating within the private courtyard in the east wing. Allow me to guide the way." Escorted by the pretty attendant, Clayde, Merritt, and Ransome began to head towards Linley's resting area. But halfway there…

Clayde and the other two saw Guillermo and his two Vicars.

"Lord Guillermo." Clayde, Merritt, and Ransome simultaneously paid their respects.

"Clayde, you came as well." Guillermo nodded. "This internal injury of Linley's seems to be a heavy one. Just now, he was coughing. When you go to see him, don't waste too much time. Just see how he is doing, then allow him to rest."

"Understood." Clayde nodded.

"Then I'll leave now." Guillermo nodded as well, then led his two Vicars out and left.

Clayde went with Merritt and Ransome to Linley's chambers.

Guillermo's departure allowed Linley to let out a sigh of relief. But before he had a chance to take a breather, a female attendant came running in to make a report.

"Lord Linley. His Majesty and the Right Premier have arrived." The female attendant hurriedly reported.

“He’s here?”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

“I’ve waited so long. He finally came.” Linley couldn’t repress the excitement in his heart. “You can go now.” Linley immediately ordered the attendant to leave, and then he calmly stood up, quietly awaiting Clayde’s arrival.

Just a few seconds later, Linley heard the sound of footsteps.

“Linley.” Clayde’s voice rang out as soon as he entered the room. In three quick steps, he arrived by Linley’s side. In a very caring voice, he said, “Linley, your face looks terrible. Quick, sit down and rest. Have a good rest.”

Linley was pressed down to his seat by Clayde.

“Lord Linley.” Merritt was very courteous to Linley as well.

“Thank you, your Majesty. Thank you, Lord Merritt.” Linley said with a rather weak voice.

But the excitement in Linley’s heart was beginning to swell. In the past, after learning of his father’s death, Linley had instructed Hillman to take his clan’s heirloom, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, to the O’Brien Empire. At that time, he had already made up his mind that the risk of death would not be enough to sway his decision to gain revenge.

Father. Mother!

His father’s death was linked to Clayde as well. If it hadn’t been for Clayde ordering Patterson to abduct his mother, how would his father have died in an attempt to gain revenge? And of course, his mother’s disappearance was Clayde’s doing.

“Your Majesty. I’m fine. I’ve just suffered some internal injuries, and won’t

be able to train battle-qi for a while. I can still carry out my normal, day-to-day activities." Linley said with a smile.

"That's good. That's good." Clayde revealed a hint of a smile as well.

"Lord Merritt, you came as well." Linley suddenly 'remembered' something, and exclaimed happily, "Right! I haven't had the chance to drink the flagon of fine wine that you gifted to me last time, Lord Merritt. Since both you and his Majesty have arrived today, let's have a little drink."

As he spoke, Linley headed to the liquor cabinet next to him.

"No need. Linley, you've been injured. You can't drink any alcohol." Clayde advised him.

"It's fine. My wound is just a light one. And a little bit of wine is good to get one's veins active." As he spoke, Linley plucked out four wineglasses, along with a bottle of red wine. "Ransome, you should sit as well. At my home, there's no need to stand on so much ceremony."

Linley knew a great deal about Ransome.

As Clayde's personal bodyguard, he was an extremely powerful person as well. Although Linley couldn't clearly determine his power, Linley was certain that he was at least a combatant of the seventh rank, or perhaps even of the eighth rank.

"No need. I don't drink alcohol." Ransome shook his head in refusal.

As his Majesty's personal attendant, he had to maintain his wakefulness at all times.

"Linley, Ransome never drinks alcohol. No need to invite him to drink." Clayde shook his head towards Linley. "Linley, when Lord Guillermo saw me just now, he said you were coughing hard. He wanted you to have a good rest. It's best that we don't drink."

Not drink?

Nobody but Linley knew this, but the Bloodrupture poison had already been mixed in with this wine. If Clayde didn't drink, how would he be poisoned?

"No worries. Lord Guillermo is overly concerned about my welfare." Smiling, Linley poured everyone a glass of wine. "Your Majesty. This wine is exceptionally delightful. Lord Merritt, come. Let's all have a toast." Linley raised his own glass.

Clayde and Merritt had no choice but to raise their glasses as well.

A light ringing sound as their cups touched. And then Clayde, Merritt, and Linley each drank the wine.

"Paaah!"

Linley suddenly began to cough violently again, spitting out all the wine from his mouth. The coughing Linley's face turned a sickly red color again.

"Linley, I told you not to drink wine. You just had to drink." Clayde said in dissatisfaction. He hurriedly went over to help Linley.

"I'm fine." Linley smiled and reached out to stop Clayde.

Suddenly. Linley stared at Clayde. In a solemn voice, he said, "Your Majesty. There is a very important matter which I would like to discuss with you, your Majesty."

"A very important matter?" Seeing the expression on Linley's face, Clayde felt confused.

Chapter 28 – Mother's Life or Death

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 28, Mother's Life or Death

Linley cautiously glanced about the room, saying in a low voice, "Your Majesty, just a moment. Let me order out the people who are outside." As he spoke, Linley walked out the door, then barked at the two guards outside. "Both of you, stand down. Without my direct orders, do not permit anyone to enter this courtyard."

"Yes, Lord Linley."

Those two guards saluted respectfully, then left. Now, the only ones left in this standalone courtyard were Linley, Clayde, Merritt, and Ransome.

"Creaaak." Linley quietly shut the door.

"Linley, what sort of secret is this, that you even close the door?" Clayde chuckled.

Linley glanced at Clayde, laughing coldly in his heart. He himself knew that Clayde had already been poisoned by the Bloodrupture poison. As the Bloodrupture poison didn't actually cause any damage to the body, just prevent the generation of battle-qi, it was only after a person attempted to generate battle-qi that they would discover that they had been poisoned.

"This affair really is quite important." Linley's face was solemn.

At this time, Ransome subtly moved closer towards Clayde. As the personal bodyguard of the king, Ransome was beginning to feel that this environment was vaguely dangerous. At the same time, Ransome also felt that as Clayde was a warrior of the ninth rank, and he Ransome was a warrior of the eighth rank, by all rights, nobody here should be capable of being a threat to them.

But one could never be too careful.

“Your Majesty.” Linley stared solemnly at Clayde. “My mother left this world when I was young.”

Clayde nodded. He had investigated Linley’s background, and had discovered that Linley’s mother had died in childbirth, while giving birth to Linley’s younger brother, Wharton.

“I have no memories of receiving motherly love, only of the strictness of my father. My father was quite severe towards me in terms of both warrior training as well as all the education which nobles were expected to have. My father’s requirements for me were very high and very strict.”

Linley looked at Clayde as he spoke slowly.

Clayde was beginning to be confused. He didn’t understand what any of this had to do with the so-called ‘important matter’ which Linley had mentioned. But as the ruler of the kingdom, Clayde showed a kingly poise and didn’t interrupt.

“Your Majesty, I expect that you know that my clan, the Baruch clan, is also the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors.” A slightly proud look was on Linley’s face.

“That’s right. One of the Four Supreme Warrior clans, the Dragonblood Warrior clan. This is an illustrious, ancient lineage.” Clayde sighed with praise.

Linley shook his head. “We were only illustrious in the past. My clan had fallen so far that even our ancestral heirloom had been lost for hundreds of years. Each and every generation of Baruch clan leaders had desired to seize back this heirloom for centuries, but this never occurred. Your Majesty, when I was accepted by the Ernst Institute and left home, do you know what my father said to me the day I left?”

“What did he say?” Clayde looked at Linley.

“My father said, if in the future I do not bring back the ancestral heirloom of our clan, even in his death, he wouldn’t forgive me!” Linley’s body was trembling slightly.

Clayde, Merritt, and even Ransome all stared in amazement. A father could actually say such a thing to his son? “Your father went a bit too far.” Clayde said.

“No.”

Linley shook his head solemnly. “I understand my father’s desire. My Dragonblood Warrior clan had been downtrodden for centuries, without a single truly powerful person appearing in all that time. My father understood that I would be the strongest person my clan had produced in centuries. Hundreds of years of hopes and desires all rested on my shoulders. Tell me, how could my father permit me to be a failure?” Clayde began to understand.

“My father’s lifelong desire was to bring the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ back to the clan.” Linley’s voice was growing fierce. “At the Ernst Institute, I didn’t dare to slacken off in the slightest. I trained like mad. I always remembered my father’s wish, my father’s instructions!”

Clayde and the others were beginning to understand Linley’s motivations.

“Half a year ago, after I auctioned off ‘Awakening From the Dream’, I went back home, and that time, I brought the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ with me.” Linley’s voice rose to a higher timbre.

Clayde, Ransome, and Merritt were stunned.

Because they all knew that on that trip, Linley had found that his father had already passed away.

“But when I excitedly returned home, I was welcomed by the news of my father’s death. Before he died, he didn’t have a chance to see the warblade,

and I didn't have a chance to see my father one last time either. All those years of hard work, my dream of making my father happy… unfortunately…" All the muscles on Linley's face were twitching, and the expression on his face was terrifying to behold.

Clayde and the others could all understand how Linley was feeling.

"Linley, don't be too heartbroken," Clayde sighed.

Linley sneered. "But, do you know why or how my father died?"

Clayde, Merritt, and Ransome were all startled.

"My father was killed, your Majesty, by your younger brother, Duke Patterson!!!!" Linley's eyes began to turn red.

"What?!" Clayde rose to his feet in shock. By his side, Merritt and Ransome were both stunned as well.

"Therefore…I killed Patterson!" Linley's voice was very sinister.

At this point in time, Ransome was the first to feel that something was very wrong in this room. He vigilantly inched closer to Clayde, guarding against Linley's actions. But suddenly, just at this moment, Ransome felt a gust of wind from behind. Ransome, a warrior of the eighth rank, knew that he wouldn't have time to turn his head, and so his only choice was to swing his arm behind him in defense.

"Crunch!"

An incredibly painful feeling…and then, Ransome could no longer feel his arm's existence. Only now did Ransome notice, from the corner of his eyes….

A rat-like magical beast, nearly half a meter long, was standing beside him. Aside from noticing the rat's blood-covered maw, Ransome also noticed its sharp claws moving extremely fast towards him. At such a close distance,

Ransome didn’t have any chance of dodging at all.

It was too fast!

“Snick.”

The sharp claws split apart Ransome’s throat. Ransome stared in astonishment, but gradually, the life faded away from his eyes.

He simply couldn’t understand where this half-meter long rodent-type magical beast had come from. The first thing he had done when he had entered the room was to scan it carefully. He only noticed a small Shadowmouse on the ground which was the size of a man’s palm.

Could a palm-sized Shadowmouse pose a threat?

To a warrior of the eighth rank, not at all. Ransome thus wasn’t on his guard against it at all.

And thus, being caught totally off-guard, this warrior of the eighth rank, Ransome, was easily killed by the Shadowmouse, Bebe. In truth, his death wasn’t too unjust. Given Bebe’s current power, even if Ransome had been able to fight him openly and fairly, he still probably wouldn’t have been able to hold on for too long.

“Ransome.” Clayde and Merritt were both shocked.

A stately warrior of the eighth rank died in one action. The two of them stared in shock at that Shadowmouse. Before their very eyes, Bebe’s body shrank down, returning to a fist-sized state, then leaping back onto Linley’s shoulders.

“Bebe. Well done.” Linley rubbed Bebe’s little head.

Bebe closed his eyes, luxuriating in the feeling.

Linley turned his head to once more stare at Clayde. That cold look in his

eyes made Clayde feel very uneasy.

“Linley, what do you think you are doing?” Clayde barked coldly. At the same time, he began to activate the battle-qi in his body. But at that moment, Clayde suddenly felt that those wide open blood vessels in his body had suddenly been stopped up by something.

Based on the dense battle-qi which Clayde possessed as a warrior of the ninth rank, in the past the flow of his battle-qi was as powerful and forceful as the crushing waves of the sea. But now, he was only able to forcibly activate a tiny amount of battle-qi, and sometimes the flow would break entirely. Right now, the amount of battle-qi available to Clayde was perhaps only one percent of what was normally available to him.

“Your Majesty, don’t shout and don’t resist. If you resist, you die.” Linley said calmly.

Clayde instantly realized what sort of situation he was now in.

Right now, just based on his muscle power, he could perhaps compete against a warrior of the seventh rank. But that little Shadowmouse on Linley’s shoulders was capable of killing even a warrior of the eighth rank like Ransome in a flash.

Clayde didn’t doubt in the slightest that Linley and his little Shadowmouse had the power to kill him in an instant.

“Linley, how dare you! You dare to attempt to assassinate his Majesty?” Terrified out of his mind, Merritt shouted.

“Shut your mouth.” Linley cast a frozen glance at Merritt.

Merritt’s muscle strength wasn’t that powerful. Now that he was virtually totally unable to activate his battle-qi, he could perhaps be comparable at most to a normal warrior of the fourth rank.

Merritt quickly understood the situation as well. Not daring to shout at

Linley, he still tried to persuade him. “Linley, you have a great future and lots of potential. In the future, you’ll be a high-level official within the Radiant Church, and perhaps one day you’ll even be the next Holy Emperor. Why must you destroy your future prospects? Linley, I trust that his Majesty won’t blame you for having killed Patterson. He brought calamity upon himself when he acted against your father.” As he spoke, Merritt glanced at Clayde.

Clayde nodded as well. “Linley, I am willing to pretend that nothing happened today. As for Patterson, he’s already dead.”

“Linley, his Majesty has already spoken. Don’t act too rashly.” Merritt hurriedly said.

“Shut your mouth!” Linley suddenly stretched his arm out.

Like iron claws, Linley’s right hand stretched out and grabbed Merritt by the throat, suddenly raising him up in the air.

“Ah! Ah! Ah!” Merritt stared at Linley, terrified, gurgling out his pleas.

“Linley.” Clayde immediately called out.

But with a cold laugh, Linley flexed his fingers, and then let his hand relax.

“Crunch!” With a snapping sound, Merritt fell to the floor. He grabbed his throat, just barely managing to force out an ‘ah’ ‘ah’ sound. In the moments just before his death, he still couldn’t believe what had happened. He had come to visit today alongside King Clayde, and yet, this was the result.

As he died, Merritt’s life began to flash before his eyes. The last thing he thought of…was a woman.

“If I had known that I would die in Linley’s hands, then…that day…I shouldn’t have let Alice slip through my fingers.” This was the last thought Merritt ever had.

Linley was smiling coldly at Clayde.

“Linley, why are you acting against me? I seem to have treated you quite well.” Clayde looked at Linley, but at this moment, Clayde was hoping to himself: “Snow Lion, bring someone, quick, quick!” As a warrior of the ninth rank, Clayde had a magical beast companion of his own.

The Snow Lion was a Glacial Snow Lion, an eighth-ranked magical beast who came from the far north. Generally speaking, it would remain in the palace.

Because of the soul-binding contract which bound them, the minds of the Snow Lion and Clayde were linked. Thus, the Snow Lion immediately knew that Clayde had been a victim of an ambush. Clayde knew very well that right now…his priority was to delay, delay as long as he could!

“True, you have treated me well! But what about my mother?” Linley stared death at Clayde.

If it hadn’t been for the fact that in the past, Clayde had ordered the abduction of Linley’s mother, Linley’s father would still be alive, and his mother would be at home as well. His parents would still be alive! But because of Clayde’s actions, he had lost both parents.

“Mother? Didn’t your mother die in childbirth?” Clayde didn’t understand.

“Die in childbirth?” Linley laughed loudly, his voice wild. And then he stared coldly at Clayde. “That was just a cover story that we made up. Clayde, after my mother gave birth to my little brother, my father and her went to the Radiant Temple to pray. But that night, upon returning to their hotel, they were attacked and my mother was captured.”

“Clayde, could it be that you have forgotten that twelve years ago, you ordered Patterson to have kidnappers abduct my mother?” Linley stared coldly at Clayde. “Don’t deny it. Patterson has already told me everything.”

“That…that was your mother?!” Clayde was totally shocked.

“What, you remember now?” Linley’s eyes were boiling with fury. “Tell me. What happened to my mother? Tell me, is she alive, or is she dead?”

Clayde said calmly, “Your mother, I handed over to another person. You can’t afford to offend that person. Neither can I.”

“Another person?” Linley totally didn’t understand.

But at the same time, Linley felt a thread of hope in his heart. A person that even Clayde couldn’t afford to offend had abducted his mother. There had to be an important reason behind it. Perhaps…his mother was still alive.

Clayde laughed coldly. “But I can tell you one thing. Your mother is dead. Without question, she is dead!”

“No…” Linley stared.

“You don’t believe me?” Despite the situation he was in, Clayde began to laugh.

Chapter 29 – Kill However Many Come!

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 29, Kill However Many Come!

Within the palace.

The Glacial Snow Lion which Clayde had tamed had ten or so servants dedicated solely to his maintenance. After having tended him for so long, the Glacial Snow Lion's attendants could already guess what the Glacial Snow Lion was saying when it roared.

"Where's the Snow Lion?" A white-robed male palace attendant said in a high-pitched voice.

"Milord, the Snow Lion is currently asleep." One of the Glacial Snow Lion's attendants said respectfully.

"Mm." The palace attendant nodded arrogantly.

"Roar! Roar!" Suddenly, a series of ferocious roars could be heard. The roars sounded frantic and worried.

Hearing the sound, the face of the attendant responsible for tending the Glacial Snow Lion instantly changed. The white-robed palace attendant was even more worried. He asked, "What's going on? What's wrong with the Snow Lion?"

Roaring furiously, the Snow Lion quickly charged forwards to them.

"His Majesty, his Majesty is in danger!" The servant charged with tending the Snow Lion was frantic. "Quick! Ten years ago, this happened once as well. His Majesty must be in grave danger! Quick, quick, go protect his Majesty! Milord, where is his Majesty right now?"

The expression on the face of the white-robed palace attendant changed as

well. “His Majesty, his Majesty left the palace. Right. He went to Lord Linley’s manor.”

“Quick, quick, go protect his Majesty!” The attendant bellowed.

At the same time, the attendant directly leapt onto the Snow Lion’s back. After having spent every day feeding the Snow Lion, the creature held very little animosity towards him and was willing to let him ride atop itself. Just at this moment, five shadows suddenly flew over as well. These were five of the top experts of the palace.

“Snow Lion, is his Majesty in danger?” A golden-haired middle-aged man barked out to the Glacial Snow Lion.

The Snow Lion continued to bellow while nodding at the same time.

“Quick, to Lord Linley’s manor. His Majesty is there.” A jade-haired expert quickly said.

“Fourth Bro, you go find Lord Kaiser [Kai’sa].” The golden-haired middle-aged man shouted.

Lord Kaiser was the leader of these experts, and one of the most powerful combatants of the Kingdom of Fenlai. There were only a total of two combatants of the ninth level who had pledged loyalty to the Kingdom of Fenlai, with one being King Clayde himself, and the other being this Lord Kaiser.

Because of Lord Kaiser’s high status, there was no need for him to live long-term in the palace.

“Yes, Second Bro! You go protect his Majesty. I’ll find Lord Kaiser.” The jade-haired man immediately sped off.

“Snow Lion, let’s go.”

The four of them immediately sped off with the Snow Lion in the direction

of Linley's manor.

Within Linley's manor. Right now, within Linley's 'recuperation' courtyard, aside from two corpses, only Linley and Clayde were present.

"No…how do you know that my mother is dead? Didn't you say you gave my mother to another person, a person even you dared not offend? I don't believe that a person like that would abduct my mother just for the purpose of killing her." Linley refused to believe it.

His father was already dead. Linley didn't want for his mother to be dead as well.

Deep in his heart, Linley thirsted for his family to be alive!

"Haha…" Clayde began to laugh while looking at Linley with pity in his eyes. "Linley, I can tell you clearly, right now, that person didn't instruct me to abduct your mother for him. I did it on my own initiative, abducting your mother, then gifting her to him. Because I knew…he really needed women like her."

"And I also know very well that in the past, this lord had acquired quite a few women like your mother. And all of them, without exception. Perished." A hint of mad laughter was in Clayde's eyes.

Linley seemed to have been hit by a bolt of lightning. His body swayed.

"Without exception?" Linley stared at Clayde.

Clayde looked at Linley with pity in his eyes. "Linley, you should've had an extremely resplendent future. But you insisted on choosing this path. Since you've already chosen this path, your future has now been determined as well."

"Haha…..hahahahahahahaha!" Linley suddenly began to laugh loudly, all of the muscles on his face twitching.

Linley stared at Clayde with eyes like death. “Clayde. It was you. You were the one who harmed my mother, and in the end caused my father to die. If it wasn’t for you, I probably would be enjoying a wonderful life with my parents right now. It was you. It was all you. It was you who ruined–”

Linley’s hand stretched out, grabbing a straight chisel by his side.

“What are you planning to do?” Clayde stared at Linley with his tiger-like eyes.

“What am I going to do?” Linley stared at the straight chisel in his hands. “In the past, I always engaged in stone sculpting. But today…I want to try flesh sculpting.” Linley’s eyes had already begun to turn a dark, gold color, just like those eyes of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. Heartless. Cold!

Within the Coiling Dragon ring, Doehring Cowart continued to maintain his silence.

Having watched Linley grow up, Doehring Cowart understood Linley very well.

Linley deeply valued his family and his bros. For the sake of his family and his bros, Linley wouldn’t fear death. Right now, the man responsible for the deaths of his mother and father were right in front of him. It was impossible for Linley to remain calm at a time like this.

“Flesh sculpting?” Clayde was startled. Linley’s gaze was fierce, and he carefully inspected Clayde’s entire body. “Don’t worry. You have such a strong, powerful body. I am confident that I will be able to slice you a thousand times before I let you die, as a woman.” Linley’s voice was freezing cold, and the murderous aura rolled from him in waves.

“You!” Clayde’s face turned icy cold as well, and he viciously snarled, “Linley, I will definitely kill you and let you reunite with your two unfortunate parents.”

“Reunite?”

Thinking of his parents, Linley's urge to kill grew only stronger.

"Have a taste of my straight chisel technique." Linley's face appeared to be covered by a layer of frost. With a wave of his hand, he sent the straight chisel directly towards Clayde's waist. But once the straight chisel got within ten centimeters or so of Clayde, it was suddenly impeded by a strange force.

A translucent sigil suddenly appeared in mid-air, easily blocking Linley's chisel. "What is this?" Linley was totally shocked.

"I told you. I will definitely kill you." Clayde stood up, looking at Linley arrogantly. His powerful body made him look like an enraged lion.

"Impossible."

Linley's body erupted with Dragonblood battle-qi, and the straight chisel in his hands chopped viciously towards Clayde's body.

"Swish! Swish!" Seven chops in a row, all aimed at a different part of Clayde's body. But no matter where he chopped, his chisel would be blocked by that translucent pattern at around ten centimeters away from Clayde's body.

"You don't have the ability to kill me." Clayde said arrogantly.

"Raaaargh!" On Linley's shoulders, Bebe's mouth suddenly widened and expanded as he viciously bit down at Clayde. Facing Bebe's bite attack, Clayde didn't seem afraid in the slightest. Perhaps he was simply too confident in the power of this defense, as he didn't even try to dodge.

When Bebe's fangs crunched down against that translucent defense, the translucent barrier suddenly glowed with the seven colors of the rainbow for a moment, and then the colors vanished.

"Hrm?"

The expression on Clayde's face changed. "What a powerful attack." Clayde didn't dare to let Bebe bite him again, and he quickly charged towards the outside.

"Boss, attack him, attack him! That defensive barrier on his body isn't innate to him. It must be some sort of magical spell from a scroll or something. There's got to be a limit to how much it can take! Your attacks will whittle away its energy, and once the energy is gone, he will definitely die!" Bebe frantically urged Linley.

Linley immediately understood this logic.

"You want to escape?!"

Linley's skin suddenly began to be covered by black scales, and those sharp spikes began to jut out from his elbows and kneecaps. A long, iron-whip-like tail sprouted from behind him, and on Linley's back, a row of spikes erupted from his spine.

Dragonform. Total Dragonform!

Even in his normal state, Linley was already a warrior of the seventh rank. After Dragonform, he was an early-stage warrior of the ninth rank.

"Swish!" Linley kicked off from the ground, and as he did, the marble beneath his feet cracked. Transforming into a blur, Linley charged directly at Clayde. Right now, Clayde was only able to rely on that comparatively pitifully small amount of muscle power to run, and thus couldn't move at high speed.

Linley's powerful, scale-covered right arm swept its claws ferociously at Clayde.

"Whap!" A terrifyingly powerful force smashed against Clayde's defensive barrier. Although this barrier was able to protect Clayde, it would still be impacted by the momentum of the force. It was as though Clayde was

inside an incredibly sturdy carriage. When others attacked the carriage, although Clayde wouldn't be harmed, the carriage would be sent flying in a certain direction. Naturally, Clayde would be sent flying as well.

This was exactly that sort of situation.

Clayde's body was sent flying forward, then smashed directly into wooden screen. The wooden screen totally disintegrated from the power of this blow, but Clayde wasn't harmed at all. He rolled to his feet.

"Dragonblood Warrior. You actually can transform into a Dragonblood Warrior." Seeing Linley having truly Dragonformed, Clayde was totally stunned.

Before, Linley's strength wasn't that impressive. But after having taken on the Dragonform, he actually possessed the power of a warrior of the ninth rank. The fame of the Supreme Warriors really wasn't hollow.

"I can't let this continue. Otherwise, this Fateguard is going to collapse." The thing which Clayde counted on the most was this Fateguard. In the past, the Holy Emperor himself had bequeathed it to Clayde. This Fateguard came from one of the finest defensive magical scrolls in existence, and was powerful enough to allow Clayde to withstand a single blow from a Saint-level combatant!

Capable of blocking a full-power attack from a Saint-level combatant. As for a ninth-rank combatant, it could take dozens of blows before shattering.

"Clayde, I refuse to believe that the energy of your magical armor is endless and infinite." The totally Dragonformed Linley walked towards Clayde, step by step.

Seeing Linley with spikes jutting from his back, his entire body covered in scales, and in particular with that long, whip-like tail, Clayde felt he had encountered a human-shaped magical beast. In the past, he wouldn't have been the slightest bit afraid, but right now, he had less than a tenth of his usual power!

“Whoosh!” Clayde suddenly scurried forward, flying towards a window.

“Swish!”

Linley’s draconic tail swept over viciously. Despite moving later, it arrived first, landing directly on Clayde’s body. Clayde’s body was sent flying, smashing viciously at a corner of the window. Breaking through the window, Clayde’s body was sent rolling into courtyard. With a leap, Linley flew out as well, the ground beneath his feet splintering from his jump.

“You still want to escape?”

Linley’s Dragonformed claws and legs all ferociously attacked Clayde, while at the same time, Bebe continuously bit and scratched at Clayde, trying to whittle away the energy in his defensive barrier as quickly as possible.

Relying on his significant combat experience, as well as his natural strength as a warrior of the seventh rank, as well as the defensive power of the Fateguard, Clayde did his best to dodge Linley’s blows and delay as long as he could.

“Protect his Majesty! Protect his Majesty!”

“Roaaar!”

From outside, the sounds of many people shouting could be heard, as well as the roar of a magical beast.

“Linley, today, you are doomed to die.” Clayde was exultant. By now, he could sense that his Fateguard had only expended half of its energy. It had more than enough to continue to block Linley’s attacks. Linley’s gaze grew even colder.

“If one comes, I’ll kill one. If two come, I’ll kill a pair. I will kill however many come!” Linley’s killing intent had boiled to a crescendo.

“Whap!” Linley’s draconic tail smashed viciously down on Clayde, sending him flying into the courtyard’s wall, which immediately began to crack. At the same time, the sharp claws of a black blur fiercely swiped down at Clayde’s body, smashing Clayde hard against the ground yet again.

“Crash!”

The closed gate to the courtyard suddenly split open, sending its shattered shards flying everywhere. A five meter long, three meter tall lion with a body of pure white fur charged inside. From its mouth, it spat out hundreds of javelin-sized jade-blue spikes, while behind it, a group of palace experts charged in as well!

Chapter 30 – Even if I Die – I'll Kill You!

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 30, Even if I Die, I'll Kill You!

The group of warriors who had charged in behind the Glacial Snow Lion were all shocked upon seeing the scene within the courtyard.

"What is this monster?"

The creature within the courtyard was covered in black scales, a back covered with a row of sharp spikes that gleamed with a cold, golden light, and an iron-whip-like draconic tail that swung back and forth. In particular, when this monster stared at them, they noticed its strange, dark golden eyes.

These dark golden eyes were filled with heartlessness, coldness, and murder!

"Graaaaaawr!" Not afraid in the slightest, the Glacial Snow Lion was the first to charge forward at the monster.

The Glacial Snow Lion spat a mass of jade-blue javelins from its mouth, but the monster didn't dodge at all, allowing them to strike against his scales. With a thunderous clatter, the air was rent by the sound of the collision. The attack hadn't harmed the monster at all!

"F*ck off!" A gutteral, furious voice rang out from the mouth of the monster.

Its right leg suddenly transformed into a cylindrical blur and viciously smashed against the Glacial Snow Lion's body. The Glacial Snow Lion was actually kicked away! This was a magical beast of the eighth rank, but it was sent flying away by a single kick.

But how could these guards know that having fully Dragonformed, Linley had stepped into the domain of a combatant of the ninth rank!

“Kill him, kill him!” Clayde howled loudly with rage.

Only now did those experts, who had been stunned by this scene, recover. Immediately, all of them let out angry cries as they drew their weapons and charged towards Linley. At the same time, the magical beast companions belonging to these experts also began to charge at Linley.

Magical beast, Frostwolf. Magical beast, Gorehorse. Magical beast, Mastodon. Magical beast, Bluewind Warbird.

One magical beast after another charged at Linley from the air or from the ground. Linley was like a whirlpool, attracting all of the nearby warriors and magical beasts to attack him. This sort of large-scale focused attack was truly very terrifying.

Linley’s death-promising gaze was locked onto Clayde. Bebe continued to attack Clayde nonstop, reducing the energy remaining in Clayde’s Fateguard.

“Clayde, today, I must kill you.” Linley didn’t care about the surrounding warriors in the slightest. Right now, the strongest person present was a warrior of the eighth rank. Although in his Dragonform, Linley was still just an early-stage ninth rank warrior, Linley had inherited one of the strongest traits of the Armored Razorback Wyrm; an incredibly terrifying defense!

The attack of a warrior of the eighth rank, when landing on Linley’s black scales, couldn’t hurt Linley in the slightest.

The only large-sized man among them, a two-meter tall, massively muscled man with a waist like a bear swung a massive battleaxe at Linley. On top of the battleaxe was a layer of blazing red light, causing even the temperature of the air itself to rise.

“F*ck off!”

Linley didn’t dodge at all. Balling his fierce claws into a fist, he punched at

the axe with astonishing speed, splitting the air with the force of his punch.

“Bam!”

That massive, sturdy battleaxe was directly smashed into smithereens. Linley’s fist didn’t slow down in the slightest as it pierced through the warrior’s chest. And even as his fist penetrated the man’s chest, Linley’s other hand came piercing in as well…

With a powerful tug from both arms, Linley ripped the warrior into two halves from within. Blood splattered all over Linley’s scales, making Linley look all the more like a demon come from the pits of hell.

“Second Bro!”

The other three warriors screamed with rage. The one whom Linley had killed was one of those four warriors of the eighth rank. The eyes of the three remaining warrior turned red, and alongside their magical beasts, they all charged towards Linley.

“Whap!” Linley’s draconic tail suddenly swept at them from the side.

One of the warriors who had intended to ambush Linley from behind, a tall, skinny, golden-haired man, was struck on the head by the tail. His head shattered, spraying blood everywhere.

“He’s a demon, a demon! Everyone, kill him!” Terrified by Linley’s display of might, everyone began to scream and attack.

More and more people were pouring in from the more distant courtyards, and even some of the guards that had been originally stationed to protect Linley came charging in to attack Linley as well. Because black scales covered Linley’s entire body, even his face, nobody knew…that this monster was Linley!

In everyone’s minds, this was a terrifying demon!

Kill it!

“Your Majesty, hurry and flee!” Two warriors of the eighth rank leapt over to Clayde’s side. But just as they finished speaking, a black shadow charged towards them. These two warriors had extremely fast reaction times though, and with a tremble, their bodies became blurs as well.

“Ah!”

A chunk of flesh from one of the warrior’s shoulders was bitten off, and that black shadow continued to attack that warrior. Relying on fierce claws and sharp teeth, in a very short period of time, over ten pieces of flesh were bitten off that warrior, and blood flowed from everywhere on his body.

Having lost too much blood and too much flesh, the warrior began to stagger and stumble.

“Crunch!”

A sharp paw directly slapped onto his skull, crushing it and killing him on the spot.

“Bebe, focus your attacks on Clayde!” Linley’s voice rang out in Bebe’s mind.

“Got it, Boss!”

“Whoosh!” Clayde had seized this opportunity to jump out the courtyard.

“Shiiiiirk!” Bebe’s high-pitched screech once more split the air. Transforming into a black blur, Bebe smashed directly into the wall at high speed. The already-cracked wall instantly split apart, and Bebe charged straight through, attacking Clayde frantically.

“Kill this demon! Everyone, kill him!” Clayde commanded in a loud voice.

“Your Majesty!”

The people in Linley's courtyard were growing greater and greater in number, and thousands of soldiers from the palace had come charging in to protect the king as well. Many nobles as well, having noticed the commotion, immediately ordered their people to protect his Majesty. The number of people in Linley's manor could already be described with the phrase, 'an ocean of people'.

People were everywhere!

"For honor!"

"For honor!"

A squad of Knights of the Radiant Church immediately rushed in front of Clayde, and all of them simultaneously attacked that lightning-fast black blur. For the sake of protecting his Majesty, a large number of soldiers were willing to ignore their own safety.

"Shkreeeee!"

Bebe's high-pitched screech once more split the air, and his speed suddenly increased even further. Bebe's strange blurred body, sharp claws, fierce fangs, and astonishing speed had transformed into the emissary of the god of death, and one warrior after another collapsed.

Bebe directly burrowed through some of their chests. Others were decapitated, their heads sent flying. The skulls of others were shattered…

Circling around and around, Bebe continued to attack Clayde. Clayde could clearly feel that the energy around his body was continuing to diminish.

"This pet of Linley's is too terrifying." Only now did Clayde totally understand how much power Linley had.

Right now, Linley had been totally surrounded and pinned down by an ocean of warriors. He was powerful, true. But under the mass attack of a

huge number of magical beasts and warriors, even if he was able to kill a person in a single blow, he would still need to take a long time.

“I can’t delay. Once the Saint-level combatants of the Radiant Church arrive, I won’t have any chance at all.”

Seeing the crazed masses set against him, and the warriors screeching words such as ‘For honor’ and ‘For his Majesty’ and ‘Demon’, Linley grew more and more frantic. What’s more, many magi were lobbing spells at Linley from afar as well.

“Whap!”

“Bam!”

Linley’s body seemed to have transformed into a rainbow, as countless magical spells landed on his body. But Linley’s defensive abilities were simply too terrifying. The Armored Razorback Wyrm was praised as the dragon-type beast with the highest defensive power. There was no question about this.

“Shkreeee!” Far away, Bebe’s screeching cry could be heard, but Linley was surrounded by a sea of soldiers and warriors. He couldn’t help but feel frantic.

“Clayde!”

“Father! Mother! Today, even if I die, I will kill him. If worst comes to worst, then our family will reunite in the Netherworld! Little Wharton, I entrust the Baruch clan to you!” Linley said to himself. At this moment, Linley no longer cared about or feared death.

“Clayde!!!”

Linley let out a furious roar, and his scale-covered right arm touched his waist. Suddenly, a beautiful violet flash lit the air.

“Die, all of you, die!”

Linley began to slaughter!

Linley transforming into a tornado, and the violet light flickered around beautifully, its strange radiance flashing here and there. Every place Linley passed by, warriors would fall down, chopped in half or turned into meat paste.

The Godsword, Bloodviolet!

Given Bloodviolet’s sharpness, especially when wielded by the Dragonformed Linley, even warriors of the seventh rank were directly chopped in half.

A massacre!

Wielding Bloodviolet, Linley’s rate of slaughter increased tenfold. Wherever that purple light flashed, groups of warriors would fall to the ground. Linley was charging forward in Clayde’s direction at high speed. Every step forward, he was forced to kill ten people!

Kill!

Kill!

Kill!

Human blood spurted everywhere like fountains, and shattered bones lay everywhere, as common as mud. The black scale-covered Dragonformed Linley seemed to have truly transformed into a demon from hell. In the face of his massacring charge, one warrior after another collapsed.

Nobody could stop his advance!

“Bam!” With each step, Linley made the earth shake. Bloodviolet danced in his hands, and yet another body collapsed. All of the bushes in the

manmade hill nearby had been eradicated long ago, and all of the walls in the manor had toppled as well.

Linley finally arrived by Clayde's side. Because of Bebe's constant attacks, Clayde hadn't been able to flee anywhere.

"Linley, must you kill me?" Clayde glared at Linley.

Linley's lips curved upwards, ever so slightly.

Must?

Ever since his father died and Linley had instructed Hillman to take the warblade 'Slaughterer' out of the Holy Union, Linley had made his mind up. No matter what, he was going to avenge his father.

"Hah!"

His Dragonblood battle-qi exploding, Linley's arms suddenly, bizarrely expanded in size by an inch, as his physical strength was pushed to the limit. Seeming to shatter and slice through the air itself, the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hands cut down viciously on Clayde's body.

"Bam!" Clayde was knocked flying by the force of that blow, and his body viciously slammed against that manmade hill. The boulders atop the manmade hill were sent flying everywhere.

His body turning into a blur, Linley once more appeared in front of him.

Linley seemed to have turned into a tornado, and as he turned, his right leg lashed out fiercely against Clayde's neck. Although this blow was once more guarded against by the Fateguard, Clayde's body was still smashed deep into the ground by the force of that blow.

"Whap!" Immediately following Linley's right leg was Linley's draconic tail.

Like a whip, it struck harshly again and again on Clayde's body. The power that was being slammed onto Clayde's body and through it into the ground was akin to a meteor striking the earth. More than ten large cracks appeared on the ground, and his body sank into the newly created crevice.

The translucent barrier protecting Clayde's body was beginning to tremble, and the seven-colored rainbow was flashing wildly, about to break at any moment.

"It's about to break." Linley exulted wildly.

"Protect his Majesty!" A high-pitched shout rang out.

"Lord Kaiser!"

The warriors who had been terrified by the way they had been slaughtered by Linley and Bebe were ecstatic. A powerfully built man with long, flowing jade hair charged forward, a greatsword in his hands. The speed of his movements weren't inferior to Linley in the slightest.

Linley's heart shook. "The second warrior of the ninth rank in the Kingdom of Fenlai, Kaiser. Not good!"

"Forget it." Linley didn't even turn to look at Kaiser. He quickly chased after Clayde, who had seized the opportunity to flee out of the crevice he had been smashed into. Clayde's Fateguard defend had been stretched to the limit, and could shatter at any moment. He had to seize this last moment to kill Clayde!

"Stop!" Kaiser howled with rage.

"Bam!"

Linley once again smashed a fist against Clayde, this time landing an uppercut on Clayde's jaw, sending him rising up in the air. Immediately following, Linley's body turned around at high speed and, like a pair of battleaxes, his right leg and his iron-whip-like tail struck in sequence

against Clayde's body.

"Bzzzt." A very strange sound emanated from Clayde's body.

Clayde's body was in midair, and the protective barrier around him was trembling nonstop, glowing with that seven-colored rainbow. But just then, in midair, a black blur flashed towards him, sending a vicious claw against that seven-colored rainbow.

"Shatter!"

A clear sound could be heard, and the barrier around Clayde's body broke apart.

"It broke." Seeing this, Linley was wildly happy. He immediately charged directly for Clayde, but right at this moment, Kaiser arrived and chopped viciously at Linley with his greatsword. But Linley didn't care about the sword in the slightest, continuing to charge directly at Clayde.

But just at this moment….

None of the thousands of battling warriors in Linley's manor had noticed that a person was floating in mid-air, watching from above. Although this person was standing in mid-air, someone staring up at him from below wouldn't be able to see him at all. They would see nothing there.

He was very skinny, bald, and wore a long white robe. His face was calm, and he watched the proceedings below with the icy gaze of a god.

It was his Holiness, the Radiant Church's Holy Emperor himself!

Chapter 31 – Won’t Accept it

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 31, Won’t Accept it

“As I suspected, this genius of the Baruch clan is indeed capable of Dragonforming. Although it isn’t quite the same as the Dragonblood Warriors of record, despite his youth, he already has the power of a warrior of the ninth rank. The Dragonblood Warriors live up to their reputation as one of the Four Supreme Warriors.”

The Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church, Heidens [Hai’ting’si], had a hint of a smile on his face as he watched the going-on’s below.

The thousand-plus casualties below and the blood-stained earth wasn’t enough to make the Holy Emperor’s heart quiver even slightly.

“Kaiser, stop him!” Clayde shouted frantically.

Clayde had never imagined that despite being in possession of a Fateguard, that he would be beleaguered to this extent. What’s more, it was within the Holy Capital of Fenlai City.

“Yes, your Majesty!” Kaiser called out in response, while sweeping his greatsword towards Linley.

Linley didn’t try to defend against this attack at all. “Even if I have to take this blow head on, I am going to kill Clayde first.” The death of his parents had filled Linley with boundless hatred towards Clayde. Only by killing Clayde would he be satisfied. Otherwise, even if he died, he would be unsatisfied!

“Thud!” The greatsword slammed against Linley’s body.

Linley had been planning to take this blow head-on, but he suddenly realized that, bizarrely, this actually wasn’t an attack against him at all. This

blow was used to block Linley's charging momentum, while at the same time, Kaiser took advantage of the counter-force to knock himself flying towards Clayde at an astonishing speed.

"Swish!" Bebe once more charged towards Clayde.

"Bam!" That greatsword sliced through the air, blocking Bebe's way. Bebe used his fierce claws to exchange a vicious blow against the greatsword.

"Clang!"

Bebe only felt a fiery aura emanate from the surface of that greatsword, while at the same time, a fierce gust of battle-qi raged towards him. Bebe immediately dodged quickly, but nonetheless that fiery battle-qi struck his body. However, relying on his astonishing defensive abilities, Bebe only somersaulted through the air once before landing on the ground again.

Kaiser stood in front of Clayde, staring coldly at Linley and Bebe.

"Boss, this guy is really tough!" Bebe's fur was standing straight up, and he stared fixedly at Kaiser.

Linley could also sense Kaiser's power. In terms of speed, Kaiser wasn't a single bit slower than him, and when he struck with his sword, his speed was even more astonishing. This Kaiser was a true, full warrior of the ninth rank, with significant experience as well.

"Who are you? Why are you trying to kill his Majesty?" Sword in hand, Kaiser stared coldly at Linley.

Linley didn't speak. Tapping his waist, the Bloodviolet Godsword once more appeared in his hands. At the same time, Linley immediately utilized the wind-style supporting spell, Supersonic. A Supersonic spell of the seventh rank was still capable of raising Linley's speed a bit.

"A double expert, both magus and warrior." The expression on Kaiser's face changed.

“Clayde.” Linley’s gutteral voice rang out.

Right now, there were a group of warriors surrounding Clayde, but as far as Linley was concerned, aside from that Kaiser, none of them were capable of opposing him.

“Swish!” Linley furiously stomped the ground, causing the ground to split and crack. Relying on that powerful counterforce, Linley transformed into a merciless black blur and shot straight towards Clayde.

“Whoosh!” Bebe, being spiritually linked with Linley, shot out at the same time.

“Chi! Chi!” The Bloodviolet Godsword transformed into a violet blur of light, piercing directly at Kaiser. With a flip of his wrist, Kaiser’s huge sword moved with surprising agility to block Linley’s Bloodviolet. But just at that moment…

That previously ramrod stiff Bloodviolet Godsword suddenly curved, avoiding Kaiser’s sword and thrusting directly at Kaiser.

It was too close!

Kaiser didn’t have the chance to dodge at all.

“Bam!”

Three centimeters away from Kaiser’s body, the Bloodviolet Godblade suddenly came to a halt, ramming against a layer of blazing red battle-qi that was sprung up to protect Kaiser. As a warrior of the ninth rank, Kaiser was incredibly strong, even a bit more so than Linley.

This blow having failed, Linley didn’t hesitate in the slightest, charging directly towards the nearby Clayde.

“Halt!” Kaiser let out a low shout, about to move to block Linley.

But from the corner of his eyes, Kaiser noticed a black blur suddenly arrive at the back of his neck. Kaiser knew exactly how terrifying this unique magical beast could be, and he didn't dare to use his battle-qi to forcibly block its fierce claws.

Kaiser hurriedly and agilely pivoted to dodge, putting some distance between him and Bebe. Flipping the greatsword in his hand again, he chopped directly at Bebe.

"Kaiser, come save me!" Clayde called out frantically.

Kaiser couldn't help but grow anxious. Both Linley and this terrifying magical beast had, without question, the power of a combatant of the ninth rank. What's more, that magical beast of Linley's possessed both incredible agility and terrifying defense. Kaiser was confident in his ability to deal with one, but dealing with two was a major headache.

"Slash!"

As the Bloodviolet Godsword cut through the air, it left behind a trail of severed limbs and sprays of blood.

Linley's dark gold eyes were fixed firmly upon Clayde, and he charged towards Clayde at high speed. Everyone who sought to block him was bisected by the Bloodviolet Godsword in Linley's hands. Blood had already dyed every inch of Linley's black scales!

With each step he took, he killed ten people!

"Slash!" After chopping away the last two warriors guarding Clayde, Linley charged directly towards Clayde.

"Don't, don't kill me!" Clayde was now truly afraid.

Kaiser was still being entangled by that astonishingly durable Bebe, and simply wasn't going to be able to come rescue him. As for the other

warriors, they were nothing more than an afterthought to Linley. The power of Linley in his complete Dragonform was enough that he would only fear a combatant of the Saint-level. Even most warriors of the ninth-rank would not be enough to make Linley afraid.

“Clayde, die.”

This time, Linley didn’t use his sword. With his right claw, he swiped viciously at Clayde’s neck. He wanted to rip Clayde to death with his own hands.

“Ah!” Clayde hurriedly flew backwards at high speed, falling against a manmade hill.

But with a single twitch of his legs, Linley once more appeared in front of him. Those fierce claws arrived directly in front of Clayde’s eyes.

“Father. Mother. I’ve finally avenged you.” Linley’s heart was shaking, and he brought his right claw down with force. The totally unprotected Clayde, in front of Linley, was like a toothless, claw-less animal.

Clayde’s eyes were filled with terror and disbelief.

“Thruuuuum.”

An extremely strange vibration suddenly emanated from the sky. In the blink of an eye, it totally surrounded Linley, making him feel as though he was sunken in quicksand. His entire body had been bound, and he couldn’t use any more force with his right claws.

If Linley were to use just a bit more force, he would be able to sever Clayde’s neck. But Linley wasn’t able to move at the slightest.

Clayde stared, stunned, and then he exulted wildly.

“Ha…hahahaha!”

Clayde began to laugh loudly, and then he slowly retreated several steps before raising his head to stare at the sky. At this moment, a white-robed figure slowly floated over from up above in the sky. It was his Holiness, the Holy Emperor Heidens.

“Your Holiness.” Clayde immediately bowed respectfully.

All of the warriors nearby, Kaiser included, were stunned. But then immediately, they all bowed very respectfully and called out respectfully, “Your Holiness!”

The highest authority within the Holy Union. The man with the authority to depose a ruler from his rule. The Holy Emperor, Heidens, had appeared.

The Holy Emperor walked one step at a time towards Linley, and as he did, Linley suddenly felt as though he had escaped from the quicksand and could now move. But facing the Holy Emperor’s gaze, Linley only felt his heart quiver.

“Your Holiness!” At this time, another squad rushed over, with two Cardinals leading them, along with several Executors from the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.

“Heathen!” Guillermo, seeing the totally Dragonformed Linley, was the first to speak, his face changing.

The Holy Emperor Heidens calmly glanced at Guillermo. Guillermo instantly fell silent, not daring to make another sound.

“Get out.”

Linley’s gutteral voice rang out, causing the Holy Emperor Heidens to look at Linley with some surprise. Despite being affected by the power of his Presence, this man still was resisting? Heidens knew very well that his Presence was even more powerful than the presence of most Saint-level combatants, because Heidens was carrying several valuable treasures of the Radiant Church on him.

“Surrender.” Heidens spoke.

“Whoosh!”

Linley suddenly moved, transforming into a blur as he flew towards Clayde, while striking in an arc towards Clayde with that iron-whip-like draconic tail. Without question, the terrifying power of Linley’s tail was enough to kill Clayde with one blow.

Heidens suddenly made a waving gesture with his right hand. “WHAP!” Linley’s body was sent flying far away, slamming into a distant manmade hill. Rocks shattered, and blood began to seep out all across Linley’s body. From this single blow, his astonishingly sturdy scales had been shattered to the point of allowing blood to be drawn.

Heidens glanced at Guillermo.

Guillermo understood what Heidens wanted. He shouted an order to the Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. “Take this demon away!”

Instantly, four Executors charged towards Linley.

“Boss!” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley was half-kneeling against the manmade hill, and blood was dribbling out of his mouth. “Bebe. Leave. Leave now. While they haven’t noticed you, leave!”

“I won’t leave.” Bebe was crouching off in the distance behind the corner of a wall, but continued to mentally converse with Linley.

“No. With the Holy Emperor present, we no longer have any chance at all. He hasn’t noticed you yet, so you have a chance to slip away. Bebe…leave now. I must kill that Clayde. Even if I die, I need you to help me kill him. If even you are caught, in the future I will have no chance at all.”

“Boss…”

“Leave! Or else, even if I die, I won’t forgive you!” Linley roared mentally.

In the corner of that wall, Bebe stared at Linley, his little eyes filled with fury, grief, and an unwillingness to depart.

“Leave now!”

Linley mentally howled with fury at him. At this moment, those four Executors had walked to Linley’s side and reached out, intending to subdue Linley. But that half-kneeling Linley suddenly rose to his feet, like a praying mantis attacking from ambush.

“Swish!” A violet light flashed. All four of them were bisected at the waist.

“Die!” Linley charged towards Clayde once again.

The expression on Clayde’s face changed.

“Even if I die, I will kill you first!” Linley howled with rage.

“Hrmph!”

The eyes of the Holy Emperor Heidens flashed coldly, and he let out a sneer. His right hand slapped in Linley’s general direction, and suddenly, a terrifyingly powerful force appeared out of nowhere, surrounding and pressing down Linley from all sides. Linley felt as though an enormous mountain had just slammed onto his body.

“Bam!” Linley was slammed into the ground.

“Crack!” Linley felt that the bones in his body were suddenly broken in over ten different places. Totally paralyzed, he lay there on the ground, unable to move again. Nobody, no matter how strong, would be able to move with so many bones broken.

“Take him away.” Guillermo once again ordered.

“Boss…” Seeing the sorry state Linley was in, tears were flowing down Bebe’s face.

Linley was lying on the ground, totally paralyzed. All the bones in his arms, legs and ribs were shattered. He couldn’t move at all. The black scales covering him were in even worse shape, and blood flowed out from the flesh beneath the scales, dying his entire body red.

“Boss.”

“Leave! Bebe, leave!” Linley was mentally roaring with rage.

Several Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal roughly lifted Linley up. Perhaps it was because they had just seen Linley murder four of their colleagues, but their hands were not gentle, and as they carried him, they didn’t pay any attention to his wounds. This sort of carrying method caused Linley’s entire body to be filled with agony.

As he was lifted and carried away, Linley continued to stare unblinkingly at Clayde.

“Haha, haha…” Clayde began to laugh again.

Staring at Clayde with those dark gold eyes, Linley roared furiously, “If I don’t kill you, I won’t rest! Even in death, I won’t accept it!” Linley’s voice made the heart of that far-off Bebe quiver.

Hearing these words, Clayde’s heart couldn’t help but quiver as well.

“I, won’t, accept it!” Two trails of tears cascaded down from Linley’s eyes. He had been so close to victory. But in the end, he had still failed to kill Clayde.

Chapter 32 – In Dire Straits

Book 6, The Road to Revenge – Chapter 32, In Dire Straits

Within the hotel at the end of the Greenleaf Road, Yale and a group of people were waiting.

“Young master. His Majesty suffered an attack from some sort of demonic creature at Lord Linley’s manor. Right now, many palace guards as well as the warriors of many noble clans have gone to protect his Majesty.” A golden-haired man in front of Yale said respectfully.

Yale was startled.

He knew that Linley wanted to kill Clayde, and now, Clayde was the target of an assassination attempt. Nine out of ten, this had something to do with Linley.

“I wonder if this so-called ‘demonic creature’ is actually Third Bro.” Yale began to worry.

But Yale could only wait here quietly. He had no other options. Shortly afterwards, another report came. “Young master Yale, that demonic creature has begun a wild slaughterfest. Too many people have died. Lord Linley’s manor has become a river of blood, and is littered with corpses.”

Yale secretly felt shocked.

“Third Bro is really formidable. But I don’t know if Third Bro will be able to escape in the end.” Yale could only continue to wait.

One report after another continued to come.

“Young master Yale, that demonic monster’s violet sword is far too powerful. Wherever that violet flash appears, death follows. Countless

people have died within the manor. Of the palace guards, many platoons and even entire companies have been wiped out."

Upon hearing this, Yale became even more certain.

"A violet sword? Could it be that Bloodviolet sword?" Yale, Reynolds, and George all knew that Linley was in possession of a Bloodviolet Godblade. In particular, Yale suddenly recollected something about Linley's clan. "The Baruch clan is the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors. Can it be that Linley transformed into a Dragonblood Warrior?"

The so-called 'demonic creature' could very well be Linley after having transformed into a Dragonblood Warrior.

Thinking about how his beloved bro was currently being attacked by thousands of men and beasts and was engaging in a wild battle, Yale couldn't help but worry even more.

"Third Bro!"

Yale's fists clenched, relaxed, clenched, relaxed. All of the people present could sense his nervousness.

"Young master Yale. His Holiness, the Holy Emperor appeared. He heavily injured that demonic creature, and it has already been dragged back to the Radiant Temple." The final report came back. Yale's face turned white, devoid of all blood.

Upon hearing the words, "His Holiness, the Holy Emperor appeared", Yale knew that things had just gone from bad to worse.

"Squeak squeak!" A black blur suddenly appeared within the hotel.

"Bebe." Seeing this Shadowmouse, Yale instantly ran over to it.

"Bebe. Where is Third Bro?" Yale immediately looked at Bebe, asking desperately.

The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, didn't have any of his usual exuberance. He only stared at Yale, then lowered his head and let out a few dejected squeaks. Yale could sense the grief and pain hidden within Bebe's eyes. Although Bebe was a magical beast, his intelligence was no lower than that of a human.

"Swish." Bebe's body flickered, and he suddenly disappeared from in front of Yale.

Yale was startled.

"Young master Yale." A nearby person said softly.

"Go back. Go find my Second Uncle." Yale suddenly rose to his feet and issued orders to his men.

Within one of the more secluded private rooms on the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple. Linley had been tossed inside the room like a dying dog. For Linley to be imprisoned within the Radiant Temple was actually still a testament to how highly the Radiant Church valued Linley.

The Radiant Temple was the heart of the Radiant Church.

This was a place which even Saint-level combatants dared not to trespass into.

"Ah." All the scales on Linley's body had already retracted back inside. Currently, Linley's body was covered with blood, and he had more than ten visible wounds. These wounds were all caused by the Holy Emperor, Heidens. His visible wounds were very serious. But his internal wounds were even worse.

The bones of all four of his limbs had been broken. Linley could only grit his teeth as he tried to force his body to move, but all he could accomplish was resting his head against the wall.

“Linley.”

Doehring Cowart flew out of the Coiling Dragon ring. He looked at Linley, and his eyes were filled with affection and helplessness.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley looked at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart sighed mentally towards Linley. “Linley, do you feel any regret?”

“Regret?”

Linley shook his head. “No. In fact, in this life, I have only two desires. The first is to reclaim the lost glory of my clan. The second is to reach the highest pinnacle of power and training that I can reach. But if I do not gain my revenge, I probably won’t even be able to sleep well. I would be in torment my entire life.”

Doehring Cowart nodded. He could understand Linley’s frame of mind.

“I lost. Haha. I lost.”

Linley laughed lightly. His entire body hurt. Right now, most likely any person at all could easily trample him.

He lost!

As soon as the Holy Emperor had appeared, Linley knew.

He lost. And losing meant death.

Linley had been aware of this long ago. In this world, many people died every day. Linley never believed that it was impossible for him to die.

“Linley, you probably won’t die.” Doehring Cowart said.

“Huh?” Linley looked questioningly at Doehring Cowart.

Doehring Cowart laughed calmly. “If that Holy Emperor wanted to kill you, he would’ve killed you long ago. How could it be that he would have acted against you several times, yet still spared your life? In addition…you haven’t considered the fact that most likely, a ruler of a kingdom holds less attraction for him than you do.”

Linley suddenly began to understand a bit.

“The second greatest genius magus in all of history, someone likely to become a Saint-level Grand Magus. And now, the Holy Emperor has discovered that you are a Dragonblood Warrior as well. Most likely, he would be all the more reluctant to kill you now. The Dragonblood Warriors are one of the Supreme Warriors. Upon entering the Saint-level, you will definitely be one of the most powerful Saint-level combatants. In terms of attack power alone, you definitely won’t be any inferior to the Holy Emperor himself!” Doehring Cowart said with certainty.

Supreme Warriors were very terrifying.

Most people, upon entering the Saint-level, would have to progress through the so-called early-stage, middle-stage, and peak-stage.

But upon entering the Saint-level, a Supreme Warrior, especially in Dragonform, would definitely be a peak-stage Saint-level combatant with incredible defense and offense. Even amongst peak-stage Saint-level combatants, the Supreme Warriors would probably be amongst the most powerful.

“A genius like you, Heidens won’t be willing to kill unless there’s absolutely no options available.” After finishing his speech, Doehring Cowart flew back into the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley’s heart was very calm.

Life, death?

The thing which Linley truly cared about was vengeance.

“I’m afraid that even if he spares me, Heidens won’t allow me to kill Clayde.” Linley knew very well that having failed to kill Clayde this time, in the future, it would be very hard for him to kill Clayde. If he couldn’t kill Clayde, in his heart, Linley wouldn’t be able to accept it.

“Who knows when I will be able to get vengeance.”

Linley’s heart was filled with helplessness.

Within the highest floor of the Radiant Temple. The Holy Emperor, Heidens, was sitting calmly on his seat.

Guillermo was staring at the Holy Emperor in shock. “Your Holiness, that demon was Linley? But…but…”

At first, Guillermo hadn’t known that person was Linley, but after the scales had retracted into Linley’s body, Guillermo discovered his identity. This had totally shocked the man.

“That wasn’t a demon. That was a Dragonblood Warrior!” Heidens glanced calmly at Guillermo.

Guillermo was startled, but then he quickly understood. “Right…the Baruch clan is the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors. But it has been over a thousand years since the Dragonblood warrior clan has produced a Dragonblood Warrior. It’s unimaginable that…that…that Linley was actually…your Holiness, that was a Dragonblood Warrior?”

Remembering how terrifying Linley had appeared, Guillermo felt his heart tremble a bit.

“Perhaps a mutated version. But it should be a Dragonblood Warrior transformation, yes. Otherwise, how could he rise in power so quickly?” Heidens said calmly. “This Linley’s potential is too great. Although this time, his offense was a major one, there are very few outsiders who know

that ‘demon’ was actually Linley.”

Guillermo instantly understood Heidens’ meaning.

Linley’s potential is too great?

Guillermo sighed to himself. Linley’s potential was absolutely terrifying. Not only was his potential as a magus incredible, he was also a Supreme Warrior. In both aspects, he was a very terrifying person. If such a person could remain within the Radiant Church, in several decades, the Radiant Church would almost assuredly have another supreme combatant.

“Indeed. Your Holiness, others all say that it was a demon. Aside from those Executors who dragged Linley back, nobody else knows this demon was Linley.” Guillermo said respectfully.

“Oh. Those four. Deal with them.” Heidens said coldly.

“Yes, your Holiness.” Guillermo said respectfully. “It is their good fortune to be able to return to the Lord’s embrace.”

Guillermo then said softly, “Right. Your Holiness, another person knows that the demon is actually Linley.”

“You mean…Clayde?” Heidens said softly.

“Yes, your Holiness.” Guillermo said. Questioningly, he wondered, “Clearly, this Linley has an extremely deep grievance with Clayde, otherwise he wouldn’t have gone to this extent to kill him. Your Holiness, Clayde is the ruler of the Kingdom of Fenlai. If we are to preserve Linley, perhaps we should have a chat with Clayde.”

“Yes, we should have a chat.”

A hint of a smile was on Heidens’ face. “I am very curious. What sort of deep grievance and enmity does Linley have with Clayde?”

Late in the evening, Clayde arrived at the top floor of the Radiant Temple.

“Your Holiness.” Clayde bowed respectfully.

The Holy Emperor, Heidens, was seated on his chair, leafing through a few thick tomes. Without even looking up, he said, “Clayde. In your opinion, who is more important to the Holy Union? You? Or Linley?”

Clayde’s heart thumped hard.

“The Holy Emperor means to preserve Linley?” Clayde’s heart began to grow frantic.

After having experienced this event, he now knew that Linley’s father and mother were killed as a result of him, even though he didn’t do it himself. In terms of responsibility for the deaths of Linley’s parents, he, Clayde, probably bore 90% of the responsibility.

That year in the past, if it hadn’t been for Clayde deciding to take Linley’s mother and offer her up, how could she have ended up dying? And how would Linley’s father have died?

Clayde remembered very clearly that look of unrelenting hatred in Linley’s eyes, even as Linley had been dragged away after being heavily wounded by the Holy Emperor.

“This Linley will fight with me until one of us dies. He cannot be allowed to live.” Clayde said to himself.

“Clayde, the outside world all believe that it was a demon. Nobody knows that it was Linley, yes?” Heidens looked at Clayde.

Hearing these words, Clayde even more was certain of the Holy Emperor’s intentions. He hurriedly said, “Your Holiness, that Linley truly is an incredible talent. Most likely, he is the greatest genius to have appeared in thousands of years, both as a magus as well as a warrior. He is an absolute genius. It is very understandable that your Holiness would desire to have

him be of use to the Radiant Church. But…it is already determined that he will not be of service to our Church."

These words from Clayde caused Heidens to frown. His eyes stared coldly at Clayde.

Clayde's heart quivered in fear.

But he knew that if Linley didn't die, then he would never have a moment's peace again.

"Your Holiness, do you know why Linley wishes to kill me?" Clayde hurriedly said.

"Summarize." Heidens said coldly.

Clayde immediately said, "Your Holiness, the reason Linley wishes to kill me is because twelve years ago, I sent people to abduct his mother. And then, his father, in the course of investigating his mother's disappearance, was killed. His mother and father, it can be said, died because of me."

"The enmity sowed by the deaths of one's parents is indeed a great one." Heidens nodded.

"But your Holiness, do you remember that woman from twelve years ago? That woman I gifted to you, your Holiness?" Clayde looked at Heidens.

Heidens started.

"Are you saying…" The look on Heidens' face changed.

"Right. That woman was Linley's mother!" Clayde said in a resounding, loud voice.

"Your Holiness, if Linley is to remain within the Radiant Church, then as his station rises, he will begin to learn some of the secrets of the Radiant Church. He will definitely discover how and why his mother died. By

then…is it even remotely possible that he would still be loyal to the Radiant Church?" Clayde let out a mental sigh of relief.

He trusted that given the situation, Heidens would definitely decide to act appropriately. Yes, Linley's potential was high. But the more powerful that Linley became, the greater a threat he would pose to the Radiant Church once he discovered the truth.

"If this is the case…pity. What a waste of a talent." Heidens let out a single sigh.

Chapter 1 – A Hope of Living

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 1, A Hope of Living

Upon hearing the words, “What a waste of a genius”, Clayde exulted mentally.

He already knew that the Holy Emperor’s choice was.

“You can leave now.” Heidens waved his arm and said calmly.

“Yes, Your Holiness.” Clayde bowed respectfully, then turned and left the top floor of the Radiant Temple. In the entire hall, only Holy Emperor Heidens now remained. Walking to a window, Heidens stared down at the city of Fenlai, maintaining a long silence.

After a long time…

“Knock!” “Knock!” “Knock!” The sound of knocking on the door.

“Enter.” Heidens said calmly.

The person who entered was Cardinal Guillermo. Guillermo glanced at Heidens’s back. Able to sense that Heidens was in a foul mood, he respectfully lowered his voice. “Your Holiness, how should we attempt to persuade Linley?”

“Persuade? No need.” Heidens said calmly.

Guillermo couldn’t help but raise his head to stare at Heidens in astonishment. If they wanted Linley to be of use to them in the future, at the very least they would have to speak with him and persuade him. After all, not only had Heidens severely injured Linley, Linley had a deep grudge against Clayde to begin with.

“Guillermo, do you know who Linley’s mother was?” Heidens turned his head to stare at Guillermo. Guillermo was startled. Curiously, he said, “Linley’s mother? Didn’t she die while giving birth to Linley’s younger brother?”

“No.”

Heidens shook his head. “When you investigated Linley’s background and information regarding his mother, you weren’t able to uncover the truth. Linley’s mother was actually that woman we acquired twelve years ago.”

That woman from twelve years ago!

Guillermo instantly remembered, because that woman had had a huge impact on the upper levels of the Radiant Church.

“But if we’ve already killed his mother, then…” Guillermo instantly understood why the Holy Emperor was now in such a foul mood.

A genius such as Linley was extremely enticing. But in the future, once Linley discovered the truth about his mother, he would be a huge threat to the Radiant Church.

“Guillermo. The 28th of this month will be the day when the glorious aura of the Radiant Sovereign will be the strongest, is it not?” Heidens said suddenly.

“Yes.” Guillermo was somewhat perplexed by Heidens raising this question.

“Make the preparations. That night, I intend to beg the Radiant Sovereign for a divine boon.” Heidens said calmly.

“Divine boon?” Guillermo was greatly shocked, but then he quickly understood Heidens’s plan. He secretly sighed to himself, “The Holy Emperor is most likely requesting this divine boon on behalf of Linley.

Although this will limit Linley's future potential, given his talent, he will still be an incredible figure. Only, what a waste of his talent."

A Divine Boon was in reality a manifestation of the divine power of the Radiant Sovereign in the material world.

The Radiant Sovereign, as a Sovereign, one of the most powerful entities in existence, could extend a thread of his divine, faith-based power to totally cleanse a person's soul, causing them to be wholly devoted and faithful to the Radiant Sovereign. Only a person who had already reached the Saint-level and was able to crystalize his soul would be able to resist the effects of this Divine Baptism.

Everyone else…definitely could not resist!

But after his soul had been affected by the Divine Baptism of the Radiant Sovereign, Linley's natural talent would be impacted as well. His future accomplishments would definitely be a bit lower.

"What a waste. What a waste of a talent." Heidens sighed again. This was the reason why earlier, in front of Clayde, he had said the words 'what a waste'. Heidens was, however, very confident. Once he had been affected by the Divine Baptism, even if he later found out about his mother's death, Linley would still be loyal and faithful to the Radiant Sovereign.

Because the faith this Divine Baptism created would go deep within a person's soul!

In the blink of an eye, ten days passed. The city of Fenlai was as calm as it had always been, but all the major noble clans in Fenlai felt a strange, oppressive atmosphere. For example, his Majesty, King Clayde, was always in a terrible mood these days, and several major ministers and nobles had run afoul of his temper and been executed.

On the Fragrant Pavilion Road, behind a lavishly decorated hotel, a group of people were gathered together within a quiet, three-story building.

Yale, George, and Reynolds had been here this entire time.

Ever since they had found out about what happened to Linley, the three of them had continued to worry for Linley. They knew very well what a huge disaster Linley had dragged down upon himself. Not only had he openly attacked King Clayde and killed over a thousand elite warriors of the kingdom, he had even forced the Holy Emperor himself to subdue him in the end.

“Boss Yale, have your people heard any news of Linley yet?” George asked, and Reynolds looked at Yale as well.

Yale shook his head.

All of them had ugly looks on their faces. They had grown up alongside Linley. At the Ernst Institute, they had eaten together and roomed together. Although they weren’t actual siblings, they were as every bit as close to each other as real brothers were. There was no way they could just stand by and watch as Linley was executed.

“There’s no way. I don’t have any means of reaching the high level people in the Radiant Church.” Yale was somewhat frantic. “Wait a few more days. My father will arrive soon.”

Yale’s father.

Monroe [Men’luo] Dawson!

The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate, and the controller of the enormously powerful Dawson clan, whose wealth made even the Four Great Empires and the two major alliances envious. Their mercantile web had already encompassed every city in the Yulan continent, and was totally able to determine whether a nation’s economy flourished or collapsed.

Each of the three major trading unions possessed tremendous power.

Neither the two major alliances nor the Four Great Empires were willing to

be openly hostile against them, because once one of the trading unions was openly at war with an empire, it could very well trigger an economic collapse, wiping out decades of progress and causing chaos within its domain.

“Boss Yale, you told us to wait a few more days two days ago! If we keep on waiting, I’m afraid…” Reynolds was frantic as well.

There was nothing Yale could do.

Fortunately, his father had been engaging in some tourism in a kingdom not too far from the Kingdom of Fenlai. Upon getting the news, Yale had immediately gotten in touch with his father and expressed the hope that his father could come to Fenlai City as quickly as possible. Given his father’s status as the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate, most likely Heidens would personally welcome him to the city.

Once his father appeared, the chances of rescuing Linley would be exponentially greater.

“Young master, young master!” A skinny, tall youth came running in, excited. “Young master, the Chairman has arrived!”

“Father!”

Yale leapt to his feet in joy. In the eyes of Reynolds and George as well, a hint of hope appeared.

Within the VIP reception hall of the Radiant Temple.

A two-meter tall, bald, pudgy man stepped into the hall, grinning merrily. This bald fatty was two meters tall and of enormous girth, most likely weighing 300-400 pounds.

This was the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate – Monroe Dawson! From another door, in walked the Holy Emperor – Heidens.

Heidens was also nearly two meters tall, but he was quite thin. The two of them together, both tall, both bald, but one fat while the other was skinny, made for a very interesting sight.

Behind Monroe Dawson, there were two middle-aged men. One was a golden-haired man with cold, hawk-like eyes, while the other was a powerfully built red-haired man. These two followed solemnly behind Monroe Dawson. Without question, the two of them were both combatants of the ninth rank!

Behind Heiden, as well, there were two red-robed Cardinals, one male, one female. These two were Guillermo and Melina [Ma'li'na].

"Oh, Your Holiness."

Monroe called out in an exaggeratedly loud voice as he attempted to bow. However, that large belly of Monroe's made bowing an extremely difficult thing to do. "Monroe, please sit." Heidens was still quite friendly to him.

Monroe immediately sat down, as did Heidens.

Monroe's enormous butt was simply too big. Most chairs wouldn't be a good fit for him. Fortunately, the Radiant Church had prepared a special chair for him in advance. Upon sitting down, a delighted grin split his rotund face, and he laughed loudly. "Thank you, your Holiness. On this trip, I had only intended to do some sightseeing near Greenstone Lake, but who would've thought that my son would insist on me hurrying over here? Alas, you should understand that as a father, I had no choice."

"Monroe, you really do pamper little Yale." Heidens said with a smile.

Monroe nodded helplessly. "Hehe, that little tyke. But I've heard Yale say that he has an extremely incredible bro by the name of Linley. Not only is he a master sculptor, he is a genius magus, and also a very powerful warrior. When I heard this, I was very much impressed. But from what Yale says, this Linley has now been imprisoned within the Radiant Temple."

“This is indeed the case.” Heidens nodded in acknowledgment.

Monroe chortled, “Your Holiness, can you give me some face and free Linley? Young people are always so impetuous. Although I know he attempted to assassinate Clayde, in the end, Clayde didn’t die, right? I’m sure that your Holiness wouldn’t care too much about a small matter like this.”

Monroe spoke casually and simply.

But Heidens couldn’t respond to him in as casual a manner.

This Monroe Dawson had gone so far as to explicitly ask Heidens to give him face. If Heidens refused, wasn’t that the same as directly refusing to give Monroe face? Although Monroe was grinning cheerfully, Heidens knew very well how powerful the Dawson Conglomerate standing behind Monroe was.

“Monroe.” Heidens shook his head. “It isn’t that I won’t give you face. It’s that it’s really not convenient for me to free him. Because…Linley killed several people from the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, including students of Osenno [Wu’sen’nuo] himself. Osenno is extremely angry this time.”

“Osenno?” Monroe Dawson frowned.

Osenno was one of the other pillars of the Radiant Church – the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.

In truth, it should be said that the Radiant Church actually had two leaders; the public leader known as the Holy Emperor, and the hidden leader in charge of killings, slaughters, and eliminating heathens and apostates – the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.

“This is going to be difficult.” Monroe immediately knew that this was not good.

Perhaps Heidens would care somewhat about Monroe’s status, but that cold

fellow Osenno was nothing but a crazed killer.

But Monroe Dawson could also guess something.

“Linley killed the students of Osenno? These words are most likely a lie spun by Heidens, but there’s no way I’ll be able to verify this with Osenno.” Monroe felt helpless. He could tell that clearly, Heidens did not wish to let Linley go that easily.

The Dawson Conglomerate really did have its eyes set on Linley.

This was especially true after discovering that Linley was capable of Dragonforming. In terms of both his potential as a magus as well as a warrior, Linley’s potential was incredible. Once the Dawson Conglomerate acquired Linley, when Linley entered the Saint-level, the influence of the Dawson Conglomerate would instantly supersede that of the other two trading unions.

“If that’s the case, then I’ll leave now.” Monroe Dawson immediately stood up.

Heidens smiled calmly. “I truly am sorry, Monroe. Right now, the Radiant Church has not internally decided on how we should punish Linley. After we have decided on how we should deal with Linley, I’ll send someone to inform you.”

“Sure. During this period of time, I’ll stay in Fenlai City. I really want to see the upcoming Yulan Festival. This 10000th Yulan Festival is sure to be an amazing spectacle. In a man’s entire life, he might only see such a spectacle this one time.” Monroe Dawson beamed as he spoke.

After speaking, Monroe Dawson departed with his two bodyguards.

Heidens quietly watched as Monroe Dawson departed. By his side, Guillermo said quietly, “Your Holiness, that damn fatty foolishly thinks he can claim Linley for his own. After the 28th, Monroe can abandon all of his hopes.”

Heidens turned to glance at Guillermo. Smiling, he left the hall as well.

Right now, the only thing to do was to wait for December 28th.

Chapter 2 – The Divine Boon Descends

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 2, The Divine Boon Descends

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

Linley seemed to have been discarded here and forgotten. The only people who came were the cold, grim purple-robed Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal who came each day bringing his meals. His arms and legs both broken, Linley's only choice was to squirm over then lower his head to the food.

Within the dark, gloomy cell, one such day after another passed.

Life? Or death?

Linley didn't know which it would be, but Linley wouldn't so easily give up any hope of staying alive.

These past few days, Linley had spent his time reviewing why his attempt at gaining revenge this time had failed. Almost everything had been within his calculations, and he even included the existence of Clayde's magical beast companion in his plans. But Linley hadn't expected that Clayde would have a Saint-level magical barrier enchantment!

Producing a barrier enchantment was far more difficult than just casting a spell.

To produce a Saint-level barrier enchantment, the effort that needed to be expended in both spiritual energy and mageforce was greater than the effort needed to directly cast a Saint-level magical spell. Linley didn't believe that Clayde would have a Saint-level barrier enchantment on him.

Even Doehring Cowart had said: "Forget about Clayde. Most likely, even

the Cardinals of the Radiant Church wouldn't have a Saint-level barrier enchantment on them."

Given Linley's power as a warrior of the ninth rank in Dragonform, and combined with Bebe's power, Clayde should've died without a doubt. Although Linley was perhaps a bit too hasty in his plan to get revenge, he should've had a nearly 100% chance of success. Alas, that Fateguard enchantment ruined Linley's plans.

"Who would've thought that a mere ruler of a kingdom would have a Saint-level barrier enchantment!" Linley was still unable to accept it.

He really just couldn't.

The temperature of these winter nights was now extremely cold. There were very few people on the streets of Fenlai City. A black Shadowmouse was standing in a corner of an intersection, staring up at the tall and far-off Radiant Temple. The little Shadowmouse just stood there and stared, not moving at all.

That entire night, the little Shadowmouse remained there staring, even after the sun began to rise.

He didn't dare to enter the Radiant Temple, because he knew very well that the Radiant Temple was a place where even Saint-level combatants feared to tread. He, a rat-type magical beast, wouldn't be able to escape. If in the end he was captured as well, Linley would only be even more heartbroken.

It was day now.

"Boss, I will definitely avenge you." Bebe glanced at the Radiant Temple one final time, then with a flicker, disappeared.

Over the entire past twenty days, the Shadowmouse, Bebe, had been thinking about how to avenge Linley. But he discovered that Clayde was now as cautious as a bird which had been frightened by the twang of a bow. Not only did he order magi to lay multiple magical formations around him,

he also ordered Kaiser to constantly remain by his side. The little Shadowmouse didn't have any chance to ambush him at all.

However, Bebe was very patient.

He would wait, continue to wait patiently. He would wait for the day when Clayde let down his guard, and then suddenly appear and chew Clayde into a meaty paste, avenging Linley.

Midnight, December 28th.

"Clank!"

The door to Linley's holding cell swung open, and two Vicars stepped in. They didn't seem as cold and sinister as the Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, and they even brought a gurney. Very carefully, they placed Linley on top of the gurney, and then lifted the gurney with Linley on top of it.

"What are you doing?" Linley coldly looked at the two Vicars.

Recollecting how Linley had slaughtered people in the past, the two Vicars felt some fear in their hearts towards him.

"Lord Linley, the Holy Emperor is preparing to treat your injuries." A female Vicar said in a soft voice.

"Treat my injuries?"

Linley's heart stirred. "Can it be that the Holy Emperor really is going to let me live?" Linley didn't say anything else, maintaining his silence. He allowed the two Vicars to carry him further upstairs into the top of the Radiant Temple. One floor after another…

Finally, the two Vicars carrying Linley arrived at the top floor of the Radiant Temple. Currently, this floor was very empty. In the middle of the room, there was a very complicated-looking octagram magical formation. In each of the eight corners of the octagram, there sat quiet, barefoot

Ascetics with disheveled hair and sackcloth clothes. In the very center of the octagram stood the Holy Emperor Heidens, who was wearing an ornate white robe.

At the edges of this top floor, there were three Cardinals, and two Deputy Arbiters along with six Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. All of these people were combatants of the ninth rank. One could tell how powerful the Radiant Church was, for it to be able to summon so many combatants of the ninth rank.

“Put him down. You can leave now.” Guillermo spoke.

“Yes.” The two Vicars didn’t even dare to breathe loudly. Right now, within this very room, there were astonishingly powerful Ascetics, mysterious Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, three Cardinals, and two Deputy Arbiters.

These were all important, major figures.

After putting down Linley, the two Vicars hurriedly, respectfully departed, and the door once more was shut behind them.

Lying on the gurney, Linley swept the people present with his gaze. Linley could easily tell that every single person here possessed incredible, astonishing power, all at least of the ninth rank or higher. “Your Holiness, what are you intending?” Linley said in a hoarse voice.

Heidens glanced at Linley. Laughing calmly, he said, “Linley, although this time you committed a major offence, after the internal deliberations of the Church, we have decided to give you another chance. Right now, we are preparing to execute a joint spell and use it to help you heal your wounds in the best possible way.”

If Linley had any experience whatsoever with light-style magic, he would’ve quickly seen the gaps in Heidens claims.

“Grandpa Doehring, it seems like the Radiant Temple is planning

something major.” Linley was conversing mentally with Doehring Cowart.

“What’s going on outside?” Doehring Cowart very prudently didn’t appear, not daring to reveal even a hint of his spiritual power.

Heidens was a peak-stage Saint-level combatant. If Doehring Cowart left the Coiling Dragon ring, the Holy Emperor would definitely discover him.

“There’s around twenty or so people outside, and even the weakest is at least of the ninth rank. There are eight Ascetics and the Holy Emperor standing in an octagram magical formation.” Linley reported.

Doehring Cowart had far more experience than Linley. “Linley, if they just wanted you to fully recover, a single Saint-level combatant using the Lifelight spell would be enough to fully heal you. There’s no need for them to do all of this. I think they must be planning to summon the divine energy of a Sovereign of Light. Otherwise, there’d be no need for them to cause such a commotion.”

There was more than one Sovereign of Light.

The Radiant Sovereign, however, was the most powerful one of them.

“Summoning the power of a Sovereign?” Linley was greatly shocked. “They intend to use the power of a Sovereign against me? What are they intending?”

“I’m not sure either.”

In Doehring Cowart’s era, both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were fairly small and weak. There nothing more than two religions amongst many in the Pouant Empire. Back then, the Radiant Church also had very few experts, and couldn’t possibly produce as many as they did today.

“Your Holiness. It is time.” Guillermo said respectfully.

Heidens raised his head upwards, looking at the sky, then nodded.

“Let us begin.” Heidens said calmly.

A white light immediately began to emanate from the bodies of those eight Ascetics seated within the corners of the octagram, causing an extremely dense wave of light-style mageforce to flow into the center of the magical formation. The entire magical formation immediately grew bright. In front of Heidens, a golden holy scripture suddenly appeared, while Heidens himself slowly began to radiate a golden light.

Heidens opened the scripture to its first page.

“Lord, it is you who grant us everything.” Heidens said softly, but his voice rang out in the hearts of everyone present like a thunderclap. At the same time, the glow from the holy scripture brightened dramatically, and the amount of holy white light in the magical formation increased dramatically as well.

Two lines of light intersected.

“Crackle, crackle.”

A perfectly straight line of light shot upwards, piercing into and through the very tip of the Radiant Church, then continuing upwards into the dark night. Anyone in Fenlai City would be able to clearly see this holy white light, entwined with a golden light, penetrate into and past the clouds.

Within the top floor of the Radiant Temple.

Heidens suddenly turned to look at Linley. Linley felt as though an extremely dense power was lifting him up, causing him to slowly rise into the air. Linley floated over to the middle of the magical formation, directly above Heidens’ head.

“Lord, you take pity on and love the people of this world, and in turn, we must put our faith in you.”

Heidens raised his head, an incomparably holy radiance emanating from his face.

“Rumble.”

The air above the Radiant Temple began to tremble. A cloud of white light began to gather in the air above the Radiant Temple, covering an extremely large expanse of space. Many of the people in Fenlai City noticed it.

“If one betrays you, Lord, then you shall take everything from them. But those who place their faith in you, Lord, shall receive your benevolence and your love.” Heidens flipped to the next page in the holy scripture. “Boom!”

The world shook. In the air above the Radiant Temple, the darkness of the night had been shattered by that exceedingly bright cloud of light. In the middle of the cloud of bright light, a single crack appeared in space, and a line of white light shot down from the crack at high speed.

“Swish!”

That line of white light carried with it a majestic presence which filled everyone’s hearts with awe. It pierced straight through the tip of the Radiant Chapel before finally landing on Linley, who was hovering in the air above the magical formation.

Within the top floor of the Radiant Chapel.

Heidens, the eight Ascetics, the three Cardinals, the two Deputy Arbiters, and the six special Executors all raised their heads, looking at Linley. The majestic power that line of white light embodied filled even the heart of Heidens with awe and worship.

Although it was just a hint of divine power, this power came directly from the Radiant Sovereign himself.

The white light penetrated Linley’s body, and Linley’s entire body

immediately began to emanate that white light as well. At the same time, Linley's body began to heal at an astonishing speed. In the blink of an eye, Linley's shattered bones and wounds were all healed, and his physical condition was restored to a better than ever condition.

"Ah!"

Linley's soul moaned. When that ray of white light had entered Linley's body, the healing effects had only been a side effect. The primary target of this ray of white light was Linley's soul. Clearly, this ray of white light wished to sink into and merge with Linley's soul.

Once this divine power merged with Linley's soul, then Linley would never again be able to shake off the control of the Radiant Sovereign, and would forever be his loyal vassal.

But just as this was happening….

An incomparably powerful force surged forth from the Coiling Dragon ring on Linley's finger. Passing through Linley's body, it rushed straight to Linley's brain. That terrifyingly powerful force surrounded the divine power in Linley's body and rapidly began to devour and dispel it.

And then, that burst of unimaginable power once more travelled through Linley's body and re-entered the Coiling Dragon ring.

"Grandpa Doehring, what is going on?" Linley said frantically.

"No idea. That force belonged to the Coiling Dragon ring itself. That force was terrifyingly powerful. It was terrifying…terrifying…terrifyingly powerful." Doehring Cowart was so shocked and nervous that he repeated the word 'terrifying' three times.

Doehring Cowart had been in possession of the Coiling Dragon ring five thousand years ago, but he had never had any inkling that such an unsurpassable power lay dormant within the ring.

Doehring Cowart was absolutely certain that if that power had been used to attack someone, even ten peak-stage Saint-level combatants would've been reduced to dust in the blink of an eye.

"Where did this burst of power come from, and what was it? Even I, the owner and master of this Coiling Dragon ring, was unable to sense it, much less control it." Linley knew very well that this power was not so easily used. In the past, Doehring Cowart had worn and used this ring for over a thousand years when he was alive, but had never used or discovered this burst of power.

While this was occurring….

All of the people in the top floor of the Radiant Temple were astonished. The Holy Emperor Heidens, the eight Ascetics, the three Cardinals, the two Deputy Arbiters, and the six Executors all stared in disbelief. They could tell that Linley's body didn't show a single hint of having received the Divine Baptism. There wasn't even a Radiant Seal on his forehead.

"How is this possible? It failed?" Heidens stared at Linley, stunned.

Chapter 3 – Would Definitely Die?

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 3, Would Definitely Die?

All of the powerful people in the highest floor of the Radiant Temple were stunned. Linley's soul was a huge distance away from the level of crystallizing. He was nothing more than a magus of the seventh rank. Even an Arch Magus of the ninth rank wouldn't be able to resist the Divine Baptism of the Radiant Sovereign.

"How is this possible?" The Ascetics, Executors, and Deputy Arbiters all began to mumble amongst themselves, unable to believe what they had just seen.

"It actually failed. The divine boon actually failed to successfully create a new Blessed One. Then…how should we deal with this Linley?" Heidens stared at Linley, suspended in mid-air. "An absolute genius such as him will definitely be a peak-stage Saint-level combatant within a hundred years. He might even become more powerful than me. By that time, the glory of our Radiant Church will be able to spread across an even wider territory."

Heidens really couldn't bear to just kill Linley.

"Your Holiness?" Guillermo called out softly.

Heidens's lost, confused gaze suddenly sharpened. He had made his decision.

"Your Holiness, Linley hasn't become a Blessed One. Then we…?" Guillermo asked.

Heidens looked at Linley. Under his control, Linley's body slowly drifted down to the floor. At this point in time, Linley pushed himself to a standing position with his hands. Right now, Linley's body was totally uninjured. It

must be said that receiving a divine boon had its benefits.

Linley looked at the mighty people surrounding him.

“These people are all combatants of the ninth rank at least. If I were to struggle against them, I wouldn’t have any chance at all.” Linley coldly stared at Heidens and the others. “Your Holiness, what exactly are you intending to do with me?”

Suddenly, a smile appeared on Heidens face. “No need to ask too much. Executors, return Linley to his private room.” “Yes, Your Holiness.” Those six special Executors nodded.

Without giving Linley any chance to react, they immediately headed towards Linley, as one of them barked out, “Move! Or do you want us to drag you?”

They were forcing him by their actions. Linley had no options.

“Fine.” Linley opened the door and began to walk downwards. Those six Executors followed directly behind Linley. As Linley went down the stairs one level at a time, he saw that all of the guards, upon seeing those six Executors, were all extremely respectful.

Those six special Executors all wore bluish-violet robes. Those icy eyes of theirs stared at Linley, making him feel as though…if he acted untowardly in any way at all, they would immediately kill him.

After the six Executors had escorted Linley away, the female Cardinal, Melina, asked, “Your Holiness, that Linley didn’t become a Blessed One. Although we don’t know the reason why not, the decision we must come to right now is, what should we do with Linley?”

Guillermo and the others all looked at Heidens.

Linley was a genius. They all knew this. But Linley hadn’t become a Blessed One, and his mother had been killed by the Radiant Church. The

Church had to come to a decision: Would they accept the risk of recruiting Linley and hide the truth behind the death of his mother? Or would Linley be put to death?

Although it would be possible to hide the truth behind his mother's death for a time, once Linley entered the highest ranks of the Radiant Church, it would most likely be impossible to hide it any longer.

Heidens' face was cold. In a cold voice, he said, "Kill."

Guillermo and the others felt their hearts quiver.

"In a few more days, it will be the 10000 year anniversary of the Yulan Festival. Let's arrange for Linley's execution to be after the festival." Heidens announced.

Guillermo, who had the closest relationship with Linley, sighed in his heart.

A genius who would have dominated the entire continent would now see his fate cut short. Guillermo knew very well that with Linley imprisoned in the Radiant Temple, there was no way Linley would be able to escape. Linley wouldn't even be able to leave his cell.

"That Cesar has some sort of a relationship with Linley, but even Cesar doesn't have the ability to break into the Radiant Temple to rescue Linley." Guillermo sighed secretly.

Linley would definitely die!

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple, within the private cell.

"Get in."

Linley entered the cell, and the six Executors closed the door behind him.

As the six Executors turned and immediately left, one of them, a silver-haired man, turned to look at Linley. "Kid, let me give you a reminder.

Although you have recovered your strength, don't dream about breaking out of this cell."

The other five Executors halted as well, and a bald old Executor laughed, "Break out of the cell? Kid, if you are able to break out of this cell, that would mean your power is on the level of his Holiness himself."

"What do you mean?" Linley asked.

Linley himself couldn't see anything special about this cell. Given his power as a warrior of the ninth rank when Dragonformed, an ordinary stone cell would be shattered as easily as paper.

"The Radiant Temple is the most incredible edifice the Radiant Church possesses. The entire Temple itself hides a massive magical formation within it known as the Glory of the Radiant Sovereign. It's impossible for you to do the slightest bit of damage to it, whether from the inside or from the outside." That silver-haired man said proudly. "Kid, let me tell you, the only chance you have of breaking out from this cell is by breaking the lock on the cell door. I can also tell you that the lock is made from metals that were alloyed with some adamantine."

Finished speaking, the six Executors laughed loudly amongst each other, then left.

Linley was silent.

When he heard the words, 'adamantine', Linley understood that it was probably impossible for him to break out. According to legend, when the earth-style spell Earthguard reached the Deity level, the Earthguard armor would be composed of adamantine. Its power and durability was enough to be able to withstand several blows of even a Deity-level combatant. As for a Saint-level combatant, there was no way at all for them to break it.

Linley was an earth-style magus, and so naturally he knew about the legends regarding the Earthguard armor at its peak power.

Upon becoming a Saint-level Grand Magus, the Earthguard armor would be composed of diamonds, and upon breaking through to the Deity-level, the armor would be of adamantine.

“Linley, I expect that this cell is used for the Radiant Church to imprison combatants of the ninth rank, or perhaps even the Saint-level.” Doehring Cowart spoke. “Although this lock only has a trace amount of adamantine and isn’t pure adamantine, it would probably be hard for even a Saint-level combatant to break it.”

Linley nodded.

From the words of the Executors, he had already figured out that he would not be able to break out, as they had said that breaking out would demonstrate Linley’s power was at least on par with the Holy Emperor.

That next afternoon.

Monroe Dawson, Yale, Reynolds, and George were all seated together around a table covered with breakfast items. During this period of time, Yale, Reynold, and George had never stopped being worried about Linley. But even Monroe Dawson making a personal appeal had failed. What could they possibly do?

Break into the Radiant Temple to rescue Linley? Even Monroe Dawson wouldn’t dare to do such a thing.

“Yale, in two days, it’ll be the Yulan Festival. This Yulan Festival will be the 10000th Yulan Festival, which we’ll only see once in our lives. You three kids can have a nice, rowdy time.” Monroe Dawson chortled.

Monroe Dawson had treated these two dear bros of his son Yale with the utmost friendliness.

This was because all three of Yale’s bros were quite out of the ordinary. Linley, George, and Reynolds. Reynolds’ clan possessed an astonishing amount of power in the O’Brien Empire’s military. George’s clan held

tremendous influence within the Yulan Empire, and wasn't much weaker than the Leon clan.

As for Linley, although his clan was now weak, it was still the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors. And Linley's own potential was limitless.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps.

"Milord Chairman, an emissary of the Radiant Church have arrived." A servant said respectfully.

Hearing the words "Radiant Church", the eyes of Yale, George, and Reynolds all lit up, and they turned to look at the servant. Monroe Dawson knew what his son was thinking, and he immediately instructed with a laugh, "Let them in."

"Yes."

A short while later, a Vicar walked in. He said respectfully, "Chairman Dawson. His Holiness instructed me to deliver this letter to you." As he spoke, he withdrew from within his clothes a beautifully, lavishly decorated letter.

The servant immediately accepted the letter, then gave it to Monroe Dawson.

Monroe Dawson immediately opened the letter. But upon seeing the contents of the letter, his face changed. He said coldly, "You can leave now."

That Vicar bowed slightly, then left.

"Father. What is in the letter?" Yale asked urgently. "Does it have to do with Third Bro?" Reynolds and George all looked hopefully at Monroe Dawson.

Monroe Dawson nodded.

“The Holy Emperor informs me that the internal deliberations of the Radiant Church have concluded. They will execute Linley in secret.” Monroe Dawson’s words were like thunder, ringing in the ears of Yale, Reynolds, and George, whose faces immediately turned white. They were stunned for a long moment.

“No, no way.”

Yale was the first to begin shouting. He snatched the letter from his father’s hands, and with shaking hands held it as he began to read. By his side, Reynolds and George both craned their necks to take a look as well. But when the three of them saw the contents, they all turned frantic with fear.

“No!!!”

Yale leapt out of his seat, intending to rush directly out of the hall. “Yale!” Monroe Dawson frowned, shouting coldly.

“Stop him.” Monroe Dawson ordered.

Yale turned his head to stare at his father. Frantic, he said, “Father, I beg you, lead some men to rescue Third Bro. If necessary, the Conglomerate can give up something valuable. I refuse to believe that the Radiant Church won’t care whatsoever about our Conglomerate. Father, I beg you.”

“Hmph, what do you know? If there really were terms that could be negotiated, the Holy Emperor would’ve started negotiating with me long ago. The grievance which Linley has with the Radiant Church clearly isn’t what we thought it was. Otherwise, the Radiant Church wouldn’t decide to execute a genius like him. Enough. Men, escort your young master to his room. Let him spend a good period of time calming down.”

Immediately, the guards escorted Yale back to his room. No matter how frantically or how angrily Yale protested, it was of no use.

Reynolds and George could only maintain their silence.

They didn't have any special relationship with Monroe Dawson, after all. But in their hearts, they were frantic on Linley's behalf.

A visitor had arrived at Linley's cell. It was Guillermo.

"Guillermo." Linley looked at Guillermo with some surprise.

Guillermo had brought with him an extremely lavish meal, and delivered it through the small opening in the cell door.

Guillermo looked at Linley. He let out a sigh. "Linley, I really viewed you very favorably. But…alas. Perhaps it was meant to be, that you couldn't become a member of our Radiant Church. Alright, have a good meal. You won't have many meals left."

Hearing these words, Linley was stunned.

"Lord Guillermo, what do you mean by saying this?" Linley looked at Guillermo.

Guillermo let out a sigh. "In two days, which is to say, January 2nd, the last day of your existence will arrive." Guillermo really did like this young man, Linley. Especially after finding out the reason why Linley attempted to assassinate Clayde, Guillermo felt all the more regretful for how Linley's fate had turned out.

He could've had a glorious future, but for the sake of his parents' deaths, he was willing to forsake everything in order to gain revenge.

Although he, Guillermo, would never have acted in such a way, in his heart, he still felt admiration for Linley.

"January 2nd?"

Linley's facial expressions changed several times, but finally he closed his eyes. He already completely understood. Clearly, in two days, he would be put to death.

“Thank you, Lord Guillermo. If it wasn’t for you, I would’ve clung to the hope of surviving.” Linley laughed calmly.

Guillermo looked at Linley. With a low sigh, he shook his head, then turned his head, leaving Linley alone in his cell.

“January 2nd. They had to wait until after the Yulan Festival to kill me, eh? Tomorrow will be the Yulan Festival. I believe it will also be the day of Kalan and Alice’s marriage as well, right?” Knowing that he was about to die, Linley somehow felt calmer and more at peace than he ever had before.

Chapter 4 – A Giant Foot

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 4, A Giant Foot

The night between year 9999 and year 10000. The snow flew about as the temperature in Fenlai City dropped to an astonishing low. Within a cold cell in the Radiant Temple, Linley was resting against one of the icy stone walls of the cell.

Linley didn't notice the cold at all.

"I know that I am about to be put to death, but I don't have any ability to resist at all." Linley lowered his head, sighing softly.

He had made attempts, had tried.

But this cell was exactly as the Executor had described. It possessed incredible endurance, and even in Dragonform Linley was not able to break the lock or the room in the slightest. All he could do was quietly wait for the sentence which was soon to be carried out.

The dark night went by quickly, and that great blizzard finally came to an end as well. Both the nobles as well as the commoners were celebrating, in their own ways, the arrival of this 10000th Yulan Festival on this glorious, cloudless day. In particular, the Radiant Temple.

On this day, in the air above the Radiant Temple, countless beautiful mirages and illusions created by magical formations were on display.

In the Holy Capital, Fenlai City, today was a day for a sea of celebrations. That massive plaza in front of the Radiant Temple was filled to the brim with people who hailed from all sorts of places. Everyone was calling out in excitement to each other over this 10000th Yulan Festival, and the Radiant Temple organized many lively activities as well.

Yale, Reynolds, and George were within the third floor of a hotel. They stared at the far-away Radiant Temple Plaza. The plaza was covered densely by people, a veritable sea of people.

“Boss Yale, are we going to go to the wedding ceremony of the Debs clan today?” George asked.

The wedding of Kalan of the Debs clan was on Yulan Day. Today was an extremely propitious day, and there were many families in Fenlai City holding wedding ceremonies on this day. These sorts of weddings would start at noon, and continue until nightfall.

“Yes. Of course.” Yale had an ugly look on his face.

Due to Linley’s affairs, Yale, George, and Reynolds were all in low spirits.

“Hmph, Third Bro was too soft-hearted towards this b*tch and that punk Kalan. But now, Third Bro is going to be executed, while that b*tch and that punk Kalan are going to be enjoying themselves and hold a wedding ceremony.” Yale was burning with rage.

He had never looked kindly upon Alice and Kalan.

Especially right now, with Linley on the verge of being executed, and himself unable to save him. He had no place to vent his frustrations and anxiety. This only made him now view Alice and Kalan even more unfavorably.

“Right. They want their wedding to go smoothly? In their dreams!” Reynolds ground his teeth as well.

Even George felt a desire to wreck this wedding.

Yale, George, and Reynolds had all been consumed by worry for Linley for days now. Knowing that Linley was about to die, but not having the ability to rescue him, they couldn’t help but think back to all the years they had spent together growing up. They hated themselves all the more for not

having the power to save him.

And right at this time, Alice, who had discarded Linley, was now going to get married to Kalan.

How could these three just let it slide?

On Greenleaf Road, the Deb's clan's manor.

At noon, one noble or magnate after another arrived at the Debs clan's manor. Although after the smuggling case, the Debs clan was no longer one of the topmost clans of the Kingdom of Fenlai, they were still a clan with some influence. At least, in the Kingdom of Fenlai, they could still be ranked amongst the top twenty. "Lord Count Juneau has arrived!"

"Lord Baron Prey [Pu'lei] has arrived!"

Nobles, noble ladies, affluent girls, all entered the manor of the Debs clan. The leader of the Debs clan, Bernard, welcomed them all in a very friendly manner. The Debs clan's power had shrunk dramatically, but within the Kingdom of Fenlai, they were still able to remain standing on fairly stable footing.

"Lord Duke Bonalt has arrived!"

Hearing the words 'Duke Bonalt', many nobles turned to look at the door. Even Bernard immediately hurried over to welcome him. Right now, the highest ranking person attending this wedding ceremony would be Duke Bonalt. Last time, at the engagement ceremony, even King Clayde, the ruler of Fenlai, had come. But this time, for the wedding proper, his Majesty did not come.

Everyone knew the reason why.

"Lord Duke, your attendance brings great honor and joy to our Debs clan." Bernard said humbly.

Duke Bonalt nodded.

After the assassination attempt at Linley's manor, the Right Premier Merritt had died. Although Clayde had promoted another important minister to the rank of Right Premier, in terms of influence, there was no way he could compare for now with Merritt, who had been Right Premier for decades.

What's more, the Minister of Finance, Patterson, was also dead. Right now, in the entire Kingdom of Fenlai, perhaps the most powerful, influential figure aside from the ruler was this Left Premier, Duke Bonalt.

"Kalan, come and pay your respects to Duke Bonalt." Bernard immediately called out.

Kalan was dressed very handsomely today. The pure black tailored suit he was wearing made him the most outstanding-looking young man present today. Kalan very modestly bowed in front of Duke Bonalt. "Duke Bonalt, welcome to my wedding."

"Congratulations, Kalan." Duke Bonalt said with a casual laugh. But just at this moment…

"Young master Yale of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived!"

When these words rang out, Bernard's eyes immediately lit up, and even Duke Bonalt headed over alongside him. These other nobles of Fenlai naturally couldn't compete with the Dawson Conglomerate. The Dawson clan of the Dawson Conglomerate was one of the most powerful clans within the entire Yulan continent.

Yale, dressed in a sleek black suit.

Reynolds, dressed in a handsome blue suit.

George, dressed in a faintly checkered white suit.

The three walked in, shoulder by shoulder, causing all the watching nobles

to stare at them with bright eyes. Generally speaking, magi would have a certain aura about them. This was because magi often entered the meditative state, resulting them being very much in sync with natural elemental essence. That, combined with their powerful spiritual energy, gave them a certain aura.

In addition, Yale, George, and Reynolds all belonged to ancient clans. Clearly, their refinement and aura could not be matched by the likes of most nobles in Fenlai.

“Young master Yale, welcome! And these two are?” Bernard could tell at a single glance that these two definitely weren’t from any ordinary clans either.

Yale laughed calmly. “These two are my two dear bros from the Ernst Institute.”

Reynolds courteously said, “Mr. Bernard, I am from the Dunstan [Deng’si’tan] clan of the O’Brien Empire. You can address me as Reynolds.”

“The Dunstan clan?”

Both Bernard and Duke Bonalt were startled. Everyone present with some experience knew of the fame of the Dunstan clan. The Dunstan clan was an extremely powerful clan within the O’Brien Empire, a clan which controlled an exceedingly powerful military force.

“Young master Reynolds, our Debs clan warmly welcomes your arrival!” Bernard said excitedly.

The arrival of a young master from the Dunstan clan naturally gained a great deal of face to Bernard. Nearby, Kalan also bowed very courteously. But it was clear that the difference between him and a descendant of one the great clans was extremely large.

“And this?” Bernard looked towards George.

George smiled. “Mr. Bernard, I come from the Walsh [Hua’shi] clan of the Yulan Empire.”

“The Walsh clan?” The hearts of all the nearby nobles thumped hard. The Walsh clan was an ancient clan with thousands of years of history. In the Yulan Empire, they possessed tremendous influence, and was pretty much on the same level as the Leon clan of Dixie and Delia.

“Young master George, your arrival today brings exceptional honor to our Debs clan.” Bernard was extremely humble.

Both the Walsh clan and the Dunstan clan were extremely powerful clans from the Four Great Empires. They were clans which could influence the internal strategies of their respective empires. Even before the fall, the Debs clan couldn’t compare with the likes of these clans, much less the current Debs clan.

The wedding ceremony of the Debs clan was a very lively affair. Many nobles as well as many young noble ladies wanted to strike up conversations with Yale, George, and Reynolds. In the eyes of those young noble ladies, even if they abandoned the thoughts of becoming a principal wife, if they could become even just a secondary wife to one of those three, their clans would receive countless benefits.

As for the original center of attention, Kalan, much less attention was now paid to him.

But there were three people whose attentions were focused on him. Yale, Reynolds, and George.

“Look. Miss Alice and Miss Rowling have arrived.” Suddenly, a voice rang out in the hall. Right now, the two female leads had appeared, dressed in beautiful wedding gowns. They entered from a side door, and Kalan immediately went to go welcome them. Very naturally, both Alice and Rowling slipped their arms around Kalan’s.

At this time, Yale, Reynolds, and George finally acted.

“Haha, Kalan, these two must be your wives, right? They really are beautiful!” Reynolds was the first to laugh and walk over.

Seeing them walk over, Kalan immediately headed towards them with his two wives. “Rowling, Alice, pay your respects to these three young masters. This is young master Reynolds of the Dunstan clan, and this is…” But halfway through his words, George let out a cry of surprise, shouting out loudly, “Alice?! You’re getting married to this Kalan?”

George’s shout was very loud. These words caused the entire hall to fall silent.

To say something like this at someone’s wedding ceremony was far too impolite.

“Right, Alice, aren’t you dating our Third Bro?” Reynolds added.

It was Yale’s turn to speak. “Second Bro, Fourth Bro, you two didn’t know this, but this Alice has already broken up with Third Bro. She’s going to get married with this Kalan now.”

“She broke up with Third Bro?”

George and Reynolds both shook their heads, sighing.

Reynolds then immediately said, “Alice, since you abandoned our Third Bro to be together with this Kalan fellow, then you definitely will be his principal wife, right?” “Actually, no. The principal wife is this Miss Rowling. This was already proclaimed at the engagement ceremony.” Yale immediately said.

These two sentences made Alice’s face turn scarlet, while the look on Kalan’s face was extremely awkward as well. But not a single person in the entire hall dared to berate Yale, Reynolds, or George for their discourtesy. Given their statuses, who would dare?

“Three young masters, we have to toast our guests. Please excuse us.” Kalan forcibly suppressed the rage in his heart and spoke modestly.

“Alright.” Reynolds nodded as well.

Kalan immediately led Rowling and Alice towards other tables. Yale, George, and Reynolds only coldly watched him depart. Thinking about how Linley was probably going to be executed soon, their hearts were filled with even more rage at the injustice of it all.

Suddenly…

“Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!”

A terrifying series of sounds could be heard from outside. It was a low, somber sound that made the earth tremble with each vibration, and all of the utensils in the hall were knocked to the floor.

“What’s going on outside?” A nobleman in the hall stood up in surprise.

“Rowling, Alice, stay put.” Kalan immediately ran out of the main hall with his father, and many other nobles ran out as well. They wanted to see what exactly was going on outside, for such a huge ruckus to be caused.

Reynolds, Yale, and George also headed outside, curious.

But right at this moment…

“BAM!”

A giant foot suddenly descended from the heavens, landing directly in the front courtyard of the Debs clan’s manor. That giant foot just happened to land directly on Kalan and Bernard, who had just entered the front courtyard. The sound of bone splintering could be heard as the two of them, father and son, were immediately smashed into a meaty paste. The ground was stained with their blood.

That foot was over four meters long, and was covered with thick golden fur.

“Ah!” Many people raised their heads to stare at the monster.

This was an enormous golden-furred ape, at least twenty or thirty meters tall, the size of an eight-floor tall building. This gigantic golden ape’s eyes were like a pair of giant purple carriage wheels. The giant golden ape’s body seemed to be brimming with power, causing the very air around it to shudder.

“Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape! A Saint-level magical beast, the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape!” Seeing this magical beast, Yale couldn’t help but stare at it, his jaw slack.

That Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape raised its head, letting out an excited howl, and spoke in the human tongue, “Haha, kill, haha, kill them for me! Kill them all! The more you kill, the greater the rewards the King will give you! Haha, kill!”

“Bam.” “Screech!”

Yale, George, and Reynolds could suddenly hear the howls and cries of magical beasts from all directions, as though the entire world had suddenly been filled with them. Suddenly, Yale, George, and Reynolds saw that the entire sky had been filled with countless, innumerable flying magical beasts!

“Dragonhawks! These are Dragonhawks! This…” Reynolds was stunned and slackjawed as well.

From far away, an enormous flock of Dragonhawks had appeared, covering the entire sky with their presences. The density of Dragonhawks was so high that there was no way to count their number.

Suddenly, everyone felt as though the day of the apocalypse had descended upon them. Right now, no one could be bothered to grieve or feel pity for

Kalan and Bernard, who had been crushed to a pulp by that giant foot of the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape.

Chapter 5 – Apocalypse Day

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 5, Apocalypse Day

“What on earth is going on?”

Yale, Reynolds, and George were all stunned. Just moments ago, they were participating in a wedding banquet, but then all of a sudden, a giant Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape had dropped out of the skies, apparently with a huge host of magical beasts behind him. That incredibly supermassive flock of Dragonhawks in the sky was terrifying to behold.

Not only were the three bros stunned; all of the people within the city of Fenlai were stunned.

“Get out, now!” Yale immediately shouted.

Yale, George, and Reynolds hurriedly fled from the Debs clan’s manor. Fortunately, the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape didn’t pay any attention to the three of them, because there were simply too many people running about in Fenlai City. Someone worthy of the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape noticing would have to be at least a combatant of the ninth rank or a Saint-level combatant.

“Young master.” The vast majority of the guards of the Dawson Conglomerate had undergone training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and so were able to maintain their calm despite seeing that vast number of magical beasts descend upon them.

“Quick, to my father!”

Yale immediately shouted.

Escorted by the Dawson Conglomerate bodyguards, Yale, Reynolds, and

George quickly rushed back to the Dawson Conglomerate's headquarters. On the way back, Yale noticed that there were a huge number of flying magical beasts already within the city of Fenlai. Not only were there Dragonhawks, there were also Winged Pegasi.

There were also magical beasts of the seventh rank such as Thunderwing Pegasi and Blue-eyed Thunderhawks, and magical beasts of the eighth rank such as Golden Sunhawks as well as various giant dragons.

Both the skies and the streets of Fenlai City were covered with massive magical beasts. The apocalypse had descended onto Fenlai City, and there was no way to fend it off. Even the weakest of the giant flying dragons was a magical beast of the eighth rank. Over a hundred giant flying dragons had come to attack. Who could stop them?

Even the Eight Ace Regiments of the Radiant Temple would see their numbers cut in half from a single combined fiery blast from those hundred plus dragons.

"Apocalypse. Apocalypse!"

The entire Fenlai City had already sunken into a mass of fires and floods. But the dwellers of Fenlai City didn't know that these magical beasts made up only a fraction of the total number coming…because the magical beasts on the ground far outnumbered the flying beasts. But in terms of speed, of course the flying magical beasts were much faster and had arrived first.

Thus, the flying magical beasts had led the attack as the vanguard.

….

The soldiers standing on the walls of Fenlai City were all stunned. This was the 10000th anniversary of the Yulan Festival. Just earlier, during lunch, they had all celebrated by drinking alcohol, but now, all they could see were endless numbers of magical beasts. And in front of them…

"Magical beasts. So many. So many." Those soldiers were all speechless.

The earth was shaking. Outside the city of Fenlai, an army of hundreds of thousands of Windwolves were charging towards the city at high speed. Just the very sight of those hundreds of thousands of Windwolves charging at them in masse was enough to freeze the blood of the watchers.

“Where are the magi?! Magi!”

“Magicannons! Load the magicannons!”

The army officers all began shouting loudly, trying to do their best to get their soldiers ready. In reality, they also knew that struggling was hopeless, because a huge number of winged magical beasts had already descended within the heart of Fenlai City.

“Captain, what is that?” Suddenly, a soldier stared speechlessly at the skies.

The captain looked in that direction as well, and saw that up in the air, there was an enormous magical beast that was speeding towards them. This magical beast had no wings at all, but it sliced through the air as it flew towards them at astonishing speed.

“Flying in the air. This is…this is a Saint-level magical beast. A Saint-level magical beast!”

That captain now understood that there really was no chance at all.

“Groaaaaaaaaaaaaawr!”

At the same time, far away from Fenlai City, a terrifying roar could be heard. A huge form passed through the horde of Windwolves at high speed, moving so fast that it was at least ten times speedier than the Windwolves. It probably wasn’t much slower than the Saint-level beast flying in the air.

This was an enormous beast, at least thirty meters tall. Physically, it looked exactly like an enormous lion, except its eyes were bloody red!

A magus on the walls of Fenlai City screamed, “Saint-level magical beast, Bloody-eyed Maned Lion! Heavens, another Saint-level magical beast! It’s a Bloody-eyed Maned Lion! Amongst behemoth-type monsters, only the Golden Behemoth is a match for it!”

Everyone was stunned.

There was no way they could match it in power.

“Haha! Bloody, why are you, a Saint-level magical beast, running on the ground?” The giant beast flying in the air spoke with words that sounded like booming thunder.

Quite a few soldiers below raised their heads to look up.

“It’s speaking in human tongues! So it’s true that Saint-level magical beasts can speak in human tongues!” This was the first time anyone present had ever personally encountered a Saint-level magical beast, much less two of them! By now, they could tell what the magical beast in the air looked like.

The body of Saint-level magical beast above was obsidian black, and it looked like a dragon, but without wings.

“Saint-level magical beast, Tyrant Wyrm! A hegemon amongst dragons!” Another magus cried out in terror.

Dragons were primarily divided into two types. The first type was the winged dragons, such as the eighth-ranked Emerald Dragons and Fire Dragons, or the ninth-ranked Silver Dragons, Black Dragons, and Frost Dragons, or the Saint-level Gold Dragons, Prismatic Dragons, and Bloodgem Dragons.

The other type was the wingless dragons, such as the seventh-ranked Velocidragons, the ninth ranked Armored Razorback Wyrms and Stegowyrms, or the Saint-level Thunder Lizards, Tyrant Wyrms, and Triceratops Wyrms.

The main difference between winged dragons and wingless dragons lay in the power of their bodies.

The wingless dragons possessed immense power within their bodies. The Armored Razorback Wyrms, the Stegowyrms, the Thunder Lizards, and the Tyrant Wyrms all possessed incredibly durable bodies that were somewhat stronger than winged dragons of the same rank.

“Hmph, enough chitchat. Let’s compete and see who can kill the most.” The Bloody-eyed Maned Lion’s terrible voice growled out, shaking the earth with its echoes.

“Fine!” The Tyrant Wyrm roared in response.

Instantly, that enormous, hundred-meter plus body of the Tyrant Wyrm descended from the heavens, aiming directly at the city walls. The walls of Fenlai City were extremely sturdy, and were covered with countless powerful magical formations. But because there were too many flying magical beasts present, there was no way to activate the magical barriers without interference.

“Do you think you can run faster than me?” The Bloody-eyed Maned Lion roared angrily as well, increase its speed still further.

These two terrifying massive beasts charged towards the city, one from the air, another from the ground. The walls protecting Fenlai City were over ten meters thick. Walls that thick were definitely capable of defending against enemy armies, but facing two such terrifying magical beasts…

After all, Tyrant Wyrms and Bloody-eyed Maned Lions could only be matched by peak-stage Saint-level human combatants!

“Bam!”

At virtually the exact same instant, the Tyrant Worm and the Bloody-eyed Maned Lion slammed into the wall. Under the attack of these two Saint-level massive magical beasts, the ten-meter thick wall was only able to

serve as a slight, momentary impediment. And then, in the next heartbeat, the section of the walls blocking them collapsed entirely.

“Boom!”

Those two parts of the wall exploded, sending rubble flying everywhere. The rubble alone killed many people.

“Growwwwwwwr!”

The Bloody-eyed Maned Lion and the Tyrant Wyrm excitedly charged towards the heart of Fenlai City. Given their astonishing speed, most people would totally be unable to dodge out of the way of their charge. Their massive weight and the force of each step would most likely heavily injure even a warrior of the ninth rank. A warrior of the eighth rank would die from being stepped on, no question at all.

“Hoooooowl!”

Hundreds of thousands of Windwolves charged forward, like the boundless waves of the sea, charging through the openings created by the two Saint-level magical beasts. Other Windwolves just leapt directly into the air, bypassing the wall entirely. Windwolves possessed incredible leaping abilities, after all, and were able to leap 20-30 meters in a bound. These walls were totally useless in stopping them.

Hundreds of thousands of Windwolves had entered Fenlai City…

“Rumble, rumble, rumble.”

The earth continued to shake with thunder-like galloping sounds. Behind the Windwolves were countless numbers of different types of land-based magical creatures. There were Mastodons and other creatures far more terrifying that Windwolves. Those soldiers who had been lucky enough to survive, staring at that massive flood of magical beasts, knew true despair.

“The Holy Capital is finished.” Staring off at into the distance, a soldier

hiding in a corner of the walls said in despair.

“Crunch.”

A Windwolf suddenly appeared next to him and bit his head off in a single bite.

……

A cell in the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

“What is going on?” Linley climbed to his feet. He could feel the ground shaking and hear the thunderous roars, howls, as well as screams of misery from outside. Having stayed so long within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley could tell just from listening to the sounds what sorts of magical beasts had arrived.

“Why are there so many magical beasts here? They seem to be everywhere.” Linley was totally amazed.

“Boom!”

A terrifyingly powerful force struck against the Radiant Temple. All the walls of the Radiant Temple suddenly began to glow with a dim light. Despite having received such a tremendous blow, the Radiant Temple had managed to withstand it.

“This Radiant Temple’s defense is really something.” A deep, thick voice growled from outside. The power and strength of that voice was such that even in his cell, Linley could clearly hear each word.

“Someone is attacking the Radiant Temple?”

Linley found it somewhat hard to believe. The Holy Union was one of the six major powers, and the Radiant Church had existed for millennia. In all that time, no one had ever dared to attack the Radiant Temple. But given the attack just then, as well as that loud voice, someone had definitely just

attacked the Radiant Temple.

“KING!”

Suddenly, in unison, several rough voices rang out loudly. There was definitely more than one loud voice!

“Stop!” An angry bellow.

“That’s the Holy Emperor.” Linley could clearly tell it was him, but right after the Holy Emperor’s voice rang out, there was a….

“BAM!”

A terrifyingly powerful force descended upon the Radiant Temple, causing the entire Radiant Temple to shake violently. The light shining from the myriad complicated magical patterns covering the Radiant Temple began to flicker and shudder, while on the walls of the Temple, cracks began to emerge.

“How terrifying.” Doehring Cowart sighed in amazement. “A single attack was enough to nearly collapse the entire Radiant Temple.”

“BAM!”

Yet another terrifying strike. This time, even the giant magical formation covering the Radiant Temple, the Glory of the Radiant Sovereign, wasn’t able to withstand it. With an exploding sound, the Radiant Temple split open at the middle, and the top eight floors of the Radiant Temple collapsed.

“The protective magical formation was destroyed.” Linley could feel his cell beginning to shift about, as if it were sliding down.

Linley was both amazed and overjoyed. Before this, the cell walls were extremely sturdy, because any force used against it would be absorbed by the entire magical formation. But now, the magical formation itself had

been destroyed! Linley's hands transformed into a pair of draconic claws, and he immediately smashed a giant hole into the walls with five or six punches.

Linley immediately burst out from within the hole he had just created.

"Bloodviolet Godsword!" When Linley had been seized, the Bloodviolet Godsword had been taken from him by the Radiant Church. But since the Bloodviolet Godsword had already been personalized and bound by Linley long ago, with a mental command by Linley, it began to fly towards his direction, arriving in Linley's hands shortly afterwards.

By now, the Radiant Temple was in a state of chaos. No one could be bothered to worry about Linley.

With a tap of the foot, Linley sent himself leaping down into the plaza below. Right now, the Radiant Temple Plaza was littered with corpses. Far too many had just died. There were many people engaged in battle against magical beasts as well.

"So many people."

Linley was totally stunned.

The skies were filled with countless types of flying magical beasts – Dragonhawks, Bluewind Hawks, Winged Pegasi, Thunderwing Pegasi, Emerald Dragons, Fire Dragons, Black Dragons…all sorts of dragons. The sight of these creatures blocking out the sky with their mass was enough to freeze anyone's heart.

And the numbers of magical beasts on the ground were even more astonishing.

"Is that…?"

Linley stared in the direction of the Radiant Temple. In the air directly above it, there were over ten enormous magical beasts.

“A Savage Worldbear…Bloody-eyed Maned Lion…Electrobolt Panther… Thunderwing White Tiger…Thunder Lizard…Tyrant Wyrm…” Linley saw one legendary Saint-level magical beast after another, all hovering in the air above the Radiant Temple. He was totally stupefied at the number of Saint-level magical beasts that had just appeared.

What’s more, the person leading these Saint-level magical beasts seemed to be a human.

He was a very devilish looking young man, wearing a dim gold robe, with a strange slit-like scar on his forehead. This devilish young man was coldly, calmly looking at Heidens and Heidens’ forces. Heidens, Mr. Fallen Leaf, and five other Saint-level human combatants were all standing in mid-air, staring back at the young man. Clearly, the Radiant Church’s side was in very bad shape.

“You…” Heidens and the other humans were furious.

“I really am so sorry for disturbing you on your Yulan Festival, but I must inform you that your Radiant Church needs to go find another place to be your Holy Capital.” The devilish young man said calmly.

Linley could clearly hear these words, and he couldn’t help but be secretly shocked at how terrifying this young man was.

“Boss, boss!” Linley suddenly heard Bebe’s voice ringing out in his mind. Linley could sense Bebe’s location, and he couldn’t help but turn to look at him. He saw a black blur pass through the massed throngs of people and magical beasts. Very shortly afterwards, the blur arrived, and with a leap it threw itself directly into Linley’s arms.

“Bebe.” Linley felt extremely moved.

“Boss.” In Linley’s arms, Bebe was also so moved that his little eyes turned moist.

Chapter 6 – Deity-Level Combatant

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 6, Deity-Level Combatant

There were magical beasts both inside and outside of Fenlai City. Countless numbers of magical beasts. This city which had just been celebrating the 10000th Yulan Festival now found itself having run into the day of Apocalypse. Deaths were happening constantly, and the population of this Holy Capital, Fenlai City, was dropping at a terrifying rate.

Both the higher ups of the Radiant Temple as well as the commoners were all fleeing for their lives from the magical beasts.

“Quick, quick, stop dawdling!”

Duke Bonalt roared furiously. Right now, Duke Bonalt didn’t give a damn about his ‘king’. He only led his own family out of his Duke’s manor, along with ten of his most powerful guards, immediately fleeing towards the outside of the city. The only thing he had on him was a few magicrystal cards.

They were fleeing for their lives!

“Father, let’s go rescue Nessa [Ni’sha],” pleaded Duke Bonalt’s son Albert [Ai’bo’te].

“You bastard, if you want to live, then follow me!” Duke Bonalt howled furiously. “Let’s go!”

Duke Bonalt paid no more attention to his son, and immediately led his wife and his other children out. As for Albert, he hesitated there for a moment, then ground his teeth and pulled out his sword as he ran in the other direction.

“You ungrateful whelp!” Duke Bonalt swore, but in his heart, he was extremely grieved.

But Duke Bonalt knew very well that right now, Fenlai City was covered with magical beasts. Magical beasts of the seventh rank could appear at any time, and even magical beasts of the eighth rank and ninth rank were not rare. Right now, if they didn’t immediately flee the city, they wouldn’t have a chance at surviving.

“Son, forgive your father.” Duke Bonalt said to himself, while at the same time, he shouted at his guardsmen. “Quick, let’s leave Fenlai City! Once we’ve reached safety, each person will receive 30,000 gold coins!” At a time like this, Duke Bonalt was not going to be stingy.

“Yes, Lord Duke!” The guardsmen exulted. 30,000 gold coins was more than enough for them to live out their lives carefree.

But after travelling just two or three kilometers, they had already encountered and killed two magical beasts of the seventh rank, five magical beasts of the sixth rank, and three magical beasts of the fifth rank.

“Groooooowl!”

A ten-meter high black bear began to run at them from high speed from far away, each step causing the earth to shake. Seeing the black bear, all of the faces of the guardsmen turned white, and Duke Bonalt shouted loudly, “Quickly, flee! That’s a Violet Tattooed Bear! Quickly!”

An adult Violet Tattooed Bear was generally a magical beast of the ninth rank.

The Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear which Linley had encountered in the Foggy Valley within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was a particularly strong representative of its kind.

“Groooowl!” The Violet Tattooed Bear clearly had its eyes set on Duke Bonalt’s group, and it continued running towards them, causing both the

earth and the hearts of Duke Bonalt's group to shake. The Violet Tattooed Bear was running in a totally direct line towards them. Anything which got in its way was smashed.

"Bam!" With a wave of its arm, a three story high building was disintegrated, showering Duke Bonalt's group with rubble.

"Smash!" A piece of rubble nearly half the size of a man came smashing down on one of the young daughters of Duke Bonalt. The pretty, delicate head of that girl was instantly transformed into a pile of mud-like meat paste, as blood and brain matter splattered across the stone and across the ground.

Duke Bonalt and his men didn't even have the chance to be angry or to be heartbroken, because immediately afterwards, the Violet Tattooed Bear slammed down its huge paws upon one of the guards, turning him into nothing more than ground meat.

"Ah!" Duke Bonalt suddenly realized that a giant foot was coming for him, and he frantically tried to roll away.

"WHAP!"

The Violet Tattooed Bear stepped on Duke Bonalt, killing him on the spot. If someone as weak as Duke Bonalt would have been able to avoid the attack of a Violet Tattooed Bear, then the Violet Tattooed Bear wouldn't have been worthy of being classified as a magical beast of the ninth rank.

"Groooooooowl!" The Violet Tattooed Bear raised its head and roared, beating its chest with excitement, before turning and heading in a different direction to find more prey.

…….

Crushed to death. Swiped to death. Slapped to death. Bitten to death. This was extremely common and normal, now. Regardless of whether they were nobles or commoners, right now in Fenlai City, life was a very fragile thing.

And so, one noble and commoner after another died.

Fenlai City was a scene of utter catastrophe.

And the place where the slaughter was the most ferocious…was the area around the Radiant Temple.

On the massive plaza in front of the Radiant Temple, the mighty Knights of the Radiant Temple as well as the Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal were engaged in ferocious battle against the magical beasts. The defense here was the stiffest, and so even more magical beasts congregated here as well.

Linley and Bebe were in a corner of the Radiant Temple Plaza, but the two of them were very safe. This was because, given their current strength, they had nothing to fear as long as a Saint-level combatant didn't come attack them.

And right now, all the Saint-level combatants were in the skies above the Radiant Temple.

"Boss, there's so many Saint-level magical beasts." Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley looked up again at the Saint-level magical beasts in the air above the Radiant Temple. Linley hadn't expected that at a critical moment such as this, the Radiant Church was able to mobilize seven Saint-level combatants within Fenlai City.

"The Saint-level combatants which the Radiant Church officially acknowledges having can be counted on one hand. In truth, it has many powerful combatants lying hidden. This is just the Holy Capital, yet they already have seven Saint-level combatants. Most likely the total number of Saint-level combatants within the Holy Union is a good deal higher."

Linley finally had an idea of what the highest levels of power within the continent were like.

The aura of a Saint-level combatant was enough to cause dread in lesser individuals. Any of the seven Saint-level humans in the air above could easily kill Linley, as though Linley were nothing but an ant. But right now, those seven Saint-level humans were at a definite disadvantage!

Magical beasts were naturally more powerful than humans.

For ordinary magical beasts, immediately upon reaching the Saint-level, despite being early-stage Saint-level magical beasts, generally only middle-stage Saint-level human combatants would be a match for them. For those particularly powerful magical beasts which reached the Saint-level, such as an Armored Razorback Wyrm, or a Tyrant Wyrm, or a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor…immediately upon reaching the Saint-level, they could only be matched by a peak-stage human Saint-level combatant.

And right now…

Over ten Saint-level magical beasts stood in mid-air, and amongst them were a Bloody-eyed Maned Lion, a Tyrant Wyrm, a Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape, and other incredibly strong Saint-level magical beasts. Any one of them was capable of fighting with the Holy Emperor head to head.

What was even more amazing was that in front of these magical beasts, there was that devilish ‘young man’.

“Are you a human, or are you…?” Heidens stared at that devilish young man.

The devilish young man glanced coldly at Heidens. “A human? How could I be a pathetic human? Humans are nothing more than food to us magical beasts!” The devilish young man’s words were loaded with absolute contempt. Even when looking at Heidens, he was filled with nothing but utter contempt.

“Haha, if our almighty King wished to kill you, it would be as easy as flipping over his hands. He’s giving you guys face. You’d best accept it.

Haha…" That Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape shouted loudly with laughter.

The expression on Heidens' face changed dramatically, and so did the faces of the six Saint-level combatants behind him.

A magical beast that could take human form. What sort of power was this?

"Could it be that yet another Deity-level combatant has appeared on the Yulan continent? An invincible entity?" Heidens felt extremely sour. In the past, there had only been three individuals who had stood at the very peak of power in the Yulan continent; the 'War God' of the O'Brien Empire, the 'High Priest' of the Yulan Empire, and the 'King' of the Forest of Darkness.

Heidens didn't imagine that the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts would suddenly produce its own 'King', who was able to take human form as well.

"Broke through the Saint-level to reach the Deity-level. A Deity-level magical beast. This…" Heidens knew very well how terrifying a Deity-level magical beast was. To this 'King', killing these seven human Saint-level combatants would be like child's play.

Heidens instantly made his decision…

They had to retreat!

Right now, preserving as much power as remained to the Radiant Church was the most important thing of all. If it lost seven Saint-level combatants, the Radiant Church's power would drop by at least a large half, and its status would drop as well.

"A Deity-level magical beast. How could a Deity-level magical beast appear out of nowhere?" Heidens cursed to himself. He had no idea that this Deity-level magical beast had been accidentally released by Linley from within the Foggy Valley. And as it just so happened, when this Deity-level magical beast had implemented the plan he had been formulating for over half a year, he had accidentally saved Linley.

Fate truly was a strange thing.

“Mighty King of Magical Beasts, I am the Holy Emperor Heidens. Might I ask what you wish of me?” Heidens decided to submit.

The devilish young man smiled and nodded. “Your name is Heidens? Very well. What you need to do is lead your people and flee to the north. The magical beasts of my Mountain Range of Magical Beasts will also continue to expand to the north. When the day comes that my magical beasts feel they have enough territory, they will stop expanding.”

Heidens’ heart was filled with fury.

What sort of offer was this?

When they felt they had enough territory, they would stop expanding?

“Hmph, don’t worry. We won’t take over all of the territory belonging to your Holy Union. At most, we’ll take half. Right…as of right now, the Holy Capital of the Cult of Shadows has been destroyed by us as well.” The devilish young man said casually.

“The Holy Capital of the Cult of Shadows?” Heidens and the other six Saint-level combatants were all startled.

Could it be that the magical beasts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had launched simultaneous attacks against both the Radiant Church as well as the Cult of Shadows? This was too insane! They knew that the magical beasts in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts were quite numerous, and there were quite a few Saint-level magical beasts there as well. But they hadn’t imagined there would be enough to launch simultaneous assaults against two major powers.

“You can beat it now. Oh, and there’s one more thing I can tell you. My name…is Dylin [Di’lin].” The devilish young man said casually.

Hearing the conversation going on up above, Linley was totally stunned.

Clearly, this horde of magical beasts wasn't just attacking Fenlai City; it was attacking the entirety of both the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance. And judging from what the devilish young man was saying…

They intended to take over half of the territory of both the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance!

"Then it seems the twelve kingdoms and thirty-two duchies to the west of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts are going to plunge into disaster." Linley felt terrified.

"The King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin?"

Linley firmly imprinted this name, 'Dylin', into his memory. After having quietly listened for a while, Linley stealthily made his way through the crowds and departed, heading to his own residence at high speed. This was because he had left a number of things back at his manor.

"Hoooowl!" A powerfully built Windwolf noticed Linley and immediately lunged at him.

"Swish!"

A flash of violet light. Linley didn't even pause or slow down, but that powerful Windwolf suddenly split in half, staining the ground with its blood. On the road back to his manor, Linley saw that the streets had become avenues of death and destruction. There were magical beasts everywhere.

But by the time Linley reached the intersection between the Fragrant Pavilion Road and the Greenleaf Road, Linley saw a squad of troops numbering thirty-something strong. Wherever this squad went, the magical beasts were unable to block them.

"Boss Yale?"

Linley suddenly saw that Yale was bound on the back of a powerful

warhorse. “Second Bro and Fourth Bro are here as well. Only, they are riding their horses.”

“Father, let me go, let me go! Let me go save Third Bro! The Radiant Temple has already been demolished. This is our best chance to save him!” Tied up and bound, Yale continued to shout loudly from his position on the back of the warhorse. The person actually riding the warhorse was an extremely powerful looking red-haired man.

The feeling he gave Linley was that he wasn’t weaker than Kaiser at all.

“Shut your mouth.” Riding in the center of this convoy was an extremely fat man, who was wielding a giant battleaxe in his hands. It danced like a vicious blur in his hands, clearly possessing tremendous power.

“Father? Is that the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate?” Linley secretly mused.

With a few leaps, Linley reached the convoy in seconds.

“Boss Yale, Reynolds, George!” Linley shouted loudly.

Yale, who was in the middle of shouting, was startled, and he couldn’t help but turn to look. Reynolds and George, who had been maintaining their silence while riding, turned to look as well. Seeing the blood-splattered Linley, and that familiar-looking little Shadowmouse, Bebe, on his shoulders, the eyes of all three of them turned instantly red.

“Third Bro!”

All three of them cried out in joyful unison.

Chapter 7 – Fleeing in Panic

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 7, Fleeing in Panic

When the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate, Monroe Dawson, saw what was going on, he immediately ordered, “Halt!”

In unison, all of the riders immediately pulled sharply on their horses’ reins. The horses rose high in the air on their hooves, then came down and halted.

“Release the young master.” Monroe Dawson instructed. The red-haired warrior of the ninth rank in charge of Yale’s protection and escort waved his hands, and the ropes covering Yale instantly split apart. Yale immediately jumped down from the horse. As for George and Reynolds, they had jumped down long ago already.

“Third Bro, are you okay?” Reynolds was so excited that his eyes were red.

“Third Bro, this is wonderful! I knew you would be fine!” Yale said excitedly.

George didn’t say anything at all, just thumping Linley on the chest.

“Third Bro, let’s go. Leave Fenlai City with us.” Yale immediately said, and Monroe Dawson also spoke out now. “This would be Linley, right? Come along with us. As long as we aren’t attacked by a Saint-level combatant, our safety should not be a problem at all.”

Monroe Dawson desired very much to have Linley be a member of the Dawson Conglomerate.

What the Dawson Conglomerate lacked the most was Saint-level combatants!

“No need. I have some affairs to settle. Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro, you leave first.” Linley shook his head.

“Third Bro, are you actually going to…?” Yale shouted in shock. Yale already guessed at what Linley was planning.

Linley nodded. “Right.”

Clayde. Had to die!

Last time, he failed because of the Saint-level Fateguard, but Linley believed that, given it was already extremely rare for a ruler of a kingdom to possess a single Fateguard, there was no way that Clayde could be in possession of a second one. Right now, the Saint-level combatants of the Radiant Temple were all focused on saving their own skins. It was highly unlikely that they would care about protecting a king at this point.

“Boss Yale, you can leave now. I’ll go find you all later.” Linley said.

“There’s too many magical beasts here this time. I’m afraid that the Ernst Institute is going to be attacked as well, given its proximity to Fenlai City. We won’t be heading back to the Institute. After reaching a safe location, both Reynolds and George plan to go back to their own empires. As for me…I’ll follow my father for now.” Yale replied. George and Reynolds both nodded.

“Good. Then in the future, I’ll go looking for you all. Boss Yale. Second Bro. Fourth Bro. Farewell.” Linley stared longingly at his three good bros, nodded heavily a single time, then turned and leapt in the opposite direction at high speed, travelling over a hundred meters in three steps.

Yale, Reynolds, and George all understood that seeing this Third Bro of theirs again in the future would be quite difficult.

The three of them immediately mounted their horses. “Go!”

The Dawson Conglomerate’s convoy headed out once more.

This day, countless clans within the city of Fenlai were on the brink of annihilation, and the Debs clan was no exception. The clan leader, Bernard, had been crushed to death by the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape's foot, along with the successor, Kalan. The other clan members didn't have any time to consider who the next clan leader should be, because immediately afterwards, they suffered an even greater loss. Magical beasts began attacking the Debs clan's manor.

Guards, servants, maids, clan members…they all died, one after the other. The people of the Debs clan all went wild, grabbing what valuables they could get their hands on and fleeing in all directions. By now, nobody would think about helping others.

"Big sister Alice, what should we do?" Rowling was stunned.

Alice was stunned at first as well, but now she recovered. "Come with me." Alice immediately shouted. Alice was a magus of the fourth rank, after all, while Rowling was a warrior of the fourth rank. Considering their ages, this was actually quite impressive. But in a situation where magical beasts of the fifth rank were everywhere, they didn't have the ability to resist at all.

Leading Rowling, Alice rushed into Kalan's room and grabbed two magicrystal cards from a drawer.

"Little sister Rowling, each of these two magicrystal cards have a hundred thousand gold coins in them. They'll be enough for us to survive on. We can go now." Alice handed Rowling one of the magicrystal cards, then they rushed out of the manor together. One of them was a magus, the other was a warrior.

They were in fairly good physical condition, and were able to run quite agilely.

"Save me! Ah!"

A maid frantically ran past Alice and Rowling, while behind her a

Windwolf was in hot pursuit. The Windwolf viciously charged directly to her, then snapped directly at her throat. Staring at Alice and Rowling, the maid's eyes were filled with the desire to keep living. But then, her eyes grew dim and faded.

Rowling stood there, staring stupidly at the spectacle.

"Hurry, let's go!"

Alice pulled at Rowling's hands. To try and be benevolent right now was to court certain death. Right now, even combatants of the ninth rank didn't dare to be too self-sacrificing, much less them. In the city of Fenlai, there was currently more than ten Saint-level combatants, and nearly a hundred magical beasts of the ninth rank.

The lower ranked magical beasts were even more plentiful, especially the fifth and sixth ranked magical beasts such as the horde of Windwolves, which numbered in the hundreds of thousands alone. There were only a million or so denizens in Fenlai City to begin with, and most of them only possessed strength at the first or second rank. They had no chance of fighting back.

"Rip!" Alice and Rowling, these two weak girls, ripped off the dress part of their wedding gowns, so as to allow themselves to run faster.

"Big sister Alice, there are magical beasts up ahead." Rowling suddenly called out.

"This way." Alice pulled Rowling by the hand, rushing towards a small alleyway.

But after crossing through the alleyway, they saw that the other side also had magical beasts. Alice and Rowling were forced to stay in the middle of the alley, between two manors. But suddenly, from the other side of the alley, a Vampiric Iron Bull charged towards them.

"Let's go!" Alice pulled strongly at Rowling's hands, and they rushed out of

the alleyway. They ignored the magical beasts up ahead. There were many people up ahead as well, after all. Those magical beasts might not necessarily target the two of them. They continued to charge forward as frantically as they could.

Their breaths were hoarse and ragged. This life and death juncture had increased their anxiety to the highest level.

“Howl!” “Howl!” Suddenly, from behind them, over ten Windwolves suddenly charged forward at high speed. Windwolves were simply too fast, possessing more than double the speed of Alice and Rowling. Very soon, the ten Windwolves would catch up to them…and at the same time, up in front of Alice and Rowling, an enormous Landwyrm appeared.

The Landwyrm was large enough that just by standing there, it blocked off almost half of the Greenleaf Road. And with that draconic tail…there was nowhere for Alice and Rowling to flee.

“Big sister Alice…” Rowling felt somewhat hopeless.

Alice looked at that enormous, two-story tall Landwyrm, then at the ravening pack of Windwolves charging in their direction. She couldn’t think of any way to escape at all.

“Am I going to die?” Alice couldn’t help but tightly embrace Rowling. At this moment, she too felt that all hope was lost. From behind, the ten Windwolves were about to arrive, their white fangs gleaming with a cold light…

A beautiful flash of violet light.

The heads of the ten Windwolves instantly flew apart. A human figure descended from the heavens, then charged directly towards that enormous Landwyrm.

“That is…” Alice and Rowling stared stupidly at the person who had suddenly saved them.

Alice could clearly see who it was.

“A long, long time ago, something like this happened as well.” A lost look in her eyes, Alice stared at that figure. It was Linley. In truth, Linley’s own residence was located right across the street from the Debs clan’s manor, and right now, Alice and Rowling were only a few dozen meters away from Linley’s manor.

Linley wouldn’t just watch someone die without helping, after all.

“Haaaargh!”

Twisting his waist, Linley applied power to his legs, kicking out forcefully like the snapping of a whip. Like an iron whip, Linley’s leg snapped out, piercing through the air with a shriek as it landed against the skull of the Landwyrm.

And as this was happening, Linley’s legs suddenly became covered with black scales.

Demidragon form!

“Bam!”

This kick was simply too fast. Caught offguard, the Landwyrm was unable to react, and its skull exploded from the force of this blow. The enormous body of the Landwyrm collapsed, slumping to the ground.

Linley landed on the ground. Rowling and Alice, watching all of this, were somewhat stunned.

“Big…big brother Linley…” Alice said softly.

Linley turned to look at them, a frown appearing on his face. Linley didn’t have the spare time to lead these two girls around, but if Alice and Rowling were to be here by themselves, they would definitely die. But then, Linley

suddenly saw a squad of knights charge over at high speed. Within this squad of knights was an old man riding a handsome stallion. It was Managing Director Maia of the Proulx Gallery.

Under this assault by the magical beasts, the collections within the Proulx Gallery were essentially finished. Director Maia was only able to collect the most important pieces within his interspatial ring of holding.

These interspatial rings were extremely valuable and rare. Even Director Maia only had one because his clan had passed one down.

“Director Maia.” Linley shouted loudly.

Seeing Linley, Director Maia was extremely excited. “Master Linley, you are here!” The people Director Maia admired the most were those master-level sculptors, so naturally, Director Maia greatly admired Linley, this young man who was able to so easily carve out a sculpture that was almost on the same level as Proulx and Hope Jensen.

There were actually very few people who knew about Linley’s attempted assassination of King Clayde. In the outside world, the story was that a demon had attempted to kill King Clayde. Naturally, Director Maia didn’t know the truth.

“Master Linley, come along with us.” Director Maia was very confident.

The martial force of the Proulx Gallery was quite high. As long as they weren’t attacked by a Saint-level magical beast, they definitely wouldn’t find surviving to be a problem.

“Director Maia, no need. But I hope you can help me. These two girls have some ties to me, and I hope you can take them to a safe location.” Linley instructed.

“No problem. But Master Linley, Fenlai City is not safe right now.” Director Maia hurriedly said.

“No need. I have affairs to settle. I entrust these two girls to you.” After he spoke, Linley immediately disappeared into his manor. Alice and Rowling exchanged glances, and then immediately were ordered by Director Maia to mount a horse and integrate into the convoy.

“He…actually didn’t say a single word to me.” Alice suddenly felt a little heartsick.

The sound of hoof steps unabated. Director Maia’s convoy, along with Alice and Rowling, departed.

Only now did Linley emerge from his manor, bearing a black parcel on his shoulders. This parcel contained several magicrystal cards, some of the remaining Bloodrupture poison powder, and Blueheart Grass.

“Bebe, now we head to the palace.”

“Boss, let’s go have ourselves a slaughter.” Bebe was excited as well.

Linley immediately led Bebe and moved at high speed towards the palace.

Quite a few people had already fled, but Clayde had gone into the royal treasury instead. How could Clayde abandon the riches of the royal clan which had been accumulated for countless years? The wealth of a royal clan was an incredibly large figure.

The Debs clan, at its prime, was worth perhaps a hundred million gold coins.

But a corrupt major official such as Duke Patterson had also managed to accumulate around a hundred million gold coins. As for the wealth stored within the palace treasury, that was worth far more.

Within the treasury.

“This is the wealth that has been accumulated by countless generations of rulers of Fenlai over thousands of years.” Staring at the treasures within the

treasury, Clayde didn't have too much time to ponder. He grabbed the most valuable items and directly absorbed them into his interspatial ring. As a king, Clayde had been lucky enough to procure an interspatial ring as well.

"And these 32 magicrystal cards." Clayde looked at the magicrystal cards in his hands.

These 32 magicrystal cards were all un-bound, and they represented thousands of years of wealth that had been accumulated by the kingdom. Each card contained within it a hundred million gold coins. The 32 magicrystal cards, in total, represented a wealth of 3.2 billion gold coins. This was a terrifying sum. Perhaps even some of the major clans of the Four Great Empires didn't have such a large sum of gold.

A popular saying was that the easiest way to make money was to become a king. The wealth that had been accumulated by kings over thousands of years was naturally astonishingly high.

"The capital, Fenlai City, is finished." Clayde turned to give the remaining treasures one last look, then ground his teeth and left.

But what Clayde didn't realize yet was that it wasn't just the capital which was finished. The entire Kingdom of Fenlai had now become the territory of magical beasts! He, Clayde, was no longer a king! What's more, it wasn't just the Kingdom of Fenlai that had been destroyed; a huge amount of the territory belonging to the Holy Union was being rapidly devoured and claimed by magical beasts.

Chapter 8 – One Hand

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 8, One Hand

In a secluded courtyard within the palace, the most important members of the royal clan of Fenlai were gathered, including Clayde, his wives, and his many children.

“The entire city of Fenlai is swarming with magical beasts. We definitely cannot all travel together in a large group, as that would attract some extremely powerful magical beasts.” Clayde said solemnly. This reasoning was something everyone understood, and was the reason why Director Maia and Menlo Dawson were travelling in small convoys.

Convoys of a few dozen people were everywhere in Fenlai City, and weren’t remarkable at all.

But a convoy of several hundred people would draw the attention of magical beasts of the ninth rank, and perhaps even result in an attack from a Saint-level magical beast.

The most dangerous thing one could do right now was to attract attention from magical beasts.

“Carre [Ka’lei], you and your mother shall lead a division of the Wildthunder squad soldiers. Here are five un-imprinted magicrystal cards. Remember, this represents thousands of years of accumulated wealth of our clan!” Clayde looked solemnly at his son.

There were too many people in the royal clan. They had to go in separate packs.

Clayde didn’t want for his clan to be annihilated. By going in separate packs, the chances of at least some surviving would be greater.

“Yes, father.” Carre was overjoyed.

Thousands of years of accumulated wealth…how much would that be worth?

“Shaq [Sha’ke], you, your mother, and your younger sister will also lead a division of the Wildthunder squad soldiers. Here are five magicrystal cards for you as well.” Clayde withdrew another five magicrystal cards and handed them to his second son. Both of the princes were extremely excited.

Clayde’s face was very solemn. He said, “The elite soldiers of our clan will be divided into these three divisions. Carre’s, Shaq’s, and my own. No matter who manages to survive in the end, at least our clan will continue. Enough, let’s head out!”

“Kaiser, as the instructor for the Wildthunder Regiment, you will come with me.” Clayde looked at Kaiser.

“Yes, your Majesty.” Kaiser nodded.

The Wildthunder Regiment was the most powerful defensive regiment within the Kingdom of Fenlai. The entire regiment, including Kaiser, only consisted of a hundred people, giving each squad only 33 soldiers. But although they were small in number, they were high in quality. Even the weakest member of this regiment was a warrior of the seventh rank.

Divided into three squads, the royal clan immediately began to flee in three separate directions.

….

“Swish!” Linley leapt up at a high speed. At the same time, there was a violet flash of light, and the Thunderwing Pegasus that was harassing Linley suddenly split into two halves. Linley continued to run forward, making his way towards the palace at high speed.

On the way, he passed by far too many human and magical beast corpses.

“Arrived at the palace.” Linley was leaping forward so fast that his body was naught but a blur, and with each movement, he travelled dozens of meters. This sort of astonishing speed made it impossible for magical beasts of the fifth and sixth ranks to stop him.

“Whew.”

Linley easily leapt up over ten meters in the air, flipping into the interior of the palace.

“Roaaaar!” The sound of magical beasts roaring could be heard from within, as well as the battle cries of soldiers. Right now, there were no longer any guards at the palace gates. The only things present were corpses, blood, and rent flesh. And, occasionally, a massive corpse of a magical beast.

Like an agile treecat, Linley leapt his way through the tops of the various palace buildings.

But when Linley arrived on top of one particular roof, he suddenly saw a mounted squad far away. Right now, virtually no one was using carriages anymore. Carriages were simply too slow for fleeing.

“That is…”

Linley instantly was able to recognize that golden-haired man in the center of the squad. It was the ‘Golden Lion’, Clayde. Clayde was currently issuing orders to his soldiers to kill the magical beasts besieging them. This squad’s teamwork was really quite marvelous.

When a group of elite warriors of the seventh and eighth ranks worked together as one, they were actually more powerful than a group of the same size consisting only of warriors of the eighth rank that had no teamwork.

“Clayde.” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“Boss, let’s make our move.” Bebe was excited as well.

“Wait. We can’t afford any mistakes this time. Wait for his squad to get closer to us, and then we will launch a sudden ambush.” Linley remained on top of the roof, his cold eyes focused on that distant mounted squad.

….

“Don’t waste any time. Quick.” Clayde swung the giant warsword in his hands, chopping down a Dragonhawk from midair.”

During this past half month, Clayde had managed to purge a small amount of Bloodrupture poison from his system, allowing him to recover 10% of his battle-qi. Although it was just 10%, he once more had the power of a warrior of the eighth rank.

But Clayde recognized that he would most likely need another half year to purge the remaining 90% of Bloodrupture poison from his body.

“Where the hell did all these magical beasts come from. Bastard.” Clayde was growing more and more furious.

These magical beasts had destroyed his capital, and now they were threatening his life. How could he not be angry?

“Quick.”

After killing all of the attacking magical beasts, Clayde immediately pressed his men to hurry on, and the troop of knights once more sped forward. As Clayde and his men travelled at high speeds through the pathways between the palace buildings, they didn’t notice at all that someone was lying in wait on the roofs above.

Watching Clayde and his men draw nearer and nearer, Linley narrowed his eyes.

All the fur on Bebe’s body was standing straight up.

“Now is the time!”

Linley’s voice rang out in Bebe’s head, and the two of them, man and magical beast, flew at high speeds towards Clayde. In that split second before launching, Linley’s entire body was suddenly covered with a layer of black scales, and spikes sprouted from his forehead, his elbows, and his knees. From behind, that draconic tail sprouted out as well.

Dragonform!

That squad of knights lived up to their reputation of being elites. As soon as Linley and Bebe flew towards them, they immediately noticed and tried to react. But Linley and Bebe were simply too fast!

“Ah! It’s you!” Immediately seeing that terrifying creature, Clayde knew without a doubt that Linley had come!

He didn’t have time to wonder why Linley wasn’t dead yet, because Linley’s draconic tail had already arrived, viciously slapping at him from just two meters away. Behind him, Kaiser had already become caught up dealing with that black Shadowmouse and wasn’t going to be able to save him.

“Whap!”

Linley’s draconic tail slapped down mercilessly, and Clayde quickly dodged by tumbling to the ground. Linley’s tail thus landed on the horse, and the animal was split into two halves by the sheer force of that vicious blow. The warhorse let out a pain-filled whinny before collapsing.

Fallen on the ground, Clayde pressed down on the ground with his fists and quickly retreated.

But now, Linley came chasing after him.

“Swish swish!” At the same time, eight spears gleaming with battle-qi were

thrust at Linley.

“Haaargh!”

The Dragonblood battle-qi in Linley’s body burst forth, and he used his right leg to viciously kick at the ground. He instantly reached an extremely high momentum as he shot forward like a boulder that had been catapulted forth in anger. Linley’s body smashed fiercely against those eight spears.

The eight spears shuddered at almost the exact same time, and those eight streams of power essentially managed to cancel out with the power of Linley’s charge.

“This will be troublesome.” Linley frowned.

He didn’t expect those eight knights would be able to block his attack so effortlessly.

But what Linley didn’t know was that those eight knights were shocked and terrified as well. These eight knights were Clayde’s personal bodyguards, the most elite of the elite Wildthunder Regiment. All of them were warriors of the eighth rank. Working together, the eight of them would even be able to hold off a warrior of the ninth rank.

However, not even a warrior of the ninth rank would dare to forcibly ram into their spears. But Linley had.

“What a freakishly strong defense.” Hiding far away and protected by the remaining knights, Clayde’s heart trembled.

“Shkreeeee!”

Bebe let out a piercing screech, then swept his fierce claws at Kaiser again and again, while sometimes using his fangs to bite at him as well. But Kaiser rather effortlessly managed to use his greatsword to block each of Bebe’s attacks. Kaiser’s sword techniques seemed very simple but were highly effective.

One step back, then a piercing stab with the sword that seemed incredibly hard to block.

“Clayde, who is going to rescue you today?” Linley looked at the mighty warriors in front of him and sneered. “Fine, you want to engage in group attacks?” As soon as Linley finished speaking, he immediately charged at one particular knight.

Linley didn’t fear or pay attention to the attacks of the other knights, simply aiming himself at that one knight.

Now, their combined attacks were useless.

“Whoosh!” Linley was simply too fast. In the blink of an eye, he arrived by the side of that warrior of the eighth rank. Balling his fierce claws into a fist, he slammed it towards that warrior. The warrior leaned back to avoid it, but at this time, Linley’s draconic tail suddenly swung forward and crushed the warrior’s skull in.

“Thrall[Sa’er]!” Many of the knights howled in fury.

The Wildthunder Regiment had always trained together, and their affection for each other was no less than that of blood brothers. Many warriors furiously aimed their attacks at Linley, and despite their anger, they were still able to coordinate their attacks very well, as greatswords and long spears attacked in perfect sequence.

“Pew!” The Bloodviolet Godsword suddenly appeared in Linley’s hands. Ignoring the attacks aimed at him, Linley flew to another knight while thrusting Bloodviolet directly towards his eyes. The sword went straight through his skull. The man died immediately.

“Die!” Instantly, another one of the knights pierced at Linley’s head with his own spear.

Linley flipped Bloodviolet around and struck a counterblow. Just as the

knight was about to attempt to block it, Bloodviolet suddenly curved in midair and effortlessly cut the knight's head off. Even without being activated by battle-qi, the Bloodviolet Godsword in Linley's hands could easily kill a warrior of the seventh rank. And now, suffused by Linley's Dragonblood battle-qi, the Bloodviolet Godsword was more than capable of killing a warrior of the eighth rank as well.

Bizarre attacks!

Three of the warriors of the eighth rank had died in the blink of an eye.

"I want to see how you'll block me!" Linley once again charged towards Clayde, the devilish Bloodviolet Godsword flashing nonstop in the air. None of the knights dared to close with Linley, because that Godsword in Linley's hands was simply too bizarre.

"Groooooowl!"

Suddenly, from far away, a roar could be heard.

"Rumble, rumble, rumble." Ponderous, heavy footsteps shook the earth. The deep sounds and vibrations made it more than clear that this was an enormous magical beast headed their way, and it was drawing closer.

But Linley didn't care about anything at this point.

"Block him, block him!" Clayde shouted loudly, while continuing to retreat.

Linley suddenly leapt into the air, launched himself off a wall, and flew towards Clayde at high speed. Seeing this though, Kaiser instantly kicked off and launched himself backwards as well, transforming into a blur and sweeping the greatsword in his hands directly towards Linley.

"Come." Linley didn't attempt to block the sword at all, aiming the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hands directly at Clayde.

"Last time, you had a Saint-level Fateguard to protect you and Heidens to

save you. I want to see who will rescue you this time." Linley's dark gold eyes spat death at Clayde, and the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hands struck out towards Clayde's throat like a vicious snake. Right now, Clayde had almost gone crazy as he began to wave the greatsword in his hands in an attempt to block.

"Haaah!" Very suddenly, Kaiser released his grip on his greatsword, letting it fly.

"Bam!" Linley didn't manage to react in time, and his right arm was struck heavily by the greatsword. Right at that moment, the burning battle-qi contained within the greatsword burst forth. Linley felt his arm suddenly grow numb. Due to this smashing blow, the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hands was now more than a meter away from his target, Clayde.

"Hmph."

The Bloodviolet Godsword suddenly curved in midair, wrapping itself around the greatsword in Clayde's hands, and then slid down until it was wrapped around Clayde's wrist. Chop!

"Whap!"

Clayde's right hand was cut off, and it fell to the ground with a thud. The fingers on the hand were still extended, and the sword fell to the ground as well. In addition, that severed hand had a ring on it. That ring was the most precious item of all to the royal clan of Fenlai – the interspatial ring.

"My hand! Get it back, get it back!" Clayde's face had turned white from the pain, but he still shouted furiously.

This interspatial ring contained 22 magicrystal cards with a total value of 2.2 billion gold coins! In addition, it had several dozen precious treasures that the royal clan had accumulated over thousands of years. Clayde would rather die than allow this interspatial ring to be lost. This was the accumulated wealth of countless generations of his clan!

“Swish!”

A black blur suddenly flashed by and made off with the severed hand, then leapt onto Linley’s shoulders.

“Boss, the more Clayde wants something, the more we will work to prevent him from getting it.” Standing on Linley’s shoulders, Bebe mentally spoke to Linley. “But Boss, why would he want this severed hand so much? There’s nothing special about this hand. Could it be that it is this ring that he wants?”

Chapter 9 – Interspatial Ring

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 9, Interspatial Ring

“Get it back, quick!” Clayde was so frantic that his face and neck were both beet red with rage. He roared, “The ring, get it back, get it back! A million gold coins to whoever gets it back!”

When the members of the Wildthunder Regiment heard the words ‘a million gold coins’, a hint of greed appeared in their eyes. All of the mighty knights began launching group attacks against Linley, and the leader of the Wildthunder Regiment, Kaiser, was the first to charge at him.

“Ring, eh? Looks like it really is valuable.” Seeing how crazed Clayde had just become, Linley couldn’t help but laugh coldly. With a powerful leap, he shot backwards at high speed, retreating. While retreating, Linley quickly pulled the ring off the severed hand, and then put it on his own finger.

“Linley, this is an interspatial ring!” Doehring Cowart said excitedly. Given his powerful soul, Doehring Cowart could instantly sense what was so special about this ring. An interspatial ring was a priceless treasure! Linley was shocked as well.

He had thought that this ring was something akin to an ancestral heirloom of the royal clan of Fenlai. He didn’t expect it to be one of the fabled interspatial rings of legend. Interspatial rings were extremely rare. Even just two of the five Cardinals of the Radiant Church were in possession of interspatial rings.

No one was stupid enough to sell an interspatial ring.

And once these interspatial rings were imprinted and bound by the blood of its master, there was no way anyone else could use them. This was the best place to store treasures. Of course, there was one way to open an

interspatial ring; kill the owner. Once the owner died, the interspatial ring would revert to being an un-bound item. At that point, one could imprint and bind it to one's self and gain access to the treasures within.

"Whoosh."

Greatsword in hand, Kaiser stared fixedly at Linley as he suddenly pierced through the air. Carrying an explosive force that seemed capable of shattering mountains, the greatsword shattered the air and howled terrifyingly as it swung towards Linley. Linley could clearly, visibly see the red light flowing on the surface of the sword.

This power couldn't be blocked head on!

"Swish!" With another leap, Linley sent himself dodging in another direction again.

"Bam!" The wall Linley had been standing on was struck by the terrifying force of that sword, and an entire section of wall exploded outwards with the sword at the epicenter. The walls within a hundred meters of that blow all crumbled and collapsed.

"So powerful!" Linley was secretly amazed.

Far away, under the protection of his remaining guards, Clayde couldn't be bothered about the pain from his severed hand. He shouted loudly, "Quick, get the ring back for me, quick!" Clayde was about to go mad. Although he knew that Linley wouldn't be able to open the interspatial ring despite having it, if the ring remained in Linley's hands, then he, Clayde, wouldn't be able to access the items within it despite being its master.

2.2 billion gold coins! What an amazing, enormous sum of money that was.

Thousands of years of accumulated royal wealth. For these treasures and wealth to be taken away was more painful to him than being killed.

"Bam!"

A section of wall collapsed. An enormous magical beast was walking in the middle of the palace grounds, passing through walls as though it were walking on flat ground. One wall after another collapsed as though they were made from mud. This enormous magical beast had already noticed Clayde and Linley, and it roared in excitement. “Groooooooooowl!”

“Violet Tattooed Bear!” Seeing that familiar figure, Linley wasn’t too frightened. Perhaps it was because he could still remember the terrifying power of the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear in the Foggy Valley. In terms of size, this Violet Tattooed Bear was about the same size as the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear in the Foggy Valley, but Linley felt this bear’s aura was not as formidable.

This Violet-Tattooed Bear was the one which had killed Duke Bonalt and his family. By now, he had begun to attack the palace.

Having seen Linley and Clayde’s group, it was now gleefully charging through the palace towards them, roaring happily.

“Thud!” “Thud!” “Thud!” “Thud!”

The Violet-Tattooed Bear was a machine bred for war, with a body the size of a three-floor building and massive, sturdy bear paws. Even the sturdiest of walls would be shattered by a single blow of those paws. And right now, the bear’s target was Linley and Clayde’s group.

“Clayde, you want the ring? If you have the ability, come and get it.” Linley shouted loudly while moving around at high speed.

“Bebe. You deal with those other warriors. This Kaiser, I’ll handle.” Linley said mentally.

“Fine. Boss, just watch me!” Bebe excitedly scurried towards that group of warriors.

Those combination attacks practiced by the warriors were all meant to be

used against human-shaped opponents by attacking their vitals. They were of no use at all against a magical beast like Bebe which was physically small, extremely fast, and astonishingly durable.

Bebe stretched out his vicious claws and gave a nasty swipe. “Snick!” He slashed directly through half the neck of a warrior of the eighth rank, causing blood to spurt out wildly. That warriors’ head directly swung down, only remaining connected to his body by a thin layer of skin.

“Hmph.” Kaiser’s eyes turned red, and with an angry shout, he chopped at Linley with his greatsword.

With a leap, Linley dodged, while at the same time his legs spun like a tornado. Carrying the power of a pair of sharp knives, Linley’s legs chopped towards Kaiser’s neck.

Kaiser leaned his head backwards while launching a counterattack, and Linley’s kicks just barely brushed against Kaiser’s face. Just a little closer, and he would’ve been able to kill Kaiser. While Kaiser was leaning his head back, he too launched a powerful kick at Linley, but Linley, who was in mid-air, didn’t dodge at all.

“Swish!”

Linley’s long, iron-whip-like tail suddenly pierced through the air, thrashing viciously towards Kaiser.

One attack after another!

If Kaiser was to continue his attack against Linley, then clearly this attack of Linley’s would hit him as well. “Hrmph.” Kaiser kicked the ground hard, sending himself flying backwards as he retreated at high speeds while at the same time, slamming the greatsword in his hands against Linley’s tail. Kaiser’s speed was so fast that he had retreated roughly a hundred meters in the blink of an eye.

“Whoosh!”

Kaiser once more charged forward at high speed. The greatsword in his hands was actually vibrating now, transforming into six illusionary swords, causing Linley not to know how to block.

“Ah!” Bebe killed another warrior, this one of the seventh rank, by crushing the warrior’s skull with his fangs. This was Bebe’s seventh kill.

These deaths only further enraged Kaiser, who had trained and taught these Wildthunder Regiment soldiers. But Linley was simply too hard to deal with. Not only could Linley attack with his hands and his feet, the attack power of his tail was also extremely terrifying. And Linley’s durability was astonishingly high as well.

Fortunately…

In terms of both combat experience and tactical acumen, Linley couldn’t compare to a true warrior of the ninth rank who had trained for over a hundred years.

“Quick, quick, get the ring back!” Clayde was at the verge of losing his sanity.

Right now, the situation was totally not in his favor. If this continued, they wouldn’t have any chance of recovering the ring at all. Within that interspatial ring was thousands of years of accumulated wealth by the royal clan. Even if he died, he couldn’t allow that ring to be lost.

“Roaaaaar!”

The Violet Tattooed Bear had finally arrived, and all the warriors nearby scattered in its wake. No one dared to fight with it head on. To engage in battle against a powerful magical beast of the ninth rank required one to be a warrior of the ninth rank at the very least. And given that magical beasts were naturally more powerful than humans, most likely even a warrior of the ninth rank would only be able to guarantee that he wouldn’t die.

That Violet Tattooed Bear actually came to a halt and glanced at the group of people present. The intelligence of a high-rank magical beast wasn't inferior to that of humans at all, and a magical beast of the ninth rank might actually be even more intelligent than some humans. This Violet Tattooed Bear could easily tell that these people in front of him were divided into two groups. On one side, there was a man and a magical beast. The other were the knights who were led by the man with only one hand.

And that man with one hand seemed to be quite concerned about a ring.

The Violet Tattooed Bear could understand the human tongue. Although he couldn't speak in it, he could understand it. A hint of excitement appeared in the eyes of the Violet Tattooed Bear.

"Wooo, wooo!"

The Violet Tattooed Bear clapped its massive paws together excitedly, then charged directly towards Linley and Kaiser. Upon encountering any warriors in its path, it simply waved its massive paws, mercilessly batting them aside.

"Ah!" A warrior of the eighth rank tried frantically to dodge, while at the same time a jade-green light appeared from his body.

But although the Violet Tattooed Bear didn't move that quickly, its paws were able to attack at a terrifying speed. "WHAP!" The massive paw slammed against the warrior of the eighth rank. A sickening crunching sound could be heard as the man's head was instantly shattered. The warrior's battle-qi aura was shattered as well, and his body was reduced to nothing more than ground meat.

Even the ground beneath the man had a giant hole gouged into it, with deep cracks appearing in the area around the hole.

"Why is a magical beast of the ninth rank so much more powerful than humans of the same rank?" Seeing this from afar, Linley's heart couldn't help but feel surprise. Kaiser, still engaged in battle against Linley, grew

frantic as well. He didn't have any confidence at all in his ability to deal with a Violet Tattooed Bear.

Violet Tattooed Bears possessed extremely thick, durable skin and tremendous power. Even giant dragons would probably be reduced to a pulp by its massive paws. Its only flaw was that in terms of movement speed, it was rather slow. Its attack speed, however, was still astonishingly high. The Violet Tattooed Bears could be considered one of the extremely powerful kinds of magical beasts of the ninth rank.

"Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!"

Linley and Kaiser exchanged blows at high speed, and Linley's arms, legs, and tail clashed nonstop with the greatsword. The speed of their blows was at an astonishingly high level. Linley, relying on his astonishing defense, dared to fight with seemingly suicidal attacks, but Kaiser's techniques were effective, and he possessed both experience and powerful battle-qi.

The battle between them had no clear victor.

"Roaaaaar!" The Violet Tattooed Bear had reached Linley and Kaiser, and it swiped down with its massive paws towards the two men.

"Swish!" Linley and Kaiser both retreated backwards at high speed.

"Bam!" The sound of the bear's paw slamming into the ground produced a deep vibration, causing the entire ground to shake, and the ground within ten meters of the blow became covered with cracks. Neither Linley nor Kaiser chose to attempt to forcibly block that blow!

A Violet Tattooed Bear's paw was perhaps the most powerful, durable part of its body.

If they attempted to block it head on, the two of them would've both become nothing more than meat paste.

"Roaaaar!" With a loud howl, the Violet Tattooed Bear actually turned and

charged at Linley.

“Why the hell are you chasing ME?” Relying on his high speed, Linley began to flee. After having Dragonformed, Linley possessed the speed of a warrior of the ninth rank, and a very fast one at that. At the same time, the Violet Tattooed Bear’s weakness was its movement speed. It wasn’t too hard for Linley shake it off.

The Violet Tattooed Bear continued to charge forward, and anyone who got in its way was slapped to death.

It only pursued Linley!

Linley didn’t know that the Violet Tattooed Bear had taken a fancy to that ring. Given its intelligence, and its understanding of human languages, the Violet Tattooed Bear knew that the ring was something which both parties valued.

It was actually quite common for magical beasts of the ninth rank to understand the human tongues. They understood it, they just couldn’t speak it, simply because their bodies weren’t designed to speak it. But upon reaching the Saint-level, they could break free of this restriction and speak in human tongues.

“Ring, ring!” Clayde was about to cry.

“Your Majesty.” Kaiser was standing guard in front of Clayde. “Your Majesty, it’s best we leave now. If we don’t leave, things will become extremely dangerous.”

Of the 33 members of the Wildthunder Regiment, fourteen had just been killed by Bebe. The remaining members were beginning to panic as well. The magical beast in front of them was physically small, possessed astonishing durability, and terrifying attack power. It was highly suited for dealing with humans.

“Roaaaar!”

“Roaaaar!”

Suddenly, a mighty series of draconic roars could be heard from the skies, as hundreds of gigantic dragons with jade-green scales, blazing red scales, silvery scales, and even a very tyrannical-looking Black Dragon began to fly in this direction.

Dragons possessed a very high level of intelligence. They knew that the palace held many treasures, and dragons loved collecting treasures.

“Roaaaaaar!” The leader of this flight, the massive Black Dragon, focused on Clayde and Linley. With a mighty roar, it led the large pack of dragons to charge downwards towards the palace. Those Fire Dragons and Emerald Dragons were only dragons of the eighth rank, but Silver Dragons and Black Dragons were generally dragons of the ninth rank.

Seeing this, Clayde, Kaiser, and the others were all stunned.

A single magical beast of the ninth rank was already hard enough to deal with. And now a horde of beasts was coming?

“Boss, this isn’t good. Let’s run.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s head as well, but right now, Linley was still being pursued by that Violet Tattooed Bear who had taken a fancy to that interspatial ring.

Chapter 10 – A Terrible Situation

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 10, A Terrible Situation

“Thud!” With each step of its massive feet on the ground, the Violet Tattooed Bear would make the earth shake. This Violet Tattooed Bear was fixated on Linley. No matter where Linley ran off to, the Violet Tattooed Bear followed, while its two massive bear paws continually tried to reach out at him.

“Groooooowl!”

Hearing those familiar dragon roars, Linley couldn’t help but look up at the skies. What he saw made his heart clench tightly.

The sky was covered with countless massive dragon bodies. In terms of numbers, there were definitely more here today than that time previously at the Foggy Valley. What’s more, within the host of dragons, there were even Silver Dragons and Black Dragons. Both of those were dragon-type beasts of the ninth rank!

“No!”

With a sudden leap, Linley avoided yet another attack from the Violet Tattooed Bear, then charged directly for Clayde. “No matter what, this time, I have to kill Clayde.”

“Get it, ring, get it back!” Clayde’s forehead was covered with sweat, but he didn’t dare charge forward himself.

“Roaaaar!”

“Roaaaar!”

Several dozen dragons swooped down from the skies, blasting forth dragonfire from their mouths. The flames belched forth by the Black Dragons were black in color as well, while the Silver Dragons exhaled plumes of silvery-white flames. Clearly, in terms of temperature, the black flames and silver flames were far hotter than the dragonfire of the Fire Dragons.

“Sizzle sizzle.”

The temperature of the surrounding area immediately began to rise at a terrifying speed as several dozens streams of dragonfire blasted down.

“Your Majesty, if we don’t leave, we’ll die for sure! If we’re dead, treasures will be useless to us!” Kaiser’s entire body was suffused with red battle-qi. He roared frantically at Clayde, who started.

“CLAYDE!!!”

A furious roar from the fully Dragonformed Linley, who was shooting towards him like an arrow.

“Go. Go, let’s go!” Clayde immediately howled out the order angrily. This decision of Clayde was an extremely painful one for him, but he too understood that if he died here, everything would be lost. In addition, his eldest prince and his second prince both had magicrystal cards on them, with a combined value of a billion gold coins.

A billion gold coins was definitely enough to allow a royal clan to rebuild and flourish again.

“Bam!” Kaiser’s giant sword once again blocked Linley’s attack.

“Kaiser, let me kill Clayde. No matter how much gold you desire, I’ll give it to you.” Linley was half-mad with anxiousness as well.

Kaiser just shook his head.

“Roaaaar!”

Right at this moment, a Black Dragon suddenly swooped down and tried to snatch Linley with its claws. Black Dragons were highly intelligent. Seeing how the Violet Tattooed Bear continuously pursued and tried to kill Linley, it was sure that there had to be a reason for the bear’s fixation. Thus, its first target was Linley.

“Me again?” Linley frantically dodged to the side.

Just now, when he had been fighting with Kaiser, that Violet Tattooed Bear had decided to chase after him instead of Kaiser. And now, the same thing was happening again. The Black Dragon of the ninth rank chased after the fleeing Linley.

“Whew.” Kaiser paid no more attention to Linley as he hurriedly upped his speed to the maximum and fled away. Immediately, several of the giant dragons began a pursuit of Clayde and Kaiser, but the large majority of them continued to encircle and attack Linley.

The Violet Tattooed Bear began to roar in anger as it rose to its hind feet.

Clearly, it was enraged at the dragons for stealing its prey, but the Violet Tattooed Bear didn’t dare to openly fight against the dragons either. The Violet Tattooed Bear wasn’t confident of beating even that extremely large Black Dragon leader of this host of dragons, to say nothing of the rest of the dragons.

“Thud!” “Thud!” “Thud!”

The Violet Tattooed Bear began to walk away in a different direction, moving a long distance with each stride. Every building in its way was crushed and demolished.

“Clayde!” Seeing Clayde and his men grow farther and farther away, Linley wanted to immediately chase after them.

But yet another massive dragon descended from the skies. This was a massive Black Dragon, over a hundred meters long, and it blocked the road in front of Linley while constantly reaching for Linley with its claws. From its mouth, it repeatedly blasted hot flames at Linley.

Both the earth and the skies were covered in dragons, and all of them were launching attacks at Linley. Surrounded and attacked by so many dragons, Linley felt miserable as well.

“Bastards!”

Encircled and besieged by a large number of dragons, Linley could only watch as Clayde disappeared from his field of vision.

“Boss, we need to flee!” Bebe was frantic now.

Bebe was extremely agile, and also very small. It would be very difficult for those dragons to attack him. What’s more, Bebe’s fierce claws and sharp fangs were very powerful as well. His attack power was now enough to cause some harm to the dragons, causing all of them to be quite nervous with respect to that little tiny thing.

“Go. Go where?”

No matter in which direction Linley tried to flee, a host of dragons would block and attack. He wasn’t afraid of dragons of the eighth rank, but there were more than ten dragons of the ninth rank as well.

“Whap!”

Linley was attacked viciously by a Silver Dragon’s tail, but Linley only flipped around in the air before trying to flee again. But it was useless. In midair, several dragons encircled and attacked again. Linley was in such a bad situation that he wanted to cry.

“Swish!” Linley very agilely avoided an attack by a fierce claw, continuing to dodge about at high speed.

“Boss, I’ll help you!” Seeing the danger Linley was in, Bebe immediately flew over as well and began chomping down viciously at the leg of that dragon. CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH!

“Roaaaaar!” That giant dragon let out a roar of pain.

Relying on his astonishing speed, Linley managed to resolve one draconic attack after another. Whenever he met with real danger, Bebe would help out. The dragons weren’t able to do anything to Linley for now either.

In their eyes, this human-shaped aberration was too hard to deal with, and that even smaller-sized rat-type magical beast kept on nibbling at them and causing them pain.

“Roaaaaar!” The leading Black Dragon let out another roar.

Instantly, all of the dragons flew into the air. They had already made the decision to give up this battle against this difficult-to-deal-with human-shaped aberration. It was totally not worth it for an entire host of dragons to waste so much time on a single human-shaped aberration.

The host of dragons flew away, just like that.

“They left?” Linley was startled.

Just moments ago, he had been frantically dealing with the attacks of many dragons, and he had been dodging for his life. That was a very miserable experience. He didn’t expect the dragons to give up just like that.

“Boss, let’s go now!” Bebe urged.

“Right. Clayde.”

Recalling Clayde, Linley maintained his Dragonform and led Bebe at a high speed charge through the city.

By now, the vicious battles between man and magical beast within Fenlai City had all but come to an end. There were very few living people within Fenlai City now, and virtually the only creatures alive on the streets were magical beasts that were hunting for living humans. The Dragonformed Linley moved too fast, and what's more, the fact that his body was covered in scales deceived many magical beasts into thinking that Linley was a magical beast as well.

"Not here."

Linley had led a chase in the direction where he thought Clayde would've fled to, but even after escaping Fenlai City, he still didn't find any traces of Clayde's party.

Outside Fenlai City. A desolate scene.

Even many of the great trees that had lined the road to and from Fenlai City had been shattered. Countless human corpses lay on the road as well. Clearly, these people had managed to flee Fenlai City, but had been killed outside the city by magical beasts nonetheless.

In the desolate countryside outside Fenlai City, small groups of one or two magical beasts could be seen everywhere.

"I wonder what direction that Clayde ran off in." Linley stared at the three branching forks ahead of him. He felt very helpless. It was possible that Clayde might've even left through the East Gate of Fenlai City, but as Linley saw it, that was unlikely, because the further east they went, the closer they would have become to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Thus, Linley had chosen to exit via the West Gate.

But despite having left by the West Gate, Linley still didn't know in what direction he should now head. After all, there were hoof prints pointing every which way.

"Perhaps that Clayde didn't choose any of the roads, and went cross-

country into the wilderness." Linley said to himself. The weakest person in Clayde's party was of the seventh rank, and so going cross-country wouldn't be difficult at all.

Linley understood that the chance of finding Clayde in the wilderness was very, very low!

"North. I heard that 'King' of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts say that the people of the Holy Union could only flee to the north! I'll head north as well. Given Clayde's fame, there's no way that his passing will attract no attention. When I reach the north, I'll search for him again." Linley made up his mind.

Seeing the corpses littering the area around him, Linley couldn't help but sigh.

"Ah! Wushan township!"

Linley suddenly thought of his own hometown. Wushan township was less than a hundred kilometers away from Fenlai City. What sort of shape was Wushan township currently in? Linley couldn't be bothered to cancel his Dragonform transformation, as he began to run at high speed available to him towards Wushan township.

Although Linley wasn't moving at maximum speed, after having assumed the Dragonform, he was able to easily travel two or three hundred kilometers each hour as a warrior of the ninth rank.

The trees on each side of the road quickly disappeared into the distance, and dust flew about everywhere.

"Is that…?" A fleeing mounted knight suddenly saw a human-shaped aberration suddenly charge in his direction from behind. He couldn't help but be frightened, but Linley only passed him by, moving like the wind towards Wushan township. This was the speed of a warrior of the ninth rank! Within twenty minutes, Linley had drawn close enough that he could see his hometown.

Wushan township.

This was a very quiet little township. In the past, the lives of the commoners here had been very peaceful.

But now…

Corpses. Mutilated corpses everywhere. Those corpses clearly bore the signs of having been ravaged by magical beasts.

"This…this…" Linley walked onto the main road of Wushan township. He stared at the corpses littering the main road or the side alleys. There were old people, young people, women, children…seeing all this, Linley couldn't help but feel grief in his heart.

Linley recognized the majority of these dead people.

Linley suddenly saw a young man not far away, clutching a baby in his arms. That young man's body was covered with blood, and that baby had been bitten to death as well.

"Or…Orson [Ao'sen]." Linley wanted to cry, but the tears wouldn't come out.

Orson was only one year older than him. When Linley had first started his physical training at the empty training grounds outside Wushan township, both of them had been placed within the six-to-eight year old group. Orson was the little boy who had stood right next to Linley when they had lined up. The two of them were on fairly good terms. Linley knew that two years ago, Orson had gotten married after reaching the age of maturity. That dead infant was most likely Orson's child.

"Rip. Rip." Not too far away, several Windwolves were chewing on the corpses of the dead.

"Ah!" Linley cast a furious glare at them, then flew towards them like a bolt

of lightning. He didn't use his Bloodviolet Godsword. Using his two hands, he either smashed their heads in or ripped them into several pieces barehanded.

In the blink of an eye, the few dozen magical beasts which had remained in Wushan township were all killed.

Seeing the magical beast corpses around him, as well as the human corpses, Linley cancelled his Dragonform transformation, a pained laugh escaping him. And then, he felt to his knees, powerless.

Everyone was dead.

"Haha…" Linley began to laugh in a low voice, but his eyes had begun to fill with tears.

"When the magical beasts ambushed the city and I escaped from the Radiant Temple, I was so immeasurably smug and self-satisfied with myself. But…" Linley's tears began to flow. Only now did Linley truly understand the meaning behind the words that 'King' of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had spoken.

"How could I be a pathetic human? Humans are nothing more than food to us magical beasts!"

"Food. Food."

Linley's heart was filled with grief.

Wushan township. His hometown. These familiar fellow villagers!

All dead.

When he had left his hometown, Linley had felt fairly calm, because he had always known that his hometown would still be there. But now…his hometown was gone. Everyone was dead.

“What a calamity.” Doehring Cowart’s ancient voice rang out. “Not just for your hometown. Most likely nearly half of the entire Holy Union has now become the domain of magical beasts. Those people…will become nothing more than food.”

Linley quietly stared at his surroundings. He could totally envision how the countless people within the domain of the Holy Union had now been trapped within a catastrophic nightmare. This so-called day of joy, the 10000th anniversary of the Yulan Festival, to the people of the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance, had become a day of catastrophe.

Chapter 11 – The Titanic Black Python

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 11, The Titanic Black Python

When a catastrophe occurred, the only thing a person could do was accept it.

After leaving Wushan township, Linley and Bebe headed north. Everything Linley saw only made him all the more taciturn. The entire Kingdom of Fenlai had turned into a playground for magical beasts, and human corpses were nothing more than food for them.

On the long road north, magical beasts occasionally dotted the landscape. Not a single living human being could be seen.

But suddenly, a human form appeared at the end of the road. The human form was moving forward quickly, and was being pursued by several howling magical beasts. But with a few flashes of violet light, those magical beasts were diced apart, and the human form continued northwards. On this person's shoulders, there was an adorable little black Shadowmouse.

"Boss, shouldn't we find a place to rest? I'm getting a bit hungry." Standing on Linley's shoulders, Bebe mentally spoke to Linley.

Linley cast a helpless look at Bebe.

This entire trip, he was the one who had been actively moving, while Bebe was either just standing on his shoulders, enjoying the wind, or sleeping inside Linley's clothes. How exactly was he tired?

"Fine. There's a mountain up ahead. We can kill a few magical beasts and cook them for food." Linley still pampered and spoiled Bebe as always. To Linley, aside from his three bros and his younger brother Wharton, who was

in the O'Brien Empire along with Uncle Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri, he had no close kin. But meeting with Wharton or his three bros was and would be an extremely rare thing.

Only Bebe would always be by his side.

In Linley's heart, he viewed Bebe as a younger brother to be pampered and spoiled.

"This Bloodviolet Godsword is still quite handy when dealing with magical beasts of the seventh or eighth ranks. But it is quite hard for it to penetrate the defense of a magical beast of the ninth rank and deliver a sufficiently deadly wound." Linley glanced at the sword at his waist and sighed.

The Bloodviolet Godsword was very sharp, very fast, and could bend in any which way he desired it to. It was thus extremely useful when dealing against large numbers of weaker enemies. But when used to deal with a single powerful magical beast, this Bloodviolet Godsword of Linley's was actually not even as good as Linley's own claws and draconic tail.

At the base of the stubby mountain, Linley and Bebe were roasting a pair of wolf legs. Bebe and Linley had not yet left the boundaries of the Kingdom of Fenlai, and so the area was swarming with magical beasts. But given Linley and Bebe's current power, as long as they didn't encounter any Saint-level magical beasts, they would be safe.

"It's cooked." Bebe immediately grabbed a haunch of wolf leg and began to chomp through it.

With a wave of his hand, Linley extinguished the fire, then grabbed a roasted wolf leg and began eating as well. This roasted wolf leg, when cooked alongside some wild herbs and grasses, was actually quite tasty. In the mountain wilderness areas, one could often find some ingredients which could be used for cooking. This was a survival skill one learned in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and Linley naturally knew it.

That wolf leg was much larger than Bebe, but Bebe finished eating it before

Linley had. By the time Linley was halfway through, Bebe had finished his portion.

“Slither slither.”

Suddenly, a very minute sound could be heard from far away. Linley froze in mid-bite, while Bebe’s little ears perked up as well. In unison, the man and the magical beast turned to stare behind them.

It was a python.

An enormous python, easily the size of a house. Those two bizarre, reptilian eyes looked like giant red lanterns. Only ten or so meters of its enormous body could be seen outside of a grove, but just judging from the fact that its body was three meters thick, Linley could easily imagine how terrifyingly large this creature really was.

The visible ten or so meters was just a small part of it.

Seeing the dense black skin, tattooed with yellow lines, the expression on Linley’s face changed.

“It’s a Titanic Black Python.” Linley was instantly sure of this magical beast’s breed.

Titanic Black Pythons were considered one of the more powerful types of pythons. Generally speaking, adult Titanic Black Pythons were magical beasts of the ninth rank, roughly on par with the Nine Headed Serpents. Amongst python-type beasts, the Titanic Black Python was famed as a war machine.

If you were to place a Titanic Black Python in the middle of an army, it could definitely kill a hundred thousand soldiers.

It was a darkness-style magical beast with incredible defensive powers. Its fangs were poisonous. These were the special traits of the Titanic Black Python.

“Hisssss. Hisssss.” The forked tongue of the Titanic Black Python flicked in and out, and its cold eyes stared at Linley and Bebe. Clearly, this Titanic Black Python had already decided that Linley and Bebe were to be its next meals.

“Bebe. Be careful.”

Linley’s gaze was locked on the Titanic Black Python, not daring to relax in the slightest. At the same time, dense black scales began to erupt from Linley’s skin, and a row of spikes rose up out of his back. His forehead, elbows, and knees all sprouted fierce, sharp spikes as well.

“Whap. Whap.” Linley’s draconic tail slapped the ground a few times. By Linley’s side, all of the hair on Bebe’s body was standing up straight.

Seeing this, the Titanic Black Python suddenly rose up high in the air. Clearly, it was now on guard and vigilant.

“Whoosh!”

Like a gust of wind, the entire body of the Titanic Black Python shot forward. In less than a second, its enormous, hundred-meter long body was striking against Linley and Bebe, who both also almost simultaneously launched attacks against the Titanic Black Python.

“Swish!” Bloodviolet flashed.

“Clang!” Linley heard a sound similar to a hammer striking against an anvil. His Bloodviolet Godsword had only been able to leave behind a white mark on the Titanic Black Python’s skin, and hadn’t managed to wound it at all.

“It really is very durable.”

The enormous body of the Titanic Black Python began to wrap around Linley. Linley knew that if he allowed it to constrict him, not only would he

be unable to breathe, the terrifyingly powerful constrictive force would probably be able to crush him to death.

“Haaaa!”

Linley’s sharp claws suddenly pierced towards the Titanic Black Python’s body. With a ‘rip’ sound, his claws penetrated the Titanic Black Python’s outer layer of scales. However, Linley could feel that his claws could go no further. Beneath the scales, Linley could sense an astonishingly durable force.

“Whoosh!” The Python was about to constrict Linley!

Linley only laughed coldly. He suddenly ripped his claws free and leaped outside of the Titanic Black Python’s coils, while at the same time smashing his elbows down at the Titanic Black Python. Linley’s elbows had those sharp spikes on them, which were the unique traits of Armored Razorback Wyrm’s and possessed astonishing power.

“Riiip!” The spike pierced through the black scales and slowly penetrated downwards.

“What exactly is underneath the scales of this Titanic Black Python? Its defense is so formidable.” Linley’s sharp spike was only able to penetrate halfway through before being stopped.

“Aaaargh!”

The Titanic Black Python let out an angry, pain-filled roar, and in a flash, its massive head struck towards Linley, its bloody maw opened wide. Suddenly, a black liquid shot out from its mouth and was spat towards Linley.

“Venom.” Linley immediately leapt off against the body of the Titanic Black Python, hurriedly dodging backwards.

But the amount of black venom was too great, and the area it covered too

large. Some of it still managed to land on Linley's legs.

"Sizzle, sizzle." A strange sound could be heard coming from Linley's legs.

Linley could feel that the black venom which landed on his legs had been totally blocked by that layer of defensive scales. The defensive powers of an Armored Razorback Wyrm were quite formidable, and the venom didn't pose much of a danger to the scales.

"Boss, let's run. That Titanic Black Python is freakishly tough. Its scales and flesh are too thick." Bebe urged.

"Run."

Without hesitating in the slightest, Linley and Bebe went running northwards. Slithering forward rapidly, the Titanic Black Python gave chase for a while, but in the end, Linley and Bebe managed to leave it in the dust.

After escaping the Titanic Black Python's pursuit, Linley and Bebe finally left the boundaries of the former Kingdom of Fenlai. However, despite having left its boundaries, they still saw the same desolate sights. It seemed as though the 'King' of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had told the truth.

They intended to take over half of the territory which had belonged to the Holy Union.

"Swish!"

Bloodviolet flashed, easily cutting a Dragonhawk in two.

"Bebe, tell me, why is it so hard for us to deal with magical beasts of the ninth rank?" By now, Linley had already encountered several magical beasts of the ninth rank, such as the Black Dragon and Violet Tattooed Bear in Fenlai City. When faced with these creatures, Linley was forced to dodge. There was no way for him to take them head on.

Even when dealing with the fairly slow Violet Tattooed Bear and Titanic Black Python, Linley wasn't able to truly harm them.

Bebe was speechless as well.

Bebe and Linley both had the same problem. Bebe's problem was that he was physically small, and probably wouldn't even be able to chew past the opponent's thick skin with his teeth. How would he harm the enemy?

"Linley." Doehring Cowart's voice rang out.

Linley suddenly came to his senses.

Right. Why not ask Grandpa Doehring? Grandpa Doehring had vast experience, and certainly should've seen many Saint-level combatants. He must have some sort of understanding in this regard.

"Linley, are you frustrated by the question of dealing with magical beasts of the ninth rank?" Doehring Cowart laughed.

Linley nodded. "Yes, Grandpa Doehring. Do you know what I should do?"

Doehring Cowart continued, "Linley, actually, your Bloodviolet Godsword is quite powerful. But the problem is, pre-Dragonform, you are only a warrior of the seventh rank. Post-Dragonform, you are still only an early-stage ninth rank warrior. As an early-stage ninth rank warrior, you think you can kill a magical beast of the ninth rank?"

Linley was startled.

Right. The problem was that he wasn't strong enough.

"When you enter the eighth rank, you will be a peak-stage warrior of the ninth rank in Dragonform. By then, you will be able to harm magical beasts of the ninth rank using your claws or using Bloodviolet." Doehring Cowart chuckled. "However, it's still possible for you at your current level of power to deal with magical beasts of the ninth rank as well."

“How?” Linley exulted. Grandpa Doehring really did know a way!

Doehring Cowart said, “Linley, did you notice that both Kaiser and Clayde used greatswords?”

Linley thought back to his battles. Right, Kaiser and Clayde did indeed both use greatswords.

“Do you know why they use greatswords?” Doehring Cowart asked.

Linley was beginning to grow curious. Right. As warriors of the ninth rank, Clayde and Kaiser naturally knew that using lighter weapons would be faster. Why did they choose to use greatswords instead? Linley couldn’t help but to think back to those battles he had with Kaiser.

“Linley, when I was young, I remember that whenever my father was cutting down trees, he would always use heavy axes, rather than small hatchets. Why is that?” Doehring Cowart guided patiently.

Linley started to have an inkling of understanding.

“Light weapons are sharp. When dealing with large groups of enemies, they are very effective. But when fighting in solo combat against a powerful foe, they are inferior to heavy weapons. Through usage of a heavy weapon, a person can utilize more of his power and increase the force of his blows. And…to a warrior of the ninth rank, even a weapon weighing a few hundred pounds won’t slow him down too much.”

Linley was now beginning to truly comprehend.

Only through using heavy weapons could one truly unleash all of the power they were capable of.

For example, would a strongman deliver more powerful blows using a massive mace, or a light sword? A Dragonblood Warrior was capable of lifting boulders weighing tens of thousands of pounds. Their potential

strength was extremely astonishing.

“No wonder why when I faced the Titanic Black Python, I felt as though using the Bloodviolet Godsword wasn’t as effective as using my own fists and claws.” Linley said. “Perhaps I too should find a heavy weapon to use.”

While chatting, Linley continued to make his way northwards into the desolate wilderness.

“Boss, there’s a squad of knights up ahead.” Bebe suddenly said to him mentally.

Linley looked carefully. Indeed, up ahead, there was a squad of knights taking a break up ahead. Linley had already encountered quite a few such squads. Generally speaking, squads capable of surviving in these magical beast infested lands were composed of elite soldiers belonging to major clans.

“No need to pay them any mind.” Linley ignored these people, continuing forward.

But when he drew near, Linley suddenly noticed a familiar face.

“Shaq? Second Prince Shaq?” Linley was startled.

As the Prime Court Magus for the Kingdom of Fenlai, Linley knew both Crown Prince Carre and Second Prince Shaq.

Chapter 12 – The Rescue

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 12, The Rescue

Travelling on this desolate road, Shaq, the Second Prince of Fenlai, was bitterly cursing at these magical beasts. Off in the distance, Linley quietly removed the interspatial ring from his fingers and placed it within one of his pockets.

“The royal clan of Fenlai divided into several squads when they left. No doubt, they had made prior arrangements for where they would meet up.”

Linley was worrying about where he would find Clayde, but now that heaven had delivered Shaq and his squad to him, how could Linley not be overjoyed? In addition, Linley could guess…that when he had tried to assassinate Clayde, then been captured by the Radiant Church, the Radiant Church had originally still planned to make use of him and thus had most likely had ordered Clayde to keep silent.

“Perhaps this Shaq doesn’t yet know that the ‘demon’ who tried to kill his father was me.”

As he was thinking these thoughts, Linley began to walk in Shaq’s direction.

Linley had another thought as well. “If Shaq knows that I tried to kill his father, then none of them will be spared!” Shaq’s men were powerful in comparison to most magical beasts, but compared to these two freaks Linley and Bebe, they weren’t much at all.

“Second Prince! Your Highness!”

Linley called out in a loud, friendly voice.

Shaq, who had been eating roasted meat while cursing, started upon hearing

Linley's shout. He swiveled his head over to look at Linley. As he did so, Linley and Bebe both watched him carefully, paying attention to his every facial expression and to his gaze.

"If anything seems off at all, first we capture, then we kill!" Linley carefully watched Shaq's eyes and face.

Upon seeing Linley, Shaq excitedly jumped to his feet. He charged over, his burly body two meters tall, and immediately pulled Linley into a massive hug. In an overjoyed voice, he said, "Lord Linley, you actually made it out safely! This is wonderful, wonderful!"

"I am very happy to be able to see you here as well, Second Prince!" Linley didn't detect any falseness in Shaq's eyes or expressions. He nodded to himself.

Linley's guess was spot on. Clayde had been instructed by the Radiant Church to remain silent, and that he could not, no matter what, reveal that the 'demon' who had attempted to assassinate him was Linley. No matter how daring Clayde was, he wouldn't dare disobey the direct orders of the Radiant Church.

"Lord Linley, have you eaten yet? Come, come eat with us." Shaq warmly said.

Right now, Shaq had no idea that he was walking on a fine line between life and death. If just now, there had been anything wrong with his facial expressions, he would've died.

"Lord Linley, please don't blame my royal father for not rescuing you. Those hordes of monsters came too quickly. My royal father had no choice. He didn't even bring most of his royal consorts, only just the most important ones." Shaq explained on behalf of his father.

"I can understand." Linley nodded while walking towards their camp.

All of those elite knights reminded Linley of the Wildthunder Regiment

knights he had fought back when he attacked Clayde at the royal palace. The knights in front of him had a very similar aura and bearing to those knights back then. Aside from those thirty or so knights, there was a slightly older lady, and a little girl who was only five or six years old.

“My respects to you, Royal Consort. My respects to you, Princess.”

Linley immediately bowed towards those two women.

The very beautiful, refined-looking consort was over forty years old, but she looked as though she was barely thirty. She was an alluring, attractive woman. The consort immediately laughed. “Linley, when his Majesty left, he was in a terrible rush. He didn’t bring a single magus with him. And, he felt confident that the Radiant Church would rescue you, thus…”

Both Shaq and the consort immediately made explanations for Clayde.

Both Shaq and the consort felt that it was very important to have good relations with Linley. They didn’t know the real relationship between Linley and Clayde.

“I understand.” But in his heart, Linley was laughing coldly. Earlier, when he was battling with Clayde’s men in the palace, Linley had already noticed that the guards consisted solely of knights, and that no magi were present. Similarly, there were no magi present here in Shaq’s squad either.

Clearly, when fleeing, Clayde hadn’t had time to look after his magi at all.

Although magi were very useful when it came to doing battle, this time they were engaging in flight, not in battle with magical beasts. Bringing a magus along would actually slow things down. How could a magus travel as quickly as a powerful warrior? Some of the more powerful warriors could run like the wind even if they had no horse. But magi?

…….

On this desolate road, Shaq and his squad continued to hurry forward

nonstop. Some of the formerly prosperous villages on the way had already been reduced to ash, and rotting corpses were strewn everywhere. In this wasteland, magical beasts could often be seen roaming about singly or in pairs.

Those lucky humans who had manage to escape the first massacre would eventually all be chased down and eaten by these roaming magical beasts.

“Our Kingdom of Fenlai is finished.”

Shaq, riding side by side with Linley on their horses, said with a sigh as he looked off into the distance. Occasionally, a magical beast would launch attacks against them, but the Wildthunder knights would easily dispose of them. Shaq and Linley’s conversations weren’t disrupted at all.

“Most likely nine out of ten citizens of the Kingdom of Fenlai are dead now.” Linley’s face was full of sorrow and despair as well.

Shaq nodded slightly.

In his heart, Shaq was also in mourning. The destruction of the Kingdom of Fenlai meant that his clan was no longer a royal clan. When there was no kingdom, how could there be a royal clan?

“Fortunately…” Shaq’s thoughts turned to the five magicrystal cards in his bag. With these five magicrystal cards, even though the royal clan of Fenlai no longer had a kingdom, it wouldn’t be too hard for them to become a powerful clan again, thanks to their thousands of years of accumulated wealth. Linley suddenly said, “Second Prince, where will we be meeting with his Majesty?”

The purpose of Linley travelling with Shaq was to learn of Clayde’s whereabouts.

Shaq said with resignation, “Lord Linley, my royal father and I originally didn’t expect the scope of this disaster to be so wide. Thus, the two meeting points we had originally designated were within the Kingdom of Fenlai’s

borders and are now useless. Right now, the only thing I can do is follow our original plan and keep heading north. When we reach one of the cities that was designated by me and my royal father, we will stop, if the city is safe."

Linley instantly understood.

Clayde and Shaq had designated more than one city as possible rendezvous points. They most likely designated a string of cities heading north of the city of Fenlai. Whichever city was safe would be the city they would stop at.

"Which cities did you and his Majesty designate as meeting points?" Linley asked with a laugh.

Shaq wasn't suspicious at all. He immediately said, "There were quite a few cities. Some were within the Kingdom of Fenlai, while others were in the kingdoms and dukedoms to the north. We even designated a city within the O'Brien Empire."

"The O'Brien Empire?" Linley began to laugh.

Shaq said, somewhat embarrassed, "My royal father was worried that these magical beasts might take over the territory of the entire Holy Union. If that was the case, we would be forced to flee to the O'Brien Empire. The O'Brien Empire is the empire with the strongest military force in the Yulan continent, and definitely would be able to stop those magical beasts."

Linley knew much more than Shaq did.

The O'Brien Empire didn't just possess a powerful military. It also had War God O'Brien.

As long as the War God was present, even that 'King' of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts would have to seriously consider whether or not attacking the O'Brien Empire was a good idea.

“No need to over-think it. We’ll just continue to make our way forward. When we reach a safe spot, we’ll find the nearest city that my father and I designated, then we’ll rest. Lord Linley, let’s speed up. Giddy up, giddy up!” As he spoke, Shaq sped up as well. Their hoof steps speeding up, the squad of knights quickly made their way through the wilderness.

Travelling with Shaq and his squad, Linley no longer had to personally act when they were attacked by magical beasts. Those Wildthunder troops disposed of all the attackers.

Three days later.

“Two kingdoms and three duchies have collapsed.”

Shaq and Linley had passed the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Kingdom of Hanmu, as well as two duchies. They had just entered the Dukedom of Ligaode, but here, too, no humans could be seen.

Such a huge swath of territory had fallen. This really was an astonishing event.

After all, the Holy Union only had six kingdoms and fifteen duchies to begin with.

“Growl.”

“Growl.”

A series of growls from magical beasts could be heard from far away, mixed with the shouts of men. Hearing those mixed sounds, Linley and Shaq immediately knew what was going on.

“There’s a battle between humans and magical beasts going on up ahead.” Shaq frowned. Rubbing his chin, he said, “Everyone, be careful. Let’s go around them.” “Yes.” The members of the Wildthunder squad said respectfully.

Leading his men, Shaq carefully circled around the area in front. But when they got close to the combat area, Shaq suddenly stared at the battlefield. “Prince Louis [Luo’yi]?”

Linley also turned to pay attention to that battlefield. Another elite squad of knights was there, but unfortunately, this squad had terrible luck. They had run into a pack of Fire Lions.

Fire Lions were fire-element magical beasts of the seventh rank. They could easily blast fireballs from their mouths, and their bodies were wreathed in flame.

Although they were ‘only’ magical beasts of the seventh rank, magical beasts naturally were more powerful than most humans of the same rank. Even a warrior of the eighth rank would usually have to expend some effort to kill a fire-element magical beast of the seventh rank. But clearly, within that elite squad of knights, there were very few warriors of the eighth rank. The majority were of the seventh rank.

Over half of this squad of knights had died as a result of this battle against nearly twenty Fire Lions. Only a third of the Fire Lions had perished.

But although half of the knights had perished, none of the warriors of the eighth rank had. Thus, in reality, the squad of knights had only lost a third of its total combat potential.

“Stop.” Shaq ordered.

The group of knights were startled, but they all nodded. The power of the Wildthunder squad, when added to Prince Louis’ forces, should be enough to kill those Fire Lions without too much trouble. But what surprised them was that Shaq didn’t permit them to do battle right away.

Another half of Prince Louis’ men had died or been injured, including two warriors of the eighth rank. Half of the Fire Lions had died as well. Only now did Shaq give the order.

“Let’s go. Rescue Prince Louis.” Shaq suddenly ordered his men.

“Yes!”

Instantly, the Wildthunder squad began to charge. With the added strength of these thirty-plus warriors, ten of them of the eighth rank, five of the Fire Lions were instantly killed. The rest, seeing the writing on the wall, quickly turned tail and fled.

“Prince Shaq, thank you, thank you!”

Prince Louis was an extremely handsome young man, but right now, he looked to be in a very sorry state. Upon seeing Shaq, Louis was so grateful that he ran over to hug him.

“Prince Louis, alas, I saw your squad of knights attacked from quite far away, but due to self-preservation considerations, I hesitated for a while. Only after I saw it was you did I order my men to come attack. I hope you won’t blame me.” Shaq said very ‘honestly’. He regretfully added, “If I had come a bit earlier, you would’ve lost fewer men.”

Earlier, Shaq and his knights had waited far away for quite a while. How could experts like Louis and his men not be aware?

In his heart, Louis had borne a grudge towards Shaq, but now, hearing him say this, Louis somewhat believed him.

It made sense.

After such a disaster had occurred, who would go rescue someone who had no relation to one’s self?

“Prince Shaq, no need to say such things. I am already extremely grateful. If it weren’t for you, most likely only two or three of us would be remaining. Hey, no need. We can take care of our own people’s corpses.” Seeing one of Shaq’s men actually go and remove the bags from the corpses of their own volition, Louis shouted out at them.

As soon as the Fire Lions had fled, those few lucky survivors of Prince Louis' force immediately went to remove the bags from the corpses of the deceased, then put them on.

This naturally raised Shaq's suspicions.

Why bring the bags of the deceased? Thus, he ordered that man to go remove some of the bags. Indeed, it had agitated Prince Louis. "Alright, here you go." Shaq's knight immediately handed the bag over. When Louis' knight received the bag, he glared angrily at Shaq's knight.

Seeing this, Shaq only laughed coldly in his heart.

This was too easy to guess.

Very few royal clans were in possession of an interspatial ring. The royal clan of Fenlai had only managed to acquire one through great luck. Now that disaster had struck, naturally these royal clans would want to take the treasures in their treasuries with them. Without interspatial rings, the only option was to carry them in bags. For Prince Louis to be so agitated about these bags most likely meant that he was having his subordinates carry important treasures of the Kingdom of Hanmu.

"Not too many men left. 100% chance of success." Shaq looked at Louis' men. He had already made his decision.

Chapter 13 – A Major Treasure

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 13, A Major Treasure

“Prince Shaq, thank you once again for your assistance. Let us part ways here.” Prince Louis said with a smile.

Shaq’s face immediately turned stern. Unhappily, he said, “Prince Louis, what’s the rush? Right now, this area is covered with magical beasts, and you only have seven people left. If you meet any more magical beasts on the road, it’ll be very dangerous. Come along with us. With our combined strength, we will be safer as well.”

Prince Louis hurriedly said, “Prince Shaq, no…”

“Don’t refuse. Otherwise, I’ll get angry.” Shaq said with a stern, angry look.

Prince Louis looked very awkward, but in his heart, he was furious. He, Prince Louis, wasn’t an idiot. He knew that his subordinates’ earlier actions of collecting off the bags of the deceased had aroused suspicion.

It was true.

The bags of his subordinates contained the major treasures of the royal clan of the Kingdom of Hanmu. The royal clan of Hanmu had been in existence for over a thousand years. Although its history wasn’t as long as that of the royal clan of Fenlai, it still possessed an astonishing amount of wealth and major treasures. However, their royal clan didn’t have any interspatial rings, and so they had to carry their treasures with them.

Actually, in such a chaotic period, the various noble clans of Fenlai and Hanmu had all thrown their valuables and magicrystal cards in bags and fled. The number of people in the entire continent who had interspatial rings was very low. Even a powerful entity such as the Proulx Gallery had only

one, belonging to Managing Director Maia.

“This Shaq is full of bad intentions.” Louis was extremely worried.

He wanted to refuse, but he was afraid that Shaq really would have a falling out with him.

A knight by the side of Prince Louis nudged him, then stepped forward. This knight was the instructor for Prince Louis. “Since Prince Shaq is so sincere, then we shall travel alongside your squad. Only, we’re sorry to have troubled you, Prince Shaq.”

“No trouble at all. Haha, let’s go together.” Shaq laughed loudly.

Just judging from appearances alone, this two-meter tall, burly man looked like a foolish boor. But having grown up in the royal clan, how could Shaq truly be foolish? He, too, could guess what the other party was thinking. Nonetheless, he led everyone travelling north.

“Boss, the atmosphere seems really weird.” Bebe said mentally to Linley.

Linley laughed inwardly. That Prince Louis didn’t dare to offend Prince Shaq too much, but he had to be careful so as to prevent Prince Shaq from acting against him. Naturally, this expedition became rather…special. Watching both sides, Linley knew exactly what was going on.

After chatting for a while with Prince Louis, Prince Shaq separated, then rode over to Linley. In a low voice, he said, “Lord Linley, did you see?”

“See? See what?” Linley looked at Shaq.

After making sure that no one belonging to Prince Louis was nearby, Prince Shaq said in a low voice, “The royal clan of Hanmu is in flight. They surely took with them many of the major treasures they accumulated over their thousand years of existence. In my estimation, those knights’ bags are all filled with major treasures.” Linley knew that the existence of the Golden Bank of the Four Empires had made magicrystal cards quite popular.

Even large clans and royal clans used magicrystal cards. To these clans who possessed hundreds of millions of gold coins in wealth, most treasures weren't a big deal. For example, when they were fleeing, these nobles couldn't be bothered to bring something like Blueheart Grass, which was worth 100,000 gold coins.

The only things they would take were the most important treasures, all worth over a million gold coins, such as magicite cores of magical beasts of the ninth rank or of the Saint-level, or perhaps treasures from other planes. Or divine artifacts…

"Lord Linley, as long as you are willing to assist, when we divide the treasures, naturally you will have a share as well. No. Two shares. What do you say? In my view, those treasures must be worth several million gold coins at least." Shaq said in a low voice.

Shaq knew very well what an astonishing amount of wealth a royal clan possessed. Because in his own hands, there were five hundred million gold coins in magicrystal cards.

The Kingdom of Hanmu wasn't inferior to the Kingdom of Fenlai. They probably possessed the same amount of wealth. How could the major treasures they carried out be of low quality?

"Fine." Linley nodded. "When you plan to make your move, notify me as to what you wish."

Hearing this, Shaq was extremely excited.

Perhaps when they were fleeing, magi were hindrances, but when they were able to engage in a battle, their power was astonishing. Linley was a dual-element magus of the seventh rank. With their opponents totally caught off-guard, he alone could probably kill half of them.

Linley carefully inspected those seven people on Prince Louis' side. Right now, each of them were carrying four or five bags. In particular…

“Hrm?”

Linley suddenly noticed that the sound of hoof steps of one middle-aged man’s horse was particularly loud. In addition, that horse seemed more tired than the other horses as well. More importantly, that middle-aged man had another horse running alongside him! He had two horses to himself!

Clearly, this middle-aged man needed to frequently change horses.

“These horses are both fine horses. Even if they were carrying three or four people, they would gallop like the wind. Why would this middle-aged man cause these horses to be so tired, to the point where he would have to frequently change horses?” Linley instantly understood the reason.

This middle-aged man was very heavy.

Or, to put it another way, the things he was carrying was very heavy. “But this middle-aged man is only carrying a short sword. Can it be that within his bags…” Linley’s only explanation was that the four bags the middle-aged man was carrying included something extremely heavy.

The wind howled.

Both Prince Louis’ and Prince Shaq’s men had retired for the night. No matter how strong one was, they would still need rest. Prince Louis’ and his six warriors all rested together, while Prince Shaq’s men were divided into four or five units. These two forces were located in separate areas.

“Master, when should we leave?” Prince Louis said in a soft voice. The other five men were all feigning sleep.

“Wait a bit longer. When they’ve all fallen asleep, we’ll mount and leave.” That middle-aged man said quietly.

Fleeing into the dark night was a very common strategy. It was a common strategy because many people used it…and many people used it because it

was effective!

The thirty people on Prince Shaq's side were feigning sleep as well. Not a single one of them was truly asleep. Everyone knew that there would be a battle they had to fight tonight.

"Lord Linley." Prince Shaq was by Linley's side. He called out to Linley in a soft voice.

"Hrm?" Linley turned to look at Shaq.

Prince Shaq continued, "Lord Linley, prepare to secretly cast a magic spell. This will catch them off-guard and make them suffer heavy losses. And then, my squad will charge over and finish them off. Lord Linley, it's up to you now."

"Fine." Linley nodded.

A sudden sneak attack via magic at night was something which opponents definitely would not be able to foresee.

Linley's lips began to move slightly as he quietly began to chant the words to a magical spell. By his side, Prince Shaq could only wait impatiently. Poor Prince Louis and his men actually wanted to wait a while longer and flee after Prince Shaq and his men had fallen asleep.

"Swish! Swish! Swish!"

In a circular area with a radius of ten meters, dozens of sharp earthen spears suddenly jutted out of the ground. "Ah!" A series of agonized screams sounded out as those sharp earthen spears suddenly pierced through those warriors' bodies, and one of them was directly impaled through and through. That poor Prince Louis was instantly killed as well by those spears. He was, after all, the weakest person amongst them.

The thickly clustered array of earthen spears was enough to freeze one's heart.

Earth-style magic of the seventh rank – Earthen Spear Array.

Four of the seven people in Prince Louis' party died in agony on the spot, while the three remaining warriors of the eighth rank suffered serious injuries as well, due to being caught off-guard.

"Kill!"

The thirty members of the Wildthunder squad were previously feigning sleep, but hearing those miserable screams, they all charged towards the other camp as though they had received orders. They immediately attacked those three wounded warriors of the eighth rank, in a thirty against three fight.

This wasn't a fair contest at all. What's more, the Wildthunder squad had ten warriors of the eighth rank.

"Slice." "Slice."

Those three wounded warriors of the eighth rank were easily killed. They were barely able to resist at all.

"Second Prince, all of them are dead now." The captain of the Wildthunder squad, an energetic, golden-haired middle-aged man reported.

Shaq was overjoyed. "Haha, wonderful! Quick, bring those bags over to me. For this action alone, I will award all of you a hundred thousand gold coins. When we reunite with my royal father, I will disburse the gold." Shaq was extremely excited.

There were thirty people in the Wildthunder squad. A hundred thousand gold coins each was only a total of three million gold coins. But the wealth contained within those ten bags surely was worth more than a hundred million gold coins.

"Come, Lord Linley. You pick two bags first." Shaq said very

magnanimously to Linley.

The usefulness of a magus in pitched group battles had been totally put on display. This sneak attack by magic of Linley's had killed four and heavily injured the remaining three. If Shaq had ordered his men to directly attack, quite a few of them probably would've died.

Linley walked directly over to Prince Louis' master's corpse, the middle-aged man. He hefted each of the four bags. As he did so, Linley indeed noticed something strange. Three of the bags were very light, very ordinary.

But the last bag…it seemed very small, and the object inside was only the size of a man's palm, but its weight…was over a thousand pounds.

"Something the size of a hand but over a thousand pounds in weight?"

Linley was stunned.

He had never heard of anything this dense and heavy. Even gold and diamonds were much lighter than this material. The size of a hand, but over a thousand pounds…

"Lord Linley?" Shaq walked over. "Have you chosen?"

"No need to choose. I'll just go with these two." Linley randomly grabbed another bag from the remaining three, then slung the two bags over his back.

Seeing this, Shaq felt very happy as well. What he worried about the most was that Linley would open every single bag to take a look inside, then make his decision. This would be quite unfair to him. But Linley had just casually hefted the bags on a single person, then chose two of them.

All of Shaq's subordinates were now carrying bags.

"Let's go." Shaq was now in a wonderful mood.

Linley was riding on a horse as well, but while riding the horse, Linley had cast the Floating Technique on himself. Given his power as a magus of the seventh rank, using a spell of the fifth rank was extremely easy. Linley used the levitational powers of the Floating Technique to counteract the extra weight of that mysterious object.

This allowed the horse he was riding to continue galloping without strain.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley immediately pressed him. “Take a look and see what I have inside these two new bags of mine?”

“Oh, you got some treasures?” Doehring Cowart, who had been napping inside the Coiling Dragon ring, was suddenly full of energy. He immediately used his spiritual energy to directly sense what was inside Linley’s two bags.

“Within that first bag is a brocade box wrapped in several layers of cloth. Inside the box there is a matching pair of beautiful jade crystals. They should have quite the history, but I don’t know where they are from.” Doehring Cowart said.

“The second bag…ah?!”

Doehring Cowart cried out in surprise. “What is it?” Linley’s heart clenched in excitement. He knew that the second bag had to be the one containing the strange item weighing over a thousand pounds, because the item inside the second bag wasn’t a perfectly rectangular box.

“Adamantine. Adamantine ore. There’s actually a fist-sized chunk of adamantine ore in the Yulan continent. This…this is astonishing.” Doehring Cowart said in amazement.

Hearing the words ‘adamantine’, Linley’s heart clenched yet again. Adamantine didn’t actually exist in the material plane. It only came from other planes, and it was so tough and durable that supposedly even most Deity-level combatants couldn’t easily break it. When he was jailed in the Radiant Temple, that lock with some adamantine alloyed into it would’ve

been hard for even a Saint-level combatant to break. From this, one could tell how tough adamantine was.

“A fist-sized chunk of adamantine ore. This…this is more valuable than even a Saint-level magicite core. How could there be such a huge chunk in the world?” Doehring Cowart simply couldn’t believe it.

“A fist-sized chunk is ‘huge’?” Linley was rather confused.

Chapter 14 – The City of Hess

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 14, The City of Hess

Doehring Cowart was rendered momentarily speechless by Linley's question.

"Linley, I must tell you, if a weapon has just a little bit of adamantine alloyed into it, the weapon's durability will increase to a very high level. If a weapon were to be totally made out of adamantine, even if you gave it to a Saint-level combatant and let him try to break it, he wouldn't be able to scratch it, no matter how long he tried."

Doehring Cowart was very resigned.

Linley clearly didn't fully appreciate how valuable adamantine was.

"Then, Grandpa Doehring, can I use this adamantine to forge a 'heavy sword'?" After listening to Doehring Cowart previously explain the benefits to using heavy weapons, Linley wanted to acquire a heavy sword of his own. Originally, Linley was planning to spend some money and buy a good one. But now that he had this chunk of 'adamantine', naturally he had to put it to good use.

Right now, Linley didn't lack for money.

"Forge a heavy sword with adamantine? A heavy sword is rather large, and will most likely need this chunk of adamantine to be mixed with some other metals. But of course, I don't know anything about blacksmithing myself. However, I have heard that forging weapons out of adamantine is extremely difficult. Adamantine is extremely tough. Most master weaponsmiths are not capable of melting and reforging it." Doehring Cowart chuckled.

Linley nodded to himself.

Adamantine was a material which even Deity-level combatants supposedly would find tough to break. But since it was possible for adamantine to be forged into a weapon, naturally there had to be a special technique for it as well. Only, the technique was probably too difficult.

“Got it.” Linley nodded.

….

Linley and Second Prince Shaq continued speeding northwards, and the farther north they went, the sparser the magical beasts became. After travelling another three or four hundred kilometers without a single magical beast appearing, they reached an area where the local cities and towns hadn’t had any people die.

But these villages and towns were very sparsely populated. Most likely, people were afraid of the danger and had moved northwards as well.

“Haha, good, it seems the Kingdom of Hess hasn’t fallen.” Shaq laughed loudly. “It’s been quite a few days. Finally we can rest.”

Shaq looked at Linley.

Seated on his horse, Linley seemed as solid and unmovable as an old oak, not wavering in the slightest, seeming very stable. His face was calm, and he had been silent, giving him a reliable, taciturn aura. Towards Linley, Shaq had always felt a hint of dread. Although he was a few years older than Linley, he always respectfully addressed Linley as ‘Master Linley’.

“Master Linley, look. That’s a military camp up ahead.” Shaq and Linley were riding side by side.

Linley nodded.

The Radiant Church had clearly decided to set up a line of defense here at the borders of the Kingdom of Hess. Seeing those countless military camps

lining the border, one could tell how many soldiers had been deployed here.

“Two kingdoms and five duchies lost. That’s about a third of the territory of the Holy Union. I expect the Radiant Church isn’t willing to retreat any further.” Linley chuckled. Linley and the knights made their way through the guarded pass, and were quickly allowed in.

This guarded pass was to defend against magical beasts.

Naturally, no humans would be denied entry.

“Second Prince, shall we rest here?” Linley seemed very tranquil.

“The city of Hess is one of the agreed upon places that my royal father and I settled upon. We still have around three hundred kilometers before arriving at Hess City. If we hurry, we should be able to reach there by nightfall today.” Shaq said unguardedly.

“Hess City!”

Linley memorized this name. “Clayde. Hess City shall be where you die.”

……

They continued their journey. Linley, Shaq, and the thirty mounted knights kicked up a trail of dust in their wake. By the time Linley and Shaq saw the city of Hess, the sun was just setting, casting its red glow upon the earth.

“Hess City, the capital of the Kingdom of Hess. It’s only slightly smaller than Fenlai City.” Seeing the silhouettes of the enormous city walls, Linley couldn’t help but be awed.

How much manpower had it taken to erect such giant walls?

Arriving at the gate to Hess City, Linley and his squad found their way barred.

“Dismount!” A gate guard of Hess City ordered in a loud voice.

“Why should we dismount?” Shaq shouted back angrily.

The gate guard saw that Shaq’s group was definitely an extraordinary one, and thus answered the question. “His Highness has ordered that no horses may be ridden within the boundaries of Hess City. Everyone, right now Hess City is overflowing with people. There’s simply not enough space to ride horses. It’s best if you all dismount.”

“Let’s dismount.” Linley smiled at Shaq.

Shaq nodded.

Linley and Shaq could both imagine that many people had fled here from the two ruined kingdoms and the six destroyed duchies. Most likely many of the people living near Hess City had fled here as well. Those two kingdoms and six duchies possessed a combined population of hundreds of millions.

Even if 90% had died, millions would have survived. And of course, there had been no magical beast sightings within hundreds of kilometers of the Kingdom of Hess, so virtually all of the people who lived in that area had survived.

“So many people.”

Stepping into Hess City, Linley and Shaq and the knights were all shocked. Hess City normally could only accommodate at most a million people. But by Linley’s calculations, right now there were at least several million people within the city, because every single street was clogged. Even in the city of Fenlai, Linley had never seen anything like this.

“Go find a hotel first, then come back here to pick me up.” Shaq immediately ordered his men to go reserve a hotel suite.

“Lord Linley, let’s go eat dinner first.” Shaq said with a laugh, and of

course Linley wouldn't refuse. Shaq immediately led Linley and the others to a nearby restaurant. The bottom floor of this restaurant was full, but there were still dining rooms available in the upper levels.

"Three rooms." Shaq said magnanimously.

But when they sat down and Shaq saw the prices on the menu, he was somewhat flabbergasted. Shaq grabbed the nearest waiter and shouted angrily, "Do you take me for an idiot? With prices like this, a table of dishes would cost several thousand gold coins. You are trying to cheat me!"

Although this restaurant was a high class one, Shaq, as a prince, had naturally been to many high class restaurants.

For a restaurant of this class, a hundred gold coins a table was generally more than enough.

"Milord, if you don't wish to eat, you can leave." The waiter seemed very confident. "Right now, Hess City is filled to the brim with people, including countless nobles who fled here with their valuables. All of them demand high quality service and are willing to pay for it."

Shaq was instantly stunned by these words.

Right. The people who had managed to flee from the two kingdoms and the three duchies most likely all belonged to powerful clans or were powerful combatants themselves. Those powerful clans naturally wouldn't penny-pinch.

"Hmph."

Shaq snorted, but still placed his orders in the end. After Shaq and Linley had finished eating their meals…

"Your Highness, Second Prince." The people who had gone looking for a hotel came back.

“And? Have you found a place?” Shaq asked.

That guard shook his head. “All of the rooms in the major hotels have been booked. Although we only went to five large hotels, we could already tell this wouldn’t work. There were too many people trying to make reservations. Your Highness, we arrived at Hess City too late. The members of the clans belonging to the five duchies and the Kingdom of Hanmu arrived much faster than us.”

Shaq nodded.

“Sit and eat first.” Shaq turned to look at another guard, one with short jade hair. “Are you full yet? If you are, help me find a manor and buy it. I expect the prices here within Hess City will be quite high, but no matter how pricy it is, buy it. Remember, though; don’t buy something which is too gaudy and too large. This manor will only be a temporary lodging place for myself and my royal father.”

“Yes, your Highness.” The guard acknowledged, and then left to find a manor.

Linley quietly drank his wine, watching everything.

“A manor? I wonder which manor it will be. When Clayde comes, most likely he will head to that manor as well.” By finding out the place where Clayde was going to stay, all he would need to do was lie in wait. When the opportunity came, he would send Clayde to his death.

……

Hess City. A very ordinary manor on Keyan Road.

Under normal conditions, a manor in Hess City like this which was not located in the city center would generally be worth two or three hundred thousand gold coins. But Prince Shaq had to pay a million gold coins just to buy it. A large number of nobles and magnates had entered Hess City, causing inflation to skyrocket.

That night.

Linley also stayed in this manor for now.

“That Clayde, after he comes, should be residing in one of these two or three rooms.” Linley was walking in the middle of the manor, carefully inspecting its internal layout. He was making preparations for killing Clayde in the future.

The night wind was cool and refreshing, but Linley ignored it, only paying attention to the location and layout of every part of this manor.

“Lord Linley, why haven’t you rested yet?” That enchanting consort said to Linley in a soft voice, standing in the doorway to her room.

“Found being in my room to be too stuffy. Thought I’d get some fresh air.” Linley replied casually.

“I also feel it’s rather stuffy.” That consort walked out of her room towards Linley. Her coquettish gaze only made Linley feel apprehensive, and he immediately said, “Then Royal Consort, you should get some air. I’ll go back to my room and get some rest now.” After he spoke, Linley immediately left.

Watching Linley leave, the consort couldn’t help but let out a little hmph of displeasure.

….

The next morning.

“Second Prince, Royal Consort, Princess. I have some things to take care of, so I’ll leave now.” Linley bid his farewells.

“Lord Linley, why are you in such a rush to leave? Wait for my royal father to come back first, then decide.” Shaq immediately tried to convince him to

stay.

Linley laughed coldly inside. “Wait for your royal father? If Clayde saw that I was living here, I probably would have to openly attack and kill him. The chance of killing him openly is lower than assassinating him.” Linley had already had enough setbacks.

This time, Linley wanted to be absolutely certain of success.

“This time, I’ll have to endure and be patient. I’ll wait for the moment when Clayde and Kaiser aren’t together. When Clayde is alone, I’ll kill him. That will definitely be successful.” Linley knew that so long as Kaiser was there, he wouldn’t be able to kill Clayde quickly.

But as long as Kaiser was not present, he definitely would succeed.

“Then where are you going, Lord Linley?” Shaq asked.

“I plan to leave Hess City and continue north. As for where exactly, I’m not yet sure.” Linley replied. “Alright. Second Prince, Royal Consort, Princess. I bid you farewell.”

Bowing slightly, Linley led Bebe away from the manor.

……

That very night, Linley moved into a small courtyard on the same street as Shaq’s manor. The manor which Shaq had bought took up a large amount of space, enough to very comfortably fit thirty people. But the house which Linley bought was very small, only enough for three or four people.

This little courtyard had still cost Linley 50,000 gold coins. In normal times, a few thousand coins would have been enough.

“Ah Da, Ah Er, have you seen anyone new enter the manor?” Linley was seated at his dinner table as he asked these two men.

“No.”

Linley had casually picked these two men up from the streets for his employ. Right now, in Hess City, there were many commoners as well as nobles. After fleeing here, those commoners had no food to eat and place to live. All they could do was beg or do manual labor. Thus, it was easy for Linley to find people to work for him. A salary of two gold coins each day, with food and board included, was an opportunity which any of these impoverished refugees would have fought for.

Linley saw that these two men seemed the reliable sort, and so had chosen them.

“At night, you can sleep, but by day, keep a close watch. As long as any strangers enter the manor, especially in large numbers, you have to inform me. Pay special attention to a man who has only one hand.” Linley repeated his instructions.

There was no need to keep a watch at night, because the gates to Hess City were barred shut at night.

And Linley was confident that with two people watching during the day, as long as Clayde’s men arrived, he would definitely find out. Shaq and his people believed that Linley had really left the city, but in reality, Linley continued his watch from a courtyard very near them.

“Clayde, I’ll just keep waiting here for as long as it takes. Let’s see how long it takes you to get here.” Linley’s gaze was cold.

Seeing the look on Linley’s face, those two brothers shuddered.

“Go.” Linley ordered.

“Yes, milord.”

Chapter 15 – The Clan of the Violetflame Warriors

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 15, The Clan of the Violetflame Warriors

A sky-blue magus robe and a magistaff in hand.

This was how Linley was dressed now as he walked on the streets.

On this outing, Bebe had stayed behind in the little courtyard on Keyan Road. Linley's instructions were for Bebe to instantly tell him once Clayde appeared. Given the soul link between Linley and Bebe, no matter how far apart they were, they would be able to sense each other's thoughts.

Today, Linley had made this outing for the sake of his 'heavy sword'.

"Hrm?" Linley noticed a weapons shop nearby and immediately went inside.

The weapons shop's business was quite average. There were only two customers inside inspecting the various weapons. Linley went straight to the counter and asked calmly, "In Hess City, who is the best weaponsmith around?"

The store clerk glanced at Linley. Realizing he was a magus, the shopkeeper immediately said courteously, "Milord magus, the master blacksmith of our shop possesses very high skills. There's no weapon that he cannot forge."

"My question was, in Hess City, who is the best blacksmith around?" Linley's face turned cold. "If your so-called master blacksmith is unable to produce the weapon I need, don't blame me when I wreck your shop."

The store clerk was frightened by Linley's words. Previously, he had wanted to try and win a customer, but now he no longer dared to make any

rash claims. “Milord magus, the number one blacksmith of Hess City resides in West Hess City. His name is Master Corby [Ke’er’bi], and his weapons shop is quite close to the Radiant Temple.”

“Corby?” Linley memorized this name. He immediately left.

“But milord magus.” That store clerk said in a quiet voice.

“Hrm?” Linley turned his head to look at the clerk, curious what he had to say.

The store clerk said respectfully, “Milord magus, if you want a good magistaff, you should go to a magic weapons store. These weapons are all meant for warriors to choose from.” In the eyes of this store clerk, it was very strange indeed for a magus to not only want a weapon, but to want one made by a master blacksmith.

The weapon of a magus was his magistaff.

And in order to produce a magistaff, one needed high skills in alchemy.

Linley’s lips curved upwards in a smile, and he left the weapons store.

Half an hour later, Linley arrived near the Radiant Temple in the west part of the city. Based on Linley’s investigations, the Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church and the other Saint-level combatants hadn’t arrived in Hess City yet. Supposedly, only a single Cardinal had arrived here, but to better assist the ruler of the Kingdom of Hess, he had taken residence along with the soldiers at the border.

As for where that group of Saint-level combatants of the Radiant Church had gone, no one knew.

“I really hope that ‘King’ of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts killed a few of those Saint-levels.” Linley secretly said to himself. The Holy Emperor Heidens had used the Divine Baptism against Linley. Although Linley didn’t know what exactly it had been meant to do, he knew that the

divine power of it had tried to merge into his very soul.

His soul.

This was the most important core of a person. Linley was certain that Heidens had been up to no good.

“This is the weapons store of the so-called number one blacksmith in Hess City?” Linley glanced at the weapons store. The store was tens of meters long, and on each side of the door there were two powerfully built warriors in beautifully wrought armor standing guard, weapons in hand.

This weapons store did indeed seem quite impressive. Clearly, it was much better than the store which Linley had gone into just a while earlier.

Entering the weapons store, Linley saw that the attendant was a beautiful young woman. The woman’s eyes lit up when she saw how Linley was dressed, and she courteously said, “Milord magus, what sort of weapon do you desire? Come with me. We have all sorts of beautiful court rapiers.”

Linley chuckled with resignation.

It seemed this woman thought that he was nothing more than a magus who wanted a weapon to play around with.

“I heard your Master Corby is here?” Linley said directly to the woman.

The attendant nodded. “Right. Master Corby is the head blacksmith here, and he is definitely the number one blacksmith within the city of Hess. I’ve never heard of Master Corby being unable to forge a weapon of any sort.”

“Oh? Have Master Corby come out. I wish for him to make me a weapon.” Linley said immediately.

“Have…have Master Corby come out?” The attendant laughed awkwardly. “Milord magus, Master Corby never comes out to meet with customers. If you wish to meet with Master Corby, you’ll have to go find him yourself.

And…if you want to meet Master Corby, you need to spend some money, as otherwise, he won't meet with you."

Linley had to admit that this man really did know how to put on airs.

"Fine. How much money for me to go meet him?" Linley asked directly.

"Not much. Fifty gold coins." The attendant said.

Fifty gold coins was nothing to those members of rich clans, but this price was enough for a commoner to survive off of for a year or two.

"Fifty?" Linley withdrew a sack of gold from his clothes. This sack contained a hundred pieces of gold. Linley poured out fifty, then instructed, "Lead the way." Linley usually only carried a hundred gold coins on him. He had magicrystal cards on him, after all. If he needed any more, he could go withdraw it.

"Yes, milord magus." The attendant was extremely happy.

….

Five minutes later, guided by the attendant, Linley arrived at a very plain-looking residence. The guard to the residence clearly was familiar with the attendant, and let them in immediately.

When Linley saw Master Corby, the man was reclining on a chair while sipping a cup of tea. This Corby's hair was totally white, but the powerful muscles bulging from his body showed that he was still a powerful warrior.

Most weaponsmiths were extremely powerful warriors.

"Master Corby, this lord magus wishes to meet with you." The attendant said respectfully.

Corby glanced at Linley and laughed. "Youngster, my fees are quite high. If you want me to forge a weapon for you, at the very least it will cost you ten

thousand gold coins."

Linley could sense this Master Corby's approximate level of power.

If he wasn't a warrior of the seventh rank, then he was one of the eighth.

"Fine." Linley nodded. "But this weapon will use special materials. Right. Can the other people here leave?"

"Of course." Master Corby nodded at his servants, who immediately left.

Master Corby looked at Linley curiously. "Youngster, what special materials do you bring?"

"Adamantine." Linley said directly.

Previously sitting lazily on his chair, Master Corby suddenly shot to his feet as though thunderstruck. He stared at Linley in amazement. "What did you just say? Adamantine? Did I hear you correctly?" Adamantine was a material that appeared only in legends. He, Corby, had been a weaponsmith his entire life, but hadn't seen any.

"Right. I intend to use adamantine to forge a weapon. Are you capable of doing so?" Linley looked expectantly at Master Corby.

Master Corby hesitated for a moment, but in the end, he sighed and said, "Youngster, I actually do not have the ability to smith adamantine." Hearing these words, Linley couldn't help but feel disappointed.

"Youngster, can…can you show the adamantine to me?" Corby said somewhat awkwardly.

Linley could understand the desire of a master blacksmith like Corby to see adamantine with his own eyes. He immediately removed the adamantine chunk from his bag and handed it over to Master Corby. This thousand-pound chunk of adamantine didn't seem to be heavy at all to Linley.

However, when the totally unprepared Master Corby accepted the chunk of adamantine, his hand couldn't help but sink down.

"It really is heavy." Master Corby recovered and easily lifted it back up.

But Corby still glanced at Linley in surprise. For this Linley to be able to hold this heavy chunk of adamantine so easily meant that he was at least a warrior of the sixth rank.

"Adamantine. Having seen it, I'm satisfied." Corby stared lovingly at the chunk of adamantine, but in the end he returned it to Linley. In truth, Corby did feel a hint of greed and desire for it, but he knew that for Linley to so casually hand it to him meant that Linley wasn't worried at all about being unable to get it back.

What's more, Corby also knew that he didn't have the ability to smith this adamantine chunk.

"Master Corby, do you know who is capable of smithing adamantine?" Linley asked.

Corby considered for a moment. "From what I know, the Radiant Church has specialized master weaponsmiths. The Radiant Church has a long history and it should possess the techniques needed to smith adamantine. I expect that the master weaponsmiths belonging to the Four Great Empires and to the Cult of Shadows should all be in possession of such techniques as well."

Linley nodded.

"Farewell, then." Linley left, somewhat disappointed.

Linley knew from the beginning that adamantine wasn't so easily smelted, and so he had made some mental preparations. Departing from this location, he headed back towards his own residence. But halfway back, Linley suddenly heard a familiar voice.

“Third Bro.”

Linley immediately turned his head to look.

Yale, George, and Reynolds were staring back at him in astonishment.

“Boss Yale. Second Bro. Fourth Bro.” Linley immediately ran over excitedly. He didn’t expect to be able to meet with his dear bros again. Under Yale’s invitation, Linley decided to go to the Dawson Conglomerate’s headquarters to have a good meal with his bros.

Within a very secluded manor.

Linley, Yale, Reynolds, and George were all happily exchanging stories of recent events.

“You want to find a master weaponsmith? Mm, I don’t know any either.” Yale shook his head.

Reynolds said questioningly, “Third Bro, you said adamantine? What is adamantine?”

Neither Reynolds, nor Yale, nor George had ever heard of adamantine.

Adamantine was simply too rare and too precious.

“Linley, we just barely had a chance to meet last time. Only today do I have the opportunity to have a good chat with a genius like you.” Monroe Dawson walked in from the main hall, holding his big belly and chuckling. “Hey, did you just say adamantine?”

Linley nodded. “Lord Chairman, I managed to acquire some adamantine and plan to use it to forge a weapon. But I’m not able to find a master weaponsmith capable of forging it.”

“Oh.”

What sort of a person was Monroe Dawson? How could he not know what adamantine was? “You actually address me as Chairman? You and Yale are like brothers! Just call me Uncle. You say you need to find a master weaponsmith who can smelt adamantine? I happen to know one.”

Linley actually didn’t feel too excited upon hearing this.

Because even if Monroe Dawson knew a person, that person most likely wasn’t in the city of Hess.

“Uncle Monroe, who is that master weaponsmith?” Linley asked.

Monroe Dawson grinned. “That master weaponsmith is known as Master Vincente [Wei’lin’te], the leader of the Hyde clan.”

“Vincente?” Linley was a bit curious.

Suddenly, Linley started. “Uncle Dawson, what clan did you just say he belonged to?”

“The Hyde clan.” Monroe Dawson replied with a chortle.

Linley had totally memorized that book he had read back in his clan’s manor which introduced the Four Supreme Warriors. One piece of information included within was the clan names of the Four Supreme Warriors. The Violetflame Warriors clan…was the Hyde clan! However… there was more than one clan named ‘Hyde’, and thus this Hyde clan wasn’t necessarily the clan of the Violetflame Warriors.

“You thought of them? Haha. Right. This Hyde clan is just like your Baruch clan. They are a clan of Supreme Warriors. The Hyde clan lived within a small city in the Holy Union’s Kingdom of Hanmu. After this catastrophe, they fled here to Hess City.” Monroe Dawson said with a laugh.

“They are here in Hess City?” Linley was surprised.

“And they are living right next to my manor. I personally arranged for them

to be put there.” Monroe Dawson continued.

Linley stared at Monroe Dawson in astonishment.

Actually, Monroe Dawson knew several people who were capable of smelting adamantine. The master weaponsmith of the Dawson Conglomerate was capable of smelting adamantine as well. But none of those other people whom Monroe Dawson knew were currently in Hess City. Thus, Monroe Dawson only mentioned this one person.

Chapter 16 – The Furnace

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 16, The Furnace

Linley was in a dire need of a good weapon, and so Monroe Dawson decided to immediately take Linley to Master Vincente. Monroe Dawson, Linley, Yale, George, and Reynolds all went in a group to a dwelling not too far away.

“Lord Chairman!” The guard at the entrance immediately bowed respectfully upon seeing Monroe Dawson.

The servants and guards of the Hyde clan had been personally arranged for by Monroe Dawson. They all belonged to the Dawson Conglomerate to begin with.

“Lord Dawson has arrived?” A middle-aged man who had been quietly lying in rest in the front courtyard instantly scrambled to his feet and walked over. His face filled with gratitude, he said, “Lord Dawson, if you want to see me, all you have to do is send someone for me. I would just come to your place.”

This Vincente truly did feel grateful towards Monroe Dawson.

In this past half year, Monroe Dawson had been extremely friendly and courteous towards his Hyde clan, but hadn’t required anything of them. In particular, when they had fled for their lives, if the Dawson Conglomerate hadn’t assisted them while they were in the Kingdom of Hanmu, perhaps many more members of the Hyde clan would have died.

“Haha, let’s talk inside.” Monroe Dawson slapped Vincente on the shoulders.

“Alright.”

Other members of the Hyde clan, such as Vincente's father, and Vincente's two sons all came out.

"Come, Mr. Vincente, let me make some introductions." Monroe Dawson beamed as he pointed at Linley. "The three of you should already know my son, but this one here is that genius magus I have often mentioned to you. He is…"

"Linley of the Baruch clan, a master sculptor and a genius magus." Vincente continued.

Vincente turned his eyes to Linley. Even Vincente's father and his two children turned to stare at Linley in awe.

"Linley, I imagine you know about our Hyde clan." There was a very special sentiment visible in Vincente's eyes. Although both the Hyde clan and the Baruch clan had decayed in power over the years, in their heart, they were filled with pride and a certain type of arrogance.

The clans of the Four Supreme Warriors had five thousand years of history!

No matter how far they had fallen, this sort of innate pride and arrogance sprung from their hearts.

Two descendants of two Supreme Warrior clans looked at each other, sharing a very special moment.

"The Violetflame Warrior clan." Linley said modestly. "In the books passed down within our Baruch clan, there are careful descriptions regarding the Hyde clan, one of our fellow Supreme Warrior clans."

Hearing these words, Vincente couldn't help but feel as though he had been given quite a bit of face, and felt all the more well-disposed towards Linley. "Linley, let me introduce you. This is my eldest son, Yotian [Yu'xing] Hyde. This is my second son, Trey [Te'lei] Hyde." Vincente clearly was very proud of his sons. "Linley, my two sons are quite talented as well. But of course, compared to you, they have quite a distance to go."

Yotian and Trey only nodded, but from the fierce look in their eyes, they clearly didn't submit to their father's claims that the two brothers were a bit inferior to Linley.

"Haha, alright, Mr. Vincente. I've come today to ask you for your help." Monroe Dawson said directly.

Vincente immediately said magnanimously, "Lord Dawson, if you need anything, just tell me. As long as I am capable, I will definitely do my best." In this past half year, the Dawson Conglomerate had helped the Hyde clan out in many matters. But the Hyde clan hadn't been able to repay them at all. After all, the Dawson Conglomerate hadn't asked them to do anything.

The feeling of owing someone wasn't a good one.

Monroe Dawson laughed while gesturing at Linley. "Linley wants a good weapon. I want to ask you to be the one to forge it for him."

"Forge a weapon?" Vincente looked at Linley. "Linley, a weapon for yourself?"

"Yes." Linley nodded.

A gratified look was in Vincente's eyes. Nodding, he said, "Right. We descendants of the Four Supreme Warriors can't be physically puny and weak. We must train as warriors, and naturally we must have a fine weapon. Tell me, what sort of weapon do you desire!"

Both Vincente, and his two sons, upon hearing that Linley was a magus genius, felt a bit of disdain towards him in their hearts. In their eyes, the Four Supreme Warriors descendants should be powerful, invincible warriors. Now that Linley was asking them to help him make a weapon, they felt very happy.

"A heavy sword." Linley said slowly. "Mr. Vincente, I am 1.9 meters tall. You decide how long the heavy sword should be. You should know what

length would be most suitable to someone of my height."

Vincente was a bit surprised. "A heavy sword? Not a greatsword or a warblade?"

Greatswords and heavy swords were two different types of weapons. "A heavy sword." Linley said with certainty.

"Alright. Any other requests?" Vincente was the leader of the Hyde clan. The descendants of the Hyde clan weren't just powerful warriors; they were all extremely skilled blacksmiths as well.

Linley removed the bag he was carrying. "The materials for the heavy sword must include this."

From within the bag, Linley withdrew that fist-sized chunk of adamantine ore.

Just by looking at it, Vincente couldn't tell that this was adamantine. After all, even Vincente had never seen adamantine before. He immediately asked curiously, "What is this ore called?"

"Adamantine."

Linley replied directly.

"Adamantine?!" Vincente, his father, and his two sons all stared in astonishment at the fist-sized chunk of black rock in Linley's hands.

Vincente suppressed the excitement in his heart. Looking at Linley, he said, "Can you let me take a look?"

"Yes."

Vincente carefully accepted the chunk of adamantine. Although he had never seen adamantine before, Vincente knew that adamantine was extremely heavy, and so he had prepared himself for it. Indeed…

“At least a thousand pounds.” Vincente’s eyes shone. “Indeed. Adamantine is over a hundred times heavier than gold. The legends are true.”

Vincente suddenly came to his senses, and he stared at Linley in astonishment. “Linley, you want to use this entire chunk of adamantine in the forging of your heavy sword?”

“Right. All of it.” Linley replied.

Vincente shook his head repeatedly. “Linley, this adamantine ore is a thousand pounds by itself. Using adamantine as the base, the other materials you will need to alloy it with will have to be of high quality as well. Given the size of your heavy sword, it will most likely weigh nearly three thousand pounds. This will be my first time forging such a heavy sword. Three thousand pounds! You want it for yourself? Even most warriors of the seventh rank won’t be able to use it freely. Even a warrior of the eighth rank will be slowed down by it, despite being able to wield it with ease.”

“Mr. Vincente, just worry about the forging.” Linley laughed.

Dragonblood Warriors were immensely strong, physically. Comparatively speaking, in terms of battle-qi, Dragonblood battle-qi was a bit weaker.

Of the Four Supreme Warriors, the Dragonblood Warriors and the Undying Warriors possessed greater strength. The founder of the Baruch clan, Baruch, was someone who had dared to fight head on against a Nine Headed Serpent Emperor and win, killing it in the end.

A Nine Headed Serpent Emperor was an incredibly large creature, with strength to match. It could be considered one of the most powerful Saint-level magical beasts in existence. But Baruch still dared to fight it head on and killed it. From this, people learned how powerful and strong the Dragonblood Warriors were. Vincente glanced at Linley, then nodded. “Within my clan, we do indeed have secret methods for forging adamantine. But it will be hard for me to acquire all of the other rare ingredients right now.”

“Let me handle that.” Monroe Dawson said.

Vincente nodded. Given the power and influence of the Dawson Conglomerate, procuring some ores should be very easy. Vincente looked at Linley. Solemnly, he said, “Linley, adamantine weapons are indeed very formidable. If you only use a small amount of adamantine ore in your weapon, I’ll still be able to sharpen and put an edge on it. But if you want to use this much adamantine, I’m afraid that at most, I’ll be able to make the edges of the sword slightly thinner. But I won’t be able to put an edge on it.”

A thousand-pound chunk of adamantine ore! Vincente had never even heard of such a thing.

The sturdiness of the weapon it was used to forge would be incredible. To put an edge on and sharpen such a weapon? Vincente knew his own limits.

“Unable to put an edge on it?”

Linley suddenly thought back to the records of his clan. The first Dragonblood Warrior had used a warblade to do battle, but the later Dragonblood Warriors did not. One had even used a massive warhammer, relying purely on weight and power.

A three thousand pound heavy sword would totally be a match for that warhammer of his ancestors.

“If you can’t put an edge on it, so be it.” Linley was very confident. Such a heavy sword with such weight would be able to smash magical beasts to death with sheer kinetic force when wielded by the terrifying strength of a Dragonblood Warrior.

“Good. As long as we have the other ores needed, I can immediately begin the forging for you. A single weapon won’t take more than half a day of work.” Vincente said confidently. He, Vincente, had forged countless weapons, and he was very confident in the secret forging methods of his

clan.

Monroe Dawson laughed. “Vincente, then can you provide me with your secret recipe for forging adamantine now?”

“Fine. I’ll go get it now.” Vincente immediately left.

The Dawson Conglomerate’s efficiency level was terrifyingly high. Before nightfall, they had procured a large piled of quality ores. In truth, the secret forging methods of the Hyde clan didn’t require any specific ores, as every material had possible replacements as well.

But the materials provided by the Dawson Conglomerate were the best of the best.

That night.

“The quality of these materials is extremely high, and all of these ores are high value ores.” Staring at the ores, Vincente was so excited that his face had a ruddy glow. Laughing loudly, he said, “Linley, with such good materials to work with, I’m afraid that the heavy sword will be slightly heavier than I anticipated.”

“That’s fine.” Linley laughed.

A weapon weighing just a bit over three thousand pounds could still be easily wielded by most warriors of the ninth rank, much less the astonishingly strong Dragonblood Warriors.

“Alright. Tomorrow morning, I’ll begin.” Vincent said heroically.

That night, Linley didn’t go back to his own manor. He chatted mentally with Bebe, who very obediently stayed home and didn’t come over. As far as Bebe was concerned, right now his life consisted of eat, sleep, eat, sleep. This was the type of life he liked.

Early morning. The sky slowly brightened.

Those three Hyde clan members, father and two sons, were bare-chested as they began the forging process. Vincente was the primary worker, while Yotian and Trey assisted on the sides. The flames spat forth by the bellows were at an incredibly high temperature.

“Hiss, hiss.”

Vincente Hyde’s body began to emit a blue flame, which quickly merged with the flames in the furnace. The color of the flames in the furnace actually changed as well, and those other ores began to slowly liquefy. Only the adamantine ore didn’t change at all.

Vincente picked up a cup of greenish herbal liquids and poured it directly over the adamantine ore. “Hiss, hiss.” The green liquid actually began to transform the adamantine ore somehow, as it actually slowly began to melt as well.

Finally, the general shape of a sword could be seen.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!”

The forgehammer smashed down again and again, the speed of the blows coming at a terrifyingly fast rate. The hammer danced in Vincente’s hands, giving everyone present the sense of watching an artistic performance. Clearly, Vincente’s hammer strokes had a certain rhythm to it, and the form of the heavy sword began to become more and more clearly defined.

“Hiss, hiss.”

Vincente’s body was constantly emitting that blue flame, keeping the heavy sword under high temperatures at all times. He continued hammering away at it for three hours. The heavy sword, which originally had been all sorts of colors, gradually turned into a pitch black color. Vincente was covered in sweat, and his face was turning a bit white. This was perhaps the most tiring forging project he had ever done.

“Give me mountain spring water.” Vincente shouted loudly.

His elder son, Yotian, immediately brought over a nearby barrel of water, then mixed into it a cup with a different, pre-prepared liquid inside. Using the secret liquid ingredients of their clan along with mountain spring water would definitely produce optimal tempering results.

“Hiss, hiss.” The heavy sword was placed within the barrel.

Watching by the side, Linley and Monroe Dawson’s eyes lit up. After being tempered, the heavy sword would more or less be complete. But just at this time, the gloomy, overcast sky suddenly boomed with thunder, catching everyone off-guard.

“Success!” Vincente pulled the heavy sword out, his face filled with excitement. He raised it high in the air, laughing loudly, “Haha, Linley, success! This is the finest creation I have ever made!”

“BOOOOM!”

A terrifying sound could be heard as a bolt of blue lightning suddenly forked down, striking directly on top of the heavy sword!

Chapter 17 – The Heavy Sword – ‘Bladeless’

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 17, The Heavy Sword, ‘Bladeless’

This naturally generated bolt of lightning slashed down at high speed, and was many times faster than electrical bolts which thunder-element magi could produce. Nobody present was able to react in time, and the lightning bolt crashed onto the upraised heavy sword.

“Ah!” Vincente let out a pain-filled scream as his body was suddenly enveloped in a wild blue flame, which even had some silvery white flame mixed within!

“Thud!” The heavy sword fell to the ground.

At the same time, Vincente collapsed as well, his entire body twitching, especially his right arm, which had been charred badly enough that the scent of burning flesh could be smelled. Even after collapsing, Vincente’s body continued to jerk about, and blood was pouring from his mouth.

“Father!” The two brothers Yotian and Trey let out simultaneous cries as they immediately ran forward.

“Mr. Vincente!” Both Linley and Monroe Dawson were shocked as well.

This natural bolt of lightning had carried an enormous amount of energy. It wasn’t unheard of for even powerful combatants to die due to being struck by lightning. All of them ran over, surrounding Vincente, as Monroe Dawson roared out, “Quick, have Mr. Armand [A’man’da] come, quick!”

Armand was a light-style magus under Monroe Dawson’s command who also specialized in medicine. He was extremely skilled at healing people.

“Yes!” Seeing this, the gate guard also was frantic, and he rushed to find the

magus Armand.

Magus Armand arrived shortly afterwards. He was an old man with a snowy white beard. Without saying a word, he immediately invoked a light-style spell. The totally burnt and charred right arm of Vincente began to quickly and visibly heal. Soon, all traces of the injury were gone.

“I…I’m fine.” Vincente managed to force out these words with difficulty.

“How are your internals?” Armand asked immediately.

A powerful warrior was easily capable of sensing his body’s internal condition. This assessment would be more accurate than a magus’ external observations.

Vincente shook his head. “I’m fine. I just need a little time, and I will be alright.”

“Mr. Armand, there’s no further need for you to concern yourself with my father’s injuries.” Yotian said bluntly as well.

These words raised the suspicions of Monroe Dawson, Linley, Reynolds, George, and everyone else. They could all see that right now, Vincente was very weak. Vincente was a very powerful warrior; for him to be so weak now meant that he clearly had suffered an enormous injury.

But suddenly, Linley remember a passage from his clan’s records regarding the Violetflame Warriors.

A Saint-level Violetflame Warrior possessed a power known as the Nirvana Rebirth. Generally speaking, they were able to recover from any wounds at an astonishing speed.

“This Master Vincente is only at the ‘blue flame’ level, and has just barely managed to enter the ‘white flame’ level. He is quite a distance away from the highest ‘violet flame’ level. Most likely, he doesn’t have the Nirvana Rebirth ability yet, but he should still be able to heal his wounds.” Linley

understood.

The Four Supreme Warriors.

The Dragonblood Warriors could be considered as the warriors with the greatest combat potential, while the Violetflame Warriors were famous due to their Nirvana Rebirth ability. The Tigerstriped Warriors were known for their attacking speed, while the Undying Warriors were famed for their strength and endurance.

“Uncle Dawson, Master Vincente has secret techniques for recovering from his wounds. There’s no need for him to take any medicine.” Linley spoke.

Monroe Dawson nodded, then gave instructions to Armand. Armand spoke some well-intentioned words of guidance to Vincente, then left. As for Vincente, he lay down and rested for around ten minutes, after which he looked much better.

Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished. The regenerative capabilities of the Violetflame Warriors really were something special.

“Linley, your heavy sword.” Immediately after recovering a bit, Vincente began to worry about his masterpiece. “Quick, bring it over and let me take a look. I hope no damage was caused to the sword.”

Only now did any of them pay attention to the discarded heavy sword. All of them were amazed! The formerly pitch-black sword now had a faint blue glow on its surface, as though a layer of frost had formed atop it.

“Let me see!” Vincente said urgently.

Linley grabbed the heavy sword and immediately gave it to Vincente. Of all the people present, only Vincente had any true knowledge regarding weapons.

Vincente still hadn’t fully recovered from his injury, and so even lifting the sword up was hard for him. He was only able to grasp the hilt after allowing

the tip of the sword to rest against the ground. Vincente's face was extremely solemn, and with his left hand, he began rap against the flat of the heavy sword's blade.

"Dang!" "Dang!" "Dang!"

A series of crisp, clear sound could be heard. Vincente began to apply more and more force to each blow, and the ringing sounds were growing louder as well. Vincente rapped every single part of the heavy sword, constantly changing positions.

While doing so, Vincente was staring intently at the sword while listening to the sounds.

Next to him, Linley, Monroe Dawson, and the others had stopped breathing. They knew that most likely, Vincente was assessing the heavy sword to see if the bolt of lightning had caused any damage to it or had altered it somehow. After all, the bolt of thunder had struck it just after it had been quenched in the liquid solution.

"Riiiiing." With a single flick of Vincente's finger, the entire heavy sword emitted a beautiful sound. Hearing this almost perfect, rich, smooth sound, a look of wild joy appeared on Vincente's face.

"Heaven's will. Heaven's will."

His face filled with wild joy, Vincente turned to look at Linley. "Linley, it must be that heaven itself desired for you to possess this divine sword."

"Mr. Vincente, what's the situation with this heavy sword?" Monroe Dawson asked.

Vincente explained, "The hardest part of forging an adamantine weapon is bringing out the full potential of the adamantine, since the alloyed metals are all significantly inferior to adamantine. Although the secret method of my clan allows me to alloy a high percentage of the other metals with the adamantine, I of course am not able to alloy it 100% perfectly."

“In other words, the internals of the sword that I had just forged were not perfectly consistent, and there were minute inconsistencies in each spot.”

A look of disbelieving joy was on Vincente’s face. “But I didn’t expect that right after I finished quenching the sword, I would get struck by that bolt of lightning, which caused all of the remaining internal irregularities in the sword to be fused perfectly. The full potential of the adamantine has been released. I simply can’t believe that something like this happened. This is heaven’s will. Heaven’s will!”

Linley was overjoyed as well.

“Third Bro, congratulations.” Yale, Reynolds, and George all began to grin. They all understood. After having withstood this lightning strike, the quality of Linley’s heavy sword had just improved by another level.

“And not just that. Look. There’s a faint blue glow on the surface of this heavy sword. I’ve touched the surface of it, and it is unbelievably slick and smooth. Most likely in the future, when you kill someone using it, no blood will stick to it.” Vincente chortled.

“Killing without being stained by blood.” Monroe Dawson sighed in praise as well.

The creation of this heavy sword was indeed miraculous, causing everyone present to sigh in amazement.

“This heavy sword was originally pitch black, but now it has a layer of blue light on it. At first glance, one would say that it was dark blue.” Yale sighed in amazement.

This sword really did have quite the majestic aura to it.

“Yotian, Trey, bring me the measuring sticks.” Vincente instructed. After finishing the smithing of a sword, naturally he would have to see what the sword’s exact dimensions were. Linley could feel that this sword was very

heavy, but he couldn't say exactly what its weight was.

Monroe Dawson only chortled happily as he watched them take the measurements for this sword.

"The sword is 1.41 meters long. It weighs…" Yale and the others quickly began to weigh the sword, but when they saw the figures, they were all astonished.

"3600 pounds! The heavy sword is 1.41 meters long, and 3600 pounds heavy!" Reynolds began screaming in a high-pitched voice. This was an extremely domineering heavy sword! And as far as it was length-wise, it was just about right for Linley.

What's more, Linley wasn't finished growing yet, and his strength would continue to increase as well. Naturally, this sword would only grow more and more easy to use in the future.

"Third Bro. What is the name of this heavy sword? Quick, pick a name." Yale was the first to say.

Vincente and the others all looked at Linley.

Reynolds interjected, "This was hit by a lightning bolt. I say, how about calling it Heavenly Thunder? That's really cool, right?"

"That's way too vulgar." George shook his head.

"How about Lightning's Majesty?" Reynolds continued.

Yale and everyone else began to laugh. Monroe Dawson teased, "Reynolds, why call it Lightning's Majesty? Let's just go ahead and call the sword Reynolds."

[Translator's note – There is a pun here. In Chinese, Reynolds name is Lei Nuo, with Lei meaning thunder. Heavenly Lightning is "Tian Lei", while Lightning's Majesty is "Lei Wei". Everyone is teasing Reynolds for picking

names that sound similar to his own.]

Reynolds pouted and fell silent after letting out a ‘hmph’. “It doesn’t necessarily have to be related to lightning.” Linley laughed. “Since there’s no way for this sword to be sharpened, then let’s just call it Bladeless.” Linley casually picked this name. It was a very simple one, but Linley liked it.

“Bladeless? The heavy sword, Bladeless? Not bad.” Yale nodded.

“Bladeless.”

Vincente, Yotian, Trey, and the others all savored the name for a while, then nodded.

That day, Monroe Dawson gifted Linley with a fine sheath for a heavy sword. It was a deep blue color and forged from precious metals. It was only half a meter long, but had openings on both ends. Linley could sheath his heavy sword into it from either direction, with half of it remaining visible.

This was how sheaths for heavy swords were usually designed. Scabbards that were meant to cover the entire sword were simply too long, and once the warrior removed the sword from the sheath, the meter-long sheath would be very impractical and get in the way. This half-meter long scabbard was very light and wouldn’t cause any hindrance.

That night at a banquet.

Linley dressed in his warrior clothes and carried this heavy sword with him. Thanks to his long-term training, his 1.9 meter tall body was rippling with muscles, and his warriors clothes put his charisma on full display. With this heavy sword on his back, he did indeed have the aura of a powerful heavy swordsman.

“Haha, Linley.” Monroe Dawson laughed as he looked at Linley. “In my opinion, nobody who sees you would believe that you were a genius

magus.”

Linley was slightly startled, but then he laughed as well.

Dressed like this, naturally it would be hard for others to tell that he was a magus.

“I remember when we first arrived at the Ernst Institute, when we were in our first year, Third Bro was only nine. Even then, he was able to easily lift up and throw that nine year old who won the tournament quite a distance. Ever since then, I knew that Third Bro was extremely talented as a warrior as well.” Yale chortled.

Everyone was enjoying this banquet immensely, and after having acquired this heavy sword, Linley felt very pleased as well.

“When I have some time, I’ll definitely have to analyze and train in using heavy swords.” Linley made his decision. When he had originally acquired the Bloodviolet Godsword, Linley had also spent several months before totally comprehending all the best ways to use a flexible sword such as Bloodviolet.

But Linley had the feeling that, comparatively speaking, training with Bloodviolet wasn’t that hard, only fast and strange.

But this heavy sword weighed 3600 pounds.

On the surface, it would seem that the techniques for using a heavy sword were simple. Block, smash, etc. But Linley knew that was just the most basic of movements. Using this sword to its full potential definitely wouldn’t be that easy. He knew this because his clan’s records had described the ways in which that ancestor of his had used a massive warhammer. Clearly, there were deep mysteries with regards to how one used weapons.

To bring out a heavy weapon’s full power and potential?

This was very hard.

But upon succeeding, it would possess tremendous power.

The banquet ended.

Linley began to engage in some simple sword stances in an empty courtyard within the Dawson Conglomerate's estate, trying to feel for the heavy sword's balance, and how it felt when thrusting and chopping. Just as Linley was beginning to totally immerse himself in getting a basic feel for the technique behind using such a sword…

"Boss, boss! Come back, quick! That Clayde has finally appeared!" Bebe's excited voice suddenly rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley instantly came to his normal senses.

"Clayde is back." Linley felt his previously calm heart suddenly fill with excitement, and his body suddenly began to brim with power. He didn't have time to explain too much to his bros. He bid a simple farewell, and then headed for his own residence at high speed.

Chapter 18 – A Missing Hand?

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 18, A Missing Hand?

Bearing the adamantine heavy sword on his back, Linley quickly made his way through the streets. However, just from appearances, nobody could tell how heavy it truly was, and so Linley didn't attract any notice from bystanders.

"Clayde finally came. I've waited so long!" Linley suppressed the excitement he felt. "Calm. This time, no matter what, I can't make any mistakes again."

The first time, he had thought he had a better than 90% chance of success, but unexpectedly, that Saint-level Fateguard had appeared out of nowhere and caused Linley's plan to fail. This time, Linley didn't want to make any mistakes.

"Linley." Doehring Cowart's slightly hoarse voice rang out. "Remember, you previously were together for a period of time with Shaq and his men. Upon Clayde's return, Shaq might report that fact to him."

"Understood."

Linley had thought of this possibility long ago. But for the sake of being able to find the place where Clayde would end up, he had to travel alongside Shaq, which resulted in them arriving together in Hess City. He definitely could not kill Shaq, because once Shaq and his group of men died, then Clayde perhaps wouldn't show himself at all.

"I had to act in this way. But even if Clayde knew that I had travelled along with Shaq for a time, there's nothing he can do, because…I already know his whereabouts. There's no way he can escape." Linley was totally confident. At the same time, Bebe, who was spiritually connected to him,

was watching over Clayde and his men.

As they chatted, Linley arrived at Keyan Road.

In order to prevent himself from being seen by Clayde's men, Linley immediately headed towards his residence via a series of back alleys.

A black blur suddenly travelled several dozen meters and leapt into Linley's arms.

"Bebe." Laughing, Linley looked at the little Shadowmouse in his arms.

Bebe's eyes were gleaming as he delightedly conversed mentally, "Boss, I saw Clayde come here not too long ago. But I only caught a glimpse of half his face before he entered the manor. Boss, those two people you employed were too useless. They didn't notice him at all."

"Hrm?"

Linley was somewhat suspicious. He had ordered those two to stay on the lookout. Logically speaking, as soon as Clayde had appeared, they should have noticed him.

"Milord, milord!"

Ah Da and Ah Er ran over and said respectfully, "Milord, we just saw a large group of people enter that manor not too long ago."

"A large group of people?" Linley immediately asked. "Was one of them missing a hand?"

Ah Er shook his head. "No, milord. Milord, you ordered us to pay attention to any groups of people entering the manor, and you also told us to watch for a man with a missing hand. But we didn't see anyone with a missing hand in that group."

"Impossible." Linley said with certainty. "There definitely was a man with a

missing hand."

Bebe had already seen half of Clayde's face, and given Bebe's eyesight, he definitely wouldn't have been mistaken. Since Bebe was certain he had seen him, then Clayde was definitely in that group.

"Definitely?" Hearing how certain Linley was, the man felt awkward. "Milord, perhaps…perhaps there were too many people in the group, so my elder brother and I didn't see him."

Linley frowned.

Too many people?

Originally, when he fought with Clayde's squad at the palace, Linley and Bebe had killed quite a number, leaving only ten or so knights remaining. And given the number of magical beasts on the road here, it would be quite exceptional if all ten of Clayde's men were still alive. How could this be considered 'too many people'?

"Many people? How many?" Linley asked.

"Very many. At least seventy or eighty." The man said haltingly, seemingly uncertain. "Regardless, there were very many. That group suddenly appeared and then entered the manor. We two brothers couldn't clearly see every single person in the group. Perhaps there really was a man with a missing hand amongst them."

Linley was confused.

Seventy or eighty people?

Even when he had attempted to kill Clayde in the palace, Clayde's Wildthunder squad had only thirty or so people. What's more, after having been reduced in numbers by himself and Bebe, how could so many more people have appeared out of nowhere?

Linley didn't understand it.

"Boss, there really were a lot of people." Bebe's voice also sounded out now, in Linley's mind. "By the time I noticed Clayde, he was just about to enter the manor. I only had the chance to catch a glimpse of half his face. But behind him there were at least fifty or so people. But as to how many people entered the manor before Clayde, I'm not too sure."

Linley definitely trusted Bebe, of course.

"That many people?" Linley wondered to himself.

"Alright, you can go now. This is a reward for you and your brother. Keep watching for me." Linley tossed the half-filled sack of gold, which had fifty coins in it.

Accepting the sack, he took a peek inside through the opening. The insides were filled with gleaming gold. This half-bag had to have near fifty coins in it! His heart began to be filled with excitement. When he had escaped here to Hess City, he hadn't even been able to feed himself. Now, after only having worked for Linley for a few days, the man tossed him a sack with fifty gold coins? How could he not be wildly excited?

"Thank you, milord. Thank you, milord." He made up his mind. He and his elder brother would consider keeping a close watch on the people inside the manor. He immediately departed, then ran to the top floor of the nearby restaurant where he and his elder brother kept watch.

Within the courtyard.

All alone, Linley was pondering what he should do next.

A white light shone out from the Coiling Dragon ring, transforming into the white-robed, white-haired, white-bearded Doehring Cowart. Doehring Cowart stroked his beard. Chuckling, he said, "Linley, what's wrong? Are you in a bad mood?"

Linley lifted his head up to look at Doehring Cowart. Upon seeing his Grandpa Doehring, Linley felt his heart calm down a little. With such an experienced elder by his side, at least Linley wouldn't grow frantic or feel unsure of himself.

"Grandpa Doehring. I'm wondering where that group of people with Clayde came from." Linley said.

Doehring Cowart chuckled. "You are wasting your time wondering about this. Why don't you act instead? Hide in a corner of a wall in their manor and take a look for yourself. By then, you will know exactly who these people with Clayde are."

Linley began to laugh.

Right. Why was he wasting time?

"Carrying this heavy sword will still impact my speed." Linley removed his adamantine heavy sword, then entered his bedroom and placed it under his bed, then grabbed his bedsheets.

Standing on Linley's shoulders, Bebe stared curiously at the adamantine heavy sword. He mentally asked Linley, "Boss, is this heavy sword the treasure which you had created for you using that adamantine ore?"

Linley laughed and nodded.

"How heavy is this heavy sword?" Bebe asked curiously.

"3600 pounds." Linley replied honestly.

Bebe rubbed his little nose with his paws in surprise, while his beady little eyes spun around in shock as well as he stared at the adamantine heavy sword.

"Enough. You'll have plenty of time to look at it later." Linley put down the bedsheets, hiding the heavy sword.

“Ah. Hey boss, I suddenly remember something. That Clayde probably already knows that you are right here.” Bebe looked at the interspatial ring on Linley’s finger and cried out in alarm.

“What? Why?” Linley was extremely shocked. “Boss, you personalized and bound your Bloodviolet Godsword using a drop of blood. I remember you saying that when you were imprisoned within the Radiant Temple, although Bloodviolet was confiscated, you could still sense where it was. Interspatial rings are also personalized through blood. Wouldn’t Clayde then be able to sense the location of his interspatial ring?” Bebe urgently transmitted his thoughts to Linley.

But hearing this, Linley only began to laugh.

“Haha.” Standing next to them, Doehring Cowart began to laugh as well. Only, Bebe wasn’t able to hear Doehring Cowart’s laughter.

Immediately upon leaving the city of Fenlai, Linley had already questioned Doehring Cowart regarding this interspatial ring he had taken.

“Bebe.” Linley laughed as he explained. “This interspatial ring is different from a divine artifact such as Bloodviolet. Technically speaking, an interspatial ring isn’t a divine artifact, just a very valuable magical item. Its basic underpinnings are quite similar to the magicrystal cards, which use fingerprints to personalize and recognize an owner, while interspatial rings use blood to do the same. Only the owner of an interspatial ring can open it and take out its contents. However, when a magical item is taken away, there’s no way for the owner of it to sense the exact location of his item. Do you think divine artifacts are that common? Even my adamantine heavy sword, Bladeless, isn’t at the level of divine artifacts.”

Divine artifacts.

It was impossible for a divine artifact to be forged within this material plane, in the Yulan continent. Things such as the Coiling Dragon ring and the Bloodviolet sword were both very ancient items.

“The Coiling Dragon ring had suddenly emitted a terrifying burst of energy back at the Radiant Temple and saved me. What’s more, when using magic through it, it reduces the amount of mageforce and spiritual energy needed to a sixth of normal. Bloodviolet, in turn, can become flexible or straight as the wielder chooses, and is virtually indestructible.”

Linley had a certain theory.

It was already a fact that the Coiling Dragon ring had secrets hidden within that he hadn’t yet discovered. That terrifying burst of energy at the Radiant Temple was proof.

As for Bloodviolet?

For it to be used as a focusing seal for that mysterious magical formation meant that it definitely had special qualities to it as well. Only, right now Linley was still too weak and couldn’t discover what was so special about it.

“Bloodviolet.” Linley glanced at the sword at his waist which he was wearing like a belt. What was the real ability of this mysterious Bloodviolet flexible sword?

“Bebe, you stay here for now.” Linley instructed.

“Got it.” Bebe obediently remained within the courtyard, while Linley stealthily slipped out of his residence and headed quietly towards Clayde and Shaq’s manor.

Linley pressed himself against one of the walls of the manor which Shaq had purchased.

“Snick.”

Linley’s sharp claws emerged. He easily cut a small opening into the wall, then transformed his hands back to normal as he peered inside through the

opening.

That night Linley had stayed at the residence with Shaq, he had memorized the entire layout, including the manmade hill and which rooms were which. Linley had chosen to make his cut in a very particular location; through this cut, he was able to see into both the front courtyard and the back courtyard, without anything obstructing his vision.

“My royal father.”

Linley’s sensitive ears actually managed to pick up the conversation between Shaq and Clayde in the back courtyard. Linley carefully peered in that direction. Indeed, Clayde and Shaq were walking shoulder by shoulder within Linley’s area of vision.

“It’s Clayde.” Linley watched carefully.

But what he saw utterly stunned him. “Clayde’s hand…his hand…”

Right now, both of Clayde’s hands were in perfect condition. But Linley had clearly seen Clayde’s hand fall off after being cut. He had even stolen the interspatial ring from the hand. There definitely was no mistake.

“To regenerate a lost hand would require the services of a light-style Arch Magus of the ninth rank at least.” Linley was astonished.

When Clayde left, he didn’t have a single magus with him. How did he get mixed up with an Arch Magus of the ninth rank?

“Royal father, how did you end up encountering forces belonging to the Radiant Church? Those people are all so formidable.” Shaq said in a somewhat astonished voice.

Clayde nodded. “Of course they are. These people are amongst the most terrifying people the Radiant Church leads. The Ascetics led by Lord Fallen Leaf have many combatants of the ninth rank amongst them. Travelling by their side, we were quite safe the entire time.”

Clayde was speaking in a normal tone. Logically speaking, someone from the opposite side of a distant wall shouldn't be able to hear him. But Linley, as a Dragonblood Warrior, possessed freakishly enhanced hearing, and heard every word clearly.

"A group of Ascetics? Led by Lord Fallen Leaf?" The look on Linley's face changed.

Lord Fallen Leaf was a peak-stage Saint-level combatant. And he had with him a group of freakishly strong Ascetics, quite a few of whom had reached the ninth rank.

Chapter 19 – With Bated Breath

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 19, With Bated Breath

Linley quietly left, returning to his own manor.

On the road back from Clayde's residence to his own, Linley's face was a mask of unhappiness. This news he had just received had made Linley think that things would be much more difficult now.

"Linley. What decision have you come to?" Doehring Cowart appeared from within the Coiling Dragon ring.

There was still a degree of distance between Linley's residence and Clayde's manor. Doehring Cowart, this five-thousand year old ghost of a peak-stage Saint level combatant, wasn't afraid that Lord Fallen Leaf would see him here.

"Me?"

Linley balled his fists. "Endure. I can only endure and wait."

Doehring Cowart nodded with satisfaction. He had watched every step of Linley's journey and growth. Doehring Cowart felt affection and love for Linley as he might a grandson.

He didn't wish for Linley to act too rashly.

"Linley. Don't worry." Stroking his beard, Doehring Cowart spoke confidently. "That Fallen Leaf probably just let Clayde travel along with him since it didn't inconvenience him. He definitely won't stay with Clayde for too long. In the past, when Clayde was still the king of a kingdom, his status was already much lower than that of Fallen Leaf. As for the current Clayde…the Kingdom of Fenlai itself has been destroyed, making him even

less important. What's more, based on my calculations, the new Holy Capital which the Radiant Church will select most likely will not be Hess City. Thus, Fallen Leaf won't stay here too long."

Linley nodded.

The previous Holy Capital, 'Fenlai City', had been totally annihilated by the army of magical beasts from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Only rubble was left. The Radiant Church definitely would not permit such an event to happen again. Naturally, they wouldn't erect the new Holy Capital in a location like Hess City, which was so near their new borders.

After all, the 'King' of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, had previously said that the magical beasts under his domain could possibly expand to the point of taking up half of the Holy Union. Right now, they had only taken up a third of the Holy Union's territory. If they were to truly take over half, then Hess City would fall into that area as well.

Heidens and the other top level members of the Radiant Church simply did not have confidence in their ability to resist this Deity-level Dylin.

Although the Radiant Church still had untapped powers of its own that it hadn't put on display yet, once they deployed those powers against Dylin, it would be equivalent to them expending all of the resources they had saved up over ten millennia in one battle.

Heidens didn't dare to act in such a way.

"Just wait." Linley took a deep breath, forcing himself to remain calm. He already knew where Clayde was. So long as he didn't make any mistakes, Clayde definitely wouldn't be able to escape.

Within a restaurant opposite of Shaq's manor, the same restaurant where Linley's two servants maintained their vigil over Shaq and Clayde.

That very day.

Wearing a very ordinary sleeveless sweatshirt, Linley's powerful chest muscles were plainly visible. Those two mighty, muscled arms and that heavy sword on his back gave the impression of an extremely strong man.

A heavy sword warrior!

Linley's current appearance was a very commonly seen one. Warriors prioritized muscular training the most, and thus many of them had powerful bodies, and quite a few used heavy swords as well.

"Two plates of roast meat and two bottles of Bullfighters." Linley said in a deep voice.

"Sir, please take a seat first." Seeing how powerful Linley appeared, the waiter was extremely respectful to him. Linley selected a seat located towards the interior of the restaurant which still offered a clear vantage point to see through the door and the windows towards Clayde's manor.

The waiter immediately pulled the chair out for Linley to sit on.

"Sir, please wait a moment." The waiter said with a smile. At this time, another waiter came over with those two bottles of Bullfighters. Bullfighter was a type of extremely strong liquor, particularly favored by powerful warriors.

Casting a sneak glance at the heavy sword on Linley's back, the attendant was secretly shocked. "Oh my lord. What a long, thick heavy sword, and from the coloration, it must have been made from special materials. It must weigh at least a few hundred pounds. This gentleman must be an extremely strong warrior."

At this restaurant, when the servers were bored, they would sneak peeks at their various customers. After having done so for a long time, their eyes had become quite sharp and their guesses accurate. Seeing how easily Linley was carrying this heavy sword about, they could immediately tell that Linley was an extremely powerful warrior.

The elder of the two brothers whom Linley had stationed in this restaurant walked over at this time.

“Take this roasted meat back and give it to Bebe.” Linley didn’t give him a chance to speak before issuing orders. “Yes, milord.”

The elder of the two brothers didn’t have anything important to do either. He immediately carried out Linley’s instructions and took the roast meat back.

And then, Linley just quietly sat in the restaurant and drank his liquor.

Linley drank wine very slowly. A single bottle of liquor was enough to last him two or three hours. He just continued to drink while keeping an eye on Clayde’s manor.

That night.

In the higher levels of the restaurant, a travelling bard was belting out songs, and the entire bar was extremely rowdy. Quite a few warriors were shouting and laughing at each other.

Because of the catastrophe, Hess City was more lively than it had ever been.

Many powerful warriors patronized this restaurant, and all of them were very energetic. They actually began to compete in arm wrestling.

“Ten thousand gold coins! The winner gets ten thousand gold coins!” The contest organizer shouted in a high pitched voice.

To many of the powerful warriors who had fled here after the disaster, although ten thousand gold coins wasn’t a small sum of money, it wasn’t a particularly large sum either.

“I’ll join. These ten thousand gold coins are mine.” A 2.2 meter tall brown-haired warrior with a barrel-sized chest sat down. His arms were definitely

thicker than most people's legs.

"Hrmph, I'll give you a go."

A red-haired man with a body similar to Linley's walked over and sat down as well. The two immediately stretched their arms out and clasped hands. Immediately afterwards, the muscles in their arms began to bulge.

Those warriors drinking next to them all began to shout out loudly in encouragement.

"This sort of life isn't that bad." Linley knew that waiting for Fallen Leaf to leave would be an extremely boring event. Who knew how long Fallen Leaf would stay? One day? Two days? Ten?

Linley turned to watch with interest as well.

"Neither of these two are weak. They are at least warriors of the sixth rank." Linley nodded to himself. Right now, experts could be seen everywhere in Hess City.

Their arms locked against each other, these two warriors were exerting ten thousand pounds of force against each other.

"Grrr!" That brown-haired warrior whose arms were thicker than most people's legs suddenly let out a mighty shout, and all of the veins on his arm began to pop out, criss-crossing his arm like worms beneath the skin. Anyone looking at him would think that his veins were about to explode at any moment.

The red-haired man's face had turned red as well, as he wasn't willing to back down in the slightest.

"Creak. Creak." The table underneath their arms was beginning to shiver as well.

The tables and chairs in this restaurant were all made from steel, and were

extremely sturdy. Generally speaking, powerful warriors were able to carefully calibrate and control the amount of power released from their wrists as they engaged in arm-wrestling above the table. For the table to begin quivering due to their strength was a sign that both men were at their limits.

“Haha, let’s go Harold [Ha’luo’de]!”

“Damnit, Harold, try harder!”

“Second Bro, don’t lose in front of me!”

All the warriors who were drinking around them were howling loudly in support. Slowly, that large man with massive arms named Harold gained a slight advantage, causing the red-haired warrior to immediately try desperately to resist.

“Haaaaah!”

With a loud roar, Harold smashed his opponent’s arm against the table, causing a impression to be left upon the steel table.

“Haha, I win!” Harold laughed loudly.

“F*ck. Second Bro, beat it. Let me come. This big dumb idiot wants to win ten thousand gold? Hmph.” A one-eyed red-haired warrior walked over.

The restaurant was very rowdy, and those energetic warriors screamed and shouted, while up above, the travelling bard was also singing loudly so as to get that bit of gold the restaurant had promised him.

Noisy.

But in this rowdy environment, three or four people remained silent. The warriors around them quite conscientiously didn’t disturb those people. All of these warriors had significant outside experience, and they had good judgment. They knew who they could afford to offend, and who they could

not.

The next morning, soon after Linley sat down.

“Hrm?”

Linley suddenly saw a familiar face. Lord Fallen Leaf.

As skinny as a beggar, Lord Fallen Leaf casually walked out of Clayde’s manor and departed, with two barefooted Ascetics dressed in sackcloth by his side.

“He left? But only Fallen Leaf and two Ascetics have left.” Linley considered for a moment. He knew that many Ascetics had come on this journey, and many experts were amongst their ranks. Right now, only three had left.

“Continue to wait.” Linley took a sip of liquor. He would keep waiting.

Clayde, Shaq, and the others sent off Lord Fallen Leaf, watching him leave from the gate.

“Royal father, there is something that I forgot to tell you.” Shaq slapped himself on the head. “Royal father, Lord Linley travelled with us for a time, but two days ago he left. He was heading north.”

“Linley.”

Hearing this name, Clayde almost shouted aloud in surprise.

This Linley had nearly taken his life on two separate occasions.

“What’s wrong, royal father?” Shaq questioned. As far as Shaq could tell, this wasn’t a major issue. After all, the Kingdom of Fenlai had already been annihilated. Their royal clan was royal only in name now, and not in truth. It would be surprising if Linley had actually continued to be loyal to them.

“He travelled with you. Did he know that you are living here?” Clayde immediately asked.

“Yes. He even stayed here a night.” Shaq said, confused.

Clayde’s heart began to shudder. “This Linley is definitely still in Hess City.” Clayde knew that Linley wanted to kill him, and wouldn’t leave just like that.

“No worries. There’s still a large group of Ascetics living here.” Clayde comforted himself.

“But when the Ascetics leave, I will leave with them.” Clayde made his decision. Only by travelling together with the Ascetics would he feel safe.

Clayde carefully looked in every direction.

He even had this strange feeling that Linley was looking at him from somewhere nearby.

A day passed. A second day passed. Aside from going back at night to sleep, Linley spent all his time at the restaurant. Once, a foolish person tried to cause Linley some trouble, but Linley booted him from the back of the restaurant to the front of the restaurant with one kick. Thereafter, no one else disturbed Linley.

In the blink of an eye, six days passed.

During these past six days, aside from Fallen Leaf and those two Ascetics, none of the other Ascetics had left.

Within Clayde’s manor.

“Everyone, why are you in such a rush to leave?” Clayde looked at the three representatives of the Ascetics in front of him, trying to persuade them.

An old, golden-haired man said calmly, “Clayde, we must head towards the

new Holy Capital now. Sorry for inconveniencing you these past days. We'll leave now."

These three Ascetics totally ignored Clayde's entreaties as they prepared to leave immediately.

"Milords, you are heading to the new Holy Capital? I wish to go as well. How about I travel alongside you?" Clayde said immediately, while at the same time, he instructed his son Shaq, "Shaq, prepare some things. We leave immediately."

At this point in time, Clayde didn't feel any sense of security at all.

If only Kaiser was left with him, Clayde didn't feel confident that Kaiser would be able to protect him against both Linley and that freakish magical beast of his.

"Travel along with us?" The golden-haired old man frowned.

In truth, they were not making a trip towards the new Holy Capital at all. They had a secret mission.

"Impossible. We are under strict orders from the Church." The golden-haired man said coldly.

The other two looked coldly at Clayde as well. "If you follow us secretly, you should know what the end result will be." After they spoke, the three turned and left, leaving behind a pole-axed Clayde.

Clayde hadn't expected that these Ascetics would forbid him from travelling with them.

"Milords!" Clayde chased out from the main hall, but the fifty or so Ascetics had already left the manor via the gate. Not a single one of them turned to look back at him.

Clayde considered what to do. He didn't dare to follow them. Although the

Radiant Church taught that men should be benevolent, when they decided to act against someone, they were definitely without mercy. Right now, Clayde was no longer of particular use to the Radiant Church. Those Ascetics definitely would not fear to kill him.

“Royal father.” Shaq walked over, looking at Clayde.

Clayde frowned. He was quiet for a moment. Then, he gave his orders. “Let’s leave from the back gate. We will leave immediately. Yes, immediately. The danger grows with each passing minute.

Chapter 20 – The Full Story

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 20, The Full Story

Within the restaurant.

Seeing a large group of Ascetics leave Clayde's manor, Linley was wildly exultant. At a glance, Linley could tell that over fifty people were in that group of Ascetics. For such a large group of them to leave most likely meant that all of them had left.

"It's been six or seven days. By now, it's almost certain that Shaq has told Clayde about our meeting. Most likely, Clayde has already been able to guess that I'm nearby."

Linley casually tossed down a few gold coins. Suddenly, gusts of air began to wrap around him, and moving like the breeze, Linley agilely flew out of the restaurant.

Despite bearing the heavy sword on his back, with the assistance of wind-style magic, he still moved with great ease. But of course, this was due to Linley having become a magus of the seventh rank. If a magus of the third rank had been the one to cast the spell, the effect wouldn't have been nearly as good. "Bebe, watch the back door." Linley mentally instructed Bebe.

"Boss, got it."

As Linley rushed towards one of the exterior walls of Clayde's manor, he began to mumble the words to another spell – Windscout.

"Whoosh!"

With Linley at the center, a gust of air suddenly spread out in all directions. Closing his eyes, Linley could clearly sense everything the Windscout had

detected.

“Hrm? Gathering near the back gate?”

The Windscout spell could only detect bodies and objects. It couldn’t actually make out faces clearly. However, through the usage of the Windscout, Linley had already been able to discover that the people inside the manor were all hurriedly moving towards the back courtyard. Clearly, they were all getting ready to flee.

“Hmph. As predicted.” With a quiet movement, Linley flowed into Clayde’s manor, moving into the front courtyard with movements as light as the wind. Quietly but quickly, Linley made his way on the inside paths towards the back courtyard.

“Hurry, hurry!” Clayde berated angrily.

“Let’s go from the back gate. We are heading out immediately. We are leaving Hess City.” Clayde said directly.

The royal consort was confused. “Your Majesty, aren’t we all living here just fine? Why-”

“Whap!”

Clayde slapped her across the face.

“Enough crap.” Clayde snarled.

“Hurry up. Forget about the horses. You two, you are responsible for the Princess and the Royal Consort.” Clayde ordered two of his knights, and then had a third one open the back gate.

Linley, hiding behind a manmade hill, watched this all while laughing coldly.

“As I thought. Not a single Ascetic is left.” With a leap, Linley retreated at

high speed, moving to a place where Clayde and Kaiser wouldn't be able to see him, then he leapt past the wall. And then, Linley turned and moved at high speed to the back gate. But just as Linley had rounded the corner, he came to a sudden halt.

Bebe was right next to the back gate.

"Creaaaaak." The back gate began to open.

Bebe immediately scurried over at high speed to a patch of wild grass nearby. Given that Bebe was only fist-sized, the wild grass was totally capable of covering and hiding Bebe's entire body.

"Bebe. When Clayde comes out, tell me right away." Linley hid behind the corner, and his entire body began to be covered with black scales. "Snick." His forehead, back, elbows, and kneecaps all began to sprout sharp spikes.

And that long, iron-whip-like draconic tail sprouted out as well.

Linley's black eyes suddenly transformed into a dark gold color, the same color as the eyes of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

Total Dragonform! "Wind-style supporting magic – Supersonic." At the same time, Linley reinforced himself with a wind spell. After having completely Dragonformed, Linley felt that his body was full of limitless power.

Right now, that 3600 pound adamantine heavy sword didn't have any impact on Linley at all.

To a mighty warrior who could easily lift up something weighing hundreds of thousands of pounds, what was a mere 3600? Comparatively speaking, it was like asking an ordinary man who could lift 100 pounds to carry a one pound item on him. Would it impact him?

Clayde continued to urge his men, and one Wildthunder knight after another began to step out of the back gate.

Clayde himself walked through the gate, with Shaq by his side. And then the princess and the royal consort, under the protection of the Wildthunder knights, headed out as well. As for Kaiser, he was at the very end, serving as their guard and escort.

“Boss, Clayde came out.”

Just after Clayde stepped out of the manor, Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. The eyes of Linley, who had been hiding behind the corner this entire time, suddenly began to shine.

“Whoosh!”

A mighty leap forward, combined with the wind around him propelling him forward at high speed.

“Swish!”

In the blink of an eye, a black, human-sized blur slashed through a distance of seventy meters, charging directly at the back gate to Clayde’s manor. Somewhat caught off guard, Clayde turned to look, and when he did, he saw that this human-shaped blur was already next to him. That familiar figure made Clayde’s heart quail. Before he even had a chance to call out or to react, a powerful force suddenly bound him.

“Don’t move. Otherwise. You die.” Linley’s voice was transmitted directly to Clayde’s ear.

“Ah!” The royal consort had just stepped out of the gate. Upon seeing Linley, she was so frightened that she immediately screamed. But then, with a ‘snick’ sound, the consort’s head went flying off.

Linley retracted his claws.

The severed head of the consort oozed blood everywhere, while her body collapsed to the floor.

“Mon…monster!” The princess, terrified, retreated backwards.

“Release his Majesty!” The Wildthunder knights who had left along with Shaq immediately charged over, but as they did, a black blur flashed towards them. The little Shadowmouse, Bebe, who had suddenly transformed to half a meter in length, landed on the ground. As he did, those two warriors who had wanted to charge over collapsed, as half of their necks had been severed.

“None of you resist. Resistance is futile.” Linley’s cold voice rang out.

At this time, Kaiser charged over as well.

“Lord Kaiser, what…what is that monster?” The princess was terrified. But Shaq, whom Clayde had explained everything to, knew that this monster was actually Linley.

The aberration in front of them was covered from head to toe in black scales, and there were spikes sprouting from his forehead, knees, elbows, and back. Its scale covered feet and claws were all extremely sharp.

And what’s more, it had an iron-whip-like draconic tail.

Right now, that draconic tail was wrapping tightly around Clayde, preventing him from moving at all. With each small swaying motion of Linley’s draconic tail, Clayde’s body swayed as well.

This scene stunned everyone present.

“Kaiser. This time, you don’t have any chance.” Linley’s cold voice rang out.

A pained look was on Kaiser’s face. He knew that even if he fought one on one against Linley, victory was no sure thing. What’s more, Linley had that freakish magical beast companion who was on the same level of power as him.

Kaiser wasn't confident in his ability to deal with either Linley or the magical beast, Bebe.

And now that Clayde had been caught by Linley, he, Kaiser, did indeed have no chance at all.

"Lin…Linley! Release my royal father!" Shaq shouted angrily.

Linley glanced at Shaq with his cold, dark golden eyes. Shaq shivered, no longer daring to speak. Right now, Linley's appearance had stupefied everyone present. Those Wildthunder knights who had followed Clayde had also battled against and been slaughtered by Linley and Bebe in the past. They knew exactly how powerful Linley and his freakish magical beast companion Bebe were.

"Linley." Just as Clayde was going to beg for mercy…

"Crunch!" "Crack!"

Linley actually tore off Clayde's ring finger and index finger, then casually tossed them in the direction of the princess and Kaiser's group.

"Ah…ah!" Clayde couldn't refrain from howling from the agony of having his fingers ripped off.

"Clayde, I'll tell you right now that you are definitely going to die." Linley said casually.

Clayde turned his fierce, tiger-like glare towards Linley.

But what welcomed his gaze was Linley's cold, emotionless pair of dark gold eyes.

"Right now, you have two choices. The first is to be tortured to death. The second is to tell me who you gave my mother to, and who killed her. And then, I'll let you die an easy death." Linley said calmly.

Linley knew very well that the best way to deal with someone like Clayde was to lay it out clearly for him.

Otherwise, Clayde would think that there was still some hope of living. He would grit his teeth and refuse to answer, for the sake of that hope.

“No! If you are willing to spare me, AH!!” Linley once again remorselessly ripped out another one of Clayde’s fingers. Calmly, Linley said, “You are definitely going to die. The only question is, will you tell the truth early and spare yourself some pain and suffering?”

“Your Majesty!”

Kaiser was about to immediately rush over.

“Kaiser, do you want everyone present to die?” Linley’s dark gold eyes stared at Kaiser. Kaiser instantly halted. He understood that Linley and Bebe definitely had the power to kill everyone present.

Even he, Kaiser, would only have the ability to flee. Facing a combined attack from both Linley and Bebe, he didn’t have any chance of victory at all. “Ah…” Kaiser really didn’t know what to do.

Linley looked back at Clayde.

Clayde’s face was totally pale. Large beads of sweat the size of soybeans had gathered on his forehead. Right now, the amount of force Linley was exerting on him with his tail was very high.

“Continue thinking. The longer you think, the more pain you will be in.” Linley’s scale-covered claw reached out and grabbed Clayde’s ear.

Guessing what Linley was about to do, Clayde howled, “No!”

“Riiip.”

Clayde's left ear was ripped off by Linley, and he howled in agony while cursing wildly, "Linley, you bastard, you are a goddamn devil!"

"Keep on wasting time." Linley's claws slowly reached towards Clayde's face.

"This time, it'll be your eyes. Tell me, would you prefer your left eye, or your right eye?" Linley's face was still expressionless. When Clayde looked at Linley, hoping to gather anything from Linley's eyes or facial expressions, all he could see was that unmoving, scale-covered face, and those cold, merciless dark gold eyes.

"If you don't decide, I'll decide for you. Just then, it was your left ear. Now, it will be your right eye." Linley reached out with his claws.

"No! I'll talk. I'll talk." Clayde howled with all his might.

Linley retracted his claws. "Then speak."

"I'll talk. I'll talk." Tears actually appeared in Clayde's eyes. He really had mentally collapsed. Linley had no intention of sparing him whatsoever. No matter what he did, he was going to die. If he talked, at least he would die an easy death. If he didn't, he would be tortured to death.

None of the Wildthunder knights standing off in the distance dared to say a word. Linley and Bebe, man and magical beast, were really too terrifying, too formidable.

Clayde was roaring furiously in his heart, "Radiant Church, this time you didn't give a damn about me and left me behind. Don't blame me for giving you an enemy which will be terrifying to deal with in the future!"

"Linley, I'll tell you. Each year, the Radiant Church will offer extremely pure souls to the Radiant Sovereign. The Radiant Sovereign needs only two things: The faith of worshippers, and pure souls." Clayde said directly.

Linley's stared at Clayde with his emotionless eyes. "What does this have to

do with my mother?"

Clayde continued, "The purer the soul offered to the Radiant Sovereign, the greater the gifts the Radiant Sovereign will bestow upon the Church. That year…my younger brother Patterson and I had just stepped out of the Radiant Temple. When I saw your mother, I was instantly stunned. Her eyes looked so pure, so innocent. From that first glance I had of your mother, my mind was made up. I had the feeling that your mother's soul must be extremely pure." After having heard this, Linley could guess the rest.

"I could tell that your father was only an ordinary person, and thus I ordered Patterson to go and directly abduct your mother. The next day, I delivered your mother to the Radiant Church."

Clayde took a deep breath. "Indeed, your mother's soul was incomparably pure. When the Radiant Church killed your mother, offering her soul as a sacrifice to the Radiant Sovereign, the Radiant Sovereign blessed them with greater gifts than they had ever received."

"And this was the reason why the Radiant Temple decided to reward me with a divine blessing like none they had ever given before. The blessing raised me directly from a warrior of the seventh rank to the ninth rank. Although it would make my future advancement impossible, I was still satisfied. In addition, the Radiant Temple gifted me with a Saint-level Fateguard."

Clayde looked at Linley. "Your mother's soul really was very remarkable. The Radiant Temple actually gave me so many things for her. From this, you can imagine how heavily the Radiant Sovereign had rewarded them when they had sacrificed your mother's soul to him."

Chapter 21 – Fate

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 21, Fate

Hearing Clayde's words, Linley fell silent.

"Haha, Linley, now you should know who your true enemy is, right? But are you capable of dealing with the Radiant Temple?" Clayde laughed wildly, on the edge of hysteria. Clayde knew that he was going to die, and at the moment of his death, he had decided to bring as much chaos to the world as he could.

"Do you speak the truth?" Linley's voice was hoarse.

Actually, Linley already believed what Clayde had just told him, precisely because this was the only possible explanation as to why the Radiant Church would have given Clayde a Saint-level Fateguard.

"You yourself know whether I speak truly or not." Clayde laughed wildly.

Linley fell silent.

"Linley, you should've considered the fact that you are a genius magus and a Dragonblood Warrior. In the eyes of the Radiant Church, you have much more potential than me, a warrior who was only raised to the ninth rank due to secret magical methods. In the future, you will most likely be both a Saint-level Supreme Warrior and a Saint-level Grand Magus. If it wasn't for this secret I just divulged, even if you had killed me, the Radiant Church probably wouldn't bear to execute you." Clayde laughed loudly.

Linley understood this reasoning.

"Clayde should be telling the truth." Doehring Cowart's voice sounded out in Linley's mind. Given Doehring Cowart's experience, his ability to judge whether someone was telling the truth or not was much better than Linley's.

Linley had deep faith in Doehring Cowart.

…..

At this time, on Keyan Road within the city of Hess, there were six ruthless looking men dressed in violet robes. These six violet-robed men all naturally emitted the aura of cold, arrogant experts, causing everyone else around them to avoid them.

These six people were heading directly for Clayde's manor.

Right now, they had no idea as to what had happened at Clayde's manor.

"Waiters [Wei'te'si], are the Ascetics located here?" One of the violet-robed men said in a low voice.

The leader of the violet-robed men nodded. "Right. From what I understand, the Ascetics are all staying in this Clayde's manor. This assignment of ours is extremely important. It's best that we head out together alongside the Ascetics."

These six people were the six Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.

They had just arrived at Hess City, and this was the only address they had on hand. They didn't know that a few minutes ago, the Ascetics had all left. They had just barely missed them.

"Hrm? Why is there no one here?"

Upon entering Clayde's empty manor, they couldn't help but look around in confusion. The other five Special Executors looked at Waiters. Waiters was the leader of the squad for this assignment.

"Let's go inside and take a look." Waiters said calmly. The six headed directly into the manor, but the inside of the manor was totally devoid of

people as well.

“Linley, release my royal father. My royal father has already told you everything.” A voice rang out from beyond the back gate. Instantly, the six Special Executors turned to look at the back courtyard.

The six men’s faces turned solemn.

“Linley?”

The six men exchanged glances.

“Linley? His name is on the Red List. Kill on sight.” The six Special Executors immediately hurried towards the back gate.

The Ecclesiastical Tribunal had two special lists. One was known as the Red List. The other was the Black List.

The people on the Red List were to be killed on sight, but there was no need to expend too much effort on those targets. Those on the Black List were to be killed no matter the cost.

Actually, given Linley’s future potential, the threat he could pose towards the Radiant Church in the future should’ve been enough for him to be placed on the Black List. However, while the high levels of the Radiant Church were fleeing, they believed that since Linley was not a member of the Church, the chances of him being able to discover that his mother had been killed by the Radiant Church was very low. Thus, they only placed Linley on the Red List.

The Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal all possessed astonishing power. These six Special Executors were all warriors of the ninth rank. They stealthily began to surround Linley.

…..

In the little alleyway behind the back gate of Clayde’s manor.

Linley's iron-whip-like draconic tail was still wrapped tightly around Clayde.

"Release your royal father?" Linley stared at Shaq. Letting out a cold laugh, he said, "I can release your father, but what of my mother and father? Although it was the Radiant Church which killed my mother, at least half of the responsibility lies with your father. And over half the responsibility for my father's death lies on your father as well."

As Linley spoke, he began to exert more pressure with his tail.

"Crack, crack." All sorts of strange noises were emitting from Clayde's body. Clayde was in such agony from the constricting draconic tail that he began to try and struggle again.

"Ah! Ah! Linley, kill me cleanly in one stroke!" Clayde moaned in agony.

"Crunch."

Clayde's two arms snapped off. Right now, Clayde had been constricted so tightly by Linley that his formerly broad waist was now more slender than a woman's.

"Die."

Linley looked at Clayde, then exert a bit more force with his tail.

"Smush!" Clayde spat out a large amount of blood from his mouth, and his entire face turned red. While spitting the blood out, he was coughing nonstop, and some bits and pieces of his internal organs were coughed out as well.

Right now…

Clayde had been ripped into two parts at the waist. Even his spine had been snapped apart. The only thing keeping his upper body and lower body

connected was a bloody layer of skin.

Clayde let out a few more moans. “Ah…ah…” His entire face was red. A few seconds later, his breathing stopped, and his soul left this earth.

But right now, Linley didn’t feel any happiness or sense of accomplishment.

The only thing he felt was a deep grief, a deep sadness.

“Father. Mother. Can you see me?” Linley said to himself.

Shaq, Kaiser, the princess, and the Wildthunder knights all stared at Linley. Many of them had hearts full of fear. After seeing how Clayde had died, they didn’t dare to try and avenge him. They could only hope that Linley would leave now.

Linley’s dark gold eyes glanced at everyone present.

“Cough.” Shaq cleared his throat, beads of sweat appearing on his forehead. His father had died, but he didn’t want to die as well.

Linley’s draconic tail swayed slightly, then he turned and began to walk away.

“Bebe. Let’s go.” He called to Bebe.

Just as Bebe, who was off to the side this entire time, was about to scurry away with him, Bebe suddenly paused, all the hair on his body sticking up. Right afterwards, Linley as well sensed sudden danger, which seemed to come from all directions.

“Whoosh.”

Several gusts of wind could be heard as six violet-robed figures appeared, surrounding Linley from six different points. Linley and Bebe were both trapped within their encirclement. Four of these six were standing on nearby rooftops, while the other two were at each end of the alley Linley

was in. There was no place Linley could flee to at all.

“Special Executors from the Ecclesiastical Tribunal.” Linley immediately understood who these people were upon seeing their uniform.

Seeing this formation, Shaq and the Wildthunder knights all turned pale. These six Special Executors hadn’t just encircled Linley and Bebe. They had also encircled Shaq and his men as well.

“Milords, I am the Second Prince of the royal clan of Fenlai. Please allow me to leave first.” Shaq immediately begged.

Kaiser recognized the Special Executors from their outfit. He also immediately said, “Milord Special Executors, I am Kaiser, and I am also a servant of the Radiant Church. May I leave first?” Kaiser knew very well about some of the special methods available to the Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal. Given the current situation, he, Kaiser, wouldn’t be of any use to them, and would actually serve to disrupt their actions.”

“Kaiser, you can leave.”

One of the violet-robed men standing at one of the ends of the alley said in a cold voice.

“Yes.” Kaiser immediately began running towards one of the ends of the alleyway. The six violet robed men didn’t block him at all, allowing him to flee past them. Kaiser was an expert of the Kingdom of Fenlai, true, but he was also a holy knight of the Radiant Church.

“Milords, what about me?” Shaq immediately said.

“Milord Special Executors.” That princess immediately begged towards the Special Executors as well.

But the six Special Executors didn’t even glance at them. The six Special Executors were clear-headed. When Kaiser left, he was but one person, and a warrior of the ninth rank at that. Linley definitely wouldn’t be able to find

a chance to slip past. But if they allowed Shaq and the others to leave as well, given Linley's current prowess, he definitely might be able to find a way to slip past at a critical moment.

Linley stared coldly at the six of them.

"You want to kill me?" Linley said calmly. He felt total confidence in himself. Even when surrounded by the attacks of that group of giant dragons, he was still able to flee and survive.

To these six Special Executors, killing him and Bebe wouldn't be an easy affair. The protective scales on Linley's body were no joking matter.

"Those on the Red List are to be killed on sight." The leader of the Special Executors laughed coldly.

The six Special Executors stared fixedly at him and Bebe, ignoring everything else entirely. As high level members of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, they naturally knew that Linley was a Dragonblood Warrior. Dragonblood Warriors were one of the Supreme Warriors. They didn't dare to look down upon him.

"Oh? Kill on sight?" Linley's draconic tail began to swing.

"Swish!" Like a steel sabre, Linley's draconic tail casually slashed across the ground, cutting a deep gouge into it. Linley's dark gold eyes were fixed on this group of people as well.

"Milord Special Executors." Shaq and his men were really terrified now.

"Let's go!" One of the Wildthunder knights let out a deep roar, and immediately, a group of knights charged en masse towards one of the alleyway exits. The remaining Wildthunder knights numbered amongst them more than ten knights of the eighth rank. For them to charge en masse like this, even a combatant of the ninth rank would find it difficult to stop them.

Linley's eyes lit up.

Linley immediately charged towards the wall on his left. Ignoring the wall's existence, Linley slammed into it as though he were a large magical beast.

"BAM!" Linley knocked the section of wall over while fleeing at high speed to the north.

"Whoosh."

The bodies of those six Special Executors suddenly began to emit a hot, burning white light. The light from these six Special Executors was totally interconnected, forming a strange, glowing hexagram.

Linley just happened to ram against one of the edges of the hexagram.

"Bam!"

Linley felt as though he had just been slapped by a Violet Tattooed Bear. His entire body quivered as he was sent flying backwards. He remained surrounded by the six Special Executors.

"Ah!!!"

The bodies of those Wildthunder knights who struck against the glowing white hexagram all exploded, drenching the area with blood. Every single one of the Wildthunder knights who had touched the glowing white hexagram died.

"What is this?" Linley was shocked.

"Linley, quick, do your best to escape! This should be one of the combination attack methods of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal." Doehring Cowart immediately recognized the danger that Linley and Bebe were now in. If they continued to be trapped in such a manner, it was very likely that Linley and Bebe would not be able to escape at all.

Those six Special Executors charged forwards towards Linley and Bebe in a very practiced manner. And as they did, the area of movement within the hexagram began to shrink at an extremely fast rate.

“Ah!” “Ah!” “Ah!” “Ah!”

Shaq and the remaining knights who had not touched the glowing white hexagram were unable to dodge with the six Special Executors drawing closer and closer. One after another was forced to come into contact with the glowing white hexagram, and when they did, their bodies began to vibrate before exploding.

In the blink of an eye, no one in Shaq’s party was left alive.

But Linley and Bebe were trapped in an increasingly small, tight space.

“Boss, that white thing seems really powerful. What should we do?” Bebe was frantic.

Linley had both felt and could sense the power of this glowing white hexagram. When it had struck his body, he still felt extreme pain despite his defensive powers, and all the blood in his body had been agitated.

“Bebe, you go down through the earth, I’ll go up from the skies. Flee!” Linley mentally directed Bebe.

This black-scaled aberration, Linley, and his freak of a Shadowmouse companion, Bebe, acted at almost the same time. One flew up into the sky like an arrow leaving the bow, while the other burrowed deep into the ground.

Chapter 22 – Passing Away

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 22, Passing Away

“Haaah!” The six Special Executors simultaneously stomped the ground viciously, and suddenly the light around them penetrated the earth. Bebe, who had just burrowed into the earth, struck against the white light and was immediately knocked back.

“Whoosh!”

At the same time, the six Special Executors retreated at high speed, suddenly expanding the area within the glowing white hexagram. With each leap, Linley was usually only able to travel a few dozen meters to a hundred meters at most. In the end, he still had to fall to the ground after all.

As for the Soaring Technique….

Under the current conditions, he simply didn’t have enough time to utter the incantations necessary to cast the Soaring Technique.

“Haaaaah!” Bebe didn’t dare to touch the glowing white hexagram the six Special Executors had created again. Bebe jumped up in the air as well. At this time, five of the Special Executors suddenly rose into the air as well. Of those five, four rose to the same height in the air as Linley, while the last one rose above Linley.

“Whoa!” One person was above him, four were around him, and one was underneath him.

Glowing with white light, the six Special Executors had formed a totally air-tight octahedron, keeping Linley and Bebe totally sealed in within.

“What the hell is this?” Linley was rather stunned.

Doehring Cowart's voice sounded out in Linley's mind. "This special combination attack of these Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal consumes an enormous amount of light-style battle-qi. But perhaps they have some secret treasures of the Radiant Temple on them. Five thousand years ago, the Radiant Temple didn't possess such mysterious, agile combination attacks.

Even if they practiced the same type of battle-qi, every person's battle-qi would have fine, minute differences. To be able to totally combine battle-qi like these six Special Executors were doing, to the point of even being able to transform their battle-qi to dramatically increase its power was virtually impossible. But the Radiant Temple had succeeded.

"Whoosh."

Above, below, front and back, left and right. These six Special Executors flew towards Linley simultaneously at high speed. All six of them were wielding very thin, slender longswords.

No place to dodge!

"Boss." Bebe was frantic. Linley mentally roared, "Bebe, let's go all out against the one below us. If we can kill one of them, this formation will be broken."

"Got it."

Linley and Bebe, man and magical beast, began to fall at high speeds, launching simultaneous attacks against the combatant of the ninth rank beneath them. But the combatant of the ninth rank didn't seem to be afraid at all. On the contrary, his lips quirked up slightly, a hint of disdain and mockery on his face.

"Thruuuum."

The white light flowed at high speeds. The light dimmed from the other five

Special Executors, while the light from the one below began to blaze like the sun. Launching off from the ground, this Special Executor chopped towards Linley and Bebe with his sword.

“Ah!” Ignoring everything else, Linley struck out with his draconic tail, risking everything to try and constrict the Special Executor.

“Slash!” The sword chopped against Linley’s chest. Linley only felt an incomparable degree of pain, and his protective scales instantly began to crack. It felt as though an iron rod that had been heated until it was glowing white had been pressed against his skin, causing such pain that Linley’s entire body began to twitch, but he continued to constrict the Special Executor with his draconic tail. Fresh blood began to flow from Linley’s wound.

The scales of the Armored Razorback Wyrm weren’t able to block this sword.

“That sword blow’s power was only a bit weaker than the power of a Saint-level expert.” Doehring Cowart was astonished as well. After entering their combination attack formation, the attacks of the Special Executors could reach an incredible level of power.

The Radiant Temple was confident that unless the opponent was a Saint-level combatant, this formation attack would always be victorious!

“Ah!” The draconic tail gripping the Special Executor suddenly came under assault by that powerful light-style battle-qi. Linley felt enormous pain coming from his tail, but Linley continued to go all out, risking everything to constrict this opponent. Those dark golden eyes stared fixedly at the Special Executor.

“Hmph.” The Special Executor let out a cold laugh.

“Bam.”

White light exploded forth from the Special Executor, and Linley’s draconic

tail uncontrollably slackened. Linley's constrictive power simply wasn't able to overcome the opponent's counterattack.

At this time, the other five Special Executors came charging at Linley as well.

"Boss!" Bebe kicked off from Linley's shoulders, charging directly towards those five Special Executors. But on his very first attack, Bebe was struck simultaneously by all five swords, and his body was knocked back downwards.

"Bebe!" Linley said worriedly.

"Boss, I'm fine." Bebe flipped to his feet, but a hint of blood could be seen on his firm, tough fur. However, Bebe's defense really was remarkably powerful. He barely suffered any damage to his skin and fur.

These six Special Executors stared at Bebe in astonishment.

Too monstrous. Even that hadn't been able to pierce the skin of this Shadowmouse? As far as the Special Executors were concerned, even magical beasts of the ninth rank should have their defensive armor and skin be pierced by that blow.

Even someone with defense as monstrously powerful as Linley saw the scales over his chest crack and split from a single blow.

"The target is Linley!" The six of them knew that killing this monster of a Shadowmouse would probably force them to use quite some effort, but killing Linley would be much easier.

A single sword had been able to penetrate his defenses. Thus, a few sword strikes should be enough to kill him.

"What on earth is going on?! Their light-style battle-qi seems to be limitless!" Linley mentally roared with fury, as he swept his claws to attack the Special Executors who were charging towards him.

“Shkreeeee!” Bebe’s piercing screech rang out as well.

Light wrapped around their bodies, the six Special Executors did a pincer attack against Linley and Bebe, while Linley and Bebe used all their force to try and counterattack.

“BAM!!!”

A wild series of attacks. Both sides totally ignored their defense, only focusing on attacking.

The six Special Executors retreated at high speed.

More than half of Linley’s black scales were shattered now, revealing multiple wounds beneath. Fresh blood oozed out past the scales, and even the scales on Linley’s tail were shattered.

Linley wasn’t able to suppress the fresh blood which had risen to his throat, and he vomited it out.

“Their defense…” Linley was truly angry and frantic now.

He had finally met people whose defensive powers were even greater than his own. These six Special Executors were using light-style battle-qi in an extravagantly wasteful manner. Their combination formation attacks gave them both terrifying offense as well as astonishing defense. Linley’s attack hadn’t managed to wound them at all.

“Boss, are you okay?” Bebe said in shock and fright. Those beady eyes of him stared at Linley with concern.

Bebe was in much better shape than Linley. The primary target of those six Special Executors had been Linley. In addition, Bebe’s defense was even more monstrous than Linley’s. Once again, only a hint of blood could be seen on Bebe’s fur.

“Fi, fine.” Linley wiped the blood from his mouth.

“That was the first attack.”

One of the violet-robed Special Executors standing on a distant rooftop said calmly, “Your defense isn’t bad. Let’s see how many of our formation attacks you can take.”

“Waiters, let’s not waste time.” One of the other Special Executors also standing on a rooftop said coldly.

“Move.” The Special Executor shouted in a loud voice.

Many of the buildings nearby had toppled, and the battle aroused the interest of a large number of powerful combatants, who were watching from afar. But seeing such a large scale, intense battle, they didn’t dare draw too near.

The aura of that powerful light-style battle-qi alone filled them with dread.

“Swish!” The six Special Executors moved at the same time, transforming into six streaks of white light that flew towards Linley. Surrounded on all sides by the walls of light, Linley had nowhere to run.

Linley ground his teeth.

“Raaaaaargh!” Linley let out an angry howl, then pulled out the adamantine heavy sword from his back, wildly chopping it towards the six Special Executors.

“BOOM.” Linley’s adamantine heavy sword collided viciously against a Special Executor, who didn’t even attempt to dodge. That Special Executor suddenly felt a terrifying force passing towards him.

“Hrm?” The violet-robed Special Executor was knocked flying backwards by the blow, but under the protection of that light-style battle-qi, he still didn’t suffer any major injuries.

Only a heavy sword such as this could allow the astonishing power of a Dragonblood Warrior to be put on full display.

“Slash!”

The other five swords continued to chop at Linley’s body. Linley used his claws, his tail, and the spikes on his body to wildly attack, and the five Special Executors once more flew backwards.

Linley fell to one knee.

The majority of the scales on Linley’s body were shattered now, and that wound on his chest had suffered yet another slash. The wound was so deep that Linley’s bones could be seen, and it was rapidly oozing blood.

However, the Dragonblood Warrior’s powerful bloodline gave Linley an extremely fast recovery.

Linley’s muscles were constantly rippling and stretching out, try to once more mend themselves and stitch themselves back together. This wound, however, was simply too severe. Even Linley’s bloodline only resulted in the wound growing stronger. The loss of a large amount of blood, however, was causing Linley to grow dizzy.

“The next one will be the one that kills you.”

One of the six Special Executors said arrogantly. Filled with fear, Bebe crouched next to Linley. Both Linley and Bebe felt a sense of despair.

“Hmph.” Linley angrily shook his head, forcing himself to try and focus a little.

But he had lost too much blood, and even Linley’s vision had grown slightly blurred. But right at this moment, a magical, illusory ray of light shone forth from the Coiling Dragon ring, transforming into an old man with white robes, a white beard, and white hair.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley was startled. He didn’t understand why Doehring Cowart had appeared all of a sudden.

Doehring Cowart looked exactly the way he did when Linley had first encountered him. A little smile on his face, Doehring Cowart gently rubbed Linley on the head.

“Linley, in the future, you’ll have to rely on yourself.” Doehring Cowart said, a fond smile on his face.

“Grandpa Doehring, what are you…” Linley was stunned.

Doehring Cowart’s spirit suddenly rose into the air. Hovering a meter above the ground, he spread his hands wide. A terrifyingly powerful burst of spiritual energy suddenly erupted forth from Doehring Cowart.

Right now, Doehring Cowart felt extremely calm and at peace.

“In the past, when I lived in the Pouant Empire, my life was a life of training and slaughter. In the Pouant Empire, I was extremely arrogant and a difficult person to get close to. I had no children and no grandchildren. But after having spent five thousand years in the Coiling Dragon ring, my temperament has changed. And then, I met you, Linley.”

Hovering in the air, Doehring Cowart was still gazing at Linley.

“Grandpa Doehring, what are you going to do?” Linley had an terrible premonition…

“I’ve watched you grow up and become mature, one step at a time. In my heart, I felt very proud of your successes. I’ve even come to consider you as my own grandson.” The amount of spiritual energy Doehring Cowart was emitting grew even greater.

The amount of spiritual energy was so high that aside from powerful combatants such as Linley and the six Special Executors, even those

warriors watching the battle from far away could sense it. All of the six Special Executors were shocked and alarmed.

“Linley, don’t be sad. In truth, trapped as I am within this Coiling Dragon ring, I don’t have much of a future. Let this, then, be one final demonstration of my power.” Doehring Cowart’s smile became all the more brilliant.

But Linley was now shaking with terror.

“What is going on?!” The six Special Executors were beginning to be genuinely frightened. That vortex of spiritual energy was simply too powerful, so powerful that they too were beginning to quake with fear.

The power unleashed when a peak-stage Saint-level combatant was igniting the spiritual energy present in his very soul was incomparably more powerful than the power which even a peak-stage Saint-level combatant normally possessed.

“WHOOSH!” All of the earth elemental essence around the entire city of Hess suddenly flowed towards Doehring Cowart at high speed. Bound by Doehring Cowart’s terrifyingly powerful spiritual energy, all of the earth elemental essence began to coalesce.

No mageforce. This was a spell that relied solely on spiritual energy to control the earth elemental essence!

Under normal conditions, this would render the attack power of the earth spell to be very weak. But the spell which Doehring Cowart was now casting was so powerful that one could only shiver in terror.

“HEAVENLY METEOR’S DESCENT!”

Doehring Cowart’s spirit had begun to grow blurry, but his voice remained as cold and calm as that of a celestial spirit. Six enormous earth-colored meteors fell forth from the sky, smashing towards those six Special Executors.

“SWOOSH!” Those six gigantic meteors formed purely from earth elemental essence, each the size of a house, smashed towards the six men at such a high speed that it seemed as though they were tearing through space itself.

Those six Special Executors fled in terror, but those six meteors only chased after them.

“Linley.” Doehring Cowart looked at Linley. “Goodbye.”

Linley looked up at Grandpa Doehring, with his white beard, white hair, and white robe.

“Remember this. Live well.” Doehring Cowart’s face suddenly blossomed into his trademark smile…and then his now translucent spirit disappeared, like smoke being blown away by the wind.

Linley opened his mouth, but felt as though no words could come from his throat. His tears began to uncontrollably roll down his face.

“Ah…Ah!!!” As though he were mute and incapable of speech, Linley howled to the heavens, and his tears came pouring down.

Chapter 23 – Crazed

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 23, Crazed

“BAM!” “BAM!” “BAM!” “BAM!”

…..

The six giant meteors smashed down viciously towards those six Special Executors. The six Special Executors all used their hands to rip the ground apart beneath them and try to tunnel downwards.

Those six giant meteors struck the ground, causing the earth to shake furiously with colossal booms, as though giant waves of thunder were suddenly emanating from the ground.

“BOOOOM!”

Six massive, deep gouges appeared in the earth, each of them around ten meters wide. The tremendous shockwaves spread out in all directions, and the earth itself began to buckle and roil about, toppling houses and snapping trees in every which way.

Within a circular area with a circumference of several hundred meters, everything was turned to dust.

This terrifying explosive boom caused the entirety of Hess City to take notice. Whether it was the Ascetics who had just stepped out of the gates of Hess City, or the men of the Dawson Conglomerate, or other powerful experts, everyone felt the vibrations coming from this place.

…..

The roiling waves of force reached Linley as well, but Linley only stood there like an idiot, not moving at all. He allowed the waves of force to

buffet him as they pleased.

Linley just stood there like an idiot, his tears flowing down without stopping.

“Ah…ah…ah…” Linley seemed to have forgotten how to speak, and his entire body trembled with panic and heartbreak as he roared into the sky.

Linley fell to his knees.

A sense of utter heartbreak, of his heart being ripped to shreds, consumed Linley.

Linley’s mind suddenly began to swim with images of him and Doehring Cowart together.

…..

That first time he had seen that ray of light transform into an old man with white robes, white beard, and white hair. The child-Linley had shouted in astonishment, “You…who are you?”

“Hello, kiddo. My name is Doehring Cowart. I am a Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire!” That was the first time Doehring Cowart had interacted with Linley.

….

“Grandpa Doehring, why aren’t you talking? How is the strength of my affinity for earth elemental essence?” The first time Linley had been tested for his talent as a magus.

“Good. Extremely good. Your affinity for earth elemental essence is extremely high.” Doehring Cowart’s face was wreathed in smiles. “Based on what I know, only perhaps one in a thousand magi would have as strong an affinity for earth elemental essence as you. Truly.” Doehring Cowart’s praise had caused child-Linley to be unspeakably excited.

….

A Saint-level Grand Magus of the era of the Pouant Empire. A young child. And so, under the tutelage of this Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire, the child embarked on the road to being a magus.

…..

Stonesculpting using the Straight Chisel School method. Training within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Under the tutelage of the experienced Doehring Cowart, Linley had progressed and matured at an astonishing rate.

But when Linley had become the center of attention for everyone…

…no one knew that behind him stood the spirit of a Saint-level Grand Magus of the era of the Pouant Empire.

….

“Linley. In the future, you’ll have to rely on yourself.” Grandpa Doehring had fondly rubbed Linley’s head one last time.

After casting that world-shaking forbidden spell, ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’, Grandpa Doehring had faded away.

“Linley. Goodbye.”

“Remember this. Live well.”

…..

Linley’s mind swam with images of the time he had spent with his Grandpa Doehring. That kindly, forbearing old man who had taught Linley so much, had long since become someone whom Linley couldn’t bear to be apart from.

“No…no….”

Linley shook his head repeatedly.

He wasn’t willing to believe it. Grandpa Doehring had truly passed away. What’s more, his very soul had dissipated upon his death.

“Impossible. Grandpa Doehring, come out. Come out.” Linley stared at the Coiling Dragon ring, howling nonstop at first, before his words took on begging tones as his tears splashed against his ice cold scales.

Blood continued to leak out of Linley’s body, but Linley didn’t feel anything at all.

“Grandpa Doehring.”

Linley so dearly hoped that once more, that ray of white light would shine forth from the Coiling Dragon ring and transform into the white bearded, white haired, white robed Grandpa Doehring. Linley simply couldn’t believe that Grandpa Doehring had died, just like that. Never to be by his side again.

He had been together with Grandpa Doehring since he was a child.

Since then, Linley had never been separated from Grandpa Doehring. Never!

In the depths of his heart, Linley had truly become accustomed long ago to Grandpa Doehring’s presence. Even when Linley had been imprisoned within the Radiant Temple, he hadn’t felt as alone or as helpless as he did now.

His heart had always been steady…because behind him, he had the support of Grandpa Doehring.

But now…

Grandpa Doehring had left forever. Forever!

“Why. Why.” Linley’s voice was shaking. “Heaven, first my mother died, then my father died. Why. Why did you have to take even Grandpa Doehring away as well?”

“WHY!!!” Linley raised his head, howling towards the heavens.

His voice echoed in the sky.

“Ah…ah….” Linley fell to his knees, powerless. He began to sob madly, but no matter how hard Linley cried, that kindly old man would never appear again.

He had died and left forever.

“Grandpa Doehring.”

Linley felt more feeble and fragile than he ever had before. It was a spiritual fragility. No father. No mother. And now, even Grandpa Doehring, who had always been by his side, had left.

The only one left by Linley’s side was Bebe, who had never even known about Grandpa Doehring’s existence.

“Boss. Hey, Linley, Boss!” Bebe nudged Linley, somewhat frightened.

Linley turned his head to look at Bebe.

“Bebe.” Linley suddenly pulled Bebe into his arms.

“Boss, just now, you were calling out for a ‘Grandpa Doehring’. Who is Grandpa Doehring? Just now, I sensed a terrifying spiritual energy burst. What was that?” Bebe was totally baffled.

Linley’s heart was shot through with agony once more upon hearing

Grandpa Doehring's name.

He lowered his head to look at the Coiling Dragon ring on his finger. But… Grandpa Doehring would never come out from it again.

"Rustle." Suddenly, a series of extremely light sounds could be heard. Linley turned his head to look.

Within the giant craters created by the meteors, a violet-robed figure was struggling to crawl out. Not only him. The other five men were also slowly struggling to crawl out as well.

Heavenly Meteor's Descent – An earth-style forbidden spell.

If a Saint-level Grand Magus were to use this spell, the six of them would have been dead without a doubt. But Doehring Cowart was a Saint-level Grand Magus who didn't have a single shred of mageforce.

Based on the laws of magic, mageforce was the generals commanding the army of soldiers known as elemental essence. Through mageforce, spiritual energy was able to command these soldiers to form powerful magical spells.

What Doehring Cowart had done was to consume the spiritual energy within his very soul, using this powerful burst of spiritual energy to directly control the elemental essences and execute the forbidden spell, Heavenly Meteor's Descent.

But because he had no mageforce, even though he consumed all of his own spiritual energy, the power of Doehring Cowart's spell was only 10% – 20% of a normal Heavenly Meteor's Descent. Despite that though, even 10% to 20% of the power of a forbidden spell had smashed those six Special Executors to the brink of death.

Watching those six violet robed figures crawl out, Linley's heart was suddenly filled with unbridled, boundless, unquenchable rage.

“Ah!!!!!” With a scream, Linley charged like a bolt of lightning towards one of the violet robed figures. The Special Executor, seeing Linley charge towards him, was so terrified that his eyes turned as round as the moon.

“Ah!!!!!” Exerting force with his arms, Linley ripped the Special Executor into two halves with his bare hands.

“Die.” Linley physically ripped off the head of another Special Executor.

“Haaaargh!” Linley’s sharp claws pierced into the chest of a third Special Executor, ripping his heart out and crushing it to pieces with his claws.

“Go die!” Linley latched onto the throat of the fourth Special Executor with his teeth, ripping his throat out.

He wanted to eat their flesh and drink their blood!

“Ah!!!!” Linley’s figure suddenly appeared next to the fifth Special Executor. The heavily wounded Special Executor, unable to defend himself, could only watch in terror as Linley ripped him apart into two pieces by his legs.

As for the sixth Special Executor…

“You…you…” The heavily wounded sixth Special Executor, upon seeing the terrifying scene before him, saw Linley charge towards him like a demon from the Infernal Realm. He was so terrified that his body began to shake, and then he collapsed dead from fear.

Although the sixth Special Executor was already dead, Linley still smashed a vicious punch at his head, exploding it.

Watching this, Bebe was somewhat frightened.

The warriors watching from far away had been scared stupid as well. They had never imagined that a human could be so vicious, so brutal, so terrifying. This was especially true because of how Linley currently

appeared. His body was covered in broken scales, and blood dyed his entire form red. Even his dark gold eyes were dimly flashing red.

“Boss, you…you…what’s wrong?” Bebe was worried.

After Linley had brutally killed all six Special Executors, he suddenly sat down on the ground, his energy gone. He sat there, staring into nothing, with no clue as to what he was thinking.

“Boss.” Bebe pushed Linley frantically.

Linley suddenly raised his head, but he was unable to restrain his tears from coming out again. He then lowered his head, burying it against his legs and beginning to cry once more.

…..

Those six giant meteors had turned the entire area around for hundreds of meters into rubble. Those six violet-robed men had all been killed by that demonic freak.

But then, that demonic freak suddenly put his head against his legs and began to sob.

……

There were nearly ten thousand onlookers now, watching from hundreds of meters away. None of these people could understand what they were seeing.

“That demon is crying?”

All of them were astonished.

“That demon seems…seems really sad.” A young person said uncertainly to a nearby friend of his. That friend started, then nodded slowly.

None of the onlookers moved any closer. They had seen the terrifying scene

of just moments ago. Even the combatants of the eighth rank knew exactly how much stronger this person in front of them was.

“The demon is crying?” Yale, George, and Reynolds had just gotten here, having travelled quite far. Hearing these words, they all started.

“Out of the way! Out of the way!” Yale shouted angrily.

Immediately, the guards of the Dawson Conglomerate began to push aside the various onlookers. Yale, George, and Reynolds ran frantically towards the center of the battlefield.

But upon reaching the epicenter, all of them were stunned.

Everything within several hundred meters had been turned to rubble. Looking at the six craters, one could imagine how terrifyingly powerful those six giant meteors had been. And just looking at the corpses of those six men, one could imagine how brutal the person who had killed them was.

The demon’s body, covered with broken scales, was sitting there, sobbing.

Upon seeing Bebe by the side of the ‘demon’, and that adamantine heavy sword which had been tossed to the ground, Yale and the others became all the more certain that this was Linley.

“Third Bro.” Yale, George, and Reynolds immediately rushed over.

By now, Monroe Dawson had arrived as well. He immediately ordered his subordinates, “Quick, dispose of those six corpses, then leave immediately. Don’t let anyone know that the Dawson Conglomerate had anything to do with this.” As he spoke, Monroe Dawson immediately left as well.

“Third Bro.” Yale, George, and Reynolds all called out with worry.

Back during Linley’s assassination attempt on Clayde at Fenlai City, Yale had already guessed that Linley was capable of transforming into a Dragonblood Warrior. He had informed Reynolds and George as well. And

now, seeing Bebe as well as the discarded adamantine heavy sword, they naturally were certain that this was Linley.

Linley's body shook slightly.

Raising his head and glancing besides himself, Linley saw Yale, George, and Reynolds. Linley finally spoke. "You guys…"

"Let's go, quick." Yale immediately urged. "You just killed Special Executors. If the Radiant Church finds out, it'll be a disaster for you." Yale immediately helped Linley up.

Linley allowed himself to be raised to his feet.

"Bebe. Let's go." Linley hugged Bebe, then headed out.

Yale was startled, because he noticed that Linley didn't pay any attention at all to his adamantine heavy sword. He couldn't help but call out urgently, "Third Bro, your heavy sword."

"Heavy sword?" Linley turned his head. After a moment, he seemed to understand, and he walked over, picking his heavy sword up.

Just then, the subordinates of the Dawson Conglomerate arrived as well, and they quickly disposed of those six violet robed Special Executors' corpses.

"What's wrong with Third Bro?" George said quietly to Yale and Reynolds.

Yale shook his head as well, confused. "No idea. Bebe seems to be fine as well. Why then does it seem as though Third Bro just suffered a worse blow than that time when he had his heart broken? He seems so downcast that it is like he has lost his soul."

Linley allowed the Dawson Conglomerate's men to lead him away, as they crept away via small alleyways and arrived at a mysterious residence.

Chapter 24 – Stillness

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 24, Stillness

Within the dark, quiet residence, there was only Reynolds, Yale, George, a few dozen female attendants, and a few dozen guards. All of them were here for Linley.

Beneath branches of hanging grapes, George, Yale, and Reynolds were standing around a stone desk.

“Boss Yale. What do you think is going on with Third Bro?” Reynolds face was filled with confusion as he said helplessly.

Yale shook his head. “I don’t know either. It’s been ten days since Third Bro has come here, and in these past ten days, Third Bro hasn’t had any of his usual energy. He isn’t even training, nor does he joke around and laugh with us anymore. He’s always off by himself.”

George nodded as well. “In the past, no matter what happened, Third Bro wouldn’t stop his training. But now he seems to have transformed into a totally different person.”

“So who can tell me what exactly is going on with Third Bro?” Reynolds gnashed his teeth. “It would be great if I knew.” Yale sighed resignedly.

The thing which hurt their heads the most was that they had no idea what had caused Linley to become like this. He no longer trained, nor did he joke around with the three of them. He was always off by himself, looking as though he had lost his soul.

He had become like this for no apparent reason whatsoever.

As the dear bros of Linley, how could they not be worried?

“Third Bro must have suffered some sort of tremendous shock.” Yale sighed quietly. George and Reynolds were all startled for a moment, then they fell silent. They couldn’t help but think back to what they had seen that day.

Thousands of observers surrounding a circular area where everything for hundreds of meters around had been reduced to rubble. Within that disaster area, those six astonishingly deep craters and fallen meteors.

Linley, in full Dragonform, had brutally massacred those six Special Executors, then sat down and began to cry. He had been sobbing like a child. “I’ve never seen Third Bro this heartbroken, this fragile.” Yale said in a low voice.

George nodded as well. “Third Bro is very tough. Even when he suffered heartbreak from breaking up with Alice, after completing the ‘Awakening From the Dream’ sculpture, he headed directly for the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to engage in more training.”

“Right. Even when his father died, Third Bro had managed to endure and hold on. But this time…” Reynold simply couldn’t understand.

They were all certain that their beloved bro was in a fragile state right now, but none of them could find a reason why.

Next to a murmuring creek in the back courtyard of the residence, Linley was sitting on top of a decorative polished stone. He stared at the creek, not moving.

Bebe was standing on the stone as well, right next to Linley.

Utter silence. The only sound that could be heard was the murmurs of the flowing water.

Although Linley’s eyes were aimed at the creek, his thoughts were still with Grandpa Doehring and the time they had spent together.

How he had played around with Grandpa Doehring as a child.

How Grandpa Doehring had strictly supervised and trained him as a young man.

In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, how Grandpa Doehring had lectured him time and time again to be careful without growing tired of it.

With each memory swimming to the surface, Linley felt his heart grow still.

“After my father died, I thought that I was now very lonely. But I didn’t realize that in reality, I was very fortunate. No matter what happened, Grandpa Doehring was always behind me, supporting me, consoling me, encouraging me, reminding me…”

“But why didn’t I realize this in the past? Why didn’t I treasure the time I had spent together with Grandpa Doehring?” Linley’s heart was filled with agony.

Grandpa Doehring had never made any excessive requests of him, but he had never considered about how Grandpa Doehring had felt. He hadn’t truly valued the time he had spent with Grandpa Doehring. Perhaps subconsciously, he had believed that Grandpa Doehring would forever be with him within the Coiling Dragon ring.

“Coiling Dragon ring? Grandpa Doehring was always inside the Coiling Dragon ring by himself. It must have been very painful and miserable for him to always be alone in there. Grandpa Doehring probably also hoped that I would chat with him often, right?” Only now did Linley think of these things.

But…

In the past, Linley usually would only ask for Grandpa Doehring’s advice when he met with some insurmountable difficulties. He would very rarely actively seek out Grandpa Doehring just to chat.

He only took, without giving back.

“Why is it that only after I have lost, that I now understand how to cherish?” Linley’s body began to tremble. How he hoped that Grandpa Doehring would return and would be by his side again.

Unfortunately….

This was impossible.

Grandpa Doehring was dead. Dead and gone forever.

Linley could feel his heart clenching, as though it were contorting. His entire body was convulsing with pain. But there wasn’t a hint of pain on Linley’s face.

Deep in Linley’s heart, he even began to think…

If he could just die now from the pain, then he would have escaped from it all.

“Boss.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s head. Linley turned to look at Bebe. Bebe’s beady little black eyes were staring at Linley, a look of concern in them.

“You…you are thinking about that Grandpa Doehring again?” Even Bebe only learned after Doehring Cowart’s death that Linley previously had a ghost Saint-level Grand Magus by his side.

Linley nodded.

Bebe mentally spoke to Linley. “Boss, can you…can you tell me all about that Grandpa Doehring?”

Looking at Bebe, Linley nodded slightly, then reached out and held Bebe in his arms, hugging him. He began to tell Bebe all about Doehring Cowart. “That year, I was eight years old. There were two Saint-level combatants who had appeared at Wushan township….”

Standing outside the gate to the back courtyard, Reynolds and the others quietly watched as Linley hugged Bebe while seated on that smooth, polished decorative stone.

“I feel extremely miserable myself, seeing Third Bro like this.” Reynolds sighed softly.

Yale and George were both silent.

“We have to think of something.” George’s eyes suddenly sharpened, became fierce. “No matter what, we can’t let Third Bro just collapse like this.”

Yale and Reynolds both nodded.

“Second Bro, do you have any ideas?” Reynolds and Yale looked at George.

George said, “We have no idea what has caused Third Bro to become like this. But there are a few things that we can extrapolate.” George said gravely, “Third Bro’s clan was the Dragonblood Warrior clan. As a clan which once dominated the entire world, the members of the clan naturally wish to revive their clan to their former glory.”

Yale’s eyes lit up. “Right. Third Bro values his clan highly. For the sake of acquiring his ancestral heirloom, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, he was even willing to auction off ‘Awakening From the Dream’.”

“Exactly.”

George nodded. “My theory is, the reason why Third Bro was always so hard on himself in training was because he had something important to him that was driving him. Most likely, restoring his clan to its former glory was that motivating impulse. Third Bro has worked hard for so many years now. He definitely wouldn’t give up that easily. We have to use this to agitate and encourage him.”

“Agitate him? Would that work?” Yale was a bit suspicious.

George said helplessly, “Do we have a better method of helping him?”

“We’ll use this method.” Reynolds harrumphed. “I can’t stand watching Third Bro continue to act like this any longer. Let’s go. The three of us will go talk with him. Let’s see what exactly is going on.”

“Fourth Bro, let Second Bro do the talking. The more you talk, the more you screw things up.” Yale reproved.

Knowing his own temperament, Reynolds nodded. George, Yale, and Reynolds looked at each other, then walked towards Linley.

After listening to Linley’s story, Bebe was quiet as well. He was also very heart-sick, heart-sick for Doehring Cowart’s death. Suddenly, Bebe felt people approaching them from behind. He leaped out of Linley’s arms and looked towards that direction.

It was Yale, George, and Reynolds.

But right now, having just finished the tale of Grandpa Doehring, Linley was lost in his memories once more, and didn’t even realize that people were approaching him.

Yale, George, and Reynolds glanced at each other, all sighing internally. Linley was an expert. Normally, Linley probably would’ve noticed the three of them before they had even entered the courtyard. But now, all three of them were right behind Linley, and yet Linley didn’t react at all.

“Third Bro.” Yale spoke.

Linley trembled, then slightly turned his head to look at the three of them. His eyes were very calm. “You guys came.” After speaking, Linley turned his head back towards the creek, continuing to stare at the water.

Yale, George, and Reynolds immediately walked to stand next to the

boulder Linley was sitting on.

“Third Bro.” Yale suddenly grabbed Linley by his shoulders, forcing Linley to look at him. “Third Bro, do you remember those things which had happened at the Ernst Institute, and what you often said to me?”

“Forgot.” Linley said calmly.

Yale stared. “Forgot? Third Bro, you often put me down, saying that I don’t work hard or train hard, and that in our dorm, I would be the weakest out of us four, despite physically being the largest.”

Back when the four of them were dorm-mates, naturally they would often joke with each other.

But Linley remained silent.

George looked at Yale, nodding slightly. Yale released Linley’s shoulders, and then George walked in front of Linley, saying solemnly, “Third Bro, I want to ask you. You have trained so bitterly for all these years. What was it all for?”

Linley started.

He couldn’t help but think about how he had been focused on training, ever since he was young.

“For the clan.” Linley finally responded.

Next to him, a hint of delight appeared on the faces of Yale and Reynolds. George immediately said, “Then let me ask you this. As you are now, are you behaving responsibly towards your clan?”

Looking at George, Linley smiled bitterly. In a dreary, desolate voice, he said, “My father’s dead. My mother’s dead. Tell me. What’s the point of working hard on behalf of the clan?”

Linley rose to his feet, walking towards the back courtyard.

Yale, George, and Reynolds all stared at Linley's back, then exchange stunned looks.

"Pointless. Everyone is dead. What's the point of doing my best?" Linley said in a desolate, mournful voice before he disappeared past the door.

Fifteen days.

Linley had stayed within the residence for fifteen days. During these fifteen days, Yale and the others had tried everything they could think of, but no matter what they did, Linley remained as he had.

George, Reynolds, and Yale were seated together, drinking unhappily.

"What should we do? What exactly should we do? We can't just watch as Third Bro drowns in this abyss of despair." Reynolds angrily smashed the wine cup against the floor.

Yale and George both shook their heads as well.

These past few days, they had tried everything they could. They also asked Linley what had caused him to become like this, but Linley didn't say a word, remaining silent.

What could they do?

"When I see how silent Third Bro is, I really worry about him. My heart hurts. Third Bro, alas…" Yale grabbed the bottle of wine and poured it directly into his mouth, drinking half of it at a swig.

They had grown up alongside Linley, and their love for each other was even greater than that between real brothers. How could they just watch as Linley collapsed like this?

Seated on a chair within his room, Linley stared at the Coiling Dragon ring

on his hand. Linley could clearly recollect how Grandpa Doehring looked each time he came out of the ring.

But that scene would never, ever play out again.

On Linley's other hand, he was wearing a second ring, an interspatial ring. After Clayde had died, the ring and its contents had become items without an owner. When he had been engaging in battle against the six Special Executors, the blood from Linley's body had covered the ring long ago, and it naturally had become personalized and bound to him.

But…

These past fifteen days, Linley hadn't so much as glanced at this interspatial ring or its contents. His mind was elsewhere. Even when he didn't actively dwell on it, his thoughts would always turn to scenes of him together with Grandpa Doehring. How Grandpa Doehring had looked when stroking his beard, or how he had looked when he was sternly instructing Linley. All sorts of memories, all of them so clear and vivid.

"Why. Why. Even Grandpa Doehring, the last person I had, was taken away?"

After having lost Grandpa Doehring, Linley had also lost his strongest source of support. He felt more fragile and more lonely than he ever had before. Linley tightly held Bebe in his arms. In that quiet little room, he continued to sit there, alone…

Chapter 25 – Departure

Book 7, Heaven and Earth Turned Upside Down – Chapter 25, Departure

At the borders of the Kingdom of Hess was an army numbering over 800,000 soldiers. On a vast expanse of ground, military camps dotted the land like a series of mountain ranges, limitless and without end. This enormous army was, however, quite organized.

But in front of the military camp, there was a vast expanse of empty land.

“Hey, Uncle Rand [Lan’te]. If the army of magical beasts attack, will we be able to hold?” An armored young man who looked to be in sixteen or seventeen said in a soft voice.

Next to him was a muscular, bearded man. Removing a small flagon of liquor from his pouch, he took a small swig, then laughed loudly. “Relax. This time, in addition to the elite troops of our Kingdom of Hess, the knights of the Radiant Temple have been sent by the Radiant Church, along with many lord magi. Don’t worry. The spells of magi are quite powerful.”

“Right.” This was the young man’s first battle. Hearing the words of the veteran, he felt slightly steadier.

But that muscular man was sighing to himself inside. Because he, in fact, had seen how vicious and powerful magical beasts were. If thousands or tens of thousands of magical beasts charged towards them, the only way humanity would be able to survive was by paying a price in blood.

“Roaaaar!”

Suddenly, a low growl could be heard coming from an extremely far distance.

“Uncle Rand, I think I heard something.” The young man was growing

nervous.

“It’s fine.” Rand said loudly, but suddenly, Rand squinted and looked to the south. Atop that barren, empty plain, a countless number of thickly clustered dots could be seen.

“Magical beasts. A horde of magical beasts!”

From another part of the military camp, a shrill cry rang out. Instantly, the entire military camp began to move. From the highest ranking generals to the lowest level soldiers, everyone heightened their vigilance.

The entire 800,000 man army was preparing to do battle.

“So, so many!” Many human soldiers, upon seeing the horde of magical beasts off in the distance, couldn’t help but suck in a cold breath. From far away, countless Vampiric Iron Bulls had formed into a series of formation lines. Their muscles knotted, they were charging towards the humans at high speed.

There was well over ten thousand Vampiric Iron Bulls.

“Rumble, rumble.” The Vampiric Iron Bulls charged wildly, causing the very ground to shake. The eyes of each and every Vampiric Iron Bull had turned red, and their bodies were emitting flames. They looked like a sea of fire.

The shaking earth. The endless sea of flame.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Suddenly, the sky became filled with many translucent, azure-colored javelins. These javelins fell down upon the Vampiric Iron Bulls like the rain.

“The lord magi!” Many human soldiers exulted.

“Puchiii!” Every single javelin possessed astonishing power. As one of the water-style’s pure water-element spells, they were extremely powerful against fire-type magical beasts.

These icy javelins descended, either piercing into the ground or into the bodies of the Vampiric Iron Bulls. “Puchiii!” Some of the icy javelins penetrated directly through the internal organs of the Vampiric Iron Bulls, who roared in fury, ran a few steps more, then collapsed.

One Vampiric Iron Bull after another died, but the vast majority of them continued to charge forward. Even if they had suffered some light injuries, they would only grow more furious.

Fresh blood stained the ground.

“Snooort!” The Vampiric Iron Bulls roared angrily.

“Archers! Ready…Fire!” The officers shouted loudly.

Instantly, the skies were filled with countless arrows. The thickly clustered arrows arced down from the heavens in a dense wave.

One sharp arrow after another struck the Vampiric Iron Bulls, but their tough, knotted muscles easily deflected many of the arrows.

The tactics which human armies used against other human armies wasn’t necessarily effective against magical beasts.

“Pikemen, formations!”

One heavily armored and thickly muscled warrior after another strode forward, all holding steel pikes. Assuming a defensive formation, they quietly awaited the onslaught of the Vampiric Iron Bulls. “Snoooort!” The red-eyed Vampiric Iron Bulls charged forward.

Countless steel pikes were there to welcome the Vampiric Iron Bulls, but the Vampiric Iron Bulls only lowered their horns and continued to charge

forward while roaring. Like a solid flood, they slammed viciously against the pikes.

“Puchiiii!” The Vampiric Iron Bulls were skewered by those steel pikes.

The people capable of wielding steel pikes were all at least warriors of the third rank. In addition, all of the pikemen were mutually supporting each other in their bristling pike formation, borrowing and lending strength as needed.

The first wave of Vampiric Iron Bulls were not able to break this defensive line. But behind them, more Vampiric Iron Bulls continued to charge.

The battle between the army of magical beasts and the army of men was extremely fierce. The army of beasts was composed of more than just Vampiric Iron Bulls. There were also packs of Windwolves, and also elite prides of the even more terrifying Fire Lions. There were also Landwyrms, Velocidragons, and more…

But the human army wasn’t weak either. In addition to the ordinary common soldiers, they also possessed some truly powerful magi who hadn’t yet made their moves. In addition, the Radiant Church had also sent a number of magi of the seventh, eighth, and even ninth ranks. There was also a division of elite Knights of the Radiant Temple…

The battle raged for three days, and in the end, the human army was forced to retreat. In just three days, the human side had lost over 300,000 soldiers, and the number of wounded was even more staggering. But the magical beast’s army had suffered high casualties as well.

However, both armies seemed to have a tacit understanding, as neither side made use of their Saint-level combatants. The Saint-level combatants only watched from afar, and didn’t act.

Hess City was in a state of chaos.

This battle at the border had resulted in the human army retreating a

hundred kilometers at once. They were now extremely close to Hess City, and many of the people within Hess City had made the decision to evacuate.

Hess City. The quiet manor where Linley was residing.

“Yale, we’re leaving immediately. Quick. Don’t waste any more time.” Monroe Dawson shouted. “I expect that the human army won’t be able to hold for many more days. The flames of war are about to engulf Hess City.”

Yale nodded. “Understood, father.”

“But Third Bro, he…” Yale was still concerned about Linley. George and Reynolds, by Yale’s side, were both worried as well.

Monroe Dawson frowned. “How about this. You go try to persuade him one final time. No matter what though, we must leave tonight.” After he spoke, Monroe Dawson turned and left.

Yale, George, and Reynolds looked at each other.

Finally, the three of them headed in the direction of Linley’s room. As soon as they entered the rear courtyard, they saw Linley sitting on a chair next to a stone table, calmly staring at the straight chisel in his hand. Seeing this, Yale, George, and Reynolds didn’t feel happy or excited at all.

For the sake of wanting to help Linley wake up, they would often place the straight chisel there, along with sculptures. But Linley didn’t seem to have any desire at all to sculpt. Each time he saw the chisel, he would think back to how Grandpa Doehring had painstakingly trained him to sculpt.

He could still remember how proud and majestic Grandpa Doehring had looked when he had first imparted to Linley the secrets of the Straight Chisel school. At that moment, Grandpa Doehring really had the regal bearing of a grandmaster.

“Third Bro.” Yale walked directly over to him.

Linley raised his head to look at Yale. A smile formed on his face, but he said nothing.

“Third Bro, the army of magical beasts is about to break through the borders. The human side has already been forced to retreat a hundred kilometers. It’s only a matter of time before they break into Hess City. We have to leave.” Yale said solemnly. “Leave?” Linley was briefly startled. “Oh. Got it.”

Seeing how Linley was acting, Reynolds, the most hot-tempered of the four, grabbed Linley by his clothes. Staring straight into Linley’s eyes, he angrily shouted, “Third Bro, what the hell is wrong with you? Speak! Why have you become like this? The person whom I, Reynolds, admire most in this world is you. I often brag to others about you. But now? Look at yourself! Look at what you have become!”

“Admire me?” Linley said self-mockingly. “Admire what?”

“I heard Boss Yale say that because of the enmity between you and Clayde, you were willing to throw away everything to be able to kill him. You dared to act and you dared to accept the consequences. As your brother, I admired you! But now? You killed Clayde, then you killed six Special Executors of the Radiant Church. Isn’t this something you should be proud of? Why have you become like this?” Reynolds was truly furious now.

Next to him, George frowned.

“Third Bro.” George suddenly shouted at Linley.

Reynolds and Yale both turned to look at George. Linley looked at him as well.

“Third Bro, why did you kill those six Special Executors?” George asked with a shout. George suddenly realized…even if Linley were to kill Clayde, there was no reason for Special Executors of the Radiant Church to try and kill Linley.

After all, Clayde was no longer one of their kings. “They wanted to kill me.” Linley said in a low voice.

“Why did they want to kill you?” George had a feeling that he had touched upon the reason behind Linley’s depression.

“Because it was the Radiant Church who killed my mother.” Linley said calmly.

Standing next to Linley, both Yale and Reynolds were both surprised, but a flash of insight suddenly appeared within George’s mind. He immediately roared, “The Radiant Church killed your mother? But you, Third Bro, aren’t going to seek revenge? What, are you afraid?”

“Not seek revenge?”

Those three words seemed to have struck Linley like a lightning bolt.

“Right. It was the Radiant Church.” Linley’s dull eyes slowly began to sharpen.

“If it wasn’t for the Radiant Church constantly searching for pure souls to offer to the Radiant Sovereign, then Clayde wouldn’t have given my mother to the Radiant Church, resulting in my mother’s death.”

“If it wasn’t for my mother’s death, my father wouldn’t have died.”

“If my father was alive, why would I go seek revenge? How could Grandpa Doehring have died as a result? What’s more, Grandpa Doehring died as a result of helping me against those six Special Executors.”

Linley began to feel hatred in his heart.

“This was all due to the Radiant Church!!! Radiant, radiant, haha! The Radiant Church is radiant? If it was radiant, then why would they murder people with pure, innocent souls and offer them to the Radiant Sovereign?”

Linley's heart began to beat with hatred.

The Radiant Temple's actions were really too vicious.

Because of their viciousness, a series of tragedies had occurred, and his own life was one of those tragedies.

"Boss." Bebe saw that Linley's face was growing firm. He was worried that Linley would be rash. He mentally said, "Boss, the last words that Grandpa Doehring said to you were that he hoped you would live well."

Linley's heart trembled. How could Linley forget the final words which Grandpa Doehring's had said just before his soul had dissipated.

"Bebe, don't worry. I will never act rashly again. I will endure…the entity I will act against is the Radiant Church, rather than one specific individual. I know my own limits." Linley's eyes had grown firm and hard.

Seeing the changes in Linley's eyes and expression, Yale, George, and Reynolds couldn't help but feel ecstatic.

In recent days, Linley had always seemed so lost, so distant. He had never looked as resolved as he now did, and his eyes had never been so firm.

"Boss Yale. Second Bro. Fourth Bro. I've decided to leave." Linley made his decision.

"Third Bro, you…" Yale and the others were surprised.

"Don't worry. I'm fine." Linley laughed, giving each of his three bros a punch to the chest. Yale and the others began to laugh as well. Seeing Linley like this, they felt much more relieved.

Wearing a warrior's uniform, carrying the adamantine heavy sword on his back, and with Bebe on his shoulders, Linley left by himself.

After leaving the chaotic city of Hess, Linley headed towards the east. After

half a day, Linley arrived at the border to the outer regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Seeing the boundless Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, a hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face.

"Radiant Church, just wait. There will come a day when I will pull you out by the roots." Linley's gaze was extremely firm.

He lost his father. He had lost his mother. He had lost Grandpa Doehring.

The only one Linley could now rely on was himself.

"Boss, are we going to cut through the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts?" Bebe was confused.

Linley laughed, shaking his head. "No. First, we go to the core regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, and then we'll head straight north, until we reach the very end." "That's a distance of ten thousand kilometers!" Bebe was somewhat stunned. "And the core regions have a lot of extremely powerful magical beasts." Bebe was absolutely shocked that Linley wanted to travel in the core region of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for ten thousand kilometers.

"If not, how shall I train? I haven't yet mastered the correct way to use the heavy sword. If I can't even master the heavy sword and use it properly, how will I deal with the Radiant Church?"

Linley immediately strode forward, entering the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. And with this, Linley began the longest period of training in his entire life…

Chapter 1 – Thunderbolt

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 1, Thunderbolt

The central regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts rarely saw humans passing through. Here, magical beasts of the seventh to ninth ranks could appear at any time. Most likely, only warriors of the ninth rank would dare trespass here. But Linley, upon arriving at the central region, began to embark on a northwards journey, along the central lines of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Such an incredible journey was something which even most combatants of the ninth rank wouldn't be so wild as to attempt.

Linley was only wearing a pair of raggedy hempcloth pants. His upper body was bare, and he was bare-footed as well. On his back, he carried the adamantine heavy sword. Step by step, he continued on this path which few dared tread.

As always, Bebe stood on Linley's shoulders, scanning the nearby area.

"Rustle, rustle."

Linley walked through a thick layer of dried leaves, his face calm. His backpack, Bloodviolet, straight chisel, and other clothes were all stored inside the interspatial ring. Within Clayde's interspatial ring, aside from that enormous fortune of 2.2 billion gold coins worth of magicrystal cards, there were also dozens of precious items. Even the least valuable of them was worth millions of gold coins. The wealth accumulated by the royal clan of Fenlai over centuries was indeed a terrifying figure.

But to Linley?

Wealth was merely a worldly possession. What he truly valued was his own strength. Hadn't the Dawson Conglomerate been willing to directly offer him a hundred million gold coins to join them? And this was just based on the mere possibility that Linley would reach the Saint-rank. To truly invite a

Saint-rank to join, the price would be astronomical and astonishing.

From this, one could tell how important one's personal strength was.

….

Although Linley was in the core regions, Linley still quite sensibly avoided a region where he couldn't detect any magical beasts for tens of kilometers around. For such a large place within the core regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to be devoid of magical beasts most likely meant that the region was the territory of a Saint-level magical beast. Although Linley was self-confident, he still didn't want to irritate a Saint-level magical beast.

Cutting his way through brambles and thistles, Linley wasn't travelling at a particularly high speed.

"Everything needs to start from the basics." Linley was extremely pragmatic. Every day, he carried the adamantine heavy sword on his back. Slashing, chopping, piercing, upward swinging. Linley continuously practiced with every possible move, trying nonstop to raise his attack power.

Linley didn't train using only one method either.

He would often ponder how to train next. Using the scant information in his clan's records regarding how some of his ancestors had trained, he tried to form a correct training regime for himself.

The correct way of training was to not aim too high and too far right away.

The dawning spring, the flourishing summer, the cool autumn, the freezing winter. No matter what season it was, Linley continued to only wear those tattered pants, which had been ripped countless times due to his Dragonform transformation. His upper body remained bare.

Linley had discovered something…

When he was barefooted, he could more clearly sense the thrumming pulse of the earth. Standing on the ground, his heart was as steady as the vast earth itself. Linley's usage of the adamantine heavy sword also began to embody the weight of the world itself.

His upper body was bare.

Feeling the movement of the air against his body, Linley felt as though his entire being had become part of the wind itself. Wind, by its nature, was invisible and formless. When using the Bloodviolet flexible sword, Linley felt that he was wielding it with greater and greater ease.

Because of this, Linley now emanated an aura that was both stable and immovable as well as graceful as the wind. These two auras should have been opposites, but the strange thing was, coming from Linley, they felt very natural and innate.

…..

Focusing primarily on the heavy sword, secondarily on the flexible sword, and also sparing some time for stonesculpting. At night, Linley would be in the meditative trance. Linley's entire life had entered a very particular regime of training.

Sometimes, when he saw massive waterfalls crashing down from the top of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley would feel excited and leap into the waterfalls, training beneath the water.

Seeing those long, pure rivers, Linley would often wade into their waters.

When he saw boulders atop mountain peaks, if Linley felt struck by inspiration, he would directly climb onto the top of the peaks and carve out a statue, perhaps spending several nights on each one.

…..

He did whatever he wanted.

Linley's mind and spirit were more natural and more at-ease than they ever had been before. Training under these conditions, Linley totally forgot the passage of time. He only felt that his strength was improving every single day, and every single improvement made him feel happy and moved.

The path of training was a long, winding one.

This was a hard road to travel, but on this path there were constant new breakthroughs, making one feel gratified and moved.

……

Linley began to grow a beard, and his originally short hair began to grow long as well. His eyes, previously filled with a proud aloofness, had become calm and tranquil, due to the influence of being in touch with nature for so long.

Only occasionally while training would his eyes become terrifyingly sharp.

Linley's temperament, as well, had become molded by nature to become more stable. Without Doehring Cowart's guidance, Linley had no one to rely upon. Naturally, he continued to develop and mature even more.

…….

"Rumble."

Water thundered down from the hundred-meter high waterfall, smashing down against the deep pool below, spraying water everywhere. Right next to the waterfall, there was a large boulder sticking up from the ground.

There was a person seated cross legged atop the boulder, with a black heavy sword resting atop his legs.

It was early dawn. The sky was just beginning to lighten. Within the

Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, one of the things Linley enjoyed doing was enjoying the clear dawn air.

“Ah…” Linley opened his eyes.

He glanced behind him, and saw Bebe curled up right next to him. Bebe’s two little claws were stuck directly into the stone itself, so as to make sure there was no possibility he could roll off and fall.

“Bebe, time to move.” Linley said with a laugh.

Bebe opened his eyes lazily, glancing all around himself. Then he shook his head, clearing it of the last remnants of sleep, and stood up. “Boss. I’m hungry.”

“Let’s go. We’ll eat later.” Linley leaped off the boulder. Moving as gracefully as the wind itself, Linley traversed several dozen meters with that leap, landing on the opposite shore of the pond. Also jumping off the boulder, Bebe transformed into a black streak, finally landing next to Linley’s feet.

A man and a magical beast once more began their voyage.

But before they had gone too far, Linley’s footsteps suddenly halted. Bebe looked questioningly at Linley.

“There’s a magical beast nearby.” Linley said mentally.

Bebe stared. Bebe could now be considered an early-stage magical beast of the ninth rank. Generally speaking, there were very few magical beasts that could draw near without him sensing it. But this time, he hadn’t sensed anything.

With his feet pressed against the earth and his ability to sense the wind, it would be difficult for anything moving nearby to not attract Linley’s attention.

“This magical beast’s movements are light and graceful. I can’t sense its movements on the earth at all. But when it moves, it causes vibrations in the wind.” Linley said mentally.

Bebe nodded.

…..

A Golden Tattooed Panther was latched onto a tree trunk, not moving at all. Panthers could be considered one of the fastest type of land-based magical beasts.

In particular, the Saint-level Electrobolt Panther’s movement speed made it an incredibly terrifying Saint-level magical beast to deal with.

Golden Tattooed Panthers were magical beasts of the seventh rank. But as a panther-type magical beast, it naturally possessed the high speed which all panthers were known for. Its explosive, short distance pouncing speed was even superior to magical beasts of the eighth rank.

The Golden Tattooed Panther suddenly exerted pressure with its four limbs.

“Swish.”

It leapt atop another tree. Panthers were extremely skilled at running and leaping about on tree tops, and were very well known for that as well. From within the dense leaves, the Golden Tattooed Panther had already seen that distant human figure.

The Golden Tattooed Panther waited quietly. Waited for the human to draw near.

Indeed, the human and the black Shadowmouse were beginning to come nearer.

“A black Shadowmouse? Not a threat.” Magical beasts of the seventh rank possessed very high intelligence. The primary focus of the Golden Tattooed

Panther was that human. The aura that human emitted had already raised the Golden Tattooed Panther's caution level. But the Golden Tattooed Panther had the feeling that this human shouldn't be too powerful.

Indeed, in his base form, Linley was only a late-stage warrior of the seventh rank.

Generally speaking, when a magical beast of the seventh rank fought a human of the seventh rank, the magical beast would have the advantage.

"Swish." Leaping off from the tree trunk, the Golden Tattooed Panther transformed into a vicious golden blur, gracefully soaring towards Linley.

The seemingly totally unprepared human, suddenly….

As fast as lightning, drew that adamantine heavy sword from his back while retreating! At the same time, he chopped down with that sword against the Golden Tattooed Panther with tremendous power.

Already in mid-leap, there was no way for the Golden Tattooed Panther to change its trajectory. The only thing it could do was to do his best to move his head away.

"Bam."

Flashing out like a lightning bolt, the adamantine heavy sword viciously slammed against the Golden Tattooed Panther's body. Where it landed on the Golden Tattooed Panther's body, a deep crevice appeared. The sounds of bones shattering could be heard.

With that 'bam' sound, the Golden Tattooed Panther's body crashed to the ground. It lay twitching there, blood pouring out of its mouth. But within ten seconds, the Golden Tattooed Panther moved no more.

Linley gracefully resheathed his adamantine heavy sword.

"Bebe, our breakfast today will be panther flesh." Linley said casually.

To Linley and Bebe, this was just a very ordinary event. Within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, they would kill several magical beasts every day.

If an expert at using the sword had been present, they would clearly be able to tell that Linley, despite only being a late-stage warrior of the seventh rank, was able to utilize this 3600 pound heavy sword at an extremely high level. Not only did the weight of the heavy sword not hinder Linley, Linley was even able to make use of its weight to make the speed of the heavy sword's blows faster.

When chopping, he could actually chop a magical beast of the seventh rank to death at one blow. This power was simply astonishing.

Linley and Bebe began to roast panther flesh in the middle of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

"Boss, how powerful is the most powerful attack you can now use with that heavy sword? A few days ago, you said you had a breakthrough." Bebe asked.

They had been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for over a year now. During this year, Linley's mind had become one with nature, and he had completely immersed himself in his training. This year and a half of training had improved his abilities at an extremely rapid pace.

"My most powerful attack? Hard to say. Speaking in more general terms, I should be able to fight most magical beasts of the eighth rank in human form alone." Linley said confidently.

This wasn't arrogance. This was confidence in his own power.

"The panther meat smells so good." Bebe sniffed the air with his nose.

"Hrm?" Linley frowned, then suddenly laughed. "Bebe, when we roast meat, we often attract attention from magical beasts. Only, this time, this

magical beast seemed to be quite a slow and clumsy one."

After waiting a good while, Linley and Bebe finally saw a magical beast appear.

A Velocidragon.

"Velocidragon?" Linley began to laugh. Linley was now quite familiar with Velocidragons. Despite being magical beasts of the seventh rank, they possessed extremely powerful defense. Although both were of the seventh rank, a Velocidragon's defense was far more formidable than that of a Golden Tattooed Panther. But in turn, the Golden Tattooed Panther was far faster than a Velocidragon.

"Boss, you say that your attack power is really high now. Do you think you can chop a Velocidragon to death with one sword stroke?" Bebe suddenly said.

The scales of a Velocidragon were nearly half a meter thick, and the bones of its skull were extremely hard and dense. Although Velocidragons were fairly slow, their defense could match an ordinary magical beast of the eighth rank.

"One sword blow? I haven't tested it yet. Let me give it a try."

Linley drew the adamantine heavy sword from the sheath on his back, then began walking step by step towards the Velocidragon.

The Velocidragon was two stories tall and nearly twenty meters long. Compared to this enormous creature, Linley was nothing more than a small speck.

"Groooooowl." The Velocidragon roared angrily at Linley.

But wielding the adamantine heavy sword in his hands, Linley continued to walk towards the Velocidragon, one barefooted step at a time.

Suddenly….

Linley's movements sped up dramatically as he charged towards the Velocidragon. Letting out an angry roar, the Velocidragon sent its draconic tail whipping towards Linley. The Velocidragon's tail was an extremely quick weapon.

"Clang." Linley's adamantine heavy sword suddenly moved at high speed and blocked the draconic tail.

Despite the great lashing force of the Velocidragon's tail, Linley leapt off the ground, borrowing the force of the tail to fly over the Velocidragon.

"Uh, this is a human?" The Velocidragon was surprised to discover that the man in front of him had wielded that adamantine heavy sword as easily and as naturally as the grass bowing from the wind. And now, that man was smashing directly down at his head with the sword.

The Velocidragon was extremely confident. Its skull was, after all, the toughest part of its body.

Indeed…

When that agile, flowing black heavy sword touched his skull, it posed no danger to the Velocidragon at all. But all of a sudden, just as it touched the skull, an incredibly powerful force exploded from the sword. Like a sudden flood bursting through a dam, that astonishing power poured out all at once. It only heard a 'crack' sound, and then everything went dark.

Bebe watched this scene in astonishment.

Linley had only struck the skull, the toughest part of a Velocidragon's body, with a single blow from his sword. And then, the Velocidragon's head had split open like a fragile egg, with brain matter and blood pouring out. The massive, powerful body of the Velocidragon slumped to the ground, as Linley gracefully landed as well.

“Boss! Wow! You are that powerful now?” Bebe ran over excitedly.

Linley laughed. “Over the past year, I have been able to almost perfectly merge my own strength with my Dragonblood battle-qi. And then, based on what I have learned from my connection to the earth, I broke past the simple levels of using ‘strength’ and ‘battle-qi’. I have arrived at the level which the ancestors of the Baruch clan described as ‘wielding the heavy as though it were light’. Only now, I have managed to develop this technique: ‘Thunderbolt’.

Chapter 2 – The Howling Worldwolf

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 2, The Howling Worldwolf

The most basic underpinnings of training with the heavy sword lay in combining battle-qi along with physical strength in utilizing it.

Right after the adamantine heavy sword had been forged in the city of Hess, when Linley had used the adamantine heavy sword to attack the violet-robed Special Executors, he was not capable of combining his strength and his battle-qi to use the heavy sword in a meaningful way.

The heavy sword was not meant to be used with pure brute force.

It lay in conserving every little bit of strength to allow the heavy sword to reach its maximum possible velocity, while at the same time combining physical strength and battle-qi to reach the most optimal level possible.

After spending more than a year, Linley had finally become able to wield the adamantine heavy sword as easily as though it were his hands, without wasting any strength at all. Despite a limited amount of strength and battle-qi, he was able to raise the power of the adamantine heavy sword to an extremely high level.

But this was still just the basics.

Above this basic level was the second level, a different realm of possibilities. This was something Linley had suddenly awoken to when he saw the crashing waterfalls within the mountain grotto.

To wield something heavy as though it were light was easy to say, but hard to do.

In truth, it required one to be able to perfectly control one's battle-qi and

physical strength. And then, one could suddenly unleash all of one's power, like the unending, cascading waters of the waterfall. The power that erupted from a blow such as this was extremely great.

This was the principle underneath Linley's 'Thunderbolt' technique.

But this was easier said than done. It required an extremely solid grasp of the basics. If one didn't have enough control over one's strength and battle-qi, even after one understood the principles of this technique, one still wouldn't be able to utilize it.

"As powerful as that? Boss, is this the most powerful way to use the heavy sword?" Bebe said in surprise.

Laughing, Linley shook his head. "Not even close. Based on the information contained within my clan's records, the way of using heavy weapons can be described as having three levels. The first is to master and perfect the basics. The second is to be able to wield something heavy as though it were light. And the third is known as 'impose'."

"'Impose'?" Bebe was a bit confused. "What is that?"

"I don't know either." Linley shook his head. "After all, my clan's records, aside from the Secret Dragonblood Manual, primarily consists of general descriptions of the history of my clan and some stories of my ancestors. With regards to that ancestor who was able to 'wield something heavy as though it were light', there were only a few lines describing his power. That record also mentioned that the third level was 'impose', but what exactly 'impose' is, it didn't describe in detail, so I don't know either."

Linley didn't understand.

Could 'impose' be referring to an imposing manner?

But when wielding the adamantine heavy sword, how much could an imposing manner possibly add to attack power?

“I haven’t had that moment of enlightenment yet. No way to understand it.” Linley shook his head.

Linley knew very well that he had not yet in fact mastered this level of ‘using something heavy as though it were light’. Because the most important part of the ‘Thunderbolt’ technique was to suddenly release all of the power available at the last moment.

How would one further increase the power of this technique?

Right now, Linley was suddenly releasing all of his strength and battle-qi in a brute force manner, but Linley knew that this was a stupid, crude method.

“Pity that there’s no signposts on the path of training.” Linley chuckled, then ceased his idle speculations.

…..

Deep autumn. The prime, virgin forests of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts were covered with yellowing leaves.

This was the late autumn of year 10001 of the Yulan calendar. Linley had already entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for more than a year and a half, but he had only travelled five or six thousand kilometers thus far.

He spent most of every day in training, progressing only a few dozen kilometers at most in his journey.

Late at night, not a sound could be heard. Within the central areas of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, beneath a giant tree which would take five or six men linking hands to embrace the trunks of, Linley was quietly sitting cross-legged in the meditative trance.

Slowly…

The skies began to brighten. Linley opened his eyes, a hint of a smile on his face.

The light, pure dawn wind was blowing. Several leaves slowly spun about and fell down. Watching these leaves fall, Linley was silent.

“Boss?” Bebe casually opened his eyes. Questioningly, he said, “You woke up? Why didn’t you wake me?”

Actually, every day, when Linley woke up, Bebe would wake up as well. But every day, Bebe would wait for Linley to wake him up before he would be willing to open his eyes. Today, though, Linley hadn’t called him.

“Bebe, I seem to have made a breakthrough.” Linley suddenly said mentally to Bebe.

“A breakthrough?” Bebe immediately jumped to his feet. He asked with excitement, “What sort of breakthrough have you had?”

Linley laughed. “My spiritual energy has finally reached the level of a magus of the eighth rank.”

“A magus of the eighth rank?!” Bebe immediately yelped in surprise.

That winter, when he was sixteen years old, Linley had crafted the sculpture ‘Awakening From the Dream’, and the rapid improvement he had gained over those ten days and ten nights had resulted in Linley’s spiritual energy strengthening tenfold, arriving at the level of spiritual power possessed by a late-stage magus of the seventh rank.

He was sixteen years old that winter, and already at the late-stage seventh rank!

From then until now, three years had passed.

While he had been at Fenlai City, Linley’s spiritual energy hadn’t improved that fast, and based on that rate of improvement, Linley probably would’ve needed five or six years to advance from the late-stage of the seventh rank to the eighth rank. But this year in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts,

Linley had totally submerged himself into nature, and each time he had engaged in stonesculpting, he had been so natural and unrestrained.

His rate of improvement in spiritual energy was quite noticeable.

Right now…

Linley's spiritual energy finally reached the eighth rank as a magus.

"Boss, how powerful are spells of the eighth rank?" Bebe said curiously.

"You'll find out if you are willing to give it a try." A hint of a smile was on Linley's face. Bebe stared at him, then said proudly, "Come. I, Bebe, am not afraid of magical beasts of the eighth rank, much less a spell of the eighth rank."

Linley immediately begin to chant the words to a spell.

Shortly afterwards, a large amount of earth elemental essence began to rapidly solidify and condense near Linley. The mageforce in Linley's body, as well, was beginning to rouse.

"Whoosh." A wind suddenly arose in front of Linley, catching and tossing up all the fallen leaves around him. An angry howl could suddenly be heard, as an earth-colored, three-meter tall wolf suddenly appeared in front of Linley. This massive wolf was three meters tall and ten meters long. All the muscles on its body seemed as tough and gnarled as steel, and its four limbs were filled with power.

Earth-style spell of the eighth rank – the Howling Worldwolf!

"Hooooooowl!"

The Howling Worldwolf let out an enraged snarl, then charged at Bebe, but Bebe only playfully stood there with confidence, staring at the Howling Worldwolf.

“Swish!” Suddenly, an Earthen Spear Array erupted from the ground beneath Bebe.

“Whoah!” Bebe let out a cry of surprise, leaping into the air.

The Earthen Spear Array hadn’t managed to hurt Bebe in the slightest, but at this time, the Howling Worldwolf had arrived next to him. Bebe immediately let out a shrill screech, and his body suddenly enlarged.

“Hooooooooowl!”

Fangs bared and maw bloody, the Howling Worldwolf bit down at Bebe, while Bebe also bit angrily at the Howling Worldwolf. With a ‘crunch’ sound, Bebe ripped apart the throat of the Howling Worldwolf.

But the Howling Worldwolf didn’t seem to be hurt at all as it slashed at Bebe with his fierce claws.

“Whap!”

Bebe was knocked flying, smashing against the ground, creating a minor crater. Bebe immediately crawled out, staring angrily at the Howling Worldwolf. Just then, the Howling Worldwolf had carried a tremendous amount of power in its claws.

“Bebe, this Howling Worldwolf isn’t a magical beast. It’s an earth-element construct, totally composed of mageforce and elemental essence. It has no vital weak points.” Linley’s voice rang out playfully.

Bebe instantly understood.

To a construct created solely from mageforce and elemental essence, whether you bit it on the tail or at the throat, there really was no difference in terms of damage done.

“Shkreeeee!”

Bebe was truly furious now. Transforming into a black blur, he flew at the Howling Worldwolf, which ripped towards Bebe with its fangs. But Bebe dodged its attack, and then raked the Howling Worldwolf with his claws. In the blink of an eye, Bebe had raked the Howling Worldwolf nearly a hundred times, forcibly bringing his opponent to the breaking point.

“Bam!” The Howling Worldwolf’s body suddenly began to grow brighter, and then the blink of an eye, it exploded.

Bebe was knocked flying by the force of the explosion, smashing hard against a nearby tree, snapping the tree in half, then falling to the ground.

“Bebe, what do you think?” Linley knew exactly how powerful Bebe was. This bit of offensive force wasn’t enough to hurt Bebe.

Bebe quickly ran over to him. In a wounded voice, he said, “Boss, that Howling Worldwolf’s offensive attacks weren’t lower than an ordinary magical beast of the eighth rank. And it doesn’t have any weaknesses either. What a freak. Even when it was about to die, it engaged in a suicidal explosion.”

When its body was about to collapse, a construct formed from mageforce and elemental essence would naturally explode.

A dual-element magus of the eighth rank. Now, even in human form, Linley would still be considered a truly formidable person. The power of eighth rank spells was very astonishing.

For example, the ‘Brutal Tornado’ wind-style spell. This Brutal Tornado spell could easily annihilate an army of thousands of soldiers. In truth, even the attack of the Howling Worldwolf would destroy most small armies. The Howling Worldwolf possessed astonishing defensive powers. Only a freak like Bebe would be capable of so easily penetrating the Howling Worldwolf’s defense.

The Howling Worldwolf was extremely fast and possessed astonishing defensive powers. And, it had no weak points.

One could imagine how much havoc it would wreak upon an army.

“To a kingdom, a magus of the eighth rank is more important than an army with 10,000 soldiers.” Linley understood this logic. And magi of the ninth rank, in turn, were more important than an army of 100,000 soldiers. As for Saint-level Grand Magi, they were more important than an army of a million soldiers.

By casting a single forbidden spell, ‘Annihilating Tempest’, an entire army of a million soldiers would instantly be destroyed.

……

Linley’s elemental essence affinity was exceptional. Naturally, he didn’t need too much time to refine more mageforce. Given the additional support provided by the Straight Chisel School of sculpting, Linley didn’t need to spend too much time training himself as a magus.

And since he could Dragonform now, the speed of his training as a warrior was many times faster than before as well.

……

His adamantine heavy sword in hand, Linley was walking atop a large mountain. He casually swung and chopped the adamantine heavy sword in every direction. Whap. Slap. Every movement was very natural and graceful.

But whenever the adamantine heavy sword touched any boulders, the boulders would immediately shatter.

Either they would shatter into dozens of pieces, or they would explode, or they would turn to dust…

Linley constantly tested himself and tested out how to have his ‘Thunderbolt’ technique release more power. How to, using the same

amount of battle-qi, increase the effectiveness of his attacks.

“Whew.” Sensing that he had used up over half of his Dragonblood battle-qi, Linley immediately sheathed his adamantine heavy blade.

With a flip of his hand, Bloodviolet appeared in his grasp.

Linley immediately began to leap about, the Bloodviolet flexible sword in his hands flashing every which way gracefully. The strength of the Bloodviolet sword lay in its speed and its ability to attack unpredictably.

“Swoosh!”

The Bloodviolet sword slashed in the direction of a small nearby tree. Halfway there, though, Bloodviolet suddenly curved like a serpent, and in a flash, it wrapped itself around the tree. With another violet flash, the tree was cut in half.

With a quiver, the Bloodviolet sword suddenly became straight again.

“Swish.” The Bloodviolet sword stabbed forward. Its sharp edge wreathed with a greenish-black light, the sword easily plunged straight into a nearby stone wall.

“Hrm?”

Linley suddenly frowned, pulling out Bloodviolet. He stared at the Bloodviolet sword suspiciously. “Inside the sword…what in the world…” Just then, Linley had been focusing his spiritual energy on Bloodviolet, controlling its fluctuations and contortions. As he had done so, he suddenly had discovered an aura that made his heart tremble with fear.

“Can it be that?” Linley’s heart suddenly clenched.

Previously, when he had been in that dangerous situation in the Radiant Temple, the Coiling Dragon ring had emitted a tremendously powerful burst of power. This Bloodviolet flexible sword was also a divine artifact, but it

wasn’t as powerful as Linley had thought it would be. Linley had always been wondering if there was some secret contained within this Bloodviolet flexible sword.

Linley immediately focused his spiritual energy inside Bloodviolet, carefully probing it from within.

In the past, Linley also tried to do this before he had reached the eighth rank as a magus, but he hadn’t been able to find anything. But now, he was a magus of the eighth rank.

“Hrm?” Linley’s spiritual energy finally seemed to detect something.

A bloodthirsty, crazed aura suddenly came into contact with Linley’s spiritual energy. Linley suddenly seemed to see a boundless sea of blood. Countless corpses. An endless number of bones.

That crazed, bloodthirsty, violent aura directly invaded Linley’s spiritual energy, and then, as fast as lightning, it began to pervade Linley’s very soul…

Chapter 3 – A Slaughter

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 3, A Slaughter

That endless sea of blood was filled with countless white skeletons, and all sorts of different corpses. Some of the corpses belonged to ten meter tall giants that were covered in scales with two horns sprouting from their heads. Others had white skeletons that glimmered with a faint gold color…

“Ah…”

Linley’s eyes began to turn red, as he suddenly began to emit a terrifying, baleful aura. That baleful aura somehow seemed to take physical form as a faint, bloody mist began to emanate from around Linley’s body. And surrounded by that baleful aura, Linley seemed like he was a fiendish god.

Bebe, not too far away from Linley, naturally could feel that oppressive, baleful aura.

Shocked, all the fur on Bebe’s body stood straight up, and Bebe could clearly feel that all of his muscles were quivering, and his blood was pumping faster. Even his claws were shaking, not entirely under his own control.

Terror.

Terror the likes of which he had never felt before!

“Bo-, Boss, what’s going on?” Bebe said frantically.

Right now, Linley was still in control of himself. Only, after being pervaded by that baleful aura, Linley felt a powerful desire to go out and kill.

“This Bloodviolet is?…” Linley forcibly suppressed his desire to kill, lowering his head to stare at the sword.

“Hiss…” Linley could see that in his hands, Bloodviolet was glowing with a devilish red light that flowed, as though blood was flowing on and through it. The entire Bloodviolet sword was shuddering slightly. Linley could feel the intense desire of Bloodviolet to kill! Kill unceasingly!

But right now, the more strongly Linley tried to suppress the urge to kill, the more powerful that urge grew. Linley’s eyes began to turn more and more red.

“Ah!!!” Linley let out a wild howl.

As though he had transformed into a tornado of movement, Linley ran down the mountain. In his hand, Bloodviolet was flashing everywhere like lightning. Every place Linley passed by, the trees and the stones were all transformed into rubble and debris.

Seeing Linley’s wild charge, Bebe stood where he was hesitantly for a moment. Bebe had truly been terrified by that baleful aura, the likes of which he had never felt before. But for the sake of his Boss…

“Grr!” Bebe ground his teeth, then suddenly flew down the mountain as well.

….

Not too far away from the mountain Linley had been on was a clear pond of water. There was a pack of Goldmane Mastiffs living next to the pond. Goldmane Mastiffs were pack type creatures, unlike the solitary panthers or tigers. Generally speaking, panthers or tigers might band together for major battles, but in their day to day lives, these types of magical beasts would generally live separately. But Goldmane Mastiffs were different.

Goldmane Mastiffs had a strong pack mentality and were adept at teamwork.

Goldmane Mastiffs possessed extremely powerful claws. This pack of

Goldmane Mastiffs numbered over a hundred. Although Goldmane Mastiffs were magical beasts of the eighth rank, even your average magical beast of the ninth rank wouldn't dare provoke such a pack. They definitely were a local power to be reckoned with.

Right now…

These Goldmane Mastiffs were either lying in rest next to the pond, or casually strolling about, or perhaps frolicking and swimming in the water. This wasn't yet the time for them to hunt for food, and given their strength, they never feared that they would lack for food.

But many Goldmane Mastiffs suddenly looked cautiously up the mountain. Given their alert senses, they could easily sense that something living was moving towards them at high speed. The Goldmane Mastiffs which had been lying down all stood up, staring coldly at this creature which was moving towards them.

Goldmane Mastiffs were three meters tall and six meters long. Their entire bodies were covered with golden fur, and they seemed lion-like. But their eyes radiated a strange golden glow.

"Grrrrrrrrr." The pack of Goldmane Mastiffs suddenly began to growl.

They finally saw the creature which was provoking them. It was a human wielding a devilish violet sword whose body was wrapped up with a red light. These extremely intelligent Goldmane Mastiffs suddenly felt at ease again. It was just a human. Unless this human was at the Saint-level, he wouldn't be able to do anything to them.

But suddenly…

When the human drew close enough for that red mist to cover them, all of the Goldmane Mastiffs suddenly felt terrified like never before. This terrifying aura was far more powerful than even the aura of a Saint-level magical beast. Under this oppressive, baleful aura, all of the Goldmane Mastiffs felt as though their limbs were no longer under their own control,

and one after another knelt down in terror as they lowered their proud heads.

“Blood…blood…”

Linley was doing his best to remain clear-minded, but he could feel the intense desire of Bloodviolet to drink blood. After having roused the baleful aura contained within Bloodviolet, Bloodviolet had to be sated by drinking enough blood.

“Swish!”

Transforming into a violet ray of light, Bloodviolet passed straight through the neck of one of the Goldmane Mastiffs. A meter-high mastiff head flew off.

Linley’s speed was simply too fast.

No. Accurately speaking, Bloodviolet’s killing speed was too fast. Only after it had chopped through eight Goldmane Mastiffs heads did the first head fly off. And only now did the remaining Goldmane Mastiffs, who had all been kneeling in terror, wake to their senses.

“Hoowwwl!” Nearby, the largest of the Goldmane Mastiffs forced itself to stand up, then raised his head up and began howling angrily. But despite this, its limbs were still trembling, and its eyes were still filled with disbelieving fear.

Their intelligence, however, was very high.

These Goldmane Mastiffs all knew that this human emitting this terrifying aura was going to kill them all. Even though they were terrified, they were still going to resist.

Having drank so much fresh blood, Bloodviolet emitted a joyful sound.

“Die! Die!” The more he killed, the more Linley felt as though the desire to

kill was consuming him. Right now, the only desire he had was to kill.

The remaining hundred or so Goldmane Mastiffs didn't dare to directly face Linley. All of them turned tail and ran.

"Swish!" Linley's Bloodviolet sword chopped towards the head of another Goldmane Mastiff.

Knowing that it wasn't going to be able to flee, this Goldmane Mastiff turned back and opened its mouth, biting down at Linley while breathing flames from its mouth. Instinctively, Linley's body became covered by his azure-blackish Dragonblood battle-qi, which protected him and blocked the flame breath of this Goldmane Mastiff.

When the violet sword drew close to the Goldmane Mastiff's head, the Goldmane Mastiff could clearly sense that the baleful aura this violet sword was emitting was now several times stronger than before. This terror, the likes of which it had never felt before, caused its limbs to go soft. Even the energy being generated by the magicite core in its body had come to a halt, and it just stood there, allowing the violet sword to cut its head off.

Surrounded by a baleful aura that had taken physical form, Linley constantly chased after and killed one Goldmane Mastiff after another.

These local tyrants, the Goldmane Mastiffs, were now truly panicked. They had no idea where this fiendish god had come from. That baleful aura was now so strong that even their bodily functions were being affected. Even if they wanted to fight, their bodies were no longer under their total control.

Blood sprayed everywhere.

Hacked limbs and severed heads flew everywhere…

In the blink of an eye, thirty Goldmane Mastiffs had died on the spot.

"Boss, boss!" Bebe called out frantically.

Bebe could sense the state which Linley was currently in. He was terrified that in the future, Linley would have permanently transformed into a constantly slaughtering madman. Slowly, Linley's form slowed its movements.

"Bebe. I'm fine." Linley's voice rang out in Bebe's mind.

Bebe immediately ran over. Bebe could clearly see Linley's bare upper body, his forehead covered in sweat, and that faint layer of red on his skin. Right now, Linley's eyes were closed, and his chest was rising and falling like a blacksmith's bellows.

"Whew…"

Letting out a long breath, Linley finally opened his eyes. Linley's eyes had now returned to their normal clarity.

"Boss, you…what happened to you?" Bebe said worriedly.

With a hint of lingering fear, Linley looked at the Bloodviolet sword in his hands. Right now, Linley was very certain that this Bloodviolet sword had been a slaughterer's sword, and that it had killed an extraordinarily high number of people. Linley even suspected that the endless sea of blood, bones, and corpses that he had sensed earlier had all been the handiwork of Bloodviolet.

But those corpses…Linley didn't even recognize most of them, or what races they belonged to.

"Is there a race of humans with the heads of bulls? Can it be that these are the legendary minotaurs from other planes?" Linley thought to himself questioningly. From his books, Linley had seen references to minotaurs before, but there were no such creatures in the Yulan continent.

But many of the other corpses, Linley had never seen or heard of, even in the books and records he had read.

For example, those massive giant creatures that were ten meters tall, covered with thick black scales, and had two massive horns sprouting from their foreheads. The aura emanating from their corpses alone filled Linley with dread. Linley had the feeling that those massive creatures definitely were not one whit weaker than some of the Saint-level magical beasts he had seen.

But there were innumerable numbers of corpses of those giant creatures!

It was true! Those corpses of creatures which were no weaker than Saint-level magical beasts could be seen everywhere in that boundless sea of blood.

“Who was the previous owner of this Bloodviolet sword? He actually killed this many powerful combatants.” Linley was secretly shocked. He was absolutely certain that this sword definitely came from one of the Higher Planes, because the Yulan continent simply never had this many powerful combatants.

As he thought back to how he had originally acquired Bloodviolet, Linley understood something. This Bloodviolet Godsword truly did not originate from the Yulan continent.

With a thought, Linley absorbed Bloodviolet into his interspatial ring.

“Whew. Unless it is absolutely necessary, I definitely cannot activate the baleful aura hidden within this Bloodviolet sword again.” Linley had already made up his mind about this.

At this time, Bebe leaped onto Linley’s shoulders.

“Boss. What just happened?” Bebe asked.

Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe. “Bebe, do you remember how we discovered that magical formation back when we were in the Foggy Valley? At that time, Grandpa Doehring had said that the mysterious magical formation was even more complicated and mysterious than Saint-level

magical formations. And Bloodviolet was used to support that magical formation. At that time, we suspected that Bloodviolet wasn't as simple a sword as it appeared to be. And indeed, that is the case."

Bebe immediately listened alertly.

"This Bloodviolet Godsword most likely has experienced endless amounts of murder and slaughter, and also killed many powerful combatants, including those of the Saint-level, or even higher! And precisely because that is the case, within this Bloodviolet sword there is a terrifyingly powerful baleful aura. Once it has been activated and agitated, even those Goldmane Mastiffs quaked and knelt down in fear. But despite having its positives, it also has its negatives. Once it's been activated, Bloodviolet absolutely must be fed blood. Otherwise, Bloodviolet will refuse to obey my intentions and won't obediently go into my interspatial ring."

Bebe nodded.

"Boss, this Bloodviolet sword really is terrifying. Just then, that baleful aura even made me tremble with fear as well, and my limbs were shaking too. In a situation like that that, even though I'm a magical beast of the ninth rank, I perhaps would've only been able to use half of my power." Bebe said honestly.

As for magical beasts of the eighth rank, when oppressed by that baleful aura, they probably wouldn't even be able to use a tenth of their power.

When the baleful aura within Bloodviolet was activated, the opponent's own power would be impacted and drop. If even a magical beast of the ninth rank would be influenced so dramatically, one could easily imagine how useful this sword would prove to be in battle.

"But being possessed by that cruel, vicious, wild, murdering urge really is not a good feeling. Once the baleful aura is activated, I absolutely must kill a large number of living creatures before that wild, cruel, murdering urge is sated." Linley had just experienced that urge, so he knew full well what it was like.

Unless it was absolutely necessary, it was best not to activate that baleful aura.

“Alright, Bebe. Let’s collect the magicite cores and continue.”

“Magicite cores? Wow, so many.” Bebe excitedly went to collect the magicite cores.

After collecting the cores of those several dozen Goldmane Mastiffs, Linley and Bebe continued on their journey, letting the corpses of the Goldmane Mastiffs remain there. In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, once dead, even the most powerful of magical beasts would be no more than food for other animals.

Their discovery of this secret contained within Bloodviolet was nothing more but a side event.

Linley continued his lifestyle of training. Every day, he would travel around ten kilometers, with most of his time spent training. As far as how the heavy sword was meant to be used, almost every day, Linley would have a new insight. Linley was totally immersed in that wondrous feeling of training and improving.

Chapter 4 – The Black Shadow

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 4, The Black Shadow

The first snow of that winter was a major one. Many places in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts were covered with snow as well. Various tracks could be seen clearly, some belonging to humans, and as well as magical beasts of various sizes.

“What a large blizzard.”

Linley still wore only those ragged hempcloth pants, his upper body bare. Although the temperature was so cold that even rapidly flowing water would freeze, Linley didn’t fear it in the slightest.

Barefooted, Linley continued to stride forward.

“Boss, it should almost be the time of the Yulan Festival, right.” Bebe guessed.

After having been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for so long, Linley didn’t even have a rough idea of what day it was. Although Linley did have a pocket watch, the watch was only capable of keeping simple time, and didn’t track dates.

“Should be around that time.” Linley nodded.

After having been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for around two years, Linley’s prowess as a warrior had increased at a fairly rapid rate. He was at the peak-stage of the seventh rank now. But in terms of using the heavy sword, his skill in wielding his adamantine heavy sword was immeasurably higher than it was originally. In particular, after becoming a dual-element magus of the eighth rank, when he used his magic and his warrior skills simultaneously, his power was raised to a very high level.

“Hrm?” Bebe and Linley both turned to look back.

Not too far away, two sturdy warriors dressed in leather armor and holding weapons were running frantically, seemingly panic-stricken. Seeing that it was other humans, Linley continued on his path. The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had a large number of human experts training within it, and in these past two years, Linley had encountered quite a few humans. With respect to the humans in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley had a simple principle – Don’t irritate others.

After all, plenty of people were here with the intention of taking the magicite crystals in other people’s bags for themselves. Because Linley had an interspatial ring, he didn’t have to carry his bag with him. Thus, there were very few people who had the desire to act against Linley.

“Wait, wait!” A frantic shout from behind.

But Linley didn’t pay them any mind at all, continuing to walk forward. Those two people ran quite fast, and they quickly overtook Linley. When they drew near, Linley immediately halted and turned around.

“What do you want?” Linley stared coldly at those two men.

Linley could tell that these two were not weak. However, a human’s level of power was hard to judge at a glance. Linley was fairly cautious in dealing with these two.

“Us?” The two sturdily built men exchanged glances, and then forced out awkward smiles towards Linley. One of them, a one-eyed bald man, said apologetically, “We don’t have any bad intentions. Only, the core regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts are too dangerous. We two brothers…would like to travel with you, friend. That way, we can help each other out. Wouldn’t that be safer?”

The other bald man started momentarily, then quickly nodded repeatedly. “Right. The core region is very dangerous. If we travel together, we can

help each other out. How about this? Once we all leave the core regions and leave the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, we'll go our own ways."

"Not interested."

Linley frowned. Turning back, he continued on his journey forward.

Linley wasn't that easily fooled youngster of the past. He could tell that these two were clearly lying. Helping each other out in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts? What a joke. These two people definitely didn't have any good intentions in wanting to travel with him. Linley didn't want to cause any trouble, and couldn't be bothered to kill these two either. Naturally, he wouldn't want them to travel with him.

Seeing how bluntly Linley refused and continued on his journey, these two bald men glanced at each other. Hesitating only slightly, they immediately rushed over again.

"Wait, friend, please wait." The two bald men caught up again.

Linley couldn't help but frown as he turned his head to stare coldly at these two.

The two men looked awkwardly at Linley. The one-eyed man said apologetically, "I'm so very sorry, but we two really would like to travel alongside you. Don't worry, once we leave this place, we'll definitely show gratitude to you."

Linley glanced at each man.

"If you want to follow, then follow." Linley said calmly.

After having been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for so long, Linley was quite experienced now. If these two insisted on travelling with him, then let them. Linley was confident in his own ability to deal with them. After all, Linley had Bebe with him as well, on his shoulders.

“Thank you, thank you.” Those two bald men said gratefully.

Immediately, those two moved together to walk alongside Linley. At the same time, they constantly scanned the area around them, a hint of dread in their eyes.

“Friend, we hail from the O’Brien Empire’s southwest district administrative province. Where are you from?” The one-eyed bald man seemed to want to have more friendly relations with Linley.

Linley’s eyebrows twitched.

The O’Brien Empire?

Linley knew very well that if he were to cut directly through the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he would be able to arrive in the territory of the O’Brien Empire quite quickly.

“Why so many questions?” Linley glanced at the man. “If you want to follow, then follow. Don’t make a sound.”

“Alright, alright.” The one-eyed bald man nodded repeatedly.

They could tell that Linley definitely was no ordinary person. It wasn’t too strange for him to be only wearing hempcloth pants in the winter, but what was quite amazing was that a human in the core region of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts could be so calm and unhurried.

It was as though this dangerous region was nothing more than a flower garden to him.

“Big brother.” The bald man pulled at the arm of the other, one-eyed bald man. In a low voice, he said, “Big brother, do you think we’ll be able to preserve our lives?”

The one-eyed bald man looked at their surroundings in fear, then said in a low voice, “Don’t over-think things. For now, let’s follow this mysterious

fellow. If we follow him, we might have a chance."

"Right." The first bald man nodded. But in his heart, he still felt fearful.

Up ahead in front of them, Linley was walking very naturally. Linley noticed that the two men behind him were whispering, but Linley had a feeling that these two men were not the type to try and act against him.

After a while, Linley took a rest.

Each day, Linley would only travel ten kilometers. The rest of his time was spent in training. The two men behind him became truly frantic when Linley rested so soon.

"Why have you stopped?" The one-eyed bald man said frantically.

"Hrm?" Linley glanced unhappily at the two men.

The younger man hurriedly laughed. "Milord, this is still the core regions. Wouldn't it be better for us to hurry out of the core regions before resting?"

Linley frowned, then spoke. "Don't annoy me. If you want to follow me, then follow. If you want to go, then go. As for me, if I want to stop, I'll stop. If you keep kicking up such a fuss, then don't blame me if I kill you both."

The two bald men exchanged glances, then laughed awkwardly.

"Sorry, sorry."

The two immediately retreated slightly, no longer daring to disturb Linley.

"These two are acting in a strange way." Linley glanced at these two men. These two men said that they wanted to leave the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, but they insisted on following him. If he didn't leave, they wouldn't leave either.

Why did they insist on following him?

He didn't know these two men at all.

Linley sat down cross-legged, placing the adamantine heavy sword across his legs. But just at this moment, Linley suddenly felt a tinge of fear in his heart….

"Swish!"

Linley suddenly turned his head. A black shadow suddenly flashed in front of him, then disappeared.

"Ah! Ah!" From far away, a terrified cry could be heard, but after two or three cries, it fell silent. Only now did Linley realize that of the two bald men, only one was left now. The one remaining was the one-eyed bald man. As for his younger brother, the man was gone now. Next to the man, there was a pool of blood.

"Ah! Ah! No, no!" The one-eyed bald man seemed to have suffered some sort of unspeakable shock, as he began to scream.

Linley solemnly rose to his feet, and Bebe began to grow cautious as well.

"Boss, that creature is extremely fast!" Bebe mentally spoke solemnly. "We've been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for a very long time. This is the fastest creature we've encountered yet. I couldn't even clearly see if it was a man or a magical beast."

Linley hadn't been able to see it clearly either.

That creature's speed was simply too fast. In terms of movement speed, it was even a bit faster than Bebe.

"What exactly was that? Bebe has entered the ninth rank now, and we have spent quite some time here in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. But in terms of speed, we've never met anything that was faster than Bebe."

Linley began to feel suspicious.

Bebe's speed was his greatest strength.

It was hard to find a magical beast able to outspeed Bebe, even amongst the ninth rank.

"What was that strange creature? Could it have been a Saint-level creature?" Linley felt a slight shock. Saint-level magical beasts would naturally be fast. It would make sense for it to be faster than Linley.

Linley immediately turned his head to stare at the one-eyed bald man.

Right now, the eyes of the one-eyed bald man were filled with fear, and his mouth was continuously muttering something. Every so often, he would look around in fear, as though in terror of being attacked again.

"Ah!!!" Feeling himself being grabbed, the one-eyed bald man couldn't help but scream in terror.

But when he came to his senses and looked behind himself, he saw that it was Linley who had grabbed him by his clothes.

"Speak. What is going on." Linley stared at him accusingly. "Otherwise, I'll abandon you here and travel by myself."

"No, no, don't abandon me." The one-eyed bald man directly fell to his knees. "I'll talk. I'll talk."

Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but frown.

He had heard long ago that the O'Brien Empire was a major military power. The people of the O'Brien Empire deeply venerated the War God, and thus many of the citizens of the Empire would train in the path of the warrior. Powerful warriors were extremely proud. For this bald man to be able to enter the core region of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he clearly wasn't weak either. Even if he wasn't a warrior of the seventh rank, he must

be a warrior of the sixth rank at least.

But the one-eyed bald man had just fallen to his knees, showing no spine at all.

“Milord, you don’t know how terrible these recent days have been. They’ve, they’ve been like a terrible, terrible dream.” The one-eyed bald man’s eyes were beginning to fill with tears.

Linley immediately began to listen closely.

“This time, myself, my younger brother, my wife, and a group of friends formed a squad to enter the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and begin our training. We hoped to acquire some magicite cores as well. To people like us, who had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for more than five times, this was an ordinary trip. But we didn’t expect…”

The bald man’s entire body was trembling. “On the third day after we entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, just as we entered the inner regions, we entered a nightmare.”

“This squad of mine had six warriors of the seventh rank, and two magi of the sixth rank. As long as we stayed within the inner regions of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, there shouldn’t have been any danger. But who would’ve thought…that we would encounter a terrifying monster.”

“Monster?” Linley frowned.

“The first time we encountered it, it immediately ambushed us, killing one of my good friends, just like how it acted just now.” The one-eyed bald man’s entire body was shaking. “I was furious, because this monster was simply too fast. We couldn’t even tell what it looked like. Only after hearing our friend’s miserable cries did we know that we were under attack. And then, seeing the blood on the ground, we realized that our friend was most likely dead.”

“At the time, we all believed that magical beast was only able to attack

from ambush, and didn't dare to face us directly. Clearly, it wasn't that strong. In our fury, we even thought about killing it to gain vengeance. But at first, we couldn't find the monster."

The one-eyed bald man took a deep breath, calming his agitated heart before continuing. "But that very night, shortly after we finished dinner, the monster came again." As he spoke, the lone eye of the man opened wide. Clearly he was very nervous.

"This time, like the previous time, that monster ambushed and carried off one of our magi. But this time, it carried the magus only a few dozen meters away before beginning to eat him. Right in front of us, the monster began eating our squad's magus."

"What did this monster look like?" Linley immediately asked.

"It looked like a panther whose body was almost totally pitch black." The one-eyed bald man said.

"Totally pitch black body? The eighth ranked magical beast, Blackstripe Panther?" But saying this, Linley found that he didn't believe it. A magical beast of the eighth rank couldn't possibly reach such an astonishing speed. Not even a panther, a land-based magical beast of incredible speed.

"It wasn't a Blackstripe Panther. Our squad was fairly experienced, and we know that Blackstripe Panthers are covered in extremely dense straight black stripes, while this monster's body was covered in curved black stripes that looked like a decorative pattern."

Chapter 5 – The Mysterious Black Panther

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 5, The Mysterious Black Panther

Linley was beginning to frown.

He, too, had never heard of such a creature. There were several types of panther-type magical beasts, but one which was entirely pitch-black and covered with dense black wavy lines which formed decorative patterns, was totally unheard of.

Generally speaking, creatures that one had never heard of must not be underestimated.

The one-eyed bald man said, “That monster decided to eat the meat on the face and the legs of our magus right in front of us, one large bite at a time. Watching this, we were all furious, and we instantly charged forward to attack it.

“However…”

The bald man shook his head. “What we didn’t expect was that the monster was far too powerful. We originally thought that the reason it attacked from ambush, then slipped away was because it was weak. However…when our entire group attacked it, it only heavily wounded us.”

“Heavily wounded?” Linley questioned suspiciously.

“Right.” The one-eyed bald man said in fear and anger. “That monster definitely was capable of killing us all, but it didn’t. It only heavily wounded us.

“We originally thought that we still had a chance of living, only to find that the monster was focused on us now. Each day, it would take away two of

our people. Sometimes, it would take them away, while other times, it would just eat our friends not too far away from us."

Linley's heart trembled.

He knew that magical beasts were highly intelligent. The magical beast that this one-eyed bald man had encountered clearly was extremely powerful and extremely intelligent. Most likely, this magical beast was a perverted creature.

"We wanted to flee back, but each time we tried to head away from and out of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, that monster would come again and heavily injure us again."

That one-eyed bald man laughed bitterly. "We simply weren't able to escape the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Each day, that monster would come and take away one or two people. In the blink of an eye, our twelve person squad only had six left."

"Having already seen this happen several times, my wife finally broke down mentally when the monster once again began to eat our friends in front of us. She begged me. Begged me to kill her."

The one-eyed bald man laughed bitterly. "You have no idea the terror we felt after those three days. All of us were at the point of collapse. My wife was fairly weak, even weaker than me. Faced with this terrible choice, in the end, I finally made the choice to put my wife out of her misery."

"You killed your wife?" Linley frowned.

"Yes. I killed her with my own hands." The one-eyed bald man said painfully. "But the very day I killed my wife, we encountered several other people, one of whom was a major figure in our Southwest Administrative Province. A combatant of the ninth rank named Pruitt [Pu'lu'te]."

"We had been at the brink of despair and collapse. I killed my own wife, but right afterwards, a combatant of the ninth rank appeared. How do you think

I felt?”

The one-eyed bald man’s entire body was shaking. “I almost went mad. Truly. I almost killed myself, I was in such pain.”

Linley could totally imagine how, when overcome by despair and mentally broken down, one would personally kill one’s wife, so as to not allow one’s wife to suffer the fate of being eaten alive, one bite at a time. But then, after killing one’s wife, a combatant of the ninth rank appeared?

This sort of contrast was definitely capable of driving someone insane.

“I was filled with pain, but my other friends were very happy, because they knew that we now had a chance. A combatant of the ninth rank! That was someone whom only the Saint-level would surpass. We told our story to him, and Lord Pruitt immediately promised to dispose of this beast for us.”

“When that monster once more came for us, Lord Pruitt immediately made his move.” A strange expression was on the face of that one-eyed bald man. “Just one blow. The monster took a blow from Lord Pruitt head on, then smashed Lord Pruitt’s head open with a blow from its paws.”

Linley’s heart shook.

It was actually able to take a blow from a combatant of the ninth rank head on? Its speed and defense were both incredibly terrifying. A monster like this definitely couldn’t be underestimated.

“This time, the monster was extremely excited. Right before our very eyes, it suddenly transformed, increasing in size from two meters tall to nearly five meters tall and ten meters long. It devoured Lord Pruitt with one gulp.” The one-eyed bald man said in terror.

The look on Linley’s face changed.

“Able to change its size?” Linley was truly shocked.

All Saint-level magical beasts were capable of changing their size. They could easily make themselves much larger or much smaller. But of course, a very small number of magical beasts of the ninth rank with extremely high natural talent could do this as well.

For example, Bebe was capable of changing his size slightly.

In other words…

This magical beast was either a Saint-level magical beast, or an extremely talented magical beast of the ninth rank.

"It wouldn't be a Saint-level, would it?" Linley's heart was somewhat unsettled. Although Linley was very self-confident, he still didn't have any hopes of dealing with a Saint-level magical beast at all.

That one-eyed bald man laughed painfully. "Just like that, the monster continued to torment us, eating two of us each day. In the end, only my younger brother and I were left. We continued to flee along the core regions, hoping in vain that this monster would engage in battle with some other powerful magical beast, giving us a chance to flee. But clearly, no magical beasts were capable of stopping that monster."

Linley nodded.

He now totally understood.

But this one-eyed bald man didn't have any good intentions towards Linley, insisting on following Linley. Clearly, this was out of the hopes that Linley would protect him. Acting like this showed that this man didn't care about whether Linley lived or died at all.

The expression on Linley's face grew hard.

"Milord, I…I had no other choices." The one-eyed bald man knew what Linley was thinking. He hurriedly said, "I have kids. My second brother had kids as well. We didn't want to die."

“Do you think I want to die?” Linley said coldly.

Just based on what that one-eyed bald man had said, Linley had a general sense of how powerful this monster was.

It was faster than Bebe, and wasn’t hurt from a sword blow from a combatant of the ninth rank.

Just based on these two points, Linley couldn’t help but feel nervous. What’s more, that was only the power that had been revealed. What was the true level of power possessed by this monster?

Was it a Saint-level magical beast?

Linley couldn’t be certain. If it was a Saint-level of magical beast, then even if he and Bebe joined forces, they still wouldn’t be a match at all.

“You didn’t want to die, so you pulled us under water as well?” Linley felt extremely dissatisfied.

“Bebe, let’s go.”

Linley immediately sped up his footsteps, heading forward. The one-eyed bald man continued to follow Linley. Linley couldn’t help but turn his head and stare at him coldly.

This bastard was still following?

Clearly, that monster had its mind set on that one-eyed bald man.

“Milord, you…please save me.” The one-eyed bald man’s eyes were filled with a beseeching look.

But his actions only made Linley dislike him more and more. This man was selfish, only caring about himself. He didn’t care about others at all.

“Even a ninth rank combatant died. Do you think I’m a Saint-level combatant?” Linley suddenly drew the adamantine heavy sword from his back, and the one-eyed bald man was frightened into beating a hasty retreat.

“If you continue to follow me, then don’t blame me for being merciless to you.” Linley said coldly.

Linley was now a peak-stage warrior of the seventh rank, and a middle-stage warrior of the ninth rank in Dragonform. Although he was somewhat more powerful than when he was in Hess City, in Hess City, Linley was only capable of fighting that warrior of the ninth rank, Kaiser, to a draw.

Right now, it would be very difficult for Linley to be able to kill a combatant of the ninth rank in one blow.

But that monster had easily done just that, killing a ninth ranked combatant.

Risking his own life for a person he didn’t even know? Was that worth it?

Linley returned his adamantine heavy sword to its sheath, then left by himself. The one-eyed bald man just stood there, not daring to follow. He only stared with despair and hatred at Linley’s back.

“Ah!!!”

After walking less than a hundred meters, an agonized scream came from behind him. Linley immediately turned to look back.

On the snow ground, there was a black panther that was two meters tall and nearly four meters long. The black panther had, in its maws, the body of that one-eyed bald man.

“Save…save me!” The one-eyed bald man was still alive.

Linley’s attention was totally focused on the black panther. The black panther’s body was covered with a large number of wavy, patterned lines. It was quite beautiful, actually. And right now, that black panther’s cold eyes

were currently looking at Linley with curiosity.

Clearly…

The black panther was playing a game. The previous game had just come to an end, and now, Linley had become the next victim in its game.

“Save me!” The one-eyed bald man stared at Linley, begging Linley with his eyes.

But that black panther just bit down viciously. With a crunching sound, half of the one-eyed bald man’s waist was bitten off, and his intestines began to slide out. The one-eyed bald man spasmed on the ground a few times, not dying right away.

The black panther walked forward gracefully, stepping on the one-eyed bald man’s chest with its sharp paws.

“CRUNCH!”

The one-eyed bald man’s chest caved in, and seconds later he stopped moving.

The black panther looked at Linley with interest, and then it began to slowly, gracefully move towards Linley. It must be said that its graceful stride was indeed quite beautiful to behold.

“Bebe. Prepare to ambush him. This time, we’re going all out.” Linley could tell that this unidentifiable panther-type magical beast now had its eyes set on him. Instead of allowing this creature to ambush him as it pleased, it was better to engage it head on.

Linley drew the adamantine heavy sword from its sheath, staring at the black panther.

“Hmph.” Linley’s body began to transform. Cold, sharp horns erupted from his forehead, while black scales quickly covered his entire body. That

sturdy tail erupted from behind him as well, and his knees, elbows, and spine became lined with sharp spikes.

In the blink of an eye, Linley had totally Dragonformed.

The black panther, seeing this human suddenly transform into a strange, human-shaped aberration, couldn't help but be startled. Its sleek, glossy hair immediately rose up in caution.

One was a Dragonblood Warrior.

The other, a mysterious panther-type magical beast.

"Come." Wielding the adamantine heavy sword in his hands, Linley didn't move at all, just standing there on the snowy ground. As stable and unmoving as a mountain.

The black panther's body began to crouch down slightly. It was gathering its power!

"Whoosh!"

His dark golden eyes locked onto the black panther, this time Linley was just barely able to see the black panther's movements. In the blink of an eye, the black panther had crossed the hundred meters distance between them and arrived in front of him.

"WHAP!"

Moving as fast as lightning, Linley's draconic tail swung at the black panther's body. In terms of speed, the attack speed of Linley's tail was actually much faster than the black panther's movement speed.

The black panther was knocked back over ten meters onto the snowy ground.

But immediately upon landing, the black panther let out a deep growl as it

stared at Linley with its cold eyes. This time, the creature was clearly going to attack at full power. With a leap, the black panther charged at incredible speed, so fast as to make one's heart tremble.

Linley could clearly tell that there wasn't a single hint of blood on the black panther's body.

The draconic tail of a middle-stage Dragonblood Warrior of the ninth rank wasn't able to injure it at all.

The adamantine heavy sword of Linley swung downwards, chopping as fast as lightning. Black light seemed to flow off the blade of the adamantine heavy sword. The black panther actually dared to swing a paw to directly claw at Linley's adamantine heavy sword.

"CLANG!" Linley's adamantine heavy sword was actually deflected to the side by the black panther's paw.

"Slash!"

The other paw slashed against Linley's arm. On the black scales covering Linley's arm, a rather deep scratch could be seen, and two scales had been split open as well.

The man and the magical beast had each exchanged a blow. They immediately separated.

"Growl…growl…" Standing in the middle of the snow, the black panther stared coldly at Linley. He now saw Linley as a serious opponent. Just now, his attack hadn't been able to totally rip apart that scaled defense and tear off Linley's arm. This made the black panther very surprised.

Linley stared at the damage done to his scaly armor.

Most magical beasts of the ninth rank were not capable of breaching Linley's defense. But just now, that panther had been able to rip two scales apart.

The black panther's body suddenly increased in size, transforming from two meters tall to five, and lengthening to ten meters as well. That black tail of the panther was waving around like a whip. The panther continued to stare coldly at Linley.

"Growl…"

This enormous creature once again charged towards Linley.

Chapter 6 – Another Transformation

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 6, Another Transformation

“Boss.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Holding the adamantine heavy sword with one hand, Linley leapt backwards in an arcing dodging pattern. At the same time, he mentally said, “Bebe, don’t panic. Let me first have a good fight with this mysterious black panther. If I can’t beat it, you can make your move against it. You are my secret weapon.”

Bebe, understanding, rapidly retreated to one side.

Right now, Linley had been filled with a growing urge to do battle. Despite having spent this much time in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he hadn’t yet encountered an opponent who required him to truly use all of his power. Saint-level beasts were too powerful, while Linley could now totally dominate ordinary magical beasts of the ninth rank through his higher speed.

Only, this mysterious black panther was even faster than Linley.

“Growl!” The enormous black panther landed on the ground, cold gaze fixed upon Linley.

But Linley only had a hint of a smile on his lips.

“It increased in size, but no doubt its speed is now slower.” Linley could clearly tell that this black panther’s speed had dropped by 20% to 30% just now. With the support of the wind-style Supersonic spell, Linley was totally confident in his ability to deal with it.

But Linley also understood something.

With greater size came lesser speed…but most likely, the black panther's offensive abilities had just greatly increased. Even in its normal form, the black panther had been able to rip open two of Linley's scales. Linley no longer dared to allow the black panther to land any more claw attacks against him.

With a 'swish', that mysterious black panther once more pounced towards Linley at high speed, arriving in front of Linley in mere moments.

"Whoosh."

Right at this moment, Linley suddenly slid down on the snow beneath the black panther, passing below it while simultaneously stabbing at the black panther's chest with his adamantine heavy sword.

"CLANG!"

Linley's heavy sword once again slammed against the sharp claws of the panther. Although the black panther's speed had decreased with its increased size, the attack speed of its paw strikes was still astonishingly fast.

"Swish!" That seven or eight meter long black panther tail ripped through the air, viciously slashing towards Linley.

Linley kicked off powerfully against the ground with his right foot, launching himself towards an enormous nearby tree. As he arrived, Linley kicked viciously against the massive tree with both legs.

"CRACK!" The tree was broken in half and fell down, while its dense array of branches also smashed everywhere.

With astonishing speed, Linley used the bounce-back force to dive back towards the mysterious black panther, while at the same time, gripping the adamantine heavy sword with both hands in a vicious downward stroke against the black panther.

“Slash!” The adamantine heavy sword moved so fast that it ripped through the air, creating an ear-piercing, howling sound.

But right at this moment, the black panther turned its head to stare at Linley, staying there without moving, allowing Linley to strike it at will. Clearly, this black panther understood that after having transformed to a larger size, it would no longer be able to rely on its speed to suppress Linley.

“Swish!”

The adamantine heavy sword in Linley’s hands suddenly seemed to lose all weight and force, floating gracefully downwards at an astonishing speed. The tip of the sword, however, was beginning to tremble.

“Bam.” The adamantine heavy sword collided against the black panther’s body.

A look of surprise appeared in the cold, arrogant eyes of the black panther, because this sword blow seemed to have no force behind it at all. Without hesitating in the slightest, it sent its seven or eight meter long tail slashing fiercely towards Linley.

“Thunderbolt.” Linley’s formerly calm eyes suddenly seemed to spit lightning bolts.

The black panther suddenly felt as though that adamantine heavy sword which had just touched its back suddenly exploded with a terrifyingly powerful blast of force. The force was like the eruption of a volcano, blasting out power wildly and at high speed.

“BAM!”

The black panther felt its limbs grow soft, and its body was pressed down by a significant amount. Its glossy black fur suddenly began to ripple like the waves of the sea.

“Growl!!!!” A small amount of blood leaked out from the corner of the black panther’s mouth.

This level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’ required perfect coordination between physical strength and battle-qi. It wasn’t just raw, brute force; rather, it was concentrating all of the rushing power and unleashing it at one blow. Although the black panther possessed astonishing defensive capabilities, with its fur neutralizing more than half of the offensive power, a significant amount of power still entered its body, causing the black panther some internal injuries.

“Whap!”

That whip-like black tail of the black panther landed viciously on Linley’s body, smashing apart the armored scales on Linley’s waist and sending Linley flying.

Just as Linley was about to smash into the top part of the trunk of another large tree, Linley suddenly stretched out his right hand and plunged his claws into the tree trunk like a grappling hook. Hanging onto the trunk, Linley looked down from his position at the upper trunk of the tree.

“As I thought. Once it transforms to a large size, its offensive power increases greatly.” Linley looked at the shattered scales on his waist and the fresh blood leaking from beneath it. He now understood much more about this mysterious black panther. “As for its defense, however, it didn’t increase that much.”

When it transformed to a larger size, the black panther’s defense didn’t change much. Its speed dropped, and its attack power increased.

“It seems as though my ‘Thunderbolt’ technique is still effective against it.” Linley was very satisfied with the effect of his ‘Thunderbolt’ attack.

This black panther possessed a terrifyingly powerful defense. Even the explosive power unleashed by ‘Thunderbolt’ was largely blocked by its extremely tough black fur, and the fur itself seemed to be totally

undamaged.

If Linley were only to use raw, brute force and battle-qi against this black panther, he probably wouldn't be able to wound it at all.

"Time to use my magic."

Linley began to mumble the words to a magical incantation. Right now, Linley was hanging around thirty or so meters up above the ground off that tree trunk, while the black panther was staring up at him coldly from below. Seeing that Linley didn't come down, this peak-stage, highly intelligent magical beast of the ninth rank, came to a snap decision.

If you aren't coming down, I'm coming up!

"Swoosh!" That five-meter tall, enormous black panther suddenly flew into the air, leaping directly towards Linley. With its astonishing springing force, it cleared thirty meters with a single bound.

Linley's heart was as tranquil as water.

Despite seeing the enormous black panther fly upwards towards himself, he still continued to chant the words to his spell. Only, he slapped the trunk of the tree with his right hand, sending himself flying upwards at an incline at high speed.

The tree which Linley had just slapped instantly split apart by the force of that blow.

"Crash!" The tree toppled to the ground towards the panther.

This tree was enormous enough that when it was falling, it took up half of available space. To the physically small Linley, it didn't prove a problem at all, but the enormous panther was forced to slash at it with its paws and rip it in half.

Seizing this moment, Linley finally completed the magical incantation he

was chanting.

“Swiiiish.” On Linley’s back, a pair of translucent, blue wings suddenly appeared. Flashing with azure light, the translucent wings seemed extremely beautiful. With a gentle flap of the wings, Linley’s body rocketed into the air.

Wind-style spell of the eighth rank: Airwings!

Seeing this, the enormous black panther instantly howled with fury. It actually pounced once more towards Linley at high speeds, as Linley flew higher.

“Bam!” Although the black panther had increased in size, it was still extremely dexterous and agile, capable of leaping dozens of meters at a single bound. Borrowing force against the tree trunk, it continued to leap higher and higher up the trees.

But after five or six leaps, the enormous black panther had reached the top of the tallest tree, while right now, Linley flew high above the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts with his translucent wings.

“Now, time for me to thrash you.” Linley saw that the enormous black panther had already leapt towards him from the top of the tallest tree. But now, with nothing to grab on, the black panther had no choice but to allow its body to fall down.

Just as its body began to fall…

“Whoosh!” Linley suddenly spread his wings and rocketed downwards at an astonishing speed.

Through using the astonishing downwards speed granted to him by the Airwings spell, Linley quickly arrived next to the falling enormous black panther. The enormous black panther glared angrily at Linley, but in mid-air, it had nothing to latch onto.

“Haaaaaaaaargh!” Linley suddenly activated all of the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body.

Reaching the absolute maximum limit of Dragonblood battle-qi power in an instant, and with both hands gripped tightly around the adamantine heavy sword, Linley delivered a vicious mid-air chop against the falling black panther, which had nowhere to dodge.

“CLANG!” The black panther’s sharp claws once again clashed against the adamantine heavy sword.

But Linley only confidently swung his adamantine heavy sword against it again at high speed. At this moment, the dancing adamantine heavy sword in Linley’s hands had seemed to become one with the wind, slashing down more than ten times against the falling black panther in the space of one second.

With each sword blow, he executed the ‘Thunderbolt’ technique.

“Bam!” “Bam!”

After blocking the very first strike, the black panther’s body had begun to accelerate its downward falling speed. But using his Airwings spell, Linley was still able to match the black panther’s rate of descent. One sword, then another, then another…

The black panther felt as though each sword stroke of Linley’s was more forceful and heavier than the last, and each sword stroke unleashed the same explosive, flood-like burst of power, causing its internal organs to shake.

After taking over ten blows, the body of the enormous black panther was smashed all the way into the ground by Linley.

“BOOM!”

An enormous crater appeared, and cracks appeared in every direction on the

ground. The roots of the massive trees around them began to emerge from the ground, uprooted from the force of this collision.

In the middle of the crater, the enormous black panther spat out a large mouthful of fresh blood, and even a hint of blood could be seen coming out of its fur. These repeated blows by Linley's heavy sword had caused even the black panther's fur to be unable to withstand all of the attack force.

"Black panther." Linley stood in midair, over ten meters above it. His translucent wings fluttered. "I know that you understand the human tongue. I'll give you a chance. As long as you submit to me, I'll spare your life."

Right now, Linley really wanted to tame and acquire this magical beast.

Linley had been in sore need of a good mount this entire time. And, even more importantly, this black panther was an extremely superior creature, especially after it transformed in size. Its enormous, two-story tall body, combined with its astonishing speed and defense made it an absolute war machine.

"Growl!"

The enormous black panther stood up, staring coldly at Linley. Its deadly eyes were filled with boundless wrath. Its head was still raised proudly. How could it possibly submit so easily? But right now, the black panther understood that this human warrior in front of it wasn't the prey it had thought he was. For a warrior to possess such terrifying power and also be able to use a high level wind-style spell such as 'Airwings' was an expert which was extremely rare in the human world.

"Are you willing to submit?" Linley shouted from up high.

As far as magical beasts were concerned, only martial force could make them submit and subdue them. And the higher the rank of a magical beast, the more difficult it was to make them submit.

"Groooowl!" The enormous black panther let out an angry roar.

“If you won’t submit, then I’ll beat you until you do!” Linley was very confident.

When combining his magic with his warrior abilities, his power could rise to an astonishing level. Right now, due to the pair of translucent Airwings on his back, Linley was in total control of the battlefield.

“Swish!” Linley once more dived downwards.

The movement speed of the pair of translucent wings was higher than that which four limbs provided. In the blink of an eye, Linley appeared in front of the enormous black panther as he once more smashed downwards viciously against it with his adamantine heavy sword.

But the black panther only retreated over ten meters at high speed, then pounced forward again.

Flexing his translucent wings, Linley began to dodge about very agilely in the air while constantly chopping downwards with his adamantine heavy sword. Every sword carried with it a terrifying force, capable of flattening a hill.

“Bam!”

The enormous black panther’s body was once more struck by the adamantine heavy sword and knocked flying. Blood had matted its glossy black fur with a red color. Linley stood confidently in midair, ready to strike another blow at the black panther at any moment with his adamantine heavy sword.

“Will you submit?” Linley said in a solemn voice.

The black panther once more rose to its feet, staring coldly at Linley. Suddenly…the black panther’s body began to shrink. It once more shrunk down to a height of two meters and a length of four meters…but the strange thing was, this time, the black panther’s entire body began to glow with a

hazy black and white light.

“What on earth?” Sensing danger, Linley quickly flew a bit higher using his translucent wings, cautiously staring down.

That black and white light disappeared. The black panther’s body, previously covered with a large, dense amount of black stripes, now only had a few thick black stripes on its upper body, while the fur on its four limbs had turned as white as snow.

Seeing this, Linley sucked in a cold breath. “Blackcloud Panther? The legendary Blackcloud Panther?”

Chapter 7 – A Battle of Speed

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 7, A Battle of Speed

The most powerful panther-type magical beast would probably be the Saint-level magical beast, “Electrobolt Panther”, a lightning-type magical beast. It was so incredibly fast that other Saint-level beasts simply couldn’t compare to it.

But the most secretive, most mysterious panther-type magical beast would be the ninth-ranked magical beast, ‘Blackcloud Panther’.

According to records, the last time a Blackcloud Panther appeared was over a thousand years ago. Despite so many years having passed, the amount of information which people had managed to collect regarding Blackcloud Panthers remained very scarce.

Blackcloud Panthers were magical beasts of the ninth rank, and extremely fast. Their bodies were covered with just a few black stripes, but their four limbs were snow white, as though they were travelling within a cloud. This was why people gave them the name, ‘Blackcloud Panthers’.

But with regards to what special abilities the Blackcloud Panthers had, or what element they were, the records had no information.

“Most likely, all of the experts who encountered Blackcloud Panthers lost their lives. As for those Saint-level combatants who knew the truth about Blackcloud Panthers, perhaps they intentionally did not reveal any information.” Linley knew very well that many of the more powerful organizations held secrets which were closely guarded. Even spells of the seventh rank would not be revealed. From this, one could imagine how secretive these organizations were.

….

Within this densely forested area in the core region of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Blackcloud Panther was exchanging stares with Linley, who was floating in mid-air with translucent wings on his back.

“Blackcloud Panthers can change their size as well as their appearances. They truly are quite mysterious.” Linley didn’t dare to relax at all.

The Blackcloud Panther stared coldly at Linley, its icy eyes filled with fury.

“Swish!”

In the blink of an eye, the Blackcloud Panther crossed the fifty meter gap between itself and Linley. Compared to before, when it was in its first form (normal size and covered with wavy black stripes), it was almost 50% faster.

50%!

For its speed to increase by that much prevented Linley from being able to dodge, and the Blackcloud Panther landed a vicious blow against Linley’s chest. Immediately, the scales on his chest shattered. “Crack!” With a cracking sound, fresh blood leaked out from behind the scales.

“Whoosh.” Linley immediately activated his translucent wings, rapidly rising higher into the air.

“What incredible speed.” Linley felt shocked in his heart.

The Blackcloud Panther, in its first form, was slightly faster than Bebe. In its second form, the large form, the speed of the Blackcloud Panther decreased by 30%, roughly on par with Linley. In its third form, the one it was in right now, it was 50% faster than the original form.

At this current speed, it could cross a hundred meters in the blink of an eye.

How utterly terrifying!

“Grooowl.” The Blackcloud Panther raised its head to look up at Linley, its eyes filled with arrogance.

Linley slowly flapped his translucent wings, but didn’t descend yet, merely hovering. Linley knew very well that once he descended, he would find it very difficult to deal with the Blackcloud Panther’s speed.

“Boss, my turn!” Having watched for so long, Bebe could no longer hold himself back.

“Shkreeeeech!”

With a terrifying, high-pitched shriek, Bebe transformed into a ferocious black blur, charging at the Blackcloud Panther. The Blackcloud Panther, which hadn’t paid any attention to Bebe at all, was now shocked by Bebe’s speed.

“Supersonic!” Linley immediately cast this supportive magic spell.

He cast the supportive Supersonic spell directly on Bebe. In the past, Bebe had never encountered any magical beasts of the ninth rank faster than himself. Thus, Linley had never seen the need to cast Supersonic on Bebe. But now, Linley finally did so.

In truth, this Supersonic spell was generally used by magi to increase the power of warriors in their squad.

“Swish!” Aided by a Supersonic spell of the eighth rank, Bebe’s speed instantly increased by 30%.

“Slash!” The Blackcloud Panther clawed at Bebe with its fierce claws.

But with his speed increased 30% by the Supersonic spell, although Bebe was still slightly slower than the Blackcloud Panther, the difference wasn’t too huge. More importantly, Bebe was extremely small and nimble.

Bebe constantly changed the direction he was moving in.

“Shkreeech!” Bebe suddenly sped up, pouncing towards the Blackcloud Panther. In mid-pounce, Bebe’s body suddenly enlarged, and then Bebe swiped viciously at the Blackcloud Panther with his paws.

Staring coldly at Bebe, the Blackcloud Panther clawed viciously at Bebe with its own paw as well.

“Slash!”

“Slash!”

Both magical beasts landed blows on each other. Bebe’s claw managed to leave a clear mark on the body of the Blackcloud Panther, and fresh blood began to seep out. But although Bebe was knocked flying as well, he just flipped up to his feet and stood back up, not harmed at all.

“Hrm?” Linley’s eyes turned round in surprise.

“Bebe’s attack power is about on par with mine. So how could Bebe so easily wound it?” Linley was shocked.

Linley knew very well how powerful Bebe’s defense was. After all, when they had been in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts last time, Bebe was just an early-stage magical beast of the eighth rank, but he could withstand the dying blow of an Armored Razorback Wyrm without perishing. Now that Bebe had entered the ninth rank, his terrifyingly strong defense was even more powerful than Linley’s. Linley didn’t find it surprising at all that Bebe was uninjured. But the strange thing was, the defense of the Blackcloud Panther had just dropped.

“Ah! I understand.”

Linley suddenly understood the special characteristics of the three forms of the Blackcloud Panther. The first form was a balanced one in terms of defense, speed, and offense. The second, giant form, prioritized offense at

the expense of speed. As for this form, the third one, although it raised speed to an astonishing level, its defense dropped in turn.

Right now, the Blackcloud Panther and Bebe were staring at each other. The Blackcloud Panther could feel that it was bleeding, and it was beginning to worry…because this freak of a magical beast in front of it hadn't been hurt at all.

"Blackcloud Panther." Linley spoke.

The Blackcloud Panther looked up at Linley.

Linley didn't speak to the Blackcloud Panther as though it were an inferior life form. Rather, Linley spoke to it as he would a creature of equal intelligence. "Blackcloud Panther, in your current form, you should possess great speed but low defense. In this form, you aren't even able to overcome Bebe."

"Growl." The Blackcloud Panther snarled unhappily.

The Blackcloud Panther then stared at Bebe, and from its jaw came a series of strange growls. Bebe was startled for a moment, and then let out an enraged growl of his own.

"Boss. This Blackcloud Panther can speak the tongue of us rodent-type magical beasts." Bebe said mentally to Linley.

Linley knew very well that Bebe was born understanding the rodent language. But the languages of other magical beasts were different; each different type of magical beast had their own language.

Some extremely long-lived magical beasts, however, were skilled at communicating using the languages of other types of magical beasts.

This Blackcloud Panther was a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank. Not only did it know many languages of other types of magical beasts, it also understood the human tongue. Only, it was unable to reproduce the

human sounds due to physical reasons. Only upon reaching the Saint-level, when it could begin to alter its body, could it speak the human tongue.

“What did it say?” Linley asked.

Bebe and the Blackcloud Panther engaged in a discussion through growls and angry snarls. Suddenly, Bebe and the Blackcloud Panther seemed to get into an argument, as the fur on both magical beasts stood up straight.

“Growl!!”

“Shkreeech!”

The two magical beasts suddenly began to engage in a wild battle, as their shadows flashed against each other again and again. Fresh blood began to fly everywhere…

Their angry growls unabated, the two magical beasts exchanged blows at high speed, and the trees and boulders nearby suffered the brunt of their fury.

The trees toppled. The boulders shattered.

Every place these two magical beasts crossed through turned into a debris-strewn area.

Suddenly, the two beasts separated again. Bebe hunched down, growling as he stared at the Blackcloud Panther. The Blackcloud Panther stared at Bebe in the same manner, as though facing a fierce opponent.

But the Blackcloud Panther’s body was covered in blood.

With its defense lowered, it was unable to resist Bebe’s claw attacks. And in terms of speed, boosted by the Supersonic spell, Bebe was only slightly slower than it was.

Bebe growled angrily towards the Blackcloud Panther.

The Blackcloud Panther roared back towards Bebe.

“Boss, this Blackcloud Panther isn’t willing to submit. It says that you simply don’t have the ability to defeat it on your own.” Bebe said mentally to Linley. “Boss, let me kill it.”

Right now, the Blackcloud Panther was extremely frustrated.

If it used its first two forms, its speed was inferior to its opponent and it would be trampled. But after increasing its speed by entering its ‘wind-style form’, its defense was lowered.

The Blackcloud Panther knew that the human opponent was capable of flight.

The speed one could reach flying was definitely greater than the speed one could reach through running on all fours. In terms of short term bursts, it could exceed Linley in speed. But if it were to flee, Bebe and Linley would definitely be able to easily catch up to it.

“Blackcloud Panther, you think I can’t beat you?” Linley said loudly.

The Blackcloud Panther immediately raised its head arrogantly as it looked at Linley. In close quarters combat, the speed boost provided by the translucent wings couldn’t be put on full display. It didn’t fear Linley at all.

“Fine.” Linley nodded.

And then, Linley began to mutter the words to another spell as well, causing the Blackcloud Panther to be suspicious. But as a wind-type magical beast as well, the Blackcloud Panther wasn’t afraid of Linley having access to any particularly powerful wind-type spells. In addition, it knew that if it were to now flee, Linley would be able to catch up to it.

“Thruuumm.”

Centered around the body of the Blackcloud Panther, a circular area a hundred meters in circumference suddenly began to glow with a layer of earth elemental essence. These earth elemental essences were throbbing with a certain frequency.

The Blackcloud Panther suddenly felt a terrifyingly powerful gravitational force tug at it, causing it to hunch over. Even the blood inside its body as well as its heart were affected, causing it to feel rather dizzy.

Earth-style magic – Supergravity Field!

The Supergravity Field created by a magus of the eighth rank was able to increase the local gravity by a factor of eight. This increased gravitational field's effect wasn't as simple as say adding 1000 pounds of weight to a man who already weighed 200 pounds. The eight-fold gravity also impacted the heart, the spleen, and the other internal organs.

An ordinary person might be able to carry 100-200 pounds of weight.

But under a double-strength gravitational field, his heart might not be able to stand the pressure and might break down.

After all, although the external muscles were easily trained, it was very hard to train internal organs such as the heart. At the very least, the rate of training the internal organs was much slower than the external muscles.

Suddenly ambushed by a field of eight-fold gravity, the Blackcloud Panther couldn't help but feel dizzy.

Not giving it a chance to recover, Linley, his entire body covered with earth elemental essence, charged in, and began to wildly unleash upon the Blackcloud Panther…vicious punches and kicks!

Yes, he didn't use the adamantine heavy sword!

Only his fists and his feet!

“Growl!” The body of a magical beast of the ninth rank was extremely sturdy, and very soon, it became used to the greater gravity. But under the influence of an eight-fold gravity, it didn’t even have half the speed it previously had.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

“Bam!”

A kick landed hard against the Blackcloud Panther’s waist, and then Linley rushed to the opposite side, landing a vicious punch on the Blackcloud Panther’s body and sending it flying back in the other direction.

In ten short seconds, the Blackcloud Panther had been thoroughly ravaged by Linley’s punches and kicks. Its current speed was totally insufficient for escaping the confines of the Supergravity Field. And what’s more, Bebe was watching intently from the side as well.

“Do you submit?”

“Do you submit?”

…..

While shouting loudly, Linley wildly continued to whale away at it with his fists and feet. Linley was beating this peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank, the Blackcloud Panther, into a state where it couldn’t resist at all. One mouthful after another of blood was leaking from its mouth.

“Groooooowl!” The Blackcloud Panther suddenly let out a howl of grief and anger.

“Boss. He submits.”

“Bam!” Linley’s fists were moving too fast, and he landed one final punch on the Blackcloud Panther’s skull, smashing it to the ground.

Laughing, Linley looked at the Blackcloud Panther, which was on all fours, pressed against the ground. Under the influence of the eight-fold gravity, the blood flowing through the veins of the Blackcloud Panther had grown sluggish as well. And now, after having been beaten wildly by Linley in such a manner, the Blackcloud Panther had become quite dizzy.

“Do you submit?” Linley laughed as he looked at the Blackcloud Panther.

Although Linley was laughing, under the total Dragonform transformation, Linley’s eyes were still that calm, emotionless dark gold color. And how could one tell that Linley was smiling beneath all of those scales on his face?

The Blackcloud Panther raised his head to look at Linley, paying particular attention to the translucent wings on Linley’s back. His heart trembled. He was afraid of being brutalized by Linley yet again. Immediately, it nodded. And in fact, he really had mentally submitted to Linley’s display of prowess. For a combatant to be so powerful as a warrior and as a magus was more than enough to force it to submit.

Smiling, Linley immediately began to set up a soul-binding magical array!

Chapter 8 – Leaving the Mountains

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 8, Leaving the Mountains

Virtually all magi knew how to set up a soul-binding magic array. But in terms of actually setting one up, there were certain requirements. Generally speaking, only upon reaching the seventh rank as a magus did one have sufficient spiritual strength to set it up.

A nearly translucent pentagram was floating in mid-air.

And then, the pentagram magic formation flew towards the head of the Blackcloud Panther, who didn't resist at all, allowing the magical formation to enter his mind. Suddenly, both Linley and the Blackcloud Panther could feel that their spirits were now interconnected.

This was not the same as the 'bond of equals' which Linley and Bebe shared.

In the 'bond of equals' between Linley and Bebe, both of their souls had become intermingled. With this soul-binding magic array, however, was formed solely from Linley's spiritual energy. When the Blackcloud Panther accepted the soul-binding compact, naturally Linley was the master.

"Master." The Blackcloud Panther was extremely respectful.

Linley looked at the Blackcloud Panther. "What is your name?" Linley knew that some high-class magical beasts had names of their own. For example, that Armored Razorback Wyrm which Linley had encountered in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts' Foggy Valley had been named Sartius.

The Blackcloud Panther's voice sounded in Linley's mind. "Master, my name is Haeru [Hei'lu]."

“Haeru?” Linley memorized the name.

“Haeru, tell me about your transformation abilities.” Towards this topic, Linley felt quite a bit of interest.

The Blackcloud Panther nodded. “Master, it is because I am a dual-element magical beast of both darkness and wind elements. In my brain, I have two magicite cores; one is darkness element, the other is wind element. Normally, I am in my first form, where my defense, offense, and speed are all equal.”

“When I rely primarily on the energy from my darkness magicite core, my body will increase in size and my attack power will go up, at the expense of speed. When I rely primarily on the energy from my wind magicite core, I will be in this form, the wind-style form, with great speed but weaker defense.”

The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, said honestly.

Linley now understood.

So Blackcloud Panthers were dual-element magical beasts of wind and darkness, and this current form was the wind-style form. The giant form was the darkness-style form, and only the original form was the ‘normal’ form.

“I had originally thought that Haeru’s current form was his normal form.” Linley snickered to himself.

Linley suspected that the person who had written the records which Linley had read regarding Blackcloud Panthers had only seen this wind-style form, and thus mistook this as the only form of the Blackcloud Panthers.

“Growl!” Bebe ran over, growling in a low voice towards the Blackcloud Panther.

The Blackcloud Panther began to chat with him as well.

“Looks like our journey will be more interesting in the future.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

…..

Alongside his two magical beast companions, Bebe and Haeru, Linley continued his daily training regime. Linley immersed himself in the world of sword-training. Every so often, Linley would have some new insights regarding how to use his heavy sword.

Spring left, autumn came.

In the blink of an eye, another year had passed.

That fall in the second year, the temperature had dropped to a murderous low. Linley was seated cross-legged beneath an ancient oak, training. The Dragonblood battle-qi had suddenly begun to boil, causing his blood vessels and his heart to once again begin to change and transform.

In addition, within Linley’s dantian, the Dragonblood battle-qi had finally begun to change as well. Excited, Linley let out a laugh. He had finally broken past the late-stage of the seventh rank and reached the eighth rank. He had become a warrior of the eighth rank!

As a warrior of the eighth rank, upon totally Dragonforming, Linley’s power was now at the peak-stage of the ninth rank.

There was a significant difference between a peak-stage ninth rank warrior and an early-stage ninth rank warrior.

“When I was in Hess City, it was hard for me to even break past the armor of an ordinary magical beast of the ninth rank. But now, even without using the adamantine heavy sword, I can kill most magical beasts of the ninth rank.” Linley was extremely confident.

A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior of the ninth rank could definitely vanquish a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank.

Aside from Saint-levels, perhaps there was nobody in the world who could threaten him anymore.

“Only, the higher level of using this adamantine heavy sword, this so-called ‘impose’ level…what is it?” Linley began to frown. Right now, Linley had completely mastered the technique of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.

He walked barefooted on the ground.

Linley continued on his path of training, constantly harmonizing himself with the pulsing thrum of the earth and the indistinct ebbs and flows of the wind. In turn, Linley’s spirit became purified by nature, becoming more agile and graceful.

….

Winter arrived.

In the morning, a great blizzard had descended, covering the entire world with blankets of falling snow. Standing in the middle of the snowstorm, Linley stared up at the snowflakes falling from the sky. His heart was very peaceful.

Suddenly, Linley sat down cross-legged, placing the adamantine heavy sword across his lap. His upper body was still bare, and he still wore that ragged pair of hempcloth pants.

The snow settled on top of Linley’s body, but Linley didn’t notice it at all.

Time passed. The snow continued to fall from morning until nightfall, covering the entire area with a layer of snow as thick as one’s foot.

Bebe and Haeru had hidden themselves underneath a large pine tree, where

they watched Linley.

“Impose.”

Linley’s eyes opened. Within them, there was a hint of a smile. Raising his head to stare in front of him, he saw that the snow had ceased to fall. Although it was almost dark, the entire world had been painted a light white color by the snow.

“Groooooowl!” From far away, the roar of a magical beast could be heard.

A Glacial Snow Lion was striding on the snow. Apparently having discovered Linley, it began to draw close to Linley, one step at a time. Watching the Glacial Snow Lion draw near, Linley didn’t seem to react at all.

“Swoosh!” With a mighty leap, the Glacial Snow Lion pounced towards Linley.

Linley watched as the Glacial Snow Lion pounced towards him. Very casually, he grabbed the adamantine heavy sword that had been lying in his lap and chopped directly towards the Glacial Snow Lion.

“Rumble!” The moment Linley swung the adamantine heavy sword, space itself seemed to suddenly be compressed in the area around the sword, in the direction of the Glacial Snow Lion.

Terrified, the Glacial Snow Lion wished to flee, but the entire area around it was compressed by that pressuring force. It had nowhere to run.

Facing this heavy sword, it had no choice but to take it head on.

“Bam!”

The heavy sword slammed against the Glacial Snow Lion’s body. The Glacial Snow Lion’s entire body trembled momentarily, then suddenly disintegrated into a pile of flesh and blood.

“So ‘impose’ refers to ‘imposing’ one’s will on the heavens and the earth, to the point where even space itself can become used to constrict someone. Haha…” Linley laughed.

After having experienced that huge blizzard, Linley finally entered the third level of wielding heavy weapons; the ‘impose’ level. Only, Linley understood that he had just barely begun to grasp this level.

“To be able to so quickly grasp the ‘impose’ level, I really must give thanks to my training as a stonesculptor as well as my insights as a magus.” Linley felt very happy.

Because he was a magus, Linley’s soul could more clearly sense the throbbing pulse of the earth as well as the flows of the wind. His soul was capable now of becoming one with nature. In addition, this entire time, Linley had been extremely focused on his training and had accumulated a great deal of experience. This allowed Linley to finally surpass that initial barrier and enter the ‘impose’ level of wielding the heavy sword.

In terms of power, the ‘impose’ level was far more terrifying than the level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’. It was also far more profound and mysterious.

….

Spring. Year 10003 of the Yulan calendar. The northernmost edge of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was only a few kilometers away from the North Sea. In fact, from the northernmost point in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, one could see the vast, endless expanse of water known as the North Sea.

Between the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and the North Sea, there was a corridor which linked the Holy Union and the O’Brien Empire together. Almost every day, large numbers of people passed through this wide road.

Virtually everyone, be it the merchants of the O'Brien Empire, the merchants of the Holy Union, or others, passed through this corridor.

However, the citizens of the O'Brien Empire, when facing the citizens of the Holy Union, felt a sense of natural superiority. This was because the O'Brien Empire was the most powerful Empire in the entire Yulan continent. What's more, it possessed the 'War God'. In the war-loving O'Brien Empire, virtually every citizen was proud to belong to the O'Brien Empire.

Right now, on the wide corridor, there was a merchant caravan with hundreds of people that were camping and resting. Many people were currently eating.

"Old Hett [Hei'te]."

A young man riding on a carriage chuckled at a chubby man next to him. "You've made a fortune on this latest deal."

"Haha." That middle-aged fatty laughed contentedly. "Petrie [Pi'te'li], you are a smart young fellow. If you continue to work for me, in three years time, you'll be able to buy a manor in your hometown, then buy a few beautiful serving maids and hire a few manservants. You'll be able to live a happy life as an estate owner."

"Three years? Shit, in three more years I probably will have lost my life." The youngster swore. "A new person like myself is always assigned the most dangerous tasks. Alas…in one year, I'll go back home, buy a beautiful girl, and enjoy life. Estate owner? That'll depend on whether or not I have that good fortune."

The middle-aged fatty began to laugh. "You are a newcomer. Of course it falls on you to take on the most dangerous tasks. However, that means you get a large share as well. Oh, right. Petrie, this time in our caravan, there's a very beautiful girl. As we are headed the same way, we are escorting her."

"Are you talking about Miss Jenne [Zhan'en]?" The young fellow's eyes

instantly lit up. “If I had a woman like that, I’d be willing to work for ten more years. That figure. That aura. Oh, man…”

“But she clearly is a noble, and that old servant of hers isn’t weak either.” The middle aged fatty chortled.

“Can’t I at least fantasize?” The youngster said unhappily.

The middle aged fatty began to laugh, but then he suddenly looked towards the south. “Hrm? Petrie, look. Someone is coming out from within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.” Petrie immediately looked south towards the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Dressed in an ordinary blue warrior’s uniform, a man carrying a heavy sword on his back was walking out from within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. His long brown hair just barely reached his shoulders. By the looks of it, he was nearly two meters tall.

By his side was a black panther that was nearly as tall as he was, and on the back of that black panther was a black Shadowmouse.

“What is that black panther?” Petrie said in astonishment.

Staring with wide eyes, the middle-aged man said, “Don’t cause a ruckus! I’ve heard that all panther-type and lion-type magical beasts are very powerful. Generally speaking, they are at least magical beasts of the sixth rank, or even higher.”

Immediately, Petrie no longer dared to make a sound.

Right at this moment, the brown-haired man began jogging towards their caravan with long strides. The caravan guards immediately became alert. The person coming towards them was clearly a powerful warrior.

…….

Right now, Linley was in an excellent mood. After three full years of hard

training, he had finally left the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“The Northern Sea is indeed vast.” This was the first time Linley had seen the North Sea, and the sight of that enormous, boundless sky-blue sea stunned Linley, filling him with awe.

Seeing the resting caravan in front of him, Linley jogged in that direction.

“Hey, friend, what do you want?” A heavily bearded guard shouted out loudly. Smiling, Linley replied, “I’m headed for the O’Brien Empire. I hope you can take me along with you.”

The heavily bearded guard looked at Linley, then turned towards a middle-aged, golden-haired man next to him. After exchanging a few words, he said to Linley in a loud voice, “That’s easy. Twenty gold coins, and we’ll take you with us.”

“Fine.” Linley agreed very readily. He immediately pulled out a small sack of gold, counted out twenty gold coins, and handed it over.

This outfit Linley was currently wearing had been stored in the interspatial ring, ready for just an occasion such as this. In his interspatial ring, Linley naturally had prepared quite a few things.

“Hey, friend, since you already have a mount, do you plan to ride in a carriage, or on this panther?” The heavily bearded man asked warmly.

“In a carriage, I suppose.” Linley said.

“Fine. You can go get inside that cart in the back. That one right there, the flat cart with two people in it.” The heavily bearded man pointed as he spoke. Actual covered carriages were rather expensive, and in this caravan, the majority of the soldiers all rode in flat carts.

“Sure.” Linley agreed quite casually.

As he walked over to and reached that flat cart, the two men already in the

cart, previously engaged in conversation, were immediately terrified by Haeru, who was walking alongside Linley. Panther-type magical beasts were generally high class magical beasts, after all.

“Ah, friend, please, sit.” The two men were incredibly friendly.

Linley entered the cart. The cart had mattresses made of hay inside, which were covered by a thick cotton cloth. As Linley sat on top of a hay mattress, Bebe jumped right onto Linley’s shoulders as well.

“Come, friend, have some wine.” The slightly older one of the two men warmly offered.

“Thanks.” Linley accepted the wineskin and took a large gulp.

“Hey, everybody, get ready. We’re about to start moving again!” A loud voice rang out, and all the people who had got off their carriages for a rest immediately got back into their carriages.

The caravan began to move forward again, embarking once more on its journey towards the O’Brien Empire…

Chapter 9 – Olivier

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 9, Olivier

Travelling on this seemingly endless, winding road, this caravan with hundreds of people didn't move at too rapid a pace. All of the guards of the caravan maintained a careful eye in the direction of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts at all times.

There were two major sources of danger on this road. The first was the magical beasts in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. The second was bandits. Because this road which was hundreds of miles long was controlled by neither the Holy Union nor the O'Brien Empire, there naturally were many bandits here.

"Squeak. Squeak." The carriage wheels squeaked rhythmically, and Linley lay back, enjoying the strong liquor in the wineskin.

"It's been three years since I've touched alcohol. This rough liquor feels even more enjoyable to me than those exquisite wines the Jade Water Paradise used to have." Though he laughed, Linley was sighing in his heart as well. Meanwhile, by his side, Bebe was very enjoyably munching on pieces of roasted meat.

The older of the two soldiers whom Linley was sharing this cart with said, "Friend, my name is Lowndes [Lang'si]. This is my younger friend. His name is Luther [Lu'de]."

Linley was slightly startled. He understood that these two wished to know his name, but Linley knew that his name was already on the Red List of the Radiant Church as someone who must be killed on sight.

"You can call me 'Ley'." Linley said with a laugh.

"Ley, what level of magical beast is this panther of yours?" That young

fellow named Luther immediately asked enthusiastically. “This magical beast’s fur is so smooth. Riding on such a magical beast really would be so majestic! I think it must be at least a magical beast of the seventh rank.”

“All you need to know is that he is a high-class magical beast.” Linley said casually.

The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, who had been loping alongside the cart, suddenly fixed Luther with its cold eyes. Seeing Haeru’s gaze, Luther immediately was so frightened that he could only smile weakly in response.

Everyone in the Yulan continent knew that magical beasts possessed intelligence which was no less than that of men. They definitely couldn’t be treated like domesticated household pets. If you tried to, the results would be disastrous.

“The two of you belong to the Holy Union? Or to the O’Brien Empire?” Linley asked.

Linley knew very little regarding the O’Brien Empire.

“We are both from the O’Brien Empire.” Lowndes said with a chortle. “Ley, how about you?”

“This will be my first trip to the O’Brien Empire. I’ve long heard that the O’Brien Empire has a tremendous martial spirit, but have never experienced it for myself.” Linley said calmly.

Both Luther and Lowndes lived by the edges of their blades. They possessed quite good insight, and could easily tell that Linley was an extremely powerful person. After all, in order to be able to subdue a powerful magical beast, one had to be able to totally dominate it with power first. Only then would it submit.

“Ley, we citizens of the O’Brien Empire greatly revere powerful combatants. No matter where you go, you will be received with great courtesy, given your power.” Lowndes said with a chuckle. “Ley, if this is

your first time visiting the O'Brien Empire, do you know much about it?"

"Aside from knowing that the O'Brien Empire has seven administrative provinces and knowing about the War God, I don't know much." Linley laughed.

As the most militarily powerful of the Four Great Empires, the O'Brien Empire's territory was also the largest amongst the six major powers. Each of those seven provinces was significantly larger than a kingdom.

"Ley, let me explain. Our Empire has a large number of experts. Even combatants of the ninth rank don't dare to be arrogant in the Imperial Capital. After all, the War God's College is settled down atop one of the mountains just outside the Imperial Capital." Lowndes explained enthusiastically.

"The War God's College?" Linley had no idea what this was.

Next to him, Luther hurriedly said, "Ley, you absolutely must be aware of this. The highest, most holiest training site in the entire O'Brien Empire is the War God's College. Every hundred years or so, or sometimes every few hundred years, the War God will accept a single disciple whom he will personally teach. The number of direct disciples he has is extremely few, but eight or nine out of every ten people whom the War God accepts as a disciple will become a Saint-level combatant."

Hearing this, Linley was truly stunned.

Previously, he was under the impression that the O'Brien Academy was the most elite training academy in existence, but now, clearly, this War God's College was far superior to it.

"But it really is too difficult for one to be accepted as a disciple by the War God. Even the honorary disciples whom he doesn't personally teach will only see one added to their number every two years or so." Lowndes sighed.

Just one disciple every year or two, and an honorary one at that.

This acceptance rate was even lower by far than that of the Ernst Institute. But one could understand if one thought about it. After all, this had to do with taking the War God as one's teacher and master. The War God…an entity who had surpassed the Saint-level over five thousand years ago.

"Therefore, Ley, in the future, if you meet anyone from the War God's College, you have to be careful. Even if they decide to kill someone, usually no one will interfere." Lowndes advised.

Linley understood.

The War God, O'Brien, was the founding Emperor of the O'Brien Empire. Although he had abdicated long ago, his influence in the O'Brien Empire was much higher than the reigning Emperor. The War God O'Brien absolutely was the backbone and main pillar of the entire O'Brien Empire.

"Right. Have you heard of any geniuses appearing recently in the O'Brien Empire?" Linley suddenly asked. What Linley was thinking was, "The density of Dragonblood in the veins of Wharton was even higher than mine, hence he could naturally become a Dragonblood Warrior. His potential should be higher than mine as well. By now, Wharton should be seventeen. He should be very famous in the O'Brien Empire."

Given the speed at which a Dragonblood Warrior trained at…

Generally speaking, in a few decades, they could reach the Saint-level. If one trained hard, one would be able to reach the ninth rank within twenty years, and the eighth rank within ten.

Wharton's innate talent definitely should be enough to stun the Empire.

"Prodigy? Are you talking about Olivier, the Prodigy Sword Saint?" Lowndes asked.

"The Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier?" Linley had never heard this name

before. “Why is this Olivier known as the Prodigy Sword Saint?”

Next to him, Luther hurriedly said, “Ley, if in the Empire, someone hears you say that you don’t know who the Prodigy Sword Saint is, they will laugh at you. Do you know how old Lord Olivier was when he reached the Saint-level?”

He was a Saint-level combatant?

“How old?” Linley actually was extremely calm. He was a member of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, who generally could reach the Saint-level in a few decades. Generally speaking, those so-called Prodigyes would still need nearly a century.

“Forty seven!” Luther said worshipfully. “Lord Olivier was a combatant of the ninth rank by age thirty, and by age forty seven, entered the Saint-level. And three years ago, that year when the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance suffered the ‘Apocalypse Day’, Olivier entered the Saint-level.”

Linley nodded slightly.

It seemed as though that cataclysmic day had been dubbed the ‘Apocalypse Day’.

“No wonder I haven’t heard of him.” Linley understood now. When this person’s fame became widespread, Linley had just entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and embarked on his three years of toilsome training.

That Luther clearly worshipped this Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. He hurriedly said, “Ley, let me tell you something. When Lord Olivier reached the ninth rank, the War God actively reached out to him and invited him to become his student. But Lord Olivier refused. He wanted to walk on his own training path.”

Linley couldn’t help but begin to admire this Olivier. A War God who had surpassed the Saint-level long ago wanted to accept him as a disciple, but

he actually refused. Indeed, only a man with supreme confidence could do such a thing.

“This is the first person to refuse the War God in all of history.” Luther said worshipfully. “Ley, at first, many people thought that Olivier was insane and insulted him. But…Lord Olivier wasn’t just bragging. Three years ago, when Olivier entered the Saint-level, he immediately challenged the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon.”

“Dillon?” Linley frowned.

Linley could still clearly remember that when those two Saint-level combatants did battle in the skies above Wushan township, one of them had been the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon. The other was a Saint-level Grand Magus, Rudi. These two names had been forever engraved in Linley’s mind.

“Right. Lord Dillon, the Stellar Sword Saint, has been famous for a long time, and he has been a Saint-level combatant for nearly a century. Olivier had just entered the Saint-level, and he immediately went to challenge Dillon. Many people thought that Olivier was too brash and arrogant. But the day of their duel…”

Luther’s eyes were filled with awe and worship. “Within three sword strokes, the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon, had been defeated. To be able to defeat the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon, as soon as he entered the Saint-level was something which stunned everyone. Only now, due to his power, was he publically acknowledged as a genius.”

Linley, too, was filled with admiration.

In the past, he had often discussed powerful combatants with Grandpa Doehring. Linley knew very well…that there was a large difference between early-stage Saints, middle-stage Saints, late-stage Saints, and peak-stage Saints.

Dillon had reached the Saint-level nearly a hundred years ago, but he was

defeated in just three sword strokes by the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. Linley had to admit that Olivier was incredibly powerful. What's more, he had only been forty seven years old.

For someone to reach the Saint-level at forty seven years of age, and be so powerful.

Even the Supreme Warriors wouldn't be much better than this.

…….

Chatting with these hired soldiers who travelled everywhere, Linley learned a great deal regarding the O'Brien Empire, giving him a good sense of the area.

By nightfall, the caravan once more came to a halt.

Campfires were lit everywhere, and all sorts of wild roasted dishes were brought out. Linley followed Luther and Lowndes to a campfire, where they began to roast chunks of leg meat.

Linley suddenly turned to look in the direction of Haeru. Right at that moment, a young nobleman dressed in a suit was standing next to the Blackcloud Panther, looking excitedly at it.

"What a beautiful panther." The young nobleman's eyes were shining like gems as he stared at the Blackcloud Panther. He even stretched his hand out, intending to touch him.

The Blackcloud Panther was a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank. He was extremely arrogant. How could he allow an ordinary person to touch it?

The Blackcloud Panther suddenly swung its head , fixing its cold eyes upon that young nobleman. Unhappily, he began to let out a menacing growl. "Groooooowl."

“Ah!!!” Terrified, the young nobleman quickly retreated, falling on his back as he did. His face was white with fear.

“Haha.” Luther, Lowndes, and Linley all began to laugh.

At this time, the brocade door to a nearby carriage was pushed open, and a young woman dressed in a light violet dress immediately jumped out of the carriage, frightened. “Keane [Ji’en], Keane, what happened?”

Seeing this woman, Linley’s eyes suddenly lit up.

This full-body dress was rather tight, revealing her lithe, slim little waist, as well as making her chest swell all the more. As she ran, her long hair fluttered about.

That slender figure was one of the top three female figures Linley had ever seen. Judging by her appearance, she should be seventeen or eighteen years old.

“Big sis, big sis!” That young noble clutched this lady in terror.

Haeru, the Blackcloud Panther, let out another dissatisfied growl in the direction of the young nobleman. This terrified the young noblewoman so much that her face instantly turned white as well.

“Don’t be afraid. Haeru won’t hurt you.” Linley called out, laughing.

“Haha, Miss Jenne, you need to take good care of your little brother. This powerful magical beast isn’t one of your household pets. If he pisses it off, it might eat him. Hahaha!” Lowndes laughed loudly.

These words made the faces of both Jenne and the young nobleman turn white.

Jenne pulled the young nobleman to his feet, and then quickly curtsied in apology. “Sorry, sorry.”

“No need to apologize to us. This black panther is Ley’s. You can apologize to him.” Luther joined the fun as well.

Jenne glanced at Linley. Clearly, she wasn’t good at interacting with people. Her face immediately turned red upon looking at him. “Lord Ley, so sorry.”

“It’s fine. In the future, just make sure your little brother doesn’t irritate Haeru anymore.” Linley laughed. It had been a long time since he had met a girl who was so easily embarrassed.

Jenne immediately pulled the young nobleman by the hand in the direction of that nearby carriage.

“Amusing, amusing.” Linley laughed, raising the wineskin to his lips for another swig.

Chapter 10 – A Single Sword

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 10, A Single Sword

“Ley, what do you think of that Miss Jenne? She’s quite something, isn’t she?” Lowndes said with a quiet chortle.

“She is quite something.” Linley nodded in praise.

Next to them, Luther walked over. “She isn’t just ‘something’. In all these years I’ve been roaming about, I’ve seen countless beautiful women. But Miss Jenne…heh heh…she’s absolutely tops. Ley, are you interested in Miss Jenne?”

Linley blinked in shock.

Lowndes also glanced at Linley with a wink that all men understood. “Ley, it’s quite normal for powerful people to have beauties with them. If you don’t seize the opportunity, after you leave the caravan, you won’t have another chance.”

“You two…” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or cry.

Alice had long ago caused Linley to seal off his heart with respect to romantic love. And right now, Linley wasn’t yet at the stage where he was ravenous and would just go chasing after every beautiful girl he saw.

“Miss Jenne and her little brother just came out.” Luther suddenly said in a soft voice.

Linley turned to look. Indeed, Miss Jenne and her younger brother Keane were headed towards a campfire, which was currently manned by her elderly servant.

That young noble, Keane, couldn't help but turn to look at the Blackcloud Panther again.

The Blackcloud Panther immediately revealed its gleaming, cold fangs. Keane was so terrified that he tightly clutched his sister's hands. Miss Jenne, as though sensing something, turned to look in Linley's direction as well.

Nodding somewhat apologetically at Linley, Miss Jenne led her little brother to sit next to the campfire.

….

"Big sis, that magical beast is so handsome!" Keane's eyes were as bright as gems and filled with longing. "It'll be great if one day, I too have a powerful magical beast."

The old servant chuckled. "Young master Keane, taming a magical beast is no easy feat. To tame a powerful magical beast, you must totally subdue it, and to subdue it, you must defeat it head on. From what I know, the weakest type of panther-type magical beasts are all of the seventh rank. That Lord Ley is a truly powerful combatant."

"The weakest is a magical beast of the seventh rank?" Keane sucked in a cold breath. "Grandpa Lambert, is it as powerful as you, Grandpa Lambert [Lan'bo'te]?"

In Keane's mind, the person he worshipped the most in the world was his Grandpa Lambert.

When him and his sister were in the Holy Union, they had no one to rely on at all. The entire time, it was Grandpa Lambert who had protected them. If it wasn't for Grandpa Lambert, those nobles in the town they lived in would've sent people long ago to seize his sister. He had personally seen Grandpa Lambert shatter a noble's guard's shield with one punch, then easily defeat ten guards.

“Me? I just have a bit of ability. He could kill me in one blow with ease.” Lambert chuckled, rubbing Keane’s head. “Young master Keane, when we arrive in the O’Brien Empire, you must be careful. There are many experts in this world. I’m only able to protect you in places like those small towns. But when we reach the big cities…”

“It’s fine! This time, we’re going to assume the position of city governor, right?” Keane arrogantly raised his little head up high. “When I’m the city governor, who will I fear?”

Looking at Keane, Jenne couldn’t help but also affectionately pat Keane on his little head. “Keane, in the future, you will be a majestic city governor.”

“Of course.” Keane was very confident.

……

Slowly, most people in the caravan began to drift off to sleep. Only a few mercenaries remained awake in a defensive perimeter around the caravan. Linley was seated cross-legged on the ground, the adamantine heavy sword placed on his lap as always.

Linley didn’t know how the ancestors of his clan had trained in the third level of using the heavy sword, the ‘impose’ level. But Linley’s training method was to allow his soul to become one with the great earth and one with the boundless wind.

The earth possessed a wondrous throbbing pulse of its own.

That unique pulse had its own unique rhythm, which Linley submerged himself into. As for the boundless wind which filled all the skies, it had a deep, intimate connection with space, which was also an important part of being able to understand the essence of the ‘impose’ level.

Submerged within nature…understanding nature…

In this state, Linley didn’t notice the passage of time at all. By the second

half of the night, when the vast majority of the caravan was asleep, only a few hired mercenaries maintained their watchful vigilance.

“Rasp, rasp.”

Deep night. The cold wind was blowing, and it rustled against the tips of Linley’s hair. Linley’s closed eyes suddenly opened, and then he sheathed the adamantine heavy sword onto his back.

“Get up.” Linley patted Lowndes and Luther twice each.

Lowndes and Luther were both mercenaries who lived by the edges of their weapons. They slept very lightly. Immediately, they woke up. Lowndes and Luther quickly saw that it was still midnight.

“Ley, it’s late at night. Why aren’t you sleeping?” Lowndes was a bit unhappy, but he didn’t dare to complain.

“Bandits are coming.” Linley said casually.

“Oh.”

Luther’s eyes were drifting closed again, but then suddenly they snapped open. Staring at Linley in shock, he said, “Ley, what’d you say? Bandits are coming?”

“A group of roughly a hundred or so bandits are approaching us from approximately three hundred meters in front. They’re slowly making their way here.” Linley continued.

Just then, Linley had been communing with the throbbing pulse of the earth and the flows of the wind.

Linley could clearly feel those hundred or so feet coming from hundreds of meters away. Naturally, under normal conditions, Linley wouldn’t have been able to detect them so early. But after having become one with nature, he naturally was far more sensitive.

Luther was frightened.

“Don’t stand there like an idiot. Wake up all of our brothers.” Lowndes was far calmer.

“Oh. Got it.” Luther immediately left to wake up one mercenary after another, while Lowndes went to warn all of the mercenaries who were on guard.

Being woken up from their sweet dreams in the middle of the night, the mercenaries were naturally all unhappy.

“Bandits coming.” But that phrase was enough to shock them into scrambling up.

“Where are they?” Staring in all directions into the pitch black night, the awakened mercenaries couldn’t even see the shadow of a bandit. All of them began to grow unhappy.

The leader of the mercenaries, a heavily bearded man, grabbed Lowndes by his shirt. “You said there are bandits. Where?”

“Not me. It was Ley who said there are bandits.” Lowndes hurriedly explained.

“Oh?” The heavily bearded man was shocked. With regards to this expert whom they picked up mid-way through their journey, just by looking at that black panther, the heavily bearded man knew that this was no one he could afford to offend. For an expert to make this claim, he clearly wouldn’t just be playing a prank.

And just at this moment, the heavily bearded man could also begin to hear the extremely soft sounds of stealthy footsteps coming from afar.

Given the heavily bearded man’s power, he could make out the sounds quite clearly now.

“Bandits. Prepare, prepare!” The heavily bearded man’s terrifying roar immediately woke everyone up. Even many slumbering merchants as well as their carriage drivers were woken up.

These hundred or so mercenaries lined up in an orderly fashion.

“Haha, Big Beard Malone. I didn’t expect you to be so alert. You’ve made some progress over these years. Looks like our ambush failed. We’ll have to make a frontal attack then.” A loud laugh could be heard, and then a figure dressed in black appeared in front of the caravan.

“It’s you?” The heavily bearded man’s face changed as he stared at that one-eyed, golden-haired man.

McKinley [Mai’jin’li], the One-Eyed Viper. In this long road which nobody controlled, this name was a very famous one. This person was famed for both his viciousness as well as his power.

“Waaaaa!” An infant in the caravan behind began to cry.

“Bandits!” Many people began to panic.

“QUIET!” The heavily bearded man roared angrily. Many people in the caravan immediately began to arrange themselves in groups, making sure that everyone was together. A number of youngsters armed themselves with weapons, preparing to resist.

The heavily bearded man looked at the one-eyed golden-haired man. “One-Eyed Viper, don’t push things too far. How about this. I’ll offer you five thousand gold coins for you and yours to allow us past. Deal?”

“Five thousand gold coins?” The one-eyed man laughed coldly. “Malone, do you take me, McKinley, to be a beggar? Listen up. A hundred thousand gold coins, and I’ll let you go. Otherwise…hmph.”

The faces of all the mercenaries sank.

A hundred thousand gold coins? Their compensation for this escort mission was only sixty or seventy thousand gold coins. If they were to offer a hundred thousand gold coins, they would be paying out of pocket. After all, according to the mercenary escorting rules, once they accepted an escort mission, even if they had to pay off some bandits, the mercenary company would have to pay out of pocket.

“One-Eyed Viper, don’t go overboard. You should be satisfied to earn 5000 gold without a single man of yours dying.” The heavily bearded man hefted his battleaxe. “Otherwise. We’ll just have to see who is stronger.” Big Beard Malone was quite confident. In the past, he had battled against McKinley, and they were about equal in strength. He believed that with the ambush a failure, McKinley wouldn’t dare to risk everything in an all-out assault.

“That’s how it should be. Brothers, attack!” McKinley shouted in a high voice.

Instantly, all of the bandits drew their weapons and, howling angrily, began to charge. This really did completely shock Malone.

“Swish!” “Swish”! “Swish!”

The archers on both sides began to release their arrows without mercy, but in a small-scale skirmish like this with only a hundred people on each side, archers didn’t have too great an impact on the overall battle.

“Malone, die!” McKinley charged forward, a sharp polearm in his arms. Leaping into the air, with all his might, he delivered a tremendous blow against Malone.

Malone swung his battleaxe upwards, unwilling to show any weakness.

“Thruuum.” The dark aura covering the polearm suddenly dramatically intensified.

“BAM!”

Malone felt his hands grow numb, and he couldn't help but take a few steps back.

"You…?" Malone stared at McKinley in astonishment. He knew exactly how powerful McKinley was. In terms of frontal assaults, his own weapon held an advantage over McKinley's. But just then, the opponent had an advantage over him. This…

"Your guess is correct. I've already entered the eighth rank as a warrior." McKinley's face was filled with arrogance.

"No wonder you weren't worried about making a frontal assault at all." Malone now understood.

"Boss, there's a pretty woman here." A voice suddenly rang out.

McKinley immediately turned his head and saw Jenne, her face pale from terror and shock. Right now, Jenne was frantically protecting her little brother. The pitiable look on her face was quite stirring indeed.

"Haha, that woman is mine!" McKinley immediately grew excited.

….

The mercenaries were battling against the bandits. A bandit decapitated a mercenary, and then was run through the chest by another mercenary's sword.

"Retreat, retreat!" Malone bellowed as he quickly retreated. All of his mercenaries retreated with him as well.

"Lord Ley, I beg of you, please rescue our caravan." Malone said respectfully towards Linley, begging him for aid. Right now, the mercenaries had formed into a circle, with all the merchants and the others inside the ring. Linley and Malone were both located at the outermost layer of the circle.

Faced with Malone's plea, Linley nodded once.

"I'll only help you deal with the leader." Linley said. Malone instantly was so excited that his eyes shone. If McKinley was killed, how could they be afraid of those remaining bandits?

Jenne was tightly holding her younger brother near the campfire.

"Sis, that mercenary captain seems to be begging Lord Ley." Keane's eyes were glowing as he watched all of this. Jenne turned to look at Linley as well.

Linley was standing in the middle of the road, calmly looking at the bandits.

"F*ck off!" Wielding his polearm, McKinley charged forward at high speed. He was advancing at an extremely fast speed, and his body was also flickering from left to right, as though he had transformed into two separate figures, making it difficult for one to determine who the real McKinley was, and which was the illusion.

Illusionary Blade!

This was the trademark special skill of McKinely, the One-Eyed Viper!

"How laughable." Linley, having already reached the level of 'impose', held techniques of this level in absolutely no regard at all.

"Die!" A terrifying, ferocious gleam appeared in McKinley's eye.

Linley drew the adamantine heavy sword from its sheath on his back. This drawing motion carried with it an astonishing, imposing aura, as though all of the space around it had suddenly become frozen.

The adamantine heavy sword chopped towards McKinley in a very simple manner.

McKinley immediately wanted to dodge, but to his terror, he discovered that the space around him seemed to have become suddenly compressed and locked. In that moment, not even sound could escape from the area.

He had nowhere to dodge, and in fact, he couldn't even see anything else. His eye could only watch as the adamantine heavy sword drew closer and closer.

He wanted to raise his polearm to block, but he felt as though he had been mired in an endless pit of quicksand. The polearm felt as though it weighed ten thousand pounds, and was extremely slow.

"Bam!"

The adamantine heavy sword landed against McKinley's body. Suddenly, McKinley's entire body, from head to toe, transformed into meat pulp. The bandits, the mercenaries, Jenne, Keane, and the others all stared in astonishment, their mouths hanging open.

"The rest of those little bandits are for you to handle." Linley replaced his sword into its sheath as he spoke calmly to Big Beard Malone.

Chapter 11 – Hands

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 11, Hands

Under the glow of the campfires, everyone's faces were half-lit, half-shadowed. The smell of blood still infested the area, but now, the men on both sides of the battle only stared in shock at that corpse that had been transformed into a pile of flesh and blood, then at Linley and the adamantine heavy sword he carried.

A combatant of the eighth rank had been killed in one sword stroke…

This…

Was hard to believe!

"My brothers, let's kill these bandits!" Big Beard Malone was the first to react, and he immediately shouted in excitement. "Kill these bastards and avenge our slain comrades!"

Hearing this roar by Big Beard Malone, all of the bandits woke up as well. Their leader, the One-Eyed Viper, McKinley, was killed in one stroke. Even if the mercenaries weren't there, Linley alone could lay waste to them all with that heavy sword.

"Vengeance! Vengeance! Kill!" The mercenaries' eyes were blazing as they were suddenly filled with confidence. One after another charged forward, weapons at the ready.

"Flee, quick!"

The bandits shouted loudly, as they all began to flee, forgetting everything else. The archers of the mercenary company immediately began to nock their bows. Staring coldly at the backs of the fleeing bandits, one sharp arrow was shot out after another. "Swish." "Swish." Six bandits were hit by

arrows and fell to the ground.

In the blink of an eye, the seventy or so remaining bandits disappeared into the darkness.

The mercenary company didn't engage in pursuit for too long, chasing after them for only a hundred or so meters before returning. After all, their prime responsibility was to protect the caravan.

"Whew."

The many merchants and travelers in the caravan all sighed in relief. But at this time, the faces of the mercenaries were quite ugly to behold, as they began to collect the corpses of the ten or so comrades who had died.

"Everyone, you can get back to your rest." Malone said loudly.

Quite a few mercenaries had been wounded as well, and had to rest and be treated. Those hundreds of people in the caravan began to calm down, each returning to their own places. As long-time travelers, they often experienced such events, and wouldn't be too shocked or concerned now.

…..

One campfire after another was lit, and the ten or so mercenary corpses were buried within the desolate earth at the sides of the road. Mercenaries who lived by the edges of their blades could die at any time. And once they died, their bodies would all be buried thusly, with the other mercenaries at most bringing some keepsakes of theirs back home for them.

Leaning against a large tree by the roadside with the adamantine heavy sword on his back, Linley quietly watched everyone else.

"Lord Ley." Many of the caravan merchants ran over, expressing their gratitude towards Linley. Many of them even wanted to give gold coins to Linley as a gift, but Linley respectfully declined them all.

“Brothers, a good journey to you!” Malone roared loudly.

All of the mercenaries present were standing in front of the graves. In unison, they bowed deeply towards the graves. In the lives of these mercenaries, death was a common occurrence. After paying their respects, all of them returned to their normal positions.

The captain of this mercenary company, Big Beard Malone, headed towards Linley with Luther and Lowndes alongside him. Very gratefully, he said, “Lord Ley, thank you. If it wasn’t for you, our mercenary company…” Malone fell silent, shaking his head.

“Ley, thank you so much for saving our mercenary company.” The young Luther said gratefully.

Linley’s initial warning to them as well as his assistance at the end had both been utterly invaluable in saving the mercenary company.

“No need.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Lord Ley, here is ten thousand gold coins.” Malone withdrew a magicrystal card from his pockets. “This magicrystal card is an un-bound one, and has ten thousand gold coins within it. Lord Ley, you must accept it. If it wasn’t for you, not only would our mercenary company have failed our mission, we most likely would’ve all died as well.”

Linley shook his head with a laugh.

“Ley, please accept it,” Lowndes immediately urged. Mercenaries were usually quite magnanimous. These people who spent their lives living by the edges of their blades generally held in high regard the codes of valor, brotherhood, and friendship.

“Do I look like someone who needs money to you?” Linley looked at the three of them.

Within his interspatial ring, Linley had twenty two magicrystal cards, each

with 100 million gold coins. 2.2 billion gold coins! Even the Dawson Conglomerate wouldn't be easily persuaded to bring out such a vast fortune at once.

Some of the clans in the Four Great Empires were very powerful and very wealthy, but no matter how powerful they were, they couldn't compare to the wealth of a royal clan.

After all, those extremely large and powerful clans in the Four Great Empires still had to pay an enormous amount of taxes each year to the Emperor.

By comparison, the ruler of the Kingdom of Fenlai, compared to those major clans, had much more power in his own domain. The wealth that had been built up over thousands of years was a frightening sum indeed.

After hearing Linley's words, Malone was briefly startled, but then didn't press it. He didn't dare to keep squabbling with a powerful combatant such as Linley. And in addition, it truly wasn't easy for his mercenary company to make a living either.

"Captain Malone, go take care of your mercenaries. I see that quite a number of them suffered serious injuries." Linley said.

"Then Lord Ley, I leave you to your rest. I'll take my leave now." Malone said respectfully. Powerful combatants were treated with respect no matter where they were.

The campfires blazed. Many of the people in the caravan weren't able to fall asleep. Many of them hunched over campfires. Aside from a minority who had managed to fall asleep, most were talking about what had just happened. Every so often, glances would be sneaked towards Linley. Clearly, the topic of their conversation was Linley.

Right now, Linley was seated cross-legged, attuning himself to the vast, boundless earth, as well as the wind which spanned the skies.

After having spent three years training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley had learned quite a bit about the proper way of training. Both warriors and magi, in the end, had to learn how to understand and become attuned to nature.

For example, just now, both Linley and McKinley were warriors of the eighth rank.

But in terms of true understanding, McKinley was still on the most basic level of attack, while Linley had already reached the third level, and was able to ‘impose’ in battle. This ‘imposing power’ was the power to impose upon the heavens and the earth to constrain his enemies. When he struck out with his sword, he had disrupted the entire surrounding space.

The difference between the two of them was too great. For him to be killed in a single stroke wasn’t strange at all.

“If I had not trained within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and forgot about everything besides training for three years, no matter how long I stayed in Hess City, I probably wouldn’t have been able to rise to another level of understanding.” Linley mused to himself.

Many of the people in the caravan were discussing Linley, but Linley didn’t pay any attention to them as he quietly meditated.

“Ley, Lord Ley?” A nervous voice rang out next to Linley.

Hearing this voice, Linley turned around. It was that young nobleman, who was standing up as straight as a ramrod. Keane. A hint of a smile appeared on Linley’s face. “Keane. Right? What is it?”

Hearing Linley call him by his name, Keane felt very proud. He said quietly, “Lord Ley, I have a request.”

“Sit first, then talk.”

Linley’s attitude made Keane relax just a little, and he sat down next to

Linley. His eyes filled with worship, he said to Linley, “Lord Ley, just then, your sword blow was so powerful. I’ve been bullied ever since I was a kid. I want to be a powerful warrior as well. Can you teach me?”

Linley was startled.

Warrior training wasn’t a matter of just a few days. It required many years of accumulated hard work, as well as good natural talent. It also required good instructors. Only when all three criteria were fulfilled could a powerful combatant be produced.

“That’s a bit difficult, and I don’t have enough time to train you.” Linley laughed.

Keane hurriedly nodded, waving his hands frantically. “No, Lord Ley, I don’t need to learn too much. I don’t need to be too powerful. I just want to learn that sword stroke you used just now. Just that one sword stroke.” As he spoke, Keane even pantomimed the actual sword blow.

“Just that one sword stroke?” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Although that sword stroke of his had seemed easy, it had required over ten years of hard training as well as changes to both his mind and spirit. Only then was he able to understand this ‘impose’ level. Not even most warriors of the ninth rank were able to grasp any level of ‘impose’, much less those of the eighth rank.

According to the Baruch clan’s records, that ancestor who wielded the heavy warhammer, upon reaching the Saint-level, was still only capable of reaching the level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’. Only after being at the Saint-level for more than ten years did the ancestor begin to understand how to ‘impose’.

Magi found it naturally easier than warriors to become one with nature.

For a pure warrior to truly understand and comprehend ‘impose’ was far more difficult than a dual-class combatant such as Linley, who was both

magus and warrior.

“Is it very….very hard? I’m not afraid.” Keane said.

“Keane.” A gentle voice called out, and Jenne rushed over, dressed in light blue and holding some clothes in her hands. She said towards Keane with concern, “The night is growing cold. Bundle up.”

Keane pouted, shaking his head. “No.”

Jenne couldn’t help but frown, but there was nothing she could do.

Keane continued, “Big sis, look, Lord Ley is only wearing a thin shirt. I’m already wearing a lot, and you want me to wear even more?”

Linley couldn’t help but let out an unexpected laugh. This Keane was actually comparing himself to him? Even in the most freezing of winters, Linley wouldn’t feel cold, much less now.

“Keane, bundle up.” Linley said.

Linley’s words seemed to have more of an effect than Jenne’s. “Oh.” Keane accepted the clothes from Jenne, then put them on. Jenne gratefully looked at Linley. “Thank you, Lord Ley.”

Linley smiled and nodded.

As Jenne and Linley exchanged glances, Jenne immediately blushed red slightly.

But Linley, quite by accident, noticed Jenne’s hands. When he saw them, he was quite surprised. From what Linley could tell, Jenne was without question a young noble lady, but Jenne’s hands seemed rather coarse.

“Keane, don’t disturb Lord Ley for too long. Lord Ley needs to rest as well.” Jenne smiled apologetically towards Linley, and then she went back to her own carriage, face still slightly red.

Linley looked at Keane.

“Keane, does your sister often do chores at home?” Linley was very curious. Most noble ladies had hands that were extremely tender and soft. In terms of both bearing as well as clothing, Jenne was definitely a noble lady, but her hands…

Keane nodded. “Right. Lord Ley, you probably can’t tell from the way I’ve dressed, but I feel really awkward in these clothes. It’s been a long time since I’ve dressed this formally.” Keane tugged at his collar. “Actually, my sister and I were living in an ordinary mountain village. Only Grandpa Lambert was there to take care of us. Big sis usually had to do most of our family chores.”

“Oh?” Linley was beginning to grow curious. “But your sister’s demeanor doesn’t seem like that of an ordinary village girl.”

Keane nodded. “Of course. Our father was the governor of a prefecture-level city and had an exceedingly high social status. When we were young, we stayed in the governor’s mansion. But when I was six, my mother, my sister, and myself were forced out by our aunt. Thus, my mother took my sister and I back to her home. My big sis, when she was young, received all the education that a young noble lady should have, and when we left our father’s home, she was already ten. So she naturally continued to maintain the noble customs which had already become ingrained within her. But I was young, and my mother was never in good health. Grandpa Lambert couldn’t take care of both of us by himself, so big sis often had to do housework. Big sis can do anything!”

“I remember in the heart of winter, big sis’ hands had begun to split from the cold, but she’d still cook for me. I wanted to help, but she wouldn’t let me.” Keane bit his lips, eyes starting to turn red. “This time, when I take over the position of city governor, I definitely won’t let big sis do any more chores. I’m going to let a huge number of servants take care of sis.”

Hearing this story, Linley couldn’t help but admire this Jenne, who

outwardly looked so fragile and so shy.

“You are going to take over the position of city governor? Didn’t your aunt expel you though?” Linley asked.

Keane didn’t hide anything. “At first, my aunt used every method available to her to make us leave, so as to guarantee that her son would be the next city governor. Unfortunately…that garbage son of hers did nothing but drink and fool around. Immediately after my father died, that piece of trash felt delighted as he had nothing to fear now, and became even more dissolute. From what I heard, not too long ago, he died in the arms of some woman. After he died, naturally the position of city governor falls to me.”

Keane looked at Linley with excitement. “Lord Ley, please teach me. Once I become city governor, I’ll definitely give you a really, really high position!”

Chapter 12 – Blackrock City

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 12, Blackrock City

Right. A kid who had lived in a small village after the age of six would naturally be very innocent. Linley felt that Jenne was quite innocent as well.

Through that short conversation, Linley had already learned a great deal about this little fellow, Keane.

At the same time, Linley more or less also understood what was going on with him and his sister.

“Assume the position of city governor? I’m afraid it won’t be that easy.” Linley thought to himself. Compared to these two innocent siblings, Linley could see much more deeply.

The highest level of city in the O’Brien Empire was the imperial capital, followed by the provincial capitals of the seven provinces. Beneath the level of the provincial capitals were the prefectural cities, then ordinary cities, and then countryside villages.

The status of a governor of a prefectural city was actually quite high.

How could the position of governor of a prefectural city be so easily acquired by an innocent countryside-raised child?

…..

After training the entire night, when Linley next opened his eyes, it was already dawn.

“Lord Ley, by nightfall tonight, we should be at the border cities of the Empire.” Lowndes chortled. “Lord Ley, let’s eat breakfast together.”

“Alright.”

Linley and Bebe headed over to them. As for Haeru…the food there wasn’t nearly enough for him. Late last night, Haeru had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and only returned after having eaten a good, full meal.

Within a carriage not too far away from Linley.

“Sis, I’ll get off first.” Keane happily hopped off the carriage.

Lambert looked at Keane, who had not a care in the world. He shook his head mentally, and then looked at Jenne. Lambert knew very well how innocent and how kind Jenne was.

“Miss, don’t rush off just yet.” Lambert squeezed out a smile.

“Grandpa Lambert, what is it?” Jenne looked questioningly at Lambert with her big eyes.

Lambert said, “Miss, you saw as well how we met with bandits on the way. When we reach the border cities, we’ll have to separate from the caravan. By then, I, an old man, along with you and the young master will be all alone on the road. If we meet with any bandits on the way, I might not be able to overcome them.”

Jenne couldn’t help but to think back to that bloody scene of attacking bandits from the previous night.

“Right. Then what should we do?” Jenne was a bit nervous.

Lambert laughed. “Miss, didn’t you notice that Lord Ley? Even the leader of those bandits was killed by Lord Ley with a single sword stroke. As long as Lord Ley is willing to protect you, you definitely won’t be in any danger.”

Jenne was eighteen years old, after all. She wasn't as irresponsible as Keane.

"Grandpa Lambert, if I try to invite a powerful combatant like that to assist us, do you think he will agree?" Jenne looked at Lambert.

Lambert laughed encouragingly. "Don't worry. Just tell him that you and Keane are the children of the governor of the prefectural city of Cerre [Chi'er], and that this time you are returning for the purpose of Keane assuming the governorship. If he can guard you on your way back, once you arrive at Cerre, you will definitely thank and reward him heavily. Remember…don't tell him too much. Don't tell him that in the past, you were living in a small village. Just tell him what I told you now."

Lambert knew very well that if Linley became aware of the details of their situation, he probably wouldn't agree.

"Oh."

Jenne didn't even notice that there were some slight differences between the truth and what Lambert had just instructed her to say.

"Go, and remember what I told you. Act sincerely." Lambert encouraged.

"Okay." Jenne nodded. Taking a deep breath, she summoned her courage and descended from the carriage.

Watching Jenne leave the carriage, Lambert secretly sighed. "Alas. Madame, even on your death bed, you weren't willing to swallow your anger. You insisted on having Jenne and Keane go assume the position of city governor. Lord Count Wade [Wei'de] is already dead, but the senior madame probably won't so easily allow Keane to assume the position of governor."

"If we had a combatant of the ninth rank protecting us though, then we will have a good chance." Late at night, Lambert had heard others whisper that McKinley had already reached the eighth rank as a warrior. But Linley had

been able to easily kill him in one blow. As Lambert saw it, Linley should therefore be a warrior of the ninth rank.

…….

The wind was blowing. After eating to his content, Linley was relaxing comfortably for now, as they would depart again soon.

“The O’Brien Empire. Mm. We should be there tomorrow.” Linley was reclining on his cart, lazily awaiting their departure. But right at this moment, from the corner of his eyes, Linley suddenly saw someone approaching.

“Jenne?” Linley sat up curiously.

Somewhat cautiously, Jenne was walking over to him. Seeing Linley sit up and look at her, Jenne forced out a small smile. “Lord Ley, hello.”

“Miss Jenne, hello.” Linley was a bit confused. Why had this Miss Jenne come?

Jenne just stood there hesitantly for a moment, not knowing how to start.

“Miss Jenne, is there something I can help you with?” Linley asked preemptively.

Jenne’s face turned slightly red. Clearly, she was very nervous. “Lord Ley, it’s like this. My younger brother and I are journeying to my father’s prefectural city. My younger brother is going to assume the position of city governor. But we’re afraid that the journey to the city will be dangerous. Therefore, we were hoping…hoping to ask you, Lord Ley, to protect us.”

Getting this all out in one breath, Jenne began to stammer a bit.

Linley had a basic understanding of the general geography of the O’Brien Empire. His younger brother, Wharton, was in the southernmost administrative province of the O’Brien Empire, known as the O’Brien

Administrative Province.

Linley himself currently was in the Northwest Administrative Province of the O'Brien Empire.

From the northwest province to the southernmost province was a journey that would most likely take a year and a half or so. But of course, if Linley hurried along the way by riding on the Blackcloud Panther, he could cross a thousand kilometers per day and arrive within ten days.

But Linley was in no rush.

His younger brother was in school at the O'Brien Academy. Why the need to rush over there? Right now, the most important thing for him was training and raising his own strength as much as possible.

"Protect you? For how long?" Linley asked with a laugh.

"Not too long," Jenne hurriedly said. "The city of Cerre is in the Northwest Administrative Province. From here to there, it should only take us around ten days or half a month or so. When we get there, I will definitely thank you and reward you heavily."

"Thank and reward me?"

Linley was sighing to himself. Based on Linley's experience, he knew very well, how could the position of city governor of a prefectural city be so easily taken by a pair of innocent siblings who had no powerful backers at all?

"We'll give you lots of gold coins." Jenne looked hopefully at Linley.

Jokingly, Linley said, "Oh? How many gold coins?"

Jenne gritted her teeth. "Ten thousand gold coins? What do you think?" Jenne had been living in the village since she was ten. Normally speaking, one or two gold coins could last for quite a while in a place like that. She

knew that the prefectural city was a wealthy place, and she believed that although ten thousand gold coins was an astronomical figure, the prefectural city should be able to support it.

“Ten thousand gold coins?”

That previous night, the mercenary captain had wanted to offer Linley ten thousand gold coins as a token of his thanks as well. But frankly, even aside from the wealth in Linley’s interspatial ring, each of Linley’s sculptures, given his status as a master sculptor, would be worth over a hundred thousand gold coins.

“Is that not enough?” Jenne stuttered.

Linley looked at Jenne. “Miss Jenne, generally speaking, how much did you and Keane spend each year in the village?”

“In the village?” Jenne was startled. Lambert had just instructed her repeatedly not to say that in the past she had lived in a village, but Linley had already known about it.

Jenne said honestly, “A few dozen gold coins each year. After all, we had to pay for my mother’s medical treatment. Right. Lord Ley, I don’t have that much money on me right now, but in the future, I will.”

Linley had to admit that she really was an innocent girl.

“So, um, actually, you know, it should be fairly safe inside the Empire’s borders. Grandpa Lambert probably was just over-thinking things. Um. I should leave.” Jenne felt rather awkward, and began to just blurt out random things.

“No. I just wanted to ask, right now, how many gold coins can you pay up front?” Linley asked.

After hearing that her prefectural city was in the Northwest Administrative Province, Linley had already made up his mind to help them, as it was on

the way for him. After all, he was going to pass through the Northwest Administrative Province enroute to the O'Brien Administrative Province.

"Right now? I have around ten gold coins on me." Jenne withdrew a small pouch in her purse. "Uncle Lambert has a few more coins on him also."

Linley accepted the pouch, retrieving a single gold coin from it.

"Done." Linley placed this gold coin into his own pouch. "From this moment forward, I've accepted this escort mission. But of course, this gold coin is just your down payment. When your younger brother becomes the city governor, I'll collect the remaining 9999 gold coins."

Jenne was wildly overjoyed at her success.

"Thank you, thank you." Jenne was so excited that her little face turned pure scarlet.

…..

The caravan began to move forward once more, and the Blackcloud Panther once more began to lope alongside Linley's cart. At the same time, Haeru looked suspiciously at Bebe and growled, "Bebe. Master accepted an escort mission for just ten thousand gold coins?"

Even a hundred thousand gold coins wouldn't be enough to invite an expert like Linley to help out.

Just by killing a magical beast of the eighth rank, Linley would be able to procure a magicite core of the eighth rank that was worth 500,000 gold coins. Generally speaking, it was difficult for combatants of the eighth rank to kill magical beasts of the eighth rank. Only combatants of the ninth rank were able to kill magical beasts with confidence.

"Haeru, what do you know? The Boss is being benevolent, get it?" Bebe growled back to the Blackcloud Panther.

Growling to each other, the two magical beasts conversed in the language of magical beasts. Seeing them chatting to each other, Linley chuckled, continuing to sit quietly in the cart.

“Squeak, squeak.”

The cart’s wheels rhythmically squeaked, constantly moving forward. By the time the sun went down past the mountains, this caravan finally arrived at a border city of the O’Brien Empire.

Riding on the cart, Linley’s body swayed back and forth as he watched the distant city grow closer.

This was a pitch-black city that looked as if it were an enormous magical beast that had taken the land for itself. The walls of the cities were over thirty meters tall. Only powerful combatants would be able to scale such heights.

“Blackrock City. The ‘wall’ of the O’Brien Empire in the Northwest Administrative Province.” Linley had long since heard of this famous city.

Historically, there were quite a few major battles that had been fought at Blackrock City. Although many years had passed by, when they drew near Blackrock City, they could still see the dark red color staining many of the enormous black stones making up the walls of the city. These were dried bloodstains that had accumulated over countless years and battles.

“Everyone, we’ll part ways here.” Malone shouted loudly from outside the city walls.

Based on their mission requirements, their mercenary company was only responsible for delivering the caravan to this location. Immediately, the various merchants and travelers began to drive their carriages or carry their bags towards the city gates.

“Big brother Ley!” Keane called out from his carriage.

On the journey over, Keane had learned that Linley was going to escort them. Immediately, he grew even closer to Linley, and Linley, in turn, told Keane to just address him as ‘big brother’. After all, Linley was only 21 years old.

“Let’s go together.”

Linley led his two-meter tall, four-meter long black panther directly towards the city gates. The previously lazy-looking guard, seeing Linley’s black panther, was so scared that he immediately took a few steps back.

Panther-type, tiger-type, and lion-type magical beasts were all high-class magical beasts. Even the weakest panther-type magical beasts and lion-type magical beasts were generally of the seventh rank.

Right now, in a time of peace, the security at the gates wasn’t too strict.

The gate guards didn’t even inspect Linley, directly allowing him entrance.

“My heavens, what rank of magical beast is that black panther? When it looked at me, my heart almost stopped from fear.” A gate guard cried out loudly in fear.

An older gate guard next to him lowered his voice and said, “Lower your voice. From what I know, the weakest type of panther, the Golden Tattooed Panther, is a magical beast of the seventh rank. This black panther is at least a magical beast of the eighth rank.”

….

“Wow! Blackrock City is so developed!” Keane’s eyes were shining.

On the main streets of Blackrock City, Linley, Keane, and Jenne were walking side by side. Jenne was wearing a peaked cap on her head, pressed down firmly and with a veil in front of her face. After all, Jenne’s beauty could cause a great deal of trouble.

“He thinks THIS is developed?” Bebe squeaked on Linley’s shoulders.

Blackrock City was a city meant for war. Although it was fairly developed due to traders, there was no way it could compare to the now-lost Holy Capital, Fenlai City. Even when compared to Hess City, the capital of a kingdom, there was quite a big difference.

“Careful.” Linley’s body suddenly turned into a blur as he flashed in front of Jenne and Keane.

“Swish.” “Swish.”

With a wave of his right hand, Linley snatched two arrows out of the air.

“You think you can run?” With a wave of his hands, Linley sent the two arrows going back the way they came, piercing through the throats of the two distant men who were preparing to flee.

“Urk…”

Those two men clutched their throats in shock, and then collapsed, dead.

“Ah!” The previously calm street became filled with screams, and many people began to run about in a panic. “Let’s go.” Linley said to the stunned Jenne and Keane.

Chapter 13 – Persuasion

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 13, Persuasion

“Move, now!” That old servant, Lambert, reacted quickly as well, immediately urging them to leave.

Totally baffled and confused, Jenne and Keane were tugged by Lambert and Linley away from this area. After all, given that people had just been killed on the streets, the city guard would soon arrive.

Linley wasn’t afraid of the guards, but dealing with guards while also escorting Jenne was an extremely annoying task.

Aside from Linley and his group, many others around them were running away and fleeing wildly as well.

It was nightfall, and it should have been the most bustling time for this major road in Blackrock City, but in the blink of an eye, this part of the road became totally deserted. Nobody was within a hundred meters of those two corpses.

“Captain, what should we do?”

Seated next to a window within a private room in a hotel, two men were staring down at the scene below. One of them had long red hair, with a face that looked as though it had been carved with a knife. But right now, he had a sinister look on his face as he listened to the nearby subordinate query him.

“I didn’t expect these two country bumpkin siblings to have such a powerful helper.” The red-haired man said coldly.

“Captain, that man even has a black panther. Panthers are all high-class magical beasts. For the likes of us to deal with such a powerful

combatant…will be difficult." A burly, broad-chested man beside the captain said in a quiet voice.

The red-haired man was frustrated as well.

Per the orders of the senior madame, they came to kill these two bumpkin siblings. Per their intelligence, only the old servant with these two bumpkins posed any threat. But he was only a warrior of the sixth rank. In the O'Brien Empire, which was filled with experts, a combatant of the sixth rank was nothing.

Perhaps in some villages, a warrior of the sixth rank was powerful. But the leader of this squad which had been sent out per the senior madame's orders was himself a warrior of the seventh rank.

"A black panther…why haven't I ever seen this type of panther before?" The red-haired man was frowning. As an expert of the seventh level, he knew quite a bit about magical beasts.

Panther-type magical beasts included the Golden Tattooed Panther, the Blackstripe Panther, and others.

But this black panther with wavy black stripes was something he had never seen.

"That brown-haired man is clearly the master of this black panther. He is, at the very least, a combatant of the eighth rank." The red-haired man thought back to the scene of Linley suddenly snatching the arrows out of the air, and as he did, he shivered.

Arrows moved at an extremely high speed.

To be able to react and immediately move in front of Jenne and Keane, and then snatch the two arrows out of the air was something even most warriors of the eighth rank couldn't do.

"Captain?" The burly man next to him asked quietly.

The red-haired man turned to look at him. In a cold voice, he said, “Hmph. That brown-haired man is extremely powerful. For this mission, we can’t fight them head on. Arrange for some people to keep watch on them secretly. I refuse to believe that expert will neither eat nor sleep. He can’t always be together with those two siblings.”

“As soon as that brown-haired man and those two are separated, immediately have our men kill the two.” The red-haired man issued his order.

“Yes, Captain!” The burly man nodded and immediately left the room.

The red-haired man turned his head back, once more staring below through the window. Those two corpses still lay on the street with the arrows through their throats. The mounted city guards were just now rushing over.

……

On the second floor of an ordinary hotel in Blackstone City, Linley, Jenne, Keane, and Lambert were seated in a private room. Even Bebe had a seat of his own. As for Haeru, he was lying down on the ground, his eyes contentedly half-shut.

Right now, Jenne and Keane’s faces were both still rather pale.

“Just…just now, I was so scared.” Keane’s eyes were still filled with terror.

Ever since he was young, Keane had lived in a countryside village. The most violent struggles he had ever seen were just some of the young men getting into serious fights with each other. How could he ever have experienced something like what he just saw?

Although on the road here, they had suffered a bandit attack, the bandits were fighting against the mercenaries, and hadn’t harmed them yet. But this time, the opponents had come for his life and his sister’s life.

Jenne's eyes were filled with a hint of terror as well.

"Jenne, Keane, don't be afraid." Linley laughed as he consoled them.

To Linley, a small event like this couldn't even impact his mood at all. In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he was constantly on guard for magical beasts laying in ambush for him.

And thus, within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley learned how to keep his heart as tranquil as water, come what may. How could a small event like this disturb him?

"Young master, young miss." Lambert consoled as well. "We're fine now. Don't worry. Fortunately, we had Lord Ley with us today. Otherwise, things would have been terrible. Young master, young miss, you absolutely must offer your thanks to Lord Ley."

Only now did Jenne and Keane recover from their panic.

"Big brother Ley, we really owe you our thanks this time." Keane said gratefully, and his eyes were glowing. "Big brother Ley, just now, you waved your hand and snatched the two arrows out of the air, and then with another wave…those two guys were dead." Keane was indeed a child. In his excitement, he had totally forgotten his fear.

Jenne looked gratefully at Linley as well. "Thank you, big brother Ley."

Towards Linley, Jenne felt gratitude from the bottom of her heart.

That first time she had seen Linley, Jenne had felt that he was a mysterious, powerful expert, an amazing person who commanded a mighty magical beast as well.

In particular, when Linley had agreed to escort and protect them, he had only taken a single gold coin. Although Linley said that he would collect the other 9999 when Keane became the city governor, Jenne, being an eighteen year old adult, knew when someone was acting out of kindness.

“No need for thanks. I agreed to protect you. This is nothing more than what I’m supposed to do.” Linley frowned. “What’s going on though? As soon as you entered Blackrock City, people tried to assassinate you? Who exactly have you offended?”

Keane was instantly baffled.

Jenne was confused as well. “I…I haven’t offended anyone.”

“Then who has enmity with you two?” Linley continued to ask.

Jenne was quiet for a moment, then said, “Right, if we talk about enmity, perhaps the only one with enmity towards us is my aunt.” Right at this moment, the old servant, Lambert, immediately interrupted their conversation. Laughing towards Linley, he said, “We don’t have any enemies. Their aunt just has some disagreements with them, that’s all. Lord Ley, no need to worry about these annoying things. Let’s all eat.”

Linley glanced at Lambert, then laughed and nodded. “Fine, let’s all eat.”

In truth, ever since Keane had told Linley about himself and his sister, Linley had a rough idea as to what was going on. This assassination attempt showed that clearly, it was because the main wife of the departed city governor didn’t wish for Jenne and Keane to assume the position of city governor.

But Linley didn’t say these things openly.

……

That very night, the two siblings, Lambert, and Linley each retired to their own rooms. They had reserved a private, stand-alone villa.

Darkness descended.

Linley’s room was totally dark. Linley sat cross-legged on his bed, his heart

totally calm as he quietly attuned with the throbbing pulse of the world and the flows of the wind.

Occasionally, when Linley had some insights, he would rise to his feet and casually swing his heavy sword.

….

“Squeak.” Dressed in her sleeping clothes and her long hair unbound, Jenne walked towards the room of her old servant, Lambert. “Grandpa Lambert, are you sleeping yet?”

The door opened very quickly.

“Miss, quick, come in.” Lambert immediately opened the door for Jenne, then closed it after Jenne entered his room.

“Miss, what is it?” Lambert asked.

Jenne stared at Lambert. “Grandpa Lambert, tell me. Why does someone want to kill me and my younger brother? Is it my aunt?”

“Why would you think such a thing?” Lambert’s heart trembled.

Jenne said stubbornly, “Grandpa Lambert, don’t treat me like a little kid. The day my younger brother and I left the village, I thought we would be making a joyful return as we went to assume the position of city governor. But now, I understand. Aunt and her people won’t allow us to take the position over. The people who tried to kill us just now definitely were acting on her behalf. I can’t think of anyone else.”

Lambert looked at Jenne and let out a long sigh.

“Fine, miss. I admit, your suspicions are correct.” Lambert said resignedly.

Jenne started.

“So it really is…” Jenne murmured.

Jenne look at Lambert. “Grandpa Lambert, why didn’t you tell me and my younger brother from the start?”

“Sigh.” Lambert shook his head. “What would be the point? Even on her death’s bed, your mother couldn’t let go of this grievance. She insisted on having you and your little brother go take over the governor’s position. I know that given your temperament, you wouldn’t go against your mother’s dying wish.”

“Right. I’ll carry it out, even if it costs me my life.” Jenne nodded stubbornly.

“Since this is the case, it was better to let the two of you travel happily. In addition, I was trying to come up with ways to protect you two as well. If we hadn’t encountered Lord Ley, I would’ve come up with other ideas here in Blackrock City, so as to allow you two to safely reach Cerre City.” Lambert said honestly.

Living in the village, Jenne and Keane’s lives weren’t happy at all.

The nobles of the village all lusted after Jenne’s beauty, while Keane was often bullied as well. Even if Jenne and Keane had known how dangerous this journey would be, they still would’ve made this trip.

After all, once Keane assumed the governorship, his destiny would be totally transformed.

“Grandpa Lambert, will this trip be very dangerous?” Jenne had a very complex look on her face.

Lambert let out a deep sigh. “Originally, I didn’t think it would be too dangerous, but now, it seems as though that aunt of yours has really made up her mind to be vicious. She’s arranged for assassins as far away as Blackrock City. Most likely, the road to Cerre City will be very dangerous after all.”

“Then, Grandpa Lambert, why didn’t you explain clearly to big brother Ley?” Jenne stared at Lambert.

“We can’t.” Lambert shook his head. “After your father died, your aunt virtually took total control over Cerre City. She has quite a few experts under her control. If you openly ask your big brother Ley to fight against the power controlling a prefectural city, I’m afraid that he won’t do so for the sake of you and your brother. After all, it is extremely dangerous.”

The real power controlling a prefectural city possessed an astonishing amount of power.

Such a power should have several combatants of the eighth rank. Of course, combatants of the ninth rank weren’t very likely. Even one would be astonishing. After all, combatants of the ninth rank usually served the managing clan of an entire Administrative Province, or the Emperor himself. To serve a governor of a prefectural city…unlikely.

However, assassins didn’t have to rely solely on brute force. Poison, traps… all of these were possible.

“Very dangerous?” Jenne paused for a moment. “Grandpa Lambert, get some rest.” As she spoke, Jenne left Lambert’s room.

But after leaving Lambert’s room, Jenne didn’t immediately go back to her own. Rather…she headed for Linley’s.

“Knock, knock, knock.” Three raps on the door.

“Come in.” Linley’s voice rang out, while a lantern was lit inside the room.

Jenne pushed the door open and entered.

Linley left his bed and took a seat on his chair. Smiling, he said, “Miss Jenne, it’s very late. Is there something you need?”

“Big brother Ley.” Jenne sat down. Taking a deep breath, she mustered up all her courage and said to Linley, “Big brother Ley, I have to tell you something.”

“What is that?” Linley looked at Jenne.

Jenne said apologetically, “Actually, Keane and I have been living in a countryside village this entire time, and it has been a long time since we had seen our father. We aren’t familiar at all with Cerre City, and we might not be successful in our attempt to take over the governorship of the city.”

Jenne really was an extremely compassionate girl. Knowing how dangerous it was, she decided that she didn’t want Linley to suffer these risks alongside them.

“Oh.” Linley only said this in response.

But in his heart, Linley sighed to himself. This Jenne really was a pure, innocent girl.

Seeing Linley’s reaction, Jenne thought that Linley didn’t understand. She hurriedly explained, “Big brother Ley, originally, with regards to assuming the governorship, my thought was that either we would succeed, or we would fail and go home. But it looks like it won’t be that simple. There are people out to kill us, and most likely, they were sent by our aunt. In the future, she’ll probably use even more vicious means against us. If you stay by our side, it will be dangerous for you too.”

Chapter 14 – Repeated Assassination Attempts

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 14, Repeated Assassination Attempts

“Very dangerous?” Linley began to laugh. “How dangerous, exactly?”

Seeing Linley’s reaction, Jenne couldn’t help but nod frantically. “Extremely dangerous. My aunt is currently in control of Cerre City, and her authority is on par with that of a city governor right now.”

Jenne said somewhat awkwardly, “Big brother Ley, I am so sorry. I didn’t tell you these things earlier. There’s no need for you to risk yourself for me. It isn’t worth it.”

“Haha….”

Linley laughed. “Not worth it? I don’t have anything else to do right now either. Escorting you along the way is just a matter of course. As far as the ‘danger’ is concerned? I have a much better understanding than you of whether or not it will be dangerous. Alright, Jenne, go back and get some rest.”

“Big brother Ley.” Jenne stared at Linley, somewhat stunned.

“Go back.” Linley said with a faint smile.

Jenne cast a grateful glance at Linley. “Thank you, big brother Ley.” But then, Jenne looked solemnly at him. “However, big brother Ley, I really don’t want you to risk yourself for my sake.”

“Go back to sleep.” Linley intentionally hardened his face, ‘barking’ at her.

“Oh.” Like a scolded child, Jenne nodded obediently, then turned and left via the door. Actually, in her heart, Jenne was feeling quite happy right now.

She was, after all, an eighteen year old child. When such a girl saw such an outstanding young man treat her so well, of course the girl would feel happy. Jenne didn't truly want to separate from Linley.

After walking outside the door, Jenne suddenly turned her head.

Jenne smiled beautifully. "Big brother Ley, when you harden your face like that, you look really grim and scary." And then, like a playful child, Jenne fled down and away from Linley's room.

Watching her flee, Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Taking a deep breath, Linley calmed himself down, then returned to his bed, quietly seating himself in the meditative position as he began to train his spirit. No matter when or where he was, Linley would always seize every possible moment for training.

Linley would never forget about seeking vengeance for his parents.

Could never forget about the death of Grandpa Doehring!

Could never forget that right now, he had a goal set for himself – Destroying the entire Radiant Church, root and stem!

"There will come a day…" Linley's resolve was extremely firm. Right now, he desired neither authority nor status. All he wanted was to be able to train in peace.

…..

In another stand-alone residence facing this hotel complex, there was a room where a lamp had been lit the entire night. The grim red-haired man sat alone in that room, six others surrounding him.

"If we succeed with this initiative, everyone will benefit. But if we fail… you all know how cruel Madame Wade can be." The red-haired man said calmly.

The six men's hearts were all filled with fear.

Madame Wade was heartless and vicious. When Count Wade had been alive, virtually everyone in Cerre City knew that although Count Wade was the city governor in name, in reality, the true governor was Madame Wade.

Even Madame Wade's son always felt frightened and cold when facing her.

Unfortunately, her son was dead now.

Per the rules, the successor to Count Wade as city governor should be his son. But how could Madame Wade so easily allow those two countryside-dwelling siblings to take the position?

"Captain, don't worry. We definitely won't fail this time. Although that expert is very powerful, he can't always be protecting them." One of the six men said with force and determination.

The others all nodded as well.

"Fine. I've already arranged for this hotel's owner to be bribed. On the third floor of the hotel, there are two rooms which are facing the siblings' residence. When the time comes, the four of you shall take up those two rooms. The other two will come with me. Remember, we will make our move as soon as we see the opportunity to, but our primary target is the boy." The red-haired man reminded.

After all, right now, Keane was the first in line for succession.

Jenne was a girl. It would be much harder for her to become the city governor.

"When the boy comes out, we move. After killing him, if we have the chance, we can kill the girl as well." The red-haired man said coldly.
"Alright. Let's go wait. Perhaps the boy will need to make a trip to the bathroom at night. That will allow us to complete our mission easily."

“Yes, Captain!”

Per the red-haired man’s orders, four of the six men immediately left the residence, heading directly for the hotel and for the two rooms on the third floor that had been prepared.

A curved moon was hanging in the sky tonight, and moonlight cast a gentle glow upon the world.

The archers that the red-haired man had brought on this trip were the elite archers of Cerre City. They should have been able to easily shoot a weak, unprepared boy from the distance of fifty or sixty meters.

“Captain, what should we do?” The other two men asked, standing by the red-haired man’s side.

The red-haired man said calmly, “Your mission is…if those four do not have a chance to kill the boy, dress up as hotel attendants and deliver breakfast to them. When you near the boy, immediately kill him with one hit.”

“Captain!” The two immediately became frantic.

Order them to dress as attendants to go assassinate the boy? But that powerful combatant with the black panther companion was right there. Even if they succeeded, would they be able to survive?

“Hmph.”

The red-haired man looked coldly at them. “The two of you have no options. When the eight of you came with me, your families were all taken into custody by Madame Wade. Once your mission fails, not only will you be doomed, your families are finished as well. But if you succeed, even if you die, your families will be treated well.”

Both men’s faces turned white.

“The two of you should know what type of person Madame Wade is, and what type of person I am.” The red-haired man said mercilessly.

Although this red-haired man was nominally their captain, in reality, he was nothing more than Madame Wade’s loyal hound. He was merciless when killing people.

“But of course, if the other four succeed, then there’ll be no need for the two of you to risk your lives.” The red-haired man said calmly, “Right now, you two should pray. Pray that the War God blesses you.”

Both of them were silent.

They were so-called ‘elite’ soldiers from the army. But how could small figures like them possibly struggle against Madame Wade? And what’s more, the red-haired man was keeping his eyes on them.

……

Right now, there were four archers based in the third floor of the hotel. All of them were lying in ambush in their separate rooms. In each room, one was resting, while another was on watch. They had to stay in top condition, and once Keane stepped out, they would immediately awaken the other person.

The night slowly passed on.

This night, Keane didn’t take a single step out of his room. The sky began to brighten, and the fresh morning air freshened the minds of the four archers considerably.

“Squeak.”

The door opened.

“He’s coming out.” The archers on watch in each room reminded their

partners.

The four archers in the two rooms all felt their heart-rates speed up. All of them secretly looked out the window in the direction of Jenne and Keane's residence.

"It's the girl. Don't be impatient. Wait." The archers were waiting quietly.

……

Pushing the door open, Jenne's face was wreathed in smiles. After knowing that Linley wouldn't leave and would continue to protect them, although she knew the path ahead was still perilous, Jenne still felt very happy.

"Ah. What nice, fresh air." Jenne closed her eyes, taking a deep breath of the fresh morning air.

And then, Jenne began to walk in the direction of her younger brother's room. In a clear voice, she called out, "Keane, time to get out of bed. Don't be lazy-a-bed'." As she spoke, Jenne knocked on the door.

Hearing Jenne's voice, Linley opened his eyes, ending his training. As for Haeru, Linley's Blackcloud Panther who was sleeping at the foot of Linley's bed, he didn't even bother to open his eyes.

….

Still wearing his sleepwear, Keane opened his door. Rubbing his eyes sleepily, he muttered, "Sis, why are we getting up so early? I haven't woken up yet. It's been a long time since I've had a good sleep."

Right at this moment, the eyes of the archers in the third floor of the hotel lit up.

"Target acquired."

The four archers simultaneously nocked their bows, preparing to fire.

…..

“Young miss, young master. You two have gotten up quite early.” The old servant, Lambert, pushed his door open as well.

“Good morning, Grandpa Lambert.” Jenne said warmly.

Keane just pouted, still rubbing at his eyes. “Grandpa Lambert, it isn’t that I got up early, it’s that big sis woke me up.”

Right at this moment.

“Fire!”

From one of the rooms in the third floor, an archer let out the order in a quiet voice. Simultaneously, two of the archers rose to their feet, their bows appearing in view of the window.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Two sharp arrows shot out simultaneously. At the same time, the two archers from the other room shot their arrows as well.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Two arrows in front, two arrows behind. In the blink of an eye, they ripped through the air, arriving directly in front of Jenne. Two of these arrows were aimed at her, while the other two were aimed at Keane.

At this moment…Linley was still in his room. The old servant, Lambert, was over ten meters away from the two siblings. Given his speed, there was no way he would be able to block in time.

“Young miss!” Lambert could only cry in alarm.

Jenne and Keane both felt the danger coming and turned their heads to look.

But all the two siblings saw, as though in slow motion, were those arrows growing closer and closer to them.

The metal arrows sliced through the air with a ear-piercing hissing sound.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!”

Four sounds in a row.

…..

Jenne and Keane both stood there, frozen with shock. Next to them, Lambert was also frightened stiff. With a ‘squeak’ sound, the door to Linley’s room swung open.

Linley left his room.

“Bebe, all yours.”

Bebe was standing directly in front of Jenne and Keane. Just then, in the blink of an eye, Bebe had easily blocked four arrows in a row.

After the ambush attempt yesterday, Linley had expected this band of assassins to try again today. Thus, he had ordered Bebe to stand guard all night outside, just to be safe.

Given Bebe’s physically small size, when he hid amidst the grassy areas in the courtyard, not even Jenne and Keane would notice him, much less the archers.

“Boss, just watch.” Bebe excitedly licked his lips.

“Swoosh”

A cruel black shadow suddenly flashed through the air. A height of ten or so meters was nothing to Bebe, who jumped directly through the open windows. When the archers who had just failed with their sneak attack saw

the little black Shadowmouse, their hearts shook and they immediately attempted to flee.

But before they had a chance to leave their rooms, Bebe had entered.

His two claws flashed forward, and two archers immediately collapsed in pools of blood. Bebe then smashed hard against the wall, going straight through the hole he had created into the other room.

The two remaining archers were hurriedly fleeing as well.

Turning, they saw a black blur flying towards them. The two of them didn't even have the chance to call out. "Slash!" "Slash!" The sounds of two claws ripping through jugulars could be heard.

Bebe disdainfully looked at the two corpses on the ground, then immediately turned and left via the window, returning to the courtyard. From start to finish, only a few seconds had passed.

"Bebe, nicely done." Linley praised with a laugh.

Bebe delightedly raised his head up high. At this moment, the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, growled unhappily towards Bebe. "Hmph, if I had gone, I would've been even faster."

Bebe immediately growled unhappily back at the Blackcloud Panther.

Linley couldn't be bothered trying to placate the two of them. Instead, he walked towards Jenne, Keane, and Lambert, who were still in states of shock. They had escaped from life-and-death encounters twice in two days. Although in the past, the two siblings had often been bullied, they had never been in such danger.

"Everything's fine now, everything's fine now."

Linley lightly patted Jenne on her shoulder. With a "Wah!" sound, Jenne suddenly burst into tears, hugging Linley. Next to her, Keane began to

blubber as well, also charging forward to hug Linley.

Linley had no choice but to console these two siblings.

After the two of them had calmed down, Linley asked the nearby Lambert, “Lambert, you made our breakfast arrangements already, right?”

“Yes. In a bit, the hotel will probably send people with our breakfast.” Lambert looked at Linley with the utmost gratitude in his eyes.

Chapter 15 – The Apothecary

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 15, The Apothecary

After experiencing yet another assassination attempt, Jenne and Keane both truly understood how dangerous this trip to Cerre City would be. They were at risk of dying at any moment. Unconsciously, both of them turned towards Linley.

“Big brother Ley, what should we do in the future?” Jenne looked at Linley as she asked this question, her heart filled with worry.

Right now, both Keane and Jenne felt as though they were lost within a boundless haze, unable to see the future. They didn’t know what would happen if they persevered.

Looking at this pair of innocent siblings, Linley consoled them, “Don’t worry. I’m confident in my ability to deal with an acting city governor of a prefectural city.”

Right now, Linley had reached the eighth rank, and was a peak-stage combatant of the ninth rank when Dragonformed. The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, was also a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank, and Bebe’s power was no lower than that of Linley and Haeru’s either.

If this man and these two magical beasts attacked together, if no Saint-level combatants appeared, no matter how many people came, they would not be able to stop these three.

Hearing Linley’s words, Jenne and Keane couldn’t help but begin to worship Linley.

Although up till now, the two of them still had no idea as to how powerful Linley truly was, in their eyes, Linley was an amazing, mysterious

individual. As for Lambert, upon seeing all this, he felt gratified as well. As long as Jenne and Keane could live a safe life, he would be happy even if he had to die. For such an expert to be willing to help these two countryside-raised siblings without quibbling about anything else was more than enough for this old servant to be filled with gratitude.

“Knock!” “Knock!” “Knock!”

A knocking sound could be heard from outside.

“I’ll get it.” Lambert chortled. “It is probably the attendants bringing breakfast.”

“Let’s get ready to eat.” Linley chuckled as he led Jenne and Keane to the living room. Lambert opened the gate to their residence, and two attendants pushing two food-laden trolleys entered.

“Deliver these to the living room.” Lambert chortled as he instructed them.

“Yes, sir.” The two attendants were extremely meek as they each pushed their trolleys inside. But as they moved in, they glanced at each other, a hint of determination in their eyes.

In this assassination attempt, regardless of whether or not they would succeed, they definitely would die.

They knew that Linley, that powerful expert, was still present. Either Linley or his black panther could easily kill them.

….

Within the living room, Linley was seated at the head of the table. Jenne and Keane were seated at the sides. The two attendants smiled meekly as they pushed the carts into the room.

“Sir, miss, where should we place this whole roast sheep?” The attendant opened one of the lids.

“Place them over there.” Linley gestured at the stone floor nearby the table. The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, was resting next to that table. Smelling the roasted meat, he raised his head.

For Haeru, an entire roast sheep was nothing more than a light breakfast.

“Yes, sir.” The attendant very obediently placed that huge lamb-covered tray onto the floor. Bebe immediately ran over as well. With a swipe of his sharp paws, he ripped off one of the roasted lamb’s legs.

Haeru stared at Bebe, and then he too went over and began to bite off large chunks of the roasted sheep.

“Sir, please enjoy.” The attendant placed a tray in front of Linley, and then put another tray in front of Jenne.

At the same moment, the other attendant was placing a tray in front of Keane.

Currently…

The two attendants were to each side of Keane. Keane wasn’t suspicious at all, and happily picked up his knife and his fork as he prepared to enjoy this sumptuous meal.

The two attendants exchanged glances. As though they were psychically connected, they suddenly reached out at the same time towards Keane. Their four hands were formed into claws, piercing at Keane’s chest, head, and throat.

Four hands attacking at once!

Ordinary warriors of the fifth and sixth ranks could shatter stones with a single blow. Even warriors of the fourth rank could shatter thick wooden planks.

The vital points of a weak child like Keane probably couldn't withstand a single blow, whether it was at his head, his chest, or his throat.

They were simply too close.

The two attendants were simply too close to Keane, and they attacked from too close as well. At such a close range, even a warrior of the eighth rank wouldn't be able to react before Keane was already dead.

Linley let out a cold snort.

A dazzling violet light suddenly flashed, then disappeared. Ear-piercing screams could be heard as the four limbs of the two attendants fell to the floor.

"Ah!!" Jenne was so scared that she jumped to her feet.

"Young master!" Only now did Lambert realize what had almost happened. He angrily kicked the two attendants into the walls, causing the walls to shake.

Those two attendants were moaning in pain. They only exchanged glances, despair in their eyes.

"You…how…" One of them stared at Linley disbelievingly.

They had been less than half a meter away from Keane. Although they were only warriors of the fourth rank, at such a close distance, they didn't even need more than a brief instant to kill Keane.

In such a short period of time, even an expert shouldn't be able to react fast enough.

But not only did Linley manage to react, he had been able to cut all of their arms off.

"Surprised as to why I was able to react in time?" Linley looked calmly at

the two of them. “How would ordinary attendants have arms like yours?”

The two of them looked at their severed arms.

The people under the command of that red-haired man were all elite archers. As elite archers, they would often train, causing the veins and muscles in their arms in particular to be protruding.

The two attendants exchanged glances, their eyes filled with despair.

What’s more, their arm sockets were constantly leaking blood. Very soon, the two of them would definitely die of blood loss. But they knew…having failed their mission, even if Linley spared them, their captain and Madame Wade wouldn’t spare them.

“Don’t pay them any mind. We leave now.” Linley stood up.

Jenne and Keane, having experienced two assassination attempts already, didn’t have as huge a reaction to this third one as they had before. Keane said softly, “Big brother Ley, what about breakfast? Should we wrap it up and take it with us?”

“No.”

Linley shook his head. “Be careful about the food you eat in the future. I suspect all this food is poisoned.”

“Poisoned?” Keane looked at the food in his plate, terrified.

“Squeak!” Off to the side, Bebe suddenly began to squeak at Linley. Looking at Bebe, Linley couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

“Yeah, yeah, you aren’t afraid of poison. Alright?” Linley said resignedly.

Magical beasts and humans were very different, biologically. Many magical beasts contained venomous parts and sacs within their bodies to begin with. The poisons which humans feared, they might not fear at all. The more

powerful a magical beast was, the stronger their natural immune system was. In addition, since magical beasts generally resided in pristine, untouched forests, they often interacted with various natural toxins from a young age. Thus, one generation after another, magical beasts' resistance to poisons would increase.

……

Linley's group left the hotel very early in the morning. The red-haired man watched Linley's group depart from afar, his face exceedingly ugly to behold.

"Ley?" The red-haired man muttered. "Where did such a powerful expert come from? And why must he travel with these two countryside-raised siblings?"

The red-haired man was extremely unhappy.

This mission to assassinate Keane and Jenne was originally quite simple. That old servant, Lambert, simply wasn't powerful enough to do anything. But this originally simple mission suddenly became extremely difficult once that mysterious expert got involved.

"Nothing for it. I have to report to the Madame." Knowing how powerful Linley was, the red-haired man didn't dare to take any more risks.

……

As the most militarily powerful empire of the Four Great Empires, the O'Brien Empire had an extremely thorough communication system sustained primarily by a special communications corps who used Bluewind Hawks.

Every single prefectural city in the O'Brien Empire had quite a few Bluewind Hawks who were controlled solely by the communications corps. Bluewind Hawks were extremely intelligent. They recognized roads and, under the orders of their owners, could take a letter to any place at all.

But only the governing clans of the O'Brien Empire had the authority to use these Bluewind Hawks. Most commoners, and even most nobles, didn't have that authority. And of course, the army had its own stand-alone communications system.

Carrying the seal of the city governor of the prefectural city of Cerre, the red-haired man requested Blackrock City to send a Bluewind Hawk towards the city of Cerre.

….

Flying in a straight line in the air was far faster than running on the road. Not long after Linley's group had left Blackrock City, the Bluewind Hawk arrived at Cerre.

The prefectural city of Cerre. This was a fairly large city.

In the Northwest Administrative Province, it was one of the top ten cities. At this moment, within the castle that was reserved for the city governor, the mood was very dark and very sinister.

The master of this castle was Madame Wade! An infamously cold, grim, arrogant person.

"Sis, sis!"

Two middle-aged men came running into the rear flower garden. At this moment, Madame Wade was enjoying the radiant sun while being tended to by two serving women.

"What's wrong, my two dear brothers?" Madame Wade lifted her head up as she looked at the two men.

"Sis, this is the mail that just came by courier. This mission was a failure." The slightly chubbier of the two men said.

“Failed? How could Kerde [Ke’de] be so useless?” Madame Wade took over the letter. Reading it, she began to scowl, confused. “A mysterious expert who has a black panther as a magical beast companion?”

Per what the red-haired man, Kerde, was saying, that black panther was at least a magical beast of the eighth rank, and that mysterious expert was at least a combatant of the eighth rank, and perhaps even the ninth.

Madame Wade suddenly felt that the letter was extremely heavy.

“Sis, what should we do?” Madame Wade’s eldest brother, that chubby man, asked. Madame Wade’s second brother also looked at her hopefully.

Madame Wade frowned as she considered the issue.

“My two brothers, please request the services of Apothecary Holmer [Huo’er’mo].” Madame Wade said calmly.

“Holmer? That old freak?” Her second brother immediately cried out in surprise.

Madame Wade said coldly, “According to Kerde’s investigations, this mysterious ‘Ley’ fellow is at least a combatant of the eighth rank, perhaps even of the ninth. I don’t have the ability to kill a combatant of the ninth rank face to face. It’s best to have Apothecary Holmer take care of this affair. After all, Apothecary Holmer has killed a combatant of the ninth rank before.”

“But Holmer…” Madame Wade’s eldest brother hesitated as well.

“Hmph. If the two of you keep on acting like this, you’ll never accomplish anything. Even if I kill Keane, if you two act like this, do you think you will be fit to be city governors?” Madame Wade snorted coldly.

“Fine, sis. We’ll go speak to Apothecary Holmer right now!” Madame Wade’s two older brothers submitted to her.

…..

‘Apothecary Holmer’ was a title which Holmer had given himself.

Others viewed Holmer as a murderer, but Holmer viewed himself as an Apothecary.

And indeed, Holmer’s abilities in preserving life were quite high. Holmer was almost three hundred years old now. For a warrior of the sixth rank to live for nearly three hundred years was nearly impossible, but Holmer had done so. What’s more, Holmer looked as though he was in quite good shape. This was because Holmer often used various bizarre concoctions, allowing his three-hundred year old body to be as strong and healthy as a young man’s.

“Huh. Madame Wade is quite generous. This business transaction…I accept, I accept.” Holmer stroked his graying beard, laughing delightedly.

In front of Holmer, Madame Wade’s two brothers were still rather nervous.

“Apothecary Homer, it would be best if you act quickly.” Madame Wade’s eldest brother urged. “Our people will deliver you to your target.”

“Haha, first give me a down payment. I’ll head out right away afterwards.” Holmer laughed loudly.

“Down payment?” The two brothers looked at each other.

In the prefectural city of Cerre, the two of them had never been treated like this before. But after learning a bit about Holmer, the two brothers didn’t dare to irritate this elderly, self-proclaimed ‘Apothecary’. Once this old man got angry, no one knew how many people might die as a result.

Chapter 16 – The Yulan River

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 16, The Yulan River

The greatest river within the Yulan continent was, without a doubt, the Yulan River. The Yulan River's main stream flowed through the O'Brien Empire, the Yulan Empire, the Rhine Empire, and the Rohault Empire. Its countless tributaries were densely spread across each of the four empires.

It would be fair to say that the Yulan River nourished and gave life to over half of humanity.

"What a wide river." Seated on the deck of a multi-level ship, Linley stared with awe at the vast, turgid waters of the Yulan River.

This ship had been employed by Linley for his usage alone.

He spent ten thousand gold coins to have it take the group directly to the harbor nearest to Cerre City. That harbor was less than a hundred kilometers from Cerre.

As Linley had explained it, if they continued on their originally planned route, who knows how many more assassination attempts they would have to endure? It was better for them to directly commission a boat to take them southwards through the Yulan River.

This boat had been commissioned by Linley on the spot. Linley didn't believe that the people who worked on this ship all belonged to Madame Wade's forces. Madame Wade's influence did not, after all, hold much sway near Blackrock City.

"Big brother Ley." Jenne came out of the ship's cabin.

In the middle of this river, the wind was very strong. It blew against Jenne's

long hair and long dress. Smiling, Jenne looked at Linley. Walking next to him, she sat down as well. “Big brother Ley, to think that originally, I had wanted to employ you for ten thousand gold coins.” Jenne said these words with quite some embarrassment.

To Jenne and Keane, ten thousand gold coins was an enormous sum of money.

But how could they have imagined that Linley would go ahead and specially commission the services of this ship? The amount of money it cost to specially commission a large ship such as this was quite high. Although the distance between Cerre and Blackkrock was not that far, the cost was ten thousand gold coins. And what’s more, this was an extremely discounted price that they had given Linley as a show of respect to him, a powerful combatant who had a black panther for a companion.

So far, Linley had taken only a single gold coin out of the ten thousand gold coins he had been promised as his ‘hiring fee’.

But by now, Linley himself had already spent ten thousand gold coins. It wasn’t strange for Jenne to be embarrassed. Jenne and her brother had wanted to pay for the boat themselves…but of course, they currently had no money.

“Jenne, don’t you think that the scenery here is quite beautiful?” Linley walked to the end of the deck, which was surrounded by protective steel chains.

Linley rested his hands against the steel chains, looking at the surroundings.

The rolling waves of the Yulan River could be seen for kilometers about. At its widest, the Yulan River was several kilometers wide; at its narrowest, it was still hundreds of meters wide. This was the ‘mother river’ for the entire Yulan continent. Who knows how many people it had given life to? The recorded history of the Yulan continent had stretched back for hundreds of thousands of years.

“This Yulan River must have existed for hundreds of thousands of years as well.”

Gazing at the turgid river waters, Linley couldn’t help but imagine what it would’ve been like, hundreds of thousands of years ago. As he lost himself within this massive, boundless river, Linley felt his heart become unbounded as well.

“The people and kingdoms from hundreds of thousands of years back have turned to dust long ago. Compared to the endless march of history, where kingdoms and empires rise then collapse, personal grudges and enmities are so meaningless and small.”

Facing this vast river, Linley had a very strange feeling.

“Right now, the Yulan continent has six major political entities. The Four Great Empires, the Holy Union, and the Dark Alliance.” Linley’s heart was extremely calm.

Ever since he was young, Linley’s goals had been to realize his father’s dreams, and to stand at the highest levels of training and power.

But after his father died, Linley’s heart had fallen into a dark abyss. He had embarked on a road to revenge, a road of slaughter…and on this road, Linley had lost his Grandpa Doehring.

The three years of training he had spent in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and his communing with nature had allowed nature to cleanse his soul. His heart was now as calm as still water, and he had transformed, like a butterfly emerging from the cocoon.

“Only by reaching the pinnacle of power can one realize one’s dreams. Despite being such an enormous organization, when the Holy Union came face to face with that Dylin, didn’t they choose to retreat?”

Linley had total confidence in himself.

“There will come a day when I, too, will reach those heights.” Staring at the raging waves, Linley felt nothing but great ambitions, as boundless as the river.

….

The captain of this ship had an extremely easy life. Although the rapids of the Yulan River were rather fast, it was still far safer than the sea. The captain even had time to casually chat with his sailors.

“Hey, did you guys see that black panther?” The captain said delightedly. “That’s a magical beast. You just wait and see. My own son will tame a magical beast of his own soon.”

“Captain, that’s a panther-type magical beast. Do you think your son could tame one of those?” The nearby sailors began to laugh. There wasn’t too much of a social stratification between a captain and his sailors. Both were men who made their livings on the sea.

The captain sighed emotionally. “High-class magical beasts. I really admire those people who can tame one. I remember how last year, when we went to the imperial capital, I saw the War God’s College accept new honorary disciples. Wow. You have no idea how many experts were there. Some were mounted on enormous magical beasts, while others were seated on flying magical beasts…so many experts all rushed there, struggling to be the one to qualify for that sole slot. Those battles and those movements between the experts…all I saw were blurs. They were too fast, too fast.”

The sailors all began to make wild boasts about the experts they had seen before.

In the O’Brien Empire, every single child wanted to become a powerful combatant, with being recruited by the War God’s College being their ultimate goal.

….

Linley was seated meditatively on the wooden deck, allowing the wind to blow against him. His adamantine heavy sword was on his legs. His eyes closed, Linley was quietly attuning with the boundless vastness of the Yulan River's waters.

"The power to impose is the power of the heavens, the power of the earth, the power of the boundless oceans." Linley's spirit had totally become one with the wind. He almost felt as though he could sense the vast riverbed of the Yulan River as well as the boundless land surrounding it.

Naturally, he could also sense that rushing river as well.

The ship continued to sail forward. They did stop occasionally in their journey so as to allow everyone to have some food, but Linley remained in the meditative posture on the deck, not eating at all.

In the blink of an eye, six days had passed.

"Sis, is big bro Ley gonna be ok? He hasn't eaten or drank anything." Keane pointed at Linley, who was still in the meditative posture, as he worriedly asked Jenne.

Jenne was somewhat worried as well, but she shook her head helplessly. "I don't know either. That Bebe won't let us get near him though."

"Don't worry." The captain of the ship walked over, chuckling. "Those high-level experts aren't like us ordinary folks. To them, even traversing a precipice ten thousand fathoms deep is of no issue. Not even a million man army can stop them. I've heard of people who, in the course of their meditative training, neither ate nor drank for months. At their level, not eating or drinking for months is actually quite normal." Although the captain used the word 'normal' when he spoke, a trace of envy was in his eyes.

Hearing the ship captain's words, Jenne and Keane began to feel even more astonished.

“Can it be?”

Suddenly, a murmur could be heard. Jenne, Keane, and the captain all turned their heads towards Linley, and when they did, they were shocked.

Holding the adamantine heavy sword in his hands, Linley jumped directly into the river.

“Big brother Ley!” Jenne shouted in alarm.

The three of them immediately ran over to the deck. Running to those locked steel chains, they stared down. To their amazement, they saw that Linley was currently standing on top of the water, the adamantine heavy sword in his hands. He floated up and down with the waves, but didn’t sink down at all.

This sight stunned them all and left them gaping in shock.

Mid-air flight was something only a person at the Saint-level could do.

“Earth…fire…water…wind…” Linley murmured in a quiet voice, and then suddenly, he thrust his adamantine black sword towards the sky. As the adamantine heavy sword shot up, it seemed as though a hole had been pierced in the sky, as a dreadful, screeching howl could be heard from the air.

At the same time, all the water surrounding Linley suddenly erupted skywards like a geyser.

“Haha.” Linley laughed loudly and happily, and then his body could be seen constantly moving and spinning about amidst the waves. The river water seemed to follow Linley’s movements, as the heavy sword constantly shrieked and howled with each stroke.

All the river water in an area of a hundred meters around Linley had gone wild.

Sometimes, the water would all rise tens of meters into the sky, while at other times, they would form a giant whirlpool. Other times, the water would shoot out like sharp arrows in every direction, while at other times, it would just circle around Linley….

“Clang.” A crisp, clear sound rang out from the heavy sword entering its sheath.

Those wild waters suddenly calmed down. In the blink of an eye, the Yulan River once more returned to its ordinary state, with just a few lingering effects. Striding on the waves, Linley didn’t sink down at all.

But this time, Linley wasn’t using his wind-style magic to counteract the effects of the weight of the adamantine heavy sword.

Rather, he was using his new insights on how to ‘impose’.

“This ‘imposing’ force was the force of the heavens. It is also the force of the enormous earth and the boundless seas.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face. With a gentle leap, Linley vaulted back onto the deck of the ship.

This entire time, Linley had been focusing on understanding ‘impose’ through his affinity to earth and wind. But over the course of these six days of meditation, Linley was able to sense the movements of the waves, and he also remembered the blazing passion of the fire elemental essences in fire-style magic.

Dense, graceful, pliable, and passionate.

When these aspects of these four elements were merged with each other in a sword stroke, they could make the universe move. This was what ‘impose’ truly meant. In the past, Linley’s understanding of ‘impose’ was nothing more than the most rudimentary of understandings.

“Big brother Ley, just now, what were you, what was…?” Keane was very excited, but he didn’t know what to say.

Jenne was looking at Linley with awe as well.

What Linley had just done had truly stunned them. Even the captain, who was well-travelled and worldly, had never seen such an awesome spectacle.

“Just training.” Linley said with a calm smile.

Although in the records of his clan, the highest level of using heavy weapons was this third level of ‘impose’, Linley suddenly had a certain feeling.

‘Impose’ was not the end of the road.

There was something even greater than it.

After reaching the ‘impose’ level, and in particular, after his soul could become attuned to nature, Linley always had this feeling…that there were even more profound truths awaiting him. Linley could dimly sense them, but he had no way of actually comprehending them.

“Battle-qi and brute strength are only the most basic of building blocks. In order for one’s attacks to become more powerful, having a deep grasp of these profound principles is extremely important.”

You might possess the power to lift something that weighed a million pounds, but if your movements were too stupid and clumsy, you might only be able to unleash 10% of your total power.

After training hard, you might be able to unleash 30%.

Experts would be able to unleash 70%.

But what Linley wanted to do was to unleash 100%. And, borrowing from the ‘imposing force’ of the universe itself, strike blows that were more powerful than he himself was physically capable of.

“Jenne, Keane, how far are we from the shore?” Linley asked.

“We are another day off,” the nearby captain replied.

Linley nodded, then instructed, “How about this. Let’s not get off too close to Cerre City. Let’s get off at the harbor one stop removed from Cerre City.”

“Yes, Lord Ley.” Although the ship captain didn’t understand the reason, he still agreed.

…..

Linley’s choice to travel by river had thrown all of Madame Wade’s forces into a state of confusion. That red-haired man, Kerde, in the end had managed to learn that Linley’s group had travelled by ship and were advancing through the Yulan River.

No matter how powerful Apothecary Holmer was, he couldn’t just leap past a river that was hundreds of meters across at its narrowest and get onto the opponent’s boat, right? Even if he was able to get on the boat, they would no doubt be highly suspicious of his intentions.

Thus, they could only lie in ambush at the port, as if they were waiting for a hare to fall into their snare.

However…

Based on their calculations, the ship should’ve already arrived by now.

“What’s going on? Shouldn’t they have arrived yesterday?” Apothecary Holmer was resting in a commoner’s house in a town that was located quite near the port.

“Master Holmer, please wait a bit longer.” Madame Wade’s subordinates were extremely frantic as well.

Suddenly, the door to the residence swung open, and one of Madame

Wade's subordinates rushed in. He angrily said, "Master Holmer, they didn't stop at this harbor; they stopped at the previous one. They have already reached a small city named Redsand which is quite near Cerre. Most likely, they will reach the prefectural city of Cerre by tonight.

"They are arriving tonight?" Apothecary Holmer was startled.

"Quick, we need to head out immediately." Apothecary Holmer immediately ordered, and the entire group frantically hurried back in the direction of the prefectural city of Cerre.

Chapter 17 – Poison Gas Fluttering in the Wind

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 17, Poison Gas Fluttering in the Wind

The city of Redsand was a small one, and there were only a few tens of thousands of people within it.

When Linley' s group left the boat, they headed directly towards the prefectural city of Cerre. On the way there, they stopped by Redsand City, preparing to have a quick lunch.

In a private room in the second floor of a hotel, Jenne and Keane both had excited smiles on their faces.

"Haha, by tonight, we will reach Cerre City. By then, we'll have much fewer troubles." Keane chortled.

Jenne nodded as well. "Once we reach Cerre, our aunt probably wouldn't openly move against us, right?"

"Jenne, Keane, things won't be as easy as you think." Linley laughed calmly. "Once we reach Cerre, it will actually be even more dangerous. Your so-called aunt isn't as timid and fearful as you seem to think she is."

When women decided to be venomous, they could be extremely terrifying.

During his three years in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley had encountered all sorts of cruel, vicious people. Jenne's aunt was totally capable of having Keane killed within Cerre City, and in a manner which didn't implicate her at all.

"Really?" Keane was somewhat afraid now. After all, he was a fourteen year old boy.

Linley laughed. “But don’t worry too much. There’s no need for us to rush to Cerre City this afternoon. Let’s have a good rest in Redsand City first. Tomorrow morning, we will head out.”

“Tomorrow morning?” Jenne and Keane both looked at Linley.

“If my predictions are correct, the people your aunt undoubtedly stationed at the river have already discovered that we disembarked one harbor early. They should be able to calculate that we would arrive at Cerre City at around nightfall. Thus…there is an 80% to 90% chance that they will be waiting for us there, tonight.”

Linley could easily deduce such simple stratagems.

As long as one could think things through from another’s perspective, one could easily lead them by the nose.

“Let’s rest up and recover our strength. Tomorrow morning, we head out.” Linley laughed loudly. “There’s no rush right now. Let’s have a good lunch.”

Jenne and Keane revealed hints of smiles on their faces.

….

Indeed, as Linley had predicted, Apothecary Holmer and his group had headed directly for Cerre City. Madame Wade’s people in Cerre City had received this information as well.

On the walls of Cerre city.

Madame Wade was leaning on a parapet, staring outside the city. Behind her were her two brothers as well as Apothecary Holmer. As for the city guards, they had all scattered at her command.

“Mr. Holmer, I’ll have to trouble you to wait here tonight for a while.” Madame Wade turned her head towards Holmer, smiling.

Apothecary Holmer knew his own limits.

He personally wasn't that powerful. The most powerful weapon available to him was his poisons. Naturally, he wouldn't want to offend this malicious person in front of him, who was the true power in Cerre city.

"Madame Wade, don't worry. Those siblings definitely will not live to arrive at Cerre city."

Holmer was very confident. "Even if they have an escort who is of the ninth rank, hmph. As long as he hasn't reached the Saint-level, I am confident in my ability to deal with him. But of course…he can't already know who I am."

If a combatant of the ninth rank were to recognize him and activate his battle-qi, the battle-qi would be sufficient to easily repel the poison.

"Mr. Holmer, all these years, you've resided here in Cerre City. You aren't a person who likes to show yourself either. How many people could have possibly seen you? What's more, I've heard that you, Mr. Holmer, possess the ability to change your appearance?" Madame Wade laughed as she looked at Holmer.

Holmer laughed happily. Stroking his beard, he said, "Haha. Madame Wade, change my appearance? You praise me too highly. All I do is to use some medicinal concoctions to change the color of my skin and hair. And then a little makeup…even people who know me, as long as they don't carefully inspect me, won't be able to recognize me."

Madame Wade smiled as she nodded. "Then I leave everything in your hands, Mr. Holmer. Tonight, I will stay in the nearby hotel and await your good news."

Holmer laughed confidently.

….

But as time went on, Madame Wade, who was in that hotel nearest to the city walls, was beginning to grow confused. Because quite soon, the city gates would close for the night.

The rule of Cerre City was that at ten o'clock sharp, the gates would be shut.

But Jenne and Keane's group still had yet to arrive. Based on Madame Wade's information, Jenne's group had arrived at Redsand City by lunchtime. Even if they travelled slowly, they should've reached here by now.

Ten o'clock arrived.

Those enormous city gates began to slowly close as a large number of guards pushed at them. Apothecary Holmer, who had meticulously prepared for this battle, descended from the walls with a belly full of anger. Madame Wade also walked out of the hotel.

"Madame Wade, what is this?" Holmer was truly upset now.

After receiving the news, he had run all the way back from the harbor to the city. The bumpy, long ride was quite miserable for this 300-year old Holmer.

And then, he had stood up there on the walls for half the night, with the icy wind blowing at him the entire time.

And now, the city gates were shutting. But no one came.

"Who knows what is going on with that group of people. I'm afraid they might have taken a rest at Redsand City. Mr. Holmer, why don't you rest here at the hotel tonight? Let's see what tomorrow brings." Madame Wade was not in a good mood either.

"That's the only option we have right now." Holmer was extremely

disgruntled.

….

The next dawn, just as the city gates opened, Holmer began to quietly wait for them to arrive. By 9 o'clock in the morning, Holmer was truly furious.

Holmer rushed down from the city walls and charged directly into the second floor of the hotel.

"Madame Wade. If they aren't coming to us, I'll go to them." Holmer said directly. "Give me some men, at least one of whom recognizes those two siblings."

Madame Wade approved of this idea. "Alright. Then I'll have to trouble you, Mr. Holmer, to make this trip."

"This time, I really have to give these people a taste of my power." Holmer said quietly, his eyes filled with a murderous look.

After purchasing a carriage in Redsand City, Jenne and Keane entered the carriage, with the old servant, Lambert, being the driver. As for Linley, he rode on the back of his Blackcloud Panther, Haeru.

Haeru was more than two meters tall and very broad-backed. His fur was very smooth and soft as well.

Riding on the Blackcloud Panther, Linley couldn't feel any bumps in the road as well. The ride was far more comfortable than that of a horse or a carriage. What's more, the Blackcloud Panther ran up mountains as easily as it ran on prairies.

"Big brother Ley. What time is it now?" Keane poked his head out of the carriage and asked Linley.

Linley glanced at him. "Don't be impatient. It's only ten o'clock. We most likely will arrive at Cerre City by eleven o'clock."

The Blackcloud Panther which Linley was riding on was very awe-inspiring. Everyone on the road who saw Linley all moved aside early on to allow Linley the right of way.

“Giddyup, giddyup!”

From far away, the sound of hoof steps could be heard. Soon, three mounted knights could be seen in the distance, but as soon as they saw Linley, all three were terrified and came to a halt.

“What a massive panther.” One of the knights sighed, staring at the black panther Linley was riding.

“Stop staring. Let’s move.” The other knight said.

Just at this time, another stallion trotted past them. This stallion was ridden by a kindly looking old hunchback with pure white hair. The speed of the old man’s horse was fairly slow, and it clip-clopped its way forward.

“Haha, look at him. He’s so old, but still rides a horse. Haha…” One of the knights laughed loudly.

“Let’s go. We have business to attend to.”

The three knights laughed calmly, continuing on their way. Right at this time, that hunchbacked old man raised his head to glance at Linley’s group. This hunchback immediately understood.

Per their pre-arranged agreement, if they encountered the targets, the knights would say, “Haha, look at him. He’s so old, but still rides a horse.” What’s more, Holmer also knew that the mysterious expert had a black panther as a pet.

….

“Those three knights don’t have any knightly chivalry at all.” Keane, who

had seen all this through the window, said unhappily once the three knights left.

But Linley frowned as he stared at the hunchback.

The hunchback rode the horse in a manner that did indeed inspire concern. Just from the look of him, one could tell that he was extremely old. Although the horse wasn't moving too fast, the hunchback continued to sway back and forth on the horse's back, as though he could fall off at any moment. His legs didn't seem to be too firmly clamped on the horse's back either.

Right at this moment, a carriage appeared from behind the old hunchback as well.

"F*ck off, you old fart." One of the knights cursed loudly. The hunchback immediately whipped his horse, moving it to the side of the road.

"Ahhh!"

When the horse was roughly ten or so meters away from Linley's group, the old hunchback swayed again and fell off his horse.

"The old grandpa fell off!" Keane, seeing this from through the window, immediately pushed open the door to come out and help.

But just as the old man fell off, a light blue wave of gas emanated from his body. That light blue gas was extremely thin and light, so much so that if someone wasn't specifically looking for it, it would be quite hard to discern.

The wind just so happened to be blowing from the east, and it blew the gas directly towards Linley. But of course, the first people to be impacted by the poison gas was the people in the carriage which had just passed by.

"Crumple."

One knight after another collapsed from their horses to the ground, fresh

blood leaking out of their noses.

“Hrm?” Linley also felt that something in his body seemed off, and his head felt a little dizzy.

“Not good. Poison.” Attuned to the wind, Linley could clearly sense that a light blue poisonous gas was wafting in his direction. By now, Linley had already taken two breaths of it.

The Dragonblood battle-qi in Linley’s body immediately rose up, absorbing all of the poisonous gas in Linley’s body, with none of it harming him at all.

This poisonous gas was a poison which Holmer had specially designed to be used against humans, based on human biology.

But Holmer could never have imagined that Linley was very different, biologically speaking, from ordinary people. Within his veins was the bloodline of the Dragonblood Warriors, an ancestral bloodline that was many times more exalted than even the bloodlines of magical beasts. In the past, even the magicite core of the Armored Razorback Wyrm had been absorbed and consumed by just the small amount of Dragonblood that was in Linley’s veins at that time.

Normal people simply couldn’t imagine or understand the special abilities and attributes of each of the Four Supreme Warriors.

This sort of poison gas couldn’t hurt a Dragonblood Warrior at all.

“Wind.”

Based on his mastery of wind elemental essence granted to him by being a wind-style magus, Linley immediately controlled the air around him to blow the wind backwards. The poisonous gas immediately blew back towards the east. By now, the squad of knights that were between the ‘hunchback’ Holmer and Linley had all died.

The poisonous gas blew back towards Holmer, but he didn’t dodge. He was

not afraid of his own poisons. But what he was afraid of…was Linley.

“Giddyup, giddyup!” Holmer suddenly became quite agile, leaping back onto his horse and then sending it galloping east as fast as he could.

“Haeru.” Linley said in a cold voice.

“Swoooosh.”

The Blackcloud Panther’s speed was terrifyingly fast, many times faster than an ordinary stallion.

In the blink of an eye, he traversed several hundred meters, and actually passed by Holmer, landing in front of him. All that had been visible during this motion was a black blur.

Seeing Linley suddenly appear in front of him, Holmer immediately grew frantic.

“My friend, I was paid by others to do this. If you are willing to spare me, I will give you as much gold as you wish.” Although Holmer was more than three hundred years old, he didn’t want to die yet.

Thinking back to what just happened, Linley still felt afraid.

Fortunately, he had managed to react in time and blow the poison gas back before it had entered the carriage.

“Poison gas? Are you a necromancer?” Linley looked at Holmer.

“Necromancer?” Holmer was startled, then shook his head. “No. I’m an apothecary. My friend, I am quite wealthy. Ten thousand gold coins? Twenty thousand? Or perhaps, a hundred thousand?” At a time like this, Holmer was still trying to save money.

But Linley couldn’t even be bothered to speak to him.

“Haeru, deal with it.”

Linley hopped off the black panther, heading back towards the carriage. As for the Blackcloud Panther, he revealed his sharp fangs, and then pounced directly towards Holmer.

“Ah! A million! Ten million! Ah!!!!” Before Holmer had even finished calling out, he had been flattened by a single blow from the Blackcloud Panther’s massive paw.

Chapter 18 – The Prefectural City of Cerre

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 18, The Prefectural City of Cerre

The desolate wilderness.

The tens of people escorting the carriage were all dead. The black blood oozing from their bodies made the scene all the more sinister. Holmer, in turn, had been smashed to death by a single blow from Haeru. Jenne and Keane, who had watched this all from the carriage, were totally stunned.

“Big brother Ley.” Keane called out in alarm. Jenne’s face was rather pale as well.

Just as Linley was about to respond, that old servant, Lambert, who was driving the carriage suddenly called out in surprise as he stared at the corpse of Holmer. “Him! He’s the deadliest killer in Cerre City, Holmer. That old freak who styled himself an apothecary.”

“Holmer? Grandpa Lambert, who are you talking about?” Keane looked at Lambert.

Lambert took a deep breath. “Young master, young miss, this Holmer was an extremely dangerous individual within Cerre City. In the past, when I was serving your mother in the city, I encountered him a few times. At the time, Count Wade had mentioned this Holmer to your mother as well. This Holmer is an extremely skilled user of poisons. Although he is only a warrior of the sixth rank, he once killed a combatant of the ninth rank.”

Only now did Jenne and Keane understand.

Linley, listening to the side, nodded as well.

“This Holmer is extremely greedy. Most likely, his actions this time were at

the direction of the senior madame as well." Lambert's face was extremely solemn. "The senior madame really has her mind set on killing you!"

"With big brother Ley, we have nothing to fear!" Keane was very confident. Jenne also looked confidently at Linley.

"Enough. Let's head out immediately so we can arrive sooner at Cerre." Linley said directly. Linley's group immediately made haste towards the prefectural city of Cerre, leaving behind a cloud of dust on the desolate road.

The prefectural city of Cerre. This was a city with around two to three hundred thousand people. Its red walls stretched off into the distance. In terms of architecture, the buildings of Cerre tended towards the ornate.

Keane pushed open the door to the carriage. Seeing the beautiful, majestic city in front of them, Keane's heart was filled with boundless ambition. His eyes lit up, and he said, "From this day forth, I shall be the master of this prefectural city."

Outside the city gates.

"Black panther?" When the gate guards saw Linley's mount from the distance, they had immediately called out to the other guards nearby, "Quick, someone go speak with the madame. The person she spoke of is arriving."

"Okay."

A gate guard immediately ran towards the hotel located nearest to the city gates, rushing up to the second floor. At this moment, there was a warrior stationed outside the stairway. Seeing that it was a gate guard who was running this way, the warrior allowed him passage.

"Madame Countess." The guard fell respectfully to one knee.

"Madame Countess, the expert riding a black panther which you spoke of

has arrived. There is a carriage behind him."

"What?" Before Madame Wade had reacted, the two brothers of her who were standing behind her called out in alarm.

Madame Wade frowned. "Leave for now."

"Yes." The guard respectfully withdrew.

Right now, both of Madame Wade's brothers were growing frantic. Her eldest brother hurriedly said, "Sis, they actually survived their journey to Cerre. Can it be that Holmer, that old freak, failed?"

"Hard to say."

Madame Wade was frowning. "Perhaps that expert with the black panther who was escorting those two countryside-raised siblings didn't come on the main road from Redsand City. Perhaps they intentionally took a detour and caused Holmer and the others to miss them."

Hearing her words, her two brothers couldn't help but nod.

Indeed, it was very possible that their opponents had craftily taken a roundabout path enroute to Cerre City.

"Then what should we now do?" Madame Wade's two brothers looked at her.

"Go down and welcome them." A hint of a smile was on Madame Wade's face. "My two darling children have returned, after suffering for so many years. They are finally back. As their loving aunt, how can I not go welcome them?"

And as she spoke, Madame Wade headed down the stairs.

Right as they walked out of the main door of the hotel, Madame Wade saw the tall and sturdy man with a heavy sword on his back who was riding a

handsome black panther, as well as the familiar face of Lambert.

“Oh, Lambert, long time no see.” Madame Wade immediately called out in a high pitched voice.

Linley, Jenne, Keane, and Lambert all swung their heads to look at her. Lambert started, then respectfully said, “Senior madame.”

Madame Wade laughed warmly. “These two children should be Jenne and Keane. Jenne is even more beautiful than before, and she looks more like her mother now as well. Keane isn’t the child that he used to be either. He’s even more handsome now.”

Jenne and Keane could both recognize Madame Wade.

Although nearly eight years had passed, Madame Wade’s appearance hadn’t changed much, with the exception of a slight wrinkle at the corner of her eyes.

“Senior madame.” Jenne and Keane both paid their respects.

“Wonderful, wonderful. And there’s no need to stand on courtesy.” Madame Wade chortled, then looked at Linley. “And this is?”

“This is big brother Ley.” Keane hurriedly answered.

“Ley?” Madame Wade’s eyelids flickered, then she laughed. “Oh, Mr. Ley. I imagine it must have been you who protected and escorted them to Cerre City. I absolutely must thank you on behalf of Jenne and Keane. Come, let’s all go to the castle. Tonight, I am going to arrange a magnificent banquet for my two poor little children.”

The castle of the city governor was a square block, and was quite an imposing sight.

“What a useless fellow.” After hearing the news which the messenger knights had delivered, Madame Wade was even more furious.

Holmer had been a chess piece that she had trusted.

But now that Holmer had failed, Madame Wade felt extremely frustrated.

“With that Mr. Ley present, it will very hard for me to kill Keane.” Madame Wade was extremely angry. “Poison? The poison used by ordinary poison experts won’t be able to escape detection. Assassins? How many can deal with this Ley?”

Madame Wade’s eyes slowly sharpened.

“Looks like there’s only that one method left.” The worry disappeared from Madame Wade’s eyes. The only thing left was confidence and callousness.

Within the enormous dining room of the castle, the giant glass chandelier had been lit, casting its resplendent, bewitching light upon the room. All of the nobles of Cerre City were present today.

“I’ve heard that Count Wade’s son has returned. I wonder how Madame Wade will deal with this.”

“Who knows? But Madame Wade definitely will not give up her authority.”

“Madame Wade is extremely vicious. Sadly for her, her baby boy died in the arms of a woman. What a joke.” The various nobles chatted in soft tones.

Whom amongst them did not know that Madame Wade was a tyrannical, domineering woman? But since they lived in Cerre City, at most they would mock her in private. They didn’t dare to publicly offend her.

“Madame Wade has arrived.”

Instantly, all of the gossiping nobles ceased their discourse. They all turned to look towards Madame Wade, who had just descended from the stairway. Madame Wade still looked as stately and arrogant as she ever had.

Madame Wade enjoyed the attention of the people present. She tilted her head up slightly as she descended.

“Everyone.” Madame Wade laughed. “Today is a joyous occasion. Those two poor children of mine, who have suffered outside for eight years, have finally returned today.”

At this time, two more people suddenly appeared at the stairway.

One was a young man wearing a black gentleman’s suit, while the other was a golden-haired young lady wearing a white, full-bodied dress. They came out together, and the eyes of many nobles lit up.

Although Jenne was dressed very simply, when matched with her appearance, her figure, and her kind, innocent demeanor, she was a soul-stirring sight. Many young nobles present made up their minds to go over later and ask who that girl was.

“Jenne, Keane, come.” Madame Wade called out to them warmly.

Jenne and Keane walked down the stairway together, standing besides Madame Wade. Madame Wade called out warmly, “This is Jenne. Look, what a beautiful girl she is. And this handsome young man is Keane.” Madame Wade sighed emotionally. “Jenne and Keane have finally escaped their bitter lives. But their mother, my dear sister…” Madame Wade’s eyes grew red, as though she were about to cry.

“Senior madame, if the second madame knew how much you cared about her, she would undoubtedly be very moved.” An ancient voice rang out, and Lambert walked in with Linley by his side.

Madame Wade glanced at Lambert.

Lambert was previously the second madame’s most faithful servant. Even after the second madame had fallen into dire straits, he continued to follow her without complaint.

Jenne and Keane felt extremely unhappy as well.

They knew that the reason for their mother's deaths and those eight bitter years they had suffered were all caused by this senior madame in front of them. Jenne knew how to hide her thoughts, but the fourteen year old Keane ridiculed angrily, "Senior madame, why didn't you ever come visit us during these eight years? We've missed you so terribly."

Madame Wade's facial expression didn't change at all. She sighed, "All these years, I've been working on behalf of Cerre City, and I've never had time. Every time I think about this, I feel I've mistreated the two of you."

Linley suddenly laughed and said directly, "Madame Wade, Count Wade has now passed away, and Keane is his successor. The reason he has returned this time is to assume the position of city governor. Madame Wade, I wonder if you have already decided on a date for Keane to assume the city governor's position?"

Everyone in the dining room fell silent upon hearing these words.

All of the nobles present knew that the main act of the play was starting.

At the same time, all of the nobles stared at Linley in puzzlement. They didn't know where this youngster had come from, for him to dare to so boldly and directly say these words.

"Mr. Ley." Madame Wade's face grew hard, and she said coldly, "As their aunt, I must thank you for escorting Jenne and Keane to Cerre City. But the question of Keane taking over the governorship is an internal affair of our clans. It isn't very appropriate for you, an outsider, to get involved, is it?"

Keane immediately refuted, "And who says big brother Ley is an outsider?"

"If he isn't an outsider, what is he?" Madame Wade's face was very cold.

Keane was startled, then he looked up at Linley and said, "Big brother Ley

is, is, is my sister's fiancé. How could he be an outsider?"

"Fiancé?" Madame Wade was flabbergasted.

Jenne was flabbergasted.

Linley was flabbergasted.

"Fiancé?" Linley immediately looked at Keane. Keane only winked at Linley. Linley immediately understood what Keane meant.

Right at this moment, Jenne's face turned red.

"How about that?" Keane arrogantly tilted his head up. "My brother-in-law to be is qualified to discuss this, isn't he? Aunt, my father is dead, as is my elder brother. I am now the primary successor."

Madame Wade was silent.

All of the people present looked at Madame Wade. Keane's position as primary successor to the governorship was indisputable and protected by imperial law. They wanted to see how Madame Wade would handle it.

"Haha, Keane, what's the rush?" Madame Wade laughed. "Your father is dead, and you are his only surviving son. Naturally, you are his primary successor. The governorship is yours, of course. No one will take it from you."

Linley looked suspiciously at Madame Wade.

Linley wasn't alone. Everyone's hearts were filled with suspicion. Madame Wade wasn't the sort to so easily give up.

"Then thank you, aunt." Keane smiled. "Then when shall I assume the governorship?" Madame Wade chuckled, "No rush, no rush. Right now, Keane, you aren't of age yet. How about this. In two years, when you reach the age of maturity, you can assume the governorship."

“Two years later?” Keane stared.

Madame Wade was beaming. “Keane, be a good boy. You aren’t of age yet. You don’t have enough ability to manage a city. Don’t worry. Two years from now, you will definitely be the governor of the prefectural city of Cerre.”

Chapter 19 – Search and Seizure

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 19, Search and Seizure

Assume the governorship two years from now? Who knows what would happen within these two years? How could Keane endure two years under the rule of Madame Wade?

“I think I already have the necessary ability.” Keane said firmly.

Madame Wade’s face turned slightly more solemn. “Keane, be calm. You are still only a child. The governor of the prefectural city of Cerre is in charge of hundreds of thousands of citizens. Right now, you aren’t capable of assuming this heavy responsibility.”

At this time, Jenne, who was next to Keane, spoke. “Aunt, imperial law makes no requirements with regards to a person having to be of the age of maturity before assuming a governorship.”

Madame Wade looked at Jenne.

Not backing down in the slightest, Jenne stared back at Madame Wade. The two women of different ages just stared at each other.

“True.” Madame Wade laughed. “Imperial law does not openly state that one must be of age before assuming the governorship of a city. However…”

Madame Wade seemed a bit saddened. “Not long ago, after your father passed away, when the clan learned about this news, they had originally planned to let your elder brother assume the governorship. But alas, my poor child…”

“After they learned that Keane was only fourteen, the clan ordered that as the prefectural city of Cerre was one of the important prefectural cities of

the Northwest Administrative Province, and is located very close to the provincial capital of Basil [Ba'si'er], the management of Cerre is an important matter. The clan ordered that Keane must be of age before assuming the governorship."

"The clan?"

Jenne and Keane were both startled.

Hearing this order from 'the clan', both Jenne and Keane were caught off-guard. As a collateral descendant of the Jacques [Jia'ke'si] clan, Jenne and Keane knew what it meant for the clan to issue an order.

"Aunt, did the clan truly issue such a decree?" Jenne stared at Madame Wade.

Madame Wade frowned as she looked at Jenne. "Jenne. Do you think I would dare to make a false decree on behalf of the clan? Mm. Before Keane is able to assume the governorship, all matters in the prefectural city are for me to manage."

"As the future governor, I have the authority to select my own steward." Keane called out unhappily.

Madame Wade stared coldly towards Keane.

Right at this time, Linley, who had been silent the entire time, suddenly spoke. "Madame Wade. The clan that you spoke of didn't issue the order for you specifically to be the steward of the city on behalf of the governor, did they?

Madame Wade was stunned.

No matter how daring she was, she didn't dare to fabricate an order from the clan.

Jenne and Keane were both members of the Jacques clan by blood, while

the Jacques clan itself was one of the most powerful, flourishing clans within the O'Brien Empire.

The entire Northwest Administrative Province, one of the seven great provinces of the O'Brien Empire, was under the management and control of the Jacques clan.

Jenne and Keane's father, Wade Jacques, was only a collateral descendant of the Jacques clan, not a lineal descendant. If it wasn't because of the support of the Jacques clan, how could a coward like Wade Jacques have assumed the position of city governor?

But now, Wade was dead.

In the eyes of the Jacques clan, the prefectural city of Cerre naturally would have to remain in the custody and management of the Jacques clan.

Although Madame Wade had married Wade Jacques, she herself did not, after all, carry any Jacques blood. It wasn't likely that the Jacques clan would allow Madame Wade to assume the position of Steward of the city of Cerre.

"Hmph, if it wasn't for those old relics in the clan…" Madame Wade was inwardly hateful.

No matter how formidable Madame Wade was, there was no way she could compete against the clan. A single word from them could turn her, a noble lady, into a beggar.

"I'm not of the age of maturity yet, but my sister is. I will send people to the provincial capital of Basil. I trust that the elders of the clan will allow my sister to be the steward of the city, rather than you!"

Keane said forcefully.

There was no way that the enmity between Jenne, Keane, and Madame Wade could be resolved.

In just a few words, it had been totally exposed for everyone to see at this dinner. After all, Keane and Jenne's mother had been hounded to her death by Madame Wade. Jenne and Keane, as well, had been the victim of repeated assassination attempts at Madame Wade's orders on this trip.

"Fine. Fine. If you have the ability to do so, go ask the clan. I really want to see for myself if the clan will hand the stewardship of the prefectural city of Cerre to an eighteen year old girl!" Madame Wade raised her chin, speaking arrogantly.

Keane's face was filled with stubbornness as well.

A young man at fourteen years of age was at his most rebellious. The more arrogant Madame Wade was, the more Keane would retaliate against her. Keane believed that the clan would definitely stand on his side. He was, after all, a member of the clan.

After the dinner banquet.

Linley, Jenne, Lambert, and Keane were all together. After asking a few questions, Linley finally realized how enormous and powerful the Jacques clan of Jenne and Keane was.

And their father, Wade Jacques, was nothing more than a collateral descendant and not part of the ruling line.

The true ruling branch of the clan had an astonishing amount of power. The entire Northwest Administrative Province was under their control, and what's more, the control was hereditary. The Jacques clan had already managed the Northwest Administrative Province for around a thousand years.

"The imperial clan of the O'Brien Empire really is very confident, to allow a single clan to manage one of his provinces for a thousand years." Linley sighed in amazement.

The amount of territory a province controlled was greater than the amount of territory the Kingdom of Fenlai had.

To allow a clan to manage a province for so long was to allow a clan to easily accumulate an astonishing amount of power. This was a common reason for eventual rebellion and an empire breaking down.

But the imperial clan of the O'Brien Empire was extremely confident.

Because…they had the War God, as well as the large number of powerful combatants of the War God's College. Additionally, the two most important administrative provinces in the O'Brien Empire, the 'Central Administrative Province' and the 'O'Brien Administrative Province', were both under the control of the imperial clan.

"As long as the War God is present, not a single clan dares rebel. Even if the War God doesn't intervene, the disciples his War God's College had admitted over the past thousands of years now constitute an astonishingly formidable force."

Linley understood.

In the face of absolute power, those so-called armies were just a joke. Armies were only used as a show of force for the commoners. Only Saint-level combatants could truly determine the fate of a nation.

"The Jacques clan must be extremely powerful, after having managed the Northwest Administrative Province for a thousand years." Linley said to himself.

"Hmph, that venomous woman. I refuse to believe the clan will support her." Keane said angrily.

Lambert only chuckled. "Young master, don't worry. If the clan were likely to support her, she wouldn't have acted the way she did tonight."

Indeed.

Right now, Madame Wade was both very angry and very frustrated. “How dare those two countryside siblings be so wild and arrogant? It’s a pity that I didn’t send someone to kill them years ago. If I had, I wouldn’t have so many problems today.”

In the past, Madame Wade had believed that her own son was sure to be the next governor of the prefectural city of Cerre.

But she didn’t expect that her son would die so early.

“Holmer, that fool. Three hundred years of life were wasted on an idiot.” Cold light glittered in Madame Wade’s eyes. “Over the course of three hundred years, Holmer must have accumulated quite a bit of wealth.”

….

Late night. Cerre City was very peaceful.

Holmer’s residence was located in the east district of Cerre. It took up an extremely large amount of land, and had many beautiful female servants. Holmer was quite a lecherous man.

Suddenly, many hoof steps could be heard.

Two guards at the gate of Holmer’s residence looked suspiciously towards the outside. Instantly, their faces turned pale. A large number of armored city guards had clustered around the main gate.

“Open the gate.” A tall, arrogant knight clad in white metal armor and riding a fine stallion called out loudly.

Madame Wade and her two elder brothers were there as well, smiling as they watched. Holmer’s clan didn’t have any experts. With his death, his clan had become a piece of fresh meat which anyone could take.

The main gate slowly opened.

“Milords, why have you come here so late at night?” A middle-aged ran out in a state of partial undress. He had just come running from his bed.

“Madame Countess.” He suddenly saw Madame Wade was here, and his heart instantly shook.

Madame Wade said coldly, “Based on our evidence, Holmer is under suspicion of having attempted to assassinate Keane, the successor to the governorship of Cerre. All members of Holmer’s clan are to be arrested, and all of the clan’s possessions are to be searched and seized.”

Hearing these words, the man’s legs couldn’t help but feel soft, and he fell to his knees.

“No! Madame Countess.” The middle-aged man said hurriedly. “My grandfather was invited by your two brothers…”

“You dare to slander a noble clan? Your crimes increase a level in severity. Kill him.” Madame Wade’s face turned cold.

The leading knight suddenly thrust forward with his lance, striking like a serpent from its lair. With a ‘swish’ sound, the lance pierced through the throat of that middle-aged man.

Madame Wade’s eldest brother, putting on a brave display, called out loudly, “Everyone, hurry up!”

Those city guards immediately charged into the manor like a pack of ravenous wolves and tigers. The thing which these city guards loved to do the most was search and seizures. Because when they carried these activities out, they would always be able to secretly take a few things for themselves.

But of course, they wouldn’t dare take too much, as many people were present and watching.

“What are you doing? What are you doing?!”

A hastily dressed man and woman rushed out, shouting loudly. Some of the manor guards also hefted their weapons, but none of them dared to act.

Because…they could tell that these were the city guards.

How would the private guards of a manor dare to struggle against the city guards?

“Holmer is under suspicion of having attempted to kill young master Keane. All members of Holmer’s clan are to be arrested. Those who resist, kill them.” The knight leader said coldly. When the members of Holmer’s clan heard this order, they were all stunned.

In the face of the assault by the ferocious city guards, many people were taken without a struggle.

But there were still a number of people who were unwilling to surrender, and they turned tail to flee. The soldiers of the city guard chased after them, one by one.

“That Wade-whore.” A white-haired old man said. “She asked Grandpa to help her. Now that Grandpa is dead, she’s actually coming to ransack our manor. How venomous.”

That white-haired old man left a secret room, holding three magicrystal cards.

Holmer was three hundred years old. Of his sons, only two were still alive; the other had died of old age. The two remaining sons were the youngest ones. As for grandsons…the oldest grandchildren of his were two hundred, while the youngest were only around thirty.

“Stop!” A city guard suddenly noticed the old man.

The old man threw a handful of dust out.

“Uhhhh.” The guard’s face immediately turned blue. He grabbed at his throat, emitting several pained noises, then collapsed. He was dead.

With a sneer, the old man very agilely ran towards a small alleyway.

“Hold it!” A loud shout from far away.

The old man didn’t pay it any heed, increasing his speed instead.

“Swish.” An arrow pierced through the air at astonishing speed, howling as it pierced into the old man’s back.

The handsome, golden-haired knight lowered his bow. With a cold laugh, he said, “You thought you could run? In your dreams. Go search his body and see if he has any magicrystal cards.”

“Yes, milord.”

….

Not only was the manor itself filled with people; a large ring had formed around the manor as well. Not a single member of Holmer’s clan had been able to flee. Although some members of the clan knew how to use poison, they were far inferior to Holmer.

Within the main hall of Holmer’s manor.

Madame Wade and her two brothers were staring at a pile of treasure and magicrystal cards.

“This old fart’s money-making abilities were quite impressive.” Madame Wade’s older brother’s eyes were gleaming.

Madame Wade laughed calmly. “The two of you shouldn’t lust after a small amount like this. When we take over control of the city’s governorship, our wealth will be far greater than this.”

In the air, high above Holmer's manor.

Linley had a pair of translucent wings on his back. He was flying in the air, watching the looting and ransacking scene below in Holmer's manor.

"Madame Wade really is vicious and ruthless. This Holmer really is quite unfortunate." In mid-air, Linley laughed calmly as he watched all of this happen.

Chapter 20 – The Summer Inferno

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 20, The Summer Inferno

This had been a peaceful night. The miserable screams of the people of Holmer's clan being slaughtered were thus all the more jarring to the ear. Those sounds had travelled very far. Even Jenne and Keane, who were within the castle, could hear them.

"What is that?"

Keane ran out dressed in his sleepwear, while Jenne came out with her hair undone. The two siblings curiously walked out towards the direction of the castle gates. As for the extremely cautious old servant, Lambert, he had run to the castle gates already.

"By the Madame's orders, no one is permitted to leave the castle at night."

Two castle guards standing at the gate formed a cross with their spears, forbidding entry, as they spoke coldly to Lambert.

"What is going on? The two of you, move!" Keane snapped at them.

Seeing that Keane and Jenne had come, the two castle guards exchanged glances. Everyone in the castle knew that Keane was the successor to the governorship, but at the same time, Madame Wade wasn't going to easily give up her power.

"Young master Keane, Miss Jenne. We are very sorry, but the Madame has ordered that no one is to leave the castle at night. Please go back and rest." The taller of the two guards spoke.

Keane's face turned cold. "Out of my way."

The taller guard didn't budge. He only begged painfully, "Young master Keane, please don't make things difficult for us. If you force us to let you pass, you'll be killing us. We really can't afford to disobey the Madame's orders."

Keane was boiling with rage.

By his side, Jenne said to him, "Enough, Keane. Let's not make things difficult for them. They are in a very pitiable situation."

"Thank you, Miss Jenne! Thank you, Miss Jenne!" Those two guards hurriedly said. In their hearts, they felt very grateful to Jenne. Jenne was as beautiful as a holy angel, and she possessed a kindly soul as well.

Jenne asked gently, "May I ask, what exactly happened outside? I heard screaming. It seems as though there was some sort of disaster in the east district of the city."

The taller guard said in a low voice, "Miss Jenne, not too long ago, the Madame led a group of people out of the castle, and quite a large number of city guards passed through as well."

"Aunt? City guards?" Jenne and Keane were both confused.

Why was Madame Wade leading a large group of city guards so late at night?

"Miss, young master. Let's sit down and rest for now." Lambert pointed at a nearby stone bench. Jenne and Keane nodded, then walked over, the three of them sitting down.

Jenne, Keane, and Lambert were all extremely irritated.

Madame Wade's existence was like having a fishbone stuck in their throats, causing them a great deal of misery.

"That damn woman wants to use me not being of age as an excuse to try

and force me to wait two years. Hrmph. Two years. Within those two years, I probably would have been killed by her long ago." Keane cursed in a low voice.

Jenne nodded as well.

The two siblings knew very well that they couldn't allow Madame Wade to continue to act as she pleased.

"Young miss, young master. The senior madame has been in charge of Cerre for quite a long time. The city guards as well as the castle guards all obey her orders. The senior madame's prestige is at a very high level. If young master Keane is unable to become the governor, it really will be very hard for us to fight against her. After all…there are too few people here who whole-heartedly support us." Lambert was very resigned.

Jenne, Keane, and Lambert were all silent.

Within Cerre, there were very few people who supported them. Perhaps even if there were people who supported them, they wouldn't dare to do so openly. In the prefectural city of Cerre, Madame Wade was like a local tyrant.

"Whoosh."

A wind began to blow.

"Who is it?!" The two gate guards cautiously raised their heads, and saw a man dressed in a black warrior's outfit and wearing a heavy black sword on his back descend from the air.

"Me." Linley looked backwards at the guards.

Instantly, the two guards no longer dared to speak. They had heard of how powerful Linley was. At these guards' level of power, they couldn't even dream of stopping Linley.

“Big brother Ley.” Jenne and Keane stood up.

Linley turned to look at them.

Summer was just starting, and the temperatures at night were still fairly high. Keane and Jenne were only dressed in simple sleepwear, and their hair was all mussed.

“Big brother Ley, what exactly is going on outside? Why is it so noisy?” Keane looked at Linley and asked.

Linley said casually, “Madame Wade led a group of city guards to Holmer’s clan manor and launched a search and seizure operation. Tell me, how could it not be noisy?”

“Search and seizure?” Jenne and Keane were stunned.

“Holmer’s clan?” Lambert was greatly shocked as well.

Linley casually sat down on another end of the long bench. Laughing, he said, “Just wait and rest here for a bit. Very soon, you’ll hear some good news.”

“Good news? Can it be that she intends to give us the money she’s seized from that bastard?” Keane cursed quietly.

“BOOM!”

Right at this moment, a thunderous explosion could be heard from the east. The explosive sound was so noisy, it sounded like several dozen thunderbolts going off at once. This explosion probably woke up at least half of the residents of Cerre City.

“What was that?” Jenne, Keane, and Lambert jumped to their feet in shock.

The nearby guards, as well as the castle servants and female attendants all stared eastwards as well, and as they did, they saw that blazing flames were

rising into the sky from the east.

“How could there be such a large inferno? And where did that explosion come from?” Linley looked questioningly towards the east as well.

All of the people in the castle were mystified. They all waited quietly for the city guards to return, as well as Madame Wade. Perhaps they would know what was causing that huge inferno in the east, or that massive explosion.

After a while…

A chorus of hoof steps could be heard outside the castle, followed by countless shouts. Immediately following these shouts were a series of frantic knocking sounds from the gate that came as quickly as rain drops in a storm.

“Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!”

The knocking sounds were frantic and ringing.

“Open the door, quick!” Angry roars could be heard from outside the castle gates.

The two gate guards didn’t dare to hesitate. They immediately opened the castle gates, as Linley, Lambert, Jenne, and Keane watched.

Once the castle doors were opened, they saw that in front of the castle were a large number of knights as well as heroic warriors. Their leader was a golden-haired man who was wielding a spear.

“Out of my way!” The golden-haired man roared to the two gate guards.

But upon seeing Keane and Jenne, the golden-haired man started, then immediately said with respect, “Deputy Commander Ritter [Li’te] of the city guards pays his respect to Miss Jenne and young master Keane.”

Deputy Commander Ritter could be considered the second highest ranking person in the city guard. Not too long ago, he had participated in that welcoming banquet. Naturally, he recognized Jenne and Keane.

“Mr. Ritter. What happened, to cause all of you to be so frantic?” Keane spoke.

Ritter immediately fell to one knee. He painfully said, “Young master Keane. Forgive me for being useless in my protective responsibilities. Madame Wade and her two brothers died in the explosion just now.”

“Oh……ah!?”

Keane’s eyes immediately bulged out, and Jenne and Lambert were greatly shocked as well. Disbelief painted the faces of all of the nearby guards as well.

Madame Wade had died.

Just as Keane and Jenne were worrying about her, Madame Wade and her two brothers had suddenly both died. Her death only filled the hearts of Jenne and Keane with joy.

Jenne and Keane glanced at each other, their eyes filled with wild joy.

“What exactly happened? Explain clearly.” Keane adopted the attitude and posture of a superior lecturing a subordinate.

The golden-haired Ritter immediately replied, “Your subordinate led several hundred members of the city guard, under the command of the Madame Countess, to launch a search and seizure operation of Holmer’s manor.”

“After we finished the search and seizure operation, Madame Countess ordered that all the treasures of the Holmer clan be placed within the main hall, then ordered all of us soldiers to leave, leaving behind just her and her two brothers in that hall.”

Hearing this, Keane couldn't help but quietly curse, "That b*tch really is shameless."

Ritter continued, "We were stationed outside capturing the escaping members of the Holmer clan, but who would've thought that suddenly, the Holmer clan's manor would catch fire. As soon as it did, everyone charged into rescue the Madame Countess."

"But we hadn't even made our way inside before we heard that terrifying explosion. Half of the building suddenly blew up and was destroyed."

Ritter said painfully, "By the time we reached Madame Countess and the other two, we found only their bodies, which had already been blown apart by the blast. All three of them were dead."

"Fine. Order people to bring my aunt's corpse here, then go back and rest." Keane directly ordered.

"Yes sir." Ritter immediately issued the order.

Everyone all understood that with Madame Wade's death, all of the authority in the prefectural city of Cerre now rested with this fourteen year old boy.

Everyone watched as Ritter's men brought the charred, blasted remnants of the corpses inside.

Only now did Keane and Jenne totally believe…that it wasn't just a dream. That detestable Madame Wade had truly died. From this day forward, their lives would no longer be lived in fear.

"Big brother Ley." Jenne suddenly came to her senses. She turned to look at Linley. "Thank you."

Lambert only now understood as well. Looking at Linley, he said with gratitude, "Mr. Ley, the good news you wanted us to hear truly was excellent news. It was the best type of news, the news that we've been

saved."

"What are you talking about?"

Keane was flabbergasted. "What do you mean by mumbling about good news and excellent news? OH!!!"

Finally, Keane understood as well.

"Big brother Ley, just now, you came in from outside the castle?" Keane asked quietly.

"Yep." Linley nodded.

"Then you…" A hint of a smile was on Keane's face.

Linley begin to chuckle as well. "Seeing how nervous and restless you all were, I helped you address the root of your troubles. Alright, time to go to bed and have a good sleep, so you'll have the energy to take over the governance of this prefectural city."

As he spoke, Linley turned and headed towards his own residence.

Lambert, Jenne, and Keane all were amazed. Staring at each other with shock and joy, they really wanted to scream with happiness. But of course, Madame Wade's corpse was right next to them. It wouldn't be appropriate for them to celebrate like that.

"Boss. It's done?" Bebe was lying on the ground, his eyelids drooped sleepily.

Linley chuckled. "Yep. All done."

To the current Linley, someone like Madame Wade wasn't even qualified to be considered an 'opponent'. Those small schemes that Madame Wade could come up with were nothing more than jokes to Linley.

Try whatever tricks you want. I'll just straight up kill you and resolve the issue once and for all.

"Why was there an explosion?" Bebe asked curiously.

"How should I know?" Linley shook his head. "All I did was kill Madame Wade and her two brothers, then use some fire-style magic to set the manor on fire. Afterwards…I just rushed back alone. Who would've expected that as soon as I returned to the manor, there would be such an explosion?"

What Linley didn't realize was that one of Holmer's experimental laboratories was located in that building. Many strange and bizarre chemicals and experimental materials were stored in that room. When Linley set fire to that building, he also unknowingly set ablaze some special materials, resulting in that massive explosion.

"You don't know?" Bebe was startled. "Oh. Then let's go to bed."

"Yep. Bedtime."

Linley casually climbed into his bed, then went to sleep.

Madame Wade and her brothers had suddenly died, just like that, in one night. This news shook the prefectural city of Cerre like an earthquake. And, to Jenne and Keane, this joyous news made them so happy that they couldn't sleep at all.

But to Linley, it was nothing more than a trifling matter.

Right now, the Holmer clan's manor continued to blaze merrily into the night. Many of the local city guards were frantically trying to put out the fire….

Chapter 21 – Gift

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 21, Gift

The prefectural city of Cerre administrated around ten or so other cities, as well as a large number of villages and farmers. The total population it controlled was in the millions. It would be fair to say that the prefectural city of Cerre could be considered as equivalent to a Duchy.

And the city governor of the prefectural city of Cerre could be considered equivalent to the Grand Duke of a Duchy!

“About to become the city governor of a prefectural city at just fourteen years of age. This really makes one feel envious.” In many of the hotels in Cerre, countless people were discussing this event.

Madame Wade and her brothers had suddenly died in that massive fire. This caused the somewhat complicated lines of power in Cerre to suddenly grow distinct and clear.

There was no longer any question.

Keane, who possessed the blood of the Jacques clan, would definitely assume the position of governor of the prefectural city of Cerre.

“That Madame Wade went in the middle of the night to ransack someone’s home, but she didn’t expect that she would lose her life as a result. What a farce.” A red-bearded old man grabbed a large flagon of wine, laughing loudly.

“Heard she was burnt to death.” Another nearby person said.

“How could she have been burnt to death? There were so many city guards around her. If she really was just burned by fire, the Madame Countess definitely would’ve been able to escape.” A skinny man suddenly lowered

his voice. “Let me tell you a secret. Madame Countess and her brothers were first killed, and then their corpses were burnt by the fire.”

All the people nearby immediately turned to stare at him.

“This is the truth.” The skinny man said confidently.

“All of you are full of crap.” A burly man laughed coldly. “I’m an actual damn city guard, and I was there that night. Do you know more, or do I know more?”

That skinny man immediately laughed awkwardly. “Friend, I’m just kidding.”

“Madame Countess and her two brothers weren’t killed by fire. They probably died due to the blast.” The burly man said what he believed to be the truth. “Burnt to death? Wouldn’t they call for help? But the brothers in our squad didn’t hear a single cry for help the entire time. What most likely happened was that the sudden explosion instantly blew them apart, so they didn’t have any chance to cry for help.”

All the people nearby nodded, including the skinny man.

This explanation was a very logical one.

“Forget about Madame Wade. Right now, the city governors of Cerre are that pair of siblings.” The burly man took a deep drink of liquor, then spoke loudly.

……

Indeed. Right now, the center of attention in the prefectural city of Cerre was that pair of previously unremarkable countryside-raised siblings, Jenne and Keane.

Within the castle of the prefectural city.

“Why are there so many?” Flipping through the list of gifts in front of him, Keane also looked at the gift-filled room. He couldn’t help but be stunned.

After Madame Wade’s death, all of the nobles of the city immediately wished to draw closer to Keane now. They gave him gifts, they gave him beautiful women, they gave him powerful guards…all of these nobles knew that given Keane’s young age, their clans would probably be under the direct control of Keane for the next century at least. Naturally, they had to have good relations with him.

“This isn’t that much.” Lambert shook his head.

Jenne and Keane stared at Lambert in surprise, while Linley sipped his tea at a nearby table.

“Grandpa Lambert, this isn’t a lot?” Jenne said with surprise.

Lambert shook his head. “Miss, young master. These gifts, all combined, are only worth a few hundred thousand gold coins. A few hundred thousand gold coins? Hrmph. Miss, young master, do you know how much the senior madame’s net worth was? I believe it was over ten million gold coins!”

“Over ten million gold coins?” Jenne and Keane were both stunned.

They had lived for so long in the countryside. When had they ever seen such wealth? Lambert, on the other hand, had followed their mother for many years. When he lived within the governor’s castle, he had seen many things.

“This is very normal. After managing millions of people for so many years, given the senior madame’s avaricious nature, it would be strange if she didn’t have ten million gold coins. Unfortunately, we’ve still yet to find where she hid her magicrystal card. Even if we found it…most likely, that magicrystal card was linked to the senior madame’s fingerprints. We wouldn’t be able to withdraw the money.” Lambert shook his head helplessly.

The rules that the Golden Bank of the Four Empires had set were all to the advantage of the Golden Bank of the Four Empires.

Once a magicrystal card had been imprinted with a fingerprint, only the owner of that fingerprint could access the contents. Even if others acquired the magicrystal card, it would be of no use to them.

Of course…

The owner of the magicrystal card could go to a physical branch and transfer their wealth to someone else.

But if that person were to suddenly die without initiating a transfer of funds, then the assets would be claimed in its entirety by the Golden Bank of the Four Empires. In truth, the Golden Bank of the Four Empires had no choice but to do this.

The amount of gold coins stored in magicrystal cards in the world was actually ten times greater than the amount of gold coins the Golden Bank physically possessed.

But how often would extremely wealthy people, who were in possession of at least a hundred million gold coins, actually go to the bank and physically withdraw a hundred million gold coins? Even if they managed to withdraw it, physically moving the money back would be a problem. This was one of the reasons why the Golden Bank of the Four Empires dared to issue so many magicrystal cards. At the same time, the bank didn't dare to indiscriminately issue them either, because the bank was jointly run by all four empires. And behind the empires was the War God O'Brien, as well as the longest living human expert, the High Priest. No one dared to act too rashly.

"Ten million gold coins, disappeared, just like that." Keane said painfully.

He really agonized for the loss of such a sum of money.

"Young master. Being a city governor isn't just about collecting money. You

have to pay for the salaries of the city guards, to renovate the city, and so on. There are multiple expenses." Lambert added.

Keane started.

"Whaaaa? Being a city governor costs money?" Keane had no idea about this.

"That is why I said these few hundred thousand gold coins don't mean much. Fortunately, the prefectural city does have its own treasury, which should have a fair amount of money inside." Lambert said.

Keane rubbed his head. "Ah. It seems as though being city governor is quite complicated and quite burdensome."

"Sis." Keane looked hopefully at Jenne. "You have to help me out."

Jenne nodded honestly. "Keane, I'll definitely do my best to help." But this simple nod of the head was the beginning to a painful, painful life for Jenne.

Right now, neither Keane nor Jenne nor Lambert knew that while they were worrying over money, the tea-drinking Linley was in possession of an astonishing fortune that had been built up by a royal clan over thousands of years. Most likely, even their clan, the Jacques clan which had managed the Northwest Administrative Province for a thousand years, couldn't match Linley for wealth.

After all, no matter how money-grubbing they were, they couldn't out-compete the royal clan of a kingdom.

"Jenne, Keane." Linley suddenly spoke. "You guys can stay here. I need to go train."

Jenne and Keane both looked at Linley. Keane chortled, "Big brother Ley, don't spend too much time training tonight. You have to remember to come for dinner. Tonight…my sister is going to personally cook."

Jenne immediately blushed.

Ever since the night of the banquet, when Keane had openly said that Linley was Jenne's fiancé, all of the citizens of the prefectural city of Cerre had really come to believe this was the case. Even the servants believe it. Naturally, this made Jenne quite embarrassed.

"Oh, right." Linley waved his hand with a smile.

Suddenly, in front of the courtyard, four large chests appeared out of nowhere. The chests were all open, and they were filled with all sorts of artworks, valuable magicite cores, and some rare, highly precious materials.

"What is this?" Keane and Jenne were both stunned.

"These are the possessions of Holmer's clan. I'm not too sure what the valuation of these four chests is. Most likely, over a million gold coins. Take these as well." Linley took out eight magicrystal cards. "These are the un-imprinted magicrystal cards of Holmer's clan. There's eight cards in total. Each of them should have a million gold coins stored within."

Linley had overheard this information from Madame Wade's conversation with her two brothers. Only then had he learned about the value of these magicrystal cards.

"This…this…" Keane and Jenne, and even Lambert, stared at Linley in shock.

"All combined, this should be worth nearly ten million gold coins, right? With these…you won't have to be too stingy and tight-fisted in managing the prefectural city of Cerre. Alright, time for me to go train."

Linley casually tossed the eight magicrystal cards into the chests, then turned and left.

Jenne, Keane, and Lambert all stared at the four chests, as well as the eight

runed magicrystal cards. They didn't know what to say.

"Sis." Keane looked at Jenne.

Jenne was stunned. "Originally, when I asked big brother Ley to help us, I said I would give him ten thousand gold coins. This…"

The two siblings really had no idea as to what they should say. They had offered ten thousand gold to Linley to ask him to help them out, but he only took a single gold coin…and now, gave them this fortune worth ten million gold coins!

Ten million gold coins!

This was an extremely amazing fortune.

When the Debs clan of the Kingdom of Fenlai was at its most flourishing, its net worth was only around a hundred million gold coins. After the repercussions of the smuggling affair, their net worth dropped to around ten million gold coins, but despite that, they were still a major clan of Fenlai.

"Miss, young master, this Mr. Ley really is no ordinary person." Lambert's expression was very solemn.

Jenne and Keane both nodded.

That went without saying. How could an ordinary person so casually toss out ten million gold coins?

"Just then, when Mr. Ley waved his hands, these four chests appeared out of nowhere. If my prediction is correct…Mr. Ley is in possession of a legendary interspatial ring!" Lambert's face was extremely serious.

"An interspatial ring?" Jenne and Keane had never even heard of such a thing.

Lambert nodded. "Right. Interspatial rings are priceless treasures. In the

Yulan continent, they are a proof of one's stature and power. In the legends that I have heard, even when people offered to buy one for hundreds of millions of gold coins, no one has ever been willing to sell one."

"Hundreds of millions of gold coins?!" Jenne and Keane were wide-eyed.

What would hundreds of millions of gold coins look like if you put them all in one place? They didn't even dare imagine what an enormous fortune like that would look like.

"In the entire Northwest Administrative Province, only the legendary clan leader of the Jacques clan, the governor for the entire province, has an interspatial ring." Having been in the prefectural city of Cerre for many years, Lambert knew quite a bit about the affairs of the Jacques clan.

"Are you talking about…Great-Grandfather McKenzie [Mai'ke'kan]?" Keane immediately said.

The two greatest source of pride for the Jacques clan was their first clan leader, Jacques, and their legendary clan leader, McKenzie Jacques.

In the past Jacques had been an ordinary commoner. He ended up joining the army, and was continuously promoted through the ranks, and also made major contributions to the O'Brien Empire. In the end, he even founded a new legion for the O'Brien Empire; the Jacques Legion.

As Jacques grew famous, he founded his own Jacques clan.

The Emperor even gave the Northwest Administrative Province to Jacques for his clan to manage. From this, one could tell how greatly Jacques was favored by the imperial clan.

But of course…the first clan leader was famous because of his military abilities in leading armies. With regards to how personally powerful he was, up till his dying day, he still was still just a warrior of the eighth rank.

But McKenzie Jacques was the pride of the clan. Over fifty years ago,

McKenzie had entered the Saint-level before the age of two hundred.

A Saint-level combatant!

Once a clan produced a Saint-level combatant, so long as that combatant didn't perish and the clan didn't rebel, the clan's glory would never diminish.

"Great-Grandfather McKenzie, has an interspatial ring?" Keane was surprised.

"Right. And he has one only because in the past, his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor himself, personally gifted it to him." Lambert said emotionally. "The Jacques clan has always been proud of this fact. You must understand, even many of kings of various kingdoms in the Yulan continent do not possess an interspatial ring."

Only now did Jenne and Keane completely understand how rare and valuable these interspatial rings were.

"But I didn't expect…that Mr. Ley would also be in possession of an interspatial ring. No wonder…no wonder ten million gold coins was nothing to him."

Jenne and Keane felt as though they couldn't breathe.

"I thought I had a very high rank as the successor to the city governorship. I thought I could give big brother Ley a really, really important official position to serve in. But it seems as though…big brother Ley…" Keane was now beginning to understand.

The governor of a prefectural city, to the ordinary people, was someone as high above them as the heavens were.

But to experts such as Linley, it was nothing at all. He could kill one whenever he wanted to.

Chapter 22 – The Vast Earth

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 22, The Vast Earth

A month later, the order came down from the clan leader of the Jacques clan; Keane was to assume the position of city governor of the prefectural city of Cerre. However, prior to achieving the age of maturity, his sister, Jenne, was to assist him in managing the affairs of the city.

“Big brother Ley, you are leaving?”

Jenne, Keane, and Lambert all looked at Linley with astonishment.

With Keane the governor of Cerre and Jenne his steward, the two of them now had comparatively relaxed lives. Just as the two of them wanted to find a way to repay Linley, he suddenly declared his intention to depart from the prefectural city of Cerre.

“Big brother Ley.” Jenne’s eyes were starting to turn slightly red.

Linley was carrying his heavy sword, and Bebe was on his shoulders. By his side was Haeru, his Blackcloud Panther. Smiling, Linley said, “In this developed, urbanized environment within Cerre City, my training is negatively influenced. I won’t be going too far. I just intend to go to a valley in the mountains near Cerre City to quietly train for a time.”

To Linley, the most important thing was still training. Linley, who was still constantly improving himself, hadn’t yet reached a bottleneck, which made training all the more important. At a time like this, he had to seize the opportunity to raise his power as much as possible.

There were records of Dragonblood Warriors of the Baruch clan reaching the Saint-level and dominating the world in a matter of decades due to intensive training.

Experts had to be able to endure loneliness.

“Valley?” Jenne and Keane both inwardly let out sighs of relief.

“Alright, if I have some free time, I’ll come visit. I’ve already helped you as much as I can. In the future, you’ll have to rely on yourselves.” Linley said with a laugh.

When he looked at these two siblings, Keane and Jenne, Linley would often think of his own younger brother, Wharton. Right now, he and Wharton also had lost their parents.

“I wonder how Wharton is doing. After I finish understanding the level beyond ‘impose’, I’ll go pay him a visit.”

Linley knew very well that right now, over the course of Wharton’s training in the O’Brien Empire, there was no need for him to go disturb Wharton. In addition, only by learning on his own would Wharton grow fastest.

Once Linley was by Wharton’s side, Wharton would probably be unconsciously negatively impacted.

…..

East of Cerre, there was a vibrant, green mountain range with an unassuming little valley. Linley erected a wooden room here, then began to engage in quiet training.

Late at night, within the mountain valley. There was a green plain of grass, and even a little lake in the middle of it.

Linley was seated in a meditative trance close to the lake. His eyes were closed as he attuned himself to nature. By his side, there was a lit campfire, casting a flickering light across Linley’s face.

Linley could feel the expansiveness of the vast earth, the flows of the wind, and the streams of water. He could feel the passion of the flames…

As a magus, especially one with exceptional affinity for both wind and earth elemental essence, Linley's ability to attune with nature was far superior to most warriors.

This was the reason why that ancestor of the Baruch clan who used a heavy warhammer as his weapon only managed to reach the level of 'impose' after entering the Saint-level. After all, it was harder for warriors to become one with nature, compared to magi.

"The 'Thunderbolt' technique learned when I reached the level of 'wielding something heavy as though it were light' contained explosive force, like the eruption of a volcano. As for the so-called 'impose', it contains the 'imposing force' of nature itself, of earth, fire, water, and wind. However…"

After meditating for a long time, Linley suddenly understood.

"The 'impose' level is merely an 'imposing force' that borrows from the strength of the surrounding, nearby nature. The level that is above 'impose' should be all-embracing. I need to pursue the most suitable avenue for this."

In the darkness of the night, Linley remained there in the meditative pose. His eyes then suddenly opened, and they were as resplendent as the stars in the night sky.

"Different weapons will need to be used in different ways. The strength of the heavy sword lies in its weight! As for this heavy sword, Bladeless, it naturally doesn't rely on a sharp edge. It openly relies on its tremendous weight and makes open, direct assaults."

Linley's spirit was dimly sensing something.

The principles of training with the heavy sword were very similar to the fundamental principles of the earth itself.

"The vast earth is dense and heavy. The vast earth is boundless. The vast

earth is stable…" Linley was holding the adamantine heavy sword in his hands, but his heart had totally merged with the throbbing pulse of the earth.

The unique vibrating pulse of the earth had a one-of-a-kind, heart-shaking rhythm. Generally speaking, only people who had reached a very high level of attunement to the earth would sense it.

Linley rose to his feet.

He began to silently wield the adamantine heavy sword about. As the adamantine heavy sword danced about, Linley's own movements and the movements of his sword began to enter into a certain unique rhythm.

This was a rhythm that was like the pulse of one's heart.

"Whoosh."

The adamantine heavy sword seemed to carry a million pounds of force, as it heavily slashed through the air again and again. As Linley swung his heavy sword repeatedly, he felt as though he had totally become one with the earth. Just by training with his heavy sword, he felt as though he himself now carried the weight of the earth.

"Boom."

Linley's heavy adamantine sword suddenly pierced directly up into the air. Several explosive booms could be heard in succession. This empty stab upwards had caused the air itself to explode. This was inconceivable! This was because no matter how fast a weapon could move, it could at most cause a single sonic boom. To cause multiple sonic booms was virtually impossible.

"Hrm?" Linley's eyes suddenly lit up.

But just like that, upon becoming distracted, Linley was no longer absorbed with that near-miraculous feeling of being one with nature.

“What happened just then? I didn’t use any battle-qi, but my power split into multiple rhythmic pulses in that attack.”

Linley began to ponder this question.

When in the middle of training, people would sometimes enter into a certain state and reach an astonishing level of power. But if they weren’t able to totally understand that state they had entered, they wouldn’t be able to wield its power again so easily.

What Linley needed to do now was to constantly ponder and constantly train.

He needed to master everything and be in complete control!

……

The sky was ocean-blue, a pure azure color without a hint of other colors. A few beautiful, lazy clouds drifted across it. Linley’s life in the valley was indeed very quiet.

The blowing wind. The rippling lake.

Right now, Linley wasn’t training. He was fishing in the valley lake. A person couldn’t always be training; if they did, it could actually be counter-productive.

If he wanted to go fishing, he would. If he wanted to go to sleep, he would.

His heart had become one with the world, one with nature.

When he did train, this made his rate of improvement extremely high.

“Big brother Ley.” From outside the valley, a happy voice could be heard. Linley turned and saw Jenne on a fine stallion. Behind her, there were two pretty female servants on horses. These two female servants were clearly

quite talented, as their movements on their horses were those of practiced riders.

“Jenne.” Linley put down his fishing pole and stood up.

Neither Bebe nor Haeru were currently present. The two of them would often go deeper into the mountains to hunt for wild beasts to eat. The beasts in this mountain range Linley had chosen to stay in were all ordinary animals. Magical beasts were extremely rare.

“Big brother Ley, these are some of the dishes that I prepared.” Jenne removed a package from the back of her horse. The package was well wrapped. “You definitely can’t have been eating too well here. Come, big brother Ley, have a good taste.”

Jenne unwrapped the package, one layer at a time. Inside was a metal box, which was filled with all sorts of dishes as well as rice.

Linley took a sniff.

“Mmm. It really does smell good.” Linley laughed.

Jenne’s face immediately turned red with excitement.

But in his heart, Linley was sighing. How could Linley not tell how Jenne felt? In terms of both appearance as well as temperament, Jenne was all but perfect. But having experienced so much, it was hard for Linley to open the depths of his hearts and let anyone else in.

“Love?”

Linley sighed to himself.

He didn’t have any interest in affairs of the heart. The most important thing for now was to focus on his training. Right at this moment, a scene couldn’t help but suddenly flash through Linley’s mind.

After Linley's father had died, all the nobles had come to pay their respects at Wushan township. That night, Delia had come to visit him. She had wanted to tell Linley that she was returning to the Yulan Empire. And that night, before she had left…Delia had kissed him.

"Delia?"

Aside from Alice, perhaps the only person Linley felt some romantic affection towards was this girl whom he had known since his very first year at the Ernst Institute, especially after the open displays of affection Delia had shown him. Although Linley had never admitted it openly, in his heart, Delia's image had been engraved in his mind.

"Big brother Ley, eat up!" Jenne said hopefully.

Linley sighed to himself. "I can't let Jenne waste her youth like this." As he thought to himself, Linley began to eat heartily while praising, "This really is excellent. The taste is wonderful."

Hearing Linley's praise, Jenne was all smiles.

"Jenne, in the future, though, you don't need to come visit me. When I am training, I don't like to be disturbed." Linley said to Jenne.

Jenne was startled.

"Oh." Jenne mumbled, then she squeezed out a smile. "Then when you have some free time, big brother Ley, come visit us in the castle."

"Sure." Linley could only respond affirmatively.

….

The days of Linley training in the mountain valley passed by very quickly. In the blink of an eye, over a month had passed. With regards to how to properly use his adamantine heavy sword, Linley had gradually begun to find the proper path.

So long as he persevered down this path, in a few years time, he definitely would be able to reach a new level that was beyond the ‘impose’ level!

….

Within a secluded hotel in the prefectural city of Cerre.

This hotel was very dimly lit, and the atmosphere tended towards the dark, giving the impression of dusk. Each table was arranged in a very orderly manner, and between each booth, there was a screen.

This was a very quiet hotel with a great deal of atmosphere. The first time Linley had come here, he had taken a liking to it.

The expenses here were fairly high as well.

While he was training, generally speaking, every seven or eight days, Linley would come here and drink wine while listening to the elegant, beautiful music of the hotel. Every so often, he would hear some gossip from travelers.

“It’s almost July. Wharton’s school year should be starting soon.” Linley thought to himself.

Right now, there were quite a few customers in this hotel. All of the customers engaged in conversations were quite conscientiously lowering their voices as they spoke, but when Linley focused, he could clearly hear every word of every conversation they were having.

Suddenly, a quiet conversation attracted Linley’s attention.

“Have you heard? In the imperial capital, an incredible genius has emerged. A seventeen year old named ‘Wharton’.” On a table next to Linley, there were three middle-aged men. They were discussing the various geniuses of the empire.

Wharton?

Linley focused his attention on them.

After having spent so much time in the O'Brien Empire, Linley had yet to learn anything regarding Wharton.

"Are you talking about that genius who popped up out of nowhere in the O'Brien Academy?" The bald man's eyes lit up. "I've heard of him too. The end-of-the-year competitions for students of the seventh grade always receive a great deal of attention. Even some students who have reached the eighth rank will participate on occasion."

As the number one warrior academy of the Yulan continent, the O'Brien Academy was divided into seven grades.

Upon reaching the seventh rank, a warrior was admitted into the seventh grade.

A warrior of the seventh rank was qualified to graduate, but many of them still elected to stay in the academy. Even some warriors of the eighth rank were in no hurry to graduate.

"Old bald vulture, you've heard this news as well? That Wharton is really… wow." A jade-haired middle-aged man sighed. "Only seventeen years old. In the past, he had never participated in any of the yearly competitions. This time, when he took part in the seventh grade competition, he actually defeated a warrior of the eighth rank to become the champion of the seventh grade class."

"What? A seventeen year old who defeated a warrior of the eighth rank? Are you serious? Is this real?" A pudgy man who had only been listening up till now suddenly spoke in shock.

The bald man glanced at him. "Of course it's real. I personally witnessed it. You have no idea. This Wharton was around two meters tall and extremely powerfully built. His physical presence alone exerts tremendous pressure on

people. His weapon of choice is an extremely terrifying giant warblade. Wielding that warblade, that Wharton was actually able to defeat a warrior of the eighth rank to become the champion of the seventh grade class."

"From what I heard, for this Wharton to already be able to defeat a warrior of the eighth rank now means that he most likely will be able to reach the eighth rank himself by age twenty. In the past, the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, reached the ninth rank when he was thirty. This Wharton's natural ability isn't too far off." The jade-haired man praised as well, "For a seventeen year old to be able to defeat a warrior of the eighth rank is amazing. It has been a long time since the empire has produced a genius like this. He's even been publicly acknowledged as the number one genius of the O'Brien Academy, and the Emperor has already conferred upon him the title of Count."

Chapter 23 – The Cardinal

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 23, The Cardinal

The fat man said questioningly, “Hey, according to what you two are saying, someone like this Wharton should’ve become famous a long time ago. Why hadn’t anyone heard of him until now?”

The bald man nodded. “I was suspicious about this question as well, so I did some investigating. This Wharton, in all his time at the O’Brien Empire, had never participated in the yearly tournaments, nor did he ever duel against any experts. That’s why he didn’t have any fame at all.”

“To have power but not reveal it.” The jade-haired man and the fat man both sighed in appreciation.

“Forget about the past.” The bald man was very confident. “After this seventh grade tournament at the O’Brien Academy, this Wharton is going to be the center of attention.”

Within that secluded little hotel, Linley continued to sip his wine. There was a hint of a smile on his face.

“Little Wharton is two meters tall? That’s a bit taller than me.”

When Wharton left Wushan township, he had only been six years old. At the time, he still had his baby teeth, and was very adorable. In the blink of an eye, eleven years had passed.

“Little Wharton!”

A warm feeling swelled in Linley’s heart. This was the affection and bond between siblings.

“Little Wharton’s density of Dragonblood in his veins is even higher than

mine. His natural talent as a warrior is higher than me as well. He defeated warriors of the eighth rank at age seventeen? Mm….I expect Wharton should have reached the seventh rank at least two or three years ago."

Linley's guesses were absolutely correct.

That year, the six year old Wharton had followed Housekeeper Hiri on the long, winding road to the O'Brien Empire. Given Wharton's natural ability, it was easy for him to enter the O'Brien Academy.

But Housekeeper Hiri understood that the Baruch clan still belonged to the Holy Union. Thus, all this time, he had made sure that Wharton would conceal his true strength and not reveal it. If Wharton shone too brightly, after graduation, the O'Brien Academy wouldn't easily allow him to return to the Holy Union.

Thus, per Housekeeper Hiri's guidance, this entire time Wharton had been concealing his strength. Although he had revealed a little when he was a child, at that time he was too young and thus no one paid attention. Once he grew up and matured, he naturally understood the importance of concealing himself.

Long years of hard training.

At the O'Brien Academy, the top warrior academy of the most military powerful empire in the world, Wharton's rate of improvement had been quite rapid.

When Wharton turned fourteen, Hillman, per Linley's instructions, had arrived at the O'Brien Academy.

Actually, by the time Hillman had arrived at the O'Brien Academy, the 'Apocalypse Day' had already happened long ago. The imperial clan and major noble clans of the O'Brien Empire all had their own unique communications systems and had known about it long ago. As the elite military academy of the O'Brien Empire, the O'Brien Academy naturally knew about this news as well.

When Hillman reached the empire, Wharton already knew that Apocalypse Day had occurred.

Hillman informed Wharton of the death of Hogg, as well as Linley's decision to seek revenge. Wharton was totally stunned. He had no idea what he should do.

With Hillman and Hiri at his side, and with the warblade 'Slaughterer' in his hands per Linley's bequeathing, Wharton made up his mind to assume the responsibilities of the clan. But in his heart, Wharton remained concerned for his big brother, Linley. Wharton didn't know what the situation was with Linley.

The distance from the Holy Union to the O'Brien Empire was simply too great. A one way journey would take at least a year.

Fortunately, afterwards the Dawson Conglomerate had gotten in contact with Wharton and sent him a secret letter.

That secret letter was written by Yale. It clearly described the enmity between Linley and Clayde, as well as the Radiant Church. It also informed Wharton that Linley was fine, but that he would embark on a long period of solo training.

After hearing this news, Wharton felt a bit more at ease.

Wharton felt all the more proud of his big brother, and that made him all the more determined to work hard, so that in the future, he would stand side-by-side with his brother. In the past, Wharton was already very hard working, but the three years after that, Wharton trained even harder. When he was fifteen years old, Wharton had reached the seventh rank as a warrior.

When he turned seventeen, Wharton believed that he had reached a certain level of attainment in the use of the warblade 'Slaughterer'. At that time, he made up his mind to participate in the yearly tournament. As a result of that participation, Wharton shocked the empire and became the most dazzling

new star in the imperial capital. The Emperor himself had bestowed the title of Count upon him.

……

Seated in the corner of the hotel, Linley was happier than he had been in a long time.

“Boss, Wharton? That’s your little brother, right?” Bebe was curled up on a chair, staring at Linley with his beady little black eyes.

Laughing, Linley nodded.

“That little tyke can beat a warrior of the eighth rank?” Bebe sighed in surprise. “Boss, your little brother should be able to transform into a Dragonblood Warrior, right?”

“Naturally.”

Linley was very proud of his younger brother Wharton. “Bebe, I transformed into a Dragonblood Warrior through drinking the dragon’s blood of the Armored Razorback Wyrm and agitating the Dragonblood in my veins. My younger brother has a higher density of Dragonblood in his veins. He can directly become a Dragonblood Warrior. But his Dragonform isn’t the same as mine.”

Linley clearly remembered how the Dragonform transformation was described in his clan’s records.

Once the density of Dragonblood in one’s veins was high enough, after one trained according to the Secret Dragonblood Manual, one could transform into a Dragonblood Warrior. Normally, a Dragonblood Warrior’s body would be covered with azure draconic scales, have an azure draconic tail, and a single draconic horn sprouting from the forehead.

Linley’s transformation, however, was a Dragonform covered with black scales and with black spikes piercing from his forehead, back spine, elbows,

and knees, as well as a black tail.

“A bottle of Green Jadeite for each person!” A voice which Linley was familiar with rang out in the hotel.

“This is…”

Linley seemed to have been struck by lightning. His entire body turned stiff, and then he immediately said mentally to Bebe, “Bebe, come to me. Don’t reveal yourself.” Linley placed Bebe onto a chair in the corner of his little booth.

This hotel was very dimly lit.

What’s more, every table was separated by a wooden screen. Linley’s body was almost entirely blocked by that wooden screen, and so that familiar person didn’t see Linley at all.

Linley turned his head to peek out just slightly…

That pudgy figure. Those eyes which turned into slits when beaming.

“It’s him.”

Linley immediately pulled his head back. “Cardinal Lampson. Why is he here in the O’Brien Empire? And those people by his side aren’t weak either. What’s more, one of them is one of the Ascetics who appeared at the highest level of the Radiant Temple that year.”

Indeed, that Ascetic was one of the men who had worked with Heidens in setting up that magical formation. He was a powerful combatant.

There were at least two combatants of the ninth rank here; Lampson and the Ascetic.

“I don’t recognize the others, but judging from their auras, they aren’t much weaker than Lampson. Perhaps they are also experts of the ninth rank.”

Linley's heart began to tremble.

"In a place such as the prefectural city of Cerre, why are so many experts of the Radiant Church present? Could it be…could it be that…" Linley's heart clenched. "Could it be that my identity has been revealed?"

Linley knew that an enormous organization such as the Holy Union definitely had intelligence networks in the various other kingdoms and empires. But could their intelligence network really have deeply penetrated even a place such as the prefectural city of Cerre?

"Boss, what's going on?" Bebe was still confused. Having been ordered by Linley into a corner, he had no idea what was going on.

Linley looked at Bebe, a hint of a smile on his lips. "Bebe, experts from the Radiant Church have arrived. There should be several combatants of the ninth rank."

"The Radiant Church?" A murderous look flashed in Bebe's eyes.

"If they plan to act against me, I'll make sure none of them leave Cerre alive." Linley's heart was filled with a killing intent as well. Linley's current level of power was far greater than what it had been in the past.

When Dragonformed, his power was that of a warrior of the peak-stage ninth rank. And what's more, with regards to the usage of his adamantine heavy sword, Linley had also reached the peak of the 'impose' level, and had just dimly begun to sense his way to an even higher level of attainment.

Linley listened carefully.

Those people from the Radiant Church hadn't discovered Linley's presence yet.

"For this fellow's sake, we've spent two years. Finally, in another ten days or half month or so, we'll be able to go back." Lampson's voice was very

soft.

Lampson was very careful when he spoke as well, not giving any hint as to the identity of ‘this fellow’.

“Two years.” Another black-robed man whose back was facing Linley shook his head. “For the sake of dealing with that old fellow, several of my good friends have died.”

“As long as we capture him, it will all have been worth it.” Lampson said.

…..

Linley frowned as he listened to their conversation.

“What do they mean?”

He had indeed killed six Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, but he definitely wasn’t an ‘old fellow’.

“Old fellow? And they are going back soon?” Linley was beginning to understand that these people were here, most likely for the purpose of dealing with that person.

Linley began to grow curious. Who, exactly, was worth the Radiant Church expending this much effort on?

“Old fellow, what are you staring at?” One of the black-robed men snapped quietly.

“Why the arrogance?” An ancient-sounding voice spoke out. “If it weren’t for the fact that you outnumbered me and used some tricks, how could I have fallen into your hands? What a joke.”

Linley’s eyelids twitched.

It seemed that the owner of this old voice was the person whom the Radiant

Church desired to acquire.

“The Radiant Church didn’t send such a large number of experts to other countries to pursue and kill me. But they did for this old man…who exactly is he?”

Linley wondered to himself.

“No matter what, and no matter who this old man is, I’ll definitely rescue him.” Linley laughed coldly to himself. “Being able to disrupt the important plans of the Radiant Church will make myself feel a bit better.”

To totally destroy the Radiant Church and uproot it entirely was very hard.

Right now, he could only proceed one step at a time.

After waiting about half an hour, Lampson and his group of men finally left the hotel, taking the old man with them. From start to finish, Lampson and the people with him hadn’t cast a single glance towards Linley, who had been hidden by his screen.

Linley walked out from his booth.

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley casually tossed down a few gold pieces, immediately leading Bebe out of the hotel, following Lampson’s group from behind.

Linley’s understanding of the ‘impose’ level had already reached the peak of mastery. Just by using his knowledge of ‘impose’, Linley was able to stand on top of water without sinking down, something which most combatants of the ninth rank could not do. This was a higher level of understanding, which couldn’t be accomplished simply through powerful physical strength or battle-qi.

Following behind Lampson’s group, Linley finally managed to see who these people were.

“The Radiant Church has six people, along with that mysterious old man they have under guard.” Linley had the sense that these six were all combatants of the ninth rank.

Six experts of the ninth rank, guarding and escorting a single old man. And with Cardinal Lampson personally leading the squad.

Hearing their conversation, it seemed that Cardinal Lampson’s squad had spent two years on this assignment, and had lost quite a few people as well.

“Just who is this old man?” From behind, Linley managed to catch a glimpse of how the old man looked as well.

He was extremely skinny, and his white eyebrows were so long that they drooped down to his chest. Most importantly, this old man was shackled by the hands. Only, there was a piece of cloth wrapped around the manacles. Most people simply wouldn’t notice it unless they had carefully inspected it. Even Linley had only noticed it after tailing them for a long time, and only because a gust of wind had temporarily blown the cloth wrapping aside for a moment.

“Hrm? Is that…” This was the first time Linley had seen this legendary tool. “Antimagic manacles?”

According to the records, anyone shackled by these antimagic manacles wouldn’t be able to use any of the mageforce in their body. Even the most powerful of magi would be like an ordinary person. But these antimagic shackles were extremely expensive. This was the first time Linley had seen such a thing.

Linley slipped in and out of the crowds on the street, sometimes dodging, sometimes hiding. His movements were very graceful. Lampson and his men had no idea he was there at all.

After a while, Lampson and his men arrived at an alleyway. They stopped in front of a two-level residence. One of the black-robed men knocked on the door.

“Milord.” The door to the residence opened, and a middle-aged man came out with a bow. “Everything is prepared. Milords, please come in and rest.”

Lampson and the others nodded.

“Xartes [Ke’sa’te’si], you and your brother, stand guard on the old man. We will come relieve you later.” Lampson instructed.

Linley secretly was startled. “Even shackled by antimagic manacles, they still intend to watch him this closely? This old man really is something special.” This made Linley desire to ruin the Radiant Church’s plans even more.

Chapter 24 – Zassler

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 24, Zassler

The sky slowly grew dark. Linley remained hidden outside the walls of this residence the entire time, but up till now, he still hadn't found any opportunity or method by which he could stealthily get near that mysterious old man.

"Based on their conversation in the hotel, the Radiant Church seems to have sacrificed several powerful experts for the sake of catching this person." Linley frowned as he considered the question. "This old man is at least of the ninth rank in power."

"But he shouldn't be at the Saint-level yet. Even a large group of powerful experts of the ninth rank could at most force the Saint-level to flee. It definitely is highly unlikely that they would seize him."

Although Linley wasn't too sure about exactly how powerful that mysterious old man was, without question, that mysterious old man had the ability to deal with multiple experts of the ninth rank.

"This old man must be very important for the Radiant Church to expend so much effort on catching him. I'll definitely disrupt their scheme." Linley's eyes were radiating a cold light. "But killing these six experts of the ninth rank and preventing a single one of them from escaping Cerre is a difficult task."

Linley himself was living quite close to Cerre. Naturally, he wouldn't want his movements and his presence to be exposed.

If he was to act, he would have to kill all six of them.

"Myself, Bebe, Haeru. We are totally capable of dealing with three combatants of the ninth rank. Against six…if we use some tactics, it still

isn’t out of the realm of possibility. However, it’s best if we release the old man first and have him ally with us. That will give us an even greater chance of success.”

Linley knew how to deal with antimagic manacles.

The power and value of antimagic manacles lay in the complicated magical rune formations etched onto them. But the materials which the manacles were made out of actually weren’t that durable. Although antimagic manacles prevented the prisoner from using any mageforce and was fairly sturdy, Linley was totally confident in his ability to break them.

Linley wasn’t in a rush. At this time, he mentally commanded Haeru to return to the city from within the mountain valley.

Humans and the magical beast companions they had tamed were spiritually bound. The more powerful the spiritual energy of the two was, the greater the distance the two could exchange mental conversations.

For example, Linley and Bebe could exchange thoughts from a distance of several hundred kilometers. But if they were to become separated from an even farther distance, it would no longer be possible.

As for some weak members of noble clans who used soul-binding scrolls to tame magical beasts of the first, second, or third ranks, they might not be able to communicate past a distance of just a few hundred meters.

The main issue was spiritual energy.

Linley and Haeru, as well, could spiritually communicate from a distance of hundreds of kilometers. But once the distance grew too great, they would only be able to vaguely sense the direction each was in, and could no longer send messages.

Darkness descended. It was approximately 9 o’clock at night now.

Dressed in a black warrior’s outfit, Linley was hiding outside the walls of

the residence, alongside the similarly black Shadowmouse, Bebe, as well as the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. They were quietly waiting for their opportunity.

“Bebe, Haeru, the two of you stay here. Only make your move after I mentally command you two to act.” Linley instructed.

Haeru and Bebe both nodded.

Linley immediately removed his black warrior’s outfit, then allowed black scales to manifest on top of his skin. A black spike jutted forth from his forehead, and spikes jutted out along his entire back spine.

That draconic tail silently pierced through Linley’s long pants.

Linley’s eyes became a cold, merciless dark gold color.

“Remember. Await my order.” Linley once again instructed Bebe and Haeru. And then, like a phantom in the darkness, Linley glided towards the courtyard.

After having mastered the ‘impose’ level, Linley could now move without causing any disturbance to the surrounding air.

The main building had two floors. Beside it were three rooms, the central one clearly being the place where the old man had been locked into. Because outside this room, there were two black-robed men.

Linley crept behind a manmade hill, not moving at all as he quietly awaited his opportunity.

“I refuse to believe you won’t lose your focus for even a second.” Linley was extremely patient.

Right now, the two black robed men were engaging in conversation out of boredom.

“Bro, after completing this mission, the two of us have to have a good, long rest. These past two years have exhausted us. I’ve been nervous this entire time, not daring to loosen up at all.” One of the black haired men said.

“Right. On this mission, two of our Ascetics of the ninth rank died, and three Special Executors of the ninth rank as well. Eleven of us had to work together, aided by poison, and yet five of us still died. This old fellow is such a monster.”

Right now, the two black-robed men were fairly relaxed.

In order to pursue and capture this old fellow, their group had been sent out as soon as the Radiant Church had received news of his whereabouts. They had passed through the O’Brien Empire, traversed the 48 Anarchic Duchies, and entered the great plains of the far east. They had battled against this mysterious old man for months, finally capturing him in one of the Duchies of the Anarchic Lands.

But as long as they had managed to seize this old man, all their sacrifices would have been worth it.

They were very careful on their way back as well. They were afraid that the experts of the O’Brien Empire would discover them. But by now, they were halfway back, and the towns they would pass by in the future were all small ones without many experts. They shouldn’t pose much danger.

Naturally, Lampson and the others now felt slightly more relaxed.

“Bro, I’m going to the bathroom. You stand guard here. I’ll be back in a minute.” One of the black-robed men said.

The other black-robed man laughed. “I was fine before you said anything, but now that you mentioned going to the bathroom, I want to go as well. Fine, you go first, and I’ll go later.” Although they were a bit relaxed, they still didn’t dare to have both guards be gone at the same time.

After all, if they let this old man escape, they would have committed a

grave sin.

Hiding behind the manmade hill, when Linley saw the black-robed man leave, he felt a hint of surprised excitement. “Only one left. Killing him isn’t a problem at all. Only…I can’t let him make any noise.”

Linley narrowed his eyes, while beginning to quietly mouth the words to a magical spell. ‘Supersonic’.

…..

At this moment, Xartes was currently standing at his bedroom door, keeping a casual eye on his surroundings. In a mere prefectural city, Xartes, an expert of the ninth rank, still felt quite self-confident.

But suddenly, Xartes saw a black light flash in the corner of his eyes.

“What was that?” Xartes turned his head over to look.

An enormous bluish-black sword had suddenly appeared in his field of vision. The most terrifying thing was, this bluish-black sword seemed to be using all of the surrounding area to apply pressure and force on him, locking him into place!

Space itself had been totally locked!

Xartes wanted to cry out in alarm, but he couldn’t make a sound. In truth, even if he had managed to shout, the sound wouldn’t have managed to leak through that frozen space.

Xartes’ eyes were round and bulging. Suddenly, he slammed his palm, now glowing with radiant battle-qi, in the direction of the sword.

“Bam!”

When the enormous sword struck Xartes’ hand, Xartes felt as though he had suddenly slammed against a boundless, roiling flood. He wasn’t able to

suppress it at all.

“Boom.” His hand and his arm disintegrated and liquefied, the bones in them shattering.

And then, not slowing down, the adamantine heavy sword struck Xartes on his chest. Xartes only felt his chest tremble, felt something break, and then…he felt nothing else.

In the blink of an eye. The opponent was killed.

He didn’t have a chance. After Dragonforming, Linley was a peak-stage combatant of the ninth rank, and had the adamantine heavy sword for his weapon. At the same time, he had reached the realm of understanding and mastering the power of ‘impose’. The two were on totally different levels.

“Hurry.” Linley gently pushed the door open. As he did, he immediately saw that skinny old man with long white hair and the long white eyebrows, seated cross-legged on the floor. Hearing Linley enter, the old man casually opened his eyes while saying, “Why have you come…”

But upon seeing Linley, the old man’s words immediately came to a halt.

Seeing Linley in full Dragonform, the old man stared at Linley. Lowering his voice, he said, “What plane of existence do you come from, Draconian?”

“Draconian?” Linley was startled.

Could it be that in other planes, there was a race called Draconians that looked similar to him?

“Why have you come here?” The old man said again in that quiet voice.

“To save you.”

Linley was wielding his adamantine heavy sword. “Hold your arms out

straight. I will break your antimagic manacles."

Although the old man was suspicious as to who Linley was, he still very obediently held his arms out. Staring at the pitch-black antimagic manacles, Linley chopped directly down with his adamantine heavy sword.

'Wielding Something Heavy as Though it Were Light' – Thunderbolt!

The adamantine heavy sword drifted down, as slowly and gracefully as a leaf, barely brushing against the center of the antimagic manacles. As it did, with a 'crack' sound, multiple cracks appeared in the antimagic manacles, and pieces of it even went flying to the edges of the room.

The old man only had to casually shake his hands, and the two halves of the already-destroyed manacles went flying in opposite directions.

"I didn't ask you to save me, so I owe you nothing." The emaciated, pale-faced old man stood there, staring at Linley coldly.

Linley glanced at him, but Linley's dark gold pupils seemed to stir no fear in this old man at all.

"Do you have enmity with the Radiant Church?" Linley said quietly.

Both of them were speaking extremely quietly, and Lampson's group in the two story building couldn't hear their conversation at all.

"Enmity? I won't stop until one of us is destroyed." The old man said boldly.

"That's all I need." Linley said calmly. "Although I don't know who you are, I must tell you…tonight, none of the Radiant Church's men can be allowed to leave here alive. I don't want to reveal myself to them."

"Reveal yourself?" The old man was curious. "Which plane of existence do you come from, Draconian? Could it be that you are a Draconian from one of the Four Higher Planes? The Infernal Realm?"

Linley glanced at him. “No.”

The old man began to laugh evilly. “Then let me tell you who I am, first. My name is Zassler [Sai’si’le]. I am an Arch Magus, a necromancer of the ninth rank. Yourself?”

Linley was truly shocked.

As a magus, Linley knew very well that there were three types of magic which surpassed earth, fire, wind, water, lightning, light, and darkness style magic. Doehring Cowart had discussed this with him before as well.

These three forms of magic were the Oracular Magic which the Radiant Church was adept at, the Life Magic which was used by the legendary High Priest of the Yulan Empire, and the extremely rare Necromantic Magic.

All three of these types of magic were extremely rare in the Yulan continent.

When Linley realized that Holmer was ambushing him, because Holmer had used poison gas, Linley had asked him if he was a necromancer. If he had been…Linley probably wouldn’t have been able to bear killing him.

After all!

The Four Higher Planes had been created by the Four Overgods. These Overgods were, respectively, the Overgod of Fate, the Overgod of Life, the Overgod of Death, and the Overgod of Destruction.

The Overgod of Fate had passed down Oracular Magic.

The Overgod of Life had passed down Life Magic.

The Overgod of Death had passed down Necromantic Magic.

These three branches of magic were astonishingly powerful, precisely

because they originally stemmed from the Four Overgods. As for the Overgod of Destruction, he hadn't passed down any magic at all. The followers of the Overgod of Destruction held their own power and abilities in prime reverence.

For example, the War God O'Brien was a follower of the Overgod of Destruction.

"An Arch Magus necromancer?" Shock appeared on Linley's face.

"And you?" The Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, stared at Linley.

"Why should I tell you about myself? I didn't ask you to tell me about yourself." Linley said calmly. The Arch Magus necromancer was instantly stunned, not knowing what to say.

Right at this time, the black-robed man came back from the restroom.

"Bro, where the hell did you go?" Seeing that there was no one outside, the black robed man's face immediately changed, as he shouted loudly in anger.

Their task of watching over this Arch Magus necromancer was an extremely critical one. How could he not be furious when he saw that his brother had just disappeared without a word?

Chapter 25 – When Experts Join Forces

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 25, When Experts Join Forces

This loud shout by the black-robed man not only frightened Linley and the Arch Magus necromancer, it also startled Lampson and the other three experts of the ninth rank on the second floor.

“What’s going on? Why is Xartes gone?” Lampson immediately pushed open his door, walking to the second floor corridor and barking angrily.

At this time, the other three combatants of the ninth rank came out of their rooms as well.

Within Zassler’s room.

Hearing the loud shouts, the look on Zassler’s face changed. He immediately instructed the nearby Linley, “You killed one combatant of the ninth rank, but there are five remaining. I will take care of three of them. You handle the other two. Don’t tell me you aren’t able to do so.”

Zassler was quite confident in his ability to deal with three combatants of the ninth rank.

“You only need to kill one.” Linley said calmly. At the same time, Linley quietly awaited the opponents to gather outside. When they did so, Bebe and Haeru would ambush them from behind, while he and the Arch Magus necromancer would attack from the front. This pincer attack would make it even harder for their opponents to flee.

Hearing Linley’s words, Zassler couldn’t help but sneer, “You really dare to make all sorts of wild boasts.”

“Bro!” At this moment, the black-robed man saw the corpse of Xartes. He

immediately let out a howl of grief, while also noticing that there were now two men inside the room.

Like a gust of wind, the four other combatants of the ninth rank descended from the higher floors.

Lampson and the others stared at Zassler, then at Linley. The expressions on their face changed.

“Hello, everyone. Last time we fought, it wasn’t as fun as it should have been. Let’s play again.” The Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, beamed happily at the five combatants of the ninth rank in front of him.

“The antimagic shackles are broken.” A silver-haired old expert of the ninth rank said in shock.

But Lampson was staring at Linley.

“Cardinal Lampson. Long time no see.” Linley held his adamantine heavy sword in his hands, his dark gold eyes shooting a cold, merciless glare towards these men.

Almost all of the high level combatants of the Radiant Church knew about the terrifying appearance Linley had when transformed.

“Linley!”

Lampson’s voice was very low, and his facial expression was dark.

“You are the Linley who killed six of my comrades?” Xartes’ younger brother, that black-robed man, stared at Linley in disbelief. “How is that possible?”

The Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, also stared at Linley in surprise. From the reaction of the Radiant Church’s squad, this ‘Draconian’ who had rescued him apparently was quite formidable. “Oh, your name is Linley? And it seems you are even more famous than me?”

Linley just stared coldly at the enemies. “Enough talk. Let’s do this.”

“My men are ready. We can move at any time.” The Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, laughed delightedly. Suddenly, two golden skeletal archers manifested behind him.

Linley was startled.

He had heard that Necromantic Magic possessed the Wraith Call ability, but this was the first time he had seen it in action. These two golden skeletal archers had auras that weren’t the slightest bit weaker than combatants of the ninth rank.

“Linley, you seem to be quite powerful. Let’s have a little competition and see who kills more.” Zassler laughed delightedly, while at this moment, three powerful, three-meter tall golden-furred zombies appeared at the door. These golden-furred zombies had jade-green eyes.

Two golden skeletal archers, and three golden-furred zombies. Each of them had the power of a combatant of the ninth rank.

Combined, they made up a force of five combatants of the ninth rank!

Lampson looked at Zassler, then looked at Linley. Grinding his teeth, he ordered in a low voice, “Retreat. We leave now!” Lampson truly did not wish to give this order.

In order to capture Zassler, they had sacrificed so much.

But once they learned the secrets of Necromantic Magic from Zassler, the Radiant Church would totally be capable of secretly raising an entire squad of necromancers.

“Bebe. Haeru. Now!” Linley mentally ordered.

“Kill.”

The Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, issued a callous order, while at the same time he began to continue mumbling the words to yet another magical spell. Although these skeletal archers and golden-furred zombies had the power of ninth rank combatants, they were only equivalent to early-stage ninth rank combatants.

He, Zassler, had two summons which he was extremely proud of.

In order to subdue these two creatures he had encountered in the plane of undead, he had expended a tremendous amount of effort. Zassler's lips were constantly moving as he mumbled the words to this spell. The difficulty of summoning these two undead was far greater than the first five.

"Flee, now! The Undead Dragon is about to arrive!" The two Special Executors, the two Ascetics, and the Cardinal all hurriedly fled from the courtyard.

But right at this moment…

"Swish!" "Swish!"

Two golden arrows split the air, piercing directly towards the two Ascetics. At the same moment, two black blurs suddenly appeared from outside the courtyard.

"Lampson. Not one of you will escape." Linley's callous voice rang out, while at the same time, Linley charged towards them like a bolt of lightning.

Linley's movement speed really was incredibly fast. As a peak-stage ninth rank combatant who had inherited the speed inherent to the Armored Razorback Wyrm, was supported by the Supersonic spell, and also borrowed the 'imposing force' of the world…Linley's speed far surpassed those two Special Executors, to say nothing of the Ascetics and the Cardinal.

“Roaaaar!”

The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, charged recklessly at one of the Special Executors, clawing and biting at him. Terrified, the Special Executor immediately chopped viciously at the Blackcloud Panther with his sword.

“Ah!” The Special Executor’s skull was caved in by the panther’s paw, while his sword hadn’t managed to injure Haeru in the slightest.

“Hrmph.” The Blackcloud Panther was filled with contempt.

In the past, Linley had used the adamantine heavy sword while at the peak-stage of the ninth rank in Dragonform, yet still hadn’t been able to do anything. In the end, he had been forced to rely on both the Supergravity Field as well as the Airwings spells before he could force the panther to submit.

In terms of defense, the Blackcloud Panther was even more formidable than Linley, and only a whisker inferior to Bebe.

“Slash, slash!”

Catching the Special Executor totally off-guard, Bebe pierced straight through his defense, driving his claws into the man’s chest and ripping the man’s heart out.

In the blink of an eye, the two magical beasts had killed two combatants of the ninth rank.

“Groooooowl!” The Blackcloud Panther turned and attacked the nearby Ascetic. The Ascetic was truly stunned. Two magical beasts had just popped up out of nowhere and killed two Special Executors.

Bebe charged towards the other Ascetic as well.

The two Ascetics and Lampson were all truly in states of shock. They specialized in light-style magic, but all magic took time to set up. The spells

they could instacast wouldn't be of use against these two magical beasts.

"Lampson!"

Linley let out a loud roar. Wielding his adamantine heavy sword, like a demonic god, he chopped down with his black adamantine heavy sword, causing the very air to vibrate with the force of the blow.

Lampson discovered, to his terror, that the space above him had been totally locked in.

"Lin-"

In the moment of his death, Lampson thought back to that first time he had encountered Linley. That was the day that the sculpture, 'Awakening From the Dream' was being auctioned. At that time, Linley was an optimistic, joyful young genius. But a few years later, Linley had become so frightening. And today, Linley was going to take his life.

"Bam."

Before Lampson's unwilling eyes, Linley's adamantine heavy sword slashed down directly on his body. At this moment, Linley managed to link together some of the scattered insights he had regarding the new level he was trying to attain.

It was like the pulse of the world itself.

Those deep tremors. Those irresistible vibrations. The terrifying force that the adamantine heavy sword was carrying suddenly transformed into a 'pulse' like rhythm which entered Lampson's body.

Lampson's entire body trembled once, and then he collapsed to the ground. Not a single wound could be seen on Lampson's body…but blood was flowing from Lampson's ear and nose.

If someone were to cut open Lampson's skin, they would discover that

Lampson's internal organs had all disintegrated.

At this time, Bebe and Haeru finished off the two remaining Ascetics. This killing spree was simply too perfectly formulated. The undead creatures which Zassler had summoned, along with Linley's fearsome appearance, had actually frightened Lampson's group so much that they had directly fled, but just as they had reached the walls, they were caught totally off-guard by Bebe and Haeru, these two unspeakably terrifying magical beasts.

The end result was plain for everyone to see.

Bebe, Haeru, and Linley had killed five combatants of the ninth rank! If they counted the person whom Linley had killed at the beginning, they had killed six.

"Groooowl."

Right at this moment, in the middle of the courtyard, the space began to rumble as a dimensional crack appeared. An enormous, black dragon's head stretched out through the dimensional crack.

Wraith Call – Undead Dragon!

"But…but…" Zassler stared at Linley, as well as his black Shadowmouse and the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. He was totally shocked, totally speechless.

Just now, he had been very arrogant, going so far as to say that he would deal with three of them, if Linley could handle two.

But before his undead creatures had killed a single person, Linley and his magical beasts had killed all of the combatants.

"Mr. Zassler, there's no need to finish summoning this Undead Dragon, I think. Or did you want to test it out against Bebe, or perhaps Haeru?" Linley said calmly.

The leathery face of the Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, twitched. And then, he banished the Undead Dragon back to the plane of undead.

“Linley, those two magical beasts of yours are indeed rather powerful. But my Undead Dragon isn’t weak either. What’s more, the Undead Dragon isn’t the only creature I possess. I also have an Ancient Wight.” Zassler sneered. “You must understand, so long as the undead realm remains, the army available to a necromancer is endless.”

Linley truly was frightened by Zassler’s words.

Actually, in his heart, Zassler knew that taming an undead creature in the undead realm was no easy feat. They had to be subdued one at a time, after all. In the past, when he had subdued this Undead Dragon, he had sacrificed many other undead creatures.

“Let’s hurry up and clean up this courtyard. Don’t let the Radiant Church know what happened here.” Linley said immediately.

Zassler immediately began to issue orders to his undead creatures.

Those two golden skeletal archers and the three golden-furred zombies very obediently began to dispose of the corpses. They were quite efficient. Very soon, all the corpses had vanished.

“Linley.” Zassler looked at Linley with interest. “From what Lampson said, it seems you are quite famous. Tell me about yourself?”

Linley glanced at Zassler. “Shut your mouth. Quiet.”

Seeing Linley’s absolutely emotionless golden eyes, Zassler began to laugh. “Linley, it seems as though you have quite a large grudge against the Radiant Church, am I right?”

“So what if I do?” Linley responded this time.

“What sort of grudge?” Zassler immediately asked.

“I won’t stop till one of us is destroyed.” Linley’s voice was quiet, but it was like the sinister wind which blew in the undead realm, capable of making one’s soul shudder.

Zassler’s eyes immediately lit up. He excitedly said, “Haha, good. Linley, it seems you have some ability. How about this. You assist me, and together, we will deal with the Radiant Church.”

“Me, assist you? You be the leader?” Linley looked at Zassler.

Zassler had to admit to himself that he felt just the slightest bit uncomfortable when Linley stared at him with those dark golden eyes.

“No need to differentiate between who is the lead, and who is not. The two of us will work together.” As a necromancer, Zassler’s close-combat abilities were very poor. In addition, his undead creatures took a certain amount of time to summon.

Linley’s dark gold eyes stared at Zassler for quite some time.

“Fine. I accept.” Linley finally spoke. Linley had to admit that joining forces with a necromancer could indeed make him stronger.

Zassler immediately exulted. “Haha, wonderful. With the two of us joining forces, what have we to fear? Heidens, there will come a day when I kill you, you old bastard. Linley, who in the Radiant Church do you wish to kill?” Zassler was certain that Linley had to have had a major grudge against someone in the Radiant Church, for him to hate it so.

“Who?”

Linley shook his head. “I intend to destroy the Radiant Church and tear out its roots.”

“The Radiant Church?” Zassler was truly stunned for a moment, then he laughed loudly. “Haha, wonderful, excellent! When the time comes, we will

kill Heidens together and annihilate the Radiant Church!”

But Linley’s face was cold and emotionless.

“Let’s go.” Linley led Bebe and Haeru towards the exit.

“Where to?” Zassler immediately followed.

“Do you have any destination?” Linley asked.

“None.” Zassler shook his head.

Linley said calmly, “Then starting today, just follow me.” As he spoke, Linley led Bebe and Haeru into the darkness. Zassler started, then mumbled to himself, “It seems that by following this Linley, the future will be quite exciting.” And thus, this eight hundred year old Arch Magus necromancer followed Linley into the night.

Chapter 26 – Mutual Trust

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 26, Mutual Trust

There were no stars in the night sky, nor was there a moon.

Linley and the Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, and Bebe made their way through the secluded alleyway. At this time, Linley returned to his human form.

“Crackle—”

Linley’s ripped and torn pants were instantly consumed by flame. And then, with a flip of the hand, Linley retrieved yet another pair of pants as well as a form-fitting black shirt. In the blink of an eye, Linley redressed himself.

“Oh, this Linley kid is even more special than I thought.” Zassler’s green eyes stared at Linley. How could Zassler not know what had just happened? Linley clearly had an interspatial ring.

He, Zassler, had an interspatial ring of his own as well.

Over four hundred years ago, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, when he was collecting undead slaves, he had accidentally raised a half-shattered skeleton that had been dead for who knows how many years. On the skeleton’s finger, there was an interspatial ring.

At the time, Zassler had been wildly overjoyed.

Based on his observations of the surroundings, Zassler guessed that this skeleton most likely had engaged in battle against magical beasts countless thousands of years ago, and then crawled into a deep valley where it had died of its heavy injuries. But after thousands of years, the local geography had changed and the valley had been sealed off.

As an 800+ year old Arch Magus necromancer, it was understandable for him to be in possession of an interspatial ring. But this young man in front of him clearly was very young. Where did he acquire one?

“Let’s move, fast.” Linley finished dressing himself and let out a quiet order.

“Linley, I find myself more and more curious about you.” Zassler’s laugh was so very sinister.

Linley glanced at him sideways. “Zassler, remember. In the future, without my permission, you are not to call me by my real name. Just call me ‘Ley.’”

Zassler’s eyebrows twitched. “I understand. You are afraid your identity will be revealed.”

Actually, Linley’s name was a relatively famous one in the O’Brien Empire as well. But this was primarily in the field of sculpture. Sculpture aficionados knew a great deal about Linley. A sixteen year old who was able to carve a sculpture on the level of the Ten Masterpieces? How could they not be filled with admiration towards him?

Unfortunately, Zassler, that old philistine, had no interest in sculpture.

They hurried along the way.

“Where are we going?” Zassler asked quietly while maintaining his high rate of movement.

“Outside the city.” Linley said calmly.

“But this isn’t the direction of the city gate, is it?” Zassler asked suspiciously.

“Must we leave the city by the city gate?” Linley glanced at Zassler, who immediately understood what Linley meant.

“But it isn’t ten o’clock at night yet. The city gates haven’t shut yet. We absolutely can depart by the city gates if we wish.” Zassler objected.

“I’m not certain of the forces which the Radiant Church has in the prefectural city of Cerre. Perhaps they have people planted amongst the gate guards here. If you go by that route…it’s possible that they will recognize you. After all, aside from those six experts from the headquarters of the Radiant Church, there are others who have seen you today and knew that you were heading towards that residence.” Linley said calmly.

Zassler nodded.

On the way to being locked into the residence, there had indeed been another group of people within the residence, all of whom clearly were the Radiant Church’s people in the prefectural city of Cerre. Originally, there were servants there to serve Lampson and the others as well.

But Lampson was extremely careful. He was afraid of the possibility that these people had been infiltrated, and thus all of the servants had been sent away.

….

Linley and Zassler quickly arrived at the high city walls. Those twenty-meter high walls were more than enough to render Zassler speechless.

“There’s no way I can get over.” Zassler was quite blunt.

He was an Arch Magus necromancer. His physical condition was on par with an ordinary fighter of the third rank. But for him to leap over a twenty, thirty meter high wall was impossible.

“Haeru.” Linley looked at his Blackcloud Panther.

“Groooooowl.” This two meter tall, four meter long, handsome black panther, Haeru, stared at the Arch Magus necromancer Zassler with his cold eyes.

“Ride on Haeru’s back.” Linley instructed.

Zassler no longer hesitated, immediately leaping onto Haeru’s back. Standing on Haeru’s neck, Bebe also gave Zassler a challenging look. Zassler, however, didn’t dare contend against these two magical beasts.

He had clearly seen the results of that battle just then. Given his judgment, he could clearly tell that both the black Shadowmouse and the black panther were magical beasts of the ninth rank. Without having his undead minions ready, he, an Arch Magus necromancer, didn’t dare irritate magical beasts of the ninth rank.

“Let’s go.”

With a leap, Linley flew into the air like an arrow, vaulting over thirty meters with a single bound, easily flipping past the wall and landing on the other side.

“Swoosh.” With a mighty bound, Haeru transformed into a black blur and easily leapt past the twenty-meter high city wall.

On the wild grass outside the city.

“Whoah. This panther is quite fast.” Zassler clutched his chest, letting out a shocked breath. As he spoke, he dismounted.

“Stay on.” Linley immediately said. “Haeru, let’s go back now.”

Linley immediately executed the ‘Supersonic’ spell on himself. Linley quickly hurried towards their mountain valley home, moving as fast as the wind, but Haeru easily maintained pace with him.

Scant minutes later, Zassler and Linley arrived at the mountain valley.

“Starting today, you will live here. If you want to leave, it’s best if you change your appearance first.” Linley said calmly. Looking at his

surroundings, Zassler nodded with satisfaction. “I like secluded areas. This place is very much suited for my training.”

That very night, Linley built a wooden room for Zassler as well.

Late at night, when Linley was seated on the grass, preparing to quietly train, he suddenly sensed that from Zassler’s wooden room, there was a dense, deathly aura emanating from within. No wonder Zassler liked secluded areas. In places where there were many people, Zassler wouldn’t dare train in such an open, unrestrained manner.

“Necromancer.” Thinking back to the information he had read about necromancers, Linley couldn’t help but feel some fear.

Generally speaking, the older a necromancer was, the more powerful his spiritual energy was, and the more terrifyingly powerful he was. Because, with enough time, they could amass an enormous number of undead minions.

“At the courtyard, Zassler’s undead minions were all of the ninth rank. Most likely, he also has an ocean’s worth of middle-rank undead minions as well.” Linley had heard that an Arch Magus necromancer could be considered an entire terrifying army by himself.

An Arch Magus necromancer was totally capable of summoning a massive army of hundreds of thousands of minions to do battle.

And, in wars, as long as he could kill his opponents, the necromancer would be able to create undead slaves out of their corpses, controlling the deceased warriors of his opponents. His opponent’s corpses would do his bidding and wage war against his enemies.

A necromancer’s army only grew with each battle.

But of course, the pre-requisite for that was that the necromancer have sufficient spiritual energy.

“In addition, I’ve heard it said that necromancers have more than just the Wraith Call ability or the ability to create undead slaves. I’ve heard that there are some unique, sinister necromantic spells.”

Necromancers were most famous for their plagues.

In historical records, there was indeed a case where, because of a single necromancer, a huge epidemic had occurred, costing tens of millions of people their lives. This was also the reason why, when Linley had seen Holmer using poison, Linley had wondered if Holmer was a necromancer.

……..

Dawn. The sky slowly brightened.

The Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler, retracted his spiritual energy out of the undead realm and back into his body. Opening his eyes, a small smile appeared on his face. “Yesterday really was my lucky day.”

“Not only did I regain my liberty, in the undead realm, I even managed to subdue a Black Knight Captain. Although it cost me one of my golden-furred zombies, the cost was worth it.” Zassler was very happy.

Although golden-furred zombies were also of the ninth rank, compared to a Black Knight Captain, they were much weaker. A Black Knight Captain was roughly on the same level of power as the Undead Dragon. It could be considered a peak-stage creature of the ninth rank.

Right now, under Zassler’s control were three undead minions of the peak-stage ninth rank – An Undead Dragon, an Ancient Wight, and a Black Knight Captain. At the same time, he also had available to him two golden-furred zombies and two golden skeletal archers.

Three peak-stage ninth rank minions, four ordinary ninth-rank minions.

This was the most powerful force available to Zassler. As for undead minions of the eighth and seventh ranks, he had far more. After all, in the

undead realm, a high-class undead could enslave many lower-ranked undead.

For example, those two golden skeletal archers controlled an army of five hundred thousand skeletons.

As for the Black Knight Captain, he had a number of Black Knights of the eighth rank under his command.

A necromancer, especially an 800+ year old Arch Magus necromancer, definitely could be considered a terrifying one-man army. This was no joke.

“Hrm?” As he walked out of his wooden room, Zassler’s eyes immediately widened.

Because right now, Linley was quietly standing on top of the pond, his eyes closed. His body seemed to be feather-light, and he didn’t sink down at all into the water.

“This is…” Zassler was extremely amazed.

Zassler knew very well that Linley was not a Saint-level combatant. After transforming, Linley was only a peak-stage ninth rank, while in his human form, he was most likely even weaker. But right now, Linley was standing there as though he weighed nothing at all.

“Mr. Zassler.” Linley suddenly opened his eyes, a rare smile on his face. At the same time, he walked over on the surface of the pond, as easily as though he were walking on solid land.

“We can be considered allies now. I want to know a few things about the Radiant Church.” Linley said directly.

Zassler chuckled, then nodded. “Even if you didn’t ask me, I would tell you. Right. Before this, we should show some mutual trust in each other. I really don’t know much about you at all.”

“Linley. Full name, Linley Baruch. Twenty one years old. Beneath the Saint-rank, no one in the world is a match for me.” Linley said calmly, but his words were extremely confident.

As a peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior of the ninth rank, he could already be considered invincible save against Saint-levels. When combining that with the adamantine heavy sword which he could use with the ‘impose’ level at maximum proficiency now, and more importantly with Linley’s supportive abilities as a dual-element magus of the eighth rank…Linley’s power could rise to an amazing level.

“Dragonblood Warrior. No wonder.” Only now did Zassler understand that Linley wasn’t a Draconian. Suddenly, Zassler stared. “What did you say? Twenty one years old?”

“And?” Linley looked at Zassler.

Linley knew very well that this Arch Magus necromancer was definitely a very proud person. If Linley wasn’t able to totally overawe him, most likely their teamwork would be very difficult to manage.

“How is that possible?” Zassler was rather shocked. But then, he laughed. “Haha, I’m different. The older we necromancers are, the more of an advantage we have. This year, I’ll be 866 years old.” Zassler proudly announced his age.

“Linley, you say that you are invincible aside from the Saint-levels. I don’t really believe it.” Zassler said calmly. “My army of undead minions reaches into the millions, and I have three peak-stage undead minions of the ninth rank.”

At this time, both sides were trying to forcibly suppress the other. In addition, by letting each other know exactly how powerful they were, they would be able to coordinate their teamwork better as well.

“Zassler.” Linley glanced at him coldly. “I admit that if I were to fight against your entire army of undead, I wouldn’t be able to fight through

them. However, I have two peak-stage magical beasts of my own. And I've forgotten to tell you something. I'm not only a Dragonblood Warrior. I am also a dual-element magus of the eighth rank. Your human wave tactics are of no use against me."

Zassler was now totally stunned.

He could accept that as a Dragonblood Warrior, Linley could reach the peak of the ninth rank as a warrior at twenty one years of age.

But a twenty one year old dual element magus of the eighth rank was absolutely terrifying.

After all, the hardest part of magus training was cultivating spiritual energy. There was simply no way to avoid it. For a twenty one year old to have such a terrifying amount of spiritual energy was something which Zassler didn't even dare to think about.

"A dual-element magus of the eighth rank. Twenty one years old?" Zassler murmured. "Is this the number one magus genius in all of history?"

When Linley was seventeen, he had reached the seventh rank as a magus. This was the second youngest in history.

But a twenty one year old dual-element magus of the eighth rank? This was the first in history.

"When I reached the eighth rank as a necromancer, I believe I was around four hundred years old." When Zassler thought about how old he had been, he found that there was nothing more he could say.

Chapter 27 – Secrets of the Church

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 27, Secrets of the Church

Zassler knew that for a twenty one year old to reach such a level meant that in the future, he would eventually leave Zassler far behind in the dust.

“We can be considered to know something about each other’s abilities now. Didn’t you want to know about the Radiant Church?” A look of self-confidence was on Zassler’s face. With regards to the secrets of the Radiant Church, he, Zassler, probably knew as much as the high level members of the Church itself.

“Speak.” Linley immediately began to listen carefully.

Zassler nodded. “Simply put, the Radiant Church’s power, on the most superficial level, includes Missionaries, Priests, Bishops, Vicars, and Cardinals. They also have the eight ace regiments of knights, as well as powerful Knights of the Radiant Temple. This can be considered their second military force. In addition, they also have the servants of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal as well as a large number of Ascetics.”

Hearing this, Linley was silent. He knew all this already.

“But aside from these overtly visible forces, they also have two hidden forces.” These words immediately aroused Linley’s interest.

Ascetics and Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal were considered their ‘overtly visible’ forces?

“These two hidden forces are extremely formidable, more powerful than any of their other forces. The first hidden force is known as the Zealots!” Zassler frowned. “These Zealots are very terrifying. They have a very strange power which is not light-style power. I can’t explain it either.”

This was the first time that Linley had heard the term ‘Zealot’.

“And the second force?” Linley asked.

Zassler’s face was solemn. “The second force is the most powerful force the Radiant Church has to offer, their true trump card. They will never use this force unless things reach the final, most critical point. These are… Descended Angels!”

“Angels?!” Linley’s heart shook.

In the past, at the Ernst Institute, Linley had read quite a bit regarding Angels. The impression he had of Angels was that they were powerful, extremely powerful.

“Because of the restrictions of having fleshly bodies, Descended Angels will not be at the peak of their power. However, even the weakest Descended Angel will be a combatant of the ninth rank. Many are Saint-levels. Descended Angels are the true, most terrifying force available to the Radiant Church.” Zassler sighed.

Linley’s heart was filled with shock.

“Zassler, I’ve read about Angels before. The descriptions of the most powerful Angels say that they have the power of Deities. If the Radiant Church has a large number of powerful Angels, they shouldn’t be in their current state.” Linley probed.

Zassler shook his head. “No. The power of the Descended Angels will depend on the human vessels the Radiant Church provides.”

“Human vessels?” Linley looked questioningly at Zassler.

“Right. Angels are unable to create dimensional rifts and directly descend into our world. Their only option is to use some special methods and descend into the body of a human. The strength or weakness of this human

body will determine how much power the Angel can wield." Zassler explained.

"Linley, although this world has ninth-rank combatants and Saint-level combatants…if it weren't for their battle-qi, their physical strength would be quite a bit weaker. Normal humans can only reach the sixth rank based on their muscular strength."

Linley agreed with this assessment.

"When an Angel descends into a body with muscular strength of the sixth rank, they can at most wield power of the ninth rank. Thus, the Radiant Church needs bodies of the seventh rank, or even higher." Zassler said with certainty.

"Even more powerful bodies?" Linley frowned.

"Although normal human bodies can generally only reach the sixth rank, there are still some geniuses who are extremely powerful. Since youth, they possess boundless strength. It can be said that they are inherently powerful. These people with special natural gifts might reach the limit of the seventh rank based on muscle power alone. And a body which can naturally reach the seventh rank in power should be enough to allow an Angel to wield power of the Saint-level."

Hearing Zassler's words, Linley couldn't help but frown.

Because Linley's great grandfather had been able to train to the seventh level just based on his muscular strength. But afterwards, Linley's great grandfather had died in battle. In the past, Linley had never questioned this, but now…

"Could it have been possible that my great grandfather was actually taken away by the Radiant Church for his body?" Linley was guessing.

In truth, all of the Four Supreme Warriors possessed tremendous innate physical gifts. All of them could train to an extremely powerful level just

based on muscle strength.

Zassler continued, “This has caused the Radiant Church to scour the entire world for people with powerful bodies. The more powerful the body, the more powerful the Descended Angel will be. But it’s of no use. In this era, the Yulan continent has four Deity-level combatants. Faced with these Deity-level combatants, Saint-level combatants can do nothing but die.”

“Four Deity-level combatants?” Linley stared at Zassler in surprise. It seemed as though Zassler knew about the existence of that expert from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Zassler saw Linley’s surprise. Laughing, he said, “The four Deity-level combatants are humanity’s War God and High Priest, the magical beast who is the King of the Forest of Darkness, and the magical beast King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts who appeared on Apocalypse Day.”

“Linley, when I was being taught the secrets to Necromantic Magic, I learned…that the bodies of Deities are at the Saint-level in terms of physical strength alone.” Zassler said with certainty.

A Deity-level combatant could be said to be composed of his divine body, his divine spark, and the divine power he wielded. There was no way a Saint-level combatant could injure them at all.

“Thus, in order to wield the power of a Deity, the body alone must be at the Saint-level in physical strength. Most likely, the Radiant Church is not able to manifest a Deity-level Angel. Even if high class Angels were to descend, they wouldn’t be able to use their deific power, due to being restricted by their physical bodies.” Zassler said confidently.

The teachings of Necromantic Magic were abstruse and profound. In addition, Zassler was over eight centuries old. He truly knew many things.

“Deity-level combatants!” Linley’s heart swelled with amazement.

Any of these four most powerful experts of the Yulan continent could shake

the world with their might. On the Apocalypse Day, the appearance of Dylin had caused both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows to flee and avoid him.

The Radiant Church had their Descended Angels. But then, what did the Cult of Shadows possess, for them to be equal to the Radiant Church for countless, untold years?

Despite that, both powers combined still didn't dare to offend that Dylin, the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

From this, one could clearly tell how ineffable the power of a Deity-level combatant was.

"Who knows when I will have power like that." Linley was filled with eagerness and hope towards this sort of power.

….

Zassler continued to tell Linley a great deal of information regarding the Radiant Church.

"The Radiant Church cares the most about two things. The first is finding extremely powerful bodies. The second is to find extremely pure souls." As Zassler said this, Linley's face changed.

Pure souls?

His own mother had died as a result of this.

"Supposedly, the 'Radiant Sovereign' which the Radiant Church worships only needs two things. The first is the worship of his followers. The second is pure souls. The purer the souls offered by the Church, the greater the gifts that the Radiant Sovereign will bestow upon them."

By now, Linley had a good understanding of the Radiant Church.

The reason why the Radiant Church sacrificed pure souls to the Radiant Sovereign was the same reason they searched for powerful bodies. It was because they wanted to acquire powerful Descended Angels.

“Linley, in the Yulan continent, the Radiant Church has hidden reserves of power in every location. After all, the power of a religion is extremely formidable.” Zassler said with a sigh. “But in the Four Great Empires, the Radiant Church is fairly weak. In the Anarchic Lands, however, their influence is quite powerful.”

“Anarchic Lands?”

A map drifted to the forefront of Linley’s memories.

East of the O’Brien Empire, there was an area which was slightly larger than the O’Brien Empire itself. In the center of this area was an enormous forest – the Forest of Darkness.

The Forest of Darkness was thousands of kilometers wide, and thousands of kilometers long as well. This enormous forest took up half of the land in this area.

North of the Forest of Darkness, were the Eighteen Northern Duchies, roughly the same size as one of the O’Brien Empires administrative provinces.

South of the Forest of Darkness were the 48 Anarchic Duchies. The total area of these duchies was roughly half the size of the O’Brien Empire. This could be considered the most politically chaotic area in the Yulan continent, as the 48 Anarchic Duchies engaged in constant warfare.

“The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are the two most powerful religions in the Anarchic Lands.” Zassler said.

Linley could imagine.

In the war-torn Anarchic Lands, it was only natural for those poor

commoners to turn to religion for solace.

“Alright, I’ve talked so much that my mouth is dry. Let’s eat breakfast.” Zassler laughed loudly.

Zassler and Linley were both in possession of interspatial rings, and both their rings contained fine wine. Drinking wine while eating freshly plucked fruit, the two of them continued to discuss their plans for dealing with the Radiant Church.

“Oh, right. I suddenly remember something.” Zassler suddenly said.

“What’s that?” Linley looked at Zassler

Zassler chuckled. “This time, when I was being escorted under guard, we ran into another squad of the Radiant Church’s men. This squad was also escorting a group of people.”

“Who? An expert like you?” Linley asked.

If they were experts, then he and Zassler would go rescue them. After all, each of them had enmity with the Radiant Church. If they banded together, they would only be stronger.

“No. It was two adorable girls.” Zassler shook his head. “Originally, when that squad and Lampson’s squad met up, I saw those girls. I must say, those two girls were as innocent and pure as angels. Based on my familiarity with souls, I am quite certain that these two girls have extremely pure souls.”

Practitioners of Necromantic Magic, compared with the other types of magi, were undoubtedly the most experienced when it came to souls.

“However, in the eyes of the Radiant Church, my importance far outweighed the importance of those two girls. Lampson and the others took me away at high speed, while the two girls were taken away by another squad, which was moving quite a bit more slowly.” Zassler said.

“So your intention is…?” Linley looked questioningly at Zassler.

Zassler chuckled, “My intention is for us to go rescue those two girls. After all, that squad didn’t have many experts in it. It only had a single combatant of the eighth rank.”

In the eyes of Zassler and Linley, an expert of the eighth rank really was nothing.

“How is it that an Arch Magus necromancer like you would be so kind-hearted as to go rescue two girls?” Linley looked at Zassler.

Zassler laughed. “I delight in disrupting the affairs of the Radiant Church whenever I can. And what’s more, with such extremely pure souls, the two of them might be suitable for training in Necromantic Magic.”

The requirements for learning Necromantic Magic were terrifyingly high.

This was why in the entire Yulan continent, the number of necromancers was extremely, extremely low. The soul was a person’s most important quality, and even the Radiant Sovereign desired to acquire pure souls. From this, one could tell how important a pure soul was. In order to learn Necromantic Magic, an extremely pure soul was needed.

“You should know what trajectory they were on, right?” Linley asked.

Zassler nodded his head. “The path they took should be identical to the path that I had been taken on, unless this squad has already received word of the deaths of Lampson and his men. Only then might they suddenly change their direction.”

“Then let’s go.” Linley immediately rose.

“Groooowl.” Bebe and Haeru, who had been lying on the nearby grass, both stood up. These two magical beasts were very excited. By their nature, magical beasts were violent and barbaric, loving to do battle.

“Right now?” Zassler was a bit startled. “We’ve destroyed all trace of Lampson and his men. Even if the Radiant Church’s people discovered that the manor was empty, they probably would only think that Lampson and his men had left. They wouldn’t discover that Lampson is dead this fast. Even if they found out that Lampson and his men were dead, they wouldn’t be able to send the message to the other squad so quickly.”

“Leave nothing to chance at all. We will immediately set out on the same path that you were taken on and trace our way back.” Linley said immediately.

Zassler, helpless against Linley, could only shake his head, let out a sigh, then rise to his feet as well.

Chapter 28 – Flower-Like Sisters

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 28, Flower-Like Sisters

Dawn. The air was clear and fresh.

Ruskin [Luo'si'jin] was leading his two subordinates as they moved at high speed in the direction of the manor where Lampson and the others had settled into last night.

"I must make sure that we take excellent care of Lord Lampson and the others. A single word from Lampson could most likely get us all promoted." Ruskin was feeling rather frustrated though. "Unfortunately, it seemed as though Lord Lampson is being extremely cautious. They didn't allow a single attendant to enter the manor."

As he was thinking these things, Ruskin walked to the gate.

"What's going on? The gate isn't shut?" Ruskin frowned. He knew that Lampson and the other lords were on a very important matter. They definitely wouldn't leave the door open.

He entered the courtyard. As he did, he felt that the courtyard was a bit too quiet.

"Milords." Ruskin called out.

But his voice echoed out in the courtyard without any response.

"The two of you, look around for me. I'll go upstairs and see what I can find." Ruskin had a very bad feeling about this. He immediately headed to the second floor, where Lampson and the others' rooms had been located.

Every single door on the second floor was open. None were closed.

Entering Lampson's room, Ruskin immediately frowned. The bed was in a used state, clearly not made. At the same time, at the head of the bed, there was a backpack.

"This isn't right."

Ruskin immediately entered another room. Indeed, the bed there was also in a messy state, and a backpack was on a table. As of yet, Ruskin hadn't seen any problems…but he felt this wasn't quite right.

"Lord Lampson didn't even have the time to put on the backpack, and the same was true for the other lords as well. Could it be that something important occurred, forcing Lord Lampson and the others to immediately depart?" Ruskin frowned.

"Milord!" A frantic call from downstairs.

Ruskin's face changed, and he immediately rushed down the hallway, then jumped down directly from the balcony to the courtyard.

"What is it?" Ruskin looked at his two subordinates.

"Milord, there are bloodstains here." The two of them pointed at the wall.

Originally, Zassler had ordered his undead minions to destroy all traces of the deceased. Virtually all traces, including bloodstains, had indeed been removed. But when the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, had smashed open that Special Executor's skull with one paw, blood had splattered everywhere. Although those undead minions were very industrious and careful, there were still a few tiny traces remaining.

"Bloodstains. And the lords have all disappeared?"

Staring at the quiet courtyard, Ruskin felt as though an enormous boulder was pressing against his chest. "A battle occurred here. As for the lords, could it be that they are in pursuit?"

Ruskin knew how astonishingly powerful the six of these lords were. He didn't believe that someone could kill these six lords.

Ruskin instructed his two subordinates, "The two of you, head out immediately towards the provincial capital of Basil. Report this news back."

"Yes!"

But before the two subordinates had even reached the provincial capital of Basil, Linley's group had already encountered the second squad mid-way.

"It's them?" Linley, Bebe, Zassler, and Haeru were hiding in some tall, wild grass by the roadside.

Zassler looked at the four knights surrounding a carriage. Nodding, he said, "Right. It's them. The two girls should be inside the carriage."

"Inside the carriage?"

Linley frowned, then looked at Bebe. "Bebe, I expect that the carriage will have more than just those two girls. There should be people guarding the girls as well. Bebe, you are physically small. Your assignment will be to enter the carriage at high speed and kill those guards."

Zassler nodded. "This squad should also have six people, all men. There should be two more men inside this carriage."

"Did you hear that, Bebe? Kill the two men inside the carriage." Linley laughed as he rubbed Bebe's head.

Bebe hopped onto Linley's shoulders, lifting his little head up confidently as he squeaked at Linley. "Boss. Have I, Bebe, ever let you down?"

Linley chortled lovingly.

“Let’s do this.” Linley said to him mentally.

Bebe immediately grew solemn as he stared at the carriage with his little eyes. And then, he quietly snuck through the tall grass, drawing closer to the carriage…

Within the carriage, there were two beautiful, jade-haired identical twin sisters. Their eyes were slightly red and swollen, and they were staring hatefully at the two men opposite of them.

“You bastards.” One of the two, the one whose eyes were slightly larger, cursed in a low voice.

The two men only smiled at them, not minding in the slightest.

“Rebecca [Li’be’ka], don’t curse anymore. Cursing these pieces of garbage is a waste of energy. And to think, we believed in the Radiant Church all these years and prayed to the Lord to bring us happiness. Who would’ve thought that they would be this vile.” The other girl’s eyes were also filled with hatred.

“Big sis.” Rebecca miserably clutched at her older sister’s hand.

Rebecca and Leena [Li’na] hailed from the 48 Anarchic Duchies. They had followed their father in believing in the Radiant Sovereign, but who would’ve thought that the Radiant Church would kill their parents, then abduct them.

With their parents dead, Rebecca and Leena were now without family.

And now, their future had turned to ashes. They couldn’t see any hope.

“Father. Mother.” Rebecca and Leena began to tremble as they thought of their parents. All these years, their parents had protected them, no matter how much chaos and war there had been in the Anarchic Lands.

But this time…

“Leena. Take your little sister and run.” Their father had tightly held onto a combatant of the seventh rank at the last moment of his life. Despite only being a warrior of the fifth rank, their father had managed to drag it out for a few seconds longer.

But unfortunately, the Radiant Church’s forces were too strong.

“God, please rescue us.” Leena was shouting in her heart. “So long as you can rescue us and give us a chance to seek revenge, I am willing to sacrifice everything, including my very soul.”

She had watched as her parents died. She wanted revenge.

Unfortunately. God was too far away from them. How would he be able to sense the desires of these two ordinary souls?

“Slash.” Suddenly, a very strange sound rang out.

Leena and Rebecca both turned in surprise. They only saw a black blur flash by. “Slash!” The sound rang out a second time, and blood spurted everywhere.

Rebecca and Leena stared in shock.

The heads of the two men who had been guarding them suddenly slumped down. Half of their neck had been cut off. They were unquestionably dead.

“Who was it?” The twin sisters stared in shock, then suddenly were overjoyed. They knew that someone had rescued them. They looked in all directions, but they couldn’t see their savior.

“Squeak, squeak.” A sound rang out from beneath them.

Rebecca and Leena both lowered their heads, only to see an adorable little black mouse standing there, holding his head up in a very arrogant fashion. In a very human-like manner, it used its sharp claws to stroke its whiskers.

“A rat?” Both Rebecca and Leena were confused.

Bebe immediately grew angry, and he quickly jumped up while waving his little paws around wildly. He suddenly transformed into a black blur, flashing past them.

“It was the rat?” Rebecca and Leena began to understand.

Bebe had made no noise at all when he had killed those two. What’s more, the carriage wheels continually rumbled as the carriage rolled along the road. The four knights outside hadn’t noticed a thing.

“Ah!”

Suddenly, a miserable scream from outside.

“Roaaaar!” A furious roar from a beast.

Rebecca and Leena looked at each other, then immediately pushed open the carriage door. The carriage driver had already collapsed, his fresh blood staining the carriage.

Rebecca and Leena quickly turned to look at the four knights.

But all they saw….

Was four devilish flashes of violet light. The three knights didn’t have a chance to react before their heads went flying, while the warrior wearing black armor, Linley, landed gracefully in front of the carriage, the adamantine heavy sword on his back.

“Hello. You’ve just been freed.” Linley said with a smile.

Seeing the powerful youngster in front of them, Rebecca and Leena were both somewhat stunned. In their eyes, those knights were extremely powerful. But it seemed as though to this youngster, those knights weren’t

even capable of resisting for a moment.

“Rebecca and Leena. Hello there.” An ancient voice rang out. Only now did Zassler stand up from amidst the grassy field.

Seeing Zassler’s bony, decrepit body, as well as his extremely long, white eyebrows, Rebecca and Leena both called out in excitement, “Grandpa Zassler!”

They had travelled with Zassler for a time under common guard, so they knew each other.

“Grandpa Zassler, who is this lord?” Rebecca and Leena both looked curiously towards Linley. Suddenly, the two sisters noticed an enormous black panther was drawing near them. The panther’s cold, eerie eyes made both Rebecca and Leena feel frightened.

“Don’t be afraid. Haeru, stop scaring them.” Linley barked.

“Arooo.” Haeru made a placating voice towards Linley, then lowered his head and moved to the side, no longer daring to go frighten these twin sisters.

“Rebecca, Leena, this is Lord Linley. He isn’t any weaker than me.” Zassler chortled.

“Truly?” Rebecca and Leena stared at Linley in shock.

It wasn’t that they didn’t believe Linley was powerful; it was that they had seen how, when Zassler was being escorted, how much the Radiant Church had valued him. His jailors had even a Cardinal in their midst. Zassler had bragged to these sisters before about how he was capable of destroying a million-man army. It was only because he was surrounded and attacked by over ten combatants of the ninth rank that he was finally captured.

“Grandpa Zassler. It was this adorable mouse who saved us.” Rebecca and Leena immediately turned their heads to look at Bebe.

Bebe was currently standing on top of the carriage. He smirked at her, and then in the blink of an eye, he scurried onto Linley's shoulders.

"You're talking about Bebe? This is a magical beast which Linley tamed." Zassler laughed as he introduced Bebe. Then he looked at Linley. "Linley. Let me introduce you. The younger sister, Rebecca, has slightly larger eyes. This one is the older sister, Leena."

Linley smiled and nodded.

"Zassler, should we send these two girls back, or…?"

In Linley's opinion, these two girls were of no use to them. After all, no matter how pure their souls were, that didn't mean they were very powerful.

"Grandpa Zassler, we have no place to go." The older sister, Leena, immediately grew frantic. Begging, she said, "Grandpa Zassler, let us come with you. We know that you've killed the Radiant Church's people. We also want to seek revenge for our parents."

"Grandpa Zassler, we're begging you." Rebecca also beseeched him.

Zassler was planning to take these girls with him all along, with the intention of possibly inducting the twins into the dark art of Necromantic Magic. But he had to get Linley's concurrence as well.

"Linley, let's just take them along with us. Leena and Rebecca can both cook. We can't always just eat roast meat in the valley, can we?" Zassler laughed.

Hearing his words, Rebecca and Leena hurriedly said, "We can do anything. We can fry, cook, clean."

The two of them knew that without anyone to rely on, two beautiful girls such as them would have a disastrous fate. Seeing how highly Zassler seemed to value Linley's opinion, they knew that Linley was undoubtedly

an expert as well. This would give them an even greater chance of getting revenge.

Linley glanced at the two siblings. Facing their beseeching gaze, he nodded. “Fine.”

Rebecca and Leena’s eyes were instantly filled with a radiant, joyful light.

“Let’s go. We’re going back.” Linley instructed.

Linley’s group once more returned to the mountain valley, but this time with the addition of these two siblings. The four of them shared one point in common: They were filled with hatred towards the Radiant Church!

Chapter 29 – Investigation

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 29, Investigation

The Northwest Administrative Province, one of the seven major provinces of the O'Brien Empire, was a vast place, with tens of millions of citizens living in it. The Northwest Administrative Province's provincial capital, Basil, was the most developed of the province's cities. Within the walls of Basil alone were over a million people.

Within Basil, there were many ancient clans as well.

Count Perry [Pi'li] was a relatively unassuming noble within Basil City. But amongst the ancient clans, he had quite a bit of influence. In addition, he was an extremely amiable person who never fought with others or struggled for influence. Virtually all of the nobles of the city were on good terms with him.

"Milord Count, you've returned." The guard outside the gate to his mansion smiled and bowed.

Count Perry was two hundred years old, and all his hair had turned silvery-white. But his long beard was as resplendent as it had been when he was young. Count Perry nodded slightly towards the guard, laughing warmly, "Oh, you've gotten a haircut. This haircut suits you. Did you get it done at old Locke's [Luo'ke] place?"

Hearing the words of praise, the guard was immediately all smiles. "Right. Mr. Locke is really quite skilled."

Beaming, Count Perry entered his mansion.

"Count Perry really is a nice man." The guard sighed to himself.

Count Perry really was a very kind person. This was the opinion of virtually

everyone in the city of Basil. Count Perry didn't like to kill people and didn't like foul language. His every action totally demonstrated the ethics and nobility of a noble gentleman.

He entered the inner courtyard.

Count Perry's face suddenly sank.

"What is going on? How could something like this happen multiple times?" Count Perry was very frustrated. Just a few days ago, he had received the news that Cardinal Lampson and his Ascetics and Special Executors had disappeared within the prefectural city of Cerre. And now, he had received the news that the squad that had been escorting those two girls had been killed, and the girls had vanished.

Count Perry, after becoming the person responsible for the affairs of the Radiant Church in the Northwest Administrative Province of the O'Brien Empire, hadn't encountered such a thorny problem in a long time.

"I hope Lord Lampson hasn't met with any trouble."

Perry prayed silently.

If those two girls had been saved, then they had been saved. It wasn't of major concern. But Lampson and the other five were all experts of the ninth rank, and the person they were escorting was an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. This affair was the most important affair he had ever encountered after taking on the responsibilities for the Northwest Administrative Province.

"Milord Count." A hawk-nosed, tall and skinny man with curly hair walked in. Bowing respectfully, he said, "We've already completed our investigations regarding the missing lords."

Perry immediately looked at him. "Speak, fast."

"Based on our sympathizers' reports in the province, the lords still have yet

to appear in any other cities. In addition, we've activated our entire network of sympathizers within the prefectural city of Cerre, yet we still haven't found anyone who saw the lords leaving the city." The hawk-nosed man replied respectfully.

Perry stared.

"What?" Perry's heart, previously tense, genuinely began to quiver. "Lampson and the other lords couldn't possibly have remained in the prefectural city of Cerre this entire time. And if they did stay in Cerre, there would be some trace of them. Lampson and the others must have been attacked. It is entirely possible that Lampson and the others could have exited the prefectural city of Cerre late at night by leaping past the city walls."

"But even if that was the case, Lord Lampson should still have reappeared in a different city."

Perry was starting to become truly worried.

He had an extremely bad premonition.

"Could it be possible that Lord Lampson encountered the attack of a powerful foe and was killed?" Perry didn't dare to believe it. After all, Lampson and the others were all extremely powerful. To kill the six of them would require their opponents to number multiple experts of the ninth level, or a Saint-level combatant.

Perry suddenly looked at the hawk-nosed man. In a cold voice, he ordered, "Go at your fastest speed to find old Pori. Tell him to bring his three Bluewind Hawks to my study."

"Yes, milord Count." The hawk-nosed man knew exactly how important this situation was.

Perry hurriedly walked towards his study, and wrote three letters regarding Lampson's squad's affairs. Each copy was given to a different Bluewind

Hawk and addressed to be delivered to the ‘Sacred Isle’.

Ever since the Holy Capital, Fenlai City, had been destroyed, the Radiant Church set up their new headquarters on an island not too far away from the Yulan continent. They publicly announced this place as being the ‘Sacred Isle’.

…….

Within the secluded valley outside the prefectural city of Cerre.

Right now, there were four wooden rooms here. One was for Linley and Bebe, another was for Zassler, the third was for Rebecca and Leena, while the last one was for Haeru.

Dawn. The valley was very quiet and peaceful.

A pair of twin beauties, so lovely they seemed to be an illusion, were chatting and laughing while washing some clothes. These clothes belonged to them, Linley, and Zassler. Within the valley, they handled all the cooking and cleaning.

“Big sis. Do you think Grandpa Zassler gets tired from spending all his time in that room training?” Rebecca asked Leena quietly.

Zassler’s wooden room was totally shrouded by a black, deathly aura. That dense, black, deathly aura made Rebecca and Leena scared to even approach it.

Leena wrinkled her nose in a frown, an adorable sight. She said consideringly, “Perhaps powerful experts all have to train very hard like that. However, I still feel more comfortable watching big brother Linley train.” As she spoke, she turned to look at the distant blue pond, and Rebecca turned to look as well.

In the center of the pond, Linley was standing on the water, not sinking at all.

“Ripple, ripple.”

The water beneath Linley’s feet were a few centimeters lower than the water around him, because Linley was constantly releasing battle-qi from his feet, creating small waves in the middle of the pond.

Linley was wielding the adamantine heavy sword in his right hand. Occasionally, he would chop with it, while other times, he would just thrust. Every movement would cause the nearby air to tremble. It was as though the air was made of mud, and when the adamantine heavy sword chopped through it, there was a sense that it was breaking through space itself.

“This ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ technique sometimes works, but sometimes doesn’t work.”

Linley’s forehead was furrowed.

When he had killed Lampson, although Linley had slashed Lampson with his sword, the outside of Lampson’s body hadn’t been injured on the slightest. His internal organs, however, had all been disintegrated.

As Linley viewed it, the third level of using the adamantine heavy sword was the ‘impose’ level. But the fourth level, was the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’.

Through using this heavy weapon, the adamantine heavy sword, Linley was now capable of unleashing the portion of the Laws of the Earth he had come to understand. This sort of attack could, in the blink of an eye, transform all the attacking power into vibrations which would enter the opponent’s body.

This sort of vibrational attack, when fully mastered, could all but ignore an opponent’s defense.

After all, the throbbing pulse of the world was something which had existed since the heavens and the earth had been formed. The secrets it contained

within it were extremely deep and profound.

The principles of the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ was this:

Totally convert one’s attacking power into the same sort of vibrations as the throbbing pulse of the world itself. When these vibrations entered the opponent’s body, the opponent’s internals would also begin to resonate. The resonance would be very powerful; after all, it had been created through Linley’s attack power.

The body’s internal organs weren’t nearly as durable as a person’s external defenses.

This sort of resonance could easily annihilate the opponent’s internal organs, shaking them into tiny pieces.

“However, it is incredibly difficult to transform attack power into resonating vibrations.” Linley understood that the battle-qi and strength he normally used was a totally different sort of attack, compared to this sort of ‘resonance wave’ attack.

Only by relying on his partial understanding of the Laws of the Earth was Linley able to convert his normal attacks into this sort of ‘resonance wave’ attack.

Per Linley’s line of thought, the more ‘resonance waves’ were created, the more successful the power transformation had been.

“Sometimes, I can create over ten tremors in the blink of an eye, but other times, I can’t even create one.” Linley’s head hurt.

Linley understood that once his skill in using the heavy sword had reached this sort of level, he could already be considered as having entered the realm of using the ‘Laws of the Earth’.

But Linley wasn’t totally able to grasp it.

“I can’t be too greedy. Right now, I shouldn’t focus too much on creating as many vibrations as possible. I should focus on just one resonance wave at a time.” Wielding the adamantine heavy sword in one hand, Linley’s face was very solemn.

Suddenly….

The adamantine heavy sword seemed to tear the air apart as it chopped down against the lake.

The strange thing was, not a single ripple was created on the surface of the lake. But suddenly, the entire lake began to emit a strange gurgling sound… and then, as though it had been lifted by a giant, the entire surface of the lake suddenly rose up, forming a one-meter high wall of water.

“I succeeded again this time.”

Linley actually wasn’t too excited. He sometimes succeeded and sometimes failed when training with this ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’. He wasn’t able to reproduce the results with any regularity.

“Big brother Linley, time to eat.” Leena stood at the not-too-distant shore, laughing as she called out to him.

“Grandpa Zassler, time to eat! Stop training!” Rebecca began calling out from outside of Zassler’s wooden room.

With a flip of his hand, Linley sent the adamantine heavy sword flying into the air. When it landed, it landed neatly into its sheath. Linley had already totally mastered the ‘impose’ level, and the weight of the adamantine heavy sword didn’t impede Linley in the slightest.

On the grass, a rectangular table had been laid out.

Linley, Zassler, Rebecca, and Leena were seated around the table.

“Linley, what are you training on? I saw that bizarre training method you

were working on. I've never seen a warrior train in such a manner." Zassler said with curiosity.

Zassler had an extremely broad array of knowledge, but comparatively speaking, he didn't know much about warrior training methods.

In truth, the most important thing for peak-stage experts of the ninth rank to enter the Saint-level was to advance to a higher level of understanding. And for Saint-levels to advance to the Deity-level, they also needed to understand the various Laws of heaven and earth before they could attain a divine spark.

"I am training to gain a greater understanding. It is similar to a magus' attempts to gain insights in the nature of the elemental essences." Linley said casually.

Zassler immediately understood.

As an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank, Zassler would often envelop himself with the boundless deathly aura from the undead realm to try and understand the elusive and illusory Laws of Death.

"Zassler, we killed Lampson and their men. Do you think the Radiant Church will be able to swallow their rage?" Linley was still concerned about this affair.

Zassler laughed very confidently. "Don't worry. Let me tell you, the O'Brien Empire and the Radiant Church are very far apart. Even if they used flying magical beasts to send messages, they would need ten days or half a month. And if they were to send experts over, it would still take quite a while."

"But if Saint-level experts were to fly here, they would be able to travel extremely fast." Linley said solemnly.

After having killed so many of the Radiant Church's men, it was very possible that the Radiant Church would send over Saint-level experts.

“Haha, don’t worry. They don’t dare send any Saint-level experts. Think about it. Why didn’t they send Saint-level experts to capture me, and instead send combatants of the ninth rank?” Zassler laughed loudly in delight.

Linley was curious about this as well.

If Saint-level experts had been sent after Zassler, capturing him would be very easy.

“Linley, you must understand, the O’Brien Empire is overseen by the War God. Long ago, the War God decreed that the Saint-level combatants of other nations would not be permitted to act wildly within the boundaries of the O’Brien Empire. If they came for the purpose of pleasure, that was fine, but if they were discovered engaging in acts of violence, the repercussions would be very severe.”

Zassler laughed coldly. “Even if the Radiant Church had ten times the courage, they wouldn’t dare go against the War God’s edict.”

The prestige of the War God could not be violated.

“Not necessarily.”

Linley shook his head. “Didn’t you just say it? ‘If they were discovered engaging in acts of violence.’ But what if they weren’t discovered? Remember, the prefectural city of Cerre doesn’t have any experts, and the War God is far away, in the imperial capital. If a Saint-level combatant suddenly appears in the prefectural city of Cerre, he wouldn’t necessarily know.”

Zassler was startled.

“The Radiant Church wouldn’t be that insane, right?” Zassler was a bit uncertain.

“Hard to say. After all, we killed six of the combatants of the ninth rank in one breath, this time. And when they were trying to capture you, you killed several of them as well. The Radiant Church won’t easily take this lying down, without a fight.” Linley said solemnly.

Zassler considered this for a while, then laughed. “It’s fine. Although the prefectural city of Cerre doesn’t have any Saint-level combatants, Basil City does have one. McKenzie. If Saint-level experts of the Radiant Church are sent here to fight with us, McKenzie would definitely notice it. McKenzie definitely wouldn’t permit the forces of the Radiant Church to act in such an unbridled manner on his turf. By then, with two Saint-level experts engaged in battle here, the War God would definitely find out.”

“True.” Linley began to laugh as well.

If he was able to incite the Radiant Church into a battle against the O’Brien Empire, the Radiant Church would truly have bitten off more than it could chew.

“Linley, when I was under armed escort by Lampson and the others in the Northwest Administrative Province, the people whom the Radiant Church secretly placed within the Northwest Administrative Province went to go welcome them. I remember one of them was an old man named ‘Perry’, who was responsible for their affairs in the province. Judging from their conversation, that Perry should belong to the provincial capital of Basil.

Zassler laughed sinisterly. “Since we’re going to go to Basil anyways, we might as well dispose of that Perry fellow. Perhaps we might even discover some more secrets of the Radiant Church.”

“The manager for their affairs in the Northwest Administrative Province?” Linley’s eyes lit up. “Alright. We’ll head out tomorrow.”

Chapter 30 – The Five Year Agreement

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 30, The Five Year Agreement

Keane, the governor of the prefectural city of Cerre, was just a fourteen year old child. Although he had his older sister Jenne helping him, in truth, how much did Jenne know herself? Most of the time, it was still up to their old servant, Lambert, to help out.

Lambert's clothes were very sharp and creased. His combed hair was gleaming as he slowly strolled about in the interior of the castle, appearing every inch the noble.

"Why must the young miss always be thinking about Lord Ley?" Lambert was sighing to himself. Jenne wanted to go visit Linley, but after Linley had told her that he didn't like being disturbed in the middle of his training, Jenne had no choice but to stay in the castle. Unfortunately, it had been a long time since Linley had come to the castle.

As he watched Jenne slowly grow thinner, Lambert felt very heartsick.

"Lambert."

Hearing his name called, Lambert turned around and saw Linley walking in by himself, dressed in a light blue warrior's outfit. Jenne and Keane had issued orders early on that if the castle guards were to see Linley, they were to let him in immediately without need for any notification.

"Lord Ley!" Lambert was extremely happy.

"Lord Ley, wait in the main hall for just a moment. I will immediately go inform the young master and the young miss."

Within the main hall.

Linley was quietly sitting on a chair. This trip to the provincial capital of Basil he was going to make with Zassler, Leena, and her sister was most likely one where they would end up staying in the area around Basil.

After all, Linley had to be wary of the Radiant Church secretly sending Saint-level experts over. As the city of Basil had McKenzie, the Radiant Church wouldn't dare to act too wildly.

"Big brother Ley."

A surprised and happy voice rang out from the doorway. Linley turned his head and saw Jenne, her face flushed, rush in wearing a faint red dress. Her chest was rising and falling, and she was panting. As soon as she heard the news that Linley was back, Jenne had immediately ran over as fast as she could.

"Why'd you run so fast? Look at how out of breath you are. Have a seat." Linley laughed.

"Okay." Jenne very obediently sat down.

After a while, Keane and Lambert entered as well. Laughing, Keane complained, "Sis, you ran too fast. I couldn't even keep up with you."

Jenne was a bit embarrassed. She shot a vicious glare at Keane.

"Big brother Ley, it's been a long time since you last came. How long do you plan to stay this time?" Keane said to Linley.

Linley shook his head. "This time, I've come to bid you farewell. I plan to leave the prefectural city of Cerre."

"What?"

Keane and Lambert were both startled. Simultaneously, they turned their heads to look at Jenne. Where before, her face had been flushed with

excitement and shyness, a stunned look was now on Jenne's face.

"Big brother Ley, where are you going?" Jenne was the first to ask.

"For now, I plan to go to the provincial capital of Basil." Linley replied.

The provincial capital of Basil and the prefectural city of Cerre were fairly far apart. Normal people would need to spend two or three days by carriage to get there.

"Big brother Ley, I'll go with you." Jenne summoned her courage and said.

Linley sighed to himself. How could he not know what Jenne was thinking? But towards Jenne, Linley felt nothing more than the love he would feel towards a younger sister. This was a familial, platonic love.

"Enough, Jenne. I'm going on business. I might encounter danger. There's no need for you to follow me." Linley refused.

Jenne shook her head resolutely. "I'm not afraid."

Looking at Jenne, Linley knew that if he didn't refuse her very openly and firmly, she wouldn't give up. Linley let out a long sigh. "Jenne, all I care about is training. Nothing else. Jenne, there's no way I can take care of you."

Linley spoke with tact, but how could Jenne not understand his meaning?

Jenne's face was somewhat pale. Since she had been eight years old, she had lived in that countryside village. The life she had lived there was both peaceful as well as harsh. On this trip to the prefectural city of Cerre, Linley had protected them the entire time, which was the only reason her and her brother had survived the trip and took over the governorship.

"Big brother Ley, I don't want to continue repressing my feelings. Big brother Ley, I know you don't like me that way. I don't want to ask too much. All I want to do is to ask that you allow me to accompany you. Big

brother Ley, I'm willing to be your maidservant. As long as I can be by your side, I'll be happy." Jenne said hopefully.

Keane and Lambert were both silent.

Linley felt extremely anxious as well. Jenne really was an extremely kind girl, but…

"Jenne, there's no need for you to follow me and expose yourself to danger. Right now, you are a noble lady. In the prefectural city of Cerre, there are definitely many outstanding young men who are pursuing you." Linley said.

Jenne bit her lips, then resolutely shook her head. Her eyes were growing moist.

"Big brother Ley." Keane said. "Please agree to my sister's request. These past days when you haven't been around, she's had almost no appetite. She's grown thinner now."

Her eyes moist, Jenne looked at Linley with an appeal in her eyes.

"Jenne…"

In the end, Linley's heart softened. "Five years. I will give you five years, and you give me five years as well. Five years from now, I'll come meet you. If at that time you are still resolute in your decision, I'll agree to let you accompany me."

Time was the best medicine.

Five years from now, Jenne would have matured and her thoughts and beliefs would have changed as well. Linley believed that perhaps because Jenne didn't have parents to take care of her when she was young, she had come to depend on and love him. In a few more years, when Jenne grew more mature, her mind would change. By then, Linley wouldn't be under any pressure.

“Five years. Okay.” Hope appeared once more in Jenne’s eyes.

“Jenne.”

Linley looked at Jenne. “Before I go, I need to tell you something. My real name isn’t ‘Ley’. It is Linley Baruch.”

“Linley Baruch?” Jenne murmured.

“Linley? Lord Ley, you are that genius master sculptor?” Lambert cried out in surprise. Lambert had previously stayed in the Holy Union. In the Holy Union, Linley was extremely famous.

“I hope you won’t reveal my presence or my whereabouts. Farewell.”

Linley squeezed out a small smile, then turned and immediately strode out of the hall.

As she looked at Linley’s departing back, the tears finally began to fall from Jenne’s eyes. She balled her fists tightly, her nails piercing into her palm’s flesh.

On the streets of the prefectural city of Cerre.

Rebecca and Leena were seated on the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. Bebe was comfortably resting in Leena’s arms, while Linley, dressed in his warrior’s outfit, was walking alongside Zassler, who was in a long magus robe.

They were travelling towards the provincial capital of Basil at high speed.

The provincial capital of Basil was a huge city that could be seen from far away.

And just like that, Linley’s squad drew close to and entered the provincial capital of Basil.

“No need to rush out and find that Perry right away. Let’s find a place to stay first.” Linley said.

Zassler nodded as well.

There were definitely quite a few people named Perry in the provincial capital. Most likely, finding the right one would take some time. Thus, Linley and Zassler went to a hotel and reserved an individual, stand-alone manor, where their party now stayed.

Two days after Linley’s party had arrived at the provincial capital of Basil, the Bluewind Hawks of Count Perry arrived at the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church.

The Sacred Isle was a lonely place, located outside the Yulan continent.

The entire Sacred Isle was only a few dozen kilometers long. In truth, in the past, this was a secret base for the Radiant Church. Now, it had been directly converted into their main headquarters.

It had a Radiant Temple that was nine floors high.

This Radiant Temple wasn’t as huge as the Radiant Temple of Fenlai City, but it, too, had been painstakingly constructed by the Radiant Church, costing a great deal of effort.

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

Heidens was seated in front of a window. Through the window, he could see the boundless blue ocean waters beyond the island.

Recently, Heidens had been in fairly good mood. The squad of experts of the ninth rank he had sent out had already successfully captured the Arch Magus necromancer, Zassler. And two days ago, he had received another excellent news. In the Eighteen Northern Duchies, his forces had made a tremendous discovery – five potential vessels of the eighth rank.

Generally speaking, an ordinary person would be able to train their bodies to the sixth rank. That was the maximum limit.

Some geniuses could reach the seventh rank just by focusing on training their body.

But…in the Eighteen Northern Duchies, the forces of the Radiant Church had discovered five siblings, all exceedingly strong and durable. None of them had any battle-qi. But all of them had reached the eighth rank as warriors, just based on physical strength.

“Vessels of the eighth rank. That will definitely be enough to allow Seraphims, the Six-Winged Angels, to display their power.” Heidens couldn’t help but be excited. “Five bodies of the eighth rank. When the Angels possess them, they will definitely be able to transform into five peak-stage Saint-level combatants.”

Early-stage, middle-stage, and peak-stage Saint-level combatants were on totally different levels of power.

Currently, the entire Radiant Church only had five peak-stage Saint-level combatants. But once those five specimens of the eighth rank were brought over, the peak-stage Saint-level experts under the Radiant Church would instantly double!

“By then, would the Cult of Shadows still be able to stand against us?” Heidens face was covered in smiles.

“Your Holiness.”

“Enter.” Heidens face regained its usual calm.

A Vicar walked in, respectfully presenting a letter to the Holy Emperor. “Your Holiness, this is a secret message from our supervisor in the O’Brien Empire’s Northwest Administrative Province.”

“Oh?” Heidens raised an eyebrow.

The supervisors in the outside areas, aside from their annual reports, would almost never send secret messages. If a secret message was sent out, then it meant that something major has occurred.

“Could it be that…?” Heidens suddenly remembered that not too long ago, Lampson and his men had just escorted that Arch Magus necromancer into the Northwest Administrative Province.

Heidens immediately accepted the letter, opening the envelope.

As soon as he saw its contents, Heidens’ face sank down. “Have Lord Stehle [Shi’te’lei] come see me.”

“Lord Stehle?” The Vicar was surprised.

In the Radiant Church, the leader of the Ascetics was Lord Fallen Leaf. As for the Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, their leader was Stehle.

Lord Stehle was only a Special Executor.

But in terms of power, he was on par with the leader of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, Praetor Osenno. Both were peak-stage Saint-level combatants. In times of peace, the Radiant Church rarely sent peak-stage Saint-level combatants out on missions.

“Hurry.” Heidens barked.

The Vicar immediately came to his senses and hurriedly said, “Yes, Your Holiness.”

Watching the Vicar depart, Heidens began to frown. “So it seems Lampson’s squad had arrived half a month ago in the Northwest Administrative Province. But there has been no news from our borders informing me of their return to the Holy Union. It seems…they really have

been killed."

Lampson and ten other experts of the ninth rank had all died.

This setback was not a small one, but Heidens was able to maintain his calm.

After all, what the Radiant Church truly relied on was Saint-level combatants. As long as their Saint-level combatants remained, the Radiant Church wouldn't be threatened at its core.

"Lampson and the other five were escorting Zassler. Given their ability, one or two combatants of the ninth rank wouldn't be able to deal with them." Heidens frowned. "Could it have been a Saint-level combatant? The McKenzie of the Northwest Administrative Province?"

Heidens couldn't think of any other possibilities besides McKenzie.

"McKenzie!" Heidens was filled with a murderous intent.

To Heidens, those eleven combatants of the ninth rank put together weren't as valuable as a single Zassler. Zassler's true value lay not in the man himself, but rather in the training method for Necromantic Magic. As a type of magic on par with Oracular Magic, it was naturally extremely powerful.

It included maledictive spells, poison gases, plague spells, undead slaves, and the Wraith Call ability. These were all extremely powerful.

The Radiant Church didn't reject necromancers from their ranks.

So long as a necromancer was willing to serve them, they would totally be willing to give this necromancer the title of Special Executor. The dark underbelly of the Radiant Church that was the Ecclesiastical Tribunal possessed experts of all types and places.

Heidens didn't know that the person who had killed Lampson and his men was Linley. If he had known, Heidens would probably be so angry that he

would jump up and down.

“Your Holiness.” An ice-cold voice rang out.

“Stehle. Come in.” Heidens said warmly.

Stehle was only 1.7 meters tall. In the Yulan continent, he would be considered a fairly small and skinny person. He had short white hair, and his eyes were as sharp as knife blades. Judging from his appearance, he seemed to be a middle-aged man.

“Your Holiness, is there something you need?” Stehle asked directly.

Heidens was very direct as well. “According to our reports, Lampson and his men are most likely all dead. There is a high chance that the killer is a Saint-level combatant of the O’Brien Empire.”

Stehle remained silent.

“I am going to send you to the North Sea Administrative Province of the O’Brien Empire. When you get there, you will meet with another group which is escorting a number of prisoners. No matter what happens, you must ensure that those five siblings are brought back to the Sacred Isle.”

“And if I encounter Saint-level combatants of the O’Brien Empire?” Stehle asked.

“Kill them, and then fly back with those five at maximum speed.” Heidens said emotionlessly.

Once they used those five bodies of the eighth rank as vessels for Angels to descend into, the Radiant Church would have produced five peak-stage Saint-level combatants. For the sake of that, it would be worth it if they had to offend the O’Brien Empire. After all, even if they offended the O’Brien Empire, at worst the Holy Empire would just have to give the O’Brien Empire some sort of compensation.

“Alright. I immediately will head out tonight, at nightfall.” Stehle said indifferently.

Chapter 31 – Concealed by the Night

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 31, Concealed by the Night

There had been no trace of Linley in over three years. It was impossible for Heidens to connect this affair with Linley. What's more, even if he did think of Linley, he wouldn't think that Linley had the ability to kill six experts of the ninth rank.

Unfortunately…

Heidens didn't know that Linley had grown, grown at a speed even faster than he had feared.

Within a secluded restaurant in the provincial capital of Basil.

Linley was seated by himself, with Bebe being his only companion. They occasionally were drinking.

"Come over here." Linley called to the waiter.

"Is there something you need, sir?" That waiter was extremely courteous.

Linley casually tossed out three gold pieces. "Let me ask you a question. If I'm satisfied with your answer, these three gold pieces are yours." This waiter's yearly salary was only around four gold pieces. His eyes immediately lit up with greed.

"Sir, please ask. I know quite a few things in this province." The servant said confidently.

In a place like this restaurant, all sorts of people would come and visit. The servant would overhear a great deal and know a great deal as well.

“I want to ask you, is there an old man named ‘Perry’ within this city of Basil? His hair is white, and he should appear rather dignified.” Linley whispered into the waiter’s ears.

The waiter immediately let out a confident laugh, and then, very conscientiously, lowered his voice in response. “You must be referring to Count Perry.”

“Count Perry?”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

The waiter nodded. “In the provincial capital of Basil, there’s only one noble named Perry who is fairly well known. And this Perry is, indeed, an old man, so old that his hair is white. There’s no mistaking it.”

“Oh.” Linley nodded. “Do you know where Count Perry’s manor is?”

The servant nodded. “Of course. Count Perry lives on Huating Road, the third residence from the right.”

“If you come with me, I’ll add another three gold coins.” Linley said.

After all, Linley was worried that he might get lost by himself. It was better to bring the servant with him. This way, at least he wouldn’t get totally lost.

Watching Linley bring out another three gold coins, the servant immediately grew excited. “Alright. Sir, please wait a bit. I’ll go talk to the boss first.”

If he didn’t do anything that day, at worst he would be deducted a day’s pay. But by following Linley, he would be paid three gold coins.

The provincial capital of Basil. Huating Road.

Linley stared from afar an ancient looking manor. Judging from the decaying, ivy-wrapped walls, this manor was at least several centuries old.

“Count Perry, a very kind fellow?”

Linley sneered.

This ‘very kind fellow’ the waiter described was the supervisor of affairs for the Radiant Church in the Northwest Administrative Province. The O’Brien Empire was extremely antagonistic towards foreign religions. If Perry were to be discovered, he would definitely be found guilty of a serious crime, to be punished by having his belongings confiscated and his clan wiped out.

Memorizing the address, Linley immediately turned and left.

But what Linley didn’t notice was a man staring at him in astonishment from a distance. “Here? He actually showed up here?” The man was amazed.

“Mm. It’s been three years. I didn’t expect to discover him here. It looks like I’ll receive that reward of five thousand gold coins.” The man was very delighted.

Walking on the streets, Linley did not notice any of the ordinary commoners who weren’t particularly strong. Naturally, he wouldn’t have paid any attention to this ordinary warrior who was only of the third rank.

Within the courtyard of the residence behind his hotel.

Zassler was seated beneath a large tree in the courtyard. Seeing Linley enter, he laughed. “How did it go? Did you find that Perry fellow?”

“Found him. He’s even a Count. His position isn’t that low.” Linley said.

Someone capable of becoming the supervisor of affairs for a province definitely wasn’t an incapable person. He would either be a wealthy magnate or a powerful noble.

“Haha, wonderful. Then tonight, let us…pay a visit.” Zassler’s laughed

sinisterly, his eyes emitting a hint of green light.

Linley nodded calmly.

“Rebecca, Leena.” Linley raised his head to look at the two twins who had just walked in from the main hall. “Tonight, the two of you need to stay here. Don’t go anywhere.”

“Understood.” Rebecca and Leena both nodded.

Zassler laughed in the direction of the twins. “Do as I have taught you, and enter the meditative trance. In a few days, I will begin to commence the ‘Necromantic Initiation Rites’ for both of you.”

After having been with them for a period of time, Zassler had made the determination that these two twins were highly suited for studying Necromantic Magic.

In truth, the normal seven elements of magic (earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, darkness) all had fairly high requirements with regards to spiritual energy. But the higher level arts of Oracular Magic, Life Magic, and Necromantic Magic, had terrifyingly high requirements when it came to souls.

Of these three types of magic, Necromantic Magic had the highest requirements with regards to spiritual purity and soul analysis. Comparatively speaking, it didn’t have much of a requirement with regards to elemental essence affinity.

“Necromantic Initiation Rites?”

Rebecca and Leena were both excited. This entire time, they had hoped they would be able to seek revenge for their parents, but they didn’t have any power. But after learning Necromantic Magic, they would have sufficient power.

That night.

“Haeru. Protect Rebecca and Leena.” Linley instructed.

To deal with a minor figure like Perry was an extremely simple task. Linley and Zassler would be more than enough. With Bebe present as well, there would be no chance of failure at all.

“Be careful.” Rebecca and Leena said.

Zassler laughed weirdly. “In Basil, aside from McKenzie, there’s no one whom I or Linley need to be concerned with.”

“Let’s go.” Linley said calmly.

Both dressed in black, Linley and Zassler very quickly slipped out of the courtyard. The black-furred Bebe also stealthily followed the two, with none the wiser.

In the dark night, Linley, Zassler, and Bebe were walking in an alleyway.

“Huating Road must be ahead.” Linley’s memory was very good. Despite having a very complicated layout, Linley was able to totally memorize the layout after having walked through the city once. Linley, Zassler, and Bebe directly passed through the small alleyway and arrived at the outskirts of the walls to Count Perry’s manor.

Staring at this ancient building, Zassler and Linley exchanged glances.

“Zassler, you need to be certain.” Linley had never seen Count Perry before.

“Don’t worry.” Zassler’s lips curled in a dark smile.

Linley led Zassler forward as they jumped directly past the wall. With regards to how residences were generally laid out, Linley and Zassler both had a good general idea. Usually in front was the main hall, while the second building in the back was where the owner would sleep.

But Zassler came to a stop in front of the second building as he began to mumble a magical incantation.

A short while later…

A grey smoke began to slowly drift towards the building. In a short while, the entire second building was covered by that grey fog. The fog continued to spread until it covered every single building in the residence. Watching this happen, Linley was puzzled.

Linley took a sniff of the grey fog. As he did, he felt momentarily dizzy, but then instantly recovered.

“What are you doing?” Linley said softly.

“I’m just putting the weaker people here to sleep. Upon reaching the seventh rank, a person can use battle-qi to counteract this fog. Perry is a warrior of the eighth rank.” Zassler knew exactly how strong Perry was.

“Who is it?!”

An angry roar could be heard, as an old man and three middle-aged men ran out from the room. The leader stared icily at Linley and Zassler. But because of the grey mist, as well as the fact that it was late at night, they could not make out Linley or Zassler’s appearance.

“Lord Count.” Three more voices rang out from the courtyard, as two more middle-aged men and a young man ran over.

The Count had seven experts at his residence; five of the seventh rank, two of the eighth rank.

“Who are you?” Count Perry barked.

“Heh heh heh. Oh, Perry. You’ve forgotten me?” Zassler slowly walked forward, while two powerful, golden-furred zombies materialized out of nowhere.

The mist began to thin, and Count Perry could now see him clearly.

“It’s you.” Count Perry’s eyes bulged from their sockets. He knew exactly how powerful Zassler was. Even five or six experts of the ninth rank wouldn’t be able to do anything to him.

Seeing Zassler appear, Perry understood that most likely, Lampson and his men had indeed met a violent end.

“And you are?” Count Perry looked at Linley. Suddenly, he started.

Linley’s appearance had long ago been distributed to every single one of the Radiant Church’s supervisors in foreign locations. Compared to three years ago, Linley’s hair was now a bit longer, yes, but his face hadn’t changed much.

“You are Linley?” Perry was somewhat shocked.

Linley smiled and nodded. “Count Perry, good eyesight. Zassler and I have quite a few things we’d like to discuss with you on this lovely night. Zassler, let’s move.”

“Kill.” Zassler immediately barked.

The two golden-furred zombies suddenly transformed into rays of golden light, charging at those other six men. Sudden screams of agony could be heard, as the zombies killed three of them in a blink of an eye, causing the other three to turn pale with fear.

“Clang.” That young man chopped down with his sabre on the body of the golden-furred zombie, but the only effect was that his hand broke from the impact. Golden-furred zombies prided themselves on their defensive abilities.

“Groooooowl.” With a low growl, the golden-furred zombie caved the young man’s head in with a single blow.

“Bang!”

A middle-aged man kicked viciously at a nearby boulder, sending enormous pieces of rock smashing towards the golden-furred zombie. But the zombie only charged at him, fast as lightning. Those pieces of rocks continued to fly at high speed at the zombie. “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” One rock after another smashed against the golden-furred zombie, and it didn’t block at all.

Each rock contained thousands of pounds of force, but unfortunately, they did nothing to the golden-furred zombies.

“Slash.”

A black blur flashed by, and that middle-aged man fell to the floor in astonishment.

“You’re too slow, you big oaf.” Bebe growled towards the golden-furred zombie, then jumped back onto Linley’s shoulders.

The golden-furred zombie’s speed could be considered the speed of a normal combatant of the ninth rank. But compared to Bebe, there was a huge difference. After all, Bebe and Haeru were magical beasts of the ninth rank which specialized in speed.

The six of them had been killed by the two golden-furred zombies and Bebe in the blink of an eye. Those zombies were, after all, undead of the ninth rank. Those people didn’t have a chance against them.

Perry had silently maintained his composure the entire time.

When he had been selected as the supervisor for this region by the Radiant Church, he had mentally prepared for such a day. Only, what he had expected was that he would be killed by the O’Brien Empire’s men. He didn’t expect that it would be Linley and Zassler who killed him.

“Linley, it was you who killed Lampson’s men and rescued Zassler?” Perry

questioned. Before dying, Perry wanted to indulge his curiosity.

“Indeed.” Linley replied succinctly.

Perry nodded and laughed. “You truly do live up to the name of being one of the descendants of the Dragonblood Warrior clan. In three years, your power has grown so much. I hope you don’t expect to get anything out of me, however. I won’t answer your questions.” A hint of a holy light had appeared on Perry’s face.

“Do you think that will do you any good?” Zassler sneered.

“Seize him.” Zassler ordered coldly.

The two golden-furred zombies charged at Perry at high speed, seizing him without giving him a chance to avoid.

“Linley, help me stay on watch for a while. I am about to ‘Soulscour’ him. Zassler instructed Linley.

Linley started.

Soulscour? Linley had never heard of anyone being able to ‘Soulscour’ someone. Even the Radiant Church didn’t have the ability to search and scour a person’s soul. But necromancers, as practitioners of the type of magic that involved souls the most, naturally knew far more about souls than all other types of magi.

“Soulscour?” Hearing this word, Perry was shocked as well. “Impossible.” He had never heard of a ‘Soulscour’ technique.

“Haha. Even if you were to die right now, it would be too late.”

Zassler walked in front of Perry. The five fingers of his wizened, chicken-claw like hand grabbed Perry’s head, while at the same time, Zassler’s eyes suddenly turned a deep green color.

“Uhhhh…ahhhhh….” Perry’s body began to tremble violently, while at the same time, he began to let out agonized moans.

Chapter 32 – The Decision

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 32, The Decision

Although Perry was already over two hundred years old, as a warrior of the eighth rank, his body was still very sturdy. But after Zassler pierced his claws into his skull, Perry's face and body began to turn ashen white, while at the same time, his body began to quiver violently, as though he were an extremely ill old man.

Linley carefully watched this sight.

"Soulscour." This was the first time Linley had seen this sort of technique performed. As one of the three most powerful types of magi, necromancers did indeed have some terrifying abilities.

After approximately two minutes had passed, Zassler's green, glowing eyes returned to their normal color.

Zassler glanced at the ashen faced Perry, letting out a sinister laugh, then released him. The two golden-furred zombies also released Perry. As for Perry, with his skull pierced by claws and his soul scoured, he was dead without a doubt. Like a pile of mud, he slumped to the floor and didn't move again.

"What do you think?" Zassler looked delightedly at Linley.

An expert like Zassler generally wouldn't feel pride upon seeing the astonishment and admiration of ordinary people. But during this period of time that he had spent with Linley, he had yet to do anything to make Linley truly admire him. After revealing this ability, Zassler was quite looking forward to seeing Linley's amazed expression.

Only the amazement of experts could satisfy Zassler's vanity.

“Very incredible.” Linley sighed in honest amazement.

Souls were very amazing, mysterious things. They were the most fundamental component of a person, but people knew very little about souls. To recover a person’s memory from his soul was something which Linley, at least, couldn’t even begin to imagine doing.

“Heh heh heh.” Zassler laughed delightedly, and then those two golden-furred zombies by his side disappeared, returning to their home in the undead realm.

“Let’s go.”

Linley urged.

In the blink of an eye, Count Perry’s manor returned to its normal calm. By now, most people here remained unconscious, while the corpses of the experts just lay there on the floor.

Within the private courtyard of their residence.

Shutting the door to the main hall, Rebecca and Leena very obediently lit the lamps as Linley and Zassler began to chat.

“What did you discover in Perry’s memories?” Linley said calmly.

Zassler laughed delightedly as he looked at Linley. “Linley, in the past, I knew too little about you. I didn’t expect that you were such an incredible figure.”

“What did you find out about big brother Ley?” Rebecca’s adorable, large eyes widened as she asked with curiosity.

Zassler laughed, his white eyebrows jumping up and down. “Rebecca, Leena, your big brother Linley has quite a reputation in the Holy Union. His proficiency in stone sculpture is nearly on the same level as the likes of grandmasters such as Proulx. Do you know? When he was sixteen years

old, he carved out a special sculpture. Can you guess how much that sculpture was worth?" Zassler asked, laughing.

"Sculpture?"

Rebecca and Leena glanced at each other.

To them, sculptures were things that were very hard to make. To carve out a sculpture that was accurate and detailed was already hard enough, to say nothing of making it have a special aura.

"How many gold coins?" Rebecca and Leena asked curiously.

"Ten million gold coins!" Zassler announced.

Zassler had actually gotten all of this information from Count Perry's mind. Count Perry had received a 'kill order' from the Radiant Church regarding Linley. Naturally, this kill order had many details regarding Linley.

"Ten million gold coins, for just a statue?" Rebecca and Leena's mouths hung open, very wide.

"Not just sculptures, by the way. Your big brother Linley's talent as a magus, in the past, was the second best in history. But now, most likely in the entire history of the Yulan continent, he can be considered the number one genius. As for his talent as a warrior, you should already know." Zassler sincerely admired Linley from the heart.

Genius.

Nobody would question that he was a genius. Linley's performance had given testament to everything.

Rebecca and Leena immediately looked towards Linley, their eyes filled with astonishment and worship.

"Enough, Zassler." Linley shook his head and laughed. "Enough of these

bygone affairs. Tell me what you found in Perry's mind."

Zassler nodded, dropping his smile.

"Based on the information in Perry's memory, the Radiant Church's forces in the O'Brien Empire are fairly weak. They are all in hiding. They don't dare to offend the War God, and thus in the O'Brien Empire, the Radiant Church has very few experts."

Linley nodded slightly.

"From Perry's memories, I discovered the identities of the various supervisors throughout the Northwest Administrative Province for the Radiant Church. We now can definitely shatter their entire web of power in this area." Zassler laughed evilly.

Creation was hard. Destruction was easy.

To place a group of people in an area without arousing suspicion was extremely hard.

But to destroy this web of influence only required those people be killed.

"And in the other provinces?" Linley asked.

As far as Linley was concerned, just destroying their web of influence in this administrative province wasn't enough. Only by destroying the entire operation of the Radiant Church in the O'Brien Empire would Linley be truly happy.

"If we kill all of the general supervisors and some of the important supervisors in all seven provinces, the Radiant Church's forces will be like a beheaded dragon. In addition, the Radiant Church's force structure in these areas all hinge around a single line of communication. Once the general supervisor and supervisors are dead, most likely their entire web of influence will collapse."

The greater the blow to the Radiant Church, the happier Linley would be.

Zassler shook his head. “Just like how each supervisor in each prefectural city only reports to Perry, Perry himself only reports to the general supervisor for the entire O’Brien Empire, or the Radiant Church’s headquarters.”

“The general supervisor for the entire O’Brien Empire?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

So in the O’Brien Empire, there was a highly ranked general supervisor for the Empire? If they could seize this person and Soulscour him, most likely they would learn even more.

“Sadly, even Perry didn’t know who this person really is.” Zassler shook his head. “Perry only knew about a place he could go to exchange messages.”

Linley nodded.

But Zassler suddenly began to laugh. “But from Perry’s memories, I discovered another piece of interesting news.”

“Speak.” Linley looked at Zassler.

“The general supervisor of the O’Brien Empire issued an order. In roughly another month’s time, another squad of prisoner escorts will enter the Northwest Administrative Province. The general supervisor ordered Perry to carefully assist and welcome these people and make sure their secrets were kept.” Zassler’s lips split into a grin. “Per this order, it seems as though they place a very high importance on this squad. This squad isn’t the slightest bit less important than the one escorting me.”

“Oh?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

For this squad’s importance to be so high meant that the people they were escorting definitely weren’t ordinary figures.

“Do you know where their first point of entry in the Northwest Administrative Province will be?” Linley asked.

“It should be the prefectural city of Deco [De’ke]. Based on the initial planned trajectory, they won’t pass through the provincial capital.” Zassler said.

Linley nodded. He could totally understand this. The provincial capital of Basil had the Saint-level expert McKenzie present. Naturally, their route had to avoid this place.

“The prefectural city of Deco is roughly eight hundred kilometers away.” Zassler was quite familiar with the geography of the O’Brien Empire.

Linley said coldly. “Eight hundred kilometers? If we rush, we can get there in a day.”

If the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, were to run at maximum speed, he wouldn’t even need half a day. But running for so long meant that he wouldn’t be able to maintain maximum output the entire time.

But if they ran at normal speeds and left in the morning, they definitely could reach there by nightfall.

“In half a month, we will head towards the prefectural city of Deco.” Linley said.

Zassler nodded as well.

Time passed. Linley, Zassler, and the sisters remained within this residence. Zassler was preparing to begin the ‘Necromantic Initiation Rites’ for the two sisters, while Linley didn’t waste any time either as he trained continuously.

Linley didn’t actually have the opportunity to witness the ‘Necromantic Initiation Rites’ first hand.

Only Rebecca, Leena, and Zassler were inside their room, as they began the ‘Necromantic Initiation Rites’. Very shortly afterwards, Zassler left the room, then instructed Linley not to disturb the two.

A full three days and three nights later, Rebecca and Leena proudly left the room.

Over the course of those three days, they had been totally attuned with the contents of the ‘Necromantic Initiation Rites’. According to what Zassler said, these two sisters had very high aptitudes.

As for Linley, he continued to train in the fourth level of the heavy sword, the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’.

In the desolate wildness, a long-robed figure crossed the boundless plains like a whirlwind, flying east at high speed.

He had a skinny, agile frame, and his short hair was gleaming silver, looking like steel threads.

His entire body was covered by a black robe, and his eyes were very sharp. He stared east as he flew through the air at high speed.

“Five vessels of the eighth rank.” Stehle still remembered Heidens’ repeated instructions.

Those five siblings which were under armed escort could not be allowed to escape, no matter what. Five bodies of the eighth rank! Once the Angels descended, they would transform into five peak-stage Saint-level combatants.

“It has been a long time since I’ve killed a Saint-level combatant.” Stehle’s face had a hint of a cold, sinister smile on it.

Heidens had already stated that if a Saint-level combatant were to interfere, he could kill them. The Radiant Church would bear all responsibility for his actions.

The tenth morning after Count Perry's death.

Linley was seated cross-legged on the floor, not moving at all. The morning mist covered the lands. Recently, Linley's life had been very peaceful, even though Perry's death had aroused an investigation by the city guards.

But this had nothing to do with Linley and his group.

Linley suddenly rose to his feet. The adamantine heavy sword in his hands suddenly stabbed forward, and an ear-splitting howl could be heard!

A wall roughly fifty meters in front of Linley suddenly quivered, a layer of dust shaking off from it.

"Boooom." A fist-sized chunk of wall suddenly turned into dust. The sand-like pieces of disintegrated stone slowly poured out, revealing that fist-sized hole in the wall.

No battle-qi had been shot out. Just by stabbing at the air, Linley had created a hole in the wall at fifty meters distance.

"Profound Truths of the Earth – Triple Layered Waves."

Linley gently murmured, "These most basic 'Triple Layered Waves' of the Profound Truths of the Earth have finally been completed." After leaving the prefectural city of Cerre, Linley had been pondering this the entire time.

And now, Linley had finally mastered the most basic attack of the 'Profound Truths of the Earth'; the 'Triple Layered Waves'.

When the force of the battle-qi and physical strength in an attack was converted into vibrational form, the more vibrations that were created represented a higher rate of conversion, with lower loss of power. The 'Triple Layered Waves' technique had a very high level of loss conversion, but it was already extremely powerful.

After all, it was a totally different form of attack than one utilizing battle-qi and physical force.

“Linley.” Zassler was standing at the doorway, watching. “What sort of attack is that?” Zassler was quite surprised as well.

Zassler had seen attacks from Saint-level combatants.

But generally, what they did was chop out their swords, projecting battle-qi in distant attacks. But Zassler had never seen someone like Linley, who without visibly using battle-qi or any other power, could suddenly, silently, create a fist-sized hole in a distant wall. This was too bizarre.

“Even if I told you, you wouldn’t understand.” Linley laughed calmly.

After having mastered the most basic ‘Triple Layered Waves’, Linley knew that the farther up he went, the more difficult it would be and the more time would be required.

“Knock!” “Knock!” “Knock!”

Suddenly, knocking sounds could be heard from outside the door. Linley immediately walked over and opened it.

The hotel attendant said respectfully, “Sir, this gentleman wants to meet you.” An amiable, middle-aged man was standing next to the attendant.

The middle-aged man glanced at the attendant, and the attendant very courteously withdrew immediately.

The middle-aged man smiled at Linley. “Lord Linley, hello.”

Linley’s face couldn’t help but change. There were very few people who knew his identity.

“Lord Linley, no need to be too anxious. My clan’s lord wishes to meet with you.” The middle-aged man smiled.

“Who is the lord of your clan?” Linley frowned.

“Lord Linley, if you read this letter, you will understand.” The middle-aged man withdrew a letter from his clothes and offered it to Linley.

Chapter 33 – The Four Bros' Paths

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 33, The Four Bros' Paths

Zassler walked out from the back as well. Hearing the middle-aged man address Linley by his name, he immediately grew wary. But after he reached Linley's side, he saw that upon reading the letter, a smile appeared on Linley's face. A very happy smile.

Zassler could tell that although Linley wasn't a sinister fellow, he was rather callous, focused utterly on training.

He had never seen Linley smile in such a happy, brilliant manner.

"Zassler." Linley laughed. "You stay here for now. I need to meet a friend."

"Sure." Zassler nodded.

"Bebe." Linley shouted towards Bebe, who was sleeping on the ground. Bebe opened his bleary eyes, staring questioningly at Linley.

"Come, make a trip with me."

"Haeru, you can stay here."

Bebe delightedly raised his head up at Haeru arrogantly, then scampered onto Linley's shoulders. Happily, he mentally spoke to Linley. "Boss, what are we going to do?"

"You'll know when we get there." Linley laughed.

"Lead the way." Linley said to the middle-aged man.

Within fifteen minutes, Linley and the middle-aged man reached a lavish,

large mansion. From far away, Linley could recognize the figure standing in the middle of the main hall.

“Third Bro!” That familiar voice called out excitedly.

“Boss Yale.” Linley was laughing as well.

“Squeeaaaak!” Bebe squeaked out delightedly as well. When they were at the Ernst Institute, Bebe had gotten along very well with Yale, Reynolds, and George as well. Naturally, they were quite familiar with each other.

Yale had matured quite a bit compared to three years ago. Right now, Yale was roughly as tall as Linley, nearly two meters tall. But Yale was slightly thinner than Linley, making him appear like a tall, skinny man.

That form-fitting black gentleman’s suit, combined with a faint cologne, made Yale seem to have a very magnetic charisma.

“Third Bro, I’ve been worried to death over these past three years.” Yale bear-hugged Linley.

Hugging his dear friend, Linley felt very happy as well.

In the past three years, he hadn’t seen his dear friends a single time.

“I didn’t expect that you would grow to be about as tall as me. These three years really have changed you.” Yale sighed. Compared to three years ago, Yale didn’t change that much, but Linley had.

Linley laughed loudly. “You were a year older than me to begin with. You just had a head start. Now that you are no longer growing, it’s very normal that I caught up.”

Bebe squeaked off from the side.

Bebe was very happy as well. It had been a long time since Bebe had seen Linley laughing and joking like this.

“Wow, Bebe!” Yale hugged Bebe, affectionately rubbing his little head. “I knew that you’d come. I’ve prepared some fine foods for you!”

Yale turned his head and glanced at the attendant, who understood what Yale desired. Very shortly afterwards, over ten attendants pushed food carts laden with food over.

“This is roasted meat delicacies from around the world. Bebe, have a taste.” Yale laughed loudly.

Bebe’s little nose sniffed the air, then his eyes immediately began to shine. Transforming into a black shadow, he charged towards those food carts. Watching this, Linley and Yale both began to laugh.

“Boss Yale, let’s chat inside.” Linley said with a laugh.

The two bros entered the main hall, which had been covered with all sorts of delicacies and fine wines. The two bros began to eat and chat.

“Right, Yale, what happened to the Ernst Institute?” Linley suddenly asked.

“It’s finished.” Yale shook his head and sighed. “The Ernst Institute was very close to Fenlai City and came under heavy attack by the magical beasts. You know, even the instructors in the Institute were only of the eighth rank at most. Most of the students were very weak. Facing all those magical beasts…how could they resist them?”

Linley nodded.

Students of the sixth year, the highest year, were just magi of the sixth rank. But the magical beasts possessed quite a few beasts of the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth ranks. When a large number of magical beasts charged over, it really was a disaster.

“There is no longer an Ernst Institute in the world.”

Yale sighed. “I, Reynolds, and George left the Holy Union three years ago. These three years, I’ve been running around between the O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire. As for Reynolds, naturally he returned to his clan, while George returned to the Yulan Empire as well. I hear that George has done quite well for himself. He’s managed to enter the imperial government of the Yulan Empire.”

“Entered the imperial government?”

Linley wasn’t too shocked. George was, after all, a very good person at organization, and behind George was the mighty Walsh clan. Success wouldn’t be too hard for him.

“And Fourth Bro?” Linley laughed as he asked.

“Fourth Bro? He returned to his own clan and was delivered to the army by his father.” Yale laughed loudly. “Third Bro, just imagine. Fourth Bro in the army. Isn’t that unbelievable?”

Linley began to laugh as well.

Their Fourth Bro, Reynolds, was a very lively and rebellious person. But now, he was entering the army? One could imagine how miserable he was there.

“But last year, when I saw Fourth Bro, he seemed to have changed quite a bit. He’s much more mature than before, and he does indeed look like a soldier now. But as soon as he started to drink with me, he returned to his old self.” Yale roared with laughter.

“Boss Yale, what about yourself? I feel that compared to before, you have even more of a nobleman’s aura than in the past.”

Indeed. Dressed in that black gentleman’s suit, Yale’s nobleman’s aura could be clearly sensed by anyone.

“Nothing for it.” Yale laughed bitterly. “After leaving the Ernst Institute,

aside from normal magical training, I've been focused on managing some of my clan's affairs. Naturally, I had to sit through countless noble banquets. After so long, I've learned some of their mannerisms."

Linley nodded.

His three dear bros had all embarked on path which belonged to them.

Government. Military. Market.

"And what about myself?" In his mind, Linley knew exactly what his path was. "Advance on the path of training until I reach the level of the High Priest, the War God, and Dylin. Stand at the very peak of the Yulan continent!"

The absolute peak-level experts possessed all the true power in this world.

To a Deity-level combatant, everything was but a joke. No one dared to offend a Deity-level combatant. They were the ultimate forces in existence in the Yulan continent.

Linley wouldn't permit any obstacles to prevent him from advancing on this path.

Nothing would stop him!

"Third Bro, three years ago, when I went to the imperial capital, I saw your little brother." Yale suddenly said.

"Wharton?" Linley's eyes lit up.

Yale nodded with a laugh. "When I saw Wharton, he was very worried about you, since he didn't know what your situation was. I told him you were fine, and that you were just training by yourself."

"How is Wharton doing?" Linley asked.

“Don’t worry, he’s doing very well.” Yale said with surprise, “I didn’t expect that your little brother was even more muscular than you. Three years ago, he was already a bit taller than me. By now, he should be even taller. Those arms, those muscles. Damn!”

Linley laughed while nodding.

Wharton’s growth was totally within his expectations. After all, every single Dragonblood Warrior in the history of his clan was extremely physically muscular. The weapons they used were the likes of the first Dragonblood Warrior’s warblade ‘Slaughterer’, the second one’s heavy pike, or the third one’s heavy warhammer.

“Linley, your little brother, Wharton, really knows how to conceal himself. In the past, he had been hiding his power the entire time. But after knowing about your affairs, your little brother stopped doing so and began to slowly reveal his strength. A while ago, at the annual tournament for the seventh grade students, he shocked everyone when he defeated a warrior of the eighth rank.” Yale sighed in amazement.

Linley smiled calmly.

A warrior of the eighth rank?

Right now, Wharton was of the seventh rank, and he could also Dragonform. Once Dragonformed, he could reach the ninth rank in power.

“After becoming famous, how has Wharton been doing?” Linley asked.

“Wharton was conferred the rank of Imperial Count. Right now, he’s a rising star in the O’Brien Empire. In a few years, perhaps he will be recruited into the War God’s College.” Yale sighed. “In the future, he has a high chance of entering the Saint-level.”

“War God’s College? Saint-level?” Linley didn’t actually wish for his younger brother to enter the War God’s College.

To the venerable Dragonblood Warriors, entering the Saint-level was something which would happen without fail.

Linley chatted with Yale for an entire morning. Linley was now totally at ease, knowing that all of his bros were living good lives.

After lunch.

“Third Bro. This is a talisman of the Dawson Conglomerate. It represents your status as an elder. Take it.” Yale withdrew a black talisman.

Linley was a bit shocked. “An elder?”

When Linley was at the city of Fenlai, he had already displayed the power of an early-stage warrior of the ninth rank. At that time, Linley was only seventeen. Given his natural ability as a magus, and as well as the fact that he could transform into a Dragonblood Warrior, the elders of the Dawson Conglomerate had come to the conclusion that he would sooner or later enter the Saint-level.

Since that was the case, allowing Linley to become an ‘elder’ of the Dawson Conglomerate was definitely a worthy investment.

“Just take it, on account of us being bros.” Yale laughed.

Linley glanced at Yale. He understood that by accepting this talisman, it signified that if in the future, the Dawson Conglomerate ran into any difficulties, he would have to help out. After all, this talisman represented both power and responsibilities.

“Alright. I’ll accept it.” Laughing, Linley took the talisman. Even if he didn’t have this talisman, if the Dawson Conglomerate really ran into any difficulties, for the sake of his dear bro Yale, Linley of course couldn’t just stand by and watch.

“Thanks.”

The two bros were very close. Thus, there were many words that did not need to be said.

“Third Bro. I feel as though your aura, compared to three years ago, is much more restrained. Over the course of these three years, what level of power have you reached?” Yale lowered his voice and whispered the question with curiosity.

Linley didn’t hide the truth. “Beneath the Saint-level, I should be invincible.”

Yale stared with slight amazement at Linley.

“Enough for now, I have to get back. I’ll come visit you in a few days.” Linley laughed.

The North Sea Administrative Province. Within an ordinary little city.

Within a quiet, secluded courtyard.

“Lord Stehle.” A powerfully built warrior called out softly from outside a door. “It’s time for us to move.”

A moment later, with a creak, the door swung open. Stehle swept the man with his cold stare. “Then let’s move.”

“Yes.” The man didn’t even dare to breathe loudly.

Stehle left the courtyard. Only then did the people nearby let out relieved sighs. A glance from a peak-stage Saint-level combatant was enough to make a man’s heart quail.

“Quickly.” The man immediately urged.

The other men, escorting those five hugely brawny warriors, began to move as well. Those five huge warriors were 2.2 meters tall, and astonishingly muscular. Only, they were tightly bound by a dark golden rope. No matter

how powerful they were, they couldn't break free from these bounds.

Their mouths had been sealed as well.

"Mumble, mumble."

The five siblings angrily tried to curse.

"Do you want to die?" One of the black-robed guards landed a vicious whip-blow on the body of one of the five siblings, but only left behind a faint white mark. "F*ck, their bodies are incredibly durable."

While Stehle's group was busy traversing one city after another in the North Sea Administrative Province, Linley was entrusting Rebecca and Leena into the care of the Dawson Conglomerate's forces in Basil. And then, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru set out in the direction of the prefectural city of Deco.

"This troop escorting these prisoners only have two warriors of the ninth rank. This will be easy." Travelling on Haeru's back, Zassler laughed. "I wonder who this squad is escorting."

"Zassler, the news of Perry's death should have reached the general supervisor of the Church's affairs in the O'Brien Empire by now, right?" Linley suddenly said.

"Yes, he should know by now." Zassler said. "However, they definitely wouldn't be aware that I can Soulscour."

Chapter 34 – In Dire Straits

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 34, In Dire Straits

The prefectural city of Deco was a medium sized city which held a population of three hundred thousand. As one of the cities located at the border between the Northwest Administrative Province and the North Sea Administrative Province, each day there were quite a number of people entering and leaving the city.

“We arrived.”

Seeing the city off in the distance, Linley came to a halt.

This jog, traversing 800 kilometers in six hours, didn’t tire Linley in the slightest. Actually, it was far, far below Linley’s maximum speed. Likewise, for Haeru, the Blackcloud Panther, it was also quite an easy journey.

“We arrived. The sun hasn’t even set yet.” Zassler turned his head to look at the sun, still high in the western sky, and let out a sigh.

In Perry’s memory, he held the exact location of the arrival, because Perry was planning to personally go to the prefectural city of Deco to welcome the party.

Linley and Zassler took up residence in a manor not too far away from the meeting place.

Having money made so many things easier!

Afterwards, Linley and Zassler began to quietly train, awaiting the arrival of the escort squad, who were going to ‘fall into their trap’.

After ten or so days, after having travelled nearly two thousand kilometers on the roads of the North Sea Administrative Province, Stehle’s men finally

arrived at the borders of the North Sea Administrative Province.

“Giddyup, giddyup!” A man whipped his horse, urging it to go next to Stehle. He said respectfully, “Milord, we’ve received word that the supervisor for the Northwest Administrative Province, Count Perry, has been killed. Should we continue on our previously scheduled route?”

Stehle, mounted on horseback, was quiet for a moment, then said calmly, “Count Perry’s faith and loyalty to the Lord is without question. He definitely wouldn’t have betrayed the Lord. Continue on our original route.”

“Yes, milord.” The knight next to him acknowledged respectfully.

The knight actually wasn’t concerned either.

First of all, Count Perry was indeed an extremely ardent adherent to the faith of the Radiant Church. He definitely wouldn’t turn traitor. And secondly, even if they did manage to torture information out of Perry, they would at most ask about some secrets regarding the Radiant Church. They definitely wouldn’t think to ask about the plans of this squad.

In addition, this squad was under the escort of Stehle. What did they have to be afraid of?

By nightfall, Stehle’s squad finally reached the prefectural city of Deco. Long before Perry had died, the Radiant Church’s forces in Deco had already received their orders.

They had been waiting for this squad for a long time.

“Milords, tonight, just rest for a time. Food and drink have already been prepared for you.” The supervisor for the prefectural city of Deco said respectfully.

An expert of the ninth rank asked, “Recently, you haven’t had any problems, have you?”

“None.” The supervisor said respectfully.

“Good. You can leave now. Those attendants, after finishing preparing the food, can leave as well. We don’t need them here.” The expert of the ninth rank said.

“Yes.” The supervisor said respectfully.

Stehle dismounted and headed directly into the residence, in search of a room to stay in. “Seqalu [Si’ka’luo], call me when it is dinner time.” He shut the door.

The combatant of the ninth rank assented respectfully.

Seqalu had been the captain of this squad, but with Stehle’s arrival, naturally he would listen to Stehle in all matters. Seqalu closely inspected all of those servants. Seeing that they were all ordinary people, he no longer worried.

“Bring them out.” Seqalu ordered.

The five siblings were immediately brought down from the carriage. Fortunately, the carriage was quite spacious, as otherwise, those five enormous siblings wouldn’t have been able to sit.

“Listen up, the five of you. If you keep shouting and making noise, the first time you do so, I’ll break your arms. The second time, I’ll cut off your tongues.” Seqalu said coldly.

His subordinates then removed the cloth gags from the mouths of those five siblings.

The five siblings stared angrily at Seqalu, but they knew that Seqalu was the type of person who meant what he said. The five of them didn’t plan to be so foolish as to make things harder for themselves.

“Seqalu, there will come the day when we five brothers will kill you.” The

eldest of the siblings, Barker [Ba'ke], said in a cold voice.

Seqalu only let out a chuckle.

Others might not be aware, but he knew…that in the future, these five siblings would have been transformed into vessels for Angels. As for their souls, they would have been destroyed.

"If you have the chance, I'll welcome you to try." Seqalu sneered in response.

The Barker brothers had lived in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They were orphans who had been raised by an old man, whom they called 'Grandpa'.

Grandpa owned an ordinary restaurant and made enough to raise the five of them. Ever since they were young, the five siblings had been extremely strong. Their Grandpa had previously been a warrior in the army as well, and so ever since they were young, he had trained them. Unexpectedly, the five of them were astonishingly talented. When they were only sixteen years of age, their muscular strength alone had allowed them to reach the sixth rank. By now, the five siblings were thirty, and their physical strength had reached the eighth rank in power.

After their Grandpa had died, the five of them had joined the army.

Within their Duchy, which was one of the Eighteen Northern Duchies, these brothers were heroic figures, leading armies with impunity. In battles between Duchies, warriors of the eighth rank could be considered top-level figures. These five brothers possessed incredibly durable bodies and also very fierce attack power.

However…

In the end, they were still discovered by the Radiant Church's forces. The Radiant Church immediately had dispatched two nearby experts of the ninth rank to lead people to capture them. They had resisted, but when they did, the Radiant Church's men had wiped out all of their families.

The Barker siblings stared death at these men around them.

The five siblings previously had three wives and two children amongst them. The two unmarried ones also had women they loved, but now everything had been destroyed by the Radiant Church.

“They’ve arrived.”

Linley had been paying attention to that particular courtyard every day. He saw that the previously empty manor was finally filled with people, and judging from the sound of it, quite a few people.

Zassler’s eyes flashed with a green light for a moment. Laughing sinisterly, “We’ve waited for over ten days. Finally, it’s time. Linley, when should we act?” Zassler looked over to him. They had definitive superiority of power. No matter when they acted, it would be successful.

“Later at night.” Linley decided.

Zassler nodded as well.

The nearby Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, was pretending to hide in the grass of the courtyard. The time passed quietly, until nightfall came. The prefectural city of Deco grew quieter and quieter. By nightfall, it was almost totally silent.

Linley, who had been seated in the meditative position, suddenly opened his eyes.

“Let’s go.” Linley glanced at Zassler. “Be careful.”

“Don’t worry.” Zassler laughed self-confidently. “I’m going to summon the undead right now.” After just a few seconds, two golden-furred zombies appeared out of thin air. After a while longer, a humanoid figure wrapped in a black cloak appeared in the middle of the courtyard.

“What is this?” Linley glanced perplexedly at the black-robed humanoid.

“An Ancient Wight of the peak-stage ninth rank.” Zassler laughed delightedly.

Linley nodded. His side had many powerful experts, while the opponent only had two experts of the ninth rank. What’s more, they were attacking from ambush. This battle wouldn’t prove to be challenging at all.

“Let’s go.”

Linley jumped directly over the wall, with Bebe and the Blackcloud Panther following close behind. Zassler, his two golden-furred zombies, and the Ancient Wight also followed behind Linley.

Soon, they arrived at that residence.

“Let’s act separately. I’ll go deal with the guards overseeing those five siblings, and then together, we’ll slaughter our way through each room.” Linley said in a low voice.

“Let’s move.”

The five Barker siblings were in one room. Outside the room were two warriors of the eighth rank standing guard. The two were fairly relaxed, casually scanning their surroundings while chatting.

“Hrm?”

The moment before their deaths, they seemed to have sensed something, as they turned to look. But all they saw were two devilish flashes of purple light.

Blood fountained out of two severed necks.

“Swish!” Bebe, Haeru, the Ancient Wight, and the two golden-furred zombies all charged towards the other rooms, while Linley hurriedly ran

into the room with the five siblings.

Upon entering the room, the Barker siblings stared at this ‘monster’ in astonishment. His entire body was covered in black draconic scales, and spikes were emitting from his forehead and back. What’s more, Linley had a pair of dark golden eyes which chilled the hearts of those who saw it.

“Who…who are you?” No matter how bold Barker was, right now, he was rather shocked.

But the only response to his question was a violet flash of sword light.

“Swish!”

Struck by Linley’s ‘Bloodviolet Godsword’, those dark golden ropes all split apart. After having mastered the ‘impose’ ability, Linley’s usage of the Bloodviolet soft sword had reached a new level as well.

‘Impose’ was not restricted by weapon.

A fist could also summon the ‘imposing power’ of the heavens. A sabre or a knife could as well. Bloodviolet was sharp to begin with. Now, with Linley’s battle-qi permeating it, chopping through the ropes was a very easy task.

Seeing the ropes split open, the five siblings immediately understood that this man had come to rescue them. But before they even had a chance to express their thanks, suddenly….

“F*ck off!” An angry shout.

“Aaah!” A pain-filled scream.

The look on Linley’s face changed, and he hurriedly returned to the main courtyard. He saw the black-robed Ancient Wight moaning in pain on the ground, while the stone floor of the courtyard was now covered with cracks. Clearly, these were caused by the Ancient Wight smashing into the floor. In

addition, there were hints of green blood on the ground as well.

“What is going on?” Linley was shocked.

Zassler, too, was very surprised. “Not good. There’s an expert here.” The Ancient Wight was a peak-stage combatant of the ninth rank, and its body was extremely durable. The expert in the room was able to injure it heavily and sent it flying in just one move. This was too terrifying.

“Bebe, Haeru, come back.” Linley mentally ordered.

Bebe and Haeru transformed into two black blurs as they returned to the courtyard. By this time, the five Barker brothers had walked out as well, but Linley kept his gaze focused on that room.

“Hrmph.”

With a cold sneer, a short, skinny man walked out from the room. His short silver hair looked like steel wire. This man looked very cold, especially when one saw his icy gaze.

Stehle glanced coldly at the Ancient Wight. “A necromancer?”

Turning his head to look at Linley and Zassler, he sneered, “I was wondering who it was. So it’s the necromancer Zassler, and that so-called genius, the Dragonblood Warrior Linley.”

All the higher-ups of the Radiant Church were very familiar with Linley’s Dragonformed appearance.

“Excellent. All of you are targets for the Radiant Church. Today, I’ll take you all.” Stehle’s lips quirked upwards, a cold smile appearing on his lips.

“Swish, swish.” Linley’s draconic tail swished about, slapping the ground.

Suddenly, an earth-colored light covered the entire ground of the courtyard. Everyone in the courtyard felt their head momentarily grow dizzy. Zassler

couldn't help but fall to one knee, but then immediately afterwards, another layer of earthen light covered Zassler, the Ancient Wight, the two golden-furred zombies, Bebe, and Haeru. They no longer were suffering from the effects of this gravitational power.

Earth-style magic – Supergravity Field.

"So it is as our reports say; not only are you a Dragonblood Warrior, you are a genius magus as well." Stehle laughed calmly. "Your gravitational field is around eight times that of normal. I didn't expect that in just a few short years, you would advance from the seventh rank to the eighth rank. Sadly, a genius such as you is going to die today."

Stehle walked one step at a time towards Linley.

"Charge." Zassler let out a low shout.

The two golden-furred zombies immediately let out deep growls, then charged towards Stehle. At the same time, Zassler and Linley's allies all fled, as if by common agreement.

A cold flash of sword light.

The two golden-furred zombies were immediately chopped in half, collapsing within the courtyard.

"You want to flee?"

Stehle, in the blink of an eye, appeared in the air in front of Linley's squad. He stood there in mid-air, wielding the longsword which he had just stained with the blood of the golden-furred zombies.

"It really is a Saint-level combatant." Zassler laughed bitterly

Actually, earlier, when they had seen the peak-stage ninth ranked Ancient Wight be heavily injured in one blow, Linley had already known that things were not good. He knew that this person was most likely a Saint-level. And

now, they knew that to be a fact. Saint-level combatants were able to fly at an astonishing speed. There was no way they would be able to flee.

Linley and Zassler exchanged glances. They knew exactly what sort of situation they had found themselves in.

“I thought today’s activities would have been very stress-free. Who would’ve thought we’d run into a Saint-level combatant?” Linley was extremely unhappy about this. His dark golden eyes stared fixedly at Stehle. “No choice but to go all out.”

Chapter 35 – The Profound Truths of the Earth

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 35, The Profound Truths of the Earth

The night was as cold as water.

The cold wind of the deep night blew drearily. The squad that had belonged to Stehle had been wiped out earlier. Now, only Stehle remained.

Linley's side had Linley, Bebe, Haeru, Zassler, and the five Barker brothers.

The opponent's side had only Stehle.

But without question, right now Linley's side was in the weaker position. Even fleeing would be very difficult.

"The Supergravity Field's effects are ground-based. The farther from the ground is, the less its influence is." Linley knew very well that once a Saint-level combatant were to fly several dozen meters above the ground, they probably wouldn't feel the gravitational field at all.

Right now, Stehle was hovering roughly ten or so meters above the ground.

"Even if he is impacted by the gravitational effect, at most it would be around two times normal gravity." As fast as lightning, Linley considered their options and how they could stay alive.

Zassler said in a low voice, "Linley, Saint-level combatants can fly, but much like flying magical beasts, although they can fly very fast at high speeds, their turning speeds and aerial agility is only perhaps one or two times faster than combatants of the ninth rank.

This reasoning was very simple.

Just like when humans ran at top speed. They would be able to run in a straight line quite easily, but if they were to suddenly turn left, then suddenly turn right, then suddenly run backwards and forward again, you would be lucky to reach a speed of a third of your regular maximum speed.

Linley understood this logic, but he hadn't thought of it just now. Now that he did, an idea flashed by Linley's mind.

"What, you want to resist?" Stehle was wielding that sword stained with green blood.

"Bebe, Haeru, don't leave the Supergravity Field's area." Linley's dark golden eyes stared at Stehle in the air. "Saint-level combatants are very powerful, but he is a warrior. He has no way to counteract the effects of the Supergravity Field. If he wants, he can stay in the air. Once he reaches the ground, his speed will be halved or cut to a third. By then, he won't be any faster than me, nor will he be faster than you."

Bebe and Haeru both let out a low growl.

But Zassler frowned. His speed wasn't that fast.

"Let us face him. We five brothers definitely won't allow ourselves to hinder you, benefactor." The Barker brothers called out. The five siblings' muscles began to ripple and bulge, making them seem like terrifying magical beasts.

Wielding the adamantine heavy sword in his hands, Linley stared at the mid-air Stehle. "Don't be rash."

Stehle was in no rush to act either, calmly staring down at them. As a peak-stage Saint-level combatant, how could he be worried about being unable to deal with these people?

"Speed?"

Stehle's sharp eyes stared coldly at Linley. "This tactic of yours might be

useful against those who just entered the Saint-level, but unfortunately…I reached the Saint-level centuries ago. Kid, the Saint-level isn't as simple as you seem to think it is. The Saint-level isn't just about using strength to brute force things; it requires a deeper understanding."

Linley stood in front of everyone, sword in hand, staring coldly at Stehle.

This tactic was the only option available to him. Faced with a Saint-level's speed, he had no place to run. His only option was to remain in the Supergravity Field. Only then did he have a chance at life.

"Whoosh!"

Stehle suddenly shot towards Linley like a released arrow, his black robe slightly fluttering with the wind. However, that longsword of his, covered in golden light, chopped towards Linley at a very ordinary speed.

But once he struck out with his sword, a cold aura seemed to pervade the entire courtyard.

Linley instantly felt as though he had entered a frozen realm. He had been totally surrounded by that freezing aura, while at the same time, the entire area seemed to have been locked by that aura. Although that sword was moving at an ordinary speed, it chopped towards Linley with an irresistible force.

The 'impose' level!

"Hrmph." Slowly yet inexorably, the adamantine heavy sword in Linley's hands began to move.

Stehle's eyes suddenly brightened.

"Slash!" His ice-cold longsword suddenly split the air, increasing in speed tenfold. In the blink of an eye, it arrived near Linley's body.

Linley's adamantine heavy sword was like a fish in water, agilely gliding

through the air to block the ice-cold longsword.

One was fast. The other, slow.

But the strange thing was, the two swords intersected.

“Ruuuumble.” There were no other sounds when the adamantine heavy sword and the ice-cold longsword struck each other. Only, the air itself suddenly shuddered. Linley’s dark golden eyes continued to stare coldly at the opponent.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Triple Layered Waves!

Stehle only sensed a strange vibration being transmitted to him, as though three deep, powerful attacks were viciously attacking his heart.

“Booom!”

A terrifying noise exploded forth from Stehle as his silver battle-qi wildly exploded forth in all directions from Stehle’s body. Every single ray of battle-qi easily shot through the surrounding buildings like needles.

“Careful!” Linley roared loudly, immediately allowing the Dragonblood battle-qi in his own body to explode forth as well, frantically trying to block that omnidirectional blast of silvery battle-qi, so as to protect the five Barker siblings behind him. But despite doing so, he wasn’t able to totally protect everyone, as several strands of silvery battle-qi still struck the five brothers on their bodies. “Slash!” Several dozen bloody lines were drawn on their bodies, but the five brothers had managed to survive.

“What astonishing defense.” Linley sighed in amazement.

Fortunately, Stehle had only accidentally exploded his battle-qi, resulting it in going in every which way. This was the only reason why the Barker siblings had not lost their lives, despite them being criss-crossed with bloody lines and wounds.

As for Zassler, in front of him was a lance-wielding knight who was wearing a suit of heavy black armor. This was the ‘Black Knight Captain’, one of the three primary peak-stage undead of the ninth rank under his command.

“Boom!”

The walls nearby all collapsed, and even the nearby manors were impacted by the vibrations. Some people were literally shaken to death by that omnidirectional blast of Saint-level battle-qi.

“Ah!”

“Help!”

The nearby folks all began to scream in panic. An explosion such as this woke up quite a few people in the prefectural city of Deco as well, and all the nearby citizens began to flee their houses.

Linley’s group only stared solemnly at the mid-air Stehle.

A small hint of blood could be seen at the corner of Stehle’s lips. Stehle wiped the blood off, and then stared at Linley in amazement. Finally, he sighed, “Linley, I didn’t expect that you have already surpassed the level of utilizing the force of the heavens and the earth. Admirable, truly admirable.”

Utilizing the force of the heavens and the earth was what was known as ‘impose’. This was the level which ordinary Saint-levels reached.

“He received this attack of mine without any preparation, and yet he wasn’t heavily wounded.” Linley’s heart had grown cold.

Stehle stared at Linley. He sighed, “Linley, I really feel that it is a pity. The current level of insight and understanding you have reached is roughly on par with most peak-stage Saint-level combatants. Generally speaking, the reason that most peak-stage ninth ranks are unable to break through to the

Saint-level is because their insights and level of understanding is insufficient. But for you, the opposite is true; you possess a very high level of understanding, but your battle-qi is far from being sufficient.

Linley himself understood this logic as well.

“For a genius such as you to die like this really is a pity.”

Stele’s eyes began to grow sharp and fierce again. In a cold voice, he said, “Linley, so as to show my respect for you, I will use my most powerful attack to deal with you; the Ice-Bound World.”

“Actually, did you really think this Supergravity Field could affect me?” Stehle sneered, and then his body began to radiate a terrifying silver light. Stehle seemed to have transformed into the sun itself as his silvery light easily encompassed an area of several hundred square meters.

“My Supergravity Field?” Linley found, to his astonishment, that the earth elemental essence he had used to create the Supergravity Field had been totally wiped away by that silvery light.

Within several hundred meters, the area was the absolute domain of that silvery light.

“A twenty one year old could actually reach such a level.” Stehle continually sighed as well. Many people wouldn’t be able to enter the Saint-level despite working at it for hundreds of years. But Linley?

He was only twenty one, and yet he was at such a high level of understanding.

“Bebe, Haeru, get ready to flee.” Linley transmitted mentally.

“Boss.” Bebe began to grow anxious.

“Don’t dawdle!” Linley mentally roared angrily.

Bebe and Haeru roared with fury, but they had no choice either. Right now, neither the five Barker brothers nor Zassler knew what to say.

Linley stood in front of all of them, staring at Stehle.

“My only choice is to use the higher levels of the Profound Truths of the Earth, which I haven’t truly mastered yet.” Linley’s dark golden eyes were fixed on his opponent’s. His adamantine heavy sword was in his hands.

The ‘Triple Layered Waves’ of the Profound Truths of the Earth was only the basics.

This most basic ‘Triple Layered Waves’, Linley was able to unleash with a 100% success right now. As for the higher level attacks, Linley was much less confident. But right now, he had no choice but to give it a shot.

“Aside from the Profound Truths of the Earth, I also have that other, dangerous technique.” Linley’s eyes slowly began to turn red.

“Groooooowl!”

Linley hunched over. Suddenly, his dragon-scale covered legs kicked off the ground, blasting his body upwards like an enormous boulder from a catapult, smashing viciously towards the mid-air Stehle.

“Go back down.” Stehle coldly swung his sword down at Linley.

“Ah!!!!” Linley suddenly howled. The adamantine heavy sword in his right hand chopped viciously at Stehle with boundless strength and fury, while at the same time, his left hand flashed with a beautiful violet light.

The divine artifact – Bloodviolet Godsword.

The same moment he had drawn Bloodviolet, Linley had sent his spiritual energy into it, activating its terrifying, baleful presence. The entirety of Bloodviolet was now totally covered by that bloody red light.

“Bam!”

With Linley at the center, a surge of red, baleful light enveloped Linley. Even people hundreds of meters away began to scream in terror, and even the five Barker siblings were so terrified that they started quivering.

“Ah!!!”

Even Zassler’s heart was also filled with fear. From a distance, people who saw Linley in the air, surrounded by that baleful red aura, all felt that he definitely must be a fiendish god whom they dared not rebel against.

As for Stehle, who was closest to Linley?

Stehle only felt a terrifying baleful aura completely envelope him. This baleful aura was even more terrifying than the aura which had been given off by Dylin, the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. That dense baleful aura entered his body, striking directly at his mind and soul.

“Kill!”

“Kill!”

Strange voices chanted nonstop in his mind.

Stehle felt as though he had returned to his youth, when he was a young beggar. He felt the same unbounded terror he had then, when each day he would be whipped by the leader of those men.

But the hearts of Saint-level combatants were extremely resolute.

“Ah.” Stehle suppressed the terror he felt, allowing the silver battle-qi in his body to explode. Under this sort of situation, Stehle was only able to utilize half of his power.

“Die!”

Linley's eyes were totally red, and he chopped down at Stehle with his adamantine heavy sword.

"Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!"

The adamantine heavy sword collided three times with Stehle's sword. Each time, Linley's right arm went numb from the shock, to the point where his hand was beginning to split open.

"Swish!"

"Swish!"

In the same time that the adamantine heavy sword had attacked three times, Bloodviolet had slashed over ten times as well. Each of the strange attacks chopped at the same location. Although Stehle's battle-qi was very dense, the eighth sword blow had managed to pierce it. The ninth and tenth attacks actually pierced into Stehle's muscles, but Stehle's body was filled with that dense battle-qi as well.

Linley was unable to remain standing in mid-air. After delivering these ten blows, he began to sink downwards towards the ground.

"Hrmph."

Stehle's eyes had already turned cold. To be forced by a mere peak-stage combatant of the ninth rank to such a state was an absolute humiliation. Stehle let out a growl. "The Ice-Bound World!"

While falling, Linley saw that in the sky, a mirage of a shadow of a sword had split space-time itself. In the blink of an eye, it reached his body. At this moment…this illusionary shadow of a sword seemed to have wiped away the entire world. In Linley's world, the only thing which existed was this illusionary sword.

Linley didn't have any time to block.

Zassler, the five Barker brothers, and those people watching from afar felt that the surrounding temperature had dropped to an extremely, terrifyingly low degree. Frost began to gather on their eyebrows.

At the same time, the longsword in Stehle's hands pierced towards Linley's heart.

But Linley didn't react at all, allowing the longsword to pierce towards him at will…

"Master!"

"Boss!"

Haeru and Bebe, these two magical beasts, could only watch helplessly as Linley was about to be killed.

Chapter 36 – True Experts

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 36, True Experts

This sword attack by Stehle, in terms of level, had surpassed that of the ‘impose’ level. If the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ of the adamantine heavy sword was one sort of special attack, then this attack by Stehle could be summarized using a single word: Fast!

“I’m going to die?” Linley was filled with resentment and an unwillingness to die. He wanted to live. He hadn’t yet attained his goals.

But unfortunately, in this world, many people died at times and places not of their choosing. After all, the world didn’t revolve around any person. Many events would not cater to their desires.

“Boss.”

Bebe’s tears had already begun to flow.

But suddenly, Bebe was stunned.

Not just Bebe. Haeru, Zassler, the Black Knight Captain, the five Barker brothers, and even the far away group of onlookers were all stunned.

“What’s going on?” Everyone was flabbergasted.

Linley was standing on the ground right now, while Stehle was stabbing down towards Linley from the sky. His sword was very, very close to Linley’s forehead.

But the two of them didn’t move; they were frozen in position.

Even the drop of blood dripping down from Linley’s injured right hand had frozen in mid-air.

At this moment, it was as though the entirety of spacetime around Linley and Stehle had suddenly frozen. Objects, bodies…everything was paralyzed.

Not just them. Bebe, Haeru, Zassler, the five Barker siblings. All of them were frozen.

Silence!

A gloomy feeling. A terrible sense of loneliness and quiet.

A look of astonishment was in Stehle's eyes.

"Master Linley. Long time no see."

A gentle, playful voice rang out. A seemingly thirty-something year old man with long black hair, dressed in a loose robe, walked over. He looked the same as he always did; as though he had just woken up.

"Stehle, right? All of you young fellows have reached the peak of the Saint-level. If I still didn't advance, I really would feel too ashamed to meet anyone." The lazy man dressed in the loose robe waved his hand. As though struck by a mountain, Stehle was sent flying backwards as though he were a meteor.

"Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!" ……

Stehle's body slammed through over ten stone walls before finally hitting the ground.

"Linley, I haven't seen you in around three years, yes?" The indolent man beamed at Linley. At this moment, Linley suddenly felt as though he could move again. Bebe, Haeru, Zassler, and the five Barker brothers all regained their movement ability as well.

That terrifying suppressive aura had vanished.

“Lord Cesar.” Linley immediately paid his grateful respects. Linley felt more gratitude towards Cesar than he ever had before. Just now, he had truly felt it was totally hopeless. The man had just saved his life. How could he not be grateful?

The person who had come was indeed Cesar. The King of Killers.

Zassler and the others all stared in astonishment, their mouths hanging open. What they had seen just then was simply too bizarre. And, faced with this man, Stehle was totally unable to resist at all.

The sound of stones rumbling could be heard. Stehle climbed to his feet. Although his face was covered in dust and dirt, he still walked over, staring with disbelief at Cesar.

“You…you…this….this…” Stehle was in total shock.

“This what? Haha, tell me. This what?” Cesar grinned evilly at Stehle.

Stehle had totally lost the demeanor and poise of an expert, only staring in Cesar in utter astonishment. He stammered, “God…God….Godrealm?!”

“Godrealm?”

Linley and Zassler were both astonished as well.

No wonder Stehle had been so astonished. Just now, when everything had suddenly been frozen in place, was the legendary power of a “Godrealm”. Only a Deity-level could utilize this power.

Right now, the Yulan continent had four supreme experts – War God O’Brien, the High Priest, and the Kings of the Forest of Darkness and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

But now…this King of Killers, Cesar, had his own Godrealm?

“Haha…” Cesar laughed.

“Lord Cesar.” Linley and the others stared at Cesar in astonishment.

Cesar beamed as he stroked his mustache. “Don’t be surprised. Stehle, you and the others have been too arrogant. Hell, your old man, Cesar, reached the peak of the Saint-level over five thousand years ago, and my speed of training was far faster than yours. I’m a genius, you know.”

Cesar spat out a bit of saliva, harrumphing as he continued. “But your old man was stuck at the peak of the Saint-level for over five thousand years. If I still couldn’t find a way to break through, I really would feel ashamed. Thus, two years ago, I finally broke through that tiny little barrier.”

Stehle, Linley, Zassler, and the others all remained silent.

Good heavens.

Just like that, another Deity-level combatant had been born.

Linley found it understandable, actually. According to what Grandpa Doehring had said, Cesar was a person from Doehring Cowart’s era, and even back then, he was a Saint-level expert. To break through after five thousand years and finally reach the Deity-level wasn’t exactly something which happened out of nowhere.

“Lord Cesar.”

Stehle bowed respectfully.

Any Deity-level combatant was worthy of respect. Upon reaching the Deity-level, one could ignore the existence of even empires. They were the true, highest powers of the land. It wouldn’t be too hard for a Deity-level combatant to wipe out the entire Holy Union, at most risking some serious wounds.

“What is it?” Cesar looked at Stehle.

Stehle said respectfully, “Lord Cesar, all these years, the relationship between the Radiant Church and you, Lord Cesar, has been quite excellent. I wonder if Lord Cesar would be willing to join us in the Radiant Church. As long as you are willing, Lord Cesar, I believe His Holiness, the Holy Emperor, would be willing to accede to any request.”

This was a Deity-level combatant.

Most likely Heidens would even be willing to resign the Holy Emperorship to him. After all, with a Deity-level combatant overseeing the Church, the status of the Radiant Church in the Yulan continent would be totally different.

“Not interested.” Cesar snorted. “Hell, over these years, your old man hasn’t even been willing to manage the affairs of my own ‘Sabre’ organization. And you want me to work on your behalf?”

Stehle let out two awkward laughs.

Right now, most likely Cesar could stand in front of the Holy Emperor, wag his finger in the man’s nose, then curse at him, and the Holy Emperor wouldn’t dare make a sound. This was the prestige of a Deity-level combatant.

“Lord Cesar, if you are unwilling, we won’t force it. But as for this Linley…he’s killed many people of our Radiant Church. Lord Cesar, would you be willing…”

“Bullshit.”

Cesar kicked Stehle in the stomach, but clearly, Cesar didn’t use any force with the kick. “Linley is a master sculptor on the same level as master Proulx and the others. I don’t have many hobbies. One is beautiful women, the other is sculptures. You want to kill Master Linley in front of me? In your dreams.”

Stehle no longer dared to say anything.

Stehle was extremely frustrated, because this mission of his had been to escort these five siblings back to the Radiant Church. Those five siblings all had bodies that were of the eighth rank in muscle power alone. Once the Angels descended into them, they would transform into five peak-stage Saint-level combatants.

“Lord Cesar, that’s fine. The Church will of course give you face, Lord Cesar.” Stehle squeezed out a smile. “However, those five over there are people which our Church absolutely must have. No matter what the cost, we must take them back with us. I hope, Lord Cesar, you will agree.”

“Oh, those five? Take them. I don’t know them anyhow.” Cesar said casually.

The Radiant Church had indeed treated him quite well over the years. Thus, Cesar would give the Radiant Church face as well.

The five Barker brothers were astonished.

“Lord Cesar!” Linley said frantically.

“Linley, do those five people have some sort of very important relationship with you?” Cesar twisted his lips. “Doesn’t seem to be the case. Don’t bother with them, then. Just enjoy your own life. Why bother about theirs?”

This was Cesar’s temperament. He travelled alone, and acted as he pleased.

“Thank you, Lord Cesar.” Stehle was overjoyed.

Cesar beamed at him, then turned to look at the five Barker brothers. “Let me take a look and see who you are, that the Radiant Church would value you so highly.” Cesar swept the five Barker brothers with his gaze.

The five Barker brothers were indeed very eye-catching. Those 2.2 meter tall bodies and terrifyingly muscular forms. All of them looked like

enormous bears.

“The five of you had best not resist.” Stehle walked over. Zassler and Linley wanted to stop him, but under Stehle’s cold gaze, Zassler and Linley could only laugh bitterly inside.

How could they stop a peak-stage Saint-level combatant?

Linley had just used both the baleful aura of the Bloodviolet sword as well as the most powerful attacks of the adamantine heavy sword. Despite that, he had only given the opponent the most superficial of injuries.

“Linley, no matter what, we five brothers would like to thank you.” Barker, the oldest of the five brothers, said loudly.

“These five fellows are pretty large, aren’t they.” Cesar’s playful voice rang out.

Stehle immediately responded, “Yes, they are quite muscular.”

Cesar looked at the five men. His expression, originally playful, suddenly slowly sank into a brooding look. He even began to slowly walk towards the Barker brothers, one step at a time.

“Why are you coming over?” The third of the five brothers, Hazer [Hei’sha], growled.

“Third bro, don’t be rude!” Barker growled back.

“Big bro.” The muscular man said unhappily.

Cesar quietly stared at the five siblings. By his side, Stehle was beginning to grow surprised. In a low voice, he asked, “Lord Cesar, what are you doing?”

“Stehle, you can leave now.” Cesar said calmly.

“Then Lord Cesar, I bid you farewell.” Stehle said respectfully. Then he immediately shouted towards the Barker siblings. “The five of you, walk in front.”

“I said you can leave now. The five of them will remain behind.” Cesar said in a cold voice.

Stehle was startled.

Behind them, Linley and Zassler were both stunned as well. Even the five Barker brothers were shocked by these words.

“Lord Cesar, you…?” Stehle stared at Cesar in astonishment. Just moments ago, Cesar had agreed to let him take the five of them away. But in the blink of an eye, things had changed.

Cesar’s expression was colder and grimmer than it had ever been. He stared coldly at Stehle. “Stehle. Listen clearly. Go back and tell Heidens this. If in the future, the Church’s men make any attempts on these five brothers, then don’t blame me, Cesar, for not giving you face when I slaughter my way to your Sacred Isle.”

Hearing these words, Stehle was totally shocked.

“If you leave now, I’ll pretend nothing happened today. Otherwise…” Cesar’s eyes glittered with a cold light, and a terrifying murderous aura began to emanate from him.

Cesar was the King of Killers to begin with. He specialized in assassination.

And now, Cesar was a Deity-level combatant.

Once Cesar made the decision to go against the Radiant Church, just by engaging in assassinations, he could probably kill all the Saint-level combatants of the Radiant Church without suffering a single injury.

No matter what, the Church could not afford to offend a Deity-level

combatant, much less a Deity-level combatant who specialized in assassinations.

“Alright.” Stehle’s heart was filled with bitterness.

It was also filled with rage. Rage at how overbearing and domineering Cesar was being. But Stehle knew that the person in front of him was a Deity-level combatant. He was qualified to be overbearing and domineering. He didn’t dare to show his anger or to retaliate.

“Then Lord Cesar, I bid you farewell.” Stehle bowed slightly, and then transformed into a blur, disappearing from the scene.

Linley, Zassler, and the five Barker brothers stared at Cesar in puzzlement.

“In the past, Cesar was always so lazy and lackadaisical. So why did he grow so solemn upon seeing the five Barker brothers?” Linley was extremely puzzled as well.

Cesar glanced at Linley and his group. “Come with me and leave this place. There are quite a few onlookers here. And…I expect Saint-level combatants have already detected the powerful ripples generated by this battle.”

There actually were no Saint-level combatants in the prefectural city of Deco.

The closest Saint-level combatant was over a thousand kilometers away. Even Saint-level combatants would take quite a while to travel that sort of distance when flying.

Linley and the others immediately followed Cesar away from the battlefield. That very night, they left the prefectural city of Deco and entered the mountain wilderness. Only then did Cesar have everyone come to a rest stop.

“We’ll spend the night here for now.” Cesar sighed.

Right now, Cesar didn’t seem as carefree and unrestrained as he usually was. On the contrary, he seemed rather heartsick. Linley had the feeling that Cesar must have some sort of connection to those five siblings.

Chapter 37 – The Undying Warriors

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 37, The Undying Warriors

“Crackle.”

The bonfire was blazing. Cesar, Linley, Zassler, and the five Barker brothers sat around the campfire. Bebe was resting on Linley’s thigh, while Haeru was lying behind Linley.

Camping overnight in the wilderness was fairly dangerous. But who or what could possibly threaten Linley’s group? Especially with that Deity-level expert amongst them.

“Why did you save us?” The eldest of the five brothers said in a loud voice.

Linley and Zassler all turned to look at Cesar. This was a question they were curious about as well.

Cesar glanced at the five of them. He didn’t respond, instead asking them a question of his own. “Your father? Your mother?”

“All our relatives are dead. As for our parents? We were orphans since we were young.” Barker replied. They were now in their thirties. To them, who had spent their entire lives in the war-torn lands of the Eighteen Northern Duchies, growing up without parents wasn’t anything particular special.

After all, in those war-torn lands of the Eighteen Northern Duchies, orphans were a common sight.

“Orphans…”

Cesar let out a long sigh. “I didn’t expect that after all these years, the ‘Armand clan’ [A’man’da] whose fame shook the Yulan continent would

fall to such a state."

The five Barker brothers, Linley, and Zassler all started.

"Lord Cesar, are you saying that the Barker brothers are…" Linley had a guess as to what Cesar was saying.

Cesar nodded. "Right. These five siblings belong to the Armand clan, the clan of the Undying Warriors, one of the Four Supreme Warrior clans of the Yulan continent."

"Undying Warriors?" Barker and his siblings all stared at each other in shock.

"How is that possible?"

The five brothers rose to their feet, stunned. They were orphans since youth. How could they dare imagine that they belonged to one of the Supreme Warrior clans?

Linley had already guessed the truth as soon as he heard Cesar say the words, 'Armand clan'. After all, Linley's own clan records included information on each of the Four Supreme Warrior clans; the Dragonblood Warriors' Baruch clan, the Violetflame Warriors' Hyde clan, the Tigerstriped Warriors' Prey [Bo'lei] clan, and the Undying Warriors' Armand clan."

Five thousand years ago, these four clans indeed were extremely famous.

Aside from the War God and the High Priest, without question, the Four Supreme Warriors stood at the absolute pinnacle of human power. Although there were other so-called peak-stage Saint-level combatants, those peak-stage Saint-level combatants couldn't match the Supreme Warriors.

Power and insight; these were two mutually supporting, mutually complementing things.

For example, right now, Linley's level of understanding was very high; he had surpassed the 'impose' level, and was nearing the peak-stage Saint-level in terms of understanding. But his actual power was extremely weak. Naturally, his attack force was far weaker than that of a Saint-level combatant.

Historically, the third Dragonblood Warrior had used a heavy warhammer.

When he had reached the Saint-level, he was only at the level of 'wielding something heavy as though it were light'. But despite that, he still possessed astonishing attack force.

This was because his body possessed a terrifyingly high degree of power and battle-qi.

A person's strength and battle-qi were his most basic foundations. The higher one's level of understanding, the better one would be able to utilize those basics. For example, if your basics were at 100, but you were at a low level of understanding, your actual attack power might just be 50. But if you had a high level of understanding, you might be able to use all 100 of your attack power, or perhaps even more, reaching 200 attack power.

The Supreme Warriors, by their very nature, possessed several times more physical strength and battle-qi than other Saint-level combatants. Even if they were a bit inferior in terms of insight and understanding, their attacks would still be very terrifying. This was the natural gift of the Supreme Warriors!

There was nothing that could be done for it. They were able to gain an unfair advantage over others via their natural gifts.

"Your bodies must be extremely tough." Cesar sighed.

The five Barker brothers glanced at each other, then nodded. The second of the five brothers, Anke [An'ke], nodded and said, "It's impossible for us to train in battle-qi, but just through our muscle power, we are on the level of warriors of the eighth rank."

“Aside from the Four Supreme Warriors, how could anyone else possibly break past the natural limitations of the body and reach the eighth rank just based on their body and muscles?” Cesar shook his head and said.

Linley was now certain as well.

Only the Four Supreme Warriors were restricted to using their own special battle-qi cultivation methods and be unable to train normal battle-qi.

“Amongst the Four Supreme Warriors, the Undying Warriors have the toughest bodies. Their defense is very powerful, and their attacks are legendary as well. The only weakness is that you are a bit slow.” Cesar sighed. “Barker, you and your brothers are so young, but you were able to reach the eighth rank just based on your muscles and bodies. Aside from the most physically powerful of the Four Supreme Warriors, the Undying Warriors, who could possibly achieve this?”

Linley nodded as well.

Right.

He himself was a Dragonblood Warrior, but if he were to try to reach the eighth rank based purely on physical training, who knows how long it would take? Even his younger brother Wharton, who trained in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual, had only reached the seventh rank this year at age seventeen.

“Aside from the elders of your clan, I’m afraid there is no one who knows more about you Undying Warriors than myself. You are definitely Undying Warriors. There is no question about this at all.” Cesar said with absolute certainty. “And what’s more, the five of you possess an extremely high degree of natural talent. If you were to train using the ‘Secret Undying Manual’, then most likely you would have already entered the ninth rank by now.”

“The Secret Undying Manual?” Barker and his brothers were confused.

Linley explained, “Barker, the truth is, all of the Four Supreme Warrior clans find other types of battle-qi to be unusable. Only by training in accordance with certain special ways can we develop battle-qi. As for your Undying Warrior clan, you can only train using the ‘Secret Undying Manual’.”

“No wonder we couldn’t train battle-qi no matter what we tried.” The fifth brother, Gates [Gai’ci], said with a sigh.

“If the five of you had been in possession of the ‘Secret Undying Manual’, there’s no way you would have been caught originally.” Cesar sighed. “The Four Supreme Warriors all possess extremely powerful attacks. Amongst them, the Undying Warriors possess the highest defense, the Tigerstripe Warriors are the fastest, the Violetflame Warriors possess the strange Nirvana Rebirth ability, while the Dragonblood Warriors are the most balanced, possessing powerful attack, defense, and speed.”

Cesar was a man of Doehring Cowart’s era.

This was also the era when the Supreme Warriors appeared in the world.

“Lord Cesar, why is it that you treat us so…specially.” Barker said with curiosity.

Hearing these words, Cesar couldn’t help but think back to the past. His expressions grew complex. After a long time, he sighed. “Your ancestor, Armand, was the dearest friend and bro that I, Cesar, have ever had.”

Armand, the first clan leader of the Undying Warrior clan, was also the first Undying Warrior.

“Five thousand years ago, the Yulan continent was in the midst of what was most likely the most chaotic, most dangerous era I have ever seen. The Four Supreme Warriors appeared out of nowhere, while the War God O’Brien became famous after his titanic clash with the High Priest. The Yulan Empire fragmented, as did the Pouant Empire. The entire continent sank

into a mass of fire and floods."

Linley and the others all listened carefully, even though they knew this already.

"And this was just what was going on, on the surface."

Cesar grinned at Linley. "Actually, that era was much more complicated than you can imagine. The Yulan continent had more than just our native experts. Even powerful combatants from other planes had descended to the Yulan continent."

"Powerful combatants from other planes?"

Linley, Zassler, and the Barker brothers were all stunned.

"Right." Cesar chuckled. "To you, these are all distant, far away events, but that era really was chaotic. Many Saint-level combatants lost their lives. In that era, Saint-level combatants were nothing special, because there were many powerful experts who had descended…including many Deity-level combatants."

"Many Deity-level combatants?!" Linley felt his head grow dizzy.

"Right."

Cesar nodded. "Actually, five thousand years ago, organizations in some higher planes paid a very high price so as to allow their people to enter the Yulan continent. There was a reason they did this. Linley, you simply don't know how fierce, how ruthless those battles back then were. At that time, Armand and I joined forces as we roamed the Yulan continent. Several times, I nearly died, but Armand rescued me. But of course…I helped out Armand several times as well."

Cesar fell silent at this point, as though he were reminiscing about past events between himself and Armand.

Linley was growing puzzled.

The Pouant Empire and the Yulan Empire had fragmented five thousand years ago. The War God had entered the Deity-realm and became famous five thousand years ago. The Four Supreme Warriors had also suddenly appeared out of nowhere five thousand years ago…

And now, according to Cesar, five thousand years ago, even experts from other planes had descended to the Yulan continent.

“Five thousand years ago, something incredibly major must have happened.” Linley thought to himself.

“Enough of that. By the time your power reaches a certain level, even if you don’t want to know, there’ll be someone who will tell you.” Cesar chuckled.

Linley suddenly had the sense that the Yulan continent wasn’t as simple a place as he had thought it to be.

“Actually, there’s no need to force many things in life. Look at me. I eat when I should and play with women when I want to. I’m as carefree as I want to be. How wonderful is that? But look at that O’Brien, and that High Priest. Don’t be mistaken by their fame and glory. In reality, they are under enormous pressure.” Cesar quirked his lips.

Linley, Zassler, the five Barker siblings, Bebe, and Haeru all silently listened.

Listening to Cesar, this Deity-level expert, casually discuss the affairs of the most puissant experts on the Yulan continent, Linley had a very strange feeling.

“Only after reaching the Deity-level will one have the power to move mountains at will.” Linley silently thought to himself.

Cesar glanced at Linley. “Linley, let me give you a word of advice.”

“Lord Cesar, please guide me.” Linley said very modestly, as though he were a student again.

Cesar nodded. “I know there is a very deep enmity between yourself and the Radiant Church. But right now, you are far too weak. Even if you are able to wreck some of the plans of the Radiant Church and give them some small problems, you aren’t able to damage their foundations at all. I recommend that you quietly train for a time first. I don’t ask that you train to an excessively high level. But at least, after transforming, you need to be at the Saint-level. That will be enough.”

Cesar had already realized that Linley possessed a very high level of understanding.

As long as Linley’s level of power were to enter the Saint-level, then, aided by his deep understanding of reality, when faced with peak-stage Saint-level combatants, even if he wasn’t able to win, he would still have the hope of escaping.

“Understood.” Linley nodded.

“Barker.” Cesar looked at the five Barker brothers.

“Lord Cesar.” The five of them were extremely respectful. They now believed that they indeed were the descendants of the Undying Warrior clan. Since the man in front of them was a life-and-death friend of their ancestor, naturally they were very respectful.

Cesar nodded. “All of the Four Supreme Warrior clans have decayed. Armand’s clan has now decayed to the point where even your ancestral training methods have been lost. Fortunately…in the past, during the course of the dozens of years I had spent travelling with Armand, I procured a copy of the ‘Secret Undying Manual’. It should still be within the general headquarters of my Sabre organization.”

Hearing these words, the five siblings’ eyes shone.

They had just watched Linley transform. All of the Four Supreme Warriors had their own transformations. Even pre-transformation, the five of them had the power of warriors of the eighth rank. Once they acquired the secret manual, they would be able to transform…and by then, their power would increase enormously.

“However, there’s a bit of distance from here to the general headquarters. Tomorrow morning, I plan to personally make a trip.” Cesar said.

If those high ranking members of Sabre who had been personally trained by him in the past were to hear these words coming from Cesar, they probably would die from shock.

The ‘Old Master’, Cesar, was legendarily lazy.

There was over ten thousand miles distance from here to the general headquarters. This journey would be an extremely tiring one. For someone of Cesar’s lazy nature to make such a long round trip was quite the feat.

“Thank you, Lord Cesar.” Barker and his brothers said gratefully.

“No need. I hope that in the future, the five of you will restore the Undying Warrior clan’s reputation and fame.” Right now, Cesar was feeling quite emotional. Five thousand years ago, when he had roamed the world with Armand, at risk of dying every single day, was the most unforgettable experience in his very long life.

A night passed. The dawn came.

Nothing was left of the campfire but ashes. Linley and his squad all got up to send Cesar off.

“Lord Cesar, we will immediately return to a small town outside the prefectural city of Basil and settle down. When the time comes, you can just come find us there.” Linley said.

Linley knew that Saint-level combatants could use their spiritual energy to

search for people. As for Deity-level combatants, as long as you gave them a general location, it was very easy for them to find someone.

“Got it. Haha. Train hard, kiddos. I’ll head off now.” Cesar had returned to his usual lackadaisical, noisy mood. It was as though after that night had passed, he was back to his old self.

Linley, the Barker siblings, Zassler, and the rest of the group all watched as Cesar’s figure flew through the sky at high speed, disappearing past the horizon.

Chapter 38 – The Church's Strategy

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 38, The Church's Strategy

After Cesar left, Linley's group immediately headed off that morning in the direction of the provincial capital of Basil. This time, they weren't in too much of a hurry. But for the five Barker brothers, who were warriors of the eighth rank, the speed at which they travelled was still quite fast.

By nightfall the next day, Linley's group arrived at a town near the provincial capital of Basil.

"This town is called Cloudpeaks Village." Zassler laughed as he introduced the town. "In the past, I spent over ten years in this small town. The people here are fairly honest and simple, and they rarely interact with the outside world. Generally speaking, very few people come here. It is quite peaceful."

Linley nodded.

What they needed was a peaceful place. This time, when he fought against Stehle, he had very nearly lost his life. Linley made up his mind that he would have to train until he was at least a warrior of the ninth rank in human form. That way, after being Dragonformed, his power would be at the Saint-level.

"If I can reach the Saint-level, then a few years later after that, when I combine my insights and understanding of the principles of using the sword with my superior speed, even if I encounter Stehle again, I'll still be able to flee, even if I can't win."

Linley had a very good grasp of the strengths of this mutated Dragonform he had.

After devouring the blood as well as the draconic core of that Armored

Razorback Wyrm, Linley's mutated Dragonform had inherited the strengths of the Armored Razorback Wyrm; its speed and its defense.

As the five Barker brothers stared at the peaceful town, their eyes were firm and resolute as well.

"There will definitely come the day when I will get revenge for my wife and my son." Barker and his brothers also knew the state of affairs between Linley, Zassler, and the Radiant Church.

Without question, this group was now under the leadership of Linley.

This squad was completely composed of the enemies of the Radiant Church.

On the west side of Cloudpeaks Village, Linley and his people engaged in a quick transaction with some local nobles, spending ten thousand gold coins to invite many laborers to come and erect a new residence.

Ten thousand gold coins, in a countryside town such as this, was enough to build a very lavish residence.

The very next day, Linley brought Rebecca and Leena to this place. From this day forward, Linley's team all quietly took up residence here, focusing on their training.

"Rumble."

The ocean waves crashed against the shore, throwing up countless sprays of foam. Above the jade-blue ocean waters, a human figure could be seen flying over at high speed. In a short period of time, the human figure arrived at the shore. It was Stehle.

"Things have gotten complicated now." Stehle was extremely frustrated.

The Church had placed a very high degree of importance on obtaining those five bodies. Most likely, it would even be willing to give up one of its Saint-

level combatants or offend the O'Brien Empire to do so. In order to make sure nothing would go amiss, Heidens had even asked him, Stehle, to handle it.

But the result was…

Stehle stared at that distant, mighty Radiant Cathedral.

"Woosh." Stehle once more took to the air. The knights surrounding the Radiant Temple, upon seeing someone flying towards it, couldn't help but tense. Only after seeing that it was Stehle did they calm down.

Within the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

"Oh, Stehle's back." Heidens had already seen through his window the sight of Stehle flying back through the air. "What's going on? Why did Stehle come back alone?"

Heidens had a very bad premonition.

"Creak." Without any forewarning, the door to his room swung upon. Stehle, as cold as thousand-year glacial ice, walked in.

"Stehle, what happened? Where are they? Where are those five bodies of the eighth rank?" Heidens was frowning and he asked his questions hurriedly.

Stehle shook his head. "Your Holiness, acquiring those five bodies is no longer an option for us."

"What happened?" Heidens' face sank.

Those five bodies represented five peak-stage Saint-level combatants. Their importance to the Radiant Church couldn't be understated.

Stehle said in a low, somber voice, "Your Holiness, originally, I was escorting those five brothers along the way. But when we entered the

prefectural city of Deco, we ran into two people."

"Which two people?" Heidens didn't believe there was someone capable of stopping Stehle.

"Linley, Zassler." Stehle's voice was extremely cold.

"Linley? Zassler?" Heidens was startled.

This Linley had disappeared for three years. He now appeared out of nowhere?

Heidens couldn't help but think back to three years ago. Heidens truly did not wish to kill an ultimate genius such as Linley. But he had no other choice. However, three years ago, after Linley disappeared from Hess City, no one ever found any trace of him again.

But now, Linley was in cahoots with Zassler?

"Are you telling me that it was Linley who had rescued Zassler?" Heidens' eyes lit up.

Stehle nodded. "Yes. This Linley is already extremely, extremely powerful. Beneath the Saint-level, there's definitely no one who can match him. Only Saint-level fighters or other extremely powerful fighters can defeat him."

"Six combatants of the ninth rank. He can kill that many?" Heidens found it rather hard to believe.

Stehle nodded somberly. "Your Holiness, I must inform you that this Linley has two extremely powerful magical beasts. Both of them should be peak-stage magical beasts of the ninth rank. And in addition…in terms of insight and understanding regarding fundamental principles, Linley is already nearing the peak-stage Saint level."

"Nearing the peak-stage Saint-level?" Heidens was very shocked.

After all, the higher one's level of understanding was already at, the harder it would be to progress to the next level of understanding. There were people who would spend hundreds of years training yet still fail to improve whatsoever.

"Yes. Linley has already surpassed the level of using the force of the heavens. His current form of attack is extremely strange and unique. What's more, I have the feeling that right now, he has only mastered a small part of that level. Despite that, he was able to cause me a light wound." Stehle couldn't help but reflect on how bizarre Linley's attack using the 'Profound Truths of the Earth' was.

"I've never encountered an attack such as that. That sort of attack wasn't based on battle-qi, nor was it based purely on strength. It was…" Stehle paused, not quite able to find the right words to express it.

Hearing Stehle say such things, Heidens was very surprised.

An attack which could cause a light wound to a peak-stage Saint-level combatant such as Stehle was already, in and of itself, quite astonishing.

"What was so special about his attack? How would one defend against it?" Heidens immediately asked.

Stehle nodded. "His attack could pass through the exterior muscles and transmit its force directly into the internal organs. In other words, exterior layers of defense, no matter how powerful, are virtually useless."

"Oh?" Heidens frowned.

"This technique is a weapon aimed at attacking the internal organs of a person. In order to defend against this technique, the best method is to use battle-qi to internally protect all of the body's internal organs, covering them all with a layer of battle-qi."

Actually, these vibrations which Linley's attack created, when passing through material barriers, would still lose a bit of power.

But because this was a sort of vibrating wave, no matter how high your external defense was, it would still transmit its power through your defense. However, if the opponent's organs had a highly dense, concentrated layer of protective battle-qi over it, the vibrational waves would be slowly weakened by the battle-qi. By the time it reached the internal organs, its threat level would be rather low.

"There's no way to completely defend against this sort of attack. The only option is to use a high amount of battle-qi to ameliorate its effects." Stehle sighed in praise. "And, again, I have the sense that Linley has just recently begun to understand this technique. In the future, his attack will most likely be even more powerful. This can probably be classified as the strangest type of attack I have ever seen."

Stehle had a very high opinion of this technique.

This made Heidens all the more worried.

"This Linley must be killed." Heidens was now truly starting to grow worried. If Linley was to be permitted to continue to develop like this, he would pose a true threat to the Radiant Church.

"Continue. I'm sure the two of them weren't enough to stop you." Heidens said in a somber voice.

Stehle nodded. "Indeed. Both Linley and Zassler are only of the ninth rank. But just as I was about to kill Linley, a person appeared out of nowhere. Cesar. The King of Killers, Cesar!"

"Cesar?" Heidens said doubtfully. "He shouldn't be willing to dare fight face to face against the Radiant Church directly."

"Wrong. He dares." Stehle sighed. "Cesar has reached the Deity-level."

"Reached the Deity-level!"

These words were like a lightning bolt slamming into Heidens' mind, making him momentarily feel dizzy. Yet another Deity-level combatant had appeared in the Yulan continent.

"Deity-level?" Heidens stared at Stehle.

"Yes. Deity-level." Stehle nodded again.

Heidens was silent for a long moment.

"What did Cesar say?" Heidens said calmly.

"Cesar said, in the future, our Radiant Church definitely must not have any designs on those five brothers. Otherwise, he will shed all pretense of cordiality with us and slaughter his way to the Sacred Isle." Stehle's words were like a hammer to Heidens' heart.

These five vessels of the eighth rank symbolized five peak-stage Saint-level Angels.

This was too heartbreaking. Heidens didn't want to accept it.

He didn't want to accept it!!!

"Why would Cesar say such a thing?" Heidens' eyes narrowed. "Based on my understanding of Cesar, he's a man who has no interest in power or authority. He enjoys living a carefree life. He wouldn't spend a single iota of effort on a stranger."

This was indeed the case. Cesar truly didn't care about the lives or deaths of others.

"For a lazy person such as Cesar to be willing to go this far…"

Heidens' eyebrows suddenly shot up, and his eyes lit up.

"I understand now." Heidens sighed.

“What’s the reason, Your Holiness?” Stehle asked.

Heidens sighed yet again. “In the records that the Church has regarding Cesar, there was information regarding, in the chaotic era of five thousand years ago, Cesar’s experiences alongside his good friend Armand. The people whom Cesar truly values have always been the descendants of Armand.”

“The Undying Warriors?” Stehle began to understand as well.

“Right. I’ve always been very surprised how five bodies of the eighth rank could suddenly appear here in the Yulan continent. But now, it makes sense. Undying Warriors. The most physically powerful of the Four Supreme Warriors.”

Heidens was silent for a long period of time. His thoughts regained their normal clarity.

“We can’t touch those five siblings. That is without question.” No matter what, they couldn’t afford to offend a Deity-level expert.

“Linley’s level of talent is simply terrifying. We simply cannot allow him to live.” Heidens looked at Stehle. “Stehle, Cesar didn’t say that he would go to war against the Radiant Church for Linley’s sake, did he?”

Stehle nodded.

Heidens smiled confidently.

“That’s more like him. Although he likes stone sculptures, he definitely wouldn’t go to total war against the Radiant Church for the sake of a master sculptor.”

Cesar was an arrogant loner.

There were very few people for whom he would really be willing to go all

out. And Linley was not one of them.

“Stehle, go and get some rest. When you leave, order someone to have Lyndin [Lan’dan] come.” Heidens ordered.

“Yes, Your Holiness.”

Roughly ten minutes later, the sound of knocking at the door.

“Enter.” Heidens said calmly.

A tall and beautiful woman with a head of silver hair walked in. Without question, she was a woman so beautiful as to make any man go wild. But that icy beauty of hers was the type that would make others not dare to approach her.

“Your Holiness.” Lyndin bowed.

Heidens immediately issued his order. “Tomorrow, take five Angels of the ninth rank with you and head directly to the O’Brien Empire. The goal for this mission is to kill Linley. In a while, I will have a scroll containing information about Linley delivered to you.”

“Yes, Your Holiness.”

Lyndin was a Radiant Angel who had descended into a body of the sixth rank. Although it was quite hard to find bodies of the seventh and eighth ranks, bodies of the sixth rank were quite common. Thus, the Radiant Church had quite a few Angels of the ninth rank.

“Remember, you must kill Linley, no matter the cost.” Heidens instructed yet again.

Lyndin started, then expressed assent.

Angels possessed astonishing power. Even the weakest Two-Winged Angels had early-stage Saint-level power. Lyndin’s true power was very powerful;

however, bound by the restrictions of their vessels, they weren't able to put them on full display.

But if they were to go all out…

They were totally capable of unleashing their Saint-level power in exchange for their lives.

Most importantly…six Angels were capable of forming the legendary 'Angel Battle Formation'. With the six of them joining forces, even an early-stage Saint-level expert would most likely be killed, to say nothing of Linley.

"Go."

Heidens said calmly.

They were just six Angels of the ninth rank, after all. For the sake of killing Linley, he'd be willing to sacrifice six more if necessary. After all, Linley's natural talent had truly terrified Heidens.

"He cannot be allowed to continue to grow!"

Chapter 39 – Time Passing Slowly

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 39, Time Passing Slowly

The O'Brien Empire restricted the worship of other religions within its borders, and so the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were forced to keep their forces in hiding. If and when their forces were discovered, the O'Brien Empire would mercilessly stamp them out.

This attitude of the O'Brien Empire had caused the Radiant Church to never have the chance to expand its influence within the Empire's borders.

In important places such as the imperial capital or in the provincial capitals, the Radiant Church still managed to place quite a few forces in hiding, but in prefectural cities, they would have at most a few dozen people.

As for those ordinary cities, some places had a few people, others had none.

And the towns? No need to even mention them.

The density of their web of influence wasn't very high. Thus, the Radiant Church's forces which had been sent to locate Linley couldn't find any trace of him. They had no idea where this Linley had run off to.

Even though they didn't know where Linley was hiding, the Lyndin's team of six experts still departed from the Sacred Isle and headed towards the O'Brien Empire.

Outside Northwest Administrative Province's provincial capital of Basil. Cloudpeaks Village.

Linley, Zassler, Barker and his brothers, Rebecca, and Leena were all living here quietly. Aside from their training, Rebecca and Leena spent their time making sure Linley and the others were all fed.

The explanation they gave to the local villagers was that Linley was a noble. Zassler was his housekeeper, and the five Barker brothers were his guards.

Linley's team was located in the western side of the village, several hundred meters away from any other residences.

"Big sis, today the skeleton I summoned was so cute! It looked so silly." Rebecca and Leena were on their way back from the local market, carrying baskets of fresh vegetables.

Aside from their training, they spent much of their time cooking.

"Rebecca, don't always waste your time playing around. After summoning a skeleton, release it back. You are wasting too much time playing around with skeletons." Leena was somewhat unhappy.

Rebecca was too undisciplined. Every day, she would play around with and tease the skeletal warriors she summoned.

"I know, big sis. I'll catch up to you soon." Rebecca said in a low voice. Her sister was already capable of summoning zombies.

It must be said that both Rebecca and Leena were quite talented. They were progressing quite rapidly in the arts of Necromantic Magic.

The two of them walked to an empty spot of land. Currently, the manor which Linley had designed was still in the construction phase. And thus, Linley had erected a series of wooden cabins for them to live in for now.

"Big brother Linley's training method is so weird." Rebecca murmured.

Right now, Linley was wielding the adamantine heavy sword in one hand and the Bloodviolet Godsword in the other. In Linley's hands, the adamantine heavy sword danced about as though it was totally weightless. But Bloodviolet was the opposite; it seemed to carry a thousand tons of

force with each blow.

“Wielding something heavy as though it were light, wielding something light as though it were heavy…”

Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips.

Regardless of whether he was using Bloodviolet or the adamantine heavy sword, his level of understanding could be applied to both. For example, the ‘impose’ level could be used with virtually any sort of attack.

Sabre, sword, staff, rod, fists, or kicks.

‘Impose’ could be used with any of these.

This is why using it could be described as ‘calling upon the force of the heavens and the earth’.

As for the level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’, there was no way one could use it on the Bloodviolet Godsword, because this sword was already very light. After pondering for over ten days while seated meditatively on the floor, Linley suddenly became aware of how ponderous and all-encompassing the wind which blew through the skies really was. Finally, he had his flash of insight.

The wind was invisible. When it was gentle, it could be like the kiss of a lover. But when it was aroused into a vicious storm, it could split mountains and shatter stones.

“Wielding something light as though it were heavy.”

Linley hacked out with the Bloodviolet Godsword. The nearly invisible, diaphanous sword let out a thunder-like sound as out of nowhere, a tornado suddenly appeared.

“The wind-style single-combat spell, ‘Dimensional Edge’, is an extremely powerful one-on-one magical attack spell. The power of the Dimensional

Edge spell is so great that it can hack apart the dimensional walls itself. Then…would it be possible to duplicate the effects of the Dimensional Edge through sword techniques?"

Linley considered this question.

The correct roads would all lead to the same destination, despite the path. The level above 'impose', when using the adamantine heavy sword, was achieved by Linley through using his insights regarding the Laws of the Earth.

As Linley saw it, with regards to the Bloodviolet Godsword, to surpass the 'impose' level, he would have to utilize his understanding of the 'Laws of the Wind'.

Only by selecting the correct avenue of training would one not be led astray.

Right now, Linley was quietly considering which avenue of training he should embark on. But the fundamental Laws of the universe were very profound and very abstruse. To understand them was very difficult. Fortunately, Linley has exceptional elemental affinity for both wind elemental essence as well as earth elemental essence, and thus was able to reach a very high level of attunement with nature.

But despite that, without multiple years of training and time, it would be virtually impossible to make much progress.

"Swish."

A blur slashed through the air, then landed behind Linley.

"Lord Cesar." Linley turned his head, then immediately paid his respects.

Cesar laughed and nodded. "Where are Barker and his brothers?"

"They are training in the empty space behind their room. Lord Cesar, please

follow me.” Smiling, Linley headed towards the area behind the room, but as he did, Cesar suddenly stared at Linley’s feet in astonishment.

Although on the surface, Linley appeared to be no different from normal people, but…

What sort of person was Cesar? How could he not tell?

He could clearly sense that Linley was walking in an extremely rhythmic manner, seeming to carry with each step a certain vibration. In truth, what had happened was that Linley had immersed himself in his silent training for so long that even when he walked, his steps would also embody the throbbing pulse of the earth.

“He truly is talented.” Cesar praised in his heart.

After walking for a short distance, Cesar saw Barker and his siblings. The five of them were in an area filled with countless giant boulders the size of houses, which they were using as part of their weight training. The entire area was suffused with an earth-colored layer of light.

“Haaaargh!”

The muscles on the bodies of the Barker brothers were rippling and gleaming, with the veins sticking out like snakes on their bodies, making them look extremely powerful and mighty.

“Lord Cesar.” Upon seeing Cesar, Barker and his siblings immediately stopped their training.

“You five fellows really do train hard, eh?” Cesar quirked his lips in a grin. “What sort of effectiveness are you seeing from your training?”

The fourth of the five siblings, Boone [Bu’en], said excitedly, “In the past, when we were training, we didn’t sense much improvement. But now that we are training in this Supergravity Field, both our muscles as well as our internal organs are strengthening and improving.”

The area under the effects of a Supergravity Field would see the local gravity increase dramatically.

Higher gravity could benefit the muscles, the organs, and the entire body.

“Excellent. I made a long round trip, and brought back with me the secret manual I had copied by hand all those years ago.” With a flip of his hand, a rather thin book appeared in front of Cesar.

Barker and his brothers stared at this manual, their eyes shining.

“This is the Secret Undying Manual?” The fifth brother, Gates, stared at it with wide, hungry eyes.

“Take it.” Cesar began to laugh.

The fifth brother, Gates, snatched it over, his hand moving like a blur. He immediately opened the manual and began to read, with the other four squeezed together like five giant bears, craning their necks over and staring at it with eyes as big and wide as ox-eyes.

This spectacle was actually quite funny.

“Haha.” Cesar began to laugh, while a hint of a smile was on Linley’s lips as well. Cesar looked at Linley. In a low voice, he warned, “Linley, I can tell that these five brothers are just like their ancestors. They are rather boorish and unrefined. If they are to travel alone, most likely they will be easily duped and cheated by others. I hope you can lead and guide them.”

“Lord Cesar, don’t worry.” Linley assented.

During this period of association with the five Barker brothers, Linley had discovered that these five men clearly differentiated between enmity and benevolence. They were very straightforward and didn’t play any mind games. They’d curse out whoever they wanted to curse and wouldn’t hide any of their thoughts.

Linley actually rather liked this sort of temperament. It was genuine!

“The five of them, upon training in accordance with the Secret Undying Manual, will improve at a very rapid speed. It won’t be difficult at all for them to reach the ninth rank within a few years.” Cesar sighed to himself.

Turning his head, he glanced at Linley. “This Linley is most likely worthy of my trust.”

As far as Cesar was concerned, Linley couldn’t even come close to comparing with the five Barker brothers in terms of importance. After all, these five were the descendants of the closest friend Cesar had ever made. As for Linley, he was nothing more than a sculptor whom Cesar, a statue aficionado, rather liked.

Towards Linley, he only felt appreciation.

But towards the five brothers, he felt the sort of doting love one might feel towards one’s grandchildren.

Soon after, Cesar left again. After about half a year had passed, the manor was completed, and Linley and his team took up residence within, beginning a long period of quiet training.

Aside from Cesar, perhaps the only person who knew that Linley was living there was Yale.

Yale had long ago had set up a system of sending someone each month to provide news regarding the Radiant Church, basic news regarding the Yulan continent as a whole, as well as information about Wharton.

Although they were living in this village, Linley thus was still kept very well informed about the affairs of the Yulan continent.

Within a forest on the west side of Cloudpeaks Village, Linley was training by himself.

Three years.

They had spent three full years within the quiet Cloudpeaks Village. During these three years, the Radiant Church's forces had been searching fruitlessly for them. As for Linley, he had totally immersed himself within his training, and had advanced quite rapidly as well.

The wind rose, blowing the dead leaves to the ground.

Linley raised his head to look at the sky. Very high up above him, a Bluewind Hawk was flying with wings spread. A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's lips, and he suddenly thrust his adamantine heavy sword into the air.

"Boom!"

Originating from Linley's adamantine heavy sword, a series of faint cracks in space itself could be seen as a vibrational wave burst forward up into the sky at an incredibly high speed.

In the blink of an eye, the vibrating waves had traversed nearly a thousand meters.

"Boom!"

The body of the Bluewind Hawk, a magical beast of the fifth rank, shuddered, then begin to collapse from the skies.

"I've finally reached the level of the 'Hundred Layered Waves'." Linley's eyes were filled with a hint of confidence. "If today, that Stehle were to be struck by me again, he most likely wouldn't get off with just a light wound this time."

Profound Truths of the Earth – Triple Layered Waves!

Profound Truths of the Earth – Ten Layered Waves!

Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves!

After spending three years, Linley had already reached an extremely high level of understanding with regards to the Profound Truths of the Earth, and his attack power was now very terrifying as well.

Within a thousand meters distance, he could kill a magical beast of the fifth rank

Most likely, even an early-stage Saint-level combatant would be hard pressed to accomplish such a task. After all, battle-qi, when being transmitted through the air, would slowly be weakened by air resistance. When the distance reached a certain length, the power of the attack would be almost negligibly weak as well.

Compared to battle-qi, these 'vibrational waves' would still be weakened when passing through the air, but much, much less than battle-qi would be.

When using the Triple Layered Waves technique in the past, Linley could only kill a magical beast of the fifth rank at a distance of roughly ten meters. Any farther away, and the waves wouldn't be powerful enough to kill fifth ranked magical beasts.

But upon reaching the Ten Layered Waves stage of the technique, Linley could kill a fifth ranked magical beast within a hundred meters.

But the Hundred Layered Waves was even more powerful. Even three thousand meters wouldn't prove a problem, much less a thousand.

This was the true ace in Linley's sleeve. Unless he was in a dangerous situation, Linley wouldn't willingly use this technique.

"But how to break past the barrier for the Profound Truths of the Wind?" With a flip of his hand, Linley returned the adamantine heavy sword to its sheath, then drew out the Bloodviolet Godsword.

Over the past three years, Linley had gained some insight regarding the fourth level of using the Bloodviolet, the Profound Truths of the Wind. But his insights were only limited to the simplest level; the ‘Rippling Wind’ technique.

“This shouldn’t be the case. Wind-style magic isn’t just fast and flexible. It should also have extremely powerful one-on-one attack abilities. How, then, can one execute the ‘Dimensional Edge’ through sword attacks?”

Linley had a certain feeling that the effects of the ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell absolutely could be displayed through the Bloodviolet Godsword. But it was as though the road to that level was covered by a dense fog, leading Linley to have no idea where he should try to make the breakthrough.

“Big brother Linley, big brother Linley!” Rebecca’s clear voice rang out from outside the forest.

Linley grabbed the Bluewind Hawk by the neck and headed out of the forest with the hawk in his hands. This hawk would serve as part of dinner.

“Big brother Linley, your letter just came.” Rebecca smiled radiantly at Linley.

“Oh?”

Each month, a new letter would come. Linley tossed the Bluewind Hawk over. “Rebecca, our dinner tonight will be this Bluewind Hawk.” As he spoke, Linley accepted the letter and tore it open.

Chapter 40 – Undying Warrior Transformation

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 40, Undying Warrior Transformation

Reading the information in this letter regarding Wharton, Linley couldn't help but start to frown.

"Wharton has registered for next year's selection process to become an honorary disciple of the War God's College?" Linley was rather puzzled and also rather dissatisfied. "Why does he want to enter the War God's College? Even the personally taught disciples of the War God at most reach the Saint-level. What, a Dragonblood Warrior can't reach the Saint-level on his own?"

Linley knew very well that entering the War God's College wouldn't have much of an impact on their development.

After all, Dragonblood Warriors were absolutely guaranteed to eventually become peak-stage Saint-level combatants. The Supreme Warriors were nothing to trifle with.

As for the Deity-level…

Despite the passage of so many years since the War God O'Brien had founded the Empire, not a single one of his honorary disciples or personally taught disciples had reached the Deity-level, right? The Deity-level wasn't something that could simply be taught by a Deity-level combatant.

"How could one's understanding of the Laws and principles of the world be taught? Everyone has their own insights. The road others have taken might not be suited to one's self."

Linley was somewhat unhappy with his younger brother's decision to register and attempt to become an honorary disciple of the War God's

College.

However, his younger brother had grown up.

“I can’t blame Wharton for making his own choices.” Linley continued to read. At the very end, a hint of laughter appeared on Linley’s face. “Haha, so this kid, Wharton…haha…”

The letter Yale had ordered to be delivered explained in detail the reason why Wharton had registered for the chance to be selected as an honorary disciple of the War God’s College. The primary reason was because of the Seventh Princess of the Empire.

“I hope that Wharton will have a perfect, unbroken love life. At the very least, it must not be like mine was.” Linley blessed his younger brother silently.

Indeed, the reason Wharton wanted to become an honorary disciple of the War God’s College was because of her. Given that the master of the War God’s College was the founding Emperor of the O’Brien Empire, War God O’Brien, upon entering the War God’s College, it would be much easier for Wharton to wed an imperial princess.

After reading the letter, a flame emerged from Linley’s hands.

“Crackle.” The letter was reduced to ash.

Alongside Rebecca, Linley made his way back to their manor.

His days of peaceful training continued. Linley continued to keep an eye out for Wharton’s affairs. According to the reports in the letters, the Seventh Princess of the Empire was an extremely beautiful girl, and she was also very adorable and kind. She was also doted on by her imperial father, which was why she had many pursuers.

Several of them had higher social statuses and rankings than Wharton.

However…

The Seventh Princess of the Empire was on very good relations with Wharton. She would often go out to play and joke around with him.

The next year, the competition to join the War God's College began. This was also the fourth year for Linley and his squad here at Cloudpeak Village.

"Big brother Linley, here's your letter."

Rebecca once more delivered a letter to him. Linley immediately opened it and began to read. Based on the timing of events, this letter should have information regarding the grand competition.

Given his younger brother's ability, he should be able to succeed.

"Oh? He failed?" Reading the contents of the letter, Linley frowned.

The competition to become an honorary disciple of the War God's College had resulted in a young man named Blumer [Bu'lu'mo] capturing that position. This sort of competition wasn't the type of competition where the last man standing would be given the position.

It was a series of competitions resulting in a total of ten finalists. From within these ten finalists, either the War God himself, or one of his personally taught disciples, would select the next honorary disciple.

Wharton had indeed become one of the ten finalists, but in the end, the War God's College had selected Blumer.

"Yet another genius?" Linley was very surprised.

Blumer was currently 32 years old, yet had just entered the ninth rank as a warrior. This astonishing natural talent was indeed quite incredible.

"But in terms of talent, Wharton should still be somewhat superior to him. This year, Wharton should be 21 years old, but he has already entered the

eighth rank as a warrior." Linley had learned just a month ago that Wharton had entered the eighth rank as a warrior.

A 21-year old warrior of the eighth rank was very astonishing as well.

"Hrm?" Reading Blumer's background information, something caught Linley's eye.

"Blumer's older brother is actually the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier?" Linley was quite surprised. Olivier was that genius who, immediately upon entering the Saint-level, defeated the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon.

It wasn't impossible for an early-stage Saint-level to defeat a Saint-level who had entered the Saint-level many years ago.

What it required was a higher level of understanding and insight.

For example, Linley. Right now, his level of understanding and insight was already at the peak of the Saint-level. Only, because his physical strength and battle-qi was too low, it was impossible for him to enter the Saint-level at this time.

As soon as he reached the required amount of strength and battle-qi, he would enter the Saint-level.

This was why Linley now spent a large majority of his time training his battle-qi. He wanted to break through to the ninth rank as quickly as possible.

"I wonder how Wharton is currently feeling." Linley wondered to himself. That buck-toothed, chubby cheeked kid from years ago was now an adult.

Linley was truly filled with love and affection towards Wharton.

"The Emperor of the O'Brien Empire, if this letter is accurate, should already know that Wharton is the descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan. Given Wharton's power, he clearly is capable of Dragonforming. As a

Dragonblood Warrior, the imperial clan would not be disgraced by Wharton marrying the Emperor's daughter."

Actually, Linley didn't really feel much respect or fear towards the so-called royal clans or imperial clans.

The only thing he feared and respected was truly powerful experts, such as the War God, the High Priest, the King of Killers, and the two Kings of the Forest of Darkness and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. The people who stood at the pinnacle of the world.

Understanding and insight was important. Physical strength was important as well! To Linley at his current level in particular, improving his battle-qi and physical strength was something he desperately needed.

When using the same technique of 'wielding something light as though it was heavy', the force of Linley's attacks were dozens of times weaker than that of a Saint-level combatant.

The same was true for the Profound Truths of the Earth.

At this time, Linley perhaps could seriously injure a Saint-level combatant if he caught him off guard, but if a Saint-level combatant were to use the technique, he definitely could cause the opponent to instantly perish.

The three vibrational waves were the same, but the strength of the vibrations was just on totally different levels. The vibrational power unleashed by a Saint-level combatant would be ten times higher.

"The basics!"

Linley sat in the meditative position on his bed, all the muscles on his body twitching as though countless worms were crawling beneath his skin. The veins on Linley's forehead were bulging outwards as well.

The azure-blackish battle-qi was rapidly circulating through Linley's arteries, each time bringing with them the unique, nourishing, strengthening

effects of the Dragonblood battle-qi.

Within his dantian region.

The battle-qi had already achieved a very high degree of density. That liquefied battle-qi was constantly swirling about at a slow pace in the middle of his dantian.

“Whew.”

Linley let out a long breath, and when he did, a white mist spat forth from his mouth in a line as flat as a sharp sword.

“Who knows how long it will take to advance from the peak of the eighth rank to the ninth rank.” In the past four years, Linley had managed to reach the peak-stage of the eighth rank. But as always when it came to training, the most critical juncture was also the one which took the most time.

Right now, Linley, when transformed, was still just at the peak of the ninth rank.

As soon as he broke through to the ninth rank, Linley would be an early-stage Saint-level combatant when Dragonformed.

The peak of the ninth rank to the early-stage Saint-level was a true transformation. There was an enormous difference between the two levels.

“Haha…hahahaha….” Suddenly, a bout of wild laughter erupted from outside the room. Linley stood up from his bed, puzzled. “Why are the Barker brothers so happy, this early in the morning?”

At this time, the sky was just barely lit, and the world was covered by a thick fog. Ordinary people wouldn’t even be able to see someone five meters away; all they would see was the fog.

“Big brother Barker, why are you guys ranting like this early in the morning? We sisters need our sleep!” Rebecca called out unhappily.

Linley's vision was far stronger than that of ordinary people's. At a glance, he could tell that the eldest of the five brothers, Barker, was so happy he couldn't control himself.

"Big bro, why are you so happy?" The other four siblings all came out of their rooms as well.

"I succeeded. I've broken through to the ninth rank." Barker excitedly said to his four brothers. "Haha, when transformed, I can finally reach the early-stage of the Saint-level."

The Undying Warriors' transformation was very similar to that of the Dragonblood Warriors in this respect. If in their normal, human form, they were of the ninth rank, once transformed, they would be at the Saint-level.

"Early-stage Saint-level?" Zassler, who had just walked out of his own room, was shocked as well.

Linley, the sisters, and the four brothers of Barker were both stunned as well.

Linley's eyes were shining.

"Barker, you've really broken through?" Linley said with uncontrollable excitement.

Barker nodded. "Yes, Lord. I truly have broken through." In the past, the Barker brothers all addressed Linley as 'Lord Linley'. Now that they were in the village, everyone was pretending that Linley was a noble and the five brothers were his guards, so naturally, they continued to address Linley as 'Lord'.

After four years, everyone had gotten used to this form of address.

After all, the five Barker brothers were very heroic, blunt figures. Their minds weren't nearly as agile as Linley's and Zassler's. The decisions of

this group were primarily made by Linley.

“Let’s go to the empty space in the west. Let us get a good look at your current power.” Linley immediately said.

Everyone excitedly rushed out of the manor towards the empty space in the west side. Because the sun wasn’t totally up yet, most of the people in the village were still sleeping. Not a single person could be seen.

“As soon as he transforms, he’ll be Saint-level. Master, how long will it take before I’ll be able to break through?” The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, said with some frustration to Linley.

Haeru had already been at the peak of the ninth rank for a long time.

“Groooowl.” Bebe growled angrily at him. “Haeru, don’t think I don’t understand what your sly intentions are. You have designs on that Saint-level magicite core the Boss has.”

Linley laughed as he shook his head.

For a magical beast of the peak of the ninth rank to break through to the Saint-level usually required them to make the breakthrough on their own. But of course, if they were to consume a Saint-level magicite core of the same elemental type as their own, there was a very high chance that they would be able to suddenly break through.

But of course, there was a chance of failure as well.

“Groooowl.” Haeru growled at Bebe as well. “Bebe, I’m not like you. You’ve been growing stronger this entire time, during the past four years. But I’ve stopped.”

Exactly what sort of magical beast Bebe was, no one knew.

But Bebe was definitely a type of magical beast whose natural talent was even more terrifyingly high than Blackcloud Panthers. Although four years

ago, Bebe was roughly on par with Haeru, in truth, Bebe was still growing and developing.

After these past four years, Bebe at his current level of power could easily devastate the Blackcloud Panther.

In terms of speed or defense, Bebe was extremely terrifying.

“Most likely, even a Saint-level combatant would have to spend quite a bit of effort to kill Bebe.” Linley’s heart was filled with appreciation. Four years ago, Bebe’s defense was already frighteningly high. Now, it was so high as to be unspeakable.

“Haeru, that Saint-level magicite core the Boss has is darkness-element, but you are dual-element, wind and darkness. If you eat it, the chance of failure is too high. It isn’t worth it! I’m a pure darkness-element magical beast. When I reach the end of my development, the chances of me making a breakthrough after consuming it is much higher than yours.” Bebe said arrogantly. “What, you aren’t happy? You want a taste of my claws?”

Haeru let out a growl, then fell silent.

Bebe arrogantly stuck up his little head. Haeru, this extremely arrogant magical beast, had been thoroughly cowed by Bebe.

Right at this time, Barker was about to transform.

“Bebe, knock it off.” Linley was focusing on Barker, who stood in front of everyone.

“Haha, everyone, watch carefully.”

Barker was extremely excited. With a popping sound, the muscles on his body began to constantly crackle and pop. The muscles on Barker’s body began to wildly expand, while at the same time, the color of his skin and muscles began to transform as well.

Thunderous crackles!

Barker, originally 2.2 meters tall, had now expanded in size along with his swelling muscles. In the blink of an eye, Barker had transformed into a terrifyingly large and powerful looking giant who was 3 meters tall.

Barker's entire skin had turned into a light green color.

His skin and muscles seemed like they were made from stone, and those enormous, defined muscles clearly contained an unimaginable amount of power. Just by looking at him, one could tell this. And then, atop his light green skin, a layer of white, marble-like armor suddenly began to appear, eventually covering his entire body aside from his face. Even his head was covered by a white marble helmet.

This so-called armor and helmet was grown from his very body. It was terrifyingly odd.

And then, Barker suddenly rose into the air, flying in a circle before settling down and hovering in mid-air.

"Haha, the Saint-level. This is the power of the Saint-level." Barker excitedly smashed his two gigantic fists together. When he did, the air itself rippled from the force of that blow.

This was a Saint-level Undying Warrior!

Chapter 41 – The Power of the Hundred Layered Waves

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 41, The Power of the Hundred Layered Waves

Surrounded by the foggy mist, Linley, the Arch Magus necromancer Zassler, Rebecca, Leena, Barker's four brothers, Bebe, and Haeru all stared at the Saint-level Undying Warrior in front of them with a mixture of astonishment and delight.

Those powerful, muscular arms and legs…

Just by looking at the Saint-level Undying Warrior, one could almost physically see the warrior's aura of power and might. In particular, that white, marble-like armor made Barker look as though he truly was a war machine.

Although the other four siblings were 2.2 meters tall, compared to their big brother Barker, they now seemed like under-age children. They only reached Barker's chest in height.

"The Saint-level. Big bro, how do you feel?" The eyes of Hazer, the third brother, were shining.

Standing in mid-air, the Saint-level Undying Warrior emitted a deep rumbling noise, and then allowed his voice to reverberate through the air. "The feeling…is of power. Unbelievable power. What's more, I can fly easily, as though it were a natural ability."

Most Saint-level combatants needed to reach a certain level of understanding and insight to fly.

But the Four Supreme Warriors were different. As long as they had enough power, the exalted, mysterious bloodlines of the Four Supreme Warriors

would allow them to fly as though it were second nature to them.

It was similar to how some Saint-level magical beasts would immediately and naturally know how to fly upon reaching their age of adulthood and maturity.

This was an innate gift!

“Haha, second bro, third bro, fourth bro, fifth bro. Don’t be too stressed out. All of you are at the peak of the eighth rank, right? With just a single extra step, you’ll be at the ninth rank, and by then, after transforming, you will be like me.” Barker tried to keep his sonorous voice quiet, but he couldn’t help but express his excitement.

Seeing this, Linley also felt great excitement and joy on behalf of these five brothers, who were Supreme Warriors like him.

The Barker brothers had trained for much longer than Linley had. When they had been captured and then escorted by Stehle, they had already been over thirty years old. At that time, they had already entered the eighth rank for quite some time.

They were warriors of the eighth rank who had never trained using the ‘Secret Undying Manual’.

As soon as they did, it was only natural that they then developed at an astonishingly fast pace. After all, the power of one’s body was what determined how much battle-qi could be generated, and those powerful bodies of theirs…the five of them had all reached the peak of the eighth rank. And today, Barker had broken through the last gate and reached the ninth rank.

An Undying Warrior of the ninth rank in human form, an early-stage Saint-level after transforming.

“Breaking through from the peak of the eighth rank to the ninth rank isn’t hard, but it isn’t easy either. I might still need several years.” The fifth

brother, Gates, pursed his lips.

It was hard to say when one would break through to another level.

For example, Linley was currently at the peak of the eighth rank as well. He might break through tomorrow, or he might break through in three to four years.

Barker suddenly looked at Linley. With excitement, he said, “Lord Linley, use that ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ technique to attack me again.”

“You want to give it a try?” Linley laughed with resignation.

One of the reasons why Linley was able to make the five of them willingly address him as ‘Lord’ and accept him as their leader was because Linley had totally outclassed the five of them in terms of martial force. In recent years, the five brothers had trained in accordance with the ‘Secret Undying Manual’, and after transforming into Undying Warriors, they had sparred a few times with Linley.

Undying Warriors did indeed possess an astonishingly high defense.

But the strange vibrational attacks of the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ were able to pierce through the armor and the muscles of the Undying Warriors, suffering only a slight loss of power before attacking their internal organs.

At that time, Linley had only used his weakest ‘Triple Layered Waves’ against them, and at a reduced level of power. But despite that, the five brothers still suffered some light injuries.

“The Profound Truths of the Earth is an extremely dangerous technique. Barker, if you really want to give it a try, then it has to be like it was in the past. I’ll start at the weakest level of power, then slowly ramp it up one level at a time. I don’t dare use my most powerful attack at the very start.” Linley said sincerely.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves.

The power of this attack was dozens of times greater than the Triple Layered Waves. According to Linley's calculations, it shouldn't be too difficult for him to use this attack to kill an early-stage Saint-level combatant.

"Don't worry, Lord. Let's do this one step at a time. I won't try to show off too much." Barker's deep voice rumbled out.

"Fine, then." Linley nodded. "You are already at the Saint-level. I'll transform into a Dragonblood Warrior as well." Linley removed his upper body clothes, then allowed his body to become fully covered with black draconic scales, with the sharp spikes coming out as well.

In the blink of an eye, Linley had totally transformed into his Dragonblood Warrior form.

"Each time I see his Lordship's eyes, my heart trembles." The fifth brother, Gates, said in a low voice. The other three nodded.

The dark golden eyes Linley had inherited from the Armored Razorback Wyrm were cold and utterly remorseless.

"Barker, first, I'll use my fist to execute the Profound Truths of the Earth. If you can totally withstand it, then I'll switch to using the adamantine heavy sword." Linley said in a deep voice.

Through using his fists, he could still put the power of the Profound Truths of the Earth on full display.

Only, in terms of actual force, it would be about half of that which the adamantine heavy sword could generate.

"Alright, come. Don't take it too easy on me." Barker was full of excitement as well. Right now, his blue eyes had a hint of gold in them.

Launching off from the ground, Linley shot upwards like a vicious blur towards the mid-air Barker.

“Ten Layered Waves.” Linley let out a growl.

Like a thunderbolt, his right fist smashed through the air, landing directly against the white armor covering Barker’s chest. But Barker felt nothing at all as that seemingly titanic punch slammed against his body.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” ….

The strange attack penetrated through his armor and his powerful muscles, then pierced through the Undying battle-qi surrounding his organs. Finally, like a warhammer, it smashed against his heart and his other organs.

His internal organs all quivered.

But then, the Undying battle-qi in Barker’s body once more covered his organs.

“Haha, I’m fine. Again.” Barker’s eyes were shining. Linley’s punch using the Ten Layered Waves had actually not been able to injure him at all. The only thing he felt was a slight tremble from his internal organs.

Linley nodded.

Indeed, if a Saint-level Undying Warrior, with their incredibly strong defense, wasn’t able to take an empty-handed Ten Layered Waves blow, then Undying Warriors wouldn’t be worthy of being praised as the Supreme Warriors with the greatest level of defense.

“Fine. I’ll begin to gradually increase my attack power.” Linley didn’t waste any more words, immediately beginning to attack.

Barker knew very well that the weak point of the Undying Warriors lay in their low speed. In truth, even if he were to engage in a genuine battle against Linley, given Linley’s superior speed, Linley could land one punch

after another on him. The result wouldn't be too different from what he was doing right now; just standing there and letting Linley hit him.

The number of vibrations each blow caused slowly began to increase.

From ten layers, to twenty layers, to thirty layers…

"His defense truly is powerful. He's even managed to withstand ninety layers of vibrations." Linley's eyes were shining. He immediately called out loudly, "Barker, prepare to take my most powerful bare-handed blow!"

Barker waited for him there in mid-air.

Barker had to admit that just then, the ninety layered waves had caused him some injury. But due to the astonishing healing power of his Undying battle-qi, he had already pretty much recovered from that light injury.

"Hundred Layered Waves!"

Like a tempest, Linley shot into the air, his fist drawing closer and closer to Barker before finally smashing against his chest.

"Boom!" "Boom!" "Boom!" "Boom!" ….

Barker felt as though he had been smashed by an enormous meteor as both his body as well as his internal organs began to vibrate with a strength which he had never experienced before. A hundred vibrations occurred in the blink of an eye.

Barker felt his internal organs shudder, and he could already taste blood in his mouth.

He wanted to swallow it, but then another stream of blood was forced into his mouth by his organs. He could no longer repress it, and he spat out a mouthful of blood.

"Big bro!" Barker's four brothers immediately ran over in astonishment.

“Barker.” Linley was surprised as well.

“I’m fine.” After spitting out that mouthful of blood, Barker actually felt much better. “I’m not injured too badly. My Undying battle-qi should be able to totally cure this sort of minor wound in just three days or so.”

Barker looked at Linley with admiration. “Lord, in terms of understanding and insight, you are on a much higher level than me. Although my body is more powerful than yours, I’m still unable to defeat you.”

The Linley of four years ago definitely wouldn’t have been a match for the current Barker.

But over the course of these four years, Linley had deepened his understanding of the Profound Truths of the Earth. By enhancing his original Triple Layered Waves to the current level of a Hundred Layered Waves, he had increased his attack power by several dozen times.

“If I were to use my adamantine heavy sword, the power of the Hundred Layered Waves would be doubled.” Linley said to himself. The power of the Profound Truths of the Earth, when executed by a heavy sword, was extremely great.

“If I used all of my power with the adamantine heavy sword and executed the Hundred Layered Waves attack, I could most likely heavily injure or even kill an early-stage Saint-level Undying Warrior.” Linley was now very certain.

The defensive abilities of the Undying Warriors were legendary.

If even an early-stage Saint-level Undying Warrior was unable to take this attack, how could an ordinary early-stage Saint-level combatant do so?

“Any early-stage Saint-level who encounters the Hundred Layered Waves attack will most likely die.” Linley felt extremely confident.

Raw power and level of insight were mutually supportive.

Compared to four years ago, Linley's raw power had not increased much. But in terms of the effectiveness of his level of understanding, he had improved by dozens of times. An ordinary peak-stage combatant of the ninth rank, upon reaching the Saint-level, would generally only increase in power by around ten times or so.

"Barker." Zassler said with a smile. "In terms of raw power, the bodies of the five of you are not one whit weaker than Linley's. Your body, Barker, is in fact stronger than Linley's. But in terms of insight and understanding, you are too inferior. Linley has already told you that his levels of understanding can be divided into four levels; ordinary attacks being the first, 'wielding something heavy as though it were light' as the second, 'impose' as the third, and the 'Profound Truths of the Earth' as the fourth. But the five of you are still at the most basic level of using raw force. Your level of understanding and insight is far too low."

Barker deactivated his transformation, returning to his normal appearance.

"In the past four years, Lord Linley has already taught us much. But we five brothers truly…" Barker laughed awkwardly.

"Old man, do you think we are geniuses? His Lordship is around twenty five years old, but has already reached the peak-stage of the Saint-level in terms of insight and understanding." The fifth brother, Gates, didn't treat Zassler with any respect at all.

Zassler glanced at Gates unhappily.

"You are physically powerful and all use heavy weapons. You should easily be able to understand the level of 'using something heavy as though it were light'. But don't be too impatient. As long as you focus on your training, one day, you will perhaps understand it." Linley said encouragingly.

In truth, Linley had a large, unfair advantage.

His elemental affinity was, after all, exceptional. As a magus, he naturally was able to more easily attune with nature and commune with it. Pairing his inborn elemental affinity with his proficiency with the sword, it was very natural for him to be able to quickly deepen his level of understanding.

“Yes, Lord.” The five brothers all nodded.

The five Barker brothers all knew that right now, Linley was also at the peak of the eighth rank. As soon as he broke through to the next level, Linley would also be at the early-stage of the Saint-level in his Dragonform. Given his already-high level of understanding, by then, the difference between Linley and them would be even greater.

“We can’t allow ourselves to become a hindrance to him.” The five proud brothers all decided to work even harder from now on.

In the blink of an eye, yet another year passed.

The autumn wind was still howling drearily, the same as before.

Staring into the distance at the Barker brothers engaged in their training, Linley couldn’t help but grin. All five of the Barker brothers were physically stronger than Linley, and Linley had paid for the Dawson Conglomerate to produce weapons for them.

Five long-handled greataxes.

Those long-handled greataxes were at least two meters long, and were astonishingly thick. In addition, the axeheads were extremely large as well. The greataxes themselves were made from the finest and rarest of materials, with each long-handled greataxe weighing an astonishing 5300 pounds.

“The fifth brother, Gates, has a relatively higher talent for insight. He was the first to understand ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’. The other four have yet to grasp it.”

Although over a year had passed, aside from Barker, the others remained

stuck at the peak-stage of the eighth rank and had not broken through. The only pleasant surprise had been Gates coming to understand ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.

Zassler had spent this year in tireless training as well. This 800+ year old man had been somewhat embarrassed by the rapid increases in power by Linley and the Barker brothers, causing him to become hard working as well.

Watching the dried leaves fall from the trees, Linley suddenly felt very much at peace.

“Five years. It has been five years. I should go fulfill my end of the five year agreement as well.” Linley looked towards the northwest, in the direction of the prefectural city of Cerre.

Chapter 42 – An Appointment Kept

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 42, An Appointment Kept

The five year agreement. Linley still remembered his promise.

“I hope Jenne won’t be too determined.” Linley knew that even if in the end, Jenne elected to follow him, at most Linley would only be able to treat her as he did Rebecca and Leena.

Linley couldn’t reciprocate her affections.

After experiencing so much and passing one tribulation after another, the deepest part of Linley’s heart had been frozen and locked. That layer of ice covering it was very cold, very thick. To melt the hard ice surrounding Linley’s heart would be difficult. Very difficult.

But when he thought about affairs of the heart, Linley began to think about Wharton.

“According to Yale’s messengers, over this past year, Wharton and the Seventh Princess of the Empire have been quite passionate with each other. However, according to what the letter says, it won’t be easy for Wharton to successfully take the Seventh Princess as his wife.”

The Seventh Princess’s background was simply too excellent. She was virtuous, kind, beautiful, of high rank, and doted upon by her imperial father. There were too many suitors.

The only thing Linley could do was to silently bless his little brother and hope he would have a wonderful relationship.

At least, his brother couldn’t end up like him.

Half a month later.

“Lord.” The fifth brother, Gates, energetically sprinted over towards Linley, who had just completed a sculpture. With excitement, he said, “My big brother has also grasped the concept of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.”

“Oh?”

With a flip of his hand, Linley stored away his straight chisel. With surprise, he said, “Barker has reached the level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’?”

“Right. Lord, why don’t you go take a look?” Gates advised.

Linley laughed. “How about this. Gates, have everyone come to the main hall. There’s something I want to tell all of you.”

“Oh.” Seeing Linley had something important that he wished to discuss, Gates nodded.

After a while, everyone congregated within the main hall. Many of them were animatedly talking about Barker reaching the level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.

“Everyone.”

Smiling, Linley walked into the main hall. “I have an important matter I need to take care of. On this trip, I will only bring Bebe and Haeru. As for the rest of you, all you need to do is to continue to train here. If everything happens quickly, I’ll be back in a few days. If I need a bit longer, I’ll send someone with a message.”

“Lord, you don’t plan to take us along?” Gates asked loudly.

“Continue your training.” Linley laughed as he glanced at Gates. “Gates, if you can reach the ‘impose’ level, or reach the ninth rank, I will take you as

well."

Gates immediately shut his mouth. He wasn't Linley. Reaching the level of 'wielding something heavy as though it were light' was already quite difficult for him. He was still just at the basic stage of this level, and had yet to even master it.

"Enough. Tomorrow morning, I leave at dawn." Linley declared directly.

The next morning at dawn, the Barker brothers, Rebecca, Leena, and Zassler all watched as Linley, dressed in a warrior's outfit covered by a long black robe, rode off on the back of Haeru, his Blackcloud Panther, with Bebe seated next to him. The man and the two magical beasts departed from the Cloudpeaks Village.

His long black robe fluttered in the wind. Linley's weapons had all been withdrawn into his interspatial ring.

"Using the adamantine heavy sword to execute the Profound Truths of the Earth is extremely powerful; once that technique comes out, most likely the target will perish. Normally, it would be better for me to continue using the Bloodviolet Godsword."

Linley had already reached a fairly high level of proficiency in using his Profound Truths of the Earth.

But as for the Profound Truths of the Wind his Bloodviolet sword used, Linley's level of proficiency was quite low.

Linley didn't believe that using the Bloodviolet sword was necessarily weaker than using the adamantine heavy sword. After all, the forbidden wind-style spell was the single-target spell 'Dimensional Edge'. If magical techniques could create the effects of this spell, logically speaking, sword techniques should as well.

"Bebe, I've discovered that over these years, you've continued to improve. What sort of magical beast are you, exactly?" Seated astride Haeru, Linley

laughed towards Bebe.

Haeru let out a growl. “Master, Bebe is a total freak. I’ve never seen such a freakishly powerful magical beast. Five years ago, he was about the same as me, but now, he’s much more powerful. But he still hasn’t reached the Saint-level yet.”

If Haeru had met the three sons of Dylin, the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he would know that there were other magical beasts in the world that were even more freakishly powerful than Bebe. Those three were terrifying magical beasts of the Saint-rank had easily swallowed over a hundred enormous dragons into their bellies.

“Bebe has grown somewhat stronger.” Linley chuckled. “But Bebe seems to still be growing.”

Linley suspected that Bebe was not fully an adult yet.

“Heh heh, that’s entirely possible.” Bebe narcissistically raised his little head. “When I, Bebe, reach adulthood, maybe I’ll be a Saint-level magical beast.”

Saint-level magical beasts such as the Bloody-eyed Maned Lion, the Savage Worldbear, the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape…these were magical beasts which would, as a natural part of their growth cycle, enter the Saint-level as soon as they reached full adulthood.

This was the innate gift of these Saint-level magical beasts.

“I’ve heard of Saint-level magical beasts. But is there such a thing as magical beasts which would naturally grow up to reach the Deity-level?” Linley sighed to himself. “Even if there are, I’ll wager they wouldn’t appear on planes such as the Yulan continent.”

They continued on their journey. By nightfall, Linley reached the prefectural city of Cerre.

On the streets of Cerre, there were many people mounted on magical beasts. However, most of those people were mounted on low-level or mid-level magical beasts such as Windwolves or Fanged Wolves.

When Linley rode the Blackcloud Panther on the streets, the other magical beasts all prudently retreated in terror, giving him space.

Although humans, when encountering strange magical beasts, might not be able to accurately gauge the beast's strength, when a low level magical beast encountered a high level magical beast, they would easily be able to sense the difference in power.

"Hrm? A black panther?"

A very ordinary man in the streets of the prefectural city of Cerre saw Linley seated on his black panther, and his eyes immediately lit up. "He has a black panther, and he looks exactly the same as the picture. It must be him."

The man immediately grew excited. He immediately ran out of the street, heading towards a small alleyway.

At the gate to the governor's castle of the prefectural city of Cerre. As soon as Linley had seen the gate, he discovered that a large number of people were congregating around the gate, awaiting his arrival.

"Big brother Ley."

A young man and woman called out at the same time.

Linley immediately recognized them. The girl who had grown even more mature and beautiful was Jenne, while the handsome young fellow who was half a head taller than Jenne was most likely the grown up Keane.

Keane and Jenne ran over excitedly.

The now nineteen year old Keane said loudly, "Big brother Ley, I heard

from the guards a long time ago that a man riding a black panther had arrived. I immediately guessed that it must be you."

Black panthers were extremely rare, after all. There were only two types; Blackstripe Panthers, and Blackcloud Panthers.

"Big brother Ley." Jenne's face was slightly flushed, and she looked expectantly at Linley.

"Let's talk inside." Linley said with a calm laugh.

All of them entered the castle. Since he had turned sixteen, Keane had officially taken over the management responsibilities of the city, and by now, he was a qualified city governor.

Last year, Keane had taken a beautiful wife. At the time, Keane had wanted to invite Linley, but unfortunately, he had no idea where Linley was living.

"Jenne, you've become a magus?" Walking in the hallway, Linley laughed as he asked her this question.

Given Linley's spiritual energy, he could immediately sense the aura of a magus coming from Jenne. The aura wasn't particularly strong.

"Right. A water-style magus." Jenne's eyes shone with excitement. "Big brother Ley, after you left, I didn't have anything to do. Afterwards, I realized that with you being so powerful, if I couldn't do anything and kept on being a hindrance to you, that wouldn't be a good thing. So, I went to have my elemental affinity and my spiritual energy tested. I didn't expect that I was suited to train in water-style magic."

When she was young, Jenne had been constantly suppressed and held down by her aunt, and thus didn't have the chance to train in magic at all.

Nobody had any idea that Jenne had the capability of becoming a magus.

"But my talent isn't very high. After five years, I'm still only a magus of the

third rank.” Jenne said quietly.

Generally speaking, from infanthood until adulthood, one’s spiritual energy was continuously growing. But for geniuses such as Linley and Reynolds, even if they hadn’t trained in magic when they were young and only began once they reached the age of eighteen, they probably would have immediately started off with the spiritual energy of a magus of the third rank.

Eighteen years of growth, combined with five years of training. And yet, she was still only of the third rank.

Her talent could only be considered to be average, perhaps a bit higher than your ordinary magi.

“Big brother Ley, have a seat.” Keane enthusiastically invited Linley to sit in the seat of honor. “Let me make some introductions. This is my wife, Irene [Ai’lin].”

Seated next to Keane was a very beautiful young lady, who had a pair of pretty blue eyes. Right now, this young lady was looking at Linley with curiosity. When she and Keane had first began their courtship, Keane often would talk to her about Linley.

“Big brother Ley.” Irene said courteously.

“Keane, everyone, just sit down and relax. Don’t stand on so much ceremony.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Everyone sat down, but Keane continuously stared at Linley. Keane knew very well that the purpose of this trip had to do with that five year agreement he had made.

Five years having passed, Jenne was now twenty three. Because of training in water-style magic, Jenne’s skin was now glistening, making her even more beautiful. And the now twenty three year old Jenne now had a more womanly aura.

During these five years, Jenne had many suitors.

And not just from the prefectural city of Cerre. Whenever Jenne and Keane went to attend the yearly events of the clan at the provincial capital of Basil, there would be many people who would attempt to flirt with or make passes at Jenne.

But Jenne still refused to pay any of them any heed.

“Jenne.” Linley looked at Jenne, cutting straight to the heart of the matter. “I imagine you still remember our five year agreement. Jenne, I’ll tell you right now, in my heart, I truly can only envision you as a younger sister who needs someone to cherish her.”

Jenne’s entire body trembled, but in the next moment, she began to laugh.

Next to her, Keane and their housekeeper, Lambert, both let out a low sigh.

“Big brother Ley.” Jenne said. “I feel very fortunate to have a big brother like you. No matter what, no matter where, I’ll follow you. I just hope that you won’t discard me before I get married.”

Linley slightly trembled.

But he immediately understood that Jenne truly had made up her mind to follow him. But judging from what Jenne was saying, over the course of these five years, Jenne had already mentally prepared for what he had said today.

“Then you’ve decided to follow me and leave here?” Linley asked.

Jenne paused for a second. After all, she was very close to her brother, Keane. In her heart, she couldn’t bear to part with him either. But after taking a glance at Keane and seeing how happy and loving he was with Irene, Jenne’s worries melted away.

“I can follow you away at any time, big brother Ley. Big brother Ley, where do we go first?” Jenne asked.

“We’ll first pay a visit to a small town near the provincial capital of Basil.” Linley replied.

“The provincial capital of Basil?” Keane started, then immediately said, “Big brother Ley, our Jacques clan will organize a yearly gathering at the provincial capital of Basil each year. It happens every year on November 15th. The day will come in three days. Big brother Linley, would you be willing to let my sis go with me one more time? It’s in the same direction anyhow.”

Keane looked expectantly at Linley.

Keane really couldn’t bear to be parted from his sister. He knew that Linley roamed the world. Once his sister left with Linley, who knew how long it would be before the two would meet again?

Having grown up alongside his big sister, their affection was naturally very deep.

Linley looked at Keane, then looked at Jenne. Finally, he nodded. “Fine. We’ll go to the provincial capital of Basil together. After you finish attending your clan’s annual gathering, Jenne will leave with me.”

“Thank you.” Keane said gratefully.

While Linley took up residence for a few days within the prefectural city’s castle, the Radiant Church’s forces that were hidden within the prefectural city of Cerre were very excited.

“That Linley actually came to the prefectural city of Cerre. This is wonderful.” A white haired man said, his face covered with excitement. “Five years, five full years. We’ve finally found Linley.”

The Radiant Church had been searching fruitlessly for Linley for five years.

Sadly, due to their lack of manpower within the O'Brien Empire, their forces were primarily concentrated in places such as prefectural cities. Naturally, they wouldn't be able to discover Linley, who was hiding within a countryside village.

However, in this prefectural city of Cerre, the place where Linley had once stayed for quite some time, the Radiant Church had a good amount of people present.

"Hurry and send a message to Lady Lyndin in the countryside. Tell her that Linley has arrived at the prefectural city of Cerre." The white robed man immediately instructed his subordinates.

Lyndin and the other five Angels, upon arriving at the O'Brien Empire, had searched everywhere for Linley for two full years, but had found nothing. In the end, with no other choices, they had settled into a small town near the prefectural city of Cerre, ready to act at a moment's notice.

As soon as they received any news, they would immediately head out.

They would kill Linley no matter what the cost, even if it meant they would have to die with him. This was their fate as Angels.

Chapter 43 – The Gathering in Basil

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 43, The Gathering in Basil

That night, Linley had dinner at the main hall of the governor's castle.

"Keane, Jenne. Come outside a moment." After finishing dinner, Linley called out to them, then walked out of the main hall to the quiet rear gardens.

Keane and Jenne exchanged glances, then followed Linley to the gardens as well.

The gardens at night were very peaceful and quiet. Looking at Jenne and Keane, Linley smiled. "Jenne, Keane, there's something I must inform you of."

Keane and Jenne stared at Linley, puzzled.

"The Radiant Church and I have a deep hatred between us. We will not rest until one or the other is destroyed."

These words from Linley immediately stunned Jenne and Keane. They knew that Linley was no ordinary man, but they had no idea that he was diametrically opposed to the Radiant Church.

The Radiant Church was, without question, an enormous entity.

Lowering his voice, Linley said, "Five years ago, when I fought with the Radiant Church, it most likely resulted in them becoming aware that I am in the O'Brien Empire. Five years ago, the forces of the Radiant Church became aware of Haeru's existence. I believe that just based on this alone, they should have discovered how I had followed the two of you to the prefectural city of Cerre."

Many people knew that back then, a mysterious expert with a black panther companion had protected Keane and Jenne on their journey to Cerre, allowing Keane to assume the position of city governor.

This wasn't a secret. It wouldn't be strange at all for the Radiant Church to find out about this.

"I suspect that the Radiant Church has definitely hidden quite a few people within the prefectural city of Cerre." Linley said calmly.

From the moment he had decided to come to the prefectural city of Cerre, Linley had already made certain plans.

That Stehle had exchanged blows with him before. After that fight, the Radiant Church would certainly have realized how dangerous Linley was to them. If they didn't send people immediately to kill him as soon as possible, then the Radiant Church really would be a pack of fools.

"Then what should we do?" Keane and Jenne were both rather bewildered.

"Jenne, first of all, let me ask you. Do you still want to follow me?" Linley stared at Jenne.

Jenne nodded without any hesitation.

Linley nodded slightly. "I'm afraid that within your castle, the Radiant Church has spies here as well. That's what I want to let you know…that I plan to leave the prefectural city of Cerre tonight."

"What?" Jenne looked at Linley in astonishment. "Big brother Ley, you plan to leave by yourself?"

"Don't worry. I'll just head out slightly before you do. I'll head to the provincial capital of Basil first. I'll take up residence in the eastern side of the city's Nile [Nai'er] Hotel. When the time comes, you can find me there." Linley was very confident in his ability to deal with the Radiant

Church's men.

However, he couldn't take Jenne and Keane along with him.

If he brought such a large group of people, he would be as good as harming Jenne and Keane.

"The Nile Hotel of the eastern city. This is a very famous hotel. I know where it is." Keane nodded. Over these five years, he had paid quite a few visits to the provincial capital.

Linley had made these plans long ago.

Right now, whether or not he killed the Radiant Church's forces wasn't important. After all, killing those people didn't make a huge difference to the Radiant Church.

If he encountered them, he would kill them. If he didn't, then forget it.

As for Jenne, by the time they reunited with the five Barker brothers and Zassler, Linley would no longer be concerned about any schemes the Radiant Church might have to play.

"Then I'll leave now." Linley laughed.

"Immediately?" Jenne and Keane were startled.

"Immediately. That way, the Radiant Church's men wouldn't have any idea." Linley chuckled, then transformed into a black blur, flying through the air and disappearing from the rear gardens.

At the same moment, the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, as well Bebe also departed at high speed.

Three black blurs flashed over the prefectural city of Cerre's twenty meter tall walls, easily crossing over to the other side. Although the city walls were useful against ordinary combatants, to experts on Linley's current

level, they were nothing more than a fairly high door stop.

Riding on Haeru's back, the night wind howled past Linley.

"I've discovered that I rather like the feeling of travelling by night." Feeling the cool wind blow against his face, Linley felt very much refreshed.

The light of the moon seemed to make the world covered by a layer of thin gauze, making everything seem so dreamlike.

This night, there were people riding on horses at high speed heading to other places as well. These were the people who were rushing towards Lyndin to give her the good news. However, there was a distance of over a hundred kilometers from the prefectural city of Cerre to the town Lyndin was staying in.

Linley had only arrived in the prefectural city of Cerre at nightfall. The supervisor for the prefectural city of Cerre only received the news at around 6 o'clock at night. By the time he sent someone out, it was already 7 o'clock.

At around 8 o'clock at night, Linley had left the prefectural city of Cerre.

At this time, that messenger was still on the road. By around 9 o'clock, the messenger finally managed to arrive at the town where Lyndin and the others were staying. The town was lit by fires. The poor man who had been blown on by the cold wind of November finally felt a hint of warmth.

"Lord Lyndin." The messenger man arrived at Lyndin's residence. Seeing Lyndin at the doorway, he immediately jumped off his horse. "Lord Lyndin, something important has happened. We've already discovered that Linley has arrived at the prefectural city of Cerre."

The eyes of Lyndin, who had been standing there coldly, suddenly lit up.

"Linley?" Lyndin was both shocked as well as overjoyed.

She had waited for five full years, to the point of being numb. And then tonight, this report had come out of nowhere.

“Syke [Sai’ke], Syke! All of you, come out.” Lyndin’s cold voice rang out a few times, and the other five Angels immediately rushed over.

These six Angels were all wearing human bodies, and thus their power was limited to that of a warrior of the ninth rank.

But their essence was still that of the Angels.

They would definitely obey orders. For the sake of the glory of the Lord, they would be willing to sacrifice their lives at any time.

Upon hearing that there was news of Linley’s return to the prefectural city of Cerre, the other five Angels grew excited as well. Their mission was to kill Linley.

“Let’s go, we head out immediately.” Lyndin immediately ordered.

“Yes.” The other five didn’t hesitate at all.

Lyndin and the others didn’t bother about the messenger. The six of them, relying on their legs, immediately began racing towards the direction of the prefectural city of Cerre. As combatants of the ninth rank, without question, the speed they could reach was much faster than that of horses.

The next morning.

Within a very ordinary manor in the prefectural city of Cerre. The previous night, Lyndin and her people had taken up residence here upon reaching the prefectural city of Cerre.

“What? Linley disappeared?” Lyndin stared coldly at the white-robed man in front of her.

The white-robed man immediately said, “Lord Lyndin, the people we

stationed within the city governor's castle didn't know either. They only found out this morning that Linley and his two magical beasts disappeared. Most likely, they've left the prefectural city of Cerre.

"Bam!"

Lyndin angrily smashed a fist against the stone desk in front of her, smashing it into tiny pieces. The other five Angels were extremely angry as well.

The six of them had spent over five years here. They had just received word of Linley's arrival, but then in the blink of an eye, he had disappeared again.

The white-robed man was somewhat nervous now. He knew that the six people in front of him were very powerful. Even the Northwest Administrative Province's supervisor had to obey the orders of these six people.

However, the white robed man didn't know that these six were actually angels.

Only in the moments before the deaths, when Lyndin and the others chose to go all out, would their true power as Angels be put on display.

"Investigate. Go investigate. Find out where Linley has gone. Also… activate every resource we have in the entire Northwest Administrative Province. We must find Linley. Linley must be somewhere within the Northwest Administrative Province." Lyndin said in a cold, deadly voice.

"Yes." The white-robed man immediately assented.

They hadn't been able to find Linley for five years. Lyndin had even begun to worry if Linley had perhaps left the O'Brien Empire. After all, given they had found no trace of him, there was no way they could be certain as to where he actually was.

But at least they now knew for sure that Linley was in the Northwest

Administrative Province.

Just as Lyndin was feeling furious at her helplessness on the third morning, they received word from the provincial capital of Basil.

“Linley has appeared within the provincial capital of Basil.”

As soon as they received this news, Lyndin’s other colleagues grew excited.

“Lord, shall we head out now?” The five looked at Lyndin expectantly. Lyndin was the captain of their squad. In fact, amongst the Descended Angels, Lyndin could be considered a fairly famous person.

The Angels that would descend into bodies that could only support the ninth rank were almost all Two-Winged Angels. Only three of them were Cherubim, Four-Winged Angels, and of the three, Lyndin was the only female one.

“That McKenzie is in the provincial capital.”

Lyndin frowned. “McKenzie has reached the Saint-level nearly sixty years ago. From our reports, his power can be considered a mid-stage Saint-level. If he were to interfere, things would become complicated.”

“Lord, if we were to go all out, killing McKenzie shouldn’t be too hard.” Another nearby Angel, the one known as Syke, spoke out.

“Right. When going all out, we can allow our bodies to collapse and utilize all of our true power. The five of us are all Two-Winged Angels, while you, Lord, are a Cherub. Although it will only be for a short period of time, it should be enough to kill Linley.

Hearing her subordinates words, Lyndin hesitated.

Indeed. If Angels were to ignore their physical collapse, they could indeed use all of their real power for a short period of time. But most likely, after just two or three attacks, their bodies would have turned to ash.

When a Cherub and five Two-Winged Angels used the Angel Battle Formation and allowed their bodies to collapse from using their full power, even a mid-stage Saint-level combatant might die in their hands.

“No rush.” Lyndin said calmly. “Everyone, calm down. Going all out is our last resort. After all, pre-transformation, Linley isn’t that impressive. We can instead find an opportunity where Linley is in his human form and directly kill him.”

“Lord, then your intention is to…” The five looked at Lyndin.

“That Linley doesn’t recognize the six of us.” A hint of a cruel smile was on Lyndin’s face.

That day, Lyndin’s group, led by the white-robed man, rode fine horses out of the prefectural city of Cerre.

“Lord, the military carriage up ahead belongs to the soldiers of the city governor of Cerre.” The white-robed man reported in a quiet voice to Lyndin and the others as soon as he saw them.

“Oh? Is it Jenne and Keane?” Lyndin glanced at the distant caravan.

Jenne and Keane’s relationship with Linley was something that Lyndin knew quite a bit about.

“Have your subordinates been mixed into their caravan?” Lyndin lowered her voice.

“Yes, Lord.” The white-robed man nodded. Smiling, Lyndin said, “That’s fine. For now, we don’t need to pay them any attention.

Lyndin’s group clearly travelled at a much faster pace than Keane and Jenne’s group. In the blink of an eye, they passed them by. The reason Keane and Jenne were making this trip

out to the prefectural city of Basil was because they needed to attend the annual dinner party.

Lyndin's team and Jenne's caravan were both headed towards the provincial capital of Basil. As for Linley, quite some time ago, he had settled down in the hotel in the east side of the city.

There was a small manor located right off behind the hotel. Linley was staying there.

"I came to the provincial capital of Basil in such grand fashion. Most likely, the Radiant Church's men recognized me. I wonder who the Radiant Church will send out next time?

Linley wasn't worried in the slightest. He was actually quite eager.

"I haven't encountered anyone who could fight me head on yet, or force me to use the 'Hundred Layered Waves' level of the 'Profound Truths of the Earth.'

Chapter 44 – Neighbors

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 44, Neighbors

The provincial capital of Basil was the base of operations for the ancient Jacques clan, here in the Northwest Administrative Province. Here in the Northwest Administrative Province, the Jacques clan could be considered the local kings. During their annual clan gathering, all of the various branches of the clan would hurry over to the provincial capital.

In the northeast part of the provincial capital, there was an extremely large and ancient castle. This was the headquarters of the Jacques clan.

Yulan calendar, year 10008. November 14th. This was a day when the Jacques clan's castle would always be decorated and brightly lit. The number of guards at the gate were tripled as well, compared to the past. In addition, many branch members of the clan were passing through the gates this day, arriving from all over the world.

"Sis, the clan's castle is much larger than ours, at least ten times larger." Keane peered through his carriage's cloth door while sighing in amazement.

This carriage contained three people. Keane, Irene, and Jenne.

Jenne also stared through the door. Nodding, she said, "The clan clearly has far more experts than us as well. Only, I wonder if Great-Grandfather will be there as well."

The Great-Grandfather which Jenne spoke of was McKenzie.

Each year, at the annual gathering, McKenzie sometimes attended but sometimes did not. However, two years ago, McKenzie did show himself once. That sighting had satisfied Jenne and Keane's desire to see the hero whom everyone in the clan worshipped.

“It is very possible. Irene has never seen Great-Grandfather.” Keane held his wife’s hands.

The caravan quickly arrived at the castle gates. It came to a halt. Jenne, Keane, and Irene all knew the rules. They got off the carriage.

“Jenne!” A happy, teasing voice rang out.

Immediately upon hearing this voice, Jenne frowned, but then she squeezed out a smile. She turned her head and looked towards a young man with gleaming hair. “Cousin Albert [Ai’bo’te].”

“Cousin Albert.” Keane and Irene also said courteously.

Albert looked like someone who was full of himself. Being educated since he was young had given him the airs of an ancient, noble clan, but just by looking at his eyes and his face, anyone could tell that this man was an empty-headed lecher.

But Albert was the eldest son of the current clan leader of the Jacques clan, and was the successor to the position as well.

The future clan leader of the Jacques clan. Who would dare look down at Albert, given his status?

“Jenne, you are growing more beautiful by the year. Keane, Irene, don’t just stand there like idiots, come in.” Albert warmly escorted Jenne and the others into the castle.

Because the family gathering was on November 15th, quite a few people arrived on the 14th. The night of the 14th, the castle of the Jacques clan was extremely lively.

“Big sis, feeling frustrated over Albert again?”

Keane walked into Jenne’s room. Seeing Jenne standing at the window and sighing, he immediately could guess at what Jenne was thinking about.

Jenne turned her head to glance at her younger brother. Frowning, she said, “That Albert doesn’t have any good intentions. Each time at our clan gathering, he’ll come bother me. These days never pass by easily.”

“Sis.” Keane took his sister by the hand. Apologetically, he said, “I know that the only reason you didn’t go with big brother Ley was because you wanted to spend a few more days with me.”

“Keane.” Jenne affectionately patted Keane on the head. “Keane, you are even taller than me now.”

Keane lowered his head silently.

Jenne had taken care of Keane since they were young. Ever since they had arrived in the Holy Union, their mother had been severely ill, and so Jenne had taken care of Keane like a mother would have.

The affection between these two siblings was very deep.

“Jenne, Cousin Jenne.” Albert’s voice rang out again.

Jenne and Keane both frowned, no trace of enjoyment on their faces now. This Albert really was as annoying and stifling as a boa constrictor.

In the blink of an eye, Albert had arrived at the doorway.

“Jenne. Oh, Keane, you are here also.” Albert beamed. “Jenne, we’re organizing a small banquet in the main hall. Jenne, let’s go together. I’ve arranged for some people to prepare several beautiful evening gowns for you.”

Jenne shook her head. “No need. I’m feeling a bit dizzy and am a bit unwell.”

“Why would you be feeling unwell? Let me take a look.” Albert actually stepped forward, intending to touch Jenne by her forehead. Jenne

immediately took two steps back.

Keane snickered from the side, “Cousin Albert, my sister isn’t feeling well. Let her have a good rest.”

Albert stood there for a moment, then laughed and nodded. “Fine.” He then stared at Keane. “Keane, come with me for a moment. Cousin Jenne, have a good rest. If there is anything you need, just let the servants know.” He gave Keane a meaningful look.

Keane nodded, then followed Albert out.

Within the flower garden.

Albert and Keane were walking together. Albert was silent, and Keane said nothing either.

After a long time…

“Keane, how does it feel to be the governor of a prefectural city?” Albert suddenly asked.

Keane was startled. Slowly, he said, “Pretty good.”

Albert laughed and nodded. “Of course it’s good. You govern millions of people, Keane. You must understand that the entire Northwest Administrative Province has only ten prefectural cities. Positions like the city governorship are highly sought after, and many people keep their eyes on those positions. After all, our Jacques clan is a large clan.”

As though he understood something, Keane nodded.

The Jacques clan was continuously starting new branches. Naturally, each generation was more numerous than the last. In the past, the reason why Keane’s father, Count Wade, had been lucky enough to receive the governorship was because he was on very close terms with the previous clan leader.

In truth, the various city governorships were totally all controlled and decided upon by the clan leader of the Jacques clan.

After all, the Jacques clan had sole authority over the management of the Northwest Administrative Province.

“Keane, you should know that many of my younger siblings have grown up now, such as my own third brother. Right now, he’s only a major in the army. Many of these people would very much like to become the governor of a prefectural city.” Albert looked at Keane with an expression that both was and wasn’t a smile.

Keane knew what Albert was hinting at.

“And not just my siblings. My uncles as well. In the past, they weren’t able to overcome your father, but they’ve never given up.”

Albert looked at Keane. “Keane, I have a very good impression of you. But you must understand that to get something, you have to give something.”

Keane was silent.

“Keane, you have taken the city governorship, yes, but I, the future clan leader, can make you lose it as well.” Albert saw that Keane was silent, and began to speak more coldly.

“Cousin Albert, go ahead and state your desires.” Keane forced a smile to his face.

Albert laughed. “Haha, you are my cousin. Of course I won’t force you to do anything. I just hope that we can further deepen our relationship. For example, you can have your big sister marry me. What do you think?”

Keane was filled with rage.

He knew Albert’s intentions long ago. Such a gentle, beautiful, virtuous

woman such as Jenne, especially after beginning to train in water-style magic, was a very mesmerizing, refined lady.

Albert had been lusting after her this entire time.

But Albert was already thirty years old and had three wives. If Keane's sister were to marry him, she would be nothing more than a concubine.

What's more, his sister was going to follow Linley.

"Cousin Albert, I've told you in the past that my sister already has someone she likes." Keane said helplessly.

"What a joke." Albert sneered. "Keane, if your sister has someone she likes, why hasn't she gotten married yet? And even if she likes someone, we can just go ahead and kill him."

Albert had desired Jenne for quite some time now. Not only was she beautiful, she was a magus. After a person trained in magic, their longevity would be extended. Most likely, even when she was sixty or seventy, Jenne would look like a thirty year old lady. Albert naturally desired a wife like this.

"You can't kill him. The person my sister likes is an expert of the ninth rank." Keane made up his mind.

"A combatant of the ninth rank?" Albert frowned.

This was troublesome. If he were the current clan leader, he could use the powerful soldiers of the clan to go kill that expert of the ninth rank. But he was only a successor. The people at his disposal were quite limited, and they weren't very powerful either.

"Keane, you'd best not be lying to me." Albert stared coldly at Keane.

Keane bowed slightly. "Cousin Albert, I'm definitely not lying. My sister likes him. There's nothing I can do about that. Cousin Albert, I won't

disturb you any further. I bid you farewell."

Albert let out a cold snort, staring at Keane as he left.

"Five years." Albert stared in the direction of Jenne's room. "This time, I definitely cannot let Jenne slip away again. So what if he is an expert of the ninth rank? Does he dare come and make trouble for the Jacques clan?" A fierce, wolf-like look was in Albert's eyes.

On the 15th, Linley had headed to the headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate early in the morning. Using his medallion showing that he was an elder, he sent some people to Cloudpeaks Village to inform Zassler and the others that he was going to be delayed.

And then, Linley quietly stayed in the Nile Hotel.

There were over ten manors behind the Nile Hotel, all of which were tall and well made. Linley was residing in one of them.

Within his courtyard, Linley finished carving a sculpture, and then began to wave his adamantine heavy sword about as he pleased.

Bebe and Haeru both lazily rested on the ground.

After training with the sword for some time, Linley came to a halt, a sudden thought having come to mind. "It has been a year since I reached the peak of the eighth rank. In this past month, I've always had this feeling that I'm about to break through, but for some reason, there's just some tiny piece missing."

To an ordinary person, breaking through from the peak of the eighth rank to the ninth rank wasn't a big deal.

But for Supreme Warriors, the difference between the two was extremely great. Upon entering the ninth rank, Linley in Dragonform would be at the Saint-level.

“I can’t be too hasty. My speed of training is already very fast.” Linley was still fairly calm. Staring towards the south, Linley once again began to think about his younger brother, Wharton. “When I reach the ninth rank, I’ll head towards the imperial capital and meet with my younger brother. It has been a long, long time since I’ve seen Wharton.”

Ever since Wharton had left home when he was six and headed to the O’Brien Empire along with Housekeeper Hiri, the two brothers had never met again.

And now, Wharton was twenty two years old. In another month, he would be twenty three.

“Hrm?” Linley suddenly turned and stared at the courtyard walls.

The various manors operated by the hotel were all quite close to each other, with each plot of land divided into two manors. At this time, in the manor adjoining Linley’s, the person who was renting that manor had climbed over the wall and was peeking in this direction.

This guest was an extremely adorable, agile young lady. Her guileless eyes were staring in Linley’s direction, but they were locked on the Blackcloud Panther on the ground.

“Wow, what a huge panther.” The young lady very agilely hopped over the wall, and then jogged towards Haeru.

“Don’t touch him.” Linley immediately shouted.

The young lady came to a halt, smiling and laughing at Linley. “Big brother, I’ve never seen such an adorable, large black panther. Can I please touch him?”

This young lady had a head full of silver hair, and her eyes were very intelligent. She had a playful smile on her face, but she was dressed in the garb of a female warrior.

Linley took a sizing look at this silver-haired girl.

A warrior's power was hard to gauge just by looking at them, but Linley could tell from this girl's aura that she was at least a warrior of the seventh rank, or perhaps even higher.

"Haeru doesn't like being touched by others." Linley said calmly.

The silver-haired girl couldn't help but pout, scrunching her nose up as she frowned. "Hmph, I don't believe you. My teacher's magical beasts often let me touch them." The silver-haired girl ran directly towards Haeru.

"Groooooowl." Haeru suddenly rose to his feet, baring his sharp fangs as he stared coldly at the silver-haired girl.

The silver-haired girl was immediately frightened, and she stumbled back two steps.

"I told you. Haeru doesn't like being touched. Enough, you can go back to your own place now." Linley directly asked her to leave.

The silver-haired girl smiled bewitchingly at Linley. "My master told me that panther-type magical beasts are very formidable. Then big brother, you must be very powerful as well. Can I spar with you?"

"Spar?" Linley disliked his life being interrupted by others.

"Let me introduce myself first. My name is Danlan [Dan'lan]." The silver-haired girl said with an adorable smile.

"You can call me Ley. But I don't have any time for you. You can go back now." Linley still spoke coldly and calmly. For a young girl to be at least a warrior of the seventh rank…she wasn't as simple as she appeared.

The silver-haired girl pouted helplessly. "Oh. Got it." And then she turned and left, although her heart was filled with frustration. "This Linley really is a cold fellow. Getting close to him will be difficult. But I won't give up so

easily either. If I can kill him easily, I will."

This silver-haired girl was Lyndin.

But in terms of temperament, Lyndin had changed dramatically. In the past, she was an ice-cold Angel. But now, she had become adorable and lively. One had to admit that her acting skills were formidable.

"Oh, big brother Ley, you are a sculptor?" Lyndin looked at the sculpture Linley had just completed and immediately ran over in excitement. Staring at it, she said happily, "My teacher also likes sculptures, but he doesn't know how to carve himself." As she spoke, Lyndin carefully inspected the sculpture with great curiosity.

Linley frowned.

This silver-haired girl was really annoying!

Chapter 45 – Vicious Acts

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 45, Vicious Acts

This sculpture was one which Linley had just finished not too long ago. Given Linley's current skill, his stonesculpting was at an extremely high level as well. This silver-haired young lady carefully examined the sculpture from every angle.

"Wonderful. Just wonderful."

After inspecting the sculpture with great care for a while, she turned her head to look at Linley. "Big brother Ley, I sense that this sculpture of yours is better than those of my master's, but I don't know exactly how to describe it."

Despite such an adorable girl looking at him like this, Linley only felt irritated.

"Miss Danlan, I need to train." Linley said tactfully.

The silver-haired girl nodded. "Okay, I'll leave right away." As soon as she said these words, Linley let out a sigh of relief. But then the silver-haired girl continued, "However, big brother Ley, after you finish training, you need to teach me how to stone sculpt."

Linley hardened his face. "Stone sculpting is one of the top tier artistic forms. How can I so easily transmit its secrets to others?"

Indeed, most master-level sculptors would not easily accept disciples.

"Oh." The silver-haired girl lowered her head in disappointment, beginning to walk to the nearby wall. And then, with an easy leap, she jumped to the other side.

“She’s finally gone.” Linley let out a long sigh.

But then, the silver-haired girl’s head popped out from over the wall. “Big brother Ley, have a good training session. After you are done, I’ll come and find you.” After speaking, she disappeared again.

Lyndin returned to her own bedroom. Sitting down on a chair, her face returned to its usual coldness, and her eyes were as icy and merciless as ever. If Linley saw her, he wouldn’t be able to believe that someone was able to act so well.

“This Linley is suspicious of everyone, and won’t let anyone easily get close to him. This is rather troublesome.”

As a Descended Angel, Lyndin actually truly did not wish for her and the other five Angels to die alongside Linley.

However, as an Angel, she could not disobey orders.

One step at a time.

If she could easily kill Linley somehow, wouldn’t that be better than sacrificing her life?

“Given the amount of care Linley has shown towards Jenne and Keane, it makes no sense that he would be so suspicious towards me.” Lyndin had come up with this plan after learning about how Linley had treated Jenne and Keane.

As long as Lyndin could get into close physical range with Linley, given her power as a combatant of the ninth rank, she could suddenly ambush him from close range in his human form. She had a 90%+ chance to kill him in that sort of situation.

“Perhaps it was because he sensed my power.” Lyndin shook her head. “This Linley has no sense of curiosity. I mentioned my ‘master’ several times, but he still didn’t ask me who my master is.”

Lyndin actually had prepared an entire chain of lines to fool Linley.

Although Lyndin appeared very young, in reality, her actual age was most likely far greater than that of Doehring Cowart. Only, the ten thousand years she had spent in the divine realm of the Radiant Sovereign hadn't been as impactful to her as the decades she had spent here.

…..

"From her personality and her attitude, that silver-haired girl seems like an unreasonable little princess." Linley frowned. "But her power…"

In truth, Linley was continuously wary of the Radiant Church's forces.

As far as Linley was concerned, the Radiant Church's forces should have already located him here by now. And now, all of a sudden, a young female warrior of the seventh rank appeared? Even if she appeared to be lively and cute, Linley wouldn't easily trust her.

Before he trusted someone, he would take their strength into consideration.

If she had been a weak little girl who didn't have the strength to kill a chicken, Linley's attitude probably would have been much better. After all, even if you gave such a girl a weapon, she wouldn't be able to hurt him at all. But this young lady was different.

If she were to suddenly attack him from a near distance, it would be very possible for her to heavily injure or kill him.

"Could it be that the assassin the Radiant Church has sent after me this time is this young lady?" But thinking back to the innocent, pure look in the silver-haired girl's eyes, Linley found it rather hard to believe.

That night.

The silver-haired girl came again, but this time, she came pushing a hotel

food cart from the front gate.

“Big brother Ley, I took the place of the servant in delivering dinner for you.” Lyndin’s clear voice rang out. Her face was covered with smiles, but Linley, looking at her, only felt a headache coming.

“You again?”

“What, is there a problem?” Lyndin pouted, then tittered, “Big brother Ley, I brought you dinner, so you teach me stone sculpting, okay?”

“No.” Linley refused.

“Stingy.” Lyndin wrinkled her nose. “When I cook for my teacher, my teacher will do anything I ask him to. You are a stingy fellow.”

“Your teacher is your teacher, I am not.” Linley simply wouldn’t agree.

This stranger was at least of the seventh rank, and perhaps even higher. Linley would not permit this female warrior to draw close to him, while teaching someone how to stone sculpt would definitely require them to be in close physical contact.

After all, this period of time was the period when he was expecting the Radiant Church to act against him.

“Remember. I don’t want you delivering my dinner.” Linley said coldly.

Lyndin’s face changed, and she glared angrily at Linley. “You bastard. You don’t know when someone is being good to you. I’ll definitely go tell my master. He’ll come over here and kill you.”

“Kill me?” Linley looked at the angry expression the girl’s face.

“Of course. My master is very powerful.” The silver-haired girl said arrogantly.

“Who is this oh-so-powerful master of yours?” Linley asked.

The silver-haired girl said arrogantly, “I’ll tell you. The name of my master is Haydson [Hei’de’sen].”

“The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson?” Linley was startled.

In the entire O’Brien Empire, if the War God was considered the number one expert, then without question, the second highest expert would be the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. This Monolithic Sword Saint had been at the peak-stage of the Saint-level for many years now, and he had never lost a single duel against any Saint-level experts.

He was flawless in terms of both offense and defense.

In addition, he was a very cold and remote person. Virtually nothing was capable of impeding his developments. A flawless, perfect Saint-level expert who towered above all others, his very perfect was the reason why others dubbed him the ‘Monolithic Sword Saint’.

“So now you know that you should be afraid?” The silver-haired girl laughed arrogantly. “But don’t worry. So long as you teach me how to stone sculpt, I won’t tell my teacher.”

“No wonder.” Linley looked at the silver-haired girl. “What rank are you currently at?”

“The eighth rank already.” The silver-haired girl said proudly. “What do you think? The entire Empire doesn’t have many experts of the eighth rank who are younger than me.”

Linley glanced at the silver-haired girl. “Miss Danlan, you can go back and tell your teacher that I am unwilling to teach you stone sculpting. I want to see if he will come over and kill me.”

The silver-haired girl started, and then her attitude softened. Begging, she said, “Big brother Ley, I’m begging you, just teach me, okay?” As she

spoke, she walked closer to Linley.

Linley directly took three steps back, retreating into his main hall.

“Miss Danlan, I need to rest now. You should go back.” Linley shut the door to his manor.

“Hrmph.”

The silver-haired girl let out a snort, then left.

The next two days, the silver-haired girl would try all sorts of things; she would buy beautiful clothes to bring to Linley as a gift, or pretend to be very pitiable and just watch Linley. It was as though she absolutely refused to accept the fact that Linley wouldn’t teach her how to stone sculpt.

The fourth day.

This morning, Lyndin came to Linley’s courtyard once more, as she had every day past.

“Big brother Ley, I’m leaving now.” Lyndin said in a somewhat lost voice.

Linley glanced at the silver-haired girl with some surprise. These past three days, Linley had been tormented by this girl to the point of getting a headache whenever he saw her. What’s more, Linley was still uncertain as to who this girl really was.

Someone belonging to the Radiant Church?

Or the disciple of the Monolithic Sword Saint?

But the longer he had interacted with Lyndin, the more Linley came to feel that this silver-haired girl really was the playful, active type. He didn’t really think she belonged to the Radiant Church.

“If she is an assassin of the Radiant Church, then I am truly in awe of her

acting abilities.” Linley secretly said to himself.

Lyndin glanced at Linley helplessly. “Big brother Ley, I’ve always worshipped my master, and my master also likes sculpture. I really wanted to carve a good sculpture for him, but you aren’t willing to teach me.”

“It is useless if you do not have enough time and not enough talent.” Linley shook his head.

Lyndin’s eyes lit up. She quickly said, “I have both time and talent.”

“Are you an earth-style magus?” Linley suddenly asked.

“No.” Lyndin shook her head, then asked questioningly, “What does this have to do with being an earth-style magus?”

Linley shook his head. “If you are not an earth-style magus, that means you do not have the talent necessary to learn stone sculpting from me.” Linley was telling the truth. The Straight Chisel School of sculpting required the sculptor to be an earth-style magus.

“You are just making that up.” Lyndin took a step forward, pointing at Linley with a finger. “I’ve never heard anyone say that stone sculpting required one to be an earth-style magus.”

“There’s many things you don’t know.” Linley laughed calmly.

Right now, Lyndin was roughly two meters away from Linley. Lyndin was calculating to herself, “Two meters distance. In his normal human form, I am more powerful than Linley. I should have the chance to kill him.”

Originally, Lyndin had wanted for the two of them to be in even closer proximity before making her move.

But Linley didn’t give her the chance.

“Big brother Ley, I know that you are lying. Big brother Ley, I just want to

ask you one last time. Are you willing to teach me stone sculpting?" Lyndin looked at Linley with hopeful eyes.

Linley shook his head.

"Oh." Lyndin lowered her head despondently.

But right at this moment, Lyndin suddenly charged at Linley, moving as fast as lightning, while from within Lyndin's right hand, a dagger appeared.

Two meters. They were too close.

But then, a strange violet light flashed.

Lyndin only felt as though that violet sword flash flickered everywhere, changing positions constantly. It somehow wrapped around her dagger and her arm as well.

"Hrmph."

Lyndin immediately dropped her dagger while slamming her left hand directly at Linley.

"Boom!"

Their two hands clashed against each other, and Lyndin hurriedly charged forward. But Linley moved in a strangely graceful way backwards, in the blink of an eye retreating to the corner of the wall.

"Growl."

Haeru and Bebe were both standing by Linley's side, but before Haeru and the others could attack, Lyndin immediately retreated.

"You want to kill me?" Linley stared coldly at Lyndin.

Raising her head high, Lyndin said angrily, "Ley, listen up. I, Danlan, have

never begged anyone in my entire life like I did just now. Even when I'm with my master, I've never acted like this before. Three full days! I tried everything I could to beg you to teach me, but you refuse to do so. So what if I want to kill you now? Is there something wrong about that?"

"Such overbearing logic." Linley looked at Lyndin.

Lyndin stood at the gate to Linley's manor, staring angrily at him. "If you have the ability to do so, come and kill me. My fellow apprentices will be arriving soon. If you dare bully me, I'll go tell them about it!"

Right now, Linley's desire to kill had already been aroused.

Regardless of whether this 'Danlan' girl was really the student of the Monolithic Sword Saint, or if she was not, she definitely had tried to kill him just then.

But Linley had this strange feeling of danger.

He couldn't clearly explain where it was coming from, but this feeling was warning him…do not pursue Danlan. If you do, it will be very dangerous.

"Hrmph, you don't have the guts to kill me, right? Then I'm leaving." Lyndin arrogantly pushed the door to the manor open, then began walking out. Linley didn't chase after her, only mentally sending out an order. "Bebe, go through the underground tunnels and take a look to see what is outside."

Right now, outside Linley's gate.

The other five experts of the ninth rank were all outside the gate. They had taken up their positions long ago, ready to join with Lyndin in the Angel Battle Formation at any time.

When Lyndin walked out of the courtyard, she used her eyes to signal the other five.

Those five quietly followed behind Lyndin, quickly departing.

“Hrmph.” Exiting the hotel, Lyndin was very unhappy. “If just then, Linley had chased after me, the six of us could’ve killed Linley in the blink of an eye. But he kept hiding in his manor, with those two magical beasts beside him. Even if the six of us ran inside, given Linley’s speed, he definitely would be able to flee.

Lyndin knew very well that killing Linley within the provincial capital was not a wise decision. After all, McKenzie was living in that nearby castle. Given McKenzie’s speed, he could probably fly over here in the blink of an eye.

“Lord, what should we do?” The other five were looking at Lyndin.

“Execute the next strategy.” Lyndin said coldly. “As for killing Linley in a suicide attack, that is an option of last resort, to be used only if we have no other choices.” The other five nodded.

Even Angels wouldn’t be willing to throw away their lives too easily.

“Hrm?” Lyndin suddenly saw a man and a woman being escorted by quite a few guards. Lyndin had seen pictures of Jenne and Keane before. “I hadn’t gone to find them yet, but they actually delivered themselves to me?” Lyndin’s lips began to curve up in a smile.

Chapter 46 – A Change of Plans

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 46, A Change of Plans

Within the courtyard.

“Boss, just now, when I dug my way through the tunnels and went outside, I saw that five men left alongside that Danlan chick.” Bebe’s eyes were shining with an angry light. “That bad woman! She definitely had ill intentions.”

Linley laughed calmly. “No need to over-think things. That woman was almost certainly someone the Radiant Church sent to kill me. Just now, if I had chased out after her, most likely as soon as I stepped out of the gate, the people lying in ambush outside would’ve attacked at the same time and killed me. If she hadn’t already made up her mind to kill me long ago, why would she have arranged for people to lie in ambush? What’s more, I couldn’t sense those people at all.”

He hadn’t been able to detect the presences of those five men hiding outside. These five men were definitely experts, experts that were no weaker than he himself.

“Master, what should we do, then?” Haeru mentally transmitted.

With a thought, Linley summoned his adamantine heavy sword to his hands. “What should we do? We don’t need to mind them. When Jenne returns, I’ll immediately take her away from here. If they follow, I’ll kill them.”

As long as he wasn’t ambushed, after transforming into his Dragonform, with the adamantine heavy sword in hand, Linley was confident of dealing with even an early-stage Saint-level expert.

A short while later.

“Big brother Ley.” That familiar voice rang out.

“Enter.” Linley laughed as he stood up, casually pulling the gate open. Jenne and Keane walked in.

Keane looked at Linley, sighing. “Big brother Ley, my sis almost got taken advantage of this time. Fortunately I was cautious and arranged people to surround and guard her room.”

“Taken advantage of?” Linley looked at Jenne.

Jenne shook her head and laughed. “It’s nothing. It’s just that Albert, the first successor to the clan leader position. Tonight, he was planning to secretly enter my room. Fortunately, my little bro had taken some precautionary measures. That Albert was afraid of this situation getting out of hand as well. After all, there were many people inside the castle.”

“That Albert has always had bad intentions towards you. I don’t dare to be caught off-guard. Even if I stop being the city governor, so what? No matter what, I won’t allow you to be taken advantage of by that bastard, sis.” Keane said solemnly.

Somewhat moved, Jenne looked at her little brother.

Linley looked at Keane with praise in his eyes as well.

“Sis, in the future, when you are following big brother Ley, you have to take good care of yourself.” Keane’s eyes were starting to turn red. “But as long as you are with big brother Ley, I’m not too worried about you.”

Lyndin was standing not too far away from the hotel, and had watched as Jenne and her younger brother had entered.

“Let’s sit down nearby and take a rest for now.” Lyndin pointed at the first floor of the hotel. “But while resting, we have to keep an eye on things

outside. When Jenne and Keane head out, we'll immediately follow them."

The other five all nodded, and they followed Lyndin into the hotel.

But after one or two minutes, Albert brought around ten or so people into the hotel.

"Is this the place?" Albert asked one of his subordinates.

"Yes, young master. Miss Jenne entered this hotel." Hearing this, Albert nodded. "Go investigate for me and find out who the bastard is that Jenne likes."

As he spoke, Albert rubbed the wound on his face.

Last night, he really did cut quite the sorry figure.

He knew that Jenne was a magus of the third rank, but he himself was a warrior of the fourth rank. He was planning to slip in while she was asleep and rape her. That shouldn't have been too hard. So, late at night, he stealthily crept towards Jenne's room.

But who would've expected that Jenne's room had a female guard in it, and not just Jenne.

What's more, there were guards hidden outside the room as well.

He, the stately successor to the clan leader position of the Jacques clan, was soundly thrashed by that female guard. Fortunately, Jenne and the female guard knew who he was and so had not dared to kill him. At the time, Jenne had also told him to give up, because in the future, she was going to travel to the ends of the earth by the side of the man she loved.

"Could it be that she is going to go by the side of this mysterious warrior of the ninth rank and travel the world with him?" Albert's heart was filled with suppressed rage.

“Let’s sit here for a while. We’ll have some food and wait.” Albert shouted.

Albert led his group of men into the Nile Hotel as well, into the main floor. But as soon as the fuming Albert entered the hotel, his eyes immediately lit up as he saw who was inside.

Albert stared fixedly at Lyndin.

“This beauty is as lovely as an angel.” Albert sighed to himself.

Albert was quite choosy. He was already bored with ordinary beautiful girls. But Lyndin truly was astonishingly beautiful. Not only were her facial features exquisite, she also had that cold, holy aura about her.

Lyndin, no longer putting on an act, had totally returned to her usual temperament.

The holier and purer a woman seemed, the more Albert desired her. Albert felt extremely satisfied when he had a holy and pure woman beneath his thighs.

“Pretty lady, your humble servant is named Albert Jacques. Very happy to meet you.” Albert walked over, saying modestly.

Lyndin glanced at him, not paying him any attention.

“F*ck off.” One of the golden-haired men next to Lyndin barked.

“You lookin’ to die?” The guard behind Albert immediately drew his weapon, staring coldly at the golden-haired man. This time, as he followed Jenne over, Albert had been very careful.

He knew that Jenne’s paramour was a warrior of the ninth rank, and thus everyone he brought today was an expert. One of them was a student of his great grandfather, a warrior of the ninth rank.

“Jacques?” Lyndin suddenly turned to look at him. She only now had paid

attention to the lineage of the buffoon in front of her.

“Yes.” Albert smiled proudly.

One of Albert’s servants said arrogantly, “The young master of my clan is the successor to the clan leader position. Your group actually dares to be impolite to the young master?”

The Northwest Administrative Province was the domain of the Jacques clan. Albert was the successor to the clan leader position. Indeed, he had the right to act so overbearingly.

“Albert.” A middle-aged man standing behind Albert said softly, “None of those six, including that woman, are weak. It is very likely that they are all warriors of the eighth rank, and perhaps even of the ninth.”

Albert was startled.

At this moment, Lyndin rose to her feet, smiling. “Young master Albert, hello. I’ve come with my five fellow apprentices in search of a man we intend to kill.”

“Five fellow apprentices? Who is your master?” The middle-aged man behind Albert asked.

“The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.” Lyndin said.

The reason why Lyndin dared to make wild claims like this was primarily because the Monolithic Sword Saint was a man who liked to roam all about the world. Thus, there were most likely very few people in the entire O’Brien Empire who knew exactly who the apprentices of the Monolithic Sword Saint were.

“The Monolithic Sword Saint?”

Everyone was shocked.

“Young master.” A servant of Albert’s came running over. “Young master, we have the information. The man whom Miss Jenne came here to meet registered under the name of ‘Ley’.”

“Ley?” Albert frowned.

“Never heard of him.” Albert turned to look at the expert he had brought. “Uncle Slan [Si’lan], are you confident you can deal with him?” The middle-aged man frowned.

But hearing this, Lyndin’s heart was suddenly swayed.

“Young master Albert, can it be that you have a grudge against that man named Ley?” Lyndin laughed.

Albert looked at her in surprise. “What of it?”

“My five fellow apprentices and I have come to deal with him.” Lyndin smiled.

Albert was immediately excited. He really did hope to develop a closer relationship with this holy, pure beauty, and this was an excellent opportunity.

“Perhaps I will not only kill Ley and acquire Jenne, I will also acquire this beauty in front of me.” Albert’s heart began to quiver. Lyndin’s beauty was not one whit inferior to Jenne’s, and in fact she was even superior.

Albert smiled. “That is wonderful. Everyone will work together, then. What is your name?”

“I am called Danlan.” Lyndin still used the same false name.

“Beautiful Lady Danlan, your master, Lord Haydson, has previously paid a visit to the Jacques clan before as well. At that time, he had spent a full month together with my great grandfather.” Albert said, attempting to draw a closer connection.

“Oh?” Lyndin seemed rather surprised.

“Indeed.” Albert then looked at the five men behind Lyndin. “Are your people confident in your ability to deal with Ley?”

“Do you not have faith in the disciples my master taught?” Lyndin said somewhat unhappily. That frown on Lyndin’s face when she was unhappy only made her look all the more mesmerizing. Albert could almost feel his heart twitching ferociously.

Just as Albert and Lyndin were chatting, the people keeping tabs on Jenne rushed in from the outside.

“Young master, bad news! That Ley took Miss Jenne with him and actually separated from young master Keane. And they just exited the courtyard. It seems they plan to leave.”

Albert immediately jumped to his feet.

Albert, Lyndin, and the others all stared at the outside through the window. Indeed, Jenne was following Linley on the street in a direction heading outside of the city.

As far as Keane, his group was taking a different route. The two even waved farewell to each other.

“She’s leaving? Jenne is really leaving with this Ley?”

Lyndin’s face changed, and her mind became unsettled.

The strategy she had just came up with had just been ruined by Linley suddenly leaving with Jenne. She didn’t expect that Jenne would leave with Linley. After all, Jenne had been with Keane for all these years.

“Jenne is really going to leave with that bastard? It seems the two of them really do plan to wander the world together.” Albert fumed. “Men, attend

me!”

“Don’t be hasty.” Lyndin’s eyes lit up, and she immediately interrupted him.

Albert looked questioningly at Lyndin. Lyndin, by now, knew that with Linley’s departure alongside Jenne, her previous plan was now useless.

But there was another way.

“Albert, send some people to follow them. Once they leave the city, we will ride horses after them. Outside the city… my fellow apprentices and I will kill him.” Lyndin said confidently.

Outside the city, most likely McKenzie would only be able to arrive after they had already killed Linley.

“Oh?” Albert was delighted. If he didn’t have to personally act, of course he would only be all the happier.

“How about this. After they leave the city, lead a squad of knights after them. Myself and my five fellow apprentices will join the squad, so Linley doesn’t notice us at first. When the time is right…” Lyndin laughed coldly.

When Linley was caught off-guard, the six of them would suddenly erupt from the squad and surround Linley, setting up the Angel Battle Formation.

In a short period of time, they would kill Linley.

Once the Angel Battle Formation was successfully set up, they had a virtually 100% chance of killing Linley. After all, when Angels set up the Angel Battle Formation, even if they didn’t go all out, they could still kill early-stage Saint-level experts. Once they did go all out and allow their bodies to collapse, even a middle-stage Saint-level expert might perish.

“No problem.” Albert patted his chest and guaranteed.

Lyndin and the other five were all smiles, while Albert was smiling

radiantly as well.

Outside the city.

Jenne rode on the back of the black panther, while Linley was walking, as smooth and graceful as the wind. While walking, Linley chatted and laughed with Jenne.

Jenne's face was radiant, filled with the light of true happiness. As long as she could often see Linley and chat with him, Jenne felt that she was already very happy and fortunate.

"Jenne, in a bit, please be careful." Linley suddenly said.

"What?" Jenne was somewhat startled.

Linley said casually, "There's a squad of knights chasing after us." A hint of a murderous intent was in Linley's eyes. This squad most likely had to do with the Radiant Church.

"It is about time to truly test the power of the Hundred Layered Waves anyhow." Linley intentionally continued forward at their current pace, allowing the squad to have the chance to catch up.

Chapter 47 – The Angel Battle Formation

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 47, The Angel Battle Formation

It was deep into autumn already. The cold autumn wind howled across the land like icy blades as an elite squad of knights galloped forward.

“Faster, faster!”

With Albert dressed in simple armor leading the way, the group quickly galloped forward on the desolate road, with several dozen knights following behind Albert. By Albert’s side, there was a middle-aged man, the one and only expert of the ninth rank under Albert’s command.

As for Lyndin and the other five, they were also wearing ordinary knight’s armor and wearing gray knight’s helmets. Just from appearances, one wouldn’t be able to tell that Lyndin and the others were any different from the rest of the knights.

“Remember.” Lyndin said quietly to the five men with her. “When we catch up to Linley, once Albert gives the order to attack, each of you will split up and follow these knights to surround Linley. With Linley off-guard, we’ll execute the Angel Battle Formation. Remember, no matter what, don’t be too hasty with your attack. You absolutely must await my order.”

“Yes, Lord.”

The five all nodded.

A hint of a smile was on Lyndin’s lips. “Giddyup.”

The sound of hoof steps continued to ring out, and the squad kicked up clouds of dust in their wake. In the blink of an eye, they had travelled a great distance.

Linley had intentionally lowered his own speed to allow this group of people to catch up. Naturally, after just a short period of time at full gallop, Albert's squad saw Linley's figure.

"He's right ahead." Albert was very happy, and he immediately began to shout, "Faster, faster!"

Those knights began to call out loudly as well, and they prodded their horses to gallop even faster. Within the thunder of their hoof steps, this group of knights quickly neared Linley.

"Remember, hang on to Haeru's neck. Haeru will take you to my place first." Linley instructed softly.

Jenne looked at Linley with concern. "Big brother Ley, what about you?"

"Don't worry. I'll just get rid of this bit of trouble." At the same time, Linley glanced at his Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. Mentally, he ordered, "Haeru, you can go now. Remember, protect Jenne."

"Growl."

Haeru let out an arrogant growl, and then slowly began to speed up before suddenly transforming into a black blur, disappearing far away, without giving Albert's men any chance to stop him.

"Clatter." The group of knights totally blocked Linley's forward path. They didn't block the Blackcloud Panther from leaving, because they couldn't block him. As for Lyndin and the others, they were capable of blocking the panther, but they were happy to see it leave.

After all, their target was Linley!

"Jenne!" Seeing this happen, Albert couldn't help but grow angry.

Turning furiously towards Linley, Albert sneered, "Punk, you had your

magical beast take Jenne away? Hrmph, let me tell you, Jenne is mine. As for you…let me send you off to the Netherworld. Haha…everyone, attack!" Albert pointed angrily at Linley.

With the clatter of hoof steps, the dozens of knights immediately surrounded Linley.

Linley just stood there in the middle, not caring in the slightest. Bebe only stood arrogantly on top of Linley's shoulders, using his beady little eyes to stare disdainfully at the knights.

"My Cousin Jenne isn't for the likes of you to touch. You should consider what lowly status you have!" Albert said arrogantly. He had the feeling that everything was now under his control.

Linley only calmly glanced at the surrounding knights.

"I originally wanted to get rid of the Radiant Church's forces. I didn't expect that I would have attracted this group of useless fools." Linley shook his head slowly. But right at that moment…

"Boss." Bebe suddenly stared at the knights. "Danlan is there."

"Danlan?" As though a bucket of cold water had been poured on Linley's head, Linley shivered once. "The Radiant Church's forces are with them?" Linley began to be cautious.

"I can smell her scent." Bebe said confidently. "She thought that by putting on a helmet and some armor, that I, Bebe, wouldn't be able to discover her?"

Linley still didn't call forth any of his weapons.

There was no need to rush to using weapons.

When the weapons suddenly appeared from his interspatial ring at the critical moment, that would catch the opponents off-guard. Linley paid no

heed to Albert, who was still arrogantly spouting his nonsense, and instead carefully paid attention to the surrounding knights.

“Charge! Kill him!”

Albert ordered arrogantly.

But just at this moment, a cruel voice rang out as well. “Kill!” Suddenly, six rays of gleaming white light suddenly connected with each other. In terms of appearance, it was exactly the same technique as had been used by the six Special Executors to trap Linley.

That combined formation attack actually was the Angel Battle Formation.

But in terms of power, when actual Angels used this formation, it was far more powerful.

“Swish swish.” Those six rays of light, when connecting, pierced through the bodies of several of the knights that were in the way. Three of them died immediately, while eight were heavily injured.

“Aaah!”

One of the knights was pierced through the chest, leaving a small hole behind. This knight immediately toppled off his horse. He screamed twice, then fell silent.

“Haha, it’s been almost nine years. The Radiant Church hasn’t learned any new tricks.” Linley began to laugh loudly.

“What’s going on?” Albert was terrified.

The middle-aged man by Albert’s side was quite experienced. His face immediately changed, and he shouted, “Quick, leave! Those six are not the disciples of Haydson; they are from the Radiant Church, and they are all experts of the ninth rank. Leave! If you tarry, it’ll be too late!”

Albert was useless in most aspects, but his fleeing instinct was top notch.

“Giddyup, giddyup!” Albert no longer cared about killing Linley at this moment, as he hurriedly galloped away alongside that middle-aged man.

Some of the knights were trapped in the midst of that Angel Battle Formation. Terrified, some of them thought to try and flee out, but as soon as they ran into that white light, their bodies turned to ash, as though they had been burnt by an extremely high temperature flame.

“Hrm? It seems to be more powerful than that of those six Special Executors.” Linley sighed in praise.

“Flee.”

The remaining knights all fled at high speed, while those who did not had all been killed by Lyndin. In the entire desolate landscape, only Linley, Bebe, and Lyndin’s squad remained.

“Boom!”

The armor covering Lyndin and her men split apart as they returned to their normal appearances. One woman and five men. Lyndin’s group stared very confidently at Linley.

“Linley, aren’t you afraid?” Lyndin laughed coldly at Linley.

Linley glanced at Lyndin. “I must admit, your acting abilities are extremely formidable. You were able to successfully play the part of a headstrong young lady. However, you weren’t aware that eight years ago, at the city of Hess, I killed six Special Executors who also used this combination attack.”

“Crack, ripple…”

As Linley was speaking, those black draconic scales pierced through his clothes, while those cold, gleaming spikes erupted one at a time from his spine, his forehead, his elbows, and his knees. A long draconic tail sprouted

from behind him as well.

Linley's eyes had become that cold, remorseless dark gold color.

"Linley, we aren't the same as those six." Lyndin said calmly. "Today, you will definitely die." As she spoke, the density of the light increased once more, seeming to even cover the sky above the area.

Linley's dark golden eyes swept the six of them. In a cold voice, he said, "I have to tell you something. I….really dislike this formation attack."

Linley still remembered that dream-like white glow.

"Grandpa Doehring." Linley could clearly remember the scene when, eight years ago, Grandpa Doehring had sacrificed himself to kill those six Special Executors. From that day forth, Grandpa Doehring had forever vanished from the universe.

"Kill him."

Lyndin ordered coldly.

"Whoosh!" Lyndin's group charged forward towards Linley, and that cage of light began to shrink at high speed. Anything and everything touched by that light was turned into dust.

It was utterly unblockable.

"Radiant Church. Haha…" Linley laughed coldly at the six attackers. Kicking off from the ground, he leapt towards one of the attackers.

"How sad." Lyndin stared coldly at Linley's attempt to resist.

When joined forces, their defense was incredibly high. No one below the Saint-level could harm them at all. They didn't care about Linley's attack at all.

“The first one!”

Linley’s voice suddenly rang out like a bolt of thunder, as from his hands, the adamantine heavy sword suddenly appeared. Transforming into a blur, the adamantine heavy sword slashed through the air, smashing against the body of one of the attackers.

“How laughable.”

The six of them didn’t care at all. That Angel of the ninth rank originally didn’t even bother dodging, but the strange thing was, Linley’s blow hadn’t caused the white light to activate and block it.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves!

Linley’s dark golden eyes stared coldly at the man.

This Angel of the ninth rank only felt a very queer sensation, as though giant warhammers were suddenly smashing against his internal organs again and again. His light-style power was totally useless against this sort of attack!

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” …..

Those strange attacks continue to reverberate in the Angel’s head as well as body.

“Ah!”

The ninth ranked Angel slumped to the ground. The Angel Battle Formation, now lacking a person, had been destroyed, and the white light disappeared. Lyndin and the other four stared at this scene in astonishment. They couldn’t believe it.

Linley quirked his lips.

That white light had been light-style energy; in essence, it was the same as

battle-qi. But the Profound Truths of the Earth which Linley used was a totally different sort of attack. Whenever it encountered an obstacle, it would transmit through it, with only a bit of reduction in attack power. No obstacle could totally block it.

This so-called combination attack, before the Profound Truths of the Earth, was nothing but a joke.

Linley's full-power attack had disintegrated the internal organs of an Angel of the ninth rank in a single blow. He was dead as dead could be, and his soul vanished from the world.

"You…you killed him?" Lyndin and the other four were stunned.

The Angel Battle Formation had been broken, just like that.

"Formation attacks are useless against me." Linley's remorseless eyes swept them with his gaze. "That's one of you down. Now for the rest of you."

In the Yulan continent, anyone, including Saint-level experts, would die once their bodies were destroyed.

When these Angels who had descended into human bodies fought, even when they went all out, they weren't actually destroying their own bodies. They were just ignoring their bodies' ability to contain their power, in essence overloading them.

This sort of overloading technique would cause the body to slowly break down.

This sort of break down was gradual. Only after, say, thirty seconds, would the body have decayed to the point where the soul could no longer survive in it.

But since Linley reduced the Angel's internal organs into paste with a single blow, even if the Angel wanted to go all out at this point, it was too late.

“Lord?” The other four looked at Lyndin.

A holy light was suddenly shining from Lyndin’s face. “Since this mortal has such an unusual attack, we no longer need to worry about our lives. Prepare to return to the embrace of the Lord.”

“Yes, Lord.”

Their eyes were very cold and calm. Their faces began to shine with holy light as well.

“Swish, swish…” A pair of illusion-like white wings suddenly sprouted from the backs of those four men. In the blink of an eye, those four ‘ordinary’ men each now were winged, and they flew into the sky.

Four humanoids with wings were flying in the air. Seeing this, Linley was shocked.

“Angels! They are Angels!”

One of the legendary, powerful races had just appeared in front of him. Even the weakest two-Winged Angels were terrifyingly powerful early-stage Saint-level experts.

“Kill.” Lyndin issued her order, not wasting any time at all.

This was because the bodies of these four were already beginning to emit blood, which was constantly flowing downwards. Clearly, their bodies were already starting to crumble, and their blood vessels were beginning to collapse. The early-stage Saint-level energy was beyond the capacity of these bodies.

They didn’t have much time.

They had to kill Linley as quickly as possible.

“Whoosh!” With a flap of their radiant wings, the four Angels transformed into four white blurs as they charged towards Linley.

Chapter 48 – The Four-Winged Angel

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 48, The Four-Winged Angel

Tonight, the moon was in the sky. The moon was very bright, covering the wilderness with its desolate glow.

And in this desolate wilderness, four white Angels were gliding down through the air coldly, like an illusionary mirage, drawing ever closer to Linley.

“What incredible speed.” Linley was surprised.

Right now, Linley’s offense was powerful, but his defense was weak. His offense was powerful enough to kill an early-stage Saint-level combatant. But his defense was poor; although he could take blows below the Saint-level of power, he still couldn’t take blows from early-stage Saint-level combatants.

“Hrmph.” Linley launched himself off the ground. With the aid of the Supersonic spell, Linley very agilely began to dodge. In terms of speed, however, Linley was still slightly slower than these four Angels.

“Shkreeeee!”

With an ear-piercing screech, a black blur suddenly appeared, moving even faster than those four Angels, colliding against the Angel nearest Linley.

“Die.” That Angel coldly smashed his fist against the black blur.

“Bam!” The fist, glowing with holy light, smashed viciously against the black blur. The black blur was knocked to the floor, but with a ricochet from the ground, it quickly charged up again.

“Swish!” Two fierce claws extended out, swiping viciously against the Angel.

One claw smashed against the Angel’s fist, while the other struck the Angel’s body. The Angel’s body was already at the point of collapse; struck by such a vicious claw, the body actually trembled, a layer of muscle being ripped open and blood pouring out.

“Bam!” Circling around once, the black blur smashed viciously against the Angel a second time.

This strike only hastened the collapse of the Angel’s body.

With a “boom” sound, the Angel’s body directly disintegrated. The white wings disappeared. Just like that, a Two-Winged Angel had died in battle.

Lyndin, who was watching the battle from behind, stared in astonishment at the black blur.

She could tell that the black blur was Linley’s pet, that adorable Shadowmouse. But by now, the Shadowmouse was already a meter long, no longer just that twenty-centimeter long, hand-sized critter. And the black Shadowmouse was astonishingly fast…even faster than Two-Winged Angels.

Bebe was simply too astonishing.

“Six years ago, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Bebe was roughly on par with Haeru in their battle. Six years later, Haeru hasn’t improved at all. He’s at his limit. But Bebe has continued to grow these six years…in terms of speed, Bebe is now far faster than Haeru. As for defense…perhaps even Barker, a Saint-level Undying Warrior when transformed, doesn’t have much higher defense than Bebe.” Linley knew exactly how formidable Bebe was.

Right now Bebe’s speed was simply too high.

Every day, Linley was absorbed in his bitter training. Bebe did nothing but eat, sleep, sleep, eat. And yet, the pace of his strength growth was faster than Linley's.

One could tell how powerful Bebe had become just from looking at his transformation. From half a meter in the past to 1 meter long now.

"Squeeeeeak." Bebe let out an excited cry, while mentally transmitting, "Boss, let me handle these Two-Winged Angels. Their attacks can't hurt me at all."

Linley was speechless.

Two-Winged Angels, early-stage Saint rank. Couldn't harm Bebe.

What sort of freakishly powerful magical beast was Bebe?!

The other three Two-Winged Angels, seeing how this black blur's lightning-fast claws had destroyed one of their comrades with two swipes, couldn't help but be filled with both shock and fury.

Not giving them the time to react, Bebe immediately charged towards another one of them.

"Ignore him. Kill Linley." Lyndin's cold voice rang out.

The three Angels paid no more attention to that terrifying black blur, charging towards Linley. But although they paid Bebe no heed, Bebe himself wouldn't let them off.

After all, Bebe was slightly faster than them.

"Whoosh." A black blur flashed by, with Bebe arriving next to one of the Angels.

Linley had run far away, as he was not confident in his ability to deal with the group attack of the Angels. Only in single combat was he confident of

success. After all, Linley wasn't like Bebe, with his freakishly tough defense.

"Slash!"

Bebe opened his maw wide, chomping towards one of the Angels.

"Bam!" The Two-Winged Angel slammed his fists against Bebe, but Bebe actually wrapped his twin claws around the Angel's right fist, and then bit at it.

"Crunch!"

The right hand was bitten off.

Resisting the pain, the Two-Winged Angel smashed his left fist against the black Shadowmouse angrily. This attack carried with it virtually all of the power available to the Two-Winged Angel, and his left hand shone like the sun.

"Baaaam!" The left hand smashed against the black Shadowmouse, but at the same time, the black Shadowmouse thrust its claws fiercely against the Two-Winged Angel's chest.

Skin and flesh ripped open. Blood sprayed everywhere.

Bebe was smashed to the ground, but the Two-Winged Angel's body trembled. The vessels in its body totally collapsed, and even its heart had imploded, unable to sustain that amount of power any longer. As blood leaked everywhere, the Two-Winged Angel collapsed from the skies.

Yet another Angel had fallen.

"Boss." Bebe was looking anxiously at Linley.

"Bam!"

Linley was sent flying by a fist, but the Two-Winged Angel's body shuddered, and then crumbled, falling from the skies. The last remaining Two-Winged Angel immediately chased after Linley.

"Boss!" Bebe's speed reached its limit. With Linley constantly dodging as well, Bebe managed to interpose himself between Linley and the Angel, just before the Angel would have struck Linley again.

Bebe stared angrily at the Two-Winged Angel.

"Boss, you okay?" Bebe mentally transmitted.

"I'm fine. But if I took more of those blows, I wouldn't be able to take it." Linley wiped the blood away from the corner of his lips. Part of the scales around his chest were smashed apart, with blood leaking out from behind them.

Linley couldn't help but be frightened.

Just then, the two Angels had pincer-attacked him. Linley was slightly slower than them to begin with. In the end, his only option was to block one attack with his own, while accepting the second blow.

"Still not fast enough. If I could match Bebe in terms of speed and defense, I wouldn't have cut such a sorry state." Linley sighed to himself.

Six years ago, Bebe was roughly as fast as he was, while Bebe's defense was a level higher.

But six years later, Bebe's speed was nearly double his own. In terms of defense, Bebe's was multiple levels higher now. The most irritating thing was, Bebe remained at the ninth level. He had not reached the Saint-level.

No wonder the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, had submitted to him.

Haeru was a proud magical beast of the ninth rank with extremely high natural talent, but compared to Bebe, his so-called talent was far weaker.

Using his astonishing defense and speed, Bebe dealt with the final Two-Winged Angel. In the blink of an eye, the four Angels had all died. Their leader, Lyndin, remained in her human form, watching from afar.

“Boss, are Two-Winged Angels of the early-stage Saint-level? Why did I feel that they weren’t that powerful?” Landing on the ground, Bebe mentally spoke to Linley.

Linley chuckled, casting a glance at Lyndin.

“Bebe, didn’t you notice that after they utilized their Angelic power, blood began to flow from their bodies? Clearly, their bodies couldn’t withstand that level of power. They weren’t truly early-stage Saint-levels; although they had the power, their bodies were still as weak as before.” Linley had immediately seen the truth of the matter.

Those bodies had been at the breaking point already. A few good blows to those bodies would cause them to totally collapse.

“What a powerful magical beast.”

Staring at Bebe, Lyndin said with surprise, “Linley, I only heard that you had a Shadowmouse, but it seems he isn’t a Shadowmouse. He seems more like the legendary ruler of the rat race….”

“What’s that?” Linley looked at Lyndin.

Linley had always been curious as to exactly what sort of magical beast Bebe was.

“The type of magical beast with the greatest defense and the highest speed…could he really be that type?” Lyndin had lived in the realm of the Radiant Sovereign for many years. As a Four-Winged Angel, she had seen many things.

There were quite a few magical beasts that would reach the Saint-level

upon becoming an adult.

But even amongst those, there were still a few extremely rare and outstanding types of magical beasts. This was the first time Lyndin had seen any of the legendary rulers of the rat race.

“Boss, what’s this woman saying?” Bebe looked doubtfully at Linley.

“She’s saying you are a ruler amongst the rats.” Linley chuckled.

Even the likes of Doehring Cowart and the Holy Emperor didn’t know what kind of magical beast Bebe was, but it seemed as though this Lyndin had a bit of a clue. Only, from the sound of it, Lyndin was just guessing, and wasn’t certain.

“Linley, you should feel proud.”

Just now, Lyndin had only been briefly surprised by Bebe’s performance. Now, she had totally calmed down again. “For the sake of killing you, a Cherub, a Four-Winged Angel, is about to die alongside you.”

Lyndin’s entire body began to shine with white light, and then four white wings sprouted forth from Lyndin’s back, stretching and spreading out as Lyndin took to the skies.

A Cherub!

“Not good.” The look on Linley’s face changed. The more wings an Angel had, the more powerful they were, and as the number of wings increased, the power increased at a rapid geometrical rate.

“Boss, let me go!”

Bebe excitedly let out a sharp screech, then transformed into a blur as he charged towards the Cherub.

Lyndin smiled coldly. Her four wings fluttered slightly, and she suddenly

transformed into a white blur. Her astonishing speed was actually not one whit inferior to that of Bebe's.

"Boom!"

Lyndin's fist, clad in holy light and appearing like white jade, smashed against Bebe. This time, Bebe was smashed down, flying into the ground like a meteor and even creating a deep crater in the ground. Bebe's body had been smashed deep into the earth.

"Bebe." Linley was shocked.

Linley had guessed at how powerful this Cherub was, but he didn't expect the Cherub to be so terrifyingly strong.

"Bo-, Boss, I'm fine." Bebe's weak voice rang out in Linley's mind. Linley could guess at how heavily injured Bebe currently was.

The power of a Cherub was far greater than that of a Two-Winged Angel.

"Linley. It is your turn." Lyndin's body was already beginning to be covered with blood, but Lyndin didn't care about her collapsing body at all.

Lyndin knew that she had, at the very least, ten seconds of life left. These ten seconds were more than enough for her to kill Linley.

Those four white wings of light fluttered slightly, and then Lyndin transformed into a white blur. Linley couldn't see her clearly, as she appeared almost like a mirage, suddenly appearing in front of him.

The only thing Linley could see were Lyndin's cold, remorseless eyes, now silver in color.

"Time to go all out!"

"Ah!!!"

Linley launched himself off the ground, rapidly retreating while at the same time, the Bloodviolet Godsword appeared in his hand. He immediately activated that terrifying baleful aura hidden within Bloodviolet.

This terrifyingly baleful aura had influenced even the peak-stage Saint-level expert, Stehle, much less Lyndin.

Trembling slightly, that strange bloody light covered and began to flow on the surface of Bloodviolet.

That baleful aura entered Lyndin's mind, attacking her soul.

"This…" A hint of fear suddenly appeared in Lyndin's cold eyes. She only sensed that she seemed to have returned to that time when she was with the army of Angels engaging in warfare in other planes, and had suddenly encountered within the depths that terrifying demon. She still remembered how that demon had easily butchered so many of the Angels. An entire army of hundreds of thousands of Angels had been butchered.

That full-power punch of hers, under the influence of Bloodviolet, began to grow weaker.

At the same time as he activated Bloodviolet, Linley fiercely swung his adamantine heavy sword forward, chopping mercilessly against Lyndin's body.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves.

"Boom!" Linley was struck by Lyndin's fist as well, which had been reduced to roughly half-power. His black scales immediately split apart, and Linley's chest caved in as a large volume of blood poured out of Linley's mouth.

Like a ripped sandbag, Linley smashed against the ground, kicking up a huge cloud of dust.

Lyndin stood there disbelievingly.

“How could he possess such a terrifying baleful aura?” And then, Lyndin suddenly felt herself bound by the Laws of the universe. Her soul, not resisting in the slightest, was drawn forth by the Laws, disappearing from the plane of the Yulan continent.

As for Lyndin’s corpse, it gently slumped down, fresh blood leaking from her mouth and nose.

Chapter 49 – Saint-Level Dragonblood Warrior

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 49, Saint-Level Dragonblood Warrior

The cold wind continued to blow.

The desolate wilderness had finally returned to its former calm. But compared to earlier, atop the wild plains, there were a number of corpses as well as pools of blood. The aftermath of the battle was easily visible. The ground was cracked open in many places, and there was that giant crater, with that deep hole in the center of it. At this moment, a black Shadowmouse slowly, wearily crawled out of that deep hole.

“Boss.” Bebe’s body was stained red, blood matting his fur.

Bebe was staring forward in concern. He saw that Linley was lying there, not moving at all. Although the Cherub, thanks to the influence of the Bloodviolet sword’s baleful aura, had seen its attack weakened, the force of its blow was still several times greater than that of the Two-Winged Angels.

Bebe scurried forward, arriving next to Linley.

“Boss, you okay?” Bebe mentally transmitted. Bebe was very worried. Right now, Linley’s chest had an astonishingly deep indentation, with over half of the scales on his chest shattered and fallen. Fresh blood had dyed Linley’s chest totally red, and Linley’s face was very pale. His eyes were closed.

Slowly, Linley opened his eyes, looking at Bebe.

“I’m fine. Bebe. Don’t move my body.” Linley’s voice rang out in Bebe’s mind.

Bebe nodded obediently, settling into a curl near Linley’s body.

“This time, I was wounded very badly.” Linley felt that his chest was wracking him with severe pain with each breath he took. Linley’s only option was to urge the Dragonblood battle-qi in his vessels to help repair some of the damage he had taken, in accordance with the method prescribed in the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’. As a Supreme Warrior, his recuperative abilities were quite formidable.

But this time, the injury really was very severe.

The Dragonblood battle-qi slowly flowed through each part of his body, as the unique energy of the Dragonblood in his veins slowly seeped into his blood vessels and heart. As for his chest, which had suffered the majority of the damage this time, after it drew some of the special energy from his Dragonblood, Linley could feel it slowly begin to recover. With each breath, Linley could feel his chest slowly changing.

“In terms of regenerative speed, amongst the Four Supreme Warriors, the Dragonblood Warriors should be inferior to the Violetflame Warriors and the Undying Warriors.” In a time like this, this thought suddenly crossed Linley’s mind.

The Violetflame Warriors possessed incredibly strong regenerative abilities, and even had that freakishly powerful Nirvana Rebirth ability.

Unless their bodies were entirely destroyed, given enough time, a Violetflame Warrior would be able to recover to their peak condition.

“Huff.” “Puff.”

The sound of Linley’s breathing grew louder and louder, as his damaged chest continued to recuperate. At the same time, the black scales covering Linley’s body retracted, as did his spikes and his tail. In the blink of an eye, Linley returned to his normal human form. But despite now being in human form, Linley’s body was still covered in blood, and the injury to his chest was as severe as ever.

As time passed, the night began to deepen.

The cold wind blew drearily. The light of the moon was totally blocked by the clouds. But Linley and Bebe paid no heed to the weather at all.

“Boss, doing better?” Bebe’s beady little eyes stared unwaveringly at Linley.

“My internal injuries are more or less fixed. Only, three of my ribs are broken. Fortunately, they didn’t pierce into any other vital regions.” Linley revealed a smile towards Bebe. “However, it will take at least ten days or half a month for broken ribs to recover.” Normal people would need several months to heal a broken rib. Linley was only able to make this claim because of his confidence in his lineage as a Dragonblood Warrior.

Bebe nodded.

“But if I were able to find a light-style or a water-style magus, I should be able to recover even more quickly.” Linley knew that certain types of magical healing could be extremely powerful.

When Linley had been imprisoned within the Radiant Temple, virtually every single bone in his body had been broken. But when he had been bathed in that holy light of the Radiant Sovereign, his body completely healed in the blink of an eye, and was restored to peak condition. This sort of astonishing recuperative ability was very formidable.

Linley continued to generate his Dragonblood battle-qi.

The Dragonblood battle-qi absorbed the elemental essence from nature, and it also absorbed the unique Dragonblood lineage in Linley’s veins. As it gradually strengthened, it nourished every part of Linley’s body. Linley’s internal injuries were now almost completely healed. The only tricky part remaining was his shattered ribs.

“Hrm?”

Linley's eyebrows shot up, and he felt a hint of delight.

The Dragonblood battle-qi circulating throughout his body suddenly began to tremble, and the liquefied Dragonblood battle-qi in his dantian suddenly roiled about like the waves of the sea. Linley immediately guided all of the Dragonblood battle-qi in his veins into his lower dantian. Very soon…the density of Dragonblood battle-qi in his lower dantian reached its maximum peak.

"Rumble…"

A radiant smile blossomed on Linley's face as he sensed the Dragonblood battle-qi in his dantian begin to transform.

Every single shred of battle-qi was changing. Changing in quality and nature.

"I'm finally beginning to break through." Linley calmly waited. At first, only a small amount of Dragonblood battle-qi had been transformed, but as time went on, more and more transformed, and at a faster and faster rate. At the end, in the space of time it would take a person to breathe ten times, the remaining half of the battle-qi all transformed successfully.

"Haha…"

Linley rose to his feet, dispersing the totally transformed Dragonblood battle-qi in his veins to every part of his body. Some of it was sent to his shattered ribs, assisting them to recover more rapidly.

"Boss?" Bebe looked at Linley with curiosity.

Linley hugged Bebe, lifting him into the air. Laughing, he said, "I'm fine. Let's prepare to go home."

At this time, Linley was extremely happy. Ever since he had reached the peak of the eighth rank, he had been waiting for this day. Although in the past month, Linley had the feeling that he could break through at any

moment, that moment somehow just wouldn't come. But now, while he had been healing his injuries, he had suddenly broken through.

The ninth rank!

From this day forward, Linley was a warrior of the ninth rank…but that was just his nominal level of power. In reality, after Dragonforming, Linley was already an early-stage Saint-level combatant. In terms of defense, speed, or power, he had dramatically grown.

"If I were to encounter that Four-Winged Angel again, just by using the adamantine heavy sword, I would be able to dispose of her." Linley was very excited.

The Saint-level!

That was a brand new level of existence. Even the mighty Dawson Conglomerate desperately desired to have a Saint-level warrior amongst their ranks. The mighty Jacques clan was mighty, precisely because they had a single Saint-level combatant. This was their pride and the source of their arrogance. This was why they had the confidence and the ability to administer the O'Brien Empire's Northwest Administrative Province in perpetuity.

An expert of the Saint-level.

Before a Saint-level combatant, even the Grand Dukes and Kings who administered and ruled over populations of millions or tens of millions meant nothing at all.

Before a Saint-level combatant, even an ancient clan that had existed for thousands of years would have to lower their noble heads.

Even the Radiant Church, the Cult of Shadows, and the Four Great Empires would deeply desire to pull Saint-level combatants into their orbit!

In the entire Yulan continent, aside from those three humans who stood at

the peak of the world (the High Priest, the War God, and the King of Killers), or the two deity-level Kings of magical beasts, Saint-level combatants were the cream of the crop. Upon entering the Saint-level, one would immediately possess an unlimited life. The King of Killers, Cesar, had lived for five thousand years as a Saint-level, had he not?

“The Saint-level!”

Linley raised his head to the sky.

Suddenly, flakes of snow began to drift down from the heavens, melting when they touched Linley’s face.

“I still remember those two Saint-level experts doing battle in Wushan township when I was a child. At that time, Saint-level combatants were unfathomably high entities, far beyond the likes of me. Even that magus of the eighth rank who rode on a Velocidragon was an expert. But now?” A sense of pride swelled up in Linley’s heart.

At last, he had accomplished something.

Most likely, if the current Linley were to encounter the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon, he would be able to defeat him.

“Ancestors of the Baruch clan, keep watching me. I will restore the fame and the legend of the Dragonblood Warriors, and spread it across the continent.” Linley felt a sense of absolute self-confidence.

Linley was only twenty six years old, this year. But upon Dragonforming, he was a Saint-level warrior.

“There will come a day when I reach an even higher peak of power.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

Linley knew exactly how powerful he was. Although he was only an early-stage Saint-level after Dragonforming, the hardest part of advancing from the early-stage to the peak-stage of the Saint-level was not in accumulating

battle-qi. Rather, it was in gaining a deeper level of understanding and insight regarding the world. But Linley's level of understanding was already at that of a peak-stage Saint-level.

In truth, sometimes two people who had the same amount of battle-qi and similarly deep levels of understanding would still have major differences in their power.

This was because different people would walk different paths to wisdom, even if they were in the same realm.

For example, another combatant might also be training in the Laws of the Earth, but after the 'impose' level, he might have taken a totally different route. After all, the Laws of the Earth were as boundless and infinite as the oceans, and there were many paths one could take in understanding them. Different paths would result in different results. Linley's path was akin to the throbbing pulse of the earth itself, using those strange vibrational attacks. It was totally different to the usual types of force and power based attacks used within the Yulan continent.

Just as Linley was preparing to head back to the Cloudpeaks Village, suddenly….

"Linley, right?" A voice rang out from not too far behind him.

Linley's heart jumped in fright. He hadn't noticed that there was someone nearby. He immediately turned his head to look, only to see a black-robed, skinny old man with a few flecks of white in his hair, standing in mid-air. The old man was staring down at Linley from mid-air.

Linley immediately understood. "McKenzie?"

"Right." This person was indeed McKenzie.

Linley had just suffered a serious wound, and had been focusing on healing himself. He had totally forgotten that this major battle he had just fought against those six Angels definitely would not escape the attention of the

nearby Saint-level combatant, McKenzie, who was residing in the provincial capital.

Linley carefully looked at McKenzie. McKenzie looked as though he were in his early fifties. Although his hair had a few streaks of white, there wasn't a single wrinkle on his face. He stood in mid-air with his waist ramrod straight, with an immovable aura that made Linley feel secretly amazed. This McKenzie was definitely more powerful than that Four-Winged Cherub.

"How long have you been here?" Linley asked.

McKenzie laughed. "Not too long. When I arrived, I managed to witness you and the Four-Winged Cherub exchanging your final blows to each other and injuring each other."

Linley raised an eyebrow.

This McKenzie should have been watching the entire time as Linley had been healing himself. Since he didn't act against Linley when Linley was injured, he probably didn't have any ill intentions towards Linley.

"I am very surprised that you actually managed to kill a Cherub." McKenzie sighed in appreciation. "Although the Four-Winged Angels are only temporarily able to use their full strength, for you to be able to kill one without dying is quite amazing. Dragonblood Warriors…the legendary Dragonblood Warriors really are powerful. Linley, after Dragonforming, you should be at the Saint-level, I believe. Only, given how difficult it was for you to kill a Cherub, you should only be an early-stage Saint-level warrior, right?"

Linley started, not knowing whether he should laugh or cry.

"This McKenzie…jeeze…" Linley was speechless. He thought to himself, "Only after I killed the Four-Winged Angel did I gain the ability to reach the Saint-level in Dragonform. This McKenzie actually thinks that I had already reached the Saint-level when I was fighting with the Cherub."

“What, you haven’t reached the Saint-level?” McKenzie said disbelievingly.

Linley smiled. “I admit that after Dragonforming, I am indeed at the early-stage Saint-level.”

McKenzie laughed and nodded with satisfaction. “Haha, it’s been a long time since I’ve seen a Saint-level combatant. I really am quite happy to see you today. How about this. Come with me to my residence for a time. That way, the two of us can spar a bit. I’m sure that this will definitely help both of us improve our abilities. Don’t worry, I won’t go full force; this is just a sparring match.”

Seeing that Linley suffered serious injuries while killing a Four-Winged Angel, McKenzie believed Linley was not truly a match for him.

“McKenzie, my Dragonform is indeed at the Saint-level. However…” Linley looked confidently at McKenzie. “I just broke through to that level now, after the battle. When I was fighting against the Cherub, I hadn’t broken through yet.” Right now, as far as Linley was concerned, although he wasn’t confident in his ability to deal with peak-stage Saint-level experts, he was still confident in dealing with people at McKenzie’s level.

Having reached the Saint-level, there was no longer a need for him to conceal himself or hide his power.

“What? You broke through just now?” McKenzie was shocked to hear this.

Chapter 50 – An Appointment

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 50, An Appointment

McKenzie's view of Linley had totally changed.

"Haha…" After being silent for a moment, McKenzie laughed loudly. He descended from the skies, slowly walking towards Linley, his attitude noticeably more warm and friendly. "Linley, the legendary genius magus, supposedly the second greatest genius in history. But in my opinion, your talent as a warrior is even greater than as a magus. To be so young and yet already have the power of the Saint-level…the Dragonblood Warriors truly are Supreme Warriors."

Linley had always been proud of his clan's heritage. But whenever he thought back to how his clan had all but been destroyed, with only himself and his younger brother remaining, he couldn't help but feel a thread of grief in his heart.

"Mr. McKenzie, is there anything else? If there isn't, I need to go back now." Linley said.

McKenzie hurriedly said, "My friend Linley, this is our first meeting. Why don't we have a nice get-together? I'm very curious about you legendary Dragonblood Warriors as well. If there's enough time, I truly do wish to have a sparring contest against you, Linley. After all, sparring against experts of the same level is one of the best ways a Saint-level combatant can improve." As he finished speaking, McKenzie looked very earnestly at Linley.

Spar?

McKenzie was the local hegemon of the Northwest Administrative Province. Being able to get on good terms with McKenzie was of benefit to

him. And in addition, Keane belonged to the Northwest Administrative Province as well. This could be considered helping Keane out as well.

Considering for a moment, Linley nodded. “I’m still wounded. Even if I did go to your residence, I wouldn’t be able to immediately spar with you. How about this? I’ll go home first, but after a period of time, I’ll come back and pay a visit to you. It won’t be too long, a month or so at most.”

McKenzie happily nodded. “Wonderful. Then I will await your arrival within the Jacques clan’s castle.”

“I’ll definitely come.”

Linley smiled and nodded.

It had begun to snow, and snowflakes were flying everywhere. McKenzie and Linley, these two Saint-level combatants, smiled at each other, then flew off in different directions.

In the vast wilderness, only Linley and Bebe were left present.

“The winter’s snow.” Seeing the endless snowfall, Linley suddenly thought back to that huge blizzard that winter when he was young and in love with Alice.

The next year, also on a day of a blizzard, Linley and Alice had separated.

And then, within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, on another snowy day, Linley had come to understand the ‘impose’ level.

Now, on a fourth blizzard, tonight, Linley had broken through to the ninth rank as a warrior, with his true power now totally within the realm of the Saint-levels.

“Snow…”

Linley felt extremely moved. But when he lowered his head and looked at

himself, his smile disappeared. Astonished, he said, “I chatted with a Saint-level combatant for such a long time, looking like this?”

Because of his transformation and his battle against the Angels, Linley’s clothes and pants had been turned utterly ruined.

The way he currently looked, even beggars would probably feel sorry for him.

However, just now, McKenzie hadn’t paid any attention to his attire. In truth, when many Saint-level combatants engaged in training, they would sometimes train for months at a time. It was normal for their bodies to become incredibly filthy. Thus, they didn’t care too much about superficial appearances. What they cared about was what a person was like inside.

For example, although Linley’s clothes were in absolutely wretched shape, no one would dare look down upon him as he stood there.

This was a person’s aura and demeanor.

“Boss, you said you have reached the Saint-level? Transform and let me admire my Boss’s magnificence.” Bebe’s beady little eyes stared at Linley as he intentionally said those flattering words.

An excited feeling entered Linley’s heart.

That was not a bad idea at all.

“Fine.” Linley said with a laugh. Bebe immediately leapt off of Linley’s shoulders as once again, those black scales emerged from Linley’s skin. Sharp spikes erupted from his forehead, knees, and elbows, while his eyes once more transformed into that dark golden color.

He looked exactly the same as he had before.

But Linley could feel the difference.

“Whoosh.” Linley felt the unique energy of the exalted Dragonblood hiding in his veins begin to flow into his bones, his muscles, and even his armor, spikes, and draconic tail.

The originally pitch-black scales were actually beginning to shine with a hint of blue light.

“What a feeling of power.”

Linley could feel that his vision and his hearing had suddenly increased dozens of times in sensitivity. Nothing within several kilometers of him could escape his notice.

“Such powerful strength. Such powerful battle-qi.”

Linley balled his fist, and the air itself shuddered once. His mighty muscles now contained far greater power than before, and the amount of battle-qi in his body had grown vastly.

“Haha…” Linley began to laugh excitedly.

Late at night. Linley was flying across the desolate landscape. He, a fully transformed Dragonblood Warrior, looked like a monster as he floated through the air, occasionally letting out overjoyed bouts of wild laughter.

His laughter echoed in the heavens and in the earth.

“No wonder Barker was so excited when he reached the Saint-level. I didn’t expect that my power would increase this much after reaching this level.” Linley was extremely excited as well.

Dragonblood Warriors had many innate gifts. Once their power reached a certain level, they would naturally be able to fly. This was like the flight which flying magical beasts innately possessed; it was a natural ability which didn’t require any particular understanding or insights.

“In terms of mysteriousness and exaltedness, the bloodline of the Armored

Razorback Wyrm is far inferior to the lineage of us Dragonblood Warriors." Flying high in the air, Linley felt a sense of awe.

Originally, Linley had drank a large amount of dragon's blood as well as eaten the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. But despite that, the Dragonblood in Linley's vein had been able to dissolve and absorb it all.

And now, upon entering the Saint-level, Linley could sense that the energy of the Dragonblood heritage in his veins was continuing to transform and strengthen various functions in his body.

"My speed has doubled, at least." With but a thought, Linley suddenly transformed into a blur as he streaked across the sky.

"As for defenses…" Linley looked at his now perfect, undamaged scales, paying special attention to that dim layer of blue light. "If I were to take another blow from that Four-Winged Angel, I would at most suffer some light wound."

Linley's lips curved upwards.

Confidence!

Unmatchable confidence!

Actually, most human Saint-level experts had very weak defense. Even experts of the peak-stage Saint-rank had far inferior defense compared to Saint-level magical beasts.

But the Four Supreme Warriors possessed talents and gifts that were even more freakishly powerful than that of magical beasts.

This was one of the reasons why, as soon as a Dragonblood Warrior reached the Saint-level in human form, they would immediately be at the peak-stage of the Saint-level in power after Dragonforming. They were invincible. Understanding and insight made no difference.

Even just by relying on raw force, they were an invincible force amongst Saint-levels.

This was their natural talent!

Much like how Haeru was jealous of how powerful Bebe had become, the Four Supreme Warriors were worthy of admiration and jealousy from any race in the entire Yulan continent.

“Boss.” Bebe leaped up into the air.

Linley stretched his arm out, catching Bebe in mid-air, and Bebe jumped onto Linley’s shoulders. Linley was now covered totally with dark scales, while on his shoulders there was a black Shadowmouse.

It really was quite a matching sight.

“Bebe, time for you to experience the flight speed of a true Saint-level expert.” Linley laughed loudly, then exerted himself to his utmost, transforming into a black blur as he streaked across the skies, disappearing into the horizon.

The snow continued to fall across the night-shrouded wilderness.

Only the corpses on the ground gave testament to the battle that had been fought here.

The straight-line flying speed of a Saint-level was extremely fast. In an hour, Linley was able to cross over a thousand kilometers. In a very short period of time, Linley saw Cloudpeaks Village up ahead.

Tonight, the snow-covered Cloudpeaks Village was very quiet.

Linley flew directly to the western side of the village, dropping down at high speed like a meteor as he landed into the middle of the courtyard.

“Who comes!” A low roar as several shadows flashed out.

Linley had been flying so fast that he had been creating sonic booms. Naturally, he attracted the attention of experts such as the Barker brothers. But once they saw that the person in front of them was the Dragonformed Linley, they all secretly sighed.

“Hrm, you entered without even opening the door?” The fifth brother, Gates, said in astonishment, then he stared at Linley. “Lord, could it be that…?”

Laughing, Linley glanced at Gates.

Gates was the most intelligent and mentally agile of the five brothers, and was the first one to grasp the concept of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light.’

“Ah! Saint-level!” The others now realized as well, and the five brothers stared at Linley in astonishment.

“Big brother Ley returned?” Jenne’s voice rang out, as she ran out as well. But as she saw Linley’s transformed appearance, she was so scared that she immediately screamed, “Monster!”

Rebecca and Leena, who shared the room with her, quickly consoled her.

“Jenne, that’s big brother Linley. That’s his Dragonblood Warrior transformation.” Rebecca laughed.

Linley returned to his normal human form. Badly frightened just now, Jenne stared stupidly at the transformation, then looked at Rebecca. “Dragonblood Warrior? What’s a Dragonblood Warrior?”

“Haha, Dragonblood Warriors are one of the Four Supreme Warriors. We five brothers are also Supreme Warriors. We are the Undying Warriors!” Gates said arrogantly.

Jenne looked at the surrounding group of people.

When she had arrived here tonight with Haeru, she temporarily took up residence with Rebecca and Leena. But when Rebecca and Leena were introducing everyone to her, they had only gotten around to introducing Zassler.

Jenne hadn't even finished getting over her amazement at hearing that Zassler was an Arch Magus necromancer before, suddenly, this 'Dragonblood Warrior' and these 'Undying Warrior' concepts popped up as well.

"This…you all are…" Jenne's mind was in chaos.

"Jenne, go back and get some rest." Linley laughed as he spoke.

Barker and his brothers were all stunned by Linley's breakthrough. The second brother, Ankh [An'ke], laughed helplessly. "Lord, you broke through at such speed. Big brother Barker has reached the Saint-level as well, but still wasn't your match. Now…the difference between us has increased even more."

"If he wasn't powerful, would he be our Lord, and lead us against the Radiant Church to seek vengeance?" Gates said arrogantly.

"All of you are close to having the power of the Saint-level." Zassler's face had a smile on it. "Fortunately, this old fogey has finally gained some certain insights. I trust that within ten years, I should be able to break through and reach the Saint-level."

Ten years?

Zassler was over eight hundred years old. To him, ten years was a fairly short period of time.

"A Grand Magus necromancer? That is an incredibly terrifying idea." Linley's eyes shone. "By that time, you'll be able to summon Saint-level

undead, and lead an army of millions of undead!”

An Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank was already very frightening.

But a Grand Magus necromancer was as terrifying as an entire Empire, all by himself.

“Haha, everyone, keep growing stronger. F*ck, does the Radiant Church still dare send people over? If they send one, we’ll kill one. If they send ten, we’ll kill ten. Then we’ll let Zassler create undead slaves out of their corpses and use them to counter-attack.” As Gates spoke, he grew excited over his idea.

Everyone was very happy. Their strength increasing meant that they were now becoming more qualified to fight head on against the Radiant Church.

Linley was very happy as well.

Raising his head towards the sky, watching the snow drift about, Linley then turned his gaze to everyone present. “Alright, there’s a blizzard tonight. Everyone should go inside the main hall if we want to chat.”

“Right! Tonight, we won’t stop until we are all drunk.” Even the reliable and steady Barker was roaring loudly in his happiness.

The party went on for half the night. In truth, whether or not they would be able to fight against the Radiant Church depended entirely on their power. The reason Linley was their leader was because he was the most powerful amongst them.

Time passed. In the blink of an eye, three days had gone by.

Jenne had grown to fully understand everyone’s background, and she slowly came to accept it all. Only now did Jenne truly understand that to these people, the city governor of a prefectural city was nothing at all.

In fact, not just a prefectural city; even the mighty Jacques clan, the rulers of the Northwest Administrative Province, didn't trouble Linley's group. They only viewed the Jacques clan as equals, and that only because of the existence of McKenzie.

"Barker, his brothers, and big brother Linley are all so hard working." Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne, these three beautiful ladies, were chatting amongst themselves while carrying baskets through the manor.

But just as they entered the courtyard, they suddenly saw….

The Shadowmouse, Bebe, floating in mid-air. Seeing Jenne and the others, he winked flirtatiously towards the three of them. Bebe opened his mouth, and out of it came crisp, clear human speech.

"Wow, three pretty girls. Hello, ladies!"

Chapter 51 – Wharton

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 51, Wharton

The imperial capital of the O'Brien Empire. Channe [Chi'yan]. In the entire Yulan continent, perhaps only the capital of the Yulan Empire could match Channe in terms of size.

As for the name 'Channe', the War God O'Brien himself had chosen this name.

The imperial capital, Channe. There were millions of residents living here.

As a capital with over five thousand years of history, Channe had many ancient clans. In a place such as the imperial capital of Channe, even experts of the ninth rank were quite common. No one dared to act rashly in the imperial capital, because there were far too many powerful clans here.

But of course, the number one power of the imperial capital of Channe was, without a doubt, the War God's College.

Although the personally taught disciples of the War God virtually never showed their faces, even the weakest of the honorary disciples were at least warriors of the eighth rank, while most were warriors of the ninth rank. From this, one could tell how astonishingly powerful the War God's College was. And of course, there was the master of the War God's College. The War God himself.

It must be understood that in the O'Brien Empire, all other religions were outlawed. Even the commoners prayed to the War God. The War God had become the object of their faith!

From this, one could tell how important the War God was in the hearts of the commoners.

The east part of the imperial capital of Channe was a place covered with palaces and noble residences, with the imperial palace located within the east city as well. Within East Channe there was a street named Boulder Street, and on each side of Boulder Street there were meticulously constructed manors. These were all built by the order of the imperial clan of the Empire, and were given as rewards to the nobles and government officials who had rendered great deeds unto the Empire.

One of the manors on Boulder Street was the residence of the newest rising star of the Empire, Count Wharton. Two sturdy guards stood at each side of the gate to his residence, their waists stiff. And right now, within the main hall of the manor, there were four people.

All four of them were standing, but one of them was pacing about, a hint of a frown appearing on his brows.

He seemed to be roughly twenty one or twenty two years old. He wore a simple warrior's outfit, with the sleeveless outfit totally revealing his bulging muscles. He had a straight nose, thick black eyebrows, and a blocky, angular face, making him look very courageous and fierce.

But the most astonishing thing about him was his body.

He had the astonishing height of 2.2 meters. He had massively broad shoulders, a comparatively narrow waist, and two toned, powerful legs.

"Just by looks, Wharton does seem to be more astonishing than Linley." Hillman said to himself.

Compared to Wharton, Linley appeared to be more reserved and understated.

"Young master Wharton, are you still worrying about the Seventh Princess?" Housekeeper Hiri, his nose red from drinking wine, begin to chortle. Wharton turned to look at him helplessly. "Grandpa Hiri, you know who those people chasing after Nina [Ni'na] are."

The other young man in the group of four laughed. “Young master Wharton, why has a bold, forthright man such as yourself become so squeamish and nervous when it comes to matters of love? Why don’t you just go with her to meet with His Imperial Majesty? Isn’t that simple?”

“Just go directly?” Wharton raised an eyebrow.

Hillman encouraged as well, “Nader [Na’de] is right. You are already a warrior of the eighth rank, and the scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan. His Imperial Majesty surely knows that for a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan to reach the eighth rank means that he definitely has been able to train in Dragonblood battle-qi, and has the ability to transform.”

As Hillman saw it, for someone to reach the eighth rank without training in battle-qi was virtually impossible.

But Hillman had no idea that right now, by Linley’s side, there were five brothers who had reached the eighth rank just based on physical training.

“Wharton, as a Dragonblood Warrior, you are a fit and qualified match to wed the Seventh Princess. I trust His Imperial Majesty will agree.” Housekeeper Hiri laughed as he spoke. “But as for asking for her hand, I think it might be better if you let the Seventh Princess to sound His Imperial Majesty out first. That way, you’ll have a better idea going in.”

Housekeeper Hiri and Hillman glanced at each other, then both of them began to laugh.

In the past year or two, the relationship between Wharton and the Seventh Princess of the Empire had become quite well known throughout the entire imperial capital. Only, the other young nobles of the imperial capital had refused to give up. What’s more, two of them were quite competitive.

“Enough of that for now.” Wharton shook his head.

He trusted the Seventh Princess. The Seventh Princess had already told him long ago that aside from him, she wouldn’t marry anyone else. But Wharton

also knew that the marriage of an imperial princess of the Empire was not up to her alone to decide. In addition, Wharton didn't want the Seventh Princess to be too frustrated and unhappy. If he could openly wed her, that would be for the best.

"Oh, right. Grandpa Hiri, any news of my big brother?" Wharton asked.

Housekeeper Hiri nodded. "The Dawson Conglomerate has sent word that your big brother remains hidden in seclusion, where he continues to train. There's no special news."

"Big brother is as hard working as ever." In his heart, Wharton admired Linley very much.

Many of the weighty responsibilities of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, such as the reclaiming of their ancestral heirloom, or the avenging their parent's deaths, had been shouldered by Linley alone. As for him, Wharton, he could remain here in the imperial capital and quietly train.

Even from afar, Linley continued to shield him from the wind and the rain.

"Big brother…" Wharton still remembered how when he was young, when those two Saint-level combatants were doing battle outside Wushan Township, those boulders had rained down densely from the skies. His big brother had ignored his own safety to cover Wharton with his own body.

Wharton could clearly remember that dangerous moment….

"Get down!" Linley had angrily shouted at Wharton, while charging towards him with no regard for his own safety. Linley had used his own weak, frail body to shield Wharton.

After leaving home at the age of six, Wharton was now twenty two years old. In another month, he would be twenty three.

It had been almost seventeen years.

He hadn't seen his sibling in seventeen years.

"Young master Wharton, don't worry too much. Young master Linley will come find you once his training reaches a certain level. After all, he knows exactly where you are living." Housekeeper Hiri said consolingly.

Wharton nodded, then chuckled at himself. "When big brother sees me, I wonder if he'll still recognize me."

"The little six year old kid has changed quite a bit. Haha…it's true that your big brother might not recognize you." Hillman began to laugh.

Nader nodded as well. "When I came along with my father from the Holy Union, I initially couldn't recognize you either, young master Wharton. It was only after I saw Housekeeper Hiri did I realize that this big fellow who was even taller than me was actually that little kid I used to know."

"Nader, you punk." Wharton glared at him.

Nader was Hillman's son. However, Nader didn't have much talent as a warrior; although he was already twenty five years old, Nader was only a warrior of the fourth rank. But Nader was extremely discreet and careful, and so alongside his father Hillman, he managed and oversaw the work of all the guards of the manor.

"Whoah, it's getting late." Wharton took out a pocket watch and cast it a glance. "Grandpa Hiri, Uncle Hillman, I need to head out."

"He must be meeting up with the Seventh Princess again." Nader snickered, intentionally putting a smirk on his face.

Wharton laughed confidently towards Nader. "Naturally. What, are you jealous?" As he spoke, Wharton chortled as he walked out of the manor.

Watching Wharton leave, Housekeeper Hiri felt very moved.

"When we came, young master Wharton was just a child. But now, he's all

grown up. I have fulfilled the task Lord Hogg gave me." When he thought of Hogg, Hiri couldn't stop sighing.

"The Baruch clan has been slumbering for many years. But now, it has finally begun to awaken. In another ten years, most likely the entire Yulan continent will once again be filled with people discussing the legendary Dragonblood Warriors." Hillman said confidently.

Carrying the warblade 'Slaughterer', Wharton rode on a Saber-Toothed Tiger on the streets. Saber-Toothed Tigers were magical beasts of the eighth rank, and thus their aura would make ordinary magical beasts cower away from it. What's more, Wharton was so physically huge himself. Together, they posed such a terrifying sight that everyone who saw him felt dread.

Thus, the pedestrians on the street all made way for him.

"That's the genius student of the O'Brien Academy, Wharton. Look. He's riding a magical beast of the eighth rank."

"Saber-Toothed Tiger. How fierce! If I had a magical beast of my own, how great that would be."

Many people on the streets chatted about Wharton as he passed by. In the past, when Linley had seen that Velocidragon for the first time, he too had dreamed of having a powerful magical beast like a Velocidragon for his companion. In the eyes of many youths, Wharton was their role model.

Saber-Toothed Tigers were extremely fast. Even when travelling on the streets, it moved forward very rapidly and very nimbly.

"Here we are." Wharton saw that magnificent hotel from far away. This was the appointed meeting spot for him and the Seventh Princess. The receptionist for the hotel recognized Wharton as well, and immediately opened the door for Wharton to enter.

Leading the Saber-Toothed Tiger behind him, Wharton entered the hotel.

Wharton looked around the hotel, his gaze finally settling on the person he cared about the most. He immediately called out happily, “Nina.” But just at this moment, Wharton suddenly frowned…because he also once again saw the person who irritated him.

“Wharton.”

Nina had a head of full, lustrous blonde hair, and her pale face was as charming as ever. Her brilliant, shining eyes didn’t have a single hint of impurity in them.

Nina ran over happily towards Wharton, who immediately stepped forward, taking Nina by the hand.

“That guy is bothering me again.” Nina whispered to Wharton.

Wharton glanced at the distant man, saying in a low voice, “Nina, don’t pay any attention to that guy.” But just at that moment, the handsome young man walked over. With a calm laugh, he said, “Wharton, I really didn’t expect to see you here. Why is it that you always appear wherever Nina is?”

“Shut your mouth, Lamonte [Lan’mo].” Wharton frowned. “Remember. Nina’s name isn’t for the likes of you to call out. And also. The question you asked me, I should be asking you. Why is it that wherever Nina is, you always appear?”

Lamonte glanced at Wharton, a smile that was not a smile on his face.

Although on the surface, he didn’t seem to care much, in his heart, Lamonte really disliked this Wharton. After all, it was Wharton who had taken Nina away from him.

“Oh, a Saber-Toothed Tiger.” Lamonte looked at Wharton’s Saber-Toothed Tiger. Laughing, he said, “Wharton, any interest in letting my Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiff have a fight with your Saber-Toothed Tiger? I’ll wager that my Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiff would definitely win.”

Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs and Saber-Toothed Tigers were both magical beasts of the eighth rank.

However, there were differences in power amongst magical beasts of the eighth rank as well. For example, Goldmane Mastiffs and Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs were considered one of the top kinds of magical beasts of the eighth rank. Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs were particularly effective against tiger-type magical beasts.

“Not interested.” Wharton paid his suggestion no heed at all. Looking coldly at Lamonte, Wharton said, “Lamonte, if you really want to have a competition, I wouldn’t object to having a sparring match against you. As for having magical beasts, compete? Hrmph.”

“A competition between men?”

Lamonte chuckled, then no longer said anything.

He, Lamonte, was an honorary disciple of the War God’s College, and he was a warrior of the ninth rank. He was indeed qualified to be arrogant. But right now, virtually all of the ancient clans of the imperial city knew that Wharton was of the Baruch clan, which in turn was the clan of the Dragonblood Warriors. And Wharton was clearly able to use battle-qi.

A scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan who could use battle-qi was definitely capable of Dragonforming as well.

Lamonte knew very well that although Wharton appeared to be only a warrior of the eighth rank, when using that unique, special warblade of his to attack, he could fight on par with ordinary warriors of the ninth rank. But once Wharton transformed, he, Lamonte, wouldn’t be a match at all.

“Let’s leave.” Gently stroking the head of his Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiff, Lamonte chuckled lightly.

And then, Lamonte left along with his magical beast, just like that.

Nina and Wharton headed directly to a private deluxe room on the second room of the hotel. As for Nina's female attendant, she stayed outside the room.

"You big lunk, tell me, what should we do about that Lamonte? He is so annoying." Nina nestled in Wharton's arms, asking in a soft voice.

'Big lunk'. This was how Nina had addressed Wharton the first time they had met. Whenever they met in private, this was how Nina would address him.

"It is your own fault for being so charming, Nina." Wharton grinned as he tweaked Nina's nose. "Actually, I don't care too much about that Lamonte fellow. The one I'm worried about is Caylan [Kai'lan]."

"Big brother Caylan?" Nina said with resignation, "I only think of him as a big brother, but he…sigh."

Caylan was twenty three years old, but was already a magus of the seventh rank.

There were quite a few twenty three year old warriors of the seventh rank, but very few twenty three year old magi of the seventh rank. Moreover, Caylan had reached the seventh rank as a magus when he was twenty one years old.

If Linley hadn't sculpted 'Awakening From the Dream', most likely it would've taken him until the age of twenty to reach the seventh rank.

In the imperial capital, Caylan was considered a genius magus. He had been childhood friends with Nina. And more importantly, Caylan's father was the Left Premier of the Empire, an extremely powerful man. Caylan himself was, simply put, a very good person as well. It could be said that he was a nearly perfect individual.

Chapter 52 – The Beirut Clan

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 52, The Beirut Clan

“In terms of lineage as well as personality, Caylan is a fine man.” Wharton held Nina in his arms, speaking softly. “I’m afraid that your Imperial father will give your hand in marriage to Caylan.”

Nina nodded. “It is true that Imperial father values Caylan due to his high talent for magic. In the future, he has a high chance of becoming an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, and even has a chance to become a Saint-level Grand Magus. The Empire has many Saint-level experts, but most of them are Saint-level warriors. There are extremely few Saint-level Grand Magi.”

Wharton sensed that Caylan was a threat.

Although Lamonte belonged to the War God’s College, he was just an honorary disciple. In addition, his clan wasn’t particularly powerful either. He, Wharton, was a Dragonblood Warrior after all. As long as the Emperor wasn’t a fool, he would definitely select Wharton.

But if Caylan were to compete against Wharton, things would be different. His father was, after all, the powerful and influential Left Premier of the Empire.

“Nina.” Wharton became very solemn.

“Hrm?” Nestled in Wharton’s arms, Nina looked up at him.

“I am preparing to request an audience with His Imperial Majesty, and to personally ask for him to give me your hand in marriage.” Wharton said with a very solemn expression on his face.

Nina started, and then a look of wild joy appeared on her face.

“Truly?” Nina was very excited.

“Yes.” Wharton nodded. “Nina, before I do so, you can chat with your Imperial father and get a sense of which way the wind is blowing.”

Nina shook her head helplessly. “I thought I told you already. My Imperial father himself has yet to make up his mind. The only thing he says is, ‘no rush’, ‘no rush’….but my Imperial father does have a very favorable impression of you, and he values you as well. If you really were to ask for my hand, I think your chances would be very high.” Nina was very hopeful.

Only one of her older sister’s had married someone whom she loved. For the rest of Nina’s sisters, their marriages were marriages of political convenience, and not very happy ones.

Wharton nodded slightly.

“Don’t worry, Nina. I won’t let anyone take you from me.” Wharton tightly embraced Nina, who placed her head against Wharton’s massive, sturdy chest.

The Northwest Administrative Province. Cloudpeaks Village, outside the provincial capital. On the west side of Cloudpeaks Village, there was a forest. The already Dragonformed Linley was currently sparring with Bebe.

“Bebe, don’t force me.” Linley said helplessly as he wielded the adamantine heavy sword. “If you keep doing this to me, then I’ll be forced to use the Profound Truths of the Earth.”

“Heh heh, Boss, I know you care about me too much to do that to me.” Bebe was hovering in midair, speaking in the human tongue.

Upon reaching the Saint-level, magical beasts could freely alter their size, and also speak in human tongues. But only a Deity-level magical beast could transform into a human shape.

In the entire Yulan continent, only the King of the Forest of Darkness and the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, these two powerful Deity-level experts, could transform into a human form.

As for Bebe, who knew how long it would be before he could reach such a level?

“You rascal.” Linley sighed. “I reached the Saint-level and finally caught up to you in terms of speed and defense. But you, you immediately entered the Saint-level as well. Your speed became even more ridiculous.”

But movement speed and attack speed remained two different concepts.

The speed of swinging a sword was far faster than movement speed. Although in terms of dodging and agility, Linley was no match for Bebe, his adamantine heavy sword was still able to block Bebe’s attacks. Thus, facing Bebe, Linley usually just stood there, using his sword to defend himself.

“Heh heh.” Bebe laughed proudly.

Actually, Linley’s Profound Truths of the Earth still posed a real threat to Bebe. After all, the Profound Truths of the Earth all but ignored external defenses, rendering Bebe’s powerful defense useless.

But how could Linley bear to use such a vicious attack against Bebe?

Thus, Bebe continuously teased and taunted Linley in their spars.

“Enough. My body has two claw marks on it now. Are you happy?” Linley laughed as he rubbed Bebe’s little head. “Let’s go back. It’s time to eat.”

As he spoke, Linley reverted to his human form, then put on a new set of clothes.

“The Boss is always the best.” Bebe flew to Linley’s shoulders and giggled.

In Linley's current squad, if Linley were to avoid using the Profound Truths of the Earth, there was no one here who was a match for Bebe. Bebe was a truly powerful Saint-level magical beast, through and through.

"Bebe, what sort of magical beast are you, exactly?" Linley walked while chatting with Bebe.

"I really don't know either." Bebe rapidly shook his little head.

Linley suddenly remembered something, then looked towards Bebe in astonishment. "Bebe, do you remember back when we initiated our 'bond of equals', I asked you what your name was? At that time you said, 'Bei', 'Bei'. You didn't say whatever it was you wanted to say very clearly."

Linley remembered that scene very clearly.

"Little Shadowmouse, what is your name?" Linley had mentally asked him.

The little Shadowmouse had said, somewhat excitedly, "Bei….bei…."

Linley had stared at the little Shadowmouse.

"What's the little Shadowmouse saying?" Linley didn't really understand.

His white beard flowing, Doehring Cowart had floated next to him and mentally said,"Linley, this little Shadowmouse is still an infant. He can't form precise sounds yet. Even when engaging in mental communication with you, for now, he can only communicate simple intentions."

Due to their spiritual link, Linley had been able to feel the little Shadowmouse's excitement, but the little Shadowmouse simply couldn't speak at all.

"Okay. You were saying 'Bei'…. 'Bei'….then I'm going to call you 'Bebe'. How's that?" Linley had grinned as he watched the little Shadowmouse.

The little Shadowmouse had seemed to ponder for a while, and then had

happily nodded.

And just like that, Linley had named him ‘Bebe’.

“Did I say that?”

Bebe was startled.

“Oh, right.” Bebe remembered. “I remember now. When I was very, very young, so young that I couldn’t even open my eyes, I heard a very close, very warm voice speak to me.”

Linley immediately looked at Bebe. He had never heard Bebe speak of this before.

It was normal for magical beasts to be unable to open their eyes soon after they were born. At that time, Bebe most likely had just been born not long ago. That was a very distant memory. If Linley hadn’t brought it up, Bebe wouldn’t have recalled it either.

“That voice told me that I belonged to some clan. It instructed me to hide in the back courtyard of your clan’s manor and to not run around. And then, the voice disappeared.” Bebe was very puzzled.

“The Bei-something clan?” Linley said questioningly.

“I don’t recall very well. It seems to have been Bei…Bei…oh!” Bebe’s little eyes lit up. “‘Beirut’ [Bei’lu’te]. Right. It seems to have been ‘Beirut’. That voice told me that I was a member of the mighty Beirut clan. It told me not to run around, because it was dangerous outside. That’s why I stayed in your manor’s back courtyard the entire time, Boss, as I slowly grew up there.”

Linley now understood.

“The Beirut clan?” Linley was puzzled. “Magical beasts have clans?”

Bebe shook his head in confusion as well. “I don’t know either. I never met my parents after I was born. I just stayed at the back courtyard of your clan’s manor, and all I had to eat were those pieces of rubble.”

Linley firmly imprinted this name into his memory – the Beirut clan!

Linley was absolutely certain that he had never heard of any powerful clan in the Yulan continent named ‘Beirut’. But this clan was most likely a magical beast clan.

A magical beast clan?

Linley didn’t know about it because he was not a magical beast.

But Bebe didn’t know either, because he had no parents.

Ten more days passed for Linley within Cloudpeaks Village. Per Linley’s agreement with McKenzie, all he had to do was make a single trip to visit the Jacques clan within thirty days.

“Big brother Linley, you have a letter.” Jenne ran in excitedly from outside.

“Oh, it should be from the Dawson Conglomerate.”

The Dawson Conglomerate sent a letter every month. Linley immediately walked out. There was a young man leading a horse outside. Upon seeing Linley, the young man immediately bowed and said courteously, “Lord Ley, here is your letter.”

Linley accepted the letter and laughed. “Next month, there will be no need for you to come here.”

The young man looked at Linley questioningly.

“By this time next month, I will no longer be here.” Linley had made the decision long ago that in the next few days, he would head to the Jacques clan.

His wounds had healed long ago, and after Dragonforming, he was a Saint-level combatant. It was time to go visit his little brother.

It had been a long, long time since he had met with Wharton. In his heart, Linley had always missed this one and only sibling of his.

“Yes, Lord Ley.” The young man said respectfully, and then he mounted his horse and left.

As for Linley, he opened the letter and read it. The letter had quite a good amount of general information regarding the current state of affairs for the Radiant Church and the Yulan continent as a whole. It also had some information about Reynolds, George, and Yale. At the bottom was information regarding Wharton.

“George is really formidable.” Linley mentally sighed in praise.

With the support of the Walsh family, George had continued on his upward trajectory within the Yulan Empire. He himself was very talented as well, but more importantly…

The Third Prince of the Yulan Empire had successfully inherited the imperial throne, becoming the Emperor of the Yulan Empire.

Prior to the Third Prince assuming the position of Emperor, George had been on very close terms with him. The two of them were politically of one mind. Now that the Third Prince had succeeded his father as Emperor, George had become the youngest Grand Secretary in the Yulan Empire.

The entire Yulan Empire only had twelve Grand Secretaries. Each of them possessed extraordinary power and authority. What’s more, George was also the Deputy for the Right Premier of the Yulan Empire.

“By comparison, Reynolds hasn’t done as well as George.” Linley chuckled, then he closely read the information regarding Wharton. Linley had a general idea of what Wharton was up to.

But upon reading the letter…

“What?!” Linley was shocked. “Wharton has asked the Emperor for the Seventh Princess’s hand in marriage?”

The Dawson Conglomerate had just transmitted this news to the provincial capital of Basil not long ago. After all, this event only happened a few days ago.

“The Emperor didn’t agree?”

Frowning, Linley continued to read. “Fortunately, although he didn’t agree, he didn’t refuse too harshly either.”

According to the letter, the Emperor was continuing to delay.

That Lamonte had gone long ago to ask the same question, and the Emperor hadn’t agreed then either. Now that Wharton had gone, the Emperor still declined to agree. What he said was, “Nina is still young. There is no rush.”

Nina was already twenty one years old. She wasn’t that young.

But Nina was both a magus and a warrior, and her affinity as a magus was to water magic, which was of exceeding benefit to one’s body. Nina’s lifespan would definitely be very long. It would be easy for her to live for three or four hundred years. Given this, it was true that she did not need to be in a rush to marry.

“One is the son of the Left Premier of the Empire, while the other is an honorary disciple of the War God’s College.” Linley could immediately tell who his younger brother’s greatest adversary was. It was the Left Premier’s son, that magus named Caylan.

“It seems as though the situation isn’t looking good.” Linley’s forehead was furrowed. A cold light flashed in his eyes. “No matter what, I can’t let Wharton walk the same road that I did. Tomorrow. Tomorrow, I’ll go pay a

visit to the Jacques clan. After satisfying the agreement, we'll head directly to the imperial capital."

Linley had made his decision.

But right at that moment…

"Lord, Lord!" The familiar voice of Gates rang out. Gates was probably the most lively of the five brothers.

"Lord!" It wasn't just Gates; the others were shouting as well.

Puzzled, Linley returned to the courtyard. As he did, Gates and the others immediately rushed to him, their faces filled with wild joy.

"All of you are so happy. What's the good news?" Linley laughed.

"Second brother, second brother has already reached the ninth rank!" Gates was the first to speak.

"Ankh, our second brother, is at the Saint-level as well after transforming." The third brother, Hazer, said with joy.

Linley was startled.

Of the five brothers, Barker was the first to reach the ninth rank. After he possessed the power of the Saint-level, the other four brothers, all at the peak of the eighth rank, continued to work hard. Unexpectedly, another one had reached the ninth rank so soon.

"Myself. Bebe. Barker. Ankh. All of a sudden, four of us have reached the Saint-level." Linley had never heard of a clan possessing four Saint-level combatants. The scariest part of it was…the other three brothers could break through at any moment as well.

Linley had no idea, but he was grinning so widely that his lips threatened to split apart.

Perhaps the very next day, someone would come running over to tell him that another one of the five brothers had broken through. They would then have yet another Saint-level in their ranks.

Linley now felt all the more convinced that his decision to go rescue Barker and his brothers was an absolutely genius decision. By now, aside from Barker and Ankh, the other three brothers could be considered Saint-levels in the making.

Chapter 53 – Guest

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 53, Guest

Living in the Northwest Administrative Province, it could be said that Linley had gotten everything he had desired. In the blink of an eye, he, Bebe, and the second brother, Ankh, had all reached the Saint-level of power. Their group now had four Saint-level experts. Even the three major trading unions or the four major assassin's guilds couldn't boast such a number!

This was an extremely powerful, hidden force.

Unfortunately, in the imperial capital, the opposite was true for Wharton.

In the spacious training area in the back part of the manor, Wharton was wildly training with his ancestral heirloom, the warblade 'Slaughterer'. Sweat was pouring down from every part of his body, but it seemed as though Wharton didn't feel tired at all, as he continued to train.

Watching quietly, Housekeeper Hiri shook his head to himself.

"Wharton is just like his father. He cares too much about love." Hiri had watched Hogg grow up, and knew how deep a love Hogg had felt for Linley's mother, Lina. When Lina had been abducted, Hogg had been in misery for over ten years. The only reason he had endured was because he had to raise Linley and Wharton.

As soon as Hogg felt that Linley and Wharton could grow up on their own, he threw away everything to investigate his wife's whereabouts. In the end, he paid for it with his life.

"Wharton is the same. His Imperial Majesty didn't totally cut off all his hopes. He only asked Wharton not to be in such a rush, and that there was no need for the Seventh Princess to marry so soon. But Wharton has

become like this…” Hiri kept on sighing.

Housekeeper Hiri didn’t know that it wasn’t just Hogg and Wharton who were like this. Linley was the same as well.

“Groooowl.”

After this bestial growl, Wharton slowly stopped brandishing the warblade in his hands. After having painstakingly trained for so many years, Wharton had already reached a very high level of proficiency with the warblade. The bestial roar that came out just now was one of the hallmarks of the warblade style he had developed.

“Grandpa Hiri.” Wharton looked at Housekeeper Hiri, squeezing a smile onto his face.

After having unleashed all of his frustrations just now, Wharton felt a bit better inside.

“Wharton, don’t be too sad. You and the Seventh Princess still have a chance.” Hiri laughed. “I think the reason His Imperial Majesty has been delaying is because it is very hard for him to choose between you and Caylan.”

Wharton nodded.

Wharton actually understood a great deal about the current Emperor.

He was an Emperor that highly valued human talent, and he was a fairly decisive man as well. But he had one flaw. That flaw was – bias! Extreme bias!

Everyone in the imperial capital knew this.

For example, twenty years ago, the Southeast Administrative Province’s managing clan had made some mistakes. Since they didn’t have the backing of a Saint-level expert, in the end, their clan was ransacked by the Emperor.

At the time, many clans had desired to take over the Southeast Administrative Province. But in the end, the Emperor had actually given his one and only younger brother, Duke Julin [Yu'lin], authority over the Southeast Administrative Province.

Anyone the Emperor was close to, he tended to be biased towards.

Caylan's father, the Imperial Left Premier, Judd Darryl [Jia'de Da'li'er], had grown up alongside the Emperor. They were on very good terms with each other. After the Emperor took the throne, he naturally appointed Judd Darryl to a high rank, eventually appointing him the Imperial Left Premier. He possessed enormous power, and could be described to be second to only the Emperor himself.

The Emperor, being on such close terms with the Imperial Left Premier, naturally was very partial and protective towards Caylan as well.

In addition, Caylan was a very talented, worthy person. It would have been very natural for the Emperor to agree to Caylan's attempt to woo Nina. However, Wharton was also wooing Nina, and Nina herself liked Wharton. This made the Emperor hesitate.

Caylan and Wharton were both very talented.

He doted on Caylan, but he also doted on Nina.

Caylan's father was his dear friend and was one of the pillars of the Empire. But Wharton was a Dragonblood Warrior.

This was a very hard choice to make!

"I understand what His Imperial Majesty is thinking. For him to refuse my direct request to be allowed to wed Nina means that it will not be so easy for the two of us to be together." Wharton sighed.

"Wharton, you need to have some self-confidence." Housekeeper Hiri encouraged.

Wharton forced out a smile. “Grandpa Hiri, I know what the situation is. In the Empire, His Imperial Majesty’s decree is absolute law. The only person he is afraid of is the War God himself. That’s is why I originally took part in the competition to become an honorary disciple. I wanted to build a relationship with the War God. So long as the War God was willing to assist me, everything would have been set.”

The War God. The true foundation and pillar of the O’Brien Empire.

A single word from the War God could make the Emperor abdicate without daring to say a word of complaint. After all the War God was the founding Emperor of the O’Brien Empire, and he was also a Deity-level expert who stood at the top of the entire Yulan continent.

“Slowly, slowly. Don’t be in a rush.” Housekeeper Hiri consoled.

“Lord Count, the Seventh Princess has arrived.” An attendant walked into the training grounds and said respectfully.

“Nina came?” Wharton was very surprised.

Although the two were on very close terms, Nina rarely came to visit him at his manor. Wharton immediately took a quick rinse, changed into a fresh set of clothes, then went to the main hall to see Nina.

Within the main hall.

A look of happiness was on Nina’s face. The female attendant behind her laughed quietly. “Princess, what sort of expression do you think the Lord Count will have on his face when he hears this news?”

“What sort of expression the big lunk will have?” Nina pondered the question, her laughter becoming all the merrier.

As she thought and chatted, Nina suddenly heard footsteps. Turning, she saw a large, powerful figure walk in, as tall and strong as a wargod. Staring

at this familiar figure, Nina felt a sweet feeling in her heart. In her heart, Wharton had already become her mental pillar of support.

“Nina, why have you come to my place? Aren’t you afraid your Imperial father will scold you?” Wharton laughed as he walked in.

Nina pouted. “He can scold me if he wants. I wanted to come.”

Seeing the adorable look on Nina’s face, Wharton felt a gentle, warm feeling in his heart. He sat next to Nina and held her hands. “Nina, judging from the look on your face, I think you are hiding something from me.”

Nina wrinkled her nose, saying delightedly, “I can’t hide anything from you. I want to tell you some good news.”

“Good news? What good news? Has your Imperial father changed his mind and decided to allow me to marry you?” Wharton said casually.

The Emperor’s words were as good as gold. How could he so casually take back what he had said?

“Of course not.” Nina’s smile was very bright.

“Then what is it?”

Nina’s expression grew solemn. “Two days ago, you spoke with my Imperial father, but he didn’t agree. I felt very unhappy, so I thought of something. I went directly to big brother Caylan.”

“You went to find Caylan?” Wharton’s eyebrows shot up. Caylan was his enemy in love. “What did you go find him for?”

Nina giggled. “Okay, stop guessing. I just went to have a good chat with big brother Caylan. I told him that the only thing I felt for him was the affection due an older brother. We grew up together, and he really was like an older brother to me. I asked big brother Caylan to help the two of us. I told big brother Caylan that if I were to leave you, Wharton, I wouldn’t be able to

live.”

Wharton suddenly felt deeply moved.

“Big brother Caylan was quiet for a long time, but in the end, he agreed that he would speak to His Imperial Majesty, and that he would abandon his pursuit of me and allow us to be together.” Nina’s smile was incandescent.

“Caylan is giving up?” Wharton was shocked.

Wharton had been in the imperial capital for a long time now, and had interacted with Caylan several times. Wharton could clearly sense the love which Caylan felt towards Nina. He was totally, truly in love with her. And yet, Caylan had decided to give up. Wharton felt very moved, while at the same time, he began to somewhat admire Caylan.

“Big brother Caylan has given up, while the others aren’t much of a threat. As for that Lamonte, in my Imperial father’s heart, he can’t compare to you.” A very happy look was on Nina’s face. “Big lunk, there’s no one who can stop us from being together now.”

Excitement!

There was no way he could stop this sense of excitement and joy from swelling in his heart. The most troublesome, headache-inducing competitor facing him had voluntarily given up. This sort of sudden, unexpected joy made Wharton feel a little giddy and dizzy.

Staring at Nina’s incandescent smile, Wharton felt more moved than he ever had been.

“Right. No one will prevent us from being together.” Wharton held Nina tightly in his arms.

Linley, Bebe, Haeru, Rebecca, Leena, Jenne, Zassler, and Barker and his brothers left Cloudpeaks Village, making their way towards the provincial capital of Basil.

The provincial capital of Basil. The Jacques clan's castle.

Linley's group had arrived at the gates.

"Who comes before us?" The castle guards barked at them from far away. The Jacques clan were the local hegemons of the Northwest Administrative Province. Their headquarters wasn't a place where just anyone could enter.

The fifth of the brothers, Gates, immediately shouted loudly, "Go inform McKenzie that our Lord Linley has arrived."

"Who is making so much noise outside?!"

A familiar voice shouted. Linley carefully stared in the direction of that voice. Indeed, that gaudily dressed young man, Albert, came rushing out amidst a number of servants.

Seeing Linley's group, the look on Albert's face changed.

"You are called Ley, right? How dare you come to my house?" A vicious, sinister look was on Albert's face. "I didn't expect that those six people belonging to the Radiant Church wouldn't be able to kill you. But my Jacques clan isn't so easily bullied by the likes of you."

At the same time, Albert also noticed that behind Linley, there was Jenne, as well as Rebecca and her sister.

Jenne's complexion was as beautiful as a flower petal in a pool of water, while Rebecca and Leena possessed a certain mysterious grace that was extremely mesmerizing.

"How the hell did this guy get so many beautiful women to follow him?" Albert felt extremely aggrieved.

"How dare you come to cause trouble at the gates of the Jacques clan? Men! Seize them!" Albert immediately ordered loudly.

The surrounding guards all charged forward, but before Linley made a single move, Barker and his brothers charged forward.

“Spare their lives.” Linley said calmly.

“Got it.” Gates said excitedly.

“As long as they don’t die, right?” Barker’s eyes held a hint of glee as well. These five brothers had been famous in the Eighteen Northern Duchies as bloodthirsty warlords. When leading their armies, they had killed countless people.

These five enormous siblings were like war machines. They seized one guard after another, as easily as snatching up a chicken, and then casually tossed them like sandbags towards the castle gates. The force of these tosses by the Barker brothers was quite high. These warriors of the fifth and sixth ranks had their bones snapped as soon as they hit the ground.

“You…” Albert was so angry that his entire body was quivering. “You are too arrogant and wild. You dare act like this in front of the Jacques clan?”

“What is going on out here?”

An angry roar could be heard, as another group of people appeared from within the castle. The leader was a middle-aged man with a square face. Albert immediately bowed. “Father, these people are causing trouble at our gates, and they even injured our guards.”

“Oh?” This middle-aged man was the leader of the Jacques clan, Odin [Ao’deng] Jacques.

Odin Jacques stared coldly at Linley’s group.

“Haha, brother Linley, you’ve arrived!” A loud laugh could be heard as a blur suddenly descended from the heavens, appearing in front of the castle gates.

That stiff, ramrod straight back. That white-flecked hair.

Odin and Albert, upon seeing this man, immediately dropped all pretenses of arrogance and immediately bowed respectfully.

“Odin, what are you doing here?” McKenzie looked coldly at Odin.

Odin trembled, not daring to speak. He had heard how McKenzie had just said the words, ‘brother Linley’. He didn’t dare say a word.

“This has nothing to do with this Odin fellow. Only, there’s a small grudge between his son Albert and myself. Thus, he wanted to use the clan’s forces to resolve our private issues.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Grudge?” McKenzie nodded.

Casting a single cold glance at Albert, McKenzie turned to look at Odin. “Odin, have Albert go to the prefectural city of Deco to assist his uncle. The provincial capital of Basil is no longer an appropriate place for him to stay.”

Albert’s face instantly turned white.

The provincial capital of Basil was no longer a suitable place for him to stay? This was as good as saying that his position as heir to the clan leadership had just been stripped from him. Moreover, he was being exiled to a prefectural city, and he wasn’t even going to be the city governor; he was just going to assist his uncle. In the future, he wouldn’t even be on Keane’s level.

“Yes, grandfather.” Odin didn’t dare to hesitate in the slightest.

In the Northwest Administrative Province, McKenzie’s stature was the same as the War God O’Brien’s stature in the O’Brien Empire. Even if he wanted Odin to give up his position as clan leader, Odin wouldn’t dare to voice a single word of complaint.

“Brother Linley, I am so very sorry. I was out for a stroll just now, and so I arrived here a bit late.” McKenzie warmly welcomed Linley into his castle.

Smiling, Linley entered the castle alongside McKenzie, with Odin courteously following them from behind. As for the pale-faced Albert, no one paid him any more attention.

Chapter 54 – Personal Disciple

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 54, Personal Disciple

The Jacques clan's castle was extremely large, but virtually everyone in the castle knew that the 'quiet park' that took up nearly a third of the castle was a restricted area.

Because that was where McKenzie lived. Aside from McKenzie and his wife, only three attendants as well as McKenzie's disciples were permitted to enter. Normally, even the clan leader or his sons had to be granted entry before entering.

The quiet park was extremely large, and more than half of it was taken up by trees and flowers. The buildings inside the park were both simple and unadorned. But despite that, it would be easy for over a hundred people to live within this place.

Linley's group had been invited to enter the quiet park.

A jade-haired, beautiful, virtuous looking woman who seemed to be in her thirties guided Linley's group through the park, helping arrange places for them to live.

"Bliss [Bi'li'si], prepare a banquet, just like last time when Haydson came to visit." McKenzie said to the beautiful attendant.

"Yes, milord."

The jade-haired woman was very shocked. McKenzie, when receiving guests, was very particular about how he treated them. Generally speaking, this high-class banquet which McKenzie was now instructing to hold was generally only for Saint-level combatants.

“Can this youngster be a Saint-level expert?” Bliss glanced at Linley, guessing silently.

McKenzie laughed towards Linley. “Linley, although you’ve been in my Northwest Administrative Province for quite some time, I’ll wager you have yet to try some of the true delicacies of the Northwest Administrative Province.”

“True delicacies?” Linley raised an eyebrow.

When he was staying in the hotels, the dishes Linley had ordered were all very famous. After all, for someone at Linley’s level, money was of no concern.

“Of course, the provincial capital has many restaurants with fine dishes. But there are some special dishes which even those finest of restaurants only prepare a single portion of each week. Those special delicacies are something that you can’t simply buy with money.” McKenzie said proudly.

Throughout his life, McKenzie had only two hobbies; the first was training, and the second was sampling the various delicacies of the world.

McKenzie had even once said that if one didn’t have the chance to eat rare foods, then one’s life would have no flavor.

“Then today, I must have a good sampling of what you have to offer.” Linley chuckled.

Right now, only Linley and McKenzie were in the main hall, as well as Bebe, who was standing on Linley’s shoulders. As for Barker and his brothers, all of them had retired to their rooms.

“Hrm?” Seeing the Shadowmouse on Linley’s shoulders, McKenzie seemed to be slightly surprised. “Linley, I have the feeling that this magical beast of yours seems to be quite extraordinary. But he looks like a black Shadowmouse. This…” Black Shadowmice were the weakest type of Shadowmice. But McKenzie was certain that given Linley’s status, there

was no way he would have such a weak magical beast companion.

Bebe had reached the Saint-level already.

Currently, however, Bebe was totally suppressing his aura. If a Saint-level combatant were to suppress their aura, unless the opponents were far stronger, they wouldn't be able to sense the exact power.

"Bebe is a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank." Linley laughed.

On Linley's shoulders, Bebe flashed his fangs disdainfully towards McKenzie. As Linley planned it, Bebe having reached the Saint-rank was one of his most valuable hidden trump cards.

Bebe was already extremely terrifying before reaching the Saint-rank. Now that he had reached the Saint-rank, if Linley didn't use the Profound Truths of the Earth, he would be absolutely ravaged by Bebe in their sparring matches.

But amongst Saint-level experts, how many possessed such a strange attack as Linley's Profound Truths of the Earth? Generally, Saint-level experts weren't a match for Bebe at all.

"A black Shadowmouse which is a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank?" McKenzie was still very surprised.

"Enough about that. McKenzie, in a few days, I plan to head off to the imperial capital. What do you think would be a good time for us to hold our sparring match?" Linley asked.

"Leaving so soon?" McKenzie was a bit disappointed. "I was hoping to celebrate with you for quite a while, brother Linley. That way, when we sparred together, we would learn more as well. But since you have business to attend to in the imperial capital, then…how about this? In three days, let's have our sparring match in that small desolate mountain outside the city."

“Works for me.” Linley nodded in agreement.

“Come, come take a look at my training yard.” McKenzie said warmly, and Linley followed McKenzie over to take a look.

While Linley was enjoying the warm hospitality of McKenzie, Wharton and Nina had left the imperial capital and were headed for the War God’s College.

The War God’s College was built on top of a tall mountain. The mountain was thus named, War God Mountain.

“It has already been over two hundred years since the last time the War God accepted a personal disciple. A few years ago, the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, refused the War God’s invitation. I didn’t expect that he would suddenly declare that he would accept another personal disciple.”

“If one day, I could become his personal disciple, even if it were just for a day, I would die a happy man.”

The road outside the imperial capital was filled with people, all chatting and calling out to each other. The War God’s College accepting new honorary disciples was no longer an issue of major interest; accepting a new personal disciple, however, was an earth-shaking event. The importance of such an event was not one whit less than a new Emperor assuming the throne.

After all, in the past five thousand years, the War God O’Brien had only accepted a total of 20 or so personal disciples. Many of them were already deceased.

As for Emperors?

In the past five thousand years, there had been over a hundred of them.

Although in the hearts of the commoners, this was a huge affair, the War God’s College method of carrying the recruiting of a personal disciple was very simple. When the time came, they would simply send out a public

announcement of who the next personal disciple would be.

The designated time was today at noon.

And thus, early this morning, a large number of people had come to congregate outside War God Mountain. Wharton and Nina naturally went to watch this momentous event as well.

Within their carriage.

“Big lunk, who do you think will become the next personal disciple of the War God?” Nina asked. Even in the eyes of an imperial princess, the War God was high and far above them, someone who they could never approach. Since she was born, Nina had never seen the War God once.

In fact, not even the current reigning Emperor, Johann [Qiao’an], had ever met the War God.

But the personally taught disciples of the War God were qualified to meet him. From this, one could see the extremely elite status the War God’s personally taught disciples held. In the past, when that Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, had refused the enticing offer to become a personally taught disciple of the War God, everyone was shocked and filled with admiration.

“The personally taught disciple of the War God would definitely be a person of enormous talent. At the very least, he would be a warrior of the ninth rank, and one with the possibility of reaching the Saint-level.” Wharton’s words were based on historical precedent.

“However, there are too many experts of the ninth rank in the Empire, and talent level is difficult to determine as well. It is very hard to say who the War God will accept as his personal disciple.”

Suddenly, the carriage came to a halt.

“Princess, we’ve already reached War God Mountain. There are too many people up ahead. The carriage can’t pass through.” The driver called out.

Wharton immediately helped Nina off the carriage.

“There are so many people here.” Seeing the sea of people in front of them, Nina couldn’t help but be afraid.

At the base of the cloud-topped War God Mountain, people were densely clustered everywhere. Earlier, carriages might have been able to advance, but now, none would be able to. The mountain roads were filled with people.

“Nina.” Wharton smiled towards Nina.

“Groooowl.” The Saber-Toothed Tiger, who had been following the carriage the entire time, leapt over. Wharton put Nina on top of it. “Have a good seat and take a firm grip. We’ll take a shortcut.”

Nina was both a warrior and a magus. Although she wasn’t very powerful, she was able to clutch quite tightly to the Saber-Toothed Tiger’s neck.

“Let’s go.” Nina was very excited.

The Saber-Toothed Tiger immediately soared into the air, with Wharton travelling at high speed by its side. Wharton and Nina didn’t take the main road; rather, they took some hard-to-traverse side roads from the back of the mountain.

Even the toughest, steepest of mountain paths were as easy for the Saber-Toothed Tiger to traverse as flat land. Wharton was extremely agile as well.

The two of them clambered up at high speed. On the way, they encountered quite a few powerful experts who were using the same method as they were. After all, if they had to squeeze in through the main road, who knew how long it would take?

“Here we are.” With a final leap, Wharton and the Saber-Toothed Tiger arrived at the main plaza.

“Wow. I’m so scared that my entire body is covered with sweat now.” Nina’s little face was very red. She hopped off the Saber-Toothed Tiger’s back.

The neat, flat stone plaza in front of them was extremely large. There already were over ten thousand people present, and yet it didn’t seem crowded at all. In fact, to the contrary; it seemed rather empty.

“Big lunk, did you know that this huge training school’s foundation was originally created by the War God himself? That year, he used one stroke of his sword to slice off the main peak of War God Mountain, then had the War God’s College built on the now-flat land.

Wharton was astonished at the War God’s power.

In truth, War God Mountain actually had several mountain peaks, with one being the primary peak. But the War God effortlessly chopped it off with one blow of his sword, creating a flat surface, upon which these various buildings of the War God’s College were erected, becoming the place where the honorary disciples of the War God’s College would stay.

According to legend, the personally taught disciples of the War God lived at another mountain peak.

“It isn’t time yet. Let’s have a rest.” Holding Nina’s hand, Wharton headed to a nearby stone bench and took a seat.

The plaza began to fill up with more and more people. Finally, the appointed time came.

On the tall dais in the front part of the plaza, there were a large number of people, all of whom were the honorary disciples of the War God’s College. Wharton’s ‘competitor’, Lamonte, was there as well.

“Look. A Saint-level expert.”

“Someone is flying over.”

Wharton and Nina all looked upward into the sky. They saw three human forms dressed in blue robes flash through the air, flying shoulder-to-shoulder towards the dais. Finally, they landed.

“Three Saint-level experts!” Everyone present felt their hearts tremble. Normally, even a single Saint-level expert was a rare sight, but now, three had appeared.

After landing, one of the three Saint-level experts, a middle-aged man who appeared to be the leader, said in a loud voice, “Everyone, today, we three fellow apprentices have come at our master’s instruction to announce who the 27th personal disciple will be.”

Everyone grew quiet.

“All three of them are the personal disciples of the War God.” Wharton suddenly felt as though he couldn’t breathe. The War God’s College was simply too powerful. All three of these personal disciples were Saint-level experts. No wonder the O’Brien Empire was named the most militarily mighty Empire in the world.

That middle-aged man continued, “The last time a personal disciple was accepted was in year 9723 of the Yulan calendar. This is now year 10008 of the Yulan calendar. 285 years have passed.”

Everyone below began to murmur. Such a long time had passed between accepting new disciples. 285 years. Many people didn’t even live that long.

“I announce that my master’s 27th personal disciple will be….Blumer Akerlund [Bu’lu’mo A’qi’lun]!”

Hearing this name, everyone in the plaza immediately let out a roar of joyous approval. At the same time, from within the group of honorary disciples who were standing on the dais, Blumer quietly walked out.

Blumer was rather skinny, and his eyes were slightly sunken. He gave the appearance of being a resolute, cold person.

“Respectful greetings to you, senior fellow apprentices.” Blumer bowed as he walked in front of those three men.

Those other three personal disciples of the War God all nodded slightly. Their leader, the middle-aged man, withdrew a scarlet interspatial ring from within his clothes.

Blumer knew that the emblem of one’s status as a personal disciple of the War God was always an interspatial ring, and a scarlet red one at that.

“So it’s him.”

Watching from below, Wharton shook his head slightly. Last time, when he had tried to join the ranks of the honorary disciples, the one who had won in the end was this Blumer.

Unexpectedly, after just a year had passed, Blumer had suddenly become the personal disciple of the War God!

Nina nodded as she said, “The seemingly common and ordinary Akerlund clan actually produced two geniuses in a row. The Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, was an absolute genius who even the War God wished to take on as his disciple. And now, Olivier’s younger brother, Blumer, has himself become the personal disciple of the War God.”

However, Wharton’s heart was filled with self-confidence despite seeing Blumer’s success.

So what if Blumer was able to join the War God’s College? Wasn’t the point of it all to reach the Saint-level? He, Wharton, upon reaching the Saint-level as a Dragonblood Warrior, would definitely be a powerful expert amongst the Saint-levels.

Chapter 55 – A Saint-Level Battle

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 55, A Saint-Level Battle

While the citizens of the imperial capital were celebrating the 27th personal disciple the War God had chosen in five thousand years, in the far-off Northwest Administrative Province, Linley and the Saint-level expert, McKenzie, were currently chatting happily over wine. Tonight, they would prepare to do battle.

Tonight, the curved moon hung high in the sky, its faint silver glow covering the world, making it seem as though the entire world had been covered by a layer of gauze.

Atop the small desolate mountain outside the provincial capital of Basil, Linley and McKenzie were walking shoulder to shoulder, with Bebe seated on Linley's shoulder. The others did not come.

The only witness to this battle would be Bebe.

The small mountain was extremely desolate and depopulated. Aside from a few sparse trees, the mountain peak was empty and bare. Linley and McKenzie stood side by side on the top of the mountain. The mountain wind howled drearily, rustling their clothes.

Linley and McKenzie glanced at each other, each understanding the hidden meaning in the other's eyes.

Bebe very obediently hopped off from Linley's shoulders, and Linley removed his upper body clothes, storing them in his interspatial ring. He began to transform, and black scales quickly covered his entire body, while his forehead, back, elbows, and knees began to sprout sharp spikes. That iron-whip-like tail began to swing about behind him, and his eyes suddenly transformed into that merciless dark golden color. That faint layer of blue

light appeared on his scales as well. As immense power began to radiate from Linley's body, dust and small rocks began to be caught up in the swirl of energy.

"Supreme Warriors live up to their name." McKenzie's eyes lit up.

"Whoosh!"

Simultaneously, Linley and McKenzie transformed into a pair of rainbows as they flew to the air above the small mountain. They stood there in mid-air, roughly a hundred meters from each other.

McKenzie flipped his hand, and an azure spear appeared within it. "In order to forge this spear, I had to spend twenty million gold coins to purchase all sorts of precious ores. After completing it, I named it 'Azureflame'."

Linley flipped his own hand, and the Bloodviolet flexible sword appeared within it.

"I acquired this sword from a very dangerous location in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Its name is 'Bloodviolet.'"

With regards to his abilities in using Bloodviolet, Linley had reached the fourth level, 'Profound Truths of the Wind'. However, Linley had only reached the first, simplest stage of the 'Profound Truths of the Wind', which he had named 'Rippling Wind'.

But despite that, when combined with the unique properties of Bloodviolet, Linley still felt confident in his ability to deal with McKenzie.

"Being at the Saint-level makes me feel as though I am filled with boundless power." Wielding the Bloodviolet Godsword in his hands, Linley felt extremely confident. "In the past, it was impossible for me to use Bloodviolet to harm a Saint-level combatant. It wasn't that Bloodviolet was insufficiently sharp; it was that my own battle-qi and strength was far from being sufficient."

How could the weapons used by most experts, in terms of sharpness, compare with this divine artifact, the Bloodviolet Godsword?

Bloodviolet was so sharp that if one didn't use any battle-qi, just by virtue of its sharpness, it could pierce the defense of most magical beasts of the seventh rank. How many weapons could possibly compete with such terrifying sharpness?

Once it was matched with a Saint-level amount of battle-qi, its sharpness and power would reach an even more astonishing level.

"Then, let us begin!"

McKenzie's body began to radiate a boundless desire for battle. Standing high up in the air, as the wind blew his long robes about, McKenzie's body suddenly began to be covered with a layer of crackling flame, and the Azureflame spear in his hands began to emit flame as well.

His entire body seemed to have been covered by fire.

Clad in flame, and holding his spear at the ready, McKenzie looked like a god of battle.

"His battle-qi has actually reached such a level." Linley's eyes lit up.

"Boom!" Linley's own battle-qi exploded as well, as that azure-black battle-qi totally covered Linley's body, and also activated Bloodviolet. Those azure-black scales were totally covered by that azure-black battle-qi, making Linley look like a demon from the Infernal Realm.

A hint of a smile was on McKenzie's lips.

Suddenly…

"Swish!"

Linley only saw a blur as McKenzie slashed his way through the air at him.

The spear in McKenzie's hands, burning with flame, seemed to have locked down all the surrounding space as it pierced towards Linley with tremendous, boundless power.

At this moment, it seemed as though the only thing which existed in this world was that spear.

"Clang!"

A strange, devilish purple light gently slashed open the locked space, and the tip of the sword clashed against the tip of the spear. As they did, Linley and McKenzie's battle-qi exploded through their weapons at each other.

"Boooom!"

A terrifying explosive sound blasted forth from between the two of them as the power released from this clash of two Saint-level experts burst forth in all directions. Even the boulders dotting the mountain beneath them began to crack apart from the released battle-qi.

The two separated at high speed after the clash.

"Hrm?" Linley glanced at McKenzie once. "His battle-qi is actually slightly more powerful than mine." Dragonblood Warriors simply possessed too much natural talent. Even an early-stage Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior would only have just slightly less battle-qi than an ordinary mid-stage Saint-level combatant.

Of the Four Supreme Warriors, the Undying Warriors had the best defense, the Tigerstriped Warriors had the highest speed, the Violetflame Warriors had the fastest healing speed, but the Dragonblood Warriors had the best offense.

Dragonblood Warriors were nothing to joke about.

"Haha, wonderful. Take another attack from me!" McKenzie laughed loudly as he charged towards Linley at high speed again, transforming into

three separate mirages as he did so.

“You want to compete in speed?”

Linley smirked.

Linley’s body blurred, then transformed into three separate mirages as he charged towards McKenzie as well, leaving a streak behind in the sky as he did so.

“Haaargh!”

The previously refined McKenzie was now extremely wild and unrestrained as his three mirages transformed into nine. But somehow, those nine shadow-McKenzie’s were all wielding the spear in their hands in a different manner.

“Bam!”

The nine mirages spun their spears in different ways, then thrust their spears at Linley.

Originally, Linley had only seen nine spears, but after those spears coiled about mysteriously, suddenly, it seemed as though the entire world was filled with countless spear-shadows.

An infinite number of spear-shadows, giving Linley no place to run.

“Haha…” Linley laughed loudly, while at the same time, he himself transformed into a whirlwind of action. In what seemed like the blink of an eye, Linley’s entire body had turned into a spinning tornado, and surrounding that spinning tornado were countless flashes of that devilish purple light.

Those countless spear-shadows were all blocked by those countless flashes of violet light.

McKenzie was stunned.

“Tornado Technique – Shatter!”

Linley roared loudly, and then he slammed towards McKenzie as though he were a giant warhammer. In the blink of an eye, that Bloodviolet sword in his hand seemed to have transformed into ten thousand different swords.

Those sword strikes all seemed so light and graceful, but when they collided against McKenzie’s spear, McKenzie felt as though they each had the power of a thunderbolt.

Wielding something light as though it were heavy!

“Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!”

Linley’s entire body had been transformed into a tornado, and McKenzie had a feeling as though the heavens themselves were aiding Linley. The strangest thing was, it seemed as though the sword in Linley’s hand could disappear then reappear at will.

Under these repeated assault, McKenzie was forced down to the ground from the sky.

“Bam!”

McKenzie landed heavily on the ground, and the earth around him cracked as dust swirled up everywhere. The flames atop of McKenzie’s body began to burn even hotter, and the warlike look in his eyes grew only more wild.

Linley landed heavily on the ground as well. Covered in azure-black battle-qi, the aura Linley gave off was totally opposite compared to McKenzie’s.

One was domineering and tyrannical. The other was dark and mysterious.

McKenzie lowered his head to glance at his chest.

Fresh blood oozed out from beneath his clothes, and then evaporated under the intense heat of the flames. But McKenzie's bloodstained clothes indicated that he clearly had been wounded.

"Linley, I could understand your movements, but there was one thing I couldn't understand. How could that Bloodviolet Godsword of yours fuse with the wind so well?" McKenzie was a very experienced Saint-level combatant.

The level of 'impose' was that of using the imposing force of the heavens and the earth.

But the amount of natural force which Linley had used to support his attack was truly frightening.

"Of course there is a limit to the amount of energy which the heavens and earth can loan you. As for the reason why you had such trouble defending…" Smiling, Linley lifted Bloodviolet into the air, and it suddenly, bizarrely, began to curve about every which way.

If you wanted a sword to be sufficiently hard and sharp, one of the pre-requisites for that was that the sword would not be able to be very flexible.

"This…this is a flexible sword?" McKenzie was very surprised.

Just then, when Linley exchanged blows with him, he had used Bloodviolet to attack in curving arcs. However, due to Linley's usage of 'impose', the impression that McKenzie had gotten was that the sword would suddenly disappear, then appear from somewhere else.

This was another way one could use 'impose'.

"Right. This is a flexible sword." Linley said.

"But how can a flexible sword fight head-on against my Azureflame spear?" McKenzie was very shocked.

The reason why a flexible sword could straighten and be hard was because of battle-qi. But how could a weapon which relied on battle-qi to become straight be comparable to a weapon that was straight to begin with?

McKenzie's Azureflame spear was also a very precious spear.

"This is a divine artifact." Linley didn't hide anything.

"A divine artifact." McKenzie nodded in amazement, and then laughed loudly. "Wonderful. Linley, next I will use my ultimate attack. Be careful."

"I have a special attack that I haven't used either." Linley was very confident as well.

Right now, both men were on the ground, staring at each other.

"Haaaargh!"

McKenzie suddenly began to move. He lifted the spear in his hands, pointing it at the sky. Suddenly, with McKenzie as the focal point, an endless wave of flame began to spew out in every direction.

In the blink of an eye, within several hundred meters, everything had turned into a world of flame.

Linley was surrounded and caged in as well. His dark golden eyes watched emotionlessly. Within this World of Flames, McKenzie's image appeared everywhere, along with his spear.

Oppressive!

This World of Flames seemed to be suppressing Linley, and there was no 'imposing force' Linley could draw upon.

"Rumble…" One indistinct spear after another suddenly pierced through the air, thrusting towards Linley. Combined, they formed a seemingly very real fire dragon, which was coiling forth from the flames and roaring at Linley.

And at the same time…

Behind Linley as well, McKenzie bizarrely appeared out of nowhere as he thrust the spear in his hands toward Linley.

One in front, one from behind. Linley had nowhere to run.

“Rippling Wind!”

Linley began to move, and the Bloodviolet flexible sword in his hands suddenly transformed into countless vipers, colliding and striking against the various spear-shadows that were attacking from all around him. Each time his sword struck against a spear, there was a thunderous boom. That astonishingly powerful fire dragon seemed to have been surrounded and wrapped around by a large number of enormous pythons, and as the pythons constricted it, it exploded violently.

“Slash!” McKenzie’s spear thrust out towards Linley from behind.

But that Bloodviolet flexible sword very nimbly and agilely curved backwards, blocking the spear. As the flexible sword bounced off the spear, Linley too immediately went flying backwards, moving farther away from McKenzie.

“Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!” “Bam!”

To his astonishment McKenzie had discovered that the area around Linley seemed to have suddenly given birth to wild gusts of wind, while the Bloodviolet sword in Linley’s hands seemed to have turned into a violet bolt of thunder, striking in every direction. In the blink of an eye, his World of Flames had been broken open.

Linley had already located McKenzie.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” The Bloodviolet sword in Linley’s hands would appear and disappear at random. In McKenzie’s eyes, all he

could see were countless sword tips stabbing towards him.

It was simply too fast. So fast that McKenzie wasn't able to block them all, and his only option was to rouse his battle-qi to defend against it.

Countless sword tips pierced against his protective layer of battle-qi, and each blow contained an astonishing amount of force. With a sudden exploding sound, that layer of battle-qi blew apart, the force of it causing the earth to rumble, creating ten terrifyingly deep canyons in the ground. Dust flew everywhere.

After a long period of time, the dust finally settled down.

McKenzie's clothes were totally ruined, unsightly beyond repair.

McKenzie glanced at Linley. Chuckling, he nodded. "I lose."

But Linley stared suspiciously at McKenzie. "McKenzie, why were all the spear-shadows in your world of flames so weak and illusionary? My sword easily broke every one of them. If all of those attacks were real, I would have lost."

Linley had already reached a very high level of understanding. He could tell that those spear-shadows were totally capable of becoming real attacks. In other words, those countless spear-shadows could all be real spears. It would have been very difficult for him to block them, if that were the case. But just then, he had easily broken every single spear-shadow.

"Haha, if all of them were real, then I would be a peak-stage Saint-level expert." McKenzie laughed. "My current World of Flames can only reach this current level."

"How is it that your Rippling Wind technique can be so fast? It was even more terrifying than what you were using when we started." McKenzie asked in puzzlement.

Linley explained, "When we first started to fight, I was only borrowing the

imposing force of the wind. As for the Rippling Wind technique, that was part of the insights I gained with regards to the Profound Truths of the Wind. The sword can become one with the wind, and wherever the wind is, the sword can appear."

The Rippling Wind was indeed fast. Terrifyingly fast.

Linley was only able to develop this terrifying technique thanks to the unique properties of the Bloodviolet sword. Using Bloodviolet with this technique, it wouldn't be hard for Linley to produce over ten million sword attacks in the blink of an eye.

Chapter 56 – The Magicite Core

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 56, The Magicite Core

“Wherever the wind is, the sword can appear!”

Hearing these words, McKenzie was truly shocked. If he hadn’t personally sparred with Linley, upon hearing these words, McKenzie would have taken them to be an empty boast. But just then, he himself had sensed the terrifying speed of those sword attacks, which had reached a speed that was ten, no, a hundred times faster than his own.

There was no way for him to block them, and so he had to rely on his battle-qi to defend against it.

To be forced to such a state, McKenzie was thoroughly convinced of Linley’s superiority.

“Linley, you spoke of merging and becoming one with the wind. I…do not understand what you mean.” McKenzie said, frowning slightly.

Linley didn’t try to hide anything. Laughing, he said, “McKenzie, you must understand, the wind itself is invisible and formless, but it can be both as fast as the lightning, or utterly slow and calm. My ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ is, in truth, based on that small amount of insight I have gained into the Laws of the Wind.”

“The Laws.” McKenzie’s eyes were filled with admiration. “The highest of truths.”

Every sort of elemental Law was extremely profound and mysterious. In truth, if one could master and understand a sufficiently large amount of one of these Laws, then one’s soul would totally merge with the ‘elemental world’ and crystallize into a divine spark, allowing one to reach the Deity-

level.

As for Linley, he had just barely scratched the surface of these Laws.

Whether it was the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ or the ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’, Linley had only understood the smallest portion, like a single drop of water in an endless sea.

“By merging with the wind, my sword can appear wherever the wind is. But this sort of technique has a very high requirement with regards to the composition of the sword itself, because it requires the sword to almost instantly move from one place to another, causing the sword to come under enormous stress.” Linley smirked. “If there was no such requirement or drawback, then wouldn’t I be able to essentially teleport myself around by merging into the wind?”

Linley could indeed merge with the wind, but his body simply couldn’t handle the amount of speed and stress it would suffer from teleportation-like movement speeds.

“Haha, teleportation, eh? Even Deity-level combatants are not capable of such a thing.” McKenzie sighed.

No matter how powerful an expert was, even one such as the War God, they could at most move as fast as lightning. No one was capable of teleportation. Although people often talked about ‘teleportation’, that was just how the weak described the high speed movements of Saint-level experts who did battle.

Saint-level experts were simply too fast. Those ordinary people could only see that the Saint-level experts were sometimes here, and other times there. They took this to be teleportation.

In truth, there was no such thing as teleportation.

Even if there was, it wasn’t something which the likes of the War God was capable of.

“McKenzie, what about that technique of yours? What was that all about? Just now, I couldn’t sense you at all. I felt as though all of those countless spear-shadows surrounding me were real.” Linley stared at McKenzie questioningly as well.

When Saint-level experts sparred, it did indeed help them learn more and faster. Naturally, Linley wouldn’t give up this opportunity by being shy about asking.

McKenzie laughed. “Actually, this sort of attack is a fairly common one. Generally speaking, most peak-stage Saint-level combatants use such an attack.”

“Oh?” Linley looked at McKenzie in astonishment.

“In the past, during the War God’s battle with the High Priest, many experts witnessed the terrifying power of a Deity’s “Godrealm”. Afterwards, many Saint-level combatants wanted to create an attack that could duplicate the effect of a Godrealm. In truth, that attack I used just now was a sort of ‘Pseudo-Realm’ attack.” McKenzie laughed at himself self-deprecatingly.

Linley continued to look at McKenzie.

What Linley wanted to know was the underlying principles behind this sort of attack.

“Actually, this sort of attack is extremely wasteful.” McKenzie said emotionally. “For example, I myself am a practitioner walking on the path of understanding the ‘Laws of Fire’.”

Every Saint-level practitioner had their own paths to understanding the various Laws. Only, they would all focus on different types of Laws.

“This attack, the ‘Pseudo-Realm’, basically forces one to blast out all of one’s battle-qi, while at the same time summoning and igniting all of the surrounding area’s fire elemental essence, causing everything within a

hundred meters to turn into a sea of flame. Because my own battle-qi has merged with the fire elemental essence, this causes the entire sea of flame to be imprinted with my own aura, making you unable to detect where my true body is located."

"However, my control is insufficient. I can only control my battle-qi to form a single true attack from the elemental essence. If I were able to control all the other spear-shadows and change them into real attacks, you would be in a great deal of trouble." McKenzie laughed.

Linley was beginning to understand.

The underlying principles of this technique were quite simple. The difficulty lay in the control of elemental essence.

For example, 'impose' was just borrowing on the natural force of the heavens, but this 'Pseudo-Realm' was different. It required complete control! Generally speaking, it was impossible for a Saint-level to totally control all the elemental essence in a given area. This was something only a Deity-level expert could perform.

But Saint-level experts were very intelligent. By blasting out all of their of battle-qi, they allowed their battle-qi to merge with the elemental essence, then used it to control the elemental essence. Although it required them to use a large amount of effort and battle-qi, they were able to just barely create this 'Pseudo-Realm'.

But despite that, its control over elemental essence was far inferior to that of the 'Godrealm' technique.

Linley had personally experienced how the King of Killers, Cesar, had used the power of his Godrealm to freeze both Linley as well as the peak-stage Saint-level expert, Stehle, in the blink of an eye, causing them both to be unable to move.

That sort of control over elemental essence was absolutely terrifying.

Compared to it, the ‘Pseudo-Realm’ was far weaker.

“This Pseudo-Realm does have its strong points. Although it consumes a huge amount of battle-qi, as long as one is at a high level of understanding, one can suddenly create ten million attacks out of nowhere. In addition, it also allows one to hide one’s body. It is more powerful than my own ‘Rippling Wind’ technique. The only weakness is that it uses up too much battle-qi, and is very wasteful.”

But then, Linley quickly shook his head.

“No. This is simply a clever little technique to mimic the Godrealm ability. Although it is a test of a person’s ability to control elemental essence, it has virtually nothing to do with a person’s actual level of understanding with regards to the Laws.” Linley believed that this was definitely a wrong path of training, not a correct path.

Earth, fire, wind, water. Each had its own Laws, such as the Laws of the Earth.

A complete, perfect set of elemental Laws was like a complete, perfectly constructed building. Every single brick in this building was akin to one of the profound mysteries of the Laws. Each Law contained within it countless numbers of profound mysteries.

Linley had gained insight into one particular mystery, and had developed his vibrational attack technique. This should be considered one of the higher class mysteries of the Laws of the Earth.

After this battle, both Linley as well as McKenzie were now in absolutely tattered clothes. But of course, only Linley’s pants were torn. The two changed their clothes, then smiling, left the mountain.

“Squeaaaak!” On Linley’s shoulders, Bebe delightedly squeaked at McKenzie, baring his fangs. It was as though Bebe was mocking McKenzie for losing.

“You little rascal. Jeeze…” McKenzie laughed involuntarily.

Linley laughed as well. Per Linley’s instructions, Bebe wasn’t giving any sign that he was at the Saint-level of power. Only when it was absolutely necessary would Linley reveal this trump card of his.

Under the moonlight, the two Saint-level experts chatted and laughed on the way back to the provincial capital of Basil.

The next morning, no matter how McKenzie tried to persuade him, Linley was still determined to head off to the imperial capital. Out of options, McKenzie personally sent them off, escorting them for over a hundred kilometers. By nightfall, the group arrived at a harbor at the Yulan river.

Early on, McKenzie had sent people to arrange a three-story boat for Linley at the harbor.

“Mr. McKenzie, there’s no need to escort us any further.”

By now, Linley was on extremely good terms with McKenzie. This McKenzie had escorted them for a hundred kilometers, all the way to the port. How could Linley not be grateful for McKenzie’s kindness and courtesy?

“Brother Linley, I really hate the fact that I can’t spend a few more months with you. However, you are in a rush to meet with your little brother, so I know it isn’t appropriate for me to insist on you staying either.” McKenzie said seriously. “Brother Linley, have a safe trip.”

As McKenzie watched, Linley’s group boarded this ship, and then, following the tides of the Yulan river, began to sail south.

The Yulan river was extremely wide, and the river waters were turgid.

This ship was much finer than the ship Linley had previously rented. In addition, the skills of its sailors were much higher as well. Although they went down the same general direction with the flow of the river, they were

clearly moving much faster than before.

“This is the Yulan River? It really is huge.” Barker and his brothers were standing at the railing, staring at the roiling river waves, their eyes shining.

Barker and his brothers came from the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They were used to seeing the land covered in snow and ice, but had never seen such an enormous river.

Rebecca and Leena were very excited as well, while Jenne chatted with them about the Yulan river.

Right now, Bebe and Haeru, the two magical beasts, were growling in conversation to each other.

Linley knew that ever since Bebe had reached the Saint-rank, Haeru had felt all the more ashamed in front of Bebe. After all, Haeru was a peak-stage magical beast of the ninth rank. He was used to being proud and arrogant. But now, he had suffered a severe mental blow due to Bebe.

“Haeru, come with me.”

Linley glanced at Haeru, then headed directly to the second floor of the ship. Bebe and Haeru immediately followed after him. Right now, the second floor of the ship was fairly empty.

“Boss, why’d you have Haeru come over?” Bebe suddenly asked. While outsiders were present, Bebe didn’t dare to speak, but now, with no one else present, Bebe was going to have a good, spoken chat. Bebe actually very much enjoyed speaking in human tongues.

Haeru’s cold eyes stared questioningly at Linley.

He didn’t know what his master, Linley, was planning to do.

“Haeru, in the past, didn’t you and Bebe both want that darkness-type Saint-level magicite core?” Linley laughed.

Hearing these words, the intelligent Haeru instantly understood what Linley intended to do, and his eyes immediately lit up.

“Boss, you are giving him the Saint-level magicite core?” Bebe was able to guess it as well.

“What, are you opposed?” Linley looked at Bebe.

Bebe happily shook his little head, then looked at Haeru pityingly as he said mockingly, “Of course not. Although Haeru is sometimes a little bit cocky, he’s still a fine fellow. In the future, he’ll be following me, right? I’m a Saint-level magical beast. If my followers are too weak, that’ll be really embarrassing to me.”

Listening to Bebe’s words, Linley couldn’t control his laughter from coming out.

“Enough. Haeru, eat this Saint-level magicite core, then go to your room. I won’t let anyone disturb you.” With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved that darkness-style Saint-level magicite core he had acquired so long ago.

Thinking back to the affairs of his youth, and that terrifying battle between the Armored Razorback Wyrm and the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear, Linley couldn’t help but secretly sigh.

Time had gone by. The current Linley most likely had the strength to fight head on against the Armored Razorback Wyrm or the Saint-level Violet Tattooed Bear. But back then, all he could do was hide.

“Bebe, you go to Haeru’s room as well. Help me keep an eye on him. If anything important and out of the ordinary happens when Haeru is trying to break through, immediately inform me.” Linley was concerned about any side effects Haeru might have from eating the Saint-level magicite core.

“Got it, Boss.” Bebe puffed out his chest, saluting.

Linley tossed the darkness-style Saint-level magicite to Haeru. Haeru opened his jaws, catching it in his mouth as he cast a grateful look at Linley. Given his level of intelligence, Haeru knew exactly how valuable a Saint-level magicite core was. What's more, it wasn't a guarantee that he would break through upon eating the Saint-level magicite core. He did have a chance of failure.

But Linley still had given him the Saint-level magicite core.

"I hope Haeru won't disappoint me." Watching Haeru and Bebe enter Haeru's room, Linley secretly sighed. And then, he once more returned to the main deck, enjoying the view of the turgid waters of the Yulan river.

The ship continued to head south through the Yulan river at high speed as it had previously. As for the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, he was beginning to charge towards the barrier between him and the Saint-level.

Chapter 57 – Yet Another Saint-Level

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 57, Yet Another Saint-Level

A Saint-level magicite core contained the essence of a Saint-level magical beast's magical power. A Saint-level magicite core was something that was very hard to consume, and which would take a significant amount of time to do so. In the past, because Linley had the legendary 'Dragonblood Warrior bloodline', his special bloodline eventually dissolved and absorbed that ninth-rank magicite core of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.

But even after he had dissolved and absorbed that magicite core of the ninth rank, the residual energy of the core remained in Linley's body, alongside his Dragonblood. It hadn't been totally mastered and utilized by Linley.

"As the current continues to take us south, from here to the Southwest Administrative Province, we will have travelled more than three thousand kilometers. Such an enormous distance will take several days, even though we are following the current."

Looking at the roiling waves, Linley said to himself.

Who knows if a few days would be enough for Haeru to finish dissolving and absorbing that Saint-level magicite core. Linley himself didn't have any experience of course when it came to the subject of peak-stage magical beasts of the ninth rank absorbing magicite cores.

"Gates, why are you going back inside? The scenery around the Yulan river is pretty good." The third brother, Hazer, said in a loud voice.

Of the Barker brothers, four were standing in front of the railing, enjoying the beautiful sights of the Yulan river. Only Gates was heading back into the cabin.

“Big bro and second bro have already made their breakthroughs, third bro. You guys can watch, but I’m not in the mood. I don’t want to waste time. I’ll go back and train.” Gates replied back loudly.

Hazer was caught off-guard.

Linley turned to stare at Gates in surprise. Right now, only two of the five had mastered the level of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’. One was Barker, while the other was Gates. Gates was a very proud person. Linley knew this quite well.

“Gates is right.” The fourth brother, Boone, nodded as well. “I will go train as well.”

The third brother, Hazer, followed Boone into the cabin as well, leaving behind just Barker and Ankh. The two exchange glances, then began to laugh.

“Second bro, you have to work hard. If Gates makes a breakthrough, he’ll be more powerful than you.” Barker laughed as he spoke to Ankh.

Ankh nodded, drawing out the two giant long-handled greataxes on his back. “I’m going to the rear deck to train with my weapons.”

“I’ll go with you.” Barker drew out his own long-handled greataxes as well.

The long-handled greataxes of Barker and his brothers were quite astonishing. These might be the heaviest weapons that existed in the modern world. 5300 pounds each, they were quite suited to the Undying Warriors, famed amongst the Supreme Warriors for their strength.

Zassler laughed as he stroked his white beard. “Those five brothers really have become quite hard working. They make this old man feel a bit ashamed.”

But despite saying that, Zassler continued to admire the local scenery.

At Zassler's current level, what he needed was a flash of insight. Training alone wouldn't provide that.

Smiling, Linley stood on the front of the ship. Slowly, Linley closed his eyes. The wind over the wide Yulan river was quite strong, and it buffeted Linley's robes, causing Linley to sway ever so slightly.

Linley had totally become one with the wind, and could sense the movements of the wind elemental essence.

…..

Time flowed on like water. In the blink of an eye, four days had passed, and the ship had entered the domain of the Southwest Administrative Province. In two days or so, they should be able to reach the harbor they were aiming for.

"Big brother Linley is training?" Jenne said quietly.

Rebecca and Leena both shook her heads, indicating that they didn't know.

Right now, it was late at night, but Linley continued to stand on the deck of the ship, his eyes closed. If someone thought Linley was asleep, though, they would have been wrong. Because every so often, a flash of violet light would pass by Linley's body.

The difference was, this time, Linley wasn't aiming for speed.

When he was training in the 'Rippling Wind' technique, Linley's body was always surrounded by innumerable sword flashes. But right now, there was one just one violet flash at a time.

No one knew what Linley was training.

"Wielding something heavy as though it were light. Wielding something light as though it were heavy. It can be as fierce as the storm winds, or as gentle as the spring wind." After having trained for so long, Linley finally

was gaining some insight with regards to the second stage of the Profound Truths of the Wind.

Profound Truths of the Wind, stage one – Rippling Wind. This relied on pursuing speed to the highest levels.

In truth, once a technique's speed reached a certain level, its attack power would also be extremely powerful. This was the reason why Linley could break through McKenzie's defense in an instant.

But the second stage of the Profound Truths of the Wind which Linley was developing was a very unique type of attack.

When he struck out with his sword, sometimes the sword would flash like lightning, while other times it would be as heavy as a mountain. In truth, this sword attack was very fast, but it gave the impression of constantly rippling and fluctuating between being fast and being slow.

That was the intention of this technique.

"Profound Truths of the Wind, stage two – Tempos of the Wind."

A smile was on Linley's face. He slashed through the air with Bloodviolet, and when it did, he gave off two distinctly different impressions; one was that this attack was as fierce and explosive as the winds of a hurricane, while the other was that it was a gentle and calm as the spring wind which blew through the willows.

One technique with two opposing rhythms.

"These two totally opposite tempos, when merged together, can give birth to a blade made of air." Linley continued to pursue his goal of using his sword to create the 'Dimensional Edge' type of attack.

This 'Tempos of the Wind' was a single-target attack.

Although its power was far inferior to the 'Dimensional Edge' spell, which

was so terrifyingly powerful that it could cut through the walls of reality itself, the power of the ‘Tempo of the Wind’ had already exceeded that of the ‘Rippling Wind’ technique.

This was especially true in one-on-one combat.

“This second stage of the Profound Truths of the Wind, the Tempos of the Wind technique, should be capable of posing a threat to peak-stage Saint-level experts.” When Linley had sparred with McKenzie, he had gained a better understanding of what peak-stage Saint-level experts were like. “However, this ‘Tempos of the Wind’ technique is most likely one of the more basic mysteries of the Laws of the Wind that I have gained some insight onto.

Linley had to admit that the Tempos of the Wind was an extremely powerful technique.

But the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ could only be considered the most basic, rudimentary level of the ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell. It was still a material, physical attack, which the opponent could use battle-qi or armor to defend against.

But the resonating vibrations produced by the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ was clearly a higher level of attack. Those vibrations didn’t need to break the opponent’s armor; it could simply bypass it and attack the internals directly.

“To an ordinary Saint-level expert, using Bloodviolet should be enough.” Linley chuckled. “Unless, of course, I encounter some particularly powerful peak-stage Saint-level experts.”

Peak-stage Saint-level experts had varying levels of power as well.

For example, Stehle and the Holy Emperor were both peak-stage Saint-level experts, but Stehle was much weaker than the Holy Emperor. After all, the Holy Emperor trained in Oracular Magic.

Or for example, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, reputed to be the most powerful Saint-level in existence. To date, not a single expert had been able to overcome Haydson.

Of course, there were people who had never competed against Haydson, such as the Holy Emperor, or the Dark Patriarch. They didn't dare compete against him, because their exalted statuses meant they simply couldn't afford to lose. Unless they were totally certain of victory, they wouldn't compete.

……..

The fifth day on the ship, at around noon, just as Linley and the others were eating lunch and chatting casually, suddenly….

"Boss, come quick!" Bebe's urgent voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Without hesitating slightly, Linley immediately began to run towards Haeru's private room. "You guys, keep eating." He instructed as he entered Haeru's room.

Closing the door, Linley stared in astonishment.

"Rumble." It seemed as though beneath the Blackcloud Panther's skin, there were small mice running around, as his muscles and flesh constantly twitched. A black light surrounded his entire body. His eyes closed, the Blackcloud Panther constantly moaned in pain.

At the same time, the patterns on the Blackcloud Panther's body were beginning to change as well. Sometimes his four limbs would turn snow white, while later they would turn totally black. Sometimes, his entire body would turn snow white….

Bizarre.

The most astonishing thing was that the Blackcloud Panther's head was covered with two circulating gusts of blue and black energy.

“Boss, Haeru’s been like this for a while. I don’t know what to do either.” Bebe said with concern.

Linley looked at Haeru.

“Haeru.” Linley said to him mentally.

“Ma…master. I’m fine!” Haeru’s agonized voice rang out in Linley’s mind. Linley forced himself to suppress his anxiety, just watching and waiting.

Linley’s attention was focused on Haeru’s head. The most important part of a magical beast was their head; their magicite cores were there, after all.

In the air above and around the Blackcloud Panther’s head, those two streams of blue and black energy continued to spin about at high speed. Sometimes, the black energy would expand, but then a moment later, the amount of black energy would decrease, and the blue energy would increase in amount.

This repeated over and over!

And then, those two gusts of energy suddenly emitted a terrifying amount of force. Even Linley was shocked. If these two gusts of energy were to explode, most likely the entire boat would be transformed into rubble.

“Rumble.” Linley’s body immediately became covered with a layer of black scales. Without hesitating in the slightest, Linley immediately transformed into his Dragonform.

If he wasn’t in his Dragonblood Warrior form, if these two gusts of energy were to explode, Linley wouldn’t be able to take it. Linley’s remorseless, dark golden eyes stared at the Blackcloud Panther, his gaze as sharp as daggers.

Suddenly, those two gusts of blue and black energy returned to their earlier state of calmness as they directly entered the Blackcloud Panther’s skull.

And then, the Blackcloud Panther's body grew calm as well, and the patterns on his body stopped changing.

Linley let out his held breath.

Right now, the Blackcloud Panther's body was covered with beads of blood. That transformation just now had been a transformation in both physical and spiritual terms.

The Blackcloud Panther opened his eyes, staring with grateful joy at Linley.

"You succeeded?" A hint of a smile was on Linley's lips as he immediately returned to his human form. Only, his upper body clothes were ruined once again.

"Yes, Master." These growling, cold words in the human tongue came forth from the Blackcloud Panther's lips.

A faint gust of blue light appeared on the Blackcloud Panther's body, gently wiping off all of the beads of blood, restoring him once more to his normal, glossy black color.

"Not bad." Bebe floated over to the Blackcloud Panther, chortling. "It's a good thing that you didn't waste that Saint-level magicite core. Otherwise…"

Haeru looked away.

He could guess that if he had failed, Bebe would have given him a thorough beating.

"Enough. Let's all head out." Linley said after changing into another set of clothes.

Because of how his Dragonform transformation ruined his clothes, Linley had stored over a hundred set of clothes in his interspatial ring. But of course, to the current Linley, the amount of money it cost to buy clothes

was a miniscule amount.

….

On the sixth morning they spent on the boat, the boat finally reached the harbor they were headed towards.

“We finally arrived.” Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne, the three ladies, all stared excitedly with bright eyes. But just at this moment, from the rear deck, the sound of loud, explosive, excited laughter could be heard.

“Hrm?”

Linley, Zassler, and the others both turned to stare at the rear deck, where Barker and his brothers had been training this entire time.

“Barker, the five of you, hurry on over. We’re about to reach the shore.” Rebecca called out loudly.

“Coming, coming.” Barker and his brothers walked over, laughing loudly. All of their eyes were on Linley, and there was a look of irrepressible joy on their faces.

Seeing that look on the faces of Barker and his brothers, Linley began to wonder. “These five brothers….can it be…can it be that yet another has broken through?”

Right now, of the five brothers, the oldest brother Barker and the second brother Ankh had reached the Saint-level in power. The others, in their human forms, were still only at the peak of the eighth rank.

“Lord.” Barker’s face was filled with excitement. “Gates has broken through as well!”

“Gates has broken through?”

Although he had predicted it, Linley still felt a surge of joy and excitement.

He couldn’t help but to turn and look at Gates. The usually loud and boisterous Gates was currently just scratching his head and beaming happily.

When they had left Basil and boarded the ship, Linley’s forces consisted of four Saint-level combatants; Linley, Bebe, Barker, and Ankh. But upon landing, Linley’s forces now consisted of six Saint-level experts.

Not a single Empire would dare be discourteous to such a terrifying force.

Taking a look behind at the Blackcloud Panther Haeru, then at the beaming Gates, Linley shouted with heroic gusto, “Haha, everyone, disembark! Let’s go! We are heading to the imperial capital!”

“Let’s go!” The five brothers also roared happily.

Chapter 58 – Blumer's Request

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 58, Blumer's Request

Linley's group disembarked at the port, beginning to travel in the direction of the imperial capital. But as this port was in the central region of the Southwest Administrative Province, from there to the center of the O'Brien Administrative Province was a journey of four thousand kilometers after factoring in the curving roads.

Such a long distance would take at least ten days or half a month, even if one rode horses at full gallop the entire time.

On the road to the imperial capital of Channe, many people were talking about the rising star of the Empire; Blumer Akerlund.

"I hear that anyone who becomes the personal disciple of the War God has the possibility of becoming a Saint-level combatant eventually. Blumer is so lucky."

"What do you mean, 'has the possibility'? It is guaranteed."

In many of the common restaurants of the imperial capital, the drinking men would loudly chat about this subject. "That day, when it was announced that Blumer would be the personal disciple, I was there myself. Three of the personal disciples of the War God came, and all three were Saint-level experts."

"Not all of his students are necessarily at the Saint-level. The War God has accepted a total of twenty seven disciples, and the first one was accepted over five thousand years ago. He might have died by now. And there are the other personal disciples who have disappeared. Who knows if they all reached the Saint-level or not?" Someone else disputed.

“You don’t believe in the power of the War God?”

“Of course I believe in the War God, but are his personal disciples necessarily that formidable?” The man pursed his lips. “Training requires natural talent. Look at the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. He trained on his own and yet still became so powerful. How many of the disciples of the War God can compete with Olivier?”

“You aren’t Olivier. You aren’t qualified to speak poorly of Blumer. What’s more, Lord Olivier and Lord Blumer are siblings, you know!”

That year, when Olivier had entered the Saint-level, he had easily defeated the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon. Thus, everyone believed that Olivier already possessed the power of a peak-stage Saint-level combatant.

Although Dillon himself was only a mid-stage Saint-level expert, if Olivier wasn’t at the peak-stage, how could he so easily defeat Dillon?

“I hear that tomorrow, His Imperial Majesty is going to hold a personal audience with Blumer and confer upon him a title of nobility.” Someone suddenly said.

“I’ve heard this as well. Tomorrow, many of the nobles of the imperial capital will be visiting the ‘Martial Palace’.

The O’Brien Empire was an Empire which highly valued martial strength and valued their military. Since the founding Emperor of the Empire was the War God, it was natural that this was the case. Whenever the Emperor of the Empire wished to meet with his ministers, he would summon them to the Martial Palace.

The Martial Palace was named by the War God himself.

The next day.

Many nobles of the imperial capital got up very early this day. They dressed formally, then one after another, entered their carriages and headed towards

the imperial palace. Today, the Emperor was going to confer a title of nobility on Blumer. This was a major affair.

Every single personal disciple of the War God would receive a title of nobility from the Empire.

For an Emperor to have the chance to do so even a single time was already quite lucky. After all, in the past five thousand years, there had been over a hundred Emperors, but only twenty seven personal disciples.

The rank of the title was already set. It was never as high as a ‘Duke’; it was usually a ‘Marquis’.

“After becoming the personal disciple of the War God, the noble rank conferred to Blumer is even higher than the one I received.” Wharton casually thought to himself while riding in his carriage.

Personal disciples had a very exalted status. After all, anyone qualified to become a personal disciple was almost certainly capable of reaching the Saint-level.

What’s more, they had the backing of the War God himself. Naturally, no one dared to offend him. And if you offended a single personal disciple, all the other personal disciples would possibly appear as well.

Upon reaching the palace gates, Wharton left his carriage and casually headed inside alongside the other nobles.

The Martial Palace usually only had around a hundred or so senior ministers present for morning court, but today was a special occasion. Many nobles who usually did not need to attend morning court were present, and thus a very high number of people were there.

Ordinary imperial nobles weren’t even qualified to join this ceremony. Those who did participate were all people with power and authority. As for Wharton, he was a Count who had received his title of nobility from the Emperor himself, and thus he was qualified to participate.

The Martial Palace normally seemed very large and empty, but now that it was filled with over eight hundred nobles and senior ministers, it didn't seem very large at all. People were everywhere.

"Blumer, congratulations."

In the center of the palace, many people were surrounding Blumer, warmly congratulating him. Blumer's older brother was a Saint-level expert, while Blumer in the future would most likely become a Saint-level expert as well. Even the most powerful of clans wouldn't be so foolish as to anger a Saint-level expert.

Blumer quietly nodded in response to each of the nobles.

"Worldly power?" Blumer didn't care about it.

In his heart, the one he truly worshipped was his older brother, Olivier. Even the sword techniques that he utilized had been developed, then taught to him by Olivier.

Ever since he was young, Olivier had displayed astonishing amounts of talent, and he always protected Blumer as well. If anyone dared to mistreat Blumer, Olivier would definitely avenge his little brother.

"Big brother is training alone on that mountain peak. I wonder what level he has now reached." Blumer silently wondered to himself.

Nearly nine years ago, his older brother had entered the Saint-level and easily defeated the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon. At that time, there were some who already believed that Olivier possessed the power of a peak-stage Saint-level expert.

But Olivier didn't accept any gifts or titles. He just left by himself, continuing his training.

Three years ago, Olivier began training alone in a barren mountain outside

the imperial capital. No one knew how powerful Olivier, who nine years ago already possessed the power of a peak-stage Saint-level, had now become.

“Perhaps one day, my older brother will reach the Deity-level as well.” In Blumer’s heart, his older brother was an indisputable genius. There was nothing his older brother could not accomplish.

And indeed, this was the case.

Olivier was such a genius that even the War God had sighed in praise and wanted to accept as a disciple.

“His Imperial Majesty has arrived.” Many nobles noticed that the Emperor had arrived, and they immediately returned to their designated positions, forming neat rows as they paid their respects to the Emperor.

The Emperor of the O’Brien Empire, Johann O’Brien, was a fairly just Emperor, aside from that little problem of being biased.

Johann was fairly tall, standing 1.9 meters high. Even after becoming Emperor, he continued to train his battle-qi, causing his body to be powerful and sturdy. Dressed in his imperial robes, he sat on his imperial throne, looking down at everyone.

“Haha, where is Blumer?” Emperor Johann laughed as he looked down at his subjects. Today, Johann was extremely happy. Neither his father nor his grandfather had the opportunity to confer a rank of nobility on one of the personal disciples of the War God, but he did.

This sort of opportunity would happen only once in a lifetime.

With nearly eight hundred people standing before him, Johann couldn’t immediately see where Blumer was. Blumer strode out from the crowd. Standing in the center of the palace, he bowed respectfully. “Blumer pays his respects to you, Imperial Majesty.”

Johann carefully inspected Blumer, then sighed in praise. “You are indeed incredible. Who would have expected that the Akerlund clan would suddenly produce two geniuses. You are not inferior to your elder brother at all.”

A hint of a smile was on Blumer’s face.

Whenever others put him on the same level as his older brother, Blumer felt very proud.

“We are very happy that you are able to become the personal disciple of the War God. Today, We shall bequeath unto you the hereditary noble title of Marquis, a manor on Boulder Street, a hundred guards, a hundred maids, and a hundred thousand gold coins.” Johann said loudly.

Everyone stared jealously at Blumer.

Generally speaking, with each generation, the noble rank of Marquis would be lowered by one rank. If future descendants were incompetent, after a few generations, they would be commoners again and the noble rank would be lost.

But hereditary noble titles were different. They never dropped in rank. A hereditary rank of Marquis was far more important than even most ordinary Dukedoms. The Empire had many dukes, over a hundred. But very few of them were hereditary.

“Thank you, your Imperial Majesty.” Blumer bowed respectfully.

Johann nodded in satisfaction. Actually, this gift was already pre-determined. Every personal disciple of the War God was given a Marquisdom, and in each case it was a hereditary title.

Amidst the crowd of nobles and senior ministers, Wharton looked at Blumer, standing proudly in the center.

Previously, he had lost out to Blumer when the War God’s College was

selecting honorary disciples. The gifts the Emperor had previously given Wharton was the hereditary title of Count, fifty guards, fifty maids, and fifty thousand gold coins. Clearly, Blumer's gift was a level higher.

Wharton didn't care too much about worldly goods.

But in his heart, Wharton had already considered Blumer as an opponent. "Although he is nearly ten years older than me, he's only an ordinary person. I am a Dragonblood Warrior. These two cancel out. No matter what, I won't let myself be weaker than him." Wharton was extremely proud and stubborn.

But he hid these feelings in his heart.

"Blumer, today, We are in an extremely good mood. You are the first personal disciple that We have conferred a title of nobility on after We succeeded to the throne. Haha. Tell me, is there anything you desire? So long as it is reasonable, We will definitely agree." Johann's voice rang out in the Martial Palace.

Everyone's gazes turned towards Blumer.

Actually, these words from Johann were just a form of courtesy. Historically speaking, the vast majority of personal disciples would say something like, "Thank you for your kindness, your Imperial Majesty." They wouldn't actually request anything.

"Your Imperial Majesty, your servant does indeed have a boon to request." Blumer said.

Wharton stared at Blumer with a bit of surprise.

"Speak." Johann magnanimously waved his hand.

Blumer bowed before speaking. "Your Imperial Majesty, your servant has seen the Seventh Princess, and as soon as I saw her, my heart was trapped by her. Your servant humbly begs that your Imperial Majesty give me the

Seventh Princess' hand in marriage."

After he said this, everyone in the palace was stunned.

Asking to marry a princess!

This Blumer actually asked to marry a princess.

Hearing these words, Wharton felt his head grow dizzy. He shook his head, staring fixedly at Blumer in the center of the palace.

Blumer only stared quietly at the Emperor.

"Your servant humbly begs that your Imperial Majesty grant your servant's request." Blumer said again.

All the nearby nobles and senior ministers turned to look at Wharton. Who in the imperial capital didn't know about Wharton and Nina? Just a while ago, Caylan, the son of the Imperial Left Premier, had personally sought out his Imperial Majesty to inform him that he would no longer pursue the Seventh Princess.

Many people believed that Wharton and Nina would definitely be a couple.

Even Emperor Johann had been planning to select an auspicious day to have Wharton and Nina marry. But this request by Blumer caused Johann to suddenly reconsider.

Johann glanced at Wharton, who stood out in the crowd. At 2.2 meters tall, he was the tallest of the local nobles and ministers.

Chuckling, Johann said, "Blumer, We truly desire to grant you this boon as well, but We must also ask Nina what she thinks. Don't be impatient. Haha…"

"Yes, Your Imperial Majesty." Blumer didn't say anything else.

After court was adjourned, Wharton exchanged a quick stare with Blumer before the two left the Martial Palace. For Blumer to suddenly act in such way had indeed caught Wharton off guard.

The Emperor, Johann, was taking a stroll in his flower garden. He was in a wonderful mood.

“That Olivier cares nothing for fame or nobility. It is hard for me to recruit him. I was thinking about how to draw the Akerlund clan closer to me, but I didn’t expect…I didn’t expect…”

To Johann, Olivier, who had defeated the Stellar Sword Saint Dillon as soon as Olivier had entered the Saint-rank, was indeed a person worth building a relationship with.

And his younger brother was the personal disciple of the War God.

The Akerlund clan, in the future, would almost certainly possess two mighty Saint-level combatants.

“Olivier was so powerful upon entering the Saint-level. In the future, he’ll definitely be even more astonishing. At the same time, I can’t refuse to give face to the personal disciple of the War God.” Johann frowned. “But that Wharton…”

This was the reason why Johann hadn’t immediately agreed in the Martial Palace.

Wharton and Nina were truly in love with each other.

“Wharton only has the support of the decaying Dragonblood Warrior clan, while behind Blumer is the support of the War God and Olivier.”

Johann truly did give great weight to Blumer’s position as the personal disciple of the War God.

“I’ll keep delaying for now. No rush.” Johann decided to use the same

strategy he had previously used against Wharton and Caylan when they were struggling over Nina. Only, in his heart, Johann was already inclined towards Blumer.

But what the nobles of the imperial capital, Channe, did not know was that at this very moment, Linley's group of six Saint-level experts were hastening in the direction of the imperial capital.

Chapter 59 – The Brothers Meet

Book 8, The Ten Thousand Kilometer Journey – Chapter 59, The Brothers Meet

Several days had passed since Blumer received the title of Marquis.

“Milord.” The guards at the gate of the Count’s manor saluted respectfully.

Wharton seemed to have not noticed the guards at all. Not glancing at the guards in the slightest, he headed directly into his manor. The two guards looked at each other.

“The Lord Count has been really out of it the past few days. Just now, he was lost in his own world again.”

“Right. In the past, he would always smile at us and even greet us. From the looks of it, that Blumer’s request in the palace to be allowed to marry the princess had a major impact on the Lord Count.”

The news of Blumer requesting the princess’ hand in marriage had already spread throughout the capital.

Many people in the imperial capital knew about the affairs of Wharton, Seventh Princess Nina, and Blumer. In the main streets and the little alleyways, in the hotels and the restaurants, this topic could often be heard discussed.

“Wharton, what’s wrong?” A voice rang out.

Wharton turned to see who spoke to him. It was Hillman’s son, Nader. Shaking his head, Wharton let out a sigh. Nader understood. “The Seventh Princess didn’t show up?”

“Yeah.” Wharton nodded.

Wharton and the Seventh Princess often went on dates together, and the timing of these dates had become quite regular. But ever since Blumer had requested to marry Nina at the Martial Palace, Wharton had only met Nina a single time, the day after that event. The next three days, he hadn't met Nina.

He wasn't even able to see her. Naturally, Wharton felt very miserable.

Nader felt very aggrieved on Wharton's behalf as well. Snorting, he said, "Blumer must be messed up in the head. He actually directly asked that the Seventh Princess be given to him in marriage. What the hell is wrong with him."

"It's pointless to talk about it right now." Wharton shook his head.

Just at this moment…

"Lord Count, Lord Count." A clear voice rang out from outside. Turning his head, Wharton saw that the speaker was the personal hand-servant of the Imperial Seventh Princess, Lucy [Lu'si].

"Let her in." Wharton immediately said.

The guards let Lucy run in. Panting, Lucy charged straight towards Wharton. "Wharton, the Princess has been ordered to remain in the palace by his Imperial Majesty and is not to leave the palace. Even I had to come up with some special ideas in order to leave. This is the letter that the Princess asked me to give you. Here, take it. I don't have any time, I have to go back now. If I go back late, it will be disastrous."

Lucy handed the letter to Wharton. Wharton stood there, stunned. Before he had a chance to even speak, Lucy ran away.

"What is his Imperial Majesty thinking?" Nader frowned, feeling rather angry.

Wharton immediately opened the envelope and withdrew the letter from it. Seeing the contents of the letter, Wharton felt a gush of warmth enter his heart, warming it.

Azure battle-qi exploded from Wharton's hands, reducing the letter to ash.

"Both a personal disciple of the War God, and the younger brother of Olivier. It seems his Imperial Majesty is favoring Blumer." Wharton saw things clearly.

If his Imperial Majesty didn't restrict Nina from coming out, Nina would go find Wharton, not Blumer.

This order clearly was meant to help Blumer.

Letting out a cold snort, Wharton felt helpless. Even Dragonformed, he would only be at the peak of the ninth rank. How could he cause any trouble or make any waves with that bit of power?

Many days later, outside the imperial capital.

One carriage, several horses, and a pure, pitch-black panther. Atop the panther was a young man dressed in a simple robe.

"Linley, look." Zassler, mounted on his horse, pointed at the distant, tall mountain. That mountain had multiple peaks. "That is the world-renowned War God Mountain. The War God's College is at the top of it."

"The War God's College?" Linley's eyes lit up.

The legendary and indisputably most powerful force within the Empire. The College founded by the War God who stood at the peak of the entire Yulan continent. Staring at the War God Mountain from afar, Linley couldn't help but sigh in admiration.

"War God…"

The War God O'Brien was simply too dazzling a figure. He had not only established the mighty O'Brien Empire, he had also fought the High Priest to a stalemate over the Yulan river. That battle had made him famous, guaranteeing that he would share the same exalted status as the High Priest.

After five thousand years, no one knew how powerful the War God, who had previously been on the same level as the High Priest, was now. But the only deity that was worshipped within the O'Brien Empire was the War God. From this, one could see how venerated the War God was.

Linley's heart was filled with a heroic urge. "There will come the day when I, too, will stand at the peak of the Yulan continent!"

Linley turned his head, no longer staring at War God Mountain. No matter how beautiful War God Mountain was, it belonged to the War God.

"The imperial capital of Channe." Staring to the east, he could already see that enormous city, reputedly the largest in the entire continent. Channe was an enormous city. Only the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire could match it.

Channe's architecture was simple and unadorned.

"The imperial capital of the most militarily powerful Empire in the continent. The place where experts reside. Channe." A hint of a smile was on Linley's lips. Underneath the dazzling sun, Linley and his team headed into Channe.

No major figures paid any special attention to this group of travelers.

But they didn't know that these people would very soon cause earth-shaking disturbances within the O'Brien Empire.

"Haha, this really does live up to its reputation as the imperial capital of the O'Brien Empire. These streets are so wide." Barker laughed loudly, and Linley laughed as well.

Linley's team was walking in the center of one of the major thoroughfares of the imperial capital.

Barker and his brothers had already dismounted, as they put their weapons on their backs; those astonishing long-handled greataxes. On the way over, they had stored their long-handled greataxes within Linley's interspatial ring. After all, the greataxes were simply too heavy; the horses couldn't carry them.

"What muscular men."

Many people in the imperial capital parted in front of this team. Barker and his brothers were simply too physically awe-inspiring. All of them were around 2.2 meters tall, had massive bear-like waists, and were so muscular they seemed inhuman. What's more, on their backs they carried those enormous long-handled greataxes, which gleamed with a cold metal light.

Even if those long-handled greataxes were made solely from steel, they would weigh at least a thousand pounds. But from the coloration of those greataxes, clearly they were not ordinary weapons. Would someone who was weak dare wield such heavy weapons?

And that sleek, glossy black panther, who didn't have any hint of discoloration whatsoever?

Nobody in the imperial capital had ever seen such a panther. This was because after the Blackcloud Panther had reached the Saint-level, it had the ability to easily change the colors of its fur.

"Boulder Street." Linley knew where Wharton was staying, and everyone present hastened towards the East Channe's Boulder Street.

"I wager that Lord Blumer will definitely be able to marry Princess Nina."

Linley suddenly came to a halt, turning his head to stare at a nearby restaurant. Linley was frowning. "Nina? That Nina which Wharton likes? Wasn't it someone called Caylan who was competing with Wharton? What

does Blumer have to do with this?”

Linley knew who Blumer was.

When Wharton had taken part in the competition to become an honorary disciple, in the end, Blumer had been victorious.

“Nonsense. I’m willing to bet that Lord Wharton will be the one to marry Princess Nina. Princess Nina and Lord Wharton have been together for a long time now.”

“Hard to say. Look at Lord Blumer’s current status; he’s the War God’s personal disciple.”

“Lord?” Barker said in a quiet voice.

Linley stood there silently for a while.

Blumer was the younger brother of Olivier. He had actually become the personal disciple of the War God? And it seemed that he had asked the Emperor for Nina’s hand in marriage.

Barker and the others looked at Linley.

“Let’s go.” Linley said.

Linley’s group arrived at Boulder Street. Every single manor lining Boulder Street belonged to a noble clan, and thus Boulder Street was not very crowded.

Walking in the empty Boulder Street, Linley carefully inspected the signs on every single manor.

“Up ahead.” Linley’s eyes lit up.

The two guards who were engaged in idle conversation suddenly noticed Linley and the others walking over. They immediately became alert,

especially after seeing the enormous bodies of Barker and his brothers.

“These guys are definitely as tall and as muscular as the Lord Count.” The two guards were somewhat shocked.

“Who are you?” One of the guards summoned all his courage, calling out bravely.

Gates was the first to reply loudly, “Is this Count Wharton’s residence?”

“Yes.” The guard nodded.

Hearing these words, Linley felt his heart tremble in excitement as it sped up. How many years had it been? Wharton had left when he was six years old. In a few days, exactly seventeen years would have gone by.

Seventeen years!

Smiling, Linley said, “Go deliver the message that his big brother, Linley, has arrived.” Hearing these words, those two guards were very surprised. Count Wharton’s older brother? They had never heard of such a person.

But these two guards had good judgment. They could immediately tell how formidable this group was. Without daring to say much else, one guard bowed. “Please wait here a moment. I’ll go make the report.”

Linley took a deep breath, letting himself calm down.

“Linley, this is your little brother’s residence?” Zassler walked over, laughing. “Looks like your little brother has done quite well for himself in the imperial capital.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel extremely proud as well.

Housekeeper Hiri and Hillman were currently chatting over some wine, but suddenly, the guard ran in at high speed. “Lord Hillman, a group of people have just arrived. Their leader claims he is Wharton’s older brother, and that

his name is Linley."

"Smash!" The winecup in Housekeeper Hiri's hands fell to the floor, smashing into pieces.

"Linley!"

Housekeeper Hiri and Hillman simultaneously rose to their feet. They stared at each other, wide-eyed and filled with shock and joy.

"Go, go, fast! Go inform the Lord Count!" Hiri immediately instructed.

And then, Hiri and Hillman both charged towards the outside of the manor at high speed. Seeing how Housekeeper Hiri had totally lost his usual bearing, the guard realized what a momentous affair this was, and he immediately ran to the training fields.

Soon, Hiri and Hillman arrived at the front courtyard. Arriving before the main gate, they actually slowed down as they looked forward carefully.

They saw five terrifyingly muscular men. Those long-handled greataxes on their backs alone made the two of them tremble. By the side of those five men, there was a skinny, skeletal old man whose shadowy green eyes were filled with a terrifying aura.

Besides the old man were three beautiful girls, pleasing to behold.

And at the very front…

"Linley!" Hillman was the first to speak. Housekeeper Hiri was still carefully inspecting Linley. After a while, he suddenly recognized who Linley was. He cried out in surprise and joy, "Young master Linley."

Linley, who was in the middle of a conversation with Zassler, turned his head.

Grandpa Hiri looked just as he had in Linley's memories, with that wine-

reddened nose of his. And Uncle Hillman was there as well. Looking at them, Linley found that he was totally unable to suppress the excitement in his heart.

“Grandpa Hiri, Uncle Hillman.” Linley rushed into the courtyard, his eyes beginning to turn moist.

Housekeeper Hiri walked to Linley’s side, eyes red. “You grew up. You grew up. Young master Linley, you are taller than you were.” It had been seventeen full years since Housekeeper Hiri had seen Linley.

When he had left with Wharton, Linley had only been ten years old.

“Grandpa Hiri, you look exactly the same.” The joy in Linley’s heart couldn’t be expressed with mere words.

Looking at Linley, Hillman said in an extremely gratified voice, “Young master Linley, you’ve grown up. But you still look very similar to how you looked ten years ago.”

Ten years ago, Linley was already 1.7 meters tall. His appearance hadn’t changed much since then.

Suddenly, frantic footsteps could be heard.

Turning his head, Linley saw a tall, strong figure appear in the doorway, as though appearing from a dream. This person looked very similar to Linley himself. Linley had the feeling that this person was most likely his younger brother, Wharton.

Only, Wharton had left when he was just six years old. He had changed tremendously.

But Wharton only needed a moment before recognizing Linley. Linley still looked very much like he did in the past. Wharton’s mouth hung open. His tears were already beginning to flow down his face. “Big bro…”

Linley slowly walked towards Wharton, his gaze totally locked on him.

“Big bro…” Wharton staggered forward two steps as well.

“Little Wharton. Is it really you?” Linley stared at Wharton. That chubby-faced kid of the past had turned into a 2.2 meter tall youngster.

“Big bro, it’s me. It’s me.” At this moment, Wharton had totally forgotten about the issue with Nina. His heart was filled with boundless excitement. He was totally incapable of suppressing this excitement.

Linley reached out with trembling hands, resting them against Wharton’s shoulders. He carefully looked at Wharton. His face blossomed into smiles, even as tears were shining in his eyes. In a quivering voice, Linley said, “Little Wharton, you’ve grown up.”

That chubby face kid of his memories, who had always called out ‘big brother’, ‘big brother’ at him in a child-like voice, had already grown up.

“Big bro!” Wharton tightly embraced Linley in a massive hug. Having seen Wharton, Linley felt more excited than he had in a long time. Finally, he was no longer able to prevent his own tears from coming out, and they cascaded down his face.

Chapter 1 – A Powerful Supporter

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 1, A Powerful Supporter

Linley and Wharton had been separated for nearly seventeen years.

Seventeen years ago, shortly after the Yulan festival of that year, Wharton had left Wushan Township by the side of Housekeeper Hiri and headed towards the distant O'Brien Empire. At that time, Linley was only ten, while Wharton was six. The two brothers had been very innocent and knew so little about the outside world. And back then, they were supported by Hogg, who had protected them like an old hawk looking after its chicks.

But now, Hogg was long dead. Of the two brothers, one was a Count of the O'Brien Empire, while the other possessed the terrifying power of the Saint-level.

Within the Count's manor.

Linley, Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Nader, the Barker brothers, Zassler, Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena were all gathered together.

Two rectangular tables had been covered with wine and food.

Wharton and Linley were engaged in conversation regarding what had happened in recent years. Although Wharton had gotten general information regarding Linley from the Dawson Conglomerate, when he personally chatted with Linley, he couldn't help but grow anxious as he listened.

So close. His big brother had come so close to dying.

"During those three years of training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, followed by the six years of training in the Northwest Administrative Province, although I encountered several dangerous battles, in the end, I arrived without suffering any major harm." Linley laughed. "In

the past, I was worried about the Radiant Church. But now? Although I don't have the power to raid their headquarters yet, I have more than enough power to protect myself."

The Radiant Church had been established in the Yulan continent for many years now.

For it to be on par with the O'Brien Empire as one of the premier powers of the Yulan continent, it definitely had a terrifying amount of hidden power. From the fact that the War God's College was able to send out three personal disciples who were all at the Saint-level, one could determine that the Radiant Church must surely have quite a number of Saint-level experts of its own.

"Big bro, you, you've reached the Saint-level?" Wharton was shocked and excited. Wharton knew how difficult training could be. Although he himself had an extremely high density of Dragonblood in his veins, he was still only of the eighth rank, and even in Dragonform was only at the peak of the ninth rank.

The density of the Dragonblood in Linley's veins was lower than in his own.

But for Linley to be able to claim that he had more than enough power to protect himself surely meant that Linley had reached the Saint-level.

"After Dragonforming, I indeed am at the Saint-level." Linley said with a smile.

Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri, seated at the same table, exchanged glances, excitement in their eyes. Housekeeper Hiri's voice was hoarse with excitement. "I've taken care of three generations of Baruch clan members now. The Baruch clan has finally produced a Saint-level combatant."

The Saint-level was simply on a whole different level.

If a clan had a Saint-level in it, as long as that Saint-level did not die, then

the clan would never decay or weaken.

“Wharton.” Linley looked at Wharton. “When I was in the Northwest Administrative Province, I paid attention to your affairs. It seems that you and that Imperial Seventh Princess…”

Wharton nodded honestly. “It’s true, big brother. I truly wish to marry Nina, but right now, the situation is very complicated. Right after Caylan gave up his pursuit of her, Blumer appeared.”

On the road over, Linley had already learned of this issue.

After all, right now, there are many rumors regarding Wharton, Nina, and Blumer.

“Blumer. I’ve heard people in the streets of the imperial capital discussing Blumer. He seems to be the personal disciple of the War God, and is the younger brother of Olivier.” Linley laughed calmly.

Wharton nodded, a hint of worry appearing in his brows again. “Big bro, you don’t understand how famous Olivier is within the O’Brien Empire. Olivier is simply too powerful, terrifyingly powerful. Nine years ago, he already possessed the power of a peak-stage Saint-level. And now…who knows how powerful he has become?”

Linley patted Wharton on the shoulders. “Wharton, don’t inflate the deeds of others and downplay your own abilities.”

Wharton nodded.

Housekeeper Hiri sighed emotionally. “Young master Linley, you’ve never lived in the imperial capital. Perhaps you don’t fully understand how influential the War God’s College is. Even the Emperor himself would be extremely courteous to the personal disciples of the War God’s College. The personal disciples of the War God have an extremely exalted status.”

Hillman said seriously, “After all, there have been over a hundred

generations of Emperors since the War God founded the Empire. Many of the Emperors in the history of the Empire have never even met the War God. But the personal disciples of the War God? They are qualified to meet him. Tell me, who does the War God care more about?"

Linley now understood.

Good point.

A hundred plus generations had passed. Although the War God was the ancestor of Johann, after five thousand years, who knew how many descendants the War God had? How much affection would the War God truly have for each individual descendant of his over the past hundred generations?

Just judging from the fact that many Emperors had never even met the War God, one could tell what the answer to that question was.

By contrast, personal disciples were different. The War God would even personally instruct them.

"It isn't that I'm inflating the deeds of others. It's that I truly am not confident." Wharton was frustrated. "I really don't know what I'll do if Nina ends up being given to Blumer."

Wharton truly could not accept this result.

"F*ck his grandmother, if that Emperor dares to do such a thing, then we bros will go over and abduct the princess and bring her over to be your woman." Gates immediately said.

The entire hall immediately grew silent.

Wharton stared at Gates in shock, then looked at Linley. "Big bro, who is this?"

Only now did Linley come to his senses. He had been so excited at his

reunion with his little brother that he had focused on chatting with him, and had totally forgotten to introduce Zassler and the others.

“Haha…”

Linley rose to his feet. “Wharton, let the servants leave first. The attendants outside can leave as well.” Linley was about to introduce these people in his group to Wharton.

There was no need to hide anything from one of his own.

“Understood.” Although Wharton didn’t know what Linley wanted to talk about, he immediately followed Linley’s instructions and dismissed the servants and attendants.

Linley first walked in front of Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena. Sighing with emotion, he said, “Wharton, in the past, our mother was forcibly abducted by the Radiant Church, precisely because her soul was pure. Rebecca and Leena had been abducted for the same reason.”

Hearing these words, Wharton felt an emotional resonance in his heart.

“When I was in the Northwest Administrative Province, I rescued them. This one is Jenne. Wharton, you need to treat these three girls as you would a big sister or little sister.” Linley instructed.

Wharton nodded.

“As for this gentleman…” Linley walked towards Zassler. Actually, whenever Wharton and the others looked at Zassler, they felt their hearts tremble. His thin, skeletal body and his dark green eyes caused fear in the hearts of whoever saw him.

“This is Zassler, an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. He is the oldest member of my group, and is already over eight hundred years old.”

Linley’s words caused Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, and Nader to

all be astonished.

Necromancer? This was a legendary type of magus. And an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank? It was far harder for a magus to advance than a warrior, due to the high requirement for spiritual energy. By contrasts, warriors didn't require much spiritual energy.

The spiritual energy of a magus of the eighth rank was generally greater than that of a Saint-level warrior.

Although Saint-level warriors possessed extremely tough, durable spiritual energy, in terms of volume, a magus of the same rank would possess a hundred times the amount of spiritual energy, if not more.

"Eight hundred years old? As I recall, a person's maximum lifespan is only five hundred years, unless he reaches the Saint-level." Housekeeper Hiri suddenly said.

The Saint-level experts had an essentially unlimited lifespan, but humans who did not reach the Saint-level couldn't live for more than five hundred years.

"Haha…" Zassler's ancient voice rang out. "You are referring to normal people. Let me tell you something. Those magi who train in the three ultimate types of magic, Oracular Magic, Life Magic, and Necromantic Magic, have extremely long lives. Of the three, we necromancers possess the longest lifespan."

Zassler glanced with an evil look at the group. "If one of you were about to die from old age, you can come find me. Given my relationship with Linley, I can help you transform your body into a zombie-body and allow you to never perish."

Never perish?

This was the goal of countless people. But a zombie-body? Just from the sound of it, one could guess that it must be one which belonged to an

undead.

Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, and Hillman all squeezed out a smile. They really were rather nervous in dealing with an Arch Magus necromancer.

“Zassler.” Linley looked unhappily at Zassler.

Zassler’s eyes flashed with green light as he laughed, “I’m just joking with your little brother and his friends. Transforming a body into a zombie-body isn’t an easy task either.”

Linley shook his head, then walked over to Barker and his brothers.

“It’s finally our turn.” Gates intentionally puffed out his chest. Wharton’s eyes lit up as well. All five of the brothers were as tall as Wharton, and they were much more muscular than him. Those long-handled greataxes in particular clearly were extremely heavy weapons.

“Wharton, have you heard of the Armand clan?” Linley looked at his younger brother.

“The Armand clan? Can it be…the Undying Warrior clan?” Wharton’s eyes lit up.

Linley nodded with satisfaction. “Right. Barker, Ankh, Hazer, Boone, Gates. These five brothers are the descendants of the Armand clan, and all five of them are Undying Warriors.”

“All five of them are Undying Warriors?” Wharton was shocked. Next to him, Hiri and Hillman were stunned as well.

Being a descendant of the Armand clan and being an Undying Warrior were totally different concepts.

For example, although Hogg was a descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, he himself wasn’t a Dragonblood Warrior. It was very rare that one of the Supreme Warrior clans would produce a genius actually capable of

transforming into a Supreme Warrior.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

Seeing the astonished look on Wharton’s face, the five brothers felt extremely proud.

“The Armand clan had fallen on extremely hard times, and even their ‘Secret Undying Manual’ had been lost. Fortunately, Lord Cesar helped out.” Linley said gratefully. “Wharton, amongst these five brothers, Barker, Ankh, and Gates have already reached the ninth rank of power. The other two are at the peak of the eighth rank.”

“Ninth rank!” Wharton was frightened when he heard this.

“Big bro, are you saying that…?”

“Right. After transforming, all three of them have Saint-level power.” Linley smiled.

Wharton, Hillman, Housekeeper Hiri, and Nader’s hearts were filled with a hot gush of excitement. They were already very excited upon learning that Linley possessed the Saint-level of power, but who would’ve expected that three more Saint-level combatants would have popped up?

Four Saint-level experts!

What a terrifying force this was.

A basis for being confident!

A very strong basis for being confident. Previously, Wharton had been worrying about how he would go about struggling with Blumer. But now that his big brother had come with this group of people, Wharton felt like a beggar who had suddenly acquired a trillion gold coins.

“Lord Hogg, can you see this? Can you see this?” Hillman repeated

emotionally.

If Hogg was still present, he would definitely be very happy upon witnessing this.

“Wharton, this is a magical beast that I tamed in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. His name is Haeru. Haeru, greet everyone.” Linley said with a laugh.

The Blackcloud Panther that had been lying on the ground stood up. He swept Wharton and the others with his cold, dark eyes, and then spoke in the human tongue. “Haeru pays his respects to you all.”

Wharton stared at Linley in astonishment. “Big brother, this magical beast, this magical beast just…”

“Right. Saint-level magical beast.” Linley nodded.

The throats of Wharton, Hillman, Hiri, and Nader all clenched. Good heavens. Magical beasts, by their very nature, were stronger than humans of the same level. Generally, only peak-stage Saint-level human experts would be able to defeat any Saint-level magical beasts.

Linley was a Saint-level expert. Fine. But his magical beast was as well?

“Hrmph.”

A cold sneer could be heard. Wharton and the others all turned upon hearing it. The sound came from Bebe, who was seated next to Linley. Bebe’s head was arrogantly raised.

“Bebe.” Seeing Bebe’s familiar figure, Wharton felt very close to him. After all, Bebe had been with Linley early on. When they were young, Wharton had often played around with Bebe as well. “Bebe, how does it feel to be travelling alongside a Saint-level magical beast? You must really worship him, right?”

Bebe stared at Wharton, then said loudly, “Wharton, you stinking little punk! What sort of magical beast do you take me, Bebe, to be? That fellow Haeru, even at the Saint-level, he isn’t a match for me, Bebe!”

“Aaaah!”

Wharton and the others had shocked expressions on their faces, as though they had seen a ghost. They could accept that this mysterious panther-type magical beast was a Saint-level magical beast, but Bebe? They had all watched as Bebe had first followed Linley when they were young.

That adorable little Shadowmouse had actually reached the Saint-level as well.

“Bebe is indeed stronger than me.” The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, once more growled in the human tongue.

Bebe raised his little head high, his eyes filled with self-delight.

Chapter 2 – A Breakthrough in Spiritual Energy

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 2, A Breakthrough in Spiritual Energy

Six Saint-level experts was simply too shocking. Only after a long time did Wharton and the others finally calm down from their manic excitement. But even after calming down, their hearts were still filled with boundless joy.

They had been worrying this entire time about what to do about Wharton and Nina.

Blumer's status as the personal disciple of the War God and the younger brother of Olivier was giving them a huge amount of pressure. But now, they felt complete confidence in their ability to contend.

Wharton's face was radiant with smiles. His older brother had brought this many powerful experts. Wharton could almost visualize the scene of his marriage with Nina.

"Big bro, thanks. Cheers." Wharton raised his wine cup.

Laughing, Linley raised his own as well.

Wharton had worshipped Linley, ever since he was young. A magus coming out of Wushan Township who was accepted to the Ernst Institute was already something incredible. But now, a scant seventeen years later, Linley actually was in possession of two Saint-level magical beasts and was followed by three Saint-level experts.

"Big bro, in a few more days, it'll be the Yulan festival again. You are almost twenty seven years old by now. When are you planning to get married?" Wharton leaned over and whispered into Linley's ear while snickering.

“You punk.” Linley laughed. “Let’s not discuss this issue for now.”

“Oh.” Wharton nodded obediently.

Although Wharton was now an Imperial Count and was a huge man who stood 2.2 meters high, in front of Linley, he still acted the same as he did when they were young.

“Actually, Leena and the other girls are all quite good.” Wharton whispered secretly.

Linley gently smacked Wharton upside the head.

“I’ll stop, I’ll stop. Let’s drink, let’s drink.” Wharton hurriedly said.

Housekeeper Hiri and Hillman, seeing Linley and Wharton chat like this, felt boundless joy in their hearts. Exchanging glances, they began laughing together.

Linley and his little brother were extremely happy in those first few days of Linley’s arrival. However, Linley had instructed Wharton that although it was fine to reveal the news of himself and Haeru being at the Saint-level, for now the news that Bebe and three of the Barker brothers had reached the Saint-level as well must be hidden.

Barker, his brothers, and Bebe were an important hidden force for Linley.

In addition, in the entire O’Brien Empire, there was virtually none who knew that Barker and his brothers were Undying Warriors. Thus, maintaining this secret was easy.

Just the presence of two Saint-levels, Linley and the Saint-level magical beast Haeru, was already enough to cause dread in the hearts of others.

Year 10008 of the Yulan calendar. December 30th. This was the day before the Yulan festival. It was snowing on this day, and the entire O’Brien Empire was covered with snow, as the entire world seemed to turn white.

Boulder Street. Count Wharton's training grounds.

Although the snow was flying about, Linley still sat in the meditative position in the middle of the grass. As for Wharton, such a powerful man as himself wouldn't care about snow.

"Whoosh." Wharton's bare upper body was brimming with power and heat. He put down the warblade 'Slaughterer' to one side, preparing to take a rest. But just as he turned to look at the nearby Linley…

"Hrm?"

Wharton found, to his astonishment, that although the snow was flying everywhere, whenever any snow approached Linley, it would 'avoid' him, passing by him in a circular line. It was as though there was an invisible tornado around Linley. Not a single snowflake had fallen onto Linley's clothes.

"What's this?" Wharton was a bit shocked.

Linley, who had been meditating, suddenly opened his eyes. "Wharton, what are you looking at?" Although Linley had been in deep meditation, when someone paid attention to him, Linley would notice.

"Big bro, that snow…how? Could this be the 'impose' level mentioned in our clan's records?" Wharton said in astonishment.

Smiling, Linley said, "Wharton, once you reach the level of 'impose', it is true that you can prevent the rain or the snow from landing on your body. However, this requires that you whole-heartedly concentrate on utilizing the 'imposing force' of the surrounding area. It is impossible to do this at the 'impose' level while one is meditating and not focusing on it."

Just then, Linley hadn't been intentionally preventing the snowflakes from reaching him. However, all it took was a thought, and the snowflakes couldn't come near him.

“What lies beyond the ‘impose’ level, then?” Wharton truly admired his big brother from the bottom of his heart.

Wharton had trained hard for so many years, and had received the finest instruction from the O’Brien Academy, but to date, Wharton had only reached the ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’ level as described in his clan’s records.

Actually, there was no need for Wharton to be too modest. The reason why Linley had been able to make such astonishing improvements, aside from his natural talent, was the fact that he was greatly assisted by his exceptional elemental essence affinity.

To ordinary people, elemental essence affinity only represented that one would be able to gather mageforce faster. But to experts, it represented that one would more easily be able to attune with nature, and understand the Laws of the world.

“This part of the ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ which I have gained insight into.” Linley laughed calmly. “This is just a simple application of it.”

“Profound Truths of the Wind?” Wharton’s eyes lit up.

“Continue with your training.” Linley said, then closed his eyes again, returning to his meditation.

Actually, nowadays Linley didn’t spend too much time on his stone sculpting, unless he was seized by a sudden desire. When that desire came, Linley would more easily enter the correct state of mind, and the benefits to him would be better.

These days, the effects of normal stone sculpting were about the same as Linley simply meditating.

The reason was at this point, given Linley’s understanding of the Laws of the Wind and the Laws of the Earth, when Linley meditated, he could easily

become one with nature, giving him essentially the same benefits as he had when sculpting under normal conditions.

This sort of meditation on the various Laws was also helping to improve Linley's spiritual energy at a constant rate of growth.

Around nightfall.

Linley, who had been quietly meditating this entire time, suddenly revealed a hint of a smile on his previously expressionless face. And then, Linley's lips moved slightly. Shortly afterwards…

"Swish!"

Linley, who had been seated, suddenly moved at a terrifyingly fast speed. At the same instant, nine different Linley's suddenly seemed to appear at different locations of the training ground.

After the nine blurred images disappeared, Linley once again appeared seated in the meditative position in the training grounds.

Only now did Linley open his eyes. "The ninth-ranked wind-style 'Windshadow' spell, famed as the most powerful speed-enhancing spell, lives up to its name. It can actually allow me, in my human form, to reach the speed of a Saint-level."

Right!

Magic of the ninth rank!

Roughly a year and a half after Linley had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he had reached the eighth rank as a magus. But from the eighth rank to the ninth rank as a magus, the amount of spiritual energy required was astonishing. Even the most brilliant of geniuses would require at least ten years.

But due to his constant meditating, Linley's spiritual energy had grown at a

rapid rate.

After spending just seven years, he had finally broken through and reached the level of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

“Tomorrow is the Yulan festival. The day before the Yulan festival, I reached the level of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, eh? Sheesh…” Linley felt extremely happy.

Magi possessed extremely powerful attacks. If you gave a magus sufficient time, a magus could definitely use his spells to defeat a warrior of the same level. The wide area spells of magi were particularly astonishing.

“Tomorrow, I will be twenty seven years old. A twenty seven year old dual-element Arch Magus of the ninth rank. This should be a first in history.” A look of confidence was on Linley’s face.

How incredible.

A twenty seven year old dual-element Arch Magus of the ninth rank. This was a terrifying record which had never before appeared within the history of the Yulan continent. The previous record holder had reached the ninth rank and become an Arch Magus only after he had turned thirty.

“Wind-style magic includes the Savage Tornado spell, which can easily deal with an army of a hundred thousand soldiers. As for earth-style magic, the ‘Castle of Earth’ can be considered a large-scale defensive spell…” Linley had to admit that the more powerful a magus was, the more terrifyingly useful the battle applications of their magic became.

Magi also possessed very powerful one-on-one spells as well.

“The ninth-ranked wind-style spell, ‘Void Extermination’. Reputedly, as long as one has enough mageforce, this is a single-target spell that can even kill Saint-level experts. It truly is monstrously powerful.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh in praise.

Wind-style magic was very valiant and mighty. ‘Void Extermination’ was the most powerful attacking spell out of all spells of the ninth rank in every discipline. The ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell, in turn, was the most powerful attacking spell out of all forbidden-level spells.

The earth-style in turn was legendary for its defensiveness, whether in self-protection or in large-scale protection.

When an earth-style magus of the ninth rank utilized the ‘Supergravity Field’ spell, he could cause the hearts and veins of other experts to explode and cause them to instantly die. After all, although some people had powerful muscles, their hearts and their blood vessels weren’t necessarily that tough.

“However, to me, the most useful spell is still the Windshadow spell. The most powerful speed-supporting spell!”

In his human form, Linley had less than half the speed he possessed in his Saint-level Dragonform. But by relying on the Windshadow technique, his speed in human form could rival his speed in Dragonform. How terrifying!

The day of the Yulan festival. The sun was bright and high in the sky, casting its glow on the snow-covered trees and rooftops, which gleamed dazzlingly. The entire imperial capital seemed to be much brighter than normal.

On this day, the imperial capital was arranging large-scale celebrations as well.

Within a carriage.

Watching the festivities, Wharton and Linley were sharing a carriage while chatting about Nina, and what to do about her.

“Wharton, in two days, bring me to visit the Emperor.” Linley said directly.

“Visit his Imperial Majesty?” Wharton stared at Linley in astonishment.

Linley said with a calm laugh, “I have no grudges against the O’Brien Empire. If the Emperor is willing to allow Nina to marry you, I wouldn’t mind settling down here in the O’Brien Empire.”

Wharton looked at his older brother. In his heart, he understood what Linley was saying.

“But if that Emperor doesn’t know what’s good for him and insists on marrying the Seventh Princess to Blumer, then we’ll have to resort to our backup plan. We’ll abduct Nina and then the two of you can elope.” Linley looked at Wharton. “Wharton, are you ready to accept this result?”

Wharton was silent for a moment. “Of course I am. I don’t feel too great a sense of loyalty to the O’Brien Empire. But Nina…”

“The Seventh Princess would refuse?” Linley asked.

This was a major issue.

Wharton shook his head. “I know her. When I was competing against Caylan, Nina once said that if the Emperor really tried to force her, she would elope with me. But Nina is afraid that we wouldn’t be able to make it.”

“You don’t need to worry about that, unless the War God personally intervenes.” Linley said calmly.

Linley knew that given the War God’s status, he wouldn’t get involved in these minor issues. Only if the Empire truly suffered a severe crisis would the War God show himself.

Normally speaking, the War God wouldn’t even get involved if an Emperor was assassinated.

The War God had countless descendants. If one Emperor died, another would succeed him. As long as nothing threatening the entire foundation of

the Empire occurred, the deity-like War God would not interfere.

Three days later, a carriage came to the gates of the imperial palace. A tall young man dressed in a gentleman's suit, alongside a young man dressed in a long black robe, stepped out of the carriage.

"Count Wharton, who is this?" The palace guards asked. Given their keen eyes, they could clearly tell that the person next to Count Wharton was no ordinary individual.

With a calm laugh, Wharton said, "This is my older brother. I wish to take him to see his Imperial Majesty."

The palace guards didn't make any difficulties for them, immediately allowing them in. Actually, it generally wasn't too difficult for one to be granted entry into the palace. Anyone with some status could bring people inside.

This was because the palace itself was enormous. If one wanted to enter one of the important areas of the palace, however, the guards would be much more restrictive.

"Stop!" Two guards shouted. "Count Wharton, who is this person by your side?"

"Please send a message. This is my older brother, Linley. I am bringing my older brother to meet with his Imperial Majesty." Wharton said directly.

"Please wait here first." One of the guards shouted, before turning and running inside the courtyard.

There were very many experts within this courtyard. Without the express permission of the Emperor, the various nobles did not dare to rashly barge in. A while later, that guard came running back. "His Imperial Majesty has permitted you to enter."

"There really are quite a few experts here." As Linley walked into the

courtyard, he could easily sense the locations of one expert after another from the flows of the nearby wind elemental essence.

After walking for a while and taking some roundabout paths, they arrived at a classical, refined study room.

“Your Imperial Majesty.” Wharton called out in a loud voice.

“Haha, Wharton, I hear your big brother Linley has arrived? Come, quick!” Emperor Johann’s clear and bright voice rang out from within the study.

Smiling, Linley stepped into the study.

Chapter 3 – Provocation

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 3, Provocation

Emperor Johann had heard of Linley's fame long ago.

That 'second genius magus' in all of history who had also reached the exalted rank of grandmaster sculptor at the age of sixteen. An absolute genius. When Johann had learned of Linley and his history, he couldn't help but sigh repeatedly with admiration.

He watched as Linley walked in.

"He indeed appears to be a man of great talent." Johann sighed to himself. Be it in either his physical proportions or his reserved personality, Johann could tell that Linley did indeed have that unique aura of a grandmaster sculptor.

"Greetings, your Imperial Majesty." Linley bowed fractionally.

"How dare you." The palace attendant next to Emperor Johann said in a shrill voice. "How dare you not kneel and kowtow before his Imperial Majesty?"

Linley swept the attendant with his cold gaze. The palace attendant suddenly felt as though he was being stared at by a viper, and he couldn't help but shiver.

"A master artisan such as Linley is someone whom We have admired for a long time. Naturally, there is no need for him to kneel and pay any obeisance." Johann glanced at his nearby attendant, and the attendant no longer dared to speak.

In the O'Brien Empire, generally speaking, ministers needed to kneel on one knee before the Emperor. But people such as Blumer, a personal

disciple of the War God, only needed to bow slightly.

“Wharton.” Johann looked at Wharton, who stood next to Linley. “We have heard long ago that you had an older brother. Why is it that you have only brought him to see Us today?”

Wharton immediately said, “Your Imperial Majesty, your servant’s older brother has only recently arrived in the imperial capital.”

Emperor Johann nodded calmly, then looked at Linley. With a laugh, he said, “Master Linley, I heard that at the age of seventeen, you became a dual-element magus of the seventh rank. After ten years have passed, might I ask what level you have now reached?”

Linley smiled. “After ten years of painstaking training, just a few days ago, I stepped past the gateway into the ninth rank.”

“An Arch Magus of the ninth rank?” Johann blinked.

“What?” A surprised shout from behind the Emperor. Linley casually glanced at the covering screen placed behind the Emperor’s seat. As soon as he had entered, Linley had known that there were two experts of the ninth rank hidden there, one a magus, one a warrior.

Johann glanced backwards as well.

Knowing that they had revealed themselves, those two came forward. One was dressed in a loose, long magus robe, while the other was wearing a classic warrior’s outfit.

“These two are Our guards. They, too, were shocked at your advancement, Master Linley.” Johann laughed calmly.

“A dual-element Arch Magus of the ninth rank. Linley, might I ask how old you are this year?” That silver-haired magus stared at Linley. As a magus, he naturally knew how incredibly difficult it was for one to increase one’s level of spiritual energy.

Throughout history, more than ten warriors had reached the Saint-level in their twenties.

But in all of history, there was not a single Arch Magus of the ninth rank who reached that rank before the age of thirty. The rate of advancement for spiritual energy was something which couldn't be increased by any known means. It required one to slowly accumulate it, one step at a time.

"My older brother is twenty seven years old this year." Wharton spoke out.

"Twenty seven!" Hearing this number, that magus of the ninth rank had a very…amusing…look of shock on his face.

History was history. History included the records of countless geniuses over tens of thousands of years. There were a few people who reached the ninth rank after the age of thirty, but that was ancient history. In the past few centuries, there hadn't been a single person who had reached the ninth rank in their thirties.

But…

"Twenty seven. Twenty seven!" That silver-haired old man laughed at himself. "I reached the rank of Arch Magus of the ninth rank when I turned 170, and I thought I didn't do too bad. But compared to you, Master Linley…"

The silver-haired old man sighed, shaking his head.

The difference was simply too extraordinary.

"Mr. Gerhaus, in the past, how old was the youngest Arch Magus to reach the ninth rank?" Johann immediately asked.

The silver-haired old man said respectfully, "Your Imperial Majesty, according to the historical records, the youngest Arch Magus of the ninth rank was an absolute genius from over thirty thousand years ago. He

reached the ninth rank at the age of thirty-two. In more recent history, from the beginning of the Yulan calendar to now, the youngest genius magus to reach the ninth rank did so at the age of thirty-five."

In training battle-qi, if one possessed or acquired some special treasures, perhaps their battle-qi would be greatly enhanced.

One's level of understanding might suddenly jump as well from a flash of insight.

There had been people who had reached the Saint-level in their twenties!

But spiritual energy wasn't something that you could easily increase at will. Even by using the Straight Chisel School of stone sculpting, Linley had only gained that sudden breakthrough and increase a single time, when he was sixteen. In the past ten years, he had been slowly, painstakingly training nonstop. Only then had he managed to reach the ninth rank.

"I've heard that Master Linley isn't just a magus. You are also a powerful warrior?" Emperor Johann smiled towards Linley.

Linley smiled calmly. "Your Imperial Majesty, you can have that person next to you give me a try."

That warrior of the ninth rank pursed his lips. "Can it be that Master Linley is such a genius that you have reached the level of a warrior of the ninth rank as well?"

"Mr. Lancy, go ahead and give him a try. But you must be careful. Master Linley is of the Dragonblood Warrior clan." Johann laughed.

Mr. Lancy immediately drew his pitch black broadsword.

Linley only flipped his hand over, allowing Bloodviolet to appear in his palm. Against a warrior of the ninth rank, he didn't even need to transform.

"Hrmph." A layer of illusionary, stellar light seemed to suddenly cover the

broadsword in Mr. Lancy's hand. "Mr. Lancy is the student of the Stellar Sword Saint." Johann explained.

Stellar Sword Saint?

Linley wasn't even concerned about the Stellar Sword Saint himself, much less his disciple.

"Swish…" The broadsword seemed to split apart the air itself, chopping against Linley with seemingly enormous power. Linley just stood there, not even moving. Bloodviolet flashed…

Mr. Lancer suddenly felt as though the entire world was filled with violet light, and that all the surrounding space had suddenly been locked and frozen.

"Bam!" The flat of Bloodviolet's blade struck against Lancy, knocking him flying back and smashing against the stone screen. The screen split apart, and Lancy spat out a mouthful of blood as he fell to the ground.

Steadying himself with his hands against the floor, Lancy slowly rose to his feet. His eyes didn't have a hint of arrogance in them. Instead, he said with gratitude, "Thank you for being merciful, Master Linley." The flat of the blade had contained such tremendous force when it struck against him. If it had been the edge of the blade, he definitely would have died.

"Of course. It was just a sparring match." Linley said casually.

"Master Linley, you have already mastered the level of using the force of the heavens and the earth. My master once said that in order to reach the Saint-level, one must master this level. I am too far off from your level, Master Linley." Lancy knew his own limits.

When sparring against his master, he had previously experienced this sensation of the space around him having been frozen and locked.

Emperor Johann's eyes narrowed.

The Empire's intelligence regarding the Dragonblood Warriors was quite detailed. If a person were able to reach the ninth rank in human form, then after Dragonforming, that person would definitely be at the Saint-level of power. And if they were able to reach the Saint-level in human form, then in Dragonform, they would definitely be invincible amongst Saint-levels.

"The Saint-level…"

Linley's status in Johann's mind was continuing to rise.

"Haha…master Linley, you truly are the most incredible genius that We have ever seen. Even Olivier cannot come close to competing with you." Johann laughed loudly.

As a warrior, Olivier perhaps was on par with Linley.

But as a magus? Who could compete with him, the greatest genius in all of history?

As a stone sculptor? Linley had been acclaimed as a grandmaster sculptor at the age of sixteen. Every aficionado of stone sculptures was filled with worship towards him.

It was very hard to reach the peak of any field. For someone to reach the peak of three fields…only the word 'genius' could be used to describe him.

"Your Imperial Majesty." Linley didn't want to waste any time with Johann. "I just recently arrived at the imperial capital. There are many things I don't understand too well regarding the affairs of the Empire. But I understand that my younger brother Wharton truly likes the Seventh Princess, Nina. In my capacity as the clan leader of the Baruch clan, I would like to ask you, your Imperial Majesty. Would you be willing to allow Nina to marry into my Baruch clan?"

With Hogg's death, Linley had become the leader of the Baruch clan.

But this so-called clan only had two members to it.

“This…” Johann was put in a very difficult situation by Linley’s sudden ambush.

Linley was indeed a genius, and Johann’s heart had been moved.

There were quite a few Saint-level warriors in the O’Brien Empire. The War God’s College alone had several. But Saint-level Grand Magi could be counted on one hand. And perhaps only a single one of them would obey the commands of the imperial clan.

Perhaps in one-on-one combat, Saint-level Grand Magi were not exceptionally powerful.

But in times of war, Saint-level Grand Magi were incredibly dangerous.

Just think about it. If a Saint-level Grand Magus were to directly cast a destructive forbidden-level spell over your capital, how much damage would be caused? The million man army that you painstakingly built up might be destroyed in an instant by a single forbidden-level spell such as the ‘Annihilating Tempest’.

A dual-element Arch Magus of the ninth rank at age twenty seven.

If someone were to tell Johann that a genius such as this wouldn’t be able to reach the Saint-level and become a Grand Magus, Johann most likely would curse out that person as being mentally retarded.

“Human talent.”

The allure of a Saint-level Grand Magus was much higher than that of a Saint-level warrior.

“Master Linley, please permit Us some time to consider it.” Emperor Johann’s attitude was incredibly friendly.

“Then I and my younger brother will respectfully await your Imperial Majesty’s decision.” Linley said with a calm laugh. “Then, your Imperial Majesty, I bid you farewell.”

“Master Linley, why not enjoy a dinner with Us instead?” Emperor Johann hurriedly said.

“Thank you, your Imperial Majesty, for your kind offer. But I have other affairs to attend to.” Linley said with a smile. A hint of disappointment was on Johann’s face, but he didn’t try to press the issue. Smiling, he said, “Next time, then.”

Linley and Wharton walked out of the inner palace. Wharton was extremely excited. “Big bro, I’ve never seen his Imperial Majesty be so humble before. Even facing Blumer, he had never been so modest.”

“The O’Brien Empire has many Saint-level warriors, but very few Saint-level Grand Magi.” Linley laughed calmly. “Most likely, he values my talent in magic.”

A twenty-seven year old dual-element Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

Anyone who heard these words would be terrified out of their wits.

Nobody could say for sure how terrifyingly powerful Linley would be in the future.

“Judging from the look on his Imperial Majesty’s face, most likely he is beginning to seriously consider things. I’ve been in the Empire for quite some time, but I haven’t heard of any Saint-level Grand Magi yet.” Wharton sighed emotionally.

The O’Brien Empire truly had too few Saint-level Grand Magi.

“Hrm?” Wharton suddenly saw someone from afar.

Noticing that Wharton had paused, Linley couldn’t help but ask

questioningly, “What are you looking at?”

“Oh, it’s Wharton. What, did you go to visit his Imperial Majesty?” A cold voice rang out. Linley turned to look as well. At a glance, Linley could tell that this youngster in front of him was no weakling.

“Blumer, what are you doing over there?” Wharton said coldly.

Wharton was fairly familiar with the layout of the imperial palace, especially the wing where the Seventh Princess, Nina, resided in. The direction Blumer was headed towards was precisely the direction where Nina’s residence was.

Blumer laughed calmly. “What? Aren’t I allowed to visit Princess Nina?”

“Visit Princess Nina?” Wharton suddenly grew calm. “Blumer, I’ll wager that you haven’t been even allowed inside the main entrance.”

This indeed was the case.

Blumer had went to visit Nina, but Nina had shut the gate in his face, refusing to see him at all.

Blumer’s heart had been filled with anger at this. All his life, aside from his older brother whom he worshipped, he had never lowered himself in front of anyone. After becoming the personal disciple of the War God, he had become all the more self-confident.

“No. I haven’t been able to get in.”

Wharton laughed calmly. “Blumer, did you think that because you are the personal disciple of the War God, you would definitely be able to marry Nina? Dream on! Big bro, let’s go.”

Linley shook his head with a calm smile, then turned and left alongside Wharton as well.

“Hold it!” Blumer suddenly shouted.

“Oh?” Wharton turned his head to look at him. “Might I ask, oh mighty personal disciple of the War God, what else do you want?”

Blumer stared coldly at him. “Wharton, I hear you are of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, and that you are quite powerful after you transform. But I don’t believe it. Today, I formally challenge you to a duel. Do you dare accept?”

Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes.

Wharton was briefly startled, and then he laughed loudly. “What do I have to fear?”

“A month from now, at the imperial capital’s Colosseum. I’ll invite his Imperial Majesty as well as my fellow apprentices from the War God’s College to officiate. If you don’t have the guts to participate, you can give up.” Blumer said coldly.

And then Blumer paid no more attention to Wharton, immediately walking away.

Chapter 4 – The Blade Named ‘Slaughterer’

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 4, The Blade Named ‘Slaughterer’

Linley turned his head to glance at his younger brother. Smiling, he said, “Wharton, this Blumer knows how powerful you are, and yet still challenges you. It seems he is quite confident.”

Wharton said confidently, “Don’t worry, big bro. Since when have we Dragonblood Warriors feared anyone at the same rank?”

“That’s exactly the sort of confidence you should have.”

Linley glanced at Blumer’s disappearing back. “I noticed the sword this Blumer fellow was carrying. It seems rather special.”

“Right. Blumer’s sword is extremely fast. When he participated in the competition to become an honorary disciple, he became famous for his fast sword speed. But fast swords are usually not very powerful. He might be able to overcome ordinary opponents of the ninth rank, but given my defensive power, even if he lands a hit on me, he most likely wouldn’t be able to break my defense.” Wharton was extremely confident. “If the honorary disciple tournament had consisted of a winner-take-all tournament, the victor most likely wouldn’t have been him.”

Smiling, Linley patted Wharton on his shoulder. “Enough. Honorary disciple of the War God’s College? Pfft. Let’s go. Time to go home.”

As the scions of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, Linley and Wharton both possessed a sort of pride.

Blumer quickly informed Emperor Johann of the duel, and Emperor Johan immediately sent someone to ask Wharton if this was the case. After knowing that this was indeed the case, Johann immediately issued the order

to have his subordinates prepare the Colosseum for this duel between two geniuses.

All of the citizens of the imperial capital became excited after hearing of this impending duel.

One was the personal disciple of the War God, the ninth ranked warrior, Blumer.

The other was a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, the genius of the O'Brien Academy, Wharton!

Most importantly…

Both of these geniuses were wooing the Imperial Seventh Princess. Given the common folk's natural propensity to engage in gossip, many people began to say that these two geniuses were battling for the sake of the Seventh Princess. All sorts of rumors regarding Wharton, Blumer, and Nina began to fill the streets and alleyways of the imperial capital.

East Channe. Count Wharton's manor, on Boulder Street. Within the training grounds.

Linley and Wharton were each standing on opposite sides of the training ground. Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Barker, and the others were watching from far away.

The duel on February 4th was one which Wharton had to win.

Linley stared directly at Wharton. "Wharton, since Blumer is famous for his fast sword attacks, I will compete with you using fast sword attacks. Don't hesitate in the slightest. Use your full strength in battling me."

"Yes, big brother." His upper body bare, Wharton immediately initiated his transformation.

Azure draconic scales began to cover Wharton's entire body, and his arms

and legs began to be covered in scales as well, as his nails also began to lengthen and sharpen. A draconic tail sprouted out from behind him, and a single draconic horn emerged from his forehead.

His eyes were still black, despite an occasional golden light flashing through them.

“This is the true, authentic Dragonblood Warrior form of our clan.” Seeing his little brother’s transformation, Linley felt quite moved. He immediately said loudly, “Wharton, attack me at full strength. Quickly!”

“Understood.”

Wharton’s eyes lit up, and he forcefully leapt from the ground, causing the earth where he had been standing to tremble. Wharton transformed into a blur as he charged towards Linley, his hands tightly grasped around the warblade Slaughterer, covered as always with countless bloodstains.

“Wielding something light as though it were heavy!” The Bloodviolet Godsword in Linley’s hands, carrying a titanic, heavy force, flew up at a seemingly slow speed towards the Slaughterer. It actually managed to block the Slaughterer in an extremely strange way.

“Bang!” The two forces collided.

Linley felt as though he had been slammed into by a giant meteor, as the astonishing force from that blow was transmitted to him through the Bloodviolet Godsword.

“He really is ridiculously strong. An ordinary blow from him is actually on par with me in human form using ‘wielding something light as though it were heavy’.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh in praise. Dragonblood Warriors truly did have an astonishingly powerful level of strength.

Twisting like a tornado, Linley easily dodged past Wharton.

“Swish!”

Nine flashes of violet light appeared. This was just the ordinary attack speed of the Bloodviolet Godsword. As far as Linley was concerned, even if Blumer's sword was very fast, he probably should only be able to reach this level of speed at best.

Tapping the ground with the point of his foot, Wharton quickly leapt backwards with a dodge while also using the warblade 'Slaughterer' in his hands to block Linley's attack.

But although he was able to block six of the attacks, the other three attacks from Linley landed on Wharton's body. These attacks were simply ordinary attacks by Linley in his human form.

"Clang!" "Clang!" "Clang!"

Three metallic ringing sounds could be heard, as three faint white lines appeared on Wharton's azure blue scales.

"Haha…Wharton, it looks like if I don't use a bit of power, I won't be able to hurt you at all." Linley laughed loudly, but in truth, he was very happy.

Wharton looked seriously at his big brother. "Big brother, don't hold back."

In his human form, Linley was only an early-stage warrior of the ninth rank.

But right now, Wharton was already a peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior of the ninth rank. In terms of strength, battle-qi, or defense, he vastly outstripped Linley.

"Lord, if you keep on holding back, I'm afraid Wharton is going to simply beat you down." Gates shouted loudly from the side.

Laughing, Linley shook his head.

"Wharton, be careful."

Linley grew solemn, and then he suddenly began to move at rapid speed. The entire training yard seemed to have suddenly been filled with a wild gust of wind as Linley's body reached a terrifyingly fast speed.

"Whoosh!" The Bloodviolet Godsword chopped towards Wharton, and seemed to press down against Wharton along with the very space around him.

Impose!

Wharton felt an incredible pressure coming towards him, but faced with this dangerous situation, the Dragonblood in his body began to boil. Letting out a deep growl, Wharton exploded forth the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body, allowing this wild strength to be burst forth from his warblade, 'Slaughterer'…

"Swoooosh."

The locked space was chopped open and the warblade collided directly against Linley's Bloodviolet Godsword.

But Linley's Bloodviolet only trembled slightly, then immediately transformed into six sword-shadows. At such close range, Wharton was totally unable to use his warblade to block it.

"Haargh!" Wharton clenched his left fist, which suddenly had become covered with azure light, then smashed it against the nearest sword-shadow.

"Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!" "Bam!"

The six sword-shadows once more transformed into a single physical shape as Bloodviolet once more pierced towards Wharton, carrying with a terrifying penetrative aura which made Wharton tremble.

Wielding something light as though it were heavy! As fast as lightning!

In the blink of an eye, Linley had stabbed four times at a single spot on

Wharton's body. These repeated stabs pierced through Wharton's battle-qi and his protective scales, punching into his flesh.

As soon as he pierced through the scales, however, Linley immediately retracted his sword and flew back.

Wharton stood there, stupefied, then raised his head to look at Linley. Disbelievingly, he said, "Big bro, how could you be so fast?" He didn't even have the ability to react. From this, one could imagine in what a short period of time those attacks had occurred. And yet, Linley had sent out four full attacks!

"You call that fast? If I were to reach my limit, then in a situation like that, I could have sent out another six sword attacks. This was relying purely on speed, not relying on any mysteries or deep insights. If I were to utilize the Rippling Wind technique…" A hint of a smile was on Linley's lips. "In the blink of an eye, I can execute several hundred sword attacks, or even more!"

Wherever there was wind, his sword could appear.

The power of the Rippling Wind technique lay in a single word: "Fast". So fast it seemed like teleportation. But for the speed to reach such a level meant the power of each strike couldn't be extremely high. But with hundreds of sword blows combined together, the total strength was still astonishingly high.

"Hundreds of sword attacks?" Wharton was shocked. "But…good thing Blumer's speed is far inferior to yours, big bro. If he was this fast, I'd rather just admit defeat."

"Never hope to rely on luck." Linley rebuked coldly. "Wharton, are you so sure you know Blumer's absolute highest speed?"

"No, I don't." Wharton shook his head.

"Use your most powerful attack against me." Linley said seriously.

“Yes, big bro.” Wharton grew solemn as well. “This attack was one I developed based on my understanding of ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’. The name is ‘Single Stroke Execution’.” Wharton gripped the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ with both hands, and a metallic light flashed atop the warblade’s edges.

A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

“That’s a rather murderous name.” Linley wielded Bloodviolet in one hand.

“Whoosh!” Wharton sped up to his maximum speed, appearing before Linley in the blink of an eye. The warblade, Slaughterer, seemed to dance in his hands, as agile as a falling leaf. “Swish!” It chopped towards Linley.

Although the impression it gave was that it seemed to be moving quite slowly, in the blink of an eye, it arrived in front of Linley. Facing this chop, Linley could actually feel a murderous, bloody aura emanating from it.

Linley didn’t dare to be the slightest bit careless.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” …..

Linley seemed to have transformed into the sun as he seemed to radiate a million flashes of violet light. These violet flashes of light all converged against the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. The terrifying attack power that the warblade ‘Slaughterer’ originally had possessed was slowly, yet totally being cancelled out by the force of those countless violet flashes of light.

“Bang!” The warblade was actually sent flying, and Wharton himself was chopped countless times by those flashes of violet light and sent flying as well.

Wharton coughed twice, rubbing his chest as he stood up.

“Not bad. It is quite powerful.” Linley said approvingly. “It actually took ten…no, sixteen hits from my sword to cancel out your attack.” When using

the Rippling Wind, every sword blow was fairly weak.

In truth, if Linley were to attack at full strength, each blow would probably be around 25% of the power of that one chop of Wharton's.

Logically speaking, Linley should've been able to cancel out the attack with just four hits.

"In principle, there shouldn't be any expert of the ninth rank who is a match for you, unless they are a Supreme Warrior, in which case you might have a fight on your hands." Linley said approvingly.

"Also." Linley looked at Wharton. "You need to learn how to more agilely control your battle-qi, and also how to move more fluidly. You shouldn't let the opponent land several blows on you in one spot."

Wharton nodded.

"Lord." A servant ran over and bowed respectfully. "Lord, there is a fellow called Reynolds who says he has come to see you, Lord Linley."

"Reynolds?" Linley's eyes lit up.

Not bothering to chat any longer with his little brother, Linley immediately rushed towards the outside of the manor. Linley hadn't seen his fourth bro, Reynolds, for nine full years.

Reaching the front courtyard, Linley's footsteps slowed.

Seeing the figure outside the gate, Linley felt as though he had gone back in time. His most carefree, happy youthful years had been spent with his beloved bros, when the four young men had went to the Jade Water Paradise to drink and have fun.

Those distant days were so happy.

And now, the current Reynolds…

Reynolds was wearing a long, plain robe. But his waist was now ramrod straight. His long years spent in the army had given Reynolds the aura of a military man. And by now, Reynolds was nearly 1.9 meters tall.

“Fourth bro!”

Reynolds, who had been waiting at the gate, heard the shout. He immediately looked over, and his eyes lit up. Linley had changed as well. That dazzlingly genius had now become much more reserved and composed. “Third bro!”

“Haha…”

The two bros rushed towards each other, clutching each other in an embrace.”

“I didn’t expect that you, fourth bro, would join the army. It’s been seven or eight years now, right? When you were at the gate, I actually wasn’t sure if it was you. I was wondering to myself, why has a military official come here?” Linley teased.

Reynolds clubbed Linley on the chest. “Third bro, damn, I had no choice but to join the army. My old man forced me to. What was I supposed to do?”

“Fortunately, this time when I took my leave of absence, Yale sent someone to inform me that you had arrived at the imperial capital. On my way back, I came to pay a visit to your little bro and look for you. I felt sure that upon arriving at the imperial capital, you’d definitely head to your little bro’s place. And see? Here you are.”

“Haha, let’s go inside and chat.”

After having been separated for nine years, these bros had countless things to say to each other. They had been separated for nine years. Nine years later, those two youths had both become accomplished young men.

Chapter 5 – The Colosseum

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 5, The Colosseum

Night arrived. The imperial capital of Channe was still bustling and beautiful as brocade, but the wilderness outside East Channe was very desolate. On the desolate road, there was a single ghost-like human figure rapidly heading east.

In the blink of an eye, the human figure travelled over a hundred meters.

This person was the personal disciple of the War God, the current rising star of the imperial capital; Blumer Akerlund.

The imperial capital of Channe was surrounded by many mountains. Outside West Channe was the War God Mountain and other mountains, while outside East Channe was a number of unremarkable mountain peaks as well. Blumer quickly arrived at one seemingly ordinary mountain.

At the top of this mountain was a peak that seemed knife-sharp. At the absolute top of this peak, a man was seated in the meditative stance. Looking at how he sat there, one might be forgiven for having the strange feeling that this man had been there for tens of millions of years.

Arriving at the mountain peak, Blumer said respectfully, “Elder brother.”

Clearly, the person quietly meditating at the peak of the mountain was Blumer’s elder brother, the one known as the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. Tonight, there was no moon in the sky, nor any stars. In the darkness, one could only hazily make out Olivier’s figure.

“Second brother. Is there something you need?” A cold voice rang out.

Blumer knew that his elder brother had been quietly meditating here on this mountain peak for three full years. These three years, his elder brother had

neither eaten nor drank anything. He had used the skies as his roof and the earth as his bed.

Three years ago, when he had seen his big brother, he could sense emanating from his big brother's body a terrifying, incisive aura. That sort of aura gave the impression that with just a thought, Olivier could defeat him.

But after three years, his elder brother seemed to have turned into a boulder on the mountain, without any fierce aura at all.

No one had any idea how powerful the current Olivier had become!

"Elder brother, on the fourth of the next month, which is to say fifteen days from now, I will have a duel with a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan at the Colosseum of the imperial capital." Blumer said respectfully.

"Dragonblood Warrior clan?"

His normally tranquil voice seemed to carry a hint of interest. "According to legend, Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors are experts even amongst Saint-levels. I very much want to exchange blows with a Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior, but Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors have disappeared long ago from the Yulan continent. Mmm. How strong is the person whom you are dueling?"

"After transforming, he should be at the peak-stage of the ninth rank." Blumer said respectfully.

"Oh. Using the sword arts that I taught you, you should be invincible amongst the ninth rank combatants." Olivier said calmly. "Enough. You can leave now."

Blumer hesitated a moment, then said in a low voice, "Elder brother, on the day of my duel, can you come?"

Olivier was quiet for a moment.

“February 4th. Understood. If I have time, I will hasten there.” Olivier’s voice didn’t change tone in the slightest. It was as calm as ever.

“Then I bid you farewell.” Blumer immediately left.

The mountain peak returned to its prior stillness. That human shadow in the darkness didn’t move at all, as though it had always been and always would be part of that mountain peak.

Yulan calendar, year 10009. February 4th. This was the day two geniuses were going to duel, and many people in the imperial capital excitedly hurried to the Colosseum. Those 80,000 Colosseum tickets had been sold out long ago, and today, it wasn’t just people from the imperial capital who were hurrying to watch the duel. There were people from other cities and even other provinces.

Linley’s group had arrived at the Colosseum early on, and had been given a private room within it. Linley, Reynolds, and Yale were engaged in active conversation.

“Boss Yale, I didn’t expect that you would be able to make it here as well.” Reynolds laughed.

Yale’s forehead was still covered in sweat. Looking at Linley and Reynolds, he laughed very happily. “After I heard that you arrived at the imperial capital, fourth bro, and that third bro was here as well, even the most important of tasks became irrelevant, and I came. This time, I can also help cheer on third bro’s little brother.”

“Boss Yale, fourth bro, you all came. Now, we’re only missing second bro.” Linley said emotionally.

“Second bro is now a Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire. He has an extremely high status. What’s more, given that distance from there to here is over ten thousand kilometers, how can he possibly make it in time?” Yale sighed as well.

Reynolds laughingly cursed, “Back when the four of us were at the Academy, second bro was the most glib and most crafty. He participated in every school activity, and he also was very good at hosting them. I knew even back then that second bro would be suited for officialdom, and see? Just ten years later, he’s managed to swindle his way into becoming a Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire.”

“It is fortunate that the current Emperor of the Yulan Empire succeeded to the throne when he did. This caused second bro’s position and status to immediately rise.” Yale said approvingly.

Footsteps could be heard outside the door.

“Bro, we’re heading out to the Colosseum. Let’s go.” Hearing this call, Yale, Linley, and Reynolds all rose and left the resting room.

In the center of the Colosseum, there was a dueling platform over three hundred meters long and three hundred meters wide. The platform was constructed from enormous slabs of tough rock, and were covered with large-scale magical arrays.

On the east and west sides of the dueling platform were the viewing platforms for the families of the duelists.

Directly in front of the dueling platform was the position reserved for the officiating hosts of the duel.

Wharton, Linley, and the others came out of the tunnel. Seeing the countless teeming human forms surround them in the Colosseum, they couldn’t help but feel stunned.

“So many people.” Wharton had a forced smile on his face.

The fifth brother Gates said with a laugh, “Wharton, there are eighty thousand people here today. You’d best not lose any face.”

The chants from the crowd seemed like the howling of the seas, filling the air. Linley and his group could totally sense the excitement of the onlookers.

The O'Brien Empire was a highly martial Empire. The duel between two ultimate geniuses would attract the attention of countless people. There were 80,000 watchers inside, and outside the Colosseum, there were many people hoping they would somehow have a chance to catch a glimpse of this duel.

Above Wharton's seat, Linley, Yale, Reynolds, Barker and his brothers, and the others all sat down. Blumer's side had arrived early as well.

Blumer had many people with him, over a hundred.

"Plenty of them are honorary disciples of the War God's College. It seems they have come to support Blumer." Linley said with a calm laugh.

He could tell that all of those people were very strong.

"What good does it do him to bring so many supporters?" Yale laughed contemptuously.

Right at this time, the chants began to build. Clearly, with both the participants in the duel having appeared, everyone had become extremely excited.

"80,000 people. The most people I've seen in one location, even in the army, was 10,000 training together." Reynolds stared at the spectacle here in the Colosseum. As the Four Great Empires currently were not in an era of large-scale warfare, it was rare to see the various armies massed together.

"Everyone, silence!"

A voice rang out like a bolt of thunder, covering the entire Colosseum. Those 80,000 viewers immediately quieted down, as they stared at the silver-haired old man in the middle of the Colosseum.

Linley and the others began to chuckle. This silver haired old man was an expert of the ninth rank. Given his prowess in battle-qi, it wasn't hard for him to have his voice cover the entire Colosseum.

"For a duel such as this, even the officiating host must be an expert." Linley sighed ruefully.

The silver-haired old man boomed out, "Everyone, this duel we are about to see is the most important duel in recent history. Of the two participants, one is the personal disciple of the War God, Marquis Blumer. The other is a scion of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, Count Wharton. Both of them are unquestioned geniuses, but who exactly is stronger?"

The silver-haired old man began to laugh. "Soon enough, everyone will know. As for the judges for this day, I expect everyone will be very happy once you learn who they are."

"The first is the personal disciple of the War God, Lord Kenyon [Kai'ni'en]." The silver-haired old man said clearly.

A middle-aged man with graying temples, dressed in a long blue robe, came striding out of a tunnel. And then, with a single step, he seemed to turn into a blur. Lord Kenyon suddenly appeared in the judge's position, then sat down.

The appearance of this Lord Kenyon sent everyone in the Coloseeum into a frenzy, as countless shouts and chants could be heard.

"A Saint-level expert." Linley was absolutely certain.

Just then, Kenyon had used a flying technique to directly arrive at the leftmost judge's position.

"The second is our Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of the O'Brien Empire." The silver-haired old man's voice grew higher, and the lavishly dressed Johann, face beaming with smiles, walked towards the judge's seats, taking

the middle position.

The arrival of the Emperor naturally instigated yet another bout of wild joy.

The silver-haired old man's face was covered with smiles as well. "After finding out who our third judge is, I too was both shocked and overjoyed." The silver-haired old man intentionally paused a moment, and the 80,000 viewers all fell silent, listening closely. Who was this third judge?

"The third judge is the pride of our Empire…the Monolithic Sword Saint, Lord Haydson!"

As soon as the words 'Lord Haydson' came out, the entire Colosseum seemed to go utterly mad, as the countless viewers began to scream and shout excitedly.

"HAYDSON! HAYDSON!!!"

"MONOLITHIC SWORD SAINT!"

Some of the more powerful warriors began to use their battle-qi to shout. The chants sounded like a million thunderbolts ripping through the Colosseum, as everyone went stark raving mad.

"Crazy. They've all gone crazy." Gates was flabbergasted. "Is it worth getting this crazy for a Saint-level expert?"

Zassler glanced at him, laughing. "You haven't been in the O'Brien Empire for very long. You have no idea how influential the Monolithic Sword Saint is."

Reynolds' eyes were filled with excitement as well. "After reaching the Saint-level, Lord Haydson has experienced countless duels and battles, but he has never lost a single time! Even against the other peak-stage Saint-level experts of the Empire, he achieved complete victory. He is the number one Saint-level. No one amongst the Saint-levels can defeat him. The Monolithic Sword Saint – Haydson!"

Linley, Wharton, and the others all stared at the distant tunnel, quietly awaiting Haydson's appearance.

Haydson finally came out.

Haydson appeared simple and unadorned, the lines of his face as hard and sharp as something from a stone sculpture. He wore only a simple gray robe, and on his back was an earth-colored heavy sword.

His steps were steady and sure. Haydson didn't use any flying technique. He merely walked forward.

With a single step though, he somehow walked from the tunnel to the officiating host's platform. With the second step, he somehow arrived next to Emperor Johann, then took his seat next to Johann.

It was as though he had teleported!

"What was that?" Linley had seen something that was utterly unbelievable.

Barker and the others were all stunned as well.

"Was that teleportation?" Wharton murmured.

But Linley was absolutely certain it was not teleportation! As far as Linley knew, there was no one alive who could teleport. Teleportation was just a fairy tale.

"When Haydson walked, the entire earth seemed to tremble. In the blink of an eye, it was as though that long distance suddenly became short, allowing him to travel dozens of meters with one step. It was so relaxed. It didn't rely on speed at all. With but a single step, he could somehow shorten the distance?"

It was simply too astonishing.

Linley's own training relied on two different paths. One was on divining the Laws of the Earth, and the other was on attuning with the Laws of the Wind.

This simple technique that Haydson had utilized had something to do with the Laws of the Earth, but…Linley could not understand it at all. How had Haydson done this?

"Whew."

Letting out a deep breath, Linley calmly sat down.

"He is reputed to be the number one amongst Saint-levels. In all these years, no one has ever defeated him. It makes sense for a person like him to have such capability." Linley was still very confident.

Haydson might have his own marvelous abilities, but wouldn't Haydson in turn be unable to understand Linley's vibrational attacks?

Although they both attuned to the Laws of the Earth, they had each embarked on different paths.

Chapter 6 – The Duel

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 6, The Duel

Both the Emperor Johann as well as the War God's disciple, Kenyon, immediately stood up, smiling as they greeted Haydson. Haydson acted in a very friendly manner, greeting Emperor Johann and Kenyon as well.

The three judges sat down.

Behind the judges, there were many seats as well, all taken. These people primarily consisted of the likes of the Empress, the imperial consorts, the princes, and the princesses.

"Nina." Wharton saw that Nina was in that crowd of people.

Nina saw Wharton as well. Over the past few days, the Emperor had restricted her from leaving the palace, so Wharton and Nina hadn't seen each other in over a month. Given the depths of their affection for each other, even three days without seeing each other would feel like three years. These thirty days of not seeing each other had been very arduous indeed.

Wharton and Nina exchanged glances. They could sense from each other's gazes the love and affection each bore the other.

"Hrmph." Seeing this, Blumer couldn't help but snort coldly. An ordinary person might not have been able to see this clearly from a distance of hundreds of meters, but Blumer's vision was simply too good. He could clearly see the look in these two people's eyes.

Sometimes, having good eyesight wasn't necessarily a good thing.

The silver-haired old man looked at the Emperor and at the judges. Emperor Johann nodded, and the silver-haired old man laughed. In a sonorous voice, he said, "Everyone, please be quiet. The duel between the two geniuses of

the O'Brien Empire is about to start. First, introducing the challenger, the personal disciple of the War God…Blumer!"

The challenger was the first to be announced, while the challenged was the second to be announced. This was the rule.

Carrying a long sword on his back, and dressed in a blue warrior's outfit, Blumer flew several dozen meters into the air, arriving onto the dueling platform.

"BLUMER!"

"BLUMER!"

Many of the 80,000 onlookers began to chant loudly. Clearly, many supporters of Blumer were here today. In the hearts of many people, Blumer's older brother, Olivier, was the pride of the O'Brien Empire.

"Quiet." The silver-haired old man smiled. "Next is Wharton, of the Dragonblood Warrior clan."

"Rumble…" Tearing off his upper body clothes, Wharton bared his torso, revealing his explosively muscular chest, causing many viewers to roar in excitement.

"Hrmph." Seeing this, Blumer only let out a cold, contemptuous sneer.

Taking the warblade 'Slaughterer' in his hands, Wharton leapt directly onto the dueling platform. Given Wharton's 2.2 meter tall stature, and with that massive warblade in his hands, and his bare upper body…

Wharton emanated a simply heroic aura.

Heroic!

This sort of heroic aura caused many people to begin joyful chants. "WHARTON!" "WHARTON!" These chants began to erupt as well, and

these supporters were not any fewer in number than Blumer's.

"What is so impressive about Blumer, that he was able to become the personal disciple of the War God? Today, everyone shall find out." The silver-haired old man said sonorously. "As for the legendary Dragonblood Warriors, acclaimed as Supreme Warriors, today, everyone will have a chance to witness them in action as well."

"I now announce…"

The silver-haired old man's voice went up in pitch. "This duel has commenced!"

In the blink of an eye, Wharton's body was covered with azure draconic scales. A draconic horn sprouted forth from his forehead, and that blue draconic tail came out as well. The entire dueling platform began to tremble. Beneath the light of the sun, those azure-blue draconic scales radiated a dazzling glare.

"Oooooooo."

A collective noise of surprise could be heard from the onlookers. None of the people present had seen the Dragonform transformation. This transformation of Wharton's had totally stunned the watchers.

But after being momentarily stunned, everyone burst into wild cheers of joy.

"Dragonblood Warrior?" All three of the judges watched with their eyes lit up. Haydson looked at Wharton with interest. "It would be wonderful if he was at the Saint-level."

The legendary Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors were experts even amongst the Saint-levels.

And he himself, the Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson, was an expert amongst the Saint-levels. It had been a long time since Haydson had tasted

defeat. But yet if he were to challenge a Deity-level combatant, he would definitely lose. Against that sort of overwhelming force, there was nothing Haydson could do either.

He truly hoped that there would appear a Saint-level combatant capable of defeating him.

Perhaps, he would gain some insights and suddenly break through to the next level, reaching the Deity-level.

“So this is a Dragonblood Warrior?” A twelve year old child holding Nina’s hands who sat next to her said. Nina looked at the figure on the dueling platform, then nodded. “Right. This is the legendary Supreme Warrior.”

Given the relationship between the two of them, Wharton had long ago demonstrated the Dragonform transformation for her.

“Haha, Dragonblood Warrior. Not bad.” Blumer looked at Wharton and began to laugh. “But my Akerlund clan has never believed the Four Supreme Warriors to be all that strong.”

Blumer stared coldly at Wharton as he drew his longsword with a flip of his hand.

The longsword looked like it was forged from a piece of ice, seemingly see-through. Beneath the light of the sun, it radiated all the colors of the rainbow. Blumer confidently looked at Wharton, and he loudly said, “This is the precious sword which my older brother gifted to me: Icedream.”

Wharton hefted the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. In a cold voice, he said, “The warblade, ‘Slaughterer’, the ancestral heirloom of our Baruch clan, the personal weapon of the first Dragonblood Warrior.”

“Oh?” Blumer sneered.

All the onlookers fell silent. They watched with wide eyes carefully trained on this duel between geniuses. They didn’t want to miss a thing.

“Whoosh!”

In the blink of an eye, Blumer seemed to suddenly disappear as a violent gust of wind suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the dueling platform. This was a gust of wind created by Blumer’s speed.

The wind blasted against Wharton’s face, but Wharton simply stood there without moving.

“Hrm?” Wharton suddenly noticed Blumer out of the corner of his left eye. Just as Wharton turned and prepared to attack, he suddenly sensed another gust of wind ambushing him from his right.

Indeed.

Blumer’s real body was to his right.

Laughing coldly, Blumer looked at Wharton as he mercilessly chopped towards Wharton with Icedream. But Wharton, his back facing Blumer, suddenly smashed with his iron-whip-like draconic tail.

“WHAP!” The draconic tail smashed viciously against Icedream, with part of the tail landing against Blumer’s body as well.

“BAM!”

Blumer’s body was sent flying by that blow as if he were but a sandbag. In mid-air, Blumer recovered with a beautiful somersault, landing on one knee at the edge of the platform.

All the viewers held their breath, not daring to chant or shout.

“Ugh.” Blumer spat out a bit of blood, then stared at his chest, where the draconic tail had struck. His clothes had been ripped apart. Although his chest had been protected by battle-qi, the battle-qi had been ripped open. A visible wound was on his chest, and blood was slowly leaking out.

Only now did Wharton turn around, staring at Blumer with his cold black eyes. A golden light flashed through those eyes.

“What powerful force.” Blumer said in a low voice.

Without question, no warrior at the same level possessed the same strength or power of attack as a Dragonblood Warrior. Just a swipe from Wharton’s draconic tail would be enough to deeply wound Blumer.

Blumer now fully understood that in fighting Wharton, he could not allow himself to be struck. Just the tip of the draconic tail had struck his chest, but he had already been wounded. If it had been a full blow, he probably wouldn’t have been wounded so lightly.

“Boom!”

With monstrous force, Wharton kicked off from the ground, which trembled despite the protective magical barriers on it. Transforming into a cruel blur, in the blink of an eye Wharton crossed the hundred meters distance between the two of them as he charged at Blumer.

“Haaaargh!”

Carrying immense force, Slaughterer came crashing down on him. Without hesitating in the slightest, Blumer immediately dodged. At the same moment as when he attacked with the warblade, Wharton spun around and kicked out with both legs viciously at Blumer.

Blumer didn’t dare to block at all, only continuing to retreat at high speed.

“Whap!” But despite his high speed of retreat, that lightning-fast draconic tail snapped towards him once again, and Blumer hurriedly raised Icedream to block.

“Bam!” Despite striking against Icedream, the powerful force of the blow still sent Blumer flying far away towards the spectator stands of the

Colosseum. The people standing near the spectator stands quickly scattered as Blumer viciously slammed down.

“Bam!” The stone spectator stands split apart, sending rubble flying everywhere and covering the area with dust.

All the viewers sucked in a cold breath. Dragonblood Warriors were simply too powerful. Because of their terrifyingly powerful draconic scales, their legs, arms, and tail could clash head on against weapons.

This was a major advantage.

“Aaaaargh!” With a wild howl, Blumer came flying out from the dust cloud. He didn’t charge directly at Wharton; rather ,he charged towards the other side of the dueling platform.

With just three massive leaps, Blumer arrived at the other side.

“Blumer, you will definitely lose.” Wharton said coldly.

Blumer’s body was covered in bloodstains, but he still stood ramrod straight. Blumer didn’t look at Wharton, only at the longsword in his hand. “I originally wanted to defeat you using the sword technique that I personally developed. But it seems that I will have to use the sword technique which my older brother taught me.”

“His older brother’s sword technique?”

Haydson could clearly hear each word. “Olivier’s Lightshadow Sword? I wonder how much of Olivier’s technique he has mastered.”

Linley frowned as well.

Olivier’s sword technique?

“Remember, the technique which defeated you is the Lightshadow Sword!” Blumer’s cold voice rang out. Suddenly, the Icedream sword in Blumer’s

hand became covered with a layer of golden light.

“Rumble…”

The strange thing was, standing on the dueling platform, Blumer suddenly split into two people, along with the sword in his hands. But then, those two shadows split once more…

One became two. Two became four. Four became eight.

This sight was simply too queer.

“What astonishing speed.” Given his current level of enlightenment, Linley could tell that this Blumer was relying on an astonishing level of speed to reach this effect.

“This speed is actually slightly faster than my fastest speed in human form.” Linley was secretly startled.

Wharton kept a careful, solemn guard. He felt as though he were surrounded by Blumer’s shadows. Blumer was very fast, far faster than him. Even faster than his big brother Linley’s human form.

“You will lose for sure.”

The ice cold voice seemed to ring out simultaneously from all of those human shadows. Just as Wharton tightened his guard even further, those illusionary shadows suddenly blurred as Blumer appeared in front of him.

“Slash!”

Wharton simply didn’t have time to use his warblade to block, and so he could only raise his arm, relying on it to block this blow.

“Clang!” The sound of metal ringing on metal could be heard. Icedream only left a white line on Wharton’s scales, but at the same time, Wharton’s draconic tail…

“Swish!”

The draconic tail came smashing over…but Blumer disappeared yet again.

Having failed with this attack, he had immediately retreated.

“What is going on?” Wharton was shocked. “How did he suddenly appear in front of me just now?”

But Linley had seen everything clearly and understood. “Using the illusionary effects of this Lightshadow technique, he can draw near without his opponents noticing, and then using his astonishing speed, appear in front of his opponent before the opponent has a chance to react.”

Linley was able to use his understanding of the wind to easily determine where his opponent was, as a way to overcome this technique.

Wharton, however, didn’t have much attunement to the wind.

“Why are there so many shadows.” The 80,000 onlookers were stunned. They saw that on the dueling platform, sixteen shadow-Blumers had appeared. As a piercing golden light flashed, one of Blumer’s shadow-bodies appeared in a different location.

The total number of shadows remained sixteen in number.

Whenever one shadow disappeared, another shadow would appear in a different location. Every single time there was a change, there was a flash of golden light.

Bizarre.

Wharton watched carefully. As another golden light flashed, Wharton’s vision was dazzled, but right at this moment, Blumer’s longsword appeared in front of him. Blumer didn’t aim this attack at any other location, only at Wharton’s eyes.

That flashing golden sword had already appeared in front of Wharton's eyes.

Chapter 7 – Intending to Inflict Serious Wounds

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 7, Intending to Inflict Serious Wounds

“Bam!” A draconic-scale-covered left hand suddenly swung up and tightly gripped the Icedream sword in Blumer’s hand. Despite his attack power, Blumer was still unable to make Icedream pierce forward by even an inch. The palm of Wharton’s left hand was tightly pressed against the tip of Icedream’s blade.

The look on Blumer’s face changed.

Flee!

Drawing his sword back with a powerful pull, Blumer quickly fell backwards, pressing his back nearly against the dueling platform while hurriedly scuttling backwards. Right at this moment, Wharton’s draconic tail smashed towards Blumer.

If Blumer hadn’t pressed his body down to the ground, he definitely would have been struck.

“Whew.” Blumer stood once more at the edge of the dueling platform, panting slightly. That had been too close; he had almost been struck by Wharton’s draconic tail.

Blumer’s head hurt. Wharton’s defense was simply too powerful. His attacks couldn’t break that defense at all.

“Is that technique my only option?” Blumer only had a superficial understanding of the ‘Lightshadow Sword’ technique, but according to what Olivier had taught him, he could still utilize the most powerful attack of the Lightshadow Sword.

…..

Everyone in the Colosseum was holding their breaths. These experts simply fought at too high a speed, making it impossible for most people to see clearly what was going on. They only saw that Blumer seemed to have transformed into sixteen shadows, moving about as though he was teleporting.

But Wharton was like a sturdy castle. No matter how Blumer attacked, he was unable to hurt Wharton.

“If you won’t attack me, then it’s my turn to attack you.” Wharton’s voice rang out in the Colosseum, and then Wharton charged wildly towards Blumer.

Blumer immediately prepared to dodge.

But Wharton’s seemingly light, agile blow from his warblade had reached a bizarre speed, and was chopping directly at Blumer’s skull. Blumer quickly fell backwards while kicking off against the ground.

“Whoosh!” Blumer retreated backwards at high speed.

Although his retreat was very fast, Wharton’s Slaughterer was even faster. Just as it was about to reach Blumer’s vital chest area, Blumer immediately split his legs open and rolled to the back.

“Bam!” The Slaughter just scraped Blumer on the back, slamming against the ground.

Slaughterer – Single Stroke Execution!

“Boom!” The entire dueling platform began to tremble, and the magical formation on the dueling platform actually split apart as massive cracks appeared on the platform. This caused all of the 80,000 viewers to feel both shock and fear.

The defense of this dueling platform was incredibly strong, but the magical array had actually been destroyed nonetheless?

Blumer somersaulted in mid-air, then landed at the edges of the dueling platform. The audience near him couldn't help but begin to cry out in shock and fear.

Blumer roared angrily, a fierce look on his face.

With a fierce kick against the dueling platform, Wharton flew into the air at high speed towards Blumer's direction as the platform beneath him cracked yet again. Blumer once again dodged.

"Ahhh!" Seeing Wharton charge towards them, all the onlookers up above began to scream in fear.

But despite moving at high speed, Wharton only lightly balanced against the wall, then changed direction, continuing to pursue after Blumer.

Blumer retreated back to the top of the dueling platform, his face now completely red as his body emanated a red light. His face then turned a golden color, although his eyes remained red.

"What is Blumer doing?" Linley frowned.

Wharton, showing no fear, brandished the warblade 'Slaughterer' and charged directly at Blumer for close quarters combat.

Right now, many of the viewers began to cheer for Wharton, while others cursed at Blumer. Clearly, Blumer's repeated dodges had roused the anger of the crowd. Relying on greater speed to run and hide; what was that? Why not just admit defeat?

Blumer stared coldly at the charging Wharton, a hint of madness in his bloodshot eyes.

The golden aura covering Icedream suddenly carried a hint of white light in

it. From a distance, Linley could clearly tell that the sword's aura had grown more powerful.

"Rumble…"

Repeating his old tactic, Blumer's body once more separated into multiple images. As flashes of golden-white light appeared, so too did more and more shadow-Blumers.

"Blumer, can't you do anything besides just run?" Wharton stood there. "If you have any ability, come and play."

Wharton knew that in speed, he was inferior to Blumer.

"As you wish, Wharton!" A gnashing, wrathful voice could be heard as a dazzling golden light flashed, and a longsword appeared in front of Wharton.

Wharton was shocked.

In terms of speed, this time it was even faster than last time.

"Haaargh!" Wharton once more wanted to use his left hand to grab at Icedream and rely on the toughness of the scales around his palm to block the tip, but this time….

"Slash!"

Covered with that golden-white aura, Icedream actually pierced straight through Wharton's palm and then, with astonishing speed, stabbed into Wharton's scale-armored chest.

And then, still covered in that bizarre golden-white light, Icedream once more split open Wharton's scales.

Although it took time to describe it, the actual event happened in the blink of an eye. Icedream pierced through both Wharton's palm and into his

chest, and Wharton had actually reacted very quickly as well.

“F*ck off!” Wharton’s right leg kicked viciously against Blumer.

Blumer, forewarned, had immediately begun to withdraw his sword. Piercing through the opponent was difficult, but pulling the sword out was much easier. Blumer dodged Wharton’s kick, but he wasn’t able to dodge the slap from Wharton’s draconic tail…

Wharton had actually launched consecutive attacks with his tail and leg.

“Whap!” That draconic tail came swinging towards him. Unable to dodge it, Blumer could only use his left arm to block, while at the same time, allowing the momentum of the force to carry him backwards.

“Bam!”

The battle-qi protecting Blumer’s left arm immediately split open, and the tip of the draconic tail actually slammed into Blumer’s chest, knocking Blumer spinning through the air.

Wharton fell to the ground paralyzed, blood pouring from the wound in his chest.

“Big lunk!”

Nina called out in shock.

Wharton’s injury was very severe. This sword blow from Blumer had pierced into his vitals and damaged his internal organs. Even coughing wracked Wharton’s body with immense pain.

Blumer flipped up from his fallen position on the ground.

His left arm was broken, but he was still battle-worthy. But right now, Wharton could no longer move. If he were to try to do so, his severe injury would only grow more severe, to the point where he might even lose his

life.

“Haha…”

Blumer laughed coldly. By this point, it could be said that Blumer was the victor, but Blumer actually moved at high speed towards Wharton, the Icedream sword in his hands stabbing mercilessly towards Wharton.

Just as Blumer moved, another human figure suddenly moved as well.

“F*ck off!” An angry roar could be heard. The 80,000 viewers only saw a sudden hurricane wind appear out of nowhere, and then countless flashes of violet light simultaneously struck against Blumer.

Blumer immediately hurriedly roused the battle-qi in his body to form a protective armor.

He didn’t dare to take the blow head on. Borrowing the momentum force from those blows, he hurriedly retreated, letting himself be blasted backwards. But despite that, he still suffered several dozen sword wounds.

Blood flowed everywhere.

Fortunately, he retreated at high speed. If he had dared to resist the blow for even a second, Linley’s sword would have run him through. The only things he had suffered so far were superficial wounds.

“Wharton, are you okay?” Linley couldn’t be bothered with Blumer as he immediately inspected Wharton’s injury.

“I…am fine.” Wharton shook his head.

Linley’s face changed. The chest was a vital area. A serious blow there could be life threatening. That Blumer could already be considered to have achieved victory, but he still had wanted to kill Wharton.

“This gentleman with the violet sword, please depart. Others cannot

interfere in the duel between these two." A cold voice rang out. The speaker was one of the judges, Mr. Kenyon.

Linley turned to stare at him.

Couldn't he tell that Wharton had already been defeated?

"I represent my younger brother in admitting defeat." Linley said coldly. If they lost a duel, then they lost it. To Linley, this wasn't nearly as important as Wharton's life.

It was normal for an expert to lose a duel at times. As long as they could learn from their losses, they would be able to slowly improve.

"Impossible." Kenyon said calmly. "Per the rules of the competition, unless one of the duelists personally admits defeat, the duel must continue to its conclusion. Since Wharton has not yet admitted defeat, the duel has not finished."

Blumer rose to his feet as well.

Although he looked as though he had been badly injured, Linley's sword hadn't injured him at his vital points. He still could do battle.

"You are Wharton's older brother? Nonetheless, I still ask that you depart. Wharton and I will continue our competition." Blumer said directly.

Wharton's chest was deeply injured, and he could only speak in a tiny voice. If he used too much force to speak, his wound would worsen as well. Wharton opened his mouth, forcing himself to say loudly, "I…I…"

Watching beads of sweat form on his little brother's forehead as he struggled, Linley's heart clenched in pain. "Wharton, don't speak. Don't speak." Linley stopped his little brother from speaking.

"Sir, please leave the dueling platform." The judge, Kenyon, spoke again in a loud voice.

“You shut your motherf*cking mouth!!!” Filled with rage, Linley roared at him loudly.

The entire Colosseum grew silent. Even the judge, Kenyon, was stunned. He…he had just been cursed at?!

He, a stately personal disciple of the War God, a Saint-level expert, had just been cursed!?

In the Colosseum, in front of 80,000 viewers, he had been cursed!!!

Kenyon immediately erupted with fury.

“Whoosh!” Kenyon immediately flew out of the judge’s stand towards the dueling platform, staring at Linley coldly. “What type of thing are you, that you dare speak to your betters in such a way?”

Kenyon was both a Saint-level expert and the personal disciple of the War God. Who would dare be disrespectful to him?

Even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was very polite towards him. But today, in front of all these people, he had actually been cursed out by this person who came from gods-knew-where.

“Barker, take Wharton away first.” Linley glanced coldly at Kenyon.

Barker and his brothers immediately rushed towards the dueling platform.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” Barker and his brothers landed on the platform with those long-handled greataxes on their backs, and the weight of those 5000+ pound greataxes caused the earth to shudder.

All the onlookers had gone completely silent.

Barker and his brothers very carefully lifted Wharton up, taking him down from the platform. As they did, however, Barker and the others glared

viciously at Kenyon.

“F*ck, who the f*ck does he think he is?” Gates even cursed at him in a low growl.

Kenyon couldn’t help but stare angrily at Gates…but just at this moment, Linley’s body began to undergo an astonishing transformation. Black draconic scales sprouted forth from his body, and his forehead, back, elbows, and knees all became covered with sharp spikes. A black draconic tail began to wave about behind him.

“Ah!” The on-looking audience members cried out in shock.

“He is a Dragonblood Warrior as well?” Seeing this, Haydson was shocked as well. Linley’s Dragonform was much more ferocious-looking than Wharton’s, in particular that line of spikes running up his spine.

Raising his head, Linley stared at Kenyon with those utterly remorseless dark golden eyes.

Today, Linley’s heart was filled with boundless fury. An expert such as Kenyon should have easily been able to tell the sort of condition his little brother was in. His little brother had already lost, and so Emperor Johann and Haydson hadn’t spoken out or tried to stop Linley. But Kenyon had tried to stop him. Clearly, he was biased in favor of his fellow apprentice, Blumer.

Kenyon began to grow wary.

He discovered…

The person in front of him was a threat.

“Dragonblood Warrior?” Kenyon said in a solemn voice, floating in mid-air.

Linley actually rose into the air as well, rising to the same height as Kenyon as he stared coldly at him. Seeing Linley float in the air, everyone in the

Colosseum exploded with excitement.

Good heavens! Yet another Saint-level combatant!

Was this going to be a battle between two Saint-level combatants? This was simply too exciting!

Two Saint-level experts stood in mid-air, staring at each other!

“I already told you that my younger brother admitted defeat. But you…still wanted my younger brother to continue.” Linley’s voice was utterly cold, seeming to come from the underworld.

“My fellow apprentice only wanted your younger brother to personally admit defeat. He didn’t actually want your younger brother to continue. Your younger brother could’ve admitted defeat, but he refused to. Whose fault is that?” Blumer equivocated.

“Roll the f*ck away.”

Linley let out an angry shout as he suddenly moved. How could Kenyon watch Linley act without stopping him? He immediately drew a gold-black dual-color staff and he smashed it towards Linley.

“F*ck off!”

Linley’s entire body seemed to have transformed into the sun, as countless violet sword-shadows blasted out in every direction. In the blink of an eye, ten million sword-shadows stabbed towards Kenyon.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind!

Kenyon was completely unable to block. In the blink of an eye, the layer of protective battle-qi over his body exploded with a ‘BAM!’. Facing certain death, Kenyon retreated backwards at high speed in terror, but despite that, he was still stabbed several times by Bloodviolet.

Kenyon landed at the edge of the dueling platform, his long robes totally soaked with blood. He looked absolutely pathetic.

Kenyon stared at Linley in shock and terror.

They were on totally different levels. Linley definitely had the power of a peak-stage Saint-level expert!

A majestic personal disciple of the War God, a Saint-level expert…had been reduced to such dire straits by a single attack.

“Blumer!” When Linley turned to look at Blumer, he saw that Blumer, sensing that things were going terribly wrong, had immediately fled from the platform, heading towards the position of the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

The only person standing above the platform was Linley, who looked like a vicious demon who had descended from another plane of existence. That devilish Bloodviolet flexible sword was still dripping with blood.

The Colosseum. 80,000 viewers. Utter, deathly silence!

Chapter 8 – The Prodigy Sword Saint

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 8, The Prodigy Sword Saint

With a single stroke, Linley had defeated a Saint-level expert who was the personal disciple of the War God. In addition, Linley's current transformation was into a terrifying form. This deeply shocked everyone present. None of the 80,000 viewers actually dared make a single sound.

Deathly silence. Terrifying silence!

Blumer stared terrified at Linley, still hovering in mid-air. At this moment, Linley's cold, remorseless dark golden eyes were fixed upon him. Blumer felt as though he could die at any moment. This utmost sensation of terror caused him to run even closer towards the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Silence. No one dared to speak.

"Drip!" A single drop of bright red blood dripped down from the tip of Bloodviolet, landing on the dueling platform and splattering on it. In the silence, that clear sound rang out loudly.

This was the blood of Kenyon.

Kenyon was standing at the edge of the dueling platform, in miserable shape. Controlling his muscles and battle-qi, he sealed his wound and stopped the flow of blood. But he didn't dare fight against Linley again.

He was a Saint-level, true. But he was 'only' a mid-stage Saint-level. In terms of their comparative levels of enlightenment, he was far lower than Linley.

"Master Linley." Johann finally spoke. His voice echoed in the Colosseum, seeming to come out of nowhere, causing more than half the people to turn

to him. His face still covered in smiles, Emperor Johann said, “Although I knew you were a powerful warrior, I had no idea that your talent in this field was not one whit inferior to your talent in stone sculpting.”

Emperor Johann’s words visibly eased the tension.

Just then, Linley’s vicious demeanor had caused those 80,000 onlookers to not even dare breathe loudly. But as soon as Emperor Johann finished speaking, the entire Colosseum became filled with the sound of countless conversations.

“Master Linley? Ah! Could it be that he is that youngest-ever grandmaster sculptor?”

“Master Linley belongs to the Holy Union. I heard that Count Wharton had originally come from the Holy Union as well. Dragonblood Warriors truly are formidable!”

“Master Linley is so young! When he was sixteen, he created ‘Awakening From the Dream’, and only eleven years have passed since then. A twenty seven year old Saint-level combatant. Doesn’t that make him even more incredible than Lord Olivier?”

…..

Countless conversations regarding Linley could be heard. Linley had appeared out of nowhere. His status as a master sculptor was well known to many aficionados of stone sculptures.

This was an individual who was almost on the same level as Master Proulx.

And now, this young master sculptor, only twenty seven years old, had defeated in a single blow a Saint-level expert who was a personal disciple of the War God!

Unavoidably, many people began to compare him and Olivier.

Compared to Olivier, Linley was even younger.

“My young friend Linley, that technique you used just now should have been derived from your insight into the Laws of the Wind, yes?” The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, spoke, his voice ringing from the judge’s platform.

As soon as Haydson spoke, everyone else in the Colosseum fell silent. What did the Monolithic Sword Saint wish to discuss with this genius, Linley?

“It was indeed, Mr. Haydson.” A calm reply from Linley.

“Might I ask what the name of this technique is?” The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was a man devoted to his training and focused on reaching the Deity-level. Haydson was very much interested in the mysteries gleaned by other Saint-level experts. Perhaps by doing so, he might suddenly gain some new insights and have a breakthrough.

“The name of this technique is Rippling Wind.” Linley didn’t try to hide it.

In order to learn a powerful technique, one must possess a certain level of understanding and insight with regards to the Laws of a certain element. Without that level of understanding, no matter how clearly you explained a technique to someone, they wouldn’t be able to learn it.

Still standing in mid-air, Linley glanced at the distant Kenyon. Calmly, he said, “Your name is Kenyon, correct?”

At first, Kenyon had thought Linley was someone who wasn’t even at the Saint-level. Naturally, he was furious when Linley rebuked and cursed at him. But now, he knew that Linley was more powerful than he was.

Although he was still rather angry, in his heart, Kenyon already viewed Linley as someone on the same level as himself, or perhaps at an even higher level.

“I am.” Kenyon nodded slightly.

“Mr. Kenyon, given your level of power, you should have been able to clearly discern the seriousness of my younger brother’s injury. Given that you knew exactly how wounded he was, you shouldn’t have said the words you said. Remember. As a judge, you have to be at least somewhat impartial. We had admitted defeat, after all. You can’t go too far!”

As soon as Linley finished speaking these words coldly, he flew down towards his own squad. Linley was still concerned about his younger brother’s injury.

Having been rebuked by Linley yet again, Kenyon felt rather embarrassed.

But he knew that he had acted wrongly here. Just then, the other side had admitted defeat. He did indeed go a bit too far by acting in such a manner.

…..

“Wharton, are you okay?” Linley said worriedly as he returned to his human form, rushing to his little brother’s side and crouching on one knee.

Right now, quite a few people were surrounding him. Even Nina had ignored everything and rushed over.

“Lord Linley.” A light-style magus next to them smiled. “Don’t worry. I just utilized recovery magic on him. Lord Wharton’s wounds are already half-healed. Given Lord Wharton’s natural healing abilities, in ten days or half a month, he should be totally fine.”

“Big bro, I feel much better.” Wharton was able to speak fairly easily now.

Linley finally calmed down.

At the same time, he felt rather satisfied with the preparations the Colosseum had made. Linley knew exactly how effective light-style magi were in treating wounds. Generally speaking, low-ranking magi would only be able to treat superficial wounds. Only powerful light-style magi would

be able to heal broken bones or internal injuries.

And of course, the most powerful light-style magi could even totally restore to peak condition anyone who had not yet died. For example, when Linley had received the Divine Boon at the Radiant Temple, that divine power had carried just a bit of healing power with it, but that little bit had been enough to totally restore Linley's body to peak condition, healing all of his broken bones.

This sort of regenerative ability was very formidable.

"Everyone!"

At this moment, the tournament organizer, that silver-haired old man, reappeared on the dueling platform. His face covered in smiles, he said, "I imagine everyone has had an incredible time watching this battle today. Haha. Even our dueling platform has been destroyed as a result of this battle."

The 80,000 viewers stared at the shattered, crater-marked dueling platform, and they all began to laugh as well.

This duel today had absolutely been worth watching.

Not only had they seen a competition between two ultimate geniuses, they even had had a chance to see the terrifying power of Wharton's older brother, Linley. He had, in one blow, defeated Kenyon.

Although the exchange between Linley and Kenyon was very brief, the 'value' of watching that exchange was much higher than that of the battle between Wharton and Blumer. After all, this was a battle between Saint-levels. Many people would live their entire lives without having a chance to witness such a battle.

"And the results of today's duel, I'm sure everyone will agree, are without question. I announce…" The silver-haired old man's words came to a halt, as he stared at the air above him.

Not just him. The tens of thousands of people sitting on the side of the judge's stand were all staring at a glowing line streaking at high speed through the air towards them.

In the blink of an eye, the streak of light arrived at the Colosseum.

"Saint-level!"

The Colosseum once again was filled with excited shouts. Yet another Saint-level expert had appeared.

This man wore simple, sackcloth clothes, and seemed very calm. But his eyes seemed to blaze with the light of the stars. His hair was black mixed with streaks of white, but judging from his face, one could tell without a doubt that this was not an old man; rather, this man was very young.

"Who is this person?"

"Don't recognize'm. His hair is turning white. Which Saint-level expert is this?"

…..

The stands were filled with the sound of discussions being held. It seemed most people were surprisingly unable to recognize who this Saint-level was, that had just flown here. After all, many people had seen some of the more famous Saint-level experts.

The young man flew towards Blumer.

"Second brother, what happened?" The young man said.

"Big brother!" Blumer's astonished, overjoyed voice rang out.

This exchange seemed to have lit a fire within the audience at the Colosseum. This youngster with white and black hair, dressed in a simple

sackcloth attire, was the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier!

“Olivier. Wait, that can’t be. Olivier’s hair should be brownish-black, and he likes wearing white clothes.”

“Olivier. He was such a marvel to behold. How did he become like this?”

“I can tell for certain that this is Olivier. Compared to how he looked when he last battled against Lord Dillon, his appearance is almost identical. Only, his hair looks different, and it seems his aura is different as well.”

…..

Right. His aura was different.

No wonder those 80,000 viewers were unable to recognize him. In the past, Olivier’s aura was astonishingly sharp, like a sword that had been unleashed from its scabbard. In addition, he wore a pure white robe.

His handsome face and his fierce aura had made Olivier famous throughout the imperial capital.

But the current Olivier had changed dramatically compared to before.

The current Olivier didn’t have a fierce aura, and his hair, now part-white, seemed aged. Olivier had never used to dress in sackcloth before either.

“He is Olivier?” Linley looked at Olivier as well.

Yale nodded next to Linley. “Right. According to my clan’s intelligence, in the years after he reached the Saint-level, Olivier had been roving about the various Empires and engaging in training. According to the predictions of our intelligence unit, he should have defeated many Saint-level experts.”

Linley nodded slightly.

As soon as he had seen Olivier, Linley had the sense…that this Olivier

person was an extremely terrifying expert. Compared to Stehle of the Radiant Church, he was even more formidable.

“Has he come for the purpose of doing battle on behalf of his little brother?” Linley immediately began to quietly chant the words to a magic spell.

Olivier was extremely famous. Given his reputation, Linley definitely wouldn’t underestimate Olivier, nor did he dare to be insufficiently cautious.

A gust of wind suddenly swirled about Linley.

Wind-style spell of the ninth rank – Windshadow technique!

…..

Olivier finished listening to his younger brother’s description of this battle. Blumer intentionally made the situation sound even worse. “Big brother, that Linley bullied me with his superior power. If it wasn’t for the assistance of my elder fellow apprentice, I’m afraid…”

Olivier frowned.

The Akerlund clan was actually a very ordinary, common clan. Their parents had died early on, and Olivier had to rely on himself to protect Blumer and help raise Blumer.

Blumer was Olivier’s only family member. The two brothers shared a very deep love for each other.

“Kenyon.” Olivier glanced at the nearby Kenyon. “Thank you. I, Olivier, will definitely remember your benevolence in assisting us.”

Kenyon hurriedly said, “Olivier, no need. Blumer is my younger fellow apprentice. I can’t just sit and watch.”

Olivier smiled at Kenyon, then stared coldly at his younger brother. He rebuked, “Second brother, I told you long ago, unless the situation is a matter of life or death, you are not to use that forbidden technique. Given your current level of understanding, you are far from being able to use it properly. Do you know how harmful that most powerful attack was to you? The damage it caused was more severe than that of your broken arm!”

Blumer lowered his head.

In order to defeat Wharton, in the end, he had utilized a forbidden technique, and the damage done to himself by this forbidden technique wasn’t something which light-style magic could heal. When Olivier had taught him this technique, he had instructed him to only use it in a life-or-death situation.

“Elder brother. I am sorry.” Blumer knew that Olivier was looking out for his interests.

Olivier shook his head and sighed, then turned to look at the distant Linley. A fierce look appeared in his eyes, previously as tranquil as the depths of the seas. Olivier flew directly over.

“Olivier, wait!” Knowing things were taking a turn for the worse, Emperor Johann immediately spoke out.

“Your Imperial Majesty, I will not spare someone who tried to kill my younger brother. Your Imperial Majesty, it’s best if you don’t get involved in this matter.” Olivier didn’t give Johann any face at all.

Emperor Johann didn’t say anything else either. He understood Olivier’s temperament very well.

But as far as Johann was concerned, both Linley and Olivier were important members of the Empire. He didn’t want these two geniuses to battle each other.

Olivier hovered in mid-air, his long robes fluttering about him. His cold,

fierce gaze was on Linley. “Linley, come out!” This explosive shout rocked the Colosseum like a thunderbolt, echoing nonstop within it.

“Come out!” “Come out!” “Come out!”

Everyone in the Colosseum held their breaths. Good heavens. The tickets they had bought were absolutely worth it. They had already seen two battles, but now, it seemed as though they were going to see an even more exciting one.

The 80,000 pairs of eyes in the Colosseum all swung towards Linley.

Chapter 9 – Linley vs. Olivier

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 9, Linley vs. Olivier

“Linley, come out!”

Olivier’s explosive shout still echoed in the Colosseum, but Linley seemed to be deaf to it. He remained on one knee besides his younger brother’s side, discussing something with his younger brother, seemingly not having heard Olivier’s shout at all.

Olivier, standing in mid-air, couldn’t help but frown.

“What is Master Linley doing? Didn’t he hear it?”

“Impossible. Maybe he is afraid of Olivier?”

…..

The people in the Colosseum were puzzled by Linley’s lack of reaction. After letting out this angry shout, Olivier fell silent, staring coldly from mid-air at Linley.

After finishing his conversation with his little brother, Linley turned and glanced upwards at the mid-air Olivier. In that instant…

Their gazes met! One on the ground, the other mid-air.

Their gazes seemed to clash in the air like physical blows.

“Olivier.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face. He calmly said, “Ever since arriving in the O’Brien Empire, I’ve heard people praise you as the Prodigy Sword Saint. To tell the truth? Given that you reached the Saint-level at age forty, I don’t see what makes you a ‘prodigy’.”

Olivier's forehead furrowed slightly.

The combative nature of Linley's words caused all 80,000 onlookers to grow excited. Good heavens. These two geniuses were really being antagonistic towards each other.

This would be the true duel between geniuses.

A duel between Linley and Olivier would clearly be on a totally different level from the duel between Blumer and Wharton. The battle between the older brothers definitely would be a duel between two of the utmost geniuses in the entire Yulan continent.

This duel was about to start at any moment.

Linley suddenly rose directly into the air above the dueling platform. Only after he came to a stop did the blur beneath him slowly disappear.

What terrifying speed.

"Rumble…" Black draconic scales quickly covered Linley's entire body, and ferocious spikes erupted from his spine, his knees, his elbows, and his forehead. That black, scale-covered draconic tail flashed with a cold, gloomy light.

Floating in the air, Linley stared at Olivier with those dark golden eyes.

This was the first time he had seen such a terrifying transformation. Even the normally calm and composed Olivier had a flash of surprise in his eyes, but he quickly returned to his usual calm.

"Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior?" Olivier looked at Linley, a terrifying aura of battle-lust emanating from him. "You aren't at the Saint-level pre-transformation. It seems that your current condition isn't the most powerful condition and time for a Dragonblood Warrior. Pity…such a pity…"

Olivier truly wanted to have a battle with one of the legendary peak-stage

Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors.

“Olivier, a person should know their limits.” Linley’s cold voice rang out in the Colosseum. “Do you think the likes of you are a match for the Supreme Warriors?”

The two genius Saint-levels stared at each other in mid-air. Everyone held their breaths, carefully watching this never-before-seen battle.

“Linley!”

Olivier extended his hand to his back. On Olivier’s back, there were two longswords; one of them, a translucent sword, appeared very similar to Icedream. The other sword was pitch black.

“Against you, using the Lightshadow Sword technique is enough.” Olivier drew the longsword that was as translucent as a block of ice. This sword really was identical to Blumer’s; it was also an ‘Icedream sword’.

With a flip of his hand, that devilish-looking Bloodviolet flexible sword appeared.

“Enough talk. Power is demonstrated through actions, not words.” Linley paid no attention to Olivier’s arrogance at all.

A hint of self-confidence was in Olivier’s eyes. Staring at the Icedream sword in his hands, he murmured, “After I reached the Saint-level and defeated Dillon, I have roamed the various countries. In total, I met eighteen Saint-level experts, and won each battle. Unfortunately, not a single one of them was able to match me in speed.”

A series of surprised murmurs from the 80,000 onlookers.

No one had known that Olivier had subsequently done battle against eighteen Saint-level experts.

Olivier looked at Linley, a hint of self-confidence in his eyes. “In general,

someone who cannot match me in speed will definitely lose." As he spoke, the Icedream sword in Olivier's hand began to shine as a white light began to swirl about the surface of the sword.

Seeing this, Linley began to grow cautious.

Linley could remember clearly how when Blumer used this Lightshadow Sword technique, the light on the Icedream sword had been golden. Only afterwards, when Blumer had used the 'forbidden' technique, did Icedream carry a hint of white light within it.

Although it was just a hint of white light, the attack power of Icedream had multiplied several dozen times.

Originally, Icedream had not been able to harm Wharton, but afterwards, it had been able to pierce through Wharton's palm, and then pierce past the scales on Wharton's chest. And that was just a hint of white light.

But Olivier's? It was pure white.

"The power of this attack is most likely far more powerful than Blumer's all-out desperation attack." Linley naturally was prepared for this.

"Linley, I'm afraid that today, the world will have lost another genius." Olivier said in a quiet, calm voice, and then the white light began to flash repeatedly.

With each flash of white light, another shadow-Olivier appeared in the air above the dueling platform. The power and efficacy of this white light clearly was much higher than Blumer's technique; in the blink of an eye, 108 shadow-Oliviers had appeared in the sky.

Everyone was shocked speechless.

"Third bro." Yale and Reynolds were so nervous that they had begun to sweat already. Wharton, Barker and his brothers, Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne also watched nervously as well.

The injured Blumer, by contrast, watched with confidence.

“Blumer, your older brother’s Lightshadow sword has already reached the perfected level, filling the skies with his shadows.” The seated judge, Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson, smiled calmly at Blumer.

Blumer’s face was filled with confidence.

…..

The demonically ferocious-looking Linley, standing in mid-air, was now surrounded by 108 shadow-Oliviers. Linley had to admit that this speed was absolutely astonishing.

“Linley, are you ready?” Olivier actually gave Linley a warning.

Clearly, Olivier was feeling extremely confident.

Linley only chuckled calmly.

A sudden white flash, utterly piercing to the eye. Even Linley had to squint, but right at that moment, the Icedream sword, covered with white light, reached Linley’s head, piercing directly through it.

“Ah!”

Everyone let out simultaneous cries of alarm. Did the mighty Linley die just like that?

But not a hint of blood came out from Linley’s head, despite having been pierced through by Icedream. Suddenly, ‘Linley’ slowly disappeared. It had just been a shadow!

“You are indeed quite fast. Unfortunately, in front of me, you aren’t qualified to be arrogant about it!” Linley’s voice rang out from the air a hundred meters away.

Olivier stared at the distant Linley, his face growing solemn.

“How incredibly fast!” The eyes of the Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson, watching from the judge’s platform, shone brightly. Linley’s speed wasn’t one whit inferior to Olivier’s.

A wave of surprised murmurs filled the Colosseum. And then, silence once again.

The viewers all felt as though their very souls had been shocked by this exciting battle.

“Is that so?” Olivier’s face grew cold. He had never met anyone faster than him. As for someone on par with his speed, the only one to date had been the Monolithic Sword Saint. He didn’t believe this youngster Linley could match him.

After all, his speed was so fast that it had already exceeded human limits.

This sword technique and movement technique was based on Olivier’s insights into the Elemental Laws of Light. This movement technique, in principle, could reach the speed of light itself. However, due to the limits of his body and his battle-qi, he could only reach his current level of speed.

“You don’t believe me?” Linley chuckled.

Another flash of white light. Linley began to move as well, as both reached a terrifying level of speed.

Shadowed blurs everywhere!

Countless shadows and blurs appeared everywhere. The 80,000 watchers felt their vision grow blurry. They simply couldn’t tell which of the shadows were the true bodies of Linley and Olivier. The two had simply reached an absolutely terrifying level of speed.

“What astonishing speed.” As they really began to compete, Linley couldn’t help but feel surprised. “If it wasn’t for the fact that I had cast the Windshadow spell in advance, I wouldn’t be able to match this Olivier in speed.”

Linley was fast, true.

But the insights which Olivier had gained into the Elemental Laws of Light were extremely powerful. However, supported by the most powerful speed-enhancing spell, the Windshadow spell, Linley’s speed had been instantly raised to a level equivalent to Olivier’s.

“Swish!”

A deep gouge suddenly appeared on the dueling platform; clearly, it had been cut by a longsword. But then in the blink of an eye, a huge crater appeared with a thundering sound.

The 80,000 viewers stared fixedly with wide eyes, not wanting to miss a thing.

“Motherf*cker, this is real speed. Our Academy’s teacher keeps on bragging, but compared with these guys? He’s just a child who has barely learned to walk.” Watching this battle, a youngster was so excited that his eyes were turning bloodshot.

These 80,000 viewers had perhaps never seen this sort of high-speed battle before in their entire lives.

This sort of battle would only occur when the two combatants were equally matched in speed. If one of them was too slow, the battle would have ended instantly.

“Bam!”

Linley’s black draconic tail brushed past Olivier’s clothes, viciously smashing against the dueling platform, causing every single inch of the

platform to crack. In the next instant, Linley and Olivier both disappeared.

The battle was so high speed that the onlookers could only barely see some shadows and blurs when the two lowered their speeds to exchange blows. But once the combatants returned to their maximum speed, not even their shadows could be seen!

“Whoosh!”

A tornado seemed to have sprung into being out of nowhere in the middle of the Colosseum. As the wind howled, the 80,000 onlookers could just barely make out two hazy figures standing in the middle of the wind, staring at each other.

The fierce wind gradually died down.

Olivier looked solemnly at Linley, the Icedream sword in his hands gleaming with all seven colors of the rainbow, like a beautiful illusion.

As for the demonic Linley, his draconic tail quivered behind him, and the Bloodviolet sword in his hand was covered with a strange violet light.

A suppressive aura filled the Colosseum.

“I admit that your speed is no lower than mine.” Olivier spoke out.

Linley’s dark golden eyes were fixed on his opponent. He said calmly, “And your speed isn’t any lower than mine either.” After having competed just then, these two experts found that neither could gain an advantage over the other based on speed.

If they continued to compete in such a manner, there would be no end.

“Dare you face my attacks head on?” Olivier stared Linley, a surge of an aura of battle-lust erupting forth from him.

“Why wouldn’t I dare?” Linley’s body began to emit that same ferocious

battle-lust.

The 80,000 onlookers were so excited that they were beginning to quiver. Good heavens. These two experts were going to fight head on now. Even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was watching carefully.

As for Blumer, Wharton, and the others, they were each eager to see their older brother achieve victory.

Linley and Olivier stared at each other in mid air. In the same instant, the two of them moved in a direct line towards the other.

“Bang!” Sudden sonic booms erupted from them as they reached a terrifying level of speed.

While charging at Linley, Olivier’s body seemed to have fragmented into seven or eight people, and the Icedream sword in his hands had transformed into ten million sword-shadows.

“You want to compete in sword speed?”

The Bloodviolet sword in Linley’s hand flickered, then in the blink of an eye, Linley’s body seemed to have been surrounded by a tornado while at the same time, countless flashes of violet light simultaneously struck at Olivier.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!”

Countless clashing sounds could be heard, and then, Linley’s iron-whip-like draconic tail turned into a blur as well, smashing viciously against Olivier.

“Clang.” The Icedream sword in Olivier’s hand slammed against Linley’s draconic tail, then he flew backwards at high speed.

Chapter 10 – The Two Geniuses

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 10, The Two Geniuses

Olivier immediately flew backwards to the viewing platform, staring at Linley with a hint of surprise in his eyes.

But then, Olivier began to laugh loudly. “Great, great, great! The speed of your sword attacks actually can match my ‘Phantom Dream Sword’ technique.”

“You aren’t bad either. You were actually able to block my ‘Rippling Wind’ technique.” Linley’s cold voice rang out.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind.

Lightshadow Sword – Phantom Dream Sword.

The strength of these two techniques were equal.

After praising their opponents, the two geniuses fell silent, carefully watching the other. Clearly, this exchange had resulted in both men viewing the other as equals.

The tension in the Colosseum was so thick, it could be sliced with a knife. The terrifying, repressive aura caused the 80,000 viewers to feel as though they didn’t even dare to breathe.

“If you can receive this next attack of mine, I can spare your life.” A hint of appreciation towards Linley could be seen in Olivier’s eyes. “By receiving this next attack, you’ll be demonstrating that you are qualified to be considered a rival of mine.”

As soon as he said these words, Barker and the others actually began to curse.

“F*ck his grandmother, this Olivier wasn’t able to show any superiority over Lord Linley at all, and he actually dares say something like…‘by receiving this next attack, you’ll be qualified to be my rival’? What sort of bullshit is this?” Gates cursed loudly.

Barker and the other brothers were muttering unhappily as well.

Indeed, these words from Olivier made many of the people watching this battle unhappy. They had clearly seen how Olivier hadn’t been able to seize any advantage. How could he say such a thing? This was simply too arrogant.

“Rival?” Linley laughed calmly. “If you can take this next sword of mine, you’ll be qualified to be my rival as well.”

The two said the exact same things to each other.

“Haha…then have a taste of the power of my ‘Sword of the Aurora’!” Olivier laughed loudly. And then, he flew once more at high speed directly towards Linley.

Linley laughed coldly.

Linley, too, began to prepare the second stage of the Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind. This was a single-target sword attack, relying on ultimate speed and power.

“BOOM!” Sonic booms erupted.

Linley’s ferocious draconic tail swaying behind him, Linley transformed into a blur as he also charged straight forward, the Bloodviolet sword in his hands transforming into a brilliant violet light.

The brilliant white aura covering Olivier’s Icedream sword suddenly expanded dramatically, transforming Icedream and making it as dazzling as the sun itself.

The piercing white light forced everyone watching the battle to unconsciously narrow their eyes.

The most powerful attack of the Lightshadow Sword technique – Sword of the Aurora!

The most powerful attack of Linley's Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind!

That devilish violet light moved as fast and as ferociously as a bolt of lightning, but at the same time it carried with it the gentleness of the spring wind. These totally opposite auras were manifested at the same time with this attack.

That sort of strange tempo caused many people to feel a strange fear in their hearts.

"What a powerful sword attack!" The eyes of Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson lit up. He could totally sense how powerful this attack by Linley was.

This sort of strange, uniquely intersecting tempo caused a natural wind-edge to form on the surface of Linley's Bloodviolet sword. Or, to put it more accurately, it was a spatial edge.

The devilish violet light. The piercing white light. They intersected in the middle of the air above the Colosseum.

"Boom!" The terrifying force of the collision blasted out in every direction. The dueling platform below was slashed open by countless invisible blades, with many gouges appearing in its surface. At the same time, a frighteningly powerful wave of force emanated in each direction, causing the 80,000 viewers to sway and stumble.

"Crunch!" Some of the cups located near the edges of the dueling platform were actually shattered by the force of the wind.

Those onlookers held on for dear life against their stone seats as their bodies swayed. Only after that wild blast of wind left did the Colosseum slowly return to its normal calm. But to the shock of many of the watchers, many of their outer layer of clothes had been blown off of them by the wind.

What terrifying force.

Everyone stared in astonishment at the two experts in mid-air. At this time, Olivier and Linley were silently staring at each other in mid-air.

Tempos of the Wind. Sword of the Aurora.

Once again, they were equally matched.

Olivier stared at Linley, his gaze slowly brightening. A hint of a smile actually appeared on Olivier's face. "Linley, what was the name of that sword technique you just used?"

Linley didn't try to dissemble. "Profound Truths of the Wind, second stage – Tempos of the Wind."

"Tempos of the Wind…Tempos of the Wind…" Thinking back to the attack Linley had just used, Olivier looked at Linley with eyes filled with approval. "Linley, I can hardly believe that you are a young grandmaster sculptor as well. To be so accomplished, but not yet be even thirty years old. I admire you."

Olivier's attitude towards Linley had totally changed.

"I previously said that if you could withstand this blow from me, I would spare your life. I will keep my word. From today onwards, your name has now been added to my list of rivals. I eagerly anticipate your growth and development." Olivier said with a smile.

Linley frowned.

This Olivier was simply too arrogant.

Barker and his brothers were standing below them. Gates, the most irascible of the lot, immediately jumped to his feet. “F*ck his grandmother! Olivier, you didn’t beat our Lord. How dare you prattle on and swagger about like a bushy-tailed wolf! F*ck, I hate people like you.”

This loud shout caused the countless onlookers to be unable to control their laughter.

It must be said that many people agreed with Gates’ words.

The words which Olivier had just said were the words an elder expert would say to a junior. They had a lecturing aura to it. He had even said, ‘I look forward to your growth’ and ‘I will spare your life’.

If Olivier had truly won, others would acknowledge these words as having bearing and composure.

But he hadn’t won. Nobody could sense that Olivier had held even the slightest bit of advantage. If they continued fighting, it was hard to say who would win.

“Hrmph.” Olivier sneered coldly. His cold, gloomy eyes swept the surrounding area, and the Colosseum immediately fell silent.

Olivier looked at Linley. Calmly, he said, “Six years ago, you would indeed have been able to stalemate me. But now…”

“You just barely qualify for me to utilize the obsidian sword. But if I use it then today you, a genius, would definitely lose your life.” Olivier’s calm voice echoed in the Colosseum.

Only now did most people in the Colosseum remember…Olivier had two swords on his back. The Icedream sword was only one of them.

Obsidian sword?

“Obsidian sword? Olivier, you’ve truly mastered it?” At the judge’s stand, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, spoke out, attracting the attention of everyone present.

From the looks of it, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had some sort of prior relationship with Olivier.

Olivier turned to look at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. In a calm voice, he said, “Mr. Haydson, thank you for the advice you gave me six years ago. It resulted in me gaining certain insights. Three years of battles, followed by three years of quiet meditation in the desolate mountains. I have now mastered the ‘obsidian sword’, which is even more powerful than the ‘Lightshadow’ technique.”

The Colosseum was filled with cries of astonishment.

“Even more powerful than the Lightshadow Sword technique? No wonder Lord Olivier said that he was sparing Master Linley’s life.”

“That year when he defeated Lord Dillon, Lord Olivier had used the Lightshadow Sword technique. Back then, Lord Olivier only had a single sword on his back, but now he has two. Ten years. He really has improved.”

Many people sighed in amazement at Olivier’s prowess. The power he had demonstrated just now wasn’t his true power. How terrifying was Olivier truly?

“My big brother, he…” Wharton knew that Linley was fighting for his sake, and now, he was beginning to worry for Linley.

Wharton was worried, but Barker and his brothers, on the contrary, weren’t worried at all.

“Wharton, his Lordship hasn’t revealed his true power yet.” Barker laughed as he glanced at Wharton. “When his Lordship sparred with you, he only

used the Bloodviolet flexible sword. He didn't dare test his true attack against you."

"Right. Linley has an even more terrifying adamantine heavy sword." Zassler said solemnly.

Having been with Linley for so long, Zassler and the Barker brothers knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful the adamantine heavy sword was. When Linley was only at the peak-stage of the ninth rank, his usage of the 'Hundred Layered Waves' technique with the adamantine heavy sword would have been irresistible by even Saint-level Undying Warriors despite them being known for their defense.

Even most mid-stage Saint-level experts would probably suffer a severe injury.

And now, Linley's base power and battle-qi were all at the Saint-level. If he were to once more utilize his 'Profound Truths of the Earth', most likely even peak-stage Saint-level experts wouldn't be able to take a blow from him.

After all, the vibrational attacks which Linley had developed based on his insights was simply too terrifying. Battle-qi and muscle power virtually did nothing to defend against it.

"Linley, I eagerly anticipate your future challenge." Olivier said with a calm laugh.

Olivier was also someone who pursued the peak of power. A good rival was hard to find. For Linley to be so powerful in his twenties meant that in the future, he would definitely be a good rival for Olivier.

"Lord Olivier really does have the bearing of an expert." Many people sighed in praise. But Blumer, located near the judge's stand, was unhappy. "Why can't elder brother simply just kill Linley and get it over with?"

The spikes protruding from Linley's head gleamed with a metallic light.

“Olivier.” Linley’s dark golden eyes stared at Olivier. “I told you long ago. A person should know their limits. Do you think your obsidian sword is very powerful?”

“Hrm?” Olivier’s face changed as he looked at Linley. Linley didn’t know what was good for him!

But Linley extended his hand. Suddenly, an astonishing azure-black heavy sword appeared in his palm.

“My most powerful weapon…the adamantine heavy sword.” Linley stared at Olivier. “Once I use the adamantine heavy sword, even I can’t fully control its power. I might kill you.”

Olivier started.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was stunned as well. Blumer stared at the mid-air Linley in astonishment as well. The 80,000 viewers had all fallen silent.

In mid-air, the ferocious Dragonformed Linley wielded his adamantine heavy sword and stared coldly at Olivier. “From what you are saying, it sounds like your obsidian sword is very powerful. I want to see for myself if your obsidian sword is more powerful, or if my adamantine heavy sword is more powerful.”

“Adamantine heavy sword? Adamantine?” Olivier and Haydson were both secretly shocked.

The legendary material which supposedly even Deity-level experts would find difficult to break?

“Haha…good. Wonderful.” Olivier began to laugh loudly. “I take back my earlier words. I, too, want to see if your adamantine heavy sword is everything you claim it is. Linley, be careful. My obsidian sword might just claim your life.”

As he spoke, Olivier sheathed his Icedream sword, then slowly drew out his obsidian sword. The obsidian sword was the same size and shape as the Icedream sword, but its pitch-black surface looked very ordinary. However, when Olivier placed the obsidian sword in front of him, a layer of cold, dark light began to flow over its surface.

That black light seemed capable of devouring everything around it.

“The obsidian sword’s techniques were developed based on my insights into the Elemental Laws of Darkness.” Olivier stared coldly at Linley.

Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in his hands. Because it had been struck by heavenly lightning when it had been forged, the adamantine heavy sword’s surface gleamed with that azure light.

“The adamantine heavy sword’s techniques were developed based on my insights into the Elemental Laws of the Earth.” Linley’s dark golden eyes were fixed upon the opponent as well.

One wielded an obsidian sword. The other wielded the adamantine heavy sword.

Two ultimate geniuses. 80,000 pairs of eyes in the Colosseum were focused on them. The entire Colosseum seemed to be holding its breath. Both Blumer and Wharton began to grow anxious and nervous.

Right now, no one knew who would win; Linley, or Olivier!

“Bang!” “Bang!”

Two terrifying sonic booms erupted, as the two people charged directly towards each other from hundreds of meters away. But just at this moment, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, who had been seated at the judge’s stand, suddenly disappeared from his seat. He took three steps in mid-air, moving as fast as lightning, suddenly interposing between the two.

“Stay your hands!”

An earth-colored ripple of power erupted forth from the body of the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, striking simultaneously against Linley and Olivier. Linley had the sensation of being struck by countless meteors, and his body was repelled backwards by several dozen meters. Olivier had also been knocked backwards in the same way.

Linley and Olivier both turned to stare at Haydson.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, laughed calmly as he looked at each of them. “Linley. Olivier. Both of you are incredible geniuses of the entire Yulan continent. You are both so young. Judging from your words, both the adamantine heavy sword technique and the obsidian sword technique are extremely vicious, dangerous sword techniques, which even you two are unable to fully control. If this battle were truly to continue, then one of you will definitely die, or perhaps even both of you. For two such geniuses to fall would be a huge loss to the entire Yulan continent. I suggest…that we bring this duel to a end for now.”

Chapter 11 – The Challenge

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 11, The Challenge

Stop fighting?

The 80,000 viewers all began to mumble in unison upon hearing these words from the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Some even began to quietly curse him.

Linley and Olivier were definitely two of the most brilliant men in the entirety of the Yulan continent. Many warriors would literally be willing to give up their lives if it meant they could see such a battle between two such genius Saint-level experts.

But just as the battle was getting to the most exciting part, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had popped out!

How could they not be angry?

But the person stopping the battle was Haydson, the number one Saint-level in the world!

“It’s best if we have this battle come to an end here and now.” Housekeeper Hiri’s forehead was covered in sweat.

Not just Housekeeper Hiri. Hillman, Wharton, and the others were all worrying for Linley as well. Olivier’s performance hadn’t been one whit inferior to Linley’s, and that obsidian sword technique seemed to be very strange as well.

Linley’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ was powerful, true.

But would the attack which Olivier had developed based on his understanding of the Elemental Laws of Darkness necessarily be any

weaker than Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Earth'? Hadn't Olivier himself said that he was unable to control the power of the obsidian sword once unleashed?

Because the Monolithic Sword Saint Haydson had suddenly interrupted, Linley and Olivier were standing on opposite ends of the Colosseum in mid-air, staring at each other, with Haydson between them.

Three Saint-level experts. Two were ultimate geniuses, while the third was reputed to be the most powerful Saint-level expert in the world.

"Stop fighting?" Olivier glanced at Haydson.

Linley glanced at Haydson as well.

"This Haydson's power really is astonishing. That technique he displayed just now definitely wasn't just based on pure battle-qi. It should have been some sort of defensive technique developed through his mastery of the Laws of the Earth."

Linley could totally sense that the earth-colored wave Haydson had emitted earlier contained layers of wave-like energy.

"However, he wouldn't necessarily be able to withstand my 'Profound Truths of the Earth'." Linley was still extremely confident in the power of his ultimate attack.

In truth, when charging against each other just now, both Linley and Olivier had both been in the charge-up phase.

At Linley and Olivier's levels, as peak-stage Saint-level experts, they wouldn't waste any energy at all. Both the 'Profound Truths of the Earth' as well as Olivier's attack would wait until when the blows landed on the opponent before suddenly allowing their power to erupt!

Many of the victims of the 'Profound Truths of the Earth', when first struck by the adamantine heavy sword, initially hadn't sensed any danger at all.

But then suddenly…

They would sense layers upon layers of vibrational wave attacks transmitting into their internal organs.

Just then, Haydson had been able to push aside both Linley and Olivier with one technique, true. But that was because neither Linley nor Olivier had used their ultimate attacks against Haydson. Otherwise, it wouldn't have been so easy for Haydson to block them.

"Haha, Olivier, Linley." Emperor Johann stood up now. Under the gaze of 80,000 people, Emperor Johann walked off the judge's platform and said in a loud voice, "Olivier, Linley, this battle between the two of you has already been an incredible sight, and expanded our horizons. What's more, neither of you have a serious grudge against each other that can only be resolved in death."

Emperor Johann didn't wish for either Linley or Olivier to die.

If these two geniuses remained alive, then the O'Brien Empire's influence in the Yulan continent would be even stronger.

Linley and Olivier glanced at each other.

"Fine." Olivier nodded, laughing calmly. "When brother Linley had received my 'Lightshadow Sword' attack, I already had lost my desire to continue fighting. However, I was partially at fault in this affair as well…" Olivier looked at Linley.

"Brother Linley's power exceeded my expectations. I didn't expect that the sword techniques he revealed at the beginning were just the surface of his abilities." Olivier revealed a smile towards Linley. "I admit, brother Linley's power is no weaker than my own."

Clearly, Olivier was indicating a willingness to be friendly towards Linley. He even addressed him as 'brother Linley'.

The obsidian sword's technique was extremely powerful, but Linley's adamantine heavy sword technique was also extremely powerful. If these two geniuses really did insist on going all-out today and fight to the point of death, it really would be a waste and not worth it.

Since Olivier had already spoken in a conciliatory manner, Linley wouldn't press things either.

After all, he had just entered the O'Brien Empire recently. It was best that he not create too many enemies.

"Then let's have this battle come to an end." Linley's calm voice echoed in the Colosseum, and the 80,000 viewers understood that the battle between these two ultimate geniuses wouldn't continue today.

But immediately afterwards…

An ear-splitting, thunderous applause filled the entire Colosseum. All of the watchers were cheering at the top of their lungs. Although the duel had come to an end, they were still uncontrollably excited.

"Olivier!" "Olivier!" "Olivier!"

"Linley!" "Linley!" "Linley!" "Linley!"

Those joyous, thunderous waves of sound assaulted each person's ears. All of them were cheering for their idols.

In this moment, they had already forgotten that today's duel had actually been supposed to be between Wharton and Blumer.

Clearly…

Although Wharton and Blumer were geniuses, compared to their respective elder brothers, there was still a huge gap between them in every aspect. The astonishing power and might of Linley and Olivier had totally overawed every single person in the Colosseum.

Seeing the two end their battle, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, felt very gratified as well. At this time, Linley immediately flew down towards his own side.

The joyous roars of the Colosseum continued unabated. By now, in the eyes of the crowd, Linley had already been vaulted to the same level and status of Olivier. If one factored in Linley's youth and his mastery of stone sculpting, perhaps Linley was even more worthy than Olivier of the title of 'Prodigy'.

"Big bro…" From his seated position, Wharton saw Linley fly down. He immediately called out to him in an excited voice.

"Lord." Barker and his brothers went to welcome him as well. Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena all let out sighs of relief as they, too, went forward to excitedly welcome him.

Linley returned to his normal human form and put on a long robe.

"Lord, keep fighting! That Olivier definitely isn't a match for you, your Lordship! I refuse to believe he'll be able to withstand your 'Profound Truths of the Earth' attack." Gates said in a quiet, unhappy voice.

Barker and the others all knew exactly how powerful Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Earth' was. They all believed Linley was capable of winning.

But Linley shook his head and laughed. "Don't underestimate Olivier. For him to be able to create that special attack, Lightshadow Sword, means that the power of his obsidian sword would definitely be astonishing. You must consider this: I was able to gain insights into certain profound truths, but does that mean others are unable to? The Elemental Laws are as vast and boundless as the ocean, and my insights are but a tiny drop of water in that ocean."

Barker and the others all nodded as though they understood.

But right at this moment, a voice rang out from mid-air above the Colosseum. “Mr. Haydson, do you still remember that battle between us six years ago?”

Linley immediately turned his head to stare at the sky. The person who spoke those words was the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. Olivier’s eyes were filled with light, and he stared at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, who was just about to fly downwards.

Haydson came to a halt, turning to look at Olivier. Nodding, he said, “Six years ago, on a night with a full moon. Of course I remember that battle. Your speed left a deep impression on me.”

Olivier looked at Haydson. Solemnly, he said, “I roamed through many kingdoms and gained victory in all of my battles against the various experts of the other Empires. I lost to you, and only you. Six years…six full years. During these six years, I developed my blackstone sword technique specifically to deal with you.”

The Colosseum instantly went silent.

It seemed as though there was quite a bit of history between these two Saint-level experts.

“Oh, to deal with me?” Haydson laughed calmly. “You believe that your obsidian sword is capable of breaking my defense?”

One of the most important reasons why Haydson was known as the ‘Monolithic Sword Saint’ was because he possessed an extremely powerful defense. Many peak-stage Saint-level experts weren’t able to even break through it, much less injure him.

Olivier thought back to their battle six years ago. That was an utter humiliation!

No matter how he attacked Haydson, he couldn’t scratch Haydson at all. Instead, he was lightly wounded by the impact of each blow. What’s more,

Haydson hadn't been slower than him at all.

Domination!

Although Olivier was also a peak-stage Saint-level, compared to Haydson, he had been utterly dominated. It was as though they were on totally different levels. His reputation as the number one Saint-level expert was definitely not unearned.

"We'll know whether or not I can break your defense if we give it a test, right? Mr. Haydson, today at the Colosseum, I formally issue you a challenge. If you accept, then in three months, we'll duel outside the city." Olivier said.

Olivier had consumed a large amount of his battle-qi today, in his battle against Linley. He was no longer in peak shape.

"Challenge?"

Haydson furrowed his forehead, but a hint of a smile was on his face.

The Colosseum immediately began to be filled with roars of excitement. The Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, had openly challenged the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Many people were so excited that their faces were turning red.

Everyone turned to look at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

"Fine. I accept." Haydson smiled and nodded. "Three months from now, I will definitely sample the power of the obsidian sword technique which you developed over these past six years."

"It definitely will not disappoint you." Olivier's face was filled with the utmost confidence.

The smile on Haydson's face became even brighter.

Six years ago, having been dominated to the point where he had no fighting spirit left, Olivier had learned how powerful Haydson's defense was. But Olivier was still this confident. Olivier was no fool. Clearly, he must really have something he felt he could count on.

"Won't disappoint me? I truly hope it will be as you say." Haydson was filled with some anticipation.

It had been a long time since he had encountered an opponent who could pose a threat to him.

In three short steps, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, somehow once more appeared at the judge's platform. As for Olivier, he flew to the side of his little brother.

The entire Colosseum was filled with the sound of murmuring discussions.

Linley had suddenly taken to the field of battle and easily defeated Kenyon, and then had fought Olivier to a standstill. And now, Olivier had challenge the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, to a battle.

This chain of events had truly excited them no end.

"Everyone." At this moment, the silver-haired old man returned to the dueling platform. "Just now, I was about to announce the results of the duel. But I didn't expect that Lord Olivier would arrive."

The silver-haired old man's face was covered in smiles. "That made me extremely excited. This was the most exciting day in my long life. Lord Olivier's battle against Lord Linley is something I trust none of you will ever forget for the rest of your lives. Just look at the dueling platform, and then look at those flagpoles."

The battle just now had caused the already-cracked dueling platform to be riddled with gaping holes. Most of the flagpoles around the dueling platform had been snapped in half, and many peoples' clothes had been blown to different corners of the Colosseum. It was a disaster scene.

But this disaster scene made the 80,000 people begin to laugh.

“Haha, enough talk. Everyone already knows the results of the earlier duel between Wharton and Blumer. Blumer managed to squeak out a victory by a narrow margin.” The silver-haired old man laughed towards Emperor Johann. “His Imperial Majesty has a few words he wishes to say. I hope everyone will listen closely.”

After speaking, the silver-haired old man left the platform.

Emperor Johann now rose to his feet. Some people in the Colosseum looked towards Emperor Johann, while the others looked at Linley, Olivier, and Haydson, the Saint-level experts.

“Today has been the most exciting day in Our life. Whether it was the duel between Wharton and Blumer, or their brothers, Linley and Olivier, what We witnessed was extremely thrilling.”

Emperor Johann revealed a hint of a smile on his face. “Everyone knows that both Wharton and Blumer have asked for the hand of Our daughter, the Seventh Princess, in marriage. After seeing both of these brilliant young men in action today, We have already made our decision. We have decided that on March 15th, at the Martial Palace, We shall openly announce who will be the one to wed Our Seventh Princess.”

Chapter 12 – Front Courtyard as Busy as a Marketplace

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 12, Front Courtyard as Busy as a Marketplace

Linley, Wharton, Blumer, and Olivier almost simultaneously turned to stare at Emperor Johann in surprise.

On March 15th, the Emperor would announce who would marry the Seventh Princess?

In the past, Emperor Johann had kept delaying, without seeming to be the slightest bit impatient. Neither Wharton nor Blumer had imagined that Emperor Johann would suddenly say such a thing.

“Nina…” Wharton turned to look at Nina.

Nina shook her head, also confused. “I don’t know anything. My Imperial father didn’t tell me anything about this.” She, too, looked frantically at Emperor Johann, but as the Seventh Princess was a member of imperial clan, her marriage was not something she could design on her own. It was completely up to Emperor Johann to decide.

“Princess.” At this moment, a palace attendant came over. “His Imperial Majesty is about to leave. It is time to return to the palace.’

Nina nodded.

Emperor Johann had forbidden her to leave the palace. The only reason she was able to meet Wharton this time was because of this duel in the Colosseum. After bidding farewell to Wharton, Nina followed the imperial clan back and left.

Linley and Wharton’s forces also withdrew from the Colosseum.

“Olivier.” As Linley left via one of the passageways, he glanced at Olivier, and saw that Olivier was also glancing at him.

These two ultimate geniuses exchanged stares, then turned their heads and left the Colosseum.

Ever since the 80,000 onlookers had witnessed the events in the Colosseum on this day, February 4th, the news about the duel which had taken place at the Colosseum took the imperial capital by storm, filling the entire imperial capital with excitement.

Many people from other cities and other provinces, upon leaving, brought back the news of this duel to their own hometowns as well.

Linley had easily defeated Kenyon, and then fought to a stalemate with Olivier. Olivier had then challenged Haydson. These three events quickly became well-known, and the rumors of these events spread out at astonishing speed.

Linley’s reputation quickly became well-known in the imperial capital, and beyond as well, spreading in every direction.

The imperial capital. Boulder Street. Outside Count Wharton’s manor, one carriage after another came, all filled with people coming to visit Linley.

Within the inner courtyard of the manor.

Linley, Yale, and Reynolds were seated together, chatting and laughing. Although there were many nobles and famous people clustered together at the front courtyard, Linley couldn’t be bothered to pay attention to them.

Actually, those nobles expected and understood this in heart. Would someone of Linley’s status go personally welcome them?

At Linley’s level, ordinary, worldly trappings of power no longer meant anything to him. Even the Emperor would be extremely courteous when

dealing with Saint-level experts and wouldn't dare to put on airs.

Without question….

Now that the Baruch clan had produced someone like Linley, even if Linley were to never become a noble within the Empire and even though Wharton was just a Count, the Baruch clan had naturally become an extremely surpassing clan within the imperial capital.

"Third bro, you've been hiding your power and your talents, but now that you've exploded forth onto the scene, you've really shocked quite a few people." Yale laughed loudly.

Reynolds nodded repeatedly as well. "Right, right. I imagine the Radiant Church has a terrible headache right now."

Yale and Reynolds knew about Linley's affairs with the Radiant Church. Given the Radiant Church's power, for them to kill Linley at his current level was virtually impossible.

This was especially true given that Linley was currently in the imperial capital of the O'Brien Empire. The Radiant Church wouldn't dare send any Saint-level experts over, for fear that the War God would misunderstand. This was the War God's territory, after all.

"Dealing with the Radiant Church?" Linley laughed calmly. "I've already killed the principal target of my quest for revenge. As for dealing with the rest of the Radiant Church, I'm not in a particular rush. Right now, I'm no longer afraid of the people of the Radiant Church. But dealing with the Radiant Church…I don't have enough power yet."

The Radiant Church had quite a few peak-stage Saint-level experts.

The currently reigning Holy Emperor, Heidens. The spiritual leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf. The Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal, Osenno. Special Executor, Stehle. And the leader of the Zealots…

Five experts, with Stehle most likely being the weakest of them.

As for the other four, none of them could be underestimated. Even against Stehle, Linley wouldn't be able to win that easily. The reason why Linley had been able to easily defeat Kenyon was only because Kenyon was nothing more than a mid-stage Saint-level expert.

"When my human form reaches the Saint-level and my skills as magus reach the Saint-level…" Linley's eyes flashed with a fierce light.

"When your human form reaches the Saint-level?" Yale and Reynolds exchanged glances. They couldn't help but feel worried for the future Radiant Church.

If Linley were to reach the Saint-level in his human form, then as soon as he transformed, just relying on physical strength, battle-qi, defense, and speed, he would already be at a terrifying level of power. Supreme Warriors were hailed as the most powerful of Saint-levels. They were nothing to laugh at.

Such a powerful foundation combined with Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Wind' and 'Profound Truths of the Earth'….

They believed that once Linley reached the Saint-level in his human form, then his two 'Profound Truths' would also advance in level. And then, once he reached the Saint-level as a magus…

He would be invincible in close combat, and at long-range, the spells of a Saint-level magus were unbeatable.

If his opponents were to use human wave tactics, a single annihilating magical spell would be able to destroy them.

"Too terrifying." Yale and Reynolds were frightened just thinking about it. The current Linley was already a peak-stage Saint-level expert. If in the future, his power increased tenfold in every aspect…who could possibly stop him?

“Enough about this topic for now.” Linley laughed calmly.

Yale laughed and nodded. “Third bro, do you know? My old man keeps on telling me to handle this affair or handle that affair, but after hearing that you had arrived here, he’s stopped pressing me. In fact, he supported me spending more time with you. I must say…my Conglomerate really did make a killing off this deal. We got you as one of our Elders so cheaply.”

Previously, at the provincial capital of Basil, Yale had given Linley an elder’s medal.

“Even if you didn’t give me that medal, if the Dawson Conglomerate had any difficulties, given our relationship, Boss Yale, of course I would help out.” Linley laughed.

Yale felt a sense of warmth and gratitude in his heart.

“Beautifully said! Come, cheers!” Yale immediately raised his cup in a toast, and Linley and Reynolds joined him, laughing.

People’s hearts were hard to discern, especially after growing up. It would be hard for Yale, Linley, and Reynolds to easily trust people now, but towards those good friends they made in their carefree, worry-free childhood years, they felt nothing but the utmost trust.

It is a rare thing for someone to be able to have a true bosom friend.

Linley and the others all felt very fortunate to have such good bros.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds pursed his lips. “You really showed off your godlike power this time at the Colosseum. Even our Dunstan clan has sent people to come meet you.”

“They sent someone?” Linley was startled. “Who?”

“One of my paternal uncles.” Reynolds said disdainfully. “But he didn’t

have a chance to even see you."

Linley nodded. Linley had refused to meet with any of the people who had come to pay a visit with him. Even the people of the imperial clan had been summarily ignored.

"If your clan truly wants to meet with me, just give me a heads up, and I'll go meet with them." He would of course give face to one of his bros.

"No need." Reynolds shook his head. "I really don't see eye to eye with the people in my clan. Anyhow, the point is, Third Bro, you've really become famous. This makes my life easier as well. Many people in the clan are now much nicer to me as well. They all know that I'm your bro." Chortling, Reynolds looked at Linley. "Third Bro, in the future, if anything good comes your way, you have to take care of me, your bro, you know!"

"You little punk." Seeing the impish expression on Reynold's face, Linley couldn't help but laugh while berating him. "You've been in the army for seven or eight years now, but you still act this way!"

The four close friends of dormitory 1987. Yale was the playboy type, while Reynolds was the type who feared neither heaven nor earth and would dare to do anything.

"Third Bro, Boss Yale, I'm only this one way in front of you guys. In front of those common soldiers, I always have a hard-ass look on my face." Reynolds intentionally put on a stern, solemn expression.

It had to be said that once Reynolds hardened his face, he did indeed have the look of a soldier in his eyes and demeanor.

After chatting and joking with his close friends, Linley's face grew solemn. "Boss Yale, Fourth Bro. There's something I need you two to help me plan out."

"What is it?" Reynolds and Yale looked at Linley.

Given Linley's current status, what did he have to worry about?

"This has to do with my little brother. That day, Emperor Johann publicly announced that on March 15th, he would openly announce at the Martial Palace who the Seventh Princess will marry." Linley's face was very solemn.

Reynolds and Yale both nodded.

"My little brother, Wharton, and the Seventh Princess share a deep love for each other. Without the Seventh Princess, I fear that my little brother will be in pain for a long, long time. I don't want to see something like that to happen once again, and to my own little brother." Linley's voice was very low.

Reynolds and Yale exchanged glances.

They still remembered how Linley had actually coughed out blood that year when he and Alice had broken up, and then carved out the sculpture 'Awakening From the Dream' over ten days and ten nights, not drinking or eating anything.

Although Linley didn't say anything, they both understood that this had deeply hurt Linley.

"Third Bro, go ahead. Tell us what you want us to do." Yale said directly, and Reynolds nodded by his side as well.

Linley nodded. "Right now, I have two options planned. If Emperor Johann plans to choose my little brother, then that will be a joyous event. But…if he chooses Blumer…"

Linley's face turned cold.

"At that time, I won't give a damn about the fact that he's the Emperor, or how powerful Blumer's older brother is. I will help my little brother and go bring the Seventh Princess out of the palace and allow the two of them to

elope together. If anyone tries to stop me, I will kill them!" A killing intent could be seen in Linley's eyes.

Reynolds and Yale couldn't help but feel their hearts shiver.

Others might not understand, but they understood clearly. The five Barker brothers which Linley had brought with him were actually Undying Warriors, and three of them had Saint-level power. And then there was the Blackcloud Panther and Bebe.

Six Saint-level experts!

Once Linley decided to go all out, especially with Bebe who was no weaker than Linley, the entire imperial capital would no doubt begin to tremble from the repercussions of six trouble-making Saint-level experts.

"I hope his Imperial Majesty chooses Wharton." Reynolds and Yale were both praying in their hearts.

"Third Bro." Yale looked solemnly at Linley. "Don't be impatient. Even if you have to bring the Seventh Princess out by force, there's no need to push things to such a state."

"I know." Linley laughed calmly. "I'm only saying, IF someone tries to stop me, then I'll kill them. My little brother and I naturally don't have as firm an understanding of the affairs of the imperial capital as your clans, which is why I hope the two of you can help me think about this issue."

The Dunstan clan and the Dawson clan both had very deep roots of power, and knew many things about the events occurring in the imperial capital.

"Third Bro, set your mind at ease. My Dawson Conglomerate's forces are quite numerous. We even have a number of palace attendants and maids who will obey the words of the Conglomerate." Yale said confidently.

Money was a wondrous thing. The power of money could be extremely large.

“When I go back, I will speak with my old man. Don’t worry. My old man will definitely help and support you.” Yale laughed.

Linley was certain about this as well.

If the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate were to leak this information to the Emperor, he probably wouldn’t see much of a benefit. After all, the Dawson Conglomerate didn’t lack for money. But as for experts…the Emperor couldn’t simply order a Saint-level expert to serve the Dawson Conglomerate, right?

“You should take primary responsibility for this affair of Third Bro’s. My clan’s authority primarily resides in the military, after all.” Reynolds knew his own limits.

Linley nodded.

“Then I’ll be counting on you, Boss Yale.” Linley said seriously.

Yale nodded confidently.

After the deaths of his parents, Linley had only a single relative left: Wharton. No matter what, he wouldn’t let his little brother be hurt. If Emperor Johann were to select Wharton, then that would be wonderful. But if he didn’t…Linley wasn’t adverse to revealing the true depths of power available to him and forcibly bring Nina out.

Chapter 13 – Caylan's Arrival

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 13, Caylan's Arrival

The night descended. In Channe, the imperial capital of the O'Brien Empire, the most military powerful Empire in the Yulan continent, life went on as usual. Aside from a few crowded nightlife streets, the city was calm and peaceful.

East Channe. Boulder Street. After receiving countless carriages over the past few days, Count Wharton's manor gradually regained its usual calm as well.

Within Count Wharton's halls.

Linley, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Barker and his brothers, Zassler, and the other core members of the team were in a meeting. They were discussing how to handle the Seventh Princess affair.

"If his Imperial Majesty really were to select Blumer, then I will act in accordance with your plans, big bro." Wharton didn't hesitate in the slightest.

Hillman nodded solemnly as well. "The soldiers of the Empire are famous for their courage and fearlessness, while the Seventh Princess is located deep within the palace. If you are discovered while sneaking within…even if you manage to slaughter your way out, no doubt there will be countless deaths."

After arriving at the O'Brien Empire, Hillman had been stunned by the spirit and aura of the Empire.

Martial!

The entire Empire venerated the War God, and the only deity they

worshipped was the War God. This nation deeply respected powerful experts. One could easily sense that just by looking at the near-crazed reactions of those onlookers in the Colosseum.

Cowards who fled from battle would be viewed with disdain by the Empire.

The O'Brien Empire was located in the northern part of the Yulan continent. The entire Empire was often fairly cold all year around, which had also helped the citizens of the Empire in developing their endurance.

"Uncle Hillman, if we are to go bring out the Seventh Princess, we definitely won't just send a single person. Although the soldiers of the Empire are very powerful, as far as I can tell, they shouldn't be able to pose a threat to us. The only potential complication is that there are Saint-level experts living in the palace."

The Emperor didn't have the ability to demand a Saint-level expert be his personal bodyguard, but the War God would of course station Saint-level experts within the palace to help defend it. The value of the items in the imperial treasury and various hidden treasure rooms were more important than the Emperor himself. Naturally, they would have to be protected.

If someone dared to barge into the imperial palace to take a princess, those resident Saint-level experts might just interfere and stop them. Linley was confident in his ability to deal with Saint-level experts by himself, but if he was bringing an ordinary person like Nina with him, it would be tricky.

Linley looked at Bebe, who was resting on his legs. "Bebe. When the time comes, it will be up to you."

Bebe immediately leapt to his feet, hopping onto the table.

"Hrm? Up to me?" Bebe rolled his beady little black eyes as he looked at Wharton. "Little Wharton, don't worry. I, Bebe, will definitely bring your woman back to you totally unharmed."

"Bebe will go?" Wharton was stunned.

“Little Wharton, don’t you trust me, Bebe?” Bebe raised his little head proudly, widening his eyes and staring angrily at Wharton.

Wharton hurriedly shook his head. “It isn’t that I don’t trust you. It’s…the imperial palace will definitely have Saint-level experts residing there. If they fight against each other, will Bebe really able to bring a weak person like Nina safely?”

“Wharton, given Bebe’s level of power, bringing the Seventh Princess out of the imperial palace shouldn’t be a problem.” Linley had quite a bit of confidence in Bebe’s abilities. “Bebe’s speed is the fastest I’ve ever seen.”

“The fastest? Big bro, are you saying he’s even faster than you and Olivier?” Wharton said in surprise.

“Bebe’s speed is the fastest speed I have ever seen in a magical beast.” The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, suddenly spoke up from his position lying on the ground. Blackcloud Panthers were famed for their speed. When they were at the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Bebe was actually only an early-stage ninth rank. But even then, Bebe was already almost on par with the Blackcloud Panther.

After five or six years had passed, Bebe’s speed had surpassed the Blackcloud Panther’s by a large margin, reaching a new, terrifying level.

And now? After having reached the Saint-level, Bebe’s speed had soared once again!

“Of course he is faster than Olivier.” Linley laughed as he rubbed Bebe’s little head. “Wharton, let me tell you, Bebe’s speed and defense are the greatest I have ever seen. In the past, when I was at the Ernst Institute, Bebe was still in his growing phase and had the power of a magical beast of the seventh or eighth rank. But even after being struck by the dying blow of a peak-stage ninth ranked Armored Razorback Wyrm, he still only suffered a severe wound.”

This was the first time Wharton had heard of this. It was the first time Zassler and the others had heard this story as well.

“How is that possible?”

They were all stunned. An Armored Razorback Wyrm was one of the most terrifying dragon-type magical beasts.

“When I encountered Haeru in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Haeru wasn’t able to injure Bebe at all with his attacks. At that time, Bebe was only an early-stage ninth rank. You must know that Haeru’s attacks were able to cause harm to me at that time, even though I had the defensive powers of a late-stage ninth-rank expert after transforming.”

Bebe raised his head even higher upon hearing Linley’s praise, staring around himself haughtily like a victorious general.

“I can tell you this. Bebe’s speed is definitely higher than Olivier’s. What’s more, even if Olivier was able to land a blow of his ‘Sword of the Aurora’ on Bebe, he still probably wouldn’t be able to break past Bebe’s defense.”

Linley laughed.

Bebe’s fur’s defensive power was simply too terrifying.

“The ‘Sword of the Aurora’ most likely wouldn’t be able to break his defense?” Wharton, Hillman and the others fell silent. That unremarkable little Shadowmouse Linley had acquired when he was young had grown to be so powerful.

Bebe shook his head. “Har har har. The defense of me, Bebe, is naturally powerful. That goes without saying. However…I’m not confident in my ability to deal with a blow from the Boss’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’.”

Linley’s ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ all but ignored defense. The only thing defense would do would be to slightly weaken the strength of the vibrations as it passed through.

“Given Bebe’s speed, bringing out the Seventh Princess then fleeing at high speed from the imperial palace shouldn’t be a problem. Most likely, the Saint-level experts in the palace simply wouldn’t have time to catch up.”

“Heh heh. Boss, just entrust this issue to me.” Bebe was extremely excited. He looked as though he wanted to go break the Seventh Princess out right now.

“Don’t be impatient. Emperor Johann hasn’t made his announcement yet with regards to who he will choose, after all.” Right now, Linley was prepared for either eventuality. He wouldn’t be caught offguard.

…….

Both Wharton and Blumer spent these next few days worrying. Many of the nobles of the imperial capital were also secretly guessing which one of them would end up marrying the seventh princess.

In the imperial palace.

The Emperor was currently in a seated meeting with a blue-haired middle-aged man. In front of them was a strategic wargame board in front of them. These games were quite popular in the military, and Emperor Johann often liked to play this game as well.

“Your Imperial Majesty. You’ve raised a fine daughter. She’s actually attracted so many suitors, including my own younger son.” The blue-haired middle-aged man laughed.

This blue-haired middle-aged man was the mighty Imperial Left Premier, Judd Darryl. Judd and Johann were on extremely good terms, and in private they were as close to each other as brothers.

“Judd, stop teasing me.” In front of Judd, Johann only addressed himself as ‘me’, not using the royal ‘we’. Just from this alone, one could tell how close the relationship was between these two men. But of course, he only did so

when nobody else was present.

“You don’t know this, but this has been a huge headache for me. Blumer and Wharton aren’t too much of an issue. Either would be a fine choice. But their older brothers…” Emperor Johann sighed. “Olivier and Linley both are absolutely terrifying.”

Judd nodded. “Indeed. I saw that astonishing battle in the air above the Colosseum as well. Olivier and Linley both revealed that they had peak-stage Saint-level power from the very beginning. I didn’t expect that the power they initially revealed was just the tip of the iceberg. They actually both had their own ultimate attacks, and Olivier even dared to challenge the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.”

Johann nodded. “Olivier and the Monolithic Sword Saint competed before. Last time, Olivier lost. But despite having already competed and thus knowing exactly how powerful the Monolithic Sword Saint is, he still dares to challenge him yet again? That means he definitely has something that is making him confident.”

“I have a feeling that both Olivier and Linley will be people on the level of the Monolithic Sword Saint in the future.” Johann sighed. “The most damnable thing is, both of these men are extremely protective of their younger brothers. Judd. You tell me. How can I not have a headache?”

Judd began to laugh.

“Then, your Imperial Majesty, have you made your decision yet?” Judd looked at Johann.

Johann nodded. “I’ve made my decision.”

“Who?” Judd was very curious.

Johann said resignedly, “I admit that Linley is indeed the most brilliant person I have seen in my entire life. He is astonishing in every single aspect. But compared to him, Olivier isn’t much inferior. If it weren’t for

other factors, I would probably choose Wharton."

"Then your Imperial Majesty, you mean to say…you have chosen Blumer?" Judd could tell what Emperor Johann meant.

"Right." Johann nodded.

"There's nothing for it. Blumer is, after all, the personal disciple of the War God. You should know how influential the War God is in the Empire. In addition…over four of his fellow apprentices have come to speak with me. All of them did so for Blumer's sake." Emperor Johann said helplessly.

"Four of them?"

Judd was shocked as well. "I've heard that the personal disciples of the War God rarely get involved in matters. I didn't expect that as soon as he became a personal disciple, four other personal disciples would come out and speak on his behalf."

"Judd, you should know that although in principle, I have the most authority in the Empire, in reality…the War God is still the highest power in the land."

Emperor Johann, in the end, had decided to side with the War God's College.

…..

The Imperial Left Premier's manor.

An astonishingly handsome young man with long, flowing blue hair was taking a casual stroll on the stone roads within his own family's estates. Whenever he saw anyone, even servants, he would smile and nod towards them.

Caylan Darryl, a genius magus.

“In the end, his Imperial Majesty decided to choose Blumer?” Caylan shook his head and sighed. His father, Judd, deeply doted on Caylan. He had even told Caylan about this affair.

“Why? Why can’t his Imperial Majesty consider his daughter’s feelings?” In his heart, Caylan was actually very unhappy with some of the coldly pragmatic ways in which the noble clans and the imperial clan handled affairs.

In his mind, people should treat other people well. If two people were to be together, it should be because both loved each other. Emperor Johann should have considered things from Nina’s standpoint.

“That girl Nina.”

Thinking back to how he and Nina had played around together when they were young, Caylan came to a decision. He immediately headed out of the Left Premier’s manor. The only thing he said to the housekeeper when he ran into him was, “I’m going out for a walk.” Caylan headed straight for Count Wharton’s manor on Boulder Street.

Caylan had come to a decision.

He had to inform Wharton of this affair.

….

At nightfall, Wharton was still training in his manor’s training area. Next to him, Linley was meditating quietly. Just at this moment, a servant ran over. “Milord, Lord Caylan of the Left Premier’s household has arrived.”

“Caylan?”

Wharton came to a halt. In his heart, Wharton actually felt very grateful to this former romantic rival of his. After all, Caylan had voluntarily given up his pursuit. If he hadn’t, this affair would be even more complicated.

“Caylan’s come? Wharton, I’ll accompany you.” Linley was actually quite curious about this young man who had voluntarily abandoned his pursuit as well.

Linley and Wharton headed directly to the guest hall. When they saw Caylan, the first impression Linley had was that this was a person who was very amiable and easy to get along with.

“Wharton.” Seeing Wharton, Caylan smiled, then looked at Linley. “And this should be your older brother, Master Linley. I’ve heard of Master Linley’s reputation a long time ago.”

Linley smiled at him as well.

“Caylan, please sit.” Wharton was very friendly towards him.

Caylan shook his head. “No need. I’ve come today to tell you something. As soon as I have, I’ll be leaving.” Caylan’s face grew solemn.

“Tell me what?” Wharton said, puzzled.

Caylan said resignedly, “Wharton, based on the information I’ve received, on March 15th, his Imperial Majesty is most likely going to choose Blumer, not you. But of course…since it isn’t March 15th yet, nothing is for sure. However, this information I have is most likely 90% accurate.”

Chapter 14 – An Exchange Between Geniuses

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 14, An Exchange Between Geniuses

Wharton was stunned by this sudden news.

Wharton truly wanted to be able to openly wed Nina in the imperial capital, rather than elope with her.

“Caylan, is this information of yours true?” Linley stared at Caylan, asking urgently.

Caylan nodded solemnly. “Master Linley, although his Imperial Majesty hasn’t publicly proclaimed it yet, this information came from my father’s conversation with his Imperial Majesty. Master Linley, I trust you can judge for yourself the authenticity of this news.”

Linley nodded slightly.

There was no need for the Imperial Left Premier to lie to his own son. And, given Linley’s spiritual energy as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, if Caylan were currently lying, Linley should be able to sense something.

“No matter what happens, we brothers would like to thank you for your assistance, Caylan.” Linley said in thanks.

Only now did Wharton’s mind become clear again. He too said gratefully towards Caylan, “Caylan, thank you for notifying us.”

“No need to thank me. I just hope that in the future, Nina will have a happy life. Alright, I need to leave.” Caylan bowed slightly towards Linley and Wharton, then left.

Wharton watched Caylan leave, then suddenly turned towards Linley. “Big

bro. What should we do?" Wharton's mind was in chaos.

"What should we do?" Linley spoke with absolute conviction. "For now, we immediately begin moving the household out of the imperial capital."

Linley stared coldly in the direction of the imperial palace. "We are out of options. I will immediately instruct people to speak with Yale and have him come. Right now, we'll have to use the secret channels of the Dawson Conglomerate to take Rebecca, Leena, Jenne, and Uncle Hillman's family members out of the imperial capital. And, ideally the Emperor must not discover that they've left."

In truth, it wouldn't be too big of a deal even if the Emperor did find out.

Even if Emperor Johann was suspicious of Linley, so what? Would he dare to offend Linley? He himself was not the War God, after all. And even if he dared to offend Linley…who under his command was actually capable of dealing with Linley?

…..

That very day, Linley invited Yale over. After discussing the issue for quite some time with Yale, Yale immediately slapped his chest and promised, "Third Bro, don't worry about it. It's just a few people. There definitely won't be any issues."

Yale then laughed. "Actually, Third Bro. Even if the Emperor found out, he would pretend he didn't know."

Linley smiled as well.

He had reached the Saint-level. Although the status of the Emperor was very high, Linley didn't have any fear of the man. In truth, the only person Linley was afraid of was that man who was residing on War God Mountain.

"Still, try to avoid being discovered." Linley instructed.

……..

Although, Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena were reluctant to leave, they knew that they would meet again with Linley's group later, and thus they followed the directives of the Dawson Conglomerate and quietly left the imperial capital.

Actually, Linley and Wharton hadn't given up all hope yet.

They hoped that on March 15th, Emperor Johann would choose Wharton at the Martial Palace. Although the chance was very low…it was still possible that Emperor Johann might change his mind.

After all, Nina eloping with Wharton meant parting with her family. As for Wharton, he, Housekeeper Hiri, and Hillman had all become very comfortable and used to living in the imperial capital. Unless it was absolutely necessary, they didn't want to take the final step.

….

Each day passed, and March 15th drew nearer as well. The streets, hotels, and restaurants of the imperial capital were once again filled with discussion regarding Wharton, Blumer, and their older brothers.

Everyone was trying to guess who would be the one to wed the Imperial Seventh Princess.

The hoped for day of March 15th finally arrived. That morning, a rare snowstorm actually descended on the imperial capital early in the morning. Even though the sun came up at seven or eight, it was still hard to see anything farther than ten meters away.

"Whew." Standing outside his manor, Wharton let out a long breath.

These past few days, he had been under a lot of mental pressure.

"Enough. We'll know the answer today. Relax." Linley laughed, clapping

Wharton on the shoulder. Wharton turned his head to look at his older brother. Looking at Linley, Wharton felt as though Linley were his strongest source of support. With Linley there, Wharton felt a sense of confidence.

“Right.” Wharton nodded strongly.

Linley and Wharton immediately got on their carriages, heading in the direction of the imperial palace. Because of the snowstorm, the carriages advanced very slowly. In addition, there were many carriages heading towards the imperial palace this day.

At the gates of the imperial palace.

One carriage after another stopped at the gates, and the various nobles exited their carriages and exchanged pleasantries with each other.

“Lord Olivier has arrived.” Seeing Olivier and Blumer walk out of the carriage together, many of the nobles and ministers outside the gates welcomed them warmly.

Seeing the nobles and ministers walk towards him as soon as he left the carriage, Olivier couldn’t help but frown.

“Second brother, let’s go inside.” Olivier didn’t so much as glance at the nobles as he emitted a wave of force from his body, directly pushing aside the oncoming nobles and senior ministers, yet not harming them in the slightest.

The nobles and ministers all exchanged glances. They couldn’t help but be surprised.

“Your Lordship, we’ve arrived.” A carriage-driver’s voice rang out, and then Wharton and Linley exited the carriage. This time, the nobles and ministers very wisely did not try to draw too near. They just called out words of welcome at a safe distance.

Linley and Wharton didn’t pay too much attention to those nobles either,

heading directly for the palace.

“Linley.” Olivier came to a halt, turning his head and bidding Linley welcome.

“Olivier.” Linley still felt a degree of respect towards a powerful rival such as Olivier. Nobody could reach such a level of power without focusing for many years on painstakingly training one’s self.

Linley, Wharton, Olivier, and Blumer walked forward in a line, heading towards the Martial Palace together.

“Linley, that day, at the Colosseum…to be honest, I really wanted to keep fighting with you.” A friendly smile appeared on Olivier’s face.

“Oh? Then why did you give up the chance? I refuse to believe you were afraid of Haydson.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Olivier and Linley had both sensed each other’s power. Although that day, they had been forced aside by Haydson, aside from Haydson’s power, one of the main reasons they had been forced aside was because they had not yet allowed their attacks to explode at full power.

“It wasn’t that I was afraid of Haydson. It was more that…challenging Haydson was the goal I set for myself six years ago. After mastering the obsidian sword, I absolutely must challenge him.” Olivier glanced at him. “At the Colosseum, I very much hoped to continue to do battle with you. But this battle must come after my battle with Haydson.”

“I don’t want to let Haydson know the secrets to my obsidian sword technique. If I were to battle you with it, wouldn’t I be exposing myself to him?” A hint of a smile was on Olivier’s face. “I really want to see if the ‘Monolithic Sword Saint’ Haydson, famed for his defensive abilities, can withstand my attack.”

Linley nodded.

“In the duel between myself and the Monolithic Sword Saint roughly a month from now, who do you think will win?” Olivier suddenly asked.

Linley paused for a moment.

That day, Linley had seen the layer of flowing black energy on the obsidian sword’s blade. It gave off a very strange sensation. Linley was very confident in his own adamantine heavy sword, but he wasn’t necessarily confident in his ability to withstand his opponent’s blow.”

“It’s possible for either you or the Monolithic Sword Saint to win. But I think the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, has a higher chance of winning. After all, in all these years, no Saint-level expert has been able to beat him. For him to be able to accomplish such a feat means that he surely has some power to rely on.” Linley said impartially.

Olivier nodded. “Right. I admit, six years ago, when I dueled with Haydson, he only revealed a portion of his true power. Haydson…his power is unfathomably deep. But I am filled with confidence towards my obsidian sword as well. No matter how strong his defense is, he shouldn’t be able to withstand it.”

Linley laughed.

How could it be that this Olivier was so similar to him? He himself had that same sort of confidence in his adamantine heavy sword.

“What sort of attack does your obsidian sword possess? Why are you so confident in it?” Linley asked curiously.

Olivier laughed. “My obsidian sword?” Olivier looked at Linley. Pausing for a moment, he said, “I can tell you this. You should know by now that the technique of my obsidian sword is based on my insights into the Elemental Laws of Darkness.”

Linley nodded.

“Thus, in addition to astonishing penetrative power and attack power, my obsidian sword also possesses a spiritual attack.” Olivier said directly with confidence.

“Spiritual attack?” Linley was shocked.

Darkness-style magic did indeed include spirit-based curses. The Elemental Laws of Darkness included all sorts of soul-related properties. But for Olivier to be able to develop a spiritual attack with his obsidian sword based on his insights into these laws was indeed astonishing.

“Perhaps the ordinary, physical attacks of the obsidian sword are very easy to defend against, but the assault on the spirit…ordinary defenses are virtually useless against it. I want to see how Haydson can block it!”

As Olivier spoke, a look of excitement appeared on Blumer’s face as well.

Linley had to admit…

The obsidian sword was indeed very terrifying.

“How frightening. To directly attack the spirit…” Linley was amazed at the power of this technique as well.

“The more powerful one’s spirit is, the greater the chance that they will be able to block this attack. But warriors generally do not have very powerful spiritual energy. Even Saint-level warriors usually don’t have as much spiritual energy as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.” Olivier was very confident.

Warriors had far less spiritual energy than magi of the same rank.

This technique was aimed precisely at the weak point of warriors.

“Linley. What about the attack for your technique?” Olivier asked as well.

Blumer also looked at Linley. Right now, a hint of arrogance was in

Blumer's eyes. He was certain that Linley wouldn't be able to match up to his big brother.

Linley didn't try to hide anything. He said directly. "My technique with the adamantine heavy sword also renders exterior defenses useless. It directly strikes against the internal organs in the opponent's body."

"Renders defenses useless?" Olivier's face changed.

Generally speaking, experts would slowly build up their spiritual energy. On the path to gaining insight into the Laws, their rate of growth in spiritual energy would increase rapidly. For example, Haydson's spiritual energy should be able to match an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

But the internal organs were different.

Although it was easy to train one's muscles, it was extremely hard to train the heart or the intestines. They could only absorb a little bit of elemental essence, which would slightly fortify the heart and the organs.

If one's organs were destroyed, one would definitely die.

"Renders exterior defenses useless and strikes directly at the insides of the body…" Olivier felt admiration in his heart towards Linley as well. This sort of attack was simply too bizarre, yet Linley had managed to develop it.

Linley similarly felt admiration towards Olivier. The obsidian sword was able to attack someone's spirit!

……..

The nobles and ministers behind them, upon seeing Linley and Olivier chatting on seemingly amicable terms, couldn't help but feel surprised.

Soon, Linley and the others arrived outside the Martial Palace.

Linley and Olivier glanced at each other, then led their younger brothers

into the Martial Palace together. Actually, even though they had described their ultimate attacks to each other, the attacks would still be very hard to defend against.

Both the spirit and the internal organs were definitely vital points. This was why these two geniuses were so confident, and why they weren't afraid of telling their rival their secret.

So what if I tell you? Let's see if you can do anything about it!

……

Quite a few people were gathered in the Martial Palace. Upon Linley and Wharton entering the palace, a palace attendant immediately walked over. "Lord Linley, his Imperial Majesty has already arranged a seat for you. Please take a seat over there."

Ordinary ministers had to remain standing, but Linley did not.

Linley calmly sat down, while Olivier was also led to a seat by a palace attendant. The eyes of the various nobles and ministers in the palace were all focused on Linley and Olivier with a hint of respect and dread.

"Linley, who do you think his Imperial Majesty will select?" Olivier chatted casually with Linley, as though those watching nobles and ministers weren't present at all.

"My younger brother Wharton, of course." Linley said directly.

Olivier glanced at Linley. "I don't think I agree. Oh, his Imperial Majesty has arrived." Linley and Olivier both looked towards the palace gates. At that moment, a number of palace attendants, the Empress, the Imperial Consorts, and seven princesses entered the palace alongside his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Johann.

Chapter 15 – The Results

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 15, The Results

The entire Martial Palace fell silent. Seeing Emperor Johann arrive, Linley and Olivier both rose to their feet. In the Martial Palace, the Emperor had the highest rank. They had to at least give the Emperor some face.

Wharton's gaze fell upon Nina. Nina was behind her mother, the Empress. As soon as she entered, she looked at him.

"Big lunk…" Nina's mouth moved, but she didn't speak.

Wharton squeezed out a smile of his own, but his eyes were firm. The two knew what the other was thinking from the gaze they shared. No matter who Emperor Johann selected today, Wharton wouldn't give up.

"Nina is mine. Nobody can take her from me." Wharton glanced at Blumer from afar, then turned to look at his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Johann.

"Your Imperial Majesty!"

All the nobles and ministers in the palace fell to one knee, bowing respectfully.

"Arise, all of you." Emperor Johann turned to look at Olivier and Linley, saying modestly, "Linley, Olivier, please, take your seats."

Wharton also stared at Linley from afar. With Linley there, Wharton felt the utmost confidence.

Emperor Johann then turned to look at the Empress and his Imperial Consorts. "All of you, you can sit over there. Nina, sit with your Imperial mother." The Empress, the Imperial Consorts, and the seven princesses all sat on the other side of the palace, where a row of seats had been arranged.

In the O'Brien Empire, the Empress and the consorts were not permitted to get involved in politics. In the Martial Palace, even the Empress could only sit below and watch.

"Today is a very important day. Haha…We expect many of you have been waiting for this day. Indeed, today, We are going to announce who will be the one to marry Our beloved daughter." Emperor Johann smiled towards Nina as he spoke.

Linley, Olivier, and everyone else stared raptly at Emperor Johann.

Wharton felt his heart begin to thump loudly.

Who would it be?

Himself? Or Blumer?

"As for who We will select, before We make the announcement, We would like to introduce two of the personal disciples of the War God." Emperor Johann saw the two figures flying in this direction from far away. Both men were dressed in long blue robes. Upon entering the Martial Palace, the first one nodded towards Blumer.

"Your Imperial Majesty." Only then did the two men greet Emperor Johann.

The expression on Wharton's face changed.

The personal disciples of the War God? Seeing these two arrive, Wharton sensed that things were not going to go well. Blumer, not too far away from him, cast Wharton a delighted glance.

These two had clearly come in support of Blumer.

"We shall make some introductions, first. This person on the left is Mr. Lanke [Lan'ke], a personal disciple of the War God and a Saint-level expert." Emperor Johann said in a loud voice. "This person on the right is

Mr. Castro [Ka'si'te'luo], a personal disciple of the War God and a Saint-level expert as well."

The nobles and ministers in the Martial Palace all made gestures of respect towards the two Saint-level experts.

"Lanke, Castro, please take a seat over there, near Linley and Olivier." Emperor Johann said with a smile.

Lanke, Castro, Linley, and Olivier were all seated together.

Wharton cleared his throat. Right now, he truly felt under a great deal of pressure. The atmosphere was clearly in favor of Blumer. At this moment in time, Emperor Johann spoke.

"Blumer, Wharton, come to the middle." Emperor Johann said in a clear voice.

"Yes, your Imperial Majesty."

Taking a deep breath, Wharton forced himself to stop thinking wild thoughts, then headed to the center of the palace. Blumer and Wharton stared at each other coldly, then stood shoulder to shoulder.

Everyone's attention was focused on these two.

"We are going to announce who shall become Nina's husband. Naturally, that's only if you two both desire to marry Nina. We shall ask you one more time; do the two of you both wish to marry Nina?" Emperor Johann said in a solemn voice.

This was the final moment.

Blumer immediately said. "Your Imperial Majesty, my greatest desire and dream is to be able to take Princess Nina as my wife."

Wharton said respectfully, "Your Imperial Majesty, it is also your servant's

dream that I can have an open, public marriage ceremony with Nina, and that the two of us shall be together forever, never to be apart."

As Wharton spoke, he looked at Nina.

Nina was looking at Wharton as well. Their gazes met. Most of the people in the palace noticed this, and Blumer's face sank.

"Haha, wonderful." Emperor Johann laughed loudly. "Since both of you are so sincere, We are very gratified. But in the end, We must choose one person."

As he spoke, Emperor Johann cast a smiling glance at Blumer.

This glance immediately dissipated the rage in Blumer's heart. He could sense what Emperor Johann's hidden meaning was, and Blumer suddenly felt confidence.

Who would be chosen?

To the contrary, Wharton was growing anxious as he looked anxiously at Emperor Johann.

"Everyone, please be quiet. We solemnly announce that-"

"Wait." That personal disciple of the War God, Castro, stood up and spoke out, preventing Emperor Johann from speaking. Emperor Johann looked questioningly towards him.

If it had been someone else who had interrupted him, he would've shouted in anger already. But the person stopping him was Castro.

"Your Imperial Majesty." Castro actually headed towards Emperor Johann, in the middle of the palace. All of the nobles and ministers were stupefied. "There is something I must tell you in private, your Imperial Majesty." As he spoke, Castro glanced at Blumer.

The palace attendants didn't know whether they should try to block him or not try to block him.

"Step aside. Castro has something he wishes to discuss with Us." Emperor Johann instructed his attendants to step aside, and Castro walked directly to Emperor Johann's side.

Emperor Johann looked at Castro quizzically.

Castro whispered a few words quietly into Emperor Johann's ear. Emperor Johann frowned, glancing at Castro. But then Emperor Johann started, and a smile appeared on his face.

Castro stepped away.

"What is this Castro doing?" Linley had a very bad feeling about this. "Could it be that Castro is privately asking Emperor Johann to select Blumer?"

In Linley's heart, he truly hoped that his younger brother would have a perfect marriage.

But there was nothing that could be done about it. Behind Blumer was the might of the War God's College.

"Haha. Just then, Castro had a minor matter to discuss with Us. Now, We shall officially announce that Our daughter shall be wed to…" A smile was on Emperor Johann's face.

The entire palace was so silent, you could hear a needle falling.

Wharton and Blumer both looked anxiously at Emperor Johann.

"Shall be wed to…" Emperor Johann proclaimed loudly. "Wharton Baruch!"

"Wharton Baruch!" "Wharton Baruch!" "Wharton Baruch!" Wharton's

name echoed throughout the Martial Palace.

The entire Martial Palace became utterly still.

Blumer's eyes bulged out.

Wharton was stunned.

Nina was stupefied as well.

"Ah!!!!" Wharton suddenly let out a wild howl of excitement, then charged directly towards Nina. Nina recovered as well, throwing herself directly into Wharton's embrace.

Wharton and Nina actually tightly embraced each other, there in the Martial Palace, as though no one was watching. Nina was utterly thrilled.

"Impossible!" Blumer shook his head nonstop, totally unable to accept this result.

In truth, Blumer didn't feel too much affection towards Princess Nina. But Blumer had a strong, possessive nature, wanting to possess the best of everything. And when he was young, people would often compare him against Wharton.

Thus, Blumer wanted to surpass Wharton in every way.

Challenging him to a duel. Wooing Nina. They were all for this reason. The only person Blumer truly loved was himself.

"Wharton. Nina." Emperor Johann's voice rang out.

Only now did Wharton and Nina come to their senses. This was the Martial Palace. Nina's face turned red, and she immediately retreated into her Imperial mother's embrace.

Wharton immediately bowed as well. "Your Imperial Majesty, your servant

was too excited."

"We can understand. We can understand." Emperor Johann laughed and nodded.

And then, Emperor Johann looked at Blumer. "Blumer, you and Wharton are both outstanding talents. Only, We have to consider what is best for our daughter. Do you understand?"

What could Blumer do?

He wasn't Wharton. In Blumer's heart, even if Princess Nina became his wife, she would still be nothing more than something for him to show off. He didn't have much affection for Nina herself. Although it was hard for Blumer to accept this defeat, he didn't lose his composure.

"I understand the difficult choice your Imperial Majesty had to make." Blumer could only grind his teeth and force out these words, swallowing the bile that had risen to his throat.

Emperor Johann nodded with satisfaction.

"Haha…" Emperor Johann laughed loudly. "We are extremely happy today. How about this. Let Us decide the date for Wharton and Nina's engagement. Next month, on the 12th. Wharton, that will be the date of your engagement ceremony with Nina. Do you have any objections?"

"Thank you, your Imperial Majesty. Your servant has no objections." Right now, Wharton was all smiles. How could he have any objections?

Linley, standing next to Wharton, felt very happy as well upon seeing his little brother's joy. His little brother's romantic relationship was about to come to a happy conclusion. At last, he was confident it wouldn't turn out like his own had.

Thinking once more about how his own had turned out, Linley felt a bit of pain in his heart.

“Linley, congratulations.” The personal disciple of the War God who sat next to him, Lanke, said in a warm manner.

Castro laughed as well. “Master Linley, on War God Mountain, I am a big collector of stone sculptures. I’ve always been full of admiration for you, Master Linley. If you have some free time, Master Linley, please come to War God Mountain for a stroll. War God Mountain welcomes you at any time.”

“I will definitely go when I am free.” Linley was in a fine mood today as well.

Olivier directly rose to his feet and walked to his little brother, Blumer, patting Blumer on the shoulder.

“Linley, Wharton, today you shall enjoy a meal with Us, what do you say?” Emperor Johann’s voice rang out. “Olivier, Blumer, Castro, Lanke, you should come with Us as well.”

Castro and Lanke rose to their feet.

“Your Imperial Majesty, we have affairs we need to attend to back at War God Mountain. We won’t be able to accompany you.” Castro said.

“That’s fine.” Emperor Johann didn’t try to force the issue.

“Your Imperial Majesty, I also need to go prepare for my duel with Haydson next month. My second brother shall accompany me back as well.” Olivier also refused.

Blumer had already lost. How could he stay and have a meal with them?

Emperor Johann understood this and nodded.

But Linley and Wharton accepted Emperor Johann’s invitation. In the future, Emperor Johann would be Wharton’s father-in-law. They had to give

him this bit of face.

“I didn’t expect this.” Linley’s face was covered with smiles.

Indeed, he truly had not. Linley had already sent out Jenne, Leena, and Rebecca from the imperial capital, and was already prepared to take Nina by force and let Nina and Wharton elope. But the end result had actually been this. This truly was surprising.

After the court was adjourned, Nina left alongside the Empress and the Imperial Consorts.

But Linley and Wharton followed Emperor Johann to a different place.

“Big bro.” Wharton’s face was still covered in smiles. He was simply too happy. Without meaning to, he continued to beam happily.

Linley was very happy for Wharton as well.

“Linley, in the future, we’ll all be one family.” Emperor Johann laughed towards Linley.

“Right. All one family.” Linley smiled back.

……..

Lanke and Castro were flying in the air side by side, heading straight for the War God Mountain outside the imperial capital.

“What was that all about? What did you say to Johann?” Lanke was confused this entire time. Why did Emperor Johann choose Wharton? Emperor Johann had previously already agreed to choose Blumer.

“I told Johann that our master, the War God, was ordering him to choose Wharton!” Castro said in an unhappy voice.

“Master?” Lanke was stunned.

“How should I know? Right after I entered the palace, Master’s voice rang out in my mind and instructed me to speak with Johann. And then, Master delivered the same message to Johann as well.” Castro said helplessly. “Master most likely was afraid that if he simply spoke to Johann, Johann wouldn’t believe that it truly was the War God who was speaking to him. After all, Master has never spoken to Johann mentally before.”

“Why did Master do such a thing?” Lanke said quizzically.

“How should I know?” Castro had no idea either.

Chapter 16 – Congratulatory Gift

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 16, Congratulatory Gift

The imperial palace was under heavy guard, and valiant knights could be seen everywhere, along with beautiful palace serving ladies. Emperor Johann and Linley walked side by side, with Wharton slightly behind them. Behind these three men were a number of palace attendants and serving ladies. All of the soldiers they encountered on the trip over bowed respectfully upon seeing Emperor Johann.

“That is Master Linley.” Many warriors, seeing Linley walking by Emperor Johann’s side, began to murmur quietly amongst themselves.

Their eyes were filled with veneration and adoration towards Linley. They were all young, and many of them were no older than Linley. Many of the young men in the Empire had set Linley as their goal towards which they would strive.

“The O’Brien Empire lives up to its name of being the most military powerful of the six major powers. All of these warriors in the imperial palace are very powerful.” On the way over, Linley noticed that not a single one of the warriors here was weaker than the sixth rank.

Most were of the sixth, and many were of the seventh. Even a few eighth rank warriors could be seen.

Even the ordinary patrolling guards were so powerful. One could imagine how powerful the Empire as a whole was.

“Linley, look. The eyes of those guards are lighting up when they see you. I’m afraid that in their hearts, the veneration they feel towards you is greater than for Us.” Emperor Johann said with a loud laugh.

Linley laughed calmly.

Ever since that duel in the Colosseum, Linley's fame had spread throughout the O'Brien Empire, especially given his young age. He had already become a legend.

Linley was in his twenties, and not only a genius sculptor, but also a genius magus and a Saint-level warrior. In the hearts of many, even though they might not be as talented as Linley, as long as they worked hard, they might be able to reach at least 10% of Linley's accomplishments, and they would be happy with that.

This had actually caused many young people in the Empire to train even more painstakingly.

The O'Brien Empire had a long-standing custom that whenever a genius appeared, the Empire would officially spread the news alongside the rumors of the common-folk. The impact on the citizens of the Empire was actually quite large.

….

The imperial flower garden. There was a banquet table filled with food, and the only people seated there were Emperor Johann, Linley, and Wharton.

The palace serving maids brought plate after plate of delicacies forward, while the guards around them kept a solemn watch around them.

"You can all leave now." Emperor Johann waved his hand.

"Yes, your Imperial Majesty."

The surrounding maids, servants, and guards all dispersed. Soon afterwards, only Emperor Johann, Linley, and Wharton were present.

Emperor Johann glanced at Wharton. Actually, on the entire trip over from the Martial Palace, his heart was filled with questions.

Why did the War God wish to help Wharton?

In the Empire, the War God was unquestionably the highest power. Wharton was nothing compared to him. The War God and Wharton most likely didn't have much of a relationship.

"Could it be that our venerable ancestor, the War God, has some sort of connection to the ancestors of the Dragonblood Warrior clan? That shouldn't be the case either. Five thousand years ago, when the Empire was founded, the Dragonblood Warrior, Baruch, was very famous, true, but they were nothing more than peak-stage Saint-level combatants. There was still a major gap between them and the War God. What sort of relationship could the two possibly have had?"

Emperor Johann didn't believe it.

The War God was someone on the level of the High Priest. How much of a relationship could he possibly have had with Baruch? Even if he had one, could it have been a deep enough relationship that he would help out the descendants of Baruch, five thousand years later?

"Wharton." Emperor Johann didn't think about it any longer. Smiling, he said, "A while later, you and Nina will get engaged. You need to take good care of Nina. This child has the temper of a spoiled princess. We hope you can be accommodating towards her."

Wharton straightened his chest, hurriedly saying, "Your Imperial Majesty, don't worry."

But Linley was staring at Emperor Johann.

"A few days ago, Caylan said that Emperor Johann was going to choose Blumer, but now…" Linley was puzzled about this.

Linley asked directly, "Your Imperial Majesty, I wish to ask, why is it that you chose my younger brother Wharton?"

Emperor Johann was a bit startled.

“Haha…” Emperor Johann laughed loudly. “Linley, didn’t We already discuss this at the palace? We were considering things from Nina’s standpoint. Nina likes Wharton, after all. We are deeply gratified that We are able to bring Nina happiness.”

Linley snickered secretly.

If Emperor Johann really were considering things from Nina’s standpoint, then when Wharton had asked for her hand in marriage, he wouldn’t have delayed and caused a large chain of events to occur before accepting.

Emperor Johann saw the look on Linley’s face. “What? You don’t believe it, Linley?”

“I don’t fully believe it, actually.” Linley said bluntly.

Emperor Johann started. Generally speaking, who would dare speak to him in such a way? But the one who said these words was Linley, a peak-stage Saint-level expert. Emperor Johann let out two awkward chuckles. “Actually, We admit that We had originally been considering Blumer.”

That was more like it.

Although that had been Linley’s first time meeting with Caylan, he had the feeling that Caylan was a trustworthy person.

“Linley, you should know that in reality, it is Saint-level experts which determine the rise and fall of an Empire.” Emperor Johann sighed. “Saint-level experts can easily kill the enemy’s leaders despite being surrounded by a million soldiers. Saint-level magi can utilize destructive forbidden-spells and destroy a million man army entirely. It can be said that in the eyes of ordinary people, Saint-levels are absolutely invincible experts.”

Linley nodded. When he was young, Saint-levels were indeed the ultimate combatants in existence.

“Although We are the Emperor, We do not dare issue orders to Saint-levels. If We were to offend them, they might leave the Empire. We trust there are many places which would welcome a Saint-level expert’s arrival.” Emperor Johann laughed bitterly.

Linley understood this.

If a Saint-level expert were to flee, given their flying ability, that would be very simple.

“Both Blumer and Wharton are likely to reach the Saint-level in the future. But the critical issue is…Blumer belongs to the War God’s College. All of the experts of the Empire are clustered around the War God’s College. We do not wish to anger the War God’s College. After all, there is an entire group of Saint-level experts there, not just one or two!”

An entire group of Saint-level experts. Just hearing the words was enough to make people shiver.

“With multiple fellow apprentices of Blumer coming to speak on his behalf, We didn’t have a choice.” Emperor Johann shook his head and sighed.

“Then why did you choose my younger brother Wharton in the end?” Linley asked.

He had been wondering about this the entire time. What was the reason?

Emperor Johann turned a puzzled gaze towards Linley and Wharton. “Linley. Does your Baruch clan have some sort of historical relationship with the War God?”

“The War God?”

Linley immediately understood. Shocked, he said, “Your Imperial Majesty, are you saying that it was the War God who caused you to select Wharton?”

“Of course.” Emperor Johann said, “Linley, think about it. In the Empire, whose word carries even more weight than the members of the War God’s College? Only the War God, the highest power of the land.”

“Our venerable ancestor, the War God, directly spoke to Us mentally and ordered Us to choose Wharton.” A hint of excitement was in Emperor Johann’s eyes. “This was the first time We have ever heard the voice of our venerable ancestor, the War God.”

The War God!

It had actually been the War God!

The War God was an incredible figure. Five thousand years ago, he had battled the High Priest over the Yulan river to a standstill, proving that he was definitely a Deity-level combatant.

After five thousand years, although no one had ever seen the War God fight again, everyone understood that given the War God’s natural talent, he was undoubtedly even more terrifyingly powerful now.

The War God had trained incredibly fast, going from ordinary person to Deity-level in just a few centuries.

His sudden rise to prominence five thousand years ago had caused his fame and glory to completely eclipse even the Four Supreme Warriors, becoming the most brilliant shining star of that era.

“The War God helped my little brother?” Linley couldn’t understand it.

“Could it be that he knows my side has six Saint-level experts?” Linley began to wonder. Given the War God’s power, he definitely could sense the strength of Linley’s forces.

Linley shook his head.

Impossible. To a Deity, Saint-level experts were nothing. Most likely, the

War God could kill all six of them with one blow.

“Then what’s the reason? Could it really be because he had some relationship with the ancestors of the Baruch clan?” Linley truly didn’t understand what the reason was behind the War God’s actions.

…..

West of the imperial capital. War God Mountain. Aside from the primary peak, there were four other peaks. Connecting two of the peaks was a natural cave tunnel.

Lanke and Castro were walking side by side in the tunnel.

After travelling several hundred meters through the winding tunnel, the tunnel suddenly turned downwards sharply. If one stared downwards into that bizarre, deep dark hole, not a single thing could be seen. Nobody could tell how deep that tunnel was.

“Whoosh.”

Lanke and Castro jumped directly into the deep hole. They fell down at a fairly slow speed. After falling for several thousand meters, the two landed as gently as leaves on the ground. From the entrance of the tunnel to this hole was merely a thousand meters, but this hole took them several thousand meters underground.

“Master usually spends his time in closed-door training, and whenever he does so, he’ll usually spend several years, several decades, or even longer training. When he is engaged in training, he’ll virtually never speak to us mentally. But this time, at the Martial Palace, he actually reached out to us mentally and told us to tell Johann to choose Wharton, then told us to come back here.” Lanke was mystified.

This was very contrary to the War God’s habits.

There were very few matters in the world which an ascetic such as War God

would issue orders about.

“Junior apprentice-brother, don’t think about it too much. Master surely has his reasons for acting like this. All we need to do is listen and obey.” Castro said.

“Yes, senior apprentice-brother.” Lanke nodded.

To the disciples of the War God’s College, the commands of the War God were not to be flouted. They would do whatever the War God ordered them to do. There was no need to think about it.

“Rumble…” A blistering heat could be sensed in the depths of the tunnel. As they walked in, the stones were slowly turning red as well.

The temperature here was very high!

After going several hundred more meters, Lanke and Castro came to a halt in front of a pitch-black stone door. The stone walls surrounding this door were already scarlet red, and the temperature was so high that even Lanke and Castro had to use their battle-qi on their feet to protect themselves.

If a piece of paper was tossed out, it would most likely instantly be set alight.

“You’ve come.” A calm voice drifted out from behind the door.

The War God’s voice was very soft, but it carried a penetrative power. The voice was like a needle, piercing directly into one’s soul. Castro and Lanke, his two disciples, even suspected…that the War God could possibly dissipate their soul with his voice alone.

This was one of the reasons why Castro and the other personal disciples of the War God feared their Master so much. The War God was simply too powerful.

“Yes, Master.” Castro and Lanke said respectfully. Castro continued,

“Master, what instructions have you for us?”

The War God’s voice rang out yet again. “April 12th will be the day of the engagement ceremony for that kid Wharton. Go speak to your eldest apprentice-brother and acquire an interspatial ring. On the day of that kid Wharton’s engagement ceremony, give it to him as his engagement present.”

Castro and Lanke were utterly stunned.

The War God was giving an engagement present?

This had never happened before. Even when they, his personal disciples, had gotten married, the War God paid no heed. After all, was the War God someone who had to send congratulatory gifts to others? Even if he wanted to do so, who would be worthy of accepting his gifts?

But the War God was now ordering them to deliver a congratulatory gift for Wharton’s engagement ceremony?

“You can leave now.” The War God’s calm voice once more sounded out in the tunnel.

Castro and Lanke stared at the pitch-black stone door, then glanced at each other. Although they didn’t understand it at all, they didn’t dare disobey the orders of the War God.

“Yes, Master.” Lanke and Castro replied, their voices filled with incomparable respect.

Chapter 17 – Stepping Onto the Stage

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 17, Stepping Onto the Stage

Yulan calendar, year 10009, April 12th. This was the day on which Wharton and Nina would be engaged at the imperial capital. One of the two lovers was the younger brother of a peak-stage Saint-level expert, while the other was the daughter of the Emperor. An engagement ceremony such as this would definitely be very well attended.

The nobles of the imperial capital who received invitation letters all felt extremely proud. Many common nobles weren't qualified to be invited to this event; after all, if everyone was invited, the Count's manor wouldn't be able to hold all those people.

The Count's manor was very festive today, and the outside of the manor was flooded with arriving carriages, which blocked off a large half of the Boulder Street. The guards and servants of the nobles weren't qualified to enter the manor, and all had to wait outside. In total, there were thousands of guards and servants waiting outside.

An ocean of people!

Each carriage was gaudier and more lavish than the next, and each young noble lady was dressed more beautifully and was more mesmerizing than the last. The engagement ceremony banquet at the manor was definitely one of the imperial events of the highest caliber, and the people who came were all people of great status.

"Big bro, I still feel really uncomfortable wearing this." Wharton had wasted quite a bit of his time in his room. He felt more nervous than he ever had before.

Linley laughed. "Enough, Wharton. You already look very handsome. Have some confidence!"

Wharton took a deep breath.

“Let’s go. Time to welcome the guests in the hall.” Linley laughingly lectured. “You can’t just keep on having Grandpa Hiri welcome the guests. For example, when his Imperial Majesty comes, how can you possibly not be out there to welcome him?”

Wharton and Linley entered the main hall, and as soon as they did, they breathed sharply. Good heavens. There were so many people there. What’s more, that was just a small portion of the nobles who would be present. Many senior personages hadn’t arrived yet.

“The imperial capital really is the imperial capital. There are far more nobles here than in Fenlai City.” Linley sighed.

In the past, Linley had participated in Alice and Kalan’s engagement ceremony. The number of people present that day clearly were far fewer than the number attending the ceremony today, and were clearly a much lower caliber of people as well.

The noble clans of a kingdom naturally were far fewer in number than the noble clans of an empire.

As soon as Linley and Wharton entered the main hall, they immediately became the center of attention. Wharton’s massive frame was simply too eye-catching, and many people went over there to greet him warmly.

“Wharton, come over here.” Housekeeper Hiri immediately called out to him.

Wharton immediately hastened over to the main door of the hall and began to greet each of the arriving guests. As for Linley, he filled a cup with wine, then casually walked to the center of the hall, occasionally clinking cups with the guests.

These nobles were very conscientious and didn’t try to get too close to

Linley or bother him too much, only gently tipping their cups towards him from afar.

However…

Some of the young noble ladies had their eyes set on Linley. They knew that Linley was unmarried. A twenty-something year old peak-stage Saint-level expert…where would anyone find another man like this?

“What a headache.” Linley saw three separate young noble ladies begin to drift in his direction. Linley could only pretend not to have seen them.

When these three young noble ladies were a meter away from Linley…

“Whoosh.” A soft yet firm gust of wind suddenly pressed against their bodies. No matter what they tried, those three young noble ladies couldn’t move any closer towards Linley.

And then, Linley raised his cup, smiling faintly, before heading to a corner of the main hall and sitting down.

“Just then, Master Linley…” A golden-haired and golden-eyed beautiful young noble lady got excited. “What sort of amazing technique was that?”

The other two young noble ladies didn’t know either.

Not knowing wasn’t an issue. This didn’t impact Linley’s status in their heart. In fact, to the contrary; this made Linley seem all the more powerful and mysterious to them. Actually, what Linley had just used was just the simplest manipulations of the wind.

“Did you see Master Linley’s Dragonform transformation that day at the Colosseum? He seemed so wild and untamed. I was so excited.”

“He really is exciting. I like this type. Those men at school are all soft as cotton. None of them are extremely manly like him.”

Linley's hearing was simply too good. Hearing what the young noble ladies were saying to each other, Linley felt a wave of resignation in his heart. They called his Dragonform transformation 'wild and untamed'? And 'extremely manly'?"

"His Imperial Majesty has arrived!"

The voice of the guest announcer at the main gates immediately increased in volume. He had clearly shouted using battle-qi, allowing all the guests in the hall to hear clearly.

The entire hall full of nobles fell silent as they all looked towards the gates. There were many nobles outside the hall as well. There were too many guests here today, and the hall simply couldn't fit them all inside.

"Johann has arrived?" Linley stood up and left the hall.

"Milord." The uniformed Gates called out towards Linley.

Today, all five of the Barker brothers were dressed in handsome matching uniforms. As they wandered around the manor, their massive size and frame made the hearts of the nobles quail. The nobles all secretly sighed…the Dragonblood Warrior clan lives up to its name. Even their guards were so incredible.

Emperor Johann was a sight to behold, as always. Holding the Empress's hand, he was followed by a few bodyguards.

"Wharton." Emperor Johann immediately picked out Wharton from the crowd. Seeing how handsome and strong Wharton looked, Johann nodded with satisfaction. "Not bad, not bad."

Linley arrived.

"Your Imperial Majesty, come rest inside." Linley laughed.

"Alright. We have much to discuss with you, Master Linley." Emperor

Johann said warmly. Immediately, the two of them entered the guest hall. As for the other nobles and ministers, they very conscientiously stepped aside for them.

So many of the nobles of the imperial capital had arrived today, but Linley hadn't gone to welcome any of them. The nobles all felt that this was normal. A Saint-level expert, go welcome them? Was that possible?

"The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived!"

That high-pitched voice rang out again. The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate, one of the three major trading unions of the Yulan Continent. Although the Dawson Conglomerate didn't actually possess any Saint-level experts, it still possessed astonishing economic power.

Even Emperor Johann stood up and said to Linley, "Monroe Dawson is one of Our good friends."

Linley rose as well.

Yale was sure to have come alongside Monroe Dawson. Of course Linley would go welcome them.

"Haha…" The big-bellied Monroe Dawson made his way over, with Yale by his father's side. Seeing Emperor Johann, Monroe Dawson immediately bowed slightly. "Monroe pays his respects to the mighty Emperor Johann."

Emperor Johann smiled warmly. "Monroe, today, Linley is the master of this location. There's no need for you to stand on too much courtesy with Us."

"Master Linley and I have been friends for a long time. Only, I didn't expect that in a few scant years, Master Linley had reached such a level of accomplishment. Haha…" Monroe Dawson laughed so hard his eyes turned into merry slits.

"Uncle Dawson, just call me Linley." Linley smiled as he spoke. He and

Yale were the best of bros. Naturally, he had to be respectful to Yale's father.

"Wharton, come and greet Uncle Dawson."

Wharton came over as well.

"What a handsome, strapping young lad." Monroe Dawson's eyes lit up when he saw Wharton. Clearly, Wharton's size and stature had surprised him.

One noble after another arrived, and even Blumer arrived. Blumer acted in an extremely gentlemanly manner today, and even spent some time congratulating Wharton.

But Wharton, in his heart, still felt rather uncomfortable around Blumer. He kept on feeling that Blumer wasn't speaking sincerely.

"Blumer, your elder brother didn't come today?" Emperor Johann laughed as he spoke to Blumer.

"My elder brother is currently in closed-door meditation training, in preparation for his duel with Lord Haydson next month." Blumer smiled.

"Oh. Makes sense." Emperor Johann nodded.

Blumer then glanced towards Wharton, who was welcoming guests at the gate. A cold light flashed in his eyes. In his heart, Blumer was very unhappy that Wharton had managed to successfully ask for Nina's hand in marriage.

"The Monolithic Sword Saint, Lord Haydson, has arrived!"

When the voice rang out, Emperor Johann, Linley, Monroe Dawson, and many others immediately rose to their feet and headed out the hall.

"Haydson came?" Linley was very surprised and pleased. He had thought that Haydson would be busy preparing for next month's duel.

Very soon, the gray-robed Haydson walked in by himself. Emperor Johann, Linley, Wharton, and the others all went to welcome him.

“Haha, Wharton, congratulations.” A very friendly smile was on Haydson’s face. He then looked at Linley. Jokingly, he said, “Linley, your little brother is getting engaged. What about you, the big brother?”

Linley started. He hadn’t expected Haydson to ask such a question.

“Hahaha…” Emperor Johann began to laugh loudly as well, nodding repeatedly. “Linley, it really is time for you to get married. If you take a fancy to someone, just tell Us. We will definitely make sure that lucky girl is sent to you.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“Lords from the War God’s College have arrived!”

This call from the gate extricated Linley from having to answer the question, as they all went to welcome the people from the War God’s College.

“I didn’t expect that the War God’s College would also send people over.” Emperor Johann sighed emotionally.

Haydson nodded as well. The War God’s College was one of the most major organizations in the Yulan continent. They rarely participated in engagement or wedding events, unless it was the event of one of their own people. Only then would the other fellow apprentices attend.

Lanke and Castro walked in, side by side.

Castro smiled. “Haha, brother Wharton, congratulations.” As Castro figured, given how well-disposed his master was towards Wharton, then Wharton was qualified to be addressed by him as ‘brother Wharton’.”

But this term of address baffled Linley, Johann, Haydson, and the others.

The members of the War God's College were extremely arrogant.

They rarely paid much attention to other people. Castro's attitude really caused quite a few people to feel puzzled.

"Today, we two fellow apprentices have come here as representatives of the entire War God's College to congratulate you, Wharton, on this joyful occasion. This is the gift which our master personally instructed us to bring you." Castro directly held out a brocade box towards Wharton.

Master?

Everyone around them was stunned. The War God was giving a gift?

"We are incredibly grateful." Linley was the first to recover. Smiling, he accepted the congratulatory gift. "Castro, Lanke, come, have a rest over here."

Generally speaking, the servants would accept any congratulatory gifts at the gate…but how would the gift registrars of the Count's manor dare to take the gifts from people belonging to the War God's College? Even if they had come empty-handed, it would have been an honor.

The Count's manor was a hubbub of noise. Many high ranking nobles such as Dukes and Counts were all chatting amongst themselves, while Linley, Emperor Johan, Monroe Dawson, Castro, Lanke, Haydson, and the others chatted casually as well.

The guests at this engagement ceremony were all absolutely incredible.

Just look at the seating arrangements. At Linley's table, the only people present aside from Saint-levels experts were an Emperor and the Chairman of a Conglomerate. Just at this moment…

"A Saint-level expert is flying over." Many people called out. Linley

glanced through the door at the sky, and indeed, saw a human form gracefully soaring through the clouds.

Linley, Emperor Johann, and the others all rose to their feet in confusion.

But no matter who it was, given this person was a Saint-level expert, they had to give him some face.

With a mid-air flash, the man arrived at the main gate. This was a white-haired old man, with a white beard as well. Clearly, he was ancient, but his dreamy, sky-blue eyes were very sharp.

“Haha, I came uninvited. I hope I won’t be unwelcome here?” The white-haired old man laughed heartily.

He didn’t even look at Linley and the others, instead flying directly towards the place where Linley and the others had been seated. As he drew near, Haydson and Castro hurriedly stepped out of his way, and the white-haired old man sat down on the seat previously occupied by the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

“This is a pretty good seat. I’ll sit here.” The white-haired old man laughed loudly.

Emperor Johann frowned. This man was a bit too impolite. Linley, as well, felt that this white-haired old man was a little too arrogant.

“Might I ask…” Before Linley even had a chance to finish his words, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, quickly said in an extremely courteously voice, “I didn’t expect you would come here, milord. This truly is an unexpected surprise for us.”

By his side, both Castro and Lanke hurriedly nodded their heads in assent. Their attitudes were unbelievably humble.

Chapter 18 – Experts of Other Planes

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 18, Experts of Other Planes

Linley, Emperor Johann, and the others were all puzzled. Who in the world was this mysterious white-haired old man? Even the number one Saint-level expert, Haydson, was incredibly deferential to him.

“Could it be the War God?” Linley secretly wondered.

Most likely, only a Deity could make Haydson be this deferential. And clearly, both Castro and Lanke recognized this person as well. He was most likely the War God.

“Add a chair.” Housekeeper Hiri instructed a nearby servant.

Linley took a step forward. Smiling, he said, “Sir, we two brothers feel extremely honored to have you attend my younger brother’s engagement ceremony. Might I know your name, sir?”

“Me?” The white-haired old man glanced smilingly at Linley. “My name is Hodan [Huo’dan].”

“Hodan?” Linley quickly combed through his memory, but he definitely didn’t recall an expert by the name of Hodan.

“Linley, no need to ask anything else. It is wonderful that Lord Hodan is able to attend today. Let’s all sit down first.” The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, said with a laugh.

Although Linley and Emperor Johann and the others were mystified, they all sat down.

“Milord, let us offer you a toast, milord.” Castro and Lanke both raised their cups.

Milord?

A few things suddenly came to Linley's awareness.

First of all, most likely only a Deity was capable of making a Saint-level expert address them as 'milord'. At the same time…if Castro and Lanke addressed him as 'milord' and not as 'Master', then this person was most likely not the War God.

The continent had five prominent Deities. Linley had already met Dylin and Cesar, while he had yet to meet the High Priest, the War God, and the King of the Forest of Darkness. The white-haired old man should therefore be one of those three.

He was now certain that this man was not the War God.

So this person should be either the High Priest or the King of the Forest of Darkness.

"However, it has been countless years since those two Deities showed themselves. How could Haydson, Castro, and Lanke all recognize him?" Linley refused to believe it.

A Deity-level expert didn't make appearances so easily.

"Linley." The white-haired old man named 'Hodan' raised his cup. "Come, let us toast each other."

Linley hurriedly raised his cup.

"When I see you, Linley, I think about the past affairs of your Baruch clan and those several Dragonblood Warriors. Haha…unexpectedly, several thousand years have passed in the blink of an eye." Hodan laughed merrily.

These words caused Linley's heart to twitch, hard.

“Those several Dragonblood Warriors of the Baruch clan? Thousands of years ago?” Linley looked at Hodan with confusion.

In his own clan’s history books, there had been three generations of Dragonblood Warriors, but later on a thousand years would pass between each generation of Dragonblood Warriors.

But this Hodan was saying that thousands of years ago, he had met several Dragonblood Warriors?

“I didn’t know that Elder Hodan knew the ancestors of my clan.” Linley laughed.

“Of course. Your clan leader, Baruch, really is a formidable fellow.” Hodan said with feeling. “But your Baruch clan has really decayed. In the past, when you had dozens of Dragonblood Warriors, who would dare offend you? Such a pity, such a pity…”

Linley stared.

“Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?” Linley and Wharton both looked at Hodan in shock.

“What, is that surprising?” Hodan looked at Linley and Wharton.

Haydson hurriedly said, “Milord, it would be best if you discuss this somewhere else. There are too many people here.” It was best if they didn’t reveal these secrets to the ordinary nobles.

“It is fine. Only the people at this table can hear us. As for the people outside of it, no matter how loudly we speak, they won’t be able to overhear anything.” Hodan chortled.

There were eight people at this table. Aside from Wharton, Emperor Johann, and Monroe Dawson, the others all possessed at least Saint-level power, with the white-haired old man’s power being immeasurably deeper.

“Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?”

Linley and Wharton could hardly dare to believe it.

Their ancestral records were very clear; the first three generations of their clan produced three Dragonblood Warriors, after which a thousand years would pass between Dragonblood Warriors. In total, there had been only five. How could there have been dozens of Dragonblood Warriors a few thousand years back?”

“The Four Supreme Warrior clans…alas. All have decayed to a sorry state. In the past, the Four Supreme Warrior clans were quite glorious.” Hodan said with emotion.

Linley suddenly thought of something.

He remembered how in the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’, there were instructions on the second way by which one could become a Dragonblood Warrior; drinking live dragon’s blood. But based on that manual, all three Dragonblood Warriors were natural-born Dragonblood Warriors.

If the second method had never been used successfully, why would the Secret Dragonblood Manual record it?

In the past, both Linley and Doehring Cowart had suspected that the manual had been altered. His clan’s history should probably have included examples of Dragonblood Warriors who were produced via drinking live dragon’s blood.

“But I didn’t expect there were dozens!” Both Linley and Wharton felt extremely shocked internally.

“Oh, that little girl named Nina is coming over.” The white-haired old man, Hodan, beamed, causing Linley and the other shocked participants to turn and look.

Linley and the others all stood up, and Wharton immediately went over to

welcome Nina.

Holding hands, Wharton and Nina went from table to table, toasting the guests. But right now, both Wharton and Linley, who remained at his seat, felt their minds to be in a state of utter confusion.

Their clan's history clearly wasn't as simple as they had imagined.

In addition…

Saint-level experts had extremely long lifespans. How could it be that not a single Dragonblood Warrior in their clan was remaining? And not just their clan; even the Undying Warrior clan, the Violetflame Warrior clan, and the Tigerstripe Warrior clan had seen the same thing. All of the Four Supreme Warrior clans had bizarrely collapsed.

"Secret…" Linley understood that the history of the continent definitely contained many hidden secrets that were different from the official accounts.

For example, the King of Killers, Cesar, had once told Linley that five thousand years ago, many experts from other planes of existence had descended to the plane of the Yulan continent. But in the history books, there was no such thing.

Linley found himself somewhat mentally disengaged as the engagement ceremony continued. He kept on thinking about these things.

He even wanted to have a private chat with that white-haired old man named Hodan.

Clearly, this Hodan person knew many things about the affairs of the past.

After dinner, the various nobles in the main hall were chatting idly. At this time, Linley, who had grown frantic with impatience, suddenly heard a sentence that was as beautiful as music from the heavens.

“Linley, come with me. I have something to discuss with you.”

Hodan actually reached out to Linley and actively asked to speak to him privately.

Wharton looked at his older brother, and Linley instructed, “Wharton, you stay here. Afterwards, go spend some time with Nina. As for Mr. Hodan, I’ll speak with him.” As he spoke, Linley followed Hodan out of the main hall.

Haydson, Castro, and Lanke all glanced at each other.

“I wonder what Linley will decide.” Haydson sighed with emotion.

Hodan and Linley left the main hall. While walking, Hodan said, “Linley, where are those two Saint-level experts of yours? Call them over as well.”

Linley was startled.

How did this Hodan know everything?

Hodan knew the names of Wharton and Nina, and he also knew that Linley had two magical beasts. He even knew that Bebe was a Saint-level magical beast.

Linley didn’t try to deny anything. He immediately spiritually contacted Bebe and Haeru, calling them over. Since there were Saint-level experts present today, Linley hadn’t allowed Bebe or Haeru to go to the main hall.

“Let’s go to the training grounds behind the manor. There’s nobody there.” Hodan chuckled.

“Groooooowl.”

Haeru and Bebe arrived by Linley’s side.

“Squeaaaak!” Bebe continued to pretend.

“Little fellow, I know that you are a Saint-level magical beast. Stop squeaking.” Hodan laughed as he reached out to rub Bebe on the head. Bebe wanted to move aside, but to his astonishment, he found that it was impossible for him to move. He had no choice but to allow Hodan to rub his head.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Without question, Hodan was a Deity-level expert.

“He really is a Deity. How many Deities does the continent have?” Linley thought to himself, while at the same time, he followed Hodan to the training grounds.

“Boss, who is that old fellow? How is he so powerful?” Bebe didn’t dare to be too playful right now, appearing very obedient.

Haeru obediently followed by Linley’s side as well.

“Close the door first. Without my orders, no one is to be permitted entry.” Linley instructed the servants, and then Hodan headed directly to a stone bench and sat down.

“You can sit as well.” Hodan pointed to another seat opposite from him.

Linley sat down obediently, then said humbly, “Mr. Hodan, I am totally lost right now. Can you please provide me with guidance?”

“The reason I came today is primarily for the sake of your two magical beasts.” Hodan smiled. “Of course, you and those three other Undying Warriors who possess the Saint-level of power can also just barely be considered qualified to be worthy of being considered my targets.”

“Hrm?” Linley looked at Hodan with confusion.

Hodan smiled. “Linley, in the countless years of the Yulan continent’s history, there have been countless geniuses as well. Even if there is only one

every century, in a hundred thousand years, that means there have been a thousand. But right now, how many Saint-level experts exist in the Yulan continent? Each Empire only has a few dozen."

"Saint-level experts can live for over a hundred thousand years?" Linley said in shock.

"Saint-level experts, so long as they aren't killed, can easily live a hundred thousand years." Hodan laughed calmly. "Upon reaching the Saint-level, you are virtually immortal and immune to aging. However, you can still be killed, of course."

Linley was also puzzled.

If this was the case, why were there so few Saint-level experts? After all, the Yulan continent definitely saw a new Saint-level expert every century.

"Then what is the reason?" Linley asked.

"The reason is…they've gone to other planes." Hodan smiled.

"Other planes?" Linley started.

But then, Linley suddenly understood, and he hurriedly asked, "Could it be that the ancestors of the Baruch clan have also gone to other planes?"

"Right. Those dozens of Dragonblood Warriors have all gone to the 'Infernal Realm', one of the Four Higher Planes. In the past, I even visited your ancestor, Baruch, in the Infernal Realm and drank with him." Hodan laughed heartily.

"The Infernal Realm. Mr. Hodan, you come from the Infernal Realm?" Linley felt as though the secrets of the universe were unfolding before his very eyes.

Hodan nodded. "Right. Linley, let me put it to you like this…in the ordinary, material world, once a life form has reached the Saint-level, they

will be qualified to enter the Four Higher Planes, or perhaps the Seven Divine Planes. They will be permitted to train and live there."

"In the history of the Yulan continent, many Saint-level experts have already left the Yulan continent and chosen to enter the Four Higher Planes or the Seven Divine Planes." Hodan smiled.

Linley nodded to show he understood.

"Technically speaking, you and those other three Undying Warriors, despite possessing Saint-level power, aren't yet at the Saint-level in your human forms. There was actually no need for me to hurry over here to speak to you. My primary targets were those two Saint-level magical beasts of yours. They have both reached the Saint-level. They are allowed to choose…to continue to live here at the Yulan continent, or to enter the other planes."

Hodan quickly said with a hint of enticement, "The Four Higher Planes are much better than the Seven Divine Planes. In the 'Infernal Realm', for example, experts as are common as the clouds, and Saint-level experts are nothing more than ordinary people. In that place you will have excellent training opportunities, and treasures such as interspatial rings are as common as water. There's a terrifyingly large amount of treasures there."

Linley understood.

Only upon reaching the Saint-level was one qualified to enter the Higher Planes. Naturally, the Four Higher Planes would have experts everywhere, with Saint-level experts being nothing more than commoners.

"I'm not going. I'm staying with the Boss." Bebe shook his head.

"I'm not going either. I'm staying with my master." Haeru said.

Hodan looked at Linley. Laughing, he said, "Linley, your real power has already reached the peak-stage of the Saint-level. You are completely qualified to enter the Higher Planes. Do you wish to go?"

Linley didn’t respond. Instead, he looked at Hodan. “Mr. Hodan, who are you, exactly?”

“Me? Oh. I forgot to tell you.” Hodan smiled at Linley. “I am the Planar Overseer for the Yulan continent.”

Chapter 19 – A Choice

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 19, A Choice

“Planar Overseer?”

Hearing this title, Linley somewhat understood. The term ‘overseer’ contained elements of both ‘watching over’ and ‘protecting’. No wonder this Hodan possessed such astonishing strength.

“Linley, you haven’t answered me yet. Are you willing to go to the other planes?” Hodan urged.

It was up to each individual Saint-level as to whether or not they wished to go to the higher planes. The Planar Overseer was only responsible for telling them about this choice.

Linley remained very calm.

“Mr. Hodan, honestly speaking, I don’t know anything about the other planes. Can you perhaps enlighten me a bit?” Linley asked humbly.

Doehring Cowart actually knew about the existence of the Planar Overseer, but at the time, Linley was far too weak, and so Doehring Cowart didn’t see a need to tell Linley right away. But Doehring Cowart had explained a little bit about the Four Higher Planes.

“There are many material planes such as the Yulan continent. These material planes are all about the same. On some, magical beasts are the primary power, while in others, other races are in power. In some, humans are in power. These planes are essentially the same.” Hodan began explaining some of the most basic information regarding the Higher Planes.

“Above these material planes are the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes.” Hodan laughed. “The Seven Divine Planes were created by

the seven principal Sovereigns of the seven elements. As for the Four Higher Planes, they were created by the four Overgods."

Linley nodded.

"The Seven Divine Planes and the Four Higher Planes…what are the differences between them?" Linley asked.

Hodan laughed. "The Seven Divine Planes are planes of earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, and darkness. For example, you are someone who is training in the Laws of the Earth. If you were to enter the Divine Plane of Earth, you would find that you trained twice as fast using half the effort."

"However, the Seven Divine Planes are inferior to the Four Higher Planes. It's best if you enter the Higher Realms." Hodan said enticingly. "Linley, you must understand, the Higher Planes were created by the Overgods. The four Overgods far outstrip the power of the Sovereigns."

"Overgods? Can anyone reach the level of Overgod through training?" Linley suddenly asked.

Hodan stared at Linley in astonishment.

"Haha…" Hodan began to roar with laughter, as though he had heard the funniest joke ever.

Linley looked at Hodan in confusion.

"Linley, it seems you really know nothing." Hodan laughed. "You have no idea. The Overgods aren't people who reached that level through training. Let me explain to you. Every single race has the chance to become a Sovereign through training; the chance is just extremely, extremely low…"

"How low?" Linley asked.

"Let me give an example. In a hundred million ordinary Deities, it would be rare for a single Sovereign to appear." Hodan laughed. "For example, in the

Divine Realm of Light, there are countless Demigods, Gods, and Highgods. But in ten million years, you might not see a single Sovereign appear from their ranks."

Linley was silent.

"Demigods, Gods, and Highgods?" Linley frowned as he looked at Hodan in confusion.

In the past, Grandpa Doehring had only discussed the existence of 'Gods'. He didn't explain further.

"The 'divine spark' of Deities are of different levels as well." Hodan said calmly. "Once you reach a certain level of mastery with regards to the Laws, the Laws will themselves grant you their recognition and descend into you a 'divine spark', allowing you to become a Deity. But when you begin, you'll only be a Demigod. As you continue to understand more…at a certain level, you will become a God."

Only now did Linley understood.

"What level of Deity is the War God?" Linley asked with curiosity.

Hodan glanced at Linley with irritation, then laughed. "For the sake of your ancestors, I'll tell you. The War God…is only a Demigod."

"A Demigod?" Linley blinked twice.

Good heavens. The War God had become a Deity over five thousand years ago. Given his talent, he should be much more powerful now than before. How could he still just be a Demigod?

"Haha, Linley, do you think it is easy to advance from being a Demigod to a God?" Hodan shook his head.

"But the War God was a Demigod five thousand years ago." Linley immediately said.

“At that time, he was indeed a Demigod. But there are differences amongst Demigods as well. For example, let’s say that to become a Demigod, one must master 1% of a Law, while to become a God, one must master 10% of a Law. Someone who only mastered 9% of a Law is only a Demigod…but is he on the same level of power as someone who mastered 1% of a Law? Even though they are both Demigods?” Hodan explained in a simplified way.

Linley now understood.

“Linley, don’t be too greedy. On the road to becoming a Deity, every single step is extremely arduous. There have been countless Demigods in the Four Higher Planes who have spent hundreds of millions of years, or even billions of years, without being able to break through from the Demigod level to the God level.”

“But what about the Overgods?” Linley immediately said.

“The Overgods?” Hodan laughed again. “You were asking me earlier if it was possible for humans to reach the Overgod level, right? Let me explain…”

“The Overgods…” Hodan continued to snicker at Linley. “Linley, the Overgods aren’t people, nor do they have genders. They don’t even have bodies.”

“Uh?” Linley stared at Hodan in surprise.

“The four Overgods are manifestations of the Four Prime Laws. They are nothing more than the very embodiment of the Laws that flow through the countless planes! The Overgod of Death is the embodiment of the Laws of Death. The Overgod of Destruction is the incarnation of the Laws of Destruction. The Overgod of Life is the avatar of the Laws of Life. And the Overgod of Fate is the personification of the Laws of Fate!”

Hodan laughed as he looked at Linley. “You tell me. Can you become an

Overgod through training?"

Linley understood.

The four Overgods were a natural part of the infinite planes of the universe. They were the heavens, they were the earth…they were part of the souls of every living creature.

They were the Laws themselves!

"The Overgods are beings of pure Law. They know nothing of love, hate, friendship, grudges, or other such emotions. They are cold. If you cursed an Overgod, they would ignore you. If you flattered them, they will not reward you. However…if you were to damage the planes themselves, then the Overgods would punish you."

Linley laughed.

Although the Overgods existed, they were the personification of the Laws of the universe. There was no need to pay them any heed or attention at all.

"Curse an Overgod? Someone would dare to curse an Overgod?" Linley asked, laughing.

Hodan stared at him, then laughingly berated Linley, "I was just giving an example. In all my years in the Netherworld, I've never heard of an Overgod manifesting in person. As far as you should be concerned, the most invincible power in the world is the power of the Sovereigns. The will of the Sovereigns is not to be disobeyed!"

Linley nodded, signifying understanding.

"Linley, the Seven Divine Planes are extremely beneficial for someone training in a particular Law. But the Four Higher Planes are different. No matter what sort of Law you are studying, the speed at which you train in the Four Higher Planes will be as fast as if you were training in the relevant Law in one of the Seven Divine Planes." Hodan said persuasively. "Thus,

the Four Higher Planes are the best choices."

The Four Higher Planes – the Celestial Realm, the Netherworld, the Infernal Realm, and the Life Realm.

"Linley. The ancestors of your clan are all in the Infernal Realm. Why don't you go there as well?" Hodan continued.

Go?

Linley had already made up his mind.

The Infernal Realm only had the ancestors he had never met. There wasn't much point going there. By contrast, in the Yulan continent, he had his younger brother Wharton, and his dear bros, Yale, Reynolds, and George. He also had many friends such as Barker, his brothers, Jenne, and the others.

In addition…

He also had a goal that was unfinished. The utter destruction of the Radiant Church.

Seeing Linley's hesitation, Hodan continued to speak persuasively. "Linley, the Infernal Realm has countless races and all sorts of powerful species of creatures, which have all sorts of attacks. In the Infernal Realm, training is extremely exciting."

"No need."

Linley shook his head and laughed. "Mr. Hodan, thank you for telling me so much. However, I am still young, and I haven't even gotten married. I'm in no rush to go there."

Hearing Linley say this, Hodan could only nod with resignation.

As the Planar Overseer, he was forbidden from forcing people to leave this

plane. If others were unwilling to leave, they could remain in their own plane as long as they liked, even to the point of becoming a Highgod.

“Mr. Hodan, I wish to ask you, if one goes to a Higher Plane, can one return?” Linley suddenly asked.

Hodan shook his head. “It is virtually impossible. Out of hundred thousand people who enter a Higher Plane, there usually isn’t even a single person who can come back to his homeland. This is because returning home carries an extremely high price.”

Linley understood.

No wonder the War God and the High Priest were unwilling to go to the Higher Planes. For even Deity-level experts to be unwilling to go, one could imagine how difficult returning was.

Not even one out of a hundred thousand would be able to return.

This probability was simply too low.

“Mr. Hodan, I’m so sorry to have wasted your time.” Linley said humbly.

“Since that’s the case, I’ll leave now.” Hodan stood up. “Linley, if one day you wish to leave this plane, you can come to the Arctic Icecap at the end of the North Sea to find me. I live atop a glacier in the Arctic Icecap.”

Linley felt surprised.

“The Arctic Icecap?” This was the first time Linley had heard that at the end of the North Sea, there was an ‘Arctic Icecap’.

“Mr. Hodan, what about at the end of the South Sea?” Linley was curious.

“The South Sea is far larger than the North Sea, and is virtually boundless. But at the end of it…at the end of it is the end of the Yulan plane. You’ll find nothing there but chaotic space.

Linley now understood.

After speaking, Hodan immediately flew into the air and left, heading north and quickly disappearing. Linley stood there, not moving for a long time.

This discussion with Hodan had a major impact on Linley.

“Boss, I’m actually pretty curious about the Higher Planes. Wow. All sorts of amazing species, and Saint-levels are just ordinary people there. That place must be awesome.” Bebe’s eyes were gleaming.

Linley patted Bebe on his little head. “Do you want to die?” Most likely, any expert in that plane could easily kill them.

Linley already had a plan for his future training.

Sovereign? That was too far away.

One step at a time. First, reach the Demigod level. Upon becoming a Demigod, Linley would have confidence in his ability to destroy the Radiant Church.

Linley knew his own limits. Given his current power, he wasn’t yet strong enough to impose his will upon and act as he pleased in the Yulan continent.

“It’s hard to say if I’d even be able to defeat Olivier.” Linley didn’t feel any confidence at all when it came to Olivier’s spiritual attack in his obsidian sword.

Spiritual attack?

Linley suddenly thought of his Coiling Dragon ring. In the past, when divine power had entered Linley’s soul, a burst of power had emanated from the Coiling Dragon ring to counter it.

“But Grandpa Doehring was also a master of the Coiling Dragon ring in the

past. Why is it that at the point of his death, the ring didn't help him?" Linley was puzzled.

The mysterious power of the Coiling Dragon had to be activated somehow.

The divine power of the Radiant Sovereign had done just that, somehow agitating the power in the Coiling Dragon ring, causing it to manifest protectively. But Olivier's attack wouldn't necessarily also activate the Coiling Dragon ring's protective energy.

"I have no idea what secrets lie hidden within the Coiling Dragon ring. But no matter what, I can't just put all my hopes on the Coiling Dragon ring. In battle, the only one I can rely on is myself."

Right now, the manor was filled with countless nobles and magnates, but Linley and his two magical beasts remained in the training courtyard in the rear of the manor. As if no one was present, Linley began to train.

"After going to the Infernal Realm, returning will be almost impossible. I can't possibly hope that I will receive any support from my ancestors. Everything that I do in the Yulan continent, I will have to rely on myself."

But Linley had forgotten something. Why was it that the dozens of Dragonblood Warriors as well as all of the other Supreme Warriors had left the Yulan continent en masse, and hadn't left even a single Saint-level expert behind to look after their descendants?

The waters of the Yulan continent were far deeper than Linley could imagine.

Chapter 20 – The War God's College

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 20, The War God's College

By nightfall, many of the guests at the manor had left, and most of the nobles were now gone. The engagement banquet was an afternoon banquet. The people still remaining at the manor were all relatively important guests.

"Wharton, where is your big brother?" Yale poured two cups of wine, then walked to Wharton's side. "I haven't seen him for almost the entire afternoon, I think?"

"My big brother left with that Mr. Hodan. No clue where he went." Wharton shook his head.

"I'll go look for him. Given your big brother's personality, he might have run off to the training yard and started to train." Yale left the guest hall. Making his way down the corridors, he arrived at the training courtyard after a while.

"Drip." "Drip."

Water flowed down the manmade fountain. Each drip-drop of water could be heard clearly in the silent training courtyard. Linley was seated in the meditative trance on the grass, not moving at all.

If one moved closer and examined him carefully, one might see that Linley's muscles were contracting and expanding in a very rhythmic way. And as they did, a natural gust of wind seemed to have surrounded Linley.

His spirit had become one with the endless earth and attuned to the boundless wind.

"Boom!" "Boom!" ….

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” ….

His eyes shut, Linley could feel the trembling, vibrating spirit of the earth, and the formless wind which filled the skies. After a long time, Linley opened his eyes.

“His lordship issued the order that no one is to be permitted to enter without his permission.”

“Not even me?” Yale sounded very resigned.

“Boss Yale, come in.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips, and he immediately stood up. Only now did Yale walk in. Looking at Linley, he chuckled, “Third Bro, I knew it. You are training again. Why are you so hard working? You are already a peak-stage Saint-level. You are already incredibly powerful.”

Linley glanced at Yale and chuckled.

To Yale, Linley could already be considered a peerless expert in the Yulan continent. Even the Emperor of the O’Brien Empire was incredibly courteous to Linley. But after having interacted with Hodan, Linley knew that he was still far from being adequate.

“Come, have some wine with me. I haven’t had much of a chance to drink with you today.” Yale put down two flasks of wine on the stone table.

Linley sat down as well, then retrieved two winecups from his interspatial ring.

“It’s a pity that Fourth Bro couldn’t be here.” Linley shook his head and sighed. A month ago, when Emperor Johann had announced who would marry his daughter, Reynolds had left the imperial capital.

“He had no choice. The army had ordered him to return. He had to go.” Yale said helplessly. “Last time, he just so happened to be on leave, which was why we three bros were able to have a reunion. It isn’t so bad for

Fourth Bro, but for Second Bro…if we want to see him, we have to go to the Yulan Empire."

The distance from the Yulan Empire to the O'Brien Empire was quite far.

Chatting idly with his dear bro, Linley felt extremely cheerful. Why would he want to give this up to go to a Higher Plane and engage in slaughter?

The most enjoyable part of training was in the spirit gaining a greater and greater level of understanding. It wasn't about the bloody slaughter.

"Third Bro, in a few days, I'll leave the imperial capital as well." Yale sighed emotionally. "Nothing for it. I'm still young. There are many things which the Conglomerate needs me to handle. Otherwise, in the future, I won't be qualified to manage it."

Linley understood.

An organization on the level of the Dawson Conglomerate definitely wouldn't award someone the leadership position just because one's father previously held it. Otherwise, the Dawson Conglomerate wouldn't be as powerful as it currently was. Of course, being the son of the Chairman had its advantages, but one also needed to have ability and a work history.

"Next month, Olivier will be doing battle with the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Doesn't that mean you'll miss it?" Linley laughed.

"Yeah." Yale laughed uncaringly. "I'm just a magus anyhow. How much would I understand from watching a battle between two Saint-level warriors?"

Linley suddenly put down his wine cup and looked at the door. "Someone is coming."

"Who?" Yale was puzzled. "Someone else knows that you are here?"

"Those two from the War God's College." Linley laughed calmly.

Saint-level experts could use spiritual energy to scan an area. The comparatively tiny manor could easily be totally covered by it. Naturally, they could easily locate Linley.

Castro and Lanke walked towards the back courtyard side by side. They were very surprised by their master's instructions.

"Although Linley's strength is not bad, there's no need for Master to act this way." Lanke shook his head.

"I don't understand either." Castro also felt puzzled.

Both of them were confused. Walking into the back courtyard, they saw that the guards had opened the door for them already. Castro and Lanke exchanged a glance.

"Linley knew that we were coming."

Castro and Lanke immediately saw Linley seated alongside Yale. Seeing that Yale was here as well, the two frowned.

Yale immediately stood up. "Third Bro, people have come to see you. Why don't you have a chat with them? I'll go to the main hall for now."

Linley nodded.

After Yale left, Castro and Lanke sat down. Linley asked, "Castro, Lanke, why have you come?"

Castro laughed. "Linley, the two of us have come bearing an invitation from our master to pay a visit to the War God's College."

"The War God is inviting me to the War God's College?" Linley could hardly believe it.

How could someone like the War God be inviting him?

Lanke nodded. “Linley, Master did indeed instruct us to have you come to the War God’s College. And what’s more, Master has instructed our senior apprentice-brother to welcome you personally. Linley, you must understand, even when the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, visited the War God’s College in the past, our senior apprentice-brother didn’t come to welcome him.”

“Oh?”

Linley was intrigued. Who was this ‘senior apprentice-brother’ of the War God’s College?

“Your senior apprentice-brother should be the first disciple of the War God, right? Wait…how old is he?” Linley suddenly came to a realization. Good heavens. The War God was someone who had reached this level over five thousand years ago.

Castro and Lanke both grinned.

“Right. Our senior apprentice-brother is already five thousand years old. He isn’t much younger than our master.” Castro nodded. “We were very surprised as well when we heard that Master instructed our senior apprentice-brother to welcome you.”

Linley knew that the War God only accepted a personal disciple every three hundred years.

The youngest one was Blumer, only thirty years old or so. But the oldest was this senior apprentice-brother, and was five thousand years old.

“Alright. When should I go?” Linley asked with a laugh.

“You can come to the War God’s College at any time. How about this? Here’s my insignia. When you arrive at the War God’s College, hand it to one of our fellow apprentices. They will inform me.” With a flip of his hand, Castro retrieved a scarlet red medal which had Castro’s name carved

onto it.

Accepting the insignia, Linley laughed and nodded. “Don’t worry. I will definitely go.”

Castro and Lanke both nodded, then left.

Linley secretly wondered to himself…if the senior apprentice-brother of the War God’s College was five thousand years old, how powerful was he?

Could he be weaker than the Monolithic Sword Saint?

Linley didn’t much believe it. The Monolithic Sword Saint was only a few centuries old, while the senior apprentice-brother had been training in the War God’s College for thousands of years with the War God’s personal guidance. After five thousand years, how could he possibly not be strong?

The primary peak of the War God Mountain was covered with many buildings. These were the places where the honorary disciples of the War God stayed, along with Kenyon, Castro, and Lanke, who were in charge of the ordinary affairs of War God Mountain, great or small.

The mountain wind was very strong this day. Many of the honorary disciples of the War God’s College were training.

“Haaargh!”

A boulder weighing dozens of tons was easily tossed from one person to another, who in turn kicked it back…the two honorary disciples of the war God’s College were able to easily kick around this massive boulder.

Most importantly, the boulder wasn’t damaged at all.

This required a very fine control of both physical strength and battle-qi.

Right at this time, a graceful figure appeared, soaring across the sky like blue smoke. It gracefully circled around War God Mountain, and in the

blink of an eye it arrived at the War God's College.

"Hrm?" One of the honorary disciples of the War God's College looked at the arrival with surprise. He hadn't seen anyone earlier, but then all of a sudden, this person had appeared.

"Are you…Master Linley?" The honorary disciple could recognize him. On the day of the duel at the Colosseum, the honorary disciple had gone to support Blumer.

Smiling, Linley nodded. "Castro invited me to come. This is his insignia. Please go inform him." Linley tossed the insignia to the honorary disciple.

The honorary disciple hurriedly said, "I'll go report it right away. Master Linley, please take a rest first."

Linley nodded. Wharton's engagement ceremony had concluded two days ago, and today, Linley had accepted the invitation and headed off to the War God's College and see for himself what it was all about.

"That person is Master Linley. I hear he's only 27 years old."

"Even apprentice-brother Kenyon was easily defeated by him."

"I was there that day. It only took one blow. Compared to Linley, apprentice-brother Kenyon is very weak."

"Apprentice-brother Kenyon is only the 25th personal disciple of our master. It is understandable that he is a bit weaker. Most likely, apprentice-brother Castro is roughly on par with Linley. If the first ten disciples of Master had been the ones to do battle, most likely they would have easily beat Linley."

Many of the honorary disciples of the War God's College murmured in quiet voices while casting glances at Linley. All of these honorary disciples were geniuses in their own right, and they were all proud and arrogant. But compared to Linley, they had a long way to go.

“Linley.” A bright voice rang out.

Castro ran out, his face wreathed in smiles. “You came after all. Come, let’s go to Bluethunder Peak.”

“Not here?” Linley was puzzled.

Clearly, this primary peak was the largest one with the most buildings. The other four peaks didn’t have much construction.

Castro laughed. “Linley, we have many honorary disciples here at the War God’s College, so we let them stay at the main peaks. Myself, Lanke, and Kenyon all stay here because we are in charge of them. The rest of our fellow apprentices are all on the other mountain peaks.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Castro immediately led Linley in the direction of a different mountain peak. Linley and Castro walked up the steep mountain walls as easily as if they were travelling on flat land, their steps as graceful as flying birds.

“Castro, you are in which generation of personal disciples of the War God?” Linley asked.

“Me? I’m the 22nd personal disciple.” Castro laughed.

“You’ve reached the peak-stage of the Saint-level by now, right?” Linley asked. When he was at the courtyard, he had heard the honorary disciples say that Castro should be on par with him. This was why Linley asked this question.

Castro nodded. “Right. But I most likely am not a match for you. Your speed is quite astonishing, on par with Olivier.”

Linley was thinking nonstop.

Even the 22nd personal disciple had reached the peak-stage of the Saint-level. Then what about the earlier disciples?

“Castro, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, is reputed to be the number one Saint in the world. Has he ever competed against your senior apprentice-brother?” Linley asked.

“No way.”

Castro let out an involuntary chuckle. “Although Haydson already has a rather high grasp and understanding of the Laws of the Earth, the War God’s College has quite a few people more powerful than him. The reason why Haydson is famous is because my senior apprentice-brother and second apprentice-brother are all over five thousand years old, and have retreated from the secular world thousands of years ago. How could they go out and compete against a junior who is only a few centuries old for the sake of fame and glory?”

Linley suddenly understood.

“Even aside from our War God’s College, I know others more powerful than him as well. For example, that King of Killers, Cesar. A thousand years ago, Cesar sparred against my senior apprentice-brother, and they were both on par with each other. I imagine if Cesar wanted to act against Haydson, he would be able to easily gain victory.” Castro said with certainty.

Linley was startled.

Cesar?

It seemed as though Castro didn’t know that Cesar had already reached the Deity-level. But for his senior apprentice-brother to have dueled Cesar to a standstill a thousand years ago meant that he was indeed an incredible person.

“We’ve arrived at Bluethunder Peak. Come. It’s been a long time since I’ve seen my senior apprentice-brother as well. Master has always said that

amongst all of us disciples, senior apprentice-brother is the most likely to reach the Deity-level." Castro's face was filled with confidence.

Chapter 21 – The Eldest Disciple

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 21, The Eldest Disciple

The mountain wind howled drearily. Walking up the mountain, Linley and Castro travelled a hundred meters with every two or three steps.

“On Bluethunder Peak, eight of us apprentice-brothers are living there. Our senior apprentice-brother is also living at the very top of Bluethunder Peak.” Castro said with emotion.

But Linley was currently thinking about that battle the eldest disciple had with Cesar a thousand years ago.”

“Castro, do you know anything about that duel between your senior apprentice-brother and Cesar?” Linley asked.

Castro said enviously, “When that duel occurred, I hadn’t been accepted into the War God’s College yet. I have, however, heard other fellow apprentices discuss it. That Cesar was extremely powerful, and he was extremely fast as well. Senior apprentice-brother’s speed is the highest amongst all of us, but he was only able to match Cesar’s speed.”

“How fast were they?” Linley was also specialized in speed.

Castro laughed calmly. “I don’t know either. After all, I didn’t personally witness this duel. But I think…they should be much faster than you and Olivier.”

Linley could understand. After all, his human form was not yet at the Saint-level. He still had a long way to grow. It was normal if he currently wasn’t a match for them.

At the top of Bluethunder Peak.

The top of the mountain had an open space that was a few dozen meters wide. There were some stunted dwarf trees at the top of the mountain as well as some wild grass. Next to one of the old dwarf trees, there were two stone houses.

And at the top of the mountain, there was a man standing there, staring downwards.

Linley carefully looked at this man. He was dressed in a simple blue robe. He was rather skinny, but his back was ramrod straight. His short hair was only three inches, and it was also blue. Just by looking at him, one could sense that this man was possessed of a valiant, resolute air.

“Senior apprentice-brother.” Castro said respectfully.

The blue-haired man turned to look at them. When his gaze landed on Linley, Linley suddenly sensed his own soul seem to tremble from the gaze.

Was this an attack?!

Linley instantly grew frightened. He was certain that against ordinary warriors, most likely the gaze alone of this senior apprentice-brother could destroy their soul. Fortunately, he himself possessed the spiritual energy of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

“Not bad.” The man smiled and nodded. “You are Linley?”

“I am.” Linley nodded as well.

“My name is Fain [Fa’en].” The man smiled. “Master instructed me to come welcome you. You drank dragon’s blood in order to gain the ability to transform, I believe. You aren’t a pure Dragonblood Warrior, right?”

“Hrm?” Linley frowned.

“After hearing about your Dragonform’s appearance, I deduced this. I’ve met other Dragonblood Warriors of your Baruch clan.” Fain said with a

calm laugh.

“So what if I did drink dragon’s blood?” Linley responded.

The eldest disciple, Fain, sighed with emotion. “Based on what I know, the Pure Dragonblood Warriors have tremendous potential, while the Variant Dragonblood Warriors who drank dragon’s blood have slightly less potential. If you were a Pure Dragonblood Warrior, upon reaching the peak of your power, you would probably be able to do battle with me.”

“Even the potential of a Variant Dragonblood Warrior most likely is greater than yours.” Linley was very unhappy with the way this ‘eldest disciple’ was speaking.

Fain frowned.

He was a person of great status. Even the so-called ‘most powerful Saint’ in the world, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was nothing more than a junior in Fain’s eyes, not even worthy of his attention. He truly was rather dissatisfied with the way Linley had just spoken to him.

But when he thought of the instructions the War God had given him, Fain simply smiled, no longer allowing himself to be angry.

“Indeed. Supreme Warriors, even non-pure ones, still have higher potential than normal people.” Fain smiled, then glanced at the nearby Castro. “Apprentice-brother, you can go back now. For now, I will attend to Linley.”

“Yes, senior apprentice-brother.” Castro said very respectfully. He then looked at Linley meaningfully, signaling with his eyes for Linley to not be too arrogant. He then left the mountain.

Linley took a deep breath. He, too, understood that here at the War God’s College, it was best to be a bit more humble.

“Linley, let’s sit down and chat.” With a wave of his hand, Fain caused two

nearby wooden seats to fly over towards them, landing in front of himself and Linley.

Seeing this, Linley was extremely puzzled.

What technique had Fain used just now? Linley hadn't sensed him using any battle-qi.

"I hear that you refused Lord Hodan?" Fain laughed. Even Fain was extremely respectful towards Hodan. Hodan was, after all, a Deity-level expert.

"Indeed." Linley nodded.

"Wise." Fain laughed. "Linley, we should feel very lucky to have been born here in the Yulan continent."

"Oh?" Linley was somewhat confused.

Fain continued, "Many Saints have already been famous for centuries and have enjoyed all there is to enjoy. Most of their family members have died of old age. Without anything tying them down emotionally, a large number of them have gone to the Higher Planes."

Linley nodded. He understood this.

Eventually, one would grow weary of what the material plane had to offer. After the passage of centuries, all family members who had not reached the Saint-level would have died long ago. It was very normal for them to eventually decide to go to the Higher Planes.

"But what those people do not understand is that many of the experts of the Higher Planes wish they could come here to the plane of the Yulan continent." A hint of a smile was at the corner of Fain's lips. "Linley, five thousand years ago, many experts from different planes descended to the Yulan continent. Do you know of this affair?"

“I’ve heard of it.” Linley nodded.

“I didn’t expect you to know about this.” Fain nodded. “Those countless experts all came to the Yulan continent. Naturally, it was because there was something about this plane which attracted them.”

Fain shook his head and sighed. “But many Saints instead choose to run off to the Higher Planes, where experts are as common as the clouds. They give up what is close to them for something far away.”

“Linley, let me just tell you this. Don’t be in a hurry to go to the Higher Planes. Stay here. Eventually, you’ll know what huge benefits this plane has to offer. As for what secrets lie hidden within the Yulan continent, for now, I cannot tell you.” Fain said with a laugh.

Linley looked at Fain questioningly. “Why tell me this?”

Many Saints didn’t know about this. Why had Fain decided to tell him?

“Master instructed me to.” Fain said.

“The War God?” Linley truly didn’t understand it.

This was the second time the War God had assisted him. The first time, he had ordered Emperor Johann to choose Wharton, while this time, he had Fain tell him these secrets.

Fain suddenly said, “Linley, I hear you are quite powerful. Let’s spar together. What do you say?”

Linley’s eyes lit up. He immediately nodded.

To train with someone on the level of Fain would definitely be beneficial. With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved his Bloodviolet flexible sword. Leaping backwards, he retreated at high speed, while at the same time, those black scales covered his body, and those sharp, ferocious spikes appeared as well.

Staring at Linley's cold, remorseless dark golden eyes, Fain sighed in praise. "This Variant Dragonform of yours seems to be quite special. Come. Are you ready?"

Linley was already chanting the words to the Windshadow spell.

"Ready." Linley nodded.

Looking at Linley, Fain recalled his master's instructions. He couldn't help but let out a resigned sigh. The reason he actively asked Linley to spar was also at the behest of the War God.

According to the War God, it was time to let Linley have an idea as to how powerful the true experts of the continent were.

"Linley, I am extremely fast. Be careful." Fain said with a smile. In fact, Linley had chosen to use Bloodviolet precisely because he had heard that Fain was fast.

Bloodviolet could reach an astonishing level of speed when used correctly.

"Let's begin." Fain's eyes lit up.

"Swish!" An azure light suddenly flowed out from Fain's body, so powerful that it crackled and popped.

Fain suddenly moved.

Linley only felt an azure bolt of lightning suddenly streak towards him, at least twice as fast as Olivier's top speed. This terrifying speed rendered Linley completely unable to dodge.

"How frightening!"

Linley leapt backwards while hurriedly transforming Bloodviolet into a tornado of movement, creating countless flashes of violet light which

attacked that azure bolt of lightning.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind!

Linley didn't dare to use any other techniques. If he were to use the 'Tempos of the Wind' instead, he probably wouldn't even be able to touch his opponent. Only by using this extremely fast technique could he just barely defend himself.

"Bam!" A terrifying force struck onto the tip of Bloodviolet.

And then, Linley could clearly sense that azure bolt of lightning seem to be transmitted through Bloodviolet towards him, striking onto his black scales.

"Bang!"

It was as though a heavy warhammer had struck Linley's soul. Linley flew upwards, then immediately collapsed onto the floor, his entire body trembling as that azure lightning continued to ripple across Linley's body.

His entire body felt paralyzed. Linley could sense that his muscles had lost all power, and he was barely able to remain conscious.

After a long period of time, Linley finally regained full consciousness, and his four limbs and his muscles slowly gained strength as well. Only now did Linley stand up, staring at Fain with disbelief.

When he had dueled with Olivier, Linley had believed himself to be a peak-stage Saint, which meant that there should be very few people in the continent capable of defeating him.

But now, after sparring with Fain, he realized that the difference between himself and Fain was extremely vast.

Fain was twice as fast as him. Although that didn't sound like much, when engaging in a battle of speed, even a tiny advantage in speed meant the faster party held an advantage. Twice as fast…this was an unbridgeable

gap.

There was no way for him to counterattack.

What's more, that lightning-attack had stunned his very soul. Fain had actually held back from using his full power as he had not wished to injure Linley.

"What, you can't believe it?" Fain sat back down on his wooden chair, laughing.

Linley's mind was in a state of chaos. "Although I knew that you are strong, Mr. Fain, I didn't expect…I couldn't resist at all. Mr. Fain, have you reached the Deity-level?"

"No. I'm still just a peak-stage Saint." Fain shook his head.

"I'm also a peak-stage Saint. But…" Linley couldn't understand.

Laughing, Fain looked at Linley, then sighed with emotion. "Linley, don't be fooled by the four words, 'peak-stage Saint-level'. In the eyes of experts such as us, the so-called 'peak-stage' doesn't matter. The only thing that matters is how much and how well you understand the Laws."

"If you understand just the tiniest bit of the Laws, then you are a 'peak-stage' Saint in the eyes of ordinary people." Fain said disdainfully.

Linley was startled.

Right. That was indeed the case. When Linley's proficiency with the sword had reached the 'impose' level, that was merely borrowing the 'imposing force' of the heavens and the earth. It didn't have anything to do with the Laws.

But the techniques he had developed based on the Profound Truths of the Earth and the two techniques he had developed based on the Profound Truths of the Wind, the Rippling Wind and Tempos of the Wind techniques,

were indeed based on what he himself knew was but a tiny bit of understanding of the Laws.

“According to what Master says, the Elemental Laws are as vast and boundless as the seas. If you’ve understood a single drop of water in those seas, you are a peak-stage Saint. If you’ve understood a hundred drops of water, you are still a peak-stage Saint. But there is a huge difference between the two!”

A hint of loneliness could be seen on Fain’s face. “The Elemental Laws truly are vast and boundless. Supposedly, only after mastering 1% of a Law can one reach the Demigod stage.”

“As for you and Olivier, you haven’t even mastered 0.01%.” Fain laughed as he glanced at Linley. “Tell me. Although both of you have gained some insights, can your insights compare with the likes of those of us who have been training for thousands of years?”

Linley understood.

No matter how much of a genius he was, he had spent less than ten years meditating on the Elemental Laws.

And Fain? He had been doing the same for thousands of years. Even if Fain wasn’t as talented as him, how could his understanding of the Laws be lower than Linley’s?

“Linley, most of the famous Saints in the world, such as that ‘Monolithic Sword Saint’ Haydson, all became famous in the past millennium. Those true experts who have been training for thousands of years are all far past the point of caring about worldly fame. All of them are meditating and training in private.”

Linley was stunned.

The Monolithic Sword Saint had the reputation of being the most powerful Saint, after all.

“Those lists and rankings that you might have heard about are nothing more than the experts which most people of the continent know about. Do you know how powerful the experts you are unaware of are? All of the lucky survivors of those battles from five thousand years ago have been in training in secret since then. I refuse to believe that they would be willing to leave the plane of the Yulan continent.” A hint of a smile was on Fain’s face.

Chapter 22 – The War God's Summons

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 22, The War God's Summons

After saying these words, Fain turned and walked to the edge of the peak, allowing the wind to buffet his long robes. As for Linley, he continued to sit there, digesting what he had just learned.

From the Planar Overseer, Hodan, Linley had learned that upon reaching the Saint-level, one could leave the plane of the Yulan continent.

From Fain, Linley had learned that the Yulan continent's plane contained a major secret. The descent of those experts from other planes five thousand years ago was also related to this mystery.

Actually, it was already quite incredible that Linley had reached his current level at the tender age of twenty seven. After all, those extremely powerful experts who were training in secret here in the Yulan continent had all been training for countless years.

"Whew." Linley let out a long breath.

"Why worry about so much? As long as my little brother and I are happy, and as long as I can exterminate the Radiant Church to avenge my parents, I should feel satisfied."

Linley's current goals required that he reach a certain level of power.

As for Linley himself, he truly enjoyed the path of training.

The path of training was filled with obstacles, treacherous cliffs, and dangers. Many powerful people had lost their lives on this path. How few would actually reach the pinnacle?

In the entire Yulan continent, there were only five Deities.

Ever since embarking on this path, Linley's goal was to stand at the very pinnacle of the Yulan continent. When he had embarked on this path as a youth, Linley had mentally prepared himself for the possibility of death and failure.

"When I was six, because I was unable to train in Dragonblood battle-qi, my dream was to become a warrior of the seventh or eighth ranks. Afterwards, I not only became a Dragonblood Warrior, I also became the genius magus of the Holy Union."

"When I was young, I dreamed of eventually reaching the Saint-level. And now, I have become a peak-stage Saint."

A hint of a smile was on Linley's lips.

He had confidence.

"Fain? In the not too-distant future, I will defeat him as well." Linley felt full of excitement. The more experts he surpassed and the greater the heights he achieved, the more satisfied he felt.

What truly moved a person wasn't the results he gained, but the overcoming of setbacks and breakthroughs which one made on the path to success.

Fain turned his head, looking at Linley.

"Rest here for now. At nightfall, I will take you to see Master." Fain smiled.

"The War God?" Linley frowned.

The War God wanted to personally meet with him?

"Naturally, Master has something he wishes to discuss with you. Just train here quietly for now. If there is anything you need, you can ask me." Fain didn't want to waste any more time on Linley. He walked to a stone that had

already been polished smooth by him sitting on it countless times. Seating himself in the meditative stance, he closed his eyes.

Linley stared at the meditating Fain.

“What exactly does the War God want?” Linley didn’t think about it for too long, as he also sat down and began to quietly meditate.

…..

Time passed. In the blink of an eye, the sun had set.

Fain had been quietly meditating on the boulder. Suddenly, his body began to turn blurry, then disappeared from atop the boulder and reappeared next to it.

Seeing that Linley had been quietly meditating this entire time, Fain couldn’t help but secretly nod.

True experts had to learn how to endure solitude.

For example, Olivier had quietly meditated by himself atop that desolate mountain for three full years. Linley, in turn, had spent three painstaking years training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. If one couldn’t endure solitude, one’s level of talent wouldn’t make a difference.

“Linley, it is about time. Come with me to meet Master.” Fain smiled.

Linley opened his eyes as well, and immediately followed Fain.

Fain walked to the side of the peak, and then began to fly downwards. Although Linley wasn’t able to fly in human form, Linley leapt off the peak as well, allowing himself to gracefully drift downwards.

Based on his mastery of the wind, Linley could slow down the rate of his descent.

Soon, Fain landed at the half-way point down the mountain, and Linley landed as well.

“Come in with me.” Fain headed straight for a natural tunnel. Linley felt rather puzzled. The War God actually lived in a tunnel?

The tunnel curved left and right. After a long time, it ended in that deep, bottomless pit. Looking down into it, nothing but darkness could be seen.

“Let’s go down.” Fain jumped down directly, and Linley followed him.

“Whoosh.” “Whoosh.”

The two fell down at high speed. Linley was secretly shocked. “We’ve definitely fallen for at least two thousand meters. We’re below the ground level by now.”

After falling for a long period of time, Fain and Linley gracefully floated to the ground.

And then, Linley followed Fain as they continued to move through the tunnel, but as they did, the tunnel’s temperature grew higher and higher.

“What a high temperature.”

Even Linley didn’t dare to resist this terrifying heat with his body alone. He had to use his battle-qi to protect the soles of his feet, and even his skin and head was covered by a layer of azurish-black battle-qi.

Without the protection of his battle-qi, most likely Linley would have caught on fire.

The surrounding stone walls were all red with heat. After walking for a while, Linley saw a pitch-black stone door in front of him. Despite the extremely high temperature, the stone door hadn’t turned even the slightest bit red. Clearly, it was made from no ordinary material.

“Whoooooosh.”

Gusts of hot air came from the other side of the door, carrying with it a faint, majestic presence. Faced with this majestic presence, Linley actually felt the sudden urge to bow down towards it.

“Master, I’ve brought Linley.” Fain said respectfully.

The War God?

The War God was past this door!

Linley had previously been calm, but now, his heart couldn’t help but begin to beat faster. He was actually standing in front of one of the six ultimate experts of the Yulan continent, with only a stone door separating them.

“Alright. Fain. You can leave now.” A calm voice rang out.

“Yes, Master.” Fain respectfully departed.

Linley still stood there, quietly waiting for the War God to address him.

“Linley. Twenty seven years old. An Arch Magus of the ninth rank who has already embarked on the path of understanding the Laws…” The War God’s voice remained very calm. “Linley, you aren’t bad.”

Linley frowned.

He could sense that the War God’s voice seemed to be causing his soul to shudder. He had the sense that if the War God was to raise his voice a little bit, it would cause his soul to dissipate and collapse.

“Thank you for your praise, War God.” Linley said humbly.

“I have already instructed Fain to tell you that which you need to know. Outside the door, there is a scarlet talisman of command. Take it. From today forward, you can be considered to be someone belonging to my side.”

The War God said calmly.

Linley's heart shook.

Considered to be someone belonging to the War God's side?

He turned to look at the side of the door. Indeed, atop a flat rock, there was a scarlet red talisman, which slowly rose into the air and began to fly towards Linley.

Atop the talisman, a single engraved word could be seen: "War"!

"What is this War God thinking? I'll be considered as belonging to his side?" Linley felt somewhat unhappy. The War God was forcibly recruiting him without even asking or negotiating with him.

The War God's calm voice once more rang out, "Given your current level of power, you actually aren't yet qualified to receive this talisman. However… I believe you will reach that level sooner or later, which is why I am giving it to you in advance. Once you have this talisman, you will be qualified to investigate the secrets of the Yulan continent."

"The secrets of the Yulan continent?" Linley said.

"When your human form reaches the Saint-level, or…when you defeat the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, come find me again. By then, you will be qualified to know this secret. Only then would you truly be worthy of this talisman." The War God said calmly.

From the War God's words, Linley could sense a certain lonely arrogance.

In the War God's eyes, the current Linley wasn't even qualified to possess this talisman. In his eyes, Linley's power was indeed quite weak.

Linley knew his own limits as well.

"War God." Linley said respectfully. "You just said when my human form

reaches the Saint-level, or when I defeat the Monolithic Sword Saint? Does that mean you, War God, feel that only after my human form reaches the Saint-level will I be able to defeat the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson?"

The War God was momentarily silent.

"That Monolithic Sword Saint is reputed to be the world's strongest Saint. Although in the eyes of those other peak-stage Saints who lie hidden throughout the world, he doesn't live up to that reputation, Haydson's current level of power can still be considered on par with those who have trained for thousands of years.

Linley understood.

"As for reaching the Saint-level in your human form…if you remain unable to defeat Haydson even after your human form reaches the Saint-level, then I will feel embarrassed on your ancestors' behalf." The War God said calmly.

Linley laughed.

Clearly, as far as the War God was concerned, once Linley's human form reached the Saint-level, Linley should definitely have surpassed Haydson. But the War God seemed to currently feel that he was not yet able to overcome Haydson.

"I refuse to believe that the War God knows about the true offensive power of my 'Profound Truths of the Earth.'" Linley said to himself.

Although the War God possessed divine power, he wasn't omniscient.

"Linley, let me offer you a word of advice!" The War God suddenly said.

"War God, please speak." Linley's eyes lit up, and he immediately listened carefully. The War God had become a Deity over five thousand years ago. His advice could allow Linley to avoid many missteps.

That calm voice rang out from behind the stone door. “The Elemental Laws contain all sorts of truths. What you need to do is select a single path and follow it to its conclusion. It is best if you don’t simultaneously train in multiple paths.”

Linley was startled. The Elemental Laws were indeed quite boundless. For example, Linley was currently analyzing two aspects of the Elemental Laws of Wind. The first one was speed, the ultimate speed.

The second was in single-target sword attacks, such as his Tempos of the Wind.

“War God, why should I select just one path?” Linley asked.

“Naturally, if you so desire, you can simultaneously analyze multiple aspects of the Elemental Laws. No one can force you not to do so. Whether or not you choose to take my advice is up to you. Alright, I am finished. You can leave now.” The War God said calmly.

Linley hurriedly said, “War God, I would like to ask, what sort of power or authority does this talisman confer upon me?”

“Possessing this talisman is a symbol that you are qualified to enter the ranks of those who know the secrets of the Yulan continent. As for everything else…even if you die, I won’t get involved. You must rely on yourself.”

“Then War God, I would like to ask, right now, how many Deities exist on the Yulan continent?” Ever since meeting Fain, Linley had been wondering…

Was it possible that the Yulan continent had more than just five Deities?

“In total, there are five.” The War God said calmly. “That Cesar broke through just a few years ago.”

Linley felt secretly relieved.

The Yulan continent only had a few Deities standing at its peak after all.

“War God, why did you give me this talisman? Previously, why did you help my younger brother?” Linley asked. Linley had been puzzled about this the entire time. What sort of relationship did the War God have with him?

As far as Linley could tell, the War God shouldn’t need anything from him.

After all, the War God was far, far more powerful than him.

“You ask too many questions.”

The War God’s voice turned cold. “You can go back now. For now, don’t think about too many things. Focus on your training. After you defeat Haydson, or after your human form reaches the Saint-level, come find me again.”

Hearing that the War God was starting to grow annoyed, Linley knew how he should act.

“War God, I bid you farewell then.”

Linley immediately left. Casting the Windshadow spell, Linley flew out of the deep pit, then exited the tunnel. After exiting the tunnel and allowing the mountain wind to buffet him, Linley let out a long breath.

Despite being separated from the War God by a stone door, Linley still felt enormous pressure when speaking to the man.

“Someone belonging to his side?” Linley stared at the scarlet talisman in his hand. The scarlet talisman occasionally flashed with golden light. Linley had never seen this sort of material before.

With a flip of his hand, Linley stored the scarlet talisman into his interspatial ring, then headed down War God Mountain.

On the way down, Linley was still thinking about the War God's final bit of advice.

"The Elemental Laws contain all sorts of truths. What you need to do is select a single path and follow it to its conclusion."

His current focus was the throbbing pulse of the world.

Linley shook his head. Without thinking about it any longer, he left War God Mountain and returned to the imperial capital.

The next time Linley would return to War God Mountain, it would be after he defeated Haydson, or when his human form reached the Saint-level.

Chapter 23 – Pulseguard

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 23, Pulseguard

Count Wharton's manor was very quiet. Zassler was in his room training, while Barker, his brothers, and Wharton were all training in the wide training yard in the back of the manor. Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne were chatting with the Seventh Princess, Nina.

"Whew."

After finishing his training, Wharton took a shower and changed into a set of clean clothes. Satisfied and content, Wharton walked into his manor. He had never felt as happy as he currently felt.

He was together with his big brother, and he was marrying Nina. Grandpa Hiri and Hillman were also enjoying the quiet, comfortable lives of nobles.

"Father. Mother. If you two were still alive, you would definitely be very happy." Wharton felt very satisfied, while at the same time, he felt very grateful to his big brother, Linley, who had brought all of this.

Linley was the pillar of the clan.

If it wasn't for Linley, would the Emperor have given Nina to him? If it wasn't for Linley, in the capital, he would only be an ordinary person amongst the nobles, at best considered a genius.

Wharton glanced at the distant Grandpa Hiri, who was reclining on a chair, idly sipping some fruit juice.

"Grandpa Hiri, where's my big brother?" Wharton asked as he walked over.

Housekeeper Hiri looked up and smiled. "Oh, Wharton. Young master Linley left early in the morning."

“He still isn’t back yet?” Wharton nodded.

“You have nothing to be worried about. Your big brother is a Saint. Young master Wharton, you need to train hard as well.” Housekeeper Hiri chortled.

“Right.” Wharton nodded.

“Grandpa Hiri, next month is Olivier’s duel against the Monolithic Sword Saint. Will you go watch?” Wharton laughed.

“Naturally. How could I miss a duel between two Saints?” Housekeeper Hiri’s eyes shone. “The Monolithic Sword Saint is an expert amongst Saints. This duel will definitely be exciting.”

Wharton’s eyes were also filled with excitement.

“One day, I will be like my big brother, Olivier, and Haydson.” Wharton secretly decided.

Just then, footsteps rang out.

Linley appeared outside the courtyard. Seeing his big brother, Wharton felt a warm feeling in his heart. He hurriedly went to welcome him. “Big bro, what took you so long to come back? Barker and I have finished our training. We are going to eat dinner soon.”

“I went to see some people.” Linley laughed.

Linley didn’t tell his little brother about his trip to War God Mountain. As Linley saw it, it was best not to inform his little brother about certain affairs of the Yulan continent. When his little brother reached the Saint-level, there would be plenty of time to tell him then.

Within the rear of the courtyard was Linley’s residence within the manor estate. The training grounds of the estate were extremely large, but Wharton, Barker, and his brothers all needed a great deal of space as well.

Thus, Linley usually trained by himself in his own manor.

“Whoosh.” “Whoosh.” The wind blew about, scattering the fallen leaves on the floor, sending them dancing into the air. Linley’s hair gently fluttered about with the wind as well.

Linley was wielding the adamantine heavy sword, with the tip of the sword touching the ground.

“I have already managed to generate 128 pulses of the vibrational attacks of the Profound Truths of the Earth.” During the five years he had spent at Cloudpeaks Village, Linley had already mastered the Hundred Layered Waves during the fourth year.

Linley had improved quite rapidly when he had advanced from three waves to ten, then from ten to a hundred.

But after a hundred waves had been reached, Linley’s rate of improvement had begun to drop. Despite all that time having passed, Linley had only reached 128 waves.

With each breakthrough, Linley only managed to increase the number of waves by one or two.

“I wonder what the absolute limit is for the number of waves?” Linley sat down into the meditative position.

“Thruuum.” “Thruuuum.”

The sound of the throbbing pulse of the world rang out within Linley’s consciousness. That unique rhythm had a miraculous cadence, capable of causing someone to unconsciously be subsumed within it.

Linley’s muscles would occasionally expand or contract as they constantly vibrated, and wind arose out of nowhere around Linley. While meditating, Linley had previously noticed that his muscles would absorb earth elemental essence at an even faster pace when they were vibrating in pace

with the rhythm of the earth's pulse, allowing his body to gain strength faster.

"Ah!"

Linley suddenly stood up, his eyes shining with terrifying light.

"The throbbing pulse of the world. The throbbing pulse of the world…" Linley had suddenly recalled that technique the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had used to block himself and Olivier.

Haydson's body had suddenly been surrounded by layered waves of earth-colored elemental particles which had hammered against him in waves, forcing him backwards.

"Back then, I had the feeling that Haydson's defense seemed to have a very familiar quality about it. But at the time, I didn't understand it, and I didn't have time to analyze it. But now…"

Linley had a particular feeling, akin to seeing a bright moon which had been hidden behind a foggy veil gradually grow clearer in his mind.

"The throbbing pulse of the world isn't just vibrational waves. It can also become invisible, and it can also be transmitted through battle-qi." It was as though there had been an opaque film covering this realization. Having pierced through the film, Linley now began to understand.

"Using pulses for defense, haha…earth-style magic has the 'Pulsating Guard' forbidden level spell. It seems that they are based on the same principles. However, my 'Pulseguard Defense' would only be used to protect myself."

Linley's azurish-black battle-qi began to fill the area around him.

"No, that isn't how it works."

Linley shut his eyes, allowing his heart to merge with the throbbing pulse of

the world, while also tuning his Dragonblood battle-qi to the same tempo. He already understood the general principles, but actually applying them wasn't a simple task.

Linley stood there in the middle of the courtyard as waves of azurish-black battle-qi suffused the area around him.

The principle was actually quite simple. For example, a sheet of paper could easily be torn apart, but if the paper was folded six times into a braid, this braid of paper might be able to support up to a hundred pounds of force.

The same material, after being folded and braided, could support far more amounts of force.

Battle-qi was the same when used for defense.

The same battle-qi, when used in different ways, could defend against ten times or even a hundred times as much incoming force. The "Throbbing Pulse of the World", in turn, was a very unique technique.

The Throbbing Pulse of the World was just one of the paths within the Laws of the Earth.

Linley had already reached a rather high level of understanding with regards to the Throbbing Pulse of the World. All he had to do now was to transform that understanding and use the same principles to create a Pulseguard Defense for himself. Since he already understood the principles, once he began to apply them, he would advance fairly quickly.

"Big bro, time to eat." Wharton walked over, with Barker and his brothers behind him. The five of them had just finished training and then showering.

But when they pushed the door open, they discovered…

Linley was surrounded by azurish-black battle-qi, which rolled out like waves of fog. Linley was hidden within those roiling waves of azurish-

black battle-qi.

“Big bro?”

“Lord?”

Wharton, Barker, and the others all looked at each other. Although training was important, resting was as well.

“Don’t bother the Boss.” Bebe, resting in the corner of the courtyard, ordered.

“It is dinner time. Big bro should take a rest.” As he spoke, Wharton headed towards Linley. Bebe and Haeru glanced at each other, but didn’t block him.

Linley had already instructed Bebe and Haeru not to go near him, as they would otherwise be injured by those waves.

“Time to let this little punk learn a lesson.” Bebe secretly said to himself.

Wharton remained cautious. The battle-qi around Linley was quite dense, but he was still fairly far away from Linley. The battle-qi here was still rather sparse. How could Wharton be truly worried about such a small amount of battle-qi?

But once he reached the edges of that azurish-black battle-qi, Wharton suddenly felt a bizarre surge of energy strike at him.

“Bang!”

Wharton was sent flying away. Wharton had the sensation of being struck dozens of times in an instant, and each time he felt as though he had been struck by a meteor.

“Wharton.” Gates was the first to go forward and catch Wharton.

“Wharton, are you okay?” Gates asked.

“I’m fine.” Wharton put his hand against his chest, the taste of blood in his mouth. He stared at Linley in disbelief. “Big bro is releasing his battle-qi, but I only touched the outermost perimeter. How could the power be so intense?”

Wharton didn’t believe it. The battle-qi density closer to Linley was far higher, and it would most likely be far more dangerous as well.

“Wharton, his Lordship still hasn’t stopped his training despite what just happened. Clearly, he must be at a critical juncture in his training. It’s best if we don’t disturb him.” Barker said seriously.

Wharton nodded as well. “I will order the guards to prevent anyone from disturbing him.”

“No need. Haeru and I will look after him.” Bebe said disdainfully. “You can leave now. If the Boss doesn’t finish his training, don’t disturb him.”

Wharton, Barker, and the others glanced at each other, then left.

At the same time, Wharton and Barker instructed everyone else not to interrupt Linley’s training. That night, at dinner, Jenne, Nina, and the others were all astonished at how hard Linley was training.

“He’s training so hard that he won’t even eat dinner. Big lunk, your big bro really is hard working.” Nina murmured.

But unexpectedly, the second day, Linley continued to train like this. The third day, the same…and just like that, one day after another went by.

In the blink of an eye, over ten days passed. May had arrived.

“In a few more days, it will be time for the duel between Olivier and Haydson. My big bro wouldn’t be so caught up in his training that he will miss it, would he?” Wharton said to Barker and his brothers.

Wharton, Barker, and his brothers were all standing at the doorway to the courtyard.

Every day, after they finished their training, they would come visit Linley. Linley hadn't changed at all, and he was still surrounded by that azurish-black battle-qi. Only, compared to ten days past, that azurish-black battle-qi had actually shrunk quite a bit in area.

"I wonder how big brother's training is progressing." Wharton simply couldn't understand what he was seeing.

Barker and his brothers shook their heads as well. In terms of level of understanding, Barker and his brothers weren't much better off than Wharton, and weren't able to understand much of anything regarding the Elemental Laws.

"Whew." The sound of an exhaling breath.

Wharton and the Barker brothers, who had just turned and prepared to leave, all turned and looked back. Indeed, the azurish-black battle-qi had returned to Linley's body, and Linley was currently smiling while stretching.

"Wharton, you are here as well." Linley laughed.

"Big bro, you finally finished your training." Wharton said with excitement.

"Oh, right. Wharton, how much time have I spent in training?" Linley laughed.

"Almost fifteen days! Today is May 1st. In three days, it will be May 4th. That night, Olivier and Haydson will be dueling." Wharton said quickly.

"Fifteen days?"

Linley was slightly startled. Actually, he had been totally concentrating on sensing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and constantly modifying and

upgrading his Pulseguard Defense technique. He hadn't noticed time pass at all.

Unexpectedly, after closing his eyes, fifteen days had passed.

"Although I already had a high understanding of the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and also understood the general principles behind the Pulseguard, the actual development of the technique took fifteen days."

But Linley was actually quite satisfied.

In the past, his 'battle-qi armor' was created through the application of battle-qi in a very simple, crude manner. His current 'Pulseguard Defense' used the same amount of battle-qi, but was several dozen times stronger.

"But it seems my defense is different from Haydson's."

When he was developing his technique, Linley had thought their techniques were the same. But after developing it, Linley realized…that Haydson's defense was actually just a simple way of utilizing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'. Haydson's understanding of the Throbbing Pulse of the World definitely was not as deep as Linley's own level of understanding.

However, Haydon's defense was still frightfully powerful.

This was because the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' was just a supportive part of Haydson's defense. His true power most likely lay in a different mystery of the Laws of the Earth.

"I wonder how my pure 'Pulseguard Defense' technique matches up against Haydson's defense." Linley secretly wondered to himself.

"Big bro, what are you thinking about? Let's go eat dinner." Wharton called out.

"Alright."

Linley turned to look at Bebe and Haeru. “Bebe, Haeru, let’s go.” Linley could guess that Bebe and Haeru hadn’t left his side during these past fifteen days.

“And here I was thinking that the Boss had forgotten about us.” Bebe hopped onto Linley’s shoulders, then pursed his lips. “But Boss, I’ve gotta say, although we haven’t left the courtyard a single time during these past ten or so days, those servants still delivered food to us every day. Alas, but tonight, nobody will deliver food. I, Bebe, will have to personally go get something to eat.”

Linley, Wharton, and Barker and his brothers all couldn’t help but laugh.

Chapter 24 – Olivier vs Haydson

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 24, Olivier vs Haydson

Yulan calendar, year 10009. May 4th. This night was guaranteed to be anything but an ordinary night. Many of the people of the imperial capital were unable to sleep, and instead came to the outskirts of the city. Tonight, there were no stars in the sky, nor was there a bright moon. Instead, a thick layer of clouds covered the skies.

Many citizens of the imperial capital had come with lit lanterns. In groups of three and five, they awaited the arrival of this battle.

“Hey, third brother. Where do you think Lord Olivier and Lord Haydson will hold their duel? Back then, when Lord Olivier challenged Lord Haydson, he didn’t clearly specify where they would fight. Only, that they would fight outside the city. But would it be outside the east gate or the west gate, or the south gate, or the north gate?”

“Who knows? We have no choice but to quietly wait.”

This question nagged at many people. Many people had even arrived from different cities. Aside from a small number of people who were indifferent, and a number of magi, many people came. Nearly half the population of the city had come to watch this duel. When the tourists from other cities were added to their number, there were definitely millions of people here today.

People were clustered outside all four of the gates of the imperial city.

Nobody knew where the duel would take place.

A large group of people from Count Wharton’s resident had gone as well, naturally. But Linley’s group was able to easily tell where the duel was going to occur. This was because…the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was intentionally broadcasting his aura.

The Monolithic Sword Saint and Olivier had not clearly discussed where the duel would occur.

Thus, Haydson, the Monolithic Sword Saint, had chosen to head to the Channe River, located north of the imperial capital. He stood in the air above the river, which was a wide one, measuring several hundred meters across at its widest. However, in terms of length, it could not compare to the Yulan River, and the Channe River actually joined the Yulan River at its end.

Saints were extremely sensitive to the auras of others.

If a Saint-level battle were to occur at a specific location, Saints from hundreds of kilometers away would sense it. Linley didn't transform, because Haeru and Bebe could both clearly sense Haydson's aura.

"Above Channe River, north of the city. Let's go now. The duel will occur there. Lord Haydson is there." This information swept the city like a storm, quickly spreading to the people in the south, east, and west sides of the city.

The millions of people congregating in those places swept towards the north like a flood.

The vast majority of these people went cross country towards the north. After all, there were far too many people here. If they all went by the streets of the capital, it would simply be too congested.

"There really are quite a number of people here." Linley, Wharton, Barker and the others all stared at the local scene in shock.

Over a million people were standing on each side of Channe River. The 80,000 spectators in the Colosseum had already seemed like a sea of people. These million-plus spectators truly were a terrifying sight.

Both sides of Channe River were filled with people.

The worst part of it was…

People were continuing to arrive from the east, west, and southern sides of the city. It was as though three massive deluges of water were continually adding to an already flooded area. The population of people here only continued to grow.

“So many people. Jeeze, that Olivier…why did he have to insist on the duel being three months later? If it had been half a month, the people from the other provinces wouldn’t have been able to make it over. Three months… even people from the Northwest Administrative Province have made their way over.” Hillman shook his head.

Zassler only snickered. “The more the merrier. What an awesome spectacle.”

Zassler seemed to be treating this sight as a way to reminisce about the sight of his million-body strong army of undead. His million-body undead army was also an extremely incredible sight.

“More importantly, how can we get to the front? Are we going to just watch from afar?” Seeing how tightly packed the people were in front of them, Housekeeper Hiri didn’t have the courage to try and squeeze through.

Gates said delightedly, “That’s easy. Let us five brothers lead the way and charge forward.”

Given their massive frames, they definitely were capable of pushing to the front.

“No rush. Haven’t you noticed that Emperor Johann’s army has arrived?” Linley laughed. Indeed, just at this moment, the soldiers from the army had formed an orderly regiment and were marching in their direction.

There were millions of ordinary commoners here, and less than a hundred thousand soldiers.

But due to their tight formations and gleaming armor, the soldiers were able to awe and suppress the hearts of the commoners.

“Roooaaaaar!” “Groooooowl.”

The millions of spectators had magical beasts in their ranks as well, some of which had been tamed by powerful experts. The cries of magical beasts could be heard as well, alongside the unceasing chatter of the humans.

It was a scene of utter chaos.

“SILENCE!”

A powerful voice rang out. “Everyone who is on a boat on Channe River, all of you, get to land, quickly! If you are on the river during Lord Haydson and Lord Olivier’s battle, it is highly likely that your boats will be swamped by waves. People on the shores of Channe River, all of you move backwards by ten meters! Nobody is permitted to go near the shores of the river. The army will maintain order here!”

The imperial army began to organize the viewers.

The upper echelons of the Empire didn’t dare to be careless. If something were to happen here, with millions of citizens present, it could be disastrous. A duel between two Saints was a joyous occasion. They couldn’t let it turn into a tragedy.

“Lord Wharton, Lord Linley, please come with us.” Two soldiers walked over to them.

Linley and Wharton grinned at each other.

Emperor Johann had already made arrangements early on. After having those spectators retreat by ten meters, the nobles of the Empire headed to the front, although they also didn’t go to the edges of the shores. With the Channe River spanning several hundred meters, there was plenty of space for the two Saints to duel.

In addition, both of the Saints were dueling in mid-air.

The nobles, based on their prearranged spots, lined up along the banks of Channe River. Having the best viewing locations, they prepared to watch this incredible spectacle. The commoners of the Empire, seeing this, actually weren't angry.

There was a huge gap between the worlds of the nobles and the commoners.

Those who were able to become nobles were all people of talent, or who had rendered great merit to the nation. As long as you had ability, you could become a noble. The commoners of the Empire actually held the nobles in great admiration, and they too wished to become nobles.

The night wind was very cold, especially close to the river banks. The cold night wind caused many nobles to put on cloaks.

On each side of the river, there were countless lit torches, illuminating the entire Channe River. However, in the air above Channe River, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, stood there in mid-air alone. Olivier had yet to appear.

"Master Linley, why hasn't Olivier appeared yet?" Emperor Johann said to Linley, who was now by his side.

Emperor Johann had personally requested that Linley be seated next to him. The first reason was because he wanted to strengthen his relationship with Linley. The second was because with Linley by his side, he would be a bit safer while watching these two Saints duel.

"Don't be impatient, your Imperial Majesty." Linley smiled. "Haydson himself is still patiently waiting. Your Imperial Majesty, you just need to quietly wait."

"True." Emperor Johann smiled and nodded.

In the air above Channe River, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson stood, dressed in his simple gray robes, and carrying that earth-colored heavy sword on his back. His eyes were shut.

Suddenly…

Haydson opened his eyes and stared to the east. A human blur was flying through the air at high speed. In the blink of an eye, a second human figure had arrived in the air above Channe River.

It was Olivier, with his Lightshadow sword and the obsidian sword on his back. Today, Olivier was dressed in a long black robe. He looked very mysterious, and his white-streaked hair was flowing freely in the breeze.

“Lord Olivier has arrived!”

The millions who had been impatiently waiting suddenly let out an explosive shout of joy, filling the heavens like a physical wave of sound, causing the waters of Channe River to vibrate. One can imagine how loud millions of joyfully shouting voices were.

“Such a large number of people is really frightening.” Wharton sighed in amazement.

Linley chuckled.

In the air above them, Olivier and Haydson hadn’t been impacted in the slightest. They stared at each other in mid-air, with Olivier absolutely radiating an aura of battle.

“Haydson, there is no way I will hold back in our duel today. If I accidentally kill you, you can’t blame me.” Olivier said coldly.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, laughed calmly as he glanced at Olivier. “If you can kill me, then kill me. I definitely won’t blame you.”

These words from these two powerful Saints excited all the spectators to the

point of trembling. Good heavens, was this going to be a life-and-death duel between two powerful Saints?

This duel between two Saints was not a duel between ordinary Saints. One was reputed to be the most powerful Saint in the world, the Monolithic Sword Saint. The other was the Prodigy Sword Saint, who had come today to avenge his humiliating defeat of six years ago. This battle had filled everyone with excitement.

After countless voices called out in excitement, everyone fell silent!

Millions of people were present, but not a single person made any noise. The only thing that could be heard was the rustling of animals in the grass and the ceaseless blowing of the wind.

“Today, I have to get a good look at these two.” Linley’s eyes were as sharp as lightning, and what’s more, the surrounding wind also served as his eyes. Despite the dark night, he could clearly ‘see’ everything going on in the air between these two people who stood in mid-air several hundred meters above.

According to what the War God had said, if Linley was capable of defeating Haydson, that would mean he was qualified to know the secrets of the Yulan continent’s plane. Haydson was also a practitioner of the Laws of the Earth. Naturally, Linley would carefully observe this battle.

As for Olivier…Linley had the sense that Olivier would also be a very powerful rival.

Not just Linley.

Blumer, Kenyon, Castro, Lanke, and other personal disciples of the War God had come over to watch this duel as well. After all, given Haydson’s power, even in the War God’s College, only those disciples who had trained for thousands of years were capable of defeating him.

“Six years ago, I wasn’t a match for you at all. But today…” Olivier

laughed coldly as he drew the pitch-black obsidian sword from his back.

“You are starting off with the obsidian sword?” Haydson smiled slightly, but then his face slowly grew solemn. He didn’t move at all, nor did he draw his sword.

Olivier’s face turned cold.

“Oh? Six years ago, you didn’t draw your sword. Today, you still think you won’t need to draw your sword in order to defeat me?” Olivier said coldly.

“If you have the ability, then force me to draw my sword.” Haydson said calmly. At the same time, a rippling wave of earth-colored battle-qi surrounded Haydson, causing him to seemingly be ensconced in a wave of earth.

The two were separated by hundreds of meters of distance. Naturally, they spoke very loudly.

All the millions of spectators could clearly hear their words. They were stunned. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was so arrogant that he didn’t even draw his sword.

“This Haydson probably doesn’t know that Olivier’s obsidian sword includes a spiritual attack component alongside the physical attack.” Linley didn’t say anything.

For Haydson to dare act in such a way meant that he probably had reason to be confident. Linley actually didn’t desire Haydson to be killed by Olivier in one stroke. That would be too laughable.

A dream-like burst of white light flashed across the sky. With each streak of white light, an additional Olivier appeared in the sky. In the blink of an eye, 108 Oliviers appeared in mid-air.

“Using a technique like this? Olivier, can it be that you don’t know that these techniques are useless against me?” Haydson stood there calmly in

mid-air, ensconced by his earthen aura.

“Truly?”

Olivier laughed coldly. The strange thing was, those 108 Oliviers all moved at the same instant, charging towards the Monolithic Sword Saint at the same time.

Haydson stood there, occasionally taking a single step.

One step forward, one step back, left one step, right one step…each movement was simple, but every single step allowed him to instantly travel several dozen meters, easily dodging every single one of Olivier’s attacks.

In terms of speed, Haydson wasn’t the slightest bit slower than Olivier.

“Are you only capable of dodging?” Olivier shouted angrily.

“Even if I were to fight you head on, what would you be able to do?” Haydson’s calm voice rang out, then he returned to his original position, and then he actually retracted that earthen aura, allowing it to cling on his body.

“Whoosh!”

Those 108 Oliviers all combined into one. Olivier’s body was covered by a gloomy, cold black light which seemed to devour all the light surround him. Olivier’s face couldn’t be clearly seen.

“Hrm?” Linley was surprised.

The wind elemental essence couldn’t even get near Olivier.

“Swish!”

A ray of devouring black light tore through the sky, striking directly at Haydson. Haydson stood there without moving, just using a simple punch

to strike at it with his right fist…

“Bam!” A sonic boom could be heard.

That fist smashed down with the weight of a mountain, locking the surrounding air in place.

“Boom!”

Olivier finally appeared, his obsidian sword having chopped against Haydson’s fist. When Haydson had punched out, Olivier actually hadn’t tried to dodge, instead clashing his sword directly against it. That terrifying force from the punch passed through the obsidian sword, and with a terrifying splintering sound, Olivier’s right arm contorted bizarrely, and he was knocked flying away by the power of that fist.

As for Haydson, he simply stood there, not moving.

“Haydson…seems to be in trouble.” Linley carefully watched Haydson.

Chapter 25 – As Resilient as a Monolith

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 25, As Resilient as a Monolith

“Splash!”

Olivier fell from the skies, slamming down into the waters of the river and kicking up an enormous geyser of water.

“Elder brother!” Blumer, who had been watching at the riverbank, roared loudly, while at the same time charging directly towards the location in the water where Olivier had fallen.

The millions of spectators were simply too numerous. Many of the people at the distant edges couldn’t even see Olivier and the Monolithic Sword Saint do battle. They could only overhear what the people in front were saying about what had just happened. Instantly, the millions of onlookers began to murmur.

The difference between the two was simply too enormous!

After all, Haydson continued to stand there, as though he hadn’t been injured at all.

“Master Linley, Olivier lost?” Emperor Johann said questioningly to Linley, by his side.

“It is still too early to come to any conclusion.” Linley was still staring up at the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, who remained unmoving in mid-air. Linley said to himself, “I wonder what the results are for Haydson, after he took on that attack head on.”

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was feeling extremely uncomfortable right now.

He was extremely confident in his defense. He had roamed the Yulan continent for centuries now, and had never discovered anyone whose defense was stronger than his. Indeed, the obsidian sword's battle-qi attack just now hadn't breached his defense in the slightest.

However…

When the obsidian sword had struck against his fist, a strange energy had easily penetrated past his vaunted defense and directly attacked his spirit, catching him off guard and stabbing viciously into his soul.

He felt dizzy, and his head hurt so much it threatened to split apart.

"What a Prodigy Sword Saint. He's even managed to develop a soul attack technique." After a moment, Haydson regained his normal faculties. "A young fellow who isn't even a half-century old was actually able to develop such a unique attack."

Haydson had tasted this sort of attack long ago!

Soul attacks actually weren't that unique.

For example, that 'eldest disciple' of the War God, Fain, which Linley had met, had caused Linley to nearly faint when his lightning technique struck Linley. It had taken Linley quite a while to recover. This, too, was a form of soul-based attack.

For example, the War God, who simply by speaking could cause someone's soul to shudder.

The basic principle underlying soul-based attacks was quite simple; it was using one's spiritual energy to form an attack, then use it against the opponent's soul.

Simply put, it was a spiritual attack.

But although it was easy in theory, it was extremely difficult to do in practice. This was because spiritual energy, normally speaking, was very soft and malleable, like cotton. In order to do a spiritual attack, one had to transform the cotton into a sharp knife and use it to pierce the opponent's soul.

Even most Saints were only able to, at most, broadcast their spiritual energy. To use it to attack? To transform cotton into a knife?

Difficult!

But although it was difficult, those top-level experts who had been meditating on the Elemental Laws for a long time were capable of reaching that level. Haydson had previously experienced this sort of soul-based attack.

"Olivier's spiritual energy is not very strong. Most likely, it is only on the level of a magus of the eighth rank. If he had the spiritual energy of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, I would most likely be badly injured. If it was on the level of a Grand Magus Saint…" Haydson laughed calmly.

And then, Haydson looked down into the Channe River.

The Channe River had already regained its usual calm, but Olivier hadn't reappeared yet.

"Olivier, it seems you won't come out until you've finished repairing your arm." Haydson laughed loudly, his voice shaking the heavens and reverberating throughout the land.

"Repairing his arm?" Linley frowned, feeling surprised.

"Splash!"

A waterspout suddenly erupted from the river, and a black blur instantly shot up into the sky, once more standing in mid-air and staring at Haydson. Olivier's damaged, twisted right arm had already returned to its normal

condition.

Olivier laughed coldly as he looked at Haydson. “Repairing an arm? Haydson, even if you wanted to do such a thing, you wouldn’t be able to.”

“Light-style elemental essence is indeed miraculous. Some top-grade light-style magi are able to heal even the most grievous of wounds in an instant. However…in terms of defense and attack, the Laws of Light are inferior to the Laws of the Earth.” Haydson said confidently.

The Laws of the Earth.

Linley, too, trained in the Laws of the Earth.

“How can you possibly understand the subtle mysteries of the Laws of Light?” Olivier said calmly. “Haydson, don’t be over-confident. You didn’t enjoy the feeling of my sword attack just now, did you.”

Haydson frowned.

Even an extremely powerful soul, upon receiving a soul-based attack, would suffer some wounds.

“With your soul damaged, will you be able to use 100% of your power?” Olivier drew his Lightshadow sword with his left hand.

He wielded his obsidian sword with his right hand, and his Lightshadow sword with his left.

“But I’m different. My arm was broken, but now it is healed. I’m not impacted in the slightest.” Olivier dual-wielded his weapons, with a layer of dazzling white light covering his Lightshadow sword, while a layer of light-devouring cold black aura covered his obsidian sword.

Two diametrically opposite forces.

“I want to see how you will deal with these two totally opposite forces!”

Olivier's eyes flashed with a cold look, and then he instantly transformed into a blaze of white light, as radiant as the sun, while at the same time, an unremarkable series of black lights flashed amidst his radiance.

His speed suddenly increased to his utmost limit!

The skies were once again filled with over 108 Oliviers.

"Clang!" Haydson, his face solemn, drew his earthen-colored heavy sword from his back.

"Haha…you've finally drawn your sword." Olivier's laughter shook the heavens. The countless spectators were all silent.

Tonight, the night sky was covered by thick clouds, giving the battlefield a very gloomy aura. The spectators below even had the feeling that those dark, thick clouds were so close to Olivier and Haydson that the two could touch the clouds just by raising their hands up.

"Boom!" "Boom!"

Terrifying sonic booms could be heard, as each time Olivier streaked through the sky at high speed, there would be an eardrum-rupturing sonic boom. The power of those sonic booms in the sky was so great that even those lit torches wavered, the flames pressing downwards from the pressure.

Gales of wind caused everyone's hair to begin to float upwards.

Countless people stared fixedly at this spectacle, hoping they could clearly see what was happening in the skies.

"Clang!" "Clang!"

Each time Olivier's dual swords clashed against Haydson's earthen-colored heavy sword, those two light-style and darkness-style bursts of energy would strangely combine and attack together, seeking to break through

Haydson's attack.

"I didn't expect Olivier to have this sort of attack!" Watching the battle with his head raised, Linley sighed secretly.

He had to admit that Olivier was a genius. Light and Darkness were two diametrically opposed types of Elemental Laws, but Olivier not only was able to train in both at the same time, he was also able to use them together in a very perfect manner.

"Haha…"

With each consecutive blow, Olivier's loud laughter rang out. "Haydson, what, are you just going to defend? Can it be that your soul is so wounded that you can't even attack?"

"BOOM!"

A terrifying thunderclap could suddenly be heard from the cloud-covered skies as an enormous bolt of lightning snaked down and struck the ground. A few seconds later, a torrential rain began to fall.

In the blink of an eye, the world was covered with rain.

"Damnit, why does it have to rain now?" The millions of spectators began to curse aloud. Most people had not brought any rain gear. With the rain suddenly descending upon them, they were transformed into a series of half-drowned chickens. However, these spectators continued to raise their heads high, staring at the duel in the skies.

But thanks to the torrential rain, they couldn't even fully open their eyes as they stared upwards.

How miserable!

Many people were forced to take off their clothes and try to use their clothes to block some of the rain, so as to allow themselves to continue to

stare upwards at this duel between absolute experts, which they might not have the chance to see again in a hundred years. But despite this…the thick, heavy rain prevented them from seeing much of the battle in the skies.

Right now, there were very few people who could clearly see what was going on in the skies.

Linley, of course, was one of them.

“Master Linley, what is going on in the duel above?” Emperor Johann asked Linley urgently. The imperial clan was still quite comfortable, because as soon as the rain had started, many large umbrellas were immediately deployed above them.

Linley and the others all continued to sit comfortably dry under those umbrellas.

“Your Imperial Majesty, Haydson continues to defend, while Olivier is wildly attacking him. However…it seems Olivier is totally unable to harm Haydson.” Linley smiled.

But although that was what he said, in his heart, Linley was wondering to himself, “Every single one of Olivier’s attacks contains a spiritual attack component. What sort of shape is Haydson in, exactly?”

The torrential rain continued to fall.

Those countless torches had been extinguished by the rain long ago. Right now, only the illuminating spells of a few light-style magi provided a bit of illumination in the area.

“Olivier, are you finished attacking?” Haydson said calmly.

“What?!” Olivier was suddenly stunned.

Could it be that despite him having attacked for so long, he hadn’t been able to injure Haydson at all? His soul-based attack was his secret weapon.

Wielding both swords in his hands, Olivier stood in mid-air, staring at Haydson.

Haydson looked calmly at Olivier. “When I received your first soul-based attack, I was indeed injured, but afterwards, since I was prepared for them, your attacks weren’t able to harm me at all.”

“Prepared?” Olivier was stunned.

How would one defend against a soul-based attack? Even Olivier himself had no idea.

“Olivier, you must understand, although soul-based attacks are special, you aren’t the only one to use them. There have been quite a number of people in the history of the Yulan continent who have developed soul-based attacks, and I have tasted these attacks before as well. You are only a warrior, after all. Your spiritual energy is far too weak. Most likely, you are only at the level of a magus of the eighth rank. If you were at the ninth rank…then perhaps I would be injured even if I prepared for your attacks. If that were the case my victory today wouldn’t be this easy.”

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, looked calmly at Olivier.

“What?!” Olivier found it difficult to accept this.

This was an unbelievably heavy blow to him!

“Olivier, you are already quite impressive, to have reached this level before even a half century of life.” Haydson gently stroked the earthen-colored heavy blade in his hands. “Now, prepare to receive my most powerful attack. Consider this my way of showing respect for your power. As to whether you will live or die, that will be up to heaven.”

Olivier felt that this was very laughable.

Whether he would live or die?”

“Haydson, don’t be too arrogant. If you have the ability to do so, then come and kill me. Enough talk.” Olivier’s body once more began to blaze with that brilliant white light, intermixed with that dark black light.

Half his body was covered with pure white light. The other half, pitch black.

“Come!” Olivier’s black and white hair flowed freely in the air. He radiated light in every direction, and the power of those two swords in his hands reached a crescendo as well.

Wielding his earthen-colored heavy sword in one hand, the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, had a smile on his face.

“This is my most powerful attack. The name of the attack is…‘Worldbreaker’. If you are to die, I wish you to die with full knowledge of what killed you!” Haydson had already forgotten how many so-called geniuses had died to him.

Was Olivier the sixth, or the seventh?

He had forgotten.

But Haydson knew that if a genius were to die, then they would no longer be a genius.

“Elder brother!” Blumer roared mightily into the skies. “Be careful!” Tears streamed down from Blumer’s eyes, but given the torrential rain, no one could tell if they were tears or just raindrops.

Although the torrential rain was thunderously loud, powerful experts were still able to clearly hear the words between these two combatants.

Hearing his younger brother’s shout, ensconced in black and white light, the corner of Olivier’s lips actually tugged upwards, forming a perfect curve. Surrounded by black and white light, Olivier was very dazzling to the eye.

To the below spectators, Olivier seemed to be a bright star shining in the night rain.

“Boom!”

Olivier suddenly moved, and a terrifying sonic boom could be heard as he transformed into a dazzling line of light which streaked towards the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

“Haaaaaaaaargh!” Haydson let out a loud yet calm shout.

The Lightshadow sword and the obsidian sword seemed to have merged together, and the dark light and the white light crackled and swirled together, as Olivier, his face fierce, viciously swung down both swords at close range for one final blow…

But as Haydson swung his giant earthen sword towards him, it seemed to carry the power to shatter the entire world.

“BAAANG!”

A terrifying loud collision sound could be heard, as though the world itself had exploded. At the same time, a terrifying gust of hurricane-like wind blasted in every direction as the torrential rain fell down in sheets, carried by the force of that blast of wind.

“Splash!” A human figured covered with dim black and white light fell at high speed into the Channe River…and on the surface of the Channe River, a large amount of a red colored liquid could be seen.

Chapter 26 – A Time and a Place

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 26, A Time and a Place

In turn, Haydson's body had been knocked flying far away at high speed by this terrifying clashing force. Only after flying backwards for nearly a hundred meters did Haydson stabilize himself, and a hint of blood leaked out from Haydson's mouth.

Haydson wiped the blood away, staring down at the Channe River.

"What a fine Prodigy Sword Saint. His final attack truly was powerful." Haydson murmured to himself. At a do or die moment, Olivier's final attack had reached a new level of power, and had actually broken through Haydson's defense and struck Haydson's body, causing him to be injured.

"Rumble." The torrential rain continued to fall nonstop, and on the surface of Channe River, the waves of water roiled about. Quickly, that 'scarlet red' color atop the surface of the river dissipated and disappeared from sight.

A deathly silence!

Everyone had fallen silent, and the people at the two banks of the river stared into the Channe River. Everyone wanted to know, had that glorious Prodigy Sword Saint died, just like that?

"Elder brother!" Blumer didn't hesitate at all. Shedding bitter tears of pain, he threw himself directly into the turbid waters of the Channe River.

"Master Linley, did Olivier die?" Emperor Johann was worried.

Linley shook his head. "I'm not sure either." As he spoke, Linley lowered his head to glance at Bebe, who looked upwards at Linley with resignation. "Boss, Olivier's aura is extremely weak right now, and he isn't even breathing. I can only detect the barest hint of life in him. It seems he really

is about to die."

The countless spectators were all discussing this situation in hushed tones, wondering if Olivier had truly died. But everyone still remembered… Olivier's dazzling final blow.

"Plop!" Water sprayed everywhere.

Carrying a body, Blumer rushed out of the water. Linley could instantly tell that Olivier's face was drained of all blood and was totally white, and his lips were ashen as well. He was no longer breathing.

Only by using spiritual essence to probe him could one sense that Olivier was still alive.

"Move, move!" Carrying the Lightshadow sword, the obsidian sword, and his older brother Olivier in his arms, Blumer charged directly towards the direction of Emperor Johann.

Blumer's eyes were filled with tears.

"Your Imperial Majesty, your Imperial Majesty, where are the healers? Quick, quick!" Blumer shouted frantically.

For this battle, Emperor Johann had prepared in advance for the most exalted Arch Magus of light magic of the ninth rank in the palace to come.

"Mr. Anders [An'te], quick, save Olivier." Emperor Johann immediately said.

A silver-haired old man immediately walked out from behind Emperor Johann and hurried towards Olivier's prone body. His hands glowing with white light, he touched Olivier's body. Soon, color began to quickly reappear in Olivier's face.

"How is he? How is my older brother?" Blumer said frantically.

Although Blumer was very stubborn and very cold towards others, in Blumer's heart, he loved Olivier like a father. His older brother had raised him ever since he was young. To Blumer, there was nobody more important than his older brother.

"Don't be hasty. Just now, all I did was heal the simpler wounds Lord Olivier has sustained. I need to use more healing magic to address his internal injuries." The silver haired old man nodded as he spoke, then immediately began to mumble the words to a magic spell. Blumer watched, feeling anxious and nervous, but he didn't dare to interrupt the work of this light-style Arch Magus.

Soon…

A starry light entered Olivier's body, and the wounds on Olivier's body began to rapidly heal. The efficacy of this healing magic was quite astonishing.

"Hrm?" The silver haired old man shook his head, puzzled.

"What is it?" Blumer asked frantically.

The silver haired old man shook his head, frowning. "Lord Olivier's body has been totally healed. His external injuries, his organs, and his broken bones are all restored. But Lord Olivier didn't wake up. This…"

Linley was carefully inspecting Olivier as well.

"Olivier's soul has been wounded." Bebe said mentally to Linley. "I can feel that his spirit is extremely weak right now."

Just at this moment, the gray-robed Haydson flew over slowly from the sky, agilely and gracefully coming to a halt in front of Emperor Johann.

"Haydson!" Blumer stared hatefully at Haydson.

His one and only older brother, his one and only family member. Blumer

felt boundless hatred towards Haydson. If it wasn't for the fact that he was far weaker than him, Blumer probably would've charged straight for him.

"Stop staring at me. Your older brother's spirit was heavily wounded, and he is hovering at the point of life and death, but that isn't because of me. When executing his final attack, your older brother seemed to utilize some sort of forbidden technique to attack me, hoping to take me down with him." Haydson's face was rather pale as well.

"Forbidden technique?" Blumer frowned.

Suddenly, he remembered…

A while ago, he wanted to learn the obsidian sword technique from his elder brother, but Olivier had instructed to focus on learning the Lightshadow sword technique, and not to train in the diametrically opposite obsidian sword technique.

"Could it be that there really is some sort of taboo preventing people from utilizing two diametrically opposite Elemental Laws at the same time?" Blumer lowered his head to stare at his older brother.

Olivier's face was ruddy, and his body was clearly in peak condition. But he still didn't wake up, and his spiritual aura was extremely weak, as though it could be extinguished at any moment.

"Lord Olivier lost?"

"His brother carried his corpse out. Alas, the Prodigy Sword Saint has died."

"Who said he died? Maybe he's just unconscious due to his injury."

"No matter what happened, Lord Haydson, the Monolithic Sword Saint, seems to be fine, and even flew down from the skies. Clearly, he is far stronger than Lord Olivier."

Those millions of spectators were all discussing this battle. Although the skies were filled with torrential rain, it couldn't douse their burning ardor. Everyone was filled with excitement at what they had just seen. Regardless of whether Olivier was dead or just passed out from his injuries, one thing was certain…

The victor of this duel was the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson!

This result was one which the vast majority had predicted. After all, Haydson had been famous for too long, and was reputed to be the most powerful Saint alive. He had never been defeated. It was very normal for him to be the victor of this duel.

Everyone would've been stunned if Haydson had lost.

The flood of spectators slowly began to melt away. Many began to head towards the imperial capital, while others headed towards some villages on the outskirts of the city.

The people slowly left, but the soldiers still stood guard.

"My elder brother won't die." Blumer said coldly. And then, carrying his elder brother's body, he ordered his servants to carry the Lightshadow and obsidian swords and follow him. Blumer left, carrying his older brother in his arms.

"I hope Olivier can make it past this disaster." Emperor Johann sighed. Right now, Emperor Johann was surrounded by over a thousand people.

These people were all nobles. Many of them wished to know if Olivier was alive or dead.

"Lord Haydson truly is powerful. Once again, he won easily." A distant noble's voice rang out respectfully. Haydson laughed calmly.

And then Haydson looked at Linley. With a loud laugh, he said, "Actually, compared to Olivier, I'd rather have a competition against Master Linley."

A stunned silence.

Everyone was shocked. Haydson had just completed a major duel with Olivier, and now he wanted to challenge Linley to a duel?

Linley was silent for a moment, then spoke. “Haydson, what do you mean by this?”

Haydson smiled. “Last time at the Coloseeum, you and Olivier didn’t finish your duel, but Olivier had drawn his obsidian sword, and you had prepared your adamantine heavy sword. I remember at that time, you had said that your adamantine heavy sword techniques were based on the Laws of the Earth, right?”

“Indeed.” Linley nodded.

“I, too, am a person who studies the Laws of the Earth. I imagine that if we were to engage in a competition, it would be of great benefit to both of us in our attempts to break through to a higher level of understanding.” Haydson looked at Linley. “Linley, I’d like to invite you to spar. Would you accept?”

Neither the surrounding nobles nor Emperor Johann dared to make a sound.

One was reputedly the strongest Saint alive. The other was a Saint who was a genius the likes of which the world had never seen.

“Big brother…” Wharton couldn’t help but speak out.

Linley turned to glance at his little brother. He chuckled.

Wharton, in his heart, was frantic and angry. He thought to himself, “This Haydson really is despicable. He just finished beating Olivier to the brink of death. Does he now want to kill my big brother as well? Is it because he saw both my big brother and Olivier are both geniuses, and are afraid that in the future, they would threaten his status?”

Wharton wasn't the only person thinking this. Many of the people present were thinking this as well.

After all, Linley and Olivier were both dazzling geniuses. One had been beaten to the point where whether or not he would survive was at question. And now, Haydson invited Linley to spar? Many people naturally questioned his real motives.

"What, you refuse?" Haydson asked with a laugh.

Linley looked at Haydson, a smile on his face. "Name a time, and name a place?"

Haydson was startled.

He immediately understood that this meant Linley was accepting his challenge. "I've already competed today against Olivier and am not in peak form. How about this. Three months from now, on August 4th, in the air above Mt. Tujiao, east of the city. Let's have our competition there."

"Fine." Linley smiled and nodded.

Linley wanted to duel with Haydson as well. He had just begun to understand this Pulseguard Defense technique. Combining that with his 'Profound Truths of the Earth' attack, Linley didn't think that he would be easily defeated. After all, he not only was protected by the Pulseguard Defense, he also was protected by his draconic scales. With such powerful defenses, most likely it would be hard to say if Haydson's was better or his own was better.

"Since this is the case, then your Imperial Majesty, Linley, I'll bid you farewell." Haydson nodded to each of them, then transformed into a gray streak of light as he flew away into the sky.

"Big bro…" Wharton ran over frantically.

"I'm fine. Victory and defeat is yet to be determined." Linley smiled

confidently, and then he led his people back towards their residence.

As for those nobles and the members of the imperial clan, they were all engaged in endless speculation. After a while though, all of them returned back to the imperial capital as well under the cover of rain.

The Channe River once more regained its normal peacefulness. Only the mess left behind at the riverbanks gave testament to the earlier excitement.

……..

At the place where the Channe River and the Yulan River intersected, a six story tall enormous ship was sailing from the Yulan River into the Channe River. A row of knights were standing in a neat row on the deck.

Many of those powerful knights had magical beasts as well. Ordinary people did not have access to magical beasts; for so many of the knights to have magical beasts meant that the status of the person on this ship was quite extraordinary.

“When we arrive at the Channe River, we’ll be only three days out from the imperial capital of the O’Brien Empire. Unfortunately, we’ll have missed the duel between the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, and Lord Haydson.”

The warriors on the ship’s deck were chatting amongst each other.

Right at this time, a man with white streaked hair came out onto the top deck. He seemed to be a middle-aged man in his forties or fifties. By his side was a brown-furred bear that looked charmingly naïve. This bear was roughly as tall as a person was, and seemed very cute.

“Growl. Growl. Master. I really don’t feel comfortable here on the water. Let’s fly instead.” That charmingly naïve seeming bear said to the middle-aged man.

“I know you hate water.” The middle-aged man laughed as he walked to the chain linked side of the boat, staring down into the waves.

“Your Honor.” Seeing the middle-aged man, the soldiers on the ship deck all said respectfully. Just at this time, a tall, golden-haired beautiful woman came walking out with a smile. Laughing, she headed towards the middle-aged man. “Teacher, we’ve already arrived at the Channe River. We should be arriving at the O’Brien Empire soon.”

The middle-aged man laughed as he glanced at the golden-haired woman. “Haha. Indeed we are. Delia, I think you are even more impatient than I am.”

Chapter 27 – The Yulan Empire's Special Envoy

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 27, The Yulan Empire's Special Envoy

That adorable looking bear laughed as well. "Right, right. As soon as Delia knew that Linley fellow was here, she immediately started scheming to come as well."

"Big Yellow, do you want to die?" Delia grabbed the big bear by his ear.

"It doesn't hurt. Haha. It doesn't hurt." The big bear said delightedly.

"Hrmph." Delia wrinkled her nose and pouted. "Big Yellow, I know you are powerful, alright? You are a Worldbear and you have thick skin. You aren't afraid of me twisting your ears." As she spoke, she walked over to stand next to the middle-aged man and ignored the bear.

The big bear rubbed its head, said in a deep, adorable voice, "Delia, don't be angry. It was my mistake, alright?"

Delia looked at him and started to laugh.

"Hatton [Ha'dun], Delia is just teasing you. She won't get angry that easily." The middle-aged man said with a calm laugh, and then he turned to stare at the skies. "Parry [Pa'lei] is coming back."

From the skies, a hawk with wingspan of five or six meters came swooping towards the ship at high speed. This hawk was extremely fast, and it seemed to move at the speed of lightning. Its eyes were golden, and it had a crest of blue feathers atop its head. It appeared very fierce.

This was a magical beast of the ninth rank – the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

The soldiers on the ship did not attempt to block it. Clearly, they recognized

this Wildthunder Stormhawk, which flew directly towards and landed next to Delia and the others.

“Little Wind, did you catch anything?” Delia devotedly rubbed the head of the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

Retracting its wings, the Wildthunder Stormhawk stood up, rising to its full height of 2 meters high. Right now, the Wildthunder Stormhawk was enjoying Delia’s attention, closing its eyes as Delia continued stroking its head.

“Parry, get over here.” The big bear said unhappily.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk glanced at the big bear, then obediently moved over to it. The Worldbear was a Saint-level magical beast, and an extremely powerful type at that.

Actually, both the Worldbear as well as the Wildthunder Stormhawk were the magical beast companions of that middle aged man, a Saint-level Grand Magus of the Yulan Empire, Longhaus [Long’er’si].

Master Longhaus was a wind-style Grand Magus.

Wind-style Grand Magi were extremely terrifying. When Longhaus had brought his Wildthunder Stormhawk into the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun, he had used the Dimensional Edge spell to heavily injure this Worldbear.

The offensive power of the Dimensional Edge spell was simply too terrifying. It cut through the walls of reality itself.

Against this sort of attack, even a peak-stage Saint such as Haydson could be split into two halves. In addition, wind-style Grand Magi could control the wind to a terrifying degree, and could also move extremely quickly.

It could easily be said that, given enough time, a Grand Magus Saint could easily defeat a Saint-level warrior. But Saint-level warriors were no fools

either. Thus, most Grand Magi Saints would work hard to acquire a Saint-level magical beast.

Alas, capturing Saint-level magical beasts was simply too difficult.

Delia stood atop the ship's deck, fiddling with her necklace as she stared to the east. A gentle wind blew, stirring her hair. She was a very beautiful, moving sight. Even those warriors off to the side couldn't help but stare at her and feel moved.

Delia had become extremely famous in the Yulan Empire. She was a genius who had reached the seventh rank as a magus at the young age of 22. In addition, she had an extremely powerful clan behind her, and had been accepted as an apprentice by the Saint-level Grand Magus, Longhaus. In terms of appearance, she could definitely rank in the top ten of the imperial capital as well. Such a glorious, outstanding girl definitely had many suitors and paramours.

But unfortunately, Delia had refused every single one of them.

Because of her clan and because she had grown up in the imperial capital, Delia was extremely eloquent and very astute in judging the intentions of others. Ever since the news of Linley's battle with Olivier had spread to the Yulan Empire, Delia had schemed nonstop, finally managing to convince the Emperor of the Yulan Empire to send a special envoy to the O'Brien Empire.

Before heading out, they had notified the O'Brien Empire, which had naturally agreed.

"Channe City…" Delia murmured.

That place which occupied her dreams had a person whom she longed for.

The river waters continued to rush forward rapidly. On the front deck, the Worldbear and the Wildthunder Stormhawk stood alongside Delia as the massive ship continued to sail forward at high speed.

Soon, the ship disappeared off into the horizon as it made its way through the Channe River.

The news that a special envoy from the Yulan Empire was coming quickly spread across the imperial capital, and the imperial clan as well as the nobles quickly learned of this as well. But as far as the imperial capital was concerned, they only cared about two things right now.

They only cared about two major duels.

The first duel was the duel which had just happened between the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, and the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. The second one was the duel which would occur three months from now between the Dragonblood Warrior, Linley, and the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Would Linley learn from the mistakes of his predecessor, Olivier? Or would he come to the same disastrous end?

Nobody knew.

But in the hearts of the citizens of the Empire, most believed that the strongest Saint, Haydson, would gain victory yet again.

Boulder Street. Count Wharton's estate.

"In the next three months, nobody is permitted to disturb Lord Linley unless there is something critical!" This declaration came forth from the manor ever since that stormy night.

The atmosphere in the estate was extremely tense.

In the rear training courtyard, Wharton trained for a short while. Then, not in the mood for more training, he placed the warblade 'Slaughterer' to one side, then sat down unhappily.

“That Haydson really goes too far.” Wharton cursed. As soon as he thought about Linley, he began to worry. “Haydson, if you are so tough, why don’t you wait ten years and let my big brother reach the Saint-level in his human form before dueling with my big brother! What’s the point of dueling now?”

“F*ck his grandmother. He doesn’t just go too far. He’s absolutely vile!”

Gates walked over, saying angrily, “There are plenty of Saints in the Empire, and the War God’s College has many experts as well. Why doesn’t Haydson go challenge them? Instead, he challenges his Lordship. His Lordship is only twenty seven years old. That Haydson is several centuries old.”

“No point in cursing him.”

Barker walked over, resting his massive long-handled greataxe against the artificial hill. “His Lordship has already agreed to duel with Haydson. Right now, our only option is to hope that his Lordship will win.”

“His Lordship definitely will win.”

Gates clenched his fist and pumped it in the air several times as he said angrily, “I refuse to believe that Haydson’s internal organs are as defensively powerful as his external defense. What’s more, that weird thing which his Lordship developed a while ago seems to be really mysterious as well. It definitely must be extraordinary.”

Gates and the others didn’t really understand how powerful the Pulseguard Defense was.

Linley was within his private courtyard. Right now, he was seated in the meditative stance beneath a tree, constantly training in accordance with the ‘Secret Dragonblood Manual’. Right now, Linley already was at a very high level of understanding. All he needed was battle-qi.

Whenever Linley had any free time, he would train in battle-qi, trying to

absorb as much of the energy from the Dragonblood in his veins as possible, ideally until reaching the Saint-level. However, training battle-qi actually didn't require too much focus. As long as one trained in accordance with the set methods, that would be enough. Thus, right now, Linley was pondering other questions in his mind.

"Last time, when I encountered the War God's first disciple, Fain, and when I encountered the War God, I found that they were both capable of soul-based attacks. Olivier also mastered such a form of attack. Most likely, there are many people who have mastered this type of technique. Should I also try to develop this sort of soul-based attack? Even if I don't, I should at least learn how to defend against it, right?"

While cultivating his battle-qi, Linley continued to wrestle with this question in his mind.

What were the principles underlying soul-based attacks?

And how would one guard against it?

While Linley was thinking and training, Haeru lay resting against the ground, while Bebe was curled up comfortably on Haeru's back, his eyes half-closed.

"Bebe, do you think Master will be able to beat that Haydson in their duel?" Haeru said in a low voice.

"Naturally." Bebe opened his eyes and said with complete confidence.

But then, Bebe said in a low voice, "But of course, that Haydson seems to be really powerful as well. But no matter what, if the Boss ends up at the point of death in his duel against Haydson, I, Bebe, will immediately charge forward to assist. Hrmph. Two nights ago, everyone just watched as Olivier was beaten half to death. He still hasn't woken up yet. I can't let the Boss succumb to such a state."

"Isn't that a breach of rules?" Haeru said questioningly.

When two people dueled, regardless of victory or defeat, others were not to interfere.

“Screw the damn rules. The earth is big and the heavens are bigger, but nothing is bigger than the Boss. How can the rules compare in importance to my Boss’s life?” Bebe said arrogantly. “What’s more, so what if I, Bebe, interfere? My Boss is a magus, ya know! When a magus duels against a warrior, they usually bring their magical beasts. If I interfere, that isn’t a violation of the rules.” As he spoke, Bebe felt as though his argument had a lot of merit, and he laughed delightedly.

The gates to the imperial capital were open. The path from the imperial palace to the east gate of the city were all lined with guards from the imperial army, who had been divided up into two neat lines on each side of the street.

The knights of the imperial palace formed into lined regiments, following behind the Emperor’s carriage, with a large number of nobles following behind them.

The Saint-level experts of the War God’s College, Kenyon and Lanke, had both arrived as well.

This was because they knew that the delegation from the Yulan Empire included a Saint-level Grand Magus. If their side had no Saints present, then their side would seem weaker.

“Why aren’t they here yet?” Emperor Johann said unhappily to a nearby palace attendant.

“Your Imperial Majesty, the ship of the Yulan Empire’s special envoy is about to reach the river’s harbor. Most likely, they’ll be here soon.” The palace attendant said respectfully.

Emperor Johann nodded.

Without question, the two most powerful nations in the Yulan continent were the Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire. Emperor Johann very much wished that his own O'Brien Empire could be superior to and suppress the Yulan Empire.

But alas, the Yulan Empire had its own strong points.

The Yulan Empire had been in existence for over ten thousand years now, and was an ancient nation. What's more, the Yulan Empire had become one of the greatest sources for magi in the world. If the O'Brien Empire had the most Saint-level warriors, then the Yulan Empire could be said to have just as many Saint-level Grand Magi.

After all, Saint-level Grand Magi were far more threatening than Saint-level warriors. For example, that wind-style Saint-level Grand Magus, Longhaus. Not even Haydson would dare say that he was totally confident of defeating him. After all, so long as Longhaus was given a bit of time to prepare, his Dimensional Edge spell could chop Haydson into two halves.

"They are here!"

The many spectators of the O'Brien Empire saw the enormous ship sail over. When they saw that adorable big bear on the deck, as well as that large hawk, many people felt astonished.

"A Worldbear? And a Wildthunder Stormhawk?"

Kenyon and Lanke exchanged glances. They couldn't help but feel astonished. Even if they joined forces, they weren't certain that they would be able to defeat a Saint-level Worldbear.

Delia was dressed in a beautiful long robe and standing next to the wind-style Saint-level Grand Magus, Longhaus. They disembarked together, and behind them came the two magical beasts, the warriors on the ship, and the magical beasts of the warriors.

"Clang!"

The knights of the Empire formed into two ranks, while at the same time raising their pikes high into the air. These knights were specially selected from the finest knights of the imperial palace. All of them were of the seventh rank, and their leader was a warrior of the eighth rank.

“Teacher, the warriors of the O’Brien Empire really are more powerful than those of our Yulan Empire. They even have a totally different aura. Our imperial capital is a bit too dissolute.” Delia chatted quietly with her teacher as though no one else was present.

Longhaus nodded slightly as well.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire was an extremely ancient city, and the ancient clans of the capital only thought of enjoying life. To the contrary, the O’Brien Empire was a nation of warriors, and all of them strove to outdo each other. No wonder it was hailed as the most militarily powerful nation.

Emperor Johann, Lanke, Kenyon, and the palace attendants went to welcome them.

“Delia Leon, right? Haha…” Emperor Johann laughed loudly.

Delia very courteously curtsied. “Special Envoy Delia of the Yulan Empire pays her respects to the mighty ruler of the O’Brien Empire, Emperor Johann. I bring with me the sincerest greetings and well-wishes of the Emperor of the Yulan Empire.”

“Emperor Johann, this is my teacher, Saint-level Grand Magus Longhaus.” Delia smiled as she made the introductions.

Emperor Johann looked at Master Longhaus. “Very happy to meet you, Master Longhaus.”

“I am very honored to meet you as well, Emperor Johann.” Longhaus said with a smile.

Delia couldn’t help but glance around at her surroundings. A hint of disappointment appeared in her eyes. She didn’t see the person she was looking for. But at the same time, she said to Emperor Johann, “Emperor Johann, these two should be two powerful Saint-level experts, correct? Can you introduce them to me?”

Before Delia had arrived, she had already acquired quite a bit of information, and she already knew quite a bit about Kenyon and Lanke.

Special Envoy Delia of the Yulan Empire, the wind-style Grand Magus Longhaus, and the others had now formally entered the imperial capital of Channe, where a grand welcoming ceremony awaited them.

Chapter 28 – Delia

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 28, Delia

Delia chatted and jested with Emperor Johann, and their conversation was full of humor and amusement. Emperor Johann's loud, clear laughter rang out nonstop.

Emperor Johann, Delia, Master Longhaus, Kenyon, Lanke and the others walked in front, with the palace servants and palace maids as well as many powerful knights taking up the rear.

The many other nobles followed behind the knights at a distance.

"What a beautiful woman." A group of young nobles of the imperial capital were clustered together. All of these young nobles had an extremely high rank in the Empire. Some were princes, while others were main branch descendants of major clans. They had never lacked for anything, and they often formed little cliques. Nobody in the imperial capital dared to offend them.

The words that had just been spoken came from the son of Prince Julin, Marquis Jeff [Ji'fo].

"I think her name is Delia." Another noble youngster next to him spoke. This young noble was named Scott, and he was the Eighth Prince of the Empire. "She's so beautiful and has such grace. There are very few like her, even here in the imperial capital."

Marquis Jeff, Prince Scott, and the others all stared from afar while rating her.

Indeed, Delia was an extremely alluring and charismatic figure.

Her every movement contained the grace and poise of an ancient clan, and

as a magus of the seventh rank, her movements were filled with grace. What's more, Delia was beautiful to begin with, and her dazzling, soft golden hair shone like the sun.

Scott sighed emotionally, "Delia is a member of the Leon clan, and was previously a student at the Ernst Institute. Nowadays, she is the disciple of a wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Longhaus. In the Yulan Empire's imperial capital, she can be considered one of the most influential nobles. No doubt there are countless young nobles pursuing her."

Marquis Jeff's eyes were shining as he stared at Delia. "If I were to successfully woo her, I would be willing to never touch another woman again."

"Cousin Jeff, you are that determined?" Scott laughed as he glanced at Jeff.

"Of course!" Marquis Jeff said with conviction.

Emperor Johann was an extremely biased person. His one and only younger brother was Prince Julin, and Emperor Johann was extremely solicitous of him, to the point of even allowing Prince Julin to take over and rule the Southeast Administrative Province, one of the seven large Administrative Province's.

As the saying goes, love me, love my dog. Naturally, Marquis Jeff was doted upon by Emperor Johann as well. In the imperial capital, his status was extremely high, and this group of young nobles accepted him as their leader.

"Since you've made up your mind, cousin, then I can't let myself fall behind you." Scott laughed confidently. "Cousin Jeff, let's see which of us two bros will be able to successfully woo Ms. Delia."

"Fine." Jeff nodded. With an evil laugh, he said, "If we're successful, it can be said that we'll have really gained a huge amount of face on behalf of all the men of the O'Brien Empire. After all, those young nobles of the Yulan Empire hadn't been able to successfully woo Delia."

……..

“I imagine that Ms. Delia must be tired after her long journey, along with Master Longhaus. How about this. Let Us order some people to arrange places for Ms. Delia and Master Longhaus to rest. Later at night, after you’ve rested, you can attend the dinner banquet which We have arranged. What do you say?” Emperor Johann came to a halt once they reached Boulder Street and said.

The residences of Boulder Street had all been constructed by the imperial clan.

When the imperial clan bequeathed estates to nobles or received guests, it was usually all done within the confines of Boulder Street. The estates here couldn’t be bought with mere money.

“Then we shall do as you suggest, your Imperial Majesty.” Delia said with a smile.

At this moment, Scott and Marquis Jeff quickly walked forward. They, too, knew that Emperor Johann was about to separate from Ms. Delia. They had to seize the opportunity.

Given their status, those guards naturally wouldn’t stop them.

“Ms. Delia and Master Longhaus, I imagine you two aren’t too familiar with our imperial capital. We shall arrange a guide to accompany you.” Emperor Johann said with a laugh.

“Thank you, your Imperial Majesty.” Delia said with appreciation.

“Imperial father.” “Your Imperial Majesty.” At this point, Scott and Marquis Jeff’s eyes lit up, and they called out without any hesitation.

Emperor Johann glanced backwards and saw that it was his son as well as his nephew.

“Scott, Jeff, what is it?” Emperor Johann was in a fine mood today.

Marquis Jeff said respectfully, “Your Imperial Majesty, you plan to arrange a guide? Scott and I are as familiar with the imperial capital as our own homes. I think that the two of us can be the guides. We would definitely make Ms. Delia very happy with our services.”

Emperor Johann glanced at Jeff and Scott upon hearing these words. How could he not guess what these two really intended?

However, Emperor Johann also thought that Delia was a fine woman. If his nephew or his son were able to successfully woo this woman, that would be a good thing as well.

“Let Us ask Ms. Delia first.” Emperor Johann turned to look at Delia. “Ms. Delia, what do you think?”

Delia glanced at Scott and Marquis Jeff. Immediately, both of them stood slightly straighter, putting on gentlemanly appearances. A hint of laughter appeared in Delia’s eyes.

“Thank you. I’ll trouble you two to assist me then.” Delia curtsied slightly.

“No trouble, no trouble at all.” Scott and Marquis Jeff hurriedly said.

A hint of a smile could be seen on the lips of Master Longhaus, who was by Delia’s side. As his disciple, how could he not understand Delia? When they were in the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire, countless young men had pursued Delia. Given Delia’s skill, she had easily beaten them at their own game and played them like a fiddle.

“Milady Special Envoy, this will be the place where you will live while you are here in the imperial capital.” A palace attendant pointed towards an estate in front of them.

The nearby Marquis Jeff immediately said, “Ms. Delia, the Boulder Street is

an extremely famous street within the O'Brien Empire. On this street, there are even several Saints who live here. For example, our Empire's Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier, and his younger brother. They both live on Boulder Street. The genius Master Linley and his younger brother both live on Boulder Street as well."

While they passed between the estates, Marquis Jeff continuously introduced them to her.

"Right. These two geniuses would be considered the most outstanding individuals anywhere in the Yulan continent." Scott didn't want to fall behind either.

Delia, hearing their words, couldn't help but allow a complicated look appear in her eyes. But naturally, she quickly returned to her normal, friendly smile.

"That isn't necessarily the case." A deep, rumbling sound could be heard from the nearby bear.

Scott and Jeff looked at the big bear and immediately squeezed out a smile. When they were in the welcoming party, they had overheard that this big bear was a Saint-level Worldbear. Saint-level magical beasts could freely change their size. A Worldbear was usually well over ten meters high in their normal form.

He could easily crush them to death with a single paw.

"Delia's older brother is very formidable as well. He is only twenty seven years old, but has become a magus of the eighth rank. What's more, he has become the personal disciple of the High Priest." The big bear looked at Delia. "Delia, am I right?"

Delia smiled slightly and nodded.

Becoming a twenty seven year old magus of the eighth rank was definitely an extremely terrifying accomplishment. At this speed, it would be quite

possible for him to become an Arch Magus of the ninth rank before the age of forty.

It must be understood that someone who could reach the ninth rank before the age of forty was, without question, a definite world-shaking genius.

“Dixie is indeed the most talented magus I have ever seen.” Master Longhaus laughed as well. As they spoke, they entered the main hall of their estate.

“Magus talent?”

Lifting his head proudly, Scott said, “Master Longhaus, on the topic of talent as a magus, I understand that our Empire’s Master Linley, also twenty seven years old, is already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. What’s more, he is a peak-stage Saint-level warrior.”

“A twenty seven year old Arch Magus of the ninth rank? Impossible!!!” Master Longhaus couldn’t believe it at all. “In the entire history of the Yulan continent, there has never been anyone who could reach the ninth rank before the age of thirty.”

“Scott, is this true?” Marquis Jeff asked questioningly.

Scott said with absolute certainty, “It is true. My Imperial father personally told me this. When Master Linley dueled with Olivier, everyone learned how powerful he was as a warrior, but they didn’t pay attention to his abilities with magic. He is indeed already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.”

Hearing Scott’s words, although on an emotional level Longhaus still couldn’t believe it, his intellect told him that this was probably true.

“Master Linley. An Arch Magus of the ninth rank.” Delia wasn’t too surprised.

In Delia’s heart, Linley was a person filled with secrets and miracles. A sixteen year old grandmaster sculptor, and supposedly the number two

genius magus in all of history. But now, he had become the number one genius magus in all of history. Why would that be 'impossible'?

"You can keep chatting. Delia, I'm going to go take a rest. If you need to talk to me, just notify Parry." Longhaus instructed.

"Yes, Teacher." Delia said humbly. Next to her, Scott and Jeff bowed as well.

"Gentlemen, I'm tired as well. I'll retire to my room and rest. Excuse me." Delia rose as well.

Scott and Jeff knew that they couldn't push her, and they immediately nodded. Delia left, with that Wildthunder Stormhawk by her side.

Ever since Master Longhaus had tamed the Worldbear, the Wildthunder Stormhawk's primary responsibility became guarding Delia. From this, one could tell how much Master Longhaus cared about her.

"He's also living on Boulder Street. Maybe he's very close to me."

Delia stood in front of her window quietly.

That night at Wushan township, when she had bid Linley farewell, then left the Holy Union and returned to her own ancestral nation, she had been preparing to return to the Holy Union after the Yulan Festival. But then, she had heard of the Apocalypse Day which had occurred.

The entire Kingdom of Fenlai had been reduced to rubble and become the playground for magical beasts.

And according to the news available to her clan, a few days before the Apocalypse Day, in the estate of the magus genius, Linley, a demon appeared, attempting to murder the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai. Most likely, Linley himself had already died.

This news had caused Delia to suffer a major illness.

It had taken a full year before she had fully recovered.

In years after this, she had no news of Linley at all, and she had even made up her mind to abandon love and instead focus on carrying out the affairs of her clan and train in magic. But she didn't expect…that a while ago, news came to the Yulan Empire of Linley and Olivier's duel.

This news caused Delia's deadened heart to immediately grow excited. She felt as though she were full of energy and full of hope.

After a few machinations, she arranged for today's visit.

Delia had planned to wait until the next day before visiting Linley, but after spending merely half an hour in her room, she felt as though she had waited for half a year.

Especially after learning that Linley also lived on Boulder Street…she could no longer resist.

"Little Wind, tell Teacher that I plan to pay Linley a visit." Delia said to the Wildthunder Stormhawk. A while later, Master Longhaus appeared outside her door.

An indulgent smile was on Master Longhaus' face. "Delia, I knew that you wouldn't be able to sit still for long before deciding to go see him." Longhaus knew everything there was to know about his student Delia's affairs.

A bashful red flush crept onto Delia's face.

"Teacher!" Delia wrinkled her nose. "Stop making fun of me. Let's go."

"Fine, fine." Longhaus laughed.

Delia and Master Longhaus, followed by the Worldbear and the Wildthunder Stormhawk, left the estate. When they did, they saw Jeff and

Scott waiting outside, seated.

“Ms. Delia?” Jeff and Scott’s eyes lit up, and they immediately rose to their feet. “Where are you headed?”

Delia’s forehead creased, but she still managed to say with a smile, “I was planning to go pay a visit to your so-called genius, Master Linley.”

“Oh, so you are going to visit Master Linley?” Marquis Jeff hurriedly said. “That’s a good idea. But I’m afraid that it will be difficult for you to see him. This is because over two months from now, Master Linley will be engaging in a duel with Lord Haydson at Mt. Tujiao.”

“What?” Delia was stunned, and for once, lost her cool.

“Oh, you just arrived, so you didn’t know. Two days ago, Olivier and Lord Haydson dueled, with the result being that Lord Olivier was badly injured to the point of death. Lord Haydson then immediately invited Master Linley to a duel as well, and Master Linley has already accepted.” The nearby Scott explained.

Chapter 29 – Meeting Ten Years Later

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 29, Meeting Ten Years Later

“Linley and Haydson?” Master Longhaus said in surprise as well.

Marquis Jeff nodded repeatedly. “Right. Two nights ago, Lord Olivier was injured by Lord Haydson so badly that he is still in a coma. Immediately afterwards, Lord Haydson challenged Master Linley.”

Marquis Jeff and Scott’s words both contained some resentment, suggesting that Haydson was going too far.

“This Haydson is reputed to be the most powerful Saint. For him to be able to injure Olivier so badly that he entered a coma means that Haydson’s reputation is definitely deserved. No matter how much of a genius Linley is, he is only twenty seven…” Master Longhaus was somewhat dissatisfied as well.

He knew that his disciple, Delia, liked Linley. Naturally, he himself looked favorably on Linley as well.

“Olivier was injured to the point of entering a coma?” Delia’s eyes were blazing. “How could he be in a coma after receiving treatment from light-style magic?”

No matter how serious the injury, light-style magic could easily and totally repair it. And what’s more, there was another type of magic which was even more effective than light-style magic for healing; Life Magic!

The three types of High Magic; Necromantic Magic, Oracular Magic, and Life Magic.

As long as one didn’t die, even if one’s soul was heavily damaged, Life Magic could heal it.

“It seems it has something to do with his soul.” As a prince, Scott knew quite a bit.

“His soul?” Master Longhaus frowned. “Can it be that Haydson possesses a soul-based attack?” Actually, Grand Magus Saints were generally proficient in soul-based attacks.

Generally speaking, after beginning to gain insight into the Laws, it wasn’t hard for them to use soul-based attacks, given their powerful spiritual energy.

“In your opinion, does Linley have any chance of defeating Haydson?” Delia suddenly asked.

“Of course not.” Scott said bluntly. “Lord Haydson has been famous for centuries, and nobody has ever been able to defeat him! Master Linley competed a while ago against Lord Olivier, and the two were roughly on par. Since Lord Haydson was able to beat Olivier into such a terrible condition, it is very possible that he might badly injure Linley or even kill him.”

No matter how calm and collected Delia was, she was beginning to worry for Linley.

What if Linley was killed?

Delia didn’t even dare to imagine such a thing.

“Would Haydson truly be so merciless as to go full force?” Delia’s face still maintained its calm.

“Ms. Delia, two days ago, when Lord Haydson dueled Lord Olivier, he went full force on Lord Olivier. How could he be merciful with Master Linley?” Marquis Jeff said.

Master Longhaus shook his head. “When Saints do battle, unless there is a

huge gap in power, we do not dare to hold back. If you hold back but your opponent goes full force, you might die."

Delia was silent for a moment.

"Ms. Delia?" Scott and Marquis Jeff called to her softly.

"Nothing. Let's go." Delia's face returned to her normal, professional smile, but her smile was somewhat forced.

Marquis Jeff and Scott both nodded.

At Count Wharton's estate.

"Ms. Delia, as I said earlier, you won't necessarily be able to see Master Linley." Marquis Jeff laughed, then casually spoke to the gate guard, "Go report that the Eighth Imperial Prince, Marquis Jeff, and the Special Envoy from the Yulan Empire have come here to meet with Count Wharton."

"Yes. Please wait here a moment."

One of the guards outside the estate ran inside to make his report.

Delia and the others knew that given Linley's current status, meeting him would be very difficult. Right now, their only option was to first see Wharton, and then ask to meet with Linley.

"Everyone, please come in."

Delia, Master Longhaus, Marquis Jeff, and Scott all entered the Count's residence.

Within the main hall.

"Wharton." Scott walked into the main hall, laughing in a very familiar manner. "Let me make some introductions. This beautiful young lady is the Special Envoy from the Yulan Empire, Ms. Delia."

Scott was the Imperial Eighth Prince, while Nina was the Imperial Seventh Princess. Wharton naturally was extremely familiar with Scott.

“The Special Envoy from the Yulan Empire? Why has she come to meet me?” Although Wharton was very surprised, he still smiled politely. “Ms. Delia, an honor to meet you.”

“Count Wharton.” Delia smiled as she spoke. “This is my teacher, the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.”

Wharton was startled. Housekeeper Hiri, standing behind him, was startled as well.

In the O’Brien Empire, Saint-level warriors would be seen from time to time, but they had never seen a Saint-level Grand Magus. After all, there were extremely few Grand Magi in the O’Brien Empire.

“Wharton, the Special Imperial Envoy has arrived?” A loud, brash voice rang out. It was the fifth of the Barker brothers, Gates.

Wharton had been in the middle of his training with Barker and his brothers. Hearing the report from his subordinates, he had stopped training and come out to welcome the guests. Out of curiosity, Gates had come over as well.

“Whoah. What a pretty girl.” Gates’ eyes shone.

“Gates, this is the Special Imperial Envoy, Ms. Delia. This is the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.” Wharton made the introductions, afraid that Gates would cause a diplomatic disaster.

Gates’ attention immediately turned to Master Longhaus.

“Whoah! A Grand Magus Saint!” Gates’ eyes were as wide as an ox’s.

Master Longhaus secretly sighed to himself. Good grief. Where did these

people come from? Wharton's massive physique had already shocked Longhaus, but Wharton was at least relatively handsome. Gates was totally different. His waist was astonishingly thick, and the man himself looked like a giant bear.

"Step away from my Master." A deep voice rang out.

The big bear behind Master Longhaus suddenly began to grow in size. Originally, he was only two meters tall, but suddenly he increased to three meters in height. The Worldbear lowered his head to stare at Gates, a hint of delight in his eyes.

"A Saint-level magical beast?" Gates raised his head to stare at the Worldbear.

Delia immediately went straight to the point. "Count Wharton, my teacher and I have come for the purpose of meeting with Master Linley."

"To see my big bro…" Wharton frowned.

These people didn't have a low status, and they even had a Grand Magus Saint with them. However, to Wharton, his big brother's training was more important. After all, in more than two months time, he would be in a major duel.

"Very sorry, but my big brother is focusing on his upcoming duel with Haydson, and he can't be disturbed." Wharton said. When he mentioned Haydson's name, he didn't have the slightest bit of respect to his voice.

Hearing these words, Delia, as well, felt that Linley's preparation for his duel was more important. After being silent for a moment, she said, "Then…I won't disturb him."

Longhaus, by her side, sighed secretly, then said in a loud voice, "Count Wharton, my student, Delia, was previously also a student at the Ernst Institute, and she was a very good friend and classmate of your big brother's. They haven't met for ten years."

“A student of the Ernst Institute?” Wharton’s heart was swayed.

Actually, every day, Linley would still eat and rest like normal. After all, he didn’t train nonstop like when he was developing his Pulseguard Defense. It wasn’t a big deal if he paused for a bit to welcome some guests.

If they were people that Linley didn’t know, Wharton would refuse them.

But this was his big brother’s old schoolmate.

“Then…come with me.” Wharton nodded.

Delia’s fists clenched nervously. She took a deep breath to calm herself down. By her side, Master Longhaus laughed as he patted Delia on the shoulders. “Relax.”

“An old classmate?” Scott and Marquis Jeff were both surprised.

But Delia walked in front of them, not paying attention to them in the slightest. Scott and Jeff therefore quite conscientiously maintained their silence.

After walking for a while…

“Ms. Delia, my big bro is training in the courtyard in front of us.” Wharton laughed, while Gates hurriedly said, “I’ll go inform his Lordship.”

Delia could feel her breathing grow more rapid.

Ten years!

That year Linley’s father had died, Delia had parted ways with Linley. In the blink of an eye…it had been ten full years. Delia’s eyes closed for a moment. Once her eyes opened again, she had returned to her normal calm.

“Bebe, out of the way. I have something important to report.” Gates’ loud

voice rang out from the courtyard.

“Your Lordship, there’s someone named Delia outside. She says she’s your old classmate and wants to see you?”

“Delia?” A calm voice that carried a hint of surprise rang out from within the courtyard. The voice wasn’t very loud, but to Delia, the words seemed to ring in the skies with the power of a thunderbolt.

No matter how calm or tranquil one normally was, when one met with someone one had been thinking about for ten years…she couldn’t prevent her heart from shaking.

“Whoosh!” A gentle gust of wind blew past the surrounding trees, gently lifting up Delia’s long golden hair, causing it to sway with the wind.

Delia couldn’t help but narrow her eyes due to the wind.

Just at this moment, the figure she had dreamed about over a million times appeared in front of the courtyard’s gate. The man wore a light blue robe, and his formerly short hair had grown long.

Delia carefully looked at him.

“He’s a bit taller than he was, and much more mature.” Seeing the man of her dreams, for a moment, Delia couldn’t speak.

“Delia. It really is you.” Linley suddenly spoke out in a startled, joyful tone.

“It is me.” Delia finally was able to speak.

Linley’s eyes were as dark and profound as the sea. Quickly, he noticed Master Longhaus by Delia’s side, as well as his Worldbear. “A Saint-level magical beast. Worldbear?”

“Linley, this is my teacher, the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus. The Worldbear is his magical beast companion.” Delia finally

recovered from her earlier stupor.

“Come in.” Linley smiled.

Seeing Linley’s smile, for some reason she herself didn’t understand, Delia felt a hot gush of warmth in her heart. “Is this feeling…happiness?” Delia’s eyes were turning red.

“Wharton, you can help welcome these two.” Linley glanced at Marquis Jeff and Scott, then didn’t say anything else.

Scott and Marquis Jeff weren’t angry at all. They immediately left respectfully. After all, the man was a Saint. Even his Imperial Majesty would be respectful to him. How could he possibly waste time on nobles like them?

Around a stone table in the courtyard.

Linley, Delia, and Longhaus were all seated around the table.

“What are you looking at?” The Worldbear glanced at the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. As a Saint-level magical beast, the Worldbear was an extremely proud creature.

“You, you stupid bear.” Haeru sneered aloud.

“Saint-level magical beast?” Longhaus and Delia, hearing Haeru speak, both turned to look at Linley in astonishment.

“Don’t squabble, Haeru.” Linley glanced at Haeru, and Haeru immediately crouched down, no longer paying any attention to the Worldbear. Actually, Haeru himself knew that he wasn’t a match for the Worldbear. But at the same time, Haeru wasn’t afraid either…because the Worldbear’s speed was inferior to his own.

But Bebe actually waved his claws in a threatening manner towards the Worldbear.

“Bebe.” Delia was extremely delighted. “Come here.”

Very obediently, Bebe made a single hop and landed directly into Delia’s arms.

“Bebe, long time no see.” Delia devotedly petted Bebe on his glossy fur, and Bebe closed his eyes contentedly.

Although she was petting Bebe, Delia was still looking at Linley.

In the past, Linley had been very hard and callous. But now, he seemed more gentle and much more natural and at ease.

“Master Linley, I hear you are going to duel with Haydson?” Longhaus started off the conversation.

“Right.”

Linley smiled and nodded.

Delia turned her head to stare at Linley and said, “Linley, can it be that you are confident that you can defeat Haydson?”

“No.” Linley said honestly. Delia was one of his extremely few close friends at the Ernst Institute. Aside from Yale, Reynolds, and George, Delia was probably his closest friend.

Seeing Delia, Linley couldn’t help but think back to their final meeting from ten years ago.

That night…

Delia had come late at night to see Linley and tell him that she was leaving the Holy Union. She said that before leaving, she wanted a hug. But who would’ve expected that their goodbye hug would have turned into a goodbye kiss?

Linley truly had been stunned by that kiss.

Even today, upon seeing Delia, Linley couldn't help but think back to that night.

"You aren't confident?" Delia chewed her lips, then asked, "Then, Linley… can you cancel the duel and not compete against him?"

Master Longhaus shook his head. "Delia, how can you say something so foolish? After two Saints have already agreed to a duel, how can one back out?"

Chapter 30 – Delia's Protector

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 30, Delia's Protector

Master Longhaus could clearly tell that his disciple cared about Linley so much that she had lost her wits.

"Delia, it is fine. Don't worry!" Linley laughed. Linley felt very moved at Delia's obvious concern.

"Okay." Delia nodded.

However, Delia was still worried. After all, the person dueling with Linley was reputedly the most powerful Saint alive; the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Longhaus looked at Linley, then at Delia. Laughing, he said, "It's been quite a while since you two classmates have met with each other. I won't disturb you. Let me go for a walk. The two of you can have a nice chat. I imagine, after ten years, you have many things to say to each other."

Delia cast a grateful glance at her teacher.

Clearly, Master Longhaus was giving her a chance to have some alone time with Linley.

As he spoke, Master Longhaus led his Worldbear away from that courtyard, leaving behind only Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Haeru.

Delia lowered her head, continuing to stroke Bebe's fur. She was waiting for Linley to speak.

A beautiful woman, petting an adorable pet. This was a soul-stirring image…but Linley only felt awkward. If he was facing a Saint, Linley wouldn't feel any fear at all, but facing Delia, Linley felt very complicated.

The female of his age group whom he was most familiar with was definitely Delia.

After all, they grew up together.

Linley wasn't a dummy. He knew how Delia felt…and this was why Linley felt so awkward. Especially now that he was alone with her.

"These past few years, have you been well?" After a long silence, Linley finally managed to force out this rather blunt and graceless phrase.

Delia raised her head, glancing at Linley. She actually let out a chuckle. "Linley, you are already a Saint-level expert. Since when have you become so shy? I've been fairly well these years. With my clan and my teacher backing me up, who would dare to mistreat me?"

After hearing Delia's words, Linley felt slightly more relaxed.

"What have you been up to these years?" Delia said softly.

"Not too much." Linley seemed to once again think back to what had happened ten years ago. Ten years ago, after learning of his father's death, he had given up everything and set his mind upon avenging his father.

He had walked farther and farther along the road to revenge, and in the end he had indeed killed Clayde. But due to the encirclement and battle with those six Special Executors of the Radiant Church, in the end, his most dearly beloved Grandpa Doehring had sacrificed his soul for him…

Three years of painstaking training in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, six years of quiet meditation in the O'Brien Empire.

That battle with Stehle, that battle with those six Angels, that sparring match with McKenzie…one scene after another appeared in his mind. As they did, without holding anything back, Linley began to tell Delia what had happened.

Delia stopped petting Bebe, intently listening to every single word Linley said.

Right now, Linley spoke in a very calm, simple manner, as though he were very relaxed. But Delia could totally imagine what Linley's past ten years of life had been like. After finishing speaking, Linley couldn't help but sigh repeatedly.

"Linley." Delia suddenly reached out to take Linley by the hand, gripping it tightly!

Linley raised his head to stare at Delia in surprise. Delia was staring at him. "Linley, don't let your life be so exhausting. You've done very well already."

Delia's hands were rather cold.

But Linley could feel the beat of Delia's heart through her tight grip. It was beating very quietly. Linley felt a surge of warmth in his own heart, slowly thawing a small part of his frozen heart.

"Thank you." Linley said softly.

"Don't say thank you to me." Delia shook her head, her scorching gaze on Linley's face.

The air between the two of them grew warm. For some reason, Linley felt himself grow a bit muddle-headed. Scenes of himself and Alice would drift to his mind, but then they would be replaced by that kiss he had shared that night with Delia. His heartbeat sped up as well. Linley actually was growing a bit frantic.

"Bebe." Linley looked at Bebe, then looked at Delia. "Delia, do you know how powerful Bebe has gotten?" Under that sort of atmosphere, the only thing the panicking Linley could do was immediately change the topic.

Linley didn't know what he might end up doing if that atmosphere continued.

Thus, Linley decided to simply change the topic.

Delia secretly sighed to herself. She was skilled in negotiations, and thus she naturally was a student of psychology as well. When she had been at the Ernst Institute, she had already begun studying psychology. In fact, the reason she started psychology was to better understand Linley.

Delia understood Linley very well.

Delia knew that, after having experienced what he had with Alice, although Linley had seemingly already forgotten about her, in truth…the after-effects of that relationship were not something which Linley could simply forget about as easily as that.

First love was actually very fragile.

Especially for a stubborn person such as Linley. Once he truly loved someone, then he would place an even higher value on that first love than normal people. The failure of that first love would unconsciously cause Linley to have somewhat of a phobia towards love.

Even if other females tried to approach him, Linley would naturally recoil.

Delia understood that a layer of ice had already covered Linley's heart. If one wished to melt that layer of ice, one couldn't be too hasty. It would have to be melted one step at a time.

Delia deeply loved Linley, and in her heart, she felt pain on Linley's behalf.

Linley had suffered so much. One loved one after another had left him. True, he was extremely accomplished, having become a peak-stage Saint at the age of twenty seven. But how much bitterness and suffering had occurred on the path he had taken?

Delia truly didn't wish for Linley to continue exhausting himself. For Linley's sake, Delia had already made up her mind to spend as much time as would be needed. As long as she could help Linley be a bit more relaxed and a bit happier, she would be very satisfied.

"Delia, what are you thinking about?" Linley saw that Delia seemed to have gone daydreaming.

Delia immediately snapped out of it and laughed, "What am I thinking about? I'm thinking about you." Linley couldn't help but be stunned. Seeing the look on Linley's face, Delia laughed. "I'm joking."

Linley laughed as well.

"What did you want to say about Bebe just now?" Delia laughed.

"Bebe, want to say a few things to Delia?" Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe.

"Say a few things?" Delia looked at Bebe in surprise. That ordinary little Shadowmouse she had seen at the Ernst Institute could speak? All magical beasts capable of speech were at the Saint-level.

Bebe jumped to his feet, clambering onto the stone table. Standing tall, Bebe raised his little head proudly and said in a loud voice, "Ms. Delia, let me tell you a secret. When the Boss and I were in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Boss would often talk to me about you. He even said that you had forcibly kissed him once!"

"Whap!" Linley immediately slapped towards Bebe, but Linley's palm passed straight through 'Bebe'. It was nothing more than Bebe's after-image!

Bebe was standing in mid-air, laughing at Linley delighted.

"Bebe, you little rascal." Linley didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He had never said such a thing before. Bebe actually made that all up.

“Bebe, be good, come over to me.” Delia stretched her hand out, and Bebe immediately hopped into Delia’s bosom again. In Delia’s warm embrace, he seemed to feel very comfortable, and even winked a few times at Linley.

Thanks to Bebe’s intentional ‘teasing’, Linley and Delia were both laughing constantly. Time flew by very quickly, and soon, the sky gradually began to darken.

Seeing how the sky was darkening, Delia suddenly remembered that tonight, Emperor Johann had arranged a major welcome banquet for her.

“Linley, it’s getting late. I need to leave for now. Tonight, Emperor Johann has arranged a dinner banquet for me. I have to attend.” Delia said apologetically.

Linley nodded slightly. “Then I won’t keep you any longer.”

“Will you go tonight?” Delia suddenly asked.

“Me?” Linley laughed. “Emperor Johann didn’t invite me, and I don’t like dinner banquets. Forget it.”

Delia nodded slightly.

Actually, how could Emperor Johann not have invited Linley? Only, Wharton had already refused on his older brother’s behalf. He knew that Linley didn’t like banquets, and also didn’t like dealing with those nobles.

“Farewell.” Delia said softly.

“Farewell.” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia stood there for a moment before slowly leaving the courtyard. After she walked outside, she turned to look back at Linley. It was already growing dark, and there wasn’t much light. As Delia turned to look at

Linley, her hair was swept up by the night wind.

A dazzling smile, and then she left.

Watching this beauty depart into the night, Linley stood there without moving, thinking who knows what.

“Big bro, what are you looking at?” Wharton walked over, laughing. “It is time for dinner.”

“Your big bro feels the stirrings of spring!” Bebe’s little head popped up from behind Linley.

Night descended, but the entire imperial capital was filled with lights. Right now, in the imperial palace, a huge banquet had been prepared, and the palace musicians were performing beautiful songs. Men and women were displaying their graceful dance steps in the middle of the hall.

Delia was seated in a seat next to a wall of the main hall. Next to her was the Wildthunder Stormhawk. She was the guest of honor today. After all, this banquet was for the sake of welcoming her.

But aside from exchanging a few polite words with Emperor Johann, and singing a few words to a beautiful song, Delia claimed that she wasn’t feeling well and went off to one side to rest.

A handsome young noble walked over to Delia, a smile that he probably thought was friendly on his face. Bowing slightly, he said, “Beautiful Ms. Delia, might I have the honor of asking you to a dance?”

“I’m sorry, I’m not feeling very well.” Delia shook her head.

The young noble left regretfully. Not feeling well? Who was she trying to fool? Many girls who didn’t want to accept an offer to dance would say this. What’s more, Delia was a magus of the seventh rank. How could she so easily become ill?

From afar, quite a few young nobles were staring at Delia.

“What number is he?” Scott laughed towards a nearby young noble.

“The eighth.” The young noble laughed.

“The eighth what?” Marquis Jeff, who had just finished a dance, laughed as he walked over. Right now, Marquis Jeff was in a splendid mood.

Indeed, as Marquis Jeff was the son of Prince Julin. As his heir, Marquis Jeff would one day be the controller of the entire Southeast Administrative Province! His status was very high, even higher than a prince who wasn’t in line for the imperial throne. Naturally, many young noble ladies were desirous of becoming his wife.

Unfortunately, although many young noble ladies had been bedded by Marquis Jeff, none of them had gotten anything.

“I was talking with his Imperial Highness regarding Ms. Delia. This is already the eighth person to ask Ms. Delia to dance, only to be refused. It seems the others have lost confidence. No one else dares to go invite her.” The young noble laughed.

Scott laughingly looked at Marquis Jeff. “What, cousin Jeff, do you wish to try?”

Marquis Jeff nodded confidently. “It’s just a dance, right? Watch me.” Marquis Jeff smiled as he walked over towards Delia, smiled quite brightly.

“Ms. Delia.” Marquis Jeff walked in front of her. “Might I have the honor of asking you to a dance?”

“I’m sorry. I’m not feeling well.” Delia gave the same response.

Marquis Jeff very naturally sat down next to her, maintaining a practiced degree of distance between the two of them. Although the distance between the two wasn’t very far, it wasn’t so close as to be threatening.

“If you aren’t feeling well, you should rest.” Marquis Jeff, being quite experienced, knew exactly how he should approach this sort of situation. If one was able to get into physical contact with a girl, it would be easier for the two to feel more intimate with each other.

As to how to get into physical contact…

“Oh, Ms. Delia, your shoulder has some…” As he spoke, Marquis Jeff reached out with his hand towards Delia’s shoulder.

But before he could get the word ‘dust’ out of his mouth…

“Ah!!!” Marquis Jeff let out an agonized scream. That scream stunned the main hall, and everyone turned to look at him. Even the distant Emperor Johann, who was chatting with the Imperial Left Premier, had their attention drawn to them.

“What just happened?” Emperor Johann immediately walked over.

“My hand! My hand!” Marquis Jeff was almost crying. A large wound had appeared on his hand, and a large chunk of flesh was missing. Blood was flowing nonstop, staining the floor.

Delia hurriedly stood up. “Emperor Johann, my apologies. Teacher instructed his Wildthunder Stormhawk to protect me. The Wildthunder Stormhawk will attack anything which touches my body in a manner it deems threatening. Before I even had a chance to react, the Wildthunder Stormhawk immediately pecked at him.”

Everyone looked at the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk was dangling a chunk of flesh off its beak, which was stained with blood. The Wildthunder Stormhawk swallowed that chunk of flesh in one gulp, then stared death at Marquis Jeff with its two golden hawk eyes.

Chapter 31 – The Anticipation of the Crowd

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 31, The Anticipation of the Crowd

“The Wildthunder Stormhawk will attack anything which touches my body in a manner it deems threatening.” These words seemed very simple, but all of the nobles present were extremely intelligent. They immediately realized what had happened when they heard Delia say this.

All of the nobles turned to stare at Marquis Jeff, who was currently clutching his wounded hand. His face was pale and very ugly to behold.

“This Marquis Jeff actually tried to make a physical move on her. Jeeze…” Many nobles secretly cursed him in silence. Although they didn’t speak aloud, it was only natural that their gazes would convey their thoughts. Marquis Jeff felt extremely awkward.

Emperor Johann glanced at his nephew with dissatisfaction as well.

He knew that the Wildthunder Stormhawk behind Delia was a magical beast of the ninth rank belonging to her wind-style Grand Magus Saint teacher, Master Longhaus. Most likely, Delia really was unable to react to the Wildthunder Stormhawk’s attack on Marquis Jeff, and in turn the Wildthunder Stormhawk was unable to speak with Delia.

A situation like this most likely wasn’t a result of Delia intentionally acting against Marquis Jeff.

Indeed…

Delia hadn’t intentionally acted against Marquis Jeff. Before arriving at the banquet, Delia had already told the Wildthunder Stormhawk that if anyone wished to try and make a physical move on her, the Wildthunder Stormhawk was to ‘peck’ them in punishment.

None of the other young nobles had dared to make a physical move on her, but Marquis Jeff did. Naturally, he was the one who took the spear in the belly.

“Attend me! Take Jeff to the healers.” Emperor Johann snapped an order to his servants.

Marquis Jeff didn’t try to explain, only hanging his head while holding his hand, with that astonishingly large hole in it. He rapidly left the main hall. Only then did Emperor Johann say comfortingly to Delia, “Ms. Delia, sincere apologies that you had to experience something like this. This was our fault. We hope you won’t be too upset.”

“No, no. Emperor Johann, this was Little Wind’s mistake. When I go back, I’ll definitely ask Teacher to rebuke him.” As she spoke, she intentionally ‘glared’ at the Wildthunder Stormhawk.

And then, Delia said apologetically, “Emperor Johann, I’m not feeling very well today. I’ll go home now. I hope you will forgive me.”

“That’s a good idea. Ms. Delia, when you get back, you need to have a good rest.” Emperor Johann said in a very gentlemanly manner.

With the guest of honor, Delia, having left, the other nobles began to buzz and chatter. Poor Marquis Jeff, naturally, became the center of their gossip.

After this event and after having his wound healed by light-style magic, Marquis Jeff actually fearlessly and shamelessly went to serve as a ‘guide’ for Delia, and Eighth Imperial Prince Scott accompanied him as well.

But unfortunately…

Although Ms. Delia was very friendly, those two magical beasts were terrifying.

Once, when Ms. Delia stumbled while walking, as she was about to fall,

Prince Scott reached out with ‘good intentions’ to help steady Delia by embracing her. Welcoming him, however, was a peck from the Wildthunder Stormhawk. This time, the injury was even more severe than Marquis Jeff’s, as a hole was pecked straight through Prince Scott’s right hand.

After this experience, both Scott and Marquis Jeff learned their lessons and no longer dared to reach out with their hands. But just as they thought they were being nice and proper, misfortune came again.

That Worldbear suddenly stretched out its two palms and sent both Scott and Marquis Jeff flying into the air.

How terrifyingly strong were the paws of a Worldbear? Even a casual slap from the Worldbear was enough to injure Scott and Marquis Jeff to the point of vomiting blood. They were beaten to the brink of death, but fortunately, light-style magi were there to heal them.

This is what the Worldbear, Hatton, said to them: “You two keep swaggering around every day in front of me, Lord Hatton. You are so motherf*cking annoying. In the future, every time I see you, I’ll beat you!”

Good heavens!

Who would dare anger a Saint-level Worldbear? Even for the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, defeating a Worldbear wouldn’t be a simple task. After all, a Worldbear was definitely a top-class magical beast, even amongst Saint-level magical beasts. If it hadn’t been that Master Longhaus’ Dimensional Edge spell was simply too terrifyingly powerful, how could he possibly have subdued such a creature?

Having learned their lessons, Scott and Marquis Jeff no longer dared to bother Ms. Delia again.

Those other young nobles of the imperial capital who had ambitious designs on Ms. Delia, seeing the disasters which had befallen Marquis Jeff and Prince Scott, no longer dared to try anything. There was nothing for it. If they were swatted to death by that Saint-level Worldbear, they wouldn’t

even have a chance to cry.

Emperor Johann, while chatting with Delia, finally learned that Delia had actually been classmates of the same year with Master Linley at the Ernst Institute. In addition, Delia was in no hurry to return to the Yulan Empire, and was planning to stay and watch the duel in the O'Brien Empire between Linley and the Monolithic Sword Saint.

Emperor Johann naturally was very welcoming and magnanimous.

Although a stay of several months from a foreign Special Envoy was quite long, Emperor Johann expressed welcome to her, saying that the longer she stayed, the better.

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, nearly three months had passed. Tomorrow was August 4th. Countless people in the imperial capital were discussing the upcoming Saint-level duel. Even the towns outside the imperial capital were beginning to fill up with people who had come from distant places.

This was because there were simply too many people coming to watch this duel. The imperial capital was totally full.

On Boulder Street. Count Wharton's estate. Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri were drinking wine and chatting idly.

"Uncle Hiri, have you noticed that recently, at mealtime, Linley smiles a lot more than usual, and often cracks jokes." Hillman's face was all smiles.

Housekeeper Hiri's ruddy nose was as red as ever. He chortled as well. "Hillman, I imagine you know the reason why as well. Ms. Delia comes to visit young master Linley every day. How can young master Linley not be happy? As I see it, this Ms. Delia is a fine young lady. And I feel that Ms. Delia is interested in young master Linley."

"Right. When Ms. Delia eats with us, I recognize that look in her eyes when she looks at young master Linley." Hillman spoke with the air of

experience.

Hillman and Housekeeper Hiri were both quite satisfied with Delia.

However…

“But young master Linley himself always dodges this topic. I’ve raised it with him several times.” Hillman shook his head helplessly.

“No rush. As long as both of them are willing, when the time is right, they’ll definitely get together.” Housekeeper Hiri was actually quite confident.

Right at this time, Wharton, Barker, and his siblings all came from the back courtyard’s training fields. Those six massive bodies formed an amazing sight.

“Grandpa Hiri. Uncle Hillman.” Wharton called out to them from far away.

As soon as Wharton entered the living room. “Eh? My big brother and Ms. Delia haven’t arrived yet.” Right now, every day, Delia would come have lunch with Linley.

“They’ll be here soon. Don’t be impatient.” Hillman said.

“They are here.” Gates, who was at the back, turned his head and saw Linley walk in alongside Delia, both dressed in light blue robes. The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, was behind them, while Bebe was standing on Haeru’s back.

Both dressed in light blue robes, the natural, at-ease Linley and the beautiful, moving Delia did appear to be a match made in heaven indeed.

“Big bro, time to eat. You’re still busy chatting? Don’t you think you’ve chatted enough?” Wharton’s loud voice boomed out.

Linley and Delia looked at Wharton, and Wharton laughed while shaking

his head.

Yulan calendar, year 10009. August 4th. Afternoon. Today, the weather was excellent. The sky was pure blue, with only a few clouds in the sky. The wind wasn't too strong, and the soft wind gently blew comfortably against everyone's faces, as gentle as the caress of a lover's hand.

West of the city. Mt. Tujiao!

This was a small mountain that was only around a thousand meters high, and a few thousand square meters in area. It wasn't a large mountain. Compared to War God Mountain, it was far smaller. Today, however, the area surrounding the mountain had already been divided into countless regions by various painted lines. Over a hundred thousand city guards were there maintaining order as well.

There was an extremely high number of spectators here today, even more than during that last duel between Olivier and Haydson. Although many people had come, with those millions of people all divided into one region after another, it was quite orderly, with each region having an army regiment standing guard.

Mt. Tujiao didn't have any people on the mountain itself. But in the air above Mt. Tujiao, Linley stood in mid-air!

Even the nobles stood several hundred meters away from the base of Mt. Tujiao, with the city guards maintaining a perimeter.

Wharton, Barker, and his brothers naturally were in the front, quite close to Emperor Johann. As for Delia and Master Longhaus, they were quite close to Wharton's group.

Wharton and Delia both raised their heads, staring at Linley's figure with concern.

"My big bro will definitely win." Wharton murmured silently to himself.

Master Longhaus gently patted Delia on her shoulders. Delia looked towards her teacher, her eyes slightly red. Delia felt tremendous mental pressure.

“It’ll be fine. Linley will be fine.” Master Longhaus said comfortingly.

“He definitely will be fine.” Delia said softly to herself, as she looked up towards Mt. Tujiao again.

“F*ck, why hasn’t that Haydson come yet?” Gates cursed angrily. He didn’t care about the Monolithic Sword Saint at all, and cursed as he pleased.

Right now, Wharton, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Delia, Barker and his brothers, Jenne, Rebecca, and Leena…all of them were quietly hoping and praying for Linley’s victory.

“For Linley to win will be very hard.” A gray-robed figure suddenly appeared next to them.

“Olivier?” Wharton and Gates stared at this man in astonishment.

Olivier had come back to life!

Olivier’s face was ashen pale, but his aura was even more restrained than before. Blumer was standing by his side. Olivier glanced at Wharton, then said calmly, “That Haydson’s defense is extremely powerful, and his attack force is very astonishing as well. You should remember how when I fought him, my arm broke from aiming a single sword blow at him. His strength far exceeds mine. In addition, his spiritual energy is very powerful, and he is also very fast…he is essentially flawless. Beating him will be hard.”

“Olivier, our Lord is not you.” Gates said unhappily.

Olivier laughed calmly and fell silent. He walked with his younger brother to a different area, quietly awaiting the coming battle.

“Lord Haydson has arrived!” A surprised shout came from somewhere

within that endless sea of humanity.

Everyone turned to stare at a figure that was flying over at high speed from the east. In the blink of an eye, Haydson appeared in the air above Mt. Tujiao, standing opposite from Linley.

Right now, Linley and Haydson were only a thousand meters off the ground.

The dwellers of the Yulan continent all had good eyesight. In broad daylight, they could clearly make out these two figures who were a thousand meters away.

Delia's hands were balled into tight fists, and her palms were sweaty.

At this moment, none of the millions of spectators surrounding Mt. Tujiao made any noise. It seemed as though they were all holding their breaths, as they all felt an incredible pressure.

Everyone's gaze was fixed on those two figures high up in the air.

"Linley, you arrived rather early." Haydson said casually as he stood in mid-air.

Linley just looked at him calmly. A gentle wind surrounded him. Linley was currently in his human form. The reason he was able to fly was because he had already utilized the wind-style spell of the ninth rank, Windshadow.

The Soaring Technique was a spell of the seventh rank, while the Airwings spell was a spell of the eighth rank. The Windshadow spell of the ninth rank combined the Airwings spell with the Supersonic spell. When using this spell, not only could one fly, one would also possess astonishing speed.

Linley casually removed his outer garments, collecting them into his interspatial ring, then stared coldly at Haydson. "Haydson, let's cut the crap. Prepare to fight." As he spoke, Linley's body quickly began to be covered with black scales, and those sharp spikes appeared from his elbows, knees,

forehead, and spine. That iron-whip-like tail swung about behind him, and those dark gold eyes stared coldly at Haydson.

“Oh, how refreshingly blunt. Come, then…let’s see if you are qualified to make me draw my sword!” The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, looked at Linley with confidence, and he laughed calmly as he spoke in a bright voice.

Chapter 32 – Desperate

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 32, Desperate

Linley and Haydson stood there in mid-air, staring at each other from over a few hundred meters apart. Naturally, they used battle-qi to speak to each other, and their voices were very loud. The viewers below could hear their words clearly.

“How arrogant!” Wharton frowned.

“F*ck his grandmother, when his Lordship beats him to the point of being unable to fight back, this Haydson will know how ignorant and sheltered he is.” Gates cursed unhappily.

Although most of the spectators below felt Haydson was arrogant, they also knew…that Haydson had the power to be arrogant. After all, he was the Monolithic Sword Saint, famous for his defense!

In mid-air.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, finished his words, and the area around him became covered with those earthen swirls of energy. The density of that roiling energy had reached a terrifying density and power.

“Force you to draw your sword?” Linley’s lips curved upwards.

“Bang!” A dense azurish-black battle-qi exploded forth from Linley’s body, surrounding Linley like a thick black swirling fog. But compared to Haydson’s, the protective energy around Linley actually made one’s heart rate change. It contained within it some sort of strange vibrational pulse.

“Oh?” Staring at Linley’s Pulseguard Defense, Haydson’s eyes lit up. He immediately stared carefully at Linley and laughed, “Linley, I didn’t realize that when you dueled with Olivier, you had been hiding this ability. I

confess…you are qualified to make me draw my sword."

Haydson was extremely experienced.

Although Linley's Pulseguard Defense was different from his, the power of his defense was definitely not any inferior than Haydson's. Just based on this astonishing defensive power, Haydson had to draw his sword!

"Clang!" Haydson drew his earthen colored heavy sword from the sheath on his back, staring steadily at Linley.

With a flip of his hand, that adamantine heavy sword appeared in his hands, glowing with that faint blue light. He immediately adopted a ready position, prepared to deliver a fierce blow at any moment.

"He drew his sword. Lord Haydson drew his sword."

The heartbeats of the millions of spectators increased in speed. Olivier frowned. "Linley's defense. It seems…to be rather special. I didn't expect that he had been hiding this ability."

Delia was so nervous that her forehead was covered with sweat, but she didn't notice it at all.

One was surrounded by earth-colored energy, while the other was surrounded by azurish-black energy. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, looked like a wargod of the earth, while Linley looked like a demon from another dimension, making those who saw him feel fear.

"Careful!" Linley let out a cold shout, then he moved.

"Boom!" The gentle wind suddenly transformed into a howling tempest which filled the skies. Linley's body suddenly blurrily merged with the wind which began to blow around the entire Mt. Tujiao. "Crack!" A tree was shattered in half by the force of the wind, and many other trees began to bend as well. Leaves were blown everywhere into the sky, and countless leaves and pebbles were swirling about in the air above Mt. Tujiao.

Everyone below scrunched their eyes, carefully watching this oncoming battle.

“He’s actually reached such a high level of understanding with regards to the Elemental Laws of the Wind.” The wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Longhaus, sighed quietly in praise as his eyes lit up.

The others all watched the battle with baited breath.

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, wielding his earthen heavy sword in his hands, stood arrogantly in mid-air. He seemed as stable as a mountain, despite the wind howling about him. Linley’s body could be blurrily seen at multiple places throughout that wild wind.

“Hooooowl!”

Suddenly, a bizarre, bestial howl could be heard as a black blur suddenly charged towards Haydson. Haydson’s face changed. Linley’s speed was simply too fast. Because his speed had reached a certain limit, the wind itself had howled in rage.

The only thing Haydson saw was Linley’s two dark golden eyes. They stared at each other.

“Hrmph!” Haydson wasn’t afraid at all.

“Haaaaaaargh!”

“Haaaaaaargh!”

Two angry roars rang out at the same time. The adamantine heavy sword howled with the wind, carrying tremendous force as it chopped down towards Haydson. But Haydson’s earthen heavy sword seemed to carry the force of a mountain as it swung towards Linley.

The two swords collided!

“BANG!!!”

It was as though two mountains had collided. The terrifying power of that collision produced waves of energy that one could see with the naked eye. Those waves of energy were knife-sharp, and the trees directly beneath the battle on Mt. Tujiao were split apart. Some boulders were chopped into rubble, while countless rocks and pebbles blasted in all directions.

“Your Imperial Majesty, careful!”

A boulder actually smashed down directly towards Emperor Johann’s direction. Immediately, warriors charged towards it, kicking that ten-thousand pound boulder away. One powerful warrior after another protected each of the nobles. Many of the spectators were powerful warriors, and some were magi.

“Everyone, be careful!” Those spectators were all stunned.

This power was simply too terrifying.

“Linley!” Seeing Linley’s Dragonblood Warrior transformation and his astonishing strength, Delia felt pride for the person she was in love with.

Linley and Haydson both retreated nearly a hundred meters.

“What astonishing strength.” Linley felt shocked. When he had dueled against Olivier, Linley had only used Bloodviolet and therefore had not shown off his incredible strength. After all, Dragonblood Warriors were famous for their strength! When using the adamantine heavy sword, he was able to put his terrifying, earth-shaking power on full display.

“Dragonblood Warriors live up to their reputation as Supreme Warriors.” Haydson laughed loudly. “But Linley, just now, I only used pure strength and none of the Laws. You need to be careful of my next attack.”

For example, that ‘Worldbreaker’ attack Haydson had used last time

contained the insights he had gained into the Laws of the Earth.

The power of that attack had increased tremendously as a result.

“With my next technique, I too shall use my Profound Truths of the Earth. You be careful as well.” Linley looked calmly at the distant Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

In this battle, he definitely couldn’t hold anything back. If he held back but the opponent didn’t, he would probably die.

“His Lordship is about to use the Profound Truths of the Earth.” Barker, his brothers, and Wharton all grew nervous. Bebe and Haeru both exchanged glances. Haeru had shrunken his size dramatically today, which was very rare for him.

“Swoosh!”

While everyone stared upwards into the sky, Bebe and Haeru scurried towards Mt. Tujiao, moving as fast as lightning. These two magical beasts quickly arrived at the tip of Mt. Tujiao, and in the blink of an eye, Bebe and Haeru hid within some of the wild grass at the mountain top.

“We’ll watch from here. If the Boss wins, that’s fine. If the Boss loses and that Haydson continues to go full force on him, then it’ll be time for us to charge.” Bebe stared evilly at the mid-air Haydson.

Haeru nodded as well.

Last time, Olivier had nearly lost his life. Haeru and Bebe didn’t want to see that scene repeat itself.

Linley was wielding the adamantine heavy sword while the battle-qi in his body began to rise rapidly, and his power quickly grew. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was building his power as well.

The two experts were preparing to use their ultimate techniques.

“Boom!” “Boom!”

Terrifying sonic booms rang out as two blurs slashed through the air. In the blink of an eye, those two experts slammed into each other like two massive colliding meteors.

“Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves!” Linley’s dark golden eyes grew even colder, and his adamantine heavy sword floated as agilely as a soft breeze, having attained a bizarrely fast speed, as though it was passing through reality itself.

“Worldquake!” Haydon’s face was very solemn, and the light covering his earthen heavy sword grew even more concentrated, and the heavens and the earth in the area around them began to congeal and solidify.

“Bang!”

The earthen heavy sword collided against the adamantine heavy sword. This collision was very strange. Linley was smashed downwards from the skies like a meteor, falling downwards at extreme speed. Only after falling several hundred meters did he manage to somersault and then halt his descent.

Linley could sense that the flow of blood in his body had been disrupted and was roiling about.

“What terrifying attack power.” Linley stared in amazement at the mid-air Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Linley’s Pulseguard Defense was extremely powerful, several dozen times more powerful than the normal battle-qi armor which protected most Saints. Such a terrifying defense was generally immune to the attacks of most Law-based techniques of peak-stage Saints.

Linley’s defense was not one bit weaker than Haydson’s.

But despite that, Haydson’s Worldquake technique was simply too

terrifying. It was as though the weight of an entire enormous mountain had concentrated itself onto Haydson's sword as it chopped down against Linley. It had broken through Linley's Pulseguard Defense, exhausting the majority of its power as it did so, but Linley was just barely able to defend against that remaining amount of power via his draconic scales.

"This Monolithic Sword Saint's attack power actually contains a hint of similarity to my Profound Truths of the Earth." Linley could sense that Haydson's Worldquake technique actually carried a bit of vibrational power as well; only, there was but a single vibrational wave.

A single vibrational wave was only capable of causing the blood in Linley's body to be roiled and disturbed.

"His insight into the Throbbing Pulse of the World is quite low."

The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, didn't actually focus on the Throbbing Pulse of the World when training in the Laws of the Earth. He had gone a different way.

"I imagine Haydson isn't feeling too well right now either." Linley stared upwards at Haydson.

"Urgh!" Haydson's body trembled, a hint of blood leaking out from his lips as he stared down at Linley in astonishment.

When the adamantine heavy sword had intersected with his earthen heavy sword, at first he hadn't felt any force at all. But then, a strange vibration passed into his body through the sword, and Haydson felt as though countless warhammer-like blows were smashing into his internals. In the blink of an eye, he had been struck by a hundred vibrations.

"Fortunately, I've reached a certain degree of mastery into the 'Massive' aspect of the Laws of the Earth, which fortified both my soul and my internals. Otherwise…this attack by itself probably would've taken my life."

Haydson's defense was very powerful indeed.

Not only was his external defense formidable, his spirit and his internal organs were protected as well. After all, the earth was the mother to us all. The path Haydson had chosen was a path of extreme defense and extreme offensive power.

If Linley had used fifty layered vibrational waves to attack Haydson, he probably wouldn't have been able to injure Haydson at all. But Linley had used the Hundred Layered Waves attack. No matter how strong Haydson's defense had been, he had still been injured.

One stood in mid-air above Mt. Tujiao. The other stood in mid-air, halfway down Mt. Tujiao. The two stared at each other, both sensing how powerful the other was.

"What a terrifying attack." Haydson felt terror in his heart. This was the first time he had experienced such a bizarre attack.

"What astonishing defense, and what terrifying strength." Linley, seeing that the opponent had received his 'Hundred Layered Waves' head on without dying, also felt stunned.

Below them was a sea of silence. Nobody knew what the result had been between this clash of experts.

"Haha…Linley, wonderful. You are the first Saint to cause me to be heavily injured." Haydson's voice rang out brightly, but then it grew seriously. "But now, I'll no longer hold back anything. Prepare to receive my Worldbreaker attack. If you die, don't blame me!"

Watching from below, Olivier's face changed. Last time, it had been the Worldbreaker technique which had nearly taken his life.

The Worldbreaker technique was far more terrifying than the Worldquake technique.

“It remains to be seen who shall be the one to die!” Linley said coldly, his voice also ringing in the skies.

In truth, Linley had already reached the level of being able to generate 132 layers of waves. Just then, Linley had only utilized the Hundred Layered Waves, but that wasn’t Linley’s limit.

“Boom!”

“Boom!”

Two sonic booms once more split the air, as these two ultimate experts charged towards each other in mid-air. One flew upwards at high speed, while the other charged downwards. These two experts collided with tremendous force at the outskirts of Mt. Tujiao.

Worldbreaker!

Profound Truths of the Earth – 132 Layered Waves!

The absolute most powerful attacks of these two experts!

“Bang!” Linley’s body was actually slammed into the side of Mt. Tujiao itself, creating a giant crater. “Crack!” “Crack!” Instantly, the entire mountain began to crack, and with a rumbling noise, countless boulders began to fall and trees began to split apart. As the boulders came tumbling down towards them, many of the spectators below immediately began to block them.

“Boom!” Linley came charging out from within the deep crater. His body was stained with blood, and even parts of his draconic scales were shattered.

The power of the Worldbreaker technique was many times higher than the Worldquake technique. Linley had taken this attack head on, but despite being protected by two layers of defense, the Pulseguard Defense and his draconic scales, he had still been heavily wounded and vomited blood.

“Paaargh!”

Haydson’s throat convulsed, and he vomited out a large mouthful of fresh blood, his face instantly turning white. Both of these mighty Saints were now covered with blood.

The battle had reached a desperate point!

Chapter 33 – Astonishment

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 33, Astonishment

The millions of spectators below were stunned. Haydson had vomited blood, while Linley's shattered scales were covered with bloodstains. Clearly, this battle was growing extremely desperate.

"How is this possible?"

"How is this possible…Master Linley and Lord Haydson…"

The countless spectators were all stunned. These two dominating experts had actually battled to such a point. What was truly shocking was…the reputed most powerful of Saints, Haydson, had vomited a large mouthful of blood. Clearly he had been deeply injured.

As they saw it, Linley was only twenty seven, despite being a genius.

But wasn't Linley previously just on par with Olivier? Olivier had been defeated by Haydson, and Linley should've suffered the same fate. But clearly, the results were totally different.

"Linley, he…" Olivier's forehead was locked into a frown. He fell silent.

Actually, if Linley hadn't gained insight into his Pulseguard Defense, most likely the Worldquake technique of Haydson would have badly injured him, and the Worldbreaker should have directly killed him. But now that Linley had his Pulseguard Defense, his protective abilities were extremely high. Even when Haydson used his ultimate technique, he could only badly injure Linley at most.

"Linley!" Delia was at the point of tears.

Especially when she saw Linley's body covered with bloodstains, her heart

quivered.

“Big bro.” “Lord!” Wharton, the Barker brothers, Housekeeper Hiri, Hillman, Jenne and the other girls…all of them were worried for Linley.

The battle had truly reached a desperate state.

“What a bizarre attack. There is no way to defend against it at all.” Haydson stared at the distant, demonic-looking Linley, thinking at high speed.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 132 Layered Waves!

Even Haydson, whose internal organs were under special protection, had been heavily injured. Haydson knew very well that he could perhaps endure a single additional blow from his opponent’s ultimate attack, but if he were to be hit a third time, he would definitely perish.

“How could Linley’s defense be so powerful? My Worldbreaker attack was unable to kill him.” Haydson couldn’t believe it.

He hadn’t met any opponent who would dare take his attack head on. The Worldbreaker was his ultimate attack. If he wasn’t capable of killing his opponent with it, how would he win?

“I can’t take another one head on. I’ll have to rely on my speed to try and avoid his attack while landing mine on him.” Haydson decided. He believed that Linley wouldn’t be much better off than him. It was already incredible that Linley would still be battle-worthy after having taken his Worldbreaker attack. He trusted that so long as he was able to land another Worldbreaker, Linley definitely wouldn’t be able to take it.

Haydson’s thoughts were actually mirrored by Linley’s own.

Given his current condition, he definitely couldn’t take another attack head on.

“Shudder…” The earthen flows of energy surrounding Haydson began to

contract, forming a thinner, almost armor-like layer around him.

Linley was also retracting the area of his Pulseguard Defense.

If the defense was too spread out, their high speed flying maneuvers would be impacted. Without question, for both experts to do this meant that they were about to engage in a battle of agility.

The countless spectators below all stared in the sky, barely breathing.

Those people who had been absolutely certain that the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, would win, no longer dared to say anything anymore.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” Hurricane like winds once more split the sky open, and Linley’s body once again began to move in that graceful, bizarre manner. His speed had reached its absolute limit. Relying on the force of the wind, Linley’s movements were extremely bizarre and totally unpredictable.

Wielding his earthen heavy sword, Haydson moved as well. With each step he took, he seemed to teleport, traversing tens of meters. His movements were bizarre as well!

“Swiiish.”

Haydson’s earthen heavy sword suddenly appeared in front of Linley, chopping down at him. But it passed through ‘Linley’ as though Linley was nothing but air. This ‘Linley’ turned into a blur and disappeared. It was just an after-image.

“Swish!” The adamantine heavy sword struck out as well.

But as it neared Haydson’s body, Haydson suddenly appeared several dozen meters away.

Both of these experts knew how formidable the other’s attacks were. They didn’t dare to take them on head on, and they all desired to use their agility

to allow themselves to deliver a vicious blow towards their opponent.

“Where are they?”

“We can’t even see them!”

Those countless viewers stared carefully at the skies, but Linley and Haydson were simply moving too fast. With the wind howling as ferociously as it was, they could only occasionally see a solid blur.

Delia’s forehead was covered in sweat, but she still stared unblinkingly at the heavens.

The atmosphere was incredibly tense!

With a single step, Haydson appeared at the top of Mt. Tujiao. Haydson had decided to use the boulders and trees of Mt. Tujiao to serve as cover and restrict Linley’s speed.

“Whoosh!”

Linley charged downwards at high speed, heading straight towards Haydson.

With a single step, Haydson moved a great distance, and with a second step, he appeared behind a giant boulder. Linley was currently located on the opposite side of the boulder.

“Worldbreaker!”

The earthen heavy sword chopped down with boundless power. That man-sized boulder split apart as easily as tofu, shattering into pebbles as soon as the energy surrounding the heavy sword touched it. Linley, however, had already retreated at high speed, having sensed that the situation had turned dangerous.

“Bang!”

The entire Mt. Tujiao suddenly had a terrifying large crack which was hundreds of meters long appear in the mountain itself, with the crack three or four meters wide. Countless stones rained down in every direction.

“God!” The millions of spectators were stunned.

They saw how, before their very eyes, an enormous crack had appeared in the mountain itself. The thousand meter tall mountain had been half-split!

“Boom!” Linley struck out once more with his Profound Truths of the Earth – 132 Layered Waves, chopping at Haydson.

Haydson once more dodged.

Linley’s heavy sword struck on a nearby tree. “Rumble.” With a bizarre sound, the tree turned into dust, while at the same time, the vibrations from the adamantine heavy sword’s chop travelled in a straight line from the top of the mountain to the center of the mountain, and then expanded outwards.

“Rumble…”

In the middle of the mountain, a man sized tunnel began to appear, and countless crushed rocks came flowing out from within it. Those rocks had been completely crushed to dust, to the point where they floated upwards into the wind, covering the entire mountain with dust.

In the blink of an eye…

A tunnel that passed straight from the top of the mountain to the center of the mountain could clearly be seen by the countless spectators.

The countless spectators were deathly quiet.

Emperor Johann’s throat clenched twice.

Good heavens. What sort of terrifying power was this? Who could possibly

withstand a single blow from these two? One sword split half the mountain, while the other bore a tunnel straight through it, turning the stone into dust. This was simply inconceivable.

“That’s the Profound Truths of the Earth!” Barker and the others were excited, but at the same time, they were alarmed by the astonishing power of the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson.

Olivier silently watched everything.

The wind blew wildly. Linley, hiding his body within the wind, would constantly appear in multiple places. As for Haydson, he continued to dodge nonstop in that bizarre method. The spectators below only heard those nonstop powerful exploding sounds, followed by the sound of boulders splitting apart and trees either exploding or disintegrating.

“Boom!” Part of the mountain peak was actually split off and sent flying downwards. Tumbling down the mountainside, countless trees were split apart in its path, and the spectators below began to cry in alarm.

Kenyon of the War God’s College, one of the spectating Saints, immediately went forward. With a sweep of his sturdy staff, he borrowed the force of the titanic rock and sent it flying towards an empty space at the base of the mountain. Only then did the nearly hundred-meter wide rock roll away.

“Retreat! Retreat!”

The soldiers of the army immediately issued orders, directing the spectators to begin retreating. The imperial clan and the nobles began to retreat as well. Good heavens, this battle was far more than they had thought it would be. At such a close distance, it would be simply too dangerous.

Everyone began to retreat.

Linley and Haydson’s battle grew more and more frantic and more and more reckless. With just three or four full force sword chops, Haydson had

all but chopped the entire Mt. Tujiao into several pieces, while Linley's attacks were causing Mt. Tujiao to split apart. Soon…

"Rumble…"

Mt. Tujiao simply couldn't sustain the damage anymore. The utterly ravaged Mt. Tujiao collapsed, sending countless amounts of dust flying everywhere. The spectators immediately began to retreat, frightened. Fortunately, they had already retreated earlier, and they had multiple Saints protecting them.

After the dust and rubble settled down, a field of rubble roughly two or three hundred meters high appeared in front of them.

Mt. Tujiao was gone!

All that was left was an enormous pile of rubble!

"Good heavens!" The countless spectators stared at the two people standing above the rubble. Linley and Haydson were both covered with blood, and their faces were pale. But their auras were still incredibly fierce.

None of the viewers would ever be able to forget this battle. Regardless of who would be the winner or who would die, they wouldn't think for an instant that the loser was weak or had performed poorly.

"Linley, you lose!" Haydson stared coldly at Linley.

Linley's dark golden eyes stared silently at Haydson.

"Even after you Dragonform, your battle-qi is weaker than mine. After such a long, exhausting battle, your speed has already begun to slow down." Haydson said confidently.

Indeed.

In his human form, Linley was only of the ninth rank, and after

Dragonforming, his battle-qi was only at the level of a mid-stage Saint. But Haydson was someone who had trained for centuries. His reservoir of battle-qi was far deeper than Linley's. After such a vigorous battle, Linley's battle-qi was almost empty. Without sufficient battle-qi to support him, his speed naturally would decrease.

Haydson's lips curved up.

"Boom!" Haydson suddenly moved. An explosive sonic boom could be heard as Haydson charged forward at high speed, while Linley also dodged at high speed, relying on his powerful Dragonform as well as the support of the Windshadow spell.

But with his battle-qi almost all gone, Linley's speed was now slower than Haydson's.

"Worldbreaker!" Sensing his chance, Haydson aimed a final blow at Linley.

"Shkreeeeech!" An ear-piercing, heart-shaking screech shook the heavens, while a vicious black shadow appeared from within the rubble and charged at high speed, appearing between Linley and Haydson.

At the same time, it expanded in size.

"Bebe." Linley was startled.

Bebe had transformed to be two meters tall and four meters long, while at the same time, he slammed his sharp claws viciously against that earthen heavy sword.

"F*ck off!" Bebe howled angrily.

"Boom!"

The earthen heavy sword and Bebe's sharp claws collided.

Haydson was knocked flying, and he spat out a mouthful of blood. As for

Bebe, he too was knocked backwards by the terrifying power of that attack.

“F*ck, that hurts!” An angry howl.

Fast as lightning, Bebe once more appeared in front of Haydson. Despite having taken the Worldbreaker attack head on, Bebe’s body only had a hint of blood on it. He hadn’t suffered a severe injury at all.

Haydson had fallen onto the ground. Seeing this freak charge towards him, he had no idea where it had come from. All he knew was…if he didn’t block, he would die.

Haydson immediately jumped to his feet.

Where had this freak come from? It had taken his Worldbreaker blow head on without injury!

“Worldbreaker!” Haydson went all out to try and preserve his life.

“Bang!”

Bebe slammed both claws directly against the earthen heavy sword, sending it flying out of Haydson’s hands. Haydson was sent flying backwards as well, and fresh blood once more spewed forth from his lips as he fell heavily to the ground.

All of the onlookers were stunned, and their mouths gaped open.

“You want to kill my Boss? You wanna die?” Bebe howled angrily as he charged forward yet again.

“Bebe, stop.” Linley immediately shouted.

“Boss, what are you doing?” Bebe turned to look at Linley. Linley glanced at Haydson. After this duel, Linley knew that Haydson actually wouldn’t be a huge threat to him in the future.

Linley shook his head, then mentally said, “Bebe, forget it.”

Bebe was extremely dissatisfied. He jumped next to that earthen heavy sword, lifted it up, then put it into his mouth. “Crunch.” “Crunch.” With two crunching sounds, he actually devoured and swallowed that earthen heavy sword.

“I, Bebe, will spare your life. I’ll eat your little toy though. Consider this your punishment.” The giant Bebe said casually as he stared down at Haydson from mid-air with two cold eyes.

“How…how is that possible?” Haydson forced himself to his feet, staring in disbelief. His sword had been forged through an alloy of countless precious materials. It wasn’t much weaker than Linley’s adamantine heavy sword, but it had actually been eaten by this magical beast.”

“Master Linley, this…this magical beast?” Emperor Johann asked from afar.

Bebe turned to stare at Emperor Johann angrily. “What? My Boss is a magus. When a magus engages in a duel, it is very normal for him to bring his magical beast companions. Why can’t I help? I, Bebe, have already been quite forbearing, since Haeru hasn’t even come out yet. Otherwise, if my Boss, myself, and Haeru were to join forces, killing Haydson would’ve been as easy as eating that sword just now. Haeru, show yourself!”

“Groooooowl.” At this time, an angry growl could be heard as another magical beast came charging out of the rubble. It also began to grow in size. It was the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru. Haeru flew directly next to Bebe, standing in mid-air alongside Bebe as he glanced at Haydson.

Right now, both Linley and Haydson were badly injured.

But the distant, countless spectators were no longer paying any attention to them. Their attention was on these two Saint-level magical beasts that had suddenly appeared, especially that first one. The first one was too terrifying.

He had taken a hit from the Worldbreaker attack without any problems.

With a few crunchy chomps, he had eaten Haydson's personal weapon.

"Hey, Haydson, you got any issues with that?" Bebe lowered his head to scowl at Haydson.

Seeing the cold light flashing in Bebe's eyes, Haydson knew that if he were to protest strongly, Bebe would probably claw him to death. Even at full strength, it would be hard for him to win against a magical beast like Bebe, with such astonishing defense, attack, and speed. Much less now.

Haydson turned his head, maintaining his silence.

"Haydson, I admit that I lost this duel." Linley said.

Haydson glanced at Linley. In his heart, he was beginning to admire Linley. "Linley, today, actually, the two of us fought to a draw. I was able to rely on my deeper reservoir of battle-qi to take a slight advantage. As for your magical beast…"

Haydson glanced at Haeru, then looked at Bebe.

Bebe immediately stared at him. Haydson laughed bitterly. "Your magical beast is the most terrifying Saint-level magical beast I have ever seen." Hearing these words, Bebe raised his little head up arrogantly.

Chapter 34 – Fame Spreading Far

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 34, Fame Spreading Far

With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a long robe from his interspatial ring. He returned to his human form, then put on the long robe. With a calm laugh, he said, “Bebe, Haeru, let’s go back.” At the same time, Linley looked at Haydson. The Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was looking at him as well.

Both Haydson and Linley’s faces were rather pale. After this duel, both of them had suffered severe injuries, internal injuries.

These two ultimate experts both nodded slightly. And then Haydson, paying no attention to anyone else, rose into the air and flew away towards the east. He transformed into a blurred black dot, then disappeared into the eastern horizons.

Linley walked in front, with Bebe and Haeru, his two Saint-level magical beasts, behind him.

Seeing the man and his two magical beasts, Emperor Johann, Kenyon, Lanke and the others all felt great pressure. Linley and his two Saint-level magical beasts all possessed astonishing power.

“Master Linley.” Emperor Johann was the first to walk forward and greet him warmly.

Linley nodded slightly, his face still rather white. “Emperor Johann, I’ve gained some insights as a result of this duel. I need to go back and train.”

Emperor Johann was startled, but then he hurriedly said, “Alright, alright. Master Linley’s training takes priority.”

Linley smiled politely, then headed towards his own people. Wharton, Delia

and the others immediately went forward to welcome him, and Wharton immediately gave Linley a bearhug.

“Big bro.” Wharton’s eyes were red, but he managed to laugh.

“Let’s go. Let’s go home.” Linley said as he glanced at Delia. Delia’s beautiful eyelashes were wet. When she had seen Linley in danger just then, Delia had cried from worry.

Linley felt a surge of warmth in his heart.

“Let’s all go together.” Linley laughed as he looked at Delia, who looked back at him and nodded slightly.

Linley’s group immediately left. The countless bystanders all quite conscientiously parted, giving them a path out. Virtually everyone was staring at Linley with a worshipful look in their eyes. A twenty seven year old youngster could actually fight with Haydson, the reputedly strongest Saint in the continent, on such a level. And what’s more, he even had two Saint-level magical beasts, one of which was so powerful that it could suppress Haydson.

“Elder brother…” Blumer looked towards his older brother, Olivier.

Olivier was publicly hailed as a prodigy, but three months ago, he had been defeated by the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson. Nobody blamed him for losing; after all, his opponent had been Haydson. Everyone in the Yulan continent still felt Olivier was an absolute genius.

However…

Linley was younger than him, much younger!

But the result of Linley’s duel with Haydson was clearly different. Even Haydson himself had said that if it weren’t for the fact that Linley’s battle-qi was insufficient, he wouldn’t have been able to defeat Linley.

Victory thanks to superior battle-qi?

In the eyes of many experts, that couldn't even be considered a victory. This was because the understanding of the Elemental Laws was far more difficult than cultivating battle-qi. As long as one had sufficient time, one's battle-qi could definitely be increased.

"Second brother, I plan to go train in the Arctic Icecap. Take care of yourself." Olivier said calmly towards his younger brother.

"Elder brother!" Blumer stared at him, his eyes wide.

He had heard his older brother speak of the Arctic Icecap in the past. The Planar Overseer was there, along with some Saints who had hidden themselves there to train in those wild, desolate, lifeless lands.

Olivier turned his head to glance at his younger brother. "Second brother, remember. You are the younger brother of Olivier. Don't disappoint me."

"Right." Blumer nodded solemnly.

Olivier smiled, and then flew into the air, streaking towards the north. His robes fluttering in the wind, and carrying those two longswords on his back, Olivier disappeared off into the horizon, heading towards the Arctic Icecap.

"Haydson, Linley…when I return, I will definitely defeat both of you!"

Olivier stared towards the north, his eyes filled with newfound resolve.

Under the direction of the army, the millions of spectators quickly dispersed in every direction. Even as they left, they all felt extremely excited and jubilant, forming small groups as they discussed today's battle.

One sword split the mountain. Another sword tunneled through it.

A thousand meter high mountain that had an area of several square miles had been turned into a giant pile of rubble.

And then, those two magical beasts had appeared.

All of these events had caused the spectators to feel uncontrollable excitement. After this duel, everyone was filled with awe towards Linley. A twenty seven year old who was able to fight so well against Haydson, and had two such incredible magical beast companions! By the looks of it, one of the magical beasts was capable of beating Haydson.

If he fought together alongside his two magical beasts, who in the Yulan continent would dare stand against them?

“It is fortunate that I had chosen Wharton. Thankfully, our ancestor, the War God, guided me.” Emperor Johann let out a long sigh. “I didn’t realize that Linley was this formidable. Fortunately, he’s become in-laws with our imperial clan.”

After this battle at Mt. Tujiao west of the imperial capital, the millions of spectators began to spread the news with astonishing speed. Soon, Linley’s fame resounded throughout the world, becoming one of the most famous names in the entire Yulan continent!

He was able to fight the most powerful Saint, Haydson, to a standstill!

Only twenty seven years old!

An Arch Magus of the ninth rank!

And a grandmaster sculptor!

And what’s more, he was in control of two terrifying Saint-level magical beasts, one of which was capable of defeating Haydson.

This seemed like something out of a legend. Whether as a sculptor, as a magus, or as a warrior, Linley had reached a legendary level. It was as though multiple legends had taken form.

Without question, he was an unequaled genius.

Linley's name and fame as a Saint quickly spread across the entire Yulan continent, much like how the War God's had in the distant past. With some gossipers further exaggerating these legendary events, countless youths began to set Linley as their goal and began to train all the harder!

Linley was guaranteed to leave behind a thick stroke in the history books of the Yulan continent.

What's more…Linley's glory had just begun. He was only twenty seven years old. His future prospects were unlimited!

The news of Linley's duel with Haydson quickly reached the intelligence networks of the Radiant Church, and arrived at the Sacred Isle via flying magical beast couriers.

The waves crashed against the Sacred Isle. Located in the sea, it was extremely peaceful, and within it there was the powerful force of the Radiant Church.

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

The Holy Emperor, Heidens, was quietly flipping through the treasured holy scripture of the Radiant Church. Suddenly, two rapping sounds could be clearly heard on his door.

"Come in." Heidens voice was as steady as always.

Guillermo, dressed in a long red robe, hurried in. He stared at the Holy Emperor, Heidens, and said in a serious voice, "Your Holiness, word has come regarding Linley's duel with Haydson."

Heidens raised his head to glance at Guillermo.

The look on Guillermo's face aroused Heiden's suspicions. He accepted the piece of paper from Guillermo and casually flipped through it. As he did,

his previously calm expression froze.

“Your Holiness?” Guillermo said in a quiet voice.

Heidens sighed softly, then tossed the parchment onto his desk. Rising to his feet, he walked to the nearby window. Staring at the distant, boundless sea, he said, “Linley…I knew that you are a genius, but I didn’t expect that in ten short years, you could have grown so much.”

Long ago, Heidens had predicted that Linley would become very accomplished. Otherwise, he wouldn’t have sent six Angels to kill Linley.

But who would’ve imagined that soon after those six Angels failed, Linley would cause such a huge stir. First, he fought Olivier to a standstill, which had already shocked the Radiant Church. But this time…

“Your Holiness, what should we do?” Guillermo asked in a low voice. “Currently, Linley is already roughly on par with Haydson.”

“Haydson…”

Heidens continued staring outside the window, his back to Guillermo. “Haydson is indeed quite strong. If I wanted to defeat him, I’d have to expend quite a bit of effort.”

Although Haydson was reputed to be the strongest Saint, there had been many people who had never competed against him. Aside from those experts who had been quietly training for many years, there was the Holy Emperor, the Dark Patriarch, and a number of other experts who didn’t care about fame.

Oracular Magic was one of the three types of High Magic, after all.

A peak-stage Saint-level practitioner of Oracular Magic was extremely powerful, far more so than an ordinary peak-stage Saint-level Grand Magus. Heidens was confident that if he were to go all out, he would be able to defeat Haydson.

That was only if he went all out. What's more, the intelligence network had reputed that Linley also had two terrifying magical beast companions, one of whom even Haydson apparently couldn't do anything to.

"Linley has those two Saint-level magical beasts. If I and Osenno were to both attack, most likely at most we would only be able to force Linley to flee. To kill Linley…we would need to have all the experts of the Church come!" Heidens said in a low voice.

To defeat and to kill were two totally different concepts.

That combination of Linley and two magical beasts was simply too terrifying. Even the Radiant Church needed all of its most powerful experts working together in order to be confident of killing him.

"But even if we succeeded, the Radiant Church will suffer heavy losses. And the imperial capital is the territory of the War God…" A gold light flashed in Heiden's eyes.

Heidens' heart was filled with anger!

"Bam!" The glass window in front of him transformed into glass shards.

"We previously could have killed Linley, but we didn't go full force against him. But now, we no longer have a chance." Heidens looked towards Guillermo, then announced helplessly, "The price of killing Linley is simply too high. We can't afford to pay it. And what's more, we wouldn't necessarily succeed…from today onwards, no longer act against Linley. If we don't make trouble for him…I refuse to believe he would dare come and attack the Sacred Isle."

At this point, this was the only option left to the Radiant Church.

"Yes, Your Holiness." Guillermo laughed bitterly in his heart.

Guillermo couldn't help but think back to the first time he had met Linley,

when he had been in a hotel within the Ernst Institute. At that time, Linley was just a hopeful future prospect.

Only ten years had passed!

That youngster had already become one of the most powerful people in the Yulan continent, and the Radiant Church could no longer do anything about him.

Heidens was frowning.

His heart was filled with hatred!

Did the Church truly lack the power to deal with Linley? No! It had the power! In addition to its high level experts such as the Holy Emperor and the Praetor, the Radiant Church actually had a number of even more terrifying people in their ranks.

These people had all been training for thousands of years, some even longer.

However…

These people no longer served the Radiant Church.

“These traitors have all forsaken the Lord and only care about themselves!” Heidens’ heart was filled with anger. Those people were all extremely powerful, but none of them cared about the ‘Radiant Sovereign’ any longer, nor did they care about religion or worship.

This group of people had once been the pride of the Radiant Church.

They even included past Holy Emperors. But now, most likely they wouldn’t even care if the Radiant Church were to be totally obliterated. The goal of these people was to become Deities!

To enter the Deity realm!

“Your Holiness?” Guillermo saw that Heidens was daydreaming and quietly called out to him.

Heidens let out a long sigh, then looked at Guillermo. He instructed, “Right, Guillermo, that Dylin of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts dealt us a severe setback. Many followers perished…we must quickly establish ourselves in the Anarchic Lands. We must let the radiant glory of the Lord illuminate that place.”

Guillermo immediately nodded.

The more followers the Lord had, the greater the gifts the Lord would bestow. The 48 Anarchic Duchies were like a piece of juicy meat which the Radiant Church had set its eyes on for a long time now. They had already been engaged in turmoil and strife for thousands of years. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both wanted to subjugate that area, but neither had been successful in their struggles to do so.

The Anarchic Lands bordered both the O’Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire, as well as the great plains to the far east which were ruled over by the ruthless steppe horsemen…

To tame the Anarchic Lands was extremely hard.

“You can go now.” Heidens said calmly.

When Guillermo left, Heidens felt a certain sourness in his heart. “The Cult of Shadows. The Anarchic Lands. And Linley, who will be a great danger in the future…”

He knew that Linley would be a threat, but what could he do?

Chapter 35 – Target: Anarchic Lands!

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 35, Target: Anarchic Lands!

The gentle wind blew softly against Linley's hair as he sat quietly in the meditative posture on the ground, his eyes shut. His soul had become one with the earth and one with the wind.

"Rumble…" Linley could sense the heat of the scorching hot magma in the depths of the earth.

"Swish…" Linley could sense the changes in the speed of the wind. In the upper atmosphere, the wind was very strong, but the wind within the imperial capital's manors was much weaker. Linley could clearly sense all the changes of the wind.

Linley enjoyed the sensation of training. Each time he gained a new insight and each time he made a breakthrough, he felt his spirit be uplifted and be transformed!

This was a very emotional event which made his heart tremble each time.

"The War God's words were perhaps accurate. It is good to focus one's attention on a single path of training. The Laws of the Earth are vast and boundless, while the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' should be a fairly deep, profound subset of those laws." Linley could sense this.

Although he and Haydson both studied the Laws of the Earth, they had taken different routes.

His own vibrational attacks were clearly on a higher level than Haydson's!

"Thruuum." "Thruuuum." The unique rhythm and tempo of the earth totally absorbed Linley's attention. Linley once more allowed himself to be totally submerged into it as he worked hard to understand the profound secrets

hidden within it.

Ever since that battle with Haydson, Linley had become publicly acknowledged as one of the most powerful experts people knew about in the Yulan continent. He was already someone who was spoken of as being on the level of Haydson, the Holy Emperor, and the Dark Patriarch. In the imperial capital of Channe, the status of the Baruch clan had become even more extraordinary as well.

Clearly, although he had become famous, no one dared to come disturb Linley any more.

“With each new insight, I have a different sensation.” Linley opened his eyes, a smile coming unbidden to his face. Linley sighed with amazement to himself, “Even the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ contains such immeasurably deep and abstruse secrets. How vast and boundless are the Laws of the Earth, then?”

No wonder it was so hard to become a Deity.

And even an incredible person such as the War God remained at the Demigod level despite five thousand years having passed.

“Big bro!” Wharton and the Barker brothers ran over.

“I knew you were coming.” Linley laughed and stood up. When he had been in tune with the earth, Linley had sensed Wharton and the others walk over.

After everyone finished lunch.

“Zassler.” Linley rose to his feet and smiled as he gestured at Zassler. He brought Zassler into his own courtyard, and the two sat down facing each other.

“Lord Linley, is there something you need?” Zassler asked questioningly.

A complicated expression was on Linley's face. He sighed, "Zassler, you know much about the affairs of my Baruch clan." Zassler had been here at the estate for a long time now. Naturally, he had learned everything there was to know. Zassler immediately nodded.

Linley said calmly, "My parents are both dead now, and the primary culprit is the Radiant Church. In the past, when I left the city of Hess, I swore an oath that one day, I would eradicate the Radiant Church and pull it out by its roots."

Zassler knew of this goal of Linley's.

Linley looked at Zassler. "I know that right now, my power is increasing steadily. What's more, with Bebe, Haeru, and the Barker brothers…I have confidence in my ability to deal with the Radiant Church. I am preparing to start acting against the Radiant Church!"

"You are starting?" Zassler was startled.

Linley was planning to openly act against the Radiant Church?

"Linley, although it is true that our power is now quite formidable, the roots of the Radiant Church are very deep as well…" Zassler hurriedly tried to dissuade him. Although he, too, wished to destroy the Radiant Church, they had to be wise about it.

Linley smiled and waved his hand. "No, I'm not going to fight them head on yet."

"Last time, I heard you talking about the Anarchic Lands. Didn't you say the Radiant Church highly values that area? And that there is a lot of power there?" Linley asked.

Zassler was over eight hundred years old, and he had spent many years living in the Anarchic Lands.

"Of course they value it!"

Zassler explained in detail, “Linley, based on my understanding of the Radiant Church, aside from sacrificing pure souls to the Radiant Sovereign, the Radiant Sovereign also needs sufficient worshippers! The more worshippers they have, the more faith is generated. The Radiant Church always prattles on about ‘spreading the Lord’s light across the entire world’, precisely because of this goal.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Zassler clicked his fingernails together. “Linley, in the entire continent, the most chaotic areas are the great plains of the far east, the Anarchic Lands, and the Eighteen Northern Duchies!”

“Of those places, the Eighteen Northern Duchies are engaged in constant warfare, while the steppe riders of the great plains are famous for their savagery. Bloodlust is bred into their very bones. How could they possibly worship the Radiant Sovereign? The very nature of the steppe warriors guarantees that the Radiant Church would not be able to succeed with them.” Zassler chatted slowly. “As for the Eighteen Northern Duchies, those Eighteen Northern Duchies already worship the Frost Goddess.”

“The Frost Goddess?” Linley actually didn’t know much about the Eighteen Northern Duchies.

“Right.” Zassler nodded. “Although the Eighteen Northern Duchies engage in constant battle amongst themselves, the Frost Goddess Shrine holds absolute dominion amongst them. And the secrets of the Frost Goddess Shrine are immeasurably deep…and what’s more, the Frost Goddess Shrine isn’t ambitious, and has remained within the Eighteen Northern Duchies this entire time. Naturally, the Radiant Church wouldn’t go and provoke them and create a powerful foe.”

Linley laughed.

Linley had always wondered about this. The Eighteen Northern Duchies were located to the north of the Forest of Darkness. The only nation it

bordered was the O'Brien Empire, and the area it covered was roughly that of an Administrative Province. Given the power of the O'Brien Empire, taming it shouldn't be hard.

But why hadn't they?

Only now did Linley understand that this had to do with the Frost Goddess Shrine.

"Since these two places are out of the question, the only place left is the Anarchic Lands!" Zassler sighed. "The Anarchic Lands are extremely chaotic. Terrifyingly chaotic."

"Chaotic? How so?"

Zassler sighed emotionally. "First of all, in the past, according to calculations, there were 48 Duchies. But the boundaries in the Anarchic Lands constantly shift. Every few years, the number of Duchies will change. Perhaps there would be fifty, or perhaps there would be forty. It is hard to say. This is the first reason why it is chaotic."

"The second reason why it is chaotic is because of their borders. They are located next to the O'Brien Empire, the Rohault Empire, and the clans of the great plains in the far east. All three of these powers have designs upon them!"

"The third reason they are chaotic is because both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have desired to hold sway over the Anarchic Lands. In these lands, both of these religions are very powerful and have great influence. The two religions are diametrically opposed, and the struggles between them persist unabated."

Listening to this, Linley couldn't help but sigh. If, given all of these conditions, the Anarchic Lands wasn't in a state of chaos, it wouldn't make any sense at all.

"There is a fourth reason why they are chaotic!" Zassler sighed with

feeling. “To the north of the Anarchic Lands is the vast Forest of Darkness. The Forest of Darkness contains a multitude of magical beasts, with the total number being not much less than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Every few decades, or perhaps every decade, there will be a wave of magical beasts…countless magical beasts will come from the Forest of Darkness and charge towards the Anarchic Lands. This is no ordinary disaster!”

Linley’s face changed.

An explosive surge of magical beasts?

After having experienced the Apocalypse Day of the Holy Union, Linley knew exactly how terrifying a large wave of magical beasts could be. That definitely was a day of doom.

“Of course, although it is described as a wave of magical beasts, it can’t compete with the ‘Apocalypse Day’ in terms of how terrifying that day was.” Zassler laughed. “Most of the magical beasts which come from the Forest of Darkness are middle-rank or low-rank beasts. Only very few are high ranked magical beasts. And although they are numerous, at those times, all of the Duchies in the Anarchic Lands will work together and be able to wipe out all of the magical beasts.”

Linley now understood.

If there were few high ranking magical beasts, the damage that these waves could cause would be much lower. In addition, the numbers weren’t as large as when the Holy Union had been invaded. Naturally, the amount of damage which could be caused would be limited.

“Linley, but the difference between this and what happened in the Holy Union is that the wave of magical beasts coming from the Forest of Darkness doesn’t just happen once. It happens every decade or every few decades, and as a result, the Anarchic Lands can never be truly at peace.” Zassler sighed.

Linley secretly sighed as well.

Due to these four reasons, the Anarchic Lands would indeed be forever chaotic.

“Although the Duchies are small, all 48 Duchies combined make up a large amount of territory. The Anarchic Lands definitely rival roughly half of the O’Brien Empire in scope. In fact, the size of the area which the Anarchic Lands covers is roughly the same size as the current Holy Union.”

Linley nodded as well.

After the Apocalypse Day, the Holy Union only had two thirds of the territory it previously held. And of course, the O’Brien Empire was a territorially vast Empire to begin with.

It made sense that the Anarchic Lands, being half the size of the O’Brien Empire, was roughly the same size as the current Holy Union.

“Such a vast territory naturally attracts the interest of the Radiant Church. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both have many experts there, and their roots are deep.”

Hearing this, Linley laughed.

How many people would the Radiant Church send to a territory which was roughly equal in size to the entire Holy Union?

“If the Radiant Church has twenty or thirty Saints, they would at least have to send five, six, or seven Saints over there.” Linley said to himself.

The Sacred Isle was definitely the place where most of the Radiant Church’s experts would cluster.

The Saints sent to the Anarchic Lands most likely should not be the most powerful experts the Radiant Church had.

“After my little brother’s wedding, we’ll head to the Anarchic Lands.” Linley looked at Zassler, smiling. “Let our war against the Radiant Church commence in the Anarchic Lands.”

Destroying the roots which the Radiant Church had painstakingly cultivated over thousands of years in the Anarchic Lands would definitely enrage the Radiant Church to the point of insanity.

“The Anarchic Lands?” Zassler’s eyes lit up. “Excellent!”

Linley smiled. Destroying the influence which the Radiant Church had built up there over thousands of years definitely wasn’t something that would be accomplished in a year or two.

“I’ll spend part of my time training while spending the rest of my time dealing with them. After destroying their forces in the Anarchic Lands, I should have reached the Saint-level in my human form. By then, my understanding of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ should be very high as well. At that time…we can directly engage in battle against the Radiant Church.”

Linley had a very clear series of plans in his mind.

They would act in accordance with these plans. They wouldn’t be impatient or rash. One step at a time, they would rip out the roots of the Radiant Church.

Wharton had previously said that his mind would be too unsettled to be able to have his wedding with Nina before Linley’s duel with Haydson. They had now set the date of the wedding: September 15th.

It was now the beginning of September. Both the Count’s estate as well as the imperial clan were busy making preparations for this grand wedding.

The wedding banquet was far more important than the engagement banquet.

Count Wharton’s estate. Linley’s residence.

“Linley, our ship and our crew are planning to return to the Yulan Empire. I need to go back with my teacher.” Delia looked at Linley, her lips curving downwards as she spoke. Linley had previously been smiling, but suddenly, his smile froze.

Knowing that Delia was about to leave, Linley couldn’t help but feel a bit heartsick.

The past few months he had spent with Delia had been the most relaxed period in the past ten years of Linley’s life. Every day, he was filled with smiles.

“You are leaving?” Linley forced out a smile. “Then let me wish you a safe journey.”

Delia actually smiled. She could tell that Linley was unwilling to part with her. “However…I told my teacher that he can go back first, and that I would stay here as a private citizen.”

“Ah?!” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“Are you unhappy?” Delia frowned.

“Happy, happy!” Linley hurriedly said, but then he looked solemnly at Delia. “Delia, there’s something I need to tell you.”

“What?” Delia looked expectantly at Linley.

“After my younger brother’s grand wedding, I will most likely need to go to the Anarchic Lands.” Linley said.

“Oh. Then I will go as well.” Delia didn’t hesitate in the slightest.

But just at this moment, a series of excited shouts could be heard, while a human figure rushed at high speed to Linley’s residence. From outside the door, Gates’ loud voice could be heard shouting, “Lord, my fourth brother

has also broken through and reached the ninth rank!”

Of the five Barker brothers, four now had the power of Saints.

“Yet another Saint?” A smile couldn’t help but appear on Linley’s face. These five brothers were indeed capable of easily bringing people wonderful surprises.

Chapter 36 – Reynolds' Crisis

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 36, Reynolds' Crisis

Of Barker and his brothers, at this point, Barker, Ankh, Boone, and Gates had all reached the ninth rank. After transforming, they had the power of a Saint. As for the third brother, Hazer, he was just one small step away from reaching the ninth rank and could break through at any moment. Of the five brothers, Barker, Gates, and Hazer had already mastered the art of 'wielding something heavy as though it were light'.

"After my little brother's grand wedding, we'll head for the Anarchic Lands. With the assistance of Barker and his brothers, things will be much simpler." Linley's eyes glowed with an unspoken light.

Linley was extremely excited and couldn't wait to begin his future life in the Anarchic Lands, where he would do battle against the Radiant Church.

Aside from the wonderful surprise of Boone reaching the ninth rank, everyone was also eagerly anticipating the upcoming wedding. Wharton was all smiles every day as well.

This time, Wharton and Nina would be holding their wedding ceremony in the imperial palace. The excitement and hustle bustle would far exceed the engagement ceremony.

Within a quiet courtyard.

After having finished his training, Linley sat next to a stone desk. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved a flask of fruit wine. While drinking wine, he stared forward, pondering. From the look of him, he was clearly thinking about something.

Bebe stealthily peeked at Linley.

“Swish.” Bebe suddenly scurried onto Linley’s table.

Linley was startled by Bebe. “Bebe, what are you doing?”

Bebe stood up straight, folding his claws over his chest, staring at Linley with an appraising gaze. “Based on the observations of myself, Bebe, I’ve discovered that you, Boss…are thinking lustful thoughts about love!”

Bebe spoke with the aura of absolute conviction.

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. “I’m thinking about those dear bros of mine. In a few days, it will be Wharton’s grand wedding. But Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro…none of them will be able to come…”

Linley let out a long sigh.

“I wonder how the three of them are currently doing.” Yale, Reynolds, and George, these three dear friends of Linley, held a very firm position in Linley’s heart. Their love for each other was as deep as that of real brothers.

Reynolds wasn’t doing very well. After that short break, he had returned to the army. Even after learning of Linley’s duel with Haydson, he hadn’t had a chance to come watch.

This was because, as a soldier, he had to follow orders and procedures.

Although Reynolds was quite sloppy and lazy, when he was in the army, he absolutely was a man who would do what he said he would and who would obey orders without question.

At the borders of the Southeast Administrative Province of the O’Brien Empire, in the area south of the city of Neil [Ne’er], was the area where the O’Brien Empire intersected with the Rohault Empire. This was also a fairly chaotic area.

The Rohault Empire was located to the south of the Anarchic Lands and west of the great plains of the far east.

Due to constant warfare with the steppe riders of the great plains, the Rohault Empire had a very ferocious, martial spirit, and their armies of mounted knights were legendary for their prowess. The Rohault Empire and the O'Brien Empire constantly engaged in warfare in the area near Neil City, and the blood from those countless battles had stained the very dirt itself a dark red color in the wilderness outside the city.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" The strong wind howled through the wild grass, which was half the height of a man. The wild grass bent from the wind. Through it, one could see that there was a small creek nearby, where dozens of stallions were drinking water with their heads lowered.

Several dozen knights were seated on the ground, resting, while several others were maintaining a watch.

Right now, Reynolds was sitting atop a tree, his hawk-like eyes constantly scanning their surroundings. When he was in the army, Reynolds was very different from how he acted in private. Right now, he wore a deep blue armor which had a golden insignia of a flame emblazoned onto his chest. This represented that he was a member of the 'Golden Flame Legion', one of the elite legions of the O'Brien Empire.

And the design of his armor gave testament to his rank; senior captain.

Reynolds withdrew a watch from his breast-pocket and checked the time. "Three in the afternoon. At five, the others should have arrived."

"Milord." A blue-haired knight walked over with a laugh. "The Rohault Empire is currently not in a state of warfare with the O'Brien Empire. Don't you feel that we are wasting energy by maintaining such a long watch?"

"Tiger, stop talking." Reynolds frowned.

"Yes sir." The blue-haired knight no longer dared to laugh.

Commanding this squadron of knights was actually a downgraded position

for him as a senior captain. In total, there were three medium-sized squadrons with nine hundred people total. Right now, they had been separated into eighteen smaller squads and taken separate routes. The squad which Reynolds was leading was actually his personal squad, and a very powerful one.

He had already been in the army for quite a few years, and Reynolds had slowly risen through the ranks from common soldier to his current position.

“Although the Rohault Empire has not been in open warfare for over ten years with our O’Brien Empire, aren’t there always small skirmishes? Each year, the Empire suffers over ten thousand casualties from these border skirmishes.” Reynolds said solemnly. “And based on my calculations, it has been a very long time since a large battle. I imagine the population of the Rohault Empire has already reached its limits, and they will therefore force some battles. Thus, we must be careful.”

The meaning of warfare was very simple.

When the population rose too much and there wasn’t enough land or food to support the people, the Empires would naturally begin to war against each other. If they didn’t, the Empires would fall into internal chaos. After two Empires both suffered a high amount of casualties, the reduced population would mean that the amount of land they had was sufficient to sustain their people. Naturally, they would cease fighting.

In truth, this was one of the most basic principles.

After all, to most commoners, the most important, basic necessity was that of sufficient food and a place to live.

“Yes, milord. We will be careful.” The blue-haired knight laughed.

“Right. Milord, you previously were at the Ernst Institute with Master Linley. I heard that he fought Lord Haydson to a standstill?” The blue-haired knight said quietly.

Hearing his subordinate ask him about Linley, Reynolds couldn't help but begin to grin.

"The only reason he suffered a slight loss was because he didn't have enough battle-qi." Reynolds said calmly. In his heart, Reynolds actually felt quite regretful that he hadn't been able to go watch this life-and-death battle of his beloved bro.

Turning his head to stare westwards, Reynolds squinted his eyes due to the scorching rays of the sun. His dear brother Linley was in the imperial capital to the west.

"In a bit more than a year, my ten year commitment will be up and I'll be able to leave the army." Reynolds secretly sighed to himself.

The eight-plus years of army life had caused Reynolds to truly enjoy being in the army, but Reynolds knew that per the regulations of his clan, if the descendants of the clan were able to reach the rank of legion commander or deputy legion commander, they would be permitted to remain in the army. If they did not, then they would have to return home to the clan.

Right now, Reynolds was only a senior captain. He was still one step away.

But although Reynolds did rather enjoy the army life, he didn't want to spend his entire life in the army. He still wanted to quietly train his magic in peace. He was already a magus of the seventh rank. If he spent another hundred years in painstaking training, he still had a shot at becoming an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

While he quietly waited, the other squads began to arrive. By around 4:50 PM, around 400 people had gathered here, with 500 yet to arrive.

"Hrm?" Reynolds suddenly frowned.

He suddenly had the sensation of impending danger, as though an invisible, murderous force was stealthily creeping towards them. As a magus, Reynolds had an extremely powerful spiritual force, and his premonitions

were far stronger than most people's.

"Everyone, be careful!" Reynolds suddenly shouted coldly.

"Yes, milord!" All the surrounding knights answered, but right at this moment, the sound of frantic hoof beats could be heard, drawing closer to them at high speed.

"Enemy ambush!" Enemy ambush!" That fierce shout shattered the calm skies.

Virtually all of the knights reacted very quickly, snatching up their spears and raising their shields as they all charged at high speed towards their horses. But just at this moment, sharp arrows began to rain down upon them from afar….

"Swish!" "Swish!"

The arrows rained down upon them at high speed like a plague of locusts. All of the knights immediately knelt down while raising their shields to protect themselves, while moving closer to each other.

The Empire's shields were of very high quality. In battle, it was rare that ordinary arrows would be able to pierce through them. And indeed, many of the arrows struck the shields, but the shields would only tremble slightly as the arrows fell to the ground, spent. But ten or so arrows passed straight through the shields, as though they were made of paper…

"Pierce!"

A fast-moving arrow tore straight through a shield, then pierced straight through the knight's head. Brain matter exploded out.

Reynolds, seeing this, felt heartsick. These knights were his personal squad, and had followed him for six years. Six years of living together had resulted in deep bonds of affection. But Reynolds instantly could tell: "To be able to pierce through shields from hundreds of meters away means they are

definitely experts of the seventh or eighth ranks. And there are quite a few of them."

"Rumble." As those distant people moved nearer, the sound of their horses' hoof steps grew clearer. This group of people all wore gray armor, and the hooves of their horses were covered with cloth.

In front of these people, over ten bloodstained knights were fleeing.

"Rossi [Luo'xi]." Reynolds' face changed. Those ten knights belonged to his squad.

"Milord, flee, quick! These are the soldiers of the Rohault Empire, and they number in the thousands! Quick…ah!!!" A bloodied knight ran past at high speed, but in the blink of an eye, an arrow went straight through his throat.

"Kill them all! Let none survive!" A cold voice rang out from afar.

"Flee!"

Reynolds shouted loudly. Fight against an opponent numbering in the thousands, while he only had a few hundred people? And what's more, they were being ambushed, and the enemy had multiple elite warriors of the seventh and eighth ranks.

In addition, their duty was reconnaissance. They had to go back and spread the news.

The lucky survivors immediately vaulted onto their warhorses. Perhaps because their enemies wanted to acquire those several hundred horses, the arrows that had rained down on them just now had only struck the knights. Not a single warhorse had been killed.

Flee!

Flee!

The only thing on Reynolds' mind was to flee at high speed. At the beginning, four hundred men had tried to flee, but right now, only a hundred were left. That a hundred were left was because Reynolds had used magic to intimidate their enemies. While fleeing, Reynolds was still muttering the words to even more magical spells.

With Reynolds at the center, eight swathes of flame shaped like greatswords suddenly exploded forth, scattering in every direction and charging directly towards the pursuing armies.

Fire-style magic – Decapitating Inferno!

"Crackle, crackle." The blazing flames slashed down on the bodies of those knights, who immediately began to scream in agony. Their metal armor rapidly melted, and in the blink of an eye, they were turned to char. The surrounding grass began to blaze as well, and the following knights were forced to slow down.

"Chase, chase!" That blonde, tousled-haired leader stared angrily at the distant Reynolds.

If it hadn't been for that distant magus, he would've wiped out this group of people long ago. But because of that magus and because it was autumn and the grass was dry, the grass had easily begun to burn and caused a huge wildfire, blocking their pursuit.

Magical force wasn't endless.

Reynolds didn't dare to use any actual spells of the seventh rank. All of the spells he had used were of the sixth rank. But despite that, nearly all of the mageforce in Reynolds' body had been exhausted.

Only a single squad of three hundred soldiers of the Rohault Empire continued their pursuit, but this squad had over ten experts of the seventh rank. Clearly, this was an elite squad. And in Reynolds' squad, there was only a single warrior of the seventh rank, and of course himself, a magus of the seventh rank.

“The city of Neil! I can see the city of Neil!” One of the knights shouted loudly.

“Neil city!” Reynolds saw the distant, hazy outlines of the city. His eyes were filled with hope, and he frantically urged his horse forwards.

“Swish!” Yet another arrow shot at them from behind, and the exhausted Reynolds once again frantically dodged while raising his shield to block. With a ‘slash’ sound, the arrow pierced through the shield and into Reynolds’ shoulder. The powerful force of that arrow actually caused the exhausted body of Reynolds’ to sway, and he nearly fell from his horse.

After running for two hours, it was almost dusk.

The walls of the city of Neil were manned by quite a few warriors, as well as a number of nobles who were on the walls strolling about aimlessly.

“Open the city gates, quick! There are soldiers of the Rohault Empire behind us. Kill them all!!!” Reynolds roared furiously.

In the blink of an eye, Reynolds and his tens of wounded surviving soldiers reached the outskirts of the city of Neil, but the gates to the city didn’t open.

“Swish!” An arrow shot out at one of the nobles on the wall.

“Don’t open it! Don’t open the city gates!” A shrill, ear-piercing voice could be heard coming from up above. “Fire your arrows! Shoot the enemies to death!”

That pursuing squad of the Rohault Empire stopped just outside of bow range. Ten of them actually dismounted, then charged directly towards the city walls. They easily dodged the arrows aimed at them from above, and all of them were covered with a sheath of battle-qi.

These were mighty warriors indeed.

“Kill that magus.” The leader of those ten men stared fixedly at Reynolds. They had chased all the way over here for the sake of killing Reynolds. A magus without mageforce was simply far too weak.

Right now, Reynolds couldn’t fight back at all.

“Open the gates!” Reynolds’ squad of knights felt totally hopeless now. Although they had several dozen people and their enemy only had ten, just from looking at their opponents’ battle-qi, they could tell that the leader of their enemies could probably kill them all by himself.

Chapter 37 – Grievous News on the Wedding Day

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 37, Grievous News on the Wedding Day

“Open the gates!”

“Open the gates!”

Reynolds and his men continuously howled with anger. The enemy only had three hundred in total, while Neil City had tens of thousands of soldiers. What was there to be afraid of? After making their way back here, Reynolds and his men had thought that their lives had been saved, but now…

“Slash!” A warblade chopped down towards a knight’s neck, bifurcating him into two pieces. His intestines rolled out.

“Die, all of you, die!” The leader of the enemies laughed wildly.

Reynolds’ side was quickly decimated. In the blink of an eye, only a few were left. Staring at the enemies, Reynolds couldn’t help but feel despair.

“Am I going to die?”

Reynolds had many goals and dreams which he had yet to accomplish. But now, he was about to die.

On the city walls, a group of nobles were surrounding an ashen-faced middle-aged noble.

“Your Imperial Highness, are you alright?”

“Don’t be afraid, your Imperial Highness. The enemies won’t be able to break in.”

After continuous reassurances, the middle-aged noble slowly calmed down. This man was the administrator of the Southeast Administrative Province, the younger brother of the Emperor, Prince Julin.

Prince Julin wasn't born with any spine or ability, but he was the younger brother of Emperor Johann, and Emperor Johann doted on this younger brother. Thus, Prince Julin was living quite a comfortable life.

He knew that it had been over a decade since the O'Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire had engaged in any large scale battles. Thus, he had been happy to come here to 'take a look at the borders'. His arrival had caused all the local nobles of Neil City to surround and pamper him.

But who would've thought that just as he was bragging about the military might of the Empire up on the wall, an arrow had shot towards him. Fortunately, the guards next to him had blocked the windows.

"Open the gates!" A desolate, angry howl from below.

The surrounding warriors' eyes were turning red at the scene. There weren't many enemies. If the army of Neil City were to charge out, they could definitely kill all the enemies with ease. But Prince Julin refused to let them open the gates.

"Your Imperial Highness, there aren't many enemies below. Let me lead my men to go kill them." A military officer begged.

"Bullshit." Prince Julin pointed at his nose and cursed, "What the hell do you know? Can't you see that far away, there are several hundred soldiers?"

"But your Imperial Highness, our city of Neil has thirty thousand soldiers." The military officer argued.

Prince Julin sneered, "It is dusk right now, and in the distance, there is a great deal of tall grass. Who knows how many enemies are lying in wait? Think about it, for just a few hundred people to dare attack, surely they must have some sort of support, yes? It isn't worth the risk and the

additional bloodshed just to rescue a few dozen soldiers of the Empire."

Prince Julin spoke with authority and determination.

"But your Imperial Highness…" The military officer didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Clearly, this Prince Julin didn't know anything about military affairs. Given how sturdy the city of Neil was, even if their enemy had a hundred thousand soldiers, they wouldn't find it easy to break through the defense of Neil City and its thirty thousand soldiers.

What's more, his side was just going to go kill the enemies below the city walls. It wasn't as though they were going to chase and counterattack.

Prince Julin wiped away the cold sweat from his forehead.

"Isn't it just a few dozen common soldiers? If they die, they die. I don't want to be in any risk." Prince Julin secretly said to himself. He immediately said with severity, "Remember, you are not to attack without authorization. Otherwise, if something happens, don't blame me for being merciless."

"Your Imperial Highness, the leader of those people seems to be Reynolds." Someone suddenly said.

"Which Reynolds?" Prince Julin frowned.

"The Reynolds who is in the principal line of descent for the Dunstan clan."

"The Dunstan clan?" Prince Julin frowned, but then he laughed uncaringly. "To die for the sake of the Empire is a glorious thing for their clan. In addition, the Dunstan clan is a large one. So what if a single descendant dies?"

Prince Julin didn't care in the slightest.

"Open the city gates!" That desolate cry rang out again. And then, there were no more cries to be heard from outside the city.

Reynolds body slumped down, falling against the city walls. An arrow was in his shoulder, and a terrifying wound could be seen in his chest. Fresh blood flowed everywhere.

Reynolds had already lost consciousness.

“Senior captain?” Reynolds’ armor revealed his status.

The leader immediately grabbed Reynolds, tossing him onto his shoulder, then shouted to his men, “Let’s go.” As he spoke, those ten men left as fast as lightning.

From start to finish, aside from shooting arrows atop the city walls, the defenders of the city of Neil didn’t open the city gates or engage the enemies in battle at all.

The Dunstan clan possessed tremendous influence in the military. Soon, the news of how Reynolds’ entire unit had been wiped out, while Prince Julin had given the ridiculous order that his men were not to leave the city and engage in battle, reached its way to the Dunstan clan.

Not long after Prince Julin returned to his residence, his subordinates told him something shocking.

“Your Imperial Highness, that Lord Reynolds who died in battle was an extremely close friend of Master Linley. The two studied together at the Ernst Institute, and their affection for each other rivals that of real brothers.” A bearded middle-aged man said respectfully to Prince Julin.

“What? Master Linley? The two are as close as real brothers?” Prince Julin instantly jumped to his feet.

“Those…those bastards! Why didn’t they tell me up on the wall?” Prince Julin said frantically.

“Your Imperial Highness, there aren’t many people who know of the

relationship between Linley and Reynolds. Even in the imperial capital, only a few nobles know. How could those distant nobles of Neil City know about this?"

Prince Julin immediately began to frown.

He wasn't afraid of offending the Dunstan clan. No matter how powerful the Dunstan clan was, they relied on being in the good graces of the Emperor. It was just one clan member, after all. All he had to do was to say something to the Dunstan clan, and this matter would definitely be at an end.

But offending Linley was something else entirely.

"Immediately reach out to the Dunstan clan. Also…prevent any news from coming out of the city of Neil. Don't let the information get to the imperial capital, especially to Linley. Just say that Reynolds' death was in battle and in service to the Empire." Prince Julin was truly beginning to panic.

Yulan calendar, year 10009. September 15th. This was the day when Wharton and Nina were going to get married. Wharton was the younger brother of the world-famous Master Linley, while Nina was an Imperial Princess.

Their grand wedding was naturally an incomparably important affair.

Within the palace, beautiful music wafted throughout the halls like flowing water. All the nobles were toasting each other while chatting and laughing.

"Emperor Johann, excuse me." Linley said with a calm laugh as he nursed his cup of wine.

Linley truly was not accustomed to dealing with these nobles. After saying a few words to a few people, Linley left the main hall and headed towards a garden, with Delia soon following him there.

"What is it, Linley?" Delia laughed.

“Not comfortable.” Linley chuckled.

“It seems that today you aren’t in a very good mood.” Delia saw that an unhappy look was on Linley’s face. Linley nodded. “I don’t know why, but for some reason, I feel anxious and irritable.”

When one’s spirit had reached Linley’s level, it was quite rare that one would feel irritable and uncomfortable.

“Today is Wharton’s grand wedding. Be happy.” Delia consoled.

Linley let out a long breath and nodded.

While Linley and Delia were in the garden, Emperor Johann received a secret letter. His personal attendant said in a soft voice, “Your Imperial Majesty, Reynolds of the Dunstan clan died in battle.”

“Reynolds died? Which Reynolds?” Emperor Johann glanced at his personal attendant. Why did a single person’s death have to be brought to the attention to the Emperor? Did he, the Emperor, have nothing better to do than to worry about this?

“This was a classmate of Master Linley’s at the Ernst Institute. He is on extremely good terms with Master Linley.” His personal attendant said in a quiet voice. “Your Imperial Majesty, this matter involves his Imperial Highness, Prince Julin.”

“Julin?”

“According to our reports, Reynolds and his men were pursued by the soldiers of the Rohault Empire to the walls of the city, but Prince Julin ordered his men not to open the gates and to strictly defend only.”

“Defend? How many soldiers did the enemy have?” Emperor Johann frowned.

“Three hundred.” The palace attendant said.

Emperor Johann’s eyes bulged out. “Three hundred, and he had them defend only? This Julin…jeeze…” Emperor Johann felt a surge of anger, but then, in the blink of an eye, he understood what had just happened.

He understood his younger brother very well.

Julin was a person without much ambition. His main problem was that he was a bit of a coward. Emperor Johann didn’t consider this much of a flaw. After all, he didn’t need to rely on Julin to lead his armies or to do anything else.

But now, the situation had just gotten complicated. If Linley were to find out…and if Linley were to cause trouble…

Thinking back to the terrifying power Linley had displayed at Mt. Tujiao, and how powerful those two magical beasts were, Emperor Johann immediately understood that unless the experts from the War God’s College were to intervene, there was no way he could suppress Linley’s forces at all.

But how could the War God’s College intervene for the sake of a mere prince?

This was impossible.

“Julin. All he ever does is create disasters for me.” Emperor Johann rapidly considered what to do. Although he was furious, he still had to protect his little brother.

“Your Imperial Majesty, as Prince Julin tells it, they didn’t have a chance to rescue Reynolds before Reynolds and his men were killed at the base of the city walls. At that time, it was already very dark, and they weren’t sure as to exactly how many men the opponents had.” The palace attendant said softly.

Emperor Johann nodded slightly. He carefully considered how to manage

this affair.

There was no way this could be totally hidden!

This was Emperor Johann's first reaction. It was best not to try and hide something from a peak-stage Saint like Linley. Otherwise, once the lie was discovered, things would go catastrophically wrong.

Emperor Johann immediately walked out of the hall and headed towards the garden in search of Linley.

"Emperor Johann?" Linley, who was strolling alongside Delia, saw Emperor Johann walk over with a dire expression on his face. He couldn't help but call out to him questioningly.

When Emperor Johann saw Linley, the look on his face became all the grimmer.

"Emperor Johann, what exactly has happened?" Linley frowned.

Emperor Johann sighed. "Linley, I'm going to tell you something, but you have to be calm."

"What happened?" Linley was growing nervous. These past few days, Linley kept feeling irritable and restless. Hearing Emperor Johann's words, he began to worry.

It seemed as though something terrible had happened.

Emperor Johann let out a low sigh. "Just now, we received word from the Golden Flame Legion based in the Southeast Administrative Province. A squad of knights led by Reynolds was ambushed by enemy forces, and was chased back the entire way…"

Linley's heart instantly sank.

"Reynolds and a few people managed to make their way towards Neil City,

but the soldiers of Neil City didn't have enough time to save them. Reynolds and his men…all died in battle!"

"All died in battle!" "All died in battle!" "All died in battle!" ….

These four words struck Linley like thunderbolts, reverberating and echoing in Linley's mind. Linley felt as though his mind had gone blank, and all strength had left his body. Everything had gone blank!

After a long time…

"Fourth Bro…Fourth Bro…he died?" Linley stuttered.

"Hi there. I'm Reynolds, from the O'Brien Empire." Linley could still clearly recall how he had met Reynolds for the first time, as they were registering to enroll in the Ernst Institute. The first person he had met was Reynolds. At that time, Linley had been with Uncle Hillman, while Reynolds had been with his Grandpa Lomu.

Two young children had become friends, just like that.

The eight years after that, they had been together day and night. Reynolds' sloppiness, his mischievousness, his sincerity…his joyful laughter. One scene after another swam to the forefront of Linley's mind.

"Fourth Bro, he died?"

Linley couldn't believe it. Just a while ago, his Fourth Bro had been chatting and laughing with himself and Boss Yale. But just like that, he had died in battle.

Linley could clearly remember how he had looked and how he had sounded.

How could Fourth Bro have died?

"Master Linley, I hope you can restrain your grief." Emperor Johann, seeing

the look on Linley's face, began to grow nervous. He was afraid that Linley would go crazy.

Linley turned to stare at Emperor Johann, his gaze stabbing at Emperor Johann like sharp daggers. In a low voice, he said, "Emperor Johann, tell me, what exactly happened? I hope you won't lie to me. If you are wise, you can probably guess what the results would be for someone lying to me! Tell me, what exactly happened?"

Chapter 38 – Is it True?

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 38, Is it True?

Emperor Johann couldn't help but frown at Linley's attitude. No matter what, he was still the Emperor of the O'Brien Empire.

"Emperor Johann!" Linley's voice grew even deeper, and his eyes stabbed at Emperor Johann.

Emperor Johann suddenly had the sensation that he was sinking into a cold, dark abyss. Linley's stare was making it somewhat hard for him to breathe. Emperor Johann's throat clenched, and he managed to say, "Master Linley, what is the meaning of this? Don't you trust Us?"

By his side, Delia maintained her silence.

Linley stared at Emperor Johann. In a deep voice, he said, "Emperor Johann, it isn't that I don't trust you. Only, Reynolds is my close friend. All of a sudden, you tell me that he died in battle? Tell me…how could I not want to try and find out the truth of the matter?"

"The truth of the matter?"

Emperor Johann stood erect and said angrily, "Master Linley, can it be that We are not telling the truth? Let Us tell you once again, Reynolds was pursued and killed by the forces of the Rohault Empire to the walls of Neil City, where he died in battle. There is no question about this!"

"Neil City?" Linley's eyes couldn't help but narrow. "Emperor Johann, if Reynolds had already fled to the walls of Neil City, how could it be that those many soldiers of Neil City were unable to rescue Reynolds?"

Emperor Johann hesitated, but then said firmly, "At that time, We were not there. However, according to what We have learned, just as Reynolds

arrived at the walls of Neil City, he was killed before the soldiers of the city had a chance to rescue him."

His Fourth Bro had died!

Linley didn't wish to believe it. When he had been interrogating Emperor Johann, scenes and memories of the time he had spent with his Fourth Bro came drifting uncontrollably to his mind, causing Linley's baleful feeling in his heart to grow even stronger.

Emperor Johann could sense that Linley's mood was transforming. The aura of the surrounding environment had become terrifyingly oppressive. Giant beads of sweat appeared on Emperor Johann's forehead, but he only stared at Linley.

No matter what, he couldn't open his mouth and spill the truth. He had to insist that Reynolds' had died in battle, and the soldiers of the city of Neil didn't have a chance to rescue him.

Linley closed his eyes, forcing down that demonic feeling in his heart. He let out a breath.

When his eyes opened, they flashed like lightning. Under Linley's gaze, Emperor Johann felt tremendous psychological pressure. As an ordinary warrior, how could his spiritual energy compare to that of an Arch Magus of the ninth rank like Linley?

"Emperor Johann, you must understand, perhaps what you are telling me is true. But are you able to guarantee that the person who brought you this information also told the truth?" Linley's voice was very low.

Emperor Johann nodded without any hesitation, saying firmly, "Linley, you must believe Us."

Linley glanced at Emperor Johann, then said calmly, "Emperor Johann, I'm not in a good mood today. I'm going back home. Let my little brother and Nina know."

Although his forehead was covered in sweat, Emperor Johann still squeezed out a smile. “Master Linley, We can totally understand how you are feeling. Master Linley, go home and get some rest. We shall definitely inform Wharton and Nina.”

Linley nodded, then left the imperial palace alongside Delia.

Watching Linley leave, Emperor Johann finally let out a sigh of relief. Wiping the sweat from his forehead, he secretly said to himself, “Good heavens, lying in front of Linley is absolutely terrifying. If Linley were to have let loose his anger, no one here would have been able to stop him.”

After calming himself down, Emperor Johann once more summoned that noble, majestic smile to his face and returned to the main hall.

Linley and Delia walked shoulder-to-shoulder on Boulder Street. On the way back from the imperial palace, Linley had been silent the entire time. Next to him, Delia could sense how much pain Linley was in.

After a long moment, Delia said softly, “Linley.”

Linley was startled out of his reverie by this voice. Having escaped his memories for a moment, he looked at Delia. “What is it?” Delia said in a gentle, comforting voice, “Are you thinking about Reynolds?”

Linley nodded gently. “Delia, in my heart, Boss Yale, Second Bro, and Fourth Bro are like true brothers to me. I’ve never even considered the possibility that Fourth Bro would die in battle.” Although he was calm when saying these words, Delia noticed that Linley’s eyes had turned red.

Despite being such a resilient person, Linley’s eyes were moist. One could imagine how much pain he was in.

Even if he didn’t actively think about past events, the memories of his youth swam to him unbidden. He still remembered how the four of them had drank together and played together, laughing merrily. He still remembered

how, in their dormitory, they chatted about the girls of the Institute. At that time, both Reynolds and Yale were very animated. Thinking back to Reynolds' sloppy, lazy demeanor, Linley couldn't help but feel even more miserable.

They had arrived at Count Wharton's manor.

"Milord." The gate guards said respectfully.

After staring at the estate, Linley then turned his head towards Delia. "Delia, you can go back for now."

"Where are you going?" Delia asked questioningly. Hurriedly, she said, "Linley, please don't do anything rash." Delia knew that given Linley's current condition, it was possible that he might cause some sort of disastrous catastrophe.

Linley shook his head. "No, I'm just going to Reynolds' home…the Dunstan clan!"

The Dunstan clan was also one of the oldest clans of the O'Brien Empire. In the army, the Dunstan clan had an extremely large amount of influence.

The Dunstan clan was located not too far from the imperial palace.

Using the Windshadow spell, Linley soared as gracefully as the wind itself through the streets of the city. Before most people even had a chance to notice Linley, he would have already moved a hundred meters past them.

"Man, I told you to be careful and to not piss off the Madame. Jeeze…" Two guards of the Dunstan clan were talking to each other. One of them was laughing at another one.

The other guard nursed his face, which had a bright red handprint on it.

"I didn't do anything to irritate her! Only, when the Madame arrived, I didn't move back far enough, so the Madame yelled at me and gave me a

slap. Damn, man. So not fair."

"Don't complain about fair or unfair. Young master Reynolds just died in battle. Whoever angers the Madame right now is asking for death."

The two guards casually chatted, but suddenly, with a gust of wind, a human figure appeared in front of the gates to the Dunstan clan's manor.

The two guards were startled.

"Might I ask who you are, milord?" One of the guards said.

"Go make a report and state that Linley wishes to meet with the leader of the Dunstan clan." Linley's voice was calm, but it had a certain penetrative, soul-shaking power.

"Master Linley?" The two guards exchanged glances, amazement in their eyes.

What sort of a person was Linley? He was one of the most powerful experts in the entire Yulan continent, on the same level as the Holy Emperor or Haydson.

The two guards immediately bowed deeply.

"Master Linley, please wait a moment. I will immediately go make the report." One of the guards immediately ran at high speed inside the manor. Linley quietly waited there outside the gate, standing as straight and as stiff as a spear.

Shortly afterwards, three middle-aged men ran over at high speed. The leader of these three was the leader of the Dunstan clan, and Reynolds' father: Neon [Ni'en] Dunstan.

Neon Dunstan, upon learning that Linley had come, had immediately ran over to welcome him.

They knew that today was the day of Wharton's grand wedding with Nina. But because of Reynolds' death, the Dunstan clan was extremely depressed, which was why the Dunstan clan had not attended Wharton and Nina's wedding banquet.

"Is this Master Linley?"

Neon Dunstan spied Linley from afar. Linley was an important figure of the world. Neon could sense at a single glance Linley's astonishing presence.

This was a sort of spiritual pressure.

When experts trained to a certain level, their spirit and their soul would both transform. Saint-level experts, even if their clothes were tattered, would generally seem much more noble than most nobles.

Linley turned his head and saw Neon and the other two arrive.

When his electric gaze swept past the three men, all of them took a deep breath before warmly saying words of welcome. The clan leader, Neon, was the first to speak. "Master Linley, if there is anything you need, you could've sent someone for us. I would've come to speak with you. There was no need to trouble you to come in person, Master Linley."

Linley didn't mince words, immediately heading into the Dunstan clan's estate. He passed by those three people and headed directly inside.

Neon Dunstan and the others were puzzled, but they immediately followed him.

Given Linley's current understanding of the wind, he only needed a thought to activate the Windscout spell, allowing him to 'see' everything within several kilometers. As Linley walked into the main hall of the Dunstan clan, he saw that many people were already clustered there. All of them were men.

"Respectful greetings to Master Linley." All of the men bowed respectfully

to him.

Linley forced out a smile, then said, “Everyone, no need to be so courteous. I imagine everyone here knows why I have come today.”

Neon Dunstan and the others exchanged glances. All of them were stunned for quite a while.

“Reynolds is dead.” Linley’s gaze swept the men surrounding him, his voice growing deep. “Reynolds was one of my best friends. We were as close as real brothers!”

Linley’s voice filled the entire hall with a stifling aura.

“Right now, what I want to know is, how exactly did Fourth Bro die? Was it truly due to the so-called ‘reason’ of the soldiers of Neil City not being able to rescue him in time, resulting in him dying in battle!” Linley’s gaze came to a halt on Neon Dunstan.

Neon Dunstan sighed deeply. “Linley, Reynolds was my son. I am in great pain over his death. But there is nothing for it. In war, people will die. The Dunstan clan can’t kick up a huge fuss and racket just because my son died. The Dunstan clan is a military clan. The original reason why we decided long ago to have every single son serve for ten years in the military was to make sure that they were all mentally prepared to die in service to their country. If they aren’t able to be tempered like steel, how can they become of use?”

“I understand this.”

Linley looked calmly at Neon Dunstan. “To sacrifice one’s life for one’s homeland is nothing to be ashamed of. However…for some reason, I feel that Reynolds death in front of the walls of Neil City is something hard for me to believe. Could it be that Neil City didn’t have any experts present? Wouldn’t it be easy for them to simply jump down the city walls and rescue them?”

“Uncle Neon!” Linley stared fixedly at Neon Dunstan. “You must understand. My brother is dead. If he had died a glorious death in battle, I will only feel proud of him! But if he died a meaningless death, or died due to some other reason, then I must definitely find out everything there is to know about what happened to my dear brother!”

“If his death involved some other people who intentionally caused my brother to die? Then I will make them die as well!!!” Linley’s eyes were like daggers.

Neon and the others all felt their hearts tremble.

“Uncle Neon!” The way in which Linley had addressed him had caused Neon’s heart to quiver as well.

“Tell me. Your son. My brother. Did he die an unjust, meaningless death?” Linley stared at Neon Dunstan, waiting for his response.

A very complicated look was on Neon Dunstan’s face, but he looked directly at Linley and replied firmly, “Master Linley, thank you so much. However, my son died gloriously in battle. His death was not an unjust one!!!”

Linley swept everyone’s faces with his gaze.

“Then I bid you farewell.” Linley turned and immediately left the Dunstan clan.

Watching Linley depart, Neon Dunstan and the others all let out secret sighs of relief. Neon Dunstan immediately ordered in a bright voice, “Everyone, go back to your usual affairs.”

After speaking, Neon Dunstan immediately left the main hall and returned to his study.

“Reynolds…forgive your father!” As he walked, Neon’s eyes turned red.

Given the influence and power the Dunstan clan held within the military, they naturally knew exactly what had happened. Neon's son had done battle with the enemy for quite some time at the walls of Neil City before being killed. But Prince Julin had personally ordered that nobody was to open the city gates and rescue them.

His death had been an unjust one!

Neon's heart was filled with bitter tears. "Master Linley might kill Prince Julin in order to avenge you. But his Imperial Majesty dotes on Prince Julin very much. Although he wouldn't dare to seek revenge against Master Linley, he would definitely do so against the Dunstan clan."

There was nothing for it!

If a man was dead, he was dead. They had to act for the sake of the living!

Chapter 39 – The Cover-Up and the Truth

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 39, The Cover-Up and the Truth

Linley returned to Count Wharton's manor. When he did, he locked himself into his courtyard, forbidding anyone from entering. Although it was Wharton and Nina's wedding, after learning that Reynolds had died in battle, Wharton knew how his big brother must be feeling right now.

Nobody in the Count's estate dared to go disturb Linley.

The courtyard door remained firmly shut.

Linley sat at a stone table. There was a single flask of wine and two wine cups on the table. One wine cup was in front of Linley; the other was opposite of him. Only…nobody was sitting opposite of Linley.

Linley poured wine into both of the cups, then raised one of them in a toast.

"Fourth Bro…" Linley stared straight ahead, his gaze seeming to pierce through the walls of reality. His eyes, however, were red. "Have a good journey."

Raising his head, Linley gulped the entire cup of wine down.

Fourth Bro had died.

Linley simply couldn't accept this.

But first he had interrogated Emperor Johann, and then he had interrogated the people of the Dunstan clan. He had even carefully inspected the expressions on the faces of the Dunstan clan's people. Linley had come to the conclusion…

That perhaps, his Fourth Bro truly had died a glorious death in battle. Perhaps it hadn't been anyone's fault at all.

But what Linley didn't know was that only the three or four core members of the Dunstan clan knew the truth. Neon Dunstan knew that Linley would pay attention to their expressions, which is why he hadn't told anyone else the truth.

There was one other person who knew the truth. Reynolds' mother!

This was the so-called 'Madame' the guards had mentioned earlier. Reynolds' mother was heartbroken. Neon knew very well that in front of Linley, Reynolds' mother wouldn't be able to dissemble at all, which is why no women were present at all in the main hall. Naturally, Reynolds' mother hadn't been there either.

"Fourth Bro, you were the smallest of us four bros. I didn't expect that you would have been the first to depart." Linley's heart felt as though it had been stabbed by knives, and two trails of tears began to flow down uncontrollably.

Snatching the wine flask with his hands, Linley raised his head and began to drink.

"Cough, cough." After drinking so fast, Linley began to cough. But after coughing two or three times, Linley once again raised his head high and drank it all down.

Bebe and Haeru stood in the corner of the courtyard, not daring to disturb Linley at all.

"This is the fourth time the Boss has been so heartbroken." Bebe said to himself. The first time was when he had broken up with Alice. The second time was when he had learned of his father's death. The third time was when Grandpa Doehring had passed away…

Family members. Friends. One after the other, they had left him.

Linley felt great pain, but Linley knew…he had to be strong. Because he had other family members and other friends. He had to be strong, both for the sake of the dead as well as for the sake of the living.

“Let me just wallow in my misery for three days, then.”

Linley painfully cracked his lips into a laugh. Then, without holding back at all, he cried as he wished, drank as he wished, laughed as he wished, mumbled as he wished, reminisced as he wished…or even spoke to Reynolds as though he were there.

Three days later!

“Creaaaak.” The door to the courtyard swung open. Delia had been waiting outside the courtyard the entire time for the past few days, and had asked a servant to bring a stone bench over. She had been sitting there, reading as she quietly awaited Linley.

Three days!

Linley had shut himself in his courtyard for three days, and Delia had waited outside for three days.

Hearing the door creak open, Delia turned her head in surprised pleasure. Right now, Linley was dressed in a long, light blue robe. His back was still ramrod straight, and he didn’t look the slightest bit downtrodden.

“Linley…” Delighted, Delia immediately went over to welcome him.

Linley looked at Delia, and as he did, he felt a warm, thankful feeling in his heart. Given Linley’s current level, how could he have been unaware that Delia had been waiting outside for three full days?

Although he was inside the courtyard and was separated from Delia by a gate, Linley could sense Delia’s presence at all times.

Linley suddenly reached out and took Delia into his arms.

Delia was stunned.

Linley had never hugged her on his own accord before!

Holding Delia in his arms, Linley lowered his head. The tip of his nose brushed against Delia's fragrant hair. The smell was so intoxicating. Smelling her scent, Linley felt his heart grow calmer.

It was as though a lonely little boat had finally reached a harbor.

"Delia. Thank you." Linley's voice sounded out next to Delia's ear.

Hugging Linley and resting her head against Linley's chest, Delia felt happier than she ever had been. She had spent years in the Institute hoping for this, then ten more years waiting…now, it seemed as though her dreams were closer than ever before.

After the day Linley exited the courtyard, him and Delia had drawn a step closer. Sometimes, they could tell what the other was thinking from a mere glance. Only, Linley didn't push past the final barriers between them, and Delia didn't try to do so on her own accord either.

"How is his Lordship doing?"

Gates spoke softly to Wharton in the training courtyard of the manor.

A hint of a smile was on Wharton's face. "After exiting his courtyard, my big brother's been quite close with Ms. Delia. When I saw him just now, he was even smiling. Most likely, he's feeling much better now."

Gates nodded slightly. "When his Lordship didn't leave for three days, it really was quite worrisome."

"Fifth brother, do you think his Lordship is like you, so easily abandoning himself to despair?" Another terrifyingly large and powerful man nearby

said with a laugh.

“Second brother, why are you criticizing me?” Gates said unhappily.

The Count’s estate was very peaceful. Linley continued to live a life of quiet training, while at the same time, making his preparations to head out to the Anarchic Lands.

……..

“Your Imperial Majesty, Master Linley seems to be acting as he always has. He’s focused on his training. There are no abnormal activities. But of course, on the day of Lord Wharton’s wedding, Master Linley paid a visit to the Dunstan clan.” The palace attendant reported respectfully.

Emperor Johann’s face was covered with smiles.

“Wonderful. You can leave now.” Emperor Johann said calmly.

Knowing that Linley hadn’t acted out of the ordinary, Emperor Johann felt much relieved. “Fortunately. Fortunately, Linley really believed that what I said was the truth.”

“The Dunstan clan knew how to act as well.” Emperor Johann was very satisfied.

He knew that given the influence the Dunstan clan had in the military, they definitely knew the truth of the matter. Most likely, they had found out about it even before Emperor Johann himself had.

But clearly, Linley hadn’t learned anything from his trip to the Dunstan clan, and truly believed that Reynolds had died in battle, with the soldiers of Neil City unable to rescue him.

……

Delia stared at a letter in her hands, then stared at Linley. She had a

miserable look on her face.

“Delia, what is it?” Linley looked questioningly at Delia.

Delia shook her head helplessly. “This is a letter from my parents. They say that my grandmother is seriously ill, and want me to go home immediately. My grandmother…” A worried, sad look was on Delia’s face.

Linley reached out to hold Delia’s hand. Staring at Delia, he consoled her, “Don’t worry. Your grandmother will be fine.”

“Linley, I have to rush home.” Delia looked helplessly at Linley. “I had planned to go with you to the Anarchic Lands, but now…”

Linley smiled and consoled her, “It is fine. You go home first. Given my squad’s abilities, we should be able to quickly set up a base in the Anarchic Lands. In the future, when you come looking for me, it will be easy to find me.”

Delia looked at Linley, unwilling to part from him.

But her grandmother was seriously ill. Her parents’ letter had made her extremely worried. There was nothing she could do…she could only choose to leave and return to the Yulan Empire.

The next morning, Delia mounted on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk and flew directly back to the Yulan Empire.

……

Within a prefectural city in the Central Administrative Province of the O’Brien Empire. Within a courtyard owned by a high, luxurious hotel. Yale was casually flipping through a number of letters he had received.

“Hrm? Something about Fourth Bro? What happened to Fourth Bro? Can it be that he rendered military merit and is about to be promoted?” A hint of a smile was on Yale’s face.

In the past, of the four bros, Yale and Reynolds were both the playboy types. They had chased after girls together. The two of them had acted degenerately together, while George and Linley had been rather self-controlled.

Opening the letter, Yale began to read.

And as he did…

Yale's face immediately turned white. His body suddenly began to shake uncontrollably. Yale held his head in his hands and closed his eyes. After a long time…Yale finally opened his eyes.

His face was totally ashen. Not a hint of blood could be seen.

"Impossible."

Moisture could be seen in Yale's eyes. Soon, they turned red. Forcibly swallowing the grief in his heart, Yale continued to read.

After finishing…

"Fourth Bro!!!!" Yale's tears began to flow.

If one was to ask Yale who were the people that he cared the most about? It definitely wouldn't be his older biological brother. The relationship between them was relatively cold. After all, within the Dawson Conglomerate… there were many struggles and much infighting.

In the ten years after leaving the Ernst Institute, although Yale had come to trust some people, he hadn't truly treated any of them as lifelong friends. In his heart, there were only three lifelong friends. The three he had made in his youth.

George. Linley. Reynolds!

Yale stood there, his entire body shaking uncontrollably. Suddenly, a flash of electricity appeared in his hands, turning the letter into ash.

Yale was a lightning-style magus. He was the weakest of the four bros, having only reached the level of magus of the sixth rank.

“Prince…Julin?” Yale ground his teeth, his entire body still shaking.

“You actually just stood there and watched, and let my brother die!!! I don’t care who you are. I will make sure you die!” Yale took a deep breath, closing his eyes.

He forced himself to calm down.

The Dawson Conglomerate was very influential amongst the common-folk, and border cities such as Neil City were cities which the Dawson Conglomerate viewed as being of great importance. The merchants and nobles there had many dealings with the Dawson Conglomerate.

Perhaps this secret could be kept from Linley, but there was no way they could keep this secret from the pervasive, world-spanning Dawson Conglomerate!

“There is no way that father would mobilize the forces of the Conglomerate to deal with a prince for my sake. In addition, even if he tried to, he wouldn’t necessarily be successful.” Yale understood this.

Prince Julin was the administrator for the Southeast Administrative Province. He controlled a huge number of soldiers. How could the Dawson Conglomerate fight against him?

“Third Bro!” Suddenly, Linley came to Yale’s mind, unbidden.

“Third Bro hasn’t avenged Fourth Bro yet?” Yale knew very well how much each of the four of them cared about the others. He was certain that if Linley knew why Reynolds had died, he would definitely go seek revenge. “It must be that Prince Julin and that Emperor-whatever hid this from him.

Third Bro doesn't have an intelligence network."

Whenever Yale thought of that adorable youngster who had followed him around and drank and dallied alongside him at the Jade Water Paradise, he felt bitter pain in his heart.

"Fourth Bro, I promise you, Third Bro and I will definitely avenge you." Yale murmured to himself.

Suddenly, Yale roared loudly. "Attend me! Make preparations for me immediately. I am going to the imperial capital right now. Quick! I am going immediately!"

In just five short minutes, Yale was mounted atop a fine stallion, with two guards by his side. He rushed towards the imperial capital at full gallop. On the way, Yale stopped for nothing, travelling day and night, neither eating nor drinking.

On the way to the imperial capital, he switched horses at several cities, continuing to make haste towards the imperial capital at full gallop.

After two days and one night, Yale and his men managed to arrive at the imperial capital. Due to his high speed journey, both of Yale's eyes were bloodshot, and his face was so ashen and pale that it looked like the face of someone who was seriously ill.

"We're here."

From far away, Yale saw Count Wharton's manor. After two days and a night of travelling, Yale finally felt a glimmer of hope.

"Lord Yale?" The guards at the manor naturally recognized Yale. In the past, Yale had often come to visit Linley. There was no need for them to make any report before letting Yale enter. Only, the two guards were puzzled as to why Yale looked so haggard.

"Third Bro!"

Yale charged into the manor, then began shouting at the top of his lungs, “Third Bro, come out! Third Bro, quick, come out!!!” As soon as Linley heard Yale’s first shout, he immediately ran at high speed out of his courtyard.

Seeing the distant Yale, Linley was stunned.

Right now, Yale’s face was extremely pale, and his hair was an absolute mess. Was this the impeccably dressed, handsome, and cheerful Boss Yale?

Seeing Linley, Yale immediately ran over, grabbing Linley by the shoulders. His bloodshot eyes stared at Linley, and he said in a sobbing voice, “Third Bro, you absolutely must get revenge for Fourth Bro!”

Chapter 40 – The Secrets of the Yulan Continent

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 40, The Secrets of the Yulan Continent

These words stunned Linley.

Get revenge? For what?

“Wait a second!” Linley immediately understood. Fourth Bro had indeed died an unjust death.

Linley grabbed Yale by the arms. “Boss Yale, calm down. Come. Come to my place. Tell me everything you know in detail.” Yale nodded slightly.

They arrived in Linley’s courtyard.

“What were the circumstances around Fourth Bro’s death?” Linley’s face was extremely serious.

Yale said with solemnity, “Third Bro, that day, Fourth Bro had led his men in a scouting mission outside the city. Who would’ve thought that they would encounter the soldiers of the Rohault Empire? Fourth Bro was vastly outnumbered. Despite going all out, only himself and a few dozen of his men escaped. Fourth Bro and his dozens of men fled to Neil City, and at that time, only three hundred enemies were pursuing them.”

“Three hundred?” Linley simply couldn’t believe it.

“Right. But simply because the Rohault Empire’s soldiers fired an arrow at the wall near where Prince Julin was currently standing, Prince Julin was terrified. He immediately ordered that nobody was to be allowed to open the city gates. He ordered his men to only stand guard inside the city. This was done solely to protect himself. As for Fourth Bro and his men, they kept on screaming angrily, ‘Open the gates!’, but nobody dared to do so…

and just like that, Fourth Bro and his men were all slaughtered."

Linley's heart was beginning to blaze with fury.

He could see the scene as if he himself was there. His Fourth Bro had miserably screamed for them to 'Open the gates!', but Prince Julin had forcibly ordered people not to open the gates. Nobody dared to go rescue them either.

And so, Fourth Bro had died.

His death was an unjust one, a pointless one. He didn't have to die!

"Where is Fourth Bro's body?" Linley immediately asked.

Yale said in agony, "According to our Conglomerate's intelligence network, Fourth Bro was hit by an arrow on the shoulder, and then the enemy used a warblade to slash open his chest. Fourth Bro collapsed at the corner of the walls. And then, the leader of the enemy soldiers took Fourth Bro's corpse away as a spoil of war."

"What?!" Linley couldn't believe it. "Three hundred people before the gates of Neil City. Not only did the guarding forces not attack, they even allowed the enemies to take away Fourth Bro's corpse?"

This was an absolute joke.

"Precisely speaking, the large majority of those three hundred soldiers stayed outside of bow range. The real attackers only numbered ten or so. Those ten experts didn't care about arrows at all." Yale's heart was filled with bitter pain. "Those ten or so experts killed Fourth Bro, then took his corpse away…but given Prince Julin's orders, none of the guard soldiers dared to venture out to do battle."

The soldiers of the O'Brien Empire were extremely disciplined and would follow orders.

But such laughable orders, in all honesty, were extremely hard to accept for them.

“Fourth Bro…” In Linley’s mind, he could see the scene of how his Fourth Bro had angrily, desperately, screamed ‘Open the gates!’ outside the walls of Neil City, but the soldiers atop the walls had coldly refused to do so.

Such an unjust death filled Linley’s heart with endless rage.

Fourth Bro shouldn’t have died at all!

“Johann and the Dunstan clan both dared to deceive me.” Linley, knowing the truth, immediately understood that most likely, the Dunstan clan had done so due to their fear of offending Prince Julin and Emperor Johann.

“So it turns out that this was all due to that Prince Julin!” Linley’s rage was building.

He had heard of Prince Julin long ago. Emperor Johann was famous for his bias and partiality, and had made his incompetent younger brother the administrator of an Administrative Province. From this alone, one could tell how much Emperor Johann doted on his younger brother.

“Third Bro, only you are capable of avenging Fourth Bro.” Yale said with pained fury.

Yale’s heart was filled with self-reproach. He, too, wanted to avenge his Fourth Bro, but he personally was simply too weak, and the Dawson Conglomerate didn’t belong to him.

Linley nodded, a cold light shining forth from his eyes. “Since that Prince Julin caused Fourth Bro’s death, then he definitely must die.” Linley turned to stare at Yale. “Yale, take a rest. I need to make a trip.”

“What are you going to do? Are you going to act against him now?”

“No.”

Linley slowly, calmly shook his head. “If I were to directly kill Prince Julin, most likely that Emperor Johann would revenge himself upon the Dunstan clan…Fourth Bro is already dead. I don’t wish for his clan to collapse as well.”

…..

War God Mountain.

Linley stood in front of the tunnel which led to the War God’s training area, quietly waiting. Right at this moment, someone flew towards him at high speed. It was Castro.

“Linley, what are you doing here?” Castro questioned.

“I wish to see the War God.” Linley replied.

Castro nodded. “If that’s the case, then let me report your arrival.” But right at this moment, a voice rang out next to Castro and Linley’s ears at the same time. “Linley. Come in.”

Linley had already prepared the Windshadow spell, and so he flew into the tunnel. Those familiar, winding pathways led him deeper into the tunnels until he arrived at the pit. He dropped down several thousand meters, arriving at the bottom.

A few moments later, Linley arrived at that pitch-black stone door.

“Rumble.” That terrifying heat was still there, turning the stone walls scarlet red.

Linley said respectfully, “Lord War God, I imagine that you already know about my duel with Haydson. I imagine that I should now be qualified to learn of the secrets you previously spoke about.”

“Enter, then.” The War God’s calm voice rang out.

“Rumble…” The pitch-black stone door swung open on its own, revealing a tunnel within. A terrifying blast of heat blasted out from within.

Linley formed his Dragonblood battle-qi into his Pulseguard Defense.

“What a hot place.” Staring deep into the tunnel, Linley was astonished. On the far end of the tunnel, Linley saw an enormous magma pool that was at least a hundred meters wide. The lava boiled and hissed and swirled about, but this wasn’t the astonishing part.

The astonishing part was…in the air directly above the magma pool, there was a ball of fire at least three meters long.

This ball of fire was pure, scarlet red. It was constantly emanating waves of terrifying heat from mid-air. For Linley to be forced to use the Pulseguard Defense to protect himself, one could imagine how terrifyingly hot this ball of fire was.

The temperature of ordinary lava wouldn’t be able to hurt Linley, even if he went near it.

Even if he were to walk on top of lava, all he had to do was to control his battle-qi to protect himself. There was no need to use the Pulseguard Defense. Linley suddenly realized something…

“Where is Lord War God?” Linley looked suspiciously in every direction.

In the blink of an eye, he could make out the surrounding area. Aside from the central pool of lava, everything could be seen clearly in this area. But there wasn’t a human figure in sight.

“Linley!” The War God’s calm voice suddenly drifted down from within the ball of fire.

Linley stared in astonishment at that hovering ball of fire.

Could it be that the War God was that ball of fire?

A blurry human figure slowly drifted out from within that ball of fire. In the blink of an eye, that blurry human figure appeared next to the pool of magma.

This man was indeed the War God.

Linley carefully inspected this War God, whose legend was known throughout the Yulan continent. The War God wasn't an extremely tall man, only around 1.8 meters tall or so. He had the appearance of a man in his thirties. He had thick eyebrows and scarlet red hair which had grown to his waist. Due to his careful observations, Linley suddenly realized that atop the War God's scarlet red hair were multiple blazing flames.

The War God's face was as hard and cold as granite, and his eyes were extremely sharp.

With every single action, he radiated absolute certainty. In particular, he possessed a terrifying presence which caused Linley's heart to quiver.

Such power!

"Respectful greetings to you, War God." Linley said courteously.

The War God carefully looked at Linley, a hint of a smile appearing at the corners of his lips. He nodded calmly. "Not bad. I watched your duel with Haydson. Your attack technique is quite interesting."

A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face as well.

"Lord War God, I should now be qualified to learn about the secrets of the Yulan continent, right?" Linley had already decided long ago that before heading out to the Anarchic Lands, he would come visit the War God once.

And now, he had to seek vengeance for his Fourth Bro as well.

Linley had already made careful calculations. After avenging his Fourth Bro, he would immediately head out for the Anarchic Lands. In addition, this meeting with the War God wasn't solely for the sake of learning the secrets. It was also to use the War God's influence to suppress Johann.

Who did Johann fear the most? Without question, it was the War God!

"Linley, the attack you have developed is quite unique indeed. Your current level of power is indeed on par with Haydson, and is enough to qualify you to be made aware of the secrets of the Yulan continent." The War God said calmly.

Linley listened carefully.

"Linley, do you know how I became a Deity?" The War God suddenly looked at Linley.

"Wasn't it through gaining sufficient insight which allowed you to break through the limits of the Saint-level and reach the Deity-level?" Linley looked at the War God, puzzled.

The War God shook his head slightly. "It isn't so easy to break through to the Deity-level. Even Cesar, with his extraordinary talent, spent five thousand years before reaching the Deity-level. As for me…although in the past, I had indeed reached the limits of the Saint-level, it was very hard to take that last step and break through. Five thousand years ago, during a battle, I was fortunate enough to acquire the divine spark of a Demigod. I absorbed and fused that divine spark…and thus, I became a Deity."

Linley was stunned.

So the almighty War God whom everyone praised to the high heavens had actually broken through because he had acquired the divine spark of a Demigod.

"What, are you very disappointed?" The War God laughed calmly.

Linley shook his head. “No. It is very incredible that in the past, you were able to reach the limits of the Saint-level after only a few hundred years. Your eldest disciple, Fain, has spent thousands of years training. By now, he should be at the limits of the Saint-level as well.”

The War God laughed.

He was very satisfied with Linley’s response. Indeed, reaching the limits of the Saint-level in a few centuries was extremely difficult.

“It is hard to reach the limits of the Saint-level. For someone to reach the limits of the Saint-level definitely means that they have already arrived at the very end of the path of the Elemental Laws they have chosen. To break past that barrier, what they need is a sudden insight! In an instant, they must fuse together and combine every part of the aspect of Elemental Law they are training in. Only then will they succeed in breaking through.”

The War God sighed, “In the entire Yulan continent, up until a few decades ago, there had been six Prime Saints who had reached the limits of the Saint-level and only needed to take one more step before breaking through to the Deity-level. Now that Cesar has broken through, there are five Prime Saints remaining who are at the limits. One of them is Fain.”

“Currently, in the Yulan continent, aside from those five Deities, the most powerful people are Fain and the other four. You should already know by now how powerful Fain is.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Linley was now beginning to truly interact with the hidden aspects of the Yulan continent.

“Lord War God, what level of power does the Holy Emperor have, in comparison with those hidden experts?” In the future, Linley would definitely have to deal with the Holy Emperor. Naturally, he needed to ask this question.

“The Holy Emperor?”

The War God paused for a moment, then said, “Amongst the hidden experts of the continent, aside from the Deities, Fain and the other four Prime Saints are the most powerful. They need only a single step to reach the Deity-level. Beneath them are the likes of the Holy Emperor. There are roughly ten or so people on this level. Below them are those people on Haydson’s level. Most of the experts who lie hidden here in the continent are on Haydson’s level.

“The Holy Emperor is more powerful than Haydson?” Linley memorized this little fact.

The War God cast a warning glance at Linley. “The Holy Emperor trains in Oracular Magic. Oracular Magic is extremely powerful. It is normal for him to be on a higher level than Haydson.”

Linley looked at the War God, then asked, “Lord War God, then what are the secrets of the Yulan continent? What are they?” Linley had been curious this entire time.

For what reason had the Yulan continent attracted so many experts to remain here on this plane?

“In the Four Higher Planes, there is another name for the plane of the Yulan continent.” A hint of delight was in the War God’s face.

“What name?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“The Necropolis of the Gods!” The War God said softly.

“The Necropolis of the Gods?” Linley’s heart thumped. “Lord War God, even if Deities were to die, there’s no reason they would have to come to our Yulan continent to be buried, is there?”

“Of course not.” The War God laughed calmly. “Five thousand years ago, many of the experts who descended from other planes were Deities. There

were even Gods and Highgods. They engaged in warfare and slaughter here in the Yulan continent. In the end, aside from a few who left, virtually all of those experts died here.”

Chapter 41 – The War God's Favor

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 41, The War God's Favor

"During one of those battles, I was extremely lucky. Although I had hidden far away, I managed to acquire a divine spark, and what's more, it was the divine spark of a Demigod. If it had been the divine spark of a full God, I wouldn't have been able to absorb and fuse with it at all." The War God laughed calmly.

Linley suddenly began to understand.

There were certain preconditions for one to fuse with a divine spark.

Someone who had not yet become a Deity probably would only be able to fuse with a Demigod's divine spark.

"Why did those experts from other planes descend to the Yulan continent and engage in battle here?" Linley immediately asked.

The War God glanced at Linley. "For now, you don't need to know about this." Clearly, the War God didn't wish to tell Linley.

Linley had no choice but to remain silent.

"The Necropolis of the Gods will be opened once every thousand years. Each time it is opened, those who have received acknowledgment and permission from us Deities are permitted to enter the Necropolis of the Gods and engage in exploration." The War God glanced at Linley. "But I must tell you, the Necropolis of the Gods is extremely dangerous!"

"Has anyone ever succeeded?" Linley asked.

"Of course." The War God said with certainty. "But only one person. And the funny thing was, as soon as he acquired a Demigod divine spark and

broke through, he immediately headed off to the Higher Planes."

Linley secretly laughed.

To become a Deity was extremely hard.

But wouldn't it be so much simpler to just acquire a divine spark from within the Necropolis of the Gods and then fuse it? No wonder so many of the lucky survivors of the past had decided to remain hidden here in the Yulan continent.

After all, it was virtually impossible for a Saint to acquire a divine spark in the Higher Planes.

"Lord War God, are there any differences between becoming a Deity through fusing with a divine spark and becoming a Deity through personal understandings and breakthroughs?" Linley asked.

The War God nodded and sighed. "There are. After absorbing and fusing with a divine spark, one's future training becomes much more difficult. After all, the divine spark you fused with wasn't one which had naturally descended upon you and formed within your soul. There are qualitative differences."

Linley nodded.

In his heart, Linley deeply appreciated the fact that the War God had provided him with this important piece of information.

"But despite that, so what? Linley, if I placed a divine spark in front of you and told you that if you fused with it, you would become a Demigod, with the price being that your future training would be slower and more difficult…would you be willing to fuse with it?" The War God looked at Linley.

Linley was startled.

Indeed. If a Demigod's divine spark was placed in front of him, which represented the chance to become a Deity, despite knowing that one's future training would become more difficult…most likely, many people would choose to immediately absorb and fuse with the divine spark.

"Enough. Linley, if there's nothing else, you can leave now." The War God said calmly.

Linley hurriedly said. "Lord War God, in a few days, I plan to go to the Anarchic Lands. My little brother Wharton will probably remain in the imperial capital. I am worried that the forces of the Radiant Church will threaten my little brother…"

"Don't worry. The imperial capital is not a place where the Radiant Church can act as they please." The War God said calmly.

Hearing these words from the War God, Linley felt calmer.

"Lord War God, the current Emperor, Johann…" Linley didn't even finish speaking before the War God frowned and said, "I gave you my talisman. Just show it to Johann, and he will know that it represents my authority. Each generation of Emperors knows this."

Linley was startled.

The talisman with the word 'War' on it which the War God had bequeathed unto him previously actually had this function as well?

The War God glanced coldly at Linley. "But you had better not use the talisman too wildly. If you throw the Empire into a state of chaos, then you will be the one to fix it. Oh, right. When you go to the Anarchic Lands, there is a person you must remember not to offend."

"Who?" Linley was startled.

The Anarchic Lands didn't have any famous experts, right?

The War God said calmly, “One of the five Prime Saints lives in the Anarchic Lands. His name is Desri [De’si’li]. He trains in the Laws of Light. His power is on par with Fain’s.”

Linley immediately memorized this name.

Someone who was on par with Fain was a person who was only a step away from becoming a Deity.

“Enough. You can leave now.” The War God said calmly.

Linley immediately bowed, then turned and prepared to leave.

“Remember to treat with kindness that magical beast of yours, Bebe.” The War God said with a sudden sigh.

Shocked, Linley turned his head to stare at the War God. Linley wasn’t surprised that the War God knew of Bebe’s existence, but why had the War God just told him to treat Bebe well?

The War God paid no more attention to Linley. With one step, his scarlet hair flowing around him, he entered that hovering ball of fire once more and returned to his training.

“Bebe?”

Linley actually felt that the War God was being a bit too nice to him. Whether it was with regards to Wharton’s wedding, or telling him so many things on this visit…Linley now felt that this had to do with Bebe.

Bebe?

Linley still remembered how Bebe had told him that he came from a clan known as the ‘Beirut’ clan.

“Bebe’s power is terrifying, and his rate of growth is astonishing as well. And he comes from the Beirut clan. Now, the War God says…” Linley

suddenly began to question Bebe's identity.

The imperial capital of Channe. The imperial palace. Within the flower gardens.

Emperor Johann was in a wonderful mood. He leisurely strolled about in his flower gardens, enjoying the sight of all sorts of beautiful flowers. With Linley no longer looking into Reynolds' affair, he naturally felt much more relaxed.

"Your Imperial Majesty, someone is flying over." His personal attendant suddenly said.

Someone was flying over?

A Saint-level expert!

Emperor Johann immediately turned to look. In the skies, he saw a blue-robed Linley soaring in his direction. In the blink of an eye, Linley arrived in the flower gardens.

"Oh, so it is Master Linley." A smile immediately blossomed on Emperor Johann's face. "Is there something you need, Master Linley?"

Linley glanced at the palace attendant.

"Leave for now." Emperor Johann said to his nearby attendant, who immediately walked far into the distance. Now there was only Linley and Emperor Johann, with no one else nearby. Even the guards were over a hundred meters away.

Linley stared emotionlessly at Emperor Johann.

Stared at by Linley in such a manner, Emperor Johann began to feel puzzled and uneasy. Could it be that Linley had discovered that Reynolds' death had to do with Julin?

“Emperor Johann, do you still believe that you’ve told me the complete truth regarding Reynolds’ dying in battle?” Linley stared at Emperor Johann.

Emperor Johann’s heart immediately plummeted. He felt as though he had suddenly fallen into a bottomless abyss.

Emperor Johann was no fool. Hearing Linley’s words, he naturally could guess that Linley perhaps already knew everything.

“Linley, that was the report that came from the military. It shouldn’t be fake.” Emperor Johann said seriously. The meaning of his words were clear; even if the information was wrong, it was the fault of the military reporters, and didn’t have anything to do with him, Johann.

Linley glanced at Emperor Johann.

“Emperor Johann, based on what I have learned, my dear friend Reynolds had led a group of knights in a scouting trip, but had been pursued by the forces of the Rohault Empire to the walls of the city of Neil. The pursuing forces of the Rohault Empire numbered only three hundred! But at that time, Prince Julin actually ordered the soldiers to stay put and guard the city from inside, out of fear!”

The look on Johann’s face changed.

“Faced with three hundred people, why would a garrison of tens of thousands of soldiers have to stand their ground inside the city of Neil?” Linley’s voice grew even colder. “My brother, Reynolds, and his dozens of subordinates were shouting for the gates to be opened from the base of the walls. But Prince Julin actually ordered that the gates were to remain shut. And thus like that…Reynolds and his men lost their lives, for no purpose whatsoever!”

Linley stared coldly at Johann. “Emperor Johann. Tell me. How should we resolve this affair?”

Emperor Johann already knew that there was no way to favorably resolve this situation. He didn't dare to lie or to equivocate. In front of a peak-stage Saint, would excuses be of any use?

Johann's face turned steely. "Julin, that bastard!"

Johann looked at Linley with fury in his eyes. "Master Linley, We had no idea that Julin actually did something like this. He has brought utter shame upon our Empire. Master Linley, please don't worry. We guarantee you that We will definitely take severe actions to censure him. Tomorrow, no, immediately, We shall send our senior ministers to go to the Southeast Administrative Province and strictly investigate this matter. We definitely will not let off anyone who committed any major crimes with a light punishment!"

Linley had seen through Johann's little ploy from the very beginning.

Johann would 'send someone'?

Even if they discovered anything, they wouldn't find Prince Julin guilty of any serious crime.

"Your Imperial Majesty, no need to trouble yourself. Whoever caused my brother to die, I shall make them die." Linley's voice was cold and fierce, causing Johann's heart to quiver.

But Emperor Johann was frantic as well.

Linley was actually saying he was going to directly kill Julin! He was going to go kill Johann's brother? He, Johann, only had a single brother. What was Reynolds? Nothing more than a common noble. If he died, he died.

How could Reynolds' life compare to Johann's brother's life?

"Linley, the Empire has our imperial laws." Emperor Johann said in a cold voice.

For his little brother's sake, he had decided to try and face Linley head on for once.

Linley looked at Emperor Johann. With a cold, calm voice, he said, "Dare I ask, according to military law, what is the punishment for someone who is afraid to do battle against an enemy of just three hundred soldiers, and even stands by and does nothing as his own soldiers are slaughtered?"

"The penalty is indeed death." Johann nodded. "However, an investigation is still needed to find out exactly what happened."

Linley glanced at Johann. "What happened is quite clear. I've only come to inform you of what I am going to do. Johann…do not press your luck. Do not think you can use worldly laws to bind and restrict me."

Saint-level experts were indeed free of worldly laws and restrictions.

Emperor Johann stared at Linley. Suddenly, he said in a soft, begging voice, "Linley, you have a little brother as well. You should understand how I feel."

"Haha…" Linley laughed loudly. "Your Imperial Majesty, it seems you are suggesting that so long as one has an older brother, then they can kill any of my brothers with impunity, and then have their older brother say to me, 'You have a little brother as well'? And then let me pardon their little brother?"

Linley's face was so cold, it seemed like a layer of frost was covering it. "How laughable!"

It was indeed laughable. Someone had killed his bro, and now was trying to stir up sympathy by talking about the relationship between older and younger brothers.

"Linley, you…" Emperor Johann was furious.

"Johann, I hope that you won't let yourself act rashly. Otherwise…" With a

flip of his hand, Linley retrieved the scarlet talisman which the War God had given him.

Emperor Johann, upon seeing the talisman in Linley's hands, seemed to have had a bucket of ice water poured onto his head. His entire body began to shake.

"The War God's Talisman?" Johann stared disbelievingly at the talisman.

After the founding of the O'Brien Empire, the War God, O'Brien, had abdicated and given the throne to his son, who had passed it down over time to future generations. Every generation of Emperors knew that the War God's Talisman represented the War God himself!

Whosoever held this War God's Talisman even had the power to force the Emperor to abdicate!

Naturally, very few people were in possession of the War God's Talisman, and those people wouldn't dare to falsify an order from the War God.

"It's good that you recognize the War God's Talisman." Linley looked calmly at Emperor Johann. "Emperor Johann, I don't care about the fact that you don't handle affairs with impartiality. I, Linley, am not the sort of person to consider myself the epitome of honor and righteousness. However, don't try to put on any airs around me and restrict me. I won't offend others, but I don't wish for others to offend me either."

"Also. I do not wish to see you scheme against or act against the Dunstan clan, the clan of my friend Reynolds." Linley said calmly. And then, Linley immediately took to the air and flew off towards the east.

Johann watched as Linley flew eastwards.

He knew…that Linley was heading to the Southeast Administrative Province to go kill his younger brother. But did he dare to stop him? Right now, Johann didn't even dare to try and verbally argue with Linley.

He was the Emperor, true.

But who had given him his authority? The War God! A single word from the War God could force him to abdicate. By then, he, Johann, wouldn't have any authority at all. The loss of his younger brother's life, or the loss of his Imperial power…which was more important?

Johann chose himself.

The wind blew with dreary force as Linley flew at high speed towards the Southeast Administrative Province. At this time, a black light suddenly flew towards him at high speed from the imperial capital, soon reaching Linley's side. It was Bebe!

"Boss, how'd it go?" Bebe asked.

"Although Johann dotes on his little brother, he values his Imperial power even more. I didn't have to say anything. All I did was take out the War God's Talisman, and he no longer dared to make a sound." Linley chuckled.

Worldly power?

That was nothing more than secondary, and bequeathed upon you by others at that. Only true personal power, developed by training, was truly effective. No wonder the War God didn't want to be Emperor, but instead spent his time in quiet training.

Linley and Bebe, the man and the magical beast, flew east at high speed, and in the blink of an eye disappeared into the eastern horizon.

Chapter 42 – The Southeast Administrative Province

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 42, The Southeast Administrative Province

Emperor Johann lay down on a bench within the imperial palace's flower gardens, feeling utterly powerless. A weak, pale look was on his face. His eyes were closed, and he was silent. The only thing the nearby palace attendant could do was to carefully take care of him. The palace attendant was very puzzled. "Just then, his Imperial Majesty was in a fine mood. But after chatting a while with Master Linley, he became like this?"

Emperor Johann's eyes suddenly opened.

"Transmit this decree. Marquis Jeff is to go to the Central Administrative Province and join with the Jacques Legion. Let Legion Commander Lace arrange a relaxed assignment for him. Unless there are special circumstances, Marquis Jeff is not to be permitted to return to the imperial capital." Emperor Johann said calmly. He truly did not wish to see Marquis Jeff again. Whenever he saw Marquis Jeff, he would be reminded of Prince Julin.

The event which occurred today was the deepest humiliation in Emperor Johann's heart. But Emperor Johann knew that there was nothing he could do about it. All he could do was accept it.

Although the palace attendant was puzzled by the Emperor's orders, he still said respectfully, "Yes, your Imperial Majesty!"

Emperor Johann sat back down on his seat. Suddenly, he seemed to have become much older.

From the imperial capital to the Southeast Administrative Province, even flying at high speed in a straight line, over two thousand kilometers had to

be traversed. In mid-flight, the impatient Linley transformed into his full Dragonform, making haste towards the southeast at top speed.

When Linley had left the imperial capital, the sun had already sunk down to and reached the edges of the eastern horizon.

When Linley arrived at the provincial capital of the Southeast Administrative Province, the entire world had begun to grow dim, and the countless commoners had begun to sit down in their homes and prepare for dinner.

“Whoosh!” While flying towards the top of provincial capital in his Dragonform, Linley suddenly spread out his spiritual energy, easily encapsulating that luxurious castle in the center of the city within it.

Prince Julin was living there. “Boss, should I handle it?” Bebe was flying side by side with Linley.

“No!” Whenever Linley thought of his bro, Reynolds, the flames of fury in his heart burned ever hotter. Although he had flown here at high speed, Linley still felt that this trip had been a long one. Too long!

Linley’s dark golden eyes had turned slightly bloodshot.

“Julin!” Linley ground his teeth and said in a low voice, and then his dark golden eyes became all the more grim and callous.

Thousands of guards were currently on patrol outside the administrator’s castle of the Southeast Administrative Province’s provincial capital. There were many beautiful maids and servants walking about the castle as well.

Within one quiet, secluded room within the castle. Behind a hazy gauze screen. The sound of low panting. A coquettish voice moaning nonstop. Two bodies intertwined with each other.

After a long moment…

A low growl. And then, the room returned to utter silence.

“Your Imperial Highness.” A soft, sweet voice.

“Baby, you really are bewitching. You are much better than my wife.” Prince Julin opened the gauze screen, then put on his long robe and left the bed. “Baby, rest here. I’ll order someone to bring you food.”

“Thank you, your Imperial Highness.” The woman behind the gauze screen had jade hair which cascaded down like a waterfall, and her eyes seemed utterly bewitching.

A hint of a satisfied smile was on the corner of Prince Julin’s face.

He was very satisfied with his life.

What was so good about being an Emperor? As a Prince, he had as many servants as he wished and as many women as he wished. Wasn’t this sort of life even better than that of a god’s?

“That big brother of mine. Jeeze. All I did was cause that Reynolds to die, but he lectured and berated me.” Prince Julin pursed his lips disdainfully.

His life was extremely valuable.

If a common noble died, he died. What was the big deal about it? Prince Julin’s absolute bottom line was this; anything which might threaten his life, no matter how small, had to be stopped.

Prince Julin walked out of the room, feeling satisfied.

“Your Imperial Highness.” The two female attendants outside the room said respectfully.

Prince Julin gently stroked the face of one of the female attendants. Laughing lightly, he said, “Baby, tonight, you can come serve me.”

“Yes, your Imperial Highness.” A hint of joy actually appeared on that female attendant’s face.

Just as Prince Julin was feeling that his life was simply too perfect, a cold voice rang out from the skies above, covering the entire castle. “Prince Julin, are you enjoying your life?” That voice was filled with resentment and hatred, causing Prince Julin to suddenly tremble.

“Who is it?!” The castle guards all raised their weapons and roared angrily.

“Up above. Ahhh! It is a demon!” A guard saw Linley standing in mid-air.

Prince Julin’s heart was filled with terror and fear. He didn’t know who had come to act against him. The people whom Prince Julin had offended were all people who were inferior in status to him. Prince Julin knew very well that some powerful experts were not to be offended. So who was this? Prince Julin raised his head high…and his face turned ashen in terror.

Linley was currently standing in mid-air above Prince Julin’s residence. In full Dragonform, Linley was surrounded by a dense fog of azurish-black battle-qi, which swirled and roiled about him. Linley did indeed look like a demon from the abyss.

His dark golden eyes were staring down at Prince Julin.

All Linley had done was to use his spiritual energy to search and investigate. After hearing Prince Julin’s words to the two female attendants, he knew that this person was indeed Prince Julin.

Linley’s body suddenly descended, and a terrifying surge of energy blasted out in every direction.

“Boom!”

The nearby buildings were all blown apart by this terrifying blast of force. Linley landed heavily on the ground, and the stone floor of the residence instantly cracked and shattered, as though it had been struck by a massive

falling boulder.

“Milord, who are you?” Prince Julin squeezed out a smile, appearing to be incredibly humble.

The man in front of him was a Saint. Prince Julin was absolutely certain of this.

Prince Julin deeply cared about his life, so he never offended any Saints.

“Milord, is there perhaps some mistake? Why have you sought me out?” Prince Julin forcibly maintained his smile, but just at this time, from afar, a guard’s voice could be heard. “Your Imperial Highness, that person is Master Linley. I went to the imperial capital and watched his duel with Lord Haydson.”

Many people had watched the duel between Linley and Haydson. People from the Southeast Administrative Province had gone as well. Naturally, that guard recognized Linley.

Prince Julin hadn’t gone.

To Prince Julin, watching experts fight wasn’t as interesting as playing around with some beautiful women. It was fortunate for him that he was the Emperor’s younger brother, because otherwise, in a country like the O’Brien Empire, where people worshipped experts and valued training and personal strength, his life would have been terrible.

“Master Linley?”

Prince Julin’s heart shook. What he had feared the most had come! Previously, at Neil City, he had caused Reynolds death. After Prince Julin had discovered the relationship between Linley and Reynolds, he was filled with regret, but it was too late.

“What the hell did my big brother do? Didn’t he say that Linley didn’t know that this affair had something to do with me?” Prince Julin began to

curse Johann in his heart. Meanwhile, Linley just stared at Prince Julin.

His dear brother, Reynolds, had died because this Julin had extinguished Reynolds' last chance at life due to his own cowardice. His dear brother didn't have to die.

"Do you know why I have come?" Linley was unable to restrain his fury any longer.

"Ah! So it is Master Linley!" Prince Julin hurriedly said. "It is Julin's honor to be able to welcome you here, Master. But I actually do not know why you have come here, Master."

By now, groups of people had clustered around them, watching.

There were many of Prince Julin's women, some of his children, and many guards and female attendants. They all watched with terror. Even the two experts of the ninth rank who were Prince Julin's special guests stood far away, their hearts filled with terror.

"Master Linley, if there's anything you want, please speak calmly. I think, Master, you must have some sort of misunderstanding about his Imperial Highness." The caretaker of the castle said from the side in a trembling voice.

Linley turned back to glance at the caretaker, whose face instantly turned white.

"Misunderstanding?"

Linley walked towards Prince Julin, one step at a time. Cold sweat poured from Prince Julin's forehead. He was so frightened that not a hint of blood could be seen in his face. Linley's lips quirked upwards, revealing a terrifying smile.

"Whoosh!" Linley's ferocious black draconic tail suddenly moved, wrapping around Prince Julin's body and constricting him like a whip.

“Ah!!!” An shrill scream burst out from Prince Julin’s throat, sounding like a woman being molested.

Linley’s dark golden eyes stared remorselessly at Prince Julin. “Why are you screaming? I haven’t even used any force, but you are already screaming. If I were to use force…”

“Spare me, Master Linley, spare me.” Prince Julin said, terror-stricken.

“Spare you?”

Linley’s voice suddenly turned into a guttural growl. “Me, spare you? What about my brother Reynolds? Who spared his life?” Linley’s black draconic tail, radiating a cold light, began to squeeze while lifting Prince Julin into the air.

Prince Julin was constricted and lifted into the air by this draconic tail which was as thick as a strong man’s arm. As the tail began to tremble slightly, Prince Julin began to howl in terror. “Ah!!” “Slash.” Fresh blood began to dye Prince Julin’s clothes red.

“Stop!” Many of the loyal guards raised their weapons from afar and howled angrily. They didn’t dare to charge forwards, but they did dare to at least shout.

“F*ck off!” Linley frowned, his heart filled with fury.

“Boom!” A terrifying surge of energy erupted from Linley, blasting out in every direction. All of the surrounding guards and female attendants were sent flying. Some unlucky guards ended up smashing into walls head first, with their brains splattering. Others fell to the ground and were heavily injured.

In the blink of an eye, aside from Linley and Prince Julin, not a single person was still on his or her feet.

“The Boss has really gone crazy.” Bebe watched quietly from midair.

Linley retracted his gaze from the surrounding people, turning to stare at the bloody-faced Prince Julin. “Julin, don’t’ worry. I’ll let you live for a bit longer…I’ll let you have the sensation of a slow death.” Linley’s voice was very soft, but it filled Prince Julin with the utmost fear.

“Master, please spare me. I’ll do anything you want, give you anything you want, as long as I am capable, anything is fine, but the important thing, don’t kill me.” Prince Julin still thought that he could escape from this situation alive.

Linley didn’t pay any attention to Prince Julin’s squabbling. The only thing in his mind was the smile of his Fourth Bro, Reynolds. That adorable youngster, so dissolute and lazy, had spent ten days and ten nights waiting for him in a blizzard when he had been carving ‘Awakening From the Dream’.

“Crunch.” A cringe-inducing sound could be heard from Prince Julin’s entire body.

His waist had suddenly become compacted to the waist of a slender young lady. Prince Julin’s face was utterly red. He wasn’t able to say a single sentence, and fresh blood was leaking forward from his mouth.

“Spare…spare…” Prince Julin stared at Linley in terror.

The distant serving women and attendants all watched with terror as Prince Julin’s waist visibly became smaller and smaller.

“Crunch!” Yet another bone-splintering sound could be heard. Blood was pouring forth from Prince Julin’s mouth, and his face had turned the color of purple jam.

The internal organs in his body had been squeezed to the point of rupture. This sort of pain made Prince Julin wish he could die.

“You can’t die so fast.” Prince Julin’s endurance was far weaker than that of Clayde’s, from all those years ago.

Suddenly, Linley’s draconic tail loosened and retracted. That nearly-dead Prince Julin fell to the ground. Prince Julin let out a sigh of relief, but before he even hit the ground…

“Bam!” Linley’s right leg kicked viciously against Prince Julin’s body.

Prince Julin’s eyes turned round from utter terror.

Prince Julin’s body was sent flying from this kick, and he smashed hard against a distant wall. That thick, sturdy wall was actually shattered by the collision. As for Prince Julin? His weak, fragile body instantly disintegrated into a pile of mud-like flesh and bone, strewn everywhere.

“Fourth Bro, don’t worry. I won’t spare a single one of those people who caused you to die.” Linley said softly to himself. A hint of moisture could be seen in those dark golden eyes.

Linley turned to look at Bebe in mid-air.

“Let’s go. We’re heading to Neil City!”

“Whoosh!” Linley rose straight into the air, flying towards the southeast at high speed with Bebe by his side. The thousands of people in the area below were utterly, deathly silent. Only, Prince Julin’s utterly disintegrated corpse was so eye-catching and so frightful to behold!

Chapter 43 – The Corpse

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 43, The Corpse

If Reynolds was alive, he wanted to see him. If Reynolds was dead, he wanted to see Reynolds' corpse!

From Yale, Linley had learned that Reynolds' corpse had actually been taken away by the enemy. On this trip, no matter what, he had to bring his friend's corpse back. However, before that, Linley had to pay a visit to Neil City. After all, the soldiers of Neil City should have known exactly what happened on the day Reynolds was killed.

"Boss, don't be too heartbroken." Bebe said softly.

Linley stared at the distant horizon, then turned to glance at Bebe, forcing out a smile. "Bebe, I'm fine." But it was hard to make out any expressions on the face of the Dragonformed Linley; all that could be seen was the corners of his lips curving slightly.

After flying for a while, the distant Neil City appeared in the desolate landscape.

"We're arriving." The temperature around Linley suddenly dropped by a level.

The army of the O'Brien Empire was currently camped a few dozen kilometers outside Neil City. Ten kilometers away, facing them, was the army of the Rohault Empire. The two armies stared at each other.

After Prince Julin had left the city, the Golden Flame Legion had quickly exacted revenge for Reynolds. But the Rohault Empire had been prepared already, and they wouldn't lower their heads either. The two armies had engaged in multiple engagements, with tens of thousands of casualties. They were now at a temporary halt, but the next attack could come at any

moment.

Right now, the garrison of Neil City was fairly relaxed. After all, there was an army of tens of thousands in front of them.

“Man, that Prince-whatever was such a coward. He let the enemy make it all the way to our walls, and didn’t even let us go out.” A couple of garrison guards were huddled together in a corner of the walls, chatting idly.

“What a tragedy. Senior Captain Reynolds died such an unjust death, and even his corpse was taken away.”

The Golden Flame Legion was, without question, an extremely elite legion. What happened last time at the walls of Neil City was, without a doubt, a mark of shame for the entire Golden Flame Legion. But the military commanders at that time hadn’t dared to disobey the orders of Prince Julin.

“Who are you?!” Suddenly, terrified, angry shouts could be heard from outside. One soldier after another stopped resting in their cubbyholes and came out, but when they saw the Dragonformed person standing in mid-air, wrapped within a cocoon of azurish-black mist, they were all stunned.

They were elite soldiers, elite soldiers who constantly lived on the line between life and death.

But when they saw this expert standing in mid-air, they understood that this aberration was definitely a Saint-level expert. These soldiers didn’t have any ability to fight against him at all.

“You…you are Master Linley?” Suddenly, a military officer whispered these words.

The eyes of the surrounding elite soldiers suddenly lit up. Linley’s Dragonformed appearance had become the stuff of legends. Those elite warriors carefully inspected the cloud-shrouded Linley’s appearance. Indeed, he looked very much like how the legends said he did.

“It is I.” A dark whisper drifted out from within that azurish-black mist.

Master Linley. A genius magus. A grandmaster sculptor. A peak-stage Saint. The pride of the entire O’Brien Empire…countless people in the Empire worshipped Linley. After realizing that this aberration was Linley, the surrounding warriors actually began to feel that Linley’s transformation was extremely ‘manly’ and very ‘ferocious’.

These were valiant warriors indeed.

“Master Linley, if there is anything you need, please just ask us.” The military officer hurriedly said.

“A while ago, a group of your scouts were encountered and attacked by the Rohault Empire’s forces, and were chased all the way to the city walls. The senior captain of that group was named Reynolds, correct?” Linley’s voice was hoarse.

The military officer said, “Yes, Master Linley.”

All of the surrounding soldiers felt a deep sense of humiliation. Even Master Linley had learned of the Golden Flame Legion’s shame. All of them felt extremely awkward and embarrassed.

“Where is Reynolds’ corpse?” Linley asked.

“Master Linley, Lord Reynolds’ corpse was taken away by the enemies.” The military officer’s face was turning a bit green. He truly felt ashamed. Before their very eyes, three hundred people had not only killed Reynolds and his men, they had even taken away Reynolds’ corpse.

Linley asked, “Who here personally witnessed what had happened on that day?”

Many people looked at each other. These people had only heard of what happened to Reynolds. That squad of soldiers who had been on the walls and had personally witnessed what had happened had all been punished and

sent to the front lines to do battle with the enemies.

Seeing the expression on their faces, Linley frowned.

“I…I witnessed it.” An ancient-sounding voice rang out from behind. All of the soldiers parted, allowing a lavishly dressed old man walk over. This old man was the governor of Neil City.

“Lord Governor!” All the surrounding soldiers bowed respectfully.

Staring at Linley and the azurish-black cloud surrounding him, the city governor sighed secretly. As the city governor of a border city like Neil City, how could he possibly be a soft, spineless person? At that time, he had been accompanying Prince Julin. When he had seen Reynolds and the others being pursued, he was just about to order his men to go rescue them.

But at that time, Prince Julin’s attitude clearly showed that he would not permit anyone to go outside. They had to stand their ground inside the walls! The city governor was already quite old, and he had sons and grandsons. He didn’t dare to disobey the order of Prince Julin.

“You are the city governor of Neil City? Good. Clearly explain to me what happened that day when Reynolds was pursued here and killed.” Linley said coldly.

The city governor nodded. “When Reynolds and his men fled here, they had all been wounded. There was an arrow sticking out from Reynolds’ shoulders. When they reached the walls, ten or so experts of the enemy came rushing over, ignoring the arrows of the garrison troops as they immediately began to slaughter Reynolds and the others. Reynolds was slashed to death by a blow to his chest, and then the leader of the enemy forces took him away.”

Linley secretly nodded to himself.

The Dawson Conglomerate’s intelligence was indeed accurate.

“The leader of the enemies? Do you know where he is?” Linley stared at the city governor of Neil. “I must find and reclaim Reynolds’ corpse.”

The city governor of Neil nodded. “Right now, the legions of the Rohault Empire are currently in a deadlock against our legion. They are located a few dozen kilometers outside of Neil City. I imagine their leader is there as well. Right…the leader should be a warrior of the eighth rank.”

“Oh…”

Linley turned to stare towards the south. He could clearly smell the scent of battle and blood in that direction. The bloody scent created by the deaths of tens of thousands was extremely thick!

“Bebe, let’s go.”

“Boom!” A terrifying sonic boom could be heard as Linley and Bebe, the man and the magical beast, slashed through the air, disappearing into the southern horizons. Seeing this, the city governor of Neil had a hint of excitement on his face. “Looks like those bastards of the Rohault Empire are in for it now.”

The city governor of Neil immediately descended from the walls and led a small squad out of the city into the direction of the Golden Flame Legion’s camp.

The two armies of the two Empires stared at each other. Within the central battlefield, many soldiers were carting away the corpses of their own people. At a time like this, the two legions had quite conscientiously paused their battle.

The corpses were carried away, one after the other. At this time, the already faintly red earth was stained even more crimson, and the stench of blood had attracted quite a few locusts.

In the camp of the army of the Rohault Empire’s, their military flag was gently waving in the breeze. Multiple squads were out on patrol. Suddenly,

an azurish-black cloud appeared in the air above the Rohault Empire's camp.

"Not here?" Linley's spiritual energy had encompassed the entire military camp, but he couldn't find Reynolds' corpse.

Senior Captain Hugh [Hu'ke] was currently in his tent, taking large gulps of strong liquor. He was in a wonderful mood. Hugh was certain that, after this battle, he would definitely be promoted.

"At the very least, I will be promoted to deputy legion commander." Hugh mused to himself.

But right at this moment, a powerful force suddenly ripped apart his sturdy tent. Hugh was shocked. "What on earth? Have the enemies broken into our camp?" While thinking this, Hugh quickly rushed out, but when he did, he felt the wild, howling wind, so powerful that he couldn't even stand straight.

Staring at his surroundings, Hugh's face turned pale. He saw countless gusts of energy swirling about throughout the Rohault Empire's camp, and all of the soldiers found it hard to stand stable.

After a while, the wild wind disappeared.

"All of the military officers of the Rohault Empire are to report to the central gathering location. Quickly." A calm voice rang out from the sky. Everyone craned their heads upwards. They saw that constantly flowing azurish-black mist, and within that mist, they could vaguely see the form of a terrifying creature.

"I am Legion Commander Chastre [Sha'si'te] of the Rohault Empire's Wright [Lai'te] Legion. Might I ask why you have come here, esteemed expert?" Legion Commander Chastre said respectfully.

From the power the man had just displayed, Chastre knew that this was a terrifyingly powerful expert with the ability to destroy this entire legion.

The azurish-black mist was drawn closer to Linley's body, allowing the people below to clearly see what Linley looked like.

"Freak!"

"Demon!"

Many soldiers let out quiet cries of fear. Linley's body landed heavily on the ground, causing it to shake and cracks to appear. Linley's draconic tail swished about, gouging deep holes into the ground wherever it passed.

"Dare I ask, esteemed expert, are you Master Linley?" Chastre said respectfully.

Linley glanced at Chastre. The man was quite experienced, and lived up to being a legion commander. After Linley had become famous, news about his Dragonformed appearance had been widely spread as well.

"It is I." Linley said calmly.

The countless surrounding soldiers immediately felt a terrifying sense of pressure. They had all heard of how powerful Linley was, but Linley belonged to the O'Brien Empire's side. Right now, they were currently engaged in battle against the O'Brien Empire.

"Master Linley, can it be that you are going to violate the laws of war? As a Saint-level expert, are you also going to participate in this battle?" Chastre said in a voice that was neither humble nor offensive. When two Empires engaged in battle, unless it was a do-or-die final battle, Saint-level experts generally were not permitted to participate.

Linley glanced at him coldly. "I dislike others threatening me."

Chastre immediately no longer dared to make a sound. If Linley were to go wild, he was truly capable of annihilating this entire army. He didn't have any recourse…

“Speak. A while ago, you sent some people out on ambush and chased a scouting party of the O’Brien Empire to the city of Neil. Who was the leader of that squad of three hundred?” Linley said coldly.

When he said this, virtually all the surrounding soldiers turned to stare at the nearby Hugh.

Hugh’s body quivered.

No one needed to say anything. Linley turned to look at Hugh as well, and Hugh immediately said respectfully, “Master Linley, a while ago, I did indeed lead my troops to kill a large squad and utterly annihilated them in the end.”

“Utterly annihilated?” Hearing these words, the muscles beneath Linley’s eyes twitched once.

Linley stared at Hugh, his cold gaze causing Hugh to feel as though he had suddenly sunk into a frozen land of ice. “I heard that you not only killed all the people in that squad, you also brought back the corpse of the senior captain.”

“It is true.” A look of arrogance appeared on Hugh’s face. As far as Hugh was concerned, this was something worth being proud of.

Linley’s heart shook.

The man in front of him had admitted to it, but the military camp didn’t have Reynolds’ corpse within it. Could it be that Reynolds’ corpse had already been destroyed? When he thought of this possibility, the angry flames in Linley’s heart burned even hotter.

With a flicker, Linley appeared in front of Hugh.

“Ah.” Hugh didn’t have the chance to run away. Stretching out one arm, Linley’s powerful right hand clutched around Hugh’s throat, lifting Hugh

into the air.

Linley's dark golden eyes stared death at Hugh. "Do you know? The name of that senior captain was Reynolds. He was a friend for life of myself, Linley!" Linley ground his teeth.

The surrounding soldiers now all understood why Linley had come and done such a thing.

Hugh's eyes were filled with shocked understanding as well. At the same time, he could sense that the force Linley was exerting around his throat was increasing. His face turning red, he forced out one word after another with difficulty. "No…that…that Reynolds…he…he didn't die!"

Linley was stunned.

His hand loosened, and Hugh collapsed to the ground. Hugh immediately held his throat in his hands and began to cough.

Chapter 44 – Enslaved

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 44, Enslaved

“Fourth Bro didn’t die?” Stunned, Linley blurted these words out, but then he immediately came to himself. “Did you just say that Reynolds didn’t die?”

Right now, Linley’s heart was thumping madly. Shock, joy, worry, disbelief, excitement, fear…all sorts of emotions were intermixed in Linley’s chest. Right now, the only thing Linley could do was to stare expectantly at this military officer of the Rohault Empire in front of him.

Holding his throat, Hugh frantically said in fear, “It is true. He didn’t die. He really didn’t die.”

“Hugh, when you reported your military success, didn’t you say that the senior captain you captured had died already?” The nearby legion commander, Chastre, was frowning.

Lying to a Saint was extremely foolish. Chastre thought that Hugh was perhaps concocting a lie out of fear.

Linley stared at Hugh as well. He truly hoped that Hugh wasn’t lying.

“Speak, now.” Linley stared at Hugh. Every single person in the now-chaotic army camp was staring at Hugh. Hugh straightened his body, then hurriedly explained, “Master Linley, I truly am not lying. Back then, when I recovered that senior captain’s corpse, that is, Reynolds’ corpse, I carried the body myself. But afterwards, I discovered that this ‘corpse’ suddenly moved. Only then did I realize that he hadn’t died!”

Linley’s heart tightened.

An awkward look appeared on Hugh’s face. “Master Linley, this Reynolds

was extremely handsome, and he was a noble, valuable magus. Based on the magic he used when my comrades and I were chasing him, he should most likely be a magus of the seventh rank. A handsome young magus of the seventh rank is extremely valuable on the slave market."

Hearing this, Linley instantly understood.

The surrounding military officers all understood as well. In times of war, there would often be large numbers of slaves sold to slave trading organizations. The army was often on good terms with these organizations, and a handsome young magus of the seventh rank would definitely be a valuable commodity.

A magus of the seventh rank was a high and mighty figure.

To cause a magus like this to become a slave was something which some noble ladies truly liked. They would be willing to pay enormous sums of money to purchase such a slave. The price one would get from selling such a magus of the seventh rank would probably be far greater than any reward money which Hugh would have received from the army.

"Are you saying…that you sold Reynolds to a slave trading organization?" Linley asked.

"Right." Hugh said in terror. He now knew that Reynolds was Master Linley's bosom friend.

"How badly was Reynolds injured?" Linley said with concern. From the reports he had heard, Reynolds had suffered life-threatening wounds. Linley was worried about him.

Hugh said with absolute certainty, "Master Linley, don't worry. When I took Reynolds back, I immediately invited healers to come treat him. And then, after he was sold to the slave trading organization, those slave traders definitely wouldn't let such a valuable commodity die."

Valuable commodity?

In his heart, Linley was worried about his friend. Reynolds had fallen to the point of becoming a slave?

“Let’s go. You will come with me to find that slave trading organization. You should know where it is, right?” Linley grabbed Hugh by his clothes, and Hugh hurriedly said, “Yes, this humble one remembers it very clearly.”

The nearby Chastre snapped, “Hugh, from today onwards, you are to accompany Master Linley. Whatever Master Linley wishes you to do, you must obey.” Chastre looked at Linley and said apologetically, “Master Linley, our deepest apologies. I hope you won’t be too upset with us.”

Chastre truly didn’t have any other options.

Generally speaking, in times of war, both sides wouldn’t dare to get the family and friends of Saints involved. After all, if a Saint was to go berserk, that would be quite terrifying.

In the annals of history, there had been more than a few cases of a Saint going berserk and killing tens of thousands of soldiers.

However, generally speaking, Saints were high and mighty people who stood above the fray. So long as you didn’t offend them, they wouldn’t stoop to causing troubles with ordinary people.

Linley glanced at Chastre, then snatched Hugh up. “Let’s go.” He suddenly rose into the air, and then flew alongside Bebe towards the south…

Watching Linley fly away, the entire military camp let out a collective sigh of relief. Facing such a powerful Saint, all of the warriors present truly didn’t have anything they could do.

“Commanders, go now and manage your subordinates. I’m worried that the Golden Flame Legion will seize this opportunity to launch a sneak attack.” Seeing how disorderly and dispirited the army camp was, Chastre couldn’t help but feel worried. After all, their army was already in a state of disorder,

and the spirit of the army had already been suppressed by Linley.

Chastre's prediction was correct. Not too long afterwards, the Golden Flame Legion once more began their ferocious assault.

Within a border city within the Rohault Empire. Hugh in hand, Linley descended upon a seemingly unremarkable estate, which had a number of exquisitely dressed guards within.

"Whoosh!" A sudden gust of wind came out of nowhere. Linley, now in human form again, appeared on the ground with Hugh in his clutches. Linley was no longer as grief-stricken and furious as he had been at the beginning, when he was preparing to avenge his brother's death. He was much calmer, now.

No matter what, at least his Fourth Bro was still alive.

"Old White [Huai'te]! Old White!" Hugh immediately began to yell at the top of his lungs as soon as he landed.

"Who are you guys?" Old White didn't come out, but quickly, over ten guards appeared in a circle around them, all of whom had their weapons at the ready, prepared to attack at any moment. Only then did a silver-haired old man in a gentleman's suit appear from a side door. Seeing Hugh, the silver-haired old man laughed loudly. "Oh, so it is my dear Hugh. Why are you in such a rush, to the point of charging straight in?"

"Hugh, who is this?" The old gentleman named 'White' had very sharp eyes. He instantly could tell that this man dressed in a black robe was quite extraordinary. After returning to human form, Linley hadn't changed his clothes, and so his pants were ripped and torn.

Linley frowned, glancing coldly at this Old White.

"Old White, this is Master Linley!" Hugh said hurriedly.

"Master Linley?" Old White was startled, and then a look of shock

appeared on his face. “Could it be that this is the Dragonblood Warrior of the O’Brien Empire, Master Linley?”

Hugh hurriedly nodded. “I was flown over here by Master Linley.”

Old White didn’t dare to believe it. He was nothing more than a local supervisor for his slave trading organization. How could he be worth Master Linley, one of the towering figures of the Yulan continent, to come and visit him?

“Old White…” Linley looked at Old White.

“Master Linley.” Old White was extremely humble.

Linley went straight to the point. “Old White, roughly a month ago, Hugh brought a young magus of the seventh rank and sold him to you, I believe.”

Old White glanced at Hugh, then nodded towards Linley. “That is correct.”

“That magus of the seventh rank, his name is Reynolds! He is the bosom friend of me, Linley!” Linley’s voice was very calm, but his eyes stared coldly at Old White.

Old White’s eyes instantly turned as round as an ox’s. “Mas…Master Linley’s bosom friend?!” Old White’s eyes were filled with shock, terror, and disbelief.

Although these slave trading organizations were quite powerful and had some connections to the four major assassin’s guilds, no matter how powerful they were, they wouldn’t dare offend a Saint, much less a peak-stage Saint such as Linley!

“Hugh, you…” Old White stared furiously at Hugh.

It was Hugh who had sold that Reynolds to their organization. Their organization dared to sell almost anyone, even the disciples of major clans, but why had Hugh sold them the close friend of a Saint?

A bitter smile was on Hugh's face.

He didn't know either. If he knew, would he have dared to offend Reynolds? Now, Hugh's life was in Linley's hands.

"Old White." Linley spoke.

Old White's reaction speed was extremely fast. He hurriedly said to Linley, "Master Linley, don't worry. Since this Mr. Reynolds is your friend, Master Linley, our organization definitely will not do anything to Mr. Reynolds. I will immediately send someone to inform our headquarters…"

"What's the matter? Where is Reynolds?" Linley asked.

"This…this…" A hint of terror was on Old White's face. After all, Reynolds had been sold off as a slave almost a month ago.

Linley could sense that something was wrong, and he immediately barked, "Speak!"

Old White had a feeling of terror in his heart. If a Saint such as Linley were to grow angry with him, it was totally possible that their entire organization would be wiped off the map. He hurriedly said, "Master Linley, when Mr. Reynolds was brought here, we first arranged for his wounds to be treated, and then roughly ten days later, we sent him off with a large group of slaves in one shipment. From my understanding, Mr. Reynolds should probably already have arrived at our headquarters."

"Headquarters?" Linley frowned.

Hugh was puzzled as well. "Old White, what's this all about? Doesn't your organization usually sell off slaves directly at the slave markets? Why would you send Mr. Reynolds to your headquarters?"

Old White hurriedly said, "We do sell off ordinary slaves at the slave markets, yes, but Mr. Reynolds was different. He is a magus of the seventh

rank! He poses an extremely great risk. If we were to sell Mr. Reynolds to a customer, and then Mr. Reynolds was to use a magic spell and kill the customer, then our organization would have to pay a huge fine."

Linley stared at Old White.

"Therefore, for powerful people such as Mr. Reynolds and other dangerous, top-quality slaves, they all are sent off to the headquarters, where they will be trained for three months. They will be trained and taught to never dare to disobey a command and obediently obey their masters. Only then would we deliver them to customers." Old White explained.

Linley's face changed.

Train them so they wouldn't dare to disobey? Obediently obey their masters' orders? The person being trained was an expert like Reynolds… Linley could totally imagine how sinister and terrifying this 'training' was.

"Where is your headquarters? Take me there." Linley's face changed and he immediately shouted.

Old White hesitated for a moment, but seeing the terrifying look in Linley's eyes, he immediately nodded. "Yes, Master Linley, I will immediately guide you to our headquarters."

"Our headquarters is deep within the Rohault Empire and is far from the borders. Given the winding roads, it is a journey of three thousand kilometers from here." Old White said.

"My Boss can just fly you over there." The nearby Bebe said unhappily. Bebe was worried for Reynolds as well. After all, when they were at the Ernst Institute, Bebe would often have fun alongside and play around alongside Reynolds.

Old White hurriedly nodded. He didn't dare to say a word.

"Master Linley, there's no need for me to go with you, right?" The nearby

Hugh was filled with terror.

Linley turned to stare at Hugh. Currently, Reynolds was probably being tormented by those people in the slave trading organization's headquarters. Thinking of this, Linley couldn't help but feel a hint of fury.

"Slash!" A blurred claw swiped out. Hugh clutched his throat with terror, but fresh blood still flowed out of his throat. A few moments later, Hugh toppled to the floor.

Floating in mid-air, Bebe cast a dissatisfied glance at Hugh. "You bastard, you thought you would be able to save your worthless skin? Are you damn stupid or what? When you were killing the soldiers of Reynolds' corps, you thought it was quite enjoyable, right? Well, today, when I, Bebe, killed you, I felt it was very enjoyable as well."

Seeing this scene play out, Old White's body was trembling slightly.

"Old fellow, don't be afraid. As long as you obediently follow my Boss's orders, I, Bebe, definitely won't mistreat you." Bebe smiled widely, revealing his sharp fangs.

Old White had heard of how, during Linley's duel with Haydson, Linley's two Saint-level magical beasts had appeared, one of which seemed to be a mouse-type magical beast and which had easily trampled Haydson. Staring at the hovering Bebe, Old White was beginning to suspect that this Bebe was most likely that very terrifying magical beast.

Terrified, Old White could only force himself to smile at Bebe.

Linley snatched Old White then soared into the air, flying towards the southeast. "Old White, lead the way for me!" The terrified Old White cleared his throat a few times, stared at the ground below, then began to direct Linley towards their headquarters.

Chapter 45 – Cruelty

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 45, Cruelty

Let us return to year 10009 of the Yulan calendar, September 21st. A few days had passed after Wharton and Nina's grand wedding. At this time, Linley was under the belief that Reynolds had died.

However…

"This is the third day on this ship. That bastard just tortured another slave to death, then tossed him into the river." Through the steel-barred windows, Reynolds could see the outside world. He had watched a seemingly powerful, yet blood-stained body be tossed into the river. A human being, just like that, sank into the river with a 'plop'.

In the army, Reynolds had already seen how worthless a human life was.

However, on this slave journey, Reynolds had been truly shocked by how terrifying these slavers were. Fortunately, he, Reynolds, was an extremely valuable commodity, and so those slavers didn't dare to kill him.

"Whap!" A whip struck Reynolds heavily on his body, and then against Reynolds' face. Instantly, a bloody welt could be seen forming on his face, and his ragged clothes were covered with rips as well.

"Motherf*cker, what are you looking at?" A large whip-wielding thug shouted angrily at Reynolds.

Reynolds could only huddle into a corner of the ship, not daring to make a sound. He had learned to be obedient. If he wanted to try and be brave and stare back at him…he probably would be tortured this entire night.

This slaving vessel was extremely large. The bottommost deck held those cheapest of slaves. Those slavers would sometimes go down to that deck,

and if they saw someone they disliked, they would strike them heavily.

Reynolds, as an extremely valuable slave, was imprisoned within a special room in the second level. The windows to this room were barred with steel, and there were two thugs on watch at all times.

Quite a few thugs were stationed in the other rooms on the second floor as well.

The third and uppermost floor was used for transporting the leaders of this slaving vessel. One was an expert of the eighth rank, while two were experts of the seventh rank. If it wasn't for Reynolds, this slaving vessel wouldn't have had an expert of the eighth rank sent along with it.

On the deck of this ship, a tall, strong, bald man walked down from the third floor.

"Lord Peel [Pi'er]." The surrounding thugs said respectfully.

Seeing the bloodstains on the deck of the ship, the bald man frowned. "Wipe those bloodstains away. Also, slaves are worth f*cking money. All of you be careful when you hit them. Don't kill them. If you kill a slave, that means the organization will lose some money."

Those thugs didn't dare to make a sound.

The bald man snorted, then walked to the chain links at the deck's edge. The cool night wind blew against him as he enjoyed the beautiful night scenery of the Bonai [Bo'nai] River.

"Right. What's going on with that magus?" The bald man snorted.

A nearby thug immediately said obsequiously, "Lord Peel, that little pretty-boy magus started off all high and mighty, but after the boys spent a bit of time trainin' him these past few days, he's learned his lesson."

"Excellent." The bald man said calmly, "All of you, be careful and keep a

close eye on that magus. The only valuable commodity we are escorting this time is that magus of the seventh rank. And, by the looks of it, this magus is a noble. When we sell him, the price will be extraordinarily high."

Those thugs all nodded.

A young magus of the seventh rank was definitely one of the best auction items that would appear in the slave markets. People would go even crazier for him than they would for a beautiful virgin.

"What's that noise?" The bald man suddenly frowned, then turned his head and stared at the cabin. "That sick bastard keeps on coughing. Drag him out. Motherf*cker, he pisses me off.' A hint of bloodlust was in the eyes of the bald man.

Soon, a skinny young man was dragged out. By the looks of him, he was eighteen or nineteen years old. His body was covered with a foul odor as well as bloodstains. The eyes of this youngster were rather vacant. This long period of imprisonment had caused him to go crazy. He was nothing more than a young man who had left his hometown in search of his dreams, but who would've thought that he would suddenly have been seized and sold to a slaving organization? Just like that, he had entered a nightmare.

"Hrm?" The bald man stretched his hand out, and a nearby thug very conscientiously filled it with a whip.

Holding the whip, the bald man cracked it in the air, creating a clear, crisp sound. Suddenly, a hint of fear appeared in the blank eyes of the youngster.

"If you aren't dead, why do you keep coughing? You ruined the wonderful mood I was in." The bald man suddenly landed a vicious whipping blow onto the skinny youth.

This whip blow was far stronger than the blows of those common thugs.

The skinny youngster's body suddenly trembled violently, and a terrifyingly deep whip-scar was left from his face to his waist. Blood immediately

began to flow out. As for his clothes, they were destroyed long ago.

“Whap!” “Whap!” “Whap!” “Whap!” ….

The bald man viciously whipped him, fully venting his temper on this poor young man’s body. The skinny youngster, quite experienced by now, immediately tried to protect his head and curled into a ball. What he thought was that as long as he could endure, he might still be able to preserve his life.

Sadly. Although the bald man didn’t dare to kill Reynolds, the bald man dared to kill him.

“Lord Peel, he’s dead.” A nearby thug whispered.

The bald man casually tossed his bloodstained whip to a nearby thug, then turned back to stare at the raging river waters, stretching lazily. “Damn, that feels good. You guys, toss that piece of trash overboard. Also, make sure you scrub the deck clean.”

“Yes, Lord Peel.” The surrounding thugs quickly began to work as instructed.

“Plop!” With a plopping sound, yet another body was tossed into the river.

Each slaving ship carried several hundred slaves within it, and on each trip, over ten would be tortured to death. The ones which the thugs would beat to death were the ones who were physically the weakest. The physically stronger ones would be able to hold on for longer. Thus, the slaving organization didn’t lose too much.

“Yet another one.” Reynolds sighed in his heart. He didn’t expect that after managing to escape Neil City alive, he would have fallen to such a state.

Reynolds didn’t know what his future would be like.

“Be a slave?” Thinking about the debased, dark life of a slave, Reynolds

shuddered.

“Pretty-boy, what are you mumbling? Do you want to cast a spell?” With an angry roar and a ‘WHAP!’ sound, another whip blow came, striking him directly on his face.

Pain. Humiliation!

These thugs clearly knew that Reynolds was a magus of the seventh rank. All of those petty, despicable thugs wanted to whip Reynolds whenever they could, so as to satisfy their petty pride.

“Motherf*cker, f*ck off!” Reynolds was truly angry now.

The more he endured, the more overbearing these men became.

“Oh ho!” The thug with the whip raised an eyebrow, his lips curving into a sneer as he looked at Reynolds. “You still have the gall to be arrogant?” As he spoke, he struck out with another whip.

A ferocious light flashed in Reynolds eyes, and his lips quickly muttered the words to a magic spell.

“BAM!” A series of fireballs the size of a person’s head erupted out from Reynolds, striking out wildly towards those two thugs. In the blink of an eye, they had been encircled by over ten balls of fire.

“Ah!!!” Those two thugs screamed miserably, their entire bodies covered with flame. What’s more, these flames burned much hotter than ordinary, fire-stoked flames. The two thugs quickly had their skin turned into char. Soon, they stopped breathing.

Immediately after casting the spell, Reynolds charged outside.

But just then…

“Bam!” A sudden hole appeared in the ceiling of the room, and a one-eyed

man wearing a red robe descended into the middle of the room. With a flash, he reached Reynolds, and then kicked Reynolds with his leg.

“Bam!” Reynolds was knocked into a corner of the cabin, hard. Blood spewed from his mouth.

The one-eyed, red-robed man glanced back at the two charred corpses, then stared coldly at Reynolds. “You are asking for death!” Reynolds stared back at the red-haired and red-robed one-eyed man.

“No wonder the organization insists on three months of special training. All of you are miserable wretches.” The one-eyed man cursed. Simply capturing an expert such as a magus of the seventh rank was not enough. To make them feel, in the deepest parts of their hearts, unable to resist any orders, was extremely difficult. If they were angered, they would go all out.

Moments later…

Multiple thugs grabbed Reynolds by his limbs, making sure he couldn’t move. The red-haired one-eyed man and two bald men stared coldly at Reynolds.

“Pretty-boy, I’ve reminded you that you need to be a good boy on my boat. But you, you make me very angry.” The red-haired one-eyed man said in a cold voice. “Peel, help him improve his memory.”

Reynolds’ face immediately turned pale.

He remembered the threat which the one-eyed man had previously made to him. The terror-stricken Reynolds stared with bulging eyes, but the bald man named Peel only laughed as he walked over. “Hold one of his hands down for me.” Immediately, the thugs grabbed Reynolds’ hands and pressed them against the deck.

From the deck, Peel retrieved a pair of steel pincers that were used for cutting through iron chains. He pressed the steel pincers around two of Reynolds’ fingers. Sensing the cold feeling from his fingers, Reynolds’

heart trembled.

“Hrmph. Squeeze.” The one-eyed man sneered coldly.

The steel pincers clamped down, and as easily as cutting through cloth, Reynolds’ two fingers were cut off. Fresh blood flowed out as piercing pain wracked Reynolds’ body.

The pain of losing two fingers was far worse than even when he had received a blade chop on his body.

Hearing Reynolds agonized moans, the nearby thugs began to grow excited. The one-eyed man sneered coldly, “Pretty-boy, remember this. Today, all I did was teach you a little lesson. If you forget this lesson again, I guarantee…you will never forget the next lesson again.” After speaking, the one-eyed man turned and walked away.

Dark night.

Reynolds was curled into the icy cold corner of the room, his body still trembling slightly. His severed finger-stubs had already clotted. The two nearby thugs occasionally looked at him, their eyes filled with madness.

Reynolds had killed two of their friends. These thugs naturally were filled with hatred towards him.

“Motherf*cker. Pretty-boy.”

A whip suddenly flashed out, aimed at Reynolds’ wounded hand. Reynolds tried his best to hide his injured hand behind his back, but part of that whip still clipped his hand. An extreme wave of pain and agony came from his hand…the wound burst open yet again. In particular, the pain of the whip striking his finger bones was especially agonizing. It was as though his fingers had been chopped off yet again.

“Enough. Stop hitting him.” The nearby thug said.

Actually, the two thugs were also afraid that Reynolds would go crazy once more and cast magic at them. However, the thug which had just hit Reynolds was on extremely good terms with one of the two thugs that had been killed. Naturally, he wanted revenge.

“I can’t do this. I have to escape.” Curled into a ball in the icy corner, Reynolds secretly thought to himself, “If this sort of life continues, I really will go insane.”

Reynolds knew that even if he was able to persevere and hold on to his sanity, the only thing which would welcome him was the life of a slave.

“Tomorrow. Tomorrow, when the ship reaches the shore, I’ll make my move.” Reynolds had no time for any misgivings. Actually, every day this ship would stop at the shore. One reason was to replenish their food supplies; the other was because the one-eyed man didn’t like to eat dry food. He preferred eating fresh delicacies. Thus, they had to go ashore to do so.

However, the one-eyed man was very careful. Whenever he went ashore to eat, the other two experts of the seventh rank would watch Reynolds.

Time passed very slowly. Lying on the floor late at night, Reynolds felt even colder. What’s more, throbbing pain continued to come in waves from his severed fingers. He gritted his teeth and endured.

Slowly, the sky began to turn bright.

Those two thugs whipped Reynolds a few more times, but Reynolds only huddled in the corner, quietly accepting the blows. He knew that he couldn’t resist. The first time he resisted, he had lost two fingers. The next time he resisted…then perhaps, like the one-eyed man had threatened, the next ‘lesson’ would be one he would never forget!

Reynolds quietly waited for the boat to near the shore.

After a long, long time…

“We’ve reached the shore.” Ringing sounds could be heard from the deck above. Soon afterwards, the sound of footsteps could be heard. Clearly, the two experts had walked down.

“Peel, you two stand watch. I’ll go rest for a bit, and then I’ll come and change places with you two.” The one-eyed man’s voice could be heard.

“Milord, don’t worry.” Peel’s voice rang out as well.

Hearing the footsteps head away from the ship, Reynolds let out a silent sigh of relief, and then he shut his eyes, once more mentally going through his escape plan.

The plan was very dangerous, but he had to give it a try.

Glancing at the two nearby thugs, Reynolds curled into a corner and lowered his head, and his lips began to slightly move…

Chapter 46 – The Order

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 46, The Order

The red-haired one-eyed thug led a group of thugs off the slave ship, while Peel and the other bald man stood on the deck, casually chatting while occasionally glancing towards Reynolds.

“Peel, tomorrow, we’ll finally reach the provincial capital. At that time, we’ll send off those common slaves and have ourselves a good time. Spending every day on a boat is a damnable way to live.” The bald man cursed in a whisper.

Peel began to laugh as well.

But just at this time, Peel suddenly heard a terrifying roar from a magical beast…

“Hoooowl!” All of a sudden, a terrifying, enormous flame serpent, as thick as a water barrel, came exploding out of the cabin, blasting a hole into the side of the ship.

The enormous fire serpent was as thick as a water barrel and over a hundred meters long. Howling, it circled around the slave ship, which instantly was set aflame. At the same time, the fire serpent charged directly towards the interior of the ship, blasting a hole through the entire vessel. Aside from around ten or so slaves in the bottom hold who were burnt to the death, the hundreds of other slaves wildly charged out from the hole in the ship which the fire serpent had made.

“Motherf*cker. That pretty-boy!” Peel said, his face changing.

“Quick! Catch him!”

The two bald men immediately ran towards Reynolds room. At this time,

they didn't care about the common slaves at all, but that enormous fire serpent actually charged straight towards the two of them.

"Motherf*cker, a Blazing Fire Serpent. Be careful!" Peel and the other man were both nervous now.

Fire-style, spell of the seventh rank: Blazing Fire Serpent!

This was the most powerful spell which Reynolds could cast; the Blazing Fire Serpent. If this spell were to advance in level, it would transform into the eighth-ranked spell, 'Dance of the Fire Serpents'. The 'Dance of the Fire Serpents' would create and attack with seven enormous fire serpents , and the temperature of the serpents would be even hotter. As for the Blazing Fire Serpent, it was still extremely powerful.

Most warriors of the seventh rank wouldn't dare to fight it head on.

The bald man, Peel, dodged as agilely as a fish, avoiding the attack of the Blazing Fire Serpent, while at the same time moving towards where Reynolds previously had been staying. In the room, Peel saw nothing but ash. Those two thugs' bodies had been charred to dust, and there were two large circular holes in the walls.

Clearly, Reynolds had fled via these two holes.

"Ah! Ah!!!" A miserable scream could be heard nearby. The other bald man hadn't been able to completely dodge the Blazing Fire Serpent. As soon as it had brushed by the man, the Blazing Fire Serpent immediately wrapped itself around him. The bald man's battle-qi armor quickly was depleted, and the sickly sweet smell of burnt flesh appeared.

Seeing this, the look on Peel's face changed.

"Dale [Da'luo]!!!!" Peel went insane. "You motherf*cking bastard!"

By now, many of the slaves who had escaped from the bottom of the boat had begun frantically fleeing in each direction. After having been captured

as slaves, they had felt utterly hopeless, but now, all of them were filled with hope once more, and they frantically fled.

Peel charged out from within those two holes as well, and with a mighty leap, arrived directly onto the shore.

“That damnable pretty-boy.” Peel stared at the slave ship in the Bonai River. The utterly demolished ship was slowly sinking, and it continued to burn with sheets of flame. Filled with smoke and fire and water, this ship was clearly finished.

“Peel, Dale!” A furious roar from afar.

The red-haired one-eyed man ran over at high speed, his single eye filled with unspeakable rage. Staring at Peel, he howled angrily, “Peel, where is he? Where is that magus?”

“Milord, that magus cast the Blazing Fire Serpent spell. No idea where he fled to. Dale died.” Peel was furious as well.

The one-eyed man panted with fury.

The Blazing Fire Serpent was capable of dealing with warriors of the seventh rank, but if it had encountered the one-eyed man, given his power as a warrior of the eighth rank, he definitely would’ve been able to destroy the Blazing Fire Serpent and seize Reynolds.

This was the reason why his slaving organization had sent him, a warrior of the eighth rank, on this mission.

But the one-eyed man hadn’t expected that right after he had taught that magus a lesson, he would dare to go all out like this.

“Quick, seize him. Bring that magus back.” The one-eyed man immediately shouted towards the surrounding thugs. “The ten of you, split up and search upstream and downstream. The dozens of you over here, start searching the nearby area. You must bring that magus back to me. Quickly!”

“Yes, milord!”

The furious thugs scattered every which way. Most of their forces were concentrated in the surrounding area, while only five thugs were sent searching upstream and downstream.

Reynolds was dressed like the other slaves, in absolutely raggedy clothes, and his body was covered with scars. Because the other slaves had fled as well, on many occasions, those thugs would see some other slaves, think they were Reynolds, and immediately rush over to seize them. Unfortunately, they were wasting their time.

An hour later.

The one-eyed man stood at the harbor, his heart filled with rage as he stared angrily around him.

“Milord, we’ve discovered over ten slaves downstream, but we didn’t find that magus.” A thug ran over to report. The speed at which they had travelled on land was definitely faster than the speed of the flowing river.

“Milord, we didn’t find that magus upstream either.“

“Milord, we didn’t find that magus in the surrounding areas. All we found were those common slaves.”

Hearing one report after another from his subordinates, the one-eyed man stared at the surrounding area. He was so angry he could die. This harbor was the harbor for a small township. Their organization didn’t have any forces here.

This was why the one-eyed man had no choice but to send those few dozen thugs to search for Reynolds.

Several dozen people had spent an hour without finding Reynolds. Then… there was no way he could be found. Because one hour was more than

enough time for a person to travel a great distance. And how could several dozen people search an area of several dozen square kilometers?

“Bastard!” The one-eyed man snarled and cursed. “Let’s go. We have to report this immediately to the organization. That pretty-boy better hope that I don’t catch him. Otherwise…I will make sure his fate is worse than death.”

The sky was dark now. The one-eyed man and the others had already left helplessly. Several thousand meters away, next to the riverbank, a human form emerged from the water.

“Patooey.” Reynolds spat out the breathing reed from his mouth.

Glancing at his surroundings, Reynolds finally let out a long sigh. Reynolds hadn’t dared to be the slightest bit incautious during this escape attempt. After casting his spell, he had immediately dove into the water, then plucked a hollow reed and used it to breathe. Each time he dove down, he would travel more than a thousand meters before daring to raise his head.

“I’m very far away now. Those people can’t possibly find me now.” Reynolds went onto the shore.

Reynolds body suddenly began to emit a white steam. A few moments later, Reynolds tattered clothes were totally dry again. Glancing at the surrounding area, Reynolds centered himself through using the flow of the river.

“That slaving organization has people in all the major cities. It is better if I stick to the smaller cities. I can’t go back through the border between the two Empires. The slaving organizations have quite a few people in the border cities.” Although Reynolds believed that they wouldn’t spend too much effort searching for him, it was better for him to be careful. Reynolds had decided to first enter the Anarchic Lands through the Rohault Empire, and then return to the O’Brien Empire through the Anarchic Lands.

…..

The world was very dark now. The only light that could be seen was sporadic campfires. A dark shadow was flying through the skies, slashing through the air at high speed.

“Whoooooosh!” Their high-speed flight caused Old White to unconsciously narrow his eyes. From the skies, he could clearly make out the various roads, and so it was easy for him to make out the various landmarks.

“Master Linley, it is right below us.” Old White pointed at a distant countryside town.

“Oh? That little town is your organization’s headquarters?” Linley glanced at Old White. The town seemed no different from any other ordinary little town. In the darkness, a few lamp lights could be seen.

Old White hurriedly nodded. “It is. This is just some of our organization’s camouflaging abilities.”

“Whoosh!”

Linley immediately charged down, leaving a black shadowy trail of afterimages behind him. He landed in the middle of the headquarters of the slaving organization…this countryside town.

Linley was wearing a deep blue robe. Hovering up into the air, he loosened his hand, allowing Old White to fall to the ground. “Have the leader of your organization come out.”

Old White didn’t dare to disobey.

At this moment, a number of people ran over at high speed, surrounding them. But when they saw Linley was standing in mid-air, they were all stunned. Generally speaking, only Saints were capable of flight. Naturally, powerful wind-style magi could fly as well. In truth, right now, Linley was only capable of flight without transforming because he had already cast the Windshadow spell.

“Old White, why have you come?” A middle-aged madame glanced at Linley, then whispered to Old White.

Old White shouted loudly, “Quick, quick, have the leader come! This is Master Linley, the mighty Dragonblood Warrior, Master Linley!”

Master Linley?

These words were quite effective. A slaving organization, in terms of power, was far inferior to even the three major trading unions or the four great assassin’s guilds. Naturally, it didn’t dare to offend a Saint. Many people immediately ran to get their leaders, and all of the high-ranking people quickly began to assemble.

Linley stood there in mid-air, calmly waiting. Bebe stood atop of Linley’s shoulders.

“Boss, this little town looked quite ordinary, but the insides of these buildings are quite unique! Many of them have underground basements.” Bebe spoke to Linley mentally.

Linley nodded slightly.

In just a short while, a large group of people began to head in this direction from afar, with their leader being a tall, thin man who was dressed in a gaudy long robe. This man was half-running, half-walking, his forehead covered with sweat.

“Master Linley, my name is Dennis [Dan’ni’si], and I am the leader of this organization. Is there something we can do for you, Master Linley? If there is, please inform us, Master.” The tall, thin man said humbly, filled with terror.

Although he had never met Linley before, a Saint who could hover in mid-air, no matter who he really was, wasn’t someone he dared to offend.

Linley glanced at him, then said, “Dennis! A month ago, you bought a magus from Old White over at the border city. He should have arrived here by now.”

Dennis was startled.

A somewhat fatter, older man next to Dennis hurriedly said, “Master Linley, I was responsible for this assignment. Halfway here, at the Bonai River, that magus burned our slaving vessel and fled.”

“Fled?” Linley was surprised but also relieved.

Fourth Bro was quite impressive, to be able to able to escape from the clutches of the slaving organization.

Only now did Dennis come to his senses, and he nodded. “I’m aware of this event as well. After the magus fled, we sent our forces to some cities to try and recapture him, but we’ve yet to find him. This was over ten days ago now.”

“Leader, that magus is Master Linley’s bosom friend!” Old White hurriedly said.

Dennis’ face immediately turned ugly to behold, while at the same time he was filled with fear.

Linley glanced at them. “From today onwards, you are forbidden from attempting to capture my friend.” Dennis hurriedly said, “Of course. If we find him, we will definitely treat him as an honored guest.”

Linley nodded calmly. Without wasting any more words, Linley and Bebe flew off and left.

Given the current situation, the slaving organization didn’t really matter much now. Fourth Bro had escaped over ten days ago. By now, he should’ve fled quite far.

In mid-air.

“Bebe, you go back first. Immediately have Zassler and the others head out towards the Anarchic Lands. I plan to spend a bit of time scanning the area around the Bonai River and between the borders of the Rohault Empire and the O’Brien Empire. I want to see if I can find Fourth Bro. After I finish my search, I will join up with you.” Linley had already come to this decision.

Searching using spiritual energy was actually quite a painful experience for most Saint-level warriors.

Most Saint-level warriors would only be able to occasionally search using their spiritual energy, because in truth, their spiritual energy wasn’t extremely strong. It was magi who had powerful spiritual energy. In terms of spiritual energy, that Haydson who had been training for centuries was at most on par with Linley.

It would only take a short hour to cover that distance, but if one were to search carefully, one would definitely have to spend at least several days.

“Got it.” Bebe obediently nodded his little head, then flew at high speed towards the O’Brien Empire.

Chapter 47 – Establishing a Base in the Anarchic Lands

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 47, Establishing a Base in the Anarchic Lands

Transforming into his Dragonblood Warrior form, Linley began to trace from the Bonai River all the way to the border city of Neil, carefully scanning the surrounding areas. Every so often, he would have to rest to recover his spiritual energy.

He spent six full days and nights searching, and viewed all the nearby cities as well.

However…

He didn't find Reynolds.

"Master Linley, don't worry. As soon as our Dawson Conglomerate discovers young master Reynolds, we will definitely make sure he safely makes it back home."

A supervisor for the Dawson Conglomerate within one of the prefectural cities at the border of the Rohault Empire said respectfully to Linley.

Linley nodded slightly.

Right now, the only choice he had was to entrust this task to the Dawson Conglomerate. In his heart, Linley felt a bit puzzled. "Where did Fourth Bro run off to? Why didn't he go to the Dawson Conglomerate's branch headquarters? The Dawson Conglomerate has branches in each of the various prefectural cities."

Actually, Linley didn't understand.

Reynolds had been truly terrified by his time spent aboard that slaving vessel. Reynolds had decided that so long as he was within the borders of the Rohault Empire, no matter what, he would not enter any large cities. Although large cities had branch headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate, it also had slaving organizations. If he were to be caught by slaving organizations, once he was discovered by them, he would be in dire straits.

“Any risk of being caught is too much risk. I’d rather take some side routes.” Reynolds was very firm in his decision.

Given his power, heading towards the Anarchic Lands via some cross country travelling wasn’t too hard. Once he reached the Anarchic Lands, he would then make contact with the Dawson Conglomerate. By then, he would be able to return safely.

By nightfall, in an ordinary courtyard within a prefectural city of the O’Brien Empire’s Southeast Administrative Province. Zassler, the Barker brothers, Rebecca, Leena, and Jenne were all here.

The sound of knocking could be heard. Carrying that massive greataxe on his back, Gates strode forward and threw the door open. In front of the door were three attendants, all pushing food carts.

“What took you so long?” Gates swept the three men with his ox-like stare, causing their hearts to tremble. In front of the massive Gates, the three of them were like small children.

Suddenly, a bestial roar could be heard from the courtyard. The three attendants turned towards the sound…

The Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, lazily padded his way over. The natural, baleful aura of a top-class magical beast such as the Blackcloud Panther was more than enough to set hearts trembling. Haeru glanced at the three with his dark, cold eyes, and then disdainfully turned his head and lay down on the ground.

The three attendants exchanged glances, not daring to make any sound.

They immediately put all the plates of food onto the table, then quickly left. When they walked out of the courtyard, they wiped the cold sweat from their foreheads.

“Who the hell are these guys? Those five men were enormous!”

“And those axes were so huge. They have to weigh at least a thousand pounds each.”

“And that old man. He looked like a skeleton. All he did was glance at me, and I felt fear. But those three ladies were certainly pretty. If I could marry such a beautiful girl, I’d be willing to have my lifespan shortened by a few dozen years.”

In the eyes of these hotel attendants, the guests in this courtyard were definitely extremely, terrifyingly powerful entities. While Zassler and the others ate, Bebe and Haeru remained within the courtyard. This was because they could sense…that Linley was heading back at high speed.

A short while later, Linley, dressed in a deep blue robe, landed from the skies.

“Lord Linley.” Barker and his brothers ran over to welcome him excitedly. Jenne, Rebbeca, and Leena all came over to welcome him as well.

“Linley, how did it go? Did you find Reynolds?” Zassler asked.

Linley shook his head. Right now, Linley was in a fairly good mood. Since the slave trading organization hadn’t found Reynolds, given Reynolds’ power as a magus of the seventh rank, as long as he didn’t anger someone powerful, he shouldn’t be in any danger.

“Fourth Bro has been a soldier for many years now, and the slave trading organization is no longer after him either…given the circumstances, he should have a 100% chance of escaping and returning.” Linley was very

confident in his friend.

“If Reynolds isn’t able to make it back safely under such favorable conditions, he wouldn’t be worthy of being your bro, Lord. The Rohault Empire is usually very stable and very safe.” Gates said loudly. “In the past, when we brothers were just warriors of the seventh rank, we lived a wonderful life in the Eighteen Northern Duchies.”

Linley laughed.

He entered the room with the others and began to eat dinner.

“Linley.” Zassler put down his utensils, then asked, “We are about to head off to the Anarchic Lands. What are your plans?”

Linley knew that Zassler was the most experienced member of his team. With an eight hundred year old man by his side, many things would be much easier to accomplish.

“Zassler, what do you feel we should do?” Linley asked.

Barker said, “Lord Linley, actually, I imagine that the Anarchic Lands must be very similar to our Eighteen Northern Duchies. You do all your talking with your fists. Given our tremendous power, we definitely would be able to quickly establish a mighty force.”

Zassler nodded. “What Barker just described is one type of method, yes. Linley…I believe we have two options right now. The first is what Barker just said. Using our reputation as Saints, we can quickly dominate a very wide swathe of territory. In the Anarchic Lands, the rally call of a Saint is very effective.”

Linley nodded slightly.

The Anarchic Lands were often in a state of chaos and warfare. The citizens caught in these chaotic battles desperately hoped for their leader to be a powerful figure. If he publicly announced himself as a Saint, there would

definitely be many people willing to follow Linley.

After all, Saints would be able to provide their followers with a good deal of safety and security.

“The second method is to, at least at first, not announce your status, Linley. We’ll start in the smaller regions. First, we’ll find an ordinary little city where the lives of the commoners are unbearably bad. Even if I were to act by myself, I could easily take over such a small city. And then, we will slowly expand to larger cities, then erect our own Duchy. And then, we continue, one step at a time. In the past…I was a Grand Duke in the Anarchic Lands, myself.” Zassler laughed.

The second method was the method which many ambitious people used.

After all, the first method could only be used by powerful experts with overwhelming force.

“Milord, what method do you wish to use?” Zassler looked at Linley. “The benefit to the first method is that it is fast. Within a year, we can easily take over countless Duchies in the Anarchic Lands. The second method is slower, but it allows us to have a more stable foundation.”

Jenne, the other two girls, Barker, and his brothers all stared at Linley, waiting for his decision.

“Zassler, we’ll carry out the second method.” Linley made his decision after pondering for a while.

“Our target is the Radiant Church, and the Radiant Church is very skilled at seducing the masses. We need to move slowly, one step at a time, and let the commoners be fully willing to follow our orders. We need to give them a strong sense of belonging. Otherwise…even if we take over a large amount of territory, when we fight against the Radiant Church, we will have many traitors and riots.” Linley said.

Zassler laughed and nodded.

“Very well then. We’ll secretly expand. We won’t attract any attention. Otherwise, if we start raising Linley’s banner from the start, we will attract a great deal of hostility from many areas.”

Zassler was quiet for a moment, then continued. “Linley, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both have tremendous influence in the Anarchic Lands. If you wish to expand there, I think…the first step would be to begin closer to the Forest of Darkness. In other words, the northernmost area of the Anarchic Lands.”

Linley raised an eyebrow. “The northern part of the Anarchic Lands?”

“Right. The area near the Forest of Darkness. Because it often suffers attacks from the magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness, the people of that area are extremely sturdy and very violent. Few of the citizens of that area have much faith in the Radiant Church. They worship the strong. In addition, given our power, we don’t need to fear those low-rank and medium-rank magical beasts at all.” Zassler smiled.

Hearing Zassler’s words, Linley agreed in his mind.

“From the east edge to the west edge of the northern part of the Anarchic Lands is roughly a thousand miles. There are many small cities with only a few tens of thousands of citizens in them. There will be plenty of options for us.”

Zassler said confidently.

As Zassler saw it, occupying and taking over a city in the Anarchic Lands which had a population of just a few tens of thousands was as easy as breathing. Either Zassler or the Barker brothers could easily erect a Dukedom in the Anarchic Lands, all by themselves, much less occupy a small city.

Linley’s team was truly powerful.

He had a whole group of Saints, and Linley, Bebe, and Haeru were peak-stage Saints. Most likely, even the powerful hidden force the Radiant Church had within the Anarchic Lands couldn't match Linley for power.

For such a team, building a base in the Anarchic Lands was incomparably easy.

The Anarchic Lands was more than half the size of the O'Brien Empire, and was definitely on par with the size of the current Radiant Church, Rohault Empire, and Rhine Empire.

Long ago, when a calculation had been run on the Anarchic Lands, it was found that the 48 Duchies had a total population of over three hundred million. Such an enormous population wasn't much lower than the population of the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire. The countless years of chaotic battles hadn't lowered the population all that much. Instead, all it had done was make the people of that area even more vicious and violent.

This sort of chaotic region was a veritable playground for powerful experts!

After passing the border, Linley and his team entered the Anarchic Lands. Upon entering the their very first city in the Anarchic Lands, Linley could sense what a state of frenzy and chaos the people here were in.

"Long years of warfare have caused food to become extremely expensive in the Anarchic Lands. Although some Duchies have worked hard to try to bring an end to warfare during the harvest seasons, sometimes, they are still forced to do battle…" Zassler sighed.

The Anarchic Lands were totally different from the Holy Union and the O'Brien Empire.

In the cities of the Holy Union and the O'Brien Empire, one could sense a peaceful, amiable aura. Noble madams and young noble ladies there all wore lavish clothes and casually strolled about the streets.

But in the Anarchic Lands, heavily armored warriors could be seen everywhere, and the cities were filled with a ferocious aura, giving the sense that a single wrong word could result in murder. This was the norm, here.

Linley's team continued to travel towards the north. As they travelled, they carefully observed the local areas, gaining a better understanding of the Anarchic Lands.

"A priest?" Linley saw from afar someone dressed as a priest. "Damn the Radiant Church. Chapels can be seen everywhere in the Anarchic Lands, and all of them openly preach and proselytize for the Radiant Church…"

As they continued to travel, Linley's heart grew heavy.

The Radiant Church's influence here was indeed tremendous.

Linley's team moved quite quickly. After journeying for roughly ten days, they arrived at the northern part of the Anarchic Lands. Linley and his people entered a small city known as 'Blackdirt City'.

It was noon.

Within a private room in an ordinary hotel, Zassler said to Linley, "Based on my investigations from earlier this morning, the city governor of this place, Blackdirt City, is a classic example of all brawns, no brains. All he wants to do is be the ruler of a small city and enjoy the life of a local tyrant. He is extremely tyrannical and oppressive to the common folk…I think that this should be quite suitable for us to take over as our first little city."

"But this is only the first city we've considered!" Linley was rather surprised.

Zassler laughed. "This is normal. In the Anarchic Lands, aside from a very few Duchies, most rulers are extremely oppressive towards their citizens. After all, war could break out at any time and they might lose their power. Naturally, they'll want to enjoy it while they can."

Linley nodded slightly.

“Fine. Then let’s start with this Blackdirt City.” Linley immediately decided.

The eyes of the nearby Barker brothers lit up. Gates was the first to say excitedly, “Lord, don’t worry. You don’t need to do a thing. We’ll just head on over and kill that leader, and then terrify those few thousand soldiers into submission. There’ll be nothing difficult at all about it.”

The five Barker brothers had led armies to war in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They very much loved that sort of blood-pumping life.

“Lord, don’t worry. Tonight, you’ll be living inside the governor’s mansion of Blackdirt City.” Barker slapped his chest as he spoke.

Chapter 48 – Administration

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 48, Administration

Noon time. The blazing sun hung high in the western skies, baking Blackdirt City with its scorching rays. The garrison soldiers of Blackdirt City were lazily and casually strolling about within Blackdirt City, while a few poor guards were being baked by the sun while standing guard on the walls.

“This damn weather. It is unbearably hot during the day, and deathly cold at night!” A large man dressed in tattered armor cursed softly. Him and the nine companions by his side were one of the squads belonging to the city guard.

Whenever the common citizens of the city saw these soldiers, they immediately fled away, their faces full of fear.

Seeing this, another warrior cursed softly. “Now that I’m working under that greedy, fat pig, some of my elders are beginning to look down at me. That fat pig is too greedy!”

“That motherf*cker. If it weren’t for the fact that I have a wife and son to feed, I wouldn’t do this job.” Another warrior agreed.

In Blackdirt City, that fat city governor had an extremely poor reputation. These warriors who had joined the army for the sake of feeding their families all secretly cursed this vile city governor behind his back, but they didn’t dare to fight against him. This was because the city governor had an extremely powerful and despotic son, who was a peak-stage warrior of the seventh rank. That sort of power was more than enough for one to become a local tyrant in small cities such as this.

“Faster, faster!” From nearby, the hoof steps of a knight’s horse could be heard coming towards them at high speed. Seeing the soldiers from afar, the

knight immediately cried out loudly, “Brothers, quick, come and pay your respects to the new city governor! That greedy, fat pig is dead! Quick, go pay your respects to the new city governor!”

The ten men in the squad were startled. They glanced at each other, then immediately began to laugh with excitement.

“Haha…quick, let’s go to the governor’s mansion.”

In the Anarchic Lands, the common citizens had virtually no sense of belonging. This month, they would be ruled by one city governor; next month, it might be a different one. The commoners didn’t ask for much; they only wanted to have enough to feed themselves and their families.

The governor’s mansion of Blackdirt City could be considered a city within a city.

Blackdirt City’s army was divided into two major battalions, with each battalion having 1800 people. One of the battalions was the city guard, while the other was the city governor’s personal guard. One could imagine how afraid of death the city governor was, to use half of his military force to protect his own mansion.

There were a large number of soldiers currently centered within the city governor’s mansion. All 3600 soldiers quickly assembled there.

The city governor’s mansion could easily fit in 1800 people. Atop a broad training field, Barker and his brothers stood in the center. Their rippling muscles and massive, powerful bodies made them look like gods of battle. Those terrifying black greataxes they carried on their back were especially frightening.

The soldiers all stood there, keeping quiet out of fear.

“Brothers.” A powerful man with short golden hair roared loudly, “That vile, fat pig and his son have already been chopped into meat paste by these five lords. These five lords are all mighty combatants of the ninth rank.

Invincible combatants of the ninth rank!!!”

As soon as they heard the words, ‘combatants of the ninth rank’, all of the soldiers were stunned.

“Combatants of the ninth rank? Combatants of the ninth rank would come to a little city like ours?” Whispers could be heard circulating throughout the crowd.

“Bam!” Gates took a few steps forward, his demonically powerful aura causing the nearby soldiers to all take a step back. Gates laughed thunderously, “All of you, listen up. From today onwards, Blackdirt City belongs to we five brothers. My big brother, Barker, is the city governor!”

Gates drew out the greataxe from his back. Staring at the surrounding people, he said, “If any of you have any objections to my big brother, Barker, being the city governor, you are welcome to come compete with me!”

Who would dare compete against such a terrifying god of battle?

The city governor’s son, who had terrified Blackdirt City for so long, had been chopped to death by a single blow from Gates’ greataxe. Then again, most of the soldiers present hadn’t personally witnessed this themselves. The natural, violent atmosphere of the region caused some of the soldiers to stare at Gates questioningly. Just being physically big didn’t necessarily mean someone was very powerful!

“This greataxe of mine was made from countless precious materials. It weighs 5300 pounds!” Gates casually tossed his greataxe forward, and it soared agilely through the air, landing against a nearby boulder which the soldiers used for weight training.

The ten-thousand pound boulder didn’t even move when struck. Many of the watching soldiers were stunned. “Could it be that this greataxe is made from wood, and it just has a layer of metallic dye on top of it?”

“Boom!” The boulder suddenly exploded and disintegrated into a storm of dust.

Wielding something heavy as though it were light!

All the onlookers stared with their mouths gaping open. These soldiers had heard of people being able to smash a ten-thousand pound boulder, but to cause it to instantly disintegrate into a pile of dust…this wasn’t something which could be accomplished just through brute strength. All the soldiers turned to look at Gates with adoration and worship in their eyes.

Gates delightedly let out a thunderous laugh. He had used this technique in the past in the Eighteen Northern Duchies as well. The Anarchic Lands and the Eighteen Northern Duchies were very similar; powerful experts were deeply venerated.

“Looks like there are no objections.” Gates said loudly. “Wonderful. From today forward, you are now the soldiers of my big brother. There’s a benefit to working for my big brother. In the future, your military pay will be triple that of your current military pay!”

Triple military pay?

The three thousand plus soldiers stared in shock, but then, they all let a thunderous, sky-shaking cry…

“Long live Lord Barker!”

What more could they ask for? These five experts possessed unbelievable power, and they gave a very high military pay. Naturally, they loved leaders like this!

…..

The city of Blackdirt now had a new city governor. It was the mighty Barker and his four brothers, all of whom were powerful warriors of the ninth rank. Their weapons alone weighed 5300 pounds! Having such a

powerful leader was something which all of the citizens of Blackdirt City celebrated over.

The most exciting thing was…

The Lord City Governor had declared that as long they were obedient and faithful, the citizens of Blackdirt City would be forever exempted from paying taxes!

Forever exempted from paying taxes! In the Anarchic Lands, this could be described as a miracle. After all, if there were no taxes, where would one have money to pay their soldiers? But this problem, to Linley, was no problem at all. He held the terrifying amount of wealth which the royal clan of the Kingdom of Fenlai had accumulated for thousands of years.

He could casually pull out a hundred million gold coins, and that would already be more than enough.

Powerful leaders and high salaries, combined with no taxes…given the above, the people here quickly gained the hope and desire to forever live under this administration. And because of the high military pay, many people now desired to join the army.

At the same time, when some of the commoners nearby Blackdirt City learned about this, they hurriedly immigrated to Blackdirt City.

……

Half a year after the change in leadership in Blackdirt City.

Within the city governor's mansion. The newly selected housekeeper, Nemi [Nei'mi], was currently giving a detailed report to this mysterious 'Lord Ley'. As the administrator for various matters in Blackdirt City, Nemi knew that although the city governor was nominally Barker, in truth, the highest authority here was that mysterious Lord Ley.

"Milord, the population of Blackdirt Town numbers nearly eighty thousand.

If we add that number to the large number of surrounding villages, then in total…the population under Blackdirt City's control is a total of around 700,000. Currently, our military is expanding as well. We now have a total of five battalions, all at full strength. The five battalions number a total of nine thousand soldiers." Nemi said respectfully.

Linley, seated above him, nodded slightly upon hearing this.

"Enough, Nemi. You can retire now." Barker glanced at him.

"Yes, Lord City Governor." Nemi immediately left respectfully.

Right now, the people seated in the room were Linley and the other core members of the team. According to the decision which Zassler and Linley had originally made, to outsiders, they said that Lord Barker was the city governor. 'Barker' was a very ordinary name. Nobody else knew which 'Barker' this was.

"Lord, you really gave us a good scare when you casually brought out a magicrystal card with a hundred million gold in it." Barker chortled.

Linley laughed. "Don't worry about the financial side of things!" In the past, Linley had essentially stripped away thousands of years of accumulated wealth from the Kingdom of Fenlai.

Zassler said, "Linley, the reason we are being so generous to the citizens of Blackdirt City is because we want Blackdirt City to become our strongest, most resilient base, and to make sure that the people here are absolutely loyal to us! It is enough that we exempt this city from paying taxes. In the future, at most, we can just lower the tax rate in our cities. In addition, in order to function well, a nation needs to be able to be self-sufficient. It can't always rely on outside money. It has to be self-sustaining!"

Linley nodded.

"I don't know much about managing a country. I'll let Zassler and Jenne handle these matters." Linley laughed as he glanced at Jenne. Zassler had

controlled a Duchy before in the Anarchic Lands, while Jenne had helped her little brother administrate the affairs of the prefectural city of Cerre for multiple years. Both of them knew much more about city management than Linley did.

Jenne nodded and laughed. “Big brother Linley, the most important part of being a leader is knowing who to use. Just let me handle it.”

Zassler concurred. “Jenne is right. Linley…you are our standard-bearer. In the Anarchic Lands, an ultimate expert has a great deal of influence. Look at the War God. The War God always stays on War God Mountain and never gets personally involved in anything, but everyone understands that so long as the War God is alive, then the O’Brien Empire will never collapse.”

“Lord, in the future, your relationship to our nation will be the same as the War God’s relationship to the O’Brien Empire.” Barker agreed.

Linley nodded slightly. “I understand your reasoning. Oh, right. Yesterday, I took a stroll around Blackdirt City. I saw that a few dozen kilometers northeast of Blackdirt City, there is a small mountain known as Mt. Blackraven. I plan to train there.”

Linley could sense the vastness of both the Laws of the Earth and the Laws of the Wind. Linley wished to spend a large amount of time subsuming himself in them, and spend some time attuning to them and understanding them.

…..

In the central-southern part of the Anarchic Lands, there was a prefectural city with hundreds of thousands of citizens. Within a room on the fifth floor of a five story tall hotel, an old man with white-streaked hair opened a letter, carefully reading its contents.

“What I feared the most has come to pass!” The old man began to frown. “The Emperor ordered us not to act against Linley and just observe him. A

while ago, we learned that Linley's group had entered the Anarchic Lands. At that time, we thought he was just engaging in tourism. Who would've thought that they'd take over a city? What exactly are they planning?"

The old man had a bad feeling.

Linley was a major foe of the Radiant Church. A foe which they didn't want to have to fight.

But now…

"I hope Linley is just messing around and having fun in the Anarchic Lands." The old man was frowning. What he feared the most was…that Linley had come to the Anarchic Lands expressly to deal with the Radiant Church. "We don't want to stir up trouble with him, but if he insists on stirring up trouble with us, we'll have to act."

The old man was a high level manager for the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands. He knew exactly how powerful Linley's side was.

"As for now…let's just watch. Let's see what Linley plans to do."

……

Outside of Blackdirt City, in a small mountain roughly a thousand meters tall which was located in the direction of the Forest of Darkness, Linley was seated in the meditative position on the top of a large tree. The treetop swayed along with the blowing wind, and Linley swayed along with it, as gently and as agilely as a leaf.

He was carrying a 3600 pounds adamantine heavy sword, and yet he was seated on the crown of a tree. Linley had indeed reached a very high level in his ability to control the wind.

"Slow. Fast. It isn't that simple…" Linley was constantly pondering his 'Tempos of the Wind' technique. The Tempos of the Wind was actually utilizing two contradictory aspects of the wind in perfect harmony, with the

clash between these two aspects creating a terrifyingly sharp blade of air.

But Linley was discovering that as he continued to study the individual aspects of ‘Slow’ and ‘Fast’, these aspects had additional astonishing secrets that had yet to be revealed to him.

“The limits to the Profound Truths of Slowness…the limits to the Analytics of Hyperspeed…” Linley was totally absorbed in his meditations on the Elemental Laws. This sort of meditation relied entirely on a single sudden spark of insight. Perhaps Linley would suddenly gain an insight onto the Laws of the Earth, at which point Linley would begin to analyze the Laws of the Earth. If he suddenly gained insight into the Laws of the Wind, he would go study that instead.

Those days he spent in training on Mt. Blackraven passed very quickly….

Chapter 49 – The Mysterious Mountain Village

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 49, The Mysterious Mountain Village

The sun was high in the sky. Reynolds was currently hiking through a particularly large mountain.

“I should have entered the Anarchic Lands by now.” Reynolds himself wasn’t too clear how far he had walked, after having hurried for ten days. Reynolds generally headed in whatever direction looked the most desolate. Even if he saw cities from afar, he wouldn’t enter them.

The mountain that Reynolds was now hiking on was extremely large and took up an enormous amount of land.

After hiking for a long time, Reynolds arrived at one of the mountain peaks and gazed around him. Suddenly, he discovered that this giant mountain actually had a tiny little mountain village in the center. Reynolds licked his dry, chapped lips. Grabbing a fistful of long rattan vines, he began to climb down into the little mountain village in the center of the mountain.

This little mountain village had people inside it. When they saw Reynolds walk in, they glanced at him with curious stares.

Clearly…they rarely saw visitors.

There were quite a few people in this little mountain village. Guessing based on what his eyes had seen, Reynolds estimated that there were several thousand people here. There was even an open-air inn that was rather simply made. Reynolds walked over and immediately sat down and said, “Two cups of water, and then some dishes and a bottle of wine.”

But as soon as he sat down, Reynolds noticed something…

“This place…” Reynolds’ heart shook.

He suddenly had discovered that every single person here emanated the aura of an expert. From what Reynolds could tell, there were many warriors of the sixth and seventh ranks, and even warriors of the eighth rank…as well as some mighty magi. Not warriors. Magi. And extremely powerful ones.

“Friend, how did you end up here?” A bald man came over with a bottle of wine and two bowls. “Come, let’s drink.”

Reynolds now sensed that this mountain village was no ordinary place. He immediately replied, “I came from across the border with the Rohault Empire. I was planning to enter the Anarchic Lands. I didn’t take any of the main roads, and hiked my way through the mountains to the north. Whenever I encountered a river, I swam my way through. Whenever I encountered a mountain, I hiked through. I didn’t expect that while hiking through this mountain, I would’ve run into this little mountain village.”

The bald man nodded and laughed. “So that’s the case.”

“No wonder. There’s no roads near our village, and this mountain is extremely desolate. Generally speaking, we’ll usually go eight or ten years without seeing a single outsider.” Another man walked over, laughing.

Reynolds was growing anxious.

The two people in front of him were both exceedingly powerful, perhaps at the seventh or the eighth rank.

“What in the world is this place? Why are there so many experts here?” Reynolds secretly wondered.

Drinking and chatting with these two people, Reynolds discovered…that the people of this mysterious mountain village weren’t totally cut off from the outside world. In fact, they knew a great deal about the outside world.

“Princess Monica [Meng’ni’ka] is coming.” The bald man suddenly said. Many people turned to look in one direction, and Reynolds did as well…

He saw a beautiful young woman with long jade hair walk over with a serving maid behind her, while greeting the other villagers along the way warmly. Seeing this beautiful woman, Reynolds instantly was stunned. That beautiful face…that friendly smile…

Despite often having dalliances amidst the flowers, Reynolds felt utterly bewitched and smitten.

“I think…I have found the place I was meant to be.”

The playboy Reynolds had dallied with quite a few young noble ladies. But there hadn’t been a single person who had successfully moved his heart… which was why he was still single up till now. But this girl in this mysterious mountain village had a very unique aura, one which made Reynolds’ heart shake.

The girl named Monica glanced at Reynolds. Reynolds instantly discovered that Monica’s clear eyes contained a hint of jade light. She looked like one of the legendary spirits, utterly bewitching. Monica laughed and spoke to him. “Hello there, outsider.”

Reynolds immediately rose to his feet and said with great courtesy, “Beautiful Princess Monica, my name is Reynolds.”

Monica suddenly glanced at Reynolds’ left hand. She opened her mouth in surprise, then looked at Reynolds. “What happened to your hand?”

“It was injured by someone.” Reynolds said casually.

Monica immediately walked towards him. “Stretch your hand out.” Reynolds didn’t ask any questions, immediately stretching his left hand out. The wound which had been left by those steel pincers was heart-shakingly frightful to behold. Monica’s lips began to move slightly, and a short while later…

Countless specks of light entered Reynolds left hand like a mirage-like nebula. Reynolds could clearly sense that the wound on his left hand was rapidly healing, and two new fingers were growing out from it. In the blink of an eye, Reynolds' left hand returned to a perfect state, as though it had never been injured.

"This…this…" Reynolds was shocked, and he stared at the young lady named Monica in surprise.

He hadn't expected that this young lady named Monica was a light-style magus, and an extremely powerful one. Her power wasn't one whit inferior to Reynolds'.

When Reynolds saw the look of concentration on Monica's face, his heart immediately began to thump wildly.

……..

Nightfall. The sun was setting in the west, and the skies had a large amount of red, flame-like clouds.

On the grass by the mountain village, Reynolds and Monica were walking side by side. Reynolds looked at Monica's beautiful face, and in his heart, he felt a hint of contentment. He had already stayed here in this mysterious mountain village for more than a month now.

No one in the mountain village had suggested that he leave.

During his month in the mountain village, Reynolds had learned that the vast majority of the villagers here had never left the mountain village. Only a very small percentage would occasionally make trips to the outside world. When they returned, they would inform the other villagers of the events of the outside world.

Monica was only twenty years old, but she was already a light-style magus of the seventh rank. In terms of talent, she was actually superior to

Reynolds. She was even more talented than Reynolds.

“I can’t continue like this. I have to inform my parents and Third Bro that I am alive.” Reynolds wanted to meet his friends and family, but Monica’s allure for him was simply too strong. And to Monica, this outsider, Reynolds, knew many things. Whenever she chatted with him, Monica found that she could learn many things about the outside world.

Reynolds was particularly good at making conversation. This made Monica very happy whenever she was with him.

“If I were to always be with Monica, how wonderful would that be?” Reynolds’ heart was filled with hope.

“Miss Monica.” A voice suddenly came from behind them, and a silver-haired middle-aged man walked towards them. Reynolds was startled. He hadn’t noticed this man approach them. Clearly, the man was extremely powerful.

“Uncle Miller [Mi’le].” When Monica turned her head and saw this middle-aged man with short silver hair, she immediately called out in laughter.

Miller had a simple, honest face. Glancing at Reynolds, he then laughed towards Monica in a friendly manner. “Miss Monica, it is getting late. Your mother is waiting for you to go home and eat dinner.” Monica nodded, then smiled towards Reynolds. “Big brother Reynolds, I’m going home for now. See you later.”

Reynolds smiled and nodded as well.

After Monica left, Miller stared at Reynolds. “Outsider kid, you’ve been in our mountain village for some time now. You now need to make a choice…”

“Choice?” Reynolds felt surprised.

Miller nodded calmly. “Since you’ve been able to find us, that means that

destiny has led you here. You now have two choices. The first is to forever stay in our mountain village, and become one of our villagers, never to leave. The second is to immediately leave, and never enter again. You only have two choices. If you disobey, you will definitely die."

These cold, calm words made Reynolds' heart quiver.

Leave forever? Or never leave the mountain village again?

Reynolds didn't want to make either choice.

"Mr. Miller," Reynolds hurriedly said, "Based on what I know, aren't there some people in the village who occasionally go outside?"

Miller glanced at him, then chuckled. "True. Our mountain village has a yearly contest. Anyone who makes it into the top ten during this tournament is permitted to leave the village and make a trip to the outside world. But given your current power…you aren't even able to rank in our top hundred, much less top ten."

Reynolds was very anxious.

"Although I currently can't make the ranking, in the future I might." Reynolds had already made his decision. "Mr. Miller, I have decided to become a member of this village." Although Reynolds loved his parents, when he was in the army, he often went a year or two without seeing his parents a single time. So long as his parents knew that he was alive, that was all that matter. In the future, he would have a chance to meet them. There shouldn't be too much of a problem.

Reynolds knew that his parents could definitely live for another century or two.

But Monica…Reynolds was worried that if he left, he would regret it for the rest of his life.

Miller nodded slightly. "Welcome to the village. Remember. You are not

allowed to leave the village without permission. If it is discovered that you did…you will definitely die. No matter what, you had best not harbor any doubts about how powerful our village is." Miller immediately turned and prepared to leave.

"Mr. Miller." Reynolds hurriedly said.

Miller turned to look at him. "What is it?"

"When the other people in the village leave, can they help me carry a message out?" Reynolds asked.

Miller nodded. "Yes they can. However, you cannot reveal any information regarding the village. In two days, I'll be leaving the village. If you have any messages, I can help you transmit them."

Reynolds felt a surge of joy, and he hurriedly said, "Lord Miller, when you leave the village, please go to any of the Dawson Conglomerate's branches and tell them that I, Reynolds Dunstan, am not dead. Right now, I am happily alive, and I hope my friends and family won't be worried about me."

"The Dawson Conglomerate?" Miller glanced at him, then nodded.

"Lord Miller." Reynolds suddenly realized something. "Didn't you just say that only the top ten in the annual tournament are allowed to make a trip? Why is it that you can leave whenever you want?"

Miller glanced at him. "Once you are at my level of power, you can also leave whenever you wish." As he spoke, with a single movement Miller suddenly vanished from in front of Reynolds. Reynolds' heart was filled with shock; this speed was simply too terrifying!

"Milord, that Reynolds isn't very powerful, but it seems as though Miss Monica feels rather…" Miller stood to one side respectfully, while a handsome, refined-looking middle-aged man with long black hair sat on a stone chair, casually sipping wine.

The refined middle-aged man laughed calmly. “Monica is free to like whoever she wants. Don’t force her. For Reynolds to choose to remain in the village means that he has courage, at least.”

“But the Madame…” Miller said.

The refined middle-aged man laughed. “Haha…as for that, there’s nothing I can do either. If that Reynolds really has taken a liking to my daughter, then all I can do is suggest that he work hard. Otherwise, he won’t even be able to pass my wife’s approval.”

“Tomorrow, when you head to the Forest of Darkness, be careful. Don’t irritate the King of the Forest of Darkness.” The refined middle-aged man glanced at Miller.

“Yes, milord.” Miller said respectfully.

The next morning, a blur suddenly streaked out at high speed away from the mountain village. In the blink of an eye, it pierced through the skies as it flew towards the north at high speed. The speed at which it travelled was a good deal faster than even Linley’s speed in full Dragonform. An hour or so later, that blur arrived at the Forest of Darkness.

“Hrm?” The astonishing speed lessened, and from high up above, Miller stared down below.

Blackdirt City was located quite close to the Forest of Darkness, only fifty or so kilometers away from it. Miller was currently directly above Mt. Blackraven. Although he had been flying at high speed, he could sense a powerful amount of wind-style energy coming from below.

“Someone else who also trains in the Laws of the Wind?” Miller’s eyes lit up.

Miller was studying the Laws of the Wind as well. He carefully examined Mt. Blackraven, and saw a human form, dressed in a deep blue robe who

was wielding a violet longsword. That human form constantly flickered about in multiple places in Mt. Blackraven at an astonishingly fast speed.

“His level of understanding is quite excellent. It has been centuries since I’ve sparred with another wind-style expert.” Miller’s heart itched. He flew down at high speed.

By now, Linley had noticed this human form flying down from the skies at high speed.

Miller landed directly atop the crown of a tree on Mt. Blackraven. Standing on the tree’s crown, he stared at the nearby Linley and laughed loudly, “I am Miller, also a student of the Laws of the Wind. My friend, would you be willing to have a competition with me?”

Chapter 50 – Linley and Olivier

Book 9, His Fame Shakes the World – Chapter 50, Linley and Olivier

Linley looked at the man standing on the tree crown.

His short silver hair made him look very energetic and intrepid. That wavy blue robe fluttered in the wind, making him seem agile and graceful.

“An expert!” Linley had the feeling that this silver-haired man’s power was no less than his own.

“I am Linley.” Linley didn’t try to hide his identity.

“Linley? The O’Brien Empire’s Linley?” Miller said with surprise, but then he laughed. “I’ve long heard that the O’Brien Empire has a twenty seven year old genius, who has reached a high level of achievement as a sculptor, as a magus, and as a warrior. I didn’t expect that today, I’d be able to encounter you. You were on par with Haydson. I, Miller, would like to spar with you, brother.”

Linley had a very good impression of Miller as well.

Miller was open and direct, just the type of person Linley liked.

“Very well. Then I will have a good sparring match with you, brother Miller.” Having spent such a long period of time in training, Linley also desired to have a good sparring match against an expert. Perhaps he would gain a sudden insight.

Linley removed the deep blue robe covering his upper body, letting it be bare. And then, black scales quickly began to cover Linley’s body, and those ferocious spikes emerged from his forehead, spine, elbows, and knees. Seeing this, Miller’s eyes lit up. “Dragonblood Warrior. Haha, I’ve heard of this for some time now…”

Linley's body began to be covered with that roiling, swirling layer of azurish-black battle-qi.

Wielding Bloodviolet in his hands, Linley looked at Miller. "Come."

With a flip of his hand, Miller withdrew a silvery-white longsword from out of nowhere. Laughing loudly, he said, "Linley, you must be careful. The power of my sword technique isn't much weaker than Haydson's attack." Miller spoke with total confidence. Linley was secretly startled. Linley knew very well how powerful Haydson's "Worldbreaker" attack was.

"Careful!" Miller shouted loudly, then his body slashed through the air, immediately appearing next to Linley.

With a kick of his feet, Linley leapt backwards at high speed, but Miller's longsword still brushed against Linley's Pulseguard Defense. In the blink of an eye, Linley appeared atop a large tree several hundred meters away. "Such incredible speed. It seems I have to use the Windshadow spell."

From this exchange, Linley immediately understood that in terms of understanding the 'Speed' aspect of the wind, he was inferior to this man.

Linley began to chant the words to the Windshadow magic spell. As for Miller, he paused for a while, still wielding that silver longsword as he waited for Linley to complete his Windshadow spell. Only when Linley did so did Miller charge towards Linley at high speed again. "Linley, show me your ultimate attack."

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

Linley's body moved at a similarly high speed. Right now, the two were on par as far as speed went, and they dodged and attacked at high speed. Towards the attacking Miller, with a flip of his hand, Linley utilized the 'Rippling Wind' technique, and in an instant, countless violet sword tips slashed down, covering Miller's entire body.

“Excellent!” Miller laughed loudly, and suddenly, the silvery-white longsword seemed to slowly draw a circle in front of him.

Although it seemed to be slow, in actuality, before Linley’s ‘Rippling Wind’ attacks managed to land on Miller, they were all destroyed by that ‘circle’. Linley was secretly delighted. “Has Miller trained in a type of extremely ‘Slow’ aspect of the wind?”

Slow. Fast!

The so called ‘slow’ and ‘fast’ weren’t purely about ‘speed’; it was about a higher level of understanding. For example, although Miller’s attack seemed to be slow, in actuality, it wasn’t the slightest bit slower than Linley’s ‘Rippling Wind’ technique.

“Miller, take another one of my attacks.” Linley shouted loudly.

Linley and Miller were constantly dodging. With each light tap against the tree leaves, the two could instantly change direction at high speed. Suddenly, the two once again clashed in the air above Mt. Blackraven. Linley’s dreamlike Bloodviolet longsword seemed to encompass both an extremely fast speed as well as an extremely slow tempo, combining these two polar opposites into a single seemingly perfect whole.

“Excellent.” Miller let out a loud shout of surprised joy.

Miller’s longsword suddenly reduced in speed to an extremely low level, as though it weighed ten trillion pounds and could barely move. Linley could sense how extremely slothful the movements of the opponent’s sword had become!

But his Bloodviolet sword remained unable to break through this sword.

“Boom!” The two swords collided.

Linley felt as though he had suddenly been hit at high speed by something weighing ten trillion pounds. His body shuddered and was sent flying

against the nearby mountain cliffs, smashing into the heart of the mountain. On the cliffs, a human-shaped tunnel could now be seen.

“Whoosh.” A while later, Linley came flying back out.

Miller was extremely excited. “Linley, your sword art…‘Slow’ and ‘Fast’? Two totally opposite aspects. This…this…” Miller felt as though a light had gone off inside his mind, as though he had suddenly realized something. Linley was also extremely shocked and delighted as well.

Linley didn’t even care about that line of blood trailing down from the corner of his lips. The only thing he was thinking about was that sword technique his opponent had just used. “Miller defended against my ‘Rippling Wind’ attack using a technique which was gentle as a breeze. But this technique he just used was extremely powerful, not one whit inferior than Haydson’s ‘Worldbreaker’ technique. If it wasn’t for the fact that I have gained some additional insights into the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, I probably would’ve been severely injured.”

“That sword technique was derived from a variation of the ‘Slow’ aspect of the Laws of the Wind. During that moment, it seemed as though space itself had frozen.” Linley could still clearly remember how he had felt when facing that sword.

That sword had moved so slowly, as though it weighed ten trillion pounds, but space itself seemed to have frozen as well. Linley had clearly sensed that his opponent’s sword was extremely slow, but despite the fact that his own sword was extremely fast, in that moment, it somehow wasn’t faster than his opponent’s.

Miller and Linley both had looks of surprised delight on their face. They smiled, standing there in mid-air.

Recovering from their ponderings, the two looked at each other and grinned. Clearly, both had gained certain insights.

“Linley, I had never imagined that two opposite aspects could actually be

used to aid each other…you truly have helped me out." Miller was a little bit excited. Indeed, in that mysterious mountain village, none of his friends trained in the Laws of the Wind, and thus they were unable to help him.

Linley spoke words of thanks as well. "Miller, I've been pondering how to continue analyzing the 'Slow' and 'Fast' aspect and how to train them. You've helped me clearly see how I should go about it as well."

"As far as my insights into the Laws of the Wind go, I don't have any deeper insights to show you. Let's just call a stop to it for now. What do you say?" Linley advised.

Miller pursed his lips. "Linley, don't be modest. I know…that your true, most powerful attack is with a heavy sword. Supposedly, despite Haydson's ridiculously strong defense, he was still heavily injured by you. Come. Let me have a try." Miller said expectantly.

Linley hesitated slightly.

Once the 'Profound Truths of the Earth' was used, it would be very dangerous. It might kill him.

"It's fine. Linley, just come. Let me have a taste of your most powerful attack. My defense is extremely formidable." Miller laughed confidently.

Seeing how confident the man was and how he had requested Linley repeatedly to attack, Linley nodded. At the same time, Linley had made up his mind that he would executed the Hundred Layered Waves attack of the Profound Truths of the Earth. He wouldn't go all the way to his limits of 138 Layered Waves. Given the power his opponent had displayed, he should be able to withstand the Hundred Layered Waves.

In the air above Mt. Blackraven, Linley and Miller stood, facing each other. Linley was now wielding the adamantine heavy sword.

"Come." Miller said with a bit of excitement.

“Miller, be careful.” As he spoke, Linley suddenly charged towards Miller, creating a terrifying sonic boom. Miller just stood there, casually wielding his silvery longsword and slowly waving it in front of himself.

Space once again froze.

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword agilely and lightly smashed downwards. A silvery longsword that was very light, but seemingly weighed ten trillion pounds. An adamantine heavy sword that was very heavy, yet seemed to move very agilely and gracefully. As soon as the adamantine heavy sword drew near that silver longsword, it was caught within the ‘frozen space’.

The two swords intersected!

“Boom!”

Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves!

What shocked Linley was that when those vibrational waves passed through that ‘frozen space’, it quickly began to weaken in power. By the time it passed through and entered Miller’s body, it had lost more than half of its power.

But despite that…

Miller’s eyes lit up. His entire body suddenly was surrounded by waves of energy, but despite that, a hint of blood still came out from the corner of his lips. He stared at Linley in astonishment. “Linley, your attack truly is bizarre. My defense can be considered a very special one, but your attack…”

When experts did battle, they had to be proficient in speed, defense, and attack. If they were weak in a single area, then they would find themselves in danger.

Miller’s defense was very special as well.

As he circulated the Dragonblood battle-qi in his body, Linley's wounds rapidly began to heal, but he stared at Miller in astonishment. "Miller, that sword of yours…I keep on having the feeling that it seems to have caused space itself to change." It was precisely because space had changed that Linley's vibrational attacks would weaken so much when passing through it.

Miller laughed. "It does indeed cause space to change. I can't clearly explain it. When you gain insight on this aspect, you will naturally understand it."

Linley nodded slightly as he returned to his human form.

"Alright, then. Linley, I'm very glad to have met you today and made friends with you. If you ever want to come looking for me, you can come to the southern reaches of the Anarchic Lands. There's a relatively well-known city there known as 'Southmount City'. Roughly a hundred kilometers south of Southmount City is a large mountain, and within that mountain there is a small mountain village. I live there." Miller laughed.

Linley nodded in appreciation. "When I am free, I will definitely go."

"Several of my good friends, as well as my Lord, live there as well. If you come there and spar, you will improve more quickly as well." Miller said warmly. "I have some business in the Forest of Darkness. I'll have to bid you farewell for now."

After saying his goodbyes to Miller, Linley watched as Miller rapidly flew towards the north, into the endless Forest of Darkness. Then Linley chuckled and, with a leap, flew to a nearby flat stone. He sat down atop of it into the meditative posture, quietly reflecting on the insights he had gained on various profound mysteries during that sparring match…

….

To the north of the Yulan continent was the boundless Northern Sea. North of the Northern Sea was the Arctic Icecap. The Arctic Icecap was extremely

vast, several times larger than the entire Yulan continent. However, aside from some powerful magical beasts who lived there, there were virtually no inhabitants. The Arctic Icecap was formed from nothing more than extremely hard ice.

“Whooooooosh.”

Cold wind slashed past the glaciers like icy knives, shearing pieces of ice off. The Arctic Icecap was an extremely cold place, and extremely dangerous. Even powerful warriors would find it very hard to live here. However, this bitter, desolate environment did have a few experts who lived here quietly.

Beneath an iceberg that was tens of thousands of meters high, two experts engaged in battle at high speed. One of them was Olivier, with his opponent being a very well muscled, yet skinny, cruel looking man with short jade hair. The cruel-looking man was using nothing more than a pair of dark golden boxing gloves.

“Whoosh!” Lightshadow flashing, Olivier appeared in the air above the cruel-looking man, then chopped downwards with his sword.

The cruel-looking man dodged this attack, and then immediately viciously kicked out with his leg against Olivier. On the surface of the leg was a clearly visible edge of air, and it chopped against Olivier like a warblade. The blade of air was far more distinct and visible than the one produced by Linley’s ‘Tempos of the Wind’ technique.

“Boom!”

Olivier and his sword were both sent flying by this kick, landing and smashing viciously against the tough, frozen ground. “Boom!” The icy ground split apart, and dozens of enormous cracks appeared. Olivier vomited a mouthful of fresh blood onto the ground.

“Hmph. Olivier, you dare challenge Lord Rutherford [La’si’fu’de]? You can’t even beat me. In the Arctic Icecap, you are nothing more than the

bottom rung. Train hard." The cruel-looking man said coldly, and then he flew into the skies at high speed, disappearing into that enormous iceberg that was tens of thousands of meters high.

Olivier coughed once, then stood up. Staring upwards at the iceberg, he said, "Next time, I will definitely defeat you." And then, Olivier's body flickered, then disappeared from the snowy land.

Chapter 1 – Delia and Linley

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 1, Delia and Linley

“Whoooosh.” The desolate cold wind blew across the world, bringing countless snowflakes to cover it.

Delia, wearing a white fur robe, was standing quietly in front of a window, staring at the outside world. Behind her were two magical beasts. One was the Worldbear, Hatton. The other was the Wildthunder Stormhawk, Parry. Neither of the two beasts made a sound.

A sigh escaped from Delia’s lips.

“Father, mother…” A bitter smile was on Delia’s face. She really hadn’t expected her parents to deceive her. They had told her that her grandmother was seriously ill, but after she raced home on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk, she had discovered that her grandmother was quite healthy.

That very first night back…

Delia had angrily asked her parents, “Father, mother, why did you two lie to me to get me home?”

Delia had originally intended to stay with Linley.

Delia’s father, Dylla [Dai’ya] Leon, had looked at Delia and had asked her, “Delia, have you fallen for that Dragonblood Warrior, Linley? Ever since you first returned those many years ago, you refused to accept any other boys. Was it because of him?”

Delia had been very surprised. She hadn’t told her parents.

“How did you know?” Delia had immediately asked.

Her mother had sighed. “Delia, why didn’t you tell us how you felt? It was your master, Master Longhaus, who informed us upon returning to the Empire. He told us to prepare for the wedding between you and Linley.”

The previously furious Delia had suddenly become bashful.

Her parents had glanced at each other, shaking their heads and smiling bitterly. Her father, Dylla, had said seriously, “My beloved daughter, I must solemnly tell you that it is impossible for you and Linley to be together.”

“What?” Delia had stared at her father.

Her father had said seriously, “Delia, Linley’s younger brother is the husband of the Seventh Imperial Princess of the O’Brien Empire. Without question, Linley is a Saint belonging to the O’Brien Empire. But you should understand the state of the relationship between our Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire.”

“True, both our Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire are two mighty Empires who are enemies to each other, but what does that have to do with Linley?” Delia had been very upset. “Could it be that you believe, father, that me being with Linley would impact the clan?”

“Yes.”

Dylla Leon had nodded. “If a clan were to have a Saint, that clan would rise up and flourish. If you and Linley were to marry…then what happens if the Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire were to engage in a large-scale war? Our Empire would no longer dare to have much faith in the Leon clan.”

Delia immediately had become enraged.

Her father’s explanation had seemed laughable.

“Delia, think about it. If you were the Emperor and you discovered that the daughter of one of your largest clans had gotten married to a Saint on the enemy’s side, wouldn’t you be concerned that this clan would betray him?”

Dylla Leon had said seriously.

Delia had been stunned.

There was nothing she could say, because there were historical precedents for this.

In the past, a daughter of a noble clan in the Rohault Empire had married the king of one of the kingdoms of the great plains to the far east. Afterwards, her entire clan had rebelled and joined the side of that great plains kingdom.

Don't think that the Rohault Empire was necessarily far stronger than the kingdoms of the great plains.

The great plains to the far east had three kingdoms in total.

The people of the great plains were extremely violent, and each of them were born warriors. Although in terms of population, they were far lower in number than the Rohault Empire and the Rhine Empire, these three major kingdoms had done battle with the two Empires for countless years without being at any disadvantage.

"Father, Linley and I…" Delia had begun to speak.

Dylla Leon had interrupted her. "Delia. You are a smart child. You should understand everything. Our Leon clan has been building ourselves up for a thousand years. That's why we now have our current status. If you were to marry Linley, even if his Imperial Majesty didn't actually do anything to our clan, without question…his Imperial Majesty's faith in our clan would be lessened!"

"Once his faith in us is lessened, the countless descendants of our clan in the military and in the government will find it very hard to be promoted." Dylla Leon sighed. "Delia, I hope you can consider the interests of the clan."

“But father, Linley doesn’t belong to the O’Brien Empire. He has gone to the Anarchic Lands.” Delia had hurriedly said.

“The Anarchic Lands?” Dylla Leon had been startled, and Delia’s mother had also stared at her in surprise.

Delia had hurriedly explained, “Yes, father. Linley isn’t attached to the O’Brien Empire. He wants to start his own undertakings in the Anarchic Lands. In the future, he will be part of the Anarchic Lands. Father…the Anarchic Lands and our Empire aren’t enemies, right?”

Dylla had been silent for a moment before nodding slowly.

This was indeed the case. In the entire continent, the only force that was worthy of the Yulan Empire considering it their enemy was the O’Brien Empire.

As for the Anarchic Lands, who would consider these chaotic lands which had several dozen Duchies an enemy?

“If Linley truly were to establish himself in the Anarchic Lands, then it wouldn’t be a problem for you to marry him.” Dylla Leon had said slowly. These words had been like heavenly music to Delia’s ears, making her heart instantly calm down.

Dylla Leon had looked at Delia and said solemnly, “My beloved daughter, I must remind you…only when the day comes when Linley is no longer a member of the O’Brien Empire in the eyes of the imperial clan, will you be permitted to be with him. Otherwise, you definitely cannot.”

“Father, I understand.” Delia loved her parents, her grandparents, her older brother, her cousins, and the rest of her family. She didn’t want to break off her relationships to them.

Dylla had nodded. “For now, stay in the imperial capital. Don’t go looking for that Linley.”

…….

Thinking back to that conversation, Delia gently sighed again. Delia understood…Linley was already a Saint and had an unlimited lifespan. As a magus of the seventh rank, she herself would have a long lifespan as well, as she continued to train.

She wasn't too worried about a year or two.

Staring out of the window towards the north, she saw the large, feather-like snowflakes slowly drift down. The entire world seemed so hazy, and nothing could be clearly seen. But Delia's gaze seemed to pierce through the walls of reality and see into the distant Anarchic Lands, and see into Blackdirt City…

……..

Outside Blackdirt City, one squad of soldiers after another were running laps on the black dirt, and alongside each squad, there was a military officer constantly shouting, "Faster, faster! Don't get left behind! Goddamnit, if you get left behind, no breakfast for you!"

On an uplifted area, the fourth of the Barker brothers, Boone, and the fifth, Gates, were clad in just a pair of long pants, their upper bodies bare. They watched the training proceed.

During this period of time, Blackdirt City hadn't attacked any other cities. They had only been training. The cities around Blackdirt City had all sensed that Blackdirt would pose a threat to them, and their city governors were very nervous. But at the same time, those city governors didn't dare to attack first either.

Suddenly, Linley walked over. He watched the soldiers train while heading towards Gates and Boone.

"Lord, what do you think?" Gates said proudly.

Linley nodded with satisfaction. “Very good. Oh, right. When do you plan to begin attacking the nearby cities?” Linley didn’t know a single thing about military tactics. The only thing he knew was that unless things came to a critical juncture, there was no need for him to get involved.

Boone laughed heartily. “Lord, we haven’t attacked anybody yet, but some people from the nearby cities have already surrendered to us and promised that they would undermine their cities from the inside.”

“Oh, is that so?” Linley laughed as well.

Gates hurriedly said. “Of course, how could we make this up? Lord, think about it. After the power of we five brothers spread across the Anarchic Lands, many of the nearby cities are terrified of us. In order to deal with those cities, after all, we don’t even need to mobilize our armies. Just by ourselves, we five brothers can slaughter our path into those cities and easily take victory.”

Linley laughed again.

To this sort of small city, a single expert could decide everything. For example, the city army of Blackdirt City numbered only a few thousand people. A warrior of the ninth rank could easily kill that many people. Alternately, he could directly kill the leader and force the rest to surrender!

Attacking a Duchy, however, was different.

Each Duchy had perhaps around a hundred thousand soldiers. Similarly, if in the future, they were to fight against the Radiant Church, perhaps the enemy would have a huge number of soldiers. Against this sort of human wave tactics, how many people could a single expert kill? However, a magus in this sort of situation would be extremely useful.

But as long as there were no Saint-level magi about, when two armies engaged in wide-scale warfare against each other, the quality and the ability of each armies’ soldiers was of paramount importance.

“What are you training them in?” Linley frowned as he looked at these scattered squads.

Boone explained, “Lord, this is the training of a medium-sized brigade. Each battalion is split into a brigade of three hundred people who will train together. Each brigade has a captain and six lieutenants who are in charge of supervising and training. This is a very effective way of training.”

Gates and Boone had trained soldiers before in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. They knew what the best methods were.

After coming to Blackdirt City and learning what the situation was, Linley returned to Mt. Blackraven.

Like an ephemeral blue trail of smoke, Linley wisped back into the depths of Mt. Blackraven. Linley currently lived in the center of a beautiful lake in Mt. Blackraven, which had several boulders in the center covering several dozen square meters. Linley had found those boulders from elsewhere in Mt. Blackraven, then with his sword, chopped them flat, then moved them to the center of the lake to serve as his base.

In the center of the lake, the boulders were only half a meter or so higher than the surface of the lake. There, atop those boulders, Linley had built himself a wooden house.

“Bebe, what are you up to?” Linley walked atop the water, gracefully arriving at the center of the lake. But when he did so, Linley suddenly discovered that Bebe was digging at the side of one of the boulders.

“Boss!” Bebe turned his head and chortled at Linley, while at the same time his sharp little claws continued to swipe at the edge of the rocks, sending debris everywhere. “I’m making a flight of stairs. I’m going to make a few stairs over here. That way, in the future when I get into the water, I can choose to either rest on the stairs, or lie in the water. That’ll be so comfortable. Boss, aren’t I, Bebe, simply the smartest?”

Linley began to laugh.

“Slash, slash.” Swiping with his claws, Bebe gradually dug out the six steps of stairs, with each step roughly ten centimeters high, with the last one in the water itself. Bebe sat his rear down on the bottommost step, happily whacking the water with his four limbs.

Linley chuckled. Seeing the stones lying around the lake, Linley waved a single hand…

“Whoosh!” A sudden wind began to howl, and a terrifying tornado appeared, picking up a human-sized boulder and depositing it in front of Linley. The beautiful surroundings of Mt. Blackraven had made Linley feel very peaceful, and he couldn’t help but think about the person who was in his heart.

Linley’s lips quirked upwards slightly, a hint of a smile on his face.

With a flip of his hand, he withdrew his straight chisel and began to carve the sculpture. Pieces of rock flew everywhere. Slowly…a human-sized model began to appear from within the boulder. Bebe, his small claws resting on the stairs, raised his head to stare at the sculpture.

“Oh ho, Boss, you’re carving a woman? Haha, I know, it has to be Delia!” Bebe snickered.

But Linley was totally absorbed in his carving. His straight chisel flashed as fast as lightning, carrying with it the soft, gentle grace of the wind. Having already reached the grandmaster level of sculpting, Linley was now totally capable of carving anything he desired.

Linley was entirely focused on his carving, and the details began to appear…

From morning until three in the afternoon of the next day. After having spent more than a day and a night, Linley finally put down his straight chisel.

“Whew.” Linley lightly exhaled, blowing the fine dust off from the sculpture. The woman he had sculpted possessed a unique, heroic aura. In particular, her eyes…they made the stone sculpture look as though it was truly alive.

Linley looked at the sculpture with satisfaction, then turned to stare towards the southwest. In his heart, he thought to himself, “Delia, you should have received my letter by now.”

Chapter 2 – Two Letters

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 2, Two Letters

Although Linley's first love had ended in failure and caused Linley to develop an aversion towards love, Delia's repeated actions, beginning since they had known each other while they were children, had forced Linley to admit…that he enjoyed being together with Delia. He enjoyed that sort of warm, intimate feeling.

At the Institute, Linley already knew how Delia felt about him.

He knew that Delia was waiting for him to make the first move, but after his first love had failed, Linley's heart had become knotted, and he simply couldn't.

Far away, in the imperial capital of the Yulan continent, although the sun was high in the sky, the world was still extremely cold. Delia was wearing an expensive, thick robe as she sat in her courtyard, enjoying the rays of the sun. In her hands was a letter which Linley had sent her. This letter had come to her via the high speed information network of the Dawson Conglomerate.

Holding the letter in her hands, Delia couldn't help but laugh, laugh with great joy.

"Delia, what are you looking at?" A thick, heavy sound rang out. It was the Worldbear, Hatton. Hatton's adorable bear eyes stared at the letter in Delia's hands. "C'mon, Delia, lemme see it. Let Big Yellow be happy with you."

The Worldbear, Hatton, was on exceedingly close terms with Delia.

As soon as Delia saw Hatton, she immediately hid the letter away, wrinkling her nose and snorting at him. "Big Yellow, are you causing trouble again? Where's Teacher? Why aren't you by Teacher's side?"

The Worldbear shook his head. “Master is engaging in closed door meditation training. He won’t be coming out for the next ten days or half a month. He doesn’t need me by his side right now. So, Big Yellow has come to find Delia.” The Worldbear beamed at Delia.

Delia was in a fine mood today as well, and so she continued jesting with the Worldbear for a while.

“Delia, that letter is from Linley, right?” The Worldbear suddenly asked in a lowered voice.

Delia glanced with vexation at him, but she still nodded. Delia’s eyes were filled with irrepressible excitement. Linley’s letter had clearly detailed how his life had been, and had also told Delia that he was currently in Blackdirt City, in the Anarchic Lands. He even gave Delia clear instructions on how to get there.

Although Linley didn’t explicitly say that he wanted Delia to come visit him, just based on how carefully he described the route to the city, his intentions were quite clear.

“That silly man. He’s always trying to hide his intentions. If he wants me to go, he should say so.” Delia both laughed and cursed him in her heart.

Delia was in such a mood that just sitting there by herself, she would start giggling. The Worldbear, next to Delia, continually chatted with her as well.

“Delia, tomorrow is the Yulan Festival. Will you go back tonight?” The Worldbear, Hatton, asked softly.

Delia, hearing these words, couldn’t help but frown. Letting out a sigh, she said, “Yeah. Tonight, the entire clan will be coming together. Ugh…I really don’t want to go back.” During this period of time, each of the two times Delia had gone back, her clansmen had exhorted her to forget about Linley.

However…

Was that possible?

When Delia had believed Linley dead, she had even made up her mind to never marry. Ten full years had passed like that. Now that she knew Linley was alive, and would soon set up his own dominion, how could she give him up now?

That night.

All of the important members of the Leon clan were in attendance at this banquet. Nearly a hundred important clan members happily chatted and toasted each other, and this noble procession naturally included the clan leader, Dylla Leon. Not only was Dylla Leon himself quite accomplished, his two children were incredible as well.

Dixie was a magus of the eighth rank, and the personal disciple of the High Priest.

Delia had reached the seventh rank years ago, and was the disciple of the Saint-level Grand Magus, Master Longhaus.

These two children truly were extremely amazing.

Today, although Delia didn't put on much makeup, the combination of her noble, aristocratic bearing and her natural good looks made Delia appear more dazzling than any of the young noble ladies. Only, Delia headed to a corner of the main hall with her wine goblet in hand.

A middle-aged person walked towards Dylla Leon with goblet in hand, glancing at Delia. Laughing, he said, "Big brother, Delia truly is growing more and more beautiful. Quite a few young noblemen in the imperial capital have been smitten by her."

Dylla Leon laughed calmly.

"Big brother, the son of Prince Reed [Li'de] has always been enamored of

Delia. Do you think there is a chance that the two of them…"

Dylla Leon shook his head. "Third Brother, there's nothing to discuss. If Delia was willing to accept marrying one of the nobles of the imperial capital, then she would have done so many years earlier. As for now…it's best if you don't say anything. Later, I'll let my wife go speak with her."

There had been quite a few people who had raised this issue with Dylla Leon during this banquet.

This was because, clearly, Delia was young, beautiful, and talented, and was the disciple of a Grand Magus Saint. She also had the backing of the powerful Leon clan…such a perfect woman had countless suitors.

Delia sat there quietly in the corner.

"Little sister." A handsome young man, standing 1.8 meters tall with utterly straight golden hair which fell to his shoulders, walked over to her.

Raising her head up, Delia revealed a smile on her face. "Big brother." The person had come was Delia's older sibling, Dixie. Just like back at the Ernst Institute, Dixie remained as cold and indifferent to others as ever. But towards his little sister, Dixie was filled with affection.

Dixie sat down opposite from Delia.

"What is it? You seem to be in a bad mood?" Dixie smiled as he spoke.

Delia shook her head resignedly. "Big brother, you are always training by the side of the High Priest. You don't know much about my affairs."

"Does it have to do with Linley?" Dixie asked.

Delia laughed as she tossed him a glance. "Big brother, you are quite clever. But both father and mother are somewhat opposed to me being together with him. I've been vexed about this…after all, I don't want the relationship with the family to become too stiff."

Dixie nodded. He understood how his sister felt. He had watched Delia grow up, and Dixie knew very well…that although Delia was a very determined, resolute girl, in the depths of her heart, she was somewhat mentally reliant on her family members.

“Most likely tonight, mother will come over and chat with me yet again about how promising this young man is, or how promising that young man is.” Delia laughed bitterly.

Every time she came back, her parents would always raise this issue with her.

Dixie frowned. “Those wastrel sons of those rich nobles still want to marry you? Linley has acted improperly as well. He should have openly come to the imperial capital and proposed to you long ago! If he did so, I would definitely support him.” In his heart, Dixie actually quite admired Linley.

After all, Linley was someone who was an even greater genius than he himself was.

“Propose to me?” Delia was startled, but then she burst into laughter.

Delia thought back to that night at Wushan Township and how she had kissed Linley. That look of utter shock and panic on Linley’s face. Even despite her best subtle efforts, she wasn’t able to get Linley to summon the courage to say that he loved her. How could he possibly come to the imperial capital to propose to her?”

“Big brother, Linley is very different from how you imagine him.” Delia laughed.

Delia was in a fairly good mood while her big brother was with her during the banquet. Unfortunately, after the banquet was over, she chatted with her parents for a time, and afterwards, her mood became terrible once again. Her parents tirelessly tried to persuade her.

She hated being pressured like this.

On the day of the Yulan Festival, Delia came to the headquarters of the Dawson Conglomerate in the Yulan Empire's imperial capital.

"Miss Delia." The supervisor here knew Delia by sight.

"I'd like to trouble you, sir, to help deliver this letter to Linley." Delia handed over a letter.

The supervisor immediately nodded. "Please don't worry. I will definitely make sure that this letter is delivered to Master Linley's hands." The Dawson Conglomerate was extremely efficient in carrying out any tasks related to Linley. The same day, they sent a flying magical beast out with the letter away from the imperial capital.

After the blizzard had ambushed them last night, this morning, when Linley left his room, he discovered that Mt. Blackraven was now covered with a layer of silver 'ornaments'. Some snow was drifting about on the surface of the lake. As the warm rays of the morning sun began to shine down from the east, the snow covering the trees and the boulders reflected the light dazzlingly.

"Whew." Taking a deep breath and sensing the fresh air after the blizzard, Linley allowed a smile to appear on his face.

Bebe appeared from within the wooden room as well. Rubbing the sleep from his little eyes, Bebe's four little paws left behind marks in the snow as he walked.

"Lord, Lord!" That loud voice rang out from afar, causing some of the snow on the trees to be shaken loose. Turning, Linley saw a huge figure rush towards him at high speed. With each step, the man moved over ten meters. With a mighty leap from the lake's edge, the man flew over seventy or eighty meters before landing on the flat boulder in the center of the lake.

"Gates, why'd you run over here in such a rush?" Linley laughed.

Gates chortled. “To handle your affairs, of course. Otherwise, I wouldn’t rush over here so quickly.”

“My affairs?” Linley was clearly rather puzzled.

“Look, see!” Gates took out a letter from his clothes. “This is Miss Delia’s letter. The Dawson Conglomerate’s men just delivered it to Blackdirt City. Haha, those people from the Dawson Conglomerate have decided to just go ahead and set up a branch office in Blackdirt City.”

“Delia’s?”

Linley immediately accepted the letter. After opening it, he began to read it. At this time, Bebe growled towards Gates, “Gates, big guy, step aside. Don’t try to sneak any peeks at the letter between Delia and my Boss.”

“Got it, got it.” Gates didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

What Gates did know, however, was that he didn’t dare to offend this terrifying fellow, Bebe. Even the Saint-level magical beast Haeru admitted he was no match for Bebe. How would he, Gates, dare to offend him?

Linley was reading the letter very carefully.

“To the most esteemed Master Linley,

Greetings and happy reading!

You’ve been quite impressive lately. You’ve already taken over Blackdirt City…but Blackdirt City is just a small city. Given your status as the venerable Master Linley, I’m sure that you can’t possibly expect me to come over after you took over a single tiny city such as Blackdirt, can you? Wouldn’t that be rather embarrassing for you?

I’ve come to the decision that I must wait for you to, at the very least, found your own Duchy within the Anarchic Lands before heading over there.

Otherwise…hrmph, I won't see you.

As for your questions regarding how my life is? My life isn't bad. I'm just quietly spending my time with my Teacher in training. My grandmother is doing much better now. There's no need for you to worry about my affairs. It's best if you spend your time worrying about the Anarchic Lands and your training.

Remember that I'm waiting for you to set up your Duchy.

The day that your Duchy is founded is the day I will leave the Yulan Empire. This is our appointment!

However…be careful. Don't exhaust yourself. I have all the time in the world, and I'll wait for you to found your Duchy! I'll wait to see you!

Yours…Delia."

After reading this letter, Linley felt warmth in his heart, and he couldn't help but let a smile creep onto his face as he stored the letter into his interspatial ring. The nearby Gates couldn't help but mock, "Lord, you seem to be quite happy. Your face is about to split apart from that smile. What did Miss Delia write?"

"Yeah, Boss, what did she write?" Bebe was staring at Linley as well.

Linley chuckled, then looked at Gates. "Enough. Let me ask you something. When are you preparing to begin attacking the other cities?"

"We can start at any time. But right now, it is the Yulan Festival…" Gates said. The Yulan Festival was a festival which was celebrated throughout the entire Yulan continent. Even many soldiers would go back at this time to reunite with their families. Naturally, a portion of the soldiers would have to remain on duty to keep watch.

Linley shook his head. "Catching them by surprise will reduce our casualties."

“Then give the order, Lord.” Gates’ eyes were shining.

Linley nodded slightly. “Go back and make preparations immediately. Tomorrow morning, we’ll begin our attacks against the neighboring cities. We must subdue the surrounding cities with the greatest haste…our current plan is to take over an amount of land equal to a Duchy in size.”

“Yes, Lord!” Gates said in a clear voice.

“Go, then.” Linley laughed calmly.

Gates immediately nodded, then left Mt. Blackraven. Blackdirt City, which had been in a state of preparation this entire time, began to frantically prepare to make its move after receiving Linley’s orders via Gates. And so, the hibernating Blackdirt City finally began to reach out towards the neighboring cities with its fierce claws.

Chapter 3 – Expanding Power

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 3, Expanding Power

Yulan calendar, year 10010. January 5th. Night time. The world was covered with a dim gray gauze, and in some cooler places, the snow had yet to melt. Right now, the city of Tours [Tu'er] was under tremendous pressure.

The city governor of Tours was up on his walls, staring outside in desperation. Outside the city, there was an indeterminate number of people whom couldn't be seen very clearly.

"How many people does Blackdirt City have?" The city governor, Delai [De'lei] shouted a question to his subordinates.

"Lord Governor, the scouts came to report to us as soon as they saw the enemy forces. They weren't able to clearly make out how many men they have. However, the leader of them seems to be one of those five legendary wargods which Blackdirt City possesses." A nearby subordinate reported back with some panic.

"One of the five wargods?" The city governor grew frantic. "Is he of the ninth rank just because he says he is? Hell, I can say that I'm a Saint! All of you, be careful. You must stand your ground."

"Yes, Lord Governor." Those soldiers assented.

Tours City didn't dare to receive the attackers in a pitched battle on open ground. They could only stay inside the city and stand guard. After all, defense was always easier than offense.

The second brother, Ankh, stared coldly at the distant city. Blackdirt City had gone into full mobilization mode. Of the five major battalions, only one had stayed behind to guard the city, while the other four, under the

leadership of Ankh, Hazer, Boone, and Gates went to attack the nearest four cities.

“Stop!” Ankh raised his right hand and shouted loudly.

Instantly, the 1800 soldiers came to a halt. Everyone stared worshipfully at the massive figure in front of them. All five of the Barker brothers were evenhanded in their treatment of the soldiers, rewarding and punishing as appropriate, and they spent much of their time with the soldiers as well.

When the soldiers trained, they also trained.

When the soldiers ran laps while carrying heavy weights, those five Barker brothers would train while carrying boulders weighing hundreds of thousands of pounds. The soldiers of Blackdirt City naturally grew to adore their leaders even more.

“Delai, listen up!” Ankh roared furiously.

That voice, brimming with Undying battle-qi, echoed in Tours City like thunder. The hearts of the soldiers of Tours City quailed. That huge voice alone caused their morale to drop dramatically. It seemed the legends were true. How could they possibly resist an expert like this?

The city governor, Delai, was growing frantic as well. But he didn’t want to give up his base.

“Say what you want to say. Don’t waste time.” Delai summoned his courage and shouted back, but although his voice was quite loud at the walls, by the time it reached Ankh, it had grown very soft, without any hint of threat.

Ankh continued shouting like a bullhorn. “Delai, if you offer Tours City to us, we can spare your life. Otherwise…my greataxe will show no mercy.” As Ankh spoke, many of the soldiers of Tours City began to have thoughts of betrayal.

In addition, long before Blackdirt City had launched its attack, many people in Tours City had secretly surrendered to Blackdirt City already.

“Oh, you want to fight to the end?” Ankh’s voice once more echoed in the ears of all the soldiers of Tours City.

“Kill!” A loud shout that shattered the heavens.

Many of the soldiers on the walls of Tours City were terrified by this shout. From below, they could hear countless warriors angrily screaming, “Kill!” “Kill!”

….

All of them were charging wildly towards the walls of Tours City, their shields held high. Those ferocious, roaring knights created panic in the city guards.

“Archers! Shoot them! Shoot them dead!” The city governor, Delai, shouted angrily, his face red.

The archers on the city walls immediately nocked their bows, then began shooting arrows at the charging enemies. Most of the arrows in this first volley struck the shields. A few injured some of the soldiers of Blackdirt City. Three unlucky soldiers were shot to death.

“Shoot them all to death!” Delai roared angrily.

But before the second volley of arrows was loosed, Ankh charged forward, outpacing his men by over a hundred yards and rushing to the gates of the city. With a mighty howl, he brandished his terrifying greataxe and gave the city gates a thunderous chop.

“BANG!”

The entire city wall trembled, and the gates to Tours City instantly shattered into smithereens which flew everywhere. Even in his human form, Ankh

was a warrior of the ninth rank. There was no difficulty at all for him to break past the defenses of these soldiers.

“The city gate is down!”

“That wargod is charging in!”

All sorts of shouts could be heard from within Tours City. Even the city governor, Delai, upon realizing that the gate had been breached, instantly turned pale.

“Whoosh!” With each wave of the greataxe, the surrounding soldiers were instantly blasted into countless pieces, sending blood and flesh everywhere. The nearby soldiers all began to retreat in terror. Ankh, covered by his Undying battle-qi, seemed a veritable devil.

Twirling his terrifying greataxe about, Ankh roared angrily, “Those who stand against me will die!”

Ankh brandished his greataxe about like a tornado, but this ‘tornado’ was a visible one. Anything touched by this ‘tornado’ was instantly blasted to bits. At first, some soldiers of Tours City had attempted to attack, but afterwards, no one dared to get near this fiend.

In but a few moments, the forces of Blackdirt City swept into the city through the gates.

“We surrender! We surrender!”

First, a single voice called out to surrender, but then, countless voices joined in. By the time Ankh and his bloody greataxe arrived at the city walls, the soldiers on the walls had all put down their weapons, while the city governor, Delai, was tied up in rope and placed on the floor. Several military officers were there, awaiting Ankh’s arrival.

“Milord, my name is Ford [Fu’er’de].” One of the military officers said respectfully.

“Oh, so you are Ford.”

Ankh knew very well that Ford was one of the military officers who had surrendered to them even before the battle had began. Many had done so. Given that Blackdirt City had the five Barker brothers, how could they possibly lose?

Battles were fought by men and won by men.

When two forces were roughly on the same level of power, perhaps some stratagems and deceptions would be effective. But once the gap in power reached a sufficient level, such as now, where Ankh alone could demolish the forces of Tours City? A battle like this had no other possible outcomes at all. There wasn’t the slightest chance of defeat.

Yulan calendar, Year 10010. January 5th. Blackdirt City began its conquests.

By January 6th, Linley’s side already had five cities, and the number of people they controlled, including the various satellite towns and villages, was a grand total of nearly three million. Generally speaking, however, in the Anarchic Lands, only an entity which was in control of a prefectural city would be considered to be a Duchy.

Linley’s side had five cities, but all of them were small cities, with only a few tens of thousands of people within the cities. But a prefectural city was capable of holding hundreds of thousands of citizens.

After these lightning-fast battles concluded, Linley’s side temporarily stopped attacking. Instead, they quickly began to reorganize their armies. The original five battalions of Blackdirt City were now part of the ‘First Legion’, which was the core-most legion. The other four legions belonging to the other four cities all saw their military pay levels increased to roughly two thirds of the salary of the First Legion.

The taxes on the common people were lowered by over half across the

board.

Each legion now had nine thousand people. In the Yulan continent, large legions could reach up to twenty thousand people. In the Anarchic Lands, however, since warfare was relatively scattered, Linley decided to lower the number of people per legion, forming five battalions into each legion.

The five legions quickly began to train together and organize internally.

The surrounding cities all sensed the threat, but they knew that Blackdirt City's forces were simply too powerful. While Blackdirt City's forces were still busy training and re-organizing, a nearby city voluntarily surrendered. The reason? The previous city governor had taken all of his enormous wealth and his guards and fled from that city.

Barker and Zassler both arrived at Mt. Blackraven. They stared up at the mountain.

"Barker." Zassler suddenly spoke.

Barker looked at Zassler. Zassler said, "Hazer has reached the ninth rank on the way to the Anarchic Lands. By now, all five of you brothers possess the power of a Saint. I will make my breakthrough in the next year or two as well. Think about it…with you five brothers making up the bulk of our military power, with me providing support, and of course, most important of all, with Linley and his two powerful magical beasts…with such a overpowering force, we can erect our own kingdom, or perhaps even an empire!

"Mr. Zassler, what do you intend?" Barker's eyes lit up.

Zassler said seriously, "Barker, right now, the continent has six major powers. Aside from the O'Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire, the other forces, ie the Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, Holy Union, and Dark Alliance, do not have a Deity amongst their ranks."

Barker nodded his head in agreement.

“As for the Rohault Empire and the Rhine Empire, these two Empires don’t even have an expert on the same level as Haydson. But we not only have Linley, we also have Bebe.” Zassler was extremely confident. “The most important aspect of founding an empire is the strength of its highest level experts. The more powerful its highest tier members are, the better of a chance one has.”

Barker was growing excited as well.

“Mr. Zassler, are you saying that we should build an empire together?” Barker looked at Zassler.

Zassler laughed. “That’s just one of the things I’ve been considering. Our current goal is destroying the Radiant Church’s influence in the Anarchic Lands. However, the Radiant Church currently occupies nearly a third of the territory of the Anarchic Lands. In order to eliminate them, we will need a great deal of land as well. After destroying them and taking over their territory…we would be in control of over half of the Anarchic Lands. At that time, we would then deal with the Cult of Shadows…and the Anarchic Lands would then be ours.”

Barker felt his heart rate speed up.

The Anarchic Lands was an area in constant turmoil and chaos. Although in size, it was smaller than the O’Brien Empire, it was still comparable to the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire.

“Erecting an empire…” Barker’s eyes were shining.

“Haha, no rush. One step at a time. Given our current power, with all of us working together, it shouldn’t be too hard for us to take over at least ten Duchies in the Anarchic Lands and found a kingdom at the very least.” Zassler said confidently.

Barker nodded repeatedly.

The Rohault Empire. The Rhine Empire. How many Saints did they have? The roots of these two Empires weren't nearly as deep as the roots of the O'Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire, nor did they have the assistance of Descended Angels like the Radiant Church or the Cult of Shadows.

For example, the Rohault Empire could at absolute most produce just over ten Saints.

Linley's side had five Undying Warriors. Once Barker and his brothers reached the Saint-level in human form, they would have the power of true Saint-level Undying Warriors. If the five of them worked together in concert with Linley and Bebe…a force like this wouldn't be afraid of the Radiant Church at all.

So why couldn't they found an Empire, then?

"Occupying the entire Anarchic Lands will be a bit difficult. After all, there are a lot of complicated aspects to this place." Zassler smiled. "But I still feel very confident." Zassler turned and stared up at Mt. Blackraven. Linley was there, in the mountain.

Zassler slowly said, "In my mind, I have a goal. One day, we will create a powerful empire, and Linley…he will be to our empire what the War God is to the O'Brien Empire."

"The War God?" Barker was very shocked.

Zassler smiled and nodded.

An enormous, mighty empire could only be founded with a cadre of fear-inducing top-tier experts. For example, in reality, the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire were both reliant on the Yulan Empire, precisely because they didn't have enough top-tier power.

But in the empire which Zassler dreamed of, the top-tier power was Linley.

Just like how the War God watched over the O'Brien Empire and the High

Priest watched over the Yulan Empire…the future Linley would also watch over his future empire! But of course, Linley currently didn't yet have that much power.

"He's only twenty eight years old, but he's already reached such a terrifying level. Can you imagine what someone like him will be able to accomplish in the future?" Zassler laughed as he glanced at Barker.

Barker nodded.

Barker and his brothers were truly awed by Linley's prowess.

"Let's go. Let's go see Linley." Zassler laughed.

Zassler, this old fox who had lived for over eight hundred years, now had a particular desire which excited him. He wanted to see the Yulan continent bring forth yet another Empire. How exciting that would be!

Chapter 4 – War Machine

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 4, War Machine

“Rumble…”

Water rushed down from that tens of meters high waterfall, striking against the deep pool of water at the bottom, creating countless sprays of water. The water within this deep pool flowed out into a narrow creek, slowly winding its way downwards. Barker and Zassler followed this little creek deeper and deeper into Mt. Blackraven.

At the end of this creek was a peaceful lake. In the center of the lake, there was a gracefully built wooden cabin.

In front of the wooden cabin, there was a long-haired man wearing a loose robe who was wielding a violet longsword slowly. But in actuality, this ‘slowness’ was an illusion, a misperception of Zassler’s and Barker’s. Although it seemed slow, in truth, it was terrifyingly fast.

This sensation of a visual misperception made Barker and Zassler have the urge to vomit blood.

With each strike of the sword, it seemed as though the surrounding space itself was twisted.

Barker and Zassler glanced at each other, their eyes filled with shock. It had only been a few months, but Linley had made yet another breakthrough! They had never before seen Linley use this sword technique before. Just now, from what they had seen, they were certain…that this sword technique definitely was astonishingly powerful.

Barker and Zassler stood at the edges of the lake, quietly waiting.

After a long time, Linley sheathed his sword.

“Come over.” With a wave of Linley’s hands, a sudden gust of wind emerged, creating a ‘bridge of air’ between the wooden cabin and the lakeshore. “You can just walk over. Don’t be afraid. You won’t fall.”

Baker and Zassler glanced at each other, and then they stepped onto this ‘bridge of air’, walking to the center where Linley’s wooden cabin was.

Linley sat down next to the stone bench. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew a flask of wine and three cups. Laughing calmly, he said, “Zassler, if you had come a few days ago, I probably would’ve only been able to use the wind to bring you over directly. I wouldn’t have been able to do what I just did.”

Zassler was an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. Although he was almost at the Saint-rank, he couldn’t fly. And given his body’s relative frailty, there was no way he could walk on water either.

“Lord, what was that, just now?” Barker had yet to recover from his shock.

Zassler looked at Linley as well. Laughing, Linley explained, “It is one way by which one can use the Laws of the Wind. Not too long ago, I gained some insights on the ‘Slow’ aspect, which allowed me to do what I just did. But I still am quite a ways off from the ‘Spatial Lock’ level.”

“What is a ‘Spatial Lock’?” Zassler questioned.

Linley didn’t explain further. Zassler and Barker weren’t practitioners of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. How could they possibly understand his explanations? When Linley had sparred against Miller, that expert from the mysterious mountain village, Linley had suddenly seen a clearer path to gaining a deeper understanding in the ‘Slow’ aspect of the wind. Naturally, that made training progress twice as fast for half the effort.

If Miller were to have seen Linley training, he would’ve been shocked.

In just a few short months, Linley had been able to advance this much. This

sort of rate of improvement was simply terrifyingly fast.

Pouring cups of wine for each man, Linley raised his own winecup in a toast. Smiling, he said, “Just tell me why you have come.”

Barker said, “Lord, after spending some time on the management of our current territory, we have completed our military reorganization, and given them three months of training. It is about time to attack a few other cities.” As soon as he heard these words, a smile crept onto Linley’s face.

He had been eagerly awaiting this day.

“This time, we should be attacking that prefectural city, right?” Linley said.

The nearby Zassler nodded. “Right. According to my plans, this time, we should attack three small cities and the prefectural city of Moat [Mo’te].” Linley’s side currently had six cities and six legions with fifty thousand soldiers. This sort of military power was on par with that of a prefectural city.

However…

Linley’s side had experts as well! This was a definite advantage.

“After we take down the prefectural city, we will be able to announce publicly that we have founded a Duchy.” Barker chortled.

Linley had been eagerly awaiting the founding of the Duchy. He still remembered Delia’s appointment with him in that letter. The day he founded his own Duchy was the day on which Delia would leave the Yulan Empire to come looking for him.

“Linley.” Zassler asked, “After we take down the prefectural city, what should we do next? Should we continue taking over cities which belong to neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows? Or should we begin to launch attacks against the cities which the Radiant Church controls?”

Per their battle maps, after taking down the prefectural city, to the south of the territory which Linley controlled was the territory under the dominion of the Radiant Church.

Of course, the Radiant Church's control was in secret. On the surface, they were all Duchies. But in truth, it was quite easy to tell which were controlled by the Radiant Church and which were controlled by the Cult of Shadows! The way to do so was to simply look at the temples in those prefectural cities. If the city had a Radiant Temple, then that Duchy was secretly controlled by the Radiant Church.

If it had a Shadow Temple, then it was controlled by the Cult of Shadows.

"Begin attacking the Duchies controlled by the Radiant Church." Linley's eyes narrowed as he made his decision. "As our activities grow more and more pronounced, the intelligence network of the Radiant Church would definitely take note of the five Barker brothers. Knowing that you are here, it would be strange if they didn't realize that I, Linley, was here as well."

Linley looked at Barker and Zassler, then chuckled. "After we take down the prefectural city, we'll spend some time stabilizing it and do a wholesale reorganization of our armies. After reorganizing our armies, then we will begin attacking the territory controlled by the Radiant Church!"

"But of course, let's only launch some small attacks at first, and see how the Radiant Church responds." Linley laughed calmly. "Let's see if they immediately counterattack, or if they refrain from doing so, or if they send over experts to find me."

Zassler understood Linley's intentions. Laughing, he said, "Right. If the Radiant Church decides to openly fight you, Linley, then…the name of the Duchy will be based off of your family name. Let us call it the 'Baruch Duchy'!"

"But if the Radiant Church refrains, then we can continue to pretend you are not here, and we can just choose a name for the Duchy at random."

Hearing Zassler's words, Linley nodded in approval.

Right now, what they needed to see was how the Radiant Church would react. If the experts of the Radiant Church did not appear, then Linley wouldn't act. He would let Barker and his brothers stir up trouble, repeatedly attacking cities. If enemy experts appeared….then they would respond in this manner.

"When will we attack the city of Moat?" Barker looked at Linley.

"Hurry up and start." Linley replied.

Linley's words caused all six cities to begin gearing up for war. One legion with nine thousand men, led by Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, went to attack three smaller cities, while the other four legions, under the leadership of Gates and Barker, went to attack the prefectural city of Moat.

Zassler watched over Blackdirt City.

"Kill!" The grounds beneath the walls of the prefectural city of Moat were totally red with blood. At first, the prefectural city of Moat had sent their army of twenty thousand out, preparing to directly battle against the enemy. But when the troops led by Gates and Barker had charged into them, massive casualties had resulted.

Gates and Barker were two terrible gods of battle.

Wherever those massive greataxes whirled about, people died in vast numbers. Each army had its own elite squads, and Gates and Barker focused precisely on those people. Wherever there was a tough pocket of resistance, they went to snuff it out.

Quickly, the twenty-thousand man army of the prefectural city of Moat was utterly shattered. Their morale totally gone, many people immediately surrendered, then and there.

More than half had died. The lucky survivors…were all captured.

They couldn't flee even if they wanted to. The city gates to the prefectural city of Moat were firmly shut. The city governor of the prefectural city of Moat simply didn't dare to open the gates. Once he did, those two fiends would charge inside and he would definitely die. Right now, the prefectural city of Moat only had twenty thousand soldiers.

The soldiers of Blackdirt City were arranged in neat, orderly rows. Those ten thousand prisoners were utterly demoralized, with many wounded. Only two or three thousand were in battle-shape. Blood covered the ground, and the morale of the city guards of the prefectural city of Moat was at rock bottom.

"What is going on? Why are they standing so far away?" The garrison troops were growing frantic. The range the enemy was at was far beyond bow range.

Suddenly, those two godlike leaders suddenly charged forward at high speed, greataxes in hand. Their speed was so fast that everyone gaped as they watched. The garrison troops immediately shouted out, "Archers, prepare to attack those two men. Fire!"

The hundred elite archers selected from within the ordinary ranged division were all equipped with powerful bows, which they began to use to fire down upon the two men. However, Barker and Gates were simply too fast. Only a few arrows hit them, but even the ones that hit them were deflected off.

"Haha, watch this!" Gates roared in excitement. Raising his heart-stoppingly terrifying greataxe, he chopped down in the direction of that distant city gate.

"Bam!"

A sudden, terrifying sound rang out from the city gates. The tall, strong city gates shuddered and then began to crack, but it didn't actually break.

“The gates of a prefectural city are far sturdier than those of smaller cities.” Gates laughed loudly, the sound of his laughter shaking the heavens. The soldiers on the walls of Moat could hear it clearly. “Big brother, no need for you to get involved, I can deal with that gate.”

That powerful blast of force from afar had already caused the soldiers on the wall to turn pale-faced.

Who fought battles like this?!

Smashing straight through the front gates and charging in?!

“Drop the boulders, quick, drop the boulder!” The shrill voice of the city governor rang out. The walls of this prefectural city were over ten meters thick. Aside from the normally closed city gates, there were actually a few other apertures. From those apertures, massive boulders began to fall down.

Those ten-plus thick, heavy boulders crashed down with enough power that not even a warrior of the ninth rank could disregard them. These were used especially for dealing with experts.

“Dropping boulders?”

Gates’ face changed, and he howled angrily, “Motherf*cker, out of my way!” That greataxe moved as agilely as a leaf, gently touching the city gate. The gate shuddered violently, and then half of it broke apart and crumbled. But with a low rumbling sound, those boulders began to fall down, blocking off the city entrance.

“Break.” Barker also used the same technique, ‘wielding something heavy as though it were light’.

“Boom!” The boulder shuddered, and pieces of rock were sent flying everywhere. Over a meter-deep crack appeared on the surface of the boulder, but compared to its terrifyingly massive size, even a deep crack meant little to it.

Gates and Barker glanced at each other.

“We’ll have to act per his Lordship’s orders.” Gates laughed.

As Linley had directed, Barker and his brothers were to keep their identity as Undying Warriors a secret. They were one of Linley’s hidden weapons. After all, the Radiant Church didn’t know their identity for certain. The only thing they could reveal was what the Radiant Church already knew.

“Haeru!” Barker let out a loud roar.

“Groooooowl!” An earth-shaking roar could be heard, and that terrifying black panther which had been in the middle of the army suddenly grew dramatically larger, reaching a height of ten meters and a length of twenty. Seeing this enormous, three-story tall magical beast…all of the people in the prefectural city of Moat were utterly stunned.

“A Saint-level magical beast!”

Those guards were speechless.

“Bang!” The three-story tall Haeru transformed into a black blur, charging at the city gates. In the blink of an eye, he traversed the thousand meters of distance to the city gates. The city gates were twenty meters high, but Haeru’s terrifying body slammed directly against that ten-meter thick boulder.

A terrifying explosion could be heard.

That boulder split apart as though it were made of tofu, exploding into countless pieces which went flying every which way. Many of the garrison soldiers in the city were struck by the flying stones and had their heads broken open or their chests caved in…and that was just the appetizer.

The terrifying magical beast, Haeru, charged through and began to kill.

He was an absolute war machine. Anything standing before him would be

trampled to death or knocked flying. Countless casualties!

“Surrender! We surrender!”

“Surrender!!!”

Even the sturdiest of warriors, when faced with such a terrifying magical beast, would feel powerless. All of them immediately threw down their weapons and knelt down, signifying surrender. A Saint-level magical beast…how could soldiers like them possibly resist against such an overpowering force?

“Surrender. I surrender.” The city governor of the prefectural city of Moat fell to his knees, his entire body shaking.

After taking over the prefectural city of Moat, Linley’s side now had a prefectural city and nine smaller cities, and now controlled a population of nine million. They could already be considered a relatively large Duchy in size.

Chapter 5 – Heading Out

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 5, Heading Out

Late night. Within a quiet study, there was a desk with a lit lamp atop it, flickering with dim light.

Atop the table, there was a hawk-nosed, skinny man with long violet hair. This man was flipping through a thick book. Under the dim light of the lamp, the hawk-nosed man's appearance couldn't be clearly made out. But just at this moment…"Knock, knock, knock." The sound of knocking.

"Enter." The hawk-nosed man didn't even look up, continuing to leaf through the book.

"Creaaaak." The door swung open, and a handsome-looking golden-haired middle-aged man walked in. As soon as he walked in, he shut the door, then bowed respectfully. "Lord Praetor, Linley's forces have already taken the prefectural city of Moat."

The hawk-nosed man was the awe-inspiring Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Radiant Church. Osenno.

Publicly, the Holy Emperor was the leader of the Radiant Church. The church did, however, whitewash its actions to make itself look pure. When dealing with some experts, they had the Ecclesiastical Tribunal carry out missions with extreme ruthlessness. Their leader, the Praetor, within the Radiant Church itself, had power and authority not one whit lower than the Holy Emperor's.

"Oh." Osenno continued to read his book.

The golden-haired man said respectfully, "Taking over the prefectural city of Moat is a small affair. More importantly…Linley's side used that mysterious Saint-level panther-type magical beast in order to break through

the city walls!”

“They used the Saint-level beast?” Osenno’s head suddenly snapped up.

Osenno’s eyes were as deep and dark as the depths of the sea. The golden-haired man felt his heart shake from Osenno’s gaze, but he forced down his fear and said, “Lord Praetor, Linley’s side actually used Saints to do battle. This is a clear provocation.”

Generally speaking, Saints did not get involved in battles.

Once a Saint got involved, that meant that there was no leeway left, nor any chance of reconciliation. It would be a fight to the death.

As the prefectural city of Moat was not part of the Radiant Church’s territory, for Linley to act in such a way wasn’t a direct provocation towards the Radiant Church. But for him to have Saint-level magical beasts engage in battle…this was a gesture. A provoking gesture towards the Radiant Church. Linley’s intentions were quite clear…

My magical beast has already shown himself. These forces belong to me, Linley. So what is your Radiant Church going to do about it?

At the same time, Linley’s side was displaying their might. ‘Since I dare to send out my Saint-level magical beast to do battle, if your Radiant Church wishes to battle me, you’d best bring your Saints along as well. Don’t bother with the soldiers.’

“Lord Praetor?” The golden-haired man looked at Osenno.

Osenno’s deep, dark eyes were totally unreadable. Suddenly, Osenno spoke. “Remember. From today forward, don’t fight head on against Linley. We will endure!” The golden-haired man was shocked, and he stared at Osenno in disbelief.

Osenno was definitely an extremely, terrifyingly powerful expert.

As one of the towering figures of the Radiant Church, his power was no lower than Haydson's, and probably higher. The Radiant Church had quite a few Saints in the Anarchic Lands as well. There was no need for them to fear Linley.

"Lord Praetor, Linley's side only includes himself and those two magical beasts." The golden-haired man said uncomprehendingly.

Osenno said calmly, "No. He doesn't only have so few Saints. Those five Barker brothers, if our predictions are correct, should be the descendants of Armand. They are all warriors of the ninth rank now. Upon transforming, they would be early-stage Saints. Only experts on the level of mid-stage Saints would be able to beat them."

"Undying Warriors?" The golden-haired man was shocked.

Osenno glanced at him.

When Cesar had rescued Barker and his brothers and threatened Stehle, the Holy Emperor Heidens had immediately suspected that the Barker brothers were of the Armand clan. After all, for Cesar to act in such a way and so strongly…there was no other explanation.

"They aren't much weaker than us." Osenno lowered his head to his book again. He said a few final, calm words. "Remember. Endure."

"Then what if Linley erects a Duchy and begins attacking our territory?" The golden-haired man asked. Although he was the managing supervisor for the Radiant Church's forces in the Anarchic Lands, now that Osenno was here, naturally Osenno was now in charge.

Osenno said calmly, "If they attack our territory, we retreat and let them take it."

"Uh…" The golden-haired man stared at Osenno in shock.

Osenno said calmly, "If they provoke us, we will endure. If they attack our

territory, we will retreat! Let Linley think that we fear them and that our power is less than theirs…however, understand this. When he takes over our territory, he will naturally reorganize and make use of the soldiers of those cities."

"Ah!" The golden-haired man's eyes lit up. He understood Osenno's hidden meaning.

"The Lord Praetor is wise." The golden-haired man said excitedly.

Osenno chuckled calmly. "This is how warfare has always been. Human resources are of the highest importance! In terms of ensuring loyalty, what can be more powerful than faith? Linley…I'll let you know how terrifyingly powerful 'faith' can be."

The golden-haired man was secretly shaken.

Osenno was simply too sinister.

They possessed great power and many experts, but they still used such sinister methods. The golden-haired man could totally visualize…how the cocky, overconfident Linley's forces would suddenly be beaten back to the starting point.

"You can leave now." Osenno lowered his head to his book as he spoke calmly.

"Yes, Lord Praetor."

The golden-haired man left respectfully, leaving behind Osenno by himself in that dimly lit study. He quietly continued to read that book. Next to it, there was another scroll, which had a few words written atop it; 'Linley Baruch.'

…..

In the northern area of the Anarchic Lands. In one breath, they had taken

over a prefectural city and nine small cities, erecting a dominion which controlled nine million citizens. But although they had taken over the prefectural city of Moat, the political center of Linley's side was still in Blackdirt City.

The current Blackdirt City was extremely developed.

The policy of no taxation caused many people to desire to migrate to Blackdirt City, and caused Blackdirt City to be bursting from the seams. This had resulted in the population management department of Blackdirt City to raise the immigration requirements. But as the political center of this dominion, Blackdirt City continued to attract many migrants.

"Boss, Blackdirt City has changed so much." Standing on Linley's shoulders, Bebe accompanied Linley as he walked along one of the primary roads.

Linley also stared at the surrounding hotels, clothing stores, and weaponry stores on each side of the road. When Linley had first arrived at Blackdirt City, the local citizens were dressed in rags and most looked yellow and malnourished. But in recent months, Blackdirt City had totally changed.

Those tattered old stores had all been completely renovated.

The streets had been repaved as well, and there were trees on each side of the road. In some of the hotels, Linley saw many commoners drinking wine while casually chatting. Most of them were talking about their 'five wargods'.

Under the leadership of these five virtually invincible wargods, their lives had become stable, and the null taxation rate had caused their quality of life to improve by several levels.

"If those five wargods were to be defeated…" Just as a person in the hotel spoke these words…

"Motherf*cker, what are you farting about?"

“Those wargods are invincible. How can they be defeated? Punk, you better watch your mouth.”

Many people instantly began to curse him angrily. These commoners all deeply enjoyed their current peaceful, stable lives. Naturally, they didn’t wish for their lives to be disrupted.

“In the O’Brien Empire and the Holy Union, peaceful lives are so easily found, but in the Anarchic Lands, they are so precious and valuable.” Linley suddenly was moved. “This is what constant chaos causes.”

“If one day, the Anarchic Lands could be unified and the chaos brought to an end…”

Looking at the smiles on the faces of the commoners, Linley suddenly realized that his heart had a happy, satisfied feeling.

“Unification?” Linley shook his head and laughed.

He didn’t aspire to this. To be able to make his loved ones happy and to allow himself to constantly improve in his training. This would make him very satisfied.

“It’s best to allow Zassler and Barker to continue handling the affairs of war.” Linley’s body suddenly flickered and disappeared with a light wind.

Within the city governor’s mansion in Blackdirt City, Jenne, Rebecca, Leena, and the others were eating lunch in the living room. Suddenly, Linley appeared in front of the door…

“Lord.” Barker immediately stood up, and the others did as well. Linley hurriedly said, “Sit, everyone. I’m just here to visit you and talk about a few things.” Linley smiled as he walked to a nearby chair and sat down.

Zassler immediately said, “Linley, we were planning to go find you and discuss recent developments with you. Now that you are here, Jenne…make

your report to Linley." Currently, Jenne was the highest level administrator of their dominion.

But just as Jenne opened her mouth and was about to begin, Linley chuckled as he reached out to stop her. "Jenne, sit. No rush."

Jenne nodded and sat down.

"As far as the wars are concerned, you can make up your minds on your own. Right now, I am thinking…there is still a period of time before we begin to do battle against the Radiant Church. I want to take this opportunity to make a trip to the south and spar with a few Saints."

Linley still remembered the invitation from that Miller.

Sparring with experts, especially experts who trained in the same Elemental Laws, would give him many insights. In addition, his forces would soon do battle against the Radiant Church. By the time the battles started, he wouldn't dare to casually leave.

He had to seize the time he had.

"Lord, don't worry." Barker laughed. "However, in another seven or eight days, we will begin attacking the Duchies controlled by the Radiant Church. Given what we discussed with you last time, Lord, if the Radiant Church fights us head on, we won't cower from them, and a month from now, we will found our Duchy as the Baruch Duchy. If they are afraid of us, we can continue to pretend as we attack them, and pick another name for the Duchy."

Linley nodded.

"Very well then. Haeru will stay with you, in case of any emergency. Bebe and I will head out." Linley immediately stood up.

"Big brother Linley, won't you have a meal with us?" Jenne suddenly said.

Linley chuckled towards Jenne, then shook his head. “No.” Linley’s body flickered, then disappeared from within the living room. Jenne, somewhat disappointed, let out a soft sigh.

…….

In the southern areas of the Anarchic Lands. Within that quiet, mysterious little village.

Ever since the news of Reynolds choosing to stay here in the village had spread out, Reynolds had been ostracized within the village! The reason? Monica! Monica was the most beautiful, eye-catching girl in this village. There were simply too many suitors pursuing her.

Originally, many youngsters had thought that Reynolds would definitely leave and thus not be a threat.

But in the end, Reynolds had stayed.

Within a hotel in the mountain village. Reynolds was sitting there drinking wine.

“Hey, punk, move over.” Three youngsters walked over and slapped his table hard as they barked viciously at Reynolds.

Reynolds lifted his head up and glanced at them.

“What, you got a problem?” Those three youngsters’ bodies began to faintly glow with battle-qi. A magus of the seventh rank didn’t count for much in this mysterious mountain village. There were dozens of youths here who had reached the seventh rank, and quite a few who had reached the eighth. The three youngsters in front of him? One was a warrior of the seventh rank. The stronger one was of the eighth rank.

There was nothing he would be able to do if they wanted to beat him.

Taking a deep breath, Reynolds held down his temper and moved aside.

There was nothing he could do…he had no one to rely on here in this village. But many of the uncles, aunts, grandparents and what not of the youngsters here were all experts. How could he possibly fight against them? And many of the youths here had grown up together. If they banded together, how could he possibly fight them all?

“What are you doing?”

Monica and her serving maid came over, and she snapped angrily at them.

“Princess Monica.” Those three youngsters immediately bowed. Within this mysterious mountain village, Monica’s father’s status was extremely high. According to legend…this mysterious mountain village had already existed a thousand years ago, and at that time, Monica’s father had looked exactly the way he looked right now.

Monica stared angrily at each of them, then grabbed Reynolds by the hand. “Big brother Reynolds, let’s go.”

Reynolds stood up. Taking a deep breath, he left alongside Monica.

“All he can do is hide behind a woman. Useless creature.” Those three youths cursed him in whispers. Reynolds, who had left alongside Monica, naturally could hear their voices. His body just trembled slightly, and then he followed Monica away.

In this mysterious mountain village, he had no one to rely on. All he could do was endure it!

Chapter 6 – Third Bro?

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 6, Third Bro?

Within a grassy area near the mountain village.

Monica had her serving girl go back, and then held hands with Reynolds as they walked together.

“Big brother Reynolds, those people go way too far. This isn’t the first time either. I’m going to tell Uncle Miller and have Uncle Miller teach them a lesson.” Monica was so angry that her face was a bit red. Looking at Monica, Reynolds only smiled. “Monica, it’s fine. Don’t tell your Uncle Miller.”

“But big brother Reynolds, they…” Monica said frantically,

Reynolds shook his head. “These people are only angry that you are always with me. They are jealous of me, get it?”

Monica’s face instantly turned red.

Seeing the embarrassed look on Monica’s face, Reynolds quickly felt that the little bit of unhappiness he had just experienced was nothing. “Monica, for you, I chose to stay in the mountain village. I knew these things would happen. Monica…don’t worry. I’m still weak. When I grow stronger, they won’t dare to do these things any longer.”

“But that will take a long time.” Monica frowned.

Reynolds said confidently, “Trust in your big brother Reynolds. I’ll be fine.”

Monica nodded obediently.

It must be said that Reynolds was extremely skilled in chasing girls. Despite having only known him for a few months, Monica had very early on fallen for this experienced, humorous, and attentive man, Reynolds.

Holding hands, the two quietly walked on the grass.

“If we can always be like this and walk together into eternity, how wonderful that would be?” Monica leaned against Reynolds. Reynolds gently said, “Monica, let’s get married.”

“AH!”

Monica jerked her head up as though she had been hit by lightning. Utterly stunned, her face turned pure scarlet. Reynolds laughed and lowered his head to look at her. “What, Monica? Are you unwilling?” Monica stuttered for a few moments, then said with a frown, “My mother wouldn’t agree.”

“Why wouldn’t your mother agree?” Reynolds asked.

Monica shook her head. “My mother has very strict requirements. She originally said that only a person at the Saint-level could marry me. After my father coaxed and cajoled her, she still said…that my husband had to at least be of the ninth rank. My mother looks down upon the weak.”

Reynolds was stunned.

“How could your mother…” Reynolds didn’t know what to say.

Monica lowered her voice to a whisper. “Big brother Reynolds, my mother is very cold. Only in front of me does she occasionally smile. Usually… even Uncle Miller is terrified of her.”

Reynolds was shocked. Reynolds had a faint idea as to how powerful Miller was. His terrifying speed was something which most likely warriors of the ninth rank would find difficult or impossible to reach. In other words…this Uncle Miller was at least of the ninth rank, or perhaps a Saint.

The two chatted on the grass for a long time.

“Alright, it’s getting late.” Monica looked upwards at the sky. “I need to go back and eat dinner. If I get home late, mother will reprimand me again.” Reynolds nodded slightly, watching Monica as she left.

Monica’s residence was one of the restricted areas in the mysterious village. Aside from a few people like Miller who were granted entry, most of the dwellers of the village were not permitted to go near it. Naturally… Reynolds couldn’t go there either, and he hadn’t met Monica’s parents.

Shortly after Monica had left.

“Reynolds, you seem to be enjoying yourself.” Five youths walked over. Their leader had long golden hair, like that of a lion, and a handsome, rugged face. Seeing these people, Reynolds knew that today was not going to be a good day.

The name of this youngster was Videle [Vi’de’li]. He was one of the leaders of the younger generation. Despite only being forty, he was a warrior of the eighth rank.

To those powerful warriors and magi, their lifespan was usually quite long, at least three or four centuries. Forty was quite young.

“Reynolds, I already warned you last time to stop bothering Monica.” Videle stared coldly at Reynolds. “A man should know his limits. Punk, how can you be worthy of Monica? Monica’s parents are both Saints. And what are you?”

Reynolds was startled. He knew that Monica’s father was a Saint, but this was the first time he had heard that Monica’s mother was a Saint as well.

“Big brother Videle’s father is a Saint as well. Him and Monica are a good match. You outsider punk, what type of thing are you?” The other youngsters were cursing Reynolds as well. These youngsters simply couldn’t stand to watch an outsider take away ‘their’ princess.

“Brothers, help this punk learn his lesson.” Videle said coldly.

The four nearby youths immediately charged forward together, while Reynolds continuously retreated…and then immediately turned and began running towards the village. But he was a magus; how could he compete against warriors in speed? In a few short moments, he was caught up to.

Instantly, punches and kicks began to land all over his body. His face, however, wasn’t injured at all. These people were quite clever, reserving their attacks for Reynolds’ body. But the rules of the village were strict; the villagers were not to engage in mutual slaughter. Fighting was fine, but if someone was killed, those youths would have been in for it.

This was the reason why Reynolds had endured.

He knew that these people wouldn’t dare to kill him.

….

“Creaaak.” Reynolds opened his door. At this time, a burly neighbor of his laughed, “Reynolds, you are back? Hrm? What’s wrong? You seem to have some trouble walking. Did those punks beat you up again?”

Reynolds forced out a smile. “Big brother Field [Fei’er’de], I’m fine.”

In the village, there were still some people who were very kind to Reynolds. These were mostly the older crowd. Because Reynolds had a good character, many people liked Reynolds. Field was one of those who cared about Reynolds the most.

“Reynolds, in the future, don’t go out so much. Maybe you can help out at my weapon shop. As long as you are with me, I’d like to see who’d dare try and abuse you.” Field said repeatedly.

“Thank you.” Reynolds forced out a smile as he entered his room.

In his quiet room, Reynolds sat down cross legged, thinking to himself, “Those bastards! But in this village, I am an outsider, after all. All I can do is to endure. One day…when my power increases, I won’t be afraid of them again.”

His life in this village was very tough.

But Reynolds had never thought about abandoning it. Each time he was humiliated, Reynolds would think about Monica. This was the only reason why he had been able to endure.

“Boss…Second Bro…Third Bro…who knows when I’ll be able to meet you again?” Reynolds couldn’t help but think of his dear friends. And then, he closed his eyes and began to meditate. In the past, he had never trained so hard before, but he knew that the only way he would be allowed to leave the village was if he reached the top ten in the annual tournament.

…..

The sky was clear and blue. Linley flew agilely through the skies, with Bebe by his side. Beneath them was the boundless earth and cities which seemed the size of a fist. They had left at noon. Just by using the Windshadow spell, by the afternoon, Linley had arrived at the southern part of the Anarchic Lands.

Linley was able to easily find that large mountain around a hundred kilometers south of Southmount City.

“This little mountain village really is mysterious.” Flying into the air above the mountain valley, Linley stared down at the quiet little village below. Linley instructed Bebe, “Bebe, don’t use your spiritual energy to scan them. Let’s just go down.”

Bebe snickered, “Boss, I got it. It is very impolite to use spiritual energy to scan other Saints, right?”

Linley nodded slightly.

It was actually not a big deal if a powerful Saint used his spiritual energy to scan a weak Saint, but Linley had interacted with Miller before. According to Miller…there were multiple Saints within this mysterious village, and in particular, they had that 'Lord' amongst them.

Someone whom even Miller would refer to as 'Lord' was definitely someone much more powerful than Linley.

In a place such as this, it was better to be a bit humble.

Before Linley even had a chance to fly down, suddenly, a human figure streaked into the air at high speed. It was Miller. Miller's face was all smiles. "Haha, brother Linley. You came. This is wonderful. As soon as I got back, I began to wonder to myself when you would come, brother Linley."

"Miller, you really are powerful. As soon as I came, you noticed me." Linley said with surprise.

Neither he nor Bebe had utilized their spiritual energy, and yet they had been discovered so quickly. This was indeed terrifying. Miller laughed self-mockingly. "Linley, I am not as formidable as that. When you arrived, his Lordship discovered you and spoke to me mentally to inform me."

"Spoke to you mentally?" Linley stared at Miller in surprise.

They weren't master and magical beast companion. How could they mentally communicate? At most, Saints would be able to reach the level of using spiritual energy to broadcast their location or to scan people. There was no way one could use spiritual energy to communicate.

"You and I aren't capable of it, but that doesn't mean his Lordship isn't capable of it." Miller laughed.

Linley became even more curious about this mysterious expert.

Suddenly, another human figure flew towards them at high speed. It was someone with fiery red hair and a dominating aura that made even Linley feel surprised. This person should be extremely powerful.

“Miller, is this the genius, ‘Linley’, that you mentioned?” The red-haired man stared at Linley, as though staring at some sort of rare specimen.

Miller immediately made the introductions. “Linley, this is my good friend, Livingston [Li’wen’si’dun]. He trains in the Elemental Laws of Fire, and is on par with me in power.” The nearby red-haired man hurriedly said, “What do you mean, on par with you? Miller…when you fight with me, you always dodge here and dodge there. If you are so tough, take me head on!”

Linley began to laugh.

“That’s Livingston for you.” Miller laughed as well.

Livingston glanced at him, then laughed towards Linley. “Linley, although I rarely leave the village, I’ve heard of you long ago. You are only twenty seven…oh, twenty eight years old now, right?”

Linley nodded.

“I am so ashamed I could die. I’m over a thousand years old.” Livingston said with a self-mocking laugh.

“Useless. So useless.” Bebe’s voice rang out.

Livingston and Miller stared at the little tiny ‘Bebe’ on Linley’s shoulders. When they did, Miller’s face suddenly changed and he said with surprise, “Linley, is this Saint-level magical beast the one which defeated Haydson?”

“Twas indeed I, Bebe!” Bebe arrogantly raised his little head up high.

Miller laughed and nodded, then said to Linley, “You’ve come at just the right time. Today, we are holding our annual village tournament. Livingston and I are responsible for organizing it. In a while, the tournament will

begin. Linley, come take a look with us."

"A village tournament?" Linley grew interested.

Linley, Livingston, and Miller all flew downwards, while Miller introduced some of the details about the village tournament. Hearing more and more, Linley was quite astonished. This mountain village really was quite strict, for them to make it so hard for someone to leave the village.

In the empty area east of the mountain village, virtually all of the villagers had assembled. Thousands of people were there, filling the tournament grounds to the brim.

Within the village, this annual competition was one of the biggest events of the year. Because so many people participated, each tournament would take a great deal of time. Generally speaking…Saints would be the officiators for the first day's competition.

"Lord Miller and Lord Livingston have arrived."

Those thousands of people stared at the sky as those two human figures flew over at high speed. They instantly recognized Livingston and Miller. Although the mountain village had many experts and quite a few experts of the ninth rank, producing a Saint was extremely difficult. Centuries might pass without a single new Saint appearing. Thus, all of the people in the village were very much in awe of Miller and Livingston.

"Hey, who is that lord who is flying alongside Lord Miller and Lord Livingston?" Many villagers were puzzled.

Reynolds, standing in the middle of the crowd, just stood there, stunned as he stared at that familiar figure. That person chatting and laughing with Miller and Livingston…"Third, Third Bro?" Reynolds' eyes were filled with disbelief.

But Linley was busy chatting with Miller and Livingston. How could he possibly notice that in this crowd of thousands, Reynolds was present?

Chapter 7 – Desri

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 7, Desri

Virtually all of the villagers in this secretive little village in the southern part of the Anarchic Lands were clustered here, staring at Miller, Livingston, and Linley as they flew over. Those thousands of people instantly grew excited and began to chant the names of those two Saints.

“Miller!” “Miller!” “Miller!” “Miller!”

“Livingston!” “Livingston!” “Livingston!” “Livingston!”

A wave of cheers echoed forth from the valley. The atmosphere here was extremely lively and energetic. Miller, Livingston, and Linley flew to the center. Miller just extended his hand and waved, and everyone in the area fell silent.

Everyone stared at those three people in the center, and many also noticed the cute little Shadowmouse on Linley’s shoulders.

A smile appeared on Miller’s face. “This year will be the same as the past. We are about to begin our annual tournament. However, there is one difference this year. First of all, there is a total of 1022 participants in this year’s tournament, which is much higher than in the past. And secondly… this year, Master Linley, renowned throughout the Yulan continent, has come!”

Master Linley?

Upon hearing this name, the thousands of villagers all fell silent, turning their gazes towards Linley…and then, the entire village exploded into explosive cheers of welcome. Everyone felt extremely excited that such a legendary genius Saint had arrived.

“Excuse me. Excuse me.” Reynolds constantly squeezed forward.

But there were too many people. Reynolds, having always been low-key, had originally been at the margins of the crowd, but now, he was squeezing forwards.

“Why are you squeezing forward?” An unhappy shout.

Reynolds turned his head and saw that it was Videle, the youth who had a grudge against him. Right now, the area was filled with thunderous cheers, but Videle stared coldly at Reynolds and whispered, “What, you want to take a look at Master Linley? Haha…what a joke!”

But Reynolds paid Videle no heed, passing by more people as he continued to squeeze forward.

“Everyone, silence.” Miller reached his hand out and waved, and the villagers began to fall silent. But just as Miller was about to speak, a voice rang out from within the crowd. “Third Bro!”

Linley had been engaged in quiet chatter and laughter with Livingston, but suddenly, his face stiffened. Seeing the change in Linley’s expression, Livingston couldn’t help but feel startled. He whispered, “Linley?” But it seemed as though Linley didn’t even hear him, as he slowly turned his head towards the direction of that noise.

That familiar figure in the crowd…

“Third Bro…” Reynolds was so excited that his entire body was shaking.

“Fourth Bro!” Linley felt filled with joy and excitement. Paying no heed to what Miller and Livingston were saying, Linley’s body turned into a blur as he rushed towards Reynolds, who had already squeezed his way in. The two bros immediately embraced each other in a hug.

A very tight hug!

After learning the truth behind how Reynolds had ‘died’, Linley had been filled with utter rage, and in that rage, slaughtered Prince Julin. When Linley had learned that it was Hugh who had killed Reynolds, Linley had planned to kill Hugh right there in the military camp to avenge his bro.

But afterwards, Hugh claimed that Reynolds didn’t die. Only then had Linley forbore from killing him.

Linley was no soldier. In his heart, he didn’t care about noble ranks or military matters. According to noble privileges, as the saying went, ‘If the monarch ordered his officials to die, his officials had no choice but to die.’ Prince Julin, in his fear of death, had let Reynolds ‘die’ pointlessly. He could do this because according to noble privileges, the rights of the lord were far greater than that of the subject.

But to Linley?

Bullshit!

Even the Emperor wasn’t as important as his bros. What was the big deal about an Emperor? He was born to the royal clan and inherited the Imperial throne. What, did that mean he was necessarily more noble than Linley’s bros? That was nothing more than the brainwashing foolish commoners believed in. Linley didn’t care about those at all.

“Reynolds and Master Linley…but…” Everyone was stunned.

In particular, Videle. That ‘pretty-boy’ Reynolds was tightly embracing Linley? What was the relationship between them?

Linley and Reynolds released each other.

It was rare for Linley to have such a look of utter joy on his face. Turning to look at Miller and Livingston, he said, “Miller, so sorry. I interrupted your officiating over this tournament.”

“It’s fine.” Miller hurriedly said, but then looked at Linley in confusion.

“Brother Linley, you and Reynolds…?”

Linley casually rested his hand against Reynolds’ shoulders. “Reynolds is my friend, one of my closest, dearest brothers, like a real brother.” Reynold laughed as he slapped Linley on his shoulders as well. “Third Bro, don’t say such sappy things.”

“Haha…” Linley laughed with great happiness.

The village tournament was held in accordance with the normal rules, of course, but many of the youngsters, upon seeing Linley and Reynolds together, felt utterly stunned. They had bullied Reynolds in the past, serving him regular meals of punches and kicks. If Reynolds was to tell Linley, and Linley was to tell Miller…

Given Miller’s legendary severity in dealing out punishments, they would be doomed.

“This Reynolds…how did this Reynolds get involved with Master Linley?” Videle and the other youths felt full of regret.

After the tournament’s officiating ceremonies were ended, Miller, Livingston, Linley, and Reynolds departed together, heading to the restricted area; Monica’s home.

“Uncle Miller, I shouldn’t go.” Reynolds saw that distant copse of trees and immediately said.

This was a restricted area.

Miller laughed. “No need. Since you are Linley’s bro, come along with us. It is no big deal.” Miller suddenly frowned and let out a laugh. “Reynolds, you called me Uncle Miller…but I address Linley as brother. This…this really is…amusing, haha.”

Linley and Reynolds were both startled. Only now did they realize this as well.

Livingston laughed as well. “Miller, enough chitchat. You each can address each other as you should. You and I are both over a thousand years old, yet we know Saints who are over four or five thousand years old. Don’t we all just address each other by name?”

“I’m just making conversation.” Miller pursed his lips unhappily.

Reynolds began to laugh as well. Even the normally icy-faced Miller had his humorous side, it seemed. Most likely, very few people in the village had ever seen Miller laugh. Reynolds understood…only in front of experts of his own level would these people joke about so freely.

“Miller, let’s hurry. I’m very curious about those experts you mentioned.” Linley urged.

Linley had always felt a hint of anticipation whenever he thought about the experts in this mysterious village. He knew…these experts were perhaps some of the people whom the War God had spoken about, those ‘experts who were quietly training in seclusion’. These experts weren’t very well known in the continent these days. Or perhaps, long ago, they were very famous. These experts, in terms of power, were much stronger than the famous people of the current era.

Passing through the dense copse of trees, they arrived at a large grassy area, filled with flowers and with stone benches and stone tables placed nearby.

In the center of the grassy area was a round lake.

Passing by the grassy area, they arrived at a location next to the mountainside. Next to the mountainside were several stone houses. The mountainside itself had been hollowed out as well with several tunnels.

“Big brother Reynolds!” An excited and happy voice rang out, and from a nearby tunnel, a figure dressed in white came running out. Seeing the jade-haired, beautiful girl, Linley turned to look at the expression on Reynold’s face.

Linley laughed softly. “Fourth Bro, no wonder you weren’t willing to leave.”

Reynolds let out an awkward chuckle.

The look Linley saw on Reynolds’ face made Linley feel as though he had seen a doppelganger. The playboy Reynolds could actually be embarrassed? Could it be that this time, Reynolds had really fallen?

“Big brother Reynolds, what are you doing here?” Monica grabbed Reynolds by the hand. She was very excited. Reynolds immediately walked with Monica off to one side, then whispered and explained to Monica, who immediately turned to stare at Linley in surprise. “He’s Linley?”

“Haha, I hear Linley came?” A loud laugh could be heard.

Three figures emerged from the other side of the grassy area. The person who had just spoken was an old man with snow-white hair but the ruddy complexion of a child. The other two? One was a rather chubby, friendly seeming middle-aged man, while the other man who walked between them was an elegant middle-aged man with long black hair who wore a moon-white long robe.

The elegant middle-aged man was clearly the leader of the three.

“Father.” Monica immediately ran towards the elegant middle-aged man, tugging his hand affectionately as she pointed towards Reynolds and introduced him. “Father, this is the Reynolds who I spoke to you about.”

Monica had immediately introduced Reynolds, making him nervous.

This was the tantamount to seeing his father-in-law for the first time. Most importantly…his future father-in-law seemed to be an extremely incredible personage.

“Not bad.” The elegant middle-aged man favored Reynolds with a friendly

smile. Miller immediately introduced, “Lord, this Reynolds originally went to the same school as Linley. They are close friends. For them to be able to meet with us here means that the bonds of destiny tie us together.”

As Miller spoke, he walked towards the elegant middle-aged man, while at the same time, he mouthed something.

The elegant middle-aged man’s face froze for a moment, but then it returned to normal. However, when no one was paying attention, he snuck a peek at the little Shadowmouse, ‘Bebe’, on Linley’s shoulders. The smile on his face instantly increased in friendliness by another 30%.

“Linley, hello. Very happy to be able to meet you. Haha…let me introduce you.” The middle-aged man spoke in an extremely friendly manner. Pointing to the ruddy-faced old man, he said, “This is my good friend who came here with me, Hayward [Hai’wo’de]. He is a magus as well, but he is a fire-style magus.”

The red-faced elder, Hayward, chuckled towards Linley. “The ninth rank by age twenty seven. Truly admirable.”

“This gentleman is Foreman [Fu’man]. He’s a Saint-level warrior, and like you, he trains in the Elemental Laws of the Earth.” The elegant middle-aged man laughed. “I have another friend who is currently in training. He should be arriving a while later. Oh, right. I haven’t introduced myself yet.”

The elegant middle-aged man smiled as he stared at Linley. “My name is Desri. I train in the Elemental Laws of Light.”

Linley’s heart shook slightly.

It was him after all!

According to the War God, the Yulan continent had five Prime Saints who were only one step removed from becoming Deities. Fain of the War God’s College was one such, while another was an expert named Desri in the Anarchic Lands.

Linley understood that experts such as these people could defeat him with just one move, much like how Fain had caused him to collapse and nearly pass out with one attack.

Both Fain and Desri had reached the doorway to the Deity-level. With one step past that doorway, they would reach it, but that step was extremely hard. Cesar, for example, who had previously been on par with Fain, had taken thousands of years as well, but upon breaking through and taking that last step, he had become a Demigod.

“Respectful greetings, Mr. Desri.” Linley said humbly.

Desri laughed calmly. “Come, let’s take a seat inside. My wife should be arriving soon as well.”

Everyone immediately headed into a nearby tunnel.

“Whoah.” Linley stared with astonishment at the architecture inside the mountain. The insides had been hollowed out, creating a large, empty space with all sorts of rooms and courtyards built inside. Most importantly, the ceiling above was filled with all sorts of gemstones, filling the area with a multicolored, dazzling, dream-like light.

Inside the mountain, the sound of dripping water from a mountain spring could occasionally be heard. It seemed so peaceful.

The temperature today was rather low, but inside the mountain, it was much warmer and quite comfortable. In an empty area, there were multiple square tables which were covered with all sorts of fruits and delicacies.

“Linley, take a seat first. Let me go call my wife. Hayward, you and the others can keep Linley company for now.” Desri smiled, then immediately headed deeper inside. After taking a number of twists and turns, Desri arrived at a sealed stone room.

The sound of stone rumbling could be heard, and the stone door swung

open. A jade-haired beautiful woman dressed in a noble white robe walked out. At a casual glance, she looked nearly identical to Monica. Only when one stared at her more closely would one notice that she was a bit more mature and poised than Monica.

“Wife.” Desri laughed as he looked at this lady. “Come. Today, not only has Linley come, but Reynolds has come as well.”

The beautiful woman frowned. “Why did that Reynolds come?” She truly disliked this pretty-boy who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere and wanted to pursue her daughter.

“Reynolds and Linley are good friends who grew up together.” Desri explained.

“So what if they are? Linley’s nothing more than a genius.” The beautiful woman didn’t hold Linley in any particular regard. “If it wasn’t because his rate of training is so fast and if we were only to look at his current level of power, how could he be worthy of me leaving my training for him?”

Desri laughed as he shook his head. “Wife, I think you had best not prevent Reynolds and our daughter from being together, and you need to alter your attitude towards Linley.”

“Why?” The beautiful woman frowned.

Desri said confidently, “Go take a look at that Saint-level magical beast on Linley’s shoulders and you’ll know why. I think…when you see it, your attitude will change.”

Chapter 8 – The Terrifying Power of Grand Magus Saints

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 8, The Terrifying Power of Grand Magus Saints

“Oh?” The beautiful woman was surprised.

A hint of a smile was on Desri’s face. When he had seen Bebe on Linley’s shoulders, he had been shocked as well. As soon as he saw Bebe, Desri had decided…he had to build up a good relationship with Linley, no matter what the cost was.

In Desri’s heart, he found it hard to believe that Bebe would recognize a human as his master.

But Desri understood that since Linley was Bebe’s master, then building a good relationship with Linley was absolutely necessary.

“I want to see what sort of magical beast this is.” Seeing the secretive air that Desri was putting on, she chuckled then followed him out. After walking for a while, Desri and his wife arrived at the place where Hayward, Livingston, and Linley and the others were.

The beautiful woman immediately stared at Linley’s shoulders.

But…there was nothing on Linley’s shoulders.

“On the table.” Desri’s voice rang out in the beautiful woman’s mind. Only now did the beautiful woman notice that adorable little Shadowmouse, Bebe, was holding a cup of wine and drinking it in a very satisfied manner. “The fur is black!” The beautiful woman’s heart shook.

Mice with black fur weren’t necessarily restricted to just the lowest type of Shadowmice.

Perhaps the Radiant Church and the War God's College weren't familiar with what Bebe was, but the Anarchic Lands and the Frost Goddess Shrine definitely were.

"Father. Mother." Monica was extremely happy, but upon seeing her mother, Monica began to worry for Reynolds. She knew what sort of temper her mother had.

Desri and the beautiful woman walked towards the table together, taking the hosts' seats.

"Desri's wife?" Linley stared at this beautiful woman in astonishment. In terms of hair and every other aspect, Monica and her mother looked identical. Outsiders would think that they were siblings. However, that icy aura surrounding this beautiful woman made Linley feel surprise in his heart.

"Yet another expert, one who isn't much weaker than Miller."

Linley once more felt that the War God's words were very true. The War God had said…of those experts who had quietly trained in seclusion for thousands of years in the Yulan continent, aside from the Deities, the highest tier was the five Prime Saints including Fain and Desri. The second tier was the tier of the Holy Emperor, while the third was Haydson. Haydson's level was just an ordinary level amongst the hidden experts.

This was the reason why Olivier had tasted bitter defeat in the Arctic Icecap. After all, he wasn't even able to defeat Haydson. Who could he possibly defeat?

Desri said warmly, "Linley, let me make the introductions. This is my wife, Pennslyn [Bing'se'lin]."

"Sincerest greetings, Madame." Linley said humbly.

A friendly smile appeared on Pennslyn's face. "I truly am sorry. I've been training this entire time and just came out now. I hope you don't mind." As

soon as she said these words, the nearby Monica was shocked. Her mother's temper was such that aside from Monica's father, her mother paid others no heed.

But…her mother had actually apologized? Was being polite?

Was this her icy, cold mother?

This was the first time Linley met Pennslyn. Naturally, he didn't know about her normal temper. He thought Pennslyn was very friendly by nature, and he immediately laughed, "Madame, you are too courteous."

"Monica, this is the Reynolds you've spoken of?" Pennslyn chuckled as she looked over at her daughter, and then her gaze rested on Reynolds. Reynolds had been warned by Monica early on, and thus he felt some dread towards this future mother-in-law of his.

Monica hurriedly said, "Yes, mother."

"Sincerest greetings, Madame." Reynolds felt rather nervous.

An approving look was in Pennslyn's eyes. "Mmm, not bad at all. Monica…good eye. Why didn't you bring Reynolds over sooner?" These words from Pennslyn instantly filled Reynolds with joy. It seemed as though this future mother-in-law had taken a liking to him.

But Monica was flabbergasted once again.

Was this her mother?

Linley's impression towards Pennslyn became even more favorable. Just at this time, a clear, loud voice rang out. "Big brother, I hear we have guests?" A middle-aged man with long, dazzling golden hair walked in. His gaze immediately fell upon Linley, but at the same time, when he noticed the nearby Bebe, he raised an eyebrow.

"Higginson [Xi'jin'seng], hurry on over. You are the last one." Desri

laughed.

Immediately, Desri turned to look at Linley. “Linley, Higginson, like Hayward, came alongside me to this place. He also trains in the Elemental Laws of Light.”

“Sincerest greetings, Mr. Higginson.” Linley immediately said.

Higginson found an empty seat and sat down, then laughed, “Linley, don’t be so courteous. Just treat this place like you would your own home.” Hearing these words, Linley felt warmth in his heart. Desri and his gang truly were incomparably hospitable.

Within this inner mountain residence, there were some serving maids as well.

The serving maids brought over all sorts of delicacies, and the group began to engage in idle conversation. Reynolds and Monica sat there, not daring to say much. It was primarily Desri and the others chatting with Linley, while occasionally mentioning Bebe.

But today, Bebe didn’t have much to say. As Linley would’ve described it… Bebe was ‘playing it cool’.

Over the course of this discussion, Linley had discovered that the leader of this group was Desri, of course, followed by Hayward and Higginson, who had come to this place alongside Desri. Next was Miller, Livingston, and Foreman. This was obvious because…Miller, Livingston, and Foreman all addressed Desri as ‘Lord’, while Hayward and Higginson addressed him as ‘big brother’.

After the meal.

After having eaten and drank their fill, these people naturally wanted to go do something.

Linley and the other experts naturally wanted to engage in some sparring.

“Linley, Foreman is also a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Earth, just like yourself. How about you two have a spar?” Miller chuckled, while a hint of a smile appeared on Foreman’s face as well, revealing two large dimples. “Miller, there’s no need for me to spar with Linley. My training path in the Elemental Laws of Earth is roughly the same as Haydson’s. Since he has already competed against Haydson, there’s no need for him to spar with me.”

Livingston glanced at him. “Foreman, you scared?”

Desri laughed, “Foreman speaks the truth. His power is almost identical to Haydson’s. There’s not much point to him sparring with Linley. How about this…Hayward, why don’t you spar with Linley instead?” Desri glanced at Linley. “Linley, you need to be careful. Hayward’s power is extremely strong.”

“But he is a Grand Magus Saint.” Linley still remembered Desri’s introduction.

“So what if I am?” Hayward laughed.

Linley let out an awkward laugh. In his view, a Grand Magus Saint without the protection of a magical beast who was to engage in open battle against a Saint-level warrior would be at a great disadvantage. Linley asked, “Mr. Hayward, can it be that you don’t have a magical beast companion?”

“I did, and he was a Saint. But unfortunately, he is dead already.” Hayward sighed.

Desri nodded. “Two thousand years ago, for the sake of protecting Hayward, that Saint-level magical beast died. That time, another one of my close friends died as well. I wanted to save him, but I wasn’t able to help in time…alas…” Desri, Hayward, and Higginson seemed to be reminiscing about past events.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Despite Desri having been there, a Saint-level magical beast had died in order to protect Hayward. Just how fierce had that battle been?

“Why did you bring up magical beasts? Can it be that you believe a Grand Magus Saint with no magical beast is inadequate?” Hayward looked at Linley with a laugh.

Linley could only chuckle.

As Linley saw it…in sparring with a Grand Magus Saint, he would rely on his speed to charge over and defeat the opponent before his opponent had even had the chance to use any magic. Wouldn’t that be an easy victory? If he were to allow his opponent to use his magic, on the other hand, then he probably wouldn’t even have a chance to run.

The main thing that mattered was speed. What was the point of competing?

“Linley, after reaching the Saint-level, you’ve been living in the O’Brien Empire, right?” Desri suddenly said.

Linley nodded. “Right. What of it?” Linley was confused as to why Desri would suddenly ask him this.

Desri laughed, “That makes sense. The O’Brien Empire is famous for its warriors, while the Yulan Empire is famous for its magi. Most likely, all the Saints you encountered in the O’Brien Empire were Warrior Saints, and you haven’t truly sparred against a Grand Magus Saint.”

Linley started.

This was indeed the case. All the people he had competed against were warriors. There wasn’t a single magus.

Longhaus was a Grand Magus Saint, but they hadn’t dueled.

“Grand Magus Saints are far fewer in number than Warrior Saints.

However, the ratio isn't as lopsided as in the O'Brien Empire." Desri sighed. "In the continent, generally speaking, out of every four Saints, one is a Grand Magus Saint while the other three are Warrior Saints. But in the O'Brien Empire, perhaps only one Grand Magus Saint will appear for every ten or more Warrior Saints. The ratio is far too low."

"The Yulan Empire is different, however. In general, one out of every two Saints is a Grand Magus Saint." These words from Desri made Linley's heart tremble.

One to one ratio?

The Yulan Empire truly was the wellspring for magi. Desri continued, "The Holy Union is also famous for its magi. However, the Holy Union is famous more for its basic-level training, while the Yulan Empire has the High Priest, which is why it has so many Grand Magus Saints. Generally speaking, all of the disciples of the High Priest have the potential to become Grand Magus Saints."

Linley's heart clenched.

Two freaks!

One War God, one High Priest.

One trained a heap of Warrior Saints, while the other taught a heap of Grand Magus Saints.

"Grand Magus Saints aren't as simple as you think them to be. Let me tell you this. In a one on one battle between a Grand Magus Saint and a Warrior Saint, the Grand Magus Saint has the greater chance of victory." Desri laughed. "Grand Magus Saints find it harder than warriors to train and advance to begin with. Even in a place such as the Yulan Empire, which highly prizes magi, the ratio is still only one to one."

Linley nodded.

It was true that magi found training to be far harder than warriors. Linley had always thought it strange…since it was so hard for magi to train, if they were inferior to warriors at the Saint-level, wouldn't that be very unfair? But in the O'Brien Empire, Linley had witnessed how powerful Warrior Saints were.

As for Grand Magi Saints? He hadn't.

"Come, Linley. Let's go…today, let Hayward show you how powerful Grand Magi Saints are. That way, when you meet Grand Magi Saints in the future, you won't be caught off-guard." Desri stood up.

Linley immediately rose to his feet as well.

Only after a true spar would he learn how powerful Grand Magi Saints were.

At this time, Bebe hopped onto Linley's shoulders as well, and their group left the cave estate. Reynolds and Monica couldn't fly, so they stayed inside. Everyone else left and flew out of the valley.

Linley and the others flew to a different part of the mountain.

"This is the place where we usually spar against each other. You'll spar here." Desri said.

Desri, Hayward, Higginson, Miller, Livingston, Foreman, Pennslyn, Linley. In total, there were eight of them standing there in mid-air. Linley and Hayward moved to stand opposite of each other at a distance of a hundred meters.

"Come." Hayward chuckled. Linley, not hesitant in the slightest, removed his outer robe and immediately Dragonformed. Those ferocious spikes erupted forth from his forehead, and his draconic black tail began to sway from behind…and his eyes turned dark golden.

Linley's body suddenly flickered. "Boom!" He charged towards Hayward at

high speed.

“Linley’s speed is a bit faster than last time.” Miller noticed Linley’s improvement. “But he’s still unable to overcome Hayward.”

Smiling, Hayward didn’t move at all. He just quietly waited for Linley to arrive. When Linley reached a distance of ten meters from him, Hayward finally made his move. He transformed into a flash of blazing light in the blink of an eye, immediately pulling away from Linley. The distance between the two actually increased.

In terms of flying speed, Linley was inferior to Hayward.

“But…” Linley’s face changed. If his flying speed was inferior, didn’t that mean the opponent would be able to cast spells and easily devastate him? Indeed, moments later, a terrifying blast of heat began to emanate from Hayward’s body, and countless flecks of light began to swirl around in the air above Hayward.

A brilliant, clear bird cry split the air!

Two gold-tinged red wings, that crown-like crest of feathers, those cold, arrogant eyes…this terrifying creature was a size larger than even those gigantic dragons. Before this massive Fire Phoenix, Linley and the others were like ants.

“Crackle.” The air itself began to crackle from the terrifying heat, which forced Linley to raise his defenses.

“The forbidden-level spell, ‘Phoenix Metamorphosis’?” Linley felt a surge of panic.

Fire magic was reputed for its offensive power, and its single-target attack, the ‘Phoenix Metamorphosis’ spell, was only weaker than the ‘Dimensional Blade’ spell. Linley didn’t have the ability to deal with it yet.

The Fire Phoenix suddenly shrank in size, but it appeared to become more

substantial. When it shrank to the size of ten meters in length, in all aspects, be it the plumage or the gaze, it looked just like a real magical beast. The entire body of the Fire Phoenix had turned golden.

But although it had shrank in size, the amount of pressure it was exerting on Linley had increased to a terrifying level.

“Whoosh!” The Fire Phoenix charged straight towards Linley, whose body was now covered by a layer of that roiling azurish-black mist. This was the Pulseguard Defense which Linley was so proud of.

“Rumble.” Linley’s azurish-black battle-qi was being burned away at a visible rate. “If this continues, I’ll only be able to sustain it for a few more seconds.” Linley immediately flew backwards, and the Fire Phoenix flew back to Hayward’s side as well. Only then did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

This golden Fire Phoenix was simply too terrifying.

Laughing, Hayward looked at Linley. “Both Warrior Saints and Grand Magus Saints can fly once they reach the Saint-level. As far as flying speed goes, warriors are not necessarily faster. For example, wind-style magi and light-style magi…are extremely fast. Even I, a fire-style magus, am extremely fast, given my current level of training. Just through speed alone, I can make sure that you are unable to catch me, while I easily trample you.”

“But of course, those entry-level fire-style or water-style Grand Magus Saints are inferior to you. In terms of speed, Grand Magus Saints are still a bit weaker than Warrior Saints. But despite that, there are Grand Magus Saints who are faster than Warrior Saints.”

Linley understood.

In terms of speed, Warrior Saints might have an advantage, but that didn’t mean all Grand Magus Saints were slower. Some of them flew at an astonishing speed. If one were to encounter an extremely fast Grand Magus Saint, then that would be dangerous…upon meeting such a person, the only

choice was to flee.

“But of course, this sort of technique is only suited for a minority of Grand Magus Saints.” Hayward continued. “Now, come attack me again. I’ll show you the technique which Grand Magus Saints usually use against Warrior Saints.”

Linley suddenly had the feeling…

That perhaps, Grand Magus Saints truly were more terrifying than Warrior Saints.

“Are you ready?” A visible smile was on Hayward’s face.

Chapter 9 – Sparring

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 9, Sparring

Desri, Higginson, Miller, and the others all quietly watched this sparring competition from afar.

“Now, let’s pretend my speed was lower than yours.” Hayward grinned at Linley. “Come attack me. Watch how I deal with you.”

Linley felt a hint of anticipation.

If his speed was inferior, how would a Grand Magus Saint cope?

Linley suddenly moved, transforming into a black blur. As Linley moved, Hayward also transformed into a flaming blur, retreating at high speed, but clearly his speed was far lower than Linley’s.

“I want to see how you are going to block me.” Linley stared at Hayward.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” Suddenly, the air was filled with house-sized chunks of flaming meteors. The large number of flaming meteors carried tremendous power as they slammed towards Linley, and in a blink of an eye, they totally covered the space in front of Linley, forming a barrier in front of him.

Linley’s facial expression changed.

Fire-style magic of the ninth rank: Scorching Meteor Shower. This technique, although much weaker than the forbidden-level spell ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’ in terms of both scope and single-target damage, still forced Linley to have to break through these countless meteors if he was to continue attacking Hayward.

The meteors were clustered so densely that there was no space to dodge at

all.

“Bang!” Linley charged forwards, smashing hard against a flaming meteor.

Those massive flaming meteors were knocked flying by Linley, one after the other, while some others exploded and split apart. But although Linley’s body was tough enough that he didn’t fear these attacks, the constant impacts against these meteors caused his speed to decrease quite a bit.

“Bang!” With a punch, he shattered the final flaming meteor in front of him. Linley finally saw the distant Hayward.

Hayward stood there in mid-air, his face covered with smiles. “Linley, you lose again.”

Linley nodded.

“Your spells of the ninth rank are unable to hurt me, but they can greatly lower my speed. By the time I charged out, you probably would’ve already used a forbidden spell.” Linley understood this very well, but he didn’t have any choices. Those meteors weren’t like ordinary rocks, and Linley had to use great force to break each one of them.

The nearby watching Desri said, “Linley, the most basic method which Grand Magus Saints use against Warrior Saints is to instacast spells to block them while retreating at high speed, then utilizing forbidden-level spells to attack them.”

Linley nodded.

“However, Mr. Hayward, you were able to instacast a spell of the ninth rank. This truly is…” Linley now knew how terrifyingly powerful this man was. Even while depending on the Coiling Dragon ring, Linley was only able to instacast spells of the seventh rank.

Hayward chuckled, “But of course. Most Grand Magus Saints have very powerful spiritual energy, but can only instacast spells of the eighth rank.

The reason I can instacast spells of the ninth rank is only because I've trained for many years and thus have even stronger spiritual energy."

Linley secretly sighed, "His Phoenix Metamorphosis can cause a Fire Phoenix which was hundreds of meters tall to condense into a phoenix which was only ten meters tall. I've never even heard of such a thing."

Generally speaking, the Phoenix Metamorphosis spell was capable of creating a Fire Phoenix which was roughly a hundred meters tall, and which was already frightfully powerful. But Hayward…clearly was one of the most powerful of Grand Magus Saints.

"But in a dangerous situation, if a Grand Magus Saint was to wildly and repeatedly instacast spells of the eighth rank at you, they would still be able to slow you down." Hayward said with certainty.

Linley nodded and laughed. "However, it wouldn't be effective as you, Mr. Hayward, instacasting spells of the ninth rank. It would take me far longer to break through your Scorching Meteor Shower. If it was a spell of the eighth rank that was used to block me, my speed probably would've been much faster."

"Linley, you can be considered a peak-level Warrior Saint. An ordinary Warrior Saint wouldn't be able to break through an instacast spell of the eighth rank as quickly as you." Hayward said.

Linley nodded.

Linley fully understood now…it was like how an ordinary person could sprint a hundred meters in ten seconds, but if he were running atop a track of mud, he might take fifteen seconds or even longer. Mud, to ordinary people, didn't pose much of a threat either.

But it definitely would be able to slow their speed down.

"Linley, you must understand; the most important thing for a Grand Magus Saint to do when fighting against a Warrior Saint is to lower the opponent's

speed! Instacasting spell is one method, while for example darkness-style spells includes maledictive slowing spells…as long as the Grand Magus Saint can prevent you from catching up to them for a time, then the Grand Magus Saint will use that chance to utilize forbidden-level spells against you."

Desri and the others flew over as well.

"Now that you've encountered a forbidden-level spell from a Grand Magus Saint, you should know how powerful they are." Desri chuckled towards Linley.

Linley nodded.

Forbidden-level spells truly were terrifying. For example, that Phoenix Metamorphosis. Even if Linley were to stab straight through the skull of the Fire Phoenix, it would still constantly attack him, because it was a creature formed from elemental essence and wasn't actually alive. A forbidden-spell like this was even more terrifyingly strong than a Saint-level magical beast.

At least Saint-level magical beasts feared injury.

To deal against forbidden-level magical spells, the only option was to break it by repeated blows and make it run out of energy.

"Linley." That beautiful lady, Pennslyn, smiled as she spoke. "Instacasting and slowing the opponent's speed is a rather passive way for a Grand Magus Saint to deal with an opponent. Actually, Grand Magus Saints have another powerful method."

"Oh?"

Linley stared at Hayward in astonishment. "Mr. Hayward, can it be that you have other tools at your disposal?"

Grand Magus Saints were too terrifying!

Hayward nodded. “Of course. This method is a fallback method which Grand Magus Saints rely upon. Linley, come and try to attack me again. If you experience it yourself, you will understand it clearly.” As he spoke, Hayward flew backwards, pulling once more to a distance of a hundred meters away from Linley.

“The fallback method they rely on?” Linley was curious.

“Boom!” Linley once more charged towards Hayward, but Hayward didn’t move at all, only staring at Linley with confidence.

Once Linley drew near him though, Linley’s face suddenly changed. He felt a terrifyingly powerful storm of mental energy suddenly surround him and attack his spirit. In the blink of an eye, Linley suddenly felt dizzy, and his body swayed. Only after several seconds later did he fully recover.

Several seconds, to Saints engaging in battle was more than enough to determine the outcome.

Linley stared at Hayward in astonishment. “Mental attack?”

“Haha…” Miller flew over, laughing. “Linley, that isn’t a mental attack. If it was a mental attack, your head would be splitting from pain and you would’ve collapsed.”

Desri and the others flew over as well.

Desri personally explained to him. “Linley, what’s the biggest advantage magi have over warriors?”

“Mental and spiritual energy.” Linley didn’t hesitate at all.

Desri nodded. “Right. Magi possess the most powerful spiritual energy. The spiritual energy of a Grand Magus Saint is as powerful and boundless as the seas. They are far more powerful than that of a Warrior Saint. Aside from those few Grand Magus Saints who just entered the Saint-level, the vast majority of Grand Magus Saints are capable of using this sort of basic

‘Mindstorm’ attack.”

“This Mindstorm attack doesn’t require any understanding of any Elemental Laws. It is nothing more than a spiritual energy based attack that uses a great deal of spiritual energy to strike at the opponent’s soul. This sort of tactic is very simple. Upon reaching the Saint-level, a Grand Magus Saint will quickly come to understand it.” Hayward said with absolute certainty.

Linley understood this as well.

The so-called ‘Mindstorm’ just then felt like a tremendous amount of spiritual energy smashing upon his soul time and time again, even though it didn’t actually cause much damage to the soul.

“Hayward, naturally, developed his own unique spiritual attacks long ago. If he truly were to use his spiritual energy against you, you would be in trouble.” Desri laughed.

Linley now understood the basic underpinnings of these mental attacks (or spiritual attacks). It was to form that normally soft and weak spiritual energy into sharp ‘knives’ and repeatedly stab at the opponent’s soul. This sort of attack was truly frightening! If one’s soul wasn’t strong enough, it might be directly shattered and destroyed.

“Mindstorm! Haha…” Hayward shook his head and laughed. “This name was created by Grand Magus Saints long ago. But in truth, it’s nothing more than a very basic mental attack. It is only useful against Warrior Saints who are far weaker in mental energy.”

Linley felt a sense of dread.

Grand Magus Saints truly were powerful.

Whether by instacasting spells to slow movement or by using Mindstorm type attacks to attack the soul…they had methods to be highly effective.

“Grand Magus Saints are far fewer in number than Warrior Saints.

Generally speaking, Grand Magus Saints have an advantage." Higginson laughed loudly. "Linley, Warrior Saints have their experts, but Grand Magus Saints have their own as well. Who is stronger? That depends on the person."

Linley nodded.

If he were to truly fight all out against Hayward, when faced with Hayward's meteor blockade, he would've used his Profound Truths of the Earth – Hundred Layered Waves attack to blow a tunnel straight through all of the blocking stones.

In the past, Linley's sword blow had created a tunnel in an entire mountain.

Just then, Linley was playing the role of an ordinary expert. But if this were a true life-and-death battle, most likely Bebe would've gotten involved as well. If Bebe and Linley were to charge forward together…given Bebe's speed, how many Grand Magus Saints would be faster?

Even if they used mental energy to attack, could it be that they could simultaneously attack Linley and Bebe?

"Grand Magus Saints being stronger than Warrior Saints is just a generality. It can't be treated as an absolute." Linley understood.

But of course, if this Hayward wanted to kill him, it would be very easy. All he would have to do is use a mental attack. Given Hayward's ability, he could definitely cause Linley's head to hurt badly enough to make him collapse, and then Hayward could use the Phoenix Metamorphosis to attack. He wouldn't even have had the chance to flee.

There is always someone mightier than the mighty.

Hayward was mighty, but if he were to encounter Fain, he probably wouldn't be able to do anything. After all, Linley had personally witnessed how powerful Fain's mental attack was.

On the flight back with Desri's group, Bebe was mentally chatting to Linley while standing on his shoulders. "Boss, when in the future you reach the Saint-level as a magus, you'll be both a Dragonblood Warrior and a Grand Magus Saint in one. Hrmph…by then, beating them will be easy."

Linley chuckled.

If he were to reach the Saint-level in his human form as a warrior and also as a magus, the synergistic power would probably increase his power by dozens of times, if not more. By then, Linley most likely would be confident in his ability to deal with even the likes of Fain and Desri.

……

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. Master Longhaus' residence.

Delia was seated in a courtyard alone, drinking some tea while flipping through some of Master Longhaus' magical tomes. The Wildthunder Stormhawk, Parry, as well as the Worldbear, Hatton, were off to one side, chatting in the language of magical beasts.

"Hrm?" Delia saw something of interest in the magical tome. Her eyes lit up and she smiled.

Grand Magus Saints truly did have a deep understanding of magic. Delia felt that she truly was reaping great benefits here.

"Someone's coming." The Worldbear, Hatton, suddenly spoke. Delia stared questioningly towards Hatton. "Someone is coming? Why haven't the guards informed us? Big Yellow, are you just making things up again?" Delia laughed as she looked at the Worldbear, Hatton.

The Worldbear stared at Delia with wide eyes. "Delia, you don't believe me? Am I that sort of bear?"

"Someone really is coming." Delia sensed it as well by now. In terms of environmental awareness, she was far inferior to a Saint-level magical

beast.

Soon afterwards, footsteps could be heard from the outside.

“Might I ask if Master Longhaus is here?” A calm, confident voice could be heard.

“Come in.” Delia said casually. For this person to be able to come in unannounced meant that he definitely was no ordinary figure. The door was pushed open, and two handsome youths walked in at the same time. Delia immediately rose to her feet. “Respectful greetings, your Imperial Majesty.”

Of those two youths, one was the Emperor of the Yulan Empire, his Imperial Majesty, Emperor Rande [Lan’de].

Emperor Rande’s eyes lit up when he saw Delia. Laughing, he said, “Delia, you are growing more and more beautiful. Right, where is your teacher?”

“Your Imperial Majesty, wait a moment with George.” Delia said, then she turned to look at the Worldbear. “Big Yellow, ask Teacher where he currently is. His Imperial Majesty wishes to meet with him.” The youngster who had come alongside Emperor Rande was indeed the youngest Grand Secretary of the Yulan Empire, the highly favored minister, George.

Chapter 10 – Forget It!

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 10, Forget It!

Emperor Rande smiled towards Delia. “Delia, We haven’t seen you in quite some time. Ever since you’ve returned from the O’Brien Empire, you haven’t gone to the imperial palace.” Emperor Rande was roughly the same age as Delia and they were on quite good terms.

“Teacher is quite strict. I have to train hard and study my magic.” Delia pretended to be resigned.

Emperor Rande laughed.

Right at this time, the Worldbear, Hatton, said to Emperor Rande, “Hey, blue-hair. My master says you can come in.” The Worldbear wasn’t the slightest bit courteous in his words, but Emperor Rande didn’t mind in the slightest. “Big Yellow, even if you don’t address Us as ‘your Imperial Majesty’, you should at least call Us ‘Rande’. That way, We would at least save a bit of face.”

“Is ‘Big Yellow’ a name which the likes of you can call about?” The Worldbear turned his big furry head away, seemingly very disdainful.

Rande chuckled, then after saying a few words to George and Delia, he entered the inner room. Right now, only George and Delia were left inside the courtyard. Delia had a very good impression of George…because George was Linley’s good friend.

Second Bro, ‘George’. He was the most rational and most reliable of the four bros.

He had a very good temper and rarely grew angry at others. He had extremely good relationships with people.

But Delia knew very well that George was also an extremely formidable person. At such a young age, he had become one of the Grand Secretaries of the Yulan Empire. It must be understood, the world of officials and bureaucracies was a dark, sinister place. For someone to reach such a powerful, influential official position and even become a Grand Secretary meant that in secret, George surely used quite a few tricks as well.

As to who was most vicious amongst the four bros, it was George, amiable, good-natured George, who had become the most vicious.

“George, sit.” Delia laughed.

George smiled and sat down. “Delia, last year, you should’ve seen Third Bro in the O’Brien Empire. Oh, by Third Bro I mean Linley.” In his heart, George longed for his dear bros, but as a high level member of the Yulan Empire, he simply didn’t have the opportunity to visit the O’Brien Empire.

“I know.” Delia’s smile was very bright. “Linley’s often thinking about you as well.”

George felt warm in his heart.

After separating from Linley, over ten years had passed. George was now twenty nine years old, nearly a man in his thirties. He even had two children. Those crazy childhood days were beautiful recollections.

The ten years he had spent in bureaucracy had caused George to become more and more mature and more and more crafty. But the more mature he became, the fewer the number of people he truly trusted in the Yulan Empire.

“I feel very proud that Third Bro was able to reach his current accomplishments.” George sighed emotionally. “In the O’Brien Empire, most likely no one would dare to offend him. In this entire world, only upon reaching the pinnacle of power can one be confident.”

“Linley has gone to the Anarchic Lands.” Delia said.

“The Anarchic Lands?”

George frowned. He remembered the enmity between Linley and the Radiant Church which he had found out about in Hess City. In particular, with those high level people of the Radiant Church. George knew very well how powerful the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were in the Anarchic Lands. “Given Third Bro’s temperament, he definitely wouldn’t be interested in just taking over territory. That means…”

George looked at Delia and whispered, “Third Bro is about to begin his battle against the Radiant Church?”

Delia felt a hint of shock in her heart. George truly was formidable.

“Right.” Delia nodded. Linley had told her about this long ago.

George began to worry. He knew what sort of temper Linley had. In the past, for the sake of vengeance, Linley was willing to give up everything. If it had been him, George, he definitely would’ve continued to secretly endure until he reached the point where he had absolute certainty of victory. Then, he would make his move.

“Is Third Bro confident of victory?” George looked at Delia. “The Radiant Church isn’t as simple as it would appear to be.”

Delia laughed as she looked at George. “George, Linley isn’t as simple as you think he is either.”

George laughed. Indeed. Despite being a genius, George never imagined that after they separated, Linley would become so powerful that he could fight Haydson to a virtual standstill. In particular, that Shadowmouse, Bebe…George felt quite speechless. “That little rascal, Bebe. He’s so monstrously powerful. What a freak.”

After a while later, Emperor Rande came out.

“George, let’s go.” Emperor Rande said to George, and George immediately stood up. Emperor Rande smiled towards Delia, who was sending him off. “Delia, if you are free, you can come to the imperial palace for a stroll. The Third Princess has been missing you.”

Delia laughed. “I definitely will go.”

“Then there’s no need for you to send me off.” Emperor Rande laughed, then left alongside George.

…..

The imperial palace. Emperor Rande’s study. There were only three people present; Emperor Rande, his personal palace attendant, and the leader of the Leon clan.

“Dylla.” Emperor Rande put down the quill in his hand, raising his head to smile towards Dylla Leon. “Today, We have summoned you for the sake of your daughter, Delia.”

Dylla Leon looked at Emperor Rande. “Your Imperial Majesty, what do you mean?”

Emperor Rande smiled. “As We recall, your daughter is yet unwed.”

“Right.” Dylla Leon nodded.

Had Emperor Rande taken a fancy to his daughter?

Emperor Rande nodded. “That’s right. In honesty…We rather like Delia. How about this. Help Us say a few words to Delia on Our behalf, and see if Delia is willing to marry Us. But of course…you have to let her make her own decision.”

Dylla Leon said respectfully, “Your Imperial Majesty, don’t worry. Your servant shall definitely go ask Delia.”

Emperor Rande nodded and smiled as he looked at Dylla Leon. “Dylla, you should understand that when We were but a prince, We had to have children before We could assume the throne. We don’t have much affection towards that woman. In terms of lineage as well as character, Delia is far superior to her. If Delia was willing to marry Us…We promise that Delia can become the Empress.”

Dylla Leon’s heart trembled.

Empress?

If his daughter were to become an ordinary concubine, there would be no need for the mighty Leon clan to agree. But the Empress…now that was a different situation.

Dylla Leon knew quite well that this Emperor Rande was an extremely upright and extremely bold person. If he said Delia would become Empress, he would definitely make that happen.

“Alright, you can go now.” Emperor Rande said with a faint laugh.

“Yes, your Imperial Majesty.” Right now, Dylla Leon’s heart was still in a state of excitement.

Dylla Leon immediately sent someone to summon Delia home. Delia actually didn’t wish to go home. Each time she did, her parents would try to persuade her on the subject of marriage. Although Delia insisted that Linley was now outside the O’Brien Empire and that her marriage to Linley wouldn’t pose any problems to the clan, it seemed as though her parents didn’t really like Linley.

In Dylla’s eyes, Linley’s younger brother had wed the Seventh Imperial Princess, Nina, after all. There was an indisputable relationship between Linley and the O’Brien Empire.

…..

“What?” Delia immediately rose to her feet, staring at her parents in astonishment.

Her mother hurriedly said, “Delia, his Imperial Majesty’s age is close to yours, and he is one of the boldest, most competent Emperors in the history of the Yulan Empire. You are on good terms with him as well. If you were to marry his Imperial Majesty…it would be wonderful for both you and the clan.”

“It would be wonderful for the clan, but how would it be wonderful for me?” Delia couldn’t help but be furious.

She hadn’t thought that the reason her parents had summoned her back so urgently was to discuss this with her.

“Delia, can it be that his Imperial Majesty isn’t talented enough? Do you dislike him?” Dylla Leon hurriedly said.

Delia said angrily, “Father, what does his Imperial Majesty’s talent have to do with me? No, I don’t dislike him. But there’s many people I don’t dislike. Does this mean I have to marry them all? Marrying someone has nothing to do with whether or not I ‘don’t dislike them’, understood?”

“Delia, his Imperial Majesty’s feelings for you are genuine. He said that so long as you marry him, in the future, you would definitely become the Empress.” Dylla said hurriedly.

“Then what about the current Empress?” Delia frowned.

Dylla Leon laughed calmly, “That Empress was just someone the Emperor married when he was only a prince. She isn’t very capable, and she was born to a common noble clan. There have been many people unhappy that she became Empress. It will be easy for his Imperial Majesty to remove her.”

“Hrmph!”

Standing, Delia stared at her father. “Father, perhaps to you, the position of Empress is very important, but to me, it isn’t worth a fart.” The furious Delia began to spout obscenities.

Dylla Leon was so angry that he slapped the desk and stood up as well. “Delia, how can you say such things?”

“Father.” Delia stared at her father. “Don’t try and put on a brave show in front of your daughter. Let me make it clear for you today…with regards to his Imperial Majesty, you can forget it! Even if I die, I won’t marry him. I won’t marry anyone aside from Linley.”

Dylla Leon stared disbelievingly at his daughter. His daughter actually dared to speak to him in such a manner?

“I’m sorry, father.” Delia took a deep breath.

“Cough…cough…” The furious Dylla Leon began to cough. Dylla’s mother immediately went to assist him, but Dylla stared angrily at Delia. “Delia, you are no longer a child. Don’t be so rash and immature. Enough. Go back and think it over.”

Delia glanced at her red-faced, coughing father, then silently turned her head and left.

“What happened to my parents?” Delia could still remember how when she was a child, her father and mother had treated her like a precious treasure. Whatever she wanted done, her father would do. She had even ridden on her father’s back like a horse.

Her childhood memories were so beautiful, and her parents were so perfect.

But now…

Delia cared about her family. Her parents, her big brother, her grandmother, her other relatives…Delia had always hoped that she would be able to be together with Linley, while maintaining the relationship with her clan.

“I’ll wait a bit longer. I’ll wait for Linley to found his Duchy. By then, father’s attitude would change.” Delia chose to continue to endure.

…..

In the mysterious village. On the wide expanse of grass in front of the cave estate. Desri, Hayward, Miller, Pennslyn, and the others were seated around a stone table, drinking wine while watching Linley and Higginson spar. As for Reynolds and Monica, they were at the side of the grassy area.

“Monica, were you telling the truth in the past when you described your mother?” Staring at the distant Pennslyn, Reynolds then looked at Monica in puzzlement.

Monica didn’t know what to say either.

In the past, her mother was always rather cold and distant. It must be understood…her mother came from the Frost Goddess Shrine. That sort of cold arrogance was bred in the bones. But these past few days, Pennslyn had treated Linley and Reynolds unbelievably well.

Reynolds had even begun to suspect if Monica had lied about her.

“I don’t get it either.” Monica was truly speechless.

At this moment, Linley was wielding his adamantine heavy sword, while Higginson was wielding a silver, blurred longsword. The two were sparring, and Linley had begun to truly use his ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’. Although he hadn’t gone full force, it was still enough to cause Higginson to sigh with surprise.

“Bizarre, bizarre.” Higginson sighed in praise. “I’ve never seen such a bizarre attack.”

Linley stared helplessly at Higginson as well. Dealing with an expert of the Laws of Light truly was a pain. This was because once a person reached a

certain level in the Laws of Light, his self-healing abilities would become extremely terrifying. Even broken arms would self-repair in a short period of time.

“Linley, at this time, you should take a look at my ultimate attack.” Higginson smiled.

Linley was startled. Up till now, Higginson had demonstrated a speed that was even faster than that of Olivier’s. But he had been just playing around?

“The name of this sword technique is ‘Illusionary Void Sword’.” Wielding that silver longsword, Higginson suddenly transformed into a line of white light, appearing before Linley in the blink of an eye. A layer of azurish-black energy was swirling around Linley, and his adamantine heavy sword was at the ready as well.

Linley paid careful attention to the sword.

Why was it called ‘Illusionary Void Sword’?

“Rumble…” The space itself in the surrounding area began to shudder and ripple. The silver longsword clearly appeared before Linley’s eyes, but the strange thing was, Linley felt as though the longsword had transformed into multiple layers, and the nearby space had transformed into multiple layers as well. It was as though space itself had turned chaotic.

“You lose.”

Before Linley even had the chance to react, that sword came to a halt in front of Linley’s eyes. Linley hadn’t even had the chance to resist or to block.

“This…” Linley’s mind was totally preoccupied by that sword. He felt as though he had suddenly mentally found something. He immediately descended to the ground and closed his eyes, beginning to meditate. Without paying any attention at all to the nearby people, he immediately began to try hard to find that sense again.

Chapter 11 – The Order Comes Down

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 11, The Order Comes Down

Higginson stood there staring at Linley. Linley had actually immediately begun to train without paying attention to anyone else.

“Amazing, amazing.” Higginson let out a sigh of praise, then flew over to Desri. Desri’s group was staring at Linley with approval in their eyes as well. All of them sat down, and Hayward laughed, “Big brother, this Linley truly is a genius. Even when sparring with Higginson, who uses the Elemental Laws of Light, he will still have some insights.”

Desri’s group of people were all amongst the highest class Saints.

Seeing Linley do this, they knew that Linley must have gained some insight into something important, which was why he had immediately started training.

“Uncle,” Reynolds had immediately run over after seeing Linley’s actions. “What’s wrong with Linley? Is he wounded?”

“Haha…” Desri and the others began to laugh loudly. Miller laughed and said, “Reynolds, Linley is fine. However, it is hard to say how long he will be in training. For those of us at our level, it is very hard and rare for us to suddenly gain an insight.”

Only then did Reynolds relax.

Currently, Linley’s mind was filled with all sorts of movements. A longsword-wielding figure was flashing about in his mind, once again stabbing at him using the technique Higginson had just displayed. Higginson’s sword had seemed like an illusion…

The sword striking out. The flash of light. The distorted space…

Those folded, blurry layers of space…that terrifying penetrative power…it had seemed unstoppable.

“What is it? What exactly is it?” Linley was repeatedly thinking on this matter, and in his mind, he replayed that sword attack over and over. For an instant, upon seeing that sword, Linley seemed to have understood something.

But it was extremely blurry!

Again and again, he replayed the attack in his mind, concentrating on it whole-heartedly.

Suddenly-

It was as though a lightning bolt had suddenly flashed in Linley’s mind. Linley’s heart shook, and that layer of obscuring fog was stripped away. He finally understood that sensation he had felt. “Right. It is the wind. The wind! The ‘Fast’ aspect of the wind!”

Linley’s heart was filled with wild joy.

Previously, when Linley had witnessed Miller using the ‘Slow’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley had come to understand the direction in which he should train the ‘Slow’ aspect. Linley had learned that the power of his ‘Tempos of the Wind’ technique could increase.

This was because the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ was similar to the Profound Truths of the Earth. With the Profound Truths of the Earth, the more vibrational waves created, the more powerful the attack was.

By that same logic, the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ utilized the combined forces of the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind to create the frictional force that created a spatial edge attack. The deeper his understanding of the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind became, the more powerful his combination attack would become in creating a more powerful ‘Tempos of

the Wind'.

After having sparred with Miller, Linley's insight into the 'Slow' aspect of the wind was slowly increasing.

But his progression in understanding the 'Fast' aspect of the wind had come to a standstill.

Elemental Laws of the Wind – What was the path to training in the 'Fast' aspect?

But today, after seeing Higginson's 'Illusionary Void Sword', Linley now clearly understood how he should proceed. "Of the Elemental Laws, in terms of speed, the Elemental Laws of Wind and the Elemental Laws of Light have an advantage. Higginson is fast, so fast that in the instant of his attack, space itself is distorted. But the 'Slow' aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind can cause space to suddenly freeze. Right…the Elemental Laws of Wind, in their 'Fast' aspect, should also be able to instantly cause space itself to distort into multiple layers."

Linley already had some basic insights into the 'Fast' aspect of the Elemental Laws of Wind, and he had been pondering it for some time now.

But now, he knew exactly what his goal was…Linley's mind began to rapidly ponder how to train. It was as though he now knew the starting point and the endpoint. What he now needed to do was to decide what was the best way to go about on this path, and then actually follow the path to its endpoint.

Linley's mind played countless scenarios in his mind, and gradually, his insights into the 'Fast' aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind deepened as well. Whenever he could no longer resolve a question in his mind, Linley would stand up and use the Bloodviolet flexible sword to test out a theory on the spot.

This was the nature of training; tough, pain-staking, and occasionally needing a burst of insight.

It was as though a person had suddenly seen a flash of light and seen the rough picture of the road ahead of him. He now had the general idea of where he should go. All that had to be done next was to continue studying and continue testing. As long as one had enough time, one would definitely be able to reach that goal.

……

To be able to gain insights into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of Wind from watching a sword technique based on the Elemental Laws of Light wasn’t something which just anyone could do. Right now, Desri and the others didn’t have any idea what Linley had suddenly understood.

“It’s been over half a month, but Third Bro, he…” Reynolds stared at the meditating Linley with some urgency in his eyes.

The nearby Monica laughed. “Big brother Reynolds, last night, I saw Linley suddenly stand up and then perform what appeared to be a sword technique. However, his sword was so blurry and indistinct. When that violet light flashed, the wind began to blow all around him, and the speed of his sword was very fast as well. I couldn’t see anything clearly.”

“If Third Bro continues like this, who knows how long it will take.” Reynolds said with some agitation.

“Big brother Reynolds, look.” Monica suddenly pointed towards Linley excitedly. Reynolds turned to look…and saw that Linley had already stood up and was smiling towards Reynolds while walking over to them. “Fourth Bro, what’s the matter? Did a flower blossom on my face?”

At this moment, a black blur suddenly streaked out, leaping onto Linley’s shoulders.

“Bebe.” Linley lovingly rubbed Bebe’s head.

Bebe quirked his lips unhappily. “Boss, it’s been half a month. You sure can

sleep."

"Sleep?" An involuntary laugh escaped Linley's mouth.

He knew that while he was training, Bebe had definitely been extremely bored. However, Linley was in an extremely fine mood today…because he had made progress in the 'Fast' aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Linley understood very well that in order to reach the power of that sword attack of Higginson's, he would most likely need to spend at least ten or so years.

As for reaching Miller's level in using the 'Slow' aspect of the wind, he would most likely only need three or four years.

Clearly…Miller had a much lower level of understanding than Higginson. Linley was secretly delighted. Indeed, sparring with experts truly did allow one to improve much faster.

If he had been training by himself in the mountain the entire time and training aimlessly, if he was lucky, perhaps in ten years or a hundred years, he would've found the correct path. If he was unlucky, he might spend hundreds or even thousands of years before finding the correct path.

This was the nature of training. If you gained insights quickly, you trained quickly. If you gained insights slowly, you would train slowly. After all, not too much time was needed after one reached the Saint-level for one's battle-qi to reach the limits of the Saint-level. Everyone spent their time on increasing their insights into the Laws…for example, Olivier was able to defeat Dillon as soon as he had reached the Saint-level, precisely because Dillon had virtually no insights into the Elemental Laws. There was nothing for it.

…..

In the northern part of the Anarchic Lands, a large-scale campaign had begun.

As per Linley and Zassler's plans, roughly seven or eight days after Linley headed off to the mysterious village, Barker and the others began to attack southwards, invading one of the Duchies controlled by the Radiant Church. The name of this Duchy was the Sherry [She'li] Duchy.

The soldiers of the Sherry Duchy were inferior in quality to Linley's forces. Linley's people lived very close to the Forest of Darkness, and were thus highly accustomed to violence. They had a much greater battle strength. And of course, they had the five Barker brothers leading them into the fray.

Utter devastation!

The most powerful experts of the Sherry Duchy were nothing more than three experts of the eighth rank. They didn't have a single expert of the ninth rank. How could the Sherry Duchy possibly stall Linley's forces at all?

Barker and his brothers were like five gods of battle as they led their ravenous troops into a slaughtering invasion, breaking past all defenses. In just four days, the prefectural city and five smaller cities of the Sherry Duchy had all been taken over. Linley's territory had just dramatically expanded.

Gates, Hazer, and Ankh all stayed within the prefectural city of Sherry.

"They are totally unable to fight back." Gates said loudly. "Too weak. Too weak. There's no one here who can even slow us down." Indeed. Even if they did meet with strong resistance, who would be able to fight in single combat against the likes of Gates and the others?

In addition, the Saint-level magical beast, the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, had been in a state of readiness this entire time, ready to attack.

"Andrew [An'de'lu]." Ankh suddenly turned to stare at a silver-haired middle-aged man behind them. The man immediately bowed, awaiting Ankh's order. Ankh asked, "Right now, how is the reorganization of the Sherry Duchy's military proceeding? And what is the situation amongst the

masses?”

In order to manage a country, one naturally had to use appropriate personnel. Barker and the others were only used for military conquest.

“Milords.” Andrew said respectfully. “Currently, the military reorganization has already concluded. We have placed many soldiers of Blackdirt City into their ranks as well.”

Barker and the others didn’t fully trust these surrendered troops. Thus, the only thing they could do was to try and spread them out as much as possible, preventing them from easily coordinating with each other. At the same time, they killed some people while inserting their own loyal followers.

“The Sherry Duchy has been dominated by the Radiant Church for a long time, and there are many believers in the Radiant Church here.” Andrew said with concern. “I believe if the Radiant Church was to come attack us, the masses might even rebel against us. But there are too many people here. There’s not much we can do.”

“Rebel?”

Hazer said confidently, “What are we afraid of? Threatened with death, how many waves can these commoners possibly cause?”

“Andrew, we have just taken over the Sherry Duchy. Right now, the people are still restless. We’ll have to trouble you to handle it.” Ankh instructed. Andrew respectfully assented to the order.

“Enough. You can leave now.” Ankh laughed. Soon, only Ankh, Hazer, and Gates were left.

Ankh looked at his two siblings. “The results of Mr. Zassler’s meetings have come. We are ordered to stop attacking for now, and prepare to found our Duchy half a month from now. By now, we have over ten million people under our banner.”

Hazer and Gates both grinned.

“I didn’t expect that the Radiant Church wouldn’t fight back at all. It seems they don’t want to go against us head on.” Gates laughed. “Then just like how we originally planned, we’ll continue to put on an act. Only after we publicly announce the founding of our Duchy will we continue our attack against the Radiant Church.”

The Radiant Church really was spineless. The Church indeed had convinced Hazer and Gates…that they were unwilling to face their forces head on.

…….

The golden-haired middle-aged man once again arrived at the dimly lit room.

“Lord Praetor.” The golden-haired middle-aged man said respectfully.

Seated behind his desk, Osenno’s eyes were flickering with flames. He calmly said, “Right now, Linley’s side has just taken over the Sherry Duchy. They will definitely spend quite some time absorbing it. I trust they now believe we aren’t willing to fight them.”

The golden-haired middle-aged man looked towards Osenno and said excitedly, “Are we going to attack?”

“Our attack must utterly annihilate Linley’s side.” Osenno’s voice was freezing cold. “This Linley poses an enormous threat to our Radiant Church. If he is allowed to flourish, then we won’t live to regret it. Even now, he already dares to provoke us and attacked the Sherry Duchy. Clearly…he intends to fight against our Radiant Church.”

“Since they want to fight, then we must annihilate all of the experts on Linley’s side.” His voice grew even colder, and a devilish purple light flickered in his eyes.

The golden-haired middle-aged man grew more and more excited. But then, he said in confusion, “Lord Praetor, can it be that we are going to use Saints? But wouldn’t that result in dissatisfaction from the Cult of Shadows, the O’Brien Empire, and the other sides?”

“No need to worry about that.” Osenno said coldly. “If Linley is allowed to continue to expand, then the work that the Church has carried out for thousands of years here in the Anarchic Lands is going to be laid waste. In addition, Linley himself cannot be permitted to grow further. His rate of improvement is simply too terrifying. Right now…I still have the ability to kill him. But if this continues…”

Osenno looked at that golden-haired middle-aged man. “Enough. Carry out our original plans, and begin the protocols.”

“Yes, Lord Praetor.” The golden-haired middle-aged man assented.

“Tomorrow night, nine Saint-level Angels will immediately head out…and I myself will have a good ‘meeting’ with that rat-type pet of Linley’s.” Osenno was extremely confident. He was on the same level of power as the Holy Emperor, and was a full level higher than Haydson’s.

He was fully confident in his ability to kill Linley.

Chapter 12 – A Sudden Change of Events

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 12, A Sudden Change of Events

The night was pitch-black. Dark clouds covered the moon, and the entire world was cast in shadows. Suddenly…from the north, nine streaks of white light blazed through the sky at high speed towards the Sherry Duchy. Halfway there, five of the streaks of white light changed to fly towards each of the five small cities around the Sherry Duchy, while the other four streaks of light flew towards the prefectural city of Sherry.

If one drew near, one would discover…

That these streaks of light were awe-inspiring Angels who were radiating a soft, holy light. Every single one of these Angels had four wings. For them to immediately enter their Angel forms meant that the bodies they had descended into were totally capable of sustaining their might.

According to the hierarchy of Angels…

Two-Winged Angels were low-level Angels, Four-Winged Angels were middle-stage Angels, while Six Winged Angels were peak-stage Angels. As for Eight-Winged Angels…those were of the Demigod level. The legendary Twelve-Winged Angels possessed the awe-inspiring might of a Highgod.

Unfortunately, in the Yulan continent, it was impossible to find a body capable of withstanding the descent of a Twelve-Winged Angel.

“What a pity…” Osenno, flying behind those four Angels, mused to himself while staring at them. “The Radiant Sovereign created these humanoid constructs, but there is no chance of them making any breakthroughs. No matter how long they live for, their power will not change at all.”

People of Osenno’s level knew a great deal about what Angels were.

Angels, in truth, weren't living creatures. They were humanoid constructs which the Radiant Sovereign had created in the Divine Realm of Light. Of course, Osenno had no idea how they were created, but he understood that Angels would never be able to break through. However many wings they were created with, that was how many wings they would forever have. For example, the Radiant Church had Angels who had lived for thousands of years, but their power was the exact same level as it had been thousands of years ago.

Although Angels were powerful, they were not capable of advancing.

This caused Osenno to somewhat look down on the Angels. He just treated the Angels as tools. On this day, his forces consisted solely of Angels, aside from himself. Not a single human Saint had come. As far as Osenno was concerned, the lives of human Saints, who were capable of advancement, were far more valuable than these Angels.

Within one of the smaller cities in the Sherry Duchy, a Four-Winged Angel descended into the center of the city. The soft, holy radiance around the Four-Winged Angel suffused the surrounding area, turning the night into day and illuminating the city.

Seeing this light, the citizens of this village all came running out.

"Ah! Angel!"

"An Angel!"

Everyone here was awestruck. Due to the long-term presence of the Radiant Church, many of these people believed in the Radiant Sovereign. Now, all of them had the feeling that the emissary of the Lord had come to save them.

Countless civilians fell to their knees.

"Those who have faith in the Lord shall receive the Lord's protection. Those who betray the Lord shall be destroyed in the end." The Four-

Winged Angel's voice penetrated throughout the little city, and over half of the four thousand soldiers in the town fell to their knees as well. As for the others who came from Blackdirt City, they stood there, feeling astonished.

An Angel?

A legendary Angel?

"Kill those heathens!" Suddenly, someone drew out his sword and stabbed a nearby military officer to death. Many of the military officers here were from the prefectural city of Moat. They didn't believe in the Radiant Sovereign, and had even destroyed several churches in recent days.

But today…

A large number of nearby soldiers as well as civilians began to charge forward to kill all of the outsiders.

Without having to do a single thing, the Four-Winged Angel had reclaimed this city.

"Followers of the Lord, the Lord shall definitely give you his protection." The Four-Winged Angel's voice rang out.

The entire city was on its knees, filled with sincerity and faith. A smile appeared on the face of the Four-Winged Angel. He had easily discovered that there were over ten or so people here who trained in light-style magic. The Four-Winged Angel landed on the ground and walked towards one of the experts. "What is your name?"

The silver-haired old man was very excited. He respectfully said, "Oh, mighty and venerated Lord Angel, my name is Felton [Fei'er'dun]. In the past, I was a priest in the Radiant Church here in this town. I was lucky enough to survive."

The Four-Winged Angel nodded. "From today onwards, Felton shall be the city governor for this city." The Four-Winged Angel's voice shook the

skies, penetrating the entire city.

“Felton!” “Felton!” “Felton!”

The citizens of this village all began to shout loudly in joy. As they chanted, the Four-Winged Angel flew into the air, and in a burst of dazzling, holy light, the Four-Winged Angel left this little city and flew towards the prefectural city.

The other four little cities saw the exact same happen. The appearance of the Angels caused the believers of the Radiant Church to go crazy, and they fearlessly slaughtered the ‘heathens’, while those who trained in light-style magic or light-style battle-qi became appointed the new city governors.

As for the prefectural city of Sherry…

When the other five Four-Winged Angels had arrived, fires could be seen everywhere, because there were many soldiers who had come here from the prefectural city of Moat or from Blackdirt City, causing the battle here to be extremely intense.

“Lord Praetor.” The five Angels flew to Osenno’s side.

Osenno stood in mid-air, watching the three major battles going on below. Three Four-Winged Angels were currently engaging in battle with three Undying Warriors.

“Undying Warriors?” One of the Angels called out in surprise. Osenno nodded calmly. When Osenno had brought these four Angels to the prefectural city, due to the majestic awe-inspiring presence of the Angels, countless citizens began to attack Linley’s forces.

Even some soldiers had turned traitor.

This battle was extremely unfavorable for Linley’s side.

“F*ck off!” A terrifying, three-meter tall body that looked like a war

machine, with bulging, muscled arms the size of a human waist. The man was covered with a layer of marble-like armor, revealing only his face, which was an awe-inspiring green color.

A Saint-level Undying Warrior!

Three Four-Winged Angels fighting three Saint-level Undying Warriors.

“Second brother, these guys are too fast.” Gates shouted angrily. The three people here were Gates, Hazer, and Ankh. All three of them were only warriors of the ninth rank. Even after transforming into Undying Warriors… they were only early-stage Saints. Perhaps they had the advantages of possessing the terrifying ‘defense’ and ‘strength’ inherent to Undying Warriors, they were able to fight the middle-stage Four-Winged Angels head on…but the Angels were too nimble.

A Four-Winged Angel very agilely swooped in from the side, kicking viciously against Gates. That kick, easily capable of shattering boulders, landed directly on Gates, but it only caused his body to tremble slightly.

Gates suddenly stared up at the sky, and saw that even more Angels had come. He immediately shouted, “Second brother, third brother, let’s go, now! More Angels are coming!”

They weren’t even able to handle three Angels, but six more Angels could now be seen above them, along with that human Saint. How could they win this battle?”

“Let’s go. The Radiant Church is really going all-out this time.” Ankh growled with anger as well.

With mighty leaps that caused the ground to shake and shatter, the three flew wildly towards the north like human meteors. However, of the Four Supreme Warriors, the Undying Warriors had the slowest flying speed.

As for Angels, they specialized in speed.

With a flicker of their wings, four of the Four-Winged Angels instantly appeared in front of Gates and the other two, while the other five remaining Four-Winged Angels appeared behind them.

“Fifth brother, what should we do?” Hazer looked at Gates.

Of the five brothers, Gates usually had the most ideas, but right now, seeing how they were surrounded by nine Angels, he only had the desire to cry. Good heavens. The difference in power was just too vast.

One on one, they could just barely fight to a standstill.

Nine on three? How could they fight?

“What to do?” An insane light appeared in Gates’ eyes. “Motherf*cker. Let’s go all out. If we take one with us, that’s a fair trade. If we take out two, we’ll have profited.” Gates let out a growl, then wildly charged towards the Angels. Although the Four-Winged Angels had good defense, they didn’t dare to clash head on against these human-shaped monsters.

The distant Osenno said calmly, “Angel Battle Formation.”

Instantly…

Three of the Four-Winged Angels flew away at high speed, while the other six Four-Winged Angels immediately set up the Angel Battle Formation, surrounding Gates and his brothers. One was above them, one was below them, while four were around them. This sudden encirclement caused Gates, Hazer, and Ankh to all be stunned.

“Break through!” Gates charged viciously against one of those walls of light.

“Bang!”

A terrifying, blazing force pierced towards Gates’ white armor, knocking him backwards.

“Fifth brother, are you alright?” Ankh immediately went to support him.

“I’m fine.” A hint of blood could be seen at the corner of Gates’ lips. “What tremendous force. It should most likely be comparable to a peak-stage Saint. Fortunately, this Undying Warrior Armor is also very strong. Otherwise, I’d be dead.”

Osenno flew over, calmly watching Hazer, Ankh, and Gates. “Saint-level Undying Warriors. The Armand clan?”

Gates and the others didn’t pay any attention to Osenno.

“I’ll give you three a chance. As long as you are willing to surrender to our Church, then I won’t kill you.” Osenno said calmly.

Gates, Ankh, and Hazer exchanged glances.

“Motherf*cker, if you have the ability to kill us, then come kill us.” Gates stared angrily at Osenno. “Daddy aint afraid of you!”

Osenno’s face turned cold.

“Do you take your old man to be a fool?” Gates said, staring upwards. “Stop bullshitting. Can it be that your Radiant Church has forgotten Lord Cesar’s warning?” In the past, the King of Killers, Cesar, had said long ago that if the Radiant Church dared to act against the five brothers, then Cesar would slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle.

Osenno snorted coldly.

Indeed, just now he had just been trying to trick Gates. He really didn’t dare to kill Gates and his brothers. After all…he didn’t dare to disobey the words of Cesar. The King of Killers who had become a Saint five thousand years ago had reached a terrifying level of power long ago.

And in recent years, he had reached the Deity-level.

He had become a Deity!

Even if Osenno was ten times as bold, he wouldn't dare to offend him. Offending him…meant that perhaps the Radiant Church would face annihilation.

"Disperse the Angel Battle Formation." Osenno said calmly.

"Hrm?" Gates and the other three exchanged glances. Could it be that Osenno would be so kind-hearted as to release them? But as soon as the six Four-Winged Angels dispersed the Angel Battle Formation, Osenno's body transformed into a black blur. Gates and his brothers didn't have the chance to dodge at all.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

Three vicious kicks landed against each of the three brothers, transforming these three humanoid monsters into meteors which slammed into the ground at high speed.

"Boom!" The ground split apart from the collision, and the earth itself shook violently. Three massive human-shaped craters appeared, with Gates and his brothers in the center of each of them. Their white armor had cracked like a tortoise-shell, and blood was vomiting forth from their mouths.

They could no longer move. Osenno's control of force had been perfect. Although he had badly injured them, they weren't in any mortal danger.

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved three adamantine-alloyed manacles and tossed them to the nearby Angels. "Help me chain them up. You two are responsible for watching over them. The rest of you, come with me to the prefectural city of Moat." After finishing his words, Osenno flew off towards the north, not even looking at Gates and the others, followed by seven Four-Winged Angels who followed him.

Between the prefectural city of Sherry and the prefectural city of Moat was a distance of a few hundred kilometers.

Gates and his brothers had been suddenly ambushed, and they hadn't had a chance to even warn the remaining brothers. Caught totally off-guard, the prefectural city of Moat was hit by the sneak attack of Osenno and the seven Four-Winged Angels as well. This time, Osenno acted very quickly!

As soon as Barker and Boone had transformed into their Undying Warrior forms, Osenno had given each of them a kick.

"Bang!" "Bang!"

The two Undying Warriors were smashed into the ground by the kicks, creating two man-shaped craters.

"And there's a Saint-level magical beast as well." Osenno's spiritual energy quickly discovered the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, who was currently retreating at high speed. As soon as Haeru had seen Barker and Boone be defeated in the blink of an eye, he had known what the situation was. If he were to defeat Barker and Boone at the same time, he would have to spend a little bit of time.

This mysterious human Saint was simply too powerful.

Without even doing battle, Haeru had immediately turned tail and fled.

"Master, master. Come back, quick!" Haeru called out in his mind.

Chapter 13 – Linley's Return

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 13, Linley's Return

Osenno transformed into a black blur as he chased after Haeru at high speed.

"He's too fast! This isn't good!" Haeru frantically flew towards the southeast at high speed, and as he did, his spiritual energy detected Osenno chasing towards him. In terms of speed, Haeru's speed was a good bit lower than Osenno's.

Haeru had a very good understanding of his own level of power.

In truth, Haeru was only an early-stage Saint-level magical beast. Because magical beasts were naturally more powerful than humans, he was able compete against peak-stage human Saints. For example, the Worldbear was a creature who would be able to defeat most peak-stage Saints as soon as it entered the Saint-level. This was a question of inherent gifts!

Bebe was the same as well.

Bebe had only just reached the Saint level not too long ago, but Bebe belonged to an extremely rare, exalted lineage. Despite only being an early-stage Saint, he was so powerful that even the Monolithic Sword Saint, Haydson, was inferior to him. In terms of inherent giftedness, even the Worldbear was a level lower than him.

"You want to flee?" Osenno quickly saw that the Blackcloud Panther was scurrying away through the air at high speed.

Osenno's entire body was currently surrounded with dim black flames, making him look like a fiend from hell. Osenno quickly charged towards the Blackcloud Panther, preparing to attack. Haeru, terrified, instantly shrank in size, quickly transforming into a fist-size.

“Swish!”

The now mouse-sized Blackcloud Panther dove directly down into the ground.

“Bam!” A terrifying surge of black flame blasted towards the ground, instantly vaporizing the rocks and the dirt, revealing an incredibly deep tunnel in the ground. Osenno landed near it, peering down into the immeasurably deep tunnel.

“Hmph. You really can run.” Osenno sneered coldly.

Saint-level magical beasts could change their size freely, and after shrinking in size, they could move incredibly fast. Human Saints, by contrast, didn’t have this ability. Although Osenno was extremely powerful, he was far inferior to a Saint-level beast when it came to tunneling through the ground.

Hundreds of meters below the ground.

Haeru frantically continued to dig, creating a natural flow of sharp wind in front of him as he quickly pierced through the dirt.

“Master, Master!”

Haeru was extremely panicked. “Master only said he was going to the south. The distance is too far. We can’t even communicate spiritually.” Magical beasts and their masters had a maximum distance by which they could communicate spiritually. The more powerful the spiritual energy, the greater the distance they could communicate at.

Currently, Linley and Haeru could communicate at a distance of a thousand kilometers.

However…right now, Linley was in the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, fully three thousand kilometers away from Haeru. There was no way Haeru could communicate with Linley. All he could do was vaguely sense

the direction Linley was in. Travelling beneath the ground, Haeru ran frantically in Linley's direction.

Osenno returned to the prefectural city of Moat. In the air above it, he stared at those Four-Winged Angels and instructed, "Take those two Undying Warriors and imprison them in the prefectural city of Sherry along with the other three. I'll go pay a visit to Blackdirt City."

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved two more adamantine-alloyed manacles and tossed them to the angels.

"Yes, Lord." Those Angels said respectfully.

Osenno stared towards the north. According to his calculations, Linley should be in the Blackdirt City region right now. "That panther-type beast of his should have gone to inform him. I wonder if Linley will fight or flee!"

And then, Osenno transformed into a black blur and began to fly towards the north.

In the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, within a small forest in the mysterious village, there was a stone room with a stone table inside. Linley and Reynolds had been drinking here all night. It was roughly 3 AM or 4 AM by now. At daybreak, Linley was going to leave.

"In another two or three hours, Bebe and I will both leave. Fourth Bro, when you are free, you can go back to the imperial capital for a while. Your parents most likely have been missing you very much." Linley instructed Reynolds, and then winked at Monica who was seated next to him. Laughing, he said, "Alright, Fourth Bro, you should go get some rest. You haven't slept all night."

Monica and Reynolds were sitting side by side.

"Third Bro, thank you so much for everything." Reynolds said gratefully.

Whether it was allowing him and Monica to be together, or allowing him to have the special permission of leaving the village once every year, it was all due to Linley. Reynolds understood…given his own abilities, Desri and the others wouldn't have cared about him at all.

Linley's lips quirked up in a smile, and he laughingly berated him, "Fourth Bro, why do you stand on courtesy with me?"

"Uh?"

Linley's face suddenly changed. Haeru was now within a thousand kilometers of him, and Haeru's voice instantly rang out in Linley's mind. "Master, things have gone badly. The Saints of the Radiant Church have attacked, and Barker and his brothers have already been captured."

This news came as a huge shock to Linley.

"Reynolds." Linley's face suddenly became grim. "I'm sorry. I have something to take care of. I need to leave immediately."

"What happened?" Reynolds and Monica were both surprised.

Linley shook his head. "Some private matters. Right. Fourth Bro, you don't need to worry about it." Linley squeeze out a smile, then clubbed Reynolds on the chest. "Alright, I'm off." With a flicker, Linley disappeared, transforming into a blur. Arriving at Desri's residence, he said in a clear voice, "Mr. Desri!"

In the area around the mountain residence, there were a number of stone rooms. Hayward was currently with Foreman inside one of them.

"Linley, what's wrong?" Hayward, who had just been in the middle of training, stopped and walked out of the stone room. For Linley to have rushed here at such high speed meant that something must have happened.

A few moments later…

Desri and the others walked out from the residence.

Linley looked at Desri, Hayward, and the others, then immediately said apologetically, “Mr. Desri, everyone…something came up, and I need to leave.” Linley had an apologetic look on his face.

“Did something happen? Do you need my assistance?” Desri asked.

“No need.” Linley shook his head.

Linley knew that Desri and his group had been training in seclusion for a long time now. No doubt, they had no interest in fighting over power or authority. Desri asking him if he needed help was nothing more than him just being courteous. If he truly asked for Desri to go help him deal with the Radiant Church, that might actually make Desri feel resentful towards him.

More importantly…

Over this recent period of time, Linley had come to understand that in the past, Desri had been a member of the Radiant Church. Naturally, he had already left the Radiant Church by now. It wasn’t just Desri; even Higginson had previously been a member of the Radiant Church.

“Everyone, farewell.”

After bowing, Linley instantly utilized the Windshadow spell and flew into the sky. Bebe, who had been sleeping nearby in the grass, instantly transformed into a black shadow as well and flew into the air. A man and his magical beast flew away, just like that. Desri and the others watched them fly out of the mysterious village, out of the mountain, and then continue north at high speed.

It was still late at night.

“Boss, what happened? What’s the rush?” Bebe asked while flying alongside Linley.

“The Radiant Church is playing for keeps.” Linley’s eyes narrowed, emitting a razor-sharp light.

Bebe instantly grew excited. “Oh? The Radiant Church really dares to go head on against us? Wonderful! I’ve been bored to death lately. Now, I can have some good fun.” Bebe’s eyes had a hint of bloodlust in them. “It’s been a long time since I’ve had a nice good slaughterfest.”

Linley’s eyes contained a killing intent as well. “I’ve waited for this day for a long time!”

Linley felt utter hatred from the depths of his heart towards the Radiant Church. Whether it was his father, his mother, or Grandpa Doehring…all of his loved ones had departed for reasons related to the Radiant Church. This superficially honorable but secretly vicious organization was one which Linley had desired to destroy long ago.

Linley and Bebe flew at very high speed.

Soon, they saw a black blur erupt from the ground below and join them, flying next to Linley.

“Master.” Haeru said respectfully.

Bebe immediately called out, “Haeru, what’s the situation? Quick, speak up.”

While flying, Haeru said, “Barker and Boone were staying in the prefectural city of Moat, but today, seven Four-Winged Angels of the Radiant Church and a human Saint came attacking out of nowhere.”

“Seven Four-Winged Angels?” Bebe’s eyes lit up. “Whoah-ho! Awesome!”

“The Four-Winged Angels weren’t so bad, but that human Saint was absolutely terrifying. In the blink of an eye, he kicked the already-transformed Barker and Boone and injured them so badly they couldn’t move. I didn’t dare to fight against him at all. My only choice was to flee.

When I fled into the ground, he emitted a wave of black fire that blasted a hole several hundred meters deep. I nearly lost my life. That human Saint is too powerful. I feel he is far more powerful than that Haydson." Haeru, when discussing Osenno, still felt a hint of fear even now.

Linley pondered this in his mind.

"According to what the War God said, the 'Holy Emperor' of the Radiant Church should be a level lower than the likes of Fain and Desri, but stronger than Haydson. The person who came today…it sounds like he is on par with the Holy Emperor."

Black flame, and power on par with the Holy Emperor…

"Could it be the person who is on par with the Holy Emperor in both power and status…that ruthless, diabolical…Praetor Osenno of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal?" Linley secretly wondered.

Linley didn't believe that the Holy Emperor himself would attack, but it was very possible that Osenno would.

"Bebe, this opponent should be more powerful than Haydson. You need to be careful as well." Linley reminded. "This time…we can't be overconfident in the slightest. When we reach the Sherry Duchy, I'll cast the Windshadow spell on both of you."

As a spell of the ninth rank, despite only being a supportive spell, the Windshadow spell still consumed a great deal of mageforce. Fortunately, Linley possessed the Coiling Dragon ring, and by casting spells through the Coiling Dragon ring, he only needed to expend a sixth of the normal spiritual energy and mageforce.

"Windshadow?" Bebe rolled his eyes. "Could it be that he's faster than me?"

"We can't be too cocky." Linley shook his head.

Bebe nodded. Linley said towards Haeru, “Haeru, let me and Bebe handle that human Saint. As for you…go deal with those Four-Winged Angels. When we first arrive, we’ll help you kill a few Four-Winged Angels as well.”

“Yes, Master.” Haeru replied.

Immediately, the man and his two magical beast flew north at high speed. At around five in the morning, as the sky was just barely beginning to lighten, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru arrived within the borders of the Sherry Duchy. Upon reaching the Sherry Duchy, Linley immediately Dragonformed while also casting the Windshadow spell on Bebe and Haeru.

“Boss, I feel as though your current level of speed has increased quite a bit.” Bebe could sense the extra speed provided by the Windshadow spell, but at the same time, he stared in puzzlement at Linley.

“I had some insights while training on the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Naturally, my speed went up a level as well.” Linley laughed as he spoke. Linley had made breakthroughs in both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the wind, allowing him to be even more graceful and even faster.

Given that he was a Dragonblood Warrior to begin with, and had the Windshadow spell supporting him, Linley’s speed was now a full level higher than when he had dueled with Haydson.

“How rowdy.” Linley saw one of the small cities of the Sherry Duchy from afar. The families of that town were all extremely active, with lamps lit everywhere. Not too long ago, on this night, two Angels had descended! Naturally, these small cities were filled with so much excitement that nobody could fall asleep. All of them were even firmer in their faith towards the Radiant Church now.

Linley saw quite clearly that the flags on the small cities had all changed, returning to the previous flag of the Sherry Duchy.

“As soon as the Angels arrived, the lost territory was all reclaimed.”

Linley couldn’t be bothered with the small cities. He flew straight towards the prefectural city of the Sherry Duchy. Soon, the man and his two magical beasts arrived in the air above the prefectural city of Sherry. By now, it was day, and the fresh morning air filled the lands.

The Dragonformed Linley, Bebe, and Haeru stood in the breezy air above the prefectural city of Sherry.

“Only six Angels and Barker and his brothers. No other Saints present.” Linley’s spiritual energy quickly scanned the entire area below.

“Just six?” Bebe seemed rather dissatisfied.

By now, those six Four-Winged Angels had sensed Linley’s spiritual energy. They flew up into the sky at the same time, surrounded by that dazzling holy aura. It was as though six suns had suddenly risen into the skies. At the same time, lightning danced within Linley’s eyes, and he barked coldly, “Kill all six of the Angels!”

“Yes, Boss (Master).” Bebe and Haeru replied simultaneously as they transformed into two flashes of black light, charging towards those six Four-Winged Angels.

Chapter 14 – Downfall

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 14, Downfall

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry knew that there were Angels within the governor's mansion, so many people were continuously watching the mansion. Seeing those six Four-Winged Angels fly out into the air, they instantly began to shout jubilantly…which in turn attracted the attention of even more citizens.

Six Four-Winged Angels. Creatures whom these commoners had tremendous faith in.

"What are those three black shadows? How dare they fight against Angels?" Many people also noticed that the six Four-Winged Angels were currently engaged in a wild battle against three black shadows. In the blink of an eye, the citizens once more shouted in joy…

Because those three shadows had already been completely surrounded by the six Four-Winged Angels.

"Their movements are very orderly and almost perfectly choreographed in sync." Linley laughed calmly as he stared at his surroundings. Just then, Linley, Bebe, and Haeru had charged forward to fight them, but unexpectedly, the Angels had instantly scattered in multiple directions, setting up the Angel Battle Formation in the blink of an eye, surrounding Linley, Bebe, and Haeru within it.

The six Four-Winged Angels had turned into six points of this heavenly cage.

"Growl…" Bebe sent out a claw swipe against one of the Four-Winged Angels, but that pure white light only shuddered and didn't break.

Linley secretly sighed in amazement. This Angel Battle Formation truly

was formidable. These were nothing more than six middle-stage Four-Winged Angels, but the Angel Battle Formation they created couldn't be broken by even Bebe, who dared to fight Haydson's 'Worldbreaker' attack head on.

"This magical beast is very formidable. Be careful." One of the Four-Winged Angels immediately shouted.

At the same time, a brilliant light began to emanate forth from the Four-Winged Angels, blasting forth towards the skies. When it reached a certain height…that eye-piercing brilliance suddenly exploded, temporarily blinding the countless citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry.

Immediately, the citizens began rubbing their eyes, trying their best to stare upwards at the battle.

"Informing Osenno?" Linley said to the six surrounding angels.

"Hrmph. Linley. This time, you will definitely die." One of the Angels said with certainty. "Soon, the Lord Praetor shall come, and you won't have the chance to flee."

"So it really is Osenno." Linley's gaze turned cold. "You think you can defeat the Lord Praetor?" The six Four-Winged Angels were very cold and arrogant. They knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful Osenno was.

The faces of the six Four-Winged Angels turned cold, while at the same time, a thick, powerful blast of holy light was transferred to one of the Four-Winged Angels. Linley knew that this was one of the powerful attacks of this formation. Shaking his head, Linley let out a cold chuckle.

"Whoosh!"

Linley suddenly appeared in front of one of the Four-Winged Angels, and that Four-Winged Angel's body immediately began to glow with divine light. "How laughable." That Four-Winged Angel was very confident. According to their reports, Linley's power was only on par with Haydson. It

wasn’t greater than that of the magical beast named Bebe.

If even Bebe couldn’t break the Angel Battle Formation, how could Linley?

A hint of satirizing amusement appeared in Linley’s eyes. If he wasn’t confident, how could he have let himself be ‘trapped’ within this Angel Battle Formation?

“Bang!” The adamantine heavy sword struck against the protective light.

A terrifyingly powerful surge of vibrational force transferred directly into the Four-Winged Angel’s body. Those vibrations actually caused the internal organs of the Four-Winged Angel to instantly rupture and turn into a pile of soft mud. Even Haydson would have been badly injured after taking this blow, to say nothing of the Angel.

The face of that previously very confident Angel instantly turned ashen pale, while fresh blood spurted forth from his nose, ears, and mouth. In an instant, his eyes turned dim, and then like a pile of soft mud, he fell down from the skies, smashing into the ground like a ruptured sandbag and kicking up a cloud of dust.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 150 Layered Waves!

This was Linley’s limit!

“Last time, it was six Angels also. And this time, once again…” Linley laughed coldly. “The Angel Battle Formation is useless against me. But unfortunately, those six Angels who died last time didn’t have the chance to tell you.”

The power of this 150 Layered Waves attack was far stronger than when he had previously competed against Haydson. Even someone as defensively powerful as Haydson probably wouldn’t be able to take two of these hits head on.

“How is this possible?” The other five Four-Winged Angels were still in a

state of shock. They hadn't felt much of an impact against their holy power, but their comrade had died. And at this time, Bebe and Haeru instantly transformed into streaks of black lightning…

"Shkreeeee!" An ear-piercing, heaven-shattering screech.

"Slash." A Four-Winged Angel wanted to dodge, but Bebe, after having his already-terrifying speed enhanced by the Windshadow spell, was simply too fast. The Angel simply couldn't fight against him at all. Those sharp claws tore directly into the Angel's chest and ripped out his heart.

Bebe, with just three claws, sent three Four-Winged Angels falling from the skies, their blood covering the ground.

"Bang!" Haeru killed one of the Four-Winged Angels as well.

"Whooosh…" Linley's body seemed to have turned into the wind itself, as he flickered everywhere. Sometimes, his adamantine heavy sword moved fast, while sometimes, it moved slowly…in front of the adamantine heavy sword, a spatial edge actually appeared, chopping down at the head of one of the Four-Winged Angels. The Four-Winged Angel, terrified, tried to dodge, but it was chopped into two halves.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind.

"Using the adamantine heavy sword with the Profound Truths of the Wind is indeed somewhat weaker." Linley chuckled calmly as he looked down at the corpse on the ground.

The Profound Truths of the Earth and the Profound Truths of the Wind could be used with any weapon, even fists. Only, the level of effectiveness would vary. If the adamantine heavy sword were used to display the Tempos of the Wind attack, it would only be roughly half as powerful as the Bloodviolet sword. The power was roughly the same as using a knife-hand chop.

Although all of this took a while to describe…

In truth, when Linley used the Profound Truths of the Earth to kill one of the Four-Winged Angels, it happened in the blink of an eye. And then, the other five Four-Winged Angels were killed by Linley, Bebe, and Haeru. Six Angel corpses lay scattered on the ground.

“How…how is this…”

“Imp…impossible…”

The countless citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry all stared. The Angels whom they venerated in their hearts above all other creatures. The ‘Messengers of the Lord’! But the six Four-Winged Angels had died in the blink of an eye by those three shadows.

Linley’s body was covered with a roiling layer of azurish-black battle-qi, and he floated high in the air.

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry stared up at this fiend.

“You actually believe in the Radiant Sovereign? What a joke!” Linley’s voice seemed to shatter the heavens like thunder. “The teachings of the Radiant Church are nothing more than a type of deception. In this world, don’t entrust anything to a ‘god’. Rely on yourself. If you are strong, you can even kill an Angel as easily as you can raise your hand.”

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry were somewhat baffled.

The Messengers of the Lord. Those six Four-Winged Angels had been killed, just like that. According to the teachings of the Radiant Church, nothing could block the glory of the Lord, and in the face of the Messengers whom the Lord sent, anything blocking them would be turned to ash. But today…the ones which were turned to ash were the Angels!

“Who is this person?” Many people in the prefectural city of Sherry were quietly whispering this question to each other.

“Remember. My name…is Linley!”

Linley’s voice echoed nonstop in the prefectural city of Sherry, and then Linley, Bebe, and Haeru flew into the governor’s mansion. The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry remained in a stunned state.

“Linley…it’s actually Linley…”

In the Yulan continent, there was only one expert named Linley. It was the grandmaster sculptor, the genius magus, the Dragonblood Warrior…Linley Baruch!

Ever since he knew that he would have to fight head on against the Radiant Church, Linley had decided to no longer conceal his identity. The reputation of a peak-stage Saint was extremely alluring, and so Linley immediately proclaimed his identity. Most likely, some of the other Duchies would no longer dare to resist and might even immediately surrender to him.

“Boom!”

Osenno was flying at high speed towards the prefectural city of Sherry. “I didn’t expect that Linley would head to the prefectural city of Sherry. I thought he had fled.” Osenno had badly injured Barker and Boone, then sent people to lock them up with Gates and the other two in the prefectural city of Sherry, then headed towards Blackdirt City in the night.

But in the area around Blackdirt City, Osenno couldn’t find a single Saint-level expert.

“Linley ran away!” This was Osenno’s first reaction.

He believed that the Blackcloud Panther had mentally contacted Linley, and Linley had been so terrified that he immediately fled. Osenno was quite disappointed. He had no choice but to return to the prefectural city of Moat. But unexpectedly, just as the sky was beginning to brighten, a dazzling burst of light could be seen from the direction of the prefectural city of Sherry.

It was a signal!

The signal of Linley's appearance!

"Although Linley is powerful, when those six Four-Winged Angels join forces and set up the Angel Battle Formation, even if they cannot kill Linley, they should be able to stay alive." Osenno said to himself. The reason he had arranged for six Four-Winged Angels to be there was so that they could set up the Angel Battle Formation.

After all, they were six Four-Winged Angels! To the Radiant Church, they were still extremely valuable.

When Lyndin and the other five had died, the Radiant Church hadn't minded, because Lyndin and the others were only of the ninth rank, after all. Only when going all out could they have the power of a Saint. The Radiant Church had quite a few of those low-level Angels. But these six Four-Winged Angels were another matter altogether.

To find bodies capable of holding the power of Four-Winged Angels was fairly difficult.

Those bodies had to be of the seventh rank in physical power alone. Only those bodies could allow Four-Winged Angels to descend into them and for their full power to be put on display. Bodies of the seventh rank…the Radiant Church only acquired a few despite thousands of years of searching.

"I've arrived." Osenno saw the distant prefectural city of Sherry and instantly flew towards the governor's mansion.

Osenno's spiritual energy encapsulated the entire prefectural city of Sherry like a tempest, but his face quickly changed. In the blink of an eye, he arrived in the air above the governor's mansion. He clearly saw that on the main walkway in front of the governor's mansion…

Six corpses!

“All six of the Four-Winged Angels died?” Osenno’s heart contracted tightly. Even when the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, had led his Saint-level magical beasts to attack the city of Fenlai, the Radiant Church hadn’t lost many Saint-level experts. But today, in the blink of an eye, they had lost six Four-Winged Angels.

Oseeno’s dark eyes flashed with cold light, and the temperature around him dropped precipitously. The blood on the corpses of those six Four-Winged Angels actually began to turn to ice.

“Linley, get out!”

Osenno’s cold voice shook the heavens. Those citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry, who had just been agitated by Linley, now found to their shock that yet another figure with dark golden eyes was standing in the air above the governor’s mansion.

“A challenge to Linley?” Many people felt their hearts tremble.

They had simply been over-stimulated too much today. First, Angels had descended, and then, the Angels had been killed by Linley’s forces. But now, yet another Saint had come to challenge Linley…in their entire lives, they had never seen such a constant stream of exciting battles.

“Linley, are you only capable of hiding inside the governor’s mansion? Do you think I am unable to find you?” Osenno’s voice contained a hint of extreme rage.

In the past, he wanted to kill Linley because Linley was a threat. But now… Linley had killed six Four-Winged Angels. When had the Radiant Church ever suffered such a loss? If Linley was a Deity-level expert, then the Church would only be able to swallow their anger. But Linley’s power was inferior to Osenno’s!

“Hide?” A cold voice rang out from the city governor’s mansion.

“Osenno, you think too highly of yourself.” Regular, stable footsteps could be heard. Linley, dressed in a long, deep blue robe, casually walked to the courtyard with Bebe and Haeru by his side. Those Barker brothers were behind Linley as well. They formed a straight line.

Linley stared upwards at the mid-air Osenno. Osenno stared downwards at Linley as well. Their two gazes met, and as they did, it seemed as though the space between them began to shudder and rumble.

Within several hundred meters around Osenno, the temperature had reached to an extremely low level.

Extreme cold. Deathly silence.

In this area, it was as though Osenno was in total, complete control.

“Whoosh!” Suddenly, a wind arose in this area. The origin of the wind was Linley. Linley’s deep blue robe and his long hair fluttered in the wild wind, which twisted upwards towards Osenno. But Osenno was like a boulder upon which the waves broke themselves. He didn’t move at all.

“You killed six Four-Winged Angels of my Church. Today, I must kill you, and also let your soul forever be tormented by the flames of hell.” Osenno’s voice seemed to be as cold as a dagger, piercing into everyone’s ears.

Linley stared up at Osenno. His lips curved into a smile. “If you are so tough, then come on over.”

Chapter 15 – The Fierce Battle Against Osenno

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 15, The Fierce Battle Against Osenno

Black draconic scales. Fierce, sharp spikes. They all quickly emerged, covering Linley's entire body as he Dragonformed. The blue robe that had been covering Linley's body was torn to shreds by the ferocious battle-qi, and pieces of it fluttered around Linley.

"Go!" Linley's dark golden eyes stared at Osenno.

Instantly, those countless pieces of blue cloth suddenly shot towards Osenno like arrows. As they did, Bebe, who had been directly behind Linley, suddenly disappeared, crossing those hundred meters…

In just the blink of an eye.

The half-meter long Bebe suddenly appeared in front of Osenno. "Shkreeee!" The ear-piercing screech tore through the skies, while at the same time, Bebe's sharp claws transformed into a fierce storm which tore down towards Osenno.

"Crackle."

Osenno's body immediately exploded with a black flame which emanated from within his body. The black fire surrounded his fist, which clashed directly against Bebe's sharp claws. "Bang!" "Bang!" Eardrum-rupturing collision sounds could be heard repeatedly.

"Swish!" Osenno quickly retreated a hundred meters in an instant.

Bebe stared angrily at Osenno. "Osenno, if you are so tough, don't run." Just as Osenno opened his mouth and was about to speak, a tempest suddenly appeared in front of him, while at the same time, a scale-covered draconic claw slashed through the air, chopping towards him like a sharp

blade.

Osenno once more dodged backwards.

Only now did Linley reveal himself fully. Standing in mid-air, the azurish-black energy surrounding him, he said, “Osenno, why do you keep on retreating? Didn’t you say that you were going to kill me?” Linley’s voice was very low. His eyes flashing like cold daggers, he was a heart-shaking sight.

“Boss, those black flames Osenno uses are very powerful. But they shouldn’t be able to break your Pulseguard Defense.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

“I know. Osenno hasn’t used his best techniques yet.” Linley was very careful.

With a flip of his hand, Osenno retrieved a pitch-black, narrow and long sword. Osenno stared coldly at Linley and Bebe, the man and his magical beast. “Just now, I wanted to see how strong you were. Indeed…you are worthy of me drawing my blade.”

Linley and Bebe on one side. Osenno on the other. Staring at each other.

The citizens of the prefectural city of Sherry stared with bated breath at this battle, the likes of which Sherry had never seen since its founding.

“Let’s go.” Linley’s voice rang out in Bebe’s mind, and the two of them almost simultaneously charged towards Osenno. The adamantine heavy sword in Linley’s hand radiated with azurish light, chopping down agilely at Osenno.

Seeing Bebe and Linley charge towards him, Osenno instantly came to a judgment: “This magical beast called Bebe is even faster than me. This Linley is a hair faster than me as well. Our intelligence was wrong?”

Linley’s body seemed to drift forward gently as though it was very slow,

but also as though it was very fast. It was extremely bizarre.

The deeper his insights into the Elemental Laws of the Wind had become, the faster Linley had become as well.

Bebe was the first to arrive in front of Osenno. Osenno just stood there in mid-air, not moving at all, allowing Bebe to claw at him. But the black katana in Osenno's hands suddenly flashed, then chopped down against Bebe's claws.

"Clang!"

A metallic ringing sound. Osenno's body was sent flying back nearly a hundred meters, but Bebe stood there, not moving at all.

"Bebe." Linley had a bad feeling.

"Boss, be careful. His katana attacks contain a spiritual attack." Bebe warned him. "Just then, my head went dizzy for a moment."

Linley grew nervous. Spiritual attack?

However, from what Linley could tell, this Osenno was a Warrior Saint. Most likely, his spiritual energy wasn't too powerful. This was much like Olivier, who despite being capable of spiritual attacks, only had the spiritual energy of a magus of the eighth rank. Thus, his spiritual attack wasn't too dangerous to people with powerful souls.

"My spiritual energy has reached the ninth rank. I should be able to take it." Not hesitating at all, Linley once more struck out with his adamantine heavy sword, while Bebe, shaking his head a few times, let out another screech and charged towards Osenno.

Osenno's body flickered as he actually moved forward to face Linley.

"Whoosh." The adamantine heavy sword flowed gracefully through the air, slashing down at Osenno in an instant. Osenno's black katana seemed to

pierce through space itself, coming at an incomparably monstrous speed as it chopped against Linley's adamantine heavy sword.

The adamantine heavy sword and the black katana clashed…

Linley's body was sent flying backwards, and he shook his head in pain.

"Rumble…" A bizarre, terrifying vibration had passed through the black katana and attacked Osenno. It had pierced straight through Osenno's protective layer of infernal black flames and directly attacked Osenno's internal organs. Those terrifying, powerful vibrations caused all of Osenno's organs to shudder.

"Urgh." Osenno spat out a mouthful of blood.

Osenno stared at Linley in disbelief. He didn't expect that he would have suffered a serious injury in just his first exchange of blows with Linley.

"If this happens another time, I probably won't be able to take it. This Linley's attack is too bizarre and too terrifying. My defenses are useless." Osenno now realized how terrifying Linley was. "I didn't expect that I would have to use my ultimate technique to deal with Linley."

Only now did Linley's head feel a bit better.

"What a terrifying spiritual attack." Linley's heart shook. "It didn't just attack, it also possessed an illusionary, mesmerizing power."

"Die!" Bebe charged fiercely at Osenno, the tips of his sharp fangs biting down at Osenno, but Bebe actually passed straight through Osenno. 'Osenno' was still in his original position.

"Two of them."

Linley stared in astonishment. At this moment, there were two 'Osennos' standing in mid-air. And they definitely weren't illusions. Both were real!

“Dopplegangers?” Linley couldn’t believe it.

The two Osennos suddenly moved, transforming into four Osennos. This was totally different from Olivier’s technique, which relied on high speed movement to create illusions. All of these four Osennos were real. Linley’s spiritual energy could detect all four of these Osennos and sense their auras.

“This…what in the world is this?” Linley couldn’t dare believe it.

The four Osennos stood in mid-air, staring coldly at Linley. The four Osennos each said one phrase at a time. “Linley, you really do have some skill. You forced me to use this technique. Just then, you saw that when you attack me, you will find that my body is illusory, but when I attack you, you will find…that my body is real. In other words, I can attack you, but you can’t attack me. Your death is…inevitable.”

The four Osennos all flew towards Linley at high speed.

“Die!” Linley flew at high speed towards one of them, but suddenly, Linley utilized his adamantine heavy sword to chop at a different one.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 150 Layered Waves.

However, it was as though he had hit nothing but air. Linley’s adamantine heavy sword passed straight through this ‘Osenno’, not having harmed him at all. But then, this ‘Osenno’ suddenly chopped towards Linley, and Linley quickly used his adamantine heavy sword to block.

“Bang!”

Linley was knocked flying back, and his head felt dizzy yet again.

“How is this possible? How can someone possibly have such a freakish ability?” Linley didn’t dare to believe it. Even when dealing with Fain or Desri, Linley hadn’t had such a hopeless feeling. He couldn’t attack his opponent, but the opponent could easily attack him? What the hell was this?

“Osenno, don’t believe your own lies.”

Bebe’s voice rang out. Linley turned to look at Bebe. Bebe’s little eyes were staring at Osenno. “Others are unable to attack you? If four people simultaneously attacked your four bodies, tell me…would they be able to attack you?” Bebe seemed to be quite familiar with this technique.

All four Osennos were wielding that black katana.

“It seems you understand this technique?” Osenno laughed coldly.

“Of course. Don’t forget. I am a darkness-element magical beast.” Bebe’s body suddenly flickered, and then split into two as well. The two Bebe’s stood there in mid-air. Osenno was stunned as well, and Linley was also awestruck.

The Barker brothers were watching all this from below.

“What the hell?” Hazer looked at Gates.

Gates shook his head, lost. “This battle isn’t one in which the likes of us can get involved in. Let’s just watch.”

Linley flew towards the two Bebe’s, while Bebe said to Linley, “Boss, there is a relatively basic darkness-style attack known as the ‘Stealthwalk Technique’. Once the Stealthwalk Technique reaches an extremely high level, it can be transformed into the Shadowshape Technique. The Shadowshape Technique causes one’s body to merge with the shadows themselves. However…there is a level even beyond the Shadowshape technique which is known as…the Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique. This is something which only Saints can train in.”

“However, Osenno’s Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique is more powerful than mine!” Bebe said.

“So this is known as the ‘Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique’?” Osenno frowned.

“You didn’t know?” Bebe looked at Osenno.

Osenno was silent. In truth, while Osenno had been training in the Elemental Laws of Darkness, he slowly managed to develop this ‘Doppleganger Technique’. As for its name, he had casually decided to simply call it the ‘Doppleganger Technique’.

Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique.

The basic underpinning of the Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique was to create a shadow from another shadow, and then allow the real body to change position at any time from amongst the shadow-bodies.

Just then, when Linley had attacked one of the dopplegangers, Osenno had switched places with one of his other shadows, and then when he attacked Linley, he had switched back.

This technique was very powerful, but in the face of the Godrealm technique of Deities, it was still useless.

“Bebe, when did you learn this technique?” Linley asked mentally.

“Darkness-elemental magical beasts are born knowing some darkness-style spells and special attacks. Only upon reaching the Saint-level was I capable of utilizing this Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique. Unfortunately, I’m not as good at it as Osenno.” Bebe said resignedly. Magical beasts were born with some special, magical skills. The more powerful the beast, the more powerful the magic.

Linley secretly sighed as well.

“And so what if you know it? You will still die!” The four Osennos moved at the same time. The target…Linley! The four Osennos attacked together, and Linley quickly flew back…one against four, how could he fight them? He could block one, but the real body would then be in one of the other three.

If he fought head on, he would definitely lose!

“Shkreee!” As Linley retreated, the two Bebes screeched fiercely as they charged forward.

The two Bebes were freakishly fast. The two Bebes engaged in a wild battle against those four Osennos, but since Osenno could choose between those four shadow dopplegangers, he could dodge much more easily than Bebe.

“Bang!” The two Bebes flew back.

“Bebe, quick, come over to me. Listen to my order.” Linley was currently standing in one of the streets of the prefectural city of Sherry. Standing on the ground, his head was upraised as he stared at Osenno in mid-air, quietly awaiting Osenno to come over.

Bebe was somewhat puzzled, but he still flew over towards Linley at high speed.

“Boss, what do you want to do?” Bebe asked suspiciously.

But when Bebe heard Linley’s mental response, his eyes instantly lit up, and he once more scurried atop Linley’s shoulders. Linley and Bebe just stood there on the ground, staring up at the four Osennos, not afraid at all.

“Hrm? What trick do you have up your sleeves?”

Seeing how confident Linley was, Osenno was rather suspicious. But when he scanned the area with his spiritual energy, he found that Linley and Bebe didn’t have any backup at all, nor were there any apparent traps. In addition, for someone like him, an expert who trained in the Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique, how could he be afraid of a trap?

“Hrmph.” Osenno sneered coldly. No longer hesitating, the four Osennos simultaneously charged down towards Linley!

Chapter 16 – Baruch

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 16, Baruch

Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in one hand, and Bloodviolet in the other. He stood there in the middle of the street, and Bebe was on his shoulders, not moving. The man and the beast stared as Osenno charged over, but when Osenno reached within ten meters of Linley, he suddenly paused.

There was a plot here!

Osenno stared at Linley, who seemed brimming with confidence. He grew a bit nervous.

“What sort of nasty trick does this punk have up his sleeve?”

“What, are you afraid?” Linley, his two swords in his hands, stared at Osenno. “If you are afraid, then just roll the f*ck out of my city. It’s fine. I won’t chase you.”

Linley’s words made Osenno so angry, he could vomit blood.

“Chase me?” Osenno secretly cursed Linley in his mind. It was clear and apparent that he, Osenno, had the advantage. But Osenno was born cautious. He truly began to wonder if Linley did indeed have some sort of nasty trick up his sleeve. But seeing how confident Linley was looking, Osenno suddenly thought, “Wait, can it be that Linley is just pretending to be like this to try and scare me away?”

Osenno carefully inspected Linley. “If Linley really had some sort of ultimate attack, he would’ve used it long ago. Why feign weakness? In addition, if one has an ace up one’s sleeve, one wouldn’t be so blatantly self-confident. Being this confident is as good as telling someone you have a technique lying in wait.”

Osenno laughed coldly in his mind. “What is true is false, what is false is true. This punk is trying to play me. I refuse to believe he is able to wound me.”

“Why are you hesitating, Lord Praetor? What happened to your usual awe-inspiring presence and decisiveness?” Linley mocked coldly.

Osenno stared at Linley’s dark golden eyes. He sneered, “Punk, I still…” Halfway through his words, the four Osennos simultaneously attacked Linley with terrifying speed. But right at that moment…

“Rumble…”

Within a hundred meters, the land quickly became covered with a layer of earthen light, and Linley and Bebe’s body became covered with it as well.

Instacast – Supergravity Field, rank seven!

A Supergravity Field of the seventh rank would cause the strength of the gravity affecting one’s body to instantly quadruple. This gravity wouldn’t just impact the muscles; it would also affect the organs and the blood vessels. Even powerful opponents would be slowed when suddenly affected by this.

To a Saint, if you threw a boulder weighing ten thousand tons at him, he would easily shatter it with the flick of his finger, not harmed by it at all.

But the Supergravity Field was different.

For example, the quadruple gravity wasn’t something as simple as just adding a few hundred tons of weight. It could cause the flow of blood in a person’s body to slow and make breathing more difficult…weak people, under a quadruple gravity field, might even die in an instant. Even Saints would have their physical functions impacted.

“Kill!”

After instacasting the Supergravity Field as well as the nullifying magic on himself and Bebe, Linley charged forward towards Osenno with Bebe by his side in a simultaneous attack. One Linley and two Bebes arrived at the four slower Osennos.

The adamantine heavy sword once more chopped down, while at the same time, Bloodviolet chopped through the air as well.

“Bang!” Osenno was knocked flying, and all four of the Osennos merged into one. A hint of blood could be seen dribbling from his mouth. He had dodged Linley’s attack, but he wasn’t able to dodge the two Bebes attacks.

Linley didn’t hesitate at all, charging directly towards Osenno, but Osenno instantly transformed into four people as well, while at the same time, his body began to emit a large amount of black flame. The ground around him was burnt to nothing, and Linley’s Supergravity Field was wiped out as well.

“I didn’t expect you to have this sort of technique.” Osenno stared angrily at Linley. “However, this technique of yours is useless.”

“Useless?”

Linley stood on the ground confidently.

The four Osennos once more charged forward at high speed, while at virtually the same instant, Linley’s surrounding area once more appeared to be covered by that earthen light – Supergravity Field of the seventh rank!

The four Osennos paused slightly, and then, with a ‘Bam!’, the black flame began to burn, once more wiping away the Supergravity Field. Osenno’s eyes were filled with fury. “It is useless, Linley. My body is totally capable of getting accustomed to this level of Supergravity.”

“Bebe, let’s do it.”

Linley and Bebe both charged towards Osenno, while at the same time, Linley once more cast the Supergravity Field. Only this time…it was a Supergravity Field of the sixth rank!

Osenno had already been prepared for quadruple gravity, but when he suddenly became affected by double gravity instead, his movements couldn't help but falter a bit.

"Bang!"

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind. Bloodviolet seemed both 'Fast' and 'Slow', and that spatial edge apeared on the edge of Bloodviolet. The edge of the sword chopped down directly towards Osenno, and was actually able to cut through his infernal flames, sending him flying back once again.

A wound had appeared on Osenno's chest.

Osenno had dodged Linley's adamantine heavy sword and the attacks of the two Bebes, but he had been injured by Bloodviolet.

"How can it be so powerful?" The look on Osenno's face changed.

Just then, he had nowhere to run. Because all four of his shadows were attacking Linley, Linley naturally attacked two while the other two were easily attacked by the two Bebes, who was faster than them. No matter what, he would end up taking a hit.

He didn't dare take the adamantine heavy sword head-on, and he didn't want to take a hit from Bebe's claws either.

In the end, he had chosen Bloodviolet.

However…that Bloodviolet sword seemed to be even more formidable than Bebe's claws by a whisker.

"According to our intelligence, the attacks of that violet sword aren't very

powerful though.” Osenno couldn’t believe it.

Indeed, when he dueled with Haydson, Linley’s ‘Tempos of the Wind’ was not too powerful. But now that he had broken through to a higher level of comprehension towards both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, then combined them in his ‘Tempos of the Wind’, the power had been raised by far more than just one level; it was raised by at least two levels, or even more.

“Osenno, didn’t you want to kill me?” Linley seemed very arrogant.

Attack!

The demonic-looking Linley and the enlarged Bebe charged wildly towards Osenno. As they did, Linley instacast the Supergravity Field again, filling the area once more with that earthen glow.

“Bang!” In the blink of an eye, Osenno’s infernal black flames once more wiped away the Supergravity Field.

But for Linley, this sort of low-level technique was something he could use a hundred or two hundred times without exhausting his mageforce. And more importantly, Linley had the Coiling Dragon ring and only needed to use a sixth of the mageforce to begin with.

Supergravity Field of the seventh and sixth ranks. Linley was using them on a rotational basis.

“Not good.” The constantly changing gravitational power caused even Osenno’s attacks to become less coordinated.

The Supergravity Field of the sixth rank increased gravity by two times. There was a big difference between it and the Supergravity Field of the seventh rank…these two spells with huge differences in power caused Osenno to constantly be unable to get accustomed to the local gravity. It was as though an ordinary person, when walking, would suddenly feel gravity disappear, and then he would have to walk while weightless. He

wouldn’t be used to it.

Same line of reasoning.

Sometimes, Supergravity Fields weren’t necessarily the stronger the better.

With no way to dodge, Osenno was struck viciously again by Bebe’s two claws and was sent flying. With a crunching sound, Osenno’s rib had broken…this time, Osenno didn’t fly into the air, nor did he dare to go closer to the ground. After having learned this lesson, Osenno didn’t dare to get near the ground again as he remained in mid-air.

“I didn’t know that different Supergravity Fields could be used at this level.” Osenno said.

He had been badly hurt.

After being struck by Linley’s adamantine heavy sword and the Bloodviolet sword, he had then been struck twice by Bebe’s claws now.

“Bebe, let’s charge. He’s badly injured and not in great shape.”

Osenno didn’t hesitate at all. His four shadows instantly flew at high speed towards the south, paying no attention to Bebe who was behind him. Perhaps Bebe would be able to catch him, but he could change between the four shadows nonstop. He had no reason to fear Bebe.

But if Linley were to charge over….

Perhaps Osenno would be the one to injure Linley instead. After all, in mid-air, Linley would not be able to utilize the Supergravity Field. His speed would then be inferior to Osenno’s. Wasn’t he just asking for trouble if he did that?

…….

At this time, Barker and his brothers came running out of the city

governor's mansion.

"That Osenno escaped." Ankh sighed.

"His Lordship and Bebe beat Osenno so bad he ran away." Gates was excited. The brothers carefully inspected the streets in front of the city governor's manor, and instantly, they were speechless. The bodies of the six Angels had already been frozen into blocks of ice.

Near Linley's position, the ground itself was a full meter lower.

In addition, another meter of earth had been burned by Osenno's infernal flames and destroyed by it. Linley was currently at the end of that depressed patch of land.

"Lord."

"Lord."

Barker and his brothers ran excitedly towards Linley, while Linley transformed back into his human form. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew a robe from his interspatial ring. Bebe landed on Linley's shoulders, and Linley let out a long sigh.

"Lord, we won." Barker said excitedly. The other four stared at Linley with excitement as well

A hint of laughter was on Linley's face. He stared towards the south. "We didn't truly win. What a pity. The attack power of each strike of my 'Rippling Wind' isn't powerful enough. If it was more powerful…I would be able to hold off Osenno by myself."

The Rippling Wind could instantly create ten million swords.

It was the absolute peak of speed, but each attack wasn't too powerful. If Linley were to use this attack against the four Osennos, he wouldn't be able to harm them at all. Instead, he would be the one to be wounded.

“Tempos of the Wind and Rippling Wind are two different concepts. There is no way to merge them. The only thing I can do is infuse the ‘Rippling Wind’ with the insights I have gained into the ‘Fast’ aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. By then, the power of the ‘Rippling Wind’ would increase by another level.”

Linley still remembered Higginson’s sword technique.

It had been so fast that it had distorted and folded space itself, and it carried a terrifying penetrative power.

If Linley was able to reach that level and use his Rippling Wind technique, then the equivalent of countless ‘Illusionary Void Swords’ would attack his opponents. Although the attack of each sword would still be a bit lower, it would be incredibly powerful nonetheless.”

“Me too.” Bebe muttered. “If my Shadowshape Doppleganger Technique could reach the level of splitting into four shadows, I would be able to fight him by myself.”

Barker and his brothers stared at Linley and Bebe, the man and his magical beast. They were speechless.

“Lord, you aren’t even thirty yet. Yet you are so powerful.” Barker finally said loudly.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other, then laughed.

Good point. One couldn’t be too greedy.

Linley was on the fast track to understanding both the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Elemental Laws of the Earth. He wasn’t like some people who were bottlenecked or stuck. He should be overjoyed.

“Barker, immediately send people to reclaim the Sherry Duchy. Here in the prefectural city of Sherry, most likely those soldiers won’t face a single bit

of resistance." Linley was quite confident. After that massive battle with the Angels and the battle just now, who in the prefectural city of Sherry would dare to resist?

"Yes, Lord."

"Per our plans, since we are fighting head on against the Radiant Church, then we will make our affiliations public. Ten days from now, we will openly proclaim to the world that we have founded a Duchy, and the name of the Duchy….is the Baruch Duchy!" Linley announced.

Barker, Ankh, Hazer, Boone, and Gates all said with respectful excitement, "Yes, Lord."

…..

The battle at the prefectural city of Sherry had determined that for now, the Radiant Church was not capable of suppressing Linley. Linley had slaughtered six Four-Winged Angels, and then forced Praetor Osenno to flee. This victory, once announced by Zassler and the others, quickly spread across the entire area.

The morale of Linley's side was like a rainbow.

The Sherry Duchy no longer had any hint of resistance. It once more returned to Linley's control.

Blackdirt City. Within a garden.

"Lord Linley, the western Anne Duchy immediately surrendered to us after we said a few threatening words to them. The Duchies to the east are a bit more stubborn." Zassler laughed. Linley's reputation was extremely useful.

A simple threat had caused an entire Duchy to capitulate.

How could they not surrender though? What, would they fight against a Saint? After all, the most powerful combatants in a Duchy were usually of

the eighth rank only, and a very few Duchies had warriors of the ninth rank. As for Saints…how could a Saint stay in a Duchy?

“Zassler.” Linley instructed. “In three days, I will found the Baruch Duchy. How about this…send some people to one of the branches of the Dawson Conglomerate. Tell them immediately send a message to Delia in the Yulan Empire. Tell her about the founding of the Baruch Duchy.”

Zassler assented.

Linley stood there in the garden, staring towards the south. “Delia. I’ve completed my side of our agreement. So…when will you come?”

Chapter 17 – Homecoming

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 17, Homecoming

Osenno's study.

"Lord Praetor?" The golden-haired middle-aged man called out softly. Ever since Osenno had been defeated and sent fleeing by Linley and Bebe, Osenno had become even grimmer and colder. His subordinates didn't even dare to get close to him.

Osenno raised his head, staring at him with those cold eyes.

The middle-aged man squeezed out a smile. "Lord Praetor, how should we deal with Linley?"

"Linley?" Osenno let out a cold sneer.

The middle-aged man's heart quailed. He could sense the temperature in the room drop. Osenno said coldly, "Immediately send someone to deliver the news to the Sacred Isle and inform the Holy Emperor. If Linley is not eradicated…then in the future, if the Radiant Church is eliminated, it would most likely have been done by Linley!"

Osenno was truly frightened by Linley's rate of improvement.

Last year, in August, when Linley dueled with Haydson, Linley's strength was just on par with Haydson. But now, in the following April, just eight months later, in eight short months…Linley's power had increased by an astonishing amount.

In the past, that violet sword was incapable of harming Haydson. But now, it harmed him. Osenno!

"He…he's not yet thirty!" Osenno's heart was filled with worry.

“Yes, Lord Praetor. I will immediately send someone conveying your words to the Holy Emperor.” The middle-aged man hurriedly said.

Osenno sighed in his heart. “If…if in the past, the people we had killed and sacrificed to the Radiant Sovereign didn’t include Linley’s mother, then perhaps…perhaps Linley would have become the central pillar for the Radiant Church, capable of helping us overthrow the Cult of Shadows.”

But it was too late.

Linley and the Radiant Church were now openly opposed.

…….

The Anarchic Lands. Currently, there were three primary factions. One was the Radiant Church. One was the Cult of Shadows. And the final one was Linley’s. Because of the battle at the prefectural city of Sherry Duchy, the Radiant Church was now quite silent and kept its head low.

The Cult of Shadows wouldn’t interfere. They wanted to see Linley and the Radiant Church continue to fight against each other. Naturally, they too, would just keep their head low and watch. As long as Linley didn’t antagonize them, they definitely wouldn’t antagonize Linley.

In this sort of situation.

Linley’s side was the most vigorous and expanded the most, and was now preparing the festivities for the founding of the Baruch Duchy. Currently, the Baruch Duchy had three prefectural cities, nineteen small cities, and led over twenty million citizens. This sort of large faction was actually about the size of half of a regular Kingdom.

This was an extremely large Duchy.

And Linley? His legend was once more sung about in songs by the countless masses…his list of myths now included destroying six Four-

Winged Angels and defeating the Praetor of the Ecclesiastical Court of the Radiant Church. Linley's fame continued to grow, causing many warriors and magi who worshipped Linley to head to the Baruch Duchy in a wave.

They wanted to fight for Linley!

…..

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.

Master Longhaus' residence. Delia was in the courtyard as always, soaking up the rays of the sun and enjoying the fresh air while studying Master Longhaus' notes on magic.

"Miss Delia, the Dawson Conglomerate's representative is here." A guard ran over and reported to her.

Delia's eyes instantly lit up.

"I, Big Yellow, am willing to bet that it is a letter from Linley." The Worldbear next to Delia chortled, while Delia glanced at him sideways. She said, "Quick, let him come in."

"Yes." The guard said respectfully.

A short while later, a beaming, middle-aged man entered the courtyard. Seeing Delia, he immediately withdrew a letter from his robes. "Miss Delia, here is your letter. It comes from the Anarchic Lands." This wasn't his first time delivering a letter to Delia.

As soon as Delia saw this person, she knew that the letter came from Linley.

"Miss Delia, I bid you farewell." The middle-aged man was extremely polite.

Delia laughed in excitement. After the man left, she immediately opened the

letter and began to read. The nearby Worldbear craned his big head over to sneak a peek as well. Delia couldn't help but turn and glance at him. "Big Yellow, I'm getting angry."

The Worldbear immediately let out a couple of deep, awkward chuckles.

Delia laughed as well, then continued to read. But as she did, Delia's body began to tremble.

"Wonderful. Wonderful." Delia was so excited that she immediately rose to her feet. She could feel her heart racing and her entire body was beginning to be covered in sweat.

"Delia, why are you so happy?" The Worldbear asked puzzledly. Even the nearby Wildthunder Stormhawk stared towards Delia in confusion. Just at this moment, a middle-aged man appeared in the courtyard. It was the wind-style Grand Magus Saint, Master Longhaus.

"Teacher." Delia said respectfully.

Master Longhaus laughed as he looked at Delia. "Hatton tells me that you received a letter from Linley. It seems there is some joyous occasion?"

Delia stared at the Worldbear, who began to laugh delightedly.

"Teacher." Delia was still quite excited. "It is Linley's letter. He tells me… that the Baruch Duchy is going to be founded this year, April 16th. That's today. Linley is finally founding his Duchy. This is…this is wonderful."

Master Longhaus knew everything there was to know about Delia's affairs.

"As happy as that? Is it because you're about to be able to see Linley?" Master Longhaus teased.

Delia's face had turned red. Was it because she was embarassed, or was it because she was too excited?

“Alright, Teacher. I can’t talk right now. I have to go home first and tell my parents about this. According to what they previously said, now that Linley has erected his Duchy, they shouldn’t be against me and Linley being together anymore.” Delia said.

Master Longhaus nodded.

“Fine. Go.”

Delia repeatedly nodded. She immediately rode the Wildthunder Stormhawk ‘Parry’ and left her teacher’s residence. Watching Delia fly away, Master Longhaus shook his head and sighed. “Delia’s father won’t be so easily swayed, I’m afraid.”

…….

Within the Leon clan’s residence.

Dylla Leon and his wife were both quite puzzled. Why had Delia pulled them here to this quiet room to discuss something?

“Father, mother, there’s something I need to tell you.” Delia took a deep breath.

Delia’s mother started to laugh. “What sort of joyous event is it, that has you all worked up like this?”

Delia began to laugh as well. “Right. Father, mother, didn’t you say that if Linley and I were together, it would lower his Imperial Majesty’s faith in our clan? But now, Linley has erected his own Duchy in the Anarchic Lands.”

“Erected a Duchy?” Dylla Leon and his wife looked at each other.

“Delia, my dearest daughter, I hope you aren’t lying to your father. After all, I’ve never heard of this.” Dylla Leon said.

Delia secretly laughed.

Linley's Baruch Duchy was being founded today. It would take at least ten days or half a month for the news to spread several thousand kilometers away to the Yulan Empire. It would be a strange thing if her father did know about it.

"It is true. I just have some advance information. Linley's Duchy is named the Baruch Duchy." Delia said with certainty.

Dylla Leon and his wife exchanged glances.

"It's true. Father, mother, can it be that you don't believe me?" Delia frowned.

Dylla Leon chuckled while shaking his head. "I believe you. But why must you marry Linley? Although Linley has founded a Duchy…can being the wife of a Grand Duke compare to being the Empress of an Empire?"

Delia's smile froze.

"Father, what are you trying to say?" Delia's face was more serious than it had ever been.

Dylla Leon stretched his hand out, placing it on Delia's shoulder. Sighing, he said, "Delia, it is true that Linley is a Saint and is powerful. But Emperor Rande is the Emperor of our Yulan Empire. If you marry him, that would be wonderful as well. And…it would be very beneficial for our entire clan."

Delia looked at her father, her eyes filled with disbelief.

"Father. Are you still that father who loved me?" Delia's voice had turned hoarse.

Dylla Leon was startled, and his wife was taken aback as well.

"Father. I love Linley, love him very much. But this isn't because he is a

Saint. When I met him at the Ernst Institute, I fell in love with him. Was he a Saint back then? Why do you have this sort of idea in your mind about the type of person your daughter is?"

"Also. Ever since returning from the Institute, in the past eight or nine years, why is it that I refused to accept the advances of any young man in the imperial capital? Why? Can it be that you don't understand?"

Delia truly didn't know what her parents were thinking.

"Ever since I came back from the O'Brien Empire and told you about Linley, what I wanted was your blessings. But…instead you tried to stop me." Delia's eyes were glimmering with tears. "I admit, your words are very logical. Back then, if I was to be with Linley, it would indeed lower Emperor Rande's trust in our family."

"Father. Mother. I love you. I love my family. That's why I didn't want to put you in a difficult position. Although I wanted to go meet Linley a long time ago, for your sake, I've been enduring. I've stayed in the imperial capital, because I cherish my family and cherish you."

"But you try to convince me to marry this person and that person. What is it? Can it be that Linley is inferior to those nobles? Why are you always like this?" In the past seven or eight months, Delia had felt extremely depressed.

"I finally waited for this moment. Linley's erected his own Duchy. I today came to you filled with excitement. I hoped…I hoped I would receive my parents' blessings. But…" As Delia spoke, her tears began to come out. "You disappoint me. You truly disappoint me."

Dylla Leon and his wife were silent as they faced their daughter.

"Father. Mother. I love you both very much, and cherish you both very much." Delia took a deep breath. "If you still love and cherish me, I hope that on the day of my wedding with Linley, I'll receive your blessings. But if you no longer care about this daughter of yours…then forget it."

After finishing her words, Delia turned and left.

Dylla Leon and his wife were both somewhat stunned.

Only after their daughter had gone did they come to their senses.

“Delia!” They called out, but Delia was already seated on the back of the Wildthunder Stormhawk and had flown away.

….

Delia was mounted on the Wildthunder Stormhawk and looking down at the rapidly shrinking imperial city. She had bid her teacher farewell, and then left the imperial capital. The wind blew against Delia’s golden hair, and also blew her tears dry.

Right now, Delia’s aching heart only longed to see Linley. Only in Linley’s embrace would she find comfort.

The Wildthunder Stormhawk let out a few hawk cries as well, as though comforting Delia.

Slowly…the Wildthunder Stormhawk and Delia disappeared into the northern horizon.

……

Blackdirt City. At the base of Mt. Blackraven.

“Linley is currently training at Mt. Blackraven.” Zassler pointed towards a mountain while laughing. Seeing the beautiful scenery of Mt. Blackraven, Delia managed to clamp down on her excitement. “Mr. Zassler, is Linley always there?”

Zassler laughed. “Almost his entire time is spent there training. Bebe is there as well.”

As they spoke, they headed up the mountain.

Following that creek, Zassler led Delia to the side of a lake. Delia instantly saw Linley. Right now Linley was dressed in a long, sky blue robe. His long hair was unbound, and he was wielding a violet longsword on the surface of the lake, testing out his sword attacks.

Wherever the violet sword passed, space itself seemed to ripple, making Linley seem indistinct and hazy.

Clearly, Linley was currently immersed in training.

“Ah! Delia. You came. BOSS!!!!!!” Bebe, who had been playing around in the water, immediately saw Delia, and he immediately let out an excited cry.

Linley’s movements came to a halt, and he turned around.

Seeing Delia, Linley seemed to have suffered a blow to his spirit. His entire body froze…but then, he flew over at high speed. As for Delia? A smile had made its way onto her face, and her eyes had instantly turned moist.

Chapter 18 – (title hidden)

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 18, (title hidden)

Linley landed on the side of the lake. Filled with excitement, he stared at Delia, whose eyes were filled with unshed tears. He had the sudden urge to immediately take Delia into his arms. But although he had this urge, he still just stood there in front of Delia, his mouth open, but not knowing what to say.

He had ten million words in his heart, but he couldn't get a single word out.

"Linley, you haven't changed." Delia laughed. She was the one to reach out to him, with her left hand.

Seeing that white, dainty hand, Linley was stunned for a moment. Delia glanced at him out of the corner of her eyes. "Hey, Dumbo, are you going to make me use the Soaring Technique, just so that I can get to the center of the lake?" There was a distance of several dozen meters from here to the center of the lake. If Delia didn't use the Soaring Technique, she wouldn't be able to get there.

Seeing the way Delia was looking at him, and her ivory white arm, Linley immediately reached out with his own right hand and took hers in his own.

"So, uh, Linley. I'll be leaving now." Zassler finally spoke.

Linley and Delia's faces both suddenly flushed pink. Linley turned to glance at Zassler, speechless. Zassler winked towards Linley, then turned and ran away at high speed.

"That's just how Zassler is." Holding hands with Delia, Linley tapped his foot, summoning a wind which swirled around both of them. Gently… Linley and Delia floated to the center of the lake. They stepped onto the edges of the stone platform, then sat down next to each other.

The two continued to hold hands. Feeling the soft warmth of Delia's hand in his own, Linley felt as though he was currently standing in the clouds. Delia's face was slowly turning pink as well. The atmosphere between the two instantly grew more intimate.

Suddenly…

Linley saw that in the water, not too far away, Bebe had popped his little head out and was using his sneaky little eyes to peek at Linley and Delia.

"Oh! Boss! You guys keep doin' what you were doing. Bebe's gonna just go somewhere else to play for a bit. You guys keep on at it!" Bebe, knowing that he had been discovered, immediately sank down into the water. However, Linley and Delia didn't notice that far away, on top of a tree near the peak of Mt. Blackraven, a Wildthunder Stormhawk was stealthily peeping at them.

"Hehe." Delia immediately began to giggle. "Linley, Bebe really is adorable."

Linley nodded and laughed as well. "That's just how Bebe is. Oh, right. Delia, why is it that you waited so long to come here after you left the O'Brien Empire? Did something happen?" Linley still remembered how, when Delia had left, she said she would soon come find him.

Delia nodded, but she fell silent.

The events which had occurred in the imperial capital had truly hurt Delia. She was very disappointed in her parents. Linley's words…instantly made Delia feel downcast.

"What happened? Talk to me." Linley squeezed Delia's hand.

"You really want to know?" Delia stared at Linley, her face close to his.

Linley nodded.

“If you listen to the story, then you’ll have to marry me.” Delia suddenly said.

“Wha….” This sneak attack truly caught Linley offguard. Delia truly was the only woman Linley was currently interested in, but for him to immediately marry her…Linley, in his heart, was still rather nervous. His first relationship’s failure had caused Linley to be rather defensive in these matters.

He still didn’t dare to totally invest himself in any relationship with a woman.

He was afraid he would be utterly heartbroken once again.

“I’m just joking with you.” Delia began to laugh, then let out a flirtatious sniff. “Sheesh, Linley. Can’t you just pretend or just tease me for a moment?” Delia’s words made Linley feel less awkward.

Delia took a deep breath. “I can tell you the story now, if you still want to hear it?”

Linley immediately nodded.

Delia settled her thoughts. Holding Linley’s hand, staring at the peaceful lake waters, she slowly said, “Linley. When I received my clan’s letter saying that I had to go back, I found, upon my return…my grandmother was perfectly fine. There was nothing wrong with her at all.”

Linley frowned.

When Delia had written him a letter saying that her grandmother was in excellent shape, Linley had already sensed that there was something that lay hidden.

“Afterwards, I found out that my parents found out from Teacher that the reason I stayed behind in the O’Brien Empire was to be together with you.

Thus, my parents used this scheme to get me to come back and to part from you." Delia laughed bitterly as she looked at Linley. "This scheme was a very clumsy one, but I still fell for it."

Linley was puzzled. "Your parents…"

"It was for the clan."

Delia sighed. "Before you had started your own side in the Anarchic Lands, virtually everyone in the six major forces believed you were a member of the O'Brien Empire. The O'Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire have always viewed each other as principal rivals."

Linley understood. The most powerful forces in the Yulan continent were these two Empires.

"In my parents' opinion, if I were to marry you, then that would be tantamount to colluding and allying with an important Saint of the enemy. The Emperor of the Yulan Empire would have less trust in our clan. Thus, my father and mother didn't want me to be with you."

Delia glanced at Linley. "Naturally though, this was just my parents' opinion. They didn't know…that we've never discussed marriage."

Linley could only rub his nose.

Delia said falteringly, "The imperial capital is filled with people pursuing me, and my parents kept on trying to persuade me to marry someone else. I wasn't willing! I really hate that! Linley…I really wanted to leave right away and come looking for you, but I didn't want to break the relationship between me and my parents. I really love my parents!"

"I understand," Linley said consolingly.

Of course he understood how Delia was feeling. This was because he, too, was a man who cherished his relatives and his parents.

“I really wanted to come find you, but I didn’t want to lose my parents either.” Delia chewed on her lips, lowering her voice. Linley could clearly sense that Delia was squeezing his hands more tightly now.

Linley rested Delia’s hand on his leg.

Delia glanced at Linley, a hint of a smile appearing on her face. “I was waiting…waiting for you to found your Duchy. But my parents said that I should marry the Emperor of the Yulan Empire and become the Empress.”

“Hrm?” Linley felt a hint of anger in his heart.

Delia’s parents really were going too far.

“I wasn’t willing. That time, I got angry with my parents.” Delia shook her head helplessly. “I’ve always been a filial, obedient child in front of my parents. But that time, I really lost my temper. I told my father clearly that I would rather die than marry those people.”

Linley felt a grateful feeling in his heart. For a woman to be willing to do this was truly moving.

“I was waiting…and finally, the letter I waited for arrived. You had founded the Baruch Duchy.” Delia looked at Linley. “At the time, I was extremely excited. My parents would no longer block us from being together.” Linley felt extremely happy as well.

As Linley saw it, Delia should have come happily after having a good talk with her parents.

“But when I told this news to my parents…they once again advised me to marry that Emperor.” A bitter look was on Delia’s face.

“How can they be like that?” Linley’s face changed.

For them to act like this…Linley could totally understand how Delia must have felt.

“Right, how can they be like that?” Delia’s eyes had a sad look in them. “I had went to them happily, but I didn’t expect that this would be the result. Actually…I should’ve predicted it. My father is the leader of our clan. Of course he has to think about things from the clan’s standpoint. In his eyes, the Emperor is very talented and has a high status. Marrying him would also be of benefit to the clan. Marrying his Imperial Majesty truly would have been absolutely perfect. However…he had never considered things from my standpoint.”

Delia took a deep breath. “So. I didn’t spend any more time on vain hopes.”

Delia looked at Linley. “I just came. I didn’t bother with discussing it with my parents. I left the imperial capital and came to find you.”

Seeing the look in Delia’s eyes, Linley, in his heart, had a powerful surge of emotion…he felt moved, saddened, and fulfilled!

“Delia…” Linley wanted to say something, but the words stuck in his throat and wouldn’t come out.

The girl in front of him…

For his sake, she had waited ten years by herself.

For his sake, she could ignore the allure of becoming the Empress.

For him, she even left her beloved parents and journeyed all alone to this place to find him.

…..

Linley suddenly felt a strong sense of humiliation. He suddenly felt that he really despised himself, really hated himself!

“She’s a girl. She’s sacrificed so much for you, but from start to finish, you’ve never even…you’ve never even given her as much as a promise.”

Linley was berating himself mentally.

“What am I waiting for? What do I have to hesitate about?”

He looked into Delia’s eyes. Delia had always made her feelings very clear, and had always been waiting for him…but he had always been hesitating. But today, Linley knew that he could no longer hesitate. He had kept on hesitating for so long…

What he had gained was already extremely precious.

“She gave up everything and waited ten years. And she is still waiting… without any promises from me.” Linley saw the tears in the corner of Delia’s eyes. His heart twitched hard, and he howled at himself, “Do you want to have Delia wait forever? Until the day her heart dies and she leaves by herself?”

Linley felt a stabbing pain in his heart.

“Crunch.”

That layer of ice surrounding Linley’s heart finally shattered and melted away.

Linley didn’t want to wait any longer.

He didn’t want to make himself wait!

And he didn’t want to make Delia wait either!

“Linley, what’s wrong?” Seeing the look on Linley’s face, she couldn’t help but feel concerned.

Linley suddenly stretched out his hand and held Delia by her shoulders. Delia could feel her heart begin to thump. Linley stared at Delia, took a deep breath, then said seriously, “Delia…marry me!”

Delia's eyes turned as round as the moon as she stared at Linley in shock.

Upon these words coming out, in Linley's consciousness, a bolt of lightning flashed past his mind, illuminating every single scene he had shared with Delia. From the very first time they had met at the Ernst Institute and he had seen that adorable girl. Their time spent together as children. That farewell kiss that night at Wushan Township…

One scene after another.

He felt a warm feeling in his heart.

With a wife like this, what more did he need?

"Linley." Delia cleared her throat, staring at Linley with wide eyes. "What did you just say? Can you say it again? Please?" Delia's voice was quavering.

Linley stared at Delia. One word at a time, he said to her, "Delia. Marry me! Marry me, Linley. Be with me forever, and let us never be separated. Alright?" Linley's voice was trembling as well. Right now, Linley felt very nervous.

Right. Nervous.

Delia looked into Linley's eyes. Suddenly, her tears came rolling out.

How long had it been?

How long had she waited for this day?

Even when they were children and their affection was rather indistinct, she had hoped for this day to come one day. Hoped that Linley would become her knight in shining armor.

One day after another, she had waited…

That year, she had only been a little girl in her teens. But now, she was already a twenty eight year old lady. Over ten years had passed. Whether it was when Linley and Alice had been together, or when Linley had gone missing for ten years, or when her parents had stopped them from being together, she hadn't given up.

The only thing she was afraid of was…

Linley abandoning her!

She had always been waiting. She hadn't even dare to force Linley to give her any promises!

"Are you willing?" Seeing Delia's entire face covered with tears, Linley felt deeply touched and moved.

Delia suddenly threw herself into Linley's embrace, wrapping her arms around him tightly and saying repeatedly into Linley's ear, "I'm willing, I'm willing, I'm willing…"

Linley could feel the warmth from Delia's body. In his heart, he felt more content than he ever had in the past.

[TL – The name of this chapter was, 'Delia, Marry Me!']

Chapter 19 – Kingdom

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 19, Kingdom

Linley clearly could sense how, when he held Alice in his arms when they were young, he had felt happy. But now, when he held Delia in his arms, Linley felt, in the deepest part of his heart, a sort of contentment, a spiritual fulfillment!

This…was true happiness!

The ice covering Linley's heart had totally melted.

Delia's face was covered with smiles. She had never been so happy before.

"Linley. I'm so happy." Delia gently whispered into Linley's arms.

"Me too." Linley gently stroked Delia's fragrant hair and touched her sleek shoulders.

Delia obediently rested herself against Linley's chest. She murmured, "Linley, I feel as though I'm in a dream…tell me, is this real?" That tough woman who could make even an Emperor feel nervous was now as obedient as a child.

"It's real, it's real." Linley could feel the warmth from Delia's body, and a warm, protective feeling arose in his heart.

Delia suddenly raised her head and looked at Linley haltingly. "Linley, if one day, Alice comes to find you, what would you do?" Delia was truly afraid, afraid that Linley would be taken away by someone else.

"Alice?"

Linley's hand paused, but then he continued to stroke Delia's hair. He said

comfortingly, “The affection between the two of us ended long ago. I feel neither love nor hatred to her. After all, she can choose who she likes…” Linley stroked Delia’s face and chuckled, “Delia, don’t overthink things. I’ll never leave you. If I abandon you…then I would truly be an utter fool.”

“Delia, am I an utter fool?” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia laughed, laughed very happily.

“You are a genius. You are the greatest genius in the Yulan continent.” Delia harrumped ‘coldly’.

Seeing Delia’s full, bewitching lips, Linley suddenly had an urge…without hesitating at all, Linley lowered his head and planted a kiss on Delia’s lips. Delia seemed to have been struck by lightning, and her body quivered. But then, she sank into the kiss….

This was the second kiss Linley and Delia had shared.

The first was that night at Wushan township.

After that, they were a long time apart.

Delia didn’t say anything, just staying in Linley’s embrace. A hint of shyness was still on her face. To Linley, Delia was so utterly mesmerizing right now.

“Ah, hell, I can’t watch any more, I can’t watch any more, I can’t watch any more!!!!” Suddenly, Bebe burst out from underneath the lake water.

Linley and Delia both were startled.

Bebe, in mid-air, laughed openly and honestly. “Uh, sorry, Boss! Sorry, Boss’ Wife! You two can continue.”

“Boss’ Wife?” Linley and Delia couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

“So you were peeking the entire time, Bebe. Tell me, how should I punish you?” Linley guessed by now that Bebe was peeking the entire time, and actually, Bebe had utilized the Shadowshape technique and been hiding within the shadows of the lake.

Linley hadn’t been searching for Bebe with his spiritual energy, so naturally he hadn’t noticed.

“Punish me?” Bebe pondered for a moment. “Oh. Punish me with a lady mouse, one as powerful as me. I’m very lonely right now.” Bebe put on a very pitiable look.

Linley and Delia couldn’t help but both begin to laugh.

“Unfortunately, I am an extremely, unnaturally gifted mouse that might appear once in a thousand years.” Bebe sighed, then tittered. “Boss, Boss’ Wife…when are you getting married? I’m getting impatient for you.”

“Get married?”

Linley looked at Delia. It was indeed time to discuss this issue.

….

The governor’s manor. Blackdirt City.

When Barker and the others saw Linley and Delia holding hands and walk in together in such an intimate manner, all of them were stunned. Zassler was the first to recover and intentionally said in a loud voice, “Lord Linley, what’s going on between you and Ms. Delia?”

Because of Linley’s status, when they were in front of other people, Zassler addressed Linley as ‘Lord’ Linley.

“Delia and I are getting married.” Linley smiled.

This news had the effect of a forbidden-level magical spell, instantly

causing everyone present to explode with sound.

“Wow! Getting married?” Gates was the first to shout.

“Whoaaah! Ms. Delia, you and Lord Linley are getting married? Wonderful!” Rebecca jumped up in excitement as well. The entire hall instantly became a pandemonium of excitement. There was only a single person whose smile was rather forced. Jenne. In recent days, Jenne had immersed herself in managing the affairs of the Duchy.

She hadn’t expected to suddenly receive this sort of news.

But of course…Jenne had expected that this day would come, long ago.

There was nothing which Linley kept from Delia, and she knew of the history between Jenne and Linley. Smiling, Delia walked over to Jenne, then took Jenne’s hands in her own in an extremely warm manner. “Jenne, when Linley and I are getting married, you come be my bridesmaid, alright?”

Looking at the smile on Delia’s face, Jenne nodded.

Delia immediately pulled Jenne into a friendly manner off to one side and began chatting with her.

Linley walked towards Barker, Zassler, and the others. “Delia and I have already come to a decision. We will directly host a wedding ceremony. The day of the wedding will be three months later, on July 2nd.” Linley laughed as he looked at Barker. “Barker, I think…in the next three months, it would be good if we can take over the nearby Duchies and found a Kingdom before three months are up. Can you do this?”

Linley wanted his wedding with Delia to be an exciting affair.

But three months, in Linley’s opinion, seemed to be rather short.

“Three months? No need.” Barker was extremely confident. “One month is

enough."

"A month?" Linley was puzzled. "It would be hard to just organize and drill the troops in a month, and we'd have to also reorganize the conquered Duchies. That's all rather troublesome. How can you take them over in a month?"

Gates laughed loudly. "Lord, there's something you aren't aware of. Please take a look." Gates walked to a military map that had been hung up on a wall. "Lord, take a good look at the current disposition of forces in the Anarchic Lands. These twenty-plus Duchies all belong to the Radiant Church, while these all belong to the Cult of Shadows. But these…these are unaligned."

Linley immediately understood.

This power distribution was quite strange.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows both controlled Duchies in the center of the Anarchic Lands as well as in the south. They occupied more than half of the Anarchic Lands. Only the northernmost areas next to the Forest of Darkness were unaligned.

The Anarchic Lands were rectangular in shape. If you were to divide it into four equal quarters, then the northernmost portion was the portion closest to the Forest of Darkness.

Neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows wanted that area!

"Lord, our Baruch Duchy is located near the Forest of Darkness." Barker explained.

"Oh. In the past, I never paid attention to this." Linley stared carefully at the military map. "The Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church have taken over half of the Anarchic Lands. But why is it that they don't want the northernmost area which is located close to the Forest of Darkness?"

The Baruch Duchy, after all, had been set up close to the north.

“Lord Linley.” Zassler walked over, laughing. “This is why we say that we can easily unify the area in a short time.”

“Oh?” Linley looked at Zassler with a questioningly glance. “Is it because it belongs to neither side, which makes it easier to unify?”

Zassler explained, laughing, “That’s not what I mean. I mean, aside from our own Duchy, most likely more than half of those seven other Duchies near the Forest of Darkness would be willing to directly surrender to us.”

“More than half would surrender to us?” Linley didn’t understand. “Can it be that they feel pressured by our power?”

Zassler explained, “Lord Linley. Have you forgotten that every few decades or every decade, there will be a massive wave of magical beasts from the Forest of Darkness? Each wave of magical beasts first attacks the border Duchies closest to the Forest of Darkness, and thus the battles rage on the most in these Duchies as well.”

Linley instantly understood.

“Are you saying that these Duchies…”

“Right. These Duchies are the poorest Duchies in the Anarchic Lands and the most pitiable ones as well.” Zassler sighed. “The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are both uninterested in unifying it, because…resisting the magical monster waves costs too much gold, far more than these Duchies can generate.”

Linley now fully understood.

This was a barren wasteland!

Unifying this region meant that one would have to struggle against the countless magical beasts in the Forest of Darkness. Linley could totally

imagine how brutal those battles would be…each time, most likely over a million people would die, or even more.

“Linley, of the seven Duchies here, aside from a few who don’t want to surrender, the rest all deeply desire to have a strong base of support. And you, Lord…are a Saint and would make an excellent, powerful support.” Zassler laughed. “Not just them. Even the commoners wish for you to lead and unify them. That way, they would be safer.”

Barker laughed. “And Lord, even now, there have been at least three Duchies who sent people to come and negotiate the terms of their surrender. Only, because their territories are not immediately adjacent to ours, we need to first take over the Duchies east of us.”

Linley nodded. “Since that’s the case, then do it as quickly as possible.”

Gates slapped his chest and boasted, “Lord, a month from now, a full quarter of the Anarchic Lands will be under your control. Of course…this is the poorest quarter in the Anarchic Lands, but at the same time, it is the most militant and ferocious quarter.”

Linley nodded. “Zassler, make the arrangements. Have my wedding invitation letters be sent to these people. I’ll send the list of names to you in a while.”

“Yes, lord Linley.” Zassler acknowledged, and then laughed. “Then are you planning to openly announce the news of your marriage?”

Linley looked towards the side at Delia and Jenne who were happily chatting. Linley had a desire; no matter what, he would definitely have to make Delia happy.

“Publicize it! I want the day of the founding of the Baruch Kingdom to be the day of my grand wedding!” Linley said heroically.

Clearly, this meant that a month from now, they would unify their quarter of the Anarchic Lands under their banner, while three months from now…the

Baruch Kingdom would be founded and the wedding would also be held. From a territorial standpoint, controlling a quarter of the Anarchic Lands meant controlling quite a large swathe of territory.

The size of it was significantly larger than the former Kingdom of Fenlai.

In population alone, there was roughly a hundred million citizens.

….

A lonely island in the oceans. The most core area of the Radiant Church – the Sacred Isle. It received news from the Anarchic Lands.

On the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple. Heidens was reading this letter.

“When Linley and his magical beast combined forces, they were able to force Osenno to retreat?” Staring at this letter, Heidens felt as though he had been stricken heavily. Osenno’s power was unquestionable. Especially his ‘Doppelganger Technique’, which let him divide into four. It was incredibly terrifying.

Even Haydson probably would have been badly injured and then killed by Osenno.

After all, it was simply too hard to block the ‘Doppelganger technique’.

“Osenno speaks the truth.” Heidens’ heart tightened. “If this continues, then…”

The Radiant Church didn’t fear Linley.

But Linley wasn’t alone. He had that mysterious, godlike magical beast, Bebe. He also had five Undying Warriors…and his little brother.”

“In the future, when Linley reaches the Saint level in his human form and the five brothers also reach the Saint level in human form, and when Linley’s little brother reaches the Saint level in his human form…that

means they have seven peak-stage Supreme Warriors. If you add in that magical beast rodent which is no inferior to Supreme Warriors…that means they will have eight!"

Every single peak-stage Supreme Warrior was capable of being described as the most powerful of Saints.

Seven Supreme Warriors and the magical beast Bebe, if they were to attack the Sacred Isle in masse…Heidens could totally imagine the scene. The Radiant Church would be in a battle for its very life, and in the end, it would probably perish.

"Unacceptable. Linley must die."

Heidens turned to look at Cardinal Guillermo. He ordered, "Guillermo, go invite Commander Lehman, quickly!"

"Commander Lehman?" Guillermo was shocked.

In the Radiant Church, the most powerful person was the Holy Emperor, Heidens. The most frighteningly mysterious person was Osenno. The most admirable and most respected person was the spiritual leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf. But the person who caused the most dread… was the legendary Commander of the Zealots: Lehman!

The Zealots all possessed a unique power.

"Why are you hesitating? Quick, go!" Heidens rebuked.

Heidens didn't dare to hesitate any longer. He had to send a man whose power was no lower than that of Osenno's; Commander Lehman. If the two joined forces…then it would be surprising, indeed, if they were still unable to overcome Linley!

Chapter 20 – A Procession of Arrivals

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 20, A Procession of Arrivals

One of the prefectural cities in the northern part of the Anarchic Lands. Ankh, Gates, and Boone each wielded their massive long-handled greataxes, standing atop the city walls like wargods. Corpses littered the ground around them, and fresh blood stained the walls and the ground below the walls.

The nearby soldiers were all terrified.

They didn't dare to fight back anymore. All of them put down their weapons.

"Of the seven Duchies, five Duchies have voluntarily surrendered. The previous Duchy was easily taken over. You are the last one." Gates grabbed the leader of the town guards, his furious, ox-like eyes staring into the terrified, quivering leader. "Motherf*cker, why fight back when you don't have the power to? Isn't that the same as just ordering your soldiers to commit suicide? Eh?!"

It was indeed tantamount to suicide.

The two sides were on totally different levels of power. Gates and the other two had killed a huge number of the enemies by themselves.

Hoisted high into the air, the captain of the guards said in terror, "Lord, this has nothing to do with me. It was the orders of the Grand Duke."

"Fifth Brother." Ankh laughed. "Enough. Let's go down. Big Brother and the others are all down below. Most likely, they are already drinking celebratory wine. After having taken over this prefectural city, when we add it to the five which surrendered and the one we just took over, that means we have finished our mission!"

Gates and Boone both began to laugh loudly.

In twenty short days, all of the eight Duchies which bordered the Forest of Darkness had been reformed into a kingdom; the Baruch Kingdom. The Baruch Kingdom had over a hundred million people under its rule and took up a quarter of the Anarchic Lands.

Although the people here were poor, they were very violent and ferocious.

In the richer areas of the Anarchic Lands, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows still remained in control. From this point onwards…the Anarchic Lands had been divided into three major spheres of influence.

The number one genius in the history of the Yulan continent, Linley, was going to hold a wedding with Ms. Delia of the Leon clan of the Yulan Empire! The day of this wedding was going to be the same day the Baruch Kingdom was formally established.

Time: Yulan calendar, year 10010, July 21st.

Place: The future capital of the Baruch Kingdom – Baruch City (currently known as Blackdirt city, being rebuilt).

This news quickly swept throughout the Anarchic Lands like a tornado, and at the same time, it was made public to the various powers in the entire Yulan continent. One letter of invitation after another was sent to the various locations of the Yulan continent…countless eyes were focused now on the Anarchic Lands.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The Leon clan's main hall.

In terms of status, the person with the highest status in the Leon clan wasn't the clan leader, Dylla Leon. It was Dixie Leon!

First of all, Dixie would be the next clan leader. But more importantly…he was the personal disciple of the supporting pillar of the Yulan Empire, the

High Priest. The High Priest was one of the most powerful entities in human society. In the hearts of the countless masses, perhaps only the War God could compare to the High Priest.

An astonishingly powerful expert who had wielded the power of the Deities before the Yulan calendar had even started. The vast majority of the people the High Priest accepted as a personal disciple ended up becoming Grand Magus Saints!

The personal disciple of the High Priest, and a future Grand Magus Saint! And a dual-element Grand Magus Saint at that!

Dylla Leon was currently frowning as he handed the letter of invitation to his son, Dixie.

His back was ramrod straight, and his golden hair was long and unbound. He had an aura of icily keeping all comers at arm's length. This was just the way he was. Dixie. After reading the letter, however, a rare smile actually touched his lips. "Linley didn't disappoint my little sister after all."

"Dixie, what do you think we should do?" Dylla Leon asked.

Dixie glanced at his father, then frowned. "What do you mean, what we should do? My little sister has finally gotten the happiness she has been pursuing for over ten years. Of course we need to celebrate."

Dylla Leon and his wife hesitated just a moment.

"Father, Mother, I know what you two were scheming." Dixie said calmly. "You must allow your vision to expand beyond the limits of mortal, worldly power. The true controllers of the destiny of the Yulan continent…are still the likes of the War God, the High Priest, and the various Saints."

Dixie had to admit that his parents were rather short-sighted.

"Dixie, my beloved son, no matter how powerful Linley is, how can he possibly influence the Yulan empire?" Dylla sighed. "After all, the root of

our clan lies in the Yulan Empire."

Dixie glanced at his father. "Father, I must tell you something. You underestimate Linley."

"Oh? How so?" Dylla Leon was a bit puzzled.

Dixie said seriously, "Actually, this time before I returned, Master gave me an order."

"Master? Ah!!! The High Priest!" Dylla Leon's eyes instantly turned round. Good heavens. Ordinary people like them might never meet the High Priest in their entire lives. But now, the High Priest had personally issued an order to their son.

They suddenly felt honored and glorious beyond compare.

"The High Priest instructed me and two of my fellow apprentices to go to the Anarchic Lands and be his representatives in congratulating Linley." Dixie said seriously.

Dixie didn't understand it either. Why did someone at the level of the High Priest need to express such friendliness towards Linley? Especially since Dixie knew…the War God and the High Priest were on opposing sides. Linley was on good terms with the War God. Logically speaking, the High Priest should be on bad terms with Linley.

But it seemed…

The High Priest actually wished to express friendliness towards Linley.

"The waters of the Yulan continent are deep indeed." Dixie sighed to himself.

The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The Walsh clan.

"Milord, this is the letter of invitation from Master Linley, from the

Anarchic Lands." The housekeeper respectfully handed a letter to George. By this point in time, George had already been appointed the successor to the clan leader possession by the Walsh clan.

George accepted the letter.

"Haha…Third Bro, Third Bro. I didn't expect that you'd end up with Delia after all." George began laughing loudly as he read the letter.

"The world plays jokes on us all." George still remembered how, when they had first entered the Ernst Institute, Delia would often go looking for Linley. But when George had seen Alice and Linley start to date, he had thought that Linley and Delia would never work out.

Unexpectedly, in the end, after ten years, the circle was completed.

Linley and Delia had gotten together.

The leaders of all the organizations in the Yulan continent which either had some relationship with Linley or were extremely powerful all received letters of invitation. After all, this wasn't just a wedding ceremony. It was also the founding of a Kingdom. Naturally, they had to invite the leaders of the various organizations.

Ever since Linley had entered the city of Blackdirt, Blackdirt had begun to engage in a construction boom. By now, Blackdirt City, despite being territorially small, was extremely exquisite and lavish. Even the region outside Blackdirt City was beginning to engage in large-scale construction.

Linley had invited many guests. Amongst the first group to arrive in Blackdirt City was Wharton, Nina, Uncle Hillman, and Grandpa Hiri.

In the governor's mansion. A scene of excitement and joy.

"Big brother, Nina and I have decided that from today onwards, we won't be leaving. We'll be staying here at your place." Wharton laughed loudly. "Big brother, you've worked so hard to establish your own realm. How can

we live a life of luxury and comfort in the imperial capital? We're embarrassed to do so!"

Linley was secretly overjoyed.

He didn't actually have much free time to manage the Kingdom. Most of his time was spent training.

"Wharton, I've been waiting a long time to hear you say these words." Linley laughed.

Linley suddenly stared towards Nina's stomach, then looked at Wharton with suspicion. "Wharton, it seems Nina's stomach has gotten a bit bigger. Can it be that…"

Nina and Wharton exchanged glances, then began to laugh. The nearby Uncle Hillman laughed as well. "Linley, you truly are a Saint-level expert. Your perception is truly amazing. Right. Princess Nina is already pregnant. Linley, you've fallen a bit behind in this area. In the future, you and Delia need to work hard."

Linley and Delia didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Sister Nina, have you decided on a name for the child yet?" Delia asked.

Nina nodded. "I have. Whether it is a boy or a girl, we are going to name it Cena [Xi'ne]."

"Cena." Linley looked at his little brother Wharton. "Does this have some sort of special meaning?" Wharton immediately began to laugh loudly, exchanging a knowing glance with Nina. Then he said secretively towards Linley, "This is a secret between me and Nina. I can't tell you."

Linley clapped his hands to his head. "What? You are keeping secrets from me, your big brother?"

Everyone in the hall laughed joyously. Halfway through the event, Linley

secretly pulled Wharton into a nearby flower garden, and the two siblings took a private walk.

“Big brother, what is it?” Wharton waited for them to enter the garden before asking.

Linley looked at his little brother. Probingly, he asked, “Wharton, I’ve always been hoping that you would decide to come here and live with me. Now that you are here, I truly am happy. But…is Nina truly happy about it as well, in her heart? Don’t make her do something she doesn’t want to do.”

Wharton nodded. “Big brother, Nina had a long talk with me. She decided to come with me, and in the future, when she has some free time, she’ll occasionally go back for a visit.”

“That’s the only way, I suppose.”

Linley laughed as he looked at Wharton. “Wharton, after the Baruch Kingdom is formally founded and Delia and I are married, I intend to directly coronate you as the King of the Baruch Kingdom.” Linley was telling his little brother in advance, so as to mentally prepare him.

Wharton was stunned. “King?”

”I’ve already named the Kingdom ‘Baruch’. Naturally, it must be ruled over by the heirs of the Baruch clan.” Linley had made this decision a long time ago.

Wharton didn’t decline. “Fine, then. I’m currently only a warrior of the eighth rank. It should be twenty or thirty years before my human form reaches the Saint-level. Right now, there’s not much of a point to training to gain a higher level of understanding. When I reach that level, I’ll pass the throne down to my son, or perhaps your son, big brother.” Linley understood what Wharton was thinking; Wharton would need to spend time training after all.

But training in understanding the Laws was something which required

someone to be in harmony with and able to clearly sense nature, and to sense the various movements of the elemental essences. That required an extremely high level of elemental essence affinity. Generally speaking, magi had high levels of elemental essence affinity, but the same was not true for warriors. Their elemental essence affinity was not as high.

The same was true for Wharton. Right now, he virtually couldn't sense nature at all. Thus, it would be extremely hard for him to gain any insights on the Laws.

But upon reaching the Saint-level, things would change.

Upon reaching the Saint-level, one would have a much greater level of ability to sense the surrounding elements. Saints could clearly sense the elements and quickly increase their level of insight! This was the same reason why it was so hard for one to advance from being a warrior of the ninth rank to the Saint level. Only a small number of warriors of the ninth rank had a high elemental essence affinity.

However, Supreme Warriors didn't need any particular level of insight. So long as they could train their battle-qi to a certain level, they would naturally reach the Saint-level.

After spending three days in the city of Blackdirt, Linley and Delia left the city and returned to Mt. Blackraven and began a life of quiet training. As for Bebe, whenever he got bored, Bebe and Haeru would go around the Forest of Darkness, slaughtering magical beasts.

…..

The light blue skies had a dark streak of light and a white streak of light flashing through it at high speed, heading in the direction of Blackdirt City in the Anarchic Lands.

The black streak of light was Osenno.

Today, Osenno was dressed in a long black robe with golden threads

interwoven into it. His devilish purple hair flowed freely in the wind. By his side was a powerful middle-aged man dressed in a loose, long white robe. This powerful middle-aged man's body was an astonishing 2.5 meters tall.

A height of 2.5 meters was virtually unheard of in humans.

His long white robes fluttered in the wind, and his short green hair gleamed like steel needles. His face seemed to have been carved from stone, but there was an extremely faint seal located in the center of his forehead. The seal of a white flame. His body emanated an oppressive, heart-shaking aura.

This person was the Commander of the Zealots. Lord Lehman.

The two flew together, side by side, as Osenno constantly explained about Linley and Bebe's combat tactics and abilities to Lehman. "That's everything. Lehman, by now, you should have a good sense of the situation, right? How confident are you?"

Lehman glanced at him, his eyes flashing with light. His deep voice echoed forth from his massive chest, "Osenno, that man and his magical beast are inferior to you in strength, but you were still defeated by them. However, that isn't surprising; your single-target attacks are not that strong. What you mainly rely on is the bizarreness of your Doppleganger Technique. As for me…I can kill both of them by myself."

Osenno understood, as well, that his single-target attacks were relatively weak.

But for Lehman, it was the opposite; his forte was in single-target attacks.

"Blackdirt City is up ahead." Osenno pointed at the city below them. "Next to it is Mt. Blackraven. According to my intelligence, Linley spends virtually all of his time there at Mt. Blackraven. We should head directly to Mt. Blackraven."

Lehman focused his gaze on the below Mt. Blackraven.

Instantly, the two charged down towards Mt. Blackraven.

Chapter 21 – The Laws of Light

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 21, The Laws of Light

Osenno and Lehman flew at high speed towards Mt. Blackraven, while at the same time, they spread their spiritual energy to encapsulate the entirety of Mt. Blackraven.

“Linley is at Mt. Blackraven. He’s the one wearing blue!” Osenno immediately said.

“Got it.”

Lehman’s eyes were flashing with light, and at the same time, the energy in his body began to be roused. In Lehman’s hands, a three meter long longstaff suddenly appeared. Although it was a ‘longstaff’ to him, to an ordinary person, a better word would be ‘tree branch’. However, given Lehman’s size and 2.5 meter height, his massive hands could fully wrap around the thick ‘longstaff’, which had various mysterious runes carved onto it.

“That rat-type magical beast isn’t there, but there are two other Saints present, along with an ordinary woman. Could that be Delia?” Osenno was rather puzzled.

But for now, there was no need for them to over-think things.

“Boom.” It was as though a bolt of lightning had blasted down. Lehman, staff in hand, charged down at high speed. He ignored all others, focusing on his target: Linley.

Linley and Delia were currently entertaining guests. Desri, and his wife! Desri and his wife had just gone to the Frost Goddess Shrine, and on the way back, they came to visit Linley and to offer him their congratulations. Just as the two couples were chatting happily…

A terrifying surge of power descended from the heavens. The target: Linley!

“Out of the way!” Linley’s face changed, and he immediately pushed Delia aside. A surge of wind suddenly surrounded Delia, while Linley himself immediately transformed into the Dragonblood Warrior form. His sky-blue robe was directly shredded into pieces, and the adamantine heavy sword appeared in his hands.

A silver longstaff that carried boundless force with it had already appeared in front of his eyes.

“Whoosh!”

The air itself rippled and folded, as though space itself was being ripped apart. The silver longstaff smashed directly towards Linley, who sensed that he was facing a greater danger than he ever had before. He could sense that he had been totally locked down, with the surrounding space applying pressure on him.

“Linley.” Delia, who had been pushed to the side, stared at him with eyes filled with terror.

But just at this moment…

A milk-white, gentle light appeared in front of Linley, appearing like a white silk cloth. That silver longstaff, which seemed to contain enough force to obliterate the entire Mt. Blackraven, smashed against the milk-white light and the white ‘silk cloth’ formed from energy.

The white silk cloth only caved in slightly, and the longstaff could no longer push any further.

But the longstaff wielding Lehman felt the rebound force, which sent him flying backwards before landing a hundred meters away. Osenno also landed by Lehman’s side, staring at Desri in astonishment. He knew that it was this person who had blocked Lehman.

“Who are you?” Osenno spoke.

“Osenno, it’s you!” Linley’s face became grim. Delia ran over to Linley’s side. She was extremely worried.

Right now, Linley and Desri were in the center of the lake, while Lehman and Osenno were on the shore. The two sides stared at each other across the water.

“The Radiant Church’s forces?” Desri frowned.

Linley was secretly startled. “Desri used to belong to the Radiant Church. He wouldn’t still feel a degree of nostalgia for them, would he?” At the same time, Linley immediately spoke mentally to Bebe, “Bebe, stop messing around in the Forest of Darkness. Come back, quick. The Radiant Church’s forces have come knocking.”

“Boss, I’ll come back at top speed.” Bebe immediately replied.

Linley carefully looked at Osenno and Lehman, especially Lehman, whose 2.5 meter tall frame was terrifying to behold and gave Linley a forboding feeling. “Just then, the one who attacked me was the big guy. That big guy is definitely not one bit weaker than Osenno.”

“Delia, make sure you protect yourself.” Linley whispered to Delia by his side him.

Delia didn’t dare to make a sound. She didn’t want to distract Linley.

“Who are you?” Osenno stared at Desri. “This is the private affair between Linley and the Radiant Church. I hope you won’t interfere. It seems that you, too, are a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Light…today, if you step aside, it would be considered giving the Radiant Church face. In the future, we will definitely repay it.”

The proud and arrogant Lehman didn’t say a sound.

The technique that Desri had used just then had let Lehman know exactly how much of a threat this man was.

“My name is…Desri.” Desri finally spoke.

“Desri, it’s you?” Osenno and Lehman’s faces both changed dramatically.

Desri was a legendary figure within the Radiant Church. Long ago, the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst founded the Holy Union. In that era, Desri was the spiritual leader of the Ascetics of the Radiant Church.

His position was equivalent to the status of the current Lord Fallen Leaf.

Osenno and Lehman exchanged glances. They both could sense the terror in each other’s heart. They were facing a Saint from the era of the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst. From then to now, one could simply imagine how much more powerful the person had grown.

“Lord Desri, I hope that you will consider the former affection and relationship between our two parties and not get involved in this matter.” Osenno said sincerely.

“Hrmph. In your dreams.” An ice cold voice rang out from behind. It was the nearby Pennslyn.

Pennslyn gave Linley a ‘no need to worry’ look. Hearing Pennslyn’s words, the formerly nervous Linley felt a sense of gratitude. But Linley still turned to look at Desri…after all, the decision maker here was Desri.

“What are you thinking about?” Pennslyn said angrily as she saw that Desri was hesitating. As far as Pennslyn was concerned, there was nothing to hesitate over.

Delia began to grow nervous as well. She looked at Desri with concern.

“Lord Desri, can it be that you’ve forgotten the kindness which Lord Ernst

showed you in the past?" Osenno hurriedly said. Desri hesitated for a while, but then sighed and said, "I won't allow you to kill Linley. You can leave, now."

Desri did indeed feel some degree of affection for the Radiant Church.

Especially Ernst. In the past, the two had been as close as real brothers.

"Lord Desri!" Osenno said frantically. "This Linley killed six Angels and shows no mercy to our Radiant Church at all. If he is allowed to develop, especially alongside those five Undying Warriors, the threat he will pose to our Church is simply too great. Can it be, Lord Desri, that you are just going to watch as the Church is destroyed by him?"

Desri frowned.

"I told you to leave." Desri's voice turned heavy.

Osenno and Lehman glanced at each other. They had already made a decision.

Lehman stared at Desri and said loudly, "Desri, since you are going to be like this, we don't have any choice either." They now addressed Desri directly by his name. Lehman's body suddenly began to glow with a white fire, and a terrifying surge of power began to emanate from him, turning the grass nearby into nothingness.

The silver longstaff in his hands flashed like a bolt of lightning.

"Zealot?" Desri chuckled calmly.

Osenno's body began to emanate with that black fire, and his body transformed into four Osennos. "Lehman, I'll deal with this Desri. I'll hand Linley to you." Osenno felt that although he was weaker than Desri, by using his doppelgangers, he should be able to hold down Desri without too much trouble.

“Madame Pennslyn, I entrust Delia to you.” Linley whispered.

“Don’t worry.” Pennslyn immediately pulled Delia away. Delia didn’t say anything, just giving Linley a meaningful look. Linley felt his heart swell with the desire to do battle: “No matter what, for Delia’s sake, I can’t die.”

Linley immediately stared coldly at Lehman.

“So what if your attack is powerful? Can you kill me with one blow from your staff?” Linley’s body began to be surrounded by that roiling azurish-black energy. “My Pulseguard Defense has already reached 152 layers. With my draconic scales protecting me as well…kill me in one blow? In his dreams!” Linley felt confident in his heart.

His Profound Truths of the Earth was nothing to laugh at. “At this time, I have to use my last, fallback technique.” Linley’s left hand gripped Bloodviolet. At the critical juncture, he would have to utilize the terrifying baleful aura held within Bloodviolet.

“Boom!” A terrifying sonic boom could be heard as Lehman charged forward.

At the same time, the four Osennos also emitted sonic booms as he charged forward to try and entangle Desri. Because of his sudden acceleration, the nearby wind began to howl, and stones were actually blown loose from Linley’s stone house and were knocked far away, while the water of the lake began to rise in waves.

“How laughable!”

A clear sound rang out from Desri’s mouth. Desri simply stood there in mid-air, while his entire body began to emanate a dazzling white light. Instantly…Desri transformed into the sun, and lines of white light shot towards all four of the Osennos as well as Lehman.

No matter how fast someone was, they couldn’t be faster than light.

The four Osennos and Lehman were all struck instantly by those beams of white light. All four Osennos shuddered, and three of them instantly collapsed, while the last one blazed with that black fire, using it to resist the white light.

“Ah!” Lehman let out a furious howl, and the seal of white fire on his forehead instantly lit up.

“Bang!” Lehman actually smashed straight through Desri’s protective barrier with his silver longstaff. Desri was extremely shocked. Before he had the chance to let out a second attack, Linley and Lehman exchanged blows.

After having broken through Desri’s first barrier, Lehman saw a pair of cold, dark golden eyes and a dark blue heavy sword. Lehman was startled. “It’s Linley!” Not hesitating at all, he swung his longstaff down and smashed it hard against Linley.

Linley didn’t hold anything in reserve either, attacking simultaneously with his adamantine heavy sword and his Bloodviolet longsword.

“Die!” Lehman howled with rage, a fierce look on his face. The seal of a white flame on his forehead became even brighter, and the silver longstaff in his hands seemed to have created ripples in space as it smashed down against Linley with terrifying force.

Linley instantly activated the ‘baleful aura’ hidden within Bloodviolet.

Linley’s dark golden eyes suddenly contained a hint of red, and his consciousness immediately became filled with that familiar scene…the boundless sea of blood, with skeletons and corpses of various species littering the place. Corpses of ten meter tall giants covered with scales and two horns on their forehead. White skeletons that had a hint of strange gold tint…

All of the corpses and skeletons had the aura of at least a Saint, and some were even more terrifying.

“Ah!” Lehman suddenly let out a wild howl.

That terrifying baleful force penetrated his consciousness. That baleful aura that belonged to an incomprehensibly powerful expert caused even the likes of Lehman to quail in fear. Even the white flame seal on his forehead shook, and the longstaff in his hands naturally weakened.

“Bang!”

The silver longstaff and the adamantine heavy sword clashed.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 152 Layered Waves!

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword was smashed so hard, it was knocked back towards his own body. When that terrifying force struck his Pulseguard Defense, the energy of the defense immediately sprang up, but a terrifying power which he had never before experienced still was able to break through the defense.

Linley was knocked back flying…

“Linley.” The distant Delia grew frantic.

With a somersault, Linley landed on the edges of the lake. He flashed Delia a smile. “Don’t worry. I’m fine.” As he spoke, Linley forced down the blood that had risen to his throat. Seeing the shattered draconic scales on his chest, Linley couldn’t help but be secretly startled.

If just then, he hadn’t used the Bloodviolet longsword, he probably would’ve been deeply injured and collapsed.

Lehman was still standing in mid-air, a hint of blood leaking from his mouth. His gaze was clear now.

“Bastard.” Lehman let out a furious howl, once more smashing down against Linley with his silver longstaff.

“Hrmph.”

A cold sneer could be heard, and a translucent ripple that could be seen by the naked eye emanated forth from Desri’s body. In the blink of an eye, it struck against Lehman. Lehman’s massive body trembled, and then collapsed down from the skies. “Splash!” He sank directly into the lake.

“The two of you, don’t force my hand!” Desri’s face had turned grim.

Chapter 22 – The Four Sided Gathering

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 22, The Four Sided Gathering

“Such powerful spiritual energy. He is able to cause injuries from a distance with it. Lehman wasn’t able to resist at all.” Linley was utterly shocked. “No wonder the War God said that Desri and Fain are two of the five Prime Saints who were at the doorway to becoming a Deity. They only need to take that last step! They are simply too strong.”

Osenno no longer dared to move. His heart, too, was filled with terror.

“Burst.” A human figure charged up through the water. It was Lehman. Lehman, at this point, obediently flew to Osenno’s side. His face was exceedingly pale, and he stared at Desri with a hint of dread in his eyes.

Desri looked at these two men with furrowed brows. “You know that in the past, I was the leader of the Ascetics. You should also know that I am a Grand Magus Saint.”

Osenno and Lehman exchanged glances.

Grand Magus Saints specialized in powerful spiritual energy, especially this sort of expert like Desri, who had trained for millennia. When using his spiritual energy, he was on a far higher level than his good friend Hayward. In terms of spiritual energy or in understanding the Elemental Laws of Light, Desri was at the absolute limit of power a Saint could reach.

With one more step, he would become a Deity.

“Lord Desri.” Osenno once more addressed Desri as ‘Lord’.

Osenno still remember the information regarding Desri in the scrolls of the Radiant Church. He knew that Desri had been on extremely close terms with the legendary Holy Emperor Ernst.

“Lord Ernst worked all his life to raise up the Radiant Church. He founded the Holy Union. He let the Radiant Church rise to glory! These five thousand years, we have never given up and never stopped working hard.” Osenno’s voice was very low.

Desri frowned.

In his heart, he didn’t feel much affection for the Radiant Church. But, he felt a great deal of guilt towards Ernst. Ernst was like an older brother to him! His older brother had indeed labored on behalf of the Radiant Church his entire life, and in the end, he had gone to the Divine Plane of Light.

“But Linley…not only is he himself a Dragonblood Warrior, he has a younger brother and five Undying Warriors under his control. He also has that magical beast, Bebe, who is no weaker than him.” Osenno looked at Desri. “In a few decades, that means he will have seven peak-stage Supreme Warriors and a terrifying magical beast. If they were to attack together, our Church would be finished!”

“Lord Desri, our Church would be finished!”

“The life’s labor of Lord Ernst would be destroyed!”

Osenno’s voice caused Desri’s heart to tremble. He still remember the help and affection which Ernst, his ‘big brother’, had given him.

Linley, Pennslyn, and Delia were standing together. Pennslyn sighed softly to Linley. “The only person Desri feels guilty towards is Ernst. He must feel very torn right now.”

The Ernst Institute got its name from Ernst.

Linley naturally knew much about Ernst as well.

A sigh could be heard from Desri. Desri stared at both sides, then said in a bright voice. “How about this. Both sides take a step back. Consider it

giving me, Desri, some face. Alright?"

"Take a step back?" Osenno and Lehman stared at Desri in confusion.

Linley was mystified as well.

"Both of you, come to the center of the lake." Desri said. Linley trusted Desri, and so with Delia's hand in his own, he flew to the center of the lake. Osenno and Lehman also quite obediently flew to the center of the lake.

Linley and Delia stood on one side of the massive central boulder, while Osenno and Lehman stood on the other side. Both of them were on guard.

"What is Desri planning?" Linley frowned.

Desri smiled calmly. "I know very well that there is a deep grudge between the two of you. How about this…in the next twenty years, the Radiant Church is not permitted to kill Linley."

"Twenty years?" Osenno was unhappy. "Lord Desri, twenty years later, Linley will be at the Saint level in human form. Even if we wanted to kill him, we wouldn't be able to. Unfair. Unfair!"

"Shut your mouth!" Desri had a hint of anger on his face.

Osenno's heart shook. He suddenly remembered at this moment…it was Desri whose words counted.

"This requirement is the same as asking the Radiant Church to take a step. As for you, Linley, I also wish for you to take a step back." Desri looked at Linley.

"Lord Desri, pray tell." Linley said.

Desri smiled apologetically. "Osenno's words are true as well. Linley, you yourself aren't a major threat, but combined with your little brother and those five Undying Warriors, you represent a force of seven Supreme

Warriors. That is indeed capable of destroying the Radiant Church. Thus, I want you to agree that from today onward, if you want to seek revenge on the Radiant Church, you have to do so by yourself. The others, including your magical beast, cannot."

Hearing these words, Osenno and Lehman both let out a sigh of relief.

What sort of place was the Sacred Isle?

That was the headquarters for the entire Radiant Church. They had a huge pile of Angel Saints, and the likes of Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf. And given that the Sacred Isle was also protected by some large-scale magical formations…anything short of a Deity would definitely die if they attacked.

"Do you understand what I intend, now?" Desri looked at the two sides.

"Our side, within the next twenty years, is not to act against Linley. In exchange for Linley only being allowed to seek revenge on his own?" Osenno laughed calmly. "I can agree. If we can't even hold you off by yourself, then there is nothing I can say on behalf of our Radiant Church if we are destroyed."

Osenno agreed easily as well.

The Radiant Church wasn't afraid of Linley. They were afraid of the entire group of people behind Linley.

"Linley, how about you?" Desri looked at Linley.

In his heart, Linley was rather unwilling.

"Exterminate the Radiant Church by myself?" Linley still knew his own limits. "A Church which has existed for ten thousand years…that's no easy task. But to reach the Deity-level…even Cesar spent five thousand years. The legendary War God who reached the Deity-level in a short time period actually was simply fortunate enough to find a divine spark. If it was just based on his own abilities, who knows how long it would have taken?"

Linley frowned.

“Linley!” Desri spoke again. Osenno and Lehman were both looking at him.

Linley suddenly turned to look at Delia by his side. Linley’s heart trembled. “No matter what, I can’t let Delia come to harm.” Linley made up his mind. He immediately said to Desri, “The Radiant Church is not permitted to attack me within the next twenty years, fine, but there’s one more clause… they are forever forbidden from harming my family and friends.”

“Fine.” Osenno hurriedly said.

Linley looked at Osenno, a hint of cold light in his eyes. He secretly said to himself, “By myself? Although I might not dare to attack the Sacred Isle, but if I ever meet you people traveling alone, can’t I kill you then? If you want, then just stay inside the Sacred Isle forever!”

For the sake of his family and friends, Linley chose to accept this compromise.

Osenno and Lehman both let out secret sighs of relief. After all, Desri was on Linley’s side. They didn’t have much support here.

In the middle of the lake in Mt. Blackraven, Linley’s side and the Radiant Church both accepted this treaty.

“If in the next twenty years, Linley comes to attack us, we will counterattack. If he dies due to our counterattack, we cannot be blamed.” Osenno hurriedly said. Linley sneered. “Hrmph. Don’t worry. I don’t plan to play word games with you.”

Linley suddenly laughed loudly. “If in the future, someone like the War God leads experts to attack the Sacred Isle, I’ll also seize the opportunity to go. I cannot be blamed in that situation.”

“That naturally wouldn’t be your fault.” Osenno shook his head.

If the War God wanted to destroy the Radiant Church, most likely the Radiant Church would’ve been finished long ago.

After the two agreed to the treaty, Delia suddenly said, “Then what about the territory in the Anarchic Lands? Will Saints take part in the battles?”

“Saints?” Osenno frowned.

Indeed. The Radiant Church had a large expanse of territory under its control in the Anarchic Lands, and Linley did as well. If the two came to a fight…once Saints got involved in the battle, then perhaps before the twenty years was up, Linley and the Radiant Church would come to blows.

“How about this.” Desri spoke.

“Mortal, worldly battles…Saints are not to be involved.” Desri looked towards Pennslyn. “Madame, go find O’Casey [Ao’ke’xi] of the Cult of Shadows. Tell him I need to speak with him. We’ll wait for you here.”

“Fine.” Pennslyn nodded, then flew away immediately.

“O’Casey? Who is he?” Linley frowned as he asked.

Osenno said, “O’Casey is the Elder Judge of the Cult of Shadow’s Tribunal. His position is equivalent to mine in the Radiant Church. He is also the general supervisor for the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands.”

Linley nodded.

“In mortal battles, Saints are not to participate. Linley…dare you accept?” Osenno stared coldly at Linley.

“Barker and his brothers aren’t Saints in their human form. They should be able to participate in battle, right?” Linley asked.

“Of course. They are just five warriors of the ninth rank.” Osenno said disdainfully. “Linley, in terms of the numbers of experts of the ninth rank, you are far from being able to match our Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley smiled confidently, not paying any attention to him.

“Delia.” Linley held Delia’s hand. Right now, he was still in Dragonform, and his hand was covered with scales, but Delia didn’t mind at all. She looked at Linley, and in a soft voice, she said, “Linley, thank you.”

Delia knew that Linley had compromised for her sake in part.

Linley didn’t say anything.

After all these years and having suffered so much, Linley had learned something. Sometimes, a single mistake caused by being unbending could cause someone to suffer a lifetime of regret. The occasional compromise that allows one’s loved ones to be safe also allowed one to pursue revenge with even greater ferocity!

“What, I am unable to eliminate the Radiant Church by myself?”

Linley secretly said to himself, “In history, has there ever been a Supreme Warrior Saint who was also a Grand Magus Saint?” When his power reached its utmost peak, Linley would prepare to challenge the Sacred Isle. Even if he wasn’t able to destroy it, he should be able to escape with his life.

A long time later.

“Boss!” A black shadow streaked towards him at high speed.

“Bebe.” Linley felt delighted.

Bebe hopped directly onto Linley’s shoulders, then stared angrily at Osenno. “This guy came again?”

“It’s fine now.” Linley said.

“Hrmph.” Bebe sneered coldly, then said mentally, “Boss, don’t be afraid of these people. In the Forest of Darkness, I made friends with a few Saint-level magical beasts. All of them are really powerful. When the time comes, I’ll ask them to help out and deal with these guys together.”

“Saint-level magical beast friends?” Linley stared at Bebe in astonishment.

When Linley trained, Bebe would often go have fun in the Forest of Darkness. Unexpectedly, he had actually made friends with Saint-level magical beasts.

“Right. They are all quite powerful. Haeru’s race is normally at the ninth rank. He just barely broke through. His power amongst Saint-level magical beasts is just ordinary. But these friends that I made, like ‘Big White’, he is a Thunderwinged White Tiger. The ‘Big Guy’, he is a Golden Behemoth. Or ‘Big Snake’, a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor.”

Linley was utterly speechless. How could Saint-level magical beasts make friends with other Saint-level magical beasts so easily?

“Right. One of the Saints is also a rat-type magical beast.” Bebe chortled.

Linley was startled.

A Saint-level rat-type magical beast?

“Unfortunately, he’s male.” Bebe mentally said with resignation.

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. As they mentally conversed, he asked, “What does that Saint-level rat-type beast look like? Is he like you?”

“No.” Bebe shook his head. “That Saint-level magical beast is all purple. He’s quite handsome. However, he treats me quite well. He even gave me

many precious, delicious things to eat.” Bebe’s face was all smiles.

Linley secretly sighed.

A purple Saint-level rat? The books had no record of such a creature. It seems the books were incomplete.

“But Boss, all of those friends of mine are very arrogant. They only became my friends after fighting with me.” Bebe’s face was covered with a delighted smile.

Just at this moment, two human figures streaked through the air at high speed. One of the two was Pennslyn. As for the other, it was a man covered in a long black robe. It should have been Osenno’s counterpart in the Cult of Shadows; Senior Judge O’Casey.

Chapter 23 – The Wedding

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 23, The Wedding

O'Casey landed in the middle of the lake, while at the same time, removing his enveloping black robe. Inside, he was wearing a tailored suit, like a gentleman at a banquet.

"Lord Desri, I've heard of your famous name long ago, but only today do we meet. I truly feel honored." O'Casey smiled as he bowed, and then turned to look at the nearby Osenno. "Oh, Osenno. Who is this person next to you?"

Lehman's voice rumbled out, "Commander Lehman of the Zealot Division!"

"Mr. Lehman." O'Casey smiled and nodded.

"Master Linley, ten years ago, our Cult of Shadows invited you to come to us, but sadly, at that time, the Radiant Church had sunk its claws into you and wouldn't let you go." O'Casey looked at Linley and began to grumble, as though seeing an old friend of his.

Linley could only smile politely.

"Enough." Desri laughed calmly. "Everyone should know what the situation is. It truly is rather inappropriate for Saints to participate in mortal battles. The Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire both do not use Saints in normal battles. Saints are just used as a source of fear."

Desri sighed. "I've been in the Anarchic Lands for thousands of years now. I don't want it to be too anarchic. Thus…I suggest that in the battles between your three sides, Saints are not to participate. Would you be willing to accept this?"

“Yes.” Osenno nodded.

Linley smiled and nodded.

Desri immediately looked at O’Casey, who grinned. “Do you need to ask? Of course I accept.”

“Wonderful.” Desri’s face grew solemn. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved four scrolls of paper and a pen. “Then today, let the four of us write down a treaty. If any side goes against it…then the other three sides will join forces to destroy them!”

Linley frowned, while O’Casey and Osenno were also startled.

Right now, the strongest of the four sides was definitely Desri’s side. After all, Desri had Higginson, Hayward, and the other Saints behind him.

“Sign here.” Desri quickly wrote down the four agreements, then handed them to Linley, Osenno, and O’Casey.

With a smile, O’Casey was the first to sign his name. Linley didn’t hesitate either as he put down his name.

“Sign!” Osenno signed his name as well.

“Excellent.” Desri smiled. “Each of us will have a copy of this agreement. But of course…this agreement is founded on our personal honor. If someone is so shameless as to allow Saints to do battle, then destroy the evidence…you must know that no secret is airtight. Once it is discovered, then the other three sides will immediately destroy the fourth.”

……

It was nightfall now. The night fog covered the skies.

Linley and Delia were enjoying the peaceful night.

“From today onwards, our life will become very peaceful.” Delia’s face had a hint of happiness on it. Smiling, she said, “In the future, we’ll no longer need to worry about many things. Linley, in the future, will you regret today’s decision? Actually, you didn’t have to agree today. I think Desri would still have supported you.”

Linley, too, had the feeling that Desri was still on their side.

Even if he had not agreed, Desri wouldn’t have allowed the enemy to kill him.

“No. I will never regret today’s decision.” Linley held Delia in his arms. “Because if I did not agree, given my current power, although I can protect myself, I am not necessarily able to protect you. If you were to die…I think I would regret it for the rest of my life!”

It was because he had thought of Delia and of his family and friends that Linley had made this decision.

“Thank you.” Delia rested her head against Linley’s chest and said in a soft voice.

Feeling her soft warmth, Linley felt all the more certain that this decision was the right one.

…..

Yulan calendar, year 10010. July 21st. The city of Baruch (formerly Blackdirt City) was a hubbub of commotion. The construction of Baruch City was now complete. The inner city was a renovated Blackdirt City. The construction style of Baruch City focused on ‘simplicity’ and ‘practicality’.

The palace didn’t take up too much area. It was only two square kilometers in size.

In the past, when the Baruch Duchy had been founded, they had begun the renovations. After five months, they had finally finished. Most of the

buildings in the palace were a single story tall, while the tallest buildings were only two stories high. The main hall of the main palace was very large, capable of holding several hundred people.

And today, the main hall was full of guests.

“Your Majesty, Linley, I come as the representative of the Emperor of the Rohault Empire to bring our sincerest congratulations.” A middle-aged man said respectfully to Linley. Linley toasted him with a cup of wine, while Delia held her arm in his. Smiling, the two toasted him.

The two were very tired from all of this, but they were very happy as well.

“So many people have come today.” Wharton walked to Linley’s side. “Big brother, the envoys from the Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, and the O’Brien Empire have all arrived. Oh…look. Those ones are from the kingdoms of the great plains of the far east.”

“Mighty King Linley, on behalf of our King of the Muhan Kingdom, we would like to convey our King’s most sincere congratulations.” An envoy from the Muhan Kingdom of the great plains of the far east also toasted Linley, and Linley naturally had to give him face and respond.

Linley and Delia shared a smile.

“Linley, you seem rather tired.” Delia said softly.

“I’m not too bad.” Linley forced out a smile. Linley hated having to welcome guests, but today was his own wedding. He couldn’t hide from this responsibility. Delia said softly, “How about this? For those people of lower status, let me handle them.”

In the past, Delia worked as a diplomat. Thus, making conversation was quite easy for her.

And she was much better at it than Linley, who would just say a few short, blunt sentences.

“Lord Cardinal Guillermo of the Radiant Church has arrived!” The voice rang out from outside the hall, and the entire hall fell rather silent. Linley and the Radiant Church, and the grudges between them, was known to everyone here. After all, the news of Linley’s slaughter of those six Angels had spread across the continent.

But now, the Radiant Church was actually sending someone over?

“King Linley.” Guillermo bowed modestly as he stepped forward.

Linley still remembered how, ten years ago, Guillermo had went to the Ernst Institute to recruit him. Now, after more than ten years, Guillermo was still a Cardinal, while he was now the King of a Kingdom whom even the Radiant Church had to compromise with.

“Mr. Guillermo, please come inside and rest.” Linley said with a smile.

“The disciples of the War God’s College have arrived!”

The people who came were Castro and two other personal disciples.

“Lord McKenzie has arrived!”

Yet another Saint.

“Lord O’Casey of the Cult of Shadows has arrived!”

Hearing the list of names, the envoys of the various kingdoms and Empires all headed off to the various corners to engage in conversation. Good heavens. All of them were Saints.

“Three disciples of the High Priest of the Yulan Empire have arrived!”

Linley and Delia immediately went to welcome them. Seeing these people, Delia immediately called out with excitement, “Big brother!” The person in the center of this three-person delegation was Dixie. Dixie and his two

fellow apprentices both walked over, offering Linley their congratulations.

“Linley, you finally lived up to my little sister’s hopes.” In front of Linley, Dixie finally showed a smile.

When they were at the Ernst Institute, Linley and Dixie had been acknowledged as the two major geniuses.

Dixie suddenly whispered into Linley’s ears, “Linley, let me warn you. In the future, you better not make my little sister angry. Otherwise…even if I’m not able to deal with you, I’ll ask my Master to personally make an appearance!”

“No need for your Master to make an appearance. I’ll engage in self-punishment.” Linley began to laugh.

Today, Linley could feel that he and Dixie were on very close terms now. Seeing how friendly Linley and Dixie were being, Delia felt extremely happy.

Right at this time.

“The disciples of the ‘War Saint’ of the great plains of the far east have arrived!” The voice ringing out from outside the hall confused Linley.

Who was the ‘War Saint’?

Desri had arrived very early today, and he went to Linley’s side. He whispered, “Linley, currently, there are four people on par with me in the Yulan continent. The number one expert of the great plains of the far east, the ‘War Saint’ Tulily [Tu’li’lei] is one of them.”

Linley now understood.

There were five Prime Saints. One was Fain. Another was Desri. So a third was this Tulily. Who were the other two?

A middle-aged plainsman with a turban around his head walked in, two people behind him. Seeing Linley, the plainsman smiled. “King Linley. I, Moor [Mao’er], would like to bring my master’s most sincere greetings and congratulations.”

“My deepest thanks to Mr. Tulily.” Linley smiled.

The eyes of the plainsman, Moor, lit up. “So King Linley also knows of my master’s name. Ah. Lord Desri.” The plainsman immediately bowed upon seeing Desri.

Moor had previously seen his master, Tulily, personally spar with this Desri. His master, Tulily, had said that this Desri was on par with his own power. Naturally, Moor was extremely courteous.

“The Holy Lady of the Frost Goddess Shrine has arrived!”

Desri and Pennslyn immediately went to welcome her. Naturally, Linley and Delia went as well. Linley felt quite curious. How powerful exactly was this mysterious Frost Goddess Shrine?

This ‘Holy Lady’ had long, jade hair, and she seemed as cold and as unapproachable as a block of ice. Behind her were two beautiful girls.

“Big sister.” Pennslyn was boundlessly overjoyed.

Desri whispered to Linley, “Linley, this ‘Holy Lady’ of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Rosarie [Luo’sha’li], is the number one expert of the Frost Goddess Shrine. Her power is on par with mine.” Hearing these words, Linley understood that this Rosarie should be yet another of the Five Prime Saints.

He now knew four of the Prime Saints: Fain, Desri, Tulily, and Rosarie.

“Who is the last one?” Linley secretly wondered. Unfortunately, the last expert didn’t arrive, even by the time the wedding was concluded.

In the main hall of the Baruch Kingdom, there was a huge pile of Saints. All

the envoys of the various Empires were engaged in conversation, while the Saints were engaged in conversation with the other Saints. Desri and Rosarie and the others were together as well.

Each level was segregated quite clearly.

“The envoy of the Yulan Empire has arrived!”

The person who had come was George.

“Second Bro.” Linley began to laugh loudly, and George excitedly ran towards him, then intentionally made a deep bow. “O most puissant King Linley! I, George, on behalf of his Imperial Majesty…urgh!” Linley whacked George on the shoulder, not letting him get the words out.

“Enough, sheesh. Acting like this in front of me.” Linley was overjoyed. “Come, come see Fourth Bro with me.”

“Fourth Bro is here as well?” George was extremely excited.

Ever since they had separated seven or eight years ago, he hadn’t seen Reynolds a single time.

“Fourth Bro!” “Second Bro!”

As soon as Reynolds and George saw each other, they instantly shouted and then threw their arms around each other. And right at this time…

“The Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived!” Before the announcement was even finished, Yale rushed into the main hall. He immediately saw Linley, Reynolds, and George.

“Haha, Second Bro, Third Bro, Fourth Bro, your Boss has arrived!”

Laughing loudly, Yale charged towards them.

The many people in the hall all looked at these four friends. If ordinary

people had caused such a scene, they probably would've been rebuked already. But this was Linley and his closest friends. No one dared to say a thing.

Ten years late, the four bros had finally come together in one spot.

"Hey, as soon as this kid Linley has become a King, he starts acting differently. His attendants even ask me where my letter of invitation is? And asks me who I am? Jeeze, what a pain!" A lazy looking middle-aged man in a long, loose robe suddenly appeared in the middle of the hall. He grabbed a nearby cup of wine, then took two sips, seeming to enjoy it very much.

"Mm. Not bad." An expression of satisfaction was on his face.

"Lord Cesar?!" In the main hall, Barker suddenly saw this middle-aged man. He would never forget this Deity who had saved his life.

Chapter 24 – That Night

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 24, That Night

Barker and his brothers immediately rushed forward, but Cesar frowned in impatience. “Don’t get so close to me. Don’t let me become the center of attention. Low-key, low-key!” The five brothers could only grin awkwardly as they greeted Cesar from far away.

“Gurgle.”

As he sampled the wine, Cesar went hiding into a corner of the room. Whenever he encountered the envoys of the kings and Empires, he would toast them, not putting on any airs of being a Deity at all.

“Cesar.” Suddenly, a cold voice rang out.

Cesar turned. An awkward smile couldn’t help but to appear on his face. The person who had spoken was the Holy Lady of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Rosarie. Rosarie stared at Cesar. She snorted a few times, but she didn’t say anything else. Being stared daggers at like this, Cesar couldn’t do anything except grin stupidly.

“You’ve already become a Deity, but you still act like this.” A hint of moisture seemed to appear in the eyes of Rosarie, the icy beauty.

Cesar squeezed out a smile. “Rosarie, aren’t you having a wonderful time being the Holy Lady? Alas, I’m just a wastrel who wanders all over the place. I go wherever I like and do what I like. I can’t take good care of you.” Cesar felt some misery in his heart.

“Lord Cesar.” Linley saw Cesar as well.

“Don’t go.” Desri held Linley back, a ‘nasty’ little smirk on his face. “Why are you going to get between those two lovebirds?”

“Lovebirds? Isn’t she the Holy Lady?” Linley was stunned.

“Who says a Holy Lady can’t have a man?” Desri glanced at Linley. “Rosarie is almost at the Deity-level herself. For her to continue working on behalf of the Frost Goddess Shrine is already giving it quite a bit of face.” Desri grinned as he watched Cesar and Rosarie from afar.

Linley exchanged amused glances with Delia. “Linley, so this is the Lord Cesar you spoke of?” Linley nodded.

“It seems this Deity has incurred a romantic debt.” Delia pursed her lips as she laughed, and Linley shook his head as well. “Lord Cesar, he, uh…how should I put this…he’s quite the dissolute romantic.”

This night was quite a festive one, especially Desri’s group. George, Yale, and Reynolds as well. By the time he greeted and chatted with everyone, it was already midnight. Only now did Linley head towards Delia’s room…

One of the benefits of being a Saint was that despite having drank an enormous amount of wine, Linley wasn’t drunk at all.

“Linley?”

He heard someone call his name before he even reached the door. Linley turned and saw Cesar lying on a couch and drinking wine. “Linley, how come you ended up getting married? Jeeze, after I heard you got married, I felt really sorry for you.”

“Really sorry?” Linley was stunned.

Cesar stood up, then flew over gracefully. “Really sorry! Yet another man has stepped into his tomb!” As he spoke, Cesar’s body flew high into the air. “Oh yeah, happy wedding. Alright, I’m off.” Cesar’s voice sounded in Linley’s ears.

Suddenly…

“You old lecher!” A clear sharp sound. A graceful, white-garbed figure flew into the air as well, chasing after Cesar.

Cesar’s flying speed instantly increased.

“Uh…maybe it’s better to be in the ‘tomb’.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips as he headed out. Soon, he arrived at the doorway to Delia’s room. There were two beautiful maids in front of it, and the two maids respectfully drew open the door.

Linley waved his hand at them. “You can go now.”

“Yes, your Majesty.”

In the dark room, the only person there was Delia, sitting quietly in front of her bed. She just looked at Linley, waiting for Linley to speak. And finally, Linley did speak…“Bebe. Get out.”

“Haha, Boss.” Bebe crawled out from beneath the bed.

“Bebe?” Delia didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. Today, Bebe disappeared very early on. Who would’ve thought he had been hiding here?

Linley looked at Bebe, also not knowing whether to laugh or to cry. “Bebe, what are you doing?”

“Preparing a gift for ya, Boss!” Bebe raised his head high.

“What gift?” Linley was puzzled.

Bebe grinned, his little claws handing over a black rock. “This is something my good friend gave me. It was that violet-gold Saint-level rat that I told you about last time. I’m too young and haven’t accumulated much wealth, so my bro gave me this.”

“What is this?” Linley took the black stone in confusion. “Can it be some

sort of rare or precious mineral? Can't be. What use would a small piece of rock be anyhow?" Linley carefully inspected it, but couldn't tell what it was.

"I don't know either." Bebe handed it to Delia. "Delia, personalize and soulbind it with blood."

"Bind it with blood?" Linley raised an eyebrow.

Anything that needed to be bound by blood was definitely a treasure. For example, Linley's Bloodviolet sword, or his Coiling Dragon ring. Even the adamantine heavy sword wasn't worthy of needing to be blood bound. Generally speaking, only extremely rare and valuable items would require this process.

"Alright." Delia trusted Bebe very much. A blade of air cut Delia's finger, immediately creating a tiny wound.

A single drop of blood fell onto the black stone.

The black stone suddenly transformed into a ray of light and suddenly enveloped Delia. Linley was shocked…he watched as the black stone merged into Delia's body and utterly vanished.

"What is going on?" Linley was shocked.

He had never seen anything as weird as this before. Bebe stared with a gaping jaw as well. "I have no idea."

"Delia, how do you feel?" Linley immediately asked.

Delia shook her head, puzzled. "I don't feel anything at all. Hmm… actually, it seems I can sense the nearby elemental essence much more clearly. Right. That's it." Linley secretly nodded. Generally speaking, even the vilest of items, once bound by blood, wouldn't harm its master.

Linley wasn't too worried about that.

But…what was that thing?

“Bebe, this black stone…why did that magical beast give it to you? This seems to be a treasure.” Linley asked. Of course, all they knew right now about this treasure was one thing; it could increase elemental essence affinity tremendously.

Bebe hurriedly shook his head. “Boss, honestly, that good friend of mine gave it to me. He said it is very useful to magi.”

“Very useful to magi?” Linley understood. Perhaps this was some sort of special object that could enhance elemental essence affinity. It was useless to Saint-level magical beasts, which is why he gave it to Bebe. But Linley had a feeling…

There was more than met the eye to this black stone!

“Alright, Bebe. Do you plan to stay here?” Linley stared at Bebe.

Bebe’s beady little eyes rolled, and then he rubbed his nose twice. “Boss, once you got a wife, you forgot about Bebe. Sniff.” Linley immediately sent a kick in his direction, but by then, Bebe had already disappeared in a flash as he left the room.

The door shut.

The room instantly turned quiet. Linley and Delia sat side by side on the bed.

“What are you looking at?” Delia was a bit shy right now.

Linley laughed. “I’m thinking…about how many kids we should have.” Delia was startled. Linley suddenly lifted Delia up and carried her over to the bed, and then…one piece of clothing after another came flying out from the bed.

…..

“Unngh…”

They hadn’t slept all night.

“Whew.” Linley lay there on the bed, with Delia resting on top of him, her head against Linley’s chest. Beads of sweat caused Delia’s fragrant hair to stick to Linley’s body. Linley lowered his head to look at Delia. That faintly red face looked like that of a kitten’s.

Her pert little nose was sniffling.

Linley’s hand gently stroked Delia’s slick, bare back. In his mind, he continued to savor what had happened just then. How nervous he had felt when he had entered Delia’s body…Linley had to admit, things had gotten just a little too wild just then. It had been three entire hours.

“Delia, what is it?”

“I want to cry.” Delia hugged Linley’s chest. “I just want to cry right now. When I think about how you and Alice were together, I want to cry. When I think about how I waited ten years, I want to cry. Sob.”

Linley held his head in his hands.

Women. It was impossible to understand them.

“Linley, can I tell you something?” Delia said softly.

“Hrm?” Linley lowered his head to look at Delia.

Delia raised her head to look at Linley. Her face serious, she said in a soft voice, “You…got hard, down there.”

“Uh?”

For a moment, Linley had no idea what to say.

“Delia, you know, Wharton and Nina’s kid is going to be born in a few months. Don’t you think the two of us need to work harder?” Linley whispered.

“Um?” Delia was startled.

“So, I need to keep at it.” Linley flipped over and pressed Delia down once again.

Chapter 25 – Twelve Years in the Blink of an Eye

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 25, Twelve Years in the Blink of an Eye

The Radiant Church. The Holy Island. The ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

Staring outside the window, a hint of worry was on Heidens' face. Previously, Linley had made an agreement with the Radiant Church, allowing the Radiant Church to relax. After all, without the assistance of his Supreme Warriors and that terrifying rat-type magical beast, Linley, by himself, wasn't too great a threat.

But they were only relaxed for nine years.

Because on the ninth year, the Radiant Church discovered a terrifying secret.

Linley's human form had reached the Saint level.

"Heidens." An icy voice rang out. Osenno, his devilish purple hair fluttering behind him, appeared in the middle of the ninth floor.

Heidens didn't turn. Calmly, he said, "Osenno, what is it?"

Osenno had a hint of frustration in his voice. "Heidens, the many experts of the Church have been cooped up in the Sacred Isle for three full years. During these three years, you've ordered that we are not to go outside the Sacred Isle without authorization. Heidens…can it be that just because of Linley, we have to live like this?"

"And Heidens, you must understand, the information we got came from an agent who overheard the conversation which Linley's son was having with Wharton's son. That's the only information we have stating that Linley has reached the Saint level in human form. The words of children are not

necessarily true." Osenno said unhappily.

Because of this news, that Linley had reached the Saint-level in his human form, Heidens asked Osenno and the others to not leave the Sacred Isle.

Heidens remained with his back turned towards Osenno. Calmly, he said, "Osenno, first of all, Wharton's son, Cena [Xi'ne], is a very reliable and very meticulous youth. His words should be true. And secondly…when Linley was hidden within the O'Brien Empire, he had already reached the ninth rank. It has been over ten years now. Given the rate of growth for Dragonblood Warriors, it is about time that Linley reaches the Saint level in human form."

Heidens suddenly turned and stared at Osenno.

"You should be very clear about how powerful Linley is. Twelve years ago, he was only slightly weaker to you. Now that his human form has reached the Saint-level…his power should be more than ten times greater than before. Even if he didn't gain any additional insights at all, he can defeat you. But do you believe that in twelve years, Linley hasn't increased his level of insights at all?" Heidens asked Osenno.

Osenno was silent.

He knew full well how quickly Linley trained.

Twelve years without any breakthroughs? Who would believe it?

That ancestor of the Baruch clan who had only reached the 'impose' level when he reached the Saint-level as a human-form Dragonblood Warrior was nonetheless able to rely on his terrifying post-Saint-level defense and power to fight head on against peak-stage Saint-level magical beasts.

And Linley?

In strength and battle-qi, he was not inferior to his ancestor. However, he had a very deep understanding of the Laws. He was even more terrifying to

deal with than the ancestors of the Baruch clan.

“Heidens, the Sacred Isle doesn’t need me to defend it, does it.” Osenno asked.

“Osenno, if you truly want to leave the Sacred Isle…I won’t try to stop you.” Heidens said calmly. “But leaving the Sacred Isle means that you are betting that Linley won’t find and kill you! Of course, your fleeing abilities are top notch. But I’m not certain if you would be able to flee from Linley.”

Osenno had the Doppelganger Technique and was very fast.

But he probably only had a fifty-fifty chance of fleeing and surviving if Linley encountered him.

“Hmph. Fine. I’ll wait until my Doppelganger Technique reaches the peak before I have another tussle with Linley.” Osenno sneered coldly, and then with a flicker, disappeared from the ninth floor. But although his words were tough, clearly he had already submitted.

A hint of a bitter smile could be seen on Heidens’ face.

It was virtually impossible to keep tabs on someone at Linley’s level. Right now, Linley’s flying speed was far quicker than it had been in the past. It would take him less than half a day to cross the entire Yulan continent. This sort of speed…if he wanted to chase after and kill someone, he could definitely make sure that his opponent didn’t have time to call for help.

Yulan calendar, year 10022. May. An area outside Baruch City with wild flower and wild grass swaying, their beautiful dance so moving to behold. Right now, there were two luxurious carriages and a squad of elite knights who were escorting them down this wild road.

“Your Majesty, we are at Mt. Blackraven.” A knight said respectfully towards the second carriage.

Immediately, a husband and wife couple stepped out of the carriage, along

with a youth. The couple was Wharton and Nina. Wharton was much more mature now than he had been. He was the King of the Baruch Kingdom, and his personal strength had dramatically increased as well. Wharton's body emanated the aura of an expert. As for Nina, she wasn't as unripe as she had been in the past; her body was fuller, now, and she had become even more womanly.

As for that twelve or thirteen year old child in front of them, who seemed so friendly and yet graceful? This child was the son of Wharton and Nina: Cena Baruch.

"Wow, we are at Mt. Blackraven!" An excited voice rang out from the carriage in front of them, and a very excited youth clambered out of the carriage.

"Taylor [Tai'le]." Cena laughed as he called out.

"Big brother." Taylor ran over happily. Taylor was relatively handsome, but he was far more energetic than Cena.

At this time, yet another beautiful lady stepped out of the carriage in front, as well as a pretty young girl. It was Delia and her daughter, Sasha [Sha'sha]. Sasha looked quite similar to Taylor. The two of them were actually twins, but Sasha was born just a little while before Taylor was, and thus Taylor was forced to be the 'little brother'.

Cena was twelve, while Sasha and Taylor were ten.

"We're about to see Father soon. I haven't seen him in half a year." Taylor was extremely excited right now, and Cena's eyes had a hint of excitement in them as well. As the children of the Baruch clan, they all worshipped this person who supported the entire Baruch clan…Linley.

The countless members of the Baruch Kingdom also worshipped Linley. Linley was the spiritual support for the entire Baruch Kingdom. There was no question about this.

Although twelve years had passed, Delia's appearance hadn't changed at all. In fact, she actually now had a certain aura about her. Delia's children had blissful smiles on their faces. Twelve years of peaceful, happy life. Delia truly was very satisfied.

She stared at the distant Baruch City.

The royal capital, Baruch City, had been expanded long ago. The normal population was over a million. Because Linley had brought the massive fortune he had taken from the Kingdom of Fenlai, the Baruch Kingdom had easily weathered the first few tough years, and now, the entire Kingdom was prospering very nicely.

Raising her head to look at Mt. Blackraven, Delia's heart was already by Linley's side.

"Wharton, Nina, let's go up the mountain." Delia laughed. "Taylor, Sasha, Cena, follow along."

"Got it." Taylor said loudly.

His sister, Sasha, was very quiet. The squad of knights came to a halt at the foot of Mt. Blackraven, while Wharton, Nina, Delia, and the three children went up Mt. Blackraven together. Mt. Blackraven was as beautiful and graceful as ever.

Following the little creek, they finally saw the lake in the distance.

There were now three massive flattened boulders in the center of the lake. The central boulder was the first one which Linley had put down, and the stone house was naturally the one he had built long ago. As for the other two boulders, Linley had arranged them after his wedding, for when people came to visit for a while.

A faint blue figure was currently fishing in the middle of the lake.

"Father!" Taylor's voice rang out from far away.

That blue-robed figure turned around. It was Linley. Linley looked slightly more mature than he had in the past, and looking at him from a distance, one had the sense that he had totally become one with nature. Linley immediately stood up and laughed, “Haha, Taylor!”

Linley’s standing motion gave the sensation of moving with the wind itself, but it also gave an extremely solid, stable sensation as well. These two opposite sensations, merged into one person, was simply unimaginable for those who didn’t personally experience it.

Linley waved his hand…

“Bang!” Part of the flowing water instantly came to a halt, forming a bridge of water. The other parts of the lake continued to flow normally. Taylor and Sasha, quite experienced, stepped directly onto the bridge of water and ran over.

The water bridge was solid and durable.

If one looked at it closely, one would see that on top of the water bridge were minute, tiny flows of air.

“Taylor. Come. Hug.” Linley happily lifted Taylor into his arms, and the nearby Sasha immediately stared at Linley with her big, innocent eyes. Linley immediately reached out and lifted his beloved daughter into his embrace as well. “Taylor, Sasha, it’s been half a year since you’ve seen Father. Have you missed Father?”

“Yes.” Taylor said immediately. “Every day.”

Linley’s face instantly was covered with smiles. He now totally could understand how Grandpa Doehring had felt towards him, and how his father’s superficial severity masked a deep layer of love.

“Hey. Taylor, Sasha, Cena, you all came.” A happy voice emanated from the skies, and a black shadow suddenly appeared in the middle of the lake. It

was the magical beast Bebe, now two meters long.

Linley looked at Bebe and couldn't help but laugh inwardly.

Whenever Bebe was in front of these three 'juniors' (Taylor, Sasha, and Cena), he always made his body a little bit bigger. As Bebe put it, 'if my body is too small, I won't have the aura of an elder'.

"Uncle Bebe." Taylor immediately broke free from Linley's embrace and went to hug Bebe.

When Taylor was young, Bebe often played around with Taylor.

Wharton chuckled. "Big brother, let's sit down first. We can talk while eating. I brought many delicacies with me." As he spoke, the family sat down around a long rectangular table, and within his interspatial ring, Wharton withdrew the freshly prepared dishes.

The family began to eat.

"Big brother, have you heard of the big battle that occurred in the O'Brien Empire?" Wharton asked.

With an 'Oh' sound, Linley said, "Are you talking about half a month ago, how Olivier challenged Haydson to another duel?" Olivier had already returned from the Arctic Icecap, returned with the aura of utmost confidence.

Wharton sighed appreciatively. "Right. With just a single sword blow, he killed Haydson, who was famous for his defense. How terrifying."

"Haydson. Is it the Haydson who dueled with father at Mt. Tujiao?" Taylor raised his head up high and asked. This little fellow deeply venerated Linley, and he knew the details of Linley's famous battles as well as anything.

Linley laughed and nodded.

The nearby Delia also sighed in approval. “This Olivier really is formidable. Just one sword blow! Haydson’s defensive abilities were legendary. To be killed in one blow…” Delia also sighed repeatedly. The nearby Cena suddenly looked at Linley and asked, “Uncle, if you were to duel with Olivier again, can you win?”

Linley laughed calmly.

“Olivier’s improvement speed was faster than I had anticipated. In just twelve years, he reached the level of being able to kill Haydson with one sword blow. Without actually competing with him, it’s hard to say who would win and who would lose.” Linley laughed.

“Boss, what are you being modest for?” Bebe said unhappily. “Haydson’s defense was on par with yours in the past. But now? Just by relying on your post-Saint transformation, the defensive power of your draconic scales alone is on a higher level than the combined power of your draconic scales and Pulseguard Defense of twelve years ago. And now, your Pulseguard Defense is more than ten times greater than before. In front of you, that Olivier isn’t worth a fart. Even people on the second tier, like Osenno, don’t dare to offend you. I think…only the five Prime Saints are able to compete with you now.”

Wharton also said, “Big brother, you are the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in the history of our clan. Why be modest?”

Wharton and the others knew exactly how terrifying Linley had become.

After twelve years of painstaking training, Linley’s level of achievement in understanding the Elemental Laws of the Earth and the Wind was so high as to make Wharton and the others utterly speechless.

Chapter 26 – Blueheart Grass – Dragon's Blood

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 26, Blueheart Grass, Dragon's Blood

Power?

Linley knew exactly how powerful he currently was.

He had reached the Saint level in human form. Once he Dragonformed, his draconic scales were ten times as powerful as they had been in the past. His strength and battle-qi had also risen to terrifying levels. Linley could fully understand…the reason why his ancestors, despite not having a high level of insight, could rely on Dragonform alone to defeat peak-stage Saint-level magical beasts.

As for insight…

The Throbbing Pulse of the World. He had already mastered 256 layers of vibrational waves. The more waves, the more difficult improving became. It had always been like that, but upon reaching the 256th layer of waves, after spending an entire year, he hadn't been able to improve whatsoever.

It seemed…as though 256 layers was some sort of limit.

"It can't be a limit." Linley was very certain. "According to the War God, if one follows an aspect of the Elemental Laws to its limits, then one would enter the Deity-level. I'm far, far away from the Deity-level. So what exactly comes next, after the 256 layer level?"

Linley didn't know either.

His understandings of the Throbbing Pulse of the World were unique, and there was no one he could ask for advice. All Linley could do every day was to try and immerse himself in the Throbbing Pulse of the World and try to make a breakthrough.

As for the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley continued to slowly but surely improve. He hadn't reached a bottleneck yet.

"However, spiritual energy really is hard to build up. After twelve years, I'm still only at the peak of the ninth rank. Breaking through to the Grand Magus Saint level really is hard." Linley sighed in his heart. If anyone else heard what Linley was thinking, they would have cursed him to hell and back.

As a magus, going from the sixth to the seventh rank was one bottleneck, while going from the ninth rank to the Saint-level was the other major bottleneck.

How could this bottleneck be so easily broken through?

Linley looked at Delia, and he couldn't help but think back to that black rock which Bebe had given her on their wedding night. "In just twelve years, Delia has advanced from the seventh rank as a magus to the ninth rank as an Arch Magus. Although she previously had already been at the seventh rank for quite a few years, this sort of improvement rate really is terrifying."

Delia was already an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

After the wedding, Delia had discovered that it wasn't just her elemental essence affinity that had been raised to a terrifying level; she even was able to absorb mageforce at an astonishing speed, and her spiritual energy rapidly increased as well…her rate of improvement vastly outstripped Linley's. As Linley saw it, there was only one explanation for this change.

That mysterious black rock.

After the meal.

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha were having fun by the lake, while Linley, Wharton, Delia, and the others all sat down.

“Big brother.” Wharton finally brought up the purpose of their trip. “Cena and Taylor were tested when they were young. The density of Dragonblood in their veins hasn’t reached the required level. It seems we’ll have to use that method you spoke of in the past.”

Linley frowned.

“Oh? That’s right. It is time to use fresh dragon’s blood to activate the Dragonblood in their veins, so they can begin training in the Secret Dragonblood Manual early on.” Linley nodded slightly. When Linley had chatted with the Planar Overseer, Hodan, he had realized…

There were far more Dragonblood Warriors in the history of the Baruch clan than the book had mentioned. The real number was very high, and they relied on dragon’s blood.

“Would it be very dangerous?” Delia was a bit nervous.

“As long as the dragon’s blood is mixed in with Blueheart Grass, there is no danger at all to activating the Dragonblood in their veins.” Linley said with absolute certainty, while at the same time, he looked at the three children by the lake. “Taylor and Cena need to have their blood activated. What about Sasha?”

“Sasha?” Wharton and Delia both looked at the distant Sasha.

Sasha was just a girl. Although male warriors generally were somewhat superior to female warriors, that didn’t mean girls couldn’t become experts.

Delia smiled calmly. “Let her make her own choice.”

Linley nodded slightly.

….

“Become a Dragonblood Warrior?” Taylor was the first to whoop in joy.

“Oh, I’ll do it, I’ll totally do it. I dream about being a Dragonblood Warrior like Father. Wow! I’m excited just thinking about it.”

Cena nodded slightly as well. “I’ll do it.”

Linley, Wharton, Nina, and Delia weren’t surprised. It’d be weird if any of the male children in their lineage passed on this opportunity. Now they all looked at Sasha. Sasha was very quiet. Although she was just ten years old, the beauty she had inherited from Delia was beginning to show.

“I…I’ll do it also.” Sasha bit her lips, but nodded firmly.

Delia stroked Sasha’s head and praised, “Sasha, in the future, you are going to be a powerful female Dragonblood Warrior.” A smile appeared on Sasha’s face.

“Alright.” Linley nodded. “If that’s the case…then Wharton, Nina, you can just hand Cena to me. I’ll take the three of them to…the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun to search for Saint-level dragons. It’s time to engage in some bloodletting with Saint-level dragons.” Linley chuckled.

Engage in bloodletting with Saint-level dragons. These words filled the eyes of Sasha, Taylor, and Cena with shock and joy.

“I’ll go as well.” Wharton was somewhat nervous.

“Hey, little Wharton, you’re only at the ninth rank. Even after transforming, you are only an early-stage Saint.” Bebe flew over here and said unhappily, “Do you think your level of insight is comparable to the Boss of twelve years ago?”

Although he was also an early-stage Saint after transforming, in terms of insight, Wharton was far inferior to Linley.

“I’ll go with the Boss. Shit, if one dragon comes we’ll kill one dragon; if two comes, we’ll kill one, then capture the other one to use as a mount.” Bebe was extremely boastful, but he had the strength to back it up. After the

past twelve years, Bebe's power was far stronger than it had been twelve years ago as well.

Wharton nodded and laughed. "Since you are going as well, Bebe, then I won't be worried at all."

The squad was thus decided as being: Linley, Bebe, Delia, and the three kids. Delia was responsible for taking care of the kids, and Bebe's job was to protect them. As for Linley…he would deal with any Saint-level dragons.

….

The skies stretched off far into the distance, and a few white clouds were drifting here and there. A ten-meter long magical beast was soaring through the air at high speed. It was the transformed Bebe, with Delia, Cena, Taylor, and Sasha on his back.

Delia had cast a magic spell to form a protective invisible barrier, preventing the wind from scraping against the children's bodies.

"Wow…Mother, that city is the biggest one I've ever seen." Taylor pointed below at a 'fist-sized' city. Although the city seemed small from up above, the size of this 'fist' was actually a huge space.

A complicated look was in Delia's eyes. Sighing, she said, "That is my homeland, the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire."

"The imperial capital of the Yulan Empire?" Taylor, Sasha, and Cena all looked down.

"Hungry yet?" Delia withdrew some food they had brought along from the interspatial ring. Bebe had transformed to ten meters in length, and his back was naturally very wide. Given that Delia had then used magic to block the wind, this made Sasha, Cena, and Taylor feel as stable as when they were on the ground.

They sat down and began to enjoy the food.

Bebe flew very stably, with no turbulence at all.

“Delia, don’t pamper those kids too much.” Linley, flying alongside Bebe, said with a laugh as he saw this.

Delia looked at Linley. “Linley, don’t reprimand me. You see your children so rarely, and you are going to reprimand me?” Linley immediately didn’t dare to say a word. He actually did feel very guilty. Sometimes, he would go off and train for months at a time. He did indeed feel as though he owed the kids and Delia a lot.

Linley looked down at the boundless earth. They weren’t too far from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts now.

The three major gathering grounds for magical beasts in the Yulan continent were the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Forest of Darkness, and the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Of course, other places also had magical beasts, but they were much rarer in those places. But in these three places, a terrifyingly high number of magical beasts congregated.

By now, both the Forest of Darkness and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had a Deity present. Thus, Linley had chosen to go to the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun.

A long time later…

The peaks of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun appeared in the horizon. The Mountain Range of the Setting Sun started from the Dark Alliance, followed the southern boundaries of the Yulan Empire, and then intersected between the Rhine Empire and the Burning Desert.

In truth, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and the Burning Desert were both the southernmost points of the Yulan continent.

If one went past the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun or the Burning Desert, they would enter the boundless Southern Seas.

“Wow, it’s so big. It seems to be even longer than the Forest of Darkness.” Taylor said in surprise. Taylor and the others had flown on Bebe’s back before and had seen the Forest of Darkness from the air.

Cena said, “Taylor, according to the books, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts are both very long, but only around a thousand kilometers wide. As for the Forest of Darkness, it is thousands of kilometers long, but also two or three thousand kilometers wide.”

Taylor nodded in understanding.

“Get ready to go down.” Linley suddenly said.

The giant Bebe next to Linley suddenly dove down along with him. When they were only a few hundred meters away from the mountains, the two halted in mid-air.

“We’re going to fly at this height for now. Bebe and I are going to go meet some dragon Saints.” Linley said to Delia and the kids.

“Don’t worry about us, Father.” Taylor said confidently.

Linley, looking at his son, couldn’t help but chuckle, and then split apart from Bebe. At the same time, he began to scan the below area with his spiritual energy. The Mountain Range of the Setting Sun didn’t have fewer monsters than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Naturally, there were quite a few Saints as well.

But the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun was very large. The Saint-level magical beasts were scattered all over. To instantly find a Saint-level dragon was not likely.

“Hrm?” Linley’s spiritual energy suddenly discovered a Saint-level magical beast, one which Linley was fairly familiar with. It was a Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape. This terrifying, three-story tall Saint-level beast suddenly

noticed a human was scanning him.

“Who is it?” The Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape’s voice rang out like a bolt of thunder, and it raised its head to stare at the human in mid-air.

Linley stood there in mid-air, transmitting his voice downwards. “Linley of the Anarchic Lands. Excuse me for disturbing you.” After finishing speaking, the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape didn’t bother with him any further. Saint-level magical beasts were more intelligent than even your average human.

Ones that had lived a long time were very familiar with the experts of the Yulan continent.

Some of the most powerful experts, such as Desri of the Anarchic Lands, Hayward, Tulily of the great plains, were known to them. Linley of the Anarchic Lands had also become well known amongst magical beast experts. As long as Linley didn’t go too far, these Saint-level magical beasts didn’t want to fight such a peak expert either.

After searching for quite a while.

“Boss, I found a Saint-level dragon. It is a darkness-element Tyrant Wyrm.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. Not hesitating at all, Linley flew directly towards Bebe at high speed.

In the ground atop a mountain, Linley instructed, “Cena, you and the other kids all stay here. Delia will take care of you…Bebe, no matter what, you have to protect them.” Linley looked at Bebe, who said confidently, “Don’t worry, Boss. My Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique is able to create four now.”

Given Bebe’s terrifying speed and his Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique, even three ordinary Saint-level magical beasts working in concert still wouldn’t be able to hurt Delia and the others.

“Be careful, Father.” Sasha said.

Linley began to laugh. “Right. Just wait here. I’ll go bring that Tyrant Wyrm over.” As he spoke, Linley flew away at high speed. Delia and the kids just stood there, watching. Fortunately, because they were on a hill, they could see far.

A short while later…

Linley arrived in the air above the Tyrant Wyrm. The dragon race was divided into two types; the extremely strong and tough wingless dragons, and the magically powerful winged dragons. The Tyrant Wyrm was one of the most powerful wingless dragons. Its enormous body was over a hundred meters long, and its pitch-black, marble-like scales were terrifyingly hard.

The Tyrant Wyrm had already noticed Linley. Its massive eyes burned like fire as it stared at Linley. “Who are you?”

“Linley of the Anarchic Lands.” Linley said.

“Linley?” The Tyrant Wyrm growled, “I am Plaket [Pu’lei’ka’te] of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Linley, what do you want?” This Saint-level Tyrant Wyrm, Mountain Range of the Setting Sun, was also an apex combatant.

Linley smiled. “Plaket, I want to borrow some of your draconic blood.”

“Growl…” The eyes of the Tyrant Wyrm, Plaket, filled with a fiery rage, and the massive trees and boulders around him began to burn. “Linley, are you trying to humiliate me, Plaket? If you don’t beat it, then prepare to receive my fiery rage.”

In mid-air, Linley could only shake his head and sigh helplessly. With a flip of his hand, he withdrew Bloodviolet.

Chapter 27 – A Heated Battle

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 27, A Heated Battle

Seeing Linley draw out Bloodviolet, the Tyrant Wyrm knew that Linley was going to go head on against him!

As a Saint-level dragon, the Tyrant Wyrm was naturally extremely arrogant.

“Bang!” It angrily stomped the ground, causing the earth to shake and crack. The nearby trees all snapped apart and fell, and the Tyrant Wyrm’s hill-sized body shot directly into the air, breathing hellfire as its fiery red eyes stared at Linley.

It didn’t dare to be overconfident.

“Plaket, you are so huge. I just want a little bit of draconic blood.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“You are trying to insult me, insult a mighty Saint-level dragon!” The Tyrant Wyrm, Plaket, suddenly opened his mouth and blasted out a scorching cloud of black draconic fire, which suddenly enveloped ‘Linley’…but ‘Linley’ immediately dissipated.

Plaket suddenly stared upwards.

Linley was right above him. “Be careful. I’m going to start attacking you now.” Linley seemed to be quite polite.

“Hrmph.” The Tyrant Wyrm, Plaket, felt even more insulted, and his massive body immediately rose at a terrifying pace. “Boom!” A sonic boom could be heard as the Tyrant Wyrm sent its entire massive bulk against Linley.

But hadn’t he already noticed Linley’s astonishing speed?

“What a sly Tyrant Wyrm.” Linley’s body immediately transformed into a wind-shadow, appearing somewhere else. A black shadow sliced through the air, striking through ‘Linley’. It was the Tyrant Wyrm’s draconic tail.

“Boom!” The speed of the Tyrant Wyrm’s tail caused the air itself to form enormous wind blades which flew in the same direction. The nearby trees and boulders were chopped into small pieces like tofu, and the nearby trees all collapsed.

The speed of the draconic tail alone was enough to create such terrifyingly powerful wind blades. Then how powerful must the actual tail itself be?

“Must not take this draconic tail head on.” Linley’s face grew serious.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s speed suddenly reached its limit, turning into nothing more than a tiny gust of wind. Linley’s current level of control over the wind was now far more terrifying than it had been twelve years ago. The Tyrant Wyrm’s entire body was emitting a scorching, infernal heat, and the air around instantly began to rise to a terrifyingly high temperature.

If Linley was going to attack, he would have to enter this realm of infernal heat.

Linley’s body was covered with that azurish-black wave of energy. Using the Pulseguard Defense, Linley charged straight into the black flames.

“Swish!” Bloodviolet transformed into a streak of violet lightning. It seemed to have passed through reality itself as it reached a terrifying speed, causing space to grow distorted. The blurred space began to fold and distort, and the violet ray of light landed directly on the Tyrant Wyrm’s body.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Spatial Folding.

Crunch!

Bloodviolet chopped out a large wound that was one meter long and thirty

centimeters deep. However, not a single drop of the Tyrant Wyrm's blood came out. This was because its scales were more than thirty centimeters thick.

"What strong defense. It wasn't broken through by my sword." Linley was startled. The power of his Spatial Folding attack was so great that it was only one step lower than Higginson's 'Illusionary Void Sword'. After all, Linley's understanding of the 'Fast' aspect was still lower than Higginson's.

Higginson had trained for thousands of years, after all.

"If you have any balls, come fight me, Plaket, head on!" The Tyrant Wyrm roared angrily. He could clearly sense that Linley's speed was simply too fast, but just as he roared out these words and Linley was about to respond, dozens of black tentacles of infernal fire suddenly appeared out of nowhere from the Tyrant Wyrm's body and surrounded Linley.

"Tentacles?"

Linley was startled, while at the same time, he felt the tentacles surrounding him were as cold as ice. Linley didn't worry about his current situation at all. Instead, he began to wonder, "These things are like octopus tentacles. How is it that a Tyrant Wyrm…"

"Boss, these are the 'Icy Tentacles' of the darkness-style spells." Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley now understood.

The Tyrant Wyrm turned and stared at Linley with its flaming eyes. "Linley, prepare to die." But before it even had a chance to attack, the deep azure layer of energy around Linley began to roil about and expand…and as it did so, those Icy Tentacles began to shudder.

"Bang!" They exploded.

The Pulseguard Defense now had 256 layers to it. It was more than ten

times as powerful as it had been in the past.

But just as Linley exploded those Icy Tentacles…"Swish!" That lightning-fast draconic tail slashed over once more. Linley's body instantly retreated at high speed, but it nonetheless grazed the edges of the Pulseguard Defense. The terrifying power transmitted by that draconic tail caused Linley's body to shake.

"There is nothing even remotely 'ordinary' about the strength of Tyrant Wyrms." Linley was secretly surprised.

Experts on the level of Haydson probably couldn't do anything against this Tyrant Wyrm, given its power.

"Growl!" The Tyrant Wyrm roared angrily, and its terrifying voice somehow seemed to be 'locked' into a specific region and blasted against Linley. The terrifying sound caused Linley's ears to ring, and then, the Tyrant Wyrm wildly charged against Linley.

There was only a distance of a hundred meters between Linley and the Tyrant Wyrm, but as it charged at Linley, its size rapidly began to shrink.

However, its charging attack power seemed to have become even more powerful.

"Groowl!" In the blink of an eye, it seemed like an earthquake or a mountain was charging at Linley.

At the same time, a gray fog appeared out of nowhere, surrounding everything within several hundred meters, including Linley.

"Can't get hit." Linley didn't pay any attention to the fog at all, and he quickly began to dodge as fast as he could while Bloodviolet began to dance in his hands as well. He just barely dodged the charging attack of the Tyrant Wyrm, and then Linley delivered yet another sword onto the Tyrant Wyrm's body…

His sword was agile and mysterious. It fused both the ‘Spatial Freezing’ concept and the ‘Spatial Folding’ concept, two major yet opposite concepts, to form the ‘Tempos of the Wind’. The power of this attack was a level higher than even the ‘Illusionary Void Sword’.

“Crunch!”

That thick scale instantly split apart.

“Groooooowl!” The Tyrant Wyrm let out an agonized, furious growl. Instantly, fresh blood became to spurt out from that meter-long wound.

Seeing draconic blood spurt out, Cena, Sasha, and Taylor, watching from afar, all let out whoops of joy. A hint of a smile appeared on Delia’s face as well. Clearly, Linley had the advantage. And in truth…Linley hadn’t even gone into his Dragonform.

The Tyrant Wyrm was actually knocked flying towards the ground.

“Crash!” An earthquake occurred as the Tyrant Wyrm’s hill-sized body smashed into the ground. At the same time, it raised its head high and howled. “Hooooowl!” A terrifying burst of sound exploded forth from the Tyrant Wyrm, transforming all the nearby trees to splinters.

Bebe managed to react very quickly, instantly creating a black barrier around Delia and the children.

“What are you doing? Showing off your loud voice?” Linley flew down from mid-air. “I’ve already opened up a wound on your body. Just let me retrieve a little bit of fresh blood. Don’t worry, I won’t kill you.”

“You are insulting me.”

The Tyrant Wyrm, Plaket, growled with the utmost anger.

But Linley’s face suddenly changed as he turned to stare into the horizon. Two enormous magical beasts were flying towards them at high speed. One

of them had a perfectly sinuous body and a pair of enormous physical wings. It was one of the legendary Saint-level Gold Dragons.

As for the other dragon, its shape was roughly the same as the Tyrant Wyrm's, except its scales were a deep blue, and lightning crackled on the surface of its body.

"Saint-level Gold Dragon. Saint-level Thunder Lizard!" Linley felt a bit numb.

The Tyrant Wyrm was already very formidable. Even Linley, if he didn't Dragonform, wouldn't dare to take the Tyrant Wyrm's draconic tail head on just by using his enhanced Pulseguard Defense. The weakness of the Tyrant Wyrm was its speed.

But Saint-level Gold Dragons were extremely fast, and Thunder Lizards… were as fast as lightning.

"Plaket, what's wrong?" A deep voice came forth from the Thunder Lizard. "Is it this detestable human?"

The Tyrant Wyrm growled, "It is, big brother. This detestable human is relying on his speed and reaction speed." The Tyrant Wyrm was furious. If it wasn't for the fact that he was slow, how would he be losing? Tyrant Wyrms were slow, but possessed terrifying defense and attack. They were similar to Undying Warriors.

The Thunder Lizard stared at Linley with its two golden eyes.

Saint-level Thunder Lizard. Saint-level Gold Dragon. Saint-level Tyrant Wyrm. These three dragons made up an extremely powerful force in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. Whenever they met a powerful foe, they would all help each other. When they combined forces…they were terrifying, especially when they compensated for each other's deficiencies.

"Father!" The distant Taylor grow nervous. Cena and Sasha both watched the three Saint-level dragons with concern as well.

The Tyrant Wyrm flew into the air. Each of the enormous dragons were the size of a small mountain. The three Saint-level dragons flew in the air side by side, blocking out the sunlight. Their terrifying suppressive aura alone was enough to make one's heart shudder.

"If he's just fast, he's not worth us using our combination attack." A calm voice came out from the throat of the Saint-level Gold Dragon.

A hint of a smile was on Linley's face. This battle was becoming more and more amusing.

Suddenly…

"Swish!" An enormous flash of lightning split the skies. The Thunder Lizard's enormous body suddenly appeared in front of Linley, and it reached out with its sharp claws at such speed that Linley couldn't dodge at all. It clawed viciously against Linley's body.

Linley's Pulseguard Defense was actually reduced by more than half in power, and Linley's body was sent flying.

"Bang!" The Thunder Lizard's eyes simultaneously shot out two bolts of lightning, striking against Linley's body.

Linley's body slammed against the wall, then slid down. "Bang!" The ground shook from the collision and began to crack, while a huge gouge appeared in the ground.

"This speed is monstrously fast, almost as fast as Bebe." Linley, in the ground, was secretly startled. "However, the Thunder Lizard's attack power is a good deal lower than the Tyrant Wyrm's. My Pulseguard Defense was almost broken through, but in the end, it still managed to take the hit."

High speed, but somewhat weaker attack.

After all, if a creature moved as fast as lightning but had an attack as

powerful as the Tyrant Wyrm's, then it would be invincible.

"Is father fine?" Sasha was nervous.

"He's fine." Bebe could clearly sense Linley's current condition. Laughing, he said, "I bet the Boss is actually really excited right now."

Right now, the three Saint-level dragons were circling in the air above, staring at the ground.

"Bam!"

Linley suddenly erupted from another spot in the ground, shooting out at high speed. But just as he shot out, a terrifying beam of light suddenly shot out towards Linley's head, carrying a terrifying amount of light-style energy. Linley's heart shuddered, and he immediately dodged, but as he did so…

Just as the light touched Linley's body, Linley felt a terrifying wave of force attack his soul.

This was a very familiar sensation. When Linley had tested for magical aptitude, they had used this 'Overawe' spell to test his spiritual energy's strength. But the 'Overawe' spell, when used, was like a thin, snake-like ribbon of light.

By contrast, the Overawe attack this Gold Dragon was using was a ten-meter thick beam of light.

"Light-style magic, 'Overawe'? How can there be such a powerful 'Overawe' spell?"

"Haha, my turn!" The Tyrant Wyrm, Plaket, charged down, and its terrifying draconic tail slashed through the air like a whip against Linley. This sort of group attack was one which these three Saint-level dragons had perfected. The Gold Dragon would use the 'Spiritual Intimidation' spell to cause the enemy to feel woozy, and then the Tyrant Wyrm would deliver it a

full-strength attack.

“Whooooosh.”

As the enormous draconic tail swung down, space itself began to tremble, and a terrifying howling sound wave blasted the nearby trees into splinters.

“Haaargh!” A furious roar emanated from the center of that gradually dissipating beam of light, and then the Tyrant Wyrm felt a terrifying force binding its draconic tail. The beam of light disappeared, and that Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and the distant Bebe, Delia, Taylor, and the other kids all saw a terrifying sight.

A human-shaped aberration, covered in deep azure scales, emerged. On top of its scales was a layer of azurish light that was constantly flowing around it.

This was the Dragonform of a Dragonblood Warrior who had reached the Saint-level!

A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior!

His arms were wrapped around the Tyrant Wyrm’s tail. The mountain-sized Tyrant Wyrm roared madly, trying to struggle to pull free its draconic tail, but it couldn’t budge Linley at all. This was the terrifying strength of a Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior.

“Haaaaaargh!”

With a powerful, explosive roar, Linley actually swung the draconic tail and sent the mountain-sized Tyrant Wyrm flying in an arced line before slamming heavily against the ground.

“Bam!” The Tyrant Wyrm’s body smashed heavily into the ground, which immediately cracked and shuddered, blasting countless boulders and trees apart as though they were made of tofu.

Chapter 28 – Submission

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 28, Submission

“Rumble.” The earth broke apart with many cracks appearing, and sand and stones slowly rolled into those crevices.

A mountain-sized indentation in the ground. The massive dragon shook its head twice, then stared at the terrifying creature which had stopped in midair. The dragon’s fiery red eyes were filled with disbelief. A peak Dragonblood Warrior! Those dark golden eyes swept down towards the Tyrant Wyrm.

Silence!

The only sound that could be heard was that of the wind blowing, the leaves falling, and dust scattering. The Tyrant Wyrm, the Thunder Lizard, and the Gold Dragon had all been stunned by Linley’s terrifying strength.

“Wow! Father’s awesome!”

The distant Taylor was beginning to cheer, while Cena and Sasha were excited as well. In Delia’s heart, she felt all the more proud of Linley. After all, this was her man! Bebe chortled and said, “These three Saint-level dragons aren’t bad. They’ve forced the Boss to use his Dragonform.”

Linley’s current Dragonform was different from how it had been in the past.

In the past, Linley’s scales had been black, but now, they were a fusion between ‘black’ and ‘azure’, creating a ‘deep azure’ color!

“Although I drank the blood of the Armored Razorback Wyrm in order to activate my Dragonblood in my veins, it was still the Dragonblood that truly caused my power to increase.” Linley secretly mused. How could the energy in the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wyrm compare

with the exalted lineage of the Dragonblood Warriors?

A pure Dragonblood Warrior, when transformed, should have azure scales like Wharton did.

Despite having drank dragon's blood, upon transforming after having reached the Saint-level, the scales would still trend towards azure.

The massive body of the Tyrant Wyrm flew into the air, once more joining the Thunder Lizard and the Gold Dragon. These three dragons exchanged glances, then turned and looked seriously at Linley. They didn't have any of their earlier arrogance and boastfulness.

Linley had a better sense for these three Saint-level dragons as well.

The Tyrant Wyrm's power and strength wasn't any weaker than that of peak Dragonblood Warrior. The reason why Linley had been able to so easily grab the opponent's tail wasn't just through his strength; he had also used his Pulseguard Defense to reduce the opponent's attack power.

After transforming, the battle-qi in Linley's body was far more powerful than it had been in the past.

The Pulseguard Defense was naturally even more powerful after transforming as well. Using it to reduce the attack power of the tail before grabbing it allowed him to seemingly easily grab the Tyrant Wyrm's tail, then send it flying far away.

As for the Thunder Lizard…

Linley was certain that even after transforming, in terms of speed, he was still a level lower than the Thunder Lizard. But the opponent's attacks weren't very strong and thus weren't able to harm him. Naturally, the 'not very strong' attacks was only in reference to someone with Linley's level of terrifying attack power.

Gold Dragons…

This was a race of dragons that was extremely good at using magic. Linley was now certain of it. But what they had done just then was a simple exchange. He still wasn't too clear on the extent of it.

"Done chatting?"

Linley stood there in mid-air, his dark golden eyes staring at the three Saint-level dragons. In a bright voice, he said, "The three of you, do you intend to fight me to the death, or just give me a little bit of draconic blood?"

The three Saint level dragons had already come to a decision. Their leader, the Thunder Lizard, rumbled out, "Linley of the Anarchic Lands, your power has earned our respect. As long as you leave immediately, we can agree to not quibble about what just happened."

Linley's lips quirked upwards.

Twelve years of quiet training had improved his temper quite a bit compared to the past.

"It seems we will have to let our fists do the talking." Linley clenched his fists, and a wave of deep azure battle-qi spread out around Linley, blasting wildly in every direction and causing the entire area to shake.

Linley's dark golden eyes stared coldly at those three Saint level dragons. "Come. I haven't had a true, full-force fight in twelve years. Today…I'll have a good bit of fun with you." Linley's draconic tail swished, causing the air to shudder with each movement.

The three Saint level dragons all stared at Linley.

"That was just one of our simplest teamwork attacks. You had best not really believe you can beat all three of us." The Thunder Lizard rumbled. "Linley, I'll tell you clearly. The name of this technique is called 'Lightning Flashing, Thunder Booming'."

Clearly, this Saint-level Thunder Lizard was totally confident.

Linley stood there in midair like a demonic fiend, not concerned about the three Saint-level dragons in front of him at all.

“Rumble…”

The Thunder Lizard’s blue scales began to flash with lightning, and the air itself seemed to have become electrified as lightning snaked everywhere. At the center of it, the Thunder Lizard stared coldly at Linley…and then suddenly, a terrifying, enormous bolt of lightning struck towards Linley.

No. It wasn’t a bolt of lightning. It was the Thunder Lizard’s body itself!

“Haha…”

Laughing loudly, Linley instantly transformed into countless shadows as he began to move at high speed. The space around Linley seemed to have frozen, while at other times, it seemed to have folded and distorted. The area around him was totally blurred.

The Dragonblood Warrior, Linley, was constantly shifting about.

Relying on his understanding of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, he was actually able to dodge the Thunder Lizard’s attack. The dragon passed by Linley, clearly not having hit him at all…but the lightning flashing in the Thunder Lizard’s eyes became even more cold and sinister.

“Rumble…” A clap of thunder could be heard.

The thunderclap seemed to appear in Linley’s area, as the Thunder Lizard’s powerful draconic tail struck wildly and nonstop at Linley. The speed of the tail was far faster than the speed of the Thunder Lizard itself, and Linley didn’t have time to dodge at all.

Because of the back-and-forth motion of the attacking tail, the nearby space began to be distorted, creating multiple terrifying thunderous booms.

The draconic tail attack was the real power of the ‘Lightning Flashing, Thunder Booming’ attack.

Linley’s Pulseguard Defense retracted to the thickness of just twenty centimeters, but the power of the Pulseguard Defense didn’t lessen at all. It was like an elastic membrane; each time the draconic tail slashed towards him, the Pulseguard Defense was able to neutralize over half of the force.

One or two hits, Linley didn’t mind.

But in the blink of an eye, that draconic tail had whipped him a thousand times.

“This speed really is terrifying.” Linley was truly speechless. He had never seen such frightening speed. A dragon’s tail was also shockingly fast, and naturally, the tail of the speed-focused Thunder Lizard had reached an apex of speed.

“Is Father alright?” The distant Sasha was worried.

“Uncle Bebe, is Uncle Linley…?” Cena was a bit worried as well. They simply couldn’t tell clearly what was going on in the battle in the distance. All they heard was constant, awe-inspiring thunderclaps and countless lightning bolts appearing in the area.

Bebe grinned widely, revealing his white fangs.

“Beat it!” Linley let out an angry growl.

And then, with a clapping sound, the Thunder Lizard suddenly retreated at high speed, while at the same time, its draconic tail could no longer attack at high speed…because just then, Linley had landed a full force punch against the Thunder Lizard’s tail.

The Thunder Lizard possessed powerful defense. An ordinary power punch wouldn’t do anything to it, but Linley’s punch included the ‘Profound

Truths of the Earth'. The cartilage and soft, flexible bones inside the draconic tail had been broken by the vibrations. The Thunder Lizard roared angrily, "Quick!"

The three Saint-level dragons moved in concert in a practiced manner.

"Groooooowl!" An angry howl erupted from the Gold Dragon's mouth.

The Gold Dragon had been collecting energy for a powerful attack this entire time. And now, a pure, thick white spear of light shot down towards Linley from up high. This pure white spear carried with it a terrifying amount of force, and even Linley's face changed slightly.

"Light-style, forbidden magic: 'Holylight Lance'?"

The power of a single-target forbidden-level spell was shockingly strong.

Linley didn't have the chance to dodge at all. All he could do was watch as the light flashed, and as it did, the huge white spear of light slammed against his body, like a sharp spear slamming against a tough shield. But this spear was the light-style forbidden level spell, 'Holylight Lance'.

And the shield was a peak Dragonblood Warrior who had the Pulseguard Defense!

"Boom!"

Linley's body was sent flying into the ground. The collision between him and the Holylight Lance had caused invisible cracks in space in every direction, and wherever those cracks in space passed by, the nearby trees and boulders turned into powder.

The cracks were like ripples in water.

Even the earth itself rippled once.

"Careful."

Bebe immediately used a powerful amount of darkness-style energy to easily stop this omnidirectional ripple attack. Even at such a distance, the ripple still possessed tremendous force, and within a radius of several kilometers, everything had been turned into dust. Not even a single leaf could be seen.

Because the leaves had been turned to dust as well.

“Is he injured?” The Tyrant Wyrm said quietly.

“That was a forbidden-level spell. Even powerful Saints shouldn’t be able to take it head on. However, Plaket, since he was able to grab onto your draconic tail, most likely his defense is very powerful.” The Gold Dragon was somewhat uncertain and hesitating as he spoke. “But even if it couldn’t kill him, it should have badly injured him.”

“Prepare the final attack.” The Thunder Lizard said quietly.

The Gold Dragon and the Tyrant Wyrm immediately began to prepare. Their ultimate attack was a single combination attack using the power of all three of these Saint-level dragons. This combination attack was so strong that as far as they were concerned…there shouldn’t be any expert beneath the Deity level who was capable of blocking it.

The Gold Dragon’s massive mouth was mumbling, as though chanting the words to some sort of malediction.

Draconic-language spell!

“Bam!” Linley shot out from the ground like an arrow with grace and speed. Not a single wound could be seen on him. The defense granted to him after transforming by his Pulseguard Defense and his draconic scales was terrifying indeed.

Just then, the forbidden-level spell had broken through his Pulseguard Defense, but the remainder of the power of the spell wasn’t able to damage

his scales at all.

Suddenly, the world began to shake. An invisible ripple began to emanate from the Gold Dragon's body, then charged directly towards Linley. Linley instantly understood…in the past, Desri had used this exact technique to badly wound Lehman, the Commander of the Zealot Division, and knock him into the lake.

The ultimate attack of the Saint-level Gold Dragon – Soul Shout!

The Pulseguard Defense around Linley's body just barely weakened the power of this invisible ripple, which charged directly against Linley's consciousness.

Now…

In the mysterious depths of his consciousness, a half-translucent, seven-colored crystal floated, surrounded by an endless, ocean-like amount of spiritual energy. This endless amount of spiritual energy slowly flowed about it like water, but with a strange rhythm that seemed to carry the mysteries of the Profound Truths of the Earth within it.

If one was able to carefully inspect it, one would find that the spiritual energy surrounding that seven-colored crystal had an extremely faint layer of azure light protecting it as well.

Currently, that external burst of ripple-like spiritual energy was charging in wildly, with the target being Linley's soul.

"Bang!"

The Gold Dragon's most powerful attack collided with Linley's soul.

When the Gold Dragon used this technique, the Tyrant Wyrm once more began to emit hellfire from its body, while at the same time, with a thundering sound, its muscles and bones began to crackle and pop as it gathered a tremendous amount of force.

The Thunder Lizard was very confident. It was certain…that right now, Linley had already had his soul badly damaged. Even if he didn't die, he would be dizzy for a while.

In this sort of situation, Linley wouldn't be able to control his defense at all.

But just as the Tyrant Wyrm was preparing its most powerful attack…

"Swish!" Linley, who logically shouldn't have been been able to move at all, suddenly transformed into a blur and struck against the exhausted Gold Dragon. With just one mighty fist, he smashed the Saint-level Gold Dragon out of the air and into the ground.

The Tyrant Wyrm and Thunder Lizard stared at Linley in shock.

Linley's dark gold eyes swept them with its icy gaze. His voice was calm. "Stop resisting. Plaket, I can tell that the power of the attack you are about to use is definitely ridiculously powerful. However, given your speed, there's no way you will be able to harm me at all."

How could the Tyrant Wyrm not understand this logic?

If he couldn't touch the opponent, what use was even the most powerful of attacks? They had thought that combining this attack with the 'Soul Shout' would be perfect, but Linley wasn't affected by the Soul Shout at all. The three Saint-level dragons couldn't believe what they had just seen.

Linley was secretly laughing.

"Spiritual attacks? My ancestors in the Dragonblood Warrior clan were able to reach the Saint-level in just a few decades. They didn't have a high level of understanding, and their spiritual energy wasn't very strong either. There are many people in the world capable of 'spiritual attacks'. So why, then, was our Dragonblood Warrior clan so famous? Why would they be proclaimed as the strongest of Saints?"

The Dragonblood Warriors were the Supreme Warriors who had been blessed by the heavens.

Even Linley's ancestors, who had ordinary souls, no longer feared spiritual attacks upon reaching the Saint-level. This was because once they Dragonformed at the Saint-level, their souls would be protected by a unique, strange energy possessed only by the Dragonblood Warrior lineage.

This was what a Dragonblood Warrior was! The invincible Dragonblood Warriors!

Chapter 29 – Glory

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 29, Glory

Seeing this godlike, invincible Dragonblood Warrior, the Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and Tyrant Wyrm all began to feel a hint of dread in their hearts.

Right. Dread!

Dread of Linley killing them. These three Saint-level dragons already understood that the Gold Dragon who possessed the most powerful magic amongst them was unable to harm Linley, while the physically most powerful Tyrant Wyrm wasn't able to match him in speed.

As for the Thunder Lizard, someone like Linley with such ridiculous defense was his greatest bane.

"Will we die?"

The three Saint-level dragons didn't know what to do. They didn't think that Linley would spare them, because at the beginning, Linley had been lenient with them, but then the three of them had used their ultimate attacks on him, trying to kill him.

Just then, they truly had wanted to kill Linley. Would Linley spare them?

The three Saint-level dragons didn't think so!

But just then, a calm voice rang out, which to the three of them sounded like music from the heavens. "Choose death, or choose to serve as my mounts for a hundred years." Linley's dark golden eyes stared at the three Saint-level dragons. Perhaps because of his twelve years of quiet meditation, Linley was now rarely moved to engage in slaughter.

The three Saint-level dragons were unable to deal with Linley. But they would be effective against people of Osenno's level.

The Saint-level Thunder Lizard, Gold Dragon, and Tyrant Wyrm all secretly sighed in relief. Just a hundred years. To these creatures with an unending lifespan, that was a fairly short time frame. In addition, as magical beasts, they respected the powerful. Linley had defeated the three of them by himself.

Submitting to him wouldn't be considered a stain on their honor.

"Master!"

The three Saint-level dragons lowered their proud heads towards Linley. From far away, the watching Delia, Taylor, Cena, and Sasha all came over, riding on Bebe's back. The kids were cheering happily. Even the mighty Saint-level dragons, in the end, had lowered their heads to Linley, the one who the kids worshipped.

"Father, you are so powerful! Wow! Three Saint-level dragons!" Taylor screamed in excitement.

Sasha and Cena were normally calm, but upon seeing the three massive Saint-level dragons, their eyes shone and they were extremely enthusiastic as well. Bebe sneered, "You three stupid worms, why'd you have to fight against my Boss? You should've just admitted defeat from the start."

"Hrmph!" The three Saint-level dragons stared furiously at Bebe.

Only now did Linley speak out. "This is my dear brother, 'Bebe'. He is also a Saint-level magical beast. However, his power is far higher than you three's. Bebe's speed is almost on par with yours, Thunder Lizard. He isn't that far off. But his defense and attack are both greater than that of the Tyrant Wyrm's."

These words utterly stunned the three Saint-level dragons.

Was there such a monster of a magical beast in the world?

Speed almost on par with a Thunder Lizard, and power and defense even more terrifying than a Tyrant Wyrm. How could this sort of magical beast exist?

“You are a rat-type magical beast?” The Saint-level Thunder Lizard said in a low voice, shocked as he stared at Bebe. They didn’t doubt Linley’s words in the slightest. An expert on Linley’s level wouldn’t lie to them.

Bebe nodded.

“But…but…your fur is black. Not violet.” The Thunder Lizard didn’t dare believe it. “In the Yulan continent, there’s only one type of rat-type magical beast at the Saint-level…the legendary Emperor Rat of the Forest of Darkness. But the Emperor Rat’s fur is a violet gold color.”

The place where the most Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice lived was the Forest of Darkness.

“Violet gold?” Bebe suddenly understood. “Oh. You are talking about my friend. He is indeed an Emperor Rat.”

“A black Saint-level rat-type magical beast, this…” The three Saint-level dragons simply couldn’t understand it.

Bebe looked at Linley. “Boss, isn’t it time to be getting back?” Since they had the three Saint-level dragons as steeds now, they could go back and have Cena, Taylor, and Sasha rouse the Dragonblood in their veins.

The Tyrant Wyrm rumbled, “Master, aren’t you going to cast the soul-binding technique?” Only by using the soul-binding technique would one be able to effectively control a magical beast. Since these three dragons had admitted defeat, they were willing to accept the restrictions of the soul-binding technique.

“No need.” Linley said calmly.

Soul-binding technique?

Based on what Linley knew, a person was only capable of having three magical beasts. If he wanted to take over another one, he would then have to release one of his other master-servant relationships with another magical beast. Linley already had two magical beasts. He would at most be able to take another one.

“No need?” The three Saint-level dragons were shocked. Three Saint-level magical beasts were presenting themselves to him, but he didn’t want them?

“I trust you.” Linley said calmly.

The sensation of being trusted was quite a good one.

“We three brothers have agreed to serve as mounts for a hundred years. We definitely will honor our word.” The three Saint-level dragons felt a hint of admiration for Linley in their hearts. Seeing the three Saint-level dragons being so obedient before him, Linley felt a hint of nostalgia.

He still remembered when he was young, his father had led him to read the legends of his clan in the ancestral hall.

“Baruch, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4560 of the Yulan calendar, outside the walls of the city of Linnan, Baruch did battle against a Black Dragon and a Titanic Frost Wyrm. In the end, he slew both the Titanic Frost Wyrm and the Black Dragon, causing his fame to be spread across the world. In the year 4579 of the Yulan calendar, along the coastline of the northern sea of the continent, Baruch did battle against a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor. On that day, the waves crashed unceasingly and nearby cities crumbled, but after a vicious fight lasting a full day and night, Baruch finally executed the Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor…in the end, Baruch founded the Baruch clan, and became the first leader of the Baruch clan!”

“Ryan Baruch, the second Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In

the year 4690 of the Yulan calendar, in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, he defeated and subdued a Saint-level Golden Dragon, and became known as the Golden Dragonrider Saint! In the year 4697…"

"Hazard Baruch, the third Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. Born in the year 5360 of the Yulan calendar, in his very first battle, he fought fiercely with a Saint-level Bloody-eyed Maned Lion in the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun. He defeated the lion, forcing it to scurry away and flee, causing Hazard to become famous throughout the world…"

Linley still remembered how his father had looked.

That look of arrogance and pride.

Pride in his ancestors. Pride in being a descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan.

However, his entire life, his father had one regret. He had always dreamed of reclaiming his clan's ancestral heirloom. Dreamed…that one day, he would witness the rebirth of his clan's glory.

"Father…can you see this?" Linley murmured in his heart. "I, Linley Baruch, Yulan calendar year 10022, went by myself to the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun and fought against three Saint-level dragons and then tamed them." This record alone surpassed the achievements of his ancestors.

Linley could name himself the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in his clan's history without any shame.

"If only Father could see this…"

His father had desired his entire life to restore the clan's glory. When Linley had become an Ernst Institute student, his father had entrusted him with the important tasks of recovering the clan's ancestral heirloom as well as restoring the clan's glory. And today…

Linley had done it all!

But his father was gone forever.

“Let’s go. Time to return. The three of you need to shrink a bit.” Linley sighed, then issued the orders.

Instantly, the three Saint-level dragons shrank in size to roughly ten meters or so, the same size as Bebe. With the three dragons in tow, Linley’s group began to fly at high speed north, towards the Anarchic Lands.

The Anarchic Lands. Outside Baruch City. Atop Mt. Blackraven.

“Big brother, your actions really were amazing.” Wharton’s face was covered in shock and joy. “You brought three Saint-level dragons here directly to have them serve as mounts for a hundred years. In the future, our descendants won’t need to go find Saint-level dragons at all.”

Linley laughed.

Indeed, when he had decided to have these three Saint-level dragons serve as mounts for a hundred years, aside from increasing the Saint-level power on his side, part of it was indeed for the reason Wharton stated.

“Big brother.” Wharton was extremely excited. “I have the feeling…that our Dragonblood Warrior clan is about to reclaim our glory of thousands of years ago. Didn’t you say to me that Hodan said in the past, our clan had dozens of Dragonblood Warriors?”

Linley nodded. “Right. Thousands of years ago, our Dragonblood Warrior clan definitely used this same method to produce many Dragonblood Warriors. Dozens of Dragonblood Warriors in one place…the stories of the Four Supreme Warrior clans being able to dominate the Yulan continent definitely weren’t just tall tales.”

How splendid his clan had been! One could just imagine it.

“Unfortunately, the reproductive ability of our Dragonblood Warrior clan is weak.” Wharton sighed.

Indeed. Linley’s grandfather had only a single son, Hogg. Hogg only had two children; Linley and Wharton. It must be understood…in many clans, there would be seven or eight children in each household. But the Dragonblood Warrior clan clearly was different.

Linley and Delia, aside from their twins, hadn’t been able to have a single additional child.

“The heavens have already been kind enough to us. If they also gave us many children…then nobody else would be able to survive in the Yulan continent.” Linley laughed, and Wharton laughed as well. Indeed, a person couldn’t be too greedy.

Linley instructed, “Wharton, let Cena and the other two kids prepare. Tomorrow, the Dragonblood lineage in their veins will be roused.”

Rousing the Dragonblood was a major event. The next day, Haeru and Bebe both stayed obediently at Mt. Blackraven. The three Saint-level dragons, knowing this was Linley’s will, didn’t object at all. To these three massive Saint-level dragons, it was just a little bit of blood. It was nothing at all.

The Tyrant Wyrm, Thunder Lizard, and Gold Dragon had all shrunk in size, and were looking at the three kids. Laughing, Linley looked at the three children. “You all know that once you drink live dragon’s blood and rouse the Dragonblood in your veins, the type of blood you drank will have a major impact on your transformation.”

“For example, in the past, I drank the blood of an Armored Razorback Wyrm, which is why my knees, forehead, and elbows all sprouted the razor spikes of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. And my speed was relatively fast as well. This, too, was thanks to the influence of the Armored Razorback Wyrm.” Linley explained in detail. “Think well on your choice.”

Taylor, Sasha, and Cena were all considering this question.

The three of them could choose the same dragon, or they could choose different ones. For these three Saint-level dragons to give all three children blood was very simple.

“Taylor, which one do you choose?” Delia looked at her son.

Taylor carefully looked at the three Saint-level dragons, then focused his gaze on the tyrannical, indomitable Tyrant Wyrm. “I choose the Tyrant Wyrm. He’s so powerful. I like him.” Taylor’s words made the Tyrant Wyrm very happy. “Indeed, I, Plaket, am quite powerful.”

“I choose the Gold Dragon.” Sasha’s clear voice rang out. “The Gold Dragon is so beautiful. Those scales are so slick, they look just like gold.”

“Beautiful?” Linley and Delia exchanged glances.

Their daughter had actually chosen the Gold Dragon for this reason? The Gold Dragon was relatively happy as well. In the past, he would have considered offering his blood as an insult, but now, his master was Linley. For his master’s child to select him meant that they liked him.

Dragons were proud creatures. They hated being inferior to others.

The Thunder Lizard immediately looked at Cena. Cena’s face was as graceful and calm as ever. With a chuckle, he said, “Then I choose the Thunder Lizard.”

Actually, no matter who they chose, the draconic blood would only have some impact at the beginning. The most important thing was still the Dragonblood Warrior lineage.

“The three of you, put the draconic blood into those three small buckets.” Linley pointed to the side at three buckets which were large enough to complete fill one’s belly. To the dragons, however, these three buckets were nothing at all. The Gold Dragon very straightforwardly cracked and plucked off one of its scales.

The Gold Dragon placed the scale above the wooden bucket, and a single drop of fresh blood, the size of a head, dripped down, instantly filling the bucket.

Chapter 30 – Discovery

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 30, Discovery

The buckets filled with dragon blood were placed in front of the three children, and with a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a large quantity of Blueheart Grass from his ring. The jade green leaves of the Blueheart Grass glimmered with that layer of faint blue light. Linley divided it into three parts, with each part having five clumps.

“Listen up, the three of you.” Linley looked at the three kids.

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha all stood attentively in front of Linley, listening to their elder’s instructions. Linley said, “In a while, drink as much dragon’s blood as possible, until your stomach is totally full. But before doing so, you must eat this Blueheart Grass. Logically speaking, three clumps per person should be enough, but just to be safe, it’s best if you each eat all five.”

“Eat grass?” Sasha wrinkled her nose unhappily.

To let a child eat Blueheart Grass, especially one who had been pampered all her life, would naturally result in some resistance.

“Sis, when Father was in his teens, he had to go all by himself to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to search for Blueheart Grass and drink the blood of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. Father is now placing dragon’s blood in front of us. And you’re afraid to drink it?” Taylor didn’t have any concerns; he immediately grabbed the Blueheart Grass and began to eat it.

With big gulps, he swallowed it all down.

Seeing this, Linley couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a smile on his face. Linley was quite satisfied with his son, Taylor. Although Taylor was rather playful, he was able to work hard and endure bitterness, and he trained hard

as well. Taylor wasn't much weaker than the level Linley had been when Linley was ten.

Cena smiled, then grabbed the Blueheart Grass and began to eat it as well.

"Sasha, it's fine. The Blueheart Grass' juice is actually quite cool and refreshing." Cena said enticingly.

"Oh?" Watched by her father, Sasha picked up the Blueheart Grass and began to chew it. As she chewed, her face turned bitter. "Big brother Cena, you tricked me. The juice is cool, but the leaves make my mouth go numb." Despite complaining, Sasha still ate it.

Linley and Delia were laughing.

"Glug, glug." Taylor was the first to lift up that small pail of blood and began to pour it in his mouth. Taylor knew that the more dragon's blood he drank, the easier it would be to activate the Dragonblood lineage in his veins, and so he drank it all with big gulps and no hesitation.

Cena and Sasha raised up their pails and began to drink as well.

"Glug, glug." The three children drank dragon's blood at the same time. This sight caused Linley to sigh endlessly with emotion.

The predecessors cut the firewood, and the successors will not fear the cold.

Linley's hard work had made it possible for these descendants to not have to experience those life and death dangers.

"Ah!" The first one to begin shouting in pain was Taylor. The pail in his hand toppled to the ground, and Taylor was in such pain that he collapsed to the ground as well, rolling around. His face instantly turned white, and beads of sweat began to pour down his face.

Delia's face immediately changed.

“It’s fine.” Linley reassured Delia.

Delia knew…that the first time a Dragonblood Warrior activated their Dragonblood, they would involuntarily transform. This first transformation would be an extremely painful one. Linley had experienced this pain in the past as well…when the pain reached a certain level, one would pass out. And indeed…

As black scales sprouted out of his body, Taylor fainted.

Immediately afterwards, Cena and Sasha began to scream in agony as well, both of them rolling around on the ground. Blue scales began to slowly emerge from Cena’s body. The sensation of scales growing out of nowhere into his body was even more painful than being killed.

“If they can’t even withstand such a little bit of pain, what can they possibly accomplish?” Linley quietly watched.

Shortly afterwards, Taylor and Cena had both fully transformed. As for Sasha, who had been the last to drink the dragon’s blood, she finally began to transform as well. Taylor’s draconic scales were black, as he had inherited the coloration of the Tyrant Wyrm. Cena’s scales were blue, as the Thunder Lizard was blue.

As for Sasha…

“Linley, look.” Delia seemed startled and frightened.

Linley had noticed Sasha’s transformation as well. With a rumbling noise, two golden, butterfly-thin wings began to sprout from Sasha’s back. This was what she had inherited from the Gold Dragon; it’s two massive physical wings. But these faint gold wings made Sasha look like a celestial spirit.

However, those golden scales which covered her entire face made Sasha look very mysterious, especially given that she had that draconic horn on her forehead and that draconic tail, which gave Sasha’s Dragonblood

Warrior form a domineering aura as well.

….

After a long time, the three children woke up. After waking up, the three kids excitedly stared at themselves and their transformations.

“Whoah, sis, you have wings?” Taylor stared at Sasha jealously.

Sasha liked her wings as well. They were part of her, like her hands. The two wings fluttered slightly, and Sasha gracefully flew into the air, excitedly shouting, “I can fly, I can fly!”

“I feel so powerful.” Taylor excitedly punched at a nearby piece of rock, and that rock instantly split apart into tiny pieces. A ten year old child who was able to smash rocks into pieces? No ordinary person would be able to accomplish this.

Cena was extremely excited as well.

“Whoosh!” Moving like a flash, Cena’s body left behind after-images when he moved. He was extremely fast.

Linley, Delia, Wharton, and Nina all laughed as they watched this.

“How marvelous.” The Saint-level Gold Dragon sighed in praise. “Dragonblood Warriors truly are incredible.” The three Saint-level dragons all sighed in amazement at this scene. The legendary Supreme Warriors really were amazing. They could already foresee…in a few decades, these three children would be three Dragonblood Warrior Saints.

After the three children got tired from playing around.

“Mother. Where’s my clothes?” Sasha said to Delia.

The transformation had badly damaged her clothes. Fortunately, Sasha’s pants weren’t damaged; they were just a little dirty. But her upper body

clothes had been shattered by those two wings of hers. It was no big deal right now, in Dragonform, but if she returned to her human form, wouldn't she be totally exposed?

Delia began to laugh.

Linley laughed as he said, "The three of you, listen up. In the future, focus on training in accordance with the Secret Dragonblood Manual. There is one thing, however…generally speaking, you are not to transform into your Dragonforms. In addition, right now, you are weak enough that even in Dragonform, your power won't amount to much."

"Yes, Father (Uncle)."

The three children assented.

"Wharton, I'll hand these three children to you to manage." Linley looked at his little brother. The three children should live in Baruch City. They were still young, after all. If they were to be made to live in a place like Mt. Blackraven, where almost no others were around, the children wouldn't be used to it, and their temperaments would be affected as well.

"Alright." Wharton nodded.

….

Taylor and the others went down the mountain. Two of the three dragons, out of curiosity, decided to go to the Baruch City palace as well. But of course, they shrank in size first. Linley and Delia remained on Mt. Blackraven, living a life of quiet training.

Most of Delia's time was spent with Linley. Naturally, she would also go to Baruch City to spend time with the kids.

As for Linley…

He might go for months or even half a year at a time without seeing the

kids. Normally, he stayed on Mt. Blackraven and trained.

The sky was dark.

Mt. Blackraven. The stone room in the center of the lake. The inside of the room was carefully laid out, and Linley and Delia were holding each other on the bed. “Linley, have you ever asked Bebe to go inquire what that black stone was that he gave us on our wedding day?”

“I had Bebe go ask, but the Emperor Rat only said that it was something that was very good for training.” Linley said.

Delia began to laugh as well. “Alas. I never thought my training as a magus would reach such a speed. My big brother is such a genius, and is being personally taught by the High Priest, and is now an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. As for me, I wasn’t as good as him…but I reached the rank of Arch Magus of the ninth rank before he did. Every day, I feel like my spiritual energy is rising…even when I’m not training, my spiritual energy is slowly increasing. Even I’m scared by how fast I’m improving.”

“Enough, don’t overthink things. Whatever it was that Emperor Rat gave us, we’ll find out soon enough. Alright, it’s late. Let’s go to sleep.”

…….

While Linley was quietly training at Mt. Blackraven and constantly analyzing the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Earth…in a short mountain three hundred kilometers east of the Baruch Kingdom, two men were carefully inspecting the quality of the soil.

All Kingdoms and Empires needed their own mineral resources to be self-sufficient.

Before the Baruch Kingdom was unified, this region suffered from constant war and was under rapidly changing administrative controls. Today, you’d be in charge of this city; tomorrow, someone else might. Nobody had time or effort to find mineral deposits for mining.

Even if they found them, they would probably be attacked by the neighboring groups and end up dying.

Thus, no one ever went mining.

But after the Baruch Kingdom was founded, they focused on scouting and searching for mineral resources. Those surveyors carefully inspected every inch of the territory within the Baruch Kingdom. In the past twenty years, they had indeed found quite a few metal mines, such as iron mines, copper mines, gold mines, silver mines, and what not. Only, the mines were all of different sizes.

They even found some rather valuable mines, but the output of these mines was relatively low, such as the ‘black iron’ mines and the ‘mithril’ mines.

Having their own mines meant the Kingdom wouldn’t need to acquire materials for forging weapons from other nations.

“Chief, the soil here seems rather unique.” A golden-haired man as skinny as a monkey said in a low voice. The middle-aged man near him carefully inspected the soil as well, then immediately ordered, “Kaya [Ka’ya], let’s go down and do some digging. Let’s dig a bit deeper and see what is there.”

“Yes, Chief.” The young man immediately brought out the tools and began to dig alongside the chief. Although they weren’t very strong, the young man was a warrior of the third rank, while the chief was a warrior of the fifth. Digging, to them, was very simple.

Their digging skills were quite practiced, and the deep hole quickly deepened without widening.

“Clank.” A piercing sound. It seemed they had ground onto some sort of metal.

“Chief, come take a look, quick!” That young man hurriedly said.

The middle-aged man immediately lowered his head to stare. Right now, it was the afternoon, and there was still quite a bit of sunlight. The middle-aged man could clearly see that something was reflecting the light of the setting sun, and he immediately used his hand to push away the nearby dirt and mud.

A half-translucent gem appeared before his eyes.

“This…this is…” The middle-aged man was speechless for a moment, then said in shock, “This is a magicite gem. A magicite gem. Kaya, it’s a magicite gem!”

“What?! Captain, we’re rich! We’re rich!” The young man’s eyes immediately shone with happiness.

Magicite gems were extremely valuable. In truth…magicite cores of magical beasts were very similar to magicite gems. Although they were ‘cores’, they were a type of gem as well. For example, the cores of dragon’s were also often called ‘draconic gems’.

But of course, natural magicite gems couldn’t have the terrifyingly high amount of energy that draconic gems had.

According to the normal market value…

A low-quality magicite gem – 10 gold coins, equivalent to the magicite core of a magical beast of the third rank.

A middle-quality magicite gem – 100 gold coins, equivalent to a magicite core of the fourth or fifth ranks.

A high-quality magicite gem – 1000 gold coins, equivalent to a magical beast core of the sixth rank.

A top-quality magicite gem – 10000 gold coins. Natuarlly, it couldn’t match up to the magicite core of a magical beast of the seventh rank ,which was worth around fifty thousand gold coins. To find magicite gems or cores

more valuable than top-quality magicite gems, one would have to go out and kill magical beasts of the seventh or eighth ranks, or even higher.

It could be said…that a magicite gemstone mine was more than ten million times more valuable than ordinary gold mines. This was because when engaging in gold mining, one had to pan for gold, and it was extremely time consuming. But magicite gemstone mines were different. They had large numbers of magicite gems clustered together….

It was as though a large number of magicite cores had clustered together.

In the Yulan continent, the only thing comparable in value to a magicite gemstone mine was a mithril mine.

“We’re going to be rich, Chief! We can fill up a bag of gemstones, and they’d easily be worth over a hundred thousand gold coins. We’re going to be rich!” The young man was wildly overjoyed.

The chief frowned. “Don’t be hasty. This should be a magicite gemstone mine…let’s take a look and see how large this mine is.”

Chapter 31 – Magicite Gemstone Mine

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 31: Magicite Gemstone Mine

“Yes, Chief.” The young man suppressed his excitement, forcing himself to continue surveying the area with the chief.

“Here as well.” The Chief’s eyes lit up.

“Chief, there’s magicite gems here as well.” A hundred meters away, the young man, Kaya, was extremely excited. The older man surveyed his surroundings, and then immediately ran next to Kaya, so excited he was panting for breath. “Kaya, this clearly is a magicite gem mine. We’ve discovered that it is at least a few hundred meters wide. Such an enormous magicite mine is rarely seen in the entire Yulan continent.”

Kaya nodded repeatedly as well.

Magicite gems. A single sack of them was more than a thousand times the value of a sack of gold. This definitely was an enormous sum.

Kaya looked at his chief, then scanned the surrounding area. Seeing no one else was here, he immediately lowered his voice and whispered, “Chief, we’re both rich. We were able to find so many gems in the area around us. The price of the gems in this area alone has to be worth several hundred million gold coins, or maybe even more.”

The chief surveyor was also a surveying expert. Naturally he could tell how much this location was worth.

“Kaya, what are you trying to say?” The chief could already see the greedy look appear in Kaya’s eyes.

Kaya suppressed his excitement and hurriedly said, “Chief, think about it… what’s our yearly surveying salary? Now, as long as we keep quiet about it

and don't tell anyone, we can secretly excavate a bag full of gems, then sell them. Then we'd be rich! It would be possible for us to become two of the richest people in the entire Yulan continent because of this mine."

The more he thought about it, the more excited Kaya became.

There was nothing that could be done. Magicite gems were a hot commodity, and there were many channels for it to be sold through. In addition, even the lowest of magicite gems were worth ten gold coins. One could imagine how valuable this mine was.

"Kaya, calm down. Even if you have money, you have to be alive to spend it." Just as Kaya was getting so heated up that it seemed to be summer, his chief poured a bucket of verbal ice water over him. Kaya shivered, then looked at his chief. "Chief, what do you mean?"

The chief said seriously, "You should know how tightly we surveyors are managed and overseen. Those senior people are always worried that we will find some valuable mines, then secretly steal from them. The kingdom is extremely strict in its oversight of us."

Kaya sneered and laughed, "Chief, what are you afraid of? Yes, there is oversight, but all we need to do is to make one trip then leave and never return."

"You are still too young." The chief berated him. "You should know that every day, there are records in the headquarters of the areas we have excavated. If we disappear, they would definitely come investigate this area. By then, they would definitely discover the magicite gem mine."

"And secondly…" The chief looked at Kaya solemnly. "The kingdom has quite a few experts. Once the kingdom discovers what we have done, they would definitely pursue us. Our families would most likely get caught in the mix as well."

Kaya suddenly remembered that back in Baruch City, his chief had a very good family.

But he, Kaya, was different. His parents had passed away a long time ago in the chaotic wars. He was all by himself, and hadn't yet married. He had nothing tying him down. Kaya was very confident…that he could take away an enormous fortune, and live a life of luxury.

"Kaya." The chief looked at him. "If we report this to the headquarters, the headquarters will reward us for discovering the mine."

"How much would the reward be?" Kaya scoffed. "Ten thousand gold coins would be the most we could expect from them."

Actually, ten thousand gold coins was an enormous sum already. An ordinary family only used a few dozen gold coins a year. Ten thousand gold coins was enough to allow an ordinary family to live off of for a hundred years. But to enjoy the life of a magnate…ten thousand gold coins truly was nothing.

"Hard to say. It depends on the size of this mine. If the magicite gem mine is fairly large, they might give us several tens of thousands of gold coins, or even a hundred thousand gold coins." The chief tried to persuade him. "Kaya, the gold that the kingdom gives us, we can spend without fear, and we don't have to be forced to leave our home."

Kaya looked at the magicite gems in the hole beneath them, then looked at his chief. After struggling a long time mentally, he slowly nodded.

A hint of a smile appeared on the chief's face.

The chief thought of his wife and his three kids. He truly didn't want to make the kids go fleeing with him.

But just at this moment, a sharp dagger suddenly thrust out at the chief. Kaya's eyes were filled with a hint of madness. "Die!" But as his dagger stabbed at the chief, Kaya suddenly found that he could no longer push the dagger forward.

Because the chief had seized him by the hand.

Kaya's face instantly changed.

The chief stared at him coldly. And then, he exerted some pressure with his hand. "Crack!" Kaya's hand and wrist was shattered. Kaya howled wildly, while at the same time attacking the chief with his left hand. Sadly…he was a warrior of the third rank, while the chief was of the fifth.

The difference was too great.

"Bang!"

The chief, with a simple punch, hit Kaya in the chest. A bone-splintering sound was heard while Kaya went flying backwards, slamming against the floor. Kaya's chest was caved in and blood was flowing from his mouth.

"You…." Kaya's life was fading from his body. He truly couldn't accept it…he had ambushed the chief at such a close range. Clearly, the chief had been ready for him.

The chief sighed as he looked at Kaya. "Kaya, if I was twenty years younger and didn't have anything holding me back, perhaps I would have made the same choice as you, to abscond with a large amount of treasure and leave and become a magnate. Thus, I understand how you are feeling."

The chief had guessed that Kaya would ambush him, and thus had been on high guard, and the battle-qi in his body had been activated as well.

Kaya listened to these words, and then his eyes turned dim. He had no life left in him.

The chief sighed and shook his head as he looked at Kaya's body. But he didn't mind too much; when he was young, the Baruch Kingdom hadn't yet been founded. He had killed quite a few people, and he was rather used to it. For the sake of letting one's self live a good life, far too many people had lost their lives.

The chief immediately covered up the hole with dirt, then turned and left at high speed to the nearby Nifeng City.

The news that the Baruch Kingdom's small city of Nifeng had discovered a magicite gem mine quickly spread throughout the kingdom. The area around the mine had been immediately sealed off by thousands of soldiers, forbidding anyone from going near it. They quietly awaited orders from the capital.

Mt. Blackraven.

Wharton was running at high speed through the mountain. He passed through the thick woods, then followed the creek to the place where Linley was training.

"Big brother." Wharton called out from afar.

Linley, who was meditating in the center of the lake, couldn't help but open his eyes. Seeing Wharton, a hint of a smile appeared on his face. "Wharton, what has you here in such a rush?"

"Big brother, make a trip with me." Wharton hurriedly said.

"Little Wharton, what's going on?" Bebe popped out of a nearby wooded area.

Wharton explained, "Big brother, in the eastern borders, our people have discovered a large magicite gemstone mine. Right now, the scope of the deposit is at least a thousand meters wide. And that's just the surface layer. Exactly how large it is…hard to say. But even if it's just a thousand meters wide, the value of it is definitely several billion gold coins!"

"Oh?" Linley was shocked. "There's such a large magicite gem deposit?"

Magicite gemstones weren't like iron or copper deposits. Magicite gemstones usually formed only after countless years of accumulating

elemental energy. They would constantly compress it…and then finally take form. Some magicite gemstone deposits were only a few dozen meters in diameter.

“Let’s go, big brother.” Wharton said repeatedly.

“Alright, let’s go together.” As soon as Linley spoke, Bebe chimed in. “I’m going too.”

Wharton immediately laughed. “Bebe, if you go, I won’t have to Dragonform.” Wharton, being at the ninth rank, still couldn’t fly unless Dragonformed. But Dragonforming would ruin his clothes.

“Fine.” Bebe agreed easily.

Bebe’s body immediately grew larger. Wharton mounted on his back, and then the three of them flew at high speed towards the east. The current flying speed of Linley and Bebe was so great that in the amount of time it took to drink a cup of tea, they traversed the three hundred plus kilometers.

“Below.” Wharton pointed at the large area protected by a heavy guard.

Linley nodded slightly, and the three of them immediately descended. Seeing people fly over, the soldiers didn’t dare to be too rash. Their leader ran over. Sadly, this senior captain had never seen Wharton before.

“Are you…Lord Linley?”

Seeing Bebe shrink then hop onto Linley’s shoulders, many soldiers let out surprised shouts. This black Saint-level mouse had virtually become Linley’s insignia! He was a legendary figure in the Baruch Kingdom, its spiritual support!

Linley’s influence was tremendous.

“Right. I am Linley. This is Wharton, your King.” Linley laughed calmly.

Wharton resignedly stretched out his arms, which immediately became covered with azure scales. This was more convincing than any verbal proof. Dragonblood Warrior transformation…only the descendants of the Baruch clan could do this.

“Your Royal Majesty. Lord Linley.”

Loud voices rang out.

Wharton said calmly, “Enough. Keep guarding. My brother and I are going to scan this area.”

“Yes.” The surrounding soldiers raised their heads and their chests, keeping their backs straight. All of them wanted to make a good impression in front of their King and in front of this legendary Saint, Linley. Linley, meanwhile, had already begun to spiritually scan this area.

The nearby Wharton just looked at Linley.

“How huge.”

Linley was stunned as he delved deep into the ground with his spiritual sense. Spiritual energy could easily pierce through material barriers, but material barriers would still lessen the range of the spiritual energy much more than air did. After all, in the air, spiritual energy could scan at a range of ten kilometers.

But scanning solid, material barriers lowered that range to one kilometer.

“Big brother, what is it?” Wharton said softly.

Linley cracked a smile. “It seems…I need to take this a bit more seriously.”

Wharton was astonished.

He instantly understood Linley’s meaning. This magicite gemstone mine was so vast that Linley’s casual spiritual energy scan wasn’t able to totally

investigate the size and scope of this deposit.

“Big brother’s spiritual energy is capable of covering a very wide area, even through the ground. How large is this deposit exactly?” Wharton’s heart began to shake.

Linley was now using his spiritual energy to scan at full strength.

A full strength scan was very taxing on spiritual energy. Thus, unless there was some special reason, experts rarely would use spiritual energy on such a scale.

Finally…

Linley finished the investigation of this terrifying magicite gemstone deposit.

“How frightening. What a terrifyingly large magicite gem deposit.” Linley had clearly discovered…this magicite gem deposit was an oval, round shape. But of course, in the area around the ‘oval’, there were still some scattered, random deposits.

One of the nearby deposits was fairly close to the ground, perhaps just three or four meters away from the ground.

This massive deposit was over twenty kilometers wide!

Even someone who had trained to Linley’s level of understanding couldn’t help but feel his heart rate quicken. Linley secretly let out a breath, then looked at Wharton. Wharton asked softly, “Big brother, how is it?” Linley immediately walked to the side. “Talk about it over here.”

Wharton and Linley came to a quiet, secluded place.

“Big brother, how big is it?” Wharton was somewhat frantic.

Linley said seriously, “Very big…larger than any magicite gem deposit

previously discovered in the Yulan continent. At least ten times bigger."

Wharton was shocked. After all, in the past there had been deposits that were one or two kilometers in size. To be ten times larger than those deposits…"

"This magicite gem deposit is at least twenty kilometers in length. In addition, it's very deep as well…based on my calculations, this magicite gem deposit should definitely be worth at least several hundred billion gold coins." Linley felt his heart tremble as he just thought about this number.

Several hundred billion gold coins?

"Good heavens." Wharton found it hard to breathe as well.

Chapter 32 – Joining Forces

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 32: Joining Forces

The largest magicite mine in the history of the Yulan continent was actually discovered by the Baruch Kingdom which had only been erected for twelve years.

“The Anarchic Lands have been an area of constant warfare and battle. In thousands of years, not a single power has had the chance to do some excavating and mining. I didn’t expect that in this area that I unified, we would immediately find such a large mine.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh with amazement.

But at the same time, Linley felt rather curious.

Magicite deposits were formed from a large amount of elemental essence that was slowly compressed to the point of taking solid gemstone form. To create such a huge magicite mine would require an enormous amount of natural elemental essence. Why was it that there would be so much natural elemental essence here?

But when Linley had scanned the area with his spiritual energy, he hadn’t found anything unique about the ground below.

“Not good.” Wharton’s face changed.

“What is it?” Linley looked at Wharton in surprise, and Bebe did the same as well. “Little Wharton, we just found such a huge magicite mine. Why do you say, ‘not good’?”

Wharton shook his head. In a serious voice, he said, “Big brother, you say this magicite mine is worth hundreds of billions of gold coins. Aside from the financial aspect, the most important aspect of magicite mines is…they can be used in warfare. You should know this, right?”

Linley nodded.

“You are talking about magicite cannons?” Linley asked.

Magicite cannons were created from a sort of alchemy and metalsmithing. They allowed the usage of magic on a wide scale without requiring top-tier Arch Magi. In the past, the Holy Capital of Fenlai City had magicite cannons, but alas, on Apocalypse Day, even Saint-level magical beasts had descended, as well as a large number of flying beasts…this made it so that there was no time for the magicite cannons to begin firing.

In truth, magicite cannons were a type of extremely effective attack in warfare.

For example, some top-quality magicite cannons could consume a large amount of magicite gems and, with each blast, unleash power equivalent to a spell of the seventh or eighth rank, easily killing hundreds of people. On the battlefield, if one could emplace ten large magicite cannons and release a few blasts…

The enemy forces could instantly be reduced by ten thousand soldiers. This would have a huge impact on the outcome of the battle.

But magicite cannons were a bottomless, money-sucking pit. The amount of magicite gems they consumed was simply terrifying. In the past, when the Baruch Kingdom had unified this area, the enemies didn’t use any magicite cannons, because an impoverished area like this simply couldn’t afford to use them.

With each blast from the magicite cannons, magicite gems would be consumed. And these things were more valuable than gold!

“A small amount of magicite gems can be purchased by gold.” Wharton’s face was solemn. “But a large amount would be restricted and monitored by the Empires. They wouldn’t permit any outsiders to purchase them. Although some people engage in smuggling, how much can that amount

to?”

Linley nodded. How could a nation allow an enemy nation to purchase military supplies from them in large scale?

Wharton said seriously, “It is easy to buy magicite cannons, and our in truth, given our kingdom’s strength, if we spend some money, we can make our own. With such a magicite mine combined with magicite cannons…our military power would become truly astonishing.”

There were still very few magi, after all. The testing procedure Linley had gone through in the past was testament to that.

After becoming a magus, to reach the seventh rank or even higher? That was even less likely. In the continent, only the great Empires, the Holy Union, and the Dark Alliance were capable of forming entire magi corps.

Linley’s Baruch Kingdom didn’t have the ability to set up this sort of corps either.

But magicite cannons…ten large magicite cannons, if one had enough magicite gems, wouldn’t be one whit inferior to a magi corps.

“Big brother.” Wharton looked at Linley. “You should know that in the continent, the four Empires and the other kingdoms, in their struggles, will not use Saints unless it becomes a life or death war. If Saints do not get involved…then magicite cannons will have the ability to change the course of a battle. If the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows discovers that we now have the largest magicite mine in the entire Yulan continent, then…”

Linley’s expression turned grave as well.

His long time spent training had caused him to forget about worldly battles.

“You are right. Once the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows finds out, they might even join forces to attack our Kingdom.” Linley sensed the threat as well now. In the past, they had agreed that in normal battles, Saints

were not permitted to get involved.

Then…

How could the Baruch Kingdom, with a population of just a hundred million, possibly outfight the combined forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, which controlled a far greater population?

The two sides dominated a larger territory than Linley as well, and those were richer areas with higher populations. The total population which the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows controlled was definitely in the four to five hundred million range.

“Big brother, what should we do?” Wharton looked at Linley.

Linley’s eyes shone with a cold light. “No need to overthink it. Right now, we need to come up with ways to buy magicite cannons. I’ll have the Dawson Conglomerate help out! And then, we need to, in strict confidence, begin mining. If the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows truly comes, then we’ll rely on magicite cannons to support our smaller army.”

“Alright, big brother.” Wharton’s eyes lit up as well.

Linley had already made the decision that no matter what, they could not hide or cower.

Soon, a large number of people were dispatched to this area to begin mining magicite. At the same time, a large number of soldiers remained on guard here. When mining, the miners were not permitted to engage in any outside activities. Naturally, their salaries were extremely high as well.

To outsiders, all they announced was that they had discovered a fairly valuable mineral deposit.

The Baruch Kingdom’s code of silence was quite effective. A full month went past without this information being leaked. However, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had quite a few spies planted in the Baruch

Kingdom. Occasionally, some news would leak out. In the end, the Radiant Church found out the truth of the news from the family members of the miners.

Within a graceful, noble manor.

“The largest magicite mine in the Yulan continent? At least ten kilometers in size?” A silver-haired youth was reading the letter in his hands. His expression immediately changed, and the more he read, the more serious his face became.

This silver-haired youth seemed to be quite young, but in reality, not even Heidens and Osenno were older than him.

This was because…he was a Saint-level Angel of the Radiant Church. Three thousand years ago, he had descended to the Yulan continent. Although his power as an Angel had not increased, and his potential couldn’t compare to humans, the long time he had spent here resulted in his intelligence and wisdom being as high as any human’s.

Arfan [A’fang], a Four-Winged Angel, the current leader of the Radiant Church’s forces in the Anarchic Lands.

“Good news.” Arfan’s face revealed a hint of a smile, then he immediately instructed the person who had delivered the message, “Immediately go and leak this news to the Cult of Shadows. See what their response is.”

“Yes, milord.” The middle-aged man said respectfully.

Arfan nodded slightly.

If the Cult of Shadows was interested in attacking the Baruch Kingdom, that would naturally be a wonderful affair. Even if they didn’t attack, informing them wouldn’t be of detriment to the Radiant Church.

“Deliver this news to the Sacred Isle immediately. Let the Sacred Isle give us orders as to what we should do next!” Arfan ordered. He knew…the

decision on such an important matter in the Anarchic Lands had to come from the Sacred Isle.

Soon…

The order from the Sacred Isle arrived.

Arfan read the missive. It was exactly as he had anticipated.

“Join forces with the Cult of Shadows and attack the Baruch Kingdom. We have to get at least a third of the magicite mine’s output. That’s our bottom line.” The order was very simple. After all, many things didn’t have to be said openly. As the manager for this area, Arfan naturally was no fool. For example, he would do his best to let the Cult of Shadows expend more energy and power.

Arfan smiled. He thought to himself, “It seems that it is time to reply to the Cult of Shadows.”

A while ago, when he had sent someone to leak this news to the Cult of Shadows, the Cult of Shadows had responded quite quickly…they had immediately invited Arfan to go and discuss this matter. Arfan hadn’t immediately answered them, instead asking them to wait. And now, he had the Sacred Isle’s orders.

Everything could begin now.

An ordinary, unremarkable little city. An ordinary little courtyard. The Saint-level Four-Winged Angel, Arfan, and the Senior Judge of the Cult of Shadows, O’Casey. The two were seated opposite from each other, drinking wine.

“Not bad. The taste and the texture are exquisite. It should be from the Yulan Empire’s Blueflow Winery, right?” O’Casey laughed.

“Mr. O’Casey truly knows his wine.” Arfan laughed calmly. “Let’s not beat around the bush. Today, you have invited me here, Mr. O’Casey, to discuss

the issue of the Baruch Kingdom's magicite mine. What do you wish to say, Mr. O'Casey?"

O'Casey winked at Arfan, then took a sip of wine in satisfaction. "Mr. Arfan, would you mind if I took some of this wine with me when I leave? I think I…have fallen for it."

Arfan frowned. He felt a hint of frustration.

But since this was a negotiation, he had to endure it.

"Mr. O'Casey, could it be that you wish to discuss wine with me until nightfall?" Arfan said seriously.

O'Casey looked at Arfan and began to laugh loudly. "Mr. Arfan, I was just jesting with you. Right. The Cult of Shadows does indeed have some thoughts regarding the Baruch Kingdom's magicite mine. However…we don't wish to engage in warfare against the Baruch Kingdom."

"You don't?" Arfan looked carefully at O'Casey.

What was this O'Casey planning? He didn't want to engage in battle with the Baruch Kingdom? Then what was the point of this meeting?

"Mr. O'Casey, what do you mean?" Arfan's face sank.

O'Casey smiled. "Actually, Arfan, you should understand. All we have to do is send some people to the Baruch Kingdom and say…'the Radiant Church is preparing to attack the Baruch Kingdom, and has invited the Cult of Shadows to come along with them. As long as the Baruch Kingdom is willing to give up some of the gems, then the Cult of Shadows is prepared to stay out of the game and help neither side. If you are willing to give up a bit more, we can even help you deal with the Radiant Church.'"

O'Casey looked at Arfan, who now had an ugly expression on his face. "Arfan, tell me. What would Linley and Wharton choose?"

Arfan was silent.

“The enmity which Linley has with the Radiant Church isn’t a small one.” O’Casey said freely.

Indeed. O’Casey’s words were correct. Linley’s side probably truly would be willing to give some magicite gems to the Cult of Shadows, or perhaps even a large amount to have the Cult of Shadows help them deal with the Radiant Church together.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were opposed to each other, after all.

Arfan knew that right now, the situation was very unfavorable for them.

“Mr. O’Casey.” Arfan looked seriously at O’Casey. “Do you know how much that magicite mine truly contains?”

“I don’t know, but it should be several times larger than the former top magicite mine.” O’Casey said. Very few people knew the exact size of the mine. After all, it hadn’t been fully excavated yet. Only someone like Linley who could scan the area with his spiritual energy could clearly understand the size of it.

But how would the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows dare to send a Saint-level expert and risk irritating Linley?

Perhaps Linley would immediately kill that Saint.

After all, in their previous agreement, they only said that Saints could not participate in battles. But Linley was still permitted to kill other Saints.

Arfan nodded. “Since you don’t know the size of the magicite mines, then even if Linley gives your Cult of Shadows a seemingly-large quantity of magicite gems, you won’t actually know what percentage of the total mine it is.”

“True.” O’Casey admitted to it.

Linley might only declare the size of the mine as being a fraction and worth only a few hundred billion gold coins, with the actual mine being ten times larger. After all, no one knew exactly how large it was…it would be easy for Linley to lie to them.

“As long as we join forces against the Baruch Kingdom, later on, we’ll split the magicite mine fifty-fifty, no matter how large it is.” Arfan said.

“Half?” O’Casey shook his head. “Seventy-thirty. Us seventy, you thirty.”

Arfan said coldly “O’Casey, don’t go too far. If we split it in half, we’ll be able to work and coordinate better in the future.” O’Casey winked at him, then laughed, “Since that’s the case…then I’ll go help Linley’s side. We won’t have to risk a thing, and we’ll get a large amount of magicite gems.”

Arfan frowned.

“Sixty for you. Forty for us. One word: Yes, or no?” Arfan’s face was very grave.

O’Casey looked at Arfan, then raised his wineglass. Smiling, he said, “Mr. Arfan, come. Let us toast our joining forces!”

Arfan’s face revealed a smile.

“Cheers.” He raised his wineglass as well.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, for the sake of the enormous riches within that magicite mine, had joined forces. This was proof that there was no such thing as ‘eternal allies’ or ‘perpetual enemies’; only eternal and perpetual interests. And these interests could sometimes be money, sometimes be power, and sometimes be affection.

Chapter 33 – Calling the Troops – Summoning the Generals

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 33: Calling the Troops, Summoning the Generals

The Anarchic Lands. The Radiant Church's territory. On a public road, an endless army procession was moving forwards, with military officers riding on magical beasts or powerful stallions barking at the soldiers in that massive, endless line.

"Move faster!" Brandishing their whips in the air, the military officers had very strict expressions on their faces.

A forced march!

They remembered the order they had been given. They had to hurry towards the prefectural city of Sherry as quickly as possible. Outside the boundaries of the prefectural city of Sherry was the location where the Baruch Kingdom and the Radiant Church were going to do battle. This was also the place closest to the magicite mines that the Radiant Church had access to.

The mobilization of this grand army couldn't be hidden from the Baruch Kingdom. Naturally, they had to move quickly.

Right now, at the boundaries of Sherry, twenty thousand soldiers had already assembled. These hastily assembled soldiers were permitted a day or two of rest after hurrying over here, and then they would be also be sent to do battle.

"We're going to fight a full on war against the Baruch Kingdom."

Within a quiet, secluded manor, Cardinal Guillermo was staring at the northern skies. The person responsible for this battle wasn't Arfan. It was Guillermo. After all, in terms of influence amongst the masses, Cardinal

Guillermo had more.

And…

Saints were not permitted to get involved in this battle. Arfan would be useless, but Guillermo, as an Arch Magus of the ninth rank, would be able to make a major impact.

“What a true pity. The young man who could’ve become of great use to the Radiant Church has become our greatest foe.” Guillermo sighed in his heart. He had personally watched Linley grow up, and grow from being a genius magus of the seventh rank to an expert who could kill Clayde, a warrior of the ninth rank.

After being dormant for many years?

He killed six Angels of the ninth rank, and then became an earth-shaking figure in the O’Brien Empire. And then…he founded the Baruch Kingdom in the Anarchic Lands.

“Twenty years have passed. This Linley is now so powerful that even the Praetor and the others are remaining in hiding in the Sacred Isle, afraid to come out.” Guillermo mused to himself.

“Milord?” A knight saluted him respectfully, calling out his name in a reminding manner.

Guillermo awoke from his musings. Glancing at the knight, he said, “Let’s go. Come with me to the border with the prefectural city of Sherry. Let’s go see the Dark Cardinal of the Cult of Shadows, and see if Dark Cardinal Weiss Porter [Wei’si Bo’te] has improved over the past few decades.”

……

The royal capital, Baruch City. The royal palace.

Wharton, Linley, Barker and the others were standing in a line in the main

hall. There was a giant army map in the middle of the hall, and a middle-aged man was currently aiming a pointer on top of it. “Milords, the magicite mine is here. If it is just the Radiant Church that attacks us…the place we should choose to fight at is the prefectural city of Sherry.”

Linley and the others all nodded.

“However…” The middle-aged man shook his head. “Unless the Radiant Church’s commander has gone stupid, they won’t choose to attack here.”

“Oh?” Barker raised an eyebrow.

The middle-aged man continued, “The magicite mine is over three hundred kilometers away from the capital, while the prefectural city of Sherry is four or five hundred kilometers away from the capital. This is a straight line! If they had to fight their way from the prefectural city of Sherry to the magicite mine, they would have to travel nearly a thousand kilometers if they followed the road. On the road to the mines, there are over ten cities, large and small. The Radiant Church would battle us for a thousand kilometers, deep within our territory? Nearly half their forces have to remain in their garrisons with their borders with the O’Brien Empire and the Rohault Empire. Only half are available to attack us.”

“Therefore, our military strength is roughly on par.”

The middle-aged man pointed at Sherry. “At the same level of power, if we are to guard inside our city walls while they attack…and they are forced to fight through our territory for thousand kilometers…they would be asking for death.”

“Therefore, if the Radiant Church wishes to attack us, they only have one option. Join forces with the Cult of Shadows. They have no other options!” The middle-aged man took a deep breath, the pointer in his hands slashing to the side. “The Cult of Shadows shares a border of over a thousand kilometers with us. The closest place to our magicite mine, without question, is right here!”

“The prefectural city of Cod [Ke’de]!” The middle-aged man pointed at a spot.

“The magicite mine is outside the small city of Nifeng. Nifeng City is one of the small cities under the control of the prefectural city of Cod. From Cod to the mines is a distance of only a hundred kilometers.” The middle-aged man had a serious look on his face. “If they break through our defenses here, it would be smooth sailing for them to charge to the magicite mines!”

Linley nodded slightly.

This general explained things very clearly.

“Watts [Wa’ci].” Wharton suddenly said. “If I were to give you full authority to direct the battle as you please, would you be confident in your ability to win?”

Barker also said, “In addition, I can also provide you with over thirty magicite cannons. I’ll be responsible for handling the problem of bringing you the necessary magicite gems.” Barker had a very high status in the Baruch Kingdom. He was the one and only Grand Marshal of the Kingdom, and his personal power was also quite terrifying.

Soon after Linley had reached the Saint-level in his human form, Barker had as well. Once he transformed…he was a peak Undying Warrior Saint. Barker, who already had mastered the ‘impose’ level, wasn’t any bit weaker than Osenno.

Hearing that they had over thirty magicite cannons, Watts’ eyes lit up.

Watts jutted his chest out and said firmly, “Your Highness, as long as you give me the authority to command our five hundred thousand soldiers, I have full confidence in my ability to hold our ground at the prefectural city of Cod and repulse the enemies.”

“Very good.” Wharton revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

The Baruch Kingdom actually had over a million warriors, not even counting the ordinary city guards.

“Your Highness.” Watts said solemnly. “I’m worried…that the enemy will come with a force more terrifying and more powerful than we expected. If something like this happens and an irresistible force comes, standing our ground would be dangerous.”

“A terrifying force?” Wharton was puzzled.

“Right. For example, if a Saint was to appear, or if one of the legendary, powerful magus corps of the Radiant Church was to be sent here, we would be in great danger.” Watts said solemnly.

Both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had spent tremendous time and effort in cultivating their magus corps. These two sides all had powerful magus corps, and the weakest member of these corps was of the seventh ranks, while the highest were Arch Magi of the ninth rank.

A corps of over a thousand powerful magi, with several Arch Magi of the ninth rank commanding them, could cast terrifyingly powerful magic spells.

The power of such a corps wasn’t one whit inferior to a ‘forbidden-level’ spell of a Grand Magus Saint.

This was also why, with the Empires normally not permitting Saints to get involved in battles, magus corps had become a terrifyingly powerful force.

“The enemy Saints will not appear.”

Linley spoke out.

Watts immediately looked at Linley. Seeing that it was Linley who had spoken, he immediately became very respectful. Linley laughed calmly. “Don’t worry. Neither the Radiant Church nor the Cult of Shadows will send Saints out, at least. Also…as for those terrifying magus corps you

spoke of…”

“If they want to produce forbidden-level magic attacks…don’t worry, they won’t be able to.” Linley said calmly.

Although they had previously agreed that Saints were not to be permitted to get involved in battle, Linley knew exactly how powerful forbidden spells were. A single spell could perhaps destroy the entire prefectural city of Cod, and a terrifyingly high number of people would die. Linley wouldn’t be so obstinate and stubborn as to allow an entire city’s worth of people, over a million lives, to die because of an agreement.

Were the lives of a million people of less value than an agreement?

What’s more.

These so-called agreements between countries were only binding and effective when nations were on equal levels of strength. If one side was overwhelming powerful, even if they ripped the agreement to shreds and immediately attacked, so what? This was something that was quite commonly seen in the Yulan continent.

But of course, Linley would only do such a thing if the enemy magus corps jointly cast spells to create an effect on par with a forbidden spell.

….

As the commanding general, information constantly flowed to Watts, and he issued one order after another to his subordinates.

The news that the Radiant Church’s forces had arrived outside the prefectural city of Sherry quickly spread to him.

Could it be…that the Radiant Church really was going to attack the prefectural city of Sherry?

“The prefectural city of Sherry already had an army there. Send another

army over. The two legions will have a total of two hundred thousand soldiers…stand your ground inside the city, and destroy the trees around the prefectural city of Sherry. Don't give the enemy a place to hide and launch ambushes against us."

"The prefectural city of Sherry definitely isn't the place where the enemy will launch their real attack. They are just trying to tie down our forces. All we need to do is stand our ground."

The Cult of Shadows acted exactly as Watts had predicted. Indeed…they soon joined the fray.

"The bridge ahead of the prefectural city of Cod must be destroyed. Also, the roads around the prefectural city of Cod must also be destroyed. Don't give any avenue for the enemy forces to easily travel towards us. Force them to attack Cod directly." This order did indeed cause quite a bit of frustration to the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

"Within the city of Cod itself, all the civilians must be relocated. The prefectural city of Cod must become a military fort and must be internally reconfigured for war."

One order after another came from the military headquarters, and they were carefully carried out by each of the supervisors in each location. An order came to the magicite mines as well. "Increase the level of production. Mine at the maximum possible speed. No need to continue to try and disguise your activities."

In the prior twelve years, the three powers in the Anarchic Lands had only engaged in small-scale battles. They had never engaged in something like today's struggle. Even before the battle started, the mobilized forces had already reached a terrifyingly high number. Clearly…

This battle was not for training purposes. It was the real deal.

In the endless skies, a blue-robed Linley could be seen flying through the air at high speed in the direction of the Cult of Shadows. Linley knew

where O'Casey lived; the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands, a seemingly ordinary Shadow Temple.

Linley's gaze was cold.

"O'Casey actually agreed to the Radiant Church's offer. Hrmph!"

Linley didn't understand this, but the Cult of Shadows actually had no choice either. If they helped Linley, then the Radiant Church's power would essentially be destroyed here in the Anarchic Lands. They feared that at that time, Linley would suddenly turn on them.

It must be understood…

Linley's side now consisted of Linley, Bebe, the Barker brothers, and Barker who had reached the Saint-level in his human form. This Saint team was simply too powerful. The Cult of Shadows wouldn't be able to outfight them.

If Linley really did turn on them and ignored their earlier agreement, what would the Cult of Shadows be able to do?

They knew that Desri was actually biased towards Linley.

Linley's Saints were simply too powerful. Only if both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were present would Linley be cautious. Once one of the two sides were destroyed, then most likely both would be finished.

"Saint-level experts cannot participate in battles or kill ordinary people, but I can still kill Saints myself." Linley stared at the distant Shadow Temple. "I'll use death to threaten O'Casey. Perhaps that'll help him to wake up."

Linley used his spiritual energy to scan the entire Shadow Temple.

"Hrm, no one there?"

Linley frowned. The energy around his body began to roil about, and like a

flash of lightning, Linley caused the window to shatter soundlessly to dust which then drifted downwards. Linley entered the room.

“Where’s O’Casey?” Linley looked calmly at the golden-haired old man in front of him.

The golden-haired old man was one of the most powerful members of the Shadow Temple; a Saint. But he was only an mid-stage Saint, far weaker than O’Casey.

“Linley?” The old man smiled. “Lord O’Casey ordered me to wait for you here, Lord Linley. Let me introduce myself. I am a Four-Winged Fallen Angel of the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley looked calmly at the old man.

The old man’s attitude was very humble. “Lord O’Casey ordered me to inform you that this battle is unavoidable. As for Lord O’Casey himself, he has already returned to the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows. I am the only Saint remaining here belonging to the Cult of Shadows.”

Linley frowned.

O’Casey actually fled back home.

“You aren’t afraid that I’ll kill you?” Linley stared at the old man. A Four-Winged Fallen Angel.

Chapter 34 – A Beast of Burden?

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 34: A Beast of Burden?

Under Linley's gaze, the Four-Winged Fallen Angel only smiled. "Lord Linley is currently a ranking member of the most powerful experts in the entire Yulan continent. I think you most likely wouldn't lower yourself to attack me." The Four-Winged Fallen Angel was nothing more than a mid-stage Saint, after all.

Even twelve years ago, Linley and Bebe could have effortlessly killed this Four-Winged Fallen Angel.

"Help me send a message to O'Casey." Linley glanced at the old man.

"Lord Linley, please tell me what you need." The old man said humbly.

Linley said calmly, "He has chosen to join forces with the Radiant Church. This is an extremely foolish act. In the future, he will definitely regret it."

The old man nodded. "I will definitely convey your words to Lord O'Casey. However, I also want to tell you something, Lord Linley. In reality, in the Anarchic Lands, the threat you pose to us is even greater than the Radiant Church."

"Oh?" Linley laughed.

He understood their meaning. Right now, the only people who posed a threat to him in the Yulan continent were the Five Prime Saints. Linley's understanding of the Laws wasn't a match for those Five Prime Saints. After all, whether it was the Profound Truths of the Earth or the Profound Truths of the Wind, he had only reached the level of Higginson and Hayward.

However, the natural abilities of the Dragonblood Warriors were simply too

great.

Dragonblood Warriors were ten times stronger than ordinary people to begin with. Thus, even though the Five Prime Saints had a much greater understanding of the Laws…if they were to truly fight against each other, it would be hard to say who was stronger and who was weaker.

Neither the Cult of Shadows nor the Radiant Church had an expert capable of fighting Linley one on one.

Linley being in such a strong position naturally filled the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows with fear. Naturally, these two organizations would secretly have the desire to work together. After all, no matter how much territory they held…it was the experts of the organizations that determined their fate.

"I understand what you mean." Linley suddenly felt that the Four-Winged Fallen Angel was rather amusing. "However, I don't have much interest in territory. Your Cult of Shadows doesn't need to fear too much if you ally with the Baruch Kingdom."

The old man shook his head. "Lord Linley, an expert such as yourself isn't interested in worldly power, but what about your little brother, King Wharton? Even if your little brother isn't interested, what about the successors to the Baruch Kingdom? They will continuously expand their territory and have the desire to unify the entire Anarchic Lands."

Linley was briefly startled…and then he laughed.

"You are an interesting fellow." Linley chuckled as he glanced at the old man, then turned and disappeared from the room.

After Linley left, the old man secretly let out a sigh of relief. Although from start to finish, Linley hadn't acted against him at all, even just standing there, he had given the Fallen Angel a sense of dread…he understood that the difference in power between the two was simply too great.

Within the prefectural city of Cod. Right now, a large number of civilians were being evacuated. The prestige of the royal clan of the Baruch Kingdom was very high. Once the order came down, given how imminently threatening the chance of war was, these civilians all obediently evacuated.

Of course, their future homes would all be arranged for.

What was previously a three-story hotel had become the military command center for the prefectural city of Cod. Watts was standing in front of the third floor window, staring down at the evacuation. In his heart, he secretly let out a sigh. He understood…that the homes of these civilians would definitely be destroyed.

To make the prefectural city of Cod a military fort, many residential homes had to be destroyed, and tunnels and pits were dug everywhere.

Although the King had spent an enormous amount of money for the sake of relocating these civilians, for them to give up the homes they had spent twelve years establishing still deeply hurt these civilians.

“Under the unifying force of the kingdom, their lives are much better than twelve years ago.” Watts looked like he was a middle-aged man, but in reality he was in his nineties. He knew exactly how chaotic the Anarchic Lands had been in the past. The orphans alone were countless in number. From this, one could see how brutal the wars had been.

Suddenly, the sound of knocking could be heard.

“Enter.” Watts said calmly.

“Milord, the Grand Marshal has come.” The soldier reported immediately upon entering.

“His Lordship, the Grand Marshal?” Watts immediately said. “Then quick, bring me to him.”

The citizens of the Baruch Kingdom all naturally worshipped those

talented, powerful experts who supported the kingdom. The number one person was of course Linley. After him was his Majesty, King Wharton, and then…the leader of the five wargods, the Undying Warrior Saint, Barker.

Within a courtyard behind the hotel.

Barker was seated, enjoying some wine by himself, when Watts ran in and delivered a military salute. “Lord Grand Marshal!” Barker raised his head and glanced at him, then chuckled, “Oh, it is Watts. Come on over. Be at ease.”

Over the past twelve years, the Kingdom had discovered many talented people.

Barker and his brothers normally spent their time training. They rarely got involved in other matters. Watts, however, was a very promising prospect whom Barker had discovered.

“Come, drink.” Barker poured Watts a cup of wine.

Watts asked, “Lord Grand Marshal, the purpose of your journey this time is…?”

Barker laughed. “Didn’t I tell you last time? I told you I’d bring you over thirty magicite cannons.” Watts’ eyes immediately lit up. Barker continued, “I brought a total of thirty-six. These thirty-six magicite cannons have already been prepared.”

“Already prepared?” Watts was worried. “But how would you bring them over? Lord Grand Marshal, those magicite cannons must be in a distant location. Bringing them over will take a huge amount of time. Will we have enough time?”

Barker shook his head and laughed. “For the sake of these magicite cannons, I spent all day travelling.”

Watts was confused.

What did the Grand Marshal mean?

Barker waved his hand in the direction of some empty space in the courtyard.

Instantly, one magicite cannon after another appeared out of thin air. They were divided into four rows, with nine magicite cannons in each row. Each of them were two or three meters long, and the width of the cannon mouths were roughly half a meter. The cannons were covered with complicated magical runes.

Beneath the sunlight, the magicite cannons gleamed with a mesmerizing light.

Thirty six magicite cannons.

“This…this…” Watts was excited.

“Watts, haven’t you heard of interspatial rings?” Barker snickered. “Fortunately, mine is pretty big. It was just able to squeeze these thirty-six magicite cannons. However, for the sake of these thirty-six magicite cannons, I ran around half the Yulan continent and flew for a whole day. Only then did I manage to collect them all and bring them here.”

These thirty-six magicite cannons were all large-caliber cannons.

The size of the cannon mouths and the complicated runes on them were proof of the level of these cannons. Cannons on this level generally couldn’t be bought from the various Empires, but through the connections of the Dawson Conglomerate, they were able to get quite a few.

Through storing them in his interspatial ring, Barker was able to easily bring them all over.

“These thirty-six magicite cannons are equivalent to thirty-six magi of the eighth rank, and they have virtually limitless mageforce.” Barker laughed.

Most magi of the eighth rank could only use spells of the eighth rank three times before running out of mageforce.

Even if they had powerful magistaffs, they would perhaps only be able to cast them four or five times.

But these magicite cannons could continue to attack ceaselessly so long as they had magicite gems to fuel them.

“Lord Grand Marshal, with these thirty-six magicite cannons, if we use them correctly, they would definitely be able to match the effect of hundreds of thousands of soldiers.” Watts’ face was filled with irrepressible excitement, and then he laughed. “But of course, I would need enough magicite gems.”

Magicite cannons burned through money.

With each blast, it was as though gold coins were being shot out of the cannon. Without enough wealth, who would be willing to use them?

“Don’t worry. Soon, the magicite gems will be brought over as well.” Barker said with certainty.

“Our enemies are over a million in number. When the battle starts, these thirty-six magicite cannons will definitely use up an astonishing amount of magicite gems.” Watts looked at Barker. “Lord Grand Marshal, to bring over such a high amount of magicite gems will most likely need many people.”

Barker nodded.

He could store the magicite cannons in his interspatial ring, but the size of the ring was limited. If he wanted to move a large amount of magicite gems, his interspatial ring would be too small. He’d have to make over ten trips.

At the magicite mines, they no longer worked under any disguises or pretenses, since the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had already

mobilized their armies. They were excavating at full-speed. These magicite mines weren't like copper or iron mines.

Those materials needed to be smelted. It was a great deal of work.

But magicite gems only needed to be washed, and then they would be divided into grades. They were one of the easier types of minerals to mine for. The only thing difficult about them…was that magicite gems were very tough.

The higher the level of magicite gem, the tougher they were, far more so than ordinary stones.

Ordinary tools wouldn't be able to dig them out at all.

These miners were all specially selected. They had at least the strength of a warrior of the third rank. Their strength, combined with some special excavating tools, just barely allowed them to dig the gems out.

"Clang!" "Clang!" "Bang!" ….

Digging sounds rang out nonstop. Many people were here digging. Although they weren't individually fast, all added together, the result was that bags stuffed with magicite gems were constantly being brought out, then divided by level into piles.

It had been two months since they had started mining.

Despite that, they had only finished digging out part of the mine.

"What's going on? They told us to bring such a huge iron chest and store magicite gems in it. Such a huge iron chest, if used to hold magicite gems, would weigh several million pounds. How would we possibly deliver them?" The garrison troops stared at those enormous metal boxes which were fifty meters long, thirty meters wide, and thirty meters tall. They were all puzzled.

These boxes were very sturdy. Why use such huge iron boxes to store magicite gems?

Although a single magicite gem wasn't too heavy, a full box of them would definitely be several million pounds in weight. Several million pounds worth of magicite gems…how would ordinary troops possibly move them? It wouldn't be so bad if they were divided into smaller shipments, but all together…

Not even an interspatial ring would be able to hold such a large amount.

After having mined for two months, the amount of magicite gems they had mined had finally filled this massive chest. They used a large amount of steel chains to bind the entire chest securely. Every single chain was a meter thick, and there were dozens around the chest.

"Later, giant dragons will come to move the chest. All of you be quiet. Don't cause too much of a ruckus." The military officer's order came out.

Giant dragon?

All of the soldiers stared in the sky as they waited.

It was late at night. The full moon hung high in the sky.

Indeed, a massive Tyrant Wyrm over a hundred meters long appeared in the sky. The soldiers below felt the world grow dark, and the natural awesome presence of the Tyrant Wyrm made the pulses of these soldiers speed up. The hundred meter long Tyrant Wyrm landed on the ground.

"Master had me, a noble Saint-level dragon, to carry things for him. Jeeze…" The Tyrant Wyrm, Plaket, secretly sighed.

His fiery, cart-sized eyes swept the nearby soldiers with a glance. His massive nostrils snorted, then his two draconic claws grabbed those sturdy chains. The massive Tyrant Wyrm easily lifted that iron chest which weighed millions of pounds into the air. Beneath the glow of the moonlight,

it flew off with the massive chest towards the south, in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod.

Chapter 35 – The Call to Assemble

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 35: The Call to Assemble

The prefectural city of Cod was a city with several hundreds of thousands of citizens and which took up a huge amount of space. Given the local geography as well as the intentional destruction caused by the Baruch Kingdom's forces, the Radiant Church's side was forced to attack the city from the south and the east gates.

The north gate was actually open, as they had no fear of the enemy attacking from that side.

The day slowly grew bright, and many soldiers who had been on guard duty at night switched shifts. Logically speaking, there should have been fewer soldiers outside in the morning, but the new shift discovered to their surprise…that there were many people outside, and it seemed as though the soldiers that had been on duty weren't tired at all. Instead, they were excited.

"Buddy, time to change shifts. What are you guys talking about?"

Many soldiers ran to their shift changing positions.

"A titanic dragon, a titanic dragon. It had no wings, but it was able to fly. It was a Saint-level titanic dragon. Wow. It was so huge. It was like a mountain." The night-shift garrison soldiers were talking excitedly amongst themselves.

"What dragon?" The new arrival was shocked.

The night-shift garrison soldier explained excitedly, "Tonight, an enormous dragon flew over…there were a lot of soldiers waiting to move things. Look, they're still moving things. That enormous metal case was delivered by the flying dragon."

The new arrival looked over.

He saw a massive box at least fifty meters long. He sucked a cold breath. How could people possibly move such an enormous box? Perhaps it truly was a massive dragon that had carried it here.

A large number of soldiers were currently right in the middle of the metal box, carrying out bulging sacks.

The news about the giant dragon quickly spread throughout the army camp, causing the morale of the soldiers of Cod to rise. Their side had the help of a massive dragon, and a Saint-level one who could fly, at that. They would definitely be successful.

But the enemy forces, by contrast…

The Liuyan River was a fairly large river. Although it wasn't one of the top three rivers of the Anarchic Lands, it was still fifty or sixty meters wide, and caused endless headaches for the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

The bridge that had been erected at enormous expense had been destroyed by the Baruch Kingdom itself.

Building it was hard, but destroying it was simple.

The Cardinal of the Radiant Church, Guillermo, and the Dark Cardinal of the Cult of Shadows, Weiss Porter, stared at the river, frowning. To build a floating bridge was simple, but how could a million-man army possibly cross on such a floating bridge?

In addition, some of their war machines were extremely large. How would they ship them across?

"We have to immediately build a large number of floating bridges to let the soldiers cross." Guillermo frowned, urging.

“Then what about the war machines?” Someone below asked.

To attack a city, one had to use war machines such as the escalades, which were dozens of meters wide. How could something so large and so heavy be shipped across? But building a large bridge would take an enormous amount of time; even the time it would take to let the cement settle down and harden would be time consuming.

There wasn’t enough time.

“When the time comes, magic will have to be used to freeze the water into ice.” Guillermo frowned.

It was currently August, the hottest time of the year. In addition, this was a very large river. To freeze the river solid enough to allow the escalades and the other large war machines to cross would require at least an Arch Magus of the ninth rank.

……

The prefectural city of Cod was constantly being renovated as well, preparing all sorts of war machines of its own. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows continued to plan ways to bring across their million-man army. In the Anarchic Lands, warfare was about to break out at any moment.

At this time…

The O’Brien Empire. War God Mountain.

“Whooosh.”

The War God, O’Brien, suddenly appeared at the door to his cave. The War God, O’Brien, stood there, as straight as a spear, emanating a fierce air. His scarlet red hair fluttered freely, and a hint of a smile was on his face.

It had been a long time since he had left the cave.

A flash of light suddenly appeared in front of him. It was Fain.

“Master.” Fain stood respectfully in front of the War God, O’Brien. The War God, as soon as he had stepped outside, had summoned Fain.

The War God glanced at his disciple. “Fain, spend the next period of time in training and in preparation…” The War God’s voice trailed off, but Fain’s eyes lit up. He looked at his master. “Master, are you saying…?”

“Right. It should be starting again soon…because that person in the Forest of Darkness has instructed me to go to him.” The words of the War God O’Brien made Fain’s heart begin to tremble.

Fain knew that the Deity in the Forest of Darkness rarely got involved in any matters. For him to now have the War God go over most likely meant… it was time to once again open the Necropolis of the Gods.

The War God O’Brien immediately transformed into a fiery streak of light, flashing across the sky and quickly disappearing into the eastern horizon. His speed was simply astonishing, far beyond the likes of Linley and the others.

On a mountain peak in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

A devilish youth with dark-golden eyes and a long robe stood on the peak, staring at the east. There was a knife-scar in the middle of his forehead. Only people who knew him were aware…that this wasn’t actually a knife scar. It was the powerful weapon of the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

The King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts…Dylin!

“Hrmph, that old bastard.” Dylin stared towards the east. He had received the summons from that person in the Forest of Darkness as well. Although Dylin disliked him, he didn’t dare to disobey either. “He was like this five

thousand years ago, and now, he's still like this. The Yulan continent…that old bastard is the most comfortable person here."

"Swish."

Dylin's body flashed, and a dark golden light streaked toward the eastern horizon, then disappeared. The speed…seemed to be even more astonishing than that of the War God O'Brien.

On a cloud-shrouded peak near the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire.

Long silver hair flowing freely. A shining jade mask. Moon-white robes. The person looked like an Angel who didn't belong in this world, or perhaps a spirit. But from the figure…this person seemed very willowy. The person looked somewhat like a woman.

This was the oldest human Deity in the Yulan continent, the pillar of support for the Yulan Empire…the High Priest!

"Is it beginning?" The High Priest stared towards the northeast. The glowing jade mask caused his face to be hidden. "Who knows how many people will die this time." The High Priest let out a sigh, and then a wind arose nearby.

When the wind died down, the High Priest had disappeared as well.

Within a graceful entertainment area in the Rohault Empire.

"C'mon, give me a kiss." Still dressed in a loose robe, and that lazy smile still on his face, Cesar was currently cuddling a beautiful woman, teasing her while drinking wine. But just as they were having fun, his face suddenly froze. "Leave for now." Cesar waved his hand.

The beautiful woman clearly was confused.

"I told you to leave." Cesar frowned. The slight aura he was now emanating made the woman's heart quail, and she immediately left, not daring to

protest.

Frowning, Cesar let out an unhappy grumble. “The Forest of Darkness…oh, your Lordship, your mightiness, someone like you has no need for a minor figure like me. I just reached the Deity-level not too long ago. Why do I have to go with you.”

Although he was annoyed, Cesar didn’t dare to disobey.

His five thousand years of life had let Cesar know quite a bit about the background history of the Yulan continent.

A black shadow flashed, and Cesar disappeared as though he had teleported. If Bebe and Osenno had seen this…they would have been shocked. For someone to be able to reach such a level in the Shadowshape technique was simply too terrifying.

In the air above the Forest of Darkness, the four great Deities flew together, side by side. Sonic booms could be heard continuously. The War God O’Brien, his gaze firm. The quiet, natural High Priest. The cold, devilish Dylin. And the rather lazy, unhappy-looking Cesar who flew a bit farther away from the others.

“Cesar, why the unhappy face? You are a Deity now. You should be happy.” The gentle voice of the High Priest rang out.

Cesar forced out a smile. “Lord Catherine [Kai’se’lin], I just reached the Deity level not long ago. When we meet with any danger, I hope you will help me, Lord Catherine. Otherwise, my little life might be over.”

“Your little life will be over?” The War God’s firm, powerful voice rang out, and he swept Cesar with a lightning gaze. “You have entered the Deity level, and you train in the assassination and escaping aspects of the darkness-element. Amongst the four of us, your escaping ability should be the greatest.”

Cesar could only let out a few resigned chuckles.

As for the King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin, he flew silently.

“Dylin.” The High Priest looked at him, speaking with a voice that was warm and friendly. “Congratulations on escaping from the Gebados [Ge’ba’da] Prison. I must say, your luck is quite good.”

Dylin glanced at the High Priest. “Catherine, my luck isn’t as good as yours.”

Just as these people were chatting…

“Enough. There will plenty of time to chat later. Hurry up.” A hoarse, ancient voice suddenly rang out in the ears of the four Deities. The four Deities immediately increased their speed, transforming into rays of light as they entered the depths of the Forest of Darkness.

Across the Yulan continent, the vast majority of Saints, such as Linley and Desri, didn’t know that the five Deities were coming together in the Forest of Darkness. Linley was actually in the prefectural city of Cod. The upcoming battle was simply too important.

But soon after Linley arrived at the prefectural city of Cod…

“Lord Linley.” Barker suddenly ran over.

“What is it, Barker?” Linley smiled at Barker, who hurriedly said, “Lord Linley, come take a look with me. Someone told me that there was a change in the magicite mines. I took a look and I discovered something incredible.”

“Oh?” Linley was curious now. “Come, let’s take a look.”

Linley immediately followed Barker as they flew to the magicite mine at high speed. Currently, parts of the magicite mines had been sealed off, preventing anyone from going in deeper to investigate. When Barker and Linley arrived, those soldiers immediately withdrew.

“Right here.” Barker led Linley inside.

They went deeper into the mines, which was lit by torches. Barker explained, “Someone told me that when we excavated our way deep into the heart of the mine, we discovered that the quality of the magicite gems increased by a terrifying level. They are better than what the historical standard for ‘top-class’ magicite gems are at, but they are still terrifyingly tough. That’s why I came.

Linley instantly spread out his spiritual energy.

Linley suddenly discovered…that at the end of the excavation, there was a spherical nuclear area. This was the center of the mine.

“You say that the quality of the magicite gems reached a terrifyingly good level?”

“Right. From what I could tell, the quality of the magicite gems here are comparable to the cores of magical beasts of the seventh rank, and some deeper inside can even compare to magicite cores of beasts of the eighth rank. A very small number can even compare to the magicite cores of magical beasts of the ninth rank.” Barker sighed in amazement.

Linley’s heart trembled in shock.

“Linley, do you know what this core of the mine is?” Barker asked.

Linley shook his head. He had just discovered many magicite gems clustered around this area when he had used his spiritual energy, but he couldn’t find out anything else at all.

“We’re here.” Barker pointed to the front.

The sides of the excavation area were filled with half-translucent gems which carried a terrifying amount of force. Any of them could compare to the magicite cores of magical beasts of the seventh rank. Linley look ahead;

Barker was pointing in the direction of…a door.

This door had a strange spatial ripple in front of it.

But just earlier, when Linley had used his spiritual energy to search, he hadn’t discovered this door at all.

Chapter 36 – The Door

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 36: The Door

Hunting magical beasts of the eighth and ninth ranks was an extremely difficult task. One could imagine how valuable their magicite cores were. However, the gems in these magicite mines had actually reached the equivalence of the seventh and eighth ranked magicite cores, with some even comparable to magicite cores of the ninth rank.

Under the light of the torch, the semi-translucent magicite gems produced a bewildering pattern of lights.

And yet, at the end of the mining tunnel was a door.

A door that should not have existed.

“I cannot find this door with my spiritual energy. It is as though it does not exist. What is this door?” Linley was surprised and puzzled. His spiritual energy couldn’t penetrate past this door at all. How could he dare to rashly barge in?

Linley turned to look at Barker. “Barker, did you go in yet?”

Barker nodded. “I did. It was precisely because I went in that I felt shocked.”

“But Lord, it’s best if you go in after transforming. When you step past the door, you will be attacked by a powerful surge of energy. If your defense is insufficient…the door alone will kill intruders.” Barker said solemnly.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Barker was an Undying Warrior Saint, the type of Supreme Warrior with the highest defense. For him to say this…one could imagine how powerful the

attack was.

After removing his shirt and baring his upper body, Linley immediately Dragonformed. Instantly, his body was covered by deep azure draconic scales, and he stared at this mysterious ‘door’ with his now dark golden eyes before walking in.

“Slaaaaaaaaash.”

A knife-like surge of energy wildly chopped at Linley as soon as he walked in the door, slashing at him millions of times, creating sparks atop of Linley’s deep azure draconic scales.

“This is…” As soon as Linley entered, he felt shocked. The scene within the door was totally contrary to Linley’s expectations. Behind the door…was a translucent ‘bubble’ of a pocket dimension. This pocket dimension was a spherical dimension, only ten meters long.

A spherical dimension, ten meters long.

And this spherical dimension was organized like a training room. It only had a simple desk, bed, and chair. It was protected by that outer barrier, preventing outsiders from easily coming inside.

Raising his head and staring at the air above, then at his surroundings, he saw that outside the membrane was chaotic space.

Multicolored chaotic space, with rips in reality occasionally appearing and disappearing. Linley felt awed just looking at that terrifying power.

“Lord Linley.” Barker entered as well. “When I came here, I also felt it was hard to believe. Tell me, what do you think this is?”

Linley took a deep breath. “From what I know, the countless planes of existence are all held within chaotic space. For example, in the Yulan continent, if you continue to head a direction to the very end…you will be able to see chaotic space. Once your strength reaches a certain level, you

might be able to open your own pocket dimension within the chaotic space.

Linley carefully inspected this spherical dimension.

“And this spherical dimension that seems like a training room is most likely something which an extremely powerful expert created for training. This expert is most likely of the Yulan continent. Or perhaps it would be better to say…he used to be.”

Linley was filled with nothing but the utmost of admiration for the expert who had created this pocket dimension.

“Create a pocket dimension?” Barker sighed in amazement as well.

“Didn’t the Four Overgods create the Four Higher Planes? Didn’t the Seven Principal Sovereigns create the Seven Divine Planes?” Linley laughed. “There are experts capable of opening their own pocket dimension.”

Linley understood that even Demigods only had the most rudimentary ‘Godrealm’ technique.

Someone who could create a stable pocket dimension in the middle of chaotic space was definitely an extraordinary person.

Barker’s eyes lit up. “Lord Linley, now I know why there is a massive magicite gem mine here. Look. The elemental essence density here is terrifyingly high. Even someone like me, who has poor elemental essence affinity, can clearly sense all sorts of elements here. And aside from elemental essence, there is a unique energy here as well.”

Linley, too, could sense the thick density of natural elemental essence here.

Earth, fire, water, wind, thunder, light, darkness. The density of all the elements here was unbelievably high. Aside from these seven, Linley could sense other sorts of energy as well. There was a sort of energy that was rather similar to Zassler’s, a terrifying destructive energy, and also an energy filled with life…

“This should be the energy belonging to the Four Overgods.” Linley knew that aside from the seven elemental types of energy, there were also four types of unique, profound energy.

Linley looked at Barker. “That door should be a connection between the Yulan continent and this dimension. Most likely, this secret room attracted a great deal of elemental energy, which created a huge magicite mine surrounding the door.”

“However…”

“The mysterious expert who trained here should have left a long, long time ago.” Linley was very certain of this.

“Oh?” Barker looked at Linley questioningly.

“Without this mysterious expert training here, there is no way such a large amount of elemental essence would have been drawn here. We’ve been in the Anarchic Lands for a while now. If we didn’t come mining here, who would have discovered all of these magicite gems?”

Linley laughed. “Logically speaking, to form such a massive magicite deposit, there should have been a huge amount of elemental essence here, a terrifying amount. Most likely, the experts of the entire Yulan continent would have sensed it.”

“But no one in our history has ever mentioned such a thing. Thus, the large amount of elemental energy being drawn here should have been something that happened an extremely long time ago.”

As he spoke, Linley suddenly shut his eyes and sat down.

“Lord Linley?” Barker called out softly.

But Linley seemed to have not noticed him at all, as he sat there in the meditative position quietly.

The pulse of the world, and its massiveness…

The ferociousness of the wind, and its gentle agility…

The scorching heat of the fire, and its explosiveness…

The softness of the water, like an endless field of cotton…

Within this pocket dimension, Linley could sense nature with greater clarity than he ever had before. Right now, he could also sense with a hundred times his previous clarity the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', and the unique tempos possessed by the wind. He could also clearly sense the path he should take next.

Even the average elemental affinity he had for 'fire elemental essence' was magnified. Linley could clearly sense the fire elemental essence to such a high level that it was as strong as his normal affinity was for earth elemental essence outside of this pocket dimension.

Although the water elemental essence was still quite indistinct, Linley could still sense its unique rhythm and flows.

And he could also sense the unique energy coming from the Four Overgods.

"So this is how the throbbing pulse of the world works." Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart. He felt as though his previous training was akin to listening to the sound of a clock from thousands of kilometers away. The sound of the clock was indistinct. But now, he was next to a grandfather clock, listening to the sound. He could clearly sense and hear the unique rhythms of that clock now.

The mysteries of the Throbbing Pulse of the World suddenly became clear to him.

"256 layers of vibrations? Haha…so that's how it works. Here in the Yulan continent, it feels as though there are countless layers to the Throbbing

Pulse of the World. But now it seems that although the Throbbing Pulse of the World has layer after layer, that is just the countless mysteries contained with a single layer which carries infinite mysteries, encapsulating all of the mysteries of my 256 layers."

Linley instantly understood what his path of training should be.

In the past, Linley's training was similar to reading a book and making the book 'thicker'. But now, what he had to do was make the book 'thin' again. And the book was…the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', one of the profound truths of the Elemental Laws of Earth.

"Upon having reached the 256 layers, I am halfway through my mastery of the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'. Now, what I must do is…reduced the Profound Truths of the Earth to a single layered wave."

Originally, he went from one to 256, and now…he needed to go back to one.

Whenever Linley was able to contain all of the profound truths of that Law within a single vibration, and was able to utilize the full force of the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' in that vibration, only then would he be at the level of mastery. Most likely by then…with a single, simple blow from his sword, he would be able to shake his opponent into a pile of mud.

"A precious training ground." Linley opened his eyes, now filled with shocked delight.

"Lord Linley?" Barker saw that Linley had woken up. He finally relaxed. "Lord, you sat there for three days."

"Three days?" Linley knew that when immersed in sensing the Laws, the flow of time would become imperceptible. However, it was worth it…he had been stuck at the bottleneck with the 256 layers for over a year.

Without the mysterious training room…

Perhaps he would have been like many other experts and would be stuck at this bottleneck for dozens or hundreds of years, waiting for that moment of sudden insight. Only then would he know how to proceed.

“No wonder that mysterious expert created his own pocket dimension training room. Indeed…training within a pocket dimension in chaotic space allows one to sense the various Laws with a much greater clarity.” Linley had already become aware of the benefits of this place.

Although there weren’t any treasures or divine artifacts in this room, to an expert training in the various Laws, this room itself was a priceless treasure.

“Thank you for your gift, elder.” Linley bowed formally towards the training room.

Turning his head to look at the puzzled Barker, he said, “Barker, let’s go out for now. Most likely in a few days, the battle at the prefectural city of Cod will occur.” As he spoke, Linley walked out of the pocket dimension.

Barker was somewhat puzzled. Why had Linley bowed towards that expert who was currently who-knows-where?

He didn’t understand how grateful Linley felt.

He had been meditating and pondering for over a year, but hadn’t improved at all. That sort of stifling feeling was quite uncomfortable. No one knew how long Linley would have been stuck at that bottleneck. But thanks to the secret room, his path of training in the Laws would be a bit easier to walk.

“Nobody is permitted to enter this excavation tunnel. In the future, no one is allowed to mine here as well.” As he walked out of the tunnel, he gave the order to the military officers nearby. This pocket dimension was something which one could only dream.

It was far more precious than any sort of divine artifact.

Perhaps even the War God or the High Priest would feel envious and

desirous if they found out about it.

“Demigods shouldn’t have the ability to create a pocket dimension.” Linley secretly thought to himself. Linley had the feeling that the ability to create a stable pocket dimension within chaotic space, even a small one, was something only a terrifyingly powerful expert could do.

Linley and Barker flew side by side towards the prefectural city of Cod.

The two headed directly to the military headquarters. Within the third floor of that hotel, Watts and his assistants were in a loud argument, but upon seeing Linley and Barker come in, all of them saluted respectfully.

“Watts, what is the current situation?” Linley asked.

Watts hurriedly reported, “Lord Linley, according to our investigation, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows are constantly sending people over the river. However, their numbers are too great, and they have all sorts of siege weapons. Most likely, they won’t be finished with the river crossing until nightfall.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“I heard arguing just then. What are you arguing about?” Barker asked questioningly.

Watts said, “It’s like this. Over sixty to seventy thousand troops have already crossed the river. Their forces are somewhat in disarray, which is only natural following a river crossing. My assistants are recommending that we seize the opportunity to go out and attack them.”

“However, I vetoed that idea.” Watts said.

Chapter 37 – The Power of Magicite Cannons

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 37: The Power of Magicite Cannons

“Oh? You vetoed it?” Linley looked questioningly at Watts.

He felt that the suggestion was a rather reasonable one. When the enemy forces were in disarray, a sudden attack could definitely give the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows a bloody nose.

Watts said respectfully, “Lord Linley, the reason I vetoed this subjection has three parts to it.”

Three parts?

Linley had to admit that he didn’t know much about warfare, and so he carefully listened to Watts’ explanation.

“First of all, the chances of success are not high, because there is a distance of several dozen kilometers from the prefectural city of Cod to the river. If we were to send our troops over, by the time they arrived, the enemy forces would number over a million, and the disposition of the troops would have been reformed again.”

Barker shook his head. “For a million soldiers to set up their formations and be battle-ready is not something done so easily.”

Watts nodded. “That is indeed true. I’m just saying that the enemy forces would be prepared for battle. We only have half a million soldiers. How many can we send out on a sneak attack? And this is just the first consideration. The second is…I believe that the commanders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would not have made such an elementary mistake.”

“If I was the commander of the enemy forces…”

Watts smiled. “I would first have my most elite soldiers cross the river, then put on a façade of being in a state of disorder on the other side to lure the enemy to attack. When the enemy truly came to attack, the elite troops would immediately deliver a headache-causing blow to them.”

“It must be understood that our biggest support is the city walls!” Watts said seriously. “With the city walls, we can kill three of them for every one of us they kill. Thus, they want to seduce us into fighting with them on a level playing field.”

Linley nodded in approval.

Watts continued, “As for the third reason, it is because in warfare, tactics are of less importance than strategy. Our goal is to keep the enemy outside and not let them break into the city. This is the most important thing. As long as we succeed, then this battle will be our victory.”

“Therefore, there is no need for us to pay any attention to the ‘flaws’ of the enemy. Who knows if those flaws are even real or not?”

Watts laughed calmly. “All we need to do is stay inside the prefectural city of Cod and rely on the advantage of the walls to stand guard. Unless something happens beyond our expectations, victory will be ours.”

The night passed. The day slowly brightened.

The Dark Cardinal, Weiss Porter, was riding a darkness-element demonic tiger as he stared in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod.

“Guillermo, I have the feeling that this is going to be a very labor-some battle.” Weiss Porter said with a frown. “We already slowed down the speed of our troops crossing the river, and also had our troops be in a state of ‘disorder.’ But the prefectural city of Cod acted as though they didn’t notice. They didn’t send anyone over to attack.”

Guillermo nodded.

They had prepared a ‘welcoming feast’ for the enemies, but unfortunately, the plan had failed.

Right now, the entire army had crossed the river and rested an entire night. They were now steadily advancing in the direction of the prefectural city of Cod. Their total forces numbered 1.6 million soldiers. Such a terrifyingly large army covered the entire area like an endless tide.

“I’m not afraid that Linley’s commanding general is intelligent or sly. What I’m afraid of is that he’ll just hide in the city like a turtle in its shell.” Weiss Porter said.

Guillermo nodded as well.

If the opponent relied on the advantage of the city walls, breaking through the prefectural city of Cod would most likely cause heavy losses to their side. Although they had 1.6 million soldiers, they weren’t willing to waste too many lives.

“Weiss Porter.” Guillermo said. “Then what should we do?”

The commanding generals of this battle was naturally Guillermo and Weiss Porter. In terms of stratagems, Guillermo was inferior to Weiss Porter. Weiss laughed calmly. “There’s nothing for us. Right now, let’s go test the enemy’s strength.”

Only when one knew the opponent and knew one’s self was one capable of being ever victorious.

The entire prefectural city of Cod had been transformed into an enormous military fort. The civilians had been moved out long ago, and most of the houses had been renovated and demolished. Tunnels and pits had been dug. Large numbers of soldiers were clustered on the walls of the east city and the south city. On the west and north sides, however, there were fewer soldiers.

All sorts of weapons had been dragged onto the city walls.

Linley and Barker were dressed in armor, pretending to be military officers doing an inspection on the southern walls. The city walls were a hotbed of activity, and the multi-kilometer long walls were packed with people. There were over a hundred thousand people on the walls of the south side of the city alone.

“So many people.” Linley and Barker stared from afar.

They looked like densely clustered locusts. The 1.6 million man army of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows covered the land, streaming towards the prefectural city of Cod. 1.6 million people! A number that was easy to say, but when so many soldiers came charging over…

It was terrifying!

Even Linley felt a tremendous sense of pressure.

“Who knows how many people will die as a result of this battle.” Barker sighed.

Staring at the dense mass of soldiers, Linley also felt that this battle would definitely be a vicious, cruel one. But ever since human society began, wars had existed as well.

Although Linley and his men could see the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, in reality, those soldiers were still quite a distance off.

Only, because the enemy forces were simply too massive in number, the soldiers on the wall could see them from far, far away.

“Let’s go to Watts. He is our commanding general. We can’t let anything happen to him.” Linley led Barker to the city walls of the south city. Watts was currently in an unremarkable little building in the south city.

Seeing Linley and Barker, Watts immediately bowed.

“Watts, Lord Linley and I have come to protect you.” Barker laughed.

No matter how steady Watts was normally, he grew excited now. Linley laughed. “Enough. Focus on preparing to deal with the enemy. What is your strategy for dealing with a million man army?” Linley personally felt lost.

Watts laughed. “No rush. Whatever methods they use, I’ll use the appropriate countermeasures.”

“What do you think they will do for their attack?” Barker asked.

“After they crossed the river, they weren’t in a rush to attack. Instead, they let their soldiers rest and waited for dawn. I expect…in about an hour, they will reach the city. At noon, they will begin their first wave of attacks.” Watts laughed calmly.

“The first wave shouldn’t be too strong. They will only be testing our strength. How do you plan to respond?” Barker asked.

“Magicite cannons.”

Watts replied.

“You’ll use magicite cannons immediately?” Barker frowned. The magicite cannons were their secret weapons. It should be better to use them at a critical moment. Watts said with certainty, “Lord Grand Marshall, don’t worry. Just watch and enjoy. When the time comes, you will understand.”

“You put on mysterious airs in front of me?” Barker shook his head and laughed.

Linley just sat there to one side quietly. All he had to do was hand the affairs of running this battle to these men. A long time later…Linley suddenly opened his eyes and said to Watts, “Begin to prepare. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have sent their vanguard to prepare their

attack."

Watts looked at Linley in surprise.

Linley didn't explain too much. Although he hadn't used his spiritual energy, given Linley's insights into the Elemental Laws of the Wind, even from kilometers away, Linley could clearly sense everything going on if he so chose.

"Milord, two legions of the enemy have begun to attack towards our gates." A military officer suddenly ran inside.

Although the city walls were tens of kilometers long, the attacks would generally be centered around the city gates.

Watts glanced at Linley, then immediately began to issue orders. "Carry out our original plans. Prepare ten magicite cannons. Give our guests a 'welcoming present'." Watts chuckled, and the military officer's eyes had a hint of excitement in them as well. "Yes, milord."

"Come, let's go watch." Linley stood up.

On the city wall, Linley and Barker were staring down. They saw two legions with a large number of people charge forward. Compared to an army of 1.6 million, 40,000 soldiers wasn't much, but when they charged over, they still felt like a human wave of attackers.

"Kill!"

The tens of thousands of soldiers below raised their shields, charging the city gates with their weapons in hand. Their angry roars sounded like the thunder. A number of soldiers were charging forward while carrying massive escalades, while in their hearts, they were nervous about being shot by the arrows of the soldiers on the wall.

But what shocked them was, no arrows were fired.

“Fire!” An angry roar.

The runes on those ten magicite cannons instantly lit up, and a terrifying amount of elemental essence began to surround them. Suddenly, those magicite cannons emitted a terrifying, ferocious roar as ten explosions of light suddenly struck against the enemy legions.

“Magicite cannons!” Terrified sounds could be heard.

One of the balls of fire landed right in the middle of a legion, and the people nearby the ball of fire were instantly turned to charcoal. When the ball of fire hit the ground, it instantly turned into a blazing ring of fire which began to expand like a ripple of water in every direction. All soldiers touched by the ring of fire began to scream in agony as they were burned alive.

Fire-style magic: Blazing Rings of Fire!

With that one blast, a hundred people died.

One of the other balls of light, a bluish-white one, fell down into the legion as well, and the soldiers in the area around it instantly were frozen solid, then shattered into tiny pieces. This bluish-white ball of light shattered explosively, transforming into millions of terrifying projectile attacks that shot in every direction. “Swish!” Many soldiers were struck by these flying shards, and countless people began to scream in misery as a result of the blast.

Water-style magic: Angry Sea of Arrow Rain!

Different types of magicite cannons would use different types of magicite gems and produce different types of attacks. But without question, this single barrage from the ten magicite cannons caused over a thousand deaths and even more injuries.

But then, the magicite cannons lit up again.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Almost at the same time, the magicite cannons struck again. The enemies were either burned to death, shot to death by freezing shards, devoured by locusts, or electrocuted to death by lightning…the ten magicite cannons fired at the two legions, and to those two legions, they represented the apocalypse.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo were together.

“Milords.” A military officer saluted as he made the report. “The two legions who launched the first wave of attacks against the south gate have retreated, and the legion at the east gate has retreated as well. We discovered that at the south gate, ten magicite cannons have been emplaced, while five have been emplaced at the east gate. These magicite cannons are all large-caliber cannons at the level of magi of the eighth rank.”

Guillermo let out a cold snort. “This is what I was afraid of, that they would have magicite cannons. So they really do have them, and large-caliber ones. Who sold it to them?”

Weiss Porter laughed calmly. “That’s not the issue right now. Their possession of magicite cannons is within our predictions. However, since they only have five at the east gate, then…tomorrow, let’s do a real full-on attack.”

“A full-on attack?” Guillermo looked at Weiss Porter.

Weiss Porter nodded. “Right. We’ll pretend to be focusing on the south gate while sending a small part of our forces to attack the east gate, but the small portion attacking the east gate will be composed of our elite squads.” Weiss Porter said firmly.

“Weiss Porter, what do you intend?” Guillermo looked at him. “To focus our attacks on the east gate?”

The ratio of forces didn’t determine how powerful each force would be. If the soldiers were elite, a hundred thousand of them might be able to defeat a

force of four hundred thousand ordinary soldiers.

“True is false, false is true. We’re just tricking our enemies. If a hundred thousand elite soldiers suddenly attack at once, if the east gate isn’t fully prepared, we might be able to break through at one stroke.” Weiss Porter said confidently.

Guillermo laughed. “If I was the enemy commander, when I saw your million soldiers outside the south gate while only a hundred thousand were at the east gate, I would probably focus my attention on the south gate as well.”

Chapter 38 – Explosive Fury

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 38: Explosive Fury

The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were outside the south gate of the prefectural city of Cod, a seemingly endless sea of forces. The soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod were all on high alert. They knew that this 'endless sea of soldiers' in front of them could suddenly transform into tidal waves that would wash over them.

A small part of the below army had separated from the main forces.

This small part took a side route, heading towards the east gate of Cod. Factoring in the local geography, the Radiant Church was only able to attack the south gate and the east gate. As for the north gate and the west gate, there was no way for the armies to make it there. The army that came to the east gate was comprised of two legions.

These two legions were of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows. The elite legions of both sides.

The commander of the legion belonging to the Cult of Shadows was a man with short blue hair and a severe face who was staring at the city walls. Next to him was a gold-haired man, the commander of the elite legion of the Radiant Church.

If they were able to take down the east gate, they would both have rendered huge military merits in this battle.

"Just five magicite cannons." The blue-haired man said calmly. "Rogers [Luo'jie'si], how about this. Our soldiers will first charge forward, and when we get close to the walls, the vanguard will suddenly form tight ranks and use the escalades to create an opening in the city walls. The other soldiers will follow from behind. As long as we can get onto the city walls, the prefectural city of Cod will be finished."

Rogers glanced at him. “Brian [Pu’lai’en], then let’s see who will be the first to break through.”

“Fine.” Brian’s eyes were filled with arrogance.

Time passed. The two elite legions were in a state of quiet readiness, waiting…and then suddenly, they heard the terrifying sound of slaughter. Magicite cannons began to boom, warriors shouted with rage, arrows howled through the air, and an ocean-like series of roars split the world apart.

“They’ve started on the other side.” A hint of a smile was on Brian’s lips.

Rogers nodded slightly as well. “When we break through the east gate, our victory will be assured.”

Per their original plans, they would wait for the battle at the south gate to reach a crescendo of madness…after five minutes, Brian suddenly let out a furious roar, “Kill!” Their generals, who knew the plan all along, immediately led their soldiers to charge out and attack.

Those forty-meter long escalades began to move at frighteningly fast speed towards the east gate.

A large number of soldiers advanced at high speed, shields held above their heads.

The five magicite cannons at the east walls began to light up. “Boom!” “Boom!” The magicite cannons howled ferociously, and five balls of light began to shoot out at high speed, exploding into balls of terrifying light once they hit the floor. Instantly, soldiers began to die in those areas, but the remaining soldiers didn’t hesitate at all.

Hesitating meant death.

“So fast!” The commander at the east gate had already discovered how fast

the enemies were running towards them. The magicite cannons had only rang out three times, but the enemies were already within a hundred meters. “Wait a second!” He suddenly discovered that the fastest running soldiers of the enemies suddenly formed a unit with perfect coordination.

Clearly, these were elite warriors. They had most likely come to join forces and force a breach.

“Hrmph. It looks like they really did…” The commander’s face revealed a cold smile.

“All magicite cannons, prepare!” The commander howled loudly, and instantly…fifteen more magicite cannon emplacements appeared on the city walls. Combined with the previous five, there was an awe-inspiring grand total of twenty magicite cannons. The twenty magicite cannons all lit up at the same time.

Seeing another fifteen magicite cannons appear, the faces of Brian and Rogers, the two legion commanders, instantly changed.

“No!” Brian’s face was savage, and he roared in uncomprehending fury.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

Twenty magicite cannons simultaneously unleashed their terrifying fury, and their targets were clearly those special, elite soldiers who were leading at the front of the attacking line. An earth-shaking series of explosions could be heard.

“No!” Many warriors, seeing the light of the magicite cannon blasts fly towards them at high speed, screamed in fury and terror.

But the cannon blasts were simply too fast. With a flash of light, the blasts hit the ground, giving the warriors no chance to dodge at all. The warriors in the area were blasted to smithereens, with some being frozen solid, others burned alive to charcoal, and still others clutching their severed limbs and screaming miserably…

In the blink of an eye, over three thousand people had died, and several thousand were badly injured as well.

It was too terrifying.

Many warriors were stunned and awe-stricken. In addition, many of the dead were the elite of the elite. The remaining soldiers began to feel dread in their heart.

“Charge! Kill the bastards and avenge our comrades!” Some warriors howled with fury as they continued the charge.

“If we make our way up there, we win!”

But before their escalades even had a chance to be boarded, on the walls of the east wall, a large number of warriors began throwing casks of oil downwards, pouring those boiling casks of oil directly onto the bodies of the attacking warriors.

“Ah!!!” Many warriors clutched their faces as their bodies spasmed, and they fell off the escalades.

“Fire!”

A cold sound rang out, and not only did those twenty magicite cannons once more unleash the god of death…other warriors also began to shoot fire arrows at the enemies as well. Many people below had been covered with hot oil, and now, with fire arrows shooting down…

Some of those people who had ‘only’ been scalded by oil but not killed were suddenly turned into human torches.

The ground below the walls had turned into a sea of flame.

Many warriors had become human fireballs, all of them emitting tortured screams before collapsing. The soldiers behind them no longer dared to

advance, because in front of them was a sea of flame. However, at this moment, those twenty magicite cannons once more attacked, killing thousands more.

Explosions rocked the enemy camp.

Rogers and Brian were about to go insane. They howled with fierce rage, “Retreat, retreat, quickly, retreat!” In the blink of an eye, over ten thousand of their warriors had died, and several thousand more were injured.

The worst thing was, those twenty magicite cannons were continuing to attack.

The twenty magicite cannons had stripped the attackers of all their courage and morale.

Five magicite cannons might only be able to kill a thousand soldiers in one blast, but as long as they made it through three blasts, they will be able to close in. But twenty magicite cannons were different….the combined attacks of these cannons were totally capable of killing all the elite vanguard soldiers of the attackers.

The power of twenty magicite cannons was simply too great.

Even though they were retreating like mad, the twenty magicite cannons still were able to attack two more times, and thousands more collapsed. Those beautiful, firework-like balls of light were actually heart-shaking, powerful attacks.

It must be said that the magic attacks were indeed very powerful. For example, the ‘Blazing Rings of Fire’ were like a fiery red ripple.

Unfortunately, although they were as beautiful as a dream, they were as terrifying as a butcher’s blade.

“A hundred thousand soldiers…twenty thousand dead. Another ten thousand wounded.” Rogers’ voice was very low. “In a short period of time,

our morale has been completely destroyed. The warriors don't have the courage to charge those twenty magicite cannons again."

By relying on their shields, they could block enemy arrows.

But those shields weren't able to block magicite cannon blasts, especially large-caliber ones.

"Twenty. Why are there twenty magicite cannons?" Brian said furiously. "When the Lord Cardinal sent us here, didn't they say there were only five magicite cannons? If we knew there were twenty, we wouldn't have sent them to their deaths like that!"

Magicite cannons were simply too terrifying.

As long as the enemy were in firing range, their lives would be lost. In addition, the reloading time between each blast was very short. As long as they were charged with sufficient magicite gems, they would be able to constantly attack. They were far more terrifying than even twenty magi of the eighth rank.

"Go back." Rogers looked at his surrounding soldiers and immediately issued the order.

Brian clenched his fists, unwilling to admit what just happened. "Motherf*cker. We were tricked. The people of the prefectural city of Cod really are motherf*cking bastards. Let's go back." They had lost thirty percent of their attack power. If they were to attack again, they probably wouldn't be able to muster even half of their earlier attack power."

But the enemy hadn't lost a single warrior.

Of course, the enemy had spent a huge amount of money. Each time the magicite cannons fired, an enormous amount of gold coins was being spent. How many kingdoms would be willing to afford the cost of twenty magicite cannons constantly blasting nonstop like this?

What was real was false. What was false was real.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had played some tricks, but unfortunately, the prefectural city of Cod had been hiding the true number of magicite cannons. They had a total of thirty-six magicite cannons, but had only taken out fifteen at first.

According to their plans, the east gate would have twenty magicite cannons, while the south gate would have sixteen.

The battle at the east gate concluded quickly, but the battle at the south gate was extremely brutal.

“Prepare.” A large number of soldiers on the walls of the south side fell to the ground, greatbows at the ready, their arms tensed. Those enormous bows were terrifying to behold. Any of the soldiers here could easily lift several hundred pounds.

And now, for them to need to use both hands and both feet to draw and fire these bows, one could imagine how powerful they were.

“Fire!”

When the order came, countless massive arrows fell down like rain from the city walls, creating a terrifying howl as they descended downwards. Ordinary shields were of no use. These massive arrows punched straight through them, piercing through the shield-bearing soldiers.

Instantly, a large number of people fell down.

But although a large number had died, others immediately charged forward to take their place.

A large number of escalades had already latched onto the city walls, and many soldiers were even preparing to charge onto them. The six previously hidden magicite cannons were pulled out as well, and sixteen magicite cannons roared wildly, spitting brilliant balls of fire onto the ground below,

killing men in large swathes.

However, the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were simply too numerous.

They were like an endless wave!

“Let’s retreat for now. If we continue to fight like this, all we are doing is fighting a battle of attrition. Too many will die.” Guillermo was frowning. In such a short period of time, they had already lost over a hundred thousand people. But of course, the prefectural city of Cod had lost people as well, at least over ten thousand.”

The main problem was that those sixteen magicite cannons killed too many people. And also, there were those giant arrows and the falling boulders.

Those atop the walls always had a great advantage.

“I have a bad feeling.” Weiss Porter was frowning as he watched those sixteen magicite cannons roar. “There should only have been ten magicite cannons, but when the battle began, six more appeared. I’m worried…about the east gate.”

Guillermo’s heart trembled.

“Are you saying that more magicite cannons appeared on that side as well?” Guillermo shook his head. “Not necessarily. Perhaps they simply moved the magicite cannons of the east gate to the south gate.”

“I hope that’s the case.” Weiss Porter didn’t care about the dead soldiers.

What he wanted was victory.

“Lord Cardinal.” A disheveled Brian and Rogers came running at high speed towards Guillermo and Weiss Porter.

“What is it?” As soon as the Cardinals saw these two, they knew things had

not gone well.

Brian cursed with fury, “Lord Cardinal, who provided the intelligence estimates? They are nothing more than motherf*cking bastards. It wasn’t five magicite cannons, it was twenty! Twenty damn magicite cannons! My comrades…with just a few blasts, twenty thousand of them died, and many were injured as well. Our legions only had a total of a hundred thousand men. We’ve instantly lost thirty percent of our fighting capability. What’s more…the elites of our legion, those who had the courage to charge at the front, died even faster. Our soldiers don’t have any fighting spirit left at all. They are all terrified.”

Weiss Porter’s face changed.

He totally understood now.

Staring at the distant prefectural city of Cod, Weiss Porter ground his teeth. “So you played us. You enticed us to attack the east city, then changed five magicite cannons into twenty?” Weiss Porter’s eyes were red from rage. “Guillermo, forget the plans and schemes. Have all the experts of the ninth rank charge, now!”

Chapter 39 – Battle to the Death

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 39: Battle to the Death

Guillermo was silent for a moment, then said, “Fine. Let them go.”

Soon, six seemingly ordinary warriors appeared in the headquarters. Weiss Porter and Guillermo glanced at each other, and then Weiss Porter said to those six men, “The six of you, mingle into the center of the army and charge with them towards the city walls. When you reach the city walls, increase your speed and break open the city gates, then lead the army into the city. You must catch them off-guard and make them unable to react in time.”

“Yes, milord.”

Three of the men immediately acknowledged, while the other three looked at Guillermo. Guillermo nodded slightly. “Act as Weiss Porter said.”

“Yes, milord.”

On the massive, wide ground, locust-like hordes of men were charging wildly against the city. Sixteen magicite cannons were constantly flashing with brilliant light, taking lives away with each flash. On the walls above the prefectural city of Cod, Linley, Barker, Gates, Hazer, Ankh, and Boone, and the others were watching the battle.

“They are fighting wildly enough.” Gates licked his lips, grinning as he spoke.

Hazer looked at Linley, his eyes shining. “Lord Linley, let us go and teach them a lesson.” Of the five Barker brothers, only Barker had reached the Saint-level in his human form. The other four were at the peak of the ninth rank, about to break through at any moment.

Linley looked at the battle going down below. Laughing calmly, he said, "No rush. You will have your chance soon. But remember, no matter what, you cannot allow them to seize the magicite mine."

Compared to the large amount of magicite gems, Linley actually valued the pocket dimension more.

That was a precious training place that had to be preserved.

"Unfortunately, Zassler has reached the Saint-level as well. Otherwise, once he acted, he would probably be able to counter a million soldiers at once, all by himself." Linley sighed as he spoke. Zassler and Linley had reached the Saint-level almost at the same time. Zassler was now a Saint-level Grand Magus Necromancer. After becoming a Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler's power had reached a terrifying new height.

What Zassler currently spent his time doing was collecting Saint-level undead.

A single Grand Magus Necromancer could collect and tame a group of Saint-level undead. One could imagine how terrifyingly powerful they were.

"That old bastard. He spends all his time hiding inside the mountain and training. He never shows himself these days." Gates grumbled. "Last time, I went to look for him, and he actually sent a Saint-level undead to battle me for a while. I have to admit…that zombie was really pretty damn powerful." Gates sighed.

Linley secretly snickered.

Zassler was only joking around with Gates. Linley himself knew…if Zassler was really acting in earnest, Gates would probably have been defeated in an instant. This was because necromancers were highly skilled in matters pertaining the soul, and were extremely talented at 'spiritual attacks'. Upon reaching the Saint-level, once Zassler used a spiritual attack…

Even a powerful Saint probably wouldn't be able to take it.

"Bang!"

Suddenly, Linley and the others felt the city walls suddenly shake violently. Barker's face changed. "Not good!" Linley's spiritual energy had also discovered that below, six warriors of the ninth rank had joined forces to smash through the city gates.

"Charge!" The attacking soldiers found, to their delight, that the city gates were down.

Immediately, a large number of soldiers began to pour towards the city gates. The leaders of the soldiers were those six warriors of the ninth rank. The garrison guards of the prefectural city of Cod wanted to block them, but they were easily slaughtered by those six warriors of the ninth rank. The commander of the south gate, however, simply watched coldly as this all happened.

"Boulder, drop!" The commander's voice rang out without a hint of panic.

Instantly, dozens of warriors pulled at hidden levers. With clanking sounds, a massive boulder that was over dozens of meters thick began to fall down. The soldiers below wanted to dodge, but most weren't able to do so and were smashed into meat patties.

"Bam!"

The city gates had been sealed!

The soldiers outside weren't able to make it in, and the soldiers inside weren't able to go out either.

"Six warriors of the ninth rank. They really are going all out." Gates roared angrily, and then with a flip of his hand, he retrieved his massive greataxe as he charged down from the top of the walls into the inner courtyard. All

six of those warriors of the ninth rank had been inside the city already. Gates jumped down, and he was immediately followed by Ankh, Boone, and Hazer as well.

Within the city.

The six warriors of the ninth rank were engaged in a wild slaughter, with none of the soldiers around them able to fend them off.

“Quick, flee!” One of the warriors of the ninth rank shouted loudly as he sent his warblade chopping down towards an officer, who was instantly split into two halves. Wherever these warriors of the ninth rank went, corpses followed in their wake.

The other warriors of the ninth rank knew that they couldn’t stay here for too long either.

They didn’t pay any mind to the soldiers who had followed them in either. A golden-haired, one-eyed warrior suddenly launched himself off the ground, easily sending himself over thirty meters into the air, flipping past the wall and arriving outside the city. The other five warriors of the ninth rank immediately also launched off the ground…

“You want to run?!”

A furious howl, and then a terrifying greataxe flashed towards them. Gates was the first one to land, and in mid-air, he stopped one of the leaping warriors of the ninth rank. The warrior of the ninth rank actually wanted to use the heavy sword in his hands to block the axe, but as soon as he did…

“Bam!”

The warrior’s heavy sword shattered into pieces, and he was smashed back down into the ground, the ground shaking from the collision. Gates howled angrily, “You motherf*ckers actually dare to break into the city? Die!” The terrifying greataxe chopped down yet again, and it was as though the surrounding area had suddenly frozen.

Gates had already reached the ‘impose’ level of understanding!

There was no place for the warrior of the ninth rank to flee. “Ah!” A miserable, agonized cry could be heard, and then he was eviscerated by the massive greataxe. Blood and splintered organs splashed everywhere, and his body fell heavily to the ground, never to rise again.

Although they were both warriors of the ninth rank, Gates was at the peak of the ninth rank and an Undying Warrior. The difference was too great.

The other four warriors also encountered Boone, Ankh, and Hazer. Ankh, all by himself, forced two of them back down. The eyes of Hazer, Boone, and Ankh were filled with savage, murderous delight.

The battle concluded very quickly.

“Milord, aside from myself, the other five…were unable to escape.” The golden-haired, one-eyed man clearly seemed unwilling to accept this outcome.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces turned ugly to behold.

“How is that possible? You are warriors of the ninth rank!” Weiss Porter’s face couldn’t help but turn pale as he spoke.

“I saw Linley and those Undying Warriors on the city walls.” Guillermo suddenly said. At Guilllermo’s level of power, despite being kilometers away, he was still able to see Linley and the others on the city walls.

Weiss Porter’s voice turned low. “Guillermo, could it be that Linley is ignoring our previous agreement and is acting against warriors of the ninth rank?”

“It shouldn’t be Linley.” Guillermo shook his head. “If it was him, most likely not even a single warrior would have escaped. I expect that it was those Undying Warriors who haven’t reached the Saint-level yet in their

human forms. Given their power, it shouldn't be hard for them to deal with an ordinary warrior of the ninth rank."

Weiss Porter was beginning to frown.

"You can go now." The lucky survivor left.

Weiss Porter sent out the order. "Let the attacking soldiers retreat for now. Today, we'll pause for now."

"Yes, milord." The messenger immediately ran out.

Guillermo looked at Weiss Porter, puzzled. Weiss Porter closed his eyes. After a while, he opened them, then said calmly, "Guillermo, at nightfall, let's prepare to order our men to attack again, late at night. We have to take down the city before daybreak tomorrow. We'll pay whatever cost in lives is necessary."

"Late night?" Guillermo frowned as he looked at Weiss Porter. "Even if we don't care about the lives of our warriors, it'll be hard to break through."

Neither Guillermo nor Weiss Porter cared at all about the lives of their ordinary soldiers. They commanded a tremendously high number of soldiers, and it was in fact useful to reduce the population a bit through warfare. Ordinary warriors only required a year or two of training, after all.

They didn't care about them.

What they cared about were elite soldiers.

For example, the hundred thousand soldiers that had been sent to attack the east gates.

"Tonight, we will attack the city, no matter the cost. If by five in the morning, we still haven't broken through, then we will use your final trump card." Weiss Porter looked at Guillermo. "What say you, Guillermo?"

“Our final trump card?” Guillermo was silent for a moment.

He knew what Weiss Porter was talking about. Guillermo nodded slightly. “Fine!”

Actually, if they were to begin attacking at midnight and fight like wild all the way until five in the morning, even if they weren’t able to break through, they would exhaust the forces of the prefectural city of Cod. At that point, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would use their trump cards, making their victory utterly assured.

The countless warriors beneath the walls retreated like the retreating tides.

Watts stood atop the walls, his face expressionless.

Linley looked at Watts from nearby, his eyes filled with praise. Just then, he had watched the entire procession of battle. The enemy had attacked multiple times, at the east gate and the west gate, but Watts’ orders as well as his disposition of forces had been quite perfect.

“Watts.” Linley, Barker, Boone, Ankh, and the others walked towards him.

Watts bowed as soon as he saw the group of people.

Linley smiled. “Today’s battle has already concluded. Watts, get a good night’s rest.”

“No need, milord.” Watts had a very serious look on his face. “Today, the enemy attacked us several times with their armies. They used their elite soldiers to try and break through the east gate, then sent warriors of the ninth rank to break through the south gate. And they had their soldiers attack wildly…I can sense that the opposing commander isn’t a very patient person. I expect that his next strategy will be exposed later today or tomorrow. Tonight, they will probably attempt a sneak attack.”

Watts looked towards the enemy camp.

When two armies engaged in battle, if one could understand the personality of the opposing commander, one would be able to better predict the enemy's actions.

"Oh?" A hint of a smile was on Linley's face.

Gates laughed loudly. 'Lord Linley, don't have any doubts. Watts' predictions are at least 90% likely to occur."

That night, Linley, Barker, and the others were drinking wine in a courtyard. Because Watts had predicted that the enemy would attempt a sneak attack tonight, all of them were waiting.

"A secret pocket dimension room?" Boone seemed shocked by Linley's words.

Barker nodded as well. "Right. Even I, someone who doesn't have much of an affinity for the elements, would clearly sense all the elements in that mysterious room. That sort of feeling…was very unique. I felt closer to nature than ever before."

"Ankh, Boone, Gates, Hazer. You need to train hard. In the future, when you are at the Saint-level, you will be able to train inside the pocket dimension room." Linley smiled.

The room was ten meters wide. It could indeed permit multiple people to train inside at once.

Suddenly, fierce battle cries erupted from the south gate, immediately followed by the furious roars of magicite cannons. Miserable screams, arrows ripping through the air…Linley, Barker, and the others exchanged glances, then began to laugh.

"That Watts. He guessed correctly. Come." Linley began to feel some admiration for Watts.

Their group hurried towards the south city gates. The closer they drew, the

louder, the more terrifying the sounds of battle became. Illuminated by torches, the ground below the city was filled with corpses, while large numbers of soldiers were falling off the walls as well, as the soldiers below wildly shot arrows upwards.

“Siege escalades.” Linley suddenly saw a huge construct slowly make its way towards the city.

Each siege escalade was over forty meters wide, and was made entirely out of steel and cement. The massive mobile forts were slowly making their way towards the city walls. The part of the mobile forts facing the city walls were made entirely out of a thick layer of steel.

“Boom!” The magicite cannons belched forth their fury.

The blazing balls of fire only caused a layer of metal to melt, but the steel was several meters thick. The massive things weren’t budged at all. There were ten of these siege escalades, and they formed a line, slowly advancing towards the city walls.

Chapter 40 – Meat Grinder

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 40: Meat Grinder

The ten siege escalades were like ten giant steel behemoths, slowly advancing despite the withering rain of fire from the magicite cannons.

“Once the siege escalades reach the walls, then…a large number of enemy soldiers will be able to attack through the escalades to the walls.” Barker’s face was hazily illuminated by the light of the firing magicite cannons. Boone, Ankh, Hazer, and Gates all turned solemn as well.

Linley stood atop the walls, staring down at the locust-like horde of soldiers, and those ten massive siege escalades. Even he felt it was rather problematic.

“The next part of the battle will definitely be a ferocious one.”

Even someone like Linley, who barely knew anything about military strategy, could predict how wild the battle was about to get.

“Charge!” The soldiers screamed furiously, their faces ferocious.

Tens of thousands of escalade ladders were placed against the city walls, and a large number of soldiers began to climb onto them, attempting to charge the enemy forces on the walls and engage them in close combat. However…escalade ladders could be knocked off, and could also be lit on fire by burning oil.

In addition, each escalade ladder could only fit two people at once. Faced with a large number of garrison troops who attacked them at once, they weren’t able to do anything.

A soldier on top of an escalade ladder jumped off, wanting to charge into the garrison.

“Slash!”

Multiple swords and sabers swung out, and that poor soldier in front was only able to make one strike before being chopped into a beehive of holes.

“Bang!” An escalade ladder was knocked off, and a large number of soldiers fell down. For a fall of twenty or thirty meters…it wasn’t a big deal for the strong, but for the weak, they would die or be crippled from the fall. The worst part of it was…many of the weapons of the already-killed soldiers were lying on the ground.

And so when the new soldiers fell off, they fell onto the weapons.

“Snick!” Their bodies were pierced through by the weapons.

A large number of soldiers also wildly shot arrows at the garrison, the hail of arrows falling onto the walls and even into the city. Many city guards fell down, shot to death by the arrows.

Every moment, warriors were dying. Although many garrison troops were being killed, even more attackers were dying.

“Quick, quick!” From behind the troops, the Dark Cardinal, Weiss Porter, was shouting. “Quick, have the siege escalades pushed more quickly to the city walls!” Weiss Porter simply couldn’t keep his calm any longer.

He hoped for a sudden change in fortunes.

The enormous siege escalades were exactly that; powerful tools which could change the fortunes of war.

They were terrifyingly large, and were made almost completely of steel and metal.

These siege escalades were just like giant mobile fortresses. The soldiers in the walls above, when dealing with the soldiers from the siege escalades,

wouldn't be at any advantage. After all, the siege escalades would allow hundreds of attacking soldiers to attack at once as well.

"Concentrate your fire against those siege escalades!"

The commander of the south gate issued his order, and instantly, multiple magicite cannons attacked the siege escalades simultaneously. However, the steel canopies protecting the siege escalades were several meters thick. Even powerful magicite cannons weren't able to burn through such a thick layer of steel and break the siege escalades.

At most, the attacks caused the siege escalades to tremble, or perhaps kill a few of the soldiers atop the siege escalades.

But when the soldiers died, more soldiers replaced them from below. After all, one of the primary purposes of the siege escalade was to act as a delivery mechanism for soldiers.

"Come, have the first battalion assemble here and prepare to defend against the first siege escalade." A commanding officer shouted loudly. To defend against the siege escalades, they had to use their elite soldiers.

The prefectural city of Cod wanted to try their best to block the assault of these siege escalades.

However, these siege 'behemoths' were simply unstoppable…

With a sudden 'bam' sound, a siege escalade rammed into the city walls. And then multiple 'bang' 'bang' 'bang' sounds could be heard in succession, as one siege escalade after another collided with the city walls.

"Pull, pull, pull!"

Atop one of the siege escalades, a military officer was shouting in anger. Many soldiers around him instantly began to activate the hidden mechanisms of the siege escalade, and with clanking sounds, the thick steel canopy protecting the siege escalade swung down.

“Bang!” The hundred-meter wide steel canopy smashed hard against the city walls.

This immediately became the equivalent of a hundred-meter wide corridor from the siege escalade into the prefectural city of Cod. The siege escalade was taller than the city walls to begin with. With the canopy down, the soldiers of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were able to charge down from the higher ground in a wild attack.

“Brothers, kill them!”

“Avenge the captain! Kill!!!”

Countless ferocious howls came from the soldiers, as they wildly charged down the corridors to the walls of the prefectural city of Cod. They had been beaten senseless, and while they were charging, many had been shot to death by arrows or blasted apart by magicite cannons. They hadn’t even had the chance to fight a fair battle with their enemies.

This sort of frustration and resentment had been building in their hearts.

And now, they finally had the chance to explode.

The ten siege escalades represented ten corridors. Large numbers of soldiers swarmed towards the walls, attacking the defenders. The garrison troops of the prefectural city of Cod didn’t budge either. They used boulders to attack, or burning oil…the hundred-meter wide corridors were utterly filled with people.

One soldier decapitated his opponent, but then someone else rammed a spear through his chest.

The battle at the walls and the siege escalades was a meat grinder!

The attackers and defenders fought in pitched, close-quarter battles!

Large numbers of corpses clotted the area, forming piles so high that they were even higher than the walls themselves as bodies fell downwards. Blood splashed everywhere, causing rivers of blood to form atop the walls and the corridors. Countless soldiers continued to raise their weapons, charging towards their foes.

For the sake of survival.

For the sake of avenging their comrades.

Everyone fought wildly, their eyes red with bloodlust.

“Bang!” “Bang!” …

The magicite cannons were aiming their fire against the siege escalades now, because the people atop the siege escalades were very tightly clustered. The density was ten times greater than the ground below! Countless soldiers wanted to use the siege escalades to charge onto the enemy’s walls.

Indeed, the soldiers moved quickly. Soon, they managed to charge from the siege escalades into the city walls. It was only a distance of a hundred meters from the siege escalade to the city walls! Given the power of these soldiers, it wouldn’t even take them ten seconds to close that sort of distance. They all possessed the hope that during those ten seconds while they were exposed and in the open, the magicite cannons definitely wouldn’t be able to strike them.

However!

The magicite cannons continued to fire against the siege escalades, each blast claiming the lives of hundreds of soldiers. Unfortunately, the speed at which the magicite cannons killed people was far slower than the speed at which the soldiers of two sides killed each other in close quarters combat. The soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod began to die in large numbers as well now.

“In close combat, the death ratio is going to be close to one-to-one.” Barker looked at Linley. “Lord Linley, if this continues, we won’t be able to hold on.”

Indeed. The enemy had a total of 1.6 million soldiers. Although they had lost some earlier, 1.6 million was an enormous figure, and those losses meant little. The prefectural city of Cod only had 500,000 soldiers. If they were to fight a war of attrition at a one-to-one rate…a loss of three or four hundred thousand to the enemy would result in them still having nearly a million soldiers, but to Cod, they would only have less than a hundred thousand remaining.

This couldn’t be permitted to continue!

Of course, this was just the death ratio for the soldiers in close quarters combat. If they factored in the damage caused by the magicite cannons, as well as those who were being shot to death by arrows, the prefectural city of Cod still held a major advantage.

“Gates, go destroy that corridor for me.” Linley pointed at the thick steel canopy-bridge of one of the siege escalades.

Once that hundred-meter wide, multiple-meter thick steel bridge was destroyed, then…there would be a distance of nearly ten meters from the siege escalades to the city walls. Only warriors of a certain rank would be able to leap that distance, and in addition, as they leapt, the city garrison would be able to use their spears to welcome them as they landed…

“Yes, Lord.” Gates acknowledged in his loud voice.

Boone, Ankh, and Hazer didn’t hesitate at all as they headed out as well. But Barker, since he was now a Saint, couldn’t get involved.

Gates’ body was blazing with battle-qi, and in his hands, he was wielding that 5300 pound greataxe. With a mighty leap, he flew directly onto the corridor where the fighting was going on. The bridge was filled with people, as many soldiers wanted to charge onto the enemy walls.

“Bang!” A terrifying axe-shaped blast of battle-qi energy chopped out, splitting several dozen warriors apart at the waist instantly. Body parts flew everywhere, spraying the surrounding area with blood. Instantly, a large gap appeared on the corridor-bridge.

“Bam!”

Like a demonic god, Gates wielded his terrifying 5300 pound greataxe as he landed in that empty area. Almost instantly, a large number of enemy soldiers immediately filled up that gap, all of them attacking Gates wildly.

“Hrmph!” Greataxe in hand, Gates delivered a mighty blow to the bridge beneath him.

The greataxe fell down, as gently as a falling leaf, striking against the steel bridge. Only a gentle clink was heard, but then…a massive hole appeared in the steel bridge, and a huge amount of steel dust was suddenly picked up and carried away by the wind.

Wielding something heavy as though it were light!

“Bang!” Gates’ battle-qi blasted out in all directions like countless arrows, killing all of the surrounding and attacking soldiers.

“It really is thick.” Gates murmured confidently. This sturdy steel bridge was something which even a peak-stage Undying Warrior of the ninth rank was unable to chop through at a blow. However, the blow from Gates’ greataxe had chopped halfway through it, with only a meter of thickness remaining.

“No!” Many people from the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, upon seeing this, stared with wide eyes.

“Break apart!” Gates brought his greataxe gently down a second time.

“Bang!” That thick steel bridge split into two parts, and the part that was

lying against the wall fell down. A large number of soldiers fell down as well. The effectiveness of the siege escalade had instantly been halved.

If they wanted to cross to the walls, the only choice was to jump over.

But the enemy guards had their weapons pointed towards them, with spear tips and sword tips all aimed in their direction. You want to jump? Then jump! You'll know what happens if you do…

"Bang!" "Bang!" One steel bridge after another was broken through as Gates, Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, these four terrifying Undying Warriors of the peak of the ninth rank, moved through all ten of the siege escalades.

The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, who had seen victory within reach, all began to feel bitterness and despair.

"We almost succeeded. Bastards." Weiss Porter let out an angry growl.

If the earlier situation had persisted, even though the enemy continued to attack with magicite cannons and arrows, Weiss Porter was confident…that after sustaining casualties of approximately seven to eight hundred thousand, they would have destroyed the enemies.

"Weiss Porter, now what?" Guillermo looked at him.

Weiss Porter looked at him as well. "It's still early. Wait for five in the morning." Guillermo and Weiss Porter both tacitly understood.

"Although the steel bridges were destroyed, the siege escalades still have some effect." Weiss Porter stared from afar…indeed, many soldiers continued to charge onto the siege escalades, and then, relying on being on the higher ground, shot arrows or slung rocks at the enemies on the walls.

A large number of soldiers even jumped down onto the city walls.

Perhaps the initial casualty rate would be horrendous, but once a small safe area was established, they were still able to fight on fairly even footing.

“They’ve gone mad.” Gates had experienced countless battles, but even he felt a sense of pressure.

Simply too many had died.

Time passed, one minute and one second at a time.

Three in the morning…

Four in the morning…

As time dragged on, the casualties for the defenders reached nearly two hundred thousand as well. For their casualties to be at such a terrifyingly high number, one could totally imagine how many had died on the side of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows.

When five in the morning came, Guillermo and Weiss Porter looked at each other.

“Weiss Porter, as you said. It is time to use our trump card.” Guillermo spoke.

Chapter 41 – Trump Card

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 41: Trump Card

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” ….

Those magicite cannons continued to attack, as though money truly was no obstacle at all. Beneath the prefectural city of Cod, there was a veritable sea of flame, and the night sky was split up by countless beautiful flashes of light.

From far away, the commanders of the joint forces, Weiss Porter and Guillermo, had shadows cast across their faces.

“Trump card?”

Weiss Porter looked at Guillermo. Snickering, he said, “Lord Cardinal Guillermo, I think that these exhausted soldiers of the prefectural city of Cod would be easily defeated once the Sacred Legion of the Radiant Church attacks. There’s no need for my side to join in.”

The trump card of the Radiant Church – the Sacred Legion!

The Sacred Legion!

In this area of the Anarchic Lands, the Radiant Church had spent a tremendous amount of effort and materials to cultivate this mighty legion.

The Sacred Legion only had a total of thirty thousand people.

Five thousand of the soldiers in this legion were warriors of the seventh rank, while the other twenty five thousand were at least of the fifth rank in power. In the other legions, a warrior of the fifth rank might be considered an elite soldier, but in this legion, they would only be the weakest of soldiers.

It must be understood that the jumping abilities of warriors of the seventh rank alone would allow them to flip past those thirty meter tall city walls.

Such a trump card of a legion, upon entering battle, would definitely be an unbalancing force. However, cultivating such a legion was simply too difficult. The cost of training them was far larger than that of training even the million man army.

“If Linley’s Saints break our agreement and eradicated our Sacred Legion, that would be terrible.” Guillermo secretly mused. Weiss Porter and him were thinking the same thing. They were both afraid that the Saints would betray the agreement and take part in the battle.

For example, those Saint-level dragons. For example, Linley and the other Supreme Warriors.

If a few hundred thousand ordinary soldiers were killed, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows could easily recruit a few hundred thousand more. All they needed was a year or two of training. But the Sacred Legion… every single soldier represented years worth of training and expenditures. Each lost soldier wouldn’t easily be replenished by money alone.

“Weiss Porter, are you joking?” Guillermo’s face sank.

Weiss Porter immediately laughed, “Guillermo, don’t be angry. The Shadow Legion of the Cult of Shadows will attack at the same time.”

The Shadow Legion was built up by the Cult of Shadows for the express purpose of countering the Sacred Legion. Their power was on par.

These were two terrifyingly strong legions.

Although each had only thirty thousand soldiers, and combined they only numbered sixty thousand, to the two sides, the worth of these trump card legions wasn’t any less than that of a million man army.

Atop the city walls, Linley and Barker were watching the battle as though it had nothing to do with them.

The city guards in the area had been dismissed.

“There’s nobody there.” The enemy soldiers clearly saw an area where only two people were standing.

“Quick, attack over there.”

The battle was so frantic that none of the soldiers were thinking clearly. Seeing an ‘opening’ in the walls, they immediately charged over. But just as they ran up the escalade ladders and charged at Linley and Barker with their weapons raised…

“Slash.”

Instantly, countless knives of wind formed a wall. The three warriors who had been the first to charge over were instantly turned into meat paste, and even some of the warriors close to the top of the escalade ladders were chopped into ground meat. This scene…replayed itself over and over throughout the battle. Nobody was able to draw near these two.

“I’m feeling really motherf*cking stifled.” Barker cursed softly.

Barker looked at Linley. Linley didn’t seem to feel anything at all. Barker couldn’t help but say, “Lord Linley, how can you just keep watching?”

“Why can’t I?” Linley stared below.

“Oh?” Barker looked at Linley questioningly.

Linley laughed calmly. “I now somewhat understand how the War God feels. Let worldly matters develop naturally. People will always die in wars. If I hadn’t founded the Baruch Kingdom, perhaps even more people would have died in those endless, chaotic wars.”

Linley looked down below. “The mortal world has its rules. And we, we have our rules as well!”

“I will hold to our agreement. Even if they break through to the magicite mines and seize them, I won’t interfere.” Linley said calmly.

Barker grew frantic. “But what about that pocket dimension room we discovered?”

“What are you afraid of?”

Linley laughed calmly. “It is impossible for non-Saints to enter that secret room. But which Saints would dare trespass on my territory?” Linley was already viewing this battle with a transcendent gaze and mind. It didn’t really matter if they won or they lost…

And in addition, the pocket dimension was immovable.

“You speak truth, Lord.” Barker began to understand.

Upon reaching the Saint-level, they possessed an eternal lifespan. They had transcended past ordinary humans. In truth, worldly battles and affairs no longer belonged to them, and Saints no longer belonged in them either. But although they understood this in their heart, both Barker and Linley had a hint of anticipation…

The anticipation that their side would prove victorious.

“Not good.” Barker’s face suddenly changed.

Beneath the city, a large number of elite warriors charged towards the walls at high speed. They were thickly clustered and definitely numbered in the tens of thousands. This large group of elite warriors ran at an astonishing pace, and with each flicker of their bodies, they moved twenty or thirty meters. In less than a minute, they would arrive at the city walls.

“Fire!”

The magicite cannons from the east gate had been shifted over as well. More than twenty magicite cannons fired simultaneously, blasting down balls of light at the soldiers below.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Many elite soldiers immediately dodged at high speed, but the magicite cannon attacks were simply too fast. Despite many of the elite soldiers being able to dodge the center of the blasts, a few unlucky soldiers would still die, while the others are the boundaries of the blasts would be injured as well.

But there was only time for one blast!

The magicite cannons only had enough time to fire once before the elite soldiers reached the city walls.

“There’s so many people. Tens of thousands. Where did all these powerful warriors come from? There’s so many warriors of the seventh rank.” Barker felt a hint of amazement.

Linley noticed the large number of elite soldiers that had appeared out of nowhere as well. Given Linley and Barker’s current levels of power, they were instantly able to judge the power of these soldiers. “So many are of the seventh rank? They are just like the ace regiments of the Knights of the Radiant Church that I saw back in the Holy Union.”

“This must be an elite force built up by the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, akin to the Eight Ace Regiments. This is their true elite force, here in the Anarchic Lands.” Linley guessed.

And that was indeed the case.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

A large number of warriors reached the city walls, and with a sudden leap,

they easily cleared the thirty foot walls. The thickly clustered warriors all arrived atop the walls, and all of them possessed the power of the seventh rank.

“Bang!” Swords and sabers flashed everywhere, and battle-qi exploded throughout the area.

Immediately, almost ten or twenty thousand garrison guards died. The garrison troops were only of the second or third ranks in power. The warriors of the fifth rank would be considered elites amongst them. But these warriors who had jumped onto the walls were all of the seventh rank, and there were nearly ten thousand of them.

A slaughter!

They couldn’t fight back at all! And at the same time…

A huge number of warriors of ‘only’ the fifth and sixth ranks began to climb up the escalade ladders at high speed.

Although there were hundreds of thousand soldiers on the south walls, only twenty or thirty thousand troops could fight against the warriors of the seventh rank at any given time. And when the fifty thousand warriors of the fifth and sixth ranks charged up…

“We lose.”

Barker sighed.

After the sixty thousand elite troops of the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion swept upwards, hundreds of thousands of normal troops followed behind them in escalade ladders. The entire length of the south city walls were occupied with countless enemies, who swarmed forward like an endless stream of ants, attacking the inner city of Cod.

But where Linley and Barker stood, no matter how many warriors charged over, they were all transformed into mincemeat by those countless wind

blades.

“Let’s leave.” Linley immediately flew out of the walls.

“Can’t let them have those magicite cannons.” Barker said. Barker’s body flashed by the city walls, and one magicite cannon after another was stored into his interspatial ring. How could those enemy soldiers possibly block the Saint-level expert, Barker?

“Jeeze, Barker…” Linley shook his head and chuckled.

“All done.” Barker flew back to Linley’s side.

Barker and Linley flew into the air above the prefectural city of Cod. They could clearly see what was happening throughout the prefectural city. Watts clearly had been prepared for this breach, as a large number of troops were currently retreating through the west gate and the north gates.

At the same time, many soldiers remained within the prefectural city of Cod, preparing to do battle and prevent the enemy forces from chasing.

A large number of troops were fleeing towards the north of the prefectural city of Cod.

Watts stared at the distant prefectural city of Cod and let out a low sigh. In the end, he had still lost. When those two terrifying enemy legions had appeared, Watts knew that there was no way they could block them. The Radiant Church and the Cult of the Shadows, combined, had sixty thousand elite soldiers, ten thousand of whom were of the seventh rank.

To warriors of the seventh rank, walls might as well not exist.

How could one possibly defend against such a monstrously powerful legion?

“Watts, what are you sad about?” Gates was next to him. “If we lose, we lose. When I was in the Eighteen Northern Duchies, losing battles was a

commonplace event. But of course…I still felt pretty pissed."

Gates was resigned as well.

When those sixty thousand elite soldiers attacked, how many of them could he, Gates, kill by himself? After all, they wouldn't just run up to him and wait for him to kill them.

"If I was a Grand Magus Saint, that would be wonderful. I'd just cast a forbidden spell and wipe them all out." Gates secretly mumbled to himself.

Right at this time, Linley and Barker flew over. They had seen Gates, Boone, Ankh, and Hazer, and thus they flew down. As they did, Linley asked Watts, "Watts, how many people have you assigned to fight the rearguard action to hold off the enemy?"

"A hundred thousand."

Watts replied. "We have a total of a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers in full retreat, none of them wounded. As for the remaining hundred thousand, half of them are injured, while the other half are at full strength. By relying on the traps and secret tunnels we dug early on, they should be able to stop the enemy forces for an hour."

"An hour?" Linley asked.

"Right. An hour. After an hour, my men will send a signal arrow, and all the soldiers will immediately surrender." Watts sighed. "There's nothing for it. If they fight to the end, they will all die."

Linley nodded with understanding.

In the Anarchic Lands, for the defeated soldiers to surrender was quite normal.

"One hour will be more than enough for us to pull away from them." Watts said.

There were two hundred thousand soldiers stationed at the magicite mines, and the defenses had been prepared long ago. Watts and his men had fled in the early morning, while in the afternoon, the hundred and fifty thousand survivors arrived at the magicite mines. As soon as they arrived, they were immediately sent to the administrative areas to rest and eat.

Nightfall. Within a tent.

Linley, Barker, and the others were seated together, eating dinner. At this time, someone arrived. The person who had arrived was Delia, and her arrival instantly caused everyone to stop eating. Even Barker, Gates, and Boone all immediately came over to greet her.

“Linley, how can you keep eating?” Delia was somewhat frantic.

“What is it?” Linley looked at Delia.

Delia said, “The forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows have almost arrived. What are we going to do?”

“What are we going to do? What can we do?” Linley shook his head helplessly. “Delia, right now, a large number of people are mining as fast as they can. We’ve already finished mining over a quarter of the total number of gems here.” This was one method as well.

Mine as much as possible.

But suddenly….

“Boss.” Bebe suddenly appeared atop the dinner table. He stared at Linley with his beady little eyes. “The enemies have sent so many people over. Boss, I’ve already brought Zassler over. Let Zassler cast a single forbidden level spell, ‘Undead Calamity’ and summon an army of millions of undead in a single spell. Exterminate them!”

At this moment, the tent flap opened.

An old man wearing a black robe walked in. He was as thin as a skeleton. It was the Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler.

“Lord Linley, I am ready to obey your commands at any moment. If you give the order, none of those million soldiers outside will survive.” Zassler’s eyes flashed with a cold green light. Zassler’s army of undead didn’t just include ordinary undead. They even included undead of the ninth rank, and even quite a few of the Saint-rank.

To exterminate that million man army was as easy as raising his hand!

Chapter 42 – An Utter Catastrophe

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 42: An Utter Catastrophe

Everyone in the tent couldn't help but look towards Linley. Without question, Linley was the leader of these Saints.

"Boss!" Bebe called out frantically.

Linley shook his head slightly. "Once we break the agreement, then according to the original text, Desri, the Radiant Church, and the Cult of Shadows will join forces in dealing with us."

"Why are you afraid of them?" Bebe wrinkled his little nose, and said viciously, "If those Saints come, I'll eat them alive. What's more, Boss, Desri probably won't act against you. He clearly was on our side."

Desri was indeed on Linley's side.

"Zassler's usage of a forbidden spell to summon an army of millions of undead would, without question, result in victory. Desri might not come attack us as a result of us violating the agreement. However, if we act in such a way, we would essentially be destroying Desri's reputation."

Desri had given him face. He couldn't make Desri look bad like that.

"Goddamnit. What a pain in the ass." Bebe was somewhat frantic. "Boss, Zassler can just summon undead that aren't Saints. As long as non-Saint undead do the attacking, then that wouldn't be considered a violation, right?"

Bebe's words made Delia immediately begin to laugh.

Linley swatted Bebe on the head. "Bebe, you are equivocating. How is the ultimate summoning spell, 'Undead Calamity', different from other

forbidden spells? In fact, in terms of power, the Undead Calamity spell is even stronger. It even can summon Saint-level undead."

"But then we're going to lose!" Bebe said hurriedly.

Linley sighed. "If we lose, we lose. At worst, that just means the enemy will take away the majority of the gems in the magicite mines. Fortunately, we've already mined away all of those gems that were on par with magicite cores of beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks. Bebe, you've finished with those, right?"

After discovering the secret door, Linley immediately mentally reached out to Bebe and had Bebe bring Haeru and the three Saint-level dragons to go to the core area and begin mining.

Although those magicite gems probably were only numerous enough to fill up a house, in terms of price, they were roughly on par with two third of the entire rest of the mine. After all, these gems held enough energy that they were on par with the magicite cores of magical beasts of the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks.

"We've mined them all." Bebe said hurriedly. "But, we've only mined out twenty or thirty percent of those ordinary magicite gems."

The 20-30% of ordinary magicite gems, combined with the core gems that they had mined, were worth perhaps only fifty percent of the total value of the magicite mines.

…….

"Rumble…"

The thickly clustered soldiers quickly formed up into two lines. The enormous, million-man army seemed like a behemoth as it swept towards the defenses of the magicite mines.

Within the army, Weiss Porter and Guillermo both had smiles on their faces.

“We win.” Guillermo laughed as he looked at the distant magicite mines.

Weiss Porter chuckled. “Don’t celebrate just yet. Nothing is certain until the last moment!”

“I don’t care about Linley’s soldiers. What I’m afraid of is Linley personally interfering! Or, those Saint-level magic beasts attacking. Our army would probably totally collapse.”

“True.” Guillermo sighed as well.

How effective was their previous agreement in binding Linley?

“First let our army rest. They fought all night, then marched for an entire day. The soldiers haven’t had a chance to rest at all.” Weiss Porter said. “It’s already night. Wait for dawn. Let them rest one night, and then attack again at dawn.”

Right now, the advantage was all on their side. Although their common soldiers were exhausted, those sixty thousand elite soldiers weren’t tired at all.

The weakest soldier of those two legions was of the fifth rank.

During the battle at the prefectural city of Cod, they had only attacked at the very end, and then travelled for a day. Given their power, even staying up for three days and three nights was fine.

Within the Forest of Darkness.

“Rustle…” In this primeval forest, a soft sound rustled throughout the area. One Stoneater Rat and Shadowmouse after another could be seen, moving in dense ranks…as far as the eye could see, there were Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats. Countless rat-type magical beasts were traveling towards the south side of the Forest of Darkness at high speed.

Gray Stoneater Rats, black Shadowmice, silver Stoneater rats, blue Shadowmice, golden Stoneater Rats, violet Shadowmice…

Rat-type magical beasts of all colors were coming out in a constant stream from within the depths of the Forest of Darkness like a tide, surging towards the south.

Amongst them, three violet-gold rat-type magical beasts were flying in the air above.

“Big brother, are we being a bit too nasty?” One of the violet-gold rats spoke out.

“What do you mean, too nasty?” The leader of the violet-gold rats sneered. “We are the kings of the rat-type magical beasts. Since all three of us brothers are making our grand entrance…we have to show off a bit. Also, we only brought a portion of the rat-type magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness. It isn’t as though we brought them all.”

The Forest of Darkness was the home of rat-type magical beasts.

In the Forest of Darkness, rat-type magical beast hordes were terrifying in power. No other magical beasts dared to offend these rat-type magical beast hordes.

Even Saint-level magical beasts didn’t want to offend the Rat Kings.

Each of these violet-gold rats possessed terrifying amounts of power.

“That Linley hasn’t met us a single time yet, has he?” The violet-gold rat in the middle laughed.

“Right. He can be considered as having rendered great merits, for him having taken care of Bebe for so long.” The leading violet-gold rat said.

“Big brother, don’t be so self-satisfied. From what I’ve learned from my conversations with Bebe, that Linley’s power is quite astonishing. In his full

Dragonform, combined with his extremely high understanding of the Laws, you probably aren't a match for him." The third violet-gold rat said.

The leading violet-gold rat let out a few snorts. "At his current level of power, I suppose he finally, just barely, qualifies to be Bebe's 'Boss', now."

Twelve years ago, when Bebe and the violet-gold rat had exchanged blows, Bebe had been at a disadvantage.

But twelve years later, Bebe's level of power had already reached parity with the violet-gold rat.

"They are moving so slowly." The leading violet-gold rat said with impatience. Suddenly, it let out a shrill screech. "Shkreeeee!" The piercing sound rang out, and instantly, the masses of Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice below them began to move more quickly.

Wherever the endless tide of rat-type magical beasts went, the other magical beasts immediately scrambled to flee.

Nobody dared to stop them!

…….

Linley's forces were all hidden behind their defenses. All they could do was rely on the local geography and environment to stop the enemy. Although they knew the enemy forces were exhausted last night, Linley's 150,000 soldiers were exhausted as well.

The day slowly brightened. This morning was a foggy one.

The fog wasn't very thick, but it prevented a person from seeing beyond a few hundred meters.

"The enemy is moving."

Behind the defenses, the soldiers could clearly hear a multitude of footsteps.

Clearly, the enemy forces were charging in this direction. In the mist, one could vaguely begin to see countless soldiers appear like a wave crashing towards them.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, Zassler, Barker, and the others all quietly watched.

“Jeeze, this pisses me off.” Bebe grumbled on Linley’s shoulders.

Bebe secretly glanced at Linley, but Linley maintained his silence. Who here was happy? Who wouldn’t be upset at having to give away half the magicite mine to the enemies? But Linley had signed the agreement, and he didn’t want to make Desri look bad. And so, he held to the agreement.

Soon, the hundreds of millions of gold coins worth of magicite gems would belong to the enemy.

Suddenly…

The footsteps came to a halt. At the same time, a loud, world-shaking voice could be heard: “Surrender. There is no way you can resist our army. If you surrender, we definitely won’t mistreat you.” The words were said quite suavely.

“He’s rather polite.” Gates snickered.

“Of course.” Zassler let out a sinister sneer. “They are afraid that we Saints will interfere.”

“If you put down your weapons within one minute’s time and surrender, we definitely won’t harm any of you. The countdown begins now.” After the voice finished speaking, not a single one of the 350,000 soldiers surrendered. They all quietly awaited the battle to start.

One minute and one second passed. A minute was a very short period of time.

The entire battlefield was put under terrifying pressure.

Baruch Kingdom's side saw many soldiers sweating. Their knuckles were white from how tightly they held their weapons.

"Prepare!"

A voice rang out. The battle at the prefectural city of Cod had resulted in almost no losses to the Sacred Legion or the Shadow Legion. Those 60,000 elite soldiers hefted their shields and raised their spears and warblades.

"We're going to lose!" Gates said in a low voice.

Delia and Bebe looked at Linley, but Linley remained silent.

But just at this time…

Three violet-gold flashes of light suddenly streaked through the air, while at the same time, their excited voices rang out. "Bebe, I'm here! This time, I brought my big brother and my second brother with me."

"Saint-level magical beasts?" Linley turned and saw three violet-gold rats.

This was Linley's first time meeting Saint-level rat-type magical beasts aside from Bebe, and what's more, there were three of them.

"What is that sound?" Linley, extremely sensitive to the elemental essences, suddenly sensed a sound from far away. That sound was moving towards them at a very fast speed. Linley spread out his spiritual sense, and suddenly he sensed…

"So many!!!!"

Countless rat-type magical beasts. Black ones. Blue ones. Violet ones. Gray ones. Silver ones. Gold ones. All sorts of rat-type magical beasts covered the land, like an enormous, endless sea. Countless rat-type magical beasts raised their head and began to let out excited screeches.

“Shkreeeeeeee!”

“Shkreeeeeeee!”

Terrifying, countless screeches filled the air, the world reverberating with the sound.

“What is that sound?” The Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion, which had just been able to engage in battle, suddenly felt their hearts quiver. The sound was coming from behind the magicite mines, but there were far too many voices, like trillions of magical beasts screeching at the same time.

Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces instantly changed.

“What is going on?” Weiss Porter and the others all felt nervous, but they didn’t know what was happening.

Not just them. Even the forces of the Baruch Kingdom felt their hearts shake.

“Magical beasts are coming. All soldiers, remain behind the earthworks. None of you are permitted to go out, nor are you permitted to attack the magical beasts.” Linley’s voice could be heard across their entire camp, and his words immediately caused all the soldiers of the Baruch Kingdom to shout in joy.

But the reaction in the camp of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows was the opposite.

“A magical beast swarm?” Weiss Porter and Guillermo’s faces changed dramatically.

Controlling a swarm of magical beasts to attack wasn’t a violation. After all, the Saint-level magical beasts weren’t personally attacking. For example, the O’Brien Empire had its Vampiric Iron Bull legion, which was a terrifying legion that had had hundreds of thousands of Vampiric Iron Bulls along with their caretakers.

“A swarm of magical beasts? Where did they come from?” Weiss Porter hurriedly said.

Guillermo’s face was ashen pale. “Linley’s rat-type magical beast! Right. It must be that Saint-level rat-type magical beast. The Forest of Darkness is the home of rat-type magical beasts.”

“Shouldn’t be. The rat-type magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness have their own rulers.” Weiss Porter knew very well that the Rat Kings of the Forest of Darkness were violet-gold rats. There was no way they would be under Bebe’s control.

But just at this time…

The squeeks from an endless tide of rat-type magical beasts rang out, and instantly, the horde of rat-type magical beasts covered an area of tens of square kilometers. Tens of kilometers! In other words, as far as the eye could see, the world had become covered with nothing but rat-type magical beasts.

“Wow!”

“Whoah!”

Cries of surprise rang out constantly from Linley’s side. Those rat-type magical beasts all quite orderly avoided Linley’s soldiers, heading towards the forces of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows in a stream. These rat-type magical beasts were generally able to eat even rocks. One could imagine how sharp their fangs and claws were.

Shadowmice were fast. Stoneater Rats were durable.

The entire swarm of rat-type magical beasts charged over. A swarm like this would even be able to devour an entire mountain.

“Wow, buddy, as badass as that?” Bebe’s eyes were bulging and round as he

stared at the other three violet-gold rats next to him. “How many rat-type magical beasts did you bring over? My spiritual energy can’t even encompass them all.”

The leading violet-gold rat said with a delighted laugh, “Not many, not many…this is just a small portion of our forces in the Forest of Darkness. Just a couple hundred million, that’s all.”

Chapter 43 – The Ratmageddon Wave

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 43: The Ratmageddon Wave

Within the endless mist, an endless swarm of rats came. All of the warriors, including the Sacred Legion, the Shadow Legion, and the others felt terror in their hearts. But despite their terror, they still had to wield their weapons and attack those magical beasts.

If the magical beasts didn't die, they would die!

"Kill!" Arrows rained down like the rain upon the wave of rats, but the defense of the Stoneater Rats was simply too tough, while the Shadowmice were too fast. Only a few Shadowmice were killed.

And then…

The wave of rats slammed into the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows' forces.

"Crunch, crunch." A terrifying series of crunching sounds.

A seemingly infinite number of rats charged forward, biting to death all of the human soldiers who sought to block them. Not only was their flesh stripped; even their bones were devoured. The Sacred Legion and Shadow Legion, all combined, had ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank.

But ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank, in the face of that rat wave, was absolutely nothing.

This was because the rat wave had a terrifying number of rats of the seventh rank, while ordinary Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice of the fifth rank, when charging in mass, could still bite a warrior of the seventh rank to death. Ten thousand warriors of the seventh rank…in front of a tidal wave of hundreds of millions of rats, utterly disappeared.

“Flee!” Some soldiers cried out in terror as they began to run.

Once the first began to flee, many of the other terrified soldiers began to flee as well. They couldn’t resist the rat wave at all.

However…

They couldn’t flee!

The Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats were extremely fast, far faster than humans. The fleeing warriors were quickly surrounded, then devoured. Even Guillermo and Weiss Porter were so terrified that their faces turned white, and they quickly began to flee.

“Quick, quick.” Weiss Porter and Guillermo didn’t try to resist at all.

The attack of the rat wave caused nearly half of the enemy force of a million soldiers to disappear, with not even the bones remaining.

“Linley, it’s enough to make them surrender. Don’t let this slaughter continue.” Delia couldn’t bear to watch any more.

Linley glanced at the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, and one of them grinned towards Delia. “Sure. Hey, Linley, just make the announcement. As long as the humans kneel down and raised their hands up in a token of submission, the rats won’t attack them.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Everyone, listen up. Kneel down and raise your hands in surrender. The magical beasts won’t attack you if you do so!” Linley’s voice rang out like thunder from the skies.

Hearing this sound, the hopeless soldiers immediately began to kneel down and raise their hands up.

At the same time, the Violet-Gold Rat King opened its mouth. “Shkreeeee!”

The high pitched screech rang out in the mist, and all the rats, as though having heard an order, bizarrely moved passed all of the kneeling soldiers, attacking the other soldiers.

“What to do?” Guillermo was in a state of total panic. Both Weiss Porter and Guillermo were using protective spells to defend themselves.

“How should I know?” Weiss Porter was terrified as well.

Right now, there were over ten rats nearly a meter long staring at them. The ten rats were either violet colored or gold colored, and the violet-furred rats had hints of gold in their fur, while the gold-furred rats had tints of violet in their fur.

Under a normal situation…

High level Shadowmice were violet at the seventh rank, and were known as Violet Shadowmice.

High level Stoneater Rats were gold at the seventh rank, and were known as Gold Stoneater Rats.

But from the seventh rank to the Saint-level, the fur of Violet Shadowmice would slowly turn a violet-gold color, while the Gold Stoneater Rats would see their fur also turn to a gold-violet color.

These ten rats were clearly of the eighth or ninth ranks.

“Squeak squeak.” One of the Stoneater Rats of the ninth rank suddenly pounced at them, biting through Guillermo’s Lightguard spell at one chomp. At the same time, Weiss Porter’s magical defense also came under assault and was broken through, but the ten rats didn’t immediately continue their assaults.

They were very intelligent, not one bit lower than humans in intelligence.

Guillermo and Weiss Porter exchanged glances. Their foreheads were covered with sweat, and their backs were also slick with sweat. They understood…if these ten rats charged toward them, they would instantly be bitten to death. Not even their bones would be left.

But just at this time, Linley's voice rang out.

After exchanging glances, the two didn't hesitate at all.

"Thud!" Their knees hit the ground, and their hands raised up.

Instantly, eight of the ten rats left, while the other two stayed there, staring at them. The rats were very smart; the ten rats had instantly discovered that these two experts of the ninth rank, Guillermo and Weiss Porter, were the enemy leaders.

Enemy leaders had to be taken alive, of course.

After the morning fog slowly dissipated, Linley's side could clearly see that large number of kneeling enemy soldiers, all of whom were surrounded by ten, no, a hundred times their number of rats and mice. The visual effect of these massive numbers alone were awesome and terrifying to behold.

"Swish!" A sudden flash of light, as a gold-colored rat with a tint of purple in its fur scurried over, letting out two squeaks.

"What? Only three hundred thousand enemy soldiers are still alive." Bebe said in surprise. Bebe naturally could understand the language of rat-type magical beasts.

The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings narrowed their eyes in delight. One of them looked at Bebe. "Bebe, what do you think?" Bebe looked at the endless sea of rats and sighed, "They really are powerful. It'd be so awesome if these rats obeyed my command."

Who could possibly resist an army of hundreds of millions of rat-type

magical beasts?

“Oh, that’s easy.” The leader of the violet-gold rats let out a few high pitched screeches, and Bebe instantly grew excited.

Linley looked at Bebe in confusion.

“Boss, from today onwards, these hundreds of millions of rats will obey my command. Haha!” Bebe was extremely excited. At the same time, he also let out a few high pitched squeaks which also encompassed the entire battlefield. The countless rat-type magical beasts all lowered their heads and bowed towards Bebe.

Linley was secretly shocked.

Stoneater Rat swarms and Shadowmice swarms were frighteningly strong. Linley had known of this since he was young. But Linley had felt that a rat wave of several million rat-type monsters was already very frightening. But several hundred million…this was simply terrifying.

“Which army can possibly resist these hundreds of millions of rats?” Linley secretly shook his head.

This was like when the magical beasts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts came charging out. Even Fenlai City itself was broken through in moments, and both the Holy Union as well as the Dark Alliance lost a third of their territory. One could imagine how terrifying magical beast swarms were. And the Forest of Darkness…was the home of rat-type magical beasts.

This small portion of the rat-type beasts within it was enough to lay waste to an Empire.

But of course, that was assuming Saints did not get involved!

The leading Violet-Gold Rat King laughed towards Linley. “Let me introduce myself. My name is Harry [Ha’li]!”

“My name’s Hart [Ha’te]. I’m number two.” A second Violet-Gold Rat King said immediately.

The final Violet-Gold Rat King nodded and was about to speak, but Linley interjected, “You must be Harvey [Ha’wei], right? Bebe often speaks to me of you.” The only Violet-Gold Rat King which Bebe had made friends with in the Forest of Darkness was Harvey. The others, he didn’t have much of a relationship with.

“Are the three of you truly giving control of this rat swarm to Bebe?” Linley asked.

This rat swarm was simply too enormous. How could these Rat Kings give them to Bebe to control?

The Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, said disdainfully, “You don’t understand. In the Forest of Darkness, every so often, there will be a massive internal slaughter amongst the rat swarms. More than half will die, and the weak will be destroyed.”

“More than half?” Linley felt shocked.

The third-ranked Rat King, Harvey, explained: “It’s simple. The lower-ranked the rat, the faster they breed. A single litter can contain a dozen or several dozen. How can that be allowed to continue? If that continues, the Forest of Darkness wouldn’t be large enough for them to survive in. That’s why they engage in internal warfare, weeding out the weak and lowering the numbers.”

Linley understood now.

If the rat-type magical beasts were allowed to develop as they pleased, most likely the entire Forest of Darkness would be devoured by them. Their numbers had to be controlled.

“Thus, Bebe.” The Rat King named Harvey patted Bebe’s shoulder with his

little paw and said in a friendly manner, “This rat swarm is yours to control. It doesn’t matter how many you get killed. The Forest of Darkness needs to keep the number of rats under control anyhow. Sooner or later, the weaker ones will die.”

Linley couldn’t help but sigh inwardly.

No wonder there were so many rats of the fifth through seventh ranks, and even several that were higher. So the weak ones had been weeded out long ago. Those grey Stoneater Rats and black Shadowmice were probably still in the growing phase.

“Don’t worry. I’ll definitely complete your mission and let more than half of them die.” Bebe chortled, then looked at Linley. “Boss, how about…let’s use these rats to take over the entire Anarchic Lands?”

“Unify the Anarchic Lands?”

Linley’s body shook slightly, but then he laughed.

“Boss, the two enemy leaders are being escorted over.” Weiss Porter and Guillermo were being brought over.

“Guillermo?” Linley looked at Guillermo. This was a familiar face.

Seeing Linley, Guillermo forced out a smile. Linley laughed calmly. “This time, the Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows have really tested my limits. Because of our agreement, I had to just watch the battle happen and not interfere.”

Guillermo and Weiss Porter’s hearts were trembling.

“It’s fine. I’ll let your Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows also learn what that feels like.”

Linley looked at Bebe and laughed. “Bebe, from today onwards, join forces with Barker. Let the rat swarm and the human army attack together. Divide

into ten units and begin to attack the territory of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows in the Anarchic Lands."

"Yes! I, Bebe, will definitely succeed." Bebe intentionally puffed out his chest, then issued a very proper military salute.

Barker's eyes were shining as well. "Lord Linley, don't worry. With these hundreds of millions of rats, uniting the Anarchic Lands will be simplicity itself." By now, even the elite legions of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had been destroyed. Who could possibly block these rats?

Guillermo and Weiss Porter's faces instantly turned even paler.

They exchanged glances, terror in their eyes. They could imagine what was going to happen.

Yulan calendar, year 10022. September.

What would later be described as the war of the 'Ratmageddon Wave' began. Hundreds of millions of rats, divided into ten units, each containing the terrifying number of tens of millions of rats, began to move in unison with Baruch Kingdom legions of twenty thousand human warriors.

The hundreds of millions of rats and the two hundred thousand human warriors had been divided into ten groups.

These ten groups began to attack the Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands.

Rat-type magical beasts of the eighth and ninth ranks could understand human speech, and in addition, some of the eighth and ninth ranked experts of the Baruch Kingdom set up soulbinding contracts with some of the powerful rat-type magical beasts. This made it even easier to control the rat swarm.

The rat wave was unstoppable!

The attacking rat waves, even when faced with giant falling boulders by city guards, were able to chew holes straight through the walls. After all, the Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats often ate rocks for food. They bore straight through the walls, then swept through like a flood into the cities. The city guards simply weren't able to stop them at all.

Wherever the rat wave passed, cities crumbled and surrendered.

Even the Sacred Legion and the Shadow Legion had been annihilated. Who could resist such a terrifying rat swarm?

The 'Ratmageddon Wave' was only comparable to the 'Apocalypse Day' on year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. In addition, the difference between this and the 'Apocalypse Day' was that this time…the boundless rat wave totally listened to the commands of Linley's side.

This news quickly spread to the O'Brien Empire, the Yulan Empire, and the various other major forces.

At the same time, this information quickly spread towards the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church. But what could they do? After all…Linley hadn't deployed any of his Saints to join the battle. He only deployed an army of magical beasts.

However, the number of magical beasts in his army was simply too astonishing.

Chapter 44 – Meeting Invitation

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 44: Meeting Invitation

The Sacred Isle. The ninth floor of the Radiant Temple.

At this moment, the atmosphere was an extremely depressing one. The air was so thick and stifling, it seemed to have turned solid.

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Praetor Osenno, Zealot Commander Lehman, and Lord Fallen Leaf, the spiritual leader of the Ascetics. These four high level individuals were all present. They were staring at the news they had received. Their faces had all become exceedingly ugly to behold.

Silence!

After receiving this news, nobody spoke. Everyone understood the grave importance this news represented. Perhaps to Linley…worldly power, land, and kingdoms meant nothing. Even if the Baruch Kingdom were to disappear, it wouldn't mean much to him.

But it was different for the Radiant Church.

"Rat wave. A rat wave!" Lord Fallen Leaf was frowning mightily. His skinny, emaciated face had a bitter look on it. "The terrifying rat wave of the Forest of Darkness. Why do they obey Linley? This is something which had never happened before."

Heidens spoke in a low voice. "Most likely it is Linley's magical beast. It is that Saint-level black Shadowmouse that is controlling them."

"Saint-level rat-type magical beasts should be Violet-Gold Rat Kings!" Osenno shook his head. "Although Linley's rat-type magical beast is a Saint, but…the Rat Kings of the Forest of Darkness are Violet-Gold Rat Kings. All Shadowmice and Stoneater Rats there listen to the orders of the

Violet-Gold Rat King race."

This was a truth. All the experts of the continent knew this truth.

The highest echelon of the Yulan continent was the five Deities, with the mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness being one of them. In all the records of the Church, even the earliest ones before the High Priest had appeared, there were notes regarding this King of the Forest of Darkness.

The most ancient of the five Deities.

The most mysterious one.

Never showing himself. Never struggling for power.

But nobody dared to offend him. No matter how powerful, no one dared to offend him.

All the major powers knew that this mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness had one hobby; he loved rat-type magical beasts. With his help, the rat-type magical beasts became an enormous, powerful race in the Forest of Darkness, and the Violet-Gold Rat Kings became amongst the highest tier of Saint-level magical beasts.

Even Saint-level magical beasts such as Nine Headed Serpent Emperors, Worldbears, and Bloody-eyed Maned Lions weren't much stronger than these Violet-Gold Rat Kings.

"Enough." Heidens frowned. "Enough discussion about why the rat swarm listens to Linley. What matters right now is how to resolve this situation. The situation is extremely grave. I imagine all of you understand this quite well."

Osenno, Lehman, and Lord Fallen Leaf all maintained their silence.

Heidens glanced at each of them. "The 'Apocalypse Day' already caused us to lose over a hundred million believers. The Radiant Sovereign is already

unhappy with the loss of so much faith energy. Once Linley takes over the Anarchic Lands, then the Church will definitely be destroyed by him. In less than a hundred years, there will perhaps be few to no believers in the Radiant Church in the Anarchic Lands.

Faith!

This was one of the most important reasons why the Radiant Church existed. They had lost a tremendous amount of faith energy last time. They had been very fortunate, for the Radiant Sovereign had not punished them for this.

But if they were to lose even more…

The repercussions would be unimaginable!

"No matter what, we cannot allow our Radiant Church's foundations in the Anarchic Lands to be destroyed. This colossal amount of faith energy cannot be allowed to be lost." Lord Fallen Leaf said in a low voice.

"Right. It cannot be lost." Zealot Commander Lehman said as well.

Osenno's lips quirked up. "Faith energy is important to us, but not necessarily to Linley. Linley most likely doesn't have much interest in land either. We can negotiate with him."

"Right." The eyes of the other three lit up.

This wasn't unresolvable.

Heidens paused for a moment, then immediately ordered, "Since that's the case, then how about this. Lehman, you stay at the Sacred Isle for now. All matters at the Sacred Isle will be under your control. Don't allow Linley to ambush us and destroy our headquarters. As for Fallen Leaf and Osenno, you two come with me, along with six Angel Saints."

The emaciated Lord Fallen Leaf nodded slightly.

Osenno approved as well.

The Radiant Church had human Saints as well, but the potential of human Saints was far greater than that of the Angels. The Church would rather use the Angels as cannon fodder than allow their human Saints to die.

With the Holy Emperor Heidens as their leader, the three pillars of the Radiant Church, Heidens, Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf, alongside six Angel Saints, quickly flew away from the Sacred Isle and away from the ocean, heading towards the Anarchic Lands.

As for the Cult of Shadows, the importance they placed on faith power was no less than that of the Radiant Church's.

The various Saint-level pillars of the Cult of Shadows, such as the Dark Patriarch, also headed towards the Anarchic Lands.

In the southern part of the Anarchic Lands, on a desolate official road, the massive tide of rats accompanied the human warriors in a quite orderly fashion, continuing their attacks. The hundreds of millions of rats and the two hundred thousand human warriors had been divided into ten armies.

Each army had tens of millions of rats and twenty thousand human warriors.

The main use of the human warriors was to placate the citizens of the cities. Within the twenty thousand human soldiers, there was a carriage. This was the only carriage in the entire army.

And within the carriage, there was only…Bebe!

Within the spacious carriage, Bebe stretched his two rear claws out as he lazily lay down while chatting spiritually with Linley. "Boss, five armies under my control have already taken down six prefectural cities and dozens of small cities. How about you? How's training in the pocket dimension going? Oh, fine…I won't bother you anymore."

“I’m so bored.”

Bebe let out a resigned sigh.

Although Bebe was roughly two thousand kilometers away from the magicite mines, Linley and Bebe both possessed so much spiritual energy that, when combined with their ‘bond of equals’ type of soul-binding, they could still chat at such a distance. Their range was double that of Linley and Haeru’s.

Twelve years ago, Linley and Haeru could mentally talk at a distance of a thousand kilometers.

By now, Linley and Haeru could talk at a distance of two thousand kilometers. Linley and Bebe naturally could talk at an even greater distance.

“Hey, where are we? How much farther from the next prefectural city?” Bebe said loudly to the outside guard.

Immediately, the soldier pulled open the carriage window and said respectfully, “Milord, according to the maps, we have another fifty kilometers to the next prefectural city.”

“As far as that?” Bebe muttered, then closed his little eyes. “I guess I’d better take another nap first.”

“The rat swarm is coming, the rat swarm is coming!” Sounds of terror from the city walls.

Atop the walls of this prefectural city, the faces of the thousands of soldiers were utterly pale. Seeing the endless wave of magical beasts in the desolate wilderness, they were all terror-stricken. Even the city governor had giant beads of sweat appear on his forehead.

“What to do?” The city governor was totally baffled.

A nearby city manager said with terror, “Lord City Governor, this rat wave is simply too terrifying. We can’t stop them. It’s…it’s better if we surrender.” As he spoke, his voice lowered to a whisper. The soldiers of the prefectural city on the wall had all seen the enormous number of rats coming, with a thin line of human soldiers mixed in.

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

“Surrender, won’t kill!”

The human soldiers immediately let out an enormous unified chant. This earth-shaking chant, mixed with the terrifying, endless rat wave, caused many guards to throw down their weapons. After all, even before the rat swarm had arrived, these people had heard of how terrifying the rat swarm was.

“Lord Bebe.”

The carriage suddenly halted, and Bebe opened his little eyes blearily. Just as Bebe’s eyes were beginning to focus, his little eyes suddenly turned absolutely round, and with a ‘swish’, he disappeared from inside the carriage.

The city had already surrendered, and the countless rats had been preparing to enter the city. But suddenly, not a single rat was moving.

This was because a group of people were standing there in mid-air, the leader of them a skinny, bald man. Heidens. A terrifying aura spread out from Heidens, terrifying the below rats so badly that they all knelt down, not daring to move.

“A Saint-level expert!” The human warriors below felt a hint of terror in their hearts.

Seeing this, a hint of a calm smile appeared on Heiden’s face.

The air quivered, and Bebe, who had previously been inside the carriage, appeared in mid-air. Bebe's eyes stared fixedly at Heidens. His voice was extremely shrill. "You damn baldy, even Osenno is standing behind you. So you are that so-called Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church?"

Damn baldy?

Osenno, Lord Fallen Leaf, and the two Angel Saints standing behind Heidens felt amused.

A hint of a faint smile remained on Heidens' face. Like a benevolent father, he looked gently at Bebe. "So you are Linley's magical beast. I am indeed the Holy Emperor, Heidens. Today, I have come because I hope to have a good negotiation with Linley."

"Oh?" Bebe's beady little eyes rolled.

"Alright. You wait." Bebe said loudly. "My Boss is still back in the Kingdom. I can't notify him. You'll need to wait half a day."

Heidens smiled and nodded. "Fine. Linley can choose the meeting location as well." Heidens' attitude was quite modest.

Bebe's beady little eyes rolled again, and then he said loudly, "Fine. Just stay here at this prefectural city. I'll come looking for you in a bit." Bebe let out a sharp screech, and instantly, the rats below all obediently retreated out of the city, no longer attacking it.

Seeing this, Heidens, Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf all felt shock in their heart.

As for Bebe, he transformed into a black streak of light, flying towards the north. As he flew, Bebe began to reach out to Linley. "Boss, quick. Stop training. Something big is going down."

In the depths of the magicite mine, a gentle wind blew past. Linley's body

appeared in mid-air, while Zassler immediately flew out as well.

“Lord Linley, the value of this pocket dimension room is definitely on par with any divine artifact.” Zassler sighed in amazement. This was Zassler’s first trip into the pocket dimension room. Just then, Linley and him had been training inside.

Zassler, having been initiated into the secrets of necromancy, knew many occult mysteries, far more than Linley did.

Zassler knew very well that a Demigod definitely would not be able to create such a stable pocket dimension.

“Enough of that for now. Just then, Barker’s magical beast notified me that the experts of the Cult of Darkness have arrived. And then, Bebe contacted me as well.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s lips. “The Cult of Shadows and Radiant Church are both frantic now.”

“Naturally.” Zassler laughed. “Lord Linley, you don’t care about territory, but religious organizations greatly value the power of faith. If they lose a huge amount of territory, they might even have a punishment fall down upon them from the Divine Plane of Light.”

“When their soldiers attacked my territory, I endured the entire time. But now, these people have popped out. I want to see what they have to say!” Linley’s eyes had a hint of coldness flash past them.

“Zassler, let’s go.”

Linley’s body transformed into a flash of light, streaking gracefully towards the south. Zassler laughed, then followed him. Only, Zassler’s ‘laugh’, when paired with his deathly, netherworldly eyes, was simply terrifying to behold.

While flying over.

Linley’s eyes turned cold as he issued a mental order. “Haeru, you and those

three Saint-level dragons come as well.” Immediately, the Saint-level magical beasts, the Blackcloud Panther, the Tyrant Wyrm, the Golden Dragon, and the Thunder Lizard all flew out of Mt. Blackraven.

Chapter 45 – Shameless

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 45:Shameless

Above the mighty Liuyan River, a large ship was gliding its way through the waters, but not a single person was on the deck.

In the uppermost inner deck of the ship, however, experts were as numerous as the clouds.

Every single person within this massive inner deck was a Saint-level expert. Within the hall, there were nine chairs, divided into three sides.

Linley, Barker, and Zassler were seated on one side.

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Praetor Osenno, and Lord Fallen Leaf were seated on another side, while on the other side were the forces of the Cult of Shadows: Dark Patriarch Affleck [A'fu'lai'ke], Senior Judge O'Casey, Fallen Angel Leader Cramerson [Ke'lai'mo'sen].

Behind each of the two sides were a number of Angel Saints or Fallen Angel Saints.

Heidens and Affleck shared a glance, a strange feeling in their heart. The two of them were the leaders of two major religions, and they were enemies to each other.

But today, they were allies.

The reason for this bizarre transformation was Linley. An astonishing genius who had grown at rapid speed. Despite his youth, he had reached one of the utmost peaks of power amongst the experts of the continent. Even figures as exalted as the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch had to lower their noble heads in front of Linley and speak soft words to negotiate with him.

“Heidens. Affleck.” Linley had a hint of a smile around his lips. “I don’t know why you have invited me to come here. What is this about?” Bebe rested on Linley’s thighs, his beady little eyes staring at the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch.

The Dark Patriarch Affleck’s skin was as white and tender as that of a young girl’s. His voice was also very soft and gentle. “The reason why so many of us from the Cult of Shadows have come is primarily to ask you, Linley, to make a concession and have your rat wave army halt its attacks. I imagine Heidens has come for similar reasons. Heidens, am I right?”

Heidens nodded slightly, then looked at Linley, his gentle gaze giving off the impression of the spring wind. “Linley, would you be willing to make this concession?”

“Are you all dreaming?” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Heidens laughed calmly. “Linley, as long as you are willing to make this concession, our Radiant Church is also willing to pay a high price. We will definitely make you satisfied.”

“The same with us. What we pay would definitely be enough to make you feel satisfied, Linley.” Affleck said.

Both of the leaders of the two religions were acting submissively towards Linley.

They didn’t want to fight against Linley head on. First of all, they had no excuse to do so. If they fought against Linley head on, they would be giving Desri’s side an excuse to intervene. And secondly, the Radiant Church, at least, had agreed that within these twenty years, they were not to attack Linley. The time limit wasn’t over.

“Linley, what do you think?” Heidens looked at Linley.

Linley felt deep hatred for the Radiant Church. Linley only harbored a

dislike for cruel, savage people, but towards those who feigned benevolence, such as Heidens, and for those who pretended to be as kind as a father, but who in reality were merciless, cruel, and utterly pragmatic, Linley felt the utmost of revulsion.

The leaders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows looked at Linley.

Linley revealed a hint of a smile, but from his mouth, he spoke two words: “No way!”

The faces of both Heidens and Affleck instantly froze, while at the same time, the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, let out a cold sneer. “Linley, can it be that you rashly imagine that you can set yourself against both the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows?”

“Cramerson.” The Dark Patriarch, Affleck, immediately barked at him.

Linley looked at the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, and let out a light laugh. “Based on what I know, for an Angel to Descend, they require a powerful body. Mr. Cramerson, you are so powerful that this body must at least be of the seventh or eighth rank in power. Where did your Cult of Shadows procure such a powerful body?”

In the past, the five Barker brothers had reached the eighth rank just by physical training alone.

Linley knew very well that most people would only be able to reach the sixth rank through physical training. No matter how talented they were, the seventh rank was virtually impossible, with perhaps one appearing every millennia. Only the lineage of the Four Supreme Warriors was able to constantly produce such a miracle just based on physical training.

Thus, this body of Cramerson’s most likely belonged to one of the Four Supreme Warriors.

“Right. Where did that body come from?” Barker stared coldly at the Cult

of Shadow's side.

Back then, him and his four brothers had nearly died and had their bodies transformed into vessels for Angels. Thus, this was a very sensitive topic for him.

"That's a secret of our Cult of Shadows." Cramerson smiled. "Enough, Linley. Let's return to the previous topic. Are you truly unwilling to make any concession at all? If you are willing to make this concession, you will win the eternal gratitude of our Cult of Shadows."

Gratitude?

Linley, Zassler, Barker, and even Bebe immediately began to laugh loudly, holding their stomachs.

"Linley, you'd best consider it." Heidens looked at Linley as well.

Linley's laughter faded, and his face grew solemn. He swept the people in front of him with his gaze and said seriously, "Heidens. Affleck. Listen well. I, Linley, will say this to you plainly. No matter what, I will not withdraw my armies. The unification of the Anarchic Lands is going to happen, and there is nothing that can stop it!"

"Linley, don't go too far." Osenno sneered coldly.

In terms of his ability to 'endure', Osenno clearly was inferior to Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf.

"Too far?" Linley frowned, his gaze shooting towards Osenno like cold knives. "Osenno, don't put on airs in front of me. I've already spoken very plainly today. If you want me to withdraw my armies, that's not going to happen."

The aura in the cabin of the boat immediately became extremely tense.

"Is there anything else? Speak." Linley was quite casual.

Bebe added, “Right, if there’s anything you want, hurry up and talk. I’m about to go lead my rat wave army to go take over a huge swathe of land.”

Zassler’s cold, gloomy gaze swept towards the people in the room. He let out a few insidious chuckles, but didn’t speak.

The cabin was silent for a while.

“Fine then.” Heidens sighed. “Our Radiant Church can make one final concession. We can offer the land which we control to your Baruch Kingdom and let you administer it.”

“Oh?” Linley was a bit surprised.

What was Heidens intending? Why was he allowing Linley to take over the entire Anarchic Lands?

“We are willing to do this as well.” Affleck said.

Linley glanced at Heidens, then at Affleck. He mused to himself, “What are these two church leaders planning?”

Heidens looked at Linley. “Our request is very simple. As long as you are willing to agree to allow our Radiant Church to preach openly throughout your empire and won’t suppress our religion at all, we’ll be satisfied.”

“Preach? Not suppress them at all?” Linley frowned.

Affleck nodded as well. “Our request is the same. Allow our Cult of Shadows to openly preach, and do not suppress it at all.”

Linley laughed.

He now understood their intentions. The Cult of Shadows and the Radiant Church greatly valued the power of faith. Compared to that, they didn’t care too much about who ruled over a particular territory.

What was truly the most important was that the faith power had to be maintained.

“Linley, the spread of our religions in your empire in the Anarchic Lands won’t affect your governance much. You should be able to accept this, right?” Affleck said persuasively.

Heidens just quietly watched Linley, waiting for Linley’s answer.

“You’ll allow me to unify it, and you’ll just proselytize?” Linley looked at the two.

“Right.” Heidens immediately nodded. “This is the greatest concession we can make. Linley, if you are willing to agree, then our two sides can become friends, and we can forget about everything which has happened in the past.”

If Linley were to agree, then the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would definitely have to give Linley face in the future. In the future, Linley would be as free and unrestrained in the Yulan continent as a fish in water.

But…

They had forgotten that Linley didn’t care about dominance. In his heart, the only thing he had was the self-confidence and desire to reach the pinnacle of training, his love towards his family and friends, and an oath he had etched into his heart.

The oath he had sworn when Grandpa Doehring had died, and he had left the city of Hess!

The oath that he would destroy the Radiant Church entirely, and pull it up by its roots!

His father had died. His mother had died. Grandpa Doehring had died!

“Become friends? Become friends with the Radiant Church?” Linley laughed coldly in his heart. “The Anarchic Lands? If I could have my father, mother, and Grandpa Doehring come back to life, I’d be willing to give up the entire Anarchic Lands, and even all of my own power!!!!”

Linley’s emotions began to swell.

“Become friends? Let you continue to preach?” The rage in Linley’s heart was rising, but his face remained as calm as ever.

Within the quiet cabin, everyone stared at Linley, waiting for Linley’s reply.

Allowing Linley to unify the Anarchic Lands while the two churches continued to preach was the bottom line for these two churches. If Linley was to refuse, then he really would have infuriated these two churches.

The Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows all looked expectantly. Linley’s lips curved upwards slightly. “In my domains, all religions shall be forbidden. If I find one, I’ll destroy one!”

The faces of Heidens, Affleck, Fallen Leaf, O’Casey, and the others instantly changed.

“Did you hear me clearly enough?” Linley looked at them. “That is my response!”

“Hmph!” Praetor Osenno and the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, suddenly rose to their feet, staring coldly at Linley.

This time, Heidens and Affleck didn’t stop them.

“Linley, this is the bottom line of our Church, and is the bottom line of the Lord. Do you know…what the result will be if you challenge our Lord’s bottom line?” Heidens’ face was calm.

Affleck also looked coldly at Linley.

Instantly, the temperature in the cabin dropped by dozens of degrees. The tension was so thick, it had congealed. Most likely, if anyone not at the Saint level were to come over, they wouldn't be able to even breathe.

"Bang!" Linley slapped the armrest on his chair, his eyes cold as he swept the people present. "What, you want to threaten me?"

The Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows were silent, but their intentions were clear.

They were indeed threatening him.

"Heidens, have you forgotten the agreement we made twelve years ago?" Linley stared coldly at the two sides.

According to their agreement, Saints were not permitted to engage in worldly battles. But if Saints did not get involved, there was no way they would be able to stop the rat swarms. Thus, once they shed all pretense of cordiality, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows would definitely send Saints to stop the rat swarms.

Another part of the agreement was that within twenty years, the Radiant Church was not permitted to actively attack Linley.

"Linley, you go too far." Heidens said in a low voice.

Affleck also said, "Linley, a man should know when to take a step back."

"Shameless. Shameless!" Linley stood up, laughing while shaking his head. "I've never seen people as shameless as you lot. When your armies attacked my territory, you charged all the way to the magicite mines, but I didn't interfere, because I held to our agreement."

"But you?"

Linley's mocking gaze swept the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch. "You people are the leaders of two major religions. As soon as the battle

starts and you know you are about to lose, you are immediately going to interfere. And you say that I go too far? As far as I can see, you people are utterly shameless, shameless!”

Linley’s words made the expressions on the faces of both the Saints of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows turn exceedingly ugly. They were all people of high status. Naturally, they wouldn’t be able to take Linley’s satirizing mockery well.

“Watch your mouth.” Osenno sneered.

Linley’s eyes flashed with cold light. The entire hall was suddenly filled with violet light, and Osenno was so terrified that he instantly transformed into four doppelgangers and retreated at high speed.

“Ah!” “Ah!” Two successive, agonized screams.

The bodies of the two Four-Winged Angels who were standing behind Osenno suddenly were simultaneously sliced into two pieces. Their bodies collapsed, staining the floor with their blood.

The second level of the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ attack: the combination of the ‘Spatial Freezing’ and the ‘Spatial Folding’ concepts!

Osenno clutched his chest, staring at Linley in astonishment.

“Osenno, with the little bit of power that you have, don’t yammer and shout in front of me.” Linley locked onto Osenno with his cold gaze. “I don’t even need to transform to kill someone like you!”

Chapter 46 – A Falling Out

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 46: A Falling Out

Osenno felt extremely astonished in his heart. “So…so fast!” Just then, all four of his doppelgangers had been struck at virtually the same time. If he hadn’t hurriedly used two of the Angel Saints as shields, he probably would’ve been killed by Linley in one blow.

Actually, in human form, Linley wasn’t much stronger than Osenno.

The main thing was that Linley had just hit him with a sneak attack. Given Bloodviolet’s speed, Osenno barely had any time to react before Linley’s sword arrived in front of him. If Osenno had been prepared, he wouldn’t have cut such a sorry shape.

“Linley, what do you mean by this!” Heidens cold voice snapped out.

At the same time, Heidens and Fallen Leaf both stood up as well. On the Cult of Shadows’ side, Affleck, O’Casey, and Cramerson stood up as well, all staring coldly at Linley. The leaders of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, the two major religions of the Yulan continent, had a common enemy….

Linley!

Seeing the look in the eyes of Heidens, Affleck, Fallen Leaf, and the others, Linley actually felt a hint of joy in his heart.

“Grandpa Doehring, can you see this?”

Twenty years!

When he had left the city of Hess and entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, it had been year 10000 of the Yulan calendar. At that time,

Linley was twenty years old. At that time, Linley had sworn that he would definitely destroy the Radiant Church and break its roots. But he knew…he had to take it a step at a time.

The Radiant Church valued the power of faith.

It had now lost a third of the Holy Union, and only had a population of four or five hundred million. Two hundred million of them came from the Radiant Church's lands in the Anarchic Lands. If Linley unified that area and forbade proselytizing…

This would be an unimaginable blow to the Radiant Church.

"In the past, in my eyes, the Radiant Church was such a huge entity. But now…" Linley glanced at Osenno, who was still clutching his bloody chest. "Even the Praetor, Osenno, is far from being a match for me." Linley murmured to himself, "Grandpa Doehring, just watch. Soon. Soon, the day will arrive when I destroy the entire Radiant Church and uproot it entirely. I only need one more step!"

In Linley's heart, Doehring Cowart held a very high status.

Ever since he was young, he had been taught by Doehring Cowart. Doehring Cowart had been entirely selfless. Whether it be in magic training or in the Straight Chisel School, Doehring Cowart had taught Linley everything. And when they had encountered a crisis, Grandpa Doehring had consumed his own spiritual energy to rescue Linley.

Linley had been waiting a long time to deliver this vicious blow to the Radiant Church.

And now, the Radiant Church had thrown itself on his spear? How could Linley show any mercy?

"What?" Linley glanced at the group of people in the cabin. "You want to take action?" Just as Heidens and Affleck were about to speak, Linley's body suddenly became covered with deep azure draconic scales, and the

robe he wore exploded outward, the scraps of cloth blasting out like arrows.

The experts of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows easily blocked these scraps of cloth which had blasted everywhere.

Linley's icy draconic tail swung about behind him, humming as it ripped through the air. Linley's dark golden eyes swept the people in front of him. "If you want action, I'm ready to oblige!"

"I'm waiting as well." Barker's deep voice rang out, and at the same time, his body immediately began to transform as well, suddenly swelling in size as he expanded to three meters in height. His skin had turned green, and those green veins popping out on top of his muscles, the size of a snake, were terrifying to behold.

Those white, marble-like slabs of armor quickly appeared from his skin, covering Barker's entire body.

Supreme Warrior Saint – Undying Warrior!

"Heh heh." An insidious laugh rang out, and Zassler's hooded gaze swept the people present. "I, Zassler, ever since reaching the Saint-level, haven't had a good fight. Radiant Church…the 'kindness' you showed me in the past, I am going to 'repay' you for, right now."

"Harhar! Fighting? Can't leave me, Bebe, out of it." Bebe floated next to Linley.

The situation in the cabin had immediately gone from bad to worse.

The Holy Emperor Heidens and the Dark Patriarch Affleck glanced at each other. They had known early on that although Linley's side had four powerful experts, in terms of strength, Zassler had just reached the Saint-level and probably wouldn't be able to threaten the likes of Heidens and Affleck yet.

But Barker was an Undying Warrior Saint. He would be a bit harder to

handle.

That Bebe was no less of a threat than Barker.

But the greatest threat…was Linley. Not only was he a Dragonblood Warrior Saint, he also had a terrifying high level of understanding of the Laws. Almost all of the previous Supreme Warriors had a very low grasp of the Laws, and not a single one had reached Linley's level of understanding.

He was the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in history!

"I'll use Oracular Magic. I should be able to tie down Linley. With Fallen Leaf joining forces with me, it should be possible for us to defeat him." Heidens secretly calculated. The power of Oracular Magic wasn't something which Osenno's 'Doppelganger Technique' could match.

Heidens and Affleck understood what the other was thinking from that glance alone.

"Ha, haha." Heidens let out three laughs. By prearranged signal, Fallen Leaf and Osenno immediately made their moves.

"Bang!"

The ceiling to the ship cabin exploded, and ten shadows burst out towards the sky like arrows. The ship instantly shuddered, and the sailors below immediately jumped into the river and started swimming for the shore.

As they swam, they raised their heads up to stare at the sky.

They were the warriors of the Baruch Kingdom. They had been invited here, and they knew that one of the persons discussing matters in the cabin was the spiritual pillar of support for the entire Baruch Kingdom. Linley.

"Ah, is that, the legendary phoenix?" A sailor's mouth flapped open in astonishment.

High in the mid-air, an enormous flying creature with a wingspan of over a hundred meters had appeared, its entire body covered with fire. Black feathers covered its entire body, and its noble, crested head was covered with black feathers as well. This black flying creature appeared very noble. This was a Saint-level magical beast, the legendary 'Hellfire Phoenix'!

Hellfire Phoenix – A darkness and fire dual-element Saint-level magical beast.

In mid-air, this Hellfire Phoenix covered the boundless skies like an enormous black cloud. The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, was standing on the back of the Hellfire Phoenix, staring coldly at Linley who was standing in mid-air.

"Roaaaaar." A terrifying howl.

A massive black dragon with physical wings which was more than a hundred meters long flew over. The black colored dragon's eyes burned like coals, and it emanated a suffocating aura of power. The Dark Patriarch, Affleck, was standing on the head of this Saint-level Black Dragon.

The Cult of Shadows had hidden two Saint-level magical beasts not too far away. Both of them had now shown themselves.

As for the Radiant Church, they had a Saint-level magical beast as well.

A beautiful silver light shone off its draconic scales which covered its entire body. Under the sun, this silver dragon seemed so beautiful and graceful. Amongst dragons, Silver Dragons were often praised as the most graceful and noble of dragons, and rightfully so. But this massive, hundred meter long Silver Dragon actually had two heads.

Mutant Saint-level magical beast – Saint-level Two-Headed Silver Dragon!

Lord Fallen Leaf's skinny body was standing atop the body of this Saint-level Two-Headed Silver Dragon.

“Wow.” The sailors on the shore felt their hearts constrict tightly. Good Heavens. Three massive Saint-level magical beasts had appeared out of nowhere, and more importantly…there were so many people standing in mid-air as well.

These were all Saint-level combatants.

“So many Saints, and Saint-level magical beasts as well. Even if I die today, it will have been worth seeing this.” A sailor stared in awe at the scene and mumbled to himself.

At this moment, the feeling these sailors had when they stared at these Saint-level experts and Saint-level magical beasts was the same feeling when Linley had when he had watched those two Saints fight when he was a child. In their eyes, these massive dragons and mighty Saints were far and high above them and above all mortals.

“Look. That’s the Dragonblood Warrior, our Lord Linley.” Many sailors saw the Dragonformed Linley. Their eyes were filled with worship as they stared at him, as well as a hint of pride. They were proud to be citizens of the Baruch Kingdom.

“Lord Linley seems to be about to engage in battle with those Saints. They have so many people.” The sailors slowly began to come to their senses.

“Lord Linley will definitely win.” A sailor said firmly, his eyes filled with veneration towards Linley.

In the air above Liuyan River, Linley, Barker, Zassler, and Bebe were floating there. Zassler was currently mumbling the words to a spell, and soon, three illusionary flashes of light appeared behind Zassler, as three great Saint-level undead descended.

Two of them were skeletons, but their bones gleamed like diamonds while flashing with dazzling light. These were Saint-level Skeleton Kings! As for the other one, it was a powerful looking monstrosity dressed in a tattered long robe. It was a powerful Ancient Wight who had reached the Saint-

level.

The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows weren't worried at all. Against these Saint-level undead, the ordinary Angel Saints and Fallen Angel Saints would be enough.

"Linley, all we want to do is preach. You can still rule over the Anarchic Lands. I hope that at this moment of no return, you'll reconsider." Although he said this, Heidens had already brought a precious treasure of the Radiant Sovereign to his hands; the 'Original Scripture' which the Lord had given them.

A soft, holy light appeared in front of Heidens.

"Reconsider my ass." Bebe knew exactly how Linley was feeling.

Unifying the Anarchic Lands was a small matter. Destroying the Radiant Church, that was what mattered.

"Stop dreaming. The Anarchic Lands belongs to me. Nobody is permitted to influence it. As for you…" Linley's empty hands curled into fists. "How about you roll back to your own domains. Otherwise…we'll talk with our fists!"

Heidens and Affleck couldn't help but be enraged.

An enraged bird cry came forth from the massive Hellfire Phoenix as well, and then it spoke in the human tongue. "You detestable human." And then, a bolt of pure black flame shot out towards Linley.

"Crackle crackle." The black flames surrounded Linley.

His body faintly covered with a layer of battle-qi, Linley wasn't damaged at all. Linley's dark golden eyes stared coldly and remorselessly at these people. "You attacked me first!" As he spoke, Linley suddenly moved at high speed.

After having Dragonformed, and with the assistance of his insights into the wind, Linley's speed was now far greater than Osenno's.

There wasn't even any wind sound to be heard. Space itself seemed to twist and distort, and Linley suddenly appeared next to the Hellfire Phoenix. The Hellfire Phoenix's cart-sized eyes immediately radiated thin threads of black light at Linley.

The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, suddenly moved his six black wings and charged straight for Linley.

"Haha…" Linley let out a loud laugh. Putting the terrifying power of the Dragonblood Warriors on full display, while combining them with his understanding of the Laws, Linley's power reached a transformative crescendo….

A soft wind seemed to gently waft past those black threads.

And then, Linley thrust his hands out like knives, using the incomparably massive strength of the Dragonblood Warriors to chop down at the Hellfire Phoenix. Although this blow carried enormous force, when Linley's hand swung down, the entire nearby space seemed to be locked while at the same time folding and distorting.

Linley was nothing more than a blur.

Knowing things weren't going well, the Hellfire Phoenix let out a few bird-cries of terror, while at the same time shrinking its body, vainly hoping to flee. Simultaneously, the Six-Winged Fallen Angel, Cramerson, let out an explosive shout as he pierced the black longsword in his hands towards Linley.

"Swish!"

Linley's speed was simply too fast, especially after transforming. The Hellfire Phoenix didn't have any chance to dodge, even after it shrank in size.

With a ‘swish’ sound, the Hellfire Phoenix, already down to a size of only ten meters, had its head directly split into two halves. A Saint-level magical beast died, just like that, after a single blow from the Dragonformed Linley.

This attack was the second level of the Tempos of the Wind technique, relying on the ‘Slow’ aspect’s ‘Spatial Freezing’ concept and the ‘Fast’ aspect’s ‘Spatial Folding’ concept, combined into one.

It was the most penetrative physical attack Linley currently was capable of.

“Swiiish.” Linley’s bladed palm swung right through the skull of the Hellfire Phoenix, and then, like steel claws, grabbed one side of the skull with each claw. The terrifying strength of the Dragonblood Warriors was put on full display as he suddenly, forcefully, ripped….

“SPLATTER!”

Blood blasted everywhere like rain, as the Hellfire Phoenix’s entire body was ripped into two halves, starting from that wound in its head.

“Swish!” The sword of the Six-Winged Fallen Angel, Cramerson, seemed to pierce through the void as it stabbed at Linley, but just as it was about to land on his body, the barely-visible ‘Pulseguard Defense’ around Linley’s body easily blocked the attack. This strike didn’t even touch Linley’s scales.

At this moment, Linley’s draconic claws were still holding onto half of the Hellfire Phoenix’s corpse, its blood still dripping down into the Liuyan River.

“What?!” Cramerson was shocked. His attack hadn’t even been able to break through the ‘Pulseguard Defense’.

Linley’s dark golden eyes swung towards Cramerson, his lips curving upwards. “The next one…is you!” As he spoke, Linley let the two halves of the Saint-level Hellfire Phoenix drop from his hands. “Splash!” The corpse landed in the turbid waters of the Liuyan River.

Chapter 47 – Downfall of Many Saints

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 47: Downfall of Many Saints

The waters of Liuyan River roared. That massive corpse of the Hellfire Phoenix sank down into its waters, and the sailors above shuddered.

Raising their head up, their eyes were filled with a certain feeling as they looked at the demonic, godlike Linley – invincible, mighty!

“Lord Linley is so powerful.” The sailors were filled with awe.

Right at this moment, because Linley had killed the Hellfire Phoenix, a vicious battle exploded. The Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had begun to do battle with Linley!

“Rumble….” The frantic battle of so many Saints caused the flow of space itself to be disrupted. Wild, howling winds screamed everywhere, sand and rocks flew everywhere, and even the waters of Liuyan River rose in giant waves, as though stirred by a giant.

“What a terrifying Supreme Warrior.” Cramerson’s heart was terror-stricken. But then, a bestial roar. “Hoooooowl!”

The leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, raised his head up and roared furiously, and as he did, magic runes appeared from his forehead. His entire body began to emit insidious cold flames, and the temperature around him seemed to have dropped dramatically. In particular, his body also became covered with dark golden shining scales. This was the legendary ‘Dark Saint Armor’, very similar to the earth-style spell’s ‘Earthguard Armor’.

“No matter how loud you shout, you’ll still die.” Linley’s calm voice drifted out.

Linley’s scale-covered right hand was balled into a tight fist, and it seemed

to pass through space itself as it attacked. Whenever that fist passed…space itself rippled and folded over itself. Cramerson's black longsword, covered in cold flames, once more struck out, as fast as lightning.

The scale-covered fist and the cold, flaming black longsword intersected!

"Clang!"

A metallic ringing sound.

"Fallen Angels exist for battle. Do you think I'll fear you?" Cramerson was full of confidence, but in an instant, Cramerson's eyes, nose, lips, and ears all had blood pouring out, and his entire body collapsed from the heavens, powerless.

His body sank into the depths of the Liuyan River, and the river water carried it away.

Profound Truths of the Earth – 256 Layered Waves!

With one head-on clash, Cramerson's internal organs had been shaken into mud.

"A Six-Winged Fallen Angel wants to fight with me in close quarters combat?" Linley's dark golden eyes flashed with a hint of cold light. Linley was now a peak Dragonblood Warrior Saint. In physical strength and battle-qi alone, he was ten times stronger than ordinary Saints!

He had such a high foundation to begin with, and Linley's 'Profound Truths of the Earth' and 'Profound Truths of the Wind' were both extremely powerful close-combat attacks as well.

When one's base level of power and one's mastery of the Laws both reached a very high level, the synthesis of the two would result in not even a person like Desri, someone who was very nearly at the Deity-level, to willingly engage in close combat with a Dragonformed Linley. Fighting in close quarters combat with a Supreme Warrior who had such a high mastery

of the laws was asking for death.

“Don’t fight with him in close quarters!” Heidens shouted out loudly.

“Linley’s attacks are very strange. Everyone, be careful.” Osenno called out as well. He was currently fighting with the transformed Undying Warrior Saint, Barker.

As for the Dark Patriarch Affleck and Senior Judge O’Casey, their faces had both changed. The third pillar of their Cult, the leader of the Fallen Angels, Cramerson, had fallen, just like that. Standing atop the head of the Saint-level Black Dragon, Affleck’s hands suddenly became filled with a black crystal ball.

Affleck’s face was solemn, and his lips were moving slightly.

“Hrm?” Linley’s face changed.

“What is that?” Linley could clearly sense an invisible, insidious cold energy penetrate his body. His ‘Pulseguard Defense’ didn’t do anything against it at all, and that insidious force rapidly began to attack Linley’s brain.

Darkness style, forbidden-level spell: the Power of Evil!

This was a spell which the Dark Patriarch was only capable of utilizing with the assistance of their Cult’s treasure, the crystal ball which had come from the Divine Plane of Darkness. Once the enemy was struck by this ‘Power of Evil’, for a short period of time, their body would be totally under the control of the spell user. The duration of the control was linked with the strength of the spiritual energy of the spell user.

If it was used against a Grand Magus Saint, it might not be able to control him, but it would be enough to make the Grand Magus Saint feel dizzy and be unable to react for a moment.

Within the depths of his mind.

That boundless ocean of spiritual energy swirled. The mysterious, seven-colored gem was hovering in the midst of it. When that surge of evil power swept into the consciousness and attacked that boundless ocean of spiritual energy, that faint layer of azure light in the spiritual energy immediately counteracted.

Dark Patriarch Affleck's eyes were cold, filled with a bizarre allure as he stared at Linley.

"Go. Kill that rat-type magical beast." Affleck said softly.

"Wait. O'Casey, go kill him, quick." Affleck's face suddenly changed. Affleck could clearly sense that Linley's spiritual energy was counter-attacking. Although Linley was still affected by the spell, the Power of Evil was not able to brainwash Linley's soul at all.

O'Casey was wielding his two-meter long 'Judge's Blade'. The Judge's Blade, covered with dark, cold light, moved in a strange rhythm as it chopped down towards Linley.

The Judge's Blade collided directly onto Linley's Pulseguard Defense.

In that moment…

"Bang!" Like a bubble being broken, the 'Pulseguard Defense', no longer being actively controlled by Linley due to the effects of the 'Power of Evil' spell, was actually split open. Only when the 'Pulseguard Defense' was being actively controlled by Linley was it capable of utilizing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the Earth' and be defensively powerful.

If the 'Pulseguard Defense' was not being controlled, it only had the simplest of vibrations and wasn't extremely powerful.

However…

Linley's draconic scales were different. No matter if Linley was conscious

or not, the draconic scales were still draconic scales. A peak-stage Dragonblood Warrior Saint's scales were ridiculously defensive. In the past, the ancestors of the Baruch clan had relied on them to dominate the entire continent.

"Slash!" Like an ordinary knife chopping against marble, sparks flashed, but only a white scar appeared atop the draconic scales.

"One more chop will break through." O'Casey secretly said to himself. Just then, the Pulseguard Defense had cancelled out part of his attack. O'Casey's right hand turned into a blur, and the Judge's Blade once more came chopping down, aimed directly at the same location his earlier attack had landed.

"Crackle."

As though he had been set on fire, Linley's body suddenly once more became covered in deep azure battle-qi, and the battle-qi once more began to circulate in accordance with that mysterious, profound way. With a 'clang' sound, Linley's scale-covered hand suddenly grabbed the Judge's Blade.

Of course, there was still a thin layer of battle-qi between his hand and the Judge's Blade.

"You lost your chance." Linley's dark golden eyes stared at O'Casey.

O'Casey's face changed dramatically. "Not good!" He didn't even have a chance to pull out his Judge's Blade, and he immediately retreated backwards at high speed. As he flew back, a strange violet light flashed through the place where O'casey had just been.

This was the Bloodviolet sword! O'Casey's back was covered with cold sweat. He had nearly been chopped in half.

Linley glanced at the disposition of the battle. Right now, Bebe was currently battling that mysterious 'Lord Fallen Leaf'. Bebe wasn't able to

kill Lord Fallen Leaf at all.

In terms of understanding of the Laws of Light, the leader of the Ascetics, Lord Fallen Leaf, had the deepest understanding in the Church.

In particular, he knew how to transform his body into a line of light, then fly about at 'light speed'. He was far faster than Olivier had been in the past. Even Bebe, the fastest person on Linley's side, was only able to be on par with Lord Fallen Leaf.

"Bebe, stop wasting time with that old bastard. Go kill the Angels first." Linley immediately ordered Bebe.

"Got it, Boss." Bebe, too, had begun to feel that this old man was hard to deal with.

Fallen Leaf simply didn't engage Bebe in close quarters combat as well. He relied on his terrifying speed to move about, and then, like a spider, emit line after line of silken white light which contained a terrifying amount of flaming light power, constantly using it to entangle Bebe.

Although Bebe was fast, he wasn't able to use his speed to his advantage.

"Fighting with this old bastard is like falling into a pit of mud." Bebe secretly cursed.

"Fighting with this big bastard is nothing more than wasting time." Osenno felt resigned as well.

Barker, one of the Undying Warrior Saints famed for defense, totally ignored Osenno as he chased after those weaker Angels. Only occasionally would he launch a sudden surprise attack against Osenno. Osenno's Doppelganger Technique was simply too weird, after all. It was hard for Barker to harm Osenno as well.

But Osenno simply couldn't deal any damage to the Undying Warrior, Barker.

“Hrmph. It looks like I’ve turned into the weak link.” Zassler laughed coldly as he watched a large number of Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels charge towards him.

Those three Saint-level undead weren’t bad, but they weren’t at the level of Haydson. They were only good for dealing with these Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels. However…how could a Grand Magus Necromancer be so easy to deal with? The Wraith Call ability was only part of the arsenal of a necromancer, after all.

“Die.” The Fallen Angels and Radiant Angels’ eyes were filled with cold light. They attacked at the same time.

Zassler stood in mid-air calmly, his lips mumbling. And then, an invisible ripple burst forth from Zassler, spreading out in all directions. This invisible ripple was quite similar to the one which Desri had used to attack Lehman, or which the Saint-level Gold Dragon had used to attack Linley.

The difference was, the area was clearly much larger.

The two closest Fallen Angels and Radiant Angel felt this invisible spiritual energy suddenly charge towards them. Their bodies immediately trembled.

“Pierce!” “Pierce!” “Pierce!”

At that instant, those three Saint-level undead attacked, and pierced straight through the hearts of the two Fallen Angels and the Radiant Angel, shattering the heart to pieces. Three of the Angels died, just like that. When adding this number to the two Linley had killed at the start and the three which Bebe had killed earlier…only a single Radiant Angel was left, while three Fallen Angels remained.

Only a single person was not engaged in battle. The Holy Emperor, Heidens. Heidens was holding the Radiant Scriptures in his hands while chanting something. He had been chanting for a very long time…Linley felt a hint of worry in his heart.

“Desri and the others really are slow.” Linley muttered, while at the same time he used Bloodviolet to easily chop through a thick Icy Tentacle.

Actually, Linley had been waiting during this entire battle…because he had immediately instructed Haeru to ask Desri and the others to come. As for those three Saint-level dragons, they were hidden in the distance. Only at the most critical moment would those three Saint-level dragons join the battle.

But now…

“Roaaaaaar!” The furious roar seemed to split the heavens, and a flash of lightning pierced through the skies. With a ‘whap’ sound, a Fallen Angel which hadn’t managed to dodge in time was smashed into meat paste. Not even a Dragonformed Linley could match the Saint-level Thunder Lizard for speed, much less a Fallen Angel!

The attack of the Thunder Lizard wasn’t enough to do anything to Linley.

But to kill a Fallen Angel in one blow? More than enough.

“Big brother, leave one for me!” A deep sound rang out, and the massive draconic tail of the Tyrant Wyrm flashed, slapping the fleeing Radiant Angel into a meat paste. At this moment…the rest of the Fallen Angels died as well. It was the Thunder Lizard who had killed them.

It was simply too terrifyingly fast.

“Whoosh!” An invisible ripple suddenly attacked out of nowhere.

“Careful!” Lord Fallen Leaf called out in alarm, but it was too late. This invisible ripple quickly struck all four of Osennos, and Osenno’s dopplegangers immediately dissipated, leaving only one behind.

This attack was the ultimate attack of the Saint-level Gold Dragon – Soul Shout!

“Haha!” A loud laugh as the Undying Warrior Barker, his massive greataxe in hand, chopped straight down at Osenno. His soul dazed, Osenno was in the midst of a nightmare and was totally unable to react.

“SLASH!”

Contrary to no one’s expectations, with a single chop of the greataxe, Osenno was split in half from the top of his skull.

At this time, Heidens finally finished chanting the words to his ultimate attack. His eyes became filled with a hint of coldness, and he pointed a finger at Linley as he gently said two words: “Life…Ripper!” An invisible surge of energy suddenly surrounded Linley.

Chapter 48 – Beirut

Book 10, Baruch – Chapter 48: Beirut

Necromantic Magic. Life Magic. Oracular Magic. All of them possessed their own mysteries.

The experts of the Four Higher Planes, however, knew very well that amongst the three, Oracular Magic was the most terrifying and most unpredictable of the three. The reason for this was that its attacks were simply too bizarre. Oracular Magic, after all, came from the Overgod of Fate, one of the four Overgods.

The Laws of Fate were derived from the Overgod, and the Oracular Magic which he passed down was unimaginably profound and mysterious.

"Not good!" Desri, Hayward, and Higginson's group had finally arrived, but they heard the words which Heidens had just spoken: "Life…Ripper!"

An invisible energy suddenly enveloped Linley, and Linley suddenly froze, totally unable to move any further. This invisible, bizarre force ignored all barriers, directly striking against Linley's consciousness and his soul. The most important thing was one's soul!

If a person died, their soul could enter the Netherworld and be reborn.

But if one's soul was destroyed, then even a Sovereign wouldn't be able to save them.

The vast sea of consciousness, where that rainbow-colored semi-translucent gem swirled while surrounded by that faint azure light possessed by the Dragonblood Warriors. This invisible force struck here, and the azure light immediately caved in.

The invisible force was depleting, but the azure light was depleting as well.

The power of Oracular Magic still depended on the practitioner. If a Deity-level practitioner had cast it, Linley wouldn't have been able to resist at all.

"Bang." The azure light could no longer endure, and it shattered.

The invisible force, despite being reduced in strength by more than half, still struck against Linley's soul. The sea of spiritual energy surrounding the rainbow-colored, semi-translucent gem simply couldn't resist the profound, obscure force of the Oracular Magic. Finally, the attack made its way to that semi-translucent gem.

Rumble!

A tremor from his very soul. Even Linley's body shuddered.

"Boss." Bebe turned frantic.

That rainbow-colored half-translucent gem also had a faint layer of azure light covering it. When the invisible force attacked the 'rainbow gem', nobody noticed…the Coiling Dragon ring on Linley's finger!

A dim, virtually unnoticeable stream of light flowed out of the Coiling Dragon ring, then vanished.

At the same moment…

It seemed as though the azure blue light covering the half-translucent gem suddenly received sufficient energy.

"Shudder…"

The azure light around the gem suddenly flashed. It was as though it had transformed into an azure sun in the midst of that sea of spiritual energy, and the azure light illuminated the entire sea. Beneath the glow of that azure sun, the force of the Oracular Magic, although still resisting for a while, slowly began to melt away like evaporating ice.

The azure light remained for a long time, but then it slowly faded away.

“How is that possible?!” Heidens’ face instantly turned an ashen pale. He stared at Linley with shock. He had used all of his force on this ultimate attack, but he still hadn’t been able to kill Linley. Linley hadn’t reached the level of Grand Magus Saint yet! And it would be hard to say if even an ordinary Grand Magus Saint could take this blow.

And then, Heidens spied Desri’s group coming from afar. He knew that things had just gotten worse. “They came as well!”

“Fallen Leaf, let’s go, quick.” Not hesitating at all, Heidens transformed into a ray of white light, immediately flying at high speed towards the west. The nearby Ascetic, Lord Fallen Leaf, also transformed into a beam of white light, flying westwards at high speed.

Both Desri and Bebe had their attention focused on Linley.

They didn’t have time to pay attention to Heidens or Fallen Leaf.

“Whew.” Linley let out a breath, then opened his eyes.

Although it took a long time to describe, in truth, the power of that Oracular Magic and its attack on Linley’s soul had only lasted for one or two seconds, but in those one or two seconds, Heidens and Fallen Leaf had disappeared into the western horizon. As for Affleck and O’Casey, they had fled with their magical beasts even before Heidens had fled.

“Boss, are you okay?” Bebe flew over, worried, his beady little eyes filled with fear.

Bebe was spiritually linked with Linley. Just then, he had sensed Linley’s soul shudder. It truly had been dangerous.

“Not bad. Not bad.” Linley was still filled with fear.

In his heart, Linley was puzzled as well. “Just then, I felt that the defensive energy which belonged to us Dragonblood Warriors was broken through by the Oracular Magic’s bizarre attack. But why was it that the defensive energy suddenly increased dramatically, easily breaking the Oracular Magic?”

Linley didn’t understand the reason.

But Linley knew very well that his soul had been shaken just then.

He knew…that just then, if he hadn’t been able to block the attack somehow, his soul probably would have shattered.

“Where’d they go?” Linley swept his gaze in the four directions, but Affleck, O’Casey, Heidens, and Fallen Leaf had fled far away. There was no way they could catch up now.

Desri flew over and said apologetically, “Linley, I came late. If you had been killed by Heidens’ Oracular Magic, I really would have…” Desri felt extremely guilty. He knew exactly how terrifying Oracular Magic was.

“I was over-confident.” Linley smiled mockingly at himself.

Linley believed that his soul’s defense was very strong. With the protection of his draconic scales and his Pulseguard Defense, he had believed the enemy wouldn’t be able to do anything to him.

But just then, he had nearly lost his life.

Fortunately, at the last moment, within his soul, the protective energy belonging to the Dragonblood Warrior’s lineage had suddenly skyrocketed by over a hundredfold, dissolving even the fierce power of the Oracular Magic.

“Those four bastards ran quickly enough.” Bebe said furiously.

Barker nodded, then said in his loud voice, “Lord Linley, it seems to me

that the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows isn't all that remarkable. Osenno just died as well, and that Cramerson also died. Quite a few Angels died as well. Their force has dropped tremendously. As I see it, given our current strength, it shouldn't be hard for us to slaughter our way to the Radiant Church now."

"Right." Zassler laughed insidiously. "Lord Linley, they've already broken our original agreement. There's no need for you to hold to it any longer either."

Linley was moved.

In the past, he had been bound by the agreement that he could only go seek revenge by himself. But now, since the other side had already broken the agreement, then he could go lead his group to slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle. It wouldn't be too hard to destroy the Radiant Church.

"Linley." Desri hurriedly said. "To be fair, their two sides have indeed gone too far, and you don't need to follow the agreement any longer either. But I must try and warn you not to go attack the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church."

Linley frowned. "Mr. Desri, do you believe that in the future, if I led my little brother, Barker and his brothers, Bebe, Zassler, and the others…we wouldn't be able to destroy the Sacred Isle? Right now, on the Sacred Isle, only Heidens, Fallen Leaf, and Lehman pose a threat."

"That isn't it."

Desri shook his head. "You must understand, in the past, I belonged to the Radiant Church."

Linley listened.

Desri sighed. "The Radiant Church has endured for countless years. No matter what has happened or how great the waves or storms, the Radiant Church has never been destroyed. Do you know why?" Linley looked at

Desri, puzzled.

Indeed. There had to be a reason why they had existed for such a long time.

“First of all, the Sacred Isle is definitely protected by the magical formation, ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’. Only someone with the power of a Deity can damage and destroy this formation.” Desri said.

Linley suddenly remembered that in the past, when he had been in the city of Fenlai, he had been imprisoned in the Radiant Temple due to his attempt to kill the King of Fenlai. That Radiant Temple was protected by a magical formation called the ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’. Supposedly, even Saints wouldn’t be able to break through the walls of the Radiant Temple as a result.

This was the effect of this magic formation.

Even a Deity like Dylin had to strike it twice to break through it.

One could imagine how powerful this defense was!

“This ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’ isn’t just a magical formation; if the people inside it actively control and operate it, it can transform into an attack upon its enemies.” Desri sighed. “Linley, if you slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle, perhaps you will be able to kill many people on the Sacred Isle, but you definitely won’t be able to kill the people hiding within the Radiant Temple.”

Linley frowned.

This was true. When the Radiant Temple in Fenlai had been destroyed, he had been in the middle of the temple himself.

“Fine. They can hide on their little island, then.” Linley could only come to this decision. In his heart, Linley secretly thought to himself, “When in the future, my Profound Truths of the Wind and Profound Truths of the Earth reach their limits, perhaps I can pay a visit to the Sacred Isle and test out the

power of that ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’ magic formation.”

Currently, Linley no longer feared the Radiant Church at all.

“Barker, make the arrangements to have the corpse of the Hellfire Phoenix processed. That Saint-level magicite core can’t go to waste.” Linley laughed.

“Yes, Lord.” Barker laughed as well.

No matter what, they had won this battle. Linley’s side had fought two sides, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, but in the end, they had won an absolute, dominating victory. Even Desri’s side hadn’t had to assist them.

This battle determined the final state of affairs in the Anarchic Lands.

The warriors of the Baruch Kingdom and the rat swarms, in their combined armies, appeared everywhere, and wherever they went, cities surrendered. Even some of the most die-hard adherents of the churches, under pressure from the rat swarms, collapsed and disappeared…and the Anarchic Lands became unified at an astonishing speed.

At the same time, the news of Linley’s battle with the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows quickly spread across the world.

This news was also intentionally spread by the Baruch Kingdom. Linley’s side had defeated two other sides at once. This caused Linley’s status in the Yulan continent to skyrocket yet again, totally eclipsing that of the Holy Emperor and the Dark Patriarch. His status was so high now that it was only lower than the War God and the High Priest.

The legend of Linley was sung throughout the Yulan continent.

As for the Anarchic Lands, countless people were filled with awe towards Linley. Many youths used Linley as their role model and began to train hard.

….

The Anarchic Lands. Baruch Kingdom. The royal palace.

Plumes of snow drifted from the skies. It was December now, and only a few days away from the Yulan festival. Linley, Delia, Zassler, Sasha, the other kids, the Barker brothers, Rebecca, Leena, Jenne, and Wharton were all here.

Rebecca and Leena. Rebecca was the more playful one, and ten years ago, she had gotten married to the loud, rambunctious Gates. As for the quieter Leena, she had eventually married Barker. Of the five Barker brothers, the other three had eventually gotten married as well. Only Jenne continued to live with some of her close friends in the royal capital, but she herself remained single.

“That was too fast. How long has it been? The entire Anarchic Lands has been unified.” Wharton laughed.

“Naturally.” Taylor was very proud. “My father’s really awesome.”

Seeing how Taylor was acting, Linley began to laugh. Rubbing Taylor’s head, Linley looked at Wharton. “Wharton, remember. All religious proselytizing is to be forbidden. If you allow them to preach, in the future, your grandchildren won’t be able to manage the kingdom effectively.”

“I know. In recent days, quite a few religious believers have been causing trouble.” Wharton sighed.

Churches were a major threat to any kingdom. Now that Linley’s side had unified the entire Anarchic Lands, the Baruch Kingdom would most likely have to change its name to the Baruch Empire.

Although Linley himself didn’t care about imperial power, he had to make considerations for the descendants of his clan.

“Linley, Bebe.” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings suddenly appeared in the main hall in a flash. The people present all looked at the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, and the eldest amongst them, Harry, opened his mouth and said in human tongues, “Linley, we’ve come to invite Bebe to make a trip with us to the Forest of Darkness.”

“Invite me?” Bebe was standing on the dinner table.

“Whose invitation?” Linley asked, puzzled.

“Our father.” The third of the Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Harvey, said proudly, “The King of the Forest of Darkness. The King of the entire Yulan continent, in fact. The most invincible, powerful person there is!” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings were very proud.

The King of the Forest of Darkness? The King of the entire Yulan continent?

Linley felt secretly shocked, and wondered internally, “The King of the Forest of Darkness is the King of the entire Yulan continent? Can it be that he is even more powerful than the War God and the High Priest?”

Linley suddenly was moved and asked, “Might I ask, what is the name of your father?”

The second of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings spoke this time: “Linley, you can refer to our father as…Lord Beirut!”

“Beirut!” Linley felt thunderclaps go off in his brain.

And Bebe, as well, stared at them, his eyes round as the moon.

Chapter 1 – Founding of an Empire

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 1: Founding of an Empire

Beirut!

Linley and Bebe exchanged a glance. Linley still remembered how Bebe had told him that not long after he was born, when he still hadn't been able to open his eyes, a very warm, intimate voice had told to him…he was of the Beirut clan.

"Lord Beirut?" Bebe spoke. "Fine. I'll go with you."

Linley looked at Bebe. Bebe's normally adorable eyes were now very solemn, and held within them a hint…of excitement! Bebe had never known anything about his parentage, and when he had been able to open his eyes, he hadn't found any rat-type magical beasts nearby.

Bebe had always wondered if that warm, intimate voice had been his mother's.

Unfortunately, Bebe had never seen her. The only clue he had was those three syllables; 'Bei-Lu-Te', Beirut.

The Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, laughed. "Don't be like this. My lord father has invited Bebe to go over to meet him. It definitely isn't for any bad reasons." As he spoke, he looked at Bebe. "Bebe, let's go." The other two Violet-Gold Rat Kings also looked at Bebe.

Bebe immediately flew into the air.

"This trip of Bebe's to the Forest of Darkness will take a bit of time, most likely. Don't be in too much of a rush." The third of the Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Harvey, said.

Linley nodded, then said to Bebe, “Bebe, if anything major happens, immediately let me know.” Linley and Bebe could speak at a very long distance through their spiritual connection. Generally speaking, while Bebe was in the Forest of Darkness, he could still spiritually communicate with Linley.

“Got it, Boss.” Bebe cracked a smile.

Linley smiled encouragingly back at him.

The mystery of his parentage was something that had weighed on Bebe’s mind his entire life. Now that he had a chance of solving it, Bebe wouldn’t hesitate at all.

…..

Plumes of snow circled down onto the earth. The discussion in the royal palace was extremely animated.

“So the mysterious King of the Forest of Darkness is named Lord Beirut.” Rebecca held her hands over her heart, breathing excitedly. The five ultimate powers of the Yulan continent, the five Deities, were indeed figures of awe. The power of Deities was far greater than that of the Saints.

For example, Stehle hadn’t been able to resist even a finger-flick from Cesar.

“Father.” Taylor’s pure eyes were filled with energy as he looked at Linley. “Is that Beirut really powerful? Even more powerful than you, Father?”

Linley and Wharton both laughed.

In the eyes of his children, Linley was invincible.

“Lord Beirut…” Linley looked towards the north, as though seeing that expert who stood atop the entire Yulan continent from within his lair in the Forest of Darkness. “According to what those three Violet-Gold Rat Kings

said, Lord Beirut is most likely the most terrifyingly powerful Deity in the Yulan continent."

Linley patted Taylor's head and said lovingly, "Taylor, your father doesn't have the strength to challenge him yet."

"Then Father will definitely surpass him in the future." Taylor spoke with absolute certainty. "My father is the greatest genius in the Yulan continent, and the most powerful Dragonblood Warrior in history."

"Haha…" Linley didn't respond. He only laughed.

Linley looked at Wharton, then instructed, "Wharton, tomorrow, I plan to go to the private underground room and begin training. The founding of the Baruch Empire, I won't get involved in." The so-called private underground room was the pocket dimensional room in the core of the magicite mines.

"Big brother, you won't participate?" Wharton was very shocked.

The founding of an Empire was a major event.

"Forget it." Linley looked at Delia. Delia's mageforce and spiritual energy had been increasing at an unbelievable rate. After reaching the ninth rank as an Arch Magus, her rate of improvement had only been increasing. This sort of improvement rate was simply astonishing to Linley.

It seemed as though to Delia, there was no such thing as a bottleneck.

"Delia, I expect when the Empire is founded, the Yulan Empire will definitely send envoys over. Your parents or other people might come over as well. You should stay at the palace and wait for them."

"Fine." Delia couldn't help but think of how her parents looked.

She had left her clan only twelve years ago. The clan and Delia had reconciled long ago. Only, because the distance between the two was so vast, they rarely had a chance to meet.

This time, with the Baruch Empire being founded, her parents would most likely come.

Linley continued with his instructions. “Delia, the private underground room is over ten meters wide. I’ve already divided it into two layers. After you are finished, you can come find me. At that time, I’ll help you enter the private underground room. You and I can train together. I expect that in a few years, you’ll be able to reach the level of Grand Magus Saint, even before I do.” Linley sighed as he spoke.

Delia’s eyes held a hint of excitement in them.

Each time Linley went into seclusion for training, he would disappear for who-knows how long. Delia naturally wanted to be with Linley during that time.

“Right. I’ll definitely come looking for you at that time.” Delia hurriedly said.

The next day, Linley flew directly to the magicite mine. After the battle, the magicite miners had began to quite orderly but quite frantically resume the excavations. In a short month, sixty or seventy percent of the gems in the magicite mine had been excavated, and only a small number of deposits were left.

But of course, various major buildings were constructed around the ‘door’.

Linley walked into the tunnels, opened a stone door, and then arrived at the mysterious dimensional door. Linley’s body immediately became covered with a layer of deep azure battle-qi, which spun about him rhythmically. Linley immediately stepped inside.

“Crackle crackle.”

Terrifying knife-like blasts of energy tore at Linley, but Linley’s Pulseguard Defense was fully able to defend against them.

Stepping into the pocket dimension, Linley felt his heart become at ease. Earth, fire, water, wind. All the elemental essences seemed so close. Even the Throbbing Pulse of the Earth became so clear to him. Raising his head…he saw that translucent membrane, and saw the multicolored chaotic space outside of it.

“I’ve already reached the level of 256 layers for a long time. I hope this time, I can make a true breakthrough.” Linley immediately sat down cross-legged, beginning to meditate and to attune.

Last time, Linley had an insight, but he had only learned that from the 256 layers, he now needed to consolidate them all into a single vibrational wave. Only then would the Profound Truths of the Earth be perfected. But as to how that would be accomplished, Linley was still very uncertain.

Within that pocket dimension, the flow of time couldn’t be noticed at all.

Linley began to train in seclusion.

Yulan calendar, year 10022, December 28th. In two more days, it would be the Yulan Festival. This would be a very historically special Yulan festival, because…on this Yulan Festival, the Baruch Empire would be formally founded.

Baruch City was a hubbub of activity. Outsiders had filled Baruch City to the brim.

Ten guards were escorting a simple, unadorned carriage on the streets of Baruch City. Just by looking at those warriors of the fifth rank and higher, one would know that the people inside the carriage were no ordinary people indeed. A long time later, the carriage arrived at a hotel.

The guards immediately halted the horse.

“Madame, we are at the hotel.” The carriage driver said respectfully into the carriage.

“Understood.” A calm voice from within the carriage. A jade-white hand pulled open the carriage curtains, then stepped out. This noble lady wore violet clothes, covered by a black cloak. If Linley had been here, he would definitely recognize her…

Alice!

It had been almost twenty three years since the Apocalypse Day.

Back then, Alice had been very young. After twenty three years, she had now acquired the natural grace and elegance of a noble lady.

“Twenty three years.” Alice looked at the city, her heart filled with emotion. She knew the name of this city; Baruch City. This city had been founded based on the name of Linley’s clan. The fifth great empire of the Yulan continent would be formally founded in two days.

The name was also the Baruch Empire.

“Linley Baruch.” Alice murmured Linley’s name.

That year when she and Kalan had met with danger in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Linley had suddenly descended from the skies and saved her. That year, Linley was nothing more than a youth with potential, while she was a beautiful, carefree young girl. Kalan was the successor to a major noble clan.

Twenty three years later.

Linley had already reached a height which she couldn’t hope to approach.

Alice felt gratitude from the depths of her heart towards Linley. On the Apocalypse Day, it was Linley who had entrusted her to Director Maia, who for Linley’s sake had taken care of her and Rowling the entire time they were fleeing. Director Maia had been very kind to the two girls.

Afterwards, Alice and Rowling had become the adopted daughters Director Maia.

And then, Alice had begun helping him take care of the matters of the Proulx Gallery. Rowling wasn't good at management, but by contrast… Alice was very talented at managing the various Galleries, and so Director Maia slowly gave more and more authority to her. This time, it was Director Maia who had sent her to come to Baruch City.

The reason was…she was going to start up a new Proulx Gallery, here in Baruch City!

Generally speaking, all of the enormous cities had a Proulx Gallery present. In the future, Baruch City would become the center of the Baruch Empire (the Anarchic Lands). Naturally, they had to have a Proulx Gallery here.

"Madame?" A nearby guard reminded gently. "It is snowing outside."

"Oh."

Only now did Alice return to the present. With a calm laugh, she said, "Let's go." Alice, escorted by her guards, entered the hotel. The guards behind Alice were very respectful to her. They knew that Alice's husband had died years ago, on the Apocalypse Day.

They actually were all puzzled…

Why was it that Alice had never remarried?

Yulan calendar, year 10023. January 1st. The Baruch Empire was founded.

On this day, the envoys of each nation came, and Baruch City was full of festivities. However…at the same time, some of the experts hidden in seclusion throughout the Yulan continent were beginning to stir.

They had begun to receive orders from the various Deity-level experts.

O’Brien Empire. Outside the imperial capital. War God Mountain.

“Welcome back, Master.” Over twenty Saints were standing there respectfully, while the War God, O’Brien, landed atop the mountain, his scarlet red hair flowing like knives.

The War God O’Brien nodded slightly, then began to issue orders. “Castro.”

Castro immediately took one step forward, awaiting the War God’s order. The War God said calmly, “Immediately head to the Anarchic Lands. Inform Linley that he is to come assemble with us next year on March 3rd at War God Mountain.”

“Yes, Master.” Castro said immediately.

“Lanke.” The War God spoke again. His disciple, Lanke, immediately took one step forward. The War God ordered, “Head to that little island in the North Sea where Kefande [Ke’fan’de] lives. Inform Kefande as well that no matter what, next year on March 3rd, he must come assemble with us at my War God Mountain.”

“Yes, Master.” Lanke immediately assented.

The War God spoke yet again. “Kenyon.” Kenyon also took a step forward. The War God continued, “You head to…”

He issued orders to twelve disciples in a row, then immediately ordered ten other disciples to stay behind. These ten disciples were the most powerful of the War God’s personally taught disciples, and they included his very first disciple, Fain.

“The ten of you, make your preparations. I don’t want you to end up like your Third Brother.” The War God said calmly.

“Yes, Master!”

The ten of them responded respectfully. They knew what their master was

referring to.

“If you are afraid to die, you can choose to give up instead. There are many Saints who would be willing to accept this opportunity.” The War God said calmly, then glanced at his ten disciples. Seeing the look on their faces, the War God nodded with satisfaction, then left.

……

In an underground hall, Castro sat down. He had flown for a long time, first to Baruch City, then to here under Barker’s guidance. Castro had thought that Linley was still living at Mt. Blackraven.

“Castro, wait a moment. Let me go notify Linley.” Barker smiled as he spoke.

“Fine.” Castro was very polite.

Barker then left the hall, and in three steps, headed towards that mysterious door. Castro quite orderly sat there, not daring to investigate with his spiritual energy. After all, Barker was a Saint as well. He would easily detect any spiritual energy probing.

Barker arrived at the door.

With one step, Barker entered the pocket dimension.

Chapter 2 – Breakthrough

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 2: Breakthrough

The pocket dimension room was divided into two layers; a central layer, and a lower layer. The central layer was the original layer. Linley was currently on this layer. As for the lower layer, this was for Delia to train in.

Delia finished her training session and opened her eyes.

She stared at the chaotic space outside the membrane. The first time she had seen it, Delia had felt shocked. But now, she was used to it.

Raising her head, she looked up through the opening and saw Linley seated cross-legged in a meditative trance. Seeing Linley, Delia instantly felt her heart grow peaceful, and a calm smile appeared on her face as well. She immediately closed her eyes, then continued to muse on the profundities of magic within her sea of consciousness.

“Thrum!” “Thrum!”

The unique rhythms of the earth were sometimes like thunder, while other times like the crashing of waves. It contained boundless mysteries within it. Linley could clearly sense these two hundred and fifty six layers of waves reverberating within his consciousness.

The profoundness of the Throbbing Pulse of the World was hidden within these 256 layered waves.

However, the Throbbing Pulse of the World, born from nature itself, actually contained all of its secrets within a single vibrational pulse as well.

Linley had bitterly trained for nearly twenty years. Only then had he managed to train from the first layered wave to the 256th layered wave.

“256 layered waves can just barely express the profound mysteries of the earth. To reduce the number of waves, but to increase the profundities of the Throbbing Pulse of the World…” Linley was constantly considering this, one idea after another flashing past his mind.

None of them were correct!

Wrong!

Wrong!

All wrong!

Countless transformations and training methods appeared in his mind, but Linley rejected them all. Linley’s mind was currently in a state of focusing on nothing else besides considering, demonstrating, and then rejecting one training method after another. Perhaps some could let Linley improve in power, but Linley knew that none of them were the correct path.

“Wrong. Wrong.” Linley’s forehead was beaded with sweat, but Linley didn’t notice at all.

He didn’t know how much time had passed, or how many possibilities he had rejected.

Suddenly…

The meditating Linley’s eyebrows suddenly twitched, and then Linley suddenly rose to his feet. With a flip of his hand, the adamantine heavy sword appeared. His eyes still closed, Linley began to brandish about the adamantine heavy sword, but he wasn’t completely utilizing the Profound Truths of the Earth.

“Thrum!” A vibration which seemed to have shaken Linley’s mind to its core.

“Right. That’s how it is.” Linley suddenly opened his eyes, which were

filled with joy.

In that moment, Linley had managed to successfully fuse the profound truths contained within the first layer and the second layer into a single layer. “Combining two layers into one layer…” Linley’s eyes were filled with wild joy. “Right. One step at a time. I can’t possibly combine all 256 layered waves into a single wave all at once. First, I’ll combine two at a time. I’ll combine them all separately.”

The first wave and the second wave became one.

The third wave and the fourth wave would become one.

The 255th wave and the 256th wave would become one.

The end result would be that he would be able to exert the power of the 256 layered waves of the Profound Truths of the Earth into just 128 layered waves!

Analyzing and combining them separately would be far easier. In addition, Linley had already succeeded in merging the first wave with the second wave.

“Right. This has to be right.” Linley was very confident in his chosen path. After all, the end result of this ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ was combining the 256 layers of waves into a single wave. Thus…any two waves should be fuse-able as well. Only, it would still be difficult.

With the successful test case of fusing the first and the second waves, however, Linley now had confidence in this method.

Each and every single wave contained with it a different aspect of the profound mysteries. Every single fusion attempt required Linley to spend an enormous amount of time and effort guessing, testing, and evaluating.

“Lord Linley!” As Linley was pondering his next move, he suddenly heard a familiar voice.

Linley opened his eyes. It was Barker. In the room below, Delia awakened as well, and she leapt onto the central level. After all, the distance between the two was only two or so meters. Given Delia's current level of power, she could easily leap that distance.

"Barker, why are you here?" Delia grinned at him.

Linley allowed his mind to temporarily rest for a while. He had thought for a long time and tested for a long time. By now, Linley had already successfully fused the third and the fourth waves. What Linley now needed to do was to continue…until he fused the 255th and the 256th waves.

At that time, the 256 Layered Waves of the Profound Truths of the Earth would be simplified to the 128 Layered Waves of the Profound Truths of the Earth. Linley expected that his power would instantly rise multiple times.

"It is already so hard to fuse two waves into one. To continue down this path and further fuse the 128 waves into 64 waves will most likely be far more difficult."

This sort of fusion, to describe it in a rather crude way, was like fitting something into a box. If you had four boxes, and you wanted to put the items in two of the boxes into one box, although it would be hard, it was doable.

One could put the items in those four boxes into just two of the boxes.

But if you then wanted to squeeze the items in those two boxes into just one of the boxes…it would be at least ten times harder than what you had done previously!

This sort of difficulty rise was exponential!

This wasn't something you could accomplish just by thinking about it. It required an extremely high level of comprehension regarding the

‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and repeated attempts and repeated tests.

“Barker, what happened?” Linley asked.

“Lord Linley, Castro of the War God’s College is currently outside. He came at the orders of the War God to find you.” Barker immediately said. Hearing the words ‘War God’, Linley couldn’t help but raise an eyebrow, then immediately stood up. “Come, let’s go outside and take a look.”

Resting his hand on Delia’s shoulders, Linley immediately covered both his body and Delia’s with that layer of deep azure battle-qi, circulating it according to that unique rhythm.

“Crackle crackle.”

As they walked past the door, Linley took a few turns, and then arrived at the underground meeting hall. Castro was currently there waiting quietly with eyes closed. Hearing Linley’s footsteps, Castro immediately opened his eyes and stood up.

As soon as he saw Linley, Castro immediately revealed a smile on his face, while he was secretly shocked. “Linley is far more reserved and disciplined than he was last time at the imperial capital. No wonder Senior Apprentice said that Linley was on par with him now.”

“Castro, we haven’t met in years. Please, sit.” Linley smiled as he sat down.

Castro’s smile grew wider. “It has been years indeed. These past few years, I haven’t changed much, but you, Linley. Not only has your personal power improved dramatically, you’ve even gotten married and had children. I saw your two children in Baruch City. That Taylor was especially cute.”

Hearing others praise his children, Linley naturally felt quite happy.

Delia laughed as well. “Mr. Castro, what is the purpose of this visit?”

Castro laughed as well. “This time, I have come at the order of Master. I

have come to deliver some news to Linley."

"What news?" Linley was puzzled.

"Next year, March 3rd, Linley, you must make haste to War God Mountain." Castro instructed.

Linley, Barker, and Delia glanced at each other, their hearts puzzled. Linley spoke. "Castro, can you tell me why the War God is asking me to head to War God Mountain next year, on March 3rd? What is this about?"

"Umm…" Castro hesitated a moment.

"Is there a secret involved?" Linley guessed.

Castro nodded. Linley's heart suddenly moved. The War God had previously told Linley that within the Yulan continent, there was something known as the Necropolis of the Gods, and this Necropolis of the Gods had many precious treasures left behind by fallen Deities, such as…divine sparks!

"Can you speak more clearly?" Linley asked, and then he explained, "Barker is also a Saint-level expert, and my wife is an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. She'll reach the Grand Magus Saint level soon. There's no need to hide anything."

"Then…fine."

Castro paused, then nodded. "This time, Master has instructed you to go to him, most likely in order to prepare to head to the Necropolis of the Gods together. The reason I say this is because before I came, Master had a special conversation with ten of my more senior fellow apprentices, most of whom have been training for more than three thousand years."

"The Necropolis of the Gods?" Delia and Barker let out surprised cries.

Delia had heard Linley speak of the Necropolis of the Gods before. They

were husband and wife, after all. Linley never held anything back from Delia.

“Are you saying that those ten personal disciples of the War God’s College will be heading to the Necropolis of the Gods?” Linley asked.

“You’ll know next year, so there’s no need for me to hide anything. Our War God’s College is indeed sending ten personal disciples over.” Castro’s face grew solemn. “But Linley, entering the Necropolis of the Gods is extremely dangerous. Just because you are strong, doesn’t mean you’ll necessarily survive.”

“Oh?” Linley frowned, a bit puzzled.

Castro explained, “Master only chose his ten most powerful disciples. You should have guessed this. The Necropolis of the Gods is a place which will easily kill most Saints who go there. Only upon reaching a certain level would one have hope of surviving.”

“But if you are strong but have terrible luck, then you still might lose your life.” Castro laughed bitterly. “In the history of the War God’s College, several experts died in there, such as our Third Brother. In the past, his level of power was equal to that of the Senior Apprentice, but he still died in the Necropolis of the Gods.”

Linley nodded slightly.

The people of the War God’s College had undoubtedly entered the Necropolis of the Gods multiple times. They were fairly experienced.

“Very dangerous?” Delia asked, feeling a bit worried. She knew that Linley would most likely enter the Necropolis of the Gods.

Castro nodded seriously. “It is. Master has said that if one rashly charges about in the Necropolis of the Gods, even someone like Master will fall, much less a Saint. Thus, in the Necropolis of the Gods, one needs strength, one needs caution, and of course…one needs a bit of luck.”

Castro suddenly laughed. “But you don’t need to worry. I only heard of these things from my other fellow apprentices. I’m not too clear myself. It probably isn’t too dangerous. After all, the Senior Apprentice has been in the Necropolis of the Gods four times now, but he’s still alive, right?”

Delia was gripping Linley’s hands, afraid.

Feeling the warmth coming from Delia’s hand, Linley felt a warm sensation in his heart as well. He immediately consoled her, “Delia, it is fine. I specialize in defense, and I’m also very fast. In addition…the path of training isn’t a path for constantly cowering and hiding.”

Linley’s heart was filled with anticipation towards the Necropolis of the Gods.

Five thousand years ago, when the experts from other planes descended here, the Four Supreme Warriors had suddenly been born…what was the reason for this?

“Alright.” Delia obediently assented.

“Castro, can I go?” Barker’s voice suddenly rang out. “The first Undying Warrior, the founder of the Armand clan, also experienced those sudden, transformative upheavals five thousand years ago. I, too, wish to enter the Necropolis of the Gods.”

“This…will be very difficult.” Castro shook his head. “Each time, there are a fixed number of slots available for one to enter the Necropolis of the Gods. Master has a limited number of slots. The ten fellow apprentices, twelve other experts training in seclusion who are relying on Master… twenty two in total.”

Linley said comfortingly towards Barker, “Barker, don’t be impatient. I’ll ask when the time comes.”

Castro laughed, then rose to his feet. “Linley, since I’ve delivered the

message, I'll go back now." Seeing Linley was about to try and convince him to stay longer, Castro hurriedly said, "No need. Master is still waiting for me to go back and report on this mission."

"Then I won't force you to stay. We'll meet again next year, at War God Mountain." Linley stood up to send the guest away.

After Castro left, Linley, Barker, and Delia all began discussing the Necropolis of the Gods.

"I absolutely must go to the Necropolis of the Gods. If I can obtain a divine spark, even if I don't use it, I can give it to Wharton or to Delia. That would be wonderful." Linley laughed calmly. "Even if I cannot acquire a divine spark, perhaps I'll be able to acquire some other precious treasures. And I have this strange feeling…that the Necropolis of the Gods is a place I must go to."

Linley had the feeling that something there was calling to him.

"Hrm? Bebe's finally back." Linley's eyes lit up. Bebe had gone to the Forest of Darkness to understand his heritage. So what was his heritage, exactly?

Chapter 3 – Bebe's Heritage

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 3: Bebe's Heritage

In the air above the boundless Forest of Darkness, a black shadow was streaking through the skies at high speed, disappearing into the horizon.

Bebe's little eyes were filled with grief and rage.

"I will make them die!" Bebe ground his fangs, but first, Bebe flew in the direction to where Linley was training in seclusion.

"Swish!" It was a bright day. Although there were soldiers on guard, a blurred shadow suddenly flashed past them, entering the underground tunnels. Those soldiers didn't even notice that a magical beast had entered the hidden area.

Within the main hall of the underground tunnels.

Barker had already left. Linley and Delia weren't in a hurry to return to their training, as they quietly waited for Bebe to arrive first.

"Boss." Sobs in his voice, Bebe threw himself into Linley's arms.

"What is it, Bebe?" Linley and Delia both felt shocked.

In Linley's arms, Bebe raised his little head, staring at Linley with his emotional eyes. "Boss, my father and mother are both dead already. Wuuuuuu." Bebe had been wondering about them this entire time, but alas, this was the result.

"What happened? Speak clearly." Linley said hurriedly. "Don't cry."

Linley could sense that Bebe seemed to still have the mental age of a youngster. He was far from being an adult of whatever race he was.

Bebe nodded. “I already met Grandpa Beirut. Grandpa Beirut told me that my father was a Stoneater Rat, and my mother was a Shadowmouse. They were both very powerful, both at the ninth rank. But they were killed by someone. That person killed my parents.”

“Who killed them?” Linley was puzzled.

“The Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon. And the earth-style Grand Magus Saint, Rudi.” Bebe ground his fangs as he spoke.

Linley was stunned.

He immediately thought back to the battle between Saints which occurred at Wushan township when he was eight. Linley clearly remembered hearing those two Saints angrily shout at each other. The Warrior Saint was Dillon! And the Grand Magus Saint was Rudi.

“They killed your parents?” Linley pondered for a moment.

Because of that battle, Linley had actually been injured in the head as he was protecting his little brother Wharton. Blood had flowed onto the Coiling Dragon ring, thus allowing Grandpa Doehring to come out of the Coiling Dragon ring. Only then had he embarked on the path of a magus. After training for nearly half a year, he had discovered Bebe within one of the abandoned courtyards of his residence.

“Half a year…right. Given Bebe’s growing speed, half a year after being born, he probably would’ve developed from an infant size to the size he was when I first saw him.”

In terms of time or location, it all fit.

Linley had been puzzled at the time. Why had two Saints come to do battle at Wushan township? Now, it seemed, the truth was it had something to do with Bebe’s parents.

“Why did they kill your parents?” Linley asked.

Bebe didn’t answer directly. “Boss, the Forest of Darkness is the lair for all rat-type magical beasts. Although the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts has many rat-type magical beasts, it can’t compare to the number in the Forest of Darkness.” Linley nodded inwardly when he heard this. Rat-type magical beasts were highly adept at reproducing in large numbers.

Wherever magical beasts congregated, there would be rat swarms as well.

“Although it doesn’t have that many, there’s still over ten million of them.” Bebe said. Even just a part of the total number in the Forest of Darkness reached the hundreds of millions, while the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts only had ten million. The difference was plain to see.

Bebe continued, “In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, there aren’t any Saint-level rats. The leader of those ten million rats were my parents, a Stoneater Rat and a Shadowmouse of the ninth rank.”

Linley and Delia both understood.

It made sense for there to be roughly a single pair of rats of the ninth rank, amongst a swarm of ten million.

“The Stellar Sword Saint Dillon and that Grand Magus Saint Rudi both wanted to tame magical beasts for themselves. The Stellar Sword Saint Dillon discovered my parents, and thus wanted to tame them. After all, taming them meant taming a swarm of ten million rats.” Bebe’s eyes were burning with hate.

Linley, on the other hand, understood how Dillon had felt.

A rat swarm of ten million rats could match an army of millions of soldiers in power. Although a Black Dragon of the ninth rank was technically equal in rank to a Stoneater Rat or a Shadowmouse of the ninth rank, most likely most experts would rather choose the Stoneater Rat or the Shadowmouse as their tamed companions.

“Unfortunately, my mother was pregnant at the time.” Bebe ground his fangs. “Rat Kings are very proud. My father, relying on his tough defense, went to block the Stellar Sword Saint Dillon and allow my mother to flee.”

The defense of Stoneater Rats was quite terrifying. One of the ninth rank would be hard for even an average Saint to kill.

“My father was a Rat King. Naturally, the Stellar Sword Saint wanted to tame him, and so my father and him began to fight. But my father refused to submit, and kept on fighting with him…but in the end, my father was killed by the Stellar Sword Saint.” Bebe sobbed.

One could imagine how arrogant and proud a Rat King who commanded a rat swarm was.

He had delayed as long as he could, to allow Bebe’s mother time to flee.

“Shadowmice are famous for their speed. My mother was a Shadowmouse of the ninth rank, and she was very fast. Even though she was pregnant, she managed to flee out of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts while my father fought with Dillon and fled to the west, eventually arriving at Wushan township.”

Linley now understood.

“My mother was perhaps afraid that I would be attacked, so she utilized the mageforce in her body to give birth to me prematurely.” Bebe’s eyes were welling with tears. “Grandpa Beirut said that when we ‘Godeater Rats’ were born in the normal course of things, I should have had the power of a magical beast of the sixth or seventh rank upon being born.”

Linley was puzzled.

Godeater Rat?

What type of race was this? Was this Bebe’s race?

But seeing the mental state Bebe was in, Linley didn't interrupt him, saving the question for later.

"After giving birth to me prematurely, my mother's body was internally wounded. In that sort of situation, my mother instructed me to stay in that ruined courtyard and not to run around. As an infant, nobody knew anything about me, so I was to just eat rocks there and quietly grow up."

"My mother told me that she was of the Beirut clan, and that I was also a member of the Beirut clan."

Bebe was torn between rage and grief. "For the sake of not letting me come to harm, she left me there, then continued to flee to the west. But unfortunately…at that time, she ran into the Grand Magus Saint, Rudi. Rudi naturally chased after my mother as well, planning to take her as his own magical beast companion."

Linley could completely imagine what that scene had been like.

"My mother was a Shadowmouse of the ninth rank, but having just given birth to me, her power had dropped dramatically. She ran east as fast as she could, but at that time, Dillon arrived as well. Dillon, being a warrior, was able to rely on certain speed techniques to seize my mother." Bebe grew agitated and angry. "And then, that Dillon and Rudi, for the sake of fighting over who the Shadowmouse of the ninth rank belonged to, began to battle."

Linley completely understood now.

The Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon, had captured the Shadowmouse, but Rudi had wanted to take it from him. The two Saints battled in the eastern skies above Wushan township, which had been a catastrophe to the people of Wushan township. Even Wharton had nearly been crushed to death, but fortunately, Linley had protected him.

And Linley had been fortunate enough to have the Coiling Dragon ring be blood-bound to him as a result.

“Right.” Linley still recalled how, in his youth, he had heard the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon, shout angrily, “Rudi, if I can’t have it, then you won’t either!”

And then, Dillon’s hands had suddenly glowed with light, and the sound of a terrifying explosion had rocked the world.

“Right. Shadowmice are physically small. In battle, they can enlarge themselves slightly, but normally, they are like Bebe, roughly twenty centimeters or so, the size of a palm.” Linley knew the complete truth now.

At the time, Bebe’s mother had been in Dillon’s palm. But at that time, Dillon was over a kilometer away from Linley. Linley couldn’t even make out Dillon’s figure, much less what Dillon was holding in his hands.

Shadowmice were famed for their speed and their attack, but their defense wasn’t all that powerful, far weaker than Stoneater Rats.

When the Saint-level Dillon had exploded forth his battle-qi, a Shadowmouse of the ninth rank who had been weakened dramatically by childbirth had of course been easily killed.

“So the truth comes out!”

Linley understood everything now. He knew why those two Saints had come to the eastern skies of Wushan township to do battle. At the time, when Dillon had angrily shouted, “Rudi, if I can’t have it, you can’t either!” He was referring to Bebe’s mother.

Half a year after that battle…

Linley had encountered Bebe.

And then, the legendary adventures of Linley and Bebe had begun.

“No wonder. No wonder.” Linley now also understood why Bebe said his

enemies were Rudi and Dillon. If it wasn't for Dillon, Bebe's father wouldn't have died. And if it hadn't been for Rudi…perhaps Bebe's mother wouldn't have been forced to her death as well.

Linley looked at Bebe.

Bebe's eyes were filled with tears. He furiously said, "Those two bastards, I'll definitely kill them!"

"Hrm?" Linley suddenly was filled with all sorts of questions.

Bebe's father was a Stoneater Rat of the ninth rank, while his mother was a Shadowmouse of the ninth rank. Why was Bebe so powerful? Bebe didn't seem like a Stoneater Rat or a Shadowmouse. He had easily reached an extremely high level of power, and he was continuing to grow stronger.

In addition…

Only Dillon and Rudi should have known what happened back then, as well as Bebe's dead parents.

But how was it that upon returning from the Forest of Darkness, Bebe knew all this? How did that Deity in the Forest of Darkness know all of these things? Could it be that the spiritual power of the Deity was so great that it could even stretch over ten thousand kilometers, from the Forest of Darkness to Wushan township?

Even if it could…

Could it be that a Deity was able to maintain such a dispersal of spiritual power for so long? If he had discovered this at that time, why hadn't he saved Bebe's parents?

"Bebe, how did you learn this?" Linley immediately asked. Delia was looking at Bebe in puzzlement as well.

"Grandpa Beirut told me." Bebe replied.

Linley asked questioningly, “This Lord Beirut…even though he is a Deity, he shouldn’t have the ability to look into the past. How did he know about this? And it seems he knows all the details.”

Bebe explained, “Boss, it’s like this. After Grandpa Beirut discovered me, he sent the Violet-Gold Rat Kings to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. First, they questioned the members of the rat swarm, and then Grandpa Beirut personally scanned the memories of Dillon and Rudi.”

“What?!” Linley and Delia both let out cries of shock.

Memory?!

A Grand Magus Saint like Zassler was able to read memories, true, but after doing so, the affected person’s soul would be destroyed and he would die. However…the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon, was perfectly well and alive. He had even been beaten by Olivier years later.

In addition, if Dillon and Rudi had died, that would have been a major event. Linley definitely would’ve heard about this.

“Grandpa Beirut is very powerful.” Bebe explained. “He said that anyone not at the Deity level wouldn’t be able to hide any of memories in front of him. Even Saints would have their memories read without them knowing about it at all.”

Linley didn’t dare believe it.

This…this was too terrifying!

Even Saints wouldn’t be able to notice? Linley absolutely refused to believe a Demigod was capable of such a power.

“Grandpa Beirut is the number one expert of the entire Yulan continent plane.” Bebe explained. “The absolute, unquestioned number one expert. Even the War God and the High Priest have to listen to Grandpa. Even that

Planar Overseer, Hodan, doesn't dare to offend Grandpa Beirut."

"Grandpa Beirut is the true King of the plane of the Yulan continent." Bebe continued.

Linley and Delia exchanged a glance. Linley suddenly remembered the words that the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings had said to Bebe when they had invited him to come with them. They had also said the same thing. Lord Beirut was the King of the Yulan continent!

"Grandpa Beirut was the very first Godeater Rat in all the planes of the universe! Even the very name, 'Godeater Rat' was chosen by Grandpa Beirut himself." Bebe said proudly. "And I, in the countless planes of the universe, I am the second Godeater Rat!"

Chapter 4 – Deity Level Magical Beast

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 4: Deity Level Magical Beast

“Godeater Rat?” Linley and Delia glanced at each other.

The number one expert of the Yulan continent, Beirut, was actually a ‘Godeater Rat’. Just from the name, Linley knew that this had to be an extremely terrifying type of creature. ‘Godeater’. How would a common magical beast dare to name himself something like this? Linley gazed questioningly at Bebe.

Delia asked questioningly as well. “Bebe, your father and mother were magical beasts of the ninth rank, right? This…what is going on?”

“Boss, this is somewhat like your Dragonblood Warrior clan, but of course there are differences.” Bebe explained in detail. “After Grandpa Beirut was born, because he was the only Godeater Rat in existence, him and Grandma Carolina [Ka’lai’luo’na] had three children. Harry, Hart, and Harvey, the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings.”

Linley memorized the name, ‘Carolina’.

“Because Grandma Carolina herself wasn’t a Godeater Rat, the children she had with Grandpa Beirut naturally weren’t pure Godeater Rats either. Thus, their level became lower. Normally, Violet-Gold Rat Kings, upon reaching the age of maturity, would be Saint-level magical beasts.” Bebe explained.

“Their level became lower?” Linley asked. “Bebe, so you mean to say…?”

Delia was very smart as well. She also knew what Bebe was implying.

His eyes filled with arrogance, he said, “Right, Godeater Rats are Deity-level magical Beasts! Even without engaging in any training at all, just through natural growth…upon reaching adulthood, Godeater Rats will

naturally reach the Deity-level!"

"Deity-level magical beast?" Linley was stunned.

This was too monstrous!

Even more monstrous than the Four Supreme Warriors. The Four Supreme Warriors could reach the peak of the Saint-level so long as they trained, true. And Saint-level magical beasts, upon reaching adulthood, would reach the Saint-level as well.

But Deity-level magical beasts would become Deities upon reaching adulthood!

"This is too unfair to other races. How can other races possibly contend?" Linley sighed repeatedly in his heart. They really lived up to the name of 'Godeater Rats'. They reached the Deity-level at adulthood? They really were blessed by the heavens.

Bebe shook his head. "Grandpa Beirut said that there is no way Deity-level magical beasts can form an entire race. Generally speaking, each Deity-level magical beast is the only one of its kind! Because Grandpa Beirut was the only one of his kind, he couldn't possibly find another female Godeater Rat to be his wife."

"His children's bloodline was impure. They could only become Saint-level Violet-Gold Rat Kings."

"And all three of the Violet-Gold Rat Kings were male, so their children's bloodline was even less pure, only able to reach the level of magical beast of the ninth rank. In the Forest of Darkness, however, there are quite a few female rats of the ninth rank. As they mated, many of their children would naturally be able to reach the ninth rank as well. My mother was also a member of the Beirut clan, only she came ten generations after Harry, Hart, and Harvey." Bebe didn't seem to speak of Harry and the other two as his ancestors.

Indeed, in reality, Harry and the others were many generations above Bebe. But Bebe himself was a Godeater Rat. Aside from Beirut, the only Godeater Rat in existence.

Linley nodded.

“As for me being a Godeater Rat,” Bebe said innocently, “According to what Grandpa Beirut said, my mother carried a bit of the Beirut lineage to begin with, and then mated with a Stoneater Rat of the ninth rank. Perhaps there was some sort of mutation or throwback.”

“After all, many rats of the ninth rank had mated with each other, but it seems as though aside from myself, none of them have become Godeater Rats.” Bebe said innocently. “Not just in the Yulan continent, mind. In all of the countless planes which Grandpa Beirut has gone to.”

“Countless planes?” Linley and Delia exchanged glances.

Lord Beirut was simply too terrifying.

Based on his conversation with Hodan, Linley knew that it was extremely hard for one to return upon departing to the Higher Planes. But from what Bebe was telling him, it sounded as though Beirut had not only left the Yulan continent, he had also gone to many other planes.

“No wonder he is reputed to be the King of the Yulan continent, and why even the War God and the High Priest must obey his orders.” Linley secretly thought to himself. “What level of expert is he? A full God? Or perhaps even…a Highgod?”

Advancing from the Demigod level to the God level was something which the High Priest had been unable to accomplish despite training for ten thousand years. One could imagine how hard it was.

As for advancing from being a full God to a Highgod, the difficult was even greater.

“The chances of being born as a Deity-level magical beast is far lower than even that of becoming a Supreme Warrior.” Linley sighed. “Although Supreme Warriors only occur rarely in our lineage, they’ll still occasionally be born. But Godeater Rats…in all the planes your Grandpa Beirut has visited, he has seen no Godeater Rats aside from you and Lord Beirut himself.”

Linley and Delia both sighed.

Deity-level magical beasts were far rarer than Saint-level magical beasts.

But it made sense. If Deity-level magical beasts reproduced so easily, then no other races would be able to survive.

“Each Deity-level magical beast is generally the only one of its kind, such as that King of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, Dylin. He’s also a Deity-level magical beast.” Bebe said.

“Dylin?” Linley and Delia couldn’t help but grow curious.

To this very day, Linley didn’t know that it was he himself who had released Dylin.

Bebe nodded. “Dylin is also a Deity-level magical beast. He is known as the ‘Suanni Lion’, and is also known as the ‘Heaven Devouring Beast’”.

One was named ‘Godeater Rat’, the other a ‘Heaven Devouring Beast’. These names were all too terrifying.

”Grandpa Beirut said that Dylin is very powerful, and can easily swallow an entire mountain or an entire city with a single gulp.” Bebe sighed. “But just like us Godeater Rats, he isn’t able to find another ‘Heaven Devouring Beast’. He has children of his own. He originally had five of them, and all of them, like Violet-Gold Rat Kings, are peak Saint-level magical beasts.”

Linley and Delia both understood.

The children of Deity-level magical beasts were impure in blood, and so their strength was lower. But despite their strength being lower, they were still the cream of the crop amongst Saint-level magical beasts.

“Those five children are known as the ‘Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions’. Their bodies are very similar to lions, but their bodies are as enormous as titanic dragons, and they have six eyes and a pair of massive wings.” Bebe sighed. “Although those Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions aren’t as terrifying as the Deity-level ‘Heaven Devouring Beast’, they still can store an enormous amount of things in their stomachs. Despite being the size of a dragon, they can easily swallow over a hundred giant dragons.”

Linley and Delia were secretly shocked.

Although the descendants of Deity-level magical beasts couldn’t compare to their ancestors, they still couldn’t be underestimated.

When Linley had drawn forth Bloodviolet and released Dylin and his three children, he didn’t know…that those three children were the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. Afterwards, those three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions really had swallowed over a hundred giant dragons into their stomachs in the blink of an eye, there in the Foggy Gulch.

Clearly, this was something they inherited from their father.

“Six-Eyed Golden Lions are Saint-level magical beasts, but their children are only magical beasts of the ninth rank. Boss, you should know about them. Guardian Ni-Lions, of the ninth rank.”

Linley immediately nodded.

Guardian Ni-Lions, ninth ranked magical beasts with extremely powerful attacks and which looked very similar to normal lions, only their body was the size of a dragon.

“Guardian Ni-Lions are extremely rare. They might mate with tiger-type magical beasts or lion-type magical beasts. Thus, their own descendants

would be the likes of Goldmane Mastiffs or Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs, two magical beast races of the eighth rank." Bebe clearly was very familiar with the mutations and changes of these various magical beast races.

Linley now understood.

At the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the first time Linley had activated the baleful aura of Bloodviolet, he had slaughtered an entire clan of Goldmane Mastiffs.

"I didn't expect that the magical beast races have such interesting history." Delia was quite intrigued as she listened. "If you follow their ancestry, it would seem as though Goldmane Mastiffs and Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs can trace their heritage back to this Deity-level magical beast, the 'Suanni Lion'."

"Are you saying that Dylin, long ago, had come to the Yulan continent before?" Linley suddenly realized what the implications were.

In the past, the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had no Deity-level experts.

In other words, at least within the past thousand years, Dylin had not been present. But if Dylin had never been in the Yulan continent, how could it be said that Guardian Ni-Lions, Goldmane Mastiffs, and Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs were his descendants?

"Right. According to what Grandpa Beirut said, ten thousand years ago, Dylin had come to our Yulan continent." Bebe explained. "These Goldmane Mastiffs, Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs, and Guardian Ni-Lions can all be considered his descendants." Bebe laughed as well.

Actually, it was the same for him. Didn't the large number of descendants of the Godeater Rat eventually devolve into Stoneater Rats and Shadowmice?

"But according to what Grandpa Beirut said, in the past, Dylin had five

children. It seemed as though two of them died in the Gebados Prison. Only three are left now." Bebe said.

Linley nodded slightly.

Linley didn't know much about the history of the Yulan continent, especially from five thousand years ago. And this…this was ten thousand years ago. There were very few books containing records regarding what happened ten thousand years ago. What had happened back then? Nobody really knew.

After all, most books started from the founding of the Yulan calendar and Empire. Most started from Yulan calendar, year one.

"Bebe, doesn't this mean that in the future, you will easily reach the Deity-level?" Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe, and Bebe's eyes shone with a rare flash of pride, but then his eyes quickly dimmed. "No matter how powerful I am, my parents are still dead."

Bebe looked at Linley, then said seriously, "Boss, keep training. I'm going to make a trip." As he spoke, he immediately flew out.

"Bebe, where are you going?" Linley immediately asked.

"I'm going to kill those two bastards." Bebe's voice echoed within the hall, but Bebe himself had disappeared.

Linley let out a sigh.

Linley wouldn't say anything about Bebe going to kill Rudi and Dylin. After all, he too would seek revenge on someone who had killed his parents.

"Now all is made clear." Linley sighed in his heart. In the past, the War God had treated him so kindly, and even helping him out in the matter of his little brother's marriage. When the Baruch Kingdom was founded, even Rosarie of the Frost Goddess Shrine had come, and even the High Priest

had sent his disciples over.

Linley didn't have a relationship with any of those hidden powers, but they all sent people.

"They weren't giving me face. They were giving Bebe face. They were giving face to the King of the Yulan continent." Linley knew very well that no matter how strong he was, and how powerful his ancestors had been, and even if his Dragonblood Warrior ancestors had become Deities in the Infernal Realm…so what? What impact would any of those things have on the War God and the High Priest, here in the Yulan continent?

As the saying goes, Heaven is far above you, and the Emperor is far away. What happened nearby was what mattered.

In the plane of the Yulan continent, even the War God, High Priest, Dylin, and the others all had to listen to Beirut. Bebe had said that even the Planar Overseer from the Infernal Realm, 'Hodan', had to be obedient and orderly in front of Lord Beirut.

One could imagine how much authority Lord Beirut had.

"What's his is his. As for myself, I need to work hard." Linley didn't want to rely on anyone else.

"Come, Delia. Let's return to the training room." Holding Delia by the hand, Linley smiled as he spoke. Delia smiled as well, and the two left the hall, quickly returning to that planar door. They returned to the life of training which belonged to them.

But even as he began training again, Linley still felt questions in his mind.

Hodan was the Planar Overseer who had come from the Infernal Realm, and he definitely had to have a powerful source of support and backing from the Higher Plane of the Infernal Realm. Why was it that even Hodan had to be obedient in front of Lord Beirut? What level of expert was this Lord Beirut, exactly?

A full God? Or perhaps a Highgod?

Linley didn't even dare to consider the possibility that he was a Sovereign. For example, there were only seven Sovereigns of Darkness. In all the countless planes of the universe, there were only seven of them! Only when one died would another be born. In trillions of years, there might not be a single new Sovereign throughout the universe. And what's more, in the Higher Planes, there was another bit of common knowledge…

Sovereigns were not able to enter common, materials planes. Their power alone would cause any material planes to rip apart and collapse!

Chapter 5 – Bebe's Revenge

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 5: Bebe's Revenge

Moller township, despite being just a township, had status that was almost on par with most prefectural cities, because the thousands of residents of Moller township all belonged to one clan. This clan, centuries ago, was a very ordinary one, but after producing the earth-style Grand Magus Saint, Rudi, the entire clan's status had skyrocketed.

However…

Right now, the central building in the township had collapsed, and the corpse of an enormous Black Dragon of the ninth rank lay there, coiled in the middle of the debris. A hole had been drilled through the head of this Black Dragon. Right now, all the residents of this township were staring with terror at the scene playing out in mid-air.

The, to them, incomparably exalted Grand Magus Saint, Rudi, was being absolutely trampled by a black rat-type creature, without any chance of fighting back.

Rudi's clothes were tattered, and his Sacred Earthguard Armor had been ripped apart early on by eighteen successive lightning-fast claw attacks from Bebe. Bebe's raw attack power was actually a bit higher than even that of Linley's, and in twelve years, he had gained some insights into the Laws as well.

Those eighteen successive claws was the technique which Bebe was most skilled at.

Even something as powerful as a Saint-level Earthguard Armor had been broken through.

"If you want to kill me, then kill me. Why are you doing this? Did Linley

order you to come?" Rudi roared with fury and grief. He had heard that Linley possessed a Saint-level rat-type magical beast with black fur. He didn't expect that he and Linley actually had enmity between them!

But the only reply he got was another claw. "Ah!" Rudi's entire body spasmed in agony, and yet another large chunk of flesh and blood was ripped from his body. Even his face had Bebe's claw marks on it.

Bebe's attacks were very precise. He wasn't trying to kill Rudi at all.

"You ask me why?" Bebe's beady little black eyes were blazing with unquenchable flames of rage. "Do you still remember, thirty years ago, you and Dillon fighting over that Shadowmouse of the ninth rank?"

Rudi immediately thought back to that past event. This entire time, he had been quite unhappy about it. Dillon had actually killed that Shadowmouse of the ninth rank. Rudi instantly understood…that this Saint-level magical beast had surely come to avenge that Shadowmouse.

"The one who killed the Shadowmouse wasn't me, it was Dillon." Rudi hurriedly said. He suddenly felt that he had a chance at life.

In front of Bebe, Rudi didn't have any ability to fight back at all. As soon as Bebe saw Rudi begin to chant a magic spell or the nearby elemental essence begin to move, Bebe would immediately give him a slap with the paw on the mouth. And given Bebe's power, even if he was able to successfully launch a Saint-level spell, it might still be unable to harm Bebe.

"Indeed, you didn't personally kill them, but if it wasn't for you, my mother probably would've been able to flee early on!"

"Ah!" Rudi let out a miserable cry. His right arm had suddenly been sliced off by those sharp claws, and the severed arm fell down from the skies.

"If it wasn't for you, would Dillon have directly killed my mother?"

Yet another claw and yet another miserable cry. Rudi's left arm fell down

from the skies as well. The mighty, dignified Grand Magus Saint, Rudi, had been devastated to such a degree. Rudi was totally bereft. In front of Bebe, he had no ability to resist at all.

“High Priest, why haven’t you come?!” Rudi was growing more and more worried. In the minds of the Saints of the Yulan Empire, the High Priest was their leader, and here, it was much like how…the Saints of Radiant Church simply didn’t dare to cause trouble within the boundaries of the O’Brien Empire.

The other Saints also didn’t dare to cause trouble in the Yulan Empire, much less in a township so near the imperial capital.

“You…prepare to die.” Bebe said calmly.

“The High Priest will definitely avenge me!!!” Rudi shouted fiercely, and then a final claw welcomed him. This claw ripped him apart from the skull, creating a massive hole in it. Rudi’s eyes immediately grew dim, and his armless corpse fell down from the skies. “Bang!” It smashed into the rubble, kicking up a cloud of dust.

In mid-air, Bebe stared down below.

The civilians down below didn’t dare to make a sound. The current Bebe had none of his usual adorableness or playfulness. All he had was the ferocious cruelty inherent to all magical beasts.

“Swish!” A black blur slashed across the skies, and Bebe disappeared into the air.

The corpse of Rudi, lying in the rubble, had its eyes bulging in disbelief. Even as he died, he had hoped the High Priest would avenge him…but alas, the High Priest wouldn’t appear for his sake. Unless, of course, the High Priest was tired of living.

There wasn’t much of a difference. The Saint-level expert, Dillon, was like an infant in front of Bebe, easily trampled. Dillon hadn’t been able to take

more than three attacks from the early-stage Saint Olivier. In front of the current Bebe, he couldn't even block a single attack.

In mid-air.

Four Bebes surrounded him in four sides, transforming into four black blurs. They were playing a game of kickball, literally kicking the body of the Saint-level expert, Dillon, all over the place.

"Bang!" Dillon felt his waist receive another vicious kick, and then with a 'crunch', his bones shattered. Dillon's body was then kicked towards another direction. Dillon immediately activated the battle-qi in his body, wanting to fly and flee.

But yet another black blur appeared in front of him. Yet another!

"Ah!" A piece of bloody flesh was ripped out of him, and Dillon's body couldn't help but spasm in pain. He ground his teeth, then flew to another direction.

However, yet another black blur was there to welcome him!

No matter how wildly Dillon tried to flee, given Bebe's terrifying speed and his Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique, Dillon wasn't able to escape.

Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique! Four doppelgangers were trampling him in four different directions.

"Why?! I've never offended Linley!" Dillon howled with grief and anger. Seeing the black-furred Saint-level rat, Dillon knew that the magical beast in front of him was Linley's magical beast. In the past, Bebe had defeated even Haydson.

After twelve years of growth, how could the current Bebe be someone Dillon could deal with?

"My Boss?" Bebe's eyes flashed with the fires of rage. "Who told you to go

to the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts to kill my parents?!"

"Kill your parents?" Dillon was confused. "Have I ever killed a powerful rat-type magical beast?"

But then with another claw, Dillon was kicked flying yet again. He felt his head grow dizzy. At Bebe's speed, he was able to kick Dillon dozens of times in a single second. By now, Dillon had been kicked over a thousand times.

Fortunately, he was at the Saint-rank, and thus could preserve his life.

"Who told you to kill my mother in front of Rudi!" With a 'bang' sound, yet another claw struck him.

"In front of Rudi? Ah! Thirty years ago…the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts…"

Dillon understood everything now. He remembered what happened that year at the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. So this mysterious rat was the child of those two rats of the ninth rank."

"Swish!" Yet another claw to his face.

Right now, Dillon's clothes were splattered with blood and sticking to his body. He didn't have a single place of undamaged flesh. After having been kicked around thousands of times, and with a piece of flesh being taken away with each kick, Dillon currently…

Had half of his bones broken and visible to plain sight, along with his bright red flesh and blood. It was a terrifying sight.

Even one of his eyes had been torn out.

"Kill me!" "Kill me!" "Kill me!" Dillon was no longer even recognizably human. He could only mumble words out, without being able to resist at all. But Bebe's eyes didn't have an ounce of pity in them. Suddenly, the four

Bebes became one!

Bebe appeared in the air directly above Dillon.

“Whap!” A final, vicious claw delivered to Dillon’s skull. Dillon’s skull immediately shattered apart, and Dillon’s no longer recognizable corpse plummeted to the ground, his shattered bones flying everywhere upon impact.

After that final claw, Bebe just stood there in mid-air, stunned.

Bebe had always been carefree and had followed and played around with Linley since he was young. He liked to eat and drink…but in his heart, he had always wondered about his parentage. Where I am from? Who is my father? Who is my mother?

The higher class a magical beast was, the more intelligent it was.

And Bebe was a Godeater Rat. His emotional intelligence was even greater than that of humans.

Thirty three years.

In the end, he found his parents had both died!

“Father. Mother. Bebe misses you both. Bebe doesn’t know what it means to have a father, or what it feels like to have a mother.” Bebe’s eyes became covered with a misty layer. “Today, Bebe has avenged you both.”

Two teardrops fell down from Bebe’s face.

“Bebe’s name was chosen by the Boss. Although Bebe doesn’t have you, Bebe still has the Boss. The Boss’s embrace is very comfortable. Maybe… your embrace would have been like being by the Boss’s side.” Bebe was quiet for a long time, there in mid-air.

The thirty plus years he had spent by Linley’s side had resulted in Bebe,

without question, considering Linley as his one and only family member.

Beirut…although Bebe addressed him as Grandpa Beirut, they had only met not too long ago.

“Whoosh.” A wind arose. Bebe’s body disappeared into the eastern horizon.

Deep in the magicite mines. In front of the dimensional door.

“Swiiiiish.” Bebe easily passed through that door. The attacks of the dimensional door chopped on Bebe’s body like sabres, but they didn’t even break a single strand of Bebe’s fur.

Linley, who had been seated in quiet meditation, opened his eyes. Before he even said a word, Bebe immediately threw himself into Linley’s embrace. “Boss.” Bebe’s eyes were already red.

Linley hugged Bebe. “Bebe, it’s fine. Don’t be too heartbroken.”

“Okay.” Bebe nodded.

Both Linley and Bebe had lost their parents. They had grown up together, and the two were as close as true brothers to each other. Linley was like the big brother, while Bebe was the little brother.

Yulan calendar, year 10024, March 2nd. Outside the imperial capital of the O’Brien Empire. War God Mountain.

Yet another ray of light streaked across the skies and entered War God Mountain. A normally quiet courtyard within War God Mountain already had an entire group of people assembled. This courtyard was the place where the War God usually stayed when he wasn’t behind closed doors engaging in training. In the empty space within the quiet courtyard, there were around ten people, all of whom were chatting idly amongst each other.

All of these people were exceedingly powerful. Not one of them was weaker than Haydson had been.

“Bowditch [Bao’di’qi] has come as well.” Someone spoke out.

A skinny man with long silver hair flew down from the skies. Bowditch was yet another person who, in the past, had shaken the Yulan continent with his fame. But that was three thousand years ago. These days, Bowditch lived a quiet life of training in the Arctic Icecaps.

“Bowditch, you came as well!” One of the ten people in the empty space, a grim-looking man with white-flecked hair spoke.

“Olivier, if you can come, why can’t I?” Bowditch’s voice was very cold as well. His gaze was focused on Olivier. Currently, Olivier only had a single sword on his back, a translucent sword that emanated extreme cold.

During his bitter training in the Arctic Icecaps, Olivier had fought several times against Bowditch as well. The first time they had fought, Olivier had lost. But eight years later, when they fought again, the two were on par.

Soon, one expert after another arrived.

“Kefande, you arrived very late, this time.” Seeing the experts continue to arrive, many people immediately laughed and greeted them.

These experts, having trained in seclusion for thousands of years, almost all knew each other. They all belonged to the War God’s side. By nightfall, twenty of them had arrived. According to their plans, there should be a total of twenty two.

Ten from the War God’s College. Twelve other experts.

“Our Senior Apprentice has arrived.” Someone suddenly said. A thin man with short jade hair whose back was ramrod-straight and who had a sharp aura walked out. His blue robes fluttered in the wind. He was the Senior Apprentice of the War God’s College…Fain!

Five Prime Saints. Fain was one of them!

As Fain arrived, a group of people immediately went to welcome him. All of them greeted him very familiarly. The only one Fain hadn't met before was Olivier.

"Hrm? Where's Linley?" Fain spoke. "He isn't here yet?"

Twenty one of them had arrived. The only one missing was Linley!

Chapter 6 – Everyone Assembled

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 6: Everyone Assembled

By the time the other experts had already assembled at War God Mountain, Linley hadn't actually had the chance to head out yet!

Linley had been secluded in meditation for over a year now. The magicite mine had been emptied long ago, and right now, there was a massive, multi-kilometer underground castle built here. The master of the castle was Linley. Every day, many people who worshipped Linley would come to the outside of this castle and stare at it in awe.

Beneath the Castle, within the pocket dimension room.

Outside the pocket dimension room was the terrifying anarchic space. Cracks in reality could be seen everywhere, while Linley still sat there in the meditative position, quietly training.

"Thrum!" "Thrum!"

Each beat of the Throbbing Pulse of the Earth thrummed in Linley's heart, and also echoed like thunder in his mind. Linley's understanding of the profound truths of the Throbbing Pulse of the Earth had deepened, step by step, from within the boundless sea which was the Laws.

The 256 waves of the Throbbing Pulse of the World was currently in the process of transforming into the 128 waves.

"Success." After an unknown period of time, Linley opened his eyes, revealing a hint of joy. "After pondering for so long, I've finally managed to fuse the 256 waves into 128 waves. The power has multiplied several times over."

Although the number of waves had decreased, the power had increased

dramatically.

The power of the current 128 waves, compared to the original 128 layered waves, was untold times more powerful. After all, the current 128 waves embodied all of the profundities of the Throbbing Pulse of the World. But if one was able to fuse them all into a single wave which contained all of the profundities, then the power of that attack…

That would be the Deity-level.

“Continue.” Without hesitating at all, Linley once more sank himself into his reverie, constantly mentally testing his ideas again and again. This time, however, the difficulty level was clearly much higher. He had to spend over ten times the effort to fuse two waves into one.

Within the main hall of this underground castle, there was a large group of people. Wharton, his wife, Barker and his brothers, Taylor, Sasha, and a group of children. These children also included the children of the Barker brothers. Everyone here was waiting for Linley.

“Why hasn’t Father come out yet?” Taylor said, somewhat frantic. Taylor was 1.7 meters tall now. He had grown very rapidly during this year.

Wharton laughed calmly. “Taylor, don’t be in a rush. Your Uncle Bebe has already gone to go call him. He should arrive soon.” Today was March 2nd. The War God had ordered him to arrive at War God Mountain before March 3rd. Linley had to head there tonight at the very latest.

“Barker, you are going to go as well?” Zassler, seated nearby, suddenly spoke out.

Barker nodded slightly.

Zassler’s eyes flashed with a green light. “Honestly speaking, I want to investigate this legendary Necropolis of the Gods. Unfortunately…I’ve only just recently reached the Saint-level. My self-protective ability is far too limited.” Zassler was somewhat unwilling to accept this. All of these

experts desired to reach the peak of training, after all.

Nobody feared a bit of danger. If they didn't all have iron will, how could they have possibly trained to the Saint level?

"He's coming." Zassler was the first to notice Linley's arrival.

Everyone looked towards the side door of the hall, because they knew that Linley would be coming from the hidden training room, which was linked by the side door. Indeed…soon afterwards, Linley, with Bebe on his shoulders, walked out while holding Delia's hand, entering the main hall.

Linley was shocked upon seeing the living room. Why were there so many people here?

"Boss, have a good meeting with the others. It'll be ten years before you see them again." Bebe's voice rang out.

"Ten years?" Linley felt incomparably shocked. He wondered to himself, "Isn't it just a trip into the Necropolis of the Gods? Entering a necropolis, then coming out…a month would be too long. Why would it need ten years?" Linley looked at Bebe, puzzled. Everyone in the main hall looked at Bebe in confusion as well.

Bebe said with absolute certainty, "The Necropolis of the Gods opens once every thousand years. Each time, one must remain inside for ten years, and only after ten years can one leave…but of course, if you die inside it, there's nothing for it."

"Bebe must have received this information from that one in the Forest of Darkness. It can't be false." Linley understood this, but he still couldn't help but frown.

Suddenly, Linley felt pressure against his hand. Linley turned his head and looked at the nearby Delia, and saw the look of longing in her eyes.

"Sorry." Linley said softly.

This trip to the Necropolis of the Gods symbolized that he would be apart from Delia for ten years.

“I’m fine. Don’t worry about me.” Delia consoled Linley. “We’ll have a long time together in the future. But Linley, you have to be careful.” Delia didn’t try to stop Linley from going to the Necropolis of the Gods, because Delia knew…

In Linley’s heart, he had the goal of reaching the peak of training.

A place like the Necropolis of the Gods was a place where countless experts desired to enter but didn’t have the chance to. How could Linley give up such a precious opportunity?

“Thank you.” Linley’s heart swelled with gratitude.

“Spend some time with the kids.” Delia said gently. Linley turned his head and looked at his two children; Taylor and Sasha. “You are so big now. By the time I come out of the Necropolis of the Gods, you’ll be in your twenties.”

Knowing that he would be leaving for a long time, Linley spent a good amount of time with his son and daughter.

When dusk arrived.

“Taylor, Sasha. Go back.” Linley patted his two kids on their heads.

“Okay.” Taylor and Sasha both nodded obediently.

The nearby Barker looked at Linley. “Lord Linley, please help me on that matter.” Hearing this, Linley nodded. Barker wanted to go to the Necropolis of the Gods as well, but the number of names was limited. Linley had to go ask before knowing what the answer was.

“Delia.” Linley exchanged gazes with Delia.

“Be careful.” Delia said softly.

Linley nodded slightly. The two kissed gently, and then Linley and Bebe flew away, leaving the castle and heading towards War God Mountain in the west.

The wild wind howled as Linley and Bebe transformed into two rays of brilliant light, flying past the horizon.

“Bebe, why must one stay ten years at the Necropolis of the Gods?” While flying, Linley asked Bebe the question.

Bebe shook his head. “I don’t know either. This is based on what Grandpa Beirut told me. Oh, right…Barker wants to go to the Necropolis of the Gods? If you aren’t able to get it for him, I can go ask Grandpa Beirut. Grandpa Beirut would definitely agree.”

“No rush. Let’s ask the War God first.” Linley said.

Linley suddenly had a suspicion. Bebe was going to the Necropolis of the Gods along with him, and Lord Beirut had agreed to it? Linley couldn’t help but ask, “Bebe, isn’t your Grandpa Beirut worried about your safety? Why is he letting you go to the Necropolis of the Gods?”

Bebe pursed his lips. “Grandpa Beirut said that in the past, he himself had experienced countless dangers before reaching his current accomplishments. He wants me to be trained and tempered. As for the Necropolis of the Gods, as long as my luck isn’t absolutely horrendous, staying alive should be fine.”

Linley nodded.

After all, weren’t Desri and Fain doing perfectly fine?

“Here we are.” Linley could already see the distant War God Mountain. The two immediately flew down.

“So many experts.” Linley immediately noticed those twenty one experts. If he didn’t transform, many of those below were on par with Linley, and even the weakest of them wasn’t much weaker than him. “But in my Dragonformed state, only Fain can do battle with me.”

In terms of understanding, he was still inferior to Fain.

But Dragonblood Warriors simply had too much of an innate advantage. There was nothing that could be done about it. Or for example, Bebe…as a Godeater Rat, his innate advantages were even greater than that of the Dragonblood Warriors.

“So noisy.” Linley noticed those twenty one warriors were currently in the midst of sparring matches. Suddenly, a loud, clear laugh could be heard. “Haha, Linley, you finally arrived. You are the last one to arrive.”

Linley immediately landed.

At this time, it was night. The empty area had quite a few chairs and tables. The experts were chatting, drinking, and even sparring, for those who had the interest. It was quite rare for these ultimate experts to have a chance to meet like this.

“Sorry, I came late.” Linley was a bit embarrassed, and he hurriedly greeted everyone.

Fain laughed as he walked over. “It’s fine. Master hasn’t come to receive us either. He won’t be here to meet us until tomorrow morning. Tonight, we’ll just assemble here and have a good time.”

“So he is Linley?”

Many of the experts who were drinking cast their gazes towards Linley.

These people had all been training in seclusion for thousands of years. Generally speaking, they didn’t care about newcomers, but…Linley had

simply become too outstandingly famous. Especially with Linley being a Dragonblood Warrior, one of the Supreme Warriors. None of the people present dared to look down on him.

“Everyone.” Fain smiled as he stood up, and everyone turned to look at Fain.

Even the experts sparring in the air landed. Fain laughed calmly. “Most people here haven’t met Linley yet. Weren’t we discussing him just this afternoon? Right, Clay [Ke’lei], weren’t you shouting nonstop about how you wanted to check out the power of the Dragonblood Warriors for yourself?”

“Check out the power of the Dragonblood Warriors?” Linley couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a smile on his lips.

“Pity that it’s a Dragonblood Warrior, not an Undying Warrior.” A loud, clear voice rang out, and a bulky, powerful-looking man with short gold hair stood up. He wore a sleeveless shirt, and his terrifying muscles made his shirt look as though it was about to split apart.

The golden-haired man looked at Linley and laughed. “Linley, let me introduce myself. I’m Clay. Normally, I train on an island in the North Sea. I’ve heard of the fame of the Dragonblood Warriors long ago, and I’ve been itching to have a go. I would like to have a spar with you, Linley. I wonder…”

“Sure.” Linley smiled as he spoke.

“Wonderful.” Clay’s eyes lit up, and his muscles immediately began to tremble. With a sudden ‘boom’, his shirt exploded into tatters, and his body suddenly seemed to have turned to metal and shone with a metallic light.

Fain said to Linley, “This Clay also trains in the Laws of the Earth, but in terms of defense, he is more than ten times more powerful than Haydson.”

Linley smiled. “I know.”

“Clay’s body looks like it is made from metal. It seems similar to the ‘Sacred Earthguard Armor’, which is made from diamonds at the Saint-level.” Linley mused. For a warrior’s defense to reach such a terrifying level, he indeed had to be an exceptional expert.

With a flip of his hand, Linley withdrew Bloodviolet.

“Linley, go ahead and transform.” The golden-haired Clay said loudly.

Linley shook his head. “No need for now.”

Clay seemed a bit unhappy. He snorted. “Linley, you really are quite confident.” As he spoke, Clay charged into the air. This was War God Mountain. They didn’t dare to damage the War God Mountain when they sparred, so naturally they all flew into the air and sparred there.

In an instant, Linley appeared in mid-air as well, his speed clearly a level higher than Clay’s.

“Haha…come!” In mid-air, Clay let out an excited roar, and then he transformed into a blur and charged at Linley. He suddenly struck out with his right fist, and it was as though it had pierced through reality, carrying a terrifying howling sound as it attacked Linley.

Where this fist passed, space itself rippled.

“Hrm?” Linley’s face changed. Linley had been preparing to use the ‘Rippling Wind’ attack, but seeing the power of this fist, Linley immediately was forced to change his attack.

Retreating backwards, Linley slashed out with Bloodviolet, and it also seemed to pass through reality. Wherever Bloodviolet passed by, space itself seemed to congeal and slow, then fold in on itself. Atop Bloodviolet was a frozen spatial edge, and clear ripples appeared around it as well.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind, level two!

“Bang!”

Bloodviolet collided head-on with the fist of the shiny metallic man.

“Booom.” That terrifying force passed straight through Bloodviolet and attacked Linley. The battle-qi around Linley’s body roiled. Only the Pulseguard Defense guarding his body managed to protect him from this terrifying force. Clay himself was knocked backwards as well. His fist had a hint of blood on it, but he wasn’t harmed at all.

“What terrifying defense. In terms of defense alone, he should be on par with an Undying Warrior.” Linley was secretly shocked.

“Linley, I admit defeat.” Clay’s voice rang out. “This Linley really is a monster. He’s so powerful even without transforming. Once he transforms, I won’t have the power to fight back at all.” As he muttered to himself, Clay flew straight back down.

Chapter 7 – The Metallic Castle

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 7: The Metallic Castle

“This Clay wasn’t injured at all, but he admitted defeat.” Linley chuckled, then stored Bloodviolet back into his interspatial ring, then landed as well.

By now, everyone present had a clearer understanding of Linley’s power. Clay was one of the more powerful experts present, and there were only a few present who were mightier than him. These experts knew very well… that Clay’s most powerful attack was his punches.

His body’s defense was slightly weaker than his fist’s power.

Linley’s sword had actually drawn a hint of blood from Clay’s fist. If it had landed on Clay’s body, it would have at least resulted in some blood loss.

“Linley, I haven’t seen you in thirteen years, but your power has reached such a level.” Fain’s eyes also had a hint of battle-lust in them.

From the battle just then, Fain could tell that Linley now had a fairly high level of understanding of the Laws. Paired with his natural gifts as a Dragonblood Warrior, Linley should now be able to have a proper duel with him. Fain, as well, wanted to have a sparring match with Linley.

“Everyone wants to fight with my Boss. Why don’t you guys fight with me?” Bebe sensed Fain’s desire to do battle and immediately flew in front of Fain.

Fain looked at Bebe, startled, and then he seemed to have remembered something. He hurriedly said, “Oh, Bebe, right?” Fain no longer mentioned anything about sparring. Instead, he pulled Linley and Bebe to join him in laughter, wine, and idle conversation.

……

Midnight. The mountain wind blew gently. The night wind of early spring was very cold, but of course, these experts didn't mind at all. They continued to chat and laugh.

"Olivier's aura has completely changed from before." Linley glanced sideways at the distant Olivier. Olivier was one of the twenty two experts as well. "In the past, Olivier would still talk and laugh, but now, he seems to have become much colder, and his eyes have become sharper as well."

The current Olivier was like a precious sword that had been unsheathed, extremely sharp and fierce.

This caused the experts around him to voluntarily draw away from him. Clearly, these people weren't very close to Olivier.

"Linley. This time, you and Olivier are the only new participants in our squad. Although Olivier's power is weaker than yours, he is still a hair more powerful than Clay." Fain sighed in approval. "His attack power is quite astonishing."

"Oh?" Linley was surprised.

Linley knew very well how powerful Olivier was. "In the past, Olivier had even lost to Haydson. Although I heard that twelve years later, he killed Haydson with a single sword, it's only been twelve years. How has he improved so astonishingly fast?"

The main reason Linley's own power had increased was because he had broken through to the Saint level, so as a peak Dragonblood Warrior his strength had increased by more than tenfold. And, of course, he had gained deeper levels of understanding as well.

But Olivier's battle-qi had reached the peak of the Saint-level long ago. His only improvement would have been in his understanding of the Laws. How had he risen in power so quickly?

“Although Olivier’s sword isn’t very fast, it combines two different types of Laws, both light and dark. When he strikes…even Clay is unable to take the blow.” Fain sighed in approval. “For one sword blow to contain two opposing types of Laws…I have never seen this in all my life. Even Master repeatedly sighed in praise.”

“What?!” Linley couldn’t believe it.

Linley stared disbelievingly at the distant Olivier, his heart filled with shock. “A single sword containing both types of Laws at the same time? How can two different Laws be used at the same time?” For example, Linley’s Profound Truths of the Earth was just that, and his Profound Truths of the Wind was just that.

To fuse the Profound Truths of the Earth and the Profound Truths of the Wind? Impossible!

After all, these were two different types of Laws.

“It is true. When Olivier attacks with his sword, darkness and light co-exist…and thus, Haydson was chopped directly in half by this sword.” Fain sighed in praise.

Linley nodded slightly.

Linley had to acknowledge of this attack by Olivier. In terms of Laws alone, it had already surpassed Linley’s ‘Tempos of the Wind’ attack.

“I wonder how the power of his sword would match up against my ‘Throbbing Pulse of the Earth’.” Linley was still very confident. He had already transformed the 256 layers of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the Earth’ to 128 layers of waves, and the power of the attack had multiplied several times over. More importantly…

Relying on his inborn gifts as a Dragonblood Warrior, Linley’s battle-qi, physical strength, and defense were all ten times that of Olivier’s.

The difference in their base abilities was simply too great.

This was the reason why Fain and Desri considered Linley as someone on the same level as them.

….

While making conversation and jesting throughout this night, Linley came to get to know these experts. The only ones that Linley got to know well, however, were Clay, Bowditch, and three of the personally trained disciples of the War God's College. The rest, he only memorized their names and their appearances.

Dawn.

The red sun peeked out from the eastern mountains, slowly casting its light down upon War God Mountain. The twenty two experts hadn't slept at all last night, but none of them felt uncomfortable at all. At their level, they had long since transcended the need to sleep.

"Creaaak." The door to the quiet little courtyard finally opened.

Twenty two experts simultaneously rose to their feet, looking respectfully towards the person who walked into the courtyard. The man had a head full of long, scarlet red hair, and his gaze flashed with dagger-like light. His powerful, dominating aura made even these twenty two experts feel afraid to breathe.

This man was the War God, O'Brien!

The War God swept the group with his gaze, pausing for a moment on Bebe, who was on Linley's shoulders, then said calmly, "Since all of you have come, then follow me." After speaking, the War God immediately flew into the air.

"The War God is blunt enough." Linley couldn't help but chuckle in his heart.

But on the surface, Linley was like the others, quite obediently flying into the air and following the War God to fly towards the east. These twenty two people flew in a particular order, and in the very forefront of the group were Fain and Linley.

Everyone had a sense of how powerful everyone else was.

The strongest were in front. The weakest were in the back.

“Fain, are we going to the Forest of Darkness?” Linley looked in front of him, at the heroic figure flying at their forefront. They were heading in the direction of the Forest of Darkness. He couldn’t help but query Fain quietly.

“Right.” Fain spoke very quietly as well. “Each time we head to the Necropolis of the Gods, the experts of the Yulan continent will first gather at the Forest of Darkness. After all, only Lord Beirut is capable of opening the passageway to the Necropolis of the Gods.”

“Oh.” Linley secretly nodded in understanding. “It seems it is very difficult to open the gateway to the Necropolis of the Gods. Even the War God isn’t able to do it.”

“Bebe, right?” A powerful, incisive voice.

Linley and Fain were both frightened. The Lord War God had actually appeared next to Linley and spoken. The frightening thing was, the War God actually had a hint of a warm smile on his face. Fain had almost never seen his master smile.

“That’s me.” Bebe looked at the War God.

The War God looked at Bebe carefully, then nodded. “Lord Beirut was actually willing to let you enter the Necropolis of the Gods.”

“What’s there to be afraid of? If the Boss goes, how can I not go?” Bebe raised his head proudly.

The War God let out a calm laugh and didn't say anything else.

"Lord War God." Linley spoke.

The War God looked at Linley, waiting for Linley to continue. Linley instantly said, "Lord War God, I have a good friend, Barker. He also wishes to go to the Necropolis of the Gods. I wonder if…"

"Lord Beirut only gave me the authority to bring twenty two people." The War God said calmly. "If you want to bring someone else into the Necropolis of the Gods, just have Bebe tell Lord Beirut. After all, Lord Beirut is the final decider of who will be allowed into the Necropolis of the Gods."

After speaking, the War God flew back to the front.

Linley let out a secret sigh of relief. "Deities. Even when they are chatting and smiling, they have such an enormous, pressuring aura." Just then, Linley had the feeling that it was hard for him to breathe, just like when he was young and had seen the Velocidragon for the first time. He had felt that sort of terror which came from the bottom of his heart."

"This must be what Divine Presence is all about." Linley said to himself.

…..

The group continued to fly towards the deepest parts of the Forest of Darkness at high speed. Soon, Linley's group, under the direction of the War God, arrived at the heart of the Forest of Darkness. This was the first time Linley had gone so deep into the Forest of Darkness.

"The legendary Lord Beirut. What will he be like?" Linley was extremely curious.

Soon, a black, metallic castle appeared before them in the Forest of Darkness. This castle's size was approximately on par with Linley's

underground castle, with just an area of several square kilometers. Only, this castle was pitch black, and was made from some sort of strange black metal.

“Everyone, stay in the area outside this castle for now. Do not go in without authorization.” The War God said calmly, but then he himself flew into the castle.

There were already quite a few experts milling around the black metal castle.

“Many of these people are Grand Magus Saints. They should have been brought here by the High Priest.” Fain landed from the skies while explaining to Linley, and Linley nodded slightly. The experts of the Yulan continent mostly belonged to a particular Deity’s side.

“None of you are to go in without authorization. This metal castle will automatically attack any invaders.” Fain said loudly.

Actually, aside from Linley and Olivier who were coming here for the first time, everyone else here knew this.

“Automatically attack invaders?” Linley was quite surprised, but Bebe snickered quietly. “Boss, this metal castle is actually a metallic life form. It has intelligence.”

Linley was secretly shocked.

This ‘King of the Forest of Darkness’ was truly incredible. Even his castle had lifeforce of its own. This was the first time Linley had encountered such a curious lifeform as well.

“Boss, wait here for now. Didn’t you want to discuss Barker’s matter? I’ll go ask Grandpa Beirut.” Bebe said.

Linley nodded slightly.

With a flicker of his body, Bebe immediately entered that pitch black castle. Seeing Bebe go in, many of the experts outside the castle were quite surprised. They all knew…any invaders would be attacked. But just then, Bebe hadn't been attacked at all!

"Linley, you came." He heard the sound of laughter. Linley turned his head and looked.

He saw Desri, Hayward, and Higginson walk over towards him, and Linley immediately went to greet them. "Mr. Desri, where is your wife? She didn't come?"

"She's a bit too weak." Desri laughed. "But I must say, I truly must congratulate you, for you to possess a magical beast such as Bebe. Twenty three years ago, Lord Beirut personally communicated to several of us mentally, and we were all curious as to what fortunate youngster managed to acquire Bebe as his magical beast companion."

Linley understood why.

Soon after Bebe had been born, Lord Beirut had probably discovered Bebe's existence by some coincidence. Thus, he had immediately mentally contacted the War God, the High Priest, Desri, Rosarie, and the other Prime Saints, asking them to look after the two of them a bit.

Lord Beirut certainly must have been paying close attention to Bebe this entire time.

"Those 'several of us' included myself, Rosarie, Tulily, and Rutherford. Only the four of us answer directly to Lord Beirut's commands." Desri explained. "In the Yulan continent, the Saints in training are divided into three camps. Lord Beirut's, the War God's, and the High Priest's."

Linley now understood.

Although the Yulan continent had five Deities, Dylin and Cesar had only appeared in recent years, and they didn't have many Saints subordinate to

them.

“Lord Cesar has arrived as well.” Desri suddenly said.

Linley raised his head and saw Cesar, dressed in a long, loose robe, a lazy smile on his face, fly into the metallic castle.

“All of you, stay here, don’t go in. Otherwise, if you die, don’t blame me.” A calm, cold voice rang out. Linley and the others couldn’t help but turn to look, and they saw a devilish young man who wore a dark golden robe issuing instructions to the magical beasts who had followed him here. And then, he entered the metallic castle as well.

“It’s Dylin!” Linley had personally seen Dylin once, when he was in Fenlai City.

Behind Dylin were three ‘kittens’ and six Saint-level magical beasts that had transformed to a size roughly equivalent to a normal human’s. Linley inspected them carefully. Indeed, these three ‘kittens’ had a pair of wings on their backs, and on their face, above their two eyes, there were another two pairs of shut eyes.

Six eyes, two wings.

“Saint-level magical beasts, Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. The children of Dylin.” Linley secretly said to himself.

Right at this moment, one of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions looked towards Linley. Suddenly…all six of its eyes opened, and he grinned at Linley. “Linley, right? Thank you!”

Chapter 8 – Three Corridors

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 8: Three Corridors

“Thank me?” Linley was startled.

This was the first time he had ever met these Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. Why did this Ni-Lion immediately thank him upon seeing him?

What was the reason?

“Unfortunately, you were born just a little too late. If you had been born three thousand years earlier, then Fourth Brother and Fifth Brother wouldn’t have had to die.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion murmured these two additional words, and the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions next to him also glanced at Linley. And then, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions flew to the other side, along with the other six Saint-level magical beasts.

Desri laughed towards Linley. “Linley, you have a relationship with these three brothers?”

“No relationship at all.” Linley said.

Desri didn’t say anything, but from the look on his face, it was clear that Desri didn’t believe him.

“In the past, there were very few magical beasts who would enter the Necropolis of the Gods. Only a few of the powerful Saint-level magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness would enter. Now that Dylin has appeared, even the magical beasts of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts are able to enter the Necropolis of the Gods.” Desri sighed.

Linley glanced at the group.

Those six Saint level magical beasts which had come alongside the Six-

Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were no ordinary beasts.

“It seems as though four of them were amongst the number of Saint-level magical beasts that had attacked Fenlai City. Or perhaps they are of the same race only.” Linley could immediately recognize four of them; the Bloody-eyed Maned Lion, the Tyrant Wyrm, the Savage Worldbear, and the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape.

It was the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape who had squashed Kalan to death with one foot.

Only, he couldn’t be sure if the Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape in front of him was the same Violet-Eyed Goldfur Ape which had attacked Fenlai City.

So many experts had gathered here. Human experts, and magical beasts as well. All of the powerful experts hidden away in the Yulan continent had come out today, and everyone present, humans and beasts alike, were chatting in quiet voices to each other. At this moment, humans and magical beasts were two races that were equal to each other.

“Swish!” A black shadow flew out from the metallic castle. It was Bebe.

All the humans and magical beasts present turned to stare at Bebe. In the past, aside from those three children of Lord Beirut as well as those Deities, not a single Saint-level expert had been qualified to enter this metallic castle.

“Boss, it’s all taken care of.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “Let Barker come.”

Linley laughed. In front of that mysterious Beirut, it seemed Bebe’s words were quite effective.

“Haeru, go inform Barker and bring Barker here.” Linley immediately spiritually communicated with his Blackcloud Panther, Haeru, and Haeru’s voice sounded out in Linley’s mind as well. “Yes, Master.”

After roughly an hour.

Barker, under Haeru's guidance, flew here.

"So many people." Barker looked at the experts present, and he couldn't help but be shocked. All combined, humans and magical beasts, there were over eighty Saints here today. These experts all possessed astonishing strength. If he didn't transform…Barker would be the weakest of them.

But of course, after transforming, Barker would be above average.

In this group, the highest tier belonged to the Desri, Fain, the other Five Prime Saints, and Linley.

The sun rose to the zenith of the sky. The Saints clustered in the empty space around the metallic castle were quite patient, and they all waited quietly. Suddenly, four shadows flew out from within the living castle. There was the War God with his absolutely dominating aura, the graceful High Priest, the devilish Dylin, and the lazy Cesar.

The four mighty Deities landed in front of the castle.

Everyone, humans and magical beasts alike, listened respectfully for their orders.

The High Priest, face covered by that green mask and long hair flowing gracefully, was the first to speak. "In this group, there are those of you who have gone to the Necropolis of the Gods before, and those who have not. But this trip is not like the previous trips, which is why we must remind you of a few things."

The High Priest's voice was very gentle, yet very neutral. From the sound of it alone, it was hard to determine whether the voice belonged to a man or a woman.

"Different from the past?" Linley smiled calmly. He had never gone there a single time before, so no matter what the past had been like, it didn't affect

him at all.

All the humans and magical beasts present listened carefully to the High Priest's reminders.

"Those who have gone to the Necropolis of the Gods know that there are, in total, three tunnels that lead to the Necropolis of the Gods. One is here at the Forest of Darkness. One is on an island in the North Seas. And the third is in the watery depths of the South Sea." The voice of the High Priest remained very gentle.

The faces of the more experienced people, like Desri and Fain, began to change.

"Three thousand years ago, the entrance to the Necropolis of the Gods was from the South Seas entrance. Two thousand years ago, the entrance was from the Forest of Darkness. One thousand years ago, it was from the island in the North Sea. Every three thousand years a cycle. This time, you will be entering the Necropolis of the Gods from the South Sea." The High Priest's voice entered the ears of every man and magical beast.

Linley was surprised.

"This Necropolis of the Gods actually has three tunnels?" Linley began to wonder. "But these three tunnels are extremely far apart from each other. North Sea, Forest of Darkness, South Sea…they are tens of thousands of kilometers apart. What's going on?"

Although he was puzzled, Linley knew that this wasn't the time to ask. He could only continue to listen patiently.

The High Priest's voice seemed to contain a hint of laughter in it. "So you should know which tunnel will be used now. Those ten of you with previous experience should also know how dangerous this trip will be. Alright. Desri, come explain to everyone."

"Remember. Anyone who wants to give up can do so. But tonight, the

remainder of us will head out together." The High Priest's voice remained soft.

Dylin's cold laughter rang out. "If you are afraid, then don't go. There's nothing embarrassing about it. It isn't too late to give up now. If you give up later, after arriving there, and decide to flee at that point, that would be really shameful." The four Deities walked to one side, waiting for midnight to come.

Desri walked to the front of the group.

Desri's face looked extremely dark and downcast. Linley had never seen the suave Desri have such an ugly look on his face before.

"Those of you who experienced the opening of the Necropolis of the Gods two thousand years ago or a thousand years ago, listen carefully." Desri's voice was very cold. "There isn't just one Necropolis of the Gods, nor is there just two. There are three. The three different tunnels lead to three different Necropolises!"

"Three?" Many people were shocked.

Even Linley felt shocked, and he focused his energy on listening to what Desri had to say.

"Although the Necropolises of the Gods which are reached through the tunnels in the Forest of Darkness and the North Sea's island are dangerous, the danger isn't that great. Generally speaking, as long as you are cautious and prudent, you won't be in any risk. But the Necropolis of the Gods which is reached through the South Sea is extremely, extremely dangerous." Desri said in a low voice, "In fact, I even believe that of the eighty or so experts present, even if we are extremely careful, we would be lucky to have a third of us survive."

"A third?" Many of the Saints let out startled calls.

Many of them had gone to the Necropolis of the Gods before, but on the

past two visits to the Necropolis of the Gods, only a quarter of them or so had died. But from what Desri was saying…it seemed two thirds of them were likely to die on this trip.

"And that assumes you are being extremely careful. If you get greedy…I expect that perhaps we might be lucky to see ten survivors out of our eighty people present." Desri looked at the people in front of him. "Remember this. If you die, that's no big deal. But don't drag down others with you."

After finishing speaking, Desri returned to stand next to Hayward and Higginson.

The atmosphere was extremely depressed.

"What is there to be afraid of? The more dangerous it is, the greater a chance of finding a divine spark or a divine artifact." A voice rang out from the group.

"Make it out alive first." Fain's cold voice rang out.

Fain's face was also exceedingly ugly to behold right now.

Desri, Higginson, and Hayward were all silent.

Linley walked towards them, then asked softly, "Desri, what's wrong? This trip to the Necropolis of the Gods will be very special?"

Desri looked at Linley, then sighed and said, "Linley, do you remember your first trip to our village? At that time, when Hayward was sparring with you, you asked why he, a Grand Magus Saint, didn't have a magical beast companion."

"I remember." Linley nodded.

When Hayward had been sparring with him, Linley had been under the impression that a Grand Magus Saint who sparred with him without a magical beast companion would definitely be defeated. But then, Hayward

had shown him the error of his ways by demonstrating how a Grand Magus Saint fought.

“At that time, you said that his magical beast had died in order to save him. That was more than two thousand years ago. In addition, a good friend of yours had died as well.” Linley responded.

“Right.” Desri nodded. “And the event I spoke of us was our journey into the Necropolis of the Gods three thousand years ago.”

Linley nodded.

“Hayward’s magical beast was an Electrobolt Panther, very useful for staying alive in the Necropolis of the Gods. I begged Lord Beirut for another slot in order to let that magical beast come as well. However, on that trip…on just the outer perimeter of the sixth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, our third brother and that magical beast both died. As for the three of us, we were on the fifth layer and didn’t dare to enter the sixth layer. Just like that…we stayed there in the fifth layer for five years, waiting until the exit tunnel appeared.” Desri’s face was very bitter.

Linley’s mind was stirred.

The fifth layer? Sixth layer?

Although he didn’t know anything about the Necropolis of the Gods, from the sound of it, it was divided into many layers. And this ‘sixth floor’ was an extremely dangerous one.

The night descended. Not a single Saint left. If they were afraid of an unknown danger…then they truly would have quite weak-willed.

A black shadow suddenly appeared in front of the group, then slowly solidified. This person wore a very simple black robe. His black hair was loose and unbound, and his beard was so long that it reached down to his chest. He looked just like an old man.

“Lord Beirut.” The High Priest, Cesar, the War God, and Dylin all immediately rose and said respectfully.

All of the Saints immediately rose and bowed respectfully, regardless of whether it was their first, second, or third time meeting Beirut. The atmosphere was such that neither the High Priest nor the War God, much less the Saints, dared to even breathe.

Beirut had a pair of little eyes, but they were quite lively, like two brilliant stars. His face seemed to have a perpetual hint of a smile on it.

“Bebe, come over here.” Beirut looked at Bebe, then beamed at him.

Bebe immediately jumped into Beirut’s arms. Everyone present looked at Bebe.

“Grandpa Beirut, let’s go. I’ve waited here so long.” Bebe didn’t seem to feel any pressure from Beirut’s presence at all, and Beirut nodded indulgently, then flew towards the south with Bebe in his arms. “Let’s go.” Beirut’s slightly gravelly voice rang out.

At this moment, the four Deities and the eighty-plus human and magical beast Saints all flew into the air as well.

While flying, many people looked at Linley. Clearly, the close relationship between Bebe and Beirut had caused them to pay attention to Linley as well. But those people only knew…that Bebe was Linley’s magical beast. Many people had come to a decision…

Even if they didn’t make friends with Linley, they couldn’t offend him.

After all, in front of Lord Beirut, even the likes of the War God and the other three Deities acted as though they were children, afraid to even breathe loudly. One could completely understand how, in Lord Beirut’s heart, the status of Bebe was far greater than that of the likes of the War God.

“This War God truly is formidable. He expressed goodwill towards me so early on, during my little brother’s wedding.” Linley laughed secretly to himself. “Lord Beirut has a relationship with Bebe, Bebe has a relationship with me, and I have a relationship with Wharton…there are two layers of separation here!”

But the War God had even gotten involved in Wharton’s affairs, directly ordering that Emperor Johann to allow Wharton to become Nina’s husband.

One could completely imagine how much respect and dread the War God felt towards Lord Beirut.

…….

The oceans took up an enormous amount of territory in the Yulan plane. The North Sea was already enormous, but the South Sea was simply shocking. Linley had once heard Hodan say that at the end of the South Sea, one would see the wild, chaotic space.

Late night. The endless waters of the sea seemed dark and heavy.

“Right here.” Beirut declared as he stood there in mid-air above the sea.

“In the depths of the ocean here, you’ll find the entrance to the tunnel to the Necropolis of the Gods. That tunnel is roughly twenty thousand meters away from the surface of the sea.” Beirut laughed calmly. “I trust the water pressure of the deep sea won’t have any effect on you. If you can’t even withstand a tiny little bit of deep sea water pressure, then it is best if you give up right away.”

As he spoke, Beirut himself was the first to dive into the water.

Wherever his body passed, the deep ocean water itself naturally split apart around him, creating a corridor.

Chapter 9 – The Necropolis' Sculptures

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 9: The Necropolis' Sculptures

"Rumble, rumble." The sea roiled, and then four pathways into the sea appeared, and the High Priest, the War God, and the others all dove into the sea as well.

The eighty-plus human and magical beast experts didn't hesitate at all, hurriedly entering the water.

"This deep sea is quite interesting." Linley's battle-qi was swirling around him. With his Pulseguard Defense, he was able to easily offset the outside water pressure. As for Linley himself, he curiously stared at the various scenes here, deep in the ocean. This was Linley's first trip into the seas.

In the deepest part of the ocean, it was silent and pitch-black. The only things that could be seen were a few creatures that naturally radiated light.

Fain and Linley flew down together. Fain glanced at Linley, then his voice rang out in Linley's mind. "Linley, in this vast expanse of land here in the South Seas, there are actually a great many magical beast, such as Aquatic Dragons, Dragon Turtles, Nine-Headed Serpents, Titanic Octopi…all of these are Saint-level magical beasts." Fain naturally had the ability to engage in spirit-projecting communication.

Linley secretly nodded.

The South Seas were far larger than the Yulan continent in size. It would be unnatural if they didn't contain a large amount of magical beasts in them.

"But even if the magical beasts of the depth drew near, upon seeing us, they would be so frightened they would immediately flee." Fain smiled calmly as he mentally spoke to Linley.

Linley chuckled as well.

The group continued to fly deeper into the dark, silent depths of the sea, while at the same time, they enjoyed the sight of these rarely-viewed sceneries. Occasionally, an enormous magic beast would appear, but upon discovering that so many experts were descending, it would invariably be so frightened that it wouldn't even dare to move.

The farther down they went, the greater the pressure was.

At the end, the pressure was so great, it was as though a small mountain was weighing down upon them. Fortunately, all of these people were amongst the most powerful Saints in the world, and thus they could take it. They would either cast magic spells, or use protective barriers of battle-qi. The rainbow of colors surrounding them was quite resplendent to behold.

"We're at the sea floor." The experts all came to a halt at the sea floor.

There were some life forms such as corals down here, which radiated a bit of light. The bottom of the sea was covered with rows upon rows of coral reefs, while the ground was not level, sometimes convex while other times concave. It could rise up to a height of hundreds of meters, and sink down so deeply that the bottom couldn't be seen.

"Almost there." Fain said mentally to Linley.

Linley nodded slightly.

Everyone continued to follow the leaders at the bottom of the sea. After travelling for several kilometers, they arrived at an enormous, pitch-black boulder. This pitch-black boulder stood by itself in the middle of a gorge, and in the water above the boulder, there was a translucent 'door' which was emitting strange ripples.

"Here we are." The gravelly voice rang out in everyone's ears.

Everyone stopped in front of this pitch-black boulder.

“Hrm? This ‘door’ seems quite similar to the ‘door’ of my pocket dimension. Only, it’s twice the size.” Linley was intrigued.

Lord Beirut’s voice could be heard in each person’s ears. “This interspatial door is the tunnel which leads to the Necropolis of the Gods. Normally, this interspatial door is shut and covered by a layer of invisible force.” As he spoke, Beirut’s body suddenly emitted a ray of black light.

This ray of black light struck directly against the interspatial door.

“Rumble…” The quiet sea floor suddenly began to shudder, and the previously translucent ‘door’ suddenly emanated with a blinding, dazzling light, as though a membrane had suddenly covered and sealed it.

But a few seconds later, it burst apart like a popped bubble.

“Pop!” With a very soft sound, the membrane collapsed.

“Follow me. All in at the same time.” Beirut flew to the interspatial door, and with one step, crossed through to the other side. As he did, Beirut completely disappeared from the line of sight from the people present.

The High Priest, War God, Dylin, and Cesar didn’t hesitate at all. They immediately entered the interspatial door as well, disappearing from line of sight.

“So the Necropolis of the Gods is actually another plane.” Linley now understood. “Only, the plane of the Necropolis of the Gods is connected to the Yulan continent’s plane.”

This was much like his pocket dimension. The hidden location of the Necropolis of the Gods was also linked up with the Yulan continent.

All of the experts present entered the interspatial door together, and Linley and Fain entered as well.

“What a strange vibration.” Linley could clearly sense that the moment he stepped across the interspatial door, he had a strange feeling, as though he were a person swimming in the water who suddenly stepped onto dry land. It was as though the entire environment had changed.”

The many experts had arrived at a different plane.

They were all still at the bottom of the sea. Only, it was the bottom of the sea of a different plane.

“What a strange feeling.” Linley had a sense of being ill at-ease upon entering this new dimension.

Fain drew near Linley and said to him spiritually, “Linley, in this plane, even my spiritual energy can only encompass ten or so meters. In addition, this plane is filled with countless experts. We can’t fall behind the others, as if we do, if we are surrounded by those countless magical beasts, we will die for certain.”

Linley was secretly shocked.

The group of people followed Beirut forward. Beirut wasn’t the slightest bit nervous, leading them flying for over ten kilometers.

“That mountain-sized building over there is the Necropolis of the Gods.” Fain drew near Linley yet again and spoke to him spiritually. Linley stared at that distant, massive structure. He couldn’t help but feel his heart shake. “This Necropolis of the Gods really is astonishingly large.”

Linley was certain that this Necropolis of the Gods was over a hundred kilometers away from them, but Linley could nonetheless make it out clearly.

“The Necropolis of the Gods is nearly twenty thousand meters tall, and each of the four sides of its base is over ten thousand meters long.” Fain spoke to Linley spiritually. He was very familiar with this Necropolis of the Gods.

“How was such an enormous edifice built?” Linley couldn’t help but sigh nonstop with praise.

Given their flying speed, the distance of a hundred kilometers was quickly reached. Once they drew near it, Linley began to sigh in amazement yet again. The reason he sighed in amazement…was because although the Necropolis of the Gods was primarily cuboid, the top of it still tapered off into narrow edges.

The Necropolis of the Gods had four sides, and the side facing Linley had a massive carving on it.

“Dragon?”

Staring at this twenty thousand meter high, ten thousand meter, massive carving, Linley saw that it was of an enormous, winding dragon. This dragon was different from the dragons of the Yulan continent’s plane, because this dragon didn’t have wings. And yet, the sculpture of the dragon gave off an aura of majesty which made others want to bow towards it.

“The four sides of the Necropolis have four different carvings.” Beirut’s voice rang out in everyone’s ears. “This side is of a massive dragon. It truly is the carving of a dragon. The opposite side is the massive carving of a white tiger. On the other two sides are massive sculptures of a phoenix and of a dragon-turtle.”

A massive dragon…a white tiger…a phoenix…and a dragon-turtle?

“Why does this Necropolis of the Gods have these four sculptures here?” Linley was puzzled.

Beirut patted Bebe, still in his arms. At this point, Bebe jumped off and scampered onto Linley’s shoulders. Beirut then laughed calmly and said, “These four massive sculptures represent four different parts of the Necropolis of the Gods. As for the side of the massive dragon, beneath it, there are a large number of smaller sculptures.”

Linley and the others saw it as well.

The massive sculpture of the dragon took up roughly 70%-80% of the entire area, while the other sculptures, all combined, only took up 10%. The rest was just blank.

“These sculptures…” Linley carefully inspected the smaller sculptures below the massive dragon. All of them, amazingly enough, were in the form of a dragon or serpent-type magical beasts. There was a certain rhythm and sequence to them as well.

“Judging from these small sculptures…” Beirut looked at the smaller sculptures as well. “This time, it seems that the guardian of the first eleven layers of the Necropolis of the Gods will be the divine beast, the ‘Ba-Serpent’.”

“The divine beast, ‘Ba-Serpent’?”

The eighty-plus experts of the Yulan continent’s plane were all very confused, but they all knew one thing…since it was termed as a ‘divine beast’, this ‘Ba-Serpent’ clearly had already reached the Deity-level. How would the Saints here possibly break past it?

“Ba-Serpent? Lord Beirut, but…how will they even stand a chance?” Dylin spoke.

Lord Beirut glanced at him, then laughed calmly. “This divine beast, ‘Ba-Serpent’, reached adulthood tens of thousands of years ago. From what I understand, it has already reached the level of being a full God. Let’s not discuss the Saints for now; even if the four of you went in, once you got into a fight with the Ba-Serpent, you would definitely die.”

The faces of the eighty-plus experts changed.

“Last time, the leader of the upper eleven floors was only a Two-Headed Vile Dragon from the Infernal Realm. I didn’t expect that this time, it would actually be the divine beast, ‘Ba-Serpent’. And a God level one at that.”

Fain's face was extremely sour.

Linley understood this as well.

This Necropolis of the Gods was for the group of Saints to enter. Even if the Deities entered, they wouldn't enter alongside them. Given the power of Saints, upon encountering a full God, they would definitely die. There was no question about this whatsoever.

Lord Beirut laughed calmly. "Don't worry. The path before you isn't a path of certain death. First, let me explain some basics regarding the Necropolis of the Gods to you. The Necropolis of the Gods has a total of eighteen layers! The top ten layers definitely do not have divine sparks. From the eleventh layer onwards, there will definitely be corpses of Deities as well as divine sparks to be found."

Many of the experts who had never been here before immediately had looks of joy on their face.

Hearing that there were divine sparks on the eleventh floor, many people immediately made the decision that they absolutely had to break through to the eleventh floor. Once they found a divine spark, they would become a Deity. The prerequisite, of course…was that they find the divine spark of a Demigod.

"The part of the Necropolis of the Gods which you are about to enter into has the divine beast, 'Ba-Serpent', as the leader of the top eleven floors. As for the twelfth floor and beyond…even Deities which enter it have a very high chance of death." Lord Beirut laughed calmly, and the people who had unconsciously contemplating giving the twelfth floor a try immediately gave up the notion.

Beirut looked at the people present. "As for the Ba-Serpent, he might be on the first floor, or he might be on the eleventh floor. Regardless…he is definitely within one of the eleven floors."

Linley couldn't help but feel nervous.

“If we run into the Ba-Serpent, doesn’t that mean we are doomed?” Linley worried.

Beirut seemed to know what Linley was thinking. He explained, “Regarding the Ba-Serpent…the Ba-Serpent is fond of sleeping, and when asleep, a Ba-Serpent generally will not wake up, unless there is a huge commotion of some sort. If you encounter the sleeping Ba-Serpent on your floor, you’d best not wake him up, as otherwise, you would definitely die.”

Everyone present was secretly cursing in their heart.

Who would be idiotic enough to wake up the Ba-Serpent? But everyone knew as well that if the leader of these first eleven floors was the Ba-Serpent, then there would definitely be other barriers as well.

“The Ba-Serpent is fond of sleeping, but if the Ba-Serpent just so happens to be awake when your group enters…all you can do is blame your own terrible luck.” Lord Beirut explained.

The faces of all the experts present changed.

If they encountered the divine beast ‘Ba-Serpent’ while it was awake, most likely not a single one of them would be able to escape.

“Haha…” Lord Beirut laughed loudly. “All I can do is wish you good luck. Remember. The first eleven floors has more than just the divine beast, ‘Ba-Serpent’. It also has all sorts of other monsters, or undead creatures, or aberrations from other planes. There are quite a few creatures within that are much more powerful than even the most powerful of you.”

The faces of Fain and Desri were extremely solemn.

They knew this very well, because last time, they had suffered as a result of it.

“Remember. Be careful and be vigilant. Don’t be greedy.” Lord Beirut said.

“If you die inside, I won’t be able to rescue you from outside either.”

As he spoke, Beirut’s hands flashed with two rays of black light which struck the bottom of the wall. Instantly, two gateways appeared there at the bottom of the massive wall. “Human Saints will enter through the left gateway, while magical beast Saints will enter through the right gateway. If you survive the first four floors, then…you’ll meet again on the fifth floor.”

Linley immediately understood.

The insides of the Necropolis of the Gods were very complex, and these two tunnels led to different paths through the first four floors. Only on the fifth floor would it all merge together.

“All of you, go inside now.” Beirut laughed calmly. “Remember. If you are afraid, you can just hide on the first floor, which has the least danger, and wait ten years. In ten year’s time, every single floor will have portals to the outside world appear, at which point you will be able to leave.”

Ten years!

Nobody hesitated. The human Saints and the magical beast Saints all separated into their own groups.

“Bebe, be careful.” Linley said mentally.

“Boss, you be careful too.” Bebe couldn’t bear to part from Linley either.

Chapter 10 – Moving Cautiously

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 10: Moving Cautiously

After the human experts and the magical beasts experts entered the Necropolis of the Gods, the High Priest finally spoke.

“Lord Beirut?” The High Priest looked at Beirut. “If that Bebe encounters the divine beast, ‘Ba-Serpent’, what then?”

Perhaps Beirut didn’t give a damn about the lives of the others, but he definitely cared about Bebe. And, in the Necropolis of the Gods, even Beirut wouldn’t be able to save them. The High Priest was confused…why did Beirut dare to do such a thing!

Beirut laughed. “It’s fine. Bebe won’t encounter the Ba-Serpent. Because… he took the right tunnel.”

“Lord Beirut, what are you saying?” Cesar’s face changed.

Beirut laughed calmly and nodded. “Just now, when I opened the tunnels, I did a quick investigation. The Ba-Serpent is in the area of the left tunnel, and it is beneath the fifth floor…thus, I had the magical beast Saints enter the right tunnel.”

The High Priest, War God, Dylin, and Cesar all sighed secretly.

“Then Linley…” Cesar said in a quiet voice.

Beirut said calmly, “I hope his luck is good. I can’t always protect them. They made the decision for themselves to enter the Necropolis of the Gods. Enough. Let’s go. We’ll come again in ten years.” Beirut immediately turned and flew out from the tunnel they came in from.

The High Priest, the War God, and the others all hurried after him.

…..

The dark, gloomy tunnel was ‘lit’ by black light. The group of experts entered the tunnel. The waters of the deep sea weren’t able to enter this tunnel at all. Fain and Linley walked side by side.

“Linley, remember. If you encounter anything dangerous, the safest thing you can do is retreat to a lower floor.” Fain was giving Linley the benefit of his experience. “Every single layer here has a large amount of terrifying creatures or undead, but they remain on their own floor.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Also. No matter what, do not release your spiritual energy in the Necropolis of the Gods.” Fain said solemnly. “If your spiritual energy draws the attention of some creatures, they will quickly discover your presence.”

“I know.” In a dangerous place like this, actively releasing his spiritual energy was telling all the creatures and undead of this floor his location. That was as good as looking for death.

Linley said questioningly, “Fain, the Necropolis of the Gods is built with so many types of creatures on each floor…I have the feeling that someone built it on purpose.” It was simply too bizarre. After all, if many Deities had died here, it should have been a chaotic place.

But instead, it looked indeed like an enormous necropolis.

“From what Master said, Lord Beirut had told him once before that this Necropolis of the Gods is actually nothing more than a Sovereign’s game.” Fain laughed bitterly.

“A Sovereign’s game?” Linley was stunned.

But then, Linley immediately understood. “That Hodan had said that in the

Higher Planes, there are trillions upon trillions of Deities, but there are only seven of each type of Sovereign. Sovereigns sit on high, far above the Deities. One must have sent his subordinates to construct a necropolis for the corpses of many dead gods, and then intentionally allow Saint-level experts or perhaps Deity-level experts to enter here and seek treasure." Linley felt a sense of helplessness.

Sovereigns were far and above their level.

All of them, including the High Priest, the War God, and the other Demigods were nothing more than a tiny chess piece in this game to the Sovereign.

"Perhaps the Sovereign would actually find some amusement in watching us fight for our lives." Fain sighed.

Linley understood. The Sovereigns were far above them, looking down and watching as they struggled, much like how when he was young, him and the other children watched the ants on the ground.

All of them, including the High Priest and the War God, were nothing more than 'ants' in the eyes of the Sovereigns. Perhaps even the seemingly powerful Beirut, in the eyes of the high Sovereigns, was nothing more than a rather large ant.

"Regardless, the chance we have here to seize a divine spark is far greater than the chance we would have in the Higher Planes." Fain sighed deeply.

Linley sighed deeply as well.

It was time to prepare to fight.

"If I can get a divine spark, even if I don't use it, I can give it to Delia." Linley deeply treasured Delia. He had left and would be gone for ten years, but she hadn't said a single word of complaint. He truly felt lucky to have been able to marry such a wife, who always thought about him first and foremost.

“Everyone, we’ve reached the end of the tunnel.” A callous middle-aged man who wore a turban on his head said loudly. “If we continue forward, we will be at the first floor. Remember. Don’t be too greedy. You dying isn’t a big deal, but don’t drag down others with you.”

After speaking, the turban-wearing man walked out of the tunnel.

This person was one of the Five Prime Saints, the number one expert of the great plains of the far east, the War Saint Tulily.

Behind him, one Saint after another exited the tunnel.

“Who knows what will be on the first floor. We better not encounter that terrifying Deity-level ‘Ba-Serpent’ magical beast on the very first floor.” Linley stared at the pitch-black end of the tunnel, then stepped through it. Instantly, the world spun and the environment changed.

“Whoooooooooooosh.” A wild wind was blowing desolately, and yellow sand was flying everywhere.

This was an extremely desolate desert world, and the wild wind blasted the yellow sand everywhere, causing the entire world to seem blurry. The heat waves here caused the air itself to distort as well.

“There’s magical beasts over there.” Linley could clearly tell that off in the distance, there was a ferocious, three-horned magical beast that was hundreds of meters tall, which was currently roaring with anger. Its entire body was covered with a metallic shine, and its fierce fangs were dripping with some sort of liquid. “This magical beast appears to be quite formidable.”

Linley was secretly surprised, and he immediately transformed into his Dragonblood Warrior form.

In a place like this, he didn’t dare to be incautious.

“Hrm?” Linley suddenly realized that a great deal of sand was being blown by the wind through the body of that ‘ferocious magical beast’. Soon, the ferocious magical beast disappeared from view.

“Mirage?” Linley began to understand.

Many of the Saints were inspecting their surroundings carefully upon entering this place, and then quickly were beginning to fly in search of the passageway to the second floor.

“Where’s Barker?” Linley hadn’t discovered Barker yet. “This damn place. There’s sand everywhere, the air is distorted, and mirages constantly appear. I can’t even see anyone clearly.” Linley secretly cursed. Aside from a few of the nearer Saints, whom he could make out clearly, he couldn’t see any of the other Saints at all.

Linley didn’t waste any more time thinking, and he immediately flew out as well.

“Linley.” Suddenly, someone drew near Linley.

Linley looked at him. This was the fifth personal disciple of the War God, Eddins [Yi’deng’si]. Eddins reminded him, “Linley, remember, this damn place is filled with mirages that are hard to tell apart from reality. They are truly irritating. Don’t stay in one place. What you need to do is run everywhere and search for that gateway to the second floor. If you stay in this place and waste too much time, it’s possible that trouble will find you.”

After speaking, Eddins immediately flew away by himself at high speed.

The scorching waves of gas caused the air itself to distort. Soon, Linley could no longer see Eddins any longer.

“I can only do what Eddins recommended.” Linley immediately began flying everywhere, searching for that gateway to the second floor. The most common life form here in this desert was an enormous cactus. As for creatures…he didn’t even see one.

Linley flew in the air while carefully inspecting all of his surroundings, searching for that gateway.

“Swish!” A flash of light suddenly shot out from beneath the yellow sands, shooting directly towards Linley. Linley’s iron-whip-like draconic tail struck at it lightning fast, and with a ‘whap’ sound, the ray of light was immediately shattered and broken.

Immediately afterwards, six skeletons whose entire bodies were covered with a diamond aura emerged from the yellow sand at high speed.

“Draconian, obediently give us your corpse, and we’ll give you a clean death.” One of the six Saint-level undead spoke out, his eyes-sockets filled with two lively balls of fire. The six Saint-level skeletons surrounded Linley, their weapons at the ready.

Linley looked at the six Saint-level undead.

“Draconian?” Linley glanced at them out of the corner of his eyes. “You think I am…” Halfway through Linley’s words, the various weapons in the hands of these Saint-level undead, such as a skeletal sickle and a skeletal spear, simultaneously struck out at Linley.

The air immediately howled piercingly. The combination attack of these six Saint-level undead couldn’t be looked down upon.

But suddenly, countless flashes of violet light appeared, and with a metallic clanging sound, the six Saint-level undead found themselves being knocked backwards.

“Oh? They didn’t die?” Linley noticed that these six Saint-level skeletons only had some superficial scars on their skeletal bodies, but hadn’t collapsed. Although the ‘Rippling Wind’ technique’s attacks were extremely fast and could produce countless strikes, its raw attack force truly wasn’t very high.

The devilish purple light flashed yet again.

The six Saint-level skeletons didn't hesitate at all. With a howl, they immediately tunneled back down into the sand.

"Crunch!" "Crunch!" "Crunch!"

Three of the Saint-level skeletons were broken in half by a chop, while the other three Saint-level skeletons managed to hide within the depths of the yellow sands.

"They fled rather quickly." Linley flew forward at high speed.

After Linley left, those three bisected skeletons suddenly moved, immediately grabbing their other, severed half. To undead, as long as the fire of their spirits hadn't been extinguished, they themselves wouldn't die either. They absolutely could reconnect any of their broken or severed body parts.

"Rustle." Suddenly, multiple Saint-level skeletons came up from the sand, surrounding and slaughtering those three heavily-injured Saint-level skeletons, and then devouring the spiritual flame of the three.

"That Draconian was terrifying." One of the Saint-level skeletons raised his head, staring into the distance. "I wonder how long it will be before we collect enough corpses." And then, those Saint-level skeletons immediately burrowed back down into the ground.

Much as Linley had expected, as long as the divine beast, 'Ba-Serpent', wasn't on this first floor, then this first floor held the least amount of danger, here in the Necropolis of the Gods. Linley disposed of a few Saint-level skeletons that had rashly tried to kill him before finally finding the stairs to the second floor.

He climbed up the stairs.

The second floor of the Necropolis of the Gods was a jungle world. Dense

foliage and brambles were everywhere, making it very hard to see any dangers that might be present here.

“There are no illusions here, but I need to be wary of ambushes.” Linley’s battle-qi had already formed his Pulseguard Defense, and he held Bloodviolet at the ready, heading into this jungle world at high speed. But suddenly, Linley came to a halt and stared into the distance.

A human Saint had appeared, not too far away.

“Him?” Linley let out a secret sigh of relief. Although Linley didn’t know the names of many of the human Saints, Linley still memorized what they looked like.

Linley began to fly again, but the trees of this jungle world reached all the way to the top of this level, and they were so dense that they completely blocked one’s field of vision.

Linley didn’t notice that a green little snake the size of a finger was coiled on the leaf of a tree. Its coloration was identical to that of the leaf, and Linley, flying through the jungle at such a high speed, didn’t notice it at all. But that green little snake’s eyes were filled with an icy glare as it stared below at Linley.

“Swoosh!”

As fast as lightning, the little green snake the size of a finger shot out towards Linley, biting towards Linley’s neck.

“Hrm?” Linley’s face instantly changed. His Pulseguard Defense had actually been instantly penetrated 70% of the way through. The power of this attack was truly too terrifying. If a slightly weaker expert had encountered this little green snake, he probably would have died immediately.

“Swish!” The devilish purple light flashed, and spacetime suddenly froze, then began to fold on itself. Even as the little green snake was crying out,

Bloodviolet chopped down on its body.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind, level two!

“Whap!” The little green snake was chopped in two. Afterwards, the two halves suddenly expanded in size, immediately transforming into an enormous green serpent that was over a hundred meters long and as thick as a water barrel. The corpse of the giant serpent fell to the ground.

Linley took a deep breath. “Saint-level snake-type magical beast, but of a type which doesn’t exist in the Yulan continent.” Linley glanced down at the corpse on the ground. “It’s a good thing that I Dragonformed, resulting in my battle-qi increasing significantly. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have been able to take that hit.”

Only now did Linley realize why both Beirut and Fain had said that one had to be absolutely cautious here.

“Someone’s there?” Linley suddenly turned around to look.

He saw a massive, three-meter tall monster fly over at high speed, but when he saw it, Linley laughed. This was the transformed Undying Warrior, Barker.

“Lord Linley.” Barker flew over to him.

“Earlier, I saw you from afar on the first level, but by the time I flew over, I couldn’t find you.” Barker arrived next to Linley and said resignedly.

Chapter 11 – Plant Lifeforms

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 11: Plant Lifeforms

“Not so loud.” Linley was extremely cautious. “See that massive green snake corpse down below?”

Barker glanced down, then nodded. Linley said solemnly, “This massive green snake had transformed to the size of a finger and had hidden itself on a tree leaf. It suddenly ambushed me. If I had been too arrogant and hadn’t been in Dragonform already, my Pulseguard Defense in human form definitely wouldn’t have been able to take it, and I probably would’ve lost my life.”

“That bad?” Barker couldn’t help but say in shock.

Linley’s face was extremely grave. Staring at the surroundings, he said in a suppressed voice, “According to what Desri said, these three tunnels in the Yulan continent all lead to three different Necropolis of the Gods, and this is the most dangerous one. In the past, Desri and the others had hidden on the fifth floor and waited there until the ten years were up.”

Barker clearly was rather shocked. “And to think I wanted to go to the eleventh floor.”

“The eleventh floor? Desri didn’t even dare to go to the sixth floor, and you want to go to the eleventh floor?” Linley looked seriously at Barker. “Barker, don’t think that just because your defense is high that you can be rash. This damnable place has all sorts of creatures from different planes. There might be one that is perfectly suited for countering your abilities. If you aren’t careful, your life would be gone.”

“Do you remember what Desri said? If we are just the slightest bit avaricious, we would be lucky to see ten of us survive, out of the eighty plus total.” Linley glanced at Barker. “If only ten were to survive, I expect

that five of them would be the Five Prime Saints, as well as the others who had already come here. As for me, if I'm not careful, I might die here."

Hearing Linley's words, Barker immediately grew much more cautious.

After all, in terms of who would be able to survive, those who had come before naturally had a higher chance of survival. In addition, amongst the eighty plus experts, there were the likes of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions and the terrifying magical beasts of the Forest of Darkness. When factoring in the human experts as well, there were definitely more than ten people who were as strong or stronger than Barker.

"Let's go." Linley whispered.

"Right." Barker immediately followed Linley. The two of them travelled very carefully, Bloodviolet and the greataxe in their respective hands, prepared to do battle at all times.

This actually made many of the powerful creatures in the forest decide not to attack them.

"Lord Linley, in this place, there are far too many thistles and far too much foliage. We can't even clearly tell which direction we are going in." After flying for a long time, both of them grew impatient. From the outside, the Necropolis of the Gods had seemed to only be ten thousand meters long, but inside, the space had expanded so dramatically.

Linley and the others could only stare in amazement at this.

"Don't worry. Be calm. Search calmly." Linley whispered.

Suddenly…"Ah!!!" A fierce, agonized scream could be heard from afar, and ravaged pieces of leaves blasted out from afar as well.

Linley and Barker glanced at each other, then quietly moved towards the direction of the battle. Soon, the two discovered an astonishing sight; an enormous flower was wrapped itself around and 'biting' a Saint, like a

massive mouth trying to devour something. The insides of the flower were quivering; clearly, the Saint inside was trying to fight back.

But in just a few moments, the insides of the flower regained its normal calm.

That Saint had died already.

“Man-eating?” Linley couldn’t help but frown.

In the Forest of Darkness, upon seeing that living, metallic castle, Linley had come to understand…that it wasn’t just humans and magical beasts which had life force. Even metals or plants could have intelligence, and sometimes were even more terrifying than humans.

“Lord?” Barker said in a hushed voice.

Linley gestured at him with his eyes. At this moment, Linley, too, had noticed…that some vines and thorns were slowly moving.

“These rattan vines are alive. Most likely, there’s some plant lifeform that wishes to kill us.” Linley quirked his lips. Against plant-type creatures, using the adamantine heavy sword probably wouldn’t be very effective. After all, even if one demolished half of the plant, the other half would still be alive.

But if one used a sharp, quick weapon such as Bloodviolet, the effect would be much better.

“Rustle…” Suddenly, from afar, a rattan vine dozens of meters long suddenly shot out directly towards Linley and Barker, while at the same time, the vines wrapped around the various trees also left them, moving to surround Linley.

The vines in the grass also shot out.

In an instant…hundreds of rattan vines, thin or thick, covered the skies,

attacking from above, from below, and from around them. Even the rattan vines in the mud snapped out. Linley and Barker had suddenly found themselves trapped within a prison of countless vines.

The countless rattan vines formed a giant, ten-meter wide green rattan sphere.

Linley and Barker were within that giant sphere.

“This will be troublesome.” Linley tried to use his arms to push apart the rattan vines that were wrapped around him, but the rattan vines were extremely soft and pliable. They only bulged outward slightly. Raw strength alone simply wasn’t capable of breaking through this rattan vine cage. In addition, Linley had the sense that countless sharp needles were piercing out at his entire body from those rattan vines.

Although his ‘Pulseguard Defense’ was able to take it, his battle-qi was beginning to deplete at a rapid pace.

“Lord, I’m unable to break free.” Barker was frantic as well. He wanted to wield his greataxe, but the large number of rattan vines surrounding his arms made it impossible for him to wield it. The elasticity and endurance of those vines was simply terrifying. “Lord, what should we do?”

Barker was frantic.

Although he was powerful, the life force of these enormous rattan vines was even greater.

Suddenly…

“Haha, the two of you, accept your death. After killing the two of you, I will kill three more, and then I’ll have enough corpses. Once I offer the corpses to his Lordship, I will also become a Deity. Don’t resist. You aren’t able to resist. The strength of you humans can’t possibly match mine.” A thin, wild voice echoed from within this rattan cage.

“Enough corpses?” Linley was shocked.

He was beginning to understand why all of these creatures in the Necropolis of the Gods wanted to kill them.

“Die.” That thin, sharp voice rang out again.

Linley sensed a terrifying force coming at him through the rattan vines. Every single one of the vines was exceedingly strong, and right now, hundreds or perhaps a thousand of them were exerting force at the same time. Even Linley and Barker felt themselves to be under tremendous pressure.

The large number of vines coiling around Linley had caused his arms, legs, and draconic tail to be bound. Even when using all of his raw strength, he was only able to move slightly.

“You want to kill the two of us?” Linley laughed coldly, and then with a flick of his wrist…

A devilish purple light immediately flashed. Under the attack of the ‘Tempos of the Wind’, wherever Bloodviolet passed by, rattan vines immediately split apart. Linley’s Bloodviolet sword quickly transformed into a blur, and countless vines split apart. A desolate, miserable cry could be heard.

Those remaining, unbroken vines quickly fled at high speed.

Soon, those undamaged vines disappeared, while the shattered vines lay there on the floor, but continued to twitch as though they were living tentacles.

“Hrmph.” Linley stared at his surroundings.

Linley was searching for the core of that plant life-form. And soon, Linley discovered some tiny tracks, but as he did, Linley could only shake his head and sigh. “This fellow’s main body is actually hidden under the ground.

Killing him will be troublesome."

Barker still felt some fear. "Lord Linley, if I were by myself and encountered this rattan life form, what could I have done? Bloodviolet is small and easy to use with but a flick of the wrist, but my greataxe is different. If I had to wield it with just my wrist, the attack power would have been weak and I wouldn't be able to break apart those rattan vines."

Linley nodded slightly.

Barker had huge strength and strong defense, and his greataxe was used for powerful chopping blows. But just then, with his entire body wrapped around by vines and his arms unable to move, it would have been very hard for him to break through the vines.

"Against this sort of plant life-forms, brute strength is far inferior to sharp weapons." Linley glanced at Barker.

"The main problem is that your understanding of the Laws is not very high. Even empty-handed, I could use the 'Tempos of the Wind' technique and use the edge of my hand to chop apart those rattan vines. Using the 'Profound Truths of the Earth' would also be sufficient to disintegrate those rattans." Linley reminded Barker, "In the Yulan continent, it is fine for you to rely on your great strength and your mighty defense, but if you are to encounter any creatures with strange powers, you would really be in trouble."

"Right." Barker firmly took this lesson to heart.

"Let's go." Linley said.

But after the two had flown only a few dozen meters away, Linley suddenly turned and charged towards the ground as fast as a thunderbolt. He smashed down with his right hand like a heavy mace and delivered a vicious blow to the ground. The entire world seemed to tremble slightly.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Throbbing Pulse of the World, 128 Layered

This was Linley's current limit, and it was far more powerful than his previous 256 layered waves.

"Ah!" A miserable cry could be heard from underground.

"Hrmph. You are fortunate to not die." Linley quickly flew up again. "Barker, let's go."

When the rattan vines had fled, Linley had actually been able to more or less calculate the general location of the rattan life-form beneath the ground. But this was just a general area. As Linley saw it…this rattan life-form's main body was undoubtedly huge.

Linley predicted where it probably was, and then delivered the 'Profound Truths of the Earth' into the center of that area.

"Although I am not able to attack the heart of the creature, I should still be able to attack the general location it is in." Linley had thought to himself. Indeed, as he had predicted, although he hadn't struck the creature's core and the rattan life-form had been lucky enough to survive, Linley still had caused it great harm.

Soon after their battle against the rattan life-form, Linley and Barker found where the second gateway was hidden. It was a set of stair surrounded by a large amount of vegetation. Linley and Barker climbed directly up the stairs, finally arriving at the entrance to the third floor.

"Be careful. Every single floor potentially has the divine beast, 'Ba-Serpent', within it. You cannot be too rash." Linley reminded Barker.

"I know. If we discover the Ba-Serpent, I won't even say a word." Barker nodded.

Linley and Barker then headed directly into the third floor. Upon entering it, Linley and Barker both couldn't help but shiver. It was too cold. This sort of

cold, Linley and Barker had never felt before.

This was a world of ice.

Icebergs dotted the landscape like mountain ranges, and a large amount of white energy was flowing everywhere. When that white energy drew near them, Linley and Barker couldn't help but shiver yet again.

"How can it be so cold?" Linley was secretly shocked. "I have both my Pulseguard Defense and my draconic scales, but I still feel cold. This is monstrous."

But although both Linley and Barker thought this, they didn't dare to make a sound. Before fully ascertaining whether or not this floor contained the divine beast, 'Ba-Serpent', the two wouldn't dare to make any noise at all. Linley and Barker flew carefully.

Suddenly…

"It is Eddins." Linley saw the Saint from not too far away. Right now, Eddins was currently flying carefully with two other Saints.

When Linley and Barker drew near them, Eddins seemed to have noticed Linley as well, and he hurriedly gestured at Linley with his eyes.

"What is it?" Linley was secretly surprised.

Eddins' glance clearly conveyed that he was worried, while at the same time, he pointed in a certain direction.

Linley immediately looked towards the direction which Eddins was pointing at, and he saw what looked like a serpentine creature, covered with green scales. It was over ten meters thick, and as for length…Linley was only able to see a few dozen meters of its length. The rest of it was blocked off by the various icebergs.

"Could that be the Ba-Serpent?" Linley's heart shook.

Barker was astonished as well. He shared a glance with Linley, and they both flew cautiously and quietly. It wasn't just them; Eddins and the other two Saints didn't dare to make any noise at all either, afraid that they might awaken the terrifying divine beast, the Ba-Serpent.

After flying for a while, Linley was able to see the main part of the Ba-Serpent's body.

The body of the Ba-Serpent was actually wrapped around a mountain-like iceberg, and one couldn't see the end of its body. But the part wrapped around the iceberg alone had to be thousands of meters long. This was the physically largest magical beast which Linley had ever witnessed in his life. Normal magical beasts were at most a hundred meters long or so.

But the visible portion of this Ba-Serpent was already thousands of meters long.

"Could it be that it is over ten thousand meters long?" Linley, Barker, and the others continued to fly about in search of the next gateway. Linley saw that from behind, more experts had entered the third floor as well. "I hope these people won't awaken the Ba-Serpent. If we get dragged down by them somehow, that would be disastrous."

There were now quite a few experts on the third floor. If a single one of them made noise, all of them would be doomed.

"The head of the Ba-Serpent." Linley saw from afar a massive serpentine head, at least twenty meters high. The Ba-Serpent's eyes were closed. Its breathing wasn't very loud, but in the silent atmosphere of the third floor, Linley and the others could make it out very clearly.

When the Ba-Serpent was asleep, it would constantly emit puffs of black gas from its mouth. The black gas scattered towards the surrounding area like the wind, and whenever the black gas touched the nearby icebergs, the icebergs would immediately crumble into ground ice dust.

Chapter 12 – The Ba-Serpent Awakens?

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 12: The Ba-Serpent Awakens?

On the third floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, all the Saints were moving with the utmost of caution, not daring to make a single sound for fear of startling awake this slumbering, terrifying creature…the Ba-Serpent. In the entire third floor, the only sound was the soft, quiet snores of the slumbering Ba-Serpent.

“Whoosh. Hiss. Whoosh. Hiss.”

With each breath the Ba-Serpent took, scattered pieces of ice nearby were drawn into its mouth. Whenever it exhaled, black gas came flowing out.

“Fortunately, there are no other creatures on this third floor aside from the Ba-Serpent.” Linley cast a glance at the distant Ba-Serpent.

The ten-kilometer long scale-covered body of the Ba-Serpent, wrapped around that massive iceberg, had a massive head that was the height of a building with six or seven floors. From its closed eyelids came flashes of metallic, steel-like light. The feeling those dim flashes of light gave off alone made many Saints feel terror in their hearts.

After searching for a long time.

“Where is the passageway to the fourth floor?” Linley was growing somewhat impatient.

Not just Linley. The other experts on the third floor were growing frantic as well. If they were forced to stay on the first or second floor for ten days or a month, they wouldn’t be too afraid, but this was the third floor. Even a few hours were difficult to bear.

If anyone made any loud sounds, this Ba-Serpent would definitely wake up.

Even if it didn't wake up from noise, the Ba-Serpent might wake up on its own. If they just so happened to be here while the Ba-Serpent was awake, then the Saints wouldn't even have the chance to cry before dying.

"There are more and more people arriving on the third floor now. There's over thirty, I wager." Linley turned back and glanced. Those experts that had been on the first or second floor were all all making their way to the third floor now. Nobody in the third floor had found the fourth floor entrance yet.

Naturally, the population in the third floor was continuing to increase.

"Whoosh."

Although the Ba-Serpent's breathing wasn't very loud, it still struck at each person's heart like a hammer.

"Desri, Tulily, and Fain came in first, but I haven't seen them yet." Linley carefully moved past a flow of black gas, which brushed against a nearby iceberg. The iceberg immediately transformed into powder.

The black gas which the Ba-Serpent exhaled was not to be touched.

"Desri and the others are experienced. Most likely, they have already found the entrance and have gone to the fourth floor already." Linley understood that while he had been searching for the gateway in the first floor, Desri and Fain probably had already begun moving up into the higher floors.

There was nothing for it. They had the benefit of experience.

A person drew near. It was Eddins. Linley looked questioningly at Eddins.

Eddins used a finger to point towards another direction, then a second direction, indicating that several of them would search in the first direction, while Linley and Barker were to search in the other direction.

Linley nodded.

Eddins smiled, and then flew in the first direction with the other two Saints. Linley and Barker exchanged a glance, knowing what the other was thinking. They flew in the second direction. What mattered right now was finding that gateway!

Time passed, one minute at a time, one second at a time.

The experts in the third floor became more and more in number. From what Linley understood, by now, there were around forty of them. After all, there were only sixty or so human Saints, while the magical beasts numbered nearly twenty. Desri and Fain had already entered the fourth floor.

But if they continued to waste time like this, then the number of people here would naturally grow larger and larger.

“Eddins.” Linley looked to the distant Eddins.

Eddins and the other two shook their heads. Clearly, they hadn’t found the gateway. Linley also shook his head. Him and Barker had yet to find it either.

Quite a few of the Saints who knew each other were exchanging messages through meaningful looks. Clearly, none of them had found the gateway. As time went on…Linley, Eddins, and the others grew more and more nervous. But this large group of people still couldn’t find the gateway.

“Impossible.” Linley frowned. “This third floor is rather large, but with so many experts flying around searching for it, it’s impossible that we can’t find it.”

“The only possible explanation is…”

Linley looked towards the Ba-Serpent. “The passageway is next to the Ba-Serpent’s body!”

Ever since arriving at the third floor, every single Saint, upon seeing the Ba-Serpent, immediately moved away from it in terror. None of them dared to go near it. First, the Ba-Serpent was too terrifying. And second…the Ba-Serpent was surrounded by a large amount of black gas.

The power of that black gas was simply too great. Even those extremely tough icebergs crumbled into dust upon touching it.

Nobody dared to go near the Ba-Serpent!

"But precisely because no one dares to go near it, that's why there's a chance the gateway is there." Linley nudged the nearby Barker, who looked questioningly at Linley.

Linley pointed towards the Ba-Serpent, then gave Barker a meaningful look before flying directly towards the Ba-Serpent. Barker didn't hesitate either, immediately following behind Linley. Soon, the two arrived close to the Ba-Serpent's body.

Many Saints saw Linley and Barker do this, and they frantically tried to signal them with their eyes, telling them to stay farther away.

It wasn't because these Saints felt worried about them. It was because they feared that Linley and Barker would awaken the Ba-Serpent, and cause the deaths of all the Saints present!

"Now that we are fairly close to the Ba-Serpent, let's begin flying alongside its body and try our best to search for the gateway." Linley pulled Barker, not letting him go any closer to the Ba-Serpent, and then the two of them began to fly around the Ba-Serpent's massive body, trying to search for that opening.

They started from the safest area, near the tail of the serpent.

Saints were very intelligent. Seeing Linley and Barker do this, many Saints suddenly understood. They, too, now guessed…that perhaps the opening was next to the Ba-Serpent's body. Immediately, many other Saints drew

near and began to carefully search as well.

“Rumble…”

The Ba-Serpent moved. Its enormous body actually moved.

“The Ba-Serpent woke up!” Linley’s face instantly turned ugly to behold. Barker’s face, as well, immediately turned pale, without a hint of color. The Saints that had been in the process of searching close to the Ba-Serpent’s massive body, in virtually the same instant, disappeared like locusts, flashing away from the Ba-Serpent’s vicinity.

Without hesitating at all…

Linley and Barker flew back at high speed to the entrance to the second floor. After all, right now, there was only two ways to escape. One was to return to the second floor through the gateway to the second floor. The other method was to immediately go to the fourth floor.

“But…”

Nobody knew where the fourth floor’s gateway was. Without any other options, they had to return to the second floor as fast as possible!

“Quick, quick!” Linley was frantic. “We’re out of time!”

At this moment, Linley’s mind suddenly flashed back to Delia, who was still waiting for him back at the Yulan continent, as well as his two children, Taylor and Sasha. Linley wasn’t the only one frightened; the other Saints were frightened as well.

But…

“Wait a second.” Linley suddenly halted.

He had once more heard that sound of snoring, the sound of the Ba-Serpent’s snoring. After Linley halted, Barker flew a short while, realized

Linley wasn't flying, and turned back.

"The Ba-Serpent didn't wake up." Linley was surprised.

Linley wasn't the only one to discover this. Many of the other fleeing Saints had discovered this as well. All of them began to fly back. If the Ba-Serpent really had woken up, how could it possibly have let them cross that long distance from its body to the opening as easily as that?

Seeing that the Ba-Serpent was still slumbering, many Saints didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Linley and Barker exchanged a glance, both grinning.

"So it just rolled over in its sleep." Linley could tell that the position of the Ba-Serpent's body had moved slightly.

Many Saints hesitated only a short while before once more drawing near the Ba-Serpent and once more searching carefully around it. In just a short period of time, a Saint discovered the location of the gateway. Linley and Barker could both clearly see seven Saints standing there in mid-air, staring at a location next to the Ba-Serpent's head.

"Could it be there?" Linley and Barker both flew over.

Indeed…

The Ba-Serpent's head was facing the cliff of that giant iceberg. The black breath of the Ba-Serpent was rapidly crumbling the cliff of the giant iceberg, revealing a passageway within it. The stairs were easy to spot.

"So it is here. How terrible." Linley and Barker shared a glance. They both had a terrible feeling.

Just then, before the Ba-Serpent had turned over, the head of the Ba-Serpent had been resting against the other side. If they had found the tunnel then, they'd have to go close to the Ba-Serpent's head, true, but it would be

towards the back of the head. Linley and the others still would have been able to soundlessly sneak past.

But now…

The Ba-Serpent's head was directly facing that passageway, and with each breath, that black gas blew towards the stairs. In addition, a large amount of black gas was still circulating around in that area.

It would be very hard to reach the passageway to the fourth floor!

"Right now, there's only two ways we can enter the fourth floor." Linley frowned. "The first is to rely on speed to dodge past the black gas and charge straight through to the stairs and enter the fourth floor quickly. The second method is…" Linley raised his head.

This iceberg was enormous.

Clearly, the stairs were continuing to the top.

Linley expected that stairs ended somewhere in the middle of the iceberg mountain. They could drill a hole down through the iceberg mountain and directly reach the insides of the iceberg mountain, then look for the entrance to the fourth floor.

"But drilling through the mountain would definitely create noise." Linley was rather worried.

Just as Linley was hesitating, two black shadows suddenly charged towards the black-energy shrouded entrance. Those two black shadows were very fast and agile. Despite the density of the black gas…one of the shadows was touched by the black gas, but the other made it onto the stairs.

"Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique!" Linley said to himself.

Just then, that person had relied on the Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique to risk his life and pass through the black gas blocking the stairs.

“Can’t keep wasting time like this. If we keep wasting time, the Ba-Serpent will have breathed even more times and the black gas surrounding the tunnel will become even denser. Once it totally blocks off the entrance, then there won’t be any chance to go in at all.” Linley ground his teeth.

He glanced at the nearby Barker, who nodded back at Linley.

All of the forty-plus experts present understood that they couldn’t waste any more time. The more time they wasted, the less of a chance they would have.

“Whoosh!” A flash of light suddenly sped towards the entrance at high speed. With but a flash, the person entered the tunnel. Yet another Saint had passed through and entered the fourth floor.

Although the black gas was very dense and seemingly dangerous, all of the Saints present had their own consummate techniques, and thus still had a high chance of making it past.

After two had made it past, the forty-plus remaining Saints all felt their confidence increase. Yet another Saints transformed into a blur and streaked towards the tunnel entrance. Linley recognized this Saint; it was the War God’s disciple, Eddins.

Eddins was extremely fast, but suddenly, with a ‘puff’, Eddins was suddenly caught in a pincer by two flows of black gas. There was no way for him to dodge at all.

Instantly…

The terrified Eddins opened his mouth, as though he wanted to let out a scream of pain, but he didn’t even have the chance to make a sound. The black gas surrounded him, and then he crumbled into tiny pieces. Not even his soul was left.

“Eddins, he…” Linley’s heart contracted violently. This black gas was too

terrifying.

The faces of the forty-plus other Saints instantly turned pale. This black gas was too terrifying. Although they had guessed at how strong it was, they hadn't imagined that just by touching it, even someone with Eddins' power wouldn't be able to withstand it for half a second. Even his soul had been destroyed.

The mood was gloomier than ever before. On the third floor, only the Ba-Serpent's slumbering snores could be heard.

Chapter 13 – True Awakening! The Impending Calamity!

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 13: True Awakening! The Impending Calamity!

What to do?

All of the Saints were pondering this question. The situation was clear. That black gas couldn't be touched at all. Touching it meant death.

"Even Eddins wasn't able to withstand it for even a moment. Perhaps even I wouldn't be able to hold on for a second." Linley knew very well that this divine beast, the 'Ba-Serpent', was a full God-level Deity. The gas it breathed out carried just the slightest hint of its power, but the power of a God, even just a hint of it…wasn't something these Saints could withstand.

Suddenly…

Three people simultaneously charged towards the gateway to the second floor. Clearly, they wanted to return to the second floor.

"Gave up?" Linley glanced at them.

These people were returning to the second floor. Clearly, they were giving up this opportunity and preparing to stay on the second floor for the ten full years. After ten years, they would leave the Necropolis of the Gods.

"Giving up means giving up all of the treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods as well, but they will at least have their lives." Linley wasn't able to determine if these people made the right choice or the wrong choice, but Linley himself didn't wish to give up. Until the last moment came, he wouldn't give up.

Seeing the three leave, another five of the forty people present left as well,

returning to the second floor.

Only thirty or so people were now left on the third floor.

“Swish.” A shadow flashed past, paying no mind to the black gas as it charged in. Clearly, this Saint was extremely nimble. He quite agilely dodged past the gas, and in the twinkling of an eye, ascended the stairs. Yet another expert had entered the fourth floor.

But the next person, his face grim, who had charged out was suddenly surrounded by that randomly flowing black gas.

“Whooosh.” The Ba-Serpent’s breathing continued unabated.

The middle-aged man was transformed into crumbled bits, not even his soul remaining.

All of the experts remaining had very solemn looks on their faces. They had a look of determination in their eyes. Yet another Saint charged down, but this one’s luck was very bad. It just so happened that several waves of black gas joined together and blocked off the entire passageway.

He could only watch as the black gas surrounded him. Yet another man had died.

“The longer we wait, the more black gas there will be in the passageway. There’s no pattern to the movements of the black gas. If I fly over just when the black gas is sealing off the gateway, then I’ll be finished.” Linley knew that this was no longer a matter of speed or agility. It was also a matter of luck.

Linley glanced the nearby Barker.

The two shared a look, then nodded.

It was time to prepare to go down.

“Whoooosh.” “Hisssss.”

The Ba-Serpent continued to snore, and that sound was a sound which seemed to ring throughout this third floor. The atmosphere surrounding of the thirty remaining Saints, by contrast, seemed extremely grim and terrible. If one was unlucky, one’s soul would be destroyed and wouldn’t even have the chance to become a departed spirit in the Netherworld.

“Swoosh!” The next person was that burly man Linley had sparred with, Clay. Clay moved like a bolt of lightning, going in an arced line towards the tunnel entrance. Clay was extremely lucky; he dodged all of the flows of black gas and strode onto the stairway.

Clay had a hint of a smile on his face. He glanced back at the other Saints, then went up.

“This is the moment.” Linley noticed that the black gas had revealed a fairly large opening, and immediately prepared to charge. But there was someone who was even faster than Linley, and charged down before Linley did, forcing Linley to come to a halt.

Indeed, because the opening was fairly large, that Saint had managed to seize the opportunity to charge through.

Just as that Saint was letting out a sigh of relief, he suddenly felt enormous pain. Lowering his head, he saw that an extremely thin current of black gas had wrapped around his right foot, and that his right foot had already transformed into powder.

At the same time…

Stretching up from his right foot, his entire right leg instantly disintegrated. By the time this Saint reacted to what was going on, his entire body below his chest had disintegrated.

The feeling of his soul suffering extreme anguish caused this Saint to let out an uncontrollable scream of pain.

“Ah!!!” A piercing, agonized howl pierced through the calm of the third floor.

The pain he felt was so great that it was worse than being cut by ten million knives. The Saint didn’t want to make any noise, but he simply couldn’t endure it. He had never suffered pain like this before…

The faces of all the Saints present instantly changed. No blood could be seen in their faces.

They were finished!

“Flee!” Someone let out a sudden, angry roar. By now, it no longer made a difference if they made any noise at all.

The thirty-plus Saints were like a flock of terrified sheep as they wildly began to flee at their maximum speed.

But with a terrifying rumbling sound, the ten-kilometer long body of the Ba-Serpent suddenly began to move, and as it did, the massive, tough iceberg mountain exploded into tiny pieces.

The entire iceberg mountain shattered apart, revealing the passageway that had been hidden within it. The exit of that passageway….was like a little window hanging in mid-air.

The exploding iceberg mountain carried with it an irresistible amount of force in the shards it sprayed everywhere. Many of the Saints were struck by the ice and knocked flying backwards while they vomited blood. Each piece of ice contained within it a terrifying amount of force.

“Terrible.” Linley felt that he was like a soldier who was dodging an endless rain of arrows. Large pieces of crushed ice transformed into countless streaks of light, blasting in each directions.

“Barker.” Linley’s face suddenly changed greatly.

Barker's dodging abilities weren't comparable to Linley's. He finally was struck by a large piece of ice.

The ice itself wasn't frightening. What was frightening was the enormous power with which it had been hurled out.

"Bang." The piece of ice shattered apart, knocking Barker backwards. Barker spat out a large mouthful of blood. "Lord, flee, hurry!" A weak voice escaped from Barker's mouth.

The apocalypse had descended upon the third floor.

The previously slumbering Ba-Serpent's metallic eyelids opened. His dark, enormous eyes which had a hint of blue in them swept the surrounding area with a glance.

The Ba-Serpent had awoken!

Just a casual movement of its body had contained such terrifying force. If the Ba-Serpent had truly been trying to kill these Saints just then, would any of them have been able to flee?

"You want to go in?" The Ba-Serpent raised its head, staring at entrance to the fourth floor which was located above it.

At this moment, someone was charging towards the entrance at high speed. Clearly…this person was trying to enter the fourth floor. If Linley raised his head to look, he would have seen that this was the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier. But he had been noticed by the Ba-Serpent.

"Swish!"

The Ba-Serpent's eyes emitted two rays of dark blue light. Given the speed of these two rays of dark light, Olivier definitely would die.

But suddenly, Olivier's body was surrounded on one side by a cover of

black battle-qi, and on the other side by a cover of white battle-qi. His speed suddenly tripled, and with a ‘hiss’ sound, his two severed legs fell down from the sky.

But Olivier himself flew into the fourth floor.

Those two rays of dark light originally should have pierced into Olivier’s chest, but Olivier’s sudden increase in speed caused these two rays of dark light to only strike his legs. Two holes had appeared in his legs, which had quickly began to grow at an appalling speed.

But Olivier was very decisive.

He had cut off his own two legs!

If that Saint who had his foot brushed by black gas had known how powerful the black gas was and had immediately severed his leg, he might have been able to preserve his life.

“None of you will escape.” The Ba-Serpent rose up, staring around itself.

Right now, there were two Saints who had already reached the exit to the second floor, but just as they were about to enter, for no reason whatsoever, their bodies suddenly turned into ice, and then, like cracked ice, suddenly shattered into dozens of pieces.

The other experts on the third floor now felt true despair.

“That bastard dragged our entire group down.” Linley felt his heart tremble.

Terror!

Right, Linley was currently terrified!

The Ba-Serpent hadn’t even moved, but two Saints who had already reached the entrance to the second floor had suddenly died. What technique had the Ba-Serpent used? Linley didn’t know. And this not knowing was

what was so terrifying.

“Perhaps in the next instant, I will be suddenly frozen as well.”

“I don’t even know where Barker is right now.” Linley’s heart was filled with bitterness.

Linley suddenly gritted his teeth.

No time to worry about anything else. Even if he died, he’d die trying.

Linley’s hands were currently wielding Bloodviolet and the adamantine heavy sword. Linley raised his head to stare at the entrance up high. At this moment, Linley was only a few thousand meters away from the entrance to the fourth floor. This sort of distance, Linley could cross in the blink of an eye.

“Swish!” A human form shot towards the entrance to the fourth floor at high speed.

But in mid-air, the Ba-Serpent’s eyes once more shot out with those two rays of dark light, piercing through the man’s head. Yet another Saint died.

“Everyone, together…” A Saint didn’t even have the chance to finish his words before, just like that, he died.

The Ba-Serpent’s eyes stared with amusement at the dead person. The Ba-Serpent wasn’t in a hurry to kill those people. He had just taken a long nap. Now that he was awakened, it would be somewhat diverting for him to play with these ants in front of him.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Several human forms charged towards the skies. One of them was the Dragonformed Linley.

From the Ba-Serpent’s eyes, each eye shot out four rays of dark light in

succession. A total of eight rays of dark light suddenly shot out at the eight people, Linley included. The others were unable to do what Olivier had done and suddenly triple their speed.

One human figure after another died in mid-air.

One of the rays of blue light was striking towards Linley's head. Linley felt a sort of dread in his heart. Without question…once he was struck by the blue light, he would definitely die. In the last instant, Linley suddenly brandished Bloodviolet.

"Clang!" Linley moved like a flash of lightning, scurrying into the fourth floor's entrance.

Of the eight people present, seven died, one survived.

"Eh?" The Ba-Serpent raised his head in a surprise glance, and then murmured softly, "Intriguing. I didn't expect to find so many wonderful surprises amongst this group of humans. One of them was capable of simultaneously using the Laws of Darkness and Light, while this one… actually has such an incredibly precious divine artifact."

……

This was a world of snow, endless snow.

Linley stood in the middle of the blizzard, panting. Even now, his heart was still gripped by fear. Just then…Linley had seen the cold, remorseless eyes of the Ba-Serpent as it had shot out those rays of dark light. The little bit of power he had gained from his understanding of the Laws, in front of such an attack, was nothing but a joke!

What to do?

"It saved my life." Linley looked at the Bloodviolet sword in his hands. This was truly a divine artifact.

Although the adamantine heavy sword was very tough, it still couldn't be described as a divine artifact. Thus, in the last moment, Linley had chosen to use Bloodviolet to block that ray of dark light. Bloodviolet hadn't disappointed Linley. When that ray of dark blue light had struck Bloodviolet, it only made Bloodviolet tremble once; it didn't damage Bloodviolet at all.

"The ray of dark blue light didn't possess any impact force. What it only had was a strange devouring force."

Linley stared carefully at Bloodviolet. It was the same as it had always been. Linley knew that Bloodviolet was no ordinary weapon…because from that day when he had first activated its baleful aura, Linley had discovered those large amounts of corpses, many of which emanated an aura that surpassed that of living Saint-level magical beasts.

This was the weapon of a Deity. As to whether Bloodviolet's former owner was a Demigod, a full God, or a Highgod, Linley had no idea.

But Linley believed that for this divine artifact shouldn't be damaged so easily by the God-level Ba-Serpent's attack.

Linley had bet his life on it, and he had betted correctly. He had survived.

"But Barker…" Linley looked back at the nearby entrance. Below the entrance was the third floor, and Barker was still there. Linley, however, wasn't able to do anything. In front of the Ba-Serpent, he had no ability resist whatsoever.

"I didn't expect that you would survive as well." A cold voice rang out from nearby.

Linley turned to look.

Olivier was currently sitting on the snowy ground, his twin leg stumps surrounded by an aura of white light. At the same time, they were quickly regrowing. By now, they had already regenerated to the knees.

Chapter 14 – The World of Snow

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 14: The World of Snow

Olivier's face was currently very pale. Just then, he had used all the power available to him, but the price of tripling his speed was not a low one. And with the loss of both his legs…Olivier was currently in very bad shape.

"Why aren't you leaving?" Olivier raised his head, staring at Linley.

Linley just stood there, in no hurry to leave. He could tell that at present, Olivier's strength had dropped dramatically. With his legs gone, Olivier's movement ability in any battle with enemies would drop greatly as well. Although he could fly…flying while lacking two legs would make one's agility drop by half.

"Thank you." After a long silence, Olivier said these two words. And then, he focused on healing his wounds.

Linley's heart was in great pain right now. He turned back to look at the third floor. "Barker…if Barker truly died, then if in the future, his wife Leena, their two kids, Gates, and the other brothers ask me…" Linley felt helpless.

In front of the divine beast, Ba-Serpent, he had been lucky to even stay alive.

There was no way Linley could have saved Barker at all.

"I hope that Barker's luck was as good as mine. Perhaps he will enter the fourth floor, or flee back to the second floor." Linley stood there without moving, partially to help Olivier protect against any creatures from attacking him, and partially because he wanted to wait…

Wait to see if Barker would come out into the fourth floor as well.

After a long while…

“I’m done.” Olivier stood up and glanced at Linley, not saying anything else. He immediately transformed into a blur as he flew high into the sky.

Linley stood there for another half hour. In the end, he finally let out a long sigh before flying into the air as well.

The frozen ground was blanketed with white snow, and it was also dotted with many large, proudly standing trees. The snow covered these trees with a layer of silver decoration. After flying for a while, Linley saw a familiar face. It was Clay, who had sparred with him at War God Mountain.

“Linley.” Clay laughed as he flew over. “I thought that you had already… below…”

“I just entered the fourth floor. The person after you let out a scream of pain, and the Ba-Serpent woke up.” Linley shook his head. “I was only lucky, but my good friend Barker…”

Clay said consolingly, “Don’t be too sad. Soon after I entered the fourth floor, I discovered Olivier with his legs severed. From him, I learned that the Ba-Serpent had woken up. I thought that all of you had been killed by the Ba-Serpent. It’s already very lucky that you survived. Your friend would feel happy for you as well.”

Linley nodded.

The two flew side by side, and Clay cautioned, “Stop thinking about your friend. This fourth floor is extremely dangerous as well. If you are distracted and die as a result of it, that would be a terrible waste.”

Linley suddenly came to himself. Taking a deep breath, he shook his head a few times. “Got it.”

“Fain told me that in the past, they had retreated to the fifth floor. This

Necropolis of the Gods has eighteen floors in total. In the top eleven floors, every five floors represents one ‘layer’. The first four floors aren’t too dangerous, while the fifth floor is actually the least dangerous of the entire layer.” Clay explained.

Clay had been alive for much longer than Linley. He knew many more things as well.

“Oh? The fifth floor is the safest of the first five floors?” Linley was surprised.

“Right. From what Fain told me, according to the War God, every five floors is a layer. The danger from the first to the fifth floor is fairly average, while the sixth to the tenth floors are extremely dangerous. Even Fain could die at any time.” Clay reminded.

Linley nodded. In the future, he would be extremely careful.

“The sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth layers are all extremely dangerous. Compared to these four floors, the tenth floor is actually less dangerous by comparison.” Clay laughed.

Linley memorized these words. This was all information which Fain had no doubt received from the War God.

The War God had definitely passed through the first ten floors. Naturally, he knew the situation in these floors.

“Five floors a layer, with the fifth floor being the safest floor of the first layer, while the tenth floor is the safest floor of the second layer.” Linley suddenly had a strange feeling. “It seems as though the safe level is to allow everyone some time to prepare.”

Clearly, the sixth floor would suddenly rise greatly in difficulty and danger.

The eleventh floor was a place where there were corpses of Deities and divine sparks. As long as one wasn’t a fool, one would understand…the

eleventh floor was most likely far more dangerous than the earlier floors.

While flying past the snowy landscape, Clay laughed, “Only in the first five floors can we rely on our personal strength to fight through those various life forms. Once we reach the sixth floor…we will have to rely on our intelligence, our strength, and our luck, all combined.”

Linley nodded.

In the past, Desri and Fain had been so frightened that they didn’t dare to enter the sixth floor. They had hidden in the fifth floor until the ten years were up.

“Whooosh.”

There was a pile of snow below. Suddenly, a creature erupted from beneath the snow, flashing at Clay like a white flash of lightning. Clay’s body instantly turned metallic, then with a furious roar, his right fist directly down towards that attacking creature.

“Bang!”

The fist slammed directly against a furry palm.

Clay was sent flying backwards at high speed, while that furry creature also landed hard against the ground.

“Such enormous power.” Clay inwardly sighed in amazement.

Linley looked down with surprise as well at that furry creature. Linley had sparred with Clay before, and he knew how physically powerful Clay was. “Clay is ten times as powerful as Haydson was, and his defense is comparable to Barker’s. But he was only on par with this creature.”

The creature below suddenly stood up like a human would.

“A bear?” Linley stared with shock at the creature below and spoke out.

That seemingly bear-like magical beast was covered with white fur, but he had a black ring of fur lining his eyes, as though someone had punched his eyes and made them swell. Actually, that made this furry magical beast seem very adorable.

“I’m not a stupid bear. I’m a Snowy Panda-Cat.” That furry magical beast rebuked.

“Swoosh!” At this moment, the Snowy Panda-Cat suddenly rose up again, this time charging straight at Linley…like a flash of white light, the Snowy Panda-Cat arrived in front of Linley. Linley couldn’t help but be shocked by its speed.

“Whap!”

Linley’s draconic tail, glittering with metallic light, struck against the Snowy Panda-Cat. The sudden attack by the draconic tail was extremely fast, not giving the Snowy Panda-Cat any chance to respond at all.

“Bang.” The Snowy Panda-Cat slammed into the snowy ground again, while at the same time, a hint of blood appeared atop its pure white fur over its chest. The Snowy Bear stared at Linley, then at Clay, before finally bending over on all fours, then scampering away.

He had fled!

Linley and Clay both couldn’t help but laugh.

“This Snowy Panda-Cat is really amusing. After a simple exchange of blows, he immediately fled.” But Linley was shocked by the power of the Snowy Panda-Cat. Its strength wasn’t one whit inferior to the Worldbear, but its speed was far greater.

No wonder why it was called the Snowy Panda-Cat, and had the word ‘cat’ in its name.

“Haha…if I had to fight this Snowy Panda-Cat by myself, it would really be troublesome. The Snowy Panda-Cat’s speed seems to be faster than mine.” Clay chuckled bitterly. “Linley, I have the feeling that at most, I’ll be able to rest on the fifth floor. The sixth floor, I probably won’t be able to break through.”

“Enough. Let’s first find the tunnel.” Linley flew alongside Clay, searching for the tunnel.

The Snowy Panda-Cats on this fourth floor were very strange. Aside from a few of the Snowy Panda-Cats that would suddenly attack, most of the Snowy Panda-Cats didn’t attack them at all. Instead, most of them were just rolled up into a ball and sleeping on the snow. At first, Linley and Clay had been worried, but afterwards, they felt more relaxed.

“Listen up, the two of you.” Suddenly, an ancient voice rang out.

Linley and Clay, in mid-flight, started, then immediately turning to look at location from which the voice rang out from.

Beneath them was a Snowy Panda-Cat that was only one meter tall that was staring calmly at Linley and Clay. Although the Snowy Panda-Cats were much smaller than Worldbears, they were usually two or three meters tall at their full height. But this Snowy Panda-Cat was only a meter tall.

“This Snowy Panda-Cat is extremely dangerous.” Linley immediately became guarded. This Snowy Panda-Cat, although physically small, gave Linley a sense of danger, not too far from the feeling which the War God and the others gave him.

The ancient voice of the Snowy Panda-Cat rang out again. “I am the clan leader of this clan of Snowy Panda-Cats.”

Linley and Clay exchanged glances. Snowy Panda-Cats had clan leaders?

“Remember. On this fourth floor, as long as my children do not attack you, you are not to attack them either. If you kill any of them, then don’t blame

me for acting viciously against you." With a flip of the Snowy Panda-Cat's hand, a bamboo flute suddenly appeared.

Right. A bamboo flute.

"Is he going to play the flute?" Linley had never seen someone who was able to injure someone else by playing the flute.

But Linley and Clay both felt that this old fellow in front of them posed an enormous threat. They didn't dare to say anything, and so Clay hurriedly said, "Don't worry. Just then, when that Snowy Panda-Cat attacked us, we didn't go full force against it either. As long as your citizens don't attack us, we definitely won't attack your children either."

"The passageway to the fifth level is over there, next to that giant tree. The passageway is inside the giant tree." The leader of the Snowy Panda-Cats pointed towards the distant tree.

Linley and Clay immediately began to fly in that direction.

Seeing Linley and Clay leave, the leader of the Snowy Panda-Cats let out a long sigh. His clan of Snowy Panda-Cats had been placed here on the fourth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, which was like being placed in a prison. As the leader of this clan of Snowy Panda-Cats, he wasn't able to do anything about that.

Given his current level of strength, it wouldn't be too hard for him to kill many outsiders and then exchange their corpses for the divine spark of a Demigod. But he didn't want to do this. The reason was, only he had the power to threaten and frighten experts on Linley's level.

"If I become a Deity and leave, then these children will die soon afterwards as well." The Snowy Panda-Cat leader let out a long sigh.

He, too, was a Prime Saint, only a single step away from becoming a Deity. But the power of this leader of the Snowy Panda-Cats was greater than that of the Five Prime Saints. This was because the profound truths he had

gained insight into were different from that of others. It was much like how Linley…trained in the Throbbing Pulse of the World. In terms of attack power, it surpassed the insights which most others had gained.

The profound truths this leader of the Snowy Panda-Cats had gained insight into was one of the rarest types of profound truths of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

The fifth floor. The world of fire.

Linley and Clay, immediately upon arriving in this floor, felt themselves being attacked by waves of heat. This center of this fifth floor was a volcano, while the surrounding area was filled with desolate lava flows. It was an empty land…one could see off into the distance easily.

But the temperature of the lava flows here was very high.

“Boss!” A black shadow suddenly flew over at high speed.

“Bebe.” Linley could clearly feel that it was Bebe who was flying over. Bebe leaped directly into Linley’s arms, his eyes turning misty. “Boss, I arrived at the fifth floor long ago. I’ve been waiting for you here the entire time. Desri and the others said that you encountered the Ba-Serpent on the third floor. I’ve been worried about you the entire time, Boss.”

Linley couldn’t help but think back to what happened on the third floor, his heart once more filled with fear.

“Fortunately, nothing happened. Wonderful.” Bebe’s face was all smiles.

Bebe’s experience had been much easier than Linley’s. He hadn’t encountered the Ba-Serpent, and the attacks of the undead and the other creatures simply didn’t pose any threat to Bebe at all.

“Hey, Boss, where’s Barker? Isn’t Barker with you?” Bebe suddenly wondered.

Linley's face froze. The look on his face couldn't help but become somewhat ugly, and his eyes had a hint of pain in them.

Bebe was intelligent. Seeing Linley's reaction, Bebe was able to guess what happened. "Boss, Barker, he…could it be on the third floor…?" Linley let out a sigh. "Right. On the third floor, the Ba-Serpent woke up. We didn't have the ability to fight back at all. I was lucky and managed to rely on Bloodviolet to flee to the fourth floor. As for Barker…"

Linley's voice grew low, and in the end, he wasn't able to continue.

Chapter 15 – Eight Years in the Necropolis

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 15: Eight Years in the Necropolis

Waves of heat permeated the fifth floor. It was hard to even see people in the distance, due to the distorted air.

“Linley, hurry on over!” A familiar voice rang out from afar. Linley couldn’t help but turn to look towards the voice. The distant figure was very blurry, but Linley was still able to tell that the person standing in the distance was the Senior Apprentice of the War God’s College, ‘Fain’.

Although Linley was very dispirited, his will was still very firm.

In a place like the Necropolis of the Gods, unless you chose to give up, your only choice was to harden your faith in yourself and continue, one step at a time.

“Bebe, let’s head on over.” Linley said calmly, and Bebe immediately jumped onto Linley’s shoulders.

Transforming into a blur, Linley quickly arrived at the place where the many experts had gathered. Not only Fain was there. Desri, Rosarie, Tulily, and Rutherford were there as well. All five of the Prime Saints were together.

Aside from the five of them, there were three of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions as well.

“Now that the two of you are here, everyone is present.” Desri said with a calm laugh.

Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled. What did that mean? Everyone was now present?

“Linley, come, sit.” Fain gestured. “I heard that in the lower floors, the Ba-Serpent woke up. That truly is a calamity. Fortunately, you survived. Now, let’s discuss the matter of ascending to the sixth floor.”

Linley came to a rest, sitting down cross-legged.

To Linley’s scales, the waves of blazing heat coming from below didn’t pose much of a threat.

“You aren’t going to discuss things with those people?” Bebe pointed in confusion to another group of men and magical beasts off in the distance.

Over thirty experts had survived and made it to the fifth floor. Amongst them were over ten magical beasts, with a similar number in men. Originally, there had been sixty human experts of the eighty plus experts present, but thirty or so had died on the third floor, and several had most likely died on the first and second floor as well. The ten or so remaining people were probably hiding on the second floor, not daring to enter the third floor again.

“Them?” The severe-looking Tulily said calmly, “If they get involved, they’ll only disturb us.”

Linley immediately understood. Glancing at the distant Olivier and Hayward, he thought to himself, “Tulily’s intentions are very clear. Only these ten experts are the cream of the crop. Bebe and I aren’t any weaker than them. As for those three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, their power is also unfathomable. As for Olivier, Hayward, the disciples of the War God’s College, and the various magical beast experts…they are at least a level lower in power.”

In a place like this, the top tier experts naturally would form a unit.

Those twenty plus slightly weaker experts formed into a second unit.

Although the second unit contained people like Desri’s good friends,

‘Hayward’ and ‘Higginson’, along with several fellow disciples of Fain’s, and two of Tulily’s apprentices, there was nothing that could be done.

“Linley, Bebe, Cleo [Ke’li’ao] and your two brothers, you five probably aren’t that familiar with the sixth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. Let me explain.” Desri said solemnly. “Bebe, you saw just a while ago that the only creatures here on the fifth floor are a few ‘Magma Demons’. In terms of power, they are only comparable to the likes of Hayward.”

“Magma Demons?” Linley was puzzled.

He had never seen any Magma Demons. Desri looked at Linley. “Linley, you didn’t come in time. Those Magma Demons are formed from lava, and are roughly comparable to a human in size and shape. They are extremely strong and possess great defense, but they are a bit slow. Their power…is most likely comparable to your good friend Barker, although their defense is perhaps a bit weaker than Barker’s.”

Linley now had a clear understanding of these creatures.

“The fifth floor is the weakest floor of the first five. Those Magma Demons have already been destroyed by us.” Desri continued. “This fifth floor is a floor for us to prepare and rest. But soon, we will be entering the sixth floor…”

Linley, Bebe, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were listening carefully.

On the sixth floor, the danger level would rise dramatically, far beyond that of the fifth floor.

“The sixth floor is a world filled with lava and rocks. There is a powerful creature there; the Flame Tyrant.”

Flame Tyrant?

“To be precise, this Flame Tyrant is hundreds of meters tall, and his body is

composed of countless tough boulders. His strength is boundless, and his defense has also reached a terrifying level." Desri's face was solemn. "Most importantly of all, he wields a Bloodlust Greataxe. If any of us are hit by that greataxe, we will most likely die."

Linley's heart twitched.

As long as one was hit, one would die. That was too terrifying.

"And that's not all. Aside from the Flame Tyrant, the sixth floor also has hundreds of Magma Demons." Desri's face grew even more solemn. "One or two Magma Demons aren't a problem, but hundreds of Magma Demons are extremely dangerous."

Linley felt himself at a loss for words.

"Hundreds of Magma Demons. Isn't that equivalent to hundreds of Undying Warriors?" Linley was inwardly shocked. "Although these Magma Demons have slightly weaker defense than an Undying Warrior, there are hundreds of them. That is simply terrifying."

Desri continued, "These large numbers of Magma Demons all obey the orders of the Flame Tyrant. Actually, I have a feeling…that the Flame Tyrant is an evolved form of the Magma Demons. Think about it. They are all formed from lava rocks, except the Flame Tyrant is as massive as a mountain, while Magma Demons are the size of a human."

The nearby Rutherford laughed coldly. "A Flame Tyrant is essentially a Magma Demon magnified hundreds of times over. Its strength and attack power is also hundreds of times that of a Magma Demon."

Linley and Bebe looked at each other.

"Boss, those Magma Demons really were strong, on par with Barker. If the Flame Tyrant's power is hundreds of times greater than the Magma Demons'…" Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind. Linley maintained his silence.

Linley now had a clear understanding of what the sixth floor was like.

The sixth floor's adversary was a Flame Tyrant who commanded hundreds of Magma Demons. The Flame Tyrant itself was like a mountain, and had the power to smash a mountain to dust with a single punch. Nobody could withstand that sort of power.

Desri was silent for a long time. After Linley and the others had fully absorbed this news, Desri continued, "None of us are a match for the Flame Tyrant by ourselves. Only if we join forces and work together will we be able to charge into the sixth floor."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Three thousand years ago, we did battle against the Flame Tyrant." Desri said.

The eyes of Linley, Bebe, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions lit up. Only with experience could one form a good strategy on how to deal with the Flame Tyrant.

"In truth, last time, it was Fain and Tulily who attacked the Flame Tyrant. As for the rest of us, we were sent fleeing by a swarm of Magma Demons." Desri added. Three thousand years ago, he hadn't even had the chance to touch the Flame Tyrant.

Fain spoke. "Of the five of us, Tulily possesses the strongest attack."

No one disputed this.

Linley couldn't help but look at this person, the number one expert of the great plains of the far east, the man known as the 'War Saint', Tulily. Tulily said calmly, "The defense of the Flame Tyrant is the most terrifying defense I have ever seen. But three thousand years ago, our power was weaker than it is right now."

The others all nodded.

After three thousand years, the five of them had become Prime Saints. Their power had improved dramatically compared to three thousand years ago.

“Once we enter the sixth floor, the seven of you need to help me, Rutherford, and Rosarie clear a path. The three of us, joining forces, should be able to deal with that Flame Tyrant.” Tulily said. Rutherford and Rosarie both nodded.

Desri explained to Linley, Bebe, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, “This is a powerful attack which the three of them have developed together after researching for a long time. Most likely, this is the most powerful attack we are capable of.”

“Alright. I’ll help clear a path.” Linley nodded.

Since Tulily was publicly acknowledged as the Prime Saint with the greatest attack, and had two others helping him, the power of their combined attack definitely would not be weak.

“Now, what we need to do is…” Desri laughed calmly. “Train here and prepare on the fifth floor!”

Fain laughed as well. “We’ll first train for eight years, then head off to the sixth floor.”

“What?” Linley was somewhat astonished. They only had ten years in the Necropolis of the Gods, but they were going to spend eight of them here on the fifth floor?

But Linley quickly understood. He had learned from Clay that the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth floors were extremely dangerous. In these four floors, they probably wouldn’t even have the chance to rest.

To go past these four floors, if they were successful, most likely they would only need ten days or half a month.

“Prepare well. Each of the following floors, if we aren’t careful, will be the death of us. If you are afraid, you can also stay here on the fifth floor and wait for the ten years to be up.” Tulily stood up as he spoke calmly, and then flew by himself off into the distance to begin his meditations.

Not just Linley and the other nine experts. Even Olivier, Hayward, and the other twenty experts knew how terrifying the sixth floor was, and so nobody was in a hurry to enter. All of them focused on seizing every available moment to train. Perhaps in this short period of time, they might make some breakthrough.

Waves of heat distorted the air. Embers could be seen everywhere.

The experts in the fifth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods began to train and meditate.

Linley stared at the distant figures, all made blurry by the waves of heat. Olivier, the human experts, the magical beast experts…these thirty plus people were the most elite group of experts in the Yulan continent. Right now, all of them were training quietly.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other, their minds linked. The man and his magical beast began to train.

“Thrum!” “Thrum!” “Thrum!” “Thrum!” …..

The Throbbing Pulse of the World was omnipresent. Even though Linley was in the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley could still clearly feel that mysterious, profound throbbing pulse of the world. Every single pulse contained extremely profound mysteries. Linley began to meditate and attune himself to it, while at the same time, quickly mentally experimenting the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ over and over.

One year. Two years. Three years.

Many of the experts would train for a year or half a year, and then get up

and test out the attacks they had developed or improved. Just like that, time continued to move forward.

In the past, Linley had needed only a year to condense the 256 waves of the Throbbing Pulse of the World into 128 waves, but he needed five full years to make it a bit past halfway on his attempt to further condense the 128 waves into 64 waves.

This was all as Linley had predicted. The Throbbing Pulse of the World became harder and harder to fuse in the later stages.

In the blink of an eye, eight years had passed.

The fifth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods was as it had been in the past, with waves of heat distorting the air. Many experts had finished their training long ago. After all, many of them had been training for thousands of years. A few years now was only enough to further perfect some of their existing attacks and condition themselves.

“Why is Linley still training? We’re waiting on him now.” Rutherford couldn’t help but frown as he stared at the distant Linley, still in the meditative position.

By now, the Five Prime Saints, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, and Bebe had stopped training. Bebe had actually reached the level of transforming into eight doppelgangers using the ‘Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique’. In their unit, the only one left was Linley, who was still totally immersed in his training.

“Don’t be impatient. My Boss has already reached the critical juncture point. Once he makes this breakthrough, his power will multiply several times over.” Bebe stood next to Linley, staring coldly at the people in front of him as he spoke.

“A breakthrough that will allow him to increase his power several times over?” Desri, Tulily, and the other experts couldn’t help but feel astonished.

They had already reached the level of being Prime Saints, and had reached the end of the path of training they had chosen. Unless they made the true, final breakthrough and reached the Demigod level, it was very hard for them to improve at all. At their current levels of insight, it was impossible for their power to multiple by several times over, unless they truly became a Deity.

“Whew.” Linley let out a long breath, then opened his eyes, a smile on his face.

After spending eight years, Linley had finally, fully mastered the 64 layered waves of the Throbbing Pulse of the World, and the attack of his ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ had once again multiplied several times over.

Linley looked at the people standing there, and he instantly understood. He couldn’t help but let out a calm laugh, then said, “Apologies. I’ve made you wait for a long time. Shall we head out now?”

Chapter 16 – The Flame Tyrant

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 16: The Flame Tyrant

The thirty plus experts came together in front of the corridor from the fifth floor to the sixth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

Linley could tell that Olivier's aura seemed to have changed. In his heart, he couldn't help but feel astonished. "This Olivier, could it be that he has made another breakthrough?" As the Prodigy Sword Saint, Olivier had needed only twelve years to reach a level where even Haydson was no match for him, rising to the level of being just beneath the Five Prime Saints.

This rate of improvement was very terrifying.

Now that another eight years had passed, it would be strange if Olivier hadn't improved, actually.

Desri looked at Hayward and the twenty other experts, then said loudly, "You should know the situation on the sixth floor. The ten of us will be responsible for dealing with the Flame Tyrant. As for the rest of you, your responsibilities will be lighter. As long as you can stay alive, go search for the exit to the seventh floor."

The other twenty experts nodded.

Their task was far easier. Even if Desri hadn't instructed them to do so, they would've still gone in search of the exit.

"Enough. Let's head out." Desri said in a bright voice.

And then, Desri and the rest of the Five Prime Saints, Linley, Bebe, Cleo and his sibling Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, took the lead, stepping into the stairway and heading out towards the sixth floor. Behind them, the twenty

remaining experts followed closely.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

They were both very confident. Compared to eight years ago, Linley not only had improved in his ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’, his spiritual energy had improved as well. In fact, Linley had the feeling that he was about to make a breakthrough and reach the rank of Grand Magus Saint.

Battle-qi refining, after all, only needed a bit of spiritual energy to control it.

But eight years of training had caused Linley’s battle-qi to reach the maximum possible amount a Saint-level Dragonblood Warrior could reach.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” ….

The ten most powerful Saints of the Yulan continent transformed into shadowy flashes. In the blink of an eye, they simultaneously entered the sixth floor…the world of the Flame Tyrant!

“Hot!” As soon as he entered the sixth floor, Linley felt greater heat than he had ever felt before.

Right now, Linley and the other nine experts were standing atop glowing red rocks. This entire sixth floor was colored red by lava and molten rock.

“Drip, drip…” Scarlet flows of lava streamed like rivers throughout the sixth floor, occasionally releasing bubbles of gas. In the area around the lava rivers were glowing red rocks. Normal creatures would not be able to survive in a place like this.

The other twenty experts entered the sixth floor as well.

“Quick, search for the exit.” Desri instructed mentally. The twenty plus experts didn’t say anything, immediately flying away.

Desri glanced at Linley, Tulily, and the others. Without needing to speak, all of them began to fly together. Tulily, Rosarie, and Rutherford flew in the center, while the other seven experts surrounded them. Tulily and the others were already beginning their preparations.

They might encounter the Flame Tyrant at any time.

“If we can avoid even meeting the Flame Tyrant before we enter the seventh floor, that would be good.” Linley secretly thought to himself, while at the same time he carefully inspected his surroundings, searching for the passageway that would lead them to the seventh floor.

Suddenly, within one of the rivers of lava, a stone popped out. The strange thing was…this stone had eyes and a mouth. The stone suddenly flew out from within the magma river. It was actually the head of one of the Magma Demons.

That Magma Demon roared, “Humans!”

“Not good.” The faces of Linley and the others instantly changed.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!” ….

From within the river of lava, suddenly one Magma Demon after another appeared. The bodies of the Magma Demons were pure scarlet, and wrapped by faint wreathes of flame. They were roughly 2.5 meters tall, and wielded stone axes, warhammers, and other heavy weapons.

In the blink of an eye, Linley saw three hundred Magma Demons appear within the area of their group.

“The sixth floor is extremely large. If all the Magma Demons in the nearby areas are as numerous as they are here, then there are definitely over a thousand of them.” Linley thought inwardly, while at the same time, the experts began to fly at high speed while maintain high alert, ready to attack at any moment.

“Oh, humans have come?” A rumbling, thunderous voice rang out within the sixth floor.

The rocky ground of the sixth floor began to shake, and even the lava flows began to bubble and rise up in waves, as a massive figure arose from within the middle of a lava river. It was simply enormous. As it stood up, even the level of the lava river itself dropped dramatically.

“It really is like a mountain.” Linley saw that distant, enormous creature: The Flame Tyrant!

The Flame Tyrant’s entire body was formed from tough, unyielding boulders, with fire surrounding its entire body. With such an enormous body, its physical strength alone was no doubt at a terrifying level.

“Everyone, be careful.” The faces of the ten experts were solemn.

The Flame Tyrant glanced at them with a contemptuous look, then laughed wildly. “The likes of you would dream about entering the seventh floor? In your dreams. Today, all of you will die! Children, come kill these outsiders along with me!” The Flame Tyrant’s voice was extraordinary loud, and his words echoed like the thunder in every part of this world.

As the Flame Tyrant spoke, he suddenly summoned a dark red greataxe into his hand.

The axehead of this greataxe alone was over a hundred meters wide. In the hands of the Flame Tyrant, however, this Bloodlust Greataxe was nothing more than a small hatchet, and he twirled it with grace and ease.

“Kill!”

Having received the order, the large amount of Magma Demons hovering in mid-air simultaneously let out howls of rage as they charged towards Linley’s group. Even Olivier and the other twenty-plus Saints came under attack from the Magma Demons as well.

“Charge through them.” Tulily ordered.

The ten major experts didn’t hesitate at all, charging straight towards the Flame Tyrant. Halfway there, over a hundred Magma Demons surrounded them.

Earlier on the fifth floor, it was Desri, Bebe, and a group of experts killing several Magma Demons. But now, it was over a hundred Magma Demons attacking them.

“Have to block them.” The outer layer of seven experts knew this very well. Facing the attacking Magma Demons, Linley fought empty-handed.

“F*ck off.” Linley directly punched towards one of them.

“Haha…” The Magma Demon laughed loudly as it sent a fist smashing towards Linley. Linley used his draconic scales and the outer layer of ‘Pulseguard Defense’ to accept this punch, taking the heavy blow of the Magma Demon’s stony fist head on.

Linley’s body trembled slightly, but the Magma Demon’s body trembled, then exploded into shards of rock.

“What terrifying strength!” Linley was inwardly shocked.

If he were to take those blows at full strength, he wouldn’t have been able to repel it so lightly. Just then, he had primarily used his Pulseguard Defense to ameliorate 90% of the power of the enemy’s attack. How could the 10%, upon encountering Linley’s draconic scales, possibly harm Linley?

Against the Magma Demons, Linley only utilized the 256 layered waves of the Throbbing Pulse of the World.

“Boom!” Every single Magma Demon which attempted to attack Fain were smashed flying away by Fain’s lightning-fast fists. Fain’s speed was simply too fast. Those Magma Demons couldn’t touch him at all. But Magma

Demons were extremely durable, and Fain's attacks were only able to heavily injure them.

It wasn't that Fain wasn't powerful; it was that Fain didn't dare to use his full force. He had to conserve his energy.

Each of the Magma Demons which attacked Desri, upon drawing near him, suddenly toppled down from the skies for seemingly no reason at all.

Desri was originally a Grand Magus Saint of light-style magic. He was currently a Prime Saint, and his spiritual attacks were at a terrifying level. Although these Magma Demons possessed tremendous physical attack and defense, Desri's spiritual attack just so happened to strike at their weakness.

"Slash!" The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions very forthrightly smashed the Magma Demons with their dancing paws, sending rocks everywhere and heavily injuring those Magma Demons, with many dying.

At times, when the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions wished, they would suddenly open their mouths and directly swallow the Magma Demons into their stomachs.

But Bebe…Bebe was terrifying. His speed was comparable to Fain's, and those Magma Demons weren't able to touch Bebe at all. But even the most casual claw swipe from Bebe would heavily injure the Magma Demons.

"Boss, these Magma Demons are really tough to deal with. Their bodies are too hard." Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

"Of course they are hard." Linley understood.

He had once tried to be like Bebe, and to use his speed to dodge the enemy's attack, and then use pure force to strike against the bodies of the Magma Demons. But the defense of the Magma Demons was simply too great; Linley's pure strength-based attacks were only able to injure the Magma Demons.

“Bang!” Yet another fist from Linley shook yet another Magma Demon in front of him into powder.

“Different profound truths clearly result in different levels of power for attacks.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh inwardly. “My Profound Truths of the Earth, despite not having reached the limit, in terms of power, is far more powerful than the Profound Truths of the Wind.”

Even Prime Saints could have fairly large differences in power. For example, that leader of the Snowy Panda-Cats, who had mastered an extremely powerful and profound truth of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. As for Desri and Fain, the profound truths they had gained insight into could only be considered ones with fairly low attack power amongst the manifold Elemental Laws.

“Boom!” “Boom!” ….

Every single one of the Magma Demons attacking Linley was reduced to powder. This sight caused many of the other Saints to feel astonished. Based just on pure physical attacks, at most they might be able to break the Magma Demons into small pieces of rocks, but they couldn’t possibly reduce them into powder.

“The Flame Tyrant is here.” Desri called out softly.

“You little rascal. You’ll be the first to die.” The Flame Tyrant stared angrily at Linley. Then, like a thunderbolt, it leapt off the rocky ground, making the rocky ground tremble and crack as it delivered a mighty chop with the Bloodlust Greataxe in its hands.

Clearly, Linley’s ‘military exploits’ had been seen by the Flame Tyrant.

“Rosarie.” Tulily growled.

Rosarie, Tulily, and Rutherford, who had been prepared this entire time, finally unleashed their attack. Suddenly, countless amounts of ice and frost descended in an area of many kilometers, and even the rivers of lava were

chilled to become rocks.

The fires covering the body of the Flame Tyrant were extinguished, and the scarlet red stones on his body turned a much dimmer red as well, as countless amounts of frost and ice covered his body.

The Flame Tyrant's attacking motion suddenly came to a halt, as though he had been frozen.

Water-style forbidden-level spell: Absolute Zero!

Under the attack of this Absolute Zero spell, generally speaking, when it was used, that terrifying drop in temperature alone would cause the opponent to freeze, then shatter into countless pieces. Even the opponent's soul would be frozen, then shatter.

But the target of this spell was the Flame Tyrant. This forbidden-level spell, 'Absolute Zero', was only capable of affecting his soul and making him temporarily dizzied. In addition, encased in countless amounts of ice, his weakness, his power dropped as well.

"Swish!" Immediately afterwards, Rutherford transformed into a ray of light, charging straight towards the Flame Tyrant.

Rutherford, the number one Saint of the Arctic Icecaps, who had been training there for thousands of years, had reached a level of perfection in terms of utilizing the forces of glacial ice. Rutherford's palms suddenly glowed with a faint blue light, and he smashed them hard against the body of the Flame Tyrant.

The strange thing was…

The countless amounts of ice and frost that had been layering the body of the Flame Tyrant suddenly sank deep into the Flame Tyrant's body. "Crunch!" The enormous body of the Flame Tyrant actually began to be covered with countless tiny cracks.

The body of the Flame Tyrant was extremely hot, but after being covered by the opposite-element spell, ‘Absolute Zero’, and then with Rutherford forcing that energy deep into its body, the incomparably tough rocky body of the Flame Tyrant began to crack on a wide scale from the sudden change in temperature.

“Bastard.” The Flame Tyrant finally recovered from his state of dizziness. Realizing the situation he was in, he couldn’t help but roar in anger.

“Die!” Tulily had already reached the Flame Tyrant’s body.

Dark black light surrounded Tulily’s fists, and the entire area around them was filled with countless cracks in spacetime. Tulily’s fists seemed to carry the strength of the heavens themselves, as he smashed viciously against the body of the Flame Tyrant. The already cracked body, suddenly…

“BOOOM!”

Countless rocks were sent flying everywhere by that terrifyingly powerful explosion. The Flame Tyrant had exploded into countless rocky fragments.

“Success.” Tulily, Rosarie, and Rutherford all let out a long sigh.

This was the ultimate attack of the three of them. First they pooled their energy together to cause the Flame Tyrant’s soul to be attacked, while at the same time counteracting the heat of the Flame Tyrant’s body with the Absolute Zero spell. Then, Rutherford would control the frost and the ice to make it go deep into the Flame Tyrant’s body.

Fire and ice were polar opposites, and the sudden clash between them would cause the rocks which made up its body to crack. This caused the defensive power of the Flame Tyrant to drop by ninety percent. With only ten percent of its defense remaining, it had naturally shattered when facing Tulily’s most powerful attack.

“If they didn’t work together, that terrifying defensive power of the Flame Tyrant probably would allow it to take Tulily’s full power attack without

much impact.” Linley said to himself.

Now that the Flame Tyrant was dead, everyone naturally felt much more relaxed. It would be fairly easy to deal with the remaining Magma Demons.

“Let’s hurry up and find the exit.” Desri said. Everyone nodded, feeling much more relaxed.

However…

What nobody noticed was that during that wild explosion earlier, when countless rocks had been blasted in every direction, there was a seemingly translucent, fist-sized rock that had also been shot out far away. This translucent rock, in the distance, began to spin.

“Rumble…”

The entire rocky ground was beginning to shake.

“What is going on?” Tulily, Rutherford, Linley, and the others felt shocked.

“Crunch!” Large amounts of cracks appeared in the ground of the sixth floor, and then one enormous rock after another flew up, as well as a large amount of the rocks in the lava rivers. Over billions of enormous boulders flew up.

Linley and the others watched with gaping mouths and stunned gazes.

“Not good.” Everyone had the sense that something bad was happening.

However…nobody knew what the problem was. All ten experts were on guard, carefully inspecting their surroundings. But on the sixth floor, one rock after another continued to rise into the air.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

All of the giant rocks, as though listening to some command, shot out to

one location at the same time. With a terrifying series of sonic booms, trillions of boulders instantly clustered around one location, and that location was the place where the translucent rock was floating.

Countless boulders surrounded that translucent rock.

In the blink of an eye…

Yet another Flame Tyrant appeared!

The faces of the ten experts changed dramatically.

“That translucent rock.” The ten experts seemed to see, just then, those countless boulders clustering around the nucleus. Desri’s face sank down. “That was the core of the Flame Tyrant. Without destroying that translucent rock, we can’t kill the Flame Tyrant. He can just make himself be reborn.”

“You have truly made me angry.”

The mountain-like Flame Tyrant’s body was once again wreathed in flames, and his eyes were filled with fiery rage as well. Wielding its Bloodlust Greataxe, he bellowed with fury, “You detestable humans want to enter the seventh floor? In your dreams! All of you will die!”

The mighty bellow of the Flame Tyrant echoed throughout the sixth floor!

Chapter 17 – The Tunnel's Location

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 17: The Tunnel's Location

On the sixth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, the mountain-like Flame Tyrant strode forward on the rocky terrain, wielding that Bloodlust Greataxe in his hand, twin eyes blazing with rage while also howling furiously. Instantly, all of the lava flows in the sixth floor began to bubble and rise up.

Linley and the rest of the ten major experts, hovering in mid-air, had a bad feeling.

"What should we do?" Rosarie asked quietly.

The others were all silent.

"We lost the best opportunity that we had. To kill the Flame Tyrant a second time will be very difficult." Tulily's gaze was totally focused on the distant Flame Tyrant. "Rutherford, Rosarie, all we can do is to try again and see if we can succeed."

Rutherford and Rosarie all nodded slightly.

"Children.' The Flame Tyrant roared furiously. "All of you, attack. Kill them alongside me." As he spoke, the Flame Tyrant transformed into a fiery blur, carrying a terrifying howling sound with him as he charged forward. Although the Flame Tyrant was physically large, his speed was also extremely fast.

The ten major experts reacted in perfect unison.

"First retreat backwards. Buy Rosarie and the others some time." Desri's voice rang out in the minds of the other nine experts.

Forbidden-level spells, especially large-scale ones, needed a good period of time. The ten major experts flew backwards at high speed like ten meteors. All of them were extremely fast, not slower than the Flame Tyrant at all.

“Hrmph!” The Flame Tyrant’s furious snort could be heard.

“Groooowl…” A thickly dense crowd of Magma Demons began to surround them, coming from all corners.

“Can’t allow ourselves to get corralled by these Magma Demons. Once our speed drops and the Flame Tyrant catches up, we’ll be in terrible shape.” Fain’s voice rang out in the minds of the various experts. All of the experts present understood this logic. Instantly, the seven major experts on the outside perimeter began to utilize their special skills.

They had to protect the three inside their perimeter and make sure they weren’t affected.

“Strange.” Linley flew at high speed, but found out that not a single one of the Magma Demons dared approach him.

“The Magma Demons are all afraid to go near Linley.” Desri, Fain, and the others, upon seeing this, didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. All they could do was to work hard to force each of the Magma Demons back.

Against the other magical beast experts, or against the likes of Fain and Desri, the Magma Demons would at most be heavily injured. All the Magma Demons needed to do was rest and heal for a while, and they would be fine. But against Linley…as long as Linley’s fist hit them, those Magma Demon’s bodies would transform into powder, and they would become deader than dead.

“Linley, protect Rosarie!” Desri’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

“Understood.” Linley flew closer towards Rosarie.

Instantly, none of the Magma Demons dared to attack Rosarie either. Any

that did attempt to attack Rosarie, Linley would suddenly flash next to and swing a fist at. Linley's fist…was death to any Magma Demons it touched.

"Kill that human female." The Flame Tyrant roared frantically.

The Flame Tyrant knew how powerful Rosarie was. The Flame Tyrant was a fire-type creature, while Rosarie just so happened to be his nemesis… although Desri was also a Grand Master Saint, to the likes of the Flame Tyrant, the threat he posed was far weaker than that of Rosarie.

"Roaaar!" "Roaaar!" "Roaaar!" …

Instantly, a large number of the Magma Demons ground their teeth and, no longer paying Linley any more mind, roared with fury as they all charged towards Rosarie.

"Wonderful, they are coming." Linley let out a loud laugh, sweeping his dark golden gaze across the many Magma Demons, and then he transformed into a gust of wind. Not only did his twin fists dance about, even his two legs whirled about in a dance of death like blades. Anything struck by Linley's legs were also instantly reduced to powder.

"Rumble…"

The temperature suddenly dropped precipitously. The previously boiling lava rivers suddenly congealed, transforming into flat rock. Even the scarlet red coloration of the rocks turned to a dark black color. Countless amounts of frost and ice descended down from the heavens within an area of several kilometers around the Flame Tyrant.

Water-style forbidden-level magic: Absolute Zero!

"Roaaaaar!" The Flame Tyrant's entire body was covered with frost and ice as well, but then, letting out a loud bellow, its body, which had already turned a dark grey rocky color, suddenly once more slowly began to turn red. As for that layer of ice and frost covering it, it slowly began to thaw and melt.

Seeing this, everyone had a bad feeling.

“His soul wasn’t affected.” Rosarie’s face changed. The forbidden-level magic, ‘Absolute Zero’, also had a secondary soul-affecting attacking. Earlier, the first time they used it, the Flame Tyrant had felt dizzy due to the attack on his soul. But this time, the Flame Tyrant wasn’t impacted at all.

“Whoosh!”

An invisible burst of energy erupted from Desri, striking towards the Flame Tyrant at astonishing speed. Instantly, it entered the Flame Tyrant’s body. The light-style Grand Magus Saint, Desri, was highly skilled at spiritual attacks.

The bellows of the Flame Tyrant halted.

“Good!” The eyes of Fain, Tulily, and the other experts lit up.

“Rutherford.” Tulily growled.

A lightning-quick flash. Rutherford’s face was rather fierce, and his palms were completely covered with blue light. Anyone near Rutherford wouldn’t be able to sense a hint of cold at all, because Rutherford had already reached an extremely high level of control over the freezing power of the Elemental Laws of Water.

But at this moment, below the Flame Tyrant, dozens of Magma Demons suddenly appeared, which simultaneously charged towards Rutherford, attempting to block him.

Like a flash of blue lightning, Rutherford dodged past more than half the Magma Demons, and then landed successive blows with his palms against two of them. Those two Magma Demons instantly charged into blocks of ice, and with a ‘crunch’ sound, the two Magma Demons instantly shattered into icy flakes.

“Die.” Rutherford had already reached the Flame Tyrant, and he was about to strike down with his twin palms.

“Whoosh!” The motionless Flame Tyrant’s enormous body suddenly retreated at high speed, while at the same time, the Bloodlust Greataxe in his hand, gleaming with bloody aura, cast a dazzling, devilish flash of light as it chopped down towards Rutherford’s head. The speed of this chop was extremely fast, and had reached a simply astonishing speed.

Although the flying speed of the Flame Tyrant was lower than Rutherford’s, the speed at which he wielded the Bloodlust Greataxe was terrifyingly fast.

“Careful!” Linley, Desri, Fain, and the others grew worried.

“Ah!” Rutherford raised his head and saw the freezing light of that hundred-meter long axehead chop down at him. He was terrified, his heart shaking. He didn’t have the chance to run or flee, so all he could do was let out a furious roar, slamming his blue, glowing hands upwards in an attempt to block.

Using his palms against the Bloodlust Greataxe!

The two were simply incomparable.

“Clang!” A metallic sound could be heard, and Rutherford’s body was sent flying backwards like a meteor. But this time, the Flame Tyrant wasn’t in a hurry to continue charging after him. He just stood there, laughing loudly.

“Rutherford.” Tulily and the others immediately went forward to catch him.

Rutherford’s face was extremely pale. His arms were gone beneath the elbows, but the strange thing was, they weren’t just cut off; they had completely disappeared. His shoulders and his clothes were torn and stained with blood.

“Don’t touch that axe. That axe is very strange and very frightening.” Rutherford said, his entire body still trembling.

Desri immediately stretched out his hands and shot out a glittering, starlight-like ray of light, covering Rutherford's entire body. Rutherford's wounds began to regenerate at an astonishing speed, and even those two disappeared arms began to rapidly regrow.

"Haha, amusing, amusing." The Flame Tyrant actually began to laugh loudly.

"The Flame Tyrant is toying with us." Desri frowned.

Linley glanced at the Flame Tyrant as well. The Flame Tyrant truly was toying with them. Perhaps just then, its earlier rage was just an act.

In particular, Linley was certain of one thing: "Just then, when the Flame Tyrant was struck by Desri's spiritual attack, it should have been faking its reaction. Otherwise, it would be too much of a coincidence for him to have suddenly recovered and attacked Rutherford at the critical moment. He wouldn't have been to seize the opportunity so perfectly, preventing Rutherford from even being able to flee."

"Haha…" The Flame Tyrant's thunderous sound shook the world of the fifth floor. "Amusing. Truly amusing. Are you very surprised?"

"Indeed, the first time you attacked me, you had the chance to kill me. However, that was me being over-confident." The Flame Tyrant stared at the distant group of humans hovering in mid-air. "Spiritual attacks? In terms of spirits, mine is incomparably powerful. In addition, I have 'Bloodlust'."

The Flame Tyrant looked at the greataxe in his hand. "This is a true divine artifact. By relying on 'Bloodlust', I can enter a bloodlusted state. In this state, your spiritual attacks cannot harm me at all."

Desri and Linley exchanged a glance.

"Terrible." Everyone felt the situation was grim.

“Originally, I could’ve perhaps spared one or two of you. But now…” The Flame Tyrant’s body began to faintly emit a bloodthirsty red light. “All of you will die.” As he finished speaking, the Flame Tyrant’s body began to emit a ‘crunch’ ‘crunch’ series of sounds.

The Flame Tyrant’s body was shrinking!

The originally hundreds of meters tall Flame Tyrant, wreathed by flames and red light, soon…

Transformed from being hundreds of meters in size to only a few dozen meters tall.

Currently, the Flame Tyrant’s body was completely covered with a layer of red light, and its aura had become even more terrifying.

“It has been a long time since I have been in my battle-form.” The Flame Tyrant’s Bloodlust Greataxe shrank by more than half as well. It truly was a divine artifact.

“Everyone, be careful.” The ten experts all felt that this matter had just become very dangerous. For now, they weren’t sure how to deal with this Flame Tyrant.

“Swish!”

The Flame Tyrant’s body flickered, transforming into a devilish, bloody red streak of light which cut through the air, so fast that he was comparable to Fain. In terms of speed, Fain, Bebe, and Desri had the fastest speed amongst the ten, while the others were a level lower in speed.

The devilish red light surged towards Tulily.

Tulily couldn’t dodge in time.

“Break!” Tulily’s face was extremely ferocious. He let out an angry roar,

smashing out with his twin fists.

“Clang!”

Tulily’s twin arms immediately exploded apart, and he himself was smashed backwards like a meteor. Blood splattered everywhere from that vicious collision. Tulily, the Prime Saint with the greatest attack power of the five, was knocked by a single blow into a state where his life or death was unknown.

At this time, Linley and the rest of the nine remaining experts fled to a distant location.

Desri’s body had transformed into a beam of light. He moved extremely fast, and discovered Higginson and the others. “Have you discovered the exit yet?” Higginson and the other twenty plus experts had been searching for the exit to the seventh floor this entire time.

“Can’t find it.” Higginson was both frantic and helpless.

“The exit? Haha…” A greataxe flashed past Desri’s group, and Desri immediately grabbed Higginson and dodged in a flash.

Blood flew everywhere, and a magical beast as well as two human Saints were instantly bisected. Their corpses fell from the skies. The corpse of the magical beast fell onto the rocky ground, while the other two corpses fell directly into the river of lava.

The distant Fain’s face changed. “Sixth Brother!”

“You won’t be able to find the tunnel.” The Flame Tyrant, hovering in mid-air and wrapped by that red light, was laughing loudly. “The exit to the seventh floor is actually in the center of the sixth floor, but I have over a thousand of my children protecting it, and they have already fully blocked it off. If you want to enter the seventh floor, you have to kill over a thousand of my children.”

Linley and the other experts felt their hearts tremble.

“Over a thousand.” Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

“Boss, even if I were the one to charge over, at most I’d be able to kill ten before the Flame Tyrant reached the exit again.” Bebe also realized how bad the situation was.

This Flame Tyrant’s speed was comparable to Bebe and Fain, but his attack…even the most powerful of them, Tulily, was far from being his match. If they kept fighting like this, not a single one of the experts present would survive.

“How can there be so many Magma Demons?” Linley glanced at Desri.

From what Desri had said, in total, there should only be a thousand Magma Demons here on the sixth floor. Desri glanced at Linley. “Linley, three thousand years ago, we were beaten back as soon as we entered the sixth floor. A thousand was just our estimate.”

Linley was speechless.

“Desri, give me a hand.” Linley suddenly took a deep breath and said softly to the nearby Desri.

“Hrm?” Desri looked at Linley with surprise.

“This is my most powerful attack. If it doesn’t work…then let’s try to come up with a way to flee from the sixth floor.” With a flip of his hands, Linley retrieved his adamantine heavy sword.

Chapter 18 – The Fate-Determining Strike

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 18: The Fate-Determining Strike

“Most powerful attack?” Desri’s eyes lit up, and he mentally said, “How confident are you?”

“Right now, 70% confident.” Linley said. “The prerequisite being I have to get near him.”

Linley stared at the distant Flame Tyrant. The Flame Tyrant, upon entering his battle-form, had shrunk dramatically in size, and even the rocks making up his body had changed. One could imagine how dramatically the power of the Flame Tyrant’s defense and speed had risen.

Right now, the Flame Tyrant truly was terrifying!

But to Linley, this sort of rocky defense was useless against him.

“If the Flame Tyrant didn’t shrink in size and was still hundreds of meters tall, then the rocks making up his body alone would be nearly a hundred meters thick. My ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’, after traveling a hundred meters, would probably have dropped in power to a fairly low level. It would be hard to destroy that gemstone core. But now…

Linley was quite confident in his heart.

“Now that it is only a few dozen meters tall, the translucent rock should be fairly close to the outside layer of its stone body, perhaps not even ten meters away.

The closer the distance was, the less weakened the waves of the Profound Truths of the Earth would be. At such a close distance, Linley was quite confident in himself. “If I can’t even kill him in a situation like this, then

that Flame Tyrant should be a Deity-level creature."

Desri glanced at Linley, his eyes filled with surprise and delight.

But right at that moment…

The Flame Tyrant, which had been chatting with them just now, charged at them once again. He bellowed wildly, "Haha…puny humans, none of you will survive. All of you will die!" As he spoke, he chopped out with his axe yet again.

An expert who hadn't managed to dodge in time was chopped directly into two halves.

"Clay!" Linley's face changed.

Clay was a very open and valiant man, with extremely powerful defense. His weakness was his speed…but no matter how tough his defense was, it still couldn't withstand a single blow from the Flame Tyrant.

"Hurry."

Desri, Fain, Rutherford…and Linley all retreated at high speed alongside the other major experts, pulling away from the murdering, bellowing Flame Tyrant. As they flew, Desri hurriedly spoke mentally to the others.

"Rosarie, Rutherford, Fain, Bebe, Cleo and brothers. The three of you, listen up. Linley has 70% confidence in being able to kill that Flame Tyrant, but of course, he first has to be able to get close to its body." Desri's voice rang out in the minds of all the other experts.

While flying at high speed, Rosarie, Rutherford, and Fain all immediately looked at Linley.

Linley nodded.

"Good. I have the energy to just barely be able to force myself to cast one

more ‘Absolute Zero’.” Rosarie spoke back mentally as well. Rosarie was also a Grand Magus Saint. Generally speaking, a Grand Magus Saint would only be able to cast a single wide-effect forbidden-level spell, and even if they had some sort of precious treasure, they would at most be able to cast two.

But Rosarie was capable of casting three, even in an environment such as the sixth floor.

And clearly, the power of her spells had been modified and improved. First of all, the area of the ‘Absolute Zero’ spell had been reduced greatly; it wasn’t like how the books had written about it, with an area of dozens of square kilometers. But in terms of single-target damage, it clearly was far more powerful as well.

“We three brothers will defend Linley as he heads over towards the Flame Tyrant’s body.” One of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said.

Linley and Fain stared in surprise at the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions.

“You’ll be able to take one of his hits?” The experts present were all a bit worried.

The eldest of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, Cleo, snorted. “Don’t worry. In the past, we three brothers, alongside with our father, encountered even more dangerous situations when we were in the Gebados Prison. Although the three of us haven’t gained insight into other things, we have gained quite a bit of insight into life-saving measures.”

In the Gebados Planar Prison, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had continuously struggled to stay alive.

For them to be able to survive in that sort of environment was partially due to the protection of their father, Dylin, but their own power was one of the main reasons as well.

“I can also cast one more forbidden-level spell. I hope it will be able to

affect the Flame Tyrant.” Desri said.

“Boss. I…” Bebe was frantic.

“Bebe, no need.” Linley knew Bebe’s situation very well. Bebe’s defense was extremely tough, but whether or not Bebe would be able to take a hit from the Flame Tyrant was something Linley wasn’t certain about. After all, Bebe hadn’t been alive for long enough. Although Godeater Rats had their own amazing powers, he hadn’t gained insight into most of them yet.

While flying at high speed, Desri was occasionally looking back and keeping an eye on the Flame Tyrant.

But suddenly, Desri’s face changed, and he let out a fierce, grief-stricken cry. “Hayward!!!”

A devilish blood red hatched cut a swathing blur through the air, and the fleeing fire-style Grand Magus Saint, Hayward, was chopped directly into two, with the chopped section disappearing into nothingness. Hayward’s two chopped halves fell down from the air, collapsing into the lava river.

“No fun.” The Flame Tyrant turned to stare at Linley and the others. “It’s more interesting dealing with you people. You sure can run.”

The Flame Tyrant’s body, dozens of meters high, transformed into a red blur, charging straight towards Linley’s group. As the Flame Tyrant charged towards them, it laughed loudly and wildly, “Haha, no matter how you run, you’ll still die. Haha…”

Only eleven or twelve of the experts in the group of twenty-plus experts which Olivier and Hayward had been in were still alive.

In a short period of time, more than ten had perished.

“Whew.” Olivier was hiding next to a boulder, and he secretly let out a relieved sigh. “This Flame Tyrant…” Olivier stared at that distant, terrifying red blur and he couldn’t help but shake his head toward himself. He was

famous for his powerful attacks, but this Flame Tyrant was his bane.

And right now, the Flame Tyrant was currently chasing after Linley's group.

"Haha, fleeing is usel-" The Flame Tyrant was laughing loudly, but he only finished half his words.

Suddenly, Rosarie turned around. Her long jade hair fluttering, she stared coldly at the distant Flame Tyrant as she extended her hands and pointed towards it.

Countless amounts of snow and frost began to descend from nowhere.

The extremely hot environment instantly transformed into a world of ice and snow, and the lava once again congealed. The flames around the Flame Tyrant's body were extinguished, and a layer of ice and frost covered it. Only, the Flame Tyrant's body continued to be covered by that layer of red light.

Water-style, forbidden-level magic: Absolute Zero!

"This technique yet again." The Flame Tyrant bellowed angrily. "This technique is useless against me!" Although this spell wasn't very effective, the Flame Tyrant truly hated it.

As a fire-type creature, the Flame Tyrant truly hated ice and snow. What he liked best was sleeping in the middle of hot lava.

The nine major experts halted in mid-air, with Rosarie and Desri in the center. After Rosarie finished casting her spell, Desri, who had been mumbling a spell this entire time, pointed one hand at the distant Flame Tyrant, and a holy aura suddenly descended.

The sound of holy chanting could be heard, and dream-like dots of white light suddenly surrounded the Flame Tyrant.

An Angel that was dozens of meters tall suddenly appeared out of nowhere,

but its body was hazy and indistinct, as though it were an illusion. Behind the Angel were three sets of wings. The sudden appearance of this massive Angel caused the Flame Tyrant to be even more enraged.

Light-style forbidden-level magic: Angelic Descent.

This Angel wasn't a true Angel; rather, it was a manifestation of light-style energy, much like the earth-style forbidden-level spell, 'World Protector'. It wasn't a true life form. This sort of creature was very hard to deal with, because it was formed from pure energy. It didn't have any true vital points. The only thing that could be done was to cause it to use up all of its energy.

"F*ck off." The Flame Tyrant swung his greataxe straight at it.

This one blow from the greataxe caused the illusionary Six-Winged Angel's body to shudder, and a good amount of its energy disappeared.

"What a ferocious axe." Desri's face changed, and with a sudden thought…

The illusory Six-Winged Angel suddenly charged down, not giving the Flame Tyrant any chance to dodge. All six of its wings were spread, and it suddenly clutched tightly around the Flame Tyrant, preventing the Flame Tyrant from moving while its six wings wrapped around the Flame Tyrant as well.

"Explode!" Desri softly spat out this single word.

"Bang!"

Even the rocky ground of the sixth floor shuddered, and a storm of energy blasted in every direction, breaking apart large amounts of stone. But right in the middle of that energy storm…

"Let's go." Linley and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions transformed into four blurs, charging forward.

"Linley, let us deal with the attack of the Flame Tyrant. All you need to

worry about is taking and killing him." The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions seemed very reliable and confident.

"Don't worry." Linley held Bloodviolet in one hand and the adamantine heavy sword in the other.

The Flame Tyrant's body wasn't too badly damaged, but suffering two forbidden-level spell attacks in a row had made the Flame Tyrant very angry. Bellowing madly, he charged forward once again, but as he did, the Flame Tyrant suddenly discovered that four blurs were already by his side.

"Detestable." The furious Flame Tyrant brandished his axe, chopping down.

The Bloodlust Greataxe glowed with that blood red light as it descended, but the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions' bodies suddenly emitted a black substance, like some sort of form-fitting armor. The strangest part of it was…atop the black armor, there was a layer of dim, multicolored barrier.

"Bang!"

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions didn't dodge at all, receiving the attack of that Bloodlust Greataxe head-on as one unit. The translucent, multicolored barrier around their bodies caved downwards as the three brothers received the blow of the Bloodlust Greataxe, while Linley transformed into a black rainbow as he charged next to the Flame Tyrant.

While charging, Linley struck out with the adamantine heavy sword in his hand.

"Hrmph." The Flame Tyrant didn't fear Linley's attack in the slightest. In his battle-form, his defense was several times greater than it had been originally. He didn't fear any Saint-level human experts at all. What he did care about was these three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions.

The adamantine heavy sword moved with grace, but it was as fast as lightning, and it struck directly against the chest of the Flame Tyrant.

“Clink!” A very gentle, soft sound.

The previously confident Flame Tyrant suddenly froze. A strange vibration seemed to completely ignore the defense of his rocky body, and in fact actually caused the countless stones which made up its body to begin to vibrate, as it made its way to his inner core.

When the vibrational waves reached the translucent gemstone which was his core…

The power of Linley’s full-force strike suddenly exploded. The fierce, profound power of the earth’s vibrational waves caused that translucent gemstone to instantly begin to crack, and then…

“BOOM!”

The translucent stone completely shattered into countless fragments!

Profound Truths of the Earth – Throbbing Pulse of the World, 64 Layered Waves!

Linley’s most powerful attack!

“Rumble…” The Flame Tyrant stared at Linley in disbelief. The fire that had been wrapped around his body was extinguished, and the fire that lit his eyes grew dim as well. His enormous body transformed into countless boulders which began to fall from the sky.

With the translucent stone shattered, the Flame Tyrant’s body itself began to crumble.

“Success!” Desri called out, wildly overjoyed.

“Haha, Boss, success!” Even Bebe began to shout in joy.

As for the extremely ashen-faced Rosarie, even she revealed a hint of excitement as she smiled. Rutherford and Fain also stared at the distant

Linley, hovering in mid-air. It was Linley who had finally killed the Flame Tyrant and rescued everyone.

“The King…the King is dead!” The dozens of nearby Magma Demons, seeing this, were completely stupefied.

The ‘King’ whom they all felt to be invincible had been trampling these humans just a few moments ago, but now…he was dead!

“This axe is so strange.” One of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions flew directly downwards. The Bloodlust Greataxe had already shrunk to the size of a human palm, and it had fallen by the side of a lava river. The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion grabbed the axe, then flew back up.

“Linley, this divine artifact is yours.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion offered the dark red hatchet to Linley.

Chapter 19 – Three Divine Artifacts

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 19: Three Divine Artifacts

Linley looked at the dark red hatchet.

“Not long ago, this hatchet was over a hundred meters long, but now, it is so tiny.” Linley, in his heart, valued this axe very highly. “Most importantly, that Flame Tyrant was only a Prime Saint level expert, and yet in his hands, this axe was capable of such tremendous power.”

Linley thought of his own Bloodviolet sword.

“Both of them are divine artifacts, but in my hands, Bloodviolet is only capable of unleashing a portion of its power.”

Linley understood that his own Bloodviolet was perhaps an even more terrifying weapon, but at the Saint-level, he simply wasn’t capable of fully unleashing the power of Bloodviolet. It was much the same with the ‘Coiling Dragon’ ring. The current Linley couldn’t actively utilize the Coiling Dragon ring at all.

The more powerful an artifact was, the greater the requirements were for activating it.

However…this divine artifact axe was something which even Saints could use. To a Saint, this axe was a better weapon.

“Linley, take it. You made the greatest contributions in killing the Flame Tyrant.” Desri flew over as well.

Linley suddenly thought of Barker, and said, “Then I won’t hesitate.” At the same time, Linley accepted the dark red hatchet, storing it into his interspatial ring. “I hope Barker survived. If he truly…well, I’ll gift this axe to Gates and the others.”

Linley still felt guilt in his heart towards Barker.

“The Flame Tyrant is finally dead. But Hayward and the others…” Desri felt extremely miserable right now. Higginson, Olivier, and the rest of the twelve remaining experts flew over from afar. There had originally been over twenty of them. But now, only a few were left.

“Big brother.” Higginson was in great pain as well.

Desri and Higginson looked at each other, agony in their eyes. But they understood…ever since they chose to come to the Necropolis of the Gods, they set on a path where they could not blame others if they died. Actually, Hayward had already lived for thousands of years. Dying now wasn’t a big deal.

After all, these people had already experienced many things in life.

Olivier looked at Linley, a hint of a resigned smile on his lips. “This Linley saved me yet again.” Olivier was a very arrogant person and he hated owing others. But Linley had saved him twice now.

“Linley, your attack is very unique.” Rutherford sighed in amazement. “That Flame Tyrant had incredible defense, but your attack seemed to completely ignore it.”

Linley didn’t try to hide anything. “This is an attack which I have gained insight into which can ignore the target’s defense.”

“What a bizarre, shocking attack.” Fain sighed in amazement as well.

The nearby experts all felt their heart shudder. Linley was a Dragonblood Warrior, and thus his natural talent was at the absolute peak of what humans could reach. But now, Linley’s understanding of the Laws had reached such a terrifying level as well. Linley was more powerful than others in both aspects.

With those aspects combined, it could be said that his attack power was the greatest amongst the Saints of the Yulan continent!

“The number one Saint-level expert of the Yulan continent…that is you!” Desri sighed approvingly as he looked at Linley.

“I only possess powerful offense and decent defense. In terms of speed, I cannot compare to you and Fain, Desri.” Linley replied honestly. The understandings he had gained in the Elemental Laws of the Wind were still very far from the level of mastery.

“Right. How is Tulily?” Rosarie, looking much better now, suddenly said. “Let’s go see if he is still alive.”

“Right.” Fain and Desri nodded as well.

Tulily was the Prime Saint with the most powerful attack of the group, after all. If they wanted to make it further into the Necropolis of the Gods, they couldn’t lack someone like him. Linley and the others immediately flew towards the place where Tulily’s body had collapsed and landed next to him.

Moments later…

Next to the boiling hot river of lava, his body covered with blood, Tulily was currently seated cross-legged on a stone. His arms were completely shattered, and even one of his legs had been partially torn off. There was a large amount of fresh blood on his chest.

“Tulily.” Desri flew over. “You are lucky to be alive.”

Tulily, seeing Desri fly over, revealed a bitter smile on his face. “I was almost finished just then. Desri, give me a hand…your powers in utilizing healing energy is the best amongst all Saints.” Desri immediately stretched his hand out and immediately released healing magic.

At Desri’s level, he was capable of instacasting light-style magic of the

ninth rank.

But Olivier, despite also training in the Laws of Light, was a warrior, after all. His healing abilities were far inferior to Desri's.

Rosarie, Rutherford, and Fain all landed as well. Tulily looked at the four of them, then said in surprise, "Desri, how can you all be so leisurely? Can it be that you killed the Flame Tyrant? What method did you use to kill him?"

Tulily was extremely surprised. He had personally witnessed the terrible might of the Flame Tyrant.

"It was Linley who killed him." Rosarie said, while pointing at the distant Linley, who was still in mid-air.

Tulily raised his head and glanced at Linley. "Linley?"

"Right. All by himself, he landed one sword against the body of the Flame Tyrant, and then the Flame Tyrant died." Desri sighed in praise. "In terms of attack power, Linley has to now be ranked number one amongst the Saints of the Yulan continent."

Soon, Tulily's injuries were completely healed.

"That exit to the seventh floor is in the center, where the Magma Demons are clustering." The most powerful group of Saints in the Yulan continent flew directly towards the center of the sixth floor.

Indeed, there were a large number of Magma Demons clustering here.

"That Draconian is coming. Flee, quick!" Seeing Linley, the many Magma Demons were so terrified that they immediately fled.

"Yet again, they call me a Draconian!" Linley shook his head and sighed, while Bebe snickered, "Boss, those fellows have no experience. They don't know what a Dragonblood Warrior is. They only know about the relatively common 'Draconian' race which lives in the other realms. Compared to

your Dragonblood Warrior lineage, Boss, those Draconians are far weaker."

As they spoke, the many experts landed.

There was no need to fight. Linley's prestige from being the slayer of the Flame Tyrant had caused the many Magma Demons scurrying everywhere in terror.

"The exit!" The experts immediately saw the nearby stairway. They were now in the heart of the volcano, and the stairways here emanated with a black aura. This was the exit to the seventh floor.

"Hey, what's that?" Bebe flew over.

Next to stairway, there were two weapons there. One of the two weapons was a blood red scimitar, while the other one was a magistaff. The magistaff was topped with a large gemstone, and the powerful energy coursing through it filled Linley with awe.

"Two divine artifacts." Desri said in astonishment, and Fain and Tulily were both shocked and delighted as well.

"Two divine artifacts?" Linley was somewhat surprised.

But then, Linley instantly understood. Lord Beirut had previously said that only on the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods would divine sparks appear, and that the first ten floors wouldn't have any divine sparks. However, the first ten floors might have divine artifacts."

"This is the Necropolis of the Gods. Many Deities have died here. It is normal that they left behind some divine artifacts." Linley knew very well that divine artifacts weren't nearly as valuable as divine sparks.

The sixth floor was so hard to defeat that for there to be a total of three divine artifacts here wasn't too strange, actually.

"There are two more divine artifacts here. How should we divide them?"

Bebe stood next to the divine artifacts and said in a loud voice.

“This…”

Everyone was silent. Many people turned to look at Linley.

On the sixth floor, the person who had truly rendered the greatest merit was Linley. But of course, Rosarie and the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had contributed as well. In terms of dividing up the divine artifacts, only people who had contributed should be awarded the divine artifacts.

Linley didn’t say anything.

He had already taken one of them. If he took too many, others would feel unhappy as well.

“Everyone, let me take this scimitar. I won’t take any of the other divine artifacts that appear in the higher floors. In addition, consider this as me, Tulily, owing all of you a favor.” Tulily said with sincerity. “This scimitar truly is the type of weapon which I like the most.”

Scimitar.

The warriors of the great plains to the far east commonly used scimitars, and Tulily himself had reached an extremely high level of skill in using them.

Only…at Tulily’s level, ordinary ‘good’ weapons weren’t as effective as Tulily’s fists. However, divine artifacts were different. Divine artifacts were usually wielded by Deities, and from this, one could imagine how powerful they were.

“Linley, what do you say?” Fain and Desri looked at Linley.

Tulily also looked hopefully towards Linley. Truthfully speaking, Tulily rarely was so nervous, but he truly was worried right now that Linley would refuse. If Linley didn’t agree, there was nothing he could do…after all, on

the sixth floor, Linley had essentially saved his life.

“I have no objections.” Linley smiled as he spoke.

Although Tulily was at a very high level of enlightenment, he still felt a strong surge of excitement in his heart.

“Linley, thank you.” Tulily said solemnly towards Linley.

Tulily wasn’t a very good talker, but these two words, ‘thank you’, included boundless gratitude.

With Linley having no objection, Rosarie naturally had no objection either. As for the others…none of them were qualified to object. Tulily immediately grabbed the blood scimitar. “With this scimitar, my power will multiply several times over.” Tulily was boundlessly excited.

“Alright, the scimitar has been distributed. The magistaff?” Bebe pointed at the magistaff.

“Boss, Delia needs a magistaff, right?” Bebe said.

Rosarie, a Grand Magus Saint, had wanted to claim this divine artifact of a magistaff for herself, but hearing Bebe’s words, she no longer could speak.

Linley was paying attention to the look on Rosarie’s face.

“There will be divine artifacts on the seventh and the eighth floors as well. And it’s hard to say whether Delia will need a divine artifact or not.” Linley said mentally to Bebe. He wasn’t a person who couldn’t see the big picture. He immediately laughed and said, “It is better if we make immediate use of this divine artifact. That way, we have a better chance of surviving in the higher floors.”

Linley looked at Rosarie and Desri. “Rosarie, Desri, the two of you are Grand Magus Saints. You two decide who this divine artifact will go to.”

“Rosarie, you take it” Desri immediately said.

On the sixth floor, the various experts would prepare for roughly a month, and Rosarie and Tulily grew accustomed to their new divine artifacts as well. The first group of ten major experts all remained here on the sixth floor, while only three of the experts in the second group remained. The others had all given up and returned to the fifth floor.

One of the three experts remaining in the second group was Olivier.

Higginson had given up. Clearly, Hayward’s death had negatively impacted him quite a bit. After all, the upcoming seventh, eighth, and ninth floors would not be any less dangerous than the sixth floor.

A month passed in the blink of an eye.

Next to the flowing river of lava, Desri spoke out. “Let’s go!”

Linley, Tulily, Rosarie, Fain, Rutherford, Olivier, and the others all rose to their feet. Everyone had reached their peak condition over the course of this month.

Including Olivier’s group of three, the thirteen experts continued up into the stairway to the next floor.

Necropolis of the Gods, floor seven!

“Whew!”

As soon as the thirteen experts of the Yulan continent entered the seventh floor, they felt a breeze.

“How comfortable.” Linley’s lips had a hint of a smile about them. Compared to the scorching hot environment of the sixth floor, the environment of the seventh floor was much better.

The seventh floor was a desert world, but Linley and the others had entered

an oasis amongst the desert. This oasis was extremely large, at least ten square kilometers in size. The thirteen experts carefully inspected their surroundings, all of them on their guard.

“There’s water in the distance.” Bebe saw the lake in the middle of the oasis, and couldn’t help but feel excited.

“Hey? What’s going on with the plants in this place? Why is the grass here so sharp?” Desri frowned as he spoke.

Suddenly…

The ‘oasis’ suddenly moved, and tens of thousands of tendrils of vegetation rose into the sky, as this ‘oasis’ of ten square kilometers in size suddenly enveloped all of the experts within. Linley, as well, was suddenly trapped in this prison of countless blades of grass and leaves.

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed dramatically, and a devilish flash of violet light suddenly flashed out in his hand.

“Ah!” A miserable scream split the air from afar.

In the blink of an eye, another expert had been heavily injured or killed. Who knew which of the thirteen it was?

Chapter 20 – The Magical Beasts in Action

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 20: The Magical Beasts in Action

The thick, dense grass had completely surrounded Linley in an airtight seal, and the surrounding grass and leaves were gurgling. The grass tendrils were wildly squeezing down, and in the blink of an eye, the pressure was so great that Linley's face began to change color.

"The strength of this pressure alone would instantly crush most Saints into meat pulp." Linley said to himself.

"This plant life form is dozens of times more formidable than the plant life form on the second floor!" Linley didn't dare to waste any time.

"Break!" Bloodviolet in his hands flashed…

Wherever Bloodviolet passed by, spacetime froze and then folded over itself, and a spatial blade appeared at the blade of the weapon. Although the grass tendrils were tens of times more durable than the vines of the plant life form of the second floor, in front of Bloodviolet, they were still chopped open as easily as pieces of cloth.

"Bang!"

The shattered pieces of grass and tendrils exploded everywhere, and Linley shot out of the prison of dense grass like an arrow.

"Boss, I'm fine!" A tunnel suddenly appeared in another distant ball of grass, and then Bebe, his entire body covered with black light, flew out at high speed.

"Bebe, what technique is this?" Linley felt joy in his heart.

“I’m a Deity-level magical beast, the ‘Godeater Rat’.” Bebe raised his little head proudly, but then Bebe noticed the scene not too far away…a large amount of grass had formed a massive ball, clearly surrounding a person, and within that massive ball of grass, a faint hint of white light could be seen.

“Boss, Desri’s not looking so good.” Bebe instantly recognized that it was Desri who was radiating that white light.

Linley had noticed as well. Without hesitating at all, he immediately flew over there while sending out his spiritual energy to scout the situation inside. He clearly saw that inside…Desri’s body was covered with a faintly glowing armor of light that was protecting his entire body, while many white arrows of light were attacking the grass surrounding him wildly.

Unfortunately, the grass tendrils were simply too durable.

“Swish!” Bloodviolet flew out and multiple rays of violet light flashed past the grass, chopping them apart.

Desri escaped from his prison. Upon seeing it was Linley, he immediately said, “Thanks. That grass monster really was tough. Even my instacast spells of the ninth rank weren’t able to break through it. Without your help, it really would have been problematic.”

A red light suddenly flashed by, and grass flew everywhere. Tulily, wielding that divine artifact, the blood red scimitar, flew out and into the skies. With this scimitar, Tulily was like a tiger who had been given wings. Tulily even roared angrily, “Who is it? Don’t skulk around. If you have any ability, come and fight us openly.”

“Bang!” Yet another ball of grass exploded, and Rutherford, his entire body covered with blue light, escaped from his imprisonment as well.

One expert after another escaped.

However, at present, Olivier’s situation was quite dire.

Just now, surrounded and crushed by those countless tendrils of grass, Olivier didn't have the chance to react at all. And he suddenly discovered…

All of the blades of grass crushing him suddenly began to grind against him at high speed. These grass tendrils all had extremely sharp edges, and this constant high speed grinding…made these grass tendrils constantly slice against his body like sharp fangs, or a sawtooth which a farmer might use to plow the earth.

In the blink of an eye, Olivier's body was sliced open.

"Hrmph." Olivier's eyes turned cold.

"Swish!" A brilliant light flashed, and shattered bits of grass flew everywhere.

His long, flowing hair colored both black and white, and with that black icy sword in his hands, Olivier flew into the air. Only, Olivier's body had a hint of blood on it. Olivier was secretly shocked. "What a fierce saw."

The thirteen experts floated there in mid-air. Desri looked around him, then let out a sigh of relief. "Fortunately, no one died."

Olivier glanced at a nearby Saint. This human Saint's waist already had a huge wound around the waist. "Karossa [Ka'luo'sa], that really was quite dangerous. You almost lost your life." That man named Karossa let out an exhausted breath as well. "Very nearly. That creature's 'teeth' were simply too fierce. If I had been slightly slower in reacting, those grass tendrils probably would have plunged into my body."

"Plunged into your body?" Linley and Fain, upon hearing this, couldn't help but feel shocked.

If the grass tendrils were to enter one's body, most likely they would ravage the internal organs almost instantly.

“Don’t move.” Desri flew to one of the human experts, executing healing magic on him.

This Karossa was one of the three experts in the second group.

The three experts in that second group consisted of two humans, Karossa and Olivier, and one magical beast, a Blackscale Scorpion King. Blackscale Scorpions were generally beasts of the ninth rank, but this Blackscale Scorpion King had trained to the peak Saint level, which was quite incredible and rare.

“I hate encountering these plant life forms.” Linley lowered his head, studying the area around him.

The area below was covered in sand. The previous ‘oasis’ had already completely disappeared, leaving behind only some tendrils of shattered grass. Linley had earlier witnessed with his own eyes those undamaged tendrils of grass sink down into the sand and disappear.

“Let’s go.” Desri said. “If that plant creature doesn’t bother us again, let’s not waste the time to deal with it either. The most important thing right now is to find the entrance to the eighth floor.”

“Let’s go.” Linley and the others all nodded.

The thirteen experts didn’t pay any more attention to that plant creature, quickly flying away and beginning their search in the boundless desert.

“Yet another oasis up ahead.” Fain frowned and shouted loudly.

Linley took a close look. Indeed, in the distance, there was a hazy hint of green. Upon flying a bit closer to it, everyone could clearly see that it was indeed a massive oasis. After the previous experience, however, nobody would be incautious again.

“Let’s not get too close.” Rosarie shook her head. “Let’s stay farther away from it. That monster is very hard to deal with.”

Everyone agreed, and the group intentionally made their way around the oasis. But after Linley's group flew away in another direction, that green oasis actually sank down into the sand, while the sand itself began to tremble slightly.

The direction the vibrations in the sand were heading (at high speed) was, quite coincidentally, the direction in which Linley's group were flying.

"Hrm?" The Blackscale Scorpion King, at the very back of the line, glanced downwards and then immediately shouted in warning, "Everyone, be careful. That monster is currently hurrying towards us at high speed from below the sand."

In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, magical beasts would often launch ambushes from below. As a Saint-level magical beast, the Blackscale Scorpion was quite familiar with this type of attack.

"That really does seem to be the case." Linley, Fain, Tulily, and the others all halted in mid-air, staring below.

If one looked carefully, one would be able to see…that on the surface of the sand, there were one or two barely noticeable tendrils of grass. This sort of plant creature could use all of the grass as its 'eyes'. Wherever the grass could see, it could see as well.

"What should we do?" Linley, Desri, and the others looked at each other.

To kill this plant creature was very troublesome, but how could they just allow it to follow in such a sinister manner?

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

Like two sharp arrows, two long tendrils of green grass suddenly shot out from beneath the sand, wrapping themselves around Desri's legs in almost the same instant. These two tendrils of grass were as thick as a man's arm, and there were a large number of smaller blades of grass on top of them as

well.

In an instant, they surrounded Desri.

“Swish!”

They suddenly pulled downwards, hard. The two tendrils of grass had shot out at simply too fast a pace. Shooting out, wrapping around, pulling down. In the blink of an eye, Desri was pulled down. Desri let out a furious roar, while at the same time, sending a wild Mindstorm towards the below area.

“Not good.” The faces of Linley and the others changed, and they immediately chased downwards as well.

“Thud…” Desri was pulled directly into the sand, and in the blink of an eye, he disappeared from everyone’s field of vision. The surface of the sand looked so ordinary, as though nothing had happened.

“Go down!” Bebe shouted loudly.

Bebe, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, the Blackscale Scorpion didn’t hesitate at all. The five magical beasts shrank in size rapidly while charging down into the desert. It was very troublesome to dig when one was physically large. Compared to magical beasts, human experts definitely weren’t as fast when they tunneled through the ground.

Fain, Rosarie, Tulily, and the rest of the seven waited there in mid-air, not knowing what to do.

“Right now, we can only place our hopes on Bebe and the others. Hopefully, they’ll be able to rescue Desri.” Linley himself wasn’t able to do anything.

If he entered the sand, first of all, his digging speed would be lowered by half, and he simply wouldn’t be able to chase down the plant creature.

“That grass monster’s tendrils are simply too fast. They move like an expert

wielding a sword." Tulily was frowning. "In a flash, they wrapped around Desri's legs. In addition, just then, Desri utilized a spiritual attack, but it seemed to not have any effect."

"It's impossible for it to have any effect." Linley shook his head. "That monster's body was as large as the oasis itself, ten square kilometers. Just now, only its tendrils were revealed. Its main body is most likely many kilometers away from us. Desri wasn't certain where the monster's body was. For him to just wildly cast his spiritual energy without knowing where to aim…it would be impressive if he was able to harm it at all."

Olivier let out a cold sneer. "That Desri was looking to be killed."

"Why would you say such a thing?" Fain and the others looked unhappily at Olivier.

Olivier glanced at them, then said calmly, "The Necropolis of the Gods has countless creatures here, and the techniques one would use against humans aren't necessarily suitable. This Desri is just a Grand Magus Saint. When faced with a sudden attack, at most he would be able to instacast a spell. But how powerful could the spells he is capable of instacasting be? Against these sorts of monsters, those spells don't pose a threat at all. And yet, he still came to the Necropolis of the Gods. Isn't that looking to be killed?"

"What sort of talk is this?" Rosarie was somewhat unhappy.

"Grand Magus Saints are poor at close combat, but upon reaching the Deity-level and upon gaining their divine body, they will naturally have their deficiencies in close combat addressed." Fain said.

But Linley actually felt that Olivier's words made some sense. Grand Magus Saints were indeed weak when facing sudden attacks.

"So?" Olivier said calmly, "After becoming a Deity, one will indeed be transformed and gain a divine body! Divine bodies are extremely powerful and suited for close combat."

Olivier laughed mockingly, “But then, why wait until becoming a Deity? Can’t a Grand Magus Saint, upon reaching the Saint-level, spend a little bit of time and effort on his close combat skills. To the likes of Desri, a few hundred years is nothing much.”

“To have a Grand Magus Saint become a Warrior Saint as well? Do you think it’s as easy as that?” Fain frowned as he spoke.

“Enough.” Linley said. “Enough talk. Everyone has their own opinions.”

Linley’s face suddenly had a look of delight on it. “Excellent, that creature has been dragged out.”

“Dragged out?” Everyone was surprised and delighted, immediately looking downwards.

The sand below began to rumble, and then rose up. Finally, with a ‘boom’ sound, sand exploded everywhere, and the first one to fly out was Desri. Desri’s body was covered with bloodstains, and his face was rather pale. Upon seeing Linley and the others, he still let out a chuckle. “That was really dangerous.”

“Boss, we’re coming.” Bebe’s voice rang out.

And then, Bebe also emerged from the sands, while in Bebe’s claws there was a thick tendril of grass, the thickness of a man’s arm. Using the thick tendril of grass, he actually dragged out the monster from below, and an enormous creature appeared in front of everyone.

This was a creature at least ten stories high, and its entire body was covered by thick, earthen yellow tendrils of grass roots, at least the size of a house.

The grass roots surrounding the monster’s body were only a hundred meters long at most. Clearly, all of the longer grass tendrils had already been broken off. Bebe dragged the monster up, while below came the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions and the Blackscale Scorpion.

“This fellow still wants to flee? Jeeze…” Bebe, holding that tendril in his hands, easily spun the massive creature a few times in mid-air, as though it were a giant windmill. “Boss, I thought it would be very powerful, but I didn’t expect it to be as soft as a persimmon. Boss, how do you want to deal with this monster? Your call.”

The Blackscale Scorpion flew over as well. “This fellow really was nothing special. It only knew those two or three attacks. When we drew near it, it was finished.”

Chapter 21 – The Queen Mother, ‘Lachapalle’

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 21: The Queen Mother, ‘Lachapalle’

“Don’t kill me.” A gravelly, terrified voice rang out.

The monster, which had been spun around like a windmill, suddenly came to a halt. Bebe dangled it there by one of its tendrils and shouted at it, “What, are you afraid now? Too late! Boss, we’re going to kill this monster anyhow. Lemme just take care of it now.”

Linley nodded slightly, and Desri and the others didn’t say anything. Just then, this monster clearly wanted to kill Desri. How would they so easily spare it?

“Halt!” The huge maw of the monster howled fiercely.

Bebe chortled twice, looking at the monster. “Halt? Are you afraid to die?”

“Bebe, stop wasting your breath on it.” Linley spoke.

“You can’t kill me. If you kill me, you will all die!” The monster roared in its gravelly voice.

Linley, Desri, Fain, and the others all looked at each other, and then glanced with amusement at this already captured plant life form. Fain laughed loudly, “If we kill you, we’ll all die? Go on and tell us, how will you kill us?”

Only now did the monster let out a sigh of relief. Seeing the attitude of these people, it came to a decision, and it sounded out with its hoarse voice, “If you kill me, I myself will not be able to seek revenge. But…you need to understand that in this seventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, I’m not the only one of my kind here, right?”

Linley frowned.

On the sixth floor, they had encountered the Flame Tyrant, and many people had died there. Killing the Flame Tyrant had been an extremely dangerous task. The danger of this seventh floor shouldn't be lower than that of the sixth. It wouldn't be as simple as just disposing of this plant creature.

"Speak." Fain frowned as he barked at it.

The experts all looked at the monster.

"On the seventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, I am only an ordinary creature. The truly powerful creature here is the Queen Mother!" The monster's voice had a hint of arrogance in it. "I urge you to let me go. If you kill me, the Queen Mother will definitely slaughter you all."

"The Queen Mother?" Linley frowned in puzzlement.

One of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions explained to the other people present, "In the other planes, there are some special life forms that are divided into a 'mother' component and 'child' components. Those 'child' components are given birth to by the 'mother' component, and the power of the 'mother' is hundreds of times that of the 'children'. Actually, the Hornet-type magical beasts are a good example of this. Each clan has just one 'Queen Mother', and the other magical beasts are all her children.

"Mother component? Child component? Queen Mother?" Linley and the others were all secretly surprised.

If this was the case, then the power of the Queen Mother would be far greater than that of its children.

"Right. The relationship between myself and the Queen Mother is the relationship between a 'mother component' and a 'child component'." The monster immediately said. "You had best release me. If you kill me, the Queen Mother will definitely sense it, and at that time…you will have

incurred the Queen Mother's wrath. You will definitely die."

The monster seemed very self confident.

The power of the Queen Mother wasn't something which it, a 'child component', could compare with.

"What should we do?" Desri looked at Linley and asked him.

Amongst this group, Linley's status had slowly risen, especially after his performance in the sixth floor. After all, his power was clearly greater than that of everyone else. In addition, Tulily and the others had been assisted by Linley.

"To kill, or not to kill." Linley hesitated a bit as well.

He couldn't tell if this creature was telling the truth or not.

"Whoosh!" A sudden gust of wind. One of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions charged at the monster, while at the same time, its body dramatically increased to the size of a titanic dragon. Its scaly, gold-fur covered sharp claws also reached several meters in thickness, and its thick, massive claws ripped viciously down at the creature.

The monster couldn't help but want to let out a scream of terror.

The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion's six eyes simultaneously sent out rays of black light, and as soon as the six rays of light enveloped the monster, the monster was no longer able to move.

"Bang!"

The sharp claws, carrying a faint, space-ripping power, slashed down on the monster's body, pausing only slightly while cutting through it. And then, like a vase being shattered into pieces, the monster's body exploded into four or five fragments, with green liquid flowing forth.

Although describing it took some time, in truth, this happened in the blink of an eye. The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion had killed the monster in a twinkling.

“Why did you kill him?” Rosarie’s eyes, flashing with a faint green light, stared at the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion. She asked coldly, “Aren’t you afraid of drawing the attention of the Queen Mother?”

“If you don’t want to be killed by the Queen Mother, then follow me.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion didn’t explain anything, immediately flying towards a certain direction. The other two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions immediately followed. Linley, Desri, and the others were puzzled, but they still followed and flew behind them.

After flying for roughly a hundred kilometers, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions came to a stop.

“What is going on?” Linley asked.

“We killed him, so the Queen Mother would probably chase after us.” Rutherford said with a frown.

The leader of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions laughed, revealing its fangs as it grinned. “You people are really stupid. That monster said a few words, and you really believed it? Just one or two words made you afraid to kill it?” The other two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had laughter in their eyes as well.

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had been alongside Dylin for countless years, and the amount of experience they had, the likes of Linley and the others could not possibly match.

“What? Can it be that what the monster was saying about it being a ‘child’ component and there being a Queen Mother on the seventh floor was a lie?” Fain asked.

“No, that part should be true.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion nodded its

great head. “That sort of plant life form, we three brothers have encountered before in the Gebados Planar Prison. Plant type creatures generally do have Queen Mother’s, and the power of the Queen Mother is indeed hundreds of times greater than that of its children.”

“And yet you still killed it?” Karossa frowned.

Linley was puzzled as well.

The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion snorted. “You don’t even understand this? This Queen Mother can give birth to hundreds on thousands of child components. To the Queen Mother, its children are nothing more than little soldiers. Have you ever seen an Emperor who immediately went to seek revenge for the sake of the death of a single soldier?”

The Blackscale Scorpion also rumbled, “Amongst the hornet-type magical beasts, the deaths of ordinary soldiers is indeed paid little attention to by the Queen Mother’s.”

“That’s just the first reason. The second reason is, it would be good if the Queen Mother chases after us.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said.

“Hrm?”

Everyone was puzzled. Why was it good for the Queen Mother to chase after them?

The other Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said, “Remember the sixth floor? At first, the Flame Tyrant was next to the corridor, but after leaving, it ordered the thousand-plus Magma Demons to block up the tunnel. Same logic. Their responsibility is to prevent us from leaving. I expect that the Queen Mother should be next to the exit to the eighth floor.”

“Right.” Fain nodded. This logic was very simple. Only, the experts present hadn’t thought of it.

“Would killing one of her ‘child’ components make the Queen Mother leave

the tunnel? What a joke. If she truly left, we would actually be able to seize the opportunity to find the tunnel and immediately enter the eighth floor." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion licked its lips. "Let's keep looking for the tunnel. However, while searching for the tunnel, it's best to be careful. You cannot compare the 'child' monster to its Queen Mother."

All of them knew this to be true, and they immediately went to look for the monster.

None of them dared to be rash. After all, the Queen Mother was here, somewhere.

"The creator of this Necropolis of the Gods has really spent quite a bit of effort." Linley, while flying in search of the tunnel, had to sigh inwardly with praise. Linley had never seen the likes of the Flame Tyrant or these plant creatures.

"But if it truly was developed by a Sovereign, then perhaps he would only need to have his subordinates go search for these strange, unique races and bring them here."

Linley sighed in his heart.

They continued searching. This desert world was extremely vast, and each time, before flying too far, they would see some oases from afar. They weren't afraid, and they would immediately fly over to see if there were any tunnels near the oases. If the oases transformed into a monster to attack them, then…the five magical beasts would immediately go kill the monster.

After a long time.

The wind blew across the desert world, whirling the sand high in the air, some dunes rising while other places sinking down. Along with the gust of wind, 'rustle, rustle', a large amount of sand rolled about, revealing a black rocky wall.

"Look. That seems to be the exit." Fain pointed excitedly off into the

distance, and everyone saw it as well.

Everyone here had excellent vision. That black rock wall, in the yellow desert, stood out very much.

“That is definitely the tunnel.” Linley and the others immediately flew over.

“Whoooosh.” Linley summoned a gust of wild wind which immediately landed against the stone wall, blowing the sand on it off into the distance, instantly revealing the full edifice that had been covered by the sand.

This was a black, pyramid-like structure. Beneath the black pyramid, there was a ten meter tall set of stairs, and the faint black glow let everyone here know…that they had found the right place. This sort of black glowing stairway was the symbol of the exit.

“Rumble…” Suddenly, countless vines and tendrils of grass erupted from around the tunnel beneath the black pyramid.

In virtually the blink of an eye, the entire black pyramid was covered by countless rattans and grass tendrils, and even the exit tunnel was completely sealed off airtight. With the black pyramid at the center, within an area of a hundred square kilometers, countless rattans and grass vines rose up towards the sky.

Linley and the others felt their hearts tremble, and they immediately flew back and flew higher.

“Haha…” A clear voice rang out from below, and then from within the countless vines and grass tendrils, an enormous green light charged upwards into the sky, then came to a halt in mid-air.

The green female creature stood there in mid-air. She was fully ten meters tall, but her body was covered with countless intersecting vines and tendrils of grass. At the same time, in the area around her body, there were countless vines and roots that were nearly a thousand meters long.

Her tendrils and vines were clearly different from those of the ‘child’ components. This was because the countless tendrils and vines around her were so green that they seemed nearly translucent.

It was as though they weren’t plants, but were a type of soft, translucent gem-like material. It was an extremely strange thing.

“It’s been so long since an outsider has come.” The green female laughed as she spoke. “This period of time has been so boring. Mm…humans. Oh, what beautiful bodies. I like human bodies. Oh. Before that. Let me introduce myself first.”

The green female creature swept everyone with her gaze. “I am Lachapelle. You can address me as the Queen Mother.”

“As we thought.” Linley and the others grew still more cautious.

Linley and the others carefully inspected this ‘Lachapelle’. Lachapelle’s tendrils were a soft green color, like a gemstones. Just from appearance alone, they were far larger than the tendrils of the ‘child’ components as well.

“Lachapelle.” One of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said in its loud voice. “I trust you have encountered other outsiders here before as well, and won’t necessarily want to make trouble for us. I hope you can allow us into the tunnel, as otherwise…if we fight all out against you, I think you won’t have a good time of it either.”

The Queen Mother, Lachapelle, stared at the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. “Oh, threatening me. How intriguing. Then let me see if you have that level of ability!” While she was still speaking, suddenly…

“Swish!”

The Queen Mother, Lachapelle, suddenly charged into the sky, shortening the distance between her and Linley.

“Retreat.” Linley and the others immediately retreated back at high speed, not hesitating at all.

But the countless rattans and tendrils of the Queen Mother, Lachapelle, shot out like sharp arrows at the same time. As Linley was retreating, he hadn’t paid attention to his back, but he suddenly realized…that the thousands of tendrils and rattans which Queen Mother Lachapelle had shot out weren’t attacking in a wild, unorganized way.

These rattans were actually attacking in accordance with some sort of strange profoundness.

“Spatial freezing?” Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that it was as though space had suddenly frozen. But of course, it hadn’t truly frozen; only, Linley and the others felt as though they had fallen into a pit of mud, and even flying became extremely arduous.

“Swish!”

Suddenly, the countless tendrils instantly surrounded Rutherford and Karossa. Rutherford and Karossa were a bit slower in terms of flying speed compared to the others, and thus were directly surrounded by the countless vines.

The countless vines and rattans immediately began to contract…

“Squelch.”

Countless amounts of blood leaked out from the cracks between the constricting rattans and vines, and then they were quickly absorbed into the rattans and vines.

“Rutherford and Karossa are dead.” The faces of the fleeing Linley and the other fleeing experts changed dramatically. Even someone as powerful as Rutherford, one of the Five Prime Saints, had instantly been killed after being surrounded, without even being able to resist.

The countless constricting vines and rattans once more began to dance, but not even the bones of Rutherford and Karossa remained.

“Mmm. So tasty.” The dark green eyes of the Queen Mother, Lachapelle, still stared at the distant, hurriedly fleeing Linley and the others.

Chapter 22 – Regrowth

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 22: Regrowth

The Queen Mother, Lachapelle, had the face of an angel, but her actions were that of a devil's.

"Children, keep a tight watch on this exit. As long as a single one of you remains alive, you cannot permit them to enter." The voice of the Queen Mother, Lachapelle, shook the heavens, and instantly, a large number of noises could be heard in the ground below the sand.

Countless tendrils and vines erupted forth from beneath the sand, and the black pyramid structure was covered by three layers on the inside and three layers on the outside by the tendrils.

Lachapelle's lips curved upwards slightly, and then with a 'swish', the air around her suddenly began to tremble.

The Queen Mother, Lachapelle, transformed into a streak of green light, chasing after Linley's group at high speed. It had to be said that Lachapelle's speed was simply too fast. In but a short while, Linley's group discovered that Lachapelle was behind them in hot pursuit.

"Quick, quick." Each person in Linley's group were exerting themselves to fly at their utmost speeds.

"Rutherford and Karossa, two powerful experts, were killed and devoured in the blink of an eye. The power of this Queen Mother is simply terrifying." Linley felt his heart clench as well. Before, when Bebe had captured that 'child' component plant, although it had also been able to surround everyone, not a single person had died.

In particular, the likes of Linley and Fain hadn't even been injured.

The difference between the ‘child’ and the ‘mother’ was simply too great.

“Boss, be careful.” Bebe’s voice suddenly rang out in Linley’s consciousness, and Linley immediately looked backwards. He saw a green, semi-translucent tendril the thickness of an arm shoot towards him through space at high speed like a sharp arrow.

Linley’s speed was only considered below average amongst the eleven remaining experts.

“Break!” Linley delivered a backhanded chop with Bloodviolet, and Bloodviolet carried with it its devilish violet flashes of light, causing space to suddenly distort as it chopped down against the semi-translucent tendrils.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Tempos of the Wind, level two!

Linley had a feeling…much like how, when he was young, he had tried to use a hatchet to chop down a tree.

“Bang.” Bloodviolet sank into the tendril, but Linley’s full strength blow had only been able to cut 80% of the way through this arm-thick tendril. At the same time, Linley suddenly sensed a tightness around his waist. That tendril had already wrapped itself around Linley.

“It didn’t break?” Linley was amazed.

Linley knew exactly how powerful this full force sword attack of his was. But a single tendril of this Queen Mother, Lachapelle, had reached such a terrifying level. Linley didn’t think anything else, and immediately the Bloodviolet flexible sword in his hand began to tremble.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind!

In almost an instant, the Bloodviolet sword that had already sank into the tendril trembled more than ten thousand times, sawing straight through the remaining 20% of the tendril.

But as Linley was chopping off this first tendril, his speed was impacted, and instantly, hundreds of tendrils swept towards Linley, seeking to surround him. Linley's face instantly turned absolutely pale. "A single tendril was already so hard to break, but hundreds…"

Those hundreds of tendrils surrounded around Linley in the blink of an eye, and those people who were fleeing ahead of them felt their hearts tremble.

This had happened once already, not too long ago. Rutherford and Karossa had been surrounded by these tendrils, and the result was…not even their bones were left. Linley was the expert with the most powerful attack in this group. If even Linley were to die, what could the rest of them do?

"Boss!" Bebe called out in terror, and at the same time, ignoring the danger, he immediately turned and charged back towards Linley.

"Swish." Bebe transformed into a black ray of light as he flew at high speed.

In the same instant those hundreds of tendrils surrounded him, in Linley's other hand suddenly appeared the adamantine heavy sword. Linly now had the adamantine heavy sword in his right hand and Bloodviolet in his left. The adamantine heavy sword floated down with seeming grace, but in truth, it had shot out as fast as lightning.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Throbbing Pulse of the World, 64 Layered Waves!

The time had come for him to go all out.

"Break for me!!!" Linley's face was extremely ferocious.

Linley was entirely surrounded by tendrils, and in the space in front of him alone, there were dozens of tendrils blocking him from going forward, trapping him within their net.

The dozens of tendrils struck by the adamantine heavy sword all shuddered,

but the soft, pliable, yet tough tendrils were extremely resilient against vibrational forces. Despite Linley attacking at full strength with his Throbbing Pulse of the World – 64 Layered Waves, only ten or so tendrils in the path of the adamantine heavy sword transformed into splinters, while the other ten tendrils remained.

“Swish!”

A devilish violet light chopped out, and the dozens of tendrils in front, almost as though they had become brittle, were chopped through by Bloodviolet.

“Swoosh!” Linley immediately seized the opportunity to fly out from the hole he had created.

“Boss.” Bebe immediately flew over. “Quick, onto my back.”

Bebe had transformed his size to become larger, and without hesitating at all, Linley directly leapt onto Bebe’s back, and Bebe’s speed immediately increased dramatically. Bebe, Desri, and Fain were the fastest in the group, and now that Bebe was moving at maximum speed, he quickly escaped the tendrils behind them.

“Whew.” Only now did Linley let out a long sigh.

Just then, the feeling of being surrounded by hundreds of tendrils really was akin to the feeling of the end coming.

For the sake of chasing after Linley, the Queen Mother, Lachapelle, had lost ground on the others. In addition, after witnessing Linley’s dangerous situation, the others had learned to be smarter.

“Quick, Olivier, onto my back.” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion shouted, while the other Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion barked the same to the nearby Rosarie. Amongst these experts, the fastest were Bebe, Fain, and Desri, and after them were the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, Tulily, and the Blackscale Scorpion.

As for Linley, Olivier, and Rosarie, they were slightly slower.

Both Olivier who trained in the Elemental Laws of Light and Linley who trained in the Elemental Laws of the Wind were all extremely fast. In addition, Olivier combined both darkness and light, while Linley was a Dragonblood Warrior…but compared to the likes of Bebe, Fain, Tulily, and the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, the two were still slower.

“This Blackscale Scorpion is really fast as well.” One of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said casually while flying.

The Blackscale Scorpion was of a race that normally was of the ninth rank. It was already quite incredible for this Blackscale Scorpion to reach the peak Saint stage. For his speed to be so fast as well…truly was amazing.

The eleven experts fled at high speed, and in the end, the Queen Mother, Lachapelle, finally gave up.

“Just now, that human youngster’s sword was quite strange.” The Queen Mother Lachapelle stared as Linley’s group disappeared beyond the horizons. “With but a single sword, he broke over ten of my tendrils, but the most amazing thing is…although the other dozens of tendrils his sword passed by didn’t shatter, they were damaged so severely that they only had a tenth of their usual strength.”

“Whew. Let’s take a rest.” Desri said.

The eleven experts didn’t dare land on the desert, and so they halted in mid-air. Clearly, that Lachapelle had truly terrified this group of people.

“This Queen Mother is simply too much of a monster.” Fain said with a frown. “Even Rutherford and Karossa were killed in an instant, and just then, when she chased after us, I felt extremely nervous.”

Everyone was resting right now.

When they were fleeing earlier, they hadn't dared to be the slightest bit incautious.

"Linley, I saw that Queen Mother attack you. What do you think?" Tulily looked at Linley.

Linley's face was rather ugly to look at.

That scene earlier had been way too dangerous. Linley shook his head and said solemnly, "This Queen Mother is far more dangerous than the Flame Tyrant. When I attacked it with Bloodviolet just now, my full force blow wasn't able to break through that tendril. This…you must understand, there were thousands on thousands of these tendrils."

"It didn't break under your full force blow?" The faces of all the experts changed.

Everyone knew how strong the Dragonblood Warriors were. Despite combining that with the Profound Truths of the Wind, Linley still hadn't been able to break through the tendril with a single blow. One could imagine how tough that tendril was.

"Afterwards, when the tendrils surrounded you, Linley, we were all very worried. How did you manage to break out? Given the toughness of those tendrils, it must have been extremely difficult." Desri asked, and all the nearby experts looked at Linley.

Right now, experience was very important.

Rutherford and Karossa, who had also been surrounded by the Queen Mother's tendrils, were both dead. Only Linley had escaped.

"My escape was an extremely risky one." Linley admitted it openly. "A large number of tendrils had surrounded me, and in that sort of situation, I had to go all out." Linley's face had a hint of bitter laughter on it. "So I immediately used the adamantine heavy sword, combining both swords in my attack."

“I first used the adamantine heavy sword to utilize the Profound Truths of the Earth, the same blow which killed the Flame Tyrant.” Linley shook his head. “My most powerful sword blow was only enough to destroy ten or so tendrils.”

“But the strange thing was…when I followed it up with Bloodviolet, I was instantly able to easily break through dozens of tendrils, and then I seized the opportunity to charge out.” Linley said.

Earlier, when Linley had first used only Bloodviolet to chop at that tendril, he hadn’t been able to break through it despite striking with full force. But this time, he was able to chop through dozens.

“How is that possible?” The others were puzzled as well.

Linley hadn’t had any time to consider this question while they were fleeing, but now, Linley suddenly understood after thinking about it. “Right. The Profound Truths of the Earth rely on vibrational waves to attack the enemy. The ten or so tendrils in front of me were directly vibrated into little pieces. Most likely, the dozens of tendrils behind them, although not completely destroyed, should have been badly damaged internally.”

With its internal components damaged, the tendrils naturally were no longer very tough.

Following with another full strength blow from Bloodviolet, it wasn’t too difficult to break through those dozens of damaged tendrils.

“Enough about that. What we need to think about is…how we should deal with the Queen Mother. If we don’t eliminate the Queen Mother, it most likely won’t permit us to enter the exit and go to the eighth floor.” Desri said with a frown.

The experts all nodded.

“What should we do?” All of them frowned in thought.

One of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions spoke. “Based on what I know, once the tendrils or vines of a plant creature are destroyed, it will be very hard for them to regrow them. The higher class the plant creature is, the tougher and more resilient their tendrils will be, but similarly, the tougher it will be to regrow them.”

“Therefore, what we can do is to divide into multiple attacks, eliminating a few tendrils with each attack. In the end…once the Queen Mother no longer has any tendrils left, won’t we be able to slaughter it as we please?”

Hearing the words of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, Linley, Fain, and the others all nodded.

If everyone joined forces and used forbidden-level spells and their ultimate attacks at the same time, they should be able to destroy a few tendrils. Once the Queen Mother, Lachapelle, chased after them, they would flee. But then they would attack her, again and again…

To reduce the number of tendrils the Queen Mother have was something they were capable of.

Slowly, one step at a time, they would still have a chance of success.

“Can’t be done.” Bebe shook his head.

The entire group of experts looked at Bebe, confused. Bebe shook his head and said, “Earlier, when I went to rescue the Boss, I saw exactly what happened. After the Boss broke through those tendrils and fled onto my back, those tendrils were regrown, and the speed of the regrowth was very fast. In a short period of time, they were completely recovered.

“How is that possible?” The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions couldn’t believe it.

“Impossible! Absolutely impossible!” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion shook his head.

“But this is what I, Bebe, personally witnessed. How can it be false?” Bebe rebutted. “In addition, how could I possibly lie about something like this?”

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions fell silent. They all believed…that in a critical moment such as this, Bebe wouldn’t possibly lie. But the three brothers had encountered this sort of plant creature in the past, and they knew some things about this type of creature.

“No matter what the reason is, the fact of the matter is that this Queen Mother’s tendrils have the ability to regrow.” Desri said solemnly. “We need to come up with a method on how to kill the Queen Mother.”

Everyone stayed silent.

The tendrils were so tough that even Linley’s full force blow with Bloodviolet couldn’t break through. The worst part was…this Queen Mother’s tendrils could regrow themselves.

What to do?

The deaths of Rutherford and Karossa were still fresh in the minds of every single expert.

Chapter 23 – Fast, Slow?

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 23: Fast, Slow?

The Queen Mother, Lachapelle, possessed tremendous power. In the air above the boundless desert of the seventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, the wind blew the sand as Desri, Linley, Fain, and the other human experts, along with Bebe and the other magical beast experts, stood there in mid-air. All of them were seriously pondering their next steps.

“If we don’t have any hope at all, I recommend…giving up.” Desri forced the words out.

The other experts all looked towards Desri.

“Give up, just like that?” Fain’s eyes had a hint of unwillingness.

They had waited a thousand years for this opportunity, and they had even passed the sixth floor. He was indeed rather unwilling to give up this opportunity now.

“We have no hope at all.” Desri shook his head. “A single tendril of Queen Mother Lachapelle’s is already so durable, and she has thousands on thousands of them. More importantly, even if you break those tendrils, they’ll naturally regrow.”

Desri looked around him. “Everyone, you tell me, must we insist on going to our deaths?”

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

“Boss, let’s give up.” Bebe said mentally to Linley. “There’s no rush for us. At worst, in another hundred years, when the two of us have become stronger, I’ll ask my Grandpa Beirut to just open another tunnel to the Necropolis of the Gods, just for us.”

Bebe felt it was hopeless as well.

Linley couldn't help but think back to the terrifying scene of those countless, densely packed tendrils surrounding him, especially the feeling of him being surrounded by them. That sort of dangerous feeling truly was heart-shaking.

But just at that moment, those three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions glanced at each other, and one of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said solemnly, "No, we aren't entirely hopeless. We still have a bit of hope."

"Oh?"

The levitating experts all stared in surprise towards those Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions.

"We still have hope? You say we still have hope? What hope?" Fain immediately asked.

That Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion nodded. "We three brothers have an ultimate attack. Through our 'Six Eyes', we can emit six rays of light to cover our opponent. It will paralyze the opponent and completely prevent them from moving."

"Paralyze them? Prevent them from moving?" Linley was greatly shocked.

This ultimate attack was simply too monstrous. Didn't it essentially mean that it would force the opponent to just stand there and be beaten?

Everyone present, even the perpetually silent Olivier and the Blackscale Scorpion, had their eyes filled with amazement.

"Right. I remember, now." Rosarie said with surprised joy. "I remember that when we first arrived at the seventh floor and Bebe and the others entered the sands and seized that 'child' monster, it was one of you three brothers who killed the monster. When you killed it, your six eyes emanated a ray of

black light that surrounded the monster, paralyzing it and forcing it to allow you to kill it."

Linley and the others remembered that as well.

"If that's the case, then we'll win for sure." The Blackscale Scorpion rumbled. "Let that Queen Mother, Lachapalle, be paralyzed, and then destroy her soul. Once her soul is destroyed, the Queen Mother will definitely die."

"It isn't as easy as that." The leader of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions shook his head. "Our technique isn't undefeatable. The way you are interpreting it, we would be able to immediately freeze any opponent we encounter and then kill them. Wouldn't that make us invincible? This technique depends on the power of the opponent."

Linley and the others nodded.

Right. If the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions used this technique against a Deity, most likely that Deity would just kill them with a flip of the hand.

"This technique of ours is naturally highly effective against that 'child' monster, of course." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said seriously. "But the power of the Queen Mother, Lachapalle, is hundreds of times stronger than her children. When she lets loose, her power is astonishingly great. To paralyze her will be very hard."

The other two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions nodded as well.

Linley and the others all understood this.

It was like a giant metal cage. It could be used to imprison a horse or a cow, but if you used the same metal cage, could you possibly use it to trap an enormous dragon that was thousands of times stronger than the horse or the cow?

"However, although the Queen Mother Lachapalle is strong, she isn't at the

Deity-level. If we three brothers join forces and use this technique together, most likely…we would be able to paralyze Queen Mother Lachapalle for around a second." The leader of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said.

Linley and the others felt joy in their hearts.

A second? Although it seemed like a short period of time, to experts such as Linley, a second was enough to allow one to exchange tens or hundreds of blows.

"But of course, that's just an estimate. After all, without having actually fought her, we don't know how long we can paralyze her for either." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said.

Everyone understood, but they also knew…that these three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, working together, would definitely be able to cause the Queen Mother to be paralyzed for a moment.

"Everyone, who amongst us feels confident in being able to kill the Queen Mother in an instant?" Desri immediately looked at the others.

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions would be able to let them one of the experts have a single instant of an opportunity. Now, the question was who had the best chance of success.

"Sadly, we don't have a wind-style Grand Magus Saint." Rosarie shook her head and sighed. In terms of the most powerful single-target attack, the title had to go to wind-style Grand Magus Saints. Once the 'Dimensional Edge' came out, even space itself would be cut through. It would have definitely been capable of cutting the Queen Mother into two parts.

All the experts present were silent.

"Linley, how about you?" Fain looked at Linley.

Linley maintained his silence.

The Queen Mother, Lachapalle, was surrounded by a dense cluster of tendrils. How long the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions would be able to paralyze her for was unknown. If, as soon as he drew near the Queen Mother's body, she escaped from the 'paralysis', then he would definitely be surrounded by countless tendrils again.

He wouldn't even have a chance to run.

After all, even the adamantine heavy sword and Bloodviolet combined could only break through roughly a hundred tendrils each time.

"Boss." Bebe shook his head towards Linley.

The chance of success was too low.

"Whoever kills the Queen Mother shall be the one to take possession of the divine artifact of the seventh floor, if there is one. I think no one here will object." Desri looked at everyone.

Everyone nodded.

"We still have two years before the ten year time limit." Linley said solemnly. "There's no need for us to rush. Let's spend some time to think about it."

All the experts nodded. Unless they had at least some degree of confidence, they wouldn't choose to throw their lives away.

…..

The boundless desert.

Linley hovered there in mid-air, his eyes shut as he attuned himself to the blowing of the wind. With regards to the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley had already had gained some new insights into both the 'Fast' aspect and the 'Slow' aspect. At this moment, he was attuning to himself to the Elemental Laws, and so he naturally was attuned to these two aspects as

well.

His mind became one with the wind elemental essences.

“Hrm?” Linley’s consciousness suddenly had an image appear within it.

When the Queen Mother, Lachapalle, had attacked the first time, those tens of thousands of tendrils had suddenly shot out at high speed. At that time, Linley and the other experts had all sensed that the surrounding space had suddenly frozen, and felt as though they were wallowing in cement or through a pool.

“At that time, the Queen Mother’s tendrils were moving in accordance to a strange, profound mystery. It somehow achieved the effect of causing space to freeze.” Linley’s mind suddenly had a thought.

Spatial freezing was in truth, a fairly high level interpretation of the ‘Slow’ aspect. Linley still had some distance to go from his current level of ‘slowing’ space to truly ‘freezing’ space.

“The Queen Mother’s tendrils were all extremely fast. Even Rutherford wasn’t able to flee.” Linley was puzzled. “But when those tendrils shot out, they were so fast that space itself became blurred. It should be the ‘spatial folding’ interpretation of the ‘Fast’ aspect. But why was it that all of those tendrils combined were able to create the effect of ‘spatial freezing’?”

Linley was puzzled.

At the same time, Linley unconsciously began to replay the sight of those countless tendrils shooting out, carefully searching for the profound mysteries within.

After a long time, Linley, still standing in mid-air, opened his eyes. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved Bloodviolet. His hand thrust it outwards, and instantly…

Thousands of Bloodviolets appeared in front of Linley, and the sword blurs

caused space itself to begin to blur. This attack was the combination of Linley's understanding of 'Spatial Folding' and 'Rippling Wind' attacks, with the 'Rippling Wind' capable of producing ten million sword attacks.

"Not right."

Linley frowned.

"If I want every single sword attack to be like those tendrils, those ten million sword blurs used simultaneously should be able to create the special effect of 'Spatial Freezing'." Linley once again struck out with Bloodviolet.

Right.

Right now, Linley was currently trying to utilize the 'Rippling Wind' technique to instantly create ten million swords, imitating the attack of Queen Mother Lachapalle.

Again. Again.

"Swish."

Bloodviolet once again transformed into ten million swords in the air, and the several meters covered by violet sword flashes suddenly began to congeal. The ten million sword attacks were all like the countless surrounding tendrils, and then, at the same time, they all converged on one point. A sound could be heard…

"Bang!" A tear in space appeared.

Linley's eyes lit up.

"Right. 'Spatial Freezing'." Linley's face finally revealed a hint of excitement.

"Finally. Success." Fortunately, Bloodviolet was capable of twisting and curving. That was the only reason why he could test the attacks time and

time again and completely learn and imitate the attack of Queen Mother Lachapalle. Only, the attack Queen Mother Lachapalle utilized had the thousands of tendrils surround the opponent.

But with Linley's attacks, the ten million swords came together at one point, converging all of their attacks.

"In the past, the 'Rippling Wind' attack could continuously send out many attacking swords, but once it transformed into ten million swords, because of wind friction, the countless swords couldn't converge on one spot simultaneously." Linley had been frustrated over this in the past.

When his sword struck out, it naturally had to follow the flows of the wind in order to suddenly produce ten million swords.

But to have the ten million swords converge on one spot required the swords to go against the natural force of the wind. As the saying goes, 'a millimeter of difference, a thousand kilometers of distance'. To go against the natural force of the wind meant that one simply couldn't instantly create ten million swords.

"But by using this unique cadence when creating all those swords, I can do it." Linley was very surprised.

Those ten million swords came out at once, but they didn't do so wildly and randomly, just following the wind wherever it went. They seemed to travel through a circular arc, creating a strange centrifugal force as all of the swords converged on a single point.

"How unique." Linley couldn't help but inwardly sigh with amazement.

But Linley was also extremely happy.

"Although each individual sword of those ten million swords aren't very powerful, when all those swords combine into one, the power of the attack would be thousands of times greater." Linley was extremely excited. When ten million swords combined into one, the sharpness and the speed of

Bloodviolet would come into full play.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Myriad Swords Converge!

This was yet another breakthrough in the Profound Truths of the Wind.

In terms of attack power, it was even much more powerful than the ‘Tempos of the Wind’.

“Only, this is a single target attack, only useful against one target.” Linley knew very well that when those countless swords combined, wherever the sword passed, all obstacles would be chopped to dust.

There was no need to wonder about it. The combined strength of those ten million swords combining would definitely cause the power of this attack to reach an awesome height.

In addition, this attack also contained the strange ‘Spatial Freezing’ effect.

“Why is it that the ‘Fast’ aspect can produce the ‘Spatial Freezing’ effect of the ‘Slow’ aspect?” Although Linley had successfully developed this attack, he still was puzzled.

The ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects of the Elemental Laws of the Wind were two totally opposite aspects. But it seemed that they were somehow linked together as well.

“If I can’t figure it out, then I won’t think about it.” Linley was in an extremely jubilant mood. “The most powerful attack of the Profound Truths of the Wind is totally capable of destroying all obstructions. With this attack, there’s no need to fear the obstruction of any tendrils.”

Linley’s heart was filled with confidence.

Three days later.

Having already engraved this most powerful attack of the Profound Truths

of the Wind into his heart, Linley immediately headed off with the other experts towards the Queen Mother, Lachapalle. This time, the others would all support him with their own attacks, while Linley himself would deliver the final attack.

After flying for quite a while.

“That vast oasis is up ahead. It should be the location of where the many ‘children’ components of Queen Mother Lachapalle have gathered.” Desri pointed off into the distance.

The place where the black pyramid had been was now surrounded by an extremely green sea, formed by those many ‘oases’.

“Haha…and here I thought all of you were so frightened, you had fled to the sixth floor. I didn’t expect you would dare to return.” The clear voice shook the air above the green sea, and in the air above that green sea, a green, glowing human-formed aberration surrounded by thousands of tendrils was hovering.”

It was the Queen Mother, Lachapalle.

Chapter 24 – Myriad Swords Converge – the Pearl of Life!

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 24, Myriad Swords Converge, the Pearl of Life!

The Queen Mother, Lachapelle, hovered there in mid-air like a queen, the thousands of nearly translucent green tendrils swiveling around her devilish body.

Meanwhile, below her…

Countless tendrils and vines rose up into the air, waving wildly. Rumbling growls could be heard from beneath the sands. A large number of ‘children’ components under the control of Queen Mother Lachapelle were covering the black pyramid, completely blocking it off.

Linley glanced at the nearby Rosarie and Desri. These two Grand Magus Saints had already begun to mumble the words to their spells, and were about to complete them.

Rosarie’s long, jade-green hair suddenly rose upwards as a wild surge of water-type elemental essence blasted forth from her. Countless amounts of frost and ice descended, and the temperature suddenly reached an extremely low point. Even the countless waving tendrils and vines below them were suddenly frozen.

Water-style forbidden-level magic: Absolute Zero.

At the same instant, a surge of invisible, ripple-like energy blasted out from Desri, shooting directly towards the mid-air Queen Mother Lachapalle. The Queen Mother Lachapalle’s body only trembled slightly, and she wasn’t much affected.

“Crunch. Bang.”

Many tendrils shattered from the cold.

The body of Queen Mother Lachapalle was covered with a layer of frost as well.

“This is the attack you have planned?” Queen Mother Lachapalle laughed wildly. “In terms of spiritual energy, how can the likes of you compare to me? As for water-style magic…haha, that’s even more laughable. I, Lachapalle, am a practitioner of the Elemental Laws of Water and Wind.”

“So powerful!” Linley’s group sighed in their hearts.

Plant type creatures which had large bodies generally also had enormously powerful souls to match. The Queen Mother’s real body was actually even more terrifyingly enormous, but as she trained, she had naturally begun to shrink it in size, but her soul had only grown more and more powerful.

Both sides were peak Saints.

But human Saints were far inferior to this sort of terrifying plant creature.

The Queen Mother Lachapalle’s words had just come out…

“Pew!”

Eighteen rays of black light shot out from the eyes of the three siblings, the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. Those eighteen rays of light instantly covered Queen Mother Lachapalle. It was as though her enormous body and tendrils had suddenly been covered with a layer of black skin.

The eyes of Queen Mother Lachapalle instantly widened, and her delicate face instantly changed and contorted.

She…couldn’t move!

“Swoosh!” Working in perfect concert, as those eighteen rays of light had

shot out, Linley had already flown straight to the Queen Mother at high speed.

“Groooowl!”

“Kill him!”

……..

Countless ‘child’ components from beneath the sand roared deafeningly, wanting to watch as their Queen Mother annihilated these humans. But in that moment, none of them had noticed…that their Queen Mother could no longer move.

Bloodviolet in one hand, and the adamantine heavy sword in the other, the Dragonformed Linley stared straight at the distant Queen Mother Lachapalle with his dark gold eyes. At his highest speed, he charged towards her. Linley had already entered the range of the countless tendrils and vines of Queen Mother Lachapalle.

Linley’s lips quirked upwards.

The wild wind howled as Linley instantly crossed hundreds of meters, reaching a distance of less than a hundred meters away from Lachapalle. To Linley, a hundred meters was but the blink of an eye…but when experts fought, that blink of an eye was what determined victory.

“Rooooar!” A furious roar escaped the lips of Queen Mother Lachapalle.

Countless tendrils, and those vines surrounding the Queen Mother’s body, shot directly towards Linley. The Queen Mother’s eyes were filled with boundless rage, and she swore to herself that she was going to kill all of the humans in front of her, starting with the one closest.

The Queen Mother had broken free of the ‘paralysis’.

“Not good.” The faces of Desri, Rosarie, and the others all changed.

Bebe's beady little eyes suddenly had a red light flash through them, while at the same time his body became covered with a layer of pitch-black light. Bebe transformed into a black ray of light, ignoring the deadly danger as he charged over. "Boss." Bebe was extremely worried.

An enormous number of tendrils snaked towards him.

Linley himself was very calm. He had prepared for this eventuality long ago.

Bloodviolet, in his hand, suddenly transformed into ten million devilish flashes of violet light. Everywhere the flashes appeared, blurry folds in space could be seen, while at the same time, the violet flashes of light all bizarrely coiled and snaked their way forward in a very peculiar pattern as they stabbed towards one spot.

Spatial Freezing!

The large number of tendrils charging towards him suddenly dropped dramatically in speed, as though they were travelling through mud.

As for Linley's ten million sword flashes, they actually converged on one spot, uniting into one indistinct, heart-stopping violet light. This violet light was like a comet charging straight ahead, utterly unblockable.

"Bang!" The violet sword light charged forwards, and those tough, half-translucent tendrils instantly crumbled and shattered, with countless tendril parts sent flying everywhere.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Myriad Swords Converge!

The most powerful sword attack which Linley could muster through using the Profound Truths of the Wind!

Linley instantly scurried out from the space that had been shattered by his 'Myriad Swords Converge' attack, while the Queen Mother, Lachapalle,

stared in astonishment. “How is that possible?” Her tendrils were far more powerful than those of the ‘child’ components’.

So many tendrils had surrounded the human, but the human had instantly broken through.

“Die.” Having breached the cage of tendrils, Linley had already reached the air above Queen Mother Lachapalle’s head, and the adamantine heavy sword in Linley’s hand came chopping down.

Lachapalle immediately dove down at high speed.

But how could her body’s movement speed compare with a weapon’s? Queen Mother Lachapalle also controlled her tendrils to block, but…it was too late.

“Bang!” Linley’s adamantine heavy sword collided with Lachapalle’s head.

The adamantine heavy sword only lightly touched Lachapalle’s head, and Lachapalle’s massive body suddenly began to tremble, and then a green liquid began to flow out from her mouth and her eyes. Those wildly waving tendrils had already begun to droop down lifelessly.

Linley’s other hand didn’t just rest; he once again utilized the ‘Myriad Swords Converge’ attack.

The devilish flash of ten million swords, moving in that strange cadence, once more appeared, and space once more froze. Those ten million swords converged on a single location, forming a blurry, violet sword flash, which pierced directly towards Queen Mother Lachapalle’s head.

“Bang!”

Starting from the head, the Queen mother’s entire body collapsed and transformed into green colored debris. Only after her body burst apart did Linley realize that actually, her internals had already been shaken by the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ into something as soft as mud. But when the

Queen Mother's body fully collapsed, Linley found to his surprise…that within the body of this Queen Mother, there was a very small, yet glittering, green-glowing translucent pearl.

With a flip of his hand, Linley grabbed the translucent pearl. As for Queen Mother Lachapalle, the remaining half of her body and a large number of tendrils collapsed lifelessly from mid-air, falling downwards and smashing into the countless vines below.

The wildly waving tendrils of the 'green sea' below suddenly halted.

None of these plant creatures could dare believe it. Their mighty 'Queen Mother' had been killed in mid-air by this warrior who looked like a Draconian.

Their invincible Queen Mother…had died!

"Listen up." Linley shouted coldly towards the people below. "All of you better scram. Otherwise…I'll kill all of you, just like how I just killed your Queen Mother." Linley swept the ground coldly with his gaze.

"Rustle, rustle…"

Countless tendrils and vines frantically sank into the sand, and the 'green sea' that had occupied an extremely wide expanse of space suddenly transformed into desert again. As for those plant creatures, they all fled at high speed in terror. Even their Queen Mother who was hundreds of times more powerful than them had died.

How could they, mere 'child' components, compete?

The black pyramid, which had been covered by countless vines and rattans, now revealed its true appearance once again.

"Boss, you scared me to death." Bebe was now by Linley's side, and he had re-absorbed that layer of black light back into his body.

Linley couldn't help but hug Bebe.

Although Bebe was emotionally immature, sometimes naughty and mischievous, while at other times as bloodthirsty as any magical beast, he was willing to give up his life for Linley's sake. The two had grown up together, and their lives were like one. Their affection for each other was so deep…that with their souls interlinked, they could physically sense it.

"I'm fine. Without a degree of certainty, would I, your Boss, dare act in such a way?" Linley snickered.

At this time, Desri and the others flew over as well. After the sudden reversal in fortune they had just witnessed, they now all had incandescent smiles on their faces.

"Linley, when you demonstrated that attack of yours in front of us earlier, I didn't have much confidence." Fain laughed. "But after seeing it just now, I now know how powerful that sword of yours is. No matter how powerful one's defense is, one still won't be able to take that sword of yours."

When Linley had demonstrated it, he was only demonstrating it into the air. How could Fain and the others clearly see how powerful it was?

"Everyone, let's hurry up and see if can find if there are any divine artifacts here on the seventh floor." Desri said to everyone. "We agreed early on that the person to kill the Queen Mother would take possession of the divine artifacts, if there are any. Linley risked his life to kill her…and so he should get the divine artifact. Everyone, search carefully."

Linley hurriedly said, "No need to go to so much trouble…"

"You just stay here. We'll help you look." One of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said. They had underestimated the strength and power of the Queen Mother. Even when the three brothers had joined forces and executed their forbidden technique, they had only been able to paralyze the Queen Mother for an instant.

Linley had made the greatest contribution to killing the Queen Mother. Everyone hurriedly began to help search for the divine artifact, and even Olivier voluntarily flew down to the ground. All of the experts began to carefully search.

As for Linley, he flew to the exit platform next to the black pyramid.

This was because last time, on the sixth floor, this was where the divine artifacts had been placed. But this time, it was different.

“Nothing there?” Linley shook his head. He had searched for quite some time by the stairs, but he hadn’t found anything.

The experts searched carefully in a circle with an area of a square kilometer. In the end, they all returned to the black pyramid.

“Did you find anything?” Desri asked.

The others all shook their heads.

Desri frowned. “Strange. On the sixth floor, including the hatchet the Flame Tyrant had, there were a total of three divine artifacts. The Queen Mother Lachapalle of the seventh floor was at a higher level of power than the Flame Tyrant. But we weren’t even able to find a single divine artifact.”

Linley was puzzled as well.

“This shouldn’t be the case.” Fain was confused as well. “Where is that divine artifact?”

“Oh, right.” Rosarie’s eyes lit up. “On the sixth floor, the Flame Tyrant himself was wielding that greataxe. Were there any divine artifacts on Lachapalle’s body? Linley, did you see anything?”

“On her body?” Linley started.

And then, Linley instantly thought of the round pearl he had already

absorbed into his interspatial ring. He immediately retrieved it with a flip of his hand. “Right. When I killed the Queen mother and her body collapsed, I found a seemingly unusual pearl inside her body, and so I grabbed it. Take a look. What is this?”

Linley didn’t think that this round pearl was a divine artifact.

As he saw it….it should be something similar to a magical beast’s magicite core, the essence of the Queen Mother.

“Pearl of Life.” Upon seeing the round pearl in Linley’s hand, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions let out simultaneous cries of shock.

Linley, Desri, and the others all stared at the three Six-Eyed Golden Lions in puzzlement. One of them immediately explained, “This Pearl of Life is a type of spiritual pearl treasure which we once saw in the past when we were with Father. Now we understand…why that Queen Mother ‘Lachapalle’ was able to instantly regrow her damaged tendrils.”

“If the Pearl of Life enters one’s body, then the boundless life energy contained within the Pearl of Life will be provided to the user. Even if one’s body is chopped into eight pieces, it will return to normal in a flash, needing just one or two seconds. In other words…as long as your soul isn’t destroyed, then you will never die.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said excitedly, “To Saint-level experts, this Pearl of Life is more precious than any divine artifact!”

Chapter 25 – Entering the Eighth Floor

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 25, Entering the Eighth Floor

Even after one's body was chopped into seven or eight pieces, it would still recover in one or two seconds.

Such a regenerative ability made the eyes of the surrounding experts all light up. To Saints, this sort of treasure was incomparably valuable.

"But it's only of use to Saints. To Deities, toys like this are totally worthless." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion laughed.

Desri nodded as well. "Deities possess a divine spark, and their divine bodies are formed from divine energy. Even if they are badly wounded, as long as their souls aren't destroyed, their body can be reborn even if reduced to nothingness." The difference between Saints and Deities was enormous.

Linley and the others couldn't help but sigh deep in their hearts.

The Deity-level!

Even someone as powerful as Linley, in front of a Deity, wouldn't be able to fight back at all. A single step…but one which blocked countless Saints.

"Big brother." The other Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said, "Even if a person puts this Pearl of Life into their body, and their soul is undamaged, they can still be killed. Have you forgotten what father said?"

The leader of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions nodded. "Oh, you are talking about the body being entirely destroyed?"

Linley, Desri, Fain, and the others all looked at the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion in confusion. The leading Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion explained to

Linley and the others, “The energy of this Pearl of Life can regenerate the body. In other words, you have to at least have a small part of the body left. Only then can the rest of your body be reborn from that part. If your entire body is destroyed, then you will die, of course.”

“Oh, so that’s what you mean.” Linley and the others now understood.

“But Linley…” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion looked at Linley. “With the Pearl of Life, don’t end up being too arrogant. In the countless planes, there are many techniques that can used to utterly destroy an opponent’s body. Opponents who train in Elemental Laws of Fire and the Elemental Laws of Water all can accomplish such a thing.”

“I know.”

Linley laughed calmly. “The Elemental Laws are as vast as the ocean. I only know one or two drops of water in that ocean.”

“Your body is very tough, and you have a Pearl of Life. What you need to do is to focus your time improving your spiritual attacks and spiritual defenses.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion seemed to take great interest in Linley’s well-being. “There’s all sorts of spiritual-type attacks, and they number beyond counting. If you are incautious just a single time, then you’ll be done for.”

Linley nodded.

The soul was indeed a profound, abstruse thing.

For example, the Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler, could easily command the undead, and even question the souls of others.

For example, Beirut, who was at such a level that even Saints such as Rudi and Dillon had their memories scanned, without them knowing a thing. A technique like this…was absolutely astonishing and unheard of. For experts such as him, directly controlling Saints would probably be extremely easy.

“In the past, when the Holy Emperor Heidens used his ‘Oracular Magic’ to attack me, my soul’s defense nearly collapsed. In the future, I need to be careful of this.” Linley said to himself.

Heidens, if placed amongst the countless ranks of Saints in the myriad other planes, was nothing more than average. There were far too many Saints who were more talented than him in spiritual attacks. Linley’s spiritual defensive power was actually inferior to even the likes of Saints such as Rosarie and Desri.

As least experts like Desri, when facing Heidens, wouldn’t have been nearly trounced so easily.

“Soul-based attacks include charms, hypnotism, paralysis, destruction, and all sorts of other techniques. There are forceful ones, and there are soft ones.” Desri sighed. “The more one studies this, the more one realizes how boundless and deep it is. In the past, the War God had said that the High Priest, with but a glance, could let us sink into an illusion, and if in the illusion we think that we have died, in real life, we really will have died and our soul will dissipate.”

“Oh?” Linley was greatly shocked.

The High Priest was this terrifying?

Rosarie chortled, “What can you do. After becoming a Deity, the weakest aspect one has is the spirit. Demigods, Gods, Highgods…all of them will spend their effort on studying the profound mysteries contained within the soul. After all, they don’t want to die.”

Fain laughed. “Linley, you had best bind this Pearl of Life with blood. Otherwise, we’ll all grow covetous as we stare at it.”

Chuckling, Linley immediately blood-bound it.

Immediately, this translucent Pearl of Life, glowing with a hazy green light, entered Linley’s body. Linley could clearly sense that his heart, his muscles,

and his bones were all filled with boundless life force. Even if part of his body was severed, he would still quickly be able to heal.

Linley's group was in no rush to go to the eighth floor. They first rested and made preparations here on the seventh floor. After all, once they entered the eighth floor, who knows what sort of terrifying creatures they would find there?

Off in the distance, Tulily was constantly training with using his scimitar.

It hadn't been long since he had this Bloodshadow scimitar, and so he was now constantly testing how to best utilize its power. As for Olivier, Desri, and the others, they all sat off to the side, meditating quietly.

"I've been at the rank of Arch Magus of the ninth rank for so long, yet I still haven't made a breakthrough." Seated in the meditative posture on the sand, Linley sighed to himself. But he understood that something like this couldn't be rushed. The more you tried to rush it, the harder it would be to break through.

Bebe was curled up on Linley's leg, sleeping comfortably.

"Bebe." Linley spoke. Wharton was his little brother. And Bebe…was also his little brother. Towards his family, Linley always had a protective instinct.

"Yeah, Boss?" Bebe raised his little head to stare at Linley.

Linley said softly, "Bebe, each layer of the Necropolis of the Gods grows more and more dangerous. I can no longer imagine what we will encounter when we go to the eighth floor, or what will happen! But Bebe, it's best if you don't go to the eighth floor."

"Boss?" Bebe's eyes instantly turned round.

"Bebe, is your defense stronger than the Flame Tyrant's? Is your attack superior to his? Bebe…you are still growing. There's no need for you to

risk yourself like this." Linley himself wasn't afraid, but he was somewhat worried for Bebe.

"Boss, if you go, I go." Bebe was very stubborn.

Linley shook his head. "That isn't it. I have the Pearl of Life. It's much safer for me. More importantly, I feel as though there is something in this Necropolis of the Gods which is waiting for me, which is calling to me." Especially after actually entering the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley could even more clearly sense that calling sensation.

It was a call which set his soul a'strumming.

Whether it was because of his desire to train himself, or because it had to do with discovering the profound secrets of the Four Supreme Warriors, or because of the call to his soul, Linley didn't want to retreat.

"Boss, I'll go with you." Bebe stared at Linley with his little eyes. "It's just a bit of danger. What are you afraid of, Boss. In the past, when we were in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, we were so weak, but we even managed to survive the attack of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. When the Radiant Church pursued and tried to kill us, we still made it through. Back then, we were very weak, but we still weren't afraid. Now that we are strong, are we going to start being afraid?"

"You better understand that I, Bebe, am really badass now!" Bebe stood up straight, intentionally puffing his little chest out.

Linley couldn't help but laugh, but at the same time, he felt a surge of gratitude.

In addition, Linley couldn't help but think back to his memories of his youth, when he and Bebe together ventured into the Foggy Gulch.

"Haha, fine. Whether we live or we die, we'll do it all together." Linley laughed as he hugged Bebe, and Bebe laughed as well.

They stayed at the seventh floor for seven days. Linley's group came to the entrance to the eighth floor. The Grand Magus Saints, Desri and Rosalie, had already prepared defensive spells for themselves, while Linley had transformed into his Dragonblood Warrior form. Everyone was ready now.

"Everyone, be careful. Now…let's head out!" Desri said.

Immediately, the eleven experts entered the tunnel into the black pyramid one by one. This tunnel was completely covered with black light. After walking for but a short while, Linley's group arrived at the eighth floor.

"It is so similar to the third floor." Linley stared at his surroundings.

The eighth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods had an extremely thick layer of ice as its ground. This was a world of ice. From afar, there were enormous glaciers and icebergs which gleamed with dazzling light. Only the cold, desolate wind howled across the landscape, blowing a few pieces of ice here and there.

Desri, Linley, Fain, Bebe, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, and the other experts all carefully inspected their surroundings.

"Search for the exit." Desri said softly while flying up.

The eleven experts began to fly together, beginning to stealthily search for the exit to the ninth floor. But of course, as they flew, they were very cautious, afraid of finding living creatures here on the eighth floor. But after flying for a long time…

"Hey…this eighth floor is strange." Rosarie was puzzled. "We've been searching for such a long time. Why haven't we seen a single living thing?"

Indeed.

In both the sixth and the seventh floor, as soon as they stepped in, they discovered living creatures, such as the 'Magma Demons' of the sixth floor, or the 'child' plants of the seventh floor. They were very easily discovered.

But here on the eighth floor, Linley and the others had flown for at least a thousand kilometers, but hadn't seen a single living thing.

"This eighth floor is quite bizarre." Fain was staring at his surroundings as well.

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were also on their guard, constantly scanning the area, hoping to find any hints or clues.

Staring at the surrounding area, Linley lowered his voice to a whisper. "No matter what sort of creature this eighth floor has, it would be best if we could enter the ninth floor without disturbing it. Let's look for the exit first." The others all nodded in agreement.

If they could avoid a battle, that would be for the best.

Everyone continued to carefully search for the tunnel

Linley and the others were still worried that they might encounter the creatures of the eighth floor later, but….

"Whoooooosh." On the eighth floor, Linley and the group only heard the howling cold wind, and didn't see any living creature at all. After flying for nearly an hour, they finally discovered the stairways, covered with black light. This was the exit to the ninth floor.

Linley, Desri, Olivier, Fain, and the other experts all exchanged glances, surprise and joy in their eyes.

"We really are lucky this time. We didn't encounter a single creature before finding the exit." Rosarie laughed softly.

The others laughed and nodded as well.

"Let's go. We're going to the ninth floor." Fain said, somewhat excited. He immediately moved towards it.

But what none of the eleven experts had noticed was that on the slick, gleaming surface of a seemingly normal iceberg nearby the stairs, there was a black pattern. Suddenly…the black pattern exploded forth, revealing an eye that was at least three or four meters tall!

A golden eye!

"Bang!" The iceberg shattered apart with a boom, and from within it appeared a giant formed from ice. The only part of the giant that wasn't formed from ice was that single, glowing golden eye. "Humans, you killed Lachapalle? That is truly excellent."

This gigantic ice-man's voice seemed to shake the eighth floor like thunder.

At the same time…

Fain, who had just walked towards the exit, suddenly discovered that the tunnel to the ninth floor became sealed by ice out of nowhere. The layer of ice was many meters thick.

Linley, Fain, Desri, and the others all simultaneously discovered this gigantic ice-man who had suddenly appeared, and they quickly flew back.

"What sort of creature is this?" Linley looked at the place on the face of the gigantic ice-man where its eyes should be, but unlike humans who had two eyes, this creature only had that single, golden glowing eye. Linley only cast a single glance towards the gold eye, but as he did, he felt as though his soul had suddenly suffered a powerful blow, and he instantly felt dizzy.

"You killed Lachapalle. I'm very happy about that. As your reward…I will only kill six of the eleven of you. The other five will be permitted to return to the seventh floor with your lives." The gigantic ice-man's voice was very gentle, as though he were a kindly old man.

Linley, Fain, Desri, and the others felt their hearts tremble.

“A Beholder? Careful, don’t look at its eye.” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion growled.

Linley had recovered to his normal mental state by now.

“Beholder?” The gigantic ice-man laughed. “No. You shouldn’t refer to me as a Beholder. To be more precise…I am the ruler of the race of Beholders from the Bintelan [Bing’te’lan] plane. You can refer to me as the Beholder King.” The gigantic ice-man said brightly.

And then, its glowing golden eye stared down at the group of people below. “So I’m going to kill six of you. Um. I’ll start with you two humans first.”

As he spoke, the golden eye suddenly emitted two rays of nearly translucent gray light. The two rays of light were simply too fast, and the worst part of it was, neither Linley nor Olivier had dared to look at its golden eye. They only realized what had happened when the gray light had almost reached them.

It was too late!

“Pew!” “Pew!”

The two rays of gray light sank into the bodies of Linley and Olivier.

Chapter 26 – The Beholder King

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 26, The Beholder King

Cold!

As the gray ray of light struck him, a bone-piercing cold spread to every part of Linley's body. Linley felt as though his entire body had turned numb with cold, and then, that ray of gray light directly went from Linley's body to his mind, attacking his soul.

The waters of his sea of consciousness slowly surged about, with that seven-colored gem that was his soul floating in the middle of it, with a faint blue light permeating that sea of consciousness as well as dimly covering the seven-colored gem.

The gray light dispersed, wrapping itself around the boundless sea of consciousness. The surging sea of consciousness suddenly came to a halt, and not even the protective blue light resisted even slightly.

The entire sea of consciousness, as well as that seven-colored gem, were completely covered with a layer of gray light.

The soul came to a halt.

The light in Linley's eyes grew dim, and a robotic, numb look appeared in them. Right now, Linley's soul had stopped moving, and naturally his mind had came to a halt as well.

His soul had been frozen!

"Rumble…" Linley's body began to quickly be covered by a hard layer of ice. In the blink of an eye, Linley's entire body was completely sealed off by ice that was multiple meters thick, transforming into a large ice cube. As for Olivier…he, too, had changed into an ice cube.

Desri and Fain stared, speechless.

The Beholder King had a hint of laughter in his voice. Staring at the distant Desri, Fain, and the others, he said, “I know that one of you is definitely in possession of the Pearl of Life, but sadly, the Pearl of Life is useless against me. First I’ll freeze them, and then later, I’ll torture them to death. Mm, alright, time to deal with four more.”

The Beholder King’s voice was very gentle, but Desri and the others felt their hearts tremble.

They knew how powerful Linley was, but Linley hadn’t been able to resist at all in the face of this ‘Beholder King’. Actually, when the Necropolis of the Gods was first constructed and filled, all of the life forms that were qualified to be placed on the seventh and eighth floors were some of the most powerful Saint-level creatures which existed in the countless planes of the universe.

Different types of life forms naturally had different levels of power.

For example, the Beholder was extremely talented at dealing against souls.

“Huh?” The golden eye of the Beholder King suddenly swiveled to stare at Olivier, who had been frozen into an ice cube.

“BOOM!” Countless shards of ice exploded in all directions.

His long, black-and-white hair flowing gracefully, Olivier charged out of the ice cube with that mystic icesword in his hands. The Beholder King stared at Olivier in astonishment. “What a strange soul. How is it possible for your soul to be offensive in nature?”

This was his greatest secret! This was the reason why, after his duel with Haydson, his power had suddenly grown so dramatically! And why he was now capable of simultaneously using the Elemental Laws of Darkness and Light!

Olivier didn't say a thing. He transformed into a ray of light as he charged towards Linley.

Before Olivier arrived, Bebe had already charged to Linley.

The Beholder King's attention was totally focused on Olivier, and not even Bebe, who had transformed into a black blur as he had flown towards Linley, tried to stop Olivier. Bebe's heart was frantic with fear. "Boss, Boss, wake up, wake up!"

Bebe's voice was transmitted to Linley's consciousness.

Bebe and Linley's souls were linked, and the reason why they could mentally talk to each other was that their souls were talking to each other.

Linley's consciousness, which had been completely frozen, shook slightly, but the gray light quickly expanded in intensity, and the sea of consciousness once more returned to its previous calm, not moving at all.

"Slash!" Bebe slashed open the ice cube with one claw, the terrifying force of that blow turning the piece of torn-off ice to powder. "Boss, Boss, wake up! Wake up!" Bebe wildly, frantically tried to wake Linley up by calling to him mentally.

The frozen soul was completely separated from the outside world. Even if his body was destroyed, Linley wouldn't feel a thing.

Only this sort of mental communication which a pre-existing soul bond permitted was able to ignore the separation.

Linley's sea of consciousness once more shook, and the gray light covering his sea of consciousness once more lit up, but clearly, the intensity of that light was growing dimmer and dimmer. This power which was suppressing the sea of consciousness clearly was constantly consuming energy.

"Keep on spiritually communicating with Linley. If you keep it up, you

should be able to wake him up." Olivier said to Bebe. "Hurry up and leave."

Bebe, carrying 'Linley', transformed into a ray of light, fleeing at high speed while constantly calling out to Linley mentally. Finally, in Linley's mind, his sea of consciousness trembled yet again, and that thin layer of gray light, already stretched to the limit, totally collapsed.

"Uh, what happened?" Linley was now totally awake.

He discovered, to his astonishment, that he was currently being carried by an enlarged Bebe, who was flying at high speed.

"Boss, wake up, wake up!" Bebe was still constantly calling out to him, his eyes filled with tears.

"Bebe." Linley spoke back mentally, while now flying on his own.

Bebe started, and then his little eyes were filled with surprise and joy.

"What just happened?" Linley was completely lost. He only remembered being struck by that ray of gray light, and then his body turned cold. After that, he remembered nothing. After waking up, he found that he was being carried by Bebe, who was fleeing at high speed.

"Bang!" From afar came a terrifying explosive sound.

Many pieces of ice shot out like meteors, howling through the air as they moved at high speed. Linley and Bebe easily dodged past them while turning to stare into the distance. It wasn't just Linley who had turned to look; even Desri, Fain, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, and the other fleeing experts all turned to stare as well.

When they did, looks of surprised joy appeared on their faces.

The enormous icy body of the Beholder King had exploded. Clearly, Olivier had shattered it with his sword. Right now, Olivier was currently wielding his longsword in his hand as he stood there in mid-air, his eyes shut.

“Excellent.” Linley sighed in praise.

“Olivier, careful.” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion shouted loudly. “The actual body of the Beholder King is that eye. That body of ice is only formed from energy.”

“Haha…”

That glowing golden eye, floating in mid-air, somehow spoke in a strange voice. “Right. The magical beast speaks correctly. The body of ice is nothing more than something I casually created. Haha, I’ve been in the Necropolis of the Gods for a long time, and I’ve killed quite a few experts, but I’ve never encountered anyone with a soul as unique as yours. Interesting, interesting.”

Olivier’s eyes remained shut, and a large amount of extremely sparse black energy was emanating in all directions from him.

He was relying on this dark energy to cover the area and allow him to know the location of the Beholder King. After all, Olivier didn’t dare to stare directly into that golden eye. The closer one was to the golden eye, the more dangerous it would be to stare into it.

For the likes of Linley who had already fled kilometers away, no matter how good their vision was, they would only be able to hazily make out a golden spot of light. They wouldn’t be affected.

“Swish!” Black energy covered half of Olivier’s body, while light-style energy covered his other half. His long black-and-white hair rustled as his battle-qi expanded. Olivier, eyes shut, shot out towards the golden eye like an arrow.

The mystic icesword in his hands chopped down with as much force and vigor as ever. Wherever his longsword passed by, countless patterns in space appeared.

“Swish.” A dream-like flash of light.

The golden eye suddenly disappeared, reappearing a hundred meters away. Its speed was so fast that it was even faster than the likes of Bebe, Fain, and Desri by a good amount. The enormous golden eye somehow spoke. “Haha, you want to kill me? In your dreams!” At the same time, a wild, explosive burst of icy energy suddenly began to flow towards the golden eye, instantly forming a ferocious icy whirlpool around it.

The golden eye was at the heart of this enormous whirlpool.

Seeing the scene playing out in the distance, Desri, Linley, and the other experts gathered together.

“Everyone, be careful. Don’t get hit by that gray light.” Desri looked at everyone in the circle. “Everyone, what should we do?”

Upon seeing how fast that golden eye could move, all the experts present understood that in terms of speed, none of them could match this Beholder King.

“There’s one final method.” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said. “We three brothers can do the same thing as we did in the seventh floor. We’ll simultaneously attack and paralyze that Beholder King. I trust that the Beholder King’s countering abilities won’t be as strong as that of the Queen Mother, Lachapalle.”

Everyone’s eyes lit up.

“Although you can paralyze it, even if the Beholder King can’t move, he can still emit those rays of gray light.” Linley said with a frown.

“It’s fine. While paralyzing it, we can attack the eye.” Fain said. “Perhaps we’ll be able to kill this Beholder King.”

“No. I strongly recommend that we not try to kill the Beholder King. It’s better if we enter the ninth floor instead.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion

argued against it.

“Why?” Desri didn’t understand, so he asked.

The other Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said, “Based on what we know, Beholders are extremely proficient at attacking. Aside from the spiritual attack this one just used against Linley and Olivier, they possess other attacks as well, such as ‘mind control’ as well as other, physical attacks.”

Everyone’s hearts shook.

“Cleo and the other two will paralyze the Beholder King, and I will attack it.” The Blackscale Scorpion, which had been silent up until now, suddenly spoke up. “All of you rush into the ninth floor.”

Everyone stared in astonishment at the Blackscale Scorpion.

“Don’t worry. I have a degree of confidence.” The Blackscale Scorpion was actually very confident.

“Haha…do you think I am only capable of freezing your soul?” From the distance, loud laughter could be heard. The wild whirlpool had already come to a halt, and now an icy giant which was only ten meters tall had appeared, a single golden eye located within the giant’s body.

The ice was translucent. One could clearly see that enormous golden eye within the body of the ice giant.

“Let’s head out.” The leader of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said.

Immediately, those ten experts flew back at high speed. At this moment, the Beholder King’s interest was all focused on Olivier. In all his years, the Beholder King had never encountered a soul as interesting as Olivier’s. As someone extremely knowledgeable in souls, he naturally wanted to take Olivier alive, dominate Olivier’s soul, and then carefully examine him.

“Swoosh.” The ice giant charged towards Olivier in a flash.

Olivier's eyes were still closed. He flew back at high speed, while at the same time, chopping out with the black icy sword in his hand.

"Clang!" The ice giant directly blocked with his left arm.

At the same time, his right fist smashed viciously towards Olivier. Unable to retract his sword in time, Olivier was smashed flying backwards. "Bang!" He struck a distant iceberg, which immediately cracked. Olivier rolled away, then stood up.

"What a tough arm. It is dozens of times tougher than it was earlier." Olivier felt shock in his heart.

This ice giant, after its body had been smashed apart and then reformed, was tremendously more defensive now, despite having shrunk from its earlier size of a mountain to now just ten meters. Olivier's full force blow only managed to cut halfway through the arm of the ice giant.

Just as the Beholder King was about to continue charging towards Olivier, he suddenly saw a black shadow scurry towards the exit. He couldn't help but feel a sudden burst of anger.

"Swish." A ray of gray light directly shot out from the golden eye in the body of the ice giant.

The black blur seemed to have already predicted what was going to happen, and it immediately dodged, then smashed into the ice-covered exit. The tough ice was shattered by the force of the collision. "Boss, everyone, quick!" A sound rang out from within the exit.

"Aaaaaaaaargh!" The Beholder King was enraged. He didn't expect that those intruders who had fled would actually dare to return. He now noticed that the group of experts including Desri, Fain, Linley, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were flying at high speed towards the exit.

"Die!"

The Beholder King exploded with fury, and its single golden eye suddenly emanated a golden ray of light the thickness of an arm. This dazzling ray of golden light split the air in an instant, shooting directly towards the human in front, ‘Desri’. But the Blackscale Scorpion next to Desri suddenly pointed its scorpion tail directly at the single golden eye of the Beholder King.

“Pew!”

A thin, finger-thick ray of black light shot out at high speed from the scorpion tail, travelling even faster than the ray of golden light. In an instant, it arrived at the body of the ice giant. The furious Beholder King actually didn’t dodge. No. It wasn’t that he didn’t dodge. It was…

The Beholder King’s body was now already covered by a layer of black light. At present, just like Queen Mother Lachapalle, he was completely paralyzed and couldn’t move at all.

The ultimate attack of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions: Imprisonment!

“Pew!” The ray of light shot out by the scorpion tail of the Blackscale Scorpion easily penetrated the ice, striking directly into the enormous golden eye in the center of the giant.

“Aaaaaaaah!” The Beholder King let out an agonized scream, and that layer of black light covering its body actually began to tremble.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Linley, Desri, Fain, and the other experts seized this opportunity to rocket straight into the exit. Even Olivier had seized the opportunity to charge towards the exit at high speed.

Chapter 27 – A Hospitable Host

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 27, A Hospitable Host

This scorpion tail attack by Blackscale Scorpion was simply too insidious. Even someone as tough as the Beholder King felt its soul tremble, causing it to howl in agony. “Aaaaaaah!” He wildly attacked his surroundings, and the icebergs nearby were smashed and sent flying everywhere.

At the same time, a hint of blood flowed down from its single golden eye.

“We have a chance.” The Blackscale Scorpion was overjoyed.

“Quick, let’s go.” The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, which knew exactly what a Beholder King was, roared furiously.

“I will kill you all!” The Beholder King howled with rage, and his bloody golden eye suddenly blasted out with more than ten rays of red light.

While fleeing towards the exit, one of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions directly grabbed the Blackscale Scorpion and dragged him towards the exit. The four magical beasts were the last to enter the exit. After they charged into the ninth floor, they could hear a thundering sound on the eighth floor.

“We finally made it into the ninth floor.”

Linley, Desri, Fain, and the others had already arrived in the ninth floor before them, and were waiting for the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions and the Blackscale Scorpion to enter. The eleven experts reunited, everyone looked at each other, a hint of a smile on their faces.

“Although we didn’t acquire any divine artifacts, all of us made it safely through to the ninth floor. This is already a very lucky thing.” Fain chuckled.

“Whew. That was really quite frightening.” For once, Rosarie revealed her true thoughts. “Fortunately, the Beholder King’s attention was focused on Olivier, giving us a chance to charge in.”

“Right. The Beholder King hadn’t actually begun to use his real power at all. ‘Soul Freezer’ is only one of his most basic attacks. Someone capable of becoming a ‘king’ amongst Beholders has immeasurably great power. We were all very lucky.” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion sighed as well.

Although the final attack by the Blackscale Scorpion was powerful, it was at most capable of injuring the Beholder King, not killing him.

“We are lucky. Lucky to have had Olivier.” Desri grinned as he looked at Olivier.

Everyone couldn’t help but look at Olivier as well.

Olivier still maintained his silence. Amongst these experts, Olivier really did not speak very often.

“Olivier, how is it that you were fine after having suffered the ‘Soul Freezer’ attack?” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion asked curiously.

Olivier hesitated a moment, then said just a few words. “I do not know either.”

They didn’t ask him any further. Regardless of whether he was telling the truth or not, it wouldn’t be polite to press him.

“Everyone, be careful. This ninth floor’s danger level is most likely no lower than that of the eighth floor’s.” Desri spoke. “We can’t always hope to be as lucky as we were just now.”

Linley’s group nodded.

Nobody minded the fact that they had been unable to gain the divine artifact of the eighth floor.

Actually, compared to divine artifacts, the true goal of the people here was divine sparks. But divine sparks would only appear on the eleventh floor. As for the twelfth floor, Linley didn't even dare to think about it. According to what Beirut had said, only upon reaching the Deity-level did one have the ability to protect one's self in the twelfth floor.

Everyone's true goal was to make it to the eleventh floor soon, without suffering any more casualties.

"This ninth floor seems to be quite mysterious." Linley stared at the environment of the ninth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

Linley and the others saw a turbid blue ocean beneath them, with roiling blue waves stretching off into the endless horizons. Here, in the ninth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, aside from the endless sea, there was only a secluded little green island not too far away.

"Everyone, be careful. After we pass through this floor, we'll be able to rest and prepare to enter the eleventh floor. This floor is the most difficult barrier to reaching the eleventh floor." Tulily said solemnly.

Everyone stared carefully at the surrounding area.

Although this was only the ninth floor, and the tenth floor would come after this, Linley's group knew that every five floors made up a 'level' of difficulty, and the tenth floor would be much less dangerous than the sixth through ninth floors.

Nobody considered the tenth floor to be hard to pass through. They only treated it as a place to rest and prepare.

It was much like how the fifth floor hadn't been a hard place to pass through.

"There's nothing but the endless oceans around us." Rosarie frowned. "There's no tall constructions. I expect there's only one possible location

for the exit to the tenth floor. That place." Rosarie pointed at the distant island.

"The tunnel to the tenth floor should be on that island." Linley nodded to himself.

After all, aside from the island, there was nothing here besides the sea. If the exit was placed in the endless depths of the ocean, how long would it take them to even just search for it? Linley believed that the almighty Sovereign who designed this Necropolis of the Gods wouldn't do such a thing.

"Let's head out." Desri spoke.

The eleven experts simultaneously flew towards the distant island, all of them extremely cautious. If they could pass through this ninth floor, then… entering the eleventh floor and acquiring a divine spark would be only a stone's throw away. Nobody wanted to fail on this floor.

The island was very quiet. Linley and the rest of the eleven experts landed on the beach.

"Splash, splash."

The ocean waves gently rolled into the edges of the beach. The waves would occasionally cover the beach, and occasionally retreat back into the sea. The ocean breeze blew gently, rustling the tall trees, flowers, and grass of the island.

"What a peaceful place." Rosarie revealed a smile on her face.

"It is quite pretty." Linley's group couldn't sense any danger here on the ninth floor at all.

"Go find the exit." Fain laughed.

The eleven experts moved towards the interior of the island, beginning to

search carefully for the exit to the tenth floor within this place. This island was quite beautiful, and there was even a small mountain in the center of the island. After a long time, the eleven experts climbed onto the mountain.

“We’ve visited all the other places on the island. The exit should be in the mountain.” Linley raised his head to stare at the winding mountain trail.

The mountain trail was quite meandering, but Linley’s group moved very fast, passing through the mountain and the trees like a breezy wind. Soon, they reached the top of the mountain, but as the eleven experts descended upon the top of the mountain, they were all stunned.

In the center of this island, atop the mountain, next to a dwarf tree, there was a wooden house.

In front of the wooden house, there was a stone table and a stone chair.

A handsome, pale-skinned young man dressed in clothes made from leaves and wearing a straw hat was currently sitting on the stone chair. He was enjoying a cup of tea. This scene was very peaceful, but Linley’s group all felt a sense of danger in their hearts. Someone had suddenly appeared here in the ninth floor.

Without question!

This pale-skinned youngster wearing a straw hat was the creature blocking them here in the ninth floor.

“Humans, magical beasts…and a Draconian?” The youngster’s blue eyes glanced at the eleven experts, and his lips curved upwards in a slight, graceful smile. “Let me introduce myself first. My name is Louis [Lu’yi]. Don’t be too nervous, everyone. I don’t have any ill intentions towards you. You can all sit down and have a chat with me. There are stone seats over there.”

Not too far away, there really were a row of stone seats, but the stone seats were all covered with a layer of dust.

“Who is this youngster?” Linley felt curious.

“Are the seats too dirty?” The youngster waved his hand, and a gentle gust of wind arose, lifting up those stone seats, then depositing them in front of Linley’s group. The dust on all of the seats had been blown away. The youngster revealed a brilliant smile. “Now you can all sit.”

“What game is this youngster playing?” Linley and the others felt confused.

Ever since they had entered the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley and his gang had never encountered as strange as this.

Linley’s group exchanged glances.

“Is there perhaps some problem with the seats?” Linley used his spiritual energy to sense them, but the stone seats seemed to be nothing more than ordinary stone seats.

“Sit.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions immediately leapt over and crouched on the stone seats.

Linley, Desri, and the others sat down as well.

“Everyone, let’s act according to the situation. If this strange youngster uses some tricks against us, we definitely won’t hold back against him.” Desri said mentally to the other experts.

The eleven experts were in total accord.

The straw hat wearing youngster, Louis, seemed extremely happy. Louis’ clear gaze swept Linley’s group, a hint of mist actually appearing in his eyes. “Ever since I was captured and put here in the Necropolis of the Gods, it has been a very, very long time since I have had the chance to speak with other living creatures.”

“This place is so quiet, it might as well be a graveyard!”

Louis' eyes had a hint of hatred in them. "Nobody else here. No people to talk with. Even the ocean…doesn't have so much as a single fish. A dead sea! A lifeless, dead sea! No birds on the island and no animals either! No life at all! Just like a graveyard!"

"Fortunately, you finally came." Louis' face revealed a hint of a smile.

The eleven experts all felt rather shocked.

"What is this youngster intending?"

Louis' laughed loudly. "I know well why you have all come to the Necropolis of the Gods. Don't overanalyze it. I can tell you right now that I am the obstacle you must overcome on the ninth floor. But I am different from the other guardians. I won't kill you."

Linley and the other ten experts felt puzzled.

Won't kill?

"But the pre-requisite is that you not try to enter the tenth floor." Louis added.

Louis smiled as he spoke. "I hope you can stay here and chat with me. You won't enter the tenth floor, and I won't attack you. Wouldn't that be wonderful? When the time comes, you will naturally be allowed to leave the Necropolis of the Gods.

Stay and chat with him?

Linley and the other experts somewhat understood. This youngster actually had a plan like this.

Linley's group was still fairly happy at meeting this sort of obstacle on the ninth floor. At least the opponent wasn't like the Flame Tyrant, constantly chasing after and trying to kill them. However, to have them all stay here

and accompany the youngster wearing a straw hat and wait for the ten year period to come to an end…

This was indeed something Linley's group couldn't accept.

"How about this. I'll stay here and chat with the youngster, while the rest of you enter the tenth floor. Perhaps this youngster will agree." Desri suddenly mentally transmitted to the other ten experts. Clearly, Desri had decided to sacrifice his own chances. After all, for this youngster to be put here on the ninth floor meant that his power was definitely not as simple as he appeared to be.

Linley, Fain, and Bebe all looked at Desri.

"Louis." The Blackscale Scorpion, who had been silent this entire time, suddenly spoke. "If I was willing to stay here and keep you company until the ten years are up, would you allow my ten other friends to enter the tenth floor?"

The sudden words of the Blackscale Scorpion caused Linley's group to be extremely surprised.

"Cannot." The youngster frowned. "I hope you won't force me to act. You won't enter the tenth floor, and I won't kill you, but if you attempt to enter, then I will be forced to choose to kill you all."

"Hrm?" Linley and the others frowned.

"I've discovered the exit staircase." Rosarie's surprised, excited voice rang out in the minds of Linley, Fain, and the other experts. "The exit staircase to the tenth floor is within the woods behind that wooden house. From my location, I can see three steps of the staircase and that black glow."

"The staircase to the exit?" Linley and the others all felt surprise and joy in their hearts.

Hearing that the location of the staircase had been discovered, they couldn't

help but occasionally glance in that direction as well.

“Oh, you finally noticed the exit?” The youngster smiled. “What is your decision? Will you fight with me, or will you spend a few peaceful days here alongside me?”

“Swish.”

Linley, Fain, and the others all rose at the same time.

Smiling, Desri said, “Louis, we don’t want to fight you. We hope you can let us pass.”

The straw-hat wearing youngster, Louis, continued to smile.

But the rage that had lain silent in his heart for thousands of years was already beginning to rise. He secretly cursed to himself in anger, “These lowly humans really don’t know what’s good for them. I wanted to trick them into staying here, then secretly steal their souls. But now, it seems…”

Linley and the rest of the eleven experts were on their guard, ready to act at any time.

“Bang!” The ‘body’ of Louis suddenly exploded, sending grass and straw everywhere.

A silver light blasted out from Louis’ exploding body, immediately striking towards the person nearest to him, Tulily.

Chapter 28 – Thorium Devil

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 28, Thorium Devil

Seeing this ray of silver light shoot towards him, Tulily's face turned cold, and his right hand, grasping the hilt of his scimitar, moved.

A bloody scimitar flash split the air.

"Bang!" The bloody scimitar shadow collided with the silver light, and with an fierce, angry howl, the silver light retreated at high speed, smashing straight through the 'wooden house', which collapsed. The ray of silver light only came to a halt at the exit to the tenth floor.

"What is this?" Linley and the others could now clearly see what the silver light actually was.

The silver light was far from them, but it was formed into a glob of silver-colored liquid ball. And then, the silver liquid's body suddenly transformed into the figure of a person. Only, his body naturally formed a set of silver battle armor atop of it.

"A Thorium Devil!" The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions felt shock in their hearts.

This transformed 'Louis' glanced coldly at Tulily. Snorting coldly, he said, "I didn't expect that a human who was only at the Saint-level would be able to develop a 'Destruction' type attack."

"Destruction-type attack…" Linley understood.

The reason why Tulily had been acknowledged as the Prime Saint with the most powerful attack was because…Tulily trained in 'Destruction'-type attacks.

In the countless planes, the most exalted and most powerful existences were that of the four Overgods who had created the Four Higher Planes. The four Overgods included the Overgod of Life, the Overgod of Fate, and the Overgod of Death, each of which had passed down their own special techniques and training methods.

These were, respectively, Life Magic, Oracular Magic, and Necromantic Magic.

As for the fourth Overgod, the Overgod of Destruction?

The Overgod of Destruction hadn't passed down any training methods. The way of Destruction…was one of constant slaughter and constantly attuning to the nature of Destruction. It inherently had to rely on one's own ability to understand it, and there was no path which one could be guided towards. It wasn't like understanding the other Laws, which were regulated into various systems.

Although Tulily had gained insights in the 'Way of Destruction', he had only understood the tiniest bit of it.

The voice of a Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion rang out in the minds of Linley and the others. "Everyone, be careful. This monster is an extremely dangerous creature from the Demonic Realm of Darkness known as the 'Thorium Devil'."

"Thorium Devil?" Linley's heart shook as soon as he heard the name.

He had never heard of a 'Thorium Devil', but Linley knew that there was an extremely rare material that was used in blacksmithing; Thorium. Thorium was exceedingly precious, because it was highly elastic and capable of alloying and bonding together with a vast variety of different materials.

"Since this monster is known as the 'Thorium Devil', could it be that his body is formed out of thorium?" Linley stared carefully at the flowing silver liquid.

“The body of the Thorium Devil is made out of thorium. In addition, it should be thorium of a fairly high class. Thorium is highly elastic, allowing Thorium Devils to easily transform into all sorts of shapes, and they bond easily with other materials as well…earth, fire, water, and wind Law attacks, unless ridiculously strong, are completely incapable of harming him.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions transmitted this information to the others. “In the seven paths of earth, fire, wind, water, lightning, light, and darkness, these seven basic, common paths, only ‘lightning’ is capable of harming him. But of course…the techniques stemming from the four Overgods, being Oracular Magic, Necromantic Magic, Life Magic, and the Way of Destruction, are also able to harm him.”

The faces of Linley and the others changed.

They understood that nothing was absolute.

If one’s attack power in earth, fire, water, or wind-type Elemental Law attack was high enough, it would still be able to kill this Thorium Devil.

But…

Would Linley’s attack cause the Thorium Devil to reach its endurance limit?

“His endurance limit?” Linley wasn’t confident. Just based on the liquid body of the opponent alone, Linley understood something. “Most likely, the purely physical ‘Myriad Swords Converge’ attack is completely useless against it, but the Profound Truths of the Earth might have some effect.”

Faced against this Thorium Devil he had never encountered before, Linley didn’t feel much confidence either.

“Fain, Tulily, this time, we’ll have to rely on you two.” Desri’s voice rang out in the minds of Fain and Tulily. Actually, this entire time, the others were exchanging glances with each other. Everyone knew what the other was thinking.

This battle rested on Fain and Tulily’s shoulders.

“No matter what, don’t let this Thorium Devil surround you with his body. Once he does, the situation would probably be even more dangerous than Queen Mother Lachapalle surrounding you with her tendrils.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions reminded mentally.

In terms of age, as the ancestors of Goldmane Mastiffs, Blue-eyed Tiger Mastiffs, and Guardian Ni-Lions, these three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were comparable to the High Priest. In terms of experience…the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, having entered the Gebados Planar Prison, knew much more than even the War God or the High Priest about the various powerful, mystical creatures from the many planes of the universe.

“Leave it to us.” Fain and Tulily transformed into blurred bolts of lightning!

“All of you, die.” The Thorium Devil, ‘Louis’, smiled coldly. His body suddenly transformed into an extremely large cloth, which transformed to become over a hundred meters long and wrapped down towards Linley and the other experts.

The bolt of lightning that was Tulily struck out with his scimitar.

The bloody scimitar once more flashed into the sky, but the thorium cloth suddenly split open, and Tulily’s attack passed through the opening.

“Bang!” Fain’s sword struck out.

This sword attack of his actually gave birth to a large amount of coiling lightning serpents, which swirled around the sword as it pierced towards the thorium cloth. The thorium cloth once more used the same technique, tearing a hole into itself, wanting to dodge Fain’s sword in such a manner.

The sword missed, but the large amount of lightning serpents coiling around it, as though they were alive, shot out wildly in every direction at high speed.

The many suddenly attacking serpents were simply too fast. The Thorium

Devil didn't manage to dodge in time, and a large number of lightning serpents struck the cloth.

"Bang!"

"Ah!" A pain-filled growl rang out, and many holes appeared where the lightning serpents had struck. But the Thorium Devil's 'cloth' body quickly repaired itself, and the thorium cloth descended towards Linley and the others.

Linley was wielding his adamantine heavy sword.

"This is the right moment." Linley's dark golden eyes suddenly flashed with an explosive light, and the adamantine heavy sword in his hand, seemingly slow but actually fast, gracefully swung towards the Thorium Devil.

The Thorium Devil didn't try to dodge. The Thorium Devil had no fear of earth-type attacks at all.

Linley's adamantine heavy sword landed against the thorium cloth, and a powerful vibration directly transmitted into it from the adamantine heavy sword. In an instant, it charged towards the center of the thorium cloth. The attacks of the Profound Truth of the Earth were all straight line attacks.

In the past, when Linley had dueled Haydson at Mt. Tujiao, the strike of his sword had actually tunneled a hole directly through the mountain.

"Hrm?" Linley's face suddenly changed.

Indeed…the Profound Truths of the Earth was not very effective against this sort of flexible 'liquid' which could transform freely.

"Haha, what an unusual attack. Even my body felt a bit of a tremor…aaah!" The 'cloth' Thorium Devil suddenly let out a pained scream, and the cloth suddenly retracted at high speed, instantly returning to the exit and transforming into human form.

The Thorium Devil stared with astonishment at the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions.

Just then, it hadn't been just Linley who had attacked the 'cloth'. Even Bebe and the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had attacked as well.

"All of you train in the Way of Destruction as well?" The Thorium Devil found it very hard to believe this, because the Way of Destruction could not be taught, only learned on one's own. Others would be able to at most provide some general guidance. Amongst Saints, one would rarely see even a single practitioner of the Way of Destruction out of a hundred Saints.

But in these eleven experts, it wasn't just Tulily who trained in the Way of Destruction; even those three six-eyed creatures did so as well.

"What, are we not allowed?" The leader of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions stared at the Thorium Devil.

Linley and the others had never known what type of attack the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions utilized; from start to finish, the only technique they had seen the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions use was 'Imprisonment'. Only now did they learn…that the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were actually the same as Tulily, practitioners of the Way of Destruction.

The Thorium Devil raised its head and let out a wild howl.

"Rumble…"

The distant, boundless sea suddenly rose up, and countless amounts of sea water began to flow towards the little island. The sea water suddenly began to rise, covering and surrounding the entire island, and then…

Countless amounts of sea water came crashing down from the skies above.

"What in the world?!" Desri, Linley, Bebe, and the others couldn't understand it at all.

“Not good. Tulily, attack together.” The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions simultaneously transformed into three blurs.

Tulily transformed into a blur as well, and the man and the three magical beasts, all four of them experts in the Way of Destruction, simultaneously launched their most powerful attacks towards the Thorium Devil. The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had a set of black battle-armor on their bodies, and the sharp claws of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion emanated auras of destruction from their claws, with the auras alone creating rips in the air.

Tulily’s scimitar remained in its sheath, not yet coming out.

“Hrmph.” The Thorium Devil sneered coldly, then suddenly increased in size a hundredfold, becoming a thorium giant that was hundreds of meters tall.

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions increased in size as well, tearing down at the Thorium Devil with claws the size of a house. The powerful destructive energy tore at the body of the Thorium Devil, causing several massive holes to appear on its gigantic form.

A bloody scimitar flash, over a hundred meters long, directly chopped the thorium giant into two halves.

“A pity. It’s useless.” The Thorium Devil’s body instantly reformed.

“That’s not right. How could the thorium making up his body not be reduced at all?” The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were greatly shocked. Destruction-type attacks were capable of badly injuring the essence of a Thorium Devil. With a few consecutive strikes, it was capable of causing a Thorium Devil to perish.

But…

The combination attack by the three brothers and Tulily hadn’t resulted in the Thorium Devil weakening at all.

“Haha, in the past, I might have feared you. However, I now have a Pearl of Life.” The Thorium Devil, Louis, raised his head to the skies, laughing loudly. And then, he opened his mouth, swallowing the vast amount of seawater hanging in the air above them directly into his stomach.

The Thorium Devil itself was only the size of a normal human. His transformation into a giant that was hundreds of meters high was actually just a layer of thorium with a hollow inside.

The vast amount of seawater swallowed by the Thorium Devil actually began to fuse with it, becoming one with it.

“Beat it!” The Thorium Devil waved his arm.

His arm actually transformed into a bladed edge, attacking so quickly that not even the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion was able to dodge, and the Ni-Lion was sent flying. The layer of black armor on the body of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion was now shining, but it had successfully blocked this attack. Despite that, the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion still had a hint of blood at the corner of his mouth.

“Not good.” Another Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion called out. “Quick, run.”

Thorium Devils had extremely powerful bonding abilities. It could bond with water, with earth, with metals, all of which would produce different results. In the middle of this boundless ocean world, the Thorium Devil was extremely powerful in his current state.

But as everyone was fleeing, a single person charged towards the Thorium Devil instead.

It was Fain.

Fain transformed into a bolt of lightning, charging towards the Thorium Devil. How could the Thorium Devil, which like the Queen Mother had a Pearl of Life, care about the pesky little fellow?

“Fain.” The frantically fleeing group suddenly came to a halt, turning their heads to stare.

A shocking sight appeared before them. When Fain’s sword struck out, the entire world seemed to be filled with a boundless thundering noise, and hundreds on thousands of enormous dragons formed from lightning bolts suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Those countless thunderbolt dragons bellowed with anger, wrapping themselves around that Thorium Devil.

“F*ck off!” The Thorium Devil was livid.

“Bang!” The hundreds of thunderbolt dragons suddenly exploded at the same time.

“Crackle crackle.” Countless bolts of lightning flew directly into the body of the Thorium Devil, and the thorium which made up the Thorium Devil’s body, under the penetrating attack of the lightning, quickly began to deplete.

The Thorium Devil’s body began to shudder, while at the same time, he emitted an agonized screech. In but the blink of an eye, his entire body disintegrated, with only a nearly-translucent ball falling down from the air.

Fain, hovering in mid-air, suddenly collapsed as well, powerless.

“Fain.” Linley and the others immediately flew forward to catch Fain, while Desri immediately snatched the Pearl of Life. Desri then immediately flew towards Fain’s side. “Fain, are you alright? Quick, take this Pearl of Life into your body.”

Fain’s face was extremely pale, but he still managed to squeeze out a laugh. “Desri, do you remember in the past how you told me how powerful your forbidden-level spells were? This technique of mine, ‘Lightning Dragons Descend’, is even more powerful than the forbidden-level lightning-style spell, ‘Kiloton Thunderclap’, right?”

“Powerful. Powerful.” Desri nodded repeatedly.

Soon, the color of Fain’s face began to improve. He laughed as he insulted, “That Thorium Devil truly was an idiot. My lightning-style was his nemesis to begin with, and he actually chose to fuse with water? Water only heightens the power of lightning. Didn’t he know that? He was asking to die.”

Chapter 29 – Abyssal Blade Demon

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 29, Abyssal Blade Demon

“Haha…” In the air above the island, the experts all began to laugh loudly.

Desri laughed and mocked, “Fain, that Thorium Devil, Louis, possessed a Pearl of Life. He thought you would only be able to injure him at most. Of course he didn’t mind you…but the power of your ultimate attack, a Saint level warrior, actually exceeded forbidden-level spells.”

“Thus, that poor fellow died, just like that.” Tulily began to laugh as well.

The experts were all extremely happy to have killed that Thorium Devil. That meant they could easily enter the tenth floor, which definitely wouldn’t be too dangerous. After dealing with the creatures of the tenth floor, they would be able to quietly prepare to enter the eleventh floor.

Once they succeeded…the divine spark would be theirs!

“With this Pearl of Life, our chances for success on the eleventh floor will have increased.” Fain looked at the Pearl of Life in his hands, delighted. He immediately bound it with blood, and the Pearl of Life absorbed that drop of blood like a sponge, then directly merged with Fain’s body.

Feeling the swirling life energy in his body, Fain felt extremely confident.

“Does everyone want to rest? Or shall we head directly to the tenth floor.” Desri glanced at everyone else.

“No need to rest. The only one injured in our battle with the Thorium Devil was Fain.” Tulily laughed.

Everyone looked at Fain, who laughed and said, “Just then, the injury I sustained was fairly heavy, but I’m already in good shape now. Let’s go. It

is just the tenth floor. It won't be too dangerous."

In truth, right now, Fain wasn't in perfect condition.

Although the 'Pearl of Life' had already returned his body to peak condition, after executing the 'Lightning Dragons Descend' technique, a great deal of spiritual energy had been consumed, which this Pearl of Life could not replenish.

However, Fain didn't mind. They were only going to the tenth floor, after all.

Before entering the tenth floor, everyone carefully searched the area to see if any other divine artifacts were present. But the result of their search was that…success on the ninth floor's only reward was this Pearl of Life. To Saint-level combatants, the importance of a Pearl of Life was indeed greater than an ordinary divine artifact's.

The tenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. Eleven experts appeared in the middle of the air of the tenth floor.

"The environment's not bad." Linley laughed as he glanced at the surrounding area.

"After dealing with the creatures of the tenth floor, we can have a good rest and make some preparations. Whether or not we'll be able to get a divine spark will depend on how we perform on the eleventh floor." Desri chortled.

The group of experts all scanned their surroundings.

This was a beautiful grassland, covered with a boundless sea of green grass, with occasionally a few wild flowers growing in clusters. The clear, fresh air also was quite comfortable to everyone.

"Where are the creatures of the tenth floor?" Rosarie was searching intently.

“Don’t bother searching.” A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said. “Let’s go search for the exit to the eleventh floor. Perhaps the creature will be there. Let’s find the exit, then dispose of the creature. Everyone will be able to have a good rest then and prepare for the final battle. Success or failure…it all rides on this.”

The experts all nodded, and then began carefully searching this great grassland.

This grassland actually wasn’t completely flat, and actually had some rolling hills. Those depressions might be hiding a powerful creature, or perhaps the exit. If they didn’t fly close while inspecting, they wouldn’t be able to find it.

“Look.” Bebe cried out in surprise and joy. “There’s a stone pillar up front, and it seems there is an exit beneath the pillar.”

The experts immediately flew over.

The stone pillar was roughly three meters in diameter and twenty meters tall. It seemed very ancient and plain. No one could guess how long it had been there for. It was carved with many mystic runes. Beneath the pillar, there was an entrance to a tunnel, and from the outside, one could see a set of stairs that glowed with a dark aura.

“Right here.” The experts felt their hearts calm down.

Having found this tunnel, if they continued through it, they would arrive at the eleventh floor.

“Swish…”

Suddenly, a brilliant light flashed across the grasslands, flying out at high speed. This flash of light charged towards the nearest person, Fain. The eleven experts had never relaxed their vigilance, and upon seeing that flash, everyone knew what it was: The creature on the tenth floor had finally arrived.

“Hrmph.” When this flash of light reached a few meters from Fain, Fain immediately flew backwards like a bolt of lightning.

Fain’s speed was the fastest amongst these eleven experts, with only Desri and Bebe a match for him.

However…

“Clang.” Weapons intersected.

Fain was knocked flying backwards, doing a somersault in mid-air as he landed on the ground. His face was slightly pale, and there was a hint of blood at the corner of his mouth. Only, the ‘Pearl of Life’ in his body activated, almost instantly restoring his body to peak condition.

“What is that?” Linley and the other experts were next to Fain.

The eleven experts all stared at the creature which had suddenly appeared.

This creature’s entire body seemed to reflect its surroundings. Its body was entirely formed from metal, but this metal…seemed to be like steel that had been reforged a hundred times over. Like a sharp blade, it reflected its surroundings like a mirror, except it was slightly more blurry than a mirror.

It was human in shape, two meters tall, completely made out of metal.

On its forehead, there was a single horn that looked like a sharp knife. His shoulders also had sharp knives atop it, and his arms and legs were all sharp blades, and both the front and back sides of his arms had sharpened edges. Without question, a kick of this creature’s legs or a swipe of its arms would be like a broadsword striking down. Even its hands and its fingers were sharp, edged blades.

On its back, there was one blade after another running down its spine as well.

“Its entire body is made of blades. Leg, hand, arm, the top of his head… even his back has a blade.” Bebe sighed in amazement.

“Absolutely a war machine.” Tulily spoke as well.

Fain said in a low voice, “Everyone, be careful. This blade-covered monstrosity is extremely fast, a match for me. When that blade of his chopped down against me, the power of the blow was definitely enough to badly injure us. Linley, most likely even your defense would find it hard to take that blow.”

Everyone understood.

Fain was extremely powerful, but he was still knocked flying by that blade, with a hint of blood appearing in his mouth.

“Although the tenth floor is simple, that’s still only comparison to the sixth through ninth floors.” Linley understood. “Although this monster is powerful, compared to the Queen Mother, the Flame Tyrant, the Beholder King, and the Thorium Devil, it is much weaker.”

Although it seemed like the Thorium Devil had been killed easily, if it weren’t for the fact that Fain had been the perfect counter to it, the Thorium Devil, capable of fusing with the earth, with fire, with water, or with the wind and gain different powers, definitely wasn’t something the likes of Linley were able to destroy.

This monster in front of them seemed fairly powerful.

But in truth, any one of the eleven experts, if going all out, could dispose of it.

“Grrr….” The bladed monstrosity in front of them growled softly, staring death at Linley’s group, but perhaps he could sense that the power of these eleven experts combined was far beyond what he could overcome. Thus, he didn’t dare to attack rashly.

“This is an Abyssal Blade Demon.” One of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions said.

“Abyssal Blade Demon?” Linley and the others all looked at the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion in confusion.

The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion nodded. “In the countless planes, the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Realms are the most powerful eleven planes. Aside from these eleven dimensions, there are some other unique planes as well, which aren’t weaker than them in power. For example…the Abyss!”

“The Abyssal Plane is reputed to be the most chaotic, anarchic plane in all of the universe, and the plane with the most warfare and slaughter.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion sighed.

Linley was secretly surprised as he heard this.

The most chaotic? With the most slaughter? He could completely imagine how terrifying this ‘Abyss’ was.

“Abyssal Blade Demons are one of the creatures which the Abyss has given birth to.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said. “Abyssal Blade Demons, in the Abyss, are the lowest level of life form, much like ants in the Yulan continent. They are extremely weak and powerless.”

Linley and these other experts all maintained their silence.

This Abyssal Blade Demons was no weaker than them.

But in the legendary Abyss, it was the weakest type of creature.

“Generally speaking, only Deities dare to travel to the Abyss from other planes. Saint-level Abyssal Blade Demons naturally are the weakest creatures there.” The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said. “Abyssal Blade Demons are mostly born for slaughter.”

Linley's group secretly nodded.

They all saw how the body of this Abyssal Blade Demon in front of them was constructed. Wasn't it indeed created for slaughter? Every single part of its body could transform into a murderous weapon.

"Abyssal Blade Demons are as fast as lightning, and possess incomparably powerful attacks. Their body, being made from special metals, have quite impressive defense as well. Naturally…if we fight at full strength, we can still kill this Abyssal Blade Demon." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said.

The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion spoke in quite a casual manner, clearly not worried about this Abyssal Blade Demon in front of them at all.

The Abyssal Blade Demon looked cautiously at the group of experts in front of it, and then…

"Swish."

The Abyssal Blade Demon actually fled. But just as the Abyssal Blade Demon fled, Bebe moved. A flashing light was speeding across the grasslands, with Bebe behind in hot pursuit. The two actually had comparable speed, but then the Abyssal Blade Demon suddenly charged underground.

"Shkreeeeeeeeee!"

Bebe excitedly dug into the ground as well.

"It shouldn't be hard for Bebe to dispose of this Abyssal Blade Demon, given his power." Linley was still quite confident in Bebe's abilities.

The Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique alone would guarantee his survival, and in addition, Bebe had definitely received some tutelage while at Beirut's side.

"The Abyss…" Tulily said in a soft voice. "If in my lifetime, I were to have

the chance to experience the Abyss, I would die happy."

Desri and the others looked at Tulily, chuckling.

"No rush. If we are to leave immediately, we'd still only be able to go to the Four Higher Planes for now." Desri said. "In addition, I expect that the passage from one plane to another is most likely extremely difficult. I imagine the battles in the Higher Planes would already be enough to satisfy you."

Tulily nodded slightly.

Desri, Tulily, Linly, and all the others understood.

In their ordinary, material plane, as Saints, they were indeed the most powerful creatures in existence. But upon arriving in the Higher Planes, Saints would be the lowest rung in the ladder, and after them would be the Demigods….who most likely were nothing more than average.

Thus, they held back and were in no rush to go to the Higher Planes.

"Boom!" A massive earthquake erupted underground, causing the ground to split open, creating a massive crevice. The experts all stared down through the massive crevice.

Linley laughed. "The Abyssal Blade Demon died."

Bebe flew out from within that crevice, dragging with him a metallic corpse that had been ripped in half. It was the Abyssal Blade Demon.

"This Abyssal Blade Demon's attack truly is powerful." Bebe sighed in amazement. "Most likely if I had been hit by him, even I would have been injured."

The experts were all secretly amazed.

Bebe was a Godeater Rat. Although he was still in his growth period, his

defense was already extremely, astonishingly high. If even Bebe said such a thing…then one could imagine how powerful the Abyssal Blade Demon's attack truly was.

"The blades on the back of the Abyssal Blade Demon are fine weapons." A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion sighed in praise. "The Abyssal Blade Demon's body naturally generates powerful blades from its essence, but the most powerful blade is the one on its back."

"Right. That blade is extremely sharp." Bebe pulled out and tossed that blade to everyone.

This rather beautiful, graceful killing weapon lay there on the ground, and the surrounding grass was actually torn apart, just by the sharp aura emanating from this killing weapon. The sharpness of the weapon was comparable to low level divine artifacts. It truly was incredible.

"Who wants this blade?" Bebe said. "I don't need it. My claws are fiercer." Bebe waved his little paws.

Linley and Olivier didn't say anything. They already had their own weapons. Desri and Rosarie were Grand Magus Saints and didn't need it either. Fain was a sword expert, not a blade expert. As for the magical beasts…their sharp claws were not suited for holding swords.

Although this blade was very precious and comparable to a weak divine artifact, and could be gifted to family or friends even if one didn't use it for one's self, Linley, Fain, Rosarie, and the others who already had acquired a divine artifact wouldn't take it.

"Haha…" Desri laughed. "Nobody wants it? I don't have any weapons on me, so I might as well take this blade. I've learned a few close combat skills before as well."

Desri picked up the blade.

Chapter 30 – Grand Magus Saint

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 30, Grand Magus Saint

Holding this sharp blade, Desri experimentally waved it a few times, causing saber energy to crisscross.

“The blade’s a good one. Only, my arm strength isn’t good enough.” Desri sighed.

Without any battle-qi, if one was physically strong enough, like the Four Supreme Warriors, one could still reach astonishing levels of power just by wielding weapons with physical strength. Actually, the Abyssal Blade Demon had relied on pure power alone in wielding the blade.

“What’s the rush?” Fain laughed. “Desri, after you become a Deity and your divine body forms, the strength of your body will be divine power. You’ll be able to put this weapon to good use then, right?”

“Haha, right.” Desri laughed as well.

Actually, everyone still knew that there was still an obstacle before becoming a Deity.

The eleventh floor!

The difficulty level from the first to the fifth floor hadn’t been too high, but the sixth floor had the Flame Tyrant, with the danger level rising exponentially. Every five floors represented a difficulty level…clearly, this eleventh floor’s danger level would be far greater than that of the sixth through tenth floors. The Flame Tyrant, the Queen Mother, and the other creatures had already been so terrifying. What would appear on the eleventh floor?

Everyone felt somber when considering this, but at the same time, they all

knew that this eleventh floor had corpses of Deities, and had divine sparks!

“The eleventh floor…” Linley looked towards that distant, ancient pillar, with the staircase beneath it so noticeably covered in that black aura. “According to what Lord Beirut said, the guardians of the eleventh floor should still be Saints.”

Clearly, the Sovereign who controlled the Necropolis of the Gods still allowed for a chance of success.

Linley understood, however, that from the twelfth floor onwards, only Deities would be able to proceed.

“I expect that from the twelfth floor onwards, the guardians will all be Deity-level creatures.” Linley didn’t even dare to think about proceeding to the twelfth floor. His power was not bad, true, but in front of a Deity, he couldn’t fight back at all.

Possessing a divine spark and gaining a divine body was a fundamental transformation in one’s level of existence.

“Everyone understands,” Desri said in a sonorous voice, staring at the assembled experts, “That of the eighty plus experts who originally came in, only eleven of us have made it to the tenth floor.”

Everyone nodded.

The other seventy plus experts had either died or retreated.

Only they had come to the tenth floor.

“This is also the first time in my life I’ve been so close to a divine spark. I know that the eleventh floor up above has divine sparks.” Desri felt his emotions stirring. He had striven for so many years, after all. “But everyone must also understand that the eleventh floor will definitely be extremely dangerous. Compared to the Flame Tyrant, the Queen Mother, the Beholder King, and the Thorium Devil, it will be even more dangerous!”

All of the experts felt their hearts tremble as though having heard a thunderclap.

“Perhaps some of us will die on the eleventh floor.” Desri’s voice became low. “However, I myself am not afraid of death. I’ve already lived for thousands of years, and experienced everything I need to experience. If I die on the road to ascending to godhood, I won’t regret my death.”

The eyes of all the experts were blazing with light.

Desri, Rosarie, Fain, Tulily, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, the Blackscale Scorpion…they had all struggled to become Deities for thousands of years. Life, death…they had long ago stopped worrying about these things.

Of the Five Prime Saints, Rutherford had died.

Nobody felt too saddened by Rutherford’s death. Because everyone understood…perhaps soon afterwards, they themselves would also die on the path to godhood.

In this group of eleven experts, Linley, Bebe, and Olivier were all very young, comparatively. None of them had even passed their first century. Compared to Desri and the other experts, there were many differences between them. Thus, mentally, their understanding of life and death was perhaps different from that of Desri and the other experts.

“Everyone, let’s make our preparations. This time, we will rest on the tenth floor for a year and a half. A year and a half later, we will enter the eleventh floor.” Desri said.

All the experts felt a surge of excitement, and they silently nodded.

They had entered the Necropolis of the Gods eight years ago now. After training for another year and a half, they would only be a few months away from the ten year time limit. On the eleventh floor, the question of whether

or not they would be able to obtain a divine spark would be resolved in perhaps just a single day.

Everyone separated, finding a place to quietly train and meditate.

“Boss.” Bebe looked at Linley.

Linley looked at Bebe as well. They each understood what the other was thinking.

“Train well.”

To Linley, Bebe, and Olivier, it was still possible to make new breakthroughs in a year and a half, and have their strength rise further. As to the other eight experts…unless some lucky accident happened, it would be truly difficult for them to make any more breakthroughs.

…….

On the boundless prairie, within a grassy area, a gentle wind blew across Linley’s long hair.

Linley’s eyes were closed, and he was quietly seated in the meditative position.

“The Profound Truths of the Earth…the further along this path I go, the greater the level of difficulty. I already have reached the level of ’64 Fused Layers’ of the Throbbing Pulse of the World. If I want to be able to reach the level of ’32 Fused Layers’, it would probably take more time than it did last time. Last time it took me eight years to make a breakthrough…I only have a scant year and a half.” Linley had made his decision. “I had better analyze the ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ instead.”

Right now, the most important thing was to raise his strength and make a breakthrough as soon as possible, so as to have a greater chance on the eleventh floor.

“Attuning my soul to nature will naturally cause my spiritual energy to rise. That way, I’ll be able to train both my spiritual energy and the ‘Profound Truths of the Wind’ at the same time.” Linley found a balance.

And then, Linley stilled his mind.

He ‘forgot’ his identity and sense of self.

Linley’s spiritual energy had become totally attuned to nature. Within Linley’s consciousness, he could clearly sense all the movements of the wind as it blew across the prairie, while at the same time, the stances of the ‘Rippling Wind’, ‘Tempos of the Wind’, and ‘Myriad Swords Converge’ appeared in his mind.

Linley meditated on the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

At the same time, he meditated on the various sword techniques, and countless sword images flashed through his mind.

Sword-shadows flashing like the wind, formless and shapeless!

In this state of silent pondering, Linley continued to heighten his understanding of the Elemental Laws of the Wind at a slow pace, rising one step at a time. In his consciousness, the sword techniques flashing through his mind became more profound and more natural. His soul was one with nature, and his spiritual energy slowly improved as well.

…….

Time flowed onwards. On the prairie of the tenth floor of the Necropolis of the gods, the experts were all either seated cross-legged while meditating, or practicing one stance after another. Every person was making preparations for the eleventh floor.

Bebe was lying on the ground, his body covered with a faint black aura.

Linley's hair had slowly grown longer as well.

In the blink of an eye, more than a year passed, and only two months were left before the appointed time.

"Desri." Fain was seated alongside Desri on the grass. They had already trained to their limits long ago. If they made any more breakthroughs, they would become Deities. And thus, there was no point for them to intentionally try and force any breakthroughs, so they just casually talked and joked with each other. "Do you remember that battle, five thousand years ago?"

"Of course I do," Desri sighed. "That battle where those experts from the other planes descended…one Saint after another fell. The battles in that scorching hot desert, in the air above the South Sea…they were so brutal."

Fain nodded slightly as well.

Back then, Fain and Desri had already reached the Saint-level, but they were minor figures at the Saint-level. Back then, they were comparable to the likes of the Stellar Sword Saint, Dillon. They were only early-stage Saints, and they would have died if they participated in the battles between the experts who had descended from the other planes.

"Countless Saints, and even quite a few Deities. Saint against Saint. Deity against Deity. One of the Deities charged into a group of Saints, causing massive casualties." Desri sighed. "From that day onwards, I made up my mind that one day, I would become a Deity."

The presence of a Deity was like a prison! In front of a Deity's power, Saints were far too weak.

"Five thousand years now." Desri sighed. "On this road, how many friends have I lost? Hayward died. That year, Kerrilan [Kai'li'lan] died. Rutherford died as well…"

Fain nodded.

Countless experts had worked hard throughout the years to become Deities. To them, becoming Saints wasn't difficult. But becoming Deities…the difficulty level was simply too great.

"Fain." Desri looked at him. "We have already reached the final step. This is also the closest we've come, in five thousand years, to becoming Deities."

Fain nodded slightly, and said solemnly, "Success or failure depends on this final journey."

"Hrm?" Fain and Desri simultaneously turned to look at Linley. They glanced at each other, their eyes filled with shock. To Desri and the other experts, Linley and Olivier were both absolute geniuses. What took others thousands of years to accomplish, they were capable of accomplishing in under a century.

As for Linley, he was even more shocking to them than Olivier.

He had a strong foundation, and he had powerful insights into the Laws. And now…

"It seems…he has finally broken through to the Grand Magus Saint level." Desri sighed. In the past, he himself had experienced this breakthrough.

……

Linley could currently sense his soul throbbing. In his consciousness, that sea of spiritual energy was bellowing, and that seven-colored soul-gem was vibrating, as though it was changing somehow.

"I'm finally going to break through." Linley's mind was filled with excitement.

From the ninth rank to the peak of the ninth rank had taken ten years, but from the peak of the ninth rank to breakthrough had taken ten more years!

“Rumble…” His spiritual energy was constantly transforming, and the amount of space his sea of spiritual energy was shrinking as well. But the power of his spiritual energy was actually increasing. And more importantly…that soul-gem was beginning to transform.

A slow transformation.

The amount of spiritual energy had shrank to a tenth of what it had previously been, but the purity of that spiritual energy and the amount of control he had over it skyrocketed.

“The soul-gem?” Linley heart was swayed.

Actually, the path of training was one where one’s level of existence was constantly rising…and the most basic underpinning of life was the soul! Naturally, the soul itself would constantly transform. ‘Grand Magus Saints’ primarily focused on training spiritual energy, and upon reaching the ‘Grand Magus Saint’ level, the soul would also transform and reach a new level.

A slow transformation.

“How long will this spiritual transformation continue before concluding?” Linley didn’t want to waste any time.

He knew that the day on which they would enter the eleventh floor was coming sooner and sooner. His spiritual transformation was occurring automatically. After paying attention to his spiritual transformation for a few days, he no longer waited, and instead focused his mind on attuning to the Elemental Laws of the Wind and analyzing all sorts of sword techniques.

All sorts of sword stances continuously flashed through his mind.

While attuning, Linley found that as his soul transformed, his efficiency and effectiveness in analyzing the Laws and his sword techniques was

becoming greater and greater.

“Hrm?” Linley felt his soul shudder. “Success!”

Linley carefully inspected his soul. Within his consciousness, above that sea of spiritual energy which had become dozens of times more pure, there was a hovering sword that was surrounded by faint azure light. Right. A sword!

“Sword?” Linley was surprised.

“My soul transformed into the shape of a sword?” Linley had not expected this.

Actually, the form one’s soul would take wasn’t set in stone. For example, the undead of the Netherworld might have souls shaped like a giant blaze, which was known as the ‘Soul of Fire’. The soul of the ‘Flame Tyrant’ which Linley had killed was that translucent rock.

A Deity-level combatant might have a soul that was a blade-shape, or even a ball-shape.

This would depend on every person’s training path.

“Reaching the Grand Magus Saint level truly is different.” Linley’s spiritual energy easily swept out from his body. In this strange plane, in the past, Linley’s spiritual energy could only encompass around ten meters, but now, it could encompass hundreds of meters.

Linley opened his eyes.

“Congratulations, Linley.” Fain, Rosarie, Desri, and the others were by his side. Even Bebe was grinning directly at Linley.

“Boss, you reached the Grand Magus Saint level? Haha, why don’t you show off the legendary ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell. I haven’t seen it yet.” Bebe was extremely excited. He was very happy for Linley having reached the Grand Magus Saint level.

Linley was now capable of utilizing forbidden-level spells of both the earth-style and the wind-style.

“Dimensional Edge?” Linley was filled with anticipation towards this legendary spell, reputed to be the most powerful single target forbidden-level spell. He immediately began to chant the words to the spell. He had learned the words long ago, but this was his first time using it.

Moments later…

Countless amounts of wind elemental essences swirled around Linley, and the wind in the area around him seemed to have come to a halt.

A three or four meter long, semi-translucent, azure blade of wind appeared, and like a flash of lightning, it shot out from Linley off into the distance. The speed of this spell was so fast…that most likely even Bebe and Fain wouldn’t be able to dodge in time. The most terrifying part of it was, wherever this blade of wind passed, with a ‘screeeeeech’ sound, tears in space appeared.

Like a piece of cloth being torn apart, a huge rip in space appeared, but of course it instantly repaired itself afterwards.

After flying for hundreds of meters, the ‘Dimensional Edge’ finally disappeared.

“Tearing apart space…what can possibly withstand an attack like this? In addition, after sending out this ‘Dimensional Edge’, I can actually slightly control the path it travels in by using my spiritual energy.” Linley was wildly overjoyed.

Chapter 31 – Necropolis of the Gods – the Eleventh Floor!

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 31, Necropolis of the Gods, the Eleventh Floor!

Atop the prairie, the experts all clearly saw the 'rip' in space appearing. Although they had heard of how astonishingly powerful the 'Dimensional Edge' spell was, personally witnessing the 'rip in space' created by the 'Dimensional Edge' still left them feeling awed.

"The Dimensional Edge spell really does live up to its reputation of being the most powerful single-target forbidden-level spell." Fain sighed in shock. "Even me…if a Grand Magus Saint ambushed me with this spell, if we weren't too distant from each other, I would probably be unable to dodge in time."

The 'Dimensional Edge' spell could be considered to have reached a pinnacle in single-target attacks for the wind-style.

Its speed had reached the absolute limit, and its attack power had reached the limit as well.

"This is why I generally will always be rather cautious around wind-style Grand Magus Saints, especially if they have any grudge against me." Desri laughed. "Generally speaking, whenever I sense a large amount of wind elemental essence gathering close to me, I'll immediately run and hide as far away as I can."

"Haha…" All the experts began to laugh loudly.

"Desri, you are afraid as well?" Fain laughed loudly as he said.

For Linley to finally break through to become a Grand Magus Saint was something which caused Desri, Fain, and the other experts to feel surprise

and joy. Linley's power would increase greatly, which gave their group a higher chance of obtaining a divine spark on the eleventh floor.

"Enough. There's two more months from now until the year and a half we agreed on is up. Let's all rest for the final two months." Desri said clearly.

The experts all nodded, then separated again.

Right now, Bebe was with Linley.

"Boss, you finally reached the Grand Magus Saint level. This is wonderful." Bebe was so happy that he was jumping up and down, waving his little claws happily in the air, his little eyes squinting in delight.

"Although I've become a Grand Magus Saint, that only means my chance of surviving the eleventh floor is now a little bit higher." Linley sighed. "Look at how much the difficulty level rose from the first level of five floors to the second level of five floors. This eleventh floor…"

Bebe nodded his head as well.

The eleventh floor would probably be ten or a hundred times as dangerous as the sixth floor, where the Flame Tyrant had been!

Would they be successful?

Actually, neither Linley nor Desri, or indeed any of the others, felt confident. But Desri's group had struggled towards the goal of becoming a Deity for thousands of years, and now that they were so close to reaching their goal, they naturally wouldn't easily give up.

"In the last two months, we'll have to prepare well."

Having reached the Grand Magus Saint level and especially after his soul had changed, Linley felt that his very existence had just transformed to a new stage. Actually, Bebe could also sense it…right now, Linley, standing in front of him, was like a sharp blade that was pointing towards the sky.

Utterly unblockable.

……

Two months later.

Beneath that ancient pillar. Outside the exit. The eleven experts had gathered.

Deep blue draconic scales covering his entire body, Linley was in Dragonform. At the same time, a diamond-like sparkling armor covered Linley's entire body, including even his draconic tail. This was the protective spell of earth-style Saints….the Sacred Earthguard Armor.

Around the diamond Sacred Earthguard Armor, there was a layer of deep azure-black battle-qi covering Linley's entire body, forming a thin membrane. This was the 'Pulseguard Defense'.

The defenses of the Dragonblood Warrior, the Saint-level 'Sacred Earthguard Armor', and the 'Pulseguard Defense'…with these three layers of defenses reinforcing each other, Linley's current defensive power was most likely so great that not even Bebe could match him.

Desri and Rosarie were covered with their respective Elemental Saint Armors as well, while Fain, Olivier, Tulily and the others were covered with a layer of battle-qi. Everyone had fully prepared themselves. Even Bebe's body had a dim black aura around it.

"The goal we have been striving towards for five thousand years…it all comes down to this." Desri's eyes were glowing.

The eyes of Fain, Tuilily, Rosarie, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, and the Blackscale Scorpion were also extremely resolute and firm.

"On the eleventh floor, the danger we encounter will definitely be ten times or a hundred times greater than in the lower floors. Any one, two, or more of us can die!" Desri swept everyone with his gaze. He said solemnly, "But

those who survive and are successful, whether man or magical beast, must definitely help the dead resolve their affairs, be it debts or grudges, in the normal world."

All of the experts nodded silently.

In the eleventh floor, nobody could afford to play the part of a lone hero. They all had to work together to have the slightest hope of success.

Fain swept every single person with his gaze. In a low voice, he said, "No matter what, I hope that at least one of us eleven will become a Deity." What Fain feared the most was…all eleven of them would perish here on the eleventh floor.

"It isn't a hope. It is a certainty. An absolute certainty that we will succeed!" Tulily's eyes were extremely fierce.

"Let's go." Desri turned his gaze towards the exit, staring at it.

"Let's go!"

The eyes of the eleven experts were extremely firm. Together, they entered the darkly glowing exit, heading to the eleventh floor.

Necropolis of the Gods. The eleventh floor!

The light of a setting sun was casting its glow upon this entire world. This was a world of metal, and the vast, endless earth was covered with all sorts of metal constructs. Massive metal mountains and metal valleys could be seen everywhere, and the wind howled here as though it were knives.

Suddenly….

The eleven experts of the Yulan continent appeared at the eleventh floor.

"How desolate. How bizarre." Rosarie stared at the surrounding area as she mentally spoke into their minds. According to their agreement, after

entering the eleventh floor, unless it was absolutely necessary, nobody was to speak, so as to avoid disturbing any terrifyingly powerful creatures here. This ability to speak mentally with the soul was one which Linley could now manage as well.

After one had enough spiritual energy, all one needed to do was learn the trick to it.

“Everyone, be careful. When we encountered the ‘Beholder King’ on the eighth floor, it was also extremely quiet there at first. Nobody can afford to be incautious. Now, let’s go hunting for divine sparks.” Linley, now acknowledged as the most powerful of these eleven experts, led the way in front.

The other experts followed behind Linley. Desri, Rosarie, and Olivier were in the center, as their defense was the weakest.

Linley had three layers of defenses, while his body had the Pearl of Life.

His soul had risen in power, and he possessed the spells of a Grand Magus Saint. Linley was indeed now the most powerful person here.

“Everything here is metal. I don’t sense any life at all.” After flying for a long time, Linley was beginning to frown.

But Linley didn’t dare to let his guard down. He focused all of his attention on maintaining his vigilance, carefully inspecting the area to see if there were any corpses of Deities here, or divine sparks. At the same time, he had to be very careful to see if there were any powerful creatures present, hiding in a hard-to-spot location.

The creatures here could be as large as a mountain or as small as a fist.

The eleven experts were careful enough for twelve people.

“There’s a valley up ahead. It seems to have a special aura about it.” Desri’s voice rang out in everyone’s mind.

Linley also noticed that distant valley, which seemed to have some sort of unique aura emanating from within it. In addition, that aura made one's heart shake and feel a sense of pressure.

"Could that be the aura of a divine spark?" Linley's voice rang out in their minds.

Everyone's eyes lit up. Something capable of making their hearts shake and make them feel pressure…that just might be a divine spark indeed. After all, nobody here had ever seen a divine spark, but they had all sensed a Deity's divine presence before.

"It might be a divine spark, but it might also be…the creature guarding the eleventh floor." Rosarie's face was solemn, and her voice rang out in everyone's mind.

"Guardian?"

Linley and the others felt their hearts quiver. Logically speaking, the difficulty level of this eleventh floor should be ten times or a hundred times greater than that of the sixth and seventh floors. The Flame Tyrant and the Queen Mother had already been so powerful…then how powerful would the creatures on this eleventh floor be?

"Everyone, let's decide. Should we enter the valley or not?" Linley asked the experts.

"Enter." A Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion said. "If we're even afraid of this, then even if we find a divine spark inside, there'll probably be no one bold enough to take it."

The experts exchanged glances.

Right. If they were so timid as to avoid every unique aura they sensed, how could they possibly find a divine spark?

“Enter.” Fain said mentally, and all of the experts turned to stare towards the valley.

The eleven experts, with Linley in front, crept towards that distant metallic valley. This metallic valley was over a hundred meters wide. As Linley and the rest of the eleven experts flew to the air above the metallic valley, they could even more clearly sense that heart-shaking aura.

“This valley is covered by a faint red fog.” Linley frowned.

Looking down into the immeasurably deep valley and that faint red fog, he saw that the fog was roiling about. It gave Linley a feeling…as though there was an enormous creature beneath the fog, and the fog was its exhaled breath.

Exchanging glances with everyone, Linley mentally spoke to them. “Let’s go down.”

The eleven experts all fearlessly flew downwards. The deeper into the valley they went, the more Linley and the other experts could sense that heart-racing aura. In a short period of time, they entered the area near that red fog, and the eleven experts flew towards the direction of the source of that aura.

“Whooosh.”

Their flying speed was very fast. It only took them a few seconds to go from the air above the valley to the valley below, but those few seconds, to these eleven experts, had been unbearable.

The eleven experts landed on the valley floor. The fog was fairly faint, not too thick, and one could see within a radius of a hundred meters.

“What’s that?” Linley could vaguely see that there was a body lying on an enormous, flat rock, off in the distance. The heart-racing aura was coming from that body.

“A Deity’s corpse.” Desri excitedly transmitted mentally to them.

Linley felt his heart clench hard. Even Fain and Tulily’s breathing became slightly heavier. Without hesitating at all, all of the experts quietly crept towards that giant flat rock.

“Haha…” Suddenly, loud, wild laughter shook the entire valley, and it seemed as though that wild laugh was coming from the giant flat rock which had a boulder resting on it.

All eleven experts, Linley included, felt their hearts suddenly shudder violently.

“Not good.” Linley knew that the situation had just turned grim, and he immediately transmitted mentally, “Retreat, quick, retreat!”

Not just Linley. This was the reaction of the other ten experts as well. They flew into the skies as fast as lightning. Their speed was extremely fast, and in the blink of an eye, they flew out of the faint red fog, but then, Linley and the other ten experts stopped in their tracks.

They stopped there, within the valley, not daring to fly up.

Because above them…

Bodies made entirely out of metal. Arms, legs, and forehead made of swords. These creatures appeared, a low-level type of creature born from the Abyss and made for slaughter…Abyssal Blade Demons!

It was Abyssal Blade Demons!

Linley and the others had encountered an Abyssal Blade Demon on the tenth floor. Although they were extremely fast and powerful, their defense was only average…any one of Linley’s group, when going all out, could have killed that Abyssal Blade Demon.

But right now, Linley, Fain, Desri, and the others all felt a sense of

hopelessness in their hearts.

They were clustered as densely together as ants. At least ten thousand Abyssal Blade Demons hovered in the air above the valley, blocking out even the light of the skies. When the Abyssal Blade Demon of the tenth floor had chopped down, Fain, despite using a weapon to block, had still been made to vomit blood by the impact.

In terms of raw offensive power, they were comparable to Tulily.

“Haha…it’s been so long since we’ve encountered any invaders. Children, kill them for me.” Within the endless sea of Abyssal Blade Demons, a small, skinny red Abyssal Blade Demon let out a wild shout.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Howling a piercing howl, the countless Abyssal Blade Demons charged downwards from the sky. Each of them wielded those long blades with both hands. Linley and the others knew exactly how sharp those long blades were. Those were weapons on par with low level divine artifacts.

“Go down.” Desri breathed raggedly.

Without hesitating at all, Linley and the other experts immediately charged back down.

“Swish…” The faint red mist was suddenly sucked away into a different part of the valley at high speed. In the blink of an eye, Linley and the others saw what was going on. The faint red fog had been drawn in by another distant, small, skinny, blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon into his chest.

There was a blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon above them, and there was another one within the valley as well.

“There’s a huge amount of Abyssal Blade Demons below us as well.” Rosarie’s voice rang out in everyone’s minds.

The valley actually had tunnels within it, and two of the tunnels were currently filled with endless amounts of Abyssal Blade Demons which were flying out of it. The air above them was flooded with countless Abyssal Blade Demons, but beneath them, there were tunnels filled with them as well.

Chapter 32 – The Blood Stained Underground

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 32, The Blood Stained Underground

Everyone knew exactly how powerful the Abyssal Blade Demons were. One or two of them, they didn't need to fear. But if one or two hundred of them attacked and fought with Linley's group head on, most likely more than half of Linley's group would die. But now, the Abyssal Blade Demons were clustered so densely that they were in the tens of thousands.

There was no choice!

Flee!

"Execute plan number two. Into the tunnels." Linley's voice rang out in everyone's mind.

"Swish…" The Blackscale Scorpion's long scorpion tail suddenly spun, then easily drilled straight through the side of the metallic mountain. At an astonishing speed, the Blackscale Scorpion chopped a tunnel through the mountain, and Desri, Rosarie, and the others immediately charged inside.

Linley, Fain, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, Bebe, and Olivier were in the rearguard.

Every one of the Abyssal Blade Demons possessed lightning-fast speed, and they came down like a plague of locusts.

"Kill them." Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in one hand and Bloodviolet in the other.

At this moment, with countless Abyssal Blade Demons charging at them, every person, be it Linley, Fain, the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, Bebe, or Olivier, was coming under terrifying attack. Olivier was the first amongst

them to be forced backwards.

Olivier, wielding that mystic icesword, was covered with a half-black, half-white aura which glowed at the same time. The mystic icesword clashed against an incoming blade of an Abyssal Blade Demon. As it did, Olivier's body trembled, then a cold light flashed in his eyes as the mystic icesword suddenly snaked out and attacked again.

"Slash…" The mystic icesword, covered in black and white light, managed to sever the head of that Abyssal Blade Demon.

But immediately afterwards, three more Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously chopped towards Olivier. Olivier's face changed, and he retreated at high speed, but in terms of speed, these Abyssal Blade Demons were on par with Fain and Bebe. Olivier could only rely on his mystic ice longsword to frantically block each blade.

"Bang!" Two blades in a row collided against his battle-qi barrier.

Olivier's barrier of battle-qi was directly smashed apart. Enduring the pain, Olivier relied on the counter-force from the two blows to scurry into the tunnel the Blackscale Scorpion had made. But despite that, nearly half of his waist had been chopped into.

If he had been just a bit slower, his entire body would have been chopped in two.

"Bang!" Immediately after that, Fain was the next to be forced flee into the tunnel by the attacks of a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons. Fain was sent flying backwards by the combined attacks of four Abyssal Blade Demons, and his body was actually chopped into three different parts, but Fain's 'head' flew at high speed into the tunnel and fled.

At the same time, Fain's body began to rebuild itself at an astonishing speed.

"Linley, be careful. If you can't hold on, then flee!" Fain mentally

transmitted to him while fleeing.

Linley could already sense how terrifyingly powerful these Abyssal Blade Demons were. In but one exchange, after he killed four Abyssal Blade Demons in a row, his Pulseguard Defense and his Sacred Earthguard Armor had been destroyed by a large number of wildly chopping blows from the Abyssal Blade Demons.

His draconic scales were shattered, and blood was spewing out.

The Pearl of Life in his body began to activate. “Rumble…” The draconic scales repaired themselves, and the ‘Pulseguard Defense’ on Linley’s body once more formed.

“Shkreeeeeeee!”

Bebe was transformed into eight different doppelgangers, wildly attacking the opponents. There were at least ten Abyssal Blade Demons who had died to his claws, but the Abyssal Blade Demons were very smart as well. Instantly, dozens of them simultaneously attacked all eight doppelgangers, with each of them suffering from the attacks of three or four Abyssal Blade Demons.

Bebe’s body was immediately sent flying backwards, as he retreated with a hint of blood on his fur.

“Bang!” A group of Abyssal Blade Demons pounced towards Bebe.

“Bebe, retreat!” Linley shouted loudly.

“Swoosh.” Bebe didn’t waste any time, also fleeing into the tunnel. As he fled inside, his body was matted with blood and his fur had been chopped into. Seeing this sight, Linley’s heart ached. After all, Bebe didn’t have a Pearl of Life!

The bodies of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were covered with black battle-armor, and thus they were able to hold on for an even longer period

of time than Bebe.

“Linley, we can’t hold. Retreat, hurry!”

The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were also forced back by large amounts of blade chops from the Abyssal Blade Demons, and they fled into the tunnel, their bodies also matted with blood. With each member of the rearguard having retreated into the tunnel, their defensive perimeter was naturally shrinking.

With the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions gone, Linley immediately retreated into the tunnel entrance as well.

“Kill him!” Countless Abyssal Blade Demons howled, raising their sharp long blades and chopping towards Linley.

“Not good.” At the same time, more than ten Abyssal Blade Demons were chopping towards Linley from every which way. Above, below, in front, on each side…more than ten Abyssal Blade Demons in total, with each blade possessing lightning-fast speed. Too fast!

Linley’s Bloodviolet sword and adamantine heavy sword were only able to kill two of the Abyssal Blade Demons, while the other ten or so blades landed on Linley’s body simultaneously!

“Bang!” The Pulseguard Defense, which was already at the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World – 64 Fused Waves’ immediately collapsed.

“Not good.” Just the momentum force from those ten blows had sent Linley flying backwards, while at the same time shattering the draconic scales on Linley’s body, sending blood everywhere. The green light of the Pearl of Life was constantly flashing, however, and Linley’s body replenished at an astonishing rate.

“Can’t hold any longer. The others should have been able to flee a good distance by now.”

Linley scurried into a tunnel as well.

“Grrrrrrrrrr!” The many Abyssal Blade Demons roared as they charged towards the tunnel as well. At the same time, a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons clustered outside the valley also charged towards the tunnel.

“Pursue them!” Countless Abyssal Blade Demons roared with anger.

Linley turned to glance, and saw the bloodthirsty, wild look in the eyes of those Abyssal Blade Demons.

“Rumble…” Instantly, earth elemental energy wildly began to gather, and a large number of giant stones formed behind Linley, instantly sealing off the tunnel in its entirety. As Linley continued to fly, countless boulders continued to appear out of nowhere behind him.

Earth-style instacast spell of the eighth rank: Rubble Rain.

“Although the Blackscale Scorpion’s tunneling speed is the fastest out of all of us, this world is a world of metal, and even the ground is made of metal. His tunneling speed is definitely inferior to his flying speed. All we can do right now is to try and hang on.”

Linley continued flying while sealing off the tunnel behind him.

“Swish!” From behind, a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons were still flying forward.

These Abyssal Blade Demons didn’t pay any attention to the boulders Linley was using to stop up the tunnel, just using their heads to ram straight through them. The sharp blades atop their forehead instantly split the boulders apart, and they continued to pursue at high speed.

However, although they were able to easily destroy the boulders, their speed was still affected.

Linley hurried towards the experts up ahead. After all, in terms of flying

speed, they were moving much faster than the Blackscale Scorpion. Desri, Fain, and the others were flying shoulder to shoulder, while the Blackscale Scorpion was ahead of them, tunneling through.

“What should we do?” Linley asked frantically.

At this time, there was a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons in hot pursuit.

“In terms of speed, underground, we’re traveling more quickly than the Abyssal Blade Demons, so we should be able to shake them off. After shaking them off, let’s go look for the divine spark.” Desri said. This was the decision which the various experts had agreed on.

Even now, they didn’t want to give up.

When they had drawn near that Deity’s corpse just now, they had used their spiritual energy to search it. That Deity’s corpse had been split open by the head long ago, and the divine spark had been taken. The corpse was nothing more than a tool used to attract their attention!

While Linley’s group continued to make their way underground at high speed, in the air above them, countless Abyssal Blade Demons were densely clustered, with three blood-red Abyssal Blade Demons leading them.

“It’s about time. Children, ten every ten kilometers. Head out now.” The leading blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon said loudly.

Flying at high speed, the Abyssal Blade Demons formed into squads of ten, and one squad of Abyssal Blade Demons after another dove directly underground, easily driving through the metallic floor and beginning to tunnel underground. A squad was inserted every ten kilometers, and of course, in the air coming down, they flew far faster than Linley’s squad tunneled.

“They want to flee from underground?” The physically small leader, that blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon, laughed coldly.

“Hrmph. We have over a million citizens. Within ten thousand square kilometers, we will set up a heaven-encompassing web. How can they possibly flee?” Another blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon said.

The third Abyssal Blade Demon laughed loudly. “I’ve arranged a tribe of over ten thousand Abyssal Blade Demons to guard the entrance back to the tenth floor. No matter where they run, they will die!”

If Linley’s group knew that this eleventh floor had over a million Abyssal Blade Demons, they probably would have given up long ago

But they didn’t know!

In the valley, there were actually only a hundred Abyssal Blade Demons who had managed to fight with Linley, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, Fain, Bebe, and Olivier. The others hadn’t been able to squeeze in, due to space limitations.

But despite that, Linley’s group had been forced into a sorry state.

The eleven experts tunneled at high speed as the scorpion’s tail of the Blackscale Scorpion continued to spin at high speed, easily opening the path for them. The speed at which he did this…was far faster than the speed at which those Abyssal Blade Demons behind them were splitting aside those stone boulders.

“It seems we should be able to throw the Abyssal Blade Demons off after all.” Fain grew slightly calmer.

“Not good.” Linley suddenly raised his head. Not just Linley; Desri, Fain, and the others raised their head as well.

In but an instant…

“Rumble…” The metal above them collapsed, and nearly ten Abyssal Blade Demons charged out towards them. These Abyssal Blade Demons

discovered Linley's group, and immediately let out excited, high-pitched roars. "Roaaaaaaaaaar!"

The sound of that roar caused the metallic ground to rumble, spreading through the area. The sound waves travelled much faster through the metal than through the air.

Underground, a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons were searching at high speed.

"There." A large number of Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously flew towards the location where the sound came from, and some even predicted where Linley's group would head next, heading there to block them.

"Clang!" The adamantine heavy sword struck against the body of an Abyssal Blade Demon, shaking it into tiny pieces, but Linley felt pain in his waist, as he had been chopped by a blade. With a furious roar, Linley swung his sword with a backhanded blow. Although the draconic scales on his body were destroyed time and time again, each time they instantly healed.

Bellowing, Linley forced the charging Abyssal Blade Demons to retreat, one after another.

Right now, Linley's group of experts was suffering the constant attacks of a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons who were assaulting them from every direction. Linley was the only one blocking from his side, but despite that, all of the experts in Linley's group were in a sorry state.

"Bang." Fain and Olivier were smashed against a nearby stone.

"Back to the tenth floor!" Desri said in agony.

Fain, Rosarie, Tulily, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions and even Linley were stunned. The goal they had for five thousand years, were they to give it up now? But more and more Abyssal Blade Demons were pouring in, and they were almost unable to hold on.

After all, the battle was attracting more and more Abyssal Blade Demons to head in this direction.

And worst of all, aside from Linley and Fain who could instantly heal, the others had to rely on Desri's healing spells, but healing spells, in this sort of high-speed battle, were simply too slow.

With a vicious backhand blow, Fain killed another Abyssal Blade Demon, and then roared in pain, "Back!"

"Back." Tulily growled as well.

Nobody was willing. Their hearts were unwilling!

But more and more Abyssal Blade Demons were coming. They truly weren't able to hold on any longer. If it wasn't for Linley, who was able to take on a third of the Abyssal Blade Demons by himself, they probably would have been doomed long ago. Despite that…right now, they were like a tiny little ship in the howling sea.

They could capsize at any moment!

They had no choice!

"Back to the tenth floor." The Blackscale Scorpion immediately began to change the direction in which he tunneled.

"Quick, don't waste time. If we delay, there will be even more Abyssal Blade Demons. I can't take much more." Linley only felt as though countless blades were flashing in front of him. Growling, Linley stabbed out with Bloodviolet while swinging with his adamantine heavy sword, but despite that, he was still knocked flying by the chopping blows, with blood once more matting his entire body, and even his white bones showing through.

Green light swirled around him, and Linley's body quickly recovered.

“You won’t be able to flee.” A cold voice rang out as a blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon suddenly dove into the tunnels.

“Not good.” As soon as Linley saw this blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon, he knew that the situation had just gone from bad to worse.

“The first one to die will be you.” Wielding that blood-red long blade in his two hands, the red Abyssal Blade Demon stared coldly at Linley. The other Abyssal Blade Demon all respectively parted for him, instead wildly attacking Fain, Tulily, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions.

Chapter 33 – Life and Death

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 33, Life and Death

From time to time, Desri would use his spiritual energy to attack.

This battle was simply too intense!

“Slash…”

Space itself seemed to be sliced through, as the blood-red long blade transformed into a bloody saber-flash, piercing through the space between the red Abyssal Blade Demon and Linley, arriving in front of Linley in an instant.

With the adamantine heavy sword in one hand, and Bloodviolet in the other, the Dragonblood Warrior, Linley, let out an angry snort, and the adamantine heavy sword in his hand struck out gracefully, seemingly slow but actually fast, clanging against that blood-red long blade. ‘Clang’. Linley felt as though a mountain had smashed against him.

“Slash!” He couldn’t suppress the blood that bubbled up, and blood burst forth from his lips.

Even the draconic scales on the right hand wielding the adamantine heavy sword had been shattered from the vibration, but moments later, Linley’s injury healed at an astonishing rate. Linley himself didn’t pay attention to a minor wound like this.

“Hrm?” Linley was staring at the blood-red Abyssal Blade Demon, waiting to see what the result would be.

The attack he had used just now was the one he had used to kill the Flame Tyrant, the most powerful blow of the Profound Truths of the Earth.

The body of the red Abyssal Blade Demon quivered like a steel wire, and with that quiver, a hint of golden blood appeared at the corner of its mouth.

“You really are powerful.” The red Abyssal Blade Demon stared coldly at Linley.

Linley was secretly shocked. “No wonder he is the leader of the Abyssal Blade Demons. His body is far more powerful than the bodies of those ordinary Abyssal Blade Demons. Despite taking my full strength blow, his body wasn’t shattered to pieces. The bodies of metal creatures are indeed far tougher than the bodies of humans.”

“Growl….” The red Abyssal Blade Demon’s eyes were filled with flames, and it tightened its two-handed grip on its blood-red long blade.

Within the tunnel, both suddenly flew towards the other at high speed.

“No matter what, I have to kill him this time.” Linley had made up his mind.

The wind suddenly emitted an ear-piercing, desolate howl. Linley and the red Abyssal Blade Demon once more clashed, and this time, Linley used Bloodviolet as his primary attack. In the blink of an eye, ten million devilish violet sword flashes appeared, arcing through the air like the countless tendrils of the Queen Mother.

Space itself suddenly froze, and the red Abyssal Blade Demon also felt that its own flying speed had just dropped dramatically.

“Hrmph.” A hint of bloodlust appeared in Linley’s eyes.

He immediately activated the baleful aura within Bloodviolet with his now extremely pure spiritual energy. This was the first time Linley had utilized the baleful aura of Bloodviolet after reaching the Grand Magus Saint level, and this time, the baleful aura was more explosive and fiercer than ever before! A blood red air, almost physical in substance, suddenly attacked the red Abyssal Blade Demon.

“Ah!”

The red Abyssal Blade Demon suddenly had the feeling as though he were facing one of the most powerful fiends of the distant Abyss, and the terror that he felt sprang from his very soul, causing his originally mighty blade blow to hesitate slightly.

“Wait, not right.” Unfortunately, the baleful aura was just a remnant of its owner which had been left in Bloodviolet. Bloodviolet’s original owner didn’t himself appear. The red Abyssal Blade Demon quickly recovered, but by the time he did, he saw a pair of bloodthirsty eyes and a single flash of violet sword light.

“Die!”

Those ten million sword flashes had already combined into a single violet sword flash. The Abyssal Blade Demon, earlier affected by the baleful aura, had raised his blade to block, but the sword flash had already arrived before his eyes.

“Slash!”

The sword light flashed through the neck of the red Abyssal Blade Demon, and as it did…a metallic head was sent flying away, its eyes filled with awe and disbelief. And then, the lifeless corpse of the red Abyssal Blade Demon fell to the ground.

No matter how powerful the Abyssal Blade Demon was, it wasn’t a Deity, and it didn’t possess a Pearl of Life. With its head gone, it died within seconds.

The attacks of the surrounding Abyssal Blade Demons suddenly came to a halt.

All of the Abyssal Blade Demons stared in disbelief at the scene. Fain, Desri, Olivier, and the others, who had been in dire straits from the sudden

attack of the Abyssal Blade Demons, also felt astonished. They, too, had discovered…that Linley had killed that red Abyssal Blade Demon.

“Quick, flee.” Linley’s voice rang out in the minds of everyone.

Fain, Desri, and the others immediately recovered and hurriedly fled through the tunnels.

Up in the air above, countless Abyssal Blade Demons flew about, while in the middle of that horde was two small, skinny red Abyssal Blade Demons. The two leaders had already received the news from their subordinates.

“Schuler [Shu’lei] actually died.” The red Abyssal Blade Demon on the left said in disbelief.

“It was the Draconian.” A cold light flashed through the eyes of the red Abyssal Blade Demon on the right. “Earlier in the valley, the Draconian already made a big impression on me. His body should have a Pearl of Life in it. He was heavily injured by our children several times, but in an instant, he recovered.”

“The main problem is that they are underground. That makes things troublesome.” The left Abyssal Blade Demon shook his head.

“Underground, there is no line of sight at all, and the spiritual energy of our children can only stretch for a few meters. In a fierce battle such as this, that sort of radius is useless.” The right Abyssal Blade Demon said. “In addition, there’s only so much space in the tunnels. At mostly, only ten or so of our children can engage in battle against them at once.”

Although an enormous number of Abyssal Blade Demons had also gone underground, their line of sight was obstructed, and in addition, Linley’s side was moving at high speed. There were only so many Abyssal Blade Demons that could attack them at once.

“Let the children of one tribe entangle them, while we constantly keep an eye on their movements.” The right Abyssal Blade Demon said coldly.

“Whether it is to find a divine spark or to return to the tenth floor, they have to eventually leave the underground area. As soon as they do…”

The eyes of the left Abyssal Blade Demon also flashed with a cold look.

“Quick, quick.” Linley’s group of experts were frantic.

In the tunnels, every so often, a nearby wall would suddenly be pierced through, with a large amount of Abyssal Blade Demons pouring through afterwards.

“Fortunately we are underground. If we were above ground…”

If countless Abyssal Blade Demons charged at them together from all directions…Linley shuddered, just thinking about that terrifying scene. At the entrance to the valley, the combined of attacks of just around ten Abyssal Blade Demons had knocked Linley flying with their chops. If he hadn’t had a Pearl of Life, Linley probably would’ve died long ago.

Although Linley’s spiritual energy could only encompass a very small area here, upon reaching the Saint level, their mental imaging abilities were extremely powerful. For example, Linley was able to mentally replay the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’ and further refine it. In the minds of Linley’s group of experts, the location of the exit to the tenth floor was clearly marked, and they also knew exactly where they are and what direction they were flying so quickly in.

Thus, travelling underground area, it wouldn’t be too hard to return to that exit. Even if they were off, they wouldn’t be off by more than a thousand meters or so.

“Everyone, hold on for a bit longer. We’re almost at the exit.” The Blackscale Scorpion’s voice rang out in their minds.

All the experts felt a surge of energy, and they all strenuously resisted the constantly charging Abyssal Blade Demons. All of the experts put their strength on full display, and any who was heavily injured would

immediately retreat to Desri's side to be healed, allowing other experts to replace them momentarily.

Linley also had the feeling…

That the density of attacks from the Abyssal Blade Demons had reached a stable level. In addition, everyone's teamwork had reached an extremely high level as well.

"Slash." The three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were once more sent retreating by the wild attacks of the Abyssal Blade Demons. Fain, Tulily, and Bebe immediately filled the gap, while Desri immediately began to heal the wounds of those three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. Fortunately, this sort of healing spell was of the ninth level, and thus to someone like Desri who could instacast them, it was not too troublesome.

"We've arrived at the exit to the tenth floor." Desri's excited voice rang out in everyone's mind.

The Blackscale Scorpion's tunneling direction suddenly shifted upwards as well, and the Abyssal Blade Demons attacking them suddenly dropped in number as well.

"Most likely, many Abyssal Blade Demons are still moving to block us off in the direction we were previously heading." Tulily also noticed that only two or three Abyssal Blade Demons would occasionally appear and attack.

"Everyone, don't let down your guard." Linley immediately instructed.

"The three of us, plus Linley and Fain, will charge up first. The other experts will follow from behind." The voice of one of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions rang out in everyone's mind as well. In terms of defense, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions were extremely powerful, while Linley and Fain both had Pearls of Life.

Nobody disagreed.

“Swoosh.” Charging upwards at high speed, Linley and the others spread out their spiritual energy.

“There are no Abyssal Blade Demons in the twenty to thirty meters above us.” Desri’s voice rang out. They were already very close to ground level. Underground, spiritual energy penetrated a much lower distance than above ground.

“Head up.” Nobody hesitated at all at a time like this.

Linley and Fain led the upwards charge, with the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions behind them. The other experts formed the third unit and the fourth unit.

“Boom.” “Boom.” …..

Linley’s group of five erupted from the ground. Based on their current surroundings, they could immediately tell that they were only two hundred meters away from the exit. However, although Linley, Fain, and the other experts were able to locate the exit…

Everyone felt misery in their hearts.

The path to the exit was blocked off by multiple layers of Abyssal Blade Demons; ten inner layers, and ten outer layers. Nearly ten thousand Abyssal Blade Demons were clustered there. With all those Abyssal Blade Demons there, how was Linley’s group going to break through their guard and flee into the exit?

The worst part of it was…

In the air above them, hovering like a storm of locusts, there were countless Abyssal Blade Demons, covering the skies like an endless horde.

“How many Abyssal Blade Demons? A hundred thousand? Even more?”

Linley, Fain, the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions…everyone felt their

hearts clench tightly.

“Rumble…”

The countless Abyssal Blade Demons, upon seeing Linley’s group, were like mosquitoes that had seen blood. They all charged over wildly at the same time. The sudden attack of nearly a million Abyssal Blade Demons was simply a terrifying, apocalyptic scene. Even nearby space itself seemed to rumble.

They were only a hundred meters away.

Instantly, those countless Abyssal Blade Demons arrived in front of Linley’s group.

“Back down, quick, quick, quick!!!” Fain’s terrified voice rang out in the minds of the other ten experts. Even Bebe, Rosarie, and Tulily, who had just left the underground, were scared silly by this sight. Almost in unison…

They scurried back underground!

“Bang!”

The rumbling sound of nearly a million Abyssal Blade Demons running across the ground shook the world. Some ran in a straight line, while some charged downwards, but all of them simultaneously delivered vicious blows towards Linley’s group!

“Bang!” A terrifying explosive force, and the area for several square kilometers around them exploded, with countless pieces of metal blasting everywhere. In the blink of an eye, a giant crater hundreds of meters deep was born, and in the center of the metallic crater, a large number of tunnels could now be seen.

Linley, Fain, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had been the first to go above ground, and so they were the last to flee back underground. How far could they have gotten? In addition, this combined attack from countless

Abyssal Blade Demons, which had all struck out at virtually the same time, had caused the energy of their blows to strike downwards like a single mighty ripple which smashed against the ground.

The ‘rearguard’ of Linley, Fain, and the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had to welcome this powerful attack.

Linley just barely managed to raised his adamantine heavy sword and Bloodviolet to block.

“Bang!”

Linley almost instantly felt a large number of saber flashes chop against his body. His ‘Pulseguard Defense’ and his draconic scales almost instantly exploded, and even Linley’s adamantine heavy sword and Bloodviolet sword were struck so hard that they flew backwards and struck against Linley.

“Ah!!!”

His entire body suddenly seemed shorter…because as Linley looked down, he saw that his legs had been smashed into bits.

“Flee, flee!” Linley only knew that they had to flee.

The terrifying scene of those countless Abyssal Blade Demons charging towards them had already caused Linley’s group’s willpower to collapse. Linley noticed that next to him, beneath his chest Fain’s entire body was gone, including both arms. Even his longsword was gone.

“Second brother!” A desolate howl rang out.

Flee!

Flee!

They fled wildly through the tunnels. After a long time had passed, they

finally came to a halt, because there no longer were any Abyssal Blade Demons in pursuit of them.

Fain's body was quickly repairing itself, but it had only repaired up to his legs thus far. Fain's entire body was wracked in pain. And wasn't Linley in much the same situation? However, compared to the others, the two of them were already very lucky.

Of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, only two were left, and both of them were heavily injured, their bodies matted with blood.

"Second brother did it to save us." The eldest Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, Cleo, growled. The three siblings weren't like Linley and Fain, who had 'Pearls of Life'. At the critical moment, the second of those three siblings had suddenly expanded his body to protect his two brothers.

The remaining ten experts looked at each other, and within their eyes, there was a hint of bitterness, pain, and…despair!

What should they do now?

Chapter 34 – Death?

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 34, Death?

Everyone's minds were still filled with that earlier scene of 'annihilation'. Those countless Abyssal Blade Demons charging down towards them… Linley's group had been completely stunned. Their minds were completely blank. Terror, disbelief…they had the feeling that they were about to go crazy.

"How could there be so many Abyssal Blade Demons here?" Linley shook his head, unable to accept it.

Tulily shook his head and sighed as well. "Most likely, even if the departed Flame Tyrant or Queen Mother were present, in the face of the joined attacks of those countless Abyssal Blade Demons, they would also be chopped into mincemeat. Simply too frightening…truly frightening."

"With so many Abyssal Blade Demons on the eleventh floor, who can possibly acquire a divine spark?" Olivier had an ugly look on his face.

"Perhaps the Sovereign who created this Necropolis of the Gods is just playing a trick on people." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, Cleo, was filled with rage and grief. Of the five brothers, two had died in the Gebados Planar Prison, and now yet another had died, leaving only two of them behind.

"No. There's still a chance of success." Desri shook his head and sighed. "The Elemental Laws contain boundless profound mysteries. The aspects of the Laws that we have gained insight into are fairly low level ones. However, the aspect which Linley, for example, used to attack and kill the Flame Tyrant is one of the higher level ones. If someone, for example, reached an extremely high level of understanding in the 'Lightspeed' aspect of the Elemental Laws of the Light, he would be far faster than all of those Abyssal Blade Demons. In that case…most likely, he would have a chance

of acquiring a divine spark."

Although both Olivier and Desri were very fast, they didn't have very deep understandings with regards to 'Lightspeed'.

"Let's not discuss this for now. More importantly, we need to figure out what exactly we are going to do. Does anyone have any ideas?" Desri swept the experts with his gaze.

"What can we do? It'd be wonderful if we could even return to the tenth floor." Rosarie sighed. "This is the most dangerous of the Necropolis of the Gods. Three thousand years a cycle, right? There's two other giant Necropolis of the Gods. Those two won't be as dangerous as this one."

Desri, Fain, and Tulily all nodded.

Three major tunnels, all headed to different Necropolis of the Gods. This one was the most dangerous of them all.

"The more danger, the more treasure." Tulily sighed. "In those other two Necropolis of the Gods, we didn't get a single true divine artifact at all. But here…we even procured two Pearls of Life. I trust there is definitely more than just one divine spark on this eleventh floor as well."

The other experts all secretly nodded.

The greater the danger, the greater the rewards would generally be.

But…

If the danger was so great that they didn't have any hope at all, no matter how many divine sparks this place had, what good would it be?

"How about let's just hide here. We'll hide for a few months and wait for the ten years to be up?" The Blackscale Scorpion spoke.

Linley's eyes lit up as well.

A person had to know their own limits. When Linley had seen those countless Abyssal Blade Demons, he had already given up on procuring a divine spark on this eleventh floor. After all…there were simply too many Abyssal Blade Demons.

“It probably wouldn’t work.” Olivier shook his head. “Place your ears against the metal walls and listen.”

Linley immediately pressed his ear against the metallic wall, and a very faint vibration could be sensed coming over constantly.

Everyone’s hearts sank.

“There should an extremely high number of Abyssal Blade Demons coming our way from the underground,” the third of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, Clervaux [Ke’lai’wo], said. “Although they aren’t moving very fast, they are moving very methodically. When those Abyssal Blade Demons surround us…”

“We can’t stay here much longer.” Tulily spoke.

Linley looked at Bebe, coiling in his arms, and his eyes hardened. Staring at the others, he said, “We have no other choices. We probably won’t even be able to spend another day down here before the countless Abyssal Blade Demons surround us.”

“The only option we have is to return to the tenth floor.” Linley said firmly.

“But how? Linley, you saw yourself just now how those countless Abyssal Blade Demons fully surrounded that exit.”

Linley took a deep breath. “There is one way.”

All of the experts looked at Linley.

“We’ll take a roundabout underground path, and then move towards the

exit. When the time comes, all of you help hold them off while I prepare the ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell, and kill all of the Abyssal Blade Demons barring our way to the exit.

The experts all looked at Linley. They didn’t think that this idea of Linley’s had a high chance of success.

How many Abyssal Blade Demons could a single Dimensional Edge spell kill?

“The Dimensional Edge spell will cut out a clear path from me to the exit. This path will soon be blocked by other Abyssal Blade Demons, so what we need to do is to pass through the pathway and rush to the tenth floor before the other Abyssal Blade Demons block us again!” Linley said.

All the experts were silent.

To use the Dimensional Edge to cut a pathway, and then instantly charge to the tenth floor.

If they were even slightly too slow, they would be surrounded and killed by the enormous numbers of Abyssal Blade Demons around them!

They had to seize that moment!

“We have no other options.” Linley stared at the other experts.

Right now, the vibrations coming from the metallic tunnel walls were growing stronger. Clearly, the many Abyssal Blade Demons were drawing closer and closer to them.

“I agree. Let’s give it a shot. At least we have a chance.” Tulily was the first to speak.

Rosarie, Desri, and Fain exchanged a glance, then nodded slightly. The two remaining Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, the Blackscale Scorpion, and Olivier all nodded in agreement. As for Bebe…he didn’t voice any objections

either.

“The most important thing right now is, when we return to the surface, we can’t let those Abyssal Blade Demons discover us. When we get near the surface, I will begin to chant the words to the spell, at which point, I won’t be able to spare any attention to dealing with those Abyssal Blade Demons.” Linley said.

“Don’t worry. You focus on your ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell. If Abyssal Blade Demons come, even if we have to die, we’ll make sure we block them.” Desri said.

The eyes of the experts were all filled with firm resolve.

They had to seize their last shot at survival!

“Let’s head out.” Linley said.

The Blackscale Scorpion immediately led the way. This time, the experts didn’t dare to travel in a straight line, and instead made a winding path as they slowly drew near. Whether it was due to good luck or something else, they didn’t encounter their first Abyssal Blade Demon until they were over halfway there.”

“Slash.” With a single swipe of his claw, Bebe tore the head of the Abyssal Blade Demon asunder, not even giving it a chance to cry out in alarm.

“Everyone, be careful. Right now, we are only five hundred meters or so from the exit. The closer we get, the greater the density of Abyssal Blade Demons will be.” Desri reminded everyone. Right now everyone was surrounding Linley, who was already beginning to chant the words to the spell.

“Not good.” Roughly three hundred meters away from their target, the Blackscale Scorpion suddenly halted.

“These Abyssal Blade Demons have dug out an enormous hole around the

exit." The Blackscale Scorpion's voice rang out in the experts' minds. All of the experts felt their hearts tremble. Linley's face changed as well, and he immediately stopped chanting the spell.

"Such a huge pit. If we were to charge past it, we would need to travel hundreds of meters before reaching the exit. Most likely, we would be killed before making it to the exit."

The ten experts all felt stunned.

In the air above the ground, countless Abyssal Blade Demons lay waiting, with those two red Abyssal Blade Demons also waiting. Only three hundred thousand Abyssal Blade Demons were underground searching for Linley, with the greater half of the Abyssal Blade Demons aboveground.

Naturally, they would be surrounding the area of the enormous hole around the exit.

The exit to the tenth floor was originally on ground level, but because of the giant hole dug by the creatures in the metallic ground, the exit was now like a window that was suspended in mid-air. That faint black aura surrounded those steps.

Not a single one of the Abyssal Blade Demons dared to pass through that exit.

Roughly ten thousand of the Abyssal Blade Demons were currently surrounding the tunnel, forming a watertight seal around it. It seemed as though Linley's group shouldn't be able to charge to the exit at all.

"Swish!" "Swish!" "Swish!" ….

But suddenly, ten blurs in a row suddenly streaked out into the hole, each of them moving extremely fast and agilely. Linley's group had no other choice. They had to risk everything and go all out, and hope that they would be able to seize that faint hope at life and charge back to the tenth floor!

The large numbers of Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously discovered Linley's group of experts.

"Kill!" The Abyssal Blade Demons reacted very fast.

But they still needed a bit of time before reacting, and in that bit of time, Linley's group had flown two or three hundred meters. They were only a few dozen meters away from the exit now, but those few dozen meters were clogged with countless Abyssal Blade Demons.

Finished with the words to his spell, Linley pointed out with one hand.

Tempestuous wind elemental essence coalesced around Linley, and the wind for several kilometers around came to a sudden halt. Linley had a vicious look on his face. Through the 'Coiling Dragon' ring, Linley forcefully summoned a large amount of the surrounding wind elemental essence and utilized all of the mageforce in his body, creating a terrifying, faint-azure colored Dimensional Edge that was twenty meters wide!

This was ten times the width of an ordinary Dimensional Edge spell.

"Chiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii."

The Dimensional Edge flew out like a giant spinning blade, and wherever it passed, giant rips appeared in space.

"Die." Through the Coiling Dragon ring, Linley utilized his spiritual energy to control the direction of the Dimensional Edge spell. Right now, Linley could clearly sense the countless revolving wind particles within his Dimensional Edge. These particles, some moving fast while others moving slow, created this 'Dimensional Edge'.

"Aaaaah!" "Aaaaah!" Countless screams of terror rang out.

Wherever this enormous Dimensional Edge passed, the blocking Abyssal Blade Demons there were chopped into pieces.

Linley tried to forcibly slow the movement of the Dimensional Edge spell to have it 'block' in front of them, but…the Dimensional Edge was simply too fast. Even with Linley controlling it, by the time the Dimensional Edge spell passed through the exit and to the other side, Linley's group was still roughly ten meters or so from the exit.

Right, just ten meters!

The exit was right in front of their eyes, and all of the Abyssal Blade Demons that had been blocking them were now dead.

But…they still had ten meters to go!

Because the Dimensional Edge spell was twenty meters wide, the Abyssal Blade Demons on each of the two sides were still at least ten meters away, and these Abyssal Blade Demons weren't able to dodge at all. However… large amounts of Abyssal Blade Demons were charging down from above. The Dimensional Blade spell, after all, was a flat, two dimensional spell.

Many of the Abyssal Blade Demons were extremely close to Linley's group.

"Quick!"

Everyone in Linley's group moved frantically, but countless Abyssal Blade Demons above them were bursting down upon them like a flood. Judging from the distance, Linley could tell that if these Abyssal Blade Demons were permitted to charge down, only three of them would be able to flee.

Fain, Bebe, and Desri, who were located in the very front.

The others wouldn't have a chance to flee at all.

Tulily, the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, the Blackscale Scorpion, Olivier…right now they had all gone mad, but their eyes had a hint of despair. So close…but not enough time!

“Hurry!”

Fain suddenly roared, transforming into a bolt of lightning as he wildly charged towards the Abyssal Blade Demons above them, hoping to block the countless Abyssal Blade Demons for just a moment. But in the blink of an eye, Fain was knocked back down by countless blows from the Abyssal Blade Demons.

“Ah!!!!” Olivier let out a furious howl.

An enormous, illusionary sword made from a fusion of black and white light suddenly appeared, killing four Abyssal Blade Demons in a single swoop. And then, Olivier fell to the ground, his face utterly ashen. Right now, only Desri and Bebe had entered the exit. The others didn’t make it in time.

“Are we going to die?”

Whether it was Olivier, the Blackscale Scorpion, Tulily, Rosarie, or the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions…

Their eyes were all filled with despair!

But just at this moment of utter despair…

“Hurry and leave!” A furious roar rang out in the minds of the experts.

A devilish violet light flashed, and countless violet sword flashes filled the air like countless vipers, spinning and twirling, covering the area directly above them like a barrier, holding the many Abyssal Blade Demons above them at bay. The strange thing was…

Something astonishing had happened to the Abyssal Blade Demons above them. Their speed had suddenly dramatically lessened.

Linley’s entire body was now covered with that faint red baleful aura.

He had once again activated the baleful aura within Bloodviolet.

“Linley!”

Olivier, Tulily, Rosarie, the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, and the others all felt shocked, but seeing a chance at life, they all madly rushed into the tunnel. But just as Olivier and the others entered the exit…

Linley hadn’t had a chance to enter the exit. From all directions, the countless Abyssal Blade Demons had fully sealed off the exit once again. Linley was able to block those above them, but he hadn’t been able to block those below and from the other four directions.

The exit was blocked!

Nowhere to flee!

“Boss! Boss!!!!!!” A black shadow suddenly flashed out from the exit, charging back into the eleventh floor. A fierce, desolate voice rang out, “Bebe, leave!” Linley roared, his voice thundering in Bebe’s consciousness. As soon as Bebe had exited the gateway, he had been knocked back by countless blade blows.

As for Linley, those countless Abyssal Blade Demons surrounded him like a horde of locusts. Linley was entirely surrounded by Abyssal Blade Demons in every direction, and even the sun had been blocked out by them.

Chapter 35 – Fleeing For His Life

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 35, Fleeing For His Life

“Kill him!” The two red Abyssal Blade Demons bellowed from afar.

“Kill!”

Countless Abyssal Blade Demons roared, and like houseflies smelling the stench of blood, they wildly charged forward. Instantly, with Linley at the center of them, the world all around Linley was filled with countless Abyssal Blade Demons.

The light red baleful aura that had already taken visible shape completely surrounded Linley, and his eyes had turned blood red and was filled with savage madness.

“F*ck off!” Linley howled angrily.

Instantly, a large number of boulders appeared out of nowhere in every direction around Linley, as well as the gaps between the numerous Abyssal Blade Demons.

The Abyssal Blade Demons had to fly, and thus couldn’t be too close to each other. In order to be able to wield their blades and to fly, each maintained a distance of approximately two or three meters from each other.

And now…

Linley’s instacasted boulders blocked off all of the available space for hundreds of meters around him.

“Where’s the Draconian?” The countless Abyssal Blade Demons had been able to see Linley from the cracks, but now, with so many giant boulders

around them, virtually none of them could see Linley any longer.

The countless Abyssal Blade Demons and boulders formed a solid sphere, with Linley in the center.

“Not good.” Those two red Abyssal Blade Demons, seeing this, had a bad feeling.

The spiritual energy of Abyssal Blade Demons could only stretch out a few meters, which was of no use to them at all. And now with their lines of vision blocked, they didn’t dare to wave their weapons wildly, for fear of killing their own people.

After all…

This ‘solid sphere’, aside from countless boulders, also had many Abyssal Blade Demons within it. But there was only a single Linley.

“Kill….”

In the same instant that Linley instacast those giant boulders, dozens of Abyssal Blade Demons next to him struck out towards Linley at the same instant. These Abyssal Blade Demons which were located close to Linley still knew where he was, and they didn’t hesitate at all.

Dozens of blades came chopping down.

“Die!”

Linley’s eyes were filled with boundless rage, and with an angry roar, he swept out with Bloodviolet as fast as lightning as he charged downwards. But no matter how fast he was, around ten blades still chopped down on Linley’s body in an instant.

“Bang!” Linley’s ‘Pulseguard Defense’ instantly crumbled.

The ‘Sacred Earthguard Armor’ which he had prepared before charging out

of the ground also crumbled in an instant.

“Slash!” Three blades struck down on his draconic scales at the same time, slashing into Linley’s body, and even digging deep into Linley’s bones, but this heart-piercing pain didn’t even make Linley frown.

“Hrmph.” The deep azure Dragonblood battle-qi in his body exploding, he directly knocked off those three blades.

“Bang!”

Like a meteor striking the ground, Linley charged down at high speed with that faint red baleful aura surrounding him, making him look like a fiendish god. Any Abyssal Blade Demons which wanted to block him, Linley, not trying to kill them, would immediately sweep out with a sword blow, then rely on the counterforce to dodge.

The strange thing was, less than a second later…Linley managed to descend from the center of this ‘solid sphere’ and charge down, entering the ground again.

Although this description of how Linley instacast giant boulders to block the countless attacking Abyssal Blade Demons and then charged downwards took a long time to describe, in truth, this all took a total of less than a second. In that short period of time…Linley managed to charge underground.

“That detestable Draconian.” Seeing this, a red Abyssal Blade Demon sneered coldly.

The other red Abyssal Blade Demon’s eyes were also filled with a killing urge. “This Draconian is simply too vile. In but an instant, he used his magic…to create an ‘underground’ environment in mid-air, causing the vast majority of our children to be unable to see him.”

The two Abyssal Blade Demons knew that things had just gotten complicated.

Ten Abyssal Blade Demons wouldn't be enough to kill Linley, but after he entered the underground area, what should they do?

"We only have one method." The leading red Abyssal Blade Demon stared at the ground. "It will indeed be very hard to get close to him and attack him. What we can do is…have over ten thousand Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously strike that Draconian from afar with energy blade strikes."

The other red Abyssal Blade Demon's eyes lit up. "Right. There's no need to get close to him. When ten thousand of our Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously strike him from afar with energy blades, although the power of the attack will be less than half of a close quarters blow, the combined attack of ten thousand of our Abyssal Blade Demons will be enough to render him into mincemeat."

When Linley and Fain had emerged from the ground the first time, nearly a million Abyssal Blade Demons had simultaneously brandished their blades and chopped down with energy blows covering an area of multiple kilometers, creating an enormous crater of many kilometers across. In addition…even Fain had lost his entire body below his chest, while Linley's legs had been shattered. And, that second of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions had to sacrifice his life to save his big brother and third brother.

It must be understood that less than 0.1% of the power of the combined blows of those million Abyssal Blade Demons actually landed on the bodies of Linley's group.

But despite that, Fain and Linley had nearly died.

Fortunately, Fain and Linley had dove underground headfirst.

"Swish!" "Swish!" "Swish!"

Hundreds of thousands of Abyssal Blade Demons dove underground like sharp arrows, beginning to hunt for Linley. Wiser for their previous experience, these Abyssal Blade Demons definitely would not allow Linley

to flee alive.

On the tenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

“Stop bothering me!” Bebe howled angrily.

Right now, Bebe’s fur was split open and his flesh was cut into, with blood matting the surrounding grass. The nearby Desri wanted to heal him, but Bebe instead yelled at him.

Desri stood there on the grass, then turned to look at the other experts. The Blackscale Scorpion, the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, Rosarie, Tulily, Olivier…they were all silent and exceedingly downcast.

“My life was rescued by Linley.” Tulily growled.

Just then, Linley had somehow managed to suddenly hold off the Abyssal Blade Demons coming from above for an instant, allowing Rosarie, Olivier, and Tulily to escape. Otherwise, they would have died.

Although Linley had also saved them on the sixth floor when he killed the Flame Tyrant, this time was different. After all, no matter what, Linley would have killed the Flame Tyrant, even if it wasn’t for their sake. Saving them was just par for the course.

Tulily and the others hadn’t felt too grateful.

But this time was different.

Although Linley himself hadn’t been able to flee, he could have done nothing at all and allowed Tulily, Olivier, and the others to die alongside him. But Linley didn’t do that!

“Boss.” Bebe’s eyes were watery. Right now, he was nervously sensing Linley’s soul.

The tenth floor and the eleventh floor were actually two different little

dimensions, and Bebe was therefore unable to spiritually speak to Linley. However, as long as Linley didn't die, Bebe could sense Linley's existence.

"Boss, you have to survive." Bebe's heart was trembling. "Hold on, hold on…"

Bebe knew very well that Linley was being surrounded and attacked by countless Abyssal Blade Demons. As Bebe saw it, if Linley was able to survive more than ten seconds, then Linley probably would have fled to the underground. Upon reaching the underground, given Linley's ability, it should be possible for him to survive for a few remaining months.

"I know about the grudge which exists between Linley and the Radiant Church." Rosarie said in a low voice. After the day of Linley's wedding, Cesar had ended up staying with Rosarie for a few days, and from Cesar, Rosarie had learned much regarding Linley's parentage and other details.

"Even if Linley dies, I will definitely help him get his revenge."

"And I." Tulily said. "My life was saved by Linley. Only after destroying the Radiant Church will I feel a bit better."

"We two brothers will go as well." The Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, Cleo, growled. "That Linley…in the past, he released us and our father, which was already a great kindness. This time…he saved us two brothers. We definitely have to repay his kindness."

In the past, when Linley had pulled out Bloodviolet, he had released Dylin. Dylin himself had only found out later from Beirut.

"Count me in for assisting Linley in his revenge." Olivier suddenly said.

"You pack of bastards!" Bebe bellowed angrily. The nearby experts all couldn't help but turn to stare at Bebe in surprise.

Bebe furiously glared at them. "Stop farting. Avenge my Boss? The Boss will avenge himself! The Boss will definitely leave the Necropolis of the

Gods alive. All of you, stop saying he's going to die. The Boss won't die!"

"Won't die?"

Fain, Tulily, Cleo, and the other experts, despite feeling grateful towards Linley, knew exactly what perilous straits Linley had been in on the eleventh floor.

When surrounded by those countless attacking Abyssal Blade Demons, how could he possibly flee and survive?

"My Boss and I are spiritually linked," Bebe said furiously. "I, Bebe, don't know much, but I do know that the Boss is still alive. My soul can still sense his existence. Quite some time has passed, but the Boss is still alive… I believe that he will definitely survive!"

The experts all immediately understood.

Bebe was Linley's magical beast companion. Bebe could sense whether Linley lived or died.

"Still alive?" Desri and the others felt surprise and joy in their hearts.

Although they didn't understand how Linley had escaped from those countless besieging Abyssal Blade Demons, at least he was still alive for now.

"Only a few months are left to the ten year period. I hope Linley can hold on." Desri murmured to himself secretly. Not just him; the other experts were all silently praying for Linley.

They all knew…

That to be able to hold on against the attack of a million Abyssal Blade Demons on the eleventh floor for months…Linley's chances of life were still quite slim!

On the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

The metallic underground was filled with countless tunnels, all formed by those hundreds of thousands of Abyssal Blade Demons which were wildly scurrying everywhere in search of Linley.

“Roaaaar.” An Abyssal Blade Demon bellowed.

Instantly, a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons frantically surged towards that area, but they only saw a dark-red figure flash by like lightning from the tunnel, only leaving behind some bloodstains and some shattered draconic scales.

Three hours.

He had been fleeing for three full hours. Ever since he had fled into the underground, countless Abyssal Blade Demons had been chasing him underground. At first, the Abyssal Blade Demons didn’t know where Linley was, and so for the first hour, Linley’s underground flight had been fairly easy.

But after being discovered time and time again…

In his area of flight, more and more Abyssal Blade Demons had arrived, making it harder and harder for him to flee.

During the second hour, Linley had been badly injured and lost a great deal of blood.

By the third hour, Linley had nearly died on two separate occasions.

“What to do? What to do?” Linley flew at high speed. Whenever he saw a figure from afar, Linley would quickly go into another tunnel, or dig his own.

“These Abyssal Blade Demons are getting more and more experienced.” Linley was feeling frantic.

At this moment, a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons were standing guard at designated choke points. Although there were many tunnels underground, with large numbers of Abyssal Blade Demons standing guard at designated locations, Linley often had to create his own tunnels.

But whenever Linley created his own tunnels, he would create many powerful tremors in the metal.

This vibration would cause the garrison Abyssal Blade Demons to immediately know where Linley's general location was.

"Just then…" Linley thought back to what had happened just five minutes ago. More than a thousand Abyssal Blade Demons had struck at him with distant energy blades. Fortunately, Linley had fled quickly, and only a few dozen energy blades had struck him, but nonetheless, Linley had nearly lost his life.

"If this continues, there will be even more Abyssal Blade Demons surrounding me. I can't let this continue." Linley knew how bad the situation was.

"Groooooowl." Yet another roar was suddenly heard.

An Abyssal Blade Demon had flown out from another tunnel at high speed and discovered Linley.

"Growl!" "Growl!" "Growl!"

Dozens of growls rang out, and countless Abyssal Blade Demons began to charge wildly towards Linley's general location.

"Not good." Linley's face instantly turned pale. Compared to five minutes ago, the situation now was even more dangerous, and even more Abyssal Blade Demons were coming!

Chapter 36 – One Against a Million

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 36, One Against a Million

“Swish!”

Like a ray of light, Linley flashed towards the tunnel, his speed rising to his limit.

But in terms of speed, the Abyssal Blade Demons which were on par with Desri and Bebe were a level higher than Linley, and they began to draw near.

His eyes utterly bloodshot, as though blazing with flame, Linley was already beginning to chant the words to a spell.

“Swoosh!” Linley’s flying direction suddenly changed.

He actually turned and flew directly into a different tunnel heading downwards. Actually, there were quite a few Abyssal Blade Demons chasing after him from below as well. As Linley moved downwards, in virtually the blink of an eye, the Abyssal Blade Demons below moving upwards were now moving towards Linley.

“Roaaaaar!” The Abyssal Blade Demons below immediately began to roar loudly.

The group of Abyssal Blade Demons that were still heading along Linley’s previous trajectory immediately turned and headed down, but Linley continued to draw near those hundred or so Abyssal Blade Demons below him. Those hundred Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously launched lightning-fast waves of blade energy, while Linley’s eyes flashed with a cold light.

Countless wind elemental essences suddenly coalesced around him.

“Die.”

“Riiiiiip.” Suddenly, a four or five meter wide, light blue ‘Dimensional Edge’ appeared out of nowhere in front of Linley, flying downwards towards those Abyssal Blade Demons charging towards him.

Seeing the Dimensional Edge, the Abyssal Blade Demons all tried to dodge in terror.

Unfortunately, the Dimensional Edge was simply too fast.

“Riiiiiiip.” Their metallic bodies were chopped into pieces. Under the control of Linley’s spiritual energy, the ‘Dimensional Edge’ moved in an arc, instantly chopping dozens of Abyssal Blade Demons into metallic pieces, while the others were dodging in terror.

“Whoosh!”

Seizing the opportunity, Linley immediately charged downwards through the corridor which the Dimensional Edge had just cut.

The Dimensional Edge was only effective against a small number of Abyssal Blade Demons. Once the Abyssal Blade Demons numbered in the thousands, how many of them could the Dimensional Edge possibly kill? This was the reason why Linley had chosen to suddenly fly downwards.

His sudden change in direction had also allowed him to temporarily pull away from the Abyssal Blade Demons behind him.

“I can flee for a while, but I can’t flee forever.” Linley, while fleeing downwards, was trying to think of a way to escape and survive. “It would be wonderful if I could instacast the ‘Dimensional Edge’. No matter how many Abyssal Blade Demons there were, I would be able to kill them all.” Linley suddenly had this wild fantasy.

Instacast a ‘Dimensional Edge’?

It was nothing more than a dream. Linley knew that it wasn't realistic.

"Hrm?" Linley, while scurrying downwards, suddenly had a thought. "Dimensional Edge?"

Actually, Linley didn't know too much about the underlying fundamentals regarding this forbidden-level spell, 'Dimensional Edge'. He only knew how to use his mageforce to gather elemental essence and then form the 'Dimensional Edge'. But suddenly, Linley thought back to the scene of him executing the 'Dimensional Edge'.

This Dimensional Edge, accurately speaking, was the 'Wind Blade' spell taken to the utmost limits.

When using his spiritual energy to slightly control the direction the 'Dimensional Edge' spell moved in, he noticed that within the 'Dimensional Edge', there were countless gusts of wind moving, either quickly or slowly, in accordance with a strange rhythm, and somehow forming this terrifying dimensional-cutting power.

"Either fast…or slow?"

Linley hadn't considered this before, but now, he suddenly discovered something suspicious. "The Dimensional Edge should be the faster the better. Why is it that it also includes seemingly slow gusts of air inside it as well?"

"Not right." Linley thought hard.

The countless gusts of wind within the Dimensional Edge actually weren't slow; only, they applied the 'Slow' aspect and seemed slow but were actually fast. Different wind blades of different aspects formed a whole, the 'Dimensional Edge'. What was the rationale behind this?

"The 'Fast' aspect? The 'Slow' aspect? The Dimensional Edge…"

Linley's mind couldn't help but think back to the scene of him utilizing the 'Tempos of the Wind'. This was a technique which had Bloodviolet simultaneously generate both the 'Fast' and the 'Slow' aspects of the wind. These two opposite aspects, when combined, caused space itself to vibrate, resulting in Bloodviolet being able to create a spatial edge.

Linley once again thought back to the scene of him utilizing 'Myriad Swords Converge'.

When developing this technique, Linley was puzzled. Why was it that when ten million swords of the 'Fast' aspect combined into one, it would create the effect of 'Spatial Freezing'? Why was it that the 'Fast' aspect and the 'Slow' aspect were mutually interchangeable? At the time, Linley didn't understand the reasoning behind it, but by mimicking the attack of the Queen Mother, he was able to develop this attack.

In truth, Linley still didn't understand the profound mysteries behind why the ten million swords he generated using the 'Fast' aspect could combine and form the space-freezing attack of 'Myriad Swords Converge'.

"Dimensional Edge…Tempos of the Wind…Myriad Swords Converge…" Linley's mind quickly sketched through one scene after another. The foggy cloud covering one of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind was currently slowly dissipating in Linley's mind.

Linley was beginning to understand.

It was as though he had touched something, but didn't quite understand it.

Linley didn't even notice that behind him, two Abyssal Blade Demons were drawing closer and closer. Right now, Linley was totally immersed in that special state. The two Abyssal Blade Demons also felt puzzled. Normally… even before drawing close to Linley, Linley would come up with an idea to flee.

But this time…

Linley was flying in a straight line, not changing direction at all. The Abyssal Blade Demons flew faster than Linley! In a straight line, they would naturally be able to catch up.

“Swish!” An ear-piercing, desolate howl suddenly scared Linley awake as two blades chopped down at him.

Linley’s back was instantly matted in cold sweat, and he immediately lashed out with Bloodviolet. Linley hadn’t noticed at all that this attack wasn’t the ‘Tempos of the Wind’, nor was it ‘Myriad Swords Converge’. It was a seemingly very ordinary sword attack.

“Slash!” It was like cutting through tofu.

Linley’s Bloodviolet flashed through the two Abyssal Blade Demons like lightning, both of whom were immediately cut into two.

“This…?” Linley was shocked. Although these two Abyssal Blade Demons weren’t the best of their race, even if Linley had used ‘Tempos of the Wind’, he would still have to use a full strength blow in order to chop the Abyssal Blade Demons into two pieces. But just then…he had very easily bisected the two Abyssal Blade Demons.

“Just then…” Linley couldn’t help but think back to that sword attack he had unconsciously used just then.

“Ah!” Linley’s eyes suddenly turned round.

That fog that had still covered his mind, preventing it from seeing into the mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, suddenly disappeared like mist disappearing under the light of the sun. He suddenly understood.

“Tempos of the Wind? Myriad Swords Converge? Dimensional Edge?” Linley began to laugh loudly. “The ‘Fast’ aspect? The ‘Slow’ aspect? ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ being opposite aspects? Haha…wrong, all wrong. The ‘Fast’ aspect and the ‘Slow’ aspect are the same, the same!!!” Linley’s entire body began to shake from excitement.

A gust of wind would seemingly blow slowly, but then in the blink of an eye move a thousand meters.

“Spatial Folding? Spatial Chaos? Spatial Pausing? Spatial Freezing?” Linley’s laughter reached the utmost level in joy.

“The Draconian!” A large number of Abyssal Blade Demons had discovered Linley.

“Kill!” Roaring furiously, the many Abyssal Blade Demons simultaneously struck out, chopping down with energy blades towards Linley. The criss-crossing waves of energy chopped apart even the ground. Although many of them didn’t land on Linley, a few of them did indeed concentrate on Linley’s body.

“Boom!” Wherever the energy blades passed, the metallic ground and tunnel were turned into smithereens.

“He’s dead for sure!”

“Huh?” Suddenly, the Abyssal Blade Demons were shocked.

Linley, who had been thousands of meters away, had suddenly appeared in front of them in two casual flashes. They only saw a strange, devilish flash of violet light, and then their heads went flying off.

“The ‘Fast’ aspect, the ‘Slow’ aspect…haha…they are all wrong paths of understanding!” Linley laughed loudly. With each casual strike of his sword, he easily killed the Abyssal Blade Demons, and with a simple flicker of his body, he easily threw off the Abyssal Blade Demons and moved far away. In terms of speed, he was now three times as fast as the Abyssal Blade Demons!

He was simply too fast!

Even if the two red Abyssal Blade Demons came over, they wouldn’t be

more than half of Linley's current speed.

"In the past, I thought that if I could reach the limit of the 'Fast' aspect, I would become a Deity. If I reached the peak of the 'Slow' aspect, I should also be able to become a Deity. Yes, I can become a Deity, but doing so in that way is taking a wrong path." Linley's heart was filled with joy, as though he had suddenly completed a massive project. "Once the 'Fast' aspect and the 'Slow' aspect each reach their utmost limits, they will merge together…"

"Both 'Fast' and 'Slow', these two major aspects, they are all part of the Elemental Laws of the Wind's…"

"Profound Truths of Velocity!"

Bloodviolet flashed out casually in Linley's hands. At first, it seemed to be moving extremely slowly, but at second glance, it was actually as fast as lightning. From different viewpoints, one would see two completely different effects. In addition, at the edge of Bloodviolet, there was a faint blue spatial edge that seemed similar to the 'Dimensional Edge'.

With a casual sword blow, space itself began to ripple, and extremely minute cracks in space appeared.

Any casual blow from Linley now had part of the power of the 'Dimensional Edge'.

Linley's form quickly appeared in multiple areas, and wherever that devilish violet light flashed, the heads of the Abyssal Blade Demons went flying.

"This technique shall be called…Profound Truths of Velocity – Dimensional Decapitator!"

"Swish!" Linley's body suddenly scurried out of the ground.

"Haha, he came out. Children, kill!" Those two red Abyssal Blade Demons

immediately gave the order in excitement. Countless howling sounds could be heard as the hundreds of thousands of Abyssal Blade Demons charged downwards like a horde of locusts, sending out energy blades towards Linley at nearly the same instant.

But Linley's body had already appeared in the center of their group.

Like a gust of Wind, Linley flickered here and there, and wherever he appeared, the heads of the Abyssal Blade Demons would go flying. In front of Linley, these Abyssal Blade Demons had no ability to fight back at all.

Miserable screams and terrified howls sounded out constantly, and golden blood splashed in every direction.

In a very short period of time, nearly a hundred thousand Abyssal Blade Demons had died. All the remaining Abyssal Blade Demons were terrified. At first, they still had willpower, but now they had none left at all.

"Im…impossible." The two red Abyssal Blade Demons called out in terror.

And then, a gentle gust of wind blew towards them. The head of one of the two red Abyssal Blade Demons went flying, while Linley's Bloodviolet sword appeared at the neck of the second red Abyssal Blade Demon. His dark golden eyes stared calmly at the red Abyssal Blade Demon. In a calm voice, he said, "What, you still want to fight?"

"Mercy, lord." The red Abyssal Blade Demon immediately knelt down in terror.

With their leader kneeling, the countless Abyssal Blade Demons whom Linley had utterly terrified all knelt down as well.

The eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. Across this wide expanse of land, countless corpses lay fallen, while countless living Abyssal Blade Demons knelt there on the ground, so terrified that they didn't even have the courage to raise their heads. That terrifying slaughter just now had truly destroyed their courage.

The countless Abyssal Blade Demons remained kneeling. The wide expanse of land was stained with golden blood. Only Linley remained standing.

“Sadly, I haven’t understood enough regarding the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects.” Linley thought back to the profound truth he had just gained insight into. “Although I’ve fused two major aspects into one and developed the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, I’m still one step away from becoming a Deity.”

Right now, Linley could sense that he was at the precipice of the Deity-level.

Actually, both the ‘Fast’ and the ‘Slow’ aspects, when trained to their utmost, could allow someone to become a Demigod. And then, after the two aspects were totally fused into the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’, which was then trained to the limit, one would become a full God.

These two aspects were seemingly polar opposites. To fuse them wasn’t something one could mentally envision; it had to come from a spark of insight.

The higher one’s level of understanding was in the two aspects, the harder it would be to fuse them. It was as if one had travelled a long distance on two roads heading in different directions. The farther one travelled on each road, the harder it would be to combine them.

Linley hadn’t reached a very high level of understanding in these two aspects yet, and so it was actually a bit easier for him to find that spark of insight to fuse them.

In the past, when developing his ‘Tempos of the Wind’, Linley had begun to understand how to allow these two aspects to work together. Upon developing the ‘Myriad Swords Converge’, he once more advanced. After casting the ‘Dimensional Edge’ spell, he suddenly had that insight, reaping the benefits of his accumulated experience and coming to understand the true ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’.

Thus, his movement speed instantly increased threefold or fourfold, and he was able to develop an even more powerful sword technique; the ‘Dimensional Decapitator’!

“Do you know where the divine spark is?” Linley lowered his head to glance at the kneeling, quivering red Abyssal Blade Demon.

“I know, I know.” The red Abyssal Blade Demon was terrified that Linley would kill him.

“Lead the way.” Linley said.

Chapter 37 – Divine Spark

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 37, Divine Spark

The metallic ground flashed with cold light. Countless Abyssal Blade Demons knelt on that ground respectfully in terror, while in mid-air, their leader, the red Abyssal Blade Demon, respectfully led Linley, and the two transformed into rays of light towards the direction of the divine spark.

There were, in total, three Necropolis of the Gods which were connected to the Yulan continent.

This Necropolis of the Gods connected to the underground tunnel at the bottom of the South Sea was the most dangerous one and the largest one. On this eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, ever since it had been constructed, not a single Saint-level expert had been successful in acquiring the treasures hidden within the floor. Linley was the first!

The wind blew, stirring Linley's long hair.

Linley was already back in human form, casually draping a long robe over his body. The wind rustled through it, occasionally revealing his bare chest.

"After having gained insight into the Profound Truths of Velocity, whether or not I Dragonform no longer makes much of a difference." Linley was wielding Bloodviolet in his hands. Bloodviolet's 'Dimensional Decapitator' ability could be described as a 'miniature Dimensional Edge'. Any Saints who touched it would die.

The red Abyssal Blade Demon led the way nervously.

Suddenly, the red Abyssal Blade Demon halted.

"Are we there?" Linley asked.

The red Abyssal Blade Demon pointed off into the distance and said respectfully, “Lord, the treasure of the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods is atop the mountain peak over there.”

Linley gazed in the direction of the Abyssal Blade Demon’s finger. Off in the distance, there was indeed a small metallic mountain, but this mountain was covered with a large number of Abyssal Blade Demons, and even in the air above it, there were many Abyssal Blade Demons hovering.

“Hrm, what’s this?” Linley frowned.

Terrified, the red Abyssal Blade Demon hastened to explain. “Lord, in the past, we were afraid that intruders would run wild and arrive here. Therefore, we arranged several tens of thousands of Abyssal Blade Demons to be stationed here and watch over this important treasury location.”

“It seems you were quite thorough.” Linley laughed calmly.

The red Abyssal Blade Demon said hurriedly, “Lord, don’t worry. I’ll immediately order them to stand down.” As he spoke, the red Abyssal Blade Demon immediately flew towards that mountain.

On the third level of the Necropolis of the Gods.

A cold wind was blowing. Aside from a few corpses of Saints, the only one remaining here was the still-slumbering Ba-Serpent. “Whooosh!” “Hiss!” …. Each time the Ba-Serpent exhaled, that black energy came out. The only sound in the third floor was that familiar snoring.

All of a sudden, the Ba-Serpent’s enormous body, wrapped around that giant iceberg, suddenly vanished.

“Unexpectedly, a human succeeded?” A devilish young man a slender body and devilish, flowing green hair stood there in mid-air. He wore a patterned blue robe over his body, and the patterns on the blue robe, on close inspection, appeared to be those of a snake’s skin.

“He succeeded. That means I’m more or less free as well. There’s no need for me to remain here on these eleven floors any longer.” He revealed a smile on his face. “Unfortunately, I still have to wait for Lord Beirut to come over. I’ll have to at least wait for a few more months. After having been here for so long though, a few more days won’t matter.”

……

A large number of Abyssal Blade Demons were beating a hasty retreat, allowing Linley to fly to the peak of the mountain.

“Whoosh.” A heart-stopping aura surged towards him. Linley’s eyes lit up, and he stared carefully at that mountain peak. There was a heap of precious treasures placed atop the flat, enormous stone on top of the mountain. The most attractive of them, however, was naturally those three divine sparks, which emanated a divine aura.

Aside from the three divine sparks, the enormous flat stone also had a series of divine artifacts. Ten of them!

“Three divine sparks, ten divine artifacts! The almighty Sovereign is truly quite generous.” Linley felt his heart rate speed up. After all, countless Saints had dreamed about acquiring just a single divine spark, but now, three of them were placed in front of him.

Not worrying about anything else, Linley immediately walked over to the flat boulder to carefully inspect those three divine sparks.

Those three divine sparks were the same color. All of them were black. Only, within the hearts of the three divine sparks, two of them emanated a faint light; one of them emanated a faint blue light, while the other one emanated an earthen yellow light. As for the last one, it didn’t emanate any light at all. Instead, it had a strange, hidden aura emanating forth from it.

“One is earth-style, while the other is wind-style. The last one is Destruction-style.” Linley frowned. “And the divine sparks here on the eleventh floor should all be Demigod sparks.”

“What is going on?” Linley’s heart was filled with suspicion.

“Could it be that the controller of this Necropolis of the Gods knew that the person acquiring the treasures would be someone who trained in the profound truths of these two Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Earth?” Linley knew very well that this destruction-style divine spark actually belonged to the ‘Way of Destruction’.

Linley, being a practitioner of the sword, could also train in this Way.

“Three divine sparks, and I’m capable of using any of them. How could there be such a coincidence? Precisely three of them!” Linley stared at the three divine sparks in front of him, a strong sense of suspicion in his mind.

Linley turned his head and stared around him.

He suddenly had a feeling as though everything going on in the Necropolis of the Gods was being watched by the Sovereign from on high.

“Perhaps…” Linley looked at the three divine sparks. “These three divine sparks were only placed here after I gained insight into the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’. Perhaps an ultimate expert stealthily placed them here afterwards.” Linley couldn’t help but suspect this. After all, this was simply too great a coincidence.

Exactly three divine sparks?

Why weren’t they lightning-style, or light-style, or fire-style? They all suited Linley’s nature and elements.

“I should feel proud to have been looked after by this sort of ultimate expert.” Linley self-mocked silently. Linley no longer pondered this question. No matter what, he was currently just a person who had only reached the doorstep to becoming a Deity, and was only a Prime Saint, not yet a god.

There were many secrets and mysteries which he was not yet qualified to be a part of yet.

“I can already dimly sense the Deity-level. Most likely, once I go back and train, in a few dozen years, I will reach the Deity-level.” Linley, after becoming aware of the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’, could already faintly sense his current level of understanding.

Linley had heard the War God speak of this before as well.

Becoming a Deity by one’s self was hundreds of times more difficult than fusing a divine spark. Linley stretched out his hand, immediately grasping those three divine sparks, then drawing them into his interspatial ring. “Even if I personally don’t use these three divine sparks, I can give them to Delia and Wharton to use.”

Given Delia and Wharton’s levels of talent, it would be extremely difficult for them to become Deities on their own.

Just by looking at how Fain and Desri had been stuck at the doorway to Deity-hood for thousands of years, one could imagine how hard it was.

Linley himself was fortunate enough that after developing the ‘Tempos of the Wind’, he encountered the Queen Mother’s attack and by mimicking it, developed the ‘Myriad Swords Converge’. Afterwards, due to reaching the Grand Magus Saint level, he was able to clearly sense the mysteries hidden within the ‘Dimensional Edge’.

With this chain of three events…

In addition, Linley only had some insights in the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’, and they weren’t at a very high level yet.

In terms of power, the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ were actually a level higher than the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’. The ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ could be said to be one of the highest, most profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

“I wonder how Delia, Taylor, Sasha, and Wharton are doing.” Linley couldn’t help but think of his family. “And I don’t know how Barker…” Linley, in his heart, was still worried about whether Barker was alive or not.

Linley sighed in his heart.

And then, Linley looked at the ten divine artifacts. These ten divine artifacts included saber, sword, and spear-type weapons, a black book, a mysterious crystal ball, and…a set of battle-armor. Deity-level battle armor.

“Battle armor?” Linley felt joy in his heart.

Linley didn’t care too much about the other divine artifacts; after all, he already had the adamantine heavy sword and Bloodviolet. The black book and crystal ball were most likely darkness-style or Necromantic-style divine artifacts. Linley wouldn’t be able to use them well.

Linley immediately stored these ten divine artifacts into his interspatial ring.

“These divine artifacts would be useful as gifts to Delia, Taylor, Sasha, and the others.” Linley laughed as he stared around the mountain peak. “It seems there aren’t any other treasures here. Oh, right…this.” Linley stared at the flat boulder where the divine artifacts had been stored.

“A rich person certainly behaves generously. Even this boulder used to hold these divine artifacts is a treasure.” Linley stored the giant boulder into his interspatial ring as well.

This enormous flat boulder was actually something he had read about in the books. ‘Bloodstone’.

Bloodstones were almost as valuable as adamantine ore. It was a type of treasure from other planes. Whether made into magus tools or weapons, it was an extremely good type of material. If one used materials such as bloodstones and adamantine to forge a weapon, one could make a divine

artifact.

Linley's adamantine heavy sword, although a good weapon, wasn't actually a divine artifact.

With a smile, Linley descended from the air, flying away from the mountain.

The distant red Abyssal Blade Demon waited nervously. Linley hadn't ordered him to leave, so he didn't dare to leave on his own, for fear that Linley would kill him in anger.

"Congratulations, Lord." The red Abyssal Blade Demon, seeing Linley fly over, immediately said respectfully.

Linley glanced at the red Abyssal Blade Demon, then noticed that blood-red blade on its back. Reaching out with his hand, Linley pointed to the warblade on the red Abyssal Blade Demon's back. "Right. Your blade, as well as the warblades from the other two red Abyssal Blade Demons. Bring them to me."

"Huh?" The red Abyssal Blade Demon stared at Linley in shock.

"Didn't you hear me?" Linley frowned.

"Lord, this…this warblade was naturally created from my body. It took me hundreds of thousands of years. This…" The red Abyssal Blade Demon was somewhat unwilling.

These Abyssal Blade Demons were made of blades, but the most powerful blade was the one on their backs. That was the place where their essence was concentrated, and that blade was incomparably hard and powerful. Originally, when Linley's group had encountered that ordinary Abyssal Blade Demon on the tenth floor, the sharpness of its blade was already approaching that of a divine artifact.

The blades of the red Abyssal Blade Demons were definitely at the divine

artifact level.

After developing the ‘Dimensional Decapitator’ and slaughtering the Abyssal Blade Demons, he had discovered…that his Dimensional Decapitator was completely unable to damage the warblades of the Abyssal Blade Demons. One could imagine how sharp and tough they were.

“Hrm?” Linley frowned, staring coldly at the red Abyssal Blade Demon.

Life or blade. Which one was more important? This question didn’t need to be asked.

“Right, Lord. I’ll immediately send people to obtain the other two warblades.” The red Abyssal Blade Demon, terrified, immediately pulled out the blade from his back, respectfully offering it to Linley.”

“Right. Bring me a thousand warblades from the ordinary Abyssal Blade Demons as well.” Linley said casually.

Although the red Abyssal Blade Demon was astonished, he didn’t dare to say anything. After all, Linley had killed a hundred thousand Abyssal Blade Demons. A thousand warblades wasn’t much. Only, he secretly said to himself, this expert in front of him was perhaps a bit too…a bit too ‘that’. He was already so powerful, but he still wanted so many warblades.

“Although I don’t need it, I can give it to the descendants of the clan.” Linley said to himself secretly.

Even the warblades of ordinary Abyssal Blade Demons were comparable to the adamantine heavy blade in preciousness. This sort of warblade would definitely be considered an extremely valuable weapon on the Yulan continent.

“Unfortunately, my interspatial ring isn’t big enough.” Linley secretly said to himself.

If it was larger, Linley would perhaps take even more, but a thousand

warblades was already enough.

After storing the thousand warblades and the three red warblades into his interspatial ring, with countless Abyssal Blade Demons kneeling towards him, Linley returned to the tenth exit.

Chapter 38 – Desiring a Divine Spark?

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 38, Desiring a Divine Spark?

On the tenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

“Bebe, how is Linley currently?” Desri asked softly.

“The Boss is still alive and kicking.” Bebe’s wounds had already been more than half-healed, but he was still focused entirely on sensing Linley’s existence, terrified that Linley might die.

As for Tulily and Rosarie and the others, all of the experts were waiting quietly off to one side. Only from Bebe would they learn that Linley was still alive.

Tulily could sense how depressing the mood amongst the experts was. In order to change the mood, he said, “Olivier, the power of that sword attack you displayed on the eleventh floor really was quite formidable. You were able to kill four of those Abyssal Blade Demons with a single blow.”

“I remember that sword attack as well.” The Blackscale Scorpion said.

“I don’t think any of the rest of us can accomplish that.” Tulily said.

When the experts had been trying to flee back to the tenth floor, Olivier, in desperation, had unleashed his most powerful sword attack, and when that black-and-white illusionary sword had chopped out, it had immediately chopped four of the Abyssal Blade Demons to death.

These Abyssal Blade Demons were formed from tough metal, even if their defenses weren’t as strong as their attacks. To kill four Abyssal Blade Demons with a single sword blow was too hard. Even Linley had to utilize either the Profound Truths of the Earth or the ‘Tempos of the Wind’ to kill a single Abyssal Blade Demon. An ordinary sword blow wouldn’t be able to

chop the Abyssal Blade Demons into two parts.

But of course, after gaining insight into the ‘Dimensional Decapitator’, Linley’s sword blows could easily kill five or six Abyssal Blade Demons per hit.

For Olivier to have been able to kill four of the Abyssal Blade Demons was a sight which truly stunned everyone present. After all, Tulily and the others couldn’t accomplish this.

“This attack is my last resort, desperation ultimate attack. After utilizing it, my spiritual energy is all but wiped out.” Olivier said.

“Despite that, it’s still very powerful. Even going all out, my attacks aren’t as powerful.” Tulily laughed self-mockingly.

The various experts all sighed in amazement at Olivier’s rate of progress. When they had just entered the Necropolis of the Gods, Olivier could only be considered a memory of the second group, but after the past ten years, Olivier’s strength had increased dramatically and his attacks had reached such a tremendous level of power.

Olivier didn’t explain any further.

The only reason he had his current level of achievements was because the near-death experience he previously had.

“In the past, when we encountered that Beholder King, we knew that you had some differences compared to us.” Desri sighed as well.

Now that everyone was chatting, the atmosphere on the tenth floor improved a bit. None of them noticed, however, that Bebe’s lowered head suddenly rose up, staring in astonishment towards that distant stone pillar.

“Boss!” A cry of surprised joy rang out.

“Swish!” A black blur charged over.

“What?!” Desri, Tulily, Olivier, and the other experts all turned to stare towards the exit to the eleventh floor in astonishment. They saw a youngster dressed in a sky-blue robe, exchanging grins with a black Shadowmouse.

Linley had returned!

“Boss.”

“Bebe.” Linley was currently holding Bebe in his arms, and the man and the magical beast laughed, staring at each other.

“Wonderful, Boss. I missed you terribly. I was afraid you wouldn’t make it back, Boss.” Bebe’s beady little eyes were turning misty. The past three or four hours had been a type of torture for Bebe. He was afraid that Linley really would die.

At this time, Desri, Fain, Olivier, Rosarie, Tulily, the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, and the Blackscale Scorpion immediately hurried over. They, too, felt both astonishment and joy that Linley was able to return to the tenth floor!

“Linley, you managed to escape?” Fain said with surprised joy.

“I really didn’t expect that despite being pursued by a million Abyssal Blade Demons, you were still able to return to the tenth floor, Linley.” Desri’s face was covered in smiles as he spoke. “I thought that you were trying to delay underground as long as you could, and hold the Abyssal Blade Demons off until the ten year period was up.”

“Think about how awesome my Boss is!” Bebe immediately began to grow boastful. He stood up high on Linley’s shoulders, his little paws folded proudly over his chest.

Linley laughed, “Do you think I didn’t want to try and delay and hold them off? But those Abyssal Blade Demons were simply too clever. They set up enormous numbers of choke points in the center area, and whenever I was

discovered, they would immediately have large numbers of Abyssal Blade Demons attack me simultaneously. After holding on for three hours, I simply couldn't hold on any further."

"Then Linley, how did you return?" Fain and the others stared at Linley in confusion.

Fain and the other experts simply couldn't imagine how, under the pursuit and assault of the Abyssal Blade Demons, Linley had managed to flee to the tenth floor.

"Luckily enough, at the critical moment, I suddenly had a breakthrough, and my speed rapidly increased, allowing me to easily throw off those Abyssal Blade Demons. After killing a few of those Abyssal Blade Demons, I managed to acquire the divine spark of the eleventh floor, and then I returned home safely." Linley said these words quite calmly.

But everyone, including Bebe, was stunned.

"You retrieved the divine spark?" Fain, Desri, Rosarie, Tulily, and the other experts stared, their eyes round and shocked. Even Olivier, who stood silently behind the others, stared at Linley with hard-to-disguise amazement.

Divine spark…

The treasure which Fain and the others had dreamed about acquiring. Upon acquiring the divine spark of a Demigod, they would become Deities.

The difference between a Saint and a Deity was as great as that of the earth and the heavens.

"Linley, congratulations." Desri was the first to recover. All he could do was say congratulations.

The other experts forced out smiles and congratulated Linley as well. Right now, Desri and the others felt hard-to-repress envy in their hearts! After all,

they had worked for simply too long to acquire a divine spark. Now that Linley had it, there was nothing they could say, as Linley had risked his life to acquire it.

But in their hearts, they still felt a hint of envy.

In fact, their envy made it so that they couldn't help but think about 'killing Linley and stealing his divine spark', but as soon as that idea came to their minds, it immediately was tossed aside.

After all, they weren't despicable people like that.

In this group, aside from Bebe, only a single person didn't feel much envy. That person was Olivier.

"Linley, I expect you will become the sixth Deity of our Yulan continent." Olivier's face revealed a hint of a smile. "Linley, you are more powerful than me right now, but…in a few more years, I will definitely challenge you."

Olivier felt extremely confident in himself.

He was weaker than Linley, but that was just for now!

"Challenge?" Linley looked at Olivier, nodding and laughing, "Wonderful, I'll accompany you any time you choose."

After Linley returned to the tenth floor, the experts all comfortably awaited the conclusion of the ten year time period, and they all went to find places to rest and relax on the grass. As for Linley, he naturally was with Bebe.

"Boss, tell me, how many divine sparks were there on the eleventh floor? I expect there was more than just one." Bebe whispered.

Linley smiled. "Three."

Bebe's little eyes instantly turned as round as the moon, and then he grinned

so wide, his little mouth nearly split open. “Wow, wonderful, three divine sparks! Boss, what element were those divine sparks?” Bebe hurriedly asked. “Are they compatible with you, Boss? I hope those three divine sparks aren’t of fire, lightning, or something like that.”

“One is earth-style, one is wind-style, one is Destruction-style.” Linley raised his head and looked up meaningfully. “They are extremely compatible with me!”

Bebe was shocked as well. “How could there be such a coincidence?”

“How should I know?” Linley chuckled, then shook his head and sighed. “Unfortunately, I am too weak and don’t have the power to go up to the twelfth floor or higher.”

“Huh?” Bebe stared at his Boss in confusion. “Boss, why do you want to go even higher? The twelfth floor is only suitable for Deities to challenge. If we go, that’s as good as throwing away our lives.” Bebe also knew…that from the twelfth floor onwards, the guardians of each floor were all Deities.

Without the power of a Deity, entering was certain death.

“Bebe, before we entered the eleventh floor, I told you that there is something in the Necropolis of the Gods which is calling to me.” Linley sighed, while Bebe cocked his little head.

“Ever since I arrived here in the Necropolis of the Gods, I had the feeling… that whatever is calling to me is coming from above. When I entered the tenth floor, I still felt that whatever was calling me was calling from above. At that time, I thought that perhaps it was in the eleventh floor.”

Linley shook his head. “But after I entered the eleventh floor, I realized that I was wrong. The presence which was calling to me was still higher. Perhaps it is on the twelfth floor, or perhaps the thirteenth…it might even be as high as the eighteenth. Who knows? After all, I’m not strong enough to go higher.”

Bebe nodded slightly.

After Linley had been on the tenth floor for roughly a month, Desri came to Linley's area. He was hesitating slightly, unable to speak.

"Desri, what is it?" Linley asked in confusion.

Desri seemed rather embarrassed. He let out two dry laughs, took a deep breath, then whispered, "Linley, I would like to know…how many divine sparks did you find on the eleventh floor?"

Linley's heart moved. This Desri, it seemed, had some desire towards his divine sparks. However, Linley could understand why.

"Three." Linley didn't try to hide it.

Desri's eyes lit up. "Can I ask what elements they were?"

"Desri, why are you asking?" The nearby Bebe said angrily. "These divine sparks, my Boss only acquired after risking his life. Don't forget that if the Boss hadn't used his 'Dimensional Edge' to open up a pathway and then blocked all of those Abyssal Blade Demons, none of you would have survived."

Desri looked rather awkward.

Linley glanced at Bebe, then smiled towards Desri. "There's no reason for me not to speak of it. They are of the earth-style, the wind-style, and the Destruction-style."

"Oh?" Desri nodded.

"Linley, there's something I need to tell you." Desri looked at Linley. "First of all, you don't necessarily have to fuse with a divine spark of your own element. For example, you are totally capable of fusing with a fire-style divine spark. But of course…the speed would be very slow. To absorb a divine spark, the only requirement is that a person be at the Saint-level,

which would allow his soul to be able to fuse with the divine spark."

Linley nodded slightly.

"In addition, every Saint can only fuse a single spark." Desri explained.

"This, I know." Linley nodded.

Desri hesitated, but in the end, still forced out a smile and said, "Linley, you only need a single divine spark for yourself. If…and I'm only saying if…if you were willing, would you be willing to…one of your divine sparks…" At this point, Desri didn't know what to say.

What should he say? Ask Linley to sell it?

What could he, Desri, possibly exchange for a divine spark?

Ask Linley to gift it to him?

Desri couldn't even force out the words to ask. The only reason why he had come and so shamelessly discussed this was Linley was because he simply had too great of a desire to become a Deity. Even if the element was different and his rate of fusion was slow, and his future rate of understanding the Laws would be impeded…he didn't care.

"Aside from Olivier and those two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, the other experts all have this wish." Linley secretly said to himself.

Over the past few months, almost all of the other experts had secretly come over to talk with Linley.

Even if Linley himself didn't need the divine sparks, he still valued them highly. It must be understood…that a single divine spark represented a Demigod! He could give these three divine sparks to Gates and his brothers, or to his own brother Wharton, and let them become Deities!"

"Let me delay for now." Linley secretly said to himself.

The experts only hinted at their interest. After all, their lives had been saved by Linley, and Linley had only managed to acquire these divine sparks after a extremely dangerous experience.

“Rumble…”

Suddenly, the entire Necropolis of the Gods began to shake.

“What’s going on?” Linley and Bebe immediately turned their heads to stare about them.

Instantly, they saw that off in the distance, an exit covered by a black aura had appeared out of nowhere. From within that black exit, a person walked out. He had long black hair, a long black beard, and wore a long black robe. It was the number one expert of the Yulan continent. Beirut.

Linley, Desri, Tulily…all the experts immediately stood up.

Beirut glanced at the experts, and then said, “The ten years are up. Everyone can now leave the Necropolis of the Gods.” And then, he turned his gaze to Linley, a hint of a smile on his lips. “Haha…Linley, I must congratulate you.”

Chapter 39 – The Predictions of Beirut

Book 11, Necropolis of the Gods – Chapter 39, The Predictions of Beirut

“Grandpa Beirut, you already know what happened?” Bebe instantly rushed over to him.

Beirut beamed as he hugged Bebe, nodding. “I manage the Necropolis of the Gods on behalf of the almighty Sovereign. Of course I know what happened within the Necropolis of the Gods.” Beirut cast Linley an amused, meaningful glance.

Linley suddenly understood.

Perhaps…

It was Beirut who had placed those three divine sparks there for him. If the person to successfully overcome the challenges of the eleventh floor had been Olivier, perhaps the divine sparks would have become of ‘light-style’, ‘darkness-style’, and ‘Destruction-style’ instead.

But of course, this was just Linley’s hypothesis.

“Linley.” Beirut laughed calmly as he looked at Linley. “I trust you have already had a dim sense of the Deity-level. You should be at the precipice now, yes?”

Linley nodded, secretly saying to himself, “It seems that Beirut knows everything which happened within the Necropolis of the Gods. Beirut…he should be the ‘housekeeper’ for the Sovereign, in charge of managing this Necropolis of the Gods.” Linley understood.

The Necropolis of the Gods was nothing more than a game to the Sovereign, so he could send any one of his subordinates down to manage it.

Only, any one of the subordinates of a Sovereign was someone far and above Linley's level.

"If my prediction is correct, within ten years, you should reach the Deity-level." Beirut said.

Linley's 'Profound Truths of Velocity' included both the 'Fast' and the 'Slow' aspects. If Linley were to fully master the 'Profound Truths of Velocity', then he would have fully mastered and fused those two major aspects into one, and he would have risen to the full God level.

"Ten years?" Linley murmured to himself, then nodded slightly.

This speed was roughly on par with what he had anticipated.

The nearby Desri, Fain, and other experts all looked at Linley in shock. They all knew what Beirut was saying. Linley, not by relying on a divine spark, and only by relying on his own insights, would be able to reach the Deity-level, and it would be within ten years.

Even if Linley had been training since the day he was born, he would have been training for around half a century.

Ten more years would only be sixty plus years. In sixty years, he would have reached the Deity-level by his own efforts!

"But Linley, you'd best not slacken off. The potential of that young fellow, Olivier, is perhaps even a bit higher than yours." Beirut laughed calmly, turning to look at Olivier.

These words instantly stunned Desri, Tulily, and the other experts. If Linley was powerful, fine. After all, in the Necropolis of the Gods, based on his performance…Linley was clearly more powerful than them, and he had single-handedly procured divine sparks on the eleventh floor. They admitted inferiority to him.

But Olivier…

Linley was rather surprised as well.

“Lord Beirut.” Olivier paid his respects.

Beirut smiled and nodded. “Your luck wasn’t bad. You were able to fuse both light and darkness without your soul being destroyed…I’ve wandered through countless planes, but situations like yours are rare, incredibly rare! Even I am rather envious of what you have become.”

Olivier’s face changed slightly. Although Beirut hadn’t said it openly, Olivier could tell that this Beirut knew his secret!

“Could it be that this Beirut is capable of inspecting my soul?” Olivier was somewhat astonished. He didn’t know…that Beirut was so powerful that he could even easily riffle through someone’s memories without them knowing about it. Compared to that, how trifling a matter would it be for him to inspect Olivier’s soul?

Linley looked towards Olivier as well.

“This Olivier…when we encountered the Beholder King and were hit by the Beholder King’s attack, I became utterly helpless, but Olivier was able to break the Beholder King’s technique.” Bebe had later told Linley about what had happened.

At the time, the Beholder King had been quite surprised by Olivier’s soul as well.

“Based on your current rate of improvement, if my prediction is correct, in ten years if you are fast, fifty years if you are slow, you should reach the Deity-level as well.” Beirut said with a calm laugh.

“No wonder Olivier was so confident to say that after training for a few years, he would come challenge me.” Linley had a hint of anticipation in his heart as well. Previously, he hadn’t paid much attention to Olivier’s words, as he now possessed the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’. He had only replied

out of politeness.

But now, Linley rather looked forward to it.

Desri, Fain, Rosarie, and the other experts felt their hearts clench.

What a difference!

They had trained for thousands of years, but compared to Linley and Olivier, the difference between them was simply too great.

“Lord Beirut, might you tell us how long we need until we can reach the Deity-level?” Desri said respectfully. Rosarie, Tulily…even the two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions and the Blackscale Scorpion all looked towards Beirut with anticipation. They wanted to hear Beirut’s judgment.

Given Beirut’s power, it was very easy for him to judge the level of understanding a Saint was at.

“You?” Beirut glanced at them. “For you to reach the Deity-level, hrm, if you are fast, just one or two days…”

The eyes of Tulily, Desri, and the other experts all lit up.

“But if you are slow, it could take you trillions of years.” Beirut finished, causing Tulily and the others to be utterly stunned. These experts deeply desired to become Deities. This was their reason for existence, the goal they had pursued for thousands of years, which they had never reached.

Beirut shook his head and laughed. “You young fellows…there is such a thing as ‘genius’, and both Linley and Olivier can be considered geniuses. In addition, the ‘Profound Truths’ which they are training in are more powerful than yours.” Beirut said with a lecturing air.

Desri, Fain, and the other experts who had trained for thousands of years all listened obediently, as though they were children listening to a lecture.

“Your vision is too narrow and limited. You must understand…these countless dimensions possess countless material planes, but your gaze is limited to just the Yulan continent. Genius? Amongst the geniuses I have seen, one of them reached the Deity-level ten years after being born, but I’ve also met those who have trained for tens of millions of years while being trapped at the Saint-level.”

Linley and Olivier were both stunned.

Reach the Deity-level ten years after birth? This was simply monstrous. Could it be some sort of divine beast race? But even a divine beast such as Bebe would take nearly a hundred years to grow into maturity.

“Linley, Olivier.” Beirut looked at the two of them. “The Yulan continent has existed for countless years, and the experts it has produced are numerous beyond measure. But of course, in the past hundred thousand years, the two of you can be considered to be the two most talented.”

Linley and Olivier didn’t display a hint of self-satisfaction.

“But if we look at the countless planes of the universe, there are simply far too many people who are greater geniuses than you two.” Beirut sighed. “There are some geniuses whom even I can only stare at in dumbfounded awe.”

Linley and Olivier both nodded slightly. At their current level, they had a greater vision than before.

“In addition, there are some races that are exceedingly powerful, such as those races you encountered in the Necropolis of the Gods. The Beholder race, or that Lachapalle…and so on. These races are naturally powerful. There is nothing which the boundless universe does not contain.” Beirut turned to look at Desri and the other experts.

Desri and the other experts had a rather unpleasant feeling in their hearts.

“After becoming powerful, don’t grow complacent. As for Fain and the rest

of you, don't underestimate yourselves. After all, in the Yulan continent, you are already at the top of the mountain. In the countless planes, there are even people who have trained for tens of millions of years without being able to reach the Deity-level. There are plenty of people far inferior to you."

Desri, Fain, and the other experts could only laugh bitterly in their hearts.

There were many people they were superior to, but also many they were inferior to.

"The most important thing is having self-confidence." Beirut said seriously. "Actually, I've discovered that in your hearts, you've all begun to doubt yourselves. You've become worried over having been at the Prime Saint level for so long, and thus you entrusted your hopes to getting a divine spark?"

"Wrong!"

Beirut shook his head. "If even you yourselves doubt yourselves and don't have strong faith in yourselves, how can you possibly break through to the Deity-level?"

Desri, Fain, and the other experts all felt their hearts tremble.

Indeed, they had all entrusted their hopes to finding a divine spark, and deep in their hearts, they had begun to doubt their own ability.

"But Linley and Olivier are different. They believe in themselves, believe that they will be able to train to the highest levels, and so they truly have continued to advance, making one breakthrough after another." Beirut sighed appreciatively.

This was indeed the truth. Linley's heart had always been focused on reaching the limits of training, never doubting his own ability. As for Olivier, when he had first left the O'Brien Empire and arrived in the Arctic Icecap, despite being so weak, he had dared to say that he would challenge Rutherford.

Even now, after Linley had returned from the eleventh with divine cores, he still dared to say that in the future, he would challenge Linley.

Self-confidence!

Linley and Olivier were both filled with self-confidence, and they were both extremely hard working as well.

If a person constantly doubted themselves, it would be simply too hard to make a breakthrough.

“Thank you, Lord Beirut.” Desri and the other experts seemed to understand a bit.

Beirut said calmly, “After having experienced countless life and death experiences in the Necropolis of the Gods, can it be that you’ve gained not even a shred of insight? This sort of place, where one is constantly at the border between life and death, can easily allow someone’s potential to be unleashed and a breakthrough to be made. Unfortunately, none of you had truly believed in yourselves.”

“Enough. Everyone leave the Necropolis of the Gods.” Beirut said.

Linley and the other experts followed Beirut out from the exit he had created, leaving the tenth floor.

Outside of the Necropolis of the Gods was the bottom of the sea.

As soon as Linley and the others came out, they discovered that there was one black exit after another leading from the second, fifth, and tenth floors of the Necropolis of the Gods. Clearly…these three levels had Saints present.

“Hrm? War God, High Priest, Dylin, Cesar…” Linley instantly noticed the four great Deities standing off in the distance.

At this moment, there was a large group of experts outside the Necropolis of the Gods, such as Higginson and the others. Aside from Linley and the other nine who had remained on the tenth floor, there were nearly twenty or so other experts who had stayed on the second and fifth floors. One of them was a familiar figure…

"Barker!" Linley's eyes instantly turned round, and a look of wild joy appeared on his face.

"Lord Linley!" Barker saw Linley as well, and immediately flew over with surprise and joy.

Linley excitedly gave Barker a bear-hug. If Barker truly had died, then on the return trip back home, Linley truly would have found it hard to face Gates and the others, as well as Barker's wife and son.

"Barker, you didn't die!" Bebe flew over to Barker as well with a surprised howl.

Barker began to laugh as well.

Outside the Necropolis of the Gods, the experts who knew each other began to engage in conversation, such as the personal disciples of the War God who had been hiding on the second or fifth floor. All of the lucky survivors were here.

"Barker, how did you manage to escape from the third floor?" Linley immediately asked.

Barker shook his head. "I was very baffled as well. When the Ba-Serpent woke up, he slaughtered many of the Saints, and I didn't know if you, Lord Linley, had even managed to flee or not. I couldn't see anything clearly."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Only, after slaughtering all of the Saints on the third floor, the Ba-Serpent gave me a whack with his tail."

Linley's heart trembled. Although Barker was still alive and perfectly well, that scene was simply terrifying to even contemplate. How could Barker not have died after being struck by the tail of the divine beast, Ba-Serpent?

"The strange thing was, when the tail of the Ba-Serpent struck me, it sent me flying back an extremely great distance, and I was totally paralyzed, as though an invisible rope was wrapped around me. When I landed…I found that, as if by coincidence, I fell into the exit to the second floor." Barker, even while telling the story, seemed to find it unbelievable as well.

Linley and Bebe immediately stared, mouths gaping.

"Hey there, guys." A playful voice rang out, and a devilish, green-haired youngster suddenly appeared next to Linley and the others.

Linley, Barker, and Bebe immediately looked in astonishment at this nearby green-haired youngster. The three of them had only noticed his presence after he had spoken.

"Linley, right?" The devilish green-haired man laughed. "Not bad. You were actually able to successfully get the divine sparks on the eleventh floor. You rock, kiddo." As he spoke, he patted Linley on his head. Linley wanted to dodge, but he found that his body couldn't move at all."

"Godrealm!" Linley was shocked.

Aside from the War God and the rest of the four, there was another Deity-level expert?

"Tarosse [Da'luo'sha], get over here." The distant Beirut called out.

The devilish green-haired youth immediately ran over quite obediently, laughing, "Lord Beirut, let's go back to the Yulan continent. It's been so long since I've gone back. I really do miss home."

All of the experts looked at the devilish green-haired youth in puzzlement.

Who was he?

Beirut glanced at the surrounding experts. Calmly, he said, “Let me introduce you. This person is named Tarosse, and quite a few of you have met him before. He was the guardian of the first eleven floors of the Necropolis of the Gods, that slumbering divine beast, the ‘Ba-Serpent’.”

“Ba-Serpent?” Many of the experts were shocked, and when they looked at Tarosse, their eyes were now filled with respect and fear, while deep in their hearts, they secretly felt hatred as well.

After all, many experts had been slaughtered by Tarosse.

“I know the four of you. I knew Catherine from way back. We’re old friends. Oh, this one is O’Brien, and this one is Cesar, right?” Tarosse chortled.

O’Brien and Cesar didn’t dare to say much. After all, Tarosse was a full God!

Linley could tell that this Tarosse should be only now meeting O’Brien and Cesar for the first time, but had met Catherine in the past.

“Whoaaaaah. Dylin. My dear friend! Your luck is excellent. You actually managed to escape from the Gebados Prison. The happiest part of me getting out of there is having a chance to see you. C’mere, we two buddies need to have a nice reunion.” As he spoke, ‘Tarosse’ went over to give Dylin a hug.

Dylin, with a frown, moved next to Beirut.

Right now, Dylin was not in a good mood, because his second son had died. These lower eleven floors were under the control of Tarosse. However, he knew that Tarosse wasn’t able to break the rules. He was able to turn a blind eye to some things, but if he were to intentionally rescue someone on a certain floor, that was not permissible. Even a Highgod would fall if he violated the rules of the Sovereign.

“Tarosse, enough.” Beirut said calmly, and Tarosse immediately no longer dared to make another sound, standing obediently behind Beirut. Only, he turned his head to wink at Barker. Barker now understood…that the ‘Tarosse’ in front of him was the Ba-Serpent.

The Ba-Serpent who had spared his life!

“Everyone, prepare to head out and return to the Yulan continent.” Beirut said calmly.

“Yes, Lord Beirut.” All of the experts said in unison.

Under Beirut’s leadership, Tarosse and the rest of the five Deities as well as the thirty Saints headed back together, journeying back towards the Yulan continent.

On this day, it was Yulan calendar’s year 10034, March 4th. Exactly ten years had passed since Linley and the others had arrived!

Chapter 1 – Coming Home

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 1, Coming Home

Deep in the bottom of the sea, with Beirut in the lead, the experts began to fly towards that interdimensional door.

“The Necropolis of the Gods…” Linley turned to glance at it.

Although they had flown tens of kilometers away from it, that twenty thousand meter tall structure, the Necropolis of the Gods, was still as visible as ever. The side currently facing Linley was still that carving of a coiled, serpent-like wingless dragon. Upon seeing that enormous dragon sculpture, Linley’s heart naturally surged with a familiar feeling.

“No matter what it is that is within the Necropolis of the Gods calling to me, I can’t just throw my life away. At home, I have Delia, Taylor, and Sasha.” Linley couldn’t help but suddenly think of his wife and children, his heart filling with warmth.

Within the boundless South Sea. Although the ocean winds weren’t very strong, waves still rolled gently over the ocean’s surface. The scorching noonday sun shone down upon the surface of the sea, causing it to reflect with dazzling light.

“Drip, drip…”

The waves of the sea suddenly bizarrely split apart, and the black-robed Beirut was the first to fly out from the bottom of the sea. Behind him was the War God O’Brien, the High Priest, Dylin, Cesar, and Tarosse, the five Deities. Behind them were those nearly thirty lucky survivors of the Necropolis of the Gods, the remaining Saints.

“Whew!” After arriving on the surface of the sea, Linley took a deep, greedy breath of air.

“This is the taste of the air of the Yulan continent.” Linley raised his head, staring at that scorching sun. His face couldn’t help but have a hint of a smile on it.

“The feeling of coming home is wonderful.” Linley murmured to himself.

Not just Linley. Even Barker, Olivier, Fain, Desri, and the other experts all had smiles on their faces. The Yulan continent was the plane which had given birth to and nurtured them. In this plane, their souls felt extremely comfortable and at ease.

“Lord Beirut, I’ll only escort you this far, then.” Tarosse said respectfully.

Beirut glanced at him, then nodded. “Fine. But Tarosse, you should know my rules. I trust you won’t violate them again.” Beirut gave Tarosse a cold glance, and Tarosse immediately squeezed out a smile.

“Lord Beirut, don’t worry. The current Tarosse is no longer that Tarosse of ten thousand years ago.” Tarosse said respectfully.

“Mm. Let’s go.” Beirut ordered calmly.

The other experts followed Beirut and flew towards the north at high speed. Only Tarosse was left behind, staring at the endless sea. He murmured, “I’m finally back…” And then Tarosse dove down into the sea.

Linley and the other experts continued to fly north in the air above the sea.

“Lord Linley, when we returned from the Necropolis of the Gods to the Yulan continent, it was Tarosse who opened the interdimensional gateway. It seems that one needs to be at the full God level of power to activate it.” Barker and Linley were engaged in a quiet conversation.

Linley nodded.

“That should be the case. But that Tarosse spared your life…we owe him a

debt."

"Right." Barker nodded. "But I don't understand why he did that."

Linley laughed. "Enough, don't worry about it. You should celebrate your survival instead. But it really is quite odd. I didn't imagine that the divine beast, the 'Ba-Serpent', belonged to our Yulan continent plane, and was a magical beast of the South Seas."

"Linley." Cesar, who was flying up ahead, suddenly slowed down his flying speed. Flying next to Linley, he laughed and whispered, "Are you discussing Tarosse? This Tarosse…ten thousand years ago, he was extremely famous. Back then, he was known as the 'King of the South Seas', and only Dylin was comparable to him. But of course, Lord Beirut doesn't count."

"Oh?" Linley was secretly astonished.

This Ba-Serpent truly was extraordinary.

"Linley, I have to thank you." Cesar continued.

"Lord Cesar, what do you mean?" Linley was startled. Cesar lowered his voice still further. "Thank you for saving Rosarie's life. Alas…Rosarie, that woman, is simply too stubborn. She insisted on heading to the Necropolis of the Gods on her own. Good thing you were there, as otherwise, this time…"

Linley only now understood what Cesar meant.

Cesar said resignedly, "It's unfortunate. If we Deities are to enter the Necropolis of the Gods, we must start from the twelfth floor. It would be very hard for me to acquire a Demigod's divine spark for Rosarie."

"Start from the twelfth floor?" Linley was somewhat surprised.

"Right. After all, those Saint-level creatures don't pose any threat to us at

all.” Cesar laughed calmly. “Oh, we’re at the Burning Desert now. We’re back to the Yulan continent.”

Linley also saw the boundless Burning Desert.

“We’re at the Yulan continent now. Everyone, go back to your own places.” Beirut said.

“Yes, Lord Beirut.” The experts all replied respectfully, and then all of them separated. The magical beasts either flew back to the Forest of Darkness or the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, while the humans flew in all directions. As for Beirut, standing there alone, he quickly disappeared from everyone’s vision in a flash.

“What incredible speed.” Linley’s heart shook.

Even though his power had increased dramatically, compared to Beirut, the difference was as great as that between the heavens and the earth.

“Whew. Heading home.” Bebe was on Linley’s shoulders now, extremely excited. Linley and Barker both had smiles on their faces. Clearly, they both were thinking of home as well.

Flying past the Burning Desert, traversing the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire. As the centrally located empires of the Yulan continent, the air above the Rhine Empire and the Rohault Empire was now fairly warm, and green leaves and vegetation could be seen growing luxuriantly everywhere.

After passing through the territory of these two Empires, Linley’s group finally arrived at the Baruch Empire’s territory.

The Baruch Empire was located in the northern part of the continent. Although it wasn’t like the Eighteen Northern Duchies, a place of perpetual cold, it was still much colder than the south. Right now, although it was March, many of the trees below only had bare branches, and some areas were even covered with snow.

After Desri's group left, only a few people continued to fly north alongside them.

"Ten years. The 'Anarchic Lands' have transformed so much." Flying at high speed and staring at the cities on the boundless earth below, Linley had a hint of pride in his heart.

Ten years ago, the Baruch Empire had only just been established after twelve years of consolidation, allowing the region to catch a breather after ending the countless years of war. But now, the Baruch Empire's population had increased dramatically, and the cities had become more graceful, comparable to the previous Holy Union.

Below, an ancient, plain and simple castle appeared within the wilderness.

The eaves of the castle were covered with a layer of thin snow, and many guards were currently patrolling atop it. This castle was the legendary 'Dragonblood Castle' of the Baruch Empire. It had been constructed after the former magicite mine had been completely emptied out, and was the place where Linley's family lived.

"Linley, let's part ways here. If you want to find me in the future, you can come to the Arctic Icecap." Olivier gestured courteously as he spoke.

"Definitely." Linley laughed and nodded.

Olivier immediately left, along with the remaining lucky survivors of the Arctic Icecap as they flew north at high speed. As for Linley, Barker, and Bebe, they flew down towards Dragonblood Castle.

Dragonblood Castle, the place where the spiritual pillar of the Baruch Empire, Linley, lived. According to legends, this Dragonblood Castle would often have massive dragons patrol about it. In addition, the guards of Dragonblood Castle were all the most talented warriors of the Baruch Empire. Nobody dared to invade this place.

Three streaks of light shot down from the skies towards the castle, while an enormous aura suddenly spread out, encompassing the entire Dragonblood Castle.

“Lord Linley?” That familiar aura…instantly, many of the experts of the Dragonblood Castle immediately reacted to it. Whether Zassler, Gates and his brothers, or Linley’s children, all of them ran towards the rear gardens of Dragonblood Castle.

Because Linley and the others were currently landing within the rear gardens.

The previous day’s snow had yet to melt completely, and thus clumps of snow could still be seen amongst the flowers.

“Linley’s back?” Housekeeper Hiri and Hillman, who were currently enjoying the sun in the center of the rear gardens, immediately turned to stare from afar. Linley, dressed in a sky-blue robe, and Barker, dressed in a brown robe, were standing shoulder to shoulder, while the adorable Bebe was currently standing on Linley’s shoulder.

“Uncle Hillman. Grandpa Hiri.” Linley immediately went over to greet them.

“Wonderful. Wonderful.” Housekeeper Hiri was extremely excited. “Over ten years. Ten full years. Linley, I, an old fellow, thought I might not have the chance to see you return.” Housekeeper Hiri had accompanied many generations of the Baruch’s clansmen. He was over a hundred years old now.

After all, in terms of age, Linley was over fifty years old.

However, amongst Saints, compared to those experts who had trained for thousands of years, Linley was just a young fellow.

“Lord Linley. Oh! Big brother!” Gates and Ankh, those two huge fellows, immediately charged forward, their faces covered in excitement.

“Father!” A deep voice rang out.

Still covered with sweat and wearing just a simple cloak, a sturdily built youngster rushed forward. This youngster was over two meters tall, and as he ran over, he excitedly looked everywhere before his gaze locked on Linley.

“Father.” The sturdy youngster immediately ran towards Linley.

This sturdy youngster’s features seemed to have 70% similarity with Linley’s. Only, he was physically larger than Linley. Linley immediately recognized him. With surprised joy, he said, “Taylor?”

“Father, it’s been ten years.” Taylor immediately embraced Linley.

When Linley had left his home, Taylor had only been twelve, and was just a child. But ten years later, Taylor was already twenty two years old. If he were to stand side by side with Linley and someone were to claim that Linley and Taylor were siblings, many would probably believe it.

After all, Linley’s appearance was virtually unchanged.

“Father, you look exactly like you did ten years ago.” Taylor was so excited that his eyes were turning red. After all, to the twenty two year old Taylor, ten years was indeed an extremely long period of time.

Linley patted Taylor on the head, a smile on his face. Linley had always felt a hint of guilt towards Taylor. A person’s childhood…was the most important period to them in their development, but he, Linley, had never had much time to spend with his son.

“Where’s your sister, Sasha?” Linley asked.

Taylor shook his head. “Sis isn’t at home. She went to the imperial capital. Most likely, she’ll only come back some time later.”

“Your mother?” Linley noticed that Delia hadn’t come out yet.

Right at this moment, a beautiful young lady holding an infant walked out. The beautiful young woman, upon seeing Linley, had a hint of worship in her eyes. Linley glanced at this young lady, puzzled. “Taylor, who is this?”

“Jenny, quick, come on over.” Taylor immediately called to her.

The beautiful young woman walked over, then said, somewhat nervously, “Father!”

“Father?” Linley was somewhat astonished.

Taylor immediately chortled, “Father, come, this is your precious grandson. He was born just three months ago.” Taylor immediately took the infant from the arms of the young lady, then held him out in front of Linley. “Father, look at how cute he is.”

“Grandson?” Linley was rather flabbergasted.

He hadn’t come back in ten years. Not only had his son grown up, he had a son of his own now.

“Haha…Boss. That look on your face…so funny.” Bebe was laughing loudly now, and the others began to laugh as well. Only, they didn’t dare to laugh as wildly as Bebe did.

Linley couldn’t help but clout Taylor on the head. “Taylor, you little rascal. You got married and had a kid without even waiting for your father, me, to come back.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. He just stared at his grandson in front of him, with his tender, watery skin, and those adorable, pure, pitch-black eyes staring at Linley in confusion.

As soon as Linley had seen his grandson, he immediately took a liking to this adorable kid.

Linley immediately reached out to hold the infant. Linley was extremely

careful. Even when he was picking up those three divine sparks in the Necropolis of the Gods, he hadn't been as careful as he now was.

"Oh…what a good boy…" Linley held his grandson, a smile blossoming on his face.

Taylor and his wife, 'Jenny', glanced at each other, smiles appearing on their faces as well. Jenny whispered into Taylor's ear, "Taylor, didn't you say that your lord father ripped a Hellfire Phoenix apart with his bare hands? But your lord father doesn't seem as terrifying a person as the legends make him out to be."

Taylor looked at his father, Linley. Right now, Linley looked as though he were holding the rarest of treasures in his arms.

"Taylor, have you picked a name for the child yet?" Linley raised his head to look at Taylor.

"I have. His name is Arnold [A'nuo]." Taylor said.

"Arnold?" Linley lowered his head, looking into Arnold's pure, jet-black eyes. He said softly, "Arnold, Arnold…" This was his first grandson, and this feeling of holding him filled Linley's heart with satisfaction and fulfillment.

Chapter 2 – Becoming a Deity?

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 2, Becoming a Deity?

After spending ten years in the Necropolis of the Gods, he came back to a grandson.

This truly caught Linley somewhat off-guard, but while holding Arnold in his arms, Linley still felt very happy.

Within the main hall of the castle.

“Taylor, where is your mother?” Linley asked.

Taylor immediately began to laugh. “Father, two years after you left, Mother reached the Grand Magus Saint level…”

“What? Two years?” Linley wasn’t only overjoyed; he was also shocked.

In the Necropolis of the Gods, he had finally broken through to the Grand Magus Saint level on the tenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. That was the ninth year in the Necropolis of the Gods. Compared to Delia, Linley had actually reached the Grand Magus Saint level much slower.

“Delia really is amazing.” Linley secretly said to himself while grinning.

Taylor continued, “After reaching the Grand Magus Saint level, she went to the underground training room you always used. A while ago, when Arnold was born, Mother had come out of seclusion, but after his first month, Mother went back to continue training.”

“Oh?” Linley nodded slightly.

Turning, he glanced at the others. “Everyone, wait here for now. I’ll bring Delia out soon. We’ll have dinner together.”

Deep within Dragonblood Castle was that mysterious dimensional gateway. Only, compared to the dimensional gateway beneath the South Sea, this one was much smaller. Linley's body was already covered with a 'Pulseguard Defense' layer, and he walked in.

"Ten years."

Linley stood in the pocket dimension. Outside of that membrane was chaotic space, and within it, Delia was seated cross-legged, meditating. Her face was covered with a holy light, and she seemed like a goddess.

"Hrm?" Linley suddenly frowned in confusion.

While she was training, the aura which Delia was emitting was actual capable of causing Linley's heart to clench.

Delia opened her eyes, turning her head in puzzlement. But when she saw Linley, she immediately stood up in surprised joy. "Linley!" Delia's eyes instantly turned red. The feeling of being separated for ten years truly had been hard to endure.

Delia threw herself into Linley's arms, clutching Linley tightly.

Linley also tightly held Delia, saying softly by her ear, "Forgive me, Delia."

"Linley, I've been so afraid. I was afraid that you wouldn't be able to return from the Necropolis of the Gods." As Delia spoke, Linley suddenly felt that his clothes were growing wet. Delia was already crying!

Delia lifted her head to look at Linley, a mixture of laughter and tears on her face, with tears glistening on her eyelashes. "Linley, you won't leave now that you are back, right?"

"I'm not leaving, I'm not leaving," Linley reassured her.

Linley and Delia walked towards the stone bed, sitting down while holding

each other.

“Right, Delia. Why is it that I have the feeling as though you are rather different compared to the past?” Linley asked questioningly.

Delia looked at Linley, intentionally putting on a mysterious air. “Linley, guess why I am different from before?”

“Is it because you have reached the Grand Magus Saint level?” Linley asked.

Delia shook her head.

“Hrm?” Linley couldn’t understand it.

Delia smiled, then said softly, “Linley, I’ll tell you big a secret. I. Have already…become a Deity!”

Linley instantly was utterly stunned. It was as though he had been struck by a bolt of lightning. He was speechless for a long time.

“What did you just say? Delia, did you say you’ve become a Deity?” Linley stared disbelievingly at Delia. How could one become a Deity so easily? The likes of Desri and Fain had trained for so many years without success. Even Linley himself had experienced countless life and death battles before, out of a lucky happenstance, he had broken through on the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.”

But despite that, Linley would still need around ten years to become a Deity.

Delia had become a Deity?

“It’s true.” Delia nodded.

“Delia, stop joking around.” Linley began to laugh. “If you really want to become a Deity, that’s not a big deal. This time, I acquired divine sparks in

the Necropolis of the Gods, one of which is a wind-style divine spark of a Demigod. You can use it to become a Deity.”

Delia gently shook her head.

“Linley, watch carefully.” Delia said softly to Linley.

Suddenly….

A strange presence suddenly filled the area. Linley felt as though he had suddenly come under tremendous invisible pressure, binding him and causing him to be unable to move.

“Godrealm?” The experienced Linley instantly understood.

But Linley’s layer of Pulseguard Defense over his body shuddered and broke free of the ‘binding’. Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished. How could a so-called ‘Godrealm’ be broken through so easily?

Linley stared at Delia in disbelief.

Delia said, somewhat embarrassed, “I’ve only been fusing with this divine spark for eight years, and I’ve only gained insight into a small part of the Laws held within it. I haven’t even finished absorbing the divine spark. I can only use this ‘Godrealm’ for scaring people. After I completely absorb the divine spark, my ‘Godrealm’ will become a true ‘Godrealm’.”

Hearing Delia say this, Linley stared at her in astonishment.

“Delia, what is this all about?” Linley spoke.

Linley was truly stunned.

He came back after ten years and found a grandson, fine. But his wife was becoming a Deity?

“Linley, do you still remember how on the day of our wedding, Bebe said

that the Violet-Gold Rat King friend of his had given him a black stone? And then, Bebe had given that black stone to me as our wedding present." Delia said.

Linley's mind suddenly shook.

"Delia, are you saying that the black stone…" Linley was no fool. Now that Delia mentioned it, he instantly understood.

"Right. That black stone was a wind-style Demigod divine spark!" Delia said.

"So it really was the case…" Linley felt that this was simply too ridiculous.

It was all too ridiculous.

There was no need to describe how important a divine spark was. Desri and the others had pursued godhood for thousands of years, and even Linley had only acquired these three divine sparks through experiencing countless dangers and near-death situations. But now he suddenly learned…that on the day of his wedding, the wedding gift he had been presented with was actually a divine spark!

"I couldn't believe it either, but after I began to absorb this divine spark…I knew that it couldn't be fake, right?" Delia said honestly.

Linley nodded slightly.

"At first, during our wedding, although I had bound the black stone by blood and absorbed it into my body, I couldn't sense it at all…only, from that day onwards, my spiritual energy and mageforce both increased at a ridiculously fast rate." Delia said.

Linley laughed. "With a divine spark in your body, how could you possibly not train quickly?"

"But I was never able to sense the presence of the divine spark. Only

roughly two years after you left, when I reached the Grand Magus Saint level and my soul began to change, did I clearly begin to sense the existence of the divine spark. At that time, I totally understood."

Linley nodded. "Right. Only after reaching the Saint-level can one's soul truly be able to fuse with a divine spark."

The reason why she had never been able to sense it in the past, and why she had trained so rapidly, had all become clear. Now Linley fully understood the reason of her 'rapid improvement'.

"Delia, according to what you said, you have already spent eight years fusing with this divine spark, but you've only absorbed part of it?" Linley asked. Linley himself knew that if he didn't train and instead used a divine spark to become a Deity, he would still need a very long period of time.

"Right." Delia nodded. "It might be because in the past, I didn't have any insights into the Elemental Laws at all. So, just like reading a book, I had to slowly begin understanding the most basic, elementary aspects of the Laws within this divine spark. Most likely, only after I finish understanding everything it contains will I be able to completely absorb this divine spark, and only then will it completely belong to me."

Linley nodded.

To ordinary people, becoming a Deity was something that required constant experiments, and which had to be taken one step at a time.

But with a divine spark, it was as though all of the profound truths of the Laws were laid bare before you, allowing you to peruse them at your leisure. After you understood them, that was enough.

"I expect that it will take at least ten or twenty years of hard work before I'll be able to completely absorb this divine spark and understand the profound mysteries of the Laws it contains." Delia said rather resignedly. "However, although I do understand some of the profound truths of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, I have no idea how to actually use them…"

Linley was stunned.

“Delia, what do you mean by saying that?” Linley didn’t understand.

“I mean, I have some insights into the Laws, but I don’t know…how to use them to attack.” Delia said, embarrassed.

Linley suddenly understood.

“Hahahaha….” Linley began to laugh loudly.

This logic was actually quite simple. For example, if a divine spark contained the profound truths of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, a Saint who fused with the divine spark would also understand the profound truths within the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’…but he wouldn’t actually know how to use it.

For example, using the vibrations of the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ to attack was what Linley had developed into his own special attack, the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’.

When utilizing it for his defense, it became the ‘Pulseguard Defense’.

Understanding the profound truths of the Laws was nothing more than understanding a theory. If you actually wanted to use it to kill someone, you still had to understand how to put that theory into practice.

For example, if someone gained insight into the ‘Fast’ aspect and you then asked them to utilize the ‘Myriad Swords Converge’, would they be able to do so?

This was a form of application!

This was the problem with absorbing someone else’s divine spark. The divine spark only contained the insights into the mysteries of the Law, but didn’t include the special techniques which the original owner had used to

actually apply and utilize the Laws.

“The question of ‘application’ is indeed a tricky one. Right, Delia. This divine spark of yours which possesses mysteries regarding the Elemental Laws of the Wind…what type of mysteries does it contain?” Linley asked. “If it has to do with speed, I might be able to give you some pointers.”

Delia shook her head. “I don’t know how to explain it clearly. I’ve only managed to understand a small part of it. Okay, I can put it to you like this. The mysteries contained within this divine spark which I am fusing with is somewhat similar to the wind-style spell, ‘Void Extermination’.”

“Void Extermination?” Linley nodded slightly.

“I truly don’t know anything about that at all.” Linley wanted to help but couldn’t.

Linley then laughed. “Enough. Delia, for now, just work hard on training. After you fully understand the mysteries of this divine spark, come up with ways of applying what you have learned. Actually, the control over wind elemental essence which the divine spark confers upon you will allow you to form a ‘Godrealm’, and within that realm, Saints won’t be able to move at all.”

Delia laughed as well. This was the biggest difference between a Saint and a Deity.

The divine spark, in and of itself, represented a type of authority.

Actually, the Sovereigns and the Highgods weren’t necessarily that different in terms of their level of understanding of the Laws. Only…with but a thought, a Sovereign could kill a Highgod. This was the unparalleled authority which a ‘divine Sovereign spark’ conveyed. And in the countless planes of the universe, the number of Sovereigns was fixed.

“Delia, it is wonderful that you are going to become a Deity. But you have to work hard. Most likely, in another ten years or so of training, I’ll reach

the Deity-level as well, on my own." Linley laughed.

"Huh?" Delia stared at Linley. "You'll become a Deity yourself, after training for ten years? Aren't you going to fuse with a divine spark? Don't you have a divine spark?"

Linley shook his head. "No need. It takes a fairly long period of time to fuse with a divine spark, and in terms of effect, fusing with a divine spark isn't as good as gaining one's own insights." Linley shook his head and laughed. "In the Necropolis of the Gods, I acquired three divine sparks, one of which, a wind-style divine spark, I was planning to give to you. But now it seems…that won't be necessary."

"Three divine sparks?" Delia was surprised.

Delia, as well, understood what a divine spark represented. These three divine sparks could produce three Demigods. On the Yulan continent, Demigods were the most powerful creatures in existence.

"Three divine sparks isn't too much." Linley sighed. "This time, on my trip to the Necropolis of the Gods, I went to the most dangerous of the three Necropolis of the Gods. In the past, not a single person had ever succeeded. In such a dangerous place, it is only fair for the reward to be three divine sparks."

If there had only been a single divine spark, Linley would have felt it quite unjust.

"Dangerous?" Delia said hurriedly. "Linley, tell me about what happened in the Necropolis of the Gods."

Linley nodded, then immediately began to tell her about this trip to the bottom of the South Seas.

Only, Linley remained puzzled about something. There was no question that the divine spark he had received on his wedding came courtesy of Lord Beirut via the Violet-Gold Rat King. What was Lord Beirut's intentions in

giving Delia a divine spark? Could it be that he didn't care about divine sparks? But it seemed that his three children were still Saints.

Linley truly couldn't understand it.

The three Violet-Gold Rat King brothers were all Saints, and yet they never entered the Necropolis of the Gods. Seemingly, they didn't care about becoming Deities. Towards the King of the Yulan continent, Beirut…Linley was beginning to feel that he was more and more mysterious.

Chapter 3 – Dividing the Treasures

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 3, Dividing the Treasures

Dragonblood Castle. Within the underground pocket dimension.

Linley's wife, Delia, was listening to him talk about the events of the Necropolis of the Gods. As she listened, she felt fear for him as he described encountering the Ba-Serpent on the third floor…

Felt worry for Barker's near-death experience.

Felt shock at the frightful power of the Flame Tyrant on the sixth floor.

Felt terror at how Linley had nearly died under the tendrils of Queen Mother Lachapalle.

"A million Abyssal Blade Demons!" Delia, hearing what Linley had encountered on the eleventh floor, was totally petrified. "When we sent our army to fight against the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows who had joined forces against us, I saw an army of five hundred thousand. Five hundred thousand soldiers already composed a sea of people, endless and uncountable."

"Right. They were boundless and inexhaustible in number."

Linley couldn't help but think back to that scene. At that time, as soon as the experts had exited from the underground area, nearly a million Abyssal Blade Demons, covering the skies, had simultaneously charged down while chopping down with long range energy blades. What an apocalyptic scene that had been. That was what had caused the second of the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions to die.

"Continue telling me more. How did you escape ,and how did you manage to acquire divine sparks in that sort of environment." Delia was nervous.

Delia knew very well that right now, having only partially begun to fuse with the divine spark, she could only be considered a half-god. Even her 'Godrealm' was incomplete, and she wasn't able to actually apply any of the profound mysteries in the Elemental Laws at all. If she had been on the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, most likely those massed Abyssal Blade Demons would have slaughtered her.

Linley immediately continued, describing how the experts had risked everything to charge towards the tunnel. He described how in the end, he had gone to block those Abyssal Blade Demons, and then how he had been pursued underground before finally coming to understand the 'Profound Truths of Velocity'.

"Whew." After Linley finished his story, Delia finally dared to let out a breath and relax.

Delia raised her head to look at Linley.

Delia still remembered how, those years in the past, Linley had been the indomitable young genius magus of the Ernst Institute. And now, Linley was an ultimate expert who was capable of dominating a million Abyssal Blade Demons. Delia couldn't help but feel proud of her husband.

"What are you looking at?" Linley laughed.

"Looking at you." Delia's current expression was like that of a innocent young girl.

Linley began to laugh. "Right, Delia. What do you think I should do with these three divine sparks? All of those experts had hinted interest towards me. But of course, after having been lectured by Lord Beirut, perhaps they have changed their minds."

Linley had to admit that Delia was much stronger than him in terms of managing human relations.

“Linley, jeeze…” Delia couldn’t help but laugh in resignation, shaking her head. “You really…I don’t even want to lecture you any longer. In the Necropolis of the Gods, of the humans, Desri, Olivier, Fain, Rosarie, and Tulily remain. Of these five, Desri has the best relationship with us, right? And according to Beirut, Olivier’s potential is very high!”

“But think about it. Fain received a Pearl of Life, while Tulily and Rosarie each received a divine artifact. Olivier and Desri, on the other hand, received nothing.”

Delia laughed as she looked at Linley. “Olivier’s potential is high, while Desri is on good terms with us. Both are worthy of being pulled closer to us. But…neither of them received anything.”

Linley opened his mouth, but didn’t know what to say.

“Linley, your status is now different compared to the past. You are the pillar of our Baruch Empire. You can’t make decisions so casually any longer.” Delia said. “Look, right now, in the human societies of the Yulan continent, the two most powerful are the Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire, because they possess the War God and the High Priest.”

“Only with a Deity will an Empire have longevity.”

“Even if you become a Deity, Linley, most likely, compared to the likes of the War God, it will still be hard for you to overcome them. After all, they have been Deities for a long time.”

Linley nodded slightly.

The power of the War God and the High Priest was indeed far greater than he could hope to fathom for now.

Delia sighed. “Desri himself lives in the borders of our Baruch Empire, and his daughter has married your good friend, Reynolds. You should pull Desri closer to our side and let us all become one family.”

“But of course, while pulling others close is important, strengthening our own people is even more important.” Delia said. “Thus, I think that of the three divine sparks, one of them needs to go to your little brother Wharton, or to one of the Barker brothers.”

“The second divine spark should be reserved for Desri.”

“As for the third divine spark, for now, just hold on to it, in case we suddenly need it. For example, if the War God or the High Priest were to come and ask for it on behalf of a disciple. Or for example, if Dylin or Cesar came. Both are possible. Dylin has his sons, while Cesar has that Rosarie. For them to owe us a debt is a good thing for us.”

Hearing Delia’s analysis, Linley felt as though the mystery bedeviling him had suddenly been resolved.

“Alright, Delia. We’ll just do what you said.” Linley nodded.

Delia continued, “Linley, as for your ten divine artifacts, three red warblades, and a thousand regular Abyssal Blade Demon blades…as I see it, the thousand Abyssal Blade Demon warblades should temporarily be stored. They can be considered the guardian treasures of our Empire. After all, every single one of them is comparable to your adamantine heavy sword. In addition, if we were to take them all out at once, a great tumult would be caused in the continent.”

Linley nodded.

“As for the thirteen divine artifacts, including those red warblades, that’s much easier to dispose of. Divide them out within the family, or perhaps you can give one or two of them to Desri. The divine artifacts are easy to divide up.” Delia said.

Linley began to laugh. “Alright. However, there is one item amongst the thirteen which you have to take.”

“What?” Delia asked curiously.

Linley, with a flip of his hand, retrieved a set of divine battle armor from his interspatial ring. “Delia, this divine battle armor is yours.”

“Uh?” Delia was stunned momentarily, then she immediately said, “Linley, you are the pillar of our Empire. You should be the one to wear this divine battle armor.”

Linley began to laugh. “No need, Delia. First of all, I already have a Pearl of Life. Secondly…once I reach the Deity-level…you need to understand that the ‘Sacred Earthguard Armor’ spell can be used at the Deity-level as well. At that time…the defensive power of my ‘Divine Earth Armor’ will definitely be on par with your divine battle armor.

“Then give it to Wharton. After all, I’m fusing a divine spark.” Delia said.

Linley shook his head. “No need. Didn’t you say it yourself? One of the three divine sparks will be reserved for our own people. In a few days, I’ll go ask Wharton if he is willing to fuse a divine spark. If he is willing, then he will become a Deity. If he isn’t willing, then after I finish a final matter, I will give my Pearl of Life to him.”

“A last matter?” Delia started. “Linley, are you saying…?”

Linley nodded slightly. “I have been looking forward to this for a long, long time. Although right now, I don’t have complete confidence, they definitely don’t have the ability to injure me.” Linley’s eyes flashed with a hint of fierce light.

……..

Wharton had already retired and given up the throne to his son, Cena Baruch, who was the new Emperor of the Baruch Empire.

After learning that Linley had returned, Wharton had immediately flown back and returned to Dragonblood Castle, and Linley’s daughter, Sasha, had returned as well. All five of the Barker brothers reunited here, and now, all

of the people who had followed Linley so many years ago were together in the hall.

Linley asked Wharton if he was willing to absorb the divine spark to become a Deity. After all, Wharton was himself already a Dragonblood Warrior Saint.

But Wharton's response made Linley feel resigned.

"Big bro, if I were to fuse with the elemental divine spark you want to give me, after I become an earth-style Demigod, would I still be able to continue training in the Elemental Laws of Fire?"

"You cannot. Once you become an earth-style Demigod, your ability to sense other elements will drop greatly, while your ability to sense earth elemental essence will greatly rise. Earth-style Demigods will find it virtually impossible to gain insights into the Elemental Laws of Fire."

"Big bro, do you have a fire-style divine spark?"

"I do not."

"Then I won't use it."

Wharton's response had been very simple and blunt. As it turned out, upon reaching the Saint level, Wharton had begun to walk on the path of the Elemental Laws of Fire. Although Wharton had just begun to gain insights, he truly enjoyed the sensation of understanding the Elemental Laws of Fire.

Linley didn't argue with him.

He understood his little brother, because he, too, liked the feeling of his soul becoming one with the earth or with the wind. He liked feeling the wind's freedom and the earth's vastness. To Linley, training in the Elemental Laws of Wind and Earth was a sort of spiritual relaxation and enjoyment.

If someone were to give Linley a fire-style divine spark and then tell him to

go fuse it, Linley wouldn't be willing to do so either.

Because…

Once the fire-style divine spark was fused, he would immediately become a fire-style Demigod, which would make it virtually impossible for him to gain any more insights in the other Elemental Laws.

"To become a fire-style Demigod and to give up the Profound Truths of the Earth and the Wind?" Linley shook his head.

In addition, there was a big difference between becoming a Deity through using a divine spark and between achieving it on one's own.

Linley then went to ask the Barker brothers.

Gates and the other three insisted that their boss, Barker, be the one to fuse with the divine core, while Barker himself just so happened to like the earth-style. Thus, Linley gave the earth-style Demigod divine spark to Barker, who began to fuse with the divine spark and train in seclusion.

In the rear gardens of Dragonblood Castle.

Four young men were seated around a round table, laughing loudly and drinking loudly. These four people were: Linley, Reynolds, Yale, George.

"It has been over ten years since we four bros have met. Come, cheers, everyone!" Yale laughed loudly as he spoke. Right now, the weakest of the four of them was Yale, but even he was a magus of the seventh rank by now and possessed a lifespan of centuries.

Their appearances still seemed very young.

"Boss Yale, congratulations on becoming the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate." Linley laughed.

Linley was incomparably delighted to be together with his closest friends of

his youth.

“Haha, Third Bro, I can’t compare to you at all.” Yale chortle, and then slapped George on the shoulders. “Second Bro, the two of us have been out-competed by Third Bro and Fourth Bro. Third Bro goes without saying; he reached the Saint-level long ago. After founding the Baruch Empire and getting married, it’s been, what, twenty four years, right? In the past twenty four years, our Fourth Bro, who was previously a magus of the seventh rank, is now a magus of the ninth rank. But the two of us?”

George began to laugh as well. “Boss Yale, don’t group me in with you. Two years ago, I finally became a magus of the eighth rank. I’m a level higher than you.”

This year was year 10034 of the Yulan calendar. Linley’s wedding had been on year 10010.

Twenty four years.

Of course, for ultimate experts, they might go into seclusion for training for a century at a time. A few decades was nothing.

“I’ve been busy and haven’t had enough time to train. Fortunately, I’ve finally reached the seventh rank as a magus, at least.” Yale let out two laughs.

George was an important minister of the Yulan Empire, while Yale was busy managing the affairs of the Conglomerate. Indeed, they hadn’t spent enough time on their training.

“Third Bro.” Yale clapped Linley on his shoulders twice. “Life truly is interesting for someone like you. You founded a massive Empire and became one of the ultimate experts of the continent. There are so many hot-blooded youths of the continent who have set you as their goal. Those hot-blooded youths are just like how we four bros were in the past!”

Linley, George, Yale, and Reynolds fell silent for a time.

They couldn't help but think back to the events of their youth.

Reynolds suddenly laughed. "Boss Yale, you are now the Chairman of one of the three great trading unions of the Yulan continent. Your wealth rivals that of an Empire. According to what you say, you should be satisfied as well, right?"

"Not yet. There's still two other trading unions." Yale's eyes were shining. "I really want to swallow up both the 'Snow Island Syndicate' and the 'Gere Group'. Unfortunately, it's too hard. Still, that just makes it challenging and interesting."

Linley stood up.

"Right. Only something hard is challenging." Linley raised his head to look at the sky.

The Yulan continent was just a material plane. In the boundless universe, there were countless planes, and above the ordinary planes, there were Four Higher Planes and Seven Divine Planes.

He himself was nothing more than at the top of the Yulan continent.

"Walk to the ultimate peak of training! Only that is interesting and challenging." Linley had a hint of a smile on the corner of his lips.

"But before that, there's still something I have to do." Linley couldn't help but turn to stare into the west, in the direction of the 'Sacred Isle' of Radiant Church.

Linley still remembered the death of Grandpa Doehring. Still remembered the oath he had sworn when he had left the city of Hess and entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. "Radiant Church, just wait. There will come the day when I will destroy you all and pull you up by the roots!"

"It's about time." Linley murmured to himself.

Chapter 4 – A Major Event

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 4, A Major Event

Dawn. Sunlight illuminated the rear garden of Dragonblood Castle. For the first time in a long time, Linley had the desire to go to the rear garden and devote himself to stonesculpting. While sculpting, Linley couldn't help but think back to one scene after another of himself with Grandpa Doehring.

"A stone's appearance, quality, grains, and coloration impact not only its appearance, but its entire potential and true form. We use chisels to remove the excess parts and allow its natural beauty to be revealed. This is stonesculpting."

"The stonesculpting way is really a way of controlling space and appearance. When stonesculpting, one must…"

The scene of Grandpa Doehring teaching him about stone sculpting was still so fresh, so vivid in Linley's mind.

After understanding the 'Profound Truths of Velocity', Linley's straight chisel moved even more gracefully and agilely, sometimes transforming into countless blurs while at other times, moving so slowly and gently…the human-shaped stone in front of him slowly took form. Linley's carving attracted the attention of Hillman, Taylor, and many others, who watched from afar.

"Father's sculpting method is so strange." Taylor said in surprise.

Hillman sighed in surprise as well. "Right. Your father's stone sculpting gives me the feeling…as though the sculpture itself already exists. All he is doing is removing the excess stone and dust that is covering it up."

The straight chisel flashed, and flecks of stone flew about.

Indeed, it was as Hillman had said. Linley was truly just removing a layer of useless stone atop the sculpture, and as the flecks of stone flew off, the sculpture slowly began to reveal its true appearance.

“Shedding the shell. This is the feeling known as ‘shedding the shell’ which stone sculpters talk about.” Jenny sighed in amazement. “Only, I have never realized that someone could be able to sculpt in such a natural manner.” Jenny herself had learned stone sculpting, but what she learned was the normal type of sculpting which required many tools.

“Hrm…”

To Linley, a single straight chisel was enough.

He started sculpting at dawn, and continued until dusk. Only then did Linley finally set aside his chisel, reaching out with a hand to gently stroke the sculpture.

“Grandpa Doehring.” Linley murmured to himself. “In the past, I promised that there would come the day when I would utterly destroy the Radiant Church and pull them up by their roots. Soon, very soon…I will be able to accomplish this.”

The sculpture in front of him was that of ‘Doehring Cowart’. Doehring Cowart’s face had that ever-present hint of a benevolent smile on it.

“Linley.” Suddenly, a voice came from behind him.

Linley turned and saw that the speaker was actually Fain. Next to him, Hillman immediately said, “Linley, Mr. Fain has been waiting here for quite some time now. But when he saw that you were sculpting, he didn’t want to disturb you.”

“It truly looks as agile and real as a spirit.” Fain sighed in amazement as he stared at the statue.

The statue seemed to be alive, and for a moment, it was as though a real

person was standing there.

“Linley, who is this person that you sculpted?” Fain asked curiously.

Linley didn’t respond. “Fain, you came because…?”

Fain hurriedly said, “Oh, this time, I’ve come to invite you to make a trip to War God Mountain. Tomorrow, which is to say April 6th, all the various Deities will be convening at War God Mountain, while a few Saints have also been invited to attend.”

“Oh?” Linley was suddenly intrigued; a gathering of Deities, with only a few Saints being invited? Clearly, this meeting was of great importance.

“Might I ask what this is about?” Linley asked.

Fain shook his head. “I’m not sure either, and Master didn’t tell me. But if you go, you’ll definitely find out.”

“Alright. I’ll definitely go tomorrow.” Linley nodded as he spoke.

Yulan calendar, year 10034, April 6th. The O’Brien Empire. Outside the imperial capital. On War God Mountain.

Within the quiet, secluded courtyard of War God O’Brien, four Deities, including the War God, the High Priest, Dylin, and Cesar, along with four Saints, being Fain, Linley, Desri, and Tulily, all casually sat down.

“So only the four of us came.” Desri also felt rather curious. “Linley, do you know what is going on?” Linley and Desri were engaging in a mental conversation.

“I’m not sure either. They are all Deities. We shouldn’t have anything to do with their affairs.” Linley was puzzled as well.

At this time, all four of the Saints were maintaining their silence.

The War God and the High Priest exchange a meaningful glance, and then the War God turned his razor-sharp gaze towards Linley and the other three. In a sonorous voice, he said, “Today, the primary reason the four of you have been summoned is because the High Priest and I have come to an agreement. There are too many nations in the Yulan continent. It is time to reduce the number.”

Linley and the other three were shocked.

“Is the War God preparing to incite a major war?” Linley wondered secretly to himself.

The masked High Priest said in a gentle voice, “The War God and I have come to an agreement. There should only be three Empires that will remain here in the Yulan continent; the O’Brien Empire, the Yulan Empire, and the Baruch Empire. In other words…it is time to start a war that will cover the entire Yulan continent.”

Linley, Fain, Desri, and Tulily, although inwardly shocked, still managed to appear calm on the outside.

“Linley, do you have any thoughts? You can be considered the representative of the Baruch Empire.”

Linley paused for a moment.

“This is good news. I naturally won’t object.”

Linley immediately continued, “If our three major Empires join forces, it won’t be hard to destroy the other nations. Only, I trust that if you, War God, and you, High Priest, join forces, you can accomplish these things easily. Why have you invited us Saints to come? I do not understand this.”

The War God and the High Priest might have simply wanted to give him face and invite him, but why did they invite Desri, Tulily, and Fain as well?

“It is very simple.” The nearby Cesar had a playful, teasing look in his eyes.

“The War God and the High Priest don’t want to act. They want you to act.”

The War God couldn’t help but glance sideways at Cesar, but Cesar only snickered.

“We won’t get involved in this battle.” The War God’s firm, forceful voice rang out. “We have to tell you something. Per the orders of Lord Beirut, in three days time, we four Deities will all head towards the Necropolis of the Gods.”

“To the Necropolis of the Gods?” Linley, Desri, and the others all knew that last time, only the Saints had entered the Necropolis of the Gods, while the Deities had not entered it.

What Saints wanted to acquire was Demigod divine sparks, while what the War God wanted was full God divine sparks.

“Three days later? Why didn’t Lord Beirut have you enter the Necropolis of the Gods along with us? Was there a special reason?” Linley asked.

The nearby Dylin snorted. “No special reason. The only reason was because Lord Beirut so ordered it.”

Linley was amazed.

Just because Lord Beirut had ordered it?

“Enough about that.” The War God said calmly. “Eliminating the other nations is only a small matter. I trust you four are completely capable of handling it. How about this…Linley, Tulily, Desri, you go lead your forces to the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church and destroy it.”

“As for the personal disciples of my War God’s College, as well as the personal disciples of the High Priest, they’ll go together to destroy the headquarters of the Cult of Shadows.”

The War God glanced sideways at Linley. “Don’t tell me you can’t do it.”

“I would be very much delighted to deal with the Radiant Church.” Linley frowned as he spoke. “But on the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church, there is a large-scale, powerful magical formation, the ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’. I imagine that just relying on Saint-level power alone, we will find it very difficult to break through it.”

The nearby Dylin said disdainfully, “The Glory of the Radiant Sovereign? Yes, the power of that large magical formation isn’t bad. Back then, it was able to block a blow from me. Just a single Saint won’t be able to break it. But Linley, if ten of you Saints attack it at full strength simultaneously… maybe not the first time, maybe not the second time, but eventually, you’ll be able to destroy the ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’.”

Linley laughed as well.

Previously, the Radiant Church had also feared that Linley would lead a square of Saints to attack the Sacred Isle. Thus, they had Linley sign the agreement that if he were to ever go to the Sacred Isle, he would go alone.

But that agreement, ever since Linley, the Radiant Church, and the Cult of Shadows had their falling out, had been destroyed.

The High Priest, ‘Catherine’, spoke. “Actually, if three wind-style Grand Magus Saints were to simultaneously cast the ‘Dimensional Edge’ and attack the same location, that should be enough to break the ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’.”

“If you can destroy the opponent’s Saint-level combatants, the results of the battle will be a foregone conclusion, even before it starts.” The War God said coldly. “In this sort of nation-destroying war, when the time comes, directly utilize your Saint-level forces and threaten the opponents. I trust that this battle will be concluded very quickly.”

Linley, Desri, Fain, and Tulily could only laugh ruefully in their hearts.

To Deities, the battles of the Yulan continent were indeed nothing more than

children's games, especially when the War God and the High Priest joined forces.

And indeed, once the highest level experts of the Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows were destroyed, the results of the war would be plainly obvious to anyone.

"Lord War God, I am a bit confused." Linley spoke out. "Why did you drag this out for so long instead of starting it long ago? I think that if you and the High Priest were to join forces, you would have been able to divide up the other two Empires long ago and split the world up for yourselves."

The War God and the High Priest glanced at each other.

Dylin laughed wickedly. "That's simple. At that time, I hadn't arrived at the Yulan continent, and Cesar hadn't made his breakthrough. In the human societies of the Yulan continent, the only Deities were the two of them. The two of them were always opponents; how could they possibly join forces?"

"As for why they are joining forces now, the first reason is because they both now have the feeling that unifying the Yulan continent under their rule is now hopeless, and so they have divided the world into three parts instead. The second reason is because they now feel pressured. As to why they feel pressured…go figure that out yourself." Dylin said.

Linley suddenly had a thought. "The War God and the High Priest…feel that unifying the continent is now hopeless? Because of me?"

Linley instantly understood.

First of all, he was about to become a Deity. The War God and the High Priest should be aware of this. Secondly, he had acquired divine sparks within the Necropolis of the Gods, and was capable of cultivating a crop of Demigods….and most importantly of all, thirdly, the relationship between Bebe and Beirut. These three points made it impossible for the War God or the High Priest to treat Linley as an enemy.

“The Eighteen Northern Duchies and the Holy Union will belong to my O’Brien Empire.” The War God said calmly.

The War God looked at Linley. “The Rohault Empire and the great plains of the far east will belong to your Baruch Empire.”

“As for the remainder, the Dark Alliance and the Rhine Empire, they will belong to the Yulan Empire.” The nearby High Priest nodded slightly.

“Linley, do you have any objections?” The War God and the High Priest looked towards Linley.

Linley could only laugh helplessly in his heart.

From the words and attitude of the War God and the High Priest, he could completely sense…that the War God and the High Priest didn’t treat the upcoming war in the continent as a major affair at all. And indeed, this was a war without any possible alternate outcomes. Experts on their level didn’t need to worry about it.

“No objections. Of course I have no objections.” What else could Linley say?

And so, according to this arrangement, the Yulan continent had been divided into three parts.

“Right.” The War God nodded with satisfaction. “Linley, you should know that actually, to the likes of us, worldly power is meaningless. The most important thing is your own level of training. Linley, I have heard that you will become a Deity in around ten years or so.”

Linley could tell that the War God’s attitude towards him was now clearly one where he considered Linley as someone on the same level.

After all, in but ten short years, by the time the War God returned, Linley would most likely be a Deity already.

The nearby Dylin said solemnly, “But before that happens, I have to remind you of a few things. Otherwise, if you were to make a foolish mistake, it would be terrible for you.”

Linley immediately listened carefully, and even the nearby Desri and the others paid close attention.

“Relying on your own power to become a Deity and fusing with a divine spark to become a Deity are completely different. Once your level of understanding of the Laws has reached a certain level, the universe will naturally create a divine spark based on the nature of your soul, and this divine spark will completely be as one with your soul.”

“Once your divine spark is created, you will face a choice.” Dylin looked solemnly at Linley. “After the divine spark is created, you have two options. The first is to absorb the divine spark into your mind and make it become one with your soul. At that time, your body will naturally transform into a divine body.”

“The merging of your soul with the divine spark will cause your body to transform into a divine body. If that divine spark was of the earth-element, then in the future, you would only be able to train in the Elemental Laws of the Earth and be unable to train in any others.”

“But of course, after the birth of the divine spark, there is still the second option!”

“That option is to not absorb the divine spark into your body, and to instead, leave it outside. If you do so, then the universe will itself, according to the nature of the divine spark, generate a second body. Your original body won’t change at all. In other words…you will essentially have a clone of yourself. This clone of yourself will be a Demigod, while your original body will still be able to train in the other Elemental Laws!”

Dylin said seriously, “However, there is a price for the second choice as well. Your soul will be divided into two. Now, during the process of becoming a Deity, the strange energies of the universe will protect you

during that instant, and thus your soul being split in half will be a controlled process, and you won't die from it. However, it will still be rather harmful to your soul."

Chapter 5 – The Apocalypse War of Ten Thousand Years Ago

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 5, The Apocalypse War of Ten Thousand Years Ago

“What the right choice is, only you can decide.” Dylin said seriously.

The choice people made upon the moment when they became Deities by their own power would determine their future accomplishments and developments.

Linley didn’t have to think about it at all; his heart automatically inclined towards the second choice. He had walked on the path of understanding the wind and the earth, two different elements, this entire time. He truly would be unwilling to give up any one of those two elements.

“Lord Dylin, if one makes the second choice, for example, if I become a wind-style Deity, then the moment I become a Deity, if I put the divine spark outside my body, then the universe will naturally form a divine body around that divine spark, right? And my soul will be divided as well. In other words, there’s no difference in the soul between the original and the clone, right?”

“Right.” Dylin nodded.

“Then I want to ask, if the clone becomes a Deity, what about the original? Will it advance in power?” Linley held this in great importance.

If his clone became a Deity, but his original body remained at the Saint level, wouldn’t that be a huge weakness?

“There is an increase in power, and your original body will be able to borrow divine power from your clone.” Dylin shook his head as he spoke. “But unfortunately, that’s just borrowed divine power. Although you can

borrow a great amount of it, since the original body has no divine spark, it will be much weaker than true divine power, due to the fact that there is no divine spark to merge with that 'divine power'."

The nearby Cesar laughed, "Linley, you should know that some of the Saints of the various religions can also sometimes borrow a bit of divine power."

Linley nodded slightly.

Cesar continued, "You would be like them, except you'll only be able to borrow divine power from your divine clone. But of course…there's no need for you to offer tributes to yourself before borrowing a large amount of energy. However, without a compatible divine spark, the power will just be rather weaker."

"Understood." Linley nodded.

The importance of a divine spark was something which Linley understood quite clearly. If the original body had no divine spark and only had divine power…it wouldn't be able to, for example, create a 'Godrealm'.

"Although the original body will be weaker due to not having a divine spark, there are still ways to protect it. Because the clone and the original are actually one entity to begin with, therefore…you can reabsorb your clone into your original body." Dylin laughed and continued, "And thus, you would still be able to utilize the strength of your divine clone."

Linley secretly shook his head.

Merge the divine clone with the original body? Utilize the power of the divine clone?

In reality, that wasn't an increase in power at all.

"If you do that, although your power won't be increased, your original body will be protected better. Actually, the only real benefit of this second choice

is…it will allow you to train in other Elemental Laws. The only real flaw… is that your soul will be divided in two!"

Dylin looked at Linley, saying seriously, "Linley, a soul is the most important part of a creature. It is very difficult to strengthen and transform a soul. This sudden division in half means that your soul will be weakened by half. In terms of both training speed as well as ability to resist enemy attacks, the soul will be affected."

"I understand. You gain something, you lose something. How could there only be benefits and no disadvantages?" Linley understood this.

"It is good that you know this." Dylin nodded.

Linley's heart was filled with questions. "What's going on with Dylin? Why has he explained to me all these details regarding becoming a Deity…it isn't like Dylin, right?" Linley felt that today, Dylin was acting rather differently.

The War God, O'Brien, spoke out sonorously. "Linley, remember what we discussed earlier. I'll hand over dealing with the Sacred Isle and the Radiant Church to you."

"Don't worry." Linley's eyes had a hard look flash through them.

Destroy the Radiant Church?

How many years had he been waiting?

"Alright. Then you can leave now." The War God said calmly.

Linley, Desri, Fain, and Tulily all immediately rose. Bowing respectfully, they left the War God's quiet, secluded residence.

Atop the quiet War God Mountain.

"Linley, congratulations. Today, Master and the others treated you with such

friendliness that they clearly consider you to be one of them." Fain suddenly said.

Linley was slightly startled. Right now, he could completely understand how bitter these other three experts had to feel in their hearts. Thousands of years of training, yet they still hadn't made any breakthroughs.

"Fain, I believe you three will quickly break through as well."

Desri suddenly laughed and nodded. "Right. We will break through soon. Fain, Tulily…have you already forgotten what Lord Beirut said? The three of us can break through in as quickly as a single day. The most important thing is that we have to have faith in ourselves."

"Right. We will break through." Tulily and Fain's eyes lit up and they nodded.

If they could break through on their own, they wouldn't need a divine spark.

But breaking through on one's own truly was difficult.

"Linley, when shall we head out to destroy the Radiant Church's Sacred Isle?" Desri asked.

Linley was silent for a moment, then said, "How about this. It's best to address this quickly." Just thinking about destroying the Radiant Church made Linley feel his blood boil and made him feel alive. "Let's all go back home today. Tomorrow, we'll summon our forces to make preparations. The day after that, on the eighth…the morning of the eighth, come to my Dragonblood Castle, and we'll head out together to slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle."

"Alright. We'll head out together on the eighth." Tulily and Desri both nodded.

Fain began to laugh. "Linley, you are moving so quickly. It seems I'll have

to pick up the pace on my side as well and eliminate the Cult of Shadows more quickly."

"Haha, Fain, then we'll head off for now." Linley said.

Linley, Desri, and Tulily immediately flew into the air, streaking towards the east.

Linley's Dragonblood Castle was in the northern part of the Baruch Empire, while Desri lived in the southern part of the Baruch Empire. As for Tulily, he lived in the great plains of the far east. The three flew together for only a short while before breaking apart.

"Whoosh." A strong wind was blowing, causing his robe to flutter.

Moving through the skies, soaring through the clouds and the mist, he flew at high speed towards Dragonblood Castle.

"Linley, wait a moment." A sound suddenly rang out, and an indistinct blur appeared near Linley.

A devilish young man, dressed in a dark gold robe, was standing before Linley. In his forehead, there was a single slit, like a knife scar. It was the Deity-level expert, 'Dylin'.

"Lord Dylin." Linley was somewhat surprised.

Dylin, surrounded by a devilish aura, had a rather sincere smile on his face right now. "Linley, your flying speed is quite fast. It seems you have indeed progressed significantly due to your time in the Necropolis of the Gods."

Linley felt utterly confused.

Flying fast?

On the road back to Dragonblood Castle, he was only flying at regular speed, and didn't even fly at full speed. Why would Dylin say he was flying

fast?

“This Dylin…why is he praising me for no reason?” Linley instantly could guess that Dylin probably had something to discuss with him.

“Lord Dylin, is there something you need?” Linley directly broached the subject.

Dylin took a deep breath. “Linley, to be honest…I, Dylin, was born tens of thousands of years ago, and experienced the terrible Apocalypse War of ten thousand years ago, as well as the war of the gods, the Theomachy, of five thousand years ago. I’ve been protecting my five children this entire time, but unfortunately, five thousand years ago, my children and I were imprisoned into the Gebados Planar Prison….”

Hearing this, Linley felt deeply stunned.

“Five thousand years ago, experts from other planes descended. I knew about this. But what is this ‘Apocalypse War’ of ten thousand years ago?” Linley had never heard that ten thousand years ago, there was an ‘Apocalypse War’. From what Dylin was saying, it seemed as though the war of ten thousand years ago was even more terrifying than the one five thousand years ago.

Dylin, seeing the look on Linley’s face, understood.

“You are curious about the Apocalypse War?” Dylin laughed.

He had a favor to ask, and thus he was very happy to have the chance to tell these secrets to Linley.

Linley nodded.

“The Apocalypse War was on a far larger scale than the war of five thousand years ago. In truth, in the past, this plane had five continents!” Dylin explained in detail.

“Five continents?” Linley had never heard of this before.

In addition, the history books had never mentioned the existence of other continents.

Dylin explained in detail, “There was a vast distance between each continent, and the Yulan continent is the northernmost continent of the five. The other four continents were all in the South Seas. Because there is a distance of nearly ten million kilometers between the continents, back then, ordinary people didn’t know about the other continents’ existence.”

“During that Apocalypse War…”

Dylin sighed. “That was a true, large-scale war, an utterly destructive, apocalyptic war. The waves of the ocean rose to the heavens, and space itself was ripped apart. Even the shockwaves of the battles occurring in the depths of the sea impacted the other continents. The four southernmost continents were all shattered and destroyed, and one Deity after another fell…the scale of this war was far, far greater than the one from five thousand years ago.”

Linley’s heart quailed.

The battle had been so vicious that four continents had collapsed? What level of experts had fought in this war?

“And it was also due to that battle that Lord Beirut formally assumed control over the Yulan continent.” Dylin sighed. “Linley, at that time, although I was already a Demigod, I could only hide here on the Yulan continent, not daring to participate in the battle at all.”

Linley could completely imagine that scene.

“I heard that the divine sparks and Deity corpses of the Necropolis of the Gods came from that Apocalypse War.” Dylin sighed. “But of course, that’s just what I hear. I don’t have any proof.”

Linley nodded slightly. Dylin had been hiding, after all, and didn't take part in the battle.

"Five thousand years ago, my children and I were jailed into the Gebados Planar Prison. That place…was an utter nightmare." Dylin said in a low voice. "My five children…two of them died there. Fortunately, we escaped back to the Yulan continent afterwards."

To this very day, Dylin hadn't told Linley that it was Linley who had allowed him to escape.

"But this time, yet another one of my children have died."

Dylin's eyes contained irrepressible grief. "It truly is too hard to become a Deity. My children are only Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, after all. It will be hard for them to break through their natural limitations and become Deities. Perhaps Desri and Fain will be able to break through upon receiving some insight, but magical beasts…it is far harder for us to break through than humans."

"Therefore…I, Dylin, would like to ask you, Linley, to give me one of your divine sparks." Dylin looked at Linley sincerely.

Linley understood what Dylin was thinking.

"Of course, I won't let you suffer too much of a loss. Only, I definitely don't have a treasure as valuable as a divine spark, but I do have divine artifacts. I can trade divine artifacts for it. How about three divine artifacts? Or perhaps, I can give you my own personal set of divine artifact gloves." Dylin said hurriedly.

Dylin deeply loved his children. This was apparent from the efforts he had gone to in the Gebados Planar Prison to protect them.

Originally, he had forbidden them from going to the Necropolis of the Gods, but Cleo and the other brothers all desired to become Deities. In the end, Dylin couldn't stop them…but on this trip to the Necropolis of the

Gods, one of them had died. Now that Linley had three divine sparks, Dylin had decided to thicken his skin and come ask him for one.

Divine sparks were far more important than divine artifacts.

Four divine artifacts for a divine spark…Linley was actually still trading at a loss. What was the chance for a Saint to successfully navigate the eleventh floor? It was incredibly low. Linley's success allowed him to obtain these three divine sparks, but in the future, Linley probably wouldn't have this sort of opportunity again.

"Alright. I agree." Linley nodded.

Dylin couldn't help but feel ecstatic. Dylin immediately retrieved three divine artifacts with a flip of his hand. All of them were bladed weapon type divine artifacts. At the same time, in Dylin's hands appeared a dark gold divine artifact gloves. In terms of preciousness, it was still the divine artifact gloves which was the most precious.

"Here is the divine spark." With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved the Destruction-type divine spark. Linley had made this decision on behalf of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. After all, they themselves trained in the Way of Destruction.

Seeing the divine spark, Dylin couldn't help but feel his heart quiver.

This was a divine spark!

If he himself wanted to enter the Necropolis of the Gods, he would have to start from the twelfth floor. It would be extremely hard to procure a divine spark, even for him.

"Thank you, thank you." Despite his normal, terrible temper, Dylin right now felt so excited that he said 'thank you' twice in a row. "Wait a moment. I'll dissolve the ownership bond I have with the divine artifact gloves."

"Lord Dylin, I don't need these divine artifacts." Linley said.

He didn’t lack for bladed divine artifacts. Two or three extra made no difference! As for divine artifact gloves, Linley himself was a sword user, and so they wouldn’t be very useful to him anyways.

“What? You don’t need them?” Dylin was stunned.

“I don’t need them.” Linley smiled and nodded. “Lord Dylin, I only hope that if in the future, I need your assistance, Lord Dylin, that you can help me. That would be wonderful.”

In his heart, Dylin actually was quite unwilling to part with these divine artifact gloves, but Dylin was a very arrogant, prideful person. If he were to receive a divine spark from Linley without giving Linley anything good for them, he himself would feel uneasy. Dylin couldn’t help but feel rather frantic. “How can this be acceptable? Unacceptable…”

Seeing Linley, Dylin felt very guilty, as though he owed him a great debt!

What could he do to recompense Linley?

Chapter 6 – Slaughtering a Path to the Sacred Isle

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 6, Slaughtering a Path to the Sacred Isle

“This definitely is not acceptable. If you are going to act like this, then I…” Dylin wanted to say ‘I will be unable to accept this divine spark’.

But this divine spark was simply too important to Dylin.

“Lord Dylin, don’t mind it too much. You should know that I am going to become a Deity on my own, and so I think you will need it more than I do.” Linley quickly changed the topic. “Lord Dylin, I have to get going.”

Seeing Linley was about to leave, Dylin couldn’t help but reach out to stop him.

“Linley, I truly don’t have any other treasures I can bring out.” Dylin looked at Linley, more serious than ever before. “But Linley, I will remember the kindness you have shown me on this day. If in the future there is anything you need, I, Dylin, definitely won’t say a single word in complaint.”

Linley smiled.

“Then Lord Dylin, let’s part ways here.”

……

Linley returned to Dragonblood Castle, and informed Delia, Wharton, and the others of the decision of the War God and the High Priest. Wharton, the Barker brothers, and Zassler, upon hearing this news, were extremely excited.

Both the Barker brothers and Zassler had their own major scores to settle

with the Radiant Church.

This entire time, Wharton, as well, wanted to help Linley in his quest for revenge. In the past, he wasn't strong enough, but now, Wharton had reached the Saint-level as well, and once he transformed into a Dragonblood Warrior Saint, he was extremely powerful, on par with Gates and the others.

Night time. A crescent moon hung in the sky.

Linley left his bed, putting on a long robe and heading to the balcony, staring at the endless night.

"Tomorrow. Tomorrow, the Radiant Church and I will have our final battle." Linley couldn't fall asleep tonight, no matter how he tried.

For some reason, those scenes from his childhood years kept on flashing through his mind. Whenever he thought about the fact that tomorrow, he was going to deal with the Radiant Church, and that he was about to accomplish the goal he had been striving towards for so long, he would grow excited.

"Linley." Delia walked next to Linley as well. "Are you thinking about the attack on the Radiant Church tomorrow?"

Delia was going alongside Linley tomorrow. Although Delia hadn't completely fused with the divine spark, Delia was still a Grand Magus Saint of the wind-style now. In addition, even her incomplete 'Godrealm' could still be effective in certain circumstances.

"Right. Tomorrow is a day for which I have waited a long time." Linley's heart was surging with emotion. "Sadly, Grandpa Doehring…won't be able to see it."

"If your Grandpa Doehring was still alive, he would definitely be so proud of you." Delia consoled him. Delia knew about Doehring Cowart as well.

“Mother died. Father died. Even Grandpa Doehring, who took care of me the entire time, died.” Linley stared towards the west. “All thanks to the Radiant Church! Self-proclaimed to be ‘radiant’, self-proclaimed to ‘love the world’. The Radiant Church! They destroyed everything.”

Linley shook his head and sneered. “While I…I was nothing more than one of the countless families they had destroyed. Barker and his brothers, Rebecca and her sister…their families were all wiped out as well! It was the Radiant Church who did it!”

Linley’s rage was beginning to build.

“Linley, don’t think too much about these things. Tomorrow, everything will come to an end.” Delia consoled him. Delia knew very well…that if it hadn’t been because of the amount of hatred he had felt, how could Linley have forced himself to endure so much, and at the tender age of eighteen, enter the endless, uninhabited Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for three full years, and then train in another little village for five?

“Right. Tomorrow, it will all come to an end.” Linley raised his head to look at the night sky.

For a moment, it seemed…his father, his Grandpa Doehring, and that vague, blurry memory of his mother were there in the night sky, watching him!

April 8th. Dawn. The morning sun shone down upon Dragonblood Castle.

“Groooooowl.” A deep growl.

An enormous, sinuous draconic form seemed to coil about near Dragonblood Castle, but the soldiers of Dragonblood Castle weren’t startled at all. Many of them already knew that there were three Saint-level dragons living within Dragonblood Castle. Occasionally, the dragon Saints would head out, while occasionally they would come back.

This was also the reason why there was an urban legend that Dragonblood

Castle had enormous dragons in the vicinity.

Within the spacious training fields of Dragonblood Castle.

Linley's experts had arrived long ago. On this trip to the Sacred Isle, Linley's side included…Linley, Bebe, Delia, Wharton, the five Barker brothers, Zassler, and the three Saint-level dragons. In total, thirteen.

As for Dragonblood Castle, Haeru would be left on guard.

Every single individual heading out on this expedition was a peak-stage Saint, none of them weaker than Heidens in power.

"They haven't arrived yet?" Wharton was getting rather impatient.

Right now, there was a large group of people waiting to send them off as well. One of them was Hillman, who laughed and said, "Wharton, don't be impatient. It is still early. The great plains of the far east are especially far away from us, at least ten thousand kilometers distant. Even flying will take a long time."

"Desri's group will probably arrive a bit earlier, but Tulily and the others will need a long period of time. Don't be impatient. Everyone, just keep waiting a while longer." Linley spoke out. But although he counseled patience, Linley himself still couldn't help but continuously stare towards the skies.

He had waited far too long for this day.

"Big bro, I think you are even more impatient than I am." Wharton said with a laugh.

Linley could only laugh in response.

"Wow, they are here!" Bebe, standing on Linley's shoulders, suddenly let out a surprised, delighted cry.

Linley's group quickly discovered that in the distant horizon, indistinct human figures were flying towards them at high speed. One of them, a fast-moving flashing white streak of light, was especially noticeable, and Linley immediately recognized the person. It was Desri!

"Hrm?" Linley was suddenly surprised.

From the distant horizon, there were more than ten people flying over. Aside from Desri, Pennslyn, Higginson, Miller, Ford, and Livingston, there were six others coming as well. The other six people were led by Tulily.

"Tulily and his disciples have arrived as well?" Although Linley was puzzled by the question of how Tulily, who lived over ten thousand kilometers away, had managed to arrive so soon, he was still extremely delighted.

Everyone was here. That meant they could head out soon.

Desri and Tulily's groups landed together within Dragonblood Castle.

Tulily walked forward, a rare hint of a smile on his face. "Linley, we aren't late, right?"

"Not late at all. Only, why is it that you are alongside Desri's group? Did you coincidentally meet on the way over? Especially since you live in the great plains of the far east…" Before Linley even finished his words, the nearby Desri laughed and responded, "Linley, Tulily led his disciples to my place yesterday, which is why this morning, we headed out together."

Linley now understood.

"I was afraid of coming late and making your two sides impatient. That wouldn't be good." Tulily laughed. "Desri and I haven't had a proper get together in quite some time anyhow, so I stayed a night at his place."

"Everyone's present. Enough chitchat, then. Let's head out." Bebe said.

Linley, Desri, and Tulily exchanged glances, then began to laugh. Linley nodded, then said loudly, “Good, then let’s head out immediately.” Linley stared towards the western horizon, his eyes shining. “Our destination: The Radiant Church’s Sacred Isle!”

Yulan continent, year 10034, April 8th. With Linley, Desri, and Tulily as the leaders, a total of twenty five Saints flew valiantly out of Dragonblood Castle, piercing through the clouds in the sky, heading directly west.

The guards of Dragonblood Castle all sighed in astonishment as they watched this scene.

Twenty five Saints flying together at the same time. When had ordinary people ever seen such an incredible sight?

Within a large ship that was sailing with haste towards the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church.

The waves struck against the beaches as that ship finally came to a halt at the Sacred Isle’s harbor. In front of the harbor, the violet-robed Special Executors of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal were staring coldly at the ship. The high level Executor who was in charge of escorting this ship was the first to disembark.

“How many did you ship over?” The leader of the Special Executors said coldly.

The disembarked Executor said respectfully, “Milord, this time we have shipped over eight hundred.”

“Mm.” The Special Executor nodded slightly. “Quick, bring them all over. First wash them, and give them some clean clothes.”

“Yes!”

Immediately, one dirty slave after another was brought out by the executors.

“Radiant Church, radiant? As radiant as dogshit!” A slave roared furiously from amidst the others in the ground, but immediately following his shout was a crack of a whip.

“If you have the ability to do so, then kill me. I was blind for having believed that this was a pilgrimage.” The slave roared loudly in a hoarse voice. “My wife, my daughter? Did you bring them all here as well? And you claim this is a pilgrimage? I really am blind…uh…uh…uh…”

A blade had flashed, and a large hole had appeared in the slave’s mouth as a piece of his tongue came falling off.

“What’s this all about?” The Special Executor barked to the whip-wielding low-level Executor.

“Milord, I don’t know either.” The low-level Executor was terrified. “While shipping them over, this stubborn ones were disciplined long ago. I didn’t expect that this fellow had been biding his time.”

The slave whose tongue had been cut off stared hatefully at these Executors.

Most of the other slaves had felt resigned to their fate long ago. They walked forward numbly.

Within a wide tunnel.

Heidens, dressed in a white robe, was standing in front of a beautiful female priestess, dressed in white. At this time, a large number of washed slaves, now dressed in clean clothes, were being escorted through this dark tunnel to the other end.

“Uh….” That slave whose tongue had been chopped off had also been washed and given a fresh change of clothes.

He stared at Heidens, and instantly, his terrified eyes turned round.

In the Holy Union, Heidens had presided over large-scale masses before, and in the past, this slave had personally seen Heidens and knew that Heidens was the Holy Emperor of the Radiant Church.

Instantly, he began to make furious ‘uh’ sounds towards Heidens.

“Hurry up.” Instantly, one of the escorts behind him gave him a vicious lash of the whip, causing the slave’s body to spasm from the blow.

“Such utter fools. They should feel proud to be able to offer their lives to the mighty Lord Chiquita [Qi’ji’ta].” The female priestess behind Heidens said with a cold snort.

Heidens laughed calmly.

“How many souls does Lord Chiquita still need before he will have completely recovered?” Heidens asked the white-robed priestess.

The priestess said respectfully, “Your Holiness, in the past year, we have already delivered several tens of thousands of people. Lord Chiquita has already recovered most of his strength, but according to what Lord Chiquita says, to completely recover, he will most likely need ten thousand more common souls.”

“Ten thousand more common souls? That will still take a long time.” Heidens frowned.

“But of course, ten Saint-level souls would be sufficient.” The white-robed priestess said.

Heidens frowned, casting a glance at the white-robed priestess. “Saint-level souls? Hmph. Remember, all you need to do is take good care of Lord Chiquita. Don’t get involved in anything else.”

“Yes.” The white-robed priestess said respectfully.

Heidens glanced towards the other end of the tunnel, then at the freshly

washed slaves who were still being escorted in an unbroken stream through it. He sighed secretly, “Before draining their souls, he wants the slaves to be washed and changed into clean clothes? This Chiquita…ugh…”

Heidens actually felt some aversion towards this Chiquita.

But Heidens knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful Chiquita was.

Ever since the event which happened in the Anarchic Lands, where he had torn up the agreement with Linley and had their final falling out, Heidens had begun to carefully plan for what he would have to do in the event that Linley led a group of Saints to slaughter a path to the Sacred Isle.

“Fortunately, the Radiant Sovereign is munificent. At this moment of crisis, he permitted Lord Chiquita to descend.” Heidens murmured to himself.

But what Heidens didn’t know was that right now, Linley was currently leading a group of twenty five experts who were traversing through the ocean, flying at high speed to the Sacred Isle.

Chapter 7 – Judgment Day Descends

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 7, Judgment Day Descends

From far off in the distance, the Radiant Church's Sacred Isle seemed so peaceful. A group of shadows was flying towards it at high speed from the horizon.

"Hold." Linley's voice rang out in everyone's mind, and instantly, all of the experts came to a halt at a distance of a few kilometers away from the Sacred Isle. The enormous draconic bodies of the Tyrant Wyrm, the Thunder Lizard, and the Gold Dragon swayed slightly in the air.

The three leaders, Linley, Tulily, and Desri, stared down at the distant island.

"That's the Sacred Isle. No mistaking it." Tulily nodded.

Linley's group could feel that enormous light-style aura. It felt the same as Fenlai City had in the past.

"First let myself and Delia give them a greeting gift." After having suppressed his hatred for so long, Linley's heart was now filled with rage.

"A greeting gift?" Tulily, Desri, and the other experts all looked at Linley and Delia.

Delia and Linley, wife and husband, exchanged a glance. They had already discussed this affair of attacking the Sacred Isle late into the previous night. Delia immediately began to murmur the words to a magic spell, while Linley did so as well.

"Wind-style forbidden-level magic?" The experts were all eagerly awaiting this spectacle.

Delia's eyes suddenly lit up, and her jade-like arms pointed towards the distant Sacred Isle.

"Rumble…"

Suddenly, a massive storm that was dozens of kilometers wide appeared out of nowhere.

Everywhere within line of sight was filled with blasts of wind which either formed into twisting tornados or powerful, knife-like gusts of wind. The ocean itself was beginning to stir!

The waves of the ocean quickly reached a height of hundreds of meters, and with a rumbling sound, the massive tidal waves crashed down towards the Sacred Isle like waves of soldiers.

When they reached the Sacred Isle, those tidal waves came crashing down viciously like mountains.

"Bang!" Under the attack of the tidal waves that were hundreds of meters high, those stone houses immediately shattered from the impact, and many boulders and trees were smashed to smithereens as well. Many of the Radiant Church's forces were directly smashed into a pulp.

This 'blowing' wind was actually acting like countless cutting blades.

This was…

Wind-style forbidden-level magic: Annihilating Tempest!!!

Wherever the Annihilating Tempest passed by, not a single shred of grass would be able to survive!

This wasn't that sort of ordinary, natural tempest. This was the 'Annihilating Tempest', formed from countless wind blades of all sizes. Even boulders and trees were effortless sliced into rubble by the countless wind blades.

A white radiant aura, centered around the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple, shot out in every direction. A visible white barrier was quickly expanding, and every place covered by this white barrier was protected against and blocked off from the energy of the Annihilating Tempest.

“What’s going on? Who is attacking?” The leader of the Zealots, ‘Lehman’, grabbed a Vicar and growled at him.

“Don’t know, I don’t know.” The white-robed Vicar seemed to have been scared silly by the power of the Annihilating Tempest. Just then, he had personally witnessed how those people in the distance had been sliced through by the countless wind blades of the Annihilating Tempest and turned into a pile of ground meat.

And just at this moment…

“Rumble…” The entire Sacred Isle was beginning to shake.

After having experienced the Annihilating Tempest, the lucky survivors of the Sacred Isle only numbered 10% of their former numbers. These lucky survivors were all experts of the seventh or eighth ranks. But against a forbidden-level spell, these experts were also utterly terrified.

“What is going on with the ground?” Many of the followers of the Church, their bodies soaked through and through by those earlier waves, felt the ground beneath their feet was unsteady.

“Crunch!” “Boom!”

The earth was constantly shaking. It was as though a series of ripples was expanding in every direction. These vibrations were causing the earth itself to break apart, and one massive crack in the earth appeared after another. Many experts, screaming, fell directly into those massive cracks…but that wasn’t the worst part.

The worst part was in the skies. Countless massive boulders, covered with

an earthen light, were crashing down wildly from the heavens.

“Bang!” Many of the members of the Church who were struck by these boulders were instantly turned into meat pulp.

“Lord!” Some hopeless believers raised their head and shouted, hoping that the Lord would save them.

And then…they were smashed flat by the massive descending boulders, and their blood stained the ground an eye-catching color. But soon, their blood was washed away by the water which was appearing from the cracks in the earth, and many half-smashed bodies were now floating about.

“Bastard.” Lehman smashed forth with a fist viciously, breaking an enormous boulder above him into tiny pieces.

But he wasn’t able to save any others!

“Who just used the earth-style forbidden-level spell, ‘Heaven Collapses, Earth Shatters’?!” Lehman was howling in his mind.

Earth-style, forbidden-level spell: ‘Heaven Collapses, Earth Shatters’!

Over two thirds of the ground of the Sacred Isle had sank down, with only the central third area where the Radiant Temple itself was located remaining. And yet, even this remaining third still had many large cracks in the ground.

The radius of the protective barrier of the Radiant Temple retracted once again.

They were afraid that the enemies would use yet another forbidden-level spell…and yes, their fears were correct.

This was nothing more than the appetizers. The faces of those very few lucky survivors suddenly changed, because suddenly, the large amounts of seawater around the Sacred Isle had suddenly frozen, and the cracked earth

of the Sacred Isle suddenly was covered with a layer of ice. Frost had completely covered the entire area.

“Boom!”

The areas that were not under the direct protection of that barrier of the Radiant Temple were immediately frozen, then shattered. Countless boulders and mounds of dirt all shattered into tiny pieces, and then fell into the sea. But the freezing, then shattering of these boulders was just a side effect.

More importantly, due to the shrunken radius of the protective barrier of the Radiant Temple, many followers of the Church had been suddenly exposed, and they, too, were frozen, then shattered into tiny pieces.

Water-style, forbidden-level spell: Absolute Zero!

“Your Holiness, what should we do? What should we do?!” A nearby Cardinal was standing next to Heidens in terror and fear.

Heidens was standing on the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple, staring at what was happening from a distance.

“The most terrifying enemy of our Church…” Heidens’ face was ugly to behold. “Has come!”

“Don’t bother about the other areas. First, protect the Radiant Temple.”

Suddenly, Heidens’ face changed.

“What?!” Seeing what had happened through the window, Heidens was shocked as well.

After having suffered the ‘Absolute Zero’ attack, the Sacred Isle only had 20% of its original territory left. The Radiant Temple’s barrier was currently only protecting a few kilometers worth of space in the heart now.

Suddenly, a white light, like the rays of the sun, shone down on the tattered remnants of the island. The island, illuminated by that holy light, suddenly seemed to be much brighter, but then…everything that white light touched was transformed into dust, the people included!

Light-style, forbidden-level magic: World-Purifying Light!

After taking four forbidden-level spells in a row, the originally beautiful, graceful Sacred Island was now reduced to just the few square kilometers on which the Radiant Temple sat.

“When you two couples work together, you really are quite terrifying.” In mid-air, Tulily sighed in amazement.

“That was awesome.” Bebe’s excited little eyes were gleaming.

Just then, after Linley and Delia had cast their two major forbidden-level spells, Pennslyn and Desri had cast two major forbidden-level spells of their own. Earth-style, wind-style, water-style, light-style…four forbidden-level spells had struck out in sequence. Even if the Radiant Church had wanted to protect the entire island, there was no way it could have done so.

Right now, Linley’s eyes, sharp as daggers, were staring at the distant Radiant Temple.

“That was just the greeting gift. Come. Let’s start the battle.”

Linley led the way, flying towards the Radiant Temple, and the rest of the twenty five Saints flew alongside him.

All the high level members of the Radiant Temple were clustered here on the ninth floor. Through the massive window wall, they could clearly make out those twenty five experts flying towards them. Seeing this, their hearts all shuddered, but their leader, Heidens, was silent.

“That’s Linley. Linley has come.”

“And Desri! That traitor to the Church, Desri, who left long ago. He is so shameless to come back now? Everyone, what should we do?”

Everyone was frantic.

“Hrmph.” A cold snort rang out, and instantly, all of the high level members of the Church on the ninth floor quieted down. The Holy Emperor Heidens, who in the past had always been amiable and smiling, never revealing his rage even when utterly infuriated…was no longer hiding anything.

“Lehman. Fallen Leaf.” Heidens’ heavy voice shook the entire Radiant Temple, and even the area outside of it rang with his voice.

Two blurs appeared in the middle of the ninth floor of the Radiant Temple. It was the leader of the Zealots, Lehman, and the spiritual leader of the Ascetics, ‘Lord Fallen Leaf’.

“Lehman, we’ll be relying on you this time.” Heidens looked at Lehman.

“The ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’. This is the most powerful attack of our Church.” The emaciated Fallen Leaf looked at Lehman as well. “This time, we cannot afford to lose.”

Lehman’s chiseled, granite features appeared very cold. “Please don’t worry. We have fifteen Saint-level Four-Winged Angels, ten Saint-level Zealots, six Saint-level Ascetics, and four Saint-level Special Executors. Including me, we have a total of thirty-six…we can form the ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’. Linley’s group will definitely die.”

Heidens nodded slightly.

Only by including Lehman would they be able to reach the necessary number of thirty-six Saints. Many of them were only early-stage and middle-stage Saints.

“The total strength of the Church, as well as our future prospects, are all at stake here.” In his heart, Heidens felt nervous. The Church had staked all of

its Saint-level power on this battle.

The radius of the protective barrier coming from the Radiant Temple was rapidly shrinking, until finally retreating to a radius of just a few hundred meters around the Radiant Temple itself.

Dozens of figures emerged from within the Radiant Temple, with Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf leading them. Heidens and Lord Fallen Leaf were both dressed in white robes, while Heidens was wielding a magistaff in his hands, and his bald head was gleaming with light.

“Heidens, you actually dare to come out!” Wharton growled coldly.

“Why shouldn’t I dare?” Heidens’ face was cold. He turned to look at Linley, with the demeanor of a high and mighty celestial spirit. “Linley, do you know that by acting in such a way, you are committing a great blasphemy against the Radiant Sovereign? This desire of yours to destroy the legacy of the Radiant Sovereign in the mortal world is an unpardonable sin.”

“Heidens, do you think I am one of your followers, to be fooled by you?”

Linley let out a cold laugh. “The Radiant Sovereign is an exalted Sovereign. His glorious light is spread across countless planes. How can the Sovereign possibly be bothered if just one or two of them have problems? What’s more, this is just a material plane which cannot possibly accommodate the mighty presence of a Sovereign!”

“Linley, don’t waste words with them. Let’s just kill them.” Tulily said.

In the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley had been terror-stricken many times, but even there, he had never been as excited as he currently felt.

“Heidens, that year, when I left the city of Hess, I swore that I would definitely destroy your entire Radiant Church and pull it out by the roots. Now, today…” Linley looked calmly at Heidens. “Today is the day your Radiant Church is annihilated.”

Heidens looked at Linley, secretly hating himself. “In the past, after I found out that Linley knew about what happened to his mother, I shouldn’t have tried to have him become a ‘Blessed One’. I should have killed him early on.” At the same time, Heidens spoke mentally to Lehman. “Lehman, make your move.”

The many Saints behind Heidens suddenly began to move at high speed. These thirty-six Saints were clearly preparing to set up the ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’.

“Ah!” Suddenly, an agonized scream rang out.

One of Heidens’ Saints fell from the sky, his head crushed into smithereens.

“What do you think you are doing, eh?” Bebe waved his little paws, snickering as he stared at Heidens.

Heidens stared at Bebe, feeling as though Bebe’s smile was incomparably detestable. “Bastard.” No matter how well trained he was, Heidens couldn’t help but let out a curse. The Great Six-Point Battle Formation was now missing a person. What to do? Heidens could only glance at the nearby Lord Fallen Leaf, and mentally spoke to him, “Fallen Leaf, you go…” But just as he began to mentally speak, Heidens noticed a look of shock appear in the eyes of Fallen Leaf.

Heidens frantically turned his head back.

A devilish violet flash of light had already arrived next to him, and where the violet sword passed through, space itself was torn apart.

“Linley!” Heidens stared in shocked into Linley’s cold eyes.

Chapter 8 – The Great Six-Point Battle Formation

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 8, The Great Six-Point Battle Formation

A holy light suddenly sprang forth from Heidens' body, and Linley's Bloodviolet sword instantly began to move more slowly, as though it was mired in mud. At the same time, the wellspring of this holy light, the 'Radiant Scriptures', flew out from within Heidens' body, hovering above Heidens' head.

"Die!" Linley's face was cold and cruel. Although Bloodviolet's speed had been lessened and impacted, it still wasn't slow enough for the likes of Heidens' to dodge.

"No!" Heidens' frantically tried to dodge.

"Slash!"

Bloodviolet chopped down diagonally from Heidens' shoulder, and half of Heidens' body, including both of his legs, was chopped apart. That half of his body included his right arm, which had been holding his magistaff. With this chop, even the magistaff tumbled down.

"Ughhhh!!!" A suppressed, agonized cry escaped Heidens' lips.

But then, Heidens' remaining half of his body flew back at high speed, while the 'Radiant Scriptures' hovering over his head radiated a holy white light that quickly began to repair Heidens' wounds. His body was visibly regenerating. Actually, Heidens himself was very talented at light-style healing magic, but with this divine artifact, the 'Radiant Scriptures', his healing speed was even faster.

"Heidens, I didn't expect you to be able to survive even that. But it's for the better…I'll let you personally witness the true destruction of the Radiant

Church." Linley said with complete confidence.

After his experiences in the Necropolis of the Gods, he now possessed the Pearl of Life and gained insights into the Profound Truths of Velocity. Linley was now far stronger than he had been before entering the Necropolis of the Gods, and he didn't hold the experts of the Radiant Church in front of him in any regard at all.

"Prepare to die, Linley." Lehman rumbled in his thick voice.

Including Lehman and Lord Fallen Leaf, thirty-six Saint-level experts had suddenly move outwards, surrounding Linley's group.

"How laughable. You fellows didn't try to flee." Lehman, in mid-air, laughed coldly.

Linley, Tulily, Desri, and the others began to laugh as well. How could they not have noticed that the experts of the Radiant Church were surrounding them? Perhaps they were about to set up some sort of new, special battle formation, but Linley's group understood a simple principle; no matter how powerful a battle formation is, it is still only as powerful as the people who use it!

Tulily laughed coldly. "These Saints…most of them are early stage Saints. More importantly…your formation doesn't just surround one of us. It surrounds twenty five of us. The combined attacks of we twenty five Saints…I wonder if your formation would be able to hold on!"

"Whooosh…."

Heidens had already rapidly retreated to the door of the Radiant Temple. He raised his head, staring upwards into mid-air. Seeing that Linley's group had been trapped within the Great Six-Point Battle Formation, he couldn't help but feel wildly overjoyed, and he said in a loud voice, "Linley, you and your group came to die. Lehman, hurry up and kill them."

Just then, he had nearly lost his life. Heidens' heart was currently swelling

with a murderous intent, but he himself wasn't powerful enough to take action.

"Yes, Your Holiness." Lehman was extremely confident as well.

Heidens took a deep breath, then started watching, slightly nervous. Although he was extremely confident in the power of the 'Great Six-Point Battle Formation', the enemy he was facing was Linley!

A person who created miracles!

Linley was currently carefully examining this so-called 'Great Six-Point Battle Formation' before him. In but a glance, Linley could tell that this 'Great Six-Point Battle Formation' should be the advanced version of the 'Angel Battle Formation', which was formed from six experts.

This 'Great Six-Point Battle Formation', however, had thirty-six Saints divided into six parts.

Each of the six Saints in each part formed an 'Angel Battle Formation'.

The thirty-six of them then formed a single whole, as the six 'Angel Battle Formations' once again merged with each other, forming this so-called 'Great Six-Point Battle Formation'.

"Could it be that they don't know that the Angel Battle Formation means nothing to me? Could it be that they think I would be stopped by a powered up Angel Battle Formation?" Linley was extremely confident.

The Four-Winged Angels…the wild Saint-level Zealots…the cold, merciless Saint-level Special Executors…the thirty-six Saints were formed into a single whole, and terrifyingly powerful 'holy force' was constantly flowing through them. Amongst them, the director of this formation, Lehman, clearly had the most powerful holy force.

"Raaaaaaaaargh!" 2.5 meters tall, and as massive and burly as a magical beast, Lehman let out a furious roar, brandishing that long staff of his,

covered in holy light.

“Bang!” The long staff struck down from far away.

Instantly, a ray of holy energy that was dozens of meters long and as thick as a barrel blasted down from the staff. The holy energy’s main target was Linley, but with a single movement, Linley dodged away from it when the beam of holy energy was still a meter away from him.

Linley was simply too fast!

“Everyone, don’t try to take that beam of light on by yourself.” Linley’s voice rang out in Delia, Desri, Tulily, and the other experts’ minds.

Although he hadn’t touched the beam of light, even at the distance of one meter, Linley had sensed that his Pulseguard Defense was faintly trembling. After having been reinforced by the merged power of thirty-six Saints, this attack was definitely comparable to a combination attack of a hundred Saints.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

One pillar of light blasted out after another, but after the beam of light dissipated, the holy energy actually returned to the formation.

“If this continues, their power will be virtually limitless.” Linley said to himself.

“Haha, everyone, attack together.” Tulily shouted loudly, and then a blood red blade flashed through the sky.

“Roooooar!” The Tyrant Wyrm, the Thunder Lizard, and the Gold Dragon swept out with their draconic tails, smashing viciously towards the enemies.

“Die!” Barker and his brothers, who had been nursing their grief and hatred this entire time, had all transformed into Undying Warrior Saints. With a furious roar, the five brothers all brandished those astonishing greataxes

smashing directly down towards the ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’ with mountain-splitting force!

As for Zassler, he had summoned eight Saint-level undead! Zassler’s eyes were flashing nonstop with jade green light.

Linley, Wharton, Bebe, Miller, Livingston, Ford, Higgingson, and the other Saints all attacked the formation at the same time as well.

With the Saint-level undead added in, their side had over thirty peak-stage Saints!

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” ….

Rips in space appeared and disappeared like an electric snake was tearing through the sky, but that white light endured and continued!

The wild attacks caused the entire formation to vibrate wildly, but in the end, it still managed to stabilize. The faces of a few of those thirty-six Saints had turned somewhat pale, but as the holy light flooded through their bodies, they quickly recovered.

“Whew. It’s fine!” The distant Heidens felt a surge of joy.

“We held on. We really held on!” Heidens had worried that this ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’ wouldn’t be able to hold on in the face of so many experts attacking together.

“Linley, you will definitely die.” Heidens finally felt confident.

If even Linley, when joining forces with all the other experts, wasn’t able to break through, what did they have to be afraid of? After all, the energy of the attacks of this ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’ which were aimed at the inside of the formation would return to the formation, making the available energy virtually limitless. No matter how long this fight lasted for, the Radiant Church wouldn’t be afraid.

“Haha…” Lord Lehman laughed loudly in his thick, rumbling voice.

The Radiant Church’s side all had excited smiles on their faces.

“The power of this formation is quite something.” Linley sighed in praise.

“Right. It really is powerful. Our full power attacks were quickly depleted by the energy of this formation, abrading the great majority of the strength of the attacks. Only ten or twenty percent of our power managed to get through and land on the bodies of those thirty-six.” Desri sighed in praise as well.

The power of their combined attacks, even reduced to ten or twenty percent, was still enough to cause some of those weaker thirty-six Saints to be injured.

The difference in power between the two sides was simply too great.

Only, the duplicative merged power of this formation was simply too great, and it also possessed the healing properties of light-style energy.

“Desri, watch me.” With a flip of his hand, Linley withdrew his adamantine heavy sword.

Linley swept Lehman and Fallen Leaf with his gaze. He praised, “I have to admit, this formation your Radiant Church possesses truly does have incredible defense. However…could it be that you aren’t aware that this sort of formation is useless against me?”

“Whoosh!” With a flash, Linley charged towards Lehman’s side.

“Die.” Linley’s eyes were filled with fierceness.

The adamantine heavy sword in his hand struck out gently, like a falling leaf, but its speed was actually as fast and vicious as a bolt of lightning. In an instant, it landed against the white glow, and a terrifying vibrational force passed straight through it, virtually ignoring it as it attacked Lehman.

Profound Truths of the Earth – Throbbing Pulse of the World, 64 Fused Waves!

“Huh?” Linley suddenly frowned.

Linley could clearly sense that the vibrational waves, upon reaching Lehman’s arm, instantly made it explode, but the holy energy immediately began to visibly repair the damage done at high speed.

“Not good.” Linley instantly understood the difference between this Great Six-Point Battle Formation and the Angel Battle Formation.

The six parts of the Angel Battle Formation were represented by six people.

If Linley were to attack one part of the Angel Battle Formation and his adamantine heavy sword were to land against a person, the vibrational waves would have a high probability of directly destroying that person’s internal organs. The assorted experts of the Angel Battle Formation wouldn’t be able to dodge at all!

But the ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’ was different. Its six parts were actually made up of six people that were formed into one whole.

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword hadn’t actually clashed with any weapons. To be precise, this attack of Linley’s was actually aimed towards the entire group of six people in that unit, but the vibration travelled in a straight line. Whoever it attacked would be the one to be damaged!

This sort of straight-line attack would naturally be avoided by the opponents, especially when Lehman and the others sensed that strange force penetrate the ‘holy power’ protecting them.

Although the speed of the vibrations was quite fast, it would only be enough to injure Lehman.

“Linley, so this is that ‘legendary’ technique of yours, the Profound Truths

of the Earth?" Lehman's eyes were gleaming, and he laughed loudly, "Haha…if this was the Angel Battle Formation, you truly would be able to succeed, but did you think that the Radiant Church would step in the same pit twice? Haha…"

Lord Fallen Leaf had a hint of a smile on his face as well. "The Great Six-Point Battle Formation is formed from six groups of six people. As soon as your Profound Truths of the Earth penetrates the holy energy, they will be able to sense it and can instantly move to make sure their vitals are not struck. You won't be able to easily kill any one of them."

"Linley, weren't you feeling very confident, just now?" One of the Special Executor Saints in the formation said in a cold voice.

But Linley began to laugh.

Delia, Tulily, Desri, and the others all began to laugh.

"Boss, you've made a fool of yourself." Bebe laughed.

Linley laughed as well. "I really did underestimate this Angel Battle Formation."

The Radiant Church's forces were all rather angry now, because Linley's side was still chatting and laughing amongst each other, as though this formation was nothing to them at all. But at the same time, Lehman, Fallen Leaf, and the others began to feel uneasy. How could the enemy be so confident? Did they have something up their sleeves?

"Do they have some sort of method to break our formation?" Lehman worried.

"Lehman, shrink the area covered by the formation. Force them into tighter quarters, then kill them." Heidens' voice rang out from afar.

"Fine." Lehman didn't think about it anymore.

The thirty-six Saints of the Radiant Church instantly began to draw closer together, reducing the volume and space covered by this ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’.

“Linley, stop playing around with them.” Desri said mentally to him.

Linley nodded slightly. “Delia, make your move.” Linley’s voice rang out in Delia’s consciousness. Delia smiled slightly, then all by herself, flew at high speed towards Lehman, who paid no attention to her at all.

“She dares to draw near? She’s asking for death.” Lehman laughed coldly to himself.

If Linley was to draw near, Lehman would perhaps be a bit nervous, but this was Delia. Why would he care?

But just as Delia was within ten meters or so of Lehman, Delia’s aura suddenly transformed.

“Rumble…”

An area of several dozen meters around her was affected. Lehman and the rest of his six, who were closest to Delia, suddenly couldn’t move at all, and even the flow of holy energy that was circulating amongst them came to a sudden halt. Because Lehman and his men were unable to move, and the holy energy in their bodies was suddenly separated from the rest of the formation, the entire Great Six-Point Battle Formation instantly shattered.

“She…she’s a Deity?!” Lehman’s eyes were filled with shock, but he couldn’t move.

The other thirty or so Saints were utterly mystified.

“Lehman, what’s going on?!” They didn’t understand why Lehman and the others had stopped using the formation, and had even stopped circulating the holy energy.

“Bang!” Bebe ripped the skull of one of the Saints to pieces. “Haha, you have no clue, right?”

“This Godrealm technique, even an imperfect one, is still able to prevent the opponent from moving for an instant.” Linley and Delia exchanged a glance, and the husband and wife couple both laughed.

The Godrealm was definitely the biggest reason why Deities were able to look down upon Saints with such contempt. Even this imperfect ‘Godrealm’ which Delia used was able to cause the opponent to be unable to move for a second or two. After all, even Linley, upon being affected by it, had been frozen for one or two seconds.

In a battle between Saints, these one or two seconds would determine life and death!

Chapter 9 – The Descent

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 9, The Descent

Because of the appearance of the Godrealm, the ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’ had been disrupted in one part, causing the entire ‘Great Six-Point Battle Formation’ to collapse. As soon as the formation had collapsed, Bebe had immediately killed a Saint.

“Haha, let’s begin the slaughter.”

The practitioner of the Way of Destruction, Tulily, shouted loudly, and each time the blood colored scimitar in his hands lit up, a Saint was chopped to death.

“Kill!” Barker and his brothers, the five Undying Warrior Saints, had ferocious looks on their faces. They roared angrily, brandishing their greataxes as they chopped towards the Saints close to them.

As for the Grand Magus Necromancer, Zassler, he laughed insidiously, utilizing spiritual attacks while simultaneously ordering his eight Saint-level undead to attack those pitiable Saints on the side of the Radiant Church. “Die…die…don’t you fellows love to kill ‘heathens’? All of you, die.”

As for the fastest person amongst them…without question, that was Linley.

With a flicker of his body, Linley charged towards Lord Fallen Leaf. If they were to discuss who was the strongest person on the side of the Radiant Church, Linley’s opinion was that it would be this person, the spiritual leader of the Ascetics. The skinny Lord Fallen Leaf saw Linley fly over, and he couldn’t help but immediately fly backwards in shock and anger.

“Lord Fallen Leaf, no need to flee.” Linley’s voice rang out in Fallen Leaf’s mind.

“Swish! A devilish violet light flashed.

The edge of that violet light had a hint of faint blue light. Wherever the violet sword went, a small seam in space itself was immediately ripped open. Lord Fallen leaf’s body radiated countless lines of white light, wanting to entangle that Bloodviolet sword, but as soon as they touched those tiny seams in space, those white threads of light instantly collapsed.

“Slash!”

Linley’s Bloodviolet sword chopped down directly towards Fallen Leaf’s head. It was like a tiny line had appeared in the middle of Fallen Leaf’s skull. The sword sliced through the skull, but the skull actually didn’t split apart. Only, a bloody line appeared straight through his head.

“Linl…Linley…” Lord Fallen Leaf looked at Linley. In the moment of his death, he thought back to that day when Guillermo had brought Linley to him to be trained as his apprentice.

At that time, Lord Fallen Leaf had refused Linley…

“I will only teach those with kind hearts and pure souls. But you…your heart is filled with an excessive desire to kill. I will not teach you.”

Thinking back to that scene, Fallen Leaf had a bitter feeling in his heart.

An excessive desire to kill?

Who would have thought that in the end, he would have died by Linley’s hands.

And then, Fallen Leaf’s consciousness vanished and dissipated!

As soon as Linley’s side had begun massacring the forces of the Radiant Emperor, Heidens, standing at the entrance to the Radiant Temple, began to tremble. His entire body shook, and then he turned towards the white-robed

priestess behind him and mentally barked, “Hurry, hurry and ask Lord Chiquita to come, hurry!!!”

“Yes, Your Holiness.” The white-robed priestess within the Radiant Temple immediately ran at high speed towards the insides of the Radiant Temple.

Holy Emperor Heidens gripped the ‘Radiant Scriptures’, staring at the scene above, his heart trembling. “Died. They all died.” Heidens’ heart ached. These dead Saints had been the reason why the Radiant Church had been able to maintain its grip on power in the Yulan continent.

Some of these Saints might have had the potential to one day surpass him in power and become the next Holy Emperor.

“Too late. It’s all too late.” Heidens felt boundless grief and rage in his heart.

“But…there is still hope!” Heidens’ ground his teeth. “As long as we can kill that Linley, after a few more centuries of training and gathering new forces, our Radiant Church can definitely grow strong again.”

Heidens’ face suddenly changed. He cried out in shock, “Fallen Leaf!”

Right at that moment, Lord Fallen Leaf’s corpse fell down from mid-air.

As Lord Fallen Leaf died, twenty eight other Saints of the thirty-six the Radiant Church had started with had died as well.

Only eight were left!

The rate at which they had been killed caused the members of the Radiant Church who had witnessed this to feel shock and terror in their hearts.

“This Linley…” Heidens found out, to his amazement, that Linley next charged straight towards Lehman. Lehman had finally broken free of Delia’s ‘Godrealm’. After all, her Godrealm was an imperfect one, and was only capable of trapping him for a few seconds.

“Linley!” Lehman roared with fury, delivering a full-forced stick smash towards Linley.

Wherever the staff passed through, space itself rippled.

“Die.” Linley said calmly.

A devilish violet light passed through the staff, which instantly snapped into two parts. Wherever the devilish violet light passed, space itself was instantly torn apart. The spatial rip actually tore straight through Lehman’s body, and his tall, massive body was instantly split into two halves.

Dimensional Decapitator!

With a flash of the sword, Lehman’s skull exploded.

Linley turned and stared at the distant Heidens.

“Heidens. It is your turn, now.” Linley’s voice seemed to echo throughout the heavens.

With Lehman and Fallen Leaf dead, the Saints on the side of the Radiant Church primarily only consisted of early and middle stage Saints. In front of experts like Tulily, Desri, and Bebe, they didn’t have any ability to fight back at all.

In but a few seconds, all thirty-six Saints on the side of the Radiant Church had perished. Not a single one had managed to even escape.

“Heidens, what, are you planning to hide within the Radiant Temple, beneath the defensive formation of the ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’?” Standing in midair, holding the bloodstained Bloodviolet in his hand, Linley stared down at the terrified Holy Emperor, Heidens.

Once upon a time…

In Fenlai City, the young Linley had wanted to slay the King of Fenlai Kingdom, Clayde, to avenge his parents. At that time, Holy Emperor Heidens had stood in midair as well, easily dominating and maintaining control of the situation and of Linley.

There were hundreds of members of the Radiant Church within the Radiant Temple, but they didn't even have a place to flee!

The shattered remnants of the Sacred Isle were surrounded by the sea. If they wanted to flee, they would have to flee into the endless sea…but none of them were capable of flight. Even if one of them was a wind-style magus, Linley's side, including the Saint-level undead, numbered over thirty Saints. How could they possibly be fast enough to escape?

All they could do was hide inside the Radiant Temple.

The Radiant Temple was the last thing they could rely on.

"What should I do? What should I do?" Heidens was extremely nervous. "The Radiant Temple definitely won't be able to hold on for too long."

The greatest, final source of support for the Radiant Church had been the Great Six-Point Battle Formation. The 'Glory of the Radiant Sovereign' only relied on the magicite gems stored within the Radiant Temple to power it, and definitely wouldn't be able to withstand the power of the repeated attacks of Linley's group of thirty-plus Saints.

"Why hasn't Lord Chiquita arrived yet?" Heidens was frantic.

"Quick, you go underground as well and ask Lord Chiquita to come." Heidens mentally said to an Ascetic behind him.

"Yes, Your Holiness." This Ascetic was very worried as well.

Holy Emperor Heidens stared at Linley's group, hovering in mid-air. Instantly, his face changed, because he noticed that Linley and Delia had both fallen silent. No one else was speaking either; everyone's attention

seemed to be focused on the two of them.

“They are chanting a magical incantation!” Heidens instantly could tell.

“They have multiple Grand Magus Saints. If they were to all cast forbidden-level spells at the same time, and then have the others attack at the same time, the Radiant Temple definitely wouldn’t be able to hold on.” Heidens felt as though he were an ant atop a heated saucepan. He was utterly frantic now.

He turned his head yet again. “Why hasn’t Lord Chiquita come yet? What is going on?”

The ‘Lord Chiquita’ which Heidens had placed all his hope in had still yet to appear.

“Chiiiiiiii.”

An enormous, faint blue ‘Dimensional Edge’, at least twenty meters long, suddenly flew out from Linley, carrying a destructive surge of energy towards the Radiant Temple. By Delia’s side, a second Dimensional Edge, five or six meters long, also flew out.

Two Dimensional Edge spells, one large, one small, attacking at the same time!

“How could this Dimensional Edge be so huge?” Everyone hiding within the Radiant Temple, Heidens included, felt utterly shocked upon seeing this scene.

Dimensional Edge spells were generally three or four meters long. If they reached five or six meters in length, it was a sign that the Grand Magus Saint casting it was going all out.

Twenty meters?

How could they have imagined that Linley possessed a monstrously

powerful supportive divine artifact like the Coiling Dragon ring?

“Chiiiiiiiiiiiiii.” The Dimensional Edges chopped down against the walls of the Radiant Temple, and the Radiant Temple instantly lit up. A holy, dazzling light emanated out, frantically striving to block the Dimensional Edge spells, but this Dimensional Edge which Linley had cast was simply too enormous.

“Crunch!”

The entire Radiant Temple shuddered. Many people within it, Heidens included, noticed that the walls of the Radiant Temple were beginning to crack.

“The Radiant Temple is no longer able to hold on. Everyone, all together, let’s destroy it!” Wharton roared with fury, and then, brandishing the warblade ‘Slaughterer’, charged forward. Instantly, the three Saint-level dragons, Bebe, the Barker brothers…the experts all charged forward.

But Delia noticed that Linley had suddenly changed.

“Linley, what is it?”

Linley, staring at the cracking, shattering Radiant Temple in front of him, had a very complicated mixture of feelings in his heart. How long had he waited for this day, the day of the destruction of the Radiant Church?

“I’m fine.” Linley chuckled. “Hrm, what is that Heidens doing?”

Heidens, seeing the many experts charging forward, ground his teeth, then immediately knelt down. The ‘Radiant Scriptures’ he had been holding in his hands suddenly flew into the air above Heidens, and Heidens immediately bowed down, pressing his head against the floor.

Heidens’ entire body began to glow with an eye-piercing brilliant light.

Faint lines of blood began to emerge from Heidens’ body, staining his white

robe. Heidens raised his head, his eyes shooting forth two rays of piercing golden light, which struck directly upon that holy scripture.

“Lord, let your Glory descend and exterminate these Blasphemers!”

Heidens’ voice was incomparably ancient.

“Bang!” At this moment, the Radiant Temple came under the combined attack of the thirty-plus Saints, and the magical defensive formation instantly shattered. The nine-floor tall Radiant Temple collapsed, and the members of the Church within it let out cries of agony.

But at the same time, the holy scripture began to glow with an incomparably eye-piercing golden brilliance. The golden brilliance floated in the air above Heidens, forming into golden flower petals.

These ‘golden flower petals’ were slowly opening and unfurling.

Linley, Bebe, Tulily, Desri, Delia, and the other experts all watched this scene cautiously. They saw that from within the golden flower petals, a barefooted, muscular man with short silver hair and hemp clothes suddenly appeared, wielding a spear in his hands.

A terrifying aura was emanating from this barefooted, muscular man with short silver hair.

“It is you…who have summoned me?” The muscular spear-wielding man lowered his head, looking at Heidens. “Blasphemers? Where?”

Heidens’ eyes lit up, and he immediately pointed towards Linley’s group. “O Mighty One, that group of Saints before us are all Blasphemers.”

The spear-wielding muscular man stood in mid-air, and with two steps, he walked outside of the Radiant Temple, turning his gaze towards Linley’s group.

The aura which this muscular, spear wielding man was emanating was one

which Linley and Desri were very familiar with.

This was the aura of a Deity!

“Linley, this is the apparition of a Deity from the Divine Realm of Light. The apparitions of Deity are only formed from energy and don’t possess divine sparks. Their energy is limited to that of Prime Saints, and can’t possibly reach the Demigod level.” Desri’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley immediately calmed down.

“However, we still need to be careful. Although the apparitions are constrained by the bounds of these material planes to have the power of Prime Saints, their understandings of the Laws are at their full level. If their true body is that of a Highgod, then the apparitions will have a Highgod level of understanding of the Laws!” Desri’s face was solemn.

Even if the apparition was limited to the power of Prime Saints, if the apparition had the insights of a Highgod, most likely even a Demigod would be easily killed by it.

The spear-wielding, muscular man swept Linley’s group with his gaze. “I am Belzie [Ba’er’sai’ze], the Third Guardian under the command of Lord Plaker [Pu’lei’ke’er]. Die, Blasphemers!” The muscular man’s spear suddenly pierced through the air, arriving in front of Linley in an instant.

Chapter 10 – Lord Chiquitas!

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 10 Lord Chiquitas!

“Crunch!”

Although Linley immediately dodged, the spear still pierced through Linley’s throat, then instantly returned to Belsize’s hands.

“So fast.” Linley felt utterly shocked. A faint green light quickly covered the wound, allowing his throat to rapidly return to normal.

Belsize glanced at Linley in surprise, then let out a sigh of approval. “I didn’t expect that you would be in possession of a Pearl of Life. It seems that you are the leader of these Blasphemers, then.” Although he had discovered Linley was in possession of a Pearl of Life, Belsize was still completely confident.

This attack of Belsize had caused all of the experts on Linley’s side to feel terror.

“That attack only pierced through your throat. This next attack, I will use to pierce through your soul. Let’s see how you will dodge this.” Belsize moved, transforming into a line of bright light and piercing through the air. As for Linley, he immediately utilized the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ to fly backwards and retreat.

Linley was fast. But Belsize was even faster!

The Bloodviolet sword in Linley’s hand, covered with that faint blue aura, chopped directly towards Belsize’s head.

Belsize smiled disdainfully. Dodging backwards, he avoided the strike of Bloodviolet, and then the spear in his hand shot out like a ray of light, piercing through the heavens towards Linley’s skull. The speed of this

attack was simply too fast, and Linley didn't have any time to dodge at all.

"Clang!"

Bloodviolet seemed to have teleported, as it clashed against the side of the spear. The spear shuddered, then just missed Linley, passing by his head.

"Your attack has a hint of the 'Dimensional Edge' about it, and your speed isn't bad either." Belsize was wielding his spear again, chuckling calmly as he looked at Linley. "Even in the countless, myriad planes of the universe, amongst Saints, you can be considered to be amongst the highest class. A pity…"

Belsize's face grew solemn, and then he swept his arm out.

"Boom!"

A burst of dim white light shot directly towards Linley. Linley had been extremely cautious, and so as soon as the white light shot at him, Linley immediately flew backwards, retreating without even pausing to think.

"Hissss…." The parts of his body which the white light touched all immediately disintegrated into ash.

"Whew." Having just barely escaped the area of the white light, Linley let out a secret sigh of relief.

Right now, his forehead was matted in sweat. His entirely disintegrated legs were quickly regrowing, and he stared in terror and rage at the distant Belsize. "His speed is several times faster than mine, and it seems he hasn't gone all out yet either. Even a casual blow from him is so terrifying."

In terms of power and energy levels, Linley and Belsize were on par.

But in terms of understanding the Laws…

The difference was simply enormous!

“Boss!” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “If you can’t hold on, then flee.” Bebe was nervous as well. Desri and the others had fled far away long ago and were watching from afar. They had to admit…that their power was far lower than Linley’s.

If Linley was unable to defeat the opponent, then they wouldn’t be able to either.

“Hissss…” Suddenly, a Dimensional Edge suddenly shot towards Belsize at high speed. It had been cast by Delia.

“Dimensional Edge.” The other experts, Linley included, all felt a thread of hope.

Belsize glanced at the Dimensional Edge, neither dodging nor retreating. When the Dimensional Edge reached his body, only then did Belsize suddenly retreat at high speed.

The Dimensional Edge flew forwards, and Belsize flew backwards.

“What?!”

Everyone, Linley included, felt shock and terror, because they knew exactly how fast the ‘Dimensional Edge’ was…and yet it was still slower than Belsize. Belsize had a faint smile on his face, easily maintaining the distance between himself and the Dimensional Edge.

After the Dimensional Edge dissipated, Belsize came to a halt as well.

“Dimensional Edge? It has been such a long time since I have encountered it. What a nostalgic feeling.” Belsize sighed.

Linley’s face changed.

It was hopeless!

It was utterly hopeless!

“Retreat, everyone, retreat, quickly, quickly!!!” Linley’s voice suddenly rang out in the minds of Tulily, Desri, and the other experts.

Not hesitating at all, Tulily and the other experts immediately began to flee in every which way.

“Fleeing?” Belsize’s face turned cold. “Hrmph.”

Belsize suddenly raised his level of speed to the limit, appearing in front of Linley in the blink of an eye, and Linley immediately flew backwards.

But just at that moment, Belsize’s body suddenly came to a halt, a hint of surprise and anger in his eyes. “A Deity?” Linley suddenly realized that Delia was close to them, and he hurriedly, frantically messaged her mentally, “Delia, quick, leave!”

Delia had just utilized her ‘Godrealm’.

However, this ‘Belsize’ was nothing more than an apparition, an energy construct. He had no soul, only a linked thread of awareness. If this was a true ‘Godrealm’, perhaps there would have been some effect, but this imperfect ‘Godrealm’ had virtually no effect on him.

Belsize’s body paused for only the briefest of instants, and then he turned to look at Delia, his gaze cold. “You haven’t even successfully fused with the divine spark in its entirety, and yet you dare to use it?”

“Swoosh!” The spear immediately shot out from his hands, and the target… was Delia!

“Delia!” Linley was shocked.

“Clang!”

A metallic ringing sound. The spear returned to Belsize’s hands, its mission

unaccomplished. Belsize stared at Delia in astonishment. “A set of divine battle armor? You actually have divine battle armor?”

“Delia, leave, quickly. I’ll hold him down. Quick!” Linley mentally said to her frantically.

Linley knew that given Belsize’s speed, if he chased after any one of them, that person would definitely be caught up to and killed.

“No.” Delia didn’t leave. She stared at Linley, her eyes slightly misty. “If we die, we die together.”

“Delia…” Linley’s heart was extremely confused and torn.

He hadn’t expect that the Holy Emperor, Heidens, would have this final card up his sleeve. To summon the specter of a Deity, and one of such terrifying power, at that…

“I was overconfident, too overconfident. If I had been a bit more prudent, and had immediately killed Heidens at the beginning! If I hadn’t given him the chance to summon this specter, none of this would have happened.” Linley hated himself for his mistake. And at this moment, Belsize charged towards Delia once more.”

At this point in time, Belsize’s primary target had actually become Delia.

“A divine spark, and a set of divine battle armor…” Belsize flew over at high speed. “I didn’t expect that in this material plane, there would actually be someone so astonishingly stupid. If she had actually finished fusing her divine spark, it truly would be quite hard for me to kill her. But as things stand…”

A cold light flashed through Belsize’s eyes.

“Delia, quick, leave!” Linley was utterly beside himself with panic, shooting towards Belsize at maximum speed.

But Linley was behind Belsize, and he was slower than Belsize to begin with. How could he possibly catch up?

“Shkreeeeeeeeee!!!”

Suddenly, a heaven-shaking, high-pitched shriek rang out, and a black shadow charged forward from behind Delia. Ignoring everything, it charged straight towards Belsize with explosive fury, transforming into eight shadows, all of which revealed cold, sharp fangs and fierce claws. It was Bebe!

Linley was instantly stunned.

“Bebe, quick, flee!” Linley was about to go insane.

Bebe, block Belsize? How could he possibly hold!

“A little mouse?” A look of contempt flashed through Belsize’s eyes. The speed of the rat-type magical beast in front of him was lower than Linley. How could Belsize be bothered by it? As for this Shadowshape Doppelganger Technique, Belsize could tell at one glance where Bebe’s true body was.

The spear in Belsize’s hand swept out.

“Slash!” The spear pierced directly into Bebe’s body. But even then, Bebe still opened his maw, wanting to bite down at Belsize, his two eyes filled with a hint of insanity.

“Boss, quick, run, run!!!!” Bebe’s voice rang in Linley’s mind.

Bebe stared forcefully at Linley with his two eyes.

It was as though in this last moment of his life, he wanted to take one more look at Linley.

“Boss, run for it!” Bebe’s little eyes were filled with unshed tears.

“Bebe!” Linley felt his mind go blank. Seeing Bebe spitted on that spear, Linley’s tears began to fall out uncontrollably. He felt so powerless. He wanted to save Bebe, but he didn’t have the ability to do so! Linley’s entire body began to shudder from his agony.

“Huh?” Belsize’s eyes suddenly opened wide with astonishment and rage.

After his spear had just penetrated partway through Bebe, he wasn’t able to push any further. Suddenly, a surge of black light instantly erupted forth from Bebe’s body, directly attacking Belsize’s mind, destroying that linked thread of awareness. As it did so, an ice-cold voice rang out in his mind.

“Belsize, how dare you! When I have some free time, I will pay a personal visit to your Lord Plaker!”

Belsize’s body instantly crumbled away and dissipated.

“Boss, Boss!” Bebe instantly scurried towards Linley.

Surprised and delighted, Delia flew over as well. Linley was standing there in mid-air, utterly stupefied. What had happened?

Just moments ago, he had been filled with utter despair and regret. But now, the incomparably powerful Belsize had suddenly dissipated, and Bebe hadn’t died.

“Bebe isn’t dead!” Linley’s eyes suddenly lit up.

“Bebe.” Linley immediately grabbed Bebe, pulling him in for a tight hug.

“Boss.” Bebe rubbed his little head comfortably against Linley’s chest.

“Delia.” Linley reached out to embrace Delia as well. Just moments ago, he had been in the grip of a nightmare, but now…he felt as though he truly understood what ‘happiness’ meant.

Within the shattered remnants of the Radiant Temple, in a room, there was a tall, three-eyed man with a pair of goose-like wings on his back. The man was staring out the window. He had watched the entire battle, from start to finish. “Even the specter of Lord Belsize was destroyed. How is that possible? That ‘Linley’ fellow’s power is on par with mine, but there’s no way he could possibly destroy the shadow of Lord Belsize.”

The three-eyed man considered his options.

“Best to simply leave. As for that Heidens…leave him to his fate.”

The tall, muscular man leapt out from within a window in the Radiant Temple. His wings trembled gently, and then he transformed into a line of light, disappearing into the horizon. His speed was incredibly fast, on par with Linley.

Heidens’ face seemed ancient and decrepit. His eyes were dim.

The execution of the ‘Deity’s Descent’ technique which was only taught to each Holy Emperor was something which had caused great harm to Heidens. Not just in terms of mageforce; his spiritual energy had been entirely used up, and even his soul had been badly damaged. There was no way he could possibly recover without spending a century in rest.

“He lost?” Seeing Belsize’s form dissipate, he couldn’t believe his eyes.

“Your Holiness, what should we do?” The Church members behind him were all terror-stricken. Just then, they had been celebrating their impending victory, but now…

Heidens stood up, turning and roaring with anger, “Where is Lord Chiquitas? Why hasn’t Lord Chiquitas come? Go find him!!!” At this point in time, their one and only hope was Lord Chiquitas. Heidens had personally witnessed Lord Chiquitas’ power before.

He should be able to deal with Linley.

“Heidens, what are you shouting about?”

Heidens turned his head. Linley, with Bebe in one arm and holding Delia’s hand with the other, walked into the main hall of the Radiant Temple.

“Linley…” Heidens, after having utilized the ‘Deity’s Descent’ technique, was unable to fight back any longer. “Linley, don’t be so smug. The Radiant Church will never be destroyed, and the glory of the Lord will forever illuminate the endless reaches of the world.” Heidens growled with fury.

Right at this moment, a white-robed priestess came running over.

Heidens noticed the white-robed priestess. This was the one he had sent to go find Lord Chiquitas. Heidens suddenly felt a hint of hope. “Lord Chiquitas?”

The white-robed priestess was so panicked, she was crying. “Your Holiness, Lord Chiquitas is no longer here any longer. He’s left. I can’t find him. I looked everywhere, but I can’t find him!” The white-robed priestess also sensed what the situation was.

“No…” Heidens seemed to have been struck by a bolt of lightning. He was utterly stunned.

Heidens instantly understood everything. Given how major this battle had been, if Chiquitas had been planning to get involved, he would have done so long ago, but he did not…clearly, Chiquitas didn’t want to get involved, and had fled long ago.

“Aaaaaaaaaah!!!” Heidens let out a furious, unrepentant howl.

Looking at Heidens, who was in such agony that he seemed about to go insane, as well as those other terrified high-level members of the Church, Linley felt his heart become peaceful. He spoke. “The Radiant Church… will never exist again.”

Chapter 11 – One Night

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 11 One Night

“Boom!”

The remnants of the Sacred Isle began to tremble violently, as though there were thousands of enormous beasts beneath it that were shaking it. One enormous crack after another appeared in the Sacred Isle, and endless amounts of seawater poured in, covering the entire Sacred Isle.

The Radiant Temple, already collapsed, no longer had the protection of the ‘Glory of the Radiant Sovereign’. It was now no different from any ordinary building, and these massive vibrations caused the collapsed Radiant Temple to break down even more. On the remnants of the island, many enormous boulders were raining down from the skies, and the few remaining survivors of the Radiant Church fled in terror into the seas, hoping to avoid those countless boulders and prevent them from smashing down on them.

Forbidden-level magic – Heaven Collapses, Earth Shatters!

Linley stood in mid-air, with Bebe on his shoulders and Delia’s hand in his own. He stared from afar at the collapsing, distant Sacred Isle. Soon, the entire Sacred Isle disappeared into the ocean without a trace. Where the Sacred Isle had previously been, there was now nothing besides rolling waves and a few corpses that occasionally rose to the surface of the sea.

Linley quietly watched this scene.

Delia, conscientiously, didn’t make a sound. After a long time…

“Let’s go.” Linley let out a long sigh.

Holding Linley’s hand in her own, Delia smiled. “What are you thinking

about?"

"The past." Linley said.

"Boss, the past? Do you have some profound thoughts about the past?" Bebe smirked from his position on Linley's shoulders.

Linley laughed, glancing at Bebe. "What sort of profound thoughts can I have? Enough, let's go home!"

"Right. Go home!"

Delia and Bebe both felt their hearts tremble. Just then, the three of them had nearly died, but now, all of them were going home safely. This sort of sudden changes in fortune naturally had mentally affected them.

The ocean wind continued to blow. In mid-air, Linley, Delia, and Bebe flew at high speed towards the eastern horizon.

Staring into the boundless eastern skies, Linley suddenly felt as though he were staring at everything he had encountered during this part of his life.

"Father. Mother. The Radiant Church has finally been destroyed." A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face.

"Father, do you still remember what you told me that year? The two greatest desires you had was for me to bring back the ancestral heirloom of our clan, the warblade 'Slaughterer'…and for the clan to be restored to its former glory."

"The warblade 'Slaughterer' is back now, and the Baruch Empire has been founded. Our Baruch clan is now one of the most powerful clans in the entire Yulan continent."

"Grandpa Doehring, when I was young, I did everything for my father and for the goals of the clan. I took on the hopes of the clan onto myself. If I had been forced to rely on myself for everything, it would have been very

hard to accomplish all these things. But because I had you, Grandpa Doehring…you changed my life. Training magic…the Straight Chisel School of sculpting…your help, your tutelage, allowed me to grow one step at a time. It was you who helped me this entire time."

"When you died, I swore an oath to destroy and uproot the Radiant Church in its entirety. How many years has it been? I've never dared to forget that oath."

"Now…I've succeeded."

"Grandpa Doehring, I feel so relaxed now. Truly. I feel relaxed in my heart. Right now, I'm holding hands with my beloved wife, and by my side is Bebe, who has braved life and death along my side. Grandpa Doehring, if you were still alive, you would definitely feel very happy for me."

"No matter how much time passes, I, Linley, will forever remember your tutelage for me in my youth. Grandpa Doehring…thank you…"

Soaring above the seas and facing the east, Linley's eyes were so very bright!

From his childhood years until now, Linley had always been carrying many burdens. His mind had always been under great pressure, but today, Linley was finally at ease!

He could finally live a carefree, happy, wonderful life!

The Holy Emperor Heidens, Lehman, and Fallen Leaf had all died in battle. The thirty-plus other Saints had all fallen as well. Even the Sacred Isle and the Radiant Temple had turned to rubble and disappeared within the vast sea. Although the Holy Union still had many Church members in it, without any Saints to serve as their foundation, the Radiant Church was destined to never be able to flourish again.

Dragonblood Castle.

Because of the complete destruction of the Radiant Church, Linley and the others managing to escape with their lives from near-certain death, as well Linley finally being able to lay down his burdens, Linley felt extremely happy on this day. All of the Saints thus convened at Dragonblood Castle and had a jubilant celebratory feast.

This celebratory banquet was such a major affair that even the Emperor of the Baruch Empire, Cena Baruch, hurried over to attend.

“Big bro, I really was so worried…but fortunately, you made it back, big bro. Come, big bro, let me toast you.” Wharton’s emotions were very complicated right now.

“Come, cheers.” Linley immediately laughed and raised his cup.

“Wharton, where’s Desri and the others?”

As this banquet proceeded, Linley felt helplessness in his heart. “Wharton, Barker and his brothers, and the others…although they had fled during the battle at the Sacred Isle when that Belsize had appeared, I truly don’t blame them at all.”

Linley understood how Wharton, Barker, his brothers, and the others were currently feeling.

When Belsize had appeared, Linley had ordered them to flee. Desri, Tulily, and the others, including even Wharton, who had been Emperor for a while, knew that staying behind would have been a very foolish idea.

They had immediately fled.

Logically speaking, this was the right decision, and the decision that Delia and Bebe had made to stay was a decision that should have resulted in their meaningless deaths.

However, from an emotional standpoint, Desri, Wharton, and the others still felt a bit guilty.

Naturally, during this celebratory banquet, they worked hard to act cheerfully and worked hard to chat, laugh, and drink with Linley, wanting Linley to be happy. Actually, Linley hadn't been angry at them at all. But Desri, Wharton, and the others themselves felt nervous inside.

"Cena, after this banquet concludes, go to the study. There's something I need to discuss with you." Linley said to Cena.

"Yes, Uncle." Cena said respectfully.

Cena had grown into an elegant, refined looking man. It was hard to imagine that the massive Wharton would have a son like him. Cena, already twenty four years of age, had taken on the responsibilities of being Emperor years ago. Both in terms of personal ability as well as in Imperial management skills, Linley was very satisfied with Cena.

After the banquet concluded, it was late at night.

Dragonblood Castle. Within Linley's personal, private study. Although Linley almost never used this study, someone would come here every single day to clean it. Naturally, it was very tidy. Today, Linley was making a rare visit to his study.

"I wonder why Uncle has asked me to come here?" Cena looked at the nearby, peaceful study, his heart filled with questions.

The study was shining with lamp light. Late at night, the lamp light was quite eye-catching.

Cena was currently the Emperor of the Baruch Empire, and he had an exalted status. But when Cena arrived at Dragonblood Castle, he didn't dare to put on any 'Imperial' airs at all, because the many experts which Dragonblood Castle contained were all the most important, supportive pillars of the Baruch Empire.

Especially his uncle!

Linley was to the Baruch Empire what the War God was to the O'Brien Empire or the High Priest was to the Yulan Empire.

Empires could lack for Emperors, but they couldn't lack for those three.

"Knock!" "Knock!" "Knock!" Cena, somewhat nervous, rapped on the door to the study. Ever since he was young, Cena had only seen Linley a few times. Towards Linley, Cena felt a combination of fear as well as worship.

"Come in."

Taking a deep breath, Cena pushed the door open. He immediately saw Linley seated before a reading table, currently flipping through a book.

"Oh, Cena. Come, sit." Linley smiled in a very friendly manner, pointing to a nearby chair.

"Yes, Uncle." Cena immediately shut the door, then sat down.

Linley looked at Cena. He couldn't help but laugh. "Cena, it's quite odd now that I think of it. Your father, when he was young, was a handful and a troublemaker, but you've always been very clever and well-behaved. In my opinion, you take after your mother, Nina, much more." Linley rather liked Cena.

"Boys usually take after their mother." Cena grinned as well.

"Good point. Taylor is quite a handful as well, and Delia herself was quite fierce when she was young." Linley paused for a moment, then went straight to the main topic. "Cena, the reason I asked you to come was because I want to tell you something. You have to listen carefully." Linley said with a laugh.

Cena immediately focused his attention.

"The High Priest of the Yulan Empire and the War God of the O'Brien

Empire have spoken with me. Their two Empires, as well as our Baruch Empire, will join forces and together take over the entire Yulan continent. Our three Empires will split the world evenly!" Linley said very casually.

But Cena, listening, was utterly stunned.

As the Emperor of an Empire, this sort of news was simply too shocking to him.

"Uncle, this…this division of the world…" Cena didn't quite dare to believe it. "Represents that we are going to destroy the Rohault Empire, the Rhine Empire, the great plains of the far east, the Dark Alliance, the Holy Union…this would take decades, if not centuries."

Linley shook his head.

"Cena, during the banquet, you should have learned that just now, we went to destroy the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church." Linley said.

"Right." Cena nodded, but then his eyes lit up. "Uncle, are you saying that…" Cena suddenly understood.

"It wasn't just the headquarters of the Radiant Church. The headquarters of the Cult of Shadows should also have been destroyed over the course of the next day or two. Once the wars truly begin…think about it. If the enemy has no Saints, but we send Saints to do battle…will the wars take so long?"

Cena felt his throat turn dry and his back turn sweaty. His heart was shaking. "Uncle and the others are simply too terrifying. They directly annihilated all of the enemy's Saints. There is now no way for them to fight back during this war."

Even the Holy Emperor himself had died.

This meant that the Holy Union now had no leader. Once war descended upon them, most likely the Kingdoms and Duchies of the Holy Union would instantly surrender.

“I just wanted to give you a heads up.” Linley didn’t really care much about this battle.

After all, to him, size of territory and population ruled meant little. The most important thing was for him to walk further along the path of training and become a Deity as soon as possible.

Deity!

Becoming a Deity represented a fundamental change in the level of one’s existence. It meant possessing a divine spark, a Godrealm, and also being able to draw upon the power of faith. It was a level of existence far beyond mortal ken.

“Uncle, the three sides shall split up the world, but how?” Cena asked. He rather cared about this.

“Oh, I almost forgot.” Linley chuckled. “This is how it will work. The territory of the Holy Union and the Eighteen Northern Duchies will belong to the O’Brien Empire. The Rhine Empire and the Dark Alliance will go to the Yulan Empire. As for the Rohault Empire and the great plains of the far east, they will belong to our Baruch Empire.”

Cena’s eyes instantly lit up.

The size of the Rohault Empire was essentially on par with the Baruch Empire. But more important than that was…the great plains of the far east!

The territory of the great plains of the far east was actually enormous in scope, approaching the massive O’Brien Empire in size. But because it was all grasslands, it had a small population despite being massive in size, causing it to only have three Kingdoms. However, those three Kingdoms were not to be trifled with. The three Kingdoms of the great plains of the far east had been able to fight on even footing with the Rohault Empire and Rhine Empire for many years. One could tell from this how strong they were.

After all, these people who spent their lives in the saddle of a horse naturally possessed an extremely martial culture.

“Alright, Cena. It’s getting late. You should go back and get some rest.” Linley said.

“Yes, Uncle.” Cena withdrew respectfully.

After Cena left, Linley turned his head to stare at the nearby chair. In the seat which Cena had just vacated, there was now a middle-aged man seated there. He was dressed in a long, loose robe, and had a lazy smile on his face. It was the Deity-level expert, the King of Killers…Cesar.

“Lord Cesar, your group is heading off to the Necropolis of the Gods tomorrow. Why have you come here tonight?” Linley couldn’t help but laugh as he asked this question.

Hearing Linley say this, Cesar couldn’t help but be startled, but then he pursed his lips helplessly. “Right. Tomorrow, we’re heading to the Necropolis of the Gods. Actually, I didn’t want to go to the Necropolis of the Gods this time, but those other guys are forcing me to go. Sheesh!”

“A person can be forced to go to the Necropolis of the Gods? Isn’t it only for those who are willing to go?” Linley frowned, confused.

“Enough of that. I’m pissed just thinking about it.”

Cesar stood up, walking forward to stand before Linley’s table, staring directly at Linley. “Linley, I’ve come today to entrust you with a task.”

Chapter 12 – New Variables

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 12 New Variables

Entrust him with a task?

Linley looked at Cesar in confusion. “Lord Cesar, pray tell!”

Cesar was, after all, a major, founding figure of the ‘Saber’ organization, one of the four major assassin’s guilds of the Yulan continent. Most mortal affairs, he could simply have Saber handle. For Cesar to ask Linley for assistance definitely meant that this affair was not a simple one.

“Linley, not too long ago, O’Brien and Catherine, those two greedy fellows, said that they wanted to take over the entire world, right?” Cesar said.

“That was the case, yes.” Linley nodded.

Cesar nodded as well. “Whether or not the world is divided up between you three is none of my concern. But you should know that Rosarie and myself have a…special…relationship.” Cesar chuckled. “I understand Rosarie’s temper quite well. She’s remained at the Frost Goddess Shrine this entire time because she truly cares about the Frost Goddess Shrine.”

Linley nodded.

Rosarie had been training for thousands of years, but she still remained at the Shrine. From this, one could tell how much she valued the Frost Goddess Shrine.

How many of the experts of the Radiant Church or the Cult of Shadows who had been in training for thousands of years had remained in their respective churches? After all, the goal of these experts who had trained for thousands of years was to become a Deity! If they themselves were on the path to becoming a Deity, why would they feel the need to worship a god?

Gods required people to have faith in them.

Rosarie, however, hadn't stayed at the Frost Goddess Shrine this entire day due to her faith in the Frost Goddess. It was because she was emotionally attached to the Frost Goddess Shrine.

"That day, O'Brien said that he wanted to have the Eighteen Northern Duchies belong to the O'Brien Empire." Cesar shook his head helplessly. "Actually, it doesn't really matter if he takes them over. Only, you should understand that the O'Brien Empire has an internal regulation that only the worship of the War God, O'Brien, is permitted. All other religions are forbidden."

Linley nodded.

Even the Radiant Church and Cult of Shadows had only been able to set up intelligence networks within the O'Brien Empire. They didn't dare to openly proselytize on a large scale.

"Once the Eighteen Northern Duchies are subdued, given the iron rule of the War God O'Brien, he definitely won't permit the Frost Goddess Shrine to continue to exist." Cesar furrowed his forehead. "I'm worried that Rosarie will act in a hot-headed way and fight against the O'Brien Empire."

Linley now understood why Cesar was concerned.

"Lord Cesar, why are you so concerned about something like this? As long as you are alive, I think the War God won't go too far in his actions." Linley laughed.

Cesar nodded. "Right. As long as I am alive, that is the case. But what if… what if on this trip to the Necropolis of the Gods, I die? Would the War God still treat the Frost Goddess Shrine with such courtesy?" A hint of frustration could be seen on Cesar's frowning face.

"This…"

Linley was silent for a moment. “Lord Cesar, why do you have so little confidence in yourself?”

“That’s not it.” Cesar shook his head. “Linley, you don’t understand. Although all four of us are Demigods, there are still vast differences between Demigods. For example, Saints. Can an early stage Saint possibly compare to you in power?”

An early stage Saint?

Even a million Abyssal Blade Demons had not been able to stand against Linley, who had killed them as he pleased. The difference between them was as great as that of the heavens and the earth.

“Although we are all Demigods, my strength is the lowest of the four. For example, Dylin. He’s already a peak-stage Demigod, and supposedly, he’s right at the cusp of breaking through to become a full God.” Cesar shook his head as he spoke.

Cesar was only an early stage Demigod, after all.

The others? The War God had become a Deity five thousand years ago, and the High Priest had become a Deity over ten thousand years ago. As for Dylin? He, too, had become a Deity tens of thousands of years ago.

“The person with the greatest chance of dying in the Necropolis of the Gods is actually myself.” Cesar said.

“Then, Lord Cesar, why are you going to the Necropolis of the Gods?” Linley asked.

“The first reason is, I am forced to go. The second is…” Cesar’s eyes lit up. “A long, lazy, life eventually grows boring as well. I want to once more experience the excitement of life-and-death struggles. In the past, when I was with Armand, we walked on the edge of life and death. Also, my career as an assassin. That truly was an exciting life. I miss it very much.”

Cesar still had the heart of a warrior.

Linley understood.

Warriors such as Cesar wouldn't be able to forever slumber in a quiet lifestyle. What they needed was battle, was heart-pounding activities, was new breakthroughs, was rising to higher and higher levels!

"Linley, are you willing to help out in Rosarie's affairs?" Cesar asked directly.

"Of course I am willing. Lord Cesar, how could I dare to not be willing?" Linley said with a smirk.

"You little punk." Cesar grinned as well.

Within ten years or so, Linley would become a Deity. Even more importantly…Linley had a special relationship with Bebe and Beirut. This was the reason why Cesar had come to ask for Linley's assistance. As long as Linley was willing to get involved, even if the War God came back from the Necropolis of the Gods, he wouldn't act against Rosarie.

"Linley, O'Brien, Catherine!"

An ancient voice suddenly rang out in Linley's mind. Not just Linley's; the War God at War God Mountain and the High Priest in the Yulan Empire both heard this same voice.

Linley's face changed.

Lord Beirut!

"I know that you are planning to start a war in the continent. I don't care what happens to the rest of the Yulan continent, but there are two things you need to remember. The first is that you are not to disturb the peace of the Forest of Darkness. The second is that your armies are not permitted to

enter the Eighteen Northern Duchies, nor are you permitted to engage in slaughter in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. Understood?"

"Yes, Lord Beirut."

The War God, the High Priest, and Linley all simultaneously responded back mentally.

Who would dare violate the orders of Lord Beirut?

Lord Beirut retracted his divine presence from their minds.

"Truly terrifying. His divine sense was able to instantly cover the entire Yulan continent." Linley sighed with endless praise. "Lord Beirut's power is simply too great, far above the likes of the War God."

"What happened, Linley?" Cesar, seeing that Linley had become lost in thought, couldn't help but grow confused.

Linley looked at Cesar, then understood. Just then, Lord Beirut had only spoke with his divine sense to give orders to Linley, the War God, and the High Priest. The other experts didn't know about it.

"Lord Cesar, weren't you worrying about Rosarie just now?" Linley laughed.

Cesar nodded, looking at Linley questioningly.

"No need to worry any longer." Linley said.

Cesar was somewhat baffled. "What's going on?"

"Just now, Lord Beirut mentally spoke to myself, the War God, and the High Priest. The Eighteen Northern Duchies are off limits. No armies are permitted to invade, nor are we permitted to engage in battle and slaughter there." Linley laughed towards Cesar. "Lord Cesar, now you should be at ease."

Cesar let out a long sigh, then smiled.

“But I don’t understand. Why is Lord Beirut doing this? Could it be that he is doing it for my sake? I think…I’m not important enough for him to do it just for me.” Cesar didn’t understand.

“If you can’t figure it out, then stop worrying about it. It’s a good thing, right?” Linley laughed.

Cesar laughed as well. “Haha, right. It’s a good thing. Right, Linley. I won’t bother you any further.” After speaking, Cesar disappeared into thin air. Even at Linley’s level of power, he could just barely see Cesar’s figure transform into a blur, then disappear.

“This Shadowshape Technique is at the level of allowing the shadow he transforms into to become completely invisible. How terrifying.” Linley sighed in praise to himself.

This night was definitely not going to be an ordinary night.

Shortly after Cesar had left, yet another person appeared in Linley’s study. But when this person arrived, Linley didn’t notice his presence in the slightest, and he continued to read his book. Only after he flipped through several pages did he notice out of the corner of his eyes that someone was in the room with him.

Linley was instantly so frightened that his heart clenched.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley immediately stood up.

The man was still dressed in that long black robe, with black hair, a black beard, and a hint of a smile on his face. It was the King of the Yulan Continent…Beirut. Beirut said with a faint smile, “Linley, wait a moment. When Bebe comes, we’ll talk.”

“Bebe?” Linley was confused.

“Swish!” A few seconds later, a black shadow suddenly scurried over, and Bebe jumped directly in front of Beirut. “Grandpa Beirut, why have you come?”

Beirut looked at Bebe, beaming so widely that his eyes turned into merry little slits. Beirut had lived an incalculably long time, but out of all of his descendants, only Bebe was a ‘Godeater Rat’ as well. It could be said…that Bebe, to Beirut, was as important as life itself.

“The reason I have come today is to bring Bebe back to the Forest of Darkness.” Beirut spoke, while looking benevolently towards Bebe.

“Back to the Forest of Darkness? Why do I have to go there? I like being here.” Bebe was rather unwilling.

But Linley suddenly had a thought.

Lord Beirut definitely wouldn’t do this for no reason at all. He definitely had some sort of special purpose to this.

“Lord Beirut, might I ask why you are doing this?” Linley looked at Beirut.

Beirut patted Bebe dotingly. “Bebe, as a divine beast, ‘Godeater Rat’, has reached the late stage of his growth period. He’ll soon reach adulthood. Upon reaching adulthood, Bebe will naturally reach the Deity level. This period of time is an extremely important period of time for him.”

“I’m about to become a Deity?” Bebe said with surprise and delight.

“Most likely, you’ll need another ten years. These ten years, Bebe, will be the most important ten years of your life.” Beirut said seriously.

Linley understood. Beirut himself was a ‘Godeater Rat’, and in the countless planes of the universe, Lord Beirut was naturally the person who knew the most about Godeater Rats. Linley cared about Bebe as well, and wanted Bebe to develop in a good way and become more powerful in the

future. “Bebe, go to the Forest of Darkness. After all, during this period of time, I need to enter closed door training as well, most likely for around ten years.”

Bebe was silent for a moment, and then exchanged a glance with Linley before nodding. “Fine, then. But Boss, if you are free, you have to chat with me spiritually.”

“Fine.” Linley laughed.

Beirut had a smile on his face as well. He was very satisfied with Linley’s actions.

“Linley, there’s something I must let you know about.” Beirut said.

Linely’s heart tightened, and he immediately said respectfully, “Lord Beirut, pray tell.” Beirut nodded, then continued. “I know that you are all preparing to attack the other Empires and to unify the Yulan continent. A few decades ago or a few centuries ago, this would have been an easy task, but now…”

Beirut shook his head.

Linley couldn’t help but feel surprised. Beirut’s words definitely wouldn’t miss the mark. But based on the plans that the War God and the others had drawn up, there shouldn’t be any problems. After having exterminated the opponents’ Saints and then sending out their armies while using their own Saints to threaten the enemies, or even use forbidden-level magic to frighten them as necessary…

This should be a sure thing.

“Lord Beirut, what do you mean?” Linley looked at Beirut.

Beirut smiled as he glanced at Linley. “This war won’t be as simple as you imagine it to be. I recommend that you not be too ambitious. Enough, I’ve said all I care to say. Time to leave.”

“Boss.” Bebe waved farewell to Linley as well.

Holding Bebe in his arms, Beirut disappeared from the study. He was so fast that Linley couldn’t even tell how Beirut had moved, or what powerful technique he might have used. His technique was clearly on a far higher level than Cesar’s.

“Why did Lord Beirut suddenly give me this warning?” Seated in his study, Linley frowned pensively. “This war won’t be as simple as I imagine it to be? Could it be that something unexpected is going to occur? And he also told me not to be too ambitious?” Linley suddenly had a thought.

“Lord Beirut had also ordered us not to attack the Eighteen Northern Duchies.”

The combination of these various issues felt Linley to suddenly feel a sense of pressure.

“We have to be careful in waging this war. We need to take it slow.” Linley made up his mind. The very next morning, he would go find Cena and give him some instructions.

As for tonight…

Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Deep within the Foggy Valley.

This place had once been the lair of the Armored Razorback Wyrm. In the past, Linley had luckily been able to swallow the blood and the draconic crystal of the Armored Razorback Wyrm, activating the Dragonblood lineage in his body and allowing him to transform into a Dragonblood Warrior. And here, too…

Dylin, after Linley drew out Bloodviolet, and his three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion sons had been released.

In the same location….

“Riiiiiiiiip.” The space here was rippling like water, with the ripples growing greater and greater, before finally, a huge gaping hole in space was torn.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Eight figures charged out at high speed, all of whom appeared to be humanoid. Some of them had horns, while others were covered with tattered robes. The eight figures that fled out from the hole were all in sorry shape, but they were all wildly overjoyed.

“Ahhh….this elemental aura…how wonderful it is.” A powerful looking figure with a pair of ox-horns on his head said, so excited his entire body was shaking.

“Back! Finally, I’m back!” Another knelt on the ground, crying in excitement. “I’ve finally managed to escape that damnable place alive. The smell of the earth is so intoxicating.”

The eight figures were all extremely excited.

“Everyone, we’ve all managed to escape from the Gebados Planar Prison. Now…let us part ways.” A handsome man with pointed ears and long, jade green hair said with a loud laugh.

“Haha, after living in terror for thousands of years, it’s time to enjoy ourselves.” The eight figures suddenly left the ground, each flying in a different direction.

Chapter 13 – Meditative Training Begins

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 13 Meditative Training Begins

The light of the morning sun peeked above the horizon, like a goddess of nature casting her illuminating gaze upon the earth.

Within the training fields of Dragonblood Castle, tens of people were gathered. They had come here to bid farewell to Tulily and Desri's groups.

"Linley, now that this affair is concluded, you should begin closed door training as well. I imagine the next time we meet, you would have reached the Deity level." Desri laughed while sighing.

Linley laughed as well. "Desri, Tulily, don't forget that Lord Beirut had said that if you were fast, you would become Deities within a single day. Perhaps the two of you will reach the Deity level long before I do."

Tulily and Desri both began to laugh.

"Enough, let's head off." Linley watched as Desri and Tulily's group flew into the sky, then transformed into a series of black dots which disappeared into the horizon.

"Flying…it would be so great if I could fly." Taylor, standing behind Linley, had a hint of jealousy in his eyes.

Linley couldn't help but turn to glance at Taylor.

The nearby Cena laughed. "Taylor, why the rush? Train for a few more years. You've already reached the eighth rank. When you become a warrior of the ninth rank, you'll be at the Saint level when you Dragonform, right? By then, you'll be able to fly."

"Taylor, it's your own fault for not having chosen the Gold Dragon that

year.” Behind Linley, a beautiful, golden-haired woman said.

Sasha, who had only been a young girl all those years ago, had now become an extremely mesmerizing beauty. Given that she also had an extremely high status, there were countless young nobles who were trying to woo her, here in Baruch City. Unfortunately, Sasha’s requirements were too high, and she didn’t give any consideration to the local nobles at all.

“Enough. Let’s go back to the main hall first.” Linley said to Taylor and Sasha.

“Yes, Father.” Taylor and Sasha immediately said.

Although Linley wasn’t too strict with Taylor and Sasha, the two of them hadn’t seen him at all during those ten years Linley had spent within the Necropolis of the Gods. During their growing, formative years, they hadn’t seen Linley, which caused them to feel a bit of dread and respect towards this ‘Father’ of theirs, who was already a figure of legend in their Baruch Empire.

Within the main hall.

There was a ten meter long table placed in the center. The experts of the Empire, including Zassler and the Barker brothers, were all seated on each side of it.

“This gathering which our family is holding today will perhaps be the only gathering we will have in the next few years with so many people in attendance.” Linley had already made up his mind that once the affairs of the clan had been arranged, he would begin to train and meditate.

Only…

Last night’s visit by Lord Beirut, as well that strange, sudden warning, had caused Linley to feel rather restless.

He kept on having this strange feeling as though some sort of hidden danger

was lying in wait in the Yulan continent…and now, the hidden danger was about to reveal itself. But no matter what, training had to be the top priority. After all, waiting around like an idiot was pointless. The sooner he reached the Deity level, the better it would be for his family and friends.

After all, both Delia and Barker both had divine sparks already, but even if they became Deities, they probably wouldn't be too familiar with how to use the Laws to do battle at first.

Their true source of combat strength was still Linley, as well as Bebe once he became an adult.

"Linley, you are going to engage in closed door meditation?" Zassler instantly could understand what Linley meant.

Linley nodded slightly. "But before I do so, there's some things I have to discuss. Cena."

"Uncle." Cena immediately said respectfully as he listened carefully.

Linley looked at Cena, saying in a solemn voice, "Last night, although I told you some information about this upcoming world war, at that time, I had taken this war to be a very simple affair. But now, I have to remind you of a few things. You must remember them!"

"Uncle, please speak." Cena said respectfully.

The surrounding people, including Delia, the Barker brothers, Wharton, and Zassler, all felt confused.

"The first point is this. Right now, the Baruch Empire, the Yulan Empire, and the O'Brien Empire are planning to do battle simultaneously to conquer and divide up the world. The original target of our Baruch Empire was to subdue the Rohault Empire and the great plains of the far east. But right now, I want you to slow down the rate of attack. Do not be impatient, and do not be greedy. Even if we are only able to take over half, a third, or even less of their territory, that is acceptable."

Cena was instantly confused.

Last night, he had heard and understood that at the Saint-level, the alliance of their three Empires had an absolute superiority. There shouldn't be any other variables in this war at all.

"Uncle…" Cena couldn't help but interject.

"Listen to me." Linley frowned, and Cena instantly no longer dared to make a sound.

Linley said solemnly, his brows furrowed, "The second point is…in this continent-wide war, the aim of our Baruch Empire is not conquest. It is self-protection."

Cena was even more puzzled now.

"The final point. I want you, Cena, to be cautious, cautious, cautious." Linley himself understood the importance of this. "All your actions should be taken with the goal of being able to protect ourselves."

What sort of a person was Lord Beirut?

He was someone who could order about the likes of the High Priest, the War God, and Linley himself. Lord Beirut had personally emphasized this matter to him, so this would definitely be a matter of grave importance. After all, events which even Lord Beirut considered to be noteworthy would definitely be very, very few in number.

"Have you heard my words clearly?" Linley barked.

"I have." Cena frowned, then asked in confusion, "Uncle, I want to ask… although we haven't started this war yet, the start and the finish to it should already be set in stone. So why, Uncle…"

The nearby Zassler, Barker, his brothers, and the others all understood what

Linley was saying…but they were also puzzled.

They had already destroyed the Radiant Church, while the destruction of the Cult of Shadows had been arranged by the forces under the command of the War God and the High Priest. If war really was to begin, they should definitely be able to win.

Linley shook his head. “All I can tell you is that the hidden dangers in this war are far greater than you can imagine. Not even Deities can underestimate these dangers.”

All of the experts in the hall felt shock in their hearts.

Deities?

At present, Dragonblood Castle didn’t yet have a single person who had truly reached the Deity-level. Delia was only halfway through fusing with her divine spark, while Barker had only just begun.

“Uncle, don’t worry. I definitely won’t let you down.” Cena, now knowing how serious the situation was, immediately spoke out.

Linley nodded.

He was still quite confident in Cena. Actually, even before entering the Necropolis of the Gods, Wharton had discussed the matter of the next Emperor with him. At that time, Wharton was preparing to have Linley’s son, Taylor, be the next Emperor. But Linley had a good understanding of the temperaments of Taylor and Cena.

Cena was the type of person who treated others with kindness, but when the time came to act, would do so with the speed and power of a lightning storm. This was the type of temperament that was suited to be an Emperor.

“After discussing this affair, there’s just one thing left.” Linley began to laugh. Seeing the looks in everyone’s eyes, Linley understood what they were thinking. “Right. I am preparing to go into closed door training for a

long session. But of course, Delia will go into training with me. Barker needs to train as well. As for the location, the location will be the underground training room."

Cena, Taylor, and Sasha looked towards Linley, their eyes filled with worship.

Their father (uncle) hadn't even trained for a century yet, but relying only on his own abilities, was about to become a Deity!

A Deity, to them, was someone who definitely had to be venerated and looked up to.

"Lord Linley." Barker spoke.

"Hrm?" Linley looked at Barker.

Barker said with sincerity, "Lord Linley, the process of fusing with the divine spark only requires one to study the mysteries of the Laws it contains. It doesn't require one to attune with nature."

Linley nodded.

To become a Deity the natural way required one to constantly train, attune with nature, and gain new insights. It meant that everything one discovered on one's path had to come from within.

Fusing with a divine spark, by contrast, basically meant the mysteries of an aspect of the Laws were placed in front of you, and all you had to do was to study them. While fusing with the divine sparks, one naturally didn't have to attune with nature.

"That's why I think that there is perhaps no need for me to enter the underground training room. I'll stay in Dragonblood Castle and do my training here." Barker said. Actually, the main thing was that Barker wanted to spend some more time with his wife. After all, he could pause his fusing whenever he wanted.

This was like reading a book. You didn't have to read the entire thing all at once.

But of course, the second reason was that Barker didn't want to disturb Linley and Delia. The two of them were husband and wife, after all! With a husband and wife training together, if he were to be there as well, sometimes things might get a little awkward.

"Perhaps that's for the best." Linley nodded and laughed.

But then, Linley turned to look at everyone solemnly. He said, "Tonight, Delia and I will begin our closed door training. While we are training, unless something extremely important occurs, no one is permitted to come disturb us in the underground room."

Everyone nodded.

Linley suddenly thought about Beirut's warning again.

He hurriedly added, "But of course, if you really do encounter some difficulties or major crises, you need to immediately inform me. Everyone, make sure you know your own limits. In particular…if you encounter something extremely bizarre or dangerous, it's best to inform me early on. Don't act rashly."

Without giving them some additional advice, Linley simply couldn't put himself at ease.

"Big bro, don't worry about it. We get it." Wharton laughed as he spoke.

"Zassler." Linley turned to look at the nearby Zassler. "You are the most experienced person in our group. If anything major happens, you can't allow these people to get in over their heads and cause trouble." Linley understood the temperaments of Wharton and the Barker brothers very well.

Although they weren't exactly rash, when they were truly angered, any of

them could lose their head in the heat of their anger.

“Yes, Lord Linley.” Zassler said.

Linley nodded slightly.

He had already said everything he had to say. Although he didn’t know what exactly was hiding within the Yulan continent and why Lord Beirut had warned him, Linley had at least made some preparations.

Darkness descended. Deep in Dragonblood Castle, within the pocket dimension.

The pocket dimension was surrounded on all four sides by boundless chaotic space.

The multicolored, chaotic space…it was indeed filled with secrets and alluring mysteries. But Linley and the others knew full well how dangerous chaotic space was. Even Deities wouldn’t dare to trespass into it.

Holding Delia in his arms, Linley gave her a gentle kiss, then looked at her and instructed, “Delia, you sit there on the stone bed while you train. I’ll sit on the floor.”

Linley, when training in the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’, occasionally needed to actually test out certain moves. Naturally, he needed a bit more space than Delia, who didn’t even need to move while fusing with the divine spark.

“Alright. Understood.” Delia nodded obediently, and then looked towards Linley with anticipation. “Linley, focus on your training. Don’t worry about me.”

Linley and Delia both sat down in the meditative position in separate areas. One on the stone bed, the other on the ground.

Almost instantly, Linley found himself utterly submerged and attuned to the

wind. This time, Linley was whole-heartedly focusing on analyzing the Elemental Laws of the Wind. After all, Linley had almost reached the Deity level through his understandings of the Profound Truths of Velocity. As for the Profound Truths of the Earth, he was still a ways off.

What Linley had to do right now was to reach the Deity level through the Profound Truths of Velocity as quickly as possible.

“Ever since I reached the Grand Magus Saint level and had my soul transform, even my speed of training and theorizing has increased significantly.” Linley felt more and more confident in himself. And then, Linley’s spiritual energy stretched out to attune with the vibrations of the surrounding wind elemental essences.

Within his consciousness, the ‘Fast’ aspect and the ‘Slow’ aspect, these two different aspects, began to merge together, and two illusionary swords struck out time and time again in Linley’s mind. Linley was constantly testing how to have these two different aspects support and complement with each other, which would allow him to gain further insights in the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’. In his mind, he also envisioned a third sword, which was demonstrating the applications of the Profound Truths of Velocity…

Whenever the mental visualizations were unable to resolve Linley’s doubts, Linley would rise to his feet and try out his theories in real life.

Attuning, hypothesizing, merging, verifying, gaining insights, testing…

Linley was totally immersed in all of these things. He forgot the passage of time. In his mental world, there was nothing except those three swords; the ‘Fast’ sword, the ‘Slow’ sword, and the combined ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ sword. These three illusionary swords were constantly changing.

In particular, the power of the illusionary sword of the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ was increasing nonstop.

Chapter 14 – A Visit From Yale

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 14, A Visit From Yale

Yulan calendar, year 10034. June. The flames of war erupted once more in the Yulan continent.

The Yulan Empire, O'Brien Empire, and Baruch Empire formed an alliance and began to launch a large scale war, the likes of which hadn't been seen for millennia, against the weaker Rohault Empire, Rhine Empire, Holy Union, Dark Alliance, and great plains of the far east.

The spiritual leader of the great plains of the far east, the War Saint Tulily, having already received the warnings of the War God and the High Priest, knew that he was not to go against these plans.

In addition, Tulily owed a debt to Linley. In addition, Tulily himself didn't wish for the warriors of the great plains of the far east to throw their lives away for no purpose, under the destructive forbidden-level spells of Grand Magus Saints. Thus, Tulily had already sent out his own Saint-level disciples to discuss the situation with all three Kingdoms of the great plains.

Although the three Kingdoms hadn't immediately agreed to surrender to the Baruch Empire, they didn't refuse flat out either, for now.

As for the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance, their higher echelons had been wiped out, and they had virtually no Saints left. The two major alliances were like a pile of loose, formless sand.

A unit of the O'Brien Empire's army passed through the northern corridor of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts and entered the Holy Union. The Kingdoms and Duchies of the Holy Union which had access to good intelligence reports, upon learning of the destruction of the Sacred Isle and the elimination of the upper echelons of the Radiant Church, had begun to secretly meet with the representatives of the O'Brien Empire.

Actually, it was the O'Brien Empire itself which had intentionally spread the word of the destruction of the upper echelons of the Radiant Church.

In addition, this was true. The few lucky survivors of the Radiant Church weren't able to cover it up, even if they wanted to. Clearly…the Holy Union had already become nothing more than a relic of history. The O'Brien Empire's conquest of it was nothing more than a matter of time.

At least for now, it appeared to be only a matter of time.

As for the Dark Alliance, their situation wasn't much better than that of the Holy Union's.

But of course, the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows had many members who were scattered throughout the lands. Although their headquarters had been destroyed and only a very few Saints were left, they still had many of their mid-level managers, most of whom were ordinary mortals.

A rule of thousands of years had resulted in these two churches possessing great influence.

The remnants of the Radiant Church and the Cult of Shadows, especially the Zealots of the Radiant Church, weren't willing to give up.

The power of religious faith truly was very strong.

By relying on various methods, be it gentle or bloody, the two major churches which had survived for ten thousand years were able to somewhat stabilize their internal situations. They wanted to prepare to do battle against the Yulan Empire and the O'Brien Empire. Until the last moment came, they didn't want to give up.

At the base of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, on a desolate road in the Southeast Administrative Province of the O'Brien Empire.

A strange person covered in a green cloak was standing amidst the desolate road, staring at his surroundings. The only thing that could be seen from within those two long sleeves was a pair of chicken claw like fingers, which demonstrated that this person should be an extremely old man.

Only…

His eyes were an oily green color, like the eyes of a wolf in the night.

Behind him, there were a total of nine figures covered in silver cloaks. These voluminous silver cloak covered figures were all standing behind the old man respectfully like servants.

“Yulan continent. So this is the Yulan continent…” The ancient, low voice rang out from the old man dressed in the green cloak.

“Cough, cough…” The sound of coughing could be heard. This green-robed old man seemed to be rather frail.

Suddenly, two youths riding handsome horses appeared, galloping across the desolate road. For some reason, when the two youths saw the green robed man and those nine mysterious silver-cloaked men, they felt a cold shiver in their hearts.

These two youths consciously decided to pull their horses aside, planning to leave from the other side of the road at high speed.

They didn’t want to get too close to these seemingly mysterious people.

“Humans…” Seeing the two youths ,the green robed old man’s oily green eyes flashed. He was so skinny that nothing more than a layer of skin was left on his bones, and when his bony, claw-like hand stretched out, a strange, invisible force suddenly bound those two youths.

“Aaaah!” “Aaaah”!

The two youths felt that they could no longer move, and then, they began to

fly up in the air, their bodies no longer under their own control. They shot out like arrows towards that green robed old man, causing them to scream in terror.

“Crunch!” “Crunch!”

His two hands gripped the skulls of the two youths, who instantly began to quiver and shake, their bodies spasming as though they were having a seizure.

“Oh, War God, High Priest? And that legendary Dragonblood Warrior?” The old man murmured to himself, and then turned his oily green eyes to peer into the eyes of the two spasming youths. “Poor children. I will give you your eternal release.”

And then, the two youths fell to the ground, but their bodies no longer had any aura at all. They were dead.

“What a pity. These two souls were too weak. Absorbing them was of little benefit to me.” The ancient man took a long, comfortable breath.

Absorbing souls?

If anyone else was near and had heard this, they would have been utterly terrified.

But the nine silver-cloaked men behind him maintained their silence, waiting respectfully.

“The Yulan continent is about to begin an era of major, large-scale warfare. This is an excellent opportunity for all of you. Go, children. Don’t disappoint me.” The ancient voice of the green-robed old man rang out, and the nine silver-cloaked figures all fell to one knee. “Yes, Grand Warlock!”

And then…

‘Swoosh’ ‘Swoosh’.

The nine silver-cloaked figures transformed into nine silver dots, disappearing into the horizon. They were so fast that if Linley and Desri had seen them, they would have felt astonished.

“Yulan continent. Ten thousand years…it has changed so much.” The green-robed old man let out a quiet sigh. “First, recover my strength. When I have the chance, then I’ll go pay a visit to Lord Beirut.” And then, with a movement, the green robed old man transformed into a blur and disappeared.

Baruch Empire. Dragonblood Castle. The main hall.

“Big brother Yale, you came at an unfortunate time. A few months ago, my big brother started to engage in closed door training.” Wharton said helplessly towards Yale, who had come to visit.

“Third Bro is in meditative training again?” Yale frowned.

“What’s wrong? Is there some problem? Why don’t you talk to me about it. I might be able to help.” Wharton said with a laugh. He knew exactly how close Yale and Linley were, and so Yale’s affairs, he naturally would get involved in.

Yale hesitated for a moment, then said, “Wharton, can’t Third Bro come out and have a quick meeting with me?”

Wharton said apologetically, “Big brother Yale, I am sorry, truly. This closed door training session is different from the previous ones. This one is rather important. Before beginning his training, my big brother had already issued an order that unless something extremely, extremely important came up, we were definitely not to permit anyone to disturb him. Actually, even if I agreed to let you see my big brother, we would still need to get the permissions of Mr. Zassler and the others as well.”

Dragonblood Castle viewed Linley’s training as an issue of paramount importance. No matter how close one’s relationship with Linley was, they

definitely wouldn't be permitted to go meet with Linley unless there was absolutely no other recourse at all.

"If that's the case…" Yale paused for a moment.

"Then Wharton, I won't disturb Third Bro. Anyhow. I have some other affairs to attend to. I'll leave for now." Yale said.

As far as Dragonblood Castle was concerned, Yale's visit was just a small affair. No one paid much attention to it.

The next day.

The imperial capital of the Baruch Empire. The imperial palace.

Cena strode into the flower garden, smiling towards Yale who was waiting for him there. "Chairman Yale, I am truly sorry to have made you wait for so long. Chairman Yale, please, sit." Cena, upon hearing that Yale had come to visit, had immediately put down everything he was working on to come meet Yale.

After all, Cena knew how close Yale and Linley were as well.

"Emperor Cena, I was in no rush. Your matters are of more importance, your Imperial Majesty." Yale said with great modesty.

Although when Cena was young, Yale had met him and played with him while meeting Linley, Cena was now the Emperor of an Empire. Within the imperial palace, Yale's attitude still had to be very respectful and modest.

"Chairman Yale, don't stand on so much ceremony. Why are you standing on so much ceremony with me?" Cena chortled. "Speak, what is it? If I can help, I definitely will."

Yale said, "Then, Emperor Cena, I'll speak plainly. My visit this time is to request your help, Emperor Cena. Emperor Cena, you are currently beginning large-scale warfare against the Rohault Empire, are you not? And

you are winning a series of battles."

"Right." Cena nodded slightly.

He was wondering why Yale mentioned this.

"I have a request that is perhaps a bit excessive." Yale said.

"Oh?" Cena looked at him.

Yale chuckled, then said, "This is the situation. I know that the alliance of your three major Empires has the goal of completely conquering your opponents. These battles will definitely be very fierce, and I also trust that your Baruch Empire will have captured many of the enemy's soldiers."

"That is correct. What of it?" Cena looked at him.

It was normal to capture the enemy's soldiers in warfare.

In addition, the goal of this war was to conquer the entire Rohault Empire. How could the imperial clan of the Rohault Empire submit to them? Naturally, they would fight back.

"Emperor Cena, the vast majority of those enemy soldiers that you've kidnapped will be used as slaves. I would like, Emperor Cena, to ask if you would be willing to sell all of the soldiers you've kidnapped to my Dawson Conglomerate?" Yale finally got around to making his request.

Cena instantly began to frown.

Sell all of the captured enemy soldiers to the Dawson Conglomerate?

Generally speaking, captured enemy soldiers would be used as cannon fodder in future battles, or put to work in building roads, mining, clearing forests, and so on and so forth. All types of hard, manual labor. Perhaps a small portion of the slaves would be sold off.

But…to sell all the captured soldiers to a single Conglomerate?

This was indeed rarely seen.

The reason for this was because in this sort of large scale, ‘total war’ type of warfare between major Empires, each Empire would probably have roughly two or three million active duty soldiers, with perhaps millions more in reserve. This sort of war of utter annihilation would generally result in many captured soldiers. For example, if a large army was destroyed, it was possible that a hundred thousand people would be captured.

Over the course of conquering the Rohault Empire, the number of captured soldiers would definitely be in the hundreds of thousands, or perhaps even more.

Several hundred thousand soldiers, even enslaved, were still a capable military force. To give such an enormous military force to a trading union?

“This…” Cena hesitated.

Although this was Yale, Linley’s big brother, Yale really was asking for quite a bit. He wanted the Baruch Empire to sell all of their captured soldiers to the Dawson Conglomerate?

“Emperor Cena, what are you worried about? Our Dawson Conglomerate neither has a large amount of territory, nor do we have Saint-level experts such as Third Bro. They are just some captured slaves.” Yale persuaded. “Emperor Cena, I hope you can help me out.”

Yale’s words were said with great sincerity.

“Chairman Yale, in the past, your Dawson Conglomerate never got involved in the slave trade. Why are you buying so many captured soldiers now?” Cena asked.

Yale laughed. “That’s an internal secret of the Conglomerate. We’re currently working out a special developmental plan.”

Cena was silent for a few more moments, then looked at Yale.

Actually, the captured soldiers were of limited use to the Baruch Empire. After all, their goal was the destruction of the Rohault Empire. Thus, there was no question of ransoming the soldiers back to the Rohault Empire after the battle was concluded. In addition…as Cena viewed it, so what if he sold the slaves to the Dawson Conglomerate?

Could it be that the Dawson Conglomerate also wanted to rule the world?

What a joke!

After all, the true foundation of any Empire was its most powerful experts!

“Alright. I agree.” Cena said.

“Emperor Cena, thank you, truly.” Yale instantly smiled. “You really are helping me out tremendously. Thank you so much, truly.”

Cena and Yale chatted for a while longer, then shared a lunch together before Yale left.

After Yale left, Cena was still puzzled as he pondered this matter carefully. “Why is the Dawson Conglomerate suddenly entering the slave trade for no apparent reason? In addition, based on what I know, Yale and Uncle are on extremely close terms, but Yale himself is an extremely valiant figure who almost never asks difficult favors from others. But this time…”

Chapter 15 – A Sudden Change

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 15 A Sudden Change

The winter of year 10034 of the Yulan calendar was an extremely bad one for Emperor Gaffney [Jia'fu'ni] of the Rohault Empire.

"Your Imperial Majesty." Gaffney's most beloved consort, an eighteen year old who was also a water-style magus, was lying atop of him, intentionally using the two firm points on her chest to massage Gaffney's body. Emperor Gaffney was a warrior of the seventh rank, and his body was quite tough.

In the past, he probably would have already flipped this beautiful woman over and pressed her beneath his thighs.

But today, he wasn't in the mood.

"Scram. F*ck off." Emperor Gaffney irritably pushed the beautiful consort away from him.

The brown-haired beauty couldn't help but take two stumbling steps back, and then, forcing out a smile, she bowed and stepped back.

Beautiful women?

He was about to lose his Empire. How could he be in the mood to frolic and cavort with beautiful women?

"All of you, f*ck off! All of you!" Gaffney waved his arm, sending the books and documents on the table in front of him, as well as some ornaments, flying away, smashing against the marble floor. The palace maids and attendants were instantly frightened, and all of them immediately left respectfully.

"This Baruch Empire is too audacious, too audacious!" Gaffney's eyes were

blazing, but his forehead was covered with sweat.

He was livid!

But at the same time, he felt powerless.

“Why? Why does it have to be like this?” Gaffney was filled with resignation and panic. “Why is it that all of the Saints of the Rohault Empire are no longer paying attention to Us? Why have they all vanished? Are they that afraid of Linley? That Linley has only been famous for a few decades. What’s there to be afraid of?”

Gaffney cursed angrily…but in his heart, Gaffney knew that all he could do was curse.

Faced with the multiple layers of incursions from the Baruch Empire, there was nothing he could do at all. All of the Saints of his Empire seemed to have vanished. He couldn’t find a single one. That one and only Saint who was loyal to the imperial clan had been smashed into meat paste by a single tail swipe on the field of battle from a Saint-level Tyrant Wyrm.

He had no Saints at his disposal!

“What to do? What to do? Is my Rohault Empire going to be destroyed, just like this?” Gaffney truly had no idea what he should do.

Ever since the news had spread that the Yulan Empire, the O’Brien Empire, and the Baruch Empire had formed an alliance, many of the Saints of the Rohault Empire had vanished. After all, these Saints all understood that the alliance of these three Empires represented…

An alliance between the War God, the High Priest, and Linley!

Not long ago, Linley had destroyed the Radiant Church’s Sacred Isle. Perhaps ordinary people weren’t aware of this, but virtually all of the Saints had been made aware of this. Even the Radiant Church, whose roots were ancient and deep, had been destroyed. The Saints of the Rohault Empire

knew that resistance meant nothing more than death.

Naturally, none of them were willing to meet with Emperor Gaffney, nor obey his commands.

With the Rohault Empire no longer having any Saints, the outcome of the battle had naturally swayed strongly in Linley's favor.

"The Empire has been in existence for thousands of years. Can it be that it is going to collapse during the reign of myself, Gaffney?" Gaffney was in agony. This afternoon, he had just received the news that yet another city had been conquered by the Baruch Empire. Although the armies had done their best to defend…

The enemy had three Saint-level dragons!

Although the Saint-level dragons hadn't actually attacked much, with but a lazy flyby, they had killed three of the Rohault Empire's leaders. Naturally, the morale of the Rohault Empire had tumbled, and many soldiers, seeing the Saint-level dragons, had been so frightened that their legs had gone soft.

How were they supposed to fight a battle like this?

"You are Gaffney, right?" A hoarse voice rang out in the study.

Gaffney, who had been in the middle of venting his anger, was instantly frightened so badly that his heart clenched. This was his personal study, and the door to it was shut and surrounded by guards. The door wasn't open, and it hadn't budged at all.

But someone was inside the study.

Gaffney suppressed his terror and turned to look at the source of the voice.

There were two skinny men dressed in short-sleeved clothes. Being dressed in short sleeves despite it being winter was of no surprise; after all, as a warrior of the seventh rank, he could do that as well. But what shocked

Gaffney was that these two men's eyes seemed to be filled with a fierce, devouring gaze.

Although the two men hadn't acted, in but an instant, they saturated the room with a cold, cruel, vicious aura.

"How…how did you get in here?" Gaffney said in terror.

"How did we get in here?" A skinny, bald man said with a sneer. "Easy. We killed the guards outside, then opened the door, came in, then closed the door. As easy as that."

"Opened the door, closed the door?" Gaffney couldn't believe it.

He was in the study, but he hadn't noticed the door being opened or shut.

Gaffney's heart was filled with terror. The cruel, killing aura these two men emanated made him wonder, "Could it be here that they are here to kill me? They are here at Linley's command?" As Gaffney saw it, perhaps only the legendary Linley was capable of ordering experts both powerful enough and willing to come here and kill him.

"Gaffney, listen closely." The skinny bald man said with a cold laugh. "The arrival of us two brothers is your good fortune."

"Good fortune my ass. This is terrible." Gaffney secretly cursed, but he didn't reveal a hint of displeasure on his face. He was afraid that if he angered these two, they really would kill him.

The other skinny man had a head of short golden hair that looked as hard as nails. The golden haired man glanced at Gaffney, then said coldly, "We two brothers have very simple conditions. First, confer upon us the rank of Dukes. And then, you can casually assign us a few thousand palace maids and servants for us to use as we please. Naturally, we two brothers will then dispose of those three irritating Saint-level dragons for you."

Gaffney rubbed his eyes, staring at the two men in front of him in shock.

He was rather stunned.

“Didn’t you hear me?” The skinny bald man barked angrily.

The two brothers had lived in thousands of years in the Gebados Planar Prison, a life that was worse than that of a dog’s.

In the Gebados Planar Prison, peak Saints were the weakest creatures there. They had lived a life of battle and fear. For each day they survived, they would fear that the next day would bring death. This was because the Gebados Planar Prison had no natural elemental essence at all. The energy that they used up couldn’t be replenished at all; the only method of recovering energy was to kill other experts, then absorb the energy within the bodies of those experts.

Saints engaged in constant slaughter against each other.

As for Deities, if they encountered one, they could only obey the orders of the Deities while being terrified. Deities could devastate them, not giving them the slightest chance to fight back. In addition, the natural environment of the Gebados Planar Prison was itself extremely dangerous. If one wasn’t careful, one would easily die.

A life worse than a dog’s!

Countless battles!

Their mind always stretched to the point of snapping!

Not just them; even the Deity-level expert, Dylin, had felt miserable there. To Saints, it was absolute torture.

But now, within the enormous Gebados Planar Prison, they had been lucky enough to discover a barely noticeable dimensional thinness and managed to force their way out. They had returned. Returned to the mortal realms. The five thousand years of life worse than a dog’s had come to an end. It

had only driven them insane.

What they now wanted was to lord over others, to force others to do their will, to live the life which men were meant to live.

“Milords, are you saying…that if I give you Dukedoms, a few thousand palace maids and attendants, you’ll dispose of that Saint-level dragon?” Gaffney could scarcely believe it. He felt as though the heavens had dropped a miracle right into his lap.

“Right. What, are you unwilling?” The bald, thin man frowned.

“Willing. How could I be unwilling?” Gaffney said hurriedly. “Milords, please don’t worry. Just a few thousand palace maids and attendants? No problem. Even if you want ten thousand, it still wouldn’t be a problem. A Dukedom? Even if you want a Princedom, that would be fine.”

Good heavens!

His Rohault Empire had been devoured day by day, and was on the road to destruction. Now two experts had come to serve him. Was there anything Gaffney wouldn’t be willing to give up to employ them?

How much would it cost for him to give up ten thousand palace maids and attendants, even if he had to go to a slave market to buy them?

“Excellent.” Both men revealed smiles on their faces.

“But milords, those three Saint-level dragons are extremely powerful, and behind them, there is an extremely powerful Saint known as Linley.” Gaffney looked carefully at the two men in front of him. He was afraid that these two men wouldn’t be able to defeat Linley’s side.

After all, Linley’s actions had been simply too amazing, especially his destruction of the Sacred Isle.

“Linley? What’s a Linley?” The short, golden-haired man said disdainfully.

“He’s a Saint?” The bald, skinny man asked coldly.

“Yes, of course. The only human Deities are the War God and the High Priest.” Gaffney wasn’t aware that Cesar had become a Deity.

“Hmph. Don’t worry. As long as he is a Saint, we can dispose of him.” The other man, the one with short golden hair, said confidently.

The Gebados Planar Prison was a place of constant war and slaughter. Being able to survive there for five thousand years testified to their strength. In that sort of place, the weak died early on. They were Prime Saints who had constantly gained new insights in the middle of battle.

Gaffney’s eyes instantly lit up.

“Then, milords, tonight you can stay in the imperial palace. I will definitely make all the arrangements for you two.” Gaffney’s attitude in front of these two experts was extremely humble.

“Right.” The two men nodded slightly with satisfaction.

They very much enjoyed being respected by others. They liked the feeling of being above others. The five thousand years of terrible life they had endured had a tremendous, tremendous impact on them!

…….

The Baruch Empire’s army was divided into two parts, and had already charged into the inner cities of the Rohault Empire.

“Roaaaaaar.”

A coiled, serpentine, massive Thunder Wyrm that was over a hundred meters long was floating in the air. His draconic roar shook the world, causing the city below him to echo with the sound. The Thunder Lizard could tell that the enemy garrison was so terrified that they were trembling.

Beneath the walls of the city, the soldiers of the Baruch Empire all revealed looks of excitement on their smiling faces.

With the assistance of a Saint-level dragon, attacking and conquering cities became so much easier.

“Saint-level Thunder Wyrm?” A disdainful, cold voice rang out. A thin, bald man wearing an immaculate golden robe suddenly flew out from the city below. The vicious aura he naturally emanated surrounded him as he stared at the nearby, hovering Saint-level Thunder Lizard.

“A Saint-level expert appeared?” The Saint-level Thunder Lizard was actually quite surprised. It had been a long time since he had encountered a Saint-level expert, and his wheel-sized eyes stared at the Saint in front of him.

Upon taking a close look at this expert, the Saint-level Thunder Lizard grew cautious.

The vicious aura naturally emanated from the man caused the Saint-level Thunder Lizard to feel slightly uneasy.

Five thousand years of being constantly prepared to do battle and to kill at a moment’s notice. After five thousand years, they naturally would emit this sort of vicious aura.

“Go back and tell Linley that he needs to know his own limits and to be a good boy and call off his armies. Otherwise…” The bald, skinny man’s voice rang out like thunder. Clearly, he didn’t view Linley as worth of respect at all. “Every single Saint you send, I will kill.”

“Shut your mouth.” The Saint-level Thunder Lizard roared angrily.

The soldiers of the Baruch Empire were furious as well. In their hearts, Linley was invincible.

“Hrmph.” The bald, skinny man let out a cold laugh, and then transformed into a streak of lightning, charging at the Thunder Lizard.

The Saint-level Thunder Lizard, bellowing, also transformed into a streak of blue lightning and charged towards the man. In mid-air, the man and the magical beast, those two Saints, struck against each other. The Saint-level Thunder Lizard’s strongest point was its speed; it was on par with Bebe.

“Laughable!” A disdainful call.

The bald, skinny man struck out with his right leg in a massive blow, slamming his leg down viciously like a giant knife against the draconic tail of the Saint-level Thunder Lizard. The sound of bones breaking could be heard. The bones of the Saint-level Thunder Lizard’s tail actually shattered, while the enormous body of the Thunder Lizard was kicked down, smashing into the ground like a meteor.

“Bang!” The earth shook. The Saint-level Thunder Lizard created a massive crater and cracks in the ground as it smashed into the earth.

“Die.” The bald skinny man charged down from mid-air.

“Swoosh!” The Saint-level Thunder Lizard’s body flashed, instantly rising into the air and then fleeing towards the north, blood dripping down from its tail.

The bald, skinny man landed in the crater, watching as the Saint-level Thunder Lizard fled.

“Its speed isn’t bad. A pity that it is so weak. It couldn’t even take a single blow from me.” The bald man said disdainfully. How many Saints had he slaughtered in the Gebados Planar Prison? He didn’t pay any attention to the little bit of power the Thunder Lizard had.

Chapter 16 – Five Years

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 16 Five Years

The war between the Baruch Empire and the Rohault Empire entered a paused state.

“Father, everyone, what do you think we should do?” Within the main hall of Dragonblood Castle, a group of people were gathered, including Cena, Wharton, Gates, Hillman, and Nina. They were discussing how to handle the two new Saints that had just appeared out of nowhere in the Rohault Empire.

Wharton, Zassler, Gates, and the others had just finished listening to Cena’s explanation.

They were all extremely shocked.

“This Rohault Empire…when did it have two such powerful Saints come out of nowhere?” Hillman frowned.

Now that he was able to train in top tier battle-qi methods, he had reached the eighth rank as a warrior. Although his power was far inferior to that of Wharton, Gates, and the others, his status in Dragonblood Castle was still very high.

“Father, Uncles, do you have confidence in being able to deal with them?” Cena looked towards Wharton and Gates.

Wharton muttered, “Although we don’t have a very high level of understanding with regards to the Laws, we have divine artifacts and are Supreme Warriors. If we really were to have a fight with those two Saints, we should still be able to achieve victory.”

Gates, Ankh, and the others all nodded.

Zassler let out a soft chuckle. “Wharton, are you planning to go have a tussle with those fellows?”

“What of it?” Wharton looked at Zassler.

“Zassler, you think that isn’t an option?” Gates and Ankh all looked at Zassler.

Zassler let out a chuckle, but the sound of it was so cold and insidious. “First of all, I want to ask you. If I were to ask one of you to fight against the Gold Dragon and the Tyrant Wyrm at the same time, would you be able to easily defeat those two Saint-level magical beasts?”

“This…” Wharton, Gates, and the others all hesitated.

Against one Saint-level magical beast, it would be fairly simple.

But against two…they would be able to at most fight them to a standstill.

“Hrmph, you aren’t able to do so, but you still want to go?” Zassler laughed condescendingly. “Can it be that you have forgotten what Lord Linley said before entering his closed door training?”

Wharton and the others suddenly started.

They now remembered.

At the time, Linley had strongly and repeatedly instructed them that if they encountered a strange situation, Wharton and the others were strictly forbidden from getting in over their head. In addition, Linley had also said that this war had major dangers hidden within it. This was the reason why Linley had been uneasy.

“At the time, Lord Linley had said that there are terrifying dangers hidden within this war, dangers which not even Deities could underestimate.” Zassler looked towards Wharton and the others. “You said that you didn’t

understand how this seemingly simple war with a fixed outcome could have dangers hidden in it, right? Well, now you know."

At the start of the war, not even Linley had known what the dangers were, exactly.

Only, because of Lord Beirut's warning, Linley felt uneasy, so he warned Wharton and the others as well.

Wharton and the others hadn't understood. They had felt that there shouldn't be any unexpected occurrences to this war.

"Mr. Zassler, what do you intend, then?" Cena frowned.

Wharton, Gates, and the others were all somewhat secretly shocked.

"You need to use your brains. There's only a few Saints in the Yulan continent. The likes of Lord Linley and Lord Desri should know about even those who are training in seclusion, right? But both of them said that the Rohault Empire has no top-class Saints. So where did those two Saints come from?" Zassler said.

"They suddenly appeared, and caused the war to grind to a halt."

Zassler laughed coldly. "Clearly, the hidden dangers within this war are already beginning to reveal themselves."

"Then right now, we…" Wharton looked towards Zassler. He remembered what Linley had told him; if they encountered any major event, they were to discuss it with the highly experienced Zassler.

Zassler said calmly, "It is simple. Don't be in a hurry to go deal with those two Saints. Lord Linley also said that in this war, our goal isn't necessarily to totally dominate the other Empires. It is fine if we take over a bit less land. The most important thing is, we have to protect ourselves."

Everyone nodded slightly.

Wharton said in a low voice, “Fine. For now, let’s watch and see what is hidden within this war.”

“If we encounter any major, critical circumstances, let’s not get in over our heads. At that time, it’s best if we go ask Lord Linley for help.” Zassler said. “But of course, right now, Lord Linley has only been training for half a year, and the situation isn’t too severe yet. There’s no need for us to go disturb Lord Linley.”

Time flowed like water. In the blink of an eye, Linley had been in training for five years.

During these five years, the Yulan continent was secretly in a state of utter chaos. The Baruch Empire, the Yulan Empire, and the O’Brien Empire’s wars had all ground to a halt, and even the Holy Union and Dark Alliance had mysterious experts appear within them.

These mysterious experts were exceedingly powerful.

The wars had ground to a halt.

Yulan calendar, year 10039. Winter. The dark winter night was exceedingly cold. Three middle-aged men dressed in thick cloaks were riding on handsome stallions, hurrying at high speed through the desolate, unpopulated road towards a nearby city.

“Haha, Bluelion City is up ahead. When we reach Bluelion City, we three brothers need to have a good cup of wine or two to help warm us up.” The leader of the three, a big, burly man, laughed loudly. This business trip they had made had been very profitable, and they were now in an excellent mood.

The city walls of Bluelion City rose up ahead of them.

They travelled on horseback through it.

“Huh, weird. Why is it so quiet?” The three brothers rode past the gates of Bluelion City, but found that the gates were open and unmanned. Not a person could be seen.

“Although Bluelion City isn’t a large one, it’s still a fairly bustling one. It has a hundred thousand people. Why is it that early in the morning, not a single person can be seen?” The three brothers dismounted, walking the stallions into the city with curiosity.

The wide streets didn’t have a single person in them.

Utter stillness!

It was roughly seven or eight in the morning now. Logically speaking, the streets should be extremely noisy and bustling right now.

“The hell is this?” The three experienced travelers couldn’t help but feel their hearts quiver.

This bizarre scene caused them to feel rather uneasy.

“Look up ahead. What’s that?!” One of the men pointed up ahead in shock. Nearby, there were two people lying on the street. The three middle-aged men immediately ran over to take a close look.

But as soon as they drew near…

“They are dead!” The three middle-aged men’s faces changed. The two people lying on the ground were bleeding from all orifices, and their blood stained the ground, creating a large, dark violet pool around them.

The cold winter wind blew through, causing the three middle-aged men to suddenly shudder.

“Ahhhhh!” A terrified scream from far away.

The three middle-aged men immediately turned their head. They saw that in

the distance, there was a woman with unbound hair running in terror.

“Why are you running? What’s going on?” The leader of the middle-aged men immediately shouted. They, too, were travelers who roamed the lands. They often saw death, and dead people weren’t enough to frighten them. What made them uneasy was…this utterly still environment.

“Dead. All dead. They are all dead.” The woman looked at the three-middle aged men, her eyes round and trembling.

“What do you mean, they are all dead?” A hint of fear awoke in the hearts of the three men.

“All the people in the city are dead. Every single person is dead. Every single one of them!” The woman said in a somewhat deranged manner.

The three middle-aged men were instantly stupefied with terror.

Everyone in the city was dead?

“All dead, all dead!” The deranged woman ran around wildly.

In a single night, the city of Bluelion, with a population of a hundred thousand, now had only a few dozen lucky survivors. The rest had all died. Those few dozen lucky survivors, at daybreak, ran to the city gates in terror, fleeing from this terrifying city.

A city of death!

The news regarding this event quickly spread to the imperial capital, and to Emperor Cena.

The furious Cena immediately sent people to investigate why and how Bluelion City had turned into a city of the dead in but a single night. At the same time, he sent people to find and ask those few dozen lucky survivors what exactly had happened.

Upon the completion of the investigation, Cena, feeling things were taking a turn for the worse, immediately hurried to Dragonblood Castle.

Within Dragonblood Castle.

There were many people gathered within the castle. Not just Wharton and Gates; even Nina, Rebecca, Leena, and the others had come as well. Everyone felt that this was a thorny problem, and all of them had come together to discuss how this problem should be resolved.

“The situation is extremely strange. The nearly hundred thousand people of that city all died with blood flowing from every orifice, and there wasn’t a hint of a wound on their bodies. From the youngest of infants to the warriors of the seventh rank…it was all the same.” Cena said.

In a short night, an entire city’s worth of people had died in such a bizarre manner.

Even experts like Wharton and the others had a hint of a cold feeling in their hearts.

“From what I know, this isn’t even the first time that an entire city’s worth of people died like this.” Cena said solemnly.

“Oh?” Wharton looked at Cena.

Cena continued, “Based on what I know, roughly a month ago, at the borders of the O’Brien Empire, something like this happened to them as well. In a single night, virtually all the people in a city died. However, because it wasn’t within our Empire’s borders, I didn’t pay too much attention to it.”

Housekeeper Hiri frowned. “This event is very strange. For example, what happened to those hundred thousand people in Bluelion City, and why were there a few dozen survivors?”

“Right. Why were there a few dozen survivors?” Zassler also felt that this

was very suspicious.

If an extremely powerful expert had used some sort of unknown forbidden-level spell to kill them, everyone within the range of the spell should have died. Even if there were a few lucky survivors, the survivors should all be extremely powerful experts themselves. But the lucky survivors were all ordinary commoners.

“In addition, there was no damage done to the buildings at all.” Cena continued.

Everyone in the hall was confused.

“I sent people to investigate, but we couldn’t find any clues at all.” Cena was also frustrated. “Oh, right. There was one commonality to the tens of lucky survivors.”

Everyone in the hall immediately turned to look at Cena.

“Those lucky survivors were all in fairly hard-to-reach areas. For example, half of the lucky survivors were being held in the deepest prison cells of Bluelion City. The others were all either in underground rooms or in other hard-to-reach areas.” Cena explained.

“Hard to reach areas…so they didn’t die?” Zassler nodded. “Perhaps this wasn’t a magic spell after all. After all, a magic spell capable of covering an entire city wouldn’t possibly care about whether an area was ‘hard to reach’ or not.”

“I recommend that we ask Lord Linley for help.” Zassler sighed.

“Lord Linley?” The eyes of Wharton and the others all lit up.

If Linley were to come out, they would feel much more confident with their leader present and wouldn’t be in such a state of disarray when events occurred.

“Right. In the past five years, there have been simply too many strange events which have occurred. For example, the war entering a state of stalemate, or those mysterious new religions appearing within our Empire, or this dead city…” Zassler said in one breath.

“I agree that we should go speak with my big brother.” Wharton nodded.

Leena’s face revealed a smile on it. “If big brother Ley were to come out, this affair would definitely be resolved easily. Big brother Ley has been in training for five years now. I wonder what level big brother Ley has reached now.”

Everyone’s faces had smiles on them when discussing Linley.

Afterwards, Wharton, Gates, and Zassler served as the representatives of the group and headed to the entrance to the training room.

“Wait a moment.” Wharton’s body was covered with a layer of battle-qi, and then he went straight through to the pocket dimension.

Moments later.

“Crackle, crackle.” A few moments later, passing through those clashing attacking energy streams, Wharton and Linley, dressed in a sky-blue robe and with his hair unbound, stepped out. Zassler and Gates, upon seeing Linley, suddenly felt much more at ease.

“Gates, Zassler, what has happened for all of you to come looking for me in such haste?” Linley said with a smile.

Chapter 17 - Mysterious Religions

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 17, Mysterious Religions

In truth, as he looked at Wharton, Gates, and Zassler, Linley felt some worry in his heart.

After all, before entering his closed door training, he had said that unless something extremely major occurred, he was not to be disturbed. And yet, despite that, Wharton and the others had still come to ask for his assistance. Clearly, the situation was very grave.

“Can it be that the continental war’s hidden dangers have revealed themselves?” Linley was rather nervous. He still remembered Lord Beirut’s warning.

Wharton, Gates, and Zassler looked at each other. After a moment of silence, Zassler looked at Linley, then spoke out. “Lord Linley, you have been in closed door training for five years. In the past five years, there have been many events that have occurred ever since the war began. We can’t explain it all in just one breath. Let’s go back, and then we’ll slowly discuss it all.”

Linley nodded slightly.

While walking out of the underground area, Wharton suddenly asked, “Big bro, have you reached the Deity-level yet?”

Gates and Zassler both immediately turned to look at Linley as well.

After all, Linley had originally expected that he would take around ten years to become a Deity. It had been nearly six years.

“I’m still a little way off.” Linley shook his head with a faint laugh. “If you hadn’t interrupted my training, in perhaps half a year, I would have reached

it.” Linley had a very strong desire towards becoming a Deity. At his current level of training with regards to the Profound Truths of Velocity, Linley could clearly feel…that the Deity level was so close he could feel it.

He only needed a tiny bit more to break through. The Profound Truths of Velocity were composed of the two aspects, ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’; if a person reached the limit in any one of those two aspects, one would become a Demigod. But upon true mastery of the Profound Truths of Velocity, Linley would become a full God.

In training the Profound Truths of Velocity, the bottleneck would only appear once one reached the God level.

But there was no bottleneck at all at the Demigod level.

For example, the likes of Fain, Desri, Rosarie, and Tulily had all been bottlenecked at the last step, because the mysteries of the Elemental Laws which they were training in were fairly low-level mysteries. In the endless cosmos and countless planes, the vast majority of Saints all were training in fairly low-level profound truths.

Linley was only able to train in the Profound Truths of Velocity in part because of a bit of good fortune, after all.

Although in half a year, he would become a Deity, Linley naturally had to leave his training when Wharton asked him to come out. After all, when being forced to choose between family and training, in the end, family was still more important. If his family and friends ran into any difficulties, how could Linley pay them no mind at all and continue to train to become a Deity?

Within the main hall of Dragonblood Castle.

Many people were gathered here. Linley quietly sat in the primary seat, listening carefully to Wharton’s explanation of the events that had occurred in the past five-plus years.

“Many top-tier Saints have appeared?” As Linley listened to Wharton describe the course of battle and how these terrifying experts had come out of nowhere, he wouldn’t help but begin to worry. “According to what Wharton and the others are saying, most of these are above the power of Supreme Warrior Saints, and are even comparable to the likes of Desri and Tulily.”

Linley could immediately judge the situation accurately.

It must be understood that normally speaking, Supreme Warrior Saints should be considered amongst the most powerful Saints in the land, second only to the likes of Prime Saints. Supreme Warrior Saints were roughly on par with the likes of the deceased Heidens, Osenno, and the others.

“Speed comparable to the Saint-level Thunder lizard, but able to defeat it in one blow.” Even Linley was amazed at the power of those two Saints who had appeared in the Rohault Empire.

“Many experts on the level of Desri and Rutherford have all appeared. This…” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

In the past five years, so many mysterious new Saints had appeared, and all of them were very strong.

It seemed as though almost all of them had the power of a Prime Saint.

“This can’t be right.” Linley frowned. “These experts definitely weren’t present in the past. If they existed, they definitely wouldn’t have escaped the notice of the likes of the War God.” Linley was very certain about this point. But since they couldn’t have been present in the past, then…

Clearly, these experts should have arrived in the Yulan continent in the past five or so years.

“Experts from foreign planes?” Linley was shocked at his own hypothesis.

“Wait, that shouldn’t be right either.” Linley instantly refuted his own

theory. “So what if they come from other planes? Could it be that all of the experts in other planes are at the Prime Saint level?”

To the other planes of the universe, the Yulan continent was also a ‘foreign plane’.

It wasn’t strange for these experts from foreign planes to be strong, but still…they shouldn’t all be so powerful!

“Big bro, also, in this period of time, there has been a mysterious new religions that has sprung up in the Baruch Empire. They follow a god who is known as ‘Muba’ [Mu’ba].” Wharton said with a frown. “Big bro, long ago, you said that no religions were to be permitted within the borders of our Empire. We worked hard to stamp out these churches, but we aren’t able to.” Wharton shook his head.

Hearing this, Linley’s face instantly changed.

A mysterious religion?

Who needed the power of faith? The answer, without question, was…

A Deity!

“Continue.” Linley immediately looked at Wharton. “Why are you unable to stamp out this religion?”

Wharton nodded and continued. “First of all, this church has hidden experts. In addition…this religion really does have some ability. There are able to produce miracles! Because of the appearance of these miracles, within the borders of our Baruch Empire, there are many people who truly have begun to believe in and worship this god, ‘Muba’.”

“Miracles?”

Linley’s face instantly turned white.

“What is it, big bro?” Wharton, Gates, Ankh, and the others all looked at Linley in confusion.

Linley, because he was almost at the point of becoming a Deity, often discussed Deity-level experts with Desri and the others. Thus, he knew very well…that the power of faith was extremely useful to Deities. That was why the likes of the War God, in the O’Brien Empire’s territory, only permitted his citizens to worship himself, the War God.

Other religions were strictly banned.

As for miracles…

Many of them could only be produced based on the profound mysteries of the Laws which only a Deity could understand.

“A nameless religion which is capable of producing miracles. Then…” Linley’s heart trembled. “Behind this religious branch in the Baruch Empire, there is definitely a Deity-level expert!”

“Wharton, Cena.” Linley immediately ordered. “Listen closely. It’s fine if you continue to act to suppress the spread of this religion, but you must remember, you are not to increase the strength and vigor with which you suppress them. No matter what, do not force that religion to fight head on against our Empire. At least…for now, don’t do so.”

The people in the hall didn’t understand it.

After all, aside from Linley, how long had the likes of Gates and Wharton been at the Saint level? Even Zassler, despite being experienced, only had worldly experience as well as experience with regards to Necromantic Magic. His understanding of Deities was far inferior to Linley.

“All of you, remember what I just said!” Linley said seriously.

“Yes.” Wharton, Cena, and the others still immediately responded in the affirmative. They definitely would not violate Linley’s orders.

Only now did Linley let out a secret sigh of relief. The opponent was a Deity-level expert. There was no doubt about it at all!

After all, until one reached the Deity-level, the power of faith was utterly useless.

Since the opponent was a Deity, Linley naturally didn't want to offend him.

Even after Linley himself became a Deity, he wouldn't want to casually become enemies with the opponent. After all, Linley would only be a new Demigod. How long ago had the opponent reached godhood? There was no way for Linley to know.

"Big bro. Recently, there has been an astonishing news circulating in our Baruch Empire. In the city of Bluelion…" Wharton began to discuss the 'city of the dead' event, while at the same time explaining some of the stranger aspects regarding the deaths of the people in the city.

Hearing this story, Linley was puzzled as well, while at the same time, he grew cautious.

An entire city's worth of people had died in a single night.

This was even more nerve-wracking than slaughter on the battlefield. After all, it was just too bizarre.

In the entire main hall, everyone else felt helpless. After all, they had no clues at all. In addition, there were currently too many mysterious experts in the Yulan continent. There was nothing they could do at present, and right now, even Linley felt lost and uncertain as to how he should go discover the culprit.

"You said just now that the same problem occurred in the O'Brien Empire?" Linley suddenly asked.

"Right, just a month or so ago." Wharton replied.

Linley nodded slightly. “Then how about this. You wait in the castle. I’ll go pay a visit to War God Mountain in the O’Brien Empire.” After all, this event had just occurred in his own Empire, but had occurred in the O’Brien Empire more than a month ago.

In addition, War God Mountain still had more powerful Saints than his side did.

After a full month, perhaps the War God’s College would have discovered some clues.

“Big bro, aren’t you going to eat with us?” Wharton was somewhat surprised. Linley had just come out of training, but even before having eaten a meal with his family, he was going to go to War God Mountain. This was just a bit too hasty, wasn’t it?

“No need.” Linley had already made up his mind.

After resolving this affair, he would go back to his closed door training. After all, Linley really was extremely close to breaking through to the Deity level.

At this point in time, it was dusk. A faint, indistinct blur slashed through the air above Dragonblood Castle, disappearing into the endless western horizons.

“Lord Beirut really did speak truly. The Yulan continent really does contain many dangers.” Linley felt a hint of nervousness. That mysterious cult represented a Deity-level expert. How could Linley not be nervous at the fact that a new Deity had appeared on this plane?

It represented that the main instigator behind these strange events was perhaps a Deity.

If he didn’t reach the Deity level himself, he probably wouldn’t even be able to fight back.

“After resolving this matter, I need to immediately seize every moment and reach the Deity level as soon as possible.” As soon as Linley thought about the ‘city of the dead’ event, he felt even more worried. He had the feeling… that the strange ‘city of the dead’ event definitely had a terrifying secret behind it.

The wind howled past him as he flew.

“It seems that the Yulan continent is about to enter an unprecedented state of storms and tempests.” Linley moved through the skies like a ray of light.

War God Mountain.

Linley’s arrival naturally caused Fain, who was temporarily in charge of War God Mountain, to personally welcome him. The two went to a private room on War God Mountain to chat. Fain had been training painstakingly for the past five years, but had yet to make a breakthrough.

“Linley, have you come this time because of the ‘city of the dead’ event?” Fain actually raised the topic first.

“Yes. Fain, do you have any clues yet?” Linley immediately asked.

Fain couldn’t help but show a hint of a bitter smile on his face. During the past month, he had naturally been worrying over the ‘city of the dead’ event in the O’Brien Empire. After the same event occurred in the Baruch Empire, he naturally quickly knew of it, as he had been paying special attention to this problem.

“I do have one clue.” Fain said with resignation. “This mysterious expert, moving at high speed, killed all the people in the city in one night, one after the other.”

“Oh?” Linley was startled. “One after the other?”

Saints could indeed kill a hundred thousand people very quickly. If they

raised to the limit, most likely all the people in the area they passed through would instantly die. To a Saint, travelling hundreds of meters in a second and killing dozens of people in that second was easily done.

To kill a hundred thousand people, just an hour or two would be enough.

If it was a Saint on Linley's level who was doing it, he would probably be even faster.

"Why did he do this?" Linley didn't understand.

Saints did have this sort of power, true, but to a Saint-level expert, what would be the point of killing so many commoners? In addition, not only was it pointless, once it was discovered…it would result in distaste and revulsion from other Saints, who might even jointly act against the culprit!

"I don't understand either." Fain shook his head. "Actually, we only have this clue because of a stroke of good fortune. When my eighth martial brother was flying about, he encountered a mysterious, silver-robed person murdering people in a city. Enraged, he immediately attacked…but unfortunately, that silver-robed expert didn't fight back. He immediately fled. The silver-robed expert was very fast, and even my eighth martial brother wasn't a match for him in speed. But by then, the silver robed man had already killed several thousand people, and those several thousand victims manners of death were identical to those in the 'city of the dead'."

Linley nodded slightly.

The eighth personal disciple. For him to be ranked so high, he clearly was an expert who had trained in the War God's College for thousands of years.

"Hrm?"

Linley and Fain simultaneously turned to stare towards the northeast. A terrifying wave of energy was currently spreading out from far away in the northeast. Although the powerful energy wave, after having travelled ten thousand kilometers, was almost undetectable by now, how could it escape

the attention of the likes of Linley and Fain?

They could sense the battles of Saints from thousands of kilometers away.

How could they possibly miss noticing this utterly, terrifyingly powerful energy wave? To the likes of them, that sort of terrifying energy wave was as noticeable as the sun appearing in the middle of the night.

“What just happened?!” Fain said in shock.

But just as he spoke, the expressions on his and Linley’s faces froze.

“All Saints and Deities who engage in wanton slaughter in the Eighteen Northern Duchies, or disturb the peace of the Forest of Darkness, shall all… be killed without hesitation!” A hoarse voice instantly rang out in the minds of every single Saint and Deity in the Yulan continent.

All the experts instantly became speechless with shock.

Chapter 18 – Guidance

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 18, Guidance

Within a cold, dark underground room.

A freezing, sea-green glow was faintly flickering within this room. A blurry, indistinct figure garbed totally in darkness was seated in the meditative position. In front of him, there was an enormous crystal the size of a person's head, which was flashing a gloomy green light.

Within the crystal ball, there was a large amount of fog-like energy swirling about it, and within the center of the fog, there were a few silvery droplets.

The hazy glow which the water crystal was giving off was just enough to illuminate the ancient face of the mysterious person in the room. His face was so old that it looked like a layer of wrinkled skin had been pasted onto a skull. He was so thin, he was skeletal. But his two cold, insidious eyes flashed with green light, making him look so sinister.

He looked like a knife that was covered with poison, a soul-freezing sight to behold.

"Hrm?" The green light in the ancient man's eyes suddenly glowed more brightly.

A long time later…

"What is going on? Since when did Lord Beirut declare the Eighteen Northern Duchies a forbidden area as well?" The skeletal old man muttered to himself, "It seems Lord Beirut wants to make a show of force. It's best not to irritate him. Whoever does end up irritating him will most likely turn into the 'chicken' in the phrase, 'killing a chicken to frighten the monkeys'."

“Only, what a waste of a silver-robed guardian of mine.”

“However, if this refining process is a success, it’d be worth it even if I lose all nine.” The skeletal old man stared at the crystal ball, like a greedy viper who had just discovered his prey.

All of the experts of the Yulan continent, be it the early stage Saints, the Saints who had escaped from the Gebados Planar Prison, or even Deities… upon hearing the sound of that ‘warning’ voice, they all felt their hearts tremble and turn cold.

Beirut!

The King of the Yulan continent. The Apocalypse Wars of ten thousand years ago had solidified his position.

The O’Brien Empire. War God Mountain.

“That should have been Lord Beirut’s voice.” Fain frowned. “The day before Master went to the Necropolis of the Gods, he told me that Lord Beirut had spoken mentally to him, forbidding him from going and causing trouble in the Forest of Darkness and the Eighteen Northern Duchies.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Five years ago, Lord Beirut had only transmitted the message to Linley, the War God, and the High Priest. As the War God left, he of course had to give the instructions to Fain as well.

“That powerful energy wave just now…” Linley hypothesized. “Most likely it was generated from the shockwaves of Lord Beirut killing an expert who had dared engage in slaughter in the Eighteen Northern Duchies.” Linley was shocked at Lord Beirut’s decisiveness as well.

Clearly, Lord Beirut would show no mercy at all.

“Right, Linley.” Fain’s eyes suddenly lit up. “Engage in slaughter in the

Eighteen Northern Duchies? How could ordinary Saints so casually engage in slaughter? Tell me, do you think it might be…?"

Linley had the same thought upon hearing this. "Are you referring to the culprit behind the 'city of the dead', that silver-robed expert?"

Fain nodded. "If this is the case, then that means the culprit has already been destroyed, right?"

Linley was silent a period of time. "Fain, your guess might be correct, but it also might be wrong. Although Lord Beirut created an extremely powerful energy wave, the person he killed might not have been the silver-robed expert. Even if it was, it's hard to say whether that silver-robed expert was acting alone."

"Linley, are you saying…" Fain couldn't help but feel surprised.

Fain had been certain in his heart that the culprit was nothing more than a Saint with some sort of special goal. He had never considered the possibility that there was a group of silver-robed experts.

But Linley had a different idea.

He knew about the 'mysterious church' that had been set up in the Baruch Empire, and thus was able to hypothesize that there was a Deity involved. Linley was beginning to expect…that the experts who had appeared in the Yulan continent weren't just Saints. There should be Deities as well.

For someone to dare to so openly carry out these 'cities of death' actions… most likely it was done at the behest of a Deity-level expert, and most likely that Deity had more than one subordinate.

"Fain." As soon as Linley thought of the possibility that it was a Deity-level expert behind the scenes, he couldn't help but feel unconfident. He immediately said to Fain, "We won't be able to find the culprit just by thinking about things. How about this. Let's both head to the Forest of Darkness and ask some questions."

“Go to the Forest of Darkness?”

Fain felt some nervousness in his heart with regards to the Forest of Darkness. Lord Beirut was someone whom even the War God held in reverence. He, Fain, was but a Saint. Of course he would feel some dread towards Beirut.

“It’s fine. Come with me.” Linley still felt rather confident.

Aside from the relationship he had with Bebe, Linley was on fairly good terms with Beirut’s three children, Harry, Hart, and Harvey. Linley just wanted to go ask a few questions. He was confident…that he would be successful.

“Fine. I’ll make a trip with you.” Fain nodded.

Fain immediately gave some instructions to the other people at the War God’s College, then flew alongside Linley away from War God Mountain, disappearing into the boundless night horizons. Fain was extremely fast to begin with, while Linley, due to his training in the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’, had already reached a ludicrous level of speed.

The two soon arrived at the Forest of Darkness.

Deep in the heart of the Forest of Darkness, that living, metallic castle sat there. Linley stared down in mid-air at that metallic castle, once again feeling a cold sensation in his heart. This enormous metallic life form….Linley expected that it was far more powerful than even Queen Mother Lachapalle.

Linley and Fain landed outside the metallic castle.

In the dark night, the metallic castle simply sat there. One couldn’t hear any sound from inside of it.

Fain and Linley exchanged glances.

“What should we do? Should we shout at him from outside?” Fain laughed bitterly. “Or should we go in? I’ve heard that unless you have the power of a Deity, as soon as you step into the metallic castle, you will be attacked by it.”

“Don’t be impatient.” Linley laughed.

Soon afterwards…

“Swish!” A black ray of light flashed out from within the metallic castle, landing on Linley.

“Boss, I’ve missed you so bad. You only came today!” Bebe raised his little head, staring at Linley with his beady little black eyes which were filled with surprise and joy. Clearly, Bebe had missed Linley very much over their six years of separation.

Linley laughed as he hugged Bebe. Together with Bebe, Linley felt so happy and relaxed.

It was much like how Grandpa Doehring used to be by his side. He would never be at a loss.

“Bebe, I missed you too. Right. Where is Lord Beirut?” Linley asked.

“Grandpa Beirut?” Bebe shook his little head. “I don’t know either. Grandpa Beirut hasn’t been in the castle recently. He said he needs to go out for a few days. It seems as though he is off paying a visit to another plane. He’ll be back in a few days.”

“Not here? Off visiting other planes?” Linley and Fain exchanged glances.

If ‘Grandpa Beirut’ wasn’t within the metallic castle and was off visiting another plane, who had carried out the actions in the Eighteen Northern Duchies? Whose voice had it been just then?

At the same time, they both sighed in their hearts.

“Visited other planes…will be back in a few days…what does Lord Beirut think planar travel is? A type of tourism?” Linley secretly sighed. He had heard from the Planar Overseer, Hodan, how astronomical the price would be to return to a plane after leaving it.

Just look at his own ancestors. Not a single Dragonblood Warrior had returned after leaving this plane.

From this, one could tell how difficult returning was.

But Lord Beirut? He treated interplanar travel as nothing but child’s play.

“Linley, you are looking for my father?” A voice rang out, and a violet-gold flash of light scurried over, hovering in front of Linley and Fain. It was one of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings.

Linley, seeing the Violet-Gold Rat King, could only let out an awkward laugh.

There was nothing for it. The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings looked identical, as far as Linley was concerned. Even their auras were similar. Linley simply couldn’t tell which of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings this one was.

“I’m Harry.” This Violet-Gold Rat King clearly understood the problem, so he directly named himself. “Linley, I know why you have come.”

“Oh?” Linley was surprised. He hadn’t even said anything yet.

Harry chortled, “O’Brien Empire, Baruch Empire. The people in the cities of both your Empires have been slaughtered. The reason both of you came is most likely for this affair, yes? Right. This occurred in the Eighteen Northern Duchies as well. Only, as soon as it began, we killed that fellow right away.”

“We?” Linley had a sudden thought.

What did the word ‘we’ from Harry represent?

Fain hurriedly asked, “Harry, might I ask, are there more than one of those silver-robed experts? Why did they do such a thing?”

“Oh, you know that it was a silver-robed man?” Harry was a bit surprised, but then he nodded his little head. “Right. Those murderous silver-robed men…there’s nine of them in total. As for why they are doing such a thing, in actuality, they are doing this at the behest of a Deity level expert.”

Harry clearly knew many things.

Linley was secretly shocked.

So this really was the case! This matter involved a Deity-level expert. Linley and Fain both felt vexed. Deities and Saints were two completely different types of creatures. One was like the heavens while the others were like the earth. Although Linley could easily kill a large number of Saints, in front of a Deity, he couldn’t do anything.

“This…what should we do?” Fain was caught completely off-guard as well.

The War God was still in the Necropolis of the Gods. He, Fain, was a Saint. How could he fight head on against a Deity?

“Oh, don’t worry about that. One of those nine silver robed men have been killed, while the other eight are all scattered in different areas. Oh, two of them are together. They are currently within the borders of the Baruch Empire.” Harry said.

“What?!” Linley instantly had a bad feeling.

Two of them were within the borders of his Baruch Empire? What were they planning?

“Hehe, right. I expect very soon, they will massacre another city.” Harry

chortled. Harry didn't care about cities being massacred. He was a magical beast, after all. To him…humans were an entirely different species. The destruction of a human city had nothing to do with him at all.

Linley instantly grew nervous. "Harry, which city are they at?"

"Linley, are you going to go deal with them?" Fain began to feel worried. "That can't be done. Didn't you hear what Harry said? They have a Deity behind them."

Bebe began to chortle at this time. "Don't worry. I know about this matter. The Deity behind those nine silver-robed men was badly injured a long time ago, and he won't easily be provoked to act. More importantly, that Deity is currently busy taking care of an important affair. He won't have the time to come deal with you."

Harry nodded his little head as well. "Right. Go kill those two silver robed men. What is there to be afraid of? Even if you do kill them, that Deity won't know that it was you who did it."

Linley and Fain immediately both laughed.

Right. If they went to go kill the silver-robed men, as long as they kept a low profile and didn't allow the Deity to immediately know it was them, how would he possibly find out afterwards who the killers were?

"Alright, Harry. Where are those two silver robed men?" Linley asked.

"Heh heh, now we're going to have some entertainment to watch." Harry chortled, revealing two neat rows of sharp white fangs. "Don't worry. Just follow me, the two of you. I'll lead the way." Harry said, then transformed into a ray of violet-gold light, flashing towards the south.

"Hurry up and follow." Harry's voice rang out in the forest.

Linley and Fain immediately began to fly as well, with Bebe excitedly standing atop of Linley's shoulders.

“How does Harry know the details of this so clearly?” Linley was beginning to feel very puzzled. “Also, Bebe and him said that Lord Beirut has already left the Yulan continent, so whose voice rang out just a while ago? And Harry even clearly knows the details and specific situations of Deities and those silver-robed men.”

He also thought back to how, on the day of his wedding, Delia and himself had received, as their wedding gift, a Demigod divine spark.

In addition, Lord Beirut was the controller of the Necropolis of the Gods.

“This Lord Beirut…the Beirut clan…more and more mysterious as I think about it.” Linley looked at Harry, flying excitedly ahead of him. He calmed his mind, then laughed to himself. “Why worry about so many things? So what if Lord Beirut is mysterious? At least he’s our friend, not our enemy!”

Chapter 19 – Controlled

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 19, Controlled

[Note – There was an entire 'fake' Chapter 19 that was posted on April Fools (April 1st) 2015. If you are interested, you can read it and the hilarious reader comments here ????]

Linley, Fain, and the Violet-Gold Rat King 'Harry' all flew in a straight line. The three experts flew at a very fast pace. Soon, they departed the Forest of Darkness and arrived within the borders of the Baruch Empire.

Linley clearly was rather nervous. He urged, "Harry, fly a bit faster. I'm worried that those two silver-robed men will begin the massacre before we arrive." Linley was still quite nervous.

An entire city's worth of people had been slaughtered.

The deaths weren't even the worst part of it; the worst part was the turmoil and terror it was causing in the hearts of the commoners.

The citizens of an Empire wouldn't be too terrified by a million people dying in battle, but a hundred thousand people dying in a city for no reason at all was simply too astonishing.

"No rush. It's fine." Harry was in no rush at all.

"Harry, just fly a bit faster. I know exactly how fast you are." Bebe spoke up for Linley.

Harry glanced at Bebe with resignation. "Fine, then." And then, the Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, immediately increased his speed dramatically, and Linley and Fain immediately hurried to catch up. The three experts streaked through the night sky like rays of light, flying past one city and town after another.

“Linley, don’t worry. Those two silver-robed men will probably wait until late night before making their move.” Harry said with complete confidence, “Right now, it’s only nine or so at night. There are still many people outside drinking and eating.” Harry said.

Linley was simply too worried about this problem. He hadn’t even had a chance to think it through.

But now, hearing Harry’s words, he thought back to the description of the previous ‘city of the dead’ which Wharton had discussed with him. Virtually all of the dead people in Bluelion City had died in their homes. The number of people who were killed on the streets could be counted on one hand. At what time would a city have almost nobody outside on the streets?

After all, only after midnight would most of the restaurants close.

Linley instantly calmed down.

Fain was puzzled. “Harry, you say they will only make their move late at night? Then previously, didn’t you say that the silver robed men were the ones to attack the Eighteen Northern Duchies? Why did they attack so early in the Eighteen Northern Duchies?”

“Stupid!” Harry laughed loudly in delight. “The Eighteen Northern Duchies are amongst the coldest places in the Yulan continent. It is currently winter, and so there’s a major difference between day and night. The night is deathly cold. In the Eighteen Northern Duchies, at night, if you were to spit out a mouthful of saliva, it would freeze into an ice cube before hitting the ground!”

Linley secretly nodded. He, too, had heard how cold the Eighteen Northern Duchies were.

“In that sort of weather, most of the people of the Eighteen Northern Duchies will stay at home at night, staying next to their furnaces. In

particular, those smaller cities will have almost no one out at night to brave the cold. There's nobody to be seen in the streets." Harry sighed. "Tell me, is there a need for those silver-robed men to wait until midnight to act in a situation like this?"

Fain now understood.

"Oh, we're almost there. Just a hundred kilometers away." Harry said excitedly.

Linley and Fain instantly felt a hint of a murderous intent begin to rise in their hearts.

The 'dead city' events in the O'Brien Empire and the Baruch Empire had truly caused both Fain and Linley to be completely enraged. For someone to act so wildly was a sign that they held both Empires in contempt, and also didn't have any respect for the Saints who stood behind those two Empires.

"Everyone, come to a halt." Harry said.

Linley and Fain immediately came to a halt. Right now, a few kilometers away, there was a small city in front of them. In mid-air, they could clearly see that the city was filled with lit lamps, and there were many human figures leisurely strolling about the streets. This city was very peaceful.

"Harry, where are those two silver-robed men?" Linley immediately asked.

He didn't dare to search with his spiritual energy. After all, if he were to use his spiritual energy to search for them, once they noticed it, they would probably flee.

"You can't tell?" Harry laughed so hard, even his whiskers curved up. "South of you, roughly six kilometers away in that wilderness, those two silver-robed men are currently seated in the meditative posture. Most likely, they will wait until late at night before making their move."

Linley and Fain immediately turned to look towards the south.

That was a desolate area, filled with wild grass.

Linley and Fain exchanged a glance. From each other's gazes, they could tell what their decision was. Without hesitating at all…

"Swoosh!"

Those two Prime Saints transformed into blurs, stealthily drawing near that desolate area. As for Bebe, he hopped off of Linley's shoulders and followed by Harry's side. He didn't want to disturb Linley's attack on those silver-robed men. In addition, Bebe was completely confident in Linley's abilities.

Linley had even managed to defeat a million Abyssal Blade Demons. How could he possibly fear these silver-robed men?

"Whoooooosh."

The wind blew against the grass and causing it to continuously sway. Within the wild grass, the two silver-robed men were seated in the meditative posture, not moving at all. Even if someone drew near them, unless they paid particular attention to their surroundings, they might think that these two were nothing more than two white rocks.

Suddenly, the two silver-robed men simultaneously opened their eyes and turned to stare at a nearby space with their cold, knife-like gazes.

Knowing that they had been discovered, Linley and Fain, who had been quietly moving closer and closer, didn't hesitate any longer.

"Kill!" Linley and Fain raised their speed to their utmost levels. From this, one could tell the difference between Fain and Linley. When Fain raised his speed to the maxium level, he transformed into a bolt of lightning that slashed through the air. As for Linley, when he raised his speed to the limit…

He simply transformed into the invisible, formless wind. In the dark night, Linley's form was no longer visible.

But as soon as the two silver-robed men knew that enemies had come, they had immediately used their spiritual energy to cover the surrounding area, and thus were completely able to sense their opponent's movements.

"So fast." The two silver-robed men were both astonished by Linley's speed. Fain's speed was already quite terrifying, but Linley's speed was nearly three times that of Fain's. In virtually an instant, Linley arrived in front of one of the silver-robed men.

Retreat!

Not hesitating at all, the silver-robed man immediately transformed into a streak of silver light, retreating backwards at a speed comparable to Fain's.

"Die!" Linley stared at the silver-robed man with an icy gaze. Like a god looking down upon a commoner, he struck out with a simple blow from his blade, and a visible, faint-blue Dimensional Decapitator appeared. Where the Dimensional Decapitator attack passed, space itself immediately began to crack and split apart.

He left no openings at all.

The Dimensional Decapitator directly chopped the silver-robed man into two halves.

"Hrmph!" With a sweep of his hand, Linley caused countless, extremely sharp wind knives to appear, chopping the silver-robed man's head into a muddy pile of flesh and destroying his soul.

In an instant, he had slain his foe!

"Bang!" From not too far away, a terrifying collision sound could be heard. Fain and the second silver-robed man flew away from each other, and a terrifying wave of energy blasted in every direction. Much of the

surrounding grass was chopped through as though cut by sharp knives, flying away in a neat circle.

Linley frowned. “Swoosh!” Moving like the wind, he quickly arrived near the silver-robed man.

The silver-robed man wanted to flee, but his speed was simply far too slow compared to Linley’s. Linley’s right leg, moving like a gust of wind, carrying enormous power, smashed viciously against his back, instantly sending the silver-robed man flying away.

Flying towards Fain’s direction.

Naturally, Fain would seize this opportunity!

Moving at his highest speed, he arrived next to the silver-robed man. The badly injured silver-robed man, with an angry roar, sent a fist smashing towards Fain’s chest, but Fain completely ignored the attack, using his own palm to smash directly down towards the skull of the silver-robed man.

“Bang!” A tremendous crunching sound.

The silver-robed man’s punch caved in Fain’s chest, but despite that, the silver-robed man’s body still fell down from the air, powerless. As for Fain, due to his possession of a Pearl of Life, his caved in chest almost instantly repaired itself to normal.

Linley and Fain drew near each other.

“Linley, you are growing more and more powerful.” Fain sighed in amazement. “If it wasn’t for you, I would probably have had to use up my spiritual energy and utilize my ultimate attack.”

Linley laughed. “Fain, let’s go take a look and see who they are. They are covering up their entire bodies with these silver robes.”

“Right.” Fain wanted to see what the silver-robed men really were as well.

The silver-robed man which Linley had killed had his head utterly shattered, and his body had been chopped in half as well. Linley and Fain landed near one of the chopped halves, then pulled aside the long silver robe which covered that half body. When they did so, both their faces changed.

That half a body was covered with dense white scales, like a fish.

“Not human.” The two were utterly certain of this.

Not hesitating at all, Linley and Fain walked over to the silver-robed man which Fain had killed, pulling aside the silver robe which covered his body. This silver-robed man’s skin was a metallic color, but just judging from his features, he seemed very similar to a human.

“Also not a human.” Linley and Fain were both all the more certain now of their hypothesis.

Whether it was the hidden Deity or the servants of that Deity, all of these people were from other planes.

“Haha, Linley, your power has improved quite a bit.” Harry and Bebe, who had been hidden far away, flew over now. Harry was chortling. “However, I have to tell you two things. One is good news. The other is bad news.”

Linley and Fain both felt their hearts tremble.

Bad news?

“Tell me, which one should I say first?” Harry looked as evil as a little devil.

“The bad news first.” Linley and Fain both said.

“You two are quite well coordinated.” Harry nodded his little head. “Then I’ll tell you. In the past, when I told you that the Deity wouldn’t know that

you were the ones to kill the silver-robed men, that was a lie! That Deity definitely knows that you were the killers."

Linley and Fain's faces instantly turned ugly to behold.

Both Fain and Linley, although being powerful amongst Saints, would be easily trampled upon by any Deities.

"Harry, you…" Linley truly had no idea what he should say.

"How does that feel? Are you pissed off? Haha, if I didn't say what I said, would you two have dared to kill the two silver-robed men?" Harry clearly seemed very delighted with himself.

"Harry." Bebe was now unhappy as well.

Harry hurriedly said, "But there's still the good news, right?"

Linley and Fain immediately looked at Harry.

"Earlier, when I said that the Deity had been badly wounded and was also busy with an important task, and that he wouldn't seek the two of you for revenge…that was true. Tell me, isn't that good news?" Harry carefully watched the expressions on Linley and Fain's faces.

Linley and Fain truly didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Harry, you said that the Deity is currently busy with an important task. Then…after he is finished with the task, wouldn't he have enough time to seek us out for revenge? How long do you think he will be busy for?" Linley asked.

Harry paused for a moment. "That's hard to say. I expect he'll need three or four years."

"I hope it's four years later." The reason Fain was saying this was because nearly six years had passed since the War God and the others had gone to

the Necropolis of the Gods for their ten year trip. In a little over four years, the War God, the High Priest, and the others would return.

Linley secretly let out a sigh of relief as well.

At least…in three or four years, he should definitely have become a Deity himself.

"But of course, that's just my guess." Harry added those extra words. Seeing the hopeful look on the faces of Linley and Fain, he immediately began to grin so widely that his little eyes turned into merry little slits.

Within that dark, gloomy underground room.

The skeletal figure remained seated in the meditative posture, and that crystal globe still hovered in front of him, with the fog-like energy swirling within it. Only…it seemed as though there were a few more silver drops that had coalesced within the fog, compared to before.

"Two more died?"

The skeletal old man's eyes flickered with that devouring green light. "The two of them?" In the mind of the skeletal figure, the images of Linley and Fain appeared.

As a Grand Warlock, he was spiritually controlling those nine silver-robed men. In the moments before their deaths, those two silver-robed men had already seen Linley and Fain's appearances, and had immediately transmitted that knowledge to the Grand Warlock's mind. Although the Grand Warlock had never personally seen Linley and Fain…

Others had!

"Yale, have you seen these two before?" The skeletal old man directly transferred the images of those two to Yale's mind.

Yale, who had been in the middle of a nap, suddenly opened his eyes.

“Grand Warlock, the one with long brown hair is Linley. He is a good friend of mine. The other one, the one with short blue hair, I once met at Third Bro’s place. He is the eldest disciple of the War God’s College, Fain.”
Yale’s voice also directly entered the Grand Warlock’s consciousness.

Chapter 20 – Discarding a Piece

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 20, Discarding a Piece

The skeletal figure's already-wrinkled face furrowed still further.

"Fain of the War God's College, and Linley?" The green light flickered in the eyes of the skeletal old man. Clearly, he was thinking about something.

He had brought all nine of those silver robed men from the Gebados Planar Prison. They all possessed the power of Prime Saints. If it hadn't been for Linley's assistance, Fain would have had to spend quite a bit of effort to kill even just one of them.

The more powerful an expert's soul was, the harder it was to dominate them.

Lord Beirut had destroyed a silver robed expert, fine. He didn't dare to be the slightest bit upset with Lord Beirut. But Linley and Fain had also killed two of his important subordinates. He was upset now.

"Hrmph. If it wasn't for the fact that I am busy with something important, I'd definitely head out and mentally dominate you two punks and have you two be controlled by me for a thousand or ten thousand years!" The low, hoarse voice of the skeletal old man rang out as a cold light flashed through his eyes. "Given the situation…"

"Yale. Come to my place quickly." The skeletal old man's voice once more rang out in Yale's mind.

"Yes, Grand Warlock." Yale didn't dare to disobey at all.

Yale was currently staying at one of the side branches of the Dawson Conglomerate, located in a large valley in the southwest part of the Baruch Empire. This location was very close to all three major Empires; the Yulan

Empire, the O'Brien Empire, and the Baruch Empire. Thus, the slaves which were being sent over by all three Empires were able to be quickly delivered to this valley.

As for the Grand Warlock…

He was living in a secret underground area in the innermost core of the valley.

Soon afterwards, Yale arrived at this gloomy underground room.

"Grand Warlock." Yale respectfully dropped to one knee. In front of the Grand Warlock, Yale was unimpeachably faithful.

The Grand Warlock nodded calmly. With a flip of his hand, he produced a translucent flask the size of a thumb which was filled with a small amount of liquid. It flew directly towards Yale, who respectfully accepted it.

"Yale, mix the liquid in this vial into a flask of wine, and then take the flask of wine to meet Linley. Have Linley drink it. Remember…no matter what the cost, you must have him drink it." The Grand Warlock calmly ordered.

"Yes, Grand Warlock." Yale's voice had no hesitation at all.

Shrouded in darkness, the Grand Warlock nodded calmly. "Enough. You can go now."

Watching Yale leave, the Grand Warlock secretly sighed. "After drinking this 'Soulsilk Poison', Linley will definitely die. A pity. Linley's friends and family members definitely won't spare Yale, the 'culprit'. Yale will die. It seems I'll have to find another person within the Dawson Conglomerate to control."

The night was dark. Yale, riding on the back of a Bluewind Hawk, flew at high speed in the direction of Dragonblood Castle. Behind him were two guards mounted on flying magical beasts. These two guards were both quite puzzled.

“Why is the Chairman in such a rush? It’s still late at night.”

“Who knows? In the past few years, the Chairman hasn’t seemed like himself. He no longer likes to joke, and he’s become so solemn.”

The two guards spoke softly to each other behind him, while Yale himself stared towards the northeast with a cold, expressionless face.

The next afternoon.

Yale’s party finally arrived at Dragonblood Castle, and the flying beasts landed.

“We’re here.” Yale swept Dragonblood Castle with his gaze, an utterly unfeeling look flashing through his eyes.

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Today, in Dragonblood Castle, Gates, Wharton, Zassler, and the others all felt uneasy and irritable. When Linley had returned, he had already made a detailed report to everyone about the ‘city of death’ affair and how the culprits behind the affair were those silver-robed men.

But behind those silver-robed men was a Deity who was controlling them!

A Deity level expert!

Those four simple words were like a mountain, crushing down against the hearts of Gates, Zassler, and the others. They all felt that tremendous pressure.

After eating lunch, Linley, Wharton, Gates, Zassler, and the others all sat down in the rear flower gardens to discuss the situation.

“Don’t worry too much. Harry has already said, after all, that the Deity won’t have time to get himself involved in other matters.” Linley saw that

the others seemed to be rather worried, and so he couldn't help but laugh and try to encourage them. "By the time that Deity is done, I should have broken through to the Deity level myself."

"Big bro." Wharton said nervously. "First of all, is it possible that the Deity will pause his activities to come act against you? Even aside from this, more importantly…even if you reach the Deity level, big bro, will you definitely be able to deal with that Deity?"

Wharton was extremely worried.

Linley, even after becoming a Deity, would only be a Demigod.

The enemy?

Who knew if the enemy was a Demigod or a full God? If the opponent was a God, then Linley wouldn't have any chance to change the situation. Even if the opponent was a Demigod…there were major differences between Demigods as well. Could an early stage Demigod and a peak stage Demigod be viewed as the same?

After all, at Linley's level, even other peak Saints would be easily killed by him.

It wasn't impossible that a peak Demigod would be able to kill early stage Demigods in just one or two attacks.

"Have some faith in me." Linley, seeing the worry etched on Wharton's face, still felt very moved. He understood what his little brother, Wharton, was thinking about.

Zassler encouraged as well, "Wharton, don't worry too much. In four more years, the War God and the others will all have returned as well. By that time, the situation will be different yet again. In addition, since when has your big brother ever let you down? You need to have faith in Lord Linley."

Wharton nodded.

He looked at his big brother. Linley had killed the king of Fenlai Kingdom, become famous in the O'Brien Empire, had fought Haydson to a standstill, and now…just by relying on his own ability, was about to become a Deity.

"Big bro, I believe in you." Wharton anticipated seeing Linley being able to overcome their enemy.

Linley actually felt much more confident than Wharton was.

First of all, if that mysterious Deity was to wait four years before coming, by then…Dylin and the others would have returned as well. He had originally gifted Dylin with that divine spark. Dylin owed him a huge favor in return. Linley believed that Dylin wouldn't just stand by and watch with arms folded.

But of course, that was just relying on external strength.

Linley's greatest support was…Bloodviolet and the Coiling Dragon ring!

Divine artifacts had differences in power as well.

For example, when they had first gone to the sixth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, they had encountered the Flame Tyrant and that divine artifact greataxe it had wielded. Even Saints could make full use of the special abilities of that divine artifact. Thus…without question, that divine artifact was a low level one.

The harder a divine artifact was to use, the more stringent its requirements were, the more powerful it actually was.

As for his Bloodviolet sword, up till now, Linley still was only able to rely on the hardness and sharpness of Bloodviolet to kill opponent's. Linley was still completely unable to use some of the special abilities of the sword. For example…Linley was completely unable to make Bloodviolet change its size as he pleased.

Divine artifacts could all expand or contract in size. This was a basic ability.

But Linley wasn't even capable of accomplishing this. Clearly, Bloodviolet was no ordinary divine artifact. Actually, when Linley's spiritual energy had interacted with that terrifying baleful aura and seen that terrifying sight within Bloodviolet, he had known that it was a portent of how extraordinary this Bloodviolet sword was.

Bloodviolet was one powerful support. He also had the Coiling Dragon ring!

Up till now, Linley was still utterly baffled with regards to the Coiling Dragon ring. But Linley was certain that for him to not be able to sense anything about it at his current level of strength meant that the power of the Coiling Dragon ring was most likely no weaker than that of Bloodviolet, and perhaps even more powerful.

"Once I become a Deity, I'll naturally be able to control and use my divine artifacts." Linley was very eager.

He wanted to know the true power of Bloodviolet and of the Coiling Dragon ring!

"Lord, Chairman Yale of the Dawson Conglomerate has arrived." A guard of Dragonblood Castle ran into the rear flower gardens and spoke to Linley respectfully. Even the quick glance he snuck at Linley was filled with a hint of worship.

"Yale?" Linley's eyes instantly lit up.

"Quick, quick, invite him over." Linley immediately felt very happy. To Linley, these three friends he had made during his youthful days had the exact same status in his heart as his real brother, Wharton.

"Yale?" Wharton frowned, then said to Linley, "Big bro, I forgot to tell you. Five years ago, after the great war began, Yale came to us and asked for us to give him the rights to purchase all of the battle captives we took. At that

time, although Cena was rather unwilling, in the end, he had still agreed."

"Oh?" Although Linley didn't understand much about managing a country, he understood what purchasing all of the battle captives meant. This wasn't something a person could do just because they had money.

"That's not a major affair. No need to worry about it too much. I'll just say a few things to Boss Yale about it." Linley didn't think too much about it and just spoke casually.

Hearing Linley's words, Wharton didn't say anything further. At this time, they heard the sound of footsteps. Linley immediately went to the gate of the rear flower garden to greet the person, and indeed…Yale, his face all smiles, walked in. As soon as he saw Linley, his eyes lit up. "Third Bro, it really is quite hard to meet you these days."

"I've been busy with something important. Come, let's have a seat while we chat." Linley immediately said warmly.

Linley said to the nearby Wharton and Zassler, "Wharton, you guys can go rest for now. Boss Yale and I haven't met for a long time. We're going to have a nice long chat. Oh, right. Make the arrangements for a banquet feast tonight. Yale's having dinner here tonight."

Linley's original plan had been to go back into closed door training after tonight's meal.

"Yes, big bro." Wharton nodded, then immediately left along with Gates and the others. Zassler frowned as he glanced twice at Yale, but he didn't say anything as he left.

The maids of the castle quickly brought fine wine and winecups to the two.

"Boss Yale, why did did you want to buy all of our battle captives?" Linley asked curiously. Linley wasn't planning to interrogate him; he was just a bit puzzled.

Yale intentionally put on a mysterious air. “That’s a business secret.”

“Jeeze, you…you’re going to talk about keeping ‘business secrets’ from me?” Linley immediately began to laugh, and he no longer raised the topic.

“Your arrival is quite the coincidence. If you were a day late, I probably wouldn’t have free time to spend with you.” Linley felt quite moved. After all, he had just come out yesterday, and had been planning to continue his closed door training after dinner today. There had only been a very small window of time, but Yale had just so happened to catch it.

It had to be said that it was quite the coincidence.

“I had some business that required me to pass nearby. When I saw Dragonblood Castle, I decided to come looking for you. I was just trying my luck. I didn’t expect you’d actually be available.” Yale laughed as well.

“Hey, what wine is this, anyhow?” Yale suddenly frowned as he looked at his wine cup.

Linley glanced at the wine bottle, shaking his head and laughing. “How should I know? My knowledge of wine isn’t as deep as yours. But I imagine the wine that the servants at my Dragonblood Castle prepared shouldn’t be too bad.”

Yale immediately began to laugh as well. “I know. You, you genius, spend all your time training. You don’t waste any time on wine. However, although this wine isn’t bad, it can’t be considered exquisite either. Right, in my interspatial ring, I have a bottle of fine wine. Third Bro, come, let’s taste it together.”

As he spoke, with a flip of his hand, Yale withdrew a small bottle of wine from within his interspatial ring.

“Such a small bottle?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

“This is something which a winery which our Dawson Conglomerate owns

just finished refining. A single drop of this wine is a thousand times more valuable than its weight in gold. Come, have a taste." Yale immediately poured Linley a cup, and then poured himself a cup as well.

Yale raised the cup, then frowned, intentionally saying 'unhappily', "Third Bro, what are you waiting for? Are you not going to give me face?"

"Haha, Yale, how would I, the Third Bro, dare to not give the Boss face?" Laughing, Linley raised the cup of wine. "Come, cheers." As he spoke, without hesitating at all, Linley drank it all in one swig. But only after Linley drank did he realize that Yale hadn't drank yet.

"Boss Yale, why didn't you drink?" Linley laughed while berating. "You are going too far."

Yale didn't reply. He just put the wine cup back on the table. His smile had disappeared, and he just looked coldly and calmly at Linley.

Chapter 21 – Soulsilk

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 21, Soulsilk

“Boss Yale, you…?”

Yale’s face was calm, and his cold gaze stabbed at Linley’s heart like daggers. It had been so many years. The four bros of dormitory 1987 had all been on exceedingly close terms with each other. Although they had some squabbles when they were young, there had been none that harmed their friendship.

Linley had never imagined that Yale would look at him in such a way.

It was as though he were looking at a stranger. As though he were looking at…a dead person!

“Huh?” Linley’s face suddenly changed dramatically.

He finally discovered the changes that were going on inside his body. After that cup of wine had entered his stomach, he suddenly realized that the cup of wine actually contained strange, faint gray strands of thin threads. The many silken threads quickly rushed towards Linley’s brain, and they soon entered his consciousness.

The many faint gray threads surrounded his entire sea of consciousness, and then…began to seep through!

“Uhhhh….”

Linley felt his head grow dizzy. He couldn’t help but sway, falling backwards over the seat behind him. After striking the chair, he collapsed to the floor, but right now, he didn’t notice it at all. His concentration was completely focused on his sea of consciousness.

“Lord Linley.” A nearby serving woman immediately cried out in alarm.

Linley, to the serving women and guards of Dragonblood Castle, was a godlike presence. This serving woman had never imagined that the invincible Linley would suddenly faint, as though he were an ordinary person. But the panicked cry of the serving woman quickly drew the attention of the people outside.

The first person whose attention was drawn was Zassler.

Zassler charged into the rear flower garden. Seeing the scene in front of him, his face changed dramatically. “Lord Linley.” Zassler immediately rushed towards Linley, but right now, no one at all could help Linley. Zassler immediately turned his head to stare at Yale.

“It was you!” Zassler’s eyes radiated a freezing light.

Yale maintained his silence, not saying a word.

“Big bro, big bro.” Wharton and a group of others ran over as well. Seeing Linley lying there collapsed on the floor, they were all terrified.

They wouldn’t even be afraid if Linley had been stabbed or slashed, but for Linley to collapse to the ground for no reason at all…how could they not be afraid and worried?

Within Linley’s consciousness.

The many faint gray strings had, in the end, penetrated straight through that faint azure layer of light surrounding his consciousness. The many faint gray strings pierced into the sea of consciousness, and instantly began to constrict around that sword-shaped soul of Linley’s.

The sword-shaped soul was currently hovering in the deepest parts of his sea of consciousness.

“Not good.” Linley definitely wouldn’t permit those strange threads to

attack his soul. He immediately tried to control his spiritual energy to block it.

The sea of consciousness in his brain instantly began to roil, and large amounts of spiritual energy began to whittle away at those dim gray threads. After having become a Grand Magus Saint, Linley's spiritual energy had been further refined and become easier to control. Those faint gray threads, however, forcefully pushed through his condensed spiritual energy, drawing closer to his sword-shaped soul at high speed.

But in the process of doing so, the threads had also been reduced in power.

Having lost a third of their power, the remaining faint gray threads still wrapped around Linley's soul. With those many gray threads wrapped around his sword-shaped soul, Linley's soul was like a turtle trapped in a jar. Those gray threads tried to penetrate even deeper.

The soul was extremely important. Once it was pierced through, one would most likely die. Linley understood this very well.

"Rumble…" The sword-shaped soul suddenly flashed with blue light, suddenly gleaming as brightly as the sun. Those faint gray threads dissolved in an instant, like flecks of snow. Within his sea of consciousness, not a single faint gray thread was remaining.

Only now did Linley secretly let out a sigh of relief.

He opened his eyes.

"What are you doing?!" As soon as Linley opened his eyes, he couldn't help but roar in fury.

Yale was curled up to one side. Yale's body was covered with blood, but Yale was still moving. He hadn't died yet. Wharton, Gates, and the others, especially his son Taylor, were currently kicking Yale.

"Bam." Yale suddenly vomited out yet another mouthful of blood.

“Big bro (Lord Linley)!” Wharton, Zassler, and the others, upon hearing Linley’s furious roar, turned to look with surprised delight.

“Father!” Taylor turned as well. His tear-covered face was now filled with shock and joy.

Everyone from Housekeeper Hiri to Taylor’s children were all present. Dozens of people from Dragonblood Castle were clustered here. All of them stared at Yale with eyes filled with hatred. Now that Linley had woken up, however, they all grew joyful and calmed down.

“Father, are you alright?” Taylor instantly rushed over to Linley.

“Everyone, take a step aside for now.” Linley was staring at Yale.

Linley was certain…that just then, he had suffered an extremely powerful, insidious attack. If it hadn’t been that the protective Dragonblood Warrior energy surrounding his soul had suddenly increased dramatically, it would be hard to say if he would’ve been able to make it past that dangerous moment.

All of this had been caused by that so-called flask of ‘fine wine’ of Yale’s.

“Cough, cough!” Yale covered his mouth, but fresh blood still continued to dribble out past his fingers. Clearly, just then, Taylor and the others had been absolutely furious. After all, Linley was family. Taylor, Wharton, and the others had been so angry that they had physically assaulted Yale.

If it hadn’t been for Yale’s special relationship with Linley, he would have been beaten to death long ago.

Linley looked at Yale and his current appearance. He stretched his hand out, resting it against Yale’s shoulders. He controlled the ‘Pearl of Life’ in his body, and as he did, a special energy filled with life force streamed out from the Pearl of Life, passing through his right hand into Yale’s body.

Yale's wounds visibly healed in front of them.

"Boss Yale, tell me. Why." Linley stared at Yale. His voice was very low.

Yale's body was fine now, and he no longer coughed. He glanced calmly at Linley. "No reason." After saying these words, Yale no longer spoke.

Linley's heart was as cold as ice.

This was his lifelong friend!

When he had broken up with Alice and had spent eleven days and eleven nights outside in the cold, Yale, George, and Reynolds had accompanied him the entire time, because they were worried about him, their friend. When he had gone to get revenge on the King of Fenlai, Yale, after having learned about the matter, had done his utmost to assist him.

Yale hadn't cared at all that these actions would perhaps cause offense to the Radiant Church.

Once, Linley had believed that the brotherly love between the four of them would never change.

But seeing the cold look currently on Yale's face, Linley's heart felt such pain.

"Boss Yale. I'll call you Boss Yale one more time. Tell me, why did you do this!" Linley suppressed the pain in his heart as he stared at Yale. Was this still the same Boss Yale who had always been so full of laughter, the man who would be willing to throwing himself in any danger for the sake of his friends?

Yale glanced at Linley. "Why so many questions? It was to kill you." Yale's words were very calm, as though what he said was very reasonable."

Linley's heart clenched, as though it had just been struck. A terrible pain slowly began to spread out from his heart, so great that Linley began to

shudder slightly. Linley had always been a man who deeply valued love, be it towards his wife, his children, or his friends.

Linley had always believed that the relationship he had were his most priceless assets.

He also believed that his brothers would never abandon him, and that their love was firm and unshakable.

“How…how could this have happened?” Linley’s body was shaking slightly. His eyes were filled with incomprehension and pain!

Why had his dear friend betrayed him?

But as he stared at that cold, calm look in Yale’s eyes, Linley truly didn’t know what he should say.

“Big bro, this Yale wanted to kill you. Why are you hesitating? This sort of person deserves to just be killed!” Wharton was currently still filled with fury, especially after having heard Yale calmly say the words, ‘it was to kill you’. On behalf of his big brother, he felt wronged!

Linley took a deep breath, letting his heart calm down slightly.

“Boss Yale. This will be the last time I call you Boss Yale.” Linley looked at Yale, his heart filled with stabbing pains. In his mind, he couldn’t help but see one scene after another of how the four bros had laughed happily together.

“You can go.” Linley turned around, no longer looking at Yale.

Yale glanced at Linley, then turned and left without a word.

“Big bro.”

“Father.”

“Lord Linley!”

Wharton, Taylor, Gates, Boone, and the others were frantic. Yale had wanted to kill Linley, but Linley was going to release him without punishing him at all?

“Remember. Do not make trouble for Yale. After all…he, he was once my brother.” Linley, when saying the word ‘once’, felt the pain in his heart increase. “Enough. You can all leave. I want to be alone for a while.”

All of them looked at each other, then looked at Linley’s back, which was turned towards them. And then, they all left, one after the other.

In the entire rear flower garden, aside from Linley, only one person was left – Zassler.

“Zassler.” Linley didn’t turn around. “You can leave as well.”

“Lord Linley, I wonder if you would be willing to tell me what happened to your body just now. Perhaps…I can understand a few things.” Zassler stared straight at Linley, his gaze firm.

“No need.” Linley said calmly. “I don’t wish to discuss this matter further.”

Linley was currently in a terrible mood.

“Lord Linley, if you tell me what happened to you within your body, perhaps…I will be able to tell you why Yale did this. There is a possibility that Yale is not to blame for his actions.” Zassler paused for a moment, then spoke.

Linley suddenly turned around, staring at Zassler. “What did you say?”

“I said, perhaps Yale is not to blame for his actions. There might be other reasons.” Zassler said.

When Linley heard these words, his heart instantly became filled with hope.

He truly hoped that Yale had his own difficulties, which is why he had asked Yale earlier why he had done this. But from Yale's eyes, he had seen no pain or embarrassment, only cold indifference.

This caused Linley's heart to turn so cold.

"Alright. I'll tell you." Linley immediately began to describe in detail what had happened in his body to Zassler. Of course, Linley didn't explain too much about how that special protective azure light unique Dragonblood Warriors possessed had increased dramatically. After all, to Zassler, what really mattered was what had been used to attack Linley.

"Soulsilk?" Zassler's eyes instantly lit up as he heard this. "So my suspicions were correct."

"What is 'Soulsilk'?" Linley looked at Zassler.

Zassler explained in detail, "Lord Linley, I've had many suspicions this entire time, but now, I'm absolutely certain. I'll tell you right now that this 'Soulsilk' is based off of Necromantic Magic. It is a type of poison that is specially meant to attack the souls of others. Only, the process of refining it is extremely difficult, and the requirements are very high. Even I have never refined this poison."

"Are you saying that this wine had Soulsilk inside it?" Linley asked.

Zassler nodded. "Right. After Soulsilk has been refined, it needs to be stored in a special type of liquid. That way, the Soulsilk will be able to last for a long period of time."

"So the culprit behind Yale is someone who trains in Necromancy?" Linley's eyes lit up.

Zassler nodded. "Lord Linley, actually…when you informed us that yesterday that after killing those two silver-robed men, that Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, told you that the Deity behind those two knew that it was the two of you who had killed the two silver-robed men…I began to grow

suspicious."

"Because even Deities can't always be casting their Deific presence everywhere at all times. You suddenly killed those two silver-robed men. How could the Deity behind them possibly know? But Harry was so certain that the Deity knew. Thus…in my mind, there's only one possibility!"

"That was a Soulseed!"

Zassler said seriously, "Necromancers can use their own soul energy to condense into a Soulseed, and then place that Soulseed into someone else's soul. That person will then be under the complete control of the Soulseed's creator. At the same time, between servant and master, there will be a spiritual link and ability to communicate. Thus, before dying, those two silver-robed men were been able to inform the appearances of you and Fain to that Deity."

Linley felt utterly shocked.

"Lord Linley, you said that there are nine silver-robed men, and that most likely every single one of them is at Prime Saint levels of power. I imagine…the only type of person capable of controlling nine Prime Saints would be an expert practitioner of Necromancy who has reached the Deity-level." Zassler said with certainty. "This is because Grand Magus Necromancers definitely don't have the ability to control so many Prime Saints. After all, the more powerful the person being controlled, the higher the requirements the Soulseed will have."

"In addition, Lord, you and Yale have an extremely deep relationship with each other, but when he tried to kill you, he was so remorseless and uncaring. He was even able to bring out a poison such as Soulsilk…there's only one explanation. He, too, has been controlled by a Soulseed from that Deity."

Zassler looked at Linley. "Lord Linley, you should forgive Yale. Once a person is controlled by a Soulseed, deep in their mind, they will come to treat the wishes of their master as paramount. Even if one was ordered to

commit suicide or commit patricide or matricide, it would be done without hesitation. He's nothing more than a dominated puppet right now."

Linley felt both joy and fear in his heart.

Fear for Yale!

"Yale's been controlled…then…is there any method to allow him to return him to normal?" Linley was filled with worry for Yale.

"There is." Zassler nodded. "The method is…kill the Deity. At that time, the Soulseed will naturally dissipate."

Chapter 22 – (title hidden)

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 22, (title hidden)

Only after killing the Deity would Yale be rescued?

Hearing Zassler's words, Linley felt a hint of pressure.

"Yale currently…" When Linley thought about how Yale was currently being dominated by the Soulseed and would completely obey the orders of that mysterious Deity, he felt both rage and injustice in his heart. "No matter who that Deity is, I will definitely kill him!"

For the sake of letting Yale become the old Yale once again.

To let Yale regain his sense of self. He had to do this!

"Lord Linley? I want to ask." Zassler paused a moment, then asked, "Lord Linley, after you and Lord Fain killed those two silver-robed men together, did you acquire anything from the corpses of those silver-robed men? For example, interspatial rings…."

"There were interspatial rings." Linley nodded as he looked at Zassler. "But I gave them to Wharton already. Wharton can give them to whoever he wants. What of it?"

Perhaps to a King of a Kingdom, interspatial rings were very precious.

But to an ordinary Saint, they were relatively commonplace items. To an expert like Linley, it would be very easy for him to acquire an interspatial ring. Thus, he didn't care too much about the interspatial ring that he had found on the silver-robed men's corpses. They had acquired two interspatial rings from the two silver-robed men. Fain took one, and Linley had taken one.

“Lord Linley, it’s best if you first investigate what exactly is within that interspatial ring.” Zassler said solemnly.

“Fine.”

Linley listened to Zassler’s advice and immediately sent someone to invite Wharton to come over.

Wharton quickly arrived at the rear gardens. On the way over, he was feeling rather worried. “Big bro highly values the love he shared with his bros. But that Yale, he…big bro must feel terrible right now.” Wharton was worrying for Linley, but when he saw Linley, he discovered…

Right now, Linley didn’t seem heartbroken at all. Instead, he was frowning slightly, a steely look in his gaze, as though he was worrying about something.

“Big bro, why’d you summon me?” Wharton immediately asked.

“I gave you an interspatial ring, right? Have you given it to someone else yet?” Linley asked hastily.

Wharton laughed and said, “Not yet. I was planning to give it to Nina in a few days. Nina and I have been married for so long, but I’ve never gifted her with anything particularly precious.”

“Have Nina come over quickly and have her bind it with blood. Let’s see what’s inside this interspatial ring.” Linley said hurriedly.

Wharton was very surprised. Why was his big brother in such a rush over this?

Soon, Nina arrived. After knowing what Linley wanted, Nina very straightforwardly immediately bound the interspatial ring by blood, and then retrieved all of the contents stored within the ring at once.

There were some clothes, some ore…and in particular, a crystal ball stood

out.

“That’s it.” Zassler’s eyes lit up when he saw the crystal ball.

Linley, Wharton, and Nina were all somewhat puzzled. As far as they were concerned, the crystal ball had a bit of a strange aura, yes, but Linley and the other two had no idea what effect the crystal ball had. But Zassler knew what it was, as soon as he saw it.

Zassler reached out and lifted up the crystal ball. The materials on the inside of the crystal ball seemed to be different compared to the materials on the outside of it. When the sunlight shone into the crystal ball, it would distort and then solidify within the heart of the crystal ball.

Zassler controlled his spiritual energy, delivering it into the crystal ball, carefully inspecting the situation within.

“This crystal ball has already been refined.” Zassler said after a pause, trying to find a way to simplify what he wanted to say. “Its current purpose is now to absorb any surrounding unprotected souls within an area of ten square meters or so.”

“Collect souls?” Linley’s heart shuddered.

He understood now.

The ‘dead city’ events were clearly caused by the silver-robed men, who would slaughter people with one hand while holding the crystal ball in the other. Each time a person was killed, their soul would naturally be absorbed into the crystal ball. After wiping out the entire Bluelion City, nearly a hundred thousand souls would have been absorbed.

“What is the purpose of collecting souls?” Wharton said in astonishment. Wharton and Nina both felt a sense of great shock.

Zassler explained, “The collecting of many souls…first of all, because Necromancy comes from the Overgod of Death, generally speaking, those

who train in Necromancy are able to become Deities. They mostly train in the Edicts of Death, and the Edicts of Death contain much regarding the usage of souls."

"By amassing a large amount of souls, one can execute some special attacks." Zassler explained.

"The…the Edicts of Death, it really is…" Even Linley felt rather uncomfortable.

He knew of the seven Elemental Laws of earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, and darkness. He also knew that Death, Destruction, Life, and Fate were four types of Edicts. Edicts and Laws were two different concepts. The Edicts were the rules which governed the functioning of the entire universe.

As for the Edicts of Death, training in them focused on 'Death'.

"The biggest purpose of amassing so many souls is to refine them and absorb them to increase one's own soul in power." Zassler's words never ceased to amaze.

"Strengthen the power of one's own soul?" Linley was truly stunned.

In the past, Dylin had told Linley that there were two options to becoming a Deity. The second option was to form a clone Deity body around the divine spark, which would represent that one's soul was being split in half. The soul was the most basic element to any living creature! Upon becoming a Deity, a Deity's body, once destroyed, could instantly be reformed from energy.

But if the soul was destroyed, then one would definitely die.

While one trained and grew stronger, one's soul would slowly grow stronger as well.

"Refine a large amount of souls, then absorb them to strengthen one's own

soul?" Linley felt this was simply inconceivable.

"Right. Only, refining souls is simply too hard." Zassler sighed. "It requires a thorough understanding of souls. Even I am not capable of doing such a thing. I imagine that a Deity who trains in the Way of Death will be capable of doing this. But most likely even other Deities who train in different Laws will find it very hard to do this."

Linley nodded to himself.

Refining the souls of others to strengthen one's own soul. This ability was simply too monstrous.

If any ordinary Demigod was capable of it, that would be too ridiculous. From the sound of it, even Deities capable of doing this were extremely rare.

"I think that I already have a good idea as to where that Deity is currently located." Zassler said.

Linley's eyes instantly lit up.

Zassler said calmly, "Putting all the pieces together, such as Yale asking to buy so many battle captives, or those silver-robed men destroying cities and collecting souls…clearly, this Deity is desperately in need of souls. As for this Deity's location, I imagine that he is located in the place where those battle captives are being delivered to."

Linley agreed with this point as well.

"We also know that the excuse the Dawson Conglomerate gave us for the reason why they are buying so many slaves is because they are excavating an enormous secret mine, with the location being within a mountain range near the southern edge of our Baruch Empire. Within that mountain range, there is a large valley, where one of the branches of the Dawson Conglomerate are located. I think…that Deity is probably there." Zassler guessed.

Zassler's lips revealed a hint of an evil smile. "Not just that. For Yale to be able to arrive so quickly…Lord Linley, you killed that silver-robed man just last night, but Yale arrived right away today. I expect that last night, Yale received the order from that Deity to come deal with you."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Yale isn't a Saint. He has to ride a flying magical beast. First, he needs to go to the Deity to retrieve the Soulsilk Poison, and then make haste to Dragonblood Castle. He only spent ten or so hours…and how fast can a flying magical beast be? Thus, that Deity is definitely within a few thousand kilometers of us. Otherwise, there is no way Yale would be able to make haste to Dragonblood Castle so quickly."

"The only large branch of the Dawson Conglomerate within a few thousand kilometers of us is that valley."

Zassler was very certain.

"Right." Linley nodded slightly. "Wharton, Zassler, Nina…all of you can go rest. I'm going to immediately begin training."

"Big bro, are you in that much of a hurry?" Wharton was somewhat surprised. After all, Linley had said that they would have dinner together, and he would only go back into training after dinner.

"What sort of a mood do you think I am in? Enough. All of you, go handle your own affairs." Linley turned his gaze towards the southwest. "Collecting souls? Slaughtering living beings? Dominating Yale…" Linley was filled with a killing urge towards this unseen, mysterious Deity.

Linley immediately left the rear flower garden, entering the hidden secret training room deep within Dragonblood Castle.

As soon as Linley stepped into the pocket dimension, Delia, who was seated in the meditative position on the stone bed, opened her eyes.

“Linley, what happened?” Delia was somewhat puzzled.

Seeing Delia, Linley made a decision. He didn’t want Delia to worry. Forcing out a smile, he said, “Nothing. Let’s continue training.” Linley immediately sat on the floor in the meditative position. Outside the pocket dimension, the multicolored chaotic space continued to flow about.

“Upon reaching the Deity-level, the very first Deity I will kill will be that bastard.” Linley’s heart was filled with a murderous urge.

Linley took three deep breaths before he was able to calm down, and then he fully began to absorb himself in attuning with the Elemental Laws of the Wind, constantly experimenting and perfecting the Profound Truths of Velocity…

As he attuned with the boundless Elemental Laws, those three illusionary mental swords which represented the ‘Fast’ aspect, ‘Slow’ aspect, and ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ all began to display their attacks in his mind. Those three swords transformed countless times, and in a single instant, Linley was capable of hypothesizing ten million different methods of usage.

Hypothesize, and then verify using the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ swords. Only then could he slowly gain new insights.

Only one experiment after another would he be able to understand what the right path was.

The more insight he gained, the more Linley could clearly sense that the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects truly weren’t opposites at all. They both contained commonalities. Fortunately, Linley had only gained some low-level insights into the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects, allowing his ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ to also improve.

If he had previously reached an extremely high level in the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects, it would be extremely hard for him to fuse them later.

Time flowed like water, never stopping.

The Grand Warlock also knew that the Soulsilk Poison which Yale had used had failed to kill Linley. This was actually a cause of considerable surprise to the Grand Warlock. This Soulsilk Poison was extremely toxic, and not a single Saint had been able to escape its affects alive yet.

Linley was the very first to survive this technique of the Grand Warlock's.

"I suppose I'll let that little punk of a Saint live for a while longer." The Grand Warlock didn't care about a Saint. If the opponent was a Deity, he might have been a bit concerned.

But a Saint?

The only reason he wanted to kill Linley was because Linley had killed his silver-robed guardians, making him a bit angry.

"So he actually didn't kill Yale. He really is 'soft-hearted'. Someone like him would have been betrayed and murdered in the Gebados Planar Prison long ago. Oh well, it's all for the best. For him to do this saves me the trouble of spending more soul energy to go control another member of the Dawson Conglomerate."

This affair quickly disappeared from the Grand Warlock's mind. Right now, the Grand Warlock focused on refining the large amount of souls in front of him.

In the blink of an eye, more than half a year had passed.

Deep within Dragonblood Castle. The pocket dimension. Within the mind of Linley, who was in the meditative position, immersed in his training. Those three illusionary swords continued to display themselves again and again, representing yet another mystery of the 'Profound Truths of Velocity'.

"Here it comes."

Linley's mind and soul began to naturally, clearly sense…that he had just crossed beyond a certain boundary. The boundary between Saints and Deities.

Linley opened his eyes and raised his head!

"Rumble…"

A thunderous, soul-shaking energy suddenly descended, completely enveloping Linley within it. The area around Linley all distorted, seemingly separating Linley from the nearby space. Linley's entire body was raised into the air.

His body was not under his control at all as he levitated upwards.

"How terrifying…" Linley could sense that enormous, boundless, ancient, unique energy. To be more specific, it was the presence of something like a Law or an Edict. In front of this presence, Linley felt as though he were nothing more than an ant.

"This…should be the natural Edict which determines whether one is to become a Deity or not." Linley's heart was utterly shaken.

[TL Note – The title for this chapter is Linley Becomes a Deity]

Chapter 23 – The Elemental Sea

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 23, The Elemental Sea

The terrifying natural Laws descended, and even Delia, who was training on the stone bed, was awakened and shocked. She stared in amazement at Linley, who was hovering in mid-air. That unique aura emanated from him, and in an instant, Delia realized what was happening.

“Linley is about to become a Deity?” Although Delia had never seen anyone else become a Deity, she could sense the presence of that enormous, boundless natural Law. Naturally, she could guess what was going on.

At this moment, Linley didn’t need to do anything at all.

A unique energy swept directly into Linley’s mind, surrounding Linley’s soul. In this moment…all of the secrets of Linley’s soul were laid bare. Naturally, the Profound Truths of Velocity which Linley trained in were also completely laid bare before this unique energy.

“Crackle…”

In the air above Linley’s head, an energy aura that contained the ‘Laws’ began to form, while at the same time, wind elemental essence also rapidly began to coalesce there. Large amounts of natural elemental essence began to charge into the pocket dimension from the chaotic space outside, focusing on that point.

“What is this?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

But shortly…

The natural elemental essence dispersed, and a black gemstone which was emanating light green light was now hovering directly above Linley’s head. It was a wind-style Demigod spark. In that instant when this divine spark

was formed, it automatically became connected to Linley's soul.

Because this divine spark was formed from Linley's spiritual aura, it was completely matched with Linley.

In fusing someone else's divine spark, even if the fusion was complete, it couldn't match one's own divine spark, which was naturally formed in accordance with one's own soul by the natural Laws.

"Divine spark."

Raising his head, he stared up at that divine spark hovering above his head and glowing with light green light. Linley's heart was filled with excitement. When he was young, under his father's tutelage, Linley's goal had only been to recover his ancestral heirloom. He had never imagined that he would become a Deity!

A Deity, like the War God or the High Priest!

In addition, he became a Deity through relying on his own power, and not through fusing with a divine spark.

"Finally…I've become a Deity." Linley had a hint of a smile on his face. At this moment, Linley's soul was naturally filled with some certain knowledge. "The natural Laws are currently waiting for me to choose to keep the divine spark outside of my body, or take it into my body."

If he hadn't been informed by Dylin of this choice in advance, Linley wouldn't have known what the difference was between these two choices. Perhaps he would have found it hard to decide.

But now…

Without hesitating in the slightest, Linley controlled the divine spark to hover next to him.

"Aaaaah!" Linley suddenly let out an uncontrollable scream of agony. An

enormous, ripping pain filled Linley, causing all of his muscles to spasm and distort. Deep within Linley's mind, that sword-shaped soul within that sea of consciousness was suddenly surrounded by the natural Laws. With a 'crunch', it snapped into two pieces.

His soul had been broken in half. This sort of pain was countless times worse than mere physical pain.

In this moment, Linley lost all rational thought. He only had the ability to let out agonized howls.

"Linley!" The nearby Delia, seeing Linley like this, couldn't help but grow worried. But Delia also knew…that in this critical moment of him becoming a Deity, no matter what happened, she, Delia, couldn't interfere.

Delia was so nervous that her entire body began to slightly shudder uncontrollably.

She clutched her arms over her chest and prayed mentally, "Linley, you'll definitely be fine." Delia and Linley had been married for many years now, but she had never seen Linley in such agony.

Slowly…

Linley's agonized howls grew softer.

Within Linley's sea of consciousness, those two shattered halves of the first sword-shaped soul had already formed into new 'sword-shapes'. Specifically speaking, Linley's sword-shaped soul had now transformed into two sword-shaped souls that were each a size smaller. One of them remained within Linley's sea of consciousness, while the other flew directly outside of Linley's body.

"What's that?" Delia looked at the sword-shaped soul in shock.

Delia, of course, had never seen Linley's soul, and so she had no idea what it looked like.

The sword-shaped soul, glowing with the colors of the rainbow, flew directly towards the divine spark, and then it easily merged directly into it. The divine spark and the soul became one, a sign that the fusion was a success.

“Was that Linley’s soul?” Delia only now understood.

She had been training for over ten years now, but her soul still had yet to fuse completely with her divine spark. But Linley’s soul was able to instantly fuse with the divine spark, because this divine spark was formed based on Linley’s soul to begin with.

“Whew.” Only now did Linley regain his normal faculties.

At this moment, he felt much weaker than he had earlier. The splitting of his soul had caused tremendous damage to it. Perhaps even his ability to mentally envision and hypothesize regarding the Elemental Laws had become only a fraction of what it had previously been. However, for the sake of being able to continue to train in the Profound Truths of the Earth, Linley had to make this choice.

“How strange.”

Whether it was his original body or that divine spark, both contained Linley’s soul. Suddenly…

“Rumble…”

The nearby space began to shake, and the soul within the divine spark miraculously could sense a unique place. This was a place that was located in the heart of the endless universe, a boundless, infinite plane which one could only sense upon reaching the Deity level…

The Elemental Sea!

“Rumble…”

This was a foggy, indistinct area. There was no light at all in the skies, but the light green light which emanated from the Elemental Sea itself just barely made this plane visible.

The boundless waters of the Elemental Sea roiled about, rising up and crashing down in waves. This was the Elemental Sea of Wind.

The Elemental Sea…the surface of it was liquid elemental essence, while below it…was boundless divine power!

The deeper one went into the Elemental Sea, the purer the divine power was. At present, Linley was only barely capable of breaking through the 'surface' of the liquid elemental essence and sense to a depth of ten meters beneath the liquid elemental essence. From the divine power right beneath the liquid elemental essence to the divine power ten meters below the liquid essence…

Despite the 'distance' only being ten meters, the purity of the divine power was doubled.

What Linley didn't know was that if he had become a Deity by fusing with a divine spark, he would have only been able to sense to a depth of one meter beneath the liquid elemental essence surface.

"Rumble…"

Ten meters below the surface of the liquid elemental essence, suddenly, a good amount of divine power disappeared through a unique corridor formed by the natural Laws, descending into Linley's so-called 'pocket dimension', and then fused directly with the sword-shaped wind elemental essence divine spark, quickly forming a divine body.

"Crackle…" Visibly, from the head on downwards, a naked body that was absolutely identical to Linley's original body was formed. With but a thought, Linley immediately caused the divine power within the clone body to form into a set of light green robes.

At this moment, that unique energy which represented the natural Laws disappeared, and the pocket dimension once more returned to its normal calm.

“It’s over.” Linley revealed a smile on his face, while at the same time, he controlled the clone body to merge with his original body.

The divine clone merged directly into Linley’s body, fusing with it. It was extremely bizarre.

“Linley, this…this…” Delia had already been quite surprised to see two ‘Linleys’ earlier, but now, seeing the two fuse into one body, she became even more shocked.

Linley looked at Delia and laughed, “Delia, wait a moment. I’ll explain to you in a moment. I haven’t figured it all out yet myself.” Having just become a Deity, there were many things which Linley had to understand, but Linley hadn’t imagined that when he asked Delia to ‘wait a moment’… he actually had to ask her to wait a very long time!

“Okay.” Delia nodded obediently.

Linley immediately sat down into the meditative posture, carefully inspecting the changes in his body.

Within his mind, above that sea of consciousness, there wasn’t just a small sword-shaped soul hovering above the sea. Below that sword-shaped soul, within the sea of consciousness, there was also a human figure floating there, seated in the meditative position. It was the divine clone that was dressed in the light green robe.

“This soul space is truly a strange place.” Linley sighed with praise repeatedly.

Actually, the ‘divine clone’ and the ‘original’…there really wasn’t much difference between the ‘clone’ and the ‘original’. After all, both of them

contained a soul, and they were equally important.

“That Elemental Sea…” Through the divine clone, Linley once more sensed that boundless plane which lay at the heart of the cosmos. The boundless elemental sea surged, and Linley could sense to a depth of ten meters beneath the liquid elemental essence surface.

He gave a shot at acquiring some of that wind-style divine power.

“Huh?” Linley found out, to his amazement, that his acquisition speed was simply too slow.

A thread of divine power, through a special channel, entered Linley’s body. Although Linley had been able to withdraw some of the divine power, the speed at which he withdrew could not be compared to when the natural Laws controlled the process. Earlier, he had been able to absorb enough divine power to instantly form a divine body.

“It seems as though in the future, I’ll need to be careful. Once the divine body is destroyed, reforming it will require a large amount of divine power.” Linley sighed.

He could clearly sense how the Elemental Sea contained limitless amounts of divine power, but he could only absorb it in tiny amounts at a time.

“Dylin was right. Once the soul fuses with the divine spark, it becomes impossible to train in other Elemental Laws.” The soul of the divine clone attempted to sense the pulses of the earth elemental essence, but the pulses of the earth were simply too indistinct and blurry. Linley couldn’t clearly sense it at all.

Compared to even when Linley was but a child, the divine clone’s affinity for the earth elemental essence was thousands of times weaker and blurrier.

“Fortunately, I didn’t place the divine spark inside my body. Otherwise…I would never be able to train in the Laws of the Earth again.” Linley felt an after-taste of fear.

Although the divine clone couldn't sense the Laws of the Earth, he could sense the Laws of the Wind hundreds of times more clearly than before. Only, 'sensing them clearly' was one matter; gaining insights into them was an entirely separate matter.

On the path of training in the Elemental Laws, the further one travelled, the harder the road would grow.

"First, let me strengthen my original body." Linley could clearly feel how powerful the divine body of his divine clone was. Comparatively speaking, his original body was rather weak.

Linley began to control that hint of divine power he had withdrawn from the Elemental Sea and began to infuse it throughout his original body. Divine power was indeed extraordinarily effective; Linley's body slowly began to transform. His muscles, his meridians, his internal organs, all began to transform and grow more powerful. However, this transformation lasted for only a short while before concluding.

"Although it only lasted a while, this body is now on a higher level as well." Linley sighed to himself.

Because he himself already was a Dragonblood Warrior, his physical power was already very great. Even after being further refined by divine power, his original body was only able to rise a bit in power, by about one level.

"Switching between the original body and the divine clone is simple enough."

With but a thought, Linley changed…instantly, Delia realized that the Linley in front of her, who had been wearing a sky-blue robe, transformed into a Linley who was wearing a light green robe.

"Linley changed clothes?" Delia didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. But she could guess that actually, what Linley had just done was to switch into another body.

Indeed, he had transformed into his divine clone.

Right now, it was Linley's divine clone which was in the world. Within the deepest reaches of the clone's mind, within that sea of consciousness, there was a rainbow-colored divine spark hovering high above, albeit the light green color being dominant.

Beneath the divine spark, seated in the meditative posture on the surface of that sea of consciousness was the sky-blue robed Linley.

"The two bodies can be swapped out at leisure. It truly is amazing." Linley sighed nonstop.

Not just that. Even his interspatial ring, Bloodviolet flexible sword, Coiling Dragon ring, and other blood-bound items could be utilized by his divine clone. After all, the soul in his original body and his divine clone was the same. Naturally, the divine artifacts could be utilized by either the original body or the divine clone.

"Using wind-style divine power to execute 'Profound Truths of Velocity' is so much more powerful…"

Linley sighed in his heart. His body suddenly moved, and in the pocket dimension, dozens of Linleys suddenly appeared, then reformed into one. Just relying on pure speed…perhaps even the War God and the others were not on Linley's level now. After all, Linley became a Deity through the 'Profound Truths of Velocity'.

Each specialty had its own special benefits. Linley's greatest specialty was naturally speed!

"Now that I am a Deity, it is time to take a look at Bloodviolet and the Coiling Dragon ring, and see what secrets the two are holding within them." Linley first withdrew Bloodviolet with a flip of his hand.

Chapter 24 – Violet Blood, Coiling Dragon

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 24, Violet Blood, Coiling Dragon

The wind-style divine power in his body seeped into Bloodviolet. Out of nowhere, the edge of Bloodviolet became covered with a thin spatial edge, while at the same time, that faint bloody aura began to circulate on top of Bloodviolet while letting out a nonstop humming sword song.

“Linley, stop, quick, stop!” Delia hurriedly called out.

Linley immediately stopped using his divine power, turning to look at Delia in confusion. “Delia, what is it?”

Delia’s face was ashen. She stared at Bloodviolet in terror, saying in astonishment, “That sword, just now, it…”

“What happened? Quick, tell me.” Linley asked.

Delia’s face slowly returned to her normal color, but she was still filled with the after-taste of fear. “Just then, when Bloodviolet let out that humming sword song, for some reason, I felt my soul begin to shudder, and the energy in my body began to run wild. It was as though my body was somewhat losing control of itself.

“Eh?” Linley’s eyes were filled with surprise and delight.

To Linley, that humming sword song sounded very ordinary. He hadn’t imagined that others would be affected by it in such a way.

“Linley, can you make Bloodviolet not emit that humming sword song? I can’t take it.” Delia said apologetically.

But Linley knew that it was his fault. He hurriedly said, “Delia, don’t

worry, I won't let Bloodviolet make any noise again." Linley was still quite surprised and delighted at what had just happened. Actually, just looking at the spatial edge which had appeared on the surface of Bloodviolet, he was already delighted.

He hadn't utilized any Laws, just divine power, but Bloodviolet had already become so incredibly sharp.

"Divine artifacts truly do require divine power in order to reach a truly high level of power. In the past, I was only relying on Bloodviolet's material strength to do battle."

Next, Linley used his spiritual energy to enter Bloodviolet, sensing once more that incredibly powerful baleful aura within it. When his spiritual energy had interacted with that baleful aura, Linley had been able to clearly sense the scene contained within that baleful aura.

The boundless sea of blood.

All sorts of corpses from all sorts of races. Skeletons floating amidst the bloody sea…massive corpses that were dozens of meters high…white skeletal corpses that were emitting a green light…scaled creatures, horned creatures, four-armed creatures…

Countless corpses floating within that bloody sea.

Dimly, Linley began to sense a mental picture form. This mental picture had a devilish violet colored longsword that had fresh blood flowing from it. It also had a devilish man with long, violet hair, a long, violet robe, sword-like eyebrows, and a slightly bloodthirsty look in his eyes.

This was nothing more than what his spiritual energy sensed, but Linley still felt a tremendous pressure, so strong that he felt he could barely breathe.

"That sword is Bloodviolet." Linley was absolutely certain. "And that violet-haired man…is he the previous master of Bloodviolet?"

One scene after another of the devilish man wielding Bloodviolet and engaging in acts of slaughter flashed through his mind as fast as lightning. Each scene, however, was very indistinct and blurry. Occasionally, it would grow bit clearer, but then the scene would disappear entirely.

“Funny. Funny.” Wielding Bloodviolet in his hand, Linley began to laugh.

He had been hoping to discover from within Bloodviolet the secrets to utilizing Bloodviolet.

“No matter how powerful a divine artifact is, it’s still just a weapon. It isn’t a living thing. How could it possibly tell me how its special attacks should be utilized? I still have to rely on myself to find them.” Linley understood that perhaps the previous owner of Bloodviolet knew how to utilize Bloodviolet, but…he couldn’t find that previous owner.

Perhaps the previous owner had already died. After all, if he hadn’t died, how would his blood-bound divine artifact have ended up being used to seal that dimensional gateway?

“However, at least I know two things right now. After filling it with divine power, Bloodviolet will become incomparably sharp. When matched with my ‘Profound Truths of Velocity – Dimensional Decapitator’ attack, the power will become far greater.” Linley felt very confident. “In addition, that humming sword song actually has the power to shake someone’s soul and to affect others in such a way.”

When he did battle, he could let the sword constantly emit noise. The enemy would be impacted, but he would not. This would create a huge advantage.

“However, I still need to slowly analyze how to effectively create the humming sword song.” Linley stored Bloodviolet into his interspatial ring once more, and then he focused his attention on the item he valued most… the Coiling Dragon ring!

He had discovered the Coiling Dragon ring within his ancestral home.

The previous owner of the Coiling Dragon ring was Grandpa Doehring. Because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he had met Grandpa Doehring and was able to step onto the path of becoming an expert.

Linley had been feeling extremely excited, but upon seeing the Coiling Dragon ring, he calmed down. He seemed to see that kindly, white-haired Grandpa Doehring within it. In his time, Grandpa Doehring had dreamed of becoming a Deity, but after being forced to enter the Coiling Dragon ring, he had lost that opportunity. He had thus cultivated and trained Linley, hoping that Linley would be able to reach the highest peaks.

“Grandpa Doehring, today, I have finally reached the Deity-level.” Linley sighed softly in his heart.

“If, Grandpa Doehring, you were still alive, how wonderful that would be.” Linley sighed in his heart.

After taking a deep breath, Linley filled the Coiling Dragon ring with his wind-style divine power, but what Linley discovered was…”Useless? Filling the Coiling Dragon ring with divine power is useless?” Linley was somewhat confused. Whenever a divine artifact was filled with divine power, it should have some response at least.

But the Coiling Dragon ring had no response at all.

“Could it be that this is a rather special divine artifact?” Linley retracted his divine power, then filled the Coiling Dragon with his spiritual energy.

When becoming a Deity, the natural Laws had surrounded Linley’s soul. Thus, despite splitting in half, after having interacted with the natural Laws, Linley’s soul had already transformed on a basic level.

All people who became Deities on their own would have this sort of transformation.

Linley's spiritual transformation had also caused his great reservoir of spiritual energy, based on his soul, to change with it as well. After this pure spiritual energy entered the Coiling Dragon ring, a faint, azure light flashed through the Coiling Dragon ring while at the same time, Linley could sense that within the Coiling Dragon ring, there was an extremely strange energy.

"What's this?"

Linley was extraordinarily surprised.

Suddenly, an extremely powerful aura touched Linley's spiritual energy. This aura was so powerful that Linley began shaking from the depths of his heart. It was simply too powerful. The aura contained within the Coiling Dragon ring was far more powerful than the aura which Bloodviolet had contained.

"Lucky young fellow." A deep, rumbling voice echoed in Linley's mind. "This was a ring that I liked very much when I was alive. It is a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Only, it is damaged now. It wasn't able to successfully protect me, and so, naturally, it was damaged. To repair it, the only thing you can do is to slowly heal it through your spiritual energy…as for how long it will take, even I cannot predict it. Actually, I very much want to know who will be the one to inherit this ring of mine. Unfortunately, I won't have the chance. I'll never have the chance…"

That deep, rumbling voice slowly faded away.

Linley was completely stunned.

A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact? A damaged one?

"A Sovereign artifact?" Linley's body was shaking slightly. He had only heard of 'divine artifacts'. No one had ever told him that there was such a thing as a Sovereign artifact.

Above the Saint level, there were Demigods, Gods, Highgods, and Sovereigns.

So weapons were divided into ‘divine artifacts’ and ‘Sovereign artifacts’.

“A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact?” Linley discovered that the Coiling Dragon ring contained a special energy within it. “Since it is a soul-protecting artifact, then…” Linley immediately controlled this unique energy, having it enter his soul. Instantly…

A huge, translucent membrane of energy, shaped like countless scales, suddenly formed around his sea of consciousness, including his divine spark and his original body. This translucent membrane contained within it an aura of spiritual energy. The scaly membrane should have been formed from spiritual energy-type power.

Only…

In the center of this translucent membrane, there was a hole, as though it had been cut apart.

“Damaged. It truly is damaged.” Linley sighed to himself.

The most important thing to a Deity was his soul!

A soul-protecting divine artifact was naturally precious. As for a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, that was something one couldn’t even hope to gain. Unfortunately, this one was damaged.

For example, that Soulsilk attack encapsulated one’s entire soul. Once a large amount of Soulsilk gathered there, it would definitely be able to flood through into his consciousness through that gap. Although the other areas of this translucent membrane were durable, with such a gap in it, the value of it would drop dramatically.

“Use spiritual energy to repair it?”

Linley laughed bitterly.

He could guess that the deep, rumbling voice was most likely that of a Sovereign who had then passed away. As for this soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, it was broken through and damaged. That voice was perhaps nothing more than some information which the deceased Sovereign had left behind.

But of course, perhaps it wasn't a Sovereign.

It wasn't necessarily only a Sovereign who could be in possession of a Sovereign artifact.

"Even that expert had no idea how long it would take to repair it. It definitely must take a very long time." Linley tested fusing his spiritual energy into that scale-like membrane. Instantly, a large amount of his spiritual energy entered the membrane, passing through even the gap.

At the same time, a large amount of spiritual energy began to try and 'patch' the gap.

This 'patch' formed from Linley's spiritual energy was able to stop up the gap.

"The defensive strength of the 'patch' my spiritual energy made is definitely very low." However, Linley discovered that as he constantly used his spiritual energy to nourish this translucent membrane, the strength of the 'patch' he had over the gap was slowly rising as well, gaining in strength.

Only, the speed of the increase was simply too slow.

"To reach the same level of defensive power as the rest of that scaly membrane will most likely take thousands of years at best." Linley shook his head, sighing. "Still, right now, all I need to do is focus my spiritual energy on defending that little gap, and I can ignore the rest. This does indeed allow my soul defense to rise dramatically."

In terms of power, this damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was actually inferior to an ordinary soul-protecting divine artifact.

“Huh?” As Linley’s spiritual energy once more entered the Coiling Dragon ring, he discovered…

After the translucent membrane’s energy faded away, there were still two other surges of energy auras contained within the Coiling Dragon ring.

One of the energy auras was coming from a gold-colored drop of blood, while the other surge of energy was coming from three azure water drops.

“Gold liquid?” For some reason, when Linley sensed that gold-colored liquid, Linley felt his original body began to tremble. Not hesitating at all, Linley immediately once more transformed into his original body, storing his divine clone back into his soul-realm.

Indeed, the sensation now was much clearer.

The blood within his body was beginning to boil. The strange thing was…at this moment, that golden drop of blood flew out from within the Coiling Dragon ring, then fused directly with Linley’s original body.

“This…?” Linley was shocked.

“Linley?” The nearby Delia had been watching Linley this entire time. When she saw the golden drop of blood fly into Linley’s body, she was deeply surprised. But then…Delia grew frantic, because Linley began to let out low roars of agony.

“Delia…I…I’m fine!” Linley ground out.

Seeing the fierce look on Linley’s face, and how his muscles were spasming, Delia refused to believe that Linley was fine.

Compared to last time, though, when his soul had been cut in half, this time Linley at least maintained consciousness.

“Aaaaaah!” Linley couldn’t help but raise his head and let out an angry roar.

“Bang!” The sky-blue robe covering Linley’s body shattered into countless tiny pieces, and instantly, an enormous amount of dark, gleaming draconic scales erupted forth from Linley’s body, and even his draconic tail emerged.

Linley was currently undergoing an uncontrollable Dragonblood Warrior transformation.

“Linley.” Delia looked at Linley, her eyes filled with worry.

Linley’s deep azure draconic scales were slowly transforming. The deep azure scales were changing, first becoming azure, just like the Pure Dragonblood Warriors. And then, Linley’s draconic scales began to emit a faint, golden aura.

The azure-gold draconic scales covered Linley’s entire body.

The horns on Linley’s forehead and along his spine were beginning to transform as well…

“Aaaaah!” Linley was filled with pain, releasing deep, growling sounds. The pain from this transformation was far greater than when Linley had originally drank the blood of the Armored Razorback Wyrm and transformed. Only, Linley’s endurance was now far greater than before, and so he didn’t pass out like he did when he was young.

Although he was in great pain, Linley’s heart was filled with wild joy.

“What on earth was that golden drop of blood? My body…has become…so powerful!” His Dragonblood Warrior form was still slowly transforming, but Linley could already sense that his body contained boundless power. Every single scale flashed with that azure-gold light, and that horn on his forehead was unspeakably sharp.

This was far more powerful than even his divine body!

Chapter 25 – Must Go

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 25, Must Go

The feeling that his current Dragonblood Warrior transformation gave Linley was…power! Boundless strength!

“Whoooosh!” The swaying of his draconic tail created a howling sound in the air, and the edges of those azure-gold draconic scales which were reflecting that cold, golden light seemed to be as sharp as knives. If one of these draconic scales were removed from his body, they would probably be able to easily chop apart very precious ores.

The gold drop of blood that had entered Linley’s body had transformed every part of him.

He did his best to endure the pain, softly emitting agonized growls.

A long time later…

The transformation finally was over.

“Whew.” Linley let out a long breath, while at the same time, he took a look at his new, transformed appearance. Azure was the primary color, covered by a layer of golden light. The transformed Linley naturally emitted an ancient aura, as though he were an ancient, god-like beast.

“Linley.” The nearby Delia had been nervous the entire time. Now, seeing that Linley was no longer shaking in agony, she felt slightly more at ease.

“Delia.” Looking at Delia, Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. At the same time, Linley immediately dissolved the Dragonblood Warrior transformation. Only, this Dragonblood Warrior transformation had been simply too explosive. All of the clothes on his body had been completely shattered. He didn’t have a single scrap of clothing on him.

Fortunately, at present, only himself and Delia were here.

“Get dressed, quickly.” Delia laughed while berating him.

Linley immediately withdrew some underwear and outer garments from his interspatial ring. As a Dragonblood Warrior, he always had many sets of clothes prepared in his interspatial ring. Dressing himself, Linley then sat down alongside Delia. Leaning against each other, they began to chat.

“Linley, what does it feel like to have reached the Deity-level?” Delia was very curious. After all, she hadn’t truly fused with the divine spark yet.

“Becoming a Deity?”

Linley was slightly startled. Although he had become a Deity, Linley hadn’t felt that he himself had changed much at all. Now that Delia asked him, however, Linley took a good look at his body and sensed it and his surroundings had indeed changed slightly.

“It’s clearer with my divine clone.” Linley swapped to his other body.

Indeed, with his divine clone present, Linley could clearly sense the control he could now wield over the surrounding area. This was a certain type of authority which that Demigod divine spark conveyed upon Linley. Linley had a feeling…that divine sparks were actually a sort of ‘certificate’ representing certain powers as well as a certain understanding of the Laws.

The more powerful the divine spark, the more authority would be granted.

“You swapped bodies yet again?” Delia laughed. “If, in battle, one of your bodies were to be destroyed, you could use the other body to continue doing battle, right?”

“Yes, I can do that. Only, the divine clone is more effective when utilizing the Profound Truths of Velocity.” Linley sighed.

“Huh?” Linley now sensed another change. Countless thin, silken streams of gold had permeated directly into his soul-world. Although each of them were miniscule, when combined, they still added up to an astonishing amount.

“What are these?” Linley was puzzled.

Linley had never seen this sort of strange energy before. But when he interacted with those countless golden threads, within Linley’s mind, he could sense one pious person after another. Every single golden thread represented a person.

“The energy of faith!” Linley instantly understood.

Linley immediately paid close attention to those golden threads. Those gold threads directly entered Linley’s soul-world. Only, as this soul-world was vast and boundless, the large number of gold threads could only be considered a single drop of water within that great sea. Linley couldn’t sense any changes to himself caused by those golden threads entering his consciousness.

Aside from, that is, being able to sense those pious worshippers.

“I hear that faith energy is extremely beneficial for training, but why is it that I can’t sense it?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

But soon afterwards, Linley laughed. “I just reached the Deity-level and just started collecting faith energy. However, faith energy is nonstop and constant. For example, the War God has accumulated thousands of years of faith energy. As for the likes of Sovereigns, they have followers in all the countless planes. Who knows how much faith energy they have accumulated? Most likely, only after faith energy accumulates to a certain amount will one sense its effect.”

Although he didn’t understand what faith energy was used for, Linley was very certain that faith energy definitely was beneficial to himself.

After all, even the likes of Sovereigns needed faith energy.

“Linley, what are you daydreaming about?” Delia interrupted Linley’s thoughts.

Linley returned to his senses. After Linley carefully explained what he had just sensed, Delia was shocked. “Faith energy? So when your spiritual energy senses faith energy, it appears as golden threads. Faith is an insubstantial, formless thing. Why is it that human faith can create this sort of unique energy?”

“I’m not sure either.” Linley laughed. “Delia, in two days, I’m planning to head out.”

“Right. You’ve already reached the Deity-level. There’s no need for you to keep working so hard.” Delia nodded.

“No. The reason I am going out is because I am preparing to start a kill-or-be-killed battle with a Deity.” Linley looked at Delia solemnly. Although he previously hadn’t told Delia, at this time, Linley no longer wished to hide it from her. After all, this was simply too important.

Linley himself wasn’t fully confident in his ability to defeat another Deity.

After all, the opponent was a Deity as well.

“What?!” Delia was instantly so shocked that her eyes turned round. “Linley, you are going to battle against a Deity? Who? The War God? The High Priest?” Delia instantly grew worried and frightened. Linley had just become a Deity.

It was too dangerous.

“No, not them.”

Linley, facing the look in Delia’s eyes, felt a hint of guilt in his heart. After all, in this battle against the Deity, it would be wonderful if he won, but if

he lost…wouldn't it have been terribly unfair to Delia?

"Then who is it? Why do you have to engage in a battle to the death?" Delia said hurriedly. "Could it be that this is an unavoidable battle?"

Linley let out a long sigh. "Fine, then. I'll tell you the truth, Delia." Linley immediately described Yale's situation in full to her. He started from Yale's out-of-character desire to have sole rights to buy the battle captives of the Empire, all the way to the point where Yale came to use poison to try and kill Linley, as well as Zassler's hypothesis.

If he didn't kill that Deity, Yale would forever remain a puppet!

In addition, at this period in time, that Deity was in a badly wounded state, and was also busy. In a few more years, that Deity would have recovered his strength, and he wouldn't be able to find another good opportunity.

Most importantly…

He could afford to waste time, but Yale couldn't.

Who knew when that Deity would once more send Yale out to be sacrificed? If Yale truly were to die, Linley would probably blame himself for the rest of his life.

"Linley." After hearing everything, Delia wanted to say something, but she couldn't get it out.

She didn't want Linley to risk himself, but she understood Linley's personality very well. Linley could, for her sake, throw away everything, including his own life. But for the sake of Wharton, Yale, Reynolds, and the others, Linley could do the same.

"Delia, don't worry. I still have some reason to be confident." Linley said.

"What reason?" Delia hurriedly asked.

She hoped that Linley could explain it to her and give her an answer that would put her at her ease.

“A person’s battle strength is based on their personal ability as well as their weapons. Delia, this Bloodviolet sword of mine should be an extremely powerful type of divine artifact.” Linley explained. “In addition to that, Delia, you need to remember that I have two bodies; my original body, and the clone.”

Linley rubbed Delia on her shoulders and said seriously, “Delia, I can guarantee to you that if one of my bodies is destroyed, I will immediately choose to retreat.”

Delia had a hint of bitterness on her face.

She understood what Linley meant. Actually, the loss of either of Linley’s bodies would be a huge blow to him. If his original body was destroyed and his soul dispersed, then…Linley would never be able to train in any other Laws again. He would only have that wind-style divine clone.

But if the divine clone was destroyed and its soul was dispersed, then it would be lost forever, and in the future, he would never again be able to train in the Laws of the Wind. Even if he managed to gain insights, he wouldn’t receive the acknowledgement of the universe again, and he wouldn’t be given another divine spark.

From the look in Linley’s eyes, Delia could tell that he had already made his decision.

“Fine, then.” Delia took a deep breath, staring at Linley. “But Linley, you have to promise me that you will remember what you said to me today. If one of your bodies is destroyed, you have to immediately give up. You can’t let yourself die! You have many other friends and family members aside from just Yale!”

Linley and Delia looked at each other.

“I promise.”

Dragonblood Castle. The main hall.

Right now, there were many people gathered here. Linley becoming a Deity was a source of great excitement to everyone, but the vast majority of them didn’t know…that when nightfall came, Linley would secretly head out to the Dawson Conglomerate’s branch and to seek out and engage in a deadly battle with that Deity.

But of course, a few people did know.

Two people. One was Wharton. The other was Zassler.

When nightfall descended, the three of them were hovering in the air above Dragonblood Castle.

“Big bro, you absolutely have to be careful.” Wharton was very much against Linley going to battle that Deity, but he knew Linley’s temperament. All he could do was try to make sure Linley was cautious. “Big bro, don’t forget that there are many people here in Dragonblood Castle who are waiting for you.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Zassler also said seriously, “Lord Linley, this Deity trains in the Ways of Death, and he will be most highly skilled at soul-based attacks. You must be careful. His weakness should be in close combat. If you can engage him in close combat, your chances of victory will be very high.”

Both Zassler and Wharton were actually very worried.

“Don’t worry. Nothing will happen to me.” Linley was filled with confidence in himself.

After smiling towards the two of them, Linley immediately began to fly in the southwest direction. In an instant, he vanished into the horizon, his

speed so fast that it would astonish anyone.

“Just judging from his speed alone, big bro should be fine.” Wharton now felt slightly more confident.

Linley, who trained in the Profound Truths of Velocity, was most proficient at speed!

……..

Within that dark, gloomy underground room.

The skinny, skeletal Grand Warlock, his entire body covered with that black robe, was seated on the ground in the meditative posture. In front of him, that crystal globe constantly emitted that gloomy green light, illuminating the cold, sinister face of the Grand Warlock. But right at this moment…“Creaaaaaak.” The door to the room opened.

Another figure, also full covered by a black robe, suddenly appeared in the secret room, as though by teleportation.

“Are you done refining it?” The hoarse voice came out from the person’s mouth.

“So, so it’s Lord Beaumont [Bo’meng’te].” From the mouth of the Grand Warlock came a hoarse, ear-piercing laugh, the type of laugh that would definitely frighten a baby to the point of bawling.

The mysterious newcomer let out a cold snort. “It has been six full years since we have arrived here from the Gebados Planar Prison. You are already in control of the three major trading unions of the Yulan continent. The slaves that you have killed already number over ten million, and your servants have killed many people as well. I think you should be just about ready to finish successfully refining the Gold Soul-Pearl.”

“Hrmph. Lord Beaumont, do you think refining souls is such a simple task?” The Grand Warlock said with some anger. “Even some full Gods are

incapable of refining souls. Souls are extremely fragile and delicate. To purify their essence requires one to be extremely careful and not be the slightest bit overconfident."

The mysterious newcomer glanced at the Grand Warlock.

After a moment of silence…"You should know what my temper is like. I've been protecting you all these years. Otherwise, given how badly injured you are, you probably would have been killed by Muba long ago. I'll give you three more years. If at that time you still haven't finished refining a Gold Soul-Pearl, then don't blame me."

"Three years. That's about right." The Grand Warlock wasn't worried at all. He said calmly, "In the next three years, I hope you, Lord Beaumont, will continue to help me hold that Muba at bay. Once my soul has fully healed, I won't have to fear him any longer."

The mysterious newcomer glanced at the Grand Warlock, and then his body disappeared from within the secret training room.

The Grand Warlock watched as Beaumont disappeared, laughing coldly in his heart. "Gold Soul-Pearl? A lowly, despicable fellow like him also wants to get a Gold Soul-Pearl? If I weren't heavily injured, would I be afraid of you? Do you know…I actually have already successfully refined one. But unfortunately, I'm not going to give it to you."

Chapter 26 – The Coiling Dragon Ring

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 26, The Coiling Dragon Ring

The night was as cold as water. A gentle wind blew past, and with it, Linley's body travelled dozens of kilometers. Although the Dawson Conglomerate's valley base was thousands of kilometers away from Dragonblood Castle, to the current Linley, that sort of distance was nothing at all.

The wind came to a halt, and Linley's body reformed and became distinct.

Staring down at the chain of mountains, especially that noticeable gorge, he saw that within the center of the gorge was that important branch of the Dawson Conglomerate's. Just by relying on his wind sense, Linley was able to discern that there was a huge amount of people within the gorge.

"Are these the slaves that have been shipped here?" Linley laughed coldly.

By now, he already knew that the reason why the Dawson Conglomerate was buying so many slaves was for the sake of that Deity, who was refining souls.

"Although the Coiling Dragon ring is only a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, at least all I have to do now is protect that hole." After a day's worth of cultivation, the 'patch' he had used to cover that gap in the scaly, translucent membrane had already became quite firm.

He looked down below, and with a gust of wind, Linley's entire body merged with the wind and charged downwards.

Within the valley, in an eerie, sinister, punishment chamber.

This punishment chamber's floor was black with dried blood. A bald man with bared chest was here, a butcher's blade in his hands. Behind him, there

was a crystal ball hanging on the wall. This crystal ball was filled with a dense fog.

A blindfolded and bound slave was pushed into the room by a guard.

“Slash.” The bald man ruthlessly plunged the butcher’s knife into the slave’s heart. “Aaaah!” A hoarse cry sounded out for a moment, then faded away.

Quick, accurate, ruthless!

He killed a slave in an instant. The slave, after having letting out that cry and died, was immediately dragged out by the guard.

The dense fog in the crystal ball rumbled for an instant. Yet another soul had been trapped within!

“Next.” The bald man licked the blood on the butcher’s blade, growing rather excited.

The bald man loved this job. Ever since he had been arranged to carry out this job six years ago, he had fallen in love with the feeling of killing others. In the past six years, even he himself was no longer sure exactly how many people he had killed.

“At least a million.” That was what the bald man guessed.

In the past six years of killing, every day, he killed several hundred people. Sometimes, even as much as a thousand. Over six years, the number of people he had killed was more than a million. Within the valley, there were quite a few people in his line of work. Although the bald man wasn’t sure about the exact figures, he himself knew that there were at least six other butchers.

“The fog in this crystal ball should be dense enough by now.” The bald man turned and glanced at it.

He was already quite experienced. After having killed so many people each day, he knew exactly how dense the fog would have grown. But when he turned, he suddenly discovered…

The crystal ball had become incomparably clear, without a hint of fog within.

“Ah!?” The bald man was so frightened that his forehead and back instantly were covered with sweat. “What’s going on? Why is there nothing? Impossible. Impossible. No one is near here.” The bald man, despite being normally fearless, was now so frightened that he was trembling.

The souls in the crystal ball had all disappeared.

Not just in the bald man’s punishment chamber; all of the souls in all of the punishment chambers had suddenly disappeared as well.

Linley had descended into the valley, and was standing near a large tree.

“This…this…what is this?” Linley was shocked. Through the Coiling Dragon ring, he could clearly sense that within the radius of a kilometer, there were twenty places with a large amount of souls that were clustered together. Right; he sensed it through the Coiling Dragon ring.

“Why are there so many souls here?”

Linley frowned. He understood. These definitely were the result of the machinations of that Deity. Constant killing, constant collection of souls.

“Hrmph. He killed so many people in a single day. After several years, how many have died?” Linley felt shocked just thinking about the numbers involved. “This Deity…what has he resorted to, in order to collect so many souls?”

Linley indeed had no idea. The Grand Warlock hadn’t just sent those nine silver-robed guardians to collect souls; he had also controlled all three of the major trading unions of the Yulan continent, who worked together to

constantly deliver slaves to him, slaughtering them and harvesting their souls.

After all, there were many slaves in the Yulan continent.

With the three major trading unions joining forces, it wouldn't be too hard for them to gather tens of millions of slaves over the course of six years.

"Hey?" Linley suddenly sensed as though the Coiling Dragon ring had a strange power that was binding the souls in those twenty-plus crystal balls. He had a feeling as though with but a thought, he could seize all of those souls and pull them into the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley gave this a test.

In an instant!

The many souls that had been in the crystal ball all disappeared, reappearing within the Coiling Dragon ring.

"So many souls? There's more than ten thousand." The combined number of souls in those twenty crystal balls were indeed more than ten thousand. But these souls were all directly devoured by the Coiling Dragon ring. What astonished Linley the most was…after devouring the souls, the Coiling Dragon ring began to naturally refine them.

The countless souls were being transformed into a large amount of golden fog of energy.

This golden fog of energy, as soon as it interacted with Linley's spiritual energy, immediately began to naturally be absorbed by Linley's soul.

"Rumble…" A large amount of golden energy streamed directly through Linley's spiritual energy into Linley's soul-world.

"Zassler said that once one reaches a certain level of understanding with regards to souls, one can refine souls and then absorb them to strengthen

one's own soul." Seeing this, Linley began to understand. "So this Coiling Dragon ring can draw souls and also naturally refine them."

When those golden fogs of energy drew near to the sword-shaped soul, the sword-shaped soul absorbed these golden fogs as though it were drinking water.

"Indeed…" Linley could sense an extremely comfortable feeling. His soul was slowly growing. Soon, those ten thousand refined souls in the shape of a golden fog had been completely absorbed by Linley's sword-shaped soul, but the sword-shaped soul only grew slightly larger.

But even such a small amount of souls already made Linley feel much more comfortable.

"This Coiling Dragon ring…" Linley was utterly astonished.

Refining souls was an extremely complicated process. Only a very few Demigods were capable of doing it, and even the majority of full Gods were not capable of it either. It required a person had a thorough understanding of the nature of souls. Even the Grand Warlock had to be extremely careful when refining them.

"This ability makes the ring more suited to its reputation as being a Sovereign artifact, albeit damaged." Linley had a hint of a smile on his face.

He took a closer look at the ring. He sensed that this Coiling Dragon ring was only capable of absorbing those souls that were not protected by their bodies. If a person was alive, his soul would be very hard to capture. But the binding power the crystal balls held over the souls was clearly inferior to the seizing power of the Coiling Dragon ring.

The seizing ability was superior to the binding power, and so the souls in the crystal balls had been seized.

"The radius is just a kilometer or so. Outside of a kilometer, I wouldn't be able to sense anything." Linley discovered that only when he flew down

into the valley and reached a distance of a kilometer away had he been able to sense those collected souls.

Taking a deep breath, he calmed himself.

“Time to spread my spiritual energy to find that Deity. I have to kill him in as short a time as possible.” With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved Bloodviolet. Linley knew very well that once his spiritual energy discovered his opponent, his opponent would also realize he was here.

He had to attack in the shortest possible timeframe, not giving the opponent any time to prepare.

“Time to begin.”

Linley’s gaze turned sharp.

Within that gloomy, secret room.

The Grand Warlock, shrouded in his black robe, was staring intently at eight crystal balls he had retrieved from his interspatial ring. Including the one in front of him, there were nine crystal balls in total. These nine crystal balls all held foggy energy within them along with that golden liquid.

The Grand Warlock stretched out his two empty hands, and the nine crystal balls instantly began to float in front of the Grand Warlock.

“Crackle, crackle…”

The golden liquid in eight of the crystal balls immediately flew out, flowing towards that most important, central crystal ball. The golden liquid was emitting that misty, foggy aura, causing the entire room to be filled with a large amount of mist. The mist was all the essence of many souls.

If an ordinary person was here, if he just took a deep breath, he would probably accidentally breathe in two or three soul essences.

The eight streams of golden liquid flew through the air. While making their way to the ninth crystal ball, they most likely released over a hundred soul essences as foggy mist. But the Grand Warlock didn't care about losing this small amount of soul essence, because it was the golden liquid which mattered.

Finally, all the gold liquid coalesced within the ninth crystal ball.

"Haha…" The Grand Warlock let out a hoarse, unpleasant laugh. "Three days. In just three more days, these twenty million soul essences will form into yet another Gold Soul-Pearl." The Grand Warlock was extremely delighted. How could he have encountered such a wonderful environment in the Gebados Planar Prison?

In the Gebados Planar Prison, his level of power could only be considered average.

Two Gold Soul-Pearls represented forty million souls!

In the past six years, through the three major trading unions and the nine silver-robed guardians, the Grand Warlock had gone all out to gather souls. Actually, it was still the three major trading unions that contributed the most. The three trading unions were deeply rooted in the Yulan continent, and they had people secretly situated in every single city.

After six years, including all the slaves they bought from slave traders, it wasn't an impossible task for them to gather forty million souls.

"Refining is hard, and absorbing them is slow as well. Most likely, it will take several months before I'll be able to finish absorbing this Gold Soul-Pearl." The Grand Warlock let out a sigh, but his words held a hidden meaning within. A single Gold Soul-Pearl would not only allow him to heal his soul completely, it would also allow his soul to grow several times more powerful.

If he had to rely just on training, who knows how many tens of thousands of years it would take to accomplish this.

“Huh? Someone’s here!” The Grand Warlock’s glowing green eyes suddenly looked upwards. He could clearly sense a surge of spiritual energy suddenly sweep past him. “A Deity.”

“Not Muba.” From the spiritual energy, the Grand Warlock was immediately able to tell that this wasn’t someone he was familiar with. “Which Deity is it?” The Grand Warlock, while pondering, drew out a black sickle with his right hand while grabbing the crystal with twenty million souls, preparing to store it into his interspatial ring.

However…

“What?!” The Grand Warlock’s face instantly changed, his eyes filled with shock.

Previously, within the crystal, there had been twenty million soul essences in the form of a golden liquid, but in the blink of an eye, the crystal suddenly became empty. The entire crystal ball was now so clear and pure!

“Where are the soul essences? Impossible, impossible!” The Grand Warlock felt this was simply too bizarre.

Although he had already finished refining one Gold Soul-Pearl, the soul essences that had suddenly disappeared had come from over twenty million souls he had spent countless amounts of time gathering and refining for several years. How could it be that in the blink of an eye, they all disappeared?

Before he was able to figure it out, he heard a humming sword song.

The humming sword song was quite pleasant to hear. Upon hearing it, the Grand Warlock felt very comfortable, but almost instantly, the Grand Warlock, so skilled in analyzing souls, instantly understood: “What a powerful soul-type attack.”

The Grand Warlock paid no further attention to the sudden disappearance of

those twenty million souls. He had to face the opponent!

With the humming sword song, a devilish violet light suddenly descended. Wherever the violet light flashed by, space itself was ripped open…the violet light carried with it a terrifying aura, causing the Grand Warlock to feel stunned. Without hesitating at all, he immediately chose to retreat. "Who is it? Could it be the War God of the O'Brien Empire?"

Although this was what he was guessing, while retreating, the Grand Warlock began to emanate a wave of gray fog which poured towards Linley.

Chapter 27 – Battle to the Death

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 27, Battle to the Death

In the dark, gloomy underground room, that hazy gray fog instantly filled the entire room. If Linley chose to dodge, the only option he had would be to move backwards, in which case, the Grand Warlock would seize the opportunity to flee far away. When Deities did battle, everything happened in an instant.

“Hrmph!” Linley’s eyes were fierce and determined. Ignoring the gray fog, he charged straight towards the Grand Warlock.

“Since when have I had enmity with this person?”

The Grand Warlock, seeing that Linley wasn’t dodging and was still charging straight for him, was so frightened that ignoring everything else, he flew straight upwards.

“Bang!” The stone ceiling above them split apart like tofu, and a tunnel was easily dug out.

The gray fog completely ignored the protective wind-style divine power covering Linley as well as his draconic scales, directly entering his body and pouring towards his mind. Linley laughed coldly to himself. “As I thought, a soul attack!”

Linley had already made preparations for this duel against the Grand Warlock.

“Crackle, crackle…” The gray fog attempted to attack Linley’s soul, but unfortunately, as soon as they touched that translucent, scaly membrane, they instantly dissipated. Only the gray fog which struck against the gap which Linley used his own spiritual energy to ‘patch’ over was able to last a bit longer.

But the amount of gray fog at the gap was simply too small, while Linley had focused a large amount of his spiritual energy to block that part off.

“This old bastard really is fast.” Linley raised his speed to the limit, pursuing after the person through the newly formed tunnel.

Actually, upon reaching the Deity level, there was no longer much of a distinction between a ‘magus’ and a ‘warrior’. The ultimate goal of both a ‘magus’ and a ‘warrior’ was to become a Deity. After becoming a Deity, both classes would train in the Elemental Laws. Only, because one was a warrior or a magus in the past, when battle began, one might be more skilled in close combat or distant combat.

But in terms of speed!

A light-style Grand Magus Saint, such as Desri, upon becoming a Deity would most likely be faster than even most warriors who became Deities.

The Grand Warlock was extremely fast, most likely above average amongst Demigods. But Linley’s speed…was simply astonishing. The only area in which Linley dared to claim superiority over other Deities was in speed, and from the underground room of the gorge to the surface, there was a distance of just a thousand meters.

A little bit of distance like this was nothing. Linley quickly caught up to the Grand Warlock.

The humming sword song was so clear and distinct. The Grand Warlock forced himself to stay calm, not allowing his soul to be affected. “This Deity is capable of a sound-based soul attack. When did I ever anger someone like this?” The Grand Warlock wondered angrily to himself. Facing this deadly sword attack, the Grand Warlock waved his own black sickle as well.

“Clang!”

The Grand Warlock's attack speed was at an inconceivably fast speed as well, and was able to block Linley's attack.

After reaching the Deity level, the might of a divine-power fueled 'Dimensional Decapitator' was simply too great. Enormous rips in space had appeared nearby, and the terrifying force of the blow struck onto that black sickle. However, the Grand Warlock clearly had many more tricks and much more experience than Linley.

"Bang!"

Relying on the momentum generated by the collision, the Grand Warlock quickly fled across the skies, with a massive explosion following him. The buildings on the ground of the gorge were blasted apart by the colliding blows, while the Grand Warlock himself charged high into the sky.

However, the even faster Linley caught up to him in the blink of an eye, blocking off the Grand Warlock in mid-air.

It must be understood that this gorge was an important base for the Dawson Conglomerate which was responsible for all sorts of missions of the Dawson Conglomerate here in the Baruch Empire. There were over ten thousand people stationed here long-term. Linley and the Grand Warlock's battle caused the ground of the entire valley to shake, and even those buildings began to crumble. Instantly, lamps started to be lit throughout the valley.

Angry roars could be heard successively, as the managers of the Dawson Conglomerate's base here began to restore order to their people.

"What is going on?" Yale barked furiously as he walked to an empty spot.

Right now, most of the people in the valley were walking out of their residences, arriving in the empty grounds. Just then, the earthquake as well as the sudden explosion of that building had startled many people. They now no longer dared to stay in their own homes.

“Lord Chairman, just then, that building over there exploded for no reason at all. A person was killed by having their head smashed in by flying rocks, while three others were wounded.” Someone instantly reported to Yale.

“There’s people above us!” Suddenly, excited shouts could be heard. “And they are floating in mid-air!”

“Saints!” Many people cried out in shock. The people here all raised their heads to stare up into the air above the canyon. Although it was currently night, many people had already lit lamps, and the light of those lamps, as well as the hazy moonlight, allowed them to make out those two blurry figures in mid-air.

Seeing those two figures in mid-air, Yale’s face changed.

“The Grand Warlock? And…Dragonblood Warrior?” Because of his spiritual connection, Yale could clearly sense that the Grand Warlock was up above him. But as to who the Dragonblood Warrior was, Yale couldn’t be sure, because the draconic scales of the Dragonblood Warrior up above was glowing with a faint azure-gold light.”

“That’s a Dragonblood Warrior!” Someone called out in surprise.

Everyone below all stared upwards excitedly.

Linley stared at the Grand Warlock in front of him. He was secretly shocked. “I didn’t expect that this fellow is so amazing, even in close combat.”

He had launched three sword attacks just now, all of which the Grand Warlock had been able to block with that black sickle.

If he was poor at close quarters combat, the Grand Warlock would have died long ago in the Gebados Planar Prison. To survive in a place like that, one couldn’t have too any obvious, glaring weaknesses. If one had too great a weakness, there would definitely come a time when someone else would seize that weakness and kill you.

“Who are you? It seems the two of us shouldn’t have any enmity against each other?” The Grand Warlock stood in mid-air, staring at Linley as he spoke. “Are you perhaps mistaken about something?” The Grand Warlock didn’t want to start a pointless fight, especially right now, when he was badly wounded.

Staring at the transformed Dragonblood Warrior in front of him, the Grand Warlock’s first thought was of Linley.

But in the next instant, he discarded that notion. “It isn’t Linley. Linley is only a Saint. In addition, Yale told me that after Linley became a Dragonblood Warrior Saint, his draconic scales are deep azure, and not this coloration…the person in front of me is clearly a Deity.”

“Can it be that he is one of the elders of the Dragonblood Warrior clan?” The Grand Warlock muttered in his heart.

After returning to the Yulan continent, he had learned a few things, and knew that five thousand years ago, four Supreme Warrior clans had appeared.

“Can it be that the elders of the Dragonblood Warrior clan have discovered that I sent Yale to kill Linley?” The Grand Warlock couldn’t help but guess.

“No enmity?”

A cold, calm voice rang out from Linley’s mouth. “If we didn’t have enmity, why would I come…” Halfway through his words, Linley transformed into a gust of wind, striking towards the Grand Warlock. The Grand Warlock’s black sickle once again transformed into a blur to block.

“Hrmph.” The Grand Warlock now was filled with a killing desire as well. Since the opponent wasn’t willing to call it quits, then even if he had to risk being injured yet again, he would still kill this person in front of him.

The black sickle shook, and the green light in the Grand Warlock’s eyes

shone dramatically brighter. A low, sinister sound erupted from the Grand Warlock's mouth, and instantly, an enormous black sickle appeared out of nowhere, chopping towards Linley. As for Linley, he slanted his body, moving to dodge it while striking out with the Bloodviolet sword in his hands in a stabbing blow towards the Grand Warlock.

Trillions of sword blurs appeared…

Profound Truths of the Wind – Rippling Wind!

At his current level, when executing the 'Rippling Wind' technique, every single sword was able to create tears in space. The trillions of swords instantly enveloped the Grand Warlock's entire body. Although the Grand Warlock wielded his sickle very quickly, no matter how quick he was, he couldn't block these trillions of sword shadows.

The Grand Warlock's heart was filled with fury.

His sickle instantly swung up, transforming into a blur to block the sword shadows stabbing towards his head. At his sword-wielding abilities, this was the best he could do. He simply wasn't capable of blocking all of the sword shadows. The many violet sword shadows chopped the rest of the Grand Warlock's body to mincemeat, which was devoured by the tiny tears in space.

The Grand Warlock's head immediately flew far away, and even that black sickle flew away alongside it.

"I'm badly injured, but, you are about to die." The Grand Warlock knew exactly how powerful that last attack of his had been. Generally speaking, the souls of most Demigods, upon encountering that enormous, spiritual energy sickle attack he had just used, would be split in half.

The enormous black sickle that had been formed by the Grand Warlock out of nothing but spiritual energy had chopped straight through Linley's skull, chopping against his mind.

“Clang!”

The black sickle, upon smashing against that scaled membrane, instantly shattered, more than half of its energy immediately being dispersed.

A small amount of remaining energy transformed into black energy, but only a good amount of this wildly striking, unfocused black energy struck against that ‘hole’. The ‘patch’ which Linley’s spiritual energy had formed only lasted a short while before being broken through, but by then, only a small amount of black energy was remaining as well. Linley quickly used his remaining spiritual energy to break it all down.

“What a terrifying soul attack.” Linley was astonished.

It was very difficult to control spiritual power. Generally speaking, an Arch Magus of the ninth rank was only capable of expanding and contracting their spiritual power.

As for Saints, they generally could only move their spiritual energy a little bit. It was very hard to form spiritual energy into an attack. As for this Deity in front of him, he had been able to use it to form a black sickle that was essentially solid. This truly was astonishing.

“He lives up to his reputation as being an expert capable of refining souls. He truly is formidable in the area of souls.” Linley felt amazement.

If he hadn’t had the protection of that damaged, semi-translucent membrane which had absorbed the vast majority of the attack, Linley probably would have been badly injured at the least by that simple attack.

“Crackle, crackle…”

The Grand Warlock’s body quickly healed, while at the same time, he caught and wore the interspatial ring which had fallen down. A Deity’s body usually stored a large amount of divine power. The Grand Warlock naturally wouldn’t make the mistake of not doing so. His body quickly completely recovered to its normal state.

“That fellow should be dead by now.” The Grand Warlock looked at Linley carefully.

He discovered…that Linley was looking at him with the barest hint of an upward curve to his lips. Was he smiling?

“What?!” The Grand Warlock was astonished.

Even in the Gebados Planar Prison, he relied on this attack to dominate. This attack had only failed a single time; that was when he encountered the peak Demigod, Muba. Afterwards, he had been forced to badly injure his own soul in order to utilize his ultimate attack, which deeply wounded Muba and forced him to flee.

“I want to see how much divine power you can spend on recovery!” Linley sneered.

Linley knew very well that gathering more divine power was a very slow process. Being able to quickly repair one’s body was the result of using up the divine power that had been already accumulated in the body, but the amount of stored divine power was only enough to be used once or twice. After all, the amount of divine power which the Grand Warlock had to use just now, with nearly his entire body destroyed, had been an astonishing amount.

The devilish violet light flashed again, and that pleasant, humming sword song rang out once more.

Trillions of sword blurs descended.

The Grand Warlock’s face was pale. After having experienced so many life-threatening battles in the Gebados Planar Prison, he was capable of instantly determining the eventual outcome of this battle; if this was to continue, his divine power would be all used up, and then he would no longer be able to block Linley’s attacks, and he would definitely die!

“Aaaargh! This is the second time!!!” The Grand Warlock felt utterly aggrieved.

No longer hesitating, the Grand Warlock made his choice…to use the same technique he had used against Muba.

“The last time I used this technique, my soul was badly injured. I hope this time, after using the technique, my soul won’t directly collapse.” The Grand Warlock had no other options. If he didn’t do this, he would definitely die. The Grand Warlock’s eyes shot out two rays of black light, which pierced directly into his black sickle, which began to shake.

Instantly, nine rays of illusory black sickles appeared out of nowhere in midair. Moving in accordance to a strange rhythm, the nine illusory black sickles actually swirled around then chopped towards Linley, giving him no place to dodge.

Soundless and all but undetectable!

“Not good.” Linley wanted to flee, but those nine illusory black sickles could actually curve, giving him no place to flee.

Linley was unable to block those nine illusory black sickles, which chopped directly towards his mind.

“Bang!”

Most of those nine illusory black sickles slammed against that translucent, scaly membrane and dispersed. But one sickle chopped directly against the gap, and the patch Linley had recreated with his spiritual energy instantly crumbled, and the black sickle chopped directly towards Linley’s soul.

Spiritual energy flooded in like waves through the opening, charging towards that sword-shaped soul.

“Clang!” The black sickle chopped directly against the sword-shaped soul.

“Rumble…” The sword-shaped soul trembled violently.

At this moment, of the three azure water droplets hidden within the Coiling Dragon ring which Linley was wearing, one emitted just a hint of energy, and instantly, the protective azure light on the surface of Linley’s sword-shaped soul increased dramatically, in the end destroying that black sickle.

“Ah!” Linley himself, holding his head, collapsed from the sky with a miserable scream. His soul hadn’t been destroyed, but the trauma from the massive collision had truly been very severe.

Watching Linley fall from the skies, the Grand Warlock revealed a hint of a smile on his face. “He’s finally dead.”

But just as Linley’s original body fell from mid-air…

“Swoosh!” The divine clone (the light green robed Linley) came flying out from Linley’s original body. Bloodviolet flew into his hands, and gripping Bloodviolet tightly, the divine clone charged directly towards the Grand Warlock, whose soul was already at the point of collapse.

Countless sword blurs flashed and lit up.

The Grand Warlock raised his black sickle in despair. “No—-!”

The Grand Warlock’s body was chopped into mincemeat by trillions of sword blurs, and some blows from Bloodviolet even smashed violently against his divine spark, causing the Grand Warlock’s soul, which had been fused into the divine spark, to shatter. As for the divine spark itself, it fell straight downwards.

The divine clone stretched his hand out and snatched the divine spark, then transformed into a blur, flying directly into the original’s body.

A look of confusion flashed through Yale’s eyes, but then in the next instant, his gaze grew clear again.

Staring at Linley, who was already back in human form on the ground, Yale's eyes instantly turned red, and he immediately charged over. "Third Bro!"

Chapter 28 – The Grand Warlock's Treasure

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 28, The Grand Warlock's Treasure

As the Grand Warlock fell from the skies, it wasn't just Yale who regained his sense of self. The chairmen of the other two major trading unions of the Yulan continent, the Snow Island Syndicate and the Gere Group, regained their senses of self as well. They all knew what disastrous things they had been doing in the past six years.

"The Grand Warlock is dead! Haha, he finally died!"

Within a desolate area, two silver-robed figures were laughing wildly.

"How many years has it been? We have finally been freed of that devil's control." The two silver-robed men simultaneously ripped away the silver robes from their body, which shattered into countless pieces of cloth. "I feel disgusted just looking at these silver robes." The two men changed their clothes.

They were so excited that their bodies were trembling slightly.

Of the two silver-robed figures, one was a human, while the other was a panther-man.

"Finally free. Finally free!" Their eyes were filled with tears, and they were filled with inexpressible excitement. Over the countless years, under the control of the Grand Warlock, they had done countless things, all of which they now clearly remembered.

If the Grand Warlock remained alive, they would have never been able to regain their freedom.

"Who killed the Grand Warlock? We really should go thank him." The

panther-man was still uncontrollably excited.

“What, Wiggin [Wei’gen]? You still want to go thank someone else?” The human expert said mockingly.

The panther-man chuckled, then shook his head. “Of course not. I’ve had enough of those long years of being controlled by others. The person who killed the Grand Warlock didn’t do it for our sake. Laghman [La’ge’man], what are your next plans?”

“This is my homeland.” The human expert stared at the wilderness, letting out a long sigh. “The Yulan continent. It has been eight thousand years since I was last here. Eight thousand years. Ever since I encountered the Grand Warlock in the Gebados Planar Prison and was controlled by him, my power didn’t improve at all. I plan to make a good long tour of the continent, and then find a place to studiously train.”

“Wiggin, do you want to go to the Necropolis of the Gods?” The human expert looked at the panther-man.

“The Necropolis of the Gods? The Yulan continent…”

The panther-man laughed at himself mockingly. “In the past, I followed my master to the Yulan continent and wanted to go to the Necropolis of the Gods to find treasures. Only, I didn’t expect that the Bloodviolet Fiend was there as well. Back then, many were killed, while others were imprisoned. I no longer dare to have too much hope towards the Yulan continent.”

“I’ve already had enough of being subject to the orders of others, to the life of a mindless puppet. I want to find a place to live quietly for a while.” The panther-man said with a self-mocking laugh, “Given the situation in the current Yulan continent, we Prime Saints are better off being a bit low-key.”

The human expert nodded as well.

And then, the two experts separated, hiding themselves within the Yulan continent.

Those who had never been controlled by the Soulseeds would find it hard to imagine what that was like. Upon being controlled by a Soulseed, one would be loyal to one's master from the deepest parts of one's soul. The master's orders were the number one priority. Under the master's order, they would kill their parents and kill their family and friends without resisting at all.

They didn't feel anything when they were controlled.

But once they regained their own will, when they remembered what had happened during those long years, they would often go insane.

"What…what have I done?!" Yale's heart was filled with agony.

After being controlled by the Grand Warlock, Yale had begun to use cruel, bloodthirsty methods to kill a large number of slaves and collect their souls for the Grand Warlock. During this process, there had been some high level members of the Dawson Conglomerate who had tried to stop Yale. For those who tried to stop him, he suppressed the ones he could suppress, and used bloodthirsty means to kill the ones he could not.

Some of them were his relatives in the Dawson clan!

These vicious, bloodthirsty actions, along with the fact that those silver-robed men assisted Yale, resulted in Yale gaining absolute, unquestioned power within the Dawson Conglomerate. This was a power that was forged through wielding a bloody butcher's blade.

"Everyone, go back." Yale said to the surrounding people.

"Lord Chairman, should we arrange some people to take care of this place?" A nearby silver-haired old man said.

"No need, Uncle Alberts [Ai'bo'ci]." Yale said sincerely.

Alberts was instantly stunned. Six years ago, Yale had turned cruel and

ruthless, and the administrative operations of the Dawson Conglomerate had become harsh and rigid. Ever since then, Yale had never again called him ‘Uncle Alberts’. Hearing these words, Alberts felt somewhat lost, and he began to think of the affairs of the past.

“Uncle Alberts. These past six years. I’m sorry.” Yale said in a low voice.

“Chairman…young master Yale.” Alberts tried to forcibly suppress the excitement from showing on his face. Yale was back. The Yale of six years ago was back!

“Enough. Everyone, go back and get some rest.” Alberts said to the surrounding people in a loud voice. His voice right now was the loudest, most confident he had been in the past six years.

“The people I owe…are far too many.” Yale knew how many mistakes he had made in the past six years.

“And Third Bro.” Yale looked towards Linley, who was currently kneeling on the ground in agony.

Right now, Linley was in terrible shape. His soul had been concussed massively. It must be understood that generally speaking, when a soul suffered a sufficiently powerful blow, it would collapse. As a Deity, Linley’s soul was naturally very strong, but still, he currently felt miserable. His entire body felt as though he was rather woozy.

Linley forced his eyes to open. He looked at Yale.

Seeing the look of concern in Yale’s eyes, Linley instantly felt relief in his heart.

He had risked his life, and in the end, he had brought the old Boss Yale back.

“Third Bro.” Yale knelt down in front of Linley, supporting him. “Third Bro, are you alright?” Yale’s heart was filled with boundless guilt.

“Yale, I’m fine. Wait a moment.”

Linley forced out these words, then sat down in the meditative position. The liquid gold soul essences within the Coiling Dragon ring were currently sending one surge after another of golden fog into Linley’s soul-world, and as it did, Linley’s soul drank it all in as though it was water.

Previously, when the twenty million liquid gold soul essences the Grand Warlock had refined had disappeared, they had been seized by Linley using the Coiling Dragon ring.

To the Grand Warlock, only after refining the ‘gold liquid’ to a ‘Gold Soul-Pearl’ would the soul essences become relatively easier to absorb.

But Linley, as the owner of the Coiling Dragon ring, could easily absorb large amounts of soul essences. As his sword-shaped soul constantly absorbed them, the glow of that sword-shaped soul continuously grew brighter, as it also slowly increased in size.

“How comfortable.” Linley had a comfortable feeling in his heart.

The pain caused by his soul being shaken had long since disappeared. Right now, this sensation of his soul growing was very comfortable to Linley. He didn’t need to focus at all on his soul absorbing those soul essences. While chatting with others or focusing on his training, he could continue to absorb soul essences.

Only now did Linley open his eyes.

“Third Bro, you…how do you feel?” Yale had been by Linley’s side this entire time. His heart was filled with worry.

“I’m fine. But, Boss Yale, you aren’t going to give me any more of that terrifying poisoned wine for me to drink, right?” Linley said with a smirking grin.

Hearing Linley's words, Yale felt relief in his heart.

"Third Bro, thank you." Yale's eyes were filled with a hint of tears.

In his heart, Yale understood very well that his attempt to use the Soulsilk Poison to kill Linley was, rationally speaking, not of his own free will. But he still felt guilty. Hearing Linley say those words, he had the feeling…that his bro, Linley, didn't care about that matter at all.

"Thank me for what?" Linley said as he stood up, and Yale stood up as well.

"I'm sorry. I've made a huge mess of your place here." Linley glanced at that nearby, exploded building, then laughed towards Yale. Linley was currently in an excellent mood. On this trip, Linley had come to battle with that Deity to the death, and had come prepared to risk his life.

Fortunately, he had succeeded.

"Linley, don't apologize to me. I can't bear it." Yale said solemnly.

Yale felt that he owed Linley too much.

"You can't be blamed. It was a Deity who was controlling you." Linley sighed with emotion.

"The Grand Warlock was a Deity?" Yale was somewhat shocked. Although he had been controlled by the Grand Warlock, Yale only knew that the Grand Warlock was powerful, and had no way to determine if the Grand Warlock was a Deity or not.

"Right. Otherwise, how could it have been so hard for me to kill him?" Linley felt that he was rather lucky as well.

If it hadn't been for this damaged soul-protecting barrier, and if it hadn't been for…

Linley lowered his head to look at the Coiling Dragon ring. In the past, Linley had never truly controlled the Coiling Dragon ring, and had no way to learn what it contained within. But now, Linley knew exactly what it held. Just then, during that dangerous moment, he had clearly sensed one of those three azure drops of water emit a ray of energy which allowed the protective azure layer of light around his soul to glow much more brightly.

“So in the past, when the azure layer of light around my soul suddenly shone dramatically brighter, it was the doing of this mysterious azure water droplet.” Linley sighed with emotion.

“Wait, that’s not right.”

Linley realized something. “According to the ancestral records of my Baruch clan, that layer of azure light covering the soul is something only possessed by Dragonblood Warriors. Ordinary Saints wouldn’t possess it. So why is it that this azure water droplet is capable of causing that layer of azure light to dramatically brighten? In addition, that drop of gold blood… why did it cause my Dragonblood Warrior form to evolve?”

Linley glanced at the Coiling Dragon ring, and at the draconic lines carved onto it. “Can it be that the earliest owner of the Coiling Dragon ring had some sort of relationship with the Dragonblood Warriors?”

Linley was forced to come to this sort of hypothesis.

After all, there were simply too many coincidences.

“Linley, what are you thinking about?” Yale, seeing Linley suddenly pause, couldn’t help but ask.

“Nothing.” Linley didn’t think about it any further.

“Third Bro, I have to congratulate you.” Yale laughed.

“Congratulate me for what?” Linley laughed. Yale stared at him. “Third Bro, you killed a Deity-level expert this time. I expect that you have already

reached the Deity-level, Third Bro…the Deity level! It seems like such a distant, exalted level. Third Bro, when we were young and fooled around together, I truly would never have been able to imagine that my friend would become a Deity."

Deity!

Going from being a mortal to becoming a Deity was a change in one's level of existence.

No matter what race, be it magical beast, beastman, human, metallic lifeform, plant creature, or any other unique, bizarre races, upon reaching the Deity level, they would all have divine bodies and divine sparks. They all had a common term of address; Deity!

Linley had become a Deity!

In the Yulan continent, amongst the human society, the highest, most exalted figures were the War God and the High Priest.

But now, there was another one; Linley!

"Haha…" Linley began to laugh as well. "In the past, who possibly could have imagined it? Ah, I almost forgot something important."

Linley suddenly turned and stared towards a black patch of ground. It was currently late at night, and nothing could be seen clearly on the ground.

"Third Bro, what are you looking for?" Yale was somewhat puzzled.

"The treasures which the Grand Warlock left behind." Linley had only taken the divine spark just now, but had forgotten to take two other important items; the Grand Warlock's divine artifact as well as his interspatial ring. Linley wanted to know what the Grand Warlock held within his interspatial ring.

Spreading out his spiritual energy, Linley instantly discovered the location

of that black sickle as well as the interspatial ring.

In order to utilize the interspatial ring, one first had to bind it with blood. Linley was in no hurry to open it, and so he just directly stored both the black sickle as well as the interspatial ring.

“Yale, as long as you are fine, I’ll be at ease. I think…during the past six years, you must have done some foolish things. Of course, none of it is your fault, but your father and the other members of the Conglomerate don’t know that, right? You need to have a good think about what to do. I won’t disturb you. To be honest, I have to get back to Dragonblood Castle right away. Delia and my little brother and the others are all very worried about me. They are worried that I won’t be able to come back from this trip.” Linley’s laughter was so free and unburdened now.

Yale felt a surge of gratitude in his heart.

He knew that Linley was a Saint not too long ago, so he was only an early stage Deity. For the sake of him, Yale, Linley had charged over here without even knowing how powerful the enemy was. This was extremely dangerous, but Linley had done it anyways, even though he, Yale, had tried to use poison to kill him.

Yale believed that never in his life would he forget this.

“Thank you.” Yale had nothing else to say.

Laughing, Linley clapped Yale on his shoulders. “Yale, you will always be the Boss Yale of our dormitory 1987.” Linley’s smile was brilliant. And then, Linley turned and left, because in Dragonblood Castle, there were people worrying about him!

Chapter 29 – The Disposition of the Divine Sparks

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 29, The Disposition of the Divine Sparks

There was a group of people within Dragonblood Castle who were unable to sleep. Linley's departure to do battle with the Grand Warlock was something which Taylor, Gates, and the others hadn't known. Only Wharton and Zassler knew. But after Linley left, Wharton and Zassler informed everyone of this affair.

Zassler's thoughts were very clear.

If Linley didn't come back, he still had to tell Taylor and the others anyways.

If Linley came back successfully, it would be a joyous affair that everyone had to share in.

No matter what, it was best to let everyone know.

The candles in Dragonblood Castle's main hall were all lit. A large group of people were assembled here. After Zassler and Wharton had informed them that Linley had gone to do battle against a Deity, they had been utterly shocked. Right now, all they could do was wait impatiently.

Suddenly, footsteps could be heard.

"Mother, why have you left your training?" Taylor, who had been worrying about Linley's battle with the Deity, turned and saw the person who had just arrived. He couldn't help but call out in surprise.

"So you are all here?" Delia squeezed out a smile.

Originally, Delia was preparing to wait patiently in the pocket dimension,

but Delia discovered…that she just couldn't calm down. She kept on worrying, and so she decided to just come out and wait for Linley's return in Dragonblood Castle.

"So you all know?" Delia looked at everyone.

Wharton, Nina, Gates, the Barker brothers and their spouses, Taylor, Sasha, Hillman, and Housekeeper Hiri all nodded.

Delia nodded slightly as well.

All of them were waiting and praying. They raised their heads to stare at the distant night sky, hoping to see that familiar figure appear.

"Everyone, don't be impatient. There's a distance of thousands of kilometers from here to the valley. The flying time alone will take a good long while." Wharton urged everyone.

"It's father!" A cry of delight and joy rang out. It was Sasha, who had been staring at the sky.

Instantly, everyone turned to look at the night sky.

Indeed, a human figure dressed in a sky-blue robe was flying gracefully through the sky. Taylor, Delia, Sasha, and the others all ran forward excitedly.

Seeing everyone here, Linley felt a comforting, happy feeling in his heart.

"Delia. Taylor. Sasha." Linley had a hint of a smile on his face. He was the calmest person here.

"Lord Linley, you killed that Deity?" Gates, coming from behind, shouted out excitedly. Wharton and Zassler all looked at Linley as well. Delia was worried as well…she was worried that Linley might have lost one of his bodies and been forced to flee back.

“Of course.” Linley grinned.

Instantly, smiles blossomed on the faces of everyone present.

“Wonderful.” Taylor was incredibly excited. “My father is someone who killed a Deity. Tonight, nobody is going to sleep. I’ll immediately arrange for wine and food to be brought over. Tonight, all of us are going to have a wild party!”

“Right! Wild party!” Gates shouted loudly as well.

Everyone was incomparably excited.

“Wild party!” Linley laughed and nodded as well. Normally so somber and serious, he was very happy right now as well. Before the battle, Linley had felt nervous as well, but now, not only had he returned without being injured at all, he had freed Yale. Linley naturally was incredibly happy.

Tonight, Dragonblood Castle was more festive than ever before.

They partied until the dawn was beginning to break. Only then did everyone leave, while Delia and Linley asked Zassler to stay behind.

Within a guest room in Dragonblood castle, Zassler stood there, looking at Linley and Delia, wondering why they asked him to remain behind. However, he had an inkling in his heart, because he had long ago hypothesized that this Deity level expert was a practitioner of the Edicts of Death.

When Linley killed the Grand Warlock, he had definitely gained some special items, which others wouldn’t even be able to use.

“Lord Linley?” Zassler had a visible smile on his face, only, Zassler’s face was simply too eerie and astonishing to begin with. Even smiling, he looked terrifying. “Why did you ask me to stay?”

Linley removed an interspatial ring and tossed it to him.

“Zassler, this interspatial ring belonged to that Deity. It should be much better than yours. Go ahead and bind it by blood. Go ahead and withdraw its contents as well.” Linley had great faith in Zassler. Actually, if Zassler intentionally left something inside of it, Linley wouldn’t know about it.

“Yes.” Zassler, trembling slightly, accepted the interspatial ring.

He didn’t care much about the interspatial ring, but of course he was greatly desirous of the possessions of Deities. After binding it with blood…

Zassler waved his hand, and withdrew a large pile of things from within the interspatial ring, filling up almost half the main hall. Amongst them were many herbs, jars, and the like, as well as some scattered pieces of ore. Seeing these things, Zassler’s eyes instantly lit up.

“A golden pearl of souls?” Linley looked at the Gold Soul-Pearl held within a translucent glass. He could sense the dense concentration of spirits within it.

Through the Coiling Dragon ring, Linley directly drew the Gold Soul-Pearl into his Coiling Dragon ring. Actually, Linley had absorbed perhaps just one percent of those liquid gold soul essences. To absorb all of them, it would probably take Linley half a year.

But Linley could clearly sense how beneficial it was for his soul to be growing stronger.

“Lord Linley, many of the materials here are extremely valuable, and very beneficial to me. But these two divine artifacts should be used by warriors.” Zassler pointed out two divine artifacts.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

So the Grand Warlock didn’t just have that black sickle. He had two other divine artifacts as well.

“Zassler, do you want to become a Deity?” Linley looked at Zassler, a not-quite smile on his face. Behind him, Delia also grinned towards Zassler.

Zassler was stunned.

“Become a Deity?” Zassler was somewhat numbed. Become a Deity? Who wouldn’t?

Someone as intelligent as him immediately understood from Linley’s words what Linley’s intentions were. But Zassler still found it rather hard to believe. Zassler knew exactly how important a divine spark was. Even Dylin had felt incredibly grateful towards Linley for gifting him with a divine spark.

A divine spark represented the creation of a Deity.

“Can it be that you don’t want to?” Linley asked. “If you don’t want to, then forget about it.”

“I want to. Of course I want to.” Zassler said hurriedly.

“Haha…” Seeing the look on Zassler’s face right now, Linley immediately started to laugh. Delia couldn’t help but laugh as well. “Linley, stop teasing Zassler. Where’s that Death-style divine spark? Give it to Zassler.”

“This is the divine spark of a Deity. Go and fuse it.” With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved the Grand Warlock’s divine spark, then tossed it over to Zassler.

Seeing the divine spark fly towards him, Zassler felt as though his entire body had turned light and airy, as though he were on a cloud.

This was a divine spark. After fusing with it, he would become a Deity!

Zassler couldn’t help but swallow. Trembling, he stretched his hands out and caught the divine spark. Zassler felt as though this divine spark in his hands weighed trillions of pounds, and his hands couldn’t help but shake.

“Lord Linley, thank you, thank you.” Zassler was extremely grateful.

Before meeting Linley, he had been an Arch Magus necromancer of the ninth rank. Finally, he had become a Saint, but Zassler knew very well the limits of his talent…it had taken him eight hundred years just to reach the Saint level. To reach the Deity level, the amount of time it would take him would be measured in ten-thousand year units.

Who would have thought that without having experienced any difficulties, a divine spark would just suddenly appear in front of him like this?

“Don’t say thank you so many times. But Zassler, you have to work hard. Your understanding of the Laws is deeper than Barker, but Barker has already begun fusing with his divine spark before you. I want to see who amongst you two will become the third Deity of Dragonblood Castle.” Linley said with a laugh.

Without question, the second Deity of Dragonblood Castle would be Delia. After all, she was already more than halfway through fusing with her divine spark.

“Lord Linley, don’t worry. I will definitely work hard.” Zassler’s heart was burning with eagerness!

The goal of countless experts, and even countless Saints of the Yulan continent, was to become a Deity.

Next, Linley asked Zassler to leave.

“Linley, in another few dozen years, our Dragonblood Castle will have a total of five Deities.” Delia said with a laugh. Linley, Delia, Zassler, Barker, and the fully grown Bebe. “Five.” Delia felt amazed as well.

“But for some reason…”

Linley frowned. “Delia. I still feel a bit uneasy. Right now, the Yulan

continent feels like a chaotic pond. No one has any idea anymore what is inside the pond, nor will any of us be able to predict what sort of experts will suddenly appear from within it."

"Right." Delia nodded slightly.

The sudden appearance of the Grand Warlock, as well as that mysterious god, 'Muba', of that secretive church…and that was just what Linley knew about. Many Saints had appeared in the past few years in the Yulan continent as well which had previously been unknown.

Who knew when a full God would emerge?

Even though Linley's side had the advantage of numbers, the disparity in raw power would be too great.

"Linley, how about we go ahead and put this wind-style divine spark to good use as well?" Delia said. "Desri and the others haven't come looking for you in the past few years. I think they won't come asking for this divine spark again."

Right now, Linley still had an unused wind-style divine spark.

A divine spark would have to be fused with for dozens of years before a Deity would be created.

"The wind-style divine spark?" Linley paused for a moment. "No rush. Right now, we aren't lacking for Deities."

After this last battle, Linley's life returned to its normal tranquility. His divine clone focused on training in the 'Profound Truths of Velocity'. Presently, Linley's 'Profound Truths of Velocity' had only reached a fairly early stage. It was still very far from full mastery.

After all, after the Profound Truths of Velocity was fully mastered, that represented the simultaneously mastery and fusion of the 'Fast' and 'Slow' aspects, which together formed the 'Profound Truths of Velocity'.

At that time, Linley would enter the realm of full Gods.

“Given my current speed, who knows how long that would take? A thousand years? Ten thousand years?” Linley himself wasn’t certain. The more he trained, the more he felt this Profound Truths of Velocity was inconceivably vast and complex.

At the same time, Linley’s original body focused on training the Profound Truths of the Earth.

In Linley’s original body, due to having absorbed the soul essences, his soul continuously grew. In just three short months, he had absorbed half of those liquid gold soul essences, and his original body’s sword-shaped soul had already increased by a sizable amount, while the power of his soul had increased nearly sixfold. For a soul to increase sixfold in power…this was truly astonishing.

Actually, even the Grand Warlock’s soul would have been strengthened multiple times after absorbing those twenty million soul essences. In addition, the Grand Warlock’s soul was much more powerful than Linley’s to begin with, and so it was only logical that Linley would grow stronger at such a rapid rate.

One of the great benefits of his soul growing stronger was…

The pace at which he gained new insights in the Laws and was able to visualize attacks was rapidly rising!

After ascending from the Saint level to the Deity level, Linley’s soul had been slightly touched by the natural laws, and so had begun a fundamental transformation, allowing his hypothesizing abilities to increase greatly. Now that his soul was six times more powerful than normal, Linley’s hypothesizing ability was nearly a hundred times faster than in the past when he was a Saint.

In addition, Linley was constantly draining and refining souls, allowing his

hypothesizing abilities to continue to increase.

In the past, it might have taken him eight years for a breakthrough, but now, in just those three short months, Linley broke through from the 64 Fused Waves of the Throbbing Pulse of the World to the level of 32 Fused Waves. But upon reaching the level of 32 Fused Waves, Linley clearly sensed that the difficulty had just increased yet again.

“Given this level of speed, breaking through to the 16 Fused Waves level will most likely need another year. Then…how long will it take to break through to the 8 Fused Waves?” Linley was rather astonished.

The Throbbing Pulse of the World rose exponentially in difficulty as one learned more of it. From the 256 waves to the 128 Fused Waves, and then to the 64 Fused Waves, the difficulty increase hadn’t been too great. But the further one went, the exponentially harder it became. In truth, the Throbbing Pulse of the World was one of the fairly high level components of the Laws of the Earth. It was extremely hard to fully master it at the Saint level.

Fortunately, Linley’s soul had dramatically risen in power, after he had absorbed so many soul essences.

Chapter 30 – Haeru

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 30, Haeru

These quiet, comfortable days passed, one after the other. In the blink of an eye, half a year had passed.

The liquid gold soul essences had been completely absorbed by Linley. Right now, although his sword-shaped soul was just one size larger than before, in terms of quality, it had absolutely transformed.

“No wonder that Deity wanted to collect so many souls and refine them.” Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

But unfortunately, despite the meticulous efforts of the Grand Warlock, in the end, it had all been to someone else’s benefit.

After completely absorbing the soul essences, Linley left the secret pocket dimension, wanting to take a stroll about Dragonblood Castle. Just as he walked along a flowery path, Linley saw a black blur flash right past the air above him from afar.

“Master.” The black shadow flew over to Linley. It was the Blackcloud Panther, Haeru.

“Haeru, heading off to the Forest of Darkness again?” Linley laughed.

Haeru nodded his great head.

Linley knew that Haeru as well those three Saint-level dragons actually were not accustomed to always living alongside humans. The four of them only occasionally stayed in Dragonblood Castle. Most of the time, they flew to the Forest of Darkness, the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, or the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun.

Those places were their real homes.

“Hm…” Linley suddenly had a thought.

“Haeru, you are darkness-style and wind-style, right?” Linley asked.

“Yes, Master. What of it?” Haeru was quite puzzled. Why had Linley suddenly asked this?

Linley laughed and said, “Nothing.” Linley continued walking forward. Haeru stared at Linley’s back, puzzled. But Haeru didn’t think too much of it, and he immediately flew to look for his three good friends; those three Saint-level dragons.

Arriving at the training fields in front of Dragonblood Castle, Linley saw Wharton and several others training.

“Wind-style…Haeru actually would be a good choice.” Linley had been pondering the question of who to give the wind-style divine spark to for quite some time now.

Gates and the others had almost no affinity for the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Although any Saint was capable of fusing with a divine spark, it was best to fuse with a spark of an element one was skilled in. For example, Delia was fusing with a wind-style divine spark, while Barker was fusing in an earth-style divine spark, and Zassler was fusing with a Death-style divine spark.

And now, Linley had found another candidate; Haeru.

Haeru was a dual-element, darkness and wind affinity magical beast. It indeed would be an excellent choice for him to refine this divine spark.

“Big brother Ley.” A familiar voice rang out.

Linley looked over. It was Jenne.

“Jenne.” Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. Jenne was wearing water-blue magus robes. The passage of time had left no mark on her face at all. Back in the day, Jenne was a famous ‘iron lady’ of the Baruch Empire’s administrative bureaus. Nowadays, Jenne was in a magus academy working as a magus instructor.

Jenne had worked very hard in her magus training, and she had spent thirty-plus years refining her abilities.

Currently, she was at the level of a magus of the seventh rank. She was more than qualified to be a magus instructor.

“Haha, Jenne, you are back. Ever since you became a magus instructor, you started to spend less and less time here.” Wharton and the others walked over as well.

Actually, everyone in Dragonblood Castle knew how Jenne felt towards Linley. Only, they all knew Linley’s temperament as well, as did Jenne… they rarely spoke, and Jenne didn’t try to force Linley to spend more time with her. As Jenne saw it, her life was already a very blessed one, for her to occasionally be able to see the person she liked, and for her to be able to do something she enjoyed. She enjoyed this sort of leisurely, fulfilling life.

“There’s nothing I can do. There’s only two breaks each year at the institute.” Jenne smiled as she spoke. “Wharton, where’s Arnold?”

“Arnold is playing around in the rear flower gardens, along with the maidservants.” Wharton laughed.

Jenne glanced at Linley. “Big brother Ley, I’m going to go find Arnold.” Linley laughed and nodded. Jenne doted on Arnold very much. Everyone in Dragonblood Castle knew this.

Within the pocket dimension.

The multicolored energy streams swirled in the chaotic space outside the membrane. Dimensional cracks could be seen everywhere. Linley and

Delia, husband and wife, were quietly training here. Linley's divine clone and his original body were separately training in the 'Profound Truths of Velocity' and the 'Profound Truths of the Earth'.

"Whew." Linley stopped training.

"Delia." Linley called out.

"What is it?" Delia opened her eyes, looking at Linley in confusion. "Is something wrong?"

"Delia, right now, we still have one more divine spark left. I'm preparing to give this divine spark to Haeru and have him fuse it. What do you think?" Linley wanted to ask Delia for her opinion first. Delia's eyes lit up. "Haeru? If it is Haeru…that actually is an excellent choice. He is your magical beast, and all these years, him and those three Saint-level dragons have handled many tasks on behalf of the Empire during those battles."

Delia appreciated Haeru very much.

Haeru was very low-key in Dragonblood Castle, but whenever any problems arose, Haeru would carry out the tasks which others didn't want to carry out without a single word of complaint.

"Then it is settled." Linley made up his mind.

After becoming a Deity, Linley was no longer under much pressure. Generally speaking, he would let his divine clone fully focus on training, while his original body would occasionally go wandering about Dragonblood Castle. After all, there was more to life than just training.

Within the main hall of Dragonblood Castle.

Dozens of people were seated around that ten-meter long table. They were eating together, and Linley was seated in the main seat.

"Rumble…"

A unique energy ripple came from the south. The other people in the main hall didn't notice anything, but Linley raised his head, staring towards the south in amazement. "Yet another person has become a Deity!"

Linley, who had once sensed the energy signature of the natural Laws, was very familiar with that energy wave.

Although that energy wave had travelled a great distance and was now very weak, Linley could still sense it very clearly. That was a unique energy wave generated by the descent of the natural Laws when a person became a Deity.

"Someone to the south became a Deity. Who?" Linley secretly wondered.

To be precise, right now, both Tulily and Desri were located to the south of Linley. Aside from those two familiar figures, there were also the various Prime Saints who had appeared out of nowhere in recent years, such as those two in the Rohault Empire. All of them had the capability of reaching the Deity-level.

So who was it?

"You keep eating. I need to make a trip." Linley rose to his feet.

Wharton, Gates, and the others stared at Linley in confusion, but they didn't ask him about it. Linley walked out of the main hall, then immediately flew into the air.

In mid-air, Linley could now clearly sense the area the energy ripples were coming from. "Directly from the south. It shouldn't be Tulily." No longer wondering, Linley immediately spread out his spiritual energy. Upon reaching the Deity level, spiritual energy could also be described as 'divine sense'.

Linley's divine sense instantly spread out. If he hadn't absorbed those twenty million soul essences, Linley's divine sense would only be able to

cover roughly a thousand kilometers or so.

But now…Linley's divine sense was able to cover ten thousand kilometers. But of course, this was only in the Yulan continent's plane. If he were in some other, higher planes, the area his divine sense covered would be much smaller.

His divine sense spread out like a ripple in water, quickly reaching the mountain where Desri resided.

"Right here." Linley could clearly sense the powerful natural Laws rippling forth from this location. Linley no longer dared to continue spreading his divine sense. All he did was wait. After all, the process of being given a divine spark and forming a divine body was a very short one. Indeed…

Just a short while later, the ripples of those natural Laws disappeared.

Linley once again spread out his divine sense, instantly covering that person who had just become a Deity.

"It is Desri." Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

At the moment, Desri was currently within an underground training room in his mountain residence. There were quite a number of people gathered there, including Pennslyn, Higgingson, Reynolds, and others. These people were all excitedly watching as Desri became a Deity. Desri had also chosen the second method; dividing his soul in two!

"Desri, congratulations." Linley's voice transmitted directly into Desri's mind.

"Haha, Linley, I was half a year slower than you." Desri spoke modestly, but in his heart, he was overjoyed. He had stopped at the Prime Saint level for too long a period of time. Today, he had finally broken through, and it was through relying on his own ability.

The two Deities were separated by thousands of kilometers, but they spoke

to each other spiritually.

“Desri, why did you choose to separate your soul?” Linley asked, puzzled. “Don’t you only train in the Laws of Light?”

“Linley, although this soul splitting process is extremely harmful to the soul, with time, the soul will grow and heal. But now, I have two separate bodies. At least, when I’m fighting, if one of my bodies is destroyed, I’ll still have another body. It basically means I’ll have a second life. And more importantly…although I’m currently only training in the Laws of Light, does that mean in the future, I won’t be able to train in anything else?”

Linley laughed as well.

Actually, the majority of people who became Deities on their own, if they knew the difference between the two choices, would choose this second option.

The damage to the soul caused by the soul splitting was only temporary, after all. But what it represented was an additional life, as well future possibilities for further training! After all, after one became a Deity, one would have an unlimited lifespan. One could train in the other Elemental Laws.

For example, if Linley had enough time, he could definitely continue to train in the fire-style, or even the Way of Destruction.

“Desri, you just became a Deity. I imagine you have quite a few things to attend to. I won’t bother you anymore. Afterwards, when you have some free time, come for a stroll at my place.” Linley laughed.

“Definitely.” Desri agreed.

Desri, too, sensed that the variables and changes in the Yulan continent had become highly unpredictable. Joining forces with Linley would be beneficial to both of them in their ability to protect themselves. After all, generally speaking, a person who became a Deity on his or her own was

more powerful by a good margin than someone who had become a Deity through fusing with a divine spark.

Fusing with a divine spark was like simply reading a book to understand the Laws contained within it, while becoming a Deity independently was like actually writing a book. The author of a book would naturally have a greater understanding of it than the readers. He would fully understand every part of the book, and would be able to apply the principles within more easily as well.

Linley withdrew his divine sense.

Linley stood there in mid-air, directly summoning his magical beast. "Haeru, come over, quickly." At this moment, Haeru was still in the Forest of Darkness, but upon hearing Linley's order, he immediately flew over in haste. Only, Haeru was still a few thousand kilometers away from Dragonblood Castle.

Linley waited in the rear flower garden for Haeru's arrival.

"Swoosh." Haeru landed on the ground.

"Master." Haeru looked at Linley in confusion. Linley had never so urgently summoned him before. After all, his power in Dragonblood Castle was below average. There were only a few who were weaker than him.

"Haeru, want to become a Deity?" Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

Haeru's eyes suddenly turned around, and all the fur on his body stood up. He stared at Linley in astonishment. "Ma…master? Did you just say?" Haeru, having lived in Dragonblood Castle, knew that Barker and Zassler had both acquired divine sparks.

Could it be…

That the same good fortune was about to descend upon him, Haeru?

Haeru felt somewhat numb. He himself felt that within Dragonblood Castle, he was an unimportant, unnoticeable figure.

“Right. Divine spark.” Linley’s smile was very bright.

With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a black divine spark, radiating a faint green light. Haeru stared at the divine spark, forgetting to breathe. All of his attention had been completely captured by that divine spark. The world of magical beasts was one where the strong were venerated.

The friends which Haeru had made were mostly Saint-level magical beasts as well.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun, the Forest of Darkness…perhaps Haeru hadn’t met a hundred Saint-level magical beasts yet, but he had definitely met more than fifty. These Saint-level magical beasts worshipped Lord Beirut and Lord Dylin, because Lord Beirut and Lord Dylin were both magical beasts who had trained to the point of being able to take human form. Magical beasts who had become Deities!

All of these Saint-level magical beasts longed for the day when they, too, would become Deities!

Deity-level magical beasts, standing atop all the other magical beasts of the world!

“I, I, Haeru, am going to become a Deity?” Haeru felt his head grow numb.

Haeru had always been quite satisfied. After all, Blackcloud Panthers were generally of the ninth rank. He was already quite satisfied at having become a Saint, and was very grateful towards Linley for having given him a Saint-level magicite core and allowing him to break through to the Saint level. Thus, Haeru did whatever Linley asked him to do without a word of complaint.

“What, you don’t want to?” Linley snickered.

“I want to!” Haeru responded very quickly this time.

Laughing, Linley tossed over the divine spark. Glimmering under the reflected rays of the sun, the divine spark flew towards him.

Haeru stared at the divine spark, his mind filled with thoughts. How could he have imagined that a magical beast of the ninth rank like himself would not only become a Saint, but also…it seemed he was about to become a Deity-level magical beast whom other Saint-level magical beasts worshipped!

“I, Haeru, am also about to become…Lord Haeru?” Haeru was currently imagining the look of awe and veneration in the eyes of countless magical beasts as they referred to him as ‘Lord Haeru’. “Hrm, how about…in the future, I’ll choose the Mountain Range of Setting Sun. I’ll become the King of the Mountain Range of Setting Sun. I, Haeru. King of the Mountain Range of the Setting Sun.”

Haeru had never been so happy before.

Chapter 31 – The Deity-Level Expert, Muba

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 31, The Deity-Level Expert, Muba

The Baruch Empire's southwest area. Within the valley amongst a chain of mountains.

This was an important base for the Dawson Conglomerate. In the past, there had been many people stationed here, but ever since Linley had killed the Grand Warlock, Yale naturally had stopped the practice of shipping slaves to this location, and thus the number of people stationed here was lowered as well. These days, there were only a few thousand people present, mostly responsible for trading activities.

Night had descended.

The Dawson Conglomerate employees who worked here now had much easier lives. At night, many men would get together to drink deep into the night, with them only wobbling home in small groups of two and three.

"During the past year, life has gotten so much better." A muscular young man, reeking of wine, said loudly. "A few years ago, in this valley of Mt. Swallow, each day was like hell. Damn…"

"Right. Back then, I didn't even dare to go out at night. Too many people died. I don't even know how many corpses I had to dispose of." A middle-aged man with curly golden hair, thinking back to the affairs of the past, couldn't help but sigh with amazement.

Those days, over ten thousand corpses had to be shipped away on a daily basis.

The employees who lived and worked at this branch of the Dawson Conglomerate within the valley always felt as though they were at the

psychological breaking point.

The three men, walking shoulder to shoulder, suddenly realized to their astonishment that they could no longer move. The space around them seemed to have solidified, causing them to be unable to move at all. They were so frightened that they wanted to open their mouths, but they could not. The three of them all stared with round eyes, terrified.

From within the darkness a human figure wrapped in a black robe appeared before them.

Seeing this mysterious black robed man, all three felt their hearts shake. They somewhat understood…that the reason they couldn't move and couldn't even open their mouths was the result of the actions of this mysterious man in black.

"How long ago did this canyon cease trading in slaves?" The black-robed man's low, gravelly voice rang out. "Speak, but don't shout too loudly. Nobody will be able to hear you. In addition, if someone shouts loudly and irritates me, I'll kill him."

He swept the three men with his dark, cold gaze. The three men's forehead and back were utterly drenched with sweat. To their astonishment, they found that their mouths could move again.

"Speak." The mysterious black robed man said.

"Half a year ago." That golden-haired, middle aged man was somewhat more mentally disciplined. The other two were scared speechless.

"Half a year ago. Half a year ago, did something happen? Such as a battle?" The black robed man asked.

"Yes, there was a major battle." The muscular youth came to his senses as well. He hurriedly said, "Half a year ago, late at night, two Saints battled, causing the ground of our entire valley to shake, and even many buildings were damaged."

“The ground shook?”

The mysterious black robed man seemed to have thought of something. “Continue. Describe what happened that night in detail to me.”

The youngster with inch long short hair added, “We were all present. At first, we didn’t notice the battle, only that the ground was shaking, followed by buildings exploding. We were so frightened that we ran outside, at which point we discovered that in the air above the valley, two experts were battling. One was a Dragonblood Warrior, while the other was a black robed person. Oh, right. He wielded a black sickle. That sickle was so enormous, at least ten meters long.”

“Right. It was very long, and then we saw it transform into nine of those black sickles.” The muscular youngster added.

They didn’t know that those sickles were created from the Grand Warlock’s spiritual energy, because at that time, it was dark. Although there were torches on the ground, they were only just barely able to make out the scene. They did, however, clearly see the enormous black sickle formed from spiritual energy.

“Sickle?” The mysterious black robed man was silent for a while.

“And the results?” The mysterious black man continued.

“The battle happened too fast. We only saw that the black robed man was turned into a pile of mincemeat, and then the Dragonblood Warrior fell to the ground. It was the Dragonblood Warrior who won. Our Lord Chairman then ordered us to go back to our homes, and then the Lord Chairman stayed with the Dragonblood Warrior for a very long time.” The muscular youth stuttered.

The mysterious black robed man immediately asked, “That Dragonblood Warrior, was his name Linley?”

“Right. It should have been Lord Linley. Lord Linley is on very good terms with our Lord Chairman.” The golden-haired, middle-aged man said.

“Very good.” The mysterious black robed man nodded in satisfaction. “I am very satisfied with your answers.”

The three men let out secret sighs of relief.

“Crackle…” A very soft sound. The bodies of the three men instantly crumbled into three piles of dust.

“He really did die.” The mysterious black robed man was extremely angry. “He actually died, and before he finished refining the Gold Soul-Pearl he promised me.” The black-robed man was Beaumont, whom the Grand Warlock had promised to help fuse a Gold Soul-Pearl for.

“Linley?”

Beaumont’s eyes were cold. “I didn’t expect that in such a short time period, he was able to become a Deity, and that he even managed to survive in the face of the Grand Warlock’s ultimate attack.”

Beaumont knew very well that the Grand Warlock’s ultimate attack was a self-damaging attack that would devastate the opponent. For an expert who had just reached the Deity level to be able to withstand it caused Beaumont to feel shocked.

“Indeed, he lives up to his reputation as being an ultimate genius of the Yulan continent.” Beaumont’s heart was actually filled with hatred. The Gold Soul-Pearl was very important to him. The benefits of absorbing one were simply too great. Not only would one’s soul be strengthened, one’s future rate of improvement in training would also be sped up dramatically.

“Hrmph. Linley.”

Beaumont muttered Linley’s name, then with a cold laugh, disappeared into a black ray of light, disappearing into the horizon.

Yulan calendar, year 10040. December 29th. The previous night, there had been a great blizzard. By daybreak, the snowfall stopped, and the entire Dragonblood Castle was now transformed into a world of snow. Under the light of the sun, the accumulated snow was as brilliant as a gemstone. Even Delia temporarily paused her training.

After all, the Yulan Festival was about to arrive. Everyone would get together over the next few days.

Outside Dragonblood Castle.

A middle aged man with a head of neat, short silver hair, wearing a thick white robe, walked through the snow to stand in front of Dragonblood Castle. This middle aged man's face had a hint of a smile on it, but his eyes looked like black jade.

"Stop, citizen." The Dragonblood Castle's guards instantly called out.

The middle-aged man glanced at the guards with a smile. "Go make a report that I have come to meet with the master of Dragonblood Castle, Linley."

The faces of the two guards outside Dragonblood Castle changed. In the Baruch Empire, the name 'Linley' was inviolable, like the name of a god. Even if someone were to refer to him by name, they would still respectfully refer to him as 'Lord Linley'. There were very few people who dared to refer to Linley by his name directly.

The two guards were just about to shout in rebuke, but suddenly…

"Let him in." Linley's voice rang out in the minds of these two guards.

The two guards were both shocked. Linley had actually mentally spoken to them for the sake of this person.

"Please, come in." Although puzzled, the two guards still allowed this

person to enter.

Within the rear flower garden, Linley and Delia were currently seated together, enjoy the snowy scene and the sunlight.

“Delia, soon, an important guest is going to be coming.” Linley smiled as he looked at Delia. Delia was somewhat surprised. “An important guest? Who? How do you know?”

“That guest directly used his divine sense to contact me.” Linley shook his head with a laugh.

“Are you saying he is a Deity?” Hearing the words ‘divine sense’, Delia instantly understood. She seemed very shocked. “Linley, which Deity? The War God and the others are still in the Necropolis of the Gods, right? They won’t be back for three more years.”

“You’ll know soon enough.”

At present, Linley was in a fine mood. “I didn’t expect that he would so politely ask the guards outside to send a message. How amusing.”

Generally speaking, the likes of Desri and Tulily would fly directly into Dragonblood Castle. If a Deity wanted to meet with Linley, they could simply fly directly in. There was no need to insist on the gate guards to make a report.

Soon afterwards, the Deity walked into the rear flower garden.

“Mr. Linley, greetings.” The silver haired middle-aged man said with a smile. “My name is Muba.”

“Mr. Muba, I’ve heard of your name long ago.” Linley spoke. The god of that mysterious religion was named ‘Muba’. Earlier, when he had just arrived at the gate to Dragonblood Castle, Muba had directly greeted Linley with his divine sense.

Although Linley was surprised, he still warmly welcomed the man.

After all, this person had come in an extremely polite manner.

Hearing Linley say this, Muba understood that this founding of a religion was probably already known to Linley. He began to laugh as well. “I truly am sorry. Without getting your permission, Mr. Linley, I started to proselytize in your Empire.”

Towards this, Linley didn’t openly express if he was upset or not.

“Mr. Muba, please sit.” Linley pointed at a nearby stone bench.

Laughing merrily, Muba sat down. Muba’s face was perpetually sunny and smiling. Even his gaze made a person think of the nourishing spring wind. This sort of person really was the sort which few would think of as an enemy.

“Might I ask what the purpose of this visit is, Mr. Muba?” Linley was the first to speak.

Muba laughed, “Actually, the first reason I came is to apologize. Before this, I knew that you, Mr. Linley, were a Saint. As I saw it, you shouldn’t care too much about faith energy. At that time, when I erected my religion, it actually didn’t affect you very much, Mr. Linley. But now that you have become a Deity, Mr. Linley, I feel rather embarrassed.”

Linley and Delia were both very surprised.

He had come to apologize, just for that?

Could it be that a Deity was so courteous and pleasant?

“Mr. Muba, since you explain it so courteously, of course I won’t be upset about it.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Muba quickly continued, “Mr. Linley, don’t worry. In a short period of

time, I will resolve this issue of proselytizing. At least, within your Baruch Empire, you won't find my religion again." Muba's attitude was very sincere.

Linley actually didn't know what to say.

"Mr. Linley, I imagine that as you have only just reached the Deity level, there are a few things you don't know yet. I'll tell you a few common facts as a form of apology." Muba said sincerely.

Given how he was acting, Linley found it hard to hold a grudge against this Muba.

Only, in his heart, Linley still felt puzzled…this Muba was perhaps being a bit too courteous. Linley had just reached the Deity-level. There was no need for Muba to act in such a way.

"It is true that I have just reached the Deity level. I'd glady welcome some advice from you, Mr. Muba." Linley said.

Muba nodded slightly. "Upon reaching the Deity-level, we can all be considered gods, now. To us, both our divine spark and our soul are very important. The divine spark is unbreakably strong, but the soul is very weak…I imagine that you, Linley, have also sensed the benefits of faith energy by now."

Linley nodded slightly.

As soon as he had become a Deity, Linley had absorbed just a bit of faith energy. At that time, Linley didn't sense much, but after the past half year, Linley could clearly sense that the faith energy was slowly fusing with his own spiritual energy, while at the same time forming a protective layer around his soul. But of course, to Linley, it seemed that this protective layer was extremely weak.

"Faith energy is exceedingly beneficial to the soul's growth. At the same time, it will also protect the soul. When faith energy reaches an extremely

powerful level, faith energy's protection alone will be capable of blocking many soul attacks." Muba sighed.

Linley nodded slightly.

After all, he had only absorbed half a year's worth of faith energy. The likes of the War God, who had absorbed five thousand years of faith energy, would have a far denser, deeper reservoir of faith energy than himself. The likes of Sovereigns, who absorbed faith energy from countless planes, had been doing so for trillions of years.

The amount of faith energy they had was surely at an astonishing level.

"Faith energy is extremely beneficial to us. You understand this as well. Next, I'll explain some important common facts regarding divine artifacts. This will be extremely important to your future training." Muba didn't try to conceal anything at all. This 'common knowledge', however, for many experts who had just become Deities, was knowledge they would only gain after having suffered quite a few mishaps.

Chapter 32 – Divine Artifacts and Divinities

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 32, Divine Artifacts and Divinities

Hearing these words, Linley couldn't help but frown.

Important common facts about divine artifacts? Important to his future training?

"Divine artifacts are just a type of weapon. How could they impact training?" Linley was puzzled, but he didn't say anything. He just quietly listened to Muba's explanation. Actually, Linley wouldn't fully believe Muba's words.

Muba's arrival today was simply too strange.

According to what Linley knew, in the Four Higher Planes and the other major planes, experts engaged in battles against each other. How could they be so courteous? But since Muba was acting in such a way, Linley naturally would receive him with equal courtesy. He carefully listened to Muba's explanation.

"I trust that you, Mr. Linley, also know that divine artifacts are divided into low, middle, and high quality artifacts. Different divine artifacts have different levels of power." Muba looked at Linley.

Linley laughed. "Although I don't know too much, I have heard of divine artifacts being divided into several levels, and that they have differences in power. What of it? What are you trying to say by discussing this, Mr. Muba?"

Muba laughed. "Let's not discuss the differences in power between divine artifacts just yet. First, let me ask you, Mr. Linley. Do you know how divine artifacts are created?"

“I do not.” Linley replied succinctly.

Linley found it harder and harder to understand the meaning of Muba’s words.

“Linley, I am about to tell you…that actually, all divine artifacts, be they high or low level, are exactly the same when first created.” Muba said with a calm laugh. He paid attention to Linley’s face, and indeed…it was as he had suspected.

Linley was very surprised.

“How can they be the same?” Linley was extremely puzzled.

In the Yulan continent, ordinary ores and valuable ores would naturally produce weapons of varied quality. But divine artifacts…

“The materials which divine artifacts are made from might have some differences, but generally speaking the differences aren’t major.” Muba explained in detail. “The level of a divine artifact isn’t determined by its ‘birth’; it is determined by the ‘experiences’ it has after being created.”

“Experiences?” Linley didn’t really understand.

The nearby Delia maintained her silence. She was also listening carefully.

“Right. For example, an ordinary divine artifact that was just created. It is very ordinary, very average. But if it is in the hands of a Highgod, one which treats this weapon like family and often uses his divine power and spiritual energy to nourish the divine artifact, as well as often uses it to battle…hundreds of millions of years later, that divine artifact will most likely have killed over a million Deities. By then, you would discover that this divine artifact has actually transformed into a high level divine artifact.”

Muba smiled as he looked at Linley.

Hearing this, Linley seemed to understand a bit.

“What do you think?” Muba laughed.

Linley felt as though he now dimly understood the meaning of Muba’s earlier words; ‘The level of a divine artifact isn’t determined by its ‘birth’; it is determined by the ‘experiences’ it has after being created’.

“How much of a difference can there be between divine artifacts in terms of what mineral ores were used to create them? But the baleful aura and ‘spirit’ of a divine artifact is determined by its experiences, and are formed slowly. Those things cannot possibly be granted by lifeless minerals.” Muba continued.

Linley was beginning to understand.

“Baleful aura. Spirit?” Linley rather agreed with Muba’s explanation.

“People like us, after stepping onto the path of training, should understand how hard and arduous this road is. When we become Deities, it can be considered that we have succeeded to a certain extent already.” Muba said with a sigh. “Only, in the Seven Divine Planes and the Four Higher Planes…there are far too many Demigods like us.”

“Divine artifacts are what we rely on to protect ourselves and kill enemies.” Muba said solemnly.

Linley once again agreed with Muba’s explanation.

The soul was the fundamental part of a Deity!

What Deities in turn truly relied on was their insights in the Laws, as well as a suitable set of divine artifacts! Relying on divine artifacts and insights into the Laws, one could protect one’s self and deal with enemies.

“To truly become attuned to the spiritual nature of a divine artifact isn’t an

easy task." Muba continued. "Can it be, Linley, that you think that just by binding it with blood, you will be able to fully make the divine artifact yours?"

Linley looked at Muba in confusion.

Binding something by blood to become its master; this was common knowledge!

"Binding by blood is nothing more than showing that this divine artifact belongs to you. However, to truly make it one with your will isn't that simple. You must understand…a divine artifact, especially one which has existed for countless years, has a spirit of its own."

Muba said solemnly, "As an expert grows, his divine artifact will grow alongside him and his experiences. We must treat our divine artifacts as we would our family. We must make our spirits become as one over a long period of time. Divine artifacts that have killed many Deities will have extremely powerful spiritual natures, making it easier to use them once you are one with it."

"For example, an expert who trains in the Way of Destruction might use an ordinary divine artifact, but after using it for ten million years and killing many Deities, this divine artifact will become a divine artifact with a Destruction-style nature. For example…just by filling it with divine power, the divine artifact's vibrations alone can cause space to shatter and create spatial blades.

Linley's heart trembled.

Bloodviolet!

Bloodviolet was exactly like this. Linley only had to fill it with divine power, and Bloodviolet would not only create spatial fractures, it would also generate a humming sword song that could cause vibrations in the souls of others. Linley had been wondering this entire time about this. A divine artifact was nothing more than something formed from minerals;

how, then, could it have such an unusual effect?

Now, it seemed, it was because of its ‘spiritual nature’.

Compared to Bloodviolet, the adamantine heavy sword was much inferior.

Linley was already beginning to believe Muba’s explanations.

“Let me make an example. A newly forged divine artifact is like an infant. What will the infant be like when it grows up? That depends on its future experiences. What we need to do is to cultivate it!” Muba explained. “Linley, if you have a powerful divine artifact, then what you need to do is make it acknowledge you.”

Linley began to worry.

“What does Muba mean by saying this? Could it be that he knows that I have powerful divine artifacts?” Linley was still very suspicious regarding this visit by Muba. Hearing Muba’s words, he became even more cautious.

“Mr. Muba, you said ‘acknowledge’?” Linley looked at Muba.

Muba nodded slightly. “Powerful divine artifacts are exceedingly rare and valuable. This is because generally speaking, a Deity is only capable of protecting and cherishing one or two divine artifacts, valuing them like his own life. It’s virtually impossible to make them give it up to someone else.”

“Just now, I said that newly made divine artifacts are like infants, while those very powerful divine artifacts are like adults. Powerful divine artifacts possess their own spirits, and are naturally powerful. But since they are already ‘adults’, it will be very hard for them to truly acknowledge another master.”

“Only after it has truly acknowledged you will you be able to utilize its full power.”

Linley listened intently to these words.

His adamantine heavy sword was most likely an ‘infant’ right now. He needed to spend time to nourish it and help it grow.

As for Bloodviolet, it was already an ‘adult’ with a soul of its own. It wouldn’t so easily acknowledge him. Most likely, the person which Bloodviolet truly acknowledged was ‘that one’…the devilish, purple haired man who had nurtured it from an ordinary divine artifact to its current level of power.

Muba was finished with his explanations.

But his words had a major impact on Linley.

After all, one of the most important things to a person training on this path was his weapons.

“Acknowledge? Acknowledge how?” Linley asked.

“Hard to say.” Muba frowned. “I can tell you a simple method. That method is…normally, often use your spiritual energy and divine power to nourish it. This is the most ordinary and most common way. Actually, to make a divine artifact that has a spirit acknowledge you as its master will require you to pay a high price.”

“A divine artifact will be able to sense the love you bear it as well.”

Muba laughed. “To put it simply, don’t treat it as a lifeless weapon. Treat it as you would a living creature. As time goes on, I imagine that the divine artifact will eventually acknowledge you.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Treat divine artifacts like living creatures!

“What if you are the first master of a divine artifact?” Linley asked.

“That’s simple. Just keep nurturing and cultivating it. It will naturally and completely acknowledge you.” Muba said with a laugh.

Linley suddenly had a thought…

His adamantine heavy sword didn’t have to be bound with blood at all. That meant…it hadn’t reached that level yet.

“If a weapon’s quality makes it very close to a divine artifact in power, but isn’t at the level of needing to be bound by blood, what then? After reaching the Deity level, can one continue to use this weapon?” Linley asked. He actually truly did have some affection towards his adamantine heavy sword.

He didn’t want to give up the adamantine heavy sword. And, in terms of quality, it wasn’t too far off either.

“Haha…”

Muba began to laugh loudly. “Linley, ‘binding by blood’ doesn’t necessarily determine whether a weapon is good or not. For example, interspatial rings. In the Higher Planes, interspatial rings are as common as bags or sacks here in the Yulan continent. They are very ordinary. Interspatial rings need to be bound by blood, but does that mean they are powerful?”

Linley was stunned.

All these years, Linley had always believed that binding by blood was something which a weapon would only acquire after reaching the divine artifact stage. But now, from the sound of it, that was a mistake.

“Binding by blood is nothing more than a technique.” Muba laughed.

“For example, an ordinary blade, even just a wood cutting machete, in the hands of a Sovereign who often uses his Sovereign power and his spiritual energy to nourish it, after trillions of years…will most likely have transformed into a ‘Sovereign artifact’ which is beyond the level of ‘divine artifacts’!” Muba explained.

Linley's eyes lit up.

"Sovereign artifacts?" This was the first time Linley had heard him mention Sovereign artifacts.

"Right. Sovereign artifacts." Muba laughed. "I forgot to tell you. The various levels which divine artifacts can be divided into also are based on the power of the divine artifacts master. Some newly forged divine artifacts, if given to a Demigod to use and nurture who remains at the Demigod level, most likely will only be a low level divine artifact."

"But a full God who nurtures it, as long as he spends time and effort on it, will allow it to become a middle level divine artifact. From this, we can tell…that if a Sovereign wholeheartedly devotes himself to nurturing a weapon, then the weapon will most likely reach the Sovereign artifact level. As for what the weapon started off as, that really doesn't matter much."

Linley nodded slightly.

Muba could tell that this Linley most likely had a mortal, ordinary weapon.

Hearing Muba's explanation, Linley felt at ease.

He didn't need to change weapons, at least. Linley had been worried that if in the future, he grew too strong, if the adamantine heavy sword would perhaps be unsuited to high level combat. But now, it seemed, there was no need…as Muba had put it, even an ordinary wood chopping machete, in the hands of a Sovereign, could become a Sovereign artifact with enough time and attention from the Sovereign.

"My adamantine heavy sword is much better than a wood chopping machete at least."

Linley was in an excellent mood after hearing this.

"Mr. Linley, I won't disturb you further. I'll head back for now." Muba

laughed as he stood up.

Linley and Delia hurriedly stood up as well.

No matter what Muba's intentions were, he had told Linley many things today. Linley felt very grateful towards him. In addition, Linley felt that what Muba had said was most likely real, based on Linley's own experiences with Bloodviolet.

After Muba left.

"So the creation of a powerful divine artifact is so complicated." Delia sighed.

Linley laughed. "Actually, that makes sense. Only if you wholeheartedly nurture it will a truly powerful divine artifact slowly be created. If just by relying on good materials and good forging skills, you could create a powerful divine artifact, then they would be all over the place."

Linley had already made up his mind.

In the future, he would have to pay more attention to his adamantine heavy sword and Bloodviolet.

While he travelled on his path to the peak of training, his divine artifacts would grow alongside him…

Chapter 33 – A Wave of Refugees

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 33, A Wave of Refugees

Deep within Dragonblood Castle. Within the pocket dimension.

Linley was seated on the ground in the meditative posture, his adamantine heavy sword resting across his legs. Linley was currently using his spiritual energy to encompass and nourish it. He didn't dare to use his divine power yet. According to Linley's plan, when he later had a divine earth clone, he would have his divine earth clone wield this weapon.

Thus, he had to use earth-style divine power to nourish it, but right now, the only type of divine power in Linley's body was wind-type.

"Dong!" "Dong!" The unique throbbing pulse of the world thudded in Linley's mind.

After becoming a Deity and absorbing twenty million soul essences, at present, Linley's soul was already extremely powerful, and he could clearly sense the Throbbing Pulse of the World. Within Linley's mind, a visualization even came to mind; the heart of the world, which possessed a unique tempo.

With each beating tempo, a water-like ripple spread forth.

From the 64 Fused Waves to the 32 Fused Waves, Linley had only needed three months.

But from the 32 Fused Waves to the 16 Fused Waves, Linley had to spend one year and three months. And this was after Linley's soul had changed, with his hypothesizing and visualizing abilities increased a hundredfold.

"If I were at the Prime Saint level, most likely I would have had to spend over a hundred years before being able to transform the 32 Fused Waves to

the 16 Fused Waves level."

Linley broke through to the 16 Fused Waves, but he didn't pause at all, continuing to train.

From the 16 Fused Waves to the 8 Fused Waves, all he had to do was fuse them in eight pairs of two. The number of fusions wasn't very high…but every single fusion was so complicated that Linley felt extreme difficulty.

Within Linley's mind.

Sixteen illusory adamantine heavy swords were constantly demonstrating various moves at various speeds. In every second, they transformed tens of thousands of times. This nonstop visualization resulted in occasional improvements, while at the same time he continued to attune with the sensations of the Throbbing Pulse of the World itself and the correct direction towards which he should try.

Complicated, vast.

"Only when I fuse it to the single wave will I have truly mastered the Throbbing Pulse of the World." The more he trained bitterly, the more Linley sighed to himself. "But with each level, the difficulty of fusing the waves yet again increases tenfold. From the 16 Fused Waves to the 8 Fused Waves, it will most likely take several years."

Linley didn't care too much about several years.

But Linley had the feeling that from the 8 Fused Waves to the 4 Fused Waves, it would take even longer. And then he would have to fuse them into the 2 Fused Waves, before the final destination of the Throbbing Pulse of the World, the single, true wave of the earth.

That last step was a barrier!

For the likes of Desri, that barrier had halted them for thousands of years.

“For them to all become one! I don’t know how long it will be before I’ll be able to completely comprehend the true Throbbing Pulse of the World.” Linley was filled with anticipation towards the profound truths within the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’. He had the feeling that once this profound truth was mastered, its power would definitely be exceptional.

Since his conversation with Muba, Linley had trained for another three years.

Within those three years, with regards to the Profound Truths of the Earth, Linley was still stuck at the ‘16 Fused Waves’ level of the Throbbing Pulse of the World. He worked hard to break through to the 8 Fused Waves level. As for the Profound Truths of Velocity, although he had some improvements, compared to the vastness of the Profound Truths of Velocity, his improvements didn’t count for much.

“What the War God had originally said was very true. If one’s understanding of the Elemental Laws were measured in percentages, then only after one mastered 10% of an Elemental Law would one become a full God. Right now, my understanding of the Profound Truths of Velocity is perhaps only a tenth of just the Profound Truths of Velocity, to say nothing of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.”

Linley was in no rush.

He had trained for just dozens of years. He knew that he should be satisfied with the amount of accomplishments he already had.

There were some poor people who had been stuck at the Prime Saint level for ten million years, after all.

Within these three years, the greatest breakthrough for Linley was…

In his soul!

After having absorbed twenty million soul essences, the quality of Linley’s soul had risen dramatically, and his ability to control his soul was much

stronger now as well. In particular, faith energy's nourishment allowed Linley's spiritual energy to be further purified and be controlled more easily.

In the past, Linley could only expand or contract his spiritual energy, but now, Linley could control it effortlessly.

For example…

Soul defense!

Linley was able to control a large amount of spiritual energy as if it were battle-qi, forming a 'Pulseguard Defense' via the usage of a large amount of spiritual energy which would form a spherical membrane around his sword-shaped soul, protecting it. This 'Pulseguard Defense' of spiritual energy was far more powerful than the raw 'patch' of spiritual energy which Linley had used to defend himself in the past.

"In the past, it wasn't that I didn't have any idea of what I wanted to do. It was that I didn't have enough control over my spiritual energy."

Linley felt very moved.

A more powerful soul, as well as the transformation of his spiritual energy, did indeed bring many changes.

"Big bro." Wharton's voice rang out as he walked into the pocket dimension.

Linley opened his eyes.

"Big bro, the Yulan Festival will be in two days." Wharton said. Linley and Delia would generally pause their training around the Yulan Festival. Linley and Delia, exchanging glances, rose to their feet, following Wharton out.

Yulan Festival. The most important holiday of the Yulan continent.

Even in times of war, generally speaking, during these days, there would be a temporary truce, allowing the warriors and commoners to enjoy the Yulan festival. However…right now, the citizens of the Rohault Empire were filled with terror, grief, and rage!

“Don’t be afraid, child. We’re almost there.” A thin woman, dressed in tattered clothes, carrying a child on her back, was running towards the north nonstop.

“Mother, where’s Father?” The five or six year old child on her back asked with a confused look. “When will Father come to see us? I want to see Father.” Hearing these words, the woman’s eyes turned red. “Be good. We’ll see Father soon.”

But the woman knew very well in her heart…that the two of them, mother and son, would never be able to see the child’s father again.

It wasn’t just the two of them. There were many other fleeing people as well. The entire road was filled with people carrying their possessions and fleeing.

A wave of refugees!

Today was year 10044 of the Yulan calendar, January 1st. It should have been a day of celebration.

By now, the Baruch Empire and the Rohault Empire were separated at the Spring River. The Rohault Empire had two powerful Prime Saints, while on the Baruch Empire’s side, Linley, despite being a Deity now, didn’t want to hasten the speed of the battle.

The two sides had naturally thus fallen into a state of stalemate.

Over the past few years, the grand armies of the two sides had been separated by Spring River.

“You call this a war?” On the Baruch Empire’s side, a sentry was

grumbling. “I’ve been sent to the front lines for two years now, but I haven’t killed a single enemy. All we do is stand guard, train, and rest…this is so boring.”

“Isn’t this great? People will die in wars.” An older soldier next to him clearly didn’t like wars.

“But wars will also have excitement. This sort of life is utterly boring.” The younger soldier grumbled. Suddenly, he heard the sound of a commotion from the other side, and he hurriedly turned to look. “Hey, quick, take a look. What’s going on, over on the opposite shore?” Actually, the two military camps of the two Empires were separated by two or three kilometers of river water.

The sentries all moved forward.

“Refugees. So many refugees.” The two soldiers were both shocked.

A large number of refugees streamed around the military camp, rushing towards a large bridge over the Spring River. Only, the bridge was guarded by the soldiers of both sides. However, there were simply too many refugees, and amongst them there were some powerful people as well.

Soon, the refugees charged through.

Actually, the soldiers on each side didn’t try to stop them either.

“What is going on?” The two sentries were very puzzled.

“Who cares. As long as these refugees don’t attack the military camp, don’t bother with them.” With battle having ground to a halt for two years, the soldiers of the two sides weren’t too cautious. Generally speaking, refugees who didn’t charge the military camps wouldn’t be attacked either.

They were just some refugees.

However…

Ever since that day, one wave of refugees after another passed through the border between the two countries, from the Rohault Empire to the Baruch Empire. The numbers grew greater and greater, attracting the attention of the Baruch Empire. But when they began to investigate, they discovered something astonishing.

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Just a few days after the Yulan festival was over, Cena came to visit Linley from the imperial capital.

“Uncle, starting a few days ago, there has been a nonstop flow of refugees from the Rohault Empire to our Empire’s borders. The number of people coming is simply astonishing.” Cena took a deep breath. “The most important thing is, it isn’t just the citizens of the Rohault Empire. Even many soldiers are fleeing to our Baruch Empire.”

“Huh? What’s this all about?”

Linley was puzzled.

The citizens might be fleeing to his side because of danger, but soldiers were under strict supervision. Any who were caught fleeing would be put to death.

“Cena, speak clearly.” Wharton was there as well.

Cena nodded. “I can put it like this. Citizens and some soldiers are moving in streams. Some fleeing to our Empire, others fleeing to the Yulan Empire. The morale of the citizens of the Rohault Empire has been completely destroyed!”

“What’s going on?” Linley, hearing this, was shocked.

The morale of the citizens had been completely destroyed? Everyone in the Empire was fleeing in all directions? This was unheard of.

When he had first arrived in the Anarchic Lands, at that time the Anarchic Lands were engaged in constant warfare, but there still hadn't been this sort of a large-scale wave of refugees who fled in every which way. After all, people had some affection towards their homelands. If they had any options at all, they wouldn't leave them behind.

"Did you investigate what this is about?" Linley asked.

"We're not sure. But we did find out one thing, and this one thing, by itself, was enough to make me feel horrified to the bones." Cena's eyes were filled with amazement.

Cena took a deep breath. "Based on our investigations, many of the cities of the Rohault Empire have already turned into dead cities. The situation is very similar to what the situation in our Bluelion City had been. Only, this time, the situation is a hundred, no, a thousand times as severe…and it should have happened recently."

"Dead cities?"

Linley instantly thought of that Deity he had killed.

"Can it be yet another Deity who trains in the Edicts of Death and is absorbing a large amount of souls?"

Linley was somewhat puzzled. Zassler had said before that refining souls was an extremely difficult process. Even most full Gods weren't capable of such a thing. But a Deity who trained in the Edicts of Death was a very rare thing; it was quite rare for a plane to have a single one. And now there was one?

What's more…

Linley had killed the last one. If there was yet another Deity who trained in the Edicts of Death, wouldn't he be afraid that Linley would deal with him as well?

“Or perhaps, is it that this hidden culprit is extremely confident?” Linley was far more powerful than he was three years ago.

His soul was much stronger, and his spiritual energy could now form into a spiritual ‘Pulseguard Defense’. Given that translucent scaly membrane’s defense of his soul…Linley had a degree of confidence in dealing with other Deities.

“According to our rough estimates, the population of the dead cities of the Rohault Empire add up to nearly a hundred million.” Even Cena, when saying this number, felt a cold shudder.

The death of a hundred thousand people in Bluelion City was already astonishing.

A hundred million?

“I’ll personally go investigate this affair.” Linley’s heart was filled with fury. “These Deities from other planes don’t treat the people of our Yulan continent as human beings at all. A hundred million? The entire Rohault Empire has only a few hundred million.”

Currently, the War God and the High Priest were not present. The human experts of the Yulan continent at the Deity level were only Linley and Desri. The Yulan continent’s plane was their homeland! How could Linley possibly forbear and permit these experts from other planes to wantonly slaughter people here?

“I’m heading out.” Linley couldn’t sit still for a minute longer. After saying those words to Wharton and the others, he flew out of Dragonblood Castle, then began to fly to the south.

Chapter 34 – Accepting the Heavy Burden

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 34, Accepting the Heavy Burden

Linley's sudden departure caused the group of people in Dragonblood Castle to feel rather worried.

"Father, is the reason Uncle left just now because he is going to go search for…?" Cena said softly.

Although he didn't finish the words, everyone in the hall understood. They, too, suspected that the culprit behind the large-scale appearance of dead cities in the Rohault Empire was a Deity. If Linley were to fight against another Deity, what would the result be?

"I know my big brother's temper very well." Wharton furrowed his brows. "Although he doesn't like to get involved in things that have nothing to do with him, he definitely will not shirk from any of his responsibilities."

Right. Linley's responsibilities!

Everyone in the hall, Delia included, nodded slightly.

Right now, aside from the human Deities in the Necropolis of the Gods, the only human Deities in the Yulan continent were Linley and Desri. Linley and Desri, as Deities, stood at the very peak of mankind in this plane.

To Linley and Desri, the Yulan continent was their root and foundation!

Their homeland!

Deities from other planes had descended onto their homeland and had begun to wantonly slaughter humans.

At a time like this, as Deities, Linley and Desri absolutely had to stand out. If even they stayed hidden and only protected themselves…then didn't that mean that the humans of the Yulan continent would be slaughtered freely by those experts who had fled from the Gebados Planar Prison?

"At a time like this, all we can do is rely on Lord Linley and Lord Desri." Cena said softly.

In front of Deities, even Saints had to lower their heads. Only other Deities such as Linley and Desri were able to hinder them.

Within the quiet mountain village where Desri was living.

Linley's sudden arrival naturally was a source of great joy to Desri's people. Reynolds, as well, hadn't seen Linley for a long period of time. He wanted to have a good chat with Linley, but this time, Linley had come on an important mission. Nobody dared to get involved, allowing Linley and Desri to speak in detail.

Within the mountain residence.

The warbling of the springs could be heard. Linley and Desri were seated facing each other.

The two of them were currently the two most powerful humans of the Yulan continent plane.

"What!!!" Desri suddenly rose to his feet. Linley had just started to speak, but Desri was already shocked.

Linley's face was heavy, and he nodded. "Right. The citizens of many cities in the Rohault Empire have been utterly slaughtered, and the cities are now dead cities. You should know that this happened in the Baruch Empire before as well, but this time, too many cities have died. In just a short period of time, the total number of deaths has exceeded a hundred million!"

Desri's eyes were filled with shock. "A hundred million. If they had to be

killed one at a time, how long would that take?"

A hundred million!

A simple number to say. A single town usually had around ten thousand people in it. This represented ten thousand small towns.

"Linley, what do you think we should do?" Desri looked at Linley.

Linley rose to his feet. His eyes seemed to be blazing with fire. His voice couldn't help but turn clear and loud. "What we should do? Desri, regardless of what happens between the Empires of the Yulan continent, these are the affairs of our Yulan continent! Internal affairs!"

"The Yulan continent is our root! I definitely will not permit those Deities of other planes to engage in this sort of wide-scale slaughter here. What do they take our place to be? A butchery?"

Linley's heart was filled with fury.

Linley stared at Desri. "Desri, are you planning to just hide here?"

Desri's gaze turned sharp and fierce as well. "Linley, what the hell do you think you are saying? Right now, O'Brien and the others are in the Necropolis of the Gods. Amongst the humans of the Yulan continent, only we two Deities are currently present. Do you actually think I would hide away in a time like this?"

"A hundred million were killed this time. Who knows how many more will be killed next time? A hundred million? A billion? The entire Yulan continent only has a population of a few billion. Most likely, within a few decades, the entire Yulan continent would become entirely devoid of human life." Desri said in a harsh, serious voice. "Linley, there are some things that must be done. A long life isn't necessarily a good one."

"The Yulan continent is our base. I naturally will stand out to defend it."

Desri's voice was very firm.

Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. Desri laughed as well.

The two experts now understood what each other was thinking.

They actually weren't afraid of death. What they were afraid of was dying like a blade of wild grass, to no purpose whatsoever.

To be able to train in the Elemental Laws to the point of becoming Deities meant that both Linley and Desri had extremely strong wills. If they set their mind to something, even if they died, they would accomplish it. If a person had fallen to such straits that even his homeland had become someone else's butcher shop without him doing anything about it, then that would be a life worse than death.

The setting sun shone down upon the fleeing refugees on the desolate road, stretching out their shadows. Tattered clothes, dirty and thin faces, eyes filled with both fear as well as hope for the future. They worked hard to move towards the north.

In mid-air.

Linley and Desri, shoulder to shoulder, came to a halt. By now, Linley and Desri had entered the borders of the Rohault Empire.

"Let's go down and take a look. Let's ask those refugees. Perhaps we can get a truer understanding of the situation." Desri said. Ever since they had crossed over the border into the Rohault Empire, Linley and Desri's faces had lost their smiles. Their faces were very solemn.

The Rohault Empire was in a state of utter chaos.

A wind arose, then dispersed. Linley and Desri appeared in the midst of some wild grass by the side of that desolate road, then strode from the grass onto the road. On this road, there were many fleeing refugees. Nobody paid attention to Linley and Desri.

“How much suffering have they endured?” Desri looked at the dim, terrified looks in the eyes of those refugees, sighing as he spoke.

Linley had the same feeling in his heart.

Linley’s gaze suddenly fell on a muscular youngster. That youngster’s gaze was resolved, and on his back he was carrying an ancient, silver-haired old lady. Amongst the hundreds of people present, Linley felt that only this youth seemed to have a bit more spirit, and Linley could also tell at a glance that he was a warrior of the fifth rank.

Linley immediately walked over, and Desri followed him.

Seeing Linley and Desri walk over, the youth instantly looked at the two of them warily. “Milords, what do you need?” This muscular youth had some worldly experience, and he could sense that these two people in front of him were not ordinary.

“My friend, I want to ask you a question. What exactly has happened, to cause you all to flee like this?” Linley’s attitude was very gentle.

Hearing these words, the muscular youth was actually a bit puzzled. “Many of the citizens of our Rohault Empire have been slaughtered, milords. I imagine every refugee knows this. Why do you ask me?”

“I, too, know that many citizens have been slaughtered, and that the number is very high. I am just puzzled. For so many people to have been slaughtered, this shouldn’t have been something that happened just a day or two ago. Why is it that you are only fleeing now, after so many people were killed?”

Linley had been wondering about this the entire time.

A hundred million people.

A Saint, even one who killed hundreds of thousands of people each day,

would still have to spend several months in slaughter. News of the ‘dead city’ events should have spread very quickly. How could the citizens have waited for over a hundred million to be slaughtered before they began a wide-scale refugee flight?

He had asked Cena this earlier, but all Cena could say was that they hadn’t had a chance to investigate this yet.

Hearing these words, the muscular youth couldn’t help but reveal a bitter smile on his face. “Milords, if you asked an ordinary person, they probably really wouldn’t know the answer.” As he spoke, the muscular youth let out a long sigh. Linley and Desri’s eyes couldn’t help but light up.

Clearly, this muscular youth knew some secrets.

“Please tell us.” Desri spoke.

The muscular youth didn’t know that the two in front of him were Deities. His eyes were filled with a hint of pain and helplessness. “This isn’t a major secret. When I was stationed in the Barrow [Ba’luo] Legion, many people there knew about this.”

The Barrow Legion?

How could reclusive experts like Linley and Desri pay attention to the legions of an Empire?

“Roughly three years ago, our Barrow Legion, a legion of roughly three hundred thousand people, was divided into many smaller units. We were sent to various intersections throughout the southern reaches of the Empire. Our order was that we were to be stationed there, and that nobody was to be permitted to pass through. Anyone who dared to pass through would be killed.

Desri and Linley were secretly shocked.

They somewhat understood now.

This was why the massacre had claimed a hundred million lives before everything had exploded into chaos.

“At first, we didn’t understand either. Although there were a few people who wanted to pass through the intersections we controlled, and they talked about ‘dead cities’, we soldiers viewed carrying out our orders as paramount. When they tried to pass, we immediately killed them.”

“Initially, when we killed the first two, we didn’t pay attention. But later, one time…one of the people who wanted to flee through our intersection was the good friend of our senior captain. For the sake of our senior captain, we didn’t immediately kill him. But who would’ve thought that this person told us that many cities throughout the southern regions of the Empire had been massacred. In the hometown of our senior captain, the only survivor was that friend. The only reason he had survived was because that day, he had went boar-hunting in the mountains, and thus he had escaped that calamity.”

As the muscular youth spoke, his voice shook.

“By then, we had been stationed there for two full months.” The muscular youth said bitterly. “At that time, our entire unit was stunned. The senior captain immediately sent someone to investigate in the nearby cities. And the result was…well, you should know.”

The muscular man shook his head. “We were preparing to inform the other units, but then we found out that we weren’t the first to make this discovery. Another unit had made this discovery before us.”

Linley and Desri now both understood.

When Saints moved to exterminate a city, when they spread out their spiritual energy to cover the place, generally speaking nobody would escape their notice. The lucky survivors would generally…be like that person who was boar-hunting at night. Only when they returned to the city would they realize what happened.

Thus, the number of escapees was extremely low.

But there were so many possible corridors of escape. A single Legion had many subunits. All of them were stationed in separate intersections, and most likely, each of them would only encounter two or three lucky survivors, but most of those lucky survivors would be slaughtered.

After all. Obeying orders was paramount.

“After learning everything, all the brothers in our unit revolted. Our parents, our spouses, or children were all dead. The people in our homeland were all dead. What was the point of us brothers staying in the army?” The muscular youth was somewhat angry as well. “Compared to those brothers of mine, my luck was a bit better. My homeland wasn’t in the south, and so my family members managed to avoid this calamity.”

The muscular youth turned to look at the old lady he was carrying on his back, his face revealing a hint of concern.

“Thank you.” Linley said sincerely.

At this moment, Linley and Desri’s hearts felt so cold. They could all guess how this came about.

Many cities were massacred, and most likely, there were still more Saints flying in the air, from city to city, killing those lucky survivors. Those who managed to flee to the army camps were extremely rare. But something like this couldn’t be hidden forever.”

“From what this youth said, this slaughter seemed to have been going on for two months.” Linley made this hypothesis.

Linley and Desri glanced at each other. Both of them quietly snuck back into the wild grass by the road, and then the two of them shot into the air, flying towards the south at high speed. Linley and Desri both had new targets.

“What we need to do is to find those Saints located within the Rohault Empire.” Linley was very certain that the Saints within the Rohault Empire would definitely be aware of a major event like this.

In fact…

These events should have been carried out by Saints.

After all, it wasn’t too likely that a Deity would personally go from city to city slaughtering people. Linley expected that a Deity would control and order some Saints to go carry this out. What they needed to do was to find out some information about this Deity from the Saints.

Know thy enemy, know thy self. Only then would one win every battle.

Chapter 35 – Claws and Fangs

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 35, Claws and Fangs

As they flew in midair, Linley directly began to search using his divine sense.

“Southeast.” Linley quickly discovered the nearest Saint. “This Saint’s aura is very unique, and his appearance is also strange. He isn’t human.”

“Let’s find him then.” A cold, fierce look flashed through Desri’s eyes. “Hrmph. There is a better than 90% chance that these Saints from other planes obey the commands of that hidden Deity. If they didn’t engage in slaughter, there is no way they would be able to live so comfortably in the Rohault Empire.”

Linley nodded slightly.

If this person wasn’t willing to be in cahoots with that Deity, he most likely would have fled long ago. How could he still be staying in the Rohault Empire?

Linley and Desri flew straight towards that foreign Saint at high speed.

A skinny, black-skinned man with a turban around his head was currently lying comfortably upon a reclining chair. Next to him were beautiful maids who were respectfully holding platters of fruit out to him. The skinny man had a hint of a smile on his face, but these maids were extremely nervous.

They all knew that their master’s temper was very bizarre. Although he was laughing very merrily right now, sometimes he would brutally begin to whip and abuse them.

“This sort of life is wonderful.” The black-skinned man let out a sigh of content.

He had arrived in the Yulan continent plane four years ago. His life in the Yulan continent was thousands of times more enjoyable than it had been in the Gebados Planar Prison. In that place, he was a low level person, but here in the Yulan continent, he easily controlled the lives and deaths of others.

“I came a bit later. Many of those fellows arrived six years ago.” The skinny man actually felt a bit dissatisfied.

In the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, that fog shrouded valley was a place where reality was unstable. Generally speaking, Demigods were capable of ripping through space and arriving at the Yulan continent. Even just Saints by themselves were capable of ripping open that tear and arriving in the Yulan continent, if eight of them joined forces.

“Um, you, come over.” The skinny man’s gaze swept towards a nearby serving maid.

That serving maid instantly knelt down respectfully, raising the fruit platter up high. Only now did that skinny man happily take a piece of fruit, gnawing it contentedly. In his heart, he said to himself, “Who would’ve thought that I, Bloom [Bu’long], would also be able to enjoy these things. In the Gebados Planar Prison, fruits were things which only Deities could enjoy.”

Only when there was a contrast would one know how lucky one was.

Only after one had lost something did one know how to treasure it!

Bloom, in his original plane, had been a major figure as well, but when he had power, he didn’t care too much about it.

After having been trapped in Gebados for so long though, he had learned how to enjoy power.

“Huh?” Bloom’s eyes suddenly realized that two people had appeared

within the main hall. Bloom was instantly terrified. He was a Prime Saint, but these two had appeared in his main hall out of nowhere. He stared at them, only to find…

Bloom suddenly rose to his feet.

“Milords, who are you?” Bloom’s attitude was extremely respectful.

Bloom had a strange feeling, as though he had once more returned to Gebados. This was the feeling he got when facing a Deity; that he had to be extremely subservient. The people in front of Bloom were Linley and Desri.

“What is Master…” The serving maids were shocked. They had personally witnessed how powerful their master was.

“Let them leave.” Desri spoke.

Bloom immediately looked at those serving maids, urging them to leave with his gaze. The maids nervously, carefully left. While leaving, all of them secretly glanced at Linley and Desri with curiosity and fear.

What sort of a person could cause their master to be so terrified?

“We are from the Yulan plane.” Linley spoke.

Bloom was stunned.

But in the next instant, he realized what this man wearing a sky-blue robe meant. Clearly, they already knew where he was from.

“You should know what our trip here is regarding, yes?” Linley and Desri’s expressions were cold.

Bloom’s heart shook. Could it be….?

Bloom forced out a smile. “Milords, I don’t know why…”

“Hrmph.” Linley let out a cold, angry snort. “Don’t tell me you don’t know what has been happening during this period of time in the Rohault Empire. Speak. Which Deity directed the deaths of those hundred million people from behind the scene?”

Bloom’s heart lurched. He wanted to speak, but he didn’t dare to. He knew exactly how terrifying that Deity was.

“Milords, I’m only a Prime Saint. How would I…”

“WHAP!”

A palm slapped directly on Bloom’s face, who was knocked flying away like a ripped sandbag, spewing blood everywhere. Even several of his teeth fell out. His body spun in midair several times before collapsing to the ground.

“So fast.” Bloom was secretly amazed. He didn’t even see the move being made.

Linley glanced at Bloom coldly, then said calmly, “If you don’t tell us, you will die right now. If you do tell us…that Deity might not necessarily kill you.”

“Milords, I’ll tell, I’ll tell.” In front of Linley and Desri, Bloom didn’t dare to put on any airs at all. He immediately said, “This affair of killing many humans and collecting their souls was done completely at the direction of Lord Beaumont.”

“Beaumont?” Linley and Desri exchanged a glance.

Yet another foreign name.

Yet another Deity!

Desri said coldly, “Beaumont. I imagine that this Beaumont wouldn’t personally go kill the humans, right?”

Bloom hesitated slightly, but upon hearing Linley's cold snort, he hurriedly said, "Of course Lord Beaumont wouldn't personally act. He ordered many Saints to go act on his behalf. Everyone who helped Lord Beaumont would receive some benefits." Bloom now somewhat realized that these men in front of him most likely were looking to make trouble for Beaumont.

"Many Saints. I imagine you were amongst them." Desri sneered.

"No, not, not me." Bloom hurriedly said. Bloom was terrified that these people would instantly kill him in fury. How would he dare admit to participating?

Linley let out a cold laugh. Actually, this topic was entirely pointless. After all, they hadn't been present.

"Fine. I'll ask you. Where is Beaumont?" Linley barked.

Bloom shook his head, lost.

"Hm?" Linley's face changed, and he stared at Bloom coldly. "It seems you really are quite loyal to Beaumont."

Bloom's face changed dramatically. He hurriedly said, "I really don't know. Milords, I'm telling the truth. I only know one thing. Lord Beaumont usually doesn't live at the Yulan continent. He lives in the boundless seas."

Linley and Desri glanced at each other, both feeling that the situation just grew tricky.

The seas?

Although Linley had absorbed twenty million soul essences and his divine sense was powerful, Linley's divine sense still only encapsulated an area of ten thousand kilometers. In the Yulan continent, that was fairly large. But in the endless seas, it was nothing at all. In addition, who knew if Beaumont was on the surface of the ocean, or in the bottom?

“How do you usually communicate?” Desri snapped.

“We don’t communicate…” Bloom said hurriedly.

“Enough bullshit.” Linley said coldly. “You are able to stay in the Rohault Empire. How could you have no connection to Beaumont at all? If you keep on lying to us, you know what the consequences will be.” Linley was already furious. He could tell that this Bloom wasn’t telling the complete truth.

The best way to lie was to mix in truth amongst the lies.

Bloom was terrified. Instantly, he replied honestly, “Milords, Lord Beaumont is extremely cautious. He usually just reaches out to us through his divine sense, one at a time, to arrange us to work for him. He has promised us that after the Gold Soul-Peas have been refined, we will get part of the benefits.”

Gold Soul-Pea?

Linley began to understand. Refining soul essences didn’t necessarily require a specific amount of souls.

For example, twenty million soul essences could be refined into a two or three centimeter thick Gold Soul-Pearl, but a million soul essences could also be refined into smaller Gold Soul-Pea.

“This Beaumont is also capable of refining souls?” Linley finally asked the question he wanted to ask.

There should only be very few Demigods who trained in the Edicts of Death.

“Lord Beaumont isn’t capable of refining souls.” Bloom said with certainty. “We all know this. We have heard that amongst the Demigods, only the Grand Warlock is able to refine souls, but I heard that the Grand Warlock

died three years ago." Bloom had stayed in the Gebados Prison for a long time, and he knew many things.

Linley instantly understood that this 'Grand Warlock' was the person he had killed.

"If he isn't capable of refining it, why is he collecting souls?" Desri asked directly.

"I don't know the answer to that either." Bloom replied.

"How often does that Beaumont reach out to you people?" Linley asked coldly.

Bloom said hurriedly, "Generally speaking, every four to five days." He didn't dare to tell the complete truth; the reason it was every four to five days was because Beaumont would order them to hand over the now-filled soul crystals, while handing over empty ones.

"How is Beaumont's power, compared to the Grand Warlock?" Linley asked.

Bloom laughed bitterly. "They are all Deities. To the likes of us, they are all so far above us. I'm not certain, but I have heard that Lord Beaumont is somewhat more powerful."

Linley and Desri exchanged glances, communicating to each other.

"Fine." Linley said to Bloom. "Remember. The next time Beaumont contacts you, inform him to come meet me at Dragonblood Castle. I imagine…he can guess who is looking for him." Linley didn't try to hide his identity.

After all…

All of the Deities present knew that right now, the only human Deities in the Yulan continent were Linley and Desri. There was no need to spell it

out.

“Yes. I will definitely remember to do so.” Bloom lowered his head in terror and respect.

But by the time he lifted his head, Linley and Desri had already disappeared from within the main hall. Only now did Bloom dare to let out a long sigh. “My life is saved, for now.”

Beaumont was actually hiding in the boundless seas? It truly would be difficult to locate him. Linley and Desri were forced to temporarily choose to go back. On the way back, Linley and Desri both felt vexed by the question of how to deal with Beaumont.

“Linley, you say we should kill him?” Desri looked at Linley. “First of all, that Beaumont is stronger than that so-called ‘Grand Warlock’. But we are Deities who have just reached the Demigod stage; how can we compare to him? If we are to act against him, our chances of success are not high.”

Linley continued to listen.

Desri said seriously, “That’s the first problem. The second problem is, even if we are able to kill Beaumont, I imagine we will still be badly injured. In addition, we don’t know how many Deities are currently in the Yulan continent. If we are able to kill Beaumont, that will be a good thing. If we are instead killed by him, then…there won’t be a single person capable of posing a threat to those Deities from other planes.”

Linley nodded.

This was indeed a problem.

Actually, the Yulan continent had another person present. Beirut. But Beirut was a magical beast Deity! To magical beasts, there wasn’t much of a difference between humans and other races. When Dylin had exploded forth from the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts on the Apocalypse Day, how many humans had died?

What's more…

Beirut had already said that his requirement was that no one was to cause trouble in the Eighteen Northern Duchies or in the Forest of Darkness. He never said that those foreign experts were forbidden from massacring humans.

"The most important issue is still that we are not strong enough, and that there are too few Deities present." Desri frowned as he spoke. "Unless all else fails, it is best if we don't fight Beaumont to the death." Although this conclusion was rather hard to swallow, the truth was the enemy was simply too strong.

If they weren't able to kill the enemy and were instead killed, wouldn't the humans of the entire Yulan continent be doomed?

"Even if we don't kill him, we have to demand that he leave the Yulan continent, and also hand over all of the soul essences he took. Otherwise…I want to see if I'm able to kill him or not." Linley wasn't like Desri; he was far more powerful than he had been three years ago.

Desri looked at Linley, wanting to say something.

But suddenly…

Both Linley and Desri turned to stare towards the north.

"Yet another person has become a Deity?" Linley and Desri's eyes were filled with shock. The descent of those natural Laws once again enveloped the Yulan continent. Even at a great distance, the descent would cause some ripples, which Linley and Desri were naturally capable of sensing.

Chapter 36 – Olivier Has Arrived

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 36, Olivier Has Arrived

“Who just became a Deity?” Linley suddenly thought of multiple possibilities.

“I hope it isn’t a Saint from the foreign planes.” Desri said softly. Hearing Desri’s words, Linley nodded as well. In the Yulan continent, the native Deities were already in the minority. If this person who just became a Deity was also one of the outsider Deities…

Then their situation would become even worse.

“Desri, come. Let’s go take a look and see who has become a Deity.” Linley said.

Desri hesitated, but then laughed as well. “Right. Let’s go take a look and see who was so lucky as to break through.” With regards to those Demigods who had reached that level thousands or tens of thousands of years ago, they were still a bit worried, but they weren’t too afraid of new Deities.

Linley and Desri instantly flew towards the north at high speed.

Desri was skilled at high speed movement as well. After having become a Deity, his speed reached an astonishing level. Although he wasn’t a match for Linley, as the two flew together, they only needed a short amount of time before arriving in the air above the Forest of Darkness. At this moment, they both could sense that the natural Laws and the ripples had vanished.

“The north, and very far away.” Linley frowned.

He had just spread out his divine sense, but it only was able to stretch to the edges of the North Sea. It was still quite a distance off from the source of

the ripples.

“Could it be that it was at the Arctic Icecap?” Desri guessed.

Since it was to the far north of the Yulan continent, there were two possibilities. The first was the North Sea, while the second was the Arctic Icecap. Linley and Desri were both very curious. Who had become a Deity? Aside from curiosity, Linley also felt a hint of anticipation.

He hoped that the person who had become a Deity belonged to the Yulan continent’s side.

“Desri, I’ve never gone to the Arctic Icecap yet. Would you mind taking a trip with me there?” Linley turned his head and chuckled towards Desri.

“Of course not.” Desri was going to suggest the same thing.

Immediately, Linley and Desri transformed into blurs, streaking across the sky and flying at high speed towards the Arctic Icecap.

In the Yulan plane, the Yulan continent itself actually took up only a small portion of the space. From north to south, the size of the continent was roughly just twenty thousand kilometers. Even from east to west, which was much longer, the distance was only thirty thousand kilometers or so. Compared to the seas, there was a huge difference.

Forget about the South Sea; the South Sea could completely be described as endless.

Ten thousand Yulan continents would take up less than a tenth of the South Sea.

The North Sea, by contrast, was much smaller, but it was still much larger than the Yulan continent.

“Whoooooosh.” A cold wind blew.

The further north they went, the colder it became. In addition, this was still January. It was the coldest season. Even at Linley's speed, they had to fly for several hours before they were able to see that utterly white, distant Arctic Icecap.

Linley and Desri landed at the edge of the Arctic Icecap.

"The Arctic Icecap truly is an astonishing sight." Linley sighed in praise.

This place was too cold. The cold wind felt like 'wind blades'. Weaker warriors who arrived in this place would be 'chopped' to pieces by the wind. But of course, to Linley and Desri, the cold wind was nothing at all.

The Arctic Icecap was formed from one enormous iceberg after another.

In the Yulan continent, mountains that were over ten kilometers high were quite rare, but here, icebergs that were over ten kilometers high were commonplace. There was sunlight in the Arctic Icecap, but the sunlight here didn't carry any warmth with it.

The wind which constantly blew pieces of ice about made the world seem so grey and indistinct.

"So the one who became a Deity really was Olivier." Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

"You've found him?" Desri's face instantly revealed a look of wild joy. Desri , despite having trained for thousands of years, in terms of soul strength, was far inferior to Linley, who had absorbed twenty million soul essences.

This was the reason why Beaumont and the Grand Warlock wanted to refine soul essences so badly.

"Come with me." Linley flew in a straight line towards the northeast, and Desri followed behind him.

After flying for roughly several thousand kilometers, Linley and Desri arrived at the base of an enormous iceberg, roughly a hundred thousand meters tall. By now, Desri had also discovered that Olivier was living deep within this enormous iceberg. At this moment, a man with long silvery white hair walked out from a tunnel within the enormous iceberg.

“Linley, Desri, please come in.” Olivier actually had a hint of a smile on his face.

Linley and Desri were both shocked.

Olivier’s hair had been a mix of black and white, but currently, Olivier’s hair was silvery white. In addition, the current Olivier’s aura was very close to ‘light’.

“Olivier, you reached the Demigod level through the Laws of Light?” Desri spoke out.

Olivier didn’t respond. He only nodded.

Linley and Desri immediately flew down and followed Olivier into the tunnel. This ice cave was extremely deep. Linley and Desri made many turns and curves within it, and occasionally flew downwards…after flying for a few dozen kilometers, they arrived at Olivier’s abode.

“It’s so cold here.” Desri sighed.

Olivier lived deep within the enormous iceberg. It truly was very cold here. It was dozens of times colder than in the outside areas of the Arctic Icecap.

“Drip drop.”

There was a pool of water nearby. The ice above it actually had green drops of water dripping down into it, which emanated an astonishing cold.

“This is the coldest place in the entire Arctic Icecap.” Olivier said with a laugh. “In the past, I continuously dug deeper. You don’t know how tough

the ice in the deepest parts of this place is. It definitely is comparable to some extremely valuable ores. After digging for a long time, I finally dug to the core. Which is to say, this place…"

Olivier pointed towards that pool of water.

"My mystic icesword came from that freezing pool as well." For there to be a pool of water in such an astonishingly cold place was already quite bizarre. But it actually had this mystic icesword within it? Linley and Desri were both guessing that this mystic icesword had to have had a major history behind it.

"Come, let's sit inside."

Olivier led Linley and Desri into a large hall which he had dug out.

"Ah?" Linley and Desri were both shocked.

Within this hall, there was another Olivier, with a head full of long black hair. The white-haired Olivier walked over, and then fused into one with the black-haired Olivier. The two Oliviers became one, and then his hair became gray.

Bizarre!

"Olivier, I didn't expect," Linley and Desri both began to laugh, "That not only did you reach the Deity level in the Laws of Light, you also became a Deity in the Laws of Darkness. Amazing, amazing!"

"Right, where is your original body?" Desri immediately asked.

For Olivier to be able to create two divine clones meant that, with his original body added in, he should have three bodies.

"I made the decision to have one divine spark go into my body, while the other one went outside." Olivier said calmly. "I don't want to train in any other Laws. As long as I can train to the limit in both the Laws of Light and

the Laws of Darkness, that will be enough for me."

Linley and Desri both nodded secretly.

Since he had chosen to train in just those two Elemental Laws, there truly was no need for him to have three bodies. If he had done that, his soul would have been split into three pieces. By making his current decision, Olivier only had to split his soul in half.

Puzzled, Linley asked, "Olivier, what about your hair? When you became a Deity in two different aspects, you should have silvery white hair when you are using your divine light clone. When you are using your divine darkness clone, you should have black hair. Why is it that when you fuse the two, this is the result?"

"Because…"

Olivier laughed calmly. "After my two bodies fuse, I can fuse light divine power alongside darkness divine power and use them together. As for my hair, it's just formed from divine power. I can make it look like whatever I like.

Linley and Desri didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. They hadn't imagined that Olivier would have this side to him.

But they were very surprised. Linley knew very well that it was impossible combine two different types of energy. For Olivier to have accomplished it undoubtedly meant that his power had dramatically increased.

"Olivier, can you tell us how you accomplished this?" Desri hesitated for a long while before asking.

Olivier glanced at him, but still answered. "Linley, remember my duel against Haydson? You were watching back then."

"I remember." Linley nodded. Haydson had nearly killed Olivier, but ten years or so later, Olivier had went to challenge him again, and this time had

killed Haydson with a single blow.

“That time, I was in a coma for several months. After waking up, I was able to fuse the two types of power and use them together.” Olivier said it very simply, but this answer caused Linley and Desri to both feel astonished. Even if others knew the way, they couldn’t possibly duplicate it.

Linley began to understand as well.

Many people had been puzzled as to why Olivier had been in a coma for so many months after being badly wounded by Haydson.

This was because no matter how badly damaged the body was, light-style healing magic could repair it. So why was Olivier still in a coma? It wasn’t strange for a Saint to die, but for a Saint to be in a coma for months was something one might not see in ten thousand years. Nobody had known, back then, why he was in a coma.

But now, they somewhat understood.

“That coma had something to do with his soul. Most likely, it is the reason for why Olivier’s soul is so special now.” Linley still remembered how the Beholder King had attempted to freeze Olivier’s soul, only to fail.

Linley glanced at Olivier. “I wager this Olivier has left out some of the details. This transformation of his souls definitely impacts the way in which he trains in the profound mysteries of these two opposite Laws.” Linley understood this, but naturally, he wouldn’t inquire into someone else’s training methods.

It was enough for one to train himself properly.

“Olivier, we have come on an important mission, this time.” Linley went straight to the point, describing what had happened in the Rohault Empire to Olivier, as well as the situation in the Yulan continent in general.

Olivier, listening to this, frowned. “I didn’t expect that in nine years, the

Yulan continent would have so many things happen."

"Olivier, what is your decision regarding these many outsider experts? Will you stay here in the Arctic Icecap, or will you…?" Linley looked expectantly towards Olivier. Olivier wielded that mysterious mystic icesword, and also had two divine clones that were fused together.

His power was such that even Linley wasn't confident in his ability to defeat him.

Linley wasn't jealous of Olivier. Quite the contrary, he was very happy. At this point in time, the more powerful the native forces of the Yulan continent were, then the easier it would be for them to protect the Yulan continent.

"Do you need to ask?" A hint of a cold smile was on Olivier's lips. "This is our turf. Those bastards dare to come to our place and massacre people? If we don't act, they'll think we're afraid of them." Olivier had always been utterly fearless.

When he had just arrived in the Arctic Icecap, he had dared to immediately go challenge Rutherford.

"What's more, now that I'm a Deity, it's impossible for me to make any further breakthroughs in a short period of time. It's time to go out and have a good fight." Olivier's eyes were flashing with a hint of fire. "So many outsider experts have come. How can I give up such a good chance to have a fight?"

Linley and Desri glanced at each other. It seemed they had worried for nothing.

Given Olivier's temperament, he wouldn't be willing to live in the Arctic Icecap like before, now that he was a Deity.

Olivier glanced at Linley. Actually, there was something he hadn't said…in the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley had saved him several times. If nothing

else, for the sake of Linley's kindness towards him alone, Olivier definitely wouldn't shirk his duties and hide.

"Haha, excellent. With you by our side, Olivier, how can the three of us be afraid of that Beaumont?" Linley laughed loudly.

"Beaumont. I want to see if he is capable of blocking this sword of mine." Olivier's eyes were filled with confidence.

Desri began to laugh as well.

"Let's go. Let's go to Linley's Dragonblood Castle. He's already arranged to let that outsider Saint inform Beaumont to come look for us at Dragonblood Castle." Desri spoke. "We'll wait for Beaumont there at Dragonblood Castle."

Linley began to chuckle. "I wonder, if that Beaumont was to use his divine sense to search and discovered that we have three Deities present, will he be so frightened that he won't even dare come?"

Olivier and Desri couldn't help but laugh as well.

And then, Linley, Desri, and Olivier, the three Deities, left the Arctic Icecap, traversed the North Seas, and returned to Dragonblood Castle. Within Dragonblood Castle, they quietly awaited Beaumont's arrival.

Chapter 37 – The Great Botha Levee

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 37, The Great Botha Levee

The Yulan continent. The Rohault Empire. Bloom's residence.

"Lord Beaumont!" Bloom bowed respectfully.

Beaumont was tall and muscular. His entire body was covered in a black cloak. Next to Beaumont were four extremely respectful Saint-level experts. Beneath the black hood, Beaumont's gloomy eyes stared at Bloom. "Bloom, is everything which you transmitted to me mentally earlier true?"

"Absolutely true. If I, Bloom, said a single false word, then you can kill me, Lord Beaumont." Bloom was very respectful.

Beaumont was silent.

Bloom didn't dare to say a single extra word. Beaumont was a person with a brutal temper. The Gebados Planar Prison was actually just a single, special plane. Naturally, it was extremely large, and there were many internal 'territories' within, which the many Deities scattered throughout the prison had claimed.

Amongst them, Beaumont, Muba, the Grand Warlock, and Dylin were all in the same general area. And within this area…

Muba was a kind, good-natured fellow. The Grand Warlock was sinister and cold. Beaumont was brutal. And of course, Dylin was the most powerful of the Demigods. Even Beaumont didn't dare to offend Dylin. However, one day, Dylin simply vanished. Dylin's disappearance caused Beaumont to become the local tyrant of their area.

Only at the very end did the experts of this area slowly begin to learn that Dylin had left through a 'weak point in space'. After that, Beaumont, Muba,

the Grand Warlock, and some Saints had all passed through it as well. Naturally, they didn't notify any others.

Thus…

The only people who had arrived in the Yulan continent were the few experts who lived close to that spatial weak point in the Planar Prison. Naturally, the vast majority of experts within the prison weren't aware of their escape. As for that weak point in space, if someone wasn't right on top of it, there is no way one would notice it.

This was the reason why Bloom had arrived in the Yulan continent only four years ago.

Even in that very area, there were still many Saints who had no idea there was an escape and were still suffering within the Planar Prison, much less the experts in other areas.

Thus, there weren't that many outsider Deities in the Yulan continent. There were just a few more Saints than normal. All of these Saints, in turn, knew very well how terrifyingly brutal Beaumont's temper could be.

"Bloom, I'm giving you an assignment." Beaumont said coldly.

Bloom bowed.

"Immediately go to Dragonblood Castle. Invite Linley and the other Deity to meet me, and say that I, Beaumont, tomorrow morning, will…wait for them at the Great Botha Levee of the Yulan River." Beaumont said calmly. "Go immediately. Don't dawdle."

Bloom was startled. Originally, Linley had asked Beaumont to go pay a visit to Dragonblood Castle. But now, Beaumont was arranging to go to the Great Botha Levee.

"Yes, Lord Beaumont." Bloom didn't dare to disobey. He immediately transformed into a blur and streaked towards the north.

Beaumont turned and glanced at the others.

“Chiquita, you keep refining souls.” Beaumont said calmly.

“Yes, Lord Beaumont.” One of the four Saints behind spoke, a man who was tall and muscular, his entire body covered with a white cloak.

Chiquita. It was indeed the same Chiquita who had fled from the Sacred Isle!

Whenever Chiquita thought about what his life had been like after he had fled from the Sacred Isle, he felt miserable. He, Chiquita, was a member of the Three-Eyed Winged Men race in the Divine Plane of Light. Many Deities viewed the Three-Eyed Winged Men as a precious race.

Why?

Three-Eyed Winged Men had a special ability. Their third eye was naturally capable of refining souls.

In the eyes of many Deities, the Three-Eyed Winged Men were like a ‘silkworm’. If they could capture a Three-Eyed Winged Man, they could keep him bound and order him to refine souls for them to enjoy. Thus, it was very common in many places for Three-Eyed Winged Men to be kept as pets.

This Chiquita was a Three-Eyed Winged Man.

In the Gebados Planar Prison, he had been captured by a Deity and had suffered greatly. Afterwards, that Deity had died, and he had luckily managed to escape…he usually hid his third eye, and amongst the other Saints, claimed that he was a Winged Man, a type of beastman. Finally, after a long time, he had been lucky enough to escape to the Yulan continent.

In the Yulan continent, his power was naturally, unquestionably, at the

Prime Saint level.

At the Sacred Isle of the Radiant Church, he enjoyed countless amounts of souls. When he saw that the divine phantasm had died, he immediately fled by himself and abandoned Heidens. But after living just a few good years in the Yulan continent, he was discovered by Beaumont.

Beaumont was overjoyed.

He had been bitter this entire time over the fact that with the Grand Warlock dead, there was now no one capable of refining a Gold Soul-Pearl for him.

“Just keep refining for me. Hrmph. I know exactly how many soul essences are produced from how many souls. Don’t try to steal any. Keep working hard and refining for me, and at the end, I will grant you a tenth of the souls you have refined.” Beaumont was still quite generous.

What could Chiquita do?

Under Beaumont’s orders, all he could do was to continue helping to refine souls.

This was the reason why Beaumont had suddenly engaged in a wide-scale massacre. If he didn’t have Chiquita, he, Beaumont, truly wouldn’t have any method of acquiring soul essences.

Late at night. Dragonblood Castle. The lamps were shining.

“Yulan River, the Great Botha Levee?” Linley glanced at the extremely respectful Bloom. “Fine. I understand. You can leave now.”

“Yes.” Bloom bowed respectfully, then immediately flew away from Dragonblood Castle.

Within the main hall of Dragonblood Castle, Linley, Desri, and Olivier were all present. At the same time, Linley’s friends and family were present as well.

“The Great Botha Levee. This Beaumont really knows how to pick a place.” Desri snickered.

“It seems this Beaumont knows a little bit about the history of the Yulan continent.” Linley sighed in praise. “He even knows about the Great Botha Levee. For him to choose the Great Botha Levee means that he has the intention of resolving this matter peacefully with us.” The nearby Olivier nodded slightly as well.

The Great Botha Levee was an extremely famous scenic spot in the Yulan continent.

The Great Botha Levee, according to legend, was built even before the start of the Yulan calendar. In other words, the age of the Great Botha Levee was at least ten thousand years old. Although it had endured ten thousand plus years of storms and disasters, the Great Botha Levee was still undamaged and unblemished. This was indeed an amazing, bizarre thing.

Five thousand years ago, the War God and the High Priest had engaged in battle at the Yulan River, with the result being a draw.

They thus entered a settlement at the Great Botha Levee, and agreed upon boundaries for their two Empires. For Beaumont to choose this location was most likely a sign that he wanted to settle with them.

“He wants to settle with us.” Olivier snorted coldly.

Desri recommended, “Olivier, we have to look at the big picture. Right now, we don’t know how many outsider Deities have arrived at the Yulan continent. Making them hesitate is enough. There’s no need to necessarily go all out. We don’t know exactly how powerful Beaumont is, anyhow.”

Olivier didn’t say anything else.

“Wharton, the rest of you can go and get some rest.” Linley turned and said to his family members.

Wharton and the others were nervous, but it wasn't appropriate for them to interject themselves into the conversations of these three Deities; Linley, Desri, and Olivier. Hearing Linley's words, Wharton spoke out. "Big bro, if it's possible to avoid fighting tomorrow, it's best to not fight."

"Enough. Don't worry." Linley laughed as he patted Wharton on the shoulders.

Immediately afterwards, a large group of people left the main hall.

"Olivier." Linley looked at Olivier.

"Hrm?" Olivier was a bit puzzled.

"Olivier, now that you have two powerful divine bodies, when they are fused, I expect your attack power will be very great. But Olivier, I hope you will be a bit more cautious." In truth, Linley was worried about Olivier the most. Desri knew that he was weak, and thus would be very careful.

But it would be terrible if this Olivier went to fight all out with the enemy, and was killed by him instead.

As Linley viewed it, Olivier was a talent as well.

"I know." Olivier nodded.

Linley laughed, then said, "Olivier, Desri, I have to tell you something. It is regarding divine artifacts." Linley immediately told Desri and Olivier everything which Muba had told him.

Hearing this, Olivier and Desri were both shocked.

Desri, after having become a Deity, had been gifted a divine artifact by Linley as well. The main reason was, after killing the Grand Warlock, Linley once again had extra divine artifacts. But Desri didn't have a single divine artifact, so Linley naturally gave him one.

“Olivier, I have the feeling that your attacks primarily rely on the opposing forces of light and darkness. But I have to remind you of something. Strength is just one aspect; divine artifacts themselves also need to be utilized well.” Linley reminded. “Divine artifacts have their own souls. You need to learn how to let your attacks become one with your divine artifact.”

Olivier was somewhat puzzled.

As he saw it, his sword skills didn’t actually have much to do with his weapons.

“Olivier, spend some time carefully reflecting on it. The way of training for Deities is very complicated and vast. It definitely isn’t as simple as you think it is. Also, don’t underestimate this Beaumont.”

Linley could tell that Olivier, because of that battle with Haydson, had a transformation occur in his soul, with light and darkness fusing. Relying on that, Olivier’s training speed had increased by leaps and bounds. But just by watching Olivier’s attacks in the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley had seen that the attacks were simply too ordinary. They were just simple blows! They completely relied on the power of those two opposite, fused energy sources.

Linley was different.

Whether it was in terms of understanding the Laws of the Earth or the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley continued to try and think of methods to increase his attack power. From the Rippling Wind to the Tempos of the Wind…he had continuously developed his power, up until the end, with the Dimensional Decapitator. Linley had always sought more powerful attacks.

The Laws were one aspect, but applying them was another aspect.

It was just like fusing a divine core; if you understood the Laws, but not how to apply them, how useful would it be?

“The path of training is indeed boundless, with countless roads to take.” Linley thought back to the three years of training he had undergone. His original body had trained in the Laws of the Earth, but when Linley’s divine wind clone had been researching the Profound Truths of Velocity, it had also been analyzing the Bloodviolet sword.

As soon as he had heard Muba discuss divine artifacts, Linley had begun analyzing Bloodviolet.

When Linley had first filled Bloodviolet with divine power, causing it to vibrate and emit that soul-shaking sound, Linley had immediately known: “This sort of soul-attack has no specific target. In a real battle, it would probably attack both friends and foes. Its real attack, however, should be able to be aimed at a specific target.”

Linley had immediately understood that in reality, he still didn’t understand a single thing about Bloodviolet.

“In addition, in the past, I was able to utilize the baleful aura to attack others. And now? Also, the Grand Warlock was able to use his spiritual energy to attack people. Then how about me? Can I fuse a spiritual energy attack into the physical attack of Bloodviolet?” These were the things which Linley had spent three full years analyzing.

Linley was constantly exploring the special qualities of Bloodviolet.

He merged that strange sound, his spiritual energy, the innate special qualities of Bloodviolet, as well as the Laws of the Wind. Linley had spent nearly two years on this, and in the end, he was finally able to develop the true attack from that basic, omnidirectional vibration.

This was the first attack he had developed based on Bloodviolet itself.

Only at that moment did he and his divine artifact truly work together.

After that experience, Linley understood even more the relationship between a person and his divine artifact.

“After reaching the Deity-level, understanding the Laws is one aspect. But how to properly apply those Laws and bring out greater power from the Laws is another important aspect.” Linley understood that actually, compared to three years ago, his understanding of the Profound Truths of Velocity hadn’t improved that much.

But in terms of attack power…

When Bloodviolet itself was matched with Linley’s dramatically strengthened spiritual energy, the attack that he had developed was already far more powerful than the Dimensional Decapitator attack he had previously used.

“Only, executing that attack uses up far too much of my spiritual energy. Unless it is absolutely necessary, I can’t use it. I hope this Beaumont knows what is good for him.” Linley, in his heart, still felt extremely confident.

Chapter 38 – Smiling Meekly

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 38, Smiling Meekly

The Great Botha Levee stretched all the way from the banks of the Yulan river to the center.

Right. The Great Botha Levee was extremely strange. It was like a massive dock or wharf. Logically speaking, for it to have stretched all the way to the center, the thousands of years of pounding by the waves of the Yulan river should have been able to even grind a mountain down.

However, the Great Botha Levee had existed for ten thousand plus years without being damaged at all.

This was indeed quite strange.

Precisely because it was so strange, the Great Botha Levee was famous throughout the Yulan continent.

Yulan calendar, year 10044, January 16th. At the Yulan River's intersection between the Rohault Empire and the Yulan Empire. The Great Botha Levee. Normally, this was an extremely rowdy place, but today, there wasn't a single person who could draw near the Great Botha Levee.

Because…

Over ten Saints were currently guarding this place, maintaining an iron order, not permitting anyone to draw near it.

On the banks of the river, many people were gathered there, watching.

"Over ten Saints. I've never seen so many Saints in my entire life." A powerful, muscular middle aged man was so excited, his eyes were shining. He kept on staring towards the distant Great Botha Levee. "What is going

on today? What is going to happen?"

"Hey, are those Saints? No way." The onlookers grew more and more numerous. The latecomers didn't believe it.

"What do you know? I personally watched those many Saints descend from the skies and force everyone back, not permitting anyone to enter the Great Botha Levee." Someone had arrived very early at the Great Botha Levee, and had watched the Saints fly down.

"So many Saints. What are they up to? Also, who is that bald guy sitting atop the Great Botha Levee?"

The watchers grew more and more numerous. Everyone's gaze was directed towards the Great Botha Levee. The only person seated there on a chair was…a tall, muscular bald man, dressed in a black robe. He didn't cover up his face. In front of this tall, bald man was a round table, with a flask of fine wine on top.

"Yet another Saint has arrived." The crowd let out a murmur of surprise.

The many onlookers watched as three figures flew over from the north. These three figures slowed down as they neared the Great Botha Levee, finally landing atop it. Shoulder to shoulder, the three walked towards the tall bald man. In a few moments, they arrived at the round table.

"I didn't realize there would be three of you. Ah, my apologies." The tall bald man dressed in a black robe had a face filled with tight flesh, but he still squeezed out a smile. "I only prepared two chairs."

Immediately, the bald man glanced to the side. Clearly, he had sent a mental message. Instantly, a Saint produced a seat from somewhere, immediately flying over and respectfully setting it down, before respectfully retreating yet again.

"That is not your fault, Mr. Beaumont." Desri said with a calm laugh.

Linley, Desri, and Olivier all sat down. Originally, Linley had only instructed Bloom to say that there were two Deities. Beaumont was also rather surprised that three had shown up. Only, Beaumont didn't care at all.

"It seems that the person who became a Deity a few days ago belonged to their side." Beaumont secretly said to himself. "Just became a Deity? Hrmph, those new early stage Demigods, I can fight them ten at a time."

Beaumont swept his gaze towards Linley. Of the three, the only one he was slightly concerned about was Linley. After all, three years ago, Linley had killed the Grand Warlock. "This Linley could not only kill the Grand Warlock, he was able to survive the Grand Warlock's ultimate attack."

Linley, Desri, and Olivier only looked at Beaumont.

"Haha…" Beaumont let out a carefree laugh. "Mr. Linley, since you wanted to meet with me, naturally I wouldn't dare to refuse. I don't know why you three have come, Mr. Linley? Is there something you need of Beaumont? If there is, please feel free to tell me. I, Beaumont, am a very easygoing fellow."

Beaumont's voice was very loud.

But, the distant onlookers didn't hear it, because Beaumont had already utilized his Godrealm.

This Godrealm was formed from a simple form of control over Beaumont's elemental energy. Linley, Desri, and Olivier were all Deities. Naturally, they wouldn't care about such a simple use of a Godrealm. Even if Beaumont had used his Godrealm at full force, it wouldn't be much of a threat.

The Godrealm was actually what made the difference between a Deity and a Saint, but upon becoming a Deity, it no longer had much of an impact on you.

"Mr. Beaumont, you should know why we have come." Linley stared at him.

Beaumont was slightly surprised, but then he laughed loudly. “Mr. Linley, you must be jesting. If you don’t tell me, how should I know?”

The nearby Olivier said coldly, “A hundred million people died in the Rohault Empire. A hundred million. Beaumont, you really are ruthless. What do you take our Yulan continent to be? You think you can kill as many as you wish?”

“Mr. Beaumont, we all know what’s going on. No need to play dumb.” Linley said as well.

Beaumont let out an awkward chuckle. “The people who died in the Rohault Empire, well…fine, I admit it. I was the one who arranged for those hundred million people to be killed. What of it? Linley, the three of you have already become Deities. You still care about those commoners?” Beaumont had a very surprised look on his face.

“Are you joking?” Linley’s face couldn’t help but sink.

Desri spoke now as well. “Beaumont, the Yulan continent is our homeland. If we allow you to keep killing as you please, the people in our homeland will all be dead. The three of us would be ashamed to keep living after that. Beaumont, go ahead and speak. How should we resolve this?”

How to resolve this?

Hearing these words, Beaumont secretly laughed. “Indeed. They don’t want to fight with me. Then this will be easy to handle.”

Olivier let out a cold snort from the side.

“This, well, I’m really sorry about this.” Beaumont sighed. “How about this. You are worried that everyone in your homeland will die, right? Then I promise, after killing another hundred million, I’ll stop. How about that? Another hundred million, to the Yulan continent, is nothing at all.”

Kill another hundred million?

Linley, Desri, and Olivier's hearts instantly filled with rage, and their faces turned cold.

Seeing the situation, Beaumont couldn't help but laugh. "Haha, just kidding, just kidding. Linley, you people really can't take a joke. I won't kill any more. I guarantee that I won't kill any more of the citizens of your Yulan continent. Good enough, right?"

Olivier's face was as cold as ice. Desri's face was rather ugly to behold as well.

Linley's face was cold. "Beaumont, we won't waste words. Agree to two requirements, and this will be done with."

"Speak." The fierce looking face of Beaumont was still covered with smiles.

"First, from today onwards, you are not permitted to kill a single member of the Yulan continent. In addition, the souls of the citizens of the Yulan continent that you collected, whether refined or not, must all be handed to us." Linley said coldly.

Beaumont's smile instantly disappeared.

"The second requirement is, once we are finished, you must leave the Yulan Plane. Our Yulan Plane does not welcome you here." Linley finished.

Beaumont's face sank down.

"Leave the Yulan Plane?" Beaumont said. "This…isn't out of the question. But you can't be in a rush. You need to give me some time."

Desri spoke as well. "Beaumont, you have collected the souls of the citizens of the Yulan Plane. You'd best hand them over quickly. No matter if they are refined into soul essences or not, all of them need to be handed over!

Hand them over. You aren't qualified to use them."

"Don't have'm. The souls have gone to the Netherworld." Beaumont said bluntly. "I'm not able to refine souls. Why would I want them?"

Beaumont's heart was starting to fill with rage as well.

Even Muba and the Grand Warlock wouldn't dare to act so presumptuously before him. When he ordered the Grand Warlock to refine a Gold Soul-Pearl, the Grand Warlock didn't dare to openly refuse him. If it wasn't for the fact that he knew a few things about Linley, how would he, Beaumont, have already lowered himself this much?

When the Grand Warlock had died, Beaumont had been very shocked, and so he immediately went to investigate Linley.

Afterwards, when he captured a disciple of the War God's College, he had learned that Linley had some sort of a relationship with Beirut. This was the reason why, all these years, Beaumont had never gone to Linley to get his revenge.

He didn't want to make Linley his enemy.

Beaumont, to his dying day, would never forget how terrifying Beirut was.

"Gone to the Netherworld? What a joke!!!" Olivier immediately stood up.

"Beaumont, you are lying." Linley and Desri both stood up as well. They were both angry now. This Beaumont had actually slaughtered a hundred million people, then acted like nothing was amiss. He just wanted to say, 'Fine, I won't do it anymore'? He was neither willing to return the souls, nor leave the Yulan Plane.

With things having come to this stage, there was nothing to discuss.

"Lying? How am I lying?" Beaumont stood up as well.

“We already know that you are collecting souls. Do you think we don’t know what you ordered those Saints to do?” Desri said coldly.

Beaumont suddenly turned and stared furiously at the distant Bloom. “Bloom…”

Bloom instantly knelt down in terror, but his body was already lifted up by the power of the Godrealm. He was utterly incapable of movement now.

“Die.” Beaumont waved his hand, and a ray of grey divine power flew straight into Bloom’s body. Bloom watched in terror as that Death-type divine power flew towards him, but he couldn’t move at all. The Death-type divine power wrapped around his body, instantly transforming him into a heap of dust.

Linley, Olivier, and Desri all watched carefully, prepared to act at any moment.

Turning his head, Beaumont stared at Linley and the others. “Linley, I, Beaumont, will make things clear to you today. I’ll give you face and no longer kill the people of your Yulan Plane! You give me face as well. This matter will be at an end. If you aren’t willing…then I don’t mind teaching you a lesson on behalf of Lord Beirut.”

“What type of talk is this?” Linley laughed coldly. “Beaumont, you killed a hundred million people. A hundred million!!! Now, you are just going to say you won’t kill anymore, without accepting any punishment at all, and just have this matter be at an end? And you say this is giving me face?”

Linley felt this was absolutely laughable.

This Beaumont was absolutely too domineering.

“Oh, it seems you don’t want to give me face.” Beaumont’s face sank.

He had already made up his mind. “This Linley and Lord Beirut has some sort of connection. I can’t kill him for now. But I still have to teach him a

lesson. As for the other two next to him…I'll kill them. This will serve to frighten Linley as well. Don't think I'm as weak as that Warlock!"

"It isn't that we aren't willing to give you face. It's that you are simply too arrogant and demanding." Linley's heart began to fill with a killing intent as well.

Olivier and Desri's bodies were slowly beginning to be surrounded with divine power as well.

"You really motherf*cking…I, Beaumont, have been smiling meekly all day today and giving you face, Linley. Who the hell do you think I, Beaumont, am? Since when have I ever smiled so meekly? I give you face, but you don't want to take it." Beaumont slapped the table viciously. With a 'boom', the table disintegrated into countless pieces, and Beaumont's furious, fierce face was trembling. "Fine. Then this isn't my fault. Lord Beirut, today, I will teach Linley a lesson on your behalf." A deep blue warblade suddenly appeared within Beaumont's hands.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

Linley, Desri, and Olivier both retreated into the air at the same time. In Linley's hands appeared the devilish Bloodviolet. In Desri's hands, a slender sword. As for Olivier, in his hands appeared the mystic icesword.

"Beaumont, you call this smiling meekly?"

Linley was so furious, he began to laugh. "You call this giving me face? You killed a hundred million people of my Yulan Plane but aren't willing to pay any price at all, and you call that giving me face? And that you are going to teach me a lesson on behalf of Lord Beirut? What type of a thing are you? On what basis can you do anything on behalf of Lord Beirut?"

"And what's more, you think you have the power to discipline me?" Linley's wind-style divine power filled Bloodviolet.

This time, Bloodviolet didn't make any sound at all.

“This fellow really is a bastard.” Desri was also angered to the point of laughing. Desri, the most even-tempered of the three, had also been utterly enraged by Beaumont.

Beaumont, the long, deep blue blade in his hands, quirked his lips, his face fierce.

“Die!!!” Beaumont roared with brutal rage. His voice was still echoing in the air, but he had already charged towards Olivier. Beaumont had already made his decision that first he would kill Desri and Olivier, and only then would he teach Linley his lesson.

Chapter 39 – Creating a Catastrophe!

Book 12, The Descent of the Gods – Chapter 39, Creating a Catastrophe!

The Saints that had been maintaining order all immediately retreated to the riverbanks. As for the increasingly large number of watchers, all of them stared with wide eyes in shock. Just then, Bloom's sudden death had already caused great shock to these commoners. Because they had seen Bloom fly in the sky.

Bloom was a Saint, but he had died without being able to fight back at all.

To these ordinary people, that was simply inconceivable.

That was a Saint

At this moment…

The fierce-faced Beaumont was howling through the air, charging towards Olivier, that deep blue warblade in his hands chopping viciously down towards Olivier. But what welcomed him was…Olivier's dazzling sword!

Darkness and light coinciding!

"Bang!"

The warblade and the mystic icesword collided, and the terrifying force of the collision blasted forth towards ground. The Great Botha Levee's entire surface layer cracked with a 'boom' sound, and then transformed into dust. A layer of the Great Botha Levee that was fully a meter deep was blown away, revealing that pitch black rocky material within it.

The reason why the Great Botha Levee was able to remain undamaged for ten thousand plus years was because of this strange material.

The shockwave continued down, causing a massive depression within the waters of the Yulan River, then exploded out, casting countless waves in every direction. Drops of water shot out like arrows, and wherever they landed, people cried out in agony, with blood splatting everywhere.

Instantly, the many citizens watching at the riverbanks grew terrified, quickly retreating backwards nonstop.

“Rumble…” A strange surge of white light rippled forth from Desri’s chest. This surge of strange, rippling white light was simply too fast, instantly reaching Beaumont’s body. Beaumont, feeling some pain, let out a single growl.

“These bastards.” Beaumont stared at the distant Desri and Olivier.

He had miscalculated!

He had thought that as Desri and Olivier had just become Deities, they should have very ordinary levels of strength. Dealing with them shouldn’t be difficult. But who would have imagined…that just then, Olivier’s attack had actually been slightly more powerful than his own warblade’s attack. As for Desri, he had that strange soul-attack.

“You want to kill us? In your dreams.” Olivier’s face was ice cold.

At this moment, Linley glanced at Desri, secretly sighing, “Desri trains in the Elemental Laws of Light, focusing on the soul. Indeed, upon becoming a Deity, soul-based attacks are extremely hard to defend against. Even Beaumont suffered somewhat.”

Desri was most proficient at matters pertaining to the soul!

“Linley, I can deal with this Beaumont by myself.” Olivier transmitted mentally. Olivier was completely confident in himself, and he immediately transformed into a ray of light, instantly piercing through the sky and arriving in front of Beaumont.

“Bang!”

Beaumont’s body instantly began to emit a rippling gray energy aura which instantly covered an area of ten meters around him.

“Swooosh.” Olivier instantly flew backwards and retreated.

Olivier’s face was ashen. While flying back, he immediately transmitted mentally, “Careful, that gray divine power covering his body has a very strange force. When I drew near it, I felt my entire body become weak. It was very bizarre.” Olivier took a deep breath, and his face slowly began look a bit better.

Desri and Linley were both secretly shocked.

Linley knew that, having been at the Demigod level for so long, this Beaumont definitely had some powerful attacks.

“Haha…” Beaumont let out a wild laugh, then stared at Linley and the other two with a murder in his eyes. “It seems I underestimated you. If I don’t use a bit of my real power, it really will be hard to kill you. Then…prepare to die.”

After finishing speaking, Beaumont charged forward, his entire body surrounded by that roiling gray aura. His target was still Olivier and Desri!

Olivier and Desri’s faces were very solemn.

“Rumble…” Desri’s chest once again emitted that strange, rippling white light which streaked towards Beaumont.

But this time, Beaumont seemed to be unaffected, while at the same time he struck out with his warblade, covered with gray light, in a lightning fast chopping blow towards Olivier.

“Haaaargh!” Olivier let out an angry sound, and the darkness and light divine power around his body formed into a protective armor. Instantly, a

black and white sword flash appeared, and space itself ripped apart. When that black-white sword flash and that blue warblade collided, the only thing that could be heard was repeated collision sounds…

“Not good!” Linley knew that the situation was dire.

Suddenly, a faint green figure charged straight in.

Countless devilish violet sword flashes appeared, creating countless tears in space. This was the Rippling Wind – Dimensional Decapitator attack! Countless violet flashes of light, each of which contained a Dimensional Decapitator, stabbed out. The countless sword shadows’ appearance and attacks caused even Beaumont, despite his power, to only be able to respond sluggishly.

“How bizarre.” Linley’s heart trembled.

He could sense that Beaumont’s warblade seemed to have transformed into layers of waves, crashing down upon him, while he himself was nothing more than a small boat within the waves that could be capsized at any moment. In addition, the ‘warblade waves’ contained within them a strange, deathly aura which was constantly affecting his soul. If his soul was weak, he might have become dizzy from that deathly aura alone and become unable to fight back.

“Retreat.” Linley, after stabbing out with his ‘Rippling Wind’ technique, immediately grabbed Olivier and flew backwards.

Olivier’s face was ashen. His soul wasn’t as strong as Linley’s, and the impact of that deathly aura on him was very great. Desri, in turn was shocked; his attack had no effect at all.

In the air above the Great Botha Levee of the Yulan River, Linley, Desri, and Olivier stood shoulder to shoulder. They all felt that the situation was not good.

“There’s nothing I can do against him.” Desri said mentally to Linley and

Olivier.

Linley didn't say anything. Desri was only skilled in soul-attacks, but his foe was able to easily block it. Then what else could Desri do? Linley looked at Olivier, transmitting to him mentally, "Olivier, do you have any methods you can use to deal with this Beaumont?"

Olivier narrowed his eyes, transmitting back, "I have a powerful attack, but after using it, my spiritual energy will be utterly consumed, and my soul will become weak as well. I won't be able to attack after that."

Linley nodded secretly.

"You still want to kill me?" Beaumont laughed wildly. "You there, soul-attacking fellow. Your soul-attack isn't bad, but I, Beaumont, wasn't even afraid of the Grand Warlock. How could I be afraid of your soul-attack? Your ability, compared to that of the Grand Warlock's, is far off!!!"

Linley thought back to the Grand Warlock's attack as well.

If it hadn't been for his damaged Sovereign artifact, and for that azure water drop, he truly wouldn't have been able to hold off against the Grand Warlock's final, desperate attack.

"As for you, the one with the white and black hair." Beaumont felt that victory was assured. "You are able to simultaneously use light divine power and darkness divine power. This really is quite unique. But…a simple sword blow like that? If I, Beaumont, couldn't resist it, I would've died in the Planar Prison long ago."

"Just a simple sword? Hrmph. This sword is enough to kill you." Olivier ground out.

He was prepared to go all out.

"Haha…" Beaumont, utterly enraged, let out a laugh. "Fine. You want to die? I'll grant you death." The deathly aura around Beaumont's body once

more began to grow in strength, and he charged like a boundless tidal wave towards Linley, Desri, and Olivier.

Linley hardened his heart.

“Kill!”

The fierce-faced Olivier was wielding his mystic icesword, and he charged out in front of Linley. Linley, not hesitating at all, followed from straight behind. Both Linley and Olivier had decided to use their ultimate attacks!

“Haha…” Beaumont laughed wildly, while at the same time he began to brandish that deep blue warblade.

The deep blue warblade transformed into countless blade blurs, forming into a wave of blade shadows. At the same time, Beaumont’s eyes turned scarlet red, and within the blue blade waves there appeared a faint red color.

Although Linley had moved after Olivier did, Linley’s speed was faster than Olivier’s, and so he was the first to clash with Beaumont.

“I will kill that black haired kid and badly injure this Linley.” Beaumont was no longer going to hold back. But suddenly, Beaumont discovered to his astonishment that an extremely bewitching violet light suddenly flashed from Linley’s body, while at the same time, a gentle, soft sound, almost like that of a flute, could be heard.

This sound was very pleasant to listen to.

In that moment, the entire world seemed to have turned quiet. The only sound that could be heard was that of the soft, gentle flute sound.

“Clang!”

The violet flash of light collided with that wave of blade blurs, but a blood-red illusory sword shadow actually shot out from Bloodviolet, piercing directly into Beaumont’s brain. Beaumont’s soul was extremely powerful,

and once he used his spiritual energy, he could form it into a powerful wall to block.

Even in the face of the ultimate attack of the Grand Warlock, Beaumont was confident that he would at least survive.

But…

That gentle flute sound had actually caused Beaumont to sink into a reverie for a moment, causing him to not control his spiritual energy to form it into a blockading wall. In that moment…Linley's attack descended. That was the moment the blood-red illusory sword shadow shot out!

"Aaaaaah!" Only after the illusory sword shadow pierced into his sea of consciousness did Beaumont awake in shock.

But it was too late.

The blood-red illusory sword shadow pierced straight into Beaumont's divine spark. Beaumont's divine spark shuddered, and then that blood-red illusory sword exploded…the soul contained within that divine spark was shattered by the collision, and Beaumont's eyes instantly turned dull.

His soul had been destroyed!

Naturally, his wave of blade-blurs stopped as well.

Profound Truths of Velocity – Hymn of the Wind!

"Die!" Linley was just a moment faster than Olivier, whose most powerful attack had also arrived. This was a battle between Deities, and Olivier was just a fraction of a moment behind Linley. Just as Beaumont died, Olivier's sword arrived.

The mystic icesword, surrounded by a black-white color, suddenly formed a sort of translucent membrane around itself.

Outside the membrane around the longsword, there were countless tears in space.

This attack was definitely the most powerful attack Olivier was capable of after becoming a Deity.

“Slash!”

The black-white sword light sent that blue warblade flying. The white-black sword light flashed through, effortlessly splitting Beaumont’s entire body in half, from head to toes. Clearly, chopping Beaumont’s divine body in half hadn’t consumed much force, as that black-white sword light continued to chop downwards.

“Bang!”

Like an axe chopping into a tree, the black-white sword light chopped viciously against the pitch black rock of the Great Botha Levee. Olivier’s sword blow was simply too strong. His blow had actually, finally, caused this Great Botha Levee, which had been undamaged for over ten thousand years, to be chopped in half.

“That can’t be.” Olivier’s spiritual energy was already utterly used up, but he still stared in surprise at Linley.

When his attack intersected with Beaumont’s, he was able to easily slice Beaumont in half. Only then did Olivier realize…that Beaumont was already dead. Clearly, before he, Olivier, had attacked, Beaumont had already died. After all, he had spent almost no energy in chopping Beaumont in half.

“Linley, you killed him?” Olivier said in surprise.

“I was just slightly faster than you.” Linley waved his hand, snatching and storing the now-flying divine spark, divine artifact, and interspatial rings.

Desri flew over as well, his face covered in smiles. “Linley, you two…” But

before he even finished the sentence…

“BANG!!!!” From below, the Great Botha Levee which Olivier had chopped into two pieces suddenly exploded, transforming into countless pieces of stone. The Great Botha Levee, which Olivier had only just barely able to break through with his full strength attack, had utterly exploded.

“Haha…after ten thousand years, I’ve finally returned!!!”

“Yulan continent. It’s been ten million years. I, Locard [Luo’ca], have returned, haha…”

“Yulan continent! I’m back!”

“I’m back!”

“I’m back!!!”

Like a horde of locusts, countless human figures charged out wildly from the Great Botha Levee, flying in every which way.

“Thanks, young fellows.” A voice rang out in the minds of Linley, Desri, and Olivier. This scene had utterly terrified and stupefied the three of them. The auras of those countless experts had already utterly shocked Linley.

“BOOM!” A black-robed figure suddenly appeared in mid-air.

Instantly, space froze.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley instantly realized that the person in mid-air was Beirut. Beirut’s face had changed dramatically. He stretched out his right hand, which transformed into an enormous black palm, slamming directly down towards the Great Botha Levee.

The endless stream of people charging out from the Great Botha Levee like a flood were suddenly caught.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley, Olivier, and Desri were utterly confused.

Beirut’s face was ashen as he stared at Linley, Olivier, and Desri. “You… have caused an utter catastrophe!!!”

Chapter 1 – Planar Prison

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 1, Planar Prison

Caused an utter catastrophe!!!

Linley, Olivier, and Desri had just exhausted themselves to kill Beaumont, and immediately afterwards, a locust swarm of experts had appeared from beneath the Great Botha Levee. The auras of many of these experts had caused their hearts to quiver.

And immediately afterwards, Beirut had appeared.

With but a single palm, he sealed off that hole which was releasing countless experts.

From the ashen look on Beirut's face, Linley and the others felt a sense of confusion and panic.

"What…what happened?" The sequence of events had caused Linley and the others to feel panicked.

"I'll deal with you later." Beirut sneered at them coldly, and then immediately flew downwards. The waters of the Yulan River split apart, making way for him. Only now did Linley and the others discover that beneath the Great Botha Levee, there was a dimensional doorway.

The dimensional doorway was currently completely sealed off by a black energy.

"Beneath the Great Botha Levee is a corridor to another dimension." Linley and the others immediately understood.

Desri said mentally, "Olivier, that sword of yours just now should have disrupted some sort of enormous magic formation. Look, there's still

damaged remnants of that magic formation that can be seen in the nearby area." Indeed, beneath the Great Botha Levee was an extremely complicated magic formation.

Because of this enormous, complicated magic formation, the dimensional doorway was completely sealed off.

Beirut's body began to emit a black aura, and the complicated magic formation below once more began to slowly take form. This magic formation was thousands of times more complicated than any which Linley had ever seen. Even the magic formation centered around Bloodviolet in the Foggy Valley of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was far inferior to this complicated magic formation.

"This magic formation…"

Linley stared at the visible holes that had been chopped into the magic formation. It had an ancient aura, and mysterious, complicated lines and runes. Linley could just barely understand ordinary magic formations of the seventh and eighth ranks, but this magic formation…Linley couldn't understand it at all.

Complicated!

Mysterious!

After nearly an hour, Beirut finally, completely restored that damaged magic formation.

"Crackle…" Beirut stretched out both hands, and instantly, the shattered black stones of the Great Botha Levee, as though melted by a fire, began to liquefy, then re-fused into a whole, forming the Great Botha Levee once more. The new Great Botha Levee, in front of Beirut, began to slowly descend, once more completely covering that enormous magic formation.

"Boom!"

The Great Botha Levee sank into the bottom of the river, while at the same time, the water once more rushed against the Great Botha Levee, then diverted around it, flowing as it always had.

“Olivier’s sword just then must have cut through the Great Botha Levee and damaged that enormous magic formation, which was why the many experts on the other side of that space were able to charge out.” Linley naturally came to this conclusion.

At the same time, Linley begin to sigh in amazement in his heart. “This magic formation’s power truly is incredible. It was actually able to seal away so many experts.”

The art of setting up magic formations was an extremely profound and immeasurably deep one.

Unfortunately, Linley had never studied it, nor did he have the energy or time to go study it.

Beirut glanced into the distance. This sudden disturbance had attracted the attention of many of the distant spectators as well.

“You three. Come with me.” Beirut looked coldly at Linley, Olivier, and Desri, then flew straight north. Linley, Olivier, and Desri didn’t dare to make a single sound, obediently following behind Beirut.

On the way over, Desri secretly mentally spoke to the others, “Linley, Olivier, how many experts did we accidentally release just now?”

Olivier didn’t make a sound.

After all, Olivier had been the one to accidentally overturn this basket.

“Although the timeframe was short, I think…” Linley thought back to that terrifying scene of countless, locust-like experts charging out. “In that short period of time, there should have been more than a thousand experts who had charged out.” Linley wasn’t certain either as to exactly how many had

entered the Yulan continent.

“I caused this mess. I’ll shoulder the responsibility.” Olivier’s voice rang out in the minds of Linley and Desri.

“Hmph! Shoulder it? How will you shoulder it?” Beirut’s icy voice rang out, while at the same time, his rapidly flying body came to a sudden halt.

Beneath them was a line of mountain ranges. Linley, Olivier, and Desri all hurriedly came to a halt, respectfully standing before Beirut. Only, in their hearts, they were extremely shocked…just then, Olivier had been mentally communicating with Desri and Linley.

However, Beirut had heard it.

“Olivier, do you know how great a disaster you have caused?” Beirut sneered coldly.

Olivier ground his teeth, forcing himself to raise his head to look up at Beirut. “Lord Beirut, I will work hard to shoulder all of the consequences.”

“Shoulder them? You aren’t even capable of repairing that great sealing formation, one which an Overgod set up. And you think you will ‘shoulder the responsibility’?” Beirut said with a cold sneer.

An Overgod set up?

Linley and the others were utterly stunned, their mouths gaping. Overgods were far too distant a concept for them. They were part of the Laws of the universe itself!

“This time…it seems we really screwed up.” Linley had the sense that this time, they really had caused a disaster.

“Just repairing that great sealing formation requires one to have the power of a Highgod. Olivier, are you able to repair that formation?” Beirut glanced at him coldly. Even Olivier, at this point, no longer dared to make a sound.

He, too, knew that this time, the situation really was severe.

But Linley suddenly had a thought.

Clearly…

“Beirut should be a Highgod.” Linley came to this conclusion.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley spoke as he looked at Beirut.

“Speak.” Beirut nodded faintly.

“Lord Beirut, I wonder what plane that dimensional gateway leads to?” Linley asked with curiosity. “Why is it that so many Deities came out of it, and also…all these years, why have so many outsider experts appeared?”

Linley and the other two had their hearts filled with questions.

Beirut glanced at them. “Actually, this isn’t a big secret. The Deities who came a few years ago and the ones released just now all came from the Gebados Planar Prison.”

Gebados Planar Prison?

Linley had heard this name come up several times. Dylin had come from this place as well.

“Might I ask what sort of a place the Gebados Planar Prison is? Why are there so many experts there, who would come to our Yulan Plane?” Linley asked. Meanwhile, Olivier and Desri didn’t dare to make a sound.

Desri’s heart quivered whenever he so much as looked at Beirut, while Olivier knew that this time, he was the one who had caused this disaster. Thus, of the three of them, only Linley dared to speak at this time.

“This Gebados Planar Prison, as a matter of fact…” Beirut shook his head with a smile. “In truth, it is part of the Yulan Plane.”

“Part of?” Linley and the others were astonished.

Beirut stared into the distance. He seemed to be speaking to himself, “Within this boundless, infinite universe, there are countless common planes. Every single one of those common planes has an interconnected Planar Prison. The material plane and the planar prison, combined, form two sides of a whole.

Linley, Desri, and Olivier could hardly believe it.

They had originally believed that the Gebados Planar Prison had to be a planar prison located somewhere in the universe that was used for the purpose of imprisoning experts. But from the sound of it, every single material plane had a planar prison. They were two sides of the same entity.

“Linley, do the three of you have any idea how long the Yulan Plane has existed for?” Beirut looked towards Linley and the others.

Linley, Olivier, and Desri looked at each other, somewhat lost.

How could any of them know how long the Yulan Plane had existed for?

Even ancient, incomplete historical records went back as far as hundreds of thousands of years.

“I’ll tell you. I myself have lived in the Yulan Plane for millions of years.” Beirut said. “As for how long the Yulan Plane has existed for, that figure is unimaginable to you.”

“A hundred million years?” Linley stated a number he felt was very large.

A hundred million years truly was a long time.

“A hundred million years?” Beirut shook his head disdainfully. “Let me tell you. This Yulan Material Plane has experienced countless troubles. Long, long ago, this world was actually 90% land.”

90% land?

But by now, the ocean areas by themselves made up more than 90%. How had the world changed into a sea world?

“This land has gone through countless eras. The eras which I know about include the ‘Beastmen Era’, the ‘Savage Era’…one era after another. Although humans appeared a very, very long time ago, in truth, humans only became the dominant species on the Yulan continent less than a hundred million years ago!”

Linley and the others all listened quietly, not daring to speak.

“Let me tell you. This material plane was formed by nature. It wasn’t formed by a Sovereign or the Overgods. The countless material planes which nature formed have existed for even longer than even the Seven Divine Plane and the Four Higher Planes.” Beirut said solemnly.

Linley secretly nodded.

If it had been naturally formed, then of course it would have been formed long ago, in the beginning of the universe.

“The exact number, I can’t be sure about. But I know for sure that this Yulan Plane has existed for at least a hundred million hundred million years [ten quadrillion]!!!” Beirut couldn’t help but feel excited as he spoke.

Linley and the others were utterly stunned.

Ten quadrillion years?

So easy to say. It was just a number. But in reality, it was unbelievable.

To be precise, even if the Yulan continent produced only a single Deity every ten thousand years (which wasn’t actually the case)…in ten quadrillion years, the number of Deities which the Yulan continent had

produced should have exceeded one trillion.

And this was just the Yulan continent.

“Ten quadrillion years is just based on what I know. If you want to know the exact number of years, you would most likely have to go ask one of the Overgods.” Beirut was certain of this. After all, even Sovereigns only slowly appeared afterwards. As for the Four Overgods, they were personifications of four major rules of the universe. When the universe had formed, the Overgods had appeared as well.

Only they would know exactly how long the material planes had existed for.

Linley forced himself to take a deep breath and calm down his beating heart. Desri and Olivier were doing the same thing.

They were all heroic figures of this era, but in the face of the countless experts which had appeared over as time had flowed on over the past ten quadrillion years, they were most likely just ordinary figures.

“Astonished?” Beirut laughed coldly. “For every material plane, there is a Planar Prison. The Gebados Planar Prison is the matching plane for our Yulan Plane. In the history of our Yulan Plane, if any Saints or Deities angered the Planar Overseer, the Planar Overseer would imprison them into the Planar Prison.”

“The Planar Overseer?” Linley couldn’t help but think of that ‘Hodan’.

Beirut said calmly, “But of course, sometimes there are special circumstances. The Planar Overseer of the Yulan Plane is Hodan. But this is my homeland. Naturally, the matters of the Yulan Plane are for me to control. They aren’t up to that Hodan to decide.”

“Intentionally or unintentionally, the experts who offended the Planar Overseers were all imprisoned there. Although it doesn’t happen frequently, they will slowly accumulate to a frightening number.”

Beirut sighed. “Just the number of experts I personally threw into the Gebados Planar Prison during these past ten thousand years, when I have been in charge of the Yulan Plane, add up to over a thousand. But of course, there are some special circumstances and reasons for that. Normally speaking, only a few will be imprisoned every ten thousand years.”

“Those who are imprisoned are all Saints at the very least. They won’t starve to death. Even if they don’t break through, they have limitless lives.” Beirut looked at Linley and the others. “Linley, think about it. Even if only three are imprisoned every ten thousand years, over ten quadrillion years, how many will have been imprisoned there?”

Linley and the others did the quick mental calculations. Instantly, they were stunned.

This number was simply too astonishing.

Chapter 2 – Departure

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 2, Departure

Beirut continued, “In the Gebados Planar Prison, 99% of experts will die from either the environment or be killed by others. But despite that, the number of experts in the Gebados Planar Prison is still astonishing. All of these experts share a common desire!”

“To leave the Planar Prison!”

“In the material planes, upon reaching the Saint level, one is qualified to leave the material plane and head to the Divine Planes and Higher Planes. However, in the Planar Prisons, even if one becomes a Highgod, one isn’t qualified to leave.” Beirut sighed.

Linley, Desri, and Olivier thought back once more to that scene when the Great Botha Levee had been broken open.

“Back!”

“We are back!!!”

Those crazed, overjoyed calls still reverberated in their ears. From those voices, Linley could completely sense the excitement and joy of those experts who had just fled from the Planar Prison.

“So if one is imprisoned, one will never be able to leave, ever?” Linley asked.

“Of course not.” Beirut shook his head. “After being imprisoned into the Gebados Planar Prison, there are three methods by which one can escape. In addition, according to the rules, once one has escaped, even the Planar Overseer isn’t qualified to imprison them into it again.”

“Three methods?” Linley was rather surprised.

So it was not only possible to escape, there were three methods for doing so!

“The first method is to reach the level of Highgod, and then chop a dimensional hole in the Planar Prison, then enter the realm of chaotic space between planes. It is a matter of luck. Highgods can remain alive for a fairly long period of time within the chaotic space. If they are lucky, they might be able to flee to another plane. If they are unlucky, they will die within the chaotic space.

Linley’s heart shook.

After training to the Highgod level, one could go try their luck in chaotic space?

Chaotic space was the most dangerous place of all. Going there was nothing short of throwing one’s life away.

“But of course, although this method is the simplest, there aren’t many who dare to try it.” Beirut continued. “The second method. Because the Yulan Plane and the Planar Prison are two sides of the same whole, aside from the dimensional gates that link them up, there are quite a few places where the two planes touch.”

“The places where these two planes touch are known as areas where the walls of reality are thin!”

Beirut chuckled. “Much like two pieces of paper that are folded between each other. If an expert is in the Planar Prison and is able to tear a hole, he’ll be able to escape through that temporary hole. They’ll instantly charge through that hole, which will instantly repair itself afterwards.”

“That Dylin, Beaumont, and those other experts who came to the Yulan Plane a few years ago all used this method to come to the Yulan Plane.”

Linley now understood.

“Actually, every single area where the planar walls are weak has been sealed off. They won’t be easily broken through.” Beirut sighed. “The Gebados Planar Prison and our Yulan Plane have, in total, nine places where the planar walls are weak. All nine of those places had been sealed. But Linley…”

Beirut looked at Linley. “When you were young and entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, didn’t you draw out a sword?”

Linley immediately thought back to the scene of his trip to the Foggy Valley. In that place, he had awoken the Dragonblood in his veins, and also had discovered Bloodviolet. At that time, when Grandpa Doehring had seen the enormous magical formation which Bloodviolet had been stuck into, he had been shocked as well.

That formation was even more powerful than Saint-level magic formations.

“Lord Beirut, are you saying…?” Linley, utterly shocked, stared with round eyes.

Beirut nodded. “Right. When you drew that sword out, the magical formation which surrounded Bloodviolet naturally was damaged. There are many people in the Planar Prison, and naturally there were people in the area near the weak planar walls. Dylin was there as well. He was the only Deity located close to it. Naturally, he was the first to discover it, and thus he arrived in the Yulan continent.

“It was me. It was actually me!!!”

Linley’s mind was in a state of utter chaos.

So the reason for the Apocalypse Day has been his pulling out of Bloodviolet. The descent of so many outsider experts also had to do with him as well.

He now began to understand why it was that Dylin's three children, the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, had thanked him.

"These areas with thin planar walls are very hard to find. Thus, only later on, people slowly began to flee into the Yulan Plane." Beirut sighed. "At that time, I was in no hurry to close it off. I felt that those people who had been imprisoned in the Gebados Planar Prison were quite pitiable. It was fine if a few of them could occasionally escape."

It was lonely at the top.

In a place like the Yulan Plane, who could possibly be a match for him? After discovering that Linley had accidentally damaged that great sealing formation, Beirut had actually treated it as watching an amusing game. He wanted to see how many could escape.

"The first method is throwing one's life away. The second method is luck." Linley and the others felt sad on behalf of those people locked into the Planar Prison.

"The third method?" Linley asked.

Beirut glanced at Olivier. "The third method is, when the population of the Planar Prison has reached too high of a level, then sometimes, the sealing magic formation will be temporarily disrupted, opening the dimensional gateway for a brief moment and allowing a few people out before sealing the dimensional gateway once again, then repairing the sealing magic formation, like what I did just now. But something like this happens only once every hundreds of millions of years."

Linley, Olivier, and Desri all felt relaxed.

Since the high level people would also occasionally open the dimensional gateway, it seemed that Olivier hadn't committed too grave a sin.

This was just a premature opening, right?

“Those people who fled need to thank you.” Beirut sneered as he looked at Olivier.

Olivier remained silent.

“If I had voluntarily opened the gateway, I would have surrounded that gateway. At least I would have known the details of every single person who came out, and none of them would have been able to escape.” Beirut glanced at Olivier. “Demigods and Gods aren’t an issue. I can find them with my divine sense. That isn’t a problem. But if there are some astonishingly powerful Highgods who lie in hiding, preventing me from finding them with my divine sense, then things will become problematic.”

Beirut didn’t worry about Demigods and Gods making trouble.

What he worried about was Highgods causing trouble!

“In such a short period of time, perhaps there didn’t happen to be any Highgods present at that dimensional gateway. It shouldn’t be that coincidental, right?” Linley said.

“Whatever. I can’t be bothered about it.” Beirut sneered coldly. “When O’Brien, Catherine, and the others return, I’ll see how they deal with this mess. The three of you, you better listen up. You are only Demigods. These days, in the continent, there are now quite a few people capable of killing you!”

Linley and the others could do nothing but listen.

“Go back.” Beirut’s body flickered, then disappeared.

Only Linley, Desri, and Olivier were left, standing there in mid-air.

“Olivier, that sword blow of yours really was powerful. You released so many experts in an instant with it.” Desri pursed his lips in a smile. He didn’t feel too much pressure. He was hidden away within a small mountain village. As long as he didn’t offend others, he probably would be fine.

Olivier's face was very gloomy. "Linley. Sorry."

Linley laughed bitterly.

Of the three of them, he was the worst off. Olivier had released so many Deities, some of whom most likely would want to enjoy worldly power. How many problems would his enormous Baruch Empire face?

Linley didn't even dare to think about it.

"All I can do is deal with it one step at a time." Linley said. "Gentlemen, I'm returning to Dragonblood Castle."

"I'll go as well." Olivier said. "I caused this problem. If anything happens in the Baruch Empire, I can't just pretend it has nothing to do with me."

"If the three of us are together, we'll pose a bit more of a threat to others." Desri said with a laugh.

Linley didn't decline. Currently, in the Yulan continent, the three of them were now just a small force. There were many people more powerful than them. Only if they stayed together as a group would they be able to have a bit of a footing. The three flew directly towards Dragonblood Castle.

…….

Dragonblood Castle. A group of people were there, Delia included, all of them worrying. Delia was blaming herself as well. "I've been fusing with this divine spark for over ten years, but I still haven't succeeded. Whenever something like this happens, it's always Linley who has to go deal with it by himself."

Delia wanted to help Linley as well!

"I hope Linley is fine." Delia prayed.

“Lord Linley is back.” Gates was the first to shout out. Delia’s eyes instantly lit up. Wharton, Taylor, and the others all went to welcome him. Linley, Desri, and Olivier landed in the castle.

“Linley, you succeeded?” Delia immediately called out, and the people all fell silent.

Linley nodded with a smile.

“Haha, I knew Father would definitely succeed.” Taylor shouted excitedly.

“But…” Linley’s voice rang out again.

“Father, you have more good news?” Taylor’s face was covered in smiles, but Linley said solemnly, “On this trip, although we killed Beaumont, shortly afterwards…many experts descended upon the Yulan continent. Amongst them are many Deities who could probably kill Beaumont with a single finger.”

Utter silence!

Taylor, Delia, and the others had a look of shock on their faces. No matter how ‘weak’ Beaumont was, he was still a Deity. Kill Beaumont with a single finger?

“For now, it’s best if no one goes out. Everyone stay here, within the castle.” Linley instructed.

“Yes.”

The people of Dragonblood Castle now also sensed that the current Yulan continent had just sank into a tempest of wind and rain. It would be very hard for them to just be able to protect themselves.

……..

The Arctic Icecap.

A white-haired old man dressed in a sky-blue robe was hovering at the peak of an iceberg. It was the Planar Overseer, Hodan.

“Haha, so many experts came at once?” Hodan’s face was covered in smiles.

“Saints and Deities, I am Hodan, the Planar Overseer. Everyone who wishes to depart for the Four Higher Planes or the Seven Divine Planes, quickly come to the Arctic Icecap!” Hodan’s voice rang out in the minds of every single Saint and Deity in the Yulan continent.

Many of those who had fled to the Yulan Plane from the Gebados Planar Prison wanted to head to the Higher Planes.

They had been trapped in that detestable prison for far, far too long.

……..

“Second brother, you really are going to leave?” Two golden-haired experts were hovering in mid-air. The slightly thinner one was a little bit frantic. “Second brother, although we were trapped in that Planar Prison for a hundred million years and you want to go to other planes, haven’t you heard? Ten thousand years ago, a major event occurred in our homeland. That Necropolis of the Gods holds many treasures within it, including divine artifacts, and even divine sparks! If we go to another plane, we’ll have no connections, and even if there are treasures there, we won’t have a chance to get them.”

The muscular, golden-haired expert shook his head. “Third brother, we are very lucky to have escaped Gebados. And you want to go to the Necropolis of the Gods? Its treasures aren’t so easily acquired. Enough, third brother. I am preparing to go to the Infernal Realm. Whenever you are done with your matters, if you want to look for me, come find me in the Infernal Realm.”

The gold haired expert said nothing else. He directly flew towards the north.

The skinnier golden haired man watched his second brother leave. He murmured, “Second brother, just wait and see. By the next time we meet, I will definitely be a Highgod.”

……..

One figure after another flew in the air above the North Sea. They included full Gods and Demigods, but most of course were Saints.

“How are there so many?” Amongst the crowd of experts, there was a golden-haired, middle-aged man with a solemn face and a long robe. From his appearance, he clearly came from a noble lineage. He had actually only trained for a hundred years, and had just reached the Saint-level not long ago.

“Our Yulan continent has this many experts?” This middle-aged man’s heart was quivering.

The number of experts he had personally seen had already been over two hundred. In the distance, even more figures could be seen. In addition, the auras emanating from those experts that flew past him in the blink of an eye made his heart shake.

“This speed…” The middle-aged man was stunned.

Many experts flashed past him, disappearing into the northern horizons, almost all of them more than ten times faster than him, if not more. Many of them were Deities. The middle-aged man was only able to hazily sense their forms pass by.

“Haha, it’s been a million years. I finally am going to the Higher Planes.”

“How many years has it been? Haha, I’m finally achieving my heart’s desire.”

…….

The skies were occasionally filled with excited voices and conversations.

“A million years?” This middle-aged man who had only trained for a hundred years and had just become a Saint swallowed. Staring at those figures that were over ten times faster than him, he thought, “I…I…I’d best stay here at the Yulan continent and continue training. The Four Higher Planes and the Divine Planes are simply too terrifying.”

This middle-aged man was so frightened, he immediately turned back and flew towards his homeland.

Not too long ago, this middle-aged man had just bid his family and friends farewell, and instructed his successors to work hard.

Chapter 3 – The World Changed

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 3, The World Changed

O'Brien Empire. War God Mountain.

Fain was still at the Prime Saint level, unable to break through to the Deity level. Fain didn't know the details of what had recently happened at the Great Botha Levee either, but when those many experts had charged out, Fain could sense their aura, even from as far away as War God Mountain.

"What a terrifying aura." Fain stared towards the south in shock. "The south. What just happened there?"

"Ugh." Fain secretly cursed.

The Yulan continent was becoming more and more chaotic. Even Fain was beginning to feel tired from trying to maintain this enormous Empire alone.

"Master, come back soon…"

The War God wouldn't be back from the Necropolis of the Gods for another three months.

A long while later.

"Whoosh!" A human figure flashed over from far away.

"Eldest apprentice brother." It was Castro. Castro landed in front of Fain, saying respectfully, "Eldest apprentice brother, I have news. Linley, Olivier, and a middle-aged man were fighting with a bald man at the Great Botha Levee."

The O'Brien Empire's intelligence gatherers recognized Linley and Olivier, but they didn't recognize Desri. This intelligence report had quickly made

its way out.

“Three against one?” Fain was shocked.

Fain knew that Linley had become a Deity. “No wonder there was such an astonishingly powerful aura not long from the south.”

“But according to the report, the Great Botha Levee was damaged, and then a large number of people appeared out of nowhere. These human figures appeared densely in the air, and then suddenly disappeared…and the Great Botha Levee reformed.” Castro said. He felt this was bizarre as well.

But that was indeed how the report had described it.

“A large number of people who had instantly disappeared?” Fain understood. The flying speeds of certain experts were so fast as to be invisible to ordinary people. “Judging from the sound of it, it seems as though many Saints appeared in the area of the Great Botha Levee!” Fain didn’t even dare to imagine that many of the people in that group were Deities.

After all, reaching the Deity level was simply too hard.

“The situation is getting more and more complicated.” Fain was irritated. “However, I won’t get involved in any of these affairs. I’ll wait for Master to return.”

In the air above the O’Brien Empire’s imperial capital, a dense mass of people suddenly appeared.

There were nearly a thousand people flying in mid air!

“Those…those are…” Many of the citizens of the imperial capital raised their heads, staring in disbelief. Based on what they knew, aside from wind-style magi, people capable of flight were generally all Saints. But now, such a huge number of people had appeared in mid-air.

“They can’t all be Saints. How can there be so many?”

Many of the citizens of the imperial capital shook their head in disbelief. They believed it had to be wind-style magi.

In mid-air, flying amongst the group of experts, the leader was a handsome young man, dressed in a dazzling long robe that shone with golden light. Behind him, there was a row of three experts, while behind those three, there was a large number of experts arranged into a specific order. Behind them, at the very back, there were hundreds of experts. Those were the weakest of the group; Prime Saints.

“This is the largest Empire of the current Yulan continent?” The handsome young man laughed wickedly. “And they worship someone called O’Brien?”

“Yes, Lord Adkins [A’de’jin’si]!” A silver-haired old man behind him said respectfully. “This O’Brien should have trained for just five thousand years, according to our estimates. His power should be that of a Demigod.” The tone of the silver-haired old man’s voice was filled with disdain for O’Brien.

“Then, it should be War God Mountain up ahead of us.” The handsome young man looked at the nearby War God Mountain, which had many people at the base of it staring up at them. The handsome youth shook his head. “A Demigod dares to style himself as ‘War God’. He really is quite boastful. I don’t like the look of this War God Mountain either.”

“O mighty Lord Adkins, permit your subordinate to destroy this unsightly little mountain.” Behind the handsome young man appeared a youngster with short silver hair. The silver haired youngster, seeing that his Lord didn’t instruct him otherwise, suddenly swept out with his arm…

Instantly, countless amounts of elemental essence began to gather, and above the massive War God Mountain, a rumbling sound could be heard.

“What’s that?” Many of the honorary and personal disciples of the War

God's College felt the awesome transformation of the surrounding elemental essences.

"Hrmph." The silver-haired youngster laughed coldly, then waved his hand. "Boom!"

In the air above War God Mountain, an astonishing, endless amount of wind blades appeared, formingly directly into the forbidden-level magic spell, 'Annihilating Tempest'. But, more precisely speaking…compared to the 'Annihilating Tempest' spell, every single wind blade's power was a hundred or a thousand times more powerful. Every single wind blade faintly flashed with golden light, and the countless wind blades chopped downwards.

"Flee, quickly!!!" A fierce shout rang out from within War God Mountain.

But these wind blades were simply too fast. Even Saints didn't have the chance to dodge beyond the wind blades before being scraped by these countless, all-encompassing wind blades.

"Rumble…" The enormous War God Mountain, its boulders, trees, vegetation, and the mountain itself…under the attack of those countless wind blades which flashed with gold light, was directly chopped into pieces of rubble. Even the likes of Saints such as Castro and Blumer…

They were only able to hold on for one or two seconds.

"Aaaaah!" A fierce, agonized scream. The Saints were chopped into mincemeat.

Only a few seconds had passed.

War God Mountain, chopped apart by those countless wind blades, had completely vanished. In the place where War God Mountain had once stood was an immeasurably, terrifyingly deep crater.

"Mm, not bad." The handsome young man's face had a satisfied smile on it.

The silver-haired youngster's eyes instantly had a look of joy flash past them. He respectfully bowed, then retreated back into line.

"Huh?" The handsome young man suddenly frowned. With his power, he could clearly see that within that deep crater, Fain had arduously survived the baptism of those wind blades. He had managed to protect his head, and the rest of his body was currently repairing at high speed.

At the same time, the terrified Fain was currently flying east beneath the ground at high speed.

A dissatisfied look flashed past the silver haired youth's eyes. With a flash, he started to fly downwards, but the handsome young man glanced at him coldly. "Return." The silver-haired youngster's body seemed to have suddenly been controlled, as it just hovered there in mid-air. He was no longer able to fly downwards.

"I, Adkins, am in a good mood today. Since that little fellow was able to survive, then I will grant him his life today." The handsome young man laughed.

"Yes, yes." The silver-haired youth flew back in terror.

"Little fellow, in the future, when you meet that O'Brien fellow, tell him that I, Adkins, have taken over his O'Brien Empire. Also let him know that he had best not call himself the 'War God' in the future. I feel quite uncomfortable when I hear that title." The handsome young man's voice directly echoed into the mind of Fain, who was still fleeing underground.

Deep underground, Fain's body had already regenerated to his waist.

"It's over. It's all over." Fain's mind was in a state of chaos.

When he thought back to that scene just then, Fain's heart trembled. Those countless wind blades had resulted in even a Prime Saint like him being only able to survive it by using his divine artifact to protect his head. The

only reason he was able to protect his head and just his head was because this was a wide-scale area attack.

If the opponent had paid even the slightest bit of extra attention to Fain, Fain would have died.

If Fain hadn't had a Pearl of Life, he also would have died.

"How terrifying." Fain couldn't breathe. "Adkins? And he wants me to carry a message to Master?"

Fain's suddenly had the feeling…

That the experts who had suddenly appeared were far more powerful than his master, the War God O'Brien.

"All I can do is go find Linley." Fain felt bitterness in his heart. The enormous War God Mountain and its honorary and personal disciples had all been destroyed. Aside from him, Fain, only two personal disciples of the War God Mountain were still alive.

Those two were currently within the Holy Alliance, and were responsible for conducting the war.

"Even Blumer died. If Olivier were to find out…alas…" Fain felt a massive headache.

In the air above War God Mountain.

"Tell me the details of Beirut. Since when did this 'Beirut' take over the Yulan Plane?" The handsome young man frowned as he spoke unhappily.

The silver-haired old man behind him immediately said respectfully, "Lord Adkins, in the past, your subordinate, myself, was in the Yulan continent. At that time, I learned of Beirut. This Beirut himself is a divine beast. When he reached adulthood, he naturally become a Demigod. However, Beirut himself naturally possessed terrifying power, and ordinary Demigods

weren't his match at all. Afterwards, I was imprisoned into the Gebados Planar Prison. As for what happened to Beirut afterwards, I'm not certain."

"Oh. Your era? It seems that this Beirut has only lived for a few hundred thousand years, then." The handsome young man was rather disdainful.

"Lord Adkins, this Beirut is a Highgod." The silver-haired old man said hurriedly. "Although I'm not clear on the details of what happened afterwards, in our Planar Prison, I heard some news. During the Apocalypse War of ten thousand years ago, he was even able to kill Highgods."

"Hmph."

The handsome young man sneered coldly. "Kill Highgods? The question is, what sort of Highgod did he kill! A Highgod who became one through refining a divine spark and one who became a Highgod through one's own insights; are they comparable? What's more…in the Gebados Planar Prison, there are quite a few Highgods as well. Why, then, does the Gebados Planar Prison have five Kings? Despite the passage of so many years, no one has ever been able to budge their positions. Those Highgods who only know the Laws but have no idea as to how the Laws should be used effectively to attack…any one of the five Kings could easily kill ten such Highgods by themselves!"

"Although I'm not one of the Kings, it wouldn't be too hard for me to kill several ordinary Highgods at once." The handsome young man was very confident.

The silver haired old man understood his Lord's intentions. Clearly, this Adkins wanted to annihilate Beirut.

"Lord Adkins. Don't be too careless. Supposedly, this Beirut is an Emissary of a Sovereign! He is the one who is in control of the Necropolis of the Gods!" The silver haired old man hurriedly persuaded.

"A Sovereign's Emissary?" Adkins' handsome eyebrows twitched.

“Right. It is very likely that he possesses a Sovereign artifact which the Sovereign gifted to him.” The silver-haired old man intentionally made up some lies. No one had any clue as to whether or not Beirut had a Sovereign artifact. However, the silver-haired old man didn’t wish his Lord, who had just escaped, to immediately fight an expert of the same level in a life-and-death battle.

It would be good if he won, but if he lost?

“Hmph. Fine. For now, I won’t go deal with that Beirut.” Adkins immediately turned and stared at the continent, as though thinking back to countless years in the past and his activities in the Yulan continent.

“A pity. In the past, the Qingya continent was thousands of times greater than this continent. Even after the Qingya continent shattered into five continents due to a great war, it was still far larger than this one. But now, the other four continents have all been destroyed, with the only one remaining behind this one, known as ‘Yulan’.”

Dragonblood Castle. Today was an especially bustling day.

Fain had tunneled underground all the way from the O’Brien Empire. Only after leaving its borders did he exit to the surface, and then he flew at high speed before finally arriving at Dragonblood Castle.

“Linley!” Fain flew straight into the main hall of Dragonblood Castle.

“Father. Lord Fain is here.” At the doorway, Taylor immediately shouted out, and instantly, a large group of people walked out from the main hall. In the very front was Linley, Delia, Desri, and Olivier. Behind them were many Saints.

“Fain, why are you in such bad shape? What happened?” Linley immediately asked.

Although Fain had already changed into a fresh set of clothes as he arrived, his face was still covered with dirt and dust, and his mind was currently in a

state of panic. It was quite impressive that he even remembered to change his clothes. How could he possibly remember to look after his appearance?

“It’s finished. War God Mountain. Finished. The O’Brien Empire…no longer belongs to Master either.” Fain shook his head and said bitterly.

Fain had been at the top of the mountain and had witnessed the enemy’s strength. He could tell that the enemy’s forces numbered nearly a thousand experts.

“Your War God Mountain was destroyed?” At this moment, a voice rang out from behind Linley. It was Dixie, along with several Grand Magus Saints.

“Why are you…” Fain was somewhat surprised.

Dixie, after having trained for dozens of years, had reached the Grand Magus Saint level as well. Dixie’s face was filled with a bitter smile. “We were slightly better off than you. However, the enemy destroyed the imperial palace of the Yulan Empire as well, with but a single blow. Two of my fellow apprentices who were stationed in the imperial palace immediately died. The rest of us immediately fled here. Our Yulan Empire is about to go to a new master as well!”

“Fain. Why are you here by yourself? Where’s my little brother?” Olivier suddenly asked.

Blumer?

Fain was stunned. He didn’t know what to say.

“Not good!” Linley’s face changed, and he stared towards the north. “I’m worried that the same thing will happen in the imperial capital of our Baruch Empire!”

“Big bro, then Cena…” Wharton immediately grew nervous as well.

“Wait here. I’ll make a trip.” Linley didn’t have time to waste; he immediately raised his speed to the limit and instantly disappeared into the boundless northern horizon.

Even the O’Brien Empire and the Yulan Empire had fallen to such a state. Linley couldn’t help but fear that his own Baruch Empire had suffered the same sort of attack.

Chapter 4 – Ferocious

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 4, Ferocious

“Rumble…” Black clouds covered the skies, and rolling thunder shuddered forth.

A blurry human figure was slashing through the air, piercing through the thick, dark clouds while flying at high speed to the north. It was the frantic Linley. Both the Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire had suffered attacks. Linley naturally was worrying about his Baruch Empire as well.

“I hope, I hope Cena is fine.” Linley murmured.

The Baruch Empire’s imperial palace was the place where Emperor Cena, the Empress, and the others lived. Of course, the imperial palace of an Empire was protected by Saints, and the Saint on guard there was the second of the five Barker brothers, Ankh.

Linley’s fast-moving body suddenly halted, his gaze focused on two indistinct figures on the northern horizon.

One of them was tall and massive, while the other was also much larger than most people.

“Not good.” Linley could instantly recognize them. These two people were the transformed Supreme Warriors, Ankh and Cena. Cena was now a peak warrior of the ninth rank. After transforming, he was a Saint. As for Ankh, he had long ago reached the Saint level.

“Lord Linley!” Ankh and Cena, fleeing in a sad state, immediately called out upon seeing Linley.

Linley could tell that many of the scales of the transformed Dragonblood Warrior Cena had been ripped apart, with blood leaking everywhere. As for

the transformed Undying Warrior Saint, Ankh, although he hadn't been injured too badly, he clearly was in a sad state as well.

"Uncle!" As soon as Cena saw Linley, his tears immediately began to flow.

Linley felt extremely nervous.

Cena was an extremely stable person. For him to cry, the situation must be very severe.

The badly injured Cena calmed down slightly, now that he saw Linley. He returned to his human form. His trousers were ripped and torn, and his body was covered in blood and wounds. Linley immediately reached out and pressed his hand against Cena's shoulder, allowing the Pearl of Life's energy to fill Cena's body.

Cena's wounds quickly recovered.

"All dead. They are all dead." Cena sobbed so hard his entire body shook. "Uncle, everyone in the entire imperial palace, aside from me and Uncle Ankh, they are all dead. My wives, my son, all dead!!!"

"All dead?" Linley couldn't help but feel a surge of fury.

He had expected that the situation was grim, but it was even worse than he had feared.

"Those Deities, why did they massacre commoners? Can it be that they can only show off their power by massacring commoners? Cena's son was named Kass [Ka'sa]…" Linley still remembered the scene from ten days ago.

It was the Yulan Festival. Cena had brought his wife and child to Dragonblood Castle to celebrate the holiday together.

Kass had only been seven years old at the time. Linley had been planning to wait when Kass grew a bit older, then take him and Arnold to activate the

Dragonblood Warrior lineage in their veins. But…who would have imagined that Kass's future would have ended before it even began.

"Bastards!!!" Linley couldn't help but curse quietly.

Cena ground his teeth as well. "I really want to kill those people."

Dragonblood Warriors had very low fertility rates.

For example, Linley only had Taylor and Sasha, the two twins. Wharton only had one child, Cena. Cena himself only had a single son. Although as the Emperor of an Empire, he had quite a few women, he only had this single son."

"Uncle, you absolutely must help me get revenge. You must!" Cena's face was covered in tears.

Linley nodded heavily.

"Ankh, what was the situation? Tell me in detail." Linley looked solemnly at Ankh.

Ankh nodded and spoke. "Lord Linley. Not long ago, I was still in the imperial palace. But suddenly, I sensed a terrifying aura coming from above the imperial palace, so I immediately rushed out of the room. When I looked upwards, I saw…roughly a hundred experts flying in mid-air."

"Nearly a hundred?" Linley's heart shook slightly.

Originally, when Olivier had chopped open the Great Botha Levee with his sword, he had released thousands of experts, many of whom were far more powerful than Linley. Of course, most of the experts were Saints, but there were Demigods and Gods amongst their number, and even Highgods.

Hearing that nearly a hundred people had appeared in the air above the imperial palace of the imperial capital of the Baruch Empire, he knew that the leader of this gathering must at least be a Demigod, and perhaps even a

full God!

“At that time, before I even had a chance to say a word, the leader, smiling, turned his gaze towards me. He immediately spoke to me using his divine sense. He said…‘Little fellow, go back and tell that Linley that from today onwards, this Baruch Empire now belongs to me, Ojwin [Ao’jia’wen].’” Ankh came to a pause.

Linley’s face sank.

“Ojwin?” Linley had never heard of this name before, but Linley could tell that this person clearly knew a great deal about him.

“And then?” Linley asked.

Ankh’s eyes held a hint of terror in them as he spoke. “And then, Ojwin just smiled. His entire body radiated out brilliant white light. It was like the holy light of the Radiant Church. The places of the imperial palace which were touched by that holy light were instantly vaporized. Many palace maids, attendants, and guards were turned directly to ash by that light. I immediately transformed, while Cena transformed as well. Under the power of that light, my defense managed to hold, but Cena was badly injured.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel his heart weighing heavily.

“The light which his body emanated was enough to badly injure Cena, who was at the Saint-level when Dragonformed?” Linley was very certain that ordinary Demigods definitely didn’t have this sort of power.

For a Demigod to kill a Saint, he would generally first have to utilize his Godrealm, or rely on his other abilities. That he was able to radiate light that covered the entire palace, yet still had such great power…most likely, the opponent was a full God. Even if he was a Demigod, he was definitely a peak Demigod.”

“Let’s go back for now.” Linley frowned.

Cena and Ankh nodded slightly, flying behind Linley as they returned towards Dragonblood Castle.

Dragonblood Castle.

Linley, Cena, and Ankh landed in the gate to Dragonblood Castle. Right now, there were quite a few people in the main hall. Everyone was chatting in soft voices. Dixie, Fain, and the others all felt extremely miserable…but the person with the most terrible look on his face was Olivier.

Olivier had learned from Fain that his little brother, Blumer, had died!

His little brother!

Their parents had died early on. He, Olivier, had personally brought up his little brother. His one and only family member! When Blumer entered the War God's College, Olivier finally stopped worrying and began wholeheartedly devoting himself to his training. Who would have imagined…that such terrible news would come today!

Blumer was to Olivier what Wharton was to Linley!

His little brother had died. How could he not be furious?

"Linley, what's the situation?" Delia immediately went to welcome them. Upon seeing Linley, Cena, and Ankh, everyone all went to welcome them as well.

Linley's face was terrible to behold. He just shook his head.

"Cena, what happened?" Wharton's face was filled with worry, and he immediately shouted the question.

"Bang!"

Cena immediately knelt down in front of Wharton, sobbing, "Father, everyone in the imperial palace, aside from myself and Uncle Ankh, are all

dead. My wives died. Even little Kass died! They all died!" Cena deeply loved his son.

His only son!

"Little Kass died as well?" Wharton seemed to have been struck by a bolt of lightning. His face turned ashen. Nina, by Wharton's side, also couldn't believe it.

The youngest generation of the Baruch clan was just composed of Arnold and Kass, those two kids. Both Linley and Wharton deeply adored these little treasures. Arnold usually was with his father, Taylor, in Dragonblood Castle. As for Kass, he normally lived with his father and mother in the imperial palace.

"Big bro, we must get revenge." Wharton looked at Linley.

But Linley was silent.

"Father, Uncle." Cena was slowly beginning to recover from the grips of his rage and hate, returning to his normal clarity of thought. "The enemy who suddenly appeared…there were nearly a hundred of them flying in the air. The leader, 'Ojwin', is astonishingly powerful. We don't have a good chance right now. For now, we must endure."

Endure!

Linley couldn't help but glance at Cena. After getting a vague sense of Ojwin's power, Linley had no longer dared to easily engage in a battle against him.

After all…

Who knew how powerful these experts who fled from the Gebados Planar Prison were? It wouldn't be so bad if they were Demigods, but if they were Gods…given his current level of power, if he went to fight, it would most likely be nothing more than certain death. He had already lost a child. But

the living still had other family members!

Looking at Delia by his side, Linley then looked towards his own son, Taylor, as well as the distant family of Hillman, the children of the five Barker brothers, and more…in the entire main hall, there were many people present. All of them were Linley's family and friends.

"I can't take any risks." Linley said to himself.

Fain, seated nearby, rose to his feet as well. He said seriously, "Too many experts suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Nearly a thousand people attacked our War God Mountain. But only one of them truly attacked; with a flip of his hand, he turned War God Mountain into rubble and ash! The difference in power between us is simply too great! Linley, you have to be cautious."

"Linley." Olivier looked at Linley as well. "Endure!"

Linley nodded slightly.

Right now, Olivier was enduring as well. He wanted to get revenge for Blumer. Perhaps to the others, Blumer wasn't much, but to Olivier, Blumer was his only family in the world. But from Fain's description, Olivier understood…

He wasn't able to get revenge. At least, he currently wasn't.

"In the coming days, everyone needs to stay at Dragonblood Castle. You are not to go out of it." Linley looked at everyone as he gave his orders. "In another few months, when the War God and the others return, we will discuss things in detail."

They had no other options. They had to endure.

Thousands of experts had fled from the Gebados Planar Prison, and only a small part of the thousands of experts had headed to the Arctic Icecap and left the Yulan Plane for the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine

Planes. Many of the others had taken up residence in the Yulan continent.

The homeland of virtually all of the experts in the Gebados Planar Prison was the Yulan Plane.

Of course, long ago in the distant past of the Yulan Plane, there were Elemental lifeforms, Beastmen, etc…after all, only in relatively 'recent' days did the Yulan Plane become as it currently was. Now that these many experts had finally returned to their homeland, all of them had their own choies to make.

The weaker parties would perhaps take over a small area and become a local lord.

The powerful ones would directly annihilate the pre-existing imperial clans, and with their power backing them up, directly take over an Empire.

To the experts who had fled from the Gebados Planar Prison, the original 'experts' of the Yulan continent were nothing. They couldn't fight back at all. The difference in power was simply too vast. Even the most powerful people on their side, Linley and Olivier, were forced to choose to endure, much less ordinary Saints.

The Eighteen Northern Duchies.

Dozens of experts were flying in the air above the Eighteen Northern Duchies. The leader of the group was a pair of twin brothers. Although they were twins, there were some slight differences; one of them had slightly darker skin, while the other had slightly lighter skin.

"Big brother, the Yulan Empire and the Baruch Empire have already been taken. Even someone as mighty as Lord Adkins was only able to take over that Empire known as O'Brien. It seems we two brothers will have to find another place to roost. This 'Eighteen Northern Duchies' area is a bit far off, but at least it'll be a place for us two brothers to settle down." The youngster with the whiter skin said.

His big brother nodded. “Let’s learn from Lord Adkins. First we’ll destroy that Frost Goddess Shrine. Afterwards, won’t all these Duchies obey us meekly?”

“If they don’t, we’ll kill them.” The younger brother said.

The two brothers exchanged glances, then burst out in laughter.

“The Eighteen Northern Duchies is our territory!” A violet-gold shadow suddenly flew over, transforming into a Violet-Gold Rat King. “And you even want to destroy the Frost Goddess Shrine to frighten others?” This Violet-Gold Rat King stared at the group of experts with its beady little black eyes.

The two brothers were startled. The group of experts behind them all began to laugh.

A Saint-level magical beast had come to block them?

“How amusing. Die.” The older brother said with a disdainful laugh. With a sweep of his arm…

“BOOM!”

In the air above those dozens of experts, a seemingly illusory giant black palm suddenly appeared. This enormous black palm covered the entire area, and those dozens of experts weren’t able to move at all. Those dozens of experts raised their head, staring in terror at that enormous black palm.

But that enormous black palm continued to descend upon them with no mercy.

“BOOM!” It was like striking tofu.

The dozens of experts, including those two brothers that had reached the Demigod level, were smashed into mincemeat without being able to resist at all.

“Saints and Deities who have chosen to remain in the Yulan continent, all of you, listen closely. If anyone causes trouble or commits slaughter in the area of the Eighteen Northern Duchies or the Forest of Darkness, I will definitely shatter their souls and disperse their spirits! Hmph. All of you had better know what’s best for you.”

An icy divine sense message instantly spread across the entire Yulan continent and echoed in the minds of all the Saints and Deities.

Many Deities who had been in the grips of wild exultation suddenly lost their smiles.

The gazes of virtually all the experts of the Yulan continent turned towards the direction of the Eighteen Northern Duchies.

Chapter 5 – Sound

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 5, Sound

O'Brien Empire. The imperial palace.

That handsome young man, Adkins, who had been seated in a resting room, chatting and laughing, suddenly stopped smiling. He stared coldly towards the north, letting out an icy snort. "This Beirut really does have the power of a Highgod. However, he's a bit too ferocious."

"Lord Adkins." That silver-haired old man behind him said respectfully, "This Beirut acts ferociously, but he has the ability to back it up."

"He just relies on the Sovereign behind him to back him up." Adkins' slender eyebrows narrowed. His eyes were as sharp as dagger.

But Adkins knew very well that although Highgods had completely mastered their Law, in front of a Sovereign…a single thought from the Sovereign could kill the Highgod. Sovereigns were far above them, inviolable presences that could only be gazed upon in awe.

"If…if I could…" Adkins' had a desire in his heart.

In the Gebados Planar Prison, he too had heard of what the Necropolis of the Gods contained. Even someone as him, who had the exalted position of Highgod, was filled with desire towards the treasure hidden on the eighteenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. But Adkins knew…

The Necropolis of the Gods was a game designed by a Sovereign.

If he wanted to enter the Necropolis of the Gods, he had to obey the rules which the Sovereign had set. To disobey the rules…was to disobey the will of the Sovereign. To disobey the will of the Sovereign…the results of that didn't need to be questioned.

“Barnas [Ba’na’si], have you finished the investigation?” Adkins asked coldly.

The silver-haired old man behind him said respectfully, “Lord Adkins, your subordinate has already completed the investigation. Those Deities O’Brien and Catherine went to the Necropolis of the Gods nine years ago. In two more months, the ten years will be up, and they should return.”

“Good.”

Adkins revealed a rare hint of a smile on his face. “I will endure for two more months.”

“No one is permitted to compete against me!” Adkins murmured to himself, then he grabbed that cup of wine and gulped it all down!

Dragonblood Castle.

Linley had already informed Desri and Olivier of the existence of the pocket dimension training room. At this point in time, Linley hoped that Desri and Olivier would also be able to rapidly improve. Olivier, Desri, and Linley’s original body were all there training.

As for Delia, she was in her normal room.

After all, it didn’t make much of a difference if she was fusing a divine spark in the pocket dimension or in an ordinary place. Linley’s original body was in the pocket dimension, whole-heartedly focusing on training the ‘Profound Truths of the Earth’. As for the divine wind clone, it was in Dragonblood Castle, quietly meditating on the Profound Truths of Velocity as well as Bloodviolet.

In the western gardens of Dragonblood Castle, there were a few dwarf trees. It was a very quiet place.

Dressed in a light green robe, Linley was completely absorbed in

meditating on the Profound Truths of the Wind and Bloodviolet.

“According to what Muba said, divine artifacts are divided into three levels. The high level divine artifacts can be described as Highgod artifacts. Above those are Sovereign artifacts. My Bloodviolet…should be a Highgod artifact.” Linley was using his spiritual energy to nurture Bloodviolet. He was able to sense Bloodviolet’s spirit.

By now, Linley had seen many divine artifacts.

But none of those divine artifacts could come close to being comparable with Bloodviolet.

“A Deity’s power is partially based on his understanding of the Laws and their applications. The other part is how well he utilizes his divine artifacts. Although I am a Demigod, if I am able to bring forth all of the power of Bloodviolet…” Linley thought back to the attack he had developed, the ‘Hymn of the Wind’.

The Hymn of the Wind combined a spiritual attack, Bloodviolet’s special properties, and the Profound Truths of Wind.

There was no need to spend much time describing its power; for him to be able to kill Beaumont with a single sword was something which Linley felt very satisfied about.

“This Hymn of the Wind, it seems…” Linley was frowning.

In Linley’s mind, he was constantly visualizing the usage of the Hymn of the Wind. His spiritual energy and Bloodviolet, mated together along with the Profound Truths of Velocity…

Although Linley was capable of utilizing the Hymn of the Wind, in truth, he didn’t fully understand the principles behind it.

“Originally, Delia had said that Bloodviolet’s sound alone was causing her soul to shake and her entire body to feel weak. Even that Beaumont…when

I utilized ‘Hymn of the Wind’, Beaumont was unable to control his spiritual energy to block it.

Linley had discovered…the power of sound!

“Sound!”

Linley remembered that Snowy Panda-Cat he had met in the Necropolis of the Gods. That Snowy Panda-Cat had been wielding a flute while threatening him.

“Sound can influence, mystify, and attack the soul!” Linley came to this conclusion. “As for my Elemental Laws of the Wind, they seem to contain the Profound Mysteries of Sound.”

Linley didn’t actually understand the Profound Mysteries of Sound.

When he had originally developed the ‘Hymn of the Wind’, it was because Bloodviolet contained this sort of aspect to it already. Linley just utilized the Profound Truths of the Wind to slightly activate the sword song of Bloodviolet, resulting in that special effect. But now, Linley wanted to focus on researching this Profound Mysteries of Sound.

“Rumble…”

Linley’s divine power filled Bloodviolet, and Bloodviolet began to tremble, emitting that humming sword song.

“Where’s Lord Linley? Inside?” Gates walked into the west garden of Dragonblood Castle.

The serving maid said with a laugh, “Lord Gates, Lord Linley said that he needs to focus on his training. No matter who it is, without his permission, nobody is to be permitted to enter the west garden. Right now, the only person in the west garden is Lord Linley himself.”

“No person is permitted to enter?” Gates was somewhat surprised.

So what if someone went in while he was training?

However, how could they know that Linley was currently researching the Profound Mysteries of Sound, of the Elemental Laws of the Wind? The sound attacks he created wouldn't harm himself, of course, but if someone else entered, it would easily harm them. As for Linley, he wasn't slowly researching this Profound Mysteries of Sound in a prescribed order.

He was only starting off from what he knew of Bloodviolet as his base to heighten the power of Bloodviolet.

If one wanted to advance in a short period of time, one had to focus on the weapon.

"Everyone is meditating and training. The atmosphere of Dragonblood Castle has changed." Gates turned and left. During this period of time, Linley, Desri, and Olivier, the three Deities, were all training nonstop, hoping to raise their power yet again.

As for Barker, Zassler, Delia, and Haeru, they were all fusing their divine sparks.

But who would have imagined that Linley continued training in the west garden without stopping. Over the course of an entire month, Linley didn't leave the west garden a single time. As for the other people of Dragonblood Castle, they didn't dare to disobey Linley's orders. They had to wait.

Wharton, Gates, Ankh, Boone, and the others were walking side by side as they left the training grounds.

"That simple, single sword attack of Olivier's released a group of experts. This really is a huge headache." Gates said.

Wharton nodded as well.

Olivier's single sword blow had utterly turned the Yulan continent on its

head.

“When the War God and the High Priest come back, they will most likely be stupefied.” Gates smirked.

“You know, that’s so true. Both their Empires are gone.” Hazer laughed as well.

“When they are back, they’ll need to have a conference with my big brother on how to deal with this disaster.” Wharton said with some anticipation.

The more people they had, the easier to accomplish some things. Although the War God and the High Priest were also Demigods, they had reached that level a long time ago. In addition, Dylin was himself a divine beast. If their group of Demigods joined forces, they could still manage to find some stable footing.

“All we can do is wait. In another month, the War God and the others will be back.” Wharton said.

“I hope the War God and the others were able to make breakthroughs in the Necropolis of the Gods.” Ankh said seriously. “If they didn’t break through, even if the War God and the others return, it’ll be hard to say if they will be able to defeat that Ojwin.”

The group suddenly paused in their chatting.

In front of them was a middle-aged man, dressed in simple long robes. A hint of a smile was on this man’s face.

“Who are you?” Ankh shouted the question.

“Muba?” Wharton frowned. Last time, when Muba had come, Wharton had seen him.

“He’s that Deity, Muba?” Ankh and the others were a bit surprised as well. That day, when Muba had arrived, Ankh and the others hadn’t seen them.

Afterwards, when they had heard of Muba, all they knew was that Muba was a Deity-level expert."

"Wharton." Muba's face still had that faint smile on it. "I'm here to see Linley."

"My big bro is currently training. Only…" Wharton shook his head. "My big bro gave the order that without his permission, nobody is permitted to go in and disturb him. You came at an unfortunate time."

"Oh?" Muba immediately spread out his divine sense.

Instantly, he located Linley in the west garden. When their divine senses touched, Linley discovered Muba as well. "Oh, it's Muba. If there's something to discuss, come over."

Muba's body flashed towards the west garden.

"This Muba." Wharton was rather angry. "My big bro forbade anyone from going in to disturb him, but he's still going in." Wharton immediately ran towards the west garden. Wharton didn't know that Linley had spoken to Muba through their divine senses. Soon, Wharton arrived at the gate to the west garden.

The maid stationed outside the west garden's gate was currently running away from it.

"Why are you running around?" Wharton barked at them.

"Lord Wharton." The maid curtsied. "Lord Linley ordered me to go prepare some fine wine and delicacies for his guest."

Within the west garden of Dragonblood Castle.

"Mr. Linley, I am in admiration. In such a short period of time, the three of you, joining forces, actually managed to kill Beaumont." Muba sighed in praise. "That Beaumont was an extremely powerful Demigod. He was very

strong in both spiritual and regular attacks."

Linley laughed as he glanced at Muba.

"Mr. Muba, I'm not sure why you have made this trip. Please tell me." Linley said directly.

Muba smiled. "I've come to help you, Linley."

"Help me?" Linley couldn't help but look at Muba in surprise.

In truth, he and Muba didn't have a deep relationship between them. Last time, Muba had told him some information about divine artifacts. As a result, Linley focused on attuning with Bloodviolet and meditating on combining Bloodviolet, his spiritual energy, and the Profound Truths of the Wind, eventually developing the Hymn of the Wind.

One could say that without Muba's information, he wouldn't have been able to develop the Hymn of the Wind.

"My situation right now really is quite terrible. Can it be that you, Mr. Muba, have come to help my side fight my enemies?" Linley asked.

"I don't have that sort of ability." Muba laughed. "I've come to give you some information on those Deities that have appeared in that Yulan continent, Linley."

Linley couldn't help but feel wild joy in his heart.

Linley still had no idea how powerful that Ojwin who destroyed his imperial palace was, which was why he hadn't dared to take any action.

"Then let me thank you in advance, Mr. Muba. Mr. Muba, please tell me the detailed information. I will be endlessly grateful." Linley said seriously.

Muba laughed. "Mr. Linley, no need to be so grateful. I'm doing this to make friends with you, Mr. Linley. As long as you consider myself your

friend, Linley, then everything I've done will have been worth it." Muba's smile was very sincere.

Linley didn't spend any time thinking about what Muba's aims were. At least he was willing to help out.

"Mr. Muba, you are my friend, of course. Muba, please speak, especially regarding that Ojwin." Linley said.

Muba nodded as he spoke. "Before that, Linley, let me first tell you that there is a city within the Gebados Planar Prison known as 'Bluefire City'. Within Bluefire City, Ojwin is a rather famous expert, and his power in Bluefire City is fairly high as well. He has reached the God level." Hearing Muba's words, Linley couldn't help but grit his teeth.

A full God!

For now at least, he couldn't act against Ojwin.

Chapter 6 – A Legend

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 6, A Legend

“Muba, please continue.” Linley was listening carefully.

Muba said with a smile, “The master of Bluefire City is Lord ‘Bluefire’, one of the five great Kings! Lord Bluefire is a very mysterious person. His power is unquestionably massive, and he virtually never shows himself. In fact, no one can even be certain if he is still within Bluefire City. In the city of Bluefire, the person whose status and power is only lower than Lord Bluefire is Lord Adkins, a mighty Highgod!”

“Highgod?”

Linley’s heart trembled. He couldn’t help but sigh secretly. “Olivier, you wanted to get revenge for your little brother, but it’s just become very difficult.”

The experts who destroyed War God mountain were led by this Adkins.

Olivier, kill Adkins? How?

“Linley, there are differences amongst Highgods as well. There is a major difference in power between someone who became a Highgod through fusing a divine spark and who knows the laws but not how to use them, and someone who became a Highgod through personal efforts. In the Gebados Planar Prison, the weakest of any particular level will be destroyed.”

Muba said, “Lord Adkins has been famous for ten billion years. Even in the Gebados Planar Prison, he is an exceedingly powerful Highgod.”

“I understand. We do not dare to go irritate that Adkins.” Linley said self-mockingly.

Knowing how powerful the enemy was, Linley now knew how he should act towards them.

“What else? The Yulan continent can’t possibly just have those few experts.” Linley asked.

Muba nodded. “The Rohault Empire, after having suffered that calamity, lost a hundred million people, and most of the remaining citizens left. There’s virtually no one left in the Empire now. Naturally, it doesn’t count. At present, the Rhine, Yulan, and Baruch Empires have all been taken over by full Gods, while the O’Brien Empire is occupied by Lord Adkins.”

“All Gods?” Linley felt sourness in his heart.

Olivier really had released quite a few experts with that sword blow of his. There were even multiple Gods amongst them.

“I know the God who is in control of the Yulan Empire. His name is Oerph [Ao’er’pu]. As for the person who is in control of the Rhine Empire, I’m not too sure. As for the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance, I’m not too familiar with that area, so I’m not sure either.” Muba said.

Linley nodded slightly.

Regardless of what was going on in the two alliances west of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, all of the four Empires east of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts had been taken over.

“Muba.” Linley suddenly had a surprising thought.

“What?” Muba, seeing the look on Linley’s face, couldn’t help but feel puzzled.

Linley hurriedly asked, “You said that the master of Bluefire City is ‘Bluefire’, one of the five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison. When the interdimensional gate opened this time, do you think this Lord Bluefire also managed to flee into the Yulan Plane?”

Muba was stunned.

“This…I don’t know.” Muba sighed in praise. “If Lord Bluefire arrived in the Yulan Plane, then that would be absolutely incredible. Most likely even the likes of Lord Beirut, an Emissary of a Sovereign, wouldn’t necessarily be able to overcome Lord Bluefire.”

Knowing the history of the Gebados Planar Prison, Linley secretly nodded as well.

“The Five Kings…”

Linley felt a hint of amazement in his heart.

King!

This Gebados Planar Prison was formed when the universe itself was formed. The number of experts who had been imprisoned within was a staggeringly high figure. For someone to be able to reach the peak of power amongst those countless experts and become one of the five Kings of the entire Planar Prison…someone like this would definitely be one of the most powerful types of Highgods.

“But Lord Bluefire rarely even shows himself within Bluefire City. It’s possible that he wasn’t even in Bluefire City at the time.” Muba said.

“Muba, I’m very confused about something.” Linley frowned.

“Please, speak.” Muba’s attitude was very friendly.

Linley nodded slightly. “I’ve always been wondering. I can understand why Demigods and Gods are remaining in the Yulan continent. After all, they want to acquire divine sparks in the Necropolis of the Gods. But…that Lord Adkins is a Highgod. Why is he remaining in the Yulan Plane as well? He’s already a Highgod. Could it be that the Necropolis of the Gods actually has a Sovereign spark?” Linley said jokingly.

Linley knew very well that the number of Sovereigns was fixed. Earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, darkness. The seven elemental styles, each of which only had seven Sovereigns. In the countless planes, the number of Deities who had arisen over the course of endless years was truly an astronomical figure.

Just look at the Gebados Planar Prison. And that was just one plane.

Countless planes added together?

Especially the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes…the number was astonishing, far more than one could even imagine.

But Sovereigns?

The earth-style only had seven of them! Only when one of them fell would another Highgod be able to obtain a Sovereign spark and take on the position of Sovereign. But how could someone as powerful as a Sovereign die easily? What's more, the Necropolis of the Gods was nothing more than a game for Sovereigns.

Would a Sovereign place a Sovereign's spark inside?

Even if a Sovereign wanted to, the Sovereign would have to acquire a Sovereign's spark first.

"No."

Muba shook his head. "Linley, you don't know this, but the Necropolis of the Gods has Sovereign artifacts within it."

"Sovereign artifacts?" Linley was somewhat surprised. "Even a Sovereign has to wholeheartedly nurture a divine artifact for countless years before being able to produce a Sovereign artifact. Can it be that the Sovereign who created the Necropolis of the Gods is willing to place a Sovereign artifact within?"

“Not just Sovereign artifacts…”

Muba said mysteriously. “According to legend, on the eighteen floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, there are Sovereign sparks!”

“What a joke. What an utter joke.” Linley laughed loudly.

“Not necessarily.” Muba said solemnly. “Linley, you don’t know this, but most of the people imprisoned into the Gebados Planar Prison are experts from throughout the history of the Yulan Plane. But ten thousand years ago and five thousand years ago, most of those newly imprisoned were outsider experts. What caused so many experts from other planes to come here?”

“The Necropolis of the Gods?” Linley asked.

Muba laughed and said, “More importantly, it wasn’t just ordinary Deities who descended to the Yulan Plane. There were Highgods as well! Extremely powerful Highgods, such as that legendary figure of the Infernal Realm, the Bloodviolet Fiend. And that time, the Bloodviolet Fiend wasn’t the only Highgod to descend.”

Linley’s heart shuddered.

He thought of his own Bloodviolet sword.

“Tell me, why did those extremely powerful Highgods come? Just for ordinary divine artifacts and divine sparks? Think about it. It’s impossible.” Muba laughed. “That’s why I’m sure that the Necropolis of the Gods definitely has Sovereign artifacts within it. As to whether or not it has Sovereign sparks, I’m not sure. However, in the Gebados Planar Prison, there are constantly rumors of Sovereign sparks being in the Necropolis of the Gods.”

Linley sighed unceasingly.

No wonder that Adkins was remaining in the Yulan Plane.

Linley and Muba chatted for a long time, then after they had lunch together, Muba left. As for Linley, he naturally once more returned to his training. Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, yet another month had passed. It was only a few days before the War God and the High Priest were going to return.

The Baruch Empire. Within a magnificent manor.

An elegant, white-robed, middle-aged man was seated within a pavilion, drinking wine while enjoying the scenery of the garden. It was the God who had destroyed the imperial palace; Ojwin.

“Father.” A golden-haired youth walked over.

“Hrm?” Ojwin glanced at the youth. In the past, when he had been imprisoned into the Gebados Planar Prison, he was just a Prime Saint, while his son had just reached the Saint level.

During the countless years of imprisonment within the Gebados Planar Prison, Ojwin had worked hard to protect his son. After bitter years of training, he had reached the God level, while his son had become a Demigod.

Finally, the two of them, father and son, had escaped from the Gebados Planar Prison.

“Father, although the Baruch Empire’s various provinces were easily pacified, the citizens of the Empire all have faith towards that ‘Linley’. It is rather vexing.” The gold-haired youth frowned. “Changing one’s faith isn’t an easy thing.”

Kill those citizens? That was an idiot’s action.

Ojwin’s homeland was the Yulan Plane as well. He wouldn’t act that rashly.

“That, is easy.” Ojwin had a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips.

“Oh?” The gold-haired man looked curiously at his father.

“They worship Linley, right? I’ve heard that Dragonblood Castle is the most sacred location in the entire Baruch Empire. Then…tomorrow, let’s head out and directly raze the Dragonblood Castle to the ground, while at the same time we can kill that Linley. When the time comes, we’ll hang Linley’s corpse up on the city walls of the imperial capital.”

“At the same time, we’ll make up a slightly altered story.”

Ojwin looked at his son. “This sort of affair is easily managed. All we need to do is make him look bad, then kill him, while afterwards creating some miracles of our own. Soon, the commoners will change their faith.”

Within Dragonblood Castle.

“Big sis, in the next few days, Lord Dylin and the others will return. By then, the situation will be much better.” Rebecca and her sister, Leena, were walking in the rear garden, their heads raised. “I really hope the War God and the High Priest could arrive right now.”

Leena laughed. “Don’t be in such a rush. It’ll be soon.”

“Aren’t you in a rush as well?” Rebecca suddenly stared wide. “Hey, someone’s flying over! Could it be the War God and the others? Hey…why are they coming from the north?”

Leena raised her head as well.

The northern horizon had multiple people flying towards their direction. But soon, they could tell that it wasn’t multiple people; it was a large group of people! There were at least fifty or sixty experts present.

“Not good.” Leena’s face instantly changed.

There was only a single side from the north that could send out so many

human experts!

“Quick, quickly inform Lord Linley.”

Leena and Rebecca immediately ran towards the location where Linley was training.

Before they arrived however, Linley himself noticed the many human figures in the air. His face couldn’t help but change, and he immediately sent out his divine sense. “Wharton, quick. Take Arnold and the others and all enter the pocket dimension immediately.”

Although the ‘door’ to the pocket dimension would attack others, as long as Saints guarded others with their protective aura, they would still be able to block the attacks for a short time. In addition…Linley’s main body was in the pocket dimension as well.

“Understood, bro.” Wharton, seeing the northern skies filled with people, also knew that the situation was dire.

“Quick, Nina, don’t worry about anything else.” Wharton picked up Arnold and immediately rushed towards the pocket dimension.

They didn’t have any time to flee. They had to immediately flee into the pocket dimension. Even if the others destroyed Dragonblood Castle the way War God Mountain and the imperial palace had been destroyed, at least Wharton, Delia, and the others wouldn’t be harmed.

Linley’s original body immediately called out to Olivier and Desri, awakening them. “Quick, Ojwin’s men have come!” Olivier and Desri were greatly shocked. They immediately rushed out of the pocket dimension, hurrying to the ground level.

“Linley, come out!!!”

A thick, deep voice shook the entire Dragonblood Castle.

“He really has come for me.” Linley raised his head, staring at the large group of people who had come to a halt in mid-air. There were nearly sixty of them, with the leader being a middle-aged man dressed in an utterly immaculate long blue robe. His golden hair shone under the light, appearing quite dazzling.

Linley, Olivier, and Desri glanced at each other, then flew into mid-air together.

“Haha, you really have courage.” The leading middle-aged man laughed, and then he swept his gaze towards Linley’s group. “Which of you is Linley?”

“Ojwin, you don’t know me, but you’ve come looking for me?” Linley said with a calm laugh as he looked at him.

“Oh, you know my name. Not bad.” The middle-aged man looked at him and nodded slightly. “I’ve heard quite a bit about you. You are indeed quite a talent. I didn’t want to kill you, but your citizens all worship you. The best way to change a population’s faith is to destroy the god they worship.”

“You should know what my purpose in coming is by now, right?” Ojwin smiled as he looked at Linley, speaking with great courtesy.

Before killing someone, he was grinning merrily and saying to that person, ‘I’m going to kill you!’

This really was quite a detestable habit.

“Of course, the other two, I don’t have to kill. I just have to kill you, Linley.” Ojwin looked at Desri and Olivier. “The two of you can leave.”

Chapter 7 – Willingly Surrender

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 7, Willingly Surrender

This Ojwin really was diabolical. With but a simple phrase, he caused a hint of a crack to appear within Linley's three-man alliance. Ojwin grinned merrily as he looked at Olivier and Desri, waiting for their response.

Staring at the distant Ojwin, Linley was actually worrying more about his family.

"This Ojwin is a full God. His power is far beyond that of myself, Desri, and Olivier. In addition, Ojwin has a group of subordinates. Those four experts behind him should all be Deities. It most likely will be very hard for me to flee."

The situation had reached an extremely grave point.

His life, compared to the lives of his family and friends…if he could protect his family and friends, Linley wouldn't mind dying.

"If Ojwin destroys Dragonblood Castle then immediately leaves, that's fine. But if he were to find that pocket dimension, then…" Linley was afraid of Delia, Wharton, and the others being killed as well. Linley was also certain of one thing.

Once Ojwin saw Delia and the others, he would definitely act.

Because Ojwin would definitely realize that Delia, Barker, and Zassler all had divine sparks in their bodies.

"What to do?" Linley was somewhat panicked.

"Hey? Just now, when I arrived, I noticed quite a few people in Dragonblood Castle, as well as a good number of Saints. Where did they all

disappear to?" Ojwin mumbled to himself in a 'puzzled' manner, staring at Linley.

Linley's heart shook.

When Wharton and Delia had hidden themselves, Ojwin probably had been using his divine sense to inspect the entire Dragonblood Castle.

"My divine sense only noticed them entering an underground area, and then their auras vanished." Ojwin had a hint of laughter at the corner of his lips. He stared at Linley as he slowly spoke. "Could it be that there is some sort of unique magic formation underground Dragonblood Castle that can hide auras? After dealing with you, I'll definitely go take a look for myself."

Linley's forehead immediately became covered in sweat.

The nearby Desri was also somewhat nervous now.

The Desri in the outside world was just his divine light clone. Desri's original body was still within that pocket dimension. After all, his original body didn't have a divine spark. It wouldn't be very effective to use his original body to attack.

"Linley, what should we do?" Desri used his divine sense to speak to Linley.

Linley was frantic as well.

Linley wouldn't care too much if this divine wind clone was destroyed. But if…that pocket dimension was to be discovered by Ojwin, then, none of the people within would be able to survive.

"Bebe!" No longer thinking about anything else, Linley directly spoke with his soul to the distant Bebe, within the Forest of Darkness.

"Boss!" Bebe immediately replied. "You finally thought of me! I've missed you so much, Boss! When are you coming over?"

Forest of Darkness. The metallic castle.

Bebe was within the castle, sprawling lazily on the floor, enjoying the sunshine. But upon hearing Linley's soul-communication, he immediately jumped up in excitement.

"Bebe, I need to ask you for something. There's a full God known as 'Ojwin' who has already arrived at Dragonblood Castle, prepared for battle. I don't know what the result will be. But Bebe, no matter what, you have to ask Lord Beirut to protect the group of people who are currently hiding in the pocket dimension."

At this point, Linley could only entrust his hopes to Bebe.

"What? Boss, flee!" Bebe instantly grew nervous. A God…Bebe knew the difference between a Demigod and a God.

Linley's heart felt sour.

Flee?

Aside from the question of whether or not fleeing would be successful, right now, he simply couldn't flee. Once he tried to flee, the battle would immediately begin, and naturally it would end very quickly. At that time, Ojwin would definitely find that 'door' to the pocket dimension, which would be disastrous.

"Bebe, my original body is within the pocket dimension. Don't worry. Even if my divine clone is destroyed, I won't die." This was how Linley explained it.

But once his divine clone was destroyed, then…Linley would forever lose the ability to train the Elemental Laws of the Wind. This price couldn't be described as a small one. But compared to the lives of his family, Linley couldn't be bothered by it.

“Boss, don’t worry, I, I’ll come immediately.” Bebe was frantic.

“Bebe, remember, go find Lord Beirut.” Linley instructed.

The Forest of Darkness. The metallic castle.

“Grandpa Beirut, he isn’t here. He went to the Necropolis of the Gods. What to do. What to do. But Boss is in such a bad situation. The enemy is a God, while I, I, I’m not even at the Deity level yet.” Bebe was frantic, not knowing what to do.

“Boss, Boss, if you die…” Bebe’s eyes were beginning to turn red.

“Shkreeeeeeeeee!” Frantic to the point of insanity, Bebe raised his head and let out an ear-piercing, desolate screech.

“Bebe, what is it?” Soon, from within the metallic castle, three Violet-Gold Rat Kings flew out. It was Harry and his brothers.

Bebe said frantically, “A God has arrived at Dragonblood Castle to do battle, but Grandpa Beirut went to the Necropolis of the Gods. What should I do? What should I do now? If I waste any more time, then most likely…” Bebe’s eyes had tears in them.

The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings looked at each other, a hint of concern in their eyes as well.

Although this took time to describe, in truth, Linley and Bebe’s soul-communication took but an instant. The communication between a magical beast companion and his master, in particular, didn’t require Linley to use his divine sense at all…that Ojwin naturally couldn’t discover it. Ojwin was still staring at Desri and Olivier.

“Desri, Olivier, you two leave for now.” Linley mentally communicated to them.

Leave now?

Olivier and Desri did not choose to leave.

“Linley, let those people in the pocket dimension scatter in every direction.” Desri said mentally.

“Won’t work. Didn’t you see that behind Ojwin, there are Demigods as well as fifty-plus Prime Saints? Once Wharton and the others flee, they will definitely be doomed.” Linley knew very well that against the three of them, the full God, Ojwin, would be more than enough.

“Oh, how loyal of you.” Ojwin smirked as he stared at the three people who stood side-by-side in midair together.

“However, the price of loyalty is death.”

At this point in time, there was a difference of a hundred meters between the two sides. To Deities, at a very short distance, if one side was to suddenly attack, the other side probably wouldn’t even have a chance to react. A hundred meters…given the reaction time and speed of Deities, that was still enough to react and counter-attack.

“Boom!”

Within a thousand meters, space was suddenly frozen. Or, more precisely speaking, through a God’s divine spark, the ‘light elemental essences’ within a thousand meters were all placed under complete control, and began to constrict Linley’s side. The higher level a divine spark was, the more powerful the control was.

Godrealm!

A full God level Godrealm!

Linley and the others immediately used their own Godrealm to resist. Although they could just barely manage to control the elements of their own style, they still had the feeling as though they had sunken into a pit of

mud.

“Not good.” Linley could tell that given the situation, with their speed having dropped drastically, while the opponent was a full God who definitely had a much more powerful understanding of the Laws and attacks…the result of this battle was predetermined, even before it had begun.

“Mr. Ojwin.” Linley suddenly boomed out.

“What is it?” Ojwin looked at Linley.

Linley ground his teeth, then said solemnly, “If I surrender willingly to you and return with you to the imperial capital, would you be willing to spare the people of Dragonblood City, as well as Desri and Olivier? I trust that my voluntary surrender would be much more effective to you than placing my corpse in the imperial capital.”

“When the commoners see my corpse, most likely many of them will think you intentionally found someone who looked just like me to fool them. They won’t believe that I died.”

“But if I personally go, it’ll be different.” Linley looked at Ojwin. “Your goal is their faith energy, right?”

Ojwin’s eyes lit up. Laughing, he said, “An excellent method!”

“Linley…” Desri and Olivier stared at Linley in astonishment.

Surrender willingly?

Linley’s heart was trembling. So what if he surrendered willingly? So what if his divine clone was destroyed? At worst, he would never again be able to train in the Elemental Laws of the Wind. But he only had one Delia. One little brother, Wharton. One Taylor, Sasha…

Linley didn’t want for them to die.

They were what Linley truly had to protect in this world.

Linley stared at Ojwin, waiting for Ojwin's reply. Ojwin's smile became even more brilliant, while at the same time, Linley's side could sense the restrictive power of the Godrealm grow much weaker. Linley's mind instantly calmed down.

The weakening of the Godrealm was a clear sign of how Ojwin felt.

"An excellent proposal. But, I don't want to let you live." Ojwin said with a calm laugh.

Linley's face instantly changed. "Ojwin, you…"

"Whoosh!" The four Deities behind Ojwin instantly flew out, surrounding Linley, Desri, and Olivier.

"From you, I can sense a hint of a threat." Ojwin laughed self-mockingly. "You've trained for less than a hundred years, but were able to kill a peak Demigod, Beaumont. To have a 'genius' like you for an enemy…it's better to strangle this threat in the cradle."

Ojwin had been training in the Gebados Planar Prison for countless years. How could he not know what was important and what wasn't?

Since he was going to be enemies with Linley, he was going to kill Linley immediately.

"Milord, against these, there's no need for you to personally act. We are more than enough." A black-robed middle-aged man said respectfully.

"Make it fast." Ojwin said with a calm laugh. "Two of you, go deal with Linley." Ojwin had a total of four Demigods under his control. Two against Linley, while the other two would go deal with Desri and Olivier.

After all, according to Ojwin's information, Linley's strength far surpassed

that of Olivier.

Even though he felt completely confident, Olivier still kept his divine sense spread out.

He was prepared to act at any moment's notice to deal with any sudden changes in the situation.

But Linley's primary attention was focused on Ojwin. He was worried that Ojwin would suddenly attack. Seeing how the four Demigods quickly divided themselves up, Linley felt a hint of resentment in his heart. "Desri, Olivier, whether we live or die is up to Heaven's will now!!!"

"Kill." Olivier's eyes were filled with a fierce look as well.

Desri silently raised that slender sword of his.

"I hope Lord Beirut will be able to make it in time." Linley murmured to himself silently.

At this moment, the only thing he could do was hope.

But how could Linley know that actually, since these two days were the days of the Necropolis of the Gods' re-opening, Beirut had headed off to the Necropolis of the Gods. It was hard to say if he would make it back in time.

"The two of us against him?" The two black-robed men glanced at each other, laughing.

The four Demigods on Ojwin's side had all had abundant experience in the Gebados Planar Prison. They definitely weren't like those weak, early Demigods. Two of them joining forces against Linley; how could Linley hold them off?"

"Swoosh!"

Warblades suddenly appeared in the hands of the two black-robed. They

transformed into two black blurs, like two leaves gently descending as they streaked and charged towards Linley Wielding Bloodviolet, Linley's body moved, transforming into a gust of wind.

Countless flashes of devilish violet light filled the skies, like countless violet vipers snapping in every direction.

Rippling Wind – Dimensional Decapitator!

The sound of countless collisions could be heard, and space itself was destroyed.

"Boom." Linley's body retreated at high speed. He spat out a mouthful of bright red blood, which splattered into the air.

Not far from Linley, Olivier had also been sent flying by a sword.

"Ah!!!" Desri emitted a desolate, miserable cry.

From the corner of his eyes, Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that half of Desri's body had been chopped off by an illusion-like saber. Desri only had his upper half of his body remaining, and a single hand. Even his right hand, which had been wielding his divine artifact, went tumbling down along with the rest of his body.

In but the first engagement, Linley's side had been badly injured.

"Hurry up." The person who was in control of the scene, Ojwin, actually frowned in dissatisfaction.

Chapter 8 – Downfall

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 8, Downfall

The four Demigods under Ojwin's leadership included Ojwin's son. Having undergone so many training experiences in the Gebados Planar Prison for so long, each of them had power on par with Beaumont. How could Linley's three-man alliance block the attacks of all four of them?

"The two of them are working together, while my 'Hymn of the Wind' is only capable of attacking one person at a time. The other person could take the opportunity to attack me."

Linley understood this.

If he went all out, he might be able to kill one, but…

If he did so, the end result would instantly become disastrous.

"The most important thing right now is time. The later that Ojwin discovers the existence of the pocket dimension, the better. I hope Lord Beirut will make it in time. For now, what I need to do is delay as much as I can." Linley immediately raised his speed to the utmost.

Delay!

Linley, who relied upon the Profound Truths of Velocity to become a Deity, was far superior to the other two in terms of speed.

Linley was like the formless wind, constantly changing locations, dodging past the attacks of those two Deities time and time again. Those two black-robed men were both growing a bit impatient. They were skilled in attacking, but in terms of speed, they were far inferior to Linley.

"He's rather fast." Ojwin said with a calm laugh.

Linley instantly felt the restrictive power of the space around him grow in strength. Ojwin was clearly using his full-power Godrealm to bind Linley. Although Linley was skilled in speed, right now…he was restricted by the Godrealm. All he could do was rely on his own Godrealm, but even so, his speed was a hint lower than those two black-robed men.

“Haha, I want to see how you can keep dodging!!!” The sound rang out in Linley’s mind. It came from one of those two black-robed men. Just then, they had naturally been enraged by Linley taking advantage of his greater speed. Right now, Linley was being restricted by the Godrealm, but they were not.

Their speed was now faster than Linley’s.

Two blurs pincer-attacked Linley.

“Lord Beirut, why haven’t you arrived yet!!!” Linley’s heart was filled with grief and fury, but then Linley noticed something which astonished him.

The heavily wounded divine body of Desri was rapidly healing, but the power of that silver-robed man with the long blade was far superior to his, able to take even Desri’s spiritual attack head on. In terms of speed, he was actually slightly superior to Desri.

“Aaah!”

A miserable scream. Desri had just been hit by three successive blades.

The first blade chop had split Desri in half. The second blade, Desri had managed to take without dying. But this third blade…

“Clang!” That cold, dark long blade chopped directly through Desri’s brain, smashing against Desri’s divine spark, which was flickering with white light. The power of that long blade landing against the divine spark was so great that the divine spark shuddered…and Desri’s soul was shattered.

His soul was shattered, his spirit dispersed!

“Dead!”

Both Linley and Olivier felt a surge of grief in their hearts.

Although Desri’s original body was still within the pocket dimension, the death of his divine clone meant…that Desri would never again be able to train in the Elemental Laws of Light. At the same time, Desri’s five thousand years of hard work had just been destroyed.

If he wanted to become a Deity on his own again, he would have to begin training in a different Elemental Law.

“Will this scene be my end as well?” Linley felt grief in his heart. Desri’s miserable scream continued to reverberate in his ears.

“Aaaaaaaargh!”

From Linley’s lips exploded forth an uncompromising, fierce, enraged howl. The devilish Bloodviolet filled the world with a humming sword song, and within Linley’s eyes, a hint of wildness appeared. At this moment, he didn’t care about anything else. Even if he was to die, he would kill one or two of them as well.

The Hymn of the Wind was unleashed!

“DIE!!!” Olivier also emitted a similar howl from the depths of his heart.

In that moment, both Linley and Olivier had gone mad.

……..

In the same moment, within the pocket dimension.

There were many people present, including the five Barker brothers and their family, Delia, Wharton, Hillman, and dozens of others. Linley’s

original body and Desri's original body were present as well.

The face of Desri original body turned utterly pale, and his eyes became filled with utter sorrow.

"Haha…" Desri let out a low laugh.

Five thousand years of painstaking training. But in this instant, it was now guaranteed that he would never again be able to become a Deity through the Elemental Laws of Light.

"Everyone, quickly." The sky-blue robed Linley shouted towards everyone. "Quick, everyone, split up. Everyone go flee in a different direction. That Ojwin can't be using his divine sense to pay attention to the underground at every single instant." Linley was out of choices.

Beirut hadn't arrived.

Linley couldn't place all of his hopes on Beirut's shoulders.

"Desri, as long as your original body remains, at least you'll be able to train in other Elemental Laws. Quick, let's go." Linley charged to the doorway of the pocket dimension and used his divine power to block the attacking energy flows at the dimensional gateway.

The dozens of people who had squeezed into the pocket dimension all felt nervous.

"Linley." Delia said hurriedly.

"Leave, quickly. Don't hesitate." Linley directly grabbed Gates' son, pulling him out of the pocket dimension. Everyone, knowing how grave the situation had become, quickly fled from the pocket dimension, and then began to tunnel through the ground in every which way.

……..

Bloodviolet shuddered, emitting that humming sword sound, as gentle and soft as a flute's song. The flute song, under Linley's control, directly emanated towards the two black-robed men, as well as that golden-haired youth who was battling Olivier.

Both the golden haired youth and the two black-robed men, in this moment, felt as though the entire world had gone silent, aside from that soft, gentle flute song. It was so pleasing to the ear.

"Clang!"

A blood-red illusionary sword shot out from Bloodviolet, shooting directly into the mind of one of those two black-robed me. The black robed man's spiritual energy was in a state of relaxation, and only when the illusory blood-red sword shot into his spiritual energy did he suddenly come to his sense.

However, it was too late.

The blood-red sword image pierced directly into his divine spark, the stabbing blow shattering his soul and dispersing his spirit.

Profound Truths of the Wind – Hymn of the Wind!

Although slow to describe, the Hymn of the Wind technique was executed in but an instant. But to Ojwin, that instant was an instant of disaster.

"NO!!!!" Ojwin's eyes suddenly turned around.

Linley had exploded forth with his full power, while Olivier had done the same! Linley had utilized his 'Hymn of the Wind', while Olivier, despite badly injuring himself, had once again released that black and white sword-flash that had shattered the Great Botha Levee. For the gold-haired youth, the worst part of it was…

Just before Olivier's attack, he had been affected by Bloodviolet's humming sword song.

“BOOM!”

The mystic icesword’s full-strength blow chopped down onto the golden-haired youth’s warblade. The power of this attack of Olivier’s was simply too incredible. It actually caused the warblade to smash back down upon the golden-haired youth, while at the same time, that black and white sword-flash also chopped down, descending towards the golden-haired youth’s head.

“Aaaah!” A fierce, miserable cry rang out.

His head was split in half, and that divine spark was chopped directly onto by the black and white sword-flash. The soul within the divine spark trembled, then shattered.

“No, Kingsley [Jin’si’li], no!” The black-robed man’s death, Ojwin didn’t care about. But this golden-haired youngster, Kingsley, was Ojwin’s one and only son. Generally, when training his son, Ojwin would let his son engage in some true life and death battles. Only through this sort of training was his son truly be able to grow and develop.

In this battle, his son was only dealing with someone who had just reached the Deity-level. Ojwin didn’t know how powerful Olivier was. He was only worried about Linley, but hadn’t paid Olivier any mind.

Ojwin hadn’t paid him any mind, but who would have thought…

Ojwin’s most dearly beloved, only son, whom he had loved as much as life itself for countless years. He had died, just like that!

“Die!!!!” No matter how calm and unflappable he normally was, at this moment, even Ojwin had gone utterly mad. The fierce-faced Ojwin’s body surged with divine power. The strength of his Godrealm suddenly raised to the maximum, like countless surging waves, surrounding everyone present.

At the same time, Ojwin transformed into a ray of white light, charging

straight towards Olivier, a greatsword appearing in his hands.

The already badly-injured Olivier wasn't able to resist at all.

Olivier instantly split apart into his two divine bodies, the divine light clone and the divine darkness clone, but both divine clones were heavily wounded. Olivier didn't have the chance to escape at all.

"Aaaaaaargh!" Ojwin howled savagely, his greatsword chopping down with a power that contained untold profundities!

A devilish violet light flashed…

"CLANG!"

Linley's badly injured body was smashed flying back, but then he was once again frozen in mid-air by the restriction of the Godrealm.

Just then, he had killed a black-robed man, but had his arm chopped off by the other, furious black-robed man. Realizing what danger Olivier was in, Linley had hurried over frantically, helping Olivier to receive that blow. A massive wound had appeared in his chest, however, and fresh blood splattered everywhere. Linley immediately summoned the divine power in his body to heal himself.

"Thank you." Olivier's two divine clones both looked at Linley.

"Why thank me? All I did was delay our deaths by a moment." Linley and Olivier's eyes were filled with the same bitter laugh and grief.

They couldn't resist any longer!

In the face of that enraged, maddened Ojwin, both Linley and Olivier had somewhat given in to despair.

That sword blow just now had included a spiritual attack element. Linley, relying upon his damaged Sovereign artifact as well as his spiritual

Pulseguard Defense, had just barely managed to withstand that blow. But despite that…Linley's spiritual energy had just become all but used up.

He wouldn't even be able to use the Hymn of the Wind a single extra time.

"I will destroy and shatter your souls!" Ojwin, filled with the utmost of grief, roared in fury as he swept out with that greatsword in his hands.

"Raaaaaaaaaaargh!"

A furious, earth-shaking roar suddenly rang out, and an invisible ripple shot out like a bullet towards Ojwin. Ojwin, greatly shocked, could sense the power of this sudden attack. "Where did this attack come from?!" At the same time, Ojwin hurriedly wielded his sword to counter-attack.

"BOOM!" Ojwin's body was knocked backwards, and he continued to retreat.

In mid-air, there was an enormous rainbow-colored, lion-like creature hovering there. In the middle of the lion's forehead, there was a third eye. The enormous lion transformed, reforming into a devilish young man who wore a long, golden robe.

It was Dylin!

"Dylin!" Linley and Olivier's eyes were filled with a look of surprise and joy.

Ojwin, having suffered that spiritual energy attack, had his Godrealm disrupted. The two Olivier's fused with each other once more, and Linley and Olivier both flew straight towards Dylin at high speed.

"Don't think of escaping." Ojwin's gaze was completely focused on Olivier right now. His eyes were filled with boundless killing intent, while at the same time, he charged towards Olivier, ignoring everything else. Dylin's face turned slightly colder, and that third eye of his opened…

An invisible ripple once more surged forth.

Ojwin let out a low growl, allowing the invisible ripple to strike against his body. He only paused for a moment, before his speed picked up once again.

Dylin had broken through and reached the God level, but…Dylin was only an early stage God. Compared to Ojwin, there was still some difference between the two in power. If it weren't for him relying on his innate gifts, Dylin's earlier attack would have found it quite difficult to force Ojwin to retreat.

"Huh?" Ojwin turned to look towards another side in astonishment.

Dozens of rays of black light had shot out towards Ojwin from that far away in that direction. This time, Ojwin didn't dare to take it head on, immediately trying to dodge at high speed. However, those dozens of rays of black light curved after him, and so Ojwin had to use his greatsword to block every single one of those rays of black light.

A human figured appeared next to Dylin.

It was a devilish youngster with long green hair.

"Dylin, you 'Heaven Devouring Beast', you really live up to the title of being a 'divine beast'. In your true form, your speed truly is astonishing. Even I couldn't catch up to you." The green haired youngster laughed.

"Tarosse, enough chitchat. This fellow's power is rather high. We'll rely on your power now." Dylin said with a cold face. "Don't end up being beaten and losing face."

"How could I?" Tarosse looked at Ojwin.

Ojwin was staring coldly at the two of them. "Gentlemen, I just want to kill that kid with black and white hair. As for Linley, I can spare him. Gentlemen…don't interfere." Ojwin had sensed the threat which these two experts posed.

Chapter 9 – Timely

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 9, Timely

Hearing Ojwin mention himself, Linley couldn't help but sneer to himself.

Just then, when he wanted to kill them, Ojwin hadn't shown any mercy. Even Desri's divine clone had been destroyed! But now, he said that he didn't want to kill Linley, just Olivier? Clearly, he was somewhat afraid of Tarosse and Dylin.

"You want to kill Olivier but not kill Linley?" Dylin deliberately paused for a moment.

Towards Olivier, Dylin didn't feel too much affection. But Linley was different. Originally, his escape with the three Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions to the Yulan Plane was partially due to Linley. In the Necropolis of the Gods, Linley had saved his son yet again. Most importantly, Linley had given him a divine spark without asking for anything in return.

Dylin naturally had to protect Linley.

"This Olivier doesn't have anything to do with me." Tarosse laughed merrily as he looked at Ojwin.

Ojwin relaxed.

"But what does that have to do with my decision as to whether I want to interfere or not?" Tarosse said with a wicked laugh. "You ask me not to interfere, and thus I won't interfere? If others heard this story, they'd think that I, Tarosse, was afraid of you. If you know what's good for you, you'd best hurry up and f*ck off. I can spare your life this once. Otherwise, well…"

Tarosse stretched out a single hand. Within it, a long, green whip appeared.

This long green whip looked just like a green snake, and it naturally emitted a frigid aura. Even the air around it seemed to have been somewhat frozen. Tarosse casually snapped the long whip, emitting a clear cracking sound.

“Are you going to leave? Or do you want me to make you leave?” Tarosse didn’t view Ojwin with any respect at all.

Ojwin swept Tarosse and Dylin with his gaze, before staring at Olivier. His eyes seemed to want to devour Olivier alive.

Ojwin paused a moment.

“Fine. Since that’s the case, I’ll give you two face. I…” Ojwin said, but suddenly, the fingers of his right hand swept towards Olivier, and a white beam of light suddenly split the air, causing space to begin to fold. The white light shot directly towards the nearby Olivier.

“Crackle…” Wherever the light from his fingers passed through, space began to emit a rumbling, crackling sound.

The speed of this light was extremely fast.

“Hrmph.” Tarosse narrowed his eyes, letting out a cold, disdainful snort.

“Whap!” That long green whip struck out like a serpent, while at the same time elongating from the original length of three or four meters to thirty to forty meters. The thickness of the whip was like that of the tail of a giant python, and it struck directly against that ray of light. Faintly emitting a green light, it circled around that white light, dispersing it.

“Lord Tarosse, thank you.” Olivier said in a low voice. Olivier knew when to be grateful to someone.

However, Olivier also knew that he didn’t have much of a relationship with Tarosse and Dylin. The reason why they were willing to help was for Linley’s sake.

Olivier looked at the nearby Linley.

Linley grinned at him. “Olivier, since Lord Tarosse is willing to act, we won’t have any more problems today.”

“But of course. I’m Lord Tarosse, you know.” Lord Tarosse laughed loudly and delightedly, while at the same time, he continued to snap his long green whip out. His body was floating and flashing about like a shadow, casually engaging in blows and counter-blows with Ojwin.

Ojwin, after a short testing period, became certain that this Tarosse was a powerful combatant even amongst Gods.

Given Ojwin’s cautious nature of never engaging in something he wasn’t confident in achieving, he normally would never engage in a fight with Tarosse like this. However…his son had died. Throughout these countless years, aside from his goal of reaching the peak of training and increasing his strength, his highest priority was raising his son.

Ojwin’s son was the reason for his existence.

“Tarosse, you are forcing me to do this!!!” Ojwin’s face slowly grew ferocious.

“What is it? If you have some powerful techniques, bring’m out!” Tarosse flew high into the air, while Ojwin chased after him. Once these two Gods really went all out, the shockwaves from their attacks would reach and harm Linley and the others. It might be enough to cause Linley to be badly injured, or even die.

Ojwin’s subordinates.

“You can go for now.” Ojwin’s voice rang out in the minds of those two lucky survivors. Four Demigods. Ojwin’s son and the black-robed man had both died, thanks to Linley and Olivier. Only two remained.

“The situation is bad. Let’s leave, quickly.” The two lucky Demigod

survivors glanced at each other, then immediately fled at high speed per Ojwin's orders.

Linley, Olivier, and Dylin were still paying close attention to the battle between those two Gods in mid-air.

"Hey, they fled." Dylin was the first to notice.

"Where'd they go?" Only now did Linley realize that those two Demigods had disappeared into the horizon.

Linley's face was extremely ugly to behold. He said frantically, "Desri's divine spark! Desri's divine spark is being held by that silver-robed man." Once the divine clone was destroyed, the original body wouldn't be able to be gifted by heaven with yet another light-style divine spark.

However…

The original body could still fuse with that light-style divine spark yet again.

The original body would be able to fuse it extremely quickly, allowing him to soon return to his full level of strength. But…if he did this, Desri would never be able to train in any other Laws again.

"Oh? No rush." Dylin suddenly moved, intending to charge after that silver-robed man.

"Whoosh!"

In mid-air, a fiery red human figure suddenly came out from Ojwin's body. This fiery red body was actually wielding a fiery red lance, and it stabbed directly at Dylin. Dylin immediately became entangled by the fiery red figure, and wasn't able to shake him off right away.

"This Ojwin has two bodies!" Linley was greatly astonished.

Linley and Olivier exchanged glances, their eyes filled with shock. Ojwin didn't just have a divine light clone; he also had a divine fire clone. The two divine clones battled against Dylin and Tarosse, and for now they fought to a standstill.

Ojwin's strength truly was astonishing.

Although Linley wanted to chase after that silver-robed man, after having executed the 'Hymn of the Wind', then helped Olivier block Ojwin's killing strike, Linley's spiritual energy had been almost completely used up. Even his soul had been shaken.

Actually, Linley had enough spiritual energy to utilize the 'Hymn of the Wind' twice, with some energy left over.

But the thing was, Olivier had killed Ojwin's son, and Ojwin had naturally gone crazy.

That attack of his had truly been too vicious. Fortunately, Linley had that damaged Sovereign artifact, which allowed him to just barely take the blow without dying.

"Desri's divine spark." Linley felt helpless. He wanted to chase, but he didn't have any confidence in being able to overcome that silver-robed man.

Linley still clearly remembered the scene of that silver-robed man killing Desri. That illusionary blade blow…it was too powerful. Linley had the feeling that the silver-robed man was most likely the most powerful of the four experts Ojwin originally commanded.

"With Tarosse and Dylin joining forces, it shouldn't be too much of a problem for them to deal with Ojwin."

In terms of spiritual strength, Linley's divine clone was far inferior to his original body's. After all, his original body had fused twenty million soul essences.

Linley's original body had already stopped fleeing.

Linley's original body stretched out his divine sense. During this short period of time, even Saints had only flown less than a thousand kilometers. Linley's divine sense instantly located every single fleeing family member and friend. "Everyone. The danger has passed. Everyone, come back to Dragonblood Castle."

The members of Dragonblood Castle who had been fleeing, mentally agonized, instantly felt great joy upon hearing Linley's divine sense message.

All of them hurriedly returned.

In the air above Dragonblood Castle. Tarosse and Ojwin had begun to go all out.

"Just this little bit of power you have, haha…" Tarosse's loud laughter rang out.

"Whoooooosh." Tarosse' long green whip coiled about like a serpent, while at the same time, the temperature of the surrounding area dropped dramatically, and one blue crystal after another appeared out of nowhere. They hovered in mid-air in an area of several square kilometers. Under the light of the sun, they seemed so beautiful.

Within an area of several square kilometers, the surrounding water elemental essences had come under Tarosse's control.

Ojwin's face changed.

Instantly, his entire body began to emit a dazzling, holy light, and the greatsword in his hands, covered by that holy light, began to tremble slightly.

In the area around the greatsword, tiny, thread-like fractures in space could be seen.

“Hrmph.” Tarosse sneered coldly. An invisible ripple surged forth from his head and was directly absorbed by each of those blue ice crystals.

“Crackle…” Every single hovering blue ice crystal began to emit a blue light. The rays of blue light emanating from those blue ice crystals connected with each other, and each time the rays of light intersected, the power grew greater, until finally…they all came together at one point.

“Shatter!” Ojwin could tell that the situation was dire. He immediately chopped down with his sword towards one of the ice crystals.

“Bang!” The ice crystal shattered. But then, in the blink of an eye, yet another ice crystal formed. This amazing formation wasn’t impacted whatsoever.

“Crunch!” At the center of the intersecting energy streams, one of the blue ice crystals suddenly emitted a ray of black light.

The target was Ojwin.

Ojwin let out a low growl from his throat. A white horn began to slowly emerge from his forehead, while at the same time, Ojwin delivered a full-strength sword chop towards the ray of black light shooting towards him. The greatsword and the ray of black light collided head-on.

The ray of black light shattered.

“Bang!” Ojwin vomited out a mouthful of fresh blood. With a ‘crunch’, even the bones in his arms shattered.

Ojwin stared viciously at Tarosse, then immediately transformed into a ray of light, streaking towards the western horizon. Even the fiery red form which had been entangling Dylin fused back into Ojwin, who instantly disappeared into the western horizon.

“Olivier. I, Ojwin, swear that I will definitely kill you!!!” Ojwin’s angry

roar shook the air above Dragonblood Castle.

Seeing Ojwin retreat, Linley and Olivier both let out a sigh of relief.

Tarosse and Dylin flew over.

“Where does this Ojwin come from? He really is quite powerful. If he were to fight against me alone using all his strength, I probably would at most be able to fight him to a draw.” Tarosse sighed in approval. Tarosse had also realized that this Ojwin actually had a second divine God clone.

Dylin nodded slightly as well.

“But that divine fire clone clearly isn’t as strong as his divine light clone.” Dylin sighed. “When fighting against me, that divine fire clone was only able to entangle me. A pity. I just reached the God level. I am not yet capable of utilizing God-level Laws to maximum effectiveness.”

Upon reaching a certain level of enlightenment, one would become a God.

But more insights alone didn’t represent that one had become better at using them.

“Two divine clones, both at the God level. This Ojwin is very hard to deal against.” Linley felt that this was a rather thorny problem as well.

“Two divine clones being at the God level isn’t all that special.” Tarosse shook his head disdainfully. “Upon becoming a Deity through one’s own power, the first divine clone can naturally reach the God level. As for the original body…it can go find a divine spark and just go fuse it. This Ojwin should have been in the Gebados Planar Prison for a long time. First, he would let his original body reach the Demigod level. Most likely, he was lucky and was able to acquire a divine God spark. That gives him two divine God clones, as easy as that.”

While they chatted, multiple figures suddenly flew over. It was the cold and grim War God ‘O’Brien’, the High Priest ‘Catherine’, and Cesar.

“Linley, congratulations.” The War God’s serious, rocky face squeezed out a smile.

Seeing the War God, Linley sighed in his heart.

“War God. Do you already know about what happened in your O’Brien Empire?” Linley asked.

“I know a bit. I don’t know the specifics yet.” The War God shook his head. “I didn’t expect that as soon as I left the Necropolis of the Gods, I would have received such terrible news.”

“Oh, right. I didn’t have the chance to ask yet. How did so many experts suddenly escape from the Gebados Planar Prison?” Dylin asked puzzledly. “Even that area I fled from in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts was just a weak spot in the walls of reality. It was very hard to find.”

“It was me.”

Olivier spoke up. “I did it accidentally. I opened that interdimensional gateway by accident.”

“You opened the interdimensional gateway?” Dylin, the War God, and the rest were all greatly shocked.

The weak spot in the walls of the reality was just a long, large crack which occasionally would release a few drops of water. But opening the interdimensional gateway was akin to a massive landslide that would release a flood of water, releasing an astonishingly high number of experts.

“Hey?” Linley looked at Dylin in confusion. “Lord Dylin, how did you know that we were in danger?”

Linley could tell that Dylin had transformed into his true form to hurry over here. Even Tarosse had been slightly slower than Dylin, while the

Demigods like the War God, the High Priest, and Cesar had been much slower. They had only arrived after the battle was over.

Chapter 10 – Foundation

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 10, Foundation

“It was Lord Beirut who informed us.” Dylin replied.

The War God also spoke. “When we returned from the Necropolis of the Gods to the Yulan Plane, soon after we entered the Yulan continent, Lord Beirut suddenly said…that you, Linley were in danger. He said that if Dylin and Tarosse hurried over, they might be able to rescue you in time.”

Dylin and Tarosse both nodded slightly.

“If you had been just a bit slower, Dylin, things really would have gotten quite dangerous.” Tarosse sighed.

Dylin laughed, “Dangerous, how? I expect that Lord Beirut arrived here long before we did. Most likely, at the most critical, dangerous moment, if we hadn’t arrived yet, Lord Beirut would have helped rescue Linley.”

“Lord Beirut?” Tarosse frowned. “Most likely, Lord Beirut wouldn’t even care if every single human on the Yulan continent died. Would he necessarily save Linley? I find it quite surprising that he even warned us.”

Tarosse had a very clear memory of Beirut’s ruthless viciousness.

“Not necessarily so.” Dylin didn’t share the same opinion.

“So that’s how it all went down.” Linley secretly sighed. No wonder after he had mentally reached out to Bebe, Bebe hadn’t told him if Beirut would be able to come…so Beirut had gone to the Necropolis of the Gods and wasn’t even in the Forest of Darkness.

Nobody noticed…

A few kilometers away from Dragonblood Castle, a translucent human figure was hovering in mid-air, absorbing all the sunlight which shone down on him. When something absorbed all light, then it naturally would become invisible.

“That kid, Tarosse.”

The invisible man snorted self-mockingly. “It seems the actions that I took during the Apocalypse Wars all those years ago had truly terrified him. He really thinks I’m as ruthless and as vicious as that?” And then, the translucent person disappeared.

At the borders of the Forest of Darkness.

“Bebe, don’t go. You won’t be of any use at Dragonblood Castle. Can you beat a full God?” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings were persuading Bebe, but Bebe had made up his mind. He hurriedly flew towards the south, his heart filled with panic.

But just at this moment.

“Bebe, I’m fine.” Linley’s voice rang out in Bebe’s mind.

“Boss.” Bebe instantly halted, overjoyed.

The three nearby Violet-Gold Rat Kings were extremely mystified as Bebe halted in mid-air and spoke spiritually with Linley. Only after a long while did the conversation end. “Boss, I’m heading to your place right now.” Bebe truly wanted to see Linley right now. Nobody could stop him.

“Bebe…” A gravelly voice rang out.

Bebe raised his head, his beady little eyes instantly filling with a hint of unhappiness. “Grandpa Beirut, you only came back now.”

“Lord Father.” The three Violet-Gold Rat Kings behaved very properly.

Beirut smiled as he reached out, wanting to hug Bebe. “Bebe, come here.” But Bebe dodged aside. “Hmph. Grandpa Beirut, I learned from the Boss that you knew that the Boss was in trouble. Why didn’t you personally intervene? If you personally intervened, that Ojwin bastard would have died, no question about it.”

Bebe was extremely dissatisfied.

Ojwin had nearly killed Linley.

In Bebe’s mind, although Beirut made him feel extremely proud and he truly liked his Grandpa Beirut very much, to Bebe, nobody was more important than Linley, who had grown up along with him since they were children. In much the same way, in Linley’s heart, Bebe was also extremely important.

How many years had Linley and Bebe travelled alone, just the two of them?

A human youth with no parents, and a magical beast with no parents. They had joked with each other, adventured together, and slowly grown up together. The bond between them was tough and unbreakable.

“Bebe. Me, personally kill that Ojwin?” Beirut laughed with resignation. “I can’t personally get involved in everything, right? As for killing Ojwin and getting revenge, it’s best to let Linley handle that. It’s enough for me to save his life.”

“It was Tarosse and Dylin who saved my Boss’ life.” Bebe turned his head around unhappily, ignoring Beirut.

Staring at Bebe, Beirut didn’t know what to say.

He, Beirut, was an extremely famous person, even amongst the high-level figures of the countless planes of the universe. His ruthless and viciousness was the stuff of legend. Even towards his own children, Beirut could be ruthless. But…towards Bebe, Beirut’s heart was filled with doting love.

It was much like how parents could be stern with their children, but would be indulgent towards their grandchildren.

Beirut was exceedingly strict with his children, but meeting this descendant of his Beirut clan, Bebe, the second Godeater Rat to ever exist in the countless planes of the universe, he simply couldn't be strict.

"Tarosse and Dylin?" Beirut shook his head. "Bebe, actually, I already arrived at Dragonblood Castle long before they did, traveling at high speed. If they hadn't been able to make it in time, I would have intervened." Beirut coaxed Bebe, as though he were coaxing a little child.

Bebe looked somewhat suspiciously at Beirut. "Truly?"

"Of course it's true. Since when has Grandpa ever lied to you?" Beirut's smile was so very benevolent.

Bebe immediately began to grin.

"Right, Grandpa Beirut, I want to pay a visit to Dragonblood Castle." Bebe immediately said.

"Fine." Beirut beamed at him. "You should go take a look, but Bebe, you need to remember that you are very close to your final transformation and reaching adulthood. After making a visit, come back quickly." Beirut instructed him solemnly.

"Got it, Grandpa Beirut." Bebe replied.

"Harry, go alongside Bebe." Beirut instructed, not entirely at ease.

"Yes, Lord Father." The Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, said.

"Grandpa Beirut, Harry doesn't have to come, right. If I meet with any Deities that come to act against me, Harry won't be able to protect me." This is what Bebe said, because as Bebe saw it, the Violet-Gold Rat King, Harry, was nothing more than a Saint-level magical beast.

Hearing this, Harry couldn't help but exchange glances with his two brothers, the other two Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Hart and Harvey.

"Harry, go with him." Beirut couldn't be bothered to say much more.

And then, Bebe and Harry headed off towards Dragonblood Castle together.

To the War God and the High Priest, the sudden descent of so many experts into the Yulan continent was an extremely disastrous piece of news. Still, they were forced to accept it. Linley, Olivier, Dylin, Tarosse, Cesar, the War God, the High Priest…this group of people were clustered together in the main hall of Dragonblood Castle.

Just as they were chatting amongst each other…

"Whoosh!" A human figure suddenly flew over at high speed. It was Fain.

Just now, because of Ojwin's arrival, Linley had ordered his family and friends to immediately flee in every direction. Now, they were slowly making their way back. The first one to arrive was Fain. When Fain landed in the main hall, he saw the War God, O'Brien, and was instantly stunned.

"Bang!" Fain's knees crashed to the ground.

"Master!" Fain's eyes were already filled with tears. "My fellow disciples are all dead, and the honorary disciples are dead as well. The entire War God Mountain has been destroyed! Your disciple has failed Master's trust!" Fain sobbed bitterly. The pain he felt in his heart, upon seeing his master, the War God, completely burst out.

The War God hurriedly moved towards him, personally raising his first disciple to his feet.

"Fain, this has nothing to do with you. Nothing to do with you." The War God let out a single sigh.

War God Mountain had held all of his life's work, but with so many Deities having descended, he understood…that his disciple, Fain, merely a Prime Saint, didn't have any chance to defend at all.

"Master!!!" From mid-air, multiple human figures flashed forward. It was Dixie and the others.

Dixie and the others also directly knelt down before the High Priest.

"Rise, all of you." The High Priest said with a sigh. Her situation was actually much better than the War God's, because the people who had taken over the Yulan Empire had attacked the imperial palace. In addition, the disciples of the High Priest weren't centered on any particular location, and so only the two who were in the imperial palace had died.

Most of the High Priest's disciples were still alive.

However…the Yulan Empire which the High Priest had guarded for ten thousand years had been taken over.

Many people hurried over, one after the other, including Linley's original body, which directly merged into his divine clone.

"Linley." As soon as she came back, Delia embraced Linley, feeling worried for him. "You are okay. That's wonderful." Delia's eyes were filled with unshed tears. When Ojwin had arrived, all of them had been forced to hide in that pocket dimension.

Afterwards, they had fled in every direction.

Linley's original body was worried that the enemy would focus on his aura and focus on seizing him, so he hadn't permitted any others to flee with him in the same direction.

At that time, everyone's heart was filled with terror. But now, everyone could set their minds at ease.

“Everything is fine now.” Linley felt somewhat relaxed as well.

Before this, an enormous weight had been crushing down upon Linley, who had been the only one to bear it. But now, Dylin and Tarosse had come. With the two of them….unless that Lord Adkins personally acted against them, Linley’s side was now more than capable of protecting themselves, at least.

“Linley, do you know who it was that destroyed my War God Mountain?” The War God looked at Linley.

The War God’s eyes held a trace of an unwillingness to accept this.

Linley sighed as he spoke. “War God, forget it. The people who destroyed your War God Mountain and took over the O’Brien Empire are an extremely powerful force. Their leader is a Highgod. His name is ‘Adkins’.” Ever since learning that Adkins was a Highgod, he had never again entertained the notion of the War God seizing back the O’Brien Empire.

“Adkins!!!” Dylin let out a shocked cry.

Having stayed in the Gebados Planar Prison, Dylin knew how terrifying Adkins was.

“Highgod?” Tarosse, Cesar, the War God, the High Priest, and the others all had changed looks on their faces. It was already very hard to go from being a Demigod to a full God, but the difficult level of advancing from God to Highgod was even more ridiculous. To them, a Highgod was invincible.

After all…

Sovereigns wouldn’t pay attention to ordinary Deities. Sovereigns couldn’t be bothered to act against them, and so Highgods naturally became the top of the mountain.

“So Adkins made it out as well. That makes sense. He belongs to Bluefire

City.” Dylin let out an emotional sigh. “Who knows if Lord Bluefire was able to flee out as well.” Dylin also knew of the terrifying power of ‘Bluefire’, one of the five great Kings.

A King amongst the most powerful of Highgods!

Although Adkins was powerful, in front of Bluefire, he had to lower his noble head and submit to him.

“Haha…” The War God laughed self-mockingly. “So a Highgod is actually interested in occupying my O’Brien Empire.” The War God’s laughed contained helplessness in it. Although the War God had made improvements in the Necropolis of the Gods, he was still just a Demigod.

“Linley, do you know who took over my Yulan Empire?” The High Priest’s gentle voice rang out.

Linley still remembered what Muba had told him. He immediately replied, “High Priest, the person who destroyed the imperial palace of the Yulan Empire and took it over was a full God named Oerph.”

“A full God?” The High Priest frowned.

Everyone present had improved over the course of this trip to the Necropolis of the Gods, and Dylin had broken through from peak Demigod level and entered the God level. The High Priest had been lucky enough to acquire a single ‘God-level divine spark’. As for Cesar and the War God, although they hadn’t acquired divine sparks, they had acquired divine artifacts.

“A God who was able to survive in the Gebados Planar Prison is no ordinary God.” Dylin said with a frown. “I imagine that for now, it’s best for us to not make too many enemies. For now, let’s make this Baruch Empire our base. Together, at least we’ll be able to protect our foundation, the Baruch Empire.”

The War God and the High Priest hesitated for a moment, then nodded as well.

Chapter 11 – Desri's Divine Spark

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 11, Desri's Divine Spark

Linley and the others understood one point; if one wanted to occupy a large territory, one had to have an equivalent amount of power!

The side occupying the Yulan Empire was led by a full God, Oerph. However, how many Gods did Oerph's side have? Was it just Oerph? For now, they couldn't be sure.

It must be known that the Yulan Empire, in size and population, vastly exceeded that of the Baruch Empire.

The Yulan Empire and O'Brien Empire remained the two largest empires of the Yulan continent.

Oerph's side definitely was not weaker than Ojwin's, for them to dare take over the Yulan Empire. Even Ojwin had two divine God clones and was able to fight Tarosse to a standstill. How could Linley's side dare to go irritate that Oerph?

"Catherine, for now, hurry up and fuse that God-level divine spark." Tarosse instructed. "Dylin, you need to train hard as well and gain insights on how to apply the Laws in your attacks, so as to raise your combat ability in a short period of time."

The High Priest and Dylin both nodded.

"Lord Beirut just opened the Necropolis of the Gods. He shouldn't open it again in the near future, therefore…the current situation with many Deities causing chaos will continue here in the Yulan continent for a fairly long period of time." Tarosse said. "As for us, what we need to do is to quietly train. If others don't bother us, we won't bother them. If others do want to deal with us though, then we don't need to be merciful to them either."

Tarosse's eyes had a cold look flash past them.

"Enough. I'm going to pay a visit to the imperial capital of the Baruch Empire. If Ojwin is there, I'll kick him out." Tarosse said. Actually, during their battle just now, Tarosse hadn't used his full force.

After all, for Tarosse to be capable of becoming the controller of the lower eleven floors of the Necropolis of the Gods meant that Tarosse had extraordinary abilities of his own.

"Lord Tarosse, I'm worried about one thing." Linley spoke out.

"Speak." Tarosse laughed as he looked at Linley.

Linley frowned. "Will that Adkins charge over to kill us at this place?" After having experienced Ojwin's attack, Linley began to worry. Originally, he thought that Ojwin, having taken over his Empire, wouldn't attack Dragonblood Castle.

After all, Linley had never attacked him.

Who would have imagined that Ojwin had indeed attacked. This caused Linley to worry that one day, if Adkins had the desire, he too would come to deal with them. That would be terrible.

"Don't worry." Dylin laughed. "Linley, Highgods have their own pride. If you don't go irritate a Highgod, a Highgod generally won't lower themselves to deal with you. Generally speaking, even full Gods won't lower themselves to deal with you, much less Highgods."

In the world of Deities, there was this custom; only Deities of the same level and status would fight each other.

For example, as long as a Demigod wasn't so hotheaded as to go irritate a God, the God wouldn't go kill him. But of course, if one violated the God's will or irritated him somehow, the God wouldn't show mercy either.

For example, Beirut had given the order that Deities and Saints were not permitted to engage in slaughter or cause destruction in the Eighteen Northern Duchies. If Deities came over despite that, then Beirut would naturally reveal some of his power, like how he directly killed those Demigods with one palm slap!

Highgods were definitely capable of killing Demigods with a single palm slap.

After all, the difference in power was enormous.

“That’s good.” Linley felt relieved as well.

At the same time, he thought back to the scene of how, when Ojwin had arrived, Ojwin hadn’t actively attacked him either. Clearly, he disdained from doing so, and instead had his subordinates attack…this was the situation in places where experts were common. For example, if two sides were engaging in warfare, the leaders would fight the leaders, while the soldiers would fight the soldiers.

“Tarosse, be careful when dealing with Ojwin.” Dylin smirked. “Don’t end up getting beaten by Ojwin instead.”

“What a joke!”

Tarosse immediately snickered. “What do you take me for? A new God like you who is easily bullied?” After speaking, Tarosse gave Dylin no face at all, immediately flying out of Dragonblood Castle’s main hall and towards the imperial capital at high speed.

“Jerk.” Dylin cursed softly.

Linley looked at the experts nearby, a smile hovering on his face. Now that everyone was fine and that Dragonblood Castle returned to its normal tranquility, Linley felt a sense of contentment in his heart. He raised his head towards the sky, staring at it through main hall’s door. “Bebe is about

to arrive!”

……..

“Boss, how about, you come live with me in the Forest of Darkness?” Bebe suggested. “Don’t worry, Grandpa Beirut definitely won’t stop me from bringing you all over. When the time comes…you, me, and Taylor and the others will all live in the Forest of Darkness. I don’t think anyone would dare go to the Forest of Darkness.”

This was Bebe’s idea!

After Ojwin’s attack, Bebe was beginning to worry as well.

“Don’t worry. There are no longer any problems.” Linley laughed. “Tarosse and Dylin have already arrived, and they are all full Gods. With them present…at least Gods aren’t able to threaten us now. As for that Adkins, as I see it, he has no reason to come deal with me, a Demigod.”

Bebe thought about it, then agreed that Linley made sense.

If Adkins wanted to kill Linley, even if Linley decided to live in the Forest of Darkness, Adkins could wait for when Beirut wasn’t present, then head over…in addition, would he, a Highgod, lower himself to deal with a Demigod?

“But I have to say, this time things really did get quite dangerous. It was an extremely close one.” Linley sighed with feeling.

If it hadn’t been for Dylin acting at just the critical moment, himself and Olivier probably would have been finished.

“What was the danger?” Bebe rebutted. “Actually, Grandpa Beirut arrived at Dragonblood Castle before they did. Only, my Grandpa Beirut couldn’t be bothered to act if not necessary. If Dylin and the others hadn’t made it in time, though, Grandpa Beirut definitely would have intervened.”

Linley couldn't help but feel surprised.

"If Grandpa had not intervened at the critical moment, even in death I would no longer recognize him as my grandpa." Bebe said somewhat angrily.

"Your Grandpa Beirut is also a Highgod after all, and I've heard that he is a Sovereign's Emissary. Given his status…how could he so casually intervene?" Linley spoke out on Beirut's behalf. Bebe let out two sniffs, then no longer spoke. After all, Bebe still liked Grandpa Beirut very much.

He could feel Beirut's love for him.

But Bebe, having never met his parents, naturally was closest to Linley.

Linley secretly said to himself, "So Lord Beirut really did arrive early on. Only, he didn't intervene…it seems that Lord Beirut simply watched as Desri's divine clone perished." Linley was beginning to understand.

Beirut was a very proud person.

Desri's life and death, Olivier's life and death, Beirut probably wouldn't care about at all.

It was only because of Bebe that Beirut was somewhat willing to take care of Linley.

Within the Forest of Darkness.

"I've told you to work hard on training in the Elemental Laws of the Earth, the Elemental Laws of Fire, and the Elemental Laws of Water, these three Laws. But you…if you keep acting like this, even after a hundred million years, you still won't be able to become Highgods!" Beirut stared at the two Violet-Gold Rat Kings in front of him.

The two Violet-Gold Rat Kings didn't dare to make a sound.

“Alas. I suppose I can’t blame you.” Beirut shook his head and sighed. “You are more proficient in the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Elemental Laws of Darkness. Training in the other three types of Laws, you are indeed too slow, too slow!”

“Father.” One of the two Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Harvey, spoke out. “I’ve trained for over a million years, but…I haven’t reached the Deity level in the earth, fire, or water elements. Honestly, I feel so tired when I train in them. It is completely different from when I train in the Laws of Darkness or the Elemental Laws of the Wind. It feels so relaxing when I train in those.”

“Forget it. Do what you want.”

Beirut shook his head. “Actually, I already have many things. I shouldn’t be so greedy.”

“That child, Bebe.” A hint of a resigned smile was on Beirut’s face. “In his heart, I’m not as important to him as that Linley. Hehe…he doesn’t realize that even if he didn’t ask me for help, just based on how Linley had taken care of him for so long, I wouldn’t just stand there and watch as Linley died. However, I have limits as to how much I can help him.”

Even someone as powerful as a Highgod wasn’t capable of teleportation.

For example, Beirut. Although his divine sense might tell him that tens of thousands of kilometers away, someone was trying to kill Linley, at such a distance, despite being fast, it would take him some time to get there. If he, Beirut, wasn’t able to make it in time…he would be helpless to act as Linley was killed.

“Hart, Harvey, the two of you, as well as your older brother, Harry. I don’t want to say anything else. You can choose your own path. If you truly are unable to take the path that I have arranged for you, then you can do as you please. Only, don’t regret it in the future.”

“Yes, Father.”

Hart and Harvey exchanged glances, a hint of delight in their eyes.

Seeing this, Beirut couldn't help but let out a sigh.

Sometimes, the road which the elders had arranged clearly was the correct one, but if the children such as Hart and Harvey didn't like it, what could he do?

Dragonblood Castle.

A human figure flew through the air at high speed, landing within Dragonblood Castle. Soon, under the guidance of a maid, the person was led to Linley's training area.

"Oh, Miller. Come in." Linley's voice rang out from within the western gardens.

A few days ago, Tarosse had already forced Ojwin to retreat. Leading his subordinates, Ojwin had fled away from the borders of the Baruch Empire.

Tarosse, Dylin, the War God, and the others all lived in the east gardens. Dragonblood Castle was an extremely large place, and there was no problem at all finding places for people to live. With so many experts all in one place, even Ojwin didn't dare come again. And although Olivier was very self-confident, he knew when to advance and when to retreat.

Now that Ojwin had sworn to kill him, Olivier naturally remained in Dragonblood Castle.

However…

Desri did not. The day of the battle, Desri's original body had fled with the others. Linley had also mentally spoken to him to return, but who would have imagined that although the others had returned, Desri hadn't come back to Dragonblood Castle. He returned to his secret mountain village instead.

“Lord Linley.” Miller immediately bowed upon entering, then said urgently, “Lord Linley, please make a trip with me. Right now, Lord Desri is in very bad shape.”

“What’s wrong?” Linley frowned.

Miller laughed bitterly. “Ever since a few days ago, Lord Desri returned, then shut himself into his study and refused to allow anyone to disturb him. At the time, we all felt the look on Lord Desri’s face was off. Madame Pennslyn went to speak with him as well, but she was cursed out and force to leave by Lord Desri.”

“Cursed?” Linley was shocked.

“Right. Lord Desri has a very good temper. He has never cursed the Madame before. In addition, the Madame also sensed that Lord Desri seems to be in very bad shape and is very frustrated.” Miller said hurriedly.

“Let’s go. I’ll make a trip with you.” Linley didn’t hesitate.

Linley hadn’t imagined that this setback would change Desri so much.

From his own perspective, if Linley had lost his divine wind clone, Linley wouldn’t be so explosive and despondent. He would just grit his teeth, then begin training in another Elemental Law. After all, at least he would have been alive.

Within the mountains. The mountain residence. Linley and Miller were walking together.

“Third Bro, you came.” Seeing Linley, Reynolds revealed a hint of a smile.

Reynolds was much more mature than he had been in the past as well. However, at present, Reynolds was still only an Arch Magus of the ninth rank. He hadn’t been able to make it into the Saint level yet.

“Linley, go take a look. Desri isn’t willing to see anyone right now. From the looks of it, he doesn’t seem to be training either. I don’t know what he’s thinking about.” Pennslyn walked over, a bitter smile on her face.

Linley nodded slightly.

Linley understood something. “It seems Desri hasn’t told his friends and family about the destruction of his divine clone yet.” Under Pennsyln’s guidance, Linley immediately headed off, arriving in front of a closed study. The door to the study opened with a push. Seeing Desri seated cross-legged there, Linley was very shocked.

Was this the same graceful, refined Desri he had known?

Chapter 12 – Desri's Decision

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 12, Desri's Decision

Of gentle temperament, with a smile ever-present on his face. This was the image of Desri which Linley had in his mind. But right now, Desri's hair was disheveled, and his entire body emanated a brutal aura. Even when Desri noticed Linley's arrival, he hadn't changed his aura at all.

"You came." Desri said calmly.

Linley secretly sighed.

The destruction of his divine clone had apparently truly been a major blow to Desri's psyche.

"Desri, it's useless to feel regret over the destruction of your divine clone. Right now, what you can do is work hard and think about your future path. The way you are right now, so frustrated that you aren't even talking to family and friends, keeping everything bottled up inside, will make your family and friends feel worried about you." Linley urged.

Desri was silent for a moment.

"When I came back, my mind was in a state of chaos. I didn't want to speak with them." Desri spoke.

Linley nodded slightly.

Desri and Linley were different. After all, Desri had worked hard for over five thousand years to become a Deity. The results of his five thousand years of effort had disappeared in one day. Nobody would at first be able to accept something like that with perfect calm.

"Desri, what's your decision?" Linley sighed as he asked. "Are you going

to train in other Elemental Laws to become a Deity on your own, or find a divine Demigod spark and fuse with it to become a Deity?" By this point, Desri had no other options.

Desri let out a self-mocking laugh.

"Train in other Elemental Laws?" Desri looked at Linley. "Linley, I was most skilled at the Elemental Laws of Light, but even so, it took me a very long period of time to become a Deity. If I were to change to other Elemental Laws, it would take me over ten thousand years. Tell me, how can I possibly become a Deity on my own again?"

Linley was silent for a moment.

Linley understood that every person had their own strong points and specialties. For example, if Linley were forced to train in the Elemental Laws of Darkness, which he knew nothing about, even if he spent ten times or a hundred times the amount of effort, his achievements in the Elemental Laws of Darkness still wouldn't reach the level of his Elemental Laws of the Wind.

Half the effort for twice the results; double the effort for half the results. There was a huge difference between the two.

"Desri, I know that you have the most aptitude for the Elemental Laws of Light…" Linley said solemnly. "That divine spark of yours was seized by that silver-robed man serving Ojwin. Don't worry. I will definitely come up with a way to seize that divine spark back for you."

If Desri's original body were to fuse with his own divine spark, then he would be able to succeed in a very short period of time.

But Linley also understood that it was hard to say as to whether or not that silver-robed man would show himself again.

"If I'm not able to find your divine spark, then I will come up with a way to find another light-style divine spark." Linley said.

As Linley saw it…originally, when Ojwin had attacked, Desri had given him great face by not immediately retreating, which resulted in his divine clone being destroyed. Desri originally had a future in the light-style Laws, but now, his only choice was to choose fusing with a divine spark to become a Deity again.

He, Linley, had to help him.

“No need.” Desri said with unwavering determination.

Linley couldn’t help but feel startled.

What did this Desri want? Could it be that he himself, relying on his power as a Prime Saint, would go seize a divine spark?

“I don’t want to train in the Elemental Laws of Light any longer.” Desri looked at Linley and sighed. “Linley, after multiple battles, I’ve discovered that training in spiritual attacks is quite disadvantageous in battles. I want to train in mysterious truths that are of use in close combat.”

“Close combat?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

He hadn’t expected that Desri would actually decide to change his path of training.

But it made sense. After becoming a Deity, Desri had engaged in two major battles, the first time against Beaumont, the second time against the silver-robed man who Ojwin commanded. Desri had realized…that solely relying on spiritual attacks was greatly disadvantageous in battle.

Although the soul was extremely important, close quarters, physical attacks were more effective.

“If that’s the case?” Linley came to a decision. With the flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a black divine spark out of nowhere, which was currently emanating a deathly aura.

Desri couldn't help but look at the divine spark. "Linley, what is this?" But Desri could tell what it was as well.

Linley nodded slightly. "Right. This is the divine spark which I got when we killed Beaumont. This divine spark's nature is of the Edicts of Death. In training, aside from the Seven Elemental Laws, there are also the Four Edicts. The Edicts of Death include both strong spiritual attacks as well strong close combat abilities. Fuse with it, research it, and break through. You should be able to have some accomplishments."

Desri hesitated slightly.

Actually, right now, Desri very much wanted this divine spark. Only, divine sparks were simply too precious.

Linley had been the one to kill Beaumont, and so the divine spark naturally went to him.

"Take it." Linley was naturally able to tell what Desri was thinking. He tossed the divine spark directly to Desri, who unconsciously caught it. As his hand clasped around the divine spark, Desri's eyes began to shine.

Now that he had a divine spark, becoming a Deity again was nothing more than a matter of time.

"Thank you." Desri only said these two words to Linley.

Linley smiled. "Desri, as I see it, it's best if you come to Dragonblood Castle to train. Currently, Tarosse and Dylin are both there. It is fairly safe there…as for this place, I'm worried that Deities might discover that you are fusing with a divine spark. They might come and steal it from you."

Desri nodded in agreement.

In the current Yulan continent, there were many Deities present.

Even though he was training within the mountain, Desri wouldn't be able to avoid the divine sense of a Deity. Most likely, the vast majority of Deities would be willing to kill Desri, a mere Prime Saint, for the sake of acquiring a divine spark.

When Desri came out, Pennslyn, Reynolds, and the others all let out a sigh of relief. This time, Desri clearly explained what happened to Pennslyn. Only now did Pennslyn know…that her husband had actually lost his divine spark.

No wonder he had been like that.

For the sake of safety, Pennslyn and the others all decided to go with Desri to Dragonblood Castle as well.

Dragonblood Castle's interior was extremely spacious. It wouldn't even be a problem if thousands of people came. Linley was very happy as well… because this meant that Reynolds would also be living at Dragonblood Castle. The two bros would once again be able to often drink and chat together.

Meanwhile, after Ojwin's forces had been pushed out of the Baruch Empire, the other Deities who lay hidden in the Yulan continent, seeing that even the full God, Ojwin, had been sent fleeing, didn't dare to dream of taking over the Baruch Empire for themselves.

The Baruch Empire slowly returned to normal.

Linley's side remained in Dragonblood Castle, training contentedly, but Ojwin's forces, who had been sent fleeing, couldn't be so relaxed.

In a small town near the borders of the O'Brien Empire, the exalted God, Ojwin, was hiding here for now. Currently, the O'Brien Empire was Lord Adkins' territory. No matter how daring Ojwin was, he wouldn't dare try to take Adkins' territory from him.

"Recently, his lordship has been in an unstable mood."

“Kingsley died. No wonder his lordship is acting like this.”

A silver-robed man was chatting with a black-robed man. In recent days, almost no one dared to go disturb Ojwin. They would wait for Ojwin to give them orders, and then they would carry them out.

Ojwin was currently seated in front of his desk, drinking one cup of wine after another, his gaze unsettled. Clearly, he was thinking about something.

“Olivier…”

The more Ojwin thought about it, the more his body naturally emitted that baleful aura. He truly wanted to kill Olivier!

“If I don’t kill Olivier, I’ll never be at ease.” Ojwin’s fiery rage continued to smolder. “But that Tarosse’s strength is simply too astonishing. Even if I were to fight against him at full strength, I would probably still be at a disadvantage. With both him and Dylin both remaining in Dragonblood Castle, how will I kill Olivier?”

Ojwin was a man of great ambition.

He was able to endure, while at the same time, wasn’t willing to subordinate himself to others.

Through the countless years he had spent in the Gebados Planar Prison, Ojwin had only two goals he had pursued; to reach the greatest heights of power and authority, and to protect his son.

He didn’t casually decide to offend others. In the Planar Prison, he had known quite a few experts, most of whom he was on good terms with. He was able to gain quite a bit of fame in Bluefire City, while at the same time, Ojwin continually pursued the goal of becoming a Highgod!

A Highgod was simply far more powerful than a God could ever be.

Now that his son was dead, Ojwin wanted to seek revenge. At the same time, he still had the goal of becoming a Highgod.

“First, revenge.” Ojwin stared towards the southwest. “But by myself, it is impossible for me to go to Dragonblood Castle and kill Olivier when he is being protected by Tarosse and Dylin. It seems, I’ll have to make this choice…”

Ojwin didn’t like subordinating himself to others.

But now, he decided to do so.

“Oerph has something of a grudge against me. If I go serve Lord Adkins, at least that Hanbritt [Han’bu’li’te] who serves him is on good terms with me. In that place, I’ll be able to quickly establish myself. It shouldn’t be too hard for me to gain revenge by relying on Lord Adkins’ power.”

Ojwin’s gaze turned as cold and as sharp as a knife.

“Olivier. I will definitely kill him! I will destroy his soul and scatter his spirit!!!” Ojwin ground his teeth.

The imperial capital of the O’Brien Empire. The imperial palace.

The imperial clan who had been in the imperial palace had been exterminated long ago. This was now the place where Lord Adkins lived. Adkins had a few hobbies. He liked wearing extravagant clothes, he likes to sample some precious, rare foods, and he liked to watch beautiful women dance…

He held a wine cup in his right hand, as jade-white as that of a woman’s. He took a gentle sip of the wine, smiling calmly as he watched the many women dancing within the flowers in front of him.

Right now, in the rear flower gardens, the youth with short silver hair was currently leading the way for Ojwin.

“Don’t be hasty. Lord Adkins is currently enjoying himself. At a time like this, Lord Adkins hates it when others disturb him.” The youth with short silver hair explained.

Ojwin nodded and laughed, “I’ve heard as well that when Lord Adkins was in Bluefire City, he liked to enjoy himself. Only someone as exalted as Lord Adkins was capable of enjoying himself like that in a place like the Gebados Planar Prison.”

The silver-haired youth laughed as well.

Others had been tormented in the Planar Prison, but someone as mighty as Adkins enjoyed his time there.

“Come in.” A voice rang out in their minds.

The silver-haired youth immediately led Ojwin into the rear flower gardens. Upon arriving in front of Adkins, Ojwin immediately knelt on one knee with respect. “I pay my respects to the exalted, mighty Lord Adkins!” Ojwin lowered his head.

Adkins, seated on his chair, glanced sideways at him.

“Ojwin? Right, I heard that a while ago, you were in the Baruch Empire.” Adkins said with a smile.

“My strength was inferior to another’s, and so I had to depart the Baruch Empire.” Ojwin still didn’t dare to lift his head.

Although he was now joining Adkins’ side, Ojwin didn’t dare to ask Adkins for help. He knew…that to a Highgod, whether or not he accepted another God in his entourage didn’t make much of a difference at all.

“You can rise.” Adkins said calmly. “From today onwards, you can stay in this imperial palace as well. If there’s anything I need, I’ll send you orders.”

“Yes, Lord Adkins.”

Ojwin felt relieved.

He knew…that now that he was serving Adkins, at least Adkins would protect him.

“Ojwin, you can go for now.” Adkins said.

“Yes, Lord.” Ojwin left respectfully.

Adkins glanced at the nearby silver-haired youth. “Hanbritt, from what I know, when those people who had gone to the Necropolis of the Gods came back, that Beirut should have returned to the Forest of Darkness. How about this…you send a subordinate to make a trip to the Forest of Darkness. You don’t need me to tell you what the purpose is, right?”

“Yes, Lord.” The silver-haired youth, ‘Hanbritt’, said respectfully.

Adkins stared towards the northeast, and then he laughed. He drained the remaining wine in his cup in one gulp.

Chapter 13 – The Millennial Cycle

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 13, The Millennial Cycle

The massive trees rose high into the skies, and brambles and vines could be seen everywhere. Some particularly enormous rattans hung from large tree branches, and vicious, brutal magical beasts were hidden everywhere within this primal forest. The Forest of Darkness had existed for simply too long. The ground was covered with an extremely thick layer of leaves.

A man who had resplendent golden hair was walking atop the leaves, making 'crunch' sounds with each step.

"Whew!"

The gold-haired man's chest heaved as he let out a long sigh.

"This mission…jeeze…" The gold-haired man felt very resigned. He had received Hanbritt's orders to go to this place, the Forest of Darkness, to pay a visit to Lord Beirut.

From Hanbritt, he had also learned…

This Beirut was a Highgod!

"I'm a Demigod. Lord Beirut could kill me with a flip of his hand." The gold-haired man felt somewhat worried in his heart. "I don't know if that Lord Beirut has any enmities with Lord Adkins. Even if he does, I pray that he won't vent his spleen on a minor figure like myself."

He exited the dense forest, arriving at a wide, empty grassy area.

In the center of this grassy area was a metallic castle.

"Kuchai [Ku'chai] comes to pay his respects to Lord Beirut!" The golden-

haired man said loudly, standing in front of the metallic castle while bowing respectfully.

“Is there something you need?” A gravelly voice rang out directly into the golden-haired youth’s mind.

Kuchai immediately raised his head, but he didn’t see anyone nearby, only that cold, metallic castle in front of him. Kuchai understood that Lord Beirut disdained to meet him, and so had only reached out with divine sense. Kuchai hurriedly bowed and said, “Lord Beirut, I was lucky enough to escape from the Gebados Planar Prison, and I have heard of the Necropolis of the Gods. I don’t know if I can enter the Necropolis of the Gods?”

Right.

What Adkins had ordered him to do was for him, a Demigod, to investigate what Beirut’s attitude towards opening the Necropolis of the Gods again was.

“Enter the Necropolis of the Gods? Yes, you can!” Beirut’s gravelly voice rang out.

The golden-haired youngster’s eyes were instantly filled with delight.

“Only, the Necropolis of the Gods is only opened once a millennium. If you want to enter it, come again after waiting a thousand years.” Beirut’s reply instantly made Kuchai somewhat flabbergasted.

“Enough. You can leave now.” Beirut said calmly.

“Lord Beirut, can’t you open it earlier?” Kuchai said respectfully.

“I told you to leave!” Beirut’s voice rang out once more.

Kucha’s heart shivered. He knew that the consequences of irritating a Highgod were extremely grave. No longer daring to say anything else, he

immediately paid his respects, “Thank you, Lord Beirut.” And then, Kuchai immediately left the metallic castle.

Within the metallic castle.

Beirut stroked his black beard, letting out a snicker. “This Adkins. He actually sent a Demigod to investigate. Could it be that he thinks that coming personally is too much trouble? Hmph. Fine, then, Adkins. I’ll toy with you a bit.” Beirut’s eyes had a hint of ridicule within them.

And then, Beirut broadcast out his divine sense in all directions like a wave.

“The Deities who are still here at the Yulan continent, the Necropolis of the Gods is opened only once every millennium, and it has just been opened not too long ago. Those of you who wish to enter the Necropolis of the Gods must wait a thousand years…also, there is a limit to the number of people who will be granted entry. Only the strong will be allowed in.”

A hint of a mocking smile on his face, Beirut sent this message to every single Deity within the Yulan continent.

“It seems the coming days will be amusing, now.” Beirut’s smile was very bright.

Beirut’s message rang out in Adkins’ mind, along with the others. Adkins, who had been within a side hall of the imperial palace, teasing and cavorting with a bewitching beauty, suddenly came to a halt. “Baby, you can go back for now. Tonight, I’ll come looking for you again.”

“Yes, milord.” The golden-haired beauty smiled, then retreated.

Adkins began to consider Beirut’s divine sense message.

“Lord Adkins.” The silver-haired elder entered the side hall as well.

“Barnas, you came.” Adkins smiled and nodded. “You should have heard the message just now from Beirut as well.”

Originally, Adkins had three Gods under his control. Now, of course, with Ojwin on his side, he had four. But the person whom Adkins trusted was this man in front of him, Barnas. The likes of that silver-haired youngster, Hanbritt, was very nervous in front of Adkins.

But when Barnas and Adkins chatted, it was as though they were just friends.

“According to what Beirut said, and based on what we know, this once-per-millennium rule should be true. To us, a thousand years is nothing much… Lord Adkins, let’s just wait a thousand years. After a thousand years, we’ll enter the Necropolis of the Gods.” The silver-haired old man said.

Adkins frowned, his elegant, slender nose wrinkling. “A thousand years…”

“If I have to wait, I’ll wait. I’m enjoying myself in the mortal world right now anyhow.” Adkins said with a calm smile. “Only, that fellow Beirut really is quite cocky. He relies on the power of the Sovereign backing him up, and even goes as far as to say the number of slots is limited for entering the Necropolis of the Gods. Jeeze. Hmph!”

Adkins let out a cold, disdainful snort.

He had a very bad view of Beirut, but Adkins wasn’t completely confident in his ability to kill Beirut. After all, Beirut might have a Sovereign artifact.

“Haha…” The silver-haired old man laughed. “Lord Adkins, the powerful will enter, right? As long as he lets people in, who in the entire Yulan continent is more qualified than you, milord? The limited list has no impact on you whatsoever, milord.”

Adkins laughed and nodded.

He was a Highgod.

Beirut was the caretaker of the Necropolis of the Gods, and naturally

wouldn't go inside it himself. Aside from Beirut, who in the entire Yulan continent was as powerful as him, Adkins?

Within the imperial palace of the Yulan Empire, within an enormous hot tub that was dozens of meters long.

A tall, thin, brown-haired youth was lying naked in the hot tub. This sort of hot tub was something which only the most highly ranked nobles could enjoy. On the other side of the hot tub, there were many people constantly adding firewood to the fire below it, maintaining its temperature.

The hot air simmered.

The brown-haired youth was like a spirit within the mists.

"A thousand years? Then I'll wait. The environment of the Yulan continent is not bad at all. It's much better than the Gebados Planar Prison, at least, where one would never know when a life-threatening problem would occur." The brown-haired youngster let out a sigh.

Within the Yulan continent, the likes of Highgods such as Adkins, the Gods who had taken over the various alliances and others Empires, the Gods who had hidden themselves elsewhere, and the Demigods who served those Gods, were willing to remain in the Yulan continent due to their desire for the treasures held within it.

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Linley continued to live a quiet life of training. Generally, Linley would rest for one day out of every seven, and he would spend some time with little Arnold, or go chat with Reynolds, Dylin, and the others. But of course, the rest of the time, Linley was hard at work training.

His divine clone lived within Dragonblood Castle, while Linley's original body remained within the pocket dimension, focusing on training in the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'.

In truth, it didn't make a difference which one was where. After all, the soul of the two were the same.

Within the pocket dimension.

"The most important thing is to strengthen the soul of the original body. As for that divine clone, all it really needs is to refine that Golden Soul-Pearl." The Golden Soul-Pearl which Linley had acquired from the Grand Warlock was actually formed from twenty million soul essences.

Linley had allowed his divine clone to absorb those twenty million soul essences.

And…

Within Beaumont's ring, there had been millions of already successfully refined soul essences, as well as nearly a hundred million unrefined soul essences. Linley was planning to utilize the Coiling Dragon ring to absorb them all with his original body.

Beaumont originally had intended for Chiquita to help him refine those souls. Although Chiquita was innately capable of refining souls, his strength was far lower than that of the Grand Warlock's. No matter how innately gifted he was, his speed in refining these souls was only on par with the Grand Warlock's at most.

In just a few short months, Chiquita had only been able to refine a few million souls.

Beaumont normally would just give Chiquita a portion of the souls. After Chiquita finished refining them, he would give him another portion. The vast majority of the souls were all stored within Beaumont's interspatial ring.

The Coiling Dragon ring swallowed all of the soul into itself at one ago, including the soul essences. Instantly…

Countless soul essences were now floating around within the Coiling Dragon ring, and those countless golden threads were being absorbed into Linley's soul. Linley's original body's soul was currently growing at an astonishing rate. The more powerful the soul grew, the faster it absorbed as well.

Towards the later stages, Linley's soul improvement speed was simply astonishing.

Only, the amount of soul essences he was consuming was also astonishing.

Nearly a hundred million soul essences!

"Those twenty million soul essences had allowed my soul to grow more than ten times as powerful as it had been previously. A hundred million soul essences…" Linley couldn't help but sigh in amazement. Actually, Linley could tell how much more powerful his soul had become, just based on his visualization speed for the Throbbing Pulse of the World.

Originally, when he had become a Deity, the natural laws of the universe had descended.

Linley's soul had been bathed within the natural Laws of the world, and there was an instant…where Linley's soul had suddenly changed. This was actually a benefit every single person who became a Deity on their own would experience.

That transformation caused Linley's visualization ability to increase more than ten times. After having drained those twenty million soul essences, his visualization speed had increased yet again. The two complimentary boosts had increased his speed a hundredfold, allowing him to, in three short months, advance from the 64 Fused Waves to the 32 Fused Waves level.

From the 32 Fused Waves to the 16 Fused Waves, he had taken one year and three months.

Over the course of Linley's absorption of those hundred million souls, his

visualization speed had been constantly increasing.

“My visualization ability has increased dramatically. The amount of time I will need to break through to the Eight Fused Waves level should be much less now, as well.”

Linley’s original body’s soul was clearly many times more powerful than the soul of his divine clone, even after the divine clone had also absorbed a Golden Soul-Pearl. Actually…a reason for this was because Linley wanted to complete his insights on the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ as quickly as possible. And the second reason was that his original body, upon once more reaching the Deity level, would have its soul split in two yet again.

Thus, the stronger his original body’s soul was, the better.

Within the garden of Dragonblood Castle.

Linley, Dylin, Tarosse, the War God, and the others were all gathered together. Not long ago, they too had heard Beirut’s instructions.

“A thousand years?” Tarosse sighed. “Even Adkins is staying in the Yulan continent. Clearly, his target is the Necropolis of the Gods. There will definitely be many experts taking part in that next opening in a thousand years. Everyone, are you planning to go in a thousand years later as well?”

“Of course.” The War God was the first to speak.

On this trip to the Necropolis of the Gods, the War God had not acquired a divine God spark. This caused the War God to feel rather disgruntled. After all, his old foe, the High Priest, Catherine, had successfully acquired a divine God spark.

“Linley, Olivier, what about you two?” Tarosse looked at Olivier and Linley.

“A thousand years later?” Linley laughed, not replying.

“Might go in. Might not.” This was Olivier’s reply.

Tarosse stared. “Olivier, what sort of an answer is this? ‘Might go in, might not’. Those were the only two options to begin with. You might as well have given no answer at all.”

“What I meant was…” Olivier said seriously. “If in a thousand years, I am still in the Yulan Plane, I’ll go to the Necropolis of the Gods. If by then, I have already gone to other planes, then naturally I won’t be able to enter the Necropolis of the Gods again.”

“Go to other planes?” The War God was rather puzzled. “In other planes, you’ll be nothing more than a Demigod with no background. Do you think you’ll be able to make a good life for yourself in the Higher Planes or the Divine Planes?”

The countless material planes and Higher Planes had all been in existence for far too long.

The Higher Planes had powerful forces, clans, and even some Empires. Without any connections or background there, it was better to stay in the Yulan continent. For example, the Yulan continent had the Necropolis of the Gods, something which many experts desired to enter.

“Linley, why don’t you say whether or not you’ll go in?” Dylin looked at Linley.

“What’s the point of discussing it now? A thousand years is too far off into the distance…” Linley let out a sigh. He hadn’t been training for even a century yet. A thousand years? That was indeed too long.

Dylin, Tarosse, and the War God were instantly speechless.

Only now did they remember that Linley had only spent a few decades before reaching the Demigod level. Comparatively speaking…a thousand years later, who knew what Linley would be like?

Chapter 14 – Two Powers Join Forces

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 14, Two Powers Join Forces

The O'Brien Empire. Within a manor.

This was the place where Ojwin currently resided. Today, Ojwin had ordered for an exceedingly sumptuous banquet to be prepared, especially for the sake of his old friend, Hanbritt. Ojwin and Hanbritt sat down opposite of each other, eating while chatting.

"Ojwin, I have the feeling that today, there's something on your mind. Speak plainly, what is it?" Hanbritt grinned as he spoke.

Ojwin chuckled as well.

"I can never fool you, old friend." Ojwin let out a sigh as he spoke, a hint of grief in his eyes. "Hanbritt, you should know that my son is dead. I've never been able to forget about this."

Ojwin let out a bitter laugh. "Honestly speaking, this sort of psychological torture, I…I'm going crazy."

Hanbritt knew how deep the bonds were between Ojwin and his son.

"That's right. I haven't had a chance to ask you. How did your son, Kingsley, die?" Hanbritt asked curiously. "Did he die at the hands of that expert who forced you out of the Baruch Empire?"

"No."

Ojwin shook his head. "If he had died in the hands of that expert named Tarosse, I would be able to hold on to my temper. After all, I'm only slightly weaker than him. I'd still be able to make myself calm down and keep on training until the day comes when my power is greater than

Tarosse's, allowing me to get revenge."

"But, the person who killed my son is a Demigod!"

"Demigod?" Hanbritt was very surprised.

Ojwin couldn't refrain from cursing and nodding, "Right! Nothing but a Demigod. It really f*cking drives me insane. Just a Demigod who I could kill with the flip of my hand, but I don't have a chance to kill him right now."

"Ojwin, are you saying that you want me…" Hanbritt was able to guess what came next.

Ojwin looked sincerely at Hanbritt. "Hanbritt, we've been friends for a very long time now. I definitely have to avenge my son's death. But the opponent is a bit too strong for me. I imagine…if you were to assist me, and if the two of us were to join forces, even though he is being protected by Tarosse, we will definitely be able to easily kill that Olivier."

Hanbritt couldn't help but hesitate.

"How many Gods does the enemy side have?" Hanbritt asked.

"Two. One of them is that Tarosse. The other…seems to be called Dylin or something. But it seems he is just an early God. His power is good deal lower than yours." Ojwin explained.

Hanbritt nodded slightly.

But Hanbritt had the feeling that since Ojwin was weaker than Tarosse, while Dylin was weaker than himself, Hanbritt, the two sides…should roughly be on par with each other.

"Are you unable to go ask Barnas or Gatenby [Gai'teng'bi] to assist?" Hanbritt suggested. "If you can get one of them to come, with the three of us working together, victory will be assured, and very easy at that."

Adkins originally had three Gods under his control; his most trusted Barnas, the silent, taciturn Gatenby, and Hanbritt. In terms of power, Hanbritt was actually the weakest, while Barnas and Gatenby possessed astonishing power.

“Barnas holds me in absolute contempt.” Ojwin said angrily. “As for Gatenby, who knows how long it would take in order to convince that block of wood.”

Hanbritt understood those two people very well. He nodded.

“Hanbritt, don’t worry. I’m not asking you to go and fight that Tarosse to the death. The purpose is to go to kill that Demigod, Olivier…how about this. When we get there, I’ll immediately use my two bodies to tie up Dylin and Tarosse, while your mission will be to, in that short period of time, kill Olivier. What do you say?” Ojwin suggested.

Hanbritt, listening to this suggestion, felt that this indeed didn’t pose much of a risk.

“Ojwin, although your proposal is easily made, in reality, carrying it out will still be quite difficult. Regarding this…I still have to consider whether or not it is worth it for me.” Hanbritt said intentionally.

Ojwin laughed coldly in his heart.

He understood that if he didn’t pay a price, Hanbritt definitely wouldn’t help.

And indeed…

Once he took out a good divine artifact, Hanbritt agreed to help out. Ojwin and Hanbritt came to an agreement. That night, they directly headed to Dragonblood Castle, preparing to immediately kill Olivier in the shortest time possible.

Dragonblood Castle.

Sundown. It was already growing dusk.

Linley, Dylin, and Tarosse were walking side by side towards the main hall, while at the same time, chatting about their training.

“Linley, I believe your training method is somewhat erroneous.” Dylin said with a frown.

“Erroneous?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

This was how Linley had previously trained in order to develop the ‘Hymn of the Wind’.

“I can tell that you are pondering how to utilize the ‘Profound Mysteries of Sound’ of the Elemental Laws of the Wind along with your Bloodviolet sword, so as to generate a more powerful attack, right?” Dylin said, and Linley nodded.

Dylin continued, “By doing this, it is true that you can raise your attack power in a short amount of time. But from a training standpoint, you are wasting time.”

“But by doing so, you are just focusing on minor points. You are focusing on Bloodviolet, and the purpose of understanding the Profound Mysteries of Sound is to use it alongside Bloodviolet. Once you don’t have Bloodviolet, you won’t be able to use your insights with any other weapons. That’s no good. Also, by doing this, it will be very hard for you to truly master and perfect your understanding of the ‘Profound Mysteries of Sound’.” Dylin said seriously. “I urge you to start from the basics.”

“Training in the Elemental Laws, we must start from the basics, then slowly go deeper…go one step at a time. That way, no matter what weapon you use, you’ll be able to utilize a powerful attack based on the Profound Mysteries of the Sound.”

Linley was startled, then he laughed.

“Lord Dylin, I understand.” Linley sighed. “Only, not too long ago, with so many experts descending onto the Yulan continent, I felt a tremendous amount of pressure, which is why I began to train in this sort of short-term power-enhancing method. All of you are back now, but I didn’t take that into consideration and continued to train in that manner.”

“It seems that I really do need to change to start from the basics, and start to gain my insights one step at a time.”

Linley nodded.

“It is good that you understand.” Dylin laughed as well, and as they spoke, they entered the main hall.

“Hey?” Linley glanced into the main hall. “Olivier still isn’t here. Lord Dylin, Lord Tarosse, wait here. I’ll go call Olivier to come over. Tonight, let’s have a get together.”

As Linley spoke, he entered the east gardens, heading towards a secluded manor.

The sky was quite dark. Two human figures slashed through it, hurrying towards Dragonblood Castle. It was Ojwin and Hanbritt. Ojwin’s heart was filled with a murderous intent. He truly wanted to kill Olivier as soon as he got there. He couldn’t help but get excited.

“Hanbritt, I’ve already described that Olivier’s appearance to you. When the time comes, we’ll both use our divine sense to cover the entire Dragonblood Castle. As soon as we discover Olivier, you’ll immediately attack, while I’ll fly over alongside with you, in case that Tarosse blocks us.” Ojwin said with his divine sense.

Hanbritt nodded, a hidden hint of killing intent in his eyes. “Don’t worry. He’s just a Demigod. This time, I will definitely use a full force attack. I’ll definitely be able to instantly kill that person named Olivier.”

“We’re here. Dragonblood Castle is just up ahead.” Ojwin’s breathing grew ragged.

“Later, when I give the order, we’ll simultaneously spread out our divine sense and also simultaneously charge down. We have to make it fast.” Ojwin said.

Hanbritt didn’t argue.

He definitely wanted to kill Olivier in as short a time as possible. The shorter the timeframe, the less of a chance they would have to do battle with Tarosse.

Within the manor.

Olivier had just now stopped his training.

“Let’s go. Everyone’s waiting for you.” Linley said with a laugh.

The two were walking shoulder-to-shoulder as they spoke.

“I don’t know why, but for some reason, I’ve been in an unsettled mood today. Even when I was training, I had to spend a lot of time before I could calm down and absorb myself in training.” Olivier frowned while sighing. “I really don’t understand why I feel so nervous.”

Linley let out a laugh. “Stop thinking wild thoughts. If you really are nervous, then just come into my pocket training dimension.”

“It’s already crowded enough in there. I won’t add to it.” Olivier laughed.

The two were walking on the path within the east garden. Just at this moment, two divine senses suddenly encapsulated the entire Dragonblood Castle. This was the divine sense of full Gods. Linley and Olivier couldn’t sense it at all, and they continued to talk and laugh while walking.

In the same instant the divine senses swept out…

Two figures descended from the sky, charging at high speed towards their target, Olivier!

“Not good!!!” Tarosse and Dylin were both Gods. They sensed the opponent’s divine senses. Naturally, they spread out their own divine sense, and realized that from mid-air, there were two Gods charging straight towards Linley and Olivier.

Two Gods!

Tarosse and Dylin both felt great shock.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Tarosse and Dylin both raised their speeds to their limit, hurrying towards Linley and Olivier while at the same time, using their divine sense to contact the two. “Quick, come to the main hall, quick!!! That Ojwin is coming for you!” Their voices rang out in Linley and Olivier’s minds.

Linley and Olivier both reacted very fast, simultaneously charging towards the main hall.

However…

Ojwin and Hanbritt were just a thousand meters away in the air, and they were charging down at a very high speed. Dragonblood Castle was quite large as well; from the main hall to the east gardens, the distance was also nearly a thousand meters.

“They came to kill Olivier.” While flying at high speed, Linley could guess what was going on.

In terms of speed, Linley was quite a bit faster than Olivier.

“BOOM!” Suddenly, from behind Linley, an ear-splitting rumble could be

heard. The strength of the rumbling vibrations alone caused the nearby earth to shatter, and even the nearby walls were instantly shaken into tiny pieces. Fortunately, there were no serving women or any other ordinary people on the pathways.

“Olivier!” Linley turned to look.

A terrifying roar rang out, and Linley felt as though the entire world had suddenly began to faintly tremble.

“Dylin…” Linley saw that Dylin had opened his mouth. Ojwin and that other expert were actually being drawn towards him by an extremely powerful devouring force.

“Ojwin, this is that so-called ‘weakling’ early-stage God you were talking about?” Hanbritt used his divine sense to angrily curse at Ojwin.

“I had no idea either!” Ojwin felt miserable in his heart as well.

He had never imagined that Dylin was this terrifying. Just then, when the two had charged down, Ojwin’s plan was…even if Tarosse and Dylin came to block them, he himself would split into his two divine clones and be able to tie them up for a short while.

But just as they were about to kill Olivier, that terrifying devouring force had suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

Even himself and Hanbritt combined were somewhat unable to resist that devouring force of Dylin’s.

Ojwin instantly transformed into two people; his divine light clone, and his divine fire clone. Ojwin’s two divine bodies, along with Hanbritt, made for three Deities. Their combined forces were able to just barely stalemate against that devouring force of Dylin’s.

“He really lives up to the name of Heaven Devouring Beast!” Linley mentally sighed in praise.

Divine beasts were extremely powerful. As soon as they reached adulthood, they would naturally become Demigods. One could imagine how strong their innate gifts were.

For him to dare to refer to himself as a ‘Heaven Devouring Beast’, Dylin’s devouring power was hundreds of times more powerful than those three sons of his. He was now a full God. Generally speaking, any Gods that were swallowed by him would die a certain death.

“I was saved by them yet again.” Olivier arrived by Linley’s side, still feeling some terror, while at the same time he looked at Dylin with an amazed sigh. “Linley, this Dylin’s power is perhaps a little too terrifying. What sort of ability is this? What Elemental Law does it belong to?”

Linley didn’t know what to say either.

What sort of Elemental Law did it belong to? Who knew?

“Bebe is a divine beast as well. For him to be named a ‘Godeater Rat’, then…what would his natural ability be?” Linley felt curious.

Chapter 15 – Unwilling to Admit Defeat

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 15, Unwilling to Admit Defeat

The exploding sound, along with Dylin's roar, shook Dragonblood Castle.

"What's going on?" The War God, High Priest, Cesar, Delia, Wharton, Gates, and the others all hastened over. They saw Dylin, Ojwin, and Hanbritt facing off. Instantly, they all moved carefully to stand near Linley.

Delia warmly gripped Linley's hand, saying in a soft voice, "Linley, that Ojwin came again?" Delia was a little worried.

Last time, when Ojwin had attacked, Linley had ordered Delia, Wharton, and the others to hide in the pocket dimension. Thus, Delia and the others had never seen Ojwin. But, as Delia viewed it, the attacking Gods had to be from Ojwin's side.

"It is him. He brought a helper as well. However, Lord Dylin and Lord Tarosse are more than enough to deal with them." Linley comforted softly.

Delia nodded.

The two raised their heads to watch.

"Haha…" Tarosse flew over, laughing loudly. "Ojwin, I didn't expect you'd have the courage to come yet again. It seems you didn't take the words I said to you last time in the imperial capital to heart."

That green whip appeared in Tarosse's hands.

"Crackle crackle." That whip emanated a freezing aura.

Ojwin's two divine clones, along with Hanbritt, both felt terror in their hearts.

“Ojwin!!!” Hanbritt roared furiously through his divine sense. Hanbritt was truly angered now. This situation had developed in a way that was completely different from Ojwin’s predictions.

Ojwin also had a bad feeling.

The two of them were just barely able to resist Dylin’s devouring power. Only by joining forces, along with Ojwin using both his divine clones, were the two able to just barely resist. They were completely unable to move right now. If this situation continued…if Tarosse were to attack, the two of them would be sitting targets!

“Haha, eat a few hundred whip strikes first.” Tarosse laughed loudly as he began to whirl his whip.

A few hundred whips?

The faces of Ojwin and Hanbritt, who were working hard to resist the devouring power, changed dramatically. How could they possibly be able to take the attack of this God head on?

“Whooosh.”

The long green whip danced out like a massive serpent, transforming into brilliant green shadows. The temperature of the nearby area lowered to the freezing point, and a layer of frost appeared on the ground. The long green whip danced like a serpent’s tail, striking viciously towards Ojwin and Hanbritt.

“Retreat!”

Ojwin and Hanbritt simultaneously gritted their teeth, exploding forth the energy within their bodies, risking injury to themselves as they forcibly broke through from the area of Dylin’s devouring force.

“Boom!” An explosion occurred in mid-air, and a sudden tempest arose out

of nowhere. Even some of the decorative plants and trees of Dragonblood Castle were destroyed. Ojwin's two divine clones, along with Hanbritt, stood there in the air above Dragonblood Castle, their faces ashen.

Dylin let out a soft curse. "Hrmph. If it wasn't for the fact that my divine power isn't pure and powerful enough yet, how could the two of you have escaped?"

In the air above Dragonblood Castle. Ojwin's two clones and Hanbritt hovered in mid-air.

"The two of you better f*ck off and stay the hell away. Otherwise, I won't show any mercy this time." Tarosse continued to chortle as he raised his head to stare at those two sorry figures in mid-air.

Hanbritt looked back at Ojwin. He transmitted with his divine sense, "Ojwin, that Dylin, is the 'weakling' you spoke of? Hmph. I think we better go." Hanbritt, having accepted a divine artifact from Ojwin, didn't feel comfortable just leaving by himself.

Ojwin stared coldly down below, his heart filled with raging fury.

As he stared down at Olivier, who stood next to Linley, Ojwin's rage caused his entire body to shake. With his divine sense, he said, "Hanbritt, this was my mistake. I didn't clearly investigate the opponent's strength. But…I absolutely must kill this Olivier. If I don't, even in death, I won't be satisfied."

"Have you gone mad?" Hanbritt stared towards Ojwin rather unhappily.

Ojwin's gaze was still fixed towards the ground below. He replied through his divine sense, "Hanbritt, don't worry…that Dylin's devouring force can only be aimed in one direction. How about this. The two of us will simultaneously attack from different directions. This time, I'll tie up Dylin and Tarosse, while you go kill Olivier. Hanbritt, I'm begging you."

After speaking, Ojwin looked seriously at Hanbritt.

Hanbritt hesitated a moment, and then let out a sigh.

“Fine. I’ll agree.” Hanbritt continued, “But if I encounter any danger, I will be the first to flee. Don’t blame me then.”

“Of course I won’t blame you.” Ojwin looked gratefully at Hanbritt. “Thank you.”

“Get ready.” Hanbritt said.

Ojwin’s divine light clone and divine fire clone simultaneously demonstrated their might. A brilliant holy light swept down, shooting towards Linley’s general area. This sort of holy light was actually a purifying light. Generally speaking, even any Saints hit by this light would be injured.

This was the same technique which Ojwin had used to destroy the imperial palace of the Baruch Empire.

This attack had caused virtually all the people in the palace to die, leaving behind only Ankh and Cena as the lucky survivors, with Cena being badly wounded.

“Not good.” Seeing this, Linley didn’t hesitate at all. He immediately smashed his fists into the ground, and a strange energy force suddenly spread appeared in the air above the dozens of people present. It was like a translucent barrier, immediately covering Linley, Wharton, and the others in its protective embrace.

Forbidden-level earth-style magic – Pulsating Guard!

The Pulsating Guard spell was a large-scale protective magic spell. It generally could be used to protect an entire city. For example, if the opponent used ‘Heavenly Meteor’s Descent’ to create countless boulders to smash down towards a city, one could use the ‘Pulsating Guard’ to protect against it.

Upon reaching the Deity-level, forbidden-level magic spells could be cast in an instant.

And in terms of power, these spells were now much more powerful than the ones Saints could cast. Linley's 'Pulsating Guard' defense was controlled within just a few dozen meters. The holy light was thus successfully defended against by the 'Pulsating Guard'.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!" One white, one red. Two rays of light streaked downwards. Ojwin had never planned on using that holy light to kill anyone; that was just something he was using to create chaos. His two divine clones shot down at what seemed like the speed of light…

And at the same time, Hanbritt moved in an angular way, charging towards Linley's direction.

"I'll go block him! Tarosse, I'll let you handle Ojwin's two divine clones. Don't let him get through." Dylin immediately used his divine sense to speak to Tarosse.

"No worries." Tarosse continued to laugh gaily.

Dylin raised his speed to the limit, transforming into a blur as he went to stop Hanbritt. At the same time, a ray of red light, carrying a destructive aura, wildly attacked Dylin, and the lance Ojwin was wielding also shot out like a devouring fire dragon.

Dylin instantly was greatly shocked. "Has Ojwin gone crazy?"

Dylin could tell that this divine fire clone of Ojwin's was using his divine power wildly, without any care at all. It must be understood…a Deity's divine power accumulated very slowly. Generally speaking, in battle, they wouldn't be willing to so wildly utilize it like this. If they did so, they wouldn't be able to maintain the expenditure for long before their divine power was all used up, at which point, the enemy would be able to easily devastate them.

“Swish!” Dylin’s third eye instantly shot out an invisible ripple.

Ojwin’s divine fire clone, in terms of power, was inferior to his divine light clone. Upon being struck by that invisible ripple, Ojwin’s divine fire clone immediately came to a halt. Dylin then immediately formed his two hands into claws. Those divine artifact gloves atop his hands, he clawed straight towards Ojwin’s head.

“Clang!”

Dylin and the divine fire clone collided viciously.

Dylin was tied up by the divine fire clone, and so that Hanbritt naturally charged towards Olivier. Olivier didn’t have any chance to flee. His speed was far inferior to Hanbritt’s.

“Haha…” Hanbritt’s eyes had a hint of excitement flash through them as he flew down.

“Too early to be so happy.” A lazy voice rang out in Hanbritt’s mind, and suddenly, a black-robed man appeared in front of Hanbritt. This black-robed man was wielding a long, thin, blood-red saber, and directly chopped towards him.

Wherever that long saber passed by, space disintegrated.

“Bang!” Hanbritt’s right hand, flashing with blue light, slammed against the edge of that saber. Instantly, he was knocked flying away. Hanbritt’s hand was also covered by a divine artifact. He, too, used his hands as his weapons.

Hanbritt was greatly shocked. “This Tarosse also has a Destruction-style divine clone!”

Currently, the green-robed Tarosse wielding the whip was still busy with Ojwin. However, this Tarosse with the long, narrow blade was able to force

Hanbritt to retreat in one blow.

“Ojwin, let’s go, quick!” Hanbritt let out a nervous divine sense message to Ojwin, and then immediately fled towards the northern skies, no longer doing battle.

“Aaaaah!”

Ojwin’s divine light clone and divine fire clone both had fierce looks on their faces. They both let out howls of anger and unwillingness to accept this result. They truly weren’t willing to admit defeat. Ojwin had his divine fire clone go deal with Dylin, and had already accepted that he might lose one of his divine clones.

Even at the price of losing one of his divine clones, he still wanted to kill Olivier! This was because…he wished to avenge his son’s death!

But this Tarosse had divine clones as well. And in terms of power…the situation was different from Ojwin’s. The divine Destruction clone which Tarosse had hidden, in terms of power, was actually not one whit inferior to Tarosse’s divine water clone.

Letting out a furious howl of unwillingness, Ojwin’s two divine clones transformed into two rays of red and white light, simultaneously fleeing into the northern horizons.

“It’s finally over.” The vast majority of people in Dragonblood Castle let out sighs of relief.

The guards and maids, who had been hiding, were terrified by this battle. Battles on this level…ordinary people like themselves could be killed just as collateral damage, and even their souls would be destroyed.

“Tarosse, why do you keep hiding your real power? At a time like this, you didn’t at least force one of them to stay behind?” Dylin said somewhat unhappily. “Don’t tell me that you don’t have that ability. You definitely have more abilities that I am unaware of!”

Dylin and Tarosse had lived together on the Yulan continent ten thousand years ago. They were once good friends.

Dylin's innate abilities. Tarosse's innate abilities. They each knew about the other's.

"Haha, don't blame me." Tarosse's two divine clones combined into one again, and he laughed as he looked at Dylin. "Dylin, why did you only use your 'Devour' power a single time? If you used 'Devour' a second time, you probably would have devoured Ojwin's divine fire clone."

Dylin glanced at Tarosse. "Use it again? Easy for you to say. If I used it again, my divine power would be completely exhausted! What a motherf*cking shame. Just then, when I used it the first time, I didn't succeed. I was originally hoping to kill both of them at the same time just then."

This innate ability was simply too terrifying and monstrous.

At the same time, though, the amount of energy it consumed was simply astonishing. The number of times it could be used didn't have too much of a correlation to how powerful one was.

For even the weak, it could be used two or three times. Only, each time, the power would be fairly weak as well. For the strong, it still could only be used two or three times, but each time, the power would be astonishing.

"You are always so greedy. If it weren't for the fact that five thousand years ago, you got greedy and used your Devour ability to try and get some Demigod-level divine sparks for your children…you wouldn't have angered Lord Beirut, resulting in him throwing you into the Planar Prison." Tarosse said with a laugh.

Dylin snorted coldly, no longer saying anything else.

He naturally felt uncomfortable when thinking back to five thousand years

ago.

As Dylin and Tarosse chatted, they walked towards Linley and the others. Linley, the War God, and the others, from this battle, had an even greater appreciation for the difference in power between them and Gods. Given their current level of power, if they were to face any Gods by themselves, they would be doomed.

“Lord Tarosse, Lord Dylin, thank you!” Olivier walked forward and said solemnly.

“It’s fine. But you little rascal, in the future, stop causing so many problems.” Tarosse said with a calm laugh.

Chapter 16 – Turned Back

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 16, Turned Back

Since Ojwin and Hanbritt had been repulsed, the people within Dragonblood Castle became much more relieved. Linley, Dylin, and Tarosse all went to the main hall, chatting and laughing while enjoying the sumptuous dinner feast.

Linley's group were all in a fine mood.

But, Ojwin was in a terrible mood!

In the gray, clouded skies.

Ojwin and Hanbritt were flying shoulder to shoulder back towards the O'Brien Empire.

Hanbritt glanced at Ojwin. "Ojwin, don't be so unhappy. Both Tarosse and Dylin were both more powerful than you had predicted. Just the two of us, go and kill Olivier under their watch? It is virtually impossible."

Ojwin was silent.

"To kill Olivier, the only options are to do so when he leaves Dragonblood Castle, or…when Tarosse and Dylin leave Dragonblood Castle." Hanbritt recommended. "Ojwin, for now, just give it up. When the time comes, if we can ask Lord Adkins to act, or perhaps Barnas or Gatenby to help us, we will have complete assurance of victory."

Whether it was Lord Adkins who acted, or the alliance of Barnas, Gatenby, Hanbritt, and Ojwin, either scenario would result in an easy storming of Dragonblood Castle and the slaying of Olivier.

However…to convince Lord Adkins to act?

“What sort of a person is Lord Adkins? I’m afraid to even speak in front of him.” Ojwin laughed mockingly at himself. “As for Barnas and Gatenby, the two are very hard to make friends with. Unless I spend sufficient time and energy on them, it’s virtually impossible to get them to help.”

“It’s good that you understand this. Thus, for now, endure.” Hanbritt said.

Ojwin was silent.

Endure?

How could he endure and ignore this enmity with the person who had killed his son? Ojwin constantly thought of killing that Olivier.

Hanbritt glanced at Ojwin. He couldn’t help but sigh in his heart, “This Ojwin seems to be possessed. It is best that I destroy any hope or fantasies he might be entertaining.” Hanbritt spoke. “Ojwin, to kill that Olivier, we have to locate his position, and thus must use our divine sense to find him. But at the same time that we do so, we will be discovered. It is impossible for us to kill Olivier under the gazes of Tarosse and Dylin. Thus, you should give up.”

“What did you just say!!!” Ojwin’s eyes widened, and he stared at Hanbritt in shock and joy.

Hanbritt started. “I…I didn’t say anything?”

“What you said just now. Using divine sense to search…” Ojwin was so excited his eyes were shining.

Hanbritt was utterly confused. “Right. If we use divine sense to search for Olivier, Dylin and Tarosse will definitely discover us. Our ambush will thus be unsuccessful. What about it?” Hanbritt didn’t understand why Ojwin had become so delighted.

“Haha…”

Ojwin laughed loudly.

“Huh?” Hanbritt was somewhat confused.

Ojwin took a deep breath, his eyes revealing the excitement he was suppressing. “Hanbritt, when we use our divine sense to search for Olivier, Tarosse will be able to locate us. Then…what if we don’t use our divine sense? Haha, I actually didn’t even think of this. I’m too stupid. Haha…”

Ojwin laughed loudly in excitement.

Hanbritt began to understand somewhat. “Ojwin, if we don’t use our divine sense, there’s no way we’ll be able to find Olivier in a short period of time.”

“Don’t worry.” Ojwin’s eyes revealed a hint of coldness. “It is very simple. I just need to infiltrate Dragonblood Castle. Dylin and Tarosse can’t always be spreading their divine sense out, right? Within Dragonblood Castle, as long as I spend a little bit of time, I’ll be able to find Olivier!”

Ojwin was incomparably confident.

“Be careful. Don’t end up running into Tarosse and Dylin before finding Olivier!” Hanbritt said with a laugh.

“Don’t worry. My luck can’t be that awful.” Ojwin immediately said.

The only danger of his infiltrating Dragonblood Castle alone was that he might run into Dylin or Tarosse before finding Olivier. If that happened, there would be no way he could kill Olivier.

“This method of yours does indeed have a chance at success, and the chance is rather high.” Hanbritt nodded. “Only, this method is dangerous as well. Ojwin, all I can do is wait here and hope for your success. I won’t be able to accompany you.”

“No need.” Ojwin understood the practicalities involved. “I alone will be

enough."

After speaking, Ojwin smiled towards Hanbritt, then immediately turned and flew back towards Dragonblood Castle.

Watching Ojwin's disappearing back, Hanbritt sighed in his heart. "Ojwin's only weakness is that he cared too much about that son of his." Both Hanbritt and Ojwin were incomparably vicious. For example, Hanbritt had been the one to destroy War God Mountain.

Ojwin, in turn, had destroyed the Baruch Empire's imperial palace.

Dragonblood Castle. Linley and Delia's residence.

Linley and Delia were enjoying their own private little world. Linley was lying in bed, with Delia in his arms, her ear pressed against Linley's chest, listening to Linley's heartbeat.

Linley stroked Delia's fragrant hair. Smelling the scent of her hair, he felt his heart at peace.

"Linley." Delia suddenly said.

"Hrm?" Linley replied.

Delia said, "Linley, recently, every day I've been afraid of a battle erupting. This sort of life…" Delia raised her head to look at Linley. "When will this end?"

Actually, Linley could also sense that many people in Dragonblood Castle were very nervous.

"What are you worried about?" Linley sighed. "In the past, when we were young, you were just an ordinary magus, and I wasn't a Saint yet. Didn't we still successfully pass through those days? A road filled with struggles and battles. And now, I have reached the Deity level, while you, Delia, in a few years, will have completely absorbed your divine spark as well and also

become a Deity. We weren't afraid back then. What have we to fear now?"

Delia thought back to those days of the past, when she was all by herself. At that time, Linley and Alice had been together, and then he had disappeared for nearly ten years.

And then Delia thought about how she and Linley were together now.

Delia laughed. Right. What did she have to worry about?

She already enjoyed this sort of quiet life very much. Linley and Delia, although both had to train, would often make the time to be together by themselves, and enjoy this sort of warmth.

"Linley, have you gone to see Alice?" Delia suddenly asked.

"Did you just say Alice?" Linley didn't feel too agitated when the subject of Alice was raised. He only had a feeling in his heart, a feeling that so much had changed, that 'the blue seas had transformed into mulberry fields'. "I haven't seen Alice. What, have you?" Decades had passed since Linley had last seen Alice, prior to her wedding.

"I saw her." Delia said. "And it was right in the imperial capital, Baruch City."

"The imperial capital? Alice is at the imperial capital?" Linley was somewhat surprised.

Delia nodded. "Right. We now have a Proulx Gallery in the imperial capital, and Alice is the manager of that Proulx Gallery. But of course, she's just a branch manager. Alice hasn't changed very much compared to the past, you know. She's still quite beautiful." Delia looked at Linley teasingly.

Linley only laughed.

He still remembered how, during the Apocalypse Day event, he had given Alice and Rowling into the care of managing director Maia.

“In addition, Alice still hasn’t gotten married.” Delia stared at Linley, carefully looking for any changes in his expression.

“What?” Linley was rather surprised.

It had been decades, after all. The puppy love they had shared in the past was insubstantial, like a dream. And on Apocalypse Day, that Kalan had died as well. Linley had thought that Alice would have married long ago.

“What, do you have any special thoughts?” Delia’s laugh was very evil.

“Not really. Only, I feel a bit moved.” Linley said with a laugh.

Delia no longer teased Linley. Nodding, she said, “Honestly, it was Jenne who told me that Alice had arrived in the imperial capital. Jenne used to spend a lot of time in the imperial capital, right? She’s quite a famous figure in the circle of nobles within the imperial capital these days. Naturally, she would encounter Alice during some of the banquets there.”

Just as Linley and Delia were engaged in private conversation between the two of them, husband and wife, a figure suddenly emerged from the earth beneath the rear gardens of Dragonblood Castle. It was Ojwin, who had snuck in.

“It is about time.” Ojwin said to himself.

Actually, Ojwin had been waiting a few hundred kilometers away from Dragonblood Castle. After three or four hours, he had come over. According to Ojwin’s calculations…it should have been dinnertime after the battle just now. He expected it should now be about midnight.

“By now, everyone should be back in their own rooms. Only a few roving patrols are around.” Ojwin suppressed the excitement in his heart.

He began to stealthily move about within Dragonblood Castle.

Dragonblood Castle was extremely large, comparable to a small city. There were thousands of commoners living here, and each night, there were quite a few roving patrols. But of course, for a God of Ojwin's power, he was naturally able to easily avoid those roving patrols.

"Hey, bros, you guys go on up ahead. We're going to take a rest."

The nighttime guards were about to change shifts. One of the units headed towards their own residences, chatting amongst each other. When they reached the northern gardens where the guards and the serving maids resided, they naturally went their separate ways and headed towards their own rooms.

Suddenly, one of the guards who was heading towards his own residence felt his head grow dizzy and his consciousness grow dim. A human figure appeared behind him. It was Ojwin.

"Tell me, where is Olivier." Ojwin spoke out.

Although Ojwin wasn't very proficient at techniques for controlling others, just by relying on his spiritual energy as a God, he was able to easily control an ordinary commoner.

"Don't know." The guard said woodenly.

Ojwin couldn't help but frown. "Then what about Tarosse and Dylin?"

"Don't know." The guard still said.

Ojwin couldn't help but feel some anger, but then he quickly understood. "It seems the ordinary people in Dragonblood Castle aren't familiar with these Deities at all. Only those personal servants will know them." Ojwin pondered his next steps.

"Let me ask you this. Have you ever seen a seemingly young man with white and black hair? He is often together with Linley." Ojwin said.

“Yes I have.” The guard said mechanically.

“Do you know where he lives?” Ojwin felt joy in his heart, and he hurriedly followed up on this line of questioning.

“East gardens. When on our patrols, I have seen that lord. He lives with several other lords in the east gardens. Lord Linley is often together with him.” The guard said. Ojwin’s heart was filled with wild joy. “It seems Olivier, Tarosse, and Dylin are all in the eastern gardens.”

“Lead me there.” Ojwin said.

“Yes.” The guard didn’t resist in the slightest.

The guard immediately led Ojwin out of the northern gardens towards the east gardens.

“Hey, Will [Wei’er], aren’t you going back to get some rest? What are you doing here in the east gardens?” Several roving patrolmen walked over from the east garden. Clearly, they recognized this guard, and they immediately asked him.

Ojwin was currently hidden nearby.

“Tell them that when you were on patrol, you lost something in the east garden, so you came to search for it.” Ojwin immediately said.

The guard said, “When I was on patrol, I lost something in the east gardens. I’m coming to look for it.”

The other guards all began to laugh. “Will, you sure are negligent. It is very dark now. Search carefully. If you can’t find it, come back and search again when it is day.” After speaking, these guards left and went back on patrol.

Although they had the feeling that Will’s manner of speech was somewhat different from the past, they didn’t harbor any suspicions.

After all, they could tell at a glance that this was indeed their old friend, Will.

“Continue.” Ojwin gave the order, and the guard immediately headed deeper towards the east garden of Dragonblood Castle…

Chapter 17 – Mental Message

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 17, Mental Message

The guard led Ojwin forward. After walking for a while, the guard suddenly halted.

“Why did you stop?” Ojwin immediately barked. Right now, Ojwin was using a small-scale Godrealm, causing no sound to transmit outside their bubble.

The guard replied woodenly, “I only know that those lords live in the rooms within. Normally, I am not permitted to enter. I don’t know which lord lives in which room.” The guard’s reply caused Ojwin to be surprised.

However, he understood why this was the case.

The rooms where the likes of Olivier lived was normally off limits to the guards.

“One of the rooms inside…” Ojwin could tell that there were six or seven little buildings within, each building having a courtyard. “That makes this complicated. I don’t know which one Olivier is in.” Ojwin frowned, considering.

War God, High Priest, Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, Olivier. They all lived there. Within the two-floor building where Cesar lived, Cesar was currently seated in the meditative position, his eyes shut.

The Elemental Laws of Darkness which Cesar trained in was a type of profound mystery having to do with stealth.

To Cesar, the darkness was as comfortable to him as a mother’s embrace. Cesar could completely and easily fuse with the darkness, causing others to be completely unable to detect him. At the same time…Cesar could sense

anything which was not part of that darkness.

For example, Cesar could sense that in the building next to his, there was a blazing hot aura.

It was obvious to him as a blazing comet within the darkness.

“Hrm?” Cesar frowned. “Why has someone drawn near so late at night?”

As the ‘King of Killers’, Cesar, a master of subterfuge, was the first to sense that someone was nearing their residences. In addition, Cesar could sense that there was more than one person present. “Such a weak aura. But unfortunately for you, you can’t escape my detection.”

Cesar didn’t use his divine sense either.

To Cesar, using divine sense was an utterly foolish sort of behavior. When you used divine sense, you allowed others to be able to find you as well.

Cesar disappeared into thin air. If a Deity-level was carefully inspecting the area, he might be able to just barely notice that the darkness within the room had changed slightly. Hidden within the darkness, Cesar quickly left his room and headed outside.

Right at this moment…Ojwin and that guard were standing not too far away.

“Him!” From a distance of just a hundred or so meters, Cesar could instantly tell who this person was.

Cesar was shocked, but then he laughed coldly to himself. “This Ojwin really is bold. He actually dares to come here late at night.” It must be said that Cesar’s stealth abilities truly were astounding. He was hidden just a hundred meters away from Ojwin, but Ojwin was completely unable to locate Cesar’s presence.

Cesar instantly used his divine sense, casting it towards the direction of

Tarosse's residence.

Tarosse didn't have any ability to hide his presence, and so Cesar easily located him. "Lord Tarosse, Ojwin came. He's right outside."

Tarosse was greatly shocked, but then his mind became filled with rage. "This Ojwin. Two times in a row, I stayed my hand and didn't go all out against him. Does he really think I'm afraid to kill him?" Tarosse immediately flew outside his residence.

Tarosse's hiding skills were clearly inferior to Cesar's. Only, Tarosse was extremely fast! His residence was only a hundred meters or so away from Ojwin. At such a close distance, as soon as Tarosse flew out of his room, he immediately saw Ojwin and thus shot towards him at high speed.

"Right now, all I can do is find one of the servants who specially serves these Deities, then continue to investigate." Ojwin was planning to go find another servant to interrogate.

"Huh?" Ojwin turned his head in shock.

A figure was shooting towards him at high speed. Ojwin's face changed dramatically, and in his heart, he cursed angrily, "Bastard, him again!!!" Seeing Tarosse come, Ojwin knew that he had failed yet again. Although he was unwilling to admit defeat, he couldn't do anything else now except immediately rocket into the air at high speed.

"Motherf*cker, you want to flee?!" Tarosse's bellowing voice shook the entire Dragonblood Castle.

Instantly, many people in Dragonblood Castle were shocked into wakefulness.

"Hisss…." An ear-piercing hiss seemed to shake the entire world. This sound was louder than the sound of the world exploding, and was far more ear-piercing as well.

“What is that?!”

Wharton, Gates, and the others all came out of their rooms upon hearing the bellow. They were all stunned by what they saw. In the air above Dragonblood Castle, an astonishing, enormous coiled green snake that was ten thousand meters long had appeared. The girth of its body, at least several houses thick, truly caused the hearts of the viewers to turn cold.

The massive green serpent coiled there in mid-air. Raising its head, it emitted that ear-piercing cry.

“No!” A human figure had been completely locked in, in mid-air. The person cried out in desperation and hopelessness.

That enormous serpent’s maw was open, and the space of what felt like the entire world began to tremble. That human figure was only able to resist for a brief instant before he was no longer able to endure that devouring force. Instantly, he was drawn into that enormous serpentine mouth and swallowed into its belly.

The ten-thousand meter long enormous green serpent then transformed into a human figure. It was the green-haired Tarosse.

Tarosse flew down while cursing, “That Ojwin actually interpreted me being good-natured as being me being afraid to kill him. Hmph. Ever since I left the Necropolis of the Gods, I haven’t killed anyone. This fellow didn’t pay any attention to what I said.”

A group of people were gathered below. Even Linley and Delia had hurried over.

“Was that Ojwin just now?” Linley hadn’t seen it clearly just now. He only vaguely saw a human figure be swallowed into Tarosse’s stomach.

Linley had once seen Tarosse’s true form on the third floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

“It was Ojwin.” Cesar laughed. “That Ojwin actually snuck into Dragonblood Castle. He thought we wouldn’t notice him. However…before he even drew near me, I noticed his presence.” How could Ojwin possibly hide himself from Cesar, so skilled in the arts of stealth?

What a silly dream.

Although one was a God and the other was a Demigod, this was Cesar’s specialty, after all.

“Haha, Tarosse, you’ve shown off your ‘Devour’ ability as well.” Dylin laughed.

Dylin’s true form was that of the Suanni Lion, also known as the ‘Heaven Devouring Beast’. He naturally had a vast amount of space in his stomach. As for Tarosse, as a Deity-class beast, the ‘Ba-Serpent’, he also had the innate ability of ‘Ocean Devouring’. The Ba-Serpent had a space in his stomach to begin with, and what’s more, the Ba-Serpent’s body was naturally enormous.

In fact, his devouring ability, compared to Dylin’s, was actually slightly more powerful.

Given that Tarosse’s spiritual energy, in terms of pureness and quantity, was superior to that of Dylin’s, his ‘Devour’ ability was naturally far stronger as well.

“This Ojwin actually came again.” Olivier laughed ruefully. He truly had been frightened just now.

Linley laughed, “Olivier, you can relax now. That Ojwin is now dead. In the future, he won’t be able to come make trouble for you.” Ojwin’s death caused Linley to feel relieved as well. Actually, many people within Dragonblood Castle would be celebrating tonight.

“Don’t be happy so soon.”

Tarosse snorted coldly as he spoke. Opening his mouth, a divine spark that faintly glowed with red light floated out. “Ojwin died inside my body. This is his divine God spark.”

“A fire-style one?” Linley was shocked. Ojwin didn’t have just one body. If the Ojwin that had been devoured was the ‘combined’ Ojwin, there should be two divine sparks present.

“Right. Only the fire-style one.” Tarosse said. “You all know that he has two bodies. And just now, the one which I devoured and killed was only his fire-element divine clone. His divine light clone never came to this place!”

Linley sighed in his heart.

It was much like how, during Ojwin’s first attack, Linley and Desri had kept their original bodies within the pocket dimension. They were guarding against the chance of their divine clones being destroyed, in which case they would be finished.

“It seems that Ojwin was also worried about being killed, so he had also made preparations.” Linley couldn’t help but look at Olivier. The look of concern once more appeared between Olivier’s forehead. If Ojwin didn’t die, then Olivier wouldn’t be able to be relaxed.

“Olivier.” Linley looked at Olivier.

Olivier couldn’t help but look at Linley with a rueful smile. Linley said, “Olivier, right now, none of us know what that Ojwin is capable of doing. How about this. Come to the pocket dimension for your training. In that place, even if Ojwin used his divine sense, he definitely wouldn’t be able to locate you.”

To be honest, there were quite a few people currently present in that pocket dimension now.

“Then, fine.” Olivier didn’t refuse this time.

The pocket dimension alone was the safest haven within Dragonblood Castle.

“Everyone, don’t worry.” Linley turned to look at Wharton and the others. “This time, Ojwin lost a divine spark, which means he lost one of his lives. He only has his divine light clone remaining. He dared to risk it this time, but in the future, he won’t dare. He has no other divine clones.”

Everyone began to laugh.

Only, the War God, O’Brien, stared at the divine spark in Tarosse’s hands, his eyes gleaming.

That was a full God’s divine fire spark. He, O’Brien, trained in the Elemental Laws of Fire. A God-level divine fire spark was something which he, O’Brien, desperately needed. Only, the divine God spark was simply too valuable. He didn’t dare to ask for it directly.

“Aaaaaargh!!!!”

Deep in the night, standing above the vast ground, Ojwin furiously smashed his fists into the earth, releasing an unrelenting, furious howl from his lips.

“BANG!” “BANG!” ……

The earth split apart, but Ojwin still couldn’t vent the unrelenting anger in his heart.

“First time. Second time. All failures! My divine clone…the Elemental Laws of Fire?” Ojwin was filled with boundless rage. He knew that he would never again be able to train in the Elemental Laws of Fire. He only had one body left now; his divine light clone.

From now on, he could only train in the Elemental Laws of Light.

“That Tarosse and that Dylin, what ability was that?” Ojwin couldn’t help but feel his heart shake as he thought back to that terrifying scene.

When Tarosse had began to devour him, it had been a completely different sensation from when Dylin had used the ability. Tarosse had transformed into his true form, that of the Ba-Serpent. When he had used the 'Devour' ability, Ojwin had felt as though he had become completely separated from all other space, and that an irresistible force had surrounded him.

And then, he was immediately swallowed into the Ba-Serpent's stomach.

At first, Ojwin had thought that upon entering the Ba-Serpent's stomach, he could rip through the internal organs to flee. But who would have thought… that the stomach wasn't an material dimension at all. And thus, entirely powerless, he had been killed.

This was the sort of innate ability only a divine beast possessed! Even most people who trained to the Highgod level couldn't possibly create such an immaterial dimension within their stomach.

This was why the likes of the Heaven Devouring Beast and the Ba-Serpent were reputed to be able to swallow mountains and swallow oceans.

"There will, there will come a day!" Ojwin ground his teeth. "There will come a day when I definitely will kill Olivier, and there will come a day when I become a Highgod and will come kill that Tarosse!" Ojwin's heart was filled with extreme hatred towards Tarosse.

But until reaching the Highgod level, Ojwin wouldn't dare to irritate Tarosse again.

And then, Ojwin transformed into a ray of light, streaking into the western skies.

Ojwin's divine fire clone had been destroyed. Indeed, he now no longer dared to cause trouble. Dragonblood Castle once more returned to its normal calm, and Linley began to train quietly as well. After many months had passed, when winter was starting, Linley received a bit of good news.

On this day, Linley was currently absorbed in attuning with the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

Suddenly, a sound rang out in his mind. “Linley, I need to entrust you with something.”

“Lord Beirut?” Linley immediately halted his training.

“Bebe has already reached the stage of transforming into a Deity. This final transformational stage is extremely critical. Remember, starting today, no matter what, don’t reach out mentally to Bebe. Don’t disturb him.” Beirut mentally transmitted to Linley.

Beirut was capable of preventing others from engaging in using their divine sense to speak, but even Beirut was incapable of blocking Linley and Bebe from communicating, due to their connected souls. Thus, he had to deliver a message.

“Transforming into a Deity? Alright, I understand. In this period of time, I definitely won’t send a mental message to Bebe and disturb him.” Linley felt delighted for Bebe as well.

Chapter 18 – Bebe Becomes a Deity

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 18, Bebe Becomes a Deity

Yulan calendar, year 10045. The entire Yulan continent was fairly calm this year.

Linley's original body remained within the pocket dimension, focusing on training in the Throbbing Pulse of the World. His divine clone remained within Dragonblood Castle, spending most of its time on training in the Profound Truths of Velocity, while occasionally analyzing the Profound Mysteries of Sound.

With respect to the Profound Truths of Velocity, Linley was very, very far off from the level of mastery.

Yulan calendar, year 10045, summer. The scorching sun baked the earth, and by the side of a pool of water in the east gardens of Dragonblood Castle, Linley and Cesar were currently seated in a pavilion, enjoying the weather.

"I have to say that the War God really has excellent luck." Cesar let out a sigh.

"Are you referring to the divine spark?" Linley instantly understood what Cesar's sigh was in reference to. Last year, when Ojwin had attacked late at night, he had been killed by Tarosse, who had acquired a divine God spark. In the end, the War God still went to ask Tarosse for that divine God spark.

The result had been…Tarosse had actually agreed.

"A divine God spark! If someone has a God-level divine darkness spark, can I get it, please?" Cesar sighed, his eyes filled with a hint of jealousy. "If I just continue training like this by myself, who knows how long it will take before I can reach the God level."

The longer one trained, the harder it became towards the end.

“I heard that the War God paid a price in order to acquire this divine God spark.” Linley said.

“You call that a price?” Cesar looked at Linley.

Linley nodded. “How is it not a price? Tarosse said that after this ‘Descent of the Gods’ event is over and resolved, the War God will need to go with him to the Infernal Realm and be under his command for the next hundred thousand years. Only after a hundred thousand years will he regain his liberty.”

“Hmph.” Cesar let out a disdainful laugh. “Linley, after hearing Tarosse’s request, O’Brien didn’t think about it for a few days, did he?”

“No.”

Linley was certain about this. “The War God was quite direct. He agreed right away.”

“I’d agree to this sort of request as well.” Cesar wrinkled his nose. “First of all, to advance from Demigod to God, given O’Brien’s level of talent, it’s hard to say if he could accomplish it in a hundred thousand years. You must understand, O’Brien became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark!”

Linley nodded in agreement.

He had indeed fused with a divine spark to become a Deity. But those divine sparks were formed by the universe when others became Deities, and wouldn’t completely be fused with O’Brien’s soul. There were impediments when training as well. To reach the God level, the amount of time it would take would also be far longer than the amount of time experts who became Deities on their own would take.

“So first of all, it will be very hard for him to become a God on his own

power. In addition, aside from the Necropolis of the Gods, where else could he, a Demigod, procure a God-level divine spark?" Cesar continued. "For the sake of a divine God spark, all he has to do is listen to someone else's orders for a hundred thousand years."

"More importantly…"

Cesar's eyes held a hint of anticipation. "He is heading to the 'Infernal Realm'. All he has to do is listen to Tarosse's orders in the 'Infernal Realm'. When a person newly enters the Infernal Realm, he would be unfamiliar with the place. Only under the guidance of an expert would one have a good shot at survival, and be capable to quickly adapt to this Higher Plane, the Infernal Realm! Others who want to find such a leader will find it hard to do so, and yet O'Brien, immediately upon entering the Infernal Realm, will have Tarosse's protection. That is a huge advantage for him."

Linley couldn't help but feel startled. Hearing Cesar's words, he felt they made sense.

"Going to the Infernal Realm means leaving behind his homeland." Linley sighed.

The current Linley still had quite a bit of affection towards the Yulan continent.

"Hmph." Cesar said. "What a joke. Only an exciting life is interesting. At the Deity-level, staying in these ordinary material planes no longer have much of a point for us. Actually, ever since returning from the Necropolis of the Gods, I've been planning to go to the Higher Planes."

"You are leaving?" Linley was somewhat surprised.

"This time, when I returned, I found out that many Deities had descended." Cesar laughed. "It seemed as though life here would be quite interesting, so naturally, I decided to stay a bit longer. If it weren't for these Deities, I would have left to the Higher Planes long ago."

“After all, standing at the top is a very lonely thing. Linley, life is only meaningful when it is colorful and interesting.” Cesar sighed. “Linley, you haven’t lived for very long yet. If you live for another century, you’ll start to have this sort of feeling as well. Think about it, Linley. If in the Yulan continent, you are so powerful as to be invincible, wouldn’t you eventually grow tired of that quiet life?”

Linley thought about it for a moment, and his heart trembled.

Standing alone at the top of the Yulan continent, living a tranquil life…just thinking about it made Linley feel some revulsion. In his mind, he quickly began thinking about everything he had experienced.

“An interesting, colorful life with ups and downs. Only that is meaningful.” Linley had to admit this was true.

He himself wasn’t willing to live an ordinary, common life. Although he knew that the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes had countless experts there, if as a result he decided to live an ordinary life and remain hiding on the Yulan Plane and be like a frog in a well, this would be too laughable.

“After this affair concludes, I will leave and go to the Infernal Realm. Linley, come with me.” Cesar urged. “In the Infernal Realm, there are experts from countless planes. All sorts of races, and also, the Four Supreme Warrior clans have all gone to the Infernal Realm. Don’t you want to go visit your ancestors?”

The Four Supreme Warrior clans? His ancestors?

The very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Baruch clan, Baruch! And the second, the third…all of his ancestors who had already gone to the Infernal Realm.

Linley couldn’t help but feel a sense of anticipation as they discussed this, but then he immediately said with a laugh, “Cesar, stop enticing me. I’m in no rush. I’ll stay here with Delia for a while. When the time comes that we,

husband and wife, feel bored, perhaps we'll make a tourist trip to the Infernal Realm."

"Tourism trip?" Cesar didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. "What do you take the Infernal Realm for?"

Yulan calendar, year 10045. Early winter. Snow flew everywhere.

Within the pocket dimension.

The pocket dimension was divided into two layers. The lower layer had Olivier and Desri there in training, while the upper layer had Barker, Haeru, and two of the Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. Linley himself was also seated in the meditative position on the bed on the upper layer, training in the Throbbing Pulse of the World.

The profound mysteries of the Laws were all interconnected, from the simple to the profound.

Precisely because this was the case, Linley utilized this sort of visualization technique to train. But of course, Linley wasn't visualizing wildly, but was doing so in accordance with his insights into the 'Elemental Laws' themselves. Occasionally, he would have a new spark of insight, causing him to make a breakthrough via his visualization.

Linley's original body had already completely finished absorbing those hundred million soul essences.

Last time, when he had absorbed twenty million soul essences, Linley's visualization speed had dramatically increased. From the 32 Fused Waves to the 16 Fused Waves, he had only taken one year and three months. After absorbing a hundred million additional soul essences, his visualization speed increased several times over.

The amount of time that he needed thus also shrank by several times.

In addition, Linley had already been training in fusing the 16 Fused Waves

to the 8 Fused Waves for two years at the time of Beaumont's death.

Now, yet another year had passed.

Three years time.

Seated in the meditative position on the stone bed within the pocket dimension, Linley's eyes opened, a hint of a smile on his face. "The Throbbing Pulse of the World truly is extremely complicated. At last, I have broken through to the 8 Fused Waves level." Linley was currently feeling extremely pleased.

"Only, why is it that I feel as though even prior to the level of complete mastery, the Throbbing Pulse of the World is hundreds of times more complex and vast than the insights I have gained into the 'Profound Truths of Velocity'?" Linley couldn't understand it.

Based on what Linley knew.

Training any of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws to the level of complete mastery would result in one becoming a Demigod.

As for the Profound Truths of Velocity, actually, the Profound Truths of Velocity wasn't just a simple profound mystery; it was the result of the fusion of the 'Fast' and 'Slow' mysteries. Reaching complete mastery in the Profound Truths of Velocity was equivalent to reaching mastery in both the 'Fast' and the 'Slow' mysteries. Naturally, it would be different from reaching the level of mastery in a single mystery.

"I won't over-think it." Linley immediately closed his eyes and continued training.

But this time, ten days later, before he had a chance to train for long…

"Boss, Boss!" A familiar voice rang out in Linley's mind. Linley instantly stopped his training, and sent back a spiritual message in surprise and delight. "Bebe, you, you succeeded?"

“Right, I succeeded. Boss, I’m already a Deity!” Bebe’s delighted voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley felt a surge of excitement and joy in his heart. Bebe, who had grown up by his side, had already become a Deity as well.

“Wonderful.” Linley didn’t know what he should say.

“Boss, I’m immediately heading out from the Forest of Darkness. Wait for me.” Bebe had finally reached the adulthood phase as a Godeater Rat. Having become a Deity, Bebe immediately, excitedly, flew straight out from the metallic castle within the Forest of Darkness towards Dragonblood Castle.

Beneath the setting sun, Dragonblood Castle seemed to be covered with a dusky red layer of sunlight.

Within the rear gardens of Dragonblood Castle, the War God and the High Priest were seated opposite to each other with a stone table between them. The War God and the High Priest were both fusing with divine sparks, only…neither the War God nor the High Priest would spend all of their time fusing with divine sparks.

“After this Descent of the Gods event is completed, I will accompany Lord Tarosse to the Infernal Realm. And you?” The War God asked.

The High Priest felt rather moved.

She and the War God had actually struggled for many years. Not long ago, she had succeeded in the Necropolis of the Gods and acquired a divine God spark. Now, the War God had acquired one as well.”

“You can go. As for myself…” The High Priest laughed. “The Necropolis of the Gods is more and more dangerous as the levels progress. It had been extremely dangerous for me acquire even this God-level divine spark. If I want to acquire a Highgod spark, who knows how long it would take. A

hundred thousand years? A million years?"

The High Priest sighed. "After this event is concluded, most likely the many Deities will all leave the Yulan continent. I don't want to be here by myself. When the time comes, I will choose to go to the Life Realm."

The Four Higher Planes were the Infernal Realm, the Celestial Realm, the Netherworld, and the Life Realm.

The Infernal Realm was made by the Overgod of Destruction. The Celestial Realm was made by the Overgod of Fate. The Netherworld was made by the Overgod of Death. As for the Life Realm, it was naturally created by the Overgod of Life.

"You'll go to the Life Realm?" The War God was somewhat astonished. He then let out a laughter filled with mixed emotions. "If that's the case, then who knows how long it will be before we meet again."

"If we have the chance, we'll meet again." The High Priest, Catherine, said calmly. Her face hidden behind that mask, it was hard to say what the expression on the High Priest's face was.

These two Deities who had been opponents for thousands of years were now both silent.

"Wow, O'Brien, Catherine, what are you two doing here? Ah, secretly dating?" A voice suddenly rang out in the rear gardens. Instantly, both the silent War God and the High Priest were greatly startled.

Especially because these words made them feel very awkward.

A seemingly skinny youth, with inch-long hair and a sleeveless shirt had suddenly appeared. This youth had sparkling, crystalline skin that was very bright, and a pair of eyes that were black and lively. Those eyes seemed capable of speech, and they were intentionally staring at the War God and the High Priest in a meaningful manner.

The youth instantly pointed at the High Priest, a delighted, surprised look on his face. “Ha, Catherine, you’re blushing!”

The High Priest didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. She was wearing a mask. Nobody could possibly see her facial expressions. Since nobody could see her facial expressions, it was of course possible that her face was indeed red.

“Bebe, stop making trouble.” Linley immediately walked into the rear garden.

“Wow, Boss!” Bebe immediately ran over excitedly.

Chapter 19 – Profound Mysteries – High and Low

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 19, Profound Mysteries, High and Low

“Uhh…..” Bebe suddenly halted, staring at Linley’s shoulder in confusion.

Linley began to laugh as well. “You still want to stand on my shoulders?” In the past, Bebe often stood on Linley’s shoulders. But now Bebe was in human form, although, at 1.7 meters, he wasn’t that tall.

Despite being short, he still couldn’t stand on Linley’s shoulders like before.

Linley stared carefully at the human formed Bebe. Bebe looked very slender and delicate. Only, his eyes were as lively and roguish as ever. Bebe chortled, and then rubbed his inch-long hair, raising his head and saying, “Boss, how’s my hair style? I spent a lot of time thinking about it before becoming a Deity.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“While flying over from the Forest of Darkness, I actually made a little something.” Bebe said in an intentionally mysterious manner.

“Oh?” Linley looked at Bebe. With a flip of his hand, Bebe retrieved a tattered straw hat out of nowhere and then, with a very practiced manner, flipped it onto his head before grinning delightedly. “Boss, this straw hat really suits me, right?”

Seeing how Bebe currently looked, Linley began to laugh. “Suits you, suits you!”

Bebe looked solemnly at Linley. “Boss, let’s go chat somewhere else. Let’s not disturb them.”

“Not disturb them?” Linley was somewhat startled, but then he immediately understood. Turning his head, Linley looked at the nearby War God and High Priest. The two clearly didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. They wanted to curse Bebe, but seeing how he was acting, they didn’t know what to say.

“Sorry.” Linley hurriedly waved at them.

“Quickly take that little fellow away.” The High Priest was trapped between laughter and curses.

“Alright, let’s go.” Linley said hurriedly. “Then…you guys continue.” While speaking, Linley led Bebe out of the rear garden, but while following Linley, Bebe turned to stare at the High Priest and the War God, letting out a loud shout, “My Boss says, you guys continue!”

Linley could only glance helplessly at Bebe.

The two walked shoulder-to-shoulder into Dragonblood Castle.

“Boss, now that I’m also a Deity, you are no longer necessarily my match.” Bebe said self-delightedly.

Linley laughed, “Bebe, the more powerful you are, the better. If you are more powerful than me, that’s naturally a wonderful thing.” Linley suddenly thought about the innate abilities of divine beasts. He asked, “Bebe, you are only the second Godeater Rat in the countless planes of the universe. Then…what is your innate ability?”

“If others asked me, I definitely wouldn’t tell them.” Bebe said. “But since it is you, Boss, who is asking me, I’ll give you a hint. Focus on the words, ‘God Eater’.”

After saying these words, Bebe no longer said anything.

“God Eater?” Linley was puzzled. Could it be that he could devour and swallow Deities? It shouldn’t be that simple.

“Oh, right. Boss, Grandpa Beirut, Harry, and his brothers are going to be arriving soon. I was just a bit impatient so I hurried over here first.” Bebe said. Linley was somewhat surprised. “Lord Beirut and the Harry brothers are coming as well?”

Indeed, that night, Beirut led his three children to Dragonblood Castle.

Within the study.

“Bebe, you, Harry, and the other two can leave for now.” Beirut said with a calm smile. Bebe and the others all obediently left, leaving behind only Beirut and Linley in the study. Linley looked at Beirut, feeling rather puzzled. “What does Beirut wish to discuss with me in private?”

Although puzzled, Linley’s attitude was still very meek.

“Sit first.” Beirut sat down, pointing at a nearby chair. Linley sat down as ordered.

Stroking his beard, Beirut chuckled while sighing, “Bebe has finally become a Deity. I can finally relax a bit. Linley, Bebe really is attached to you. I asked him to stay with me, but he refused. In the future, I hope you can take good care of him.”

“Of course.” Linley nodded.

Even without Beirut’s prompting, Linley would wholeheartedly take care of Bebe. Linley would never forget how Bebe had blocked that deathblow of the Armored Razorback Wyrm in the Foggy Valley. Bebe had saved him multiple times. Linley would never forget these events.

“Linley, you have reached the Deity level, but you must have many questions regarding the world of Deities.” Beirut laughed. “Even O’Brien and Catherine…how many Deities have they fought against?”

Linley was delighted in his heart.

He knew far too little about the world of Deities. He didn't even know much regarding battles and training methods. He felt like a blind man without any guidance, utterly helpless.

"I know that you train in the Elemental Laws of the Wind and the Laws of the Earth." Beirut laughed calmly. "So, I'll begin giving you a primer based on your training. First of all, you should know that each type of Elemental Law contains many different types of profound mysteries."

This was common knowledge. Of course Linley knew this.

"However, the profound mysteries inherent in each Elemental Law are not equal in terms of power." Beirut sighed. "The Elemental Laws contain low-level mysteries, mid-level mysteries, and high level mysteries! However, all the mysteries, high or low, can allow one to become a Deity!"

Linley nodded.

"Linley, the Elemental Laws of the Earth which you train in should belong to the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' type of profound mysteries, correct?" Beirut looked at Linley.

"Yes." Linley wasn't surprised at all. If Beirut didn't even know this, that would be bizarre.

Beirut laughed and said, "Normally speaking, a person would only gain insight into higher level profound mysteries upon reaching the God level, or perhaps the Highgod level. Many earth-style Gods have yet to gain insights into the Throbbing Pulse of the World, but you, a Demigod, have already done so."

Linley frowned.

Beirut said with a laugh, "Let me explain it to you like this. Let's say the Elemental Laws of the Earth include nine different types of profound mysteries. Of course, that's just a hypothetical; I don't train in the Laws of

the Earth, after all."

"Nine types?" Linley was rather surprised.

Based on what he knew, the Elemental Laws were virtually boundless. There should be many different types of profound mysteries contained within them…but Beirut was using 'nine types' as a hypothetical example. Since that was the case, then clearly, the actual number of profound mysteries shouldn't be too far off from nine.

"Don't think that nine profound mysteries is a small number."

Beirut noticed Linley's confusion. Laughing, he said, "Every person's growth, ability, and experiences will determine what they are skilled at. For example, you, Linley. In the Laws of the Earth, you are very sensitive to the Throbbing Pulse of the World and can sense it clearly."

"Thus, the Throbbing Pulse of the World is the first type of profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth that you train in, and you are very fast in training in it as well. However, if I were to ask you to train on the 'Gravitational Field' profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, would you be able to do so?"

Linley was utterly lost.

Gravitational Field? When he was attuning to the Laws of the Earth, he had never even sensed such a thing. How could he possibly train in it?

"This is a question of effectiveness. It will be very easy for you to train in one type of the Laws of the Earth, but the successive profound mysteries within it will not be so easily learnt. For example, of our nine profound mysteries, perhaps you only need a thousand years to master the first. The second, you would probably need a hundred thousand years. As for the third, you might need a million or ten million years…and thus, as you keep compiling them, it will be extremely hard for you to master all nine profound mysteries. Otherwise, Highgods wouldn't be so rare."

Linley now understood.

It was much like how, in the mortal world, a person might be an expert at finance, but terrible at human relations. To let a person skilled at human relations to go learn finance would be very hard.

Linley had found it fairly easy in training in the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’.

However, the other profound mysteries within the Laws of the Earth wouldn’t be so easily understood by Linley. It was much like how in the past, Haydson, with a simple step, could move dozens of meters, as though he teleported.

Linley knew that it couldn’t possibly be teleportation.

However, to this very day, Linley still had no idea how Haydson had accomplished that feat of moving dozens of meters in a step.

“Haydson was able to understand it, but I have yet to. I was able to understand the Throbbing Pulse of the World, but he was not.” Linley understood Beirut’s meaning. Understanding the Laws was partly reliant on talent, partly on life experiences, and also on sparks of insight.

Many variables determined one’s direction.

“As for the laws of becoming a Deity…”

Beirut laughed. “I’ll use your training in the Elemental Laws of the Wind for my next example. Let’s say the Laws of the Wind also have nine types of profound mysteries. If you were able to reach the level of mastery in one of them, then you would become a Demigod.” Linley knew this part.

“But to become a God? For example, Linley, the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ mysteries which you trained in, if you were able to reach mastery in both of them, you still wouldn’t become a full God. At this point, you would have two ways to become a God.”

“The first method is to train in yet another profound mystery. In other words, if you reach the point of mastery in three of the profound mysteries, you would become a God.”

“The second method is for you to fuse the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ mysteries into one. Upon succeeding, you would then become a God.” Beirut explained. At this point, Beirut came to a halt, knowing that Linley wouldn’t be able to understand it.

“The Laws of the universe determine whether or not you fulfill the requirements for becoming a God. They care about whether or not you have reached a certain level of insight into the Elemental Laws.”

Beirut sighed. “Actually, let’s say that you have gained full insights into all nine Elemental Laws. Would that be considered complete mastery?”

“If I gain insights into all nine, I should be a Highgod, right?” Linley said.

“Right. It’s true that you would be a Highgod.” Beirut nodded. “However, you wouldn’t be at the level of complete mastery. Forget it, there’s no need to discuss this for now. It’s far too early.”

Linley laughed and nodded.

“When Deities do battle, there’s great differences between Deities of different levels. Generally speaking, Gods are able to kill Demigods. But of course, there are always exceptions.” Hearing Beirut say this, Linley’s eyes lit up.

Beirut explained, “The divine sparks of Gods are able to summon a ‘Godrealm’ that can suppress a Demigod’s. Under his Godrealm, your speed will slow drastically. In addition, the divine power of a divine God spark is more pure. Just based on these two things alone, the outcome of any battle is virtually preordained.”

Linley nodded.

Within Ojwin's Godrealm, he had sensed his speed lower measurably. Originally, Linley's speed had been much faster than those two black-robed men, but within the Godrealm, he was actually slower than them.

"Thus, when a Demigod is to battle a God," Beirut explained with a laugh, "The first option is to ambush. To use the most powerful attack you have before the enemy has utilized the Godrealm and to kill him."

"Kill by ambush?" Linley said, puzzled. "Full Gods shouldn't be so easy to kill."

"Right." Beirut said. "Even via ambush, in the instant you draw near to him, he will definitely react. If you want to be able to kill him in a situation like that, then you must have…a profound mystery which is much more powerful than his!"

"Because, your divine power isn't as pure as his. Thus, you have to overcome him via a better weapon and the Laws!" Beirut explained.

Linley understood.

So what if one was a God?

A God might have, for example, mastered three profound mysteries, but if those three profound mysteries were low level, then the God wouldn't excessively powerful when using any one of those three profound mysteries. Thus, those types of Gods had to rely on their Godrealm and their pure divine power to kill Demigods.

"But of course, even if that God trained in low level profound mysteries, once they fuse those low-level mysteries they have gained, then you would have no chance." Beirut sighed. "The fusion of two low-level mysteries is definitely not one bit weaker than a high level mystery!"

Linley nodded.

For example, the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ mysteries which had fused into the Profound Truths of Velocity was not one whit inferior to the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’.

“In other words, only the most outstanding of Demigods are capable of defeating weak Gods!” Beirut concluded. “But of course, if one has an exceedingly outstanding divine artifact, or if there are some special factors in play, victory might be possible.”

Chapter 20 – The Invincible Highgods

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 20, The Invincible Highgods

“Victory might be possible?” Linley was stirred.

After speaking, Beirut just sat there, looking at Linley with a hint of a smile tugging at his lips. When Linley noticed the expression on Beirut’s face, Linley suddenly understood. He laughed self-mockingly, “Lord Beirut, are you trying to tell me that I should try to avoid battling Deities of a higher level than myself?”

Beirut stroked his beard, starting to laugh. “Right.”

Linley felt a sense of resignation.

Was he an outstanding Demigod? Linley didn’t feel confident in saying that.

Was his opponent a weak God? That was also hard to determine.

Thus, although in theory, a Demigod was capable of killing a God, in reality, the chance of success was very low. Unless that God was already badly injured and on the brink of death, a God in normal circumstances would virtually never be beaten by a Demigod.

Beirut stood up, walking to the door of the study.

“Creaaak!” The study door opened by itself, allowing the night wind to blow in, rustling against Beirut’s black robes.

Beirut hesitated a moment, then turned to look at Linley. “Linley, there are some things that I originally wanted to tell you after you grew more powerful. However, it is hard to say if you and Bebe will remain on the Yulan continent or not in the future. Thus, I’ll tell you it all today. Although

this might come as discouraging to you, at least this way, you won't go on any wrong paths."

Linley immediately stood up.

Discouraging? Go on any wrong paths? He had never been afraid of taking difficult paths. Ever since he was an ordinary youth, up til this very day, since when had he feared any discouragement?

"Beirut, please speak." Linley said respectfully.

Beirut smiled and nodded. "You should know the requirements for becoming a Highgod."

"Yes. Gain insights into all of the profound mysteries of a Law." Linley nodded while responding.

Beirut sighed, "Yes, when you gain full insights into all of the profound mysteries, you will become a Highgod. However, each Elemental Law is a complete whole, much like how your 'Fast' and 'Slow' mysteries can fuse into one. If an Elemental Law has nine profound mysteries in it, then…"

Beirut's eyes began to shine as he stared at Linley. "Any two of those nine profound mysteries can fuse together. Any three can fuse together…and in fact, all nine of the profound mysteries can be fused into one!"

Linley was flabbergasted.

All of them could be fused?

"It is very hard for one to be able to simply gain insights into all nine profound mysteries. To fuse any two or any three of them into one becomes even harder."

Beirut sighed. "Linley, the true path of training isn't necessarily 'the more the better' when it comes to gaining insights into the Laws. It is 'fusing the more profound mysteries the better'. For example, the 'Fast' and 'Slow'

mysteries are all low-level mysteries, but when the two are fused into the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’, it is comparable with high level mysteries. If you were able to fuse three low level mysteries into one, the power would far surpass that of high level mysteries.”

Linley’s eyes were shining.

“If you are able to fuse all nine profound mysteries into one, that would represent that you have truly understood an Elemental Law! That is the highest level of attainment for a Highgod!” When saying this, Beirut’s entire attitude was different.

In his heart, Linley sighed unceasingly.

Gain insights into nine profound mysteries and become a Highgod? That accomplishment was far from the actual peak. To merge all nine mysteries into a whole; that was a true peak.

“Nine types of profound mysteries into one?” Linley’s voice couldn’t help but turn into a whisper. “Lord Beirut, how many experts of this level do the planes of the universe have?”

“How many?”

Beirut laughed as he looked at Linley.

“In ten trillion Deities, only one will become a Highgod! But the invincible Highgods who are capable of fusing all of the profound mysteries in an Elemental Law into one…even I don’t know how many Highgods would be needed to be produce a single such Paragon.” It was hard for even Beirut to say. “All I can tell you is that even in the infinite universe, the number of experts on this level can be counted by hand!”

“Counted by hand?”

Linley’s heart shook.

The universe had existed for an extremely long period of time, resulting in the number of Deities each material plane produced to be an astonishingly high figure. In the countless planes and especially in the Higher Planes, it was hard to calculate how many Deities there were. But even in the Higher Planes, the number of truly peak, perfect Highgods was actually countable by hand!

“Lord Beirut, within the Gebados Planar Prison, are there any experts who have fused all of the profound mysteries of a Law?” Linley said with curiosity. “I heard that there are five powerful Kings there.”

Beirut snorted. “There are not. Definitely not! Even the five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison have fused only a few profound mysteries of the laws. To fuse all of the laws and become a Paragon? Who can calculate how low the chance is of a material plane to produce one?”

“Lord Beirut, you are that certain?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

Not even the five Kings had reached the state of perfection. Linley wasn’t surprised about that. What he was surprised about was how certain Beirut was. Could it be that Beirut could investigate the strength of others?

“Of course I’m sure.” Beirut nodded and laughed. “This is because, upon a Highgod capable of fusing all of the profound mysteries in an Elemental Law appears, even the Sovereigns…will fight over the chance to invite that sort of genius to work for them.” Beirut sighed in praise.

“After all, only people like them are at the peak of Deityhood…only they are the true peak Highgods! Experts like them, even if a hundred or a thousand Highgods come to fight against them, those Highgods would all die.”

Linley’s heart was somewhat shaking.

Standing at the very stop of the pyramid of Highgods. Invincible presences!

“Invited by Sovereigns?” Linley said in surprise. “Why would Sovereigns

invite them? Can it be that their strength is capable of threatening even Sovereigns?"

Beirut laughed, "Linley, you don't understand. Sovereigns are indeed powerful, far beyond Highgods in power. However…Linley, you must understand, in the boundless universe, the vast majority of planes are material ones. For example, our Yulan continent is in a material plane."

Linley nodded.

Material planes were the foundation of the universe.

"Sovereigns, on the other hand, cannot casually enter a material plane. Sovereigns possess an enormous divine presence, enough to cause a material plane to collapse!" Beirut said solemnly.

Linley's heart shook. Sovereigns were indeed far too powerful.

"Linley, the material planes were created by the Laws of the universe. They are not permitted to be destroyed." Beirut said solemnly. "The Four Overgods have issued a strict order. If any causes a material plane to collapse, then the culprit, even if a Sovereign, would be turned into ash!"

Linley was secretly astonished.

"Thus, Sovereigns do not dare to enter material planes, nor can they enter material planes!" Beirut said.

Linley nodded.

"Thus…these Highgods who have fused all of the profound mysteries in a Law can be described as invincible against anyone below the Sovereign level! If they were to flee to a material plane, even the Sovereigns wouldn't be able to do anything to them. If a Sovereign was to recruit them, they would be able to accomplish many things for Sovereigns, things which the Sovereigns couldn't do for themselves."

Linley nodded, beginning to understand.

Highgods could enter material planes, but Sovereigns could not!

“But of course, that’s extremely far off in the future for you.” Beirut laughed.

Linley laughed as well.

“I’m telling you this because I hope that you, Linley, when training, will begin to sense the similarities and capacity for fusion of any two profound mysteries. After fusing two of them, fuse the third…only by training in such a manner will you have hope. Otherwise, if you were to completely finish gaining insights into all of the profound mysteries, then try to merge all nine into one at once, it will be far too difficult.” Beirut said seriously.

To boil a frog alive, all you had to do was slowly increase the temperature.

Linley nodded, sighing in his heart in praise. “Just the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ mysteries fusing into the Profound Truths of Velocity required me to be able to sense that they had similarities early on. It was so hard to fuse even two profound mysteries. To fuse three or four…” Linley’s heart shook just thinking about it.

Fuse all of the mysteries in an Elemental Law?

Indeed, this was harder than rising to heaven.

“Genius figures such as this are quite attractive to Sovereigns.” Beirut sighed. “Only, these figures are simply too rare, while Sovereigns…there are seven of every type. There are 49 in the Seven Elemental Laws. For the sake of acquiring the services of a Highgod Paragon, they have even struggled against each other.”

Beirut, as a Sovereign’s Emissary, naturally knew many secrets.

Linley stared, speechless.

Even Sovereigns would struggle and compete for the sake of such geniuses.

“If one could reach such a level, one could truly feel proud of one’s self.” Linley felt some envy of those experts. Only they were truly peak level experts.

“Beginning to sense the fusibility from the beginning. Only then will your future accomplishments be great.” Beirut laughed self-mockingly. “For example, myself. In the past, I didn’t know these things. By the time I reached the Highgod level and wanted to fuse them, it was too late. Fuse several mysteries of the Laws into one at the same time? It is too hard.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel grateful towards Beirut.

Although Beirut had only given him slight guidance, to him, this was as good as pointing out a brand new path for him.

Two paths. If one embarked on the wrong path from the beginning, at the end, the difference between the two paths would be immeasurably great.

Most likely, after reaching the Highgod level, he would become like Beirut, completely unable to fuse anything.

“Enough. I’m leaving now. Your future path, you’ll have to walk yourself.” Beirut laughed.

“Thank you, Lord Beirut.” Linley bowed gratefully.

Watching Beirut leave, Linley’s heart began to blaze. It was much like how, when he was young, the War God was the peak, invincible figure in Linley’s mind. But now…the peak in Linley’s heart had become those invincible Highgods who had completely fused the mysteries in an Elemental Law into one!

This was Linley’s new goal!

Time passed quickly and stealthily. In the blink of an eye, year 10046 of the Yulan calendar arrived.

This year was a very fulfilling year for Linley. Having a new goal, he began to train in earnest. The entire Dragonblood Castle was in a constant state of energy, with the various Deities constantly gathering together. Lord Beirut had returned to the Forest of Darkness long ago.

The elder of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Harry, had returned to the Forest of Darkness as well. As for the second and third brothers, Hart and Harvey, they remained at Dragonblood Castle.

According to what Hart and Harry had said, they liked noisy, active places. Linley thus naturally had warmly welcomed the two brothers.

Late autumn in year 10046 of the Yulan calendar.

The O'Brien Empire's imperial palace took up an extremely spacious area. Aside from Adkins' palace, even his four Gods had residences within the imperial palace. But of course, Ojwin and the others had their own private estates as well.

The number one God under Adkins command, Barnas, was extremely powerful and also had Adkins' trust.

Within the imperial palace. Barnas' residence. Barnas was currently painting atop a long sheet of paper, while Ojwin, Hanbritt, and a golden-haired man were standing by his side, their attitudes quite meek.

After all, Barnas was simply too powerful, and Barnas had a Highgod-level divine artifact! Adkins had personally bequeathed it unto Barnas. Most likely, even when joining forces, Ojwin and the other two wouldn't be able to beat Barnas.

"Speak. What is it?" Barnas continued to paint, not glancing at the other three men at all.

Hanbritt and Ojwin didn't dare to make a sound. It was the golden-haired man who spoke instead. "Mr. Barnas, Ojwin dearly loved his son, who was killed. In addition, Ojwin's divine clone was destroyed by enemies as well. It is hard for Ojwin to accept this sort of humiliation. Only, he didn't want to make trouble for Lord Adkins, which is why he has never dared to mention it to Lord Adkins. During the past period of time, I've come to the decision that brother Ojwin is a friend worth making. Tomorrow, I will make a trip with him to help him gain revenge."

"Gatenby…" Barnas put down his brush, glancing at the golden-haired man and sighing.

Barnas actually somewhat valued Gatenby. As for Hanbritt, he looked down upon him. As for Ojwin…Barnas felt that Ojwin was too scheming, and thus had never liked him.

"Ojwin." Barnas looked at Ojwin.

"Mr. Barnas." Ojwin's attitude was extremely humble. For the sake of Gatenby's assistance, during the past two years, he had spent quite a bit of effort before finally getting Gatenby to agree to help.

Barnas laughed calmly. "I'm quite aware of your affairs. If all three of you go and yet still lose, you will have lost face for Lord Adkins. How about this. I'll go alongside you, and we'll tear out Dragonblood Castle by its roots."

Ojwin instantly was wildly overjoyed.

Barnas' power was definitely incomparably great. Even though Ojwin had gotten a taste of Tarosse's power, he felt certain that Barnas was not any weaker than Tarosse. After all, Barnas had a Highgod artifact.

Barnas said calmly, "I, too, want to test for myself how powerful that God named Tarosse is."

Chapter 21 – Four Mighty Gods

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 21, Four Mighty Gods

In the air above the O'Brien Empire.

"Boom!"

A terrifying sonic boom could be heard, and energy blasted in every direction. Four indistinct human figures were flying at high speed towards the east, shoulder to shoulder. The four figures had reached a terrifying level of speed, and they weren't trying to hide themselves. Sonic booms exploded forth while at the same time, a terrifying, wild aura exploded from their bodies.

In the ground below, there lived countless civilians as well as hidden experts.

One middle-aged man who had been laughing while giving some pointers to some youngsters raised his head to stare at the skies in shock, his face changing. "This is…four Gods? Could it be from Adkins' side?"

"Master, Master."

Those youths were calling out in confusion.

"All of you, keep training." The middle aged man instructed casually, then left. While walking away, he felt a hint of confusion. "Four Gods heading out together, and not trying to hide their movements at all. It seems they are about to undertake something major." The middle-aged man couldn't help but feel curious.

With a flicker, he disappeared from the road.

Barnas, Gatenby, Hanbritt, and Ojwin flew shoulder-to-shoulder in a

straight line. Their long robes fluttered as their sonic booms reverberated in the air. As Barnas had put it, “When acting, we have to have an imposing manner. There’s no need to act as though we are about to sneak attack them. This will cause our Lord Adkins to lose face.”

How could Ojwin and the others refute Barnas, now that he had spoken?

Naturally, the four heroically flew towards Dragonblood Castle. Wherever they passed, hidden Saints and Deities all noticed them, who quickly used their divine sense to contact their friends, causing many experts to quietly follow.

Fortunately, Barnas and the other three were actively emanating a tyrannical aura. Otherwise, there would be no way for these Deities and Saints to follow them.

Within Dragonblood Castle.

In the empty area of the western gardens, a violet sword shadow fluttered about like a dream. Linley’s body swayed at high speed along with his sword, and occasionally, a humming sword song could be heard. Wherever Bloodviolet crossed, spatial folds would be seen, followed by occasional spatial collapse. Other times, the only thing left behind would be tiny cracks in space.

As he continued to train, Linley’s understanding of ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ grew deeper and deeper, while Bloodviolet’s power was slowly brought out as well.

Linley had discovered that Bloodviolet’s humming sword song was actually secondary. Bloodviolet’s true power still lay in its fierce sharpness. As Linley and Bloodviolet became more attuned, even though Linley’s understanding hadn’t increased much, the power of his Dimensional Decapitoator clearly increased significantly.

“Huh?”

Linley, who had been absorbed in his training, suddenly came to a halt staring towards the north in surprise. “What a terrifying aura, and no attempt to hide it at all.” Linley could clearly sense that in the north, a powerful aura was moving at high speed towards Dragonblood Castle.”

Not just Linley.

Even the War God and the High Priest, who were absorbed in fusing with their divine God sparks, and Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, Bebe…all Deity-level experts present sensed it.

“Mr. Barnas. Dragonblood Castle is up ahead.” Ojwin felt extremely excited right now.

He finally had the chance to get revenge.

“For this day, I have waited two years.” Ojwin’s face was somewhat red, and his eyes stared towards Dragonblood Castle like sharp knives.

The silver-haired Barnas stared calmly at the distant Dragonblood Castle. “Oh, that’s Dragonblood Castle? On the way over, the four of us actively emanated our auras. There’s quite a few people behind us.” Barnas was quite certain about this.

Ojwin, Hanbritt, and Gatenby were all awaiting Barnas’ command.

“We definitely cannot cause Lord Adkins to lose face. This time, we have to deal with them in a beautiful fashion, Hanbritt.” Barnas said calmly.

“Mr. Barnas.” Hanbritt respectfully awaited the order.

“You act directly to destroy Dragonblood Castle. Those ordinary people aren’t qualified to take part in battle.” Barnas gave out the cruel order, and Hanbritt’s eyes lit up. He immediately flew in front, and with a cold smile on his face, extended his two hands.

“Rumble…” In an instant, the world began to shake.

A wild surge of wind elemental essence came roaring towards Dragonblood Castle from every direction, creating an enormous, millstone-like green vortex in the air above Dragonblood Castle. This enormous green vortex was filled with faint golden wind blades, blocking out the light of the sun.

The entire Dragonblood Castle was covered by that ice cold green light.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” In the air above Dragonblood Castle, many human figures suddenly appeared. It was Tarosse, Dylin, Linley, the War God, the High Priest, Bebe, and the rest of the Deities. The actions of the enemy were on simply too grand of a scale. Everyone in Dragonblood Castle could sense this aura.

Linley, the War God, and the others all raised their heads, staring at the sky.

In the air, the enormous green vortex was clearly filled with incredible power. If this power were to shoot down, even Supreme Warrior Saints would most likely die. Only Deities would be able to survive.

“They plan to destroy Dragonblood Castle and kill all the ordinary people in it.” Linley’s face was ashen.

Dragonblood Castle, below them, held too many of his family and friends. Linley definitely wouldn’t allow this to occur.

“Ojwin again. And this time, he brought two more people.” Tarosse sneered as he looked at those four figures, and Dylin let out a disdainful laugh as well. “Tarosse, it seems last time, Ojwin didn’t mind the pain he suffered last time at all. He still dares to come.”

“Then let’s just destroy his remaining body as well and be done with it.” Tarosse laughed calmly.

Right now, perhaps only Tarosse and Dylin were still capable of laughing so calmly.

Within Dragonblood Castle, Wharton, Taylor, Gates, Delia, and the others all raised their heads, staring at those four figures, their hearts shaking. In their eyes, those four full Gods that were emanating that heart-palpitating aura were like four invincible demons.

Powerful, irresistible!

“Let the ash fly.” Hanbritt smiled, then pressed downwards with his right hand!

The massive green vortex that had been above Dragonblood Castle suddenly began to sink downwards, while at the same time, the countless faint golden wind knives began to descend downwards like locusts. In the field of vision of Linley and the others, nothing could be seen besides those infinite faint gold wind knives.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” ……

Metallic collision sounds could be heard. In the surface of Dragonblood Castle, a green-white semi-translucent barrier appeared. The countless faint golden wind blades slashed down against the semi-translucent barrier, but the barrier wasn’t damaged at all.

“Good heavens.” The thousands of people within Dragonblood Castle stared up at the enormous barrier that covered the entire sky.

They could all clearly see those countless faint golden wind blades shoot down upon the semi-translucent barrier. Many of the guards and serving women in Dragonblood Castle began to sweat. Deity-level combatants were reputedly capable of instantly destroying the heavens and the earth. This indeed wasn’t just a myth.

“Haha, Lord Adkins is a revered Highgod. Can it be that you think killing these ordinary people will gain face for your Lord Adkins?” Tarosse’s voice rang out loudly, shaking the surrounding area of several dozen square kilometers.

The countless wind blades came to a halt.

Hanbritt, his face ashen, retreated to Barnas' side. He had summoned his strength for a long time, but Tarosse had in but a few moments created that semi-translucent barrier to resist him. His power was clearly inferior to Tarosse's.

Barnas stared at Tarosse. "Tarosse? Your power isn't bad. I'll give you a chance. You can leave now, and I can spare your life."

Tarosse and Dylin were both startled.

"You silver-haired old man, have you gone silly?" Tarosse let out a laughter born from the utmost of rage.

Barnas laughed calmly, then with a flip of the hand, retrieved an ancient, unadorned spear. This spear was bronze colored, and had some bloody runes carved atop it. But this spear, in Barnas' hand, seemed to suddenly transformed that smiling, silver-haired old man into an invincible divine spirit!

Power!

"Rumble…" That spear alone emanated an aura that ripped through the surrounding space.

"Highgod artifact." Tarosse and Dylin's faces both changed.

"Since you don't intend to accept my good intentions, then…" Barnas looked calmly at Tarosse. "Accept death." Barnas suddenly moved, his body transforming into a blur, slashing through the sky in a moment. That ancient spear in his hands pierced directly towards Tarosse.

Space seemed to freeze, with only that spear remaining!

Irresistible power!

Tarosse's face changed dramatically. Gritting his teeth, he instantly divided into two bodies. The green-robed Tarosse and the black-robed Tarosse simultaneously went to block this attack. A devilish green whip wrapped around towards the spear like a serpent, while an icy cold black, long narrow blade carried a destructive aura as it chopped towards the spear.

"BOOM!"

Barnas' body shuddered slightly, but the green-robed Tarosse and the black-robed Tarosse fell down towards the ground.

The terrifying collision force created clearly visible ripples which blasted in every direction.

Linley, the War God, the High Priest, Bebe, and Cesar, the Demigods, could clearly sense the power emanating from this ripple, which pressed their bodies down towards the ground. Linley's face changed dramatically. "Not good!" If this ripple were to strike Dragonblood Castle, Dragonblood Castle would definitely be transformed into rubble, and many people would die.

"Hmph!" With a flip of his hands, Dylin struck out with two palms, sending out a surge of destructive energy which dissipated the oncoming ripples.

"Swoosh!" Tarosse's two bodies once more flew up into the air, standing shoulder to shoulder with Dylin.

The black-robed Tarosse messaged mentally, "Dylin, this old fellow is too powerful. His personal strength is on par with mine, but he has that Highgod artifact. Not just him. He has three Gods behind him as well. This time, we're going to have some trouble!"

Dylin's face was ugly to behold as well. "All we can do is go all out."

Linley and the others landed on the ground. Wharton, Delia, and the others all immediately ran over. Wharton said in concern, "Big bro, the situation seems grim."

Linley felt worried as well. All he could do was whisper, “Don’t worry. Lord Tarosse and the others should still have some methods.” Bebe was next to Linley, unable to do anything either. After all, Bebe was only a new Demigod. There was nothing he could do in a battle like this.

“Linley, quick, lead everyone to flee for now.” Tarosse’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley’s heart shook.

“This time, the enemy is too powerful!” Tarosse didn’t feel any confidence at all either.

“Boss, the situation isn’t good.” Bebe was worrying as well.

“Today!” A sonorous voice rang out from above, as Barnas stared down at the people in Dragonblood Castle. “Not a one of you will be able to escape. Prepare to accept the punishment of the ‘Spear of Cortez’ [Ge’te’si]!” Countless spear images filled the air. Barnas, wielding the spear in his hand, stared down at the people in Dragonblood Castle like an invincible fiend.

“Rumble!” Countless spear shadows fell down like the rain.

Barnas actually separated into two figures, while Ojwin, Gatenby, and Hanbritt only had one body. The five figures shot down at high speed from mid-air. Ojwin, n particular, laughed with loud, wild glee, “All of you will die!!!”

Everyone in Dragonblood Castle felt despair.

“Flee!” Linley’s face was ferocious. He ‘shouted’ with his divine sense to everyone!

Instantly, the War God, the High Priest, Linley, Delia, Bebe…everyone began to flee in every which way. They all wanted to flee the battlefield in the shortest time possible. Only by doing so might some of them be able to live for a while.

“Haha…why are you all fleeing? No rush!” A loud laugh could be heard.

Suddenly, four blurs appeared, shooting out from Dragonblood Castle into mid-air. The formerly frightened Dylin and Tarosse were overjoyed, and they instantly charged over alongside those four figures.

Barnas’ side had: Barnas’ two divine clones, Gatenby, Ojwin, and Hanbritt, the latter three who only had one body.

Dragonblood Castle’s side had: The four figures who had suddenly appeared, Tarosse, Dylin.

The six figures attacked the five figures, with three of them attacking Barnas’ two clones…the battle started in an instant, then ended in an instant. Linley and the others, who had been fleeing in despair, now raised their head in confusion to stare at the sky…and by then, the battle was already over.

Barnas, Gatenby, Hanbritt, and Ojwin. The four of them were covered in blood.

“Highgod artifacts, four of them…all Highgod artifacts!” Barnas’ face was utterly pale, but his eyes were filled with amazement as he stared at those four who had appeared out of nowhere. Judging from their appearances, those four clones belonged to two different people. Of the four figures, two wore violet robes, while two wore golden robes. Their facial features were extremely similar.

Just then, it had been six against five. Those two violet-robed figures had combined to attack one of Barnas’ clones, destroying it and seizing the divine God spark.

“Barnas, today, we destroyed one of your clones. You can f*ck off now.” One of the violet-robed figures flipped the divine spark in his hand while laughing calmly.

“This…no….” Ojwin, seeing this, was totally stunned.

Just then, victory had been within his grasp. Not even Tarosse had been a match for Barnas, but who would have thought that the battle would have suddenly changed. These four clones that had suddenly appeared out of nowhere actually all had Highgod artifacts!

“Dragonblood Castle is a place under Lord Beirut’s protection. Go tell Adkins that he had best not permit people to come here in the future. Otherwise, next time, it won’t be as simple a punishment as destroying one of your clones.” The violet-robed youth laughed calmly as he spoke.

Ojwin, Hanbritt, and Gatenby immediately looked at Barnas.

Barnas’ face was ashen. Staring at the four figures wielding Highgod artifacts, his heart grew cold, and then with a low growl, he said, “Let’s return.” Ojwin, although unwilling, could only stare at the four mysterious youths before following Barnas and departing.

“They came just to give us a divine spark.” The four figures turned.

Tarosse, Dylin, Linley, the War God, and the others all went to welcome them.

They could instantly tell that the four figures were the divine clones of two separate people, because two pairs of the four were identical in appearance.

“Bebe, you decide how to handle this divine spark.” The violet-robed youth tossed the God-level divine spark in his hands to Bebe. Bebe accepted it, while at the same time, staring in shock at those four figures.

He could feel their aura, and it was too familiar. Bebe stared, slack-jawed. “You are Hart and Harvey?”

“Oh, right.”

The four figures merged into two youths, while at the same time, two

violet-gold figures flew over towards them, fusing into the bodies of the two youths.

“But…you guys…you guys…?” Bebe stuttered, unable to speak.

“Those are our original bodies. Our original bodies are naturally still at the Saint level.” The violet-robed youth, ‘Hart’, said. “Our Lord Father was worried about you, so naturally, he had us stay here.”

Linley, the War God, the High Priest, and the others all felt their minds in a state of chaos.

What the?

Those two Violet-Gold Rat Kings were actually full Gods.

Chapter 22 – Intimidation

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 22, Intimidation

As Barnas and the others retreated, the clouds parted and the sun once more shone down on Dragonblood Castle.

The group of people in Dragonblood Castle all stared disbelievingly at these two youths. Just then, that Barnas who had held down Tarosse and wanted to kill everyone, instead instantly had one of his clones destroyed by those two youths. What was most astonishing was…

The two youths in front of them were the two Violet-Gold Rat Kings!

“Hart, Harvey?” Linley said rather hesitatingly.

“Haha..” Loud laughter could be heard. It came from the nearby Tarosse, who laughed while walking over. “I’ve never understood how the three sons of someone as almighty as Lord Beirut, who were no younger than me and have lived for millions of years, could be at the Saint level the entire time. I’ve always suspected that you three brothers were hiding your true power. Now it seems that is indeed the case!

Hart and Harvey, the two brothers, both chuckled.

Linley, upon hearing this, instantly understood. In the past, he didn’t know how long Hart and Harvey had been alive for.

Now, from the sound of it, they had actually been living for millions of years. With such a long life, and with their father being Beirut, a Highgod and a Sovereign’s Emissary…if Harry, Hart, and Harvey truly had remained at the Saint level, that would indeed be bizarre.

“I truly feel envious.” Dylin sighed. “Hart, the two divine clones of you two brothers are both in possession of Highgod artifacts.”

“Yep.” The violet-robed Hart nodded.

“Our Lord Father gifted these two to us when we brothers originally became Deities.” A gold-robed Harvey said.

Tarosse, Dylin, the War God, High Priest, Cesar, and the others all sighed and thought the same thing; there was just no way to compare with them!

To them, getting a Highgod artifact was like a dream.

But Hart and Harvey not only had Highgod artifacts, they had Highgod artifacts for each of their two clones.

“Custodial theft!” Linley suddenly thought of this phrase.

As Linley saw it, Lord Beirut definitely had used his authority to procure Highgod artifacts for his children. It made sense; Lord Beirut was the manager of the Necropolis of the Gods. It wouldn’t be too hard to procure a few Highgod artifacts on behalf of his children.

“No wonder my Bloodviolet was used to help set up that magic sealing formation.” Linley understood now.

To Lord Beirut, a Highgod artifact was no big deal.

No wonder, on the day of his wedding, Beirut had gifted them with a divine spark.

Delia laughed, “Everyone, don’t just stand there like a fool. Since Hart and Harvey have joined forces, they’ve already intimidate the enemy and scared them off. As I see it, from today onwards, Dragonblood Castle will be able to enjoy a peaceful period. This is a wonderful affair. We need to have a good celebration!”

Housekeeper Hiri chortled, “I’ll immediately give the orders for a feast to be prepared!”

Everyone in Dragonblood Castle was in an excellent mood. Everyone understood that for the sake of protecting Bebe, Lord Beirut definitely wouldn't let anything threaten Dragonblood Castle. This time, just through Hart and Harvey making their moves…

The opponent's forces had been intimidated!

There was no question about this at all.

Barnas' side had heroically come, broadcasting their aura everywhere as they attacked Dragonblood Castle, attracting many experts along the way. Those experts even used their divine sense to summon their friends, so that when the battle occurred, there were many Deities and Saints hidden far away from Dragonblood Castle, watching the battle.

Naturally, these experts clearly saw what happened during this battle.

The manner in which Hanbritt's attack had caused the world itself to change colors caused the many experts to exhale in shock.

Tarosse's easy blocking of Hanbritt's attack also made them secretly say to themselves that this God's power truly was formidable.

In particular, when Barnas attacked, all of the experts were shocked. Even the two Gods who had hidden themselves nearby were utterly amazed. Their hearts were shaken by the power of the Highgod artifact in Barnas' hands. Only…who would have imagined that Hart and Harvey suddenly would attack?

All of the experts present had been flabbergasted!

In the blink of an eye, Barnas' side had been badly wounded, while Barnas lost one of his divine clones!

Hart and Harvey's power caused everyone present to be astonished.

In particular, those words that they uttered; “Dragonblood Castle is a place under Lord Beirut’s protection. Go tell Adkins that he had best not permit people to come here in the future. Otherwise, next time, it won’t be as simple a punishment as destroying one of your clones.”

At that time, the violet-robed youth, Hart, had intentionally spread his voice to an exceedingly great distance.

Those experts instantly understood that Dragonblood Castle was now under Lord Beirut’s protection, and Lord Beirut clearly didn’t even care about someone as powerful as the Highgod, Adkins. How then would those ordinary Demigods and Gods possibly dare to antagonize Dragonblood Castle?

These experts all spread this news widely.

Many of the experts hidden within the Yulan continent quickly learned that Dragonblood Castle not only had many Gods protecting it, it was also under guardianship of Lord Beirut. Without question…no one below the rank of Highgod would dare to irritate Lord Beirut!

Dragonblood Castle’s reputation, as well as information regarding its master, Linley, quickly became known to many experts.

O’Brien Empire. The imperial palace.

A cold wind howled, fluttering past the long robes of Barnas and the others.

Barnas, Gatenby, Ojwin, and Hanbritt were all standing together in a line respectfully to one side of Adkins. Adkins’ face was gloomy. Right his right hand, he was holding a goblet of blood-red wine. He swept the four with a knife-like gaze.

“Barnas, your clone was destroyed?” Adkins could instantly tell that Barnas was badly injured.

“Yes.” Barnas nodded slightly.

“Bastard!” Adkins let out a furious howl, smashing the goblet in his hand to the ground. “WHAP!” The wine goblet shattered. That crystalline sound seemed to have struck Barnas, Ojwin, and the others on their heart. The handsome, suave Adkins now looked like a fierce, enraged panther.

“Come with me!”

Adkins’ face was ferocious and fierce. “We are immediately heading to Dragonblood Castle. We will destroy them all!!!”

Barnas, Ojwin, Gatenby, and Hanbritt were greatly shocked. Only Ojwin had a hint of surprise and delight in his eyes. If Adkins personally attacked, then he would have a chance to avenge his son.

“Lord Adkins!” Barnas hurriedly said. “Lord Adkins, you cannot!”

Adkins angrily spun around to stare at him, saying furiously, “Grandpa Barnas, your clone was destroyed. That means you lost a life. How can we not avenge this enmity?”

The nearby Hanbritt and Ojwin were both stunned.

Grandpa Barnas?

The nearby Gatenby, however, wasn’t surprised at all. He had followed Lord Adkins for a fairly long period of time. He knew the relationship between Barnas and Adkins.

Before Adkins and Barnas had reached the Deity-level, the relationship between the two had been that of a young master and his housekeeper.

Barnas had always looked after Adkins. In fact, to be precise, Barnas had been the first to reach the Deity-level, and after having done so, he had always looked after Adkins. Adkins had a rather violent temper. Although he was extremely talented in training, because he had caused trouble and angered the Planar Overseer of the Yulan Plane of his era, Barnas and

Adkins had both been locked into the Gebados Planar Prison.

In the Gebados Planar Prison, Barnas had taken care of Adkins the entire time. In the end, Adkins' power had overtaken that of Barnas and he had reached the Highgod level.

However, in his heart, Barnas was still the closest, most trusted person Adkins knew.

Barnas had a bitter look on his face. "Adkins, don't be hotheaded!"

Hotheaded? If anyone else had said this to Adkins, Adkins would have killed him by now. But the person who said the words was Barnas.

"Lord Adkins, you didn't let me finish. My clone was indeed destroyed, but it was destroyed by the forces of Beirut. Dragonblood Castle is under Beirut's protection. If we go over there, that means we are openly becoming enemies of Beirut."

"Hmph, a young fellow who has only trained a few million years!" Adkins' eyes emitted a cold light. "So what if he is a Sovereign's Emissary? I refuse to believe I cannot kill him!"

Adkins could be considered a genius. Even in the Gebados Planar Prison, where experts were as common as the clouds, the only ones who could truly make him submit were those five Kings. As for this Beirut, just based on the fact that Beirut had only trained for a few million years, Adkins felt disdainful towards him.

Only Beirut's status as a Sovereign's Emissary made Adkins hesitate slightly.

Barnas urged solemnly, "Lord Adkins, do you know what those four figures wielded as their weapons?"

"What?" Adkins laughed coldly.

“All of them were Highgod artifacts!” Barnas said solemnly.

Adkins couldn’t help but start. Highgod artifacts. That was something which a Highgod created only after whole-heartedly cultivating an artifact for countless years. Generally speaking, experts who had only recently reached the Highgod level didn’t have Highgod artifacts.

Although he, Adkins, was very powerful, despite the passage of many years, he only had three Highgod artifacts in total, one of which he had given Barnas. He himself kept two.

But these four people had a total of four Highgod artifacts!

“Hmph. Nothing more than gifts from the Sovereign.” Adkins sneered.

Barnas bitterly urged, “Lord Adkins, that isn’t Beirut himself, just his subordinates. Those four figures were actually two people, each of which had two clones. Even those two people each have two Highgod artifacts. Lord Adkins, think about it. What about Beirut himself, then?”

Adkins, in his heart, began to hesitate now.

“All he can do is rely on the Sovereign behind him.” Adkins’ heart was filled with inconsolable fury.

What he feared was…

Beirut might be in possession of many precious Highgod artifacts, perhaps even soul-protecting Highgod artifacts. Or, if Beirut were to be in possession of a Sovereign artifact…even an ordinary Highgod who possessed a true Sovereign artifact would have terrifyingly powerful force when using it.

“Since Lord Beirut dares to act in such a way, clearly he has complete confidence in himself.” Barnas looked at him. “Lord Adkins, I’ve only lost a single clone. I’m not dead, after all. Lord Adkins, what really matter is you being able to acquire the treasures within the Necropolis of the Gods.

That's what matters. Right now, it's best not to make an enemy out of Beirut."

Adkins was silent for a moment.

"Fine. I will endure for this thousand years." Adkins ground his teeth. "After I acquire what I need from the Necropolis of the Gods…at that time, I will make Beirut regret the ignorance and arrogance he put on display today!"

Barnas let out a relieved sigh in his heart.

He knew that Adkins was too arrogant and incapable of enduring. However, Adkins would still listen to Barnas' advice.

Thus, Adkins did not go to Dragonblood Castle to seek revenge. He maintained his silence. Adkins' silence caused many of the thousands of experts who had come to the Yulan continent from the Gebados Planar Prison to believe…

Adkins feared Beirut!

The Forest of Darkness. The metallic castle.

"This Adkins actually managed to resist and endure." Lying on a recliner, drinking a cup of tea, Beirut had a hint of a smile on his face. "It seems the Yulan Plane is going to be quiet for a period of time. Only…Hodan in the north doesn't want to be lonely."

Beirut turned his head, staring northwards.

His gaze seemed to pierce through the veil of reality, seeing the Planar Overseer, Hodan, in the Arctic Icecap.

"Can it be that those experts all think that the Necropolis of the Gods is a treasure room where they can acquire divine Highgod sparks, Highgod artifacts, and even Sovereign artifacts as they please? Haha…what a pity,

the guardian of the Necropolis of the Gods is myself!”

Beirut was grinning like a fox, but his eyes held a hint of anticipation.

After all, having been in the Yulan Plane for so long, Beirut would also feel bored.

To occasionally be entertained was a good thing.

Chapter 23 – Sadista

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 23, Sadista

The Yulan Plane. The Arctic Icecap. Deep within an iceberg that stretched into the clouds. This was the residence of the Planar Overseer, Hodan.

This iceberg peak had a total of eleven complicated hexa-star magic formations surrounding it.

As Beirut in the Forest of Darkness looked this way, Hodan was currently seated in front of a magic formation. The complex magic formation was glowing with light which rose into the skies, making the center of it seem illusory and dreamlike.

Hodan's face held irrepressible excitement on it as well.

"Coming." Hodan's eyes lit up. From within the center of the magic formation, an indistinct group of human figures could be seen. Slowly, the glow of the magic formation faded away, revealing a few dozen people within the magic formation. The aura these few dozen people emanated were enough to make one's heart shudder.

All of them were Deities!

The leader was dressed in a gaudy black robe with gold trim, looking like a gentleman heading to a banquet. The leader was the first to see Hodan, and he immediately smiled. "Hodan, it's been thousands of years. You've been working hard."

Hodan immediately bowed in respect. "Lord Sadista [Sa'di'si'ta], it is my honor to be able to work on behalf of the clan!"

Sadista folded his arms over his chest, gently rubbing a ring on his finger that occasionally glimmered with red light. With a calm laugh, he said,

“Hodan, you gave only a very brief summary to the clan. Explain clearly the current situation in the Yulan continent.”

“Yes.” In front of this Sadista, Hodan was acting as if he were a meek servant.

“Lord Sadista, not long ago, there were some problems which occurred in the tunnels between the Yulan Plane and the Planar Prison, causing quite a few experts to flee out. Although Lord Beirut went to seal off the tunnel, many Deities still escaped.”

“Aside from a minority who left for the Higher Planes and the Divine Planes, most have remained in the Yulan continent. I fear that they are most likely intending to enter the Necropolis of the Gods!”

Sadista nodded slightly.

“Hodan, are there any Highgod level experts?” Sadista asked.

“There is, one! His name is ‘Adkins’. Lord Adkins is currently living in the O’Brien Empire. This Lord Adkins clearly wishes to go to the Necropolis of the Gods.” Hodan said respectfully.

“Adkins?” Sadista frowned.

He didn’t care about any of the other experts, but since Adkins was a Highgod, Sadista had to be careful about him. Although Sadista had engaged in many battles within the Infernal Realm of the Higher Planes, Sadista knew that someone who was able to survive in a Planar Prison and even train to the level of Highgod meant that Adkins definitely wasn’t someone who could be matched by those members of powerful alliances and clans in the Infernal Realm who were given Highgod sparks but were not experienced in using them.

One of Sadista’s followers immediately said, “Lord Sadista, don’t worry. That Adkins definitely isn’t a match for you, milord.”

“Shut your mouth.” Sadista frowned.

His follower instantly didn’t dare to make another sound.

Hodan said respectfully, “Lord Sadista, not long ago, four Gods under Adkins’ command and the forces of the Baruch Empire’s Dragonblood Castle engaged in a battle.”

“Oh?” Sadista looked at Hodan curiously.

He didn’t understand why Hodan would mention Gods. However, Sadista understood that Hodan wouldn’t raise this for no purpose.

“However, Adkins’ forces were defeated badly and retreated!” Hodan laughed. He could tell that Sadista was somewhat surprised, and he continued, “That Dragonblood Castle also has full Gods, and more importantly, it is a place under Lord Beirut’s protection!”

“This time, Adkins’ side suffered a huge loss, but Adkins didn’t dare to go make trouble for Lord Beirut.” Hodan said.

Sadista nodded slightly. “This Adkins can be considered to be intelligent, as he didn’t go irritate Beirut. Only, now that makes things a bit tricky for us. If Adkins truly had been so arrogant as to go irritate Beirut, it would have been excellent if Beirut had disposed of him for us. Only now, things are troublesome.”

“Uncle, is Beirut definitely capable of killing Adkins?” A youth behind Sadista said.

Sadista knew exactly how powerful Beirut was. Laughing calmly, he said, “Beirut’s power is far greater than you can imagine. Do you know that ten thousand years ago, during the Apocalypse Wars of the Yulan continent, even the likes of the Bloodviolet Fiend who dominated the entire Infernal Realm as well as Twelve-Winged Angels of the Divine Plane of Light had participated…those individuals could all be considered amongst the most powerful of Highgods in existence.”

“The Bloodviolet Fiend?” The youngster let out a shocked breath.

In the Higher Plane of the Infernal Realm, the Bloodviolet Fiend was already a figure of legend. In fact, many experts of the Infernal Realm all believed that the Bloodviolet Fiend was already powerful enough to be given the title of ‘Asura’.

Asura!

This was a title of extremely great reverence within the Infernal Realm. Only the most powerful of Highgods would be awarded such a title.

“The results of those battles were, all of those powerful Highgods fell! Not a single one of them survived. The only one who survived out of all of them was Beirut!” Sadista let out an emotional breath. “Although I’m not too certain about the specifics of that battle, just based on that alone, it means that Beirut should be even more fearsome than the Bloodviolet Fiend! Tell me, do you think there is any chance that someone as powerful as him wouldn’t be able to kill this Adkins?”

Sadista’s words caused everyone behind him to let out shocked breaths.

They were all only Gods and Demigods. In the clan, they weren’t qualified to learn of the many secrets and hidden facts of the universe.

“Right. Hodan, this Yulan Plane should be one of the planes where the Four Divine Beast clans have a branch, right?” Sadista suddenly asked. “Are there any descendants of the Four Divine Beast clans in the Yulan Plane?”

“There are, and quite a few.” Hodan replied.

Sadista’s face changed.

“Hmph, so there still are some left!” Sadista’s face instantly turned fierce, and his face seemed to instantly be covered with a layer of frost. “However many they are, kill them all! Not one is to be left alive!”

Hodan shook his head. “Lord Sadista, just now, I spoke of Dragonblood Castle. This is currently the main headquarters of the Four Divine Beast clans. Many Undying Warriors and Dragonblood Warriors are gathered there. In particular, there is one known as Linley. He has an extraordinary relationship with Lord Beirut.”

“Linley?” Sadista frowned.

“Linley is a descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan, but he has a magical beast companion. The important thing is…that magical beast is a legendary ‘Godeater Rat’. Aside from Lord Beirut, the one and only Godeater Rat in the countless planes of the universe! Lord Beirut is filled with love and affection towards that Godeater Rat. If you were to act against Linley, milord, then you would be openly making enemies of Lord Beirut.” Hodan said hurriedly. “Milord, we need to consider the bigger picture here.”

Sadista’s face was cold and gloomy.

Hodan knew very well that Sadista deeply desired to kill the descendants of the Four Divine Beast clans.

“Milord, it is nothing more than a branch. It has no impact on the big picture. The most important thing is the Necropolis of the Gods.” Hodan said hurriedly.

Sadista knew, of course, what really mattered. Sadista also knew a little bit regarding Beirut’s background and history. If he were to make an enemy out of Beirut…that was something he didn’t wish to do. Sadista let out a long breath. “Then for now, we won’t act against those people. Linley actually managed to become friends with this Godeater Rat. What a stroke of luck for him.”

Sadista looked at Hodan, then said, “How long will it be before the next opening of the Necropolis of the Gods?”

“Roughly a thousand years.” Hodan replied.

“Fine.” Sadista nodded. “Hodan, stay here. Everyone else, come with me.” As he spoke, Sadista transformed into a blur, flying south and away from the iceberg. The dozens of experts behind him all closely followed Sadista.

Sadista led the group of experts out of the North Sea and to the Yulan Continent.

Although Sadista had brought a group of experts to the Yulan continent, he hadn’t caused any disruption at all. The Yulan continent remained as peaceful and tranquil as it ever had. In this sort of tranquility, time slowly flowed by like water, one year after another…

Dragonblood Castle.

It had been twenty full years since Barnas and the others had attacked. In the past twenty years, Linley’s original body had continued to train in the Throbbing Pulse of the World. After spending six full years, Linley had finally transformed the ‘Eight Fused Waves’ into the ‘Four Fused Waves’ of the Throbbing Pulse of the World.

After another twelve years, he had managed to transform the ‘Four Fused Waves’ into the ‘Two Fused Waves’.

But afterwards, Linley hadn’t been able to make any improvements at all. It must be understood that to reach the ‘all becomes one’ step, the previous insights, proofs, and visualization techniques which Linley had used had all become ineffective. This was the final barrier.

In other words, it was a bottleneck.

From the Two Fused Waves to the One Wave, one could either make the breakthrough in an instant, or take thousands or tens of thousands of years without making any progress. Linley was very confident in himself, and he was in no rush. Instead, he relaxed and began to spend more time with his wife, Delia.

Aside from advancing in the Throbbing Pulse of the World, Linley's progress in the 'Profound Truths of Velocity' had been considerable as well.

What made Linley the happiest, however, wasn't his improvement. Rather, it was the breakthroughs which his family and friends had made.

"Delia was the first to reach the Deity-level, and next was Barker, then Desri, then Zassler…Haeru was the slowest one." Linley looked at the black-haired youngster in front of him, laughing, "Haeru, congratulations."

Right. Haeru had finally become a Deity.

Several people in Dragonblood Castle had successively become Deities. In addition, the War God and the High Priest had finished fusing with the God-level divine sparks and become Gods. Everyone's power had improved. Naturally, everyone was delighted.

"It was all thanks to your benevolence, Master." In human form, Haeru remained as respectful as ever.

Linley laughed, "Haeru, no need to be so reserved around me. You can now go wherever you like." Next to Linley, Delia laughed. "I think Haeru will definitely go show off to those three dragons. Haeru, am I right?"

Haeru could only laugh honestly.

Whenever Haeru thought about the future, he couldn't help but feel delighted. Who would have imagined that he, a Blackcloud Panther, a magical beast of the ninth rank, would become a Deity.

After Haeru left, Linley paused for a moment, then said to Delia, "Delia, I'm planning to leave Dragonblood Castle for a time."

"Hrm?" Delia was somewhat surprised.

Linley explained, "I've already reached a bottleneck in the Throbbing Pulse

of the World. I want to go out for a while and experience the world for a bit. Perhaps that way, I will more easily reach a sudden insight and thus break through." This Throbbing Pulse of the World was a fairly high level profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth.

To break through truly was very hard.

"Then I'll go with you." Delia didn't want to part from him.

"Haha, I'm not going to other planes, just for a stroll around the Yulan continent. I can engage in communication via divine sense with you at any time." Linley laughed. Delia laughed as well. Now that Delia was also a Deity, given that the Yulan continent was only so large, Delia's divine sense was enough to search for and find Linley.

"Alright." Delia nodded and laughed. "When are you planning to head out?"

"Tomorrow." Linley said.

"What about Bebe?" Delia asked.

"He'll come with me." Linley laughed. "In the past, Bebe and I had spent three years together in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. That was the place where I first sensed the Throbbing Pulse of the World."

The next morning, at dawn, just as the sun rose.

Linley didn't tell anyone else about this trip. Only Delia knew about it. After bidding Delia farewell, Linley and Bebe secretly flew out of Dragonblood Castle, beginning a life of tourism and roving about in the Yulan continent.

"Boss, where shall we go?" Raising his head towards the wind, Bebe asked.

"I've never paid a visit to the great plains of the far east. Let's go there first." Linley said with a laugh.

Linley and Bebe both transformed into streaks of rainbow light, disappearing into the southeastern horizon.

Chapter 24 – The Mountain Range of Death

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 24, The Mountain Range of Death

Linley and Bebe secretly left Dragonblood Castle. Nobody knew they were gone. At first, Wharton, Taylor, and the others didn't feel strange upon discovering that Linley wasn't in Dragonblood Castle. They thought that Linley was training within the pocket dimension.

Only after half a month did they discover from Delia that Linley and Bebe had already left.

As for the ordinary guards and maids of Dragonblood Castle, they only found out about this a long time afterwards.

Although after the 'dead cities' events, the population of the Rohault Empire had collapsed and it could no longer be termed an Empire, there were still quite a number of people living within its borders. Especially in the past twenty years, the population of the Rohault Empire had increased significantly again.

The Rohault Empire. Within a quiet little town. In the center of the town was an exceedingly large manor, which had guards within standing ramrod straight. Even the maids didn't dare to giggle and joke around.

A gaudily dressed, cruel-looking, middle-aged man walked into the manor.

"Lord Anras [An'la'si]!" The guards called out with great respect.

Anras nodded slightly, continuing forward. Soon, he arrived in front of a quiet little courtyard. There was a man dressed in a gold-threaded robe there sitting on a chair, holding a five-centimeter thick book in his hands.

"Lord Sadista!" Anras bowed respectfully.

The man reading the book was Sadista. Sadista had spent the past twenty years in the Yulan Plane in this quiet little town. However, nothing which occurred within the Yulan continent could escape the notice of Sadista. As for Anras, he was one of the three Gods under Sadista's control.

"Anras, what is it?" Sadista continued to read as he said calmly.

Anras said respectfully, "Lord Sadista, according to the news we received from Dragonblood Castle, Linley left Dragonblood Castle long ago." Sadista hadn't found it too hard to insert some people into Dragonblood Castle.

Sadista cared most about two locations; the imperial palace of the O'Brien Empire and Dragonblood Castle.

He inserted people into the O'Brien Empire's imperial palace to monitor Adkins' activities. After all, in the entire Yulan continent, Sadista was concerned about only two persons. One was Adkins, while the other was Beirut. But Beirut's 'metallic castle' didn't permit entry to others at all.

Thus, Sadista was unable to insert any spies. All he could do was take a step back and insert people into Dragonblood Castle instead.

Inserting people into Dragonblood Castle was partially because of Beirut, while partially because of the Dragonblood Warriors and the Undying Warriors.

"Whap!" He suddenly closed the book, raising his head to look at Anras. "Linley left Dragonblood Castle. Just by himself?"

"No. That Godeater Rat known as Bebe went with him." Anras said respectfully.

"Hmph." Sadista let out an unhappy snort. "This Linley is always with that Godeater Rat. Killing him will be rather difficult." Sadista had never planned to truly give up on killing those descendants of the Four Divine Beast clans.

“This Linley is less than a century old, and yet he is already at such a level. Even in the Four Divine Beast clans, he would be considered a top tier talent. In addition, this is before he’s gone back to the ancestral halls of the Four Divine Beasts and undergone their baptism. If he undergoes the baptism within their ancestral hall, in a short period of time, a talent such as him will definitely become a major force for the Indigo Prefecture, and another major foe for our clan.” Sadista’s face was solemn.

Sadista knew about the legends of the Four Divine Beast clans.

“Linley is already so powerful despite not having returned to the ancestral hall of the Four Divine Beasts. When he does return, it will indeed be troublesome.” Anras nodded as well.

“If the Indigo Prefecture learns that the Four Divine Beast clans have a talent such as him in the Yulan Plane, they will definitely spare no expense to bring Linley back to them.” Sadista said coldly. “Those other people in the Dragonblood Castle, that Wharton and Barker and whatever, they are secondary. Even if they return to the Four Divine Beast clans, they will just increase the total population slightly. They won’t result in anything amazing. But that Linley…”

Anras secretly nodded.

Generally speaking, only after undergoing the ancestral baptism rites would the scions of the Four Divine Beast clans make rapid improvements. For Linley to be so powerful before undergoing the ancestral baptism rights meant that once he did undergo those rights, his future ability…would definitely be enough to cause Sadista worry.

After all, he had become a Deity within a hundred years on his own. This already spoke to Linley’s potential.

“However, our number one priority this time is still the Necropolis of the Gods.” Sadista said with a frown.

If they wanted to enter the Necropolis of the Gods, then they couldn't offend Beirut.

If they killed Linley when he was with Bebe, Bebe would definitely memorize the aura of those who had killed Linley. When the time came… he would definitely be able to find out that it was Sadista's group.

"No matter what, we can't kill that Godeater Rat known as Bebe." Sadista knew very well that this was the only one of Beirut's progeny who had become a Godeater Rat. Beirut had even sent his two sons to Dragonblood Castle to protect Bebe.

From this, one could tell how much Beirut valued Bebe.

If they killed Bebe, then…

Beirut's rage was something which he, Sadista, couldn't withstand.

"In addition, Beirut's backer is no ordinary person. If we truly were to wreck our relations with Beirut, then most likely even our entire clan would suffer a huge calamity." Sadista was dimly aware of how terrifyingly powerful Beirut's background was.

"To kill Linley, we have to find the moment when Linley and that Godeater Rat, Bebe, are separated and not together. At that time, we would change our appearances, then seize the opportunity to kill Linley!" Sadista's eyes revealed a cold light. "Hmph. Even if that Linley and Bebe are spiritually connected, at most he'll be able to send a mental message of the appearance of his attackers. There's no way to send a person's aura."

Sadista wasn't worried at all of being discovered by Beirut given that situation.

Because…

Even as someone as mighty as a Sovereign couldn't find out what had happened in the past or what would happen in the future. As long as Beirut

was unable to find the murderer, what would he, Sadista, have to be afraid of?

“I want to see where that Linley is!” Sadista spread out his divine sense, instantly covering the entire Yulan continent. But of course, he intentionally used his divine sense to avoid the Forest of Darkness and the O’Brien Empire’s imperial capital.

“The great plains of the far east!” Sadista let out a cold laugh, and then turned towards Anras. “Anras.”

Anras immediately bowed.

“Anras, immediately go to the great plains of the far east.” Sadista instructed.

“Yes, Lord Sadista.” Anras replied.

Sadista nodded calmly. “When going to the great plains of the far east, don’t intentionally go searching for Linley. I will occasionally search for Linley’s position. Once I notice that him and Bebe are separated, I will immediately tell you through my divine sense and instruct you to kill Linley. Remember, change your appearance first.”

“Yes.” Anras immediately changed his appearance slightly.

Someone as powerful as a Deity could use divine power to repair their body. Naturally, they could also use it to change their appearance.

“This Linley actually went running out of Dragonblood Castle for no reason. He’s asking to be killed. I was worried about him spending this entire time in Dragonblood Castle and not having a chance to deal with him.” Sadista sneered coldly to himself.

Linley and Bebe had already been in the great plains of the far east for three full months. During these three months, Linley and Bebe had only relied on their legs to travel, all the way from the Baruch Empire through the border

with the great plains of the far east. They had travelled south the entire time, passing through mountains, rivers, and plains.

Three months later, Linley had already encountered many locals. Linley completely acted as though he was an ordinary person and lived an ordinary life.

In the southern parts of the great plains of the far east, they were quite close to the Burning Desert. There were some mountains nearby as well. Linley and Bebe were currently within the middle of one of those desolate mountain ranges.

“So this is the legendary ‘Mountain Range of Death’ which those locals spoke about.” Linley stared at his surroundings and let out a breath. “However, I haven’t discovered any reason for this place to be called the ‘Mountain Range of Death’.” Linley was dressed in a sleeveless shirt, and his powerful muscles made the shirt bulge out as well.

After three months of travel and tourism, Linley had once again found that sense of excitement he had in the past.

He liked this sort of interesting, unique experience.

Bebe was wearing his straw hat, chewing on a piece of a straw. Staring at his surroundings, he said, “Boss, this ordinary people call it the Mountain Range of Death, but to us, of course it has no danger whatsoever.”

“It isn’t any danger to us, but at least, it should have something special.” Linley began walking forward again. “Come, let’s go further into the mountain and take a closer look.” Leaping a few dozen meters with one stride, Bebe immediately caught up to Linley.

The two walked forward, side by side.

The Mountain Range of Death, according to local legend, was an exceedingly dangerous place. This Mountain Range of Death, especially in the southern region of the great plains of the far east, the ‘Casale’

[Ka'sha'er] region, was very famous. Many people didn't dare to enter this mountain range at all.

"Child!" "Child!" …..

A faint, desolate cry could be heard deep within the mountains.

"Oh?" Linley and Bebe exchanged a glance. Not hesitating at all, they immediately moved forward quickly, like two gusts of smoke towards the distant source of sound. They easily passed through any gorges or boulders which would have blocked their way.

Soon, Linley and Bebe arrived in front of the person who had emitted those cries.

"Someone dares to enter the Mountain Range of Death?" Linley and Bebe were both very surprised.

The person who cried out was a plainsman. Right now, the man was currently crying out desolately. His clothes were torn apart, and he appeared in terrible straits. Linley and Bebe, hearing his desolate cries, could both sense the pain and franticness of this man.

"Hey, what's wrong?" Bebe hopped right in front of that plainsman.

The plainsman, upon seeing Bebe suddenly appear, was greatly startled. But then, he said frantically, "Child, what are you doing in the Mountain Range of Death? Quick, leave. This place is very dangerous." The plainsman, seeing Bebe, clearly took him to be a youngster.

"Boom." With a flick of Bebe's slender arm, a nearby, enormous tree with a girth which would require two men to encircle it with their arms, instantly shattered. With another pat on the shattered tree trunk, Bebe transformed it into a straight line, sending it flying hundreds of meters away into another, unknown part of the mountain.

"And you are worried about me?"

The plainsman was scared silly. That enormous tree was incredibly heavy. Even the experts he knew, or even his clan's leader, couldn't possibly send such a heavy, enormous tree flying until it disappeared into the distance with a palm slap.

"Might I ask, what happened? Why are you in the Mountain Range of Death? Aren't you afraid?" Linley walked over as well.

The plainsman looked at Linley, then looked at the youngster in front of him wearing a straw hat. He somewhat understood that he had met with true experts. The man, with a 'thud', sank to his knees. "Milords, I'm begging you, please save my child."

"Speak, what happened?" Linley asked.

"My son disappeared in the mountain here." The plainsman said hurriedly.

"If you knew it was dangerous, why did you bring your son in?" Bebe said unhappily.

The plainsman hurriedly explained, "Milords, you don't understand. Although others believe the Mountain Range of Death to be deadly, in truth, it isn't that scary. There's only a single area within the Mountain Range of Death which is dangerous. The other areas are very safe. Those of us who live here all know about it, and so when we go into the mountains to cut trees for wood, we will all go into the mountains. As long as we don't go near that dangerous area, it's fine. In the past, when I went woodcutting, I would have my son by my side. But this time, when I turned to look, my son had disappeared. I don't know where he ran off to."

"I beg of you, milords, help me find my son." The plainsman sobbed.

Linley nodded.

"Is your son a seven or eight year old child dressed in red cotton clothes?" Bebe asked.

“You…how do you know?” The plains man stared, shocked.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other, laughing. Their divine sense had spread across the entire mountain in an instant. Naturally, they were able to find that child.

Chapter 25 – The Profound Mysteries of Death?

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 25, The Profound Mysteries of Death?

Linley laughed and said, “Your child is currently about three or so kilometers south of us.”

“Three or so kilometers south?” The plainsman’s face changed dramatically. “Is that place Twin Horn Peak?”

“Twin Horn Peak?” Linley was a bit puzzled, but his divine sense did indeed discover that in a place located very close to the child, there was a mountain peak which was very strange. The top of the mountain peak was split apart, perhaps by the wind over the years, and had a lonely aura to it. These two mountain peaks did indeed seem like the two horns of a mountain goat.

Bebe said, “Yes, not too far from the child, there is indeed a mountain peak that seems like two goat horns.”

The plainsman immediately kowtowed, pressing his head against the ground. “Milords, please save my child. That Twin Horn Peak is the dangerous area of the Mountain Range of Death.” This father clearly was too worried about his son. He kowtowed until the skin on his forehead split open, staining the rocky earth with his blood.

The divine power around Linley’s body reached out, causing the plainsman to no longer be able to kowtow.

“We will save your child.” Linley rested his hand on the plainsman’s shoulder, and a surge of life energy from the Pearl of Life transmitted to the plainsman, instantly healing that minor wound on his forehead.

The plainsman realized that the wound on his forehead was cured, and become all the more certain was that these two people in front of him were

incredible experts. They might even be those legendary Saints. The plainsman looked towards Linley and Bebe, his eyes filled with hope.

“Wait a moment.” Linley said, and then he and Bebe simultaneously moved, disappearing from the plainsman’s vision.

The plainsman held his arms around his chest, his eyes filled with tears. “My child will definitely be rescued. Definitely.”

Mountain Range of Death. Twin Horn Peak.

“The wind here at Twin Horn Peak is so strong and so weird.” Bebe let out a breath.

Linley nodded slightly. Although it wasn’t strange for mountain wind to be so strong, the mountain wind here was extraordinarily great. The wild wind howled, filling Twin Horn Peak, but after entering the area, it no longer produced any sound. It was as though Twin Horn Peak was capable of devouring the wind.

Fortunately, the child was still a good distance away from Twin Horn Peak.

“His father is going frantic with worry searching for him, but the child is just taking a nap here.” Bebe and Linley stood next to the child wearing a red coat. This plainsman child’s face was ruddy, and he wore a felt hat, his little face streaked with tears.

It seemed as though after getting lost, the child had been terrified and had gone searching for his father.

But in the mountainous terrain, it was hard to tell directions. Even grown men who weren’t familiar with this place would easily get lost, much less a child.

“Hey.” Bebe gently tweaked the child on his nose.

“Um, umm…” The sleeping child wrinkled his nose. Because his breathing

was interrupted, he woke up. At this time, Bebe naturally let go. Upon seeing Linley and Bebe, the child's eyes were instantly filled with a look of delight.

"Big brothers, help me find Father, I can't find him." The child instantly began to cry.

"You little rascal. In the future, will you still run around wildly?" Bebe snickered.

"I was just chasing after a wild hare. I remembered the road. Only, afterwards, for some reason, I couldn't find Father any more, no matter how I tried. I searched everywhere, but then it got dark. I searched for so long, and the night was really dark, and my tummy was really hungry, so I fell asleep." The child stared at Bebe with his big round black eyes while sobbing.

"Come, your big brother here will take you to look for father." Bebe took the child into his arms.

Linley and Bebe flew into the air. Although there was a distance of three kilometers by air from here to the child's father, if they were to actually walk, given the winding mountain paths, they would at least walk ten kilometers before reaching the child's father.

"I wonder how much suffering this child endured just now." Linley sighed in his heart.

"Wow…" The child's eyes turned round.

The child was in Bebe's arms and flying in mid-air. Clearly, this little fellow had never flown in mid-air before. Right now, he was uncontrollably excited and forgot about how pitiable he had been just now. "I'm flying. Wow. Big brother, you are so awesome."

Bebe grinned so widely, his eyes turned into merry little slits.

“Father, I see Father.” The child immediately pointed down at a below figure. Clearly, the plainsman below had seen Linley, Bebe, and his child as well. That plainsman immediately waved at them with gratitude.

Linley and Bebe landed down.

“Go to your father.” Bebe released the child to the ground.

“Father.” The child immediately ran over.

The plainsman instantly began to cry from relief and joy. Hugging his son, he said, “Child, you scared your father to death. I told you not to run around, but you still ran around wildly.” As he spoke, the plainsman continued to cry. For the sake of his child, he had been searching from yesterday until today, spending an entire night and half a day.

“I won’t run around again.” The child immediately said.

“Quick, go over there and thank those two lords.” The plainsman had heard that Saints were capable of flight. Those two in front of him were both capable of flight. Most likely, they were Saints. The plainsman immediately tugged his child over, kneeling down with gratitude as he spoke.

“Thank you, big brothers.” The child immediately said.

Linley and Bebe both laughed. Actually, on this journey, they had helped quite a few people.

“In the future, just listen to your father and everything will be fine.” Linley laughed. “Alright, we should go as well.”

The child hurriedly said, “Two big brothers, my name is Walsh [Wo’er’shi]. In the future, I will definitely look for you guys. I’ll come flying and look for you guys.” Linley and Bebe both began to laugh, and then, after bidding the two farewell, Linley and Bebe left.

Linley and Bebe headed towards that Twin Horn Peak. Twin Horn Peak

clearly had some sort of secret in it. Linley and Bebe naturally would go investigate.

“That child just now was so adorable.” Bebe said, and Linley sighed, “Seeing that father and son makes me think of Cena.”

“Cena?” Bebe was somewhat surprised.

Linley nodded and said, “When the Great Botha Levee was broken open, Ojwin had arrived in the Yulan continent and destroyed the imperial palace of our Baruch Empire. At that time, the only two survivors of the entire imperial palace were Cena and Ankh. Everyone else died. Cena’s child, little Kass, died as well. Despite so much time passing, Cena still feels great pain in his heart due to this.”

Dragonblood Warriors had very few descendants. Although twenty years ago, Cena had taken a new wife, he still had no children.

In his heart, Cena continued to harbor hatred towards Ojwin.

Originally, when Ojwin had attacked and the Violet-Gold Rat King brothers had countered, the two of them actually had the chance to kill Ojwin. However, at that time Linley and Cena were both shocked by the appearances of those mysterious experts.

How could they have dared to try and ask those experts to kill Ojwin?

After Ojwin’s group left, Ojwin had remained in hiding within the imperial capital of the O’Brien Empire, giving Linley’s side no chance for revenge.

“That enmity must be avenged.” Bebe nodded. “In the future, when we have the chance, we definitely cannot let that Ojwin off the hook.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Only, for now, he didn’t have enough power to kill Ojwin.

“Here we are. Twin Horn Peak.” Bebe said.

There was a gorge beneath Twin Horn Peak. The wild wind blew like the roaring of a wild beast, but upon entering the gorge, very bizarrely, no sound could be heard from the powerful mountain wind.

Linley and Bebe, being experts, feared nothing. They headed directly into the gorge, the wild wind not budging them in the slightest.

“There’s quite a few skeletons in this gorge.” Bebe said with a frown.

Linley nodded slightly. The gorge walls of this place weren’t very flat. They occasionally protruded out and occasionally had crevices…the entire gorge was extremely bizarre, and the sound of a wild howling wind could be heard at the entrance to it. However, when Linley and Bebe entered deeper into the gorge, they couldn’t hear any sound at all.

“Weird. Really weird.” Bebe pursed his lips.

Linley’s forehead was furrowed, and he was currently walking forward carefully and cautiously.

“So many corpses. Who knows how many people died here.” Linley stared at the corpses within ten meters of him. Clearly, they had been here for a long time.

“Huh?” Linley suddenly felt his heart viciously contract, and even his head went dizzy.

“Someone is ambushing us?” Linley instantly recovered. Greatly shocked, he immediately spread his divine power into his body.”

“Bebe, careful.” Linley immediately warned.

He was currently walking about with his original body. Ever since his original body had absorbed the golden blood drop, the power of his original body was actually greater than that of his divine body. Despite having such

a powerful body, Linley just now had felt his heart clench and his head go dizzy. This was definitely an external attack.

Bebe looked around carefully as well. “Boss, nobody’s here.” Bebe transmitted mentally.

“I was attacked just now.” Linley was very certain. “It was an invisible attack.”

“How come I wasn’t attacked?” Bebe grew worried as well. This sort of invisible attack was extremely bizarre.

Linley and Bebe were on high alert for a long while, but didn’t discover anything.

“Hrm? That’s not right.” Linley experimentally retracted his divine power from his organs. Indeed, that feeling once more appeared, causing his heart to clench and his head grow slightly dizzy. However, Linley was able to maintain his clear-headedness. Linley spread out his spiritual energy, carefully searching.

Only now did Linley clearly sense…

After the wild, howling wind entered the gorge, because of the unique, bizarre shape of the gorge, the wind transformed. The wind elemental essences in this area were clashing against each other, creating a very strange sonic vibration. This sort of inaudible vibration was constantly broadcasting everywhere.

Linley could sense his heart clench and his body feel uncomfortable. Even his head had grown dizzy. All of this was due to this sound entering his body.

When Linley normally trained in the Profound Truths of Velocity, he would occasionally analyze the Profound Mysteries of Sound. After twenty years, although he hadn’t made any major gains, he at least had a general idea of these profound mysteries. Linley was certain…that sound was actually

nothing more than sound waves which entered a person's ears, which naturally allowed them to hear it.

But the strange sound waves of this valley were inaudible, yet could cause harm to the body.

Even a body as powerful as Linley's had been impacted. If an ordinary person had entered this place, naturally they would have died.

"Hrm? This is…"

A light suddenly flashed in Linley's mind.

"So sound waves actually have a profound mystery like this…" Linley felt great joy in his heart.

"Bebe, I'm about to immediately begin training for a time." Linley mentally spoke to Bebe, and then ignoring all else, his divine clone flew directly out of his original body, sitting down within the gorge in the meditative position, beginning to attune with this strange 'sound wave'.

Not just his divine clone; even Linley's original body sat down at the same time, analyzing and sensing the profound mysteries contained within this sound wave.

Bebe was somewhat astonished. "What did the Boss just gain an insight into?"

"The more insights the Boss gains, the better." Bebe was still rather happy. He then sat down as well. While Linley trained, Bebe decided to stay here and protect Linley.

Linley's sudden flash of insight and decision to train was something that was out of Sadista's expectations. Sadista had looked forward to Linley and Bebe separating, giving him the chance to order his subordinate to kill Linley. But at things turned out…he didn't have any chance at all.

In his training, Linley lost all track of time.

His divine clone and his original body simultaneously attuned to the sound waves, both beginning to train and visualize. As for divine clone, it focused on the audible sounds, while the original body focused on the inaudible sounds, then the two cross-compared…Linley's insights into sound rapidly began to rise at an astonishing rate.

Time flowed on within the gorge. Quickly, Linley's two bodies became covered with a layer of dust and dirt.

Bebe quietly trained as well.

In the blink of an eye, two years passed.

Nobody dared to come to Twin Horn Peak. Linley's two bodies as well as Bebe remained there in the meditative posture, and within Twin Horn Peak, those invisible sound waves continuously broadcasted out.

"Haha…" The dust covering his body flew away.

Linley's two bodies merged into one. A smile was on his face. "Haha, I was wrong. I was wrong. In the Elemental Laws of the Wind, sound should be divided into two aspects; the first is the 'Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves', while the other is the 'Profound Mysteries of Music'. Only when the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves fuse into one can they be considered the Profound Truths of Sound!"

Chapter 26 – Homeland

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 26, Homeland

“Rumble…” The dust flew away from Bebe’s body as well. The dirt and dust were controlled by an invisible force, which then compressed them into a stone.

Bebe pressed down on the brim of his straw hat, excitedly looking at Linley. “Boss, just then, you talked about the Profound Mysteries of Music, and also something about a Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves, and how fusing them would result in the Profound Truths of Sound? What are these things?” Bebe was very confused.

Linley smiled slightly.

Although he had only trained for two years, Linley’s spiritual visualization and hypothesizing abilities were hundreds of times faster than before he became a Deity. During this period of time, he had both of his souls simultaneously attuning and cross-referencing. The two years of training he had undergone could definitely compare to two hundred years of training in his pre-Deity time.

With regards to the Profound Mysteries of Music and Sound Waves, Linley already reached a certain level of skill.

But of course, he was still very far away from true mastery.

“Bebe, when sound is created, it is actually just a form of sound wave.” Linley explained. “Since sound is actually a form of a wave, it naturally has its own vibrations. Every single second, it vibrates many times in a defined range, allowing our ears to hear it.”

This was something which Linley had came to understand regarding sound while back in Dragonblood Castle.

Bebe nodded.

“But the sounds that we cannot hear will create a curious effect.” Linley immediately controlled the wind elemental essence, then began to agitate it. The different elemental essence particles collided against each other, forming sound waves. Instantly, sounds began to ring out.

The beautiful sounds were like the murmurs of a lover, causing a person to unconsciously sink into them.

Bebe was faintly beginning to be affected as well.

“This is the Profound Mysteries of Music!” Linley laughed. “I just controlled elemental essences to utilize it. If I were to use divine power, the strength would be much greater. Even Deities would be affected somewhat by it. For example, my ‘Hymn of the Wind’ emits a sound that is capable of bewitching an enemy’s soul, causing them to temporarily lose their guard, allowing me to kill them.”

Bebe nodded repeatedly. “Wow, so powerful. Then what about the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves?”

“I just said that sound waves, being waves, are vibrational in nature. If they vibrate a certain number of times within a certain range each second, we will be able to hear it. But…once the vibrations exceed that range, it is different.” Linley sighed. “In the past, I didn’t understand this. But upon seeing those sound waves that were formed by this gorge, I understood.”

“Oh?” Bebe was somewhat surprised.

“Watch.” Linley’s powerful spiritual energy once more took control over the local wind elemental essence.

The unique sound waves once more appeared, this time transmitting directly towards the nearby mountain walls. Suddenly…the mountain walls of the gorge seemed to begin to vibrate like a living creature. With a

rumbling sound, shattered bits of rocks began to fall down from the wall.

“Hey?” Bebe was very surprised.

Linley strengthened his spiritual energy, and instantly the vibrations of the wind elemental essences grew stronger as well.

“Dang!” “Dang!” The entire gorge began to shake as a knocking sound could be heard. And then, with a ‘boom’ sound, countless boulders at each side of the gorge exploded, transforming into countless pieces of pebbles.

“Wow.” Bebe’s eyes were wide.

Originally, because of this gorge’s unique structure, the wild wind would blow in and create those wind waves.

But now, with Linley’s display of force, the structure of the gorge changed dramatically. It could no longer create those sound waves. Instantly, the howling wind could once more be heard, and countless bits of rocks flew about everywhere, the air instantly being filled with dust. Only a long time later did the air return to its normal calm.

Only, this gorge was now filled with the howl of the wind.

“The Mountain Range of Death will never be the Mountain Range of Death again.” Linley let out an emotional breath.

“Boss, this sort of attack is so powerful.” Bebe exhaled in amazement.

Linley laughed calmly, “It’s fairly ordinary. I’ve only gained a little bit of skill in the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves. Right now, based on what I have learned, the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves can only be used for material attacks, while the Profound Mysteries of Music can only be used to affect the soul. However, if the enemy doesn’t understand it, then even a Deity-level expert will probably suffer a bit of a disadvantage.”

Sound waves, music. These were two different aspects of sound.

One attacked the body, the other affected the soul.

“I’m not certain about its true power either. After all, I’ve only gained a bit of skill.” Linley still had a smile on his face.

This was why he loved to train.

Linley felt as though each insight was a new understanding for him with regards to the universe. Gaining insights and meditation represented that one day, without moving at all, he would be able to cause the heavens to shatter. Only, who knew how long it would be before that day came.

“Bebe, what profound mysteries did you gain insight into upon becoming a Deity?” Linley asked curiously.

Bebe pursed his lips. With resignation, he said, “Nothing as powerful as yours, Boss. It is only usable for preserving my life. It is very similar to that of that ‘King of Killers’, Cesar. If I were to fight with someone, I’d still have to rely on using my natural ability.”

Linley somewhat understood.

Suddenly…

“Rumble!” The world shook slightly. This faint vibration transmitted throughout the Yulan Plane, and the eyes of countless Deities turned towards the west. Bebe and Linley naturally stared towards the north.

“Someone else became a Deity?” Bebe said in surprise.

The descent of the natural Laws was proof of someone becoming a Deity through their own efforts. After all, fusing with a spark wouldn’t cause the natural Laws to descend.

“This isn’t the first time either. It seems a few years ago, someone in the west became a Deity on their own as well.” Linley stared below in

confusion, stretching out with his divine power. “It should be in the area of the Holy Union. What’s going on? In the past few years, two people became Deities on their own?”

To become a Deity through one’s own efforts was very difficult.

Precisely because it was difficult, it was very precious. A few years ago, a person had become a Deity on his own, causing Linley and the others to sigh in surprise. But now, yet another had become a Deity independently. This clearly was a bit too much of a coincidence.

“Boss, let’s go over and take a look.” Bebe said hurriedly.

“The Holy Union?” Linley started slightly, as though thinking of something. “Might as well. Time to go back and take a look. I haven’t gone back to my homeland in a long time.”

Linley and Bebe flew together in a straight line towards the west.

The descent of the natural Laws upon this person becoming a Deity naturally attracted the attention of Sadista, who when spreading out his divine sense discovered Linley as well. “Hey, this Linley actually woke up. Oh, he is flying somewhere?”

Linley and Bebe were flying very fast. A while later, after Sadista once again searched for and found Linley and Bebe, they had already reached their target destination.”

“They actually went to the Holy Union. Anras!” Sadista immediately sent his divine sense out to Anras, still awaiting his chance in the great plains of the far east.

Anras was seated meditatively in a quiet mountain gorge, his body covered with dust. At first glance, one would take him for a human-shaped statue.

To him, waiting for two years was nothing at all. Hearing Sadista’s divine sense calling to him, Anras immediately opened his eyes, and the dust on

his body instantly vanished into nothingness. Sadista's order came. "Anras, Linley and the Godeater Rat went to the Holy Union. Head there for now."

"Yes, Lord Sadista." Anras said respectfully.

And then, "Boom!" The entire gorge suddenly erupted into flames which rose to the sky. Anras' entire body was surrounded by flames, and like a god of fire, he quickly slashed through the sky, flying directly west and quickly disappearing into the western horizons.

Wushan Township. Linley's homeland.

"Wushan Township…" Linley stood in the center of Wushan Township, staring at the surrounding area. He couldn't help but let out a breath.

The Mt. Wushan next to Wushan Township hadn't changed much compared to his youth, but the township had changed too much. The large Wushan Township had become utterly desolate. This was no longer a place where people lived. It was a lair for magical beasts. For example, Linley's former ancestral home was now a den for Windwolves.

"Those little friends and those aunties and uncles of the past…" Linley's mind drifted back to the festive, rowdy scenes of Wushan Township. Early every morning, the children and youths would line up in the empty field near Wushan Township and begin training, while the grownups would start their work.

But now…

None of this would happen again. The vast majority of people had died.

"Wushan Township has become nothing more than history." Linley sighed. After having experienced the Apocalypse Day, the former Kingdom of Fenlai's entire demesnes had become a playground for magical beasts.

With a frown, Linley immediately controlled his divine spark within his body to emit a powerful divine presence.

Although Linley was using his original body, his divine spark was still in his spiritual ocean. Linley was completely capable of utilizing the divine spark within his divine clone. The powerful divine presence swept through the entire Wushan Township like a tidal wave.

Instantly, the hundred or so magical beasts living around Wushan Township all knelt down, shivering.

“All of you, f*ck off.” Linley’s divine sense rang out in the minds of each of these magical beasts.

Not a single magical beast resisted. Letting out low whines and growls, the hundreds of magical beasts quickly left this extremely dangerous ‘Wushan Township’, fleeing at high speed.

“Bebe, let’s go pay a visit to my ancestral home.” Linley said.

“It is my home too,” Bebe said.

In the past, Bebe had been born there, and had met with Linley in that ancestral home. Afterwards, the two of them, man and magical beast, had become lifelong companions. Linley and Bebe quietly stepped into that dust-covered, decayed ancestral residence.

Hess City.

Doehring Cowart had died here, all those years ago. This city was not, however, conquered by magical beasts. To the contrary, Hess City was now more developed and busy than it had been in the past.

Within a fairly graceful restaurant in Hess City, Linley and Bebe had found a quiet little corner. They sat down facing each other, ordering some wine and food.

“The flavor’s not bad.” Bebe praised.

Linley laughed and nodded. “That’s why they have so many customers here.” There were quite a few people in this restaurant.

“Huh?” Linley suddenly turned his head, staring at the door with some surprise. A beautiful young lady with long violet hair walked in. The beautiful young lady’s face had a few faint freckles on it, but they only made her look all the more adorable.

“Belita [Bei’li’ta]!”

“Belita, you came back. Your father is drinking with us, but he stared at the door several times now.”

As the young lady entered the restaurant, many calls of welcome rang out. Clearly, this beautiful young lady had quite a few friends.”

“Who is this girl?” There was another pair of men seated behind Linley. One of them, a youngster, asked curiously. The man facing him laughed, “This is the daughter of the restaurant owner. To be more precise, this restaurant was constructed in accordance with Miss Belita’s personal designs.”

“Oh?” The youngster was quite surprised.

“Belita’s clan was originally a noble clan. Only, it afterwards decayed. Belita’s father is that big-nosed boss over there. He feels rather strongly about face. Even though his clan’s fallen, he still wants to live in a beautiful mansion. He even arranges for servants to clean up every part of the estate. Belita’s clan mansion is very large. To maintain such a large residence costs an enormous amount of money. Belita’s father spent lots of money but didn’t make any. Naturally, he quickly ran out of money. In the end, it was Belita who actively redeveloped the front part of the residence into this restaurant. Look, that’s the rear part. If you enter from the rear, that’s Belita’s home. Belita’s home is extremely large, and Belita is in charge of the entire place.”

“In addition, Belita is a powerful magus. Supposedly, she is already of the

fifth rank."

Hearing this explanation, Linley also glanced at the violet-haired beautiful girl with some surprise.

"Boss, this Belita is really quite impressive."

Linley also felt that the design and decoration of the restaurant was not bad. Both the interior and the exterior were excellent, which was why Linley and Bebe had chosen this restaurant. He hadn't expected that it was all designed by a young lady. And, from the looks of it, although this young lady was young, she managed her entire clan.

"Father, I'm not feeling very well. I'll go back and get some rest." Belita said to her father, who was drinking wine.

"If you aren't feeling well, then quickly go get some rest." The big-nosed middle-aged man said hurriedly.

Belita, after speaking, walked into a rear door, entering her family's residence.

"Hrm?" At this moment, Linley suddenly frowned slightly.

Chapter 27 – The Lord of Mount Copper Gong

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 27, The Lord of Mount Copper Gong

“Boss, it looks like a figure with some background has arrived.” Bebe laughed as he looked at Linley.

Linley nodded slightly as well. “A very ordinary youth who actually has two experts of the ninth rank as escorts. An ordinary clan isn’t capable of this.”

“Belita!” A somewhat angered voice rang out from the doorway of the restaurant, and a youth with golden curly hair entered the restaurant. The youth with curly golden hair was followed by two grim middle-aged men. The gold-haired youth stared at the violet-haired beauty. “Belita, you are going to act as though nothing happened?”

“Ah, young master Hubert [Ha’bo’te].” The big-nosed middle-aged man stood up, immediately speaking warmly. “Please sit and discuss matters slowly with Belita.”

“Hmph.” The gold-haired youth stared coldly at the middle-aged man. “F*ck off.”

The big-nosed man let out an awkward smile, no longer daring to speak.

Belita frowned. Turning, she looked at the gold-haired youth and she said seriously, “Hubert, I admit that my actions didn’t give you face. However, I don’t like you. It is as simple as that. I hope, young master Hubert, that in the future, you will spend your efforts on other women.”

Hubert was silent for a moment, and then hatred flashed in his eyes. “Fine. Fine. Belita…”

“I, Hubert, have never been so courteous to anyone before, but to you, I’ve

given gifts time and time again, thinking of any and all ways to make you like me. But it seems as though everything is useless." Hubert's face turned cold. "Hmph. Then, Belita, don't blame me for what I am going to do."

Belita was capable of sustaining her family at such a young age. Naturally, she could guess what Hubert was about to do.

"Hubert, given your conditions, you can get any woman you want. Why waste your time on myself, a girl from a fallen noble clan?" Belita spoke in a very delicate manner.

"There is nothing that I like which I cannot get!"

As he spoke, Hubert's jaw quivered, and his eyes were filled with absolute indifference. "Uncles, take her back." Hubert's words caused Belita's face to instantly turn ashen, without a hint of color. She knew exactly how monstrously powerful Hubert's family was.

Precisely so, she had never dared to offend Hubert to much. Only, on this issue, she had to maintain her bottom line.

"Yes, young master." The two grim middle-aged men behind Hubert bowed, responding to the order.

"Wait, wait." The big-nosed man hurriedly walked in front of Belita, repeatedly begging, "Young master Hubert, please spare my daughter. I'll do anything you want. Even if you want me to give you this ancestral estate, I'd be willing to do so. I beg of you, spare my daughter."

Belita stared at her father in shock.

Was this her father, who dearly loved face and spent all his time drinking and making trouble? Belita, in her heart, had always somewhat looked down on her father, but at this moment…she discovered that her father wasn't what she had thought him to be.

"Hmph, who wants your sh*tty house?" Hubert said disdainfully. "Take

Belita back. If that fellow blocks, kill him."

"Yes." The two grim men let out cold laughs as they walked over.

The big-nosed man hurriedly moved to block in front of his daughter, as though wanting to protect her.

"Father, step away." Belita hurriedly pushed at her father, but at this moment, her alcoholic of a father seemed to have tremendous strength, standing unmoving right in front of her.

"F*ck off." One of the callous middle-aged men let a remorseless kick towards the big-nosed man.

Nobody in the restaurant dared to make a sound. Those drinkers all knew the power which Hubert held within Hess City. No one dared to stop him!

All of them looked towards Belita and her father, their eyes filled with sympathy.

As they saw it, Belita and her father's fate had already been set.

But the strange thing was, halfway through his kick, that callous man's leg suddenly went limp, and then he slid to the floor like a heap of mud. His nose, eyes, mouth, and ears all had blood flowing out of them.

He…died!

Everyone was stunned. Even that arrogantly shouting Hubert was stupefied. The expert of the ninth rank next to him immediately went down to one knee, supporting his comrade. "Big brother, big brother, what happened?" This expert of the ninth rank couldn't believe it.

His big brother, who had reached the ninth rank, suddenly died.

"Who was it? Come out!" That expert of the ninth rank shouted coldly, his eyes filled with a hint of rage.

Nobody dared to make a sound. This expert of the ninth rank let out a cold sneer. “Whoever killed my big brother, you’d best show yourself. Otherwise…everyone in this restaurant will die. It can be considered to be caused by you.” This expert swept his gaze at the surrounding people.

The entire restaurant full of guests all felt a cold aura sweep through them.

“Take your young master and f*ck off.” A sound rang out.

The expert of the ninth rank immediately turned to look, focusing his gaze on the speaker. Even Belita and her father turned to look. They saw a young man with long hair, who was sitting faced to a handsome youth wearing a straw hat.

Hubert took two steps forward, shouting icily, “Who are you? How dare you interfere in my affairs?”

Ever since he was born, nobody had ever dared to violate his commands. Whatever he wanted to do, he had done, especially within Hess City. Even the words of the king of the kingdom weren’t as effective as Hubert’s. Having been a little tyrant since youth, Hubert had never feared anyone.

“So annoying!” Bebe unhappily splashed the wine in his cup over, drenching Hubert’s face with it. “F*ck off.”

Hubert was stunned. He wiped the wine off his face, his eyes instantly turning red.

Insult!

Hubert had never suffered any sort of mistreatment since he was young. When Belita refused him, she had done so in a very graceful, indirect manner. But Hubert still felt that he had lost face, causing him to be extremely angry! But what Bebe had just done was the greatest insult he had ever suffered from birth until now!

“Kill, kill him for me!!!” Hubert’s voice screeched out, pointing at Bebe as he bellowed.

Bebe raised his head, grinning at him.

“Swish!” Bebe suddenly disappeared. With a clear ‘WHAP’ palm slap sound, Hubert was sent flying upwards, before smashing down on a nearby chair. Hubert’s head was at a strange angle on the floor, staining it with blood.

Instantly, the face of that expert of the ninth rank changed, and with a flash, he hurried over.

“WHAP!” Yet another palm slap.

The expert of the ninth rank was sent flying as well. He spat out a mouthful of blood from the blow, but he didn’t die.

“You, you are dead meat.” The expert of the ninth rank forced himself to rise to his feet. Seeing the odd angle at which Hubert’s head was at, he saw clearly that Hubert was dead.

“Dead meat?” Bebe’s handsome, slender face revealed a wicked grin. He intentionally combed his hair a few times, put on his straw hat again, then beamed at the expert. “We’ll wait right now. I want to see how you are going to let us die!”

Linley just watched from the side, not trying to stop him.

The expert stared hatefully at Linley and Bebe, then raised his head and let out an angry howl. The howl was extremely ear-piercing, instantly spreading out from the restaurant.

“Hurry, leave.” Belita ran over, hurriedly urging Linley and Bebe. “That Hubert’s father is an extremely powerful expert. Nobody dares to offend him. Quick, leave.” Belita didn’t want the two people in front of her to be harmed due to her.

Linley and Bebe exchanged a glance.

Actually, the reason Bebe didn't kill that expert of the ninth rank was to draw out that expert behind him. Only by doing so would they guarantee that this girl wouldn't suffer any following calamities.

"BOOM!" A terrifying sonic boom sounded out from afar.

Instantly, a figure appeared within the restaurant. The expert of the ninth rank fell to one knee. "Lord Reger [Lei'ge], your subordinate was useless. The young master was already killed by those two men." While speaking, the expert's body was trembling.

The person who had come was powerfully built, had a bearded face, and fierce eyes.

But when the powerful man saw Hubert, lying on the floor with his head at a crooked angle, he was stunned for a long moment. Then, he looked at the expert of the ninth rank. "The young master is dead. Why aren't you dead?" The expert of the ninth rank instantly realized what was about to happen, but before he had a chance to react…

A blade light flashed, and the expert's head went flying.

"Aaaah! Many of the people in the restaurant were so terrified that their eyes went round. Belita and her father stood together, not daring to make a sound. Belita looked towards Linley and Bebe, her eyes filled with worry.

"It was you who killed my son!" Reger stared at Linley and Bebe.

"Yep." Bebe looked disdainfully at Reger out of the corner of his eyes, his delicate face covered with disdain.

Linley still sat there, not paying any attention to Reger. Linley's divine sense had informed him long ago that this 'Lord Reger' was actually just a Saint. From the blade blow just now, at most he was a Prime Saint. He

posed no threat to Bebe at all.

“Reger, what’s wrong?” The wind arose, and another figure appeared outside the doorway. It was a middle-aged man with long silver hair.

“We’ll go see Teacher in a bit. First, I’m going to kill these two bastards.” Reger’s eyes were completely bloodshot, and he ground his teeth.

“See Teacher?” Linley frowned slightly.

The silver-haired man looked with surprise at Hubert, who lay dead on the ground. He knew very well what position Hubert had in Reger’s heart. Reger and him had both escaped from the Gebados Planar Prison. The two of them were both Prime Saints.

Prime Saints, in the Gebados Planar Prison, were nothing more than the bottom tier.

Even experts needed women.

In the Gebados Planar Prison, Prime Saints, being of the bottom tier, couldn’t get women at all. Once they escaped from the Gebados Planar Prison, they naturally would have to enjoy women. As for Reger, he naturally ended up with a son.

Reger had been imprisoned within the Gebados Planar Prison ten thousand years ago. Back then, he had children of his own. But after so many years had passed, who could tell if Reger’s lineage had carried down or not?

When an old man had a son, he naturally would spoil him greatly.

Reger was over ten thousand years old. He only had a single son. Naturally, he could be considered an ‘old man who had a son’.

The amount of pampering he gave was indescribable. He even assigned two experts of the ninth rank to be bodyguards for his son. Anything his son wanted, Reger would scheme to acquire for him! His son was a priceless

treasure in his heart. But now, his son was dead.

Reger, as well, sensed the threat emanating from Bebe. He began to store up power.

But Bebe was very carefree, waiting for Reger to attack. Suddenly, Reger let out an enraged howl, and a utterly white light erupted, followed by a saber-light arriving in front of Bebe. Everyone in the restaurant was so terrified that their faces turned ashen.

They were all beginning to worry for this delicate youngster.

“That’s all you got?” The saber came to a halt.

Bebe had caught it between two fingers, preventing the saber from moving forward another inch.

“Formidable.” Linley’s eyes lit up. Divine bodies were strong, but relying on two fingers to trap the saber of a Prime Saint was something which even Linley couldn’t do in a manner as casual as Bebe had just done. “Bebe was always powerful. Now that he is a Deity, he seems to still be very powerful.” Linley sighed internally in praise.

Everyone in the restaurant was stupefied.

Two fingers having trapped his weapon. Reger was stunned as well. He finally knew that the person he was facing was most likely a Deity-level expert.

Although he was furious, Reger hurriedly released the warblade in his hand. He finally came to his senses. His son was dead, but he could have more. Although he had raised his son for many years and felt pain over the loss, compared to his own life, he naturally viewed his own life as more important.

Reger hurriedly said respectfully, “Since it was you two lords who disciplined my son, then forget about it. My teacher is the Lord of Mount

Copper Gong. Milords, I hope that for the sake of my teacher, you can spare me."

Belita and everyone else felt that these developments had been simply too bizarre.

"Crunch!"

A black light flashed, and a hole suddenly appeared in Reger's head. Reger's eyes widened as though he couldn't believe it, and then he collapsed.

Bebe buffed his nails. "Lord of Mount Copper Gong? Never heard of'm!"

Linley frowned. He stared at the silver-haired man who was in a state of shock and fear. "You. Get over here!"

Chapter 28 – Mount Copper Gong

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 28, Mount Copper Gong

Within that restaurant in Hess City, everyone was in a state of shock.

The mighty Lord ‘Reger’, in front of that youngster with the straw hat, had seemed like an infant, unable to resist at all. He had been killed directly. And, from the looks of it, the youngster with the straw hat listened to the orders of the seated young man. That meant the seated young man’s power was even greater!

“They?” Belita drew near to her father, staring at Linley and Bebe in astonishment.

Linley was frowning.

“Milord, you called?” The silver-haired man was in a completely nervous state right now.

He understood that if Linley and Bebe wanted to kill him, he would definitely die.

“My Boss told you to get over here.” Bebe stared at him while barking. The silver-haired man’s body trembled slightly, and then he immediately walked over to the table, respectfully awaiting Linley’s words.

“My name is Sati [Sa’di]!” The silver-haired man honestly offered his name.

“You come from the Gebados Planar Prison?” Linley said calmly. While asking, Linley utilized his Godrealm, causing the ordinary people in the restaurant to be unable to hear their words.

“Yes, milord.” Sati was quite obedient.

After all, Reger's body lay there on the ground. Sati understood that if either of these two fiends in front of him were unhappy, they could kill him at any moment. Right now, all he could do was to meekly accede to whatever they wanted and make them satisfied. Only in such a way would he be able to preserve his life.

Linley's eyes grew sharp. He stared at Sati, growling, "I ask you, who is this Lord of Mount Copper Gong?"

The Lord of Mount Copper Gong!

This was someone who made Linley feel concern. Just then, before dying, Reger had said that his teacher was the Lord of Mount Copper Gong. Someone capable of being the teacher of a Prime Saint should be an extraordinary figure. Since they killed Reger, Linley had to get a clear understanding of who this Lord of Mount Copper Gong was.

"Teacher?" Sati was slightly astonished.

Linley nodded slightly.

"We don't know Teacher's name either. Because he lives at Mount Copper Gong, we all call him as the Lord of Mount Copper Gong." When mentioning the 'Lord of Mount Copper Gong', his eyes were filled with worship. "Teacher is the most powerful expert we have ever seen."

"Oh?" Linley's eyes narrowed into slits.

Sati continued, "Although only twenty years have passed since we fled from the Gebados Planar Prison back to the Yulan continent, in this period of time, two of the Prime Saints whom Teacher instructed were able to break through and become Deities on their own." Sati's eyes were filled with respect. "Someone who can help us break through our bottlenecks… how can we not venerate a mighty expert such as him?"

"What?"

No matter how calm he was, Linley's face couldn't help but change.

Even the nearby Bebe couldn't believe it. "Did you just say that those two people who recently became Deities did so due to having received instruction from your Teacher?"

Bottlenecks, being bottlenecks, were hard to break through.

Even someone as powerful as Lord Beirut, knowing that Desri and the others were at a bottleneck, only told them to have more faith in themselves. He didn't say anything else…someone capable of instructing a Prime Saint in how to break through a bottleneck was definitely an expert who had a terrifying mastery of the Laws.

"What level expert is this Lord of Mount Copper Gong?" Linley immediately asked.

"I don't know." Sati shook his head. "However, Teacher's two brothers should be Gods."

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

His brothers were Gods? Then the Lord of Mount Copper Gong should at least be a God as well.

"I've created trouble." Bebe hung his head as he looked at Linley.

He had killed the disciple of such a powerful expert. No matter how brash Bebe could be, he understood the magnitude of the trouble he had caused.

Linley laughed consolingly. "Bebe, it seems our journey will have to be cut short." After having offended such a powerful foe, they had to hurry back to Dragonblood Castle.

"Right." Bebe nodded.

“Milord, no need to worry.” Hearing Linley and Bebe’s words, Sati understood what Bebe was thinking. He hurriedly said, “Milords, please don’t worry. You killed Reger, but nobody will come make trouble for you.”

Linley and Bebe were somewhat startled.

“Oh?” Linley looked at him, waiting for him to explain.

Bebe also said, “Sati, can it be that your Teacher won’t show his face for his disciples?”

Sati hurriedly said, “Milords, what sort of status does the Lord of Mount Copper Gong have? Reger and I are only Prime Saints. How can we become his disciples?”

“But you refer to him as Teacher?” Bebe was puzzled.

Sati laughed self-mockingly, “Milords, although we refer to the Lord of Mount Copper Gong as ‘Teacher’, that’s just how we address him. The Lord of Copper Mountain has never acknowledged us as his disciples.”

Linley frowned. “Explain in detail.”

Sati explained, “Milords, we all fled from the Planar Prison. And then, we came to live here. Only, afterwards, we heard that an ultimate expert lived in Mount Copper Gong who would occasionally give guidance to those trainees who came to him for advice. There are many experts who go pay their respects to the Lord of Mount Copper Gong. Reger and I are just two of the many. Only, because we received some tutelage from the Lord of Mount Copper Gong, we respectfully address him as Teacher. Only, the Lord of Mount Copper Gong himself has never acknowledged us as his disciples.”

“If we truly had a Teacher such as him, in the Planar Prison, we wouldn’t have been in such bad straits.”

Linley and Bebe instantly understood.

“You really are shameless.” Bebe snickered.

Sati laughed awkwardly.

“This Lord of Mount Copper Gong really is a miraculous figure.” Linley sighed in praise. An expert like this would actually give tutelage to those who came to him for instruction. At the very least, he wasn’t the selfish, self-centered type.

“Just now, you said that those two who had become Deities on their own recently did so thanks to the tutelage of the Lord of Mount Copper Gong?” Linley still felt that this was unbelievable.

“Right.” Sati sighed. “This is absolutely certain. One of them is someone I know.”

“How can we possibly not pay a visit to a miracle worker like this? Bebe, what do you think?” Linley looked at Bebe, who nodded in agreement. At the same time he turned to look at Sati. “Hey, where is Mount Copper Gong?”

“Mount Copper Gong is in the southern regions of the Holy Union. It is an area which has been taken over by many magical beasts. Teacher lives within a large mountain there.” Sati explained. “The distance from here is roughly two thousand kilometers. Milords, if you want to go, I can guide you there. It isn’t just Prime Saints who beg Teacher for guidance. There are Deities as well.”

Linley felt all the more amazed in his heart.

This Lord of Mount Copper Gong definitely was an extraordinary figure. Linley all the more wanted to see him now.

“Only, if milords go, milords need to be mentally prepared. Teacher only provides guidance if he feels like it.” Sati explained. “On our trip to Mount Copper Gong, we might have to wait a long time before being lucky enough

to see Teacher."

"If we can meet him, we shall. If we can't, then it'll just be an excursion." Linley laughed calmly.

"Let's go. Let's go now." Bebe was somewhat impatient.

Sati said meekly, "It is my honor to be able to lead the way for you two, milords." Immediately, Sati led the way out of the restaurant, while Linley and Bebe followed. Linley released the Godrealm which had prevented others in the restaurant from hearing their conversation.

"The two of you…" Belita hurriedly chased afterwards, wanting to express things, but she was blocked by Linley's Godrealm.

"Whoosh!"

Three shadows blurred through the air, quickly disappearing into the southern horizons.

"Who were those three experts? Even a Prime Saint like Lord Reger was killed in one blow." Only now did the people in the restaurant dare to speak, while at the same time, they raised their head, staring skywards in a vain attempt to catch a vestigial glimpse of Linley and the others."

"That youngster was too powerful. He was able to seize a Saint's blade with his two fingers."

"I think that young man was even more powerful…"

Everyone in the bar began to excitedly chat, while Belita stared towards the horizon, towards where Linley's group had vanished. She, Belita, could do nothing but remember this kindness in her heart.

Mount Copper Gong was actually not too far away from Linley's hometown of Wushan Township. It was also considered within the domain of the magical beasts.

Only, with the experts present in this location, the magical beasts did not dare to draw near.

“This is Mount Copper Gong!” In mid-air, his robes fluttering in the wind, Sati pointed down towards a mountain.

Next to him was Linley and Bebe.

“It seems there isn’t that many people present?” Linley was rather surprised. Logically speaking, based on what he understood, if many experts came to pay visits to the Lord of Mount Copper Gong, there should be many people here. However, Linley, staring down into the manor, didn’t see many people at all.

Sati explained, “Teacher’s two brothers have informed us that after receiving tutelage from Teacher, we cannot come disturb Teacher again for the next ten years.”

“Oh.” Linley understood.

After all, there were only so many experts in the Yulan continent. Not too many knew of the existence of the Lord of Mount Copper Gong. Given they weren’t to disturb him again for ten years after being given tutelage, no wonder there weren’t many people here.

“Let’s head down.” Linley was the first to fly down.

The residence of the Lord of Mount Copper Gong was a secluded, quiet manor. Linley and the others, upon arriving in front of the manor, couldn’t help but sigh in amazement.

“This residence…” Linley sensed that this residence emanated a powerful earth elemental essence aura.

Sati revealed a hint of worship in his eyes as well. “This residence was created from earth elemental essence, formed into a solid hole. If you look

at the walls, you won't see a single crack or seam. To be able to easily control earth elemental essence to create such a manor is truly incredible."

"You don't understand." Linley's face was very solemn.

"Oh?" Sati stared towards Linley in astonishment.

Linley stared solemnly at the residence in front of him. Sati was only a Prime Saint, and he didn't train in the Laws of the Earth. Naturally, he didn't understand how truly incredible this residence formed from earth elemental essence was. Linley, however, did.

"Be it the Sacred Earthguard Armor or the forbidden-level spell which uses earth elemental essence to create the 'World Protector', there is a limit to how long the creations will last for." Linley could hardly believe it.

He believed that since someone had created this manor, they couldn't possibly go to the trouble of recreating it every hour.

"In addition, the color of the material the earth elemental essence has formed into…" Linley stared at the ancient-looking, plain black material of the residence. "It is the color of adamantine!" Linley knew that upon reaching the Deity-level, once a person used the Sacred Earthguard Armor, it would be at the 'adamantine' level.

An adamantine-level Sacred Earthguard Armor couldn't be maintained for too long.

And yet, this person used it to create an entire manor?

"Someone came again?" The gate to the manor creaked open, and a bald, muscular man glanced outwards.

That Sati immediately bowed respectfully. "I pay my respects to Lord Burgess [Bo'ji'se]."

"You again?" The bald man frowned. "Oh, that's right. Last time was ten

years ago.” After finishing, the bald man looked at Linley and Bebe, his eyes carrying a hint of curiosity as he weighed Linley and Bebe for a long while.

Linley and Bebe both bowed modestly as well.

“My third brother is inviting you two in. As for you, go rest somewhere else.” The bald man said.

“Congratulations to the two of you.” Sati wasn’t angry at all. Instead, he congratulated Linley and Bebe.

Not just anyone who came to visit the Lord of Mount Copper Gong would be received. Sati immediately bowed, then left by himself.

“Mr. Burgess?” Linley spoke.

“I really don’t know what’s going on, but my third brother wishes to meet you two. Your luck is excellent.” The bald man pursed his lips while bringing Linley and Bebe into the manor. “Listen up. When you see my third brother, you need to be a bit more respectful.”

Linley and Bebe exchanged a glance, then laughed as they glanced around at their surroundings.

This manor, completely formed from earth elemental essence, gave a very comfortable to live in aura. In addition, in the inner courtyard of this manor, there were two seemingly mild-mannered middle-aged men engaging in chatter and laughter.

“I wonder which one of the two is the Lord of Mount Copper Gong?” Linley’s gaze rested upon these two people.

Chapter 29 – Elemental Training

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 29, Elemental Training

Of the three people in the manor, aside from that bald man, Burgess, the other two appeared rather amiable. Only, the young man in the middle was rather eye-catching. He had a head of long black hair, but his eyebrows were crimson red.

“Third Brother, those two you want to meet are here.” The bald man said as he walked in. That man with the crimson eyebrows looked towards Linley and Bebe. His gaze paused momentarily on Bebe, and then he said with a laugh, “The two of you, take a seat first.”

As he spoke, he pointed at the nearby seats in front of him.

“Thank you, milord.” Linley and Bebe both said courteously, and then they sat down on the chairs in front of the man with the crimson eyebrows.

“Big Brother, Second Brother, you two can go about your business. I’ll have a private chat with these two young fellows.” The man with the crimson eyebrows said.

The bald man and the other middle-aged man clearly were very obedient towards their third brother. They both nodded then departed. The man with the crimson eyebrows looked towards Linley and Bebe. Laughing, he said, “You can address me as Mr. Leylin. If you have come to my residence because there’s something the two of you need from me, go ahead and tell me.”

Mr. Leylin?

Linley and Bebe were both rather surprised. “Hey, doesn’t this Lord of Mount Copper Gong normally not divulge his name to people?”

“Mr. Leylin?” Bebe called out in surprise.

“What?” Leylin looked at Bebe, puzzled.

“My, my Boss is named Linley.” Bebe was quite amazed.

“Linley?” Mr. Leylin was amazed for a moment as well before recovering.

Prior to this, Linley hadn’t noticed this point himself. But now, he realized. ‘Linley’ and ‘Leylin’, weren’t they just the same thing, except swapped around?

“You really are named Linley?” This Lord ‘Leylin’ was very surprised. Linley nodded and laughed, “Yes, Mr. Leylin. My full name is Linley Baruch.”

This Mr. Leylin calmed down as well, laughing loudly, “Haha…what a coincidence. I’m the opposite of you. Leylin is my clan name. My full name is Zacharias [Jia’ke’li’ya’si] Leylin. It seems we really do have a bit in common.”

“Indeed.” Linley felt that this was quite the coincidence as well.

After this discovery, Linley was no longer reticent in front of this Lord Leylin.

“Mr. Leylin, I have come due to an issue regarding training.” Linley said.

“Virtually everyone who comes looking for me does so because of training issues.” Leylin pursed his lips and laughed. “Only, let me give you advance warning. All I can do is give you some guidance. In addition, I am only skilled in the Elemental Laws of Fire and the Elemental Laws of Earth. I would most likely only be able to say a few words regarding the other Elemental Laws.”

Linley laughed.

The Laws of the Earth?

Actually, just from looking at this manor, Linley knew that this Lord of Mount Copper Gong definitely trained in the Laws of the Earth.

“Speak.” Leylin laughed.

Linley explained his frustrations and concerns regarding his bottleneck. “Mr. Leylin, I am currently training in the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ of the Laws of the Earth. Only, I have already reached the level of Two Fused Waves of the Throbbing Pulse of the World, but no matter what I try, I am unable to reach the final step of fusing everything into one.”

“You train in the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’?” The Lord of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin, raised his eyebrows. “It seems your talent is quite excellent.”

“However, if you have reached a bottleneck, there’s nothing I can do to help you break through.” Leylin said with a laugh.

Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished. Didn’t this Lord of Mount Copper Gong help two experts break through and become Deities through his guidance?

“You aren’t able to help?” Bebe said. “Didn’t you help others though?”

Leylin laughed, “Rumors grow more and more ridiculous with each telling. Nobody can help someone break through a bottleneck. At most, I can just give you one or two pointers.” Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. If Leylin was willing to give him some pointers and allow him to gain some insights, that would be enough.

“Linley, you want to train in the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’. For now, let’s stop discussing that. Instead, let’s talk about the six types of profound mysteries inherent to the Laws of the Earth.” Leylin said with a calm laugh.

“Six types of profound mysteries?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

From Beirut, Linley had heard the hypothetical number of profound mysteries within an Elemental Law as being nine.

“Right. The Laws of the Earth contain in total six different profound mysteries.” Leylin laughed. “I’m not sure about the other Laws, but for the earth, fire, water, and wind Laws, these four Elemental Laws, the Laws of the Earth, Fire, and Water all contain six profound mysteries each, while the Elemental Laws of the Wind have a bit more, containing nine.”

Leylin spoke leisurely but with complete certainty, causing others to unconsciously believe him.

Linley nodded slightly.

“The Laws of the Earth contain six profound mysteries. The most basic is the profound mystery of the ‘Essence of the Earth’.” Leylin said.

“The Profound Mysteries of the ‘Essence of the Earth’?” Linley frowned.

Elemental essence was present everywhere. It should be very common. The Laws were Elemental Laws. So how could one of the profound mysteries be the profound mysteries of the ‘Essence of the Earth’?

“Linley.” Leylin spoke. Whenever he spoke Linley’s name, he couldn’t help but laugh. “You should be aware that ordinary magic spells include the ‘Earth Puppet’, ‘World Protector’, and ‘Sacred Earthguard Armor’ type spells, right?”

Linley nodded.

Previously, when Linley was young, in the air above Wushan Township, he had watched those two Saints do battle. That Grand Magus Saint had utilized the forbidden-level spell, ‘World Protector’.

“Regardless of whether it is the ‘World Protector’ or the ‘Sacred Earthguard Armor’, they all are considered a very basic way of using the Profound

Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth."

Leylin explained slowly, "The Essence of the Earth can transform into countless shapes. You can use it to create a human figure, a magical beast figure, or even a set of armor. The 'Essence of the Earth', in the late stages of mastery, represents a deep level of proficiency in utilizing elemental essences. For example…my manor!"

Leylin pointed at his manor. "Linley, look at this manor. In terms of toughness, it is comparable to adamantine. In addition, it will exist in perpetuity! Tell me, how did I accomplish this?"

"This?" Linley was very puzzled about this to begin with.

But now, Linley somewhat understood that this manor in front of him was most likely formed after reaching the level of complete mastery in the 'Essence of the Earth'.

"Linley, experts of the Laws of the Earth should have the most powerful defenses." Leylin's eyes, beneath those crimson eyebrows, were shining. "Amongst them, the most powerful physical defenses rely on the 'Essence of the Earth', while the most powerful spiritual defenses rely on the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'."

Linley nodded in agreement.

He himself used spiritual energy to form a spiritual 'Pulseguard Defense'.

"The Laws of the Earth have six profound mysteries. If you want to master any of them, your best option is to start with the basics. Finish mastering the 'Essence of the Earth'. It is the foundation!"

Leylin advised, "The Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth is the best way one can gain a deeper understanding into the elemental essences. Once your understanding of the elemental essences reaches a certain level of depth, then it will become much easier for you to gain insights into the other profound mysteries of the Laws."

Linley somewhat understood now.

“The final, Omega Wave of the Throbbing Pulse of the World is extremely hard to achieve. I’m not able to provide any direct advice, but I imagine that if you can focus and meditate on the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth, perhaps it will be of benefit to you in breaking through with regards to the Throbbing Pulse of the World.” Leylin laughed.

“Thank you, Mr. Leylin.” Linley’s heart was filled with gratitude.

“Everything relies on you yourself.” Leylin laughed. “Then, how about this. Linley, take a close look.”

Leylin looked into the air. Suddenly, in the air above, earth elemental essence began to gather.

Linley raised his head to watch as well.

An explosive surge of earth elemental essence was rapidly condensing, and even began to emit a faint rumbling sound. An enormous earthen cloud appeared in the sky above Mount Copper Gong, and then this cloud of earth transformed into an earth-colored python that was a hundred meters long.

“Hissssss.” The python seemed to be real, occasionally revealing its fangs.

This enormous python which had appeared in mid-air truly did cause Linley to feel shock in his heart.

“Is this the result of mastery in the Essence of the Earth?” Linley secretly wondered.

“Now, take a close look.” Leylin said in a low shout.

Linley immediately focused his attention while at the same time, spreading out his divine sense to carefully study every single movement of this enormous python. This hundred-meter long coiling python suddenly

whipped out its tail in a fury, its thick, long serpentine tail lashing out like the crack of a whip.

“Rumble…”

The whipping tail attack of the python actually created spatial ripples that were visible to the naked eye.

The spatial ripples were simply too great. Every single ripple caused space to crack. Instantly…in the air above Mount Copper Gong, the rippled, cracked space began to reveal itself, appearing then disappearing. Only, as the spatial ripples continued to spread outwards, the strength naturally began to decrease.

Despite that, however, the nearby trees that were impacted by these spatial ripples were instantly transformed into dust.

“This? Is this the Throbbing Pulse of the World?” Linley was astonished.

“This is the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ at mastery.” Leylin laughed as he looked at Linley.

“The ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ can be utilized through creatures formed from elemental essence?” Linley was very surprised.

“Why not?” Leylin laughed calmly as he spoke. “And this is just the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and the ‘Essence of the Earth’ used separately. If I were to fuse the two of them and then use them…most likely this Mount Copper Gong would no longer exist.”

Linley’s heart was filled with amazement.

He knew that the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws could fuse with each other.

“So powerful.” The nearby Bebe let out a sigh of praise as well, then he looked at Leylin in confusion. “Mr. Leylin, just now, you said that of the

earth, fire, water, and wind Elemental Laws, only the Elemental Laws of the Wind have nine profound mysteries. The other three only have six profound mysteries. Then doesn't that mean…that it will be very hard to train in the Elemental Laws of the Wind?"

"No."

Leylin let out a sigh. "The numbers might be different, but the total difficulty level is roughly the same. For example, the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and the 'Gravitational Field' profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth are all extremely hard to learn. In order to reach mastery in either of the two, one must spend tremendous effort, have some good luck, and also occasional flashes of insight."

"Linley, first train in the 'Essence of the Earth'. Perhaps it will bring you some unexpected surprises." Leylin laughed.

Linley nodded slightly.

Linley knew that the 'Essence of the Earth' was fairly easy to pick up. After all, in the past, most of his magic was based off of controlling elemental essences.

"Mr. Leylin, might I ask if in the future, I can come again to ask for your aid?" Linley asked.

"Of course you can. So long as I remain here at Mount Copper Gong, you can come find me." Leylin said.

Linley could hear Leylin's unspoken meaning. "Mr. Leylin, can it be that you are going to leave?"

Leylin nodded and sighed. "Indeed. In the not too distant future, I will indeed leave this place." After speaking, Leylin seemed to have thought of something. Letting out a sigh, he no longer spoke.

And then, Linley and Bebe thus settled down within Mount Copper Gong

while sending a message via divine sense to the people in Dragonblood Castle. Normally, they quietly trained here at Mount Copper Gong. While training in the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth, Linley slowly began to discover the benefits to training in the Essence of the Earth.

Within a quiet courtyard.

Sadista once more spread out his divine sense to search for Linley. He couldn't help but frown, his eyes containing a hint of anger. "This Linley is still together with that Godeater Rat. Hmph. And this mountain actually has two other Gods?"

Given Sadista's power, he could easily discover those two Gods.

"Just Gods." Sadista didn't care about them at all. "But it seems we still need to wait for the right chance."

Sadista was extremely patient. Without complete certainty, he wouldn't send Anras to attack. After all, his number one priority was still the treasures within the Necropolis of the Gods.

But it was very strange…

That Lord of Mount Copper Gong, 'Leylin', lived on the mountain with his two brothers. However, Sadista was only able to discover those two Gods. He didn't discover the presence of that third person, 'Leylin'.

Chapter 30 – A So-Called Spar

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 30, A So-Called Spar

The environment of Mount Copper Gong was very beautiful. Within the quiet, deep valley, there was a waterfall and a pool of water beneath it. Linley and Bebe had built two stone houses and were living there. Linley didn't want to go disturb that Lord of Mount Copper Gong. It was already enough for him to have given Linley pointers.

"Rumble…"

The waterfall cascaded down like countless white pearls, smashing down into the deep pool below.

"Splash!" The water in the pool flowed out in small streams. Linley sat in the meditative stance by the side of the pool in a patch of grass. His original body had begun to calm down and focus on attuning with the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth. As for his divine clone, it continued analyzing the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

"I have never paid such close attention to the elemental essences as I currently am."

Linley sent out all of his spiritual energy, infusing it into every single earth elemental essence particle.

Earth elemental essence particles were extremely small. There was no way one could see them with the naked eye, but these elemental essence particles filled the entire world. Each earth elemental essence particle hovered throughout the nearby area, moving in a chaotic, random pattern. And then they would collide into each other, then separate.

The earth essence particles attracted each other, then repelled each other.

“How strange. Is this the elemental world?”

Linley sighed inwardly in praise.

And then, as Linley infused his spiritual energy into the earth: “These solidified elemental essence particles are far too close to each other.” Indeed, this was the case. Rocks and dirt were actually all formed from earth elemental essences, except the elemental density was extremely high.

“Although the boundless earth and the stones of the mountain are all formed from earth elemental essences, they don’t give off a strong elemental aura. Ah!” Linley’s heart was filled with shock. “According to the way the earth elemental particles in the air are behaving, when elemental particles reach a very close distance from each other, they will repel each other. Then why is it…that those extremely densely packed particles in the rocks don’t repel each other?”

Linley himself was capable of controlling earth elemental essence to form mounds of dirt or rocks or metal, but when he did so, it emanated a strong elemental aura.

“Why is it that stones and dirt don’t give off a strong elemental aura?” Linley had never discovered this before. So it seemed the ordinary, unassuming pieces of rocks and dirt actually contained unique profound mysteries of their own.

Linley’s mind couldn’t understand it.

All sorts of contradictions vexed his comprehension.

Training like this, Linley became completely absorbed into this world of the miraculous ‘Essence of the Earth’.

“Groooowl…”

During the past two months, Mount Copper Gong would occasionally have angry roars and bellows emanate from within it. This was because while

training, Linley would control elemental essence to create all sorts of magical beasts, which would occasionally let out angry howls. Based on his insights into the nature of elemental essences, one contradiction after another was resolved.

Only now did Linley understand that applying spiritual energy to forcibly control elemental essences to form a solid was a foolish technique!

“Between each elemental essence particle and each other particle, there is a mysterious, amazing relationship. All I have to do is just to use a little bit of extra spiritual energy, and I can cause countless elemental essence particles to become one.” Linley opened his eyes, looking at the angrily howling Savage Worldbear in mid-air.

This Savage Worldbear’s entire body was faintly surrounded by a yellow light. It was currently roaring in anger while beating its chest.

This Savage Worldbear was created from elemental essences.

“Two months ago, if I were to utilize a forbidden-level magic spell to summon this ‘Savage Worldbear’, I would have used up ten times as much spiritual energy, or perhaps even more!” Linley couldn’t help but sigh. “And this is with me only understanding a little bit of the ‘Essence of the Earth’.”

If he had completely mastered the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth, the difference would be far greater.

“If you take two people with the same amount of spiritual energy, one of whom has trained in the ‘Essence of the Earth’ while the other has not, the difference in power of the ‘Sacred Earthguard Armor’ they created over their bodies would be as great as the difference between the heavens and the earth.”

“Elemental essences are indeed marvelous.” Linley felt some gratitude towards the Lord of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin.

Leylin's words were correct. The Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth was just the basics. The entire Laws of the Earth were actually nothing more than the many profound mysteries which were created from the countless earth elemental essences. Understanding the 'Essence of the Earth' would be of great benefit to understanding the other profound mysteries.

Mount Copper Gong. Leylin's residence.

Within that elemental manor, Leylin was with his two brothers.

Leylin's crimson eyebrows rose. Sighing in praise, he said, "This Linley's innate talent really is quite good. In two short months, he has already reached such heights in his insights into the 'Essence of the Earth'. Given his current speed…with the 'Essence of the Earth' being a simple type of profound mystery, most likely in just two or three years, he would have completely mastered it."

"Linley has innate talent, but can it compare to yours, Third Brother?" That bald man, Burgess, laughed.

The white-robed man also said, "Third Brother, you are the only true, most powerful genius in the history of our Yulan Plane."

The white-robed man and Burgess both looked at Leylin with a hint of admiration in their eyes.

"You can't say that." Leylin gazed towards the southeast, as though he were capable of piercing through the walls of reality with his gaze and seeing that distant Linley, training within the mountain gorge. Laughing calmly, he said, "This Linley is only a Demigod. He has only just started on the road to training. Who can predict what his future accomplishments will be like?"

"At least given his current speed, he's only slightly slower than I was in the past. As for his future accomplishments, that is hard to say."

The bald man and the white-robed man both nodded slightly.

“That Beirut has also informed me that in other planes, there are absolute geniuses who were able to reach the Demigod stage in ten years, the God stage in a hundred years, and the Highgod stage in a thousand years. But to stupid, foolish people, they might be stuck at a bottleneck for ten million years without being able to break through to the Demigod stage.” Leylin laughed calmly.

“That is what insight and perception means.”

Leylin sighed, “This Linley is a very insightful and very perceptive person.”

“Become a Highgod in a thousand years. This is simply inconceivable.” Burgess and the white-robed man both sighed.

Leylin laughed calmly. “This has to do with each person’s destiny and life experiences. Those ultimate geniuses aren’t worth envying either!”

Leylin clearly felt rather disdainful towards those geniuses.

“Those geniuses desperately desired to reach the Highgod level as soon as possible. But how could they know that if one doesn’t begin trying to fuse the various profound mysteries from early on, if they only begin attempting to fuse them upon reaching the Highgod stage, it will be too late!”

“The profound mysteries of the Laws must be fused early on. The earlier, the easier it will be.” Leylin sighed. “If I had understood this when I was a Demigod, most likely I would have been able to fuse the six profound mysteries and have become a Paragon.”

“Fuse all of the profound mysteries? Third Brother, in all the countless planes, how many people have accomplished this?” The white-robed man said.

Leylin chuckled, no longer continuing on this subject.

“Big Brother.” Leylin looked towards that bald man. “It can be considered

that Linley helped contribute to our successful flight from the Gebados Planar Prison. You are also someone who trains in the Laws of the Earth. Go have a spar with him."

"Fine." The bald man, Burgess, nodded straightforwardly.

Leylin looked at the white-robed man. "Second Brother, I have received great kindness from that Beirut. You go help take care of that Godeater Rat, and spar a bit with him as well."

"And here I was, just feeling a bit bored." The white-robed man laughed as he spoke.

……

The water gurgled forward in the creeks.

Linley was completely absorbed in attuning with the elemental essences. One drop of wisdom after another filled his mind, causing Linley to unconsciously reveal a hint of a smile on his face. While Linley was training, Bebe had also calmed down and begun to train.

Suddenly, a man appeared here.

"This Linley." The bald man, Burgess, saw the hint of a smile on Linley's face. "He actually smiles while he is training. This really makes one jealous!"

Only a few experts were able to treat training as a source of pleasure.

If you liked to do something, then once you became absorbed in it, your effectiveness would be extremely high. If, on the other hand, you didn't like to do something and instead forced yourself to do it, the effectiveness would be very low.

The vast majority of experts forced themselves to train because they didn't want to be inferior to others, didn't want to be killed by others, or for other

reasons.

How could they, who forced themselves to train, possibly compare to someone who liked training?

These countless experts all understood this reasoning, and they wanted to try and make themselves enjoy training and make training a source of pleasure, thus allowing themselves to train faster, gain insights more easily, and break through.

But whether or not you liked something was something determined by your nature and soul.

You couldn't just choose to like something. For example, if you saw an extremely ugly woman, no matter how hard you tried to make yourself 'like' her, you wouldn't be able to do it. The choices of your innate nature were unchangeable.

"Mr. Burgess, why have you come?" Bebe called out loudly.

Linley now opened his eyes and immediately rose up. With a laugh, he said, "Mr. Burgess."

The bald man, Burgess, laughed loudly. "Linley, I know that you train in the Laws of the Earth. By coincidence, I too train in the Laws of the Earth. Let's have a spar between you and me. What say you?"

"This…this is wonderful, of course." Linley was very surprised and pleased.

Sparring with an expert who trained in the same Laws, especially someone much more powerful, was an extremely rare opportunity. After all, this meant the stronger person had to lower themselves to train with you.

Although it was described as 'sparring', in reality the other was helping him and guiding him!

“Haha…I’m rather stupid. I’ve only trained in two of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. One is the Profound Mysteries of the ‘Essence of the Earth’, while the other is the Profound Mysteries of Strength.

Linley’s heart leapt.

He now knew of yet another profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth; the Profound Mysteries of Strength.

“Rumble…” A large amount of earth elemental essence solidified, and the body of the bald man, Burgess, became covered with a sparkling earthen armor.

“Not the color of adamantine?” Linley was secretly surprised.

“Linley, against you, there’s no need for me to utilize the Profound Mysteries of Strength. I’ll directly utilize the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth. Careful!” Burgess laughed loudly, and as he spoke, he kicked off the ground powerful, charging forward while smashing towards Linley with his fist.

The sun reflected off of his sparkling earthen armor in a dazzling manner. Burgess’ right fist actually transformed into the head of a vicious wolf which opened its mouth and bit downwards.

“Hoooooowl!” The vicious wolf actually let out a howling sound.

Linley’s face changed. He wanted to retreat, but Burgess had actually utilized his Godrealm. As a God, Burgess’ Godrealm had caused Linley’s speed to drop dramatically.

“Clang!” Bloodviolet clashed against that vicious wolf’s head fist.

Linley was sent blasting backwards like a sandbag. With a ‘boom’, he smashed viciously into the deep pool of water like a meteorite, sending water spraying everywhere. Under the light of the sun, the water drops

spraying everywhere seemed like sparkling jewels.

“Hey, that’s way too weak.” Burgess shook his head.

“Boom!” Linley erupted out from the surface of the water, then landed on the ground. Staring at Burgess, he immediately asked, “Mr. Burgess, how is it that the vicious wolf’s head which your fist had transformed into could have such power? How could its hardness be on a level with a divine artifact?” Linley felt utterly mystified by what had just happened.

Burgess quirked his lips. “Think about it for yourself.”

Linley’s smile froze.

“Alright. Let’s do it again.” Linley gritted his teeth.

From this day onwards, each day, Linley would be defeated by Burgess three times. Burgess never gave him any guidance. Any questions Linley had, he would tell Linley to go think about it for himself. Actually…even if Burgess had explained it, he wouldn’t be able to truly explain it clearly.

After all, in order to understand the profound mysteries of the ‘Essence of the Earth’, Burgess had spent over a thousand years.

Linley sparred with Burgess, while Bebe sparred with that white-robed man.

With this sort of continued ‘sparring’, Linley’s rate of improvement in understanding the ‘Essence of the Earth’ increased greatly.

Once again, Linley was sent flying. As he fell down onto the ground, a smile actually appeared on his face.

“I was wrong, wrong!”

Linley began to laugh loudly. “It isn’t dead. It isn’t dead.”

“I never understood what the power behind the throbbing pulse everywhere in the boundless earth was all about. Now, I understand. I understand. The Throbbing Pulse of the World. Haha. So this is the Throbbing Pulse of the World!” Linley seemed to have gone mad, as he raised his head and laughed wildly. And just as Linley began to laugh loudly…

An enormous, unique, irresistible surge of force descended. The space around Linley became distorted. In the face of this unique presence which was like the Laws, any creature, no matter how powerful, was like nothing but an ant.

Even Burgess couldn’t help but tremble.

The bald Burgess, who had just defeated Linley yet again and was preparing to delightedly lecture him, was stupefied. “This Linley, he…he broke through, just like that. This is too monstrous?” Burgess finally understood the difference between himself and a genius.

Chapter 31 – The Throbbing Pulse of the World

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 31, The Throbbing Pulse of the World

The natural Laws descended.

Even Bebe and the white-robed man, who had been sparring, had their attention drawn and came over. Bebe moved like a flash of lightning through the mountain forests and arrived within the gorge. He saw Linley hovering there, and his eyes became filled with delight. “Boss, you’ve finally mastered the Throbbing Pulse of the World?”

“Big Brother, what’s going on? He…he broke through, just like that?” The white-robed man flew over, also very surprised.

The bald man, Burgess, said in a state of some confusion, “Just then, I knocked him down. I don’t know what caused him to gain a sudden insight, but he actually broke through. Look, isn’t this…this is so discouraging to me.”

“No wonder Third Brother praised him.” The white-robed man looked towards Linley as well.

As though through teleportation, yet another person appeared in the ground of the gorge. It was the crimson-eyebrowed Leylin. Bebe glanced at Leylin, somewhat surprised. “This Lord of Mount Copper Mountain is too powerful. However, Grandpa had said before that no expert, no matter how powerful, is capable of teleportation. I don’t know what techniques this Leylin used.”

Leylin smiled, hovering in mid-air as he watched Linley. He nodded as though in satisfaction.

Space blurred and distorted.

“Rumble…” Countless amounts of earth elemental essence surged towards the air above Linley, and that unique force surrounded Linley’s soul, seeming to be able to see completely through his soul and understand everything within it. In the air above Linley, the earth elemental essence continued to gather at an even more rapid rate.

Suddenly…

“BOOM!” The earth elemental essences dissipated, and in the area where they previously had been, there was a black jewel-like object that glimmered faintly with earthen yellow light.

The divine spark’s nature was of course connected to Linley’s soul.

“Earth-style divine spark.” Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart. Linley had already had experience and been prepared for this long ago.

“Finally, I have become a Deity in both the earth-style and the wind-style.” Linley couldn’t help but feel excited. But at the same time, within Linley’s mind, he couldn’t help but think of Leylin. “I truly must thank this Lord of Mount Copper Gong, for me to be able to break through the bottleneck so quickly this time.”

“Should I form another divine clone?” Linley could sense the information which the natural Laws were transmitting to him.

Without hesitating at all, Linley controlled the earth-style divine spark to hover next to him, outside his body. A hint of a smile was on Linley’s lips. “Once again, my spirit will split in two. From today onwards, I’ll have yet another body, while at the same time, I can train in still more Laws. Only, this pain of the soul being split…”

“Aaaaah!” Linley’s muscles throughout his body began to convulse. The pain of his soul being split in half caused Linley’s face to instantly turn pale and utterly bloodless.

“It seems this Linley still wishes to train in other Laws.” Leylin exhaled in

appreciation. “He actually chose to once again split his soul in half.” Leylin knew full well how agonizing it was for the soul to be split in half. When one’s soul was forcefully ripped in half, even the most powerful of experts wouldn’t be able to refrain from screaming.

Fortunately, in that moment of becoming a Deity, one’s soul would be protected by the natural Laws.

Right now, the soul tearing wouldn’t cause any problems. Under normal circumstances, however, a simple vibration that was powerful enough could cause the soul to truly collapse and the spirit to shatter, to say nothing of the soul being broken in half.

A sword-shaped soul flew out from Linley’s body, fusing with that earth-style divine spark hovering in mid-air.

“Sword-shaped soul?” Leylin’s eyes lit up. “He has potential to train in the Laws of Destruction.”

For now, Linley once more found himself within that boundless, infinite, unique plane – the Elemental Sea.

That indistinct, hazy area was filled with the boundless Elemental Sea. Waves rose and fell, and the earthen yellow waves were filled with liquefied earth essence. Deeper within it was more and more pure earth-style divine power. Linley worked hard to delve deeper into the depths in search of that divine power.

Divine earth power surrounded his earth-style divine spark, forming an earth-style divine clone which looked identical to Linley.

“Bodies formed from the natural Laws are always created naked.” Linley immediately used his divine earth power to create an earthen yellow robe for his divine earth clone. With but a thought, his divine wind clone also appeared from within his original body.

Divine earth clone, divine wind clone. His two mighty divine clones circled

around his original body.

And then, the two divine clones both fused into his original body.

Within Linley's sea of consciousness, the yellow-robed Linley and the green-robed Linley sat in the meditative position within the sea of consciousness, while in the air above the two divine clones, there hovered a rainbow-colored sword-shaped soul. Only, the size of it was much smaller than before.

Within Mount Copper Gong. Landing on the ground, Linley opened his eyes and as he did, he saw Leylin, Leylin's friends, and Bebe.

"Boss." Bebe's eyes were filled with delight, and he grinned widely. At the same time, he gave Linley a big thumbs up. "In but half a year here at Mount Copper Gong, you managed to become a Deity through the Elemental Laws of the Earth as well. Oh, right. Boss. Was it through the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth, or the Profound Mysteries of the Throbbing Pulse of the World?"

"The Throbbing Pulse of the World!" Linley said with a laugh.

"Linley, congratulations." The Lord of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin, said with a calm smile.

Linley looked towards Leylin, immediately growing somber. And then, he bowed in a very formal manner, saying with gratitude, "Mr. Leylin, I am truly grateful for the assistance the three of you provided. If it wasn't for you, I don't know how long it would have taken me to break through this bottleneck."

"No need to thank me. If there are thanks to be given, we three brothers should be thanking you." Leylin said.

"Huh?" Linley was startled.

Leylin, thank him? Why thank him?

The bald man, Burgess, laughed loudly, “Haha. Linley, if it wasn’t for you and those other two Demigods, we three brothers would most likely still be within the Gebados Planar Prison.”

Linley and Bebe instantly understood.

“So it seems this Leylin truly did escape from the Gebados Planar Prison as well.” Linley secretly said to himself.

“Boss. It seems Olivier’s sword strike actually did something good.” Bebe laughed.

Leylin looked at Linley. With a calm smile, he said, “Linley, right now, you have only reached the Demigod stage in the Laws of the Earth. Although you have gained mastery over the Throbbing Pulse of the World, to an expert, insights are only one factor; knowing how to apply them is what is most important.”

Linley, also having this feeling, nodded.

Indeed, after becoming a Demigod through the Laws of the Wind, he still had to research for quite some time before developing the ‘Hymn of the Wind’.

“Bebe, it’s best if you don’t disturb Linley for now and allow him to quietly focus on sensing the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’. When he is able to better utilize the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, he will be able to produce more powerful attacks.” Leylin looked towards Bebe and said.

“I know.” Bebe nodded repeatedly.

After someone had gained an insight into the Laws, he needed to go think about how to apply them as soon as possible.

“Linley, keep training. In a while, you should be on a level comparable with my big brother.” Leylin said.

“How can that be the case?” Linley laughed self-mockingly. “I’m only a Demigod, after all.”

“But you have two divine clones.” Leylin said with a laugh.

“This…so what if I have two?” Linley was somewhat puzzled. “The restrictive power of the Godrealm of a full God is too powerful. I can only just barely counteract part of it.”

Leylin said with a laugh, “You don’t even know this?”

“Huh?” Linley didn’t understand.

“Linley, your two divine clones are currently merged within your original body. Each divine spark is capable of creating a Godrealm. Your two divine sparks are both capable of creating Godrealms. With the two Godrealms layered atop each other, the restrictive power you will be under will be much weaker.” Leylin explained.

Linley started.

Originally, when Beirut had said a Demigod was inferior to a God, that was just in one-on-one combat.

In reality, for someone like Linley, it was as though he had two divine clones that were joining forces.

“The Godrealm of two divine clones layered atop each other might not be able to completely counteract the Godrealm of a full God, but the restrictive power will be much less. At that point, you can rely on your techniques and your profound mysteries to reach a level of parity with my big brother.” Leylin said.

Linley now felt a surge of excitement in his heart.

So having additional divine clones had this benefit as well.

Since Linley had to quietly train on utilizing the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ for attacking techniques, he naturally would no longer spar with the bald man, Burgess. Bebe didn’t disturb Linley’s meditations either. Normally, he would spar with the white-robed man in a place that was fairly far away.

Within the mountain gorge. Linley was by himself.

“The forbidden-level spell, ‘Pulsating Guard’, controls the ‘pulsating power’ which the earth contains.” Once that forbidden-level spell was cast, it would create a seemingly translucent barrier. This was formed from the ‘pulsating power’ which the earth naturally contained.

In the past, Linley didn’t understand how this ‘pulsating power’ was created.

“In the past, I believed this pulsating power isn’t the same as ordinary elemental essence, and was a new type of force. But now it seems…it just needs to be transformed.” After completely understanding the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, Linley saw many things clearly. “In using the Throbbing Pulse of the World, aside from using vibrations to attack, I should be able to use this pulsating power to attack.”

Linley stood atop the earth, the divine power in his body surging.

That strange pulsating power passed through Linley’s feet into the earth, then broadcast outwards towards the deep pool in front of him.

“BOOM!” Water erupted forth from the pool.

“This sort of attack is silent and gives no warning.” Linley had a hint of a smile at the corner of his mouth. “If I were to train for a while longer, it should become even more powerful.”

Rohault Empire. Within that secluded manor.

“Linley is actually training by himself?” Sadista had spread his divine sense out towards Mount Copper Gong once again. Naturally, he discovered that Linley was training alone. “This Linley truly is formidable. He has reached the Demigod stage in the Laws of the Earth as well.”

Sadista’s eyes revealed a cold light.

The greater Linley’s potential was, the more Sadista wanted to kill him.

“I definitely cannot permit Linley to go to the Infernal Realm and return to the Indigo Prefecture.” Sadista was certain on this point. “There are only two Gods at Mount Copper Gong. If Anras moves fast enough, he should be able to kill Linley in a short amount of time.”

Sadista was still fairly confident in Anras.

This was because Anras trained in the Elemental Laws of Fire, famed for attack power.

“Anras…” Sadista immediately reached out with his divine sense towards Anras.

Tonight was a dark and cloudy night. The wind was very strong.

A human figure was flying in mid-air at high speed. It was the red-robed Anras. Anras stared towards the south. “After waiting for so long, the opportunity has finally come.” Just now, Sadista had provided him with Linley’s location and a map through his divine sense.

Anras knew exactly where Linley was.

A faint red light began to glow in the eyes of Anras.

Soon, Mount Copper Gong appeared within Anras’ field of vision. Anras’ face grew still colder. He was very familiar with Mount Copper Gong’s layout. He easily sped downwards, passing through the mountain forests and drawing near the location where Linley was training in the gorge.

Within that manor formed from earth elemental essence.

“That arrogant fellow. He had been spreading his divine sense over to investigate time and time again. So he really did have nefarious intentions.” Leylin let out a calm laugh. Sadista had thought that no one would notice his repeated divine sense investigations in the area, but what he didn’t know was that Leylin had been fully aware of him.

“The person who came this time should be a subordinate.” Leylin wasn’t worried at all.

“A God. This is a chance to see how Linley’s strength has advanced. I wonder if he’ll be able to resist.” In the end, Leylin still disappeared from within his courtyard. In truth, Anras was much closer to Linley’s gorge than he had been.

And yet…

Leylin arrived first.

In the gorge where Linley was training. Linley was absorbed in his meditations. But suddenly, he felt the ground vibrate slightly.

“Huh?” Confused, Linley stopped his training.

“What’s going on?” Linley didn’t understand what problem had just appeared.

Only, Linley didn’t know that at the corner of the gorge, a rock had suddenly appeared. This rock was emanating a faint earthen aura. “Best to watch from here. Otherwise, if Linley were to die, then things would really get a bit tricky. Oh. That God has arrived.”

Chapter 32 – Earth and Wind

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 32, Earth and Wind

Linley didn't discover that Anras had come. Rather, he was focusing on pondering the Throbbing Pulse of the World.

"Mr. Leylin's words were correct. The 'Essence of the Earth' is the profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth with great defense against material attack, while the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' defends against spiritual attacks. At the same time…it not only can defend against spiritual attacks, it can also engage in spiritual attacks."

Linley was currently pondering how to rely upon the Throbbing Pulse of the World to execute a spiritual attack.

Within that quiet, gloomy gorge, atop a distant tree, there was a human figure. It was Anras.

Anras was looking at Linley, training within the gorge. "Killing him will only require a single blow!" Although Anras knew Linley was a Demigod, Anras still decided to engage in a sneak attack, so as to kill Linley in a short amount of time. This was the order of Sadista.

It was very quiet within the valley.

"Swish!" Very suddenly, a streak of red, fiery light split through the air, piercing towards Linley.

Linley was shocked.

"Not good." Linley could feel that he had already become restricted by a Godrealm.

Other Demigods, if suddenly ambushed by the Godrealm of a God and this

full-strength attack, definitely wouldn't be able to react in time.

But Linley had often sparred with Burgess, a full God. Now, in the face of Anras' sneak attack, Linley reacted almost naturally…

First of all, relying on the two divine clones within his body, he immediately created two Godrealms of his own.

At the same time, Bloodviolet instantly appeared within Linley's hands, and in a very practiced manner, it danced out. Countless sword shadows transformed into a long violet chain, which intersected with that fiery red light. Linley himself relied on the backlash from those colliding blows to rapidly retreat.

"Bang!" Linley was sent smashing far away into the mountain walls behind the waterfall. The mountain walls cracked open, and stones came tumbling down.

"Hrm?" Anras' face changed. "Linley was able to block my sneak attack, just like that?"

Anras was very surprised.

"Swish!" Anras slashed downwards in a line, moving like a bird of prey as he charged towards the hole in the mountain wall which Linley had just created. But with a 'BOOM' sound, at another part of the mountain wall, Linley suddenly exploded out like a bolt of lightning, landing on the empty ground of the gorge.

Azure-gold draconic scales covered Linley's entire body, and his iron-whip-like draconic tail flashed with icy cold light as it gently swayed about. Linley's icy, dark golden eyes stared coldly towards the mountain wall.

"Who are you?" Linley barked.

After having transformed into the Dragonblood Warrior form, Linley's speed had risen dramatically. Even though he used his two Godrealms

together, the opponent's God-level Godrealm still put him at a disadvantage. However, by relying on the Profound Truths of Velocity and his Dragonblood Warrior form, he was still able to maintain parity with the opponent's speed.

Linley's loud shout didn't just shock Anras.

At the same time…

In a different part of Mount Copper Gong, where Bebe and the white-robed man were sparring, the two of them as well as the spectating Burgess were all shocked.

"Boss." Bebe's face changed. He immediately charged towards the gorge alongside those two Gods.

"Not good." Anras knew that the situation was dire. "If I wait until those two Gods get here, I won't have any chance at all!" Anras' body was wrapped in flames, and he slashed through the skies like an arrow, charging towards Linley.

That icy, flame-wrapped spear in his hands pierced directly towards Linley.

"My most powerful attack!" Anras' eyes glittered coldly as he stared at Linley.

Linley stood there, staring at him with those dark golden eyes, not dodging at all.

"He's asking to be killed." Anras, seeing that the opponent wasn't dodging, couldn't help but sneer in his heart.

Actually, when Linley came out from the mountain walls and shouted loudly, he had already controlled the divine power in his body to be transformed by the Throbbing Pulse of the World into surges of pulsating power which were spreading out from Linley's feet. With Linley at the center, an area of a hundred meters had become the domain of that pulsating

power.

“Right at this moment!” Linley’s eyes suddenly lit up!

At the same instant, dozens of surges of pulsating power emerged from within the ground, rising up from below to surround Anras at high speed. It was as though…’hands’ had suddenly appeared from the ground, snatching at Anras’ legs and covering his entire body.

Anras’ face changed dramatically.

“Die!” Right at this moment, the Dragonformed Linley swept out with Bloodviolet and his adamantine heavy sword in his hands as he charged at Anras.

“BOOM!” The divine power in his body bursting forth, Anras hurriedly broke free of the restraining power of the large amount of pulsating power. However, at the same moment he broke free of that power, the distance between himself and Linley had been decreased to less than ten meters. A distance of less than ten meters, to Anras and Linley, was simply too close.

Because their speed was too fast!

How could Anras retreat? After all, Bebe and those two Gods were flying over at high speed as well.

A dazzling, cold light flashed out from his spear as he thrust it towards Linley, the tip of the spear carrying a dim surge of faint red light.

This was Anras’ most powerful attack; ‘Soul Destroyer’!

A devilish violet light flashed, while at the same time, a pleasant flute melody could be heard. Upon hearing this melody, even Anras was slightly affected. After having trained for twenty years, Linley’s ‘Hymn of the Wind’ technique was now much more powerful than it had been in the past.

More importantly, this ‘Hymn of the Wind’ wasn’t just a flute melody; it

also contained an invisible ‘sound wave attack’.

Bloodviolet clashed head on with the spear.

“Clang!”

Those illusory sword shadows and those illusory faint red spear shadows collided at the same time.

“BOOM!” The illusory sword shadows held on for only an instant before shattering. The faint red spear shadow had only dimmed slightly, continuing to pierce towards Linley.

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed dramatically.

But this spiritual attack was simply too fast. There was no time!

“Terrible!” Leylin, hidden within a distant rock nearby the gorge, was greatly shocked. Although he was fast, he wasn’t as fast as a spiritual attack.

“Die!” Linley bellowed as his adamantine heavy sword landed on Anras’ body.

Although it took a while to describe, in truth, Linley had executed simultaneous attacks with Bloodviolet and the adamantine heavy sword. Anras had chosen to not dodge, but he only had a single weapon. Between Bloodviolet and the adamantine heavy sword, Anras had clearly sensed that Bloodviolet posed a higher threat.

He had blocked Bloodviolet, and so naturally, the adamantine heavy sword landed on his body.

At the same moment that the dim red spear shadow pierced into Linley’s body…

A queer sort of spiritual energy that had been transformed into vibrational waves passed through the adamantine heavy sword and entered Anras’

body.

“BOOM!”

The scale-shaped, semi-translucent barrier covered Linley’s entire sea of consciousness, revealing only that single gap. The dim red spear shadow smashed against that translucent scaled barrier, then shattered immediately. Only a small amount of the dispersed red energy struck against that flaw in the barrier, attempting to break through.

However, Linley’s spiritual energy had formed into a Pulseguard Defense.

If it had been the dim red spear shadow, perhaps Linley’s spiritual Pulseguard Defense wouldn’t have been able to hold. However, this was nothing more than the scattered remnants of that attack.

An illusory, translucent sword-shape pierced directly into Anras’ sea of consciousness.

If one magnified this illusory sword shadow ten thousand times, one might discover that this was actually countless, dense spiritual waves that formed a complete sword shape. Linley’s previously quite ordinary spiritual energy, after being transformed by the Throbbing Pulse of the World, had become extremely terrifying.

The illusory sword shadow pierced into Anras’ sea of consciousness. Anras’ spiritual energy immediately rose up, creating a defensive, blocking wall. Only, this sort of ordinary defensive wall, in the face of that illusory sword shadow formed from those countless ripples of spiritual energy, quickly collapsed.

The illusory sword shadow smashed viciously against the divine spark.

“BANG!” The divine spark trembled, and in the end, the soul contained within it was dispersed.

The Omega Wave of the Throbbing Pulse of the World – Voidpulse Sword!

“Success?” Linley was overjoyed.

Originally, Linley had only utilized the Throbbing Pulse of the World to create vibrations to attack the enemy’s internal organs. Based on what he had learned from the ‘Hymn of the Wind’ and the results of months of study, Linley had already begun to understand how the Throbbing Pulse of the World could be used to execute spiritual attacks. Actually, this Voidpulse Sword of Linley’s wasn’t perfect yet. Sometimes he was successful in utilizing it, but sometimes he would fail.

Unexpectedly, this time he had succeeded.

“Whoosh!” Suddenly, another figure suddenly appeared from within the corpse of Anras. This figure grabbed that divine spark and then quickly charged into the skies.

“This Anras had another body!” Linley’s face changed.

“Swoosh!”

Linley immediately pursued.

“My God body was actually destroyed. I, an exalted God, was actually defeated by a Demigod?” Anras’ heart was filled with rage. He had two bodies, one a God-level divine fire clone, while the other was a Demigod-level divine wind clone. Anras naturally cared the most about his God-level body.

“I definitely, definitely will get revenge!” Anras howled angrily in his heart, but at the same time, Anras frantically tried to flee.

“Whoooooosh.” His divine sense frantically surged out, blasting towards the Rohault Empire.

“Lord Sadista!”

Sadista was awaiting the good news from Anras. “Oh, Anras, you succeeded?”

“Lord Sadista, save me, save me!” Anras stuttered out. This instantly caused Sadista to be stunned. Sadista immediately spread out his own divine sense, encapsulating the entire Mount Copper Gong area with it, allowing him to clearly know the situation within.

“What?” Sadista’s face changed dramatically.

Although this took time to describe, in reality, from the moment when Linley and Anras first fought until now, there had only been two exchanges; the first was the sneak attack, while the second was the full-strength attack of both sides. These two exchanges went by very quickly. Bebe and those two Gods had yet to reach the gorge.

Anras was unlucky enough to have met with Linley, who was in possession of a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

No matter how badly damaged a Sovereign artifact was, it was still a Sovereign artifact! Unfortunately for Anras, Linley’s Bloodviolet as well as adamantine heavy sword both contained terrifying spiritual attacks.

“Flee, flee!” Anras frantically tried to flee. His remaining body, being a wind-type Demigod body, was indeed very fast.

“Shkreeeeeeeeee!”

An enraged screech filled the air, and an enormous, illusory Godeater Rat suddenly appeared in mid-air. The Godeater Rat opened its mouth, and a bizarre force suddenly enveloped Anras, freezing him in mid-air, preventing him from moving at all.

“Bebe?” Linley came to a halt as well, staring at the distant Bebe in astonishment.

Bebe had already transformed into the Godeater Rat form, with a length of

half a meter. Only, behind Bebe's body, there was an enormous illusory Godeater Rat that was over a hundred meters tall.

"Ahhh, noooo!" Anras felt a sense of hopelessness.

A wind-style divine spark directly emerged from within Anras' body, transforming into a ray of light as it streaked straight towards Bebe's mouth. Like eating a bean, Bebe swallowed the wind-style divine spark into his stomach.

Anras' body slumped powerlessly to the ground.

Bebe scrurried over, grabbing Anras' interspatial ring as well as that fire-style divine God spark. "Hmph, you dare act against my Boss, and you still want to flee? In your dreams!" Bebe gave Anras' corpse two or three good kicks as well, clearly quite angry.

The bald man, Burgess, as well as the white-robed man and Linley all stared in astonishment, mouths gaping.

"This…this is the divine ability of a Godeater Rat?" Linley's heart trembled.

Devouring someone's divine spark?

No wonder they dared style themselves as 'Godeater Rats'. This was too monstrous.

"Boss." Bebe flew over, tossing the fire-style divine God spark in his hands to Linley. "I'm not able to digest this God-level divine spark. All yours."

"Oh." Linley accepted the God-level divine spark.

"Wait, what did you say?" Linley looked towards Bebe. "Did you just say, digest?"

Divine sparks were so hard as to be indestructible. Even divine artifacts

wouldn’t be able to leave the slightest mark on them. This was why when Deities died, they would leave behind a divine spark. Not even the full-strength attack of a Highgod could shatter a divine spark. But Bebe had…

“Right. I’m only a Demigod, so I’m only able to digest Demigod-level divine sparks.” This was Bebe’s explanation.

Linley looked at Bebe, truly not knowing what to say.

Chapter 33 – An Implacable Rage

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 33, An Implacable Rage

“Digest a divine spark?” The bald man and the white-robed man, two full Gods, descended from the air. The bald man, Burgess, stared with eyes as round as an ox’s towards Bebe. “Divine sparks are known to be indestructibly tough, and are ten thousand times tougher than even divine artifacts!”

In the Gebados Planar Prison, when experts engaged in battle, no matter what level the battle was at, divine sparks were never destroyed. In terms of toughness, most likely even Linley’s Bloodviolet couldn’t compare to a divine spark.

“In theory, divine sparks should be utterly indestructible.” The white-robed man nodded as well.

“Yeah, divine sparks really are tough. Even though my teeth are really sharp, I’m still not able to chew through and grind them up.” Bebe rubbed his nose in resignation.

“You want to grind them up?” Even Linley, upon hearing these words, wanted to curse at Bebe. However, Bebe’s gaze held a hint of slyness within them, causing Linley to not know whether to laugh or to cry. “Bebe, you little rascal, you are growing more and more sly. I wonder where you are learning this from.”

Bebe intentionally let out a long sigh. “I’m not able to chew and grind them up with my teeth, so, all I can do is just swallow them into my tummy and digest them.”

“Digest it.” Burgess and the other two all felt this was too inconceivable.

“Why not? I’m a divine beast, you know.” Bebe intentionally raised his

head high. “In the countless planes of the universe, I’m only the second Godeater Rat to ever exist. There’s quite a few ‘Ba-Serpents’ and ‘Heaven Devouring Beasts’ in the other countless planes of the universe, you know. They aren’t nearly as rare and precious as we Godeater Rats.”

Linley laughed in his heart, “Bebe most likely heard from Lord Beirut that other planes have ‘Ba-Serpents’ and ‘Heaven Devouring Beasts’.”

The Suanni Lion [Heaven Devouring Beast] and the Ba-Serpent, these two types of divine beasts, were the only ones of their kind in the Yulan Plane.

But there were far too many material planes. Dylin and Tarosse, however, had never gone to other planes. Naturally, they didn’t know anything about how many divine beasts the other planes possessed.

“Linley, Bebe, let’s go. Go to our place for a while. Third Brother is waiting for you.” The white-robed man smiled.

“Mr. Leylin?”

Since that mysterious Mr. Leylin had invited him, Linley and Bebe wouldn’t decline, of course. They immediately followed Burgess and the white-robed man and flew back to the earth elemental manor.

In the gorge where Linley had been training.

That rock in the corner of the gorge suddenly disappeared, transforming into Leylin, dressed in a dark red robe. Leylin looked towards the east, his eyes seeming to pierce through the walls of reality, a smile at the corner of his lips. “Hmph. It seems that Highgod hasn’t gone crazy yet. He didn’t immediately come to get revenge.”

“But Linley’s rate of improvement has still exceeded my expectations.” Leylin let out a praising sigh. “That violet longsword of his should be a Highgod artifact. The baleful aura it contains is so strong. Who knows how many experts have died beneath that sword.”

“However, it’s still best to not be overconfident.”

Leylin frowned. “If that Highgod were to suddenly attack…the difference between Linley and a Highgod is simply too great. Even if I wanted to rescue him, I wouldn’t have the time to. It’s best to make preparations early!”

Leylin was capable of easily detecting Anras’ arrival to Mount Copper Gong.

But if it was Sadista, especially if Sadista hid his aura, unless Leylin were to actively utilize his divine sense to search, or to search using some other abilities, he wouldn’t be able to quickly detect Sadista’s presence.

“It seems we need to be careful for a while.” Leylin chuckled, and then, as the earth elemental essence around him shuddered slightly, Leylin disappeared into thin air.

As Linley and the others flew towards this manor which was completely formed from earth elemental essence, Leylin had already arrived within it.

By the time Linley and the others landed in the manor, they saw Leylin seated while leisurely sipping wine.

“Third Brother, Linley and Bebe have come. What do you need them for?” The bald man, Burgess, said loudly.

Leylin put down his cup of wine, smiling as he looked at Linley and Bebe. “The two of you, sit.”

Linley’s heart was filled with questions. “What does Leylin want with us?”

“In the upcoming period of time, it’s best for you to live within this manor. If you need to train, Linley, then you can train within the courtyard.” Leylin bluntly proclaimed his intentions.

Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but feel somewhat astonished.

“Mr. Leylin, live at your place?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

Leylin laughed loudly. “What? Can it be that there’s something wrong with my place? Or is it that you are afraid that you will damage my residence? Don’t worry. The walls of my residence aren’t that flimsy. Even if you cause some damage to it, I can easily repair it.”

“That’s not what I meant.” Linley hurriedly said. “But since you have asked us to stay, Mr. Leylin, then Bebe and I will bother you with our presence for a time.”

Towards this Lord of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin, Linley and Bebe both felt some reverence. First of all, the person was powerful. Second of all, he truly had treated the two of them quite well.

After all, based on what that Sati said, normally, whenever Leylin gave someone advice, they wouldn’t give that person advice a second time within ten years.

“Linley, I watched quite clearly as you did battle with that God just now. For you to be able to develop a spiritual attack with the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ in such a short period of time truly is quite impressive.” Leylin said in praise.

“Actually, I haven’t fully mastered this attack yet.” Linley felt he was very lucky as well. “At that dangerous moment, I was out of options, and thus I simultaneously used Bloodviolet and the adamantine heavy sword. Luckily for me, the attack of my adamantine heavy sword succeeded. Otherwise, I wouldn’t have been able to kill that God.”

Leylin nodded, and then said seriously, “Linley, there is something I must warn you about.”

“Mr. Leylin, pray tell.” Linley immediately focused.

Leylin nodded. “Linley, to be honest, when you use Bloodviolet in a

spiritual attack, the power is too low. All you are doing is applying spiritual energy in a simple manner, passing it through Bloodviolet and using it to attack the opponent's soul. The only good aspect to this attack is that you included the Profound Mysteries of Music into it."

"I urge you, at a critical moment when dealing with a powerful foe, don't use this sort of attack. In terms of spiritual attack power, this attack is far inferior to you using that attack of the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'. The difference is too great."

"The strength is rather low." Linley knew this very well.

The Hymn of the Wind, although a spiritual attack, was in truth not connected to any deep understanding of any Laws. It just filled Bloodviolet with spiritual energy and utilized Bloodviolet to release that attack.

That was it.

When the 'Hymn of the Wind' technique struck the 'Soul Destroyer' technique, the illusory Bloodviolet shadows created by the 'Hymn of the Wind' were instantly eradicated. Its strength was far inferior.

When Linley had developed the Throbbing Pulse of the World – Voidwave Sword, he discovered that a spiritual attack which contained profound mysteries within it could reach an astonishingly terrifying height.

It can be said that the 'Hymn of the Wind' was nothing but a 'hammer' created from spiritual energy that pierced through the opponent's soul.

However, the Throbbing Pulse of the World – Voidwave Sword caused his spiritual energy to pass through the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' principles and instantly release millions of surges of spiritual ripples. The countless spiritual ripples miraculously then formed in an organized manner into a comprehensive whole, that illusory sword shadow! The illusory sword shadow, upon striking the soul, would release those countless surges of sword ripples. Reinforcing each other, the power of those countless sword ripples would suddenly layer atop each other, reaching an extreme!

It was much like ordinary white paper. Even you folded it up into a stick, if you used a lot of force, you would still break it. However, if you were to chop the paper into hundreds of strips, and then braid those strips into a cohesive whole, then its endurance would be a hundred times greater and would be able to sustain a weight of even hundreds of kilograms.

The effectiveness of the 'braiding' of the Profound Mysteries of the Throbbing Pulse of the World was hundreds of times greater than simple braiding.

"The Hymn of the Wind spiritual attack is a rather low level one. Only after fusing with the profound mysteries of the Laws will one's attack power increase." Linley understood this.

Leylin laughed, "If you had used your adamantine heavy sword to strike that God's spear, then your spiritual attacks would most likely have cancelled out! His spiritual attack's power is on par with yours."

Leylin, given his experience and judgment, was easily able to make this determination.

"Oh?" Linley thought back to that faint red spear shadow as well. That spear shadow was indeed quite powerful. "If I didn't have that damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, I most likely wouldn't have been able to take a soul attack on that level."

"Linley, there's something I'm mystified about."

Leylin frowned as he looked at Linley. "That dying blow spiritual attack the God released…the soul of even most Gods wouldn't have been able to take it, much less yours. How is it that you seem to be completely unaffected?"

This question had stumped Leylin for quite a while.

"This…" Linley didn't know what to say.

Could it be that he would tell Leylin that he had a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact? A Sovereign artifact, even a damaged one, was more than enough to cause a Highgod to become red-eyed with desire.

“Haha, I’m being rude.” Leylin laughed loudly. “I shouldn’t ask a question like this. Linley, just live nearby for now. If you have any training questions, you can ask me.”

“Alright.” Linley nodded.

“You need to master the spiritual attack aspects of the Throbbing Pulse of the World as soon as possible,” Leylin laughed.

Linley and Bebe thus began living within the manor and quietly training within. Occasionally, when puzzled, Leylin would use some examples to help explain to Linley. Sometimes, Linley would suddenly understand. If he didn’t understand, then Leylin would have Linley to slowly think about it on his own.

All Leylin could do with regards to training was occasionally give some guidance.

Linley’s training days were very happy and peaceful, but in the Rohault Empire, that Highgod, Sadista, had been in a terrible mood in recent days.

Within the courtyard, Sadista was currently dining with his two Gods. Only, Sadista’s face was very gloomy, and the two Gods didn’t dare to make any sound.

“Bang!”

Sadista slammed the crystal wineglass onto the table, then rose and walked out of the living room. Because Sadista had used a little too much force, the crystal wineglass actually shattered.

The two Gods glanced at each other.

“Danny [Dan’ni], ever since Anras died, during this past month, Lord Sadista has been in a terrible mood. How should we resolve this?” The middle-aged man with short silver hair said.

They were frustrated as well.

If Sadista was always in such a gloomy, dark mood, their lives wouldn’t be comfortable either. They would be in the Yulan Plane for nearly a thousand years, after all. If they had to spend a thousand years in nervousness, that would indeed be quite miserable.

“Right. This has to be resolved. I’ll go discuss this matter with Uncle.” That youngster, Danny, said. Danny was Sadista’s nephew. Thus, it fell upon him to deal with this.

Sadista was wearing a noble, lavish violet robe. Standing in the beautiful flower gardens, he was in a very bad mood, despite how beautiful the flowers were.

“This Linley is a mere Demigod. In order to kill him, Anras died! And right now, I still can’t go act against him!” Sadista’s heart was filled with repressed anger.

He was indeed capable of killing Linley, and perhaps Beirut wouldn’t find out.

But if Beirut did find out, then he, Sadista, wouldn’t be able to enter the Necropolis of the Gods.

“The Necropolis of the Gods matters more!” Sadista kept on reminding himself. For the sake of the Necropolis of the Gods, he had to choose to remain in hiding and not go deal with Linley. But he still felt angry and resentful. After all, Linley was only a Demigod. How could Sadista not vent this anger in his heart?

Smoldering rage!

“Uncle.” A sound rang out.

Sadista glanced over. Calmly, he said, “Oh, Danny. What is it?”

“Uncle, in the past month, I’ve seen that you are always in a bad mood. Anras is dead and gone. In addition, he was only a God. There’s no need to care so much about it.” Danny said.

Sadista snorted but didn’t say anything.

He didn’t care about a God. What made him miserable was that he had suffered a setback, but could only endure instead of venting his anger. If he had been angered by an expert, that was one thing. But in this case, he had been angered by a Demigod.

How could he calm down?

He wanted to go kill him, but what if Beirut found out? What then?

Smoldering, suppressed rage!

Chapter 34 – Darkness and Flame

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 34, Darkness and Flame

Danny, seeing Sadista snort without saying anything, intentionally asked in a mystified manner, “Uncle, there’s something I don’t understand. You told us that Anras failed in his attempt to kill Linley and died. But how did Anras die? I refuse to believe that Linley was able to kill Anras.”

Sadista started slightly.

Who killed Anras?

Sadista himself wasn’t certain. After all, Sadista couldn’t constantly be checking with his divine sense and watching everything. He had only found out about Anras’ failure when Anras notified him using his Demigod-level divine clone. Sadista didn’t know the details of Anras’ death when he was with Linley.

“Anras had two bodies. The wind-style Demigod body was killed by that Godeater Rat.” Sadista said. He was very certain about this. “As for his divine God clone…”

“Could it be that Linley killed him?” Danny asked.

“Of course not.” Sadista snorted as he spoke. “Although Linley managed to reach the Deity level in the earth-style recently, he is still just a Demigod. Even if his two divine clones joined forces and were able to greatly reduce the binding effect of the Godrealm, you, Danny, should know that Anras was a powerful God!”

Danny nodded. “Even I can’t take Anras’ spiritual attack.”

“Of the six profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Fire, the profound mysteries involving spiritual attacks are amongst the most powerful.”

Sadista said solemnly. “Once Anras utilized his spiritual attack, Linley would definitely die.”

However, no matter how formidable Sadista was, there was no way he could have suspected…

That Linley would actually be in possession of a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

“Thus, it should have been those two Gods in that manor who acted.” Sadista, although not certain of the exact circumstances, was certain about this determination. “This is the only explanation for why Linley didn’t die.”

“Uncle.”

Danny said in a puzzled manner. “Did any of those two Deities in the mountain range die?” As Danny saw it, given Anras’ spiritual attack power, even if those two Gods attacked him in unison, Anras should have been able to take one of them with him in death!

“Not a single one died.” Sadista laughed coldly. “Those two Gods should be very powerful. My divine sense located a manor formed from earth elemental essence within that mountain. Just from looking at the manor, I can tell that this God should have fused two types of profound mysteries together.”

Even after reaching the level of complete mastery in the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth, it was impossible to create an eternal manor like this one.

“No wonder they were able to kill Anras without either of them dying.” Danny sighed.

But then, Danny had a thought and he said to Sadista, “Uncle, I know that you are in a bad mood. Since that’s the case, why don’t you go kill those two Gods? You’ll be able to get revenge for Anras, but more importantly, you’ll be able to vent your anger.”

“Oh?”

Sadista was intrigued.

The repressed anger in his heart did indeed need to be vented.

“But that Linley and Bebe are both there.” Sadista frowned.

“Uncle, what are you worried about? As long as you don’t act against Linley, then you have nothing to worry about! Uncle, since you aren’t acting against Linley, I trust Lord Beirut won’t blame you either. There would be no excuse for him to cause trouble for you.” Danny explained.

“Not act against Linley?” Sadista frowned. Deep in his heart, he truly wanted to kill Linley.

Danny laughed, “Uncle, I also am aware that once Linley returns to the ‘Indigo Prefecture’ in the Infernal Realm, he will most likely become a great threat to our clan. But Uncle, we don’t necessarily have to kill Linley in the Yulan Plane! Once Linley reaches the Infernal Realm, we can make our move then. The Infernal Realm is so vast and enormous, while Linley is completely unfamiliar with that area. Wouldn’t it be extremely simple for us to deal with him then?”

“Ha, haha…” Sadista began to laugh.

Sadista laughed as he looked at Danny. “Danny, I was pushing myself into a corner just now. Right. The Infernal Realm is limitless and vast. Linley won’t find it so easy to make his way to the Indigo Prefecture. We are completely capable of acting against him in the Infernal Realm.” Staring towards the west, Sadista felt a surge of joy.

“Let’s go kill those two Gods!” Sadista deeply detested those two Gods.

“Uncle, when you see Linley, you can even greet him in a warm, friendly manner.” Danny laughed. “After all, you aren’t going to kill him here in the

Yulan Plane, so what have you to fear? As for killing him in the Infernal Realm, how could that Beirut know about everything which is happening in the Infernal Realm? Not even a Sovereign could do that!"

Sadista's smile became even more brilliant.

"Haha, well spoken." Sadista slapped Danny on the shoulders. "In the Yulan Plane, I can even make friends with Linley. After all, I can wait until we are in the Infernal Realm before making my move!"

"I've been suppressing my anger for over a month now." Sadista stared towards the west. "Hmph. I'm going to go kill those two detestable fellows right now. On the way, I'll go make friends with Linley." As he spoke, Sadista immediately flew into the air.

"I'm going to go make friends with Linley and Bebe." Sadista felt unspeakably amused.

Sadista's body transformed into emptiness, and his body completely disappeared from the area.

"Supposedly, Uncle has already fused three profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness. I wonder how long it will be before I reach that stage." Standing there in the garden, Danny let out a long sigh. It was hard to fuse even two profound mysteries of a Law.

As for fusing three, the difficulty was dozens of times greater.

There were very few Highgods who were at that stage.

The mountain range of Mount Copper Gong. Within the elemental manor.

"Linley, although the aura of your Bloodviolet sword can affect an opponent, there's no need for you to force yourself to use it for soul attacks." Leylin explained to Linley. "A truly powerful attack brings forth the profound mysteries of the Laws through the divine artifacts being wielded."

“You are completely capable of utilizing the Profound Truths of Velocity, the Profound Mysteries of Music, and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves through your Bloodviolet.” Leylin laughed. “Although these are physical attacks, there isn’t much of a difference between physical attacks and soul attacks. When your sword physically chops down through the opponent’s skull, it will still slam onto their divine spark and kill them, right?”

Linley nodded as though he had gained some insight.

“Remember. Use the profound mysteries that you have learned as the basis for your attacks. That’s all you need to do. There’s no need to be influenced too much by your choice of weapons!” Leylin said. “Look. Although your adamantine heavy sword is just a low-level divine artifact, the power of your ‘Voidwave Sword’ was far greater than that of Bloodviolet’s.”

Linley laughed.

“Leylin…” Just as Linley was about to speak, he saw that Leylin was frowning. “I didn’t expect he would actually come.”

Leylin’s body moved, disappearing from within the Elemental Manner.

“What just happened?” Linley didn’t understand.

Actually, ever since Anras had launched his sneak attack, Leylin had covered the entire Mount Copper Gong area with a spiderweb-like web of ‘Gravitational Space’. ‘Gravitational Space’ was also one of the extremely miraculous profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and was a very high level one as well.

Within his ‘Gravitational Space’, Leylin could instantly increase the strength of the local gravity by ten thousand times.

But Leylin didn’t do this. All he had done was to cover the entire Mount Copper Gong with his ‘Gravitational Space’, not actually changing the

strength of the gravity. Because the boundless earth contained gravity to begin with, although Leylin set up his Gravitational Space, Sadista didn't notice it when flying over, thinking that the gravity here was just the natural gravity of the earth.

But as soon as Sadista entered the range of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin naturally discovered his presence.

Right now, halfway up the quiet mountainside of Mount Copper Gong, the white-robed man was currently sparring with Bebe. Their two shadows flashed continuously, striking against each other, each time creating a metallic 'clang' sound as they did.

The bald man, Burgess, watched and laughed from the side. "Second Brother, you are a full God, and yet you actually have spent this much time without being able to defeat Bebe. You really are making yourself look bad, you know."

"I'm only using a single profound mystery, 'Lightspeed'. If I were to use two profound mysteries, I would have won long ago. In addition, that dagger of Bebe's really is quite bizarre. Not even my body dares to take it head on." The white-robed man cried out in protest at Burgess' words during the sparring match, but Bebe was indeed very powerful.

Especially that dagger-shaped weapon of his.

"You are a full God. Stop looking for excuses." Burgess laughed loudly.

"Bang!" Bebe was sent flying.

"Again," Bebe said, gritting his teeth and saying in an insubordinate manner. But then, Bebe's face suddenly changed slightly, and the smiles on the faces of Burgess and his friend changed as well.

Quite bizarrely, the sunlight here at the halfway point up the mountain had suddenly disappeared. Other areas still had sunlight, but in the area Bebe was in, the entire area was cast into a bizarre darkness.

A violet form suddenly appeared from within the darkness. It was Sadista.

“Who are you?” Burgess barked.

Sadista’s gaze rested on Bebe’s body. Smiling, he said, “Oh, it’s Bebe. Bebe, I have a bit of a relationship with your Grandpa Beirut, but I have a bit of a grudge against these two. You can stand off to one side for now.” Sadista’s attitude was quite pleasant.

Bebe couldn’t help but be stunned. “Who is this guy?” Bebe didn’t know Sadista at all.

Sadista turned to stare at Burgess and his friend. Laughing coldly, he said, “The two of you, prepare to die.” As he spoke, Sadista raised up a single hand….

“You want to kill my brothers? You really are quite bold.” A clear, cold voice rang out, and Leylin, dressed in a dark red robe, walked out, a hint of anger evident in his eyes, beneath those crimson eyebrows.

Seeing this person, Sadista couldn’t help but feel greatly shocked. “How could there be someone else here?” Based on what his divine sense had told him, Mount Copper Gong only had four people present; Linley, Bebe, and these two Gods. This person in front of him shouldn’t be here.

Leylin looked coldly at Sadista.

“Step back for now.” Leylin said calmly.

Bebe and the other two immediately flew to one side. At this time, Linley flew over here from afar as well, staring in surprise at the scene. He only was able to see Leylin and Sadista. Every other place was a sea of dark nothingness.

“Who is this person?” Linley asked, puzzled.

“No idea.” Burgess said. “Only, he wants to kill us. He also said that he has a bit of a relationship with Lord Beirut.”

Linley looked towards Bebe, who shook his head. “I don’t recognize this person.”

From halfway up the mountain came Leylin’s angry laugh. “Haha, you want to leave after just saying, ‘perhaps this was a case of mistaken identity’? How laughable. If I hadn’t arrived just now, wouldn’t my brothers have been killed by you? Nobody who wants to kill my brothers has ever survived!”

Sadista’s angry voice rang out as well. “I gave you face, but you are still so arrogant. Haha…fine. Since that’s the case, then today, I’m not only going to kill your brothers, I’m going to kill you as well. Let’s see what you are going to do about that!”

“Boom!” With Sadista at the center, the nearby space began to distort, with the distortions expanding in each direction. The entire nearby mountain peak actually was transformed into fine powder, with the surrounding trees, grass, and even the sunlight being devoured by the distorted space surrounding Sadista. Because the light was being devoured, this distorted space appeared to be completely black.

The space was rapidly expanding.

Sadista stood there at the center of this distorted space.

Linley felt astonished. “What power is this?” Burgess and the white-robed man were similarly astonished.

“You are asking to be killed.” Sadista stared coldly at Leylin.

Leylin let out a cold chuckle. “I didn’t expect you to have some skill after all.”

“Hrmph!” Sadista let out a cold snort. That ‘black distorted space’ that was

already hundreds of meters wide suddenly condensed at high speed, transforming into an enormous black wolf that was seven or eight meters tall which completely surrounded Sadista's body.

"Groooooooowl." Sadista's body suddenly disappeared, merging into one with that black wolf.

The black wolf, bellowing, instantly reached Leylin. It opened its maw wide, as though wanting to devour Leylin within it. In the space in front of this bloody maw, space was constantly collapsing then reforming.

"Crackle…" Suddenly, a terrifying heat arose out of nowhere. Leylin disintegrated, transforming into a ray of flaming light. This ray of flaming light 'swished' straight through the body of the black wolf, and then once more reformed into a human shape with Leylin's appearance.

As for the black wolf, its entire body began to shake with ripples…

"Aaaah!"

The wolf's body broke apart, transforming into two bodies. Sadista's two bodies both fell down from mid-air.

"Darkness and wind. What am I supposed to do with these two Highgod sparks?" Leylin glanced at the two Highgod sparks in his hands. In but an instant, Leylin had destroyed both of Sadista's divine clones. Their power simply wasn't even close to being on the same level.

Linley and Bebe both stared in astonishment, slack-jawed.

"That guy…died?" Linley could hardly believe it. That powerful Highgod had instantly been destroyed?

Chapter 35 – Paying Respect

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 35, Paying Respect

“An arrogant fellow who had no idea of how high the heavens are, or how vast the earth is!”

Leylin lowered his head to glance at Sadista’s two corpses. With a flip of his hand, two beautiful tongues of flame licked out like flower petals, gently drifting downwards. Once they touched those two corpses, the corpses absorbed the flame like a sponge absorbing water.

“Crackle…” In mere seconds, the two bodies were transformed into dust, while the interspatial ring flew into Leylin’s hands.

“This comes from the Infernal Realm. It should have some nice surprises within it for me.’ Leylin stored away the interspatial ring.

Leylin knew very well that the Infernal Realm was one of the Four Higher Realms.

Countless Deities were clustered together within the Infernal Realm. This was one of the Four Higher Planes, the four most bustling, populated of the countless planes of the universe. The Gebados Planar Prison, in comparison, was like an impoverished desert wasteland.

Although he, Leylin, was more powerful than Sadista, in terms of treasures and wealth, he most likely couldn’t compare to Sadista, who came from the Infernal Realm.

The treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods was enough to make countless experts turn red-eyed with greed, and was enough to cause some of the powerful clans in even a Higher Plane like the Infernal Realm to scheme.

Sadista had been sent by his clan to the Yulan Plane to fight for treasures.

From this, one could imagine that Sadista was a well-respected figure within his clan, and even amongst Highgods was fairly powerful.

He had two mighty Highgod clones of darkness and wind! In addition, in the Laws of Darkness, he had fused three profound mysteries.

Such power could only be described as mighty.

But in front of the Lord of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin, Sadista's two mighty divine clones were instantly killed in a single exchange of blows. Thus had he fallen, forever disappearing from the world.

Only, when Sadista executed his ultimate attack, causing the nearby space to distort and collapse, he had done so because he had sensed that this 'Leylin' was no ordinary opponent. Thus, he had used his full strength without hiding anything, and by doing so, attracted attention and fear from the many experts throughout the entire Yulan continent.

"What a powerful aura!"

Many Gods hidden throughout the Yulan continent felt their hearts shudder as they sensed the energy waves coming from the west.

"Who is it?" Within the imperial palace of the Yulan Empire, the face of the graceful, elegant brown-haired youth changed slightly as he looked towards the west. "Such a powerful aura and such vibrations in space. These energy waves are too powerful. It should be a Highgod-level expert."

This brown-haired youth was the God who had taken over the Yulan Empire, Oerph.

Oerph was a fairly powerful figure amongst the Gods of the Gebados Planar Prison.

"Could it be that Highgods are engaging in a battle?" Oerph was rather puzzled. "But in the Yulan Plane, aside from Lord Beirut, the only Highgod present is Lord Adkins. Lord Adkins wouldn't be foolish enough to go

engage in a great battle against Lord Beirut, would he?"

Up till now, Oerph had no idea of the presence of 'Sadista' and 'Leylin'.

Oerph's eyes narrowed and his heart grew nervous. "It seems that the Highgods within the Yulan continent aren't just Lord Beirut and Lord Adkins. There are others as well." Oerph was now rather hesitant and uncertain.

There were now several Highgods within the Yulan continent.

Even if he, Oerph, was able to enter the Necropolis of the Gods, how many treasures would he be able to get?

Within the O'Brien Empire. Adkins had been enjoying watching the dance of the palace ladies. His face suddenly changed slightly as he looked towards the west.

"Hrm?"

"Highgod!"

Not hesitating at all, Adkins immediately sent out his divine sense surging out like a wave towards the west, instantly covering the entire area west of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, including Mount Copper Gong. Adkins' investigation caused him to let out a shocked breath. "How could there not be a single Highgod present?"

But Adkins did discover that demolished mountain peak and the grass and trees.

"Devoured? A Highgod who trains in the Laws of Darkness!" Just from the aura of that battlefield, Adkins could come to this conclusion.

"That energy wave just now should have come from two Highgods doing battle. Otherwise, how could a Highgod be so bored as to so wildly blast out his power? Or, perhaps, this has to do with that Highgod in the Rohault

Empire.” Adkins felt puzzled.

This event couldn’t help but make him think of Sadista.

After Sadista had arrived at the Yulan Plane, Adkins discovered his existence one day when spreading out his divine sense. From that day afterwards, he paid rather close attention to Sadista.

In terms of power, Adkins wasn’t any weaker than Sadista.

Adkins immediately spread out his divine sense further, also covering the Rohault Empire with it. “The aura of that Highgod in the Rohault Empire has vanished?” Adkins spread his divine across the entire Yulan continent, but aside from Beirut’s metallic castle, “Nothing. He isn’t in the Yulan continent.”

“What just happened, exactly?” Adkins frowned.

“Can it be that the Highgod of the Rohault Empire died?” Adkins heart shuddered. Although Adkins wasn’t afraid of Sadista, Adkins still had the feeling that Sadista wasn’t someone to be taken lightly. An expert such as him had actually vanished.

“Mount Copper Gong only has four people present. One is Linley and the Godeater Rat, while the other two are Gods. Those two Gods…should be people who resided within the Ruler’s Estate of Bluefire City. I remember them.” Adkins began to ponder the question.

Adkins wasn’t surprised upon discovering Leylin’s two brothers.

After all, as soon as that tunnel had opened, everyone had frantically scurried towards it. It was normal for even people who had belonged to the Ruler’s Estate to flee to the Yulan Plane.

“I keep on having this feeling that something’s not right.” Adkins frowned.

“Lord Adkins.” The nearby Barnas said softly.

Adkins turned to look at Barnas. Coming to a decision, he said “Barnas, come make a trip with me to the west.”

“To the west?” Barnas was somewhat surprised.

“Just come.” Adkins rose from his seat, then said to the group of palace ladies dancing gracefully in front of him, “All of you can go for now.” Adkins said calmly, and then he and Barnas transformed into an illusory streak which shot towards the western horizons.

Mount Copper Gong. Everyone was flying towards the elemental manor.

“Mr. Leylin, was that expert actually a God?” Bebe looked towards Leylin in astonishment.

Leylin, dressed in that dark golden robe, his long hair flowing freely, showed a hint of amusement in the eyes beneath his crimson eyebrows. “No, that was a Highgod.” Leylin looked at Bebe in surprise. “Bebe, didn’t I say just now that these two divine sparks were both divine Highgod sparks?”

“Yes, you did, but if that person had two Highgod clones, why is it that he died in just a flash?” Bebe didn’t dare believe it.

“Haha, although it might be incredible for others to accomplish this, it isn’t strange at all for Third Brother to have been able to accomplish this.” The bald man, Burgess, said with a loud laugh.

The white robed man also said, “Not only was that man a Highgod, he was a fairly powerful Highgod. Unfortunately, he actually wanted to fight against Third Brother.”

“Enough.” Listening to his two brothers brag, Leylin couldn’t help but stop them.

Linley gave this ‘Leylin’ a serious glance. Just now, when Sadista had

caused the surrounding space to distort and devoured everything around him, Linley had the feeling that Sadista was completely undefeatable. He was certain…that if this Sadista had wanted to attack him, he probably would have been able to easily draw Linley into that distorted space.

He was too powerful.

He was ten times, no, a hundred times more powerful than the likes of Gods like Anras! But an expert as powerful as Sadista had died, just in an instant.

“The power of this Leylin should belong to the very topmost tier, even amongst Highgods.” Linley murmured to himself. “Perhaps he is an expert on the same level as Lord Beirut.” In his heart, Linley had already unconsciously put Leylin and Beirut on the same tier.

“Linley.” Leylin suddenly looked towards him.

“Mr. Leylin.” Linley listened carefully.

Leylin laughed, “Actually, this Highgod has a bit of a connection to you, Linley.”

“What?” Linley was somewhat surprised. “Has a connection to me? But I don’t know him at all.”

Leyln shook his head and said, “Linley, last time, didn’t that God come to Mount Copper Gong and attack you? Based on what I know, that God was this person’s subordinate.” Leylin was fully aware of many things regarding Sadista.

“He’s the one who wanted to kill my Boss?” Bebe was both angry and surprised.

He still remembered the friendly greeting Sadista had given him.

“I’m certain.” Leylin nodded seriously. “And this person isn’t from the Gebados Planar Prison. He is from the Infernal Realm, one of the Higher

Planes."

"He came from the Infernal Realm? Then why did he want to kill me?" Linley couldn't understand. "I have no enmity with him."

Leylin laughed loudly. "I'm not certain about why he wants to kill you. If you have some time, go ask Beirut. Perhaps Beirut would know. But of course, if he doesn't know, you'll have to go investigate for yourself."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Came from the Infernal Realm? Wants to kill me? But the only people connected to me in the Infernal Realm are my ancestors." Linley suddenly had a hint of an idea. "Could it be that it has to do with the ancestors of my Dragonblood Warrior clan?" Although he had this thought, Linley wasn't very familiar with the 'Infernal Realm' of the Higher Planes, after all.

"Oh, guests are coming." Leylin raised his head and glanced towards the northeast skies.

Dressed in a gaudy golden robe, a handsome youth descended upon Mount Copper Gong, a silver-haired old man by his side.

Adkins stood on the earlier battlefield, a large chunk of the surrounding space here having vanished. The nearby Barnas said, "Lord Adkins, I sense an extremely powerful darkness aura here."

"Not just darkness aura. There's also an extremely faint aura of fire." Adkins' face was extremely grave. "If my prediction is correct, that Highgod of the Rohault Empire is already dead, and the person who killed him trains in the Elemental Laws of Fire!"

"Fire?" Barnas was suddenly shocked.

"Right, fire!" Adkins' face was extremely grave.

The two exchange glances, knowing what the other was thinking. Shaking

his head, Adkins said, “Let’s go pay a visit. No matter who it is, we at least have to get a clear understanding as to his identity.” As Adkins spoke, he flew straight towards the elemental manor.

Adkins and Barnas didn’t fly directly into the manor. They landed outside of it, and then, quite politely, knocked on the door.

“I hope it isn’t him.” Adkins murmured in his heart.

“Creaaaak.” The door swung open, revealing the bald man’s figure.

The bald man, Burgess, saw Adkins. A smile immediately covered his face. “So it is Mr. Adkins. Long time no see. Please, come in.” Adkins smiled slightly, and then led Barnas into the elemental mansion.

Within the elemental mansion.

Linley and the others were all seated. When Adkins and Barnas entered the courtyard, Linley and Bebe were greatly shocked.

“Why is he here?” Linley, upon seeing Barnas, was instantly shocked.

When Ojwin and the others had attacked Dragonblood Castle, they had been under the leadership of Barnas. Afterwards, Hart and Harvey, the two brothers, had joined forces, destroying one of Barnas’ clones and forcing them to flee.

“In front of Barnas, even Ojwin and the others were behaving respectfully. But he is now standing respectfully behind this youth. Can it be that this seemingly handsome youth is the legendary Highgod, Adkins?” Linley secretly guessed.

As soon as the handsome youngster stepped into the courtyard, his gaze first swept past Linley and Bebe, then landed upon the Lord of Mount Copper Gong, Leylin. Instantly, the handsome youth’s eyes became filled with shock. He immediately knelt down on one knee and said with great courtesy while bowing, “Adkins pays his respects to the Lord of the City!”

Chapter 36 – Secret

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 36, Secret

Linley's heart shook as he remembered what Muba had originally told him…

"Linley, the Lord of Bluefire City is one of the five Kings, Lord Bluefire! Lord Bluefire is very secretive. Not only is he extremely powerful, he almost never shows himself. It's uncertain as to whether or not he is even residing within Bluefire City. Within Bluefire City, the person whose fame and authority is only second to Lord Bluefire would be Lord Adkins."

Linley looked towards the nearby Leylin.

"He…he is actually one of the five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison, Bluefire?"

It was hard to say exactly how long the Gebados Planar Prison had existed for. Within it, the number of Deities was absolutely numberless. However, there were five people who stood at its peak and were acclaimed respectfully as its 'Kings'. To be titled a 'King' in a planar prison…anyone with a hint of common sense would understand how powerful such a person must be.

"Adkins, rise. We have both left Gebados, and I am no longer the Lord of Bluefire City. There's no need for you to refer to me as Lord of the City anymore." Leylin said with a calm laugh.

Adkins rose respectfully, and said, "Yes, but the respect which Adkins feels for you, Lord Bluefire, will never change." Meanwhile, Barnas just stood off to one side respectfully. The fame of 'Bluefire' was simply too astonishing and overawing.

The five Kings were invincible individuals!

“You…you are Bluefire?” Bebe looked at Leylin in astonishment.

“What, do I not look the part?” Leylin’s crimson eyebrows lifted up, and he laughed towards Bebe.

Bebe muttered, “That’s not it. Only, I heard the Boss say that Bluefire is one of the five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison. Since he’s so powerful, I figured his subordinates should be Highgods. Also…I thought that Bluefire was his name.”

“Haha…”

Leylin began to laugh heartily. “Why would I, Bluefire, necessarily have to have Highgods for my subordinates? Is that the only way I would be able to demonstrate my status?”

Adkins, off to the side, laughed as well and said respectfully, “Why would Lord Bluefire need any subordinates? Even if a group of Highgods came, in front of Lord Bluefire, they wouldn’t be much.” This was no joking matter. All five of the Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison had won that title through proving their strength in slaughter.

Amongst the five Kings, Lord Bluefire had actually trained for the shortest period of time.

He was also the most dazzling, eye-catching figure!

Bluefire, also known as ‘Zacharias Leylin’, rose to sudden prominence within the Planar Prison, winning every battle he fought. Even powerful Highgods, before Bluefire, had to bow and submit themselves. To this day, there has been no one capable of withstanding Lord Bluefire’s attack.

“Bluefire is nothing more than a nickname.” Leylin laughed calmly.

But Adkins said, “The name ‘Bluefire’ is a name which, due to the countless slaughters his lordship engaged in, the countless experts of the

entire Gebados Planar Prison acknowledge and submit to. Who in Gebados hasn't heard of that battle by the Blue River?"

Leylin simply chuckled.

No matter how arrogant Adkins was, in the face of Leylin, he had to abase himself. This was nothing more than reality! Adkins, facing Leylin, didn't have even the slightest thought of 'struggling' against him. Because Adkins knew that he couldn't take so much as a single blow from Bluefire!

The battle at the Blue River was what gave rise to the name, 'Bluefire'.

It also scared countless people silly. Many people even came to believe that Bluefire was the most powerful of the five Kings. But of course, this was never proven because Gebados was simply too vast, and the five Kings were all separated in their own regions. In addition, they intentionally avoided making enemies out of each other. After all, there were no treasures in Gebados worth them fighting each other over.

"This is a true, ultimate expert!" Linley's heart was filled with even greater veneration for this 'Leylin', while at the same time, a surge of heat filled his heart.

Even Adkins was so apprehensive and respectful in front of Leylin, who had been able to reach the top tier of Gebados.

"Adkins, stop standing there. Come, sit down. You can sit right next to Linley." Leylin pointed as he spoke.

Naturally, Adkins wouldn't dare to disobey Leylin's orders. He immediately bowed respectfully. "Thank you, Lord Bluefire." And then, he sat down next to Linley, while even offering Linley a friendly smile.

Linley could only smile back as well.

"Hmph." Bebe, next to Linley, let out a cold sneer.

Adkins' eyebrows instantly rose up. He glanced at Bebe, and then immediately laughed. "This must be Bebe." Bebe just grunted in reply, but Adkins wasn't angry. Laughing, he said, "Bebe, I know you are a bit unhappy. What happened in the past was the fault of my people."

Linley and Bebe glanced at Adkins, somewhat surprised.

"What happened, Adkins?" Leylin spoke out.

Adkins smiled and said, "Lord Bluefire, this is actually just a minor issue. My subordinate, a God named Ojwin, had a bit of a small grudge against my friend Linley over here. Afterwards, Ojwin invited several of the Gods under my command go to Linley's residence to get revenge. However, in the end, it was my side that suffered losses."

"Oh?" Hearing this, Leylin was mildly intrigued as well.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other.

"Boss, it seems this Adkins wants to apologize?" Bebe said mentally to Linley.

"I'm not sure either." Linley was also puzzled.

Adkins was a Highgod after all. Was he about to apologize?

"Barnas, come over here." Adkins said. "Although you lost a divine body during that battle, it was, after all, you and your people who picked that fight. If we think about it, it was your group's fault. Go ahead and offer Linley and Bebe an apology."

Linley and Bebe started.

Barnas actually came over. Filled with an apologetic air, he said, "Mr. Linley, Mr. Bebe, I truly am sorry for what happened that year."

"Mr. Barnas, no need to be like this. This matter was primarily instigated by

that Ojwin." Linley spoke out. "Mr. Barnas, I imagine that you were just deceived by him." Since he had been given face, Linley would of course give face back as well.

Adkins nodded. "Linley, don't worry. From today onwards, I guarantee to you that Ojwin will definitely not make any more trouble for you in the future."

Linley couldn't help but laugh in his heart.

It seemed as though Olivier wouldn't have to hide within that pocket dimension any longer.

When Adkins had brought Barnas to pay a visit to Mount Copper Gong to meet with 'Bluefire' Leylin, Ojwin was still back in the distant O'Brien Empire. Him, Hanbritt, and Gatenby were all together drinking wine and chatting. Over the past twenty years, the relationship between the three of them had become quite good.

Barnas had a special status, after all, and he was thus rather distant from them.

"That astonishing energy wave from the west most likely was produced by a Highgod." Gatenby rumbled.

"Right. But it doesn't have anything to do with us." Ojwin laughed. "Since it involves Highgods, let's just peaceably drink our wine here."

Hanbritt shook his head. "Highgods? They are very powerful. If one day, I were to obtain a divine Highgod spark, wouldn't I also become a Highgod? Only, it is unfortunate that I don't know how long it will be before the day I acquire a divine Highgod spark."

"A divine Highgod spark is something I dream about." Ojwin let out a sigh as well.

Hanbritt suddenly put down his wine cup. Slightly tipsy, he grinned at

Ojwin. “Ojwin, I’m going to tell you a secret!”

“I know what you are going to say!” That Gatenby laughed loudly as well. “Secret my ass. Barnas and I both know it.”

Hanbritt rolled his eyes, then said, “You know, I know, but…Ojwin doesn’t know.” These words caused Ojwin’s heart to be filled with a hint of curiosity, and he hurriedly looked towards Hanbritt.

Hanbritt grinned merrily, “Ojwin, I’ll tell you something, Lord Adkins, in his interspatial ring, has a divine Highgod spark!”

“What?!” Ojwin’s heart shook.

A divine Highgod spark?!

Ojwin dreamed about one day acquiring a Highgod spark, but currently, Ojwin only had his divine light clone.

Who knew if that divine Highgod spark was light-style?

Gatenby nodded and said, “He does have a divine Highgod spark, only, we aren’t sure what element it belongs to. But I am certain that it is neither lightning-style nor earth-style.”

“Why are you so certain?” Ojwin hurriedly asked.

Gatenby laughed, “Lord Adkins himself doesn’t need it, of course. You know what the relationship between Lord Adkins and Barnas is like. If Barnas was able to use it, Lord Adkins definitely would give it to Barnas. Barnas originally had two bodies. At Dragonblood Castle, it was his divine earth clone which was destroyed. Right now, his body is a lightning clone. Since Barnas isn’t able to use it, then it definitely isn’t earth element, nor is it lightning element.”

“Right.” Ojwin nodded slightly.

“Can it be that the two of you, my friends, also aren’t able to use that divine Highgod spark?” Ojwin asked.

Hanbritt let out a sneer, “In the heart of his lordship, the three of us are far inferior to Barnas. We’re just his henchmen. How could his lordship be willing to waste a divine Highgod spark on us?”

“Whenever I think of it, I feel uncomfortable. Come, let’s drink.” Gatenby said hurriedly.

“Drink, drink.” Ojwin hurriedly raised his cup, only in his heart, Ojwin began to scheme…

The wild wind howled. A silver-haired elder flew respectfully behind a handsome youth as they flew through the air.

When he was at Mount Copper Gong, Adkins had been all smiles. In front of ‘Bluefire’ Leylin, Adkins had been exceedingly polite, and he had also been very warm and friendly to Linley and Bebe. But now that they had flown out of Mount Copper Gong, Adkins couldn’t help but frown, his heart filled with frustration.

“Lord Bluefire has hidden himself within the Yulan continent as well. Nine out of ten, he is doing it for the treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods as well.”

Adkins’ mind was in a state of chaos when he thought of this.

He truly wanted to acquire the treasures within the Necropolis of the Gods. “Me, compete against Lord Bluefire?”

As soon as he thought of this, Adkins felt a surge of helplessness. He knew very well that in front of Bluefire, he didn’t even have the ability to fight back.

The awesome fame of the King ‘Bluefire’ didn’t just come from public acclaim; it was won by Leylin through repeated slaughters and countless

rivers of blood. There was no need to harbor any suspicions about the amount of power which ‘Bluefire’ Leylin possessed!

“Milord? Are you preparing to give up?” Barnas asked through his divine sense.

Adkins took a deep breath, then sent a response back with his own divine sense. “Give up? Impossible!”

Barnas was startled.

Adkins said to himself, “At worst, I die. But if I succeed, I’ll hopefully be able to suppress Bluefire in power. I can’t possibly fight Bluefire head on. For now, I have only a single path forward…” Adkins made up his mind, and his gaze sharpened and firmed.

“We reached the imperial capital.”

Barnas and Adkins immediately charged downwards, flying directly into the imperial palace.

Returning to the imperial palace, the first thing which Adkins did was to summon Ojwin into the palace. Ojwin, who was currently drinking and chatting with Hanbritt and Gatenby, immediately entered the palace upon receiving the order, ignoring everything else.

“Milord.” Ojwin knelt down respectfully on one knee.

Adkins turned and stared at him coldly. “Ojwin, there is something I must warn you about. I know that your son was killed. But remember this… starting forward, forget about getting revenge. No matter what, do not cause any trouble for a single person of Dragonblood Castle!”

Ojwin started.

Forget about revenge?

Although in the past twenty years, Ojwin had calmed down, that didn't mean he had given up his desire for revenge. The goal of vengeance for the death of his son had been engraved into Ojwin's heart.

"Hmph!" Adkins let out a cold snort. "What, didn't you hear me?"

The nearby Barnas said seriously as well, "Ojwin, this has to do with an important affair of his lordship. If because of your small affairs, his lordship's major affairs are ruined, then…even death wouldn't expiate your crimes."

Ojwin immediately prostrated himself and said hurriedly, "Lord Adkins, don't worry. From today onwards, I, Ojwin, definitely won't go make trouble for anyone in Dragonblood Castle. This affair of getting revenge, I, Ojwin, will definitely never consider again!" But in his heart, Ojwin was howling with fury, "Revenge? No, even if I die, I won't give it up. All I will do is temporarily restrain myself. After…after I get that divine Highgod spark…"

Ojwin greatly desired to acquire that Highgod spark!

"You can leave now." Adkins said calmly.

"Yes." Ojwin bowed, then left.

Chapter 37 – For the Clan

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 37, For the Clan

The death of Highgod Sadista didn't cause much of a stir in the Yulan Plane. The ordinary people continued living their quiet lives. Only the Deities who stood at the top of the plane had learned something from that terrifying energy wave which had come from the west….

Something major was happening within the Yulan continent.

Anras died. Sadista headed towards the west and didn't return either.

Within the Rohault Empire, Sadista's group of Deities now naturally became led by Sadista's nephew Danny, as well as the other God, 'Nieff' [Ne'fu]. Danny and Nieff, however, couldn't be completely certain of Sadista's death.

Today, they felt very frantic.

Within the Rohault Empire. That quiet, secluded manor. The blazing summer sun shone down upon the entire manor. Within Danny's residence, a man with short silver hair, a sunken, skinny body, and a short-sleeved black shirt strode forward. "Danny, come out!"

The door swung open and Danny walked out. "Nieff, what is it?"

"How can you be in a mood to rest?" Nieff was somewhat angry.

"Tell me, what can I do?" Danny was extremely frustrated as well. It was he who had advised Sadista to go kill those two Gods to go vent his anger. After all, if Sadista spent all his time brooding, Danny would have felt miserable and stifled as well.

But who would have imagined that his uncle, Sadista, would leave and

never return.

“Three days ago, there was that astonishing energy wave from the west. You sensed it as well.” Nieff said seriously.

Danny nodded. “Yes. I sensed it. That was indeed Uncle’s aura. But Nieff, what can that prove?”

“What can that prove?” Nieff laughed. “Danny, quit dreaming. The situation is clear. That powerful energy wave is something which I trust Lord Sadista would not have released for no reason. He must have engaged in a major battle.”

Nieff continued, “That day, you told me that Lord Sadista went to the west to kill those two Gods. Are those two Gods dead yet?”

Danny started. Hesitating a moment, he said, “I, I don’t know.”

“You don’t know? It’s simple. Spread out your divine aura to cover that mountain range. I trust you will easily be able to judge for yourself if those two Gods are dead or not.” Nieff said coldly. “Danny. Stop playing the role of a fool.”

Danny’s face changed.

“I’ve checked with my divine sense.” Nieff took a deep breath. “Those two Gods didn’t die. Danny. Lord Sadista went to kill those two Gods. Such a major event occurred over there, but those two Gods didn’t die. Lord Sadista has been gone for three days without coming back. Can it be that the result isn’t clear?”

“Perhaps…Uncle had some important business to attend to so he had to go somewhere.” Danny said in an pained manner.

Danny didn’t want to believe that his uncle had died.

Their clan was an enormous one which existed for ten trillion years.

Naturally, it was divided into the main clan and the branch clans. In Danny's branch, Sadista was the pillar and foundation of the entire branch clan. If Sadista truly had died, Danny could imagine what dire straits his clan would be in.

Nieff understood what Danny was thinking as well.

"Danny, no matter what, we have to face reality." Nieff said seriously. "This is the Yulan continent, not the Infernal Realm. In the Yulan continent, even if Lord Sadista met with something important and can't spare any attention to anything else, he would have contacted us with his divine sense. A divine sense communication only takes an instant, after all."

"However, he hasn't. We haven't received any communication from Lord Sadista."

Nieff's face was grave. "I don't want to admit it, but I have to say this. The plans of the clan have failed. The Necropolis of the Gods…at least our group has no hope for it. Without the power of a Highgod, we simply won't be able to obtain the treasures which the clan needs."

Danny nodded as well.

How could he not understand this point?

"Uncle…perhaps truly has died." Danny nodded bitterly, but then he stared at Nieff. "But Nieff, so what if Uncle has died? Can it be that you…"

"Right!"

Nieff's aura grew fierce. "Danny, the status which the clan has is a result of countless elders who risked their lives over the past ten trillion years. You and I are not very talented. Why is it then that we were able to receive divine sparks and easily reach the rank of Gods as descendants of the clan? It was the clan who gave us everything!"

Danny was silent.

“The Indigo Prefecture is our greatest foe! They are too powerful. The Four Divine Beast clans of the Indigo Prefecture are extremely powerful. That Linley…you should know as well that in less than a century, he has trained to the level of having two divine clones!”

Nieff laughed coldly. “I have never heard of such a talented genius amongst the Four Divine Beast clans, who could reach this sort of level without engaging in their baptism. And Danny, that Linley trains in earth and wind, not water! Do you understand what that means?”

Danny nodded.

“As soon as he undergoes the Ancestral Baptism of the Four Divine Beasts, I believe that ten thousand years later, the Indigo Prefecture will definitely have yet another Highgod of unsurpassed power. When that happens, I don’t even dare imagine how many members of our clan will die by his hands.” Nieff’s gaze was sharp. “But right now, he is only a Demigod who has yet to undergo the Ancestral Baptism of the Four Divine Beasts!”

“If we don’t kill him now, when will we kill him?”

Nieff’s gaze was cold and fierce. “I know that in the Yulan continent, Linley has some supporters and connections, but so what if he does? I would rather let myself die if it means killing him.” Nieff had relied on using a divine spark to become a God. He knew…

Although he was currently more powerful than Linley, in terms of potential, he was far inferior to Linley.

“Nieff!” Danny took a deep breath, shaking his head. “I recommend you not go and attempt to kill Linley right now.”

“What did you say?!” Nieff exploded with rage.

Danny sighed and said, “Don’t be hasty. There really is no need for us to kill him here in the Yulan Plane. Once he goes to the Infernal Realm, we

can kill him then."

"What a joke!" Nieff said. "First of all, when will Linley go to the Infernal Realm? What if he stays in the Yulan Plane until he reaches the level of Highgod, and then acquires a Sovereign artifact in the Necropolis of the Gods, and only then goes to the Infernal Realm. If we want to kill him then, would we be able to?"

Danny was stunned.

"Also. Once Linley reaches the Infernal Realm, there's no way for us to be certain which transit location he will be sent to. Our clan is only influential in that area where we have power over. Do you really believe…we can pursue him across the entire Infernal Realm? Do you know how vast the Infernal Realm is?" Nieff stared at Danny.

There was nothing Danny could say.

Previously, Sadista's primary goal was the Necropolis of the Gods, which was why he temporarily put aside killing Linley. In truth, killing Linley in the Infernal Realm wasn't very practical. As one of the Higher Planes, the Infernal Realm's size vastly outstretched the Yulan Plane by countless times.

Within the Infernal Realm, there also quite a few forces which were more powerful than both their clan as well as the Indigo Prefecture!

"Danny, can it be that you have forgotten those countless major battles we have had against the Indigo Prefecture? The figures of those elders who died, one after the other?" Nieff stared at Danny. "Enough. I'm immediately heading off for the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. I know that this time even if I am able to kill Linley, I might be killed by his supporters in revenge."

"But if I can kill Linley, I will die content. Danny, I leave everything here in your hands. I'm leaving." Nieff turned and left.

Since they couldn't acquire the treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods, if they could at least kill Linley, this trip would not have been completely in vain.

"Nieff…" Danny didn't want to watch Nieff go die. If he killed Linley… Nieff would be killed in revenge by those forces who supported Linley.

"For Reinales [Lei'nei'er'si]!" Nieff sent back with his mental message, and then Nieff himself flew into midair, streaking towards the western horizons, transforming into a black dot.

Danny was stunned, but then his gaze grew hard and resolved. In a soft voice, he said, "For Reinales!"

"Attend me!" Danny shouted towards the outside, and soon, a Demigod came over. Danny gave him a long list of instructions, and then said, "Remember, you must provide this information to Lord Hodan. You can go now."

"Yes, milord."

The Demigod immediately flew out of this residence, heading directly towards the Arctic Icecap."

Within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, in a half-shattered canyon where wild grass grew abundantly and where spring water flowed, the figures of Thunderwing Pegasi, magical beasts of the seventh rank, could be seen everywhere. The Thunderwing Pegasi all displayed leisurely elegance, occasionally flying into the air and then landing by the side of the springs, lowering their heads to drink water.

Suddenly, a human figure appeared here, causing the many Thunderwing Pegasi to be so terrified, they didn't dare to move.

"Time to do what must be done."

The short silver haired Nieff looked around, then sent his divine sense into

the minds of every Thunderwing Pegasus before he then sat down in the meditative stance. At the same time, he spread out his divine sense. Nieff restrained the area of his divine sense to just the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

The height of his divine sense was limited to just ten or so kilometers.

This sort of scale represented less than 0.1% of the Yulan continent's total size. The amount of spiritual energy it consumed to keep a divine sense active in this region, to a God like Nieff, was completely sustainable. At the very least, he was able to replenish whatever he used up.

"Linley is still there. If he returns to Dragonblood Castle, he will have to fly through the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. Once he does, I will discover him." Nieff didn't think any longer, and just waited here for the hare to step into the trap.

Nieff didn't dare to directly attack Mount Copper Gong. After all, Anras and Sadista had both failed. He waited here in ambush, and would thus have a much higher chance.

Linley quietly trained at Mount Copper Gong. Receiving guidance from one of the five Kings, 'Bluefire' Leylin, was a rare opportunity. In addition, Linley also knew…that 'Bluefire' Leylin wouldn't stay too long here at Mount Copper Gong. He would eventually leave.

"Linley, the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth is a simple type of mystery. If you focus on training in it, you will succeed within one or two years." Leylin laughed calmly. "But, if you wait until completely mastering the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth before attempting to fuse it with the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', you will most likely spent thousands or ten thousand years without being successful."

"Fusing is far more difficult than simply understanding a profound mystery." Leylin said solemnly.

Linley nodded slightly.

“Thus, the best method is…to begin attempting to fuse your insights regarding the ‘Essence of the Earth’ right away into your other insights. Don’t try to completely master the entire ‘Essence of the Earth’ as soon as possible. What matters more is the degree to which you are able to fuse it, and to make the degree of your insights match with your degree of fusion.”

Leylin laughed, “Perhaps in such a way, it will takes decades or a century for you to master the ‘Essence of the Earth’. But by doing so, as soon as you achieve mastery in the ‘Essence of the Earth’, you will also have completed your fusion of the ‘Essence of the Earth’ and the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’.”

“I understand this principle.”

Linley had, after all, the prior experience of fusing the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. To fuse while gaining insights was actually much simpler.

But if one had reached mastery in both profound mysteries and then attempt to fuse them, it would be very hard.

If he waited until all of his profound mysteries had become mastered before attempting to fuse them, the insights he had gained into the various profound mysteries would clash with each other, causing the fusion difficulty to be even greater.

Linley’s training in Mount Copper Gong lasted for another three years. Within these three years, although his level of attainment in the ‘Essence of the Earth’ remained at the level he had reached three years ago, Linley had finally started the first step towards fusing the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and the ‘Essence of the Earth’.

Many people weren’t even capable of taking the first step towards fusing these two profound mysteries. The first step was the key, the most important part.

With a beginning, there would be chance for success.

“The power level after fusing truly is formidable.”

Although Linley had only fused just a little bit, he discovered that his Voidwave Sword had increased in power by 50% despite only using the same amount of spiritual energy as before. “And this is just the beginning. I can’t imagine how much more powerful my Voidwave Sword will become after I completely master these two profound mysteries.”

Chapter 38 – Attacked On the Way Back

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 38, Attacked On the Way Back

Seated in the meditative stance on the ground, Linley could easily sense how the vast, boundless world was filled with earth elemental essence. Every single particle of it was so friendly and familiar to him. With Linley at the center, a surge of pulsating power was throbbing out towards every direction.

“Doooong.” “Dooooong.”” …..

Each surge of pulsating power which emanated outwards was filled with natural earth elemental essence. They rolled out like waves, interacting with each other while fusing with pulsating power.

Throbbing Pulse of the World. Essence of the Earth.

Linley was focusing on slowly fusing these two profound mysteries.

“Linley!” Linley, who had been in the middle of his meditations, was suddenly interrupted by a divine sense. Linley instantly knew that it was Delia who had contacted him. An unconscious smile appeared on Linley’s face. “Delia, what is it? Do you miss me?”

“Hmph, who misses you?” Delia let out a cute ‘hmph’. “Linley, I want to ask you, how long do you plan to train there on Mount Copper Gong?”

Linley couldn’t help but be startled.

Delia’s voice contained a hint of displeasure. Naturally, Linley could detect it. Only now did Linley realize that he had gone a bit too far. “I left Dragonblood Castle in year 10066, but this is now year 10072. Uh, it’s been almost six years. I haven’t gone back a single time!”

When he was training, he truly didn't notice how fast the time went by. It felt like those years had passed in an instant.

"Six years. I can't blame Delia for being unhappy." Linley felt that he was in the wrong here.

"Linley, aren't you training? You can train in Dragonblood Castle as well." Delia now persuaded using gentler words.

"Um…alright. Delia, I'll come back tomorrow." Linley said immediately, and then added an apologetic message, "Delia, I'm sorry."

"I'm not angry. Oh, did you say tomorrow?" Delia was both surprised and delighted. "I'll immediately order the servants to prepare a banquet for tomorrow. Right, Linley, when will you arrive at Dragonblood Castle? Around noon, or at night?"

"I'll arrive before noon." Linley was certain of this.

Actually, ever since he had started fusing the 'Essence of the Earth' with the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', Lord Bluefire, ie 'Leylin', no longer needed to give Linley any more pointers. Thus, staying on Mount Copper Gong was no longer of much benefit to Linley anyways.

Within the elemental mansion in Mount Copper Gong.

"Whoooooosh." The wild mountain wind howled, and the grass and flowers in front of the door to the mansion swayed. However, the wind wasn't able to budge those several large trees there. The Lord of Mount Copper Gong, a King of the Gebados Planar Prison, Lord Bluefire, was currently there with his two brothers, sending Linley and Bebe off.

"Linley, even if you didn't go back, very soon, I would be sending you off." 'Bluefire' Leylin said amusedly. "Haha, the main issue is that very soon, I will go with my elder brother and second brother. We will depart from Mount Copper Gong, and also leave the Yulan continent."

Linley knew long ago that Leylin was going to leave.

“Mr. Leylin, where are you going?” Bebe asked with curiosity.

“I’m not sure for right now.” Leylin let out a long sigh. “Perhaps I will pay a visit to the South Seas. That place used to be my homeland. Unfortunately, the passage of countless years has resulted in the continent where my homeland was located to sink into the endless seas long ago.”

That battle of ten thousand years ago had caused the other four continents to all be shattered and collapse.

“Mr. Leylin, if you have the time, you can pay a visit to my Dragonblood Castle. I will welcome you whenever you come.” Linley and Bebe had said their words of thanks long ago. After bidding farewell to Leylin and the other two, Linley and Bebe immediately left Mount Copper Gong and flew towards Dragonblood Castle.

After not having returned for six years, Linley now had a deep desire to return.

The Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. In the gorge beneath the shattered cliffs. A place where there were few traces of civilization.

In the past, this was a paradise for magical beasts, but ever since three years ago, no magical beasts dared to go near this place. By the side of the spring waters, within a patch of wild grass, there was a faint human figure that could be seen. It was the God from the Infernal Realm, Nieff.

Despite waiting for three years, Nieff had never relaxed his vigilance.

His divine sense was eternally activated, covering this region as he waited quietly for Linley.

“This Linley will definitely go back to Dragonblood Castle eventually. As long as he passes through the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts enroute to the Dragonblood Castle, he definitely will not escape!” Nieff arose, a black

spotted spear appearing in his hands as he began to roam about the valley.

After all, having not encountered Linley despite three years of waiting, Nieff also couldn't be certain as to when Linley would appear. He couldn't waste all of his time waiting foolishly.

Only, Nieff didn't realize that someone else was hidden deep within this gorge.

"This Nieff's divine sense is very average amongst Gods. But he trains in the Elemental Laws of the Wind. In terms of speed, he is even faster than Linley. If Linley really does encounter him, it would most likely really be a bit dangerous." The indistinct figure stared at the distant Nieff. Nieff was currently transformed into a gust of wind, and his spear blurred as it silently pierced through the empty air time and time again.

"However, danger is good."

The blurred figure disappeared silently without a trace.

Nieff had come to a halt in his training, continuing to sit in the meditative position. But suddenly, he opened his eyes, staring towards mid-air with a dagger-like gaze.

"It is him. Linley!"

Nieff's eyes were filled with a hint of wild joy. He couldn't help but begin to laugh loudly and excitedly. "After waiting three years, he's finally come!" In truth, Nieff was still hundreds of kilometers away from Linley. Naturally, despite how loudly Nieff had cried out, Linley wasn't able to hear him.

"For Reinales, if I die, it will be worth it!" Nieff said in a low voice, his eyes filled with unmatched ardor.

Silently, Nieff transformed into a puff of smoke, transforming into the formless wind. This surge of wind flew at astonishing speed in pursuit of

Linley. His speed was so great that it was much faster than Linley's current absolute limit!

Nieff was a full God. After fusing with the divine spark, he had gained insight into three of the Elemental Laws within it. He was particularly proficient in fast movements.

"I didn't expect he would be so fast. It seems I need to focus!"

Seconds after Nieff had flown out, a ray of light flashed out of the gorge as well, following Nieff in pursuit. In terms of speed, this ray of light surpassed Nieff.

Linley and Bebe were currently chatting and laughing enroute to Dragonblood Castle, not sensing at all the God-level divine sense which had encompassed them. If they knew that a God was in pursuit of them, perhaps Linley and Bebe would have raised their speed to the utmost limit to return to Dragonblood Castle. But unfortunately, they didn't know.

"Boss, do you think Leylin and the others will go to the Infernal Realm?"

"Who knows. However, given Mr. Leylin's power, no matter which plane he goes to, he will be an ultimate expert." Ever since Linley had witnessed 'Bluefire' Leylin killing the seemingly powerful Sadista in a single blow, Linley had been certain that Bluefire was one of the ultimate experts amongst Highgods.

"Huh?" Bebe suddenly frowned.

"What is it?" Linley asked, puzzled.

"I feel something is off." Bebe trained in the Laws of Darkness. He was only a Demigod, but he trained in the exact same stealth skills which Cesar trained in. He was extremely sensitive to the auras of others. Bebe suddenly turned his head, then said in shock, "Boss, quick, run!"

Linley turned his head.

Within a realm of distorted space, a blurry human figure had appeared within his field of vision, staring at him with a pair of cold eyes. It was the God, Nieff!

“You want to flee!” Nieff let out a cold laugh, immediately executing his Godrealm. Just like last time when Anras had attacked him, Linley felt as though he had sunken into a quagmire. Not hesitating at all, Linley hurriedly creates both of his Demigod-level Godrealms. “Boom!” The sky-blue robes covering his body exploded, and azure-golden scales covered Linley’s entire body. From his forehead and spine, one sharp spike after another emerged. Linley’s speed once again rose. Transforming into a ray of light, he flew at high speed towards Dragonblood Castle, fleeing.

Since he was unable to discover this person, this person was at least a God.

“Not good!” As he attempted to flee, Linley discovered that in terms of speed, the person behind him was far faster than ‘Anras’ had been. Actually, Anras’ God-level divine clone was of fire-type. His wind-style divine clone was of the Demigod level.

That was why he didn’t have an advantage in speed. But Nieff was different.

“Linley.” A human figure appeared in front of Linley. It was Nieff. Linley immediately came to a halt, and Nieff laughed coldly. “You aren’t able to flee.” The strange thing was, these words came from every direction.

Linley turned!

Currently, surrounding Linley and Bebe, there were twelve figures, all of them that of ‘Nieff’.

The twelve Nieffs had completely surrounded Linley and Bebe.

“What…what is this?” Linley was shocked. “These definitely aren’t divine clones. There are seven types of Elemental Laws; even if you include the

Four Edicts, that's only eleven. Even if a person mastered all eleven, he would at most have eleven divine clones. But these twelve people before me have the exact same aura!"

"Boss, one of them definitely is the real body." Bebe looked around frantically as well.

Linley understood this as well, but he couldn't tell anything different about these twelve figures.

The twelve Nieffs surrounded Linley and Bebe.

"Die!" The twelve Nieffs revealed a hint of madness in their eyes, and instantly, they swept towards the two from every direction. The strange thing was…the twelve figures completely ignored Bebe. Their target was…

Linley!

From all eight directions, and from above and below. There was no place for Linley to flee!

"Which is the real one?" Linley thought frantically, but he still had a hint of confidence. This confidence came from his Throbbing Pulse of the World – Voidwave Sword, as well as his damaged Sovereign artifact. With the defense of his damaged Sovereign artifact, his chances of survival would be very high.

The twelve all attacked together.

A strange violet flash lit up, and countless sword shadows shot out in every direction like the petals of a flower unfolding. It was the Profound Truths of Velocity – Rippling Wind! Although there were many sword shadows, the power of each sword wasn't that great. With a series of collision sounds ringing out, none of the twelve Nieffs seemed to be harmed at all. Linley's face instantly changed.

He had thought that the eleven fake bodies amongst the twelve would be

damaged. But who would have imagined that the twelve bodies were all so powerful?

Twelve sets of cold eyes stared at Linley, as though staring at a dead man.

“BOOM!”

Twelve shadows slashed through the sky like warblades, attacking Linley.

“Only choice is to go all out.” Linley didn’t have any time to care about anything else. The adamantine heavy sword in his hand began to dance. If he wasn’t certain which one was the real body, then his only option was to randomly attack one.

“Boss!” Bebe, frantic, also stopped caring about anything else. He raised his head and let out a shrill screech. “Shkreeeeeeeeeee!” The ear-piercing screech split the skies, while at the same time, Bebe transformed into his ‘Godeater Rat’ form, and behind him, an illusory Godeater Rat that was hundreds of meters tall appeared.

Innate Divine Ability – Godeater!

With one breath, Bebe locked all twelve bodies, trying to devour all twelve of them. However, Bebe’s current Godeater ability was only effective against Demigods. Nieff, a God, could not be devoured by Bebe at all.

The twelve bodies all halted briefly, but an instantly later, they became no longer influenced.

If the devour failed, there would be a counter-force!

“Boom!” A large mouthful of blood was spat out from Bebe’s mouth, while at the same time, wildly overjoyed, he messaged mentally to Linley, “Boss, the real body is that one!” In that instant, Bebe utilized his spiritual connection with Linley to point out the real location of Nieff’s body to Linley.

Bebe had used his innate divine ability just now not for the sake of killing Nieff, but to locate the divine spark.

His divine ability involved the devouring of divine sparks, after all. Once Bebe utilized it, he was able to sense which of the twelve bodies had a divine spark within it. Only the body with the divine spark was the real one. The others were all false.

“Him!” Linley, wielding his adamantine heavy sword, transformed into a straight moving blur, chopping down directly towards the ‘Nieff’ on his left. This was Nieff’s true body!

Chapter 39 – Drawing Legs on a Snake

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 39, Drawing Legs on a Snake

Nieff's twelve bodies were originally using their legs to attack, and hadn't used any divine artifacts, because Nieff didn't want to reveal his true body to Linley. However, as Linley smashed down towards his true body with his adamantine heavy sword, Nieff's true body retrieved that spotted black spear with a flip of his hand.

"Slash!" Space distorted.

"Clang!"

The adamantine heavy sword and the spotted black spear collided, and a surge of gray-colored, illusory, sword-shaped power ignored Nieff's defense and entered Nieff's body. This was the vastly improved 'Voidwave Sword' which Linley had developed after fusing the 'Essence of the Earth' and the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'.

"Die!" At the same time Nieff controlled his spiritual energy to block the Voidwave Sword, he wildly used his other bodies to attack Linley.

Even if he were to die, he would kill Linley!

In addition, Nieff didn't care too much about this attack of Linley's. As Nieff saw it…how powerful could Linley's spiritual attack possibly be? Most likely he just controlled and shaped a surge of spiritual energy to form this attack. However, Nieff was wrong!

Countless dense pulses of spiritual energy, thrumming in accordance with the Throbbing Pulse of the World, formed into a whole.

"Rumble…"

The Voidwave Sword's countless pulses of spiritual energy smashed directly against his spiritual defense, breaking through it as though it were nothing but rotten wood. It directly entered Nieff's sea of consciousness, violently smashing upon that divine spark which was emitting a green light. Nieff only sensed a sudden, massive vibration from his soul, and then Nieff lost all consciousness.

Right at this moment…

Countless rays of white light suddenly appeared from everywhere, and Nieff's twelve bodies were completely bound by the rays of light, completely unable to move at all. Naturally, he was also no longer able to attack Linley at all.

"Haha, Linley." Gentle laughter rang out. A handsome youth appeared before Linley and Bebe.

"Lord Adkins." Linley was somewhat surprised. Why had this Adkins suddenly appeared? However, Linley still said gratefully, "Thank you for your assistance, Lord Adkins."

Adkins felt a hint of delight in his heart.

Ever since that day when he had spread out his divine sense to sweep through the Rohault Empire and accidentally stumbled upon Danny speaking with a subordinate and discussing the plot for Nieff to kill Linley, Adkins had been prepared. He had even intentionally hidden himself within the gorge by Nieff's side.

The reason he did this was primarily to intentionally have the chance to save Linley, so as to make Linley and Bebe feel grateful towards him!

Making friends with Bebe was a very important task, in Adkins' mind. Since Lord Bluefire had arrived at the Yulan continent, if he, Adkins, still wanted to obtain any of the treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods, his only chance was to ally with Beirut.

“I was just passing by, but I discovered…” Adkins was all smiles, but halfway through his words, Lord Adkins’ voice suddenly came to a halt.

He had discovered that eleven of the twelve bodies of this God, ‘Nieff’, had already crumbled and dissipated, transforming into wind elemental essence and dispersing. As for Nieff’s true body, he lay there limply, not resisting his binding at all. The muscles on Adkins’ face began to twitch.

He now clearly discovered that Nieff’s soul in his original body had already dissipated. Only a divine spark was left.

Adkins chuckled awkwardly towards Linley. “Linley, I really didn’t expect that you had already killed this Nieff. Whether or not I acted really didn’t make any difference.” Linley’s Voidwave Sword had killed Nieff with one blow. Nieff’s soul had dissipated, and so his other bodies had naturally dispersed as well.

His original body wouldn’t attack either, of course. Linley hadn’t been in any danger at all!

But Adkins’ original plan had been to save him at the most critical moment, so as to make Linley feel all the more grateful towards him. But now he discovered that doing so was like drawing legs onto a painting of a snake, a completely pointless, superfluous action! Even if he hadn’t acted, Linley wouldn’t have had any problems.

“I still have to thank you, Lord Adkins.” Linley said with a smile. As he spoke, Linley turned to look at Bebe. This time, the person who had truly saved him was Bebe. If Bebe hadn’t utilized his innate divine ability and determined which of the twelve bodies was the true one, then Linley wouldn’t have been able to hit the true body at all, given his original plan of randomly attacking one. If he hadn’t been able to hit the true body…then in the face of the wild attack from this God, Linley’s body probably would have been explosively destroyed.

“Boss.” Bebe’s face revealed a smile as well.

Linley and Bebe didn't need to say anything to each other. A single glance was enough for them to understand what the other was thinking. This sort of dangerous event was something which Linley and Bebe had already experienced many times.

"You killed this person. Everything goes to you." Adkins directly used his power to control Nieff's divine God spark, his interdimensional ring, and his divine artifact, sending them floating towards Linley. Linley wasn't overly polite either; he immediately absorbed it all into his own interspatial ring.

Adkins had a very sour feeling in his heart.

Ever since he had learned that Nieff was planning to kill Linley, he had made preparations for this day for a long time! Just now, he had intentionally waited for the most dangerous moment before making his move!

Who would have imagined that he had done all that for nothing?

"Lord Adkins, I'd like to ask, just now, what sort of profound mystery did that man use? Why did he have so many clones? And there was no way to separate them by aura either." Linley asked.

Adkins had the intention of improving his relationship with Linley and Bebe, so naturally, he replied with great friendliness, "Oh, this person used a 'doppelganger technique' belonging to the Elemental Laws of the Wind. His divine power was rather low, and his soul wasn't very strong either. His application of this doppelganger technique wasn't very impressive; the Highgods that I know are capable of instantly creating a thousand doppelgangers!"

"A thousand doppelgangers?" Linley was utterly stunned.

"That's an extreme, of course. Generally speaking, experts are capable of creating a few dozen. He had only eleven. That really is rather low." Adkins said disdainfully. "As I see it, he most likely fused with a divine spark to

become a Deity. His understanding of the Laws of the Wind is quite low as well. The power of his clones wasn't strong either; they are only capable of physical attacks. They are useful against some low level people, but against experts of the same level, they are useless."

Adkins suddenly chuckled. "Although, it is still a good method for fleeing."

Linley's eyes couldn't help but light up.

The doppelgangers and the main body were identical. Others truly wouldn't be able to tell them apart. After all, there weren't many people like Bebe, capable of discerning which body had a divine spark within it. Even Bebe had paid a heavy price for doing so.

"Linley, I recognize this God." Adkins said voluntarily.

"Who is he? Why does he want to kill me?" Linley hurriedly asked. Bebe listened carefully as well. Over the past few years, Linley had repeated assassination attempts on his life.

Adkins said, "Do you remember last time, that Highgod which Lord Bluefire killed? That Highgod was named Sadista. This person is Sadista's subordinate." Adkins had learned the name 'Sadista' through using his divine sense to scan Sadista's manor, where he heard Danny and others chat with each other.

"That Highgod? Sadista?" Linley frowned.

Linley had heard 'Bluefire' Leylin also tell him that the people who wanted to assassinate him came from the Infernal Realm.

"Well, Linley, I still have matters to attend to. I'll leave now." Adkins said with a smile. "If in the future, when you have any free time, I would welcome you to visit my place at your leisure." Adkins' attitude was extremely friendly. He then transformed into a ray of light, disappearing into the horizon.

Linley and Bebe exchanged a glance.

“That Adkins’ attitude is a bit too good, isn’t it.” Bebe rubbed his eyes. “I have a weird feeling about it.”

Linley looked towards the O’Brien Empire’s direction.

Ojwin and Linley were enemies, but Ojwin’s ‘leader’, Adkins, treated Linley in such a friendly manner.

“Who cares why he is acting strangely. At least I can be certain that this Adkins has the intention of building a good relationship with us. Let’s go. Time to go back.” Linley, thinking about the God spark he had just acquired, thought to himself, “It seems I have a gift to give Delia now!” Nieff had died and left behind a wind-style divine God spark, which was perfectly suited for giving to Delia.

After all, Delia had become a Deity through fusing with a divine spark. In the future, she would also have to continue relying upon fusing divine sparks. Just by relying on her own power, Delia would find it very hard to break through.

The battle between Nieff and Linley, especially the collapse of Nieff’s eleven doppelgangers, caused a large explosive wave of wind elemental essence to spread out, actually causing a tremor in the elemental essence of the world. This naturally attracted the attention of quite a few experts of the Yulan continent, and at this moment, quite a few divine senses were covering this area.

Within the Rohault Empire.

“Nieff died…”

Danny let out a long sigh. His divine sense had already located Linley and Bebe’s figures. “Nieff failed as well.” And then, Danny’s face changed.

“Last time, Anras attacked. This time, Nieff attacked. Is it possible that

Linley knows that Nieff belonged to our side? If he goes to ask those Gods of his residence to gain revenge upon us, or asks for Lord Beirut to act, then…" Danny's heart grew nervous.

"There's no point to staying here at the Yulan Plane any longer anyhow."

Danny was certain about this. First of all, it was impossible for them to acquire the treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods. Secondly, it was also impossible to kill Linley.

"Best to immediately head back to the Infernal Realm."

"Everyone, assemble at the front courtyard!" Danny immediately sent out this message. Only a few moments later, dozens of figures flew out of the Rohault Empire, heading towards the Arctic Icecap of the far north. They headed out in the morning. After flying for several hours, at roughly noontime, they arrived at the Arctic Icecap.

Their speed was indeed quite fast.

The Arctic Icecap. The peak of that iceberg. The wind howled.

Hodan came out from within that icy residence of his.

"Hrm? Danny?" Hodan saw Danny, then shook his head and sighed. "You are heading back?"

Danny nodded slightly. In a bitter voice, he said, "Our mission this time in the Yulan continent was a failure."

"Did Nieff succeed in killing Linley?" Hodan asked. Three years ago, Danny had already sent someone to tell Hodan of this affair.

"Failed. Nieff died as well." Danny shook his head helplessly as he spoke. "If this Linley goes to the Indigo Prefecture, he will definitely pose a great threat to our Reinales Clan. But even if I go back and explain this to the clan, I'm afraid it won't be viewed with much importance by the clan."

Danny's position in the clan was fairly low. Anyone who fused with divine sparks to become a Deity, aside from Highgods, would all have fairly low status.

"I'm not able to get involved with the matters of the clan." Hodan sighed. "Otherwise, a boring job like this wouldn't have fallen to me. Alright, I'll send you back now."

The group of Deities led by Danny stood in that same six-sided star-shaped magic formation. Hodan activated the magic formation, and rays of light shot towards the heavens. The space within the magic formation began to distort like an illusion. In but a short while, the dozens of figures disappeared, no longer visible.

Danny and the rest of the group had immediately fled the Yulan Plane and returned to the Infernal Realm. As for Dragonblood Castle in the Yulan continent, it was filled with laughter and joy. Not just Tarosse and Dylin were there; the War God, the High Priest, and everyone else all participated in this banquet.

This was Linley's first return in six years, after all.

In particular, after hearing about what Linley had experienced over the past few years, Tarosse, Dylin, and the others were all greatly surprised. In particular the story of how Leylin had killed that Highgod, Sadista, with but a single blow caused all of the experts present to stare slack-jawed.

"Did you just say that 'Leylin', the Lord of Mount Copper Gong, was Lord Bluefire? One of the five Kings, Lord Bluefire?" Dylin said in astonishment.

Dylin had stayed in Gebados for a time. He knew how terrifying 'Bluefire' was.

Bebe, chewing on food as he spoke, said, "Even Adkins, upon seeing Mr. Leylin at Mount Copper Gong, immediately fell down to one knee and

called out to him as ‘Lord of the City’.”

“Adkins?” Wharton, seated next to Linley, frowned.

Wharton hated Adkins deeply, because his grandson through Cena, little ‘Kass’, had been killed by Ojwin, while Ojwin was now Adkins’ subordinate.

“Speaking of Adkins, I just thought of something.” Linley looked at the nearby Olivier. “Olivier, that Adkins has already guaranteed to me that Ojwin will never ever make trouble for you again.”

Olivier’s eyes instantly lit up.

All these years, he had remained inside Dragonblood Castle, not daring to go outside, precisely because he was afraid of being attacked by Ojwin.

“Linley, thank you.” Olivier felt some gratitude in his heart.

“If you are going to thank someone, you should thank Mr. Leylin.” Linley said. Olivier then immediately said, “Linley, since Ojwin won’t pursue and attack me any further, then…tomorrow, I will prepare to head towards the Arctic Icecap. I really can’t take it any longer.”

“Tomorrow? Why are you going to the Arctic Icecap?”

Olivier smiled, his eyes holding a hint of anticipation. “Tomorrow, I am preparing to head to the Higher Plane of the Infernal Realm!”

Chapter 40 – Creek – Ocean?

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 40, Creek, Ocean?

Go to the Infernal Realm?

Olivier's words caused everyone in the hall to look towards him. Linley was somewhat surprised. He said, "Olivier, you are going to the Infernal Realm tomorrow? Why the rush? You can go to the Infernal Realm any time you want. In addition, the Yulan Plane is going to have another opening of the Necropolis of the Gods in a thousand years."

Most of the experts remaining on the Yulan continent were doing so because of the Necropolis of the Gods.

"Necropolis of the Gods?"

Olivier laughed self-mockingly. "What's the point of remaining in the Yulan continent. Linley, can it be that you think that I, Olivier, will be able to compete against Adkins or against Lord Bluefire? I'm just a Demigod. All I can do is watch, even if I stay behind. I might as well go to the Infernal Realm early."

"The Infernal Realm!" Olivier's gaze drifted away, as though he was staring into the Infernal Realm right now. "The legendary 'Infernal Realm' of the Higher Planes, the place where countless top tier experts of countless material planes are clustered together. A place with more experts and which is more diverse than even the Planar Prison by trillions of times!"

Everyone present, including Linley, Bebe, Delia, Tarosse, Dylin, and the War God all felt their hearts swayed.

They all knew how many experts were in the Planar Prison.

But compared to the Infernal Realm of the Higher Planes, the Gebados

Planar Prison was nothing more than a tiny spot. After all, the ‘Infernal Realm’ had attracted countless experts from the myriad material planes. After so many years, it was perhaps already impossible to calculate how many experts were there.

“Right now, it feels like the Yulan continent has quite a few experts. However, the Yulan continent is nothing more than a small creek, while the Infernal Realm is an ocean filled with countless dangers. Although dangerous, it also contains boundless opportunities and challenges!”

Olivier’s eyes were shining. “The Infernal Realm. I dream of going there! That is my stage!”

Nobody tried to dissuade Olivier again.

Because…

Olivier’s words caused even Linley, Tarosse, and the other experts to feel rather itchy in their hearts. Indeed, the Planar Prison would generally only have a few people locked within it every ten thousand years. The vast majority of experts, by contrast, travelled to the Higher Planes. And these were experts from the countless planes of the universe.

It could be said…

That most likely all of the experts in the various ‘Planar Prisons’ in the countless planes of the world, all combined, wouldn’t be as many as the number of experts within the ‘Infernal Realm’.

“Creek, ocean?” This echoed in Linley’s mind.

The Yulan continent was like a leisurely, clear creek. After Adkins, Leylin and the others left, Linley definitely would be one of the most powerful creatures living within this ‘creek’. But if Linley were to go to the Infernal Realm and enter that ‘endless sea’ filled with danger, the number of experts more powerful than Linley would be uncountable. That place had many people who had been training for far longer than Linley, or perhaps were

even more talented than Linley, or perhaps had clans that were more terrifyingly powerful than Linley's.

However, the vast Infernal Realm caused Linley's heart to begin to boil with heated blood.

A life of challenges was what was needed for a person to be excited!

Deep at night. Within the bedroom, Linley and Delia were lying on the bed.

"Linley, what are you thinking about?" Delia said softly.

"Me?" Linley recovered from his reverie. He had just been thinking about the 'Infernal Realm' of the Higher Planes. He had never gone there, so all he could do was imagine what it was like. "Thinking about the 'Infernal Realm'. I wonder what it is like there, and what the Infernal Realm has."

Delia's forehead creased slightly. She understood that Linley somewhat wanted to go to the Infernal Realm.

Delia, in her heart, didn't wish for Linley to go. In Delia's heart, she didn't want for Linley to experience danger time and time again. That sort of feeling of worry and fear would cause her to feel like she was on the verge of collapse. But Delia didn't say anything…because she understood.

Liking Linley meant that she couldn't restrict him too tightly.

She respected Linley's decisions.

Linley sighed inwardly. He knew what Delia felt as well, but precisely because of this, Linley felt all the more grateful towards Delia. Delia had always quietly supported him. Linley suddenly remembered the wind-style divine spark he had acquired.

"Delia, take a look. What is this?" With a flip of his hand, Linley revealed a black divine spark glimmering with green light which floated in front of Delia's eyes.

Delia, seeing it, couldn't help but have her eyes light up. "Wind-style divine spark? This…this is that Nieff's divine spark?" Linley had long ago told the details of what had happened to Delia. Delia also knew that Linley had a total of three divine sparks on him right now.

They were respectively, the earth-style divine God spark which had fallen into Linley's hands from when Barnas' divine clone had been killed, the fire-style divine God spark from Anras' failed assassination attempt, and then the wind-style divine God spark from Nieff.

"Go take it and fuse with it." Linley laughed.

Looking at Linley, Delia finally accepted it. Delia knew…given her level of talent, especially after having fused with a divine spark to become a Deity, relying on herself to gain insights and make breakthroughs would most likely require tens of thousands of years before she could break through.

Delia dripped blood onto the divine spark, taking it into her body. And then she rested her head against Linley's chest. In a gentle voice, she said, "This divine spark was obtained through the hard work of my husband."

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

"Delia, I've heard that some of the clans in the Infernal Realm will use divine sparks to bring their descendants directly to the Highgod level." Linley sighed in praise, "Three divine sparks in a row, and they become a Highgod. This sort of speed really is astonishing."

Fusing divine sparks was a symbol of low talent.

Experts generally wouldn't fuse with divine sparks. Even if one completely fused with a divine spark, the spark and one's own soul wouldn't be 100% compatible. To fuse with the profound mysteries within, the difficulty level would be hundreds of times greater than those who became Deities on their own.

“I will definitely work hard to learn how to use the profound mysteries of the Laws within.” Delia said.

Next morning at dawn. Although a hint of sunlight was already shining, it was still quite cold. However, a large group of people had already gathered at the training fields of Dragonblood Castle, because everyone was sending Olivier off.

This time, Olivier was going by himself to the Infernal Realm.

Dylin, Tarosse, Cesar, the War God, and the others all had matters to resolve in the Yulan continent first.

“Olivier, kid, be careful in the Infernal Realm. Don’t end up getting offed shortly after getting there. Haha…” Dylin laughed as he clapped Olivier on the shoulders. Olivier’s eyes had a fierce light flash through them. “Get offed by someone? Killing me won’t be so easy.”

Linley and the others all laughed and said a few final words to Olivier.

“If we’re lucky, perhaps in the Infernal Realm, I’ll meet with everyone again.” Olivier said with a smile. “There’s no need to say much more. I’ll leave now.” As he spoke, Olivier gave Linley a profound glance.

Linley could sense the hidden meaning within Olivier’s gaze.

Olivier stared at Linley and said, “Linley, I will wait for you in the Infernal Realm. Don’t remain hiding in this little creek forever.” After speaking, Olivier flew straight towards the north.

Linley couldn’t help but be slightly stunned.

Delia and Wharton couldn’t help but look towards Linley as well.

“Creek?” Linley’s mind was very complicated right now.

“Linley!” A voice rang out directly in Linley’s mind. Linley was startled.

This voice belonged to Lord Beirut. “Linley, you just came back from Mount Copper Gong not too long ago, right? These next two days, head over to my place and bring Bebe with you.”

“Bring Bebe?” Linley was somewhat puzzled. What did Beirut want Bebe to go there for?

“When you and Bebe get here, I’ll tell you. Remember. Hurry up. Don’t waste too much time.” Beirut laughed.

“I’ll head over immediately.” Linley replied.

“No rush. This time, when Bebe comes, he’ll most likely stay with me for quite a long period of time. You and him probably won’t meet for a long time.” Beirut said.

“Hrm?” Linley was somewhat surprised, but Beirut didn’t explain in detail, instead withdrawing his divine sense.

The next afternoon, the sky was very blue, like a washed azure porcelain plate, with an occasional white cloud floating in the horizons.

Two figures were flying shoulder to shoulder through the skies. It was Linley and Bebe. The two had left Dragonblood Castle together, heading straight for the Forest of Darkness and the metallic castle within. Bebe was puzzled as well. He didn’t know why Beirut was looking for him.

And from the sound of it, he would need to be separated from Linley for a long time.

In the vast Forest of Darkness, thousands of kilometers across, even kilometers in the air, one would still sense how vast and boundless this forest was. Upon seeing that metallic castle, Linley and Bebe descended downwards, and as they did, they sensed that ancient aura of the Forest of Darkness race towards them.

“Come in.” Beirut’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley and Bebe immediately flew into the metallic castle.

“Come to think of it, I’ve never gone inside this metallic castle before.” Linley laughed towards Bebe, who laughed widely, “Boss, this metallic castle is quite special. It is very unique, and also very interesting.”

Linley was intrigued by Bebe’s words.

He couldn’t help but take a closer look at this metallic castle. The inside of it was arranged extremely neatly, and every part of the metallic castle had a fluctuating metallic color. For example, the floor was a violet red metallic color which reflected light.

Some of the metal even formed small mountains, and within the garden, there were all sorts of flowers.

“These flowers can’t all be made from the metallic castle, right?” Linley said to Bebe.

“These aren’t, no.” Bebe shook his head. “However, all of the metallic items here are made from the metallic castle itself. Boss, this metallic castle is very marvelous. Whatever you want it to transform into, it will.”

Linley and Bebe spoke as they entered the living room.

Beirut was currently reading an extremely thick book. Not even lifting up his head, he said, “Enter.”

Linley entered the living room, glancing at the cover the book. “Hey? These characters don’t seem to be the same as the characters of our Yulan continent.” Linley was puzzled.

“Puzzled by these characters?” Beirut raised his head to glance at Linley, then laughed, “This came from an extremely long time ago. Even I don’t know how many hundreds of millions of years old it is. At that time, the Yulan continent didn’t even have humans. This was the time of the earth

elemental civilizations, and this was the language of the time."

"However, the language which we currently speak in the Yulan continent was intentionally passed down by the Planar Overseer of that time, shortly after humans appeared. It is the same language which is spoken in the Infernal Realm, the Celestial Realm, the Netherworld, and the Life Realm." Beirut said.

Linley nodded.

"Grandpa Beirut, you told me to come back yet again. What is this about?" Bebe asked directly.

"Of course there's a reason." Beirut began to laugh. "The profound mysteries of the Laws you have gained insight into after becoming a Deity are the profound mysteries which we Godeater Rats will naturally gain upon reaching maturity. As a matter of fact, you yourself haven't actively gained insights into any profound mysteries. This time, I…"

Halfway through his words, Beirut suddenly looked towards the south in amazement. "Huh? This guy…"

"Rumble…"

Suddenly, the elemental essence of the entire Yulan Plane, including not just the Yulan continent, but also the North Sea, the Arctic Icecap, and even the boundless South Seas, began to tremble. In particular, the elemental essence of the South Sea became to form into terrifying waves.

"Boom…"

Fortunately, the South Seas were extremely vast. When this terrifying wave of elemental essence which came forth from it reached the Yulan continent, it was nothing more than an elemental ripple. But this elemental ripple was enough to cause any experts capable of sensing it to feel astonishment in their hearts.

“This? What is this?”

Linley immediately spread out his divine sense, instantly covering the entire Yulan continent with it. “This elemental ripple covers an enormous area. And the origin of it seems to be even further south.” Linley’s spiritual energy, despite being powerful, couldn’t reach the end, to the source of where this elemental ripple came from.

“What scale! What tremendous scale!” Beirut began to laugh.

Chapter 41 – An Abrupt Change

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 41, An Abrupt Change

These astonishing elemental tremors were something which even the youngest students at magus academies were able to clearly sense. From Deities to magus academy initiates, countless people felt astonished at the massive scale of these elemental tremors. Even a hundred forbidden spells being fired off at the same time wouldn't create such astonishing elemental vibrations.

"Grandpa Beirut, what is going on?" Bebe asked curiously.

Linley looked towards Beirut as well, who chortled, "The King of the Gebados Planar Prison, Bluefire. You know him, right? This is all his doing. His former homeland, that shattered continent…he is preparing to create it anew."

"What?" Linley and Bebe were shocked.

Create a continent?

"This Bluefire is an absolute madman." Beirut exhaled. "Although he is a Highgod, the amount of divine power and spiritual energy he has to expend in order to create a continent is an astonishing figure. This is an entire, massive continent, not just an ordinary little island."

"You can create a continent?" Bebe didn't dare believe it.

Beirut nodded. "That Bluefire has two divine Highgod clones, and he has reached an extremely frightening level of attainment in the profound mysteries of the Laws. Given his power, creating a continent in a material plane isn't impossible. However, I still feel that this fellow is a bit too crazy."

“Crazy?” Linley couldn’t help but look towards the south.

The creation of a continent was an astonishing spectacle. Perhaps only an expert on the level of Lord Bluefire was capable of such a thing.

In the South Seas region, at the place most distant from the Yulan continent, the boundless waters of the ocean seemed to be boiling. “Hissssss.” The seabed was emitting a hot aura. In this massive area spanning ten thousand kilometers, one could clearly see boiling hot magma rising upwards from the seabed.

In the air above the underwater fountain of lava, a wild, explosive concentration of fire elemental essence was causing space to distort. Within that distortion, a human figure could be seen.

This figure, dressed in a long, dark red robe, hovered in mid-air like a celestial divinity. It was indeed ‘Bluefire’ Leylin.

Dozens of kilometers away from Leylin was the bald man, Burgess, and the white-robed man. They looked at each other, and the white robed man let out a breath. “Big Brother, Third Brother truly is quite mad. With that volcano as the center, he has in one breath summoned so much lava from the depths of the earth beneath the seabed. He is insane.”

“Fortunately, Third Brother is nearly a Paragon with regards to his understanding of the Elemental Laws of Fire. Otherwise, he definitely wouldn’t have been able to accomplish this so easily.”

The reason why Leylin was famous was because of his mastery of the Elemental Laws of Fire. The name ‘Bluefire’ was a testament to the level of attainment he had reached in the Elemental Laws of Fire. The strength of his fire-style Highgod clone was far greater than that of his earth-style Highgod clone.

It wasn’t that he was weak in earth; it was that his strength in fire was simply too great!

Countless amounts of magma continued to rise from beneath the ocean depths. Occasionally, they would even erupt over the surface of the water. But the amount of lava which erupted from above the surface of the ocean wasn't even a millionth of the total amount of lava being created.

The vast majority of the lava which had exploded forth from the seabed had solidified into rocks within the sea.

The area of the lava which Leylin had brought forth from beneath the seabed stretched out for hundreds of thousands of kilometers. Only, relying on his control over the lava, he caused the majority of it to solidify and focus within the area of ten thousand kilometers. Afterwards, when they solidified due to the cold from the waters of the sea and formed rocks, the amount of sea water within this ten thousand kilometer area would lessen as well.

In some places, rocks were already emerging from the surface of the sea, and most places only had a sea depth of a few hundred meters.

This was something that was inconceivable, so deep within the South Sea. But Bluefire had accomplished it.

"The next part is going to be tricky for Third Brother." The bald man, Burgess, stared at the distant figure of Leylin. "To control such a vast amount of earth elemental essence and form a continent…Third Brother's mastery of the Elemental Laws of Earth isn't as powerful as his mastery of the Elemental Laws of Fire."

The white-robed man nodded as well. The two continued to stare at Leylin in the distance.

Leylin let out a long breath, then stretched out his two hands…

"Rumble…" The boundless earth elemental essence of the world came under his control. Within an area of hundreds of thousands of kilometers, the rocks and dirt all came under his control, and began rushing towards that area of ten thousand kilometers formed from solidified lava.

The amount of earth elemental essence that had been summoned was too vast, creating a vacuum in earth elemental essence for hundreds of thousands of kilometers in the area around.

“BOOM!” Earth elemental essence from other areas wildly rushed in, causing space itself to tremble and distort. The countless amounts of earth elemental essence particles rushing in also created an elemental wave.

The massive vibrations within hundreds of thousands of kilometers caused countless ocean creatures to suffer an untold calamity. Actually, the explosion of lava alone had already caused many creatures to be boiled to death.

“Too slow!”

At this sort of speed, the amount of time it would take to create a continent would most likely be ten days or half a month.

Leylin frowned, his scarlet eyebrows seeming to touch. “It seems it won’t be as easy as I thought!” Leylin’s body suddenly split into two. One of the two bodies, a divine clone wearing a golden robe, suddenly disintegrated soundlessly, disappearing from the world. Instantly, within the area of hundreds of thousands of kilometers, the rocks and earth began to move at a pace several times faster.

“The divine power which my divine earth clone has built up over the countless year will most likely be completely used up.” The fire-style divine clone of Leylin, wearing a dark red robe, murmured to himself.

This time, when Leylin returned to the Yulan continent, he had a sour feeling in his heart. After all, his homeland had been completely destroyed, and even the very continent itself had been shattered and sunk into the seas. Thus, Leylin chose to go to the previous location of his former homeland and summon an explosive river of lava. The sea depth here wasn’t that great, and so the level of difficulty would be somewhat lower as well.

Creating an entire continent and creating an elemental manor…these were two completely separate concepts.

O'Brien Empire. The imperial palace.

Adkins was looking towards the south, his forehead furrowed. The nearby Barnas stood there respectfully as well.

"Lord Bluefire truly is daring." Adkins spoke.

Barnas said in a quiet voice, "Creating a continent is something which will consume an astonishing amount of divine power and spiritual energy."

A chuckle escaped Adkins. "The amount of divine power and spiritual energy which is consumed is indeed astonishing, but the creation of a continent is primarily the doing of his divine earth clone. In other words, that powerful divine fire clone of his won't be weakened by much."

"Bluefire is too powerful!"

Adkins lowered his head, silent for a long time.

Barnas stood at the side, sighing in his heart. "Young master is too stubborn and competitive. He doesn't like being inferior to others. Only, in the Gebados Planar Prison, young master is far inferior to those five Kings. If he went to the Higher Planes where even more experts exist, most likely he wouldn't be at the peak of the field. The treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods….they are young master's only hope."

Barnas knew very well that Adkins definitely wouldn't give up.

Adkins suddenly turned. "Barnas, I don't want to wait any longer."

"Lord Adkins? You…" Barnas was shocked. He knew what Adkins was thinking.

Adkins' gaze was as sharp as a knife. "This is an excellent opportunity.

Bluefire is completely focused on creating that continent. He has no energy to pay attention to us. Right now, immediately go and summon Ojwin and the other two."

"Yes!" Barnas took a deep breath as well, immediately spreading out his divine sense towards Ojwin and the others.

Adkins face was tranquil, but his heart was filled with great excitement.

"The day that determines destiny!" Adkins murmured to himself.

Soon, Ojwin, Hanbritt, and Gatenby all arrived. The three immediately fell to one knee in respect. "Lord Adkins."

"All of you, make a trip with me to the Forest of Darkness." Adkins said.

Ojwin and the other two exchanged glances, all very puzzled. They had all felt the astonishing elemental tremors. Now, they had been ordered to go immediately to the Forest of Darkness with no explanation. The three could only suppress their curiosity and then follow Adkins and Barnas towards the Forest of Darkness.

The Forest of Darkness. The metallic castle.

Linley and Beirut were still together.

"You are planning to have Bebe gain insights into the profound mysteries of the Laws?" Linley looked at Beirut in astonishment. Just then, Beirut had said that he wanted Bebe to stay in the metallic castle to attune with the profound mysteries of the Laws. After completely mastering one of them, he would allow Bebe to leave the metallic castle."

Bebe immediately had a sour look on his face as well and said, "Grandpa Beirut, let's take it slow with regards to training in the profound mysteries of the Laws. Why do you insist on me staying in the metallic castle? Who knows how long it will take me to succeed."

“Don’t worry. I only want you to master the simplest Profound Mystery of the Essence of Darkness. In addition, in order to help you gain insights, I have prepared a treasure to assist you. Grandpa paid an extremely great price to obtain this treasure.” Beirut said.

Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished.

From the sound of it, it seemed as though this was a treasure which could help a person in training in the Elemental Laws?

“Treasure? How precious is it?” Bebe’s eyes lit up.

“Stop asking so many questions.” Beirut said seriously. “Just stay here and don’t make Grandpa disappointed.”

Linley consoled and urged Bebe as well. Bebe himself was very curious towards that treasure, and so he finally agreed. After all, Bebe also knew… his Grandpa was extremely wealthy. For even Beirut to say that the price he had paid was great meant that this treasure was definitely not an ordinary one.

“Hrm?” Beirut frowned slightly.

“Harry!” Beirut shouted. Soon, a human figure appeared in the living room. It was one of the three Violet-Gold Rat Kings, Harry. Beirut instructed, “Harry, you take care of Bebe. Don’t let him run amok. I’m going out for now.”

“Yes, Father.” Harry said respectfully.

“Linley, you come with me as well.” Beirut laughed, and Linley nodded.

After bidding Bebe farewell, Linley and Beirut flew directly out of the metallic castle. Flying by Beirut’s side, Linley felt somewhat mystified. “Lord Beirut suddenly said that we were heading out. What is this about. Hey, they are…?”

Linley had already seen several figures flying over from far away, with the leader being the awe-inspiring Adkins!

“Ojwin!” Linley saw Ojwin behind Adkins as well. “Hmph. If I have the chance, I will definitely kill him.” Linley continued to feel hatred towards Ojwin. In the past, Cena’s son and wives, as well as the entire palace, had all been killed by this man.

He had never had a chance to avenge this enmity.

“Ah, Mr. Beirut.” A smile immediately drifted to Adkins’ face. “Oh, Linley, you are here as well.” Adkis’ smile was very bright.

“Linley, you can go back for now.” Beirut said.

Linley bowed, and then also bowed slightly towards Adkins, flying towards the south by himself. Only, in mid-flight, Linley couldn’t help but turn his head and look back. “Lord Beirut suddenly came out, most likely because he knew that Adkins and the others had arrived. What is going on?”

In the air above the Forest of Darkness, a black-robed Beirut and a gold-robed Adkins were standing in mid-air, facing each other. Adkins seemed like a youngster, while Beirut seemed like an elder. Old and young, standing there facing each other. It was quite intriguing.

“Mr. Beirut, let’s go to your place to chat.” Adkins said.

“No need. Here is fine.” Beirut said with a calm laugh.

Adkins was all smiles. “Fine, then.” Adkins immediately spread out his Godrealm, preventing Ojwin and the others from listening to their conversation. “Mr. Beirut, last time, you said that we have to wait a thousand years before opening the Necropolis of the Gods, yes?”

“That was indeed the case.” Beirut had a hint of a laugh in his eyes.

Adkins laughed warmly. “I also know that previously, Mr. Beirut, you

opened the Necropolis of the Gods twice in succession, once to let Saints in, once to let Deities in. There should only have been a gap of a month or so in between. I imagine that the opening of the Necropolis of the Gods is determined by yourself, Mr. Beirut?"

"Right. The almighty Sovereign hasn't set a specific schedule for the opening and closing. I alone am responsible for determining when it will be opened." Beirut said.

Adkins smile became absolutely incandescent. "That's absolutely wonderful. Mr. Beirut, I wonder, would it be possible for us to open the Necropolis of the Gods in advance?"

"In advance?" Beirut stared at Adkins in astonishment.

"Right, for example…tomorrow! I don't know if you would consider it, Mr. Beirut?" Adkins looked at Beirut, his eyes carrying a hint of anticipation.

"Oh, well now…" Beirut pondered for a moment. Adkins could only wait, absolutely frantic. Finally, Beirut nodded slightly. "That's not impossible. Opening it tomorrow is doable."

Chapter 42 – Beirut's Power

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 42, Beirut's Power

Having received a positive response, Adkins breathing couldn't help but grow ragged. His mind instantly became filled with all sorts of dreams. "If I can acquire a Sovereign artifact within the Necropolis of the Gods, or perhaps one of the legendary Sovereign sparks and become an incomparably mighty Sovereign, then I, Adkins…"

Just thinking about it made Adkins' blood boil in anticipation.

But suddenly, Beirut frowned and he said hurriedly, "Wait, we can't open it tomorrow."

"What? Why not?" Adkins was frantic.

Beirut explained, "Adkins, I forgot about something. Bluefire is currently rebuilding his homeland. His divine earth clone is wholeheartedly focused on rebuilding the continent, while his divine fire clone is standing guard. He can't divide his attention right now. Given his building speed, I imagine he still needs a few more days. How about this. Let's wait ten days, then enter together."

Adkins felt a surge of franticness in his heart. He secretly said to himself, "That's exactly the issue; I don't want Bluefire to enter. If Bluefire enters, then how will I possibly compete against him?"

Adkins knew exactly how powerful Bluefire was.

"Lord Beirut." Adkins said sincerely. Just from the fact that he was now addressing Beirut as 'Lord' was proof of how much importance he placed on the treasures of the Necropolis of the Gods. "I think…there's no need to allow that Bluefire to enter the Necropolis of the Gods. How about just the two of us enter. What do you think?"

Adkins finally got to the point.

Just him and Beirut. When the time came, only he, Adkins, would enter the Necropolis of the Gods. Given that, who would be able to compete against him?"

"Oh?" Beirut stared at Adkins, as if he suddenly understood. A hint of a smile was on his lips. "So Adkins, this is what you desire?"

Adkins continued to look at Beirut.

"Adkins, your fantasy is a bit too perfect." Beirut smirked. "If I let you go in by yourself, you might be able to acquire the treasures within. But there is no benefit to me at all. In addition, I would run the risk of offending Bluefire. Do you think that I, Beirut, am so old that my vision has gone bad, that I wouldn't know who is more important between you and Bluefire?"

Adkins laughed ingratiatingly and said hurriedly, "Lord Beirut, your words aren't correct. True, Bluefire is more powerful than me, and if he goes in, he would at least be able to acquire a Sovereign artifact. However, Lord Beirut, think about it. Given Bluefire's temper, if he were to obtain a Sovereign spark, how could he possibly submit to you? I think, Lord Beirut, that you don't have any confidence in defeating a Bluefire who wields a Sovereign artifact, right?"

Beirut just laughed.

Adkins urged yet again, "But I'm different. Lord Beirut. If you have any requests, just go ahead and state them!"

"Oh?" Beirut's eyes lit up.

"This Necropolis of the Gods does indeed have Sovereign artifacts." Beirut said. Adkins eyes instantly lit up. Beirut continued, "Adkins, I want you to swear an oath to the Overgod of Fate that the first Sovereign artifact you acquire, you have to give to me."

Adkins started slightly. “How many Sovereign artifacts are within?”

“Not just one.” Beirut said.

“Fine. No matter if I acquire one or two of them, the first Sovereign artifact I will definitely give to you, Lord Beirut.” Adkins gritted his teeth.

“Don’t rush. No point in saying it now. Later, you can make an oath to the Overgod of Fate.” Beirut said with a calm laugh.

An oath sworn to the Overgod of Fate definitely could not be violated. The Overgod of Fate was in actuality the ‘Edicts of Fate’, one of the edicts which governed the functioning of the vast universe. If you were to violate such an oath, the Edicts of Fate would naturally cause you to suffer endlessly.

“This is the first matter. There are still two other matters.” Beirut said.

“This Beirut really is black-hearted.” Adkins secretly cursed, but he didn’t have any other options. He had to force himself to squeeze out a smile. “Lord Beirut, pray tell.”

Beirut said with a calm laugh, “The second matter is, after leaving the Necropolis of the Gods, you have to serve me for a million years.”

Adkins stared.

Serve? Even in the Gebados Planar Prison, he, Adkins, had never served anyone as a vassal.

“What, you don’t accept? If you don’t accept, that’s fine. We can forget about this Necropolis of the Gods matter.” As Beirut spoke, he seemed about to turn. Adkins gritted his teeth. “I accept. After I return from the Necropolis of the Gods, I, Adkins, will definitely serve you, Lord Beirut, for a million years.”

Beirut smiled and nodded.

“Lord Beirut, now you can let me go to the Necropolis of the Gods alone, right?” Adkins had a hint of anger in his heart now.

“Don’t rush. There’s the third requirement as well.” Beirut was still all smiles.

No matter how good-tempered a person was, hearing this, they would still be irritated. What’s more, Adkins was an explosive, brutally tempered person to begin with. He couldn’t help but say, “Lord Beirut, how many requirements do you have?”

“This is the final one.” Beirut laughed calmly. “If you don’t agree, then forget about entering the Necropolis of the Gods.”

Adkins suppressed his rage and growled, “Speak.”

“My third request is very simple. I don’t want to have problems in the future. So, please go kill Bluefire.” Beirut continued to smile faintly. “Alas, I don’t want Bluefire to come get revenge on me in the future. Thus, I’ll have to trouble you to kill him.”

Adkins was instantly stupefied.

Kill Bluefire?

“If I, Adkins, had the ability to kill Bluefire, why would I be here speaking with you at such length!” Adkins said furiously.

“Oh. Then there’s nothing I can do about that.” Beirut’s face sank. “Then Adkins, please go back.”

Adkins instantly understood. He was so angry, his face turned white. Pointing at Beirut in a fury, he said, “Beirut, you…you played me for a fool!!!” The three requirements that Beirut required were completely unattainable. The first two requirements were already excessive, but this

third one was impossible.

“Haha…”

Beirut began to laugh, and he looked at Adkins as he laughed. “Adkins, you just now realize it? Haha, I did indeed play you for a fool. I was originally planning to wait a thousand years, at which point I would just bring Bluefire into the Necropolis of the Gods. I didn’t expect that you would come here so quickly. But that’s for the better. It let me see how you look when utterly furious, haha…”

Adkins’ face changed. “You never planned to let me enter the Necropolis of the Gods?”

“Right.”

Beirut smirked. “I never had the intention of letting you enter. I only planned to let Bluefire enter.”

Adkins’ entire body was shaking slightly.

By nature, he was arrogant and never willing to be subordinate to others. Adkins had always dreamed of one day reaching the heights of power and exceed Bluefire and the other five Kings. But he understood that given his talent, his only hope was to acquire a Sovereign artifact, or perhaps a Sovereign spark, something he dreamed about.

However…

His hopes had been dashed.

In the air above the Forest of Darkness, Adkins and Beirut stood there, looking at each other. Their conversation was separated from the outside world by the Godrealm. The distant Barnas, Ojwin, and others couldn’t hear their conversation at all. They only saw that Adkins’ expression had clearly become furious.

“Boom….”

With Adkins at the center, a black and white light suddenly shot out in every direction. The area covered by the black light caused space to distort, and the nearby trees began to be devoured. Wherever the white light shone upon, matter evaporated like snow in the face of the sun.

Adkins had two mighty divine clones; darkness and light!

Cocooned by darkness and light, Adkins was absolutely enraged.

Adkins pointed furiously at Beirut, bellowing in anger, “Beirut, you are a despicable, base person who relies on having a Sovereign at his back! Today, I lowered myself to beg you and gave you face time and time again. I didn’t expect that you would insult me like this. Fine. Fine. You, Beirut, abuse the weak while fearing the strong. You are afraid of offending Bluefire, but you come insult me. You are garbage!!!”

These words weren’t restricted by the Godrealm. They spread out in every direction, with Barnas and the others hearing them clearly.

Barnas was greatly shocked. “Lord Adkins, no!”

“Not good.” Hanbritt, Gatenby, and Ojwin’s faces all changed as well.

Hundreds of kilometers away from Adkins and Beirut, Linley couldn’t help but turn his head to stare in astonishment as well.

“What a powerful aura of darkness and light energy.” Linley was inwardly shocked. The explosive release of energy from Adkins had naturally attracted Linley’s attention. “Such powerful energy…can it be that Adkins and Lord Beirut are coming to blows?”

Linley was mystified.

And then, Linley immediately headed back.

Beirut's face turned cold, as though covered with a layer of frost. "Abuse the weak while fearing the strong? Garbage?"

"You've trained for just a million years. Even if you have a Sovereign artifact, do you even know how to use it properly?" A semi-translucent long blade, seemingly made out of ice, appeared in Adkins' hand. He looked disdainfully at Beirut. "If you don't have a Sovereign artifact, then die. If you do, good. It is time for the Sovereign artifact to have a new master."

Adkins had never held Beirut in any regard.

As he saw it, Beirut who had trained for just a million years was nothing more than an upstart junior. How many Elemental Laws could he have fused?"

"Have a new master?"

With a flip of his hand, Beirut revealed a pitch black staff. This staff emanated a terrifying aura, and Adkins' eyelids twitched, staring in astonishment at the staff in Beirut's hands. With an insulting smirk, Beirut said, "The Sovereign artifact is here. If you have the ability, come and take it."

This was a perfect, undamaged Sovereign artifact, not like Linley's.

The black staff in Beirut's hands emitted an aura so powerful that even the distant Barnas, Ojwin, and the others had their faces turn white.

Adkins' eyes couldn't help but narrow. He secretly said, "This Beirut actually really does have a Sovereign artifact. All the better. At worst, today, I'll lose a divine clone! I have to kill him and seize that Sovereign artifact." Adkins had made up his mind, and now he acted straightforwardly.

Barnas was frantic, but this time, he was no longer able to stop this battle!

Ojwin, Barnas, and the others all watched the two Highgods face off from afar. Suddenly, the dark and light energy exploded forth, causing space to

shudder. Even Barnas the other three immediately utilized their Godrealm to defend.

Adkins divided his body into two, his divine light clone and his divine darkness clone!

The divine light clone wielded that long blade, while his divine dark clone was hidden within the darkness, disappearing within. Adkins' divine light clone instantly charged towards Beirut, his face ferocious as he roared, "Die!" At the same instant he roared, his blade stabbed out, as eye-piercingly bright as the sun.

At the same moment…

The divine dark clone hidden within the darkness appeared as well, as a black dagger silently stabbed towards Beirut.

"Haha…" Beirut laughed loudly and gaily, sweeping out with his black staff.

The black staff seemed to have turned into a blur, smashing directly down upon that brilliant blade which shone like the sun. "BANG!" The Highgod artifact blade instantly disintegrated, but the black staff didn't slow down at all, smashing directly down upon the head of Adkins' divine light clone.

"BOOM!" The head completely exploded, leaving behind only a brilliant divine spark hovering in midair.

Adkins' divine darkness clone laughed insidiously. "He didn't even move. He is asking for death!" In the same instant his divine light clone was destroyed, Adkins' black dagger stabbed directly towards Beirut's head.

"CLANG!"

The black dagger stabbed onto Beirut's head, but there was only a metallic ringing sound.

“How is that possible?!” Adkins stared in astonishment, his eyes wide. His full-power attack with his Highgod artifact hadn’t been able to even break through Beirut’s skin? Beirut’s head was actually comparable in toughness to a Highgod artifact? This was utterly impossible.

But…it had happened.

Beirut turned his head to glance at the boggled Adkins. “What, are you disappointed?”

“Flee!” Adkins’ face changed dramatically. He finally understood that this Beirut was utterly terrifying. Even the five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison wouldn’t dare to use their heads to take a full power attack of a Highgod.

“Rumble…”

The black staff, moving at a speed that was seemingly dozens of times faster than when it had destroyed the divine light clone, instantly passed through Adkins’ head. Adkins’ head soundless disintegrated, leaving behind only a darkness-style divine spark floating next to Beirut.

And then, both of the divine sparks entered Beirut’s hands.

The two headless corpses fell from the sky. Beirut lowered his head to glance at them, murmuring, “Too weak, too weak. Compared to the former era’s Bloodviolet Fiend and the Twelve Winged Highgod Angel, he was far too weak.” Beirut, with just two casual sweeps of his staff, had killed Adkins.

Chapter 43 – Extreme Joy Turns to Grief

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 43, Extreme Joy Turns to Grief

Barnas, Ojwin, Hanbritt, and Gatenby all stared, slack-jawed and eyes round.

They had watched the battle which had occurred just now. In front of Beirut, Adkins was like an infant, completely incapable of resistance. The most monstrous part of it was…Adkins had delivered a full power attack against Beirut's head, but Beirut hadn't been hurt at all.

"Funny. So funny."

Beirut shook his head, let out a sigh, then flew at high speed towards his metallic castle in the north. Actually, Beirut had been prepared for this battle long ago. If he hadn't, he wouldn't have left the metallic castle to prepare for battle with Adkins in mid-air.

"Whew…" Ojwin and everyone else let out a long breath.

Fortunately, Beirut had completely ignored them when he had left. Otherwise, all four of them combined wouldn't be able to withstand a single blow from Beirut's staff.

"How terrifying." Hanbritt let out a sigh.

Barnas stared at the two headless corpses below. Utterly agonized, he said, "Young master!" Barnas directly flew downwards. He and Adkins had an extremely close relationship. The two had been together for a very long time, and now that Adkins was dead, Barnas was filled with agony as well.

Ojwin's eyes lit up.

"The interspatial ring!" Ojwin saw that on the two corpses below, the divine

light corpse was still wearing an interspatial ring on one of its fingers. “Adkins’ interspatial ring has a divine Highgod spark in it.” Ojwin’s heart began to tremble.

Even in his dreams, Ojwin fantasized about becoming a Highgod!

And now, the chance had come!

“Perhaps that interspatial ring has a light-style spark.” Ojwin secretly said to himself. Ojwin immediately sneaked a peek at the nearby Gatenby and Hanbritt, but unexpectedly, Hanbritt and Gatenby were also glancing at him and each other.

The three of them exchanged glances, then all grinned.

They all knew what the others were thinking. Of the four subordinates of Adkins, most likely only Barnas wasn’t interested in that divine Highgod spark. After all, it wasn’t suited for him to fuse with. All three of them had the same idea.

“Hanbritt, Gatenby, you also want that divine Highgod spark in the interspatial ring, right?” Ojwin directly sent a message via his divine sense.

Hanbritt and Gatenby’s eyes contained a hint of amusement.

Gatenby replied with his divine sense, “However, we have to deal with Barnas first. He is very powerful. If we don’t kill him, there’s no way we will be able to get that interspatial ring.”

“Alright. All of us will join forces and pool our power to kill Barnas. As for the divine spark, after we acquire it, let’s see what element it is. Whoever it suits, that’s who will get it!” Hanbritt said, and Ojwin and Gatenby both expressed assent.

The three exchanged a glance, and then flew downwards as if by prior agreement.

“Lord Adkins!” Gatenby spoke out in a somewhat agonized manner.

“Mr. Barnas, don’t be too heartbroken.” Hanbritt flew over as well.

Barnas was currently lost in his agony. The scene of him being together with Adkins over the course of all these years flashed through his mind, and tears couldn’t help but begin to trickle down Barnas’ face. He didn’t have any idea as to what Ojwin and the other two were planning.

“Let’s do it!” Ojwin shouted through his divine sense to the others.

Ojwin, Gatenby, and Hanbritt simultaneously had their weapons appear in their hands, and in the next instant, simultaneously charged towards the nearby Barnas. The three Gods revealed a murderous look in their eyes, not holding back at all.

“Not good.” Barnas suddenly sensed this terrifying aura and immediately transformed into a ray of lightning, flying away and fleeing.

Unfortunately, no matter how fast an expert was, fleeing still had a short wind up phase. In that instant, his speed wasn’t very fast, while Ojwin, Gatenby, and Hanbritt had already reached the limits of their speed as they pincer-attacked him.

“What are you doing?!” Barnas’ divine sense swept into the minds of the three with a furious howl.

Barnas had already turned and was facing Ojwin and the other two while he continued to retreat at high speed.

“Die!”

A green sword flash, a holy light flash, and a warblade that carried within it a destructive aura. The three Gods struck out at full strength, and the ancient trees nearby that had existed for innumerable years were transformed into dust, with the earth itself sinking down as well.

“Bastards!” Barnas was a smart man. He instantly could guess what the goal of these three was.

He didn’t have any chance to flee right now. Grinding his teeth, Barnas transformed into a human-shaped bolt of lightning. The Highgod artifact in his hand, the ‘Spear of Cortez’, directly pierced towards Gatenby, as Barnas hoped to make a breakthrough at this point and flee with his live.

But how could Ojwin and the other two let him flee?

“Boom!”

Three on one!

The earth seemed to have transformed into a rippling pond. Within a thousand meters, the nearby boulders, trees, and magical beasts all transformed into powder. Dust flew everywhere, but the battle had already concluded. Barnas’ eyes had already grown dim, and he had collapsed, following in Adkins’ footsteps.

“Bang!” Gatenby, a hole having been created in his chest, also collapsed at the same instant.

The Spear of Cortez didn’t just possess a material attack; it also possessed a spiritual attack. That Barnas had taken the combined strikes of those three Gods, but although he died, even in death, he had pulled down the most powerful of the three, Gatenby, into death with him.

This Barnas really had been the most powerful of those four Gods.

“Whew.” Ojwin and Hanbritt were both shaking in their hearts. The dust slowly settled. The two exchanged a glance, feeling that they were lucky. If Barnas had aimed his dying blow at either one of them, they wouldn’t have been able to dodge either.

“Hanbritt, whoever matches up with the element of this divine spark in the interspatial ring is the person who will get it.” Ojwin said with a laugh.

“Of course.” Hanbritt laughed. “However, the person who doesn’t get the divine spark will get the Spear of Cortez. What do you say?”

“Haha, of course I agree.” Ojwin laughed.

Right now, the ground had four corpses. The two headless corpses of Adkins, the corpse of Gatenby, and the corpse of Barnas. Meanwhile, Ojwin and Hanbritt were happily discussing how to divide up the rewards.

“Who will bind the interspatial ring with blood and withdraw the divine spark within?” Ojwin looked at Hanbritt.

Hanbritt said, “Ojwin, how could I distrust you? You can go ahead and activate the interspatial ring.” Ojwin nodded and laughed as he walked over to Adkins’ divine light corpse. But as he walked past Hanbritt…

Hanbritt’s eyes had a cold light flash past them. He secretly said to himself, “Prepare to die. The Highgod spark and the Highgod artifact will both be mine.”

Hanbritt suddenly moved, delivering his most powerful attack towards Ojwin.

The strange thing was, at the same instant Hanbritt made his move, Ojwin’s body suddenly flashed backwards in a straight line, chopping out with that greatsword in his hands.

Astonishment!

The two both started slightly, astonished that the other was thinking the same thing they had been.

“The Highgod artifact and spark are both mine!” Ojwin howled angrily.

The longsword that was wrapped by that green light and the greatsword that was emitting that holy light simultaneously pierced towards each other.

Ojwin and Hanbritt's gazes met for an instant, and they each saw the murderous intent in the eyes of the other. If you didn't die, then I will perish!

Kill the other, obtain all the treasures!

"Clang!"

The green-light sword collided with the holy-light greatsword in a strange manner. The blue light shook, and it was as though space had suddenly been torn apart. An interspatial crack suddenly flashed towards Ojwin's body. Ojwin retreated rapidly, but his body actually exploded. Only his head flew off into the distance.

"Haha…" Ojwin, only having his head left, still laughed delightedly and loudly.

"Boom!" Hanbritt's body slumped to the ground. He was dead!

Hanbritt trained in the Elemental Laws of the Wind. He didn't understand much about profound mysteries involving spiritual attacks. His most powerful attacks were of the Dimensional variety. Although he had badly injured Ojwin, that sword blow from Ojwin had contained a spiritual attack which had destroyed his soul.

Of the four mighty Gods, only Ojwin remained!

"I finally succeeded." Ojwin was so excited that his face was shaking. His head immediately floated over to Adkins' corpse.

At the same time, his body below his neck quickly began to regrow. Ojwin simply couldn't wait. He immediately controlled a drop of blood and sent it onto the interspatial ring, which absorbed it like a sponge. By this point, Ojwin's arm had already grown out.

"It must be light-style. It must be light-style!" Ojwin murmured in his heart.

Ojwin was extremely nervous. Grabbing the interspatial ring, he gritted his teeth and immediately retrieved the divine spark within.

“This…” Ojwin stared wide-eyed at the divine spark in front of him. The black divine spark which was emanating a white light.

“Light-style divine spark! It is light-style!” Ojwin was so excited, his body shook.

“Haha, it is light-style, it is light-style!!!” Ojwin was so happy he began to sob. “Adkins? Haha, I’ve endured servitude for you for so long, all for the sake of this day. It really is light-style. Soon, I will be a Highgod. I will be a Highgod!!!”

Ojwin’s heart was shaking.

“When I become a Highgod, Kingsley, my son, Father will definitely get revenge for you. Definitely!” Ojwin’s eyes blazed. His body had already grown to his waist.

Ojwin immediately looked at the divine Highgod spark in his hands. He couldn’t help but reveal an excited and satisfied smile on his face. In the Planar Prison, he had longed for this day. After countless years, he had finally acquired a Highgod spark.

“I, Ojwin, am finally going to become a Highgod.”

Dripping a drop of blood onto the divine Highgod spark, the spark immediately fused into his body. Ojwin’s face was covered with anticipation for the future, but right at that moment…

“Huh?”

Ojwin’s face changed. He couldn’t help but turn to look…

A cold pair of dark golden eyes was staring at him.

The devilish Bloodviolet sword. The adamantine heavy sword emanating that dark blue glow.

“Linley!” Ojwin’s face changed.

He had just undergone two life-and-death battles. His spiritual energy was 90% used up, and the Highgod spark hadn’t been fused yet. He would need dozens of years to fuse with it. The worst thing was…Linley was too close to him. With his not yet fully repaired body, his speed wasn’t as fast as it could be.

There was no time to flee!

“Die.” Linley charged down from above, the adamantine heavy sword and Bloodviolet chopping down simultaneously.

“Hrmph, you are asking for death!” Ojwin laughed coldly in his heart.

He couldn’t flee? Flee? Why did he have to flee?

Linley was nothing more than a Demigod!

The greatsword in Ojwin’s hands, shining with that holy light, carried a spiritual power with it as he unhesitatingly swung it towards Linley’s Bloodviolet sword. The choice he made was the same one which Anras had made. Given his experience, he could clearly tell that Bloodviolet was an extraordinary weapon.

“Clang!” In that same instant when Bloodviolet collided with that greatsword shining with a holy light, Ojwin flew backwards, wanting to avoid the attack of that adamantine heavy sword.

“Rumble!”

From the adamantine heavy sword, a faint, yellow, illusory sword flew out like a bolt of lightning and entered Ojwin’s body. This was the attack which Linley had been building up power for, his most powerful attack….

The most powerful attack, developed from the fusion of the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Essence of the Earth…

Voidwave Sword!

"No…."

Ojwin's eyes instantly turned round. He didn't have any chance to feel regret or grief. He immediately toppled to the ground. Ojwin had a chance to become a Highgod and then he would live life as he pleased. Even in the Infernal Realm, he would have been considered a skilled expert. But unfortunately…

"In terms of spiritual attacks, you aren't even as strong as that God who tried to assassinate me at Mount Copper Gong." Linley looked at Ojwin's corpse.

"Fighting over a Highgod spark?" Linley glanced at the nearby God corpses, then began to collect the divine artifacts, divine sparks, and interspatial rings.

Only, Ojwin's eyes remained open and round. In the instant he had died, his eyes had been filled with disbelief and despair! Just now, he had been so excited that he was shaking as he imagined how beautiful the future would be. But all of this had been destroyed.

He, Ojwin, died with his eyes open and uncomprehending!

Chapter 44 – Only One Person

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 44, Only One Person

Within the Forest of Darkness, upon that empty terrain where the battle had just occurred, Linley was currently reaping the spoils of war. His face couldn't help but reveal a grin. "So many treasures. Killing Deities and taking their wealth really is a rather attractive proposition. All I did was kill Ojwin, but I received so many treasures. Most likely, in the Infernal Realm, there are many people who are willing to engage in this sort of business which involves no sunken costs."

Soon, the treasures were all collected.

"Two Highgod artifacts, one Highgod spark, and four God sparks as well as five interspatial rings." Linley couldn't help but feel excited.

Four God sparks!

Adding those to the two God sparks he had already acquired meant Linley would have six God sparks now.

"These two Highgod artifacts…" Linley weighed the two divine artifacts with his eyes. One was the Spear of Cortez, while the other was a black dagger.

When Beirut had killed Adkins, he had only taken the two divine sparks as he left.

Adkins had two Highgod artifacts, one of which was destroyed. The other was this black dagger, which was sent flying far away. Linley naturally collected it.

Linley put the Highgod artifact and the divine spark into his interspatial ring. Only five rings remained in his hand.

“I wonder what these interspatial rings of the four Gods contain. Once I return to Dragonblood Castle, I’ll take a closer look. Also, Adkins’ interspatial ring. Aside from divine sparks, perhaps there are some other treasures within.” Linley secretly thought to himself.

“Fortunately, I sensed the energy wave and immediately returned. Otherwise, a wonderful opportunity would have slipped away.” Linley secretly celebrated.

This time, not only had he gained revenge for little Kass, he had also acquired quite a few divine sparks and divine artifacts. Linley wouldn’t disdain having more treasures such as things; the more the better.

“I was right at the Forest of Darkness, so of course I was able to hurry over. Any Deities outside the Forest of Darkness who wanted to fly over would probably still take nearly an hour to get here.” Linley was certain that nobody would be able to make it in time. After all, the battle just now had only taken a little bit of time.

Linley glanced at the area. “However, it’s still best to leave immediately!”

“Whoosh!”

Linley immediately took to the air, wanting to fly towards the south.

“Linley, don’t be in an urge to leave.” A sound rang out in Linley’s mind, while at the same time, a black shadow appeared in front of Linley. Black hair, black whiskers. It was Lord Beirut, who had killed Adkins so easily just now!

“Lord Beirut.” Linley felt relaxed.

Beirut looked at Linley, a hint of amusement in his eyes. “Linley, you have gotten quite a nice haul of things today.”

“I was lucky. I sensed that powerful energy wave, so I hurried back to see

what was happening. Only, my flying speed wasn't fast enough. By the time I made it here, that Adkins had already died. All I could do was watch as the four of them fought and killed each other." Linley said honestly.

Beirut nodded. As far as Beirut was concerned, he didn't care at all about these items which Linley had acquired.

"Linley, there's something I must tell you." Beirut went straight to the point.

"Oh?" Linley was somewhat surprised.

Beirut laughed calmly, "In the past, didn't I inform all of the Deities of the Yulan continent via mental message that the Necropolis of the Gods will open a thousand years from now?"

"Yes." Linley was somewhat puzzled. "Lord Beirut, have you changed your plans?" Linley could sense that Beirut's words had a hidden meaning within them. He couldn't help but make this guess. If Beirut had this intention, that would be normal.

Currently, in the Yulan continent, aside from Beirut himself, now that Sadista and Adkins were dead, the only Highgod remaining was 'Bluefire' Leylin.

"No." Beirut shook his head. "A thousand years from now, I will still open the Necropolis of the Gods. However, I have already discussed this with Bluefire. Half a month from now, I will permit Bluefire to enter the Necropolis of the Gods by himself."

"Just him alone?" Linley was very surprised.

Beirut nodded.

"Lord Beirut, there are other Deities present in the Yulan continent." Linley said hurriedly. Linley felt that for Beirut to act in such a way seemed to be rather unfair to the other Deities. After all, everyone else was present at the

Yulan continent as well. They should at least be given a chance.

Beirut shook his head. “No need. The greatest treasure of the Necropolis of the Gods can only be acquired by the most powerful of Highgods. Your ordinary Demigods and Gods will at most be able to acquire a divine spark within.”

Linley’s heart was stirred. “This ‘greatest treasure’ is most likely a Sovereign artifact.”

Beirut continued, “Thus, Linley, help me inform Tarosse and the others about this affair. Whether they stay or leave is up to them.” Beirut had a bit of a relationship to Tarosse, after all.

Tarosse had, after all, served as the manager of the lower eleven floors of the Necropolis of the Gods.

“I will definitely convey your words.” Linley said.

And then, Linley and Beirut separated. Linley flew at high speed back to Dragonblood Castle.

Upon returning to Dragonblood Castle, Linley first bound the five interspatial rings with blood, giving the contents of the ring a good inspection. While inspecting the rings, he found some excellent items within. Ojwin’s interspatial ring had a fire-style Demigod spark, Gatenby’s had a earth-style Demigod spark, and there were several divine artifacts as well.

Now, Linley had a total of six God sparks and two Demigod sparks. He had multiple Demigod artifacts and God artifacts, as well as two Highgod artifacts.

As soon as he had returned, Linley had begun to sort through and put these things on display, frightening the nearby Delia. Afterwards, Linley described what had happened in detail. Only then did Delia let out a sigh of relief.

Within the room where Linley and Delia stayed. Linley was drinking a cup of cool fruit wine.

“That Ojwin finally died.” Delia let out a long breath.

“He’s dead. When Cena hears the news, he should feel a bit better.” In his heart, Linley had always felt that it was still the fault of Olivier, Desri, and himself that so many experts had descended from the Gebados Planar Prison and caused trouble.

Delia could sense the pressure Linley felt from these words. Changing the topic, she said, “Linley, in the past, the Yulan continent didn’t have many Deities, and divine sparks were rare. I didn’t imagine that you would be able to obtain so many divine sparks.”

“So many divine sparks?” Linley knew well that every single divine spark had been obtained through slaughter. If it wasn’t others trying to kill him, it was him killing others.

“Divine sparks aren’t so easily acquired.” Linley sighed.

Hearing this, Delia understood what Linley was thinking.

“I suddenly understand a little.” Delia’s eyes had a light flash through them. “In the past, there were very few Deities in the Yulan continent. You could count them on one hand. Naturally, divine sparks would be hard to acquire. However, these days, Deities are everywhere. Only the powerful can obtain divine sparks. The weak will be killed. It is much like how the rich will accumulate more wealth, while the poor will be robbed of even what little they have.”

For someone as mighty as Beirut or Bluefire, if they wanted divine sparks, they could acquire them easily. Even most Highgods would easily be killed by them.

As for Linley, he had originally belonged to the group who would be

‘robbed’.

Only, he had that damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. The damaged Sovereign artifact had caused Linley’s status to change. It gave him a stable footing to at least avoid being robbed. Occasionally, he could plunder others!

“Right, Linley. Right now, since you have two Demigod sparks of earth and fire, as well as God sparks, doesn’t that mean you can let two people become full Gods?” Delia suddenly asked.

Linley had a thought. “Fire element?”

When Anras had died, Linley had acquired a fire God spark. Ojwin, in his interspatial ring, had a fire element Demigod spark.

“Wharton!” Linley suddenly sent his divine sense to Wharton. “Wharton, come to my courtyard.”

Wharton liked training in the Elemental Laws of Fire. Unfortunately, Wharton’s talent was very average. Given his training speed, he would most likely have to train for thousands of years or even longer before reaching the Deity level.

“Big bro.” Wharton pushed open the door to the courtyard, laughing as he walked in. “Big bro, you called?”

Linley laughed as he looked at his little brother. “Wharton, how are you doing in terms of analyzing the Elemental Laws of Fire?”

As Linley mentioned this, Wharton’s face turned sour. He said with resignation, “Big bro, you know what my training speed is like. Right now, I have only made a little bit of progress. Given this sort of speed, who knows how long it will be before I reach the Prime Saint level, much less breaking through the Prime Saint bottleneck and reaching the Deity level.”

Linley laughed.

“Wharton, take a look at this.” With a flip of his hand, Linley placed the two fire divine sparks on the stone table.

Wharton, seeing the black sparks emanating a red light, stared with round eyes. He then looked at Linley in astonishment, stuttering, “Big bro, you, what are you…?”

“These are two fire-style divine sparks. One is a Demigod spark, while the other is a God spark. First fuse with that spark, and afterwards, go fuse with the God spark. After completely fusing with the two, you will be a full God.” Linley said with assurance and confidence.

Wharton was somewhat numb. He had just been chatting casually with his wife just now, but all of a sudden, Linley had called him over and was now telling him…‘I have two sparks. Fuse with them and you will be a God.’

“G-, God-level Deity?” Wharton felt his mind enter a state of disorder. All he could think of were those three words ‘God-level Deity’.

Linley and Delia looked at each other and laughed.

“Whoah!” Wharton let out a long breath. His brain finally started to function again. He looked at Linley. “Big bro, you really make me speechless. All these years, I’ve been dreaming about becoming a Deity one day. But I wouldn’t have expected that in the blink of an eye, you are suddenly about to make me become a God. This…this is really! Big bro, you can’t make others feel so bad about themselves like this. I am about to be scared silly.”

“You little punk.”

Linley laughed while berating him, “Remember, first fuse with the Demigod spark.”

“I’m going to start fusing now!” Wharton couldn’t repress his excitement. He immediately bound the Demigod spark and took it into his body, then

stored the God spark into his interspatial ring. Wharton intentionally sighed, “Alas, big bro, you still aren’t THAT awesome. If you were able to acquire a fire-style Highgod spark for me to fuse…then in the future, I’d be a Highgod, right?”

Looking at the chortling Wharton, Linley understood that Wharton was in an extremely good mood.

“You want a Highgod spark? Hurry up and go have people prepare a banquet for tonight. Tonight, I have something important to declare.”

Wharton immediately replied loudly, “No problem at all!”

In Dragonblood Castle, the Deities only occasionally gathered together to eat. Tonight, Linley actively invited Tarosse, Dylin, and the others. Linley still remembered Beirut’s instructions to him.

That night, at the banquet, everyone was laughing calmly while eating and drinking.

“Everyone.” Linley suddenly raised his voice. Instantly, the entire hall became quiet.

Tarosse, Dylin, the War God, and the High Priest all looked puzzledly at Linley.

“There’s something I must tell everyone. Lord Beirut, in the coming days, will take Lord Bluefire into the Necropolis of the Gods.” Linley said.

“He is going to open the Necropolis of the Gods early?” Tarosse said in surprise and excitement.

Linley shook his head. “Not exactly, because this time, he will only let Lord Bluefire enter by himself.”

Tarosse and Dylin were both stunned. They were both remaining at the Yulan continent primarily because they wanted to have a chance to see what

the greatest treasure of the Necropolis of the Gods was. They just wanted to watch and be amused, in truth.

“We won’t be allowed in? We won’t even know if Lord Bluefire will obtain the treasure or not.” Tarosse shook his head and sighed, then glanced sideways at Dylin. “Dylin, what do you think? I feel rather bored now. That Adkins is also dead, and only Lord Bluefire will be allowed into the Necropolis of the Gods. As I see it, the Yulan continent is now rather boring. I’m planning to leave the Yulan Plane in the next few days and go to the Infernal Realm. What about you?”

“Me?”

Dylin hesitated for a moment, then said, “Then, I’ll go with you to the Infernal Realm.”

Chapter 45 – Indigo Prefecture

Book 13, Gebados – Chapter 45, Indigo Prefecture

The nearby Cesar drained the wine in his cup at one gulp, then said, “Go to the Infernal Realm? Adkins and his Gods are all dead, while Lord Beirut is only permitting Lord Bluefire to enter the Necropolis of the Gods. Then, I’ll go with you as well.”

The War God and the High Priest didn’t say anything, but everyone knew that the War God would follow Tarosse.

“Linley, how about you?” Cesar looked at Linley. “Come along with us. In the Yulan continent, there’s nothing interesting left.”

“Me?” Linley glanced at the nearby Delia, then laughed towards Cesar, “I’m in no rush. All of you have trained for thousands of years, while I haven’t trained for even a hundred years. In addition, Bebe is still in the Forest of Darkness.”

“What a pity.” Cesar let out a sigh.

Tarosse, Dylin, the War God, and Cesar began to chat with each other about the affairs of the Infernal Realm.

Watching them, Linley had to admit that in his heart, he envied them.

“The Infernal Realm…”

Linley was filled with all sorts of imaginings regarding the Infernal Realm.

Tonight, the third day after the banquet, Tarosse and the others left the Yulan Plane. A large group of people congregated at Dragonblood Castle, with Fain and Dixie amongst them. All of them had come to send off their teachers.

“Dylin, you are even taking your two sons with you?” Cesar laughed as he spoke.

Dylin nodded, as though this was only natural. “Of course!” Dylin’s two children were Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions. Before entering the Necropolis of the Gods, Dylin had asked for a Demigod spark for one of his sons. Afterwards, when Dylin had left the Necropolis of the Gods, he had already become a God.

When those Deities of the Gebados Planar Prison had descended, Dylin had killed a Demigod and seized a divine spark for his son.

“Teacher.” Dixie and the others were somewhat reluctant to part from the High Priest, Catherine.

“Train well.” The High Priest said gently. “You are already Saints now. Once you reach the Deity level, if you don’t want to stay in the Yulan Plane any longer, go to the Higher Planes. That is the place where Deities should truly stay.”

“Teacher, where are you going?” Dixie asked hurriedly.

“I…I’m different from them. I am planning to go to the Life Realm.” The High Priest said calmly.

“Alright, let’s all head out.” Tarosse glanced around and said.

And then, under the gazes of Linley and the others, this group of experts flew out of Dragonblood Castle at high speed towards the Arctic Icecap, quickly disappearing beyond the horizon.

“Cesar and Dylin have left as well.” Linley said softly. Delia, by his side, glanced at him.

The news that Bluefire was going by himself into the Necropolis of the Gods quickly spread across the entire Yulan continent. Spreading this news

through Linley was the intention of Beirut. In addition, Adkins and his four Gods had all died. This had a major impact on the Gods of the Yulan continent.

Aside from a few Deities, the vast majority of Deities all chose to leave the Necropolis of the Gods and head towards the Higher Planes.

Roughly sixteen years after Adkins' death, Wharton finally finished fusing with his Demigod spark. He was now a Demigod as well. As for Delia, nineteen years after Adkins' death, she finally completely fused the God-level wind-style spark and became a God.

Yulan calendar, year 10092. Late autumn. Sallow yellow leaves were slowly falling.

"Rumble…" The entire world seemed to tremble gently, and a unique ripple spread out. Linley was very familiar with this rippling sensation.

Standing beneath the tree, Linley suddenly turned to stare towards the north. Frowning, he said, "Hrm? Yet another person became a Deity on their own power?" That was the ripple created by the descent of the natural Laws. Only when a person became a Deity on their own would the natural Laws descend.

"Linley, come to my place." Beirut's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley was puzzled, but he immediately flew out of Dragonblood Castle towards the Forest of Darkness.

Just as Linley entered the metallic castle, he heard a voice ring out. "Boss!" Bebe's voice was very loud. Linley raised his head to look, and he couldn't help but feel some shock. "Bebe, you…" He found out, to his amazement, that he couldn't sense Bebe's aura at all.

Thinking about the descent of the Laws and the ripples just now, Linley instantly understood. "Bebe, was that you, just now?"

“Right.” Bebe delightedly bowed. “Boss, I spent twenty years and finally mastered the Profound Mysteries of the ‘Essence of Darkness’. I have already mastered two types of profound mysteries, and so I have become a God.”

“Oh, that’s rather impressive.” Linley snickered.

Amongst the Deities, the Elemental Laws of the Wind had nine profound mysteries, and so one had to master three of them before becoming a God. Or perhaps by mastering the fusion of two profound mysteries, one could also become a God. Earth, fire, water, and darkness only had six types of profound mysteries. If one mastered two of them, one would become a God.

“Linley, come in.” A voice rang out from the nearby living room.

Linley and Bebe immediately entered the living room. Stroking his beard, Beirut laughed as he looked at Bebe. “I gave you so many advantages and superior conditions, and I even had you only learn the most basic ‘Essence of Darkness’, but you still took twenty years. If I had done the same for Linley, most likely just a single year would have been enough. And you are proud about it?”

“He’s my Boss. Of course my Boss has to be more powerful than me.” Bebe didn’t mind at all.

Beirut could only shake his head and laugh, then looked towards Linley. “Linley, take a seat first.” Linley sat down to one side as commanded.

Beirut let out a breath. “Linley, how is your training proceeding? When will you become a God?”

“I’m not certain either. However, I am halfway through the fusion of two profound mysteries, the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and the ‘Essence of the Earth’. Most likely, in a few more decades, I should be able to completely fuse these types of profound mysteries.” Linley didn’t try to hide anything.

Beirut couldn't help but sigh in praise. "Gaining insights while fusing? You are quite intelligent, to not blindly and greedily advance rashly."

"I am doing this at the guidance of Mr. Leylin." Linley said.

"Right." Beirut let out a long sigh. "It is now time for me to tell you a few things. Linley, in the past, weren't you puzzled about why the Four Supreme Warrior clans disappeared all of a sudden?"

Linley's eyes lit up.

"The answer is simple. The Four Supreme Warrior clans were taken by the experts of the Infernal Realm into the Infernal Realm." Beirut said with a laugh. "More precisely speaking, your Four Supreme Warrior clans should belong to the Four Divine Beast clans of the Infernal Realm."

Linley's heart shook. He said in astonishment, "Four Divine Beast clans?"

"The Four Divine Beast clans is the root of your Four Supreme Warrior clans!" Beirut sighed. "Every single disciple, if they want to be purified and transformed, needs to return to the Four Divine Beast clans and undergo the Ancestral Baptism."

"Purified and transformed? Ancestral Baptism?" Linley was even more puzzled now.

Beirut nodded. "Linley, haven't you discovered that generally speaking, you descendants of the Four Supreme Warrior clans have a very low level of attunement to the Laws? For example, your ancestors were barely able to even sense the Laws. When they did gain some insights, they would progress very slowly."

Linley nodded hurriedly.

His own little brother Wharton was very slow in gaining insights.

"The rate of attuning to the Laws is so low that it is even inferior to many

powerful humans. How, then, could your clansmen be acclaimed as the Four Divine Beast clans? The reason for slow training is because these people have never undergone the Ancestral Baptism." Beirut sighed. "The Ancestral Baptism of the Four Divine Beast clans is very mysterious. It isn't as simple as I once thought it was. The Ancestral Baptism of the Four Divine Beast clans is extremely famous in the Infernal Realm."

Beirut glanced at Linley. As Beirut saw it…

Linley already had such astonishing training speed. Once he underwent the Ancestral Baptism, then he would definitely become a terrifying talent!

"Linley, do you want to return to the Four Divine Beast clans and meet with the ancestors of your clan?" A hint of amusement was in Beirut's eyes.

Linley hesitated, not knowing what to say.

After all, if he were to leave the Yulan Plane, it would be very hard for him to return. In addition, Linley wanted to respect Delia's opinion.

"Men shouldn't be so indecisive." Beirut barked. "What's more, this is just a Yulan continent. How can a talent like you stay within a single material plane? That boundless Infernal Realm where experts are as common as clouds is the place which truly suits you!"

Linley's heart shook.

"Boss, the Infernal Realm is really interesting. For example, Grandpa's metallic castle was purchased in the Infernal Realm." Bebe said hurriedly. Bebe, ever-curious, was very eager to visit the Higher Plane of the Infernal Realm as well.

"The Four Divine Beast clans resides within the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent of the Infernal Realm." Beirut said. "Whether you go or not is up to you."

Linley immediately bowed. "Yes, Lord Beirut."

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley looked at Bebe.

“Oh.” Bebe nodded.

Looking at Bebe’s expression, Linley let out a secret sigh. Bebe had grown up with him. The two shared the same ardent blood and love for challenges and danger. Linley knew that Bebe deeply desired to go to the Infernal Realm. But if Linley was to go to the Infernal Realm, he had to persuade Delia!

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Delia glanced at the nearby Linley. She knew what Linley was thinking. In the past three days in particular, Linley would occasionally reveal a hint of desire and a hint of confusion in his eyes.

“Linley.” Delia suddenly gritted her teeth and made her decision.

“Huh?” Linley glanced at Delia by his side, puzzled.

Delia looked at him and intentionally let out a low sigh. “Linley, don’t you feel as though life in the Yulan continent is no longer exciting?”

“Right.” Linley’s eyes instantly lit up. “Delia, I have that feeling also. Do you think we should…” Halfway through his words, Linley came to a halt. He saw the hint of laughter appear on Delia’s face. “Delia, thank you.”

Linley already understood what Delia meant.

Delia was about to give him what he wanted!

“Actually, I’m already very satisfied with the twenty years of quiet life that we’ve had.” Delia said softly.

Delia said with a sigh, “Linley, the ‘Linley’ that I know is a person who constantly struggles and is filled with willpower. I like this you. In the

Yulan continent, where nothing is a challenge to you, your willpower will slowly be ground flat. In addition, deep in my heart, I also want to live a slightly more exciting life as well."

"Also, I've already become a God." Delia looked at Linley. "At the very least, I have excellent fleeing abilities. I won't become a burden to you!"

Linley laughed as he pulled Delia into his embrace. "Delia, then let's roam the Infernal Realm together."

"Roam the Infernal Realm together!" Delia also said softly.

"And me! I'm going with you!" Bebe immediately hurried over and shouted loudly, "I'm going to the Infernal Realm too, I'm going too!!!"

Linley and Delia exchanged a glance, then both began to laugh.

Three days later, one freezing, cold early morning in late autumn. Many people of Dragonblood Castle were gathered here in this training area. They had come to send Linley, Delia, and Bebe off.

Linley looked at the people in front of him. They included Uncle Hillman, who had guided him since he was young, as well as his family members such as Wharton, Taylor, Sasha, Arnold…the five Barker brothers who had fought by his side, Zassler, Jenne, Rebecca and Leena, and his magical beast 'Haeru'…as well as his friend Desri.

Everyone was gathered here.

"Big bro!" Wharton's eyes were filled with an unwillingness to part from him.

"Wharton, I entrust everything here to you." Linley slapped Wharton on the shoulders. "I trust that you can do it. If you encounter any problems, you can go to the Forest of Darkness and beg Lord Beirut for help. He will help you."

“I know.” Wharton hurriedly nodded.

Linley had also given that earth-style Demigod spark to Wharton. In the future, it would be up to Wharton to decide who to give the divine spark to. At the same time, Linley had also given the earth-style God spark to Barker, who was already an earth-style Demigod. After Hanbritt’s death, Linley had acquired a wind-style God spark, which he gave to Haeru.

“Master.” Haeru looked longingly at Linley. He was filled with gratitude towards Linley.

It was Linley who had allowed him to become a Demigod. And now, Linley was giving him a wind-style divine God spark.

“Father!” Taylor and Sasha both looked at Linley as well.

Linley lovingly rubbed the heads of his son and daughter.

“Haha, perhaps one year in the future, I will return.” Linley forced out a smile, then turned. “Let’s go.” Linley, Delia, and Bebe flew out, disappearing into the northern skies.

Wharton, Haeru, Barker, and the others all couldn’t help but reveal a hint of tears in their eyes.

With this departure of Linley’s from the Yulan continent, how long would it be before he would be able to return?

“Big bro!” Wharton felt grateful towards his big brother from the bottom of his heart. It was Linley who had singlehandedly raised the Dragonblood Warrior clan to a flourishing level again. And now, Linley was leaving while allowing Wharton, Haeru, and Barker to become full Gods, and asking Beirut to take care of them as well. The Baruch family’s foundation was now unshakably firm.

Yulan calendar, year 10092. Late autumn. Linley led his wife, Delia, as well

as Bebe out of the Yulan continent. They were headed to a Higher Plane: The Infernal Realm.

Chapter 1 – Mirrormoon Cliff

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 1, Mirrormoon Cliff

One of the Four Higher Planes. The Infernal Realm!

A cold, violet, knife-thin moon was hanging in the night sky, emanating a hazy, devilish violet moonlight which covered the boundless world before them.

“Rumble…” The dark, gloomy waves struck time and time again against the craggy cliff that was ten thousand meters high. Despite trillions of years having passed with the waters of the Starmist Sea continuously striking against it, this crag remained exactly as it had been ten thousand years ago, standing there unmoving.

This crag was absolutely straight, like the edge of a knife. Its surface gleamed like a mirror. In the Infernal Realm, it was known as Mirrormoon Ridge.

At the highest point of Mirrormoon Ridge, an ancient stone castle that was completely built from violet stones stood. It gave the aura of having been there forever. Only, on occasion, within the violet castle, a few flickers of light would occasionally flash hazily, as though in a dream.

In the center of the violet castle, there was an extremely flat empty area that was formed from ancient, earth-colored stones.

In this space, there were two enormous magic formations that were a hundred meters across. This magic formation was untold times more complicated than the magic transportation formation located in the Arctic Icecap. Next to these two giant magic formations, there were two powerfully built men present.

The two men wore violet clothes. On the outside, they wore violet robes

with gold trims, and they also had unique violet seal markings on their forehead.

“Third Brother always works so hard. He never gives up any chance he can get to train.” The violet-clothed warrior with black hair said.

The nearby violet-robed man with silver hair laughed as well. “Third Brother is so hard working that most likely he will soon take over the position of Commander.” As they spoke, the two turned to look at the nearby bald youth who was seated in the meditative position close to them who wore the same clothes as they did.

“Rumble…”

In the empty space, one of the massive magic formations began to emanate a misty light, and then three figures appeared within the distorted space in the center of the magic formation. After the misty light dispersed, they were able to clearly see those three figures. Standing in the center was a youth dressed in a sky-blue robe, while the other two were a golden-haired beauty as well as an impish, delicate looking youngster wearing a straw hat.

The three looked curiously around at their surroundings.

“Oho!” The black-haired warrior laughed loudly. “How rare. The three which came to the Infernal Realm this time are all at the Deity level. It seems two of them are even Gods. The three of them are quite clever. They didn’t come at the Saint level, haha…”

“Those who come to the Infernal Realm at the Saint level are utter fools.” The silver-haired man snickered.

The bald man who had been meditating now rose to his feet. This bald man had a pair of icy cold, silver eyes. He walked over and said calmly, “Welcome to the world of experts – the Infernal Realm!” His hoarse voice echoed in the empty space.

The three people who had been brought over were Linley, Delia, and Bebe.

“So powerful!” Seeing the three in front of him, Linley couldn’t help but grow guarded. “These three people should all be more powerful than me. They are most likely Gods. However, they could also be Highgods.”

Bebe shouted loudly in excitement, “Wow! Hey, handsome fellas in purple, so this is the Infernal Realm? Whoaaaah, what a dense elemental aura. Also, there’s so many experts here as well…hey hey, check those guys out, those six horned creatures. This is my first time seeing them.”

In this empty space, aside from those three men in violet, there were dozens of creatures off to one side who looked very strange. Half of them were humanoid, while most of the rest had all sorts of strange appearances, many of which Linley’s group had never seen before.

The bald man stared coldly with his silver eyes at Bebe. “Shut your mouth!”

Bebe couldn’t help but feel astonished.

“I will only say what I have to say a single time! Listen clearly, otherwise, if you get killed, you can’t blame me.” The bald man’s hoarse voice didn’t seem to have any tone to it at all.

Bebe was clearly rather unhappy, but Linley reached out with his right hand and rested it on Bebe’s shoulder, applying just a bit of pressure as he said mentally, “Bebe, this is the Infernal Realm. We are new here and don’t know anything yet. Don’t make any more trouble. Lord Beirut might be powerful, but his authority doesn’t extend to the Infernal Realm.”

Although Bebe was unhappy, he still behaved obediently and stopped making trouble. “Boss, I got it.”

“The three of you came from a material plane. What you need to do now is wait over there!” The bald man pointed towards the empty space where those dozens of creatures were quietly standing. Linley couldn’t help but turn and look at them.

Half of these creatures were humans, while the others were of different species.

“These dozens of creatures only have five Deities amongst them. The rest are all Saints.” Linley could tell at a glance.

The bald man continued coldly, “What the three of you need to do is just stand there obediently. You aren’t permitted to make any sound, or to run about. You must obey us in all things. If you disobey, then your lives will come to a halt here.”

The black-haired man laughed loudly, “Listen closely to what my Third Brother just said. Otherwise…haha.”

The bald man glanced at the black-haired man, who could only chuckle. The bald man then continued to speak emotionlessly, “I have already told you what I needed to tell you. You are not permitted to speak or ask questions. Tomorrow morning, we will send you off!”

After speaking, the bald man returned to his corner and began to meditate yet again.

The other two glanced at each other and began to laugh.

Linley had a thought. “Send us off tomorrow morning? To where?”

“Linley, we just arrived in the Infernal Realm. It’s best for us to first get a clear sense of the situation. Let’s listen to these men in purple robes for now.” Delia’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. She held Linley’s hand as well. Linley turned and smiled towards Delia, and then led her and Bebe towards the empty space.

Linley and Delia only glanced at some of those previously unseen races amongst the creatures present.

“These are all from material planes. Only, many of these races do not exist

in our Yulan continent." Delia chatted with Linley using divine sense with some interest. Linley nodded slightly as well. "Hey, Delia, look at that person over there."

There was a person towards the rear of the dozens of people present. His entire body was covered with draconic scales, and there was a draconic horn in the middle of his head as well. He seemed extremely similar to a Dragonblood Warrior.

"Boss, that guy looks so similar to you when you are transformed." Bebe said mentally as well. "Isn't that one of the legendary Draconians?"

"Probably." Linley found it quite interesting as well.

Just by standing there in that empty area, Linley saw so many different races. Although more than half were humanoid, that was including the five Deities as well. Any race, upon reaching the Deity-level, was capable of taking human form.

"Linley, from what that bald man just said, it seems that at daybreak, we will be sent away. I imagine that they send people off every day." Delia quickly was able to come to a general deduction. "There really are so many material planes. So many come to the Infernal Realm each day!"

Linley secretly nodded as well.

In the Yulan continent, normally speaking, a person would go to the Higher Planes perhaps once a century. There were simply too many material planes, however. Even though they all went separately to the Infernal Realm, each day, many people arrived.

"In trillions of years, a countless number of experts must have been accumulated here in the Infernal Realm." Linley glanced at the three violet-robed men. Linley had the feeling…that the uniform which these three men wore had a peculiar aura which caused Linley to feel nervous.

That was no ordinary uniform, nor was it something which had simply been

formed from divine power.

“And those seal markings.” Linley naturally noticed that the three men had a violet seal marking in their forehead. The magic formation once more lit up with misty light. This time, two enormous creatures appeared within the magic formation. The two were at least ten meters tall, and their entire bodies were covered with golden fur. They looked like some sort of simian apes.

In addition, these two strange creatures actually had black scales growing out of their forehead.

“Motherf*cker, grow smaller!” The black-robed man shouted angrily.

The two massive creatures that were three stories tall, in their own material planes, clearly were the most powerful creatures around. Upon being cursed, one of them grew hot-headed and actually roared back in anger. He even swung his tail viciously towards that violet-robed warrior.

“You asked for it!” The violet-robed warrior stared. A black staff suddenly appeared in his hands, which suddenly elongated. Dozens of black staff shadows suddenly came smashing down, filling the air with a destructive aura, instantly terrifying those two creatures and bringing them to their senses.

Only, it was too late!

“Boom!” That ten-meter tall creature instantly became smashed into a pile of demolished flesh.

The other creature immediately shrank in size to just two meters tall, staring in terror while speaking in the human tongue, “Milord, spare me!”

“You are in the Infernal Realm now. Do you still think you are in that material plane? You really asked for it.” The violet-robed warrior snorted. “Listen up. What you need to do right now is stand over there. Don’t ask any questions. We’ll tell you what needs to be told. What doesn’t needs to

be told, we'll kill you for asking about."

"Simply put, don't make any sound and listen to our orders!"

The black-haired warrior made the black staff disappear with a flip of his hands. "Enough. Go back over there."

"Sixth Brother, clean the floor up." The bald man who was meditating suddenly spoke out.

"Uh…" The black-haired man looked at the bloodstained ground and the corpse which had been smashed apart. He couldn't help but frown. He immediately turned to stare at that seemingly simian creature. "You, hurry over."

The creature couldn't help but tremble. He immediately pointed at himself in confusion, his eyes mystified.

He didn't dare make a sound!

"Right, I'm talking to you." The black-haired man nodded, and the creature immediately ran over at high speed quite obediently. The black-haired man pointed at the floor. "Right now, hurry up and clean this floor up. If there's a trace of blood left, you can accompany your friend in death."

The creature was so frightened he hurriedly nodded.

Linley, Bebe, and Delia all felt their hearts shaken in surprise.

"Boss, it seems the people here really kill people at the drop of a hat. They don't hesitate at all." Bebe said mentally. Linley glanced at the black-haired man. "He doesn't care at all. So many people come every day to the Infernal Realm. Who would care about a few people more? Also, that black-haired man is extremely powerful!"

Delia and Bebe both agreed.

They could both sense that the three violet-robed men were at least at the God level of power.

“Just from that technique, we can tell that this black-haired man trains in the Way of Destruction. His attack just now contained both a material component as well as a spiritual component. It seems he has fused at least two profound mysteries!” Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished at this violet-robed man’s power.

In addition, Linley could also tell that of the three violet-robed men, the most powerful one should have been that cruel-looking bald man.

“The gravity here in the Infernal Realm is nearly a hundred times stronger than that of the material planes as well.” Linley was carefully sensing the differences in this new place. For the gravity to be so strong didn’t mean much to Deities. “When I went to the Necropolis of the Gods, my spiritual energy was restricted to one ten-thousandth of my normal range. But here in the Infernal Realm, my divine sense’s range is restricted even more!”

This was their first trip to the Infernal Realm. Linley didn’t dare to wildly spread out his divine sense and see how far he could stretch.

Only, he had the sense that the restrictions on divine sense in this Higher Plane was far greater than the restrictions the Necropolis of the Gods had placed on his spiritual energy.

Time flowed on, and one human, beastman, or magical beast after another continued to arrive. Many types of creatures continued to be transported to the Infernal Realm. By the time the red glow of the sun rose above the sea-line and shone down upon this castle atop Mirrormoon Ridge, over a hundred creatures had arrived from the material planes to the Infernal Realm.

Suddenly, footsteps rang out. From the nearby gate, one after another violet robed man walked in, chatting and laughing amongst themselves.

“Third Brother, thank you for standing guard all night.” Several violet robed

men chuckled and greeted him. Soon, hundreds of violet robed men had arrived. Linley wasn't able to detect the strength level of any of these men. Several of them in particular shocked Linley with the strength of their aura alone, capable of stirring up fear like how Adkins had.

Chapter 2 – Inkstone

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 2, Inkstone

Mirrormoon Cliff. The empty space in the center of the violet castle had hundreds of violet-robed men assembled here, causing the hundred-plus creatures who had just arrived in the Infernal Realm to feel fear and shock.

“Why are there so many experts here? All of them are Gods at the least, and that person who seems to be the leader is very possibly a Highgod!” Bebe rolled his eyes as he spoke to Linley mentally. Linley mentally spoke back, “Bebe, don’t worry about that. Keep waiting. It is daybreak, now. They should send us off.”

Linley knew for certain that these people were far too powerful.

In addition, the uniforms of those violet-robed men all contained a certain aura which caused Linley to feel an inexplicable dread.

“Silence!” A deep voice rang out, and the chattering violet-robed men immediately shut their mouths, no longer daring to speak. At the same time, the hundreds of violet-robed men stepped to one side together in an orderly fashion, causing the six other violet-robed men to stand out.

“These six should be the leaders.” Linley had seen Adkins, Sadista, and Bluefire. He could sense that six people gave him a similar feeling.

There were four men and two women in the six.

“This time, the quality of these newcomers from the material planes isn’t bad. There’s even a pair of Gods.” One of the six, a tall, slender woman with straight shoulders and short hair, glanced at Linley’s group, then turned to the other five and laughed, “This time, it should be my turn to send them off, right?”

“Amelia [A’mi’li’ya], nobody is fighting with you over it!” One of the six, a slightly fatter man, laughed loudly as he spoke.

Amelia laughed as well, then said loudly, “Second Mirrormoon Squad, prepare to move out!”

“Yes, Captain!” A number of those people within the hundreds of violet-robed persons called out loudly.

Amelia turned and glanced at the distant gate. A warrior dressed in golden clothes walked out from within the gate, quickly arriving in front of Amelia and coming down to one knee, saying with respect, “Master!”

“Prepare to head out.” Amelia said.

“Yes, Master!” The golden-clothed warrior rumbled.

And then, this golden clothed warrior flew into the air above the violet castle. A golden light shone, and the golden clothed warrior transformed into an enormous golden dragon, at least a hundred meters long. Under the blood-red glow of the sun, the golden dragon’s scales shone with a dazzling light as it coiled itself above the violet castle.

“Whooosh!”

An entrance that was ten meters long suddenly appeared on the flank of the golden dragon.

Everyone, including Linley, was shocked. Linley looked carefully. “Just now, that golden clothed warrior was clearly just a Saint. But now, he suddenly transformed into a golden dragon, and an entrance appeared on his flank?

Linley was filled with questions.

“Take all of these newcomers from the material planes inside.” Amelia said.

Immediately, forty nine violet-robed men walked out of the gathering towards Linley's group. Their leader, a bearded warrior, called out, "All of you, obediently go inside. Otherwise, we'll have to use force." Right after these words were said…

Ten people in the group of experts Linley was in flew directly towards the flank of the golden dragon, including Linley's group of three.

Upon flying into the flank of the golden dragon, Linley was shocked as well…so apparently, within the belly of this golden dragon, there was a setup like that of a manor. There weren't just chairs and tables; there were even decorations like manmade mountains, metallic flowers, and the like.

It was incomparably marvelous.

"Wow!" Many experts who entered couldn't help but sigh in shock. That seemingly simian creature also stared with wide eyes.

"Boss, this is a metallic creature." Bebe spoke mentally with Linley. "Just like Grandpa Beirut's metallic castle. Metallic creatures are capable of changing into all sorts of forms. However, the size of the changes is limited. Grandpa's metallic castle is much more powerful than this one."

Linley was secretly in awe of Lord Beirut.

Only today did he realize that the metallic castle which Beirut himself lived in was this incredible. In terms of size…this golden dragon's body was less than a tenth of the size of the metallic castle.

"Don't just stand there like idiots, sit." Amelia shouted coldly.

Immediately, the violet-robed people in the squad began to bark, "You two, sit over there. And you three, over there. Hurry up. Motherf*cker, if you are too slow, I'll send you flying with a kick." Those violet-robed people had no concept of courtesy.

Soon, Linley and the other hundred-plus newcomers from the material

planes were arranged into a seating pattern.

“Captain, where should we send this batch to?” A skinny, violet-robed youth asked.

Amelia glanced at him, then said calmly, “This time…we’ll send them to Nightblaze City!” Immediately, this flying metallic creature began to move, reaching an astonishing speed as it flew in the direction of the ocean.

“Crackle…”

Very strangely, within the belly of the golden dragon, a golden light was flowing everywhere, resulting in the two sides of the golden dragon’s belly becoming transparent. Linley and the other experts were able to see straight through the transparent sides of the and see what was outside. It was akin to the glass of the Yulan continent.

“How curious.” Linley said to himself in appreciation.

Having a metallic creature like this was quite comfortable. The nearby Bebe and Delia all stared through the translucent metal towards the outside.

“Huh?” Linley was somewhat astonished. He said mentally to the nearby Bebe and Delia, “This metal creature is traveling so fast.” Linley and the others were able to see the speed of movement by looking outside.

This was the Infernal Realm, not a material plane.

The gravity here was a hundred times that of the material plane. Even Linley, moving at full strength, wouldn’t be able to fly this fast. It must be understood…this was just a Saint-level metallic creature.

“Give these newcomers to the Infernal Realm a general understanding of the affairs of the Infernal Realm.” Amelia said to a nearby skinny, violet-robed youngster.

“Yes, Captain.”

The skinny violet-robed youngster immediately stood up and looked at Linley and the others. “You have all arrived in the Infernal Realm from the material realms. I will now give you a general understanding of the Infernal Realm. The Infernal Realm, as one of the Four Higher Planes, naturally has as many experts as there are clouds in the skies. Now that you are in the Infernal Realm, you should find a tribe or a clan to join.”

“In the Infernal Realm, there are primarily five large continents that are all but endless in size. These continents are the Redbud Continent, the Karol [Ka’luo] Continent, the Muja [Mu’ya] Continent, the Bloodridge Continent, and the Jadefloat Continent.”

Hearing this, Linley, Bebe, and Delia all had a thought.

Linley’s target on this trip was the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent!

“Five great continents. The Redbud Continent in the north and the Karol Continent of the west are already connected to the ends of the planes. In other words…the Redbud Continent’s northern edges is where the plane ends to the north, while the western side of the Karol Continent is where the plane ends to the west.”

“Aside from these five great continents, the rest is all ocean. The five continents are essentially connected into a circle. Inside the circle is the vast Starmist Sea, which is far greater than any single of the continents in size. The Starmist Sea is the ‘inner sea’, while the ‘outer sea’ is the sea which exists outside this circle of continents and is primarily located to the south and the east of the continents. This outer sea is known as the ‘Chaotic Sea’, and it is enormous!”

The skinny violet-robed youth chuckled when he said this. “But of course, this doesn’t mean much to you. The size of every single continent is shockingly large, and many experts will spend their entire lives in a single continent. The continent we are currently in is the Redbud Continent!”

Redbud Continent?

Linley's heart sunk! All of the continents of the Infernal Realm were astonishingly vast, unlike the simpler Yulan continent.

"Boss, what should we do? How are we going to get to the Bloodridge Continent?" Bebe couldn't help but reach out to him mentally.

"Our purpose in coming to the Infernal Realm, aside from going back to my ancestral clan, is primarily to adventure and explore this place. It's fine if we have a good adventure before heading off to the ancestral clan." Linley messaged back mentally. But although this was what Linley said and thought to himself, he still felt a hint of resignation.

The skinny violet-clothed youth continued, "In the Infernal Realm, there are five great continents and two oceans. These are each governed by the seven mighty monarchs! They are known here as the 'Seven Rulers of Hell'!"

The Seven Rulers of Hell?

Linley's group of people all began to secretly pay attention to this astonishing title.

"From what he says, these Seven Rulers are in charge of the five continents and the two seas. What sort of person would be able to be so incredible?" Linley secretly wondered.

The violet-robed youngster had a hint of veneration in his eyes. "The mighty Seven Rulers of Hell are the seven mighty Sovereigns who train in the Edicts of Destruction!"

"Seven Sovereigns?" Linley was secretly astonished.

This was the highest level of existence.

"But of course, the almighty Sovereigns disdain from interfering in worldly affairs. Generally speaking, most affairs are handled by each of the Lord

Prefects. The area where you are headed is the Nightblaze Prefecture! Nightblaze Prefecture covers a circumference of over a billion kilometers, and is considered a middle-sized prefecture!"

As soon as he heard these words, Linley stared in astonishment.

A circumference of a billion kilometers?

His own homeland, the Yulan continent, was only thirty thousand kilometers in size. The difference was too vast. Even if he flew nonstop in his Yulan continent, in twenty four hours, he would only cover a few hundred thousand kilometers. But in the Infernal Realm, where the gravitational pull was so much stronger, his speed would definitely be much lessened.

Just flying through a single Nightblaze Prefecture would most likely take a very, very long period of time.

And what's more, how could one possibly have the chance to fly about so freely in the Infernal Realm?

"The road ahead is truly difficult." Linley said to himself.

"Boom!" A rumble erupted from afar.

Everyone stared curiously outside the translucent windows towards the outside. They saw from afar, two groups of people fighting in mid-air. Lightning flashed, the wind howled, the earth shattered…over a hundred Deities were engaging in battle and the sight truly was astonishing.

"F*ck off!" A cold, angry sound erupted forth from Amelia's lips, transmitting through the metallic dragon and shaking the world.

Those hundred wildly battling Deities saw the golden dragon, and in particular that diagram on its head. It was a beautiful redbud flower!

"The Redbud Army!"

“Quick, flee!”

These hundred plus Deities were frightened. Forgetting about their mutual enmities, they immediately fled in every direction. In but the blink of an eye, they had all dispersed and could no longer be seen.

On the way over, Linley’s group encountered multiple battles involving hundreds of experts, but no matter how powerful they were, upon seeing the golden dragon fly over, they were so frightened that they immediately scurried and fled. This golden dragon flew for a very long time, spending roughly at least a full year.

Given the astonishing speed at which the golden dragon flew, and the fact that it had flown in a straight line, how vast a distance had they travelled!

“We are at the borders of Nightblaze Prefecture!” Amelia stood up, stretching and smiling. “Fortunately, Nightblaze Prefecture is fairly close to our Mirrormoon Cliff. Last time, when I went to the Snowlake Prefecture in the north, it took me ten full years to get there.”

The skinny, violet-clothed youth stood up as well and said, “The nine of you who are Deities, stand up.”

Linley and the rest of the nine all immediately stood up.

With a flip of his hand, the skinny violet-clothed produced a black rock that was the size of a fingernail. “One for each of you. This ‘inkstone’ is something nice. Keep it. Only those who are at the Deity level when they arrive in hell will receive it.” He gave each of the nine a piece.

“Inkstone?”

Linley stared in astonishment at this inkstone in his hands.

The inkstone was in a perfect square, roughly a centimeter on each side. It seemed to be a very unremarkable type of rock, but Linley could sense from

within it a unique aura that made his heart tremble.

“Whoooosh.”

A giant hole suddenly appeared in the flank of the golden dragon. Ten or so experts who had arrived from the material plane were immediately tossed out. Linley, Delia, and Bebe remained within the belly of the golden dragon. They were quite astonished. Laughing, the skinny violet-clothed youth said, “Don’t be hasty. It’ll be your turn soon.”

The golden dragon constantly flew, and after a while, ten or so more were tossed out.

By the fourth batch, it finally came to Linley’s turn.

“Whoosh!” Their seats beneath them vanished, and a powerful energy stream tossed Linley and the other ten out. Linley, Delia, and Bebe quickly controlled their movements, then looked closely below.

“Good heavens, what is that!”

This was a mountain range, and within the mountain range, there were a large number of black dragons over a hundred meters long. At a glance, there were definitely thousands of these black dragons who were stretched out into a ‘web’ as far as Linley could see. At this time, someone flew over at high speed from amongst those black dragons.

This was a silver-haired old man. Laughing, he said, “The three of you just arrived in the Infernal Realm, right? Welcome to my Black Dragon Tribe! If you want to join our Black Dragon Tribe, each of you, please pay a single inkstone. We will be responsible for protecting you. If you are unwilling… then go ahead and roam the Infernal Realm by yourself!”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe couldn’t help but be amazed.

Chapter 3 – Black Dragon Tribe

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 3, Black Dragon Tribe

“Can, can you speak a bit more clearly?” Linley was utterly confused.

As soon as he had come out of the metallic creature, he had run into this silver haired old man, who immediately asked him for his inkstone. Although he didn’t yet have an idea as to what an inkstone was, he could sense the peculiar aura within it.

It definitely wasn’t an ordinary item. How could he so casually give it to others?

“Haha…” The silver-haired old man’s face was all smiles. “The three of you just arrived, so I’m afraid there are quite a few things you don’t know yet. Fine, then. I’ll speak a bit more clearly!”

The silver haired old man glanced around, then said, “This Infernal Realm is one of the Four Higher Planes. As the plane created by the ‘Overgod of Destruction’, the Infernal Realm is filled with boundless cruelty and savagery. Massacres are commonly seen in the Infernal Realm!” As he spoke, the old man’s eyes dimly glowed red.

Linley and the others were secretly startled.

The silver-haired old man swept Linley’s group with his gaze, then said with absolute certainty, “Although the three of you are Deities, in the Infernal Realm, you are in unfamiliar territory. I dare say that if you rashly wander about the Infernal Realm, you definitely won’t live for more than three days!”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe all were slightly shocked.

“Old man, are you trying to trick us?” Bebe stared.

Although Bebe stared at him, he did so in a very adorable way. The silver-haired old man didn't grow angry either. He said, "Although you have just recently arrived in the Infernal Realm, on that metallic airship of the Redbud Army, the various lords of the Redbud Army should have told you a few things. Fortunately, you are at the Deity level. If you were Saints, even if you had inkstones, I couldn't care less about taking you in.

Within Linley's mind, a scene suddenly appeared.

When they were in that metallic creature, that skinny violet-robed youngster had said, "The Infernal Realm, as one of the Four Higher Planes, naturally has experts as common as the clouds. Since you are in the Infernal Realm, you had best find a tribe or a clan to join!" At that time, Linley hadn't paid too much attention to these words.

But now, he somewhat understood.

Joining a tribe or a clan!

"Linley, the Infernal Realm is actually this dangerous?" Delia looked towards Linley, who immediately sent back a consoling message via divine sense, "No matter what, we are already here in the Infernal Realm. It's best to be cautious. Let me ask him about a few things first."

Linley looked towards that silver-haired elder and laughed. "My name is Linley. Might I ask who you are?"

"Buffett [Bo'fei'te]!" The silver-haired old man smiled.

Linley nodded and laughed. "Mr. Buffett, I would like to ask, what is this inkstone? We just arrived in the Infernal Realm, so we don't know anything at all about these things."

"Haha…" The silver-haired elder laughed. "That's understandable. This inkstone, to be precise, is the currency for the Infernal Realm!"

“Currency?” Linley, Bebe, and Delia were all surprised.

Having lived in the Yulan continent, Linley and the other two understand what a currency meant. The ‘currency’ of the Infernal Realm was actually this unusual inkstone.

“On what basis is this thing considered currency?” Linley asked, not understanding.

Something that could be used as currency should at least have a certain innate value.

Buffett shook his head. “I’m not too sure either as to what exactly is so special about the inkstones themselves. But I do know one thing. There is no place in the Infernal Realm where inkstones can be mined. Only the Seven Rulers of Hell are able to create them. Based on this alone, inkstones are qualified to be used as currency.”

Linley nodded slightly.

So inkstones were actually created by the Seven Rulers. Only, what special uses did inkstones have? Could it be that they were just made for people to look at? Linley still felt that inkstones had some sort of innate, unique value.

“What can this currency purchase?” Linley asked.

Buffett chuckled, “This currency can buy quite a few things. For example, divine artifacts. Divine sparks. Divine gemstones. Many more things. Also, some unique items such as amethysts, large golems, and more. But of course, there are some even more miraculous things…in short, this currency is good for many things. Even legendary Sovereign artifacts can be purchased using them. Only, the sum required is simply astronomical.

Linley began to understand the value of these inkstones.

“Can you tell me what the price of a Demigod spark is?” Linley asked.

“A Demigod spark is around a hundred inkstones. A Demigod artifact is generally only worth around ten inkstones.” Buffett said in a very experienced manner. “In the Infernal Realm, there are Deities everywhere, so a Demigod spark isn’t that valuable.”

“However, God sparks are worth ten thousand inkstones, while Highgod sparks are worth ten million inkstones!” Buffett sighed. “Ten million inkstones. If I had a Highgod spark, I would become an upper-class figure in the Infernal Realm.”

Linley, Bebe, and Delia glanced at each other. They all laughed.

“Boss, you actually thought that this inkstone was some sort of treasure.” Bebe messaged him through divine sense.

“I just had the feeling that the inkstone itself seemed very unusual. I didn’t expect that this inkstone actually isn’t worth much at all.” Linley’s group naturally wouldn’t care too much about this inkstone any longer. After all, Linley was carrying Demigod artifacts, and even quite a few God artifacts. He even had those two Highgod artifacts which he hadn’t used yet.

He had a single Highgod spark as well.

By now, Linley, Delia, and Bebe didn’t have any further objections to joining the Black Dragon Tribe. It was just a single inkstone each, right?

“If we join your tribe, what if we want to leave in the future?” Linley asked.

“Leave? You can leave whenever you want, of course.” Buffett laughed. “However, only idiots would leave by themselves. Without the ability to protect yourself, roaming these lands, where danger is omnipresent, is as good as throwing one’s life away. In the Infernal Realm, killing people to steal their valuables is extremely common. Even most Gods don’t dare to run about wildly.”

Linley’s group glanced at each other.

“Fine. We accept.” With a flip of his hand, Linley brought out his inkstone, while Bebe and Delia brought out theirs as well. Buffett reached out with his hand, but Linley suddenly pulled his arm back. “No rush. I’ll give it to you after we enter your Black Dragon Tribe.”

Buffett was startled, and then he began to laugh loudly. “You are afraid that I’m trying to cheat you?”

“Fine, come with me then.” Buffett immediately flew downwards, while Linley, Delia, and Bebe all followed him down.

The Infernal Realm’s gravity was nearly a hundred times that of the Yulan continent’s. Linley could clearly sense that his flying speed was quite a bit lower than in the material plane as well. While flying downwards, Bebe asked curiously, “Hey, old guy, just now you were talking about the Redbud Army. Those Redbud soldiers who escorted us here, who are they? Why is it that on our way over, we encountered many experts battling each other, but as soon as they saw the Redbud soldiers, they immediately were terrified and fled.”

“Oh, I almost forgot to tell you about this.”

Buffett sighed. “The Infernal Realm has five great continents. The lord of our Redbud Continent is a mighty Sovereign of Destruction, one of the Seven Rulers of Hell, whom we refer to as the ‘Redbud Ruler’.”

Linley and the others knew this.

The Infernal Realm had five great continents and two oceans, which were controlled by the seven Rulers. The Seven Rulers were Sovereigns who trained in the Edicts of Destruction!

“And this Redbud Army is the army under the control of this mighty Sovereign of Destruction! This is the most powerful army in the entire Redbud Continent, and they are completely devoted to the commands of the Sovereign, ‘Redbud Ruler’! The Redbud Continent has no one who dares

offend the Redbud Army!" Buffett's eyes were filled with eagerness.

Linley and the others were shocked.

So it was an army under the authority of a Sovereign! No wonder none of the experts they encountered on the way over dared to antagonize the Redbud Army.

"Perhaps a single small unit of the Redbud Army isn't that frightening. But if you dare offend a single unit of the Redbud Army, then most likely an entire regiment of the Redbud Army will come for revenge! Even someone as powerful as our Lord Prefect of the Nightblaze Prefecture, who might be able to deal with a regiment, would most likely then face the entire Redbud Army which would come for revenge. In the entire Redbud Continent, there is virtually no one who dares offend the Redbud Army!"

Buffett looked at Linley and the others. "You have to remember this. In the Redbud Continent of the Infernal Realm, no matter what, do not offend this Redbud Army. Offending them is disastrous!"

"They are so powerful, and no one dares offend them. Then why haven't you joined the Redbud Army, Mr. Buffett? I saw that many members of the Redbud Army were Gods. Aren't you a God as well?" Linley joked.

"Don't you think I want to?"

Buffett shook his head and sighed. "The requirements for joining the Redbud Army are very strict. First of all, you had to have become a Deity on your own! Anyone who became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark is immediately eliminated from consideration. This has caused more than 90% of the people in the Infernal Realm to have no hope of joining. And the second requirement is…you have to at least be a God, and have to go through a competition. Each time, they only recruit a very low number of people. Those capable of obtaining victory in the competition all have at least some sort of unique ability."

Linley couldn't help but sigh in astonishment at the quality of this Redbud

Army.

The weakest of them were Gods, and Gods who had become Deities through their own power. In addition, they then were selected through a tournament…over the countless years, the number of truly powerful experts who had been recruited into the Redbud Army was unimaginably high. No wonder nobody in the Redbud Continent dared to offend the Redbud Army.

Linley and the others landed on the ground.

“Roaaaar.” “Roaaaaar.” A series of roars rang out from the massive mountains in front of them.

Countless enormous black dragons that were over a hundred meters long lay coiled throughout the mountain ranges. If one took a careful look, one would discover that every single enormous black dragon had a human standing or sitting atop of them.

“This is our Black Dragon Tribe!” Buffett clearly was very proud. “Come, follow me inside.” As he spoke, Buffett strode forward. The mountain paths were winding, but Linley and the others were able to move forward easily.

“Hey?” Bebe suddenly exclaimed in surprise, “Boss, that seems to be adamantite!”

Linley turned. From not too far away, he did indeed see a small hill formed from adamantite. Such an enormous amount of adamantite caused Linley to feel astonished as well.

Seeing Linley stare in astonishment at the distant adamantite, Buffett couldn’t help but laugh. “That is adamantite. This is a very common type of ore in the Infernal Realm. You’ll see it everywhere. Look, over there, that blue ore? That’s blue nightmare ore. In terms of toughness, it is comparable to adamantite, but in terms of elasticity, it is actually even a level superior. However…these things can be seen everywhere. In the Infernal Realm, divine artifacts are quite worthless. If you want a divine artifact, you can just have a Demigod spend ten thousand years cultivating it, and then you’ll

have a Demigod artifact. But this will only be worth ten or so inkstones."

Linley, Delia, and Bebe maintained their silence.

Indeed…

Only after cultivation and nourishing would a divine artifact's power increase. A newly forged divine artifact couldn't even be considered a Demigod artifact, just an un-graded weapon.

"Buffett, you brought three more people. Haha, our tribe's population has increased yet again!" From afar, a voice rang out. An enormous black dragon flew over, and someone flew down from the black dragon's back. He wore a blue turban atop his head, and he appeared quite robust.

Buffett laughed, "They just arrived in the Infernal Realm."

"Hey." Bebe blinked his eyes. "It looks like everyone here is a Deity. Why do you raise these black dragons? These are all just Saints."

The robust man who had flown down laughed, "Don't underestimate them. This type of black dragon is a very unique race of black dragons. It is known as the 'Gerrard [Jia'le'de] Black Dragon' race. The saliva of Gerrard Black Dragons is quite valuable. If you raise a Gerrard Black Dragon, after ten thousand years, you'll have earned thousands of inkstones. You fellows are quite lucky to be able to join our Black Dragon Tribe. If you joined the other tribes, you wouldn't be as well off as you are with us."

Buffett said as well, "Indeed. If other Deities wanted to join our tribe, we wouldn't even be willing to accept them. You were sent over by the Redbud Army, however, so clearly you came from the material planes. You aren't a spy from the enemy tribes!"

Linley's group began to laugh helplessly.

So the reason why the tribe accepted them was because the three of them were very 'innocent'.

“Haha, we have new brothers, eh?” Many of the dragonriders let out loud laughs. “Since you’ve arrived at our Black Dragon Tribe, in the future, we will all be brothers. Haha, Buffett, hurry up and pick a place for them to live.”

Linley glanced at those distant black dragonriders, and in his heart, he felt a surge of warmth.

It seemed that the people of the Black Dragon Tribe were all quite good.

Chapter 4 – Royalwing City

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 4, Royalwing City

Every single black dragon had a rider on its back, the vast majority of which were men.

“Men still make up the vast majority of those who reached the Deity-level.” Linley said to himself. Actually, in both the Yulan continent’s experts as well as in the Redbud Army of the Infernal Realm, or currently here in the Black Dragon Tribe, the male to female ratio showed a simple truth.

Few women. Many men.

“Linley, don’t just stand there like an idiot. Hurry up and follow me.” That Buffett flew deeper into the mountains, and Linley, Delia, and Bebe followed him. The meandering, winding mountains grew deeper and deeper. Everywhere in the mountains, residences could be seen now, all of which appeared so marvelous.

To Deities, building a residence was a very simple task.

After flying for a while, Buffett led Linley’s group to land halfway up a high mountain. The area here was very large, at least a hundred meters across, more than enough for one to build a fairly large residence at.

“In the future, you can stay here. As for the residence, you don’t need me to help you build it, right?” Buffett laughed.

“Haha…” Linley laughed as well, and then suddenly stomped on the ground.

The floor of the mountain trembled, and a strange vibration spread out. One enormous boulder after another began to float into the air, and in accordance with a set rhythm, connected with each other. Light from the

dimly glowing yellow earth elemental essences shot out in every direction. Buffett stared in great surprise at this scene.

Soon, a two-story building with a simple courtyard was finished.

“The stones of the Infernal Realm really are heavy.” Linley let out a sigh.

These stones were all similar to adamantite. In addition, the gravity here in the Higher Plane of the Infernal Realm was a hundred times that of the Yulan continent, causing each boulder to weigh as much as a small mountain peak in the Yulan continent.

“So easily accomplished and so harmoniously done. Linley, can it be that you’ve already reached the level of mastery in the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth?” Buffett said with great surprise.

“Not yet.” Linley shook his head.

Buffett said unhappily, “Linley, don’t try to hide it. To be able to lift something so heavy with such ease and use these boulders of the Infernal Realm to create a manor, especially when making those boulders move in such a fluid, harmonious way…although I don’t train in the Laws of the Earth, I’ve seen quite a few people who train in the Laws of the Earth.”

Linley chuckled and didn’t say anything further.

Actually, Linley truly hadn’t yet reached the level of mastery in the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth. Only, because he had fused it with the Throbbing Pulse of the World, when utilizing it, it contained the Profound Truths of the Throbbing Pulse of the World. Naturally, he made it look easy.

“You can live without fear here in my Black Dragon Tribe. I won’t disturb you any further. If you need anything, in the future, you can ask me or ask anyone else.” Buffett said.

“Thank you, Mr. Buffett.” Linley smiled.

After Buffett left, Linley, Delia, and Bebe entered their own residence.

“It seems we’ll have to make our own tables and chairs as well.” Linley and the other two immediately began to take action. Linley controlled a boulder, making it fly over, and then used his palm to chop down using the principles of the Dimensional Decapitator. The boulder was immediately chopped into an extremely slick, smooth surface.

A black dagger appeared in Bebe’s hands as well. It was extremely fierce.

In front of Bebe, a stone table quickly took form. As the three worked together, the stone table and three stone chairs quickly were completed.

“Whew. Fortunately in the habit, I habitually store wine and some other things in my interspatial ring. Otherwise, in this place, we wouldn’t have anything to drink.” With a flip of his hand, Linley withdrew a flask of fine wine, and Bebe immediately called out in jubilation, “Boss, you brought this as well?”

“The Infernal Realm. A strange new place.” Drinking the wine, Linley let out a sigh. As soon as they had entered the Infernal Realm, the vast majority of people they had encountered were all Deities. The weakest member of that Redbud Army was a God; that went without saying. But even here in the Black Dragon Tribe, everyone was a Deity.

This was a world of Deities!

“Boss. The distance between us and that Bloodridge Continent is way too far. What we going to do?” Bebe was somewhat worried. “That Buffett even said that if we run around wildly, we probably won’t live for more than three days.”

Delia frowned as well. “Let’s not be hasty. Let’s first find our footing here in the Infernal Realm.”

Linley nodded as well. “The Infernal Realm isn’t the Yulan continent.

Experts are as common as the clouds. We can't just go wherever we want to go. Everything else aside, we don't even know the general, basic geography of the Infernal Realm."

"Knock!" "Knock!" ….. Suddenly, the sound of knocking on the door could be heard.

"I'll get the door." Bebe leapt over, then easily pulled open the extremely heavy stone door. Behind the stone door, there was a delicate-looking, golden-haired youngster, who laughed as he greeted them. "Hey there. I'm Krate [Kui'te]. I live very close to you."

"My name is Linley. Please, come in!" Linley rose and spoke.

Linley could immediately tell that this Krate was a Demigod.

"My big brother and I live together to your north, also halfway up the mountain. I heard you just arrived in the Infernal Realm." Krate was very warm and friendly.

"Please take a seat. This is some fine wine from my homeland. Have a taste." Linley said.

"Wine?" Krate's eyes lit up, and he immediately sat down at the seat which Bebe had been sitting on. He hurriedly drank a cup, half-closing his eyes in satisfaction. "This wine really is excellent. Although it can't compare to the fine wine sold in Royalwing City, it's quite good to be able to drink any wine at all."

"Royalwing City?" Linley was somewhat puzzled.

Suddenly understanding, Krate said, "Oh, right, you just arrived in the Infernal Realm. There's many things you don't know…in our Nightblaze Prefecture, there are a total of ten cities that are scattered throughout Nightblaze Prefecture. The city closest to us is Royalwing City, roughly ten million kilometers away or so."

Linley and the others were shocked.

Ten million kilometers, and that was the nearest one?

“However, to enter Royalwing City, you have to pay a fee of an inkstone.” Krate cursed softly. “They really are greedy!”

Krate let out a sigh. “Only, if you actually want to buy some things, or sell off your dragon saliva, or a divine artifact, it’s still better to do the trade within Royalwing City.”

“Trade can only be done in Royalwing City?” Delia didn’t quite believe it. “It makes sense for large transactions to be made within Royalwing City. But what about smaller transactions?” As Delia saw it, this was the sort of logic of the stores of the Yulan Plane.

Cities had larger stores, while smaller towns also had some small shops.

“Generally speaking, smaller transactions can be carried out at the chief’s place within the tribe. However, generally speaking, a Demigod artifact can be sold for seven inkstones in Royalwing City, while the chief will only give you five inkstones for it.” Krate was somewhat unhappy about this.

Linley and the others understood. After all, Royalwing City was over ten million kilometers away from here.

“Wait. I heard Buffett say that a divine artifact was worth around ten inkstones.” Bebe said, and Linley suddenly remembered as well.

Krate said disdainfully, “When he said ten inkstones, he was referring to the selling price in Royalwing City, the retail price. When we sell them, we naturally are only able to get seven inkstones.”

“Krate, I want to ask you, if I wanted to go to another continent, how should I go?” Linley asked.

Krate stared. “Another continent? Good heavens. Redbud Continent is

already enormous. In the entire Infernal Realm, there are a total of 108 prefectures. Our Redbud Continent seems to have nearly twenty prefectures, each one of which covers an extremely vast area…going to another continent is too hard."

Linley had a thought. "A continent only has nearly twenty prefectures. It seems each Lord Prefect has an extremely high status as well!"

In the Infernal Realm, the status of the Lord Prefects was second only to the Seven Rulers.

"Whew, this wine really is nice." Krate drank another cup of wine, then stood up. Laughing, he said, "You just arrived, so I won't disturb you any further. In the future, if there's anything you need, you can come look for me. Right. Linley, that beauty next to you…be careful. The Infernal Realm has too few women. I expect that some people will come to try and pursue and woo that beauty you have there."

Linley and Delia were both astonished.

"Who dares?! I'll off him with my knife!" Bebe growled angrily.

"Haha, I'm just saying. Anyhow, I'll leave now." Krate chuckled twice, then left.

Linley and Delia glanced at each other, then began to laugh. Delia said softly, "Linley, in the future, if someone is pursuing your wife, what will you do?"

"What will I do? I'll clobber any who comes." With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved the adamantine heavy sword and gave it two twirls.

Chasing after someone else's women really did happen quite frequently. With Linley's group in the Black Dragon Tribe, there really were people who came to get into Delia's good graces. However, Delia herself shouted at them, while Linley in particular transformed into three clones and began to trample on them as Bebe would add a few flying kicks.

Quickly, nobody in the Black Dragon Tribe dared to have any further designs on Delia.

They had already been in the Black Dragon Tribe for two months. Linley and the other two had slowly grown accustomed to this place.

“Two fighting over a single woman. The two men are both Demigods. Neither of them know how to use spiritual attacks. All they can do is use material attacks.” Linley raised his head up to stare in the air above the Black Dragon Tribe. Two muscular figures were engaging in a battle.

Not just Linley and Bebe were watching. There were thousands of people present, watching this battle, nearly a quarter of the total population of the Black Dragon Tribe.

“What’s going on with those two? Why do they have to fight? Can’t they just ask what that girl named Catelyn [Ka’te’lin’] wants?” Delia was somewhat puzzled. At this time, a figure wearing a grass hat flew over at high speed. Bebe laughed repeatedly, “Boss, I already know the inside details on their battle.”

“Tell.” Linley said with curiosity.

“That golden-haired man is named Kendita [Kan’di’ta]. Kendita and that Catelyn come from the same material plane. Their relationship is quite good. But of course, they haven’t reached the stage of sleeping on the same bed yet.” Bebe rubbed his nose, raising his head as he spoke. “That black-haired man is Kimpton [Jin’pu’dun]. He used to be a Gerrard Black Dragon!”

Linley was somewhat surprised. “Did you just say that Kimpton was one of the Gerrard Black Dragons they raised?” The Black Dragon Tribe raised Gerrard Black Dragons to earn inkstone. Linley’s group knew this.

The Black Dragon Tribe had a rule. If a Gerrard Black Dragon was able to reach the Deity level and transform into human form, then they could join

the Black Dragon Tribe. Because of this rule, the Gerrard Black Dragons all had a hint of a hope for the future.

“Right.” Bebe nodded hurriedly. “That Kimpton was originally a Gerrard Black Dragon that had been raised here. After a long period of time, the Gerrard Black Dragon actually reached the Deity level. That’s Kimpton.”

Linley grew curious.

“Perhaps because of how long she had been raising him for, Catelyn treated Kimpton very well. When Kimpton transformed into human form, he actually began to pursue Catelyn. This Black Dragon has fallen for Catelyn.” Bebe began to snicker. “Naturally, this makes Kendita unhappy. How can he allow the woman he likes to be together with a Black Dragon, even if the Black Dragon is now in human form? Thus, the two began to fight. Only, they are just Demigods, and they only have insights into very basic mysteries. Their attacks are essentially nonlethal, which is why their battle has gone on for so long. This isn’t the first or second time this has happened.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel speechless.

But right at this moment.

From afar, a black robed shadow flew over in the air above the mountain ranges. The two battling Demigods, upon seeing the newcomer, were immediately frightened and flew down at high speed. Upon seeing the medallion this black-robed man wore on his chest, a sharper-eyed onlooker was shocked as well and cried out in alarm, “Ah, a Fiend!”

The other onlookers of the Black Dragon Tribe who had been watching the battle all raised their head, and their faces instantly changed from fear. They immediately scattered in every direction.

“Fiend?” Linley raised his head in confusion.

Chapter 5 – Fiend Medallion

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 5, Fiend Medallion

The highest mountain peak in the mountain ranges where the Black Dragon Tribe lived pierced towards the heavens like a sharp sword. Atop the mountain peak, there was an ancient black castle, which was completely made out of adamantite. According to legend, the owner of this black castle dearly loved adamantite.

“Whoosh!” The black-robed figure who had been termed a ‘Fiend’ swept the terrified members of the Black Dragon Tribe with his gaze, then flew directly into that black castle. The gates to the black castle swung open, and immediately, people came to respectfully take this Fiend in.

The many other members of the Black Dragon Tribe, upon seeing this, couldn’t help but begin chatting amongst themselves.

“The Fiend actually went to visit the chief. He isn’t going to go kill the chief, is he?”

“Your original body was that of a Six-Eared Donkey. Even as a Deity, you are an idiot. Think about it. If the Fiend truly came to kill the chief, would the chief send people to open the castle gates and respectfully escort the Fiend inside? As I see it, the chief definitely has something important to carry out, which is why he invited a Fiend to come.”

The members of the Black Dragon Tribe continued to discuss this amongst each other.

Halfway up the mountain, Linley sat atop a boulder, listening to these conversations. He couldn’t help but frown. Raising his head high, he looked towards that black castle located atop the mountain peak. That black castle had dozens of enormous black dragons coiling around it.

“The master of Black Dragon Castle is the chief of the Black Dragon Tribe, Stirton [Si’te’dun], the most powerful figure of the Black Dragon Tribe!” Linley murmured to himself.

Having spent two months in the Black Dragon Tribe, Linley had learned a few things about it. The Black Dragon Tribe, despite just being one of many unremarkable, small tribes in the Infernal Realm, had a very strict hierarchy.

The lowest class included the Demigods like Linley. They had no income, nor did they have any uniforms.

The middle class included the Gods who were in charge of rearing the Gerrard Black Dragons. After all, the entire Black Dragon Tribe only had so many black dragons, so only a small number of people could raise black dragons. Although more than half of the income from rearing these black dragons had to be given to the clan chief, rearing Gerrard Black Dragons was still an extremely fast way of accumulating wealth.

The upper class was made up of the tribe’s army!

The soldiers of the army were all Gods, and were trained and drilled by Chief Stirton. If one became a member of the tribe’s army, the chief would gift some money once every ten thousand years or so.

Halfway up the mountain, at Linley’s residence, only Linley, Delia, and Bebe were present.

“That Fiend is so powerful.” Bebe sighed in praise.

“The chief’s power won’t be low either.” Linley said as though thinking about something.

Delia glanced at Linley, then said, “Forget about the entire Infernal Realm; even in the Nightblaze Prefecture of the Redbud Continent, there are countless numbers of tribes that have taken over some of the mountains in this prefecture which has a circumference of over a billion kilometers.

Whenever he thought about the terrifying size of the Nightblaze Prefecture, he could imagine how many other Black Dragon Tribe sized powers were present.

In the Infernal Realm, 'powers' like the Black Dragon Tribe were indeed like weak, unremarkable ants. There were far too many of them.

"However, even in the Black Dragon Tribe, there were so many Gods. Although I've never seen Lord Chief Stirton, I imagine that for him to be able to become the chief of the Black Dragon Tribe and have more than half of the tribe's wealth delivered to him, he should be a Highgod!"

Linley suddenly understood.

In the Infernal Realm…

Deities were nothing more than commoners. Probably one out of every ten Deities were Gods, while only one out of every ten thousand Deities were Highgods. But although the chances were very low, when one thought about how enormous the Infernal Realm was, one would understand how many Highgods there were as well!

"This is what it means to be in the Infernal Realm. The place where experts are as common as clouds!" Linley's heart trembled.

"Boss." Bebe gnawed on a straw, saying casually, "My Grandpa said that in a place like the Infernal Realm, those who became Deities through fusing with divine sparks can't possibly gain a high status. Only those who became Deities on their own, and also have fused profound mysteries, have that chance. Only by being strong will one have a high status!"

Linley agreed with this in his heart.

"Linley, I won't slow you down." The nearby Delia suddenly said.

Linley turned to look at Delia. Naturally, he understood what Delia was thinking. Delia was that sort of very strong-willed woman. Linley couldn't

help but laugh as he took Delia into his arms. “Delia, you? Slow me down? If you think about it, in our group here, I’m the only Demigod. It’s me slowing you down.”

Delia felt a warm feeling in her heart. How could she not know that in truth, Linley, who was in possession of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, was the one amongst the three of them with the most variables in play? Once he truly went all out, if Linley were to encounter for instance those enemies that were most proficient in soul-based attacks, he would be able to counter them perfectly!

“It’s broad daylight, you guys! Get a room! Argh, I can’t watch anymore.” Seeing this, Bebe called out while covering his eyes.

“Little rascal.” Delia couldn’t help but laugh while scolding him.

At this time, that silver-haired elder, Buffett, flew over from afar. Seeing Linley and the other two, he laughed loudly. “Linley, you’ve been in our Black Dragon Tribe for a while now. How do you feel?”

“Not bad.” Linley immediately rose to his feet with a smile. “At least, we haven’t encountered any dangers yet.”

Buffett said with a sigh, “Right. If you were outside, you would learn…that there are simply too many bandit groups that ambush and slaughter travelers in the Infernal Realm. Generally speaking, Gods and Demigods don’t dare to travel the Infernal Realm alone.”

“Even Gods don’t dare?” Bebe stared.

Buffett went to a nearby stone chair and sat down, then nodded. “Right. Not even Gods. The bandit groups of the Infernal Realm are generally formed by Demigods and Gods. Do you think an entire group of bandit Gods and Demigods wouldn’t be able to deal with you, a single God? They have the advantage of numbers!”

“Then, why don’t Highgods act as bandits?” Bebe continued.

“Haha.” Buffett laughed. “Highgods, even in the Infernal Realm, can be considered upper class individuals. Why would they engage in something as dangerous as banditry? Whether through cultivating Highgod artifacts, by refining divine jewels, or by joining a large clan and becoming a strong supporter, they are easily able to live carefree lives.

Linley nodded slightly.

It was the same as the Yulan Plane, actually. True experts, such as those experts of the ninth rank, disdained banditry. However, in the Yulan continent, there were still some famous bandit groups which had a few powerful experts in them.

“But of course, the Infernal Realm has a few exceedingly powerful bandit groups. Only bandit groups like these will have Highgods. However, even if they have Highgods, they generally won’t act against another Highgod. After all, how would they know how powerful that other Highgod is? There are great gaps in power between Highgods as well.” Buffett sighed.

Linley agreed completely.

For example, Sadista had been killed by Bluefire with one blow.

Adkins, when facing Beirut, had both his Highgod bodies destroyed in just two blows.

“In our Infernal Realm, although there are many bandits who ambush and attack people, there are three powers that they don’t dare to offend. The first is the Redbud Army!” In a warm manner, Buffett continued to provide Linley’s group with some things that were common knowledge, while Linley and the other two listened carefully.

Linley’s group was planning to head towards the Bloodridge Continent, after all.

Only, right now they were too weak. They had to endure for now.

“Redbud Army. Got it.” Linley and the other two nodded. That was an army under the control of a Sovereign, an extremely powerful army. Who would dare antagonize them?

“The second power is the prefectural army!” Buffett sighed.

“Prefectural army?” Linley and the other two were puzzled.

“What’s a prefectural army, old man?” Bebe asked, not understanding.

Buffett said, “The entire Infernal Realm has 108 prefectures, and our Redbud Continent has nearly twenty as well. Every single prefecture has its own army! For example, our Nightblaze Prefecture naturally has the Nightblaze Army. These armies are known as ‘prefectural armies’! Within their own prefecture, everyone is glad if the army doesn’t make trouble for them; who would dare go antagonize the army? Once the army has their sights on you, even if you are a Highgod, you’ll be in for trouble!”

Linley understood now.

“The Redbud Army and the prefectural army, I can both understand. They are both giant armies. Then what is that third force which you said bandits are unwilling to antagonize?” Linley asked.

Buffett’s eyes revealed a hint of anticipation. “Fiends!”

“Fiends?”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe’s hearts trembled. At the same time, they grew curious.

“Mr. Buffett, what are Fiends?” Delia asked.

Linley was extremely curious as well. Just now, they had watched that black-robed man fly into the chief’s adamantine castle. The people of the Black Dragon Tribe, upon seeing that man, referred to him as a ‘Fiend’.

“Fiend is a type of title!” Buffett said with a sigh. “They are the valiant warriors of the Infernal Realm, a group of experts that fear no danger! Anyone capable of becoming a Fiend, even when roaming throughout the entire Infernal Realm, won’t encounter many bandit groups willing to act against them.”

Linley’s heart was stirred. He thought to himself, “I’m going to the Bloodridge Continent. The journey there will be an extremely long one. If I can become a ‘Fiend’, then I will encounter many fewer difficulties on the way over.”

Bebe and Delia had the same thought as well.

“What sort of a title is ‘Fiend’, old man? How does one become a Fiend?” Bebe asked.

Buffett said, “To become a Fiend isn’t too hard. You can go to any city, such as our closest Royalwing City. At Royalwing City, if you spend ten thousand inkstones, you can apply for a testing mission. Once you pass the testing mission, you will become a Fiend! Um, that is, you will become a One Star Fiend.”

“Ten thousand inkstones, just for a testing mission?” Bebe couldn’t help but stare.

Linley felt that this was too extravagant as well.

Ten thousand inkstones weren’t so easily earned.

“Just now, you said One Star Fiend?”

Buffett nodded. “Fiends have ranks, going from One Star Fiends to the terrifying Seven Star Fiends. This has to do with the level of missions they can accept. Those who are capable of accomplishing seven star missions are known as Seven Star Fiends!”

“However, it is generally only possible for Gods to accomplish even the simpler testing missions!” Buffett said with a sigh. “And that’s just a possibility!”

“The work which Fiends engage in is dangerous. They are all valiant. Even robbers aren’t willing to antagonize them. The most important thing is… you can’t tell the star rank of a Fiend by looking at them. From the surface, one can’t tell the difference between a One Star Fiend and a Seven Star Fiend.” Buffett said.

“From the surface? What do you mean?”

Buffett smiled as he pointed at the black castle atop the mountain peak. “Didn’t you notice? That Fiend who came just now had a Fiend medallion attached to the clothes over his chest! These are issued after a person completes the testing mission. Every single Fiend has the same ‘Fiend’ emblem!”

“Regardless of whether you are a One Star Fiend or a Seven Star Fiend, from the surface, you look the same. Only through using some very special methods can one judge a Fiend’s star rank.”

Bebe frowned. “Oh? How powerful is that Fiend?”

“I’m not sure either. However, even the weakest Fiends are Gods. Generally speaking, above-average Fiends are all of the Highgod level!” Buffett said. “Thus, bandits don’t dare to antagonize Fiends. After all, many Fiends are Highgods! If you encounter a Six Star Fiend or a terrifying Seven Star Fiend, no matter how powerful your bandit group is, you will be finished.”

Linley’s heart shook.

The majority of Fiends were Highgods? The weakest were Gods? It seemed that the quality of Fiends wasn’t lower than that of the Redbud Army at all.

Bebe’s eyes were shining. “You say more than half of Fiends are Highgods. How powerful are those powerful Seven Star Fiends?”

“Seven Star Fiends are amongst the most powerful experts of the Infernal Realm!” Buffett’s eyes had a hint of veneration in them. “Ordinary Highgods are unable to fight back against them at all. Once you reach the rank of Seven Star Fiend, you will have your own unique title. For example, in our Redbud Continent, based on what I know, we have produced figures like the ‘Silvermoon Fiend’ and the ‘Bloodviolet Fiend’, ultimate experts whose fame has spread throughout the entire Infernal Realm!”

Chapter 6 – Red-Eyed With Greed

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 6, Red-Eyed With Greed

“That powerful?”

In his heart, Linley was astonished and trembling at the might of these Seven Star Fiends. “Based on what he is saying, the power of these Seven Star Fiends should be amongst the most powerful of Highgods. I wonder if Bluefire has the power of a Seven Star Fiend or not.” Linley wondered to himself.

“Uh oh, I came to discuss something else. How’d we get sidetracked onto Fiends?” Buffett said hurriedly. “Linley, the reason I came here today was because I want to ask the three of you something.”

“Oh, Mr. Buffett, please ask away.” Linley said.

“Ask the three of us?” Bebe rubbed his jaw, staring at Buffett.

Smiling, Buffett said, “Precisely speaking, it’s the two of you.” And he pointed at Bebe and Delia.

“Oh?” Delia was somewhat puzzled as well.

“What is it, old man? Speak, hurry.” Bebe urged.

Buffett said, “In our Black Dragon Tribe, the vast majority of those at the rank of God will become a member of our guardian army. The two of you have already become Gods. I wonder if you’d be interested in joining the Black Dragon Tribe’s army? If you join the army, every ten thousand years, the chief will gift you with your salary. This is a much better life than rearing those Gerrard Black Dragons. If you rear those dragons, you always have to be by their side. It is quite tiring.”

“This…?” Bebe hesitated, looking towards Linley.

Delia laughed and spoke. “Mr. Buffett, we just arrived at the Black Dragon Tribe. There’s many things we aren’t familiar with yet, so we aren’t in a rush to join the tribe’s army either.”

“You won’t be able to make money as fast through doing other things as through the army.” Buffett said hurriedly. “I urge you to reconsider.”

“Mr. Buffett, let’s discuss this again in the future.” Linley said.

He had planned long ago that when the chance arose, they would go to the Bloodridge Continent. How could they always stay here at the Black Dragon Tribe? Receive a salary every ten thousand years? To other Deities, ten thousand years truly wasn’t a long period of time, but to Linley, there was no way he could wait that long.

“I just came to let you know.” Buffett didn’t mind.

“Mr. Buffett.” Linley hurriedly asked, “I would like to ask you, how often do people of the tribe go to Royalwing City?” Comparatively speaking, Royalwing City had to have more powerful forces present. He might be able to find a way to travel to the Bloodridge Continent there.

“Go to Royalwing City?” Buffett was startled. “Oh, our tribe doesn’t go there on any set schedules. We have to ride metallic creatures to get there. It can range from a short wait of a few years, or perhaps thousands of a years between trips.”

Linley’s heart couldn’t help but lurch.

Thousands of years? He had to wait that long?

Buffett suddenly laughed and said, “Oh, I just remembered, in half a year, it seems the tribe will make a trip to Royalwing City.”

“However, the members of the tribe have to pay five inkstones each if they

want to ride on that metallic creature." Buffett warned Linley and the other two. He could tell that Linley's group truly wanted to head to that Royalwing City.

Actually, every single person who had just arrived in the Infernal Realm would be very interested in visiting the large cities in the Infernal Realm.

"Thank you, Mr. Buffett." Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart. Just half a year.

After Buffett left, Linley's group began to drink and celebrate happily in their living room. In the Infernal Realm, wine was quite a luxury. Of course, Royalwing City had some extremely excellent wine, but the price was astoundingly high. The price of some fine wine could compare to that of a God spark.

"Each of us have to pay five inkstones to ride on that metallic creature!" Bebe cursed softly. "How black-hearted."

"Three of us. That means fifteen inkstones." Delia looked at Linley. "It seems we need to sell off some divine artifacts."

Linley was currently in possession of Highgod artifacts, God artifacts, and Demigod artifacts. Even more astonishingly, he had a Highgod spark. That Highgod spark alone would be enough to allow Linley become a rich man in the Infernal Realm. However…Linley's group knew that they couldn't reveal how much wealth they had.

In the Black Dragon Tribe, if others learned that they had Highgod sparks, most likely they wouldn't live to see the next day!

"How about this. I still have four Demigod artifacts on me. I'll go to the chief's castle first and sell off those four Demigod artifacts." Linley made his decision. "Although I'll suffer a bit of a loss, there's no other option."

Here in the tribe, a Demigod artifact would only sell for five inkstones. But if he went to Royalwing City, he would be able to sell it for seven

inkstones, while the shops of Royalwing City, in turn, would sell it for ten inkstones. Demigod artifacts were cheap, not worth much at all.

Since he made up his mind, he did it right away.

After drinking, Linley's group headed directly for that black castle atop the tall mountain peak. On the walls of this black castle, there were over ten Gods standing guard. They stared down at Linley's group but didn't say anything.

The entire Black Dragon Tribe only had twenty thousand people. Everyone knew each other.

"Linley, you came?" Someone came out from the side door to the castle. It was Buffett.

"Mr. Buffett, we came to sell a few Demigod artifacts." Linley said. Buffett nodded in understanding. "Oh, then come with me." As he spoke, Buffett let them forward into the castle through a side door.

Within the castle, there was actually another small castle.

"The inner castle is the place where his lordship lives. The outer castle is where the warriors of the tribe live." Buffett explained. "In the future, if you want to sell something, just head in directly from the side door and go to that shop. Generally speaking, members of the tribe can come into the outer city whenever they want. The guards won't stop you."

Within the black castle, the warriors of the tribe could be seen everywhere.

"Indeed, all of them are Highgods." Bebe sighed in praise.

Linley swept those people with his gaze as well. He knew that these people were all warriors of the Black Dragon Tribe. If other tribes were to invade, they would have to rely on these warriors to counterattack and defend.

"Go on in." Buffett pointed towards the shop in front of them.

Linley and the other two entered the tribe's shop. Within the shop, there was just a single black-haired middle-aged man seated cross-legged on the floor. When Linley's group entered, the black-haired man opened his eyes, sweeping them with an icy gaze. He said calmly, "What is it?"

Linley was startled. Was this the attitude a shopkeeper had towards his customers?

"They came to sell artifacts." Buffett walked in from outside as well.

"Oh. Take out the artifacts." The black-haired middle-aged man said.

With a flip of his hand, Linley removed four Demigod artifacts. These four Demigod artifacts were useless to him anyhow. The black-haired middle-aged man glanced at them, then said calmly, "Four Demigod artifacts, all weapons, nothing special. Five inkstones each, twenty inkstones total!"

With a flip of his hand, the black-haired man retrieved two long inkstone that were ten centimeters long. "Take the inkstones, leave the artifacts."

"Huh?" Linley was somewhat surprised. There were actually long inkstones? However, in terms of size, it did indeed appear that a long inkstone was equivalent to ten inkstones. Although he was surprised, Linley still placed the four divine artifacts down while accepting the two long inkstones which the man tossed over.

After exchanging for the twenty inkstones, Linley's group continued living quietly within the Black Dragon Tribe. Usually, they spent their time training quietly, peacefully awaiting the trip in half a year to Royalwing City.

The mountain ranges of the Black Dragon Tribe had a circumference of a thousand kilometers. Thousands of black dragons could be seen flying about at all times, heading in and out of the mountains. All of the members of the Black Dragon Tribe lived quietly here. However, over a thousand kilometers away from the mountains…

A savage black tiger that was the size of a mountain, along with a similarly sized vicious golden wolf, was moving together towards the Black Dragon Tribe. Those two astonishingly vast creatures also flew at a shockingly fast speed, creating terrifying sonic booms as they flew.

“Rumble…”

A thousand kilometers was quickly travelled.

Halfway up their mountain, in Linley’s residence, Linley was seated in the meditative position, quietly training in the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Essence of the Earth, working on fusing these profound mysteries. By now, both his original body as well as his divine earth clone were focusing on the Laws of the Earth, hoping to be able to reach the level of completely fusing these two profound elemental mysteries more quickly.

“Enemies attacking!”

“Enemies attacking!”

An ear-piercing voice echoed throughout the Black Dragon Tribe. Even Linley, in the middle of his training, was frightened into wakefulness.

“What’s going on?” Delia came out from her room, while Bebe flew in from outside, clearly very excited. “Wow, Boss, outside, two enormous aberrations came. Afterwards, I realized that behind those two monsters were a large number of Deities, at least thousands of people.”

“Enemies attacking?” Linley frowned. “They should be enemies of the tribe.”

Linley began to feel a bit worried. He didn’t know anything about the attackers. What he feared was…the enemies defeating the Black Dragon Tribe, then engaging in a massacre. That would make things dangerous. This wasn’t impossible; after all, divine sparks were a form of wealth.

Perhaps the enemy would truly massacre the entire Black Dragon Tribe!

“Let’s go out and take a look!” Linley immediately said. “If the situation looks bad, we will immediately leave.” Linley knew the limits of his own ability.

Linley and the other two immediately flew out. After flying out of their residence, they discovered that the skies above the mountains were filled with people. Virtually all of the members of the Black Dragon Tribe had flown out. Right now, the Black Dragon Army had also appeared, facing off with the enemy forces.

Linley and the other two flew over, joining the masses.

“Linley, you came.” Linley’s neighbor, Krate, greeted them when he saw them flying over.

“This is the army of our Black Dragon Tribe. They seem very formidable.” Linley let out a breath of praise. Up ahead of them, there were over a thousand warriors dressed in the same black battle outfit who were standing together. The murderous aura which a thousand Gods emitted simultaneously was enough to cause Linley’s heart to shudder.

Krate said proudly, “Indeed. Look over there, that gold-haired person. That’s my big brother!”

“Raschell [Le’qie’er], I didn’t expect that even you would join forces with that vicious wolf. I, Stirton, seem to recollect that I treated you quite well!” In the center of the Black Dragon Army, a powerful figure at least two meters tall roared out loudly. “Can it be that you don’t know what sort of person this vicious wolf is? If today, you abandon your course, I am willing to gift you a million inkstones, what do you say?”

Linley raised an eyebrow. “Chief Stirton?”

Linley immediately looked over. Stirton was exceedingly powerfully built, and he wore a black robe on his body. He stood in mid-air as though he

were a mountain, utterly unshakable.

“Haha, what a joke! Klotman’s [Ke’lao’te’man] character is better than yours, at least. In addition, a million inkstones? If you were willing to give me half of your Gerrard Black Dragons, that wouldn’t be bad.” In the opposing army, there was a person at least three meters tall whose face was covered with whiskers and a face that looked like a tiger’s. The tiger-headed man didn’t give the chief of the Black Dragon Tribe, Stirton, any face at all.

The other person, a skinny man dressed in a long golden robe, laughed evilly. “Stirton, you’ve taken sole possession of those thousands of Gerrard Black Dragons for so long. Don’t you feel you are a bit too black-hearted? If you are willing to divide those thousands of Gerrard Black Dragons into three parts, allowing the three of us to split them equally, then today, the people that I brought will immediately leave, along with Raschell. What do you say?”

“Hmph!” A cold snort rang out. Stirton swept them with a cold gaze. “I acquired these Gerrard Dragons in the past when I risked my life for them. Why should I give them to you?”

Linley, in the midst of the other members of the Black Dragon Tribe, felt his heart grow cold. “It seems the enemy is composed of an alliance of two other tribes. This will be troublesome.”

“Haha…” The tiger-headed warrior, Raschell, laughed loudly. “Klotman, let’s not waste any more words with this Stirton. Let’s just kill him. We’ll split those Gerrard Black Dragons evenly.”

The skinny, golden-robed man laughed coldly as well. “Big brother Raschell, well spoken.”

“Motherf*cker!” Stirton’s face became ferocious. He immediately sent out his divine sense. “First regiment, launch a group spiritual attack!”

Nearly eight hundred members of the Black Dragon Army suddenly, simultaneously brandished the weapons in their hands. Countless illusory

images shot out from their weapons in a dense barrage.

“Kill!” The two leaders of the enemy forces shouted as well, and one thousand of the three thousand members of the enemy forces also launched spiritual attacks in a very practiced manner.

Large amounts of illusory images instantly clashed throughout the air in between the two armies, either dissipating after clashing into each other, or continuing to shoot towards the enemy forces.

“Good heavens! If tens of thousands of people used a combination soul attack at the same time, most likely even a Highgod would be doomed.” Linley stared, slackjawed.

Chapter 7 – A Bloody Battle

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 7, A Bloody Battle

At a distance of several kilometers, the forces of the Black Dragon Tribe and the forces of the two combined enemy armies began to rain down attacks upon each other.

A distance of several kilometers, given the speed of soul attacks, was instantly crossed. Linley and the other ordinary members of the Black Dragon Tribe could clearly see that in mid-air, a large number of semi-translucent illusions pierced through the sky, attacking the opponents.

“Boom!” A portion of the soul attacks collided in mid-air, but the majority of the soul attacks passed through to attack the opponents.

The warriors of the two sides wanted to dodge and avoid these soul attacks. However, the soul attacks covered the entire sky, and so quite a few unlucky God-level warriors were still struck by those soul attacks. Upon being struck…even if they didn’t die, their souls would still be affected.

“Boom!” “Boom!”

Corpses of the warriors of the two sides began to fall down from the skies.

“Semih [Sen’mi]!”

“Third Brother!”

Those God-level warriors all began to feel grief and rage.

“This battle fought by armies that are completely composed of Gods…” Linley and the other members of the tribe were behind the army. Watching this scene, he felt extremely stunned. “In an instant, dozens of Gods perished. This sort of organized battle is truly terrifying!”

The nearby Bebe said quietly, “Uh, if an army of hundreds of thousands of Deities joined forces in an attack, even a Highgod would be finished.”

Delia’s face changed as well.

How could they possibly see a battle like this in the Yulan continent? But in the Infernal Realm, this was nothing more than a battle between tribes.

Linley couldn’t help but think back to what he had experienced in the Necropolis of the Gods.

That time, at the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods, he had encountered a million Abyssal Blade Demons. At that time, those millions of Abyssal Blade Demons had dove down while brandishing their blades en masse, resulting in nearly a million energy blows raining down upon them. Linley’s group had nearly been done for.

“Whoosh!” Suddenly, several rays of soul attacks shot out towards Linley’s group.

“Quick, dodge!” Linley immediately shouted through his divine sense.

Not just them. Many of the other members of the Black Dragon Tribe dodged as well.

Many soul attacks, after being deflected by the God-level warriors of one side, actually flew towards Linley’s group. These were God-level soul attacks, while the majority of those below the army were Demigods. Generally speaking, if they got hit they would most likely die.

“Let’s not stay behind the army.” Bebe’s face was sour. “It’s too easy to get hit by the remnant attacks.”

Linley took a close glance at the unfolding battle between the tribes. “The battle is growing more and more vicious!”

“Physical attacks!” Stirton howled angrily. He was utterly enraged that two tribes were joining forces against him. Under Stirton’s command, the Black Dragon Army’s warriors all began to unleash their physical attacks.

The battle was being raised to a new level!

“Whoosh!” Rays of blue sword energy pierced through the sky. Wherever the sword energy passed, space itself began to ripple.

The Infernal Realm was far more stable than the material planes. In the Yulan Plane, Linley could easily cut open the walls of reality, but this was the Infernal Realm. It would be impressive if Linley was able to create even spatial ripples.

“Grooowl.” An enormous elemental beast appeared out of nowhere. One enormous beast after another appeared in mid-air, biting and tearing at each other.

“Boom!” A thick blast of lightning slashed through the air, attacking the enemies.

“Riiiiip!”

The warriors of the two sides wildly attacked each other in mid-air. When a God was struck by several material attacks at once, he would be disintegrated! In but a single exchange of blows, dozens of God sparks fell down from mid-air.

“The situation looks bad!” Linley frowned. “The Black Dragon Army numbers less than two thousand, while the opponent’s forces have three thousand.”

If they kept on fighting head on like this, the Black Dragon Tribe would be at a great disadvantage.

“Haha, Stirton, today, you will definitely die!” The skinny, gold-robed man’s shrill voice rang out, while the other, tiger-headed warrior also

bellowed, “Brothers, kill them! Kill them all! Spare no one!”

Stirton’s face was savage.

“All members of the Black Dragon Tribe, annihilate the enemies!” Stirton roared furiously.

Instantly…

The nearly twenty thousand members of the Black Dragon Tribe that had been located behind the army all simultaneously drew their weapons and released their most powerful attacks. The entire sky was filled with illusory sword shadows, massive elemental beasts, and all sorts of shadows…

Over ten thousand attacks instantly filled the skies, attacking the opponents.

“Kill them!” The members of the Black Dragon Tribe no longer held back.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe couldn’t help but feel astonished.

“Linley, quick, help attack.” An explosive shout sounded out from nearby, causing Linley to be startled.

Turning, Linley saw that Krate, normally so friendly and so fragile looking, now had a savage look on his face. Looking like an enraged lion, he shouted towards Linley’s group, “We’re at the final stages now. If the army is finished, we are also finished. Those people will exterminate us. Kill them all, kill them!”

Bebe was the first to react. He immediately howled loudly, “Kill!” At the same time, that black dagger appeared in his hands and created rays of black light which shot towards the opponents. This black dagger was the dagger which Beirut had given him.

Everyone had gone mad. They were struggling for survival!

“Kill!” Linley and Delia withdrew their weapons as well.

Not caring about picking out a specific enemy, they swung their weapons towards the direction of their enemies. Linley was wielding his adamantine heavy sword. Dozens of enormous earthen swords appeared and swung outwards. Although superficially, these enormous earthen swords looked like physical elemental attacks, in reality, they had been infused with the Throbbing Pulse of the World.

“Charge over there and kill those Black Dragon tribesmen!” The enemy leader, that tiger-headed warrior, bellowed out.

“Charge over and kill them!” Stirton howled as well.

Previously, everyone had been exchanging long range blows. By now, however, everyone had lost friends or family, and their eyes had become red with bloodlust. The two sides instantly traversed the distance between them, engaging in a slaughter in mid-air. Hundreds of full Gods directly charged towards the group of Demigods.

There was a large difference between Demigods and Gods, especially now when hundreds of Gods were charging over.

“What is Stirton doing!” Linley was extremely unhappy. “The Black Dragon Tribe’s warriors clearly are inferior to the opponents in strength, and yet he still ignores everything else in favor of battle. By now, he should strike out by himself and destroy the enemy commanders. This is the only option!”

When your forces were inferior to your opponent’s forces, the fastest way to achieve victory was to kill the leaders of your opponents.

However, Linley wasn’t Stirton.

Linley had no way of knowing what Stirton was thinking.

Next to Linley, Krate suddenly stared at a large, tall figure who was falling from mid-air. His eyes instantly turned red, and he let out a fierce cry: “Big

brother!" His big brother had taken care of him when they were in the material planes, and had continued to do so up to this very day. But today, his big brother had died!

"Kill!" Krate lost himself in rage. His eyes completely red, he wanted to charge towards the enemies.

"Krate!" Linley shouted explosively at him through divine sense, and this sound caused him to wake up slightly.

"Quick, retreat, go back. If you die here, there's no point to it at all." Linley said frantically. At this point, the armies were engaged in wide-scale warfare. Linley wasn't able to do anything right now. All he could do was try to protect their lives as best as possible.

In addition, Linley's group was located towards the rear. The enemies Gods had yet to reach their position yet.

"Haha…" A loud laugh rang out from nearby.

Only a few dozen meters away from Linley, six Demigods of the Black Dragon Tribe suddenly exploded, and their six Demigod sparks were seized by three hands. It was three enemy God warriors, who had instantly killed those six Demigods. Clearly, they had now noticed Linley's group.

"There's Gods here who were too cowardly to join the army?" One of them, a savage-faced, bald man shouted wildly. "Brothers, kill them all."

"Kill them all!"

The enemy side had three God-level warriors. Like starving wolves, they charged towards Linley's group. The eyes of those God-level warriors were flashing with red light, a bloodthirsty look in them.

"Delia, protect yourself!" Linley shouted with his divine sense.

"You are looking for death!" Bebe shouted explosively. He was the first to

charge the attackers.

“Hmph!” The sinister bald man charged towards Linley; clearly, he had noticed that Linley was just a Demigod. “Die, punk!” The spear in the bald man’s hands, covered with yellow dots, pierced straight towards Linley. With a flip of his hand, Linley thrust out with his adamantine heavy sword.

The yellow mottled spear clashed with the adamantine heavy sword. During that instant, Linley’s adamantine heavy sword suddenly swayed strangely, not blocking the attack of that spear, allowing it to pierce towards himself…

“Huh?” The bald man stared, astonished.

“Clang!”

In Linley’s left hand, Bloodviolet suddenly appeared, and it blocked the tip of that mottled yellow spear.

“Hmph!” The bald man sneered, “Punk, you have no idea at all that my ultimate attack is a soul attack!” An illusory spear shadow pierced straight into Linley’s body, charging towards Linley’s consciousness. However, as the bald man executed his ultimate attack…

Linley’s adamantine heavy sword landed on the bald man’s body as well.

“So what if you are skilled at soul attacks? A Demigod is far too weak to do anything.” The bald man wasn’t worried. But suddenly, his face changed dramatically as Linley’s Voidwave Sword easily pierced through his soul defense.

The bald man couldn’t help but stare in Linley at astonishment. “Ah, you…” But instantly, his eyes turned dim.

“The power of my Voidwave Sword is already three times that of twenty or so years ago!” Linley’s gaze was cold and remorseless.

When he had been at Mount Copper Gong, Linley had just begun to fuse

the Throbbing Pulse of the World with the ‘Essence of the Earth’, resulting in its power increasing by several times. Now that twenty years had passed, the Essence of the Earth had already become more than halfway fused with the Throbbing Pulse of the World. At this level of being more than halfway fused, the ‘Voidwave Sword’ was now at a level of power that was three times that of the past.

How could this bald man possibly block it?

And as for the bald man’s attack?

Anyone who specialized in soul attacks would be in for a world of trouble upon meeting Linley!

“Delia, she…” Linley hurriedly turned to look. He saw eight Delias in mid-air, while the God who wanted to pursue and kill Delia was moving very slowly. Bebe suddenly charged right in front of him…

“Die!” Bebe looked like a delicate, fragile youth, but right now, he was completely merciless.

“Crunch!”

The black dagger pierced through that God’s head!

“Aaaah!” Even up till now, that God stared at Delia, unwilling to accept this outcome. He had never imagined that Delia, a God, had actually gained insights into the most bizarre profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of the Wind; the ‘Spatial Wind’!

The three Gods had died!

At this time, Linley collected the divine artifact, divine spark, and interspatial ring of the bald man.

“Whew.” The eight ‘Delias’ transformed back into one, then flew over, laughing towards Linley. “Linley, what do you think of my teamwork with

Bebe?”

Bebe said in surprised joy as well, “Boss, that technique of Delia’s just now was very powerful. Those two Gods were both affected by it, and their speed lowered dramatically, as though their hands and feet were tied. I seized the opportunity to kill both of them. It was simply too easy.”

Linley stared at Delia in astonishment.

“Linley, didn’t I tell you in the past? That year when we wed, I absorbed that Demigod-level wind-style divine spark which had profound mysteries that were similar to the ‘Void Extermination’ spell, right? This is known as the Profound Mysteries of the ‘Spatial Wind’.” Delia explained.

Linley nodded.

“I’ve discovered that those three profound mysteries contained within that Nieff’s divine spark aren’t as useful as that single profound mystery.” Delia sighed.

Linley let out a relieved breath as well.

The Elemental Laws of Wind did indeed have to do with space and dimensions.

“This Profound Mysteries of the ‘Spatial Wind’ should be a very powerful type of profound mystery. Most likely, Lord Beirut had spent quite some effort in selecting this divine spark for her.” Linley felt gratitude in his heart. Turning to look, he saw that the battle around them was extremely bloody, and many people in the tribe had died.

Linley suddenly had a surge of emotion…

This sort of battle between tribes was a microcosm of the Infernal Realm as a whole. Even life in a tribe was so dangerous; what about the entire Infernal Realm them?

“We have to survive here in the Infernal Realm!” Linley looked at Delia and Bebe as he murmured to himself.

Chapter 8 – Survival of the Fittest

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 8, Survival of the Fittest

Stirton stood there in mid-air. Although the battle around him was fierce, he was like a rock amidst the waves. Nobody was able to budge him at all.

Stirton watched everything coldly.

The warriors and members of the tribe died, but he didn't care at all.

"It is about time!" Stirton muttered softly.

"Let's do it!" A hoarse voice suddenly rang out. Three people suddenly charged out from within those black uniformed warriors of the Black Dragon Army. These three black robed figures moved almost at the same time that Stirton did, charging towards the two enemy leaders.

The tiger-headed warrior and the skinny, gold-robed man both laughed.

"Stirton really did have something up his sleeve. Only, I didn't expect he'd actually have three of them." The gold-robed man, Klotman, said in a low voice.

"Fortunately, we made preparations as well." The tiger-headed man said coldly.

The gold-robed Klotman narrowed his eyes, a freezing aura shooting forth from them. With a low growl, he said, "Kill!" As his voice rang out, two gray-robed men suddenly charged out from within their troops. These two gray-robed men and the two leaders simultaneously charged towards their enemies.

The three black-robed men and Stirton!

The two gray-robed men, Klotman, and Raschell!

Four on four!

“You invited Fiends as well?!” Stirton said in a cold voice.

“You really are rich. You invited three.” Klayton let out a sneering laugh.

The two sides immediately dispensed with words. Four on each side. Eight in total. These eight people were all Highgods, and Highgods who had become Deities through their own power. Every single one of them had their own special abilities, and they began to wildly fight against each other.

“Boom!”

Space itself shook, and terrifying waves of energy blasted out in every direction.

“What?!” Many people stared over in astonishment.

Fighting one on one, the four pairs of people fought wildly in mid-air, causing those terrifying spatial tremors to spread out in every direction constantly.

One’s body transformed into nothingness…

Another’s transformed into an enormous elemental beast…

Still another transformed into the shape of a sword…

A battle between Highgods was exceedingly vicious. The four pairs of combatants fought against each other, and no one dared to draw near. Even those God-level warriors of the two sides which had been fighting all out against each other earlier now came to a halt as if by mutual agreement, and the fierceness of the battle dropped dramatically.

“Everyone really is pragmatic.” Linley watched this scene unfold.

Just now, the leaders of both sides had only been watching as those warriors fought against each other. But now that the leaders of the two sides were fighting, the warriors came to a halt as though by taciturn understanding.

Delia laughed calmly, “It’s normal. Nobody wants to die! Right now, the leaders are fighting each other. Whichever side’s leader survives will be the side which obtains victory. To these warriors, it doesn’t make much of a difference as to who their leader is.”

Linley watched those four pairs of Highgods battle it out in mid-air.

He had to admit that the power of a Highgod vastly outstripped that of a God!

“At the very least, a Highgod has mastered every single profound mystery in an Elemental Law.” Linley sighed to himself. “Only, there’s differences in the level of fusion.”

Weak Highgods might not have fused any profound mysteries at all.

Stronger Highgods, by contrast, might have fused two profound mysteries, or three or more for the powerful ones.

“Two died.” Linley raised his head, watching the battle as he spoke softly.

The eight Highgods that had been battling each other had already suffered two casualties; it was the golden-robed Klotman and a black-robed man. Just then, during the four-on-four battle, the golden-robed Klotman had been fighting against that black-robed man.

Klotman, suffering a severe injury in turn, managed to kill the black-robed man.

But just at that moment, Stirton suddenly transformed into two clones and attacked, killing the heavily wounded Klotman. Although Klotman also had a clone of his own, his clone was only a God. It was destroyed as well.

“Stirton!” The tiger-headed warrior’s face changed. “I didn’t expect that your wind-style clone has reached the Highgod level as well.”

“Hmph!” Stirton sneered. “First, Klotman. Next, you.”

To people like them, they usually wouldn’t choose to utilize fusing divine sparks. They would only become Deities through training.

“Is that so?”

A cold look flashed through the eyes of the tiger-headed man. Suddenly, a figure flew out of his own as well. This figure pounced towards his opponent, another black-robed man. This essentially meant that the tiger-headed warrior and that shadowy figure were joining forces against their opponent.

“A Highgod clone!” The black-robed man was frightened into an immediate retreat.

Stirton’s face changed. Looking at the tiger-headed warrior, he said, “Raschell, you hid it really well!”

“Not as well as you.” The shadow solidified. It was the darkness-type clone of the tiger-headed warrior, Raschell.

Watching in the distance, Linley had to sigh in amazement. “That seemingly rash and foolish tiger-headed warrior, Raschell, isn’t one whit less sinister than Stirton.” Linley now understood that perhaps Stirton and Raschell had some secret, ulterior motives for allowing their subordinates to do battle against each other.

Right at this moment…

“Lord Bertie [Bo’di], how much longer are you planning to wait?” Stirton sent a message with his divine sense.

Suddenly, in mid-air, a black light solidified, transforming into a silver-haired, silver-robed elder. This silver-robed elder was wielding a long black whip in his hands, and he charged leisurely towards the tiger-headed warrior and those two gray-robed men.

“Whoosh!” The long whip danced out, causing space to distort.

One of the gray-robed men let out a cold sneer. The spear in his hands lengthened, and wherever it passed, black flames appeared out of nowhere.

The long whip and the long spear collided.

“Hmph.” The silver-robed elder sneered.

“Ah!!!” The gray-robed man’s entire body began to convulse. He let out a few agonized cries, and then he stopped moving, falling down from the skies.

This scene terrified many of the onlookers. Everyone had witnessed the power of that gray-robed man; he definitely was a fairly powerful Highgod. But in front of that silver-robed elder, he had been defeated within a single exchange.

“It is Bertie of Castle Greensnake!” The face of the tiger-headed warrior, Raschell, changed dramatically. He glanced disbelievingly at Stirton. “Stirton, you…” He didn’t imagine that the chief of the Black Dragon Tribe, Stirton, would actually ask for help from Castle Greensnake.”

“Bertie?” The other lucky survivor, the gray-robed man, was greatly shocked.

Bertie’s fame was fairly well known throughout the Nightblaze Prefecture, and he was a fairly powerful expert. At the very least, he wasn’t someone whom the likes of them could stand against.

“Flee!”

Without hesitating at all, the tiger-headed warrior and the gray-robed man transformed into multiple shadows, fleeing at high speed.

If a powerful Highgod wished to flee, other Highgods generally wouldn't be able to kill them.

"Hmph." The silver-robed elder sneered, then glanced sideways at Stirton.

Stirton immediately revealed a smile on his face.

"You handle affairs here. I'm going back now." Bertie said, and then he exploded, transforming into a large amount of black light which then disappeared.

Stirton looked at the surrounding, astonished people. In a bright voice, he said, "Warriors of the Golden Wolf Tribe and the Snow Tiger Tribe, you now have the choice of joining our Black Dragon Tribe. But of course, you can resist as well. If you choose resistance…" Stirton let out a cold laugh.

The warriors of the two tribes looked at each other.

Now that Klotman was dead, the Golden Wolf Tribe was finished. The Snow Tiger Tribe's power had dropped greatly as well.

"Now of course, your family and friends can join our Black Dragon Tribe as well." Stirton laughed brightly. "Our Black Dragon Tribe will definitely bring you more wealth and security than you previously had. If you agree to join our tribe, then sheath your weapons."

Those God-level warriors looked at each other. Some of the Gods of the Golden Wolf Tribe sheathed their weapons. Their leader was dead. Naturally, they had to surrender.

After all, without the protection of a tribe, their lives would be very difficult.

After the first few people began to surrender, the others began to surrender

and choose to join the Black Dragon Tribe as well. To them, the identity of their leader didn't make much of a difference.

"He was the one that killed my big brother!" Krate growled softly as he stared at a distant person.

Those surrendered warriors had some enmities now with many of the survivors of the Black Dragon Tribe. Only Stirton's presence in the Black Dragon Tribe was too intimidating, so no one dared to say anything. But one could imagine that in the future, the Black Dragon Tribe would have quite a few internal struggles.

"Hmph." Stirton glanced out of the corner of his eyes, seeing the hatred in some of the eyes of his tribesmen. He just let out a soft laugh.

He didn't care about the deaths of a few tribesmen.

This was the Infernal Realm. Survival of the fittest was the natural law of this place!

In the blink of an eye, nearly half a year passed. The battle of half a year ago had actually caused the population of the Black Dragon Tribe to increase greatly. In particular, a majority of the Golden Wolf Tribe's tribesmen had joined in. The Black Dragon Tribe's population reached nearly thirty thousand.

In particular, the number of God-level warriors had increased to nearly three thousand.

Stirton had wanted to annihilate the Snow Tiger Tribe, but afterwards, he discovered that the Snow Tiger Tribe had already moved away from their original location. Clearly, the tiger-headed leader, Raschall had predicted long ago that Stirton would come for revenge. Knowing he wouldn't be able to resist, he had immediately led his people elsewhere.

At Linley's residence.

“Krate, if you want revenge now, your only choice is to endure. Your current power is far inferior to your enemy’s. Right now, he doesn’t know that you are his enemy. You can calmly train. There will come the day when you will have a chance to take revenge.” Linley advised.

This entire time, Krate had wanted to get revenge for his big brother. But his enemy was a God, after all. Krate’s power was far inferior to his opponent’s.

“I know, Linley.” Krate’s face was sunken, but he nodded.

“Boom!”

A vibration came from outside.

Linley mused, “It seems there’s a battle outside again.”

The nearby Delia sighed as well and said, “Thousands of members of the Black Dragon Tribe died half a year ago during that battle. Many of their family and friends are still alive. Of course they want revenge! Fortunately, that battle was so chaotic that the vast majority don’t know who the killers of their loved ones were. Otherwise, the tribe would be in a state of chaos.”

Linley nodded in agreement.

“Who cares if it is in chaos or not?!” Bebe laughed coldly. “As long as they don’t cause trouble for us. If they do, we’ll kill any who come!”

“Krate, if you don’t mind, I can help you get revenge.” Bebe said quite magnanimously.

“No need.” Krate’s gaze was cold. “There will come a day when I personally get revenge. Linley, Bebe, I won’t disturb you any further. I’m going back now.” After this experience, Krate was no longer as cheerful as he had been in the past.

Soon after Krate’s departure, someone else came. It was a familiar figure;

Buffett.

“Linley, didn’t you want to go to Royalwing City? Tomorrow, our Black Dragon Tribe will send a group of people on a metallic creature to head out. If you want to go, each of you needs to prepare five inkstones.” Buffett reminded them with a laugh.

“Truly?” Bebe was the first to stand up.

Linley and Delia were greatly overjoyed as well.

They had already waited quite a long while for this day.

“Mr. Buffett, thank you so much, truly.” Linley felt great gratitude in his heart. He would finally be able to leave the Black Dragon Tribe.

Buffett let out a long sigh, then laughed, “Linley, actually, when last time you refused to join the army, I knew that you didn’t want to stay at the Black Dragon Tribe. Actually, leaving is fine.” Buffett instructed, “But Linley, Royalwing City isn’t a place where just anyone can stay. You need to make some preparations.”

“Right. I understand.” Linley’s mood was excellent right now.

Early next dawn, Linley, Delia, and Bebe first went to bid farewell to some of the friends they had made in the Black Dragon Tribe.

“Krate, no matter what, don’t be hasty.” Linley instructed.

“Linley, the Infernal Realm is vast and boundless. Royalwing City is one of the ten cities of the Nightblaze Prefecture. The Black Dragon tribe is just a small place. That place is a large city! You have to work hard to stabilize your footing in Royalwing City. That won’t be an easy task.” Krate actually encouraged Linley rather than vice versa.

Linley chuckled.

“Don’t worry. A small affair like this can’t possibly stop me.” Bebe rubbed his nose, laughing delightedly.

“The metallic creature has come.” Delia suddenly spoke.

Raising his head, Linley saw that in the air above Stirton’s black castle, a metallic creature was there, having transformed into a black dragon while hovering in mid-air. A number of people, spread throughout the Black Dragon Tribe, began to fly towards it. Linley, Delia, and Bebe bid farewell to their friends, then flew towards the metallic creature as well.

“Farewell, Black Dragon Tribe.” Linley lowered his head, looking down at the slowly disappearing Black Dragon Tribe and its mountains.

This was the first place where Linley had settled down in upon arriving at the Infernal Realm. In the future, he would most likely never return to this place again.

Chapter 9 – Omnipresent Danger

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 9, Omnipresent Danger

The metallic creature that had transformed into an enormous black dragon coiled in the air mid-way up the mountain. All of the members of the Black Dragon who wished to head to Royalwing City all flew over, while a young, muscular man stood at the flank of the metallic creature, opening the doorway.

“All of you, come. Everyone who wishes to go to Royalwing City, five inkstones each!” The young, muscular warrior called out loudly in a disdainful manner.

Those who wanted to go Royalwing City numbered over a hundred. Linley’s group naturally was amongst them.

Five inkstones each. The three of them needed to pay fifteen inkstones. Originally, when selling off those four Demigod artifacts, they had acquired twenty inkstones. More than half was now being used up, just like that.

“It really is expensive!” Bebe muttered in a low voice.

“Didn’t you hear what Buffett said?” Linley said softly. “This metallic creature is reserved for the members of the tribe only, and only members of the tribe are qualified to pay five inkstones for passage in a group. The members of other tribes aren’t even qualified to enter this metallic creature.”

As they spoke, it now came to Linley’s turn.

“Three of us.” Linley indicated, then withdrew two of the long inkstones, each one equivalent to ten inkstones.

The muscular young man accepted them, then gave Linley five smaller

inkstones. Impatiently, he said, “Hurry up. Next.” Linley’s group immediately entered the metallic creature’s interior.

The inside of the metallic creature was extremely large. It was separated into a forward cabin and a rear cabin. Those who paid five inkstones like Linley’s group were all placed in the rear cabin, which had a large number of seats automatically created by the metallic creature itself.

The seats were created in rows of four each. Linley’s group of three naturally selected the same row.

“I want the window.” Bebe immediately sat on the inside, which allowed him to see through the metallic creature’s translucent sides towards the outside. Delia sat next to Linley on the outside.

“Finally, we’re leaving the Black Dragon Tribe.” Linley and Delia exchanged a laugh, their hands coming together. As one tribesman after another entered, the spaces in the rear cabin began to fill up. A tousled, jade-haired youngster laughed as he greeted Linley, then sat down next to him.

“Hi there. My name is Daebra [Dai’bo’la]!” The jade-haired youth said in a very friendly manner towards Linley, seated next to him.

“I am Linley.” Linley nodded in a friendly manner.

In the Infernal Realm, one’s status was primarily determined by one’s power. This Daebra was only a Demigod…Daebra had the sense that the woman (Delia) and the youngster (Bebe) had auras that caused him to feel fear. He felt that Linley, however, should be a Demigod.

“Linley, why are you headed to Royalwing City?” Daebra asked curiously.

“Me? This is my first time in the Infernal Realm. I want to take a look in Royalwing City. I’ve never gone there before. You?” Linley asked with a calm laugh.

Daebra lowered his voice. “I want to sell a divine artifact, but selling it in the tribe is too disadvantageous. Thus I decided to go sell it at Royalwing City. This was my good fortune; half a year ago, during that big battle, I was lucky enough to snatch up a God artifact.

During that battle, many Gods had fallen.

At that time, Linley and the other two had killed three Gods, then seized their divine artifacts, sparks, and interspatial rings. During battles, tribesmen who acquired any ordinary items didn’t need to offer it to the chief; the items went to whoever acquired them. This was the rule of the tribe.

“Your luck really isn’t bad.” Linley laughed calmly and said a few words of praise.

“Rumble…”

The metallic creature moved, and a wild surge of energy was released as it instantly transformed into a blur, disappearing from the air above the mountain and departing from the Black Dragon Tribe.

“It’s begun.” Linley murmured to himself.

“From here to Royalwing City will take half a month or so. This half a month will be very boring.” The jade-haired youth next to Linley, ‘Daebra’, said in a somewhat resigned manner.

“Half a month?” Linley had a thought.

He remembered back to what Krate had said; the city closest to the Black Dragon Tribe, ‘Royalwing City’, was over ten million kilometers away from Black Dragon Tribe. Since they would arrive in half a month, that meant that this metallic creature was capable of moving roughly a million kilometers a day.

“Pipe down!” Suddenly, an icy shout rang out from up front. Linley and the

others turned to look, and saw that at the corridor between the rear cabin and the front cabin, a golden-haired elder entered the rear cabin, followed by several Gods.

“Lord Edmond [Ai’de’meng] has come as well.” The jade-haired Daebra said softly in surprise.

“Who is Edmond?” Linley lowered his voice as well.

Daebra explained, “Lord Edmond is the chief steward for Lord Chief Stirton. I didn’t expect that Lord Edmond is going on this trip to Royalwing City as well. For even Lord Edmond to be sent…it seems there is a major deal to be made this time in Royalwing City.” Daebra’s understanding of the Black Dragon Tribe was far greater than Linley’s.

Linley looked in surprise towards the distant Edmond as well.

Chief steward?

“This Edmond should be a Highgod.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley nodded to himself as well.

Edmond’s gaze was cold and clear as he looked at everyone in the rear cabin. In a calm voice, he barked, “Is there anyone here who is going to Royalwing City for the first time? If this is your first time, stand up!”

Immediately, two people in the rear cabin stood up. Linley, Delia, and Bebe glanced at each other, then stood up as well.

Edmond swept them with his gaze, nodding calmly. “Five in total.” And then, he walked towards Linley’s group, which was closer. Walking next to them, he saw Daebra and then chuckled, “Daebra, you are going as well, young fellow? Go ahead and tell them some of the necessary information they need to be aware of in Royalwing City. If they cause a disaster, they will die, but more importantly, I don’t want the three of them to cause any

problems for the tribe."

"Yes, milord. Don't worry. I will definitely tell them everything they need to be aware of." The jade-haired youth, Daebra, said hurriedly.

Edmond nodded calmly. "If there are any problems, I'll come looking for you. The three of you, sit down."

After speaking, Edmond walked towards the back, similarly ordering the people next to the other two newcomers to tell them what they needed to be aware of. After finishing speaking, Edmond led his people out of the rear cabin and returned to the front cabin.

The front cabin was where the forces who directly served Chief Stirton stayed.

"What do I need to be aware of when heading to Royalwing City?" Linley looked at Daebra.

Daebra laughed and nodded. "There are indeed a few things. First of all, when you enter any city in the Infernal Realm, you have to pay the city entrance fee. The entrance fee is one inkstone per person!"

"So greedy." Linley said to himself.

Daebra continued, "After entering the city, it is best for you to follow with the tribe's people and not run about rashly. This is because after finishing up, everyone is going to immediately leave Royalwing City on that very same day and return back to the tribe."

"Return on the same day?" Linley was somewhat surprised.

But as Linley saw it, this didn't matter much to him, as he didn't have any plans to return to the Black Dragon Tribe at all.

"Right. Return on the same day. This is because Royalwing City…actually, not just Royalwing City, but every city in the Infernal Realm…has a 'night

curfew'. From midnight until five in the morning, nobody is permitted to be on the streets or alleyways of the city. If you are caught…if you are a citizen of Royalwing City, it isn't as severe; after some punishment, you'll be released. But if you aren't a citizen of Royalwing City, then, you will never be able to return to the Black Dragon Tribe." Daebra said solemnly.

Linley was startled.

"Are you saying that if you are caught at night, you are finished?" Linley stared at Daebra in astonishment.

Daebra nodded solemnly. "Thus, we usually return to the Black Dragon Tribe that same day. We definitely won't stay the night at Royalwing City. This is because staying a single time at some of the hotels in Royalwing City will cost more than a hundred inkstones. Who is willing to pay that sort of price?"

"Over a hundred inkstones?" The nearby Bebe turned his head.

"Right." Daebra nodded with certainty.

Linley's group was astonished. The cost of living in Royalwing City was simply too terrifying. No wonder…Krate had once said that it was very hard for a person to establish himself in Royalwing City!

"Black Dragon, hurry up and come to a halt. When passing through our Mount Petar [Fu'te'er], you need to leave behind some valuables!" A loud, clear voice rang out, shaking through the entire metallic creature. Both the passengers in the front and rear cabins were astonished. Everyone understood…

Not good. They had encountered bandits!

"We just headed out a short while ago, and we already encountered bandits?" Linley was surprised.

It must be understood that Royalwing City was nearly half a month away

from them. According to this sort of frequency, how many bandits would they encounter on the way?

Linley looked at Delia and Bebe, saying to himself, “No wonder that Buffett had previously said that if the three of us roamed the Infernal Realm by ourselves, we wouldn’t survive more than a day or two. There are simply too many bandit groups in the Infernal Realm.” Linley and the other two peered through the translucent ‘glass’ and saw a large group of people hovering in mid-air, their leader dressed in a deep blue robe, his blue hair unbound, and with a single horn in his forehead.

“A single horn?”

Linley understood that many other races had different aesthetic standards than humans. Even in human form, they would keep some traces of what they themselves considered most beautiful, such as a horn! This was most likely the case for this bandit leader. There were seventy or eighty people here. They had summoned an enormous elemental beast to block this metallic creature.

The jade-haired youth ‘Daebra’, by Linley’s side, laughed. “Don’t worry, Linley. There won’t be any problems.”

“Hmph! When did you take over Mount Petar? Can it be that you don’t even recognize our Black Dragon Tribe?” The voice of the chief steward, Edmond, rang out. At the same time, Edmond and those two black-robed men flew out of the metallic creature as well.

Linley saw those two black-robed people through the translucent glass. He was immediately surprised. “These are the two black-robed men who helped Lord Stirton in that battle half a year ago.”

At that time, there were a total of three black robed men. One of them had died. These two were the ones who had survived.

In the air above Mount Petar, the metallic lifeform had come to a halt. When the nearly eighty or so Deities saw those three people come out, they

were all terrified. They couldn't sense the power level of these three people…clearly, all three of them were Highgods.

Those two black-robed men in particular, even had a Fiend medallion on their chest!

"Fiends!" Those bandits were terrified.

They had run into a brick wall!

Three Highgods, two of which were Fiends. More than enough to wipe them all out.

"Milords, my truest apologies. We, we made a mistake." The horned man said in terror.

"Hmph. Bastard. Disappear from my sight!" Edmond shouted coldly.

"Yes, yes!" The horned man was overjoyed. Not hesitating at all, he led his subordinates back downwards, instantly disappearing into the depths of Mount Petar below.

This scene caused Linley to sigh to himself that these bandits truly were weak. However, that was only in comparison to Highgods. If Linley and the other two had encountered these bandits, then it would be very problematic…after all, the enemy had an entire group of Deities, including thirty four Gods.

The metallic creature continued forward.

"The Infernal Realm really is dangerous." Linley sighed.

"Right. All we can do is follow the forces of the tribe. That's the only chance we have of entering Royalwing City." Daebra sighed as well. "But Linley, the Infernal Realm does have some safe zones with no danger, where no one dares to fight. In those places, you can live a very safe life!"

“Oh?” Linley was greatly shocked.

During this period of time in the Infernal Realm, all he had seen was vicious battles. The feeling the Infernal Realm had given him was that any place was ripe for battle and for plunder, with danger everywhere. But from Daebra’s words, it seemed there were some safe zones after all.

“Right. In the Infernal Realm, every single prefecture has around ten cities. The cities are safe.” Daebra said solemnly. “Linley, this is something I have to warn you about. You absolutely cannot fight or kill within the borders of Royalwing City. If you are captured, then in the future, the repercussions will be even worse than if you are caught violating curfew. Not only will you be finished; our entire tribe will most likely face trouble!”

“Not allowed to engage in battle?” Linley actually felt relieved.

Since that was the case, then nobody else would act against them in Royalwing City either.

It seemed…

Royalwing City truly was a safe haven.

“Sadly, the entire Nightblaze Prefecture has a circumference of a billion kilometers, but each of the ten cities only has a circumference of roughly a thousand kilometers. They are too small. Living in Royalwing City is far too expensive as well.” Daebra shook his head, letting out a sigh.

Chapter 10 – The Three Castles of Royalwing City

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 10, The Three Castles of Royalwing City

Hearing these two numbers, Linley ran some mental calculations. His heart couldn't help but tremble.

A circumference of a billion kilometers meant that in size, it was over a trillion times the size of an area with a circumference of a thousand kilometers! Even the ten cities combined, in terms of size, were just a hundred billionth of the total size of the Nightblaze Prefecture! A hundred billionth! This contrast was simply too shocking.

"Only the elites of the Infernal Realm should be able to establish themselves in Royalwing City!" Linley said to himself.

The jade-haired youth, Daebra, sighed. "If in my lifetime, I am able to become a citizen of Royalwing City, I would feel contentment. Unfortunately, it is too hard." Daebra didn't have enough confidence in himself.

To become a citizen of a city in the Infernal Realm was something that was worthy of being proud over.

Linley had just entered the Infernal Realm. Although he could sense some things from the 'one in a trillion' number, he hadn't lived here long enough, so his feelings weren't as strong.

Upon departing the Black Dragon Tribe, the number of bandit attacks they had encountered actually wasn't that high. This was because all of the bandit forces that had been established in this area for some time knew about the local tribes…and they knew what the metallic creature serving the Black Dragon Tribe usually transformed into.

Despite that, however, they still encountered some bandits who wanted to

stop them.

The chief steward, Edmond, and those two Fiends couldn't be bothered to lower themselves to deal with those bandits. All they did was show their faces to frighten them.

The sixteenth day after they departed from the Black Dragon Tribe, the people in the rear cabin of the metallic creature grew excited. Through the translucent metal, they were able to see an enormous city formed from giant slabs of violet stones.

The violet city was a city which emanated an ancient, noble aura.

Royalwing City! One of the ten great cities of the Nightblaze Prefecture!

"This is Royalwing City?" Bebe's eyes were shining.

Linley and Delia both excitedly looked at the enormous city as well, a city with circumference of a thousand kilometers. This was something which did not exist in the Yulan continent. In particular, the stones which the cities of the Infernal Realm were made out of shared the same hardness as adamantine.

"We finally arrived!" Linley murmured to himself.

And then, the many people within the metallic creature flew out. The people of the Black Dragon Tribe gathered together in mid-air, and the chief steward, Edmond, swept everyone with his gaze while saying loudly, "Everyone, remember, our tribe's metallic creature will return to the Black Dragon Tribe after the Blood Sun lowers and the Violet Moon rises. As for our gathering spot, it will be right here. If there is anyone who is missing by the time we leave, we won't wait for you.

Everyone understood this principle.

"Alright. Everyone, prepare to pay the city entrance fee." Edmond spoke, then led the group flying towards the gates of Royalwing City.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were seeing a city of the Infernal Realm for the first time. They felt it was very new and interesting. While following the tribesmen in flying over, they also stared at the ancient, majestic, violet-stoned city.

“So many people!” Bebe exhaled in amazement as he stared around himself.

There were too many people who wanted to enter the city. They came from every direction, and had formed a long queue outside the city. Nobody dared to rashly charge in at this place. Even the chief steward, Edmond, lined up in an ordinarily fashion, waiting to pay the entrance fee.

“Huh?” Bebe suddenly stared in shock at the city gates. “Those two black-robed men entered without paying the fee.”

“Fiends!” Linley discovered this as well.

The two Fiends who had travelled alongside them didn’t line up to pay the entrance fee. They headed directly into Royalwing City, and the guards at the gates of Royalwing City didn’t stop them either.

“Redbud Army soldiers, the prefecture army soldiers, and Fiends. These three types of people don’t need to pay any fees when entering the city.” The jade-haired youth, Daebra, explained from behind Linley. “They all have some special privileges. Thus, there are many people who want to join the Redbud Army, become Fiends, or become prefecture army soldiers. Unfortunately, the Redbud Army, the Fiends, and the prefectural army all have extremely strict entrance requirements.”

Soon, it was Linley’s group’s turn.

Each of them paid an inkstone, and then Linley’s group entered Royalwing City.

During that battle half a year ago, Linley had killed three Gods, who each

had nearly a thousand inkstones within their interspatial ring, as well as some other items. However, there was something which Linley didn't recognize; it was an azurish stone.

It was roughly the same in form as inkstone. However, the special aura it contained within it was far stronger than an inkstone's.

Linley was guessing…that this azure stone which was the size as inkstone should also be some sort of currency. Only, this was just a guess. Linley wasn't in a hurry to ask anyone else. After all, those three interspatial rings of those three Gods, all combined, only had a few dozen of those azurish stones.

Royalwing City.

Daebra and Linley's group of three walked into Royalwing City together. While walking on the wide streets, they stared at the surrounding, large structures. Those buildings all emanated a luxurious, ancient aura. Every single structure was built in a way that they could almost be described as sculptures.

"Although they aren't at the grandmaster level, they aren't too far off either." Linley naturally was qualified to make this judgment.

Given his increasingly deeper insights into the Elemental Laws, the Straight Chisel School's Linley could be considered to have reached true mastery in sculpting.

"These sculptures are so strange. They are so pleasing to the eye." Bebe's eyes lit up.

"Of course." Linley sighed. "I didn't expect that the sculpting of these giant structures would have been done in such a careful, detailed manner. These buildings must be extremely valuable."

Daebra snickered, "Hmph, valuable? Extremely, extremely expensive! A single inch of land in Royalwing City is extremely expensive. The price of

these structures is naturally even more astonishing. When building them, they invited a number of specialized Deity-level experts to construct them. The price of every single structure…I can't imagine how many years it would take for me to have enough inkstones to buy one."

Linley glanced at the look in the nearby Daebra's eyes.

Linley understood that the terrifying price of these structures had already exceeded the limits of Daebra's imagination. He didn't even dare to think about that price; all he could do was say a few grumbling words.

As they continued forward, Linley began to get an understanding of how bustling Royalwing City was.

"Royalwing City has existed for countless billions of years." Daebra explained towards Linley. "Although these buildings aren't damaged, I think you have probably sensed that ancient aura coming from them, as well as a few of the small cracks and signs of the passage of many years."

Linley nodded slightly.

Indeed, he could sense it. The number of years which Royalwing City had existed for was definitely an astonishing figure.

"Perhaps only the mineral ores of the Infernal Realm can allow a city to last for so long." Linley said to himself. The ores that were used to build this city were originally meant to be used to forge weapons! Naturally, they could last nearly forever.

However, divine artifacts, especially newly made ones, were very cheap in the Infernal Realm.

"There are clothing stores here as well?" Delia's eyes lit up. She saw a beautiful, extravagant storefront that was completely made from cream-white stones. Linley turned to look as well. He saw that this store was completely carved out from a single giant milk-white stone.

Given the toughness of the stones of the Infernal Realm, one could imagine how costly a building such as this must be.

“What beautiful clothes!” Delia looked through the translucent glass and saw some clothes. She couldn’t help but grow interested. Women always had a special fondness for clothes.

Daebra chuckled, “The costs and expenditures here in Royalwing City are quite terrifyingly high. Ordinary Deities like us who live in tribes are completely unable to afford them. For example, those clothes over there..” Daebra pointed at a violet set of clothes that was on display.

“It is very possible that the materials used to make this set of clothes came from other continents, such as the Bloodridge Continent! It might even have come from the Life Realm, or the Netherworld, or perhaps the Celestial Realm.” Daebra sighed.

Linley, hearing this, stared, slack-jawed.

A single set of clothes might have materials coming from other planes?

“Based on the value of the materials…ordinary clothes are at least a hundred inkstones, while those made from slightly more valuable materials might cost a thousand inkstones. If those materials came from other planes which are extremely rare and precious, a set of clothes could cost millions of inkstones!”

Delia was shocked as well!

Linley’s heart shuddered.

How could this be described as ‘clothes’? A set of clothes was comparable in value to a Highgod spark! This indeed wasn’t something which ordinary people were able to afford.

“But of course, these clothes will have some special effects as well. For example, in terms of defensiveness, they are definitely comparable to most

divine artifacts." Daebra then added with a laugh, "But of course, I've only heard others speak of clothes that cost millions of inkstones. I've never personally seen any."

Everyone who entered the city had roughly the same goals; buying and selling items. After all, could it be that the members of the poor tribes had come for the purpose of spending money on services here in Royalwing City? They didn't have the capital.

Continuing to move forward, Linley's group was introduced by Daebra to all sorts of entertainment venues in the Infernal Realm.

For example, wine; to make fine wine, one might invite some wine masters who had analyzed wine for hundreds of millions of years, who would use some special methods to create wine using some extremely valuable materials, some of which might only be acquired in dangerous locations.

Actually, the saliva of the Black Dragon Tribe's Gerrard Black Dragons, after being refined, could produce some valuable materials which could be used to create delicacies.

These delicacies and wines far exceeded their counterparts in the material planes in taste and flavor.

Eating the finest cuisines of the Infernal Realm was a form of utter luxury. However…the price was similarly extravagant. Even ordinary food would cost up to a hundred inkstones. It must be understood that a Demigod spark would only be sold for a hundred inkstones or so. So, there were plenty of entertainment venues, but the price in those venues scared off the vast majority of people.

Linley's group followed the other tribe members, arriving in the most bustling, crowded area of Royalwing city.

"Those three castles!" Linley's eyes were filled with shock. From the left, in the distance, he could see an enormous castle that was completely formed from black sand. Deities possessed extremely good vision; it was clear that

this castle was made from countless grains of black sand. The strangest thing was…the black sand was continually flowing about.

But the castle itself didn't budge.

On Linley's right, in the distance, there was an ancient castle made from violet rocks. At the top of the castle, there was a beautifully carved flower. This flower was a very familiar one; it was the insignia of the Redbud Army. A redbud flower!

And right in front of Linley….

There was an ancient violet castle, more than a hundred meters high. Only, the violet color of this castle was so deep, it was nearly black! This castle had an enormous carving, a carving of a face! The face seemed very blurry, but the single devilish red eye on the face was extremely eye-catching.

"That is Blacksand Castle!" Daebra pointed at the ancient castle formed from black sand. "Any sort of trade can be carried out there, most of which is large-scale. However, that place is a very secretive place with many competing interests. Little people like us had best not go there."

Daebra then pointed towards the castle with the redbud. "That place is a Redbud Castle. It is the most noble of trading places. They will accept our items at a price of 70% their selling price. When we sell things there, although we still lose a bit, it won't be very troublesome."

"And that castle?" Linley pointed at the very devilish-looking castle that was straight in front of them.

For some reason, that sole, devilish red eye in that blurry carved face made Linley's heartrate speed up, even though it was just a carving.

"That is the Fiend Castle!" Daebra said. "If you want to be a Fiend, you can go there, pay the fee, then participate in the exam. Fiends generally will go to Fiend Castle. Alright, Linley, let's go to Redbud Castle. It's best to sell our things there. Blacksand Castle is a very complicated place. Look. The

chief steward, Edmond, is entering Redbud Castle."

This was Linley's first trip to Royalwing City. Naturally, he didn't want to go to Blacksand Castle.

After all, even a Highgod like Edmond was going to the safer Redbud Castle.

"Let's go." Linley led Bebe and Delia to follow the others, heading towards Redbud Castle as well.

Chapter 11 – The Third Floor

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 11, The Third Floor

In the Redbud Castle, there was a sea of people.

The main gate of Redbud Castle was at least a hundred meters wide, with the dense masses of people entering and leaving it. One could imagine how excellent business was doing in Redbud Castle.

Linley's group of people saw Redbud Castle from afar.

"Hrm, the Redbud Army?" Linley noticed them right away. At the gates of Redbud Castle, there were over ten soldiers dressed in violet uniforms, with a long violet cloak on the outside as well. The warriors all had those unique violet seals in the center of their forehead. It was the Redbud Army!

The nearby Daebra laughed, "There are Redbud Castles throughout the entire Redbud Continent. The master of these castles is the mighty Sovereign, the Redbud Ruler. Naturally, they are guarded by the Redbud Army. Actually, the Redbud Army soldiers here are nothing more than a display of force. After all, within Royalwing City, who would dare to cause trouble? Only someone tired of living."

"Hey, that chief steward named Edmond. Why are they going to the back?" Bebe's eyes were quite sharp. He discovered that Edmond's group of people had headed towards the back of Redbud Castle, and didn't go to the main gates.

Linley had noticed this as well.

Actually, although many people entered the main gates of Redbud Castle, there were quite a few people who were entering Redbud Castle through the rear gates as well. The number was not any lower than those going through the main gates, in fact.

“Linley, Redbud Castle is divided into the main gate and the rear gate. Those who go in through the main gates are all going to Redbud Castle for shopping, while those who enter through the rear gates do so because they are going to sell their own items to Redbud Castle!” The jade-haired youth, Daebra, explained with a chuckle.

Linley understood.

So Redbud Castle didn’t just sell items; it also purchased them.

“Let’s hurry.” Daebra urged.

Holding Delia by the hand, Linley headed forward with Bebe by his side, following the flow of people through to the rear of Redbud Castle. After walking for several kilometers, Linley’s group finally reached the rear gates of Redbud Castle.

Indeed…

The rear gates were over a hundred meters wide as well, and a dense mass of people passed through them.

Delia laughed, “Most of those who are coming to sell items belong to the tribes and clans located outside Royalwing City. There really are quite a few people here. Redbud Castle buys at 70% while sells at 100%. They earn a profit of 30%…this Redbud Castle is a place which devours gold.”

“There isn’t a chance for others to engage in this business.” Linley chuckled. Behind the Redbud Castle was an almighty Sovereign!

And then, Linley’s group followed the other members of the Black Dragon Tribe into Redbud Castle. Although there were nearly two hundred people in the Black Dragon Tribe’s group, upon entering Redbud Castle, they only made up an extremely small number of the total guests.

“This place is huge!” Linley exhaled in shock.

Linley's group, upon entering the first floor of Redbud Castle, discovered that the main hall of this first floor was one or two thousand meters wide. This sort of width was an extremely extravagant sum. More than ten thousand people could pass through it without feeling cramped.

"There are quite a few Deities who have come to sell their items." Bebe was clearly quite excited.

"The main hall of the first floor is for those who have come to sell Demigod sparks, Demigod artifacts, and other items worth a hundred inkstones or less." Daebra said in a very practiced manner as he explained to Linley's group. "For example, I've come to sell a God spark this time, so I will go to the second floor. In the main hall of the second floor, items like God sparks or God artifacts which are worth around or less than ten thousand inkstones or so can be sold. As for the third floor, that's the floor for selling Highgod artifacts, Highgod sparks, and other precious items that can be worth up to a million inkstones, or even more."

Linley's group followed the Black Dragon Tribe's men up to the main hall of the second floor.

But of course, more than half of the Black Dragon Tribe's people stayed at the first floor's main hall. Clearly, these people had all come to sell fairly cheap items.

"Linley, look. There are many sales counters over there in the main hall, with many people seated there. Those people are the purchasers for Redbud Castle. Haha, have a good look. I'll go sell some things first." Daebra waved towards Linley's group, then headed directly to one of the sales counters in the main hall of the second floor."

After Daebra left, Linley and the other two exchanged glances.

"Let's go to the third floor!" Linley said.

Linley's group had quite a few treasures on them. Two Highgod artifacts,

and a Highgod spark. These were all exceedingly valuable items.

The stairs going from the main hall of the first to second floor were all exceedingly large, but the stairs from the main hall of the second floor to the main hall of the third floor was much narrower. Even the gateway into the hall was a full size smaller, and the number of people was much lower as well.

Obviously, the number of people who were selling precious items was much lower than those selling items in the first and second floors.

“Edmond!” Linley saw that up above, Edmond had led his three subordinates directly into the gateway to the third floor. At the gateway to the third floor, an employee wearing a long violet robe seemed to chat with Edmond about something, and then Edmond took out a divine spark.

“Why did Edmond take out the divine spark?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

And then, the violet-robed man let them through. Edmond led his three subordinates into the third floor.

When Linley’s group reached the doorway to the third floor…

The violet-robed man stretched his hand out, stopping Linley’s group from going through.

“Huh?” Linley’s group looked curiously at the man.

“What have you come to sell? Let me take a look.” The violet-robed said. Seeing the puzzled look on the faces of Linley’s group, he laughed calmly, “Is this your first time? This third floor is different from the lower floors. Every person who enters has to present an item for inspection. Otherwise, no entry is permitted.”

Linley now understood. Thinking back to what Edmond had just done, he now knew what that was all about.

But right at that moment, two youngsters walked past Linley, ignoring the violet-robed men as they headed directly into the third floor.

“Hey, how come they didn’t have to show any items?” Bebe said in confusion.

The violet-robed man was fairly patient and good-tempered. With a calm laugh, he said, “Didn’t you notice? They all had Fiend medallions on their chests. They are Fiends! As Fiends, we have faith in their reputation. When they come, they will definitely have brought quite a few valuable items. There’s no need for them to be inspected.”

Linley sighed to himself, “Fiends. They don’t have to pay any fees when entering the city, and they don’t have to be inspected when entering the third floor of Redbud Castle. Their status really is different.”

While thinking this to himself, Linley retrieved the black dagger with a flip of his hands. This black dagger was the Highgod artifact which Adkins had left behind after his divine darkness clone had been slain.

“Go in.” The violet-robed man nodded.

They entered the third floor of Redbud Castle. This main hall was clearly a size smaller, but it was still hundreds of meters wide. Only, the people here were clearly much sparser in number.

“That’s the place where they buy items!” Bebe ran up ahead as the three of them headed towards a sales counter.

But right at this moment….

“Lord Edmond, look!” The chief steward of the Black Dragon Tribe, Edmond, and his three subordinates had noticed Linley’s group. “Lord Edmond, aren’t they members of our tribe? Those three who were amongst the five who were making their first trips to Royalwing City? They actually came to the third floor!”

Edmonds looked at the distant Linley and the other two.

There were only five people for whom this trip to Royalwing City with the Black Dragon Tribe truly was their first trip. Edmond had seen all of them. Naturally, he recognized and remembered Linley's group.

"I didn't expect that these three had a fortune on them." Edmond's eyes narrowed, and a cold light flashed through them. "It seems our tribe's internal supervisory abilities are insufficient."

In the Infernal Realm, when one's wealth reached a certain level, there would be others who would desire it.

If you wanted to peacefully enjoy your fortune of a million inkstones which you had spent hundreds of millions of years accumulating, you might just find that some other experts would take it all from you.

This wouldn't have been the first or second time for Edmond's group to have done such a thing.

"Don't worry, milord. Since we already know now, the three of them won't be able to escape you. When we leave Royalwing City, we can make our move then." The nearby God said insidiously.

Edmond nodded.

Everyone allowed to enter the third floor had items that were worth at least a million inkstones. Even a Highgod such as Edmond would be desirous of such a fortune.

At a row of sales counter on the side of the third floor's main hall, there were violet-robed employees seated at every counter. Linley's group walked towards one of them, a silver-haired old man.

"Hrm?" The violet-robed, silver-haired old man raised his head and smiled calmly. "What are you selling? Take it out."

Linley and the other two glanced at each other, and then with a flip of his hand, Linley withdrew that black dagger and gave it to the silver-haired old man. “This Highgod artifact.”

Although Linley’s group was still in possession of the Spear of Cortez and that Highgod spark, this was Linley’s group’s first trip into Royalwing City. There were many things they didn’t know about yet. Linley’s group wasn’t in a hurry either. After all…if they truly needed money desperately, they could come again.

In addition…

Redbud Castle wasn’t the only place which purchased goods. There was also that Blacksand Castle. Only, there was a great deal of intrigue and competitive forces within Blacksand Castle. It was rather disorderly and chaotic. Without gaining a good understanding of the situation, Linley wouldn’t be in a hurry to go there.

“This dagger really is quite fine.” The violet-robed elder nodded in praise. “It is indeed a Highgod artifact, and its previous owner should have been a Highgod who trained in the Laws of Darkness who had used this dagger to kill quite a few experts. It has a very thick murderous aura. Not bad. We will buy this dagger for a price of 750,000 inkstones Are you willing to sell?” The violet-robed elder made his decision.

Linley nodded. “Fine.”

Based on his calculations, Linley had been planning to sell this item for a price of 700,000 inkstones, which would have been a fine price. Thus, this price of 750,000 inkstones made Linley quite satisfied. Linley understood… that perhaps this dagger was an excellent Highgod artifact and that perhaps he had been taken slight advantage of.

But Linley didn’t care too much about such a small sum.

“This is a hundred azurites, equivalent to a hundred thousand inkstones.

Two hundred thousand, three hundred thousand…" As he spoke, the violet-robed elder brought out large pieces of azure stones out.

Linley immediately understood.

"As I thought!" When Linley's group had killed those Gods, they had acquired a few azure colored stones. At that time, Linley had hypothesized that those azure stones were a form of currency, because their aura was identical to the aura of the inkstones. Only, the aura was far stronger.

A single azurite was shaped in a square which was one centimeter long.

The ones which this violet-robed elder brought out, however, were square slabs that were ten centimeters long and one centimeter wide. Indeed, this larger azurite slab was equivalent to a hundred smaller azurite stones. In other words, it was worth a hundred thousand inkstones!

Seven azurite slabs and five long azurite stones.

"Seven hundred and fifty thousand. Collect them." The violet-robed elder handed them to Linley.

"Dare I ask, aside from using them to purchase items, do these inkstones and azurites have any other purpose?" Linley still had the feeling that the unique aura of these azurites and inkstones should have some special purpose.

The violet-robed elder's eyes lit up. Glancing sideways at Linley, he laughed calmly, "It's useless for you to know this information, so there's no need for you to ask."

Linley was curious, but since this person wasn't willing to tell, Linley didn't pursue this line of questioning.

"If you go through that gate in the main hall, you will arrive at the main hall on the other side. If you want to buy something, you can go to that main hall." The violet-robed elder said.

Linley had guessed this long ago.

This was because Redbud Castle's main gate was reserved for people buying things, while the rear gate was reserved for people selling things to the castle employees.

It was one structure with two sides.

"Let's go take a look." Delia was very curious.

"I wonder what the Infernal Realm has." Bebe was excited as well. Linley laughed and nodded, then followed through the third floor's corridor to the other main hall on the third floor.

From afar…

"Hrm? They are going to the main hall on the other side?" Edmond, noticing this, couldn't help but frown.

He immediately instructed his subordinates, "Go wait at the main gates. And you, you go to the rear gates. Keep watch on those three."

"Yes, milord."

The two Gods immediately left.

Chapter 12 – Instant Refining

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 12, Instant Refining

After passing through the corridor, Linley's group arrived at the main hall on the other side of the third floor of Redbud Castle, where a large number of wares were on display. On this hall, there were clearly far more people present, most in groups of three to five people who walked along each of the sales counters, carefully inspecting each item.

"Boss, look." Bebe pointed at the stairway. "There's nobody at the stairway standing guard. Anyone who wants to come here can. It isn't like the other side, where those violet-robed men stand guard."

Delia laughed. "Bebe, they have their goods on display here. Naturally, they have to show them off to people. But as I see it…although there are many people here looking at the goods, there probably aren't many who are truly buying."

There were signs with words hanging off the walls behind all of the sales counters throughout the third floor.

Linley was very surprised. "Offensive artifacts, defensive artifacts, medicines, materials, training support items, divine sparks…" Clearly, the many different sales counters here in the third floor all had different products for sale.

"Linley, look. That one over there is selling houses." Delia pointed towards a corner of the main hall.

"I've always heard that establishing one's self in Royalwing City is very expensive. Let's take a look and see how expensive the houses here are." Linley was curious. He led Bebe and Delia over.

There were many Deities over here, watching.

“Everyone, you are very lucky. In Royalwing City, there are currently three houses left which have no owners! Everyone, seize your chance. If you miss this opportunity, there won’t be another one.” Within the sales counter, a violet-robed youth spoke calmly.

“The entire Royalwing City only has three empty houses?” Linley didn’t dare believe it.

A nearby onlooker glanced at Linley. “My friend, the houses of Royalwing City were all snatched up and purchased hundreds of millions of years ago. The houses that can be bought now are all houses where the owners have died, resulting in Redbud Castle then selling the houses off again. That’s why we don’t need to be in a rush to buy. You must understand that Royalwing City has perhaps tens of millions of citizens. In a short period of time, perhaps others will die. Their houses would then be available for purchase, right? But alas, the prices are too expensive. I’ll wait for a cheaper house first.”

Hearing these words, Linley now understood.

The available houses in Royalwing City were only made available for sale after their original owner died. Houses without owners would return to the ownership of Redbud Castle, who would then continue to sell them!

“That makes sense. Royalwing City, despite banning fighting, has tens of millions of citizens who can’t always be within the city. For example, some Fiends…they have to go out to take missions. If they die, then the houses would return to Redbud City.” Linley only felt puzzled about one thing.

How did Redbud Castle know if a house’s owner was deceased?

“Perhaps they have some techniques akin to binding by blood.” Linley guessed to himself.

While considering this question, Linley, Delia, and Bebe drew near the sales counter to look at the price of these three houses. Upon seeing the

listed price, the three of them were terrified!

“What a man-eating price!” Bebe breathed in shock. “Even the cheapest house requires sixty million inkstones!”

Linley was shocked as well. Of the three houses, the most expensive one was nearly three hundred million inkstones, while the second one was around 120 million inkstones. The cheapest one still cost sixty million inkstones.

“Indeed, it is too expensive. Why can’t some more of the original owners of the cheaper houses die?” A nearby Deity also grumbled angrily.

“The cheapest houses in Royalwing City can be bought for just eight million inkstones. However, as soon as those cheap houses appear, they will immediately be snatched up.” A nearby God sighed. “How long will it take before I am able to afford a sixty million inkstone house?”

Linley nodded to himself.

Not all houses were the same. Some were ridiculously expensive, but from the sound of it, the cheaper ones were only eight million or so. It was a matter of luck. After all, everyone wanted those cheap houses. As soon as one appeared, it might be instantly taken.

“Becoming a citizen of Royalwing City truly is difficult.” Linley let out a sigh.

He had thought that he was now fairly wealthy, but upon seeing the housing prices, he realized that the Highgod spark he had which was worth seven million inkstones really was nothing at all.

Linley’s group of three left the sales counter. After all, they didn’t actually want to buy houses. Linley was planning to travel to the distant Bloodridge Continent. How could he settle down in this city?

“Offensive artifacts!”

Linley and the other two walked past the long row of counters on this side. Business here clearly was very brisk, and there were many onlookers as well. But Linley himself was greatly shocked.

“This is considered an offensive artifact?” Linley didn’t pay attention to ordinary weapons.

But he had discovered a unique weapon; an arrow!

Linley wouldn’t be surprised at the sale of a godly bow, but a single ordinary arrow…this couldn’t help but cause Linley to be startled.

“And the price is set at fifty thousand inkstones. What? You have to buy them in units of ten?” Linley couldn’t help but shake his head.

The violet-robed salesman, seeing Linley stare at the arrow on the counter while shaking his head, couldn’t help but speak out. “This is a godslayer arrow. Generally speaking, if a full God is hit by this arrow, he will definitely die. Even a Highgod, upon being hit by ten arrows, will most likely have his soul dissipate and his spirit shatter!”

“How is that possible?” Bebe stared. “This arrow is just a material attack. How could it so easily kill someone?”

“Material attack?”

The violet-robed salesman snickered. “If it was just an ordinary arrow, how could it be sold here? This arrow has been dipped in a special soul poison developed by a Highgod of the Edicts of Death. Hmph, this is specially meant for dealing with souls.”

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but be intrigued.

Soul poison?

“When I was in the Yulan continent, when I encountered that Grand

Warlock, didn't he have Yale use soul poison to kill me?" Linley had drank that wine, then suffered the attack of the soulsilk poison.

Linley knew long ago that some of the experts who trained in the Edicts of Death were skilled in using soul poison to kill!

That Grand Warlock was only a Demigod.

But now, from the sound of it, this poison was made by a Highgod of the Edicts of Death. Then the power of this poison definitely couldn't be underestimated. It most likely truly was capable of killing a God in a single strike, and ten for a Highgod was about right as well.

"But although it is powerful, you still have to be able to hit your enemy with it." Linley understood this principle. Neither a God nor a Highgod would just stand there, letting you hit him at leisure.

However…

There were some people who were skilled in assassination.

In addition, when ten thousand people in an army shot out with bows, anyone, no matter how fast, would most likely be finished.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe continued to look at the various items. They discovered…that there truly were far too many ways to spend money. Many of the items here had effects that were simply terrifying.

They continued to walk forward.

"Medicines!" Linley walked to a nearby counter. He was shocked. "No matter how badly injured one's soul is, as long as one's soul hasn't completely been shattered and dissipated, it will heal instantly and the spiritual energy will also be completely recovered. This was created with great care by a Highgod who was a master of the Edicts of Life."

Linley stared at the explanation placed atop the crystalline medicine jar. He

couldn’t help but be interested.

When executing soul attacks, the greatest cost was to one’s spiritual energy.

But as soon as he saw the price, Linley felt his heart ache in pain.

A single pill…cost a million inkstones!

“Let’s go. Stop looking at these.” Linley felt his heart clenching. Many items were good, but the prices were simply too terrifying.

After seeing many items, Linley’s group left the third floor’s main hall. The prices here were simply too terrifying. Linley’s group thus returned to the second floor.

The second floor had many people and many items. It even had Golden Soul-Pearls. However, in the Infernal Realm, Golden Soul-Pearls couldn’t be considered particularly valuable. Because…

In the Infernal Realm, although there were many Deities, there were even more Saints!

Many races in the Infernal Realm would naturally reach the Saint-level in adulthood. With so many Saints…quite a few of these Saints had their souls used for refining souls into Golden Soul-Pearls.

“A single Golden Soul-Pearl, roughly the same size as the one I previously acquired. The price…a hundred thousand inkstones. Whew. Still pretty expensive.” Linley said to himself.

At this time, the violet-robed salesman behind the counter laughed and said, “This Golden Soul-Pearl can be used for strengthening the soul, and it is easily absorbable. It doesn’t have to be refined.”

“There’s another type of gem here. That one over there. It is known as an ‘amethyst’! If you absorb all of the energy within it, in terms of the amount of benefit it provides to your soul, it is roughly on par with that of a Golden

Soul-Pearl. The price, however, is only ten thousand inkstones." The violet-robed salesman said.

Linley was somewhat startled.

The nearby Bebe spoke out. "Oh? You said the amount of benefit is about the same for nourishing the soul. So why is the difference in price nearly ten times? It's too much."

The violet-robed salesman laughed, "That's because this refining and purifying this amethyst is extremely difficult. A person who isn't an expert in refining will most likely lose 80% of the power the amethyst holds while refining it, leaving only 20% remaining…and the speed is very slow as well. It takes a lot of time. Thus, the price is only ten thousand inkstones."

"Refining and purifying?" Linley had a thought.

Actually, Deities of the Edicts of Death had to spend a great amount of spiritual energy in refining souls or in refining these 'amethysts'.

But Linley was different. He had the Coiling Dragon ring!

"I'll buy one and give it a try. Let's see if the Coiling Dragon ring is capable of refining an amethyst just like how it refines souls." Linley said to himself.

Linley immediately spend ten thousand inkstones to buy an amethyst.

The amethyst was semi-translucent, and it contained a blurry, violet fog within it. It seemed very beautiful. With a flip of his hand, Linley stored the amethyst into his Coiling Dragon ring.

"Crackle…"

In almost the blink of an eye, that amethyst was transformed into a pile of rubble, while at the same time, an enormous amount of golden fog began to swirl about within the Coiling Dragon ring.

The refining had already completed!

Linley's eyes lit up. "Doesn't that mean I can buy amethysts and refine them into Golden Soul-Pearls?" This meant that he could buy an amethyst for ten thousand inkstones, and then sell them for seventy thousand inkstones.

This was a profit of 700% to 800%!

He currently had roughly a million inkstones. In but a few cycles, he would then have tens of millions of inkstones.

"Wait. The Coiling Dragon ring only refines it to a golden fog. How would I crystallize them into a golden pearl?" Linley didn't have any idea as to how to cause the golden fog to crystallize.

The golden fog was soul essence. Linley didn't have any means to compress it. There was no way his divine power could interact with this sort of soul essence. His spiritual energy could, but upon the spiritual energy drawing near, it would begin to absorb the golden fog and strengthen his soul.

"Unfortunately, although I have a good method of making money, I don't have any way of condensing the golden fog into a golden pearl." Linley sighed to himself.

The refining, purifying, and condensing of soul essences belonged to a technique of the Edicts of Death.

Linley also wanted to be able to fill the golden fog into a crystal ball.

He trusted that the golden fog stored within a crystal ball could be sold to someone. At worst, the price would be a bit lower than for the Golden Soul-Pearl. He would still be able to make a killing.

But…

“This golden aura…although I control it through the Coiling Dragon ring and I can make it leave the ring, as soon as it does so, it will begin to dissipate. After it leaves the Coiling Dragon ring, I don’t have any way of controlling it. Naturally, I won’t be able to make it enter a crystal ball.” Linley felt very discouraged.

Linley was completely incapable of controlling this golden fog.

He didn’t understand the Edicts of Death. Thus, his spiritual energy naturally devoured the soul essences as soon as they touched. Perhaps others might understand the Edicts of Death, but they couldn’t possibly control something like the Coiling Dragon ring.

“Forget it. It is already good to be able to strengthen my own soul.” Linley didn’t care too much.

The purpose of him coming to the Infernal Realm was to grow and to break through.

As for money? He just needed enough to use.

“These amethysts, give me ten of them.” Linley said. The more powerful the soul, the faster one would train, and the stronger one’s spiritual attacks would be.

Linley naturally wouldn’t be too stingy.

“Amethysts?” The violet-robed salesman was very puzzled. It was very hard to refine amethysts. One was enough. Why ten more?

But the violet-robed salesman didn’t really care. “Perhaps he’s too poor. He’d rather spend time to slowly absorb amethysts rather than buy a Golden Soul-Pearl.” But how could he have known that Linley had a Sovereign artifact that was able to instantly refine amethysts and purify the soul essences within?

Chapter 13 – Planning to Commit Violence?

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 13, Planning to Commit Violence?

After Linley purchased ten amethysts, he left the sales counter, heading towards a distant sales counter. This sales counter was very large, and it had all sorts of items on display. The viewers of the sales counter were quite numerous as well. Many were spending money to buy things.

This place was where defensive artifacts were being sold.

“Linley, you want to buy a defensive artifact?” Delia looked at Linley, puzzled.

“I don’t need it.” Linley laughed as he looked at Delia. “Delia, your defensive armor is only Demigod level. It is too weak. Let’s buy a God-level armor.” Since they were preparing to join the Fiend examination, they had to increase everyone’s strength.

Strength, aside from personal power, also included their divine artifacts.

If they were to participate in the Fiend examination, Linley was worried most about Delia. As for Bebe…when they had left the Yulan Plane, Lord Beirut had given Bebe quite a few treasures. As for himself, he already had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, albeit slightly damaged.

“Alright.” Delia didn’t refuse. She understood that when she grew stronger, Linley wouldn’t be as worried about her, and she would be able to help him more.

“The prices of these defensive artifacts truly do exceed the prices of offensive artifacts.” Linley chuckled, then sighed.

God-level offensive artifacts were just roughly a thousand inkstones, while God-level defensive artifacts were generally five or six thousand inkstones.

To Linley's team, this wasn't much at all.

People continually entered and left the main gates of Redbud Castle, but there was one person who stayed right there by the sides of the steps, always watching the main gate.

"Those three really are slow. Isn't it just shopping?" The God cursed softly. "They've never come to Royalwing City. They'll most likely wander about for a long time. They are enjoying themselves inside, while I'm slowly waiting here."

Indeed, Linley's team was very curious.

This Redbud City had many items that expanded Linley's horizons. Naturally, they had to have a good stroll and gain some experience.

The God suddenly saw a human figure. He immediately headed over and said respectfully, "Lord Edmond."

Edmond nodded slightly, then said calmly, "The three still haven't come out?"

"Right. Not yet." The God nodded.

Edmond frowned, then turned to look at the gate. "They've already sold what they came to sell. I imagine they should be coming out from this front main gate." Edmond was in no hurry. He just waited quietly outside.

"It is Lord Edmond."

The other members of the Black Dragon Tribe, when departing Redbud Castle, saw Edmond standing there. Many of them assembled up behind Edmond.

"Mm, here they are." Edmond's eyes lit up.

"That metallic lifeform really is expensive." Delia was sighing.

Linley nodded as well. “Ordinary metallic lifeforms cost millions already, but high level, powerful ones cost tens of millions…those large ones actually cost over a hundred million inkstones. Bebe, your grandpa really is powerful.” Linley sighed in praise as he looked towards the nearby Bebe.

“Naturally!” Bebe puffed his chest out proudly.

Lord Beirut’s metallic castle was a high level metallic lifeform. The price of such a creature in Redbud Castle was more than a hundred million inkstones.

As they spoke, the three of them walked out of the first main hall, following the tide of people outwards.

“Linley.” Suddenly, someone called out at the gateway.

Linley turned to look. It was Daebra.

“Daebra.” Linley laughed as he spoke out. “Oh, you sold your things?” Linley said. He noticed that next to Daebra was a large group of people, all of whom belonged to the Black Dragon Tribe.

Daebra laughed. “I was just selling a single God artifact. I heard you went to the third floor. You really are amazing.” Daebra’s words caused the nearby members of the Black Dragon Tribe to stare jealously at Linley.

In the Infernal Realm, making a fortune was simply too hard.

“Oh?” Linley laughed calmly, carefully inspecting the looks on the faces of the Black Dragon Tribe’s members.

Actually, when he went to the third floor to sell items, Linley had already anticipated that he wouldn’t be able to avoid the attention of all the members of the Black Dragon Tribe. It was possible that he would be discovered…but so what if he was? After all, he didn’t have any plans to return to the Black Dragon Tribe.

“Alright, let’s head out.” Edmond, standing in front, spoke out as he led his subordinates away.

Edmond didn’t even look at Linley.

The group walked a few dozen meters towards the direction of the pillars, moving in a direction that would bring them back out of Royalwing City. But Linley’s team took a curved route, heading towards a different direction.

“Linley, where are you going?” Daebra said with surprise.

At the same time, Edmond and many others halted, turning to look.

“Oh, I’m not going back to the Black Dragon Tribe.” Linley laughed as he said.

“Not returning to the Black Dragon Tribe?” A gentle voice rang out. Edmond led his subordinates and walked over.

Linley, seeing that it was Edmond who had come, couldn’t help but sneer coldly in his heart. “This old fellow. I’m not going to the Black Dragon Tribe, so he, the chief steward of Stirton and a Highgod, immediately came over? Does he think I don’t know what he is scheming?”

The distance from here to the front main gate of Redbud Castle was less than a hundred meters. There were many people here. Linley’s group, standing there, wasn’t noticeable at all.

“Lord Edmond.” Linley smiled as he spoke.

“Your name is Linley, right?” Edmond laughed calmly. “Your two friends are both Gods. In our Black Dragon Tribe, they can be considered elite members. It is truly a pity that you are planning to leave the Black Dragon Tribe. Right. I actually have taken a liking to you. I recently lack for subordinates. Would you be willing to follow me?”

Linley remained very modest and courteous. “Thank you, Lord Edmond, for your kindness. Only, it truly isn’t necessary. Myself, my wife, and my brother here came to the Black Dragon Tribe only because we had just arrived in the Infernal Realm. However, I still feel gratitude for the care the Black Dragon Tribe has shown me in this period of time.”

Edmond couldn’t help but be startled.

But seeing the meek smile on Linley’s face, he felt a stirring of anger in his heart. “This guy!”

He knew that Linley was carrying a fortune on himself. Even he, Edmond, wouldn’t find it so easy to accumulate such wealth. After all, he, Edmond, had fused with a divine spark to become a Highgod. This was why he had always followed Stirton. Stirton made most of the money, while he only made do with leftovers.

“We’re leaving now.” Linley said with a smile, then turned.

“Swoosh!”

Very suddenly, six Gods appeared in front of Linley.

“You want to leave?” One of the Gods said coldly.

Linley was startled, and then his gaze turned icy.

“F*ck, what, you want to fight?” Bebe’s voice suddenly raised in pitch and volume, spreading in every direction. Many of the nearby people who had been moving about turned to look in their direction. Bebe jumped up and shouted out, “Milords of the Redbud Army, these people want to beat us, they want to fight!”

The distance from here to Redbud Castle’s gates was less than a hundred meters.

At such a close distance, those bored Redbud Army soldiers milling about at the gates to Redbud Castle naturally could hear Bebe's shout. Although they were sent here to maintain order, normally who would dare cause trouble here? Naturally, they were always very bored. Now, hearing someone call out for them, they actually grew excited.

"Hey, something's happening?" A black-cloaked, muscular man called out hurriedly. "I'll go take a look."

"Brothers, let's all go check it out."

Ten or so Redbud Army soldiers all walked over curiously.

Seeing the Redbud Army soldiers come over, Edmond's face instantly grew ugly to behold.

He was a Highgod, true! But he had only become one through fusing with a divine spark. In the Infernal Realm…there were far too many people that were more powerful than him. The steward of a tribe could perhaps show off his power and authority in that tribe…but in Royalwing City, he wasn't even worth a fart!

"What's going on?" The ten-plus Redbud Army soldiers walked over, their leader shouting, "I heard someone say that someone wants to fight? This is Royalwing City. Who dares to fight!"

The shouts of the oncoming Redbud Army soldiers caused the men of Edmond, who had been so wild and arrogant just moments ago, to instantly no longer dare to act brashly.

"Milords of the Redbud Army, these people belong to my tribe, while I am the leader of this expedition of my tribe to the city. I was just lecturing them. There's nothing else." Edmond explained, while the violet-robed warrior frowned and said, "Oh, all one tribe?"

"Right. They belong to our Black Dragon Tribe." Someone near Edmond hurriedly said.

“Shit, when we joined the tribe, it was said that we can leave whenever we want. What right do you have to forcibly make us go back with you?” Bebe shouted.

“Edmond!” Linley looked straight at him. “I was respectful to you just now, and even addressed you as Lord Edmond. You should have known your place, though. This is Royalwing City, not the Black Dragon Tribe. I’m telling you right now, the three of us are formally withdrawing from your Black Dragon Tribe.”

Edmond’s face was exceedingly ugly right now.

But with the Redbud Army soldiers nearby, he didn’t dare to be arrogant.

“Oh, how interesting.” A very handsome, silver-haired, violet-cloaked youth with a single horn laughed. “In the Infernal Realm, although slaughter and warfare is common, everyone has their own freedom. Your tribe can’t force someone else to do something, right?”

Edmond’s group didn’t dare to make a sound.

Bebe bowed deeply towards the Redbud Army soldiers, chortling, “Thank you, milords. Otherwise, this old guy was preparing to use force.”

“Don’t worry.” The violet-robed, silver-haired youth laughed as he spoke. “This is Royalwing City. Royalwing City has Royalwing City’s rules. No matter if you are a Demigod or a Highgod, you are not permitted to commit violence. Whoever dares to commit violence…haha, we brothers have been quite bored.”

The Redbud Army soldiers looked towards Edmond and the others.

Cold sweat was beading on Edmond’s forehead. How could a small tribe like theirs dare to offend the terrifying Redbud Army!

“Milords of the Redbud Army, that isn’t the case. Just now, I simply was

unwilling to part from them, so I said a few words to them. I wasn't planning to stop them. If they want to leave, I'll naturally accept that. Everyone knows this. Nobody will stop them from leaving." Edmond said hurriedly.

Hearing this, Linley had to admit; this Edmond really was thick-skinned and shameless!

"Oh, so that's the case. Good. You can all leave, then." The silver-haired, violet-robed youth said with a calm laugh.

Edmond and the others let out secret sighs of relief. After bowing, they left after glancing at Linley.

"Threatening me?" Linley glanced sideways at Edmond as well.

This was Royalwing City. Linley had never been concerned about Edmond.

"That old guy. When I think of how terrified that old guy looked just now when the Redbud Army came, I want to laugh. Haha…" Bebe was clearly very self-delighted. Linley and Delia, seeing how Bebe was acting, couldn't help but begin to laugh as well.

"Let's go find a residence first." Linley said.

Delia frowned. "Linley, do you remember? Daebra said that each stay in Royalwing City cost hundreds of inkstones."

"Let's go take a look first." Linley felt very puzzled as well. If a single night was so expensive, then the situation really was a bit too terrifying.

Linley's group first came to the waiting room of a seemingly luxurious hotel that was fairly close to Redbud Castle. The hotel's waiting room had some decorations which forced even Linley to sigh in praise. The quality of the sculptures here weren't lower than his at all.

"How are the living costs here calculated?" Bebe chattered.

The violet-robed, long-haired, sharp-eared beauty laughed, “Here, each stay costs eight hundred inkstones.”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were shocked upon hearing this.

“As long as you stay here for a year or less, no matter how long you stay, the price for the stay is the same. If, however, you were to stay for a year and a day, you would need to pay 1600 inkstones.” The violet-robed, long-haired beauty said with a laugh.

Linley’s group let out sighs of relief.

This place was different from the Yulan continent. Hotel fees weren’t calculated by the day, they were calculated by the year.

It made sense…

When Deities were training and meditating, they would spend months in seclusion each time.

“Despite that being the case, if the cost for a year is eight hundred inkstones, then ten thousand years would mean they would earn eight million inkstones? And that’s just for a single room. This hotel has many rooms in it.” Linley was secretly shocked. “The hotel business here really is profitable.”

The ‘rooms’ in every hotel in Royalwing City consisted of a stand-alone residence and courtyard. After all, Deities preferred quiet when training.

“Do the three of you plan to take up residence?” The violet-haired woman said, looking expectantly at Linley’s group.

Chapter 14 – Fiend Castle

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 14, Fiend Castle

Linley, although not a miser, wasn't a spendthrift either. Linley's group left the hotel, then wandered about Royalwing City for quite some time, visiting over ten hotels before choosing a quiet, elegantly designed hotel.

The price of staying here for a year was 210 inkstones.

After paying 210 inkstones, he received a black talisman. Linley's group entered their residence, pushing open the door to their courtyard. In front of them was an elegant residence, with a flower garden taking up a third of the space of their residence.

In the rear was a simple, unadorned, two story building.

Linley and Delia looked at the building, and they couldn't help but feel satisfied.

"Boss, this courtyard is pretty quiet." Bebe chortled. "Boss, I'm going to live upstairs." Bebe hopped directly onto the second floor. Moments later, Bebe flew back down, his lips pursed. "This hotel is so stingy. Aside from the bed and chairs, there's nothing inside."

"This environment is already quite good."

Linley nodded in satisfaction, and then withdrew four azurite slabs, handing two to Delia and two to Bebe. "Bebe, Delia, each of you take two hundred thousand inkstones. In the future, if you need to buy anything, make your own decisions."

"Heh heh." Bebe winked, accepting them.

Delia nodded and accepted them as well.

Linley raised his head, looking at the sky. It was currently the afternoon. The blood-red sun still hung high in the air.

“It is still early. It isn’t even dark yet. Royalwing City’s curfew forbids others from being on the streets at midnight. Let’s go out and have a look around.” Linley’s first thought was of the Fiend Castle. “Let’s head straight to the Fiend Castle and see what the Fiend test is all about.”

“Fiend Castle?” Delia and Bebe were both excited.

Without wasting any time, the three of them immediately headed out towards the Fiend Castle!

The ancient Fiend Castle was completely black, especially that enormous carved symbol of the Fiend Castle; that blurry face with that devilish red cyclopean eye. Anyone who saw it would never be able to forget it.

The people who headed to Fiend Castle clearly weren’t as many in number as those who went to Redbud Castle or Blacksand Castle.

However, although the people heading to Fiend Castle were fairly low in number, when they strode on the streets, these people exuded a sort of confidence. The majority of them had Fiend medallions on their chest. Clearly…

They were all Fiends!

The elites of the Infernal Realm!

Linley’s group climbed up the stairs, striding into the main hall of the first floor of the Fiend Castle.

“So quiet.” Bebe said softly.

The main hall on the first floor of the Fiend Castle was very wide. There were very few people here in the main hall, only a few hundred or so. The

few hundred people were spaced out in the wide hall, giving a very sparse feeling. Linley's group immediately saw the 'Fiend Application' counter.

That counter had a jade-haired beauty seated behind it. On the shelf behind her, there were many bottles of wine.

"Yuna [You'na], one cup of Olay [Ou'lei] wine, the red bottle!" A bald, black-armored man placed a piece of azurite on the table.

"Hey, can't you see I'm busy? Wait a second." The jade-haired beauty ignored him, continuing to chat with the black-haired youth in front of her."

"Anji, what do I have to say in order to convince you? Last time, over a thousand people participated in the Fiend trials, and only fifty three succeeded. There were twenty eight others who managed to survive, although they didn't pass the trials. The others, more than nine hundred people, all died! You've participated in two trials, and you were lucky enough to survive twice despite failing. You were lucky twice, but are you going to be so lucky a third time?" The jade-haired women urged frantically.

Linley's group walked over as well.

The black-haired youth said in a low voice, "Yuna, although I know I was lucky the last two times, I don't want to give up. I almost succeeded the last two times. This time, I will definitely succeed."

"Can't you just train for a while longer, increase your strength, then try again?"

Yuna let out a sigh. "I'm responsible for the Fiend applications. I don't know how many people like you I've seen, who want to become Fiends. The chance of death in the Fiend trials is however very high. Generally speaking, only a few dozen in a thousand will succeed, while the total number survivors never number more than a hundred!"

"Anji, go back and train some more. When your power rises to a new level,

come again. At that time, I will definitely agree to your registration." Yuna urged.

"Raise my power?" The black haired youth shook his head. "I'm already a God. I have gained insights into three different profound mysteries of the Laws. But I know…if I continue to train, the amount of time it would take me to gain insight into a fourth mystery will be unthinkably long. And so what if I do gain insights? My power won't improve greatly. Only when I become a Highgod will it improve! But that is too far away."

"Can it be that I will be forced to fuse with a divine spark? I am not willing. What's more, I don't have enough money to buy a Highgod spark."

The black-haired youth looked at the jade-haired woman. "Yuna, don't stop me."

"Haha…"

Suddenly, the nearby bald, black-armored man started to laugh loudly, his laughter immediately echoing throughout the quiet main hall. Many Fiends looked towards him, who turned his head to look at his friends. "Brothers, come and take a look. This little fellow managed to stay alive in two Fiend trials in a row. He truly is lucky. But now, he is going to take the trials for a third time. Haha…"

"Oh, he survived twice in a row?" Quite a few people came over, all of whom had Fiend medallions on their chest.

"Lucky enough to survive twice, and he wants to try again? Is he tired of living?"

These Fiends all laughed calmly as they walked over.

The black-haired man lowered his head, frowning. His entire body quivered slightly.

This was an insult!

“Yuna.” The bald, black-armored warrior laughed loudly. “This little fellow wants to die, so let him. Why urge him otherwise? Let him attend the trials and die.”

“Shut your mouth, Crompton [Ke’lang’pu’dun]!” Yuna stared at him while barking.

The bald, black-armored warrior was startled, and then enraged. “Yuna, how dare you speak to me in such a way!”

“What? Can’t I?” Yuna’s chin lifted up slightly, and she stared coldly at the bald black-armored warrior. “Crompton, I insist on talking to you in such a way. What about it?”

“Motherf*cker!” Crompton, enraged, slapped the table, staring at Yuna with a pair of utterly reddened eyes.

Yuna was frightened, but then she summoned her courage and said strongly, “Crompton, what do you think you are doing? This is the Fiend Castle!” Yuna knew that Crompton was a fairly powerful Fiend who was at a Highgod level of power.

“Crompton!” Instantly, some other Fiends walked over and rebuked him, “Stop making trouble.”

These Fiends whom Crompton had called over were all Crompton’s friends.

“Hmph.” Crompton snorted coldly, but he also knew that in Royalwing City, he couldn’t commit acts of violence. All he could do was vent.

“Yuna, Crompton is just hot-tempered. Right, let’s get a bottle of Olay. Hurry.” A nearby man with long red hair handed the piece of azurite on the counter to Yuna, who accepted the chance to back down from this confrontation. Accepting the azurite, she withdrew a bottle of wine and handed it to them.

At this time, the black-haired youth, Anji, said softly, “Yuna, sorry.”

Yuna looked at him, shaking her head and smiling.

“I know my training speed.” The black-haired youth looked at Yuna. “It took me a hundred thousand years to master these three types of profound mysteries. In the next hundred thousand years, there is no way my power will increase significantly. My remaining money is only enough to permit me to stay in Royalwing City for a few more decades only. I don’t have any more time!”

Yuna glanced at him.

“Fine.” In the end, Yuna acquiesced.

“Might I ask, what are the requirements to apply to be a Fiend?” A voice rang out. Linley and the other two walked to the counter.

Yuna glanced at him, and then immediately held her head in her hands. “Good heavens. First we have this God who failed twice but was lucky enough to survive, yet still wants to take the trials again. That was already crazy enough. Don’t tell me that we now have a Demigod who wants to participate the Fiend trials.”

“Hey, my Boss asked you a question.” Bebe stared at her.

Yuna looked at Bebe. She couldn’t help but feel puzzled, saying in surprise, “He…is your Boss?” Yuna could tell that Bebe was a God, while Linley was only a Demigod.

“What, something wrong with that?” Bebe asked her in response.

Yuna couldn’t help but be feel stunned.

The nearby Delia laughed and continued, “Miss Yuna, can you tell us what requirements there are for the Fiend trials?”

Yuna said, “The Fiend trials application doesn’t have any other requirements; as long as you pay ten thousand inkstones, you can participate in the trials. Once you pass, you will be a One Star Fiend. However…although there aren’t any hard and fast rules for participating in the Fiend trials…sir, I recommend you come participate after reaching the God level. The Demigod level, it is…it is too dangerous.” Looking at Linley, Yuna could only laugh awkwardly.

Yuna spoke the truth.

Linley understood this, because he had heard their earlier conversation.

A thousand people participated in the trials, but only fifty three had succeeded, while less than a hundred had survived in total. This death rate was terrifying. In addition, those who participated should all have been at the God level. One could imagine how terrifyingly dangerous it was.

Crompton had gone to another corner of the main hall with his friends to drink wine. He was currently still extremely angry.

“Motherf*cking filthy whore!” Crompton’s heart was filled with rage, and he would occasionally glare at Yuna.

“Huh?” Crompton suddenly paused. “Brothers, look…that brown-haired youth is just a Demigod, right?”

The others were startled as well, all taking a closer look.”

“Hey, it really is a Demigod.” Those people were all astonished.

“You aren’t planning to apply for the Fiend trials now, are you?” Yuna looked at Linley’s group.

“No rush. In a while, I’ll return.” Linley said with a calm laugh. Linley now knew how dangerous the Fiend trials were. Even if it was just for Delia and Bebe’s sakes, he couldn’t put himself in danger. In addition, he was more than halfway through gaining insights into the Profound Mysteries of the

Essence of the Earth.

Even if he only slowly completed the fusion process, it would only take a few dozen years.

No rush.

As Linley's group was preparing to leave, suddenly, a voice rang out…

"In a while? Haha…" This sound was extremely ear-piercing.

Linley turned and saw that the leader of a group walking over was that Crompton. Crompton snickered, a contemptuous look in his eyes as he looked at Linley. "Haha, you, a Demigod, want to take the Fiend trials?" Crompton's voice was extremely loud.

The hundreds of people in the main hall all turned to look, and quite a few walked over.

"A Demigod is taking the Fiend trials? Have I heard wrongly?" Some people were puzzled as to what was going on.

"I've heard of Demigods wanting to take the Fiend trials, but that was something from I don't know how many years ago. I've never personally witnessed it." A red-haired man, carrying a cup of wine, walked over.

These people all turned to look at Linley.

"Is it him? The one who is taking the Fiend trials?" They could tell that the only person present at the Demigod level was Linley.

"Right, it's this little fellow." Crompton immediately laughed.

Linley's face became exceedingly ugly to behold. Delia and Bebe were also enraged.

"Not just this little brown-haired kid. This black-haired kid. He failed twice

in a row in the Fiend trials, but he was incredibly lucky and managed to survive. Now, he wants to try again." Crompton laughed. "There are an extraordinary number of fools here today. Do they think…that with their power, they can become Fiends? What do they take Fiends for? What a joke!"

The black-haired man was so angry, he clenched his hands into fists as he stared at Crompton.

Linley's face was sunken as well.

"F*ck your mother, you bastard!" Bebe bellowed, but Linley immediately grabbed Bebe. "Bebe, don't be rash. Don't get angry with trash like this. It isn't worth it!" Linley said. Linley knew that he couldn't let Bebe commit any acts of violence; if he committed any acts of violence in Royalwing City, he would be finished.

The face of Crompton, who had been laughing heartily, suddenly froze. He turned to look at Linley.

"Hey, Crompton, did you hear that? That Demigod called you trash." Some people nearby fanned the flames.

"What did you say?" Crompton's face was sinister.

"You want me to say it again?" Linley had a look on his face, as though he didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. "I really didn't expect that there were people in this world who wanted to be cursed out. Fine then, I'll say it again. I said that you…" Linley's face grew cold as he stared at Crompton. "Are trash!"

"Let's go!" Linley pulled Bebe and Delia by the hands, completely ignoring Crompton as he began heading for the outside.

Chapter 15 – Royalwing Fiend

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 15, Royalwing Fiend

“Stop right there!” An explosive shout.

But Linley’s group completely ignored him, continuing to move forward.

“There are overbearing jerks everywhere. It’s best not to get involved with this sort of person.” Delia used her divine sense to speak to Linley.

“I understand.” Linley didn’t want to keep getting involved with this Crompton either. He wanted to leave the Fiend Castle immediately.

He wanted to leave, but the man wouldn’t let him.

“Swish!”

Crompton’s figure suddenly appeared in front of Linley, blocking Linley’s path.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe all had unpleasant looks on their faces, especially Bebe. If it hadn’t been for the fact that Linley had used their spiritual link to yell at him, Bebe would have exploded already.

“Crompton, they just called you trash. How come you aren’t doing anything about it?” The people nearby delighted in causing some chaos. While some spoke and laughed on one side, others mocked and satirized on the other, causing Crompton’s face to become even uglier.

“These guys!” Behind the counter, Yuna felt a hint of worry.

The nearby Fiends were either toying with their wineglasses or snickering to each other. They were all watching this like it was great sport… Crompton, within their circle of friends, actually had a rather low status.

This was because Crompton had become a Highgod through fusing with a divine spark.

Although he was a Highgod, as he had fused with a divine spark, he hadn't fused any of the profound mysteries, and so was the weakest type of Highgod possible.

After all these years, he remained a mere Three Star Fiend.

Generally speaking, Highgods were capable of becoming Four Star Fiends. He was a Three Star Fiend…and this alone made him a target of mockery. Crompton was weak in power; naturally he didn't dare to be arrogant in front of his friends. Thus, his long-suppressed anger would naturally occasionally be let loose and vented on some people weaker than him.

Mocking the weak was something Crompton often did.

"You called me trash!"

Crompton stared at Linley, his eyes faintly red. His breathing was harsh and ragged, as though he was an explosively angry bull.

His own friends mocking him was one thing, but just because he said a few words, this Demigod, this Demigod actually trash-talked him back! Of course Crompton was furious!

"You, a Demigod, a despicable little fellow, dare to insult me." Crompton was so furious, he wanted to attack, but as he thought of the prohibitions of Royalwing City, he remembered how terrifying those penalties were…if he were to attack, the repercussions would be beyond his ability to tolerate.

"Enough."

Suddenly, the long silver-haired Fiend who had been seated in the distance said calmly, "Crompton, forget it. You acted incorrectly as well. Stop obsessing over this matter."

“Me, incorrectly?!” Crompton stared, pointing at Linley, then at the black-haired youth. “Look at the two of them. One is just a Demigod, while the other…he failed the Fiend trials twice, but was lucky enough to survive. This sort of spineless wimp still wants to try to take the Fiend trial. You tell me, why can’t I say a few things about them?”

The black-haired youth, Anji, had been suppressing his anger this entire time.

He had thought that Crompton would just say a word or two then stop. Who would have imagined that Crompton would continue nonstop, and even pointed at him while calling him a ‘spineless wimp’?

“This is Royalwing City. What have I to fear?” The black-haired youth ground his teeth.

“Spineless wimp?” The black-haired youth raised his head, staring at Crompton. “You called me a spineless wimp?”

“If you aren’t a spineless wimp, who is?” Crompton didn’t give a damn about Anji, his eyes filled with disdain.

The black-haired youth, Anji, growled in a voice that was somewhat shaking, “You call me a spineless wimp? Then I would like to ask you, if you failed the Fiend trials twice and nearly died twice, would you have the courage to participate in a third Fiend trial? Would you dare?”

Crompton was stunned.

Would he dare?

He wouldn’t dare!

“That isn’t courage, that’s idiocy.” Crompton was very unhappy with the way this black-haired youth was looking at him. “And this fellow, this idiot. He’s a Demigod, but he wants to take part in the Fiend trials.” Crompton turned to look at Linley again.

“Bebe, Delia, let’s go.”

Linley frowned, but he didn’t want to continue wasting time with this sort of person. He knew…that right now, Crompton had a belly full of anger, yet couldn’t attack. All he could do was vent through his words.

“My friends, just watch. I am willing to bet that if this guy takes part in the Fiend trials, he will definitely die.” Crompton continued to talk, while the friends next to him snorted, “Why bet? If a Demigod takes part in the Fiend trials, of course he will die. Everyone knows this.”

“Boss, one day, I will make that damn baldy pay.” Bebe said mentally.

“Don’t pay him any mind.” Linley said calmly. Suddenly, Linley stared in shock towards the outside of the Fiend Castle. From the distant horizon, he saw several blurs flash through the sky towards the gates of the Fiend Castle, at a speed that was so fast that people would be astonished to even hear of it. The most important thing was…

They dared to fly!

“Flying in Royalwing City? How is it that they dare to do this?” Linley was stunned.

After having been in Royalwing City for some time, they had seen many people in Royalwing City and many Highgods as well. However, no one dared to fly. Everyone walked on the ground. They might use some techniques to allow themselves to walk faster, but…everyone still walked on the ground.

The four figures who flew down to the gates of the castle entered the main hall of the Fiend Castle, one person walking in front, three people coming from behind.

The leader had slightly curly, long golden hair. He wore a long, golden cloak. The strange thing was, his eyebrows were white, while his pupils

were golden.

White eyebrows, golden pupils!

Just by standing there, he gave off a sort of fierce aura. After striding into the main hall of the Fiend Castle, the golden-haired middle-aged man swept everyone with his gaze. Everyone who his gaze fell across felt their souls shudder. An absolute expert!

Crompton was facing Linley and Anji, so he naturally didn't notice the newcomer. He was still self-delightedly chattering, "Not just this brown-haired boy; that Anji as well. If they participate in the Fiend trials, they will definitely die."

Many people in the Fiend Castle, however, had noticed the newcomers. Immediately, ten of them, Yuna included, immediately bowed and said respectfully, "Lord Governor!"

Lord Governor?

Hearing this, Linley and the other two were shocked as well.

The laughing Crompton, hearing these words, was greatly shocked. He immediately turned. Seeing that white-eyebrowed, golden-pupiled man, he had no idea who this person was. But he had heard others call out 'Lord Governor'.

"My respects to the Lord Governor." Everyone who had understood immediately bowed.

"My respects to the Lord Governor." Only now did Crompton understand as well, and he hurriedly bowed.

At the same time, the eyes of these Fiends were shining. They snuck glances out of the corner of their eyes at this middle-aged man with white eyebrows and golden pupils. Was this person the legendary Governor of Royalwing City?

The pride of the entire Royalwing City, the Seven Star Fiend, Lord Royalwing?

Fiends were divided into seven levels. The highest level ‘Seven Star Fiends’ were, without question, amongst the most powerful experts in all of the Infernal Realm. Every single Seven Star Fiend had their own unique moniker. This one was the Royalwing Fiend; his moniker was ‘Royalwing’.

The fame of the Fiend known as ‘Royalwing’ had long ago spread across the entire Infernal Realm. Perhaps he wasn’t as famous as the likes of ‘Bloodviolet’ and ‘Silvermoon’, who had become famous through slaughter, but in terms of power, as Seven Star Fiends, there wasn’t a big difference between them.

“Seven Star Fiend!”

Anji looked excitedly at this person in front of him. He dreamed of one day also becoming an exalted Seven Star Fiend.

“How terrifying. Definitely not any weaker than Bluefire.” When Linley saw Royalwing, in his heart, for some reason, he had a feeling that he never had before…that a person could, just with a glance, cause his soul to shudder. Such power was utterly breathtaking.

The white-eyebrowed, golden-pupiled Royalwing glanced sideways at Crompton. “You said just now that others who participate in the Fiend trials would definitely die?”

Crompton’s entire body was trembling.

None of the surrounding Fiends dared to make a sound. Crompton, terrified, hurriedly said, “Lord Governor, I, I was just saying that this brown-haired kid and that black-haired kid at the counter, if they participate, they will definitely die.” As he said this, Crompton didn’t have any conviction in his voice.

“Oh? Why do you say that?” Royalwing seemed to be intrigued.

“This, this brown-haired kid is just a Demigod. If a Demigod takes part in the Fiend trials, he will definitely die.” Crompton had no idea that Seven Star Fiends were so terrifying. Royalwing’s gaze alone was causing his heart to quaver.

They were both Highgods, but the difference between them was enormous.

“Oh, a Demigod is going to participate in the Fiend trials?” Royalwing nodded slightly. “And the other one?”

“The black-haired kid has already tried twice, twice in a row to take the Fiend trials, but failed both times. He was lucky enough to preserve his life, but he wants to participate in the Fiend trials again…” Crompton said, then no longer dared to make a sound.

But Royalwing only gave the black-haired kid, ‘Anji’, an approving glance.

And then, he turned his gaze to Crompton. “What is your name?”

“Crompton.” Crompton stuttered.

“You are a Highgod, but you became one through fusing with a divine spark.” Royalwing laughed calmly.

“Yes.” Crompton hurriedly nodded.

Royalwing continued, “If my senses are correct, you should only be a Three Star Fiend!” From the surface, the medallions of all Fiends, be they one star or seven star, were identical and generally couldn’t be distinguished from one another. One could only tell the difference through using certain special appraisal methods.

Royalwing could tell at a single glance. This was indeed astonishing.

“Yes, yes I’m a Three Star Fiend.” Crompton nodded.

“A Highgod who is only a Three Star Fiend. Low ranked.” Royalwing said calmly.

Crompton felt incredibly ashamed. It was indeed very embarrassing for a Highgod to be a Three Star Fiend. How could he not be ashamed, with Lord Royalwing pointing it out?

“This black-haired kid has failed twice, but still doesn’t give up. Although he’s a bit rash, his spirit and vigor is quite admirable…if you were able to learn to have that sort of mindset, you would have reached the four star level long ago.” Royalwing said calmly. Crompton could only make a sound of acknowledgment.

Even if Lord Royalwing was to curse him out, all he would be able to do was accept it.

Royalwing then turned and walked towards Linley. Laughing calmly, he said, “You plan to participate in the Fiend trials?”

Linley hadn’t expected that this Royalwing could come speak to him. The man was a Seven Star Fiend, the governor of Royalwing City!

“I just came to take a look today. I plan to participate in the Fiend trials a few decades from now.” Linley replied respectfully.

“A few decades?” Royalwing laughed calmly, then said, “Young fellow, it isn’t a shameful thing for a Demigod to want to participate in the Fiend trials. In the past, when I was a Demigod, I participated in the Fiend trials myself.”

Many of the nearby Fiends immediately perked up and began to listen carefully. They had never heard that Lord Royalwing had done such a thing.

However…Royalwing City had been built countless years ago. One could imagine how long Royalwing had been training for.

Surprised, Linley raised his head to glance towards Royalwing.

“But of course, I failed. Fortunately, I was able to stay alive, and then after I reached the God level, I tried the Fiend trials again.” Royalwing said with a calm laugh. “Young fellow, it’s best if you wait to reach the God level first before taking part in the Fiend trials. The Fiend trials are at the difficulty of a one star mission. Generally speaking, even full Gods have to expend a tremendous amount of effort to complete such missions. A Demigod…the chances of completing such a mission is too low, too low!”

Linley felt gratitude in his heart for this Lord Royalwing who stood in front of him.

At least he was giving him advice.

Lord Royalwing, despite possessing a noble, lofty status, was smiling and gently remonstrating with him. How could Linley not feel grateful?

Royalwing then took a long look at Linley, before turning and leading his three subordinates towards the stairs. After Lord Royalwing left, the entire main hall of the Fiend Castle exploded into a hubbub of noise. All of the Fiends were incredibly excited.

“That was Lord Royalwing! The expert I worship!”

Many Fiends were extremely excited as they discussed Lord Royalwing. They no longer discussed Linley and Anji. After all, Linley and Anji were small matters to begin with.

At the top of the Fiend Castle.

“Today was truly intriguing. That brown-haired kid actually had a hint of the aura of the Four Divine Beast clans about him.” Royalwing sighed.

“The Four Divine Beast clans? Milord, don’t they come from the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent? How is it that they have appeared in our place?” One of Royalwing’s three subordinates said.

Royalwing laughed calmly, “The Four Divine Beast clans are a very widespread clan. Their descendants are extremely numerous. It isn’t a big deal for one of their members to appear here.” Royalwing only felt somewhat intrigued. After all, a mere descendant of the Four Divine Beast clans wasn’t worthy of his actual concern.

Chapter 16 – The Full God Level!

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 16, The Full God Level!

Linley's group of three left the Fiend Castle, returning to their own residence.

"Hmph!" Bebe threw his grass hat onto the table, furiously saying, "I really have to hold my temper here in the Infernal Realm. That foul baldy doesn't dare to offend powerful people, so he comes to mock us instead. If we were outside the city, even if it cost me my life, I'd take him on."

Delia pursed her lips with a laugh. "Take him on? Bebe, that baldy is a Highgod. Will you be able to take him on?"

"So what if he's a Highgod?" Bebe raised his head, but then he lowered his head again. "Oh, um, a Highgod…"

Seeing Bebe act this way, Linley and Delia both began to laugh.

"Grandpa…ugh. He has Highgod sparks, but he forbade me from using them. He wants me to break through on my own. Otherwise, I would've become a Highgod long ago." Bebe looked towards Linley. "Enough about this. Boss, when we will take the Fiend trials? A few decades in the future?"

Linley nodded.

"I'm not confident right now in my ability to pass the Fiend trials. No rush. In a few decades, I will definitely be able to reach the God level in the Laws of the Earth. By then, our chances of success will be significant." Linley couldn't help but think of his Elemental Laws of the Wind.

Linley had never dared to slack off in his training of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

However, up till now, Linley still had only a partial understanding of the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ profound mysteries.

“I’ve mastered the Throbbing Pulse of the World long ago, and the Essence of the Earth is one of the simplest profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. Naturally, the speed of fusing them is rather fast. But the Profound Truths of Velocity requires me to simultaneously gain insights into these two different profound mysteries while fusing them. The speed is much slower.”

Linley sighed to himself.

If he himself was able to reach the God level in both the Laws of the Wind and the Laws of the Earth, his power would naturally increase greatly.

“Just a few decades. No rush.” Bebe chortled. “There’s no danger in Royalwing City anyhow, and it is so huge. I have plenty of places to stroll about now. Oh, right. Boss. In the Black Dragon Tribe, I often heard people praise the delicacies of Royalwing City. Shall we go for a taste tomorrow?”

With regards to delicacies, Linley was somewhat eager as well.

The delicacies of the Infernal Realm were made using extremely precious ingredients and by genuine maestros. The quality naturally was high.

“Fine. We’ll go for a taste tomorrow.”

An occasional splurge was necessary.

Royalwing City. At the doorway to a restaurant.

“This place is pretty good.” Linley’s group looked at the exterior decorations of this restaurant. Satisfied, they pushed the door open and went in. When Linley’s group entered, immediately the waiters of the hotel came in. Bebe glanced at the waiter, then used his divine sense to speak to Linley. “Boss, this waiter is a God.”

In his heart, Linley felt this was ridiculous.

A God, waiting on him?

But in Royalwing City, Gods were indeed commonly seen. It wasn't too absurd for a waiter to be a God.

"Our three guests, please follow me." The waiter had a smile on his face as he led Linley's group forward.

"Drip, drip."

The restaurant had a miniature artificial mountain and spring waters. The spring water gurgled forward, its flows separating the restaurant into multiple areas.

Linley's group was taken to one part of the restaurant, where they sat down. With a flip of his hand, the waiter retrieved a menu containing a list of delicacies. Smiling, he put it on the table. "After you have ordered your dishes, please just call for me."

After speaking, the waiter retreated to another corner.

"I've never seen the prices of dishes in the Infernal Realm before." Bebe excitedly flipped open the menu.

Linley was somewhat curious as well.

"Wow, it really is expensive." Bebe continuously flipped through the pages of the menu. "Boss, the cheapest dish I've found still costs twenty inkstones." As he spoke, Bebe stared with wide eyes, still reading the menu. "The introductions to each dish are quite detailed. It clearly explains the uniqueness of every single dish. Oh, this dish actually costs seven hundred inkstones. So expensive."

After reading it all, Bebe handed it over to Linley and Delia, a mocking smile on his face.

Linley and Delia began to read the menu together and the dishes within.

“Hey, Linley, look. This dish is made from the liver of a Hellfire Phoenix. It costs thirty inkstones. The price isn’t too extravagant.” Delia pointed at a dish.

Linley flipped through the menu as well, and he couldn’t help but sigh.

“As long as you have money, you can eat any sort of Saint-level magical beast or even Deity-level magical beasts, even those from other planes.” Linley, seeing the detailed descriptions of each dish, couldn’t help but sigh. “Delia, you and Bebe pick. I’ll eat whatever.”

They ended up ordering six dishes.

“Bebe, you only picked the expensive ones.” Linley began to laugh.

The six dishes came to a total price of 215 inkstones. It must be understood that in the Infernal Realm, a Demigod artifact was worth less than ten inkstones, while a Demigod spark was less than a hundred inkstones. But these six dishes alone cost a total of 215 inkstones.

Fortunately, the total networth of the three of them was in excess of several million, so they naturally wouldn’t care too much about this sum.

“These two dishes will definitely take a bit longer, especially this one. The slow roasting alone will take six hours.” The waiter smiled as he explained.

“Understood.” Linley nodded.

When ordering food, there were explanations beneath each of the dishes. After all, Linley’s group wasn’t in a rush. They could sit there and wait an entire day if necessary.

“Boss, life for people with money in the Infernal Realm is pretty good.” Bebe sighed. “When we were back in our homeland, how could we possibly

eat food like this?" Bebe currently felt that he was in a state of bliss. He loved to eat.

Linley looked outside the window.

The metallic window of the restaurant was translucent. One could see everything going on outside.

"These cities are the only safe zones in the entire Infernal Realm." Linley said to himself. "In Royalwing City, we can relax and sit here quietly while enjoying fine food. But if we were outside the city, every moment would be dangerous, and perhaps we might lose our lives."

The enormous Nightblaze Prefecture stretched to a circumference of a billion kilometers.

But there were only ten cities.

One could tell from this that in the Infernal Zone, almost all the experts lived a life of near-constant danger. Only an extremely small number were able to live lives of comfort.

"Even if you want to live a comfortable life, you still need an enormous sum of money to accomplish it." Linley understood that while Royalwing City was very comfortable, the amount of money they were spending was astonishing as well.

The dishes came, and Linley's group began to enjoy these wondrous delicacies.

"Mm!" As Bebe ate, his eyes began to grow lidded in enjoyment.

Delia and Linley also had the feeling that eating these delicacies was indeed a sort of absolute enjoyment.

"Whew." Bebe said with a sour look on his face, "Boss, after eating this food, in the future, I won't be able to swallow the food of our homeland.

Man, this is simply too delicious. This is absolutely one of the best ways one can enjoy one's self." Bebe continued to eat as he spoke, while praising the food nonstop.

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

"Linley." Delia nudged Linley gently

"Huh?" Puzzled, Linley looked over. Delia said softly, "Linley, look outside the window."

Linley immediately looked outside the window. He saw many people clustered outside on the streets, amongst which included some who were looking into the restaurant with a hint of envy in their eyes.

"This is very normal. There are many people there who just entered Royalwing City." Linley said softly. "Delia, this is much like how, when we first arrived at Royalwing City and saw these places for the first time, we also looked everywhere with curiosity and anticipation, right?"

The Infernal Realm was a very brutal place.

If you had money, you could enjoy all sorts of delicacies.

But in the Infernal Realm, most people were struggling to survive.

But of course, the worst off were the Saints. Many Saints had come from material planes to the Infernal Realm, but only after they arrived did they discover that they were the lowest rungs in this place. Their lives could be taken from them at any moment…what they wanted was to acquire a Demigod spark.

But a Demigod spark wasn't even as costly as the table of food in front of Linley.

"Big brother, congratulations on becoming a Fiend. Today, the two of us have to have a good celebration." From behind Linley, a voice rang out.

Upon hearing the word ‘Fiend’, Linley’s couldn’t help but listen carefully.

“Haha, this time it was really dangerous. Fortunately, I’m skilled in the Elemental Laws of the Wind.” The thick, deep voice rang out. “Only, several of my dear friends failed. Alas…before this, we were saying that we would all succeed and all celebrate together.” As the man spoke, his voice lowered.

Upon hearing this, the mood at Linley’s table dropped as well.

The Fiend trials were very brutal.

“Delia, in the next few decades, you need to focus on training in the Elemental Laws of the Wind. When the time comes, if anything dangerous appears, at least you’ll have a better chance of staying alive.” Linley was worried about Delia. Once he became a God, the weakest of the three would be Delia.

“Right.” Delia nodded gently.

As for Bebe’s power, Linley actually felt rather confident in his heart.

“Fortunately, Delia has learned the profound mysteries involving the ‘doppelgangers’.” Nieff, who had tried to assassinate Linley, utilized the doppelganger technique.

Time flowed on. Linley, Delia, and Bebe lived a quiet life in Royalwing City. In the blink of an eye, thirty-two years passed. Linley’s training had reached the final step long ago, and he was about to break through and reach mastery at any moment.

Within the inner courtyard.

Bebe was wearing his straw hat, a sour look on his face as he mumbled, “Boss said he reached a bottleneck two years ago, and he’s been in closed-door training ever since, not coming out. It has been two years…didn’t he say that the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth is the simplest

profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth? But he hasn't broken through after spending two years."

It actually wasn't too hard to gain insights into the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth.

But what Linley was doing was simultaneously gaining insights into the Essence of the Earth while fusing it with another profound mystery.

"Boss being in training is one thing, but Delia is by his side training as well. I'm bored to death." Bebe once again let out a long sigh. With a flip of his hand, Bebe retrieved a God spark, then tossed it into his mouth and swallowed it.

"As for Grandpa Beirut, ugh. He gave me a whole sack full of divine sparks and told me to eat them all. But digesting these divine sparks is so slow."

Bebe let out another sigh.

"So many divine sparks. How many years will it take me to eat them all? Right, once Boss is out of money, I'll sell some of them off," Bebe mumbled to himself.

But suddenly…

"Rumble…"

A surge of unique energy ripples appeared, as the natural Laws descended upon the room where Linley was living in. This happened very commonly in the Infernal Realm, so nobody paid any attention. But this…was a huge source of joy for Bebe.

"Boss finally broke through?"

Bebe rejoiced as he charged towards Linley's room.

"Creak!" Bebe pushed the door open.

Delia, within the room, saw Bebe and immediately used her eyes to tell Bebe not to make any sound. Bebe hurriedly nodded. Holding his breath, he raised his head to look at Linley, who was enfolded by the unique natural Laws and hovering in mid-air already.

Linley's eyes were shut. Suddenly…

Linley's earth-type Demigod spark seemed to have become immaterial. It came out from Linley's forehead, then floated about Linley's head. A large amount of earth elemental essence swirled around that divine spark. Under the control of the natural Laws, Linley's divine spark slowly began to transform…

Transform from a Demigod spark to a God spark!

The earth elemental essences disappeared, and that divine spark which emanated an earthen light clearly had a much more powerful aura now.

"Rumble…"

The earthen yellow divine spark slowly revolved, then re-entered Linley's body.

Moments later…

"The natural Laws have vanished. Why hasn't the Boss opened his eyes yet? What's he doing?" Bebe was somewhat unable to wait any longer. He couldn't help but speak. Delia just stared at him, then said through her divine sense, "Bebe, don't make any sound."

Linley, hearing Bebe's words, opened his eyes and laughed as he looked at Bebe. "I just reached the God level, so I wanted to sense what about myself has changed, that's all."

At this moment, Linley had already completely fused the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Essence of the Earth, entering the full God level!

Chapter 17 – Profound Mysteries Fused – Power Greatly Strengthened

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 17, Profound Mysteries Fused, Power Greatly Strengthened

“When breaking through from the Demigod level to the God level, the descent of the natural Laws which surrounded my soul lasted only a short while, but the transformation of my soul was comparable in effect to me absorbing those eleven amethysts.” Linley was absolutely amazed.

Over the past thirty-two years, those eleven amethysts that he had purchased had been completely absorbed long ago.

Linley’s spirit was now incomparably more powerful than it had been in the past. After becoming a God and having his soul transformed yet again, the effect was actually superior to absorbing soul essences.

“Delia, have you finished absorbing those two Golden Soul-Pearls?” Linley looked at Delia.

Linley had Delia go buy two Golden Soul-Pearls to strengthen her soul as well. That way, she would find it easier to resist the soul attacks of others. That time, Delia hadn’t just purchased two Golden Soul-Pearls; she had also purchased an amethyst.

“I’ve completely absorbed the Golden Soul-Pearls, but absorbing that amethyst truly is slow.” Delia sighed. “No wonder there are so many who are willing to buy Golden Soul-Pearls but so few who buy amethysts.”

“Boss, when are we going to the Fiend trials?” Bebe urged frantically.

Bebe had been waiting for this day for a long time.

“When?” Linley looked at the sky, then laughed. “No rush. It isn’t even

noon yet. Let's go have a meal at a restaurant to celebrate. After eating, we can go to the Fiend Castle."

"Restaurant?" Bebe's eyes lit up.

After Linley's group finished and left the restaurant, it was already near nightfall. However, the Fiend Castle was open at night as well. Linley's group immediately went to the Fiend Castle. Upon reaching the Fiend Castle, they saw that there were actually quite a few people here at the Fiend Castle.

They strode into the first floor's main hall of the Fiend Castle.

"A familiar face." Linley immediately saw Yuna behind the counter, and the three of them walked over.

"Miss Yuna, I want to participate in the Fiend trials." Linley said.

Yuna lifted her head up to look at them, and then her eyes suddenly widened as she started to laugh. "It is you three?" Linley had left a very deep impression in Yuna. After all, on that day, even the Lord Governor, Lord Royalwing, had made an appearance. Yuna naturally remembered that day very clearly.

"Oh, you reached the God level." Yuna glanced at Linley in surprise.

"Were you already at the verge of a breakthrough, the last time you came?" Yuna laughed.

She wasn't too surprised. As she saw it, last time Linley should have been stuck at the bottleneck for Demigods. From the Demigod level to the God level, a breakthrough could be very fast or very slow.

Linley only chuckled. "Help the three of us register for the Fiend trials, please."

Yuna looked at Linley's group then nodded. "Fine. You know the rules. Ten

thousand inkstones per person. Thirty thousand for three." Yuna laughed as she stretched her hand out, and with a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved three of those long azurites.

Accepting the three long azurites, Yuna withdrew three medallions with a devilish cyclopean eye design, handing them to Linley's group.

"What are these?" Bebe looked curiously at the image as he asked.

"This is the proof that you are qualified to participate in the Fiend trials." Yuna laughed. "Right, tell me where you are living. I'll record it down."

"Miss Yuna, you haven't even told us what the mission is. Why do you want our address?" Linley didn't understand.

Yuna shook her head. "The mission for a Fiend trial will only be explained clearly when you actually participate in it. Right now…nobody knows. Even the exact time of the Fiend trial is uncertain. This is because generally speaking, only when the numbers are filled up will a Fiend trial begin."

"Fill up the numbers?" Linley began to understand.

Only when the number of participants reached a certain number would a Fiend trial begin.

They couldn't be certain of who would come to register, so naturally, there was no way to ascertain the exact time the trials would start.

"Still have to wait? We won't wait another few decades, will we?" Bebe said hurriedly.

"Of course not. Actually, just two days ago, a group of people went to take the Fiend trials. Only, the results were as cruel as ever. Less than a hundred succeeded. Too many died." Yuna let out a sigh. "Oh. Don't be in a hurry. Roughly in about a month or so, the numbers will be filled up."

One month? Linley's group was in no rush.

“After the numbers are filled up for the Fiend trials and the mission has been selected, the employees of the Fiend Castle will notify you at your residence. Thus, you need to leave behind your address.” Yuna laughed.

Linley’s group understood. They immediately recorded their address.

“Hey, beautiful Miss Yuna.” Bebe chortled. “I’d like to ask, last time, that fellow named Anji, who failed twice in a row but still wanted to participate in a third Fiend trial. Did he succeed or fail in the last Fiend trial?”

Bebe’s question caused Linley and Delia to look at Yuna as well.

“Anji?”

Yuna began to laugh. “His luck really is not bad at all. He succeeded on the third Fiend trial. After succeeding, he accepted a long-distance escort mission out of Royalwing City. Most likely, he has long since left the boundaries of Nightblaze Prefecture. But of course, it’s also possible that he might have encountered danger during the escort mission and perished. Who knows?”

Linley’s group rejoiced for Anji. No matter what, in the end, that stubborn fellow had finally succeeded.

Linley’s group thus began to wait calmly. In the end, they waited more than twenty days.

Royalwing City. That quiet little courtyard where Linley’s group was staying. The blood-red sun shone down upon the courtyard. Linley was seated meditatively at the floor of the courtyard, a layer of earthen light roiling about on his body.

“Boss’s defensive power has far outstripped that of a God-level defensive artifact, and it’s continuing to grow stronger.”

Bebe sat there on the chair, clutching a bottle of fruit wine in his hands,

continuously drinking. “This type of fruit wine is the fairly cheap sort in the Infernal Realm. A single inkstone can buy ten bottles. While drinking it is far better than those fruit wines which are acclaimed so highly in the Yulan continent.”

Bebe wasn’t like Linley.

Linley spent most of his time and effort in training, while Bebe spent most of his time eating and playing about, only occasionally training.

The roiling earthen yellow light on Linley’s body stopped flowing about, transforming into an earthen yellow outfit.

Earth-style magic included the Sacred Earthguard Armor spell.

The Sacred Earthguard Armor, upon reaching the Deity level, could form armor on the level of adamantine, just by using powerful spiritual energy as well as divine power. But this sort of Sacred Earthguard Armor was the simplest, most primitive sort. Linley, after mastering the Essence of the Earth, was capable of forming an elemental armor over his body.

The power of this elemental armor was far greater than that of adamantine armor.

This elemental armor’s defensive power was comparable to ordinary God-level defensive artifacts.

But due to his mastery of the Throbbing Pulse of the World, Linley also had the Pulseguard Defense, which was slightly more defensively formidable than even the elemental armor.

Fortunately, Linley had managed to fuse the Essence of the Earth and the Throbbing Pulse of the World together. Thus, after constant training and improvement, Linley had finally succeeded in being able to combine the constantly flowing, throbbing Pulseguard Defense with the static, immobile earth elemental armor.

The earthen set of clothes which Linley was wearing was in reality his Pulseguard Armor.

If one magnified it a hundredfold, one would discover this.

The extremely thin, minute strands of earthen yellow divine power were criss-crossed into a rippling lattice, moving in accordance to a particular rhythm to form a perfect whole. The countless rippling lattices of divine power in the end formed this set of clothes which Linley was wearing.

This Pulseguard Armor was the combination of his Pulseguard Defense and his elemental armor.

In terms of defensive power, it was nearly ten times greater than that of most God-level defensive artifacts!

“This is the power of fusing profound mysteries!” Linley felt a surge of delight. “If I hadn’t fused them, even though I have mastered both the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Essence of the Earth, the defensive power would be much lower.”

Linley finally began to understand why there could be such an enormous gap in power between Highgods.

“I have only fused two types of profound mysteries, but the power has multiplied tenfold. If I fused three? Four?” Linley sighed unceasingly. “No wonder that Crompton, who became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark, was so terrified in front of the Lord Governor!”

Indeed.

After fusing the profound mysteries of a Law, the power expanded exponentially.

“I mastered the Throbbing Pulse of the World, then developed the Voidwave Sword. But now…with two profound mysteries completely fused, the power of my Voidwave Sword has also increased tenfold. Not just that; if I

primarily use my spiritual energy, then the attack is a spiritual attack! But if I use my divine power as the basis of the attack, then it will be a material attack."

The Essence of the Earth was normally used for material attacks.

The Throbbing Pulse of the World was normally used for spiritual attacks.

With the two profound mysteries fused, the Voidwave Sword didn't just grow more powerful in spiritual attacks, even the material attack components through his Essence of the Earth had increased greatly!

"Knock!" "Knock!" …..

Suddenly, a knocking sound could be heard. "I'll go open the door." Bebe leapt to the doorway.

Linley and Delia both walked over to the door as well. There was a black-haired youth outside. "The three of you are participating in the Fiend trials, right?"

"Have you come to alert us?" Bebe said in delight.

The black-haired youth nodded and laughed. "Right. The three of you, let me see your Fiend emblems. Don't worry; this is the only way I have to ascertain your identities."

Linley and the other two each withdrew their fiend emblems with a flip of their hands.

"Right. Tomorrow morning at dawn, go to the gates of Royalwing City and take part in the Fiend trials. You will find members of our Fiend Castle waiting for you there." The black-haired youth laughed as he spoke.

"Tomorrow at dawn?" Linley's group was filled with anticipation.

"What's the Fiend trial going to be?" Delia asked.

The black-haired youth shook his head. “I don’t know. However, they will only tell you the details regarding your Fiend trial missions when you go to the meeting point.”

“When the time comes and you go to the city gates, the people of the Fiend Castle probably won’t recognize you. You only have to show off your Fiend emblems.” The black-haired youth said, then he left.

Linley’s group exchanged glances.

“Wow. Boss, we’re about to become Fiends.” Bebe was very excited.

“Fiend trials?”

Linley had already made up his mind. No matter what, protecting Delia and Bebe was what was important.

“Perhaps Bebe actually doesn’t need my protection.” Linley glanced at Bebe.

The next dawn, Linley’s group headed to the city gates very early. When Linley’s group arrived at the city gates, they discovered a large metallic lifeform hovering outside, which had the Fiend insignia atop it.

“It seems there’s quite a few people.” Linley looked through the translucent windows of the metallic lifeform and was able to see quite a few figures within.

Linley’s group immediately flew over towards the metallic lifeform, where a silver-haired elder was standing at the entrance. He looked towards Linley’s group. “Are you here for the Fiend trials?”

Linley nodded.

“Please show your Fiend emblems.” The silver-haired elder didn’t have any hint of a smile on his face.

Seeing the Fiend emblems in the hands of Linley and the other two, the silver-haired elder nodded slightly. “Go in.”

Inside the metallic creature, there was a long corridor which was divided into two directions. There were people in the corridor. Upon seeing Linley’s group, they called out, “Fiend trial participants, enter the rear cabin.”

They entered the rear cabin.

“So many people!” Linley couldn’t help but be shocked.

“Boss, there are at least several hundred people here.” Bebe said in amazement.

Delia sighed as well, “And not everyone is here yet. Linley, let’s sit towards the sides.” As they spoke, Linley’s group found seats and sat down. In the rear cabin, each row had twenty one seats, with each row divided up by four walkways.

Bebe looked through the translucent window towards the outside. “Right now, it seems there are quite a few people still coming. Hey, Boss, look, there are people coming who are wearing Fiend medallions. And quite a few of them.”

“Why are a group of Fiends coming?” Linley looked as well.

But when he did, Linley’s face changed.

He saw a familiar face!

Bebe was shocked as well. “Boss, that foul baldy is here as well!”

Chapter 18 – Moon Lake

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 18, Moon Lake

“Linley, that bald guy named Crompton is here as well.” Delia also noticed that familiar figure.

Linley could clearly see Crompton and the other Fiends enter the metallic creature. Only, the Fiends went into the front cabin of the metallic lifeform.

“All the participants in the Fiend trials are in the rear cabin, while the Fiends are in the front cabin.” Linley was slightly relieved, but despite that, he still felt concern. “Why are these Fiends getting involved?”

Linley didn’t care about Fiends getting involved; what he cared about was that the Fiends travelling along with them included Crompton.

Linley had to admit that he disliked this Crompton. And Crompton, in turn, definitely would take advantage of any opportunity he had to kill Linley to vent his anger.

“If Crompton really were to go all out to kill us, the three of us do have a slight chance.”

Crompton only became a Highgod through fusing with a divine spark. He was the weakest type of Highgod.

Those who fused with divine sparks wouldn’t have their souls be ensconced by the natural Laws, nor be nourished and strengthened. Their souls would thus be somewhat weaker.

And Linley, while only a God, had fused two profound mysteries, the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Essence of the Earth. His soul attack was ten times stronger than that of a normal God. Linley’s soul attack was more than enough to threaten Crompton’s life.

However…

Linley wasn't completely confident either. After all, the opponent was a Highgod, meaning he had mastered all of the profound mysteries of an Elemental Law. Even if he hadn't fused any of them, he couldn't be underestimated.

"In dealing with Crompton, if Bebe and I were to go all out, we still have a chance. But…Crompton isn't alone. He has friends!" Linley frowned. This was what caused Linley the most worry. "We aren't in a city right now. We're outside the city. There're no prohibitions against combat. Once Crompton notices us, he might come for revenge!"

Linley thought back and forth, but he still couldn't come to a decision on what to do.

"Motherf*cker, there are so many Fiends. Why do I have to be so unlucky as to have that baldy be on this mission?" Linley couldn't help but mentally curse.

But although he was angry, he had to face reality!

"No matter what, all I can do right now is to hope that the baldy won't notice us." Linley quietly hoped.

This wasn't impossible.

After all, Linley's group was in the rear cabin, while Crompton was in the front cabin. As long as they didn't run into each other, there wouldn't be any problems.

"Linley." Delia looked at him, her eyes also holding a hint of worry.

"Don't worry." Linley said softly.

Bebe looked at Linley as well. Although Bebe liked to cause trouble, he

wasn't a fool. He knew that with the baldy mixed into this group, things had just potentially become disastrous. Bebe immediately said mentally, "Boss, if we really run into trouble, I'll deal with the baldy! Although I won't be able to beat him, I am confident that I'll be able to tie him up for a time while staying alive."

Linley glanced at Bebe with some surprise.

Bebe had only reached the God level a few decades ago, but he was confident in being able to tie up a Highgod for a time? Even though this one had fused with a divine spark…

"Truly?" Linley's eyes held a hint of laughter in them.

"Hmph!" Bebe raised his head proudly, then said using his divine sense, "Boss, I'm the second Godeater Rat to ever exist in the countless planes of the universe! Don't underestimate me!" Bebe was capable of easily eating divine sparks. How could he not have some special abilities?

The metallic creature began to move!

"Whoosh!"

The enormous black shadow slashed through the air, disappearing from above Royalwing City and becoming a faint speck in the distant horizons. And then, in the blink of an eye, it was completely gone.

Within the metallic lifeform, the people all looked towards the outside.

"What's going on? Up till now, we still don't know what the mission is." Bebe muttered.

"Don't be impatient." Linley laughed calmly.

A woman seated next to Linley with short silver hair spoke out. "The Fiend trial mission has a set location. It must be very far away from Royalwing City. Most likely, this journey will be a very long one. The people of Fiend

Castle naturally aren't in a hurry to tell us about the Fiend trial just yet."

Linley nodded to himself.

"My name is Linley." Linley laughed as he greeted the silver-haired woman.

This silver-haired woman was wearing a silver outfit as well. She looked very clean and sharp. She glanced at him, a hint of a smile at the corner of her lips. "My name is Regina [Rui'jin'na]. Mr. Linley, those two next to you are traveling with you, right?"

Regina knew very well that during a Fiend trial, several people joining forces together would have a much higher chance of success. If she were to encounter danger amidst the trials, if someone helped her out slightly, that might change her fate.

So she wanted to get on good terms with Linley's group.

"Right." Linley laughed and nodded. The nearby Bebe's eyes lit up, and he turned to look in this direction. "Miss Regina, your eyes are so enchanting. Ah, I forgot to introduce myself. You can call me Bebe."

Regina looked at Bebe, and his lively, playful eyes instantly captivated her. "Bebe. Your eyes are even more bewitching." Bebe's smile immediately became even brighter.

"Miss Regina, do you know why those Fiends are travelling along with us?" Linley gave voice to his confusion. "This is a Fiend trial. Those people are already Fiends, but they are coming along as well…"

Regina shook her head. "I'm not sure about this either."

Linley could only once more bury his suspicions deep in his heart.

The metallic lifeform flew for an entire day. At nightfall, the staff of the Fiend Castle finally came to the rear cabin.

“The Fiend Castle staff members are here.” Regina said.

Linley’s group immediately sat up straight. They raised their heads, staring towards the three figures standing at the very front of the cabin. These three were staff members sent over by the Fiend Castle, with the leader being that silver-haired old man.

“Everyone!” The silver-haired old man had a smile on his face. He said in a clear voice, “There are, in total, a thousand people taking part in this Fiend trial! I imagine everyone knows this already. The Fiend trial is extremely dangerous, and the death rate is extremely high! But everyone has come despite that…so in terms of courage, at least, you are all worthy of becoming Fiends.”

The silver-haired old man’s face grew solemn. “But courage alone is insufficient. You also need power!”

“This Fiend trial will take place in a place located roughly thirty million miles away from Royalwing City. This place is known as the Moon Lake! Given the flying speed of the metallic lifeform, I expect it will take roughly a month before we reach our destination.” The silver-haired elder said.

At this moment, the rear cabin of the metallic lifeform was completely silent.

A thousand Fiend trial participants were all listening closely.

“There is something important which has to be made clear. The Fiend trial mission isn’t something which is designed or set up by the Fiend Castle.” The silver-haired elder’s voice echoed in the rear cabin. “Everyone who knows anything about Fiends should know that Fiends can accept missions at the Fiend Castle! Missions are divided into different levels!”

“As for your trial, it was selected from the many available missions, a one star mission which is suitable for you!”

The silver-haired elder said solemnly, “As long as you can complete this mission, you will thus become a One Star Fiend!”

“As for the details of the mission…Lauren [Lao’lin], you tell them.” The silver-haired elder stood off to one side while Lauren, a bewitchingly beautiful woman dressed in a long black cloak stepped forward.

Lauren’s voice was clear and bright. “The location of the mission is Moon Lake! Above Moon Lake, there is an ancient castle. The master of this ancient castle is extremely, terrifyingly powerful. He has one steward, eighteen black-robed guards, and hundreds of gold-robed guards!”

“Your mission is to kill one of the gold-robed guards. Remember…after killing the gold-robed guards, take their interspatial ring, that ‘moon ring’, and bring it back to the Fiend Castle. Only the possession of this moon ring will be accepted as proof that you completed the mission!

“But of course, you can take out and make use of the wealth and items contained within the moon rings.” Lauren laughed as she spoke. “That’s all. I’m done speaking.”

Immediately, a hubbub arose in the rear cabin, as everyone began to discuss this.

“Quiet.” The silver-haired elder’s voice rang out.

Everyone’s voices lowered.

“If you have any questions, speak.” The silver-haired elder said.

Immediately, a powerfully built blue-robed man who was three meters tall stood up. In a sonorous voice, he said, “Milord, you say that the proof of completing this mission is the ‘moon ring’. Can it be that every gold-robed guard has one?”

“According to our intelligence reports, all of them should have one. Even if their interspatial rings aren’t actually moon rings, the moon rings should be

stored within their interspatial rings." The silver-robed elder laughed calmly. "But of course, we can't rule out special circumstances."

"Therefore, if you kill a gold-robed guard but can't find a moon ring, that's bad luck for you. Without a moon ring, you won't be acknowledged by the Fiend Castle." The silver-haired elder pursed his lips. "However, it should be very rare for a gold-robed guard to not have a moon ring."

The man sat back down.

The silver-haired woman by Linley's side, Regina, stood up. "Milord. You said that the lord of that castle is very powerful, and that he has a steward and black-robed guards! You only want us to kill the gold-robed guards. Would the black-robed guards and the lord of the castle really just let us do as we please?"

Linley had a sudden thought.

Not just Linley. Many of the other people who had come on this Fiend trial with them had also guessed what the answer was.

"On this trip to Moon Lake, others are going as well. There are also some Three and Four Star Fiends, and even a Five Star Fiend squad." The silver-robed elder laughed calmly. "Most likely, when you get off the metallic creature, the group of Fiends will arrive as well."

"As I thought!" Linley was very certain about this response.

The silver-haired elder continued, "Their mission is to deal with the black-robed guards, the steward, and the lord of the castle!"

From what the Fiend Castle staff member had explained, Linley and the others could guess that the gold-robed guards should be at the God level of power, while the black-robed guards, the steward, and the lord of the castle were all Highgods.

They spent thirty-two days in that metallic creature. Finally, they arrived at

the destination.

“After you disembark, all you have to do is head south a few kilometers. Moon Lake is there.”

The silver-haired elder said loudly in the rear cabin, “This place isn’t Royalwing City. Life and death battles can happen at any moment. Everyone needs to be careful. We will quietly wait here for you return. If you successfully return with a moon ring, you can return to the metallic lifeform.”

Everyone maintained their silence.

They all felt tremendous pressure!

A thousand people had come to take part in the Fiend trials. But how many of them would survive to return? The number of people who had come to take part in the Fiend trials was testament to how dangerous Fiend trials were.

Since the Fiend Castle had specially picked out this mission to test them, the difficulty level definitely wouldn’t be low.

“Everyone in the front cabins has disembarked. Now all of you need to disembark!” The silver-haired elder said calmly. “Let me give you one parting advice; you don’t need to just be on guard against the dwellers of Moon Lake. You also need to be on guard against the other Fiend trial participants. There are always many who don’t die during the mission, but are killed by other Fiend trial participants. I’ve seen this far too many times.”

Linley’s heart shook slightly.

Indeed. If someone else didn’t have a moon ring but you did, the other person might ambush you so as to kill you and seize your moon ring. This was very common.

After all, this wasn't Royalwing City!

"Let's go." Linley, Delia, and Bebe followed the flow of people outside, the densely packed group slowly disembarking the metallic lifeform.

At this moment, the metallic lifeform was on a broad, empty land. There were twenty three Fiends gathered there. Amongst them, the bald 'Crompton' was standing in front of his friends, glancing about casually. But then, his gaze suddenly turned.

"Hrm?" Crompton stared at the entrance to the metallic creature.

And then, Crompton's face immediately had a hint of a smile appear on it. "I didn't expect that the three of them would also be assigned to this Fiend trial. What a coincidence."

Chapter 19 – The Pink Mist

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 19, The Pink Mist

Linley didn't want to come face to face with Crompton, but no matter what, the three of them would have to exit the metallic creature. This was unavoidable. As soon as Linley's group exited through the opening, Crompton accidentally saw them.

Linley cautiously looked at Crompton out of the corner of his eyes as well.

At this moment, Linley was at the opening, while Crompton was currently standing amidst a tall patch of wild grass, but at that moment…

Their gazes crossed and locked!

"Not good!" Linley's face instantly changed.

Linley's face was now ugly to behold, but Crompton's face had a hint of a smile on it.

"I won't get involved with that baldy for now. If he insists on making trouble, all I can do is go all out." Linley didn't have any other choice for now either. All he could do was enter the group with the rest of the Fiend trial participants. All of them flew down from the metallic lifeform, landing on the patch of land with exuberant plant growth.

"Hey, bro, look." Crompton nudged someone nearby, and then gestured with his eyes towards the front. "It's that punk who made me lose face at Royalwing City."

"Hey, it really is the three of them." The Fiends next to Crompton also looked towards Linley, clearly surprised. One of them began to laugh. "Crompton, your luck is quite good. It seems you'll have a chance to get revenge."

Crompton let out a sinister laugh.

“I originally thought I wouldn’t have a chance, but who would have imagined that he would be delivered right to me?” Crompton naturally wouldn’t give up this opportunity.

Soon, the thousand participants of the Fiend trials had all finished disembarking.

Linley’s team was in the middle of this group.

“Linley?” That Regina greeted Linley’s group, but they only casually acknowledged her, not paying any extra attention. Regina frowned. She couldn’t help but feel puzzled, but how could she know that the three were currently worrying about Crompton?

“Boss, that Crompton is walking over.” Bebe suddenly said.

Linley looked over as well.

Crompton was sneering coldly while walking over.

“Retreat!” Linley and the other two immediately moved backwards. Seeing this, Crompton immediately snickered, “You want to flee?” Crompton’s speed suddenly increased. No longer trying to disguise it, he charged straight towards Linley’s group, his face ferocious.

“When you were a Demigod, you dared to curse at me!” The rage in Crompton’s heart which had been suppressed for thirty plus years was now exploding forth.

If it hadn’t been for the fact that they were within Royalwing City, he would’ve acted long ago.

“Delia, you immediately retreat off to a distance while using your ‘Spatial Wind’ to restrict him and slow his movements.” Linley said through his

divine sense. “Bebe, the two of us will prepare to fight.” Linley’s gaze turned cold. Since Crompton was coming for trouble…

Then it was time for them to go all out!

“Kill that foul baldy!” Bebe’s eyes had a vicious look flash through them as well.

“Hmph…” Crompton sneered coldly, and then suddenly moved to pursue, while of Linley’s group, Delia retreated at high speed, but Linley and Bebe did not; instead slowing down as though waiting for Crompton to come over.

“What are you doing!” A cold shout shook in Crompton’s mind.

At the same time, a figure appeared in front of Crompton.

Although Crompton’s mind had been clouded by his fury, when he saw this person, he was immediately frightened into his senses. He immediately said respectfully, “Lord Loysius [Luo’yi’xiu’si], I, I…”

“Huh?”

Linley’s group came together once more, watching with confusion. A Fiend had suddenly appeared in front of Crompton, blocking him. In front of this Fiend, Crompton appeared to be extremely frightened.

“Who is he?” Linley looked at the Fiend in confusion.

This Fiend had long, brownish-black hair which was unbound casually, but his gaze was cold and fierce.

“Crompton, you want to kill those three?” Loysius looked coldly at Crompton.

“I…” Crompton wanted to speak, but he didn’t know how he should explain.

Loysius, a Five Star Fiend.

On this trip to Moon Lake, the leader of the Fiends was this Loysius as well as his two partners. Five Star Fiends, all three of them! This was an extremely powerful force amongst the Fiends.

“Hmph, I don’t care what you think you were doing.” Loysius said coldly. “However, the battle has yet to begin. If because you killed these three Gods, you created energy ripples that attracted the notice of the master of Moon Lake Castle, causing him to flee without engaging in battle, our mission would be a failure. If that happens, don’t blame me for acting merciless!”

“Yes, yes, I understand!” Crompton’s heart shuddered.

In his heart, he thought regretfully, “How could I have forgotten!” The energy ripples caused by battling Deities were very apparent, especially if a Highgod was to fight against three Gods…such a battle would definitely create energy ripples, and Moon Lake was only a few kilometers away from here.

Once the battle began, the master of Moon Lake would definitely take notice.

If the master of the castle fled, then this mission of Loysius and the other Fiends would have failed.

“Hmph.” Loysius gave him a hard look, then left.

Crompton immediately gave Linley’s group a hard look as well. He said to himself, “Count yourselves lucky. However, when the battle begins, I will definitely kill the three of you to vent my anger. Right now, I’ll just let you live a bit longer!”

After having been rebuked by Loysius, the anger which Crompton felt naturally was transferred towards Linley’s group.

“Everyone, we know that you are here to take part in the Fiend trials.” A voice rang out in the minds of all one thousand test-takers, Linley included. “We are different from you; our mission is to kill that master of Moon Lake Castle. Thus, I hope you won’t be impatient. Wait for us to kill the master of Moon Lake Castle before making your moves.”

Linley and everyone else felt shocked.

“A divine sense which encapsulates everyone? It at least covers hundreds of meters.”

In the Infernal Realm, using divine sense to speak was very difficult.

When Linley had been in the Necropolis of the Gods, as soon as he moved through the interdimensional gateway and into the Necropolis of the Gods, he had realized that his spiritual energy’s maximum area had shrunk to just a few dozen meters, while in the Yulan continent, it had been over a thousand kilometers.

In the Infernal Realm, one of the Higher Planes, the restriction was even greater.

When Linley had first arrived in the Infernal Realm, he was only a Demigod. Although his soul was fairly powerful, his divine sense was still only able to encapsulate ten meters. After absorbing eleven amethysts and breaking through to the God level, Linley’s divine sense was still only a hundred meters.

“A Highgod’s divine sense should be able to cover a thousand kilometers.” This was Linley’s hypothesis.

That Loysius continued to speak using divine sense, “Right now, we are heading to Moon Lake. The thousand of you, follow us.”

And then…

With Loysius and the other Three Star Fiends taking the lead, the twenty-plus Fiends simultaneously flew into the air, heading towards Moon Lake.

Immediately, the thousand-man army of Fiend trial participants flew into the air as well, with Linley's group naturally amongst them. They all flew towards Moon Lake.

"Crompton alone isn't that frightening. But I'm worried about those friends of his." Linley said to himself. "At Moon Lake, I expect those friends of his won't help him when the battle is going on."

Linley felt certain about this. Based on their behavior in the Fiend Castle, and how those friends had fanned the flames and egged him on, most likely none of them truly considered Crompton a close, lifelong friend.

Moon Lake was extremely wide and vast, nearly ten kilometers wide. A gentle wind blew, creating slight ripples and waves across the surface of Moon Lake. In the center of Moon Lake, there was an ancient castle. This castle was multiple kilometers wide as well, and could be considered a fairly large one.

Twenty plus Fiends and a thousand Gods were standing in the middle of Moon Lake.

Loysius and his two comrades, one of which was a violet-haired, black-robed man, the other one being a blue-haired, muscular man, moved at virtually the same moment. Flying into the air, they flew at high speed towards Moon Lake Castle, and right behind them…were the Fiends.

"Let's go." Linley and the rest of the thousand didn't hesitate, immediately flying into the air as well.

"Swish!"

Three figures suddenly appeared in the air above Moon Lake Castle. It was Loysius and the other two.

“They live up to being Five Star Fiends. Their speed is so fast.” Crompton and the other Fiends sighed in amazement in their hearts.

Loysius hovered there in mid-air, staring down at the castle. “I don’t want to fight inside the castle. Third Bro, split this castle in half.”

“Yes, Big Brother.” The blue-haired muscular youth flipped his hand over, and a long black saber appeared in it. The blade of this long saber was extremely broad, at least thirty centimeters. The entire thing radiated a bloody, murderous aura. Clearly, it had drank the blood of quite a few experts.

Wielding this long black saber, the blue-haired muscular youth’s body suddenly moved, and he struck out with the weapon.

“BAM!”

An enormous black saber-shadow chopped straight down towards the castle. Wherever the saber shadow passed, space itself split apart, creating massive earthquake-like ripples which emanated downwards in the air below the saber-shadow. The part of the waters of Moon Lake which were affected by the ripples began to crackle, and then the water in that area completely vanished.

And then, the water elsewhere in Moon Lake rushed in to fill the gap.

“BOOM!”

The enormous blade-shadow chopped against the castle. The walls of the castle actually began to shine with all sorts of complicated magical runes that were black in color, flashing with enormous divine power. The magical runes continually to flash, weakening the strength of the attack. The attack, despite powerful, had been forcibly blocked head on by the castle.

The faces of Loysius and the other two changed.

“Who is the master of this castle? Did he himself set up this enormous

defensive magic formation, or did he ask someone else to help him with it?" Loysius felt a hint of worry. His third brother's material attack was the strongest of the three.

Loysius knew exactly how powerful that saber chop was. To be able to block that saber…the magic formation of this castle was something which only a true master of magic formations was capable of setting up.

If he was able to invite a master to set it up, the lord of this castle was undoubtedly extremely wealthy.

If he himself set it up, then the insides of this castle definitely wouldn't be ordinary. There would be countless dangers within.

"No wonder it is a six star assignment!" Loysius frowned.

The Fiends behind them, as well as the thousand Gods, all stared in confusion.

"This castle seems to be extraordinary." Bebe said with pursed lips. "It is similar to the magic formation which previously protected the Radiant Temple."

"They are both magic formations, but this one is millions of times more powerful." Linley also sensed that this assignment wouldn't be as easily accomplished as they might hope. "It seems it's true that only a small number out of a thousand are likely to survive."

Right at this moment, a pink mist suddenly began to emanate from the castle. This pink mist expanded very quickly, covering virtually the entire surface of the water of Moon Lake, with all of the Fiends and the thousand Gods within it.

"Huh?" Linley frowned. This pink mist was very thick. Linley could only barely see within a few dozen meters of himself.

"Crunch!" The sound of a weapon piercing into someone's body.

“Bastard, die, die!”

From afar, energy ripples from combat suddenly appeared, causing Linley’s group to be shocked.

Linley wanted to use his divine sense to take a look; after all, Linley’s divine sense was able to spread to an area of nearly a hundred meters. But just as Linley spread out his divine sense a little bit…

He suddenly sensed a hint of a murderous intent grow in his heart, and his soul was affected as well. Only, that blue light within Linley’s sea of consciousness lit up.

“Not right.” Linley instantly grew clear-minded again.

“Everyone, don’t use your divine sense, and don’t breathe that mist into your body.” The loud voice of Loysius rang out. “This pink mist is a type of poison mist created by a Highgod master who trains in the Edicts of Death. It is designed specifically to drawn out the murderous feelings in one’s soul. No matter what, your spiritual energy and your soul cannot come into contact with that pink mist.

What was divine sense?

Divine sense was nothing more than spiritual energy which was spread out of the body. Once a person’s spiritual energy came into contact with that pink mist, it would be impacted.

Chapter 20 – Cannon Fodder

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 20, Cannon Fodder

In the air above Moon Lake. That pink mist was everywhere.

Within the thick mist, everyone including Linley, without being told, released their Godrealms, causing the pink mist to stay away from them. The Godrealm of a Deity wasn't that large, but with over a thousand experts utilizing it at the same time…

Instantly, there wasn't a hint of that fog left in the air above the castle.

"We haven't even entered the castle yet, but people have started to die." Linley said to himself. Just then, when that pink fog had first come out, quite a few people had their souls contaminated by that poison fog. Those people who had been more murderous to begin with had instantly exploded into madness.

In the blink of an eye, nearly ten Gods had died.

"This fog truly is powerful." Bebe sighed in praise. "Fortunately, I didn't release my divine sense just now."

But Delia said, "Just now, when I heard the sounds of combat, I sent out my divine sense to see what was going on. But of course, once I heard the warning, I immediately withdrew it." Linley couldn't help but to turn and look at Delia. "Delia, are you alright?" Linley was frightened.

"Do I look like I'm in trouble?" Delia laughed.

"Just now, I just felt a bit grouchy. I felt only just a tiny hint of killing intent, well within my ability to control." Delia explained.

Linley suddenly frowned and he looked to the side. There were two Gods

nearby him chatting.

“Aksu [A’ke’su], this time we’re in trouble. This is a poison fog developed by a Highgod master of the Edicts of Death. Something like this is extremely precious, but the lord of Moon Lake Castle used it in such a casual manner. And that magic formation just now…this all indicates that the master of this castle is extremely wealthy.”

“Right. This sort of poison fog that stirs up an urge to kill isn’t that powerful; when I was in Blacksand Castle at Royalwing City, I once saw someone selling a poison which upon contact with one’s soul, could cause the soul to spontaneously combust and then collapse. But of course, that price was sky-high.”

The thousand Gods who were trial participants all began to discuss this amongst themselves while hovering in mid-air, waiting for the twenty-plus Fiends to come to a decision.

If the Fiends didn’t go to deal with the master of the castle and those black-robed guards, they wouldn’t dare go charging in.

Everyone, Linley included, understood that what the lord of the castle had put on display just now was most likely just a tiny little trick for him. He hadn’t shown any of his true killing strokes. How would Gods like Linley dare to charge in and throw their lives away?

At the bottom of Moon Lake Castle. Within a wide main hall.

The steward, dressed in a violet uniform, was standing to one side, while a black-haired elder whose eyebrows drooped all the way down to his chest was sampling some wine. Casually, the elder said, “Belhomme [Be’luo’mu], have you completed your investigations regarding what is going on outside?”

“Milord, the leaders are a group of Fiends.” The violet-robed steward frowned. “Milord, the situation seems to be bad. I’m afraid that some people intentionally sent out a mission for the Fiend Castle to attack us.” An

attack of Fiends would be troublesome for anyone.

The same was true for the master of this castle.

“Hm?” The black-haired elder’s eyebrows furrowed. He was silent for a moment.

“Forget them. Any who enter the castle shall be killed!” The black-haired elder said in a low voice. “All of the gold-robed guards are under your control. Deploy Tursens and the others as well. Someone is intentionally acting against me? After dealing with this affair, I will definitely have to investigate this.”

“Yes, milord!” The violet-robed steward bowed.

In the air above Moon Lake Castle, the group of people continued to hover, while their leader, Loysius, was vexed.

Loysius knew very well that with enough money and power, one could definitely go to Blacksand Castle to buy some forbidden items and turn this entire castle into a deathtrap. Even he didn’t dare to charge in rashly.

“No other options.” Loysius’ face sank as he looked at the surrounding Fiends.

The surrounding Fiends exchanged glances.

It wasn’t as though they had never encountered this sort of situation before. They all knew what they should do right now…

Let those Fiend trial participants be their cannon fodder! Let them lead the charge into the castle!

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” …..

The twenty-plus Fiends simultaneously floated over to the air above the large group of Gods including Linley, while a voice rang out. “This poison

fog is everywhere, while the castle itself is unbreakable. All we can do now is go into the castle! Right now, the thousand of you will divide into ten squads and enter the castle through the windows and corridors. We Fiends will also divide into ten squads, following behind you. You will deal with ordinary gold-robed guards. If you encounter any black-robed guards, we Fiends will act!"

When this voice rang out, the nearly-thousand Gods who were participating in this trial all had changed looks on their faces.

"Bastards. They are making us into cannon fodder!" Linley cursed inwardly.

Everyone immediately understood. However, they didn't dare to refuse… because they all knew how astonishingly powerful a strong Highgod could be.

Perhaps, against the likes of Crompton, who only became a Highgod through fusing with a divine spark, a group of Gods would be able to kill when joining forces.

But a Five Star Fiend like Loysius was different.

Someone capable of becoming a Five Star Fiend was someone who had definitely fused profound mysteries. A Five Star Fiend wouldn't find it too hard to kill all thousand of them. And there were three of those Five Star Fiends! And a whole pile of Four Star Fiends as well! There was no way for them to resist at all.

"All of you, form a squad." Fiends immediately began to divide them up.

However, the Gods didn't respond.

"Hurry up. Or can it be that you want to die right now?" A cold voice rang out. The Gods looked at each other, finally complying.

They had no other options!

“There’s no way we Gods can join forces to kill them all.” Linley glanced sideways at Moon Lake Castle. “The corridors inside the castle aren’t too wide. Only two or three people will be able to walk side by side at most. With a hundred people in each squad, there’s no way we can simultaneously suddenly attack the Highgods behind.”

There was no chance of resistance. All of the Gods could only choose to obey.

After all, the Fiends weren’t trying to kill them, just have them go in first. They still had a chance at life.

“Hey, let’s take charge of that squad.” Crompton hurriedly called out.

The ordinary Two Star Fiends and Three Star Fiends were all responsible for staying behind the hundred-man squads.

“Haha, Crompton, jeeze.” People immediately began to laugh. They all knew that because of Linley’s group, Crompton decided to choose the responsibility of overseeing that squad. This was the squad Linley was in.

The main gates to the castle were tightly shut. There was no way to break through it forcibly at all.

The ten hundred-man squads could thus only slip in through the windows. Linley’s team was mixed into one of the squads, and they too slipped into the room, then began to search for an enemy in the corridor behind them.

“This pink mist has filled the entire castle. There’s no way to see what’s going on up ahead at all. If we aren’t careful, we might be ambushed.” Linley held Delia’s hand as he and Bebe carefully followed the rest of the squad in moving forwards.

Linley didn’t dare to stay too close to the rear. Crompton and the other’s were in the rear.

There was no fog in front of Linley, because all of the Gods were using their Godrealm, which was more than enough to make it so that there was no pink fog around them. However…in front of them, outside the area of the Godrealm, there was the boundless pink mist.

Everyone was careful and advanced slowly.

“Boss, how do you think that pink fog thing was developed?” Bebe chatted with Linley through divine sense. As there was no poison mist near them, they naturally were able to chat using divine sense. “It is able to directly affect the soul. I heard others say that there are even more terrifying poison mists that can cause the soul to spontaneously combust and collapse.”

“Who knows? In the Yulan continent, I did suffer that attack from the Grand Warlock. Right, in Redbud Castle, didn’t you see those Godslayer Arrows? The Godslayer Arrows had been dipped in poison, which is why they were so powerful.” Linley messaged back through divine sense. “And I hear that many of the most terrifying poisons are only available in Blacksand Castle.”

Bebe pursed his lips. “I wonder what’s inside this castle.”

“Linley. I keep on having a very bad feeling.” Delia said through her divine sense. “Be careful. Don’t get in over your head. In the Infernal Realm, there are many attacks which we have never encountered before. Have you ever encountered a poison mist like that, which can cause someone’s soul to be filled with murderous urges? Be careful.”

Seeing the concerned look in Delia’s face, Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of warmth.

“Hurry up. You are moving too slow!” Crompton’s angry bellow rang out from behind.

Although Linley’s group of Gods were unhappy, nobody dared to say anything.

The castle had multiple layers. Linley's group searched everywhere in the corridors on the first floor without being able to find a single person. However, when they headed down the stairway leading down into the second floor, the second floor was clearly much larger than the first one, and its layout was much more complicated as well.

"How bizarre!" All the Gods felt a sense of pressure.

No matter where they went, that pink mist ahead of them continued to block them. This caused Linley's squad to feel that the world in front of them was utterly strange and mysterious. Their nerves were continuously taut, which was quite taxing.

"Whoooosh."

Suddenly, the sound of a gust of wind.

"Slash!" "Slash!" "Slash!" "Slash!" …..

Before Linley had a chance to react, an arrow suddenly appeared through an opening between the people in front of him, shooting towards him. The speed was simply too fast, and Linley wasn't able to dodge at all.

"Bang!" The arrow struck onto Linley's earthen robe.

This robe was the Pulseguard Armor created after the fusion of two types of profound mysteries. The arrow wasn't able to shoot through Linley's earthen robe.

However, in front of Linley, more than twenty people immediately collapsed to the floor, their bodies riddled with arrows. They had no more life in them. Because of their death, the unending pink fog around them quickly swirled forward.

"They all died?" Linley was momentarily stunned.

Linley previously had nearly thirty people in front, but now more than half

had died.

Actually, those arrows had been shot out very densely from the end of the hallway. Virtually all of the Gods who had been struck were killed, with only one or two that didn't die. One was Linley, while the other, despite having been struck, had been able to take the hit. Clearly, his soul defense was excellent.

"Whew."

Many of the luckily surviving Gods up ahead immediately used their interspatial rings to collect the corpses. It must be known that those corpses all had divine sparks and interspatial rings on them. Those interspatial rings had large amounts of money within them.

"Boss, your reaction time was too slow." Linley, having been momentarily astonished, didn't react until all the corpses had been collected. Bebe, on the other hand, had collected two.

"Linley, are you alright?" Delia hurriedly looked at Linley.

"How could the Boss have any problems?" Bebe snickered. "The Boss's soul protection and his exterior layer of protection are both very powerful." Actually, Bebe had been very concerned about Linley as well, but because he and Linley were spiritually linked, if something had happened to Linley, Bebe would have known.

"Retreat, retreat!" The Gods up ahead immediately called out.

From behind, Crompton bellowed, "Keep moving forward. What are you afraid of? Keep moving forward!"

The Gods up ahead couldn't help but feel enraged, and they cursed in their hearts, "You aren't the one being killed. Of course you have nothing to fear!"

However, the people who had the courage to participate in the Fiend trials

naturally weren't cowards. They wouldn't quit just because of this, but they all became even more cautious.

"Delia, stay behind me." Linley said. After having suffered that sudden arrow attack, Linley was now in the vanguard of the squad. There were only a few people ahead of him. With those people having just faced that dangerous event, their movement naturally became even slower.

Crompton, however, was leisurely walking behind them. He was sneering coldly in his heart, "I didn't expect you not to die this time. But next time, it will be your turn." Crompton was quite eager to see Linley die.

"Captain, that squad is continuing to advance."

Within the gloomy darkness, ten gold-robed warriors were silently, stealthily walking while hunched over, each of them wearing a moon-shaped interspatial ring on their fingers.

"Hmph. A group of them died, but the rest are continuing forward. They truly are daring. At the next chokepoint, we'll give them another round and kill a few dozen more of them."

"Killing people like this sure is easy."

"In normal circumstances, how can we so easily and blithely use Godslayer Arrows like this? These toys are quite expensive."

The gold-robed guards quickly reached the next chokepoint.

Linley's squad, however, continued to advance carefully. They didn't know that soon, yet another group of them would perish.

Chapter 21 – Chaos

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 21, Chaos

The corridor up ahead was filled with that thick pink fog, completely hiding what was ahead of them.

“Crackle…”

The earthen robe covering Linley was only covering most of his body. Right now, however, Linley’s hands were also covered with an earth-yellow membrane. His neck and even his face were all covered with a layer of this earth-yellow membrane as well.

This was all part of his ‘Pulseguard Armor’.

The only place that was revealed was his eyes.

Not just Linley. After having suffered that ambush of arrows, all of the Gods in Linley’s squad understood that when those dense arrows were shot out, they covered the entire area. In addition, they moved so quickly that there was no time to react at all.

Therefore, the only option was to protect the entire body!

Head, arms, legs, neck…the entire body had to be protected!

Although the squad had over eighty people, everyone crept forward silently through the corridor, not making any sound at all. The only sound which could occasionally be heard was Crompton’s irritating bark of, “Forward, faster!” But his barks only echoed in the corridor, making the entire castle seem all the more deathly quiet.

“Ahhh!” Many miserable cries rang out together, while at the same time, from afar, the sound of angry shouts and cursing could be heard.

Linley's squad couldn't help but pause in their advance.

"Yet another squad has suffered an ambush." All of them understood.

"So this was the true purpose of the master of the castle releasing this poison fog." Linley now understood. Because the pink fog was everywhere, Linley and the others didn't dare to use their divine sense to search. After all, if the pink mist so much as slightly contaminated a soul, it would be affected.

Even if they didn't go crazy, their performance in battle would decrease.

Linley's group didn't dare to use their divine sense, and the enemies didn't either. However, the enemies were very familiar with this castle's layout, and it was possible they were lying in wait within certain hidden areas. This caused Linley's side to be at an absolute disadvantage.

"Those of you up front, hurry up!" A loud rebuking shout from a Fiend in the rear. "What's going on with all of you guys? So frightened that your legs have gone soft?"

The group of people at the front of the squad were extremely furious. The front of the squad was the most dangerous place, and they were supposed to hurry up? Wasn't this forcing them to their deaths? But they didn't dare to disobey these Fiends. After all, the Fiends on this mission were all Highgods.

"Time for a turn!"

The squad arrived at a turn in the corridor, and they all followed it towards a different corridor.

Hidden in the darkness, ten gold-robed guards were holding their bows at the ready.

"About time. They've already rounded the turn!" The captain of the gold-

robed guards said softly. “Everyone, prepare to attack!”

“Got it, captain.” The eyes of the gold-robed guards were all shining. They held their bows at the ready, five arrows in their hands. They would shoot out five arrows each time. To these gold-robed guards, although their accuracy would be impacted, however…

They were firing blindly to begin with, because the corridors were straight. All they had to do, therefore, was fire in straight lines.

“You lot really are wasteful.” The captain was only using a single arrow.

“Whoever gets hit by your arrow, captain, will definitely die.”

The captain laughed calmly.

Actually, the intelligence reports of the Fiend Castle weren’t completely accurate. Indeed, Moon Lake Castle did have the ‘black-robed guards’ and the ‘gold-robed guards’, two different levels of guards, and all of the black-robed guards were fairly powerful Highgods, true. But the gold-robed guards…

They weren’t all Gods.

To be more specific, the vast majority of them were Gods, while a very small number of them were Highgods. They didn’t become black-robed guards because they had been sent to be the team captains of the gold-robed guards.

The gold-robed guards, in turn, only had two levels; the ordinary guard members, and the team captains. Generally speaking, the team captains would listen to the orders of the black-robed guards. Ten black-robed guards were responsible for managing all of the gold-robed guards. The captain of the team of gold-robed guards which was lying in ambush for Linley’s squad was a Highgod!

However, he was one who had become a Deity through fusing with a divine

spark.

“After I open up the screening wall, listen for my signal, then immediately fire!”

“Swish!” Very suddenly, in the darkness, a stone wall suddenly opened as fast as lightning, revealing the ten gold-robed guards behind.

But because of the pink fog’s concealment, Linley’s squad had no idea… that at the end of their corridor, there were ten gold-robed guards.

The gold-robed guards stared coldly at the pink mist in front of them.

“Fire!” The captain ordered with his divine sense to all of them simultaneously. Because he was the one who had opened the stone wall, he was the last one to fire.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!” ….

Instantly, like a rainstorm, forty six arrows covered every part of the corridor. In the instant after they finished firing, the stone wall immediately closed shut once more. From the outside, nobody would be able to tell that this stone wall was movable.

Linley’s squad was currently making their way forward carefully.

Linley was staring forward carefully, but suddenly, Linley’s pupils shrank and his face changed…

The dense rain of arrows instantly tore through the air, mercilessly shooting down upon Linley and the others in front, or through the cracks to the people in the rear. These arrows were simply too fast, and by the time Linley and the others saw the arrows, there was only a distance of a few dozen meters.

A few dozen meters distance simply wasn’t enough for Linley and the others to react and dodge in time.

“Delia!”

In that short moment, Linley was only able to make a single movement. He stretched out his arms, striving to stand in front of Delia and use his body to completely block her from the arrows.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Although Linley wasn’t the very first person in front, two arrows landed on his body. The arrows struck Linley like a thunderbolt, but the earthen robe on Linley’s body was made of countless ripples of divine power, instantly and completely counteracting the penetrative power of the arrows.

Bebe was struck by an arrow as well.

“Clang!” A metallic ringing sound could be heard, and the arrowhead actually exploded and shattered as the arrow fell to the floor.

“Too weak.” Bebe laughed delighted.

“We’re all fine.” Linley immediately could tell that Delia and Bebe were both safe. He couldn’t help but feel relieved.

But then, Linley’s face suddenly changed. In his line of sight, he suddenly saw from afar a terrifying arrow!

“There’s one more arrow coming!”

This was the arrow which had been fired last!

But this was also the most terrifying arrow, the arrow of a Highgod! The Godslayer Arrow glimmered with a sinister black light as it pierced through space, causing space to ripple. It gave Linley no chance to react at all as it collided directly with Linley’s chest.

“Bang!”

The penetrative power of this arrow was simply too great. Although those countless ripples of divine force wildly attempted to reduce its penetrative power, in the end, the arrow just barely broke through.

“Ah!” Linley fell to one knee on the ground, powerless.

Bebe, who had been in the process of collecting corpses nearby, suddenly turned, his face changed. “Boss!” Delia, who had just been letting out a sigh of relief, was shocked as well.

“Hmph, he finally died?” At the back of the squad, the bald Crompton had been watching Linley this entire time. When he saw Linley fall to one knee, a hint of a smile appeared on his face. “I didn’t kill you. Someone else killed you. Haha…”

He was extremely delighted.

The arrow itself wasn’t terrifying. What was truly terrifying was the poison which the arrowhead had been dipped in.

A gray energy stream instantly attacked Linley’s brain, viciously piercing towards Linley’s soul!

“Bang!”

It struck violently against that translucent membrane. The translucent scaled membrane was a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Aside from the breach in it, the other parts of it were as good as when it was undamaged. More than half of the energy of that gray energy stream dissipated upon colliding with it.

The remaining gray energy, as though it had a mind of its own which knew that the translucent membrane was hard to deal with, suddenly completely split apart, transforming into gray specks of light which covered the entire translucent membrane. Naturally, that included the breach. And that breach…was sealed by Linley using his spiritual energy into a ‘bandage’.

“What is this?” Linley was shocked. He had the feeling that the gray dots had a mind!

“Swish!”

Instantly, all of the gray dots, as though having discovered that the ‘bandage’ was weak, immediately began to wildly attack the ‘bandage’. The remaining part of the energy all flowed towards the breach, entering Linley’s sea of consciousness.

At this moment…

The many gray dots divided into three. These three weaker surges of gray energy attacked Linley’s divine spark, his wind-style divine clone, and his original body.

“It is actually attacking all of my souls at once!” Linley was greatly shocked.

But although he was shocked, Linley still controlled the spiritual energy in his sea of consciousness, creating a Pulseguard Defense! A large amount of spiritual energy ripples clashed with the gray dots of light. Moments later, all of the gray dots had been extinguished, while half of Linley’s spiritual energy had been used up as well.

“That really was dangerous.”

Only now did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

“Boss, Boss!”

“Linley! Linley!” Delia and Bebe were both by his side, calling out to him softly.

Although it took a fairly long time to describe the soul poison entering his body, it actually only happened over the course of one or two seconds, after

which Linley opened his eyes.

“I’m fine.” Linley revealed a hint of a smile towards them.

Only now did Delia and Bebe let out sighs of relief. Linley, however, was feeling rather somber. “That poison really is frightening. No wonder the staff member at Redbud Castle had said that this Godslayer Arrow is capable of killing almost any God. Too bizarre, too frightening.”

As Linley saw it, this Godslayer Arrow’s poison had a will of its own.

Although it didn’t have the capacity to actually think, it had the ability to ‘avoid strong points and seek out weak points’.

“However, to this poison, the ‘soul’ has a powerful draw to it.” Linley knew this because if the poison was capable of thought, it would have focused its efforts on destroying a single soul. But the poison didn’t; instead, it attacked Linley’s three souls at the same time!”

“He didn’t die?” Crompton, at the back of the squad, saw Linley stand up again. He couldn’t help but stare with wide eyes, and then his face turned savage. “Hmph. He survived yet again. I want to see how many more times he will survive. Even if you managed to survive the soul attack of the Godslayer Arrow, I imagine you must have used up almost all of your spiritual power.”

“Hurry up!” Crompton bellowed yet again.

This time, ten or so people had died in the squad. After having been ambushed twice, only sixty Gods were left. Linley’s group of three were now at the very front of the squad.

“Boss, we can’t let this continue.” Bebe began to worry.

“I know.” Linley understood this as well.

Who knew what other tricks the enemies were planning? If they were

continuously in this sort of situation where they could only play defense, sooner or later, when their defense was no longer able to handle it, they would be finished.

“We’re at the third floor!” Linley’s group slowly began to make their way down the stairs.

“Everyone, be careful.” A God called out. “The third floor is definitely going to be even more dangerous than the second floor!”

In a large, empty room on the third floor of the castle, ten gold-robed guards entered from above through a secret passageway.

“Our master really has gone wild this time. He has even brought out the Deathgod Golems.” The gold-robed guards were very excited.

“But we only have twenty of these Deathgod Golems in total. Our squad is very lucky to have even one of them.”

The gold-robed captain laughed calmly. “Eric [Ai’rui], you can be the one to control the Deathgod Golem we have been given. I don’t need it!” The gold-robed captain was a Highgod, after all. Although the Deathgod Golem was powerful, it was only on par with him.

The third floor was extremely large, and the layout of the castle was so chaotic that as one walked, one might even forget which road they were traveling on. They could only choose to walk around randomly.

“We can’t let this continue!” Linley walked slowly, but up ahead was that perpetual pink mist. Nobody knew what would appear from up ahead.

Suddenly…

“Halt!” An explosive shout rang out.

“Brothers, flee!”

Chaotic sounds suddenly could be heard from everywhere in the castle, and the sixty-plus people in Linley's squad all were stunned.

A look of delight appeared on Linley's face.

Linley immediately spread out his divine sense to cover the forty or fifty people towards the front. "Brothers, if this continues, we're all going to die. Let's all flee together and move separately. That way, we won't be caught and killed in one fell swoop by the people of the castle!"

"Brothers, flee!" Linley suddenly called out in a loud voice.

In virtually the same moment, all of the Gods, as though having been trained together, simultaneously scurried towards the nearby rooms, or deeper into the mist, or into the nearby passageways…

In the blink of an eye!

More than sixty Gods had all run off!

Crompton's group of three Fiends were stupefied.

"We…who should we chase?" Crompton turned to look at the two Fiends next to him.

"Chase my ass!" A Fiend cursed softly.

Chapter 22 – Deathgod Golem

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 22, Deathgod Golem

Sixty-plus people had fled.

Only three Fiends were overseeing them. How many could they catch?

One of them, a gold-haired Fiend, sent with his divine sense, “Right now, let’s forget about trying to use those Fiend trial participants to block for us. Come, let’s go find the black-robed guards!” These two Fiends immediately began to move forward quickly. Crompton, while in his heart unwilling to let the matter rest, still followed them.

“Linley, you better hope that I don’t meet you in the future. Next time definitely won’t be like this time.”

Crompton regretted not having killed Linley earlier.

Actually, it wasn’t that Crompton had been merciful; it was that he simply couldn’t kill Linley!

At that time, the thousand Fiend trial participants had all been divided into groups of ten. If Crompton were to try and kill Linley, the other Fiends probably wouldn’t have agreed. After all, if at a time like that, he was to suddenly kill Linley for no reason, most likely that would cause the rest of the thousand Fiend trial participants to flee and scatter.

Within the Moon Lake Castle, the scene was one of utter chaos.

Chaos, chaos, everywhere!

The members of the ten squads were wildly fleeing, and hundreds of them were dispersing throughout the third floor. Some of the gold-robed guards who had been hidden in some of the rooms discovered, to their shock,

people charging within!

Although they were hidden quite well, with hundreds of people running around chaotically, naturally some would bump into each other.

The battle suddenly began!

“Bang!” “Bang!” Energy explosions, angry roars, and the sounds of battle constantly emanated from every part of the castle.

Within a hidden room.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were here.

“It sure is noisy outside.” Bebe’s face was covered in smiles, and he turned to look at Linley. “Boss, if we hide here and all of the gold-robed guards get killed, doesn’t that mean we won’t be able to get moon rings?”

Linley said with a frown, “There’s quite a few of those gold-robed guards, and the strength of this castle is most likely more powerful than our side had predicted.”

Linley still remembered that arrow just now!”

His ‘Pulseguard Armor’ was developed through the fusion of two profound mysteries, and was more than ten times stronger in defense than an ordinary God’s! Despite such defensive strength, it was still pierced through. Linley was certain that the person who shot out that arrow was very likely a Highgod!

“In the castle, the most powerful ‘black-robed guards’ won’t start ambushing people right away. It was definitely done by the gold-robed guards.” Linley understood this logic. Petty actions like ambushes would definitely be done by those of lower status.

Linley couldn’t help but sigh, “Delia, Bebe, beware the gold-robed guards. The gold-robed guards aren’t all Gods as we thought!” Linley then

immediately conveyed his thoughts to Delia and Bebe.

They had to be careful!

If they were overconfident in dealing with those gold-robed guards, they would most likely be finished.

“Killing God-level gold-robed guards and Highgod-level gold-robed guards will result in getting the same thing; a moon ring.” Bebe pursed his lips as he spoke. “I hope our luck is good.”

Although Linley’s group was conversing, they were using their Godrealm to prevent sound from leaving their room to the outside.

“Boom!” The walls suddenly shook massively.

“There’s a battle outside!” Linley, Delia, and Bebe all immediately stood up. Moving as fast as lightning, they moved to the side of the wall. If someone charged in through the door, Linley’s group would be able to immediately attack them!

“Bang!” Yet another collision!

Although the wooden door was sturdy, it was smashed open, and a human figure fell down powerlessly from outside, smashing against the ground.

Linley’s team didn’t move.

“That’s a corpse!” Linley’s team was instantly able to tell. The corpse’s head had already been utterly smashed apart, and a divine spark was rolling on the ground.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe all held their breaths.

“Whoosh!”

A human figure suddenly charged in!

“Kill!” Linley’s team moved.

Delia immediately executed her Profound Mysteries of Dimensional Space, and that figure was instantly slowed down, his speed dropping. Meanwhile, the adamantine heavy sword in Linley’s hand mercilessly smashed straight down on the figure. His most powerful attack…

Voidwave Sword!

“F*ck off and die!” Bebe laughed loudly as he gave the head a kick.

“Bang!” The figure smashed into the nearby wall, then landed heavily to the floor. A layer of magical patterns on the wall flashed slightly, but the wall itself wasn’t damaged in the slightest.

The entire castle was supported by a magical formation. However, not all walls had it. Generally speaking, only the primary supporting walls or the prisons, while the other walls and doors didn’t have any protection.

“Huh?” Linley’s team’s faces changed. “Not dead?”

The figure actually stood up.

Only, his head had become distorted by Bebe’s tough kick. The flesh on his face had exploded, revealing the metallic skull within. The metallic skull’s eyes were made of two rubies, and it stared bizarrely at Linley’s team, emitting a mechanical chuckle. “Three Gods? Not bad!”

Divine power began to flow on the surface of the metallic skull, and it immediately healed.

“That isn’t human, and it doesn’t have a soul!” Linley was greatly shocked. His Voidwave Sword hadn’t found a spirit to attack.

Linley had the feeling as though this ‘person’ in front of him was wearing the skin of a human, but on the inside was some sort of metallic monster

that had no soul at all.

“What is it?” Linley, Delia, and Bebe were all puzzled.

Even if it was a metallic lifeform, it should have a soul. Any and all types of lifeforms had the soul as their base. But the creature in front of them had no soul at all! It definitely wasn’t living. But this creature not only was conscious, it was even capable of speech!

“Some sort of strange clone?” This was Linley’s guess.

“Boss, that freak’s body is very hard. I delivered a full strength kick just now, but I didn’t cause his head to explode! How bizarre.” Bebe didn’t understand it either. He knew exactly how powerful his own strength was. In terms of pure strength, not even Linley was a match for him.

This was one of the abilities which Godeater Rats had after they digested divine sparks.

“Since you have encountered me, hmph, all three of you will die.” This freak with the glowing red eyes stared at Linley’s team, then suddenly moved.

“Boom!”

Bebe charged to the front, fighting with the freak head on.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Bebe and that freak’s method of battle was very bizarre. It was as though they were two barbarians, using their fists and feet to viciously attack the opponent. Over the course of this wild battle, the freak’s entire outer layer of skin exploded out and blood flowed, revealing the metallic internal body.

This metallic body was extremely hard.

“How…how is that possible?” The freak was astonished.

“Motherf*cker, I want to see whose body is tougher, mine or yours!” Bebe shouted angrily. Bebe was extremely confident in his body’s defensive power. In his heart, he said to himself, “After digesting so many divine sparks, if I still can’t compete against a freak like this, I really would have lost all face for us Godeater Rats.”

“Boss, this definitely isn’t the real body. The real body should be outside!” Bebe said through divine sense.

“Swish!” Linley immediately flew out.

Indeed, in the corridor outside, there was a gold-robed guard who had a look of shock on his face. He wasn’t shocked at Linley coming out; he was shocked by Bebe. “There…there’s actually someone whose body is this tough. He dares to fight against a Deathgod Golem head on!” He couldn’t believe it!

A Deathgod Golem!

In truth, this was a human-shaped weapon! Precisely speaking, it was a type of divine artifact. A special divine artifact!

The twenty Deathgod Golems in the possession of Moon Lake Castle were all high level ones, human-shaped divine artifacts of the Highgod level!

The energy source for these Deathgod Golems was the divine jewel within its body.

The person controlling a Deathgod Golem had to first bind it with blood, which would allow him to then control the Deathgod Golem to attack others. Although the Deathgod Golem’s body was incomparably tough, it did have a flaw; it was incapable of spiritual attacks, because it had no spirit!

“I don’t care who you are!” The gold-robed guard let out a cold laugh.

A warblade suddenly appeared in the hands of the Deathgod Golem that was battling Bebe. That warblade was stained with poison, the same poison used in Godslayer Arrows. Generally speaking, once this sort of poison entered a person's body, it would immediately begin attacking the opponent's soul.

Thus, it could only be used once. The second time, the warblade would no longer have any poison on it.

The gold-robed guardsman didn't want to waste it, but right now, he had no choice but to use it!

"Using a blade?" Bebe stared. "Hmph, then I won't waste any more time with you either." A dagger appeared in Bebe's hand as well. This was the black dagger which Beirut had given him.

For now, let us move away from the battle between Bebe and the Deathgod Golem.

On the outside, Linley and the gold-robed guard were beginning to battle.

When the gold-robed guard fought with Linley, he instantly split into two, now having two divine clones outside.

"Divine clones?" Linley couldn't help but feel surprised.

But despite that, Linley still mercilessly chopped over with his adamantine heavy sword.

"Clang!" Weapons collided.

The Voidwave Sword's attack passed out from the adamantine heavy sword, shooting straight towards one of the divine clones of the gold-robed guard. The other divine clone wanted to use this chance to stab towards Linley, but at this time, its speed suddenly slowed.

"Bonds of wind?" The gold-robed guard instantly understood.

Not far away, behind Linley, Delia was wielding the Spear of Cortez and sent it thrusting forward with a powerful stab. A ray of light flew out, and in virtually an instant, it pierced through the gold-robed guard's chest, passing straight through it.

The gold-robed guard's divine clone couldn't help but shudder.

"Not good!" The gold-robed guard's face changed as he looked towards Linley in shock. Just now, the divine clone of his which had been hit by the Voidwave Sword had already died. He was completely capable of sensing how terrifying Linley's Voidwave Sword was. "Such an astonishing soul attack is definitely the product of fused profound mysteries!"

Fused profound mysteries!

And a soul attack.

"Flee!" The gold-robed guard instantly came to this decision as he began to scurry towards the outside.

"You want to run?" Linley's speed instantly began to raise.

"Ah!" The gold-robed man discovered, to his agony, that his current speed was only half his normal speed. This was because his entire body was being pressured. "That detestable woman!" He knew that the pressure his body was under was the doing of Delia. He also understood…

There was no way for him to defeat Linley.

"Aaaah!" Faced with Linley's attack, the gold-robed guard counter-attacked in grief and fury.

"Boom!"

When faced with death, he naturally brought out his most powerful attack. But under the assault of the Voidwave Sword, the gold-robed guard

slumped over. With a flip of the hand, Linley stored the two corpses of this gold-robed guard into his interspatial ring.

“Delia, thanks!” Linley walked over.

“What a pity that I don’t know how to use soul attacks,” Delia laughed.

Since they had decided to take part in the Fiend trials, naturally they had to increase their power as much as they could. Thus, although they had sold off one of their Highgod artifacts, Linley had given the other one, the Spear of Cortez, to Delia, having her fuse it and learn how to use it.

The ‘Fast’ profound mystery matched well with the spear, while Delia also applied the ‘Dimensional Space’ technique. When Delia’s spear thrust forth, it definitely possessed great power.

“Why did it stop?!” From inside the room, Bebe’s unhappy voice could be heard.

Linley and Delia exchanged a glance, both laughing.

The Deathgod Golem was slumped in a corner, completely unmoving. Bebe saw Linley and Delia walk in, and he hurriedly said, “Boss, that metallic monster isn’t moving any more. Did you kill the main body?” Bebe was able to guess that perhaps this was caused by the death of the original body.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“What is this?” Delia looked puzzledly at the Deathgod Golem. Linley’s group had never seen a Deathgod Golem before.

Deathgod Golems were an extremely valuable sort of human-shaped weapon. It was much more valuable than an ordinary Highgod artifact. A single Deathgod Golem’s price was far beyond even a Highgod spark. Thus the entire Moon Lake Castle only had twenty of them.

“First, collect this thing.” Linley said. “After we leave, I’ll investigate and

see what this metallic thing is.”

Linley didn’t understand that actually, all they had to do to use the Deathgod Golem was to bind it with blood.

With a flip of his hands, Bebe stored the metallic creature into his interspatial ring.

Chapter 23 – Moon Ring

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 23, Moon Ring

The sound of battling rang out unabated throughout Moon Lake Castle, and the battle was extremely fierce.

Within the room.

“Right now, we only have a single moon ring. We still are missing two.” Delia looked towards Linley and Bebe as she spoke. Bebe frowned. “It’s just two. Let’s go. We’ll go and kill two more of the gold-robed guards, that’s all.”

“Don’t be hasty.”

Linley retrieved the moon ring, first binding it with blood, and then removing the contents of the moon ring. “This gold-robed guard really is quite rich. His total networth is over a million inkstones. Right. There’s a few amethysts as well. What a coincidence.”

Before this, when Linley had been struck by the Godslayer Arrow’s soul poison, and then executed his Voidwave Sword, he had used up quite a bit of spiritual energy.

Linley immediately stored one of the amethysts into his Coiling Dragon ring, completely refining it, and then allowed his spiritual energy to begin to absorb the soul essences…Linley’s ‘sea of consciousness’ thus had its spiritual energy completely recover as a large amount of soul essences began to be absorbed.

“The Boss is the smartest. He first took out the treasures inside.” Bebe spoke, and the nearby Delia laughed as well.

During this Fiend trial, they only needed to give up the moon ring. As for

the wealth inside of it, one was permitted to take it for one's own use.

"Let's go out. Everyone, be careful." Linley instructed.

Linley was the first to walk into the corridor. Just as Linley walked out the door…

"Huh?" Linley's face suddenly changed dramatically. Right outside the door, a spear suddenly pierced towards Linley like a lightning-fast viper. Linley was caught completely off guard and wasn't able to react at all.

"Bang!" Linley was sent flying by that spear thrust, but in mid-air, Linley somersaulted lightning-fast, landing on the ground. Linley looked at the person who had ambushed him; it was a gold-robed guard who was wielding a silver spear, a look of utter shock on the guard's face!

"What powerful defense." The guard hadn't expected that Linley would be able to take this spear thrust of his head on, without even his clothes being damaged.

Bebe and Delia immediately came out, both shocked as well.

"Three Gods?" The face of the gold-robed guard changed dramatically. "Flee!" He knew well the limits of his own power; perhaps one against two, he had a chance, but one against three, he would be finished. He had no idea that actually, his comrade had already been killed by Linley.

In a flash, the gold-robed guard moved over a hundred meters, fleeing at a speed so fast that not even Delia had a chance to catch him.

"Shkreeeeeee!" Bebe emitted that ear-piercing sound.

Suddenly, from behind Bebe appeared that illusion of a Godeater Rat. This time, the illusion was only five or six meters tall, the same as the height of the corridor.

"Ahh!!" The gold-robed guard suddenly discovered that he was unable to

move.

“How is this possible?!” The gold-robed guard’s eyes were filled with terror.

Bebe opened his mouth wide.

A strange energy surrounded the gold-robed guard, who stared back disbelievingly and in terror towards Bebe. He could sense his soul shudder and his divine spark shake. “No…” He had never heard of someone being capable of devouring another person’s divine spark in battle!

Two divine sparks flew out from the gold-robed guard’s head, landing into Bebe’s mouth.

“Gulp!”

Bebe swallowed the two divine sparks, then snorted. “You dare to sneak attack us? You were looking for death!” As he spoke, Bebe’s body flashed forward as he stored the corpse into his interspatial ring. The interspatial ring of the gold-robed guard was a moon ring as well.

“Boss, we now have another moon ring.” Bebe snickered as he looked at Linley.

“Bebe, don’t be in a hurry to use your Godeater ability.” Linley said. “There are countless dangers in this castle. We need to be prepared for all possibilities.”

Linley knew that executing the Godeater ability actually consumed a considerable amount of spiritual energy.

“It’s fine. I don’t know how to use soul attacks, or how to create a soul defense. It doesn’t make a big difference if I use up a bit of spiritual energy.” Bebe said openly, and Linley couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh.

Linley's group wandered about on the third level of Moon Lake Castle for a long while without discovering a single person. From the fourth level beneath them, however, the faint sounds of slaughter could be heard.

"The third level has really been cleaned out!" Bebe cursed softly. "All I see on the floor is bloodstains, chunks of flesh, divine artifacts, and divine sparks. I haven't seen a single moon ring. Can't they leave a few behind? Why take everything away."

Linley and Delia, hearing Bebe say this, couldn't help but laugh.

"Linley, it seems there's nothing else to get on the third floor. Shall we advance to the fourth?" Delia looked at Linley.

"Alright." Linley didn't have any other ideas.

He had just acquired two moon rings. He was still missing one.

In the dark stone staircase, Linley's group moved down carefully, one step at a time, on guard against ambushes at all times. The fourth floor was naturally quite large. Linley's team selected a primary corridor, carefully advancing forward through it.

"Bang!"

"Haaargh!"

In a room in front of them, the sound of a battle could be heard, and from the sound of it, it seemed very chaotic. Most likely, quite a few people were battling each other.

Linley's group exchanged glances, then silently crept closer.

"Whoosh!" Three figures suddenly charged out of the room. The three of them were very cautious; when they saw it was Linley's team, they didn't attack. One of them said, "Oh, it's three of you. Best of luck." As they spoke, the three didn't waste any more time speaking, immediately

departed.

“They came with us.” Linley’s team was certain about this.

There were a total of just a thousand people in the Fiend trials.

As Deities, their memories were naturally excellent. When they had exited the metallic lifeform, with but a single glance, everyone had memorized every other person’s appearance.

“Boom!” A corpse flew out of the room, fiercely smashing against the wall then falling to the floor.

“That’s a Fiend trial participant!” Linley’s team immediately recognized him. “Then…there are definitely gold-robed guards inside.” Not hesitating at all, the three of them immediately flew in. However, before Linley’s team even had a chance to draw near, a golden-haired youth charged out, collecting the corpse on the ground.

“Hmph.” The gold-haired youth clearly was very delighted.

But he immediately saw Linley’s team.

“He is also a Fiend trial participant.” Linley’s team was very surprised, but then they had the same thought.

“Can it be that for the sake of a moon ring, he went after his own side?” Linley couldn’t help but think back to what the silver-haired old man of the Fiend Castle had said. The old man had told them to be careful and to avoid dying in the hands of their own people, rather than that of Moon Lake Castle’s.

“That really is the case…” Linley’s team’s hearts grew cold.

The gold-haired youth glanced at Linley, then without wasting any time, immediately scurried towards a different direction.

“It seems we need to be careful.” Linley’s team continued to move forward. After that event, they didn’t dare to be overconfident when encountering other members of the Fiend trials. Perhaps others would desire their moon rings and attempt to kill them.

“Huh?”

Linley’s team reached a narrow corridor and discovered four people there, all familiar figures. It was four men who had been seated behind them in the metallic creature.

“Hey, Linley, it’s you guys?” The leader, a muscular bald man, laughed.

“Fettes [Fei’di’si], it’s you guys.” A smile appeared on Linley’s face as well. Only, Linley’s team wasn’t completely relaxed either.

After all, Linley’s team had just seen people on the same side kill each other.

In truth, they weren’t really on the same side. They were just all Fiend trial participants. They didn’t have much of a relationship with each other.

Fettes and the other three walked over smiling, with the leader, Fettes, saying, “Well? How have you done? How many moon rings have you acquired?”

When the subject of moon rings came up, Linley immediately grew guarded while sending a message with divine sense to Bebe and Delia, “Be careful. These four fellows were on fairly good terms with us on the way over, true, but it’s possible that they have designs on us.”

“Got it, Boss. I hope they do, actually.” Bebe messaged back.

Linley nodded to himself.

“Oh, how many can we possibly have gotten? If we had enough, we would’ve left the castle long ago and returned to the metallic lifeform.”

Linley laughed calmly as he spoke.

Fettes and the other three all had a thought.

Linley's words clearly suggested…although Linley didn't have enough moon rings, he should have at least acquired one or two moon rings.

"Right. We don't have enough either. Best of luck. The four of us are heading off now." Fettes laughed as he spoke.

Linley nodded in a friendly manner.

Although Fettes and the other three said they were leaving, they walked in Linley's direction. Although from the looks of it, they just intended to walk past Linley, Linley and his team, who had been on guard this entire time, were storing energy, preparing to unleash their most powerful attacks at any moment.

"Whoosh!"

Fettes and the other three suddenly attacked. Logically speaking, a sneak attack at such a short distance shouldn't have given Linley's side time to react. Unfortunately, Linley's team was already prepared. As though a natural reaction, at almost the same time the attack was launched…

"Haha…" Bebe suddenly let out an extremely excited, wild laugh.

"Hmph!" Linley's adamantine heavy sword struck out like lightning.

Two had joined forces against Linley, while another was dealing with Bebe and the last one with Delia.

Clearly, Fettes' group knew that Linley's group was led by Linley, and thus Linley should be the most powerful one. That's why this was how they divided themselves up this way.

Four on three.

“Bang!” A lightning-fast exchange of blows, but two people on Fettes’ side directly fell down.

One was killed by Linley’s Voidwave Sword, while the other was stabbed through the head by Bebe’s dagger.

Linley’s entire body was covered with that earthen yellow membrane. The enemy’s blade smashed down on Linley’s head, but Linley’s Pulseguard Armor allowed him to take no damage at all. However, the ‘Voidwave Sword’ fell upon Fettes, causing him to collapse and die, then and there.

As for the person who wanted to kill Delia, he was entangled by Delia’s ‘Spatial Wind’ while Delia herself dodged, causing him to be completely unable to draw close to her while instead being struck by Delia’s ‘Spear of Cortez’. Fortunately, he was able to dodge fast, and thus although stabbed in the chest, he escaped with his life.

“Flee!” The two lucky survivors, seeing that the situation was grim, immediately fled.

At the same time, a divine clone suddenly appeared out of Fettes’ corpse on the ground. That divine clone naturally collected the interspatial ring while at the same time fleeing at high speed.

“Swish!” Linley’s Bloodviolet suddenly appeared and delivered a back-handed blow.

Dimensional Decapitator!

The fusion of the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects…in the past, Linley perhaps had only gained 10% of the total insights into these two aspects, but after having spent over twenty years in the Yulan continent and thirty-plus years in the Infernal Realm, he had nearly mastered half of these two aspects.

The power was more than four or five times greater now!

Killing a Demigod with one sword strike was incomparably simple. Fettes' body was neatly cleaved in half.

"Hmph. His clone was a mere Demigod." Linley laughed calmly.

"This Fettes most likely wanted his divine clones to all be Deities through their own power rather than fusing with divine sparks." Delia glance sideways at the corpse on the floor.

Linley stretched his hand out, collecting the other corpse of Fettes into his interspatial ring as well.

"Bebe, Delia, let's go inside the room and see if there's any moon rings." Linley laughed as he spoke, and then the three of them took into a room that seemed to be a storage room.

As Linley saw it, since Fettes was the leader of the group, he should have moon rings in his own interspatial ring if they had them. However, without actually checking, there was no way to be sure.

The three entered the room, but were surprised when they did.

"Huh?" Linley's group discovered that one of the walls had been moved aside, revealing a tunnel within. The tunnel headed towards a downwards slope, most likely having some sort of connection to the fifth floor.

"A secret passage?" Linley's team exchanged glances.

"Let's not rush in." Linley said. "If Fettes' interspatial ring has a moon ring, there's no need for us to risk ourselves."

But right at that moment.

"Swoosh!"

A human figure blew in like a gust of wind through the tunnel. Linley's group was greatly shocked, while Bebe cried out in surprise, "Regina, it's

you?”

Regina saw Linley’s team and was instantly overjoyed. “Save me!” As she spoke, she immediately flew towards Linley’s group as she let out a sigh of relief. Right at this moment, two more people flew out from the dark tunnel. Upon seeing Regina have helpers, and three of them, they were so frightened, they immediately flew back into the darkness.

“Linley, kill them! They have a Deathgod Golem!” Regina said hurriedly.

“What’s a Deathgod Golem?” Bebe looked at Regina in confusion.

Chapter 24 – Black-Robed Guards

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 24, Black-Robed Guards

At this moment, combat continued throughout the Moon Lake Castle. It was extremely chaotic.

Within the secret room in the fourth floor, Linley's group was with Regina.

Regina, seeing that Linley wasn't going to pursue those two person and instead asked her questions, couldn't help but feel helpless and frustrated. "You guys…you wasted a rare opportunity!" As Regina saw it, as soon as Linley's team heard the words 'Deathgod Golem', they should have immediately chased after him.

Who would have imagined that Linley's team wouldn't move at all?

That moment of hesitation meant that the two had definitely run far away by now.

"Miss Regina, you said a 'Deathgod Golem'? What exactly is that?" Linley asked.

Regina stared at the three in astonishment and puzzlement. After a long while, she responded, "Linley, do you truly not know, or are you just pretending? I'm beginning to think that you are intentionally making a fool out of me." Deathgod Golems were very famous in the Infernal Realm.

Anyone who had been here for a fairly long period of time would generally know about it.

"We told you to speak, so speak!" Bebe pursed his lips.

Regina glanced at Linley's team, then muttered quietly, "I really don't know if you guys truly don't know or are just pretending. Fine, I'll tell. Deathgod

Golems are a type of unique human-shaped weapon. You can consider it a human-shaped divine artifact."

"Deathgod Golems are the same as divine artifacts. They are constructed from metal, and they have divine power; only, their divine power is provided by a 'divine jewel'." Regina continued to explain. "Deathgod Golems are incapable of soul attacks, but because they are weapons, they aren't afraid of soul attacks either. In addition, their entire bodies are extremely hard. They are generally very hard to deal with."

Linley, Delia, and Bebe exchanged glances.

"So that's a Deathgod Golem!" Bebe let out a sigh. Linley and Delia both laughed.

They finally understood that the metallic creature which had battled Bebe was a Deathgod Golem.

Deathgod Golems truly were very hard to deal with. Generally speaking, even Highgods who encountered Deathgod Golems would find them to be a headache. There was only one way to deal with a Deathgod Golem; kill the person controlling it! After its master was killed, the Deathgod Golem would naturally become a masterless item."

"If not for Bebe, the Deathgod Golem really would have been hard to deal with. No wonder the Deathgod Golem wasn't damaged much despite taking those huge hits." Linley sighed to himself, then looked at Bebe. "Only, when the Deathgod Golem ran into Bebe, there was nothing it could do either."

Bebe was an absolute freak.

However, there were only two Godeater Rats in the entire universe.

"Based on my observations, that Deathgod Golem should have been a high level one." Regina sighed. "A high-level Deathgod Golem is far more valuable than a Highgod artifact. Even a Highgod spark is far inferior to it."

“How expensive is it?” Bebe’s eyes were gleaming.

Regina glanced at Bebe, then at Linley and Delia. Unhappily, she sighed, “A single Deathgod Golem is far more complicated to assemble than a divine artifact, and the price is ridiculously high as well. Generally speaking, you would need a hundred million inkstones.”

“A hundred million?”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe felt a surge of joy.

It seemed that their greatest treasure was not that Highgod spark; it was that Deathgod Golem.

“That’s why I wanted you to kill those two people! If the four of us joined forces, we definitely would have succeeded. That was a Deathgod Golem!” Regina still felt extremely upset. “Those two bastards got it. I really am unhappy.”

Linley’s team only laughed.

“Boom!” Suddenly, a massive earthquake emanated from the direction of the tunnel.

Linley frowned. “That earthquake should have come from fairly deep in the tunnel. It probably came from the fifth floor.”

“Come, let’s take a look.” Bebe was extremely excited.

Regina was also excited. “Let’s go take a look.” Without hesitating, they headed straight into the darkness of the tunnel. The tunnel clearly was very narrow, and at most two people could squeeze in side by side. It was much narrower than the normal walkways of the castle.

Linley’s group of four immediately passed over a hundred meters.

“Right here!” Linley’s team came to a halt.

“Bang!” The terrifying earthquake came from high up the walls of the tunnel, and there were quite a few cracks on the walls as well. Clearly, the tunnel walls here were not protected by the magical formation.

Bebe was kneeling there, peering through the cracks.

“Boss, hurry over.” Bebe sent with his divine sense, and Linley’s team immediately drew near.

What was on the other side of the cracks?

The tiny seams were enough for Linley to see the situation on the other side of the hidden passageway.

“It’s that baldy, Crompton?” Linley was greatly shocked.

In a wide, dark hall, there were three figures that were fighting as fast as lightning.

“Boom!” Crompton was hit by a vicious kick and sent smashing into the wall, then slumped to the ground.

“Ugh!” Crompton stared viciously at the distant black-robed guard. “This black-robed guard really isn’t easy to deal with.”

“Crompton, you idiot, just stand far away and use your ‘Gravitational Field’ to slow him down. Remember, don’t affect me!” The Fiend who was battling the black-robed guard shouted angrily through divine sense.

Crompton knew that he was weak. “I got it.”

After acknowledging, Crompton immediately stood up on the ground. The black-robed figure that was battling the Fiend suddenly trembled. The black-robed figure felt that a strange power was affecting him, as though making his body ten thousand times heavier in an instant.

“This is Geomagnetism!” The black-robed figure instantly understood.

The Profound Mysteries of the ‘Gravitational Field’ was also known as the Profound Mysteries of Geomagnetism. It was also one of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth.

“Bang!” The black-robed guard’s body suddenly shuddered, transforming into a blurry illusion. Sometimes the Fiend’s sword would pierce through the blurry body, but be unable to harm the black-robed guard at all. That black warblade in the black-robed guard’s hands, on the other hand, fluttered about with no fixed rhythm.

The Fiend instantly transformed into lightning, then instantly reformed, his attacks terrifyingly powerful.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

The blows of these two experts created massive earthquake-like vibrations with each exchange.

The Fiend and the black-robed guard were going all out against each other.

“How can this black-robed guard be so tough? Killing a black-robed guard isn’t a four star mission at all. This should be a five star mission.” Crompton cursed softly, while at the same time, he worked hard to control the geomagnetic force to affect the black-robed guard.

This black-robed guard was indeed very strong.

In reality, Crompton’s side had been fighting him three against one! Three Fiends against one black-robed guard.

The three Fiends were the three Fiends that had been in charge of supervising Linley’s squad.

Only, this black-robed guard had two Highgod clones. One of his clones as

well as one of the Fiends on Crompton's side had fallen, leaving the black-robed guard with only one body, while the Fiends only had Crompton and 'Opole' [Ao'pu'er], the Highgod who was currently battling.

The fact was that Crompton's power was very weak.

"Bang!" Opole's sword flashed like lightning, stabbing into the blurry shadow.

"Aaaah!" A miserable, agonized cry.

"Bang!"

The shadow suddenly broke apart, with the broken part of the darkness reforming into a solid object; a large chunk of a leg. And then the shadow begin to shudder before reforming into a complete figure. The black-robed guard was currently furious; he was cursing to himself, "Fiends? All you can do is gang up on others!"

Opole was laughing coldly as he transformed into a bolt of lightning, once more entering battle against the black-robed guard.

"Big Brother, come over, quickly!!!" The black-robed guard suddenly let out an explosive roar.

Following the roar, the faces of both Crompton and Opole, who was in mid-combat, both changed.

"Have to end this battle fast!" Opole didn't want to go all out, but he no longer had a chance. Bellowing with rage, his body began to distort as he transformed into a ray of bluish-black lightning which mercilessly struck towards the black-robed guard.

"Die." Opole's bellow could be heard echoing in the room.

The black-robed guard's face changed dramatically, but at the same time, he viciously swung out with his saber, which transformed into an illusory

black shadow as it swept out towards that bolt of lightning.

“Bang!”

A terrifying energy ripple that caused even the cracks on the walls to expand.

The two of them hunched over, then fell to the floor. Opole was already dead, while the black-robed guard, despite having exhausted all of his spiritual energy, hadn’t died yet.

“You want to kill me, but your soul defense was far weaker than mine?” The black-robed man chuckled.

“Whoosh!” A human figure suddenly appeared in front of the black-robed guard.

The black-robed guard’s face changed. Lifting his head up, he saw the savage-faced Crompton, who was wielding a long saber. “Die!” Crompton, ignoring all else, chopped down towards the black-robed guard with his saber. The long saber pierced through the air, seemingly instantly arriving in front of the black-robed guard’s eyes.

“Ah!!!!”

Bound by the ‘Gravitational Field’ and heavily wounded, the black-robed guard howled angrily. Ignoring all else, he brandished his blade again, once more using his soul attack.

“Clang!”

The sabers collided, and their souls attacked each other!

In terms of profoundness of soul attacks, the black-robed guard was indeed more formidable than Crompton, but his spiritual energy had been almost exhausted by now. Crompton, however, hadn’t had his power affected much. A head-on collision like this meant that they were essentially on par.

“Bang!” The black-robed guard borrowed the force of the collision to fly back and retreat.

However…

In the instant when Crompton had struck out with his long saber, with a flip of his wrist, he had suddenly shot out a dagger from his hand as well.

“Slash!” The dagger buried itself into the black-robed guard’s body.

The black-robed guard fell from mid-air, landing at the corner of the wall. His eyes were filled with resentment, absolute resentment!

“You aren’t willing to accept this?” Crompton snickered.

Crompton knew that he was weak, which is why he had spent money to buy expensive soul poisons, which he had stained his dagger with. This flying dagger was Crompton’s greatest weapon, and it also contained the ‘Strength’ profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth.

As the black-robed guard was already heavily injured, upon being hit, he immediately died.

“Opole, you always showed off in front of me! You always ordered me around and looked down on me!” Crompton’s face was savage, and he stared coldly at the two Fiend corpses in front of him. Right now, he was extremely wild. “But today, I, Crompton, am the survivor, right? Haha… and I acquired this black moon ring as well. I’ll immediately become a Four Star Fiend.”

With a wave of his hand, Crompton collected the two Fiend corpses, and then looked towards the black-robed guard’s corpse.

But…

The ground was empty.

The corpse was missing!

“How…how is this possible?” Crompton stared, his eyes turning round.

Two Fiends had died, while he, Crompton, had risked his life as well before finally killing that black-robed guard. But now the body of that black-robed guard was missing?

“Hurry up and go!”

Linley and the other three flew at high speed out of the secret corridor, back to the fourth floor.

“Haha, Crompton is going to feel ‘awesome’ about that, haha.” Bebe was extremely delighted.

The black-robed guard’s corpse was next to the wall, just a meter or so away from the cracks in the wall. Linley’s team naturally immediately moved closer to the cracks in the wall, then immediately stored the corpse into an interspatial ring.

Generally speaking, anything at close range could be stored into an interspatial ring.

Crompton’s gaze immediately fell onto the wall and the cracks in it that had been caused by the battle.

“Aaaah, inside!” Crompton instantly understood.

“Bastard!” Crompton immediately bellowed. He charged straight towards the wall, using a full strength vicious attack with the Profound Mysteries of ‘Strength’. The already-cracked walls, with a ‘boom’, shattered apart, revealing a giant hole. Behind the hole was the secret tunnel.

“Moon ring, my moon ring!” Crompton’s heart was filled with resentment.

With a moon ring, he would have completed the mission, which meant that he not only would get an enormous reward, he would also become a Four Star Fiend.

“Where’d they run off to?” Crompton stood in the middle of the hole, staring into the two ends of the secret tunnel, not able to make up his mind for the moment. But right at this moment…

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Two figures suddenly appeared in the room. It was two black-robed guards.

“You killed Fifth Bro?” The two black-robed guards stared at Crompton.

Crompton turned his head and was instantly terrified. A single one of these guards was already very difficult to deal with; now two of them came?”

“Flee!” Crompton no longer cared about anything else, choosing to charge straight up. And this direction was the same direction which Linley’s group had fled towards.

Chapter 25 – Nowhere to Run

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 25, Nowhere to Run

The black-robed guards of Moon Lake Castle were all elite Highgods who had been carefully selected.

Crompton's team of three Fiends, facing that single black-robed guard, had only won a narrow victory. But of course, the main reason was that Crompton himself was too weak, while the other two Fiends were only average for highgods.

"I just killed one, and now two more appear? If they catch me, I'll definitely die!" Crompton was terrified senseless, and he wildly fled out from the corridor.

"What's going on?" Crompton's face changed.

The tunnel up ahead had been sealed!

"How is this possible? How could this tunnel have been sealed? It should have an exit!" How could Crompton have imagined that when Linley's group of four fled, to prevent him from pursuing and attacking, they had moved the wall over and shut it?

Crompton was currently fleeing at high speed!

How would he have any time to investigate if this wall had a secret mechanism or not? He had no time! There were two black-robed guards in hot pursuit behind him. If he hesitated, he would be finished.

He only had one option – break through the wall!

Frantic, Crompton ignored everything else and rammed his fist viciously against the wall at the end of the tunnel, a punch which held nothing back…

“Boom!” The wall immediately split asunder, and Crompton charged out from the shattered wall, rushing into the room. However, Crompton’s speed still slowed down slightly, while from behind, the two black-robed guards who were more powerful than him to begin with caught up to him in that moment!

“You want to flee!” A furious bellow. A black shadow rushed out from the shattered wall, then delivered from mid-air a vicious saber blow that seemed to have the power to split the heavens and rend the earth apart. Under this wild blow, space itself distorted and began to shake as ripples in space spread out towards each side like ripples in water.

Crompton’s face changed dramatically.

“Nooo!” Crompton’s face was savage, and he bellowed as he struggled in the face of death.

“Clang!”

Crompton used his own warblade to block upwards above his head, blocking that wild chopping saber of the opponent, preventing it from pressing downwards any further!

However…

That black-robed guard’s saber carried a strange vibrating power, which passed straight through the warblade to Crompton’s head. With a ‘rumble’, Crompton’s head instantly began to vibrate countless times as it turned into powder!

“Nooo!” That fierce cry of Crompton’s still reverberated in the room.

From head to waist, his entire body had been shaken to smithereens.

The black shadow solidified. It was a callous, short silver-haired man who was wielding a warblade. Behind him, another black-robed guard said

softly, “Big Brother, just now, we only saw one of Fifth Bro’s divine clones. But that bald man was still alive. Fifth Bro should be dead.”

The two black-robed guards felt great pain in their hearts.

The callous man growled, “Most likely the vast majority of we ten brothers have perished. One on one, those Fiends aren’t necessarily our match. But they outnumber us!”

Indeed. More than twenty Fiends had come, while there were only ten black-robed guards.

Two or three of the weaker Fiends were able to overcome a single black-robed guard, while there were powerful Fiends present as well. Even aside from those three Five Star Fiends, there were quite a few Four Star Fiends as well, who were comparable in power to the black-robed guards.

Suddenly, the sounds of a violent battle rang out from the fourth floor.

“Let’s head over.” The two black-robed guards didn’t hesitate at all, instantly hurrying towards that area.

On the fourth floor of Moon Lake Castle, within a main hall that was a hundred meters large that had many long tables within it. These tables were capable of seating hundreds of people; most likely, it was the location meant for the gold-robed guards to gather together and celebrate and eat.

Within a side room next to the main hall.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Regina were all here.

Hearing that fierce cry, Bebe raised an eyebrow. Excitedly, he said, “Boss, that sound seems to be the stinking baldy’s.”

Linley had the same thought, and a hint of a smile crept onto his face. “Right. The direction the voice came from should be from the secret tunnel. Crompton probably saw that the corpse went missing and wanted to pursue

us, but then encountered others in the tunnel." Linley knew that if Crompton didn't die, in the future he would definitely make trouble for Linley's team.

Linley had been preparing to have a big battle with Crompton.

But now, it seemed, someone helped him deal with the matter.

Delia laughed as she looked at Regina and asked, "Regina, do you have any moon rings yet?"

"Not yet. If I did, I would have left this castle long ago. Why would I be here risking myself? But it seems all the gold-robed guards have been killed. We weren't able to find any at all in the end." Regina shook her head helplessly as she spoke.

Linley understood this as well.

"Although at first, they killed some of the Fiend trial participants, in the end, our numbers were still greater than the numbers of the gold-robed guards." Regina sighed. "More importantly, most likely quite a few Fiends killed some gold-robed guards as well!"

Linley agreed with this.

Although Fiends were in pursuit of the black-robed guards, when they encountered the gold-robed guards, they naturally wouldn't just let them leave either.

"Boom!" A massive earthquake spread out, causing even Linley's room to shake and vibrate.

"Right over there." Linley was shocked.

There were battles going on everywhere in Moon Lake Castle, so Linley wouldn't have paid any attention to distant battles. However, this battle was happening in the main hall nearby. Linley's team couldn't help but just

slightly open a crack in the room, peering into the hall.

“Three black-robed guards and eleven Fiends?” Linley’s group was shocked at what they had seen.

The three black-robed guards had fled to this place, while the Fiends had pursued them.

“The black-robed guards are outnumbered badly. They’ll definitely lose.” Bebe judged. Although Linley’s group was chatting amongst themselves, because they had utilized their Godrealms, they had blocked off sound from leaving their area into the main hall.

Linley sighed with some surprise. “The black-robed guards, especially that one with short silver hair, is so powerful. He…trains in the Elemental Laws of the Wind?”

Linley’s immediately attention focused on that black-robed guard.

Just now, when the two black-robed guards had killed Crompton, they heard the sounds of battle and had immediately hurried over. They discovered a black-robed guard besieged by three Fiends. The two black-robed guards naturally helped out…but as soon as they did, other Fiends hurried over as well.

There were simply far too many Fiends!

In the end, it ended up being eleven against three!

In the wide main hall, the eleven Fiends battled against the three black-robed guards.

“Ruuuuuumble….” A low, unpleasant sound suddenly rang out, like a hammer striking against the souls of everyone present.

It was the leader of the black-robed guards, the short silver-haired man.

Wielding a warblade, he released the profound truths of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. The ten black-robed guards were ranked in order of strength. As the big brother of the ten black-robed guards, his power was comparable to that of the steward's.

His warblade danced as that rumbling sound persisted.

"What is that bizarre sound?!" When the Fiends heard it, they couldn't help but feel irritated and distracted. They didn't want to listen to it and so blocked off all foreign sounds, and yet that bizarre sound still entered their brains, causing them to be irritated and distracted time and time again.

"Die!"

A black warblade danced out. The silver-haired man stared coldly as he chopped down with his black warblade against a Fiend.

The chop was blocked.

"Rumble…" That vibration directly entered the Fiend's head, which immediately transformed into fine powder as a divine spark fell out.

"Everyone, be careful. He's already completely fused the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves!" Amongst the Fiends, there were some with great experience and who were immediately able to make this judgment. Only when the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves were completely fused into the Profound Truths of Sound would there be such a terrifying attack.

With a single attack, not only had he affected his opponent's souls, he was able to launch combined soul-material attack!

The Elemental Laws of the Wind had nine types of profound mysteries. Any two profound mysteries when combined would have particular strengths. Only, the fusion of the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves was the most famous one. Its power was

extremely terrifying!

“Is that…?”

Linley, also analyzing the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves, seemed to have realized something from the attack of the leader of the black-robed guards.

“Pure sound waves can reach such a level?” Linley was greatly astonished. “And that sound. Why is it that the sound had the same effect of shaking the soul as those infrasound waves?” Linley was starting to be puzzled. He couldn’t understand at all.

At present, Linley had only gained a basic level of understanding regarding the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves. He hadn’t reached mastery in either, much less fuse them completely.

“It seems this leader of the black-robed guards has already mastered the Profound Truths of Sound.” Linley hypothesized. “Even a Highgod was shaken to pieces. How can sound waves be so powerful?” Linley’s heart was filled with confusion. All sorts of hypotheses regarding the profound mysteries of music and sound waves began to appear in his mind, then be applied to the attack by that black-robed guard. Linley felt as though he was coming to understand something. “Uh, wait, that’s wrong. That’s not how the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves work. So not only is it capable of internal vibrations, it’s also capable of material attacks…”

The attack of this black-robed guard had caused Linley to instantly understand something. Only, this ‘something’ was the first step on the journey to fusing the Profound Mysteries of Music and the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves!

Delia, Bebe, and Regina were all flabbergasted. Linley actually sat down into the meditative position.

“He…what is he doing?” Regina was somewhat shocked.

Bebe's expression was bizarre. In a low voice, he said, "Boss…Boss probably had another insight."

"A sudden insight?" Delia was somewhat shocked as well.

Although the black-robed guard was very powerful, the eleven Fiends had experts in their ranks as well. Over the course of that wild battle, two of the three black-robed guards died, leaving only that black-robed guard leader and seven Fiends.

Seven Fiends surrounded him.

"All dead…Second Bro…Third Bro…they are all dead, all dead!" The black-robed guard leader was going crazy.

"Aaaaaaah!" The black-robed guard leader actually raised his head up and began to bellow wildly.

A spatial ripple that could be seen with the naked eye suddenly emanated out from the body of the black-robed guard leader, instantly encompassing the seven Fiends! As the ultimate desperation attack of the black-robed guard leader, this roar also contained the most powerful attack of the Profound Truths of Sound.

With this roar, of the seven Fiends, two of them actually became completely stunned and their heads spun. For a moment, they were in a dazed state.

"Swish!" "Swish!" …..

At the same moment, three arrows shot out from the hands of that black-robed guard leader, piercing towards one of the dazed Fiends.

"Slash!"

The Fiend didn't react at all, and the three arrows pierced straight into his body.

“Bang!” Another Fiend collapsed.

“What a pity. I only had three arrows. Otherwise, I could have killed another Fiend.” The black-robed guard leader said quietly in his heart. Even when a Highgod was in a dazed state, a single Godslayer Arrow’s soul poison wasn’t enough to kill one of them.

Thus, he used all three of his arrows against a single person.

The other dazed Fiend thus managed to escape a calamity.

“Kill!” The five more powerful Fiends who hadn’t been too deeply impacted by that roar launched simultaneous attacks on that black-robed guard leader.

“BOOM!” The black-robed guard leader’s body exploded.

The main hall was covered in corpses. Only now did the six remaining Fiends let out a breath.”

“He trained in the Elemental Laws of the Wind. He was extremely fast, fluctuated unpredictably, and the two profound mysteries he had fused were that of sound waves and music.” One of the Fiends shook his head and sighed. “We really are catastrophically unlucky to have encountered this fellow. I don’t know if even ten of us Fiends have survived this mission.”

Linley, still in a state of meditation and insight, didn’t know that the black-robed guard leader had already died. Linley, drifting amidst the myriad wonders of the Laws, had his heart completely one with nature and with the world.

Only….

“Boss, wake up, quick!” Bebe sent a spiritual message, calling Linley to wakefulness.

“Bebe, what is it?” Linley looked at astonishment towards Bebe.

“The most exciting battle, and the most dangerous battle. We might be hit by the collateral shockwaves at any moment!” Bebe said softly.

Not just Bebe; the nearby Delia and Regina were all staring towards the outside in astonishment. Linley peered through the crack in the door as well, and saw that outside, a long black dragon covered with black spikes was coiling in the main hall.

Loysius and another Five Star Fiend was standing there in mid-air, their gazes locked onto the black dragon’s.

The other six Fiends were standing in the corners of the room.

“You won’t be able to run.” Loysius growled.

“Speak. How much is your bounty for this mission? I will give you ten times the amount! As long as the two of you are willing to leave immediately.” The black dragon let out a low growl.

“I didn’t expect that the master of this castle was a divine beast.” Loysius laughed coldly. “However…you, give us ten times the reward? Hmph, when we kill you, all of the wealth of your interspatial ring will be ours. And what’s more…” Loysius’ face seemed to have suddenly become covered with a layer of ice. “You killed my second sister!”

Chapter 26 – You Can’t Kill Me

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 26, You Can’t Kill Me

The battle at Moon Lake Castle had already reached the final stages. The master of the castle had already transformed into his original form, an enormous black dragon that was hundreds of meters long, and with ferocious sharp spikes growing from the back. Despite having transformed back into his original form, the master of the castle wasn’t confident in battling these Fiends!

Within the secret room on the side of the wide main hall.

Linley’s group of four was secretly watching through the crack in the door. Actually, it wasn’t that the Fiends didn’t realize Linley was there; only, they could sense that Linley and co’s auras were all of the God-level, and so the Fiends couldn’t be bothered to pay them any heed.

“That Loysius says the black dragon is the master of the castle?” Linley appeared quite puzzled.

The nearby Delia explained, “Linley, just then, when you suddenly began to meditate and gain insights, we didn’t dare disturb you. At that time, the master of the castle was pursued and attacked here in the main hall. Seeing that there were six other Fiends here, the master of the castle lost his confidence as well.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Huh?” Linley suddenly had a thought.

“Moon Lake Castle is already in such dire straits. Even if those gold-robed guards are still alive, most likely all of them have fled the castle.” Linley understood that regardless of whether or not any of the gold-robed guards had survived, most likely they wouldn’t encounter any more gold-robed

guards.

After all, those hundreds of gold-robed guards weren't idiots either. Even the master of the castle had fallen to such dire straits. Even if they were alive, why wouldn't they flee?

"Bebe, take a look." Linley tossed an interspatial ring to Bebe. "See if there are any moon rings inside."

"Right." Bebe hurriedly bound it with blood.

Meanwhile, Linley took a look inside the other interspatial ring.

At first, when Linley's group had been ambushed by those other four Fiend trial participants, those four people had failed in their ambush and two of them instead had been killed by Linley's group. Naturally, they acquired the two interspatial rings from those two.

"We only have two moon rings right now. We need one more." Linley was somewhat worried.

Delia looked at Linley and Bebe.

"Boss, although this interspatial ring has some inkstones and azurites, it doesn't have a moon ring." Bebe said helplessly.

Delia and Bebe both looked at Linley, wanting to see whether or not the interspatial ring Linley was holding had a moon ring within it.

"There it is! It really has a moon ring inside!" Linley's investigation resulted in a look of delight appearing on his face. The previous owner of this interspatial ring was the leader of the group, 'Fettes'. It made sense that after they acquired a moon ring, he would have stored it into his own interspatial ring.

"Haha, we have a full set of moon rings now." Bebe was extremely excited.

But Regina just stared at Linley. “Linley, just one ring?”

“Just one ring.” Linley smiled apologetically. He understood that Regina deeply desired a moon ring as well. However, the three of them only had three moon rings; they didn’t have any extras to give Regina. They wanted to help but were unable to.

Regina was very disappointed, but she still squeezed out a smile. “It’s fine. When we go out later, I’ll see if there’s any other chances.”

Suddenly, an explosive shout rang out from the main hall…

“Don’t go too far! I can gift you with enormous wealth, and I can even give you this entire castle. In fact…I can even come up with a way to let you all become Six Star Fiends. The point of completing this mission is to become Six Star Fiends, right?” The enormous dragon bellowed.

The hundreds of meters long black dragon coiled about in the air of the main hall, while Loysius and the other Fiend just stood there in mid-air. The difference in size between the two sides was enormous.

However, right now, the enormous black dragon was begging the other side.

“Hmph, let us become Six Star Fiends? The only way of becoming a higher level Fiend is to complete a mission. There’s no other ways at all.” Loysius stared at the light blue scimitar in his hands, then said slowly, “Stop struggling. Prepare to die!”

“Big Brother, let me do it.” The other, blue-haired warrior said hurriedly. “Let me avenge our second sister.”

“No.”

Loysius glanced sideways at the enormous black dragon. “Although he has utilized two spirit attacks and his spiritual energy is most likely almost used up, we can’t take any risk. I’ll do it!” Loysius had already begun to gather his power. He was completely confident.

“I am Wyrnessin [U’er’ni’sen]!” The enormous black dragon bellowed. “You can’t kill me! You can’t kill me!!!”

“Wyrnessin?”

Loysius snickered. “Who’s Wyrnessin? If you are going to brag before dying, pick a more frightening name. For example, you could say that you are the Bloodviolet Fiend. Or even that you are an almighty Sovereign… haha, who gives a damn who you are? Die!”

As he spoke, Loysius chopped out with that scimitar.

It moved very gently. Space didn’t move at all, and there wasn’t even any wind. It was as though this scimitar didn’t even exist.

The enormous black dragon bellowed.

“You can’t kill me!” It was extremely enraged. As the scimitar chopped down gently, the enormous black dragon went mad. Risking its own life, it once more executed its divine ability. The enormous black dragon emitted that low, growling roar…

“Whoooooosh.” Space trembled.

“Crackle!”

Loysius’ scimitar chopped down, and a blue shadow slashed through the air, landing on the enormous black draconic head. The strange thing was…the scales and flesh of the enormous black dragon split neatly in half as the scimitar cut straight through the head and struck onto a divine spark.

“You will regret this!!!”

The enormous black dragon’s dying roar echoed in the main hall.

“BOOM!”

The enormous black draconic corpse slammed into the ground. Loysius' face was ashen as he withdrew his scimitar. Glancing sideways at the massive corpse, he snickered, "Hmph, his divine ability really is formidable. But you said I'll regret it? In the entire Nightblaze Prefecture, there's only a few people that I'm afraid of, and I know all of them. How will you, a dead man, make me regret it?"

"Big Brother!" The blue-haired, muscular man looked towards Loysius in concern. "Are you alright?"

His second sister had suffered that divine ability of the master of the castle and had thus perished. Loysius had previously battled with the master of the castle on the fifth level and had taken on the innate ability once before. Now, he had been hit with it again.

"I'm fine." Loysius glanced at his brother and squeeze out a smile. "Third Bro, let's head back. Sadly, Second Sis died."

The muscular blue-haired was in great pain as well.

"When we came, Second Sis said that after completing this mission, we will all be Six Star Fiends, at which point, we should find a location where we could build a castle that would belong to we three siblings, and we would quietly train there. But now, we won't have the chance." The blue-haired man said softly.

Loysius let out a low sigh as well. "Let's go."

They didn't spare a single glance at the other six Fiends, flying away.

The other six Fiends had been trembling in shock as they watched the battle. When experts went all out like this, the battle would be over after one or two clashes.

"The power of this Loysius truly is frightening. That scimitar…not even a Highgod-level divine beast could take it." A Fiend sighed.

Perhaps in ordinary material planes, divine beasts were extremely rare.

But in the Infernal Realm, the place where countless experts gathered, there were still quite a few divine beasts. The reason why divine beasts were powerful was because of their ‘divine ability’. No matter which type of divine beast they were, upon reaching the age of maturity, they would be Demigods. Seemingly, there wasn’t any difference.

However, there were huge differences between different types of divine beasts.

The difference lay in their ‘divine ability’.

Some divine beasts had natural abilities that allowed them to launch certain types of spiritual attacks, while others had special material attacks…for example, the Heaven Devouring Beast and the Ba-Serpent both had a type of ‘Devour’ ability. But if the opponent was able to resist the strength of the ‘Devour’ ability, they would be fine.

But Bebe was different. His ‘Godeater’ ability, the natural ability to devour divine sparks, was definitely an extremely, freakishly powerful type of ability.

The more freakishly powerful a divine ability was, the rarer that type of divine beast would be in number!

“Loysius trains in the Laws of Life. The four Edicts are all very hard to deal with. Loysius truly is frightening.” The six Fiends all sighed and said a few words, and then they left the main hall. However, before leaving, one of the Fiends collected the enormous corpse.

“The corpse of a Highgod-level divine beast is worth money as well. Can’t let it go to waste.” The Fiend laughed as he collected the enormous corpse and put it into his interspatial ring.

After the six Fiends left.

Linley's group of four finally exited the room.

"Paaagh!" Bebe was somewhat unhappy. "I wanted to collect that body. I didn't expect that Fiend took it away."

Certain body parts of divine beasts were extremely good components for making certain culinary delicacies. The corpse of a Highgod-level divine beast was very rare as well. The parts of such an enormous corpse could be sold off for hundreds of thousands of inkstones, or nearly a million. This was a small fortune."

"You were thinking about that?" Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. "Let's go. Back to the metallic lifeform."

Their rewards on this trip had been quite massive. The most valuable asset they had acquired was actually that Deathgod Golem, as well as the corpse of the black-robed guard. The black-robed guard himself had a divine spark in his corpse, and the interspatial ring he had contained massive wealth as well.

"Can you…make a trip with me into the castle to take a look?" Regina forced the words out.

Linley's team couldn't help but be startled.

"I, I just want to take a look and see if there are any gold-robed guards left." Regina felt rather embarrassed as well. After all, this was as good as asking Linley's team to head back into danger. Although…logically speaking, Linley's team, alongside Regina, shouldn't have any problems in dealing with a gold-robed guard.

But who knew how many gold-robed guards they would run into, if they did run into any?

Delia and Bebe looked at Linley, waiting for Linley's decision. Linley paused for a moment, then looked at Regina and said, "Regina, we can't

possibly run all over the castle with you. How about this. We're still going to leave the castle, but we can take a bit more of a roundabout route to see if we can run into any gold-robed guards. If we do, we'll help out, but if we don't, then there's nothing for it."

"Thank you." Regina said hurriedly.

She knew that her request was a bit excessive. For Linley to be willing to agree to do this much was already very good of him.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Regina all headed out towards the upper layers of Moon Lake Castle. They returned to the third, second, and first floors, then left Moon Lake Castle through the windows. Regina truly hoped they would encounter some gold-robed guards.

However, currently Moon Lake Castle truly didn't have a single gold-robed guard left.

In the air above the clear and crystalline reflections of Moon Lake, the poisonous red fog had long since dissipated and disappeared. Right now, there were five Fiend trial participants seated cross-legged in the air above Moon Lake.

"Someone is coming out."

The five saw Linley's team fly out and immediately went forward to greet them.

"Hey, what are you guys doing?" Linley frowned and said calmly. Linley had already been ambushed within Moon Lake Castle. Naturally, he wouldn't be overconfident.

One of the five spoke. "I want to know, do the four of you have any spare moon rings? We can buy them off of you."

"I still want one for myself." Regina snorted.

The five, upon hearing this, were somewhat disappointed. They could tell that Linley's team simply didn't have enough moon rings.

"The five of you, no need to wait here outside. There shouldn't be anyone else else left in the castle." Linley said. When they came out, they had searched everywhere in the fourth through first floors, giving all of the major locations a glance. If someone was there, they would have discovered them long ago.

Linley's team was already one of the last ones to come out.

After speaking, Linley's group of four flew directly towards the metallic lifeform. Soon, Linley's group reached the metallic lifeform, hovering there in mid-air. Through the translucent metal of the creature, they were able to dimly make out the sparse number of human figures within.

"So few people." Linley sighed to himself, then entered the metallic creature.

Within the corridor inside the metallic creature, the silver-haired elder saw Linley's group and laughed, "Congratulations for surviving and returning."

"You made it back alive? Congratulations."

As soon as Linley had entered the rear cabins of the metallic creature, he swept the area with his gaze. This rear cabin of the metallic creature had many seats, more than enough to seat a thousand. However, there were far, far too many empty seats, with filled seats so rare. "A thousand came. Not even a hundred are left alive!"

Glancing at the nearby Delia and Bebe, Linley felt a surge of rejoicing in his heart as well. At least his wife and his brother had survived. "That silver-haired elder was right. This is indeed worth celebrating."

Chapter 27 – Highest Bidder Takes It

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 27, Highest Bidder Takes It

Infernal Realm. Nightblaze Prefecture.

A mountain range without any life whatsoever. The stones of the mountain were charred black, and there was some decayed wild grass as well.

Within this mountain range, there was a lake that was dozens of kilometers in circumference. The lake water was rancid, and it emanated a deathly aura as well. Some white skeletons were floating on the top of the lake. This mountain range was a forbidden area!

Even Fiends didn't dare to go near this place.

"Drip, drip…" The deathly lake water began to bubble.

"BOOM!"

Suddenly, the massive surface of the lake suddenly was pulled apart, and the lake waters naturally pulled open, revealing a corridor that was dozens of meters wide which led straight into the depths. Nearly a hundred figures appeared from the depths of the lake. Aside from the leader, who wore a gray robe, the others all wore black robes.

Nearly a hundred people stood there in the air above the lake.

The gray-robed leader had pitch-black hair, but the most eye-catching part of him was still his two eyebrows, which drooped all the way down to his chest. If Loysius had been here and seen this gray-robed man, he definitely would have been shocked. Because this gray-robed man looked exactly the same as the master of Moon Lake Castle.

"BASTARD!" The muscles around the gray-robed man's eyes were

twitching. He was currently at the edges of an absolute explosion of rage.

The gray-robed man growled, “It seems that I, Wyrnessin, have been hidden from the world for too long. Those people have forgotten my name. They actually destroyed my divine clone! I told them…that I would make them regret it!” The gray-robed man’s heart was filled with boundless rage.

He had two mighty divine clones.

He had first developed his divine clone of Death, while his original body was that of a divine clone of Darkness. In terms of power, his accomplishments in the Edicts of Death had far surpassed his accomplishments in the Laws of Darkness. Despite that, given the power of his divine Darkness clone as well as the many guards he had, he shouldn’t have had any problems.

But who would have imagined that…

One of his bodies had been destroyed.

“Kill them, kill them all!” The gray-robed man’s heart was filled with murderous thoughts.

He only had two bodies to begin with. Both of them represented a life. Losing a divine clone…of course he would be furious.

“Master, where shall we go?” A black-robed man behind him said respectfully.

“My Moon Lake Castle is close to Royalwing City! Based on the Fiend Castle’s rules for choosing Fiend trial assignments, they would definitely select nearer locations.” The gray-robed man said in a low voice. “Those Fiends have most likely boarded the metallic lifeform and begun to head back to Royalwing City.”

“We will first go to Royalwing City!” The gray-robed man said coldly.

“Yes, Master (Lord)!”

The nearly-hundred black-robed men behind him simultaneously called out, with the only difference being in their manner of address.

“Hmph, no matter what, they’ll have to return to Royalwing City! We’ll stop them outside Royalwing City.” The gray-robed man immediately looked at one black-robed man, whose body suddenly vanished. At the same time, a sinuous metallic creature appeared in mid-air. The gray-robed man and the nearly-hundred black-robed men entered the metallic lifeform.

“Whoosh!”

The metallic lifeform split through the air, making haste towards Royalwing City.

In terms of speed, this metallic lifeform’s speed was far faster than the one which Linley’s group was on.

Not too far away from Moon Lake, the metallic lifeform Linley was in was currently hovering in mid-air.

The silver-haired elder flew back to the metallic creature and immediately instructed, “There’s nobody else inside. Head out!” Immediately, the metallic lifeform transformed into a blur, disappearing into the distant horizons.

Within the metallic lifeform, the silver-haired elder entered the front cabins, saying in a sonorous voice while looking at everyone, “Everyone, stand up for now and gather at the center of the walkway.”

“Stand up?”

Although puzzled, Linley and the others all stood up. The nearly hundred survivors in the rear cabins all gathered at the center of the walkway. Suddenly…the metallic creature shrank in size by a large margin, both in length and in width. The seating arrangements changed so that only a

hundred appeared.

When they had arrived, they had fifty rows of twenty seats each.

Now, they had twenty rows of five seats each. The body was much smaller.

“There’s very few people here right now. No need for the metallic lifeform to be so large.” The silver-haired elder said calmly. After speaking, he left the rear cabin and returned to the front cabin.

Currently, there were only a hundred seats, causing the people in the rear cabins to be fairly close to each other now.

“Heading back.”

Linley looked out from the translucent metallic window of the metallic creature, feeling relaxed.

“Boss, when we return to Royalwing City and turn in the moon rings at the Fiend Castle, we will become Fiends.” Bebe chortled as he looked at Linley and spoke. “By then, we’ll be able to wear Fiend medallions. Haha, at least when we enter the city, we won’t have to stand in line to pay the fees any longer.”

“Pay the city entrance fees?”

Linley and Delia were speechless when they heard this. To them, what was a single inkstone these days?

“Who here has moon rings? If anyone has moon rings, I’m willing to pay a price to buy them.” Suddenly, a voice rang out from the rear cabin. This voice instantly caused everyone in the rear cabin to look over. The speaker was a soft, sinister looking, handsome man.

“Pay a price to buy them?” Linley was shocked. “As bold and audacious as this? The staff members of the Fiend Castle are in the front cabin.”

Bebe frowned. “Uh? He is speaking so loudly. If that silver-haired old man hears it, won’t that will be terrible?”

Regina’s eyes were shining. She was looking at the people nearby. Upon hearing Bebe’s words, she lowered her voice and explained, “Bebe, the only thing that matters in the Fiend trials is whether or not you have the required item. They don’t care how you acquired it. Whether it was by theft or by purchasing, as long as you can turn in a moon ring, that’ll be enough.”

Hearing this, Linley’s group now understand.

“The reason the Fiend Castle does this is to encourage internecine strife.” Linley mused to himself.

Only, this was what the Infernal Realm was like to begin with. Slaughter and battle was the main purpose of this place.

“If you want to buy it, haha…I do have an extra moon ring.” Suddenly, in the rear cabin, a voice rang out. This voice caused Regina and some others to immediately grow excited, and they hurriedly looked over.

The person who had an extra moon ring was an extremely muscular bearded man who was just 1.2 or 1.3 meters tall.

“Dwarf?” Linley raised an eyebrow.

“What price?” A woman with long golden hair asked.

“My asking price isn’t too high. A million inkstones. If you want it, pay up.” The muscular dwarf said directly.

“A million?” Some people immediately exhaled in shock.

To a Highgod, perhaps a million inkstones wasn’t much. But to a God, a million inkstones was an extravagant sum. Even for the likes of Linley’s group, when they had sold off that Highgod artifact, they had only received 750,000 inkstones.

But how would an ordinary God acquire a Highgod artifact?

Only after one battle and plundering after another would one be able to amass a fortune in excess of a million inkstones.

“Too expensive.” Regina frowned. She didn’t have enough wealth to purchase it.

“I’ll take it.” Immediately, that soft-looking, handsome man spoke out.

Although nearly a hundred had survived, there were still twenty or thirty who hadn’t acquired moon rings. The others, upon hearing someone was offering to buy it, immediately grew frantic.

“I’ll pay 1.1 million inkstones.” Some people hurriedly called out.

“I offered to pay first.” The handsome man said frantically.

The muscular dwarf said, “I already said the price. One million inkstones exactly. Here you go. Give me a million inkstones.” The muscular dwarf was very straightforward. He immediately carried out the transaction with the handsome man. The others couldn’t help but feel disappointed.

Regina let out a sigh.

It wasn’t that she wasn’t willing to pay; she simply didn’t have the money.

“Who else has moon rings?” Someone called out loudly from the rear cabins.

At this moment, a white-robed middle-aged man laughed calmly. “I’ll set the same price as that short gentleman. A million inkstones. Whoever wants a moon ring, give me a million inkstones and I will give you a moon ring.”

“There’s more?” Regina couldn’t help but to look over, but she didn’t have enough money.

“Swish!” Instantly, several figures immediately charged over.

“Here you go.” A jade-haired woman immediately shoved an azurite cube that was ten centimeters on each side in the hand of that white-robed middle-aged man.

“Sell it to me.” Some others were calling out. “We’ll give you a million inkstones also!”

“I already gave him a million inkstones. This moon ring is mine.” The jade-haired woman said hurriedly, while at the same time, she stared at the white-robed man. She was worried that the white-robed man was lying. However, she believed that he probably wasn’t.

The white-robed man smiled as he accepted the million inkstones, and with a flip of his hand, handed a moon ring over to the jade-haired woman. “All yours.”

The jade-haired woman was overjoyed. Accepting the moon ring, she returned to her own seat.

The others were very disappointed.

The white-robed man only smiled. “Don’t fight. As long as you have enough money, I’ll be able to sell enough moon rings.” With a flip of his hand, the white-robed man produced five more moon rings in his palm.

This scene caused everyone to be stunned.

“Where did this guy get so many moon rings?” Everyone in the rear cabins stared at the white-robed man.

Immediately, some people handed over a million inkstones, and all of them received a moon ring.

The white-robed man continued smiling. “If anyone else wants a moon ring,

please come over. I have more." As he smiled towards the onlookers, the entire rear cabin immediately fell silent.

Only those with enough money could buy it.

Although over twenty people had failed to acquire moon rings, only six of them had more than a million inkstones. The others didn't have enough money to buy them.

Regina suddenly stood up. Laughing, she said, "Sir, please lower the price for the moon ring just a little bit. A million inkstones is simply too much. The moon rings are only useful to us. To others, it is nothing but an interspatial ring."

Interspatial rings were worthless. Not even worth a single inkstone.

"Right." Instantly, many people also begun to clamor. "Why don't you lower the price, like maybe five hundred thousand inkstones? What do you say? I think there will still be quite a few who will buy from you."

"Right. Five hundred thousand inkstones." Regina also said. Regina's own assets were only around eight hundred thousand inkstones.

"You can't do that." The people who had just bought moon rings found it unfair. "We paid a million inkstones to buy it."

The white-robed man laughed calmly. "I already said, a million! If you don't have enough inkstones, I'd rather not sell than lower the price." After finishing his words, the white-robed man fell silent.

Regina's face couldn't help but change.

"Regina, how much do you have on you?" Delia suddenly spoke out.

Regina couldn't help but look at Linley's group. Actually, just then, Linley's group had been secretly chatting through using their divine sense. On this trip, Linley's group had made some enormous gains. The Deathgod Golem

alone was worth a hundred million inkstones. The black-robed guard's wealth in his interspatial ring was an astonishing figure as well.

"I…still lack two hundred thousand." Regina said with a hint of eagerness.

Bebe chortled, then with a flip of his hand, retrieved two azurites. "Right, here you go!"

Seeing this, Regina couldn't help but feel excited. "Thank you!" She immediately accepted it, then ran over to the white-robed man.

Outside Royalwing City, the gray-robed man was seated in the meditative position in a patch of grass, with dozens of experts next to him.

"Master, a metallic creature of the Fiend Castle is flying over. It is coming from the direction of Moon Lake Castle." A voice rang out in the mind of the gray-robed man, who immediately opened his eyes. He growled, "Come with me." Immediately, he led the dozens of figures flying into the sky.

A few dozen kilometers outside of Royalwing City.

The metallic creature which Linley was seated in was flying at high speed towards Royalwing City. Linley's group was very happy. After all, they were able to see the distant Royalwing City grow closer from outside the translucent window.

"We're finally arriving." Linley's group was all smiles.

Suddenly…

"Boom!" The entire metallic lifeform shuddered violently, and then with a 'BANG!' sound, the entire metallic creature exploded into countless shards of metal. The Fiends within the metallic lifeform, caught completely off guard, immediately controlled their bodies to float in midair.

Linley's group was hovering in midair as well, but as they stared at their surroundings, their faces turned white.

In the area around Linley's entire group, there were nearly a hundred black-robed men standing in mid-air. These black-robed men had completely surrounded everyone in Linley's group, without anyone being able to flee. Every single black-robed man emanated an absolutely astonishing aura.

"Highgods. All Highgods!"

The faces of everyone present changed, Linley included!

Chapter 28 – Wild Revenge

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 28, Wild Revenge

The ten Fiends who had been lucky enough to survive as well as the nearly hundred Fiend trial participants were all in a state of shock. They were surrounded by a large group of Highgods who were staring at them as if they were corpses. The hearts of everyone present shook.

“Why is this happening?” Linley didn’t dare to believe what he was seeing.

They were just about to arrive at Royalwing City and become Fiends, but at the final, critical juncture, they were waylaid by a group of Highgods.

“What are you doing?” The strongest of the experts in Linley’s group, Loysius, stared at the surrounding people, frowning as he spoke. Although Loysius wasn’t confident in his ability to battle against so many Highgods, he was confident in his ability to escape.

“What are we doing?” One of them, a black-robed man snickered.

Suddenly…

A number of black-robed figures voluntarily moved aside, creating a corridor in the air. A gray-robed figure flew out.

“Master (Lord)!” The black-robed men all bowed respectfully.

But the gray-robed man just stared at Loysius, his eyes filled with a boundless, baleful look, as though he wanted to eat Loysius alive.

“You…you are!!!” Loysius and the others all stared in shock at the gray-robed man. The gray-robed man’s appearance looked absolutely identical to that of the master of the castle. At this moment, Loysius and the other Fiends who had seen the appearance of that master of the castle were all

stunned.

They all thought of a possibility!

“Can he be…?” The master of the castle who had been killed was just a divine clone!

The gray-robed man’s face was cold and grim, and a hint of a cruel smile played at the corner of his lips. His gaze swept past Loysius and the others, but in the end landed upon Loysius once more. His other divine clone was destroyed by this Loysius.

The one who he hated the most was this Loysius as well.

“Who are you!” A shout roared out, and the silver-haired elder flew to the front, staring angrily at the gray-robed man. “This was the metallic creature of our Fiend Castle. You dare to destroy it? And it seems you want to attack? You are being rather too arrogant!”

“Fiend Castle?”

The gray-robed man lifted an eyebrow, turning to look at him. “What of it? I don’t believe that the true experts at the headquarters of your Fiend Castle will come looking for me, just because I killed your group. In addition…the relationship between the powerful Seven Star Fiends and those of you in the Fiend Castle is nothing more than a working relationship. They won’t obey your orders.”

The silver-haired elder was stunned.

“You ask me who I am?” The gray-robed man’s jaw shifted slightly as he looked disdainfully at the silver-haired elder. “Then I’ll tell you. My name is Wyrnessin! Have you heard my name before?”

“Wyrnessin?”

The silver-haired elder frowned slightly.

“Wyrnessin!” Loysius and the others all had the same thought. Indeed, this gray-robed man was the master of the castle. Or, precisely speaking, the other divine clone.

“Him!”

Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Regina were all shocked and suddenly understood. When the black dragon had been killed at the castle, he had shouted loudly that he was Wyrnessin. “No wonder he came for revenge.” Linley was secretly in dread now. “No wonder, before that castle lord was killed, he said that the one who killed him would regret it. Before dying, the castle lord had said his name…but it seems as though everyone has forgotten who he is.”

Linley could tell.

Perhaps Wyrnessin’s name was once very famous, but nobody present knew it.

“Ugh…” Wyrnessin let out a low sigh. “It seems I truly have been hidden away for too long. Even the staff members of the Fiend Castle have forgotten me.”

Wyrnessin himself just stood there in mid-air, but while chatting, he naturally exuded a sort of strength which caused everyone, Loysius included, to feel terrified. Everyone understood…this was an exceedingly powerful expert!

As Wyrnessin was sighing, Loysius and his third brother were chatting with divine sense.

“Boom.”

Suddenly, a sonic boom appeared and two shadows suddenly flew towards the north.

Wyrnessin was standing south of them. Loysius and his brother didn't dare flee in that direction, so they chose to flee towards the north.

"Hmph!" Wyrnessin let out a cold sneer.

The twenty-plus black-robed men who were standing to the north sent out palm strikes with their right hands almost simultaneously. Their united blows suddenly filled the air in front of those twenty-plus black-robed men with a black energy, immediately forming an enormous black 'web' which swept towards Loysius and his brother.

The spreading of this giant web caused Loysius and his brother to immediately retreat in terror.

"Sou!" At this moment, Wyrnessin moved as well, suddenly appearing by Loysius' side. Loysius, with a savage laugh, chopped over with a back-handed stroke from his light blue scimitar, but Wyrnessin just flicked a single finger, tapping the scimitar.

"Clang!"

A clear metallic sound rang out.

"Aaaah!" Loysius actually lost his grip on his light blue scimitar. The scimitar fell downwards, while Loysius himself held his head in agony, emitting an agonized scream.

"Big Bro!" The muscular blue-haired man called frantically, but Loysius didn't seem to hear him. He continued to spasm there in mid-air, while at the same time holding his head and screaming in absolute agony.

"Big Bro, what is it? What's going on?!" The muscular blue-haired man was absolutely besides himself.

"Stop!" Wyrnessin said calmly.

Loysius' agonized screams suddenly halted, and he returned to his senses.

He stared in terror at Wyrnessin. “You…you have a Spiritleech?”

“Spiritleech?” Hearing this title, the faces of the muscular man and the other Fiends turned absolutely white. The term ‘Spiritleech’ was something which experienced people would occasionally hear of. Even in Blacksand Castle, the ‘Spiritleech’, a forbidden item, was rarely available for purchase.

Even if it was available, the price would be absolutely staggering.

Wyrnessin chuckled. “Right. I spent a good amount of effort to create this Spiritleech.” “You, you made it?” Quite a few people present were stunned.

There were perhaps many, many Highgods who had trained in the Edicts of Death. However, those capable of creating a Spiritleech were extremely rare. In the entire Infernal Realm, there were 108 Asuras, but it would be hard to say if there were 108 people capable of creating a Spiritleech.

“Did you think I would let you die so easily?” Wyrnessin snickered. “You should feel proud that I’m wasting a Spiritleech on you.”

“Proud?” Loysius’ entire body was shaking. When he thought about the terrifying effects of the Spiritleech and about the pain he had just been in, beads of sweat began to appear on Loysius’ head.

“Bang!” Gritting his teeth, Loysius attempted to smash his own head in and commit suicide!

But before his hand touched his forehead, Loysius once more began to scream in agony. “Aaaaaah!” Holding his head, his entire body spasmed, a savage look on his face. Moments later, Loysius stopped screaming, his face ashen as though he were an invalid. He stared in terror at Wyrnessin.

“I told you!” Wyrnessin, right now, was like a Sovereign, standing far above them and holding their lives and deaths in his hands. He stared down at Loysius. “I would make you regret it!”

Everyone's hearts shuddered in terror.

He was able to create a Spiritleech. This meant that this Wyrnessin had already reached an astonishing level of attainment in the Edicts of Death.

"Haha." Wyrnessin suddenly let began to laugh like a madman, the laughter causing everyone, including Linley's group, to feel terrified. Wyrnessin's gaze swept across the other Fiends. "Everyone involved in this matter will die!"

Those Fiends as well as the nearly hundred surviving Fiend trial participants as well as the staff members of the Fiend Castle were all terrified.

"Boss." Bebe said with his divine sense.

"Watch to see how things develop. At the last moment, we'll have to flee." Linley didn't know what should be done either.

Even someone as mighty as Loysius wasn't able to resist Wyrnessin at all. Although Linley had never heard of a Spiritleech, from the discussion between the two as well as the expressions on Loysius' face, he could tell that this 'Spiritleech' was definitely no ordinary item.

"Wyrnessin, you, you can't!" The silver-haired elder said hurriedly. "Royalwing City is right there, you, you can't…"

"Royalwing City is over there? I'm not killing anyone within Royalwing City! What have I to fear?" Wyrnessin chuckled, then swept his icy gaze across Linley's group. "So what if I kill a few little people like you?"

Linley was currently thinking at high speed.

"No. We have to live." Linley glanced at the nearby Delia and Bebe. "No other choices. We'll have to flee. When nearly a hundred of us flee, we can't all be caught. Moreover, we are very close to Royalwing City. We might be able to make it into the city." Linley continued to calculate their

chances.

“I can’t die!” “I don’t want to die!”

The other Fiends and Fiend trial participants didn’t want to die either. They were all thinking frantically.

“Brothers, let’s all flee!” Suddenly, a divine sense rang out in the minds of every person present.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe, upon hearing this, couldn’t help but decide to move.

“Westwards. Hurry!” Linley sent with his divine sense.

In that moment, more than half of the hundred surrounded people began to flee in separate directions.

“Boom!” In the area around them, all of the black-robed men simultaneously swept out with their right palms. Just like last time, a dense layer of black energy came out from every black-robed figure. If one took a close look, the black-robed figures had complicated magical runes on their bodies or robes. All the black-robed men were joining forces…

Every single direction was completely locked down.

A heaven-encompassing net!

Linley and the others had nowhere to flee. “Aaah!” Those who had moved the fastest and had run into the black web seemed to have been struck by a surge of powerful energy which knocked them back.

Linley and the others once more returned to their original position.

“Flee?” Wyrnessin looked disdainfully at them. “If I were to let a group of little fellows like you flee, then I, Wyrnessin, wouldn’t have face to stay in the Infernal Realm any longer.” Wyrnessin glanced disdainfully at the

silver-haired elder, then said, “However, I can give you a chance. A chance not to die.”

Linley and the others couldn’t help but to look at Wyrnessin.

“It is very simple.” Wyrnessin pointed at Linley’s side. “In your group, one Highgod can live, and one God can live!” Wyrnessin’s smile was so bright. “Don’t say that I didn’t give you a chance!”

Linley’s group was completely stunned, but then, right away, all of them looked warily at each other.

“Linley, what should we do?” Delia said with her divine sense.

Linley maintained his silence, his eyes filled with worry.

What should they do? What could he do?

“Slash!”

Suddenly, someone attacked. Instantly, the ‘thread’ tying them together on the same side was broken.

“Don’t piss me off!” Linley roared towards the others, brandishing with his adamantine heavy sword.

Wyrnessin bellowed, his long eyebrows dancing in the air, “I won’t kill the final survivors. Haha, kill, kill!” Wyrnessin’s eyes were filled with wild savagery.

Right now, Wyrnessin was venting his anger.

His divine clone was destroyed. Thus, he would make sure that everyone involved would be doomed!

“Not die?”

Wyrnessin said to himself. “First, give you some hope. After the final two survivors come out, I will make you suffer the most agonizing torment. I won’t kill you. However, I am capable of tormenting you until you commit suicide!” Whenever Wyrnessin thought of the two people who would be ‘survivors’, and yet would face such a terrifying outcome, he couldn’t help but feel excited and eager. “I told you. I will make you all regret it.” Wyrnessin said sinisterly to himself.

Since he was going to take revenge, how would Wyrnessin let any of them flee?

“Hm?” Wyrnessin suddenly narrowed his eyes.

He saw that all of a sudden that Loysius fell downwards at high speed, this sudden drop causing the surrounding black-robed figures to be unable to block him.

“Fleeing?” Wyrnessin immediately chased afterwards.

“Aaaah!” Loysius, in mid-air, once more let out an agonized cry, but only one of his divine clones was screaming. The other divine clone of Loysius actually continued to fly downwards at high speed. However…Wyrnessin appeared in front of it.

“You want to run?” Wyrnessin looked at him disdainfully. “Did you think that I didn’t know you had a divine clone?”

Chapter 29 – Penitent Flames

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 29, Penitent Flames

Seeing Wyrnessin suddenly appear in front of him, Loysius' heart shook.

"I'm finished!" Loysius couldn't help but feel some despair.

The Spiritleech planted in his soul was only in his most powerful divine Life clone. Loysius had another divine clone. But now, that clone wasn't able to flee either.

"If you don't want to die right now, then go back!" Wyrnessin barked.

Loysius knew that by retreating, he would probably die as well, but he still chose to return to the encirclement.

"Crunch!" A dagger pierced straight into the head of a God.

And then, with a flip of his hand, Bebe collected the corpse as he flew back towards Linley. Linley, Bebe, and Delia were all in one location. If others didn't attack them, they wouldn't attack others either. But once any person attacked them, Linley's team would immediately kill the enemy!

Regina was by Linley's side as well.

Only, at this sort of critical, life-and-death juncture, Linley's team didn't dare to fully trust Regina either.

Blood splattered everywhere as the slaughter continued.

"Linley." Delia looked towards Linley, who squeezed out a smile. Given the situation, and the fact that Wyrnessin had already said that only a single God would be permitted to remain living, there would definitely be casualties in Linley's group of three.

Who would die?

“I would rather die than let Delia or Bebe die.” At this moment, Linley’s heart was in great pain.

“Even if I die, I’ll die by your side.” Delia looked at Linley, a hint of a smile actually on her face. “I am already very satisfied to be able to be together with you.”

“What nonsense are you spewing!” Linley shouted angrily with his divine sense.

But Linley’s heart was tied up in knots. Although Delia wasn’t very talented in terms of training, all these years, she had quietly supported Linley. Her quiet attentiveness and support had imperceptibly transformed their love for each other, engraving it into each other’s souls.

In neither life nor death would they be parted.

“You won’t die.” Linley looked at Delia, while at the same time paying careful attention to the surrounding area.

That white-robed man who had sold quite a few moon rings was staring at Linley’s team. Just then, Linley’s team had already discovered that the white-robed man was indeed very strong. Ten Gods had already died by his hand.

“I urge you not to come offend us.” Wielding the adamantine heavy sword in his hand, Linley sent his divine sense.

The white-robed man hesitated as he looked at Bebe. In the end, he didn’t choose to attack.

Linley and Bebe had killed quite a few people just then as well. Linley used soul attacks, while Bebe used material attacks. They were amongst the most powerful Gods of this group as well.

“HALT!” A cold shout thundered forth from the direction of Royalwing City.

Everyone who heard this angry shout felt their head grow dizzy. They lost all perception, and only a while later did they recover. By the time Linley’s team had recovered, they saw that three figures had appeared in mid-air. Beneath the light of the Blood Sun, the shadow of the leader of those figures seemed all the more majestic and dazzling.

He wore a long golden robe, had white eyebrows, and golden pupils!

White eyebrows, golden pupils!

“Governor Royalwing, Seven Star Fiend!” Linley’s heart exulted wildly. Linley, Bebe, and Delia’s faces instantly revealed a look of utter joy.

Not just them; even the silver-haired elder who was drenched in blood from the battle but had yet to die, upon realizing who had come, let out an excited call, “Lord Governor!”

“Lord Governor?” Quite a few of the Fiend trial participants stared at the newcomer in excitement.

As a Seven Star Fiend, Royalwing definitely was one of the most powerful forces of the Infernal Realm.

“Oh, Stuart [Si’tu’er’te]!” The gray-robed man, Wyrnessin, glanced at Governor Royalwing. “Stuart, can it be that you want to interfere in this matter?”

Linley’s group was shocked. They knew that ‘Royalwing’ was nothing more than the nickname which the Governor Royalwing had gained upon becoming a Seven Star Fiend.

As for Lord Royalwing’s real name, not many knew.

The white eyebrows of Governor Royalwing rose, and he stared at Wyrnessin with a sharp gaze. “Wyrnessin, this is a squad from the Fiend Castle, and they are very close to Royalwing City. Don’t go too far.” Governor Royalwing’s words contained a hint of anger as well.

“Stuart, my divine clone was killed. You tell me, am I justified or not in getting revenge?” Wyrnessin stared at Governor Royalwing.

Governor Royalwing frowned. “Your divine clone was destroyed? How could the likes of them have done that?”

Governor Royalwing knew exactly how powerful Wyrnessin was.

Wyrnessin hesitated momentarily, then said sourly, “I was staying in my lair, focusing on analyzing the Edicts of Death, but my divine Darkness clone was staying in Moon Lake Castle.” After all, Wyrnessin wanted to enjoy life as well. He couldn’t always spend his time in training.

“Who would have imagined that such a large number of people would suddenly attack my Moon Lake Castle.” Wyrnessin was furious.

Governor Royalwing now understood.

This was very simple. Many experts would choose to divide their divine clones up in multiple locations. That way, if one divine clone fell into grave danger, at least another would survive.

“How can I possibly not avenge such a huge enmity?” Wyrnessin said.

To these ultimate experts, their life was of course incomparably valuable. A divine clone’s destruction was equivalent to losing one of their lives. Who wouldn’t be utterly enraged? Wyrnessin had planned long ago to kill all of these Fiends and spare not a one.

Governor Royalwing was worried as well. He then looked at Wyrnessin and said slowly, “Wyrnessin, I understand how you feel. But…you are acting right outside of Royalwing City. You should at least give me, Stuart, a little

face.”

Wyrnessin frowned slightly.

Both Governor Royalwing and Wyrnessin had become famous as ultimate experts eons ago in a long bygone era. They had long ago, in that era, become Seven Star Fiends!

“Stuart, can it be that you want to fight me?” Wyrnessin said in a low voice, frowning.

Right now, the thirty-plus survivors who were surrounded were watching nervously. Linley and the others knew…right now, their lives were in the hands of these two ultimate experts. Whether they lived or died would depend on the results of Governor Royalwing’s discussions with Wyrnessin.

“I don’t want to fight with you, but, you can’t go too far either.” Governor Royalwing said.

Wyrnessin understood Royalwing’s temper quite well.

“Fine. These little God-level fellows, I won’t kill them. But those four Highgods that are still surviving, I must kill them!” Wyrnessin said with certainty. “The destruction of my divine clones involved those Fiends!”

Governor Royalwing glanced over.

“Lord Governor!” The silver-haired elder said hurriedly, and the other three Highgods looked towards Governor Royalwing with supplicating gazes.

Governor Royalwing spoke out. “Of the four surviving Highgods, that one over there is a staff member of the Fiend Castle.” Governor Royalwing pointed at the silver-haired elder. “He can’t possibly have anything to do with your death.”

Wyrnessin glanced sideways at the silver-haired elder, then nodded and said, “Fine. I can spare him.”

“Lord Governor.” The other three Highgods, Loysius included, called out repeatedly.

But Governor Royalwing didn’t pay them any mind at all. Governor Royalwing looked at Wyrnessin, sending a divine message. “It is best if you take care of this quickly. You’ve caused so much commotion, and were taking so much time…” Wyrnessin immediately understood.

Governor Royalwing wanted face as well.

“Fine!”

Wyrnessin smiled.

“Lord Governor!” Loysius, the muscular blue-haired man, and a gold-haired Fiend immediately called out in high voices.

“You killed one of my divine clones. Hmph!” Wyrnessin’s eyes suddenly turned white, and a translucent ripple spread out, immediately shooting towards the muscular blue-haired man, the gold-haired Fiend, and one of Loysius’ divine clones, invading their bodies.

“Ah!” Desolate screams were ripped forth from the three.

At the same time, a translucent flame swirled above the heads of the three, and then the three fell down from the skies, dead!

“Penitent Flames?” Governor Royalwing’s eyes lit up. “This Wyrnessin has become much more powerful than he had previously been.”

“So powerful.” Seeing this, the nearly thirty lucky survivors were all shocked. Highgod Fiends had been killed without any ability to fight back by this Wyrnessin, and just then, that formless attack that had created translucent flames was something they had never even heard of.

Right now, the only surviving Fiend was Loysius. This was the divine clone

of Loysius which had suffered the ‘Spiritleech’.

His other divine clone had been killed.

“Penitent Flames?” Loysius stared in terror towards Wyrnessin. “The legendary Penitent Flames?” Loysius now fully understood how great the difference was between him and Wyrnessin.

“You…why haven’t you gone to challenge an Asura yet?” Loysius said.

Linley had a thought. “Challenge an Asura?” Linley knew that the Infernal Realm had, in total, 108 prefectures, and also 108 Asuras! The Lord Prefect of every single prefecture was an Asura! In the Infernal Realm, ‘Asura’ was a title given only to the mightiest of experts, and there was only one way to obtain it.

Challenging for it!

But not just anyone had the right to challenge an Asura. The challenger had to first become a Seven Star Fiend!

Upon becoming a mighty Seven Star Fiend, one had the right to challenge an Asura. If the challenge was successful, the previous Asura would lose the title of ‘Asura’, and the challenger would receive the title of ‘Asura’. Thus, there would forever be only 108 Asuras in the Infernal Realm.

“Challenge an Asura?” Wyrnessin glanced at him sideways. “First of all, I’m not too interested in that.”

“Secondly, do you think that just because I am able to use the ‘Penitent Flames’ that I will be able to defeat an Asura?” Wyrnessin snickered. “If we were still in the era of when I first arrived in the Infernal Realm, perhaps. But countless years have passed. After so many challenges, every single Asura of our era is extremely hard to deal with.”

Wyrnessin glanced towards Governor Royalwing as well.

Governor Royalwing nodded slightly, as though he shared the same thoughts.

They were both Seven Star Fiends, and they had reached the level of Seven Star Fiends countless years ago. But they didn't dare to go challenge the Asuras! Because if their challenge was to fail, then generally speaking, the result would be death!

"Little fellows, count your blessings." Wyrnessin glanced at the nearly thirty surviving Gods.

Wyrnessin didn't have too much of an urge to kill Linley and these others, because he too knew that the death of his divine clone didn't have much to do with these Gods. Since Governor Royalwing had come in person, he had to give Governor Royalwing some face.

"Everyone, leave now." Governor Royalwing spoke out.

Immediately, under the leadership of the silver-haired elder, the nearly thirty lucky God-level survivors immediately flew towards the direction of Royalwing City.

Moments later…

In mid-air, the only figures left were Wyrnessin's subordinates, Loysius, and the three people on Governor Royalwing's side.

"Hmph, what are you looking at? You want to go back to Royalwing City as well? Haha, in your dreams!" Wyrnessin looked at Loysius, who ignored him silently. But then, Loysius suddenly began to spasm, shrieking in agony while clutching his head.

Governor Royalwing's eyebrows lifted up.

"It is a Spiritleech." Wyrnessin said unconcernedly.

Governor Royalwing was slightly startled, and he let out a surprised breath.

“Wyrnessin, you were able to make a Spiritleech? Although it isn’t very effective against experts on our level, this thing is astonishingly valuable.” Spiritleeches weren’t of great use against the likes of Governor Royalwing.

However, in the entirety of the Infernal Realm, how many people were capable of being on their level?

“If you want one, you can come to my place to buy one. The price that I’ll give you will be 10% lower than the price at Blacksand Castle.” Wyrnessin said.

Governor Royalwing couldn’t help but grin.

“Stuart, I’ll be leaving now.” Wyrnessin informed him.

Governor Royalwing nodded slightly.

Wyrnessin then stared once more at that Loysius. “Kid, I told you. You will regret it…very, very much.” And then, he led Loysius and his forces into the metallic lifeform and left at high speed.”

“That young fellow has fallen into Wyrnessin’s clutches. He’s in for a tragedy.” Governor Royalwing let out a sigh.

Seven Laws, Four Edicts. Amongst these, the most sinister and one most capable of tormenting others was the Edicts of Death. And in turn, experts on the level of Wyrnessin were capable of truly terrifying tricks.

“We finally made it back to Royalwing City alive.” Linley, Delia, and Bebe stood on the streets of Royalwing City, momentarily not sure whether they should laugh or to cry. This sort of fluctuation between life and death truly made one’s heart tremble.

“Linley, this time, I truly was scared to death.” Delia revealed a smile at this moment.

Bebe pursed his lips. “That old man Wyrnessin really went too far. But,

alas, it seems he's really powerful. Grandpa Beirut isn't here either. If he was here, everything would be fine."

Linley took Delia by the hand. "Let's go. We'll go to the Fiend Castle!" Turning in the moon rings would make Linley and the others One Star Fiends.

Immediately, Linley, Bebe, and Delia headed straight towards the Fiend Castle.

Chapter 30 – Inventory Checking

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 30, Inventory Checking

In the main hall of the first floor of the Fiend Castle, quite a few people were gathered, amongst which were Linley's team.

"Miss Yuna!" Bebe stood in front of the counter, laughing as he greeted that female employee, Yuna.

Yuna looked towards Bebe with some surprise and pleasure, as well as towards Linley and Delia who were behind him. "Linley, I was just sighing about how few people survived in your group. I didn't expect that the three of you all survived and made it back. Congratulations, truly."

"We were fairly lucky." Whenever Linley thought about what had happened outside of Royalwing City, he still felt a sense of fear.

When he had been facing Wyrnessin, Linley discovered that he didn't have any ability to resist at all. Their difference in power was simply too great.

"Miss Yuna, we've been here for a long time now. When will we have the chance to turn in the proof that we accomplished the trials?" Bebe said rather frantically. Linley's group had been waiting quite some time here on the first floor. Yuna laughed as she said, "Don't be impatient. You are already Fiends now. It isn't as simple as just giving you a Fiend medallion. There's a process for this."

A while later…

"The people who succeeded in the Fiend trials in Moon Lake Castle, up to the second floor!" Suddenly, a muscular man with short golden hair came down the stairway from the second floor of the Fiend Castle.

"Hurry on up." Yuna said with a laugh.

“Miss Yuna, we’ll head up now, then.” Bebe chortled.

Immediately, Linley’s group of twenty-plus people all stepped onto the stairway leading towards the second level of the Fiend Castle. The main hall of this second level was much smaller than the main hall of the first floor, and there were many rooms here as well. Linley’s group was led by that muscular man with short golden hair to a black room.

Within the black room, there were three people seated.

“All of you, step forward one at a time and turn in the moon rings, as well as the Fiend seal.” One of them, a black-robed middle-aged man said clearly.

Immediately, one after another stepped forward to turn in the moon rings and begin the process of becoming Fiends. But very clearly…the procedures were quite complicated. Fortunately, the black-robed man was fairly fast, and he was able to process each person in just a few minutes.

“Next!” The black-robed man said.

It was Linley’s turn.

Linley immediately handed his ‘moon ring’ as well as the ‘Fiend seal’ over.

“Name.” The black-robed man said.

“Linley.” Linley said.

And then, Linley felt his entire body tremble. So the black-robed man had actually summoned his Godrealm, using it to hold Linley down while shutting out the outsiders.

“I have to get an imprint of your soul’s aura.” The black-robed man withdrew a green, fingernail-sized bead with a flip of his hand, then put the green bead next to Linley. At a visible rate, the green bead quickly began to

transform to a gray color.

Moments later, the entire bead had turned gray.

“Soul aura? What is this?” Linley asked curiously.

The black-robed elder glanced at him, then said calmly, “This is known as a ‘soul reflecting stone’. It is capable of absorbing an imprint of a soul’s aura. All experts have different soul auras. As long as we have this ‘soul reflecting stone’ with your soul aura, we will be able to verify your identity.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished.

So there was an item such as this in the world.

However, it made sense. When he was in the Yulan continent, some alchemists were capable of creating items that astonished Linley. In the Infernal Realm, it only made sense that many complicated items existed.

“This is your Fiend medallion, while this is your secondary Fiend medallion. Bind them both with blood.” The black-robed man instructed.

Seeing the Fiend medallion, Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. This was the proof that he was now a Fiend.

“Secondary Fiend medallion?” Linley was somewhat surprised. This so-called ‘secondary’ Fiend medallion was actually a blue medallion, but this blue medallion was something which Linley had never seen Fiends wear before.

The black-robed man laughed calmly, “The secondary Fiend medallion is kept at our Fiend Castle. Once your secondary Fiend medallion becomes an object with no owner, we will know that you are dead.”

Linley now understood.

This was only a toy used to judge if someone was still alive or not.

He immediately bound them with blood, then retrieved the Fiend medallion, pinning it to his chest in accordance with requirements. Linley directly fused this ‘Fiend medallion’ with his ‘Pulseguard Armor’. After all, his clothes were nothing more than a variant of his Pulseguard Armor.

Outside the Fiend Castle.

“Linley, in the future, will you remain at Royalwing City?” Regina said to Linley. “I owe you two hundred thousand inkstones. In a while, I’ll pay you back.” Regina didn’t like owing others money.

“No need. We’ll be leaving Royalwing City soon.” Linley said directly.

“Leaving? Where are you going?” Regina said hurriedly. “Far away?”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe exchanged glances, then Bebe chortled towards Regina, “Regina, the three of us want to roam the Redbud Continent, and then float across the Starmist Sea and roam this boundless Infernal Realm. You tell me, will we be going far away?”

Regina was utterly shocked.

Even many Highgods in the Infernal Realm had never visited other continents.

After all, each of the five continents of the Infernal Realm were extremely large, more than enough for them to carve out their own little world. Without a special reason, generally speaking, people wouldn’t risk heading to other continents.

“Then I…but I…” Regina didn’t know how she was supposed to repay the two hundred thousand inkstones.

“Heh heh, no rush. When we meet again, you can pay us back.” Bebe laughed as he spoke.

“Alright. Thank you for your help this time, truly.” Regina looked at the Fiend medallion on her chest. She couldn’t help feel all the more grateful. She had become a Fiend…this was something she had dreamed about for many years.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe made their farewells to Regina, and then went to a restaurant to first enjoy a celebratory victory feast, then returned to their residence. The room fees which Linley’s group had paid had been calculated by the year.

Within the courtyard of Linley’s residence, the three were seated around a stone table.

“Right now, we need to have a good reckoning of our exact amount of wealth.” Bebe said excitedly. With a wave of his hand, seven interspatial rings fell to the table, emitting a clear, crisp sound as they did. These seven interspatial rings, under the light of the blood-red sun, gleamed with reflected light.

“I have some also.” Delia laughed as two more interspatial rings fell onto the stone table.

Seeing this, Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

On this trip to Moon Lake Castle, at first, under the commands of the Fiends, Linley’s group had served as cannon fodder and suffered two attacks from Godslayer Arrows. Bebe had thus collected four God corpses, while Delia had collected two. Afterwards, they had engaged in multiple battles…

And not long ago, outside Royalwing City, after receiving the declaration from Wyrnessin, everyone had begun battling each other.

The nearly hundred remaining Gods had battled to the death, with only roughly thirty remaining. Linley’s group alone had killed more than ten. Naturally, they had collected these corpses as well.

“Boss, you have the most.” Bebe said.

With a flip of his Linley’s hand, eleven interspatial rings fell to the stone table. Of these eleven interspatial rings, three of them had been acquired inside Moon Lake Castle, while the other eight had been acquired in the chaotic battle. But the most valuable of the eleven rings was…the black moon ring!

“This black moon ring’s wealth is most likely greater than the others combined!” Linley sighed.

This was the moon ring of the deceased black-robed guard.

The black-robed guards were all Highgods. In addition, they were fairly elite ones. Naturally, their wealth would be significant as well.

“We’ve already investigated the wealth within this black moon ring. The amount of inkstones and azurites alone are worth ninety million. There are also some Golden Soul-Pearls and other usable items which have a total value of over a hundred million inkstones.” Bebe said excitedly. “Right now, let’s investigate the other interspatial rings.”

They had investigated the ring of the black-robed guard early on.

But the other rings, aside from just two or three of them, had yet to be investigated.

“Let’s begin to count our inventory.” Linley and Delia were a bit eager as well.

On the table, there was a pile of interspatial rings. Linley’s group divided them into three piles and began to bind them with blood, investigating the contents within. They withdrew large amounts of inkstones as well as some other consumables.

“Good man! Whew, which God was the original owner of this interspatial

ring? He has so much money!" Bebe called out in surprise.

Linley and Delia immediately raised their heads to look over.

"How much?" Linley said eagerly.

"Boss, this God's wealth is over ten million." Bebe immediately said. "And his interspatial ring has quite a few God sparks inside."

Although the Gods who took part in the Fiend trials were generally all fairly powerful Gods, most of them had at most a few hundred thousand inkstones. Only a few had more than a million. As for those who had more than ten million, they were extremely rare. Linley himself had investigated four interspatial rings, but the most wealth he had discovered was just 200,000 inkstones.

"Bebe, stop counting. Keep taking inventory for the next interspatial ring." Linley laughed.

Right at this moment, Delia let out a cry of surprise.

"What is it?" Linley and Bebe both looked over.

Delia's face was all smiles. "Linley, guess how much the items in this interspatial ring are worth, all together?"

Bebe immediately guessed, "Ten million?"

Delia smiled and shook her head.

"Is ten million too low or too high?" Linley hurriedly asked.

"Of course it is too low. It isn't just ten million." Delia said. Linley couldn't help but be shocked. "How much is there inside?"

Delia smiled. "The inkstones and azurites in here, all combined, are worth eight hundred thousand."

“Eight hundred thousand?” Bebe stared. “And you said it was more than ten million?”

Delia laughed. “I’m not done. Although the inkstones and azurites are only worth that much, however, this interspatial ring has…” Delia laughed and flipped her hand, revealing two black gems…divine sparks!

They could sense the aura from these divine sparks.

“Highgod sparks, and two of them?” Linley breathed in amazement.

Delia laughed and nodded. “Right. One is wind-type, while the other is darkness-type.”

Linley couldn’t help but be overjoyed, but then he was astonished. “Two Highgod sparks. How did a God get them?”

Delia couldn’t help but tease him, “Linley, forget about him; don’t we ourselves have a Highgod spark? And we’ve just arrived in the Infernal Realm recently, but we’ve already acquired the Highgod spark of that black-robed guard. So why can’t others acquire them?”

“Makes sense.” Linley had to accept it.

What he could do, others could also do. Only…this was a huge benefit to Linley’s team.

A while later, Linley and the other two finally completed a rough inventory estimate of all of the interspatial rings. But of course, they didn’t carefully look at some of the other toys. Linley’s group only did a general accounting of the more easily calculated inkstones, azurites, divine sparks, and other items.

“We roughly have a total worth of 120 million inkstones! But of course, that doesn’t include the four Highgod sparks we have.” Linley said.

The four Highgod sparks were the one from the Yulan continent, the black-robed guard's, and the two from the interspatial ring.

"Delia." Linley looked at Delia. "I originally wanted to go buy a wind-type Highgod spark for you, but I didn't expect that we would acquire one for ourselves. You had best hurry up and fuse this one." Linley directly gave the wind-type Highgod spark to Delia.

Since Delia had embarked on a path of fusing with divine sparks, Linley would naturally let her reach the Highgod level as soon as possible.

As for Linley and Bebe, they relied on gaining insights, which wasn't something that could be achieved in a day.

"Alright." Delia nodded slightly.

The nearby Bebe flipped through some things he hadn't paid close attention to earlier. After all, when taking inventory, they didn't carefully go through everything. For example…Linley and the other two hadn't closely reviewed any of the books.

"Boss, take a look and see what this is." Bebe suddenly was rather surprised and pleased.

Puzzled, Linley turned to look. He saw Bebe holding a thick book in his hands, and on the cover of the book was the words, 'A Brief Summary of the Profound Mysteries of the Seven Elemental Laws'.

Chapter 31 – Escort Mission

Book 14, Fiend – Chapter 31, Escort Mission

Seeing the words on the cover, Linley couldn't help but feel startled.

A Brief Summary of the Profound Mysteries of the Seven Elemental Laws?

Linley's greatest problem right now was that he didn't know anything at all about many of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws. Although it was said that others weren't capable of teaching him regarding the profound mysteries, and that he had to gain insights on his own, if he at least had some general guidance, his training path wouldn't advance in a wrong direction.

"Bebe, let me look at that." Linley said hurriedly and eagerly.

"I knew Boss would want this." Bebe laughed, then tossed over the book.

Delia had fused with a divine spark, and so she didn't need to gain insights into any profound mysteries. Naturally, she didn't need to read this book either. As for Bebe…given his lazy nature, he didn't have the mental energy or discipline. As soon as Bebe saw the book, though, he understood that his Boss would definitely love it.

Holding the book, Linley immediately began to flip through and read the 'Compilation on the Elemental Laws of the Earth'.

The Laws of the Earth had in total six profound mysteries. These were the 'Essence of the Earth', 'Strength', 'Worldwalking', 'Vitality', 'Gravitational Space', and the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'. This book had some basic introductions regarding each of the six profound mysteries, as well as the powers they held.

It even contained some information about simple ways of using them.

“The Throbbing Pulse of the World should be used like this?” Linley read on, shaking his head. “The person who wrote this book clearly only knew just a tiny bit regarding the Throbbing Pulse of the World.”

As someone who had trained in the Throbbing Pulse of the World, Linley naturally could tell that the person who wrote this book either knew just very little, or was just trying to cover up how little he knew.

The so-called ‘usage methods’ were extremely simple and very weak ways of using the Laws.

Linley completely ignored this sort of information regarding how to apply the Laws. Linley cared more about the descriptions of the other profound mysteries of the Laws.

“So that’s the case!” Linley, seeing the description of the ‘Strength’ profound mystery, sighed in agreement. “Originally, I thought that the Laws of the Earth included a ‘Massive’ type profound mystery, but it seems that’s just one aspect of the ‘Strength’ profound mystery.”

The Profound Mysteries of Strength was the highest level physical attack type profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, and it was very complicated.

While reading the book, Linley didn’t notice the passing of time.

“So that was the Worldwalking ability.” Linley sighed in praise. “Back in the past, the O’Brien Empire’s ‘Monolithic Sword Saint’, Haydson, had already just touched upon the edges of the profound mysteries of Worldwalking.”

In the past, with a single step, Haydson had been able to travel dozens of meters. Linley had been shocked greatly at the time.

Actually, this was the simplest usage of Worldwalking; it couldn’t even be described as having reached a ‘basic’ level of mastery.

Worldwalking allowed a person to completely fuse himself into the boundless earth elemental essence of the world. It wasn't that Haydson had teleported; rather, he had merged himself into the earth elemental essence, and then moved through it to another location before reappearing.

Back then, Haydson had been too weak, and the amount of time he could remain merged with the earth elemental essence of the world was very short.

For a true expert, when the Worldwalking ability was used, one could completely disappear and remain merged with the earth elemental essence of the world for a long time.

After finishing reading regarding the six types of profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, Linley began to flip through the 'Compilation on the Elemental Laws of the Wind.'

The Elemental Laws of the Wind had the most types of profound mysteries, nine in total. They were the 'Essence of the Wind', 'Doppleganger', 'Sound Waves', 'Music', 'Windwalking', 'Spatial Wind', 'Dimensional', 'Fast', and 'Slow'; nine profound mysteries.

Although there were nine, when different experts used them, they would produce effects of different power.

In addition, all profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws were fusable. Any two of them could fuse. Any three of them could fuse…and different fusions would create different types of marvelous, powerful attacks.

"So that's what the Spatial Wind is all about." Linley's eyes shone as he read.

"Dimensional. This is the most powerful physical attack type profound mystery of the Laws of the Wind." Seeing the description of the 'Dimensional' profound mysteries, he couldn't help but feel stunned.

A long time later…

“Huh?” Linley glanced at his surroundings, puzzled. “How come its dark now?”

“Boss. It’s night.” Bebe and Delia both began to laugh. “You’ve been reading for half a day.”

Linley raised his head, and saw that in the sky, there was indeed a sliver of a knife-thin Violet Moon.

“Haha…” Linley couldn’t help but begin to laugh as well. “This book really is good. Although reading it hasn’t helped me gain any insights at all into the Elemental Laws, at least its given me a general idea.” Linley understood that in the end, insights depended on one’s self.

“I can’t read it, I can’t keep reading it.” Linley said with a sigh. “I haven’t even completed mastering the profound mysteries of the Laws that I have currently gained insights into. I can’t be hasty.”

Actually, the profound mysteries of the Laws weren’t so simple.

Reading this was one thing, but if one truly wanted to attempt to gain insights in accordance with it, perhaps one would even be able to make any headway at all. For example, it might say that the ‘Worldwalker’ ability required one to become completely merged into the earth elemental essences of the world…but how would you do that? There was no way to use words to describe such a thing. This was a form of insight that one might have into the Laws!

The next morning, Linley’s team headed to Redbud Castle.

“Before heading to the Indigo Prefecture, we at least have to gain some basic information regarding the geography of the Infernal Realm. Only then will we be able to work out a pathway.” Linley currently only knew that the Infernal Realm had five enormous, virtually endless continents, as well as the Starmist Sea and the Chaotic Sea.

To get to the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent…

Linley only knew that they had to first leave the Redbud Continent, then pass through the vast Starmist Sea before finally reaching the shores of the Bloodridge Continent.

Within the main hall on the first floor of Redbud Castle, Linley's group hadn't noticed any book selling counters last time. They first went to ask some of the customer service representatives, from whom they learned that actually…Redbud Castle had items for sale in more places than just the counters.

There were some standalone rooms as well.

The books were placed in a standalone room at the sides of the main hall. Linley's team went into the room. There were very few people who were here looking at books.

"So many books!" Bebe sighed in amazement as he looked at the books.

"Search carefully. Let's find information regarding the geography of the entire Infernal Realm." Linley said.

The three began to carefully search. There were quite a few books that described the geography of the Infernal Realm. Some focused on describing the Nightblaze Prefecture, while others described the massive Redbud Continent. But as for describing the entire Infernal Realm, Linley found only a single book, which was just a simple atlas-type book.

What Linley needed wasn't just a map; it was something which would describe the threats and the risky areas of the Infernal Realm.

After all, the three of them weren't all that powerful yet. If they were to fall into a dangerous area, it would be disastrous. It was best to learn of these things beforehand.

“Linley, Bebe, come over and take a look.” Delia called.

Linley and Bebe immediately walked over. Currently, Delia was holding a dark red book that was five or six centimeters thick. On the cover of the book were four words: “Infernal Realm, General Summary”. Bebe pursed his lips. “A thin book like that? This book that I have which only describes the Nightblaze Prefecture is as thick.”

How vast was the Infernal Realm?

To describe it in detail, even ten books wouldn’t be enough, much less one.

“A book of this thickness isn’t bad. Most likely, it won’t just be a simple map collection.” Linley laughed as he accepted the book.

Flipping through it, it was indeed much the same as Linley had imagined.

“This is pretty much it. Although the book doesn’t have many descriptions, at least it has a general introduction to general geography and environment of the five continents, two seas, and 108 prefectures of the Infernal Realm. It even describes each of the ten or so cities in each prefecture, as well as some dangerous areas and information about them.”

The Infernal Realm was simply too vast.

If it took two or three pages to discuss a prefecture, then the 108 prefectures combined would require nearly three hundred pages.

In addition, the pages of this book were quite long. It was an unusual book; even if it was burned or drenched, it wouldn’t be damaged. After all, this wasn’t that sort of frail material which existed in the material realm. However, every single page was only slightly thicker than the pages in the material realms.

And so, a fairly simple introduction to the Infernal Realm required a book that was five or six centimeters thick.

If it was the type which went into great detail, it would require several hundred books of the same thickness.

“How much is this” Linley glanced at the nearby, violet-robed attendant.

The attendant walked over and glanced at it, then laughed and said, “A hundred inkstones.”

Linley immediately handed over a hundred inkstones. To Linley’s team, currently in possession of over a hundred million inkstones, this was nothing. Only, Linley’s team also understood…that their networth actually wasn’t that much.

After all, a single Deathgod Golem was worth a hundred million.

Some higher level metallic lifeforms were also worth more than a hundred million, and it was normal for some of the nicer houses within the city to cost billions.

A hundred million?

Well, at least for an ordinary life, it was enough.

“Hey, why haven’t I found any books regarding descriptions of the profound mysteries of the Laws?” Linley asked the attendant.

“Those books are a bit more expensive. They are held within the second hall. Each of them cost several thousand inkstones, and the better ones cost more than ten thousand.” The attendant said. “And these types of basic, elementary books that only have common knowledge within are fairly cheap.”

They left Redbud Castle. Linley’s team selected a nearby restaurant. This time, Linley’s team selected dishes worth roughly a thousand inkstones; this could be considered a slight extravagance.

While they were in the restaurant, Linley continued to flip through the

geography book.

“Linley, have you made up your mind regarding our path?” Delia asked.

Linley closed the book, then nodded slightly. “Bloodridge Continent. This is the easternmost continent of the entire Infernal Realm. Right now, we are in the Redbud Continent, which is in the north. To reach the Bloodridge Continent, we must first head to a port city in the Rainbow Prefecture. Of the ten cities of the Rainbow Prefecture, Bluemaple City is nearest to the Starmist Seas. We should head to Bluemaple City first!”

“According to what the books describe, there are quite a few groups that will go from Bluemaple City to the Bloodridge Continent.” Linley said. “Only, the distance from our Royalwing City of the Nightblaze Prefecture to the Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture is roughly four billion kilometers!”

It was common for prefectures to have a circumference of a billion kilometers.

For the distance from Royalwing City of the Nightblaze Prefecture to the ports of Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture was within his expectations.

“Four billion kilometers.” Bebe stared. “That’s way too far. It will take forever to get to Bluemaple City, and it will probably be very dangerous.”

Linley laughed. “What are you worried about? We don’t have to go alone. After eating, let’s head to the Fiend Castle. We’ll take on an escort mission from Royalwing City to Bluemaple City. Wouldn’t we then easily reach Bluemaple City?”

Generally speaking, escort missions would have quite a few Fiends.

If Linley’s team joined one, their journey would naturally be much safer. Even if they encountered any dangers, with an entire group of Fiends present, the situation would be much easier to deal with.

“Take on a mission? I haven’t ever taken on a formal mission before.” Bebe was somewhat excited.

“Sirs, the ‘Goldscale Silkthin Fish’ you ordered is ready.” A waiter carried over a platter that was gleaming with a golden light. This beautiful, gaudy delicacy was placed upon the table.

Linley laughed, “Bebe, stop thinking about the mission. First eat, then talk. You ordered this fish, and it cost three hundred inkstones. Let’s taste it. How is it?”

After eating, Linley’s group headed to the Fiend Castle. The receptionist at the main hall of the first floor, their old friend Yuna, knew why they had come. Laughing, she pointed at Linley. “Mission acceptances are on the next floor up. One Star Fiends to Three Star Fiends take missions at the second floor, while Four Star Fiends to Six Star Fiends take on missions on the third floor.”

The second floor of the Fiend Castle. The location for One Star Fiends to accept missions. A row of rooms. Linley’s group walked into one of them.

“Speak. What sort of mission do you want?” A youth who was seated in the meditative stance on the ground said calmly.

“Escort mission, from Royalwing City to Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture.” Linley said. “Ideally, a two star mission.” Linley’s group all consisted of One Star Fiends. They could at most take on two star missions. Upon completing a two star mission, they would naturally become Two Star Fiends.

The youth nodded slightly. After closing his eyes for a moment, he then waved his hand. A scroll appeared in his hands, which he flipped open and began to read. “Escort missions from Royalwing City to Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture. There’s ten in total, three of which are two star. Take a look.”

As he spoke, he handed the scroll to Linley.

After taking a quick look, Linley came to a decision. “The two star mission that begins in twenty days.” The reason why Linley selected this one was because there were many people who had already signed up to participate in this escort mission, including the recruiting of a hundred Two Star Fiends!

Chapter 1 – The Fiends Assemble

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 1, The Fiends Assemble

Two star mission. Escort from ‘Royalwing City’ of the Nightblaze Prefecture to ‘Bluemaple City’ of the Rainbow Prefecture, a trip of nearly four billion kilometers. Compensation, two hundred thousand inkstones!

Although the distance was that of four billion kilometers, generally speaking, when riding on a metallic lifeform, a few decades was enough. An escort mission of a few decades which would result in a reward of 200,000 inkstones was quite a high compensation for a One Star Fiend or a Two Star Fiend.

“You choose this one?” The youth raised his head in surprise, glancing at Linley’s team.

The look on the youth’s face caused Linley to feel suspicious. “What? Is there a reason I shouldn’t?”

“Oh. Give me your Fiend medallion for a moment.” The youth didn’t say anything extra. Linley’s team immediately handed their Fiend medallions over. With a flip of his hand, the youth brought out gemstone which radiated with violet light.

He placed this gemstone next to the three Fiend medallions.

Under the violet light, strange characters suddenly appeared in the air above the three Fiend medallions.

“Uh?” Linley’s team was rather surprised.

“What’s this? A line of numbers?” Bebe asked. An extremely long number was currently hovering above the Fiend medallion.

The youth said very casually. “That’s the serial number for your Fiend medallion. Every single Fiend has a different serial number, and we can verify your identity through it. The medallion also has your star rank as a Fiend.” As he spoke, he recorded down the serial numbers of the three Fiend medallions.

And then, he handed the three medallions back to Linley’s team. “Alright. What the three of you need to do is go to the city gates twenty days from now at dawn. At that time, staff members of the Fiend castle as well as the escorted guests will be waiting for you there. They will verify your Fiend medallions, and thus they naturally will be able to verify your identity.”

“Does it cost anything to accept missions?” Linley asked.

Linley had heard that most Fiend Castle missions required a fee to be paid first before acceptance.

The youth laughed. “That depends on the mission. Taking on escort missions doesn’t require a fee to be paid.”

Linley’s group left the Fiend Castle, returning to their own residence.

“Ah, so we have twenty more days. In twenty days, we’ll leave this place.” Bebe tossed his grass hat to the stone table, then sighed. “We’ve lived here for thirty years now. I’ll miss it.”

Linley couldn’t help but let out a long breath.

They had come to the Infernal Realm so long ago now. They had finally become Fiends. In twenty days, they would finally begin their journey enroute to the Indigo Prefecture.

“Linley.” Delia’s face had a hint of a smile on it. “Tarosse, Dylin, and the others arrived here in the Infernal Realm long before we did. Where do you think they might be? This time, when we leave Royalwing City, will we meet them on the way?”

“Tarosse, Dylin?” Linley couldn’t help but think back to the things which had happened in the past.

“All of them are together. Tarosse and Dylin, in particular, aren’t just Gods, they are divine beasts. They should be able to have the ability to somewhat protect themselves.” Linley looked towards the distant horizons. “Only, this Infernal Realm is too vast. I don’t know where they were transported to.”

The Infernal Realm had five great continents, as well as the Starmist Sea and the Chaotic Sea.

From the material plane, one could be transported anywhere and appear within any of those seven areas. Any two places had an extremely vast distance from each other. If they weren’t sent to the same continent, meeting would really be difficult.

Bebe hurriedly shook his head and said, “Right. It isn’t so bad for Tarosse and the others in the Infernal Realm, but Olivier came alone. Him, a Demigod all by himself, most likely will have a bit of a tougher time than we did when we first came.”

“Without having come to the Infernal Realm, who would have known that it was like this?” Linley laughed calmly. “However, it makes sense. Countless experts from material planes have been transported here over countless years, and the Infernal Realm itself has many races…it is only natural for there to be so many experts here.”

Linley’s group felt very relaxed. After all, they now had a wealth of over a hundred million inkstones and had become Fiends. In the Infernal Realm, they would have no problems establishing themselves somewhere.

Linley’s group naturally also had more confidence with regards to heading to the Indigo Prefecture.

Within the twenty remaining days, Linley’s group quietly trained. Delia naturally focused on absorbing that Highgod spark. However, absorbing a Highgod spark would require dozens of years. In the blink of an eye…

The twenty days had passed.

This dawn, the cold, foggy dawn air still hovered about Royalwing City. In mid-air, the Violet Moon could still be seen. But of course, it was already past the ‘curfew’ time period. Linley’s group got up early and headed towards the gates of Royalwing City.

“Royalwing City!” Bebe sighed emotionally while walking. “In the future, I probably won’t have a chance to come to Royalwing City again.”

“Don’t overthink things.” Linley, seeing the emotional look on Bebe’s face, wanted to laugh. “Oh. The gates are up ahead.”

“Uh, we’re here.” Bebe’s eyes lit up, and he immediately looked over. “Where’s the metallic lifeform? Why can’t I see it?” Bebe looked carefully in the air above the outside of the city, but couldn’t see any trace of a metallic castle.

Linley felt a hint of puzzlement as well.

Logically speaking, there should be a metallic lifeform outside.

“Let’s head outside then discuss it.” Linley said. As they stepped past the gates, a white-robed silver-haired youth, upon seeing the Fiend medallions on their chests, immediately walked over and asked in a low voice, “Are you here for the escort mission to Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture?”

“Right!” Linley’s group nodded.

The silver-haired youth laughed and nodded. “Then please first go to the second floor of the restaurant next to the gates. The Fiends who are participating in this escort mission are all going there.”

“Next to the gates?” Linley turned to look. “The restaurant at the south, or the one at the north.”

“The one in the south. At the door, you’ll see someone like me, dressed in white. When you go, he will receive you.” The silver-haired youth said.

Linley’s team was puzzled. The escort was supposed to gather together and head out at dawn, so why were they going to a restaurant?

However, the restaurant was within Royalwing City, and violence was forbidden within Royalwing City. Linley’s group didn’t have to be afraid of taken advantage of or bullied. Naturally, they casually returned to Royalwing City again. At the same time, other Fiends who had accepted this mission were also guided to follow Linley and the others into the restaurant.

“The three of you, please wait a moment.” The white-robed, blue-haired youth smiled at the entrance to the restaurant. He had seen his colleague outside the gates instruct these three to come over, so he knew the three were also here for the mission.

Behind Linley’s group were two more Fiends.

Linley glanced at them, and made his judgment. “All Gods.”

“The five of you, please come with me.” The white-robed blue-haired youth immediately guided Linley’s group of five to the second floor of the restaurant. Right now, the halls of the restaurant on the second floor were bustling. There were forty or fifty people gathered here now.

At the stairway to the second floor, there was a black-robed man standing there.

“A Fiend Castle staffer?” Linley could immediately tell, because this person held within his hand a gemstone that was shining with a violet light.

“The five of you, please permit me to make an inspection.” The man smiled.

He immediately used that gemstone which emitted that violet light, placing it close to the chests of Linley and the others. That violet light, upon shining down on the Fiend medallion, immediately caused the Fiend medallion to display a serial number and star rank. The black-robed man was holding a book in his hands. At the top of it, he wrote down the serial number of the Fiends who were taking part in this mission.

Only after completing each verification was the black-robed man certain of every person's status.

"The five of you, welcome." The black-robed man smiled and nodded. Only now did he permit Linley's group of five to enter the center of the second floor.

A silver-haired old man who on his forehead had three long black horns arranged in a circular manner came walking over. With a smile, he said, "Welcome, the three of you. Our expedition will occur not at dawn today, but at sundown. Please enjoy a repast here first. We will pay for all your expenditures here."

"Sundown?"

Although Linley's team was puzzled, they didn't mind.

One or two days, to Deities, was nothing.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe found a corner for themselves in the dining halls of the second floor, then sat down at the table and casually ordered some dishes.

"Linley, I keep on having the feeling that this escort mission seems to be a bit unusual." Delia said softly.

Linley nodded slightly. "Right. Look. Although the vast majority of the Fiends here are Gods, there's even around ten Highgods. Highgod Fiends are generally Four Star Fiends, or even more powerful. For them to have invited so many Fiends…the price isn't going to be low."

The missions given out by the Fiend Castle didn't have a randomly assigned remuneration; it was in accordance with a baseline which the Fiend Castle had come to.

To invite a One Star Fiend or a Two Star Fiend, the price wouldn't be too bad. But for Four Star Fiends or Five Star Fiends, the price would be astonishing.

"Lord Learmonth [Li'er'meng'si]!"

"Lord Learmonth, you came as well." Suddenly, several voices rang out in the center of the restaurant.

Linley's group couldn't help but turn to look as well. A skinny, callous looking youth with blue hair was walking up. Immediately, quite a few Fiends stood up to welcome him, especially the Highgods, more than half of whom stood to greet him.

The callous youth named Learmonth entered, then swept the restaurant with his gaze, which finally fell upon three handsome siblings that looked very much alike. A hint of a smile appeared on his face. "Edwards [Ai'de'hua'si], you three brothers have taken on this mission as well? It seems I'll have it easy, then."

The three laughed and stood up.

"Mr. Learmonth, since you've taken on this mission as well, then this road will most likely have no more dangers for us." One of the three exceedingly handsome brothers said."

Right now, the silver-haired elder with the three black horns began to chortle as he walked over. "Mr. Learmonth, Edwards and co., on this trip, we'll be troubling you." In the eyes of the silver-haired elder, there was no need to pay any attention to the other Fiends.

Anyone who knew Learmonth or the Edwards brothers wouldn't be angered

by this.

Learmonth was a mighty Six Star Fiend.

The Edwards brothers were all Five Star Fiends!

Generally speaking, the most powerful Fiends, the Seven Star Fiends, would be scattered everywhere in reclusion. Asking them to take on missions was very difficult. However, generally speaking, Six Star Fiends were already extremely powerful. When one of them joined a mission, there would virtually be no problems on a mission.

“Who is this Lord Learmonth?” Not too far away from Linley, someone began discussing in a low voice.

It seemed that it wasn’t just Linley who was puzzled.

“Lord Learmonth is a Six Star Fiend, one of the ranked experts of our Royalwing City.”

Linley’s team couldn’t help but feel startled.

Last time, when they were heading to Moon Lake Castle, the strongest figure had been Loysius and the other two. Loysius was only a Five Star Fiend, but he was still able to kill the master of the Moon Lake Castle without giving him a chance to fight back at all. Five Star Fiends were already so powerful; what, then, of Six Star Fiends?

In addition, a Six Star Fiend attending an escort mission? This caused Linley to feel astonished as well.

The large group continued to eat delicacies until sundown. During this period of time, Linley’s group learned that there were nearly twenty Highgod-level Fiends who had accepted this mission, and nearly a hundred God-level Fiends.

So many Fiends, and the leader was a Six Star Fiend.

To have a Six Star Fiend take part in an escort mission of four billion kilometers…the remuneration would be astonishing. Tens of times or hundreds of times greater than that for a God-level Fiend.

“This escort mission is definitely not ordinary.” Linley was rather nervous.

At sundown. Outside Royalwing City.

Linley’s group, under the guidance of the silver-haired elder, quietly entered a metallic lifeform en masse. Almost as soon as they entered the metallic lifeform, without even having a chance to decide where to sit, the metallic lifeform began to move.

With a ‘swish’, the metallic lifeform disappeared into the horizons, leaving Royalwing City and heading towards Bluemaple City.

Chapter 2 – Extremely Heavy Casualties

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 2, Extremely Heavy Casualties

The metallic lifeform headed forward at high speed. However, the people within it couldn't sense any turbulence at all. Right now, Linley's group was all within the main hall of the metallic lifeform.

"The layout is pretty good." Linley looked around and sighed in approval.

The metallic lifeform had transformed to a fairly large size. There was a main hall in the center, while behind the main hall there were rooms lining each side.

The silver-haired elder with three black horns laughed and said, "Everyone, this is the main hall. The wine here is complimentary, and we've also invited some culinary experts. If you want to eat anything, you can instruct those two and they will have the chefs cook for you." As he spoke, the silver-haired elder pointed towards two white-robed youths nearby.

The Fiends present all smiled. These employers really were very considerate.

"Behind the main hall are the living areas. There are a total of 130 rooms. You can choose whichever one you like, one room per person. If people want to stay together and have their rooms fuse, just give the instructions to my metallic lifeform directly." The silver-haired elder smiled. "For example, you can say this; Camden [Kang'deng], merge these two rooms. 'Camden' is the name of my metallic lifeform."

The Fiends all nodded in satisfaction.

Metallic lifeforms had intelligence. Naturally, they could change their insides easily.

……

“Camden, merge these two rooms together.” Linley said.

Immediately, the two rooms in front of Linley suddenly changed. The two doors transformed into a single door, while the wall between the rooms disappeared as well, forming a single large room. The bed in the room instantly changed to a larger size as well.

“Bebe, you can stay in the nearby room.” Linley turned and instructed.

Linley suddenly found to his surprise that at this moment, Bebe was staring unblinkingly into the distance. Linley followed Bebe’s gaze. “Oh?” A youth dressed in a black warrior’s outfit and a adorable young girl with braids was in that direction. Bebe was staring at that girl.

“Bebe, what is it?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

Delia’s face had a hint of laughter on it. “Linley, could it be that Bebe has fallen for that girl?”

Linley’s eyes rose upon hearing this. He took a close look at the adorable young lady. Her eyes were fairly large, and had a hint of a sly, playful look in them. The girl had noticed Bebe looking at her as well. She couldn’t help but stare back for a moment, and then give a little cute sniff. “Hmph!” And then she turned and said, “Big brother, that guy wearing a straw hat is so annoying.”

The youngster turned over, smiling towards Bebe, Delia and Linley.

And then, they entered their own room.

“Bebe.” Linley called out. “She went in her room already. Why are you still standing there like an idiot?”

Bebe stood blankly in that spot for a long moment, then suddenly turned to look at Linley. “Boss, that girl is way, way, way, way, way too cute…” This

loud shout called quite a few distant Fiends to turn and look.

Linley and Delia were shocked for a good long moment by Bebe's shout.

"Let's go into the room then discuss it." Linley immediately grabbed Bebe by the collar of his clothes and pulled him directly into the room.

Bebe was so excited that his eyes were shining. "Boss, I've discovered something!"

"Speak, what have you discovered?" Linley and Delia both laughed while looking at Bebe.

"I'm absolutely certain!" Bebe balled his fists. "There really is such a thing as love at first sight!"

Linley and Delia stared, stupefied.

"When I saw her, wow…I felt my entire body grow warm. My mind went completely blank, like I suffered a soul-attack. I only woke up a long while later…and when I woke up, I understood!" Bebe was incomparably excited. "My purpose for being here in the Infernal Realm is…chasing her and getting her!" Bebe balled his fists, his eyes filled with resoluteness.

Linley and Delia couldn't help but begin to laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" Bebe snorted. "Boss, think about it. How could there be such a coincidence that after so long in the Infernal Realm, I would meet her as soon as I took on an escort mission? This is…this is destiny!"

Bebe arranged his straw hat and even slightly straightened his hair, saying in a bright voice, "I have decided that before we reach Bluemaple City, I will successfully chase that girl. Boss, you just wait and see!" And then, Bebe immediately walked out.

"This Bebe…" Linley didn't have any idea as to what to say.

Delia laughed. “Linley, don’t worry. Just let him do as he pleases.”

“What do I have to worry about?” Linley sighed. “Bebe has grown up with me. After all these years, he’s finally taken a liking to a girl. That’s a good thing. Only…frankly, Bebe was certain that he liked her after a single glance?”

Linley still found it inconceivable.

“Is ordinary logic applicable to Bebe?” Delia said.

Actually, Linley was quite happy. Who Bebe liked was his own business. He himself couldn’t interfere, of course.

Life in the metallic creature was very quiet. Although they ran into a few common bandit groups on the way, with so many Fiends standing there, the bandits immediately were terrified into scattering in all directions. In the blink of an eye, six years passed.

During these six years, Delia primarily focused on fusing with her Highgod spark, while Linley was training.

As for Bebe, he chased that girl.

And as a matter of fact, Bebe only needed three days before he and the girl were together. Both of them were sly, lively spirits, and when they were together, they were exceedingly happy. That big brother of the girl, seeing them like that, didn’t oppose it. After six years…Bebe and that ‘Nisse’ girl were already a couple.

Everyone throughout the metallic creature knew that there was a pair of jokesters aboard.

In a room within the metallic creature.

Three Linley’s were seated meditatively on the ground, dressed in an

earthen robe, a light green robe, and a sky-blue robe.

Linley's divine earth clone was pondering 'Gravitational Space'. Although Linley was capable of using the 'Supergravity Field' technique, he was still feeling around at the edges of the 'Gravitational Space' mystery.

Linley's fastest improvement speed was seen in his divine wind clone.

'Fast', 'Slow', 'Sound Waves', 'Music'. Linley's level of understanding in these four profound mysteries was rising at a stable rate. In particular, the 'Fast' and 'Slow' aspects. According to Linley's calculations, given his current speed, in a few decades, his complete fusion of these two profound mysteries might be completed.

As for Linley's original body, it was focusing on gaining insights into the 'Elemental Laws of Fire'.

With regards to elemental affinity, Linley had a high level of affinity for 'earth' and 'wind'. His affinity for 'fire' came afterwards. As for the other elements, his affinity was exceedingly weak.

To date, Linley had two divine clones. Naturally, Linley wouldn't give up a chance to increase his strength yet again, and so his main body began to train in the Elemental Laws of Fire.

"I still haven't been able to grasp the basics of the Profound Mysteries of Gravitational Space. But I have for the Elemental Laws of Fire." Linley laughed at himself. "But of course, I've only grasped the basics for the simplest 'Essence of Fire' profound mystery." For all Laws, be it the Elemental Laws of Fire or the Elemental Laws of the Earth, the simplest profound mystery was that of the 'Essence'; the 'Essence of Fire', the 'Essence of the Earth', etc.

Also…

"When training in the 'Essence of the Earth' or 'Essence of Fire', there are some commonalities." Linley thus found it much easier to grasp the basics

of the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of Fire.

“Linley, you woke up.” Delia opened her eyes as well.

“How is your training proceeding?” Linley rose to his feet.

“Not bad. I’m halfway through mastering the profound mysteries of the Laws.” Delia said.

The Elemental Laws of the Wind in total had nine types of profound mysteries. Prior to fusing with this Highgod spark, Delia had already known four of the nine profound mysteries. After spending six more years, Delia had gained insights into yet another one.

“Let’s go. Let’s go eat something and drink something.” Linley and Delia walked out, shoulder to shoulder.

Their little journey to the dining hall was very peaceful. Most of the Fiends were training in their own rooms. Right now, there were only a few Fiends in the main hall, but of course…there would definitely be two people there. Bebe and Nisse.

“Linley, Delia, what a coincidence. You came as well.” Someone walked over from by Linley’s side. It was Nisse’s older brother.

“Salomon [Sa’luo’meng], it is rather coincidental.” Linley laughed. “Come, let’s go have a drink.”

Salomon, as Nisse’s older brother, was a Highgod-level expert. However… Linley guessed that this Salomon was a very ordinary Highgod. This was because the most powerful people on this mission were the three Five Star Fiends and the Six Star Fiend.

Linley’s group headed straight towards Bebe and Nisse, who were currently joking and teasing each other.

“Ninny, tell me, why are you girls so beautiful and yet so foolish?” Bebe sat

there on the chair, staring at the nearby Nisse.

Nisse considered for a moment, then immediately said, “Oh, I know.”

“Adorable Ninny, please speak.” Bebe looked at Nisse.

Nisse wrinkled her little nose, then said, “Women are beautiful so as to let you men fall in love with us. As for why women are foolish…it’s to make me fall in love with you!”

Bebe stared. “You are foolish, thus you fell in love with me?”

“If I wasn’t foolish, why would I fall in love with you?” Nisse had an innocent, puzzled look on her face.

“Oh!” Irritated, Bebe slapped his head. Why was it that he could never overcome Nisse in these debates?

The nearby Linley and the other two, hearing this exchange, couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

Bebe turned his head, looking at Linley in surprise. “Boss.”

“Heh heh, you keep chatting. We’ll sit over here.” Linley laughed as he spoke. All of the tables here were fairly small, circular tables. They could sit three people. Even four people would find it to be rather crowded.

Linley, Delia, and Salomon sat down in a corner of the hall.

“Linley, Bebe really is rather adorable.” Salomon laughed. And then, he paused for a long moment, as though considering something. Suddenly, he stretched out his Godrealm, covering Linley and Delia within the reach of his Godrealm.

“Huh?” Linley and Delia looked at Salomon, puzzled.

Salomon laughed, “Delia, Linley, there’s something I want to tell you.

However, I can't let others hear this. Thus…I am completely shutting out the sound."

Linley and Delia looked towards Salomon in astonishment. What was there to be so secretive about?

"There are very few people who know this rumor. However, over these six years, my little sister and your little brother, Bebe, have become quite close to each other. And so, I'm going to tell you this rumor." Salomon's face grew very solemn.

"Rumor?" Linley and Delia were both puzzled.

Salomon said slowly, "Do you know where this escort mission started off from?"

"Started off from?" Linley frowned. "Wasn't it in Royalwing City?"

"No." Salomon shook his head. "Based on what I have heard, the escort mission started off in the distant Peakstone Prefecture!"

"Peakstone Prefecture?" Linley was greatly shocked.

Peakstone Prefecture was a prefecture in the west part of the Redbud Continent, while Nightblaze Prefecture was in the center of the Redbud Continent. As for the Rainbow Prefecture, it was in the east part of the Redbud Continent.

"Right." Salomon said solemnly. "According to rumor, on the way over, the escorts suffered an enemy attack on the way over, and virtually all the Fiends died. Only a few were left. Therefore, the employer hired another group of Fiends in our Royalwing City."

Linley and Delia were both shocked.

"You knew this, but you still came?" Linley immediately discovered a problem in this.

“First of all, it is only a rumor.” Salomon immediately laughed bitterly as he spoke. “And second of all, I only heard this rumor half a year ago.”

Linley immediately came to the conclusion; everyone had headed out six years ago. Since Salomon had heard it only half a year ago, then it seemed he had heard this from others in the metallic lifeform.

“This is just a rumor.” Linley said.

Salomon shook his head, lowering his voice. “Don’t disbelieve it. Think about it. Why would they have us gather in the restaurant and be afraid to let us openly and publicly gather at the main gates? We waited until nightfall, then quickly and stealthily slipped into the metallic lifeform. Before we even had a chance to get our footing, the metallic lifeform immediately began to move.”

Hearing this, Linley began to think that it made sense.

“Therefore, it’s best to be cautious.” Salomon said softly. “If we really run into any danger, those enemies won’t be too vicious to us. We can immediately scatter and flee. Saving our lives matters the most. The failure of the mission just means that we won’t get compensation.”

Linley and Delia both nodded slightly.

And then, Salomon released his Godrealm. The two began to casually chat and drink.

Suddenly…

A divine sense swept across the entire metallic creature! Linley and Delia didn’t notice it at all. Only, Salomon’s face changed dramatically, and he let out a low growl, “A divine sense scan?”

“Divine sense scan?” Linley was shocked as well.

Chapter 3 – Probe

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 3, Probe

Linley, Salomon, and the others instantly disappeared from the round table, reappearing at the translucent window. They all looked out through the translucent window…

In mid-air, there were hundreds of figures standing there, with the leader being a tall, slender figure with hair that was graying but a face which was exceedingly handsome. He seemed like a young man, and he had a sword on his back.

“Carrying a sword on his back?” Linley was puzzled.

In the Infernal Realm, very few experts would carry their weapons on their bodies. Most of them would keep them stored in their interspatial rings.

“So many Highgods!” The handsome youth’s face suddenly changed slightly as well. As the leader of an extremely famous bandit group within a circumference of a million kilometers, he knew exactly which caravans could be robbed and which ones could not.

“Lord, shall we attack?” A God behind him said quietly.

The handsome youth didn’t hesitate at all, immediately turning. “Attack? Your brain has problems. Everyone, retreat!” Instantly, the hundreds of bandits all fled downwards at high speed.

As for the metallic lifeform, without being affected at all, it continued to make its way forward.

Within the metallic creature.

Linley’s group returned to their original seats, and that Salomon laughed

calmly. “Looks like I was a bit too nervous. Those bandits are far more cowardly than I had imagined. Those people immediately fled before our people even went outside.”

Linley laughed as well.

Just then, he really had been quite startled.

When Salomon had said there was a divine sense probe, but he himself hadn’t discovered it, naturally that meant that the prober was a Highgod. To Linley, a Highgod was someone he had to be cautious about.

“Mr. Salomon.” Delia laughed. “Don’t worry too much. No matter how powerful the bandits are, our metallic lifeform has Mr. Learmonth, right? With him, it’s not necessary for us to worry.” Delia wasn’t too worried.

Salomon nodded in agreement.

“Delia, you can’t say that.” Linley said.

“Oh?” Delia looked at Linley.

Linley warned, “Bandits groups are virtually all made up of Gods. Generally speaking, bandit groups that have a Highgod are top of the line groups. If a bandit group is so powerful as to have multiple Highgods, then the number of Gods in that group will also be exceedingly large.”

Salomon and Delia both nodded.

They all saw how that bandit group just now had a single Highgod, but hundreds of others.

“If they really attack, true, we don’t need to fear the experts amongst them, as Learmonth and the others will deal with them. But with enemy forces being so numerous, we might be faced with the combined attacks of a large group of Gods.” Linley said resignedly. “After all, we only have a hundred or so Gods.”

Delia just came to this realization.

If they truly ran into a chaotic group battle, then how many people could Learmonth kill by himself at the same time? And even if he was able to save Linley and the others, perhaps he wouldn't even care to.

They were neither family nor friends; why save them?

"It seems it is still best for us to be careful." Delia said.

"Boss, what are you all talking about?" Bebe and Nisse walked over together.

When Linley looked at Bebe and Nisse, he couldn't help but start to laugh. "Bebe, I've discovered that you and Nisse actually look rather similar."

"What?" Bebe looked confused, and then a look of sudden understanding appeared on his face. "Oh, I get it. Boss, have you discovered that you and Delia also look rather similar?"

Linley was startled. He couldn't help but share a glance with Delia.

Husband and wife would naturally have a bit of the same aura.

"This is known as, 'spouses look alike'. Thus, Nisse and I look rather similar." Bebe's eyes fluttered as he looked at Nisse. "Nisse, am I right?"

Nisse snorted, but her eyes had a hint of delight in them as well.

Linley and Salomon exchanged a glance, then laughed. Bebe and Nisse…it seemed the two of them really did have a possibility of being together.

……..

The metallic lifeform's journey was very peaceful. Linley's group spent most of their time in training. Although Royalwing City and their

destination, Bluemaple City, were four billion kilometers apart, that was if they travelled in a straight line. Linley's group did not, however, travel in a straight line. They had to avoid some dangerous areas.

In the blink of an eye, another four years passed. In Linley and Delia's room.

"Whew." Linley opened his eyes.

Delia seemed to have sensed something, and she opened her eyes as well. "Linley, why did you stop training?"

"Delia, I've reached a bottleneck in my training of the 'Profound Truths of Velocity' in the Elemental Laws of the Wind." Linley said with a strange expression.

"Bottleneck? How is that possible?" Delia was greatly startled.

Generally speaking, only after reaching the very end would a bottleneck appear when one was training in a profound mystery of the Laws. During the early and middle stages, one might be slow but one wouldn't encounter any bottlenecks.

"Linley, last time, didn't you say that it would take you another twenty or thirty years to completely fuse them?" Delia asked.

"Delia, four years ago, I guessed that I would need another twenty years before reaching a bottleneck, and then a few more years to break through the bottleneck to achieve mastery!" Linley shook his head and laughed. "But I was wrong. The profound mysteries of the Laws aren't what I took them to be; I thought that the further I went along, the harder it would be."

"I didn't train in the 'Fast' and 'Slow' aspects separately. I compare and contrast them against each other and train them together."

"At first, it was true that I needed more and more time, but as I trained to the later stages and continued to compare, contrast, and hypothesize, my

breakthrough speed actually increased. The ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ aspects are akin to two roads which first start off in opposite directions, and so the further you walk along them, the more distant each road will be come. However, when reaching a certain distance, the two will begin to draw close to each other. As you compare and contrast them, the two roads will draw nearer and nearer, and now, I’ve already reached the end stages of fusing them together.” Linley shook his head. “Only, I’ve become stuck in this training bottleneck.”

Delia began to understand it generally.

As a God of the wind-style, Delia also had trained in the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ profound mysteries.

However, Delia was not able to make them fuse, nor did she understand… how the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ profound mysteries, seemingly opposites, could be fused together.

“Come, let’s go get some food.” Linley wasn’t going to try and force it. Upon reaching a bottleneck, he would first relax and then train later.

“Another divine sense?” Linley suddenly frowned.

Just now, a God-level divine sense swept over the metallic lifeform.

Delia laughed. “On the way over, we’ve encountered so many probes. Even Gods dare to use their divine sense to probe us. Most likely, if they found that we are very weak, they would immediately come to attack and loot us.”

“Forget them.” Linley was irritated with these bandit groups as well.

The people in this metallic lifeform had become accustomed to the divine sense probes of these bandit groups. They couldn’t be bothered to pay attention to them. After all, they knew…that if they were to leave the metallic lifeform to attack the bandits, they probably wouldn’t be able to catch that many.

Today, yet another Highgod divine sense swept across the metallic lifeform.

But the Fiends inside the metallic lifeform continued to drink, to train, to chat. Nobody cared.

“Everyone, disperse!”

A youth with curly silver hair led his hundred subordinates to rush down and flee, retreating into the depths of the mountain valleys below.

“Whoooosh!” The metallic creature didn’t slow down in the slightest, disappearing into the horizons.

But deep within a deep gorge.

“Drip, drip…”

Water flowed through the channels of a creek.

“After waiting so many years, I’ve finally encountered you.” The youth with curly silver hair stood atop the pool of water. Behind him, a muscular black-robed man was standing respectfully.

“Hayde!” The silver-haired youth said coldly.

“Lord.” The black-robed man bowed.

The silver-haired youth said seriously, “Immediately notify young master Inigo [Yi’ni’ge]. Tell him that we have discovered the squad where those two old fellows are in. As long as the young master knows that the metallic lifeform passed by our place, he will easily be able to judge the general direction it will head in next.”

“Yes, milord.”

The black-robed man nodded slightly.

Hundreds of millions of kilometers away from the silver-haired youth, within Red Orchid City, there was a hotel that had been completely booked by a group of hundreds of people.

In one of the courtyards within the hotel, there was a devilish youth with long, blood-red hair who was seated on a chair, flipping through a heavy tome. A nearby servant said respectfully, “Young master, Hayde is outside waiting to see you.”

“Hayde?” The blood-red haired youth frowned. “Who is Hayde?”

“One of our messengers.” The servant said respectfully.

In the Infernal Realm, messages were usually carried by someone who had divine clones located in separate areas.

For example, one might be in the Nightblaze Prefecture, while the other might be in the Rainbow Prefecture. Although there was a distance of billions of kilometers, since the two clones really were the same person, anything one clone knew, the other one billions of kilometers away would also know.

This was a fairly normal form of communication in the Infernal Realm.

“We finally found those two old fellows?” The youth immediately was overjoyed. “Hurry up and have him come in.”

“Yes.”

A man who looked identically to the muscular black-robed man called ‘Hayde’ entered the courtyard, immediately falling respectfully to one knee. “Young master Inigo, Lord Padgett [Pa’ji’te] has instructed me to inform you, young master, that the metallic lifeforms carrying those two old fellows just passed by his location.”

“Oh?”

Inigo was instantly overjoyed. With a flip of his hand, an enormous detailed map appeared on the table.

“Passed by Padgett? Then it seems the squad these two fellows are travelling in will pass through this place, the Nisiwan [Ni’si’wan] Mountain Range. Since they’ve selected this route, then…” Inigo stared at the map, a hint of a smile on his face.

“The web I set up has finally found those two old fellows.”

Inigo nodded slightly. “I don’t know how strong the Fiends which those two old fellows have recruited are. Right. I first have to probe them.”

“Immediately sent a message back and tell Vionnaz [Wei’ao’na]. Have him prepare his forces and immediately go to the area near the Bulu [Bu’lu] River. Those two old fellows will definitely pass through his area.” Inigo immediately instructed his servant.

“Yes, young master.” The servant immediately acknowledged and left.

Right now, the only one left in the courtyard was Inigo.

Inigo narrowed his eyes slightly, murmuring, “Those two old fellows. They’ve taken all the wealth of their master’s clan and run all the way to the Redbud Continent. They definitely have major aims.” And then, Inigo sneered coldly. “But no matter what they are aiming for, once I get the astonishing wealth which those two old fellows are carrying, I will benefit tremendously.”

Inigo’s face was all smiles.

“The ancient Boyd [Bo’yi] clan. How much wealth have they accumulated?” Inigo’s eyes were filled with intrigue.

“Inigo.” Suddenly, an ancient voice rang out, and a silver-haired elder wearing a green robe entered the courtyard.

“Oh, Teacher.” Inigo hurriedly said.

The green-robed silver-haired elder shook his head. “Inigo, you’ve brought so many people with you and spent so much money. If you end up getting nothing, then…”

“Teacher.” Inigo said in a quiet voice. “Don’t worry. If I fail, then the wealth I built up over all these years will be gone, that’s all. But if I succeed…Teacher, the Boyd clan is finished, but those two old fellows took all of their wealth as they fled.”

“The massive wealth accumulated by the Boyd clan over all those years.” Inigo’s heart trembled just thinking of it.

But the green-robed elder still frowned. “Inigo, think about it. If you had such an astonishing amount of wealth, why wouldn’t you hide? Instead, they invited all of those Fiends to escort them. It seems as though they are actually intending to return to the Jadefloat Continent.”

Inigo frowned. “As for this, I’m rather curious as well.”

“If I were in their shoes, I would have fled and disappeared long ago.” Inigo laughed. “However, Teacher, no matter what, right now, we have already discovered their traces. As long as we kill those two old folks and seize their interspatial ring…”

“I hope you will be successful.” The green-robed elder said.

Chapter 4 – Strength in Numbers

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 4, Strength in Numbers

The metallic lifeform flew at a high, stable speed. Linley and Delia's room. Linley was staring outside the window at the vast world. There were many humans, and also many beastmen, magical beasts, and other races of creatures.

"Those are all Saints." Linley was able to judge.

In the Infernal Realm, the vast majority were still at the Saint-level. Countless Saints were spread across every part of the Infernal Realm. Only, their lives had no guarantees at all.

"If I had entered the Infernal Realm when I was a Saint, then…I would have been in trouble." Linley couldn't help but say to himself. "That Hodan…when I was just a Saint, he tried to lure me into entering the Infernal Realm. He definitely had bad intentions."

"Linley, what are you thinking about?" Delia asked, puzzled.

"Nothing." Linley laughed and shook his head. "Delia, we've been on this metallic creature for over ten years now. Time has moved quite quickly."

"Right. Ten years. Most likely, in another ten years, we'll be at Bluemaple City. I hope that before you can reach Bluemaple City, you'll have reached the God level in the Elemental Laws of the Wind." Delia laughed.

"Let my divine wind clone also reach the God level?" Linley himself was not certain in his ability to do so. Breaking through a bottleneck could happen very quickly, but if it happened slowly…nobody could be certain as to how long it would take.

Just as Linley and Delia were chatting…

Salomon and Nisse were in a room together as well.

“Big bro, why did you want to speak to me?” Nisse laughed as she looked at her big brother.

Salomon looked at Nisse. She was currently wearing a straw hat on her head which Bebe had given her.

“Nisse, you truly wish to be together with that Bebe?” Salomon’s voice was very low and very solemn as he spoke.

Nisse’s smile slowly disappeared, and she nodded seriously. “Big bro, actually, I didn’t want to go to the Jadefloat Continent to begin with. Only, I didn’t want to part from you. When I think about those years we spent at the Jadefloat Continent and those attacks we suffered, I…” She couldn’t help but clench her fists.

Salomon sighed to himself, then said, “I understand. Now, I want to ask about you and Bebe. What are you planning?”

“Big bro, Bebe is a really good person. Although he occasionally likes to joke and play around, he is very sincere to others, and treats me very well. When I am with Bebe…I feel that I am very happy and carefree, without any worries at all.” Nisse had a smile on her face now. “Sometimes, when I’m not happy, Bebe will come coax me. Big bro, don’t just look at the way Bebe fools around. Bebe is actually exceedingly smart. Whenever I am even slightly unhappy, he’ll immediately know.”

“I like the feeling of being together with Bebe.” Nisse looked at her big brother. “Big bro, I’m sorry.”

Salomon said in a low voice, “Are you, no longer planning to go with me to the Jadefloat Continent?”

“I’m not going anymore.” Nisse shook her head.

Salomon maintained his silence. He had been together with his little sister, ‘Nisse’, for many years. Naturally, he couldn’t bear to part from her.

“Big bro, I’m sorry.” Nisse said quietly.

Salomon shook his head and laughed. “The trip back to the Jadefloat Continent was going to be dangerous no matter what. This is for the better. You can be with Bebe for now. Once I return to the Jadefloat Continent and arrange everything, you and Bebe, when you have free time, can come to the Jadefloat Continent to look for me.”

Nisse couldn’t help but feel excited.

“Big bro!” Nisse excitedly hugged her older brother.

“Heh heh.” Salomon began to laugh. “It’s fine, it’s fine. But Nisse, when you and Bebe are together, you need to be careful. I won’t be by your side then.”

“Got it, big bro!” Nisse hurriedly said. “Don’t worry. By then, we will find an ordinary escort mission. It won’t be very dangerous. Look, we’ve been on this metallic lifeform for a dozen years now, but we haven’t encountered any dangers.”

“BANG!”

Suddenly, the metallic creature shuddered, and both Nisse and Salomon’s bodies swayed.

“Whoosh!” The entire metallic creature shrank into a single human form, while all of the people within the creature were now hovering in mid-air. A hundred-plus people were all rather astonished. Many Fiends had been in the middle of their training, but right now, they were all startled awake.

At this moment…

Ahead of the hundred-plus people, there was a large number of Deities

hovering in mid-air. The number was so high that the One Star Fiends and Two Star Fiends like Linley were all so frightened, their faces changed.

“Boss, how many people are there here?” Bebe stared with round eyes.

“It seems like there’s roughly ten thousand.” Linley’s heart clenched. “Nearly ten thousand experts, and it seems all of them are at least Gods, while a few are Highgods! Such a large group, if they were to charge and attack all together, then the results…”

Linley’s heart grew nervous.

“Bebe, afterwards, we’ll come to this side. Delia, later, you use the Deathgod Golem.” Linley hurriedly instructed. “At this time, focus our efforts on preserving our lives. Let the Six Star Fiend defeat the foes.”

“Ninny, come over here.” Bebe immediately called out.

“Bebe.” Nisse actually had a smile on her face. Clearly, she was rather excited at the thought of being together with Bebe. Salomon flew over as well, joining Linley’s group.

Salomon was somewhat worried as well. He said in a low voice, “This will be trouble. So many people. Even a Highgod will find it dangerous to deal with the combined attacks of hundreds of Gods, much less the nearly ten thousand we have here.”

“Everyone!”

A sonorous voice rang out in the air. “The reason you have stopped us is for the sake of money. Today, we don’t want to fight with you to the death either. There’s no benefit for either side in doing so. Name a price. As long as it is within our range of acceptableness, I will immediately offer it to you. Is this acceptable?”

The speaker of these words was the silver-haired elder with the three black horns.

At this moment, the silver-haired elder was cursing silently to himself. "This damn place, since when did it have a bandit group with ten thousand people? It even has twenty Highgods. I've never even heard of this group!"

"Haha…"

The leader of the bandit brigade, a red-robed man, laughed loudly. "It seems you are rather straightforward. Then I won't make things difficult for you either. We have a total of ten thousand brothers here. How about this. We won't ask for too much. Just give us ten billion inkstones. What do you say?"

Ten billion inkstones!

This figure shocked the silver-haired elder upon hearing it.

"Ten billion inkstones?" The silver-haired elder stared somewhat disbelievingly at the red-robed man.

"Ten billion?" Bebe muttered. "This asking price is really steep."

Linley, upon hearing this figure, thought back to how he himself had a hundred million inkstones. "They immediately ask for ten billion inkstones. It seems the amount of wealth I have is nothing."

"My friend, ten billion inkstones is a bit too high, isn't it?" The silver-haired elder's tone of voice became slightly harder. "Ten billion inkstones, I cannot accept this price. How about we lower it a bit…" The silver-haired elder stared at the red-robed man.

The red-robed man had long, fiery red hair.

"Unacceptable to accept it?"

The red-robed man glanced around himself, laughing loudly. "Brothers, did you hear that?"

“Haha…” Many experts began to laugh.

The red-haired man suddenly shouted ferociously, “Kill them!”

“Kill!” “Kill!” “Kill!” “Kill!”

The bandits simultaneously called out, while at the same time…

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Ten thousand experts almost simultaneously launched their attacks, either using formless soul attacks or all sorts of material attacks. The entire sky was densely filled with countless swords images, saber images, elemental beasts, and more…

Covering the entire sky, these attacks charged towards Linley’s group.

The faces of all the Fiends couldn’t help but change.

Even someone as powerful as the Six Star Fiend, Learmonth, couldn’t take the combined attacks of on ten thousand Gods head-on at the same time. He was only able to protect himself and a few people around him.

“Retreat!”

Linley growled, while at the same time he, Delia, Bebe, Nisse, and Solomon shot downwards at high speed. Although they retreated at high speed, the speed of the attacks was astonishingly fast. In almost an instant, the material attacks and soul attacks arrived.

Linley’s group relied on their dodging abilities to avoid, but the attacks were too numerous, too dense, and too fast!

“Swoosh!” The Deathgod Golem emerged, blocking in front of Linley’s group. Two sword energy attacks smashed viciously on the Deathgod Golem’s body, and the superficial layer of skin and flesh on the Deathgod

Golem split open, revealing the metallic body underneath it, which wasn't damaged at all.

However, multiple soul attacks completely bypassed the Deathgod Golem, easily going straight through its body.

"Delia." Linley directly interposed his own body in front of Delia's, and a soul attack struck into Linley's body.

"Ninny." Bebe did the same for Nisse.

Nisse, for a moment, was completely stunned.

The first wave of attacks passed.

"Linley, are you alright?" Delia was somewhat worried. Linley turned and laughed towards her. "Delia, don't you know how powerful I am yet?" Linley was specialized in soul defense. How could a soul attack launched from so far away harm him?

"Bebe, Bebe." Nisse was frantic with worry, and her eyes even began to tear up. "Bebe, are you alright?" Nisse was at the point of tears. Although she and Bebe had known each other for a long time, they had never faced any threats, and so she didn't know how powerful Bebe was.

All she knew was that Bebe was just a God.

Bebe just grabbed her by the waist. "Let's run. Stop blabbering." He charged downwards, while a look of delight instantly appeared on Nisse's face.

"That kid." Salomon nodded slightly in approval. "It seems I can entrust him with my sister."

All of the Fiends had scattered.

"Haha, not one of you will escape. Kill, kill!!!" The red-robed man

bellowed. Several Highgods took command over several units, running in each direction as they began their pursuit and slaughter of the Fiends. As for the ten or so other Highgods, they led nearly five thousand other Gods, heading towards that silver-haired elder who was the employer for this mission.

Actually, the employer wasn't just that silver-haired, black-horned elder. There was another white-horned, silver-haired elder.

The two silver-haired elders glanced at each other.

"Mr. Learmonth, the Edwards brothers, we'll be relying on you." The black-horned silver-haired elder said.

"Don't worry." Learmonth said calmly, while the three Edwards brothers were supremely confident as well.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, Nisse, and Salomon formed into a five-person party. They were currently being pursued by hundreds of Gods.

"They want to chase us?"

Linley, holding Delia by the hand, suddenly accelerated dramatically. It must be understood that at present, Linley had already reached a bottleneck in the 'Fast' and 'Slow' profound mysteries. He was very close to the level of mastery. His speed was far faster than that of these ordinary Gods.

Bebe's speed was astonishing as well. He was also holding Nisse by the hand. As for Solomon, as a Highgod, he naturally caught up easily.

Soon, they threw off the hundreds of Gods chasing after them.

"Being outnumbered really is a pain." Salomon laughed sourly. Hundreds of Gods…if he were to fight them, he might indeed be capable of killing all of those Gods, but it was also possible that he himself would be the one to be killed. After all, there were simply too many Gods.

For example…

If ten soul attacks hit him at the same time, although he was powerful, he would still die.

“Bebe.” Nisse’s little face was red as she looked at Bebe. “Thanks.”

Bebe immediately began to laugh. “Ninny, why thank me? With the relationship we have, is thanks necessary?”

Nisse, seeing the look of teasing laughter on Bebe’s face, couldn’t help but intentionally let out a snort. Watching this nearby, Linley, Delia, and Salomon all revealed hints of a smile on their faces.”

“Another group of Gods. Let’s hurry up and leave.” Linley immediately shouted through his divine sense. There were simply too many Gods here. They had just avoided one squad of hundreds of Gods, but now another one had noticed them. Linley’s group immediately began to flee again.

In terms of speed, they were still at a huge advantage.

Suddenly…

“Rumble…” The entire world began to shake, and invisible spatial ripples spread out, causing the trees and stones that were hit by the ripples to directly turn into powder.

Linley’s group stared in mid-air in astonishment. Not just Linley; all of the luckily surviving Fiends on the battlefield as well as the ten thousand bandits all raised their heads….

Learmonth was there in mid-air, sweeping his sword across. Ten-plus Highgod corpses fell down from the sky at same time.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” Of those ten-plus Highgod corpses, eight divine clones suddenly emerged from within them and began to flee in every which way.

Chapter 5 – Sword Intent

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 5, Sword Intent

Instantly, the entire battlefield fell silent.

Over ten Highgods had actually been killed in a single blow. This was simply inconceivable!

“How is this possible?” Linley stared with wide eyes. “Even if it was a soul attack, he would at most be able to hit one person. How could ten Highgods simultaneously fall from the skies? What happened just now?” Linley now regretted it.

Regretted not having seen that sword attack.

“Flee!”

“Flee!”

The divine clones that had emerged from eight of those Highgod corpses began fleeing in terror in every which way. After having witnessed the power of that sword, none of them had any courage to fight again.

“Too powerful. Too frightening.”

These Highgods now truly had the fear of death in them.

“Fleeing?” Learmonth watched calmly as those eight divine clones fled, a hint of a cold smile at the corner of his lips.

Suddenly…

He drew his sword!

In that instant, eight rays of black sword shadows sliced through the air simultaneously, attacking in eight different directions towards those eight fleeing divine clones. Those eight divine clones continued to move forward, but their bodies were bisected, then fell down from the skies.

Blood splashed everywhere in the air.

"That sword!" Linley's pupils shrank, and in his mind, he frantically began to think about that sword.

That terrifying, nearly invincible sword!

In Linley's mind, the image of that sword flashed through as fast as lightning. That sort of extremely fast sword which had the 'intent' of an exploding volcano. In the instant the sword had been drawn, the power of the technique had been completely, explosively released…it was utterly unblockable. Wherever the sword shadow passed, destruction came with it.

"Is this the Way of Destruction?" Linley hurriedly shook his head. "It doesn't seem like it. It seemed like…"

In his mind, Linley was frantically trying to deconstruct that attack on a deeper level, the more he analyzed it…with each minor insight Linley gained, the more questions he had as well.

By now, the leader of this bandit group, that muscular, red-robed man, had fled long ago. Just now, he had been calling out for combat and killing, but he only had his subordinates attack. He himself stayed in the back, not charging forward to attack at all. When he saw that destructive sword, he had immediately chosen…

To flee!

"What a terrifying fellow. That sword was capable of simultaneously killing ten-plus Highgods!" The red-robed man's heart was filled with terror. "If I had been slightly slower, most likely I would have been killed by that frightening Fiend as well. How could these two old fellows have invited

such a powerful Fiend?"

The red-robed man's eyes narrowed slightly. "This Fiend is so formidable. It seems that this time, we'll need to invite the young master's teacher, 'Mr. Wind', to personally get involved."

"Hmph." The red-robed man glanced backwards. "These idiots. Did they think the money of me, Vionnaz, was so easily earned? They were able to make money, but they weren't able to spend it. Unfortunately, the twelve Highgods that the young master gave me as subordinates all died as well."

The red-robed man was Vionnaz, one of Inigo's subordinates.

As for the bandit army, Vionnaz had spent money to invite several major bandit organizations to form a single group. After all, Vionnaz had led twelve Highgods, while the other bandit organizations all combined only had seven or eight Highgods.

In particular, Vionnaz had given them an enormous sum of money.

These bandit groups naturally had joined up. In recent days, they had joined forces to waylay quite a few groups.

"I need to hurry back to let the kid immediately inform the young master." Vionnaz immediately flew back towards his own residence.

With two divine clones being in two locations, communications naturally were quite fast. Inigo was thus easily kept abreast of the situation regarding Linley's metallic lifeform.

After the leaders of the bandit group were slaughtered, and especially after Learmonth's sword attack, all of the bandits lost their willpower and they began to flee in every direction. Instantly…not a single bandit group was now left.

"They really ran quite quickly!" Bebe snorted.

“This Learmonth…” Even Salomon was shocked by Learmonth, standing in mid-air. Learmonth’s face was cold and calm, as though nothing had happened. Indeed, to Learmonth, this sort of small battle was nothing at all.

“Linley?” Delia called out softly.

But currently, Linley was completely lost in his own world as he pondered on that astonishing sword attack. How could he notice Delia’s call?

“Hey, what’s going on with the Boss?” Bebe noticed that Linley seemed strange as well. The nearby Nisse laughed. “Bebe, could it be that your Boss was scared silly by that sword of Learmonth’s?” Nisse teased intentionally.

Bebe gave her a stare. “What do you know? My Boss probably had some insight.”

At this moment, Linley returned to wakefulness.

“Linley, are you alright?” Delia felt that the look on Linley’s face was rather odd.

“I’m fine.” Linley shook his head and laughed. “Just now, I was thinking about a few things. I actually thought that I was about to make a breakthrough, but I was wrong.” Linley glanced at the distant Learmonth, his eyes filled with astonishment and puzzlement. “That sword…”

Linley was also a sword-wielder, and his soul was shaped as a sword.

With regards to the concept of a sword’s ‘intent’, he had his own thoughts as well.

“I’ve only just mastered the basics of the Essence of Fire, and haven’t even become a Deity. Most likely, I guessed wrongly.” Linley was still lingering over those lightning-fast eight sword attacks. At his current level of power, Linley was not capable of seeing through the profound truths of that sword.

The nearby Salomon laughed and said, “Linley, are you shocked by Learmonth’s sword? Indeed, the sword attack by Learmonth just now was definitely at an extremely high level of the ‘Way of Destruction’.”

“Way of Destruction?” Linley raised an eyebrow.

“What, weren’t you able to sense the aura of the ‘Way of Destruction’?” Salomon asked.

“I sensed it.” Linley said, but didn’t follow up.

“If Linley sensed it, why is he surprised?” Salomon was somewhat puzzled, but he didn’t speak it aloud.

Immediately, the lucky, surviving Fiends all headed towards Learmonth and the black-horned silver-haired elder. Soon, more than fifty Fiends gathered around them.

The black-horned, silver-haired elder and the white-horned, silver-haired elder looked at each other, a hint of worry in their eyes. They had already begun to guess…the reason why so many bandits had come to waylay them. It must be understood that generally speaking, when a bandit group discovered so many Fiends, they wouldn’t attack.

The black-haired elder said loudly, “Everyone, I didn’t expect that we would encounter so many bandit attacks on this trip. I truly am sorry. In such a short time, more than sixty Fiends have died. Thankfully, Mr. Learmonth as well as Edwards and his brothers were here…”

“When we reach Bluemaple City, we will add additional money to your compensation.”

The black-horned elder said, and then a golden light flashed as the metallic lifeform once more formed in mid-air. However…the metallic lifeform was now clearly smaller in size.

The Fiends once more filled it, entering the metallic lifeform.

Soon, the metallic lifeform headed out once more. Fiends lived a life on the bloody edge of a blade to begin with. These Fiends who had lived for countless years only wanted their lives to be more exciting and to reach the peak of power in the Infernal Realm. To them, life and death…

Right, death was something they didn't wish to face, and when they encountered any dangers they weren't able to resist, the Fiends would flee.

But when death truly came, they wouldn't be in terror.

After all, ever since they became Fiends, every single one of them had become mentally prepared for that possibility!

"The black-horned elder has a bit of a conscience. He knows he should increase our compensation." Bebe snorted. "I keep on having the feeling that this escort mission isn't simple."

Linley nodded as well. "Right. Only, when we took on the mission, the only thing we noticed was that more than a hundred One Star Fiends and Two Star Fiends had been recruited. Who would have imagined…that there were Four Star Fiends, Five Star Fiends, and even a Six Star Fiend taking part as well!" Linley understood that this sort of 'group mission' was divided into different parts.

It was much like the battle at Moon Lake Castle.

Linley's group was responsible for dealing with gold-robed guards, while the powerful Highgod Fiends were responsible for dealing with black-robed guards as well as the castle's master.

This mission, with a Six Star Fiend involved, wasn't a simple one either.

"Everyone is already on board. What is there to think about?" Salomon shook his head. "If just now, when facing the attack of the bandits, taking the chance to flee would have been one thing. But right now, we are already aboard the metallic creature. If we want to leave and retreat now, once this

gets out…we'll lose face."

Spineless, fearful cowards.

They would definitely become a laughingstock.

"Everyone, calmly train." Linley said seriously. "No matter what, even if we encounter enemies, the primary target isn't us. It is the black-horned elder and the white-horned elder. We just need to work hard to protect ourselves."

Linley didn't have any intention of protecting their employers. After all…

Those two elders were both Highgods, while Linley himself was just a God.

"Right."

Everyone nodded, and then scattered towards their own rooms to begin training. In this room, only Linley and Delia were left.

"I wonder why those two old fellows chose us, these Gods, to participate in the mission." Linley was still filled with confusion. "Forget it. Protecting Delia and Bebe is enough." Linley looked at Delia, and then closed his eyes and began to train.

"I hope that in a short period of time, I'll be able to quickly break through this bottleneck in the Profound Truths of Velocity. That way, I'll be able to protect us better." Linley chanted to himself quietly.

Red Orchid City. Within a courtyard in a hotel.

Inigo received the news that had been delivered from his subordinate, VIonnaz. He couldn't help but frown. "I didn't expect that those two old fellows actually invited such a powerful Fiend. To have trained to such a level in the Way of Destruction means that he is most likely a Five Star Fiend or a Six Star Fiend."

Inigo didn't dare imagine that it would be a Seven Star Fiend.

This was because Seven Star Fiends were ultimate experts with their own titles. They didn't lack for money, and they were at the top of the rankings as Fiends. They generally wouldn't take on missions.

"Inigo." The green-robed elder suddenly appeared in the courtyard again.

Inigo, seeing this person, immediately stood up and said respectfully, "Teacher, the results of Vionnaz' mission is already known…" Inigo immediately told the results of that battle in detail to his teacher.

The green-robed elder frowned. "Oh? Trains in the Way of Destruction, and killed ten Highgods with one sword? Power like this is indeed hard to oppose." The green-robed elder, although somewhat worried about the power of this opponent, didn't feel that things were hopeless.

"Teacher, do you feel confident?" Inigo said softly.

The green-robed elder said in a low voice, "Since he's accepted a mission, then this Fiend shouldn't be a Seven Star Fiend. Since he is a Six Star Fiend…I should be able to defeat him. However, based on the power of that sword attack you described, the attack of that Fiend is simply too powerful. I still can't take it on head on."

"No need to take him head on, Teacher. You only need to kill those two old fellows." Inigo said hurriedly.

The green-robed elder nodded slightly. "If that's the case, then I am confident. I just need to separate the Fiends from them for a time."

"Then I'll entrust everything to you, Teacher."

The green-robed elder laughed calmly.

Linley, in his room, continued to train for nearly a year.

“Huh?” Linley opened his eyes. “Why do I feel uneasy all of a sudden?”

For some reason, Linley suddenly felt some restlessness in his heart. Linley immediately took a deep breath, letting himself calm down.

Delia opened her eyes as well. “Linley, what is it?”

Through the window, Linley looked at the outside. “Nothing. Only, while I was training, I felt my mind grow uneasy for some reason.” Right now, the area below the metallic lifeform was a boundless desert. The wild wind howled and desert sand filled the skies.

The metallic lifeform continued to fly at high speed.

“You felt it also?” Delia said in surprise. “I felt some unease as well.”

At this moment, the metallic lifeform was completely covered by yellow sands. Originally, the metallic lifeform’s Fiends didn’t care about the sand, but…for that instant the metallic lifeform was covered by sand, the entire metallic lifeform suddenly, in the blink of an eye…

“BOOM!”

Blew apart!

Chapter 6 – The Ancient Castle of Sand

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 6, The Ancient Castle of Sand

The metallic lifeform had completely exploded, and the Fiends that had been inside instantly became surrounded by the boundless sands. Each grain of yellow sand seemed to weigh a million kilograms, and Linley was completely surrounded by sand, completely unable to move.

“Delia!” Linley couldn’t help but try to grab Delia’s hand.

“Linley!” Delia also wanted to grab Linley’s hand.

“Whoosh!” Boundless amounts of yellow sand swirled over. Linley was completely unable to control himself.

“What is this?!” Linley wanted to break free of the constricting binds of the yellow sand, but Linley was completely unable to resist that strange, unusual binding energy. In an instant…’boom!’ Linley was thrown to the ground.

Linley immediately stood up, staring around him. “This…what is this?” Linley’s heart was filled with questions and puzzlement.

This was a massive, ancient-looking structure formed completely from yellow sand. Linley, when raising his head, was only able to see the enormous roof formed from yellow sand, and was unable to see the sky at all. This was an enormous edifice made completely from yellow sand, which Linley was now trapped within.

What astonished Linley the most was…

“Nobody. There’s nobody around me. Where is everyone?” Linley stared around himself.

But within this edifice of sand, not a single person could be seen.

Linley spread out his divine sense, but was shocked to find…"How is this possible? My divine sense, even in the Infernal Realm, can cover an area of a hundred meters. But why is it that in this damn place, it only spread to ten meters?" Linley was shocked.

"My divine sense is being affected?"

Linley began to understand. "Can it be that this sand construct is a space of its own?"

Although Linley had discovered that nobody was here, he was still able to sense one person – Bebe! Bebe and Linley's souls were linked. No matter how far away they were, they would still be able to sense the other's existence.

"Boss, how are you doing? I'm in a sand-formed building. I can't see anyone. Everyone seems to have disappeared." Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Their two souls were connected. They didn't have to speak using divine sense; they could speak through their souls.

Linley, hearing Bebe's words, began to understand. "Bebe, my situation is the same as yours. This is an ancient structure completely made out of sand. I can't see a single person within. Bebe, be careful…I have the feeling that we are in a special dimension."

"Right, got it." Bebe replied. "Boss, I'm going to start heading in your direction."

"Alright." Linley could sense Bebe as well.

The two would always be able to sense the general direction of the other. Naturally, they could draw closer to each other, even if they weren't able to see each other.

“This sand structure?” With a flip of his hand Linley withdrew Bloodviolet.

“Swoosh!” Linley flew into the air, the Bloodviolet in his hand suddenly moving at a high speed. A ray of violet light flashed, and the roof of the sand structure rumbled, and a small pile of yellow sand was smashed and fell down.

However, the yellow sand roof only trembled, then quickly returned to its normal calm.

Linley’s face changed. His Profound Truths of Velocity had already reached a bottleneck. This most powerful physical attack in his possession, the ‘Dimensional Decapitator’, was now many times more powerful than it had been when he was in the Yulan continent. But it hadn’t been able to budge this castle of sand at all.

“What a bizarre power.” Linley frowned. “A strange energy has completely infused this yellow sand.”

“This strange place…” Linley didn’t waste any more time, immediately drawing closer to Bebe.

“Boss, this damn place is too weird. I have no way of getting over. There are no paths in front of me, and the walls are too weird. I can’t break them apart at all. Whenever I break them apart slightly, the yellow sand will move back.” Bebe said frantically.

Linley couldn’t help but feel surprised.

“Bebe, wait.” Linley continued to move in Bebe’s direction as well.

The enormous sand structure had many openings and many corridors. It was like an enormous maze. Linley, after walking a while, discovered that there was a dead end in front of him, a wall formed from yellow sand. Linley could clearly sense that Bebe was right there, but he was unable to cross over.

“Bebe, my path has also been blocked by a wall.” Linley frowned, turning to stare at his surroundings.

“So many roads and passages?” Linley couldn’t help but think back to the Yulan continent, and a type of entertainment he had seen there; mazes.

In mazes, there were many corridors and avenues. However, there was only a single true pathway. If one took a single wrong step, one wouldn’t be able to exit the maze.

“Could it be that this structure made out of sand is a maze?” Linley guessed to himself.

“No other choices. For now, let’s just treat it as a maze.” Linley immediately began to walk along other roads. While walking, he thought back to the previous pathways he had taken. Given Linley’s visualization abilities, if he knew the rough locations of the corridors, he would be able to eventually extrapolate the correct pathway.

“Bebe, this strange place is most likely a maze.” Linley said to Bebe mentally.

“Maze?” Bebe was greatly shocked.

“Right. Think of a way to draw closer to me from a roundabout way.” Linley continued to memorize every single corridor; if he went down a wrong pathway, he would immediately turn back.

“So it’s a maze…fine, I’ll definitely find the right path.” Bebe was very frantic as well. Both him and Linley had people they were worried about. Linley was worried about Delia, while Bebe was worried about Nisse.

……..

Twenty or so people were together, with the leader being Inigo and his teacher.

“Teacher, for you to reach such a level in the Elemental Laws of the Wind…most likely, there’s only a few people in the entire Infernal Realm who can do this.” Inigo’s face was all smiles, and he spoke respectfully.

The green-robed elder laughed calmly. “Stop flattering me. This is the one and only ultimate technique that I have. In terms of pure power, that Fiend is perhaps still somewhat more powerful than me. Whew…he really is powerful. He broke open the walls of my ‘Castle of the Winds’ in a single sword blow.”

“So what if he broke them open? You can change the walls as you please, Teacher.” Inigo knew well how powerful this technique of his master’s was.

Seven powerful Elemental Laws, and Four Edicts.

Of them, the Elemental Laws of the Wind had the most connection to space. In particular, when several of the profound mysteries were fused, the mastery over space would become even greater.

“They think this is a maze?” The green-robed elder knew exactly what was happening within this ‘Castle of the Wind’. He discovered that many Fiends were beginning to search for an exit in accordance with the rules for dealing with a maze. “Right, it is a maze, but…it is a maze that I can change whenever I want to!”

The green-robed elder laughed calmly. “Inigo, lead your men and begin the attack. I will work with you.”

“Yes, Teacher.” Inigo immediately led his men out.

Inigo and twenty-plus Highgods easily entered. Even if they encountered walls, when they drew near, the walls would naturally separate, revealing a corridor. For Linley, it was the opposite…and so, Inigo’s group had no impediments within the castle at all.

In addition, they even had the guidance and cooperation of the green-robed

elder.

Linley was walking at high speed, while the map of the maze in his mind was growing more and more clear. Linley couldn't help but reveal a hint of a smile on his lips. "It seems I'm almost about to make it out of this maze." Linley felt very confident.

But suddenly, Linley's fast footsteps came to a halt.

"How is that possible?"

Linley stared at the wall in front of him, his face instantly changing dramatically. "No, there shouldn't be a wall here. I just walked past here a while ago. This place should have a corridor, and there was a pillar here!" Linley immediately turned to look. There was indeed a pillar.

"The pillar is still here, but the corridor? Can I have remembered wrongly? Impossible!"

Linley shut his eyes, that clear map appearing within his mind. These were all places he had walked past.

"Impossible. I couldn't have taken a wrong route." Linley immediately headed back towards another direction. "There should be a corridor with an opening up this way. I just passed it." Linley murmured. But as Linley reached the place where there should have been an opening, Linley was stunned.

In front of him…

There was indeed a large corridor, but there were no openings.

"What is going on? I…I can't have remembered wrongly." Linley couldn't help but rub his head, constantly pondering the routes he had just taken. "I can't have remembered wrongly, but these places are all…"

Linley's face suddenly turned pale.

“This..this ancient maze, can it be that it is changing?” Linley had a sudden feeling of hopelessness. A maze would have a chance for one to leave it, but if the maze was constantly changing, what was one to do?

“Boss, I’m at the place you just were.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “I don’t know what’s going on. Just as I reached a dead end, the wall suddenly disappeared and a corridor appeared. Boss, hurry over. I don’t know where I should go right now.”

Linley, staring at the now-disappeared ‘gap’, laughed bitterly. “Bebe, I…I won’t be able to get back to my original location.”

“Delia.” Linley’s heart was filled with worry, but he had no options.

As Linley and the other Fiends were all frantically searching for an escape route, Inigo’s forces stealthily took their lives one at a time!

“This damn place…how am I supposed to leave?” Swaid [Sa’wei’te] was a Four Star Fiend who had taken on this mission, an expert who was at the Highgod level. When he had seen the Six Star Fiend, ‘Learmonth’, as well as the three Edwards brothers, he had been overjoyed.

He had believed that he wouldn’t be in any danger.

However, right now, there was nobody nearby he could rely on. He could only rely on himself.

“It isn’t a maze. It should be something created by an extremely powerful expert of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.” Swaid’s heart was shivering. “To be able to reach such a level in the Elemental Laws of the Wind…he must have fused at least half of the nine profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.”

Swaid knew that an expert on that level was definitely not someone he could overcome.

Suddenly…

The yellow, sandy wall next to Swaid suddenly cracked open, and two figures scurried in, charging towards him. A wave of heat surged towards him, as well as an icy aura that attacked his body.

“Not good.” Swaid’s face changed dramatically.

At the same time…

A human figure in the yellow sand next to Swaid suddenly emerged, and a narrow sword pierced straight towards Swaid.

Three Highgods had joined forces to kill Swaid! In addition, this was a sneak attack. Swaid was only just barely able to recover in time to block the two enemies in front of him, but the third person easily stabbed him with the sword. In the blink of an eye…

“Prepare to attack the next one. Oh. Be careful. There’s two up ahead. One is a Highgod, while the other is a God. The two of them actually ran into each other. You three, head towards the tunnel up ahead…” The green-robed elder’s voice rang out in the ears of the three.

Although this Castle of the Winds was very strange, it had taken in quite a few Fiends, so it was normal for one or two of them to occasionally meet up.

These three Highgods glanced at each other. They laughed.

With the help of this Castle of the Winds, killing was utterly effortless. In particular, they had the advantage of numbers and of stealth.

The green-robed elder walked forward. “The wealth of the Boyd clan? It seems it is about to fall into my hands.” The green-robed elder knew exactly where those two employers were located. With but a single step, the green-robed elder entered the sand.

The black-horned elder was currently hovering in mid-air cautiously.

“There’s actually an expert of such a level…” The black-horned knew exactly what this castle was. Naturally, he didn’t dare to draw near to the ground or to the walls. Otherwise, once the enemy ambushed him suddenly from the ground, he wouldn’t even have the time to react. “It seems this time, we are in trouble.”

“Hrm?”

The black-robed elder suddenly turned his head to stare towards a distant corridor. He saw Linley, dressed in that earthen yellow robe, carefully moving forward.

“It is him. He seems to be called Linley.” The black-robed elder was somewhat surprised.

Chapter 7 – To Choose

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 7, To Choose

Linley walked in the middle of this changing castle, exceedingly worried. "This damn place is constantly changing. There's no way I can find the exit. In addition, there are enemies attacking and ambushing from within!" Linley clearly remembered seeing the corpse of a Fiend earlier.

Upon seeing the corpse, Linley immediately understood that this ancient castle wasn't just meant for trapping people.

There were people lying in ambush here!

Actually, Linley should have understood this long ago. Only, he didn't dare to think about it. "Ambush? Assassinate? Bebe and I are a bit better off. I have a soul protecting Sovereign artifact, while Bebe has treasures bestowed upon him by Lord Beirut. He shouldn't have any problems staying alive. But Delia, she…alas. I shouldn't have been in such a rush. I should have let Delia reach the Highgod level first before heading out." Linley was filled with regret.

"If Delia were to be killed…"

Thinking of this, Linley grew even more worried.

In truth, Delia trained in the Elemental Laws of the Wind, and had already mastered six of the profound mysteries, and had a Deathgod Golem with her. Although her abilities at staying alive were inferior to that of Linley and Bebe's, she still had some degree of ability.

Only, Linley himself remained worried.

"The enemy is definitely extraordinary, to be able to create this bizarre castle. Everything else aside, Delia hasn't reached the Highgod level yet."

Linley carefully yet speedily moved through the castle, hoping that he would run into Delia within.

But suddenly…

“Huh?”

Linley reached an opening, then out of the corner of his eye, saw someone hovering in mid-air.

“The black-horned elder?” Linley immediately recognized him. That black-haired elder clearly had seen Linley as well, as he looked over towards him.

But right at this moment, the gentle wind suddenly took solid form, transforming into a green-robed elder. The green-robed elder had a hint of a smile on his face. He glanced sideways at Linley, not worried at all. “A God actually ran here as well.”

To the green-robed elder, a God was someone he could kill in an instant. Given his status and stature, he couldn’t be bothered to care about Linley at all.”

“You are…?” The black-horned elder saw the green-robed elder appear out of thin area, and his face changed dramatically.

The green-robed elder glanced calmly at the black-horned elder before him. “You truly are bold. For you and your brother to abscond with the enormous fortune of the Boyd clan is one thing, but…I didn’t expect that after so many years, you two would dare to turn back. What, you wish to return to the Jadefloat Continent?”

The black-horned elder’s face changed, and then he chuckled in a ‘relieved’ manner. “That year, my big brother and I fled from the Jadefloat Continent. We thought that no one had detected us. This time, we only invited so many Fiends out of an abundance of caution, but I wouldn’t have expected that you would come!”

The green-robed elder let out a disdainful snort.

“You want to acquire the fortune of the Boyd clan? Haha…”

The black-horned elder suddenly raised his head and laughed loudly, then stared at the green-robed elder. “Keep dreaming. For us two brothers to dare come on this trip means that we naturally came fully prepared. Even if you kill both of us, you won’t be able to obtain the treasures of the Boyd clan! You…will never get it!”

The green-robed elder’s face suddenly sank.

He had followed his student, Inigo, from the Jadefloat Continent through the Starmist Seas to the Redbud Continent. It was all for the sake of the fortune of the Boyd clan.

“Hmph. Once I kill you, I’ll know.” The green-robed elder, with a wave of his hand, summoned forth a longsword that looked like a silver thread. This was a flexible sword, but compared to Linley’s ‘Bloodviolet’ sword, it was even thinner and even lighter.

“Prepare to die.” The green-robed elder, confident of his status, would usually notify his opponent before killing them.

As soon as the black-horned elder had seen the Castle of the Winds, he had understood how powerful the opponent was.

Although he himself was also a Highgod, compared to the person in front of him, the difference was considerable.

“You want to kill me? I will make you pay a price.” The black-horned elder had already made up his mind to die here. Bellowing, he made a black heavy sword appear in his hands. Instantly, the air around the black heavy sword began to twist, and a black light shot out in every direction.

Linley, seeing these two Highgods about to battle, couldn’t help but feel startled. “I’d better run. If I get involved in this, I’ll be finished!” Linley

didn’t hesitate at all, immediately running towards the direction of one of the other corridors.

Although he was moving quickly…

“Bang!”

The first clash by these two Highgods caused the black-horned elder’s body to be sent flying towards Linley’s direction at high speed.

“Huh?” Linley couldn’t help but feel stunned. Raising his head, he watched as the body flew towards him.

But with a flip, the black-horned elder righted himself, standing up. Just now, one of the divine clones of the black-horned elder was killed.

“You want to kill me?” The black-horned elder was now fully aware of how great their difference in power was. One of his clones had just been destroyed, and he now only had this one left. “Clan master, your old servant didn’t let you down. Only, in the future, your old servant won’t be able to toil on behalf of the young master any longer.”

“Bang!”

The black-horned elder’s long blade, carrying an earth-splitting force, transformed into a black blade shadow, causing space to distort and leaving behind nothing more than a faint blur.

“Haha…you just had one of your divine clones die. I want to see how many you have left!” The green-robed elder laughed wildly, and then Linley only noticed a hint of a beautiful silver flash. Wherever those rays of silver light flashed past, space itself began to form extremely tiny cracks.

Linley was shocked.

“Cracks? Cracks in space in the Infernal Realm?” Linley found it hard to believe.

“Boom!”

The black-horned elder was only able to block a single silver ray of light; afterwards, his entire body was criss-crossed by the multiple remaining rays of silver light. His body was chopped into multiple parts which fell down from the skies. In particular, the interspatial ring on his left hand was sent flying downwards.

At this moment…

“Interspatial ring?” Linley had a thought. He absolutely could collect this interspatial ring for himself.

“Can I take it?”

The black-horned elder’s interspatial ring definitely had an enormous fortune within it. Linley was certain of this. As one of their employers, a person capable of inviting a Six Star Fiend, the amount of wealth this black-horned elder had was definitely staggering. Only, was he able to collect it?

Linley looked at the distant green-robed elder, then without hesitating at all, immediately fled.

“I wouldn’t be alive to spend it.”

Linley fled at high speed, quickly traversing thousands of meters, disappearing from the green-robed elder’s field of vision. Only, every location within this castle was under the control of this green-robed elder. Naturally, he knew exactly where Linley had gone. The green-robed elder chuckled. “This God didn’t let greed cloud his judgment.”

If Linley had stolen that interspatial ring, even if the green-robed elder originally would have had disdained killing Linley, a God, the green-robed elder would have personally intervened to retrieve the ring. At that point, Linley would have had no chance at all.

“What does he have inside?” The green-robed elder landed, then collected his interspatial ring while binding it with blood.

The green-robed elder’s face changed greatly. “Hrm? Only thirty billion inkstones. How is that possible? As little as that?” The green-robed elder couldn’t believe it. “Impossible. The fortune of the Boyd clan was built up over countless years. Even the tiniest part of it would exceed this amount.”

Perhaps to Linley or to ordinary Highgods, thirty billion inkstones was an enormous fortune.

But…

To the green-robed elder and other such experts, it was nothing more than a small sum of money. If you were to compare these thirty billion inkstones to the entire fortune of the Boyd clan…that would be like a single hair on the bodies of nine bulls! It must be understood…that within a city, a single hotel was worth tens of billions of inkstones.

How could the fortune of the Boyd clan be compared to a single hotel?

“No. There’s also that white-horned elder.” The green-robed elder’s eyes were cold. “The wealth is definitely on him.” But when he sensed the location of that white-horned elder, his face changed dramatically. “Not good…that Fiend is about to draw close to the white-horned elder.”

Learmonth’s face was cold and callous. Wielding his longsword, he walked calmly through the castle as though he was just talking a stroll in his own garden. When he encountered any yellow sand walls, he would still walk straight through them, completely ignoring the walls in front of him.

His sword would flash!

“Crunch!”

The yellow sand walls were all directly destroyed. Learmonth himself moved like an illusion, passing through the empty hole, while the yellow

sand wall immediately recovered afterwards.

“Hmph.” Learmonth turned to look coldly towards the side.

“Swish!” Like a bolt lightning, his sword chopped out towards the distant yellow sand wall. Instantly, fresh blood exploded out from the yellow sand wall, and a corpse fell down from within the wall. The eyes of the corpse were filled with shock, as though he couldn’t believe that Learmonth had noticed him.

Learmonth continued forward.

Nobody could block his advance!

“I know you can hear me.” Learmonth said while walking. “You might as well come out. Do you believe that I am unable to break through your spatial castle?”

“Crunch!”

Yet another sword chop flashed out against the impediment in front of him, and Learmonth’s body swayed yet again, appearing on the opposite side of that way.

“Ah, Mr. Learmonth.” The white-horned elder stared in astonishment and joy at Learmonth, whose face revealed a rare hint of a smile.

“I was a step behind.” The green-robed elder was hidden only a few hundred meters away from the white-horned elder, in a room. “This one named Learmonth? His attack power is truly frightening. With but a casual attack, he is able to generate such power. If he were to truly explode forth…”

The green-robed elder had extraordinary experience. Of course he could tell that Learmonth had yet to use his ultimate attack.

Generally speaking, extremely powerful experts like them would stake their

lives on their ultimate attacks, which usually consumed a great deal of spiritual energy and divine power. Thus, unless a critical moment came, these ultimate experts generally wouldn't want to use their ultimate attacks.

"That damnable fellow." The green-robed elder immediately came to a decision. "Right now, all I can do is find more Highgods and have them attack the white-horned elder, while I personally go entangle that Learmonth for a while."

The green-robed elder understood that there was no way the other Highgods could entangle Learmonth.

But to kill the white-horned elder, only a few Highgods needed to join forces and sneak attack him. That was all that would be needed.

……..

As the battles continued unabated within the castle of sand, the number of Highgods grew lower and lower.

Salomon stood calmly in mid-air.

"I hope Nisse is fine." Salomon was still worried in his heart.

"Swoosh!"

Suddenly, from the nearby wall, two figures appeared who shot straight towards Salomon, their wild releases of energy causing space to shudder.

"Hmph!" Salomon, with a flip of his hand, emitted multiple rays of black light. Those two figures let out miserable screams. One of them suddenly smashed against the floor, never to move again, while the other fled into the yellow sand walls, disappearing.

"Want to kill me?" Salomon chuckled.

The battles continued, and one Highgod Fiend after another fell.

“Aside from that terrifying Fiend, there are four Highgods that are hard to deal with.” Inigo heard the reports from his subordinates and began to frown. He didn’t know that those four extremely hard to deal with Highgod Fiends were the Edwards brothers and Salomon!

Star rank didn’t necessarily, completely testify as to one’s strength.

For example, a powerful Fiend might only be a One Star Fiend as he might have just taken the Fiend trials. But that didn’t mean his power was only at the one star level.

Salomon was a good example. On the surface, he was only a Four Star Fiend. But his true power?

Not all Fiends could be judged by their star rank.

“No need to deal with those Highgods. There’s no profit from them.” Inigo gave the order. His real goal was just those two old fellows. There was no need to kill all of the Highgod Fiends. “For now, no need to join forces. Attack as you please. Deal with all of the God-level Fiends.”

For Highgods to kill Gods, naturally there was no need for them to join forces.

“Yes, young master!”

The Highgods disappeared into the yellow sand.

With this order being given, the God-level Fiends within the castle fell into grave danger, including Linley, Bebe, Delia, Nisse…

A crisis had descended!

Linley carefully walked through the yellow sand, his hands, legs, neck, and head all covered with an earthen yellow membrane. He looked as though he were a metal warrior. Linley had already used his ‘Pulseguard Armor’ to

protect every part of his body.

“Swoosh!” An explosive sword shadow suddenly descended upon Linley from the side!

Linley only felt as though suddenly, he had transformed into a tiny boat that was currently being rocked by the wild waves of the ocean.

Chapter 8 – Many Dangers

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 8, Many Dangers

“A Highgod!”

Linley glided away like a bird in flight, gliding away alongside that explosive burst of sword energy while at the same time, the adamantine heavy sword appeared in his hand. Wielding it as though it were weightless, he sent it slamming over…and a multiple meter long earthen yellow sword shadow chopped out.

Pulsating Essence Attack!

This was a type of material attack developed after fusing the ‘Essence of the Earth’ and the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’. It was primarily reliant upon the ‘Essence of the Earth’, with the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ supporting it.

Compared to the ‘Voidwave Sword’, it was the opposite; the Voidwave Sword was primarily reliant on the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, while the ‘Essence of the Earth’ supported it.

“BANG!”

The two forces collided, and the wild explosive force backlashed onto both. Linley borrowed that backlash force to flee, while the golden-haired youth also took a few steps back. He stared in astonishment at Linley. “What a powerful sword. A God actually has such strength!”

This gold-haired youth was not angry; he was instead delighted.

These Highgods didn’t have much interest in killing God-level Fiends, but now this Highgod did. Just based on that sword alone, Linley was qualified to have him treat this fight seriously.

“Swoosh.” Launching himself upwards, the Highgod shot out like an arrow, piercing through the air at high speed in pursuit of Linley.

Linley, fleeing in front of him, had already begun moving at his maximum speed early on, but the enemy behind him continued to draw closer. “This Highgod is so fast, and also, it seems he is a wind-style Highgod as well.” From the opponent’s previous attack, he could essentially sense that the opponent was a wind-style Highgod.

“Haha, flee?”

The gold-haired youth pursued at high speed while reaching out with his left hand, clawing at the air.

“What’s this?” While fleeing, Linley’s face changed dramatically. His body seemed to have been bound by countless thin threads. Although Linley was still able to flee, a restrictive force seemed to act upon him. Even his speed fell down by half!

“This is the Profound Mysteries of Dimensional Space!” Linley instantly realized what this was. He had seen Delia often use this technique against others. But now, Linley was the one who had been hit.

“Terrible!” Linley’s heart was filled with worry. “The power of this Highgod in using this technique is much greater than Delia’s.” Linley knew that the strength of an attack was connected to one’s divine power. The same type of profound mystery at different levels of divine power had different strength levels.

In the blink of an eye, the gold-haired youth reached a distance of less than ten meters from Linley.

“You won’t be able to run!” A loud laugh rang out, and a strange ripple spread over Linley. Linley’s speed dropped yet again, and in his heart, he was shocked. “The Godrealm of a Highgod!” Linley knew long ago that facing a Highgod was extremely dangerous.

Although there was a chance for victory, he only had a tiny chance.

“In terms of profound mysteries, this gold-haired youth is a Highgod who knows all nine profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. I can only hope that he hasn’t fused any of the profound mysteries.” Linley knew that the only chance of success he had was…a soul attack!

“The Voidwave Sword must not fail.”

Linley had continuously fled upon meeting this gold-haired youth; he didn’t use his Voidwave Sword at all. Linley didn’t dare to rashly unleash it; he had to seize the best opportunity to kill the opponent in one blow. Otherwise, given the difference between him and his opponent, the opponent could easily rely on his speed to use a material attack to kill Linley.

Thus…

It was one thing to not unleash his ultimate attack, but if he was to unleash it, he had to succeed.

“Either you die or I die.” Linley continued to grit his teeth, constantly thinking up new ways to flee.

However, now that he was bound by the ‘Dimensional Wind’ and the ‘Godrealm’, and given that Linley’s speed was lower to begin with and was now only a third of his normal speed, the difference between them was so great…that unless something unexpected were to happen, the outcome of this battle was predetermined.

“Swish!” Linley’s body suddenly came to a halt. His face changed dramatically as he stared in front of himself.

In front of Linley, behind him, and above him, there were ten ‘gold-haired youths’. This gold-haired youth had actually created nearly forty doppelgangers, completely encircling Linley.

“The situation just got worse.” Linley was frantic. “The forty doppelgangers…which one is the real one? Bebe isn’t present. I’m unable to determine which one is real. What should I do?” Linley gripped the adamantine heavy sword, looking cautiously about him.

The gold-haired youth had transformed into nearly forty doppelgangers to encircle Linley.

“Haha, in front of me, you still want to run? Your speed is too slow, too slow.” The gold-haired youth chuckled.

Linley warily watched his opponent.

“Haha, die.” The gold-haired youth chuckled, and then the nearly forty doppelgangers almost simultaneously struck out. Instantly, Linley was completely covered by knife-edge palm attacks. Linley was completely unable to dodge; his only choice was to take the attacks head on!

“He…looks down on me.” Linley, seeing this, was laughing coldly in his heart.

Doppelganger was one of the nine profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. This Doppelganger Technique created bodies that had the aura of the original body. Generally speaking, others would find it very hard to tell the true body from the false bodies. This was an exceptional technique for fleeing. But as for attacking, it was weak.

The Doppelganger Technique was meant for fleeing or to be used against weak experts.

After all, the strength of each doppelganger was far inferior to that of the main body.

The doppelgangers of Highgods, in terms of strength, wouldn’t be much stronger than that of Gods.

“Hmph. A single doppelganger’s attack might not be strong, but the combined attacks of thirty-plus doppelgangers are considerable in power. In addition, my main body’s knife-edge palm attack is included as well.” The gold-haired youth was completely confident. “This fellow is just a God.”

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

In an instant, the many knife-edge palms landed on Linley’s body. Linley in total was hit by twenty eight palm blows, and had been only able to dodge ten of them.

Of the 28 palm blows, twenty seven of them landed on Linley’s ‘Pulseguard Armor’ and collapsed, while leaving Linley’s ‘Pulseguard Armor’ completely unharmed. But the twenty eighth palm blow landed directly on Linley’s body.

“CRUNCH!”

The Pulseguard Armor cracked open, and Linley’s chest was struck by a vicious blow that all but went through his chest. Blood splattered outside, while his shattered white bones were revealed as well. This blow that split apart the ‘Pulseguard Armor’ had been launched by the gold-haired youth’s real body!

The gold-haired youth was surprised. Linley’s ‘Pulseguard Armor’ was simply astonishing.

“A defensive Highgod artifact?” The gold-haired youth chuckled. “Unfortunately, you are a God. A defensive Highgod artifact in your hands won’t be used to maximum effect.” The gold-haired youth was disdainful.

“Crackle…” Linley’s ‘divine power’ in his body bubbled out, immediately healing his wound. At the same time, the ‘Pulseguard Armor’ on his body once more reformed. As long as his divine power remained, this ‘Pulseguard Armor’ could instantly recover.

“A defensive artifact?” Linley, in his heart, was disdainful. “So this is the

true body!”

From that attack just now, Linley was instantly able to tell which of the bodies in front of him was the true body.

“Already healed?” The gold-haired youth was astonished. He immediately realized that Linley wasn’t using a defensive artifact, but rather a material defense.

“Haha…your material attack isn’t bad, and your material defenses aren’t bad either.” The forty gold-haired youths circling Linley all spoke out. “A pity.” After speaking, the nearly forty gold-haired youths instantly moved as one. Right now, whether the youth attacked as one or en masse didn’t make much of a difference to Linley.

From that exchange just now, Linley was already certain as to which one was the real body.

The gold-haired youth’s speed was far greater than Linley’s. He easily and continuously changed directions as he drew near Linley.

“This brown-haired kid has a powerful material attack and defense. It seems I’ll have to kill him with a soul attack.” The gold-haired youth made up his mind. “I refuse to believe that the soul defense of a God can be very powerful!”

“Death take you!” The gold-haired youth calmly lashed out with a sword blow, causing tiny tremors to appear in the air as well as a low humming sound.

Linley’s eyes narrowed. “My only chance!”

“Rumble…” Linley’s adamantine heavy sword struck out as well with his most powerful attack…the Voidwave Sword!

“Clang!” Linley’s face suddenly changed. His Voidwave Sword had met no opposition at all as it struck into the enemy’s head. The enemy’s attack, in

turn, didn't carry any soul power at all.

"What?" Linley suddenly had a bad feeling. "Vibrations!"

A strange sort of vibration directly entered Linley's brain. This strange vibration first clashed against that soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, the translucent scaly membrane around his soul, then shattered and dispersed.

Linley had managed to withstand the attack, but the enemy…

"Aaaah!" The Highgod's entire body swayed, a low growl emitting from his lips.

Although this Highgod had become a Highgod on his own, and had an extremely pure soul and strong defense, in the face of Linley's 'Voidwave Sword', created from the fusion of two profound mysteries, his soul still trembled and a large amount of spiritual energy immediately collapsed.

He immediately became woozy.

"Die!" Howling angrily, Linley followed up with another sword blow.

The adamantine heavy sword struck directly onto the dazed gold-haired youth.

"BANG!" The gold-haired youth's soul was no longer able to withstand it, and it directly collapsed.

"Swoosh!" A figure suddenly appeared from within the gold-haired youth's corpse. "Another one?" Linley's eyes turned wide, but as if by reflex, he lashed out yet again…

Once again, the Voidwave Sword!

"BANG!" That figure collapsed as well.

Only now did Linley sit down.

Having executed three ‘Voidwave Sword’ attacks in a row, Linley’s spiritual energy had been nearly exhausted. Actually, when he executed the third ‘Voidwave Sword’, Linley had already begun to feel his head split.

“I was too nervous. The divine clone of that gold-haired youth was just a Demigod clone. It wasn’t worth me using the Voidwave Sword at all.” Linley glanced at the divine clone, then laughed inwardly at himself. “Fortunately, that fellow finally died.” Linley directly collected the gold-haired youth’s interspatial ring, divine spark, and divine artifact.

And then, Linley ran a few hundred meters away, enduring the pain in his head. He found an unassuming location and immediately retrieved an amethyst.

“The Voidwave Sword uses up far too much spiritual energy.” Linley stored the amethyst into his Coiling Dragon ring, which immediately refined it, causing surges of golden fog energy to enter Linley’s consciousness. The dry, parched sea of consciousness once more began to throb with spiritual strength.

“Whew.” The head-splitting pain began to subside, and Linley let out a long breath.

“Facing a Highgod really is dangerous.” Linley, thinking back to that battle, said to himself, “If that gold-haired youth had instead relied on his speed and material attacks to come at me repeatedly, he absolutely would have killed me.”

Linley quickly came to a conclusion based on the results of that battle.

“Those who become Deities on their own will have their souls nurtured and transformed repeatedly by the natural Laws, and so will have exceedingly strong soul defenses as well. Just gold-haired youth just now was able to take a hit from my ‘Voidwave Sword’ without dying. It seems as though in the future, I must be careful.” Linley became all the more cautious.

Linley had narrowly escaped the last attack, but the other Fiends wouldn't be so lucky. How could it be easy for a God to overcome a Highgod?

Linley was someone who had fused two profound mysteries of a Law, which was extremely rare amongst Gods. And more importantly…Linley had a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact which negated the gold-haired youth's attack. Otherwise, how could Linley's soul have withstood it?

"Big bro isn't here, and Bebe isn't here either."

Nisse was filled with panic. She took one careful step after another through this castle of sand. Just now, she had discovered the corpse of a Fiend. Clearly, this castle of sand was filled with life-threatening dangers.

Soundlessly, a skinny, callous male figure suddenly appeared from the wall behind NIsse.

"This little girl isn't bad. I'll kill her first." The callous man said quietly to himself. Just now, he had killed three God-level Fiends. In front of him, God-level Fiends weren't able to fight back at all. Looking at Nisse in front of him, the callous man laughed to himself. "Let me end your life."

Chapter 9 – Blue Water Drop

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 9, Blue Water Drop

As danger had descended upon her, Nisse's heart suddenly trembled, and she couldn't help but turn to look.

"Ah!" Nisse was so terrified, her face turned as white as parchment, while at the same time, in her terror, she raised her speed to the limit, fleeing forward.

"You want to run?" A hint of disdain was in the eyes of the callous looking man. He immediately activated his 'Godrealm', and Nisse, who had been moving at high speed, instantly became restricted and slowed down. Nisse was only a God, and in her heart, she began to feel terror. "Bebe, big bro, where are you?"

As she faced death, her thoughts were of Bebe and Salomon!

At this moment, Nisse was right in the middle of a corridor opening.

"Bebe!" Nisse's eyes immediately lit up. To her right, roughly a hundred meters away, a figure appeared. It was Bebe, wearing his straw hat, his face filled with delight. But when he saw Nisse suddenly appear, he also saw that behind her, there was a Highgod.

Bebe's facial expression instantly turned to that one of terror!

"A pity. I won't make it in time." Nisse could already sense the cold air of the sword energy behind her. Her eyes were filled with a hint of unwillingness and regret. "Bebe, actually, right now, I just want to say a few words to you and hear your voice."

In this castle of sand, Gods were only able to stretch their divine sense out for less than ten meters. How would they speak through divine sense?

Bebe's eyes were filled with terror!

"No!" Bebe cried out in a fierce voice. They were a hundred meters away, and he was extremely fast, but that Highgod wasn't any slower than him. More importantly, the Highgod was too close to Nisse. "Ninny, no!!!" Bebe was filled with rage and regret.

In the same instant Bebe saw Nisse.

Linley was making his way alone through the castle of sand, which was filled with danger everywhere.

Linley had just undergone a vicious battle. After a short recovery time, his strength had returned to peak condition. Suddenly, a look of delight appeared in Linley's eyes. "Bebe. You aren't too far away from me. Right in front of me, there is a road heading close to your direction. It's possible that we will meet."

"I have a corridor in front of me as well. Boss, I'll head over as well." Bebe was extremely excited.

Linley didn't imagine that although at first, when he had intentionally tried to meet with Bebe, he was unable to, after that vicious battle, just by casually walking around, he would draw closer to Bebe.

"Swoosh!" Linley began to move quickly.

Passing through curved hallways, he entered a corridor which headed straight towards Bebe.

"Haha, Bebe!"

Linley already saw the familiar figure wearing a straw hat at the end of the corridor. It was Bebe.

Linley and Bebe were roughly three hundred meters or so away from each

other. They were each at the opposite ends of the corridor. As for this three hundred meter long corridor, it had three or four exits and branching corridors as well.

“Haha, Boss, I see you!” Bebe said, his face excited.

“I see you too.” Linley’s heart was filled with excitement. He couldn’t help but unconsciously speed up even faster. “Please don’t let another wall suddenly appear in the center of this corridor.” This was what Linley was worrying about; he had to come together with Bebe.

That way, he wouldn’t be separated from Bebe again.

“Swoosh!”

Roughly ten meters ahead of Linley, a figure suddenly appeared from a branching corridor.

“Whoah, that scared me.” What Linley feared the most was that a wall would appear, blocking him off from Bebe. “She is?” Linley’s face instantly changed dramatically.

It was Nisse, who was being pursued and attacked!

Nisse saw that to her right, a hundred meters away, Bebe was present. But she didn’t realize that to her left was Linley!

Bebe had been lost in his excitement at the coming reunion with Linley, but when he suddenly saw Nisse being pursued, his heart instantly turned ice cold. His excited, lively eyes suddenly became filled with terror. “Nooooo!” A fierce cry rang out!

It had been so many years. Bebe had never fallen for a girl.

This was the first time he had. Although Bebe liked to joke around, in his heart, he had sworn that he would accompany this adorable girl for his entire life.

It was a very simple, pure thought. But Bebe had always kept it in his heart.

Bebe wasn't able to rescue her in time!

But. Linley was!

"Highgod!" Linley saw that a few meters behind Nisse, there was the figure of a skinny, cruel man. Instantly, his face changed.

After the last battle he had undergone with a Highgod, Linley knew very well…that although he had fused two profound mysteries and a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, when fighting with a Highgod, his chance of victory was less than 50%. If the enemy was cautious, the chances of Linley dying would be extremely high!

If he was to save her, he would have to use his ultimate attack. Acting so hastily, it would be very hard for him to kill the opponent. Once the opponent saw Linley using his ultimate attack, he would definitely grow cautious, and most likely Linley himself would be finished.

But if he didn't save her, Linley might be able to find a better opportunity to kill the man in one blow!

"Nooooo!" Linley could completely sense Bebe's terror, sense Bebe's soul shudder. His soul and Bebe's soul were linked. Linley could clearly sense… the trembling of Bebe's soul.

He didn't hesitate at all!

"Kill!" A fierce look suddenly flashed in Linley's eyes, and the adamantine heavy sword in his hand slashed out in a perfect arcing line, and then a semi-translucent sword shadow that was a faint yellow color flew out of the adamantine heavy sword, striking directly towards the skinny, cruel-looking man.

Soul attack – Voidwave Sword!

As Linley attacked the enemy without any hesitation, the terrified Bebe also let out a fierce howl, while at the same time, an enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat appeared behind him. The mouth of the illusory Godeater Rat opened as it stared coldly at the skinny, cruel man.

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

The skinny, cruel man had been chopping down with his sword towards Nisse, but Linley was very close to him, and the Voidwave Sword attack instantly struck towards him.

“Not good!”

The skinny, cruel man’s downward chopping sword blow instantly transformed into a blocking scrape. As he didn’t know how strong the opponent was, the skinny cruel man immediately used his own most powerful soul attack, and an illusion of a green, electric serpent appeared, flying out from his sword.

The Voidwave Sword and the illusory electric serpent clashed.

“BANG!”

The illusory electric serpent vanished, while the Voidwave Sword trembled twice, then vanished as well.

“So powerful!” The skinny, cruel man’s heart shook. The opponent’s soul attack was actually on a level comparable to his own; to be precise, it was actually slightly more powerful. If this illusory sword attack had truly struck his soul, he probably would have had his soul dissipated.

Right as he was feeling stunned…

A strange ripple suddenly encapsulated his entire body. This was the innate divine ability, Godeater.

The skinny cruel man's body went stiff for a moment, but a moment later, he broke free.

"Ugh!" The distant Bebe spat out a mouthful of blood, and his face turned pale as well. He only had the power of a God, but he wanted to use the Godeater ability against a Highgod? There was only one possible outcome. This Godeater ability was very unique!

If it succeeded, it would devour and take away the opponent's divine spark, and the opponent wouldn't be able to resist at all.

But if it failed, the opponent wouldn't be harmed at all. In addition, the amount of spiritual energy this technique consumed was quite astonishing.

"There are two of them!" Only now did the skinny, callous man notice Bebe.

"What an unusual attack." The skinny, callous man immediately began to treat Linley and Bebe as major foes. However, in the skinny, callous man's heart, the one he was concerned about the most was Linley. This was because Linley's Voidwave Sword was already at a level of power which could threaten his life!

"Bebe used the Godeater ability?"

Linley immediately ignored all else. Gritting his teeth, he took the opportunity to once more strike out with his adamantine heavy sword, launching his most powerful attack, the Voidwave Sword, once more.

But unfortunately, the impact of Bebe's Godeater ability on a Highgod was too miniscule.

The skinny callous man's sword once more emitted an illusory electric serpent, clashing once more with Linley's Voidwave Sword. This spectacle was virtually identical to the one earlier. The two soul attacks once more cancelled out.

“Crackle.”

From the body of the skinny, cruel man emerged four deep-green lightning dragons. The four lightning dragons pounced straight towards Linley. Although the size of each lightning dragon wasn’t too massive, with all four charging over at the same time, Linley was completely unable to dodge.

“Die.” The callous, grim man watched this calmly. “This is my most powerful lightning-type attack!”

“Bang!” The Pulseguard Armor on linley’s body only resisted for an instant, then directly collapsed. Linley was sent smashing far away, with blood, flesh, and bones flying everywhere. His entire body had lost half of its mass as those lightning dragons had attacked Linley, trying to destroy him!

Bebe had just been delighted, but then upon seeing Linley immediately face death, he grew terrified anew.

“Boss!” Bebe’s eyes were filled with concern.

“Not good!” As Linley’s Pulseguard Armor was shattered, his body had immediately transformed. The divine earth clone and his main body immediately swapped, but despite swapping out quickly, Linley’s divine earth clone still only had half its body and a head left.

In the recent battles, Linley had used the divine earth clone.

After all, the divine earth clone was the most powerful, and when using it to use attacks dependent on the Laws of the Earth, using his earth clone meant the attacks would be most powerful.

In this situation, Linley had to choose to switch bodies. After all, if his divine earth clone continued to take blows like these, the divine earth clone would most likely be shattered.

“I’ll have to see how strong my Dragonform’s defense is!” Linley’s original body was Dragonformed!

“BOOM!”

The four lightning dragons finally dispersed. Linley collapsed where he stood from the explosion, the azure-gold draconic scales covering his body broken and battered, and multiple spikes on his back shattered as well. His left arm had been completely blown off, while his waist had almost been blown through as well.

“What astonishing defense!” The skinny man couldn’t help but be amazed.

Actually, the attack he had used just now had used up nearly half of its strength in breaking through the Pulseguard Armor. At the critical moment, Linley had swapped out his body, using his main body in Dragonform to take it head on. Although it was very difficult, the defense in Dragonform was indeed exceedingly great, just slightly inferior to the Pulseguard Armor.

He was badly injured, but at least he had saved his life.

“What a talent.” The skinny cruel man sighed to himself. Linley’s soul attack and his defense, despite being just a God…the skinny, cruel man understood that if Linley was born into a major clan, he would definitely be one of their most highly valued talents to be cultivated.

“Unfortunately, you’ll die in my hands.” The skinny man said to himself calmly.

“Am I about to die?” Linley’s badly wounded body lay there on the ground. He couldn’t help but feel a surge of helplessness. There was indeed a great difference between himself and a Highgod. Once the opponent noticed his Voidwave Sword, then he probably would be finished.

“Crackle…”

Right at this moment…

Linley sensed that from within the Coiling Dragon ring, surges of unique

energy began to fill his body. Linley's body instantly was repaired, and the draconic scales and spikes on his back were all healed as well. At the same time, that unique energy filled his draconic scales, spikes, and every other part of his body, strengthening the power of Linley's draconic scales.

On the surface of Linley's draconic scales, a layer of azure light was shining.

"What is this?" Linley immediately filled the Coiling Dragon ring with his spiritual energy.

"The three blue drops of water?" When Linley had become a Deity, the Coiling Dragon ring had a single golden drop of liquid as well as three blue drops of water within it. At that time, the golden liquid had transformed Linley's Dragonform, while Linley had yet to find a use for the three blue drops of water.

But now, one of the three blue drops of water was emitting an azure energy that was filling Linley's body, strengthening Linley's Dragonform.

"Huh?" The skinny cruel man saw that Linley's body had instantly healed. His face couldn't help but change.

"Hmph."

The skinny cruel man let out a cold sneer. His hands stretched out like claws, and six lightning dragons pounced towards Linley.

"NO!!!!" The frantic, furious Bebe had already charged next to the skinny, cruel man, but he wasn't going to make it in time to save Linley. Bebe's heart was filled with regret and self-hate. If Linley were to have died due to saving Nisse, Bebe would never forgive himself for the rest of his life.

"You can die together."

Chapter 10 – Meeting

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 10, Meeting

“I feel so powerful!”

In a short amount of time, one of the three blue drops of water completely converted into energy, fusing with Linley’s original body, repeatedly strengthening Linley’s draconic scales. Linley’s scales defensive power was rising at an absolutely stupefying speed!

The three blue drops of water had now become just two.

“Huh?” Linley suddenly was startled into wakefulness. “Six lightning dragons?” Linley was shocked and frightened.

Six flashing lightning dragons bellowed and attacked Linley.

Before this, the attack of just four flashing lightning dragons had not only shattered the Pulseguard Armor but also had caused serious injury to Linley. Now there were six of them. Linley wasn’t able to form the Pulseguard Armor in time. The only thing he could do was…

“Swoosh!” Linley flew backwards, trying to dodge.

But how could a person’s movement speed compare to the speed of an attack?

“Bang!”

The six bellowing lightning dragons all smashed against Linley, and even the nearby walls of sand exploded from the collision.

“Boss!” Bebe, seeing Linley being struck by those six lightning dragons which exploded against his body, was terrified to the point of losing his

mind.

“Don’t, don’t die.” The distant Nisse’s heart was filled with terror as well.

She didn’t know what to do.

“If Bebe’s Boss dies, Bebe will definitely be miserable. His Boss did this only for the sake of saving me.” Nisse could only stand there in the distance. She didn’t have any ability to interfere. This sense of helplessness filled Nisse’s heart with guilt.

Bebe, because Linley had been attacked, had lost his wits for a moment, but when experts were battling, how could they possibly lose their focus?

“Daydreaming in a battle?” The skinny man’s lightning-like sword flashed down viciously, striking against Bebe. Bebe’s body was sent flying away, while at the same time, an illusory electric serpent ignored Bebe’s defense, directly entering Bebe’s body.

A soul attack!

“Huh?” The skinny man suddenly turned to look back.

After the explosion of the six lightning dragons, Linley was just standing there, azure light flowing atop his azure-golden draconic scales. Surges of power emanated from his draconic scales. The strength of his aura caused even the skinny man to feel terror in his heart.

“What…what is this aura?” The skinny man couldn’t believe it.

He was certain that what he feared right now wasn’t Linley himself, but rather it was the aura coming off of the draconic scales.

Linley’s cold, dark-golden eyes stared at the skinny man. His lips curved upwards slightly, and this skinny man was completely unable to ascertain if Linley was smiling or not.

“I…have to thank you.” Linley said calmly.

The skinny man was stunned. Thank him?

Linley knew very clearly that if it hadn’t been for the skinny man nearly destroying his original body, which caused this ‘blue water drop’ to suddenly send its energy into his body and transform it, there is no way that Linley would have been able to utilize this blue water drop.

Currently, he had used up one of them, but Linley was still overjoyed.

This was because he could clearly sense that currently in Dragonform, he possessed incomparable, boundless strength! Absolute strength! Physical strength of the body!

“Boss!” Bebe’s delighted voice rang out.

“What?!” The skinny man turned to look and was astonished. Bebe had suffered his soul attack, but hadn’t died. “How is this possible. A mere God who suffered my soul attack didn’t die?” The skinny man was completely unable to accept this, but instantly, he had a thought. “Can it be, can it be that he has a soul protecting divine artifact?”

“Impossible. How can that be?” The skinny man couldn’t believe this conjecture.

Soul protecting divine artifacts were very special!

They weren’t like ordinary swords, sabers, armor, and other artifacts which were easy to forge. In the entire Infernal Realm, there were exceedingly few people capable of forging ‘soul protecting divine artifacts’, and many Highgods didn’t have that sort of ability. The damndest thing was…there were no soul protecting divine artifacts for sale!

Linley’s group, upon arriving in the Infernal Realm, had yet to find a single soul protecting divine artifact for sale. If there were, Linley would have bought one for Delia long ago.

This was because once a person was killed, his soul protecting divine artifact would definitely be damaged as well. A damaged soul protecting divine artifact was generally useless.

Also…

There was more to it than that. Soul protecting divine artifacts weren't made from special ores; they were forged from 'spiritual energy'. For example, for Linley to repair his soul protecting Sovereign artifact, he had to use his spiritual energy to repair it. This was because…soul protecting divine artifacts were made out of spiritual energy to begin with.

Only, they had a rather special structure!

Because they were made out of spiritual energy, soul protecting artifacts couldn't be easily tamed and commanded just through blood binding. There were many profound mysteries that were involved in these things! Only the original creator of the soul protecting divine artifact, by using some special methods, could allow for his soul protecting divine artifact to be used by others.

Thus…

Anyone who had a soul protecting divine artifact had definitely received permission from the creator of the artifact.

And every single creator of a soul protecting divine artifact was, without a doubt, one of the ultimate experts of the Infernal Realm! Every single one was extremely accomplished in understanding the soul, and had reached terrifying heights.

"This kid with a straw hat…he has a major figure backing him up?" The skinny man came to this judgment.

"And that Draconian! The aura coming off from his body is so terrifying." The skinny man's heart quivered. "What is going on. One has a soul

protecting divine artifact, while the other has such terrifying defense."

Right now, the distant Nisse was overjoyed. "Bebe's Boss didn't die. Bebe's also fine. Wonderful, wonderful!"

"Haha, Boss, let's kill this bastard together." Bebe said through their souls.

"Fine!" Linley was exceedingly happy as well.

The powerful strength he felt in his Dragonform caused Linley want to let loose.

"Swoosh!" Bebe's dagger shot out like lightning towards the skinny man.

"Whoosh!" Linley launched himself from the ground.

Linley shot out like an arrow, exploding forward and moving so quickly that his body turned into a blur. Linley's right leg danced out like a saber, chopping down with a fierce, azure-golden light towards the neck of that skinny man.

The speed was too fast!

"Who cares who you are? Kill!!!" The skinny man was angry now as well.

"Clang!"

The longsword in his hand collided head on with the draconic scales on Linley's right leg, creating a metallic ringing sound. After having absorbed a drop of that 'blue drop of water' and having been strengthened to a terrifying degree, Linley's draconic scales were not one whit inferior to a Highgod artifact.

Linley's body landed.

"How is that possible?!" The skinny man's face changed dramatically. Today, he had been shocked too many times.

Bebe came howling forth as well.

“You have a soul protecting divine artifact. Then, I shall use a material attack! The skinny man’s body once more emitted those four lightning dragons towards Bebe, who didn’t dodge at all, instead charging at high speed towards those four lightning dragons.

“BOOM!”

The four lightning dragons landed directly on Bebe, then dispersed, but Bebe wasn’t hurt at all.

“Die.” Bebe’s eyes were filled with murder.

“How is this possible?!” The skinny man’s mind was in utter chaos. Linley’s freakishly strong draconic scale defense, Bebe’s soul protecting divine artifact…and now, Bebe used his terrifying physical defense to blast through one lightning dragon after another. The skinny man was at the verge of insanity. “Who are you guys?!”

“Swish!” A metallic tail slapped over lightning-fast.

“Clang!”

The sword and the iron-whip-like draconic tail clashed. The skinny man borrowed that force to retreat backwards. Ignoring all else, what he decided he needed to do was…flee!

“Freaks! Two freaks!” The skinny man cursed angrily. “Such freakishly strong defense, and a soul protecting divine artifact as well. Can they be two young masters from a major clan? But how can the young masters of a large clan come wandering around at the God-level, without a single protector?”

The skinny man knew very well. The Infernal Realm had existed for a long time, and within it, there were extremely ancient, great clans!

Those great clans were able to exist for countless years; naturally, they had power to rely on and special abilities. For the young masters of these clans to possess soul-protecting artifacts was very normal. Linley and Bebe's performances were very much similar to that of those young masters of those clans.

Only, why would high and noble young masters get involved with this sort of escort mission?

"Big bro, kill him!" Nisse's voice suddenly rang out.

"Huh?" The skinny man was suddenly startled into wakefulness.

However…

A ray of black light flashed past his eyes. The skinny man didn't even have a chance to react before the dark black light entered his body.

The skinny man immediately collapsed.

"Hmph!" Salomon stared coldly at the corpse on the ground.

"Big bro." Nisse immediately ran over, throwing herself into Salomon's arms and beginning to cry. "Big bro, just now I, I almost was killed by him. Sob…" After having experienced the terror of a near-death experience, then being worried for Linley and Bebe, she finally was no longer able to hold back her tears upon seeing her big brother.

"Don't cry." Salomon comforted her.

"Big bro, just now, if it wasn't for Linley, I would be dead already." Nisse lifted her head to look at her big brother. "Just now…" Nisse immediately explained everything.

Salomon, hearing his sister's explanation, immediately turned to look at Linley. Upon seeing Linley's Dragonform, Salomon was slightly surprised.

However, his experience was much greater than his little sister's, and he immediately bowed and said thankfully, "Linley, thank you. You saved my little sister's life. I, Salomon Boyd, will never forget this!"

Salomon Boyd. This surname one which Linley didn't particular understand the importance of.

'Boyd' was a clan name which Linley had never heard of.

"Big bro…" Nisse stared in astonishment at her big brother, Salomon.

Her big brother wouldn't easily reveal his identity. Why did he do so now?

"For the sake of Bebe, even if I had to risk death, I would rescue Nisse." Linley said. At the same time, he returned to his divine earth clone, his body once more becoming covered with the Pulseguard Armor.

"Boss." Bebe and Linley exchanged a glance.

"Let's hurry up and go." Linley said hurriedly. "I don't know what the situation is with Delia." Linley was worried about Delia.

Immediately, Linley, Bebe, Salomon, and Nisse began to traverse this sand castle.

After having absorbed that blue drop of water, his Dragonform had quickly raised in power to yet another monstrous level. Linley had already made his decision.

"My main body's Dragonform has an exceedingly strong material defense, while it also has a soul protecting Sovereign artifact. It has sufficient material and spiritual defense. In the future, if I face an ordinary Highgod, I am capable of killing them head on. However…the soul protecting Sovereign artifact is damaged!

Linley was still somewhat worried.

“Ordinary Highgods using a soul attack aren’t able to use it to seek out a weak spot. But in Moon Lake Castle, when I was hit by the soul poison of the Godslayer Arrow, the soul poison was actually able to search for the ‘weak point’ in my damaged soul protecting Sovereign artifact to attack my soul.” Linley understood.

It was just that the opponents he had encountered thus far weren’t very powerful.

If his enemy was a powerful Highgod, the Highgod would be able to use his soul attack to seek out the weak points, then attack the gap.

“Thus, in the end, I can’t completely reveal this trump card.”

Unless it was critical, Linley wouldn’t easily reveal the secret of him being able to Dragonform. After all, only a trump card that remained hidden would be effective. Besides, his ‘Pulseguard Armor’ wasn’t weak either.

Linley and the other three walked shoulder by shoulder, but were unable to find Delia.

“Strange. Why has the sand castle stopped transforming?” Bebe muttered.

Linley had noticed this as well.

“Perhaps…the person who set up the castle of sand is currently busy battling, and so he has no energy to deal with changing the castle.” Salomon guessed. Salomon’s words were correct; at this moment, the green-robed elder, ‘Mr. Wind’, was currently battling with Learmonth!

“BANG!!!!”

A terrifying explosion occurred, while at the same time, the entire ‘castle of sand’ seemed to have lost its controller. With a rustle and rumble, the sand began to flow down, and the entire castle of sand in the blink of an eye transformed into boundless amounts of sand dunes.

The castle of sand was gone!

The destruction of the castle of sand allowed everyone to see the sky, to see the Blood Sun.

There were quite a few corpses lying about the sand. Many of the Fiends had died miserable deaths, while the lucky survivors were in the midst of the desert. All of them seemed to be astonished, including Inigo and his subordinates.

“What is going on?” Inigo didn’t understand. How did the castle of sand which his teacher controlled suddenly collapse?

Linley was staring at his surroundings. Immediately, he saw from afar the ashen-faced Delia, who had the Deathgod Golem by her side. “Delia!” Linley immediately rushed over, overjoyed.

“Linley!” Delia’s eyes were immediately filled with joy as well, and she too rushed over towards Linley.

Chapter 11 – Secret

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 11, Secret

In the middle of the empty desert, there were dozens of broken, bloodstained corpses. Both the forces of the Fiends as well as the forces of Inigo came to a halt in their attacks, while Linley and Delia tightly embraced each other.

“Delia!” Only now did Linley settle down.

Ever since they had been trapped into the castle of sand, Linley had been feeling a sense of terror deep in his heart. He was terrified of Delia dying. Linley would forever remember how Delia had been when she was young and at the Ernst Institute with him. And then, their reunion meeting at the O’Brien Empire.

Decades had passed in what seemed like moments, and Delia had become the other half of Linley’s life.

When he saw her, Linley’s heart grew calm.

And didn’t Delia feel just the way Linley did?

“Thank you, heavens.” Delia said softly in Linley’s arms. “Linley, just now, it was so dangerous. I almost got killed by that Highgod, but I didn’t want to die…I wanted to see you.” Delia, thinking back to the near-death struggle she had just undergone, felt her heart tremble.

In the face of great danger, Delia had really gone all out, using both the Deathgod Golem as well as her profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

Fortunately, she also knew the ‘Doppelganger’ technique, and was also proficient at the ‘Dimensional Wind’. This allowed her to be lucky enough

to escape.

“I won’t let you be in any danger ever again.” Linley held Delia by the hand. Holding his loved one’s hand, Linley felt that his life and his soul were incomparably rich and filling.

Just as Linley and Delia were absorbed in the joy of meeting again…

“Bang!”

A terrifying explosion sounded out in mid-air. A ray of green light and a ray of black light clashed multiple times, each time causing the world to shake. And then, the two rays of light landed on the desert sands, transforming into the green-robed elder and a black-robed Learmonth.

The green-robed elder’s face was ashen. He stared at Learmonth, his heart filled with extreme terror. “This Learmonth’s power is even more frightening than I had anticipated. His sword techniques in the Ways of Destruction have reached such a terrifying level.” Prior to this, the green-robed elder had only wanted to tie Learmonth up for a while.

Unfortunately, Learmonth’s power was far greater than he had imagined.

This had resulted in the green-robed elder being the one to fall into peril instead. He didn’t even dare to allow himself to be distracted by controlling the castle of sand. Thus, he voluntarily released the castle of sand, focusing entirely on this terrifying opponent – Learmonth.

Learmonth held his longsword in his hand, looking calmly at the green-robed elder, a faint hint of a smile playing at his lips. “Your power is not bad. You are worthy of receiving my most powerful sword attack.”

The green-robed elder’s face instantly changed dramatically.

“What? Most powerful attack?” The green-robed elder’s heart turned cold. Before this, he had been able to stay alive, but he had to use all his strength to do so.

The experts who were watching, upon hearing Learmonth's words, were all astonished.

"Delia, let's move backwards a little bit." Linley held Delia by the hand, retreating to where Salomon and Bebe were, watching these experts battle from a safe distance. "I really rather look forward to seeing what their attacks look like!"

Prior to this, when they encountered that bandit ambush, Learmonth's sword attack had stunned Linley. This chance in front of him was all the more precious..

"Those two old fellows played me!" Inigo cursed to himself. He glanced towards Salomon. "There's no mistake about it, but we don't have any more chances. It seems as though Teacher is unable to hold on any longer. It's best if I leave!" Inigo immediately, stealthily merged his entire body into the sands, disappearing. Right now, everyone's attention was on those two ultimate experts, and nobody was paying attention to Inigo.

In addition…

On the side of the Fiends, the only one who knew Inigo was that luckily surviving white-horned elder, but the white-horned elder hadn't noticed the distant Inigo at all.

"BOOM!"

Learmonth's entire body exploded forth with a terrifyingly powerful sword intent. Learmonth's body actually emitted an enormous illusory sword that radiated the Way of Destruction. Learmonth seemed to have transformed into the nucleus of that enormous illusory sword, and a fierce, sharp sword energy was swirling around it.

The power of the sword intent was rapidly rising!

"Crackle…" The sword intent actually caused space to shudder.

Everyone seeing this had their faces change. The Infernal Realm was one of the Higher Planes, and its stability was far greater than that of a material plane's. The sword energy hadn't even been released yet, and yet it already possessed such power. At what sort of level then would Learmonth's most powerful sword attack be at?

"Madman. He's truly a madman." The green-robed elder's heart was cold.

Learmonth's power had already caused him to feel dread.

"Hmph. So what if you are powerful. The Elemental Laws of the Wind are the best for fleeing!" The green-robed elder, faced with Learmonth, had already been awed and frightened by him. Suddenly, he transformed into hundreds of doppelgangers, dispersing in every direction.

One of the nine profound mysteries of the wind – Doppelganger!

"So many doppelgangers?" Delia was shocked, and Linley let out a surprised breath as well.

When Delia used the Doppelganger technique, she was only capable of nine doppelgangers. This green-robed elder, however, had transformed into hundreds of them. The same profound mystery, 'Doppelganger', when used by people of different levels of ability would have tremendously great differences in power.

"The Doppelganger technique is indeed an excellent fleeing method. Hundreds of doppelgangers, all of whom are hard to tell apart by their aura. Learmonth will find it hard to catch the right one." Linley said to himself. However, Linley continued to watch Learmonth, waiting to see what his reaction would be.

"Fleeing? How disappointing." Learmonth's voice rang out.

At the same time…

“Rumble…”

In an area of a thousand meters surrounding Learmonth, out of nowhere, countless surges of sword energy appeared. The hundreds of fleeing doppelgangers were smashed into powder by the sword energy. In the blink of an eye, all of the hundreds of doppelgangers were annihilated, leaving behind only a single green-robed elder.

“How is this possible?!” The green-robed elder’s face changed dramatically.

Learmonth flew towards him at high speed, striking out like a viperous dragon. Wherever his body passed, many ripples in space appeared. The speed of Learmonth wasn’t lower than the green-robed elder at all.

“I won’t be able to flee!” The green-robed elder instantly understood this upon witnessing the other person’s speed.

The green-robed elder retreated backwards, while at the same time, a silver, string-like sword appeared in his hands. “Since I can’t flee, then I’ll go all out!” The green-robed elder’s eyes were now filled with a ferocious killing intent as well, and green energy swirled around his body, forming into a what appeared to be a solid dragon.

“Groooooowl!” The massive green dragon bellowed.

Watching the battle, Linley felt astonished. “Essence of the Wind and the Profound Mysteries of Music.” Linley could immediately tell how powerful this attack by the green-robed elder was. “That enormous green dragon is not only capable of protecting his body, it is also capable of creating musical attacks to affect the enemy.”

This was a support ability.

“Haha…Starpoint Explosions!” The normally calm, emotionless Learmonth was now revealing his wild side. Laughing madly, the longsword in his hand shot out.

The longsword pierced through the air!

As it did, in mid-air, a black ‘hole’ appeared as the longsword twisted through the cracks of reality. Wherever the longsword passed, tears in space constantly appeared, and everything around it was transformed into nothingness.

Facing Learmonth’s most powerful attack, the green-robed elder slowly brandished out that silver thread-like sword.

“Rumble…”

The silver sword was even longer and even narrower than Bloodviolet. It lashed out like a whip. Crack! Under the lashing of that silver sword, space itself split apart, creating an extremely narrow spatial tear, as a strange music rang out.

The entire desert was utterly silent.

Linley and the others were all utterly astonished by these two sword attacks. One was a terrifying sword that contained within it the Way of Destruction, while the other used the sharpness of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.

“BOOM!”

The silver sword, moving in a strange way, struck down upon the edge of Learmonth’s longsword.

“BANG!”

The silver sword suddenly exploded, transforming into countless silver shards which flew everywhere.

“Swish!”

The tip of the longsword almost instantly pierced through the green-robed elder’s forehead. It was so fast that the green-robed elder wasn’t able to

dodge at all. His eyes were filled with shock, and fresh blood slowly flowed down from his forehead.

“Bang!” The green-robed elder’s corpse fell down.

“That soft sword…that simple whipping and chopping motion…” Linley’s heart suddenly grew agitated. It was as though something had come to his mind, and he immediately shut his eyes quietly.

In the desert. Everyone else was still watching those two experts. But Linley was lost in meditating and in his insights.

Indeed. The green-robed elder’s power was slightly weaker than Learmonth’s. But as far as his insights into the ‘Elemental Laws of the Wind’ went, he had already fused quite a few profound mysteries.

That simple whipping motion included multiple profound mysteries.

Recently, Linley had been stuck in a bottleneck with regards to the Profound Truths of Velocity. He had been pondering on how to break through this bottleneck and completely fuse the ‘Fast’ and ‘Slow’ profound mysteries.

After the life-and-death struggle within the desert castle, as well the fluctuating feelings of worry and then calm, and now after seeing the green-robed elder’s most powerful attack, Linley had already begin to create cracks in the ‘bottleneck’ of the Profound Truths of Velocity…

The green-robed elder’s corpse lay there on the ground.

Learmonth let out a sigh. This sigh contained within it a hint of disappointment.

Learmonth glanced at the corpse of the green-robed elder. “You both use flexible swords, but your power is far too weak when compared to the Bloodviolet Fiend. Your time seems to have been all spent in defense and in trapping people. With regards to offense…too weak.” Learmonth said

softly.

A person suddenly appeared from within the green-robed elder's corpse. It was the divine clone of the green-robed elder. Only, this divine clone was a mere God.

"Learmonth. You speak the truth." The green-robed elder said astringently. "Only, in the future, I'll never be able to train in the Elemental Laws of the Wind again." The green-robed elder didn't try to flee. His divine clone was only at the God level. How could he flee?

"Mr. Learmonth, please kill him." The white-horned elder walked over, his eyes filled with hatred. "He's already killed my brother. I hope you will kill him, or allow me to personally deal with him." The white-horned elder's heart was filled with hate.

Him and his elder brother, the black-horned elder, had been together for many years. Although they had known that this return trip to the Jadefloat Continent would be dangerous, when his elder brother had died, the white-horned elder's heart was still filled with rage and hate.

"No need for you to personally act." Learmonth said.

In Learmonth's mind, although the green-robed elder only had a God-level divine clone left, he was once an extremely powerful expert. Experts would not tolerate being humiliated.

The green-robed elder glanced at him, then said to Learmonth, "Learmonth, I accept my loss to you. If you are willing to let me live, I will tell you a secret!"

"What are you doing?!" The white-horned elder immediately grew frantic.

The green-robed elder laughed coldly. "Are you afraid?"

"Swoosh!" The white-horned elder immediately flew forward, his eyes filled with a killing intent. Only, a sword flash suddenly struck out upon the

white-horned elder, knocking him flying back.

“Mr. Learmonth, you!” The white-horned elder

Learmonth let out a calm laugh. “I’m a little curious as to what this secret is.” As he spoke, Learmonth looked at the green-robed elder.

The white-horned elder was frantic.

The green-robed elder glanced disdainfully at the white-horned elder, then nodded and said, “Fine, I’ll tell you. In truth, this employer who you have been escorting on this mission is in reality, an old servant of the Boyd clan of the Coldcalm Prefecture of the Jadefloat Continent…”

“You…” The white-horned elder was utterly frantic. “Learmonth, you… how can you!”

Learmonth glanced at him coldly. “Shut your mouth.”

The green-robed elder’s face immediately had a hint of a smile appear on it. He continued, “After the Boyd clan was destroyed, these two old fellows took the vast fortune which the Boyd clan had accumulated over countless years and fled. Learmonth, I think you too can imagine…how astonishing the amount of wealth which a powerful clan accumulated over countless years is.”

The white-horned elder’s face was ashen.

At this time, next to Bebe, Nisse’s face was filled with rage as well. But Salomon only watched coldly.

Chapter 12 – A Breakthrough in Wind

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 12, A Breakthrough in Wind

“Boyd clan?” Bebe had a thought, and he couldn’t help but glance towards the nearby Salomon.

Although Bebe was rather rambunctious, he was very smart and insightful. When Linley had saved Nisse, Salomon had, for whatever reason, revealed his true name when thanking Linley – Salomon Boyd!

At that time, Bebe hadn’t paid much attention.

But now that he heard it again, Bebe began to grow puzzled.

“Nisse has been with me for so long, but she’s never been willing to tell me what her surname is!” Bebe began to suspect. “Since that’s the case, the surname must be very important. Salomon only recently told my Boss. Since his family name is Boyd…”

“Can this Boyd be the same ‘Boyd’ as the clan this green-robed elder is referring to?”

Bebe mused secretly, while at the same time looking towards Linley. Only three people had been present when Salomon had said his surname; Linley, Bebe, and Nisse.

“Boss…actually closed his eyes and began to meditate?” Bebe couldn’t help but find himself caught between laughter and tears. Next, Bebe turned to look towards the distant Learmonth, the green-robed elder, and the white-horned elder. “It seems as though the situation is about to change. Will Learmonth attack out of greed?” Bebe mused to himself.

Indeed, right now, the situation had just become very terrible for the white-horned elder.

He hadn't anticipated that the green-robed elder would actually voluntarily reveal this. The white-horned elder understood that his power was far inferior to Learmonth's. If Learmonth wanted to attack, then…

"Even if the young master helped out, we wouldn't be able to deal with Learmonth." The white-horned elder understood. "In addition, it won't just be Learmonth alone who will turn red-eyed with greed upon learning this secret. The Edwards brothers are here as well."

The Edwards brothers had also escorted them on the mission, and had yet to reveal any startling abilities.

However, not a single one of them had died. This gave testament to their strength.

"No matter what, even if I die, I cannot reveal the young master's identity." The white-horned elder made up his mind.

"Oh, you said Boyd clan?" Learmonth raised an eyebrow. "The Boyd clan of the Jadefloat Continent's Coldcalm Prefecture is indeed an ancient clan. Even though I am here in the Redbud Continent, I've heard of the fame of the Boyd clan."

The green-robed elder said, "Of course. You can imagine how wealthy the Boyd clan is, Learmonth."

The Edwards brothers looked at each other, secretly speaking through divine sense.

"Oho, things are getting messy." Bebe looked at the distant Edwards brothers, then looked at Learmonth, before finally looking at the weakest actor, the white-horned elder. "This old fellow is almost certainly going to die. There's too many people who would be greedy for this treasure."

The white-horned elder said furiously, "Mr. Learmonth, I'm your employer, you…"

“Shut your mouth.” Learmonth glanced at him calmly.

The green-robed elder couldn’t help but laugh, while at the same time saying, “Learmonth, I’ll leave now.” As he spoke the green-robed elder prepared to leave.

“Swish!”

A black sword energy pierced through the green-robed elder’s skull. The green-robed elder’s eyes were filled with shock and disbelief, and then he fell to the ground. The final remaining God-level divine clone of this green-robed elder died, just like that!

“This…?” The white-horned elder, Edwards, and the others were all shocked.

Learmonth glanced calmly at the green-robed elder. “I only told you to tell me the secret. I never agreed to spare you in exchange. You killed one of my employers. How could I not kill you?” And then Learmonth turned to look at the white-horned elder.

The white-horned elder’s face instantly turned ashen.

“Fine. If you want to kill me, then kill me.” Having seen Learmonth’s power, the white-horned elder didn’t try to resist at all. He said coldly, “Since you were willing to kill Mr. Wind, I am content.” The white-horned elder was already prepared for death. He murmured to himself, “Young master, you’ll have to rely on yourself now.”

“If I kill you, who will pay me my escort fee?” Learmonth asked.

The white-horned elder was astonished.

And then, Learmonth walked away while saying calmly, “Hurry up and prepare the metallic lifeform. We are going to head out.”

“He isn’t going to kill me?” The white-horned elder was unable to believe it.

The ten-plus lucky survivors amongst the Fiends stared towards Learmonth in astonishment as well. It must be understood anyone who cared about money at all would find it hard not to grow greedy for the wealth of the vast fortune of a massive clan. In addition, killing the white-robed elder would have been very easy.

“What is going on with this Learmonth?” The three Edwards brothers looked at each other.

Learmonth’s reaction had caused the Edwards brothers to be unable to implement their plan.

“Big brother, let’s just endure for now.”

Learmonth was able to refrain from being greedy, but the three Edwards brothers were not. This was the massive fortune of an ancient clan. The fame of the Boyd clan was so great, it echoed like thunder.

“Wait a while before heading out!” Salomon’s voice rang out. “My friend here is currently training.”

Learmonth, the three Edwards brothers, the white-horned elder, and the luckily surviving remnants of the Fiends all looked over. Linley was standing there right there in the sands, his body surrounded by a faint swirl of wind. Indeed, he was training. This sight caused everyone to be extremely surprised.

“He started training, just like that?” The lucky survivors amongst the Fiends were all shocked. To immediately begin training having just concluded a life and death struggle…that truly was crazy.

“Waiting for him alone? Wake him up.” The second of the three Edwards brothers said with a frown. Him, a Five Star Fiend, wait for a God? He didn’t have that sort of patience.

Bebe, hearing this, couldn't help but frown.

"Intriguing, intriguing." Learmonth looked at Linley, a hint of a smile on his face. "We aren't in any rush to leave. Let's wait a while."

Since Learmonth had made his decision, the three Edwards brothers wouldn't say anything now.

Immediately, the surviving Fiends took up temporary residence within the desert. After this great battle, the Highgods only numbered Learmonth, the three Edwards brothers, and Salomon, while for the Gods, including Linley's group, only thirteen survived.

Time passed on.

In the blink of an eye, three days passed. The Fiends were very patient, and didn't care about these three days at all.

"How long will the Boss be training for?" Bebe, seeing Linley remain in his meditative state, was growing frantic. "The Fiends aren't impatient yet, but if too much time passes, they definitely will grow impatient. But disturbing the Boss when he is training will have a major impact on him."

Bebe understood that Linley's sudden decision to meditate must have meant that he had a sudden insight.

This sort of opportunity was very precious. Once interrupted, it would be hard for him to once more enter this state.

"Rumble…"

A surge of unique ripples of Law descended from the heavens, encapsulating Linley.

"He made a breakthrough!" Everyone, including Learmonth, immediately opened their eyes to look towards Linley. They all understood…that this

descent of the natural Laws was the sign of a someone breaking through to become a Deity naturally.

Linley hovered in the air, while at the same time, his divine wind clone came out from his body…a light green-robed Linley.

“Rumble…”

A divine spark which emanated a green light emerged from Linley’s head, hovering there in the air above him. A large amount of wind elemental essence, under the guidance of the natural Laws, directly converged upon the divine spark, which slowly began to transform.

Moments later…

That Demigod-level divine wind spark had transformed into a God-level divine wind spark.

The ripples of the natural Laws subsided, and Linley opened his eyes.

“Uhh….” Linley, having made the breakthrough, now saw that a large group of people were around him, staring.

“Congratulations, Linley. You now have another God-level divine clone.” Salomon said with a laugh.

Learmonth nodded slightly as well. He looked towards Linley with an appraising gaze. “Very nicely done. You even gained insights during a life-and-death crisis.”

Learmonth very much appreciated this sort of person, who could make a breakthrough even during a life-and-death crisis.

He himself loved combat and challenges. As for money? As Learmonth saw it, having enough money to spend was sufficient. The so-called fortune of the Boyd clan was something which Learmonth didn’t care about at all. Learmonth’s goal was…

To become a Seven Star Fiend, then challenge an Asura!

Become one of the 108 Asuras of the Infernal Realm!

The three Edwards brothers glanced at Linley. They only chuckled. A mere God. What was there to be proud of? The Edwards brothers didn't hold Linley in any particular regard at all. They immediately looked at the white-horned elder. "Hey, that kid has made his breakthrough. Let's head out."

"Alright. Head out." The white-horned elder immediately said.

"Head out?" Only now did Linley come to the realization that all the other Fiends had been forced to wait here for him when he had suddenly begun to meditate.

"Bebe, how long did I meditate for?" Linley asked through his spirit.

"Three days. Boss, you really are amazing. Your divine wind clone has reached the God level as well." Bebe was boundlessly delighted for Linley.

Linley secretly let out a sigh of relief. "Not too bad. Just three days." If he had been training for half a year with the others all accompanying him, Linley would have felt extremely embarrassed.

The Infernal Realm. A desolate mountain range within the Redbud Continent.

Inigo stood there beneath a waterfall, two Highgods behind him.

"I didn't expect that the Boyd clan actually has a successor." Inigo said to himself. "Although that fellow was only allowed to enter the Boyd clan's estate a single time before being sent out…luckily enough, I remembered him."

Salomon's identity, even within the Boyd clan, was a major secret.

As he had entered the clan's estate only a single time before being sent out caused there to be very few people who knew who Salomon was. There were very few people who knew that Salomon had a connection to the Boyd clan.

But Inigo, thanks to a stroke of luck, had found out by accident.

And this time, when Inigo saw Salomon, he instantly understood!

"No wonder those two old fellows fled to the Redbud Continent, then tried to go back." Inigo said to himself. "However, since I now know, then…"

"Young master, what shall we do?" The two subordinates behind him looked at him.

Inigo said emotionlessly, "We head out." As he spoke, Inigo flew at high speed towards the north, and the two Highgods behind him immediately followed.

The metallic lifeform was constantly pressing forward. It had shrunk yet again. After all, there were very few people inside it now.

Within the metallic lifeform. Linley and Delia's room.

"The 'Fast' and 'Slow' aspects of the Profound Truths of Velocity have been completely fused. Only the sword attack that is both 'hard' and 'soft' is the sharpest, most powerful sword attack!" Linley understood now why experts of the Elemental Laws of the Wind found flexible swords to be so suited for them. Flexible swords allowed one to bring out the full strength of the profound mysteries.

After having seen the green-robed elder and Learmonth's sword intents…

Linley had some new thoughts regarding his usage of the sword as well.

"Unpredictable and fierce! This represents the most powerful attack of the Profound Truths of Velocity." Linley continued to visualize them in his

head. He was hard at working trying to make the attacks of the Profound Truths of Velocity more powerful and to apply it better.

This attack primarily relied on the Profound Truths of Velocity.

Naturally, it was a material attack.

“If I combine this material attack with my Dragonform…” Linley mused to himself. “The Dragonformed body is incomparably tough, and in terms of both strength and speed, it has reached a very high level. If I take the strength I have in Dragonform, then combine it with the Profound Truths of Velocity, then put it all on display through Bloodviolet, the power will definitely be substantial.

The same profound mystery, when used by a Highgod, would be far more powerful than when a God used it. This was because the mystery would be exerted through the divine power of a Highgod.

After Dragonforming, however, Linley’s strength, defense, and speed were even more monstrous than most ordinary Highgods. This was a body that was as tough as a divine artifact!

Linley was also beginning to gain a clearer and clearer understanding of the power of his most powerful sword attack.

In the blink of an eye, three months passed.

“Unfortunately, there’s no place to test it out within the metallic lifeform.” Linley said to himself. His sword attack was now able to easily chop apart this metallic lifeform. If they truly were to fight here..most likely the white-horned elder and the other Fiends would be enraged.

“Linley.” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

“Uh? Oh, Salomon, it’s you.” Linley saw that Salomon was outside his door.

Upon seeing Salomon, Linley thought about what Bebe had told him regarding the proceedings when he was training. He hadn't heard the green-robed elder discuss the Boyd clan, but upon returning to the metallic lifeform, of course Bebe had told him everything.

"This Salomon…can he be the master of this clan?" Linley wondered to himself.

Salomon said with a laugh, "Linley, there's something I wish to discuss with you."

Chapter 13 – Re-Employment

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 13, Re-Employment

Linley had a thought. Why had this Salomon suddenly come looking for him?

“Salomon, my wife, Delia, is inside training right now. How about this. Let’s chat outside.” Linley said with a smile.

Salomon’s face was very friendly. “Fine.” As he spoke, he walked out of the room alongside Linley.

Linley guessed to himself, “Salomon’s name is Salomon Boyd. Bebe told me as well that when those people were trying to kill the black-horned elder and the white-horned elder, it was because those two were the old servants of the Boyd clan and carried the fortune of the Boyd clan with them! But from the looks of it, the treasure is probably carried by Salomon.”

“However, if this Salomon truly is a member of the Boyd clan, he should keep the secret. Why did he reveal his identity to me?”

Linley didn’t understand.

The two stepped into another room. Salomon immediately spread out his Godrealm, preventing sound from leaking out.

“Please, please sit.” Salomon said courteously, and then he sat down as well.

Linley spoke out. “Salomon, why have you sought me out?” As he spoke, Linley looked at Salomon.

Salomon’s face was very sour. He let out a low sigh.

“Linley, I think you’ve probably guessed part of it.” Salomon sighed as he spoke.

Linley didn’t deny it either. He nodded. “Right. Before he died, I heard the green-robed elder say something about the Boyd clan? Can it be that the Boyd clan truly is your…”

Salomon nodded. “Right. I am indeed a member of the Boyd clan. The heir to the Boyd clan.”

Linley’s heart was startled.

Indeed!

And this Salomon wasn’t an ordinary clan member; he was actually the heir and successor.

“The Boyd clan truly is a large clan.” Salomon said slowly. “In Coldcalm Prefecture , it is one of the top ten large clans, but of course it is difficult for even an enormous clan to exist forever and never decay. Under the secret machinations of our opponents, my Boyd clan was finally brought down and destroyed.”

“My father…was the clan leader of the Boyd clan!” Salomon said softly.

Linley nodded slightly.

“In fact, I was only conceived by happenstance, when my father was touring the Infernal Realm and met my mother. I was just an illegitimate child.” Salomon snorted. “In the Boyd clan, it would be very hard for someone of my status to become the heir.”

Linley now understood. He said to himself, “I didn’t expect that this sort of thing happens in the Infernal Realm as well. It seems this Salomon’s life in the Boyd clan wasn’t very good.”

Although Linley had never experienced this himself, he had heard of it.

The status of a bastard was far inferior to that of someone in the direct line of descent.

“That year, Nisse and I went on a visit to the Jadefloat Continent. But on that trip…” Salomon’s face grew ugly. “We were directly kicked out!”

Linley was slightly startled.

Kicked out?

“I only stayed at the Boyd clan for a single day before being forced to leave.” Salomon laughed bitterly. “I returned to the Redbud Continent. Only afterwards did I learn that it was my father, the clan leader, who had arranged for myself and my sister to be expelled. Father had discovered long ago that the clan was facing a terrible danger.”

“At that time, when I returned to the Redbud Continent, it was Father who sent me to my teacher to study from him.” Salomon said with a sigh.

Linley just stood there, listening.

“Indeed…” Salomon said heavily. “The Boyd clan was finished. Some of its businesses in the ten great cities of Coldcalm Prefecture were swallowed and taken over. However, the vast fortune accumulated over countless years by our Boyd clan was hidden away. Those two faithful old servants of our clan took it and headed to the Redbud Continent to give it to me.”

Linley said helplessly, “Salomon, why are you telling me this?”

Although telling him this sort of secret was a form of trust, it was also a source of pressure for Linley.

Salomon looked at Linley. Calmly, he said, “I trust you. At the same time, I don’t want Bebe and my sister Nisse to have any misunderstandings between them, so it’s best to explain things clearly.”

Linley couldn't help but take a close look at Boyd. He then nodded slightly.

Something like this could indeed cause Bebe's suspicions to be raised. If it wasn't made clear, there would always be a hint of reservations between Bebe and Nisse.

"This Salomon is worth befriending." Linley nodded to himself. This fortune…he himself of course viewed money as something being the more the better, but there was no way he would rob and kill a friend for the sake of money.

Salomon continued to speak.

"A long time passed after I acquired this fortune. When I felt my power had reached a certain level, I led my two servants and my little sister back towards the Jadefloat Continent. I didn't expect…that after so many years, there still were people waiting here for us." Salomon sighed.

Linley laughed calmly. "Salomon, the fortune of an entire clan will cause greed in many. So what if they wait ten million years?"

To an expert who could live for hundreds of millions of years, waiting ten thousand years really was nothing.

"Fair enough."

Salomon continued. "Linley, today, I have told you these things because first of all, I want for there to be no misunderstandings between the two of us. After all, my little sister is going to be together with your little brother." This was how Linley introduced Bebe, as his little brother.

And in truth, the relationship between the two really was like that of two siblings.

"Secondly, Linley, I hope that in the future, you will help take care of my little sister." Salomon said bitterly. "Even once I return to the Jadefloat Continent, I will still be beset by difficulties. My little sister, if she goes

with you, will probably be better off. I only have a single little sister…I don't want her to be in danger!"

"It's fine. Don't worry about this." Linley didn't hesitate at all. "As long as I, Linley, do not die, I will definitely protect your sister."

In the Infernal Realm, the people Linley cared about were, without question, Bebe and his wife Delia. Even if it were only for Bebe's sake, Linley would protect Nisse.

"That makes me relieved." Salomon nodded and laughed. "Linley, since that's the case, I won't disturb you further. You can go be busy."

Linley left Salomon's residence.

After Linley left, Salomon's face, previously all smiles, instantly turned gloomy, his gaze turning fierce. "I told him so many things, but Linley continues to conceal his secrets from me. Hmph, does he think that I don't know? A core member of the Four Divine Beasts clan…"

Salomon knew very well what the history of the Four Divine Beasts clan was.

"The Four Divine Beasts clan once shook the Four Higher Realms with their fame. Although they have decayed, they are still outstanding figures within the Infernal Realm." Salomon murmured. "After transforming, his draconic scales are azure-gold, and his aura is so frightening. He is definitely a core member."

Within the castle of sand, Linley's Dragonform had absorbed that drop of blue water, and then he had attacked that Highgod. Salomon had appeared and had seen Linley's transformation form.

Salomon, as the heir to the Boyd clan, had been secretly trained by some reclusive experts at his father's request. Naturally, he knew many of the secrets of the Infernal Realm. Salomon had previously told Linley his name precisely because he had the intention of befriending Linley.

Boyd clan? Forget about now; even when they were at the heights of their power, they could only be considered a major clan within the Coldcalm Prefecture . Compared to the Four Divine Beasts clan, they were far inferior.

Which of the ultimate experts within the Infernal Realm hadn't heard of the great fame of the Four Divine Beasts clan? And this was with the Four Divine Beasts clan being in a decayed state.

When the Four Divine Beasts clan had been at the full heights of their power, their influence reached throughout the Four Higher Planes.

In Salomon's mind, Linley was definitely hiding secrets from him. How could he know that Linley actually only knew just the tiniest bit about the Four Divine Beasts clan?

The metallic lifeform pressed onwards. In the blink of an eye, it flew for yet another three months.

"This truly has been boring."

Linley sighed to himself. "With regards to executing the sword attack with the 'Profound Truths of Velocity', I already have some confidence. Only, without practical experience, I can't be certain. But within this metallic creature, there's no way I can casually test it out." What Linley wanted to do right now was to find an empty space and to test things out.

He wanted to ascertain the strength of this attack with the Profound Truths of Velocity.

"Everyone, please come to the main hall." Suddenly, a voice rang out.

"To the main hall?" Linley couldn't help but be puzzled. "Judging from the sound, it should be the voice of that white-horned elder."

Delia, who had been fusing with her divine spark, was startled into

wakefulness. “Linley, did that white-horned elder ask for us to all go to the main hall?” Linley took Delia by the hand and laughed, “How should I know what is going on? Let’s go take a look.” As he spoke, the two left their room.

Within the main hall of the metallic lifeform, a group of Fiends stood together, all of them looking towards the white-horned elder.

The white-horned elder said in a bright voice, “Everyone, we will soon arrive at Yilan City. We will stop outside of Yilan City. Everyone can take a rest within the metallic lifeform. After two crises, many Fiends have died, and our two chefs have died as well. This time, I will go into the city to invite some new chefs to come, and also employ a few more Fiends from the Fiend Castle.”

“Employ Fiends?” The Fiends in the main hall didn’t object.

This trip was fairly dangerous, but how could an escort mission be without danger? If there was no danger, why would there be a need for Fiends to escort them?

The Fiends actually welcomed more Fiends joining in.

“I’ve been bored to death recently. It’ll be good to enter the city. We can relax.” Immediately, some Fiends began to laugh.

“Boss, when we go inside Yilan City, we’ll be able to have some good food in the restaurants in the city.” Bebe smacked his lips as he spoke. “Ever since those two chefs were killed during that bandit attack, a long time has passed since I had any good food.”

Everyone was discussing this amongst themselves.

The white-horned elder said loudly, “At the same time, I would like to ask everyone to remain within the metallic creature and not to enter Yilan City.” These words instantly caused dissatisfaction.

“Why not?” A Fiend spoke out.

The white-horned elder said calmly, “I hope everyone can understand. After the battle at the castle of sand, I imagine all of you know about the Boyd clan’s affairs. I don’t want for this information to spread out. Thus…even if you don’t stay inside the metallic lifeform, at the very least, you cannot enter the city.”

Indeed, amongst the Fiends present, there were some who wanted to leak this news out.

The secret of the Boyd clan?

Linley nodded to himself. It was true. If someone spread this secret, everyone would probably meet with danger on the way.

“I understand this logic.” The eldest of the three Edwards brothers said calmly. “Please don’t worry. Since we’ve accepted this mission, we naturally won’t reveal it. Even if we were only doing it for our own sakes, we wouldn’t reveal it. All of us will stay outside the city and not enter it. Mr. Learmonth, what say you?”

Learmonth nodded. “Nobody is permitted to enter the city, nor chat casually with outsiders, until this mission is completed.”

The white-horned elder was overjoyed. “Thank you, the four of you.”

With the three Edwards brothers and Learmonth having spoken out, the other Fiends wouldn’t raise any other objections.

Moments later, through the window, they all saw the city drawing nearer. The metallic lifeform came to a halt at a wide, empty expanse of wild grass roughly ten kilometers outside of the city. The white-horned elder headed by himself through the city gates, while the others left the metallic lifeform as well.

They rested in the area around the metallic lifeform.

“I hope everyone will act wisely.” The eldest of the three Edwards brothers, the handsome man, said emotionlessly. “If someone interacts with outsiders, don’t blame us for being merciless.”

“Hmph. So boring.” Bebe snorted softly. “We’re at a city, but we can’t go inside.”

Linley’s face was all smiles. “This is good. I will have the chance to test the sword technique now.” Linley walked to an empty area, then drew Bloodviolet and began to test his sword technique. As he was worried that someone might recognize Bloodviolet, Linley had intentionally changed Bloodviolet’s appearance slightly.

Actually, there were many violet longswords, and the number of people who had personally met the Bloodviolet Fiend could be counted on one hand. After Linley’s modifications, even the aura of Bloodviolet had changed. Who would possibly be able to recognize Bloodviolet?

Chapter 14 – The Scorching Volcano

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 14, The Scorching Volcano

Linley's group remained outside of Yilan City, while nearly a hundred million kilometers east of Yilan City, there was an enormous chain of volcanoes.

The massive volcano chain took up thousands of kilometers of space. Within these thousand kilometers was an area of volcanoes, and the entire place was a dim red color.

"Crackle…" A white mist emitted from the center of the mountain range. A dense smell of sulfur could be smelled from far away, and many skeletons of humans, beastmen, and others lay throughout the mountain range. There was no life here, not a single blade of grass. This was a famously lethal region in the Infernal Realm…

The Biss [Bi'si] Volcano Range!

Dozens of human figures were flying in the air above the Biss Volcano Range. Judging from their appearances, they seemed rather ragged.

"The Infernal Realm really is chaotic. It's impossible to find a peaceful place to live." The leader cursed angrily.

"Big brother, let's hurry up and find a place where we can find our footing." A muscular man behind him said softly. "Let's try to find an out of the way place where we can build our power, and then we can worry about other things. In the Infernal Realm, there are too many dangers."

"Right." The leader nodded.

But right at that moment…

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

From the surface of the Biss Volcano Range, thousands of stones, carrying scorching flames, began to rise into the air at a terrifying speed. Instantly, those dozens of figures began to flee in terror, but those thousands of stones were capable of altering their trajectory.

“Crunch!” “Crunch!”

In the blink of an eye, dozens of Deities had their heads smashed in. Their divine sparks flew out and their souls dispersed. All of them fell down from mid-air.

Their corpses landed at the ground level of the volcano.

“Crackle…” The volcano range was like a living thing, swallowing up the corpses, interspatial rings, divine sparks, and divine artifacts.

The Biss Volcano Range was as peaceful as ever before. Aside from the fact that the surface of the volcano range now had a few more corpses, nothing had changed at all.

The Biss Volcano Range was a dangerous area, but for the many people who had never read any books regarding it or who had no experience, how would they know that this was a dangerous area? For example, Linley’s group only knew about some of the dangerous areas because they had bought some books.

And also…

Many dangerous areas in the Infernal Realm were newly formed and not recorded in any books.

Dangerous areas littered the world. This was the Infernal Realm!

A metallic lifeform was flying at high speed towards the Biss Volcano Range. Roughly a few dozen kilometers away from the Biss Volcano

Range, the metallic lifeform landed on the ground. From within it, three figures disembarked. It was Inigo and two of his subordinates.

“Young master, we’re coming to a halt now? Why don’t we fly into the volcano range?” One of them, a Highgod, asked questioningly.

Inigo glanced sideways at him coldly. “Hmph, into the volcano range? You are asking for death! The Biss Volcano Range is one of the lethally dangerous areas of the Infernal Realm. It isn’t as simple as you imagine it to be! Follow me.” As he spoke, Inigo strode forward at high speed towards the volcano range.

“How dangerous is this Biss Volcano Range, exactly?” The two Highgods behind him both wondered.

They were Highgods. There were very few areas which could pose a threat to them.

“If you don’t want to die, then don’t run about wildly.” Inigo snorted. “In this place, I’m not able to protect you.”

Although Inigo was walking on the ground, he traversed the dozens of kilometers in a very short period of time. Inigo led his two subordinates to the outer reaches of the Biss Volcano Range. Looking at the white steam and the barren, lifeless landscape, the volcano range covered with the odor of sulfur, Inigo couldn’t help but clear his throat.

“Lord Elquin [A’li’kui’en], I am second young master Inigo of the Bayfield [Bei’fei’er’de] clan of the Coldcalm Prefecture . I would like to request that Lord Elquin graces me with a meeting!” Inigo bowed respectfully as he spoke.

After speaking, Inigo remained in the bowing position, quietly awaiting for a response.

“Someone lives within this volcano range?” The two Highgods behind Inigo both felt surprised.

They too had heard that the Biss Volcano Range was a dangerous area, but they had never heard that the Biss Volcano Range had people within it.

“The Bayfield clan?” A deep voice rang out from within the volcano range, causing the entire volcano range to rumble slightly. “Enter, then.”

And then, a tunnel suddenly appeared from a crack on the surface of the volcano range.

Inigo took a deep breath, then walked towards the corridor. The two Highgods behind him both felt astonished.

“Hurry up and follow.” Inigo barked.

“Yes, young master.” The two immediately followed Inigo in, stepping into the corridor.

According to the rules of the Infernal Realm, once one became a Seven Star Fiend, one had the right to challenge the Asuras. Only by defeating an Asura would one receive the position. The former Asura would either die in battle, or survive and relinquish their position…after countless challenges and struggles, the Infernal Realm naturally now had many reclusive experts.

These reclusive experts might be former Asuras, or they might be Seven Star Fiends, or perhaps even those extremely powerful experts who weren’t interested in fighting for the position of Asura.

Without question, however, they all possessed terrifying power.

The common people of the Infernal Realm had no idea they existed, but some of the ancient clans knew about some of the reclusive experts who couldn’t be offended.

The two subordinates of Inigo immediately understood. “Most likely, this Biss Volcano Range has an ultimate expert residing within.”

In the dark corridor, the three continuously advanced deeper into the ground.

Suddenly…

“Crackle…” The stone wall at the side of the corridor suddenly splintered into countless pebbles which suddenly moved forwards!

“Ah!” “Ah!”

The two Highgods were pierced through by those countless flying pebbles, and even their divine sparks were struck numerous times. Their souls were immediately dispersed!

But Inigo’s face didn’t change. He thought to himself, “I didn’t expect that after so many years, that pet of Lord Elquin’s behaves just as father said. Hmph. These two fellows served as food for Lord Elquin’s pet!”

Moments later…

Inigo walked to the end of the corridor, where a river of lava was flowing. Inigo had arrived at the heart of the volcano range now. This core region was an extremely vast, empty cave. In the center of the cave, there was a scorching hot pond of golden magma.

“I didn’t expect that there was such a strange thing underground.” Inigo’s face changed.

“Drip…drip…” The golden magma continued to boil and flow.

The muscles on Inigo’s face clenched twice, and then he left through another corridor, arriving at a large, lavish, empty underground palace. Deep within the underground palace, black-robed figure was currently seated in the official position, while within his arms there was a golden kitten.

Inigo immediately bowed and said, “Inigo Bayfield pays his respects to

Lord Elquin, and also brings the well-wishes of my father."

"Mm." The black-robed figure responded calmly. "Inigo, I've heard your father speak of you. Why have you come to me?"

A hint of a smile appeared on Inigo's face. "Lord Elquin, actually, I spent a very long period of time and led over a hundred Highgods in preparation for a major event, but in the end, despite spending a large amount of money, most of my subordinates died and we still failed."

"Whatever it is that you want, speak clearly!" The black-robed figure snorted coldly in dissatisfaction.

Inigo hurriedly said, "Yes, I'll speak clearly. Not long ago, the Boyd clan was destroyed, but two servants of their clan took the vast fortune accumulated by the Boyd clan over countless years and fled with it. I have been searching for them this entire time, and chased them here from the Jadefloat Continent. In the end, I discovered them!"

"Boyd clan?"

The black-robed figure was finally startled. "Are you referring to the Boyd clan which was as famous as your Bayfield clan?"

"Yes." Inigo said.

The black-robed figure let out a few insidious chuckles. "Haha, Inigo, the fortune of the Boyd clan is an astonishing sum. You've actually come to notify me about such a fortunate event? Why didn't you go seek out other members of your Bayfield clan? I have to question what your intentions are."

Inigo said hurriedly, "Lord Elquin, there are two major reasons why I didn't go to my clan for help."

"First of all, if I were to look for the experts within the clan, I would have to at least head back to the Coldcalm Prefecture of the Jadefloat Continent.

The distance is simply too vast, and it's hard to say if some variables would occur which would cause me to lose track of them." Inigo said hurriedly. "As for the second reason, I'm afraid Lord Elquin will laugh at me."

Inigo laughed self-mockingly, "Lord Elquin, you should know that my big brother is the eldest son of the clan chief. In the future, he will be the one to inherit the position of clan chief. As for me, in the future, I will most likely be sent off to some distant area. My power will probably be far inferior to even my current level."

The black-robed figure let out two insidious chuckles. "You are a smart kid. Right. Speak a bit more regarding the fortune of the Boyd clan. If I can acquire this fortune, I naturally won't mistreat you."

Although he was extremely powerful, this vast fortune of an enormous clan had been enough to make him greedy.

"Um, this…" Inigo mumbled.

The black-robed figure chuckled, "Kid, do you think I can't tell what you are thinking? Fine, then. You and I can make a contract by the Overgods. If I acquire the fortune of the Boyd clan, I will give you ten percent. What do you say?"

The power of a contract was extremely great.

It was like the 'bond of equals' or 'master-servant bond' between a man and a magical beast. When metallic lifeforms were under the control of others, it was also because of this sort of bond.

As for the Overgod contract, it was an extremely serious type of bond.

"Alright." Inigo was instantly overjoyed. Ten percent of the fortune!

If he had given this information to his clan, the clan would heavily reward him, but how much would he get? This was the entire fortune of the Boyd clan; if his own clan gave him even one percent, that would be quite good.

How could they give him ten percent?

Inigo and the black-robed man immediately set up an Overgod contract.

“Crackle…”

Two rays of black light flew out from Inigo and the black-robed man’s foreheads, piercing into their divine sparks.

Inigo was now completely at ease. He immediately laughed. “Lord Elquins, on this trip, on the surface, those two servants have employed a group of Fiends, with one of the servants having died and only one remaining.”

“So the fortune is on those two old servants?” The black-robed figure said.

Inigo instead said, “Not necessarily. Lord Elquins, I saw someone within the group of Fiends who is very likely to be a member of the Boyd clan. I suspect…that the fortune is currently on him.”

“He joined the Fiends?” The black-robed figure nodded slightly.

“Lord Elquins, don’t worry. When the time comes, I will follow you and immediately point him out.”

The black-robed figure said calmly, “How about this. Inigo, you arrange for everything. All you need to do is notify me.” Inigo bowed respectfully, then retreated.

After Inigo left, the black-robed figure immediately stood up. His ashen, pale face was only now revealed. A hint of a smile was at the corner of Elquin’s lips. “Since we have made an Overgod contract, this kid won’t dare lie to me. It is worth a trip.”

Elquin was also worried that Inigo might play some tricks, but now, there was no need.

“Phusro [Pu’si’luo], let’s prepare to head out.” Elquins petted the golden fur

on the kitten in his hands.

“Meow.” The little golden kitten called out.

Outside Yilan City, the metallic lifeform remained halted outside the city. The three Edwards brothers and the other Fiends waited quietly outside the city.

“That kid really is hard working. He’s always training.”

“Most likely it is because he encountered so many dangers. He’s afraid of death.”

The three Edwards brothers chatted and laughed quietly amongst themselves, while at the same time glancing sideways into the distance at Linley, who was experimenting with his sword techniques time and time again. Linley had already been experimenting nonstop for eighteen full days. Over the course of these eighteen days, Linley had continuously trained while also correcting and improving the technique.

Theory and practice were not the same. There were always some differences.

Linley once more struck out with Bloodviolet. As it chopped out, instantly, the sword shadow became blurred, as though it had reached the limits of speed as well as the limits of sloth. This sort of feeling was extremely disorienting. As his sword flashed past, sharp ripples in space appeared.

“Crackle…” The earth split open.

This was caused by those spatial ripples alone.

“There we go.” Linley’s eyes lit up. For experimentation, Linley only used a tenth of his full power, but the strength of this attack remained astonishing.

A smile appeared on Linley’s face. “That’s about it. This ‘Bewildering

Shadow' attack has finally been completed! If I were to attack using it at full strength, especially when matching it with the massive strength and speed of my Dragonform, the power of this attack…will be dozens of times greater than it was just now!"

Chapter 15 – News of Olivier

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 15, News of Olivier

After spending eighteen days of time, Linley had finally completed this technique which he had been pondering for so long. This ‘Bewildering Shadow’ was Linley’s most powerful material attack now. After having developed the ‘Bewildering Shadow’, Linley began to accompany Delia and Bebe with a relaxed mind.

After the metallic life had waited outside Yilan City for a month or so, the white-horned elder finally returned with a group of hired Fiends. Soon, nearly a hundred Fiends had followed the white-horned elder over.

“So there are Fiends here already.” The hired Fiends, upon seeing Linley’s group, couldn’t help but begin to laugh and chat.

“But there’s so few people. There’s less than twenty people, all combined.”

“Most likely this mission really will be as dangerous as claimed.”

“Dangerous? If they died during the mission, all that can be said was that they were useless!”

Hearing this discourse, the three Edwards brothers, Learmonth, and those original Fiends were all laughing coldly in their hearts….

“So few? How would you know that when we first started, we had over a hundred Fiends as well!”

“Useless? Let’s see how many of you will survive.”

Linley and the others felt as though they could already see the sight of these Fiends being killed.

The white-horned elder laughed. “Everyone has been waiting for quite some time now. Let’s go in. We’re heading out now.”

Immediately, the bustling array of people all filled the metallic creature, with Linley, Delia, Bebe, Nisse, and Salomon walking together.

“Hired so many?” Bebe mumbled. “110 Fiends, a hundred at the God-level, with the other ten being Highgods. Why invite so many Gods? To serve as cannon fodder?”

Hearing Bebe’s words, Linley actually mused to himself, “Cannon fodder? No, most likely, with more Fiends present, it will be easier to hide Salomon’s identity.”

Linley suddenly thought back to that original conversation he had with Salomon early on.

During that conversation, Salomon had intentionally acted mysteriously and said that this escort mission was very risky, and that the origin point for this mission actually wasn’t Royalwing City. He had said that if this mission ran into any danger, Linley should immediately flee and try to preserve himself. At that time, Linley had felt grateful towards Salomon.

But afterwards, Linley had learned…

That this escort mission’s primary figure was actually Salomon!

“Most likely, he intentionally spread that ‘rumor’ as well.” Linley said to himself. “When danger came, if the Fiends scattered everywhere, he would most likely have a chance to flee as well. By then, with so many people fleeing and him amongst them, others would only pay attention to the white-horned elder. Nobody would go deal with him.”

Linley had to admit that Salomon truly did think far ahead.

Hiring more Fiends was just done for obscuring the truth.

“It’s best to be somewhat cautious when dealing with someone like him. Otherwise, I’ll probably be taken advantage of by him without even realizing it.” Linley couldn’t help but feel more guarded towards Salomon.

The metallic lifeform had remained outside of Yilan City for roughly a month, and now it was once more heading off. Currently, the metallic lifeform had once more transformed to the size it had been at when leaving Royalwing City. The interior of the metallic lifeform once more appeared to be bustling.

The metallic lifeform. Linley and Delia’s room.

Delia was frowning as though thinking about something. She then turned to look at Linley and spoke. “Linley, there’s something I want to tell you.”

“Hm, what is it?” Linley turned his head to look at Delia. Judging from her expression, it seemed to be rather important.

Delia frowned. “Linley, at first, when we accepted this mission, we thought that it would help us move along the way in our journey. But I keep on having the feeling that this mission is too dangerous. Don’t you know who we are escorting? One of the ancient clans of the Infernal Realm and the massive wealth they have accumulated over countless years! We’ve been attacked twice already. I’m worried there will be a third attack. Most likely, the third attack will be even more dangerous than the first two. Although we do need to face some challenges in the Infernal Realm, but, we don’t need to put ourselves in such danger. We could die at any moment.”

Linley nodded.

During this journey, they had first suffered the bandit attack, which had only been a probe. The second attack within the castle of sand had been filled with danger. If there was a third attack, how dangerous would it be?

Linley reached out with his arm, taking Delia into his embrace. In a gentle voice, he said, “Delia, I know. However, we’ve already accepted this mission. What are we supposed to do, withdraw from it? Look at those

other surviving Fiends. Do you see any of them withdrawing?"

If they had taken the chance to flee during a chaotic battle, they would at least have an excuse and say that they fled in terror and got separated.

But actively withdrawing…

Once this was recorded down into the mission records of the Fiend Castles, once it spread out, they would have lost all face! In the Infernal Realm, courage was reverenced while cowardice was reviled! In addition, the Infernal Realm was dangerous to begin with. Everyone was psychologically prepared for the danger.

"That's not what I meant." Delia said hurriedly. "I understand that we can't withdraw. Once that spreads to the Indigo Prefecture and your ancestors find out…we can't lose face like that. All I wanted to say was that once we arrive at the Rainbow Prefecture's Bluemaple City, we need to do a better job of selecting missions. An easier one."

"I understand."

Linley nodded, then comforted her, "Don't worry. We're halfway through the journey now. Wait a bit longer."

"Delia doesn't like danger." Linley said to himself quietly. In truth, only when teetering at the brink of death, when fighting for his life at the edge of the blade, when encountering danger, did Linley feel his blood pumping. He wasn't afraid at all.

On the contrary, Linley felt as though he were back in the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts as a youth.

This was a very exciting feeling.

"Creeaaaak." He shut the door, then headed towards the main hall.

Because there were many Fiends, the main hall within the metallic lifeform

seemed quite crowded. There were seven or eight people seated there drinking and chatting, two of whom Linley recognized. Months had passed since they had left Yilan City, and Linley had gotten to know these Fiends.

“Oi, Linley!” Immediately, a Fiend greeted Linley from afar.

Linley grinned and waved back, then sat down by himself at a round table. He casually ordered two dishes and some wine, then began to drink by himself.

At this time, a muscular, two meter tall man with golden hair walked over, somewhat surprised. He looked at Linley curiously, then said softly, “You… are Linley?”

Puzzled, Linley looked up and glanced at him. “Right. I am Linley.”

“You are Linley Baruch?” The golden haired man suddenly asked.

Linley was greatly shocked. Someone knew his full name. “You are?” The golden haired man, seeing the look on Linley’s face, laughed and sat down. “Linley, don’t be nervous. I’ve just heard of you before, that’s all.”

“Heard of me before?” Linley didn’t understand.

In the Infernal Realm, he didn’t have much of a reputation. How could a stranger recognize him?

“Let me introduce myself first. My name is Bachelor [Ba’che’lei]. As for why I know your name…Olivier, you know him, yes?” The man laughed.

Linley was shocked. “Bachelor, you know Olivier?”

After having been in the Infernal Realm for so long, upon suddenly hearing the name ‘Olivier’, Linley’s heart was filled with a strange feeling. After all, this was someone from his homeland of the Yulan Plane.

“Of course I know him.” Bachelor held a goblet of wine, laughing. “Olivier

and I have a bit of a history together. We arrived in the same batch of people to the Infernal Realm, and then were tossed out by the Redbud Army together, so we took up residence in a nearby tribe."

Linley nodded to himself. This was essentially his experience as well.

"At that time, I was already a God, while Olivier was only a Demigod. However, his training speed was very fast. After roughly fifty years, he reached the God level in the Laws of Light." Bachelor sighed. "And then, we came together to Yilan City to take part in the Fiend trials. We both succeeded in becoming One Star Fiends!"

Linley had a hint of a smile on his face.

It seemed as though Bachelor and Olivier's relationship truly wasn't just a superficial one.

"Then where is Olivier himself?" Linley asked.

Bachelor shook his head helplessly. "After becoming One Star Fiends, we took on a two star mission. However, we encountered some danger in that mission. Unable to deal with it, we all fled in every direction. I fled with some of my friends back to Yilan City. As for Olivier, I haven't been able to find him."

Linley frowned.

"Perhaps Olivier is still alive. Who knows?" Bachelor raised his head, gulping down the wine in his goblet, then put it back down and sighed. "Fiend missions are filled with danger to begin with. If you die, you die."

Linley nodded slightly.

In the Infernal Realm, death was all too common. Everyone was mentally prepared.

"When Olivier and I were in the tribe together, he mentioned you to me

before. You gave him a very deep, lasting impression." Bachelor sighed. "When I praised him for having been so quick to become a God, he said that you probably had reached this level as well. And it seems this is indeed the case!"

Linley let out a long, drawn breath.

While they were in the Yulan continent, he and Olivier had often been viewed as equals and discussed in the same breath by others. The two were acclaimed as the two greatest talents the Yulan continent had seen in over ten thousand years. However, within the boundless Infernal Realm, Linley and Olivier were very unremarkable figures.

"I hope that Olivier is still alive." Linley quietly prayed for his compatriot.

"I was able to run into two talents who come from the same material plane. This is a form of karmic destiny. Come, cheers." Bachelor grinned as he spoke.

Linley had good impression of Bachelor as well, and so he laughed and raised his own goblet as well.

Linley began to casually chat while drinking with Bachelor. When Linley mentioned the battle at Moon Lake Castle, Bachelor shared his own experiences during his own Fiend trial. However, at this time, neither Linley nor Bachelor noticed that the metallic lifeform was currently flying through a volcanic region.

"Based on the map, it should be an ordinary mountain range beneath us. Why did it transform into a volcano range?"

The two Fiends by the window chatted together.

Indeed, this volcano range had moved here not long ago!

Linley and Bachelor were still chatting happily.

“Linley, you have no idea. Even I thought that I was dead for sure. At that second, with a ‘slash’ sound, Olivier suddenly appeared behind the enemy, then stabbed him straight through the back of his head, killing him with a single blow. That’s the only reason why I managed to survive.” Bachelor said excitedly.

But right at that moment…

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

A dense array of sounds suddenly pierced through the skies, while at the same time, the metallic lifeform exploded apart with a ‘BOOM’ sound. Countless red boulders were smashing towards all of the Fiends within the metallic creature. Everything immediately became a scene of utter chaos.

“BOOM!” A Fiend who was drinking in the main hall not too far away from them was struck by one of those fiery red boulders. His body was smashed into a pulp, and his head was shattered open, his divine spark falling down from mid-air.

An enormous fiery boulder came smashing towards Linley, who immediately dodged, but the fiery red bolder suddenly arced in midair.

“BANG!” It smashed hard onto Linley’s body.

Linley’s body trembled violently, and the Pulseguard Armor on his body trembled as well. “Fortunately, this Pulseguard Armor was defensively strong enough!” Linley secretly celebrated. “Not good. Delia.” Linley immediately wanted to fly towards Delia.

But a large number of fiery boulders continued to smash around him.

Linley discovered that Bachelor was currently facing the attack of a fiery red boulder. Bachelor roared angrily, chopping down with the greatsword in his hands, and a surge of fierce power struck viciously against that fiery boulder, which was immediately cleft in two.

However, the two cleft halves actually continued to fly towards Bachelor.

Bachelor's face changed dramatically.

"Whoosh!" An illusory, blurry violet sword shadow suddenly appeared. The violet sword shadow was lightning-fast, but it also gave a slow, plodding feeling. Wherever the sword shadow passed by, space itself trembled. The violet sword shadow struck towards those two boulders, which immediately shattered apart, transforming into a large amount of pebbles.

Bachelor immediately let out a breath, glancing sideways towards Linley with a hint of thankfulness in his eyes.

"Careful!" Linley's face changed dramatically.

"Boom!"

A nearby fiery boulder that had been attacking someone else suddenly changed direction, smashing directly towards Bachelor's head. "BANG!" Bachelor's head exploded, and a divine spark fell down from mid-air.

Chapter 16 – Golden Magma

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 16, Golden Magma

“Rumble…” Linley didn’t have the time to think about other things. He saw countless boulders everywhere, with so many above them that they blocked out the sun. All of the fiery boulders pressed down towards the Fiends, surrounding them. Linley himself was collected in by those countless boulders, rendering him unable to move.

“Crackle…”

All of the fiery red boulders began to move bizarrely. If someone was watching from the outside, that person would have discovered…that within the volcano range, a fiery mountain peak had suddenly appeared.

This mountain peak was formed from those countless fiery boulders.

Linley and the surviving Fiends, as well as the corpses of the dead Fiends, were within the mountain peak.

“What is going on?” Linley stared in astonishment.

The boulders that had been surrounding him were all moved away, and in front of him was a narrow corridor. Linley followed through this narrow corridor for roughly ten meters, at which point he discovered an awesome spectacle…in front of him, there was a tunnel that led directly upwards and downwards!

At this time, one surviving Fiend after another was gathering in this vertical tunnel, coming out from their own narrow corridors. The group of them just floated there within the vertical tunnel.

“Delia?” Linley frantically looked for her towards each corridor.

The vast majority of the Fiends who had survived to come out of the tunnel were Highgods, while a few Gods were amongst them. The sudden attack just now had caused many Gods to lose their lives.

“Boss!” A voice suddenly rang out.

Linley immediately turned!

He saw Delia and Bebe emerge from within a distant corridor.

“Delia, Bebe.” Overjoyed, Linley immediately went over. Bebe and Delia’s eyes were filled with joy as well. Linley carefully looked at Delia, his heart delighted.

“It was all thanks to Bebe just now.” Delia sighed emotionally. “That attack came too suddenly, and there were many of those giant boulders. Fortunately, I was able to use the Deathgod Golem to take one of them head on. Afterwards, it was only thanks to Bebe’s help that I was able to safely pass through those terrifying waves of attacks.”

Bebe quirked his lips. “I just stood there. When the metallic creature was shattered, I was only a few meters away from Delia, so it was easy for me to help out.” Although he spoke casually, within Bebe’s eyes, there was still a hint of urgency.

Linley understood that Bebe was worried about Nisse.

“Where’s Nisse? Wasn’t she with you at the time?” Linley suddenly asked.

Bebe squeezed out a smile. “At that time, Ninny went to her brother’s place. Salomon is a Highgod. He should have been able to protect Ninny.”

“Bebe.” A voice rang out from afar.

Bebe immediately turned his head, and a look of delight appeared on his face. “Ninny.” Nisse and Salomon immediately flew over. After suffering this attack but not dying, everyone finally was able to smile.

Suddenly…

“Everyone, let’s break open the mountain walls and go out.” Suddenly, someone called out.

“BANG!”

An explosion immediately followed. By the time Linley and the others turned their heads, all they saw was a shattered corpse falling downwards.

“What’s going on?” Linley’s group was somewhat mystified.

“Everyone, what should we do right now?” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Everyone, including Linley, turned to look. The speaker was a Highgod. Linley had heard of his name before; his name was Sperry. He had a rather high reputation amongst the group of Fiends who had been hired from Yilan City, and his strength was most likely that of a Four Star Fiend or a Five Star Fiend.

This Sperry had long, slightly wavy brown hair.

With a flip of his hand, a black blade shadow suddenly appeared. Space shuddered as the blade shadow flashed past the mountain wall, carving out a half-meter deep hole, but the rocks carved out from the hole all shot out at high speed towards Sperry.

Countless blade shadows flashed, and those shattered rocks transformed into dust.

The strange thing was, the powdered rocks actually reformed, flying back to the half-meter deep hole in the mountain walls, completely filling it up. And then, the stone powder moved about, transforming to a very polished state without any hint of a blade scar.

“Everyone saw that, right?” Sperry swept everyone with his gaze.

Many of the Fiends present were highly experienced. Seeing this, they were able to hypothesize what the situation was.

“This should be a Volcano Titan!” Immediately, someone spoke out. “The most important part of a Volcano Titan is their energy nucleus. As long as the nucleus doesn’t shatter, they are able to control countless amounts of rocks to once more reform their enormous bodies. Most likely, this entire volcano range is just part of the enormous body of the Volcano Titan.”

“Volcano Titan?” Linley was shocked, and he couldn’t help but exchange glances with Bebe.

Linley thought of a type of creature. The strange thing he had encountered on the sixth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods…the Flame Tyrant!

At that time, that creature was also a mountain-sized giant. The first time, they had managed to destroy it, but a semi-translucent stone had formed as the center for the recreation of its body. Afterwards, Linley had relied on the Throbbing Pulse of the World to shake the energy nucleus to pieces, killing the creature.

“Can it be that this is also a Flame Tyrant? Or, to be precise, the Highgod variant of a Flame Tyrant?” Linley wondered to himself. This ‘Volcano Titan’ was definitely a Highgod. If it was only a God, how could it have so easily killed so many Gods?

“I didn’t expect that we would end up inside the body of a creature! And this volcano range is a creature.” Bebe muttered.

“Everyone knows the situation. Now, what should we do?” Sperry said, and then he looked towards the white-horned elder. “What thoughts do you have? You have hired us for this mission, after all.”

The white-horned elder said sincerely, “How could I have any thoughts on this? Everyone, you decide.”

“We only have seven Highgod Fiends here.” Another person said clearly. “That ambush attack was dangerous to Gods, but not to most Highgods. Also…neither the Edwards brothers nor Learmonth are here. I refuse to believe that they would die! Thus, I imagine that the surviving Fiends have most likely been divided into two or three segments.”

Everyone nodded slightly.

The three Edwards brothers and Learmonth were all extremely powerful experts in this mission. No one believed that the attack just now was capable of killing them.

However, Learmonth and the others weren’t here.

“Perhaps they are in another part of the Volcano Titan’s body.” Sperry said calmly. “However, this Volcano Titan truly is bold, to allow us to enter his body. As long as we can find his energy nucleus and shatter it, he will die for certain. Come. We have no other choices. Let’s go downwards.”

Perry led them in flying downwards, and immediately, all the other Fiends immediately followed.

Linley and the others flew downwards as well.

Soon afterwards, they landed on the ground. This place was covered with boiling rivers of lava, which had passageways and corridors to each side.

Within a palace that was hidden away deep within the volcano range, Elquin was seated on a chair, dressed in a black robe, holding that little golden kitten in his arms. Inigo, appearing rather respectful, was standing next to him.

“Phusro, how goes it?” Elquin gently petted the little golden kitten in his arms, smiling as he spoke.

“Meow. Master, I’ve already separated the Fiends apart, and the more powerful Fiends are now in a different area! That powerful Fiend named

‘Learmonth’ which Inigo described has been placed in a separate area, blocked off from everyone else. For now, he won’t be able to interfere with our plans. Meow.” The little golden kitten spoke in human tongues.

Elquin nodded slightly.

“Meow. Master, that white-horned elder and that man whom Inigo said is probably a member of the Boyd clan have been placed by me in the same location. Right now, they have reached the Goldflame Pool. Meow.” The little golden kitten said silkily.

Elquin smiled in satisfaction. “It’s about time. Let’s move!”

“Drip, drip…”

In the center of this cave, there was a pool of golden lava that was constantly boiling and hurtling about. The air on top of the magma pool was twisted and distorted from the high temperature.

By the time Linley and the other Fiends arrived here, some of the Fiends, upon seeing the pool of magma, had changed looks on their faces. They unconsciously backed away slightly from that golden magma. As for Linley and Bebe, who were rather inexperienced, they didn’t know how terrifying that golden magma was.

“Liquefied Goldflame?” Salomon said softly.

“What’s a Goldflame?” Linley, Bebe, and Delia didn’t understand.

Salomon said in a low voice, “This is a very monstrous toy. Its corrosiveness and temperature is extremely high. Forget about you; even a Highgod that falls in will be in trouble. Don’t go too close to it.”

“Liquefied Goldflame?” Although Linley was over ten meters away from that golden magma pool, he could still sense those waves of heat assaulting his body. If a Saint from a material plane was to come here, most likely within just a few meters of this golden magma pool, the Saint would

immediately combust and burn to nothingness due to the temperature.

The group of Fiends all intentionally stayed a distance away from the golden magma pool, not daring to draw too near.

“Rumble…” Quite bizarrely, the stone floor around the magma pool began to move like waves of water. All of the Fiends were caught off guard and immediately flew into the air.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

A large number of boulders from the cave walls suddenly fell down, while at the same time shooting towards Linley’s group of Fiends at astonishing speed. The densely clustered boulders shot over, and Linley and the others were forced to use their strength to block. Linley, Delia, Bebe, Nisse, and Salomon were all together.

“Bang!” A boulder slammed into him. Although his defense was powerful, Linley was still knocked flying by dozens of meters, and moved all the way over to the air above the golden magma.

“Drip, drip…”

The ‘magma’ in the golden magma pool suddenly transformed in to an enormous golden liquid hand, reaching out to grasp Linley.

“Swish!” Linley immediately activated the Profound Truths of Velocity, using it to maximum effect. He transformed into a surge of blue smoke, twisting strangely in the air and avoiding that clutch, then flying back to Delia and Bebe’s side.

“Ahhhhhh!”

Linley had managed to avoid disaster, but another person had also been knocked to the air above the magma pool and had been grabbed by that golden liquid hand, then dragged into the golden magma pool. Upon being dragged in…he never came out again. Only a few bubbles could be seen.

“Everyone, be careful. Don’t let yourself be knocked into that golden magma pool.” Linley could still taste his fear.

“Linley, you be careful too.” Salomon had the easiest time of their group. Whenever boulders drew near, a black light would flash in his hands and those boulders would immediately transform into smithereens.

Delia was prepared now, and the Deathgod Golem was constantly smashing apart one boulder after another in front of her. Deathgod Golems were incomparably tough, far tougher than these boulders, and it sheared through them now.

“Ahhhh!”

Yet another person was knocked into the air above the golden magma pool, and two enormous liquid golden hands reached out, dragging him down. He, too, never appeared again. This sight caused those experts who were suffering the attacks of those many boulders to be terrified.

“Not only is this golden magma pool itself terrifying, the main issue is that this blazing titan is secretly using techniques against us. Even a Highgod who falls in that place will find it hard to survive.” Salomon sent mentally to Linley and the others. “Everyone, be careful. Don’t fall in.”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were all on maximum vigilance, smashing one boulder after another aside.

Most of those who fell into the golden magma pool and died were Gods.

As for their employer, that white-horned elder, he had a fairly easy time of it. He was wielding a staff in his hands, which danced and whirled like a viper, deflecting the boulders which attacked him towards each side, with the boulders being unable to harm him at all.

But right at this moment…

From another corridor that also led to this cave, three figures walked out. It was the three Edwards brothers. When they had been in the metallic lifeform, they had shared a single room. After the metallic lifeform had exploded and shattered and those boulders had sought to crush them, the three brothers had still been together.

“There’s actually liquefied Goldflame here!” The three Edwards brothers carefully inspected the scene.

“Ah, that Learmonth isn’t present!” The eyes of the third Edwards brother shone. “Big brother, second brother, this is a good chance. That white-horned old man is right there.”

The three Edwards brothers were beginning to grow rather excited.

They didn’t consider how this opportunity had suddenly came. Learmonth wasn’t here; what did the three of them have to be afraid of?

Upon killing that white-horned elder, they would receive the astonishing wealth accumulated over countless years by the Boyd clan!

Chapter 17 – The Fight Over the Priceless Treasure

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 17, The Fight Over the Priceless Treasure

“Drip, drip…” The golden magma pool was continuing to bubble and boil. The many fiery boulders shooting at them finally came to a halt.

Only now did Linley and the others let out sighs of relief.

Suddenly, the shattered stones that had been broken into dozens of pieces on the ground floated into the air. Everyone grew cautious, prepared to block at any moment. But these levitating stones just flew back towards the walls on each side, merging into those deep holes. After a vibration, the walls of the cave once more returned to normal.

It was as though those attacking boulders had been nothing more than a dream.

“Whew.” Linley’s group let out sighs of relief.

“The survivors are fewer in number again.” Delia said softly. Everyone in the cave sensed a sort of pressure. Just now, those shooting boulders had been nothing more than an appetizer. The main course hadn’t arrived yet. However, less than ten Gods were surviving.

The Highgod Fiend, Sperry, said brightly, “Everyone, we…”

“BANG!”

Very suddenly, three thick electric serpents suddenly snaked across from the distant tunnel entrance, rapidly striking towards the white-horned elder. The strange thing was, the heads of the three electric serpents were flashing were saber light.

“Hrm!” Salomon’s forehead creased slightly.

The white-horned elder immediately grew solemn. His body swayed, and suddenly, one doppelganger after another filled the cave, floating in the air above it. There was an awe-inspiring sight of over three hundred doppelgangers, each one emitting the same soul aura. For the moment, there was no way to tell which one was the real one.

“Haha…” With loud, while laughter, the three electric serpents coiled and twisted, transforming into three people. It was the three Edward brothers.

“The Edward brothers. What are you doing!” The white-horned elder’s angry shout simultaneously came out from the mouths of the three-hundred plus doppelgangers, reverberating throughout the cave. “What are you doing!” “What are you doing!” The angry sound continued to cascade and echo throughout the cave, carrying with it a hint of an unusual vibration.

Linley and the other Gods couldn’t help but feel their heads grow slightly dizzy.

“Profound Mysteries of Music?” Linley couldn’t help but be startled.

The three Edward brothers had separated long ago. They were standing in front of the three exits from the cave, preventing the white-horned elder from fleeing.

“What are we doing?” The eldest of the three Edward brothers laughed coldly, then opened his mouth wide. “Roaaaaaaar!” With this furious, earth-shaking roar, countless bolts of electric light spread out, covering the entire cave. And then, the electric bolts suddenly split apart, heading to two different ends.

The electric light condensed around the two ends, then shot out electricity in each direction.

“Crackle…”

Between each end was a strange electric radiation area, with the three hundred plus doppelgangers caught within the field. But it wasn't just the three hundred doppelgangers that were caught here; Linley and the others were also caught within it, causing them to suffer as well.

"Linley, Bebe, this is a sort of material attack of the Laws of Lightning. However, it is a rather unique type of material attack. Protect yourselves." Salomon shouted to them through divine sense.

At the same time, Salomon's hands spread out, and two rays of black light flashed out, ensconcing Delia and Nisse.

A material attack!

Bebe's body was unbelievably tough. Naturally, he wouldn't fear it.

"Thank you." Linley said towards Salomon through divine sense. It was already very good of him to be willing to protect Delia.

"Ahhh!" In the next instant, Linley sensed an astonishing, unique electric force trying to break through his Pulseguard Armor. Not only did it attack from in front, it also attacked from behind. However, the Pulseguard Armor's defensive power was quite astonishing indeed.

Linley was able to take it head on.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

One doppelganger after another exploded, while at the same time, of those God-level Fiends, aside from Linley and his group, only two managed to survive. The other Gods all perished.

"Second brother, third brother, you help out as well." The other two Edward brothers all opened their mouths as well.

With two angry roars erupting, even more electricity spewed forth into the

air. Countless flashes of electricity condensed around those two ends, and instantly the penetrative power of the electric field multiplied. Those two luckily surviving God-level Fiends let out miserable cries, and then were burnt by the electricity to ash, leaving behind only their divine sparks.

“Haaargh!” Salomon let out a low growl, and the black light surrounding Nisse and Delia also intensified, with his own expression becoming fiercer.

“Motherf*cker, those three bastards have gone crazy.” Salomon growled in a low voice.

Bebe’s body was extremely durable. Even though the penetrative power of the electric bolts had increased, he was still able to take it head on. As for Linley, however, the ‘Pulseguard Armor’ around his body was beginning to shudder.

“Not good.” Linley could clearly sense how innumerable tiny needle-like electric sparks were piercing through his Pulseguard Armor. The Pulseguard Armor shook violently, and at this point, Linley no longer hid anything. He immediately switched to his original form.

“Huh?”

The three Edwards brothers were greatly shocked. They couldn’t help but look at Linley.

The azure-golden draconic scales covered his entire body, with a faint blue light swirling above the scales. An ancient, powerful aura emanated out from Linley’s Dragonform. Even Highgods couldn’t help but to turn and look. The powerful Dragonformed body didn’t fear the penetrative power of those electric sparks at all.

“He is…?” The three Edwards brothers exchanged glances, coming to the same hypothesis.

With his body so incredibly endurable, there was no way Linley was one of those common Draconians. In addition, that aura he carried was also

astonishing.

“It doesn’t matter who he is. Our target is only that white-horned old man. Brothers, let’s do it.” The three Edward brothers leapt forward at virtually the same instant, each wielding a thin knife, with faint electric light crackling on the surface.

The white-horned elder let out an angry shout, and the longstaff in his hand came smashing down!

“Crackle…” Space began to crack and split open.

“The old fellow was pretending to be weak all along!” The three Edward brothers had savage looks on their faces, with the eldest of them using his knife to smash against the longstaff.

“Bang!”

Like echoing thunder, the white-horned elder’s longstaff in his hands began to crackle with electricity, and he couldn’t help but shudder slightly for a moment. At this time, the other two Edward brothers simultaneously shot in this direction like arrows, moving so quickly that even Linley and the others could only feel astonished.

“Absolutely trampled!” Linley frowned. He couldn’t help but to glance at Salomon.

This was the old servant of Salomon!

But Salomon didn’t move at all. He just watched quietly. Clearly, Salomon didn’t want to intervene at all, or perhaps…he didn’t have enough strength to intervene.

“Alas, this old fellow is doing to die.” Linley sighed to himself.

“Growl…” The roar of a dragon could be heard as an enormous electric dragon opened its mouth, bellowing and chomping down towards the white-

horned elder. Facing death, the white-horned elder let out a wild, savage cry, and a deep explosion could be heard.

As the lightning dragon dispersed, the corpse of the white-horned elder fell to the ground as well.

The eldest of the three Edward brothers immediately grabbed the interspatial ring, and smiles appeared on their faces as well.

“We finally got it!” The three Edward brothers were incomparably excited.

The boiling, bubbling lava’s golden light shot out towards that interspatial ring, which was so dazzling to behold!

But right now, Linley’s attention was on Salomon and Nisse. Salomon was still very calm, but Nisse’s eyes were beginning to fill with tears.

“This Salomon definitely is unwilling to reveal his identity. The two old fellows are dead. Precisely speaking, this escort mission has lost its employers.” Linley said to himself, and then Linley glanced at the wildly celebrating Edward brothers.

Linley knew very well that the actual priceless treasure lay with Salomon!

“Haha…” Suddenly, a cold, sinister laugh echoed within the cave. Everyone, including the three Edward brothers, turned their heads to look. From another tunnel in the cave, a person appeared, completely covered in a black robe!

The black-robed man’s face was utterly pale, and in his hands, he held a golden kitten. He calmly said, “Do you three brothers think that you’ll be able to acquire the treasure of the Boyd clan?”

These words instantly caused the looks on the faces of the three Edward brothers to change.

“Be good boys and put down the interspatial ring, and I can spare your lives

and permit you to depart this place." The black-robed man, Elquin, said coldly.

Linley and the others very wisely withdrew to the corners of the cave.

"It seems things are going to become increasingly exciting." Bebe's eyes were shining.

Linley's attention was still on the nearby Salomon, who had a hint of a cold laugh on his face. Clearly, the coming disaster for the three Edward brothers was a source of pleasure for him. However, Linley was still puzzled. "Isn't Salomon worried that the black-robed man will act against him as well?"

"The priceless treasures of the Boyd clan. In your dreams!" The eldest of the three Edward brothers shouted angrily.

"Bang!"

The three simultaneously transformed into three enormous electric serpents, snaking towards Elquin.

Elquin continued to hold the kitten with his left hand. He stretched out his right hand, which was covered with a translucent glove. Through the glove, one could see the details of his right hand clearly…this was a hand which was slightly black and had a yellow tint to it.

A deathly aura!

The right hand stretched out and slapped towards the air in the direction of the three attackers. The three attacking electric serpents bizarrely began to break apart inch by inch, suddenly transforming back into the three Edward brothers. The three Edward brothers were extremely shocked and frightened. Without hesitating, they chose…

To flee!

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

The three went flying towards the three different exits. After having exchanged blows, the three Edward brothers had discovered very clearly that they weren't even close to being a match for the black-robed man. Their difference in power was simply too great. "He is at least a Seven Star Fiend, and he might even be a retired Asura!" The three brothers were terrified.

"Fleeing?" Elquin laughed calmly. "Phusro!"

"Meow." The kitten in his arms let out a meow.

Suddenly….

The three corridors immediately closed, with this cave now being completely sealed off from the outside.

Seeing this, the three Edward brothers were completely stunned. They all turned and looked at each other, then their leader, the eldest, hurriedly said respectfully, "Milord, we three brothers no longer desire the priceless treasure. We offer it to you, milord, and hope that just like you said earlier, you can spare our lives, milord."

"Oh. You don't want it anymore?" Elquin laughed.

The three Edward brothers hurriedly nodded.

"Unfortunately, I'll only give someone a single chance! Just now, you didn't take that chance…" As he spoke, Elquin suddenly transformed into hundreds of doppelgangers, surrounding the three Edward brothers.

"Shadowshape Doppelganger technique." Bebe stared in astonishment, his eyes wide.

Elquin's usage of it was clearly far superior to Bebe's, whether in terms of speed or in the number of doppelgangers.

The three Edward brothers were momentarily unable to determine which one was the real body. With a sudden ‘BOOM!’, Elquin’s palm came slamming down towards the youngest of the three Edward brothers, and his head immediately exploded apart.

“Third brother!”

The eyes of the eldest brother and second brother of the three Edwards brothers instantly turned red, while at the same time, they hurriedly began to dodge.

The Shadowshape technique was very terrifying, because the true body could constantly fluctuate between every single shadow. They could dodge a single shadow, but could they dodge so many?

“Soon, it will be your turn.” Elquin’s voice rang out.

“Bang!” Yet another palm suddenly caused a man’s head to shatter.

“Second brother!” Only one remained.

“Bang!” Another black shadow flashed by, and a right hand covered by a translucent glove smashed in the skull of the eldest of the three Edward brothers.

Immediately afterwards, all of the shadows reformed into a single form. The black-robed man was still holding the golden kitten.

Within the cave, Linley and the others didn’t dare to so much as breathe too loudly.

Too terrifying!

“Can it be that he is a Seven Star Fiend? Or even a former Asura?” Linley couldn’t help but make this guess. Linley could tell that this Elquin’s speed was very terrifying. The three Edward brothers weren’t able to react to a single palm attack.

In addition, his strength was formidable as well; the combined attack of the three Edward brothers had been dispersed with a single palm slap!

“Those three idiots wanted to acquire the treasures of the Boyd clan, but they didn’t even know who the real owner of the treasure is.” Esqusin snickered. When these words came out, the muscles on Salomon’s face began to twitch.

Elquin turned to look at Salomon. With a calm laugh, he said, “Child of the Boyd clan, did you think that by hiding amongst the other Fiends that I wouldn’t be able to recognize you? Hand over the fortune of your clan to me. I will give you one chance as well. Give me the treasure, and I will let you leave!”

Salomon’s face instantly turned ashen, without any hint of blood at all.

Salomon turned his head, staring hatefully at Linley. His eyes were filled with venom!

The only person he had told his identity to was Linley!

Chapter 18 – Salomon's Rage

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 18, Salomon's Rage

Salomon's face was savage, and the fury in his heart was roaring.

He, Salomon, was only an illegitimate child of the Boyd clan. He had been kicked out of the household after entering it for only a single day! Alone and without any support, he had been escorted to his teacher's place, a reclusive expert who had only accepted him as a disciple for his father's sake.

However, his teacher was a person with an extremely perverted disposition.

"I endured the humiliation of being expelled from the clan, and the life of torment I lived with Teacher I endured as well. I dreamed of one day standing at the pinnacle of the Infernal Realm, and trample down upon those bastards who looked down on me. Everything was for the sake of this!" Salomon thought back to all of the past years.

He had been enduring this entire time.

After receiving the news from the two servants that the Boyd clan had been destroyed, and that the only remaining person with the blood of the Boyd clan remaining was him, he hadn't been heartbroken; instead, he had been wildly jubilant!

If they died, good! Those bastards deserved to die!

His chance had come!

Because those two servants had brought an enormous fortune with them, in accordance with the plans his father had laid prior to dying, Salomon had remained hidden with his teacher for a long period of time. After achieving success, he led the two servants and his ignorant little sister out towards the

Jadefloat Continent!

On this trip, Salomon was planning to spread his wings and become without peer!

His plans had been very perfect.

The two servants had been two chess pieces he had been prepared to sacrifice to begin with. When he first saw Linley transform, Salomon had guessed Linley's identity. For the sake of drawing a closer relationship with Linley, he had revealed his own name. At that time, he had thought that Linley wouldn't immediately know his true identity.

After all, it was just a single character.

Salomon had thought that in the future, after Linley learned more about the affairs of the Boyd clan, he would feel Salomon had behaved very sincerely to him. Salomon had been in such danger, and yet had still revealed his identity! This action was a bit risky, but in order to win Linley's trust, it was worth it.

More importantly…

First, he felt that Linley wouldn't immediately know about the affairs of the Boyd clan.

Second, he could tell what sort of a person Linley was, especially from the way Linley had risked his own life to rescue Salomon's little sister. This let him understand that Linley shouldn't be the sort of person who would lust after a friend's wealth. After all, Linley had been willing to risk his own life for Salomon's little sister; would he care about a little money?

Salomon's calculations had been very clear.

However, who would have imagined that the affair at the castle of sand had caused the Boyd clan's affairs to be revealed. Linley and Bebe couldn't help but suspect who Salomon was. In order to reduce their suspicions, Salomon

had told Linley his true identity. As Salomon saw it…Linley shouldn't have been able to reveal it.

First of all, Linley's character. He shouldn't have been the type to reveal it.

Secondly, Linley remained within the metallic lifeform. He shouldn't have had a chance to reveal it.

But now…

This black-robed man had immediately been able to recognize him.

"The Boyd clan was destroyed, and those two old servants died as well. Who else in the entire Infernal Realm knows who I am? It must be Linley. Right. It was Linley. It was Linley who must have sent a message with someone else at Yilan City through divine sense and revealed my secrets. That must be it!"

Salomon was absolutely enraged.

"That bastard, Linley. He really puts on quite an act. Even I was tricked by him. I was wrong about him!" Salomon's mind was filled with hatred. As he stared at Linley, his eyes betrayed his desire to devour Linley and tear his life away.

His dreams!

His goals for which he had struggled towards for countless years!

It was very likely that it was Linley who caused them to all come to naught!

How could he not hate Linley?

Linley was currently flabbergasted. Salomon was staring at him viperously, but he hadn't revealed Salomon's identity!

"Linley, you…you are impressive!" Salomon ground his teeth, his eyes

turning red.

“I…” Linley felt completely wronged.

He could guess that this Salomon definitely believed that it was he, Linley, who had revealed the secret. But he had never spoken of it.

“Salomon.” Linley wanted to speak.

“You don’t need to say anything!” Salomon’s gaze was viperous. By his side, even Nisse, so familiar with him, felt her heart quiver. Was this her warm, friendly big brother?

“Salomon, why are you staring at my Boss like that? What sort of look is that? What sort of attitude is that?” Bebe shouted angrily. In Bebe’s mind, Linley was like his parent or older brother; he wouldn’t permit anyone to treat Linley like this, even if the person was the big brother of the girl he liked.

Within the cave, the golden magma continued to bubble and boil.

But the aura now seemed very strange.

“Child of the Boyd clan, stop wasting time. My patience has limits.” The black-robed Elquin, carrying the golden kitten, laughed calmly as he spoke.

Salomon immediately turned his head to stare at him.

“You want the fortunes of my Boyd clan. I’ll tell you this…” Salomon’s face was savage. “I don’t have it!”

The smile on Elquin’s pale face vanished, leaving behind only a cold emotionless look. He stared coldly at Salomon. “It seems you want to die.”

“Even if you kill me, I still don’t have it.” Salomon raised his head.

“Hmph.”

Elquin sneered coldly, and then he suddenly seemed to have teleported as a black blur appeared in front of them. Elquin himself appeared right in front of Salomon, casually slapping towards Salomon with a palm.

It was still that sallow, yellow hand which was covered by a translucent glove.

Salomon's eyes were savage. He retreated at high speed, while at the same time, an explosive, gloomy black light burst forth from his hands. "Rumble…" The air shuddered, and the gloomy black light shot directly towards that seemingly slow but actually incredibly fast right hand.

"Bang!"

A very gentle sound. Elquin's right hand trembled, then he hurriedly retracted it. His right hand remained that sallow yellow color, and he hadn't been harmed at all.

"You…this is…? Tell me, who is your teacher?" Elquin gave Salomon a surprised glance.

Salomon, who had retreated to the distant edges of the cave, snickered. "Why ask about my teacher? Can it be that you are already afraid after I used just a minor technique like this?"

A hint of anger appeared within Elquin's ashen face. He let out a cold snort. "I gave you a chance, but you didn't take it!" Elquin's right hand stretched out slowly, and it gradually began to turn blood-red, and it swelled in size as well.

The entire right hand was now even larger than an ordinary person's head, and it was as scarlet red as a drop of blood.

Elquin placed the golden kitten in his arms down, then turned to stare at Salomon. "Did you think that you would be able to threaten me with those little tricks?" As soon as he spoke, Elquin suddenly transformed into

hundreds of shadows, filling virtually the entire cave.

Elemental Laws of Darkness – Shadowshape Doppelganger technique!

“Am I really going to be forced to use that technique?” Salomon hesitated.

Suddenly, a fan-sized blood red hand came slapping down towards his head. The air around the blood-red hand was twisting and distorting like a vortex, while at the same time the vortex of space was faintly swirling with a black smoke.

Salomon’s face changed dramatically, and then turned savage. He actually shot out with his own twin hands, a black light covering his right hand which clashed directly with that blood red palm.

“BANG!” The cave itself trembled.

Salomon was knocked backwards like a bag of sand from the blow. “Crunch!” The bones of his arms were shattered, revealing red flesh and blood as well as white chunks of bone that went flying everywhere. Salomon himself was smashed into the wall, and he spewed out fresh blood from his lips, then slid down to the ground.

“Big brother!” Nisse called out in alarm.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe all frowned.

“Linley, why did Salomon act that way towards you? Can it be that it is because of his identity, that he thinks you revealed it?” Delia asked through her divine sense.

Linley felt sourness in his heart, and he sent back, “It should be, but I…”

“I know.” Of course Delia knew that Linley wasn’t the person to reveal it. After all, in the Infernal Realm, how many people did Linley even know? Even if wanted to send someone a message, he didn’t have the ability to.

Linley looked at the heavily wounded Salomon. All he could do was to secretly shake his head. Most likely, no matter what he said, Salomon wouldn't believe him.

"Don't kill me." Salomon stood up and hurriedly shouted.

"Oh, you don't want to die now?" The black-robed Elquin snickered, while at the same time, with a wave of his hand, that little golden kitten returned to his arms while the blood red color in his right hand returned to his normal dark color. "What, are you now prepared to give me the wealth of the Boyd clan?"

Elquin was worried as well. Worried that Salomon wasn't actually carrying the treasure on him. This was why Elquin didn't want to directly kill Salomon either.

"My teacher's name is Elektra [Yi'lai'ke'te'la]!" Salomon said hurriedly.

Elquin frowned, a look of detestation appearing on his face. "So it really is that freak, Elektra. When I saw the destructive light you generated, I knew it. Child of the Boyd clan, for you to be his disciple means that you really have quite the capacity for endurance." Elquin let out two chuckles.

Salomon's face was gloomy. He thought back to the time he had spent by his teacher's side, which was indeed extremely painful.

"The fortune of the Boyd clan? Where is it?" Elquin continued.

Salomon's face turned rigid. Just now, he had been hoping that upon hearing the name of his teacher, this person would give up. However…it seemed as though this person didn't care too much about his teacher.

Elquin, seeing the look on Salomon's face, understood. Letting out a cold laugh, he said, "What, did you think that just because you reported your teacher's name, I would be afraid? First of all, given your teacher's temperament, even if you died, he wouldn't come out to avenge you. In addition, even if your teacher did come, I, Elquin, wouldn't be afraid of

him, that old freak!"

Salomon hesitated a moment. Seeing that Elquin's face was slowly growing more sinister, he hurriedly said, "Mr. Elquin, please give me a little time."

"Fine." Elquin nodded slightly.

He didn't want to force Salomon too much either. After all, who knew if Salomon had put the treasure somewhere else.

Right now, within the cave, aside from Linley's group, there were several other Highgod Fiends who were maintaining their silence. These Highgod Fiends, upon hearing the dialogue between Salomon and the Elquin, could guess now what the treasure they were escorting on this mission was.

"So this fellow is actually a member of the Boyd clan." Those Highgod Fiends all looked towards Salomon.

But Salomon himself was staring at Linley. In a low voice, he said, "Linley, do you know how many years I have waited for this day?"

"Salomon, I didn't…"

"No need to speak." Salomon shouted in a cold voice, and the gaze which he swept towards Linley carried within it a hint of viperous fury. "Linley, for this day, I have trained for over a million years! A million years! Do you know how long a period of time that is? In addition, I had to endure the torments of that old freak Elektra!"

Elquin's eyes contained a hint of amusement within them. "A million years? This little fellow's endurance really is pretty strong."

Salomon's eyes were glowing red. "I've been enduring this entire time. Waiting! The final hope of the Boyd clan, the final hope of myself, Salomon! I, Salomon, trusted you and told you my identity. But…I didn't expect that you would actually reveal it! You, Linley, actually destroyed my one and only hope!"

“I misjudged you!”

Salomon ground his teeth. “You greedy, ravenous wolf, I misjudged you!!!”

Salomon turned to stare at Elquin. “Mr. Elquin, I truly am amazed that you were able to insert a spy like Linley into the escort squad of Fiends. I truly admire you. I admire you so much I could kowtow to you!” Every single word of Salomon’s contained boundless anger.

Elquin raised an eyebrow, then laughed. He didn’t deny it!

Elquin’s laughter, as Salomon saw it, was a self-delighted laugh. He became all the more enraged!

“Big brother Linley, it really was you?” Only now did Nisse begin to understand. She stared at Linley in disbelief. “You actually belong to this Elquin’s side? It was you who revealed my big brother’s status?” Nisse hadn’t understood how the other side had come to know of her brother’s identity.

But now, she understood.

Linley felt misery in his heart. He spoke out, “Salomon, Nisse, if I told you that it wasn’t me who revealed it, would you believe it?”

“Ninny!” Bebe’s handsome, delicate face was filled with rage. “My Boss said he didn’t reveal it, and that means he definitely didn’t reveal it. In addition, we don’t even know this black-robed guy! I can vouch for it with my life. Ninny, can it be that you don’t even trust me?”

“But, my big brother, he…” Nisse knew very well how hard her big brother had been striving.

Once he succeeded in this venture, her big brother would rise to the heavens in a single bound.

“Bullshit.” Salomon glanced coldly at Bebe. “Ninny, can’t you tell that this Bebe grew close to you, most likely as part of a pre-planned plot?” Upon hearing this, Nisse’s face couldn’t help but turn white. After speaking, Salomon turned to look at Elquin. “Mr. Elquin, I know that Linley belongs to your side, but…I hope that you will kill him! Otherwise, don’t even think about acquiring the treasures of my clan!”

Chapter 19 – Kiss

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 19, Kiss

When these words came out, Linley's face couldn't help but change.

If it weren't because Salomon was worried about Elquin, he would have killed Linley long ago. After all, as Salomon saw it, Linley was someone who should have been on Elquin's side. Naturally, he wouldn't easily offend Elquin.

"Salomon, you as*hole!" Bebe immediately bellowed in fury. "I told you, my Boss definitely did not reveal your secret. Why are you so convinced that it was my Boss who did it? And you want to kill him? You are a motherf*cking as*hole, an as*hole!!!"

Bebe actually wanted to kill Salomon right now, but his strength was far inferior to Salomon's!

"Salomon, on this entire way over, Linley remained within the metallic creature. How could he have had the opportunity to reveal your secret?" Delia was frantic as well. She was afraid of Linley being killed.

Linley just stared at Salomon silently. By now, Linley knew exactly what sort of person this Salomon was. He was the type of person who would pretend to be an extremely good person and to feign kindness for the sake of his goal, in a way which others would not be able to notice at all.

However, once he failed in his goals, a type of person like him would reveal his true, ferocious side! Far more terrifying and terrible than ordinary people!

"Die. You will die. Not just you, Linley. Also, your wife. And your brother, Bebe. All of you will die!!!" Salomon seemed to have gone insane, as he pointed at Linley, Delia, and Bebe.

Hearing that her big brother wanted to kill even Bebe, Nisse immediately grew frantic.

“Big brother, Bebe, he…” Nisse said frantically.

“Nisse!” Salomon shouted. “Haven’t you seen the true faces of these three yet? Bebe didn’t have any good intentions when he made friends with you!”

Nisse couldn’t help but to turn and look towards Bebe.

Bebe’s gaze was as ice, and he stared coldly at Salomon. “Salomon, I hate being slandered by others. Not only do you slander me, you want to kill my Boss and Delia. Then you…” Bebe glanced at the nearby Nisse. “Nisse, don’t blame me for what I am going to do.”

“Bebe, what are you going to do?” Linley could sense that Bebe was behaving differently.

Bebe’s face was like ice. From within his hands appeared that black dagger, the dagger which Beirut had given him.

“This is…” Elquin’s eyes lit up, and he glanced at Bebe in surprise.

Bebe then opened his lips wide, and a round black pearl floated out from within his lips. This pitch black pearl actually flew into the handle of the dagger, fitting itself into an opening there which it was perfectly fitted for. And then, the surface of the dagger began to be covered with a blue aura.

“Crackle…” Space trembled.

Even though the dagger hadn’t moved, the blue aura was powerful enough to cause space to tremble.

“What is this?” Salomon, Nisse, and the other surviving Highgods including Sperry all were shocked. They could clearly sense the threat which this dagger posed to them. Not a single one of them dared to take on

that dagger head on.

Linley and Delia were both puzzled as well. Even they hadn't known that Bebe had been hiding this trump card, but the terrifying aura which emanated out from the dagger after the pearl entered it could be sensed clearly. "Too terrifying. That aura…most likely not even a Highgod can take it."

Linley had believed all along that given how much Beirut cared about Bebe, he definitely would have given Bebe a trump card for preserving his life.

And now, it seemed as though this was it.

"Bebe, don't." Nisse said hurriedly.

Bebe just stared coldly at Salomon. In an icy voice, he said, "Salomon, die." The dagger in his hand suddenly flew out…

"Swish!"

A black light flashed, and a hole was easily torn in space, as though the space of the Infernal Realm was just a piece of paper. The power of this attack was simply astonishing and unheard of. Salomon's face changed as well, but the speed of that black light was simply too fast. He wasn't able to dodge!

Suddenly, an enormous scarlet blood-red hand appeared, and space began to twist into a vortex.

"Bang!"

The black light and the scarlet blood-red hand collided.

The black light immediately flew back into Bebe's hand. Bebe's face had turned somewhat pale, and he stared in astonishment at Elquin.

Elquin was sent moving backwards by dozens of meters as well, and he

stared in astonishment at the dagger in Bebe's hands. He said to himself in shock, "As I thought. I didn't expect that Beirut would actually give a treasure as precious as this to him. This little fellow and Beirut definitely have an extraordinary relationship."

Elquin was secretly shocked.

Elquin knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful Beirut was. Immediately, his thoughts turned, and Elquin made up his mind. "Since this treasure is in this little fellow's hands, I cannot kill this little fellow. Otherwise…Beirut will definitely learn of it, and once he has me on his mind, I'll be in for trouble."

Linley and the others, including the Highgod Fiends and Salomon, were all greatly shocked. They all knew exactly how terrifyingly powerful Elquin was; the three Edward brothers weren't able to resist at all when they had fought. But that queer dagger of Bebe's had actually forced him backwards.

But how could they have known…

"Bebe, that technique of yours…?" Linley was greatly surprised.

Bebe sent through divine sense, "I'm not that powerful. The person who forced that fellow to retreat was the power of Grandpa Beirut, which had been contained within that spirit-pearl. It can be said that it was Grandpa Beirut who defeated him." Bebe, in truth, just followed the instructions in activating it.

Elquin glanced at Bebe, then turned to look at Salomon. "Salomon, in order to protect you, I lost a Highgod artifact which I have been using for a trillion years."

Only now did Linley and the others realize…

That the translucent glove which had been on Elquin's right hand had been torn apart!

“Beirut really lives up to his reputation.” Elquin’s heart shuddered. Although he was a reclusive expert, there was still a great gap when compared to the legendary and mighty figure, Beirut, who had suddenly appeared out of nowhere to prominence.

Elquin’s heart was filled with anger, and he stared at Salomon.

A Highgod artifact which he had been nurturing for over a trillion years was incredibly precious to its user. After all, how could a purchased Highgod artifact compare to a Highgod artifact which you had been personally nurturing?

“I told you. That Delia and that Bebe all have to die!” Salomon growled.

“I cannot kill that Bebe. The others can die! Salomon, don’t test my patience further.” Elquin said calmly.

“Fine.” Salomon nodded. “That little rascal can be spared.” In his heart, Salomon still hated Linley the most.

“Phusro, handle it.” Elquin said calmly.

“Meow.” The golden kitten meowed gently.

It was extremely strange. The stone walls of the entire cavern suddenly came pressing down, and the space within the cave immediately shrank in size. The faces of Linley and the others changed dramatically. They saw the stone walls constantly press down towards them, and the other Highgod Fiends immediately began to bellow with rage and strike at the stone walls.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

Explosions could be heard nonstop, but their full strength blows could at most chop out a half-meter long hole which would immediately heal.

In but a few moments, the space of this cavern had shrunk to less than 30%. The mountain walls continued to press them towards that golden magma

pool. In other words…every person within the cave no longer had enough space to stand. They had to hover in the air, hover above that golden magma pool.

Even Elquin and Salomon were hovering there.

“Delia. Hurry up and use your Deathgod Golem to block below you.” Linley was worried that Delia would be dragged into the golden magma pool.

“Right.” Delia nodded gently, and then glanced at Linley.

“Lord Elquin, Salomon, we didn’t interfere. Release us.” Sperry and the other five Highods said hurriedly.

Salomon, his heart currently filled with fury, glanced at them coldly. “Hmph. All of you can die.”

“Phusro.” Elquin said calmly.

“Meow…” The golden kitten purred, a hint of joy seemingly contained within his voice.

Instantly…

The previously calm and quiet golden magma pool beneath them suddenly transformed into a large number of giant liquid golden hands which snatched at the Fiends above. Dozens of enormous hands had erupted forth from this golden magma pool.

“Swoosh!”

All of the Fiends immediately tried to rely on their speed to dodge. The air above the golden magma pool was filled with countless figures as everyone frantically tried to dodge.

Only Elquin, Salomon, Nisse, and Bebe weren’t being attacked by any of

the giant liquid golden hands.

“Bebe, you and Delia, stay together.” Linley shouted mentally. “Got it, Boss.” Bebe immediately drew closer to Delia. Indeed, those giant liquid golden hands tried to avoid Bebe and moved away from him.

However, those giant liquid golden hands would still move in an arcing route to try and snatch Delia.

By being next to Bebe, though, Delia was in less danger now.

“If this continues, it won’t end well.” Linley had a terrible feeling, because he knew…that there were no corridors nearby. They could dodge for a time, but they couldn’t dodge forever. Eventually, they would be caught.

“Aaaah!” Suddenly, a Highgod was seized by one of the giant liquid golden hands.

Upon one giant liquid golden hand grabbing the Highgod, immediately, the many other giant liquid golden hands surrounded him, then dragged him directly into the golden magma pool. This scene caused the faces of Linley and the others to change.

“Boss!” Bebe’s frantic voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley turned to look. It was Delia who was now surrounded by the giant liquid golden hands. Although Delia had Bebe helping out, her own power was simply too weak. In the end, she was still caught by that giant liquid golden hand, and once she was caught, there was no way she could break free.

“Crackle!” Delia was dragged directly into the golden magma pool. Her feet first entered the pool, and Delia continued to stare upwards towards Linley.

Linley seemed to have been gone dumb.

“Linley. Take care of yourself.” Delia’s divine sense echoed in Linley’s mind.

“Delia!” Linley’s eyes instantly turned scarlet red. He shot down like an arrow, ignoring all else as he charged towards Delia. Linley stared at Delia, and Delia stared at Linley! In this moment, only Delia’s head remained above the surface of the magma pool.

The two were only ten meters apart from each other. Given Linley’s speed, that distance could be traversed in but the blink of an eye.

But in that instant, one scene after another of the two being together flashed through Linley’s mind, as fast as lightning.

In his youth, the two had been class together at the Institute.

Ten years of parting, then their reunion.

The Anarchic Lands, their marriage, their child.

Their arrival in the Infernal Realm. Delia had followed him here without reservations, and they had adventured through the Infernal Realm. Silently, noiselessly, Delia had become the other half of his life. Neither of them could be without the other.

In the instant she was dragged down into the magma pool, seeing how Linley ignored everything else and immediately charged down, Delia’s tears began to fall.

“Boom!” Magma sprayed everywhere!

Linley burrowed into the magma, clutching Delia’s already-submerging body. The earthen aura surrounding Linley immediately covered Delia as well, as a ‘Pulseguard Armor’ formed on Delia’s body. Only, the corrosive power of that golden magma was simply too great. The Pulseguard Armor couldn’t help but begin to tremble and melt.

Linley frantically used the divine power of his divine earth clone to maintain the Pulseguard Armor.

Within the magma pool.

The yellow earthen aura covered Linley and Delia, and a strange type of spiritual energy slowly circled around Linley and Delia's consciousness. That strange energy was actually able to locate the flaw in Linley's damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and easily slip through.

Linley and Delia both begin to grow woozy.

"Linley. You are such a fool." Delia's eyes were filled with tears.

"We roamed the Infernal Realm together. Even if we die, we die together."

Delia was on the verge of losing consciousness, but she still managed to smile. "Linley. I feel very satisfied with the life I have lived." And then, she struggled hard to raise her head and kiss Linley on the lips, and Linley kissed Delia back. In the last moment before Linley lost all consciousness, one scene after another from his youth until now flashed through his mind like lightning.

His meeting with Grandpa Doehring.

Killing the king of the Kingdom of Fenlai.

His fame shaking the world in the O'Brien Empire.

The founding of the Baruch Empire.

The adventure in the Necropolis of the Gods.

The destruction of the Radiant Church.

And then their adventuring in the Infernal Realm, where his wife had accompanied him until death. When they had arrived in the Infernal Realm,

Linley had been mentally prepared to die. After all, in the constant slaughterfield that was the Infernal Realm, anybody could die. Even if he died…he would die happy.

He was dying alongside his beloved!

“Me too. I am very satisfied with my life!”

And then…

His consciousness was gone.

Chapter 20 – Talisman

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 20, Talisman

“Drip, drip.” The golden magma pool continued to bubble and boil. Those giant liquid golden hands now tried to snatch the three remaining Highgods.

Only three lucky survivors were left!

“Salomon, that bastard. Even if we die, we need to make him die with us.” Sperry sent a message with divine sense to the other two. They could already feel that dodging was very difficult.

“Right. Make him die with us!”

The Fiends of the Infernal Realm were all mentally prepared for death. Only, they didn’t want to die, and even if they were to die, they wouldn’t let their enemies get off lightly!

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

The three Highgod Fiends simultaneously charged towards Salomon, but before they even drew near him, that sallow, charred yellow hand once again came slapping towards them. “BANG!” One of the Highgod Fiend’s skull was smashed and exploded apart.

“Elquin!” The other two Highgod Fiends were shocked.

Clearly, this Elquin wouldn’t permit them to kill Salomon!

“Kill his little sister!” Sperry and the other Highgod Fiend, knowing that death was nigh, in their fury decided that they would kill whoever they could lay their hands on. The two Fiends just barely dodged those giant liquid golden hands, then charged straight towards Nisse, hovering there in mid-air.

At this moment, Bebe was hovering there in mid-air, unmoving. When he saw Linley and Delia be dragged into the magma pool, he was stunned. But then…

“Boss…isn’t dead!” Bebe’s eyes were filled with surprised joy. “I can still sense the Boss’s soul!”

The two were connected spiritually. As long as Linley was alive, Bebe would naturally be able to sense him.

The golden magma pool was only so big. Given the speed of these Highgod Fiends, Nisse was only able to move slightly before the Highgod Fiends arrived in front of her. A blurry, indistinct blade shadow came chopping down, and Nisse’s face instantly turned white.

“Clang!” A metallic sound could be heard.

Nisse felt that she was being tightly embraced, and she opened her eyes in shock. “Bebe!” It was Bebe who had embraced her and had taken this attack for her.

“Aaah!” Because of the counter-force from his chopping attack, that Highgod Fiend was caught by those giant liquid golden hands. Although he frantically struggled, in the end, he was still dragged down by those giant liquid golden hands into the golden magma pool, and not a hint of life was left after that.

“Crackle…”

The many giant liquid golden hands spread out like the petals of a floor, directly swallowing the final Highgod Fiend, Sperry, then pulling him into the golden magma pool.

“Bebe, are you alright?” Nisse said, worried. But as soon as she spoke out, she immediately came to her senses. She realized that Linley had very possibly revealed her big brother’s secret, and that this Bebe had most

likely intentionally made friends with her.

“I’m fine. That bastard actually even used a soul attack.” Bebe’s face was somewhat ashen, but then he was stunned as well. He noticed Nisse’s expression.

Bebe let out a bitter laugh, then gently release Nissed.

As Nisse left his embrace, for some reason, she felt her heart ache!

Bebe rubbed his nose. “I was wrong to think my love was reciprocated.” Nisse, hearing this, felt a miserable feeling in her heart, but this information about the secret being revealed was like a thorn in her heart. “But wait, if Bebe had truly lied to me, he wouldn’t have risked his own life to save me just now.”

“Take care of yourself, Ninny.” The sound rang out next to her ears, and then…SPLASH!

Only now did Nisse realize that Bebe had already jumped into the magma pool. Nisse was instantly stunned! In her mind, she could still clearly see that rowdy, playful, but towards her always considerate straw hat wearing youth!

“Bebe…died?” Nisse felt as though her heart was being ripped apart.

“Nisse, what are you doing?!” Salomon shouted, while at the same time he flew to Nisse’s side.

“Big brother, Bebe, he…” Nisse’s eyes were beginning to be covered with a layer of mist.

Salomon shouted, “What are you thinking? That Bebe did it on purpose. His body is tough, so he knew he would be able to take that blow. He did that on purpose, because it wouldn’t pose any threat to him! You need to remember, Linley is our enemy. It’s a good thing that he died, because otherwise…”

Salomon's heart was still filled with hatred.

"But, but if Bebe didn't care about me, he didn't have to save me." Nisse argued.

"That's exactly what he wanted you to think." Salomon said coldly. "Nisse, that Bebe is extremely crafty and sly."

With a rumbling sound, the four walls of the stone cave once more spread out, and the space of the cave expanded once more. Elquin, holding that little golden kitten, landed on the flat ground, and Salomon pulled his little sister to fly over as well.

At the bottom of the golden magma pool, there was a place where the magma had naturally split open, forming a true, empty space. Linley and Delia were currently embracing each other there.

"What…what's going on?" Linley and Delia both woke up.

Delia immediately used her divine power to repair her body while staring at Linley. Linley shook his head as well. "I don't know either."

And then, Linley and Delia both began to laugh.

"Linley. I thought I was dead." Delia said gently.

"Me too. I thought I was going to die." Linley felt a warm feeling in his heart. With a wife like this in his life, what more could he ask for?

After truly having walked on the fine line between life and death, this time, Linley had truly believed he was dead. But who would have imagined that he would survive? This sort of feeling truly was astonishing and shook his soul.

"Linley." In Linley's arms, Delia looked up towards Linley. "After this experience, my heart is calm. Linley, although the Infernal Realm has many

dangers, as long as you are by my side, I won't be afraid no matter where I go."

Linley held Delia, his heart filled with joy and bliss. He didn't say a word.

"You two, husband and wife, are really enjoying yourselves." A deep voice rang out in the mind of Linley and Delia.

Linley and Delia were both shocked.

"You are…?" Linley spoke.

"Everyone else who entered this liquefied pool of Goldflame is dead, aside from you two. Even the Highgods are dead." The deep voice continued.

Linley and Delia instantly understood who this person was.

"You are the Volcano Titan?" Linley said.

"Right. You may address me as Phusro." The deep voice said.

"Phusro?" Linley thought back to how the black-robed Elquin had held that golden kitten in his arms. Elquin seemed to have addressed the kitten as 'Phusro'.

"You are a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan, but more importantly, the relationship between you and that Bebe is quite deep. Thus, Master ordered me to spare your lives when pulling you into the liquefied pool of Goldflame, so as to temporarily fool that Salomon."

"You can wait right here for now. I won't claim your little lives. I imagine that you know that I can kill you at any time. Don't go out."

And then, the voice disappeared.

Linley and Delia exchanged a glance, then laughed. Delia said, "Linley, before this, I saw that Elquin was afraid to do anything to Bebe. He wanted

to spare Bebe. I was wondering…why didn't he spare us? So actually, that was this Elquin's plan all along."

Linley laughed as well.

Indeed, everyone else who had entered the golden magma pool had died, so as to give Salomon a false impression…that anyone who entered the golden magma pool would die.

Actually, the golden magma pool was under the control of 'Phusro'. If he didn't want someone to die of course that person wouldn't die.

"This Phusro's power truly is terrifying." Linley was secretly shocked. That spiritual energy had gone straight through the flaw in his soul defense. Linley had known all along that powerful Highgods were capable of this.

But now, he had actually encountered it.

"Plonk!"

Suddenly, a figured charged down at high speed through the pool, then straight towards him. Linley could clearly sense the ripples of that soul. "Bebe, what are you doing here?!" Bebe quickly charged down into this area of land.

"Boss, so you really are alright!" Bebe saw Linley and Delia, and was instantly overjoyed.

"You guys really are a pain!" Phusro's voice rang out once more in the minds of the three.

"Who is he?" Bebe's face changed.

Linley explained, "He's the Volcano Titan, Phusro."

"Phusro? Can it be that he's the kitten?" Bebe's eyes lit up.

“DON’T MENTION KITTENS!!!” Phusro’s voice exploded in fury. “Enough. The three of you, obediently stay here and don’t go out. The sound from outside will carry in here. Don’t worry, though…your voices won’t be able to transmit out.”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were at the bottom of the golden magma pool. Indeed, they could hear the voices from outside.

Elquin, holding the golden kitten, laughed calmly as he looked at Salomon. “Salomon, all of them are dead now. I’ve given you face. You should give me the treasures of your clan to me now, right? Is it on you, or is it somewhere else?”

Nisse appeared quite nervous.

Salomon laughed calmly. “Right. I admit that I am a member of the Boyd clan, but Mr. Elquin, I have to tell you something.”

“Speak.” Elquin frowned. He felt as though something was amiss.

“The amount of wealth I have on me, and in fact even including all the wealth I have in other places, amounts to less than ten billion inkstones!” Salomon laughed calmly.

Ten billion inkstones, to ordinary Highgods, was an enormous figure. But to Elquin, it was nothing at all. To the Boyd clan, it was comparable to a single hair on the body of nine bulls.

“You are playing me for a fool?” Elquin’s face changed.

Salomon hurriedly said, “No, no, I’m not playing you. To tell you the truth, those two old servants of mine did in fact bring a vast fortune to me, but… I’ve already offered the fortune to someone else!”

“To who?” Elquin frowned. “You’d best not lie to me.”

“To Lord Aiken [Ai’ken]!” Salomon replied.

Elquin's face changed. "Aiken?" Elquin couldn't help but feel angered, and he shouted angrily, "Salomon, Lord Aiken is indeed powerful, and I, Elquin, don't dare irritate him, but…do you think that just because you randomly report a name to me, that I will give up? Why don't you say Beirut? Why don't you go ahead and say that you gave it to the almighty Sovereign, the Redbud Ruler? Anybody can name names!"

With a flip of his hand, Salomon revealed a black talisman which was covered with complicated runes.

"You should recognize this talisman." Salomon said.

"Hrm?"

Elquin's face changed, and he was instantly speechless. He could recognize it. This was indeed Lord Aiken's talisman. Since Salomon had this talisman, then the relationship between himself and Aiken must be extraordinary, or perhaps…Aiken had ordered him to carry out something.

Aiken, without question, was one of if not the most powerful figure in the Redbud Continent. Some even suspected that he had reached the level of being a Paragon.

He had previously been an Asura, but then he had voluntarily stepped down and allowed another Seven Star Fiend to take over. Nobody believed that it was because Aiken wasn't strong enough. Everyone knew exactly how terrifying Aiken was! Although he was not an Asura, his power was far greater than that of most Asuras.

Aiken of the Redbud Continent. Beirut of the Bloodridge Continent. They were all dazzling, legendary figures.

"Drip, drip…" The golden magma in the cave continued to bubble and hiss. Other than that, it was silent.

"Inigo, what say you? What should we do?" Elquin turned to stare behind

him. Suddenly, a tunnel appeared in the stone wall, and a person came out. It was Inigo.

Inigo stepped out. He had been listening all along.

“Although this Salomon has the talisman of Lord Aiken, but, that doesn’t mean that he doesn’t have the wealth of his clan on him.” Inigo said.

“You are…” Salomon and NIsse stared at him.

“I saw you before at the castle of sand.” Nisse called out in surprise.

Inigo was slightly startled. Right. When the castle of sand had collapsed, Inigo and the others had indeed been seen.

Inigo then smiled slightly. “Right. Salomon, I am the person who was pursuing and attacking you. What of it?”

“That time?” Salomon began to understand.

“Right. It was I who told Lord Elquin of your identity.” Inigo let out a chuckle. “Hmph. When you were at the Coldcalm Prefecture , you were kicked out by your Boyd clan. Although that was a minor matter, at that time, I just so happened to notice.”

Salomon was stunned.

“Pity that kid named Linley. He really was wrongly accused by you.” Inigo began to laugh.

Chapter 21 – Sovereign's Might

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 21, Sovereign's Might

At the bottom of that pool of golden magma, Linley and the others could clearly hear the sounds coming from up above.

"Linley, they finally realize that you were accused wrongly." Delia was very happy at this moment, but Bebe said fumingly, "That Salomon really is an as*hole. After finding out that his identity was revealed, he ignored everything else and insisted on believing that it was you, Boss, who revealed it. This sort of person is absolute not worth treating as a friend!"

Ever since Salomon had asked Elquin to kill Linley, in the hearts of Delia and Bebe, they very much detested this Salomon.

"Salomon. It isn't worth getting angry over him." Linley shook his head. "Only, it's a pity, Bebe. That Nisse was still a pretty good person."

"Ninny?"

Bebe was stunned. He thought back to how he had protected Nisse, but Nisse still seemed to somewhat distrust him.

Suddenly, the sound of sobbing came from up above.

"It's Ninny." Bebe raised his head, but all he could see from up above was the boiling golden magma.

The golden magma caused the temperature of the entire cave to be extremely high. Even the air in the cavern was twisted and distorted.

"Linley…was wrongfully accused?" Salomon stood there, silent for a moment.

But the grief which Nisse had been suppressing for quite some time now exploded out. She actually ran straight towards that golden magma pool. Salomon was terrified, and he hurriedly grabbed Nisse by her hand. “Nisse, what are you doing? Are you trying to die?”

This was liquefied Goldflame.

Perhaps powerful Highgods could withstand it, but generally speaking, Gods who entered it would die.

“It was my fault. It was all my fault. I should have trusted Bebe. I should have trusted him!” Nisse was sobbing. Her heart was filled with boundless regret. Before this, when Bebe had charged into the golden magma pool, Nisse had felt agony in her heart as well.

But in her heart, at that time, there was another voice as well; the voice that said that Bebe had intentionally made friends with her, that he had been deceiving her!

That was the only reason Nisse had been able to remain standing there. But upon Nisse learning that Linley had been wrongfully accused, it was as though countless thunderbolts had suddenly gone off in Nisse’s mind.

She was wrong!!!

Linley had been wrongfully accused, and Bebe had been sincere towards her!

“He didn’t lie to me. He’s never lied to me. In order to save me, Bebe ignored his own well-being, but I doubted him. I didn’t believe him.” Nisse’s face was streaked in tears. She wanted to draw closer to the golden magma pool, but how could Salomon just watch as his little sister threw her life away? He firmly grabbed her by the arm and said frantically, “Nisse, Bebe is already dead. He’s already dead!!! Regret is useless.”

“Dead?” Nisse was stunned…and then she collapsed, limp, next to the magma pool.

“Ninny, why are you so beautiful?”

“I’m beautiful so you’ll fall in love with me!”

The teasing, flirtatious words the two had exchanged in past years seemed to echo in her ears. Nisse flipped her hand, and a straw hat appeared within it. It was Bebe who had given it to her.

“Ninny, I brought this straw hat with me from my homeland, the Yulan continent. You won’t be able to buy another one like it in the Infernal Realm. Take good care of it. I think that in the future, when the two of us have children, I’ll give our kid a straw hat as well. All three of us will wear straw hats, haha…”

The bygone words of Bebe lingered by her ears. Nisse looked at the straw hat in her hands, and her heart trembled.

In an instant, countless spears of regret gnawed away at her soul like locusts!

Suddenly, Nisse began to cry. Soundless cry.

Salomon, when he saw this, felt a strange feeling well up in his heart… regret! Seeing his little sister like this, Salomon felt regret as well. After all, his little sister was the only family he had. He could be calculating and vicious towards others, but he had always cared about his little sister.

“Nisse…” Salomon knelt down, stretching out with his arm to embrace Nisse by the shoulders, wanting to comfort her. “Don’t be sad. Bebe’s already dead. It’s too late. It was your big brother’s fault. I’m sorry.”

“Dead?” Nisse looked at the bubbling golden magma. She suddenly remembered how Bebe had been struck by the blade of a Highgod and had been unharmed. It seemed as though Nisse had suddenly thought of something, as she immediately turned to look towards Elquin. “Mr. Elquin, Bebe’s defensive power is so formidable, he definitely should be able to

resist this liquefied Goldflame! He's at the bottom of the lake, alive, right? Tell me that Bebe isn't dead, Mr. Elquin!" Nisse's tear-stained face stared towards Elquin.

Nisse's heart was filled with regret.

She wanted Bebe to be alive, to appear in front of her.

But Elquin only shook his head. He calmly said, "Miss Nisse, I'll tell you right now that the person named Bebe is dead! Those Highgods, that Linley and his wife, all of them who fell in are dead!"

"Nisse, if Bebe were still alive, wouldn't he come out?" Salomon urged.

Nisse lowered her head to look at the straw hat in her hands, unable to refrain from feeling agony in her heart.

At the bottom of the golden magma pool.

"Ninny!" Bebe was crying as well. Hearing Nisse's sobs and words, he cried.

Bebe, ignoring all else, suddenly charged towards the outside.

"BANG!" A powerful force appeared above Bebe's head, and Bebe smashed against it, then was knocked backwards.

"Are you looking for death?!" The deep voice rang out in the mind of Linley and the other two once more. "I warned you that for now, you are not permitted to emerge from within this liquefied Goldflame pool. This is your final warning. If this happens again, all three of you will die!"

Bebe was completely stunned. He looked back towards Linley and Delia.

"Boss, sorry." Bebe said quietly. Bebe understood that right now, their lives were completely under the control of Phusro. Acting in such a way would be thrusting Linley and Delia into grave risk.

Linley patted Bebe on the shoulders, but didn't know what to say.

"Bebe." Delia consoled. "Don't worry too much. Afterwards, when you go out, you'll be able to meet with Nisse. You can endure for a while."

"Right." Bebe nodded slightly.

Linley, seeing how Bebe was acting, sighed to himself. "Nisse is a fine girl. But her big brother Salomon is…even if we went outside and met with him, the rift between us will still persist." After all, Salomon had actually shouted arrogantly for Linley to be killed.

"Right. They are discussing the fortune of the Boyd clan once more." Linley raised his head. More voices were once more coming down from up above.

The cavern was extremely hot, but the people in the cavern were talking animatedly there.

Inigo looked at Salomon. In a cold voice, he said, "Lord Elquin, this Salomon does have the talisman of Lord Aiken, but that only means…that Salomon and Lord Aiken have some sort of a relationship. It doesn't necessarily mean that he gave the fortune of his clan to Lord Aiken!"

Salomon's face was sinister. Inigo chuckled. "What's more, Lord Elquin, do you actually believe that Salomon would be able to bear with parting with such a fortune and give it to someone else?"

"No, I don't believe it!" Elquin laughed calmly as he looked towards Salomon.

Salomon grew tense anew. Was he really going to be forced to reveal his final card?

Salomon said in a resolute, clear voice. "I've already made it clear. I gave my clan's fortune to Lord Aiken, using this fortune in exchange for Lord

Aiken's trust. Lord Aiken has instructed me to go to the Rainbow Prefecture to take care of a major undertaking. If you truly kill me, then once Lord Aiken finds out, then…hmph!"

Elquin let out a disdainful sneer.

Inigo snickered as well. "Salomon, Lord Aiken is powerful, but he isn't so powerful as to be able to see the future. If we were to kill you and destroy your corpse and all evidence, how would Lord Aiken know that it was we who killed you?"

Salomon laughed calmly. "Right, right. I understand. The chances of Lord Aiken finding out are very low, but if he really were to find out, then you two would be finished. I can tell you clearly that the amount of money I have on me is less than ten billion inkstones. Can it be that for the sake of ten billion inkstones, you would be willing to incur the anger of Lord Aiken?"

"Ten billion inkstones?" Inigo said with a snickering laugh. "Who would believe you?"

Elquin stared at Salomon, then suddenly said, "Salomon, give me your interspatial ring and let me inspect it. If it truly is as you say, then I'll let you leave. What do you say?"

"Fine! Let it be as you say!" Salomon said clearly, but who would have thought that just as he agreed, Elquin would continue. "Oh, and also your interspatial belt. Give it to me for an inspection as well. I almost overlooked it. I didn't expect that your belt is also a storage device!"

Interspatial storage devices could be made in the shape of rings; naturally, they could be made into other things as well.

However, because rings were convenient, interspatial rings were extremely common.

"Belt?" Salomon's face changed.

Elquin and Inigo, seeing the look on Salomon's face, began to laugh. Clearly…Salomon's interspatial belt most likely contained the fortune of the Boyd clan.

"To give Lord Aiken face, all I will do is inspect your interspatial ring and belt. If it truly is as you say it is…then I will let you out." Elquin smiled as he looked at Salomon. "I think…that my attitude is already very good."

Given Elquin's level of power, how could he not have noticed that Salomon's belt was special?

"What, are you afraid to take it out to show us?" Inigo snickered.

By Salomon's side, Nisse was beginning to worry for her big brother as well. Although in her heart, she still felt a bit of rage towards her big brother, no matter what, Salomon was still her big brother.

"Big brother…" Nisse said softly.

Salomon's gaze turned sharp. Looking at the cat-holding Elquin and Inigo, he said, "Mr. Elquin, I truly don't want to be enemies with you, but you continue to force me. Fine, then. I will show you the fortune of my Boyd clan!"

Elquin and Inigo's eyes lit up.

"Indeed, he is carrying it on him." Elquin said to himself, and Inigo chuckled softly. "Lord Elquin, I told you long ago that this Salomon wouldn't be able to bear giving his clan's fortune to Lord Aiken." Elquin smiled and nodded approvingly towards him.

At the same time, they both stared towards Salomon, seeing what he was going to take out.

But their features instantly froze. They stared in astonishment at an item held within Salomon's hands.

“Do you see it? This is the entirety of the fortune of our Boyd clan!” Salomon was holding a single black drop of water within his hand. He laughed coldly as he looked at Elquin and Inigo. “I imagine the two of you should both know what this is!”

“Sov…Sovereign’s Might?!” Inigo stuttered.

Elquin’s face had become exceedingly ugly as well.

Salomon stared at the drop of black water in his hand. His gaze became unfocused, and he said softly, “Right. This is Sovereign’s Might! A liquid drop of the power of a Sovereign. I trust that when combining this drop of Sovereign’s Might with my own profound mysteries of the Laws, I will have enough power to kill the both of you.”

Elquin and Inigo’s faces were very unpleasant.

“How do you have Sovereign’s Might? Could it be…Aiken?” Elquin instantly understood.

Salomon said softly, “I didn’t lie to you at all. I really did give my entire clan’s fortune to Lord Aiken. In addition, Lord Aiken previously owed my Boyd clan a favor. I gave that astonishingly vast fortune to Lord Aiken, and asked Lord Aiken to help me refine a drop of Sovereign’s Might! Thus… this is the entire fortune of my clan.”

Sovereign’s Might was divided into types as well.

Earth, fire, water, wind. Darkness, light, lightning, Life, Destruction, Death, Fate.

“Although every single inkstone and azurite contains within it an extremely, extremely miniscule and almost negligible amount of Sovereign’s Might, when countless inkstones and azurites are put together and refined, in the end, a single drop of Sovereign’s Might can be forged!” Salomon said softly.

Sovereign's Might in gaseous form would naturally dissipate. Therefore, it had be refined into liquid form.

A drop was the smallest stable amount.

However, a single drop of Sovereign's Might required the consumption of an astronomically large sum of inkstones and azurites. More importantly… it was extremely hard to refine Sovereign's Might!

"In the entire Infernal Realm, there are very few experts capable of refining Sovereign's Might. Fortunately, Lord Aiken has this ability." Salomon said as he looked towards Elquin and Inigo. He didn't want to take out this Sovereign's Might at all. This was his one and only backup.

Once he used it, he would be unable to advance his plans. How would he, a single Highgod by himself, be able to resurrect the Boyd clan?

But even if he didn't use it and if these two let him leave, the news that he had Sovereign's Might would definitely spread out.

Every possible outcome was a bad one for Salomon!

Chapter 22 – Water Drop – Sovereign's Might?

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 22, Water Drop, Sovereign's Might?

Now that he had taken out a drop of Sovereign's Might, he could either use it to either kill his opponents, or to cause the opponents to let him go out of fear. No matter what, he could leave safely! However, upon taking it out and revealing it, he had revealed his trump card, and it would no longer be a trump card.

Salomon felt rage whenever he thought of this!

Glancing sideways at Elquin and Inigo, he saw that clearly, the two of them were very desirous of this drop of Sovereign's Might, but they also didn't feel confident in being able to take it.

Salomon said softly, "The inkstones and azurites of the Infernal Realm are all created by the Sovereigns of Destruction. This drop of black water is in fact a drop of Destruction Sovereign's Might, and I just so happen to train in the Way of Destruction. Destruction Sovereign's Might, paired with the Way of Destruction…the power will be even greater."

Elquin's face was truly terrible to behold.

In the Infernal Realm, Seven Star Fiends could be considered supreme experts, with Asuras being the greatest figures who could roam the entire Infernal Realm. However, there were 108 Asuras, many Seven Star Fiends, and retired Asuras. Throughout the course of the countless years of history, there were many powerful experts in the Infernal Realm.

To be able to stand at the very peak of even these experts, generally one of the below criteria had to be true.

1. Like Aiken, be capable of refining Sovereign's Might! Who would dare do battle against someone who was capable of using a drop of Sovereign's

Might?

2. Be a supreme expert who possessed a Sovereign artifact! With a Sovereign artifact in one's possession, naturally one would be far above the others.

3. Be a Highgod who had reached the level of being a Paragon, of completely fusing all of the profound mysteries in one of the Elemental Laws. Naturally, such a person would stand at the very peak amongst Highgods.

4. Of course, there were always some special cases.

Special cases being that the Seven Star Fiend's original form was that of a divine beast which had an extremely monstrous divine ability, such as the 'Godeater' ability. With such a monstrous divine ability, then of course one would be exceedingly powerful. There were also soul mutations, and some other special circumstances.

In short, whether it was 'Aiken' whose fame overawed the Redbud Continent, or 'Beirut' of the Bloodridge Continent, these experts all had something they relied on.

But Elquin, in turn, could only be considered a rather talented Seven Star Fiend. He didn't have Sovereign's Might, nor a Sovereign artifact, nor had he reached the level of Paragon…naturally, it would be very hard for him to face Salomon.

Using 'Sovereign's Might' to attack, compared to using 'Highgod divine power' to attack, was as different as the heavens and the earth. Even if the understanding of the profound mysteries of the Laws were exactly the same, the difference in base power was simply too great.

It was comparable to an infant who was an expert in swordplay fighting with a giant who had boundless strength. How could the infant win, even if the giant didn't understand swordplay?

Same logic.

Salomon, in terms of understanding the profound mysteries of the Laws, might only have 10% the level of attainment his opponent had, but the power of Sovereign's Might was simply too great when compared to that of a Highgod's.

"What, you want to try and acquire this drop of Sovereign's Might?" Salomon chuckled.

"Mr. Elquin?" Inigo turned to look at Elquin. Inigo's personal power was weaker than Salomon's to begin with. Once Salomon used the Sovereign's Might, killing Inigo would only take an instant.

Elquin hesitated slightly, then let out a low sigh. "Sovereign's Might…such a small drop of water which contains such exceedingly terrifying power." Elquin's words contained a hint of envy. He dreamed of himself possessing a drop of Sovereign's Might.

Although it was a one-use item, even if he didn't use it, he could use it to threaten others. At a critical moment, he might be able to use it to save his own life.

Linley stood there at the bottom of the golden magma pool as though thinking about something.

"What is the Boss thinking about?" Bebe and Delia both noticed that Linley seemed to be a bit strange. "There's no need for the Boss to act like this just because he heard the conversation up above about 'Sovereign's Might', right? Although I have to say, this Sovereign's Might truly does make one envious."

Delia said softly, "Envious. Didn't you hear what Salomon said? Refining Sovereign's Might is extremely difficult, and only an extremely few people in the entire Infernal Realm are capable of refining Sovereign's Might. In addition, the amount of inkstones and azurites which would be consumed is absolutely astonishing. The entire fortune of the Boyd clan was only enough

to forge a single drop."

Linley's spiritual energy was completely focused on entering the Coiling Dragon ring.

Within the Coiling Dragon ring, there were two drops of blue water remaining!

"Water drops? Water drops? Sovereign's Might?" Linley felt rather numb. No matter how stupid he might be, he would still immediately connect the dots. "I'm an utter idiot. A single drop of blue water that is able to make my body transform and become so powerful that I can take on a Highgod artifact attack head on…such a monstrous water drop…aside from Sovereign's Might, what else could it be?"

It had raised his body's power so much that the amount of energy it had consumed was surely enormous as well.

A single water drop that was able to provide so much power? Only the legendary 'Sovereign's Might' was capable of such a thing.

"Argh, I'm too foolish. When I received the Coiling Dragon ring, this damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact…it is a Sovereign's artifact! Clearly, in the past, the master of this Coiling Dragon ring was a Sovereign! Since the master was a Sovereign, this water drop is naturally Sovereign's Might.

Everything made sense.

Aside from a Sovereign, who else would leave behind three drops of Sovereign's Might in the Coiling Dragon ring upon death?

After all, if it was a Highgod, the Highgod would most likely have used up the Sovereign's Might during the battle. Only to someone as mighty as a Sovereign would these drops of Sovereign's Might not mean that much. After all, Sovereigns possessed boundless amounts of divine Sovereign power. Leaving behind three drops of Sovereign's Might before death was

normal.

“I used a drop. I still have two remaining. If I were to sell them, what sort of price would they fetch?” Although Linley was curious about it, he wasn’t so stupid as to actually go do it.

A single drop of Sovereign’s Might was a priceless treasure!

The entire fortune of the Boyd clan, accumulated over countless years had to be expended, as well as the favor which Lord Aiken owed the Boyd clan, with the result being that Aiken had forged a single drop of Sovereign’s Might. In truth, to an expert on Aiken’s level, a debt was actually far more valuable than any treasure.

If that wasn’t the case, no matter how much treasure had been offered to him, Aiken probably still wouldn’t have refined the Sovereign’s Might.

After all, if he made Sovereign’s Might for someone, it was very possible that one day, that drop of Sovereign’s Might could fall into the hands of an enemy.

“The black drop of water is Destruction Sovereign’s Might. My blue water drop should be Water Sovereign’s Might.” Linley could actually sense that the blue drop of water contained the aura of water. In the past, Linley had been curious…what sort of thing was this, that was capable of making his body so incredibly powerful?

Linley had never dared to imagine that it might be Sovereign’s Might.

But today, Linley understood.

“If I were to use this Sovereign’s Might when executing the ‘Bewildering Shadow’ attack, how powerful would it be?” Linley wondered to himself.

The strength of an attack was usually dependant on three factors; the divine artifact, the energy level, and the profound mysteries. Actually, if any one of the three factors were freakishly strong, the attack would be very powerful.

For example, if the understanding of the profound mysteries was at the Paragon level, then one would be nearly invincible.

If the energy level was at the Sovereign's Might level, then naturally it would also be terrifying.

If the divine artifact was a Sovereign artifact, then one would also be able to dominate the Infernal Realm.

But of course, if one was strong in one aspect, one couldn't be too weak in the other two aspects either.

Linley's divine artifact was a Highgod artifact, 'Bloodviolet'. His energy source would be 'Sovereign's Might'. As for profound mysteries, he had fused two different ones. With the three combined, he might not yet be able to be much of a threat to a Paragon-level Highgod, but he should have some confidence in dealing with the likes of Elquin.

However…

It would be at the cost of expending a drop of Sovereign's Might.

"Unless the situation is absolutely critical, I cannot use it. When used at a critical moment, this is a treasure that can save lives and alter fate." After having encountered so many life-and-death struggles, Linley naturally understood the importance of this Sovereign's Might. Sovereign's Might couldn't be used wantonly; rather, it had to be used to preserve one's life at a critical moment.

Linley returned to normal, and as he did, he discovered that Bebe and Delia were staring at him.

"What are you looking at?" Linley laughed. Actually, Linley was currently in a fine mood.

Anyone in this dangerous Infernal Realm who suddenly acquired a

monstrously powerful item such as this ‘Sovereign’s Might’ would be in an excellent mood. This was a true trump card!

“Boss, you were standing there without moving and grinning. Did something good happen?” Bebe asked.

“I grinned?” Linley’s laughter became all the more brilliant. When something happened to someone, of course one would be delighted.

“Hm? Elquin has given up?” Linley suddenly raised his head, and Bebe and Delia heard the words from up above as well.

From within the cave, although Elquin was rather unwilling, in the end he still nodded. “Salomon, don’t worry. I, Elquin, am not so greedy as to try and seize your Sovereign’s Might. I trust you can’t bear to use it either.”

Of course he couldn’t! If he used it, it would be gone. This was something he had exchanged his entire clan’s fortune for.

“If you force me, then I will have no choice.” Salomon said.

“Phusro, open the tunnel of this volcano range. Let them out.” Elquin immediately ordered.

The little golden kitten in his arms let out a gentle call. “Meow….” Immediately, a massive valley appeared in the middle of the entire volcano range, connected to this cavern. Salomon raised his head and looked up at the already darkening skies. Clearly, it was almost nightfall.

Salomon, in his heart, let out a sigh of relief. “Fortunately, Elquin didn’t force me to use this Sovereign’s Might.”

“Nisse, let’s go.” Salomon turned his head to look at Nisse.

Nisse turned to look at that golden pool of magma. That golden pool of magma was still bubbling and boiling, emitting that astonishing heat. Nisse couldn’t help but once more begin to cry.

“Stop looking.” Salomon said softly.

“Bebe…” Nisse raised her head to look at the straw hat in her hands, then lowered her head. “Let’s go, big brother!”

And then, Nisse and Salomon immediately flew out through the enormous valley, disappearing from sight in the blink of an eye into the desolate wilderness.

“All that work for nothing!” Elquin let out a low snort. He had a belly full of suppressed anger right now. He had thought that the fortune of the Boyd clan was about to fall into his hands. Unexpectedly, the so-called fortune was a drop of Sovereign’s Might! This was indeed a treasure, but it was one that was hard to acquire.

He could only watch as Salomon left with it.

Inigo suddenly set up his Godrealm, preventing any sound from leaving them. Elquin couldn’t help but glance suspiciously at him. Inigo said softly, “Lord Elquin, I know that the one called Bebe is currently within that pool of liquefied Goldflame. The weapon Bebe is wielding is a treasure. If we seize it, this trip won’t be considered a loss.”

Although Inigo hadn’t been present at the time, Phusro had informed Inigo of everything which had happened through innuendo.

Elquin now understood. No wonder Inigo had blocked out sound; he was afraid that Linley’s group would hear them.

“Bebe’s weapon? That is indeed a treasure.” Elquin let out a sigh. “That is a weapon which only Beirut is capable of forging…a weapon which is completely forged out of divine sparks. It is tough and sharp! Its power far surpasses any ordinary Highgod artifact. It’s only slightly inferior to a Sovereign artifact.”

A godspark weapon!

Beirut's trademark, which only he, Beirut, could forge. Divine sparks were indestructibly tough, and only Godeater Rats were capable of digesting them. Currently, Bebe was only capable of digesting them and was not yet able to refine them, but Beirut was. In the Infernal Realm, a single godspark weapon had an astronomical price!

"But for Lord Beirut to give Bebe a weapon like this means that their relationship is extraordinary. If I killed him, then that would be offending Beirut. You should know how terrifying Beirut is." Elquin was rather hesitant.

Inigo cursed inwardly.

How could he not know how terrifying Beirut was? Beirut, who had suddenly sprang to prominence out of nowhere, was someone which perhaps ordinary Deities might not be aware of, but those larger clans and those reclusive, hidden experts all knew about him. If one had to use a single word to describe Beirut, then that would be…

Brutal!

Many people believed that in the Bloodridge Continent, aside from the Bloodridge Ruler, the number one expert was Beirut.

"Milord, I know that Lord Beirut is terrifying, but even someone as mighty as a Sovereign can't know the past or the future. As long as we kill this Bebe while destroying his corpse and all proof of his existence, how would Beirut find out that it was we who did the deed?" Inigo said hurriedly. "If you are afraid that his godspark weapon is too dangerous to keep and runs the risk of Beirut finding out, then you can just go and sell it off at the Blacksand Castle. By then, nobody would know who the killer was. This godspark weapon is worth an astronomical price!"

Chapter 23 – Execution

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 23, Execution

Faced with Inigo's enticing suggestions, Elquin began to frown in thought.

"Lord Elquin. What are you worried about? Beirut definitely wouldn't find out." Inigo said hurriedly.

The little golden kitten in Elquin's arms meowed as well. "Meow. Master. This Inigo's words have some logic. Even someone as mighty as a Sovereign can't possibly know the past or the future. If you kill Bebe, Beirut almost definitely will not find out."

Elquin let out a low snort. "Kill Bebe? Your words do make some sense!"

"Phusro. Have Linley's group of three come out first." Elquin instructed.

The little golden kitten's eyes lit up as it immediately let out a delicate little cry. "Meow." Immediately, the boiling, bubbling golden magma split apart into a tunnel, revealing at the bottom of the pool…Linley, Delia, and Bebe. Their eyes were filled with surprise.

"Boss, I wonder what they were discussing just now." Bebe sent mentally.

Linley was feeling concerned as well.

While they were at the bottom of the lake, they were able to listen to the conversation going on above them. Before this, they heard Elquin let Salomon and Nisse leave. Bebe was growing rather frantic at that time, but Bebe was unable to leave. He could only wait helplessly at the bottom of the pool.

But afterwards, there was no longer any sound at all from above.

Linley immediately was certain:”Inigo and Elquin are up above there. They definitely wouldn’t just be standing there like fools, I wager. They blocked off the sound so we won’t be able to eavesdrop on them. Perhaps they are discussing something that has to do with us.”

“Discussing something that has to do with us. Can it be that they are discussing whether or not to kill us?” Delia said. Aside from this, Delia couldn’t think of anything else.

Delia and Bebe both felt rather worried.

After all, their lives were in the hands of others right now. Although the opponent temporarily hadn’t killed them, that didn’t mean that they were truly going to be released. Compared to Delia and Bebe, Linley actually felt a hint of confidence. Confidence that came from those two drops of Sovereign’s Might!”

“If we really are in life-threatening danger, even though I can’t bear to waste it, I’ll use one of the drops of Sovereign’s Might.” Linley said quietly to himself.

He had already made his preparations.

As the golden magma split open, Linley spoke out. “Let’s go out.” Immediately, Linley’s group of three flew out from the pool of golden magma and landed on the flat floor of the cave. At this time, Linley’s group discovered a massive valley that had appeared at the side of the cave, one which led to the outside world.

This valley was the one through which Salomon and Nisse had left through.

Linley’s group didn’t flee. If the opponents wanted to kill them, their speed would be far insufficient for fleeing.

“Mr. Elquin, thank you for showing mercy to the three of us.” Linley bowed slightly and said courteously.

Elquin was slightly startled, and then he laughed inwardly. “This young fellow named Linley is rather sly. The first thing he did was to thank me. If I was someone who cared about face, it would be rather difficult for me to kill him after that. Wait…I didn’t want to kill him anyhow.” Elquin couldn’t help but turn to glance at Inigo.

Kill Bebe. Steal the godspark weapon?

“Only if my brain was seized by a fever would I do such a thing!” Elquin chuckled in his heart.

Indeed. If he killed Bebe, Beirut might not know who the murderer was.

But…if Beirut was truly enraged and began to investigate and used all of his influence, in the end, it might not be impossible for him to discover who the killer was. At which point in time, he, Elquin, would definitely lose his life!

“A godspark weapon…even if I truly were to seize, I wouldn’t dare use it myself. If I used it, wouldn’t that be as good as admitting that I was the killer? Even if I sold it, I would at most be able to earn some money. A godspark weapon isn’t as valuable as ‘Sovereign’s Might’. It would be a bad bargain for me to lose my life in exchange for making a little bit of money.”

Elquin’s calculations were quite clear.

When he wanted to kill Salomon, he wasn’t afraid; after all, Salomon himself had to spend the entire fortune of the Boyd clan and also a favor in order to have Aiken help out. This meant that Aiken didn’t actually care too much about Salomon. If Aiken had bequeathed Salomon a drop of Sovereign’s Might without asking for anything in exchange, that would mean that Aiken valued him highly.

“Killing Salomon doesn’t matter, but killing Bebe…although the chances are low, if I actually were to be discovered, I would definitely die.” Eqluin didn’t wish to anger Beirut.

“Lord Elquin.” Inigo warned, and the little golden kitten in Elquin’s arms wagged its tail gently.

Linley was still very much on guard. Right now, he had already drawn the drop of Sovereign’s Might into his body. “I hope you won’t force me to waste this drop of Sovereign’s Might,” Linley murmured to himself.

Elquin might have some valuable treasures, but how could those treasures compare with Sovereign’s Might? Even the entire fortune of the Boyd clan was most likely less than a drop of Sovereign’s Might.

Elquin glanced coldly at Inigo, then turned to Linley’s group and laughed. “Linley and Bebe, right?” Elquin’s pale face had a rare smile atop it. “My apologies for getting you involved in this. The three of you can leave now.”

Inigo was flabbergasted.

The little golden kitten in Elquin’s arms raised its head to look up at its master as well.

“Lord Elquin?” Inigo said hurriedly.

“Hrm? Do you have an objection?” Elquin looked towards him. Inigo had to force out a smile and say, “No objection.” In his heart, he was angrily cursing. “On this trip, I lost over a fortune of over ten billion inkstones and many subordinates, but I didn’t get anything in exchange. These bastards. They all deserve to die. They all deserve to die!!!”

Inigo wanted to vent his anger upon Linley’s group, but unfortunately, in front of Elquin, he didn’t dare act.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were overjoyed.

“Then we truly must thank you, Mr. Elquin.” Linley said hurriedly.

“No need to thank me. Be careful on your journey.” Elquin’s smile was very

sincere, as he very much wanted to demonstrate his friendliness. This was the way some people simply were; if they didn't want to offend you, they would go out of their way to be friendly to you. But once they decided to kill you for your treasures, they wouldn't show any mercy.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe exchanged glances.

"Let's go." Linley laughed.

He didn't have to waste a drop of Sovereign's Might. Naturally, Linley was very happy.

Just as Linley, Delia, and Bebe were flying out, suddenly…"Swish!" A black shadow of a sword scraped past Linley. The ripples in the air created by this sword shadow alone caused Linley's draconic scales to emit a clear sound.

"What is this?" Linley was badly startled.

Linley's group immediately came to a halt and looked to the side. In front of them, a tunnel appeared, split open by this sword shadow. A callous looking man dressed in a long robe wielding a longsword flew out. It was the long-missing Six Star Fiend…Learmonth!

Learmonth immediately discovered Linley's group, while at the same time, as he lowered his head, he saw that below, Inigo and Elquin were standing there.

"The others?" Learmonth asked Linley.

"All dead." Linley immediately replied.

Learmonth shook his head slightly. However, seeing that Linley's group was still alive, Learmonth still felt a hint of pleasure. After all, on the journey over, Linley's hard work in training and his performance had caused Learmonth to feel appreciation for him.

“Swoosh!” Learmonth immediately flew downwards.

Linley’s group had just flown up; the distance between them and the cavern below was merely ten meters or so. They were able to see everything within the cave clearly.

“Boss, let’s take a look first.” Bebe said. Linley and Delia were in no rush to leave either. After all, neither side was interested in killing them. Why not watch?

“It is you?” Learmonth frowned upon seeing Inigo.

Clearly, Learmonth remembered having previously seen Inigo before at the battle at the castle of sand.

Inigo, upon seeing Learmonth, couldn’t help but have his face change. However, remembering that Elquin was by his side, he still squeezed out a smile. “Inigo pays his respects to Mr. Learmonth.”

“Phusro!” Elquin let out an unhappy growl.

“Meow. Master. He’s very powerful. He’s able to easily breach the stone walls. I’ve already done what I could to guide him astray, but he still managed to make his way here.” The little golden kitten said in a low, aggrieved voice.

Learmonth turned to look at Elquin. “I am Learmonth. Might I ask who you are?”

“Elquin.” Elquin said calmly. He didn’t hold Learmonth in any regard, although he had heard from Inigo of Learmonth’s strength.

“Elquin?” Learmonth’s eyes lit up. “You are the former Seven Star Fiend, ‘Elquin’?” Learmonth knew the names of some of the ultimate experts of the Infernal Realm.

“Oh, you recognize me?” Elquin lifted an eyebrow.

Learmonth's eyes were shining, and his entire body emanated a battle-ready aura. In a clear voice, he said, "I, Learmonth, am a Six Star Fiend. That which I desire the most is the chance to challenge a Seven Star Fiend!"

Elquin couldn't help but frown. In the Infernal Realm, there was a group of people that dearly loved battle! They loved to challenge experts. Elquin very much disliked this type of person, because this type of person was very hard to deal with. However, this Learmonth in front of him was clearly this type of person.

"Today, I'm in a bad mood. I don't want to fight any longer. You can f*ck off." Elquin said.

"Meeting a Seven Star Fiend is a rare event. How could I give this chance up?" Learmonth laughed. "By your side, you have Inigo, who should be the mastermind behind the attack on us. Ever since I became a Six Star Fiend, I have never yet failed a mission."

As soon as he spoke…

"Swish!"

An astonishing gray sword aura suddenly appeared, scraping directly past Elquin's body. Inigo, shocked, immediately retreated at high speed, his own flexible sword appearing in his hand.

"Clang!" The sword energy and the flexible sword intersected.

Inigo's face instantly turned ashen, and then he slumped powerlessly to the floor, before completely collapsing.

He was already dead!

Inigo's eyes were filled with awe and a hint of unwillingness.

"Once again, that sword technique!"

Linley, secretly watching from above, felt his heart tremble. “In the past, Learmonth easily killed more than ten Highgods with this. Even this Inigo is unable to withstand this sword. It is too terrifying.” Although Linley had seen this sword attack more than once, he still felt awed and shocked.

Within the tunnel.

“You destroyed both of his souls with a single sword attack?” Elquin was slightly startled.

Learmonth smiled as he wielded his longsword. “Elquin, I, Learmonth, a Six Star Fiend, today formally challenge you. Regardless of who lives or who dies!” Learmonth’s dream was to challenge an Asura, but he knew that his current level of power was not yet at that stage.

Elquin let out a cold snort. “Your Edict of Destruction has indeed reached an impressive level. But do you think that just by relying on that, you can defeat me?”

Elquin was smoldering!

He had sacrificed so much, but he had to watch as Salomon left. Not just that. The worst part of it was…he, Elquin, in order to block Bebe’s ultimate attack, had lost his Highgod artifact! A Highgod artifact which was suited to him had to be nurtured for many years.

A divine artifact such as that had been destroyed, and now, someone came to challenge him. How could Elquin not be furious?

“Can it be you, Elquin, have lost your spine?” Learmonth raised his head slightly.

“Hmph.” Elquin, who had a belly full of fire already, finally lost his temper. With a flip of his hand, a long black whip appeared. An expert generally wouldn’t have only a single offensive divine artifact. For example, Linley himself had Bloodviolet as well as his adamantine heavy sword. This

Elquin naturally had other Highgod artifacts which he often used.

“Since you insist on dying, then I will send you to your death!” The rage smoldering within Elquin’s breast was finally let loose.

“Haha…”

Seeing this, Learmonth began to laugh loudly with excitement. “Elquin, this place is too small. How about we go find another place to battle?” “Fine.” Elquin sneered in response.

Immediately…

Learmonth and Elquin flew out into the shattered gorge, flying straight past Linley and the other two, immediately appearing in the horizon. One was a Six Star Fiend. The other, a Seven Star Fiend. Today, a true battle was about to occur.

From below, Linley and the other two watched intently, especially Linley, whose eyes were gleaming.

A battle between experts. How could he miss it?

Chapter 24 – Insight

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 24, Insight

In the dark night sky, the Violet Moon's hazy light was like a light layer of gauze covering the earth. In the air above the volcano range, Elquin and Learmonth were wielding their weapons, facing each other. Below them, Linley's group and the little golden kitten raised their heads to watch.

"Linley, who will win?" Delia said softly.

Linley's head was raised as he looked at the two in mid-air. "Hard to say. I keep on having this feeling that Elquin seems to be slightly stronger. However, no matter what, Learmonth's attack is truly astonishing." Linley wasn't blinking at all, for fear of missing any of it.

The little golden kitten, Phusro, just hovered there in mid-air, gently swaying its tail while raising its little head to watch.

"I, Learmonth, in countless years, have challenged a total of eighteen Six Star Fiends. In each battle, I was victorious! This will be my first time challenging a Seven Star Fiend." Learmonth hovered in mid-air and said in a clear voice. Normally, Learmonth was very emotionless and seemed to care about nothing.

But at this moment, Learmonth's eyes flashed like lightning, and he was filled with battle intent.

Elquin's battle intent had been aroused as well.

"Hmph. Those that you defeated were nothing more than Six Star Fiends. Today…I will let you know the difference between a Six Star Fiend and a Seven Star Fiend!" Elquin's long black robes fluttered, and the long black whip in his hand gently swayed like an agile viper.

Seven star missions were the hardest missions available in the Fiend Castle!

One star to two star, two star to three star, all the way up to the fifth star and sixth star, the increase in the difficulty of a mission wouldn't be too extravagant. However, leaping to seven star missions was extremely difficult. This is why despite so many years having passed in the Infernal Realm, the number of Seven Star Fiends was still incomparably low.

Learmonth, despite having defeated eighteen Six Star Fiends, wasn't certain in being able to defeat Elquin. But it was precisely because he wasn't certain that this was all the more challenging and arousing!

"Haha…" Learmonth began to laugh loudly.

"Crackle…" A terrifying gray sword energy emanated out from Learmonth's body. In the blink of an eye, an enormous illusory sword that was over a hundred meters high appeared, while Learmonth himself was at the nucleus of this enormous illusory sword. The fierce sword energy had already caused space to tremble.

"You truly have trained the Edicts of Destruction to an extremely high level."

Elquin let out a calm sigh in praise, but his face didn't have a hint of concern on it at all.

"Rumble…" The area within a hundred meters of Elquin instantly turned pitch-black, without a hint of light. At the same time, the entire area began to twist and distort. Even the light of the moon was completely sucked in within this area of a hundred meters of darkness around Elquin.

Only Elquin himself was visible.

"Hmph. Feel free to use whatever techniques you feel proud of. Otherwise, you won't have the chance to do so after you die." Elquin said calmly.

Learmonth let out a chuckle. "Then…first receive my thirteen swords!"

Instantly, he unleashed the sword…

The sword shadow flickered, and suddenly, an awe-inspiring thirteen black sword shadows appeared, striking out through the air like thirteen viperous dragons. Multiple scars in space appeared as the thirteen sword shadows slashed out in different arcs, but came striking down at Elquin at the same time.

The thirteen sword shadows were incredibly fierce, like giant man-eating beasts, trying to chop Elquin into mincemeat.

“Hmph.” Elquin, faced with these thirteen extremely fierce sword shadows, only let out a calm snort while at the same time lightly waving the long black whip in his hands. This seeming thin long black whip began to dance, and it seemed as though it had transformed into an enormous black python.

In addition, this ‘large black python’ carried with it a fog that seemed like strips of black silk.

“Crackle….”

The black whip, transformed into the ‘large black python’, coiled about like an enormous buckler, and the ‘large black python’ which carried within it that black silken fog coiled firmly against the thirteen extremely fierce and aggressive sword shadows.

“Bang!” “Bang!” Many of the strips of black silk instantly collapsed upon touching the sword energy, but upon dissipating into black fog, they once more reformed.

There were simply too many strips of black silk, and as soon as they shattered they reformed.

In addition, that ‘large black python’ very firmly blocked the attacks of those thirteen sword shadows. Soon, the thirteen sword shadows dissipated.

Using soft to overcome hard. Despite being incredibly sharp, those thirteen sword shadows were still ground down.

“Is that the best you can do?” Elquin said calmly.

“Excellent!” Learmonth’s eyes lit up. “This technique of yours contains at least three different profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness! Elquin, of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, how many have you fused?” Learmonth was an expert as well. With but a single glance, he was able to tell how many profound mysteries were contained within the enemy’s defense.

Elquin chuckled. “Why should I tell you? That was just the opener. That small attack of yours isn’t qualified for me to use my ultimate technique!”

Linley, quietly watching the battle, was trying to analyze the profound mysteries contained within Elquin’s technique. “Hm? Learmonth said that this technique contained three profound mysteries. Aside from the ‘Essence of Darkness’ and ‘Evil’, these two profound mysteries, what else is there?” From the surface, Linley was only able to recognize these two profound mysteries.

Linley suddenly laughed. “Right. Learmonth’s attack contained a soul attack component. Since that was blocked, the third must be a spirit-type profound mystery.”

A simple technique contained three different types of profound mysteries. This showed that Elquin had at least fused three of them.

“I’ve only fused two. It seems that I still have a long way to go.” Linley said to himself.

“Huh?” Linley’s eyes suddenly lit up.

In mid-air, Learmonth began to bellow in excitement. “Haha….” While laughing loudly, Learmonth began to move at high speed, transforming into countless shadows which surrounded Elquin, each one of which was

carrying a sword shadow.

“Competing in speed? How laughable.” How could Elquin be afraid of this?

Elquin’s body flickered, then instantly transformed into hundreds of illusory shadows as well. It wasthe Shadowshape Doppelganger technique. Elquin was capable of shifting to any one of those hundreds of shadows, making him completely unpredictable. Elquin’s loud laughter rang out. “Haha, there’s no way you can touch me!”

“I’m not competing with you in speed!” Learmonth’s voice rang out, while at the same time, those moving shadows completely dissipated. Learmonth himself flew back at high speed, but then…

Countless sword shadows split the air apart.

“Crackle…”

Just as Learmonth began to move at high speed, he had already unleashed hundreds of sword shadow attacks, each one slightly different, whether in time of attack or location. Learmonth executed them all perfectly, and as he launched his final sword shadow…

Instantly, the countless sword shadows in mid-air formed into a single shape…a blossoming lotus flower.

In this moment, as those countless sword shadows attacked, the ‘blossoming lotus flower’ came into full form, and at the center of it was Elquin.

“Hrm?” Elquin’s face instantly changed.

This sword lotus had already completely sealed off the area around him, giving him no place to flee. His only choice was to take it head on.

“This Learmonth truly is powerful.” Elquin said to himself. And then, with a flip of his right palm, Elquin’s blackened yellow right palm instantly

became as scarlet-red as blood while increasing to the size of a fan. Elquin let out a cold snort.

His right palm suddenly slammed upwards!

From above, many sword shadows were pressing down at him.

“BANG!”

The sword shadows were completely dispersed, but blood was flowing on Elquin’s scarlet-red hand. He had been wounded!

“My glove was destroyed. Otherwise, how could I have been injured?” Elquin was filled with anger.

In this attempt to seize the treasure of the Boyd clan, Elquin had incurred a major loss. And now, he had been challenged by Learmonth, and even wounded. One detriment after another…Elquin was truly enraged now, and he no longer used one technique to counter another.

He actively attacked!

The sword shadows from above crumbled away, and Elquin himself charged straight through that hole, like a giant eagle in flight, charging straight towards the distant Learmonth while shouting explosively through divine sense, “Learmonth, you receive one of my attacks as well!”

The long black whip in Elquin’s hands twisted about, instantly turning scarlet red and transforming into an enormous blood-red serpent as it coiled towards Learmonth. This enormous serpent even opened its mouth wide, revealing its black fangs.

The enormous red serpent’s sudden attack caused space itself to tremble.

“Rumble…”

“Excellent!”

Learmonth's eyes were flashing like lightning, and the longsword in his hand suddenly stabbed outwards. This sword attack appeared ordinary, but in the moment when it stabbed outwards, a black 'hole' in space suddenly appeared. The longsword seemed to twist as it stabbed through that black hole, and wherever the longsword passed by, space itself split open.

"Starpoint…EXPLOSIONS!"

Learmonth's most powerful attack. The ultimate attack he had used to kill that green-robed elder at the castle of sand.

Elquin, seeing the power of this attack, couldn't help but feel surprised. And then, Elquin gritted his teeth, his face savage. At the same time, the long whip in his hand which had transformed into a blood red serpent shuddered, then transformed into a nine-headed serpent, each one of which had its fanged maw open.

Learmonth's seemingly unblockable sword pierced straight over…

"Crunch!" It pierced straight through the throats of one of the serpentine heads.

"Clang!"

The sword pierced through to the long whip contained within the nine blood red serpentine heads. Instantly, the entire blood red nine-headed serpent trembled, then with a 'BOOM' exploded, transforming back into that long black whip. At the same time, the serpent heads that had been blocked off by that explosion continued to charge towards Learmonth.

One blood red serpent's head after another charged towards him at high speed, savagely biting towards Learmonth.

A sword shadow flashed!

Eight explosion sounds occurred simultaneously, while Learmonth himself

was sent flying backwards by the force of the explosions, landing onto the ground of the volcano range below. Immediately, Learmonth rose to his feet. Right now, Learmonth's face was ashen, and there was a hint of blood at the corner of his lips.

"Formidable, formidable. You've fused four types of profound mysteries." Learmonth's body had bloodstains on it as well, and he carefully glanced at Elquin. "Since you were able to withstand this attack of mine, I admit defeat."

Elquin's face was paler than it had been in the past as well, but he hadn't been as heavily injured as Learmonth had.

The onlookers, being Linley's group and the little golden kitten, were all rather surprised.

"Learmonth lost?" Bebe murmured. "He isn't dead yet, but he admitted defeat?"

Linley continued to carefully watch the two combatants.

Elquin looked at Learmonth in surprise. "You…you actually managed to fuse Destruction divine power and fire divine power together? You…you have a mutated soul?" When receiving this attack just now, Elquin just barely managed to detect the true energy source contained within this 'Starpoint Explosions' technique.

It wasn't Destruction divine power. It was a fusion of Destruction divine power and fire divine power.

"Right. Unfortunately, despite that being the case, I still am not your match." Learmonth shook his head.

"A mutated soul. How truly rare." Elquin sighed in amazement. "Generally speaking, only such a person is capable of fusing different types of divine power. Previously, I've only heard that when fusing different types of divine power, one's strength would increase explosively. Today, I see that is

indeed the case."

Elquin glanced at Learmonth. "To be honest, your power should already be at the Seven Star Fiend level. However, you are still somewhat weaker than me. Then…die!" As he spoke, Elquin's body suddenly transformed into an illusion, transforming into hundreds of illusory shadows which all attacked towards the heavily wounded Learmonth.

Laws of Darkness – Shadowshape Doppelganger technique!

Linley, watching this, was stunned. "Fusing divine power? Indeed. Right, Olivier had previously been able to simultaneously utilize darkness divine power and light divine power. Only, Olivier's degree of fusion was not as great as Learmonth's."

Learmonth's attack was hard to judge just from looking at it. When the person who received the attack, Elquin, had only just barely been able to detect it.

Thus, one could tell how deeply Learmonth had fused those two surges of divine power.

"When two different types of divine power are fused, the power of the attack is actually increased so much? How does one fuse divine power? From what Elquin said, it seems as though one's soul has to mutate in order for divine power to be fused. Otherwise, it is impossible." Linley's thoughts suddenly came to a halt.

He looked towards the air. "Is Learmonth going to die, just like that?"

Chapter 25 – A Trillion Years of Depression

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 25, A Trillion Years of Depression

Faced with Elquin's attack, Learmonth naturally chose to flee for his life!

"Haha, you want to flee?" Hundreds of shadowy illusions filled the area, and Elquin's loud laughter seemed to come from the mouths of every shadow. Suddenly, an enormous serpentine whip shadow slashed down towards Learmonth, who with a ferocious look stabbed out once more.

The same technique!

Starpoint – Explosions!

The blood red whip shadow tore through the air towards the longsword anew.

"BOOM!"

Elquin's right hand trembled, and his body couldn't help but be pushed backwards, while Learmonth himself was knocked flying before once more forcing himself to come to a halt in mid-air. His face was ashen, and he growled, "Elquin, don't go too far!" Learmonth had realized that in terms of speed, he was inferior to Elquin. There was no way he could flee.

Elquin's face was sinister, and he snickered. "I didn't expect that you had enough spiritual energy to execute that attack a second time. However, your technique is only enough to wound me. In terms of the profound mysteries of the Laws, you are far too weak compared to me. I want to see how many times you can execute it."

Clearly, Elquin didn't want to spare him.

Elquin had a belly full of rage right now and he wanted to find a place to

vent it. How could he let Learmonth leave?

Especially since, as Elquin saw it, Learmonth's future potential was unlimited. Elquin naturally would be delighted to kill such a genius as him.

"You want me to die?"

Learmonth took a deep breath, standing there in mid-air with his longsword raised. He said emotionlessly, "If you want to kill me, I will make you pay a price!"

"Pay a price?" Elquin chuckled. He didn't even know how many times he had heard these words before. Many people, before he killed them, had promised to make him pay a price, but unfortunately, they still died while he, Elquin, was living quite happily.

Learmonth seemed extremely calm. His entire aura had been drawn back into his body, and he stared coldly towards Elquin.

Suddenly…

Learmonth's eyes suddenly lit up, and then he shut them.

"Huh?" Elquin couldn't help but feel stunned.

Not just him. Even the spectators below, Linley and the rest, felt stunned. At the critical moment in the battle, Learmonth actually shut his eyes?

"You want to try and scare me, just before dying?" Elquin laughed coldly in his heart. The long black whip in his hand once more spun out. Although in his heart, he felt disdainful, Elquin still used his most powerful attack. The long black whip instantly turned scarlet red and simultaneously transformed into a nine-headed serpent!

Instantly, a dark red sword flash appeared in front of Elquin.

Elquin's face changed dramatically. Unable to dodge at all, all he could do

was use his blood red, fan-sized right hand to slap towards it.

“Crunch!”

The dark red sword light instantly pierced through his palm and entered his body.

“Urgh…ahhhhh!” Elquin’s entire body quivered, and his entire body emanated a red light.

“Boom!” Elquin’s entire body exploded, and two Highgod sparks as well as an interspatial ring fell down from mid-air.

Linley and the other two, watching this battle, were all stunned, along with the little golden kitten. Clearly, just now, Elquin had the advantage, and Learmonth was actually trying to flee. But who would have imagined that Learmonth would suddenly snatch victory from the jaws of defeat?

“What? Learmonth won?”

Linley was quite shocked. “And that dark red sword flash. Not only did it contain Destruction divine power, it also contained fire divine power. It was very obvious.” Linley was completely puzzled. Previously, when Learmonth had attacked, Linley had only sensed the aura of Destruction, and hadn’t sensed the fire divine power at all.

The fire divine power was very weak.

However, why did it suddenly change just now?

“Haha…” Learmonth began laughing loudly in mid-air. “I finally completed this technique. Haha. I finally fused the Way of Destruction and the Elemental Laws of Fire. Indeed, only when both divine power fuses as well as the profound mysteries of the Laws fuse, will the power greatly increase. I’ve finally developed it!” Learmonth was extremely excited.

Hearing Learmonth’s excited voice in mid-air, Linley understood.

“Did he just say that he fused the profound mysteries of two different types of Laws together?” Linley was tremendously shocked.

Given his current level of training, Linley only knew that for example the six types of profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth could be fused. He had never, however, heard of different profound mysteries of different Elemental Laws as capable of being fused.

But hearing from what Learmonth was saying, it seemed as though the different Elemental Laws, such as the Laws of the Earth and the Elemental Laws of the Wind, were capable of having two of their profound mysteries fused as well.

“This, this, how is this possible?” Linley didn’t understand.

It wasn’t just Linley who was astonished. The other listeners, being Bebe, Delia, and the little golden kitten were all shocked as well.

Learmonth lowered his head to glance at Linley’s group, understanding their puzzlement. Laughing, he said, “Don’t overthink it. The different profound mysteries of different types of Elemental Laws can only be fused by people like me, with a mutated soul. There is no way for you to fuse your divine power, and no way to develop an attack like this.”

Linley began to understand.

Divine power and profound mysteries were paired together.

For example, when using earth divine power to use the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, the power would be great. If one was to use wind divine power instead, although one could still use it, the power would be much lower.

But fusing divine power, such as Learmonth…

Destruction divine power and fire divine power, upon being fused…if one

was capable of also using a fusion of the profound mysteries of the Edicts of Destruction and the Elemental Laws of Fire…would have an absolutely terrifying amount of power once utilized.

The fusion of divine power already resulted in an extreme increase in power. Once the profound mysteries were fused as well, then matched with the fused divine power…no wonder Learmonth had been able to kill Elquin!

“Whew.” Learmonth’s face was very pale, but his eyes were still filled with jubilation.

Actually, after the repeated battles just now, his spiritual energy had been all but used up. As his power had increased dramatically, however, and as he had entered the realm of a Seven Star Fiend in power, Learmonth was indescribably delighted. “When I go back, I’ll immediately take on a seven star mission. When the time comes, I’ll challenge an Asura!”

“Just now, Elquin wanted to kill me. But now…”

Learmonth shook his head and sighed. Some things were very hard to predict. Actually, if Elquin hadn’t pushed him to the brink of death and cause him to gain an insight that he previously had not been able to understand, how could he have made this breakthrough?

“This Elquin’s interspatial ring should have many treasures within it.” Learmonth flew straight down. Although he wasn’t greedy, this was something which belonged to the person he had killed; it was wealth which he deserved to have. Naturally, Learmonth wouldn’t reject it.

Right at this moment…

Very bizarrely, the entire volcano range suddenly vanished, and the interspatial ring of Elquin which had been atop the rocks of the volcano range vanished as well.

“You even want Elquin’s items?” A low, gravelly voice said.

The volcano range had vanished, but another person had appeared!

“Who are you?” Learmonth turned to look at the newcomer. He couldn’t help but be startled. This person was three meters tall, and was covered with a fiery red armor. His long scarlet hair fluttered unrestrained, and his craggy form was very clear. He was obviously a very muscular person.

The fiery haired man stared at Learmonth, then said clearly, “Actually, I need to thank you!”

“Thank me?” Learmonth could sense that this person was extremely powerful.

The fiery haired man laughed. “Right. Thank you for killing my master!”

At this moment, Linley and the other two, floating in mid-air, were shocked. “Killed his master? Could it be that he is…?” Linley turned to look, and indeed, the little golden kitten was missing. “He is Phusro! He is that little golden kitten!”

“He is Phusro?” Bebe stared wide-eyed.

“He is Phusro? That little kitten? How?” Delia couldn’t believe it either. Who would made the connection between that adorable little kitten and this muscular giant?

Linley felt astonished as well, that the adorable little kitten had actually transformed into such a bulky giant whose voice was so thunderous.

“To thank you for killing my master, you can die as well.” Phusro laughed loudly.

Learmonth’s face immediately changed, and with a flip of his hand, a Golden Soul-Pearl suddenly appeared in Learmonth’s hand, which he immediately swallowed. This Golden Soul-Pearl emitted a large amount of soul essence, capable of both nourishing and strengthening the soul, as well

as recovering spiritual energy.

Phusro was in no hurry to attack.

“Are you done?” Phusro laughed calmly.

Learmonth was extremely shocked. Could it be that Phusro was going to let him recover? His current level of power was definitely comparable to a Seven Star Fiend’s.

“I’m done.” Learmonth replied.

“Then you can die now.” In Phusro’s hands, an axe suddenly appeared with a volcanic image atop it. Phusro suddenly chopped down with the axe, and with a ‘RUMBLE’, repeated layers of explosions could be heard.

Wherever the axe passed, space itself blew apart. The spatial walls of the Infernal Realm seemed to be as thin as paper.

Absolutely irresistible force!

Learmonth was so terrified that his face changed, and he immediately executed his most powerful sword attack…

The dark red sword flash also caused space to explode, flashing through the shattered space as fast as lightning, charging towards the heavy, oncoming axe as though it were a meteor shooting through the sky.

“BANG!”

The axe trembled slightly, and its power decreased dramatically, but at the same time, an enormous illusion of an axe flew out like an attacking ripple, shooting towards Learmonth.

“Swoosh!” Learmonth, after using his most powerful sword attack, immediately dodged backwards and fled at high speed, moving as though he had become a dark red illusion. Even though he was struck by two

surges of the illusory axe ripples, Learmonth still frantically fled, and in the blink of an eye, Learmonth completely disappeared.

Phusro held his giant axe, pursing his lips helplessly. “He ran really fast. When his divine power fused, even his speed increased many times, while I just so happen to be a bit slow, unlike Elquin, that bastard, who specialized in speed. Otherwise, I definitely would have killed him…”

Watching this, Linley’s group was stunned.

“Delia, Bebe, this Phusro has some issues. Let’s hurry up and leave.” Linley, recovering to his senses, hurriedly led Delia and Bebe to flee.

“Huh? You want to flee?”

Phusro suddenly chased after Linley’s group. In terms of speed, Phusro was inferior to Learmonth, but Linley’s team was composed of Gods. How could they escape?

“Swoosh!” Phusro appeared in front of Linley’s team.

Seeing Phusro in front of them, Linley’s team had to come to a halt.

Linley felt nervous. “This Phusro is too unpredictable. He’s extremely powerful, but before this he’s never intervened, nor did he help his master. His master was willing to let us go free, but who knows if he is.” Linley was very nervous.

“Why are you fleeing?” Phusro seemed rather disgruntled.

Linley’s group could only stand there in mid-air. Bebe murmured, “Who knows what’s going on with you. You were actually so powerful!”

“Powerful?” Phusro began to bellow angrily. “What the f*ck good does being powerful do? Can I be more powerful than a master-servant bond?”

Linley’s group was stunned. Master-servant bond?

What did strength and power have to do with a master-servant bond?

Phusro bellowed, “When I was just a Saint, I was forcibly tamed by this Elquin and had a master-servant bond set up! I don’t even know how many countless years have gone past now. He’s grown all the way from being a Demigod to a Seven Star Fiend!”

“But I am more powerful than him. Of the six profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Fire, I’ve already fused five of them. I am a Volcano Titan and extremely talented in the fire element. Killing him would be utter simplicity, and even becoming an Asura isn’t a problem!”

Phusro roared angrily, “But what good is being powerful? He was my master! I couldn’t resist him. The binding power of the master-servant bond is too terrifying!”

“But…” Bebe wanted to interject.

“Shut your mouth! Listen to me!” Phusro bellowed indignantly.

Linley’s group was terrified. Phusro was an utter madman. All they could do was listen.

Phusro continued, “This Elquin likes kittens. F*ck his grandmother, I’m a goddamn Volcano Titan, a valiant Volcano Titan. He actually had me transform into a kitten? And had me transform into an adorable little golden kitten? And every day, be in his arms and be petted by him?”

The muscles on Phusro’s face were twitching. “Aaaaaaargh! The days passed like years, and every day, he would pet me with those filthy hands of his. Pet me gently. AAAAAAAAARGH! I almost went insane! But he was my master. All I could do was endure it! Motherf*cker, I had to endure it all!” This bellow caused the entire world to echo with his voice.

Linley’s group was caught between terror and shock, but they also felt that this Phusro was rather pitiable.

Indeed, he was quite pitiable.

A powerful, valiant Volcano Titan, forced to become a little kitten and allow others to pet him for trillions of years.

“Do you know what that felt like?” Phusro stared with wide eyes towards Linley’s group.

Linley’s group could only maintain their silence.

“But I managed to endure it. I hid my power, and on the surface only revealed a tenth of my true ability.” Phusro said coldly. “I always hoped for someone to be able to kill him! But he truly was a coward, while he was also a Seven Star Fiend. There were very few people capable of killing him, so I never had the chance. But this time, my chance came!”

“Originally, I wanted him to kill you, Bebe.”

Phusro pointed at Bebe. “When the time came, I would leak this information and have Beirut come avenge you and kill him. By then, I would be freed.”

“Beirut? You know my Grandpa Beirut?” Bebe was very startled. As Bebe saw it, his Grandpa Beirut was only someone who stayed on the Yulan Plane.

“I don’t know him, but I’ve heard of him. Motherf*cker, I told you to shut your mouth. Why are you talking?” Phusro began to bellow at him again.

Bebe immediately shut his mouth.

“This madman.” Bebe muttered to himself. “I, Bebe, won’t bicker with a madman.”

Phusro continued, “But Elquin, that coward, actually didn’t dare to kill you. He actually was going to release you, so I had to intentionally guide that

Learmonth here to come deal with him." Suddenly, Phusro began to laugh excitedly. "Haha, I originally didn't expect Learmonth to be able to kill him, but who would have expected that Learmonth actually did in fact kill him? Haha…"

Phusro suddenly grabbed Bebe. "Do you know? I really didn't expect it, really didn't expect Learmonth would kill him." This grab of Phusro's was very powerful. Fortunately, it was Bebe, as if it were Delia, most likely her body would have been torn apart.

"Uh, I know." Bebe nodded hurriedly.

He was rather frightened of this seemingly insane Phusro.

Phusro suddenly raised his head.
"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!" A wild bellow rang out. It included no profound mysteries; it was a pure, simple roar, a roar which shook the heavens. A roar which included a trillion years of grief, depression, and rage!

A trillion years of depression!

This sort of torment had almost tortured him to death, and yet every day, Phusro had to pretend to be so adorable, and keep going 'meow', 'meow'!

"I!"

"HATE!"

"KITTEEEEEEEEEEENS!"

Phusro's face was savage, and he bellowed towards the heavens. "I WILL NEVER BE A KITTEN AGAIN! NEVER AGAIN!!!" Only after screaming for a long time did he calm down. Phusro's facial expressions slowly returned to normal, and he took a deep breath, then let out a deep breath.

Turning his head, he looked back at Linley, Delia, and Bebe.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were still utterly dumbfounded. None of them knew what this madman would do next.

“Whew. I feel much better now.” Phusro beamed at Linley’s group.

Linley’s group couldn’t help but gawk. However, Linley could understand how terrifying the trillion years of depression had been.

“The restrictive power of a bond is indeed completely irresistible.” Linley said to himself. “Even for someone as powerful as Phusro, whose power had vastly exceeded Elquin’s, but who still had to transform himself into a little kitten.” When Linley imagined the life Phusro had lived, he could feel Phusro’s pain.

It hurt just thinking about it. He could fully understand what level of depression, rage, and grief Phusro had reached, after trillions of years.

“I couldn’t even give voice to the rage, grief, and depression in my heart. Can you imagine what that feels like?” Phusro was now completely calm and amiable. “Now, I’m finally free. I’ve also said everything I want to say. I feel much better now.”

Linley’s group nodded.

“Haha…” Phusro laughed brilliantly. “I’m finally free. I’m finally free!”

Phusro turned to glance at Linley’s group. “Thanks for listening to me say so much. Actually, I’m usually very taciturn. Alright. We’ve killed so many Gods and Highgods this time. I imagine that these ordinary Highgods don’t have much wealth on them. I’ll give it all to you. Consider this your reward for listening to me complain!”

With a wave of his hand, Phusro immediately brought out over a hundred interspatial rings.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were stunned.

But then, with a wave of his hand, Linley collected this interspatial rings. "Mr. Phusro, this…"

"Haha, in a trillion years, you are the first person to call me Mr. Phusro." Phusro was exceedingly delighted. "Just based on this alone, you can take these toys with a clear conscience. Don't think too much of it; these interspatial rings don't have much wealth inside them. The most valuable two belonged to that Inigo and Elquin, which I will keep."

"Alright. Take good care of yourselves. I, Phusro, am now free. I don't want to stay in any one location. I will…roam the Infernal Realm!" His voice still echoed in the air, but Phusro himself had already vanished.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe just looked at each other.

Chapter 26 – Head Out – Stay Behind?

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 26, Head Out, Stay Behind?

Phusro's voice still echoed in their ears, but he himself was gone.

"This Phusro…really is weird." Bebe blinked his eyes twice, still feeling rather dazed.

Linley lowered his head to look at the hundred-plus interspatial rings hovering in his palm. Amongst them were mostly the interspatial rings of Gods, but also many of Highgods. "So many interspatial rings, with even Highgod interspatial rings amongst them. This is really a treasure that just fell down out of nowhere."

Linley felt joyful.

"That Phusro actually gave us so many interspatial rings." Delia sighed in amazement as well.

"So like I said, that guy's head isn't working. However, it's broken in a good way." Bebe chortled.

Linley shook his head. "Bebe, you can't say that. Phusro's experiences and ours are different. A trillion years of depression, of silent endurance. Only an extraordinary person would be able to endure so much. After finally being released one day, he was just venting."

Delia nodded slightly as well.

Whether it was his attack on Learmonth or his chat with Linley's group, it was all a form of venting.

"Oh." Bebe nodded in understanding, his eyes shining. "After venting, he casually tossed these little baubles to us. Phusro really is stingy though.

Why didn't he give us Elquin's interspatial ring? That old fellow's wealth is definitely astonishing."

Linley and Delia were momentarily speechless.

"Just kidding." Bebe chortled, and then looked at the hundred-plus interspatial rings in Linley's hand. "Boss, so many interspatial rings. How many treasures do you think are you inside? I'll take a look first." Bebe clearedly seemed quite eager. "I love investigating the treasures within interspatial rings."

"Why the rush?" Flipping his hand, Linley stored away all of the interspatial rings.

"Right now, we need to first decide what we are going to do next. We can look at interspatial rings later." Linley glanced at his surroundings. The volcano range had disappeared, causing this area to once more return to its flat surface. The hazy, dim light of the Violet Moon shone down from the night sky.

The gauze-like violet moonlight shone down, filling the world with an ancient, vast aura.

Delia frowned slightly. "Linley, the Infernal Realm is filled with countless dangers. It will be very hard for the three of us to rely on our own ability to reach the Rainbow Prefecture's Bluemaple City."

Linley agreed as well. The three of them were all Gods. Although a Fiend's star rank could not be distinguished, others would still be able to distinguish someone's general level of strength. They would know Linley's group was at the God level and not the Highgod level! Highgod Fiends, bandits wouldn't dare to irritate.

But God-level Fiends, bandits wouldn't fear either.

"To take on a mission, we would have to go to a city. The distance between each city in the Infernal Realm is vast! There's no way for us to take on a

mission right now." Bebe said resignedly as well.

Linley glanced at his surroundings, thinking back to some of the geographical information he had read before regarding the Infernal Realm. Moments later, he decided, "We are indeed in a bit of trouble. The closest city to us is at least eighty million kilometers away. Eighty million kilometers…who knows how many dangers we would encounter on the way over?"

"Eighty million kilometers?" Bebe and Delia both felt their heads ache as well.

Linley looked towards Delia. His mind couldn't help but be filled with the scene of himself and Delia falling into the golden magma pool. In that moment, he had truly believed he was going to die.

"For the sake of Delia, we can't keep on taking risks like this." Linley said to himself.

Delia and Bebe looked towards Linley. At times like this, they left the decision to Linley. Linley stared into the distance, then spoke. "How about this. Up ahead there seems to be a large mountain range. Let's go there and temporarily live there for a while and train quietly. When Delia completely fuses her Highgod spark, we will head out!"

"Live there?" Bebe was rather surprised.

"What is it?" Linley looked towards Bebe.

Bebe immediately shook his head. "Nothing. Boss, your words have merit. Let's wait until Delia is a Highgod. At least on the surface, others will see that she is a Highgod Fiend, which should be frightening enough. When we head out, it will be much safer."

This was indeed Linley's plan. Although Delia was only a One Star Fiend, who would be able to tell from the surface?

Others could only be certain that she was a Highgod Fiend!

Bandit groups didn't want to deal with Highgod Fiends. Who knew how many stars the Fiend might have? It might be a Seven Star Fiend!

"Huh?" Linley suddenly noticed that Delia had taken his hand. He couldn't help but to turn and look at her, and she gestured towards him with her eyes. Only now did Linley notice that Bebe was acting strangely. Instantly, Linley understood. "Bebe is most likely thinking of Nisse."

"Bebe." Linley said.

"Huh?" Bebe raised his head, looking towards Linley.

Linley immediately said, "Bebe, how about, let's travel as fast as possible. Perhaps we can first go to a city to take on a mission, or buy a metallic lifeform of our own. Either way, we can hurry to Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture as soon as possible."

Bebe understood.

Salomon and Nisse, if they wanted to return to the Jadefloat Continent ,would first have to go to Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture. Linley's suggestion…was to give Bebe a chance to catch up to Nisse.

However, this sort of hasty trip would definitely result in them meeting with many bandits on the way over. Who knew how many dangers they would face? Although Linley and Bebe were both strong, and would be able to deal with any ordinary bandit squads, if they were to encounter a bandit squad of thousands of Gods, what would they do?

It was too dangerous!

"Boss, thanks." Bebe said gratefully, but then shook his head and sighed. "However, there's no need."

Linley and Delia exchanged a glance.

Bebe continued, “This sort of hasty travel is very dangerous to begin with. It’s best to do as Boss said at first, to first take up residence for a time…as for Nisse, to be honest, right now, I really hate that Salomon! Although I hate him, I believe that with Nisse by his side, at least her safety won’t be a problem. As for myself and whether or not I’ll be able to meet her again… I’ll leave that up to fate!”

Although Bebe wanted to be together with Nisse, this sort of hasty trip would result in danger to both Linley and Delia. Bebe naturally wouldn’t do that.

Linley’s group headed towards the northeast, advancing roughly a hundred kilometers, at which point they discovered a very wide mountain range. In the ancient mountain range, enormous trees that were a thousand meters high and needed dozens of men to encircle could be seen everywhere. Wild grass grew everywhere, and all sorts of strange creatures could be seen.

Every part of this place revealed its ancient heritage.

Although Linley’s group had discovered several small tribes while travelling those hundreds of kilometers of flat land, these small tribes were formed by the puny Saints of the Infernal Realm. Generally speaking, tribes formed by Deities were able to control an area of land spanning thousands of kilometers.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe casually chose an unremarkable mountain, and midway up the mountain, Linley utilized Bloodviolet to carve out a large hole, creating a deep cavern residence for them to temporarily live in.

This cavern residence was newly made. Linley, Delia, and Bebe sat down and began to inspect those interspatial rings.

“So little. This one only has a few hundred thousand inkstones. It definitely belongs to a God-level Fiend.” Bebe seemed to have tossed Nisse to the back of his mind, and was excitedly investigating the rings. “Whoah-oh! This one is badass. It actually has several hundred million inkstones. It

definitely belongs to a Highgod Fiend!”

“I’ve searched seven interspatial rings but none of them exceeded ten million.” Delia spoke out as well.

“No rush. I expect that you have only been searching God-level Fiend rings. Whoah. This one is impressive. It actually has….twenty billion inkstones!” Seeing the contents of this interspatial ring, Linley was shocked. This was the largest sum he had ever encountered.

“Twenty billion inkstones?” Bebe and Delia looked over as well.

Their prior total assets were only worth a hundred million inkstones. Twenty billion was definitely a shocking figure to them.

Actually, as Phusro had only taken away Inigo and Elquin’s rings, the remaining rings included the white-horned elder’s. Since the black-horned elder’s had contained over thirty billion, the white-horned elder’s ring naturally wouldn’t be much inferior either. As for the Edward brothers, they were all Five Star Fiends. All of them possessed astonishing wealth! Actually, tens of billions of inkstones to Five Star Fiends was a normal sum.

After all, ordinary Highgods would have more than a hundred million.

As for some Seven Star Fiends, their assets were most likely in excess of a trillion inkstones. Inigo, as the second young master of his clan, also had a terrifying amount of wealth. Thus, the two most valuable interspatial rings had been taken away by Phusro.

“No rush. Let’s keep investigating. We haven’t even searched thirty. There are many left. Let’s keep going slowly.”

He had to admit that this sort of searching through the interspatial rings for wealth was indeed something that filled a man with excitement and hope. It wasn’t tiresome at all.

“Whoah, my heavens. This one has thirty billion inkstones.” Bebe cried out

in shock.

“What’s going on with me? Up until now, the most I’ve found was around seven billion inkstones.” Delia laughed.

“I found another one that has nearly thirty billion inkstones.” Linley laughed as he put another interspatial ring to one side.

A few moments later, they completed their review of these hundred-plus interspatial rings. The fortune within the most valuable one was actually sixty billion inkstones, while the least valuable one contained a pitiful hundred thousand! The difference was truly astonishing.

“All together…let’s calculate…” Bebe’s eyes were shining. “Wow, all together, we have two hundred billion!”

A truly astonishing figure!

“There were actually six rings which contained more than ten billion inkstones! I imagine that these six belonged to the three Edward brothers, the white-horned elder, Sperry, and those other two Highgod Fiends.” Linley said. Actually, although they had more than a hundred interspatial rings, the most valuable ones were actually these six, which all contained over ten billion. These six combined alone neared two hundred billion.

The other hundred-plus interspatial rings, all combined, had a value of just barely ten billion, not even twenty billion.

“Quality, not quantity!” Bebe sighed. “These are all just Five Star Fiends and Four Star Fiends, but they already have such astonishing wealth. What about Six Star Fiends? Or especially the likes of Elquin, a Seven Star Fiend? Who knows how much wealth he has.”

Wealth was something which accumulated like a pyramid.

The more powerful a person was, the more extravagant the amount of wealth they had.

“I expect that even all our wealth combined is still nothing more than a rounding error in Elquin’s wealth.” Linley said.

One could imagine it just by thinking about it. Who knew how many experts Elquin had killed, and how vast a fortune he had built up?

Still, although a fortune of over two hundred billion inkstones was nothing to the likes of these ultimate experts or those major clans, it was still a massive amount of money to ordinary Highgods. Linley’s group of three began to quietly train within this cavern estate.

Delia focused on fusing with her divine spark.

The cavern in which Linley’s group was living in was very large. In the Infernal Realm, generally speaking, every few thousand kilometers, there would be a tribe or a bandit group which would hold domain over that area. This mountain range where Linley lived in was no exception. It had bandit groups as well.

“Motherf*cker, it’s been a year since we’ve made money.” A long green haired man was flying in mid-air, staring into the distance while cursing in a low voice, “There’s too damn many bandit squads in the Infernal Realm. Those who dare to travel by themselves are increasingly rare. Even those who do come out, travel alongside a Highgod. It seems I wasted my time today again. Forget it. Time to go back.

The green haired man flew in the air, heading back towards his lair.

“Huh? Someone’s here?”

The green haired man suddenly disappeared like a gust of wind, then re-solidified atop a tree below as he stealthily stared towards a location midway up a mountain. “Just now, I saw someone fly in there. Can it be that this cave has someone in it?”

“Since when did someone move into this mountain range?”

The green haired man revealed a smile on his face. “Who cares who it is. I’ll go inform the leader first. I hope it is someone with money!” The green-haired man didn’t investigate clearly, immediately flying back to his lair.

Chapter 27 – Disaster Descending From the Skies

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 27, Disaster Descending From the Skies

Within the dark caverns. In the empty main hall.

Three Linley's were seated in the meditative position, dressed in a long yellow robe, a light green robe, and a sky-blue robe. The strange thing was, the yellow robed Linley actually seemed to be teleporting around, occasionally appearing in different areas throughout the main hall.

This cavern estate had been formed by Linley using his sword, and the walls and the floor all had sword scars.

While Linley and Delia were training, Bebe was extremely bored.

"Training is so complicated."

Bebe sat there on the floor of the main hall, lying against the stone, his head upraised and carrying that straw hat. "Why is it that I can never settle down to train? It'd be wonderful if I could be like the Boss. He actually starts grinning mid-training!" Bebe mumbled as he looked at the three Linleys.

Bebe didn't like to train. In the Forest of Darkness, even the easiest 'Essence of Darkness' mystery had taken him nearly twenty years to master, and that was with Beirut's assistance!

Taking off his straw hat and looking at it, Bebe naturally began to think of Nisse, a hint of grief appearing in his eyes. "I wonder how Nisse is doing."

Moments later.

With a flip of his hand, Bebe put the straw hat back on his head. "Forget it. No point to thinking randomly. Motherf*cker, the more I think about it, the

more miserable I feel. Better to focus on my training!" Bebe gritted his teeth. "I refuse to believe that I have no talent in training in the Laws. I'm a Godeater Rat! Grandpa Beirut helped me so much. If it was the Boss, he probably would have easily gained insights into those three profound mysteries by now. I need to work harder. I can't lose face. At the very least, I need to master those three types of profound mysteries."

Bebe shut his eyes and began to quietly train as well.

A long time later, the light green robed Linley stood up as well. In his heart, he said to himself, "So the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves could actually reach such a level. Not only could it create unique vibrations within the insides of something, it could also simultaneously attack from outside. Combining the inner and outer aspects is indeed a very powerful material attack. Only, how would one use the Profound Mysteries of Sound Waves to attack the soul?"

Linley was pondering this. Suddenly, he discovered that Bebe was training intensively as well. He couldn't help but laugh. "It's rare to see Bebe working so hard." But right at that moment…

"Boss, you finished your training?" Bebe immediately opened his eyes.

"And I was just praising you at how hard you were working." Linley laughed.

Bebe stood up. "Boss, you have no idea. When I'm training in the Laws of Darkness, I'm extremely sensitive to any nearby movements. As soon as you stood up, I immediately woke up as well. Right, Boss. Your divine earth clone keeps on flickering around. What's that about?"

"Can it be that you have forgotten how in the past, Haydson was able to change his physical location with his technique?" Linley said with a laugh.

"Right, it does seem really similar. Boss, you figured it out?" Bebe said in pleased surprise.

“Not even close. I’ve just started with the basics.” Linley laughed.

He had been training in this technique for quite some time. It belonged to the ‘Worldwalker’ profound mystery, one of the six profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Earth. Actually, getting a basic understanding of the Worldwalker profound mystery wasn’t that hard; the ‘Worldwalker’ profound mystery and the ‘Essence of the Earth’ profound mystery were actually somewhat linked.

In order to completely master the profound mysteries of the ‘Essence of the Earth’, one had to be able to reach an extremely high level of merging with the earth essence.

As for the Worldwalker mystery, it required a person to be completely merged into the earth essence, and then travel through the earth essence, instantly appearing somewhere else. From the outside, it looked like teleportation, but in reality, it wasn’t.

Upon reaching mastery in the ‘Essence of the Earth’, training in the ‘Worldwalker’ technique became much easier.

“Bebe, as I recall, when you were in the volcano range, it seemed like you used a technique which destroyed even that Highgod artifact of Elquin. What was that all about?” With regards to this, Linley hadn’t yet had a chance to ask in detail.

Bebe pursed his lips. “This was a life-saving measure which Grandpa Beirut had given me. He said it was enough to deal with most Highgods. However, Grandpa Beirut originally told me that the energy in the black pearl was only enough to be utilized three times. I’ve already used it once, and I only have two more remaining.”

Linley nodded slightly.

The power of that attack had truly been astonishing. Even Elquin, when taking that attack head on, had his Highgod artifact destroyed. Most likely, an ordinary Five Star Fiend or Six Star Fiend would have perished.

“Huh?”

Bebe suddenly looked towards the outside of the cave. “Boss, I feel something going on outside.” Linley’s face changed. Instantly, his two clones merged with his original form. This time, Linley immediately used his original form, and his body became covered with the Pulseguard Armor.

Right at this moment…

A surge of divine sense swept out, instantly encompassing the entire cave.

“Haha…just three Gods!” A loud voice rang out from outside the cave. “The three of you, hurry the f*ck up and come out.”

“Get the f*ck out here!” Instantly, a large number of angry roars rang out.

Linley frowned. It seemed as though quite a few people were shouting from outside, but Linley’s current level of power was far greater than it had been when they had first come to the Infernal Realm, especially after his original body Dragonformed. Linley was confident in the shattered ‘soul-protecting Sovereign artifact’ against ordinary Highgods, especially when he had his trump card, those two drops of Sovereign’s Might.

Of course he was not afraid!

“Let’s take a look.” Linley said.

Bebe, made bold by his talents, accompanied Linley towards the cave exit as well.

Linley headed out, and saw a large group of people floating directly outside. This group was formed into a surrounding circle which had completely sealed off the cave. Linley immediately spread out his divine sense, immediately encompassing all of them.

“Eighty two, three of them being Demigods, the rest being Gods!” Linley

made up his mind.

All of them were Gods. The current Linley didn't fear them at all.

"Boss, they actually stumbled onto us." Bebe's smirking mouth had a hint of amusement as well. He had been in a fairly bad mood recently. Salomon's true face and Nisse's departure had all caused Bebe to be in a foul mood. Only, in front of Linley and Delia, Bebe pretended to laugh and pretended as though nothing was amiss.

In truth, in his heart, he felt quite miserable.

After having stewed for so long, right now, Bebe wanted to let loose and vent!

The leader of this large group was a silver-haired, horned man. He laughed loudly. "What? Just the two of you came out? What about the woman inside? Have her come out as well. Or did you think you would be able to flee?"

"Haha, there's a woman? Big brother, let me have her." A horned man with short silver hair next to him said loudly.

"No problem." The leader laughed loudly.

Immediately, the other bandits all began to laugh loudly.

Linley frowned, and Bebe rubbed his nose as well, their gazes turning cold.

"I will give you a chance." The leader said arrogantly. "Since you are both Gods…how about this. Offer me your interspatial rings. I will permit you to join us. Don't worry…in the future, you will have a share in the wealth which we take in the future."

Linley secretly shook his head.

These bandits truly were interesting. They wanted to take his valuables and

also have him join them? However, this was a fairly common sight in the Infernal Realm.

The leader said. “Have you finished consid…”

“Motherf*cker, are you done with the bullshit?!” Bebe shouted angrily.

The bandits were all stunned, and then the face of the leader turned cold. “Brothers, since they don’t want their lives, finish them!” The leader waved his hand, ordering his subordinates to charge. Clearly…he didn’t hold these three Gods in high regard.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Transforming into blurs or streaks of lightning or flashes of fire, dozens of figures charged forward like a swarm of wasps.

Bebe stored his straw hat into his interspatial ring, while at the same time wielding that black dagger. Glancing sideways into the swarm of charging bandits, he grinned savagely, then wildly began to execute his Shadowshape Doppelganger technique, immediately transforming into dozens of images which charged up.

“Haha, die.” A God-level Fiend stabbed into Bebe’s true body, but when the divine artifact sword in his hand struck him, it gave out a ‘Clang!’ sound, not harming Bebe at all.

Bebe delivered a backhand blow with the dagger.

“Swish!” He stabbed directly into the head of that God-level Fiend. Bebe’s eyes were filled with a light of bloodlust.

“Next.”

Bebe’s dagger then stabbed out towards another person, while Bebe himself didn’t even bother to dodge the enemy’s attacks.

A large group charged towards him, stabbing towards Bebe from every area, while the rest charged towards Linley.

Linley wielded Bloodviolet and just stood there. Seeing the group of bandits charge over, Linley's hand suddenly began to flash with a hazy violet shadow moving at an exceedingly high speed. If one looked carefully, however, one would have a slow sort of feeling.

A visual misperception!

"Slash…."

Two heads were chopped off simultaneously, while the rest of their body was shaken by vibrations into muddy flesh. Two divine God sparks fell down from mid-air, and the violet illusion vanished.

"Too weak." Linley said to himself quietly. His most powerful physical attack, 'Bewildering Shadow', was an attack capable of threatening a Highgod. Against these Gods, it was effortless.

Instantly, eight people on the bandit side had died. The attacking bandits as well as the leader watching behind were all shocked. They hadn't expected that this time, they had rammed into an iron board. The leader immediately shouted loudly, "Brothers, launch group attacks!"

Instantly, the bandits flew back, gathering together.

Linley and Bebe each stood at one side of the entrance to the cave.

"You killed eight of my brothers." The leader's gaze was savage. "Brothers, all together."

Depending on if they were fighting against experts or weaklings, these bandits would use different methods. The bandits once more swarmed forward like wasps, but in truth, this time was different. They were all moving in an organized, concerted manner.

At virtually the same time, the bandits brandished their weapons.

After having seen the chaotic battle between the Black Dragon Tribe and the other tribes, Linley and Bebe knew exactly how terrifying this sort of concerted group attack could be.

“Bebe, let’s kill them together.” Linley almost instantly entered his Dragonform.

His body became incredibly powerful, and was endowed with astonishing speed and strength. The power in his body exploded forth, and at the same time, he utilized his Profound Truths of Velocity. Linley was like a ray of golden-azure illusory light, charging towards the group of bandits, who weren’t at all surprised by Linley’s transformation.

In the Infernal Realm, there were simply too many races and lifeforms of various types.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

Almost instantaneously, over twenty soul attacks struck out, some which contained material components as well. This was the joint attack launched by the seventy four surviving bandits, but Linley’s speed was simply too fast, and his body was too small. He was only struck by two of the soul attacks.

The two soul attacks were merely God-level soul attacks. They did nothing to Linley at all.

As for those five material attacks which struck him, they didn’t break a single draconic scale.

Not just Linley; the same was true for Bebe!

“Not good!” Seeing this, the leader’s face changed.

Linley, his face sinister, let the devilish Bloodviolet sword land its first

attack upon the horned man with short silver hair. The horned man didn't have any chance to flee at all. Bloodviolet swept straight past his head, and his head instantly was shaken into muddy flesh.

"Bang!"

Linley's right leg struck out like a meteor carrying trillions of kilograms of force, smashing against a green-haired man's waist. "BANG!" The explosive force caused the green-haired man's body to completely explode, leaving behind only a God-level divine spark.

This kick contained the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' as well as the massive strength of Linley's Dragonform. It was extremely powerful.

"Swoosh!" A man chopped straight downwards with his warblade through the air, directly towards Linley's head.

"Swish!"

A golden-azure light flashed. It was Linley's draconic tail. The fierce tail struck out with a 'Clang!', sending the warblade flying while also crushing the God's head into a pile of pulp.

The Dragonformed Linley was nothing short of a man-shaped weapon, even more terrifying than a Deathgod Golem. After all, not only was Linley's defense tough, he also knew profound mysteries!

However, Linley's slaughtering speed was only on par with Bebe, who was in the middle of letting loose to his unhappiness.

Chapter 28 – The Essence of Fire

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 28, The Essence of Fire

“Slash!”

Crimson blood splattered across the dusty yellow cliffs, and shards of flesh fell down from the skies.

“All of you, die.” Bebe’s face was savage, and his dozens of shadows were everywhere. Through relying on the Shadowshape Doppelganger technique, Bebe was occasionally here, occasionally there as he entered a wild killing spree. Bebe’s eyes were filled with madness. “That bastard Salomon. That bastard!”

“If Salomon hadn’t intentionally caused chaos, how could Ninny and I have been separated?” As he thought this, he stabbed out with the dagger in his hand towards an opponent’s divine artifact, chopping it into two pieces while simultaneously cutting through the opponent’s head, which exploded.

“Ninny, Ninny!”

Bebe’s mind was full of thoughts of Ninny, but as he thought of Salomon, the speed at which he killed grew even faster.

A massacre. Bebe wildly vented his anger. How he wanted to be together with Nisse. Each time he saw Linley and Delia together, he would think of himself and Nisse. Only, this Infernal Realm was utterly vast, and Nisse was heading towards the Jadefloat Continent.

Who knew when they would meet again?

“Kill, kill!!!”

Bebe killed wildly, ignoring all else.

“Flee, flee!!!” The bandits who were not yet dead all began to scream in terror while fleeing in all directions. The leader of the bandits, in particular, had turned ashen pale. He had never imagined that Gods could be this monstrously powerful.

They were being easily demolished!

“Finished. My men are all finished.” The leader felt grief in his heart, but although he grieved, whenever he looked at Linley and Bebe, these two fiendish gods, he was so frightened that his heart trembled. “No matter what, I need to first save my own life.”

The leader ignored everyone else and immediately fled.

After Linley and Bebe killed those closest to them, they discovered that the other bandits had started to flee in every direction. Linley couldn’t be bothered to chase them, but Bebe, caught in the grip of his bloodlust, howled angrily and them emitted a high screech which echoed throughout the heavens.

An enormous illusory Godeater Rat appeared behind Bebe. Bebe opened his mouth wide, staring at the distant bandit leader as well as a man next to him.

“Aaaaaah!” The bandit leader, in mid-flight, suddenly felt that he couldn’t move. Not just him; the God next to him couldn’t move either.

Suddenly, the God-level divine sparks of the two men floated out. Two divine sparks actually flew out of the leader, while another flew out from his subordinate’s head. These three divine sparks flew directly towards Bebe’s mouth.

The two corpses fell down from mid-air.

Linley looked at Bebe with some concern. Very clearly, Bebe was acting rather strangely.

“Bebe?” Linley flew over.

Bebe turned, then shook his head a few times and laughed, “Boss, don’t worry. I’m fine. Just now, I was feeling rather peeved, and so I wanted to give vent to my anger. I feel much better now. These bandits really were blind. They actually dared to come waylay us. They really were looking for death!”

Linley, seeing the look on Bebe’s face, finally sighed in relief.

“These bandits will most likely not dare annoy us again.” Linley laughed as well.

Actually, Linley had been prepared long ago for this day. Every single place in the Infernal Realm was controlled and occupied by a force. In some desolate areas, it was normally just common bandits or small tribes, while in bustling areas, greater forces and powers would be in control.

The mountain range which Linley had chosen was very ordinary.

Linley expected that there shouldn’t be many experts here. After today, in the future, most likely nobody in the area would dare make trouble for them again.

“Oh! I forgot to take the interspatial rings of many of those corpses. Although there wasn’t much money there, we shouldn’t let it go to waste.” Bebe immediately flew down, and Linley couldn’t help but laugh. Seeing Bebe in a better mood, Linley felt happy as well. “Bebe, wait for me.” Linley flew down as well.

This slaughter did indeed awe and frighten the people nearby. The bandit group, originally 82 strong, had only less than thirty survivors after this disaster. This small bandit group frantically began to recruit others, but they didn’t dare to come disturb Linley’s group again. They didn’t even dare to draw near.

And just like that, one year after another passed by like water as they trained quietly.

“Rumble…”

In the sixteenth year of Linley’s training here, the natural Laws descended.

Within the cavern estate, Delia and Bebe both watched with nervous, surprised joy. Linley himself was floating in mid-air, completely surrounded by the strange energy of the natural Laws, while at the same time, powerful fire elemental essences swirled above him, then solidified into a fire-type divine spark.

“The Boss has become a Deity in the fire-element as well.” Bebe said in delight.

Delia was filled with excitement and joy as well.

In training, talent was critically important. If one didn’t have talent in something, no matter how long one trained, one would find it hard to succeed. Linley was exceedingly talented in the wind and earth elements, and thus he trained very quickly in them. As for the fire-element, he wasn’t bad either. Only, compared to the wind and the earth, it was rather weaker.

However, given how incredibly powerful his soul currently was, and the fact that he had been training on the metallic creature previously, giving him a total training time of over twenty years…

Linley had finally mastered the simplest type of profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of Fire – ‘The Essence of the Fire’.

This time, Linley once more chose to have his soul split apart. After all, Linley was currently in possession of a large number of amethysts and a large amount of wealth. To strengthen his soul wouldn’t be too hard.

“Crackle…”

A Linley dressed in a fiery red robe and with fiery long hair suddenly appeared out of nowhere. It was Linley's divine fire clone.

Moments later, the ripples of the natural Laws disappeared, and the divine fire clone merged into Linley's original body. Within the sea of consciousness in Linley's original body, his powerful spiritual energy was gently flowing like waves of the ocean, while a rainbow-colored sword-shaped soul hovered above it.

Beneath the rainbow-colored sword-shaped soul, on the surface of his sea of consciousness, three Linley's hovered. They were a Linley who emitted by an earthen light, a Linley who emitted a light green aura, and a Linley who emitted a fiery red aura. The three Linley's formed a triangle exactly beneath the sword-shaped soul.

Linley opened his eyes, looking at the delighted Delia and Bebe.

"Boss, you now have three divine clones. With your original body included, that makes four." Bebe rubbed his nose as he spoke. "Compared to you, I, Bebe, really feel embarrassed. Up till now, I still only have two bodies, my original body included."

"Bebe, you at least have two. I only have one. Shouldn't I be even more embarrassed?" Delia teased with pursed lips.

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

Right now, both Delia and Bebe were exceedingly happy for Linley. With an additional divine clone, that meant he had another life, while at the same time meant that his future accomplishments would be even greater.

"This divine fire clone is only a Demigod clone. It is still very weak. Right now…I still need to rely on my earth and wind clones." Linley himself knew that for now, four bodies was most likely his limit. After all, Linley didn't know a single thing about the other Elemental Laws.

Lightning, water, light, darkness, etc. Linley didn't understand anything

about them.

“Without any talent, I’m not even able to sense the Elemental Laws. How could I train in them? Even if I trained for a million years, I would still find it hard to succeed.” Linley began to understand why the more one advanced in training, the harder it became.

Currently, in his understanding of the Laws of the Earth, he had already reached mastery in the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Essence of the Earth. Over the past sixteen years, his Worldwalker had advanced as well.

“The Laws of the Earth have in total six profound mysteries. I’ve only trained in three. Right now, although it seems like I am advancing quickly, the more I advance, most likely the slower it will become.” Linley understood. After all, the ‘Essence of the Fire’, the simplest profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of Fire, had taken twenty years, despite his soul being so incredibly strong.

When he had trained in the Essence of the Earth, if it hadn’t been for the fact that Linley was merging it with the Throbbing Pulse of the World, two years probably would have been enough for mastery.

And at that time, Linley’s soul was much weaker than it was now.

This was a difference in talent!

Perhaps in training and comprehending, a person’s hard work and spiritual sensitivity determined everything. Some people, upon seeing a scene, would instantly and naturally make the mental connections and perhaps suddenly breakthrough. This didn’t have anything to do with elemental affinity; it was related to a person’s pondering and logic, to one’s spiritual sensitivity.

But with regards to how clearly or how unclearly one would sense the Elemental Laws, that was a matter of natural talent.

“Boss, what are you thinking about?” Bebe suddenly woke Linley from his

pondering.

“Nothing. Just some random things. Let’s go. We’ll go to our living room to celebrate.” In all those interspatial rings, quite a few had stored fine wine. Linley turned to look at Delia. Suddenly, he asked, “Delia, how has your fusing of the divine spark progressed?”

“I’ve fused with eight of the profound mysteries. I expect that in a few more years, I should be able to comprehend the ninth one as well.” Delia smiled as she spoke.

“In a few more years, we can finally head out.” Bebe said rather hopefully.

Linley glanced at Bebe. In his heart, he felt rather guilty. Bebe had essentially been keeping them company here for sixteen years, while Nisse and her elder brother Salomon had most likely already reached Bluemaple City, and perhaps had even headed out on their journey to the Jadefloat Continent.

Who knew when Bebe and Nisse would meet again?

“Bebe, let’s go drink some wine.” Linley rested his right hand on Bebe’s shoulders. The two brothers headed together towards the outside.

In the blink of an eye, nearly five more years passed. Delia finally completely fused with that Highgod spark, reaching the Highgod level. From the outside, especially upon seeing Delia’s Fiend medallion on her chest, it was clear…that she was a Highgod Fiend!

Highgod Fiends had quite a frightening reputation.

“We’ve been in this place for over twenty years. I feel rather attached to it.” Linley turned to look at the cave estate, while the nearby Delia couldn’t help but laugh. Jokingly, she said, “What, you want to keep living here? How about…we stay for a few more decades?”

“Haha, let’s go.”

Linley waved his hand, and suddenly, a black panther shaped metallic lifeform appeared in mid-air. Linley's group flew into it. The metallic lifeform immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying towards the east. By now, Linley had over ten metallic lifeforms.

These metallic lifeforms had been discovered within those hundred-plus interspatial rings. After all, quite a few Highgods had purchased metallic lifeforms.

Within the metallic lifeform, Linley and the other two were seated on chairs, looking outside through the translucent 'window' to look outside. They drank wine as they headed forward.

"Boss, this metallic lifeform is so bizarre. Generally speaking, humans and magical beasts can't be stored in interspatial rings, but metallic lifeforms can. Also, I feel as though their intelligence is very low." Bebe said.

Linley nodded slightly. He had noticed this as well.

"Perhaps metallic lifeforms are rather special." Linley said.

Actually, what Linley didn't realize was that all the metallic lifeforms bought and sold in places like Redbud Castle had undergone some special modifications. They were already essentially transportation tools who only had very basic thought processes.

Seated within the metallic lifeform, Linley's group of three continued to advance.

The metallic lifeform once more halted, and Linley chuckled towards Delia. "Delia, sorry. We're going to have to trouble you to go out again." Delia laughed helplessly. "There really are quite a few bandits here, and they are all so annoying. They can't find me with their divine sense, but as soon as I head out, they go 'whoosh' and disappear."

Indeed…

As soon as Delia exited the metallic lifeform, those hundred-plus Gods, upon seeing someone whom they couldn't find with their divine sense, and in particular someone with a Fiend medallion…

"A Highgod Fiend!"

The bandits were so terrified, they immediately scattered.

Delia headed back into the metallic lifeform. "Let's continue going forward."

Bebe laughed loudly. "Haha, Delia, Highgod Fiends really are quite frightening to people!"

Delia nodded and said, "Actually, it makes sense. The Fiend trials are so very hard. Survival of the fittest! Also, the Fiend missions are fairly dangerous. In battles, it is Highgod against Highgod, God against God… generally speaking, after multiple missions, the surviving Highgods are all rather powerful ones."

Linley, hearing this, nodded slightly. This made a lot of sense.

"But of course, there's another situation; a Highgod who is weak, but has a team." Delia laughed. "Only then can that Highgod undertake multiple missions without dying. No matter what though, when bandits encounter Highgod Fiends, they will generally flee immediately."

Chapter 29 – The Amethyst Mountains

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 29, The Amethyst Mountains

In the desolate chain of mountains, there were almost no signs of human life.

People familiar with this place knew that this was a territory claimed by bandits. Normally, people didn't dare to halt here. At the edges of the chain of mountains, halfway up a mountain, there was a large amount of rattans and wild grass, with the mountain cliffs behind them.

The strange thing was…

The rattans separated, and a head popped out from between them. This was a youth who was slightly fat and whose gaze was very innocent.

Raising his head, he looked towards the sky. It was late at night, and the sky was covered with dark clouds, making the entire world pitch black. Even Deities would only barely be able to see a few hundred meters away. The youth nodded slightly. "The weather today is excellent. It is time to head forward."

"Swoosh!"

The youth transformed into a graceful gust of wind, heading towards the east silently. Soon, he had travelled thousands of kilometers.

"Huh?" The gust of wind came to a halt, and the youth returned to his normal form. He lay hidden on the ground, quietly staring into the distance. Just now, he seemed to have noticed some movement. Paying careful attention, he noticed a long-tailed beastman fly past.

"So it was just a Saint." The youth let out a hidden sigh of relief.

The youth once more transformed into a silent gust of wind. While it was dark, he pressed forward, occasionally coming to a halt. Like this, he carefully advanced. Suddenly, he realized that a metallic lifeform was flying at high speed. Instantly, a look of joy appeared on the youth's face.

"Swoosh!"

The youth's speed instantly exploded, and he flew into the air, chasing after the metallic lifeform. In terms of short-distance speed, Deities were generally capable of catching up to metallic lifeforms. When the youth drew near the metallic lifeform, he immediately spread out his divine sense, finding only a few Gods within.

"Everyone, I'm just a God. Please help me and give me a ride!" The youth immediately said through divine sense.

But the metallic lifeform paid him no mind.

"Milords, please help me." The youth once more spread out his divine sense and messaged.

"F*ck off. If you keep jabbering, I'll kill you." A divine sense message came out, and the youth immediately lowered his speed.

Shaking his head with a sigh, the youth once more transformed into a gust of wind, landing down and continuing to advance eastwards. In this pitch black night, he encountered three metallic lifeforms, all filled with many people, but his three entreaties were all refused.

Since he was refused, he had to rely on himself to travel. He managed to travel two hundred thousand kilometers before daybreak. By the time the skies slowly brightened, the youth stopped advancing.

The place he came to a halt in was within a flat area where wild grass was growing.

"Crackle…" The youth summoned his divine power and immediately dug

out a tunnel within the wild grass. It was a very secretive, hidden place.

“Whew.”

The youth sat down calmly within the tunnel, frowning in thought. “Given this speed, it’ll most likely take me decades before arriving at the Amethyst Mountains. I didn’t expect that I, Jenkin [Zhan’jin], would fall to such a state. This Infernal Realm…it really isn’t an easy place to roam.”

When thinking back to the life he had lived upon arriving in the Infernal Realm, Jenkin’s heart was filled with sourness. He sighed.

However, moments later, Jenkin’s mind returned to calmness.

“No matter what, my top goal right now is to hurry to the Amethyst Mountains. The Amethyst Mountains will be the place where I, Jenkin, make my first mark!” Jenkin’s eyes were sharp and fierce. No matter how much he had to suffer, he wouldn’t give up.

Undaunted despite countless setbacks. Self-confident!

This was why Jenkin was able to become a Deity and able to stay alive up till now.

“Fortunately, in the Infernal Realm, the area of a divine sense is very small. If this was in a material realm, where a divine sense could spread across a vast area, those bandits would be able to easily locate their targets.” Jenkin smiled slightly. “Alas, but only once or twice a month will I encounter a night like last night, where there is no moonlight at all.”

Jenkin knew very well that if he were to travel by day, he would definitely be discovered.

Once he was discovered, given his power as a new God, he definitely wouldn’t be able to flee.

All he could do was travel during this sort of dark night, but a completely

black night like the previous night only appeared once or twice a month. The chances were too low. Also, the complete darkness persisted for only a third of the day, during night. Thus, he only had a short period of time to hurry forward.

“All I can do is carefully move forward. Perhaps I’ll be able to encounter a kind-hearted person who will give me a ride.”

Jenkin understood.

Generally speaking, those who travelled aboard metallic lifeforms couldn’t be bothered to pay attention to others. If they encountered bandits, they wouldn’t chase after them and attack, as that took too much time and energy and wasn’t worth it. They couldn’t be bothered to even act against bandits; naturally, when they encountered someone like Jenkin who begged for a lift, they would ignore him as well.

“All I can do is continue to wait.” Jenkin immediately acted, using the earth to cover the hole above him, revealing only a small opening which would allow a bit of sunlight in.

This sort of wide flatland was mostly inhabited by ordinary Saints, and bandits wouldn’t be present on literally every inch of land, unless they were utterly bored.

He waited.

After roughly twenty seven days, yet another pitch black night came.

Jenkin silently pushed aside the grass, staring at his surroundings. After ascertaining no one was nearby, he once more came out of the tunnel, transforming into a gust of wind and silently advancing towards the east. This time, roughly two hours later, he encountered yet another metallic lifeform.

But when he flew over at high speed and sent an entreaty, he was once more refused and shouted at angrily.

Jenkin didn't feel any disappointment in his heart at all, and didn't even feel much of an emotional impact at all. As Jenkin saw it, every single chance had to be treasured. Failure was nothing. If he didn't even try, then he would definitely fail. Jenkin continued to stealthily travel forward.

After roughly an hour, yet another metallic lifeform flew over towards the east.

Jenkin immediately raised his head, once more chasing over at high speed. Up ahead was a fairly small metallic lifeform. Clearly, there were very few people inside. Generally speaking, if there were few people within a metallic lifeform, the people within would be fairly close family or friends who usually wouldn't allow a stranger to join them.

However, without at least making an attempt, Jenkin wouldn't give up.

Immediately spreading out his divine sense, Jenkin found two Gods within. "Milords, I am only a God. I hope you can help me and give me a ride." If he was refused and yelled at again, Jenkin wouldn't mind at all, nor would his mental state be disturbed.

However…

This metallic lifeform actually came to a sudden halt.

Jenkin immediately halted as well, nervously looking at the metallic lifeform, afraid that the people inside would come out to kill him. However, Jenkin consoled himself, "That won't happen. People who ride metallic lifeforms will encounter bandits and shout at them to leave. They've already become accustomed to not killing people who don't pose a threat to them."

"Boss, this fellow is quite interesting. He actually asks people to give him a ride." A voice rang out from within, while at the same time, an entrance to the metallic lifeform opened up.

"Then let him in."

A gentle yet ordinary voice rang out, but this voice caused Jenkin's calm heart to instantly swell with emotion. A look of shock and joy suddenly exploded forth from his eyes. Jenkin was certain that he would never forget this voice for the rest of his life.

"My Boss is letting you in. Hurry up and come in." A figure wearing a straw hat appeared at the entrance.

"Thank you, milord." Jenkin immediately flew over, entering the metallic lifeform.

The internals of the metallic lifeform was very soft and comfortable. Aside from several rooms in the back, there was a living room in the center, with wine, tables, and chairs. There was even a place to view the outside scenery. Jenkin said to himself, "This is what the upper class of the Infernal Realm live like!"

At the same time, Jenkin saw a young couple in front of him.

The young man had a head of long brown hair and wore a sky-blue robe, and his eyes contained a hint of a smile. He appeared fairly friendly and amiable. The woman behind him caused Jenkin to be shocked. This woman was beautiful, but…Jenkin couldn't sense her aura at all.

"She is a Highgod, and a Highgod Fiend?" Jenkin instantly noticed the Fiend medallion, while at the same time he noticed the Fiend medallions of the other two. Jenkin now began to understand why this metallic lifeform dared to roam the Infernal Realm without danger.

Because a Highgod Fiend was present.

With mild interest, Linley glanced at this slightly pudgy yet very friendly looking youth.

"Hey, you can sit over there." Bebe said casually.

Delia asked, “Why did you ask us to give you a ride?” Not only was Linley curious; Delia and Bebe were curious as well.

Jenkin said hurriedly, “Milords, my name is Jenkin. As to why I asked you to help out, actually, this story starts from when I first entered the Infernal Realm. When I entered the Infernal Realm, I was tossed out by the Redbud Army, and I joined a very ordinary tribe. I imagine you all know that earning money in a tribe is a very slow affair. In ten thousand years, you’d probably only earn a few dozen inkstones.”

“A few dozen?” Linley frowned slightly.

When he had lived in the Black Dragon Tribe, every ten thousand years, there was more than a thousand inkstones to be earned. However, Linley immediately realized that this was because of the Gerrard Black Dragons. Otherwise, other tribes wouldn’t have allied to attack them either. Ordinary tribes who had to rely on forging divine artifacts or divine gems to earn money really were limited to just a few dozen inkstones every ten thousand years.

“Also, in the Infernal Realm, battles are very frequent. An ordinary tribe might survive for a million years or even longer, but it also might be destroyed in just a few thousand years.” Jenkin said bitterly. “If I was an ordinary citizen, perhaps after defeat in battle, I could join another tribe. But I am a God. I was forcibly recruited to become a warrior for the tribe. In every battle, the majority of the casualties occurred amongst the warriors!”

Linley nodded slightly.

When he had been in the Black Dragon Tribe, a tribe with a fairly powerful backer, whether or not one became a warrior was a matter of choice. Clearly, they didn’t care too much about warriors. But for many of the weaker tribes, Gods were forcibly recruited to become soldiers.

“Within ten thousand years, I experienced being in two tribes.” Jenkin shook his head. “I realized that this can’t continue. I was barely lucky

enough to survive the first battle, but would I have that sort of luck again? After planning for a long time, I quietly slipped out of the tribe and began to head towards the Amethyst Mountains. However, my tribe was tens of millions of kilometers away from the Amethyst Mountains, and there are a very high amount of bandits on the way. All I could do was wait for the skies to become completely dark before carefully advancing."

Linley, hearing this, began to understand.

At the same time, he could imagine how much hardship this Jenkin had suffered on the way over.

"Why are you going to the Amethyst Mountains?" Bebe asked.

Jenkin said hurriedly, "I heard of them and learned that the Amethyst Mountains have 'amethysts' in them. I wanted to go harvest amethysts. Amethysts are very valuable. I can make six or seven thousand inkstones by selling one. This is much better than just staying in a tribe."

Linley immediately began to laugh. "You've heard of it? But do you know about the regulations regarding mining in the Amethyst Mountains?"

Linley had read some general information regarding the Infernal Realm. Naturally, he knew about the famous 'Amethyst Mountains' of the Redbud Continent. Because of this, Linley was actually planning to make a tourism trip while passing through the Amethyst Mountains.

The Amethyst Mountains had a circumference of hundreds of thousands of kilometers. It was the only area in the Redbud Continent which produced amethysts.

"Requirements?" Jenkin shook his head. How could people in the tribes learn of these things?

"How could just anyone be allowed to mine in a precious place like this? These areas are jointly guarded by multiple major clans." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Jenkin's face became unsightly, but he said hurriedly, "Impossible. The Amethyst Mountains is such a precious area and so vast. How could a few clans completely seal it off?" Many people were still able to sneak into some precious areas at the risk of losing their lives.

"Of course, there is another method. Pay five thousand inkstones, and you can enter to go mine." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Harvesting amethysts was extremely hard. Sometimes, a thousand years would pass without being able to encounter any. But of course, if you were lucky, you might find several on one trip.

"Five thousand inkstones?" Jenkin's face turned ashen. He had only been in the Infernal Realm for ten thousand years. His entire networth was less than a hundred inkstones.

Chapter 30 – The Fog Sea

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 30, The Fog Sea

The metallic lifeform moved like a flash of light, streaking at high speed towards the east.

Within the living room of the metallic lifeform, Linley and Delia were seated facing each other, while Bebe and Jenkin were seated facing each other. Everyone was chatting casually.

“My homeland? It is a far more complicated place than yours.” Jenkin’s face was all smiles right now, so very different from the look of dread it had when he had been fleeing and travelling. “In addition, my homeland’s continent is fairly large. From the north to the south, it stretches at least a hundred thousand kilometers.”

Linley nodded slightly. The Yulan continent, from north to south, stretched only twenty or thirty thousand kilometers. Jenkin’s homeland was indeed much larger than the Yulan continent.

“Our place was primarily divided into three forces. The first type included the human societies, the second included the beastmen clans, and the final one included the aquatic races! There’s all sorts of religions there. Haha, I’m afraid you are going to laugh at me when I say this, but I actually had my own church amongst the humans and amongst the beastmen!”

Jenkin laughed. “Those beastmen had no idea that the Deity they worshipped was actually a human.”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe had been bored with their journey, and so they were happy to listen to Jenkin tell them some tales from his own material plane. It had to be said that Jenkin’s material plane, although not having as many complicated secrets as the Yulan continent, had far more people, Saints, and religions, all of which engaged in battle, while the various races warred

against each other as well.

“Oho! I had no idea.” Bebe chortled. “So in your own material plane, you were actually such an amazing figure.”

Jenkin’s story did indeed have a rather ‘legendary’ feel.

“Alas.” Jenkin sighed. “But when one stands at the pinnacle of the continent, one feels lonely!”

Linley nodded slightly.

Actually, the vast majority of the experts who left the material planes for the Higher Planes did so out of loneliness!

“I knew very well how dangerous the Infernal Realm was, but I still chose to come. However, the degree of danger here in the Infernal Realm is far greater than I ever imagined.” Jenkin said gratefully, “If it hadn’t been for you three helping out, I wouldn’t even have been able to come up with five thousand inkstones.”

Jenkin wasn’t able to scrounge up five thousand inkstones, but to Linley’s group, five thousand inkstones was like a single hair on the body of nine bulls. While chatting with him, Linley’s group had felt that Jenkin was a fine fellow, and so Bebe had magnanimously agreed to help Jenkin pay that five thousand inkstone fee.

The tens of millions of kilometers passed without incident. Roughly a month or so later, Linley’s group arrived at the legendary Amethyst Mountains!

“This is the Amethyst Mountains?” Linley stood in front of the metallic lifeform. Peering through the metallic lifeform’s translucent windows, he could clearly see the vast, borderless Amethyst Mountains.

The Amethyst Mountains covered a great expanse of land, with a circumference of hundreds of thousands of kilometers. In the Infernal

Realm, a circumference of hundreds of thousands of kilometers actually wasn't too extravagant an amount of land, but it still stretched as far as one could see with the naked eye. In a single glance, all one could see was endless mountains, stretching off into the distance.

At the same time, a white fog floated above the Amethyst Mountains.

The strange thing was, it was only possible to see the fog. It wasn't possible to see the Amethyst Mountains.

"Indeed, as it was said in the books, the Amethyst Mountains, despite being a mountain range, is also known as the 'Fog Sea'. From the outside, one can't see so much as a single rock. All one can see is an endless amount of white mist." Linley sighed as he spoke, while the nearby Jenkin, Delia, and Bebe all stared, spellbound, at the beautiful sight before them.

An area of hundreds of thousands of kilometers, completely covered by coiling white mists. The light of the Blood Sun shone down from the skies into the white mist, creating brilliant scenes and colors that were indeed pleasing to behold.

"How strange." Delia exhaled in surprised. "This large mountain range of hundreds of thousands of kilometers is actually completely wrapped by countless amounts of white mist, in a way which is so tight. The mist has persisted for countless years without dissipating. It truly is odd." Delia couldn't understand it at all.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe had at least learned some things from books regarding the Amethyst Mountains.

As for Jenkin, he was completely lost.

"This is the Amethyst Mountains?" Jenkin still couldn't believe that this fog-shrouded area was the Amethyst Mountains.

"Let's go. We're heading down now." Linley, with a thought, made the metallic lifeform disappear into thin air. Linley, Delia, and Bebe all flew

downwards, while Jenkin was caught slightly offguard at first, but he then quickly stabilized himself and also hurried downwards.

The surface of the Amethyst Mountains was covered by the Fog Sea.

Outside the Amethyst Mountains, however, there was a veritable flood of people flying about. The number was so staggeringly high that it could be described as shocking to hear. Many Deities remained at the borders of this Fog Sea, hoping to be lucky enough to encounter amethysts.

On the surface area in the perimeter outside the Amethyst Mountains, within Linley's line of vision, there were at least three ancient castles.

As Linley's group of four drew near, immediately, two middle-aged men dressed in black uniforms flew over. They couldn't help but glance in Delia in surprise, clearly noticing that she was a Highgod Fiend. In their hearts, they were puzzled. "A Highgod Fiend would come here to harvest amethysts?"

Highgod Fiends, when serving as escorts, would receive compensation far greater than what they could receive by mining amethysts. Generally speaking, only Demigods and Gods would come harvest amethysts.

After realizing that Delia was a Highgod Fiend, the two immediately put on a noticeably better attitude. One of them, a golden-haired man, smiled and said, "Might I ask why you have come?"

Bebe laughed and said, "The three of us are just going in to take a look. This kid here is coming to harvest amethysts."

"Oh?" The golden-haired man nodded. "The Amethyst Mountains are jointly governed by our eighteen clans. But of course, we won't stop outsiders from going in. Whether for the purpose of tourism or for mining amethysts, all who enter will each pay five thousand inkstones."

Linley nodded slightly. The rule of paying an entrance fee of five thousand inkstones was a rule that had persisted for countless years. Even the record

books had noted this.

“What if you don’t have inkstones?” Jenkin suddenly asked.

“Don’t have them?” The middle-aged man glanced at him sideways, then laughed calmly. “If you don’t have any, that’s fine as well. We can still let you in, but we won’t give you a writ of passage, so when you come out… you will have to pay us three amethysts!”

“Writ of passage?” Linley raised an eyebrow.

The golden-haired man nodded. “Right. Everyone who pays five thousand inkstones can receive a writ of passage. When you come out, as long as you return the writ of passage to us, you can leave.”

Linley’s group now understood.

“If you want to pay five thousand inkstones, please come to the centralized entrance point.” The golden-haired man pointed to a distant, gaudily built palace gate.

Actually, the Amethyst Mountains were very vast. One could enter them by any point through the air or the land.

“Remember. The writ of passage you receive has to be returned. If you want to flee….” The golden-haired man smiled. “Then you will suffer the attacks of the experts of our eighteen clans. Heh heh. Just a reminder, that’s all.”

Linley laughed calmly. “Thank you.”

Immediately, he led Delia, Bebe, and Jenkin towards that entrance.

“Boss, that fellow seems to be rather arrogant. He keeps on saying ‘eighteen clans’ this and that.” Bebe muttered.

“Bebe, don’t mind him.” Linley himself knew exactly how powerful these eighteen clans were. “The Redbud Continent has only a single amethyst

mining area. This is an astonishing treasure site. You know how much an amethyst is worth. Can you imagine how many amethysts the Amethyst Mountains produce?"

Bebe was startled.

Amethysts? Every single Redbud Castle and Blacksand Castle had a large amount of amethysts for sale, so many that one couldn't even count them all.

"The 'Amethyst Mountains', which produces an inexhaustible amount of amethysts, is truly a treasure site! The wealth of any of the eighteen clans is far greater than that of the Boyd clan's." Linley sighed in amazement. "For the eighteen clans to be able to monopolize this treasure site, the Amethyst Mountains, has to mean that they have the support of an Asura. And what's more, most likely there is more than just one Asura behind them!"

The Amethyst Mountains was the only amethyst production site within the Redbud Continent, but the Redbud Continent had nearly twenty prefectures, which meant nearly twenty Asuras.

If one just spent a little bit of time thinking about it, one would understand that the power of these eighteen clans had to be so great that not even a Seven Star Fiend like Elquin, much less an ordinary Highgod Fiend, would dare cause trouble for them!

At the entrance to the Amethyst Mountains.

"Alright, twenty thousand inkstones!" With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved two long azurite strips.

The lady dressed in the long black uniform casually brought out four identical looking seals, giving one to each person in Linley's group.

"Thank you, Mr. Linley." Jenkin said gratefully. Actually, on the way over from the metallic lifeform, Jenkin had discovered…that amongst Linley's group, the one who made the decisions was not the Highgod Fiend, Delia,

but rather it was Linley.

“Let’s go.”

Linley flew directly into the air, heading alongside Delia and Bebe towards the foggy sea.

The light of the Blood Sun shone down on the gently flowing sea of fog, creating dazzling colors and one beautiful scene after another.

“So beautiful.” Delia laughed in a very happy manner. “Linley, look at that!” Delia pointed deeper into the Fog Sea, where tufts of white mist, under the light of the sun, formed winged horses that were galloping in the air.

“Vast and endless…it is so comfortable just looking at it all.” Linley laughed. “Let’s go take a look inside.”

As he spoke, Linley began to fly deeper in, but right at that moment…

“The four of you, halt.” A voice rang out.

Linley’s group of four came to a halt, puzzled. Turning, they saw a youth dressed in a black uniform armor fly over. “Can it be that you don’t know how dangerous this Fog Sea is? Why are you running rashly towards the Fog Sea?”

“Danger?” Puzzled, Linley pointed towards the others in the distance. “Aren’t there people in the Fog Sea already?”

As Linley saw it, if others could enter, then he should be fine to enter as well. In addition, those books he had bought regarding the Infernal Realm had given a brief description of the Amethyst Mountains. But of course, those books were not very thick, and they only devoted a few pages to each prefecture.

“Let me give you a warning.” The youth said solemnly. “The ‘Fog Sea’ of

the Amethyst Mountains is very bizarre. Visibility within it is very low. Generally speaking, Gods only can see for a hundred meters within it. Therefore…no matter what, within the Fog Sea, everyone will stay only in the outer reaches. If you are a God, you cannot enter more than a hundred meters!"

Linley's group began to listen carefully.

The youth said solemnly, "Everyone who goes in deeper, so deep that they can no longer see the outside, will never be able to come out again!"

Linley's group was greatly shocked.

"Unable to come out?" Bebe called out in surprise. "How is that possible? It's just white mist. Although visibility is low, if we fly in a straight line from within, why can't we fly out?"

"You won't be able to fly out!" The youth said solemnly. "As long as you are within the outer perimeter of the Fog Sea and can still see the outside world, you will be able to fly out. But if you are unable to see the outside world, you'll be finished. Therefore, you must be careful when mining amethysts!"

"Even if there are amethysts just ten meters in front of you, no matter what, don't pass through into that dangerous region! As soon as you enter it, you won't be able to leave!"

The youth said solemnly.

Linley frowned as he looked towards the large number of Deities hovering at the borders of the distant Fog Sea, and he immediately began to understand. "Right. If the Fog Sea wasn't dangerous, then these Deities probably would've charged deep into it long ago to find more amethysts. Why are they still at the border then?"

Linley was now certain that the Fog Sea definitely did have dangers within.

“Remember. At all times, make sure you don’t go into the forbidden area, even if there is a heap of amethysts hovering in front of you. Don’t go in.” The youth finished, then left.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe looked at each other. They couldn’t help but feel amazed at the marvels of nature.

“Delia, we aren’t here to harvest amethysts, just to take a look around. Come. Let’s go to some other places.” Linley didn’t care too much. He immediately led Delia and Bebe to fly around the borders of the Fog Sea, while Jenkin temporarily continued to follow Linley’s group.

Linley’s group walked for a while.

“The captain’s luck isn’t bad. He actually discovered amethysts just now. I’ve been here twenty years, but I haven’t found a single one yet. Hey, Olivier, have you gotten anything yet?” At this moment, there was a small team of ten or so people gathered together.

His hair was black mixed with white, and his robe was gray. It was Olivier, who had also come from the Yulan continent.

Olivier shook his head. “Bad luck.”

“Don’t be discouraged. Come, let’s go drink a few cups. My treat.” Their leader, the captain, said with a laugh.

The team flew towards the outer regions of the Fog Sea, drawing near the entrance, where a number of restaurants were located.

Chapter 31 – Blessing – Curse

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 31, Blessing, Curse

Olivier's group had in total twelve people. They entered a restaurant, then headed to a corner of the restaurant and sat down at three round tables.

"Captain, you found an amethyst. Don't be stingy." Someone called out.

"Same old rules!" The leader, the big-bearded captain, laughed loudly. "Each person a bottle of Norcha [Nuo'si'sha]. If you want to drink more, buy it yourself." Immediately, the big-bearded captain called out in a high voice, "Hey, hurry up! Twelve bottles of Norcha!"

Norcha was a fairly good brand of wine. One bottle cost around ten inkstones, while twelve cost a hundred and twenty.

Generally speaking, whoever amongst them found an amethyst would invite others to celebrate with them. After all, mining amethysts was a matter of luck. If your luck was good, you'd find one every few days. If your luck was poor, a thousand years could pass without one.

Seizing the bottle of wine, Olivier took a gulp, but his forehead was faintly creased in a frown.

"Almost thirty years, but I haven't found a single amethyst!" Olivier was very annoyed. Raising his head, he took another large gulp.

After arriving in the Infernal Realm, Olivier's luck had been pretty good at the start. After reaching the level of God, he had managed to scrape up ten thousand inkstones to take the Fiend trials, and had been lucky enough to pass, becoming a One Star Fiend. But who would have thought that he had failed on his very first mission?

In addition, while fleeing wildly, he had become accidentally separated

from his good friend Bachelor.

Olivier had originally been travelling with Bachelor. After having worked hard to scrape up ten thousand inkstones to take the Fiend trials, he had planned to accept missions, but he failed in his very first one. Thus, in reality, Olivier hadn't made any money at all. After having failed, his total wealth all together was just a pitiful few hundred inkstones.

Use a few hundred inkstones to return to a city? Impossible!

Fortunately, at that time, the mission point was fairly close to the Amethyst Mountains, and he had heard of the place before, and so he had carefully spent decades to stealthily make his way here. Per the rules of this place, as he had been unable to pay the five thousand inkstone fee, he had to pay three amethysts before departing.

"Forget about three amethysts. I haven't even found one. It's been almost thirty years." The more Olivier thought about it, the more miserable he felt. Raising his head, he took another large gulp of wine, draining half of it. "This damn place…there's no way to take on missions here either."

If he wanted to go back safely, he would have to have enough money.

To have enough money, for Olivier, currently only a God, the only choice was to harvest amethysts.

"Olivier, hey. You aren't the only one to not yet find a single amethyst, you know." Someone nearby said. "Don't be discouraged. Last time, didn't we run into that unlucky fellow who had been here for ten thousand years without finding an amethyst?"

Olivier forced out a smile.

He had to stay on good terms with these people.

Harvesting amethysts in the Amethyst Mountains wasn't necessarily safe. This wasn't a city, after all!

In the Amethyst Mountains, if one was lucky enough, one might acquire a pile of amethysts all at once, but many people, upon seeing this fortune, might kill the person who acquired it and rob them of it. This was very normal. Thus, many Gods would form into small teams.

Olivier's group of twelve was one such team. At least, they were able to protect themselves.

Tens of thousands of kilometers away from Olivier, Linley's group of four was traversing the boundaries of the Fog Sea. Linley's group hadn't come here to harvest amethysts, just to enjoy the scenery.

"Jenkin, you don't have to follow us. You can go harvest your amethysts. We'll just stroll around the Amethyst Mountains for a time. In a day or two, we'll probably leave." Linley turned to glance at Jenkin and said casually.

Jenkin felt gratitude in his heart towards Linley's group.

"Mr. Linley, the three of you have shown me, Jenkin, such benevolence. I truly don't know how to repay you. In addition, after you leave, who knows how long it will be before we meet again? What's more, mining amethysts is purely a matter of luck. Perhaps by staying alongside the rest of you, Mr. Linley, I'll be able to run into some amethysts." Jenkin jested.

"Not bad, kid. You are a loyal friend." Bebe slapped Jenkin on the shoulders, pretending to be wizened and experienced.

Linley laughed and nodded. "Fine, then. We'll accompany you in mining amethysts. I want to see if in the next day or two, we'll be lucky enough to acquire one."

The white mist billowed about, and Linley glanced at the boundless white mists. "Let's go. Let's go inside the white fog. Remember, everyone. No matter what, keep your eyes peeled on the outside. Make sure that you are able to see the outside." As he spoke, Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Jenkin all entered the white fog.

Linley stared into the white mist in susprirse. “This white mist is so cool and refreshing.” The temperature in the white mist was very low. When it encountered the skin, it felt like ice cubes.

But Linley’s group didn’t mind.

“Boss, hurry up.” Bebe actually walked backwards into the mist, his eyes focused on the outside. “I can still see the outside. Keep heading in…” Bebe chuckled as he constantly flew backwards, and Linley and the other two naturally followed him in.

Everyone flew very slowly. After flying only roughly eighty meters, Linley’s group unconsciously came to a halt.

“Huh? How strange!”

Linley couldn’t help but begin to frown.

“Whooooosh.” In the boundless white fog, there was a gentle sound of blowing wind, but although the sound of the wind was very quiet, Linley still felt his head begin to grow dizzy. Linley furiously shook his head, forcing himself to stay clearheaded.

Delia and Bebe were trying hard to stay clearheaded as well

As for Jenkin, he was already beginning to grow dizzy and was unable to tell the directions. Linley immediately grabbed him while retreating slightly.

Only now did Jenkin become clearheaded again. Upon becoming clearheaded, Jenkin was shocked. “What happened just now? I thought I heard a ‘whoooshing’ wind sound, and then I felt the world begin to spin. I felt so dizzy.” Jenkin felt shocked and terrified.

“This Fog Sea is extraordinarily bizarre.” Bebe muttered in praise.

“Linley, we’d best be careful. We’re just here to look around, not to harvest amethysts. Don’t let anything happen.” Delia pulled at Linley’s hand as she spoke.

Linley held Delia’s hand and looked at the concern in Delia’s eyes. After having experienced the golden magma pool, Linley didn’t want Delia to be in any more danger again, and so he immediately laughed and nodded, “Don’t worry, we won’t go any deeper into the Fog Sea.”

“Hey, you guys.” Suddenly, a muscular man with short jade hair flew over. Laughing, he said, “You guys, be careful. Don’t get trapped inside. You won’t be able to get out.”

“Excuse me, friend.” Jenkin smiled as he spoke. “I’m curious about one thing. Why is it that if one goes deep into the Fog Sea, one won’t be able to come out? If I leave my clone outside while I go inside, since I can sense the direction and location my clone is in, shouldn’t I be able to come out?”

Hearing this, Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but light up.

His words made sense.

If one’s clone was outside, one wouldn’t lose all sense of direction. There shouldn’t be any problems.

“Hey, don’t ask me, I don’t know either. You can talk all you want, but reality is what matters.” The jade-haired man pursed his lips and laughed. “If you aren’t afraid, you can place your clone outside and use your own body to go inside and test it. But in every case I’ve ever heard of, not a single person who went in has ever made it out alive, regardless of what method was used.”

The jade-haired youth, finished with his words, said, “Alright, you guys, best of luck.” After speaking, the jade-haired youth flew off into the distance.

Linley turned his head, once more staring into the boundless white mist.

Suddenly, Linley was startled. “Hey, that’s…” From afar, a ray of violet light flashed out, and Linley immediately moved over there. Sweeping out with his hand, he grabbed that ray of violet light. It was an amethyst. Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

He hadn’t expected that he would be so lucky.

“Boss, is that an amethyst?” Bebe immediately drew near as well.

“Right. Jenkin, here you go.” Linley, with a flip of his hand, tossed the amethyst over to Jenkin. Linley already had a large number of amethysts. He wouldn’t care about one or two.

Jenkin knew that Linley was very rich. How could an ordinary person buy a metallic lifeform?

Jenkin didn’t waste any time with words, immediately storing the amethyst, then laughing, “Mr. Linley, your luck really is excellent. As soon as you arrived, you acquired an amethyst. I’ve heard of people who’ve spent a thousand years without finding one.”

“That’s only for people with bad luck. For those with good luck, they’ll find one every few days.” Linley said disdainfully.

“Boss, since your luck is good, I refuse to believe mine will be bad.” Bebe’s eyes were shining as he stared at his surroundings. “I’m going to harvest amethysts as well!”

“I’ll try my luck also.” Delia laughed.

As Linley’s group began to tour and explore the Fog Sea, Olivier’s group had flown back to the borders of the Fog Sea once more. The twelve of them separated slightly, maintaining a distance of less than a hundred meters. Everyone quietly waited…waited for amethysts to fly out.

“Amethysts? Who knows how long it will be before I get one.”

Olivier was currently controlling his ‘divine darkness clone’ by making it train. His divine light clone had already reached the God stage, but his divine darkness clone was still at the Demigod stage. Olivier was hurriedly trying to increase the power of his divine darkness clone.

“The current level of darkness-style divine power I have is too low. Once it rises and becomes on par with my light-style divine power, with my fusion of ‘light’ and ‘darkness’, how could any ordinary God be a match for me?” Olivier thought to himself, while at the same time carefully inspecting the Fog Sea.

The Blood Sun set. The Violet Moon rose into the skies.

When night passed, the Blood Sun once more rose into the skies. A new day had arrived.

During this entire day, Olivier’s group of twelve had stayed in their original positions, virtually not moving at all. Those who came to harvest amethysts were all extremely patient. It was normal for them to wait up to a hundred years or a thousand years in the same location.

“Huh?” Olivier looked suspiciously at a distant spot of violet light.

“Swoosh!” A ray of violet light rapidly flashed towards Olivier. Olivier was instantly overjoyed, and almost immediately, he charged forward. After having been in the Fog Sea for nearly thirty years, Olivier knew what the safe distance was.

The others were all farther away from the violet flash. How could they get there faster than Olivier?

“Is that?”

While drawing closer, Olivier found himself stunned. It wasn’t a single amethyst flying towards him; it was an entire collection of amethysts, fused tightly into a dense cluster…a small pile of amethysts!

“There has to be at least ten thousand here!” Olivier was stunned.

In the Fog Sea, it was true that occasionally, a pile of amethysts would fly out. There had even been cases of a million amethysts flying out all together in one clump. However, that had caused a massive slaughter to erupt. After all, a million amethysts represented billions of inkstones.

To Gods, this was an enormous fortune.

“So many amethysts?” With a wave of his hand, Olivier collected all of the amethysts into his interspatial ring. In the moment he stored it, he became clearly aware of the number. There was exactly eighteen thousand amethysts, worth over a hundred million inkstones! This was a true fortune!

“I hope no one else noticed.” Olivier prayed silently.

But when Olivier turned his head, he felt shock in his heart. Because those eleven people were staring at him!

“Olivier, your luck wasn’t bad.” The captain pursed his lips and grinned. “Although I couldn’t see exactly how many there were, I expect there were at least over ten thousand. The finder gets a share, but shouldn’t you take it out so we twelve brothers can divide it equally?”

Olivier’s face changed. Twelve people divide it equally?

This was something he had gotten himself.

Olivier ground his teeth. “How about this. Each of you can get eight hundred amethysts! The rest are mine. You also know that there were roughly ten thousand. With twelve people, I shall get just a bit more.”

“No need for you to divide it up. Remove the blood binding on your interspatial ring and let us inspect it, and then we can divide it up.” Immediately, some spoke out.

“Remove the blood binding?” Olivier understood in his heart.

The people of the Infernal Realm wouldn’t truly be so fair.

“Alright, Jenkin. No need to accompany us any further. You’ve already accompanied us so far. Continue with your amethyst harvesting. We’ll leave now.” From not too far away, a voice rang out. When this voice entered Olivier’s ears, it caused Olivier to have a very familiar feeling.

This was a familiar person’s voice!

“Mr. Linley, be careful on your journey.” Another voice rang out.

Olivier was instantly shocked. “Linley?” Olivier turned to look at the source of the voice, and within the hazy white mist, Linley, Delia, and Bebe were currently flying together. Bebe glanced over towards him as well, and then chuckled, “Boss, look, a group of people are surrounding one person, and, hey, that guy…hey, boss, that’s Olivier!!!”

Chapter 32 – Violet Light Rising to the Heavens

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 32, Violet Light Rising to the Heavens

Surprised, Linley turned to look as well. “It really is Olivier!” But currently, Olivier was surrounded by a group of people. Sweeping them with his gaze, Linley felt quite calm. “These eleven are all Gods. Nothing to fear. However, why are they all staring at Olivier? Can it be that Olivier has received some sort of treasure?”

While thinking this, Linley began to fly towards Olivier, and Delia and Bebe were naturally by his side.

“Haha, Olivier, what’s going on?” Bebe chortled. “Need us to help out?”

Olivier saw Linley’s group of three fly over, and he immediately recognized them. “Linley, his wife, and that Bebe.” Olivier couldn’t help but laugh bitterly to himself. As he saw it, Linley in the past had only been a Demigod. After dozens of years had passed, Linley would at most be a God.

“The three of you came at such a time!” Olivier sighed to himself.

At such an urgent moment, Olivier hadn’t carefully inspected the strength of Linley’s group. After all, in Olivier’s mind, Linley’s group of three consisted of just three Gods. But there were eleven Gods surrounding them!

“The three of you!” Suddenly, a God came to stand and block in front of Linley’s group. “This affair is between us and Olivier. The three of you had best leave.”

Suddenly…

“Swoosh!”

A figured flashed by, and a blurred leg shot out like lightning, smashing viciously against the chest of that God. The ribs splintered and caved downwards, while that God was knocked flying deep into the Fog Sea like a sand bag. It must be understood, that was the Fog Sea!

One couldn't enter the Fog Sea beyond the 'danger area'. That kick sent him flying dozens of meters, but at the critical moment, that God immediately let out a furious roar and forced himself to come to a halt.

"You…!" The God pointed angrily at the straw-hat wearing Bebe.

"Me what, me?" Bebe stared at him, then barked back. "Me and my Boss were flying over, minding our own business, when you suddenly blocked our way. Who else was I supposed to kick besides you? Punk, I showed mercy just now. Otherwise, I would've kicked you to death with one kick!"

The eleven Gods couldn't help but feel enraged, and yet at the same time, they felt shock as well.

Bebe's kick had simply been too fast! Although it was at a close distance, the man hadn't been able to block at all. Actually…Bebe himself was naturally talented at the Shadowshape Doppelganger technique, and he was also a divine beast Godeater Rat, with an extremely powerful body and who was naturally fast.

"Aren't the three of you going a bit too far?" The leader, their 'captain', said.

Linley and Delia didn't speak, but Bebe glanced sideways at him. "Too far? Can what I did be considered going 'too far'? I was actually extremely courteous just now. If I really wanted to go too far, do you think any of you eleven would still be alive?" Bebe swept his gaze across the eleven, as though looking at eleven prey animals.

"Captain, that woman, that woman is a Highgod Fiend!" A divine sense suddenly rang out in the captain's mind.

“Highgod Fiend?” The captain was greatly shocked.

Because it was clear from the manner in which Linley’s group had flown over that Linley was the leader, many of them hadn’t paid attention to that seemingly fragile woman. But when they carefully inspected her, they discovered…that they couldn’t sense any aura from Delia at all.

A Highgod! And a Highgod Fiend!

Not just the captain; the others discovered this as well.

“Hey, how come you all went mute?” Bebe, as a divine beast ‘Godeater Rat’, was naturally filled with savagery and battlelust. He was hoping for a good fight, and he stared viciously at the eleven. “Didn’t you guys say I was going too far? C’mon, I’ll show you what going too far really means!”

“No need!” The captain immediately called out, while at the same time, the look on his face turned humble.

“Huh?” Bebe glanced at him.

The captain forced out a smile. “Since the three of you know Olivier, we won’t disturb Olivier in the midst of his reunion with you.” And then, the captain looked at the others. The eleven Gods, as though by tacit agreement, immediately flew away at high speed.

In the twinkling of an eye, only Linley’s group and Olivier remained.

“They fled really fast!” Bebe pursed his lips as he spoke.

Olivier was greatly shocked. “They fled?” That pile of amethysts, to Gods, was very enticing, as Olivier well knew. Three mere Gods definitely couldn’t make eleven Gods flee. Olivier swept Bebe, Linley, and then Delia with his gaze.

Olivier was greatly shocked. “This Delia, she has actually become a High, Highgod?”

“Olivier, long time no see.” A warm, gentle voice rang out. Linley, Delia, and Bebe flew towards Olivier.

“Olivier, it seems as though you’re in pretty sorry shape.” Bebe teased.

Olivier recovered from his astonishment. His face filled with gratitude, he said, “Linley, I truly do need to thank you this time. If it hadn’t been for you, I really would have been in trouble this time!” Olivier knew very well that if it hadn’t been for Linley’s group, the other eleven definitely would have attacked.

At this point, he had only reached the God level in his divine light clone. In terms of power, there were some amongst the eleven who were more powerful than him.

“Can it be that you received a priceless treasure, causing them to feel greedy and so join forces against you?” Linley asked.

Thinking of this, Olivier let out a low sigh. “Just now, suddenly, a pile of amethysts flew out from the Fog Sea. This is an enormous fortune. However, blessings and disasters come together. I acquired this pile of amethysts, arousing their murderous intent.”

Linley nodded in understanding.

Linley suddenly thought of a person. “Olivier, you know Bachelor, right?”

“Bachelor? You met him?” Olivier was overjoyed. “How is Bachelor doing? He should be doing better than me. During our last mission, we were separated.”

Seeing the look on Olivier’s face, Linley understood that Bachelor and Olivier definitely were on very good terms.

“He is dead.” Linley said directly.

“Dead?” Olivier was startled.

Linley let out a low sigh. “Roughly twenty years ago, the two of us accepted the same escort mission. We got to know each other during the mission. However…while escorting, we suffered an ambush from an expert, and Bachelor was struck by an attack and killed.”

Linley still clearly remembered the scene of how Bachelor had been smashed to death by a boulder. Now, thinking back to it, it all seemed a matter of course. That Volcano Titan was Phusro, an ultimate expert with the power of an ‘Asura’. Using some boulders to kill Gods was simplicity itself.

Olivier was silent for a moment, then let out a low sigh. “Yet another one dead!”

Linley, Delia, and Bebe’s hearts trembled. Although this phrase, ‘yet another one dead’ was a simple one, this phrase contained within it many stories, which they could easily imagine.

“The Infernal Realm is a place of survival of the fittest. Battles and slaughters are normal in the Infernal Realm.” Linley said. “From the smallest tribes and bandit groups to the most powerful Six Star Fiends, Seven Star Fiends, and even Asura-level experts, struggles continue unabated.”

“Right. Survival of the strongest.” Olivier nodded.

“Linley, the three of you seem to have done much better than me in the Infernal Realm.” Olivier laughed. He had also noticed the Fiend medallions on their chests, and knew that Delia was a Highgod Fiend. “However, what are you doing here?”

Olivier didn’t believe that Linley’s group was here to harvest amethysts.

“We helped someone on the way over, so we brought him here. At the same time, we wanted to do some sightseeing in the Amethyst Mountains. I’ve

heard that the Fog Sea is extremely beautiful and is one of the great marvelous sights of the Infernal Realm.” Linley laughed.

“You came here for sightseeing?” Olivier didn’t know what he should say.

When even staying alive was a problem for a person, one would force himself to come up with ways to grow stronger. Only when one was in no danger would one think about sightseeing.

Just based on the fact that Linley had come from sightseeing, Olivier was certain that Linley’s life was a rather leisurely one these days.

“Right. The scenery here really is excellent.” Olivier could only agree.

“Huh, what’s going on?” Linley turned his head, puzzled. From afar, violent energy ripples were spreading out. Delia, Bebe, and Olivier all looked over. Even angry roars could be heard coming from there, as well as bellows.

“Kill that white-robed punk. He has a pile of amethysts!” That roar rang out from afar.

Instantly, many people nearby were drawn forward.

“Everyone, quick, kill that white-robed punk!”

“Ah, it was seized by the red-robed guy!”

From afar, angry roars continued unabated. In an instant, over a thousand people flooded over, causing utter chaos.

Even Linley’s group of four was shocked.

“A pile of amethysts?” Olivier’s expression was rather priceless. He himself had acquired a pile, after all.

“Come, let’s take a look.” Bebe said eagerly.

Linley nodded. Most of the people here harvesting amethysts were Gods or Demigods. His power was enough to not fear the likes of them.

By the time Linley's group of four drew near, the violent battle sounds had died down, as a pursuit had begun instead! A group of people were chasing after a green-robed man who wielded a long black spear, who was frantically fleeing at high speed.

Linley's group swept this many people flying about in front of them.

"It seems that pile of amethysts was taken by the green-robed man." Linley said with a calm laugh.

"It really is quite insane." Bebe muttered. "It's just a pile of amethysts. Is it worth getting so worked up?"

Olivier said, "That pile of amethysts…each amethyst is very small, and so a small pile represents more than ten thousand amethysts. That's worth seventy or eighty million inkstones. To Gods, this is indeed a huge fortune."

Bebe was utterly disdainful.

With a networth of over two hundred billion, how could he care about an amount like that?

"But of course, that bit of money isn't much in the eyes of a Highgod Fiend." Olivier continued.

"Ah! A pile of amethysts! Him, kill him!" In another direction, yet more angry shouts could be heard, and instantly, from afar, a wild series of battles could be heard to start.

"Bang!" From yet another direction, exploding sounds rang out.

Linley frowned. "Wait. Something's wrong here."

Linley could clearly sense that right now, there were many different areas

which were emanating with the sounds of violent energy ripples. Clearly, battles were going on everywhere. Generally speaking, one, two, or even dozens of amethysts couldn't cause these Gods to battle like this. Only if a large pile of amethysts appeared would this happen!

Acquiring amethysts was a matter of luck.

But now, battles were occurring in many areas.

"What is going on?" Delia was puzzled and frowned. "Can it be that there are many areas with piles of amethysts flying out?"

Delia's guess was correct!

Right at this moment, the entire Amethyst Mountains seemed to suddenly become generous. In multiple areas, large numbers of amethysts flew out, sometimes by the piles. Each pile had at least a thousand amethysts, while the largest had more than a million amethysts flying out in a clump.

Utter chaos!

So many amethysts caused the Gods to go insane.

The Amethyst Mountains covered a circumference of hundreds of thousands of kilometers. Around the Amethyst Mountains, there were eighteen ancient castles scattered in different locations, each of which was the base for one of the eighteen clans. But right now, there were people hovering in the air above all eighteen castles.

"Milord, so many amethysts have charged out. The Amethyst Mountains seem to have gone wild." In the air above a castle, a black-robed man and a violet-robed man were hovering in the air, staring at the Fog Sea. The black-robed man spoke respectfully.

The violet-robed man stared at the Fog Sea, a look of delight appearing on his face. "Haha…violet light rising to the heavens! It truly is violet light rising to the heavens! After so many years, the 'Fog Wave' of the Amethyst

Mountains has finally once more descended, haha…" The violet-robed man was overjoyed.

Right now, looking at the Fog Sea from outside…

Deep within the Fog Sea, an eye-piercingly brilliant violet glow had risen into the skies, piercing straight through the foggy clouds. It was incomparably dazzling.

"Rumble…"

The 'Fog Sea' covering the entire Amethyst Mountains suddenly exploded wildly, crashing outwards in every direction like bellowing waves. In but the blink of an eye, the wild waves violently expanded by nearly ten kilometers, expanding all the way outwards until they nearly reached those eighteen castles.

As for those people who had originally been at the borders of the Fog Sea harvesting amethysts, they weren't able to react at all before being 'devoured' by the Fog Sea.

Chapter 33 – The Strange Fog Sea

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 33, The Strange Fog Sea

The Fog Sea had a circumference of hundreds of thousands of kilometers. It must be understood that Linley's homeland, the 'Yulan continent', had a circumference of only thirty thousand kilometers. It was less than a tenth of the Fog Sea in size!

The people who had been originally harvesting amethysts at the borders of the Fog Sea, all together, were over a hundred million in number. But of course, a hundred million Deities, in the vast, endless Infernal Realm, was nothing at all.

These hundred million people were all swallowed up, leaving behind only the overseeing staff of the eighteen clans at the outer perimeter, as well as the staff of those eighteen castles.

"Haha…one can harvest for a trillion years without getting as much as we will today!" A violet-robed figure standing in the air above one of the castles was filled with eagerness, and he barked towards the people below, "Send the order. All oversight squads are to go collect amethysts. Any who take them for themselves, upon being discovered, are to be put to death!"

"Yes, milord!"

From within this castle, a flood of people flew out, numbering more than a thousand. They dispersed into the air around the Amethyst Mountains. The uniformed oversight squads also began to quickly harvest amethysts in accordance with the order. The staff members of the eighteen clans all began to wildly harvest.

Whoever harvested more and faster would earn more!

Outside the roiling fog banks, a large number of figures could be seen

scurrying about, and many amethyst stones which flew out at high speed were collected into interspatial rings.

“So many amethysts?” A bald man dressed in a uniform muttered, while waving his hand, snatching a flying pile of amethysts into his interspatial ring. “Is this harvesting? This is just grabbing money. I really want to get some for myself.”

The subordinates of the eighteen clans were all astonished and envious, but they didn’t dare to take any for themselves.

Because after each harvesting, their interspatial rings would be inspected. They weren’t permitted to take so much as a single amethyst for themselves.

“How many amethysts will the clan acquire this time? I’ve already collected more than a hundred thousand amethysts by myself. Our clan alone has at least a hundred thousand people like me. Good heavens, doesn’t that mean there will be more than ten billion amethysts? That represents more than a hundred trillion inkstones!” A simple calculation made by those uniformed harvesters frightened them out of their minds.

What’s more, they had only been harvesting for a short while.

The Fog Sea continued to roil about, with large amounts of amethysts shooting out at high speed everywhere.

It was indeed a fact that the rewards the eighteen clans had reaped over a trillion years would not be as much as they would reap from the Fog Wave of today.

“All of you, hurry up!” Those higher level staff members shouted. “Hurry up and harvest them! Don’t let the other clans take them away!” As they shouted loudly, they would occasionally deign to reach out and snatch some amethysts as well. After all, sometimes a single pile of amethysts had hundreds of thousands of amethysts in them.

That represented a fortune of trillions of inkstones!

Grabbing money! This money making speed was simply too ridiculous.

No wonder the eighteen clans were so excited about this ‘Fog Wave’.

The Fog Wave brought the eighteen clans enormous wealth, but at the same time, the Fog Wave swept those pitiable Gods and Demigods all into the depths as well. Because of the sudden expansion by nearly ten kilometers, the people who had been within the Fog Sea’s borders were all now nearly ten kilometers within it.

A hundred meters was the danger line. Ten kilometers?

None of them would be able to return!

Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier had been chatting and laughing about going to a restaurant to eat. But who would have expected that the Fog Sea would suddenly expand?

It must be understood that normally, the Fog Sea constantly roiled about, and Linley’s group was within the borders of the Fog Sea. They weren’t able to notice that the Fog Sea had expanded. In addition, the actual expansion of the Fog Sea was simply too fast. In but an instant, Linley’s group of four entered the danger zone!

They didn’t actively go in, but the Fog Sea had expanded. Ten kilometers deep into the Fog Sea?

At a hundred meters distance, their heads would go dizzy.

Ten kilometers?

“Whoooooosh.” That low, rumbling wind constantly rang out, and one attack after another hammered against their souls. Most Gods, upon falling into this environment, would immediately have their minds turn chaotic, but as Linley has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, he was able to remain

clear-minded.

Linley had trained for twenty more years after parting with the Volcano Titan, Phusro.

During these twenty years, Linley had refined a large amount of amethysts and further strengthened his soul, while at the same time he had worked diligently to repair the flaw in the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. By now, the strength of the 'patch' over the flaw was excellent.

"What's going on?" Linley fought to stay clear-minded.

"Boss, my head feels miserable." Bebe frantically shook his head. "However, I can still maintain my awareness." Bebe suddenly closed his eyes, then opened them again, trying to keep himself awake.

Linley turned and saw that although Bebe had been able to maintain his clear-mindedness, Delia and Olivier…

Although Delia had reached the Highgod level, Delia didn't have a soul-protecting divine artifact, and what's more, she had fused with a divine spark to become a Deity. Although she had absorbed some Golden Soul-Pearls, under the attack of the strange sound of the wind, she was beginning to turn woozy.

"Lin…Linley….I….my head hurts…" Delia forced out a few words from her lips.

Linley immediately grabbed Delia by the hand. He understood what Delia was going through. In this sort of environment, staying clear-minded was already very hard, much less using divine sense to speak. Delia was only just barely able to say a few words. Even her eyes were occasionally clear, occasionally lost.

"Boss, Olivier has lost consciousness." Bebe grabbed Olivier by the hand, afraid that Olivier would drift away from their position.

“Olivier isn’t able to stay conscious?” Linley was secretly shocked. Olivier had a mutated soul, and yet even he wasn’t able to stay awake?

Linley stared at the surroundings. The visibility within the Fog Sea was very low, and Linley’s group was only able to just barely see past a hundred meters. Linley forcibly suppressed his dizziness as he looked around himself, but no matter where he looked, all he saw was white fog.”

“Boss, there’s white fog everywhere. We can’t see the outside.” Bebe called out in alarm.

Linley couldn’t help but think back to what that person had said when they had arrived: “If you go so deep in as to be unable to see the outside world, you won’t be able to leave!”

“Boss, will we be unable to leave?” Bebe also suppressed his dizziness as he spoke. Bebe had a soul-protecting divine artifact. Although its level wasn’t as high as Linley’s, at least Bebe’s soul-protecting divine artifact was an undamaged one.

“Unable to leave?”

Linley’s face suddenly changed. “Bebe, have you realized that something’s wrong?”

“Wrong?” Bebe didn’t understand.

“Haven’t you noticed that even if we don’t use our divine power to control our bodies, we still won’t land?” Linley said. Just now, Olivier had been unable to stay conscious, and yet he was still floating. This was because this area had no gravity at all.

“There really is no gravity.” Bebe immediately realized.

Linley ground his teeth, forcing himself to ignore the pain and sense the strength of the wind around him. “All I can feel is that there are surges of wind gently pushing us around, constantly drawing us in.” Linley pointed

towards their front. “If we don’t resist, we will probably enter the dangerous area.”

“Therefore, we need to move towards the opposite direction.” Linley said.

“Boss, the direction of the wind just changed.” Bebe suddenly called out in alarm.

Indeed…

The direction of the wind was chaotic and disordered. Sometimes it would be here, other times it would push there. This immediately caused Linley and Bebe to feel stupefied.

“Swish!” Suddenly, a violet light flashed over.

“Amethysts.” Bebe reached out, storing the violet light into his interspatial ring. “Boss, this pile of amethysts, although not large, has at least several thousand within it.”

Linley didn’t care about amethysts. He was pondering how to leave!

Linley’s face suddenly turned ashen. “No one who has entered the Fog Sea has ever been able to leave! If one really was able to so easily exit the depths of the Fog Sea, there probably would have been an entire pile of Highgods harvesting amethysts within it, but even those eighteen clans just quietly wait outside. Clearly, this is a place where you can enter but cannot leave!” Linley immediately deduced this fact.

But this deduction caused Linley to feel miserable, because the strange wind sounds were still causing Linley’s head to feel woozy and extremely painful.

“Bebe, forget about everything else. Let’s charge straight in front.” Linley ground his teeth.

At this time, nothing else mattered.

“Alright.” Bebe nodded.

Immediately, Linley held Delia’s hand while Bebe pulled Olivier along. The two headed straight forward. The white fog was hazy…and there was no gravity. Linley’s group wasn’t even able to determine where ‘up’ and ‘down’ was, much less the four cardinal directions. They could only blindly charge forward.

“Amethysts!” From afar, some more amethysts flew out. When they drew near Linley, Linley waved his hand and drew in the amethysts, immediately storing ten amethysts into the Coiling Dragon ring while the rest were stored into his interspatial ring.

The Coiling Dragon ring instantly refined those ten amethysts.

“Hey?” Linley’s face revealed a hint of delight. “I didn’t expect that while absorbing soul essences, the wooziness would weaken!”

However, after flying for a while, the ‘whoooshing’ wind came to an end.

“We finally flew out of that strange area.” Linley and Bebe all had small smiles on their faces, while at this moment, Delia and Olivier woke up as well.

“Linley, what happened?” Delia asked. “Just now, even thinking was difficult. Um, the surrounding area is all white fog. I can’t see the outside!” Delia was shocked as well.

As they were speaking, Linley’s group flew several dozen more meters.

Suddenly…

“BANG!” Very suddenly, a terrifying gravitational force enveloped them. This gravitational force was applied to every part of their body, including their blood vessels, heart, and even…soul!

Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier all suddenly suffered this terrifying gravitational force. For a moment, they were stunned. At an astonishing speed, the four of them were all drawn deep into the Fog Sea. Moments later, the four regained consciousness.

“This is the Supergravity Field!” Linley hurriedly said through mental messaging. “More precisely speaking, this is the Law of the Earth’s Profound Mysteries of Gravitational Space.” This sort of gravity was simply too ridiculous. Linley hadn’t been able to resist at all. At most, he was able to reduce his speed. All four of them were working hard to reduce their speed.

“Gravitational Space?” Delia looked towards Linley.

“It’s slightly different.” Linley said hurriedly. “Gravitational Space is just one type of powerful gravity which generally applies throughout one’s body. It doesn’t have any effect on the soul. But this damn place…” Linley couldn’t help but shake his head as he spoke.

It seemed as though that surge of strange energy even had a strange, strong attractive force to souls.

“A gravitational affect that works on souls?” Linley felt that this was utterly senseless.

The white fog was everywhere. Linley’s group was only able to see so much. Right at this moment, however, an amethyst flew over at such high speed that Linley wasn’t able to react at all. In the same instant it arrived at Linley, suddenly…

“CRUNCH!”

The amethyst actually pierced directly through Linley’s ‘Pulseguard Armor’, then just barely pierced through Linley’s body. After having pierced through, though, the speed of this amethyst dropped dramatically, and it didn’t have sufficient momentum to resist that gravitational field. Immediately, the terrifying gravitational force caused it to halt, then reverse

direction and move faster.

Linley was astonished. A single amethyst passing through his body hadn't caused too much damage, but…"The speed of this amethyst was too astonishing. This sort of striking power caused even my 'Pulseguard Armor' to be unable to withstand it."

"Boss, there's people over there." Bebe sent through a soul message.

Linley's group of four struggled to resist the attractive force and slow down, but someone next to Linley flew past them at astonishing speed, not resisting at all. Because…his skull had been riddled with gaping wounds.

"He's dead." Olivier sent through a mental message.

Linley nodded slightly. "He should have been killed by those suddenly appearing amethysts, which shot through his head!" In the white fog, visibility was lowered to a hundred meters. Given the astonishing speed at which the amethysts shot out at, capable of resisting that gravitational effect and also piercing through the 'Pulseguard Armor', not even Linley was able to react in time.

Linley was lucky. He had been struck in the chest.

But the other person had been struck on the head by a pile of amethysts, instantly dying!

"Delia, behind me!" Linley immediately barked, while at the same time Dragonforming!

"Olivier, you hide behind me as well." Bebe said.

Linley's face was grave. This Fog Sea was an extraordinary place. First, that bizarre wind, which should have been present within the 'chaotic region', but now it was the 'gravity region'. The gravity was so powerful that not even Highgods were able to resist it. More importantly…

Both of these regions were able to affect the soul.

“The place where amethysts are formed. How many secrets are contained within these Amethyst Mountains?” Linley was puzzled, but suddenly Linley’s face changed dramatically. “Amethysts!” From afar, a fairly thick ray of violet light appeared, instantly striking towards Bebe’s body.

Chapter 34 – Highgod

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 34, Highgod

Within the Fog Sea, Linley's group of four was flying at high speed. They were still only able to just barely see within a hundred meters of themselves. This ray of violet light's sudden appearance caused everyone to be alarmed.

A hundred meters distance, at the speed the violet light travelled, was not enough to allow one to dodge.

"Boom!" A low, rumbling collision sound.

The violet light smashed viciously against Bebe's waist, and Bebe was knocked flying backwards. This fairly thick ray of violet light was actually an entire pile of amethysts, and the collision force from the pile of amethysts actually caused Bebe to temporarily hurtle downwards at high speed, pulling away from Linley's group.

Olivier had been right behind Bebe, but Bebe had smashed right into him. This sudden collision caused Olivier's body to shudder and a hint of blood spurt out from his lips.

"Bebe!" Linley and Delia both turned to look.

Bebe was holding his stomach. Following the gravitational pull, he flew back towards them, and Olivier did the same. They came to a halt alongside Linley. Baring his fangs, Bebe pursed his lips and said, "Boss, the striking power of those amethysts really is quite strong. It smashed straight into my stomach! Ouch!"

Olivier wiped away the blood from his lips in astonishment.

Just now, that amethyst had easily pierced through Linley's body, and

what's more, it had been travelling at such speed despite the gravitational pull. One could imagine how astonishing the speed was. And yet, an entire pile of amethysts had struck onto Bebe's stomach, but hadn't harmed Bebe at all.

Bebe had only been knocked into Olivier, and yet the force of that collision had caused Olivier to vomit blood. One could imagine how powerful the concussive power of those amethysts were! Linley actually laughed and joked, "Bebe, your belly hurt for a moment, but you got an entire pile of amethysts out of it?" Linley naturally knew how powerful Bebe's defense was.

Olivier stared in astonishment at Bebe. "Bebe, the striking power of those amethysts was so great, and yet you…?"

Bebe delightedly raised an eyebrow. "What, is it so strange? Are you kidding? Don't you know who I am? I'm Bebe! Hey, Olivier, who told you to stand over there? Hurry up and get behind me." Bebe suddenly barked. After having seen what happened just now, Olivier understood how powerful Bebe was, and he immediately moved to stand behind Bebe.

Linley and Delia were in a line, while Bebe and Olivier were in a line.

In the boundless Fog Sea, Linley's group was unable to truly resist the gravitational force. All they could do was allow it to carry them in deeper.

"Mountain peak!" Bebe cried out in surprise.

Linley turned his head. Indeed, an entire mountain peak was smashing towards him.

A mountain peak smashing towards him?

Linley suddenly twisted his body, managing to force himself to one side. "Hey, how did I dodge this?" Linley was rather surprised. If it had been amethysts shooting at him, he wouldn't have been able to resist at all. But Linley instantly realized. "This mountain isn't moving!"

“We arrived at the Amethyst Mountains. So we were dropping this entire time!” Linley only now realized what direction they had been going in.

Under the pull of the gravitational force, Linley’s group brushed past the mountain peak and continued to drop at high speed. This astonishing gravitational force caused all of them to drop astonishingly quickly, and the further down past the mountain peak they went, the vaster the mountain became. Linley suddenly, clearly noticed a large mountain rock flash past his eyes.

No time to dodge!

“Bang!” Linley’s group smashed straight into this mountain boulder, halfway down the mountain. Although they had smashed into the mountain, the astonishing gravitational force still dragged down at them. The four were sent tumbling downwards by the gravity.

As their bodies continuously rolled downwards, Linley felt dizzy, especially after his head had hit the mountain rock.

“Delia!” Linley immediately grabbed the downwards tumbling Delia, while at the same time he viciously clawed at a protruding mountain rock, fixing himself onto the mountain.

Bebe immediately grabbed a mountain rock as well, no longer rolling downwards. As for Olivier, he continued to roll downwards, quickly disappearing.

“Pant, pant!” Linley panted a few breaths, then raised his head to look at Bebe. “Bebe. Where’s Olivier?”

“He fell down.” Bebe said hurriedly. “I didn’t have the chance to catch him.”

Linley turned his head to glance at Delia. Delia wasn’t injured either. Only now did Linley calm down and look at his surroundings. At the moment, the

three of them were halfway down this mountain, and the area around them was covered in white fog. Linley's group couldn't see the bottom of the mountain at all.

"Olivier probably fell down into the bottom." Delia said. "Let's go down?"

"Down. Let's go down." Linley could still sense that astonishing gravitational force. "Be careful. The gravity is too powerful. However, the stones of these Amethyst Mountains are sturdy as well." Linley gripped the protruding stone and sighed in astonishment as he spoke. The rocks of the entire Amethyst Mountains were all a dark red color.

Previously, when Linley had smashed head on against the mountain rocks, the mountain rocks actually hadn't shattered!

"Linley, look. Amethysts!" Delia laughed. Halfway down the mountain, there were one or two amethysts scattered about as well.

"This place is the Amethyst Mountains. Naturally, there's many amethysts here." Bebe muttered, while at the same time punching hard against the mountain rocks. The dark red mountain rocks only shuddered, and a small crack appeared. Bebe stared in astonishment. "My full force punch wasn't able to smash it apart!"

As he spoke, Bebe withdrew that black dagger with a flip of his hand.

"Crackle…" The black dagger forced its way down into the rock, cutting a large scar into the stone. Within the rock, aside from the dark red stone debris, there were scattered amethysts as well.

"So there's actually amethysts within these rocks." Bebe laughed. And then, he shook his head. "Only, it's so complicated. My dagger can even break through Highgod artifacts, but this rock…I was only able to chop a chunk of it off. What's more, the amethysts are embedded into the rocky fragments. Getting them out will be complicated."

"Let's go. Forget about the amethysts. Let's go down first."

Linley led them downwards.

The Amethyst Mountains were completely covered by white fog.

However, the outside world had never been able to know what the true appearance of the Amethyst Mountains was like. This was because no one who passed into the Fog Sea and entered the Amethyst Mountains had ever been able to escape. Linley's group was currently walking on the Amethyst Mountains, and had even arrived at the base.

"It seems the white fog is thinner here!" Bebe said, looking around himself.

The density of the white fog at the base of the mountains was lower. Linley's group was now able to see to a distance of two hundred meters.

"Olivier!" Linley immediately saw that nearby figure. "Bebe, Delia, let's go over."

Olivier was currently looking around in concern. He was surrounded by that bewildering white fog. He had rolled all the way down, in the end landing at the base of this mountain peak. However, in the nearby area, he wasn't able to see any people at all. All he could see was some bloodstained corpses, their bodies shattered from the fall.

"Best to wait here for Linley and them." Olivier didn't run about wildly. After all, the area around him was covered with white fog. If he ran about, he would very possibly be separated from Linley's group.

"Olivier." Linley's voice rang out.

Olivier felt a surge of joy in his heart. He immediately turned and saw Linley's group of three running over. In this damnable place, being together with friends and helping each other made one feel more confident.

"Why aren't there any others here?" Bebe looked around as well, saying in a disdainful manner.

“Don’t be impatient.” Linley laughed.

“Swoosh!” Suddenly, from above, multiple figures descended at high speed.

“Bang!” “Bang!” These multiple figures didn’t stop at all, smashing viciously against the ground with a hollow, deep thudding sound. One could imagine how strong the collision force was. Linley’s group of four looked at these five newcomers.

Bebe covered his mouth, beginning to laugh.

The five of them had fallen in terrible condition. Even their faces were scratched open. The five woke up after a while, then hurriedly began to use their divine power to repair their wounds while rising to their feet.

“Did the four of you enter from the outside as well?” The leader of the five, a green-haired man, spoke out.

“Of course we came from outside.” Bebe laughed as he responded. “Just like you, we fell down from up above. However…we were a bit better off than you. We weren’t so unlucky as to smash into the ground.” As he spoke, Bebe continued to cover his mouth and laugh.

The five couldn’t help but have awkward looks appear on their face.

“Bebe.” Linley couldn’t help but bark out. Bebe was simply too talented at causing trouble.

However, the five weren’t too angry either. In this strange place, it was better for everyone to remain united. They, too, had discovered that Delia, a Highgod Fiend, was present. Their attitude naturally became all the more friendly towards Linley’s group.

Linley glanced at the surrounding area. “Let’s go. We can’t always stay here. Let’s go to some other areas and take a look.”

Linley's group of nine began to walk through the Amethyst Mountains. In but a short while, they encountered over a hundred people. Everyone had entered from within the Fog Sea. Naturally, they formed into a unit. This small unit was actually led by Delia.

Because…Delia was the only Highgod!

This grand group of a hundred-plus people carefully made their way through the Amethyst Mountains.

"The gravity here really is powerful. Even walking is so difficult." A voice came from behind.

"It really is weird. Even the 'Gravitational Space' of a Highgod would at most be at this level, but this gravity is in effect throughout the entire Amethyst Mountains. That's weird. Even the most powerful of Highgods can't set up such an enormous, large-scale 'Gravitational Space'.

A conversation was going on in the rear. Walking in the front, Linley agreed. This sort of gravity truly was too astonishing.

"Huh?" Linley's face changed. "Everyone, halt!" Linley said loudly. Immediately, the hundred-plus people came to a halt.

"What's going on?" A question from behind.

But Linley just looked up ahead. In front of them, two figures could be seen. Just now, those two figures had flown past them, but when they reached a few dozen meters away from Linley, they suddenly came to a halt.

"So fast." Linley was secretly surprised. "Under the gravity of the Amethyst Mountains, they are still able to travel so quickly. These two are very powerful."

The two hesitated a moment, then began to draw near. The two both wore long black robes. Only, one of them was a man with long silver hair, while

the other was a woman with long brown hair.

“You came from the outside world?” The brown haired woman said coldly.

“Highgod?” Linley’s group was astonished. There were virtually no Highgods amongst the amethyst harvesters. However…the two in front of them were actually both Highgods.

Linley was secretly startled. “Who are these two people?”

The brown-haired woman and the silver-haired man were both studying Delia, especially upon seeing the Fiend medallion on Delia’s chest. Immediately, the brown-haired woman said, “My name is Garlan [Jia’lan]. I don’t know who this Highgod Fiend is…?”

“My name is Delia.” Delia said with a smile.

The silver-haired man laughed as well. “Delia, hello. My name is Jarrod [Jia’luo’de]! The Amethyst Mountains are extremely dangerous. Since you, Delia, are a Highgod Fiend, how about you join with us? With the three of us joining forces, the chances of us staying alive will be higher.”

“Staying alive?” Delia was stunned.

Linley couldn’t help but be startled as well. So the situation really was dire!

“These Amethyst Mountains are filled with many dangers. Even these two Highgod speak of ‘staying alive’…” Linley couldn’t help but feel a sense of pressure. At this moment, the group of Gods behind Linley immediately grew nervous and started chatting amongst themselves. None of them were idiots.

Hearing the words of the silver-haired man, they understood that the Amethyst Mountains definitely were very dangerous.

“Might I ask if I can bring a few people into the group?” Delia asked.

“You cannot.” The brown-haired woman said with utter decisiveness. “It is very dangerous right now. We aren’t even certain of our ability to protect ourselves. How can we take on these additional nuisances? Delia, hurry up and choose. If you are willing to join us alone, with the three of us joined together, we should be able to survive this crisis.”

“No need.” Delia shook her head and refused politely.

The two Highgods couldn’t help but be stunned.

“Travelling with them, the only thing that will happen is that they will slow you down. They will be your doom!” The silver-haired man, Jarrod, said hurriedly.

“Hey, why all the pointless chitchat?” Bebe barked unhappily. “So what if she doesn’t join you?”

The silver-haired man couldn’t help but glance at Bebe.

“There’s no need. Thank you for your good intentions.” Delia said in refusal.

The silver-haired man and the brown-haired woman glanced at each other, shaking their heads.

“If you aren’t willing, then forget it. I just want to warn you of one thing.” The brown-haired woman looked at Delia. “Beware the amethyst beasts!” After speaking, the brown-haired woman and the silver-haired man immediately flew away at high speed, instantly disappearing into the mist.

Chapter 35 – Amethyst Beasts

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 35, Amethyst Beasts

The brown-haired woman, ‘Garlan’, and the silver-haired man, ‘Jarrod’, flew away side by side at high speed.

“That Delia is truly an idiot.” Jarrod cursed softly. “A venerable Highgod Fiend who spends her time with a group of Gods and is unwilling to leave them. She is absolutely looking for death.”

“Enough talk. That Delia wants to die. What can we do about it?”

Garlan shook her head. “What’s more, it’s hard to say if even we ourselves will be able to endure this crisis. Let’s hurry up and go far away from those monsters.”

Jarrod seemed to have just remembered the monsters as well. He couldn’t help but shudder, then hurriedly said, “Right, let’s hurry up and leave.” The two increased their speed still further.

Linley’s group of people was currently in a state of chaos.

“Just now, those two Highgods said that the Amethyst Mountains are very dangerous. Are we going to actually keep going forward? As I see it, let’s not run about wildly. Let’s halt here.”

“Just because we don’t run about, does that necessarily mean we’ll be safe here? Didn’t you see those two Highgods run away? If it was safe here, why wouldn’t the two Highgods stay here?”

Linley was currently frowning as he stared into the white fog. “Amethyst beasts? Those two said ‘beware the amethyst beasts’. Even Highgods are so frightened of them that they flee. Then we…” Linley turned to look at Delia, Bebe, and Olivier.

“Let’s separate from this group of people.” Olivier said. “If we stay with them, we’ll have a great deal of trouble.”

Linley turned to look at those people.

“Mr. Linley, are you, are you going to abandon us?” Immediately, someone spoke out.

“Lord Delia, we are all under your command. No matter what, don’t abandon us.”

“Lord Delia…”

These Gods and Demigods were afraid that Delia would leave. If she did, who then would protect them? With a Highgod Fiend by their side, they would feel safer.

“Shut your mouths.” Bebe snarled at them. “Quiet down.”

In the Infernal Realm, when a lethal crisis had descended, who would be so bored as to waste time protecting others?

“Why are you shouting towards us? You are just a God. On what basis are you causing such a ruckus?” Many people looked at Bebe unhappily.

Bebe was instantly enraged.

“Quiet!” A low growl rang out.

Everyone turned to look at the speaker. It was Linley! Linley was currently frowning as though trying to hear something. These Gods and Demigods slowly began to hear a low, growling sound, but the sound was very weak.

But moments later, the growling sound grew stronger. Clearly, some monsters were drawing near at high speed!

“Beast growls?” Many people began to feel astonished.

Linley immediately sent out with his divine sense, “Delia, Bebe, Olivier, let’s flee!” As Linley spoke, he immediately began to flee, and Delia, Bebe, and Olivier didn’t hesitate, immediately following Linley and flying at high speed.

“Follow Lord Delia!” Immediately, people began to call out while chasing after them.

The hundred-plus people nervously began to gallop forward at high speed from behind.

However, Linley’s group of four were extremely fast. Despite the astonishing gravity, Linley and Bebe’s tough bodies were able to resist the gravitational pull while still running at high speed. Delia was a wind-style Highgod, also very fast. The slowest was Olivier, but he was a light-style God, adept at speed!

The hundred-plus others were slowly falling behind them.

However…

“Roaaaaaaaaar!” “Roaaaaaaar!”

The angry roars reverberated in the skies, while at the same time drawing near at high speed. The speed was so fast that it was actually far faster than the likes of Linley and the others.

“Such astonishing speed.” Linley felt greatly shocked. The monster, when running, actually was causing the earth to tremble. Those powerful earth vibrations caused his heart to grow panicky. “Roaaaaar!” “Roaaaaar!” The bestial roars grew closer and closer, as though coming from directly behind them.

“Aaaah! What sort of a monster is that?!”

“Kill the monster, kill it!”

“Aaargh, die!”

“Aaaaah!”

“Lord Delia, save us, aaaaah!”

Bellows and fierce screams rang out from behind them.

Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier couldn’t help but turn to look. As they did, they were shocked.

Its body looked like that of a ferocious lion. It was four meters tall and more than ten meters long. This ferocious beast’s entire body was made out of metal and stone, and its entire body glistened with a violet light. The divine weapons of those Gods, when landing on its body, weren’t able to harm it at all!

The strange thing was…

On its head, there were three sharp horns that were positioned in the shape of a triangle, while on its back, there were over a hundred sharp spikes that covered its entire back!

“108 spikes!” Linley could immediately tell. “And its entire body emanates an amethyst aura. Its entire body glistens with a violet light, and in coloration and aura, it seems very similar to amethysts. Can it be…that its entire body is made out of amethysts?”

While fleeing, Linley was guessing to himself.

The amethyst beast chased after them; two of them, in fact. These two amethyst beasts opened their vicious maws, as though wanting to ‘crunch’ and bite these Deities in half, then swallow the upper half of their bodies into their bellies.

“Roaaaaaar!” The amethyst beast’s blood-red eyes swept across the area, and it swept out its fierce claws casually.

“Bang!” A divine artifact was smashed aside, and then a Deity’s body was smashed as well. The Deity’s head wanted to fly away, but under the powerful gravity, it was extremely hard to fly. The amethyst beast opened its maw to devour the head, directly swallowing the Deity’s head into its stomach.

In the blink of an eye, nearly twenty people had died.

“Flee!”

“The monster isn’t afraid of soul attacks, and it isn’t afraid of material attacks either!”

The short battle had caused the hundred-plus men to no longer have the courage to fight back. They had delivered full-force blows to the bodies of those amethyst beasts, but hadn’t been able to injure them at all. These amethyst beasts didn’t respond at all to soul attacks either! At the same time, the amethyst beasts were easily slaughtering them.

Flee!

They only had this choice left.

The lucky survivors frantically fled in every direction. No matter how powerful the amethyst beasts were, there were only two of them. With so many people fleeing in every direction, how many of them could the amethyst beasts kill?

“Bang!” “Bang!”

The two amethyst beasts suddenly spat out quite a few divine sparks from their mouths. Clearly, these divine sparks belonged to those people they had killed and devoured.

“It seems the two amethyst beasts are unable to digest divine sparks. Thus, they had to spit them out.” Linley guessed to himself.

The crimson eyes of the two amethyst beasts stared around the area, and violet steam came out from their nostrils. Their gaze then fixed upon the distant, fleeing Linley and the other three. “Roaaaaaaar! Chase!” A low, indistinct voice rang out, and the two amethyst beasts immediately charged towards Linley’s group.

They flew like the wind, they moved like the thunder!

Despite the powerful gravity of the Amethyst Mountains, the two amethyst beasts still moved as fast as lightning, drawing closer and closer to Linley’s group with astonishing speed.

Linley, who had been paying attention to the amethyst beasts at all times, couldn’t help but feel startled. “Those two beasts. There’s so many people here, so why are they focused on us?” Through his earlier observations of the battles between the amethyst beasts and the Gods and Demigods, Linley had become certain that these beasts were not easy to deal with!

Material attacks and soul attacks were all ineffective.

“But it’s hard to say if it’s just that those material attacks and soul attacks weren’t strong enough.” Linley understood this principle. “However, even the combined attacks of those Gods hadn’t been able to wound the two beasts. Even if I were to attack, I probably still wouldn’t be able to deal enough damage.”

“Boss, those two beasts are drawing near.” Bebe said frantically.

“Don’t worry about me.” Olivier said frantically through a mental message. He was the slowest of the four, dragging them down.

“Shut your mouth!” Bebe growled, then suddenly reached out and clutched Olivier. And then, Bebe’s speed rapidly increased.

Linley and Delia increased their speed as well.

Linley still remained nervous. “Those two beasts are still slowly drawing near us.” The two beasts, emanating violet steam from their nostrils, continued to gallop forward at high speed, constantly reducing the distance between them and Linley’s group. Fifty meters. Forty meters. Thirty meters…

“Less than ten meters now.” Linley seemed to be able to sense the hot steam coming from the nostrils of the beasts.

“Roaaaaar!”

Suddenly, one of the two amethyst beasts rapidly increased its movement speed, instantly jumping forward and moving like a bolt of violet light, instantly arriving in front of Linley’s group. Two amethyst beasts, one behind them, one in front of them. Linley’s group was caught.

Linley’s group was forced to come to a halt, and Bebe placed Olivier down as well.

“The situation seems grim.” Delia frowned.

“Boss, let’s split them up. One for each of us.” Bebe actually licked his lips as he spoke.

“Fine.” Linley nodded.

But the two amethyst beasts were actually both staring at Delia. One of them let out a growling, stuttering sound. “High…Highgod…eat!” And then, one of the amethyst beasts transformed into a ray of light, pouncing directly towards Delia.

Delia wielded the Spear of Cortez in her hands. Bowing suddenly, her entire body seemed to arc like that of a longbow, and then with a massive thrust, the longspear shot forwards.

“Swoosh!”

The longspear thrust out, moving at maximum speed, causing even space to crack around it.

Elemental Laws of the Wind – Dimensional Attack.

“Crunch!” The Spear of Cortez actually stabbed into the amethyst beast’s body, and the amethyst beast fell down from the skies. The Spear of Cortez immediately returned to Delia’s hands, leaving behind a hole in the body of the amethyst beast.

“Crackle…” The hole quickly healed, as though it had never been wounded.

“Roaaaaar!” The amethyst beast immediately began to roar angrily, while the other amethyst beast did the same.

Linley and Bebe exchanged a glance. At virtually the same instant, they leapt off from the ground. Their two powerful bodies exploded forth with astonishing strength, shooting out like arrows towards each of the amethyst beasts. Linley’s right fist, carrying boundless power, smashed towards the amethyst beasts.

The amethyst beast roared angrily, swiping out with its fierce claws.

“Bang!” Linliey’s draconic scale covered right fist and the sharp claws collided violently.

Linley and the amethyst beast were like two colliding meteors. Both of them were actually sent flying back by that astonishingly powerful counter-force from the collision. The amethyst beast was knocked to the ground, and its scarlet eyes were filled with astonishment. As for Linley, the very instant he landed on the ground, he leapt up and shot out like a gust of wind.

“Haha…” Linley’s dark golden eyes were filled with a hint of excitement.

Ever since he had absorbed that drop of Sovereign's Might, Linley hadn't encountered a foe whose body was comparable to his.

Linley's entire body was filled with tens of thousands of tons of power. His draconic claws were like blades. Covered by dimly glowing blue light, his palm slashed down, transforming into countless illusions and creating clear ripples in space. The amethyst beast bellowed, immediately using the horns on its head to charge towards Linley!

Linley's eyes exploded forth with power, and he howled with rage…

"BANG!" His palm collided with one of the spikes, which was forcibly shattered as Linley's palm continued to chop down towards the amethyst beast's skull.

Profound Truths of Velocity – Bewildering Shadow!

Linley was knocked flying backwards by the force of the collision, while with a 'boom', the amethyst beast was knocked down to its knees by the power of the blow.

"What a tough horn." Linley looked at his right hand. The draconic scales covering his right hand actually showed a hint of blood beneath them.

This amethyst beast had been completely enraged. "You…you will…die!" Its low, gravelly voice echoed out from its bestial throat, while at the same time, the broken horn on the amethyst beast was slowly regrowing. However, clearly, the damage to the broken horn wasn't as easily repaired as the damage to the other parts of its body.

"It seems I underestimated you."

With a flip of his hands, Linley wielded the adamantine heavy sword in one hand and Bloodviolet in the other.

"Come!" Linley launched off the ground, charging forward once again.

Olivier was currently watching this go on, stunned. Linley and the amethyst beast were battling each other as though they were two meteors smashing into each other time and time again. As for Bebe, his battle with the other amethyst beast was also as wild and as exciting to watch.

“They…they…”

Chapter 36 – The Storm Caves

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 36, The Storm Caves

These amethyst beasts had easily slaughtered those Gods and Demigods. This was enough for Olivier to understand how powerful they were. When they had been wrapped into the fog, Bebe had been struck by a pile of amethysts, and from this, Olivier had already gotten a sense of how powerful Bebe's body was.

Bebe was a divine beast, and he had a connection to Beirut. Olivier could understand why he was so powerful.

But Linley?

"Linley is also…his body is actually able to go head on against that amethyst beast." Olivier watched this scene, completely dumbfounded. He had originally believed that as he himself had spent a few short decades of hard work to reach the God stage, he should be considered fairly impressive and perhaps had even surpassed Linley.

But in reality…

The difference between him and Linley was very great!

"This monster doesn't fear soul attacks!" Linley's furious roars rang out. He was thrown far away, but he then immediately flipped up and climbed to his feet. In disbelief, Linley said, "My full strength attack, 'Voidwave Sword'…this beast had no reaction to it at all!"

"Boss, just use physical attacks!" Bebe called out.

"Fine." Linley stored away his adamantine heavy sword and once more leapt forward, pouncing towards the amethyst beast like a giant eagle charging downwards. Linley's Bloodviolet once more executed the

‘Bewildering Shadow’ attack, chopping down with no mercy whatsoever towards the amethyst beast.

The amethyst beast, afraid of that attack, dodged.

“Bang!” Bloodviolet struck against the amethyst beast’s flank, chopping down at least half a meter.

However, as soon as Linley withdrew the sword, the wound immediately regenerated.

“Boss, this freak isn’t afraid of soul attacks, and even when I use physical attacks, it will recover from it, no matter how heavy the injury was.” Bebe was helpless as well. Linley couldn’t help but glance at the horn he had shattered, but the amethyst beast’s shattered horn was now already completely regrown.

Linley couldn’t help but to laugh bitterly.

“Even the most powerful of Highgods, when receiving my ‘Voidwave Sword’, would at least have a response to it, even if he didn’t fear it. But this amethyst beast didn’t react to it at all, while its body is so hard, it can compare to a Highgod artifact. And it can rapidly regenerate!”

Linley was utterly speechless. This sort of freak was completely invincible!

“No wonder even those two Highgods chose to flee instead.” Linley thought to himself, while at the same time, once more clashed viciously against the amethyst beast.

With a sword chop, Linley shattered one of the spikes of the amethyst beast, while he himself was sent flying away by the amethyst beast’s claws. In mid-air, his body twisted, and he landed on the ground on his feet.

The amethyst beast roared in agony. Clearly, the broken spike caused him great pain.

“Roaaaar!” The beast currently battling Bebe came to a halt, raising his head and emitting a roar.

The amethyst beast currently battling Linley also came to a halt. After staring at Linley for quite some time, it seemed to have finally realized that Linley hadn’t been wounded at all. In the end, it finally gave up, emitting the same low angry growl.

The two amethyst beasts glanced at each other, then the amethyst beast who had been battling Linley looked at Linley. In a low, gravelly voice, it said, “Body, not bad!”

The amethyst beast battling Bebe also glanced at Bebe.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

The two amethyst beasts transformed into two rays of violet light, running far away at high speed.

“Linley, are you alright?” Delia walked over, and Linley smiled and said, “Of course I’m alright. However, I must say, those two amethyst beasts really were formidable. They are utterly without flaw. But of course…they don’t know soul attacks.”

“Linley, what happened with those two amethyst beasts? Why did they leave?” Delia asked, puzzled.

The nearby Olivier spoke out. “Perhaps, the two amethyst beasts realized that fighting with you had no benefit for them at all, and instead they continuously were injured. Thus, they gave up and left.” Olivier reasoned.

Wasn’t that the case?

Linley and Bebe hadn’t been injured at all, and even if they were slightly nicked, they could use their divine power to heal it. Naturally, the two amethyst beasts had no interest in continuing in this sort of battle.

“Boss, I knocked a few rocks loose from its body. They seem to be amethysts.” Bebe grabbed up a few violet jewels from the floor. While Bebe had battled the amethyst beast, he had been using his black dagger to chop down on it. This was a godspark dagger. Naturally, it was able to chop a few jewels apart.

Hearing this, Linley immediately looked towards those two broken spikes on the ground.

He absorbed them directly into his Coiling Dragon ring, and indeed, those two violet jewels were immediately refined, and a large amount of soul essence was withdrawn, leaving behind only some detritus.

“Indeed, these amethyst beasts are completely made out of amethysts.” Linley felt stunned. Amethysts were filled with soul essence. These creatures completely made out of ‘amethysts’…how much soul essence did they contain?

“Boss, what are the results of your investigation? Are they amethysts?” Bebe asked. He held that violet jewel, not completely certain of its identity.

“It is indeed an amethyst.” Linley nodded.

Bebe, Delia, and Olivier, although expecting this answer, were nonetheless surprised.

Delia frowned. “Where did this freak come from? It doesn’t fear soul attacks, and its entire body is so tough. What’s more, it immediately heals from any wounds.” It had to be said that this sort of monster could be described as unbeatable. Or perhaps, more accurately, as extremely hard to kill.

“But I noticed that the creature’s intelligence seems to be very low.” Bebe said.

“It is indeed low. When we were fighting, all it knew how to do was to use its fierce claws and its fangs to launch basic attacks. It didn’t know any

profound mysteries at all." Linley had noticed this as well. "However, they are capable of speech!"

Everyone nodded slightly. The amethyst beast had afterwards said the words, 'body, not bad'. Everyone remembered this.

"Let's go. Let's take a look and see if there's a way for us to leave these Amethyst Mountains." Linley recommended.

Immediately, they all headed out once more. However, the area around them was covered in white fog, and Linley's group didn't know what places were dangerous. Still, by walking on the ground, at least Linley's group knew the general direction they were moving in. They continued moving forward in a straight line.

As Linley's group of four was moving forward, Jenkin was following three other Gods, carefully traversing these Amethyst Mountains. His luck had been excellent. He had safely arrived within the Amethyst Mountains, and up till now, he hadn't encountered any amethyst beasts.

"I wonder how Linley and the other two are doing." Jenkin said to himself quietly.

"Whoooosh." A powerful wind sound could be heard from up ahead.

"Let's go. Let's go take a look together." One of the Gods immediately called out. All four of the Gods, Jenkin included, drew closer to the origin of the sound. Moments later, Jenkin's group saw the source of that violent wind sound.

"This is…"

Jenkin and the other three stared, slackjawed.

A hundred meters away, on the ground, there was a straight crevice that was dozens of meters long. Deep within the crevice, there was a cave that was roughly ten meters long. A howling wind was emanating from within this

cave, and countless flashes of violet light were also spurting out from within the cave.

The speed at which the violet light moved was simply astonishing.

“So the amethysts flew out from here.” Jenkin said in amazement. However, he didn’t realize…the Amethyst Mountains had more than one location like this one.

The countless amethysts were blasting in every direction. Because they all moved in different directions, when they flew into the Fog Sea, they naturally covered the entire area. However, because their directions were different, some actually flew in slanting lines that were virtually parallel to the walls of the crevice, which was sunken in.

Thus, many of the amethysts smashed directly into the walls. Many of them embedded themselves deep into the crevice walls, but many others just lay there at the bottom of the crevice.

The cave was at the center of the crevice. There were countless amethysts lying everywhere else.

“How…how many amethysts is this?”

The four Gods stared, slackjawed. Amethysts usually weren’t very large, and so a small pile of just a few dozen centimeters could contain over ten thousand. However, this area that was littered with trenches definitely had to calculate the number of amethysts in the ‘hundreds of millions’. Every single amethyst was already very valuable. How much would so many amethysts be worth?

The four Gods were all stunned when they calculated the wealth.

“We…we’re rich!” A God suddenly regained his senses.

“Haha, we’re rich!” Jenkin was excited as well.

One of the four Gods hurried straight towards one of the straight trenches below. The other three, reacting slightly slower, also immediately ran downwards. The four didn't want to kill the others . After all, the amount of amethysts was simply too great…so great that their greed was completely satisfied!

But as they drew near the trench, the four came to a halt.

Because…

Large numbers of amethysts were slamming against the walls of the crevice, knocking loose the amethysts already embedded in the walls of the crevice, which fell back into the crevice. These amethysts were shooting out at a speed that was simply astonishing. If the four of them were to fly down, they would most likely be shot full of holes by those amethysts.

"What to do?" The four Gods all hesitated.

When they had fallen downwards, they had witnessed that shooting power of the amethysts. It must be understood that by then, the amethysts had already flown for a period of time, and their shooting power was actually lower than at first. But these amethysts that were shooting out from the cave were at the peak of their power and speed.

If they jumped into the crevice, they would definitely die!

"Use divine artifacts." One God advised. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved a whip. Lashing the whip out, the whip instantly elongated, coiling down like a python towards the cave.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

A large number of amethysts smashed into the whip, and the divine artifact was actually cracked apart by the force of the collisions.

The God's face couldn't help but turn white. The divine artifact had been destroyed!

It must be understood that the amethysts were even capable of breaking through Linley's 'Pulseguard Defense', and that was when they had already travelled a long distance. For the amethysts that were shooting out from the cave, even Highgod artifacts would be shot through! How could a God artifact possibly withstand them?

Jenkin and the other three were stunned.

"Motherf*cker, so many amethysts are in front of us, but we can't take them." One of the Gods cursed.

Actually, there were amethysts scattered everywhere throughout the Amethyst Mountains. Only, the amount that was scattered about was fairly small; the amount that the four had picked up was only around a hundred amethysts. Within the crevice, however, there were thick layers of them.

A random grab would pick up an enormous amount of them.

"Forget it. Life is more important." Jenkin shook his head helplessly.

The other three sighed helplessly as well.

As the four of them were about to give up, suddenly…

The 'cave' which had been constantly blasting our amethysts suddenly stopped, and the sound of the wind came to a halt as well. In the entire crevice, not a single amethyst was blasting out, leaving behind only a floor full of amethysts.

"This….this…" Jenkin and the other three were stunned.

"Ah! Down, go down!" The four Gods excitedly hopped into the crevice."

"With these amethysts, I, I…" Jenkin's mind was in a tumult. At the same time, he wildly began to collect large amounts of them into his interspatial ring.

“Hey, Jenkin?” A voice rang out.

Jenkin turned. It was Linley’s group of four.

Linley’s group had been attracted by the sound of the wind as well, but as they drew near, the sound of the wind had abruptly halted. As Linley drew near, they had discovered the crevice full of amethysts as well, as well as Jenkin and the other three, who were wildly collecting amethysts.

“So many amethysts?” Linley was shocked.

Bebe, Delia, and Olivier were stunned as well.

“Goddamn, compared to these amethysts, a fortune of two hundred billion is nothing!” Bebe’s eyes were shining.

But just as Bebe was about to jump down into the crevice…

“Rumble…”

The cave, which had already stopped shooting amethysts out, suddenly gave birth to a powerful gravitation attraction force. The strength of this gravitational force actually caused space to tremble, creating a spatial vortex. The spatial vortex within the cave instantly absorbed all of the amethysts within the crevice, along with Jenkin and the other three Gods as well.

“Lord Linley…” Jenkin, in that instant when he was being sucked into the cave, stared straight at Linley, his eyes filled with a hint of despair and resignation. However, he wasn’t able to resist at all.

The strange thing was, this astonishing gravitational force really was like a whirlpool. It only affected the entire crevice, but outside of it, it didn’t have any influence at all.

“Crackle…” The cave continued to swirl and absorb…

Within the crevice, the only things that were remaining were those amethysts that had been deeply lodged into the sides of the walls. As for amethysts which had been knocked loose, not a single one remained.

Seeing this scene, Linley couldn’t speak for a long, long moment.

Chapter 37 – The Rescue

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 37, The Rescue

The cavern whirlpool continued to swirl, its powerful sucking force enveloping the entire area near the crevice. As for Linley and the rest of the four who were outside the crevice, they watched with blank stares and slack jaws. Jenkin and the other three Gods had actually been swallowed into the cave, unable to resist at all. This sight was simply too astonishing.

Linley stared at the cavern whirlpool, his face turning solemn.

Olivier's eyes narrowed, and he said softly, "Linley, just now it seemed as though the cavern was completely inactive, and just moments ago, there was a thick layer of amethysts in the crevice. How come, all of a sudden, such a powerful, bizarre suction force appeared?

Linley felt similarly stunned and frightened. "This is the Infernal Realm. If I were to use my 'Bewildering Shadow' attack at full strength, I too can cause space in the Infernal Realm to ripple, but…the simple suction power of this cave created a spatial whirlpool. This devouring power…"

When a sword chopped down, a spatial crack or ripple would appear, focused on the sword.

Simple suction which resulted in a spatial whirlpool…this sort of suctioning force was simply too frightening.

"Most likely, not even a Highgod could resist that sort of suction force." Linley said to himself.

"Hey, Boss, why were there so many amethysts in that crevice just now?" Bebe said, puzzled. "Also, there's quite a few amethysts embedded deep into the walls of the crevice. Where did all those amethysts come from?" Bebe and the others hadn't witnessed the cave spewing forth amethysts.

“Let’s stay far away from this place.” Delia said, gnawing on her lips. “I keep on having the feeling that this place is a bit too weird.”

“Well spoken. Let’s move farther away.”

Linley led Delia and the others farther away from the crevice, but after travelling dozens of meters, Linley’s group came to a halt. Linley suddenly turned his head to stare towards the crevice. Frowning, he said, “Hey? How come that suction sound is gone?”

“Right, there’s no sound any longer.” Bebe directly headed back, moving closer to the crevice, then turned his head towards Linley and said in surprise, “Boss, hurry over and take a look. The suction in the crevice ended. It’s calm again.”

Linley, Delia, and Olivier’s eyes were filled with puzzlement, and they drew near as well.

Indeed…

The large crevice was very quiet and seemed very ordinary. If they hadn’t seen what they had seen earlier, Linley’s group wouldn’t have suspected that this crevice was dangerous.

“It is as though there is no danger here.” Delia said after looking for a while.

“Rumble…” Very suddenly, like the roaring of a vicious beast, a terrifying howling sound instantly exploded forth, while at the same time, countless flashes of violet light came out in dense clusters from the cave hole. The dense clusters of amethysts sprayed wildly in every direction.

Some rose to the heavens, some shot towards the horizon. Countless rays of violet light disappeared past the white mist above.

However, many amethysts scraped the sides of the walls as they shot out.

Because the angle was too narrow, they struck the sides of the crevice, and then with metallic clanging sounds, many amethysts collided with the amethysts already embedded into the walls, and then fell backwards, landing into the crevice.

Moments later…

The crevice was covered with a thick layer of amethysts.

This sudden scene caused Linley's group to be shocked as well. Soon, they began to understand many things.

"Oh. I get it. Those Gods and Demigods who were harvesting amethysts at the edges of the Fog Sea…those amethysts most likely flew out from and came from this type of cavern." Bebe immediately said in a jubilant voice. "There are so many amethysts flying out in such density. Look. That ditch is filled with a thick layer of them."

Linley kept his silence.

Ever since they had entered the Amethyst Mountains from the Fog Sea, Linley had gotten a thorough lesson in the astonishing gravitational power held within the Amethyst Mountains. This was a gravitational force which even Highgods would find hard to resist, but those amethysts had been able to withstand it and then fly out.

They had even been able to pierce through his Pulseguard Armor, and that was after they had already flown for a long time and slowed down.

"What secrets are held within these Amethyst Mountains?" Linley looked towards the cave, continuously spewing forth amethysts. "Whether blasting out or swallowing in, the power is monstrous…if a Highgod was capable of such explosive power and shoot his energy with such force, he would be utterly invincible."

An expert capable of such explosive power could, with a casual toss of an amethyst, riddle the opponent's head with holes.

“Deities are not capable of such great power, but the world is. It exists in nature!” Linley sighed in his heart.

Olivier, Bebe, and Delia were also sighing in amazement. But, right at this moment, from afar, an angry howl could be heard. This angry howl, to Linley’s group, was an extremely familiar sound, because…it was the angry howl of an amethyst beast!

“Amethyst beast!” Linley’s face changed, along with the faces of the other four. At the same time, they turned to stare towards the direction the sound came from.

From afar, two figures were fleeing with great difficulty, while behind them was a ten-meter long, mighty amethyst beast. The amethyst beast bellowed continuously as it used its sharp claws, fangs, and horns on its head to attack wildly. The two fleeing figures were in dire straits!

“It’s actually them.” Linley couldn’t help but be surprised.

Those two people were actually the two Highgods which Linley had met earlier when first arriving at the Amethyst Mountains; Garlan and Jarrod.

The brown-haired woman, Garlan, and the silver-haired man, Jarrod, currently appeared to be in extremely sorry shape. They were very unfortunate. They had actually encountered an amethyst beast. But of course, they were also very fortunate. After all, they had only encountered a single amethyst beast.

“Roaaaar!” The amethyst beast opened its maw wide, biting down towards Garlan.

Jarrod let out a furious shout, and a black flaming longsword in his hands struck down viciously towards the amethyst beast’s mouth. The amethyst beast, despite not being afraid of material attacks, would still find it painful to be struck by a divine artifact on the mouth.

The amethyst beast immediately shut its mouth, at the same time lowering its head, using its horn on its forehead as it gored towards Garlan.

“Clang!” The flaming longsword stabbed into the amethyst beast’s forehead, but it only sank a little bit in.

“Roaaaaaar!” The amethyst beast was only all the more maddened, and its two eyes were like scorching red flames. It actually only gored towards Garlan even faster. “Chiiiiiiiii…” As its speed increased, the horn tore through the air and created an ear-piercing whistle. The amethyst beast was actually trying to use its horn to smash Garlan’s head apart.

Garlan’s face changed dramatically.

“Bang!” A warblade suddenly appeared, smashing viciously down upon the amethyst beast’s forehead. The attacker was Jarrod, who grabbed Garlan and borrowed the bounceback force of this blow to flee at high speed.

“Run faster. Stop wasting time with that beast.” Jarrod said mentally.

“I know we can’t waste time with it, but you know how fast that thing is. Its speed is faster than us. I don’t want to waste time with it, but it keeps on bothering me.” Garlan felt both furious and helpless. She wasn’t able to find any weaknesses in the amethyst beast.

Jarrod felt helpless as well.

The beast didn’t fear soul attacks or material attacks, and it was extremely fast. How could there actually be a creature like this in the world? It was completely unbalanced. Fortunately, however, this sort of amethyst beast possessed a very low level of intelligence, and wasn’t capable of using any profound mysteries of the Laws.

“Roaaaaar!”

A violet blur flashed towards Jarrod and Garlan in pursuit, and the two of them could all but sense that extremely heated breath of the creature

making contact with their skin.

“This amethyst beast is too fast.” Jarrod and Garlan both felt helpless.

Suddenly, a surge of wind came.

“Dodge!” Jarrod pushed Garlan hard, making the two of them dodge in separate directions.

“Slash!” A fierce claw slashed past Jarrod’s body, and instantly, half of Jarrod’s arm was ripped off as blood sprayed everywhere. The amethyst beast immediately raised its head and bellowed in excitement.
“Roaaaaaaar!” At the same time, the amethyst beast bounded into the air, planning to seize the opportunity to kill Jarod.

Jarrod’s shattered left arm was rapidly regrowing.

“Motherf*cker, how can this monster’s speed be so fast.” Jarrod was almost at the point of tears.

When Garlan saw this, without hesitating at all, she immediately scurried forward, and Jarrod also immediately moved at high speed towards Garlan. When the two of them joined forces, they actually were able to just barely keep themselves alive, but if they were to try and fight solo, if one of them were to die, the other would be unable to stay alive either.

“Garlan, what should we do? This monster is even capable of telling the difference between me and the doppelgangers that I created. Can it be that I’m going to have to sacrifice a divine clone?” Jarrod frantically sent a mental message.

“Unless all other choices are gone, don’t use that technique that will make you sacrifice a divine clone.” Garlan sent back.

Using the ‘Doppelganger’ technique in front of an amethyst beast was useless. The amethyst beast was actually able to tell the original body from amidst the hundreds of doppelgangers. This was simply inconceivable.

Thus, generally speaking, amethyst beasts were indeed very hard to deal with and very troublesome.

“Someone’s here!” Garlan and Jarrod instantly noticed from the corner of their eyes the nearby group of four. Linley’s group. Upon seeing Delia in particular, their eyes immediately lit up.

“It’s that Highgod Fiend named Delia!” Garlan and Jarrod were overjoyed. Not hesitating at all, they immediately flew at high speed towards Linley’s group. As they saw it, if a Highgod Fiend were to join forces with them, the situation would be much better.

“This Delia is actually still with those Gods. Those Gods are quite lucky to still be alive.” Garlan and Jarrod, while charging towards Linley’s group, couldn’t help but think this.

Garlan and Jarrod’s speed was inferior to that of the amethyst beast.

Thus, when running and fleeing, they naturally suffered one ‘caress’ after another from the sharp claws of the amethyst beast, causing Garlan and Jarrod’s bodies to be covered with bloodstains and wounds.

“What a pain.” Bebe muttered.

“Bebe, come, let’s shoo the amethyst beast away.” Linley sent.

Linley and Bebe almost simultaneously moved forward, quickly moving past Garlan and Jarrod’s forms, causing the two to be shocked. “Are these two Gods looking to die?” As they dodged past, they turned to look…

They saw a devilish purple sword shadow slash through the air and land on the amethyst beast’s horn, forcibly chopping through it! “Slash!” It chopped down into the amethyst beast’s tough skull, causing the amethyst beast such pain that it howled in agony.

At that same moment…

“Slash!” Bebe’s black dagger also forcibly rammed into the amethyst beast’s chest, carving out a large chunk of amethyst.

In great pain, the amethyst beast wildly clawed down with its two ferocious front claws towards Linley and Bebe’s heads, as though by reflex. It was as though it wanted to make Linley and Bebe’s heads explode. However, Linley and Bebe both immediately moved to dodge.

With two thudding sounds, the sharp claws still clawed down upon their shoulders.

Linley and Bebe’s bodies shuddered, and they were knocked backwards multiple meters.

The amethyst beast stared in astonishment towards Linley and Bebe with its big red eyes. Linley and Bebe actually hadn’t been wounded at all. The amethyst beast’s sharp claws hadn’t been able to leave behind any damage on Linley’s draconic scales or Bebe’s body.

The amethyst beast stared at Linley and Bebe in confusion. It actually let out a growl, then turned and immediately fled.

Garlan and Jarrod, these two Highgods, stared slackjawed at this scene. “The monster…fled?” They had never heard of an amethyst beast being forced to flee. When battling against amethyst beasts, it was always the Highgods who got the worst of it.

After all, how many people had bodies as tough as Linley and Bebe’s?

Garlan and Jarrod exchanged a glance, their eyes filled with amazement. They had never before held Gods in much consideration, but just now, these two Gods had actually forced that amethyst beast to flee.

“Thank you, the two of you, for helping us. The two of us definitely will not forget this kindness you showed us.” Garlan immediately said sincerely.

Bebe glanced at her sideways, muttering unhappily, “Helping you? You ran all the way over to us. If we didn’t do something, the amethyst beast would have started to attack us next.”

Garlan and Jarrod couldn’t help but let out awkward laughs.

When they had run over to Linley’s group, they had been hoping for Delia to assist them. After all, the amethyst beast would attack humans whenever they found them. By dragging others down with them, everyone would work together to face the threat. In this regard, they had indeed acted wrongly, and so Garlan and Jarrod naturally felt embarrassed.

“We were forced to do so and had no other options. I hope you won’t blame us.” Jarrod hurriedly said.

Jarrod and Garlan knew that in the Amethyst Mountains, Linley and Bebe would be of much greater use in the Amethyst Mountains than Highgods like themselves. Jarrod and Garlan, while speaking, also secretly inspected Linley and Bebe’s shoulders. They couldn’t help but feel astonished.

“These two actually took the attack of an amethyst beast head on without suffering any wounds? What sort of bodies do they have?!”

Chapter 38 – Juvenile Beast

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 38, Juvenile Beast

Although they were astonished, Jarrod and Garlan, in dread of the power of Linley's group, behaved extremely properly.

"Hey, Garlan. You two should have been in these Amethyst Mountains for quite some time, right?" Bebe laughed as he asked. Garlan and Jarrod glanced at each other, their eyes revealing a look of resignation.

Garlan let out a sigh. "Right. We have been here a long, long time. At least a hundred million years."

"Over a hundred million years?" Linley's group was stunned.

A hundred million!

A simple phrase, but a truly extravagant figure. Linley was only in his second century, and was a very long distance off from a hundred million years.

Jarrod said sourly, "In the past, Garlan and I also encountered the 'Fog Wave' situation, and thus we were unwillingly brought into the Amethyst Mountains. That day, the amethyst beasts were also very excited. They killed many people, but the two of us were lucky enough to survive. Back then, I was a God, while Garlan was a Demigod…after so many years, Garlan and I have both reached the Highgod level. But because too much time has passed, the two of us couldn't be bothered to calculate it exactly. However, the hundred million year mark passed long ago."

Linley was shocked.

To grow from a Demigod to become a Highgod, for most people, an extremely long period of time would be needed.

“Can it be that you don’t want to leave?” Linley looked at them as he spoke solemnly. “Or can it be that these Amethyst Mountains really are, as the legends have it, a place where one can only enter but not leave.”

When he had heard people speak of this at the edges of the Fog Sea, Linley had only half-believed it.

As Linley saw it, none of the amethyst harvesters had entered the Fog Sea. How could they know what the situation was for the people inside of it? Even though he himself had entered the Amethyst Mountains, Linley still clung to a few shreds of illusory hope.

He believed that he still had a chance to leave.

“Right. Once you come in, you cannot leave.” Jarrod said with great certainty.

“You really can’t leave?” Linley was stunned.

Was he to forever be trapped here?

The nearby Delia glanced at Linley, knowing that Linley wanted to go to the Indigo Prefecture and visit the elders of the Baruch clan. Delia immediately asked, “Jarrod, why are you so certain? The Amethyst Mountains are so enormous. There definitely are many people here. Not a single person has ever left?”

The brown-haired woman, Garlan, said consolingly, “I know you aren’t willing to accept this, but this is the truth.”

“First of all, the gravity in the Amethyst Mountains is very powerful.” Garlan said. “Generally, Highgods aren’t able to resist the gravity at all.”

Delia and Linley both nodded slightly.

Delia was a Highgod, but she was unable to resist this gravity. Although

Linley's body was tough, he still couldn't resist the gravity and fly outside.

Garlan continued, "The Amethyst Mountains have existed for so long. Many of the people who entered this dangerous area early on have already reached extremely high levels of power, most likely comparable to Five Star Fiends, Six Star Fiends, or even more. There once was an exceedingly powerful Highgod who was actually able to resist the gravity and fly towards the outside.

Linley frowned.

"He was able to resist the gravity, but when he reached the area filled with those strange winds, he was affected and his head went dizzy. Although he was able to maintain his clarity, he stayed in mid-air for decades without being able to find a way out!" Garlan said.

Bebe said in astonishment, "Decades? In that area which made the mind go dizzy?"

"Right. However, that area is very bizarre. It isn't just a simple confusion; even the soul is affected, and so there's no way to fly out." Garlan shook her head as she spoke.

Linley couldn't help but feel his heart clench.

Even an expert who could resist the gravity couldn't fly out. What could Linley do?

That Jarrod asked, puzzled, "Afterwards, it was quite strange. That expert abandoned leaving the Amethyst Mountains, but not long after that, he completely disappeared for no reason."

"Disappeared for no reason?" Linley's group of four was shocked.

Garlan nodded. "Right. Not just him. Afterwards, everyone who reached an exceedingly high level would suddenly disappear. Nobody knows if they died or fled, or if something else happened." Garlan and Jarrod were very

mystified as well.

Linley frowned. These experts who were at the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level of power wanted to leave but had failed. There's no way they could have left under their own power.

"Whether they died, left, or were controlled, there has to be some sort of mechanism here behind the scenes controlling everything." Linley said to himself.

Linley stared at the Amethyst Mountains.

Linley kept on having this feeling that the Amethyst Mountains, in and of themselves, were very strange. 'Soul essence' was one of the most important components of a soul, but the Amethyst Mountains actually produced amethysts. This was inconceivable.

In addition, there was that white fog which perpetually covered the area, that strange wind sound, that astonishing gravity…

And also, that cave which occasionally suctioned in and occasionally blasted out!

All of these things made him uneasy.

"Garlan, Jarrod." Bebe suddenly pointed towards the distant crevice. "Do you see that place which constantly blasts out amethysts? What's going on with the cave in that crevice? Occasionally it blasts things out, and occasionally it stops, and then occasionally it starts swallowing things in. What is that about?"

"Don't go to that place." Garlan said hurriedly. "Those places are what we call 'Demonic Amethyst Lairs'. In total, the entire Amethyst Mountains have 108 of these Demonic Amethyst Lairs.

"108 total?" Bebe stared. "This strange place actually has so many?"

Garlan said hurriedly, “Right. These Demonic Amethyst Lairs is the source for blasting out amethysts. They’ll normally blast out amethysts as well, only in fairly small numbers, unlike today where they blasted them out in extravagant numbers. Also, when the Demonic Amethyst Lairs stop blasting out, don’t be greedy and try to enter the crevice to snatch amethysts.”

“I know.” Bebe snorted. “I personally watched those four be swallowed into the cave. That poor Jenkin…” Bebe’s eyes were filled with a hint of sadness.

“Someone was swallowed in?” The nearby Jarrod let out a surprised sigh, then immediately said, “Those who were swallowed in were definitely newcomers who didn’t know these things. Of the three ‘blasting’, ‘resting’, and ‘swallowing’ stages of the Demonic Amethyst Lairs, the ‘blasting’ stage is the longest, the ‘resting’ stage is the shortest, while the ‘swallowing’ stage is in the middle. Not only is the ‘resting’ stage short, the length of each rest is different. There’s no pattern or regularity at all, and no one who knows how dangerous it is would dare to jump in.

Linley’s group of four nodded slightly.

They themselves had witnessed this. The ‘blasting’ stage was quite long, while the ‘resting’ stage was mere seconds.

“To harvest amethysts isn’t too hard. During the ‘resting’ stage, all you need to do is use an ‘Elemental Doppelganger’ or an ‘Elemental Hand’ in order to snatch some up.” Garlan laughed calmly.

Linley immediately understood.

Right. For example, the ‘Essence of the Earth’ could form a long hand to snatch some up. Even if the ‘swallowing’ stage suddenly began, there wouldn’t be much of a loss.

“Jenkin and those three…ugh.” Linley sighed in his heart. “But at that time, they didn’t know anything about these Demonic Amethyst Lairs. When they saw the blasting halt, they were overjoyed and went to collect amethysts.”

“Haha…actually, what’s the point of collecting amethysts?” Jarrod chuckled, shaking his head. “No matter how many amethysts you have, they are nothing but a waste of time, here in the Amethyst Mountains. None of us will go and do so…it isn’t as though we can exchange them for azurites and inkstones.”

Linley’s group was stunned.

“Right. If you can’t get out, what’s the point of having all those amethysts here in the Amethyst Mountains?” Olivier shook his head as well.

For experts like Linley and Olivier who weren’t content with normal lives and who liked to challenge powerful foes, having them forever stay in one place and never leave was an absolute torture.

“Whoooooosh.” The faint sound of a blowing wind could be heard.

Linley’s group of four, along with Jarrod and Garlan were resting at a spot halfway up that very same mountain peak.

None of them knew where amethyst beasts might be located, so they figured they might as well stay and rest where they were.

Just as Linley’s group was chatting regarding the Amethyst Mountains, suddenly….

“Roaaaaar!” “Roaaaaar!”

“Aaaaah! Kill!”

A large number of bestial roars and battle sounds rang out, constantly echoing within the mountain forests. Upon hearing the roaring sounds, the faces of Linley’s group of six changed.

“Very many amethyst beasts!” Linley looked towards the origin of the sounds. Just from the sounds alone, Linley was certain that there were an

extremely high number of amethyst beasts.

“There’s at least a few dozen of those amethyst beasts.” Jarrod said hurriedly. “We need to leave immediately.”

Linley instantly chose a direction. “We’ll go that way.” None of them wanted to encounter those amethyst beasts, and they immediately followed Linley at high speed. If two or three amethyst beasts came, Linley’s group could just barely fight them off when working together.

But if several dozen came…

They would definitely be finished. Even Linley and Bebe, when faced with the group attacks of those amethyst beasts, would be in peril.

“Hurry up.” Linley urged them, as the faint sound of furious roars could be heard from the white fog behind them.

“You are so slow.” Bebe immediately grabbed Olivier by the hand, and Olivier, borrowing Bebe’s strength, caught up.

“They really are fast!” Jarrod and Garlan were greatly shocked. The speed of Linley’s group wasn’t the slightest bit slower than the two of them, a pair of Highgods. Linley and Bebe in particular…when their powerful bodies exploded forth to maximum speed, they were actually slightly faster.

They ran the entire time. A long time later, the furious roars could no longer be heard behind them.

“Whew. We’re finally safe.” Bebe waved his hand, putting on his straw hat, crouching onto a nearby boulder. “Hey, let’s rest here. The amethyst beasts went in a different direction from us. They won’t be able to catch us.”

Linley and Delia sat down on one side as well, next to each other. Olivier casually found a place to stand.

Jarrod and Garlan had smiles appear on their faces. Garlan laughed,

“Everyone, don’t be impatient. The Fog Wave will only last one day. That’s today. These amethyst beasts will just wildly run around. After today, the amethyst beasts will go back, and we will be able to live for countless years in peace.”

“If every day was like today, life would be utterly miserable.” Bebe muttered.

“Bebe. Even you’re afraid.” Linley pursed his lips, grinning.

“Anybody would feel a headache when faced with these unkillable freaks.” Bebe said helplessly.

Just as everyone was chatting casually…

“Hey, everyone, look. What’s going on over there?” Bebe pointed into the distance.

Linley’s group stared into the distance, and saw that in the distance, the boundless white fog was actually moving towards one direction at high speed. The white fog disappeared, increasing Linley’s line of sight and visibility distance. In the blink of an eye, all of the white fog within several meters of here completely disappeared.

Linley, Bebe, and the rest of the six stared, slack-jawed.

The six of them, halfway up that mountain peak, could clearly see to a distance of three or four kilometers. There were actually countless clusters of amethyst beasts now filling their gaze. The ones they could see numbered over a thousand, while others were deeper into the white fog.

“This…this…” Linley’s group was scared silly.

Two amethyst beasts were already so hard to deal with. A thousand amethyst beasts?

“There’s people! Oh, they’ve been surrounded.” Jarrod and Garlan’s faces

changed. Linley looked carefully as well. Indeed…

Within an encirclement of amethyst beasts, there were hundreds of people.

Within the group of amethyst beasts, there was a larger one that was seven meters tall and twenty meters long; an amethyst behemoth. But what was most eye-catching wasn't the enormous amethyst beast, it was that there was another amethyst beast that was standing on the amethyst behemoth's head.

This juvenile amethyst beast was just one meter long. Compared to the amethyst beasts, it was nothing more than a speck.

When Godeater Rats battled, they might increase in size a bit, at which point they would be about on par with this juvenile amethyst beast. Logically speaking, this sort of juvenile beast should be hidden away and protected in a lair.

However, upon seeing the juvenile amethyst beast, Linley's group shuddered, and not from the cold.

Because at this moment in time, the juvenile amethyst beast's mouth was wide open. Boundless amounts of white fog were being swallowed into the mouth of this juvenile amethyst beast. Moments later, within an circumference of ten kilometers, there was no white fog left at all. The strange thing was…the white fog in the other area didn't come fill the gap.

The juvenile amethyst beast rubbed its little stomach, and then its clear voice shook the world. "Haha, humans, the surrounding white fog is under my control. If you want to enter the white fog and flee, that will no longer be possible. All of you, prepare to become food." The voice was as clear as that of a child's, but the words were so fluid.

Linley's group was shocked.

This was because the amethyst beasts they had encountered, when speaking, only stuttered. Their intelligence was low as well. But this

juvenile amethyst beast was different.

“Haha, kiddos, kill them for me!” The juvenile amethyst beast shouted delightedly.

Immediately, the countless amethyst beasts all began to roar while charging towards those hundreds of surrounded people. Those hundreds of people all wildly executed their most powerful attacks. Linley could immediately tell that these hundreds of people were, amazingly, all experts. Those attacks they launched and the profound mysteries contained within caused even Linley to be astonished.

For a moment, the entire world was filled with thunderclaps, angry roars, and constant sounds of battle!

“Monster, die!” One man, a short silver-haired person who wielded a longspear, transformed into a ray of white light, glowing like the sun itself as he pierced through the air, striking straight towards the adorable juvenile amethyst beast.

The juvenile amethyst beast grinned wickedly. Casually waving a hand, a ray of violet light shot out, striking into the silver-haired man’s body. The silver-haired man fell down from mid-air, immediately dying!

“Oh, you were looking for death?” The juvenile amethyst beast said disdainfully.

Linley’s group was shocked.

“A soul attack!” Bebe said, stunned. “And it contains strange profound mysteries within.”

“This amethyst beast is capable of using the Laws in its attacks?” Linley’s face changed.

The juvenile amethyst beast definitely was no ordinary creature. It was completely different from those other ordinary amethyst beasts.

“Those humans should all be Highgods. Like me, they’ve been here a very long time.” Garlan said, stunned. “The one who was killed just now by that small monster was a very powerful Highgod. And he was killed in one stance. That small monster’s power…” Garlan found himself at a loss for words.

What sort of power was this?

The power of an Asura?

“Let’s hurry up and leave.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Too monstrous. Let’s go.” Bebe agreed.

Immediately, Linley’s group turned and left.

In the distant battlefield, that little juvenile beast who stood atop the head of the amethyst behemoth waved his hand, and a ray of violet light shot through the body of another powerful Highgod, killing him right away. And then, he suddenly turned his head to look towards Linley’s direction, muttering, “Oh? I was preparing to deal with you later. I didn’t expect that after watching for just a short period of time, you’d be so scared that you’d run.”

And then, the juvenile amethyst beast called out loudly, “Kiddos, pursue!” The clear voice shook the heavens.

Instantly, countless amethyst beasts immediately began to roar, and countless amethyst beasts began to gallop at high speed in the direction in which the little juvenile beast was pointing its claw at. On the ground, the only thing left was a few corpses. Those hundreds of Highgods were all dead!

Chapter 39 – Fleeing For Their Lives

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 39, Fleeing For Their Lives

Countless amethyst beasts galloped forth, and even the mountains they galloped past began to tremble and shake. Countless bellows rang out, echoing like thunder. The loudest voice, however, was a clear call which filled the heavens. “Kiddos, quick, catch them, quick!!!”

Linley’s group couldn’t help but turn their heads. They all knew that was the voice of the juvenile amethyst beast.

Linley ran as fast as lightning, running forward like a meteor as he scurried through the empty landscape of the Amethyst Mountains, occasionally leaping down from mountain cliffs, occasionally using his draconic claws and feet to quickly rappel up mountains. Due to the powerful gravity of the Amethyst Mountains, there was no way one could fly at all.

“Quick, quick!!!” While sprinting forward, Linley frantically shouted through divine sense.

Of the six of them, the back of the pack was led by Olivier and Garlan. Olivier was, after all, just a God, and his body wasn’t as strong as Linley’s to begin with. Garlan, meanwhile, trained in the Elemental Laws of Fire, and thus didn’t have any advantage in speed.

“Haha, you won’t be able to flee!” The juvenile amethyst beast said delightedly.

Linley’s group ignored all else, frantically charging towards the white fog. As long as the opponents weren’t able to see them, they would be safe.

“Swish!” As it opened its mouth, the juvenile amethyst beast swallowed a large amount of white fog into its belly, and the area Linley’s group was in had no white fog at all now. The juvenile amethyst beast said delightedly,

“Haha, I want to see how you will keep running. Hey, kiddos, move faster!”

The group of amethyst beasts had been many kilometers away from Linley’s group. After chasing for so long, though, they were less than a kilometer away.

After all, the amethyst beasts were astonishingly fast.

“Whoosh!”

Moving like the wind, flashing like lightning, Linley’s group continued to sprint at high speed. However, behind them, those rays of violet shadows flashed towards them in pursuit, giving Linley’s group a sense of pressure.

“These amethyst beasts really run fast.” Bebe said frantically.

“There’s people up ahead.” Linley’s eyes suddenly lit up. Up ahead, roughly a hundred meters away, ten-plus figures were fleeing in panic at high speed while looking backwards occasionally. It seemed as though they were terrified. In terms of speed, Linley’s group was much faster than them.

Linley immediately understood. “These people have probably heard the roars of the amethyst beasts and want to flee. Only, their speed is too slow.” At the same time, Linley suddenly had a plan.

“Turn!” Linley suddenly sent a mental message.

After speaking, Linley leapt off from the ground, shooting out like an arrow from a bow towards the distance. Delia, Bebe, and the others naturally followed Linley, turning slightly as they continued to spring. The direction in which Linley was sprinting was different from those ten-plus distant figures.

As for the amethyst beasts, they were continuing to chase and press the attack.

Part of the amethyst beast wave charged towards those ten, who had also

just arrived in the Amethyst Mountains today. Most of them were Gods, with the rest being Demigods. In the face of the amethyst beasts, that bit of power was nothing, rendering them unable to resist.

“Roaaaaaar!”

“Roaaaaar!”

The wild amethyst beasts roared while sprinting forward on their four sturdy limbs. The speed of those ten was simply too slow, and they were trampled flat by those many amethyst beasts. The amethyst beasts intentionally trampled them, stepping directly on their heads.

“Crunch!” Their heads were trampled and shattered, and their divine sparks rolled out.

This made those amethyst beasts all the more excited, and they roared while continuing to gallop. Only on the day of the Fog Wave were they given a chance like this. Once this day came to an end, they wouldn’t have this chance again. Naturally, they would have to go a little crazy today.

“Haha, you can keep running, but let’s see who runs faster!” The juvenile amethyst beast stood atop the head of the amethyst behemoth, delightedly laughing.

Currently, Linley was less than a hundred meters away from the amethyst beast wave behind them.

Moments later, the distance was reduced to fifty meters.

Thirty meters….

Twenty meters…

“What should we do?” Jarrod said frantically through divine sense. He could sense the heat of those scorching breaths reaching his body, and could smell that thick, odorous body odor. The odor of the amethyst beasts. Jarrod

hated this sort of smell.

“Shut your mouth!” Bebe shouted back through divine sense. “Keep running for your life! Flee if you can!”

Linley silently continued to sprint at high speed. The Amethyst Mountains were extremely broad, and there were many mountain peaks. Naturally, this sort of road was not easily traversed. Occasionally, there would be a mountain range, while occasionally there would be a gorge. Linley’s group climbed the mountains upon reaching them and charged down cliffs upon reaching them. When they reached the end of the gorge, they would then clamber back up.

In short, they couldn’t hesitate!

If they hesitated, they would be caught.

“Haha, you are about to die!” The juvenile amethyst beast was very excited.

The amethyst behemoth he was mounted on waved its sharp claws, swiping towards the fleeing Garlan, at the back of the pack. This seven meter tall amethyst beast was the most powerful of those countless amethyst beasts, capable of easily breaking apart Garlan’s Highgod artifact.

“Garlan.” Jarrod frantically grabbed Garlan.

But the speed of those sharp claws was simply too fast. At the moment of death, Garlan’s body suddenly released another ‘Garlan’. Clearly, this was Garlan’s divine clone. With a ‘slash’ sound, one of the Garlan’s was ripped apart by the claws, and a divine spark flew out wildly.

Jarrod couldn’t help but feel astonished and furious.

“I lost a God-level divine clone.” Garlan didn’t have time to feel sad. Right now, it would be wonderful if she could even survive.

Sprinting at the front, Linley knew how dangerous the situation had

become. He could all but sense the shadow of that amethyst behemoth drawing near. Suddenly, Linley saw what was coming up ahead, and he couldn't help but feel surprised. "There's a gorge up ahead!"

He didn't hesitate at all!

Moving like the wind, Linley, Delia, Bebe, Olivier, Garlan, and Jarrod, the six of them, threw themselves forward into the fog-shrouded gorge. Even though they didn't know what the situation was inside the gorge, none of them hesitated at all.

"Chase, chase!!!" The juvenile amethyst beast was very excited. Mounted on the amethyst behemoth, he leapt down as well.

The many amethyst beasts wildly leapt into the gorge, which was extremely wide. From one side of the gorge to the other was a distance of dozens of kilometers. In the white fog, it was completely impossible to see the other cliff.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" The wind howled as they all descended.

Linley's group of six not only didn't resist the astonishing gravity, they actually intentionally used their divine power to accelerate their descent. The six of them descended lightning-fast. This gorge was dozens of kilometers deep, but given the astonishing speed of Linley's group, they arrived at the bottom in almost an instant.

The ground of the gorge was made from tough rocks.

Not only had they resisted the impact of gravity, they had even accelerated. Smashing into such hard rocks at such speed…even the body of a Highgod would be injured.

"Swoosh!" When they were only ten meters away from the ground, Linley suddenly, frantically slowed down, landing on the ground like a gust of gentle wind. As for Delia, she gracefully disappeared, her body transforming into a gust of wind, then reforming into a solid body.

Olivier, Jarrod, and Garlan had their own tricks as well to slow down. This was very ordinary.

But Bebe? Bebe ignored everything, viciously smashing straight into the ground.

“Bang!” The ground trembled, and Bebe sank twenty or thirty centimeters into the ground. Given the toughness of the rocks of the Amethyst Mountains, one could imagine how strong the smashing force was for him to sink so deep into the ground.

But Bebe was completely unharmed.

Nobody praised Bebe, because there was no time!

“Flee!” Linley’s group of six wildly sprinted forward.

The amethyst beasts didn’t have any divine power, nor did they know any profound mysteries of the Laws. Thus, they dropped down at a very normal pace and did not accelerate. By the time they landed, of course they smashed hard into the ground.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Like meteors slamming down, each amethyst beast smashed hard into the ground, then immediately began to chase forward, as though the impact of the collision hadn’t had any effect on them. The juvenile amethyst beast was constantly shouting in anger, “Quick! The distance between us and them just increased!”

When descending, Linley’s group of six had been faster, and thus the distance between the two groups had increased to fifty meters again.

Linley’s group of six, hearing the smashing sounds, could imagine in their minds the terrifying scene of those countless amethysts beasts pursuing them. Their hearts couldn’t help but tremble, and all of them continued to

sprint for their lives. If they truly were caught, just the trampling of those countless amethyst beasts would be enough to finish them off.

“There’s a lake up ahead!” Linley immediately saw that within the white fog, there was a lake.

Linley’s group of six didn’t hesitate at all, immediately entering into the waters of the lake. When being pursued, even if there was a mountain of knives or a sea of flames in front of them, they would still charge through. After all, if they hesitated and tried to find an alternative route, they would slow down and thus be caught by the amethyst beasts behind them.

In that instant…

Many amethyst beasts appeared at the sides of the lake. Standing atop the head of the amethyst behemoth, the juvenile amethyst beast frowned and said unhappily, “They went into the water? Could it be that they know that I hate water? Hmph, none of these will be able to escape.”

Immediately, the juvenile amethyst beast said loudly, “Kiddos, all of you go down and seize those people!”

“Roaaaar!” “Roaaaar!” “Roaaaar!”

Immediately, countless amethyst beasts began to roar in anger, and the ones in front threw themselves into the lake. With repeated ‘plop’ ‘plop’ sounds, they went in, while at the same time, many other amethyst beasts, including the juvenile one, surrounded the shores of the lake.

“Surround this entire lake.” The juvenile beast ground its teeth. “Hmph, I want to see how they can possibly escape. Not a single plaything I set my eye on has ever been able to escape!” As it spoke, it wrinkled its little nose.

Linley’s group of six, entering the lake, had actually discovered a narrow underwater path. They continuously advanced through it. This little narrow pathway was actually headed upwards. The first part of it was underwater, but the second part was above water. Linley’s group quickly reached the

end of the pathway.

This little pathway was a canal that led to a mountain cave.

“I didn’t expect someone would be capable of carving out such a large, meticulous cave.” Jarrod was overjoyed.

Only now did Linley’s group let out sighs of relief. Carefully inspecting the cave, they saw that this had clearly been excavated out by others. Linley couldn’t help but feel overjoyed. “The stones of the Amethyst Mountains are incomparably tough. What sort of power would be necessary for someone to carve out such an enormous cave, and how much time must it have taken?”

Bebe, using his godspark dagger, had only just been able to break apart that rock.

“Linley, will the amethyst beasts be able to discover us here?” Delia was still somewhat worried.

“It’s fine.” Linley said consolingly.

Garlan’s face was covered with a smile that was born from having escaped a crisis. She said, “Delia, don’t worry. Although those amethyst beasts are very powerful, they don’t understand any profound mysteries or natural laws, and they don’t appear to know how to use divine sense either. These small pathways which are hidden within the wild grass in the bottom of the lake are so well-hidden, they won’t easily be able to discover them.”

Linley’s group nodded slightly as well.

After they had charged into the water, they had naturally immediately spread out their divine senses to investigate the surrounding area. When they had passed by that hidden little pathway, the divine senses of the group had naturally discovered it.

“Right. What have we to fear? Even if they discovered that hidden little

passageway, the passageway is so narrow, while those amethyst beasts are so huge. Would they be able to fit?" Bebe said disdainfully. The amethyst beasts were physically quite large. There was no way they would be able to squeeze in.

"Bebe speaks the truth. It's fine. Everyone, we can rest here." Linley said.

"No, it's useless." Jarrod shook his head helplessly. "No matter how small the tunnel is, the amethyst beasts will still be able to enter. Amethyst beasts are capable of changing their bodies."

"Changing their bodies?" Linley couldn't help but feel shocked.

If they really were able to change their bodies, it would be terrible.

Garlan nodded somberly as well. "Right. However, amethyst beasts can't freely change their size to expand or contract. Rather…for example, they can make themselves shorter, to a height of one meter, but their length will multiply. To be more precise, their total body size doesn't change."

Linley began to understand.

These amethysts beasts were like 'water', capable of changing into multiple configurations, but the overall size remained the same.

Linley stared at the tunnel and said slowly, "All we can do is hope that we won't be discovered. Once we are, we won't even have a place to run."

"Don't worry." Garlan's laughter was very brilliant. "We won't be so easily discovered. In addition, once the Fog Wave ends, these amethyst beasts will all disappear. By then, we won't be in any danger, and will be able to live a long, leisurely period of time."

Linley blew out a breath, saying quietly to himself, "I hope that today will pass safely. Once today passes, it will be safe."

Chapter 40 – Life in the Amethyst Mountains

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 40, Life in the Amethyst Mountains

Within the gorge, a large number of amethyst beasts were surrounding the shores of the lake, and the juvenile amethyst beast was standing atop the head of the amethyst behemoth, staring at the lake.

One amethyst beast after another left the waters of the lake and returned to the shore, all of them hanging their heads.

“All of you are idiots. You can’t even find a few people who fled in there.” The juvenile beast was furious.

Not a single amethyst beast dared to make a sound.

The juvenile beast considered things. “We’ve wasted a great deal of time by the lake already. The Fog Wave day is about to come to an end. We can’t keep wasting time like this.” The juvenile amethyst beast immediately let out a loud shout. “Kiddos, let’s go. We’re leaving this place. Let’s keep killing humans.”

“Roaaaaar!” Instantly, countless amethyst beasts let out excited roars.

They wanted to kill as well. After all, countless years would pass before a Fog Wave, and only on such days were they permitted to come out. Their time on this day was very valuable. If they wasted it all here, they would feel that it hadn’t been worth it.

Roaring, the countless amethyst beasts followed the juvenile amethyst beast away.

“Hmph. Hmph. I’ve memorized those people. I hope you are still alive when the next Fog Wave comes. At that time, I’ll definitely take good care of you.” The clear eyes of the juvenile amethyst beast had a hint of

craftiness flash through them.

While continuing on their path of carnage, the many amethyst beasts spread throughout the area. Many humans were caught and killed. Many Deities had been brought in by the Fog Wave, numbering over a hundred million, but they were slaughtered to the point where less than one in ten survived. The survivors, even including those who had originally already been present within the Amethyst Mountains, numbered less than ten million.

After the Blood Sun went down and the Violet Moon rose, the day of the Fog Wave ended.

But of course, because the Amethyst Mountains were perpetually shrouded by that white fog, nobody could see the Blood Sun or the Violet Moon.

However, the Amethyst Mountains operated as if by clockwork. The number of amethysts being blasted out by those 108 Demonic Amethyst Lairs dropped down, returning to their normal state. The forces of the eighteen great clans outside the Amethyst Mountains came to a halt, while feeling excited for the number of amethysts they had procured.

Within the Amethyst Mountains, those amethyst beasts immediately headed back, quickly disappearing within the amethyst mountains. There had been so many amethyst beasts, but now, there were very few Deities remaining.

Linley's group, due to being within that cave, wasn't certain of the passage of time. They waited for well over ten hours. Not until the next day did they emerge from the lake.

By the shores of the lake in the gorge, Linley's group of six sat there, resting.

Jarrod's face was covered in excitement. Gratefully, he said, "The day of the Fog Wave has finally ended. After this day, we'll be able to live for yet another hundred million years in peace. I didn't expect that I, Jarrod, would be able to survive two Fog Wave days in a row."

“To be able to survive, even losing a divine clone is worth it.” Garlan felt very happy as well.

Linley looked at Jarrod and Garlan. He could tell that the joy they felt sprang from the bottom of their heart. He couldn’t help but feel puzzled, and he asked, “Jarrod, within these Amethyst Mountains, our visibility is limited to one or two hundred meters. It’s always covered by white fog, and we can’t go out. Don’t you care about this at all?”

Linley’s words caused a feeling of agreement in the hearts of Bebe and Olivier.

In the Amethyst Mountains, aside from the day of the Fog Wave, there was virtually no danger at all. But to forever be bound by that powerful restrictive force and not even be able to fly, while at the same time only being able to see to a distance of a hundred meters? To be limited to this situation for a long time would indeed be very boring and painful!

Jarrod and Garlan exchanged a glance. Both of them began to laugh.

Jarrod looked at Linley. “Linley. It isn’t that we don’t want to go out. It’s that there is no way out of this damnable place. Since we can’t go out, what else can we do? We’ll just quietly enjoy life. At least I still have Garlan.”

Garlan’s face turned slightly red. From the gaze she shot at Jarrod, the deep love she bore could faintly be seen. After all, after having been with each other for almost an eternity, they were no longer able to be separated from each other.

“I refuse to believe we can’t leave.” Bebe harrumphed. “Let’s head straight out. If we can’t fly, then we’ll walk to the ends of the Amethyst Mountains. Keep walking! I refuse to believe we can’t walk out. If we walk to the ends, I’ll burrow into the ground and leave by the ground!”

The ground outside the area of the Amethyst Mountains wouldn’t possibly be so hard.

“You won’t be able to make it out!” Garlan urged. “The gravity of the Amethyst Mountains isn’t just ‘up’ or ‘down’. It is as though the entire Amethyst Mountains is exerting gravity in every direction. No matter whether you are on the ground, underground, or in the air, you’ll still be affected by the gravity of the Amethyst Mountains!”

“What?!” Linley was shocked.

He himself had read the descriptions of the profound mysteries of the Laws in that book. With regards to the ‘Gravitational Space’, he knew that it was equivalent to creating a ‘Gravitational Space’ in a certain area. But Linley had never heard of causing an entire area to have a gravitational pull in every direction.

The Amethyst Mountains were like a giant magnet.

No matter whether one was under, to the side of, or above the mountains, one would still suffer the gravitational pull.

“Also, aside from gravity, there’s that strange wind region. There’s no way at all you can leave that region.” Jarrod said, then laughed. “Delia, Linley, thank you so much. Garlan and I will leave now.”

After Jarrod and his wife left, Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier didn’t give up. Although they had heard what Jarrod had said, until they had witnessed it for themselves, they wouldn’t give up. Immediately, the four of them began to head out through a straight line.

The gorge which Linley was in was tens of thousands of kilometers away from the borders of the Amethyst Mountains.

The gravitational power of the Amethyst Mountains was simply too great, and Linley’s group didn’t travel that quickly either. It took them half a month before they reached the edges of the Amethyst Mountains. However, as Linley’s group tried to continue travelling forward, a terrifyingly strong gravitational force immediately affected their entire body, instantly pulling them back into the Amethyst Mountains.

It was very bizarre!

Standing on the stones at the border of the Amethyst Mountains, Linley's group felt fine. But as soon as they took a single step towards the front, they would suddenly sense that gravitational force tug them back to the Amethyst Mountains.

Linley had never heard of such a bizarre gravitational pull.

Within a Gravitational Space, the power of the gravity would pull downwards. But this gravity actually centered around the Amethyst Mountains and pulled in every direction.

They couldn't even take a single step outside the Amethyst Mountains. How would they leave?

Linley's group racked their brains, spending an entire month at the borders, but with nothing to show for it. In the end, helpless, they had chosen to give up. The four chose a mountain hollow that was only a few hundred kilometers away from the border and began to live there.

Within the mountain hollow, Linley's wind, earth, and fire clones were all training, while Linley's original body accompanied Delia.

Linley was casually seated on the ground, his back resting against the stone wall. Delia was resting against Linley's side as well. Delia raised her head to look at Linley. Delia, in her heart, understood that Linley had always desired a life full of excitement. If they truly had to spend eternity here within the Amethyst Mountains…this was simply unimaginable.

Delia still remembered that month they had spent at the borders of the Amethyst Mountains, constantly testing.

Actually, simple tests could have been completed in a month.

However, because Linley and Olivier didn't want to give up, they had

frantically come up with one idea after another to test things out. They all wanted to leave here and return to the Infernal Realm. However, after persisting for a month, Linley had finally given up. Delia understood that in his heart, however, Linley still couldn't accept it.

"Linley, do you truly want to leave?" Delia said softly. "Perhaps you can use a drop of that blue water drop?"

Linley turned to look at Delia, shaking his head slightly.

Linley had told Delia and Bebe about the 'Sovereign's Might' over the course of the twenty years they had spent in training after the Volcano Titan, 'Phusro', had departed. They all knew…that Linley's final trump card was the 'Sovereign's Might'.

By using the Sovereign's Might, he definitely would be confident in his ability to resist the gravitational pull.

But how could he use it?

Linley shook his head. "Even by using Sovereign's Might to resist that gravitational pull, it's hard to say if I'd be able to fly out of the chaotic region. Delia, you should know as well that there were previously Highgods who could resist the gravitational pull, but upon reaching that chaotic region of strange sounding wind, they still were unable to fly out."

"If I use the Sovereign's Might and am still unable to get out? That would be disastrous."

"In addition, Sovereign's Might is extremely precious. We can't waste it. Unless something extremely important happens, it can only be used at the point of death." Linley understood that if used at a critical moment, the Sovereign's Might could not only save him, it could also save Delia and the others.

This was a game-changing treasure. How could he easily use it up?

“But being here for a trillion years…can you withstand it?” Delia said softly.

Linley stretched his hand out, taking Delia into his arms. Gently, he said, “Delia, it’s just a trillion years. Jarrod was able to withstand it. Why can’t I? By your side, even if I have to spend eternity here, I would be willing.”

Delia felt moved in her heart, and Linley held her all the more tightly.

“Linley, what do you think Sasha and Taylor are like now? What is going on in the Yulan continent?” Lying in Linley’s arms, Delia said softly.

Thinking about his son and daughter, Linley couldn’t help but smile. “They should be doing quite well. Who knows if they are missing me.”

Delia laughed as well. Lifting her head up, she looked at Linley. Pursing her lips, she said, “Of course they miss you, their father. However, most likely Taylor and Sasha won’t have imagined…that their powerful, almighty father is trapped inside a mountain range in the Infernal Realm, and will most likely be here for countless years.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh as well.

But then, it turned into a sigh. He turned his gaze towards the white fog, as though seeing through it to the Yulan continent. “We are living in the Infernal Realm now. The Yulan continent is too far away from us.”

Living in the Amethyst Mountains, Linley’s mind was very calm. His original body didn’t need to train in any Laws, while Delia had reached the Highgod realm and thus didn’t train. Linley spent every day with Delia, and the two of them lived a leisurely, quiet life.

But of course, Linley’s earth, wind, and fire divine clones continued to train.

Bebe and Olivier were training as well, while occasionally sparring.

Linley's 'Elemental Laws of the Wind', due to focusing on gaining insights into the 'Sound Waves' and 'Music' profound mysteries at the same time while fusing them, improved at a very slow rate. As for the 'Elemental Laws of Fire', this was Linley's weakest aspect, and so naturally he trained very slowly.

Only in the 'Profound Laws of the Earth' and its 'Worldwalking' profound mysteries, which Linley wasn't fusing with any other profound mysteries, did his training speed improve rather quickly.

Living peacefully like this, fifty years quickly passed. Over the course of these years, because he was living in the Amethyst Mountains and constantly was affected by the gravity here, Linley had begun to master the basics of the 'Gravitational Space' profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. However, 'Gravitational Space' was an extremely difficult profound mystery, and so Linley primarily continued to focus on Worldwalking.

Before entering the Amethyst Mountains, Linley had spent nearly twenty years on Worldwalking.

Now that he had spent fifty more years, Linley finally reached the level of mastery in Worldwalking.

Within the mountain hollow, Linley's divine earth clone, Bebe, and Olivier were together.

"Boss, you really are formidable. You even achieved mastery in Worldwalking!" Bebe said in celebration.

"The Worldwalking profound mystery is naturally connected to the 'Essence of the Earth', and it belongs to one of the simpler types of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. Despite that, however, I still had to spend over seventy years before breaking through." Linley sighed.

In the past seventy years, Linley's greatest improvement had been in the soul!

In the Amethyst Mountains, there was no lack of amethysts!

Even on the grounds of the Amethyst Mountain, if one went in serious search of amethysts, in a single day one would pick up more than ten thousand. If one went to the Demonic Amethyst Lairs, even though they didn't spew out as many amethysts as they did during the Fog Wave day, when they were in the 'resting' phase, the number of amethysts in the crevice weren't that many, but if one used a giant elemental hand to grab some, most likely in a short period of time, one would be able to seize a million.

Once, when Olivier and Bebe were bored, they had made a trip to the crevice and had spent half a month there, pulling out over a hundred million amethysts. Afterwards, bored, they had come back. In the Amethyst Mountains, these amethysts were simply too worthless.

Others found it hard to refine amethysts, but Linley was different.

After constantly refining amethysts and strengthening his soul, Linley was far more powerful than he had been fifty years ago. After all, during these fifty years, his soul had been continuously growing.

"Now that you have the Worldwalking ability, the Amethyst Mountains are even safer than before." Olivier sighed. "These rocks are still part of the world. By using the Worldwalking ability, you can fuse with the rocks and pass through them. When the next Fog Wave comes, due to having the Worldwalking ability, you will be better able to preserve yourself."

Linley nodded slightly.

Only a tenth of Deities trained in the Laws of the Earth, and in that portion, fairly few mastered 'Worldwalking'. Jarrod and Garlan were unfortunate; neither of them had trained in the Laws of the Earth. They knew that training in Worldwalking was excellent for staying alive in the Amethyst Mountains, but training wasn't something you could do just because you wanted to, even if you had all the time in the world.

“Boss, give it a try. How does Worldwalking work out?” Bebe’s eyes were gleaming.

Linley laughed. “I wanted to give it a try to begin with.”

Immediately, Linley let himself calm down, then executed the Worldwalking ability. Linley could sense himself completely merge into the boundless elemental essences of the earth. The stones here were naturally filled with earth elemental essences. Linley easily passed through the stone, moving at high speed through it.

“The Boss disappeared. Worldwalking really is interesting.” Bebe laughed.

In Olivier’s heart, he sighed with praise. “Linley truly is formidable. He has three divine clones, and now he has mastered Worldwalking.” However, in Olivier’s heart, he didn’t feel too bad, because in the past few years, he had finally reached the God level in the Laws of Darkness.

The first time using Worldwalking was indeed extremely marvelous.

Linley willingly allowed himself to pass through the stone. “Using Worldwalking really is interesting. However…the Amethyst Mountains is filled with gravitational force. Even when using Worldwalking, my speed is still not fast enough.” Even though his body had completely merged with the earth elemental essences, he was still affected by the power of the gravitational pull.

Linley continued to move forward, traveling for several thousand kilometers.

Suddenly…

“Hey?” Linley suddenly discovered that deep within the rocks of the Amethyst Mountains, there was an empty cave. This cave had no exits at all, but it was within the center of a mountain. It was quite strange.

With but a thought, Linley’s body re-solidified within the cave.

“The cave is quite large.” Linley carefully inspected it. The cave was over ten meters tall and tens of meters wide, but it didn’t have any tunnels nearby. This cave was completely sealed off. Linley could also sense that this cave should have been naturally formed.

There wasn’t a single hint of carving or structuring!

“Naturally formed. How curious.” Linley sighed in amazement.

“Hey, kid of the Four Divine Beasts clan, why’d you end up running over into my place?” Suddenly, a clear voice rang out. Linley’s soul shuddered in fright, and he turned…

That adorable juvenile amethyst beast was standing there, raising its little head and staring at Linley, eyes filled with guile. “I didn’t expect this at all. I thought I’d have to wait until the next Fog Wave before I’d have the chance to come make trouble for you. But you actually ran over to my place.”

“Flee!” Linley didn’t hesitate at all, immediately using the Worldwalking ability.

“Bang!”

Linley slammed hard into the wall, unable to leave.

“You came on my turf, and you thought you would leave, just like that?” The juvenile amethyst beast snorted, eyes filled with self-delight. “Hmph, hmph. Countless of years of boredom, but today, a fun toy has arrived. How should I play with him?”

Linley felt misery in his heart. He had only come to this completely sealed off cave through using the Worldwalking ability. How had he ended up running into this little juvenile amethyst beast?

Chapter 41 – Trapped Five Hundred Years

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 41, Trapped Five Hundred Years

Within the cave inside the Amethyst Mountains. Only Linley and the juvenile amethyst beast were present.

“Just now, when I entered, there clearly was nobody inside this cave. I am certain that this juvenile amethyst beast definitely wasn’t present. How could he have suddenly appeared without me not sensing anything at all?” Linley’s heart was filled with disbelief. He didn’t dare to believe that this was all real!

What he was now facing was the leader of those countless amethyst beasts – the little juvenile amethyst beast.

“What should I do?” Linley was pondering on how to flee.

The walls of this large cave, as well as the floor, were faintly circulating with a violet light. Even if he were to use Worldwalking, he wasn’t able to go through this barrier at all so as to merge with the stone.

No way to run!

“Hey, kid, what are you thinking about? Are you actually still thinking about running away?” The juvenile amethyst beast’s clear eyes stared at Linley, and his lips curved upwards slightly. “Forget it. Once, an extremely powerful Highgod, roughly at the level you would consider a ‘Seven Star Fiend’, came here. In front of me, though, he still behaved obediently!” The juvenile amethyst beast raised its little head arrogantly.

Linley was secretly shocked. Even a Seven Star Fiend was no match for this juvenile amethyst beast?

“My name is Linley. Might I ask who you are?” Linley’s attitude was very

respectful.

The juvenile amethyst beast coughed on purpose, then said, “Listen up. My name is Reisgem [Lei’si’jing]. I’ve previous adventured in other planes, and I’ve also engaged in battles in Purgatory. I am a mighty Commander in Purgatory!”

“Commander of Purgatory?” Linley felt utterly lost.

What was a Purgatory?

When he had read the books regarding the geography of the Infernal Realm, Linley had never heard of a place called ‘Purgatory’.

“You don’t know about Purgatory?” The juvenile amethyst beast stared, and then nodded in understanding. “Oh, right. You are just a God. Even many Highgods don’t know about that place. It makes sense that you don’t know…hmph, talking to you really is a waste of time. You don’t even know what being a ‘Purgatory Commander’ represents, hmph!”

The juvenile amethyst beast was very unhappy.

Linley could only smile helplessly. He didn’t even know why this juvenile beast named Reisgem was talking about these things.

“Now, how should I punish you?” The juvenile amethyst beast stood up, his meaty little paws rubbing his chin as he strode back and forth within the cave, appearing to be in deep thought. “Play the game of smashing stones? Same as the last guy, who I smashed to death?”

Hearing this, Linley’s heart trembled.

The game of smashing stones? Smashed to death? Linley could completely imagine what this juvenile amethyst beast was capable of doing.

“No, no good.” While still walking back and forth, the juvenile amethyst beast continued to mumble. Hearing the mumbling of the juvenile amethyst

beast, Linley's heart was very cold.

"This juvenile amethyst beast named Reisgem is a terrifying figure who possesses enormous power and yet the heart of a child." Linley's heart was panicking. Lowering his head to look at the floor, he saw the faint violet light circulating through it.

This was just a layer of something which Reisgem had silently covered the floors and the walls of the cave with, but Linley couldn't budge the violet light at all. Just from this, Linley was certain of the great power of this juvenile amethyst beast. In addition…he had watched the juvenile amethyst beast personally attack, and easily kill a powerful Highgod.

"Right now, I only have my divine earth clone here. I'm far too weak." Linley secretly sighed.

The Sovereign's Might and his weapons were all on his original body. He didn't have a single thing on his divine earth clone. At present, he didn't have any ability to fight back at all.

"This juvenile amethyst beast…" Linley carefully inspected this juvenile beast. Compared to the amethyst beasts, he was very similar. His entire body was violet, and his head and back also were covered with a large number of spikes, in total 108 spikes. The same was true for the body of the amethyst beasts.

The juvenile amethyst beast suddenly was jubilant, and excitedly began to jump around. "Haha, I have it!"

Suddenly…

The juvenile amethyst beast's face froze, then out of the corner of his mouth, he muttered, "I'm not even allowed to have fun." And then, the juvenile amethyst beast raised his head to look at Linley, his face turning cold. "Kid, I'm in a really bad mood right now, so I'll have to vent it out on you. Hmph. If you are too useless, I'll just kill you."

“Mr. Reisgem, you don’t even care about Seven Star Fiends. Why must you act against me, a mere God?” Linley had a very bad feeling. This juvenile amethyst beast most likely didn’t have any good intentions.

The juvenile amethyst beast snorted. “You shut your mouth! Screw your mommy, if it weren’t for the fact that I have been ordered to remain in the Amethyst Mountains for countless years before being allowed out, why would I care about a mere God like you? Although you are a little weak, at least you are alive. You can play with me.” As he spoke, the juvenile amethyst beast flipped his little claw out, and immediately, a black stone that was emanating waves of violet light appeared, hovering in front of him.

Linley couldn’t help but carefully inspect that black stone.

The black stone was very small, only the size of a finger, but it emanated with lines of violet light. Waves of an unusual aura spread out from within it.

“Go.” The juvenile amethyst beast waved its little paw.

Immediately, the black stone hovered to above Linley, and then one ray of violet divine power after another flew out from the black stone, landing down like multiple chains. There were, in total, 108 rays of violet divine power.

The 108 rays of violet divine power all flew out from within the black stone, forming circles and reconnecting at the ground beneath Linley’s feet. The 108 curved lines of violet divine power formed a complete globe, while Linley was right in the center of it.

“Haha, let’s begin.” The juvenile amethyst beast cracked his lips into a grin.

Immediately, the 108 rays of violet divine power quickly began to flash and move at high speed, and it was no longer possible to tell that there were 108 rays of divine power. Linley could only see that the area around him was a globe of violet light, while he himself was within it.

“Crackle…”

Within the globe of violet light, it was as though electric sparks were flashing with violet light.

One surge after another of strange power was being created.

“Aaaaaah!” Agonized, Linley immediately curled into a ball, hovering in the center of that violet sphere. With a strange ‘crackle’ sound, Linley’s skin and bones were pressed down so hard, his body was caving in.

Linley could clearly sense that the surrounding violet light was creating surges of ‘repulsive force’. Every single part of the violet light was generating that repulsive force, and all of it was focused on his body.

Repulsive force was pressing down on Linley from every side.

It was as though Linley was being constantly compressed, as though the sphere was trying to compress Linley himself into a ball. This sort of terrifying pressure carried with it extreme pain.

“This Reisgem has mental issues!” Linley cursed in his mind.

Working to raise his head, he saw that roughly two meters away, that black stone was hovering. The source of this violet light was that black stone.

“Kid, given my usual temper, you would definitely die. However, today, I suddenly feel benevolent and merciful.” The juvenile amethyst beast stared at the violet globe as well as Linley, who was being compressed. “I’ve supplemented the divine power of that black stone. It should be able to roughly maintain this ‘Gravitational Space’ for ten thousand years. If in ten thousand years, you are able to leave that place, I’ll spare your life. But, if you wait until the divine power is exhausted without being able to leave, then I will…” The juvenile amethyst beast stretched out his meaty claws. “Kill ya!”

Within the globe of violet light.

Even his bones were cracking from the pressure. The massive agony was causing Linley's entire body to twitch, but Linley could still clearly hear the words of that juvenile amethyst beast. Linley immediately struggled to hiss out, "Gravitational Space? This is a Gravitational Space? Impossible!!!" That terrifying repulsive force was so strong that Linley found it hard to even open his mouth.

Only, Linley truly didn't understand it. Because, he had never heard of a Gravitational Space capable of generating a repulsive force.

A Gravitational Space should have a terrifying attractive gravitational force!

"Right, this is a Gravitational Space, one of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. There's nothing 'impossible' about it!" The juvenile amethyst beast snorted. "But of course, this is a 'Gravitational Space' that was created after fusing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and the 'Gravitational Space', and it also has a little something special added into it…let me remind you, if you want to escape, all you have to do is be able to grab that black stone."

After speaking, the juvenile amethyst beast lay down on the ground, then suddenly raised his little head to stare at Linley. "Oh, right. Even though it might hurt, don't make any noise. If your noise wakes me up, I'll kill you."

Linley could only forcibly endure the pain wracking his entire body, not daring to make a sound.

"Huff!" "Huff!" …..

A soft snoring sound filled the cave.

Linley was in a great deal of pain. The repulsive force wasn't any weaker than the astonishing attracting force from the Amethyst Mountains. When applied throughout his entire body, he was in so much pain he could die. In addition, this wasn't his original body, capable of Dragonforming.

He was in such pain, yet he couldn't make any noise…and the juvenile amethyst beast was just lying there, sleeping!

"He's just toying with me!" Linley cursed in his heart, but moments later, Linley tried to force himself to calm down. "What I need to do right now is to escape this violet globe. To leave, I have to first take that black stone." Linley raised his head to stare at the black stone that was emanating those rays of violet light.

"But this repulsive force is too great, while I'm squeezed in the center of this violet globe. I can't move at all." Linley laughed miserably.

Linley then gritted his teeth, struggling to raise his hand upwards.

"Crunch!" The powerful repulsive force from above forced Linley's right arm down, smashing it against Linley's shoulder, causing the bones in both the shoulder and the arm to shatter.

"Let's see if the 'Essence of the Earth' will work." Linley gave it another try.

One try after another. Linley did everything he could think of, but was completely unable to overcome the repulsive force, which was simply too strong.

"It seems I'll have to use that final method." Linley forced himself to calm down.

In magic, once someone understood the art of gravity, if one fell into another person's Gravitational Space, if the opponent's mastery was weaker than one's own, one could ablate the gravitational force.

"This repulsive force is very powerful because it relies on fusing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and the 'Gravitational Space'. Then if I am able to fuse those two profound mysteries, I should also be able to ablate the repulsive force and retrieve the black stone." Linley, after thinking through this, immediately tried to ignore the pain wracking his body and

force himself to lose himself within the ‘Laws of the Earth’.

Linley only had a basic understanding of the Profound Truths of Gravitational Space.

He had already achieved mastery in the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’.

Linley immediately focused all his attention into this, beginning to struggle to gain insights on how to merge these two profound mysteries. Only, both the ‘Gravitational Space’ and the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ were extremely difficult profound mysteries, and the amount of time it would take would definitely be very long.

Within the mountain hollows, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier were in a state of shock.

“Boss, your divine earth clone was captured by that juvenile amethyst beast?” Bebe said frantically. “Then what should we do?”

Delia was worried and frantic as well.

“Nothing else I can do.” Linley shook his head, looking at Delia. “Delia, for now, I won’t be able to accompany you. My original body also needs to completely focus on gaining insights into the Laws of the Earth and work hard along with my divine earth clone.”

Delia immediately nodded.

Linley’s divine clone was in a life-threatening crisis. How could Delia be so selfish as to have Linley keep her company?

“Ten thousand years?” Linley mused. “Can it be that this amethyst beast thinks that I won’t be able to merge these two profound mysteries, even in ten thousand years?”

Linley’s original body immediately began to train, while at the same time, it also constantly absorbed the soul essences from amethysts, constantly

strengthening his soul.

This was because due to his soul being simply too powerful, in terms of visualization speed, Linley's original body was actually slightly faster than his divine earth clone. The original body and the clone were completely focused on the Laws of the Earth and on visualization…

"Fuse. How should I fuse the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and the 'Gravitational Field'?" Linley's understanding of the 'Gravitational Field' was constantly rising, but as for fusing, Linley didn't even have a basic idea of how to accomplish that.

…….

Within the mountain hollow, Delia and Bebe looked at the distant Linley, seated in the meditative position. They were both worried.

"The Boss has been training for nearly five hundred years now. Why hasn't he reacted at all?" Bebe said.

"Don't be impatient. Linley will definitely succeed." Over the past five hundred years, although at first, Delia was frantic with concern, by now, although she was still worried, she had calmed down.

This was because, as Linley had said, if he truly was unlucky and failed, at most he would just lose a divine earth clone.

Chapter 42 – 108

Book 15, Priceless Treasure – Chapter 42, 108

Linley's divine earth clone and original body were both absorbed in training in the 'Laws of the Earth'. Although he constantly increased his understanding with regards to 'Gravitational Space', he hadn't been able to even find the initial steps of fusing the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and the 'Gravitational Space'!

The most important part of fusing two profound mysteries was in the initial steps. Once one found the initial steps, everything else was just a matter of time. But if one hadn't even found the initial steps, then no matter how much time you spent, it would be useless.

Linley exhausted all his mind and efforts on trying to decipher the way through which he could fuse these two profound mysteries.

But the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and 'Gravitational Space' were both high-class profound mysteries. It wasn't too hard to fuse the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' with the 'Essence of the Earth', but fusing the 'Gravitational Space' with it was extremely hard.

"This doesn't work!" After having spent thirty years without even finding the first steps to fusing these two profound mysteries, Linley started to panic. "If I'm just stuck here, I can spend ten thousand years without being able to improve at all. I can't let this continue!"

"The conditions this juvenile beast has set truly are not easy ones." Only now did Linley understand how difficult a task this was. Grinding his teeth, Linley immediately made his decision. "Then I'll try doing it in a roundabout way!"

His divine earth clone continued to train hard in attempting to fuse the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' and the 'Gravitational Space'.

As for Linley's primary body, he attempted to let the Gravitational Space and the Essence of the Earth fuse!

The Essence of the Earth had been fused with the Throbbing Pulse of the World long ago. If he could fuse Gravitational Space with the Essence of the Earth, then it might be possible for him to use that fusion to then draw the Gravitational Space and the Throbbing Pulse of the World closer to each other.

By drawing them closer together, he would begin to be able to take those first steps.

Upon having broken through the first few steps, a wide road would lie ahead of him!

The 38th year of Linley's bitter training.

"Letting Gravitational Space and the Essence of the Earth fuse is much simpler." Linley had spent eight years time in allowing these two profound mysteries to gradually fuse.

Because the Essence of the Earth and Throbbing Pulse of the World were already completely fused, through the Essence of the Earth, Linley felt some confidence in his ability to fuse the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Gravitational Space.

The 46th year of Linley's bitter training!

"This roundabout method has finally succeeded." Linley had finally begun to fuse the Gravitational Space and the Throbbing Pulse of the World . With a beginning, it would be much easier in the future.

Although he had begun to fuse them, and his original body and divine clone were simultaneously training, Linley would still have to take an extremely long amount of time and break through the bottleneck in order to fuse the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Gravitational Space, these two

profound mysteries.

This year was already the 206th year of Linley's training!

In addition, the reason why it was so fast was because Linley's original body's soul had absorbed a large amount of amethyst soul essences and had become extremely strong.

On the 206th year of Linley being trapped here. Within the cave in the Amethyst Mountains.

"Snooooore. "Snooooore."

The gentle nasal sound echoed in the room. The juvenile amethyst beast still lay there, occasionally wrinkling his nose in his sleep, appearing quite adorable.

In the middle of that violet globe, Linley's entire body was covered with bloodstains from that tremendous pressure, but currently, a look of delight was on Linley's face. "I've finally fused those two profound mysteries." After having spent fully 206 years, and with his original body and divine clone training together, he had finally fused those two profound mysteries.

At present, Linley could actually completely fuse the Throbbing Pulse of the World, the Gravitational Space, and Essence of the Earth together, because the three profound mysteries already had a common element connecting them together.

"However, I still have to wait to actually get out before being happy." Linley didn't waste any time.

Raising his head to look upwards, he stared at the black stone glowing with violet light which hovered above him.

"Repulsive force?" Linley frowned.

Although he had already begun to fuse the Throbbing Pulse of the World

and the Gravitational Space, Linley still didn't quite understand how repulsive force could be generated!

"What is it all about? How to counter this repulsive force?" Linley felt quite frantic. To be able to counteract this repulsive force, at the very least, he himself would have to be able to generate a Gravitational Space filled with repulsive force. Only when he had completely understood this would he be able to counteract!

But how?

Linley didn't know!

"That 'Reisgem', the juvenile amethyst beast, said that as long as those two profound mysteries fuse…" Linley suddenly was stunned.

He remembered the words that the juvenile amethyst beast had said; "This is a 'Gravitational Space' that was created after fusing the Throbbing Pulse of the World and Gravitational Space, with a little special something mixed in…"

"A little special something mixed in?" Linley murmured.

The attack power of a certain technique depended partially on the profound mysteries themselves, but how to apply the profound mysteries was also very important.

For example, in the Infernal Realm, there might be two Seven Star Fiends who had both fused four types of profound mysteries, but they might use them in different ways. Naturally, their attacks would be different! A particularly ingenuous way in which they used the attacks might cause the power of the profound mysteries to increase many tenfold!

"To be able to cause gravity to generate a repulsive force? How?" Linley carefully inspected the violet light surrounding himself.

However, no matter how much time he spent looking, all he saw was violet

light. Linley couldn't see anything at all.

"What is it, exactly?" Linley repeatedly pondered. "How to use gravity and change it into a repulsive force?" An attractive force and a repulsive force were completely separate types of force. No matter how he pondered it, Linley couldn't understand how to change between the two.

How could Linley have known?

That when the juvenile amethyst beast said ten thousand years, it was because he was confident that for an ordinary God, it was virtually impossible to exit the violet sphere within ten thousand years.

To fuse two profound mysteries in ten thousand years wasn't too hard!

Some geniuses could do it in a century.

However, this violet sphere had a special quality. It wasn't the profound mysteries! Rather, it was a very special type of usage of the profound mysteries, something which Reisgem felt the most proud about.

"How to use it, exactly?"

Ignoring the agony, Linley shut his eyes and constantly visualized and hypothesized in his mind.

His divine earth clone and his original body were completely absorbed into this. They constantly analyzed and pondered, time and time again…and time flowed on.

The 482nd year Linley had been trapped here!

After two centuries of painstaking thought, Linley had already come up with quite a few powerful ways of using and fusing the Throbbing Pulse of the World and Gravitational Space. However, Linley still couldn't come up with a way to convert the 'attractive force' to the 'repulsive force'.

“What to do?”

Linley was extremely frantic. After pondering for two hundred years, he still hadn’t come up with the way by which a repulsive force could be generated.

“I’ve already thought of everything, but it’s useless. I’ve thought of everything. What to do? What to do?” Linley stared at the violet light around him. He couldn’t help but feel angry. “Can it be that it really will have to be as I told Delia, that I’ll just give up this divine earth clone?”

Linley didn’t want to give up his divine earth clone!

It wasn’t because the divine earth clone represented a life, and it wasn’t because of the divine earth clone’s powerful soul attack.

It was because…

“The vast Earth!” In Linley’s mind, the image of that man, dressed in long white robes, with a long white beard. “Grandpa Doehring…”

It was Grandpa Doehring who had guided Linley onto the path of training in earth-style magic. Linley also knew that Grandpa Doehring had always wanted to break through the Saint level to become a Deity. Only, Grandpa Doehring didn’t have the chance to. Linley himself had trained so hard and had finally become a Deity in the Laws of the Earth, and now had entered the Higher Plane of the ‘Infernal Realm’!

Linley sometimes thought to himself: “Grandpa Doehring, if he knew that I had become a Deity of the earth-element and had entered the Higher Planes, he would definitely be very happy.”

His divine earth clone didn’t just represent a life to him.

It was something which Linley felt Grandpa Doehring had entrusted him with!

He didn't want to give it up!

"No, I cannot give up! The Laws of the Earth. I will continue to train in them. I definitely will not permit the divine earth clone to die." Linley constantly told himself this, and then stared at the juvenile amethyst beast. "It's been less than five hundred years. The juvenile amethyst beast gave me ten thousand years. I still have more than nine thousand years left. I will definitely succeed, definitely succe…"

Midway through his sentence, Linley came to a halt. He stared at the sleeping juvenile amethyst beast.

Or, to be precise, he was staring at those 108 spikes on the back of the juvenile amethyst beast!

Linley stared, stunned, as though he had lost his wits. He muttered to himself, "108? Flat?"

Linley's mind suddenly had thoughts flash through like lightning, and then, Linley shut his eyes. At the same time…

Within Linley's mind, he visualized rays of divine power forming, exactly 108 rays of them. First, he organized them in sequence like the way those 108 spikes on the juvenile amethyst beast's back were organized, and then constantly visualized rearranging them, trying to see what special effects might be generated.

The 108 rays of divine power were simply too complex.

After spending fully half a month visualizing, Linley felt overjoyed. "Indeed. With a different sequence, the power of the gravity will increase a hundredfold." Linley knew very well that while normally using a 'Gravitational Space', at most one would be able to impact another person's movements, but the impact wouldn't be extravagant.

But by organizing the power in such a manner, the maximum limits of the attractive force had increased a hundredfold! Most likely, even Highgods

would be rendered unable to fly.

“That’s not right. It’s still not as powerful as the gravity here in the Amethyst Mountains.” Linley refuted this mentally. “And wait. The gravity of the Amethyst Mountains isn’t focused downwards. Rather, it is like a sphere, absorbing in all directions. No matter where one is, one will be drawn towards the Amethyst Mountains.”

Linley opened his eyes, and in front of him appeared the violet light which had formed into a sphere. He just looked at it…

“Flat? Sphere?” Linley murmured, but slowly, a light appeared in Linley’s eyes. “Right! Sphere!!! It isn’t a simple flat surface!”

“Crunch!”

The ‘shackles’ binding Linley’s thoughts just shattered.

“Haha, so that’s how it works. Haha, how could I have not realized this? However…to mentally go from visualizing a flat surface to a sphere is incomparably more difficult.” Linley could completely imagine how difficult that must have been. If visualizing the effects on a flat surface had to be done a thousand times, then the visualization and hypothesizing needed for a sphere would be a thousand to the third power! A billion times!”

A thousand versus a billion!

The difference was too great.

What’s more, Linley had spent far more than just a thousand times visualizing all sorts of possible scenarios for a ‘flat surface’. Thus, the number of visualizations needed for the complicated sphere would naturally also be far more.

“If I truly had to blindly exhaust all possible calculations on ways to align the 108 rays of divine power, even if I spent a trillion years, I might not be

able to finish it." Linley understood using this sort of technique wasn't just a matter of calculating everything out; it required certain insights.

"However, fortunately I know that the true trick of it lies in the sequence of those spikes on the juvenile amethyst beast's back." Linley opened his eyes, carefully inspecting the 108 spikes on the back of the juvenile amethyst beast, working hard to memorize the lengths and locations of those 108 spikes.

The 108 rays of divine power in Linley's mind were constantly changing, while at the same time, Linley also began to circulate 108 rays of divine power around his body.

All sorts of calculations and visualizations. Linley's divine power around his body began to be ordered as well. As time went on, the repulsive force actually began to lessen, or, to be precise…the repulsive force didn't lessen, but Linley was able to counteract part of the repulsive force. As Linley's calculations and visualizations came closer and closer to the true path, the amount of repulsive force counteracted increased even further.

"Huh?" The juvenile amethyst beast suddenly opened his eyes, staring at Linley. He was tremendously shocked. "This…this kid actually…?"

The violet amethyst beast immediately stood up, so angry that his nose was crooked. "It's only been five hundred years, but this punk has actually begun to approach a basic understanding of the ultimate technique of myself, Lord Reisgem." The juvenile amethyst beast watched as the earthen light around Linley's body circulated, the profound mysteries of the Laws contained within the light.

"Right. That's how you do it!" Linley, overjoyed, opened his eyes.

In the instant he opened his eyes, he saw the juvenile amethyst beast staring at him, filled with anger.

"Mr. Reisgem, I've finally reached your requirements." Linley smiled. Although at present, some repulsive force remained, that was primarily

because the juvenile amethyst beast was using ‘Highgod’ level divine power. While the type of technique they used was the same, of course the juvenile beast’s would be somewhat more powerful.

But after the counteracting, the remaining amount of repulsive force no longer had much power.

Linley easily flew up and stretched out with his hand, snatching the black stone emanating the violet light. Immediately, the violet sphere of light collapsed.

The juvenile amethyst beast stared furiously at Linley. “You little punk. You actually were able to understand this technique of mine?”

“Actually, I must thank you, Mr. Reisgem. If it hadn’t been for the spikes on your back, I wouldn’t have been able to break through so quickly.” Linley was currently in quite a good mood. The juvenile amethyst beast instantly understood. “Your mommy! So it was I myself who helped you!” But the juvenile amethyst beast also understood…that even though Linley had seen the spikes on his back, how many people would have been able to connect them with Gravitational Space?

The juvenile amethyst beast knew very well that this sort of unique Gravitational Space was his innate ability. Combined with the spikes on his back, the power was extremely great.

“I’ll keep my promise. Kid, you can leave now.” The juvenile amethyst beast said discontentedly.

“Then, Mr. Reisgem, I’ll leave now.” Linley was very courteous.

“Ugh, after you leave the Amethyst Mountains, I won’t be able to see you again. I was planning on spending some time messing with you.” The juvenile amethyst beast curled his lips as he spoke with resignation.

“Leave the Amethyst Mountains?” Linley was stunned. He turned to look at the juvenile amethyst beast.

The juvenile amethyst beast glanced at him, snorted, then said, “I might as well tell you. You’ve already mastered my ultimate technique. This Gravitational Space technique is capable of nullifying the gravitational pull of the Amethyst Mountains. As for the soul-affecting influence of the wind sound, hmph, with that stone, you won’t be afraid either.”

“The black stone?” Linley lowered his head to look at the stone in his hand.

“All you need to do is bind it with blood…argh, your mommy! The more I talk about it, the angrier I get. I’m not wasting any more words on you. Hurry up and beat it.” The juvenile amethyst beast was very unhappy.

Linley’s heart was filled with questions. “Bind the black stone with blood?” But although puzzled, Linley still dripped a drop of blood onto the black stone. After doing so, the black stone merged into Linley’s body, fusing directly with Linley’s soul. Linley could now feel the strange, marvelous properties of this black stone.

“This black stone…?”

Linley could sense that the black stone contained within it an extremely dense power. Only, the power was too deep and hidden. Aside from that, Linley could also sense 108 rays of spiritual energy circulating within it, constantly changing positions.

Linley realized, to his astonishment…

That the technique he had developed after spending so much time pondering was just one of the most basic, superficial types of techniques.

“What on earth is this black stone?” Linley was astonished. At the same time, he glanced in amazement at the juvenile amethyst beast. “Although this juvenile amethyst beast said he was going to torment me, he actually gave me this black stone. This black stone definitely isn’t an ordinary item.” Linley didn’t understand it at all.

Why did the juvenile amethyst beast do this?

“Thank you, Mr. Reisgem.” Linley immediately said gratefully.

“Hmph.” The juvenile amethyst just turned his head away.

Linley didn’t waste any more words. He immediately executed the Worldwalking ability and left the cave.

The juvenile amethyst beast sat down onto the floor of the cave. Suddenly…the stones of the cave walls began to move transforming into an enormous face.

“Gem-Gem, what, are you mad?” The stone face actually opened its mouth and spoke.

“Hmph. Right. I’m mad.” The juvenile amethyst beast, ‘Reisgem’, said angrily. “Also, don’t call me Gem-Gem! I finally got a toy, and I had just come up with all sorts of ideas to torment him, but you actually didn’t let me, and then even gave him such a gift.”

The lips of the stone face moved slightly. “Gem-Gem, don’t be mad. Back in the day, I owed a debt to the clan leader of the Four Divine Beasts clan…” But halfway through the sentence.

“I told you, DON’T CALL ME GEM-GEM!” The juvenile amethyst beast bellowed, and then let out a snort and slammed straight into the wall, merging into the wall and disappearing.

“After all these years, he’s still like a little kid.” The stone face on the wall said helplessly, and then disappeared, the wall returning to its normal appearance.

Chapter 1 – Black Stone

Book 16, Starmist Sea– Chapter 1, Black Stone

The Amethyst Mountains were covered by that unfeeling, icy mist. Within the mountain hollow, Delia was currently seated quietly, her eyes closed. Today was as peaceful as always.

“Delia, Bebe!”

Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Delia, who had been quietly meditating, couldn’t help but be startled. She immediately opened her eyes and turned to look over. Right now, Bebe’s worried voice rang out as well. “Boss, why did you stop training? How is your divine earth clone doing? Did you succeed, or is it…?”

By the time Delia looked over, she saw that the sky-blue robed Linley, his original body, was already standing in front of her.

“What’s the situation?” Delia walked over, asking with concern.

Linley felt a surge of warmth in his heart. Nodding, he said, “Everything is fine. Right now, my divine earth clone is on the way back, and will arrive soon. Delia, Bebe, I’m sorry. I’ve made you worry during this period of time.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry right now.

He didn’t know if he should say that he was lucky, or if he was unlucky.

He had just been testing Worldwalking for the first time when he had encountered the juvenile amethyst beast. However, because of this, his power had increased greatly. Indeed, blessings and disasters could be hard to differentiate.

Suddenly, footsteps rang out from afar. It was Olivier.

“Linley, you successfully escaped, right? I can tell just by the look on your face.” Olivier laughed loudly.

Linley nodded slightly.

“Boss, you successfully escaped. This is a cause for celebration! Although we might be stuck here a very long time and need to be a bit sparing with the wine, today, we absolutely still have to celebrate this joyous occasion.” With a flip of his hand, Bebe retrieved several bottles of fine wine.

Wine was extremely precious in the Amethyst Mountains.

Within the Amethyst Mountains, perhaps not even hundreds of millions of inkstones would be enough to trade for a single bottle of wine. After all, in the Amethyst Mountains, harvesting amethysts was simply too easy. Wine, on the other hand, was gone after being drunk. The Amethyst Mountains didn’t have any materials that could be used for making wine.

“Haha, today, drink as much as you like.” Linley laughed loudly. “Even if we drink up all the wine we have, it doesn’t matter!”

Bebe immediately stared. “Boss, you can be happy, but you can’t be so wasteful.”

Olivier was somewhat astonished as well. Delia looked suspiciously at Linley, asking, “Linley, are you preparing to abstain from alcohol?”

“Haha…” Laughing, Linley shook his head. “That’s not it. It’s because I’ve already found a method by which I can take you all out from these Amethyst Mountains.”

“Leave the Amethyst Mountains?” Bebe, Delia, and Olivier couldn’t help but be stunned.

After so many years, nobody who had entered the Amethyst Mountains had been able to leave on their own. Olivier and the others had tested it out as

well, but weren't able to leave the Amethyst Mountains at all. But Linley was now saying…

Delia, Bebe, and Olivier knew what sort of person Linley was. They knew that Linley wouldn't lie.

But leaving the Amethyst Mountains, this was simply too unbelievable.

"Boss? You tellin' the truth?" Bebe was filled with doubts, and he asked again.

"Linley, you'd better not be making me happy for nothing." Olivier chuckled, but his eyes stared hard at Linley with a hint of expectation in them. If anyone else had said this, Olivier probably wouldn't even pay them any mind, but it was Linley who said this.

Linley wasn't the sort of person to lie!

"Linley, you have a way to deal with that astonishing gravity?" Delia went straight to the heart of the matter. If one wanted to leave the Amethyst Mountains, first, one had to deal with that astonishing gravity. The gravity of the Amethyst Mountains was something which not even most Highgods could nullify while flying.

"Don't worry. If I said we can leave, that means we can leave." Linley said with absolute certainty.

Bebe, Delia, and Olivier all had a hint of excitement on their faces.

"Boss, how would we leave?" Bebe asked.

Linley smiled. "Fine. I'll give you a demonstration, as otherwise, you probably wouldn't believe it." Linley's original body was capable of borrowing divine power from his divine body. Immediately, Linley's body began to circulate with a surge of divine earth power, and he immediately activated it based on the insights he had gained.

Geomagnetic ripples spread out from Linley's legs, stretching out into the earth.

"Crackle…"

At the same time, the ground within a hundred meters began to ripple strangely. Linley smiled as he looked at Delia, Bebe, and Olivier. "What do you think?"

"Huh?"

Delia and the others were astonished. To their amazement, they discovered that the effect their body suffered from the astonishing gravitational force of the Amethyst Mountains had been weakened by more than 90%. Although the remaining amount of gravity pull was considerable, it was no longer enough to prevent the three of them from flying.

Delia, Bebe, and Olivier easily hovered up from the ground.

"Linley, what's this?" Olivier couldn't help but find this unbelievable.

"Right." Bebe's face was filled with astonishment. "Garlan and Jarrod had told me that even if one mastered Gravitational Space, it would be useless here in the Amethyst Mountains. Up till now, nobody has been able to nullify the gravitational force like you."

Although some experts were powerful enough to fly despite the pull of gravity, that was just relying on pure power, unlike Linley who was using profound mysteries.

"Do you believe me now?" Linley didn't explain further.

"I believe you, I believe you." Olivier's face was covered with delight, the many years of unhappiness all washed away.

"Boss, what about that strange wind region?" Bebe asked hurriedly. That chaotic region was the true culprit behind so many experts being trapped

here.

Linley laughed calmly. “No need to ask. When we leave, I’ll deal with it.” Linley still remembered clearly how the juvenile amethyst beast, Reisgem, had said that in the area of the strange wind sound, by relying on this black stone, he would be able to pass through it.

“I have to spend some time giving a thorough review of this black stone.” Linley said quietly to himself.

After exiting the cave, Linley had been in a hurry to come back, and hadn’t analyzed the black stone. However, even that cursory glance he had given it had shown that the black stone had astonishing aspects to it. In particular, it held within it an aura that made one’s heart tremble, and the spiritual energy within it constantly changed. All of these things attracted Linley’s interest.

“But of course, I still need to spend some time preparing, and get a thorough understanding of the method we’ll use to leave.” Linley laughed. “The Amethyst Mountains are very safe. In the Infernal Realm, it’s very, very rare to find such a safe training area.”

“Indeed, aside from the flaws of the white fog here limiting visibility to a hundred meters, the astonishing gravity, and the boring, dull lifestyle…in the Amethyst Mountains, aside from the day of the Fog Wave, it really is quite safe in here.” Olivier nodded as well.

Right at this moment, the returning divine earth clone finally sprouted out from the stone, fusing into Linley’s original body. Delia and Bebe, upon seeing this, finally let out sighs of relief.

“Haha, Boss, let’s celebrate!” Bebe, having received two pieces of good news in a row, was naturally in an excellent mood.

After Linley’s group of four celebrated, Linley began to focus on his analysis of the black stone.

“This black stone contains within it an earth-type aura, and it also has a

spiritual aura. It really is odd." Linley carefully inspected the black stone, his heart filled with questions, and then he laughed. "Perhaps the black stone has some connection to amethysts." Amethyst-top stones were naturally earth-style.

However, amethysts contained spiritual energy as well. This was quite similar to the black stone.

"Only, the aura of the spiritual energy in this black stone causes one's heart to tremble…" Linley said to himself.

The black stone also held within it those 108 constantly fluctuating spiritual energy auras. These 108 spiritual energy auras were moving into constantly changing configurations, causing Linley to feel utterly delighted. The configurations he himself had developed thus far were just the basics.

But within the black stone, the naturally transforming configurations were on a deeper level.

Linley immediately calmed down and began to analyze the methods by which one would use this Gravitational Space technique. Although seemingly simple, controlling it for one's own use was very complicated. It was much like how Linley had seen those 108 spikes on the back of the juvenile amethyst beast, but truly understanding the configuration had required a very long amount of time.

Right now, this was the difficulty which he faced.

However, Linley was absorbed by it…

"When Boss trains like this, he pays no attention to time at all." Bebe muttered, not for the first time. In fact, he had complained like this innumerable times.

Delia laughed and glanced at him. "Bebe, calm down and train. It's just been twenty years. It went by in a flash! Look at Olivier. As soon as he started meditating, he hasn't woken up a single time. If you are so

impatient, when will you be able to make a breakthrough?"

Bebe pouted but didn't speak.

"Heeey." Bebe's eyes suddenly lit up. "The Boss woke up." Delia hurriedly turned to look towards where Linley was seated in meditation. Right now, Linley's eyes were open, and his face was all smiles. "So the black stone can even be used in such a manner. I truly am a fool."

Linley turned and urged, "Bebe, come over."

"What for?" Bebe didn't quite understand.

"Get a feel for my Gravitational Space." Linley said.

Bebe raised his head, then immediately walked over. Disdainfully, he said, "Gravitational Space? Give it your best shot. I, Bebe, have a really powerful body. Your Gravitational Space won't be able to harm me, no matter how powerful it is." Bebe was fully confident, and indeed, precisely because of his tough body, Linley had asked him to come.

"Get ready." Linley immediately began to use it.

"Crackle…"

Geomagnetic ripples spread out from Linley's feet, spreading out through the earth and continuously transforming from within it. The strange thing was, the black stone was currently floating within Linley's sea of consciousness, and the 108 rays of spiritual energy within the black stone were moving in exactly the same manner as the geomagnetic ripples.

It was as though the two were moving in accord.

"Haha, the gravity is quite something, but it's nothing to me." Bebe said delightedly, but suddenly, Bebe's face changed. He frantically shook his head. "Boss, stop playing around. My head feels miserable."

Linley immediately halted.

“How does that feel?” Linley laughed while looking at him. This was all as Linley had predicted it would be.

Bebe stared at Linley in surprise. “Boss, just now, my head felt so dizzy. That feeling was just, just like how when I heard the strange wind sound in the Fog Sea. It was that sort of feeling. My head felt extremely miserable. How’d you do it?” Bebe somewhat didn’t dare to believe it.

“This is the effect of a treasure I received.” Linley explained.

Actually, in the later stages of his analysis of the black stone, Linley had discovered this. It was at this point of the analysis that Linley realized why the juvenile amethyst beast had said that with this black stone, he wouldn’t have to worry about the influence of the strange wind sound. It was because the special effect of the strange wind sound and the soul-effect of the black stone were identical!

Linley suspected…

“Perhaps, within these Amethyst Mountains, there is an extremely large ‘black stone’, capable of impacting and spreading out to a range of hundreds of thousands of kilometers.” Linley guessed.

“Linley, what are you testing out?” Delia walked over as well.

Bebe turned his head and grinned. “Delia, the Boss is now extremely powerful, and I even daresay that we definitely won’t have any problems in leaving the Amethyst Mountains.” After having tasted this technique, Bebe was now completely confident in Linley.

Delia’s eyes lit up. Walking over to Linley, she said, “Linley, shall we head out now?”

Linley frowned slightly. “No rush. Delia, the Infernal Realm has too many dangers hidden within it. We should wait until we are a bit stronger before

heading out. Right now, I've only fused two types of profound mysteries. However, I am confident that I should be able to fuse three types of profound mysteries very soon!"

"Fuse three types?" Delia and Bebe were both surprised.

There were quite a few experts who had fused two types of profound mysteries, but the number who had fused three was extremely, extremely low. It must be understood that many Six Star Fiends had only fused three types of profound mysteries. As for fusing four….even Elquin, the Seven Star Fiend, had only fused four.

With each increase in level, the power would increase tenfold as well! The difficulty, as well, would also increase exponentially.

For example, Linley had fused the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Gravitational Space. To fuse a third type of profound mystery, he would have to have the third profound mystery find a 'joining' location for both of the other two types of profound mysteries, which would be the foundation for the fusing. Only then would fusing become possible. Finding the 'joining' location, however, was extremely difficult.

For example, Linley had spent a long time looking for a 'joining' point between the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the Gravitational Space without success and without any breakthroughs. Afterwards, he had used the 'Essence of the Earth' to have these two types of profound mysteries find a 'joining point'.

"I'm confident in being able to fuse three profound mysteries, but four?" Linley couldn't help but think of the 'Worldwalking' technique. Up till now, he hadn't had a single insight into how he would fuse Worldwalking with any of the other three profound mysteries. To fuse four profound mysteries, he would at least have to begin fusing Worldwalking with the other three profound mysteries.

But he hadn't even found a joining point; how could he then fuse it with the other three?

Most likely, even after spending ten thousand years, he still wouldn't be able to do it.

"The higher I climb, the harder it becomes." Linley understood.

Chapter 2 – Ten Years of Harvesting

Book 16, Starmist Sea– Chapter 2, Ten Years of Harvesting

The ‘Essence of the Earth’ had been fused with the Throbbing Pulse of the World long ago, and had been partially fused with the Gravitational Space. At present, to fuse these three profound mysteries into one, it could be said to be just a matter of time. Linley naturally wouldn’t choose to leave first.

The Amethyst Mountains were as calm as always.

As the calm days passed, Linley’s understanding of the Laws of the Earth gradually increased, and the degree of fusion of the three types of profound mysteries constantly increased as well. Time silently flowed onwards, and in the blink of an eye, another 120 years passed.

On the surface of the stone, Linley was seated in the meditative position, his body covered by a layer of dust. Suddenly, a surge of energy swirled around his body, sweeping away the dust.

“Just a little bit more, and the three profound mysteries will be fused.” Linley opened his eyes and let out a low sigh. Pausing his training, he said, “A bottleneck is hard to breakthrough. Once I am stuck at the final bottleneck, who knows how long it will take? Fusing profound mysteries have two critical points; the first is finding the ‘joining point’, and the second is the ‘final bottleneck’. The amount of time needed for these two is completely unpredictable.”

Despite that, however, Linley was still in quite a good mood.

He was just a tiny step away from fusing these three profound mysteries, and his power was now five or six times that of the past, when he had only fused two profound mysteries.

“Originally, when escorting Salomon and his treasure, we had been trapped

in that castle of sand. Now, I'm going to create a Blackstone Prison of my own!" Linley smiled, then willed it…

Instantly…

With Linley at the center, divine power surged forth in the area with a circumference of a hundred meters. A large amount of earth elemental essence coalesced, instantly forming a black, completely sealed prison. Not a hint of sunlight could be seen from within the prison, and nothing could be seen at all.

At the same time, within this prison, there was an extremely strong gravity!

Compared to the past, when Linley had only fused two profound mysteries, the power of the gravity now was actually several times greater.

"Hmph. Even a Highgod who falls into this most likely won't even be able to run out from within it." Linley was very confident. "Their speed will be lessened, but my speed won't be influenced at all. I can easily kill that Highgod!"

Blackstone Prison!

A prison formed as the result of the fusion of the Throbbing Pulse of the World, the Gravitational Space, and the Essence of the Earth profound mysteries, while using the mysterious priceless treasure, the 'black stone', as the nucleus.

Within this prison, the trapped person would suffer tremendously powerful gravitational bindings, while at the same time the soul would be impacted as well. The person would be able to use less than a tenth of his total strength. Within this region, Linley definitely could deal with his opponents.

"Unfortunately, the three profound mysteries haven't been completely fused." Linley said to himself.

Linley knew very well that given how hard it was to train in the Laws, to successfully fuse four profound mysteries would take countless years. What he was currently training in now would be, at this point in time, his greatest asset when roaming the Infernal Realm.

“Logically speaking, the Asuras of the Infernal Realm should have fused five types of profound mysteries. As for Seven Star Fiends, most of them have fused four profound mysteries. Only a very few have fused five profound mysteries. Generally speaking, Six Star Fiends have fused three types.” Linley hypothesized.

Ordinary Highgods were Four Star Fiends. After fusing two profound mysteries, they would generally be capable of becoming Five Star Fiends.

But of course, this wasn’t absolute. This was just a generality.

“Although I’m only one step off from completely fusing three profound mysteries, the effect of my ‘Blackstone Prison’ should be greater than that of four fused profound mysteries.” Linley knew very well that the reason why this technique was so powerful was primarily because of the strange way in which it was used.

This was the way in which the juvenile amethyst beast used Gravitational Space.

108 geomagnetic rays of force, when working together, could actually increase the former upper limits over a hundredfold! When combined with the ‘black stone’ and its support, the power of this technique would definitely doom most Highgods who encountered it.

In normal circumstances, Highgods could easily kill Gods, precisely because they were able to rely on their Godrealm as well as their naturally stronger souls.

Only…

With regards to the soul, Linley had a Sovereign soul-protecting artifact. As

for the binding power of a Godrealm, Linley's Gravitational Space had an even greater binding power. Generally speaking, any Highgods who encountered Linley would indeed be doomed. Actually, this made sense.

He had the 'black stone', the 'soul-protecting Sovereign artifact', and was very nearly at the point of fusing three profound mysteries.

Although his God-level divine power was rather weak, the three advantages listed above were simply too strong. Most Highgods definitely wouldn't be a match.

"Linley, you are finally prepared to head out." Olivier had waited a long time for this day.

"Sorry." Linley laughed.

And then, Linley glanced at the nearby Delia and Bebe. "Everyone, prepare yourselves!" As he spoke, Linley's body began to circulate with an earthen yellow light, and then a ten-meter long sphere of earthen light emanated out, surrounding Linley and the group of four within it, levitating.

A Gravitational Space didn't have to be flat; it could be made into a sphere. However, this was something Linley had accomplished only after centuries of research.

"Let's go!"

Within the Gravitational Space, Linley easily countered the impact of that gravitational pull. Linley's group of four immediately flew into the air.

"When we came, the gravity was so powerful. But now that we are leaving, I can't feel any gravity at all." Olivier couldn't help but glance at Linley. Sighing, he said, "Linley, of the experts of the Yulan continent who came to the Infernal Plane, I imagine there are very few as powerful as you."

Olivier couldn't help but be impressed by Linley.

They flew into the white fog ahead of them. Linley's group of four constantly rose upwards, higher into the air.

"We've already left the region of powerful gravity." Linley had been continuously controlling the gravitational sphere. Naturally, he could sense the changes in gravity outside. "We're about to immediately enter the region of that strange wind sounds, that chaotic area." Linley reminded everyone.

Delia and Olivier were very careful, because their soul defenses weren't very strong.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

That wind sound rang out again. Immediately, Bebe frowned, while Delia and Olivier began to feel their heads going dizzy.

Linley immediately activated the 'black stone', and his own spiritual energy emanated out from within the black stone, filling the entire Gravitational Space sphere.

"So it really is the same." Linley had a smile on his face. Right now, he could easily sense the principles behind the wind sound causing the soul to grow dizzy. Actually, it wasn't the wind; it was a sort of strange spiritual energy ripple. Even when it entered the body through the ears, it would still be transmitted straight through to the sea of consciousness.

Linley shut out that strange wind sound, and Delia along with the others felt much better.

"We'll definitely be able to leave now." Olivier was incomparably excited. After seeing Linley shut out that strange wind sound, he was completely sure of it now. It must be understood that this chaotic region with this strange wind sound was a place which even Highgods found difficult to deal with.

In the chaotic area, Linley's group of four was completely unaffected.

Naturally, they headed straight through.

Moments later…

“I see the outside world.” Bebe said in surprised delight.

“Me too.” Linley immediately dispersed the Gravitational Space.

At this moment, not too far away from Linley, a group of people were standing aloft in mid-air, clearly waiting for amethysts to fly out.

“Ah, two amethysts!” From afar, an excited cry could be heard.

“Haha, I didn’t expect that after being here for just half a month, you would be able to get two amethysts. Let’s go have a good celebration.” From afar, some idle chatter could be heard.

Linley’s group of four looked at each other and laughed. These words were very familiar to each other. They were words commonly heard here in the Fog Sea.

They had finally escaped!

“We really did come out.” Bebe’s face was full of delight.

“Hey, the four of you, be careful. Don’t go too deep into the Fog Sea. I saw that the four of you seem to have come from rather deep within. You have got to be careful.” A flying God warned Linley’s group of four. “If you go past the safe zone, you’ll never be able to leave again.”

“We know.” Linley chuckled in response.

Of course they knew the danger. They themselves really had in fact been trapped within.

“Let’s go.” Linley’s group of four felt quite joyful, and they immediately flew out of the borders of the Fog Sea.

“Linley, when we leave, each of us should pay three amethysts. Let’s not return the writ.” Delia said through divine sense.

“Why?” Bebe asked.

Linley was puzzled as well, but then he immediately understood. Delia explained through her divine sense, “I’m worried that after each Fog Wave, the eighteen clans will change to a different type of writ. If we take out our writ of passage, they might very well know that we entered during the previous Fog Wave, and will definitely suspect that we came out from within the Amethyst Mountains. Once we are discovered, we’ll be in for a great deal of trouble.”

Bebe and Olivier immediately understood.

Right. This was very possible.

“If we’re discovered, we really will be doomed.” Linley could imagine it.

It must be understood that in the Amethyst Mountains, acquiring amethysts was simply too easy. It was like picking money off the ground.

Linley’s group of four immediately flew towards the outside perimeter, and instantly, two black-robed men went to greet them. One of them glanced at Delia in surprise, especially upon seeing the Fiend medallion on Delia’s chest; this was a Highgod Fiend! It was extremely rare for them to see a Highgod Fiend enter the Fog Sea to harvest amethysts.

Linley couldn’t help but feel startled.

“The four of you, where are your writs of passage?” One of the black-robed staff members said.

“We entered without buying them.” Bebe replied.

“Oh.” The black-robed man replied very naturally, “Same rules as always.

Three amethysts each, twelve total for four of you."

With a flip of her hand, Delia produced five amethysts while saying, "My luck was a bit better than yours, so I'll pay five amethysts. How about you three? Bebe, this time, you had pretty good luck as well, right? You got quite a few amethysts, I believe."

"Oh, I'll pay the other seven." Bebe chortled as he withdrew seven amethysts.

Accepting the twelve amethysts, the two black-robed figures glanced at Delia in puzzlement, and then nodded. "You can leave." Clearly, the black-robed men didn't want to make too much of a fuss.

Linley's group of four laughed and immediately flew away, while from behind them came the sound of the two black-robed men chatting.

"That Highgod Fiend entered to harvest amethysts as well. What's wrong with her?"

"Who knows? Perhaps that woman reached the Highgod level while harvesting amethysts."

"Oh, right, that's very possible. It's only been a few centuries since the Fog Wave, but that skinny kid had really good luck. He was actually able to produce seven amethysts."

Linley's group heard these words as they travelled farther away. From afar, Linley's group took out their metallic lifeform and entered it, and it transformed into a ray of black light, quickly disappearing into the eastern horizons.

Within the metallic lifeform.

"Haha, we're rich, we're rich!" Bebe called out excitedly.

"How so?" Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe.

“Boss, a hundred years ago, you said that you had a way to let us leave the Amethyst Mountains, right?”

“Right, so what?” Linley looked at Bebe in puzzlement.

“Since I knew we were going to leave, I began to go harvest those amethysts like mad.” Bebe laughed delightedly. “Boss, you don’t know this, but I couldn’t settle down and focus on training, so I went to harvest amethysts. At a single one of those Demonic Amethyst Lairs, in a single day, I was easily able to acquire millions of amethysts. I was harvesting for ten full years!”

“Millions of amethysts every day for ten years? How many do you have?” Linley, Delia, and Olivier were all shocked.

“Heh heh, can’t you calculate it for yourself?” Bebe was extremely delighted with himself. “In the Amethyst Mountains, amethysts are worthless, but in other places, they are quite valuable.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

All of them knew this logic. However, Linley, Delia, and Olivier had only gone to harvest some amethysts earlier on, and afterwards they had focused on their training. Only Bebe, bored, would go harvest so many amethysts.

But ten years of harvesting? This number was simply too extravagant.

On this trip, they no longer encountered any dangers, and Linley’s group constantly advanced. The Infernal Realm really was incomparably vast. From the Amethyst Mountains to the Bluemaple City of the Rainbow Prefecture took Linley’s team eight full years of time.

“We’re here at Bluemaple City!” Bebe celebrated.

All four of them in the metallic lifeform were overjoyed.

“We finally arrived!” Looking through the translucent metal and seeing the beautiful, distant, ancient Bluemaple City, Linley felt a surge of joy. On this trip over, they experienced countless dangers, and only now had they arrived at the Bluemaple City of the ‘Rainbow Prefecture’. Now that they had arrived at Bluemaple City, they could begin their journey through the Starmist Sea.

After passing through the Starmist Sea, they would be at the place where Linley’s ancestors resided.

The Bloodridge Continent!

Chapter 3 – Saturation

Book 16, Starmist Sea– Chapter 3, Saturation

Rainbow Prefecture. Bluemaple City. This was at the southeastern-most point of the entire Redbud Continent. From Bluemaple City, one only would have to fly a few moments before reaching the borders of the vast, boundless Starmist Sea.

Everyone headed from the Redbud Continent towards the Jadefloat Continent of the east or the Bloodridge Continent of the southeast would primarily travel through here, as Bluemaple City was the closest location. Some major trading guilds would also have branches here, resulting in Bluemaple City being far more bustling and active than any of the other cities in the Redbud Continent!

“The gates of Bluemaple City actually have Redbud Army soldiers standing on duty. How strange.” Olivier laughed calmly in praise. At this moment, Linley’s group of four had already entered Bluemaple City and were walking along the roads of Bluemaple City.

“Bluemaple City is an extremely developed and bustling city. Trade has caused many merchant’s guilds to depart from this location. There are also many experts who wish to go to other continents who set out from here as well. It makes sense for some Redbud Army soldiers to be stationed at such an important location.” Linley said, while at the same time scanning his surroundings.

Linley was in an excellent mood as he enjoyed the views of Bluemaple City, which were different from Royalwing City.

How could Linley not be in a good mood? After all, they had taken a big first step on their journey to the Indigo Prefecture.

“Linley.” Delia sent quietly through divine sense.

“Huh?” Linley turned to look, puzzled. Delia gestured with her eyes towards Bebe, and only now did Linley notice that Bebe seemed to be in a rather strange mood.

Upon arriving at Bluemaple City, the normally lively Bebe actually hadn’t said a single word.

He was wearing his straw hat, which covered half his face. He paid no attention at all to the surrounding architecture or people. Bebe just walked quietly. It was hard to tell from the look on Bebe’s face as to what he was thinking, but seeing this, Linley began to understand.

Most likely, only Nisse’s affair could cause Bebe to be like this.

“Bebe.” Linley spoke out.

Bebe was suddenly startled awake, and then turned to look at Linley, puzzled. “Boss, why are you calling for me?”

“Are you thinking about Nisse?” Linley lowered his head to look at Bebe.

“Right.” Bebe nodded slightly, clearly quite saddened. “Ninny has gone to the Jadefloat Continent. She definitely headed out from Bluemaple City as well.” Upon arriving in Bluemaple City, Bebe couldn’t help but think about Ninny. And then, Bebe let out a low sigh. “However, she came to Bluemaple City centuries ago.”

Bebe raised his head and laughed wryly. “Boss, I’m fine. Ninny went to the Jadefloat Continent centuries ago. It would be very hard to find her. In the future, when I have the chance…well, let’s go. Let’s head to the Fiend Castle.” As he spoke, Bebe led the way.

Linley and Delia exchanged glances, then followed him.

Olivier actually hesitated slightly, as though thinking of something. After Linley and the others had moved some distance…“Olivier, what are you

thinking about?" Olivier only now came to his senses and immediately hurried after them.

"Olivier." Linley said.

"Hrm?" Olivier looked towards Linley.

"Have you truly decided to join us to the Bloodridge Continent?" Linley laughed. While on the trip over from Bluemaple City, he had chatted about this with Olivier. "The Starmist Sea is vast, and it's hard to say what sort of dangers we'll encounter on the trip over."

Olivier laughed calmly. "Linley, in the Infernal Realm, I have no particular goal or target. It's fine for me to just adventure with you for a time. What's more, although the Starmist Sea has dangers within it, we have you, a powerful expert, right?"

Powerful expert?

As Linley and Olivier chatted on the street, given how densely populated the streets of Bluemaple City were, quite a few people nearby overheard them. Those people couldn't help but glance sideways at Linley, either disdainfully or with amusement. Clearly…none of them viewed Linley as a powerful expert.

Because Linley was a God!

In the vast Infernal Realm, Gods could only be considered ordinary people. They couldn't be considered powerful experts at all.

Linley noticed the glances of the nearby people, and he really didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. "Olivier, since when did you become the type of person to say these sorts of things?" Olivier should be that sort of person who was solemn and icy, and not the type of person to joke around like this. However, Linley understood that the reason was because Olivier now viewed him as a true friend.

In a foreign land, people from the same homeland were especially near and dear.

In the Infernal Realm, of course they would be closer to each other, as they were both from the Yulan continent.

The Fiend Castle. The Fiend Castles everywhere were all the same.

Per the usual norms, Linley's group arrived on the second floor of the Fiend Castle. There were a row of rooms on the second floor, one of which was meant for One Star Fiends to take on assignments. Linley's group of four thus entered one of the empty rooms.

Within the room, there was a golden-haired, violet-robed woman.

The violet-robed woman raised her head and glanced at the four of them, then said calmly, "Speak. What sort of mission do you want?"

"The four of us wish to take on a two star mission, hopefully one which is heading from Bluemaple City to 'Nishan City' of the Bloodridge Continent." Linley said.

Nishan City belonged to the northwestern corner of the Bloodridge Continent. From the Redbud Continent, most would first arrive at Nishan City.

"Bloodridge Continent? Wait a moment." The violet-robed woman glanced at Linley with her blue eyes, then closed them momentarily before opening them again later. When she did, a thick scroll appeared within her hands, which she flipped open while saying, "From Bluemaple City to the border city, Nishan, of the Bloodridge Continent, within the next month, there are 13,043 different types of missions, with 1836 of them being two star missions. Choose for yourself." As she spoke, she placed the thick scroll in front of Linley.

Linley's group of four was stunned.

Over ten thousand choices?

“Linley, when we came over from Royalwing City, there were only eleven missions, three of which were two star.” Delia sighed in shock.

The violet-robed woman said calmly, “Every day, there’s a large number of people heading from Bluemaple City to the Bloodridge Continent, the Jadefloat Continent, or the Starmist Sea. However, most of them are self-guided merchant caravans. There aren’t that many real missions being issued. Despite that, it’s normal for there to be over ten thousand.”

Linley flipped through the two star missions.

“Boss, which one should we choose?” Bebe was seeing stars after looking through so many. He didn’t know which one to pick.

Linley turned to glance at the others. “This time, I’ll pick a simple, easy one.”

After their most recent experience, Linley didn’t dare to choose those missions which recruited an entire pile of Fiends. The more Fiends that had been invited, the more complicated a mission would be. However, if there were too few Fiends, the trip would be more troublesome and there would be more danger.

Thus, Linley chose a two star mission that was employing a group of Two Star Fiends.

“This one.” Linley decided.

“This one?” Bebe leaned over to take a look, then muttered, “There’s almost no payment. To go all the way through the vast Starmist Sea for just fifty thousand inkstones…” Last time, the escort mission’s reward was two hundred thousand inkstones. But of course…

On that mission, the mission givers, the white-horned elder and the black-horned elder, had both died. Linley’s group had failed the mission and thus

had gotten nothing.

“If we can’t get paid, what’s the point?” Linley laughed.

Delia laughed as well. “Bebe, you care about this?”

Bebe had harvested amethysts for fully ten years. The fortune he was in possession of was most likely comparable to the entire fortune of the Boyd clan.

“I’m just saying.” Bebe mumbled.

Linley was actually musing secretly that the higher the compensation was, the more hidden dangers would most likely be held within this mission. How could the last escort mission be considered a two star mission? Those people who had been employed on that mission had been all but throwing their lives away. Aside from Linley’s group, who had been lucky enough to be spared by Phusro, all of the other hired Fiends had died, with only Learmonth being able to escape thanks to his power.

“Give me the Fiend medallion for a moment.” The violet-robed woman said.

After finishing the paperwork, Linley’s group of four left the Fiend Castle, while at the same time they now knew when they were going to leave. It was going to be in three days! One of the reasons why Linley chose this mission was precisely because it was starting in three days.

Linley’s group of four first enjoyed a meal, then purchased a great deal of delicacies and wine which were pre-stored, then headed to a hotel.

The next three days, they spent within a private courtyard in the hotel.

“After six hundred years of training, I’ve improved quite a bit in earth and wind. Only, my progress in my divine fire clone has been too slow.” Seated in the courtyard, Linley was pondering his training.

During the six hundred years he had spent in the Amethyst Mountains, his divine earth clone had made the most accomplishments, while his divine wind clone had also finally, completely fused the ‘Sound Waves’ and ‘Music’ profound mysteries, while also reaching the later stage in the simpler ‘Essence of the Wind’ profound mystery. However, the Elemental Laws of the Wind had in total nine profound mysteries, and the further along he went, the slower it was…

As for the divine fire clone, in six hundred years, he had only gained a basic understanding of the ‘Flamebody’ technique, and had yet to reach the God stage.

Linley shut his eyes.

Within his sea of consciousness, above the sea, three bodies were seated meditatively. They were the earth-yellow robed Linley, the light green robed Linley, and the fire-red robed Linley. The three Linleys formed into a triangle, and above them was the rainbow sword-shaped soul.

Beneath the sword-shaped soul was a black stone.

At the same time, threads of golden fog was being absorbed into the sword-shaped soul. Only, the absorption speed was already very slow.

“Hm?” Linley frowned, opening his eyes. “Over the past six hundred years, I’ve placed many amethysts into the Coiling Dragon ring to refine and absorb them. After six centuries of non-stop absorption, the rate of absorption is now growing slower and slower.”

This situation had only begun in the past few days. In the past, the absorption speed had never lessened before.

“Can it be that the amount of soul essence a soul can take in has a limit?” Linley wondered.

And then, Linley nodded slightly. It made sense that there was a limit. Otherwise, if a soul could constantly strengthen nonstop, what would the

end result be?

Linley wasn't sure.

Although absorbing soul essences could allow one's soul to strengthen and even seemingly improve in quality, in truth, this was a form of 'quality' that came from 'quantity'. It was much like a bottle; if you filled it with too much gas, the gas might compress and even be forced to liquefy due to pressure.

This was an example of quantity changing quality.

But there was still a limit, because if you kept on filling the bottle with gas, even after the gas liquefies, if the liquid reaches a limit, the bottle will explode…and the soul would shatter.

This was the situation with Linley. His soul had reached a limit and was unable to absorb any more.

If he wanted to strengthen his soul still further, he had to increase the size of the 'bottle' and make it sturdier, allowing it to fill with more gas and to make the liquid denser! This sort of transformation was a true 'qualitative' transformation, but there was only one way to do this; break through to the next level of Deityhood. Advancing from Demigod to God, and God to Highgod!

Even by fusing with a divine spark, the divine spark would allow for one's soul to change.

But of course, becoming a Deity on one's own would result in the descent of the natural Laws, increasing the intrinsic quality of the soul.

This was why many Highgods, even those who didn't absorb soul essences, would have souls which were more powerful than Gods! Linley had absorbed so much soul essence, but his soul power could only be considered the peak of Gods. Compared to Highgods, he was still a bit off.

Three days later, at the gates of Bluemaple City, a large number of people were gathered. There were many groups gathered here, preparing to depart. There were also quite a few Fiend Castle staff members here. Linley's group presented their Fiend medallions for inspection, and a Fiend Castle staff member led Linley's group of four to a metallic lifeform.

"Your people are here." The Fiend Castle staff member said a few words, then turned and left.

"The four of you, I am your employer, Aches [Ai'qi]!" A short, curly golden-haired man laughed. "Wait here a while. The people I've invited are almost all here. When we are all here, we will head into the sea." Suddenly, 'Aches' stared at Delia unblinkingly.

Delia was startled by his stare.

Linley frowned, while Bebe said unhappily, "Hey, kid, what are you looking at? What sort of attitude is this?"

"Highgod, haha, you are actually a Highgod?" Aches was all smiles. "Haha, what a bargain, what a bargain! I didn't expect that amongst the twenty one Two Star Fiends, a Highgod Fiend would be amongst them."

Chapter 4 – Out To Sea

Book 16, Starmist Sea– Chapter 4, Out To Sea

The Infernal Realm's Redbud Continent, Karol Continent, Jadefloat Continent, Bloodridge Continent, and Muja Continent. These five great continents were essentially formed into a circle, with the inside of this circle being the inner sea, the 'Starmist Sea'. Although it was the 'inner sea', the size of this Starmist Sea vastly exceeded any other continent.

"Splash…." The clear, slightly-violet tinged water of the seas were forming waves.

At the boundless Starmist Sea, even when there was no wind, there would still be meter-high waves.

"Swish!" A rhomboid-shaped metallic lifeform 'boat' was flying at high speed through the waves, making its way forward. This metallic lifeform, transformed into a rhomboid, was nearly fifty meters long and ten meters wide. It had no ceiling, while the metal on each side was transparent.

Linley, Delia, and the others were all admiring the scenery of the Starmist Sea. This was their first time entering the Starmist Sea.

"So beautiful!"

The bottomless, faintly violet sea water. The slender, thin clouds. The clear, cool mist coiling about. Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but have a feeling of vastness in his heart.

"Boss, just now, when we headed out, there were almost no fog clouds above the sea. Now, there is fog everywhere. This is the same as the Amethyst Mountains. Only, it isn't as thick as the fog in the Amethyst Mountains." Bebe raised his head, staring up above. The metallic lifeform advanced upon the surface of the water.

Roughly ten meters or so above the metallic lifeform was the fog.

The fog above the Starmist Sea came in thin strands that posed very little restriction to visibility.

Linley raised his head to look at it. From nearby, a voice suddenly rang out. “Don’t underestimate the fog. The ‘fog’ of the Starmist Sea is extremely dangerous. Upon entering the fog region, you will suffer attack from lightning. The deeper into the fog you go, the more powerful the lightning! Even Highgods dare not fly too high!”

Linley turned to look. The speaker was another God-level Fiend. This God-level Fiend had short black hair which looked like steel needles, and a very thick beard. He was very casually leaning against a corner, holding a bottle of wine and drinking.

“My name is Linley.” Linley laughed while looking at him.

“You can address me as Bates [Bei’ci]!” The big bearded man said casually. “This is your first trip to the Starmist Sea, right? Everyone is like this on their first trip. However, in the future, you’ll feel bored. After all, there’s nothing here but seawater. Occasionally, there will be some irritating bandits. There really are bandits everywhere in the world. So damn annoying.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“Haha, there’s no need to worry about those bandits.” The employer, Aches, walked over, his face all smiles. “This time, our squad has two Highgods. Those small bandit groups…how would they dare offend two Highgod Fiends? As for the more powerful forces, they most likely won’t attack people like us.”

Olivier glanced at him sideways. “From what you are saying, we should be quite safe?”

“In the Starmist Sea, just based on the fact that we will constantly advance for decades, who knows what will happen?” In the main hall of the metallic lifeform, other Fiends spoke out disdainfully as well.

Linley chuckled.

Danger?

As long as they didn’t encounter any Seven Star Fiends or Asura-level combatants, staying alive shouldn’t be a problem.

Night. At the front of the boat-shaped lifeform, Linley appeared, having stepped out of his cabin. There were currently quite a few people at the front of the boat.

“Whoooooosh.”

The metallic lifeform was moving at high speed. The sea wind was very strong, carrying a knife-like force. Ordinary people would have died from the sea wind alone. To Deities, however, this sea wind didn’t impact them much. Linley didn’t chat with these people. He came to a half-rest, leaning against the semi-translucent metallic planks, enjoying the night scenery of the Starmist Sea.

The water of the Starmist Sea at night seemed very dark and gloomy, as though an enormous beast was hiding within its depths.

“We’ve been in the sea for a full year. However, I don’t feel as though we’ve advanced very far.” Linley sighed in his heart. This ‘Bates’ had spoken the truth. After spending a long time in the Starmist Sea, one would feel bored. After all, they were always surrounded by boundless water.

Although the metallic lifeform flew very quickly, one couldn’t notice it.

“Linley.” A voice rang out from behind. Linley turned, and saw that it was Delia. Delia sat by Linley’s side as well. Half-reclining, she took Linley’s hand. For some reason, she began to laugh.

“Why are you laughing like a fool?” Linley laughed as well.

“I’m just thinking. Back when we met for the first time at the Ernst Institute, who would have imagined that there would come a day where the two of us would be adventuring in the Starmist Sea of the Infernal Realm? Fate really is a strange thing.” Delia sighed.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh as well.

“Linley, look. There’s thunder in the distance.” Delia pointed to the distance as she spoke.

Linley turned to look as well…

Indeed, in the distance, the thin fogs in the sky had a large amount of lightning snaking down from within.

“The scene is quite beautiful. We’ve been in the Starmist Sea for so long, but we’ve never seen a sight so interesting.” Linley laughed, then sighed.

“Lightning!” Several people nearby began to cry out in alarm.

Not wasting words at all, almost all of them scurried back into the cabin like startled rabbits.

Linley and Delia turned to look, puzzled, only to see their employer, that Aches, stare at them while sending a mental message, “Hurry up and come in. The Starmist Sea is about to storm. Quick!”

“Storm?”

Although Linley and Delia were both puzzled ,they still flew back into the metallic lifeform. Upon returning to the metallic lifeform, Linley and Delia immediately stared through the translucent metal towards the lightning. Everyone else was doing the same.

“Crackle…” From within the mist, countless electric snakes were shooting out, with the storm area growing greater and greater.

Moments later, lightning bolts began to rain down from the skies above this metallic lifeform. Linley was greatly shocked. “In the blink of an eye, it expanded over a thousand kilometers.” Deities had a very long field of vision. For the lightning storm to expand so quickly truly caused Linley’s group to be astonished.

““Swoosh!” The metallic lifeform Linley’s group was riding immediately completely sealed itself while turning around at high speed, fleeing backwards.

“Crackle…”

In the air above Linley’s group, as well as in the air above the nearby areas, countless lightning serpents were crackling about. The area of lightning bolts was rapidly expanding, and the speed of the expansion was far faster than the metallic lifeform’s flying speed.

“I hope we can escape this storm region.” Aches said softly.

Linley and the other Fiends all looked upwards through the translucent metal. At present, the lightning bolts had already spread across an extremely large area, and the entire world seemed to be covered by them. The originally sparse, dark clouds, under the illumination of the lightning serpents, seemed so gaudily visible.

“Rumble…” A low sound rang out.

Countless lightning bolts struck out, and even the fog began to swirl. In mid-air, countless lightning bolts and clouds began to revolve around each other, as a vortex that was over ten thousand kilometers in size began to form. This enormous lightning vortex was so dazzling to behold, and the light from it even made the faces of Linley and the others bright.

“Rumble…”

The enormous ten thousand kilometer vortex actually caused the sea water below them to suddenly also form into a ten thousand kilometer whirlpool. The power of this vortex was simply astonishing. One could imagine how much force this vortex had to contain, for it to be able to cause the water within ten thousand kilometers to form into a whirlpool.

For ten thousand kilometers, sea water swirled, with the waves of the ocean rising to dozens of meters, actually touching the fog above.

“Swish!” The metallic lifeform Linley was aboard frantically tried to pass through this region, seizing every moment to escape the center of the vortex.

“The power of this vortex really is something. Even the metallic lifeform is trembling.” The big-bearded Bates sighed. Linley could also clearly sense the tremors from throughout the metallic lifeform.

“Why don’t we fly up higher?” Bebe said with a frown. “Although we’ll be hit by lightning in the fog, if we don’t go too deep in, the power of the lightning shouldn’t be too great. The power of this vortex is simply too enormous.”

The entire metallic lifeform was being shaken so powerfully by the vortex that it was almost turning backwards.

“Motherf*cker, we actually encountered a Fogsea Storm. Our luck is terrible.” Aches cursed softly, while at the same time working hard to direct the metallic lifeform to advance.

“Enter the fog above us right now?” The other Fiends in the metallic lifeform laughed. “When there is a Fogsea Storm going on, countless bolts of lightning will gather together and charge into the fog. The power of these lightning bolts is tremendous. Not even Highgods can take on those bolts of electricity. If you want to die, that’s fine, but don’t doom the rest of us as well.”

In the entire metallic lifeform, aside from Delia, there was one other Highgod. The bald youth laughed calmly. “We noticed it early, and the eye of the vortex is fairly far from us. We aren’t in the central region of the vortex, so for now it won’t be too dangerous. However, the final wave of attacks in a Fogsea Storm is truly frightening.”

“The final wave?” Bebe looked at him, puzzled. Linley, Delia, and Olivier weren’t too sure either.

The bald youth said, “The Fogsea Storm first forms into a vortex, and then will drag everything in towards it. At most, it will put us in a sorry state; it won’t actually kill us. However, at the final stages of a Fogsea Storm, countless lightning bolts will swirl about in the sky, and then wildly stab down below! If you are struck…” The bald man chuckled.

“Even I, if struck, would die.” The bald youth said.

Linley was secretly shocked. Raising his head, he looked at the vortex formed from countless lightning bolts. “The power of these lightning bolts truly is great. That bald youth is a Highgod, but not even he can take a hit from them. Now, Linley understood why the metallic lifeform was fleeing.”

It was because the closer one was to the center of the vortex, the denser the attacking lightning bolts and the higher the chance one would be struck.

Actually, this Fogsea Storm was a natural phenomenon of the Starmist Sea, because the fog of the Starmist Sea was very unique. It would naturally absorb the electric power of the world, and so anyone who entered the fog would have the fog release lightning bolts upon them.

But, since they knew this, nobody would be so stupid as to enter it and be struck.

With no one entering the fog, the amount of lightning accumulating in the fog would naturally increase, until at a certain point, it would have to release it.

That was what a Fogsea Storm was.

The process of a large amount of electricity being released!

“No time. We won’t be able to escape the perimeter of the Fogsea Storm.” Aches sighed, then turned to glance at everyone. “Everyone, be careful. Don’t get hit. Remember, when the lightning bolts come down, no matter what, don’t go into the water.”

Linley and the others understood that water conducted electricity.

In an area of ten thousand kilometers, when countless lightning bolts capable of killing a Highgod rained down, they would probably strike down all the way into the depths of the sea! Entering the sea thus meant death.

“I wish everyone good luck!” The bald youth said.

“Good luck!” Others called out as well.

“Good luck!”

Everyone’s face was solemn. In the Infernal Realm, people often teetered between the brink of life and death. Only, each time, nobody dared to be complacent! This time, however, it was completely a matter of luck. The lightning bolts were just less than a hundred meters above them. When they struck down, there was no time to dodge at all.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

Linley raised his head to look…

Instantly, within ten thousand kilometers, countless lightning bolts suddenly came smashing down like the rain in a dense cluster. In this instant, the entire world became eye-piercingly bright!

They struck the sea in the blink of an eye, and within ten thousand kilometers, more than a large half of the numerous metallic lifeforms were

struck.

Linley's group was lucky. The closest lightning bolt actually struck the surface of the sea. Every single lightning bolt carried an astonishing amount of power, striking down into the depths of the sea like a sharp arrow. Every single lightning bolt only had a small amount of electricity dissipate and spread across the surface of the sea.

The vast majority of the energy was so condensed that it plunged straight through into the depths of the sea.

"Crackle…"

However, even the remnants of electrical power that were on the surface of the waters caused Linley's metallic lifeform to violently shutter.

"BANG!" The metallic lifeform exploded.

Linley's group just hovered above the water. Only now did they let out sighs of relief. On the surface of the water beneath them, there was still a electricity circulating, only, everyone knew that this wasn't much of a threat to them.

"We're safe." The employer, Aches, cracked a smile.

The Fiends all let out sighs of relief. They laughed.

"Haha. Safe!"

"Motherf*cker, I got my life back!" After having dodged this trial, they all began to grow relaxed.

But Linley only stared into the distance. Just now, when those countless bolts of lightning had struck down, there had been another metallic lifeform not too far from Linley's group's, but that one had been unlucky. It had been struck and immediately exploded apart. Quite a few people died on the spot, while the rest had fled for their lives.

Linley had no idea how many people had died within this region of ten thousand kilometers.

“I seem to have saw someone flying in the sky just now, ignoring those striking lightning bolts.” A puzzled voice rang out.

Just now, when lightning bolts had rained down like the apocalypse, someone had dared fly in the skies?

All the Fiends nearby, Linley included, turned to look. The speaker was the big-bearded man, Bates. Frowning, he said, “I shouldn’t have seen wrongly. It was a person, and he seemed to be carrying a weapon. I don’t know if it was a sword or a saber.”

Chapter 5 – That Powerful Man

Book 16, Starmist Sea– Chapter 5, That Powerful Man

When a Fogsea Storm occurred, trillions of lightning bolts would slam down. Not even a Highgod could withstand it. What sort of power was this?

And yet, this Bates was claiming that someone dared to fly in that sort of situation?

“Haha, Bates, is it that you dodged this tribulation and thus were so overjoyed that you started to spout nonsense? You saw that Fogsea Storm as well. Even extremely powerful Highgods capable of withstanding this sort of lightning wouldn’t be so wild as to fly in the air.” A green-haired Fiend laughed while speaking.

Linley and the others all nodded slightly.

In this sort of environment, most likely only someone as powerful as a Seven Star Fiend or an Asura would dare fly.

“If you don’t believe me, then forget it.” Bates chuckled, clearly not caring. “But I definitely didn’t see wrongly just now. I don’t believe that I was just seeing things.” As a God, how could he be seeing things?

“Boss, it’s just flying in lightning. You and I can both do that. What’s the big deal?” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind. “So what if that thunder hit me? What can it do? When we were in the castle of sand, Boss, you were hit by that Highgod’s full-power lightning attack but weren’t hurt at all.”

Linley laughed.

Lightning bolts?

His original body had first absorbed a drop of that golden blood, and then absorbed that drop of liquefied Sovereign's Might as well as its powerful energy. His body was so mighty that it had already exceeded most Highgod artifacts. Linley was actually confident as well in his ability to resist those lightning bolts.

"Bebe, make sure you don't start bragging." Linley sent to him.

Bebe chortled. "Got it, Boss. I'm not that sort of person who brags wildly." The two chatted through their spiritual link, and so others couldn't overhear.

"I also saw that just now, someone was indeed flying within the lightning." Suddenly, a voice rang out.

"Oh?"

Linley couldn't help but be surprised. He turned to look. Not just Linley; the other luckily surviving Fiends also turned to look. The speaker was that young bald Highgod. He nodded and said, "And I saw clearly that on his back, he had a saber or a heavy sword type of heavy weapon."

The bald youth was a Highgod. His words were much more convincing than Bates'.

"There really was a person?"

"If Lord Boff [Bo'fei] said it was so, how could it not be?" Someone immediately replied.

"How would I, Bates, lie about this? Even Lord Boff says the same." Bates immediately was rather self-delighted.

The bald youth was named 'Boff'. The bald youth turned to look at Bates, staring at him. "Bates, just now, there were countless bolts of lightning descending. That was a life and death moment. I was confident, which is why I was able to be slightly distracted and look at my surroundings. In that sort of situation, how could you also be paying attention to the distance?"

Bates was startled.

At a critical moment, how could he dare be distracted?

Bates laughed in a silly manner, his beard fluttering up. “I only look into the distance after dodging past through bolts of lightning. Only, at that time, the person had already flown far away. That’s why I didn’t see clearly, only that he had a weapon on his back.”

“Oh.” The bald youth said.

“Alright, everyone. We all safely passed through this trial, which is a source of joy. Haha…but we still need to continue on our journey.” The employer, Aches, chuckled. At the same time, the metallic lifeform which had transformed into a rhomboid ship once more appeared on the sea.

Linley and the others immediately entered the metallic lifeform.

“Swoosh!” The metallic lifeform immediately broke through the waves and advanced.

Within the metallic lifeform, the Fiends were all in an excellent mood after having survived. All of them were loudly laughing, drinking wine, and chatting. The walls of the hall were all translucent, and so everyone could look through the metal walls to see the sea outside. Currently, the surface of the sea was still faintly crackling with electric sparks, but the power was clearly much weaker now.

“How is it that in the center of the vortex, there is still lightning crashing down?” At the side of the main hall, Olivier, staring at the outside, suddenly spoke.

“There’s still lightning?”

Linley and the others immediately turned to look. Through the translucent metal, they could immediately see that in the location which had been the

center of the vortex, the vortex had already disappeared, but in the location above that spot, thick bolts of lightning were crashing down wildly at one location.

The metallic lifeform constantly advanced forward, drawing closer and closer to that location.

“How truly odd. I’ve never heard of lightning continuously striking down after a Fogsea Storm.” Immediately, people began to murmur, although none of them were worried for their safety, because the lightning was concentrated on one spot. There’s no way it would hit them.

Linley suddenly stared.

“Someone’s there!” As they drew near, Linley immediately discovered that in the area where the lightning was continuously crashing down, there was a man standing on the surface of the sea.

The distance was too great, and Linley could only just barely make out his figure. The thick bolts of lightning crashed down, but the figure didn’t dodge at all.

“Ah, there’s someone beneath the lightning!” Others discovered as well.

“That’s the location where the center of the vortex had been. The lightning is so powerful…not even those legendary Seven Star Fiends should be able to take on that lightning head on.” The other Fiends were shocked. However, they had all only heard of Seven Star Fiends; after all, meeting a Seven Star Fiend was extremely rare.

“Hey, Aches, hurry up and go closer and let us take a look?” Immediately, everyone began to urge him.

In the Infernal Realm, everyone worshipped strong experts. Someone who dared to stand in the middle of a Fogsea Storm and actually draw lightning bolts down upon himself was definitely someone worthy of adoration. Aches said magnanimously, “Fine, I’ll immediately direct the metallic

lifeform over. However…at most, we'll draw within one kilometer. Any closer, and we'll probably irritate that lord."

As he spoke, the metallic lifeform headed closer towards that location.

One kilometer's distance, for Deities, was extremely close. Deities could clearly see an ant at that distance.

Currently, bolts of thunder that seemed as thick as a hundred lightning bolts combined were constantly crashing down upon that person in the sea. That person was thin, but he stood there, ramrod straight. His pitch black long hair fell to his shoulders, and it casually fluttered in the wind.

Linley could clearly tell that this person was carrying a warblade, and his head was raised as he stared towards the lightning.

"Crackle…"

Countless bolts of lightning crashed viciously upon his forehead, and then crackled across his entire body. However, the man just stood there unmoving like a mountain. Occasionally, his eyes would emit two rays of cold, netherworldly scarlet lightning which would crash into the fogs up above, causing the lightning descending from the fog to grow even stronger.

"So powerful!" Linley's heart clenched.

The power of the crashing lightning caused even space itself to shudder, but that person was completely unharmed.

Everyone in the metallic lifeform was holding their breaths. An expert like this was too frightening.

"Firing lightning from his eyes?" Linley began to understand. This person should be a person who trained in the Laws of Lightning.

"He should be someone who trains in the Laws of Lightning." The calm Olivier spoke out.

The others were all startled into wakefulness, and the big-bearded Bates nodded as well. “Lightning, after crashing down, would normally dissipate, but this person is constantly attacking the sea of fogs, drawing down ‘punishment’ from the sea of fogs time and time again…but as far as I can tell, he seems to be enjoying the punishment.”

“He is training.” The bald youth, Boff, said.

Everyone nodded.

For someone who trained in the Laws of Lightning to come personally experience the powerful lightning bolts of a Fogsea Storm was indeed an excellent training method. However, this sort of training method was generally only doable by a powerful expert.

“Let’s go.” The employer, Aches, laughed hurriedly. “All we are doing is watching him as he stands there. If his lordship finishes his training and sees us here, if he is angry, we’ll all be in trouble.” As he spoke, Aches ordered his metallic lifeform to leave.

Everyone began to laugh.

Experts had their own pride. Unless there was some sort of special situation, they would rarely vent their anger on weaker people.

The light of the Blood Sun slightly penetrated the thin fog, shining downwards. The waves billowed, and the metallic lifeform rode the wind, breaking through the waves and advancing.

Linley and Delia were seated at the head of the ship.

“It’s been two years since we’ve entered the sea. In the sea, there are far fewer bandits than on the continents.” Linley sighed. “On the Redbud Continent, every so often, we’ll run into bandit teams. In the Starmist Sea, however, we’ll only run into them once every two months.”

Delia nodded.

And then, Delia laughed. “Linley, you really are such a jinx. Whatever you mention ends up happening.”

“What?” Linley turned to look as well.

Indeed, in the distance, beneath the waters of the sea, there were figures floating. At the same time, an enormous, fierce green python that would require three or four men to wrap their arms around it broke out of the surface of the sea. It was at least a hundred meters along. This giant python, comparable to the size of a massive dragon, came smashing towards the metallic lifeform, which immediately halted.

Linley couldn’t help but laugh and shake his head. With a flip of his hand…

“Roaaaar!” A ten meter high earthen yellow bear appeared out of nowhere. The great bear grabbed that green python, bellowing as it ripped the python into two pieces.

Actually, the only reason why the opponents had created this elemental construct was to make the metallic lifeform come to a halt.

“Heh heh, I didn’t expect us to encounter bandits. The Starmist Sea is incredibly boring. Finally, something interesting has come.” Laughter rang out from within the metallic lifeform as quite a few Fiends came running out.

An entire group of Fiends were outside the metallic lifeform.

Right at this moment, a hundred figures were hovering in front of the metallic lifeform. Only, they immediately noticed Delia.

“A Highgod Fiend?” The hundred bandits immediately felt that the situation had become thorny.

“Hey, why are you afraid? Are you afraid just because you saw we have two

Highgod Fiends?" The big-bearded Bates was the type of person who only feared the world was too orderly, and thus he called loudly.

Linley's group of four was very relaxed. These hundred plus figures didn't have a single Highgod amongst them. They posed no threat at all.

"Disperse." The leader, a balding man with fish scales on his forehead growled.

Right at this moment…

Linley and quite a few others could sense a terrifying power, and they immediately turned to look. Only, Linley's group only saw a bolt of lightning crash down from the heavens, surrounding a person. Linley found out, to his amazement, "It is him!" It was the expert whom they had encountered a year ago, who had taken on the lightning bolts of the Fogsea Storm head on.

At the same instant this figure descended, his right fist smashed down hard from the air.

"Bang!"

The fist smashed into the empty air, but a terrifying explosive sound rang out, while at the same time, with the fist at the center, circles of ripples spread out, forming curved lines which twisted, passing by Linley's group and striking that group of bandits who had wanted to flee.

Silently…

All of the bandits who were struck trembled, and then fell down and slowly sank into the water.

With one attack, over a hundred bandits had all died!

Aches, Bates, and the others all stared, slack-jawed. Linley had seen Elquin, Bluefire, the juvenile amethyst beast, and other powerful experts, and so he

had quite a bit more experience than them. Naturally, he wasn't too shocked. Only, Linley was puzzled. "In the Infernal Realm, there are an uncountable number of bandits. Generally speaking, experts can't be bothered to deal with them. But this person…why?"

This was indeed puzzling.

At the same time, Linley took a careful look at this person, who was now close to them. His face seemed to have been sculpted by a carving knife, and his gaze was as fierce as a blade. He himself gave off a baleful, sharp aura, and every single strand of hair seemed like a thin strand of steel. As they fluttered in the wind, they actually carried a strange sound with them.

The man lowered his head, glancing down at the sinking corpses of the bandits, sneering coldly. "Bandits and thieves all deserve death!"

After speaking, the man moved, once more flying into the fog above and moving at high speed through the fog. Everyone who entered the fog would suffer the attack of lightning bolts, and so wherever this figure passed, countless lightning bolts flashed.

"His speed is so fast. He is so powerful." Olivier said softly.

The group of Fiends came to their senses moments later.

"Ahhh! All those bandit corpses are sinking. So many divine sparks and interspatial rings!" The big-bearded Bates immediately howled in grief, and all the other Fiends only now realized this as well. However, all of the corpses had sunk down long ago.

There were quite a few people living at the bottom of the seas as well. To Deities, being in the water or on the land didn't make much of a difference.

The Fiends immediately began to regret it.

"Haha, if they're gone, then forget about them. Look at all of you. Haha, let's head off." Aches laughed. "The sea region up ahead has an extremely

powerful bandit force. They live there, on Knifeblade Island. Let's make sure we take a roundabout path away from that damn place."

As he spoke, Aches once more took control over the metallic lifeform, which headed out at high speed!

Right now, though, Linley was still thinking about that man's appearance. "This expert who trains in the Laws of Lightning should have the power of a Seven Star Fiend." Linley calculated silently.

Chapter 6 – Knifeblade Island

Book 16, Starmist Sea– Chapter 6, Knifeblade Island

Knifeblade Island. Its circumference was nearly ten thousand kilometers. On the island, a single mountain peak stood by itself, appearing like the blade of a knife rising into the heavens. Thus, this island was named Knifeblade Island.

Knifeblade Island was the lair of an extremely powerful group of bandits. Everyone passing through the Starmist Sea would actively move away from it. But despite that…the forces of Knifeblade Island were spread out and on the prowl. Upon finding a target, they would immediately lead a group of people to attack in unison.

“Rumble…” The waters of the ocean bellowed as they struck upon the beaches of the island.

A bolt of lightning crashed down. After the electric sparks dissipated, a person appeared standing at the beach. It was the grim looking man who carried the warblade.

The grim eyes of the man came to a rest on the distant, eye-catching mountain peak. He murmured, “Knifeblade Island. This is the second place!” And then, the man strode forward, his body flashing with each step which took him hundreds of meters as he instantly entered the depths of the island.

The mountain peak had a large number of bandits living there.

This grim looking man was dressed in a long black robe, and he strode forward boldly, seeming to not care at all about the power of these bandits.

“Who is it!” Within the mountain forests, someone shouted loudly.

A very large number of bandits lived here at Knifeblade Island. Naturally, people would discover this black haired man, but the black haired man didn't even look at the person who had shouted, continuing to move hundreds of meters with each step.

The bandit's face changed, and he immediately shouted loudly, "Someone is invading the mountain!"

"Someone is invading the mountain!"

That ringing roar filled the entire mount peak. The bandits who had been resting or training were all startled awake, and the entire Knifeblade Island became a hubbub of activity. Immediately, quite a few pirates began to move towards the sound. Naturally, some of them would run into the black haired man.

But the black haired man still didn't care at all, continuing to move forward.

"Over there!" Immediately, people discovered him.

"Halt!" Others shouted.

But the black haired man still travelled hundreds of meters per step, constantly moving towards the mountain peak.

"Kill!" Not hesitating at all, the many bandits gathered in the surrounding areas all immediately bellowed, brandishing their cruel, merciless weapons. Flashes of fiery red light, earthen yellow light…all sorts of elemental Law based attacks began.

The black haired man's facial expression didn't change at all.

"Crackle…"

A strange sound rang out. The black haired man's speed didn't slow down at all, moving a thousand meters in three steps.

“Hey? How come this person isn’t reacting at all?” Quite a few bandits didn’t understand at all.

“BANG!”

Very suddenly, thirty bandits suddenly exploded, their flesh and blood splattering everywhere and their divine sparks landing to one side. The lucky survivors were so terrified, their faces turned white. Only now did they realize that the person had attacked just now.

Only, the speed was too fast. They hadn’t seen it at all.

The Elemental Laws of the Wind, Lightning, and Light were all very suited for speed. How fast someone would be depended on their accomplishments.

But to reach a level of speed where not even these Gods could sense anything at all was simply terrifying.

From the base of the mountain to the gates of that castle within Knifeblade Island, he only took, in total, twenty eight steps. He killed six hundred and twenty eight people. Given the amount of chaos he was creating, the three leaders of Knifeblade Island naturally came out as well, and the elites of Knifeblade Island were currently all on the walls of the castle.

Knifeblade Island had in total three leaders, a hundred Highgods, and over ten thousand Gods. In the society of bandits, they could be considered a supersized power.

At this moment, those hundred Highgods were all surrounding the three leaders. They were on top of the walls of the castle, staring down at the black haired man.

“Who are you, that you have come here to wantonly commit slaughter here?” A grim silver haired man said in an icy voice. He was the chief leader of Knifeblade Island, ‘Acketts’ (A’ke’ci), and was also the number one expert of the entire Knifeblade Island. Acketts could already tell that the black haired man was not easy to deal with.

“Why has this person come to make trouble for us bandits?” Acketts didn’t understand.

The ultimate experts of the Infernal Realm generally didn’t want to bother with bandits.

The black haired man slowly raised his head. His face was pale, and his eyes stared at Acketts like daggers. “My name is Lomio Bornesen [Lu’miao Bo’er’nuo’sen]!”

Acketts frowned. Lomio Bornesen?

He hadn’t heard of this name before.

The black haired man said calmly, “I heard that Mr. Acketts, the leader of Knifeblade Island, had already become a Six Star Fiend long ago. Today, I have two reasons for coming to Knifeblade Island. The first reason is to challenge you, Mr. Acketts!”

Acketts couldn’t help but narrow his eyes as he weighed this Lomio with a viperous gaze.

Him being a Six Star Fiend was back before he became a bandit. After so many years had passed, not many people knew whether or not he now had the power of a Seven Star Fiend. This was also the reason why nobody in Knifeblade Island dared to offend him. Nobody wanted to offend someone who was possibly a Seven Star Fiend.”

“This person dares to challenge me. Then…he most likely is confident in being able to challenge a Seven Star Fiend!” Acketts was calculating mentally.

Moments later…

“Brothers, join forces and kill him!” Acketts instantly spread out his divine sense to the hundred Highgods nearby, including the other two leaders. The

group of Highgods simultaneously drew out their weapons and immediately used their most powerful attacks.

“Swoosh!”

The black haired man instantly rose into the heavens.

“Acketts, you truly disappoint me!” A cold voice rang out from the skies, while at the same time, countless bolts of lightning appeared, and countless electric serpents actually began to swirl about as though in a vortex. The eye-catching electric serpents radiated light, glowing on the faces of each person of the castle.

Acketts and the others were all shocked.

“Boss, this looks like a Fogsea Storm.” The second leader, ‘Dimon’ (Dai’man) said in alarm by Acketts’ side.

Indeed, this was the scene of the Fogsea Storm, with countless lightning bolts appearing and circling about.

“Boss, what should we do?” The third leader, ‘Nieles’ (Ni’li’si), was worried as well.

Acketts face was sinister. He knew that once those countless lightning bolts snaked down, most likely ninety percent or more of the hundred Highgods present would all be killed. These were the elites of Knifeblade Island. Acketts immediately shouted loudly, “Lomio, since you’ve challenged me, then come!”

As he spoke, a pair of short, deep green awls appeared in his hands.

“This is the saber attack I have just developed. If you can withstand this blade, I will spare your life!” The cold voice rang out from the heavens, where many lightning bolts snaked around in the vortex. Seeing this, Acketts only let out a cold snort, his entire body faintly beginning to gleam with a green light.

At the same time, Acketts' entire body began to turn bizarrely blurred as a fog enveloped his entire body.

"So you have some ability." The calm voice rang down from the vortex above.

"Boom!"

The vortex from the large amount of lightning bolts suddenly began to spin, and a large amount of lightning concentrated at one point. Instantly, from that point, a ray of fierce electric saber light blasted out, carrying boundless power as it ripped through the skies and chopped downwards.

Acketts' entire body was enveloped by that fog, and on the surface of the fog, a strange wind-wheel appeared, frantically spinning.

"Crackle…" One crack after another was appearing in space.

"The most powerful defense of the Boss." The second leader, 'Dimon', and the third leader, 'Nieles', watched this from afar in nervousness. Their Boss trained in the Elemental Laws of Water. The defensive power of the Elemental Laws of Water was that it was both unyielding and soft, and could definitely be considered amongst the most powerful of defensive Laws.

"Boom!"

The lightning saber flashed, chopping down upon the foggy wind-wheel.

"Bang!" The wind-wheel exploded, transforming into two deep green awls which fell to one side. The fog dissipated as well. The faint green light covering Acketts body swiveled like a protective membrane over Acketts. He wanted to flee, but the speed of that lightning saber was simply too fast, and it directly chopped onto his body.

It paused for only a moment.

But then, the lightning saber flash still managed to chop through the membrane.

“Bang!” And then, the explosion. Acketts’ entire body blew apart, and three divine sparks actually fell to the ground, along with an interspatial ring. The lightning saber flash transformed into a warblade, and the black-haired man, Lomio Bornesen, once more appeared.

“Interspatial ring!”

The other two leaders, Dimon and Nieles, immediately stared at that interspatial ring.

Acketts had been in control of more than half of the wealth of Knifeblade Island, all of which was stored in his interspatial ring.

The black-haired man, Lomio, stretched his hand out and took the interspatial ring. This sight caused the facial muscles of the watching bandits to twitch and convulse. Lomio looked at the three divine sparks. “Six Star Fiend? He did indeed have the power of a Six Star Fiend. If I hadn’t made that breakthrough just a year ago, it wouldn’t have been so easy to kill you today.”

Lomio turned to look at the others.

Dimon and Nieles, as well as the other Highgods, felt terror in their hearts. Their leader, Acketts, was dead. Who could overcome this Lomio? In addition, to an expert on Lomio’s level, a hundred Highgods wouldn’t be able to do anything to him at all in a group battle.

“Mr. Lomio, the Boss is dead because his strength was inferior to yours. You’d best leave.” Dimon suppressed his anger.

The black haired man swept them with a glance, then continued. “I told you, I have two reasons for being here today. The first was to challenge Acketts. This is already completed. The second reason…” The black haired

man’s lips curved upwards. He was laughing.

This cold, callous man was actually laughing. His smile appeared quite pleasant, only, the group of bandits all felt their hearts shudder.

“The second reason is to destroy Knifeblade Island!” The black haired man, Lomio, said, his voice turning cold!

“Flee!!!”

An explosive shout instantly rang out, and the two leaders as well as the group of Highgods immediately scattered in every direction. The large amount of bandits on Knifeblade Island all immediately scattered as well.

“BOOM!” A large number of lightning bolts blasted out.

Of the hundred Highgods, fifty two corpses immediately collapsed. But of course, of the fifty two corpses, many had Highgod-level divine clones as well and so they continued to flee.

“They ran quite fast.” The black haired Lomio laughed coldly. Right now, all of the bandits of Knifeblade Island had fled. Only corpses remained!

“The second place is done! Time to start with the third target…” The black-haired man transformed into a ray of lightning, disappearing into the horizon.

The second leader, Dimon, was currently leading thirty-six Highgods and thousands of Gods. They were mounted on ten metallic lifeforms, advancing in an awe-inspiring sight. While fleeing, in order to prevent themselves from being all taken in one engagement, the second leader and the third leader had led their forces fleeing separately.

“What sort of horrible luck is this? We were doing perfectly fine when such a monstrously powerful bastard appeared!” Dimon’s rage knew no bounds.

“The vast fortune we built up!” Dimon’s heart ached. The leader, Acketts,

and that interspatial ring which had fallen after his death! The fortune stored there exceeded what he and the third leader had, combined.

The Highgods around them all had ugly looks on their faces.

“Second leader, there’s a metallic lifeform up ahead.” Immediately, a subordinate reported in.

Dimon looked out through the metallic lifeform towards the outside world. These bandits were people who normally waylaid and robbed people to begin with. Right now, they were in an especially foul mood and had bellies full of fire. Dimon didn’t dare to vent his anger on that black-haired Lomio, but he did dare to do on these travelers.

“Kill them. Kill them all, don’t spare a single one!” Dimon said viciously.

Dimon’s group had been slaughtering everyone in their path as they headed to another island.

Linley’s group was leisurely resting within the metallic lifeform, and Aches was chuckling. “We went over ten thousand kilometers away from Knifeblade Island. There should be no problem.”

“Is Knifeblade Island so powerful? You seem very afraid of them.” Bebe said.

“Knifeblade Island has more than a hundred Highgods alone, and I hear that long, long ago, their leader was a Six Star Fiend. According to legend, he now has the power of a Seven Star Fiend. You tell me, is he powerful or not? Even those two other leaders are only slightly weaker than the chief leader.” Aches said with some fear.

Linley was secretly astonished.

A bandit group actually had a Seven Star Fiend within it?

“Hey?” Linley looked through the translucent metal windows to the side.

“Why are there ten metallic lifeforms, and each one so enormous? It seems as though there are hundreds of people in each metallic lifeform, for a total of thousands of people all combined. Can it be that there is large trading caravan passing through the Starmist Sea?”

Suddenly…

The ten metallic lifeforms suddenly separated while flying at high speed. Moments later, Linley’s group of just twenty or so people were completely surrounded by a dense network of people who had come out from every single metallic vessel.

Linley’s group was momentarily stunned.

“Even if they want to waylay us, there’s no need for them to use thousands of people against our little group.” Linley felt numb as well.

Chapter 7 – Hidden Expert

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 7, Hidden Expert

In the vast Starmist Sea, ten large metallic lifeform vessels were completely surrounding a small metallic lifeform vessel. Thousands of people flew out from within the metallic vessels, all of the bandits staring at Linley's pitiful little group. Clearly, they didn't feel any concern about the group of twenty-plus in front of them.

"Finished. We're all finished!" Aches' entire body was shaking slightly, and his face was ashen.

The other God-level Fiends, upon seeing the countless experts surrounding them, all felt their hearts turn into blocks of ice. They felt so cold! The God-level Fiends all felt despair in their hearts. Thousands of bandit Gods were surrounding them. They didn't have any chance at all.

"Boss, this will be troublesome." Bebe's face was solemn.

Linley nodded slightly. Not just troublesome. When engaging in group attacks, the more people there were, the more terrifying the attacks would be. The other side had thousands of Gods, after all.

"There are even people beneath us." Linley glanced downwards and saw that beneath the surface of the sea, there were hundreds of bandits. These bandits seemed to be worried that Linley's group would flee down into the depths.

"We're finished." Some people were already in despair.

The big-bearded Bates had a solemn look on his face. He said in a low voice, "Thousands of Gods, and also Highgods. There are too many of them. Each person will have to rely on their own abilities. I wish everyone the same thing I wished you during the Fogwave Storm – Good luck!"

“Everyone, good luck.” The bald man, Boff, said in a low voice as well. Although he was a Highgod, in a situation like this, he wouldn’t be able to help the others.

Within the metallic lifeform was utter, deathly silence.

“Everyone.”

Everyone all turned their heads to look. The speaker was Aches.

Their employer, Aches, said in a solemn voice, “This time, I invited you all to come, but I didn’t expect that this would result in everyone being trapped within a calamity of certain death. I am sorry!” Aches bowed very slightly.

“Motherf*cker, even if we die, let’s kill a few of them!” Someone began to bellow.

“Right, if they want to kill me, it won’t be so easy. I even survived the goddamn Fogsea Storm. I won’t die so easily!”

The insides of the entire metallic lifeform began to bellow with shouts.

But Linley’s group of four was silent.

“Rather strange.” Linley looked towards the outside. On the Fog Sea, those countless Gods were clustered all around them. “So many Gods are gathered, but none of them are attacking? What is causing them to hesitate?”

“Boss, we…?” Bebe looked at Linley.

“At a time like this, there’s no need to pretend any longer.” Linley said with resignation through his divine sense. By now, if they kept hiding their power, they’d probably be killed.

Suddenly…

A powerful bolt of lightning snaked its way out from the bottom of the sea, bellowing as it struck towards Linley's metallic lifeform. With a colossal 'boom' sound, the entire metallic lifeform transformed into smithereens, while Linley and the others all immediately began to hover above the sea.

Linley and the other twenty plus people were like a flock of sheep trapped by a pack of wolves. They floated in the air pathetically.

"Haha…" The thousands of bandits all immediately began to laugh loudly. At present, the second leader of Knifeblade Island, 'Dimon', led thirty-six Highgods towards the front of the group, and these ordinary God bandits all immediately respectfully withdrew.

Dimon waved his hand gently, and all of the thousands of Gods immediately fell silent.

Linley and the others immediately looked towards Dimon.

"This person should be the leader of these bandits." Linley stared at Dimon, calculating mentally. "Behind him there are thirty-six Highgods. This bandit leader most likely has the power of a Five Star Fiend or even a Six Star Fiend."

Linley began to grow careful.

At present, he didn't have enough confidence in his ability to battle with a Six Star Fiend.

"Rumble…" The ocean water rolled out in waves.

Dimon and the other Highgods were up ahead, stepping on the waves, their eyes faintly red.

"Haha, I didn't expect there to be two Highgods here." Dimon began to laugh wildly, his eyes locked onto that bald youth, Boff, while occasionally glancing at Delia. "Do you know who I am? I'll tell you. I'm the second

leader of Knifeblade Island!”

Dimon had an evil smile on his face, but his red eyes carried a strange look in them.

The group of bandits all knew that once their second leader, Dimon, smiled in this manner, it meant he had gone insane and had just turned into a monster!

“Milord of Knifeblade Island.” Aches hurriedly called out loudly in supplication. “We are only ordinary travelers. I hope you can spare us, milord. We are willing to offer you our wealth.”

“Wealth?”

Dimon, hearing this, couldn’t help but think of the death of Acketts’ and how his interspatial ring had been taken away. That was the fortune of Knifeblade Island. Dimon was still unable to accept this matter. Dimon stared with bulging eyes at Aches. “Wealth. How much wealth can you possibly have? Do you think I care about your money? Ever since I fled from Knifeblade Island, I encountered three groups of people on the way over and killed them all.”

Immediately, Dimon pointed at Linley’s group. “And you, will be the fourth group!”

Linley and the others, hearing this, frowned.

“These people fled from Knifeblade Island?” Linley began to understand.

“That bald man and that b*tch. Those two are Highgods. The four of you, go deal with them.” Dimon turned to glance backwards as he spoke calmly. Immediately, four Highgods flew out, and Dimon immediately then shouted, “Brothers of the second mountain, this time, it’s your turn. Kill them all!”

Immediately, a group of Gods that had been waiting this entire time

immediately came charging out. Last three time, it hadn't been their turn to attack, and so they had already become quite impatient.

"Kill!"

"Kill!"

All of them were so excited that their eyes were red. Seven or eight hundred Gods, under the command of the four Highgods, charged forward all together. The other bandits all watched from afar. Sending out eight hundred plus people to kill this small group of around twenty was already more than enough.

The eight hundred people charged forward, walking on the waves, with thousands watching around them. This sort of mental pressure was enough to cause Linley and the others to feel unable to breath.

"Everyone, protect yourselves." The bald youth, Boff, said in a low voice.

Knifeblade Island's side had four Highgods, two of which were virtually flying shoulder by shoulder, simultaneously emitting two draconic roars. Two white icy dragons emerged from the surface of the sea, charging straight towards Boff as the two Highgods continued to advance.

The other two Highgods stared at Delia, attacking her at the same time.

Linley's gaze grew cold, and Bloodviolet appeared in his hand.

"Linley, let me give it a try." Delia's voice rang out in Linley's mind. Linley turned and saw that Delia was wielding the Spear of Cortez. Her waist swiveled slightly, and then shot backwards the other direction, and the spear in her hand shot out…

"Swish!" With a green flash of light, it arrived in front of a Highgod.

That person struggled to dodge, but unfortunately, the Spear of Cortez, infused with the 'Dimensional Attack' profound mysteries, was simply too

fast. The Highgod was only able to make his head avoid the attack, but with a ‘crunch’ sound, the Spear of Cortez pierced straight through the Highgod’s right chest.

The other Highgod wanted to use this opportunity to attack Delia, but suddenly, in front of him a Deathgod Golem appeared!

“Hmph!” The Deathgod Golem’s right leg lashed out viciously, smashing straight out towards the skull of that Highgod.

“Clang!” The Highgod immediately used his divine artifact to dodge, but he was still sent knocked flying backwards from the collision.

The Highgod flipped in the air and stabilized himself, but his face changed dramatically and he stared at the Deathgod Golem in astonishment. “A Deathgod Golem!”

Actually, the attack of these four Highgods was nothing much. The truly terrifying scene was that of those eight hundred Gods, especially in close range. The seven hundred Gods actually began to brandish the divine artifacts in their hands, and countless dazzling rays of light shot out, piercing towards each of the twenty-plus figures.

“Roaaaaaar!”

Linley immediately Dragonformed, forcibly taking on several blows aimed at Delia. A few God-level attacks wouldn’t do anything to Linley at all.”

Bebe helped the nearby Olivier as well.

Despite that, however, the eight hundred Gods still killed six of the Fiends. Bellowing, the bandits charged forward into close combat. The dense group of bandits swarmed forward, and everyone engaged in a wild battle, with Linley, Bebe, and Olivier all using their most powerful attacks.

Linley and Bebe went without saying. As for Olivier, he had reached the God level in both the Laws of Light and the Laws of Darkness. As someone

who had a mutant soul who had fused light-type and darkness-type divine power, each of his sword blows reached a new threshold in speed and also contained a strange, pure power.

He slaughtered a person with each sword.

“Huh?” From afar, Dimon’s face suddenly changed as he stared unblinkingly at Olivier.

“A Soul Mutate!” Dimon could immediately tell.

Olivier’s fusion of light-type and darkness-type power had yet to reach Learmonth’s level. Learmoth was capable of reaching the level of having the two types of divine power fuse to the point where occasionally the Destruction-type aura shone and occasionally the fire-type aura emanated.

But Olivier could not.

“Haha…we suffered such a great loss at Knifeblade Island, but I didn’t imagine I would encounter this Soul Mutate.” Dimon felt a surge of fire build up in his heart. “If, if I offer him…”

Dimon began to grow excited.

But the battle scene was causing Dimon to frown ago. Not only did Linley, Bebe, and Olivier slaughter at high speed, there was another person who was terrifying. Strange ‘swish’ ‘swish’ ‘swish’ sounds could be heard as one God after another fell nonstop.

A black shadow flashed without stopping. Those seven hundred bandits were reducing in number at an astonishing rate as they all fell down lifelessly.

Miserable screams continued unabated, but nobody could resist.

Linley brandished Bloodviolet, effortlessly killing an oncoming God while at the same time glancing at astonishment towards the shadow which flew

about at high speed. “I didn’t expect that he was actually hiding his power. Nobody realized this!”

“Brothers of the second mountain, return!” Dimon’s face was filled with anger, and he immediately roared.

Immediately, the lucky survivors retreated, but in this blink of an eye, their numbers had been reduced to four hundred, with the vast majority having been killed by this person who had hidden his power.

“Oho, how boring. They actually fled.” The figure reformed atop the waves. It was the big-bearded ‘Bates’.

At present, Bates’ aura was mysterious and mighty. He was a Highgod!

“He was hiding and suppressing his aura!” Linley said to himself silently. Generally speaking, when investigating someone’s power, one did so by sensing someone’s aura, and from it judged if someone was strong or weak. If one wasn’t able to sense it at all, it meant that the target was a level more powerful. By this, Linley was capable of judging who was a God and who was a Highgod.

He couldn’t sense a Highgod’s aura.

But sometimes, a powerful Highgod was capable of intentionally releasing just a weak aura to intentionally cause others to be unable to correctly judge his power.

“Haha…” Dimon was so angry, he started to laugh. “I didn’t expect that in your group, there was a third Highgod, and seemingly the most powerful of the group at that.” Dimon was currently in a terrible mood, and so had engaged in slaughter the entire way over.

Upon encountering this Bates, a tough bone to chew, Dimon was naturally angry.

“The most powerful of the group?” Bates looked at his surroundings. The

bald ‘Boff’ was currently heavily injured, while Delia had been able to hold her own by relying on the Deathgod Golem.

The big-bearded Bates laughed while looking at Dimon. “Hey, leader of Knifeblade Island? I trust you understand that if you want to deal with us, even if you succeed, you will probably lose a majority of your men. You won’t get anything good in exchange for the loss. I can’t be bothered to kill those weak little Gods either. How about we go our way and you go yours?”

Immediately, the luckily surviving God-level Fiends all grew excited.

“Bates, uh, Lord Bates!” Aches had some ability and was still alive. He was currently looking at Bates in excitement. “Lord Bates, I truly must thank you this time. I, I, when I reach the Bloodridge Continent, I’ll definitely increase your remuneration.” At present, Aches was so excited, he didn’t know what to say.

As Aches saw it, as long as Dimon wasn’t an idiot, he wouldn’t waste the lives of his subordinates.

“Remuneration?” Bates laughed. “Fine, fine, but, it has to be double that of Boff’s!”

“Definitely double.” Aches said hurriedly.

Bates then glanced at Dimon. “Hey, are you done with your considerations yet? Why are you standing there like a fool?”

Chapter 8 – Blackstone Prison

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 8, Blackstone Prison

Although Bates had asked the question, he himself was quite confident. He understand very well the habit of these bandits: Abuse the soft targets, fear the hard ones!

Even though the bandits might be able to kill all their targets, they would consider the cost-benefit ratio and if it was worth it! Right now, in Linley's group, Bates was too powerful. Even Linley, Bebe, and Olivier could easily kill Gods. They were clearly a tough bone to gnaw.

To kill Bates and the others, the bandits would definitely lose quite a bit.

"It'll definitely be fine. The bandit leader won't be so foolish." The God-level Fiend with green-hair, Tam [Tai'mu], had a rare smile appear on his face.

"We'll definitely live." A nearby short, muscular man also said in a low voice.

Aches' eyes were filled with hope as well.

"If we can avoid battle, that would be best." Linley said to himself. However, he didn't dare to relax, continuing to stare vigilantly at the nearby bandits. Currently, Linley's side had fourteen lucky survivors, all of whom were waiting for the reply from the enemy leader, Dimon.

The bandit forces were awaiting Dimon's response as well.

"Second leader? Kill them or no?" The Highgod behind Dimon asked softly.

The bandits were somewhat unwilling to give up. The other side only had a

few people, while they had thousands, thirty plus Highgods, and their powerful second leader. The enemy had killed nearly three hundred of the Gods. Were they to be allowed to leave, just like that? The bandits weren't willing!

Dimon narrowed his eyes, staring at the distant Bates, and then glanced sideways at Olivier. "A Soul Mutate…"

Dimon was calculating while glancing at Bates. "This Highgod expert is clearly one who trains in the Laws of Darkness and specializes in speed as well as hiding his aura." Dimon was very surprised as well, because he hadn't discovered Bates had been hiding his power at first.

"The profound mysteries he is training in should focus in subterfuge and speed. His attack power should probably be somewhat lacking." Dimon said to himself.

If the opponent was very powerful, there was no need for Bates to negotiate with him at all.

Thousands of people surrounded those ten-plus. All was silent. Everyone was waiting for Dimon's decision. Then, very suddenly…

"Kill!!!" Dimon suddenly howled angrily.

The looks on the faces of Aches, Tam, and the other Gods immediately froze. Even Bates' face changed.

"Attacking?" Linley frowned.

Dimon's eyes were gleaming red, and he bellowed, "Brothers, all of you, charge together. Kill, kill them!"

"Kill!" First came the group of Highgods behind Dimon. At their fastest speed, they charged forward. Instantly, as waves bellowed, elemental behemoths appeared out of nowhere, and the Highgods either charged forward astride the heads of elemental pythons or were hidden beneath the

foggy waves.

The combined attacks of over thirty Highgods…the aura alone made Linley feel it was hard to breath.

In unison, those thirty plus Highgod brandished their weapons, blasting out soul attacks. All sorts of half-translucent flashes of light shot out towards Linley's group.

"Terrible!" Linley's face changed dramatically.

These thirty-plus Highgods were less than a hundred meters away from Linley's group. A soul attack moved much faster than a person. Everyone was only able to move very slightly. The combined soul attacks of these three Highgods were aimed at three people…

Bates, Boff, and Delia!

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

"Careful!" In that dangerous moment, Linley, by Delia's side, suddenly pulled her aside while also trying to move away.

"Bang!" "Bang!"

Even though he dodged as best as he could, six soul attacks still slammed onto Linley.

Thirty or so Highgods attacking three people. Ten soul attacks were aimed at Delia and Boff, while ten more were aimed at Bates. Linley dodged as best as he could, but six Highgod soul attacks still struck him!

"Bang!"

The six soul attacks directly entered Linley's consciousness, smashing heavily against his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Like eggs smashing onto a rock, they shattered upon collision. These Highgods were all fairly

weak Highgods, and so their soul attacks were quite rudimentary.

Only now did Linley breathe a sigh of relief.

“Linley.” Delia couldn’t help stare unblinkingly at Linley in worry.

“I’m fine.” Linley revealed a smile.

The six hundred years of training he had spent in the Amethyst Mountains, especially his absorption of so many amethysts and their soul essences, caused his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact’s flaw to rapidly heal. After six hundred years, the flaw had already a thin membrane appear.

Although it wasn’t as strong as the other parts of the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, its defense was still excellent.

Linley wasn’t too bad off, but Boff and Bates were in trouble.

The bald youth, Boff, was also struck by several soul attacks. He directly crashed down from the skies, while at the same time, another Boff dressed in a black robe flew out. It was Boff’s divine God clone.

“Swish!” Bates was extremely fast.

Facing those ten soul attacks, he actually dodged the majority and was only struck by two. These two soul attacks caused Bates’ face to turn ashen. He didn’t have a soul-protecting divine artifact.

After all, even someone as mighty as a Seven Star Fiend wouldn’t have a soul much stronger than that of most ordinary Highgods. At most, their defense would be a bit stronger. If they took too many soul attacks head on, they would definitely be finished.

The big-bearded Bates glanced sideways at Linley. “This Linley…he really is hiding his power. He was hit by multiple soul attacks but he is fine. He really lives up to the name of being a descendant of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Bates, having seen Linley’s Dragonform, had already guessed

Linley's status.

"Big brother!"

Nearby, a desolate cry.

Linley turned. It was one of the God-level Fiends who had come with them. That skinny, tall, silver-haired man, Wilburn [Wei'er'bo'en], was crying out in grief, his tears already flowing down.

What had happened was that although Bates had dodged the majority of the soul attacks, one of them had struck upon the unfortunate elder brother of Wilburn. How could Wilburn's brother possibly withstand the soul attack of a Highgod?

What's more, Wilburns' older brother had fused with a divine spark to become a God. He immediately died.

"Wilburn should have a close relationship with him." Linley saw how heartbroken Wilburn was, and he said to himself. At this moment, nobody went to console Wilburn. Linley immediately focused his attention on those Highgods.

"Haha, I didn't expect you to have some ability." Those Highgods laughed loudly.

"Brothers, let's do it again."

These thirty-plus Highgods all liked to engage in combo attacks.

"Linley, if you still refuse to act, then I'm going to stop bothering about this and leave." A voice rang out in Linley's mind. Linley could immediately tell that the person who sent the message was that big-bearded Bates. "Linley, I didn't expect you to be a Highgod as well who was hiding his power. Even I didn't see through you."

Linley was stunned.

He was a Highgod? How come he didn't know?

"A venerable core disciple of the Four Divine Beasts clan. I recognized you as soon as you transformed. You are going to keep hiding your strength? I, Bates, am not skilled at other things, but I'm highly talented in fleeing for my life. I'm not able to deal with thirty-six Highgods, especially that leader. If you don't make your move, I'm leaving. I'm not the sort to sacrifice his life for others!" Bates sent through divine message.

Bates valued his own life quite highly.

"Haha, kill them!" From afar, Dimon shouted in joy.

"Got it, second leader."

The thirty-plus Highgods were fully confident, once more waving their weapons.

"Linley!" Bates once more sent his divine sense over.

"Time to prepare for a slaughter." Linley sent back to Bates. At the same time, within Linley's sea of consciousness, beneath his rainbow-colored soul, with that black stone at the center, a large amount of spiritual energy began to spread out. At the same time, a large amount of elemental essence began to condense.

Linley stared calmly at the thirty-plus Highgods, their weapons raised.

Strangely, powerful surges of earth-style divine power rippled out like the waves of the sea, spreading out to a range of two hundred meters. The curvature of the ripples was identical to the changing curvatures of those 108 rays of spiritual energy of the black stone.

Within a range of two hundred meters.

Those thirty-six Highgods suddenly found that suddenly, a tremendously

powerful gravitational force was affecting them. This enormous gravitational force instantly caused them to be unable to continue to fly, and they began to sink downwards!

“Ahhh!” The thirty-six Highgods began to cry out in alarm.

“Whooooosh.”

The countless amounts of earth elemental essence had already completely solidified. A completely black, totally sealed prison had formed, with everyone within two hundred meters being caught within the black prison. Those thirty-six Highgods were naturally trapped within as well.

Blackstone Prison! The thousands of Gods outside were all stupefied and stared slack-jawed.

But within the Blackstone Prison…

“What…what is this place?” The thirty-six Highgods all stared in astonishment at the surroundings. They were surrounded by dark walls, with corridors and rooms present. They could already tell that they were in a different place, and they could sense the powerful gravity.

The gravity was simply too extravagant.

Even Highgods were unable to fly.

“Crunch!” A black shadow flashed past, and a Highgod collapsed.

“Haha, this is excellent.” Bates was incomparably excited. Linley’s side was all surrounded by earth-style divine power, and they weren’t restricted by the gravity at all. Their speed was like normal.

The thirty-six Highgods, however, had their speed drop to a very low level. Bates, however, wasn’t impacted at all. Also, those thirty-six Highgods had all been separated…

It was a massacre!

“This damn place….break!” A Highgod angrily smashed towards a black wall, which rippled like water but wasn’t damaged at all. This was a Blackstone Prison formed from three types of profound mysteries. In terms of defensive strength, it was comparable to Linley’s former Pulseguard Armor.

“Motherf*cker, how should we leave?” The Highgod was extremely frantic.

Suddenly…

“Hi.” A voice rang out.

The Highgod turned to look and saw a strange shadow emerge from the walls. He only saw a pair of cold, dark golden eyes appear, and then his head went dizzy and he lost all consciousness.

“Killing in this environment really is easy.” Linley laughed calmly.

The Blackstone Prison wasn’t just capable of trapping people and applying powerful gravity; the black stone itself also contained that sort of special soul affecting property, much like the strange wind sound of the Amethyst Mountains. As Linley attacked, he immediately used his spiritual energy to use the black stone to affect the soul.

When the opponent was dizzy and unconscious, Linley would naturally kill them effortlessly with one attack.

…….

“Urgh!” A Highgod was greatly shocked and immediately used a soul attack.

A black light flashed by, and the Highgod’s head immediately blew apart as a divine spark flew out.

“Haha, he’s so slow.” Bebe laughed loudly.

Under this sort of profound gravity, their speed was slowed and they weren’t even able to dodge. All they could do was use soul attacks, but upon encountering Bebe, this person still died.

But of course, if he encountered Linley…he’d be even worse off. He wouldn’t even have a chance to use a soul attack.

…….

“Brothers, material attacks, all together!” In the instant the Blackstone Prison formed, Dimon immediately bellowed angrily.

Immediately, the thousands of Gods immediately wielded their weapons, and thousands of tightly clustered material attacks shot out. Earthen yellow, light blue, green, golden yellow…all sorts of colors shot out as attacks roared forth towards the Blackstone Prison.

However…

“Whoosh!” The Blackstone Prison, strangely enough, began to sink down from the surface of the sea into the depths.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Of the thousands of attacks, only a few hundred struck the Blackstone Prison. The combined attacks of a few hundred Gods, against this Blackstone Prison formed from three types of profound mysteries and which was comparable to something completely formed from Pulseguard Armor, only caused the walls to tremble lightly, and then immediately return to calmness.

It hadn’t been damaged at all!

Linley’s Blackstone Prison wasn’t too far off from that Castle of Sand.

“Huh?” Dimon was shocked.

But suddenly, the entire Blackstone Prison bizarrely vanished, revealing twelve people within it. It was Linley’s group. Although all of this took time to describe, roughly only ten seconds had passed before the Blackstone Prison formed, then vanished.

The only difference was, those thirty-six Highgods had all been killed.

“Im…impossible!” Dimon’s face changed dramatically.

Thirty six Highgods, all dead in the blink of an eye. How was this possible?

“There’s an expert who trains in the Laws of the Earth.” Dimon understood that just now, the black stone castle that had formed had a powerful earth aura. In the blink of an eye, thirty-six Highgods had been killed. “That expert most likely isn’t the big bearded fellow. There’s another hidden expert in that group.”

Dimon was startled.

He didn’t know what was going on with this little squad. It originally only had two Highgods, which was already quite formidable, but then first Bates popped out of nowhere, and now it seemed yet another powerful figure had appeared.

“Haha…” Bates laughed loudly. “Now, the only Highgod left is you. Heh heh, my turn…”

How could Dimon dare to take them head on?

Dimon wasn’t completely confident in being able to deal with Bates’ power, and what’s more, there was another hidden figure who was even more powerful than Bates, who trained in the Laws of the Earth!

Flee!

Without saying a word, Dimon immediately turned and fled, while secretly cursing, “This squad only had twenty or so people. Why are there so many experts hidden within it?”

“That black stone castle actually resulted in thirty-six Highgods dying so quickly within it. It definitely was formed by a Six Star Fiend, or possibly a Seven Star Fiend!” Dimon was extremely certain. “Forget it. Why obsess over it? At least I discovered a Soul Mutate this time. I can be considered to have made an accomplishment!”

While thinking this, Dimon fled far away.

“The second leader fled.”

“Quick, flee!”

Those thousands of Gods were all frightened and fled as well. Just now, their combined attacks had been unable to budge the Blackstone Prison, and that was with the Blackstone Prison being so huge as to have hundreds of attacks strike it. If it had been a Highgod, perhaps only a few attacks would have landed.

Moments later, they all disappeared without a trace, leaving behind only twelve lucky survivors.

“Just now, who was that expert who created that black stone castle?” The lucky survivors and Aches immediately looked around, only all of the surviving Fiends were puzzled. Bebe, Olivier, and the others all intentionally looked around in confusion as well.

“Hey, who was it?” Bebe looked puzzled. “We actually have such a powerful expert here? I admire him so very much. Tell me, who is it?” Bebe continuously looked around at the others.

Chapter 9 – Emotions

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 9, Emotions

The waves of the sea rolled on. There was nobody left around them.

The twelve lucky survivors had strange looks on their faces.

Seeing Bebe continuously ‘search’ for that hidden expert, the big-bearded Bates cursed silently to himself: You know who it is, yet you put on such a show.

He immediately laughed loudly, “Bebe, if that expert doesn’t want to reveal himself, how can you know? Right?”

“Right.” Bebe nodded.

The bald youth, Boff, had a calm look on his face. His divine Highgod clone was dead, leaving behind only his God clone. He said calmly, “No need to look for him. Perhaps that expert isn’t even amongst us and is an expert who was hidden near us and helped us, then left. This isn’t impossible.”

It was indeed possible for those Seven Star Fiends and Asura-level experts to escape the notice of these bandits, but under normal conditions, would an Asura-level expert be so bored as to help them?

Unless there was someone they cared about present.

“That might indeed be the case.” Aches’ face was all smiles. “Everyone, let’s not waste any more time. Let’s hurry off.” Aches was a very skilled person. Regardless of whether or not that expert was in their squad, since he didn’t want to show himself, Aches naturally wouldn’t pursue the matter and possibly make that person unhappy.

Aches was delighted from the bottom of his heart.

His squad had such an expert with it. What would they have to fear on their journey?

“Oh no!” Aches suddenly laughed bitterly.

“What is it?” The others looked at him.

Aches laughed bitterly. “That was my last metallic lifeform, and it’s already been destroyed. However, we’ve gone less than 10% on this journey. What should we do?” Aches looked at the surrounding people. “Who here has a metallic lifeform to lend me? I can buy it. Or perhaps I can pay for all of the expended divine jewels on the way.”

Everyone glanced at each other.

Metallic lifeforms were fairly high level items. Generally speaking, God-level Fiends weren’t able to buy them.

“Only prepared a few metallic lifeforms?” The big-bearded Bates chuckled, then waved his hand. Immediately, a metallic lifeform floated above the sea while transforming into a ship. “Aches, this metallic lifeform doesn’t have any divine jewels within it. You can fill it up yourself.”

“Hmph, he’s an expert, yet he’s so stingy.” Bebe muttered.

The big-bearded Bates immediately turned to look at him. He couldn’t help but stare at Bebe, then glanced at Linley. Only, he simply laughed, then sent through divine sense, “Hey, Linley…you are an expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan. You are a Six Star Fiend, right? Or are you a Seven Star Fiend? Why are you hiding your status?”

Six Star Fiend? Seven Star Fiend?

“I’m actually a One Star Fiend.” Linley sent back through divine sense.

“One Star Fiend?” Bates rolled his eyes, then turned and flew towards the metallic lifeform. “Hey, let’s hurry on our way. Prepare to head out.”

Only now did Linley return to his normal human form.

“I told the truth but he didn’t believe it.” Linley shook his head, laughing to himself. And then, he couldn’t help but sigh. “The power of this Blackstone Prison is indeed great. One part of it is the profound mysteries, but the other part is the special trick in exerting the profound mysteries. How could there be such a powerful trick?”

Linley didn’t understand it.

Just the special trick to using it could cause the upper limits of the gravity strength to multiple hundredfold. Most likely, even fusing another profound mystery wouldn’t result in such an extravagant increase in power.

“Also, if I were to try and extrapolate it from scratch, most likely even after countless years, I still wouldn’t be able to do so.” Linley knew very well how hard it would be to develop this completely on his own. After all, who could have come up with using 108 rays of divine power? In addition, the 108 rays of divine power could be set up in countless configurations, and in most of them, they were very weak.

But who would have imagined that under certain circumstances, they would produce such an effect?

Before Linley learned this technique, only the juvenile amethyst beast could use it, and the juvenile amethyst beast was a ‘divine beast’. This technique was his innate, ultimate technique! When using it, the power was even more extravagant than Linley’s execution.

“Rumble…”

The metallic lifeform pierced through the waves and advanced.

Within the metallic lifeform, everyone was chatting, drinking wine, and

laughing. Only, occasionally, some of them would intentionally glance at the others, pondering who was most likely to be that secretive, ultimate expert.

“Who was that expert?” The green haired man, Tam, was very curious. At the same time, with a rather excited gaze, he glanced at every single lucky survivor nearby. When his glance fell upon the silver-haired ‘Wilburn’, he shook his head slightly. If Wilburn was that expert, he most likely wouldn’t have let his big brother die.

Tam continued to look at them, one by one.

“Shouldn’t be them. I know these ones.” Tam then turned to look at the big-bearded Bates, who stared at him. “What are you looking at?”

Tam immediately laughed awkwardly.

However, Tam knew that Bates trained in the Laws of Darkness and so wasn’t that expert.

“Can it be them?” Tam then glanced sideways at Linley’s group, looking at each of them. Upon seeing Linley, he paused slightly. “That shouldn’t be right either. I saw him use that violet longsword. He seems to train in the Elemental Laws of the Wind. Not him either!”

Although Deities would train in more than one type of Elemental Law, when they engaged in battle, they would generally use their most powerful profound mystery. They had seen Linley utilize the Elemental Laws of the Wind, and thus were certain that Linley was a wind-style Deity. They didn’t think about anything else.

“Linley.”

A voice rang out in his mind. Linley himself was at the side of the main hall. He was staring at the outside through the translucent metallic metal. Hearing this sound, he immediately replied with divine sense, “Bates, why have you kept on chatting with me these past few days?”

“Hmph. Ever since that day when I revealed my true power, those kids have been very careful when chatting to me. It’s really boring.” The big-bearded Bates said.

Linley chuckled. Bates was someone who liked a lively atmosphere.

“Hey, look. That Wilburn kid has had a gloomy face the past few days. He seems to have been turned into a cripple. I didn’t expect that that short big brother of his was so important to him.” Bates sent with divine sense yet again.

Linley turned to look at Wilburn. This Wilburn was someone who also valued emotional relationships. If either Linley or Wharton had died, the other would probably be very heartbroken as well.

“Wharton. When I didn’t let him come to the Infernal Realm, that was the right decision.” Linley sighed in his heart.

The many dangers of the Infernal Realm had been far greater than he had imagined. However, after six hundred years of training in the Amethyst Mountains, he already was confident in his ability to protect himself. Regardless of whether it was a ‘Fogsea Storm’ or those Knifeblade Island bandits, there wasn’t much of a threat to him.

Night. The sea wind blew drearily.

Linley walked to the front of the ship. Although the metallic lifeform moved very quickly, Linley still walked very stably atop it.

“Huh?” Linley looked towards the front of the ship in surprise. “There’s someone here!” Tonight, aside from himself, there was actually someone else who had come to the front of the ship long ago. It was the silver-haired youth, Wilburn, who was leaning against the railings.

Linley found to his astonishment…

Wilburn's face was covered with tears. He was quietly staring into the distant seas. Who knew what he was thinking about?

"Wilburn." Linley sat down as well.

Wilburn was startled. The tears on his face immediately dried and vanished, and he looked as cold and emotionless as ever.

"Thinking about your elder brother?" Linley stared into the dark waves up ahead, but spoke very directly.

When Wilburn heard this, the muscles on his face couldn't help but begin to tremble slightly.

"You had an elder brother, while I, I have a little brother." Linley let out a long sigh. "His name is Wharton! However, this time, when I came to the Infernal Realm, I didn't let him accompany me…and in the blink of an eye, nearly seven centuries have passed. I wonder how my little brother is doing."

Nearly seven hundred years.

It had only taken Linley, in the Yulan continent, a few decades to become a legend. In the Infernal Realm, he had spent nearly seven centuries. Seven centuries…how many things could happen in such a period of time? Linley didn't know. How were his family members in the distant Yulan continent doing?

"My elder brother and I have been in the Infernal Realm for tens of thousands of years." Wilburn suddenly said.

Linley was somewhat astonished. Wilburn was actually speaking.

However, Linley still listened carefully. Given how heartbroken Wilburn was, he would indeed feel better after speaking out.

"My elder brother cared greatly about me. I still remember what it was like

back in our homeland, that material plane." Wilburn's gaze drifted away as he returned to his memories. "My elder brother was fairly honest and simple, while I was fairly arrogant! When I was young, because of my arrogance, I didn't have many friends. Only, my elder brother always cared about me."

"Afterwards, when I grew up, because of an certain matter, a rupture appeared in the relationship between myself and my elder brother." Wilburn said bitterly, "I killed my elder brother's fiancée!"

Linley was startled.

Seeing the look on Wilburn's face, Linley could imagine that the situation back then must have been very complicated. Otherwise, given how much Wilburn cared about his brother, he wouldn't have done such a thing.

"From that day onward, my elder brother stopped meeting with me. As for myself, I became all the more arrogant. Because of some complicated matters, in my anger, I attacked the Imperial palace and killed that detestable Imperial crown prince, and even the Emperor. That night, blood flowed into a river…"

"Only, the power of the Imperial palace was also very strong. They actually had eight Saints! I killed five of them, but was badly injured as well. I could see death coming for me."

"I had given up. After all, I had killed that Imperial crown prince and that dogshit Emperor. I was willing to die. Only, at that moment, my elder brother appeared. He saved me! Doing so meant that he was directly opposing the Empire!" Wilburn thought back to the events of that year.

Wilburn shook his head and said bitterly, "Actually, back then, I had killed my future sister-in-law by accident. I had always felt guilty towards my elder brother…"

"After killing the Emperor, things became extremely troublesome. The elder chairman of the Empire's magus association normally never got

involved in matters, but after learning about this, he would definitely intervene."

Wilburn sighed. "Thus, we immediately fled, and then immediately found the Planar Overseer to go to the Infernal Realm!"

"You came here as Saints?" Linley was shocked.

Wilburn nodded. "Only after arriving did we learn…how dangerous it was. For Saints in the Infernal Realm…this place is a nightmare…" As he spoke, Wilburn turned silent, and his tears began to quietly cascade down again.

"Enough of that." Wilburn shook his head. "After arriving here and experiencing the myriad dangers of the Infernal Realm, my elder brother and I understood that death could descend at any moment. I always hoped that if we were to die, I should be the first to die. I didn't want my elder brother to die…because in my entire life, he was the only true family and friend I have ever had!"

Linley glanced at Wilburn, then sighed to himself.

However, Linley himself didn't feel too sad. He had experienced too much, here in the Infernal Realm. He had seen these things often. Those Fiend trial participants, only a few dozen survived from a thousand participants. For the people who had come to the Infernal Realm, how many of them were 'ordinary'?

Linley quietly sat there.

At some point in time, Wilburn returned to the ship's cabin. Linley continued to sit there and stare at the waves of the sea.

Tonight, only a tiny hint of a crescent of the Violet Moon remained. The entire Starmist Sea seemed so dark and gloomy. The waves of the sea seemed like part of some incomparably enormous monster.

"The Infernal Realm is just like this Starmist Sea. It is incomparably vast,

and it devours one living creature after another. Only a truly powerful expert can remain here in the Infernal Realm and reach the pinnacle. Experts die, and only still more powerful experts can live!" Linley stared into the boundless waters in front of him. For some reason, he felt his heart tremble slightly.

The dark sea waters were vast and endless.

Linley quietly sat there at the head of the boat, silently staring into the boundless sea, not a single hint of light in his eyes.

Perhaps a long time passed, or perhaps just a moment later…

Linley opened his eyes.

In Linley's mind, illusory rays of divine power actually were forming. The rays of divine power formed into the 'Blackstone Prison'. The 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', 'Gravitational Space', 'Essence of the Earth'…all sorts of profound mysteries were fusing into his soul.

Dawn.

Linley stood up as well. Staring at the Blood Sun, blurry behind those thin clouds, he had a hint of a smile on his face.

Chapter 10 – Ganmontin

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 10, Ganmontin

By the time Linley's group once again entered the metallic lifeform and headed further into the Starmist Sea, the second leader of Knifeblade Island, 'Dimon', travelled by himself deep into the bottom of the Starmist Sea, arriving within a nameless gorge.

"Hmph. If it weren't for the fact that my elder brother died while I myself am not aware of where the Lord Commander lives, how could you have ended up getting a share of the glory!"

Staring at the gorge, Dimon felt hatred in his heart.

And then, Dimon transformed into a shadow, easily passing through the nameless gorge. Within the gorge, there were some strange plant creatures at the bottom which were colorful to behold. Sometimes, a few oceanic magical beasts would even pop up at the bottom of the sea, but Dimon paid them no mind at all.

Moments later…

Dimon arrived at the gates to an underwater estate, located deep within the seabed gorge. There were two guards at each side of the gate.

"Halt!" One of the guards immediately barked.

Dimon laughed calmly. "What, you don't even recognize me?" As he spoke, Dimon moved somewhat closer. The two guards only now began to laugh, one of them saying, "So it is second leader Lord Dimon of the Knifeblade Island." Although that was how they spoke, clearly, they didn't hold Dimon in much regard.

Although their strength wasn't that great, their master was incredible.

“Go make a report to your master. I want to meet him. This is an important matter!” Dimon said seriously.

The two guards exchanged glances.

“It seems there really is an important matter. You can go make the report.”

The other guard said, “You can just wait here. I’ll go report this to our master.” As he spoke, he entered the estate. After a long while, the guard came out. “Lord Dimon, my master invites you. Please come with me!”

Dimon snorted inwardly. “Just because you are somewhat stronger than me!”

This estate was extremely large, and it was very luxuriously decorated. Moments later, Dimon arrived within the main hall. The entire main hall was surrounded by sculptures and all sorts of paintings, which seemed to be telling an ancient story. Dimon, in his heart, knew: “Hmph, these are all about the boastful affairs of himself, Ganmontin. So what if he’s gone to Purgatory. Such arrogance!”

Although he said this in his heart, Dimon was still rather envious.

“Dimon, where’s your elder brother, Acketts?” A calm voice came out from the front.

At the throne in the front of the main hall, a green-haired man whose forehead was covered with fish scales was seated, dressed in a green cloak with golden trimmings. The green-haired man’s eyes glowed with green light, and his lips had a violet tint. He himself gave off an extremely devilish aura.

“He died!” Dimon said sorrowfully.

“Acketts died?” The green-haired man immediately stood up in shock, then hurriedly asked, “How is that possible? Your elder brother was a Six Star

Fiend who trained in the Elemental Laws of Water. His defense was the highest amongst our group. Who was capable of breaking his defense?"

"It was a black-haired man known as Lomio Bornesen!" Just mentioning this name caused Dimon to feel terror.

That day, the black-haired man's body had transformed into countless bolts of flashing lightning in the sky and caused something akin to a Fogsea Storm. And then, with but one blade blow, he had killed Dimon's elder brother.

"Lomio Bornesen?" The green-haired man on the throne frowned. "How come I've never heard of this person? What does he train in?"

"He trains in the Laws of Lightning." Dimon said, "This person came to our Knifeblade Island, then transformed into countless bolts of lightning and caused something identical to a Fogsea Storm, creating an enormous lightning vortex above our Knifeblade Island. It was too terrifying!"

"There's actually such an expert."

The green-haired man frowned. "It seems I must go report this to the Lord Commander!"

And then, the green-haired man looked at Dimon. "Dimon, can it be that you've simply come to tell me about this?" The green-haired man had decided immediately in his heart that no matter what, he couldn't make an enemy out of this Lomio Bornesen. Someone capable of killing Acketts in one blow was too terrifying.

"Lord Ganmontin!" Dimon's face had a hint of a smile appear on it. "I've come to bring you some good news."

"Speak." Ganmontin said.

"Although I've never met the Lord Commander, I've heard my elder brother say that the Lord Commander had always been collecting some

divine beasts with extremely powerful innate abilities, or talents who have mutated souls." Dimon grinned as he spoke.

"Yes, there is such a thing." Ganmontin said calmly.

"This time, although our Knifeblade Island was attacked, while I was fleeing, in the Starmist Sea, I actually encountered a talented Soul Mutate!" Dimon said hurriedly. "He's definitely a Soul Mutate genius. I personally saw him use a combination of darkness-type divine power and light-type divine power!"

"What!"

Shocked, Ganmontin immediately stood up.

Soul Mutates were extremely rare. In addition, geniuses like them were extremely terrifying in the future!

For example, an expert who was a Soul Mutate, upon reaching the Highgod level, just based on the fact that he had fused two different types of divine power, would have the strength of his attack increased tenfold! When a person used fused divine power, even if he used the same type of profound mystery, the power would be ten times that an ordinary person's!

And in addition…only Soul Mutates were capable of fusing the profound mysteries of two different types of Elemental Laws!

For example, Learmonth had later merged the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Fire as well as the Way of Destruction.

When profound mysteries belong to different types of Laws were fused, the power would be even greater by far than when two profound mysteries of the same type of Law was fused!

For example, if Linley's 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' was capable of being fused with the 'Dimensional Attack' profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of the Wind, then the power…would be comparable to

fusing three profound mysteries of the same type of Law!

If he also fused two types of divine power when using the attack, the power would increase tenfold yet again.

A Soul Mutate only had to fuse two different types of profound mysteries together, and his power would immediately become comparable to that of a Seven Star Fiend.

However, ordinary Highgods would have to fuse four profound mysteries to reach the Seven Star Fiend level!

“Where is he?” Ganmontin said hurriedly.

Dimon said helplessly, “I didn’t have the ability to bring him here.”

Ganmontin’s face immediately changed, and he sneered, “So even you, a Five Star Fiend, were unable to bring him back. It seems this Soul Mutate has already reached the Highgod level. I expect he has already fused profound mysteries as well…what, do you want me to go die?”

Ganmontin knew very well his own limits, as a Six Star Fiend.

Although he was specialized in attacks, against a Soul Mutate, especially a Soul Mutate at the height of his power, he had no confidence.

Soul Mutates were monstrously powerful.

Two different types of divine power, when fused, would make the power of even an ordinary profound mystery increase tenfold! If they were able to fuse three different types of profound power, the strength would increase a hundredfold! If they were able to fuse four…the power would continue to compound.

However, the more types of divine power one trained in, the lower the chances one would have of having a soul mutation. For example, a person capable of using three types of divine power, even if he underwent a soul

mutation, would have nearly a 100% chance of dying during the process. In the entire history of the Infernal Realm, there had only been an extremely infinitesimally small number of Soul Mutates.

Virtually all of the successful ones fused two types of divine power to become Soul Mutates. For example, when Olivier's soul had mutated, he had been in a coma for months.

In the countless years the Infernal Realm had existed, only a single person had fused three types of divine power!

As for having four different types of divine power and yet still fusing them, despite the passage of countless years, not a single such person had appeared in the countless planes of the universe.

Normally speaking, when people were discussing Soul Mutates, they referred to people who fused two different types of divine power.

For example, Linley had earth, wind, and fire-type divine power. Even if he were to undergo a soul mutation, his chance of death would be almost 100%! After all, in the countless years the Infernal Realm had existed, this sort of genius had only appeared once.

"Dimon, it's not too likely that one is going to be able to control that sort of mighty Soul Mutate." Ganmontin laughed coldly.

"No. That Soul Mutate is only a God." Dimon said hurriedly.

"Only a God?" Ganmontin was overjoyed.

The weaker the target was, the easier to control.

"Huh?" Ganmontin suddenly frowned. "Just a God. How is it that were unable to bring him back?"

Dimon explained, "Lord Ganmontin, the Soul Mutate is only a God, but… he is currently within a squad which has two experts."

“Experts. How is their strength?” Ganmontin asked hurriedly.

“One of them trains in the Elemental Laws of Darkness. By my calculations, he should have the power of a Five Star Fiend, perhaps closing on that of a Six Star Fiend! As I saw it, he specializes in speed, assassination, and hiding his aura.” Dimon said disdainfully.

Ganmontin laughed calmly. He wouldn’t even care about an ordinary Six Star Fiend.

“And the other?” Ganmontin pursued.

Dimon looked rather awkward. “Actually, I didn’t discover that other person either. However, he should be hidden in their group. In terms of power…I can’t say.”

“Eh?” Dimon frowned. “Explain in detail what the situation was like.”

Dimon immediately explained in detail. After hearing Dimon’s explanation, Ganmontin nodded slightly. “The attack of hundreds of Gods actually managed to cause the black stone castle to tremble. It seems its defense isn’t that powerful, and it also covers a fairly small area…based on my calculations, at most this person is a Six Star Fiend!”

Ganmontin had already calculated this out.

The opponent wasn’t too much of a threat.

“I can break through that black stone castle with one sword blow.” Ganmontin laughed calmly.

Dimon advised, “Milord, how about we first go inform the Lord Commander…that way, there won’t be any chance of failure.”

“A mere Six Star Fiend? How can the Lord Commander personally get involved for this?” Ganmontin laughed coldly. “This sort of affair, I alone

can handle easily." Ganmontin was very confident. He trained in the Elemental Laws of the Wind, and he specialized in two things; attacking and fleeing!

Even against a Seven Star Fiend, he was confident in his ability to flee.

For a battle like this, it was better to first prepare for defeat than to prepare for victory. Only then would one not have to worry about any problems.

"Do you know where that squad is?" Ganmontin looked at him.

Dimon smiled. "Milord, don't worry. I've made the arrangements long ago. In addition, it's only been less than half a month. Even if something happens, finding them will be easy. After all…this is our turf."

"Excellent." Ganmontin nodded in satisfaction. "Don't worry. Once I collect that Soul Mutate and offer him to the Commander, I will definitely report your contributions to the Lord Commander as well."

"Thank you, milord." Dimon said hurriedly.

But in his heart, Dimon was still furious. If he had known how to go find the Commander, would he have come to report all of this to Ganmontin? If he had enough power to seize Olivier, he wouldn't need to let Ganmontin take the credit either.

The sea waves rolled on. Linley and Bebe were seated together at the end of the ship.

"Boss, why have you always been staring at the sea lately?" Bebe asked, puzzled.

Linley chuckled, first setting up his Godrealm to block out sound, and then explained, "Bebe, recently, I feel as though there are some problems with my 'Blackstone Prison'. I know that the answer lies within this vast sea… the waters of the sea flow on casually and contain unfathomable transformations. My Blackstone Prison is too rigid. Although it is able to

distort and reform, that expends divine power. Also, it isn't able to easily deflect outside power."

Bebe just listened. He couldn't help but stare at Linley.

"Why are you staring at me?" Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe.

"Boss, didn't you say that you've already fused three types of profound mysteries?" Bebe said hurriedly.

During the past few days when Linley had been staring at the sea, he had gained a sudden insight and had managed to completely and perfectly fuse the 'Essence of the Earth', 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', and the 'Gravitational Space', these three great profound mysteries. The power of his 'Blackstone Prison' had once more increased. By now, even against a Six Star Fiend, Linley had confidence in winning.

"So what if I have?"

Linley sighed. "The Blackstone Prison is still insufficiently perfected. Actually, if I were able to infuse the Profound Mysteries of 'Vitality' of the Laws of the Earth with the other three, it would perfectly balance and strengthen the power of my Blackstone Prison. By that time, the Blackstone Prison would regrow and regenerate without end. Even a Seven Star Fiend would find it hard to break it."

"Only, fusing four types of profound mysteries is too hard. In addition, 'Vitality' should be a fairly unique type of profound mystery in the Laws of the Earth."

The vast earth was deep and gave birth to countless lifeforms, and thus it possessed profound vitality.

Linley knew a few special details regarding the Profound Truths of Vitality, only…Linley had yet to be able to gain a basic understanding of it.

"Boss, don't be too greedy." Bebe pursed his lips and said. "You've fused

three types of profound mysteries."

Linley laughed. Actually, this didn't have anything to do with greed. Linley simply pursued perfection and wanted to continuously improve himself.

"Huh?" Right at this moment, Linley was suddenly shocked. "Below!"

"Bang!" The metallic creature, which had been advancing at high speed, once more exploded, and everyone within it now hovered in mid-air, their faces covered with puzzlement. In particular, the big-bearded Bates. He roared angrily, "Motherf*cker! This metallic lifeform was mine!"

Linley carefully stared at the surface of the sea.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

Two figures broke through the surface of the sea, leaping into mid-air. One of them was a grim looking green-haired man who was dressed in a green cloak with gold trimmings, and who had fish scales over his forehead. The person by his side was a familiar figure to Linley's group. It was the second leader of Knifeblade Island. Dimon.

Chapter 11 – So It Was Him

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 11, So It Was Him

The waves of the sea rolled about. The green-haired Ganmontin and the second leader Dimon both stood there in mid-air, staring calmly at Linley's group.

"That's the leader of the Knifeblade Island group." The employer, Aches, immediately recognized Dimon. The others recognized him as well, and as they did, their hearts sank…as the second leader of Knifeblade Island, Dimon's power was obvious.

And yet, right now, Dimon was seemingly following behind that green-haired man, as though he were a subordinate.

"Boss, trouble's coming." Bebe sent through divine sense.

"No rush. Let's wait and see." Linley watched Ganmontin calmly. At his current level of power, Linley was more than capable of fighting against most Six Star Fiends. More importantly…Linley had that Sovereign's Might. If he used Sovereign's Might to attack…

Even a Seven Star Fiend was nothing to fear!

"Hey, leader of Knifeblade Island, what's your name? I forgot. But you fled last time, fellow. Why are you back this time?" The big-bearded 'Bates' barked unhappily. "What, last time, when we spared your life, you didn't feel gratitude, but instead came back and actually brought someone else over? Fine then, today, we'll just deal with both of you."

Ganmontin and Dimon didn't say a word.

Ganmontin's flashing green eyes swept past Linley's group. He carefully inspected every single person to see who was the legendary hidden expert.

As he looked, Ganmontin couldn't help but frown. "Aside from those two Highgods, it seems there isn't a third Highgod!"

During the last battle, Boff had lost a Highgod clone and was now just a God.

The entire squad only had two Highgods. One was Delia, and the others was Bates.

"The situation isn't good." Ganmontin was an expert who had entered Purgatory before. Naturally, he wouldn't drop his guard. "This hidden expert can actually escape even my notice. It seems his power isn't any lower than mine. At the very least, his ability in hiding his aura is quite powerful."

Ganmontin thought rapidly, then came to a decision.

"Dimon, the Soul Mutate you spoke of. Which one is it?" Ganmontin sent through a divine message to Dimon.

The reason he had brought Dimon was solely to have him point out the Soul Mutate. Dimon looked towards Olivier while saying through divine sense, "Lord Ganmontin, it's that man with the long gray cloak who has hair that is black streaked with white."

Ganmontin's gaze immediately rested upon Olivier, a crafty look flashing through his eyes.

Linley's group was puzzled. The two had destroyed their metallic lifeform, but hadn't said a single word. What were they intending, exactly?

"You, greenie! Why are the two of you blocking our path? If you want to say something, hurry up. We don't have time to waste with you!" Bebe, wearing his straw hat, wasn't afraid at all, and he loudly shouted towards Ganmontin.

Ganmontin began to laugh.

“Haha…” Ganmontin emitted an ear-piercing laughter, the sound of it bizarrely causing the area within hundreds of meters to echo, while outside of this area, no sound could be heard at all. The sound of the laughter bored directly into the skulls of Linley’s group.

“This is the ‘Profound Truths of Sound’ of the Elemental Laws of the Wind.” Linley immediately recognized it.

The Profound Truths of Sound fused the ‘Sound Waves’ and ‘Music’ profound mysteries. Linley had already completely fused them. This Ganmontin actually used this to ‘ambush’ them, but clearly, the power of Ganmontin’s laughter wasn’t too great.

“How painful.” Aches, Tam, and the others all held their heads.

As for Linley, Bebe, Delia, and Olivier, they weren’t as bad off.

Ganmontin glanced at the people who his laughter hadn’t affected, then chuckled. “Everyone, I am Ganmontin! Today, I have only come to take a person away. I don’t actually want to harm the rest, and I hope you won’t block me either.”

Take someone away?

Linley was puzzled. “Who in our group is worth this sort of high-level figure coming out?” For Ganmonton to be capable of having Dimon by his side like a manservant meant that his power was definitely greater than Dimon’s, most likely at a Six Star Fiend level or perhaps even a Seven Star Fiend level.

“Take someone away? Who?” Bebe asked.

“Right. Who are you taking away?” Aches asked as well. This group all felt nervous, afraid that they would be selected.

Ganmontin smiled as he said, “The person I am taking away is him!” As he

spoke, he reached out with his right hand and pointed towards Olivier!

Instantly, everyone turned to look at Olivier!

“Me?” Olivier’s face changed, and his eyes were filled with disbelief. He had only been in the Infernal Realm for a few hundred years and he hadn’t offended any powerful foes. Why would they take him away?

“Olivier!” Bebe called out in surprise.

Linley and Delia both began to frown, while Aches, Tam, and the other Gods let out sighs of relief.

“Why is this person taking Olivier away?” Linley’s thoughts flashed through his mind. Olivier had spent the vast majority of his years in the Infernal Realm in the Amethyst Mountains with Linley. He had never encountered any ultimate experts. The only thing special about Olivier was…”

His soul mutation!

“Could it be that the reason he wants to take Olivier away is related to the fact that Olivier is a Soul Mutate?” Linley couldn’t help but guess this.

“Hey, why do you want to take away Olivier? Olivier is one of us. You want to take him away just because you say so? Absolutely no way!” The big-bearded Bates snorted. Bates’ words caused Linley, Bebe, and the others to feel joy.

“This Bates is a fine fellow.” Linley said to himself.

Ganmontin laughed loudly. “Oh, so his name is Olivier. I can tell you plainly…” Ganmontin swept Linley’s group with his gaze, his eyes slowly turning cold. “Today, Olivier must leave with me. If anyone wants to stop me, there will only be one result…death!”

Ganmontin’s green glowing eyes, violet lips, and cold voice caused

everyone to feel their hearts tremble.

“He’s using the Profound Truths of Sound yet again.” Linley said to himself. “This person can utilize the Elemental Laws of the Wind quite freely.”

Ganmontin, seeing that the Gods seemed to be rather in dread of him, then immediately began to smile again. “But of course, if you don’t block my path, I naturally won’t kill you. Right now, I’ll give you all a chance…aside from Olivier, the others can all leave safely. Everyone can leave now!”

“Leave?” The God-level Fiends all hesitated.

“I’ll count to ten. If by then there are people still remaining, that means they are my enemies. The result will be…” Ganmontin suddenly made a serpent-shaped longsword which gleamed with green light appear in his hands. He casually waved the sword, which blurred while causing the world to be filled with a beautiful sound.

“Slash!”

Space itself had a large crevice split open within it, while at the same time, the sword blur carried what seemed like countless wind blades, charging downwards towards the sea like thousands of soldiers in an army. “Boom!” The sea rumbled, and instantly, the water beneath that point for hundreds of meters around turned into a massive hole that was dozens of meters deep.

Moments later, the surrounding water filled the gap, and immediately a series of waves could be heard.

Aches, Tam, Wilburn, and the other Gods all had very ugly looks on their faces. Linley, Bates, and the others all had solemn looks on their faces. The Infernal Realm’s planar walls were very stable. To slash open a crevice within the Infernal Realm was proof of having displayed terrifying power.

“One!” Ganmontin smiled as he spoke. “Two. Three…” Ganmontin’s counting speed was unhurried, and his voice wasn’t loud, but hammered

down upon the hearts of every single Fiend present.

Those God-level Fiends glanced at each other, all hesitating.

“Everyone, no need to waste your lives for me.” Olivier said bitterly.

Immediately, the employer, Aches, was the first to turn towards Olivier and say apologetically, “Forgive me.” As he spoke, he immediately flew away. As Aches left, immediately the other Gods all left as well.

By the time Ganmontin counted to ten, Boff and Wilburn flew away as well. They were all God-level Fiends, of no use at all.

“Nine!” Ganmontin’s gaze once more swept the five remaining figures. “Everyone, if you don’t leave now, you won’t have the chance later.” But the five didn’t pay him any mind at all.

“Ten!”

Ganmontin had counted to ten, but five were still remaining. They were Linley, Delia, Bebe, Olivier, and Bates!

As for Aches, Tam, Wilburn, and the other seven, they had all flown far away. From a distance of three kilometers, they stared towards this scene. Aches said softly, “Everyone, don’t be worried. I expect that the mysterious expert who used the Blackstone Prison last time should be one of those three; Linley, Bebe, or Olivier. When that expert attacks, perhaps he will be able to defeat Ganmontin!”

The other six felt their hearts firm up. In the Infernal Realm, very few people would choose to throw their lives away.

Their choices were correct.

“Who knows which one of them is the expert.” Wilburn said softly.

“I hope he can defeat Ganmontin.” Boff said as well.

Right at this moment, above the boundless Starmist Sea, Linley's group of five was hovering above the surface of the sea, standing opposite from Dimon and Ganmontin.

After counting to ten, Ganmontin was already feeling extremely unhappy. Prior to this, he had used the 'Profound Truths of Sound' through his laughter to test Linley's group. As early as then, he had expected that the hidden expert should have been one of the people in front of him, but who would have imagined that none of these people left.

He had counted from one to ten, but his ploy of his had no effect at all. Whether or not those seven Gods left had no affect on him at all.

He, Ganmontin, wanted to get the hidden expert to leave!

If he could avoid battle, he would! After all, he had no way to discover who the opponent was. Ganmontin was even wondering…"Could this hidden expert be a Seven Star Fiend? Could it be that when resisting the forces of Knifeblade Island, he was hiding his true power?"

"Hmph. Who cares what you are. If you hide yourself like a coward, I imagine you can't be too strong."

Ganmontin wielded his green serpentine longsword, grinning. "I didn't expect the four of you are really chivalrous. You are actually willing to die for Olivier. Since that's the case, I'll oblige you." Ganmontin laughed as he looked at Bates. "Your power isn't bad. The first one I'll deal with is you."

Bates' face changed slightly.

"Linley, if you don't act, then I'm going to leave." Bates hurriedly sent with divine sense. "I'm not a match for that old fellow!"

"Ganmontin!"

A voice rang out, and a figure suddenly appeared in front of Bates. His

entire body was covered with azure-golden draconic scales. Beneath the dazzling light of the Violet Sun, he was very eye-catching. Those two dark golden eyes stared at Ganmontin. It was the transformed Linley!

“Ganmontin, today, you’d best leave. I don’t want to fight you.” Linley said.

Linley wasn’t completely certain of his ability to win this battle, but if he had to, he would use the Sovereign’s Might. However, Linley was rather unwilling to.

“So it was you!” Ganmontin was shocked. He stared at Linley in surprise, and then began to laugh loudly. “I didn’t expect that a core member of the Four Divine Beasts clan was hidden in your group. I am Ganmontin. Might I ask who you are?”

“Linley!” Linley said calmly and directly.

“Haha, Linley.” Ganmontin laughed loudly as he spoke. “Today, I’ve come here not for myself, but for my Lord Commander.”

“Commander?” Linley was stunned. He couldn’t help but think back to what the juvenile amethyst beast he had met back in the Amethyst Mountains had said. “Back then, that juvenile amethyst beast had said that he was a commander in Purgatory!” A commander of Purgatory was a position which Linley had yet to fully understand.

But given the power of the juvenile amethyst beast, Linley could guess.

“As a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan, I imagine you wouldn’t want to ruin the affairs of my Lord Commander.” Ganmontin laughed calmly as he spoke. Ganmontin was very self-confident. Even the clan leader of the Four Divine Beasts clan most likely wouldn’t offend his Lord Commander. Ganmontin laughed as he looked at Linley.

“Ganmontin, I’d like to ask you to leave.” Linley said calmly.

Chapter 12 – A Great Battle

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 12, A Great Battle

“It’s Linley!” From afar, the onlookers, including Aches and the other Gods, were all shocked. They hadn’t expected that the hidden expert was Linley!

“It was actually him!” Wilburn stared at the distant, Dragonformed Linley.

For now, let us ignore the shock of Aches and the rest of the seven. Ganmontin, hearing Linley’s words, couldn’t help but feel a surge of rage. Glancing sideways at Linley, he began to laugh from rage. “Oh, Linley, what? You don’t even care about my Commander at all? What audacity!”

‘Dimon’, the second leader of Knifeblade Island, could tell that the situation was turning bad. He immediately retreated. “I can’t suffer the backlash from a battle between these two.”

“It isn’t audacity.” Linley looked at Ganmontin. “Ganmontin, I definitely will not permit you to take Olivier away. Although I don’t wish to fight you, if you truly insist on forcing him to leave, then I will be forced to.”

“Hmph!”

Ganmontin felt yet another surge of rage. He had already given Linley a great deal of face by saying so much.

“Haha…” Ganmontin continued to laugh as his rage built up. “If that’s the case, then I shall…” As he spoke, Ganmontin suddenly lifted up the green serpentine longsword in his hand and filled it with wind-style divine power. The entire sword began to tremble and emit a clear ringing sound of windchimes.

The sword-hymn reverberated within a hundred meters.

Beneath Linley's feet, rays of earth-type divine power radiated out as well, merging into the surface of the sea below. With the 'black stone' in his sea of consciousness as the core, 108 rays of earth-type divine power began to move in accordance with a pattern. The area within three hundred meters began to tremble as countless amounts of earth-type divine power coalesced.

Ganmontin, suffering this astonishing gravitational pull, found to his astonishment that his body was beginning to sink down.

At the same time, a large amount of earth elemental essence and divine power took shape. In the blink of an eye, an enormous Blackstone Prison appeared, floating on the surface of the water. Although Dimon had retreated into the distance early on, Ganmontin and Linley were both now already trapped within that Blackstone Prison.

Linley's ultimate attack, formed from three fused profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth and with the 'black stone' at the nucleus: Blackstone Prison!

"The scope is larger than last time." Dimon sucked in a cold breath. "It seems last time, this Linley really was hiding his true power." But how could he know that in reality, during this period of time, Linley just so happened to break through a bottleneck and completely perfect his fusion of those three profound mysteries?

Within the Blackstone Prison was utter darkness. The only light came from the faint earthen yellow glow coming off those pitch-black walls. As a Highgod expert, even though it was pitch-black, Ganmontin could still see clearly.

"What a terrifying gravity!" Ganmontin's face changed greatly. And then, Ganmontin gnashed his teeth, summoning the divine power in his body. With regards to flying speed, as an expert in the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Ganmontin was quite proficient. The better one's flying ability was, the better one was able to resist powerful gravity.

“Hmph!” Ganmontin’s body finally, barely left the surface of the ground. He hovered into the air.

“Not bad. In my Blackstone Prison, you are actually barely able to fly.” A sound of praise rang out. A figure, with a ‘whoosh’, appeared within Ganmontin’s line of vision. It was the Dragonformed Linley. Linley had already been prepared for Ganmontin being able to just barely resist the gravity.

Ganmontin was an expert in flying, and his power was that of a Six Star Fiend or a Seven Star Fiend. Him being capable of this was in line with Linley’s expectations.

Ganmontin immediately landed.

“I truly am in admiration of you, to reach such a level in your training of the Laws of the Earth.” Ganmontin laughed as he spoke, but at the same time, his right fist suddenly struck out with the green serpentine longsword in his hand. His target – the floor of the Blackstone Prison beneath his feet!

Linley’s face changed, and he launched himself forward, immediately charging towards Ganmontin, an adamantine heavy sword suddenly appearing in his hand.

“Slash!” An astonishing crack in space appeared, and the floor of the Blackstone Prison was cut open as well.

Ganmontin’s body immediately sank down as he fled through the giant crack beneath him.

“I didn’t imagine that he actually escaped.” Linley willed the large Blackstone Prison to vanish.

“Rumble…” The waves of the Starmist Sea rolled on and roared.

Ganmontin hovered there in mid-air as him and Linley stared at each other.

“I need to modify and improve the Blackstone Prison.” After that last experience, Linley now had an idea as to a flaw of the original Blackstone Prison. The Blackstone Prison had a circumference of roughly three hundred meters and had many corridors and rooms and what not. If Ganmontin were to chop open a wall next to him, even if he broke through, he would find yet another wall.

However, Ganmontin had directly struck down at the floor beneath his feet.

The Blackstone Prison was only so large. It was a single-story edifice. By chopping down into the ground, Ganmontin had managed to escape.

“In the future, not only must the scope of the Blackstone Prison be large, it also needs to have nine levels, with the opponent trapped in the fifth floor. That way, even if he breaks through the floor, he will still have four more levels to go!” Linley said to himself.

Olivier, Bebe, Delia, Bates, Dimon, and the distant onlookers all held their breaths as they watched. None of them knew if Ganmontin was stronger, or if Linley was stronger.

“How difficult to deal with!” Ganmontin’s eyes narrowed.

With a ‘whoosh’ sound, within a thousand meters, over a thousand ‘Ganmontins’ appeared, each one of them having a smile on his face. “Haha, Linley, with so many Doppelgangers, can you possibly find my true body?” As he spoke, the thousand ‘Ganmontins’ began to fly through the air with a whooshing sound.

Linley didn’t move at all.

His earth-style divine power, however, radiated out to three hundred meters, naturally including the nearby Delia, Bebe, and Olivier. The power of this gravitational pull didn’t have much of a difference compared with the Blackstone Prison, only, it didn’t have any prison ‘walls’ to block movement.

Gravitational Space!

Of the thousand plus ‘Ganmontins’, whenever some of them flew into the Gravitational Space, they would immediately begin to sink down, unable to resist the powerful pull of gravity.

“Ganmontin, just give up. There’s no way you’ll be able to take Olivier away!” Linley said clearly. “Your Doppelgangers aren’t able to resist the power of my Gravitational Space. Only your true body is just barely able to do so.”

Indeed…

Those Doppelgangers all sank into the sea, with only the true Ganmontin just barely able to stay aloft.

“Linley, I have never seen a gravitational pull so powerful as yours in this Gravitational Space.” Ganmontin said, and then he immediately flew backwards, outside of the range of Linley’s Gravitational Space. Linley didn’t try to block him either, instead just watching.

Linley actually hoped that this Ganmontin would leave.

“Whoosh!” Ganmontin suddenly flew into the sky, into the thin fog above the sea. Immediately, lightning began to strike towards Ganmontin.

“Eh?” Linley frowned. “Why did he fly into the fog?”

Bebe raised his head as well. “Does this Ganmontin have some mental problems? He wants to let the lightning strike him?” The power of the lightning within the ‘fog’ of the Starmist Sea increased as one flew higher. Ganmontin had already flown to a height which was roughly his maximum.

That sort of lightning was only capable of inflicting some mild wounds.

“Swoosh!” Ganmontin flew in a straight line.

It must be understood that the farther one was from the gravitational pull area, the weaker the gravity would be. Ganmontin had flown so high that the Gravitational Space set up at the surface of the sea, at the height he was in, didn't pose much of an effect at all.

Ganmontin flew directly towards the air above Linley's head.

And then…he dropped down in a straight line!

Gravity pulled downwards, and so Ganmontin's downwards speed reached a new height!

"You want to play like this?" Linley laughed calmly.

In the area around them, the constantly fluctuating rays of divine power suddenly returned to Linley's body, swirling around it. At the same time, with Linley at the center, a roughly hundred-meter, enormous sphere took shape, forming a unique, sphere-shaped repulsive force region.

Ganmontin had been full of confidence, but as soon as he entered the repulsive sphere…

"Huh?" Ganmontin immediately sensed a surge of powerful repulsive force impacting his entire body. He had been dropping at high speed, but now, his speed virtually slowed down to nothing. Sensing this sort of repulsive strength, Ganmontin was so shocked the look on his face changed. "How could a Gravitational Space be like this?"

Ganmontin had never heard of a Gravitational Space actually possessing repulsive power!

Although shocked, Ganmontin still frantically resisted that repulsive power and forced himself to descend, while at the same time brandishing out the green serpentine longsword in his hand. The longsword was covered by a layer of indistinct green illusions and also rang out with that sound of wind chimes. The sword shadow which seemed slow but was actually fast slashed through the sky, and wherever it passed, space itself split apart. A

ray of flashing green light from his illusory sword instantly pierced through the heavens and appeared in front of Linley's eyes.

Blood Drop Sword!

Ganmontin's face was savage as he unleashed his most powerful sword attack.

His body was suffering the effects of the repulsive force, but his sword energy attack wasn't impacted much.

"So fast." Linley hurriedly worked hard to dodge.

But one's body movement speed was indeed inferior to the speed of that sword light. "Clang!" The sword light viciously struck Linley's draconic scale-clad left shoulder. With a clear ringing sound, Linley's draconic scales on his left shoulder actually shattered, with three scales breaking open and hints of blood oozing out.

"What?" Ganmontin stared, slack-jawed.

His most powerful material attack had actually only caused the opponent to bleed slightly.

Linley glanced at his arm, his gaze turning cold. He immediately wielded the adamantine heavy sword, moving towards Ganmontin at high speed like a bolt of lightning.

Ganmontin, astonished and frightened by that scene, immediately flew back and retreated. Given the repulsive force, his fleeing speed was quite fast!

"Gravitational force!" Linley willed it, and immediately, that hundred meter sphere shaped space's repulsive force suddenly transformed into attractive force. In addition, the range changed from a hundred meters to two hundred meters. Ganmontin was trapped within this indistinct sphere shaped region.

The powerful gravity drew Ganmontin closer and closer to Linley.

“What level of combatant is this Linley? My most powerful attack actually only broke a few draconic scales!” Ganmontin frantically tried to throw off the power of the gravity and escape, but the gravity was too strong… although he was able to just barely resist it, his flying speed was slow.

More importantly…

Linley’s speed was unaffected, and he immediately caught up!

“Die.” Linley’s adamantine heavy sword in his hand clapped down in a light, breezy manner, while at the same time, an illusory, earthen yellow sword shadow flew out from the adamantine heavy sword, striking directly into Ganmontin’s body.

Laws of the Earth – Voidwave Sword!

Ganmontin was shocked, but under this astonishing gravity, his speed was too slow. “How can this gravity be so monstrously strong? Even Asuras shouldn’t be capable of this. Can it be that he is a hidden Asura-level combatant?” Everyone had their own specialty, and there were some people who specialized in gravity.

But gravity so powerful that Ganmontin, a Six Star Fiend, was only barely able to resist it was truly too extravagant.

“Haaargh!” Ganmontin launched a backhand sword blow, and that indistinct faint green sword shadow shot out as well.

The light green sword shadow and the light earthen yellow sword shadow collided!

After a momentary stalemate, the light yellow sword shadow collapsed, and the remaining amount of the light green sword shadow immediately charged towards Linley. Linley was too close to Ganmontin, and wasn’t able to dodge at all. The light green sword shadow immediately shot into Linley’s body.

“Huh?” Linley’s body shuddered slightly.

“Haha…his soul attack is actually weaker than mine!” Ganmontin was overjoyed.

Linley’s Gravitational Space and his terrifying defense had scared Ganmontin out of his wits. Unexpectedly, his attack which he had only wanted to use to block Linley’s had actually easily broken through Linley’s soul attack.

“Haha, go die.” Ganmontin actually release two more sword blows downwards. Generally speaking, if a person’s soul attack was strong, his soul defense would also be strong. Seeing how weak Linley’s soul attack was, he knew that Linley’s soul defense couldn’t be too powerful either. Although Ganmontin’s accomplishments in soul attacks was inferior to that of his accomplishments in physical attacks…

His soul attacks still outstripped Linley’s!

The two light green sword shadows shot towards Linley at high speed. Linley didn’t have time to dodge at all.

And Linley didn’t dodge. “Haha…” Linley laughed loudly, flying at high speed towards Ganmontin, ignoring those two light green sword shadows which flew into his body. He immediately rushed straight in front of Ganmontin. “Bang!” He viciously lashed Ganmontin with a kick to his chest.

“Crunch!” Ganmontin was knocked flying, and he spewed out a mouthful of blood.

But after flying not too far away, due to the great power of the gravitational sphere, he was once more drawn closer to Linley. Ganmontin’s face changed greatly. “This Linley, he suffered two hits of my soul attack, but he didn’t feel anything?” Ganmontin wasn’t too specialized in soul attacks, and he also was being drawn closer once more due to the gravitational

sphere.

“Here comes another one.” Linley immediately drew closer to Ganmontin once more.

“Aaaah!” Ganmontin howled loudly, and suddenly, over a thousand Ganmontins appeared around him.

“EXPLODE!” Ganmontin howled furiously.

“BOOOOOM!” The thousand ‘Ganmontins’ all blew apart!

Chapter 13 – Unbindable

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 13, Unbindable

Within the vast, boundless Starmist Sea, within that gravitational sphere that extended two hundred meters around Linley in every direction, Ganmontin's thousand or so doppelgangers all blew apart.
"Bangbangbang…" It was as though the world itself was about to collapse, as wild energy waves lashed out in every direction!

Ganmontin was very nearly at the Seven Star Fiend level of power. With such an enormous number of doppelgangers simultaneously exploding within this globe, ordinary Gods at least would definitely not be able to withstand it.

"Not good." Olivier's face changed.

That Bates immediately emanated a black energy aura, instantly covering Olivier, Bebe, and Delia behind it.

"Bang!" The powerful explosion came crashing over, causing the black aura over their bodies to flicker and shake.

"Bates, I'm fine." Bebe said disdainfully.

At the same time, Bebe and the others stared at the center of the explosion, where Linley's blurry figure could be seen. Linley was currently turning to stare at them, clearly worried about the shockwaves from the explosions striking them.

"This is the moment!" Ganmontin's original body immediately seized the opportunity, frantically resisting the gravitational pull and striving to fly away at high speed. He wanted to flee out from the Gravitational Space, and after flying outside of it, given his speed, he would easily be able to throw off Linley.

“Quick, quick!” Ganmontin frantically increased his speed, while that gravity clutched at him like countless ropes that were tightly entangling him.

“Who the hell is this Linley? His gravity control is actually at such a level, and the scaled armor on his body is so powerful.” Ganmontin was furious. Linley’s Gravitational Space and powerful body defense just so happened to perfectly counter him.

But although he was furious, Ganmontin still seized the moment when Linley was distracted to flee.

“Boss, we’re fine, but don’t let that Ganmontin escape!” Bebe hurriedly used his divine sense to speak to Linley frantically.

“Right, Ganmontin! I can’t let him escape!” Linley was startled awake. He immediately turned to look at Ganmontin, who currently had already reached the borders of the Gravitational Space. Before Linley had a chance to react, Ganmontin leapt out from the borders of that gravitational sphere.

As soon as he left that Gravitational Space, he was like a bird who had been given the skies.

Ganmontin was incomparably excited and rejoiced. “Haha, I finally escaped!”

Linley stared at Ganmontin. His lips cracked into a smile, while at the same time, he gently chanted, “Grow!”

The two hundred meter sphere of Gravitational Space suddenly expanded once more, increasing to a sphere of gravity that was four hundred meters!

It must be understood that previously, when creating his Blackstone Prison, Linley was already capable of easily reaching three hundred meters. The two hundred meter diameter was far from being Linley’s limit.

“I finally escaped that damn place. That Linley is actually such a monster. I’d best go back for now.” Just as Ganmontin was rejoicing, very suddenly…that terrifying gravitational force once more covered his entire body, with those invisible forces once more entangling him tightly.

Sensing this force, Ganmontin’s face instantly turned white, without a hint of blood.

“What?” Ganmontin was stupefied.

He was very fast, but under that gravitational pull, he wasn’t even at a tenth of his normal speed. How could he possibly escape Linley’s pursuit? Last time, he had used the exploding doppelgangers to distract Linley, but this time, Linley wouldn’t be distracted again.

“Can it be that I am going to die today?” Ganmontin turned to look, but all he saw was Linley’s dark golden eyes. Those two dark golden eyes were currently drawing nearer to him. Within the Gravitational Space, Linley’s speed was far greater than his!

Although this took time to describe, in reality, less than a second had passed since Linley had expanded his Gravitational Space.

“You won’t be able to flee!” Linley’s voice rang out in Ganmontin’s mind, echoing.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s right fist struck out like an aquatic dragon leaving the seas, seeming to carry a force that was mighty enough to shatter the earth itself. It howled as it tore through the air, and wherever his fist passed, even the space of the Infernal Realm itself began to shudder, creating spatial cracks.

Linley’s powerful muscles and body had bestowed upon him incomparably vast strength. If he were to use a long-distance attack based on the Laws, this massive physical strength wouldn’t be able to be used, but once he entered close combat, Linley’s mighty body, having been transformed by the ‘golden drop of blood’ and ‘Sovereign’s Might’, was capable of

releasing astonishing might.

This was his most powerful punch, one which fused the ‘Essence of the Earth’ and the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and connected it with his mighty physical strength!

Ganmontin felt his vision blur as a draconic scale-covered fist suddenly swung at him. Ganmontin immediately launched a backhand blow with his sword. The sword seemed to move slowly but was actually extremely fast. Before the fist arrived, the green serpentine sword was already there to block.

“Bang!”

Linley’s fist collided viciously against the serpentine divine artifact sword.

“Rumble…” The serpentine sword actually was smashed so hard that it bent. That fist, carrying boundless force, was knocked slightly off-target by Ganmontin’s sword, but it still smashed hard against Ganmontin’s shoulder. With a ‘crunch!’ sound, Ganmontin’s shoulder-blade shattered and he was knocked flying backwards by the blow.

“What terrifying brute strength!” Ganmontin’s face changed dramatically. “If he were to land a blow on my head, I would die without question. It was that close!”

Even a divine artifact sword had been bent. This force was simply monstrously powerful. However, after having been lucky enough to dodge that, Ganmontin let out a sigh of relief, but then his face changed greatly, because a flashing, azure-golden streak of light was already moving towards him like a blurred whip.

No, it wasn’t a blurred whip!

It was Linley’s draconic tail, which had reached an extreme level of speed!

As it turned out, when Linley had smashed out with his right fist, he had

also sent his steel-like draconic tail slashing through the air towards Ganmontin's head.

Ganmontin was so terrified that the look on his face completely changed. The longsword in his hand slashed out in a blur, while at the same time, a pleasant flute sound rang out. This strange flute sound caused Linley to unconsciously pause. "Crackle…" Where the sword shadow passed by, space split apart.

"Clang!" The serpentine longsword smashed hard against the draconic tail, and sparks flew everywhere. Three draconic scales on the serpentine tail were shattered, while the strike of the draconic tail couldn't help but miss its mark.

Alas, the power of this blow from the draconic tail was simply too great. Even though it was slightly off-target, it was only just a bit lower.

"WHAP!" The draconic tail smashed viciously against Ganmontin's chest like a chopping blade, and as it passed through his neck, it actually separated Ganmontin's head from the rest of his body. Ganmontin's head immediately flew away, his eyes filled with astonishment.

With a return whipping blow from that azure-golden draconic tail, yet another strike was landed on the headless body.

"Bang!" The headless body immediately blew apart.

"You won't be able to flee!" Linley chased after Ganmontin's head.

With Linley at the center, a terrifying gravitational force pulled out. Every living creature within that gravitational sphere was drawn towards Linley. Ganmontin's head was affected by the gravity as well. "Crackle…" Starting from Ganmontin's head, a neck, shoulder, and chest were quickly growing out…

The power of a head by itself to fight back was simply too weak!

Naturally, he wouldn't be able to resist the gravity, and thus he drew near Linley.

"You won't have enough time!" Linley's right leg just gently kicked out, carrying a massive force capable of shattering a mountain range as it chopped down towards the head like a chopping knife. Linley's right leg seemed to carry a hint of a blade shadow as it gently slashed past the only half-grown upper body.

"No!" A furious, unwilling scream.

"You cannot kill me. If you kill me, the Lord Commander will definitely kill you!" As Linley's leg-blade chopped down towards Ganmontin's head, Ganmontin sent his final divine sense message.

Unfortunately, Linley didn't hesitate at all.

"Slash!" The head was chopped down by Linley's leg, and it blew apart from the blow.

Ganmontin was dead!

With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved that green divine artifact longsword and interspatial ring, taking them into his hand. At this time, Delia, Bebe, and the others excitedly flew over as well. Linley naturally caused everyone to be overjoyed by his being able to kill Ganmontin.

"Haha, Boss, that Ganmontin was so boastful, but in the end, he still died." Bebe laughed loudly. "Boss, let me take a look and see how much wealth his interspatial ring had within."

"You are still thinking about such things?" Linley smirked as he laughed.

The amount of wealth Bebe had was comparable to the total wealth of some of the ancient clans of the Infernal Realm. This Ganmontin, although powerful, wasn't a Seven Star Fiend. Most likely, he only had a few trillion. Compared to Bebe's fortune, it was like a hair on the body of nine oxen.

“I like counting money.” Bebe felt itchy in his heart.

“Linley, just give the interspatial ring to Bebe.” The nearby Delia laughed. “If you don’t give it to him, he won’t give up.” Linley laughed, then tossed the interspatial ring to Bebe.

Bebe chortled, then immediately began to investigate the contents of the interspatial ring.

The big-bearded Bates just looked at Linley. He knew that Linley was powerful, but even Ganmontin had died in such a manner. This caused him to be surprised. He couldn’t help but sigh, “Mr. Linley, even Ganmontin was in such dire straits in front of you. This truly is admirable.”

Linley just shook his head and laughed, looking at the green serpentine longsword. In his heart, he said to himself, “Ganmontin really was unlucky to have encountered me.”

It wasn’t that Ganmontin wasn’t strong enough, nor was it that Linley was too strong.

It was…

Linley was a perfect counter to Ganmontin!

Ganmontin specialized in speed and in material attacks.

In terms of speed, Linley’s unique Gravitational Space would cause any expert, no matter how fast, to feel as though he were moving through mud once trapped within. Any expert’s speed would be much slower.

As for material attacks, to his misfortune, Linley’s powerful body was so strong, only an exceedingly few number of races of the Infernal Realm could compare to him. Ganmontin’s most powerful sword attack was only able to break apart two or three draconic scales, unable to influence Linley at all.

“If I were to encounter a Six Star Fiend who specializes in soul attacks, I would be in bad shape.” Linley said to himself.

Ultimate experts who were skilled in soul attacks were generally capable of reaching the level of making their soul attacks ‘conscious’. For example, the Volcano Titan, Phusro! Even the ‘Godslayer Arrows’ for sale in the Redbud Castle contained a mind of its own.

These were all from experts who were quite skilled in matters of the soul.

Linley was worried most about this type of expert. Those who specialized in material attacks, however, were perfectly countered by Linley.

“Ah, Boss? There’s no way to bind this interspatial ring by blood.”

“Eh?” Linley turned and saw that Bebe was looking sourly at the interspatial ring in his hand. The nearby Delia was frowning as well. “This interspatial ring has an owner. Can it be…that Ganmontin has another surviving divine clone?”

In the Infernal Realm, some experts would separate their divine clones into different areas.

But of course, this was only the minority. After all, there were strong divine clones and weak ones. Weak divine clones had to be put in a safe location. But where in the Infernal Realm was truly safe? The weak didn’t have the money to buy dwellings within cities, while those experts who roamed all over the place didn’t want to let their clones be separated.

In the depths of the sea, within that nameless gorge and the estate within. Ganmontin, dressed in a deep green robe, was shaking, his green glowing eyes staring in front of himself.

“My divine wind clone, destroyed!” Ganmontin ground his teeth, his entire body trembling. “Linley, of the Four Divine Beasts clan? I don’t give a damn who you are. I, Ganmontin, will definitely, definitely make you regret

it!” Ganmontin now only had his divine water cloner remaining.

In terms of power, Ganmontin’s strongest clone was his divine wind clone.

Even his divine wind clone had proved incapable of killing Linley; how, then, would he kill him?

“My only choice is to go beg the Lord Commander!” Ganmontin’s eyes flashed with the light of hatred, then he transformed into a ray of green light and immediately flew out of the hall.

In the waters above the Starmist Sea, Linley’s group was staring at that green serpentine longsword and that interspatial ring. Bebe muttered, “That fellow actually hid a divine clone. In the past, very few of the many Gods that I’ve met have done such a thing! So troublesome. We can’t even bind his interspatial ring.”

“If we can’t bind it with blood, then we should destroy it.” Linley laughed calmly. “If we leave it untouched, Ganmontin would know where we are located.”

Right at this moment…

“Linley, those seven are coming.” Delia said.

Linley turned to look. Indeed, Aches, Tam, Boff, and the rest of the seven Gods were flying over. Aches, in particular, had an apologetic smile on his face. The seven of them had watched this battle just now. Only now did they realize that the ‘hidden expert’ was Linley.

“They actually have face to come back? Hmph.” Bebe let out a low snort.

“Lord Linley.” The first to fly over was Aches, and he immediately called out in a very friendly voice.

Chapter 14 – Drifting For Twenty Years

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 14, Drifting For Twenty Years

“Oho, so it’s you guys? What are you doing here? I thought the seven of you left already! How come you came back?” Bebe intentionally cocked his head to one side, a mystified look on his face. Immediately, Aches and the other seven felt rather embarrassed.

Although in that sort of situation, it was understandable that they had to consider their own safety, if they had truly just left, that was one thing.

But now that they had come back? It was rather awkward.

In the Starmist Sea, however, where bandits abounded everywhere, given their strength as Gods, how could they safely reach the Bloodridge Continent? Only by relying on the protection of Linley and Bates would they be able to reach their destination. Although relying on Linley’s group to help out was rather awkward, given the other choice was losing their lives, they had to do it.

Aches chuckled, then hurriedly said, “Bebe, we…”

“Oh, I know.” Bebe suddenly had a look of insight appearing on his face. “Aches, originally, you were borrowing Bates’ metallic lifeform. Now that Bates’ metallic lifeform was destroyed by that Ganmontin, you have now come back to compensate him for the metallic lifeform, right?”

“Metallic lifeform?” Aches was flabbergasted.

Bates’ eyes lit up. Only now did he remember his metallic lifeform, and he immediately laughed. “Right. I agreed to your request to use my metallic lifeform and allow everyone to ride it. Now, it’s destroyed. Aches, you have to compensate me! My metallic lifeform was a high level one, worth eighteen million inkstones!”

“Eighteen million?” Aches stared.

“What, are you not going to pay up?” The face of the big-bearded Bates immediately hardened, as though he were about to attack Aches.

Aches hurriedly said, “Lord Bates, don’t worry, I’ll compensate you, I’ll definitely compensate you, alright?”

“That’s more like it.” The big-bearded Bates laughed delightedly. His metallic lifeform was actually only worth around eight million inkstones. Now that it had been destroyed, he actually made a profit of ten million inkstones.

Aches felt resignation in his heart. Who the hell had he pissed off, for all these disasters to happen on this trip through the Starmist Sea?

“If this happens a few more times, this entire business trip will all but have been for nothing.” Aches sighed helplessly. Actually, the value of the products which Aches had brought was quite high. If he could bring it to the Bloodridge Continent, he would indeed make quite a bit of money.

Unfortunately, the price of metallic lifeforms was high as well.

“Will you be coming with us?” A voice rang out.

Aches and the other seven Deities turned to look. The speaker was Linley. The big-bearded Bates glanced at him, then began to chortle. “Aches, if you want to travel alongside us, you need to first see if Linley agrees or not. I’m not the decision maker here. It’s up to Linley.”

Aches and the rest of the seven all knew that the most powerful person in this group was Linley!

“Lord Linley, we…” Aches hurriedly laughed.

“If you want to travel along with us, it’s fine.” Linley laughed calmly as he

spoke. When these words came out, Aches and the others all let out sighs of relief. Linley, seeing the situation, couldn't help but laugh. "However, I have to warn you that although I killed Ganmontin, he still has another divine clone left. More importantly…there is a terrifying figure behind him, and that ultimate expert will most likely come looking for me."

"Ultimate expert?" Aches and the rest of the seven couldn't help but look at each other.

The nearby Bebe, wanting to frighten them, added, "That Ganmontin was nothing more than a subordinate of that expert. If you just think about it, you can probably come to the conclusion…that the expert should be on the same level as an Asura!"

"Asura!" Aches, Tam, Wilburn, and the others felt their hearts shake. To a God, the Asuras were invincible figures that were far above them.

The green-haired man, 'Tam', hurriedly said awkwardly, "Lord Linley is so powerful that he should be able to deal with that expert, right?" Aches and the others immediately looked at Linley.

"I don't have any confidence at all of being able to do so." Linley refuted. "Everyone, make your decisions!"

Aches and the other seven looked at each other.

"We'll still follow you, Lord Linley." The seven, in the end, made their decision. If the seven were to roam the Starmist Sea by relying on their own power, there was no way they would be able to safely arrive at the Bloodridge Continent. By following Linley, they would be much safer.

Linley, hearing this, couldn't help but laugh.

"If I can protect you, I will. If I'm not able to, then you'll have to rely on yourselves." Linley laughed calmly. "Alright, let's head out!" Linley waved his hand, and a metallic lifeform appeared on the surface of the Starmist Sea.

Linley knew very well that Aches no longer had any metallic lifeforms.

Since they knew that behind Ganmontin there was this Lord Commander, Linley's group naturally devised a method to make it so that they wouldn't be found. First, Linley destroyed the interspatial ring and even that divine artifact, then took a roundabout route as they advanced towards the Bloodridge Continent.

The Starmist Sea was vast and boundless. Even the most powerful of experts would find it very hard to find someone within the Starmist Sea.

At first, Linley's group had been quite worried, but after advancing for over a year without encountering any danger, everyone relaxed.

The endless Starmist Sea. During their quiet voyage, twenty years quickly passed after their encounter with Ganmontin.

"Rumble…" The waves of the sea rolled on.

The metallic lifeform broke through the waves, with Linley seated outside at the head of the ship, staring at the waves.

"Twenty years!" Linley gripped the wine bottle, casually taking two gulps. "In the Infernal Realm, time really does go by fast. Just traversing the Starmist Sea alone takes decades. By now, we haven't even covered half the distance."

During the past twenty years, at first, Linley was worried about encountering that Lord Commander.

But as time went on, Linley relaxed. After travelling for twenty years, most likely it would be extremely difficult for that Commander to locate them. After all, even Paragon-level Highgods wouldn't have a significantly greater divine sense than normal Highgods.

How then could they find Linley?

“Boss.” Bebe suddenly scurried out from the cabin of the ship, his face filled with excitement. “Boss, in the cabin, they were discussing an extremely famous island that we are about to reach. It seems it is called Miluo Island!” During this journey, Linley’s group had halted at a few cities before as well.

The vast Starmist Sea had many islands within it, and they were divided amongst ten prefectures as well. Every single prefecture had ten cities, which were all built upon the various islands.

The islands of the Starmist Sea generally had a circumference of ten thousand kilometers, with the larger ones perhaps even a million kilometers, far larger than Linley’s homeland of the ‘Yulan continent’. This was more than enough land to build a city.

“Miluo Island?” Linley couldn’t help but be surprised.

“They say that Miluo Island is very developed and flourishing with trade. There’s even some sort of ‘Arena’ on Miluo Island as well, I hear.” Bebe was rather confused about this as well.

Linley, however, remembered that in that book which described the geography of the Infernal Realm, there was a rather weighty description of the ‘Miluo Island’.

The Miluo Island was a large island that was hundreds of kilometers in circumference, and was within the ‘Silverblue Prefecture’ of the Starmist Sea.

Miluo Island was an extremely bustling place with a very large amount of people passing through it. Each day, many merchants and warriors would gather there. Its degree of activity wasn’t one whit lower than the ten major cities of the Silverblue Prefecture.

This was a very puzzling thing, actually. An island that was comparable to the ten cities of Silverblue Prefecture?

“Hey, Linley, what are you chatting about?” The big-bearded Bates walked to the front of the ship as well.

“Just chatting about Miluo Island.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Miluo Island?” The big-bearded ‘Bates’ sighed. “This is a very special place. It isn’t under the protection of the Starmist Army, nor does it have the protection of any prefectural soldiers, but it is as bustling as any of the large cities. Within the island, there is an independent castle which allows merchants to engage in trade.”

The Starmist Army was comparable to the ‘Redbud Army’; it was the army of the Starmist Sea.

“Miluo Island has an extremely powerful army within it which protects the rules of Miluo Island.” Bates sighed in praise. “The soldiers of this army are all Highgods and are very outstanding. After all these years, Miluo Island has never decayed!”

Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled.

Each prefecture only had ten cities. But this Miluo Island was actually able to entice so many merchants to enter it, and was able to be maintained for so many years. This was indeed quite astonishing.

“Miluo Island has two famous places within it. One is the ‘Free Castle’, while the other is the ‘Arena’. Within the Free Castle, no battles are permitted whatsoever. If any fighting is discovered, the soldiers of the Miluo Island will definitely show no mercy at all! Within the Arena, the onlookers aren’t permitted to battle each other. Anyone who violates this will also be surrounded and killed by the army!”

Bates’ eyes were filled with amazement and excitement. “Miluo Island is too powerful. Up till now, no one has dared to challenge it.”

“So many merchants trade there? Can it be that no one dares to steal there?”

Bebe snorted. “I refuse to believe it. Ordinary people don’t dare rob the merchants, but can it be that the prefectural soldiers will also be afraid to? For example, the Starmist Army?” The Starmist Army was the army of the Sovereigns.

Could it be that it wouldn’t come to deal with Miluo Island?

“I’m not sure about that.” Bates shook his head.

“Miluo Island has already existed for countless hundreds of millions of years. There definitely has to be a special reason for all this.” Linley had a general idea of some information regarding Miluo Island. However, it was still just a general idea. From this, though, Linley was able to postulate… that someone capable of forming an army composed of Highgods, as well as create a trading location outside of the city, had to be an utterly, monstrously powerful figure.

“Behind Miluo Island there is definitely an astonishingly powerful force.” Linley said to himself.

“Hey, just now, I heard you say that in three days, we’ll be at Miluo Island?” Bebe suddenly asked.

The big-bearded Bates nodded and laughed, “Right. Three more days. Miluo Island is extremely interesting and fascinating, especially the Arena, and especially the Highgod Arena. The battles there even include some extremely powerful experts. It is so incredible!”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a hint of anticipation in his heart as well.

Miluo Island. An independent island within the Starmist Sea. It had no prefectural soldiers of the Starmist Army, and yet it was one of the most bustling places here.

Three days later.

“There’s so much activity!” Seeing the enormous island from afar, Linley’s

group was shocked. Upon seeing Miluo Island's island entrance, they actually saw countless, densely clustered metallic lifeforms heading in that direction.

"At every moment in time, there are a large number of metallic lifeforms arriving." Linley couldn't help but sigh in amazement. "Each day, how many people must be arriving here at Miluo Island? It really is hard to fathom. The amount of activity here at Miluo Island really is no lower than any other island."

On this trip, Linley had seen quite a few cities.

Their degree of activity was roughly the same as this Miluo Island.

"Boss, let's go. Let's go take a look at this Miluo Island!" Once the metallic lifeform drew near and halted at the entrance location, Bebe immediately and excitedly was the first to charge out.

There was no need to pay an entrance fee to enter Miluo Island. Linley's group thus stepped down and entered this legendary Miluo Island.

Chapter 15 – Miluo Island

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 15, Miluo Island

Miluo Island was a verdant island. Ancient trees could be seen everywhere, and the fresh air uplifted the spirits of Linley and the others. From afar, they could see the varied buildings, some sumptuous restaurants, and other edifices. The people on the streets were in an endless stream as well.

At present, some members of bizarre races walked past Linley's group. Some were sharp-eared elfin creatures with faintly green skin, while others were enormous whale-warriors whose faces had a rather scaly look. Although upon becoming a Deity, one could transform into a human, some bizarre races had different aesthetic standards compared to humans. Even in human form, they would maintain some of the things they felt proudest about. For example, the tail of a fox-man, or the fish-scales of an oceanic creature.

Linley's group was no longer puzzled by these things. Turning, he laughed as he looked at the nearby Delia and the others. "We've been on the sea for quite a while. Let's first go to a restaurant, and then to the Arena and the Free Castle later." Linley had been curious long ago regarding the legendary 'Arena'. In this place, he would be able to see some of the techniques of real experts. How could he give up a chance like this?

"We'll do as you say, Lord Linley." Aches chuckled as he spoke.

Linley, hearing these words, understand that ever since his battle with Ganmontin, he had already become the acknowledged leader of this squad. This was how things worked in the Infernal Realm. Experts were revered.

"Hey, Boss, look. That squad dressed in blood red armor. All of them are Highgods." Bebe immediately pointed into the distance.

Linley and the others immediately turned to look. Indeed, on the streaming,

crowded streets, there were three men dressed in blood red armor, which had some unique patterns atop them. Linley wasn't able to tell what sort of hidden meaning the patterns represented. As the three warriors walked atop the streets, everyone else on the streets intentionally maintained their distance, clearly not daring to offend them.

The big-bearded Bates said hurriedly, "Linley, that's the private army for protecting Miluo Island. No matter what, don't offend them. All of them are Highgods, and they are extremely many in number. Over these countless years, nobody has ever dared to cause trouble at Miluo Island."

"Understood." Linley laughed calmly.

This private army of an island was actually vastly more elite than the Starmist Army or the prefectural armies. In addition, Miluo Island had been bustling for countless years now. Linley couldn't help but feel astonished by the person behind Miluo Island.

"Hey?" The nearby Delia frowned, her eyebrows knitting. "Bates, I remembered that you said before that Miluo Island is divided into the west island and east island regions. In the east island, it seems only the 'Arena' and the 'Free Castle' are restricted. In the other areas, it is fine if battle occurs, so there shouldn't be any members of the island patrol, right?"

Linley's group, prior to coming to Miluo Island, had been warned about the rules of Miluo Island by Bates, who was familiar with them. Only the 'Arena' and the 'Free Castle' of Miluo Island were safe grounds.

"Those aren't patrols. Most likely, those three warriors are on break." The big-bearded Bates laughed as he spoke. "Also, when Miluo Island warriors are on patrol, each squad has ten people, not three!"

While walking and chatting, Linley's group headed deeper into Miluo Island. Miluo Island was simply too vast, with a circumference of hundreds of thousands of kilometers, which was multiple times larger than Linley's homeland of the Yulan continent. Fortunately, Linley's group was capable of moving at a speed that far exceeded mortals, and so to them, this sort of

scope wasn't that much.

"This restaurant isn't bad. I ate here last time." The big-bearded Bates pointed at an ancient, classy-looking building in front of them.

"Alright. I'll trust your judgment." Bebe chortled and was the first to rush into the restaurant. Linley's group naturally began to laugh while following him. However, as they walked into the restaurant, Linley was stunned.

By the side of the door, there was an explanation notice:

For those who eat in my restaurant, if they engage in battle, they must pay a fee of ten thousand inkstones. If a chair is broken, a hundred inkstones must be paid. If a table is broken…

"What…what's this all about?" Linley had never seen this outside of a restaurant before. Olivier, curious, also read through the rules. "How greedy. The chairs and tables are probably worth not even a single inkstone, but they actually want to charge so much. Also, any overturned food needs to be paid at ten times the price?"

Aches laughed. "This is a unique aspect of Miluo Island. After all, in normal cities, battles are strictly forbidden. But in Miluo Island…aside from those two areas, the other areas all permit battle and killing. Or, at least, the patrol soldiers of Miluo Island won't interfere. But these many restaurants and hotels and other service areas, which have formed into a huge alliance, will interfere."

The restaurants, hotels, and other service locations had formed an alliance? Linley was somewhat astonished.

"They won't go too hard on you, but if a battle occurs, then you absolutely must pay enough money. If you don't pay up, they'll attack." Aches sighed in praise. "If I were a store owner, I'd hope for people to engage in battle, and then I would be able to collect money afterwards."

Special places had special rules.

“How intriguing.” Linley let out a few words of praise, and then headed into the restaurant. The restaurant was very large, and there were quite a few customers present. Linley’s group headed up to the second floor, dividing into two tables. Linley’s table was one seated near a window. Naturally, the fees were covered by Aches.

“The silverfish slices are so tender. They melt as soon as they enter the mouth.” Bebe sighed in amazement, hurriedly using his spoon to scoop up yet another piece of fish, delivering it to his mouth while calling out loudly, “Delicious, delicious.”

“This Bebe…” Linley and Delia were enjoying this rare chance to eat delicacies as well.

“Did you misspeak? How is that possible!”

“Of course I didn’t misspeak! This is absolutely correct. On the sea here from Bluemaple City of the Redbud Continent, every single large-scale bandit force was completely destroyed. Those bandit forces were completely dispersed!”

Hearing this, Linley was shocked. All of the powerful bandit forces from Bluemaple City to here had been destroyed? Who could be so powerful? Linley turned to look, and saw two men drinking wine and chatting amongst themselves. One of them, a man with long golden hair, was speaking with assurance and composure.

“You might laugh at me for saying this, but a good friend of mine became a bandit. He personally witnessed a black-haired man wipe out his Orchid Coral Island. The eleven Highgods on the island, the leader included, all died. That black-haired man only used a single blade attack! My friend and the other ordinary bandits immediately fled in every direction. Most likely, that expert couldn’t be bothered to chase down and kill ordinary Gods.”

The discussion between these two was overheard by quite a few people nearby, and these people all began to discuss the matter amongst themselves

as well. Clearly, the news of many powerful bandit forces being destroyed was no longer a secret.

“This is true. Roughly a month ago, it seems as though one of the Highgods of Blueshark Island’s bandit forces escaped. All the others died.”

Linley’s group, hearing these conversations, couldn’t help but sigh in amazement.

“Destroyed so many bandit forces, all by himself?” Bebe sighed, somewhat surprised. Olivier frowned. “Black-haired man? Everyone, do you still remember that man who resisted those thunderbolts back then that we ran into?”

Linley’s mind immediately drifted back to the scene of the Fogsea Storm, and how that man who carried a warblade on his back resisted the lightning bolts. That man had a head of black hair.

“If it was him, he probably really did have the power to destroy all those powerful bandits.” Linley said to himself. At the same time, Linley also thought of how when they had encountered a small group of ordinary bandits, that black-haired man had immediately attacked and killed them.

Clearly, the black-haired man held a deep hatred for bandits.

Linley’s group chatted while eating.

“Linley, these dishes are excellent. Have a taste.” Delia said. Linley couldn’t help but to turn and smile at her. But right at this moment…“Bang!” A wild, explosive collision sound rang out on the second floor of the restaurant.

Immediately, the other customers on the second floor were startled. Linley turned to look, and noticed that two people were fighting each other, moving as fast as lightning. “Clang!” Divine artifacts clashed, and then only blurred legs which gave off a fiery glow could be seen, smashing viciously into the chest of the other black-robed man, who was immediately sent

flying.

“Swoosh!” The black-robed man was kicked so viciously that he flew as fast as lightning towards the direction Linley’s group was in. The man was about to crash into and ruin Linley’s table of dishes.

Linley couldn’t help but frown, and divine earth power began to gather on his body.

“He actually really is trying to kill me.” The black-robed man who was kicked flying was actually overjoyed in his heart. He was planning to seize the opportunity to flee and fly out from the window near Linley’s group, but as he came falling down towards Linley’s group…

A strange repulsive force activated upon the black-robed man’s body. The repulsive force was simply too strong. The black-robed man, suffering this invisible repulsive force, was actually sent flying back the opposite way, accelerating at high speed towards the fiery red figure.

“Slash!”

A fiery red blade shadow chopped down, and actually easily sliced through the black-robed man’s head. The black-robed man stared disbelievingly, and then his head blew apart. The impact of the sudden repulsive gravity being applied to the black-robed man had caused him to be in a state of astonishment, and so he had died to a single blow.

“Haha, after so many years, I finally killed you, you bastard.” The fiery light surrounding the red-robed man’s body vanished. His face was filled with excitement, while at the same time, he stretched out with his hand to collect the interspatial ring and the divine artifact.

At this moment, one of the waiters in the restaurant walked over and said casually, “You should know the rules. All the expenses, combined, total 32,100 inkstones.” At Miluo Island, there were very few people who dared to offend their alliance. Thus, there was no need for threats. A waiter coming over with the bill was enough.

The red-robed figure very straightforwardly withdrew thirty thousand or so inkstones, and then left, heading towards Linley's group. Bowing slightly, he said, "Thank you for your assistance. Otherwise, who knows how long it would have been before I would have been able to avenge my enmity."

"You can leave now. Don't bother us." Bebe, still chewing on delicacies, just frowned.

The red-robed man wasn't angry. He immediately left.

"It really is necessary to be careful at Miluo Island. Battles can occur at any point in time." Linley, after having seen this, warned himself. His plan was to next go to the Free Castle to buy some things. It seemed that he needed to be careful. After all, upon revealing his fortune, it was possible that others would lust after it.

After dining, Linley's group left the restaurant, then headed straight for the famous 'Arena' of Miluo Island.

The Arena was extremely large, taking up over a hundred kilometers. The spectators of the Arena weren't permitted to battle each other. If they were discovered to be engaging in battle, they would suffer the assaults of the patrol soldiers of Miluo Island, who would show no mercy at all.

Anyone who wished to watch the battles would have to pay a fee of 100 inkstones.

"The fee really is quite high. The Arena supposedly has millions of seats. If all the seats were filled, just based on this alone, their daily income would be in excess of a hundred million inkstones!" Linley sighed in amazement. "A hundred million inkstones a day…how much is that in ten thousand years?" This was indeed a vast sum. However, only someone with sufficient strength was capable of maintaining it.

Just by looking at the many island guards with blood red armor, one would understand how powerful the force here was.

While passing through the staircases and entering the walkways, Linley's group would often see roving patrols of the island guards. "All of them are Highgods. I've seen over a thousand by now. Who knows how many island guards there are in total?" Linley was secretly shocked.

As Linley's group of experts ran towards the viewing platforms of the Arena, they didn't know that in a different part of the corridors of the Arena, there were some familiar faces!

"Captain, our patrol for today is over. Let's first go out and have some fun. Patrolling bores me to death." Ten island guards, dressed in the same blood red armor, were walking together. They were chatting amongst themselves.

"Go out for fun? Today, we have some things to do when we get back. Next time." A calm voice rang out.

"Oh." The nine others couldn't help but feel resigned. Only, they didn't dare disobey the orders of their captain. They knew exactly how formidable and how powerful their captain was. He was a person who, in the Highgod Arena, had won a hundred battles in a row!

To win a hundred consecutive battles in the Arena was a tremendous glory.

"Cesar, that kid…alas." The captain let out a long sigh. If Linley was present, he would definitely recognize this captain dressed in the blood red armor. Amazingly, he was an expert of the Yulan continent…Tarosse! Only, the current Tarosse had already become a Highgod!

Chapter 16 – Familiar Face

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 16, Familiar Face

The Arena was divided into three levels. The Highgod Arena, the God Arena, and the Demigod Arena. There was only a single Highgod Arena, three God Arenas, and just three Demigod Arenas as well.

“Boss, which level should we visit first?” Bebe hurriedly asked.

“The Highgod battles should be the most exciting. Naturally, we’ll go there.” Linley laughed. The others also were rather more interested in the Highgod battles, and so all of them followed the directions on the walkway and headed directly towards the Highgod Arena.

Moments later, Linley’s group arrived at the vast Arena.

The Highgod Arena. The central dueling area was a round, empty expanse of land that was five kilometers in diameter. Around it was an extremely dense cluster of spectator seats. At a glance, there were nearly a million seats.

“The Highgod Arena is a large one. The other two arenas aren’t nearly as large.” The big-bearded Bates said. Linley’s group headed through the corridors to find some empty seats, then sat down.

Deity-level combatants were able to see to a very great distance. Thus, everyone was able to see clearly across multiple kilometers to view the two men battling in the central dueling area.

Currently, in mid-air, two figures were hovering while staring at each other. One was a muscular, one-horned man. The other was a devilish, bewitching red haired woman. What attracted Linley’s attention wasn’t these two people who were preparing for combat; it was the edges of the central area. In front of the viewing platforms was one blood red armored warrior after

another!

At the edges of the circular viewing platforms, every few meters, there was an island guards warrior.

“There are actually over a thousand island guards here!” Linley inspected them carefully. These people alone represented a force of a thousand Highgods. In addition, these were just the ones who were standing at the edges. It must be understood that other areas, such as the roving patrols going through the corridors, had quite a few island guards as well.

The number of island guards present at this arena was simply astonishing!

“Wow. There’s quite a few island guards.” Bebe sighed in amazement.

Aches laughed. “This is the Highgod Arena. They are here to prevent the shockwaves from the battle from harming the viewers. Thus, they arranged for so many island guards present. The number of island guards at the God Arena are far fewer, while the Demigod Arena has virtually no island guards present.”

“How much damage could shockwaves from a Demigod-level fight cause?” The big-bearded Bates chuckled as well.

While chatting, Linley’s group also carefully watched the battle going on in the center of the arena. Two figures, transformed into blurs, were currently battling as fast as lightning. In mid-air, multiple rays of light flashed, while Linley’s group continued to watch carefully.

“Rumble…”

The devilish red haired beauty actually brandished forth a red staff, striking down like lightning towards the horned man. “Aaaah!” A desolate scream could be heard, and the horned man was sent smashing away. And then, with a queer ‘boom’, his body exploded.

“Clarinda, second victory!” A voice rang out.

The devilish red haired beauty flew directly down towards the corridors below the arena.

“Too weak!” Watching this battle, Linley secretly shook his head. “Just by using a slight amount of the rather unique ‘Explosion’ profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of Fire, she was able to win twice. The quality of the combatants in this Arena is really low.” Linley had simply seen far too many powerful experts.

Bluefire, Beirut, Learmonth, Royalwing, Elquin, Phusro…

Even the Ganmontin he had defeated was far superior to these people.

Next to Linley, the big-bearded Bates said softly, “Linley, any Highgods who wish to participate in this arena are permitted to, so of course there will be differences in quality. However, true experts will occasionally appear as well, which is why the ordinary battles will of course be considered by you as uninteresting.”

“Occasionally appear?” Linley shook his head, feeling resigned.

The reason he had come was to watch experts do battle. According to their plans, they would only stay for a day or two at this Miluo Island. After finishing their shopping at the Free Castle, they would leave. He didn’t have time to wait here for experts to appear.

“Unfortunate.” Linley sighed.

“The experts here at the Arena are actually fairly common.” Bates said in a hushed voice. “The Highgod Arena has a rule; if one can defeat ten combatants in a row, then all items at the Free Castle will be 10% off. If one wins fifty victories, everything in the Free Castle will be 20% off. But if you win a hundred victories! All items in the Free Castle will be at half price, and in addition, a reward of ten billion inkstones will be given! At the same time, one will be qualified to enter a secret area of the western part of the island to do a special viewing!”

Half price shopping and a ten billion inkstone reward? Linley didn't care too much about those, but…

"A special viewing of a secret area in the western island? What does that mean?" Linley was rather puzzled.

The eastern part of the island was publicly open to anyone, but the western part of the island was forbidden to outsiders. However, Linley had never heard of a 'secret area' in the western part of the island.

"Miluo Island is jointly controlled and run by five great clans. The disciples of these five clans, as well as the island guards, all live on the western part of the island. However, supposedly, the western part of the island has an extremely important hidden area. Only someone who receives a joint invitation from the five clans or someone who wins a hundred victories is qualified to go pay a visit." Bates sighed.

Linley couldn't help but feel curious.

Five major clans jointly managed Miluo Island. Then…what was this so-called secret area on the western part of the island?

"Bates, you've never gone to take a look?" Linley looked at him.

"I would very much like to." Bates shook his head and laughed. "Only, I value my own life rather highly. Winning ten victories, for me, wouldn't be too hard. But a hundred? After all, not all combatants will be very weak. If an expert suddenly appears, won't I be finished?"

"Can it be that nobody has been so lucky as to only encounter weaklings during the hundred battles?" Linley asked.

"Impossible." Bates shook his head. "Even if you are lucky and only encounter weak Highgods during the first 99 battles whom you defeat, at the 100th battle, the five clans will arrange for one of their own experts to go test the challenger! Every single person who was truly victorious in a

hundred battles is a true expert, and has at least my level of power."

Linley nodded slightly.

It made sense. The five clans wouldn't so casually toss out ten billion inkstones to someone who was lucky but weak.

"The reward alone is ten billion inkstones. The five clans truly are rich and profligate." Linley said to himself.

"Linley, if you try for yourself, winning a hundred battles would be very easy." Bates said enticingly. "Generally speaking, someone at the Six Star Fiend level is capable of winning a hundred battles. Lucky Five Star Fiends also have a shot. After all, generally speaking, you might not see a Seven Star Fiend participate in the Arena even so much as once every ten thousand years."

Linley chuckled. That was of course the case.

Would an almighty Seven Star Fiend care about ten billion inkstones? But of course, as time passed, over the course of ten thousand years, perhaps a Seven Star Fiend might appear to take part.

"Boss, quick, look!" Bebe said urgently.

"Eh?" Linley looked at Bebe, puzzled. Not just Bebe; even Delia and the others all called out, "Linley, quick, look at the person who appeared in mid-air. That's the person we encountered back then!"

After having seen the first battle, Linley wasn't too interested in the arena battles any longer.

But at this moment, Linley immediately turned to look. What he saw shocked him!

In the wide, empty space, there was a familiar figure!

“Him?” A look of amazement appeared on Linley’s face. “Who would have expected that an event which happens perhaps once every ten thousand years is happening right now. Such a powerful expert really has come to participate.”

In the empty space of the arena, a cold, callous man, dressed in a long black robe and carrying a warblade on his back was standing there. His long black hair fluttered loosely in the wind. He stood there like a glacier who had existed for countless years, icy and unapproachable.

In his eyes, electric sparks were dancing.

“It’s him.” Bates cleared his throat and said in amazement, “If he participates, isn’t he guaranteed to win a hundred victories?”

The nearby Bebe said, puzzled, “Eh? I remember that he travelled faster than us. Logically speaking, he should’ve arrived at Miluo Island long before us. He shouldn’t be here with us at the same time.”

Travelling by himself, that black-haired man was indeed very fast.

But Linley thought back to the conversations of the others in the restaurants.

From Bluemaple City to Miluo Island, all of the larger bandit forces had been destroyed.

“Perhaps it was because he destroyed so many bandit forces on the way. Or perhaps he was training on the way.” Linley said to himself.

Linley immediately began to watch the arena carefully. After all, the person battling was the powerful black-haired man.

“You are too weak. Beat it!” A calm voice echoed in the air above the arena. The speaker was the black-haired man. His opponent was dressed in a long white robe, and was a handsome, violet-haired youth who wielded a scepter that was flashing with white light.

The viewing area immediately burst into a commotion. It had been many years since they saw someone so arrogant, to order the opponent to beat it before the battle even began.

The violet-haired youth, hearing this word, couldn't help but feel enraged. "You'll only know after fighting!"

The black-haired man couldn't help but stare at him.

"Swish!"

Suddenly, two bolts of electric light shot out from the black-haired man's eyes. The speed was so fast that the violet-haired youth wasn't able to dodge at all. It directly slammed into the violet-haired youth's body, and the violet-haired youth trembled slightly, then collapsed, never to rise again.

The hundreds of thousands of onlookers were all momentarily stunned.

The entire viewing platform was utterly still.

"Weaklings should not come. If you do, you are looking for death. Next challenger. Someone stronger. I'll just keep fighting here!" The black-haired man said calmly.

Consecutive battles!

This was an extremely arrogant display, because if one engaged in consecutive battles, one wouldn't have the chance to choose one's opponent. Regardless of who the next opponent was, he had to do battle! Even if the next opponent was an Asura, he'd still have to do battle.

But of course, there was no way an Asura would participate.

Thus, as long as one wasn't completely hot-heated, generally speaking only a true expert would dare to do consecutive battles.

“Lomio, one victory!” A voice rang out from within the arena. “Everyone, right now, Mr. Lomio has chosen to engage in consecutive battles. Any Highgod, no matter who, is permitted to participate. Anyone who is interested can immediately go down below to register. Alright, now, time for the second battle!”

Linley watched without blinking.

He watched straight from the first to the tenth battle!

As for the eleventh battle…it wasn’t that Linley didn’t want to continue watching, it was that he no longer had the chance to.

This was because every person who wanted to fight in the Arena could only fight ten battles each day. Even if one wanted to fight a hundred battles, one would have to spread it out over ten days. Lomio fought ten consecutive battles, gaining victory easily in each one. His power was so great that the onlookers all found it hard to breathe as they watched.

“Too powerful.” Linley’s heart was trembling. “This person is very skilled in both material attacks and soul attacks. In addition, from start to finish, he’s never even drawn his warblade.”

“Lomio.” Linley memorized this name.

They went to watch a few battles at the God Arena and the Demigod Arena. Bebe even joined the God Arena and fought ten battles in a row. Given Bebe’s power, just by unleashing a bit of his might, he easily won ten victories!

After leaving the Arena, Linley’s group headed straight for the Free Castle.

“Bebe, how bored are you? You actually went to compete.” Linley laughed.

“Ten victories, y’know. At least I got this medallion. I’ll be getting a 10% discount when shopping.” Bebe said delightedly.

Linley was speechless. How much money could shopping possibly use up? 10% off was nothing to them. Given the wealth which Linley and Bebe currently had, a discount of 10% was meaningless.

“The Free Castle is beautifully built.” Linley looked at the distant, dark green walls and the red-topped ancient castle. This castle’s entrance was like a nonstop flood of people.

“This place has many products for sale. Some of the Starmist Sea, some from other continents. It has even more things for sale than the Blacksand Castles of the Redbud Continent.” Aches sighed in amazement.

Linley’s group immediately entered through the gateway.

At the sides of the entrance to the Free Castle, a man with black hair who was dressed in a long, loose robe was lazily lying down in the grass, holding and nursing a bottle of wine. If Linley had seen him, he would immediately have recognized him – this was an old friend who, like them, had come from the Yulan continent. Cesar!

Cesar currently looked very dispirited.

“Last time? Haha, last time?” Cesar raised his head to laugh loudly, his tears dripping down.

Quite a few people on the streets turned to look at him, but none of them would be so bored as to interfere.

“Eh?” Linley, already at the gateway, suddenly turned to look into the distance. He stared carefully, but around him was a sea of people. “Could I have misheard?” Linley, just now, vaguely felt as though he had heard Cesar’s voice.

But there were many people with similar voices, and although Linley looked carefully, he didn’t see Cesar.

“I must have heard wrong.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“Boss, let’s head in. What are you looking at?” Bebe said, and Delia looked towards Linley as well.

“Let’s go in.” Linley laughed. He thus entered the Free Castle along with Delia.

But what Linley didn’t know was that Cesar was lying in the grass by the road. If Cesar had stood up, Linley would perhaps have seen him, but he was lying down…how could Linley discover him?

Chapter 17 – A Confrontation

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 17, A Confrontation

Miluo Island. A dazzling jewel of the Starmist Sea.

An unofficial force which was actually capable of building up a Free Castle, capable of allowing trade. In addition, it had been in existence for countless years. This was indeed a queer thing. Because of low taxation rates as well as other attractive policies, countless merchants of the Infernal Realm all gathered here. Every day, the number of customers who came to the Free Castle were beyond number.

The Free Castle had a total of six layers. Four of them were publicly available for guests to enter, while Linley's group was currently on the first floor's main hall.

"Fighting is strictly forbidden in the Free Castle as well. It is very safe here. Everyone can go their own ways here and buy whatever they want by themselves. After finishing, we'll gather together." Linley glanced at the people around him and spoke. This group of people had already very naturally taken Linley as their leader.

Everyone agreed. After all, everyone's amount of wealth was different and different things to buy. The group immediately split apart, with everyone heading in different directions.

"Linley, I'll go browsing as well." Olivier said to Linley, and then left by himself to go roam the Free Castle.

The only ones remaining were Linley, Delia, and Bebe.

"Boss, where to first?" Bebe was very excited. He had an enormous fortune on him, and so naturally he looked forward to spending it.

Linley looked around, then saw that at the sides of the main hall, there were sales counters with signs for various items. These sales counters had items which were all quite low-priced, most under a hundred inkstones. Linley remembered how when he had been at the Redbud Castle, there had been three stories, with each story representing a different level of price.

Most likely, this Free Castle was the same.

“I’ll head straight for the fourth level. Most likely, the fourth floor has the best items for the highest price.” It wasn’t that Linley was wasteful of his money; he understood that in the Infernal Realm, the best items cost more money.

Bebe was the first to walk forward, while Linley and Delia followed from behind as they constantly moved up the stairways.

“There’s certainly a large number of island guards here.” Linley noticed that throughout the Free Castle, those blood red armored Highgod warriors could be seen.

Delia laughed. “With so many island guards present, even if someone wanted to fight, they wouldn’t dare.”

Linley nodded.

Bebe carefully inspected those island guards. “How many people can possibly resist the combined attacks of a group of Highgods? Most people naturally wouldn’t dare to cause trouble!”

“Even if there is an expert capable of resisting the surrounding group of island guards, most likely more island guards would quickly head here. Miluo Island has existed for countless years. Their power is nothing to joke about.” As he spoke, Linley led his group into the fourth floor of the Free Castle.

The fourth floor’s main hall held an enormous exhibition area with a number of trade items on display within. Every single sign showed

exceedingly astonishing prices. The lowest was marked in millions of inkstones, while the higher ones started at a hundred million inkstones. Most Deities wouldn't dare to enter a place like this.

"Boss, this place has Deathgod Golems!" Bebe said excitedly.

"Deathgod Golems?" Linley immediately turned to look in the direction of Bebe's pointing finger. Indeed, there was a large display area with several Deathgod Golems on display.

Delia laughed. "Linley, you finally found it."

Linley immediately laughed as he walked over. He had wanted to buy some Deathgod Golems long ago. At a critical point in time, one could use it to completely entangle an opponent, and then flee. Only, Deathgod Golems weren't something you could simply buy with money. Linley had made inquiries in the other cities he had passed through, but hadn't found any Deathgod Golems for sale at all.

"Hey, how much do your Deathgod Golems sell for?" Bebe was the first to ask.

The shopkeeper was an icy looking youth with short black hair and violet eyes. He was currently seated in his shop with his eyes closed. Hearing Bebe's words, he opened his eyes and said calmly, "The price is marked very clearly on the sign. Go read it for yourself." And then he shut his eyes again.

Linley couldn't help but laugh. Someone who ran a business but had an attitude like this really was rare.

"Is this person relying on the fact that Deathgod Golems are easy to sell?" Delia laughed.

Linley nodded, then glanced at the price list. Deathgod Golems were divided into three levels, based on the toughness of their bodies. High level Deathgod Golems had bodies that were as tough as Highgod artifacts, and

were exceedingly hard to destroy.

Low level, mid level, high level. High level Deathgod Golems each cost 150 million inkstones!

This price was actually reasonable.

“How many high level Deathgod Golems do you have?” Linley asked.

Only now did the black haired youth open his eyes. Frowning, he glanced at Linley. “How many are you buying?”

“A hundred. Do you have that many?” Bebe said. Linley couldn’t help but look at Bebe. He had no intentions of buying so many. It must be understood that to control a Deathgod Golem to engage in battle, one had to focus one’s mind on it to control it.

Generally, each person could only control a single one.

But of course, if one didn’t have to control them too exquisitely, a single person could control quite a few.

Linley currently had four souls. He could simultaneously control four Deathgod Golems with perfect accuracy. But of course, if Linley’s original body was battling with the enemy, at most he could have his three extra souls accurately control three Deathgod Golems total. If the level of control didn’t have to be too high, then he would be able to control much more.

The cold man shook his head. “I can at most sell you ten high level Deathgod Golems.”

“If you can sell ten, I’ll take ten.” Linley laughed. Linley was already very satisfied with this figure. “Also, those mid level golems. Give me two hundred of those as well.” Linley was preparing to accurately control the high level golems. As for the mid level ones, in a time of emergency, they would be used as cannon fodder.

Mid level Deathgod Golems were worth fifteen million.

“Two hundred?” The cold youth shook his head. “I can at most provide a hundred.”

“That’s fine too.” Linley happily paid for and took those ten high level Deathgod Golems and hundred mid level Deathgod Golems. Buying these Deathgod Golems cost a total of 2.7 billion inkstones. To Linley, this was nothing at all.

The amount of money he himself had was nearly two hundred billion inkstones.

As for Bebe, he had gathered countless amethysts, which made up an astonishing fortune.

Actually, the total price should have been three billion inkstones, but Bebe had that 10% discount medallion which he had won in the Arena for ten victories!

After having sold those ten high level Deathgod Golems and hundred mid level Deathgod Golems, a rare smile was on the face of that cold, callous youth. With a wave of his hand, he collected all of the items of his store into his interspatial ring, then turned and left the fourth floor.

“He actually leave?” Bebe stared.

“He’s most likely sold off all of his product. Those remaining low level Deathgod Golems aren’t much.” Linley guessed.

Deathgod Golems were very hard to make.

If one had money, one would still find them hard to purchase. After all these years of wandering various cities, Linley had yet to find any Deathgod Golems. One could imagine how rare they were.

“Let’s go. Keep shopping for more treasures!” Bebe said in a high, excited

voice.

Walking to the main hall of the fourth floor's various exhibits, Linley sensed how wonderful having money was. He directly purchased many precious treasures. It must be understood…these treasures were things which people might perhaps only obtain after risking their lives.

But as for Linley, all he had to do was spent money.

"Where should we go next?" Bebe said. "We're pretty much done here in the fourth floor." On the fourth floor, only distant clothing stores were available. Bebe, at least, had no interest in clothing.

As he saw it, shopping for clothes was boring!

"Wait. We have the clothing stores. Let's go take a look." Linley said hurriedly. "Delia, what say you?" Linley had noticed long ago that Delia would occasionally glance towards them. Women were always quite intrigued by clothing.

Delia snorted, then walked over.

There were some women trying out the clothes of the shop, but when Linley saw the prices listed, he felt a hint of surprise in his heart. "These clothes are ridiculously expensive. All over a million inkstones?" Although he said this, Linley wouldn't mind buying whatever Delia liked.

After browsing through the three clothing shops, Delia arrived at the fourth without having found anything she liked.

There were quite a few guests here. Business was quite good.

"Not bad." As Linley entered, he felt as though every set of clothing gave him a very superb feeling, as though they were exquisite works of art. Only, the price of clothes here was astonishing as well. The other places had clothes going for around a million inkstones, but here, almost every single set of clothes was over ten million inkstones, with only a very few number

being less.

“Linley, how about this one?” After multiple selections, Delia took a fancy to a primarily pink outfit.

Linley glanced at it, then his eyes gleamed. “Excellent.”

Delia was smiling as beautifully as a flower. Clearly, she too had taken a fancy to this set of clothes. Only, the price of this set of clothes was simply too astonishing…

Just this set alone actually cost more than eighty million inkstones!

This was the second most expensive one in the store. The most expensive one cost a hundred million inkstones.

The nearby shopkeeper immediately said warmly, “This set of clothes is made from materials that come from the Divine Plane of Light. It was made from the feathers of Boissi Swan-men [Bo’si’yi], and the owner of every single feather had reached the Highgod level. The materials for this set of clothes alone, combined with the shipping cost, is an astronomical figure. Its toughness is comparable to a Highgod artifact!”

“Oh?” Linley was rather surprised.

Beautiful yet sturdy. This price made sense.

“Buy it.” Linley nodded.

The owner, seeing Linley nod so freely and easily, felt a surge of joy. At the same time, he was also secretly shocked. People really couldn’t be judged by their appearances. Superficially, Linley looked as though he was only a God, but he didn’t mind at all about paying nearly a hundred million for a set of clothes.

“See this?” Bebe reached out and flipped out his ten victories medallion.

“Uh…” The shopkeeper couldn’t help but be astonished, and then he laughed. “Alright, alright, ten percent off! You only need to pay seventy six million inkstones.”

Linley laughed, then paid the money.

Delia put on this set of pink clothes, carefully looking at herself in the mirror, clearly very happy. Looking at Delia’s slightly blushing face, set off by the pinkness of her clothes, he felt that she was so devilishly charming.

Linley had to say that this set of clothes was quite worth it!

At this moment, outside the store, six people came in, the leader a callous looking youth with short red hair who stood 2.2 meters tall. He was currently staring at Delia, dressed in that outfit, and a smile was on his face.

“Young master, you’ve taken a fancy to it?” A silver-haired elder behind him said softly.

“Yes. Not bad.” The short red haired youth nodded slightly, then said loudly, “Shopkeeper, do you have any more of that set of clothes that woman is wearing?”

The shopkeeper, hearing this, turned to look at Delia, then quickly shook his head. “Sorry. The materials for this set of clothes are simply too rare. My shop only has this one set. Every single set of clothes in my shop is quite precious. Most of them are unique!”

“Just one?” The red-haired callous youth frowned, then glanced sideways at Delia.

The silver-haired elder behind him, quite intelligently, immediately walked forward towards Linley and Delia, saying directly to Delia, “Our young master has taken a fancy to the clothes you are wearing. Sell it to us.”

Linley, hearing this, was startled. He couldn’t help but turn to look at them.

“Give us the clothes. We’ll pay you for it. However much the price was, we’ll pay double.” The silver-haired elder said calmly. Hearing this, the shopkeeper clearly was rather regretful.

“Double?” Linley laughed, then glanced back at Delia. “Forget about double. Even if you wanted to pay us ten times as much, we wouldn’t sell it!”

The silver-haired elder’s face immediately turned ugly.

“Hey, that guy over there is your young master?” Bebe glanced at the red-haired, callous youth, then pursed his lips. “Young master, the clothes you are wearing are quite excellent. I’ve taken a fancy to them. You can go ahead and sell it to me. I’ll pay you double as well. Are you willing to sell?”

Chapter 18 – The Blood-Colored Miluo Insignia

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 18, The Blood-Colored Miluo Insignia

The red-haired youth, hearing these words, couldn't help but narrow his eyes, his gaze growing cold.

The silver-haired elder snorted with cold anger as well. "You'd best know what's good for you. It's just a set of clothes, right? Be careful. Don't lose your lives for the sake of clothes!" But Bebe paid no attention to the silver-haired elder's threats.

"You threaten me?" Bebe rolled his eyes as he spoke angrily.

But Linley realized something more.

Linley carefully inspected this red-haired youth, then at the silver-haired elder. He secretly mused, "Most of the people who come to the fourth floor of the Free Castle for shopping are quite wealthy. In the Infernal Realm, most people who have money have great power as well. For the silver haired elder to dare to be so arrogant in a place like this means that he should have some sort of a background."

Although Linley wasn't afraid, in a strange place like this, he didn't want to make any enemies either.

"Bebe, Delia, let's go." Linley pulled the enraged Bebe as he began to walk towards the outside of the store. Linley didn't want to continue wasting time with these people.

"Whoosh!" The four people behind the red haired youth immediately blocked Linley's way. The four were all Highgods!

"You want to leave?" The red haired youth let out a cold laugh, a very condescending look in on face. "There's nothing that I want that I cannot

get! I'm in a good mood today and don't want to fight. You'd best hand that set of clothes to me. Otherwise!"

Linley couldn't help but begin to feel his anger rise as well.

"The offer of double price is gone now. However, we'll still give you the same price. Don't say that our Bagshaw [Ba'ge'xiao] clan takes advantage of people!" The silver-haired elder snickered as well. These words instantly caused the owner of the clothing store's face to change.

Bagshaw clan?

Linley was intrigued, but unfortunately, this was his first time at Miluo Island, and he had never heard of this Bagshaw clan.

"You'd best give them the clothes." The store owner urged.

"Linley, this Bagshaw clan seems to be rather formidable. Just give them the clothes." Delia sent through divine sense to Linley as well. Linley glanced at the nearby Delia. He knew that Delia, in her heart, really didn't want to part with it.

Only, Delia didn't want to offend people for Linley's sake.

"It's fine." Linley laughed calmly.

And then, Linley turned to look at those people and barked coldly, "What, you want to start a fight in the Free Castle?"

Immediately, those people were stunned.

This was the Free Castle. The laws and mores here forbade fighting. Anyone who engaged in combat would be mercilessly slaughtered by the island guards.

Right at this moment, the patrolling guards on the main hall of the fourth floor noticed the situation as well, and immediately, a small group of ten of

them hurriedly walked over. The leader, a bald, burly man, shouted loudly, “What’s going on? You want to cause trouble here? Are you looking for death?”

“Right, they are causing trouble.” Bebe said angrily. “Everyone, we bought a set of clothes, but these people here want to force us to sell it to them. We didn’t, so they barred our way.”

Linley watched this happen calmly.

Since the Free Castle had its own rules, then those rules definitely wouldn’t be allowed to be broken by anyone, no matter who they were. Otherwise, who would care about the rules?

“Captain, these people are rather arrogant.” The other guards immediately called out.

“You want to force others to sell their clothes to you?” The bald burly man stared with eyes as wide as a bull’s, a look of anger in his gaze. “Such audacity! You dare to be so bold in the Free Castle! No matter who you are, nobody here in the Free Castle has the right to be so brash!”

Bebe immediately began to chortle.

The arrogant red-haired youth frowned, glancing sideways with a cold look at the leader of the guards. With a flip of his hand, he revealed a blood red insignia, covered by marvelous patterns. The patterns on the insignia was very similar to the patterns on the armor of the island guards.

“A blood-colored Miluo Insignia!” The bald warrior stuttered, and his face instantly changed dramatically.

“Milord!” The ten island guards, the bald leader included, immediately bowed respectfully as they spoke.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were shocked as well.

“And it is actually a high level blood-colored Miluo Insignia!” The shopkeeper was stunned as well. There were, in total, two types of the ‘Miluo Insignias’ which conferred extremely high power within Miluo Island. The first type was green, while the other type was blood-colored. Blood-colored Miluo Insignias represented extremely great power.

At the same time, they were also extremely rare.

“A blood-colored Miluo Insignia?” Linley didn’t understand what sort of treasure this thing was, but judging from the looks of those ten guards, Linley understood the value of this insignia.

The other island guards on the fourth floor also noticed the special event occurring here. Immediately, quite a few warriors hurried over, and even the general manager of the fourth floor hurried over. Immediately, hundreds of island guards surrounded the area.

“Young master Sequeira [Sai’ke’la], what is it? You want to buy clothes for your wife?” The general manager was a handsome, gold-haired youth. Seeing the young master, he immediately greeted him warmly.

The red haired, cold youth named Sequeira laughed calmly and nodded.

“Boss, the situation looks bad.” Bebe sent through divine sense.

How could Linley not have realized this already?

“Linley, let’s just give them the clothes.” Delia sent through divine sense, urging him. Linley considered for a moment. Delia definitely liked this set of clothes very much, and he should keep it for her sake. But clearly, the opponent came from a ridiculously powerful background.

Linley decided that he might as well swallow his anger for now.

“Sorry, Delia.” Linley looked at Delia, who laughed and shook her head.

Seeing this, the silver-haired elder laughed, while the red-haired youth

snickered as well.

“Hmph, now it’s too late!” The silver-haired elder snorted in an ill-tempered manner. “We won’t give you a single inkstone. Do you want to offer it or not?” The silver-haired elder had a belly full of fire right now. As a member of the Bagshaw clan, how had he ever had to swallow his temper?

“However, if you give it to us now, we’ll generously spare your lives.” The silver-haired elder said disdainfully.

“Motherf*cker, keep dreaming.” Bebe was indescribably angry.

Linley began to laugh. Laughter born of anger!

He himself had been willing to swallow his anger to end this situation, but these people had actually taken him for a soft target, easily abused!

“What is going on with this Free Castle? Even when shopping here, we suffer threats and pressure, and a demand for us to give our items without compensation. This Free Castle isn’t free at all! It seems the reputation of this Miluo Island is fake, and these island guards are nothing more than ornaments!” Linley’s voice echoed throughout the fourth floor.

Immediately, the other customers all looked towards them.

The looks on the faces of the island guards instantly turned ugly. The face of the young master ‘Sequeira’ of the Bagshaw clan turned sinister as well. The rules of Miluo Island, which had been passed down since antiquity. In the Free Castle, nobody was permitted to engage in battle, no matter who they were.

Any who violated this would be killed!

If the rules were broken, in the future, who would dare do business here?

“Young master Sequeira, this isn’t easy to handle.” The general manager, that gold-haired youth, said through divine sense. The cold, arrogant young

master Sequeira also knew what was important and what wasn't. Glancing at Linley's group, he said calmly, "Let's go!" As he spoke, he led his people away.

The general manager, that gold-haired youth, glanced at Linley, then sent through divine sense, "Kid, be careful! Offending Sequeira in Miluo Island means that while you'll be safe in the Free Castle, as soon as you leave it…" And then, the gold-haired youth left.

Those island guards all left one by one as well.

"Those people really motherf*cking went too far." Bebe was unable to restrain his temper.

"Linley, it's all my fault." Delia said softly.

Linley tightly clenched Delia's hand, shaking his head. "It isn't your fault. In the Infernal Realm, sometimes, if we have to endure, we will. But if someone goes too far, then we might as well just have a battle with them." Linley was laughing coldly in his heart as well. At worst, he would just go all out!

He could use a drop of Sovereign's Might and engage in a wild slaughter. What was there to fear?

"Let's go out." Linley said.

Linley knew very well that at Miluo Island, the Bagshaw clan definitely had to be an extremely powerful force. Most likely, they were one of the five clans which controlled Miluo Island! Linley immediately decided that after finishing buying things in the Free Castle, they would head directly out of Miluo Island!

"I was originally planning to watch the next nine days of competitions for that 'Lomio'." Linley shook his head and sighed to himself.

Linley's group intentionally strolled about for a while on the third floor of

the Free Castle, and then came to their original gathering spot. By now, half the people had already gathered here again. Linley's group only had to wait for less than an hour before Aches, the last one to return, came back.

"Sorry, sorry. There were many things in this Free Castle which normally aren't for sale in the Blacksand Castle or the Redbud Castle, so I had to take a bit of time." Aches said hurriedly.

Linley's group all knew that Aches was a merchant. It wasn't strange for him to spend a bit more time.

"Everyone, you can head back first." Linley said.

"Huh?" The big-bearded 'Bates', Aches, and the others all immediately looked at Linley.

"In this Free Castle, we irritated members of the Bagshaw clan. Right now, there are people following us. For your safety, you need to leave first. Right…you can go to the restaurant we first ate at earlier, and we'll all regroup there. If we haven't arrived within one day, you can head off first." Linley said very directly.

Bates and the others were all shocked. In the end, everyone wisely chose to leave.

However, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier stayed by Linley.

After waiting a long time after the others left, Linley's group headed towards the exit of the Free Castle. Behind Linley's group, however, was the silver-haired elder, who stared at the backs of Linley's group. "You offended my clan's young master, and you want to leave alive?"

The silver-haired elder immediately picked up the pace to follow.

"We're out. Everyone, be careful." Linley stepped out of the Free Castle, but then his face suddenly changed.

At the two sides of the wide street, over ten people immediately drew close to them. The two lines of people immediately surrounded Linley's group while at the same time separating them off from the other customers of the Free Castle.

"Haha, you still want to leave?" The silver-haired elder came out from outside.

As soon as he had exited the fourth floor, he had immediately arranged for two of the guards of the young master to lead ten other Highgods to wait at the entrance. No matter what, they wouldn't let Linley's group flee. It had been a long time since his young master had to swallow his temper like that.

"Boss, they really did set an ambush for us." Bebe said in a low voice.

Linley glanced sideways at the two rows of twelve Highgods. These Highgods were roughly ten meters away from Linley, but to Highgods, a distance of ten meters was absolutely nothing. Battle could begin at any moment.

At the same time, a large number of people on the streets immediately hurried over to surround and watch, and they all began to chitchat over the situation.

"So many Highgods, surrounding just those few people?"

"That silver-haired elder is the housekeeper for the Bagshaw clan. I recognize him. Those people are doomed. They actually offended the Bagshaw clan."

The chatter went on, but Linley faced it all calmly.

"Walk towards the front." Linley said through divine sense.

Immediately, Linley's group of four immediately walked towards the front, not even looking at the twelve Highgods to each side of them.

“You want to leave!” An explosive shout. Instantly, one of the Highgods flew towards Linley. Clearly, as he saw it, Linley was just a God. He alone would be more than enough to deal with him.

“F*ck off!” Linley held little regard for ordinary Highgods.

The divine earth power on his body flexed out, and instantly, an astonishing repulsive force was applied to that Highgod’s body. That Highgod who had been pouncing towards Linley with his divine artifact drawn, before even touching Linley, was instantly flicked backwards by that astonishing repulsive force, while Linley himself continued to walk forward.

“How is that possible?” The Highgod stared with wide eyes.

The silver-haired elder’s face changed. He shouted, “Attack!”

Instantly, the twelve Highgods simultaneously pounced towards Linley’s group. But right at this moment, with Linley at the center, a faint earthen yellow hemisphere that was ten meters in diameter suddenly appeared, trapping all of the twelve attacking Highgods within its reach.

Blackstone Space!

Those twelve Highgods, because of the astonishing gravitational force, were drawn directly to the ground.

“How is that possible?” The twelve hadn’t even had a chance to react when suddenly, a bizarre wind sound directly entered their consciousness. It was much like the strange wind sound Linley and the others had heard in the Amethyst Mountains. Their soul was affected, and the twelve of them were instantly drawn into a stupor.

“Swish!”

A devilish violet sword light flashed, chopping through the necks of those twelve men like a giant guillotine.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

The heads of those twelve men exploded, and their divine sparks fell to the floor.

Everyone watching this scene in front of the wide gates of the Free Castle was stunned. The previously rowdy streets instantly turned silent, with the most astonished one being that silver-haired elder, who stared disbelievingly at this sight.

Twelve Highgods, killed with one sword?

“These ordinary Highgods, within my Blackstone Space, will have their souls drawn into a stupor. They are only able to stand there and be slaughtered by me.” Linley naturally hadn’t paid any mind to these sorts of people. Highgods who were in a stupor were like blocks of wood that couldn’t fight back.

Killing them was simplicity itself!

“Linley.” Delia looked towards Linley with a hint of excitement in her eyes. All women loved it when their man was powerful.

“Let’s go.” Linley laughed calmly.

Linley’s group of four continued to walk forward, while on the wide streets, the previously rowdy crowd immediately split a path for them, allowing Linley’s group to leave. Everyone who had seen Linley’s sword just now were all staring in Linley in shock and admiration.

In the Infernal Realm, the strong were worshipped!

“He killed twelve Highgods with one sword. This lord is simply too powerful. I originally thought he was just a God-level Fiend.”

“What do you know? This lord was hiding his true power. As I see it, this lord is at least a Six Star Fiend.”

Those who watched this scene were all chattering and discussing this event.

“So formidable!”

Currently, that arrogant, red-haired youth, ‘young master Sequeira’, as well as that gold-haired youth, both appeared at the entrance. Actually, this had been arranged by Sequeira to begin with. Naturally, he was watching everything in secret. At this moment, he too was watching, stunned, at Linley’s distant, disappearing back.

“Young master.” The silver-haired elder said hurriedly.

But Sequeira just frowned as he looked at the gold-haired youth. “This person killed twelve Highgods so easily with a single sword. I thought he was a God. So he was a Highgod who was hiding his true power! Could you tell how powerful he truly was?”

Sequeira knew very well how powerful the gold-haired youth was. As a chief of a thousand-man corps, the gold-haired youth had the power of a Six Star Fiend.

If even the gold-haired youth couldn’t tell how powerful this person was, then this person was definitely very fearsome.

“I…can’t see through him!” The gold-haired youth had been staring towards Linley this entire time. “This person has been hiding his power, but I can’t see through it at all. And from the sword attack he used just now… actually, the sword attack wasn’t that formidable. What was formidable was that those twelve Highgods seemed to have gone silly, allowing that sword to kill them without resistance!”

“I didn’t expect that after the Arena had a seemingly Seven Star Fiend level combatant, ‘Lomio’, appear, yet another seemingly Seven Star Fiend level combatant has appeared here.” The gold-haired youth’s face was solemn.

Chapter 19 – War God – Cesar

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 19, War God, Cesar

After having killed twelve Highgods with a single sword, he had shocked his opponents. Thus, Linley's group of four left safely.

"Linley, will that young master of the Bagshaw clan bring experts for revenge?" Olivier frowned, somewhat concerned.

Linley chuckled.

Delia replied, "Olivier, in truth, the young master of the Bagshaw clan and the three of us were only in a dispute because of clothing. And then, Linley killed those twelve ordinary Highgods. To an ancient clan like his, the death of twelve ordinary Highgods is nothing at all. I imagine that this young master wouldn't be so rash as to seek revenge without clearly investigating."

"If they come, we will kill them!"

Bebe snorted. "We're about to leave Miluo Island anyways. Who cares about the Bagshaw clan. No matter how powerful they are, can it be that they can control other areas also?"

"Let's go. These large clans are disdainful towards lesser individuals, but against true experts, they are still somewhat cautious." Linley chuckled. Linley, when attacking, had been viewed by others as a Highgod, and yet his aura was that of a God!

The enemies would definitely believe that Linley was hiding his aura.

Actually, Linley really was only just a God! How could they possibly discover any Highgod aura from him?

However, the enemies would only believe that Linley was so powerful that his ability to hide his aura was simply too great!

Given his ability to hide his aura, as well as the sword attack he had just displayed, the opponents had plenty of material to begin wildly speculating over. No matter how powerful a clan was, they wouldn't want to offend an ultimate expert. After all…a true expert, by himself, could destroy a clan.

In front of an ultimate expert, human wave tactics were ineffective.

That young master Sequeira wouldn't dare to offend a possibly Seven Star Fiend over a small fit of pique.

Linley's group immediately headed outside. After walking for a while, Linley didn't discover anyone following them. In his heart, he understood that young master Sequeira should have really given up the idea of getting revenge.

Bebe muttered, "Miluo Island is quite a beautiful island. Unfortunately, after being here just a single day, we have to leave. I really wanted to become a hundred battles victor in that Arena." How could Bebe possibly lose in a fight against those Gods? He could just stand there and let them beat on him.

Unless the opponent also had a godspark weapon or a Sovereign artifact. Most likely, only with those items would they be able to harm Bebe.

"Let's go. In the future, we'll still have the chance." Linley laughed calmly.

"Linley, quick, look!" Delia, somewhat stunned, pulled at Linley and called at him. Linley immediately turned and followed Delia's gaze. As he did, Linley was shocked. From a distant translucent restaurant window, he was able to see an icy man with long red hair seated on the other side of the window!

The War God, O'Brien!

“War God!” Linley was overjoyed.

“War God?” Olivier looked over, puzzled, and then he too was overjoyed.

All of these experts who had entered the Infernal Realm understood that it would be extremely hard for them to run into their old friends from the same material plane. The feeling of meeting with their old friends was enough to make them very excited and energetic.

“Haha, War God!” Bebe was the first to dash towards the restaurant.

Linley’s group immediately followed him as well. Entering the restaurant, they saw that this was a fairly quiet restaurant with fairly few customers. O’Brien was currently sitting there, quietly drinking a cup of tea.

“The War God actually became a Highgod?” Linley was somewhat startled. In the past, the War God had relied on fusing with a divine spark to become a God. In as short a period of time as a thousand years, he became a Highgod? There was only one explanation – he had fused with a divine spark.

“Hey, War God!” Bebe immediately ran towards the War God’s table.

O’Brien, his head lowered to his cup of tea, was startled. War God? In the Infernal Realm, it had been many years since someone had addressed him in that manner.

O’Brien raised his head and saw Bebe by his table, and also Linley, Delia, and Olivier walking this way as well. The War God O’Brien’s face went slack, and then he revealed a look of joy. “Linley, it’s actually you four!”

“O’Brien, long time no see.” Linley laughed.

“Long time no see.” O’Brien laughed as well.

“Aren’t you going to invite us to sit?” Bebe snorted.

O’Brien immediately began to laugh. “Haha, it’s fine if I don’t invite others to sit, but how would I dare to not invite you, Bebe, to sit? Come, let’s all sit together.” As he spoke, O’Brien immediately beckoned towards a distant waiter, who immediately came over.

“I don’t want to eat right now.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Then we’ll order some wine.” O’Brien casually ordered some wine, and then everyone began to chat together.

O’Brien asked Linley and Olivier about what had happened in recent years, while Linley gave a general description of the events which had occurred after their arrival in the Infernal Realm. However, he didn’t go into too much detail regarding the dangers they had faced. After giving a brief summary, Linley’s group concluded their description of what had happened in the Redbud Continent.

“We were trapped within the Amethyst Mountains for a time, but luckily were able to escape.” Olivier, for example, discussed that matter with a single sentence. While they were chatting, Delia even especially set up her ‘Godrealm’ to cover all of them within it, shutting out sound and preventing outsiders from eavesdropping.

Linley had thought that O’Brien would be shocked, but O’Brien didn’t seem to feel anything was amiss.

Actually, O’Brien had always been in the Starmist Sea, and thus he knew very little about the Redbud Continent. He didn’t understand what being trapped in the Amethyst Mountains and then escaping really meant!

“Linley, you really are audacious. The Infernal Realm is filled with countless dangers. If I hadn’t been following Tarosse, I probably would’ve died in the Starmist Sea long ago. You, however, actually left the Redbud Continent and began to hurry towards the Bloodridge Continent. Formidable. Admirable!” O’Brien sighed in amazement.

Olivier just chuckled.

As Olivier saw it, given Linley's current strength, he would be able to roam the Infernal Realm with ease. As long as he didn't encounter any major foes, he definitely wouldn't be in any danger.

"O'Brien, how about you? How has life been in the Infernal Realm?" Linley laughed as he asked.

"Me? Not bad." O'Brien nodded. "After arriving in the Infernal Realm, our group included Tarosse and Dylin. Although we ran into some dangerous situations, Tarosse and him were able to deal with it. Afterwards, Tarosse broke through from the God level to the Highgod level. He became a Highgod on his own!"

Linley couldn't help but be surprised.

"After Tarosse reached the Highgod level, he became truly formidable." O'Brien sighed in praise. "Tarosse himself had fused two types of profound mysteries to begin with. Matching that with his innate divine ability…in the Starmist Sea, he is extremely formidable. He even once killed three Five Star Fiends!"

"Killed three Five Star Fiends?" Linley's group was shocked as well.

But after considering it, Linley understood. Tarosse had become a Highgod independently and had fused two types of profound mysteries. If he was able to perfectly match his attacks with his innate divine ability as a divine beast, then it was possible for him to be comparable to a Six Star Fiend.

"Right. Tarosse won a hundred victories here at Miluo Island!" O'Brien sighed in approval.

Linley nodded to himself. Generally speaking, Six Star Fiends were capable of gaining a hundred victories. Five Star Fiends, if lucky, could as well. It was possible for Tarosse to accomplish this.

"Dylin, in turn, won a hundred victories at the God Arena." O'Brien

laughed. “Precisely because of this, Tarosse and Dylin both now live in the western part of the island. Tarosse gave us divine sparks to allow myself, Cesar, and Dylin’s children to all reach the Highgod level.”

Linley now understood.

So that was what had happened. Dylin’s two children, those Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, had both fused with divine sparks to become Deities, and O’Brien had as well. Since they had already fused with divine sparks, they might as well just keep doing so. Only, given that they had used divine sparks to become Highgods, their future potential was now rather slim.

Delia smiled. “It seems your life here isn’t bad.”

“That’s right.” O’Brien nodded, but then he seemed to have thought of something. He shook his head. “But Cesar, he…”

“What about Cesar?” Linley hurriedly asked.

Linley had a rather deep friendship with Cesar. Previously, in his homeland near Fenlai City, Cesar had helped him. Afterwards, when Linley had gone to rescue those Undying Warriors, the five Barker brothers, at the critical, life and death moment, Cesar had once again helped him and saved him.

Linley naturally was grateful towards Cesar for having helped him multiples time.

“Cesar is rather…depressed these days.” O’Brien shook his head and sighed.

“Depressed?” Bebe stared. “Cesar seems to have no cares in the world. How could he become depressed?”

Linley was rather puzzled as well.

“Problems of the heart.” O’Brien said.

A look of surprise appeared on the faces of Linley and the others. Cesar, in the Yulan continent, had been an extremely dissolute fellow who often changed women. There was no long-term woman for him. Even that 'Holy Lady' of the Frost Goddess Shrine, Cesar had ran away from as though fleeing a disaster.

As Linley saw it, a person like him shouldn't suffer too much from matters of the heart.

Seeing the looks on the faces of Linley and the others, O'Brien explained, "At first, I was like you, unable to believe it. But this time, Cesar is for real. With regards to that woman, Cecily (Sai'xi'li), it is as though he has been possessed. Him and that Cecily woman really fell in love. Cesar even told me that this time, he had found true love!"

Linley's group just listened, stunned.

"But of course, what happened between them in terms of their relationship, I'm not too clear. We wouldn't pry about their private affairs. All of us were just very happy that Cesar and Cecily were able to be with each other."

"Logically speaking, this was a good thing." O'Brien shook his head and laughed. "Unfortunately, that Cecily had a very special status. She was actually a core member of one of the five major clans of Miluo Island, the Gaylord [Gai'luo'de] clan. In addition, not too long ago, she got married to young master Sequeira of the Bagshaw clan!"

Young master Sequeira?

Linley's group of four, upon hearing this name, exchanged glances. This matter actually had something to do with Sequeira? But not too long ago, Linley's group had gotten into a dispute with that Sequeira.

"What, are you surprised? We were surprised as well. But that's the truth." O'Brien sighed. "Deities should have tough, resilient minds. Who would have imagined that Cesar seemed to have suffered a fatal wound. He's in a daze all day, either drinking or just daydreaming or sleeping or training. He

is extremely dispirited."

Linley couldn't help but sympathize with Cesar.

Although O'Brien described it all in a very ordinary manner, Linley himself had been heartbroken in love before as well. He knew well the heart-ripping pain of having his woman being taken away, and how that agony could make a person be able to barely breathe. The more deeply one loved, the more deeply one would be wounded.

"Cesar…seems to have really fallen for her." Linley sighed.

As they chatted, their wine was soon used up.

"It's a matter of time. This happened just recently after all. Cesar is just unable to get over it for now, I imagine. When time goes on, he should be better." O'Brien said, then stood up. "Linley, come. Let's go meet with Tarosse, Dylin, and those two children of Dylin's. All of them are present. When they see you, they will definitely be very happy."

Linley's group immediately rose as well.

"Boss, are we still going to head off with Aches' group?" Bebe asked.

"No need. When the time comes, we'll travel alone. In addition, with Bates by their side, safety shouldn't be a problem." Linley, having met with a group of old friends, was in no rush to leave. As for his problem with Sequeira, Sequeira hadn't immediately attempted to gain revenge, and so clearly he probably wouldn't in the future.

After all, if he really wanted to get revenge, he would've done so right away.

Linley's group of four followed O'Brien, heading directly into the western part of the island.

Miluo Island was divided into the eastern part and the western part. The

western part was where the island guards, the five clans, and the others all lived. Outsiders were forbidden entry.

“It really is beautiful here.” Linley saw the beautiful two story buildings from afar.

“Those are the homes for the island guards.” O’Brien laughed. “I’m here as well. Thanks to Tarosse’s help, I also became an island guard. Island guards rotate their duty once a year. This year, I’m on break.”

In the area where the island guards lived, people were on patrol.

“Are we allowed to go in?” Bebe was a bit nervous.

“It’s fine. The residential area of the island guards aren’t under strict supervision. As long as an island guard leads the way, you can go in. The place which is under very tight supervision is the place where those five clans live. However, they are deeper inside.” As O’Brien spoke, his body suddenly became covered by a blood red uniform armor.

This was the proof of one’s status as an island guard. The patrolling island guards immediately let them in.

Linley’s group of four thus followed O’Brien into the residential area of the island guards.

Chapter 20 – With Child?

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 20, With Child?

The island guards lived in small buildings which dotted the mountains and forests of this area. Just by looking at the number of buildings, Linley could imagine what a terrifyingly large number of island guards there were here.

“The five clans must indeed be powerful, to be able to support such an enormous army of Highgods.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh in amazement. Maintaining an army meant paying salaries; after all, nobody was willing to work for free. Generally speaking, Highgod soldiers would have fairly high pay.

To support such an enormous army required an astonishing amount of wealth.

However, just by looking at the number of people who passed through the Arena as well the Free Castle, one could imagine how astonishingly wealthy Miluo Island was.

“We’re here.” O’Brien laughed.

“O’Brien, this building is quite large.” Linley looked at this residence in surprise. This residence took up space that was roughly ten times that of those ordinary residences. It had a large courtyard and three smaller buildings within. It was built as a stand-alone residence, and the walls had carvings as well.

O’Brien laughed. “This is Tarosse’s residence. Generally speaking, Highgod victors of a hundred battles, if they join the island guards, will have a salary as well as treatment far superior to that of ordinary island guards. Although I do have a small house of my own, normally, we all live at Tarosse’s place. His place is large!”

As he spoke, O'Brien pushed the door open and went inside.

"Oh, O'Brien, you're back." A voice rang out. By the green grass off to the side of the courtyard, a green haired man was seated in the meditative position. It was Tarosse!

Tarosse turned to look at him and was about to say something, but suddenly he was stunned. He stared at Linley and the other three behind O'Brien. Linley, seeing the look on Tarosse's face, intentionally smirked at him.

"Swish!" Tarosse instantly appeared in front of Linley's group.

"Haha!" Tarosse slapped Linley on the shoulders. "Linley, you guys actually came as well. This is so incredible and such a rare occurrence. The Infernal Realm is so vast, but we actually ran into each other here. Haha…"

Tarosse was very excited and happy.

"Bebe, Lord Beirut actually was able to bear with letting you come to the Infernal Realm?" Tarosse noticed Bebe.

Bebe pursed his lips. "What, got a problem?"

"It's fine, it's fine." Tarosse greeted everyone. "Come, everyone, sit down. Dylin and Cesar are currently outside. Jeeze!"

Linley's group laughed, then sat down. Tarosse hurriedly said, "You really came at a fortuitous time. Today I was still out on patrols. I just came back not long ago. It is destiny that our group of people from the Yulan continent can meet here today!"

Linley was very happy as well, and he also laughed and chatted. While chatting about he and Olivier had met, they naturally discussed the Amethyst Mountains as well. However, Linley's group once again just skimmed over it with a word. Tarosse actually didn't seem to pay any attention to it at all.

Or perhaps it was simply that he didn't understand what it really meant for Linley's group to have been able to exit the Amethyst Mountains!

Actually, this was normal.

Tarosse was a Highgod, true.

But the amount of time he had spent in the Infernal Realm was simply too short. The things he knew about the Infernal Realm came mostly from those books he had read. Generally speaking, those geographical books would just give a simple explanation of the Amethyst Mountains. In the past, Linley had read some geography books as well, but before arriving at the Amethyst Mountains, he didn't truly know how dangerous they were.

"Creaaaak!" The courtyard door was pushed upon, and a black haired man reeking of alcohol sauntered in, his eyes droopy with drunkenness as he gave off a clearly dispirited aura. It was Cesar!

Seeing how Cesar currently was, Linley couldn't help but sigh in amazement. That former playboy who had enjoyed himself amongst the 'flowers'…how had he ended up like this today? The events of the world truly were hard to explain.

"Cesar!" Linley spoke out.

Cesar heard that someone was calling to him, but he didn't care too much. He just glanced sideways at Linley, then continued to head towards his own residence. But after taking just two or three steps, his body paused, and he turned to look at Linley once again, his misty gaze slowly growing brighter.

"Linley?" Cesar's voice contained disbelief in it as well.

"Cesar, long time no see." Linley began to laugh as well.

"Haha, Cesar, I'm Bebe." Bebe immediately jumped up also.

Cesar took a deep breath, activating the divine power in his body. The odor

of alcohol immediately vanished from his body, and he became much more sober. A rare hint of a smile appeared on Cesar's face as well. "Linley, you came to the Infernal Realm as well? When did you come?"

Cesar was full of questions, and Linley's group chatted with him happily as well.

Although Linley knew what had happened with Cesar, Linley hoped that Cesar's mood would improve. Clearly, seeing some of his old friends from their Yulan continent had caused Cesar to be invigorated.

"Linley, chat more with Cesar, but remember, don't raise that Cecily matter." Tarosse hurriedly sent through divine sense. The state Cesar was currently in was the best state he had been in during this recent period of time.

"I know."

Linley replied. At the same time, Linley was also somewhat puzzled. What was so amazing about that Cecily woman, that this sort of dissolute playboy like Cesar would become so infatuated with her?

Miluo Island. The residential area of the five clans. In the very center was the residence of the Bagshaw clan. The five clans were led by the Bagshaw clan, but the Bagshaw clan was actually not a very densely populated one, with the clan members far fewer than the other four clans.

But precisely because of this, every member of the Bagshaw clan had a fairly high status.

At present, in the rear flower gardens behind the Bagshaw clan's ancestral estate, two men who were 2.2 meters tall were currently walking together. One of the two men was a youth with short red hair, while the other was a middle-aged man with unbound, long red hair.

If Linley was present, he would recognize that the youth with short red hair was Sequiera!

“Sequiera, you need to pay special attention to that man named Lomio in the Arena!” The red-haired middle-aged man had thick eyebrows and large eyes. With each moment, he gave off a domineering aura. “According to the servants’ reports, this Lomio is very likely a Seven Star Fiend. He has already achieved ten consecutive victories on multiple days. In two more days, he’ll have completed a hundred victories!”

“Yes, Father!” Sequiera said respectfully.

Sequiera’s father, Bakwill [Ba’ke’wei] Bagshaw, was the clan leader of the Bagshaw clan. Bakwill, despite having lived for countless years, only had two children. Each member of the Bagshaw clan had exceedingly few children, most having only one.

Having two children was already quite lucky.

“If he really is a Seven Star Fiend, then that’s wonderful news. It’s rare to meet a Seven Star Fiend. We can’t let him slip away.” Bakwill said calmly.

“I know, Father.” Sequeira laughed. “Father, not long ago, you went to the secret area, so I didn’t have a chance to tell you. Seven or eight days ago, in the Free Castle, I met an expert. We had a small disagreement with each other, but that expert, with a single blow, killed twelve Highgods!”

“Killed twelve Highgods?” Bakwill looked towards him.

There were quite a few experts capable of killing twelve ordinary Highgods with one blow.

“This isn’t the strange thing. The strange thing is…those twelve Highgods hadn’t even drawn near that expert, but they seemed to have gone silly and unresponsive, allowing that expert to kill them with one blow.”

Bakwill was surprised.

Cause twelve Highgod experts to not be able to even resist?

“This man’s soul is extremely strong.” Bakwill evaluated.

“More importantly!” Sequeira lowered his voice as he spoke. “Father, that person was actually hiding his aura. From the outside, he seems to be just a God. Even the thousand-man commander of our Free Castle, that Six Star Fiend, wasn’t able to sense even a hint of his true aura!”

Only now was Bakwill shocked.

A Six Star Fiend being unable to sense a hint of the ‘true aura’ of someone, and with that someone having such a powerful soul!

“At very least, a peak Six Star Fiend, and possibly even a Seven Star Fiend. In addition, one specialized in the soul.” Bakwill evaluated. Experts who specialized in the soul were dread-inducing, because the soul was the foundation of every single person. Experts who specialized in the soul were very hard to deal with.

“Where is he?” Bakwill said hurriedly.

“Gone.” Sequeira shook his head. “He shouldn’t be someone from Miluo Island. He didn’t know anything about the blood-colored Miluo Insignia. I didn’t dare to rashly attack him, so all I could do was watch him leave.”

Bakwill let out a long breath, then laughed. “If he’s gone, then forget it. Your actions were correct. When you encounter an expert like this, you can’t rashly offend him. If he kills you, then that truly would be terrible.”

Sequeira laughed as well.

“Sequeira!” A voice of jubilation came out from the gates of the rear gardens. A mesmerizingly beautiful woman with a pure white complexion and jade hair came running in, her face covered in joy. This was Sequeira’s wife: Cecily!

“Father.” Seeing Bakwill, that jade-haired beauty immediately curtsied.

Bakwill nodded calmly.

“Lily.” Sequeira, seeing his wife, immediately smiled and walked over to welcome her.

“Lily, you seem so excited. Do you have some good news?” Sequeira laughed.

“Sequeira, I’m with child.” Cecily said hurriedly.

Hearing this news, Sequeira and Bakwill were both stunned…and then looks of wild joy appeared on their faces. The two looked at each other, with Bakwill laughing loudly in excitement. “Haha…Sequeira, you chose an excellent wife, an excellent wife, haha!”

“I have a child? I actually have a child!” Sequeira was incomparably excited as well.

Cecily, hearing this, was puzzled.

It was just a child. Why was it that even the perpetually unflappable clan leader would be so excited? She had never seen the clan leader Bakwill be so excited before.

“Excellent!” Bakwill was so excited that his face was red. He slapped his son on the shoulders. “Sequeira, your wife has rendered great merits.”

“Right.” Sequeira nodded excitedly as well.

And then, Sequeira rushed to his wife, embracing Cecily as he excitedly kissed her. “Lily, you actually are with child…I…thank you…really…thank you so much!” Sequeira said excitedly.

Cecily, seeing her husband so affectionate and ardent, even with the clan leader nearby, felt both amazed and awkward.

“I have a child.” Sequeira stretched his hand out, gently placing it on his wife’s belly.

“Huh?” Cecily stared, puzzled, at her husband. She saw Sequeira’s right hand slowly emit a blood colored glow which was extremely bizarre. Sequeira’s face was full of excitement, but slowly, Sequeira’s expression froze. He stared in astonishment at his nearby wife, Cecily.

Cecily felt puzzled by the look in his eyes.

“WHAP!” With a sudden swing of the hand, he struck his wife heavily on the face, knocking her into the ground far away.

“Bastard, slut!” Sequeira was so angry, his entire body was trembling.

Cecily held a hand to her face, staring at her husband in disbelief.

“Sequeira, what are you doing!” Bakwill was enraged.

“Father.” Sequeira turned to look at his father, saying hurriedly, “That… isn’t my child!”

Bakwill was stunned. “Sequeira, are you saying…?”

Sequeira nodded.

Bakwill’s face instantly sunk down, as though covered by a layer of frost. Bakwill glanced sideways at Cecily, then said in a voice that was like ice, “Sequeira, this woman is no longer worthy of being your principal wife. You decide how to punish her. After a period of time, prepare to take another wife.”

“Yes, Father!” Sequeira turned to stare furiously at Cecily.

Cecily’s face was filled with confusion. She immediately said hurriedly, “Sequeira, this is your child, why do you say it is another’s?”

Actually, not even a Deity was able to tell if the fetus in his wife's body was or wasn't his own. But some people were exceptions! For example, Linley, because Linley belonged to the Dragonblood Warrior clan.

Any descendant of the Dragonblood Warrior clan would definitely have the lineage of the Dragonblood Warriors. Even if the amount was sparse, it would still definitely be there!

If there was no Dragonblood Warrior lineage in one's body, then one definitely didn't belong to the clan.

"Why?" Sequeira was so furious, his facial muscles were twitching.

The Bagshaw clan belonged to the 'Bloodrune Titan clan' of the Infernal Realm. The descendants of the Bloodrune Titan clan all had the Bloodrune Titan lineage in their veins. Of course, there were varying degrees of density, and if the density reached a certain level, they would possess extremely great power.

Just now, Sequeira had used some of their clan's special energy for sensing, only to discover…

The child in the belly of his wife actually didn't have any of his clan's lineage at all!

Without even a hint of the lineage of his clan, it meant that this child was definitely not his own!

Chapter 21 – I Want Him Dead!

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 21, I Want Him Dead!

“You played me for a fool!” Sequeira stared at his wife, his eyes like death. “The child in your belly is someone else’s.” Sequeira doted dearly on his wife. When he had gone to the Free Castle, it was for buying clothes for her, but who would have imagined that his wife actually had another man!

And the child in her belly was that man’s!

The Bloodrune Titan clan was an extremely mighty clan within the Infernal Realm, and the power they controlled was astonishing as well. In Miluo Island, although on the surface, the five clans were in charge of things, in reality, the other four clans were simply subordinate clans to the Bagshaw clan!

The Bagshaw clan was the Bloodrune Titan clan. This was a secret which very few people knew.

At least, Cecily didn’t know it. Otherwise, she wouldn’t have run over so excitedly to tell her husband that she was with child.

“No…no!” Cecily hurriedly shook her head.

“This woman doesn’t even admit it.” The nearby clan elder, Bakwill, said furiously, “Son, this is a shame to our clan. If this woman refuses to admit it, then destroy her entire familial branch within the Gaylord clan!”

Cecily’s body trembled.

The Gaylord clan, one of the five clans, was extremely large, with very many family branches. Destroying one of the branches, to the true masters of the Miluo Island, the ‘Bagshaw clan’, would need nothing more than a single word.

“Speak!” Sequeira stared coldly at his own wife as well.

Sequeira cared deeply about his face, and he was always very proud of the fact that he was a member of the Bloodrune Titan clan. He himself was the son of the clan leader, and was definitely in the principal line of descent, of an extremely exalted status. He was very haughty. Now that his wife had another man’s child in her belly, of course he was already going mad!

His face was so ugly, it was turning purple!

“Hurry, speak!” Sequeira landed a kick on Cecily’s body, who was struck viciously by that kick and sent smashing into a decorative boulder. “Otherwise, you and your lineage in your clan lineage will all die!” Sequeira said in a frenzy.

“I’ll talk, I’ll talk.” Cecily said hurriedly. She was about to go mad.

Actually, she herself wasn’t sure who the child in her womb belonged to, because previously, she had been dealing with two men at the same time. One was Sequeira, while the other was Cesar. She had slept with both men, and so she herself wasn’t sure whose child it was.

Originally, as Cecily viewed it, since even she couldn’t be sure, she might as well say that it was Sequeira’s. There was no way for him to tell anyhow.

Unfortunately, she didn’t know that the Bagshaw clan was the Bloodrune Titan clan!

“Even I don’t know for sure who the child belongs to.” Cecily, seeing the rage on Sequeira’s face, hurriedly added, “But I’m certain that it is either yours or Cesar’s!”

“Cesar?”

Sequeira was stunned, and then he raised his head to the skies, laughing wildly. “Hahahaha….” His laughter carried boundless insanity within it,

and his body faintly began to glow with a bloody light. He, Sequeira, a favored son of the heavens, had never suffered such a humiliation before.

Could there be anything more insulting than his woman having another man's child in her womb?

"Cesar…I want him dead!!!" Sequeira snarled viciously, his eyes glowing with a faint, bloody light, as though he were a man-eating wolf.

At Tarosse's residence. Over the past few days, Linley had lived here very comfortable, each day watching Lomio's ten battles at the arena. He also often chatted with his old friends. As for Aches, Bates, and the others, they had left Miluo Island long ago.

"Lomio really is powerful." Pushing the courtyard gates open, Linley and the others walked in while chatting amongst themselves. "That saber blow of his is all but undefeatable. It just chops the opponents in half."

"He is proficient in both material attacks and soul attacks." Tarosse sighed in praise as well.

Olivier agreed, "In particular, his speed is also astonishing. Lomio is simply too powerful. Each time, he wins with such ease. Up till now, nobody has been able to exchange a few blows with him. All of them were defeated with the first blow."

Thinking back to the sight in the arena, Linley felt amazed as well.

In the Arena, Lomio was simply too arrogant. He held everyone in condescension, but he had the strength to do so!

"Linley, you're back." Dylin laughed as he came down from upstairs, and Linley's group went to welcome him. "Dylin, where's Cesar?"

"Cesar?" Dylin frowned, lowering his voice. "He's sleeping."

"Sleeping?"

Deities didn't need to sleep at all, and Cesar normally wouldn't sleep. However, ever since his relationship with Cecily had been destroyed, Cesar had become depressed and would often just lounge around lazily and sleep.

Tarosse shook his head and sighed. "Don't disturb him. Just let him rest."

Just as Linley's group of people were gathered together and chatting, young master Sequeira of the Bagshaw clan, a sinister look on his face, was leading three black armored experts out of his ancestral estate. These three black armored experts were true elites of the Bagshaw clan.

"This Cesar actually dares to live amongst the island guards!" Sequeira became all the more enraged.

Cesar had slept with his woman, and was now living on his clan's grounds!

"Let's go!" Sequeira immediately flew into the heavens, moving at high speed straight for the island guards residences. Those three black armored warriors quietly followed.

Moments later, Sequeira arrived at the island guards region. The patrolling guards immediately came to welcome him. Seeing the four of them, these guards couldn't help but be very shocked, especially upon noticing those three black armored warriors. Those silent black armored warriors were like three glaciers.

Although they were silent, they gave others a feeling of being unable to breathe.

"Go. Hurry and summon a thousand-man regiment!" With a wave of his hand, Sequeira revealed his blood-colored Miluo Insignia.

"Blood-colored Miluo Insignia!" The patrolling guards were shocked, and then immediately said while bowing respectfully, "Yes, milord." Although they were puzzled as to why a thousand-man regiment was being summoned, anyone with a blood-colored Miluo Insignia could easily

summon and order about a thousand-man regiment.

Soon, a thousand-man regiment was summoned.

“Young master Sequeira.” The commander of the thousand-man regiment immediately recognized Sequeira. “What are you…?”

“No questions. Follow me!” Sequeira ordered coldly.

The thousand-man commander was startled. He realized that today, Sequeira’s expression seemed rather different. In the past, Sequeira would always be smiling and laughing, but today, Sequeira’s face was simply too ugly to behold, and the aura his body was radiating was one of danger!

“Whoosh!”

Sequeira was the first to fly into the air, with the three black armored guards following. After them was the massive, dense cluster of a thousand island guards.

“Number 306!” Sequeira still remembered the address which his wife had given him, for where Cesar was living. Generally speaking, the addresses for the island guards had very large numbers, but 306 was an extremely small number. Generally speaking, only some rather special people could live there.

For example, Highgods who had won a hundred battles.

Tarosse’s residence. Linley’s group was seated together.

“Tarosse, you truly aren’t willing to leave with us?” Linley asked yet again. “Cesar has agreed to leave with us.”

In the end, Miluo Island wasn’t the ‘root’ for Tarosse and the others.

However, the Indigo Prefecture was where the Four Divine Beasts clan was located. Linley wanted to gather there with those people as well. Cesar was

willing to leave, but O'Brien had to stay with Tarosse. Tarosse had given him a God-level spark, in exchange for his service.

"No need. We don't want to leave this place." Tarosse laughed, then shook his head.

Dylin shook his head as well. "We've lived here a long time, and we've grown to consider this place our home in the Infernal Realm. We don't want to leave."

Linley could only laugh helplessly.

"A few days after Lomio's battles conclude, we'll leave." Linley said. "Such a pity. I wanted to be together with the rest of you, but there's nothing for us. I have to go to the Indigo Prefecture." Linley wouldn't try and force them either.

If they weren't willing, then forget it.

"Sorry, Linley." Dylin apologized.

"It's fine." Linley shook his head.

Suddenly, Linley was startled. Raising his head, he saw a large number of island guards in mid-air.

"Why are there so many island guards? What major event is happening?" Tarosse was surprised as well.

But Linley noticed that the leader of this large group of guards was that arrogant young man with short red hair. Sequeira!

"What's he doing here?" Linley was startled.

Right at this moment, that large group of people descended. Sequeira led the three black armored warriors into the courtyard, while over a hundred of the other island guards also landed there, with the rest hovering in the air.

“Boss!”

“Linley!”

Delia, Bebe, and Olivier all rose to their feet. They saw Sequeira as well.

“Are they here for us?” Delia asked through divine sense.

Linley stared at Sequeira, completely not understanding. Given what he had expected, Sequeira shouldn’t be causing such a ruckus over that small matter. But Sequeira had clearly brought a large number of experts to surround them.

“Who are you?” Tarosse stood up.

“Tarosse.” The thousand-man commander laughed calmly. “This is young master Sequeira of the Bagshaw clan! He has business.”

“Bagshaw clan!”

Tarosse and Dylin couldn’t help but be stunned.

Sequeira just glanced at Linley. “You are here as well.” And then, Sequeira paid no further attention to Linley. He shouted angrily, “Where is Cesar? Have him roll out!” His angry shout shook the entire courtyard.

“Cesar? He’s here for Cesar?” Linley began to frown. Sequeira wasn’t here for Linley, but was here for Cesar, but for what? Could it be that it had something to do with that woman named Cecily?

“Young master Sequeira, what are you looking for Cesar for?” Tarosse asked.

“No questions. Just have him roll out!” Sequeira stared around at the building, and then Sequeira let out a cold sneer, directly releasing his divine sense and almost immediately locating Cesar. He couldn’t help but look

towards the second floor of the little building.

“Who is looking for me?” A lazy voice rang out, and Cesar walked out, flying directly down from the second floor.

“You are Cesar!” Sequeira stared at him.

“You are… Sequeira!” Cesar’s eyes immediately grew fierce, and became filled with rage.

Seeing the look in his face, Sequeira began to laugh wildly. This loud laughter caused Linley and the others nearby to have a bad feeling. The suppressed rage which Sequeira had held in his heart was now bellowing forth, and Sequeira’s eyes were faintly red.

Deities lived for too long.

It was very normal for a female Deity to have had multiple relationships with different men.

Sequeira wouldn’t care too much.

As long as his wife wasn’t with any other men while they were together, that was enough. But what enraged him was…the child in the womb of his wife belonged to another man! Given Sequeira’s temper, how could he possibly swallow this insult?

“Sequeira, why have you come looking for me?” Cesar said coldly.

“Why?” Sequeira raised his head to the skies and laughed loudly, his body beginning to brim with a bloody light, and then he stared at Cesar. “Today, I’m going to kill you!”

The faces of Linley’s group immediately changed.

Sequeira stared at the surrounding people, then said loudly, “Today, my Bagshaw clan is going to execute this Cesar. All of you others, leave. If you

don’t leave…then you are becoming enemies of our Bagshaw clan!”

The faces of O’Brien, Linley, and the others turned ashen.

Cesar seemed very tranquil. He turned to look at Linley and Tarosse, then shook his head. “Don’t worry about me. Actually, recently, I myself have felt that my continued existence has no purpose. There’s no need to offend them for my sake.”

“How can this be acceptable?” O’Brien stepped forward, staring at Cesar. “Cesar, we came here from the Yulan continent together. Over so many years, have any of us ever abandoned each other? At worst, we’ll die together. What is there to fear!”

“O’Brien, resisting blindly is just death.” Tarosse let out a low sigh, then walked off to one side. “I won’t interfere in this matter.”

Linley was startled.

“O’Brien, don’t resist. Resisting means throwing your life away. There’s no point.” Dylin shook his head as well. He actually walked to one side as well. As for Dylin’s two children, those two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions, they stared with shock on their faces.

“Father.” The two Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lions stared at Dylin.

“Come over.” Dylin snapped at them.

The two siblings exchanged glances, but they had no choice but to follow their father.

“You…you…” O’Brien didn’t dare believe it. When they had come to the Infernal Realm, they had adventured together and treated each other’s lives like their own. Everyone believed…that none of them would ever abandon each other. However, how did things end up like this today?”

“Excellent!” Sequeira said coldly, and then looked towards Linley. “As for

you, sir?”

“Me?” Linley, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier all looked at each other.

In their smiles, they knew what each other were thinking.

Linley laughed. Taking three steps forward, he walked to the side of Cesar and O’Brien. In a calm voice, he said, “I, too, am from the Yulan continent. None of us will abandon one of our own!”

“I, too, am from the Yulan continent!”

Delia, Bebe, and Olivier walked forward as well, with Linley as their leader.

Linley’s face grew solemn, and his gaze flashed through this group of Highgods.

He understood…

“This time, we really are going to go all out. I cannot show any mercy or forbearance!” Linley’s heart was beginning to fill with a killing intent. At a critical time like this, if necessary, he would sacrifice a drop of Sovereign’s Might and launch a slaughter that would turn the world upside down.

Chapter 22 – All Who Bar My Path Shall Die!

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 22, All Who Bar My Path Shall Die!

Sequeira saw Linley step forward. His face changed slightly. He knew very well how powerful the person in front of him was. If Linley was to interfere, then a new variable would have entered this affair. Sequeira said coldly, “Today, my Bagshaw clan is definitely going to kill Cesar. Can it be that you all want to die with him?”

But Linley’s group didn’t hesitate or retreat at all.

“Linley, O’Brien, Bebe.” Cesar looked towards them, shaking his head slightly.

“Haha…” O’Brien began to laugh loudly, then looked at Cesar. “Cesar, we’ve lived so many years, and have seen countless things! Our life is important, but sometimes, there are some things which are more important than life! Today…either we shall all live together, or we shall all die together!”

Cesar trembled. He looked towards Linley’s group.

Linley’s group smiled back at him.

“Sequeira!” Linley turned to look at Sequeira. Linley could tell that Sequeira was currently slightly hesitant. As Linley saw it, it would be best if battle could be avoided. Linley thus said, “Sequeira, what sort of enmity do you and Cesar have, exactly, that you must force him to his death? Everyone should take a step back!”

Anyone else who said these words would be as good as looking for death.

But Linley saying these words was a different situation, because in Sequeira’s heart, Linley was very possibly a Seven Star Fiend!

“What is it about?” Sequeira was furious just thinking about this. “You ask him!” Sequeira pointed furiously at Cesar.

“Me?” Cesar had no idea.

Sequeira was so angry that his face was purple, but how could he so openly and publicly discuss this affair? Was he supposed to directly say that the child in his wife’s womb was another person’s? Once this got out, most likely he, Sequeira, would be a laughingstock for the rest of his life!

“Hmph!” Sequeira, seeing the look on Cesar’s face, couldn’t help but sneer.

“You are doing this because of Lily?” Cesar laughed coldly. “It must be for Lily’s sake, as otherwise, how would you, the mighty young master of your clan, come here for me?”

“Shut your mouth!”

Hearing Cesar call Cecily by her nickname ‘Lily’ in such an intimate manner, Sequeira was all the more enraged. “You aren’t worthy of calling her by that!”

“Haha…” Cesar laughed wildly as he stared at Sequeira. “I’m not worthy of calling her by that? It’s true that Lily and I were once together, but so what? Ever since you married her, the two of us never met again! What, can it be that after getting married, you are going to kill all of the men who were previously lovers with your wife?”

Immediately, the many island guards in the air and in the courtyard all began to speak quietly amongst themselves.

Deities had an unlimited lifespan. It was normal for people to have had many romantic relationships. If Sequeira were to truly say that he was going to kill a former lover of his wife, that would be going too far.

“So that’s what this is about!” Linley felt rather surprised as well. He had

heard of the affairs of Cesar and that woman. That woman had met with Cesar one last time before her wedding, and then they had never met again.

Linley empathized for Cesar.

But who would have imagined that Sequeira would come to kill Cesar!

“Cut the crap!” Sequeira was furious, and yet he couldn’t even explain the real reason he was so angry. Explaining something so shameful, to him, was something worse than death!

“I’ll ask you one last time. Are you really insisting in interfering?!” Sequeira stared death at Linley. He didn’t even glance at Cesar. He held Cesar in utter contempt. As long as he were to attack, he could kill Cesar in the blink of an eye.

The one he worried about was only Linley, who stood in front of him!

“Young master Sequeira, why do you care so much about this God?” The thousand-man commander was puzzled. Even Tarosse and Dylin were confused about this.

“I am!”

Linley said calmly, “Even if it was just for the sake of the friendship we held, I cannot possibly just sit and watch. What’s more, Cesar has saved my life before!” Linley’s expression was calm, but in truth, the energy in his body was boiling, prepared to explode into an attack at any point.

Sequeira narrowed his eyes slightly, a cold look being revealed.

“Quick, go inform my father that someone who is apparently a Seven Star Fiend is getting tangled up in this matter.” Sequeira immediately sent a mental message to one of the black armored warriors. A hint of surprise appeared on the black armored warrior’s face, and then with a flash, he disappeared.

Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but furrow his forehead.

"Haha…" Sequeira suddenly began to laugh wildly.

"Kill!" Sequeira suddenly howled.

The surrounding guards were clearly prepared for this the entire time. In the instant Sequeira gave the order, all of the island guards immediately made their move. Clearly, Sequeira wanted to launch a sudden attack to catch Linley off-guard and thus seize the opportunity to kill Cesar at once.

However, as soon as Sequeira ordered that black armored warrior off, Linley had been prepared.

In the same instant that Sequeira let out that furious howl…

"Rumble…"

With Linley at the center, within three hundred meters, a misty earthen light arose. This region was large enough to cover a large number of the island guards, including both Sequeira and their leader, the thousand-man commander.

Blackstone Space!

Powerful gravity!

"Aaaah!" Some of the guards who had been flying up in the air, not too far away, were caught within the sphere as well, and all of them dropped at high speed. As for Sequeira, who had been on the ground to begin with, his body involuntarily hunched down for a moment before he then immediately straightened his waist.

"Not good!"

Sequeira's face changed dramatically, because he saw that Linley was charging towards him at high speed!

To subdue bandits, first capture their king!

Linley had made his plans long ago. “It will be hard for anyone to flee from Miluo Island, but Sequeira is clearly an important figure. If we can capture him and use him as a hostage to threaten the others, the situation would be much better!” In the same instant he created his Blackstone Space, Linley charged straight for Sequeira.

“What terrifying gravity!” Sequeira’s face changed dramatically while at the same time he immediately retreated.

“Young master!” The two black armored warriors by Sequeira’s side, ignoring their own lifes, immediately interposed themselves in front of Sequeira, forcibly blocking Linley’s path to him.

“Die!” Linley’s gaze turned cold.

“BANG!”

Linley’s clothes exploded violently, and he instantly Dragonformed. Azure-golden draconic scales covered every part of Linley’s body, and those dark golden eyes stared coldly at the people in front of him. That draconic tail, flashing with a metallic light, began to wave.

Seeing this, those island guards, Sequeira, the thousand-man commander, and the black armored warriors all felt their hearts tremble.

“An ultimate expert!” The island guards had all thought that Linley was just a God, but now they realized how terrifying Linley was. All of them immediately believed that Linley had been hiding his true strength, and that his true status was that of an extremely powerful expert.

“Four Divine Beasts clan!” The thousand-man commander was greatly shocked.

“He’s of the Four Divine Beasts clan!” Sequeira, while rapidly retreating,

was surprised as well.

“Kill!” Sequeira shouted explosively once more.

So what if he was of the Four Divine Beasts clan? The current Four Divine Beasts clan was not like how the Four Divine Beast clans had been in the past. The former Four Divine Beast clans, their Bagshaw clan might perhaps be frightened of, but these days…their Bagshaw clan didn’t fear them at all!

They were capable of controlling Miluo Island and keep it proudly erect in the Starmist Sea. The true power of the Bagshaw clan was such that not even Sequeira, the young master of the clan, knew more than just the tiniest bit.

“Linley, he…!” Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, and O’Brien were all greatly shocked.

“Die!” The dark golden eyes swept past those two black armored warriors. A surge of spiritual energy centered around the ‘black stone’ suddenly surged towards those two black armored warriors. Instantly, a strange wind sound began to thoroughly penetrate their souls.

The two black armored warriors both hesitated slightly.

“Swish!” A devilish violet light flashed.

“Clang!” Those two black armored warriors actually both drew their weapons, blocking Linley’s sword.

Although the soul-affecting power was great, these two black armored warriors could be considered true elites of the Bagshaw clan. Both of them had the power of a Five Star Fiend. Although they were affected by the wind sound, they didn’t fall into a stupor, and were able to maintain their grip on a hint of wakefulness.

“Whap!” The draconic tail viciously slammed upon the shoulder of a black

armored warrior.

“Crunch!” Flesh and blood exploded out, and an arm and half the side of his body was split off. The black armored warrior seemed to have been struck by a meteor, and was knocked far away. The black armored warrior was greatly shocked. Fortunately, he had dodged quickly enough, as otherwise, Linley’s draconic tail would have swept onto his head.

The whipping strikes of Linley’s draconic tail were simply too powerful!

“Whap!” The other black armored warrior was sent flying as well.

“Hmph.” Linley’s gaze was focused on the frantically fleeing Sequeira. Although the above took time to describe, in truth, when Linley charged past the two black armored warriors, he just struck out twice with his draconic tail, fast as lightning, and sent them flying.

Sequeira had been so terrified by the previous scene that his face was greatly changed. The two black armored warriors hadn’t been able to stop Linley for even a moment!

“You want to flee?!” Linley laughed coldly.

Instantly, the gravitational pull that had been towards the ground changed. As Linley’s divine power flowed out and began to fluctuate, immediately, all living things within the Blackstone Space sensed an astonishingly powerful gravitational force that was tugging them towards Linley. The sudden change in gravity caught all of the enemies off-guard.

“How is this possible?!”

Sequeira could sense that he was unable to overcome this gravity, and was actually being drawn backwards!

How could he be moving backwards?!

Immediately, his body emanated a bloody light, allowing Sequeira to just

barely resist the force. But still, he was completely unable to move forward. The backwards gravity was simply too strong.

“Young master Sequeira!” The thousand-man commander, however, was able to resist the gravity.

“Block him!” The thousand-man commander shouted loudly. Even if a thousand island guards died, it didn’t matter, but Sequeira couldn’t die! The Bagshaw clan had too few people. Every single member of the clan was precious, and what’s more, Sequeira was of the primary line!

All of the island warriors were unsteady right now, and because they were squeezed into too small a space, they were tightly clustered together. They didn’t dare to wildly chop out with their weapons, because they might hurt their own people!

“Fleeing?” Linley increased his speed. Sequeira couldn’t be allowed to flee. Linley wasn’t too far away, and so naturally, he almost instantly appeared next to Sequeira.

“Bang!” A wave of powerful energy struck onto Sequeira, but Linley couldn’t help but be astonished. That wave of energy had actually come from the nearby thousand-man commander.

“Swoosh!” Sequeira instantly was knocked far into the distance, outside of the effect of the gravitational field.

After having left the gravitational field, Sequeira flew for another thousand meters before coming to a halt. He felt a sense of terror in his heart. “This member of the Four Divine Beast clans is simply too terrifying. That gravity was just…even I was unable to resist it. Fortunately, that last blow!”

Sequeira felt very grateful towards the thousand-man commander. That last attack was very queer; it didn’t possess much harmful power.

It was just a very heavy blow which impacted him, constantly pushing him outwards at high speed. This surge of force, combined with Sequeira’s own

power, naturally shot him out rapidly.

“Kill, kill! Kill him for me!” Sequeira immediately shouted explosively!

Only two hundred or so people were trapped in the Gravitational Space, while the eight hundred other island guards were flying high in the sky. They wanted to attack, but the people trapped in the Gravitational Space were too densely clustered, and most of them were their own people. They didn’t dare to engage in group assaults.

If they did, they would injure their own people!

“Terrible!” As soon as Sequeira escaped, Linley’s heart lurched.

The situation just turned terrible!

After Sequeira escaped, he definitely wouldn’t be so careless as to fall into the Gravitational Space again.

The plan of capturing Sequeira had failed!

“Now, only the second method is left to me!”

A slaughter was about to commence!

At present, Cesar and O’Brien were watching in stunned shock. They had believed that Linley was just a God and had come to die by their sides. They had been certain that they were going to die, and had been prepared to fight to their deaths. But now, they discovered…

They were wrong, ridiculously wrong!

Those island guards and black armored warriors weren’t even able to stand on their feet steady, within that Gravitational Space. Those people, in front of Linley, were like a flock of sheep, while Linley was a savage wolf. The wolf entered the flock of sheep!

“Linley, he…” Cesar and O’Brien were both rather stunned.

“The situation right now is very bad. Having not captured Sequeira, all we can do is slaughter a path out! To prevent them from engaging in group attacks, we have to battle within their groups. Only within their groups will we be able to avoid the group attacks of the other island guards!” Linley’s voice rang out in Cesar, O’Brien, Delia, Bebe, and Olivier’s minds.

Cesar and the others immediately focused their attention.

“Remember, follow me!”

After giving this instruction to those behind him, Linley let out a growl, then like an explosively enraged lion, led Cesar, Bebe, and the others to charge directly into the group of island guards in front of them!

“All who bar my path shall die!”

At this moment Linley’s heart was as cold and hard as iron. He would no longer show any mercy!

Chapter 23 – Turning the World Upside Down

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 23, Turning the World Upside Down

Within the Bagshaw clan's estate.

The only sound that could be heard was that of the gentle wind. Only, a large number of figures flew out from within the Bagshaw estate, moving at high speed towards the residential area for the island guards. It must be understood that those who lived at the Bagshaw clan estate, aside from the elites of the Bagshaw clan, were the true experts.

In mid-air.

His long red hair fluttered unrestrained. Bakwill's face was emotionless as he flew at high speed. Behind him was three experts dressed in long red robes, two of them men, one a woman. The three red-robed experts were the true experts of the Bagshaw clan…

In the Bagshaw clan, the number of red-robed elders was extremely low. They were, however, one of the main reasons why the Bagshaw clan was able to stand so tall in the Infernal Realm, to erect Miluo Island, and ignore the official powers.

Every single red-robed elder was a Seven Star Fiend!

The Bagshaw clan, in the entire Infernal Realm, was one of the ancient clans that was ranked within the top ten! The Four Divine Beasts clan, before their fall, was of course far superior to the Bagshaw clan. But now that they had declined, they were a level weaker than the powerful, full-strength Bagshaw clan.

"Seems to be a Seven Star Fiend?" Bakwill was full of worry.

He was worried about his son!

“Whoooosh!” Bagkwill flew at high speed, with three red-robed elders behind him, and a hundred black-armored warriors behind the elders.

“Swish!”

A ray of blood-colored light spread out at high speed into the skies, from the residential area for the Miluo Island’s guards. As it flew high into the skies…“BANG!” It released a powerful explosive sound, while at the same time the blood-colored light expanded greatly, instantly seeming to become an eye-piercingly bright blood-colored sun.

The faces of Bakwill and the three red-robed elders changed.

This was the emergency call-to-arms for Miluo Island, ordering all of the warriors of Miluo Island to immediately enter battle mode as well as prepare to attack.

“Let’s move ahead!” Bakwill sent out his divine sense.

Immediately, Bakwill and the three red-robed elders increased their speed dramatically, instantly throwing off the nearly hundred black-armored warriors behind them. The four Seven Star Fiends transformed into four blurs, instantly moving into the distance. Bakwill, as soon as he saw the signal, was worried for his son.

Indeed, the situation had turned extremely, terrifyingly grim, for Sequeira to have been forced to release the signal. Sequeira hovered in the air off into the distance, staring at the slaughter down below, his face ashen. “Too terrifying. How could he be so strong?”

A slaughter!

Linley, who had entered berserk mode and was using both his incomparably strong Dragonform as well as the ‘Blackstone Space’, had released a slaughtering power that caused the hearts of these men to turn cold.

“Kill!” Linley’s icy, dark golden eyes were filled without a hint of compassion.

He led Bebe and the others to charge and slaughter into the residential area of the island warriors. Within this region, there were simply too many island guards. Most of them were spread into the various regions, and on the way over, there were quite a few groups of island guards. Linley intentionally charged towards the areas where the guards were the most plentiful.

The Blackstone Space had expanded to its limit as well…a diameter of five hundred meters!

Everyone within this region was affected by the gravitational pull. Within a diameter of five hundred meters, each time he unleashed it, many island guards were caught within. When affected by the gravitational pull, they couldn’t help but be dragged closer to Linley. “Bang!” Their bodies smashed through walls but continued to be pulled towards Linley.

“No!” These island guards were terrified as well.

They discovered that there were many island guards already within the gravitational field.

But instantly, the direction of the gravity changed!

Originally, the gravity was directed towards Linley, but suddenly, it became directed to the ground. The sudden change of the direction of the gravity caused those island guards who had been striving to resist the gravity to smash viciously against and fall downwards towards the ground.

“Kill!” Some of the island guards who had suddenly been pulled into the gravity field were enraged.

“Kill!”

The many island guards who had been trapped into the gravity field

attacked.

But as soon as they attacked, Linley immediately activated the soul-bewildering effect! All of the island guards who had fallen into the gravitational field entered a stupor, but of course, amongst the island guards were a few experts as well who could just barely remain clear-headed. Against these very few experts, there was only one word…

Kill!

They were able to just barely remain clear-headed, but in the gravity field, how could they compare to Linley in speed?

“Bang!” The devilish Bloodviolet directly chopped an enemy’s head apart.

As for those other island guards who were in a stupor, Linley continued to control a small amount of gravitational power to drag them along with him at high speed as he fled.

A violet sword light continued to flash unabated!

An azure-golden blur continued to flicker!

Blood and flesh exploded, skulls shattered, and divine sparks flew everywhere wildly!

Linley’s ‘earthen yellow light sphere’ continued to advance, like a strange, devouring beast that had swallowed the island guards directly into it. Those who didn’t resist became stupefied puppets, while those who did resist were mercilessly slaughtered by Linley!

This beast was continuously advancing.

“Bastard.” Sequeira, watching this from mid-air, felt his entire body tremble.

“Linley!” Cesar and O’Brien felt their hearts filled with astonishment as

well.

“Haha, Boss, this feels great!” Bebe was very excited.

All of them, despite being within the gravity field, were covered by a flowing earthen yellow light, and so they weren’t affected at all.

In addition, in the regions through the island guards residential area, more and more island guards had flown into the air, coming in nonstop after having seen the summoning signal in the skies.

Not only were there many island guards on the ground, there were many island guards in the skies as well. In the skies, the island guards were like a swarm of locusts. More than ten thousand island guards were hovering high in the sky. Staring down at that earthen-yellow sphere of light that was constantly advancing, they too couldn’t help but angrily curse…

“This bastard!”

As they saw it, Linley really was quite a bastard!

Because within the Blackstone Space, there was a group of stupefied island guards. These guards were like a wall of flesh!

If these island guards in the skies were to attack en masse downwards, the first to be struck would definitely be these ‘meat shield’ island guards. Linley was completely capable of controlling these stupefied island guards to use them to block any attacks, once they came.

“Can’t let this continue.” Sequeira gritted his teeth.

He immediately spread out his divine sense towards those ten-plus thousand-man commanders. “Forget about those hundred island guards. Group attacks. Kill that man!”

The thousand-man commanders were all shocked.

“Yes!” They still acknowledged.

Very soon, the ten thousand island guards in the skies all received the orders.

“Attack?” The island guards were all rather surprised, but they still obeyed their orders. In accordance with the group orders, the ten thousand island guards in the skies all began to brandish their weapons, unleashing countless material attacks and physical attacks!

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Instantly, countless multicolored attacks filled the skies, falling down from up above like a rain of rainbows. Only, each ‘raindrop’ was a lethal one!

Seeing this sight, Linley’s heart clenched.

“They really are going to do this!” Linley immediately turned, leading the group of people within his gravity field to dodge to the side.

Fortunately, the countless island guards up above them were all afraid of being caught up by this blackstone space, and so they all were rather high up, causing their attacks to have to fly quite a long distance. With such a long distance, even though they flew quickly, there was still enough time to react.

Linley’s group dodged!

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

The attacks descended from the skies. Countless rays of material attacks or soul attacks fell upon them without mercy!

They fell down as tightly clustered as drops of rain.

The thousand-man commanders of the island guards clearly knew that Linley would dodge, and so their attacks were also aimed at the areas which

Linley might possibly flee to. Although by doing so, it meant their attacks were not very focused, in the end…Linley wouldn't be able to dodge them all either.

Within the gravity field, those many stupefied guards were controlled by Linley to block from above Cesar, Bebe, Delia, and the others. Linley himself also retreated backwards to stand closer to Delia.

With so many 'meat shields', the soul attacks naturally struck them first, entering the seas of consciousness for those many stupefied island guards. The number of attacks that actually fell directly upon Linley's group came in clusters, with a single 'meat shield' sometimes being able to block multiple soul attacks and quite a few material attacks.

"Quick, prepare the second wave of attacks!" Sequiera immediately shouted.

The thousand-man commanders understood that the first wave of attacks was almost completely absorbed by the 'meat shield'. Linley's group wouldn't actually be harmed much.

But before they had a chance to give the orders, Linley moved.

"Up!"

Linley's group had just relied on the meat shields to avoid that last round of attacks, and as they did so, they immediately charged upwards. Their flying speed was of course extremely fast, and most of the island guards above them hadn't even had a chance to react before Linley flew within several hundred meters of them. Instantly, dozens of island guards above Linley were drawn into that Blackstone Space.

"Ahhhh!" "Ahhhh!" They screamed miserably, but began to sink down at high speed.

But their screams quickly quieted, because they themselves entered a stupor.

The island guards began to panic.

“Flee!”

If they fell into the Blackstone Space, that would be terrible. Linley’s sudden upward charge into the middle of the island guards caused them to completely fall into disordered chaos. All of them were terrified of falling into the Blackstone Space, and so they frantically tried to fly farther away from it.

“About time.” Linley said to himself.

Instantly, a large amount of earth elemental essence began to rise up.

“Crackle…” The strange thing was, an enormous black cuboid appeared in mid-air. This black cuboid had six sides, and it hovered there in mid air, four hundred meters tall. This enormous black cube contained more than a hundred Highgods within it.

This enormous cube was formed from countless miniature cubes that were only four meters tall.

The precise number of the small cubes, was a million!

An enormous cube that was four hundred meters tall, formed from a million smaller cubes. Those Highgods were all trapped within.

This was the true form of the Blackstone Prison – a cube!

“What is this?” Many island guards were astonished.

“Swoosh!” That enormous cube flew towards the east at high speed. Any island guards that were too slow or who weren’t able to dodge, upon contact with the cube, were immediately devoured within.

At the center of the enormous cube, Linley’s group was gathered together.

“Now that these people have come in, it will be hard for them if they want to go out again.” Linley laughed calmly. The gravitational force within the cube was under Linley’s complete control. By relying on changing the direction of the gravity, Linley was capable of causing those within it to lose their sense of direction. In addition, each time they attempted to break through a wall, it would be tremendously difficult.

It must be understood that this was formed from a million cubes, and Linley was capable of soundless altering the insides of this cube.

To escape was virtually impossible.

The only possible way was to forcibly shatter it!

“Linley, what are we going to do?” Delia asked.

“First, we’ll fly to the eastern part of the island.” Linley had planned this out in advance. “By the time we arrive at the eastern part of the island, we will only have to cause a panic amongst the countless guests. The population in the eastern part of the island is very high. After causing them to panic, we’ll be able to seize the opportunity to flee.”

This was Linley’s second scheme!

“Linley, you…you…when did you become so powerful?” The War God, O’Brien, looked at Linley.

“When we are all safe, I’ll tell you.” Linley replied.

“Bang!” The outsides of the black cube were currently suffering countless attacks from the island guards. Although the island guards were numerous, their attacks were too spread out. At most, they would be able to destroy a few exterior layers, which Linley could instantly repair.

“I can block those material attacks, but as for the soul attacks, let those unfortunate ‘meat shields’ block them. The Blackstone Prison is so large

that those outside have no way at all of knowing where we are within it."

The countless island guards in mid-air were staying far, far away from that enormous black cube. The black cube thus flew across the skies of Miluo Island, moving at high speed towards the eastern part of the island. Slowly, it drew nearer and nearer to the eastern part of the island.

"What's that?"

The countless outsiders of Miluo Island raised their heads, staring at the enormous black cube.

Suddenly…

Four blurs shot at high speed towards that black cube, while at the same time, a dazzling, enormous black saber-light flashed, slashing directly across the black cube. Although it seemed to cut through it with difficulty, in the end, it still chopped through the center of the black cube.

"BANG!" The black cube crumbled.

The Dragonformed Linley, with Delia, Bebe, and the others, hovered there in mid-air.

"You won't be able to flee!" A cold voice rang out. The speaker was Bakwill, who along with the three red-robed elders were staring coldly at Linley.

Linley stared at his surroundings.

Currently, the area around them was surrounded by dense clusters of island guards who had already formed a sphere around them, completely sealing them off. From afar, the countless outsiders at the eastern part of the island were raising their heads to stare at this place.

"Those four are very powerful." Linley felt a hint of tension. That blade just now had been launched by one of the red-robed men, but the red-robed men

were clearly under the command of that red-haired man. Linley had no confidence at all in his ability to fight those four head on!

“It seems…I’ll have to use plan three.” Linley’s gaze slowly turned ice cold.

Plan three…was the final plan!

It was time to use the Sovereign’s Might!

Chapter 24 – Life and Death – Two Paths

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 24, Life and Death, Two Paths

Currently at Miluo Island, at the air above the border between the western and the eastern part of the island, tens of thousands of Highgod island warriors were in a sphere, surrounding Linley and his group who were in the center with no place to flee. The greatest threat to Linley, however, was the four people he was facing.

Four Seven Star Fiends!

“A single saber blow that chopped my Blackstone Prison ‘cube’ in half, with enough remaining force that I had to disperse it with my fist. The power of that saber blow was really quite frightening.” Linley felt that his right fist was slightly numb. Lowering his head, he saw that on his fist, there was a white imprint.

Linley was quite astonished.

This was the remaining power from that flash of saber light, after it had chopped through so many walls of the Blackstone Prison! If the saber had landed with full power on Linley, it would be hard to say if his draconic scales would be able to resist it!

“Seven Star Fiend! Definitely a Seven Star Fiend!”

Linley stared at the red-robed man who had launched that saber blow just now. He was a muscular, red-robed man with wild, tousled golden hair like the mane on a lion. At present, this man was currently standing respectfully behind the red-haired man.

“And who is this red-haired man?” Linley was cautious.

The three red-robed elders were by the side of the red-haired man, while

young master Sequeira was currently by the side of the red-haired man, appearing quite respectful. However, the red-haired man glanced at him, and Sequeira lowered his head, respectfully stepping to the side.

“Even Sequeira is so respectful, and he seems quite similar in features to Sequeira. Could this be Sequeira’s father?” Linley, seeing this scene, guessed to himself. After a short consideration, Linley came to the conclusion…

That the situation was grim!

The three red-robed men were very likely Seven Star Fiends. As for the red-haired man, he couldn’t be weak either.

“Using Sovereign’s Might is one possibility, but more importantly, I have to protect Delia and the others.” Linley was still rather worried. After all… their group was surrounded by a dense cluster of tens of thousands of Highgod island warriors!

This group of Highgod warriors were extremely dangerous as well.

“It seems…I have no other options!” Linley gritted his teeth.

He had to block the opponents while at the same time, he had protect Delia and the others. But the enemy consisted of four Seven Star Fiends. Even if he used his Sovereign’s Might, he had to go all out.

Thus, in the worst case scenario, he had to simultaneously use two drops of Sovereign’s Might!

One drop for his original body to deal with the four Seven Star Fiends.

One drop for his divine clone to protect Delia and the others.

“That’s the worst case scenario.” Linley was rather unwilling to do so. After all, this was two drops of Sovereign’s Might. But the enemy was too powerful!

“I hope you won’t force me to that step.”

Linley said quietly to himself.

Currently, as Linley was weighing his opponents, they were weighing Linley as well. They discovered, to their astonishment…that they, four Seven Star Fiends, weren’t able to see through Linley at all.

“This person is extremely powerful.” The clan leader of the Bagshaw clan, Bakwill, felt astonished. At the same time, he gave his son a hard look.

If it wasn’t because of his son, how could they have possibly offended an enemy like this?

“Boslo [Bo’si’luo]!” Bakwill shouted.

“Milord.” The lion-like man went forward.

“Go test him. If you can, then kill him.” Bakwill ordered through divine sense. Bakwill knew very well exactly how powerful the three red-robed elders accompanying him were. In terms of defense, Boslo was the strongest.

Thus, he was the most appropriate choice for testing the opponent’s strength.

“Yes, milord!” Boslo seemed rather excited.

Boslo immediately turned his head, his yellow golden eyes locking onto Linley. Cracking his lips, he laughed loudly. “Haha, just now, you were able to take on my blow. That means you are worthy of knowing my name. I am Boslo. Now, if you die, you won’t die without even knowing who killed you!”

Linley just stood there coldly in mid-air.

His body suddenly moved, and his divine wind clone flew out, landing next to Delia, Bebe, and Olivier's sides. Delia was filled with concern as well, while Bebe said through divine sense, "Boss, are you going to use the Sovereign's Might?"

"Right. My wind-style divine clone will also carry a drop of Sovereign's Might. At a time of danger, I'll immediately use it." Linley sent mentally.

Two drops of Sovereign's Might. One was held by the original body within the Coiling Dragon ring, while the other had been shifted into Linley's divine wind clone's interspatial ring. If the situation suddenly changed, Linley would immediately use his Sovereign's Might!

"Haha, I haven't even killed you, but you are already so frightened that you sent out your divine clone?" Boslo laughed loudly.

The laughter echoed like thunder in the air above Miluo Island.

"Enough bullshit!" The cold voice burst forth from Linley's lips. Boslo was slightly startled, and then his face grew solemn as well. With a flip of his hand, he retrieved a pitch black long blade that was two meters long.

Immediately…

The tens of thousands of surrounding Highgods and the countless Deity spectators on the ground all went silent, expectantly waiting for this astonishing battle to begin.

"I didn't expect that this sort of battle would occur at Miluo Island." A black haired man carrying a warblade on his back appeared within the ground. Raising his head, he stared at the battle. This was Lomio Bornesen whose fame had become widespread throughout Miluo Island.

Lomio narrowed his eyes, staring at the two men who were about to battle as closely as a viper.

The battle that was being watched by countless people was about to begin!

“Rumble…” That explosive red-robed man, Boslo, wielded his long blade. His speed reached the limit, and because he was too fast, the world itself began to rumble and thunder. In an instant, Boslo appeared high in the air.

And then, Boslo’s form tightened!

Silently, soundlessly, Boslo charged down from up above with his long blade, chopping down viciously towards Linley. But the strange thing was…this blade actually didn’t make any sound at all, and it didn’t cause any spatial vibrations at all.

It looked as though it was a very ordinary blade blow.

“Eh?” Watching from below, Lomio’s eyes suddenly lit up. “To have trained to such a level in the Way of Destruction…Miluo Island really is a place of crouching tigers and hidden dragons!” But Lomio discovered that Linley still just stood there, not seeming to care at all.

Lomio was surprised.

Even he, in the face of that saber blow, wouldn’t dare to be so casual.

“Formidable.” A sigh of praise escaped Linley’s lips, but right afterwards…

As Boslo slashed down in a perfect arc, while he was still two hundred meters or so away from Linley, his body suddenly, bizarrely quivered, then was pushed back by several meters. Instantly, the stance of his downwards chopping blow was broken.

“What sort of power is this?” Boslo was astonished. Just now, he clearly could sense a terrifying repulsive power acting on his body. Even at his level of power, when caught off-guard, he couldn’t help but retreat.

Even Bakwill and the others, watching at a distance, were astonished.

“Father, that man’s Gravitational Space is very bizarre. Not only can it pull

downwards, it can also draw inwards or repulse outwards." Sequeira immediately explained to his father through divine sense. Bakwill couldn't help but stare at Linley in amazement. "A Gravitational Space that can reach such a level?"

He didn't dare believe it!

"Haha…" Boslo let out a loud, gravelly laugh, which sounded like the bursting waters of a flood. His flashing golden eyes stared at Linley. "I underestimated you."

Boslo wielded his saber with both hands, forcibly resisting the repulsive force as he charged towards Linley.

Linley just stood there quietly.

"Die." Boslo swung down violently with full force. Wherever his warblade passed by, space itself was chopped open by the sharp blade, with a large crack easily being created. That enormous long blade came straight down towards Linley's head.

Before the long blade arrived, the spatial tremors that it had caused had reached Linley.

"This is the moment!" Linley's eyes suddenly widened viciously.

The repulsive force immediately transformed into a downwards gravitational force!

Boslo felt that he instantly seemed to have had a trillion-kilogram mountain crush down on his body. This sudden gravitational pull caused all of his movements to change. When experts exchanged blows, a sudden change like this had a tremendous impact.

Boslo, caught completely off-guarded, suddenly sank down. Boslo had been chopping down at Linley, but he was now below Linley. How could he possibly hit Linley?

“Hmph!” A cold voice rang out.

An azure-golden light flashed. Linley’s right leg struck out like a blade towards Boslo’s head, with his Dragonformed body containing such boundless physical strength that this kick actually caused space to crack and rumble.

Boslo was an expert as well. He immediately changed his downwards swing to an upwards block, and wherever the blade of his saber passed, space was parted like the waters of the sea.

“Bang!”

Linley’s right leg slammed viciously onto the blade, but the weird thing was, the power of the blow actually passed through the warblade and into Boslo’s body. Boslo’s entire body twitched momentarily, and at almost the same moment, Linley’s draconic tail also lashed viciously against Boslo’s body.

Boslo had been impacted by the Gravitational Space to begin with and was being impacted by an astonishing downwards gravitational force. Now that he had been successively hit by Linley’s kick and also struck by Linley’s vicious tail.

“Bang!” The earth trembled as Boslo smashed directly into the surface of the other, an enormous, deep crevice appearing on the ground.

The tens of thousands of island warriors and the countless spectators on Miluo Island were all stunned.

He actually had dared to use his leg to kick down towards Boslo’s warblade? And had even knocked Boslo into the ground?

“How hard is his leg?!”

This was what countless people were wondering.

“Swoosh!” Boslo emerged from the ground and flew out at high speed, his face filled with disbelief. At this moment, a voice rang out in his mind. “Boslo, what is going on?”

“Milord, his strength is too powerful. I’ve never encountered a person whose strength was so great!” Boslo sent back.

His physical strength was indeed vast!

Just now, when Linley’s leg had smashed against Boslo’s warblade, Boslo had felt as though an enormous mountain that had existed for ten million years had slammed onto his body. The strength of this power was indescribable!

“Milord, just now, my attack…he wasn’t injured?” Boslo asked. As he was smashed into the ground, he hadn’t had a chance to notice.

“You only broke a few of his draconic scales. You didn’t injure him much.” Bakwill said.

“My blade attack contained a soul attack as well. He didn’t feel anything?” Boslo asked hurriedly. Although he was more proficient in material attacks, his soul attacks weren’t weak either. Anyone who didn’t have a soul-protecting divine artifact would find it hard to resist.

“His soul defense has to be excellent. I haven’t noticed any change in him.” Bakwill was beginning to worry.

The mysterious expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan in front of him seemed to be rather too powerful.

“How dangerous. Fortunately, my soul-protecting Sovereign artifact ablated ninety percent of the attack power.” Linley was frightened as well. Just now, although the material attack component of that blade chop was powerful, it was only able to shatter his draconic scales and give him a flesh wound.

But the soul attack embodied within the blade had struck like a thunderbolt against that translucent membrane.

Upon smashing into the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, of course it shattered. After the first blow, 60% – 70% of the power was dispersed, and then the remaining force spread throughout the translucent membrane and discovered the flaw in the membrane. The 'bandage' over the flaw was now quite strong, and an enormous amount of force was needed to break through it.

The remaining bit of energy, Linley was able to resist with his own soul power.

"This person is still more proficient in physical attacks. If I were to encounter someone who was an expert in soul attacks…" Linley, just now, had already gripped the drop of Sovereign's Might into his hand, prepared to use it at any moment.

Bakwill and the three red-robed elders were all hesitating. This Linley was truly unfathomable to them. Even a Seven Star Fiend like Boslo seemed to be at a disadvantage.

But what they didn't know was that even a Six Star Fiend, if proficient in soul attacks, would be enough to deal with Linley.

Unfortunately, they didn't know any details regarding Linley.

After all, they all believed that Linley was hiding his aura.

"His ability at hiding his soul aura is at such a level…how could his soul attacks possibly be weak?" Bakwill and the others all came to this conclusion, which is why they had sent Boslo, who had the strongest material attacks in their group.

"Father." Sequeira said softly.

“F*ck off. Go to one side.” Bakwill growled.

Bakwill was frustrated, but Linley was also frustrated. Linley knew his own power. His body was very tough and so he could frighten the opponents, but if they were to truly battle, he would absolutely have to use up his Sovereign’s Might.

Linley immediately flew over towards Bakwill.

“What are you doing!” Bakwill immediately used his divine sense to shout. Bakwill and the three red-robed elders all grew guarded, staring at Linley. It was as though if he said a single word wrong, they would immediately attack.

“That Lord Linley is flying over. Can it be that he wants to fight them, one on four?”

The countless spectators on Miluo Island who were watching with their heads raised were all staring at this sight, and Lomio was watching quietly as well.

Linley continued to fly. Roughly at a distance of three hundred meters from Bakwill, Linley came to a halt. Seeing Linley halt, Bakwill and the others calmed down slightly as well.

“How could I be here to cause you trouble? You just don’t know…that at a long distance, my divine sense isn’t long enough to reach you!” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. He was only a God. Generally speaking, the divine sense of a God was only a hundred meters.

Although he had refined a large number of amethysts and his soul had grown to the limits of power for a God and was unable to absorb any more, his divine sense was still limited to three or four hundred meters or so. Highgods, however, could generally speak with divine sense to a thousand meters.

Only by drawing closer was he able to speak with divine sense!

“I am Linley!” Linley sent through divine sense to Bakwill.

“Bakwill.” Bakwill responded. “Linley, your friends are all surrounded. As long as I give the order, tens of thousands of Highgods will join forces and attack. Your friends will all die. Given your power, you should know the true power of our Bagshaw clan. If we really start to claw at each other’s faces and go all out, even if you are an Asura, our Bagshaw clan will still be able to kill you.”

The experts of the Bagshaw clan were more numerous than just the few of them present.

“I understand. My power has only been partially revealed as well.” Linley sent back through divine sense, while at the same time, Linley stretched out his right hand. In his right hand, a sparkling blue drop of water appeared!

This blue drop of water was giving off a faint yet awe-inspiring aura of power.

The faces of Bakwill and the three red-robed elders immediately changed greatly. “Water-type Sovereign’s Might!”

“I don’t want for us to rip at each other’s faces and go all out. You should know that given my power, if I use this drop of Sovereign’s Might…what the results will be!” Linley sent through divine sense.

Bakwill’s facial muscles twitched, and then he laughed coldly.

Bakwill flipped his own hand, and a drop of black liquid appeared. Linley could sense the terrifying energy contained within that black drop of liquid. It was a power on the same level of his blue drop of water, only what it emanated was the aura of Destruction.

“Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might?” Linley was shocked as well.

“Your Four Divine Beast’s clan has Sovereign’s Might. Did you think my

Bagshaw clan doesn't?" Bagshaw sent through divine sense. "For you to have a drop of water-type Sovereign's Might means that your position in the Four Divine Beasts clan must be quite high."

It was normal for Bakwill, as the leader of the clan, to be carrying a drop of Sovereign's Might.

The top ten ancient clans of the Infernal Realm, such as the Bagshaw clan, all possessed astonishing power of their own!

"You killed so many of my men. Although they were minor figures, you still besmirched the face of my Bagshaw clan. I'll give you two paths to choose from! The first path is the path where we go all out against each other and engage in a great battle. At worst, my Bagshaw clan will lose a number of experts, but we will still kill you. I wager your Four Divine Beasts clan won't dare to come to my Miluo Island to avenge you!" Bakwill was absolutely confident.

Linley's face didn't change. He continued to listen.

"The second path is, my Bagshaw clan can give you face and forget about those minor figures you killed. However, you must serve my Bagshaw clan and assume the position of a red-robed elder. You must serve the Bagshaw clan without compensation for ten thousand years as a form of apology. In this way, this matter will be at an end."

"Pick a path!" Bakwill stared at Linley.

Chapter 25 – Red-Robed Elder

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 25, Red-Robed Elder

Which path to choose?

Linley's forehead creased slightly.

Neither of these two paths were 'good' paths. The first went without saying; for the Bagshaw clan to be able to keep Miluo Island erect in the Infernal Realm for countless years meant that this ancient clan's roots and foundation of power definitely exceeded his imagination. Killing Linley wouldn't be too hard!

The second path, be a red-robed elder for ten thousand years?

For an ordinary expert, ten thousand years wasn't much. But to him, it was too long a period of time. From birth until now, he hadn't even lived a thousand years.

"Linley, you haven't made up your mind yet?" Bakwill was growing rather angry. He believed that the conditions he had offered for the second path were already quite good; it was just a short ten thousand years. For ultimate experts, they might spend ten thousand years in a single training session.

"Ten thousand years is too long. I have to go to the Bloodridge Continent on business." Linley sent back through divine sense.

Bakwill's face instantly became all smiles.

Ten thousand years. A hundred years. To experts on the level of Bakwill, there wasn't much difference. If he truly had wanted to punish Linley, he wouldn't say ten thousand years; he would say a hundred million years! After all, to ultimate experts like them, a hundred years or ten thousand years really wasn't a long period of time.

“That’s easy to negotiate. Linley, since you are willing to become my clan’s red-robed elder, my Bagshaw clan won’t go too far either. How about this. No matter what, you still have to show your sincerity in apologizing. Let’s just say a hundred years then.” Bakwill said.

Actually, Bakwill didn’t want to waste his Sovereign’s Might either, nor did he want to lose his clan’s experts. If he could avoid battle, he would. As long as Linley was willing to give his clan face, it would be enough.

But of course, this was also because Linley’s ‘power’ was too great.

If it had been another person, even another Seven Star Fiend who didn’t have Sovereign’s Might, Bakwill most likely would have ordered them to be killed already.

“There’s nothing I can do. This is the only choice.” Linley understood as well.

Although he had two drops of Sovereign’s Might, the Bagshaw clan had Sovereign’s Might as well. If they really did claw at each other’s faces and battle wildly, using up those two drops of Sovereign’s Might was a small matter, but whether or not he would be able to safely allow Delia and Bebe and the others to leave was another, greater matter.

Right now, both sides were taking a step back.

He might as well stay a hundred years. By doing so, not only would he save two drops of Sovereign’s Might, he would also protect Delia and the others.

“I accept.” Linley nodded.

Bakwill instantly laughed.

“Linley, follow us, then.” Bakwill sent through divine sense.

Linley nodded, then sent mentally to Bebe and Delia, “Bebe, Delia,

Olivier…all of you, follow me." Although Bebe and Delia were full of questions, they still flew over.

"Go back!" Bakwill suddenly said in a clear voice.

And then, Bakwill, the three red-robed elders, Sequeira, Linley, and the others all flew directly towards the western part of the island, with the hundred black armored warriors following. As for those tens of thousands of island guards covering the skies, they were all completely lost.

Not just them. The countless spectators watching the battle with heads raised on Miluo Island were puzzled as well. Why did that lord leave with the people of the Bagshaw clan?

"What just happened?"

"Moments ago, they were battling mightily. Why is it that the Draconian expert left with the people of Miluo Island?"

"Isn't it obvious that it's because he fears the people of Miluo Island? Over countless years, there's been no one who dares to resist Miluo Island."

"I disagree. Most likely, that Draconian lord was concerned about his friends."

The countless outsiders of the entire Miluo Island were all chatting about this battle, either discussing Linley's power or guessing at why Linley had left with them. However, without question, everyone agreed…

That Draconian was very powerful.

He was able to kick a red-robed expert flying and control a large number of Highgods like toys in the palm of his hand.

"Experts are as common as the clouds. It seems as though I should accept the invitation of the Bagshaw clan. Let's take a look and see…what sort of experts the Bagshaw clan has!" Lomio Bornesen raised his head, watching

Linley and the others disappear into the western horizons.

And then, he calmly turned and vanished into the crowds, while the people around him continued to chat excitedly.

While flying towards the western part of the island and towards the residential area of the Bagshaw clan, Olivier, O'Brien, and Cesar all used their divine sense to query Linley. They had bellies full of questions.

"Linley, what did you promise that Bagshaw clan?" Cesar hurriedly asked. His heart was filled with guilt. This was all because of him.

"Boss, what does that Bagshaw clan want us to do?" Bebe queried.

"Linley, are you a Highgod or a God?" O'Brien asked.

The repeated questions from multiple people caused Linley to momentarily not know how to respond.

"My power, I won't explain for now. In the future, I'll explain in detail. You can just consider me as a Six Star Fiend." Linley responded to O'Brien. Six Star Fiend only was a level of power.

It didn't mean he had to be a Highgod.

"Bebe, Delia, they just want me to be a red-robed elder for a century. We'd best humbly take a step back." Linley replied.

Only now was Delia relieved. Delia hadn't been in a hurry to go to the Indigo Prefecture to begin with; she only wanted that Linley wouldn't place himself in too much danger. That tremendous battle that was about to break out just now had terrified her so much that her heart was rising into her throat.

Fortunately, the dangerous moment had passed.

The Bagshaw clan took up an exceedingly wide amount of space, with all

sorts of buildings and manors scattered throughout it.

“Linley, from today onward, you can live at the estate.” Bakwill laughed calmly. “We agreed that you would only stay for a hundred years. It’s just a hundred short years. There’s no need for you to make a special oath.”

With a wave of his hand, Bakwill brought out a set of long red robes and a green insignia.

“This is the uniform for red-robed elders. The defensive power of this uniform is equivalent to a Highgod divine artifact. This insignia is a ‘green Miluo Insignia’. In Miluo Island, when you use this insignia, you can easily summon and mobilize a hundred island guards.” Bakwill smiled as he spoke.

Linley immediately smiled and accepted it.

“Lord Bakwill, don’t worry. Within these hundred years, without your permission, I definitely won’t leave on my own.” Linley said.

Bakwill laughed and nodded. “I trust the words spoken by the descendants of the Four Divine Beast clan.” Bakwill knew very well that large clans like theirs, the Bagshaw clan and the Four Divine Beasts clan, all had Sovereign’s Might and would give them out to clan members of exceedingly high status.

As he saw it, for Linley to be able to acquire a drop of Sovereign’s Might meant that even in the Four Divine Beasts clan, he was most likely an elder-level figure.

The word of someone like Linley was thus worthy of being trusted.

If he had to swear an oath for simply a hundred years, that would actually be laughable.

“Lord Bakwill, normally, what do I need to do?” Linley asked.

“Not much. Only when any major problems occur would we have the red-robed elders go out. For example, today!” Bakwill teased. “But of course, as a red-robed elder, there is a benefit as well. In the future, you can go to the secret area here in the western part of the island for a viewing.”

“The secret area in the western part of the island?”

Linley had heard others speak of this place long ago. It seemed as though the victors of a hundred Arena battles were qualified to go in for a viewing. Linley had wanted to ask more questions regarding this secret area, but that Bakwill just laughed and said, “Linley, I’ll leave now. If there’s anything you need, feel free to come find me.”

Linley didn’t feel comfortable chasing after him with questions.

Thus, he simply watched as Bakwill, Sequeira, and the three red-robed elders left.

……

“Creaaaak.” The door shut.

In the main hall, only Bakwill and Sequeira remained.

“Father, you’re going to just let Linley live a hundred comfortable years? This is letting him off too easy. How many of our men has he killed!” The rage which Sequeira had suppressed for so long was finally boiling out.

“Hmph!”

A single cold snort, but it struck against Sequeira’s heart like a hammer. Sequeira’s words instantly came to a halt.

Bakwill turned and gave Sequeira a cold stare. “This matter, if we pursue it to its roots, was caused by that slut and Cesar. She’s just a woman. Can it be that for the sake of your slut, my Bagshaw clan would lose several Seven Star Fiend-level experts and one or two drops of Sovereign’s Might, while

at the same time offending the Four Divine Beasts clan? Is it worth it?"

Killing Linley? They could do that.

But the price was far too high.

"It's just the Four Divine Beasts clan." Sequeira muttered.

"Hmph. An enormous dragon, even after starving to death, is still enormous. Although compared to ten thousand years ago, the Four Divine Beasts clan has changed dramatically and their power has dropped, however…the Four Divine Beasts clan had previously dominated the Infernal Realm for countless years. Their roots are extremely deep."

Bakwill growled, "Our Bagshaw clan is more powerful than the Four Divine Beasts clan, but only by a bit."

Sequeira no longer dared to say a word.

West Miluo Island. The Bagshaw clan's residential area. Linley's estate.

"Elder!" At the estate, two servants respectfully saluted Linley.

Linley was currently dressed in a long red robe. All roving island guards, upon seeing Linley, would be extremely respectful. Linley gave orders to a nearby island guard. "Go to room 306 of the island warriors' residential area. Bring Tarosse and Dylin over."

"Yes, elder." An island guard said respectfully.

Linley turned and returned to his estate. At present, Delia, Bebe, Cesar, O'Brien, and Olivier were all living here. In three steps, Linley reached the rear gardens.

O'Brien, Olivier, and Bebe were chatting idly, but Cesar was in the corner of the garden, sitting there foolishly, thinking who-knows-what.

“Linley.” Delia walked towards Linley from behind.

Delia had also noticed the distant Cesar. Sighing, she said, “Most likely Cesar is still thinking about Cecily.”

“Right.” Linley nodded slightly. Most likely, Cesar would need a long period of time before he could escape this ‘valley’.

“Hey, Boss, you came.” Bebe immediately rushed over and intentionally said a few words of congratulations. “Boss, I must say, that red elder’s robe you are wearing looks quite fetching and handsome.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Linley’s conversation attracted the notice of Cesar, who upon seeing Linley, immediately ran over, his eyes lighting up. He hurriedly said, “Linley, I want to ask something of you.”

“Cesar, if there’s anything you need, just say it.” Linley had always felt gratitude towards Cesar in his heart.

Cesar said nervously, “For Sequeira to suddenly attack me…I’m worried that possibly some sort of major conflict sprang up between him and Lily. Otherwise, how could Sequeira have been in such a towering rage and have come for me? After all, the day before her wedding, Lily and I officially broke up. Ever since that day, we never met again, not once.”

Up till now, Cesar still didn’t know that Cecily had become pregnant with his child.

“Linley, I want to ask you to go investigate and see what is going on with Lily.” Cesar begged.

Linley nodded. “Alright. Don’t worry. I will go do a careful investigation.”

Linley knew a bit about Cesar and Cecily’s affairs.

The two of them, Cesar and Cecily, were actually truly in love with each other. Unfortunately, young master Sequeira had taken a fancy for Cecily. The Gaylord clan had thus immediately requested Cecily to marry Sequeira, so as to win the favor of the Bagshaw clan!

How could Cecily disobey the orders of her clan?

Thus, in great pain, she had to separate from Cesar. On the day before her wedding, she hardened her heart and told Cesar that they would never meet again.

“Alas, Cesar is really unfortunate.” Linley sighed to himself. “Miluo Island supposedly has five clans, but in reality, the master is the Bagshaw clan. The other four clans are just their subordinates.”

He could completely imagine how, in order to ingratiate themselves to Sequeira, the Gaylord clan had forcibly required Cecily to do what had to be done.

Beneath the ground. In a darkened tunnel.

Sequeira was walking with a cold look on his face. On each side of this tunnel were jail cells, each of them quite unusual. They were specially made to detain Deities. This corridor had a black armored warrior on guard every ten meters.

“Slut!”

Whenever Sequeira thought about how his wife Cecily had someone else’s child in her stomach, and had so excitedly run over to tell him about it, he felt humiliated. And today, he hadn’t been able to kill Cesar because Linley had appeared.

“Linley! He shows up everywhere.” Sequeira truly detested Linley. He had first shown up in the Free Castle, and now here as well.

“Time to deal with it.” Sequeira took a deep breath. Cecily was the shame

of his clan. She definitely wouldn't be permitted to continue living. Once this got out, the Bagshaw clan would become a laughingstock.

He had come here…to kill Cecily. Not because he wanted to, but because his father had ordered it!

After arriving at a cell.

"Open it." Sequeira said calmly, while at the same time showing his blood-colored Miluo Insignia.

In the dark, damp jail cell, Cecily was leaning against a wall, her long hair somewhat in disarray. Hearing the cell door open, Cecily couldn't help but turn to look. Seeing that it was Sequeira, her face changed slightly.

"You…you killed Cesar?" Cecily said in a low voice.

"Yes. I killed him." Sequeira said coldly, as he emotionlessly stared at Cecily, waiting expectantly for that look of despair and agony on Cecily's face.

He got what he wanted!

Cecily's face instantly turned white. Soundlessly, her tears came dripping down. In the short few hours she had been imprisoned here, she had been worried about Cesar. She knew that Sequeira would go seek revenge, and she also knew that Cesar wouldn't be able to stop him.

But…she had still held onto hope. Upon hearing Sequeira's words, though, she lost all hope.

"Cesar…."

Cecily's mind returned to those happy scenes, those days she had spent with Cesar. She had been so happy, so free, without any restrictions from the clan. She could live as she pleased. But…

Sequeira had taken a fancy to her.

And thus, her destiny had been changed. In the face of her clan, she had lowered her head. Even after being married into the Bagshaw clan, she had always forced herself to remain smiling and happy.

“Sequeira!” Cecily suddenly raised her head to stare at Sequeira, her eyes like death. “If it wasn’t because you are a member of the Bagshaw clan, you would be less than dogshit. Do you know? Whenever I slept with you, I pretended you were Cesar!”

Sequeira’s face turned red and he roared angrily, “SLUT!” With that explosive shout, he immediately launched a heavy, furious slap, smashing down on Cecily’s head. “Bang!” Cecily’s entire body trembled, and then she slowly slid to the ground. To the very end, Cecily had a strange smile on her face.

She had said those words because she wanted to die.

Death would be an escape.

She would no longer have to continue to force herself to be happy every day. Wouldn’t have to force herself not to think of Cesar every day.

“Slut, slut, SLUT!!!!” After having killed Cecily, Sequeira’s rage was still endless. In his mind, those final words echoed over and over.

“Do you know? Whenever I slept with you, I pretended you were Cesar!”

Chapter 26 – Scryer Records

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 26, Scryer Records

Since he had promised Cesar, Linley naturally began to ponder as to what method he could use to investigate Cecily's situation. However, despite the fact that he was now a red-robed elder, he didn't have the authority to arbitrarily enter the residence of the clan leader. After having ordered people to bring Dylin and Tarosse over here, Linley began to investigate and see what he could find.

"Magnolia [Ma'ge'nuo'li'ya]!"

Linley quickly strode forward to greet her.

Magnolia. A red-robed elder of the Bagshaw clan. She was the one and only female red-robed elder of the three which Bakwill had brought during the previous battle. Magnolia turned, her violet eyes carrying a hint of a smile. "Mr. Linley, is there something you need?"

"Magnolia, there's something I want to ask about." Linley said hurriedly.

"Go ahead." Magnolia was very courteous.

"Last time, Sequeira was infuriated and wanted to kill my friend. It should have been for the sake of his wife. Do you know the current situation of young master Sequeira's wife?" Linley asked directly.

Magnolia furrowed her forehead, then shook her head. "I'm not sure about that. Sequeira and his wife both live in the clan leader's estate. I normally find it hard to go in there as well. I imagine that those who know of this situation are most likely the servants and the housekeepers of the clan leader's estate. Just those few."

Linley frowned.

The clan leader's estate was the most tightly restricted area in the entire Bagshaw clan. The people who lived there consisted of Bakwill as well as his two sons. Those servants who lived there normally never came out.

To investigate would be very hard.

"If you have the chance, you can just go ask Sequeira or the lord clan leader directly." Magnolia advised.

"Alright. Got it. Sorry for bothering you."

Linley immediately left.

Ask Sequeira or Bakwill? Of course Linley knew that was the best way! But Linley also knew that upon asking, Sequeira or Bakwill would definitely know that he was asking on behalf of Cesar, at which point, what would Sequeira and the others think?

At the very least, they would feel quite uncomfortable.

Unless absolutely necessarily, Linley didn't want to act to make others irritated.

After walking around for a bit, he asked quite a few people with high status, but he still didn't know anything about Cecily's current situation. Disappointed, Linley thus could only first return home. By the time he returned to his own estate, Linley saw Cesar at the gates.

"Linley, how did it go?" Cesar hurriedly asked.

"Cecily lives in the clan leader's estate. Even I'm not allowed to just barge in there. Don't be hasty. I'll ask again in a while." Linley shook his head regretfully.

A look of disappointment flashed past Cesar's eyes, and then he forced out a smile. "I'm in no rush, in no rush!"

Linley sighed in his heart.

“Right. Tarosse and Dylin are here.” Cesar said. “They came?” Linley immediately walked inside, and the nearby Cesar hurriedly said, “Linley, you can’t blame them. You know how bad the situation was. They didn’t want to sacrifice themselves for nothing.”

“I understand.”

In his heart, Linley didn’t blame Tarosse or Dylin too much.

Only, Linley was puzzled. Based on his understanding of Tarosse and Dylin, when that sort of dangerous situation had occurred, those two should have been the first to stand forward. But both of them actually retreated, naturally causing Linley to be filled with disbelief.

Although there was nothing wrong with their decision, from an emotional standpoint, it was still rather hard to accept.

Walking past the corridor, he passed through the courtyard door. Linley saw Dylin and Tarosse, currently seated.

“Boss!” Bebe stood up, then muttered disdainfully from the corner of his lips, “These two came.”

Linley just glanced at Bebe. Although he wasn’t happy, there was no need for them to stomp on their face like that.

Dylin and Tarosse both immediately stood up as well. The two of them were rather embarrassed. But Linley laughed as he walked over. “Dylin, Tarosse, sit and chat, sit!” Linley himself was the first to sit.

Dylin and Tarosse exchanged a glance.

“Linley, about today, it was our fault.” Dylin took the lead to speak. Shaking his head, he said helplessly, “I’m sorry. At the time, we both

thought that resistance just meant death, and so…" Tarosse nodded as well.

When a person felt guilty, they would be timid when speaking. This was how Dylin and Tarosse were right now.

"I don't blame you." Linley laughed. "After all, in the end, Cesar's still fine." Linley could tell that Dylin and Tarosse both felt ashamed. Since they were capable of feeling shame, there was no need for him to say anything else.

Tarosse and Dylin both felt relieved.

"Linley!" Tarosse couldn't help but feel puzzled, and so he asked, "I heard that you, by yourself, killed many island guards, and that you even defeated a red-robed elder?"

"That was luck." Linley said.

Tarosse and Dylin looked at each other. They lived here on Miluo Island, and knew how powerful the red-robed elders were. Each red-robed elder had the power of a Seven Star Fiend! But this God in front of them, Linley, had actually defeated a Seven Star Fiend!

Back when they were in the Yulan continent, Linley was only just a Demigod.

"Linley, you…are you a God or a Highgod?" Dylin asked again.

It wasn't Dylin's fault for asking this. Linley's performance had simply been too astonishing.

"No need to discuss this. You can just consider me a Six Star Fiend." Linley shook his head. "Tarosse, Dylin, I want to ask you about something. I hear that the victors of a hundred battles in the Arena can enter the secret area in the western part of the island. Do you know what is inside the secret area?"

The red-robed elders were qualified to enter the secret area of Miluo Island

as well.

What exactly did the secret area of Miluo Island have? Linley was puzzled as well.

“The secret area?” Dylin and Tarosse were both surprised and puzzled.

“Ask Tarosse. I’m not sure.” Dylin shook his head.

“Weren’t you a victor of a hundred battles in the God Arena?” Linley didn’t understand. Dylin explained, “After entering the secret area, you also need to undergo a test within the secret area. Only if you are considered to be qualified will you be allowed to go in for a viewing. I was refused outside the door.”

Linley was startled.

There was an inspection for whether or not a person was qualified?

Linley turned to look at Tarosse, who sighed emotionally and said, “The only thing I was able to see in the secret area was a series of scryer recordings!”

“Scryer recordings?” Linley was astonished.

Linley was very familiar with scryer recordings. They were created from a simple ‘Floating Scryer’ technique, a very simple water-style spell. That year, before Linley had broken up with Alice, Linley had purchased two memory crystals that had been filled with scryer recordings. He had used the memory crystals and filled them with many memories to give to Alice.

Only, after they broke up, Linley had smashed the memory crystals.

“Scryer recordings?” Linley didn’t understand.

These scryer recordings could record many memories, but why would the Bagshaw clan treat them as a treasure? What exactly did these images

record?

“Right. Scryer recordings.” Tarosse said with a sigh. “Recordings of experts who battled each other. Every single scryer recording has recorded some truly astonishing duels, with the experts who were in the duels at least of the Seven Star Fiend level.”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

For many people, viewing a duel between true experts was of great benefit in helping them to make breakthroughs and gain insights. Normally speaking, it was extremely rare to see a pair of Seven Star Fiends do battle.

“How many duel recordings are there?” Linley was eager as well.

“Very many, at least thousands.” Tarosse sighed in praise. “There are so many experts in those recordings. Also, there are explanations and introductions to each of those ultimate experts, including the Sixwing Fiend, the Bloodviolet Fiend, the Snow Fiend, the Silvermoon Fiend…it truly was astonishing.”

Linley’s eyes were shining as he listened.

So many Seven Star Fiend duels?

“However, my strength was insufficient. I was only allowed to go to the second secret room to do a viewing.” Tarosse shook his head. “In the second viewing room, the vast majority were Seven Star Fiend level battles, not just here in the Infernal Realm, but also including experts who are in the other Higher Planes as well as the Divine Planes.”

“I hear that the scryer recordings in the first room are truly exciting.” Tarosse’s eyes were shining. “There are recordings of Asura-level experts, and supposedly, there are recordings of inter-planar battles. And even… scryer recordings of a Sovereign showing his might!”

Linley sucked in a cold breath.

Recordings of a Sovereign showing his might?

“However, that’s all in the first room.” Tarosse shook his head. “Generally speaking, only red-robed elders or Seven Star Fiends are permitted to go view them. In addition, that’s only at the invitation of the Bagshaw clan.”

Linley remembered quite clearly how Bakwill had said that as a red-robed elder, Linley was qualified to enter the western part of the island’s hidden area.

“The recordings of so many experts engaging in battle is a priceless treasure! Asura-level battles, inter-planar battles…and even Sovereigns attacking?” Linley’s heart was blazing. What did those high and mighty Sovereigns look like when they attacked?

He had been a red-robed elder for two days now. During these two days, Linley hadn’t found any hint of information regarding Cecily.

“Boss, the secret area actually has so many exciting recordings. Can I go take a look as well?” Ever since they had learned information two days ago regarding the secret area, Bebe had also been desirous of going to take a look.

“I don’t have that authority. That’s the treasure of the Bagshaw clan.” Linley then frowned. “Only, I rather don’t understand. The scryer recordings of ultimate experts battling against each other definitely can be considered a priceless treasure.”

“But why is the Bagshaw clan willing to open it up to the public and allow the red-robed elders and the victors of a hundred battles to go for a viewing?” Linley was puzzled.

Logically speaking, these recordings should be kept secret.

Bebe rubbed his nose, then muttered, “Maybe it’s because the Bagshaw clan is confident in their strength, and so intentionally put on a show of being

generous, so as to attract more experts to go to the Arena to fight. That is their lure." Linley nodded slightly as well.

Suddenly, footsteps rang out from behind them. It was a black-armored guard.

"Elder." The black-armored guard bowed respectfully. "Per the orders of the clan leader, tomorrow morning, please gather tomorrow morning at Suncutter Peak in the western part of the island. At that time, you will meet with victors of a hundred battles in the Arena and go into the secret area together!"

Linley's eyesbrows lifted up.

"Haha, it came just as we were discussing it." Bebe laughed loudly. "Hey, can I go too?"

The black-robed guard couldn't help but be startled, and then he immediately, courteously withdrew.

"No sincerity."

Bebe snorted. He was uncomfortably curious, but Linley still wasn't able to take him in to do a viewing as well. "Enough, don't be impatient. In the future, you'll have a chance to look."

"What are you talking about? Why so happy?" Delia walked in from her room.

"Ha!" Bebe immediately leapt up in excitement. "I was a fool! Victors of a hundred battle are all qualified to go in. Although I'm a God, I can go win a hundred victories." Bebe was uncontrollably excited. "Last time, I won ten victories. I'll continue!"

Miluo Island. Suncutter Peak.

Suncutter Peak was a very ordinary mountain peak, just a thousand meters

tall. Currently, eight people were gathered at the peak, with Linley being the last one to arrive. As Linley arrived and looked at the other seven…

“Three Highgods. Two Gods. Two Demigods.” Linley instantly could tell. Those who were allowed to enter the secret area were all victors of a hundred battles. Thus, even Demigod victors would be allowed in.

“Him.” Linley instantly noticed that person.

A skinny body, a long black robe, and long black hair, with a warblade on his back. It was Lomio Bornesen!

Currently, Lomio Bornesen had seen Linley, and he was staring at him, his eyes shining. “You are Linley, right?” Lomio had accepted the invitation of the Bagshaw clan, and then had asked around for some information regarding that battle. He had also learned Linley’s name.

Linley felt rather astonished. Lomio actually recognized him?

“I saw the battle between you and that red-robed elder the other day.” Lomio’s face, normally so hard that it looked as though it had been carved out by a knife, was currently revealing a hint of a smile. His gaze was akin to one who was staring at a precious item. Firmly and forcefully, he said, “Your power is very great! Once we leave from the secret area, I hope we can have a competition.

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

This Lomio was utterly insane. Whenever he met an expert, he wanted to fight them.

“Everyone, you are all here?” A familiar figure walked over. His tall form, his short red hair…it was the young master of the Bagshaw clan, Sequeira.

Sequeira glanced at the eight people, his gaze pausing momentarily on Linley, then said loudly, “Alright. I’ll lead all of you to the hidden area, everone. Just stay behind me, and remember, on the way over, don’t make

trouble. If you are killed by the guards in the hidden area, don't blame others."

"Sequeira." Linley suddenly said.

Sequeira frowned slightly. He didn't have any good feelings towards Linley at all, but he still opened his mouth. "Elder Linley, what is it?"

"I'd like to ask, how is Cecily doing?" Linley asked directly. This question caused Sequeira to be quite embarrassed, but Linley didn't have any other choices. After all, he couldn't enter the clan leader's estate.

For Cesar's sake, he had to ask without consideration for his face.

"You ask me about this?" Sequeira's face was frozen into a frown. He could guess that Linley definitely was asking on behalf of Cesar. Once again, Cecily's dying words echoed in Sequeira's mind.

"When I slept with you, I pretended you were Cesar!"

Sequeira's rage began to rise, and he couldn't help but let out a cold sneer. Knowing Linley's power, however, he knew that attacking meant humiliating himself.

"She…left Miluo Island." Sequeira said coldly.

Chapter 27 – Secret Area

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 27, Secret Area

“Left Miluo Island?” Linley was suspicious as soon as he heard this.

Only a few days had passed since that last great battle, and Cecily had married Sequeira not too long ago. How could she suddenly leave Miluo Island? Even if she had truly left, others should have seen it. But in the past few days, he had asked many people. None of them knew anything about Cecily, nor had they seen her.

“He is lying!” Linley decided.

Why was he lying? Instantly, Linley had a terrible premonition in his mind.

“Everyone, follow me. We’re heading out.” Sequeira’s face was extremely sinister looking right now. After speaking, he led the group of people deep towards Suncutter Peak. Although Linley felt suspicious in his heart, he still followed.

Suncutter Peak. Linley’s group of nine floated into it.

Moments later, Linley’s group arrived at a deep cavernous tunnel, without a hint of sunlight within it. Sequeira was the first to enter the deep tunnel, while Linley’s group of eight hesitated slightly, then entered as well.

“Young master Sequeira.” A Highgod said through divine sense. “Where exactly is this secret area? This tunnel seems to be bottomlessly deep.”

“Just follow me.” Sequeira said calmly.

Linley and Lomio followed quite calmly. What was there to fear? This Sequeira was right in front of them, and either of them could easily kill Sequeira. They didn’t need to fear Sequeira playing any tricks at all. In

addition, Linley had learned from Tarosse that the hidden area contained scryer recordings.

“Linley.” A voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley turned to glance at the nearby Lomio. Just now, the one who had sent him the mental message was Lomio. Lomio’s lips curved upwards, and he continued to chat through divine sense. “When I saw you fight, I became certain that the Four Divine Beasts clan really lives up to its fame. Might I ask how strong the other three branches of the Four Divine Beasts clan are?”

“Why so many questions?” Linley responded.

In truth, Linley himself knew very little regarding the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“Right. There’s no need to ask. I’ll know once I’ve truly fought with them. After we exit this secret area, let’s first have a little spar. Afterwards, I’ll head to the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent to seek out the experts of the other three branches of your Four Divine Beasts clan and compete with them.” Although Lomio’s face was calm, his eyes were shining.

Lomio was very eager to battle against other experts.

Linley couldn’t help but feel a headache coming.

As soon as he left the secret room, he would have to compete against this madman? It wasn’t that Linley didn’t like to compete, it was that Linley knew his own strength and weakness. It wasn’t so bad if he ran into an expert who specialized in material attacks, but if he encountered an expert in soul attacks, it would be terrible.

Linley cursed inwardly, “This guy, ugh. He’s even crazier than that Learmonth was. As soon as he encounters an expert, he wants to challenge them.”

While chatting with Lomio through divine sense, given the speed at which Linley was advancing, they had gone multiple kilometers. The strange thing was, however, that despite having gone down many kilometers into the cavern, there was still no end in sight.

“Given this depth, we should be deep within Miluo Island.” Linley guessed to himself.

Suddenly, Linley discovered that the corridor beneath them was completely filled with water.

“It’s all water down there. Are we still going down?” Someone couldn’t help but ask.

“Just follow me and cut out the chitchat.” Sequeira was feeling very unhappy right now. Linley’s words at Suncutter Peak had made his mood turn terrible Those words which Cecily had said before dying made him feel even more insulted than when he had discovered that Cecily had another person’s son in her womb!

“Drip, drip…”

Linley’s group followed Sequeira into the water, and the eight of them all formed protective coverings around their bodies, easily blocking the water.

“Back then, I should’ve asked Tarosse in detail as to what place this secret area actually is.” Linley felt puzzled. This water-logged passage had cave walls covered with green vegetation. Clearly, this passage had been filled with water for a long, long time.

Suddenly…

The tunnel beneath them became smooth, and at the end of this smooth tunnel, a faint glow could be seen.

“We finally reached the end.” Linley couldn’t help but feel a sense of

celebration. As soon as they exited the tunnel, however, they saw a world of endless, boundless water.

“Eh? The secret area is actually in the middle of the ocean?” Linley couldn’t help but speak out in astonishment.

Sequeira sneered. “Are you puzzled?”

Linley discovered that ever since he asked that question, Sequeira’s face had continuously been ugly to behold, and his temper had turned irritable as well. Linley couldn’t be bothered to reply. Arguing with Sequeira was something that simply wasn’t worth it.

After flying at the bottom of the sea for some time, Linley was stunned.

Off the distance, an enormous black castle that was dozens of kilometers in circumference had been erected at the bottom of the ocean, like a massive monster lying in wait. The amazing thing was, countless, densely clustered figures could be seen around the castle on patrol. The number of people here was extremely high.

“This is the secret area of our western part of the island.” Sequeira said proudly. “The secret area of my Bagshaw clan! You are very lucky to have the chance to come here.”

As he spoke, from the distance, a squad of black armored warriors dressed with black cloaks flew over. Seeing this squad, Linley and the others all felt a sense of shock in their hearts. These ten guards all naturally emanated a baleful aura, and their faces were all expressionless and cold.

“Each of them is an expert.” Linley was incomparably shocked.

Compared to the warriors of Miluo Island, these black armored and black cloaked guards gave off a far more powerful, valiant, remorseless aura. Even Lomio narrowed his eyes, looking carefully at the distant black castle.

“A single clan actually has so many forces!” Linley felt stunned.

He could see, with the naked eye, thousands of people, each of them Highgods, and excellent Highgods at that. They weren't on the same level as the island guards, who were made up of just any Highgods who wanted to join.

"Young master Sequeira." The leader of the squad bowed.

"They all came. Let's go." Sequeira said calmly. The ten black armored guards immediately guided Linley's group towards the black castle. The gates to the black castle were open.

This black castle had existed for unknowable amounts of time, deep at the bottom of the sea.

The strange thing was…

The black castle seemed to have a sort of strange energy. It actually was able to keep the waters of the sea at a distance, making all the sea water unable to get within a kilometer of the black castle. It was as though a translucent barrier was protecting the castle, keeping all the seawater at a distance.

And thus Linley's group suddenly entered a water-less area.

"Hey?" Everyone was astonished, while Lomio's eyes lit up in excitement as well.

Linley turned to carefully look, but he wasn't able to find any special 'barrier'. "There really are all sorts of marvels in the world." As he entered the black castle and saw the many guards within the black castle, Linley was stunned.

"This…is most likely the true power of the Bagshaw clan." Linley said to himself.

Within the black castle. An empty plaza. Linley's group of eight was

waiting here.

“Wait here a while. Later, people will come.” Sequeira said emotionlessly. “You’ll have to be tested to see if you will have the chance to enter the secret area.” After speaking, Sequeira himself turned and left.

His assignment was complete.

“Tested?” Some people were instantly puzzled.

“Wasn’t it said that as long as we can win a hundred victories, we’ll be able to go to the secret area for a viewing? Why is there a test?”

Hearing this discourse, Lomio and Linley both maintained their silence. Linley knew all along that there would be a test, and he stared at the area around him. The buildings around this plaza also had roving patrols of black armored guards, and the entire castle was like a military fort, under extremely tight guard.

Just moments later, the ancient, dark blue gates in front of the plaza that were ten meters tall up rumbled opened.

“Creaaaaaaak.” The opening of the dark blue gates caused a very unpleasant, scraping sound.

Six people walked out from inside the gates, the leader a man with white hair, a white beard, red armor, and a red cloak. The five behind him were all black armored warriors, but they too wore red cloaks.

“Welcome!” The white-haired elder immediately strode forward and laughed clearly, “Welcome to Castle Hendsey [Han’di’sai]! Let me introduce myself. My name is Uriah [You’lai]!”

Castle Hendsey?

A hint of suspicion arose in Linley’s heart.

“Although all victors of a hundred battles in the Arena can come to this secret area,” Uriah laughed, “The scryer recordings within the secret area aren’t just shown to everyone. If you want to view them, you must undergo testing.”

“Scryer recordings? Of what?” Lomio said.

“Battles of Seven Star Fiends. Battles of Asuras. Interplanar wars. Even scryer recordings of a Sovereign showing his might!” Uriah smiled. “This has been accumulated by my Bagshaw clan over countless years!”

As soon as these words came out, everyone’s eyes lit up. Even Lomio’s eyes were shining. Linley sighed to himself; these scryer recordings of experts doing battle was indeed a very alluring prospect.

“Now, all of you come, one at a time, to compete against our people. Based on your performance, I will judge if you are qualified to go in for a viewing.” Uriah glanced at a person next to him, and immediately, a callous bald man wearing black armor and a red cloak strode forward.

Uriah stretched out with his hand, pointing towards one of the Highgod victors. “You first.”

“Fine.” That Highgod who had won a hundred Arena victories chuckled twice, then stepped forward. “If I kill him, don’t blame me.” This Highgod was dressed in a blue robe and had thick eyebrows.

“If you can kill him, feel free to.” Uriah laughed calmly.

Immediately, this blue-robed Highgod and the bald man moved to the center of the plaza. The two faced each other.

“You can start now.” Uriah gave the order.

“Boom!” The blue-robed Highgod instantly transformed into a flash of fiery light that didn’t emit flames, with the scorching heat causing even the air to crackle. And then, the flameless fire-light immediately formed into a fiery

arrowhead, which hovered there in mid-air in the plaza, emanating a heart-shaking power.

“Swoosh!”

The arrow of flame suddenly shot out like a meteor.

“Hmph!” The bald man gave a low snort, his entire body immediately becoming covered by an earthen yellow armor. His enormous fist began to be covered with rippling light, and he astonishingly landed a direct punch towards that fiery missile.

“Bang!” A low, rumbling sound. Even the arena itself trembled.

The rippling light on the fist of that bald man had been shattered, and even his fist had been blown apart. Even the layer of earthen yellow armor on his body was cracked, and he couldn’t help but take several steps back, cracking the ground as he did.

The fiery red missile collapsed as well. That blue-robed Highgod’s face was ashen, but he was still standing there.

“Not bad.” The white-haired Uriah nodded. “You are qualified to enter the second secret room.”

“The second secret room?” The blue-robed Highgod was puzzled.

“Right. The secret area is divided into two rooms; the first room and the second room. The first room has more scryer recordings, and the experts in those recordings are more powerful.” Uriah said calmly.

“Then what must I do to be qualified to enter the first room?” The blue-robed Highgod was rather unwilling to accept this.

“Kill him in one blow.” Uriah pointed towards the bald man.

The blue-robed Highgod instantly gave up.

Hearing this, Linley was stunned. “Can it be that the leader of this castle doesn’t treat life as having any value? He can so casually sacrifice even his own people?”

“You are next.” Uriah pointed to a God.

“Enough of this.” A cold voice rang out. Lomio directly strode forward, looking calmly at Uriah. “Let me go first. Didn’t you say that if I could kill him with one blow, I can enter the first room, right?”

Uriah glanced at Lomio in surprise, then laughed. “You are Lomio, right?”

Lomio nodded calmly.

“You don’t need to be tested.” Uriah shook his head and laughed. “Of the eight of you, you and red-robed elder, Linley, don’t need to be tested. You can go directly to the first room for viewing.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“However, opening the secret room is a very important matter. We have to make a request to the master of the castle, and then find a good time. You can go rest for now. We will soon notify you.” As he spoke, Uriah arranged for people to guide Linley and Lomio away.

As Linley was led away by the black-armored, red-cloaked guard, he now understood.

“It isn’t that the leader of the castle doesn’t care about the lives of his men. It is that when a real expert comes, there’s no need for a test.” Linley was quite eagerly anticipating that moment of viewing those scryer images coming as soon as possible.

The black castle was very large. It had thick, sturdy walls, and a very complicated layout of many corridors.

“Captain Mob [Mo’bu], I’ve been here for nearly a month. Why isn’t his lordship willing to meet me yet?”

“Don’t be in such a hurry. If his lordship wishes to meet you, he will. Otherwise, just wait here.”

Hearing this voice from a corridor up ahead, Linley couldn’t help but frown. “This voice is so familiar!”

In front of Linley were four corridors. Two people headed out from one of the corridors, and one of them was a man who wore a long green robe and had fish scales on his face. He was currently with another man, one dressed in black armor and a red cloak, who the first man was constantly speaking to. And then, the two of them entered another one of the corridors.

“Ganmontin?” Linley’s face was filled with disbelief. “Why is he here?”

This person was the exact same person who had waylaid and attacked Linley’s group in the Starmist Sea, the person who had wanted to offer Olivier to his ‘Lord Commander’. Ganmontin!

Chapter 28 – The Secret

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 28, The Secret

Originally, Ganmontin had wanted to forcibly take Olivier away, but Linley had refused. Thus, Ganmontin and Linley had battled against each other. At that time, Linley had relied upon his Blackstone Space to execute Ganmontin's divine wind clone, but who would've thought that Ganmontin actually had a divine water clone as well?

Ganmontin naturally hated Linley to the core.

Linley still clearly remembered Ganmontin's dying bellow. "You can't kill me. If you kill me, the Lord Commander will definitely kill you!" Ganmontin had, back then, used the so-called 'Lord Commander' to threaten Linley.

"He went to find the Lord Commander? And he is now here…can it be that the Lord Commander is right here?" Linley frowned.

This mysterious seafloor castle…Castle Hendsey. The white-haired elder who had welcomed him had once said, "Opening the secret room was a matter of great importance. We need to request permission from the master of the castle."

"Master of the castle?" Linley pondered. "The people which Uriah had brought were all roughly around the level of Six Star Fiend in power. Then Uriah's power…? The power of the master of the castle…?"

"Ganmontin's so-called. 'Commander'…"

"The master of the castle?"

In that instant, Linley suddenly thought of a possibility.

As soon as he thought of this possibility, Linley only felt a sense of terror fill his mind. His entire body couldn't help but tremble, and his face instantly turned white. "Can it be…"

"That I'm like a lamb who has delivered himself into the mouth of a tiger? That I've come to throw my life away?" Linley pondered.

From the number of experts at Miluo Island and the number of experts on display here at the seafloor Castle Hendsey, Linley could tell that this master of Castle Hendsey was, without a doubt, an ultimate expert who possessed astonishing power!

In the Infernal Realm, a person who had great status had to have an equivalent, matching amount of power. Otherwise, others wouldn't submit to them!

"Eh?" Lomio, who was travelling alongside Linley, naturally noticed that Linley currently seemed rather 'off'. He glanced at Linley, puzzled. What had caused Linley to lose his bearings like this?

Fortunately, the person leading them didn't turn to look at Linley, and didn't know what had happened.

"Milords, once we arrive at the guest houses, we'll be nearly there." The black armored red cloaked warrior laughed as he spoke, his words causing Linley to be startled awake from his pondering. Linley immediately began to adjust his mindset.

After all, the situation hadn't become utterly disastrous yet. Even assuming that the master of the castle was the 'Commander', which he might even be, this person had never met Linley.

"One thing at a time." Linley said to himself.

The seafloor Castle Hendsey was like a small city, filled with intersecting corridors that divided it into many areas. Generally speaking, guests all stayed in one area, which had a number of two-story buildings that were all

built in a similar fashion.

These small buildings were built with a type of rice-yellow stones, and made one feel quite comfortable within the black castle.

“Lord Lomio, you will stay here in room twenty six. Lord Linley, you will stay here in room twenty seven.” The black armored, red cloaked warrior said respectfully. “When the time comes, someone will deliver food to you. As for when you will enter the secret room, please don’t be impatient, milords. When the time comes, there will be people who will come notify you.”

Lomio frowned. “Are we just supposed to wait here indefinitely?”

Linley felt rather uncomfortable as well.

“Milords, don’t worry. Based on our long-established rules, in roughly half a day or so, you’ll be invited to the secret area. At the slowest, it would only take three days.” The guard smiled as he spoke.

“Right.” Lomio nodded calmly.

At most, three days? Lomio wouldn’t mind. But Linley minded!

“You can go now.” Linley stepped back from the guard, feeling rather concerned, because the more time he spent here at Castle Hendsey, the more dangerous it was. After all, Ganmontin was within this castle.”

“Linley, I’ll go to my room for now. If you need anything, you can come find me.” Lomio said, then immediately turned and entered his room, not giving Linley a chance to reply.

Lomio was normally a very arrogant, solitary figure. It was only because he had seen Linley fight and wanted to spar with Linley that he was now so courteous. Otherwise, why would he say so many things to Linley?

But Linley’s mind was preoccupied with Ganmontin, and so he didn’t have

any energy to bother with Lomio. He turned and went to his own room as well.

Taking a meditative stance on the stone bed, he looked through the window to the outside.

“I had wanted to come watch the scryer recordings of battling experts, but who would have imagined that Ganmontin was here?” Linley sighed to himself. At this time, footsteps rang out from outside, followed by a knocking on the door.

“Enter.” Linley said calmly.

The door opened. Immediately, two beautiful women dressed in bright yellow robes walked into Linley’s room, carrying a large platter of food.

“You can just leave it on the table.” Linley said calmly.

“Yes, milord.” The two maids were very respectful. They gently set down the platter of delicacies, but Linley suddenly raised his head to look at them. “Has the examination of those who had come alongside us concluded?”

One of the maids said respectfully, “Yes, milord. The examination is complete. Of those six lords, two of them have already returned to Miluo Island, while the other four are living here, not too far from you, milord.”

“Oh.” Linley understood.

Of the six, two were like Dylin; they had been refused and shut out, and weren’t going to be permitted to enter the secret room.

“You can go now.” Linley instructed.

The two maids curtsied, then left. As for the platter of delicacies, Linley didn’t take a single bite. He didn’t have any appetite or desire to enjoy delicacies right now.

“Whether fortune or disaster…if it’s a disaster, I won’t be able to avoid it anyhow.” Linley shut his eyes, quietly meditating.

Castle Hendsey. Currently, that red armored, red cloaked old man with white hair, ‘Uriah’, was currently walking on a tightly controlled and restricted corridor.

“Rumble!” A great door covered with all sorts of mystical runic carvings swung open, revealing a narrow walkway.

Uriah continued in.

And then, the two guards at each side of the door immediately closed it again.

The walls on each side of the walkway had some carvings, either of thousands of soldiers doing battle, or two figures dueling each other in mid air…

At the end of the walkway was a wide, empty throne room.

On one end of the throne room, there was an enormous fireplace. Uriah walked to the end of the fireplace and pressed a button, immediately causing a wide corridor made completely from a blood-red stone to be revealed. This blood-red corridor had a deathly aura about it that made one’s heart tremble.

Uriah took a deep breath, then stepped into the wide, hidden tunnel.

The tunnel wasn’t very large. At the end, there was a blood-red door with black edges that was ten meters tall and six meters wide. The entire gate faintly emanated a red glow. Uriah didn’t dare take another step forward.

“Teacher!” Uriah said in a low voice.

“Mm. The examination is done?” A low, gentle voice rang out from past the door.

Uriah said respectfully, “Teacher, nothing out of the ordinary happened. The other six didn’t have any special abilities or potential. However, Teacher, those two you paid attention to should be very strong. I, your disciple, personally witnessed Lomio’s battles in the Arena. He is definitely on a Seven Star Fiend level. As for that red-robed elder, Linley, he was able to easily defeat the red-robed elder, Boslo. There’s no need to say anything further.”

“Mm.” The person inside made a noncommittal sound.

Uriah hesitated a moment, puzzled, then asked, “Teacher, that Linley is a descendant of the Four Divine Beasts clan.”

“Four Divine Beasts clan?” The low voice suddenly began to laugh. “Haha…if this was ten thousand years ago, I’d be concerned. However, the Four Divine Beasts clan, at present, wouldn’t dare come irritate me! There’s no need for me to be concerned. However, for him to possess a drop of Sovereign’s Might means that this Linley should be an important figure within the Four Divine Beasts clan. Unfortunately, the present is the present, not ten thousand years ago.”

“Tomorrow, bring Linley and Lomio in to see me. Let Lomio come in first, then let Linley come in.” The low voice instructed.

“Yes, Teacher.” Uriah said respectfully. After waiting a few moments without any response, Uriah added respectfully, “Then I’ll leave now.”

“You can go.”

Uriah immediately bowed, then left, not worried about his teacher at all. Sovereign’s Might? A drop of Sovereign’s Might was indeed powerful, but his teacher was at the highest level one could be at, beneath the Sovereign-level.

Forget about just a drop of Sovereign’s Might.

Even that ultimate expert, Lord Aikens of the Redbud Continent, who was able to refine Sovereign's Might from inkstones was someone his teacher didn't fear!

"Sovereign's Might, in the hands of different people, have different amounts of power as well." Uriah clearly remembered the words his teacher had once said to him.

At present, Linley was seated with his eyes closed, while people would occasionally cross by from outside on the street. Most were maids and guards. But of course, occasionally some guests would pass by as well, and each time they did…

Linley would open his eyes!

"Ganmontin is a guest. He should live in this area as well!" Linley said to himself. "Judging from his conversation with that captain, Ganmontin clearly is waiting to see that so-called 'lord'."

Quietly, silently, time flowed on.

Although they were at the bottom of the sea and unable to tell whether it was day or night, Linley could clearly calculate in his mind if it was time for the sun to rise or the sun to fall. It was night, now. Suddenly, footsteps came from the street, outside the window.

Linley still opened his eyes, looking outside the window carefully.

A figure walked past the window.

Linley's eyes instantly lit up. "Him!" Although he only caught a glimpse of the man, Linley immediately recognized him. It was Ganmontin. With but a thought, a human figure appeared in Linley's room. It was one of Linley's Deathgod Golems!

"Swoosh!" The Deathgod Golem instantly appeared outside the door, looking towards the street.

The Deathgod Golem wasn't a living creature. It only had a hint of Linley's consciousness within it. At the doorway, it stared at the distant Ganmontin, who didn't notice anything. But of course, if it had been Linley himself staring at Ganmontin, he would have noticed.

A Deathgod Golem, in the end, wasn't a living creature. It was just an object. Who would care about an object?

"I didn't expect that this Ganmontin would be here as well." Linley, through the Deathgod Golem, could clearly see Ganmontin enter a little two story building that was eight hundred meters or so away from them.

It made sense. Ganmontin had arrived a month earlier, after all. It made sense that he lived here.

A killing look flashed past Linley's eyes.

"Ganmontin hasn't yet had a chance to meet with his 'Lord'. It's best to remove this potential source of disaster early on."

If Ganmontin was allowed to remain alive, it would be very dangerous for Linley as well as Olivier. It was better to remove him immediately. The roving patrols of Castle Hendsey didn't keep a very strict patrol watch on the guest living area.

In addition, even if they kept strict watch, it didn't matter.

"Whoosh!" The Deathgod Golem entered the interspatial ring, while Linley himself instantly arose, his body immediately fusing with the ground…

Worldwalking!

Linley didn't dare to emanate any hint of an aura. Immediately using Worldwalking, he reached the window below that two-story building, but as soon as he arrived, Linley heard Ganmontin cursing loudly.

“Hmph, a group of bastards. They knew that my divine wind clone was destroyed so they all look down on me. After talking to them for so long, all of them are still delaying. Most likely his lordship doesn’t even know that I’m here!”

Ganmontin had a belly full of fire right now, and thus was currently cursing in his room.

He came here wanting to meet the Lord Commander, but now that his power had greatly dropped after losing his divine wind clone, those ‘old friends’ of his all looked down at him. It was like pressing his warm face against their icy buttocks; how could he possibly not be upset?

“Motherf*cker, it’s all that Linley’s fault!” Ganmontin would forever remember Linley, who had destroyed his powerful divine wind clone.

“Once the Lord Commander knows that there is a soul mutant God, he will definitely intervene. That Linley will definitely die!” Ganmontin ground his teeth. “Alright. I’ll have the Lord Commander use his ‘Soulseed’ to control Linley and live for millions of years without freedom, and then be killed!”

Linley, hearing Ganmontin’s ‘cursing’ from outside the window, felt his heart tremble.

“Soulseed control?” Linley clearly remembered that when he had been at the Yulan continent, his old friend, ‘Boss Yale’, had once been controlled in such a manner. People controlled through a Soulseed had their own memory, but were completely devoted to serving their master.

“Soulseed control?”

Thoughts flashed like lightning through Linley’s mind. He instantly thought of a possibility.

“Why would Miluo Island be so generous as to allow the victors of a hundred battles in the Arena to come here and look at the precious scryer recordings of their clan?”

“Why would Miluo Island permit the red-robed elders to come to this secret area?”

“This Ganmontin is hunting for experts with great potential for his Lord Commander. Why does this Lord Commander want experts with high potential? If he was to train them, how could he be assured of their loyalty?”

“Also, why are so many Seven Star Fiends willingly serving Bagshaw’s clan? Why are Seven Star Fiends so loyal to the Bagshaw clan?”

“And also, Tarosse and Dylin. When Cesar was about to be killed by Sequeira, why had they actually, unbelievably, chosen to throw their lots in with the Bagshaw clan’s side? In addition, the two of them just so happened to have come here before as well!”

Linley’s face instantly turned white!

Chapter 29 – Unable to Leave!

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 29, Unable to Leave!

“Trap!”

Linley felt his heart turn cold.

“What an enormous lie!” Linley began to shudder.

Demigods. Gods. Highgods. Generally speaking, all those capable of winning a hundred battles had high potential and some special abilities! In addition, after arriving at Castle Hendsey, they had to be tested. Only after their potential was verified would they be allowed to stay, while the others were deported.

“All those who are allowed to stay have special potential.”

“Wait! If that’s the case, how can we explain Dylin?” Linley, based on the series of events and on the fact that Dylin and Tarosse had chosen the Bagshaw clan’s side, was now certain that Dylin had been controlled as well.

Linley immediately came up with a possibility…

“It’s not just those who pass the test who are spiritually controlled. Even if they don’t pass, most likely they will still be controlled. Only, a subordinate will do it instead.” Linley understood this; after all, how could any hundred battles victor of the Arena be weak?

The more the merrier, as far as soldiers for one’s forces.

Pondering this from the viewpoint of the master of Castle Hendsey, instantly understood: “The so-called examination is most likely to divide people based on their power. After determining how powerful an opponent

is, they'll know what level of expert is needed to control that person." The more powerful a person was, the harder they would be to control.

For the likes of Lomio, a Seven Star Fiend, it would be incredibly difficult to control him.

"Lomio and I didn't need to be tested at all. This means…very possibly, this master of the castle, the so-called lord 'Commander', will personally deal with us." Thinking of this, Linley couldn't help but be frightened. Even in Miluo Island, there were quite a few red-robed elders.

Within Castle Hendsey, there were multiple Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends.

"Even Seven Star Fiends have been effortless controlled. Then the power of this Lord Commander…?" Linley frowned. For the Lord Commander to be able to control Seven Star Fiends meant one thing…this person was extremely powerful with regards to the soul.

But what Linley feared the most…

Was precisely this, experts skilled in soul attacks!

"When I encounter this castle master, I won't be able to resist at all. Can it be that I will have to use my Sovereign's Might?" Linley immediately thought back to how the clan leader, Bakwill, had Destruction-type Sovereign's Might himself. "This master of the castle is clearly the true power behind the Bagshaw clan. Even Bakwill has Sovereign's Might… how can the master of the castle not have it?"

"Someone capable of letting Miluo Island stand proud and independent in the Infernal Realm…the power this master of the castle possesses is at a level which I definitely cannot take on."

Linley immediately came to a conclusion…

"Flee!"

He had to flee!

Linley turned to look at the window. Ganmontin was currently resting in his room. Ganmontin now only had his divine water clone, and it would be very easy for Linley to kill Ganmontin.

“Cannot kill him! If I kill him, I would attract attention, and they will definitely keep a close watch on me. If I want to leave, it will be very hard.” Linley, after having come to this understanding, couldn’t possibly remain here and wait for death.

He had to flee quickly!

“Just consider yourself lucky.” Linley glanced at the window, then immediately utilized the Worldwalker technique and entered the ground.

After having come to this conclusion, Linley himself felt shock in his heart. Based on what he knew…his hypothesis was most likely 99% correct! It no longer mattered whether or not this place truly had scryer records of experts; he couldn’t remain!

Having one’s soul controlled was a fate worse than death!

On the city walls that were forty meters tall, there were a large number of patrolling black armored guards. Occasionally, there were some red cloaked guards amongst them. This place was more severely guarded than any other place Linley had ever seen.

All of the black armored guards were silent, not daring to make a sound.

However, the red cloaked guards would occasionally chat, as though quite relaxed.

“Each time Arena victors are sent here, even we have to come over and be on patrol.” Two red cloaked warriors were walking alongside each other while chatting and laughing.

“Actually, all we need to do is capture anyone we see fleeing. The real task of oversight isn’t for us to worry about; it’s that thing over there.” One of the red cloaked warriors pointed to the core of the city.

“You are talking about the Water Element Heart?”

“Naturally. The Water Element Heart controls the vast water around this area. If anyone dares to exit our boundaries, the Water Element Heart will easily detect it. By then, we’ll just have to act.” The roving guards were quite relaxed.

It was impossible for anyone to secretly flee!

Forcibly flee? That depended on if they were strong enough. If they were, those patrolling guards would be dead.

But suddenly…

The enormous city wall glowed with the colors of the rainbow, and the multicolored light even blinked twice, immediately startling awake all of the patrolling warriors.

“Someone is fleeing!”

Dozens of the nearest black armored guards and red cloaked warriors all flew directly towards the direction of the disturbance. They clearly could tell that the person who had charged out was…

The red-robed Linley!

“Good heavens, a city wall that has a circumference of tens of kilometers is actually protected by an enormous magic formation? And which seems to have all types of elemental energy?” Linley stared at the massive city walls and the flashing, multicolored magic runes. He tasted sourness in his lips.

He wasn’t able to flee.

Currently, a large number of black armored guards were staring at this place, and many red cloaked experts descended from the skies as well.

“A red-robed elder?” These red cloaked warriors were startled, and then one of them said in a sonorous voice, “You dare to abscond? Hmph!”

Linley glanced at the group of red cloaked warriors. Previously, during the testing, Linley had seen a red-cloaked warrior attack. They were roughly on a Six Star Fiend level. “A group of Six Star Fiends?” Linley laughed bitterly to himself.

There was no way for him to forcibly escape any longer.

“I am a red-robed elder of the Bagshaw clan, Linley! I have something important that I must immediately return to handle. I didn’t want to disturb you. Now, please step aside and let me return to Miluo Island.” Linley’s voice rang out.

The leader of the red cloaked warriors said calmly, “Oh, Elder Linley? The rule of our Castle Hendsey is that unless we have permission, no outsiders are ever permitted to leave.”

“I have something important to do!” Linley said angrily.

“Please, Elder Linley, just wait a while.” One of the red cloaked warriors said. “If you want to force your way out, then don’t blame us.” Actually, these red cloaked warriors, upon seeing that it was a red-robed elder of the Bagshaw clan, didn’t want to attack either.

This was because red-robed elders were all Seven Star Fiends.

Once battle began, their group of people might be able to obtain victory through numbers, but it would assuredly be a pyrrhic victory.

Linley was frustrated. “Neither acting firmly nor speaking softly works. If I try to force my way out, most likely all the experts from the castle will pop

out.”

“Linley, why are you in such a rush to leave?” A familiar voice rang out. Linley turned and saw that white-haired elder with red armor and a red cloak fly out. It was that expert named ‘Uriah’.

Uriah laughed as he looked at Linley. “Linley, you haven’t even gone to the first viewing room yet.”

“Mr. Uriah.” Linley said hurriedly. “There’s nothing that I can do. Just now, I received a soul message from my servant. I really do have something important I must handle, and so I have to leave. As for the first viewing room, how about I return tomorrow?”

“Oh?” Uriah frowned.

“Makes sense.” Uriah laughed. “Linley, since you really do have an important task to handle…”

Linley’s heart leapt up.

“Then I won’t force you to stay. However, I’ve already reported your arrival to the master of the castle. I don’t have the authority to let you leave. How about this. You wait here for a while, and I’ll make a report to the master of the castle. I trust that he won’t make things difficult for you.” Uriah laughed.

“Sorry for the trouble, Mr. Uriah.” Linley said.

Uriah laughed calmly, then immediately flew away.

Linley’s face sank. “Ask the master of the castle? This is going to be troublesome!” Linley glanced at his surroundings. There were tens of red cloaked experts staring at him, and on the walls, there were many black armored guards watching as well.”

“How can this Castle Hendsey have so many experts?” Linley was helpless.

Originally, in Royalwing City, even Six Star Fiends were very rare. As for Seven Star Fiends, they were virtually nowhere to be seen, as they were usually hidden throughout the Infernal Realm. But this Castle Hendsey had a pile of Six Star Fiends and even quite a few Seven Star Fiends, and a seemingly even more powerful ‘master of the castle’.

Moments later…

“Eh?” Linley’s face changed.

From afar, with Uriah at their head, three red armored and red cloaked experts flew over, with the black-robed expert, ‘Lomio’, with them!

“Red armor, red cloak? The other two people have roughly the same status as Uriah. Most likely, they are here to keep me from fleeing. But…why did they bring Lomio?” Linley was puzzled, but Lomio had a rare smile on his face.

“Mr. Uriah, you have news?” Linley said clearly.

Uriah and the others landed alongside Lomio, and Uriah laughed. “Good news, good news. The master of the castle is truly considerate towards you, Linley.”

Linley was startled. Could it be that he had guessed wrong? The master of the castle was going to be so kind as to let him leave

“When he learned that you, Linley, had something important to handle, he agreed to let you and Lomio go to the first viewing room right now! Going to the first viewing room and using your divine sense to view the scryer recordings is a very fast process.” Uriah laughed.

Linley’s facial expressions couldn’t help but congeal.

“Linley, since you could wait here for me, you also have enough time to go to the first viewing room and do a quick viewing with your divine sense,

right?” Uriah laughed. The other two red armored, red cloaked experts laughed as well as they looked at Linley.

But Linley felt bone-deep terror from their stares.

“Alright, then we’ll go do a viewing first.” This was the only thing Linley could say.

Uriah immediately laughed. The three of them immediately led Linley and Lomio towards the center of Castle Hendsey. The path over there had multiple intersections, and patrols could be seen everywhere. Outsiders would probably find it hard to take a single step here, but as Linley was following Uriah, he wasn’t barred or impeded at all.

“Lomio, you need to thank Linley. If it wasn’t for him, you’d probably have to wait until tomorrow before you can go to the secret room.” Uriah laughed.

Lomio had a rare smile on his face. Clearly, he was in an excellent mood due to the prospect of about to see so many experts doing battle in those scryer recordings.

“Linley, it is quite rare for the master of the castle to let you go to the secret room early.” Uriah said to Linley.

“Right. I truly need to thank the master of the castle.” Linley said, but in his heart, he was cursing nonstop. That master of the castle clearly had no good intentions.

While walking on the path, Linley was paying attention to his surroundings.

But the deeper into the heart they went, the more patrols there were, and in addition, he had those three experts around him.

Flee?

Hard!

“Rumble!” The great door covered with mysterious carved runes swung open, revealing a corridor which had many carvings on each side. Linley and the others thus began to walk towards the end of the corridor.

Linley didn’t have any time to enjoy the sculpture.

As they reached the throne room at the end of the corridor, Uriah walked to one side of the throne room, against a brazier, and opened up a mysterious, wide corridor. The corridor was made completely from blood red stones, and emanating a heart-shaking, deathly aura.

“How mysterious.” Linley frowned.

Lomio frowned as well. The silver-haired woman by Uriah’s side laughed and said, “This is the place where the scryer recordings are held. Naturally, it’s rather hidden. The two of you, just follow me in.” As she spoke, she was the first to enter.

Linley and Lomio naturally followed them in, while Uriah and the other followed from behind.

At the end of the tunnel, they reached that black, patterned door with the blood red edges. They came to a halt.

“Teacher, Lomio and Linley are here.” Uriah said respectfully, while the others bowed as well.

Lomio raised an eyebrow. “There’s someone else inside?”

“A place as important as this naturally must be guarded.” Uriah laughed as he explained. Linley just narrowed his eyes, musing to himself, “It seems this so-called ‘Teacher’ is the master of the castle.”

“Fine. Let Mr. Lomio be the first to enter for the viewing.” A low, gentle voice came from within the door. Immediately, the large door swung open slightly, revealing a crack that was enough for one person to enter.

“Lomio, go on in.” Uriah and the other two looked towards Lomio.

Lomio was a bold, courageous expert. He immediately was about to head in, but Linley gave a soft cough, then hurriedly sent via divine sense, “Lomio, be careful. The person within the room will most likely take sinister action against you. Beware his soul attack.”

Lomio glanced at Linley in surprise, but then with a laugh, he still entered.

“Regardless of whether this is true or not, thank you! If someone inside really does attack, I’d actually be quite happy.” Lomio’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind, while he himself entered past the door.

“BANG!” The great door once more slammed shut.

Chapter 30 – Sledgehammer

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 30, Sledgehammer

The blood-red corridor. The blood-red gate. That overpowering aura of death.

“I need to flee. How can I flee?” Linley was incomparably frantic. The three experts around him were all guarding him, while past that door was the ‘master of the castle’, a person of astonishing power. Most likely, even if he used Sovereign’s Might, it would be hard for him to flee.

“Calm down. Calm down!”

Linley strove to find a chance to escape, but no matter what he thought of, in the end, there was only one possibility.

“I can only entrust my hopes to Lomio. Lomio will be on his guard. He might be able to escape. If he had a violent battle with that ‘master of the castle’ and attract the attention of those three, I’ll be able to seize an opportunity to flee.”

Linley understood that for the master of the castle to be willing to allow Lomio enter meant that he was confident in being able to easily defeat and mentally control Lomio. If it really was that simple, though…then even this final chance Linley had for escape would be gone.

Although he was frantic, Linley still watched carefully for any chance, and was prepared to explode forth and flee at any moment.

“Linley, are you impatient?” Uriah chortled. “Don’t be impatient. Lomio needs a bit of time in the first viewing room to view those scryer recordings. It’ll be your turn soon.”

“It’ll be my turn soon?” Linley felt that Uriah’s laughter was so vile. Uriah

clearly knew that this was a lie, a trap, but was still trying to lie to Linley, even now.

“BOOM!” Suddenly, the entire floor trembled violently, and even the great door in front of them shook forcefully. The tremor caused the walls around them to begin to crack, with scattered rocks falling down and smashing onto the corridor. Linley’s group of four swayed, and they were all astonished.

“Good.” Linley was overjoyed. Lomio, indeed, hadn’t let him down. He had indeed caused a disturbance.

“Eh?” Uriah and the other two were shocked. They looked at each other. Given the master of the castle’s power, how could such a huge commotion have been caused? Although they were shocked, they still kept watch on Linley.

Linley put on a puzzled look. “Mr. Uriah, what is going on inside?”

“I’m not sure.” Uriah laughed calmly. “Perhaps Lomio, when watching those scryer recordings of ultimate experts, was suddenly so excited that he wanted to test out a technique. Right. Linley, after you enter the secret room, no matter what, don’t wildly test out techniques.”

“Got it, got it.” Linley had to admit that Uriah’s dissembling abilities were top notch.

Right at that instant…

“Rumble…” It was as though heaven was collapsing or the earth was shattering. A terrifying explosive sound rang out, and the entire corridor and great door blew apart, with countless pieces of rubble flying everywhere, each one containing lightning-type energy.

Chaos!

The faces of Uriah and the other two changed. They hadn’t imagined that Lomio, in front of their teacher, could cause such a huge disturbance.

“Excellent.” Linley was overjoyed. “This is the moment.” Just as Linley was preparing to use the Worldwalker ability to leave…

“Swish!”

Uriah and the other two immediately moved, forming a three-point triangle and surrounding Linley. Uriah laughed calmly. “Linley, don’t be impatient. Perhaps Lomio did something to anger Teacher.”

Linley, seeing that he was surrounded by these three, frowned.

“Haha…kid, it looks like I underestimated you.” The low, rich voice rang out in the air above Castle Hendsey, and Linley couldn’t help but to raise his head to look up.

In the air above the shattered building, Lomio’s blood-splattered black robe fluttered in the wind. He held a black warblade in his hands, and his entire body was surrounded by crawling lightning serpents. His eyes were flashing with electricity, and he looked to be the very picture of a true Thunder God.

Facing Lomio was a man that was nearly 2.5 meters tall. The man had short red hair that looked as though it were made out of metal, and he wore a very ancient, unadorned set of armor. His thick, massive arms were a bronze color, seeming to hold a vast amount of strength, while in his right hand, he actually held a large black sledgehammer!

“He is the master of the city? That ‘Commander’?” Linley said to himself. But then, Linley stopped paying attention to the skies, instead focusing on the three around him. He hoped that one of them might relax their guard, allowing him to flee.

From high up in the sky, Lomio’s voice rang out once more.

“Hmph, I must thank you. If it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have made yet another breakthrough. You want to kill me? You are far from being able to!”

“The three of you, keep watch on Linley.” The sledgehammer-wielding red-haired man said calmly.

“Yes, Teacher (Master)!” Uriah and the other two said.

“Indeed.” Linley became all the more certain. “They actually address him as ‘Master’…I didn’t expect that amongst these three, two are under the control of the master of the city.” Although surprised, Linley was still searching for his chance to flee.

Linley’s face changed.

“Uriah, what is going on?” Linley asked angrily.

Uriah laughed, “Teacher wishes you to stay, so as to let you be able to view the first secret room.”

“Why do they address him as ‘Master’?” Linley asked another question.

“We have been followers of Master since we were Demigods.” The silver-haired woman said calmly, while Linley just smirked coldly. Two Demigod subordinates had actually both become Seven Star Fiends?

“Whatever abilities you have, use them all!” Lomio said with incomparable valor.

In mid-air, that sledgehammer-wielding red-haired man let out a loud laugh. “You were able to take a few punches from me. Not bad. Now, let’s see if you can withstand my sledgehammer.” The red-haired man agilely swept out with the massive black sledgehammer in his hand.

It made no sound out all…

The sledgehammer struck out, and as it did, a very bizarre ripple spread out, with the sledgehammer at the center. Everywhere the ripple passed through, the stone structures all transformed into fine powder. Thus did this sledgehammer slam down with no sound.

It seemed slow, but in reality it arrived next to Lomio in an instant.

“BANG!” Lightning appeared out of the blue skies.

As the thunder roared, a saber shadow clashed with the sledgehammer.

“Rumble…” The sledgehammer seemed to tremble slightly, with the surface of the sledgehammer rippling as though the sledgehammer was made of water. Lomio’s warblade actually trembled as well, and then completely shattered.

A silent, soundless sledgehammer blow.

But even Lomio’s weapon had been destroyed.

Linley, stunned, raised his head up to watch, his mind filled with that soundless blow that he had just seen. It seemed so graceful and gentle, and yet in reality the sledgehammer blow had carried trillions of kilograms of force. That amazing, miraculous curving blow caused Linley’s soul to be stirred.

Linley had never been able to understand the description of the ‘Strength’ profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, but suddenly, Linley had the feeling…

It was as though a seed in his mind had suddenly begun to bloom.

“Strength…boundless…massive…”

Linley had been training hard in the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’, but had yet to make any headway. However, this time, upon seeing that sledgehammer blow from this ‘castle master’ which seemed to hold a hint of the Profound Mysteries of Strength.

Although in reality, this master of the castle used the Way of Destruction, every single path had some similarities.

For example, the Laws of Lightning and the Laws of Light all had mysteries pertaining to speed. The speed of lightning had some similarities with the Profound Mysteries of Lightspeed.

“Impossible!” Lomio had been thrown far away, and he landed in a pile of debris, his face filled with disbelief. He had just made a breakthrough, and so he felt he was now strong enough to battle against an Asura. But why was it that despite his power, he still wasn’t able to withstand that sledgehammer?

At this moment, Uriah and the others all glanced slightly at Linley. Seeing that Linley wasn’t running, they immediately returned to watching this battle. This battle, to them, had quite the allure.

“If Linley is to flee, with so many people in the castle, he has nowhere to run.”

Uriah and the others were very confident.

“The natural ability of my Bloodrune Titan clan, when matched with the Way of Destruction…did you think it was something to be trifled with?” The red-haired man said loudly. Standing in mid-air, he was like a celestial divinity, causing people’s hearts to be filled with fear.

“Ah, why am I standing here like an idiot? I need to flee, that’s what matters.” Linley instantly came to his senses and stopped his pondering.

The sudden starting and stopping of his pondering actually only took a very short period of time.

“These three are actively watching this battle.” Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart, then turned his head to stare at the distant master of the castle and Lomio. “The moment the master of the castle attacks is the moment that I’ll flee!”

The attack of the master of the castle would definitely be carefully

scrutinized by Uriah and the other two, while the master himself wouldn't have any time to bother with catching Linley.

"You managed to eat one of my sledgehammer blows without dying. You can be considered a peak Seven Star Fiend, approaching the Asura level in strength." The master of the castle laughed loudly, and then transformed into a bloody shadow, instantly slashing through the sky…

Linley's eyes lit up. "This is the moment!"

Worldwalking!

Very suddenly, Linley disappeared from within the rubble, while Uriah and the other two, in a triangle surrounding Linley, were focused on watching this battle in the sky. An instant after Linley escaped, Uriah and the other two noticed from the corner of their eyes that Linley had disappeared!

"Fled?" Uriah and the other two were dazed, but they quickly recovered.

"He used Worldwalking." Uriah immediately shouted. "Hurry up and fly into the sky. He won't be able to flee from the ground. He'll have to go into the skies." Deep under Castle Hendsey as well as on the walls surrounding it was that enormous magic formation. There was nowhere to flee.

Only by flying through the skies or by going through the gates would one be able to leave.

The three powerful experts immediately flew into the air while simultaneously shouting towards the other warriors to be on the lookout.

"All of you, watch closely. If you are capable of Worldwalking, hurry into the underground and find Linley, quick!" Uriah immediately shouted. One black armored warrior after another began to use Worldwalking, merging into the ground.

Uriah and the other two were floating in the sky. At the same time, other experts were hovering in the sky as well, all of them staring in every

direction.

“This Linley actually dared to flee!” Uriah couldn’t help but feel infuriated.

After this event, his teacher would definitely censure him.

Underground, Linley had fused with the earth elemental essence and was travelling through the ground.

“There’s no way I’ll be able to flee the castle from underground.” Linley had previously tested it already. “I’ll first run to a unassuming place in the castle, then quickly fly into the air and flee.” Linley immediately flew at high speed towards the northwest corner.

But the strange thing was…

“Eh?” Linley could easily sense that there was a living aura from up ahead.

Linley was shocked. “There are others using Worldwalking as well?” That living aura immediately drew near at high speed, even spreading out a divine sense.

“Lord, Linley is here!” A voice rang out, echoing in the castle. Linley himself immediately fled hundreds of meters away, and then ignored all else, immediately emerging from the ground.

“Swoosh!”

Linley immediately flew into the skies, his entire body transforming violently, with azure-gold draconic scales covering every part of him and fierce spikes sprouting out as well. Linley’s speed increased yet again, and like an azure-gold flash of light, he flew upwards at high speed.

“Seize him!” The distant Uriah bellowed.

Instantly, from every direction, a large number of black armored guards and red cloaked guards swarmed over towards him like locusts. Linley let out a

mighty roar, and then with Linley at the center, a sphere of nearly five hundred meters in diameter formed.

Blackstone Space!

“Huh?” All of the black armored guards and red cloaked guards who charged into this region found out to their astonishment that they were forced to retreat.

“What a powerful repulsive force.” Those people were astonished.

“Pincer him from every direction. Trap him.” Uriah bellowed, while he himself was hurrying over as well.

Linley’s dark golden eyes were focused up above himself, but from up above, a large number of black armored guards had already gathered, completely sealing off his escape routes.

“It’s your own fault for seeking death!” Linley’s eyes turned cold.

Instantly, the world began to glow with an earthen yellow color, and earth elemental essence suddenly gathered at high speed. Divine earth power flowed about, and instantly, an enormous cube that was four hundred meters tall appeared out of nowhere. Those black armored guards which were struck by the cube were directly swallowed into it.

“Bang!”

From afar, the red-haired man once more exchanged blows with Lomio. Lomio’s face was ashen, but then, with a sudden bellow, he transformed into a ray of black lightning, disappearing into the horizons at an astonishing speed. The master of Castle Hendsey raised his head, watching with resignation. “This fellow trains in the Laws of Lightning…he’s actually so fast. He’s even a bit faster than me!”

Lomio’s speed was so great that even the master of the castle couldn’t catch him.

“There’s still another one.” The master of the castle turned to look.

Currently, Linley’s ‘cube’ had collapsed. After having suffered the combined attacks of four Seven Star Fiends and many Six Star Fiends, Linley’s ‘cube’ had immediately blown apart, while Linley himself continued to fly up at high speed.

“Teacher, his Gravitational Space is very bizarre. We are unable to catch him alive.” Uriah said hurriedly.

“Hmph.”

A cold snort, and then the master of Castle Hendsey, holding his sledgehammer, transformed into a bloody shadow as he chased towards Linley. The master of Castle Hendsey was so fast that he was only just a hair slower than Lomio, and far faster than Linley.

He was quickly drawing nearer and nearer to Linley.

“Kid, why don’t you stay.” A loud laughter rang out.

Linley lowered his head to look. “The master of the castle?” With a flip of his hand, a drop of Sovereign’s Might appeared, but Linley didn’t immediately use it, because Linley was still confident in his Gravitational Space.

“Crackle…” As the bloody shadow passed through the area of the Gravitational Space, its speed lessened dramatically.

“Haha, this Gravitational Space isn’t bad.” As he spoke, the master of Castle Hendsey laughingly waved the sledgehammer in his hand. Multiple rays of black energy coiled out from the sledgehammer, as though countless strands or ropes had been spun out, filling the entire Gravitational Space.

“Catch!”

The countless rays of black energy entangled Linley, making him no longer able to flee.

“What is this?” Linley frantically struggled and was able to break dozens of strands through brute force, but even more black strands entangled him. Linley’s face changed, and he was about to immediately use his Sovereign’s Might.

But right at this moment…

“Your strength is decent, and the Gravitational Space isn’t bad either. Unfortunately, the difference between you and Reisgem is still quite great.” A gentle voice rang in Linley’s ear.

Linley was stunned. “Reisgem? Gem-Gem?” Linley thought back to that adorable juvenile amethyst beast in the Amethyst Mountains.

Chapter 31 – Purgatory Commander

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 31, Purgatory Commander

Linley remembered the name ‘Reisgem’ very, very clearly.

Back in the Amethyst Mountains when Linley had been testing out ‘Worldwalking’, he had fallen into the hands of that juvenile amethyst beast, who had announced his name and that he was a Purgatory Commander, wanting to overawe Linley. Unfortunately, Linley had no idea what Purgatory was and thus had no idea what it meant for a person to be a Purgatory Commander.

“Crackle.” Countless black energy strands surrounded Linley, and they were incomparably stiff, causing Linley to be completely unable to move. Even though Linley’s strength was massive and inexhaustible, the speed at which he destroyed the black energy bindings was slower than the speed by which they increased.

“Kid, don’t use your Sovereign’s Might. You’d be wasting it if you did.” The low, gentle voice continued.

Linley turned his head in astonishment. Fortunately, the black energy strands didn’t cover Linley’s head as well. Linley could clearly see that ancient armor, and that red-haired man standing in mid-air, holding that massive sledgehammer.

“What do you want to do?” Linley chuckled. “What, you want to dominate my soul?”

“You even know about this?” The master of Castle Hendsey was quite surprised.

While the two were chatting, the master of the castle had set up his Godrealm, completely blocking out their conversation, while those who

were watching from afar couldn't see a single thing.

"Come with me. Let's have a nice chat." The master of the castle actually flew downwards.

"Follow him?" Linley was stunned.

The master of the castle, seeing that Linley wasn't moving, turned and glanced at him, then laughed calmly, "Given your soul strength as a God, you are far from being my match. Controlling you would be utterly effortless. There's no need for me to play any tricks."

"If there's something you want to say, you can say it here." Linley said.

The master of the castle glanced at him, amazed, then began to laugh and nod. "Fine. I'll do as you say." For so many years, nobody had ever dared to speak to him in such a way. And so, the master of the castle began to chat with Linley in the air above Castle Hendsey.

"First, let me introduce myself. I am Mosi [Mo'si] Bagshaw! The master of this Castle Hendsey." The master of the castle had a hint of a smile on his face.

The master of the castle was of the Bagshaw clan as well!

Linley had noticed that the 'master of the castle', so valiant in battle, actually spoke in a very soft, gentle voice, and his smile was quite friendly as well. He didn't give off any aura of being a rude boor at all. Linley replied, "I am Linley."

"Can you tell me what your relationship is with Reisgem, for you to actually convince him to make a soul-protecting divine artifact for you?" The master of the castle, Mosi, laughed calmly.

"Reisgem…made me a soul-protecting divine artifact?" Linley was astonished.

“Isn’t that the case?” Mosi laughed calmly. “I’ve heard of your combat prowess. You were able to kill so many Highgods, and also defeat ‘Boslo’. Your soul protection must be very strong. However, you were only a God. How powerful could your soul possibly be? The soul of a God, in terms of ‘quality’, is simply far too inferior compared to Highgod souls!”

“It is true that I have a soul-protecting artifact, but what of it?” No matter what, Linley wouldn’t dare say that he had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

Otherwise, most likely this ‘Mosi’ in front of him would be unable to resist being greedy.

“There we go.” Mosi laughed. “It is exceedingly hard to create a soul-protecting artifact. You must understand, first of all, a person who wants to make this must have an exceedingly high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul. In the entire Infernal Realm, there are very few people capable of making a soul-protecting artifact. Reisgem, however, is one of them.”

“You are able to utilize his trademark special skill, the ‘Amethyst Space’; you definitely were taught by him. Thus, I said that your soul-protecting artifact must have come from him helping you make it as well.” Mosi said very confidently.

Linley shook his head. “My Gravitational Space did indeed originate from him, this is true. But the soul-protecting artifact wasn’t made by him.”

“Oh?” Mosi glanced at Linley in surprise, then laughed. “I must say, you are quite mysterious, kid. Your body is so incomparably tough; even amongst the Four Divine Beasts clan, this is exceedingly rare. And you also have a soul-protecting artifact, and have some sort of a relationship with Reisgem…”

Linley frowned.

This Mosi had talked with him for so long. Why? But it seemed as though

the man didn't have the intention to kill him.

Mosi, seeing the look on Linley's face, couldn't help but laugh, then said comfortingly, "Kid, don't worry. Even if it were just for the sake of giving Reisgem face, I won't kill you. Only, I feel you are quite the curiosity, kid, so I want to chat with you a bit."

Linley let out a sigh of relief.

"I didn't expect that because of that juvenile amethyst beast, I dodged a catastrophe today." Linley had great faith in this castle master Mosi, as the man's power far outstripped his own. There was no need for Mosi to lie to him if he wanted to kill him.

"Why are you so certain that I am a God?" Linley asked.

"Haha…" Mosi immediately began to laugh. "Kid. Forget about the Infernal Realm; even if you were to search the entire Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes, you would at most find ten who are superior to me in terms of the soul! However, although they are slightly superior to me, there's no way they could possibly completely conceal their strength in front of me."

Linley was secretly shocked.

Four Higher Planes and Seven Divine Planes…in all those combined planes, there were no more than ten people who were superior to Mosi in terms of the 'soul'?

Then that meant…

In the Infernal Realm, Mosi's soul power should rank in the top three! The Infernal Realm had existed for countless years, and it contained experts beyond number, while many of the 'Asuras' had received their position after many of the original Asuras had retired and gone into seclusion.

Experts were as common as the clouds!

But this Mosi was actually able to rank in the top three as far as souls went? Terrifying!

“But of course, there’s another possibility.” Mosi laughed. “You might be a Sovereign! That’s the only way you could possibly deceive even me.” As he spoke, Mosi had a sudden thought, and the black energy strands retracted.

His freedom returned to him, Linley felt more kindly disposed towards Mosi. “Castle Master Mosi, dare I ask, what’s your relationship with Reisgem?”

“Him?” A hazy look flashed through Mosi’s eyes, as though he were thinking back to many things that had happened in the past. And then, his gaze firmed once more, and he sighed, “Reisgem and I are both Commanders of Purgatory.”

“As I thought!” Linley was now completely certain. The ‘Lord Commander’ which Ganmontin had spoken of was this Mosi!

“What is Purgatory? What does being a Purgatory Commander mean?” Linley asked, puzzled.

“What is Purgatory?” Mosi glanced at Linley in surprise. “You don’t even know this?” As Mosi saw it, given how many secrets Linley seemed to have, he should know about what Purgatory was.

But Mosi still answered. “Purgatory is a very special place in the Infernal Realm. In that place, experts are as common as the clouds. Many retired Asuras, reclusive experts, and others will enter Purgatory…in that place, there are simply too many experts!”

“And a Purgatory Commander?” Linley continued to ask.

“Purgatory has a total of 108 Commanders!” Mosi laughed.

“108 yet again?” Linley was astonished.

“Right. The Infernal Realm has 108 Asuras, and Purgatory also has 108 Commanders. The Asuras in the Infernal Realm all control a prefecture, while the Purgatory Commanders command an army!” Mosi explained.

“Oh. Then…which is more powerful? Asuras, or Purgatory Commanders?” Linley continued to ask.

Mosi glanced at Linley. “The Asuras of the Infernal Realm and the Commanders of Purgatory…you can’t quantify one as being superior to the other. This is because every person capable of becoming an Asura or a Purgatory Commander is close to the very peak of power possible for a Highgod, and all have their own special, ultimate attacks. There are quite a few Seven Star Fiends in the Infernal Realm, but the number of Asuras and Commanders is forever limited. In addition, they often engage in challenges, and upon losing, retire. The stronger will take the position!”

Linley couldn’t help but nod.

“However, comparatively speaking, the 108 Asuras of the Infernal Realm have it easier. They control an entire prefecture, and don’t face too many challenges. But Purgatory Commanders are different. Battles and slaughters are commonplace.” Mosi sighed.

Linley had to admit that having been in the Infernal Realm for so long, he had seen quite a few Seven Star Fiends, and here at Miluo Island had seen quite a few Seven Star Fiends.

Generally speaking, Highgods capable of fusing four profound mysteries could become Seven Star Fiends.

But in truth, there were some who had fused five or even nearly fused all six types.

But of course, there were those experts who had fused six types of profound mysteries and become Paragons.

There were some who were Soul Mutates, while others were divine beasts who had innate divine abilities. Some were of strange races that also had innate abilities, while other experts were in possession of Sovereign artifacts or Sovereign's Might…

Only the most extraordinary of people were capable of becoming 'Asuras of the Infernal Realm' or 'Commanders of Purgatory'.

"My Gravitational Space is already so powerful, but if utilized by the juvenile amethyst beast? In addition, that's his innate ability. When using it, it's definitely ten times or a hundred times more powerful than mine." Linley still remembered how the entire Amethyst Mountains had an enormous 'Gravitational Space' that was hundreds of thousands of kilometers in circumference.

Over the course of this conversation, the relationship between Linley and Mosi grew significantly friendlier.

"Castle Master Mosi, there's something I wish to beg of you." Linley said sincerely.

Tarosse and Dylin were definitely under soul control. This sort of life, where they had lost their own will, was a life worse than death. Linley naturally wanted to be able to free Tarosse and Dylin and allow them to regain their own will.

"Oh, speak." Mosi said.

"I have two friends who were both Arena victors. I believe they are under soul control. I hope you, Castle Master Mosi, can let them regain their freedom."

Mosi paused for just a moment.

Linley was rather nervous. Soul control was one of the techniques this person specialized in. Linley could only hope that this person would give him face and release the two of them.

“Fine, then. Tell me their names.” In the end, Mosi nodded.

“One is a Highgod named Tarosse. The other is a God named Dylin.” Linley said hurriedly.

Mosi sighed. “Tarosse. I personally controlled him. He has quite some potential. As for Dylin, one of my subordinates should have controlled him.” Mosi paused momentarily. “Don’t worry. By the time you return to Miluo Island, you will have discovered that the two of them have regained their free will.”

“Castle Master Mosi, I’m incomparably grateful.” Linley truly was rather grateful. If this person didn’t want to give him face, there was nothing he could’ve done.

Mosi just laughed calmly. He controlled quite a few Seven Star Fiends. Naturally, he wouldn’t care too much about minor figures such as Tarosse and Dylin.

“Let’s go. Now, you can go down with me, right?” Mosi said.

Linley laughed as well, then followed Castle Master Mosi down, back towards the castle. At this moment, those damaged parts of the castle were currently under repair by a large number of black armored warriors, who had brought black stones over and were working at high speed.

“Teacher (Master)!” Uriah and the others drew nearer respectfully.

Castle Master Mosi nodded in acknowledgment, then flew downwards with Linley.

“Who is this Linley?” Uriah and the others were puzzled. As they saw it, their teacher was one of the truly peak figures of the entire Infernal Realm, and yet he was actually so friendly towards Linley. This was truly inconceivable.

Linley and Castle Master Mosi flew downwards, but suddenly…

“Milord, milord!” A frantic voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. He couldn’t help but frown, as he saw Ganmontin flying over frantically while calling out, ‘Milord!’

“Oh, Ganmontin.” Castle Master Mosi immediately recognized Ganmontin, then was puzzled. “Ganmontin, your divine wind clone?” Ganmontin was one of his more senior subordinates.

Ganmontin immediately bowed respectfully, then said angrily, “Milord, he destroyed my divine wind clone!” As he spoke, he pointed at Linley.

“Eh?” Castle Master Mosi frowned.

“How did you and Linley end up in a fight?” Castle Master Mosi said.

Ganmontin said hurriedly, “Milord, I discovered a God-level Soul Mutate, so I immediately went to capture him to offer him to you, but who would have imagined that this person was Linley’s friend. Linley thus attacked and destroyed my divine wind clone.”

“A God-level Soul Mutate?” Castle Master Mosi’s eyes lit up.

The potential of a Soul Mutate was higher than that of even a divine beast.

“Castle Master Mosi, that God-level Soul Mutate is my brother.” This was all that Linley could say.

“Milord, you must get revenge for your subordinate.” Ganmontin said hurriedly.

Castle Master Mosi frowned and was momentarily silent. For a moment, neither Linley nor Ganmontin knew what Mosi was thinking.

“You can go now!” Castle Master Mosi said calmly.

Ganmontin was stunned. His face couldn't help but turn ashen. He knew Castle Master Mosi's temper very well, however, and so he immediately bowed respectfully. "Yes, milord." Ganmontin didn't dare to say a single word more. He immediately left.

Linley let out a secret sigh of relief.

Castle Master Mosi turned to look towards Linley. Laughing, he said, "Linley, want to go to my first secret room and take a look at the scryer recordings of experts doing battle? That place even has recordings of Sovereigns showing their might!"

Chapter 32 – The Might of a Sovereign

Book 16, Starmist Sea – Chapter 32, The Might of a Sovereign

“There really are scryer recordings?” Linley couldn’t help but be interested.

Ever since he had found out that those so-called recordings of experts doing battle served as a trap, Linley had doubted whether or not Castle Hendsey had scryer recordings or not. But from Castle Master Mosi’s words, it seemed as though there really were such things.

“You’ll know once you go take a look, right?” Mosi said mysteriously.

Castle Hendsey. Underground. Within a mysterious, wide throne room. The two sides of the throne rooms had quite a few bookshelves, only the bookshelves didn’t have books on them. Instead, they had many fist-sized crystal balls.

Linley and Mosi were currently in the throne room.

“There are a total of 1628 crystals here, each one of which contains a scryer recording.” Mosi said leisurely. “In addition, the crystal balls all have introductions and explanations regarding the battle and the techniques used.”

Linley, staring at the many crystals balls stored on the bookshelves, couldn’t help but stare with shining eyes. These were all scryer recordings of ultimate experts doing battle.

“In this first room, most of the recordings are those of peak Seven Star Fiends doing battles. There are also recordings of Asuras and Purgatory Commanders doing battle. As for the scryer recording of a Sovereigns showing their might…” Mosi pointed to a corner of the room, where a rectangular pillar was located which had a glowing gemstone placed at the very top of the pillar. “The scryer recordings of Sovereigns are located

there, within that pillar. The pillar is hollow. You can open it like a door."

Linley couldn't help but take a deep breath to calm himself down.

Good heavens. Recordings of Sovereigns showing their might? He had only heard legends of Sovereigns, but had never ever seen one. Everyone said that the might of a Sovereign was inviolable, but who knew exactly how powerful a Sovereign was?

"I'll start from the Seven Star Fiend battles." Linley walked over to the bookshelves.

After walking forward, Linley discovered that on the surface of every single crystal ball that was placed on a bookshelf had two names recorded down.

"This is to simplify the process of finding the recordings one wants to watch." Mosi walked over and said with a laugh.

"Understood." Linley swept the racks of bookshelves and the dozens of crystal balls, then suddenly his gaze fell upon a crystal ball which had several names atop it: 'Bloodviolet Fiend' dueling the 'Ironleaf Fiend'!

"Bloodviolet Fiend?" Linley immediately drew closer.

This crystal ball contained scryer recordings within. One could use divine power to cause the scryer recordings within the crystal ball to emerge from it and appear in mid-air. That way, multiple people could watch at the same time. However, a person could also use his divine sense directly enter the crystal ball, which would make the watching process extremely fast.

Linley immediately filled the crystal ball with his divine sense…

In a desolate desert, thousands of people were battling everywhere, while in mid-air, two people were staring at each other. One of them was completely covered in black scale armor, with long black hair that glowed with a blue light.

The other person had a long violet robe, long violet hair, and a violet longsword in his hand. The familiar figure was one which Linley had seen long ago.

“It really is him. The Bloodviolet Fiend!” When Linley had first used his divine sense to enter Bloodviolet, he had seen many different images, and the primary subject of every single image was this person. But only now was Linley completely, 100% certain.

“That longsword is Bloodviolet!”

Only today was Linley completely convinced and certain that the original owner of his Bloodviolet sword was the legendary figure, the ‘Bloodviolet Fiend’.

There was no sound at all from the battle scene, only the images recorded down.

The Ironleaf Fiend and the Bloodviolet Fiend both specialized in speed. Linley just saw two experts instantly transform into two blurry shadows. Wherever the Ironleaf Fiend passed by, space itself began to emit a strange, rippling spatial vibration. When looking at all the vibrations at once, they actually formed a flower that was blooming.

A devilish violet light was repeatedly flashing.

“Whoosh!”

A ray of violet light filled the skies, and the spatial ripple flower transformed into two halves, and many spatial cracks appeared.

Only now did the Ironleaf Fiend’s body grow clearly visible, and he dropped down from the skies, while the Bloodviolet Fiend’s expression didn’t change at all.

“These two people were all terrifyingly fast. The Bloodviolet Fiend’s sword attacks are much more powerful than even Learmonth and Boslo. When he

strikes, he shows no traces of his actions at all, and the power is tremendous. He doesn't need to build up his power at all." Linley could just barely understand the intricacies of this battle.

Just from the scryer recordings, he could tell that the Bloodviolet Fiend's material attacks were tremendously powerful! Far greater than the material attacks of those other Seven Star Fiends which Linley had seen.

After the recording was completed, there was some information regarding this battle.

"This explanation is quite detailed." Linley, after reading it, sighed in praise. This explanation actually gave a detailed explanation of the techniques used by both people. Only now did Linley understand: "So the Bloodviolet Fiend is actually most powerful in the Way of Destruction."

Linley opened his eyes.

"How do you feel?" Mosi, seated on a distant chair, laughed as he looked at Linley. "There are many Seven Star Fiends, but the weakest of them have fused four profound mysteries. The most powerful are comparable to the Asuras of the Infernal Realm or the Commanders of Purgatory."

"Very powerful." After seeing the explanation of this battle, only now did Linley understand how frightening the Bloodviolet Fiend was.

If he were to encounter the Bloodviolet Fiend, he would most likely be finished.

"The Bloodviolet Fiend is extremely famous, and his power is more than enough to compete against most Asuras of the Infernal Realm or Commanders of Purgatory. His accomplishments in the Way of Destruction are at a very high level, and he is also a Soul Mutate. He truly is powerful." Mosi shook his head and sighed. "Unfortunately, this astonishing, dazzling figure went to a material plane ten thousand years ago and was killed."

In his heart, Linley knew that the Bloodviolet Fiend was killed in his own

homeland.

“Could it be that Lord Beirut was the one to kill him?” Linley wondered to himself.

Linley didn’t over-think things. He seized the opportunity to immediately go watch the scryer recordings of other experts doing battle. They included the Bloodviolet Fiend, the Royalwing Fiend, the Bluejacket Fiend, the Silvermoon Fiend…

Aside from these, there were also scryer recordings of ultimate Deity-level experts from other Higher Planes engaging in battle.

Asuras of the Infernal Realm, Commanders of Purgatory…scryer recordings of figures at this level.

“There’s even a scryer recording of Reisgem engaging in battle.” Linley didn’t recognize virtually any of the figures who did battle, so when he saw Reisgem’s, he was naturally delighted.

The scryer recording had ‘Reisgem’ in a human form. He looked like a very handsome youth, quite similar with Bebe. Only, Reisgem’s entire body was covered in an amethyst armor, and in battle he relied on his hands and feet.

Clean and blunt. The Gravitational Space formed from violet light which Reisgem used was far more powerful than Linley’s.

“So powerful.” Linley stared, slack-jawed.

Another Purgatory Commander was fighting Reisgem, but the battle was one-sided.

Linley watched nearly a thousand scryer recordings, finally arriving at the pillar at the corner of the throne room. Pulling open the pillar ‘door’, he saw that inside, there were three memory crystals.

“You only need to see a single one of these three crystal balls.” Mosi finally

stood up and walked over, laughing. “The three crystal balls are all recordings of a Sovereign dealing with a Highgod, and the technique they used in each is essentially the same.”

“Understood.” Linley took a deep breath, then sent his divine sense into the first crystal ball.

It was a vast, endless sea. In the air above, there was a black-robed middle-aged man. This person was currently laughing with his head raised towards the skies, but tears were streaming down his face. His lips were moving, as though he was saying something.

The strange thing was…

In the air above the sea, a blurry, enormous face appeared, which was completely formed from elemental essence.

The black-robed man immediately pointed angrily at the enormous face, his lips moving nonstop.

A hint of annoyance passed through that enormous face, and its lips moved slightly. The black-robed middle-aged figure’s body trembled, and then he fell down from the skies, while the enormous face vanished.

“That’s it?” Linley looked at the explanation for this scryer recording. “And that black-robed figure was an Asura of the Infernal Realm?”

Linley withdrew his divine sense from the crystal ball, his mind still numb.

“That enormous face was a Sovereign?” Linley turned to look at Mosi.

Mosi nodded. “Right.”

“All the Sovereign had to do to kill an Asura of the Infernal Realm was just move his lips?” Linley felt that this was simply too incredible.

Mosi sighed. “The Will of a Sovereign is inviolable. Even someone as

powerful as an Asura, with but a thought by a Sovereign, will be easily killed. In front of a Sovereign, even the most powerful of Highgods will be unable to resist."

Linley couldn't help but be astonished.

Not being a Sovereign, Linley couldn't understand how Sovereigns could be so powerful.

Kill an Asura with just a thought?

"The might of a Sovereign is irresistible." Linley said to himself.

Compared to those countless Deities, Sovereigns were high and above them, capable of effortlessly killing any Highgod.

"Sovereigns are very remote and distant from us. As long as you do not anger Sovereigns, they won't lower themselves to kill you." Mosi laughed.

Linley nodded slightly. After having viewed so many scryer recordings, Linley was quite stunned. After calming himself, Linley said, "Lord Mosi, I've disturbed you for so long. I should return now. I truly am grateful to you."

Mosi laughed and nodded.

Linley suddenly thought of something, and he couldn't help but laugh awkwardly. "Lord Mosi, there's one last thing."

"Oh?" Mosi furrowed his forehead.

"During that battle at Miluo Island, I promised Bakwill to serve as a red-robed elder for a hundred years, and that I wouldn't leave the island without his permission. But I truly long for my homeland and want to go back sooner…" Linley continued to explain.

The next day. The Bagshaw clan's estate. Linley's residence. Currently,

Linley and Uriah were walking towards the gates of the estate.

“Elder.” Two guards at the side of the gate to the resident immediately bowed respectfully.

Linley instructed, “Go to the island guard’s residential area and have Tarosse, Dylin, and Dylin’s two children come over.” This guard had gone last time, so he knew exactly where Tarosse lived.

“Yes, elder.” The guard immediately left.

“Mr. Uriah, sorry to trouble you.” Linley turned and laughed.

“It’s no trouble.” Uriah was very courteous as well.

After Linley returned from the underwater Castle Hendsey to Miluo Island, he had brought Uriah with him. Uriah’s was on official orders from the master of Castle Hendsey to order Bakwill to permit Linley to leave.

“Linley, then I’ll go speak with clan leader Bakwill now.” Uriah immediately left.

Just as Linley entered his residence, he saw Bebe, Delia, Olivier, Cesar, and the others all come welcome him.

“Boss, did you just say we are about to leave?” Bebe was the first to run over.

Linley looked at Bebe, Delia, and his friends. Although he had only gone one or two days without seeing them, during the past two days, he had walked to and from the brink of death, and had learned many secrets in the process.

“Yes. We are about to leave.” Linley laughed as he rubbed Bebe’s head.

“Delia.” Linley turned to look at Delia.

“If it weren’t for the fact that the master of Castle Hendsey was giving face to that juvenile amethyst beast, I probably really would have been done for.” As he thought of this, he couldn’t help but tremble. Linley couldn’t help but immediately pull Delia into his arms, tightly holding her.

“Linley?” Delia asked softly. She could tell that Linley seemed to be in a strange mood.

“I missed you.” Linley said softly. Delia’s face couldn’t help but turn red, and she said softly, “Olivier and Cesar and them are all here.” Linley released Delia. Seeing her bashfulness, he couldn’t help but begin to laugh loudly.

Sequeira was walking alongside the road. When he arrived at the gate to Linley’s residence, he heard the loud laughter coming from within.

“Oh, that Linley’s back?” Sequeira recognized Linley’s voice, and then he chuckled. “He was so arrogant in front of me. But in the end, hasn’t he become just another dog for my Bagshaw clan?” Sequeira, as the young master of his clan, knew that those red-robed elders were all under soul control.

Sequeira immediately entered Linley’s resident.

The guards at the door didn’t dare to bar Sequeira’s path.

Linley was currently laughing and chatting with Delia, Bebe, Olivier, and the others.

“Linley.” A voice suddenly rang out. Linley turned to look. The newcomer was Sequeira.

Sequeira raised his jaw slightly, and with a cold laugh, flipped out his blood-red Miluo Insignia. “See this?”

Linley was puzzled.

“Blood-red colored Miluo Insignia. What of it?” Linley said, puzzled. This time, the master of Castle Hendsey had given him a great deal of face, and had satisfied every request he had made. Linley didn’t want to cause any more problems with this Sequeira.

“Come here!” Sequeira said coldly.

Frowning, Linley walked over.

“Kneel.” Sequeira shouted.

Linley’s face couldn’t help but turn dark.

“In the name of the blood-red colored Miluo Insignia, I order you to kneel.” Sequeira shouted with cold fierceness. “Hurry.” In the Bagshaw clan, the red-robed elders who had been controlled served, above all others, the master of the castle. After that, they would obey holders of the blood-red colored Miluo Insignia.

Currently, Sequeira just wanted to thoroughly humiliate Linley. As for killing Linley?

He wouldn’t do that. As he saw it, Linley was now an obedient dog for his clan. How could he bear to kill him?

“Sequeira, what are you doing?” Linley felt that this was absolutely ridiculous.

“You dare disobey?” Sequeira was enraged. Nobody whose soul had been controlled had ever dared to disobey the blood-red colored Miluo Insignia.

“You have brain damage.” Bebe immediately shouted angrily.

“Sequeira!” Suddenly, a furious shout rang out.

Sequeira turned his head and saw his father, ‘Bakwill’, currently walking over alongside Uriah. Sequeira immediately walked over and said angrily,

“Father, that Linley actually dares to disobey my orders. He needs to be properly punished.”

“Shut your mouth!” Bakwill was so furious, his face was turning red.

Sequeira was stunned.

Bakwill immediately turned to look at Linley, squeezing out a smile. “Mr. Linley, over the past few days in this place, I haven’t been a very good host. I’m truly sorry.” Hearing these words, Sequeira stared, slack-jawed.

“Father, why are you…” Sequeira didn’t understand.

Why the need to be so courteous to a completely devoted person whose soul had been dominated?

“Shut your damn mouth!” Bakwill shouted angrily.

After Uriah had conveyed the order, Bakwill and Uriah had chatted in detail. Bakwill now understood that Linley’s status was truly extraordinary. If Linley was simply a mere descendant of the Four Divine Beasts clan, his ancestor, Lord ‘Mosi’, definitely wouldn’t have stayed his hand.

“Father, I…” Sequeira was completely lost.

“WHAP!” Bakwill launched a vicious slap directly on Sequeira’s face. “I told you to shut your damn mouth!” This slap from Bakwill finally brought Sequeira to his senses. Sequeira immediately stood off to one side, not daring to make another sound.

“Mr. Bakwill, no need to be like this.” Linley now could guess that Sequeira had probably taken him for someone who had been spiritually controlled.

Bakwill forced out a smile. “Linley, my son sometimes is so arrogant as to consider everyone else beneath him. It’s only proper that he be disciplined on occasion. Linley, I’ve already learned everything from Uriah. Alas. You

haven't even stayed here at my place for more than a few days, but you are already going to leave. What a true pity."

"There's nothing I can do. I really do have something I must be doing." Linley said.

"Fine, then. I won't try to further dissuade you from leaving, Mr. Linley. Mr. Linley, you can leave whenever you wish…but of course, if you ever return to my place, my Miluo Island welcomes you at all times." Bakwill said in a very friendly manner.

"Definitely, definitely." Linley laughed.

Linley suddenly turned his head, and he saw that Tarosse, Dylin, and Dylin's two sons were currently walking over. Tarosse and Dylin, upon seeing Linley, were overjoyed and embarrassed. Their emotions were extremely complicated right now.

They wanted to say something, but with Bakwill present, they didn't know what to say for now.

"Haha, Dylin, Tarosse!" Linley immediately laughed and walked over. "No need to say too much. It is all over now!"

"Right. It's all over now." Tarosse and Dylin had unshed tears in their eyes. They had been under soul control, but now they had regained their freedom. This freedom which they had lost then regain would cause even the toughest of men to feel emotional. What's more, they knew that the reason why they had regained their freedom was due to Linley.

"Haha, let's go. It's time to head out!"

Linley stared into the distant southeastern skies. "Indigo Prefecture…time to go back!"

Chapter 1 – Training Speed

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 1, Training Speed

“Rumble…” The waves of the Starmist Sea struck against the shores of Miluo Island. The clan leader of the Bagshaw clan, Bakwill, watched alongside Uriah and the others as Linley’s group boarded their metallic lifeform, beginning their journey towards the Bloodridge Continent.

The metallic lifeform had once more transformed into a ship. On the front of the ship.

“We finally left.” O’Brien let out an emotional sigh.

“Right. We left.” Cesar repeated. “I’ll forget this place. Forever!” Linley glanced at Cesar. Previously, Cesar had asked him to help investigate what had happened to Cecily. Although Linley had discovered that the situation seemed off, and that it was uncertain whether or not Cecily was still alive…

He still told Cesar that Cecily was perfectly fine and still living in the clan estate.

“Perhaps this way, Cesar will feel a bit better.” Linley said to himself.

“We’re finally leaving. Father, we’re finally leaving.” The elder Six-Eyed Golden Ni-Lion, ‘Cleo’, was extremely excited as well. In the past, he and his brother had no idea that their father had been under soul domination. Only now did they know.

They felt a surge of terror just thinking about it.

“Right. We’re leaving. We’ve escaped.” Dylin stared into the distant southeastern skies, not turning at all. He would most likely never return to Miluo Island ever again.

“Screeech!” An ear-piercing sound suddenly shook the heavens.

Linley turned to look. It was Tarosse. Tarosse’s head was raised, and he was emitting an ear-piercing screech, his entire body trembling. After a long time, he finally ceased his howling. Tarosse turned to look at Linley, his eyes slightly red. “Linley. I won’t say too much about this great kindness you have shown me. Thank you.”

Someone who had never been soul dominated would never understand how Tarosse and Dylin were currently feeling.

“Haha, let’s go. Let’s go to the Bloodridge Continent. Let’s go to the Indigo Prefecture.” Linley held Delia by the hand.

Their trip over the Starmist Sea was very calm. They occasionally met a few bandits, but given the power of Linley’s squad, the Highgods amongst them only had to show themselves and the bandits were immediately terrified and would flee.

This trip was an uneventful one.

Within the ship cabin.

Linley was seated in the meditative stance in a corner. His original body as well as his three divine clones were all in this state. After this last experience, Linley realized what his greatest weakness was. His soul!

It wasn’t that his profound mysteries in terms of soul defense was weak!

At present, he had fused the Throbbing Pulse of the World, Gravitational Space, and the Essence of the Earth. His soul defense, in terms of profound mysteries, wasn’t weak. The biggest problem was his foundation; in other words, the strength of his soul!

The power of a God’s soul, in quality, was far weaker than that of a Highgod’s soul. Although Linley, through using soul-related profound mysteries, had soul defense comparable to that of an ordinary Highgod, and

also had that damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact…it was precisely because of that Sovereign artifact that Linley was able to roam the Starmist Sea, slay Ganmontin, and slay so many Highgods. If he didn't have it, how could Linley, a mere God, possibly be so strong?

Sovereign divine artifacts were simply too powerful.

"Right now, my number one target must be to reach the Highgod stage as soon as possible." Linley knew where he needed to develop himself. "Once I become a Highgod, I can once again refine a large amount of amethysts, and with amethysts as well as the natural Highgod boost, my soul power will increase tens of times over! Once that happens, as long as I only need to defend that flaw in the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, I won't need to be afraid of even a Seven Star Fiend skilled in soul attacks."

Linley knew all of this very well.

It might perhaps be easier for someone at the God level to fuse profound mysteries, as upon reaching the Highgod level, the difficulty level would rise greatly.

But at the same time, fusing a large number of profound mysteries as a God also took an astonishing amount of time. For example, the 'Worldwalking' profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, up till now, still hadn't yet even begun to be fused with any of the other three profound mysteries, much less completely fused.

"I currently have three types of profound mysteries. If I need to fuse four of them, it seems that I would have to thank my lucky stars to be able to fuse them in even ten thousand years."

"Right now, I've gained a basic understanding of the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength'. I need to hurry up and master the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength', and then I'll train in the final 'Vitality' mystery. Once all six are completed, I will be a Highgod. By then, my power will grow dramatically! In terms of material defense or soul defense, I won't have any glaring weaknesses. I'll be able to deal against most Seven Star Fiends."

Linley knew that upon becoming a Highgod, it was still possible to fuse profound mysteries. Only, the difficulty level would rise exponentially.

“Once I become a Highgod, I can continue to slowly fuse them.”

As long as one became a Highgod on one’s own, there was still hope for fusing.

“I need to thank Mosi. If it hadn’t been for his sledgehammer blow, who knows how long it would have been before I would have gained basic insight into the Profound Mysteries of Strength?” Linley quieted his mind, allowing his original body as well as his divine earth clone to whole-heartedly delve into training in the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’.

Right now, Linley was favoring the Laws of the Earth.

As for the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley had only begun to train in five profound mysteries. He had four more that he needed to train in, and the amount of time that took was astonishing as well.

As for the Elemental Laws of Fire, Linley’s divine fire clone, till now, was still not even at the God level.

“Training in the Elemental Laws of Fire is simply too slow.” Linley now had an even greater appreciation for the importance of talent.

If one was talented, then one would train faster, such as Linley with the Laws of the Earth and the Laws of the Wind. In less than a thousand years, Linley had reached the level of learning five of the Laws of the Earth.

But if one’s talent was poor…

Although there was no bottleneck yet, Linley still had yet to even master a second profound mystery of the Elemental Laws of Fire.

Breaking through bottlenecks required insights, luck, and comprehension

ability.

However, normal training was reliant on talent.

Linley's elemental affinity for 'earth' and 'wind', based on the test that had been done when he was young, was 'exceptional'! As for 'fire', it was only 'average'. As for the others, his affinity was very low.

Clearly, Linley had the greatest chance of becoming a Highgod soon through his divine earth clone. His divine earth clone's power was clearly more powerful, and so naturally, with even his original body training in the Laws of the Earth, his training speed became even faster.

The Starmist Sea. Endless and boundless. Occasionally, an island would be seen.

"Rumble…" The metallic lifeform continuously advanced through the waves.

Linley and Delia were currently shoulder-to-shoulder, staring towards the southeast. Next to them was Olivier, Bebe, O'Brien, Dylin, Tarosse, Cesar, and others. They all had smiles on their faces.

From afar, they saw a hint of a line that was extremely, extremely long. The line was a shore.

"The Bloodridge Continent. We finally arrived!" Linley was incomparably excited.

After heading out from Miluo Island, they had travelled for twenty three years, and now, they were finally at the Bloodridge Continent.

"We're at the Bloodridge Continent now. The Indigo Prefecture won't be far away." Bebe's eyes were shining. "Boss, I remember that on that map, it seemed as though the Indigo Prefecture wasn't too far away from the sea shore. Ohoho, after nearly seven hundred years, we are almost there, finally."

Linley and Delia held each other's hands tightly, staring towards the shore.

"Linley, once we arrive at the Bloodridge Continent, shall we head directly for the Indigo Prefecture, or to accept another escort mission headed towards the Indigo Prefecture?" Olivier looked at Linley. After all, this was what Linley had done in the past.

"No need."

Linley shook his head. "In the past, I was weak and was afraid of trouble. Now, we'll head straight for Indigo Prefecture. No need to fear anything on the way over." Linley was now extremely confident in himself, and his squad had quite a few Highgods.

In addition, Tarosse was an expert on the level of a Six Star Fiend as well.

The metallic lifeform moved forward at a very fast pace. Soon, it reached the continental shelf. Immediately, the 'ship' shaped metallic lifeform transformed into a panther-shape, flying in the air above the Bloodridge Continent.

The Bloodridge Continent was similar to the Redbud Continent.

Various tribes were scattered everywhere, and bandits were scattered everywhere as well. Battles could occur at any moment. But of course, no bandit squad would dare offend Linley's squad.

"Linley, how is your training progressing?" Tarosse laughed.

On the way over, Tarosse and Dylin had finally learned that Linley was only a God. As for how a God could release such astonishing power, Linley just gave a fairly general explanation.

However, Tarosse and Dylin could tell that this all had to do with the Amethyst Mountains.

“Not bad. I’ve reached the later stages of the Profound Mysteries of Strength.” Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. “Unfortunately, I still haven’t even gotten a basic understanding of the Profound Mysteries of Vitality.” This was what frustrated Linley the most. ‘Vitality’.

Based on the book which had given him a general description of the various profound mysteries, the ‘Vitality’ mystery was one of the unique profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and was exceedingly hard to gain insight into.

For each profound mystery, getting basic insights as well as breaking through the final bottleneck to mastery was the two hardest steps. If one was slow, one could be stuck for a million years, and that would be considered normal.

“No rush. Perhaps you’ll gain a sudden insight soon.” Tarosse laughed.

Linley laughed and nodded as well. It was true. For example, he had suddenly gained an insight into the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’, and so he had gained a basic understanding.

“Your training speed is already very impressive. You’ve trained for less than a thousand years, and yet you’ve gained insights into five of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. And, more importantly… you’ve fused three of them.” Tarosse was quite admiring of Linley.

Tarosse himself had only fused two profound mysteries, and had relied on his innate divine ability, along with those two profound mysteries, to reach the power level of a Six Star Fiend.

“Hey, Tarosse, that goes without saying. My Boss has always been awesome.” Bebe walked over as well and said arrogantly, “Look at you. You’ve been training for I don’t even know how many years, but you’ve only fused two profound mysteries. Hmph.”

Tarosse couldn’t help but laugh. “Bebe, don’t be so smug. You train in the Laws of Darkness, right? I want to ask you, of the six profound mysteries of

the Laws of Darkness, how many have you trained in, and how many have you fused? As I recall, you've been training with Linley for about the same length of time."

"Haha…" The nearby O'Brien and Cesar both began to laugh.

Linley couldn't help but begin to laugh towards Bebe as well.

Everyone knew that Bebe didn't have any patience for training. At most, he'd be able to calm his mind and train for a year or so, after which he'd begin to get restless. With an attitude like that…no matter how talented he was, if he didn't work hard, how could he improve?

"Tarosse, you know that's just how Bebe is, and yet you ask him this question?" Dylin said.

Bebe was so angry, even his nose was trembling. "Right. I haven't even fused a single profound mystery!"

"Bebe, enough. Don't be angry." Linley laughed as he patted Bebe on the shoulder, but Bebe raised his head proudly. "But of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, I, Bebe, have gained insights into four of them!"

Everyone within the cabin immediately fell silent.

Linley wondered if he was hearing things. He couldn't help but look at Bebe. "Bebe, what'd you say?" Linley remembered quite clearly that Bebe hadn't spent much time training. Normally, he would just mess around, and only occasionally would he train.

"Bebe, say it again. I suspect I misheard." Tarosse said, and even Dylin and Olivier were looking at Bebe.

Neither Dylin nor Olivier had, as of yet, successfully mastered four profound mysteries.

“Listen up, and listen clearly.” Bebe raised his eyebrows smugly, then said loudly, “I, Bebe, despite not having fused a single profound mystery, have already mastered four of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, and am currently training in a fifth!”

Linley himself had only mastered four of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and was currently working on the fifth.

“Bebe, it’s fine if you are slow in training, but you can’t just make things up.” Cesar said.

“Make things up?” Bebe was so angry, his eyes bulged out.

Bebe flipped his hand, and darkness-type elemental essence swirled around, forming a black serpent which wrapped around Bebe’s arm. It even emitted a hissing sound, as though it were real.

“This is the Essence of Darkness.” Bebe said smugly. “See it?”

“You knew that one all along.” Olivier laughed.

Bebe’s body flickered, and instantly, dozens of doppelgangers of Bebe appeared within the cabin. Everyone remained calm; they all knew that Bebe was in possession of the Shadowshape Doppelganger technique.

“Hmph.”

Bebe suddenly let out a cold snort.

Very bizarrely, one black tentacle after another emerged from Bebe’s body. Instantly, Bebe had become like an octopus, with the area around his body being filled by dozens of long, icy cold tentacles. The black, misty aura they emanated was exceedingly bizarre.

Linley was surprised, and everyone else was stunned.

Laws of Darkness – The Profound Mysteries of ‘Evil’.

“That was the third. This is the fourth.” Bebe’s body flickered, and those evil tentacles disappeared. Bebe reached out with his right hand, and from within it, a vortex appeared which seemed to be devouring everything around it, swallowing up even light itself. The area of darkness grew larger and larger.

Laws of Darkness – The Profound Mysteries of ‘Devour’.

Everyone in the cabin was speechless. Olivier, up till now, had only mastered two profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness, and was currently researching a third. As for Dylin, he had only mastered three and was currently training in a fourth.

But Bebe had actually been faster than them.

“How is this possible?”

“Hmph. You actually didn’t believe me. Bebe! Let me tell you, it’s possible that tomorrow, I’ll have mastered the fifth one.” Bebe smugly adjusted his straw hat, his head raised proudly.

“Bebe, what’s this all about?” Linley was utterly puzzled.

Chapter 2 – Travelling to Indigo Prefecture

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 2, Travelling to Indigo Prefecture

From going from the Yulan continent to the Infernal Realm, Bebe had always been by Linley's side. Linley knew very clearly how hard (or not) Bebe had trained. Logically speaking, it should be impossible for Bebe to have mastered four profound mysteries.

However, Bebe had succeeded.

This was a reality! Everyone had seen this.

"Bebe, how did you train?" Dylin was in disbelief as well.

"How could you be so fast?" Olivier, no matter how calm he normally was, had been stunned. They all stared at Bebe. Clearly, all of them wanted to know why Bebe was able to train so quickly, so as to see if they could also learn from this method.

Bebe just laughed smugly.

"I told you so, but you guys didn't believe, earlier." Bebe said forcefully.

"We believe you now, but how did you do this?" Tarosse asked as well. Even the greatest of geniuses had a process by which they trained. Linley had seized every moment to train, and his talent had been on full display in the Yulan continent. Everyone had watched him improve, step by step.

But Bebe? Nobody had dared to believe that his training speed could catch up to Linley's.

"I'm Bebe!" Bebe stared at the surrounding people. He said smugly, "You didn't believe me. All I'll say is…it has to do with my Grandpa Beirut. I won't say anything else."

“Lord Beirut?” Tarosse and Dylin were mystified.

Training was a personal matter. No matter how powerful Beirut was, he wasn’t by Bebe’s side. How could he help Bebe?

“Those smug looks on your faces just now…hmph. I won’t tell you. Slowly ponder it on your own. I’ll only tell my Boss.” Bebe turned to glance at Linley, then chortled and said through the soul, “Boss, are you surprised?”

“I am indeed surprised.” Linley couldn’t understand either how Bebe had trained so quickly.

Bebe smiled mysteriously, then said through his divine sense, “Boss, do you still remember how Grandpa Beirut had said that to help me train faster, he had paid a very heavy price and obtained many treasures to help me breakthrough faster? He said that I was very slow to have taken twenty years before mastering the Essence of Darkness and reaching the God level, and that if it had been you, most likely a single year would have been enough.”

Linley immediately recalled this.

Beirut had indeed said such a thing.

Back then, Linley hadn’t yet entered the Infernal Realm, and so he didn’t clearly understand how powerful Beirut was. After arriving in the Infernal Realm, however, Linley finally realized how mighty Beirut was. Beirut had created that godspark weapon for Bebe, then infused it with that pearl.

The power of that attack had actually destroyed the divine artifact of Elquin, a Seven Star Fiend!

“If it had been Lord Beirut himself, he most likely would have easily killed that Seven Star Fiend.” Linley still remembered how the master of Castle Hendsey, ‘Mosi’, had said that there were very few people in the Infernal Realm capable of creating soul-protecting divine artifacts.

“But Lord Beirut had made a soul-protecting divine artifact for Bebe.”

Linley mused to himself, “Godspark weapons are priceless items in the Infernal Realm as well. They are exceedingly costly. Even if all he did was sell off a few godspark weapons, Lord Beirut would be a person of astonishing wealth. In addition, he is a Sovereign’s Emissary!”

Despite having been in the Infernal Realm for so long, Linley had yet to hear of someone else who was a Sovereign’s Emissary!

To be selected by a Sovereign…naturally, only absolute topmost Highgods would be selected.

“Lord Beirut said that he had spent an enormous price to acquire some treasures. Given Lord Beirut’s power, for even him to say that the price was enormous…what treasure could it have been?” Linley understood that even a trillion inkstones, to Lord Beirut, was nothing.

A single godspark weapon, in and of itself, was worth far more!

What sort of treasure could possibly cause Lord Beirut to say that it had cost him an ‘enormous price’?

He hadn’t realized this earlier, but now that Linley thought of this, he became all the more curious.

“Bebe, what sort of treasure is it? For even your Grandpa Beirut to say it cost an enormous price, and for it to be capable of helping you train so quickly…” Linley hurriedly asked through their spiritual bond.

Bebe laughed. “Boss, that treasure is…soul fragment strips!”

“Soul fragment strips?” Linley didn’t understand.

“Right. Grandpa Beirut knew that I didn’t have the temperament to slowly train, so he came up with this idea. Grandpa Beirut went to the Infernal

Realm and spent an enormous price to invite a major figure to gather the souls of countless Prime Saints and fragment them into strips! He completely peeled out all of the fragments containing ‘Profound Mysteries of the Laws’ in the souls of those Saints.”

Linley was stunned.

Peeling off strips from the soul?

When Linley had been in the Yulan continent, he had seen the then Grand Magus Necromancer, ‘Zassler’, execute a ‘Soulscour’ on a soul. Only, that just removed a portion of a soul’s memories; there was no one to clearly sense the insights within a person’s soul.

“Grandpa Beirut said that peeling off soul fragment strips is very hard! In addition, a Deity’s soul is fused with his divine spark, and so it’s impossible to carve out soul fragment strips from them. The only choice for doing this is with Saints!” Bebe continued to chat through divine sense. “To completely peel off the portion of a soul with insights into the profound mysteries of a Law is something which only a very few people in the Infernal Realm can do. Grandpa Beirut said that he himself couldn’t do it either, so he had to pay an enormous price to invite an expert to help out.”

Linley was secretly surprised.

In places such as the Blacksand Castle and the Redbud Castle, Linley had never heard of ‘soul fragment strips’ being available for purchase. These things were simply priceless. Most likely, only major personages like Beirut were capable of acquiring them.

“When I became an adult, I naturally became a Deity, and so gained insight into the ‘Shadowshape Doppelganger’ mystery. Grandpa asked some of his friends to help out and acquire four pieces of ‘soul fragment strips’ for me, which contained four of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Darkness.”

Bebe sent resignedly, “Grandpa Beirut said that most Prime Saints had only

gained insights into very ordinary profound mysteries, such as the ‘Essence of Darkness’. Very few have insights into ‘Devour’ or ‘Evil’.”

“Grandpa’s friends also were forced to spend an enormous amount of effort and to very carefully peel off those soul fragments. It is extremely difficult to completely peel off the part of the soul with the insights into a profound mystery. In the end, he managed to acquire four, which he gave to me for fusing.” Bebe sent mentally.

Linley was completely stunned.

Souls were very unique things, and even soul attacks were hard to develop.

To completely peel off the part of a soul which contained insights into the profound mysteries of a Law…one could imagine how hard it was just thinking about it.

“To reach this level, how deep must one’s mastery with regards to the soul be?” Linley felt this was almost unbelievable.

Beirut himself was capable of making soul-protecting divine artifacts, which meant that Beirut had already reached a very high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul. But even Beirut was not capable of this, and had to pay a huge price to invite others to do it for him.

One could imagine how hard peeling off soul fragments was.

“Lord Beirut’s friends are truly amazing.” Linley sighed to himself.

There was no way one could peel any fragments from the soul of a Deity, so it had to be done to Prime Saints instead.

“Who knows how many Prime Saints were killed for these soul fragments to be acquired.” Linley sighed to himself, but he also understood that in the Infernal Realm, the mighty were respected. In the Infernal Realm, many tribes raised Saint-level magical beasts, then butchered them and retrieved their body parts for sale to restaurants.

In the Infernal Realm, Saints were treated as humans treated wild rabbits in the material realms. They could be killed at leisure.

“Alas. Prime Saints are all people who have gained some insights into a single profound mystery and have reached a bottleneck and are just one step away from completion.” Bebe sighed. “Thus, with regards to these four profound mysteries, I’ve gained insights all the way through to the bottleneck. For breaking through the bottleneck, though, I still have to rely on myself!”

“In the Yulan continent, it only took me twenty years to break through in the Essence of Darkness.”

“In the Infernal Realm, it’s been seven hundred years. I’ve occasionally gained some insights, and broke through to obtain mastery in the ‘Devour’ and ‘Evil’ profound mysteries. Right now, I’ve completely mastered four types, while I’m at a bottleneck for the fifth. As for the sixth…I’m completely blind and have no idea as to what it is about.”

Linley completely understood.

Bebe was a divine beast. As soon as he reached adulthood, he would naturally master one type of profound mystery and become a Deity! This was the first profound mystery, ‘Shadowshape Doppelganger’.

Afterwards, Lord Beirut, knowing that Bebe had no patience, didn’t want Bebe to become a Highgod through fusing with a divine spark. Thus, he had paid an enormous price to procure those four strips of soul fragments to have Bebe fuse them, and thus naturally reach the ‘bottleneck’ stage in those four profound mysteries.

As soon as he gained an insight into one of them, he would reach mastery.

He didn’t need to train at all.

“No wonder. No wonder.” Linley let out two sighs.

Sometimes, one could be angered to death when looking at others. Linley had spent every day and every night training, but Bebe had spent all his time fooling around. When, for some reason, he gained a sudden insight, he would achieve mastery. This was simply too easy.

However, in Linley's mind, he was still very happy for Bebe.

"Lord Beirut truly has taken exceedingly good care of Bebe." Linley sighed.

Beirut had a very high status, while Bebe was the second Godeater Rat in his lineage. Beirut naturally viewed Bebe as a treasure and doted upon him to an unbelievable extent. For Bebe's sake, he had been willing to exhaust himself and run throughout the Infernal Realm to ask friends to help out.

From this alone, Linley could tell how powerful and vast Lord Beirut's connections were.

"Peeling off soul strips…that's hard work and careful work. For that powerful figure to actually be willing to do this for the sake of Lord Beirut…" Linley now understood how influential Beirut himself was.

The metallic lifeform continued to speed towards Indigo Prefecture. As for the secret regarding why Bebe had trained so quickly, in the end, Bebe only told Linley and Delia. The others didn't know. Clearly, in Bebe's heart, Linley and Delia were closer to him.

After they had reached the Bloodridge Continent, the metallic lifeform had flown on for three years.

"Boss, look. Stonesword Mountain!" Bebe pointed through the translucent window towards the east.

Linley looked carefully. In the distance to the east, there was an exceedingly tall mountain, its peak seeming to pierce through the heavens. The upper part of the peak was shaped like a heavy sword, and at the peak of this

sword-shaped mountain, the clouds swirled about.

“Stonesword Mountain. We finally reached the Indigo Prefecture!” Delia said with excitement.

Stonesword Mountain was one of the important landmarks in the maps of Indigo Prefecture.

Linley felt the blood surging throughout his body. “Finally here. We’re finally here! Indigo Prefecture!”

The place which his dreams and his very soul had been focused on.

When in the Yulan continent, Linley had learned of Indigo Prefecture. He knew that his ancestors, the elders of the Baruch clan had all come to Indigo Prefecture. Linley thus had embarked on this one-way trip to the Infernal Realm!

From the Redbud Continent all the way over to here, they had encountered countless tribulations. The battle at the castle of sand. The volcano range. The breakthrough in the Amethyst Mountains. The shocking danger of Miluo Island…and now finally, after passing through the Starmist Sea, they had arrived at the Bloodridge Continent, arrived at Indigo Prefecture!

“Indigo Prefecture!”

Linley took a deep breath. Currently, he was unbearably eager to go meet the ancestors of his Baruch clan.

“Boss, we don’t know the exact location of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Bebe said.

“It’s simple.” Linley was all smiles. “Let’s first go to the nearest city, Fansi City. The Four Divine Beasts clan should be extremely famous in the Indigo Prefecture. To find the place where the Four Divine Beasts clan live should be quite simple.”

The metallic lifeform sped directly for Fansi City. Fansi City was the first city which Linley's group would be entering upon reaching the Indigo Prefecture.

After flying for many days.

Linley and everyone else was drinking wine and chatting idly in the living room of the metallic lifeform. As they were about to reach his ancestral clan, Linley was very happy. In this final stage of the journey, Linley was, for once, not training.

"Boom!" Suddenly, a powerful vibration shook out from the skies, shaking Linley's metallic lifeform.

The metallic lifeform trembled.

"What a powerful wave."

"Hey, what's going on?" Linley and the others stood up, looking out through the window.

The metallic lifeform flew very fast, and soon, Linley's group saw something which utterly stunned them…

In the distant skies, nearly a hundred Highgods were fleeing in panic. They were currently being slaughtered by three white-robed men!

"Haha, you won't be able to flee!" A white-robed figure laughed loudly.

The three white-robed men all had long golden hair, golden eyebrows, and were as handsome as any fairies which Linley had ever seen. The three white-robed men flashed about at high speed, and the Highgods on the other side all fell down from the skies.

Those Highgods were terror-struck!

"Flee!" With a furious shout, those dozens of lucky survivors immediately

dispersed in every direction.

“You won’t be able to!” A calm voice rang out.

One of the white-robed men whose long hair fluttered in the air suddenly had a pair of golden wings that were ten meters long grow out of his back. This enormous set of golden wings was covered with a hazy golden light, and holy energy spread out in every direction.

The golden-winged man, his entire body wrapped up in golden light, seemed so holy and beautiful.

“I sentence you…to death!”

The white-robed man said softly.

A translucent golden ripple spread out in every direction, and those dozens of fleeing Highgods, no matter how fast they had been fleeing, were unable to move faster than this ripple.

Immediately, those dozens of Highgods who had been fleeing in every direction fell down from the skies. Only the original leader of those hundred Highgods remained, and he stared in terror and rage at the three white-robed men in front of him.

“So strong.” Linley, Tarosse, and the others were all stunned.

“He trains in the Edicts of Fate.” Tarosse said in a low voice. “Judging from his power, that white-robed man, if not a Seven Star Fiend, must at least be a Six Star Fiend.”

“Edicts of Fate?”

In the Infernal Realm, Linley rarely encountered experts who trained in the Edicts of Fate, because most of them had gone to the ‘Celestial Realm’ of the Four Higher Planes. The few he had actually seen weren’t very powerful.

“A Highgod that trains in the Edicts of Fate.” Linley was secretly startled.

From mid-air, a bellow rang out.

“Why. We have never offended your Boleyn [Bo’lin] clan. Why must you be so ruthless, to kill us all and spare not a single one of us?” The lucky survivor, the leader, couldn’t help but bellow out in rage.

Those three white-robed men all faintly glowed with golden light.

“Why? Aren’t you on assignment for the Four Divine Beasts clan?” One of the white-robed men laughed coldly.

“Four Divine Beasts clan?” The surviving leader said, stunned.

“All who serve the Four Divine Beasts clan will die!” The white-robed man who had the pair of golden wings said, then he pointed out with his right hand and a ray of golden light shot out.

The leader wasn’t able to dodge in time. The golden light struck into his body, and he fell down from mid-air.

The white-robed man with the golden wings cast a sideways glance at Linley’s distant metallic lifeform, then let out a disdainful snort. “Let’s go.” The three white-robed figures transformed into three rays of light, disappearing into the horizon.

“All those who serve the Four Divine Beasts shall die?” Within the metallic lifeform, Linley murmured to himself, momentarily speechless.

Chapter 3 – Azure Dragon Clan

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 3, Azure Dragon Clan

According to what Linley had learned on the way, as well as what he had heard from Beirut, as Linley saw it, the Four Divine Beasts clan was extremely powerful. At Miluo Island, after seeing the many scryer recordings, he had mentioned to Castle Master Mosi the fact that he was headed for Indigo Prefecture, and Mosi had discussed the Four Divine Beasts clan.

From what Mosi had said, it seemed as though the Four Divine Beasts clan had fallen on hard times.

But even despite that, it should still be almost comparable to the Bagshaw clan.

“The Bagshaw clan, at Miluo Island, is in complete control. No one dares offend them! Despite countless years having passed, Miluo Island’s fame remains widespread. There’s no way something like this could happen at Miluo Island, where those who serve the Bagshaw clan will be killed!”

Linley really couldn’t believe it.

The Indigo Prefecture could be said to be the main headquarters for the Four Divine Beasts clan. How could something like this happen within the borders of the mighty Four Divine Beasts clan? How could a truly powerful clan allow something like this to happen?

Anyone who thought about it for even a moment would understand.

If a truly powerful clan encountered something like this, they would definitely eradicate the entire ‘Boleyn clan’, killing them as a warning sign to frighten others!

“The situation doesn’t make sense.” Linley narrowed his eyes. The joy he had felt upon arriving at his clan’s territory instantly evaporated, and Linley began to worry. It seemed as the situation the Four Divine Beasts clan was in wasn’t what he had thought it would be.

In the metallic lifeform, Tarosse, Bebe, Delia, and the others were all mystified by what they had just seen.

Tarosse said with a solemn look, “Linley, it seems as though the Four Divine Beasts clan doesn’t have much power within Indigo Prefecture.” When Linley had invited Tarosse and the others to Indigo Prefecture, he had said that that within the Indigo Prefecture, given the strength and influence of the Four Divine Beasts clan, they shouldn’t encounter any more dangers.

But now, it seemed…

“I don’t understand either.” Linley’s face was solemn.

After all, he had never gone to the Four Divine Beasts clan before. All he knew, he gained from outside sources of information.

“I’m sorry. It seems as though I’ve caused everyone to enter a dangerous situation.” Linley couldn’t help but say towards Olivier, Tarosse, and the others. When he had invited them to come with him, he had wanted for all of them from the Yulan continent to be together and that there wouldn’t be much danger.

As he saw it, there shouldn’t be any dangers in the main lair for his clan.

But it seemed he was wrong!

Dylin laughed. “Linley, don’t worry about it. No matter what happens, my life can be considered to belong to you. What have I to fear?”

“Let’s go. Even if someone wants to kill us, first they have to have enough power to do so!” Tarosse said.

Linley nodded. If the Four Divine Beasts clan was comparable to the Bagshaw clan, then, as an incredibly powerful force, there was no way they would simply be destroyed. As the saying goes, a camel which died of starvation is still larger than a horse.

Mosi's words implied that the weakened Four Divine Beasts clan was still comparable to the Bagshaw clan.

But before its downfall?

How could such an originally incomparably powerful clan possibly be completely destroyed?

"Let's go to Fansi City first."

Fansi City was a city in the eastern part of Indigo Prefecture, and was the first city which Linley's group was heading towards in Indigo Prefecture. Fansi City was just like every other city in the Infernal Realm; it was very bustling!

The streets were rowdy and filled with people everywhere.

"Boss, where shall we go to find the location of the Four Divine Beasts clan?" Bebe asked, puzzled.

The War God, O'Brien, laughed. "Any place works. For example, the Fiend Castle. We can just ask some people there. There are definitely people here in the Indigo Prefecture who know quite a bit regarding the exceedingly famous Four Divine Beasts clan."

Asking around at the Fiend Castle was indeed an excellent idea.

"No rush. Let's go to the Bloodridge Castle first!" Linley said.

The Redbud Continent had Redbud Castles, while the Bloodridge Continent had Bloodridge Castles. The two were the same; they both purchased and sold large quantities of items.

“Why are we going to the Bloodridge Castle?” Dylin asked.

“Bebe, do you still remember how we had gone shopping for books that time in the Redbud Castle?” Linley turned to look at Bebe, who hurriedly nodded. “I remember. That time, we went to buy some books regarding the geography of the Infernal Realm.”

“Right. Last time, we only went to investigate the general geography of the Infernal Realm, which is why in the books we bought, the information regarding each of the 108 Prefectures was very brief. But that time, however, we did see quite a few books which discussed each prefecture in detail.”

There had been five or six centimeter thick books that discussed each prefecture.

Those detailed books each focused on one prefecture, and naturally would discuss and point out some of the unique areas in a prefecture, as well as provide some very detailed information on some of the most powerful clans. Most likely, even some ultimate experts would be described within.

Delia’s eyes lit up, and she nodded in agreement. “Buy one which goes into detail regarding the ‘Indigo Prefecture’. The Four Divine Beasts clan is very famous in Indigo Prefecture. It will definitely be described in detail, and the location will be clearly mentioned as well.”

Linley laughed and nodded.

If they asked others, others might point them to a specific place which they didn’t even know was located where.

After all, they had never had a detailed map of the Indigo Prefecture. They only knew the rough geography of the place. By buying a detailed book regarding the Indigo Prefecture, they would even get a clear understanding of the geographical information in the Indigo Prefecture.

“Buying books? I’ve never gone book shopping in the Infernal Realm.” Tarosse laughed.

“You normally lived on Miluo Island. Why would you need to buy books? You’d only go buy them when you needed them.” Linley said, then headed towards the Bloodridge Castle.

The three castles in every single city were bustling with activity. Following the flow of people, Linley’s group quickly reached the Bloodridge Castle. At the gate to the Bloodridge Castle, there were Bloodridge Army soldiers standing guard.

“Heh heh, I must say, the uniform of the Bloodridge Army is quite stylish. It’s much better than that of the Redbud Army and the Starmist Army.” Bebe said softly as he looked at the Bloodridge Army soldiers at the gates.

Linley glanced at them. “The baleful aura it emanates is rather heavier than that of the Redbud Army and the Starmist Army.”

“Let’s go.” As he spoke, Linley led the group into the first floor of the Bloodridge Castle. The way the Bloodridge Castle was organized was quite similar to the Redbud Castle. Linley’s group easily found the room which specialized in selling a large number of books.

In the room, there were only three people, one of whom was the staff member.

“What do you want to buy?” Seeing Linley’s group walk in, and that most were Highgods, the staff member immediately came to welcome them.

“Which book has information regarding the location of the Four Divine Beasts clan?” Bebe was the first to say.

But Linley said, “This place should have a detailed description of the entire Indigo Prefecture, right? Give me that book.”

“We do.” The female staff member withdrew an enormous, black covered

book that was two fingers thick, then walked over and handed it to Linley. “This one should be the book with the most complete introduction to the Indigo Prefecture.”

Linley immediately accepted it and began to flip through it.

This book, in its table of contents, was divided into ‘geography’, ‘dangerous areas’, ‘famous people’, ‘clans’…and so on and so forth. From the table of contents, Linley easily found the top ranked ‘Four Divine Beasts clan’.

“Page 158!” Linley couldn’t help but grow excited.

The first thing which drew Linley’s attention was…

The Four Divine Beasts clan was actually the general term for four mighty clans of divine beasts.

They were:

The Azure Dragon clan: The Redding [Lei’ding] clan!

The Vermilion Bird clan: The Nimo [Ne’mo] clan!

The White Tiger clan: The Laius [Li’e’si] clan!

The Black Tortoise clan: The Bowen [Bo’wen] clan!

The Four Divine Beasts clan was led by the Azure Dragon clan, the Redding clan. The four great clans were joined together into one, and were spread throughout the Four Higher Planes…

While reading the detailed information regarding the Four Divine Beasts clan, Linley couldn’t help but begin to sweat. The history of the Four Divine Beasts clan simply astonished Linley. So originally, the Four Divine Beasts clan wasn’t just limited to the Infernal Realm!

“Divine Water Plane, Divine Earth Plane, Divine Fire Plane, Divine Wind Plane, and the Four Higher Planes of the Celestial Realm, Netherworld, Infernal Realm, Life Realm…they all have branches of the Four Divine Beasts clan!”

Linley was completely thunderstruck.

Based on the description within the book, the Four Divine Beasts clan was considered an extremely, terrifyingly powerful clan throughout the Four Higher Planes as well as the Seven Divine Planes. They were spread everywhere, but of course, in the Infernal Realm, Indigo Prefecture was a headquarters for the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“They are so powerful?” Linley found it hard to believe.

“Boss, lemme see.” Bebe, seeing the look on Linley’s face, couldn’t help but snatch the book over from Linley and begin to read it carefully as well. As he read, Bebe’s eyes began to grow round. “Wow, Boss, the Four Divine Beasts clan is really badass.”

Delia leaned over to look as well.

“They really are quite formidable.” Delia was stunned as well.

“We can leave now. I now know where the Four Divine Beasts clan is located.” Linley couldn’t help but smile. The Four Divine Beasts clan was the root and foundation of his own Baruch clan, which could only be considered one of the many branches.

Naturally, Linley was delighted at how powerful the main clan was.

“Wait.” Linley suddenly frowned.

If the Four Divine Beasts clan truly was so powerful, then why was it that when he came, he saw that member of the Boleyn clan, the one who could grow golden wings, be so arrogant and unbridled?

“You are looking for the location of the Four Divine Beasts clan?” Suddenly, a clear voice rang out.

Linley’s group turned to look. The speaker was that female staff member.

The female staff member laughed and said, “If you want to just follow the information in the book to look for them, there’s no way you’ll find the Four Divine Beasts clan.”

“Eh?” Linley was stunned.

“Why not? Is the book fake?” Bebe immediately asked.

The female staff member shook her head. “No, the descriptions in the book are real.”

“If they are real, then why can’t we find them?” Bebe said.

The female staff member laughed. “This book is in general circulation and for sale in every single city in the Infernal Realm. Because the Infernal Realm is too vast, just sending it out to each location will most likely take a thousand years.”

Linley nodded. To send it throughout the Infernal Realm, it would indeed take upwards of a thousand years.

“Because the shipping process alone takes so much time, the geographical information in the book will be re-evaluated and updated once every million years. This book is several hundred thousand years old, and it described what the situation was like for the Four Divine Beasts clan hundreds of thousands of years ago.” The female staff said.

The Infernal Realm was vast and endless. A million years, in the ancient history of the Infernal Realm, really wasn’t much.

“Are you saying…?” Linley began to understand.

“Right.” The female staff member laughed. “If you asked others, they might not know, but since I’ve always lived in Indigo Prefecture, I’m quite familiar with the Four Divine Beasts clan. The Four Divine Beasts clan, roughly ten thousand years ago, underwent a huge change. The branches that had been located in the Divine Planes or the other Higher Planes all returned and regrouped here in the Indigo Prefecture of the Infernal Realm.”

Linley now understood.

Lord Beirut had not deceived him. The current Four Divine Beasts clan really was in Indigo Prefecture.

Delia asked, puzzled, “What caused the Four Divine Beasts clan to summon and concentrate all of their branches here in the Indigo Prefecture?” Delia didn’t understand.

“I’m not sure.” The female staff member said with a laugh. “That year, a large number of experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan returned, but when they did so, they shook the entire Indigo Prefecture, because when they returned, they brought countless battles with them!”

“Countless battles?” Linley was stunned.

“Right.” The female staff member nodded, then laughed. “But of course, I’m just a minor figure, and what I know is limited. All I know is that back then, the battles were quite fierce. Afterwards, the Four Divine Beasts clans that had been scattered throughout Indigo Prefecture all came together at one location.”

“One location?” Linley still clearly remembered what that book he had read had said.

As that book had described it, in the Four Divine Beasts clan, each of the four clans was located in one of four locations.

“Right. The Four Divine Beasts clans are living quite close to each other

now. The place they live is known as the Skyrite Mountains!" The female staff member said.

Hearing this, Linley immediately thought back to when he had first read the book giving a general introduction to the geographical features of the Infernal Realm, and the information it had regarding the Skyrite Mountains. The Skyrite Mountains were a very famous area within the Indigo Prefecture.

It could, in fact, be described as the mountain range which symbolized the Indigo Prefecture.

Chapter 4 – Seize Them

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 4, Seize Them

After leaving the city of Fansi, Linley's group immediately rode on their metallic lifeform to head towards the Skyrite Mountains.

"The Skyrite Mountains are located within the northern borders of Indigo Prefecture. From Fansi City, there is a distance of nearly two hundred million kilometers. To fly there will take half a year." Linley felt rather relaxed.

After knowing where the Four Divine Beasts clan was, Linley also understood: "Most likely, this place is too far away from the Skyrite Mountains, which is why the Boleyn clan dared to be so arrogant." This was Linley's guess.

"Another half year to go." Bebe stretched lazily, letting out a long sigh, then looked at Linley. "Heh heh, Boss, let's have a contest and see who will be the first to master a fifth profound mystery. What do you say?"

Linley had already reached the late stages in training in the Profound Truths of Strength.

As for Bebe, he had already reached a peak with regards to this fifth profound mystery of Darkness, and as soon as he gained an insight, he would break through. But 'insights' were something that one could hope for but not count on. Who knew how long Bebe would take?

Linley immediately calmed down and began training.

While training, time passed extremely quickly. Linley was only awakened from his training on three occasions. By the fourth time he opened his eyes, they were only a few hundred thousand kilometers away from the Skyrite Mountains and were about to arrive.

The metallic lifeform's front became transparent, and Linley's group could completely see through the metallic lifeform to the front.

"Skyrite Mountains! The Four Divine Beasts clan!" Linley felt that his breathing was growing ragged. The blood in his body was beginning to boil. He had come all the way over here from the Yulan continent. Finally, he was returning to his own clan.

"I can see it. The Skyrite Mountains are up ahead." Delia said in delight.

Linley's eyes were shining.

One massive mountain peak after another could be seen piercing through the clouds and the sky, each of them astonishingly high. The reason why this area was known as the 'Skyrite' Mountains was precisely because so many mountain peaks here were so tall.

"That is…"

Linley's eyes couldn't help but light up. He saw an enormous bird of almost the same size as a mountain peak that looked as though it was about to take flight, its entire body surrounded by flames. Its feathers were fiery red, and it had green plumage on its forehead. Linley and the others could all feel the dominating aura which emanated forth from it.

"What an enormous sculpture." Linley couldn't help but be amazed. "It has to be at least a hundred kilometers tall." The tallest mountain peaks of the Skyrite Mountains reached upwards of tens of thousands of meters.

This enormous sculpture was comparable in height to the tallest of mountain peaks.

From the book he had read half a year ago, Linley had gained a better understanding of the Four Divine Beasts clan and had learned that the 'Four Divine Beasts' referred to the 'Azure Dragon', the 'White Tiger', the 'Vermilion Bird', and the 'Black Tortoise.' Just from the names 'Azure

Dragon' and 'White Tiger', Linley was able to understand what the creatures represented.

But Linley had never heard of a 'Vermilion Bird' or a 'Black Tortoise'.

After carefully reading through the book as well as reviewing some of the pictures in the book, Linley learned that a 'Vermilion Bird' was a fire-type divine beast that was similar to a 'Fire Phoenix', but which was far more powerful. As for the 'Black Tortoise', it was an earth-type divine beast that seemed quite similar in appearance to the 'Dragon-Turtles' which Linley had seen before.

Even the divine beast 'Azure Dragon' was not like those enormous winged dragons that he had seen on the Yulan continent, nor was it like the Tyrant Wyrms. It was a dominating, noble, and utterly perfect, true divine beast.

The most powerful water-type divine beast – the Azure Dragon.

"The southern parts of the Skyrite Mountains should be where the Vermilion Bird clan resides." Linley immediately controlled the metallic lifeform, ordering it to fly towards the northeast.

Indeed, the eastern part of the Skyrite Mountains was where the Azure Dragon clan lived.

"This…"

In mid-air, staring afar at the distant sight of the Azure Dragon's 'Redding' clan, Linley was stupefied. Even Delia, Bebe, Olivier, Tarosse, and the others were so shocked, they couldn't speak.

An enormous, coiling dragon that was over tens of thousands kilometers long was within the mountain range.

Of course, it wasn't a real dragon.

This enormous coiling dragon covered an area of tens of thousands of

kilometers, and carved atop of its massive body were giant draconic scales. At the same time, it was also, in and of itself, a long passageway in the mountains, and the entire passageway emitted an azure light. From afar, it truly looked like an enormous, terrifying Azure Dragon!

“To build an enormous edifice of tens of thousands of kilometers long in the Infernal Realm is…unbelievable.” Tarosse sighed in shock.

“Look carefully. The entire body of this Azure Dragon is actually one long passageway, with many castles and residences around that passageway.” Dylin said loudly.

Linley was completely lost in the awe-inspiring sight before him. A ‘dragon passageway’ that was tens of thousands of kilometers long and which coiled through the mountains, with castles and estates surrounding its perimeter and which formed a perfect whole with it.

In front of the dragon’s head was an enormous golden castle, which looked like a dragon pearl.

“The aura and majesty alone far surpasses any clan that I’ve ever seen.” Linley was truly stunned.

The Four Divine Beasts clan had originally dominated the Four Higher Planes and Seven Divine Planes. Even after their fall, they wouldn’t forget the former glory of their clan. Naturally, they cared deeply about the construction of their clan’s headquarters.

Although they had seen it from afar, Linley’s group had to fly for quite a while before arriving at the base of the Skyrite Mountains.

Standing at the base of the mountains, Linley’s group stared afar through the ‘dragon passageway’, staring at the many patrolling soldiers dressed in azure armor. For a moment, they felt their hearts clench. At a glance, the warriors here were more than ten thousand in number.

But Linley’s group could tell that every single one of them was a Highgod!

“So many experts!” Tarosse sighed in amazement. “The Four Divine Beasts clan really lives up to its name. At least in the number of Highgod warriors, it isn’t the slightest bit inferior to the Bagshaw clan.”

“This is a true, powerful, great clan.” Dylin sighed in amazement as well.

Salomon’s ‘Boyd’ clan had been decent, but these clans, when compared to the Bagshaw clan or the Four Divine Beasts clan, were nothing at all. Look at the Bagshaw clan or the Four Divine Beasts clan; every single soldier in their clan army was a Highgod.

“This is the Azure Dragon clan!” Linley felt his blood pumping. “My roots, the roots of my Baruch clan!”

This seemingly endless dragon passageway gave Linley such a familiar feeling, one which made the blood in his veins thunder. It was a feeling akin to when the prodigal son returned home. The sense of belonging was extremely strong.

“Linley.” Delia held Linley’s hand.

Linley turned to glance at Delia. The two, looking at each other, couldn’t help but laugh. They had experienced nearly seven centuries of turbulence. When they had first come to the Infernal Realm, Linley was just a Demigod. But now, he could effortless kill ordinary Highgods.

They had made their way over. And now, finally, they had reached their destination.

The root and foundation of the Four Supreme Warriors!

The legendary Four Divine Beasts clan’s gathering point: The Indigo Prefecture’s ‘Skyrite Mountains’!

“Who goes there!” A loud shout from up above.

From the wide dragon passageway, ten soldiers who had previously been on patrol flew over, and the captain of the squad barked, “This is an important area of my Azure Dragon clan. You need to leave immediately.”

Laughing, Linley replied, “Gentlemen, I myself am a branch member of the Azure Dragon clan. I have been in the Infernal Realm for a very long time, but I’ve finally made it here.”

“Hurry up and welcome us.” Bebe said loudly. “It’s been so long, and we’ve really been exhausted.”

“You belong to a branch of my Redding clan?” The captain looked at Linley dubiously. “Kid, the members of my clan returned a long, long time ago.” The other members of the patrol didn’t quite believe it either.

“You should know that our Azure Dragon clan is capable of Dragonforming.” One of the patrolling soldiers said.

Linley laughed.

“Crackle…” Immediately, azure-golden draconic scales sprouted from everywhere on Linley’s body, and a spike emerged from his forehead. Linley’s dark golden eyes stared at the captain. “Now, do you believe me?”

Those patrolling soldiers all began to laugh as well.

The captain was also all smiles. “Indeed! And judging from your body’s aura, it seems as though you come from a fairly pure lineage. But how come you have those spikes on your back? Still, there’s no mistaking that aura.”

Dragonforming was a very simple way by which one could tell if one was a member of the Azure Dragon clan or not.

The Draconians of the ‘beastmen’ race were completely different from the Dragonform of the Azure Dragon clan. In terms of both power as well as aura, the difference was tremendous. They just looked a bit similar.

“Haha, brother, you’ve had an arduous trip.” The captain immediately laughed and went to welcome them, saying in a sincere voice, “When our clan retreated from the various planes, we really were in too much of a rush. Most likely, at that time, you weren’t able to come back with everyone else at the time.”

The captain let out a long sigh.

“At that time, our main army returned as well, but it was disastrous. That year, my brother died in battle.” Tears glimmered at the corner of the captain’s eyes. “Let’s go. Let’s go home! At home, you’ll be safe.”

The two words, “go home”, caused Linley to tremble with emotion.

“These friends of mine came alongside me.” Linley said.

“Them?” The captain frowned.

“What is it?” Linley was puzzled.

The captain said with a frown. “These are your friends, and you plan to live with them?”

“Right.” Linley nodded. “They risked life and death to travel with me. It would be good if we can live together. What, is that forbidden?”

“It’s not that it cannot be done.” The captain reflected for a moment, then said, “The administrative rules of our clan are quite strict. If it was just you by yourself, you would receive a superb welcome, but if you want to bring them in, you’ll have to live in a fairly distant, remote part of the Skyrite Mountains.”

“Remote is fine with me.” Linley shook his head.

“That’s fine then.” The captain nodded, then laughed. “Come, go with me to register yourself. We’ll investigate what branch you belong to. Hey, you

guys can come along as well." The captain addressed Tarosse and Bebe and the others.

Linley's group immediately flew in along with the ten patrol soldiers.

"Brother, my name is Yeer [Yi'er]. I came back from the Divine Fire Plane. Which plane are you from? How could your lineage be so pure?" While walking, the captain asked in a warm, friendly manner.

"Right, which plane are you from?" The other patrolling soldiers laughed as well.

"I, I'm from the Yulan Plane." Linley laughed.

The captain's expression instantly hardened, and the same thing happened with the other soldiers.

"Seize them!" Captain Yeer shouted icily, and immediately, the other nine patrolling soldiers moved aside as fast as lightning, immediately surrounding Linley's group of people. From higher up the 'dragon passageway', many patrolling soldiers who saw these going-on's immediately flew over as well.

Linley's group was stupefied.

"Hey, what's this all about?" Bebe immediately shouted.

Linley just looked at the captain. "Captain Yeer, what's going on? Why are you suddenly seizing me?"

Captain Yeer said calmly, "Sorry, brother! The Azure Dragon 'Redding' clan, although spread out across many planes, is only spread out across the Higher Planes and the Divine Planes. I've never heard of a Yulan Plane."

"Aren't I a member of the Azure Dragon clan?" Linley asked.

"You are. I'm certain of this." Yeer nodded.

“However, if we can’t be completely certain of your history and which lineage you belong to, then you can’t be completely trusted either.” The captain said emotionlessly. “Some members were scattered across the universe when they were young, and were raised by other clans, who trained them and then sent them back to be spies! This has happened more than once.”

In the past ten thousand years, the Azure Dragon clan had become exceedingly cautious. Because…they had suffered too much previously when they weren’t.

“You suspect me of being a spy?” Linley found it hard to believe.

“Captain Yeer, if I were a spy, I wouldn’t say I’m from the Yulan Plane. I would make up a perfect identity and status.” Linley said urgently.

Delia spoke out as well. “Captain Yeer, you might not have heard of the Yulan Plane lineage, but that doesn’t mean others in your clan haven’t heard of it either. Please go investigate first.”

“Hmph. Which lineage am I unaware of?” Captain Yeer was extremely confident.

“What’s going on here?” A bark rang out from above, and a middle-aged man dressed in light gray robes flew over.

Captain Yeer, upon seeing this person, immediately said with respect, “Milord, there is a person here who claims to be a member of our Azure Dragon clan, and indeed, he has the lineage of the Azure Dragon clan. However, he claims he is from the Yulan Plane lineage. I have never heard that our clan has a branch in a ‘Yulan Plane’.”

“Oh?” The middle-aged man looked towards Linley’s group in astonishment.

“The Yulan Plane branch?” The middle-aged man looked towards them.

“Who?”

“Me.” Linley stood up.

The middle-aged man laughed. “Right, our Azure Dragon clan does in fact have a branch on the Yulan Plane.”

Captain Yeer and the other soldiers were all surprised.

“This was something from six thousand years ago. Not many people know this.” The middle-aged man said with a calm laugh. “Their branch called themselves the ‘Baruch’ clan. Quite peculiar. Nobody knows which elder ended up starting up this branch.”

Chapter 5 – Baruch

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 5, Baruch

When Linley heard them mention the ‘Baruch clan’, his heart relaxed. His ancestors in the Baruch clan were in the Infernal Realm after all, and they really were here. For a moment, a hundred emotions mixed in Linley’s heart.

“Right, right. The Baruch clan.” Bebe was unspeakably delighted. “Boss, we finally found them.”

“Linley.” Delia felt happy for Linley as well.

The nearby Olivier, O’Brien, Tarosse, and Dylin were all smiles as well. The Baruch clan, in the Yulan continent, was so very famous, but this was the first time they had heard others speak of it in the Infernal Realm.

“Linley, congratulations.” Dylin laughed.

“There’s no mistaking it this time.” Cesar and the others laughed as well.

Linley was jubilant. He had been guided by the teachings of his clan since he was young, and Linley clearly knew what the ancestors of the clan had done. And now, today, he was finally going to meet with the ancestors of his clan.

“Milord, I belong to the Baruch clan. Please hurry and take me to see the ancestors of my clan.” Linley couldn’t help but say.

“Impudence!” Captain Yeer let out a cold snort.

Linley was startled.

“Do you know what status his lordship has? Him, personally take you

there?" Captain Yeer was very unhappy that this person in front of him didn't understand the differences in status between them. "As for whether or not you belong to the Yulan branch, everything will be made clear soon. Don't be too happy too early."

The middle-aged man chuckled. "Yeer, you can make the trip yourself." After speaking, the middle-aged man turned and flew away.

Yeer looked coldly at Linley's group. "All of you, listen up. Later, when we enter the inner reaches of the Skyrite Mountains, don't fly around randomly. Follow me! If you bump into or disturb the high level members of our clan, when they look for someone to blame, I won't be able to protect you."

"Understood."

But Linley could sense how strict ranks were within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"Follow me." Yeer flew up ahead, while Linley's group immediately followed. The Skyrite Mountains were exceedingly vast, and the eastern part of them was the place where the Azure Dragon clan's clansmen lived.

Linley and the others travelled through the 'dragon passageway'.

The dragon passageway was fifty meters wide, while the edges of it were carved draconic scales. This tens of thousands of kilometers long, coiling dragon passageway, rose and fell as it winded through the mountains. Countless estates and castles were erected by the side of this dragon passageway, with human figures visible within all of them.

"Boss, there's so many people here." Bebe's eyes rolled in their sockets. "As I see it, the Azure Dragon clan has to have at least a million people in it. Boss, as I recall, your clan seems to be unable to produce many children."

Linley chuckled.

Indeed. The more powerful a race or clan was, the smaller their population was.

“But as time goes on, the accumulated population will still be a large figure.” Linley said casually.

Hypothetically, a new generation might be born every hundred years.

Each member might have one or two children. As time went on, especially as hundreds of millions of years passed, how many clan members would a clan have? After all, upon reaching the Saint level, one wouldn’t die of old age.

Only by being killed.

“After being born, we still have to survive.” Captain Yeer said from up ahead. “In the past, our Four Divine Beasts clan was very powerful and was capable of protecting all of our descendants. Naturally, our population grew greater and greater. But now, it isn’t so simple.”

Linley couldn’t help but grow puzzled.

What exactly had caused the Four Divine Beasts clan to fall?

“That castle is so beautiful.” Delia said gently into Linley’s ears. Linley turned and saw a completely blue castle, with only variations in the deepness or lightness of the coloration, creating a very unique, beautiful appearance that was indeed quite mesmerizing.

“Remember, just fly on Dragon Avenue and don’t fly elsewhere.” Yeer warned.

Bebe snorted, and Linley couldn’t help but look towards Bebe and laugh. “Bebe, our clan’s rules are a bit strict. When we are back to our own residence, things will be better.” Linley was currently in a very good mood.

“I know.” Bebe sent back through divine sense.

While chatting, Linley, under the guidance of Yeer, arrived through Dragon Avenue at a very ordinary two-story building created halfway up a mountain. This two story building had a white-haired elder slouching over a chair with half-lidded eyes, seemingly quite relaxed.

“Hanuman [Ha’ne’man].” Yeer laughed.

The white-haired elder opened his eyes, then laughed and stood up. “Oh, Yeer, it’s you. Why’d you come to my place today?”

“We just met a member of our clan who has our lineage. Please help out by going with us for an investigation and a registration.” Yeer explained.

“Which one?” The white-haired elder turned to look at Linley’s group.

“Him!” Yeer pointed at Linley, who laughed and said to the white-haired elder, ‘Mr. Hanuman, I am Linley. I come from the Baruch clan of the Yulan Plane!”

“Oh, Baruch clan? The branch from the Yulan continent. I know.” Hanuman’s eyebrows danced, and he began to laugh. “Our Azure Dragon clan is also known as the Redding clan. Virtually all of our branches refer to ourselves as the ‘Redding clan’, and only a very few branches who don’t know the real name will casually choose a name for themselves. Your Baruch clan is one of them.”

Linley could only grin.

The first generation of his clan, Baruch, didn’t know of the Azure Dragon clan, nor that they were members of the Redding clan. Thus, he had founded his Baruch clan.

“For you to be able to report that you are a member of the Baruch clan…I trust that you are a member of our clan.” Hanuman shook his head helplessly. “However, the clan has rules. We must undergo a strict test, therefore…I need you to go meet with your ancestors.”

“Meet with my ancestors?” Linley was beginning to grow excited.

“Right. You have to meet them in order to completely ascertain your identity.” Hanuman then looked towards Yeer. “Yeer, your role is done. You go take care of your business. I’ll accompany them.”

Yeer nodded, then left.

“It’s rare to encounter a lost clan member who returns to us, even in a thousand year span.” Hanuman sighed. “Let’s go. Follow me. Let’s go meet the ancestors of your branch.”

Linley hurriedly followed him, while the group behind Linley began to chat amongst themselves.

“The Four Supreme Warriors of the past…the Dragonblood Warrior, ‘Baruch’. It’s been nearly six thousand years since I’ve seen him.” Cesar had a rare smile on his face. “I wonder how those old fellows are doing these days.”

O’Brien nodded as well.

“Old fellows?” Hanuman, walking up ahead, turned and frowned. “The oldest member of the Yulan continent branch is just six thousand years old. And you call him an ‘old fellow’? In our clan, I don’t even know how many members have trained for hundreds of millions of years. The Yulan continent branch, in our Redding clan, is a very young branch.”

“Very young branch?”

Linley’s group looked at each other.

In the Yulan continent, thousands of years of history definitely could be considered a very long history. But in the Infernal Realm, thousands of years was just ‘very young’. Compared to the other branches, which were hundreds of millions old, they were indeed very young.

“Old sir,” Bebe called out, “We see many castles and estates everywhere throughout the mountain ranges, with so many people. Old sir, do you clearly remember where the Yulan continent’s branch lives?”

“How could I not!”

Hanuman stared. “Even with my eyes closed, I, Hanuman, can easily find the residences of any of our Redding clan’s various branches or of our ultimate experts.”

“But we’ve been flying on this Dragon Avenue for so long. How come we aren’t there yet?” Bebe muttered.

Hanuman couldn’t help but frown at Bebe. “Kid with the straw hat, in this group, it seems you are the most talkative.”

“Bebe.” Linley said softly.

“Hmph.” Bebe let out a low snort, not daring to say another word.

Only now did Hanuman say, “The Yulan continent branch is a very weak branch. These weak, small branches are located deep in the border areas. That’s why it takes some time to fly there. We haven’t even flown a tenth of the way there.”

After flying for a long time, and after having seen more than a hundred thousand patrolling soldiers, Linley’s group finally reached their destination.

“Here we are.” Hanuman immediately flew out of the Dragon Avenue. “Follow me.”

Linley’s group had also discovered that not too far away, there was a large gorge. Hanuman was flying straight for that gorge, and so Linley’s group followed him in as well. The gorge had fog and mist within.

While descending through it, they passed through the foggy mist and could vaguely see some small buildings up ahead.

“This place contains your Yulan branch, as well as some other branches.” Hanuman said. “This gorge has in total more than ten thousand people.”

“Baruch!” Hanuman suddenly shouted loudly.

“Baruch!” “Baruch!” “Baruch!” The entire gorge reverberated with this shout, and Linley’s group was badly startled by Hanuman’s sudden shout.

They landed on the flat ground in the gorge.

From afar, dozens of figures flew over at high speed, the leader being a muscular man with powerful, protruding chest muscles and a sleeveless shirt. His brown hair was rather mussed, and his eyes flowed with wisdom.

“Haha, so it is Mr. Hanuman.” The muscular, brown-haired man laughed in a loud voice.

A group of people followed him from behind. Most of them had long brown hair, with a few having golden hair or blue hair.

Linley stared at this group of people.

“He is Baruch? The founder of my Baruch clan?” Linley’s heart felt as though it had been struck by a massive hammer. The dozens of people who had flown over were mostly men, with a few women as well.

Linley, seeing them, had a familiar feeling appear in his heart.

“Baruch.” Hanuman laughed. “Today, I’ve come because a member of our clan says that he is from the Yulan continent and that he is from your Baruch clan.”

Linley’s eyes were shining.

Indeed, the man in front was Baruch! The founder of the Dragonblood Warrior clan!

“From the Yulan continent?” Baruch was stunned, and then wild joy appeared in his eyes.

“Someone came from the Yulan continent? And says that he is of our Baruch clan?” A muscular, handsome youth by Baruch’s side hurriedly spoke out as well, while at the same time, he swept the group of people behind Hanuman with his gaze.

As though he sensed something, his gaze fell on Linley!

This was the call of blood ties.

But Baruch’s gaze fell on another person – Cesar!

“Cesar! It’s you!” Baruch was amazed and delighted.

“Haha, Baruch, I didn’t expect that after you suddenly disappeared, you old fellow, you actually had run off to the Infernal Realm.” Cesar laughed as well.

“O’Brien?” Baruch then looked at the War God, ‘O’Brien’.

“Baruch, long time no see.” O’Brien greeted him as well.

Hanuman intentionally said in an unhappy manner, “Hey? I’m here today to verify this person’s status and see if he is a member of your clan. Baruch, give me a hand and help me confirm his identity.”

“Oh.” Only now did Baruch come to himself.

“He is Linley.” Hanuman laughed. “He says he is of the Baruch clan.” As he spoke, he pointed towards Linley.

Immediately, the group of people behind Baruch all turned their gazes

towards Linley. These elders had gazes filled with incomparable ardor. They hadn't been back for thousands of years. The return of a descendant of their clan naturally made them excited.

Actually, upon seeing Cesar and O'Brien, Baruch was already certain that this 'Linley' should definitely be a descendant of his clan.

"Please help verify him." Hanuman said.

Baruch nodded, then looked at Linley. "Linley, right? If you are a member of my Baruch clan, then you should know…that in our clan's ancestral hall, there are recordings regarding the generations of ancestors of the clan."

Linley opened his mouth and began to speak.

"Baruch, the very first Dragonblood Warrior of the Yulan continent. In the year 4560 of the Yulan calendar, outside the walls of the city of Linnan, Baruch did battle against a Black Dragon and a Titanic Frost Wyrm. In the end, he slew both the Titanic Frost Wyrm and the Black Dragon, causing his fame to be spread across the world. In the year 4579 of the Yulan calendar, along the coastline of the northern sea of the continent, Baruch did battle against a Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor. On that day, the waves crashed unceasingly and nearby cities crumbled, but after a vicious fight lasting a full day and night, Baruch finally executed the Nine-Headed Serpent Emperor….finally, Baruch founded the Baruch clan, and became the first leader of the Baruch clan!"

"Ryan Baruch…"

"Hazard Baruch…"

Linley described the affairs of three ancestors in succession. Baruch and the group of people behind him were all so excited that their eyes turned moist.

"Right. Right." Baruch said hurriedly.

Baruch strode forward and immediately enfolded Linley into his arms. “Child, welcome home.”

Chapter 6 – The Weakest – Smallest Branch

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 6, The Weakest, Smallest Branch

“Welcome home!” These words caused a hot feeling to gush forth from Linley’s chest.

Feeling the caring gaze of the Baruch clansmen on him, Linley suddenly realized that the difficulties he had endured through the nearly seven hundred years he had spent in the Redbud Continent, traversing the Starmist Sea, and hurrying through the Bloodridge Continent was all worth it!

After wandering in the Infernal Realm for so many years, he had finally returned home!

Baruch released Linley, then looked at Linley, his fierce face hiding unshed tears. “Linley, you must’ve had a rough time of it.”

“Mr. Hanuman, thank you.” Baruch looked towards Hanuman. “This Linley is indeed of my Yulan continent branch.”

“Haha, Baruch, congratulations. Here is the emblem of our clan. Let Linley bind it with blood.” Hanuman handed out an emblem, then laughed and said, “I won’t disturb you further.” As he spoke, Hanuman flew away and departed.

Baruch gave the emblem to Linley.

“Bind it with blood?” Linley studied the emblem.

“This shows your status as a clansman. All members of the clan have it.” Baruch explained, and Linley immediately bound it with blood. In the instant that he did, Linley found out to his astonishment…

That he could actually sense the emblems which others carried.

“Indeed, by relying on this, one can easily differentiate whether or not someone is a member of the clan.”

“Linley.” Behind Baruch, that handsome youth was all smiles. “Do you know who I am?”

Linley couldn’t help but be startled. He had never before met any of the ancestors of his clan. How could he know their name or identities?

“My name is Ryan.” The handsome youth said. “You were talking about my affairs, just now.”

Only now did Linley understand, and he laughed, “Our first Golden Dragonrider Saint of the Baruch clan!”

“Haha, Golden Dragonrider Saint. Right, right.” Ryan began to laugh loudly. “Just now, you mentioned myself and Hazard. Hazard, come here.” Behind Ryan was a muscular man with light golden hair.

“Linley, hello.” Hazard said.

Linley opened his mouth, but Linley suddenly realized that he had no idea how he should address them.

Hazard was his great great great…grandpa?

Whether it was Baruch or Ryan or Hazard, all of them were many generations senior to Linley.

Seeing the look on Linley’s face, Baruch was able to guess what Linley was thinking. He laughed, “Linley, in material planes, people’s lifespan are not very long, so generational questions matter. In the Infernal Realm, however, there are many who have lived for over a hundred million years. Caring about generations is no longer meaningful.”

“Look, in our Azure Dragon clan, which has existed for countless billions

of years, there might be a gap hundred million generations between an elder and a junior. Tell me, what's the point?"

Once things got to a certain level, it became pointless.

For example, in the Yulan continent and the O'Brien Empire.

The War God had many descendants. After five thousand years, his descendants were simply too many, and so O'Brien himself didn't care much about them. Of the disciples he had accepted, the eldest were almost as old as him, while the youngest were comparable to Linley. There could be a gap of five thousand years.

But despite such a huge gap, they still simply viewed themselves as fellow apprentices.

"The Azure Dragon clan has set its roots and scattered its leaves in very many places. It's possible that two people who were born at the exact same time might be technically separated by countless 'generations' in the family hierarchy." Baruch laughed. "Thus, not just in our own family, in the entire Infernal Realm, which 'generation' one is in doesn't matter much."

Linley nodded in agreement as well.

"Boss, Grandpa Beirut and I are separated by I don't even know how many generations, but I still just call him Grandpa." Bebe said. "Also, Beirut's three sons. I just call them by their names."

Bebe was a member of Beirut's clan, after all. Technically speaking, he could be considered a descendant of Harry and his brothers.

But because the difference between them in the generational hierarchy was simply too great, Bebe just addressed them by their names.

"Haha." Ryan laughed. "Linley, at first, we had headaches as well over this matter, but now we are all accustomed to it. All members of the Azure Dragon clan just address each other casually. The only thing that matters for

status is one's power!"

If one was powerful, one would be at a higher level in the clan. Even if one was very senior in terms of the hierarchy but had remained a God despite training for trillions of years while another had trained for just ten thousand years to become a Highgod, one had to bow respectfully when seeing that Highgod.

"You can just address me as clan leader. As for the others, you can call them by their names." Baruch laughed.

"Call them by their names?" Linley felt that it was awkward.

"Of course." Hazard laughed. "You've reached the God level, but most likely were born within the past thousand years. Dozens of years ago, I had another daughter. She is much younger than you. Are you supposed to address her as 'ancestor'?"

Linley could only laugh.

To these people who had unlimited lifespan, generational hierarchies really did become meaningless.

"Anyone who isn't directly within three generations of you can simply be addressed by name." Hazard said.

"Everyone, stop standing there. Come to the main hall." Baruch laughed, and Linley followed them deeper in, chatting with everyone while walking. Linley also introduced Delia and Bebe.

"Clan leader." Linley asked, "How many people does our Yulan branch have?"

"A few hundred people." Baruch laughed as he looked around. "However, in this gorge, there're a few other branches as well. Our Yulan branch is a very small branch." But there was something which Baruch had not said…

That his branch was the weakest, smallest branch.

“Baruch, you seem to be in a good mood?” A teasing voice rang out.

The faces of Baruch and the others immediately became rather unpleasant. Linley turned to look at the source of the voice. From not too far away, a few people walked over, the leader a youth with long green hair. The youth had a rather mocking smile on his face. “What happy affair has happened? Tell us and let us hear it.”

“Ignore them. Let’s go!” Baruch said in a low voice.

Linley noticed as well that the other clansmen didn’t look at that green haired youth at all, continuing towards their residence.

“Baruch, I’m talking to you. Why the ugly face?” The green-haired youth shouted with a frown.

The youths behind the green-haired youth seemed to be quite dissatisfied with Baruch as well, one of them snorting, “Baruch, what, are you going to be so arrogant, just because you have someone supporting you? You aren’t going to even pay attention to us when we speak with you?”

The faces of Baruch, Ryan, and the others were exceedingly ugly to behold.

In the Azure Dragon clan, the Yulan branch was the weakest one. When they had been brought over, they had all been Saints. After undergoing the Ancestral Baptism and hard training, although they had made great improvements, the amount of time they had lived was simply too short, just a few thousand years.

Even the strongest member of the Yulan branch was just at the God level!

God?

In the Infernal Realm, especially in an ancient clan like the Four Divine Beasts clan, if even the strongest person in a branch was still just a ‘God’,

then it was all but guaranteed that this branch would be viewed in contempt, be mocked, be satire!

The other branches all had many Highgods.

But yours only had Gods? How could you compete against them? It'd be strange if you aren't mocked, for that matter!

Although everyone in the gorge belonged to a fairly weak branch, at least the other branches had one Highgod!

"Motherf*cker, what's with all your bullshit?" Bebe shouted angrily.

Tarosse's face had turned grim as well, and he icily swept these people. "Where have you lot come from, and why are you saying so much bullshit in our place?"

"You…" Those people were stunned, and then infuriated. They had never imagined that in the weakest Yulan branch, the branch which they often mocked and insulted, there would be someone who dared to be so arrogant towards them!

The leading youth began to laugh from rage. "Baruch, your people are quite bold. They dare to insult me, Asru [A'si'lu]!"

Asru himself was a Highgod!

In the Four Divine Beasts clan, being a Highgod didn't mean much. On the way over through the Dragon Avenue, Linley had seen more than a hundred thousand patrol soldiers, all of whom were Highgods. One could thus imagine how common Highgods were, here!

But…

The Yulan branch didn't have a single Highgod!

Thus, Asru, as a Highgod, could be arrogant and unbridled in front of the

Yulan branch. As for Baruch and the others, they had to just endure it.

“Asru, don’t go too far.” Baruch said in a low voice. “Today, we have guests.”

“I, go too far?” Asru stared.

“Baruch, you’re quite bold. You dare insult Lord Asru?” The people behind Asru called out.

By now, Tarosse and Bebe were unbelievably angry. Tarosse had never viewed an ordinary Highgod with any consideration. “Kid…”

“Shut your mouth!” Asru pointed angrily at Tarosse.

Tarosse was enraged.

Asru laughed coldly, “I know that you others are Highgods. But you don’t seem to be members of our Azure Dragon clan. You are permitted to stay here, where our Azure Dragon clan lives, which is already something you need to feel thankful for. But if you are to fight…the soldiers of the clan will be the first to exterminate you!”

Asru had noticed long ago that Tarosse, Cesar, and the others were Highgods.

But he wasn’t afraid, because this was the territory of the Azure Dragon clan. Through the clan emblem, he had noticed long ago that these were outsiders.

“Cesar, you all, no matter what, cannot fight.” Baruch shook his head and sent mentally, “The reason you can live here is partially due to Linley’s status, and partially because our clan is located in a remote region. But if you were to fight…regardless of whether you were in the right or in the wrong, the clan soldiers will always favor our clansmen. Once you start a fight, they’ll kill you. Linley, look after your people.”

Tarosse, Cesar, and O'Brien were all stunned.

"Don't worry, clan leader." Linley replied.

Linley then turned to look at that Asru. Asru was a Highgod? But what was an ordinary Highgod to him? While in the Miluo Island, when he had used the Blackstone Prison, he had committed wanton slaughter when surrounded by tens of thousands of Highgods.

He didn't even fear tens of thousands of Highgods.

How could he care about this Asru?

"Kid, what are you looking at?" Asru shouted. Asru was in a very bad mood today. This weakest Yulan branch normally was shouted at and mocked by him as he pleased, without saying anything in response. But today, it seemed as though they were being rather arrogant.

"Asru, right?" Linley laughed.

"Right." Asru raised his chin slightly.

"Linley, don't cause trouble." Baruch was rather worried, and he hurriedly sent through divine sense, "The strongest member of our Baruch clan is just a God. Our branch is too weak. We can't fight with them."

"Clan leader, I'm a member of the clan. If I were to act against them, the army soldiers wouldn't favor them, right?" Linley sent through divine sense.

Baruch said, "They won't favor them, but you are only a Go-…"

Linley immediately turned to look towards Asru. "Asru, I advise you that in the future, after today, you had best not come annoy our Yulan branch."

"What did you say?" Asru was flabbergasted.

“In the future, don’t annoy us.” Linley said grimly.

Asru stared at Linley, speechless, then raised his head and laughed loudly. “Haha…” Even those youths behind Asru began to laugh loudly.

The Yulan branch was the weakest one in the gorge. They were always picked on and mocked by the other branches. But they were too weak. They couldn’t resist at all.

“Kid, listen up…” Asru pointed at Linley, about to say something. But suddenly…rays of hazy earthen yellow light suddenly sprang up, enveloping Asru and the others.

Blackstone Space – Supergravity!

Asru’s body hunched over and he immediately fell to his knees. The powerful gravity caused his entire body to shudder. The people behind him were even worse; they immediately collapsed at first before then just barely standing up.

“I told you. In the future, don’t annoy my Yulan branch!” Linley’s face sank, and instantly, the earthen yellow light trembled.

The downwards gravitational force transformed into a repulsive force!

“BOOM!” Asru and the others were thrown far away by that repulsive force. From far away, they stared at astonishment and fear towards Linley. Linley hadn’t even moved, but he had been able to easily toy with them.

The difference was too great.

Linley couldn’t be bothered to spare a single extra glance for Asru’s group. He turned towards Baruch and said, “Clan leader, let’s go back.” In Miluo Island, Linley had slaughtered a path through tens of thousands of Highgods. How could he care about a single ordinary Highgod?

“Linley…”

Baruch’s group was completely stunned.

They had yet to understand that from today onwards…the Yulan branch would never be mocked or humiliated again.

Chapter 7 – The Clan's Crisis

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 7, The Clan's Crisis

The Azure Dragon clan's Yulan branch simply had too short a history, spanning just a few millennia. A few millennia, in the ancient history of the Four Divine Beasts clan, could be considered a single drop of water in a sea.

A short history resulted in weak power!

In this gorge within the Skyrite Mountains, the other branches of the Azure Dragon tribe looked down on them and mocked them. This was very normal. Fortunately, the clan had very strict rules; members of the same clan were not permitted to kill each other.

This was a very severe rule. Nobody could violate it.

Precisely because of this, although the Yulan branch had lived a life of some embarrassment, they weren't in any mortal danger. Baruch and the others could thus just endure it. After all, if they fought back, they would just be humiliated even further.

They were weaker. There was nothing they could do!

But this descendant of the clan who they were welcoming back, one who had returned from the Yulan branch, had effortlessly toyed with a Highgod and multiple Gods.

Baruch, Ryan, and the others all stared at Linley in disbelief.

"Linley?" Baruch stuttered.

Linley looked at Baruch, then laughed. "Clan leader, let's hurry back. I still don't even know where I'll live?"

“Right, right.” Baruch recovered from his shock. Although he didn’t understand how Linley could be so powerful, Baruch wouldn’t ask right now. He immediately laughed, “Let’s go, let’s go back.”

The other clansmen of the Yulan branch all stared at Linley in amazement. This descendant was too strong!

“What are you looking at?” Bebe’s voice rang out. “What? Can it be that after the lesson my Boss just taught you, you haven’t had enough? You want to test him again?”

Linley turned to look.

Asru and the others were staring towards Linley with gazes full of shock and fear. They couldn’t believe that this was real.

“Asru.” Linley spoke out. “You and I are both members of the Azure Dragon clan. We are all members of the Redding clan! Since we are all members of the clan, fighting amongst ourselves will just result in ridicule from others.”

Asru was stunned.

“The Yulan branch is also a member of the Redding clan.” Linley laughed calmly. “I’m a member of the Yulan branch, and also a member of the Redding clan. I don’t want to see you causing trouble for us in the future. If something like that happens, then I wouldn’t mind…giving you a good lesson.”

O’Brien, Cesar, Tarosse, and the others were all laughing off to the side.

They knew exactly how powerful Linley was. During the great battle at Miluo Island, Linley’s power had been completely revealed and was unquestionable.

“Let’s go.” Linley held Delia’s hand, then followed Baruch, Ryan, and the

other members of the clan towards the abode of the Yulan branch. The only ones left were Asru and the others.

“Lord Asru, this…” A youth behind Asru said, his face filled with disbelief, shock, and anger.

Asru’s face was gloomy.

“Who would have thought that an expert would appear amongst the Yulan branch.” Asru said in a low voice.

“But he’s just a God.” Someone immediately said.

Asru shook his head. “Impossible. That Gravitational Space was powerful to an unheard of level. In such a powerful gravity, he would definitely be able to effortlessly kill us. Only an extremely powerful Highgod could possibly train the Gravitational Space to such a high level.”

“How powerful?” The Gods behind him were all puzzled.

“Six Star Fiend. Perhaps Seven Star Fiend!” Asru said in a low voice.

Immediately, those Gods were completely stupefied. These people, when encountering a Highgod, were normally all very respectful. Generally speaking, Highgods were at the Four Star Fiend level of power. Anyone capable of reaching the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level had a high status in the clan.

“But we noticed that he was just a God.” Another blue-haired youth said hurriedly.

Asru turned and glanced at him mockingly, then turned and left, not paying attention to that God at all.

“What’d I say wrong?” The blue-haired man was still lost.

“Can’t you guess that he was hiding his aura and just pretending?” Another

God snickered. “Let’s go. I can’t imagine how this short-lived Yulan branch actually produced such a powerful expert.”

While still muttering amongst themselves, those Gods all left.

Linley knew very well that even two brothers of the same mother, much less branches of the same clan, would possibly struggle with each other for status. The weak would be looked down upon and embarrassed.

This was normal.

“The high level members of the Redding family don’t care about this. First, it’s not convenient to interfere. And secondly, they are probably satisfied with the situation.” Linley understood that when the weak were viewed in contempt, this anger at being humiliated would serve as a powerful motivation for the clan to grow stronger.

Perhaps an expert would appear.

In the end, the rules of the clan prohibited clansmen from killing each other. With this rule in place, there would be no fear of the clan losing its power.

“Only when there is competition, when there is a differentiation between the ‘high’ and the ‘low’ levels will there be improvement.” Linley sighed.

Unfortunately, his Yulan branch had become the weakest branch. Its roots were weak and its history was short. There was nothing that could be done.

“Linley, on the other side of the grass is our Yulan branch’s residence.” Baruch pointed towards the front. Linley, looking in that direction, saw that at the end of the short grass, there were multiple two story buildings, as all a palace which took up a very wide amount of space.

When Linley’s group passed through the grass, quite a few men and women came to welcome them, including two children.

“Clan leader!”

The group all hurriedly welcomed them.

“Haha, hurry up and prepare a feast for celebrating Linley’s arrival.” Baruch laughed loudly.

“Clan leader, who is Linley?” Nobody here recognized Linley.

Linley looked carefully at this group of people. All of them had an aura which felt so familiar to his soul. These were people from his clan, people of his blood. “Our Baruch clan has so few people in the Yulan continent, but in the Infernal Realm, we are much more populous.”

All of them in the Infernal Realm possessed unlimited lifespan. Naturally, their numbers would continuously grow.

“Who is Linley?” Baruch immediately laughed. “He is someone from our Yulan branch.”

“He came over from the Yulan continent.” Ryan added. “Look closely. He is Linley. Don’t misrecognize him in the future.” As he spoke, he rested his hand on Linley’s shoulder.

Immediately, everyone looked towards Linley while a commotion broke out.

“He came from the Yulan continent?”

“He actually came from the Yulan continent. Hey, Linley, how’s our Baruch clan doing?”

“Linley, do you know ‘Bozart’ [Bo’sai’te]? He’s my son!”

The group of them all excitedly asked questions nonstop. In the Infernal Realm, they were the weakest branch of the Four Divine Beasts clan. In the Yulan continent, however, they were the ‘Dragonblood Warrior clan’ which had dominated the continent.

The humiliation which they now had to endure naturally made them think all the more of their glory days in the Yulan continent.

They were filled with longing for the Yulan continent.

“If all of you ask questions en masse like this, how is Linley going to respond?” Baruch snorted coldly. “Enough of this. Hurry up and prepare a banquet. Today, every member of our Yulan branch is going to get together for the banquet. During the banquet itself, you can ask your questions.”

“I’ll go arrange the banquet.” Immediately, a brown-haired woman laughed while flashing Linley a smile.

Not just this woman; many of the other members of the clan were all smiling towards Linley. They naturally were very welcoming towards their clansmen who had come from the Yulan continent!

The clan’s banquet was attended by every single member of the Yulan branch. Hundreds of people thus squeezed into the palace, but fortunately, the palace was very large, allowing everyone a place to sit. During the course of the banquet, the atmosphere was very lively.

After all, of the hundreds of people present, only a few dozen actually came from the Yulan continent. The others had been born in the Infernal Realm.

They were thus very curious regarding the root of the Yulan branch, the ‘Yulan continent’.

As for the ones who had actually come from the Yulan continent, such as Baruch, Ryan, and the others, they were also very interested in learning the situation of the descendants of their clan. This entire banquet all but turned into a story-telling time for Linley, Cesar, and the others, and Cesar and O’Brien talked nonstop regarding all sorts of matters which had occurred in the Yulan continent.

At the same time, they also told the story of how Linley had risen to sudden

prominence in the Yulan continent.

Master sculptor, Grand Magus Saint, Dragonblood Warrior…

Linley's story caused many of the descendants of the clan in the Infernal Realm to be filled with envy. Although they, too, were powerful, in the Four Divine Beasts clan, they were just the bottom tier. How could they compare to Linley's resplendence?

By the time the banquet concluded, it was dark. Only now did the group of clansmen part from Linley.

Ryan led Linley and the others to their residence.

"Linley, these three buildings are for you all to live in. You make the arrangements for who lives where." Ryan said warmly.

"Right. No need to trouble you. I'll make the arrangements." Linley laughed.

Ryan smiled, then left, while Linley, Delia, Bebe, O'Brien…the group finally let out sighs of relief.

"The banquet finally came to an end." O'Brien laughed, then let out a sigh. "Despite having been in the Infernal Realm for so long, I've never spoken so much in one breath. Linley, these clansmen of yours truly are quite curious regarding the Yulan continent."

"The vast majority of them have never been to the Yulan continent before. Of course they are curious."

Linley laughed. "Enough. Everyone, go get some rest. Everyone can choose their own residence." In the end, Linley, Delia, and Bebe took one building, Olivier, O'Brien, Cesar, and Tarosse took a second building, while Dylin and his two sons took a building."

A quiet night.

Linley and Delia were in each other's arms on the bed, smiles on their faces.

"Linley, are you very happy right now?" Delia said softly.

"Right." Thinking back to the banquet that day, and that scene of how those clansmen all asked him all sorts of questions, Linley couldn't help but laugh. "When I was with those clansmen, I felt as though I returned to a large family. It truly was wonderful! If my father could see them as well, he definitely would feel very happy and very content."

Linley still remembered how his father had dreamed all his life to restore the clan to glory.

His dying wish was that the weapon of the clan leader, Baruch, be returned.

"Right. If your father knew, he would definitely be very happy." Delia said. "If your father knew what you had done over these years, he would definitely be very proud." Delia rested her head against Linley's chest.

Linley held Delia in his arms.

"I rather miss Sasha and Taylor." Delia said.

Linley couldn't help but think of his own son and daughter. Who knew what was going on back in the Yulan continent?

"Delia." Linley suddenly said.

"What is it?" Delia raised her head.

"Let's try and see if we can have another one, shall we? Maybe we'll succeed." Linley said slyly. Delia was startled, and then her face reddened as she looked at Linley. Linley chortled, then lowered his head to kiss Delia…

Dawn. Linley got out of bed and headed to his residence's gate.

"The morning air is excellent." Linley watched as the fog swirled around in the gorge. From afar, various buildings could dimly be seen, and that coiling 'Dragon Avenue' could be seen in the skies. Given his visual acuity, he was able to even see those patrol warriors on Dragon Avenue.

"This is my Four Divine Beasts clan!"

Linley sighed in his heart.

Linley suddenly had a feeling, and he turned to look. Not far away, a figure was walking towards him. It was the clan leader of the Yulan branch, Baruch. Baruch's face was covered in smiles. "Linley!"

"Clan leader." Linley hurriedly went to greet him.

"Come. Let's find a place to chat. There's something I need to discuss with you." Baruch said.

"How about right here at my place?" Linley said.

Baruch glanced around, then nodded. "Might as well. There's no outsiders here at your place. No need to worry about others overhearing."

Linley was rather surprised. From what Baruch was saying, it seemed as though they were going to discuss a rather important matter. Linley immediately led Baruch towards his own living place, then to a study within.

Linley and Baruch both sat down.

"Clan leader, you can go ahead." Linley said.

Baruch looked towards Linley. Pausing a moment, he then said, "Linley, first tell me, are you a God or a Highgod."

Chapter 8 – The Secrets of the Ancestral Baptism!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 8, The Secrets of the Ancestral Baptism!

Asking about his strength?

Linley looked at Baruch. After a momentary pause, he said, “I am a God!”

A look of surprise appeared on Baruch’s face, and then he immediately sighed in praise, “Linley, you, a God, were able to effortlessly defeat that Asru. This is simply inconceivable. How did you accomplish this?”

Linley, for a moment, didn’t know how to reply.

The reason why he, a God, was so powerful actually had many components.

“Oh.” Baruch seemed to have realized that he had asked a question that he shouldn’t have asked. He laughed, “Enough about that. Since you are so formidable as a God, once you become a Highgod, you will definitely become a true expert of our Azure Dragon clan. Since that’s the case, there are some things which I will tell you in advance.”

Linley listened intently.

“These affairs, our Azure Dragon clan generally won’t tell some of the weaker clansmen.” Baruch sighed.

Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled. “Weak people? But the clan leader himself is just a God. How does he know?” As Linley said it, in the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Baruch clan was indeed a very weak, small clan.

Baruch just continued. “Linley, do you know how resplendent and glorious our Four Divine Beasts clan was in the past?”

“I know.” Linley nodded. “I read a book introducing the Four Divine Beasts clan. In the past, the power of the Four Divine Beasts clan spread across all Four Higher Planes and multiple Divine Planes. But it seems as though ten thousand years ago, all of our clan’s forces withdrew from the other planes and regrouped here in the Infernal Realm.”

“Right.”

Baruch sighed. “Our Four Divine Beasts clan’s power was spread across the Four Higher Planes. But do you know why our clan was so powerful to begin with?”

Linley shook his head.

Linley was puzzled about this as well. Why were they so mighty?

“Let me tell you. The reason our Four Divine Beasts clan was, in the past, so strong, was because…” Baruch’s eyes shone, and his breathing became more ragged as well. His face also turned red from excitement. “The ancestors of our Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns!!!”

“What?!” Linley felt completely stunned.

“Clan leader, what did you just say? Sovereigns? Did I mishear?” Linley said hurriedly.

Sovereigns were far above all other life forms, whom they gaze down at from up above. Even the most powerful Infernal Asuras or Purgatory Commanders, in front of a Sovereign, were like ants. With but a thought, a Sovereign could kill an Asura.

The ancestors of his clan were Sovereigns?

The ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns?

“Right! You heard correctly!” Baruch said solemnly. “The ancestors of our Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns. The four mighty Sovereigns

were a very tight-knit group, and the descendants of their Four Divine Beasts clan, which they raised, were naturally powerful to begin with. When they were present, the assistance the four ancestors provided allowed their clan to dominate the major planes with utter invincibility!"

Linley felt as though his mind was in a state of chaos.

Sovereign? And four of them?

It must be understood that the seven elements of earth, fire, water, wind, lightning, light, and darkness, each only had seven Sovereigns! The Sovereigns were scattered throughout the various Divine Planes and Four Higher Planes. And, for creatures as proud as them, it was very hard for alliances to form.

But four Sovereigns had joined forces. It would be a strange thing if the Four Divine Beasts clan wasn't mighty!

Most likely, the other Sovereigns also wouldn't be willing to offend these four Sovereigns without a good reason.

"The ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan was a water-type Sovereign. The ancestor of the White Tiger clan was a wind-type Sovereign, while the ancestor of the Vermilion Bird clan was a fire-type Sovereign. As for the Black Tortoise clan's ancestor, that was an earth-type Sovereign!" Baruch said solemnly.

Linley's mind was reeling.

Sovereigns were so far above them, and yet behind the Four Divine Beasts clan, there had been four Sovereigns!

It would be impossible for the Four Divine Beasts clan to be weak, even if they wanted to be.

"If that was still the case, our Four Divine Beasts clan would still be invincible throughout the various planes! But all of this changed, roughly

eleven thousand years ago!" Baruch said.

Linley also knew that roughly ten thousand years ago, a tremendous change happened to the Four Divine Beasts clan. What type of change, exactly, had caused his clan to fall?

For all four of the Sovereign's clans to simultaneously weaken…there was, most likely, just one possible explanation. The power backing the Four Divine Beasts clan had been destroyed! As he thought of this possibility, Linley found it to be unbelievable. "Who could possibly defeat four mighty Sovereigns? Impossible! Absolutely impossible!"

Although he thought this, he still looked at Baruch, waiting for Baruch's answer!

"The four ancestors are all dead!" Baruch said hoarsely.

Linley couldn't help but stop breathing.

So that really was the case!

"Four Sovereigns…all died? How is that possible?" Linley said hurriedly. To kill a Sovereign, one had to at least be at the Sovereign level, but the four ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan represented four full Sovereigns!

Who could kill four Sovereigns?

"They did indeed perish." Baruch said helplessly. "Although we don't know the reason for their death, there is no question about the fact that the four ancestors are dead! And precisely because the four ancestors are dead, our Four Divine Beasts clan's moment of crisis arrived!"

"Crisis?" Linley frowned.

"Right." Baruch furrowed his forehead in worry. "The four ancestors were all on very good terms with each other. The four of them, all Sovereigns,

had existed for countless years, causing the Four Divine Beasts clan and its members to be extremely arrogant and overbearing."

Linley nodded to himself. With four Sovereigns as ancestors, how could the Four Divine Beasts clan not be arrogant!

"Wherever there are people, there are struggles. Because of their arrogance, because of their power! In the past, when the Four Divine Beasts clan struggled against other clans, the Four Divine Beasts clan would naturally be rather overbearing." Baruch said.

Linley understood.

"After countless years, naturally there would often be battle and struggles. The Four Divine Beasts clan had a number of enemies, but the Four Divine Beasts clan never cared, because they were so powerful, they didn't fear their enemies!"

Baruch shook his head. "But then, the four ancestors died!"

Baruch looked towards Linley. "The clans which dared struggle against the Four Divine Beasts clan, even if they were weaker, wouldn't be too much weaker."

Linley nodded in acknowledgment.

"Those clans, in their own planes, were all very formidable. But compared to the Four Divine Beasts clan, there was still quite some difference. After all, behind the Four Divine Beasts clan were four Sovereigns. But once the four Sovereigns died…"

Baruch shook his head and sighed.

Linley began to understand.

"Those clans, in the past, had simply been humiliated too much by the Four Divine Beasts clan." Baruch shook his head. "Once the four Sovereigns

died, these clans no longer had any more misgivings. They immediately, wildly began to assault the Four Divine Beasts clan!"

Linley took a deep breath. He could completely imagine the scene.

"Thus, the forces of the Four Divine Beasts clan immediately withdrew, and the descendants in all the planes immediately withdrew and regrouped to the Infernal Realm!" Baruch said solemnly. "Ten thousand years ago, just during the withdrawal process, the number of Highgods which died was an astonishing figure. Even many Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends died."

Linley's heart shuddered.

"The Four Divine Beasts clan is strong, extremely strong." Baruch said. "Originally, when the four ancestors were alive, they naturally cultivated their descendants, causing the Four Divine Beasts clan to produce many experts, Seven Star Fiends, and even Asura-level experts."

Linley understood this. The four Sovereigns had cultivated their descendants for countless years. Given that the Four Divine Beasts clansmen were naturally blessed with gifts to begin with, it made sense for them to be mighty.

If they weren't mighty, how could they have dominated the many other planes?

After all, to dominate the other planes, the power of the ancestors was just one aspect. The many powerful experts which the Four Divine Beasts clan held was another aspect.

"They were powerful, but they couldn't overcome the superior numbers of their enemies, and in addition, their enemies were also powerful." Baruch sighed. "The worst part was, eight of the clans who had held the deepest grudges against and had the most hatred for the Four Divine Beasts clan ended up actually slaughtering a path into the Infernal Realm!"

"They attacked here in the Infernal Realm?" Linley was astonished.

“Right. Those clans actually moved their entire clans to the Infernal Realm in pursuit of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Baruch said.

Linley was completely stunned.

“Amongst them is the Barbary [Ba’ba’li] clan which attacked from the Divine Water Plane, the Dean [De’en] clan from the Divine Earth Plane, the Edric [Ai’de’li’ke] clan from the Higher Plane of the Life Realm, the Venna [Wen’na] clan of the Divine Wind Plane, the Ashcroft [A’she’ke’luo’fu’te] clan of the Netherworld, the Chanel [Sheng’nei’er] clan of the Divine Fire Plane, and also the Boleyn clan of the Celestial Realm!” Baruch said solemnly.

Linley was completely dazed.

The transportation fee for moving between high level planes was astronomical. To move an entire clan would require an astonishingly amount of wealth, but these families were able to accomplish it, which was a testament to their wealth.

In addition…

They were willing to move from their own planes to the Infernal Realm. One could imagine how great their hatred was!

“There were, in total, seven major clans. Aside from these seven clans, in the Infernal Realm, there was one clan already present who had great enmity against our Four Divine Beasts clan. This is the ‘Reinales’ clan.” Baruch said.

Linley sighed to himself.

They even had enemies on their own lands.

“Not a single one of these eight major clans are weaker than our Azure Dragon clan.” Baruch said solemnly.

Linley felt bitterness in his heart.

None of them were weaker than the Azure Dragon clan? Linley knew that in the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Azure Dragon clan was the leader. Even if theoretically all four of the Four Divine Beasts clans were equal in power, allied together, they still couldn't overcome the eight clans of the enemies!

"The eight clans joined forces. Doesn't that mean we shouldn't have been able to resist?" Linley was puzzled.

If none of them were weaker than the Azure Dragon clan, once the eight joined forces, how could the Four Divine Beasts clan possibly resist?

"Right. We couldn't resist." Baruch said. "However, we had the help of the Lord Prefect of the Indigo Prefecture."

"The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture?" Linley was surprised. The Lord Prefect of a prefecture was an Asura!

"The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture has four powerful emissaries under his command, each of whom is exceedingly powerful. In addition, the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture also controls the prefecture army." Baruch said. "The Lord Prefect forbade the eight clans from attacking the Skyrite Mountains. If battles occurred outside of the Skyrite Mountains, however, he wouldn't interfere."

Linley now understood. If the enemies had agreed, then the Four Divine Beasts clan wouldn't be completely destroyed, at least.

They had to just hide within the Skyrite Mountains.

But the Four Divine Beasts clan couldn't possibly stay forever within the mountain without leaving. As soon as they left, they would suffer attacks.

"The eight clans obeyed the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture?" Linley was puzzled.

Of these eight clans, seven came from other planes, and each of them was very powerful. These eight major clans would care about a single Lord Prefect? But of course, behind the Lord Prefect was a large number of prefecture soldiers.

“The eight clans obeyed.” Baruch laughed. “All these years, they truly have never attacked the Skyrite Mountains.”

Linley was secretly shocked at the influence of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture.

“The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was actually willing to assist our Four Divine Beasts clan.” Linley sighed to himself.

“I’m not clear as to the reason why, myself. There is probably a deep secret hidden within.” Baruch said. “Perhaps this was the reason why our Four Divine Beasts clan withdrew back to Indigo Prefecture to begin with.”

Linley nodded.

“But our clan can’t always be trapped within the mountains.” Baruch sighed. “Thus, battles still occur quite often. In addition, once they begin, they only end with one party’s death. Either you die or I die.”

Linley remembered clearly that scene he had encountered when he had first arrived at Indigo Prefecture, where the Boleyn clan had engaged in a wild slaughter. Only now did Linley understand that the Boleyn clan was one of those eight clans, and was from the Celestial Realm.

“Linley, you are powerful. Once you become a Highgod, you will definitely become a formidable warlord for our clan. Thus, I want to warn you in advance about this, so that you will continue to train hard.” Baruch said.

“Understood.” Linley nodded.

“I’m just afraid that something terrible will happen to you in those battles…

haha, I'm thinking too much." Baruch immediately shook his head and laughed. "You haven't even undergone the Ancestral Baptism, and yet you are so powerful. Once you undergo the Ancestral Baptism, you will definitely become even mightier."

"Ancestral Baptism?"

Linley was extremely curious regarding this. "Clan leader, what exactly is an Ancestral Baptism, and what does it do?"

Baruch laughed. "The Ancestral Baptism is actually a process which truly guides out the innate ability of our Azure Dragon clan. As members of the Azure Dragon clan, we all are at least capable of assuming the Azure Dragonform. But as a clan descended from a divine beast, we have to at least be capable of an 'innate divine ability' as well, right?"

"Azure Dragonform? Innate divine ability?" Linley was rather stunned.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was a clan of divine beasts. Naturally, they had their own 'innate divine abilities'.

"However, although we belong to the Azure Dragon clan, only the ancestor was a true Azure Dragon. We, his descendants, don't have as pure a blood lineage as he had. Thus, there are differences in our Azure Dragonform, and we have varying levels of strength in our innate divine ability as well." Baruch said.

"Varying levels of strength?" Linley frowned.

"Right. The more of the blood of the ancestor which flows in our veins, the more pure that blood is, then the more powerful the Azure Dragonform will be. The innate divine ability will also grow to be more powerful." Baruch said. "But unfortunately, after so many generations, the blood lineage of the descendants has grown rather thin."

Chapter 9 – Eighty Years

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 9, Eighty Years

As they discussed this, Baruch actually laughed. “But the strange thing is, my bloodline is actually extremely pure. When undergoing the Ancestral Baptism, I actually badly startled those warriors on guard there, and was received by the elder.”

“Your bloodline is very pure?” Linley looked at Baruch.

Baruch was just six thousand years old, while the Four Divine Beasts clan had been in existence for countless years. It was indeed quite bizarre for Baruch’s bloodline to be so pure.

“Generally speaking, the children of our ancestor, in particular the second and third generation members of our Azure Dragon clan, will have an extremely pure lineage. But unexpectedly, my bloodlines are actually comparable with the second generation.” Baruch didn’t hide anything at all.

The second generation of the Azure Dragon clan was composed of the sons and daughters of the ‘Azure Dragon’ Sovereign.

The children of the ‘Azure Dragon’ Sovereign naturally had very pure bloodlines. The members of the third generation who had great innate talent could also be compared to the second generation.

But as for the later generations…

Perhaps occasionally, in one generation, a genius would appear with extremely pure Azure Dragon lineage. But this was a vanishingly rare occurrence. Baruch, however, was one such example.

“This is also precisely the case as to why that elder told me these things regarding our clan.” Baruch said.

So that was how it was.

Linley now understood. Up till now, he had been puzzled at how Baruch knew these things.

“Actually, the affairs of our ancestor as well those eight clans isn’t much of a secret. In the clan, everyone with pure bloodlines, high potential, or are at the Highgod level will all know about these things.” Baruch said solemnly. “After all, clan warfare occurs frequently.”

Linley nodded. “I could sense that when I saw those patrolling guards.”

The strictness and severity of the vigilance of the Four Divine Beasts clan was far greater than that of the patrols on Miluo Island.

“Linley, your natural talent is definitely better than even mine.” Baruch’s eyes were shining. “You haven’t even undergone the Ancestral Baptism, but you are already so powerful. After you undergo it, you’ll then gain insights into the Elemental Laws of Water.”

“Insights into the Elemental Laws of Water?” Linley said in astonishment.

He currently had only gained insights into the earth, the wind, and fire. He didn’t have any insights whatsoever into the other Elemental Laws.

Baruch said solemnly, “Right. Our Azure Dragon clan is the clan of a water-type divine beast. If the members of our clan aren’t even able to understand the Elemental Laws of Water, then we would be jokes. Currently, you aren’t able to gain insights into it, but that’s only because your lineage hasn’t been fully awakened. After you enter the ‘Dragonize Pool’ and undergo the Ancestral Baptism, you will naturally be transformed into an ‘Azure Dragon’, while at the same time, you will naturally and immediately reach the Demigod level in the Laws of Water. In addition, you will also gain our innate divine ability.”

Linley was completely stunned.

In the past, when Linley had watched how divine beasts would naturally become Deities after reaching adulthood, he would secretly sigh at how naturally blessed they were.

But he hadn't expected that the same was true for himself.

"I can become an Azure Dragon, and not only gain an 'innate divine ability', I'll also become a Deity in water!" Linley couldn't help but feel joy in his heart. "Most likely, in the Infernal Realm, there are very few people who have five divine clones, including my original body."

Once he underwent the Ancestral Baptism, he would have the earth clone, fire clone, water clone, wind clone, and original body. Five bodies.

Since birth, he had high elemental affinity for 'earth' and 'wind', and he was also able to somewhat use 'fire'. But now, he would also have 'water'.

"We are the Azure Dragon clan!" Baruch said proudly. "Training in the Elemental Laws of Water will be extremely fast. Look at me. Although my understanding and ability to gain insights is poor, in just a few thousand years, I've already gained insights into five of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Water. I'm not too far away from the Highgod level."

Linley couldn't help but be astonished. For a person to gain insights and master five of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Water in just a few thousand years was indeed very fast.

"The heavens have indeed been quite kind to the Azure Dragon clan." Linley said to himself.

"Clan leader, I haven't undergone the Ancestral Baptism yet. Then, how can I go undergo it?" Linley hurriedly asked. The Ancestral Baptism would allow himself to increase in power. Naturally, the sooner he experienced it, the better.

"Don't be impatient." Baruch laughed. "The Ancestral Baptism is carried

out within the clan only once every century. Although the clan is very large, every hundred years, there will still be some newborn descendants. Thus, they'll be allowed to undergo the Ancestral Baptism."

"Oh." Linley hurriedly asked, "Then when will the next Ancestral Baptism be?"

"The last one was twenty years ago. Thus, if you want to go undergo the Ancestral Baptism, you'll need to wait eighty years." Baruch said.

"Eighty years." Linley wasn't in a rush.

Ever since he had stayed five hundred years in the Amethyst Mountains, Linley no longer cared too much about the passage of time. A single session of meditation…after closing his eyes, eighty years might pass before he would open them again.

"Linley, in the future, you will be very powerful. Thus, your responsibilities will also be great. Our Four Divine Beasts clan is currently battling against those eight great clans. You will definitely become a powerful warlord for our clan. Thus…you need to work hard. Only in this way will you be able to survive in the dangerous battles of the future." Baruch said solemnly.

And Linley nodded seriously as well.

In the eight great clans, seven were from other planes. They had moved their entire clans over, pursuing and attacking the Four Divine Beasts clan. One could imagine how deep their hatred was for the Four Divine Beasts clan. However, given the arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan, there was no way they could forever hide within the Skyrite Mountains.

The struggles and battles between them thus naturally happened all the time.

The warfare between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans…as soon as Linley got involved, he would begin to experience a true rain of blood and storm of slaughter.

“I need to train hard.” Linley said to himself.

Indigo Prefecture, Skyrite Mountains. It was as calm and peaceful as ever. Perhaps the army of the Four Divine Beasts clan would be sent out to battle and war against the eight great clans, but Linley’s group who lived deep within the Skyrite Mountains knew nothing of these things.

The peaceful days spent in training passed very quickly. Sixty years soon passed.

On this day.

In the Skyrite Mountains. The gorge where Linley’s group was currently living. The many members of the Azure Dragon clan living here were either training or gathering together.

“Let’s go to the Yulan branch and tease those little fellows. Want to come?” In one corner of the gorge, six youths were gathered together, and one of them, a blue-haired man, laughed as he spoke.

“I’m not going.”

“I’m not going either.”

The other five men all shook their heads, and one of them even said, “Second Brother, don’t go cause trouble at the Yulan branch.”

“What’s wrong with you? How come all of you are so cowardly now. It’s just the Yulan branch. Their strongest members are just Gods. What are you afraid of?” The blue-haired man was rather unhappy.

“Second Brother, in the past, it was fine to cause problems for the Yulan branch, but what you don’t realize is that in the centuries you’ve been in seclusion, there have been changes in the Yulan branch.”

“What sort of changes?” The blue-haired man snickered. “Can it be that in

just a few centuries, they've produced a Highgod? A few centuries ago, their entire branch only had twelve Gods. Aside from that Baruch who trains a bit faster, the others are all very slow. Can it be that Baruch has become a Highgod?"

"It's not Baruch. Sixty years ago, another member of our clan returned and said that he was of the Yulan branch. The tribesmen all took him to be a God, but he was able to just stand there without moving and send Asru flying."

The blue-haired youth couldn't help but be stunned. "Did you say Asru?"

"Not just Asru. When we heard this from Asru, we didn't believe it. So, we went with Elder Brother to make some trouble for him, but…even Elder Brother was easily defeated by that Linley."

"Elder Brother?" The blue-haired man was now truly stunned. "My Elder Brother was defeated as well?"

"Right. Thus, Elder Brother is now meditating in seclusion." Another one of the five spoke out.

Only now did the blue-haired man realize that this was the reason he hadn't seen his Elder Brother this time upon concluding his training. He had thought that his Elder Brother had gone travelling. So in reality, he was in seclusion.

"This person truly is powerful?" The blue-haired man asked, puzzled. "What is his name?"

"From what the Yulan branch's people say, he is named Linley!" Someone immediately said.

"Right. His name is Linley. Those Yulan branch members are now very smug. They even say…that if we want to struggle against the Yulan branch, then we should come and see if we can beat Linley. Unfortunately, all of the Highgods in our gorge who tested him were defeated."

“Thus, in the past sixty years, nobody has dared to cause trouble for the Yulan branch again.”

After hearing the explanation from his friends, the blue-haired man finally understood.

This gorge was a place where very weak branches lived. Many branches had just a few Highgods, and the entire gorge, all combined, only had twenty or thirty Highgods. But Linley was able to defeat several of them.

Naturally, the other branches in the gorge would acknowledge the new status of the Yulan branch and not go humiliate them.

After all, if instead of humiliating them, they were themselves humiliated, that would truly be a loss of face.

Suddenly…

A surge of endless ripples descended from the heavens. That unique energy ripple caused the blue-haired man and the other five to be startled.

“The descent of the natural Laws?” The six men were greatly shocked.

This was the sign of a person becoming a Deity on their own.

The six immediately began to chat amongst themselves.

“Who made a breakthrough?”

“The descent of the natural Laws was centered on the Yulan branch. It was someone from their branch.”

“It’s probably that Saint, finally breaking through to become a Demigod. No need for all this commotion.” The blue-haired man snickered.

……

Currently, quite a few people were gathered outside Linley's door, with only Delia and Bebe having run inside.

"What's going on?" Baruch walked over and immediately asked.

Tarosse laughed. "Linley made a breakthrough."

"He's become a Highgod?" Baruch immediately asked through divine sense. Up till now, many of the other people in the Yulan branch viewed Linley as a Highgod, just one who was low-key and hid his aura.

"Not sure." Tarosse shook his head. "He shouldn't have. When Linley first arrived, he was still meditating on the fifth profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth."

While they chatted amongst themselves, three figures emerged from within the room.

"He came out. Linley came out." The Yulan branch's clansmen were all very excited.

"Everyone, you can go back to your own places now. I just made a breakthrough in one of my divine clones, that's all." Linley laughed calmly. Seeing the group of clansmen present, especially the look of veneration with which they viewed him, Linley still felt quite happy.

After having arrived here, Linley naturally wouldn't just watch as his clansmen were humiliated. Thus, on multiple occasions, he had shown his might, shocking the other branches.

These days, the Yulan branch no longer needed to endure humiliation. These other clansmen naturally felt gratitude towards Linley.

"Everyone can disperse now. Don't stay here." Baruch laughed as well.

Only now did the group of clansmen, chatting and laughing amongst

themselves, depart. While doing so, they said amongst themselves, “Linley is so formidable. What clone do you think made the breakthrough?”

“Most likely, a divine Destruction clone.”

“It might be his divine Wind clone.”

Those other clansmen weren’t clear about Linley’s detailed situation. They weren’t even sure as to what type of Laws Linley was currently training in.

“Linley, what breakthrough did you make?” Cesar went up to him, greeting and asking him.

“Divine fire clone.” Linley laughed at himself. “Only now have I finally reached the God level in my divine fire clone. I truly am slow in training in fire.”

Cesar, Tarosse, and the others were immediately speechless. He had been training for less than a thousand years, but had reached the God level in earth, wind, and fire…and he was complaining that he was slow?

“How is your training in the Laws of the Earth progressing?” Tarosse asked.

“Still training in the fifth profound mystery. I’ve reached a bottleneck. I wonder if I’ll be able to completely master the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’ before the Ancestral Baptism.” Linley said.

Only a decade or two was left before the next Ancestral Baptism.

Ten or so years, to Deities, was a very short period of time. Linley’s original body accompanied Delia, while his three divine clones were completely absorbed in their training. But even after the day of the Ancestral Baptism was about to arrive, the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’ remained stuck at the bottleneck.

On this day, nearly eighty years had passed since Linley had arrived at the Skyrite Mountains.

In front of Linley's residence. Baruch was walking over.

"Linley, tonight, the Ancestral Baptism is about to begin. I've already registered your name for it. Soon, you'll most likely be led away by others to participate in the Ancestral Baptism. Make your preparations."

"Understood." Linley's eyes couldn't help but be filled with a look of anticipation.

The Ancestral Baptism. What exactly was it like?

Chapter 10 – Dragonize Pool

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 10, Dragonize Pool

The skies were dark. It was already sundown.

Tonight, the Ancestral Baptism was going to begin. Within the gorge in the Skyrite Mountains, Linley was patiently waiting. Just a short while later, Linley saw a warrior dressed in azure armor fly over from the air.

“Who is Linley!” The azure armored warrior shouted.

Linley felt a surge of joy. He immediately went up to greet the man.

“I am Linley.” Linley laughed. The azure armored warrior glanced at Linley. After a short, careful scrutinization, he couldn’t help but frown and bark, “Stop joking around. Everyone who goes to the Ancestral Baptism is less than a century old. You are a God. Can it be that you are less than a century old? Quick, go have Linley come out.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. It seemed as though he had been taken for an imposter.

“I am Linley. I had been living in other planes, and only returned to the Skyrite Mountains just eighty years ago.” Linley explained. “Thus, up till now, I have yet to participate in the Ancestral Baptism.”

“Oh?” The azure armored warrior was rather puzzled.

At this moment, watching from below, Baruch, Delia, Bebe, and the others also didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. The azure armored warrior actually didn’t believe Linley was who he said he was. Baruch himself immediately flew up towards that azure armored warrior. “It’s true. He is indeed Linley. He wasn’t born in our Skyrite Mountains, which is why to this very day, he has yet to undergo the Ancestral Baptism.”

The azure armored warrior glanced at Linley, then let out a cold snort. “I’ll believe you for now. But, kid, you better understand…if you’ve already undergone an Ancestral Baptism, undergoing a second baptism will be of no use to you. And, if you were to be found out to be an imposter, you will be in trouble. Enough. Let’s go.”

The azure armored warrior immediately flew high into the sky.

Linley turned his head to say his farewells to Delia and Bebe, then immediately followed.

They flew up into the Dragon Avenue, and followed it. Linley kept close behind the azure armored warrior as they advanced nonstop. After flying for quite some time by the side of this azure armored warrior, the two arrived at the top of a pitch-black mountain peak.

At the top of the mountain peak, there were multiple azure armored guards, a bald, black-robed man, as well as ten or so young men and women.

“Milord, Linley has been brought here.” The azure armored warrior flew over and immediately said respectfully.

The bald, black-robed man glanced sideways at Linley, nodded, then instructed the warrior, “Enough. You can leave now.” The black-robed man looked at Linley. “Linley, wait here for a while. When everyone is present, we’ll go in.”

“Yes.” Linley stood there with the other ten or so people.

“These people are all just Saints.” Linley could immediately tell that these youngsters were very suspicious, and they looked at Linley in surprise. They were amazed to discover that they actually couldn’t see Linley’s power!

“This person isn’t a Saint?” Those young men and women were all puzzled.

For someone who had been born less than a century ago, especially a descendant of the Azure Dragon clan, it wasn't very likely that they would be able to become a Deity on their own without having undergone the Ancestral Baptism.

Linley just waited there quietly, as one young man after another was led here by azure armored warriors.

"A total of twenty eight. All present." The bald, black-robed man nodded slightly, then said calmly, "Enough. Little fellows, all follow me. Remember, without my permission, you aren't allowed to run around wildly."

As he spoke, the bald, black-robed man led them all into a corridor within the mountain peak.

The outsides of the entrance to the corridor were all covered with draconic sculptures. The entire corridor led downwards, deep into the heart of the mountain. This corridor was nearly six meters wide and four meters tall. It was very rectangular, while at the same time the walls of the corridor had some ancient sculptures as well.

The floor was covered with a woven carpet.

Linley just quietly followed the bald, black-robed man.

"Hey, you, you're already a Deity?" A jade-haired girl walking alongside Linley couldn't resist her curiosity, and so she asked the question in a soft voice.

Linley turned to glance at her. He chuckled, but only nodded in response.

The jade-haired girl's eyes immediately lit up, and were filled with a look of adoration. "You are so amazing. You've never undergone the Ancestral Baptism, but you were able to become a Deity in under a century." Even the other youths who were taking part in the Ancestral Baptism turned to look at Linley with either veneration, or surprise, or jealousy.

Less than a century?

He had passed the century mark long ago. However…in the Yulan continent, when he had become a Deity on his own, it was true that at that time, he had been training for less than a century.

“Pipe down.” The bald, black-robed man shouted icily.

Immediately, those twelve Saints were so scared, they didn’t dare say another word. Linley’s expression didn’t change. “This bald fellow has quite the temper.” Linley continued to walk and follow him. Moments later, they arrived at the end of the corridor, which had a wide hall past it with quite a few black-robed figures within.

“All here?” One of the black-robed men went to welcome them.

“A total of twenty eight. All present.” The bald, black-robed man said. “You watch them for a while. I’ll go invite the two elders to activate the Dragonize Pool.”

“Right. Do you know where the two elders are, right now?” The black-robed man said.

The bald, black-robed man said, puzzled, “Could it be that they haven’t arrived yet?”

“They arrived, they arrived. But the two elders just went into a private room. They even said that without their permission, nobody is permitted to enter.” The black-robed man was puzzled. “They are in the private room in the eastern palace hall.”

“I’ll go take a look.” The bald, black-robed man immediately walked over.

Deep within the mountain, in a private room in the eastern palace hall.

Two figures were currently standing, shoulder to shoulder. One of them had

a hawk-hooked nose, a balding head, two drooping sideburns, and a pair of eyes that were as grim and callous as a viper's. The other was very handsome, with long hair that flowed down his back.

The two were both dressed in azure armor that was embroidered with gold patterns, as well as a cloak that was covered with strange, peculiar magic runes which flowed with all sorts of faint light.

They were currently focusing their attention on watching a scryer recording that currently being broadcast, floating in the air within the private room.

"Formidable." The bald man couldn't help but sigh in praise.

"Even you and I probably wouldn't be able to so easily block that blade blow." The handsome man sighed in praise as well.

The scryer recording currently being played, amazingly, was the scene of Linley's battle in the skies above Miluo Island. The scene which had just caused the two to sigh in amazement was that of the red-robed elder of the Bagshaw clan using a single blade chop to break apart Linley's 'cube'.

That battle had been watched by many outsiders who were present at Miluo Island. Those of them who trained in the Elemental Laws of Water naturally would record it down.

Because the main figure in this battle, 'Linley', was considered by many experts to be of the 'Four Divine Beasts clan', these scryer recordings naturally made their way to the Four Divine Beasts clan. Only, the speed at which this happened was rather slow.

Linley had been in the Four Divine Beasts clan for so many years now, but the scryer recording had just now made its way here.

"Look. That red-robed elder is about to fight with our clansman." The handsome man said hurriedly.

In the scryer recording, that red-robed elder, after hearing the order from the

clan leader of the Bagshaw clan, ‘Bakwill’, began to wield his blade and charge towards Linley.

Seeing the saber blow strike down, the two elders both held their breaths.

But then, they saw from the scryer recording that Linley was able to use just his right leg to kick against that saber, smashing that Seven Star Fiend directly into the ground. Moments later, the scryer recording came to an end.

“Formidable!” The handsome man sighed in praise.

A stunned look was in the eyes of the bald man as well. “Just by relying on his body, he was able to resist a full force material attack from a Seven Star Fiend. For his body to be so incredibly strong…even in our clan, there are few who are at this level.”

“You and I are not, at least.” The handsome man agreed.

Although the Azure Dragon clan’s members were indeed strong in Dragonform, to be as strong as this…very few in the Azure Dragon clan could accomplish it. For one’s Dragonform to be at this level of power wasn’t just a matter of lineage; it also required other factors.

“It isn’t just that his body is tough. Did you see that globe of earthen yellow light surrounding his body? Everyone trapped within it will have their movements be affected. Even that red-robed elder of Miluo Island was affected as well.” The bald man said solemnly.

“Right. That’s a Gravitational Space. An extremely formidable Gravitational Space.” The handsome youth said, puzzled, “Someone in our clan is actually specialized in the Laws of the Earth? And at such a level? Inconceivable!”

After having seen that scryer recording, they were certain that this person was of their clan.

In the entire Infernal Realm, only the Azure Dragon clan could have such powerful bodies after assuming Dragonform!

“This person’s power is great.” The bald man sighed. “He was able to defeat a Seven Star Fiend without even using his innate divine ability. If he had used his innate divine ability, he would have easily won.”

“Right.” The handsome man nodded. “His body is so powerful, which means that his lineage must be very pure. If his lineage is very pure, then his innate divine ability must be formidable as well.” The handsome youth knew full well how powerful his clan’s innate divine ability was.”

“But, I’ve never seen this person before.” The bald man looked at the other man. “Have you?”

The handsome man frowned. “This transformation…I haven’t seen it either.”

“It might be an expert who is in seclusion outside the clan.” The handsome man said.

“Hmph. The clan is in a state of crisis, but this person still doesn’t return.” The bald man was clearly very unhappy. “He might be powerful, but if he doesn’t return, what good is he?”

“Knock!” “Knock!”

The sound of the door being knocked.

“Enter.” The bald man said calmly.

The bald, black-robed man pushed open the door to the private room, then said respectfully, “Elders, the twenty eight participants of the Ancestral Baptism are here.”

“Oh. Let’s go. Let’s activate the Dragonize Pool.” The handsome man said, and then he headed out alongside the bald man.

The two were members of the elders of the Azure Dragon clan.

Linley's group of twenty eight followed behind the two elders and the four black-robed men, walking through a narrow corridor. Up in front, the two elders chatted and laughed with each other. "Garvey [Jia'wei], it's quite a rare occasion for us to have a God participate in the Ancestral Baptism."

"It is quite interesting." The handsome man nodded.

"He became a God without undergoing the Ancestral Baptism. Not bad." The handsome man turned to glance at Linley, but unfortunately…during that great battle above Miluo Island, Linley had been in Dragonform the entire time.

Currently, Linley was in human form, so the two elders naturally couldn't recognize him as being the main character of the scryer recording they had just seen, that so called 'reclusive expert' who was living outside the clan.

At the end of the walkway was a very wide palace hall.

In the center of the palace hall, there was a large round pool that was two hundred meter in diameter. The waters of the pool emitted a very peculiar odor, and next to the pool, there was a black-robed figure that was tossing in a large amount of herbs into it.

"Bubble, bubble…" The waters of the pool continuously frothed.

"This is the Dragonize Pool." The bald man said in a clear voice. "Wait a while. Go in only after I tell you to."

As he spoke, the bald man, with a flip of his hand, retrieved a fist-sized gemstone. This fist-sized gemstone sparkled with a dazzling azure light, and the bald man tossed it directly into the Dragonize Pool.

"Plonk!" The gemstone fell into the waters of the pool.

The strange thing was…

The Dragonize Pool immediately glowed with a dazzling azure light that was quite piercing to the eye. And then, the waters of the entire Dragonize Pool began to wildly bubble, with blasts of water constantly appearing and a large amount of azure energy forming waves that circulated on the surface, as though tiny azure dragons were swirling about.

“Enough. You can all go in now.” The bald man said casually.

“You keep an eye on them for me.” The bald man turned to look at the bald, black-robed man. “After the Ancestral Baptism is complete, retrieve the Dragonize Jewel and give it to us.”

“Yes, Elder.” The bald, black-robed man bowed as he replied.

“Let’s go.” The bald man and the handsome man laughed, then departed. The Ancestral Baptism would take a fairly long period of time. The two elders wouldn’t just wait there like fools.

The bald, black-robed man immediately stared coldly at the group of twenty eight. “All of you, go in.”

“Dragonize Pool?” Linley stared at the azure energy swirling about in front of him, at that Dragonize Pool that was emitting that dazzling azure light. He immediately dove directly into the Dragonize Pool, moving so fast he was like a ray of light. As for the other twenty seven, they too charged forward en masse and entered the Dragonize Pool.”

The twenty eight all landed within the Dragonize Pool.

“Roaaaaaaaaaaaaar!” The entire Dragonize Pool emitted a strange, draconic roar, a roar which shook the soul. At the same time, the dazzling azure light which the Dragonize Pool had been shooting out in every direction began to dim, and the large amounts of azure energy swirling on the surface of the pool, with a whoosh, flooded towards those twenty eight people.

Chapter 11 – Innate Divine Ability

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 11, Innate Divine Ability

Countless streams of azure energy circled about like serpents slithering in the Dragonize Pool. These azure energy currents flooded towards those twenty eight people, surrounding them like azure silkworm cocoons which continuously spun themselves around them.

“What an unusual feeling.”

As soon as he had entered the Dragonize Pool, Linley had sensed a large amount of energy surrounding him. It was as though he had been returned to his mother’s womb. The strange energy brought warmth to every part of his body and seeped deep into it.

His body felt both numb and comfortable.

“So this is the Ancestral Baptism. Quite comfortable, actually.” Linley closed his eyes, luxuriating in the feeling of that unique energy entering his body.

The energy continuously seeped in through his skin. His flesh, his nerves, his blood vessels, his blood…they were all infused with it. Even his bones were infused with it…and even his eyes and eyelids were going numb. From inside to outside, not a single part of his body was left unchanged.

In terms of spirit or body, Linley was currently in a very relaxed state.

The palace hall where the Dragonize Pool was located was extremely large. It was three or four hundred meters wide, and nearly a hundred meters tall. The ceiling of the palace hall, in particular, had an image of a bellowing dragon carved into it.

“Bubble, bubble…” The Dragonize Pool continuously frothed.

At the side of the Dragonize Pool, quite a few black-robed men were resting while watching these twenty eight junior descendants metamorphosize.

“The Ancestral Baptism will take at least one or two days. Some with purer bloodlines will have their Ancestral Baptism last for six or seven days.” The bald, black-robed man shook his head. “The two Elders went to rest, but we still have to wait here.”

A silver-haired youth by the side of the bald, black-robed man laughed. “When one day you become one of the Elders, you can be like that as well.”

“Me? Become an Elder? I’ll wait to have the power of a Seven Star Fiend first.” The bald, black-robed man said resignedly.

“Hey. These juniors are beginning to slow down in their rate of absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Jewel.” The silver-haired youth suddenly said.

The bald, black-robed man turned to look. Indeed.

Currently, in the Dragonize Pool, twenty five of the twenty eight azure cocoons had ceased absorbing the azure energy, with only three left which continued to devour the azure energy.

“During this Ancestral Baptism, there’s actually three who have high potential.” The bald, black-robed man sighed in praise. “The longer they can absorb the power of the ‘Dragonize Gem’, the purer the ancestor’s blood is in their veins, and the greater amount as well.”

“Right.” The silver-haired youth nodded. “However, juniors these days all have very shallow amounts of the lineage. Now that they are done absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Gem, they’ll have completed their Ancestral Baptism shortly.”

“I heard that the more powerful second and third generation members of our clan, when undergoing their Ancestral Baptism, took one or two full days just to absorb the energy of the Dragonize Gem.” The bald, black-

robed man said mysteriously.

“Are you serious?” The silver-haired youth didn’t dare believe it. “Ordinary clansmen only need a few moments to complete the absorption part. Is the lineage of the second and third generation clansmen that much superior to ordinary clansmen?”

“Why would I lie to you? Not long ago, that Baruch fellow. Do you know of him?” The bald, black-robed man said.

“I do.” The silver-haired youth sighed in praise. “Supposedly, he spent a full night just absorbing the power of the Dragonize Gem. The purity of his lineage is truly quite rare.”

“Just think about it. If even Baruch’s lineage could be so pure, how pure is the lineage of the second and third generations?” The bald, black-robed man laughed.

“That Dragonize Gem had been completely charged, but he immediately absorbed almost a third of it.” The bald, black-robed man sighed with feeling. “I saw this happen myself.”

“A third? That much?” The silver-haired youth said in shock.

A single ‘Dragonize Gem’ would generally be swapped out for a fully charged Dragonize Gem after using up half of its energy. However, generally speaking, half of the energy of a Dragonize Gem would be enough to provide Ancestral Baptisms for thousands of years for the clan.

Given there was an Ancestral Baptism every hundred years, that meant it could be used for tens of times, consecutively.

But Baruch had caused the Dragonize Gem to have a third of its energy used up in a single Ancestral Baptism. This was indeed shocking.

“It seems as though today’s Dragonize Gem is fully charged.” The bald, black-robed man said.

The Dragonize Gem was a fairly precious item for the Azure Dragon clan. To others, however, it was worthless. After all, the energy of the Dragonize Gem would only take effect on someone who had the ‘Azure Dragon lineage’. The Azure Dragon clan, in turn, had to spend an enormous amount of money to create these Dragonize Gems.

“Look, just one left. The other twenty seven have stopped absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Gem.” The silver-haired youth said.

The bald, black-robed man turned to look, only to see that in the Dragonize Pool, just a single, large azure energy cocoon remained. A large amount of azure energy continuously, ceaselessly flooded towards that azure cocoon, which seemed to be like a bottomless pit, capable of absorbing as much energy as came to it.

“Whoah-oh! This one should be that God.” The bald, black-robed man, glancing at the other twenty seven, knew that the remaining one was Linley.

“God?” The silver-haired youth laughed. “I hear that he just came back not long ago from the outside world. He was able to reach the God level without undergoing the Ancestral Baptism; he’s quite talented. No wonder he’s able to absorb so much of the energy of the Dragonize Gem.”

“Tell me, how much do you think he will absorb?” The bald, black-robed man laughed.

“Hard to say. Perhaps he might be able to absorb a tenth of the energy of the Dragonize Gem.” The youth said.

“A tenth? That’s not very likely.” The bald, black-robed man shook his head.

As they spoke, the two continued to pay attention to the final, remaining azure cocoon within the Dragonize Pool. As for the other twenty seven, they were in a state of slumber.

Time flowed on…

“Half the night has passed. He’s still absorbing?” All of the black-robed men around the Dragonize Pool were discussing this amongst themselves now.

“Crackle…”

That azure energy continued to endlessly flood towards Linley’s azure cocoon, which didn’t reject any of it, instead constantly absorbing all the azure energy. The strange energy of the Dragonize Gem continuously flooded every single part of Linley’s body.

But it seemed as though Linley’s bones and flesh were able to absorb as much energy as was sent to them.

“My entire body is shaking.” Linley felt extremely comfortable. He could sense that unique energy seeping deep into every part of his body, merging with the latent, potential energy throughout his body. The energy of the ‘Dragonize Gem’ was completely compatible with Linley’s bloodline energy.

However…

It was as though the bloodline energy in Linley’s body hadn’t been completely discovered yet. Thus, a large amount of the energy of the ‘Dragonize Gem’ continued to flood in, constantly drawing out the energy hidden deep in the blood which flowed throughout Linley’s body.

“It’s been an entire night.” The black-robed men surrounding the Dragonize Pool were awestruck.

“Last time, I heard that Baruch spent an entire night absorbing. But this person actually…right, what’s his name?” The silver-haired man asked.

“Linley. He’s Linley.” The bald, black-robed man had been in charging of assembling Linley’s group, and so he was very familiar with Linley’s

information. “Oh, that Linley is just like Baruch. He also comes from the Yulan branch.”

“The same branch?” The silver-haired youth was astonished.

“I wonder how much energy this Linley will be able to absorb.” The bald, black-robed man stared at the Dragonize Pool.

The azure energy continued to flood out, not stopping at all.

Only a long time later…

The speed of the azure energy flow slowed down, then came to a halt. That azure cocoon merged into Linley’s body as well. Within the Dragonize Pool, Linley completely stopped moving, falling into a slumber, just as the other twenty seven had.

“Half a day, and a full night.”

The bald, black-robed man and the silver-haired youth looked at each other, their eyes filled with amazement and envy.

The longer one could absorb, the more pure one’s lineage was, and the more talented one would be in water. In addition, one’s ‘innate divine ability’ would also be more powerful!

Half a day and one night!

Only the legendary members of the second and third generation could compare to this.

“Ah!” Linley seemed to be asleep, but his consciousness was still quite clear.

Linley could sense that his skin, his flesh, his bones, his organs…his entire body seemed to be trembling with excitement as countless microscopic threads of energy danced about.

Throughout his body, every single cell was vibrating minutely.

The energy of the Dragonize Pool and the energy of his lineage was fusing together.

“It feel as though every part of my body is coming alive.” Linley felt that this was inconceivable. In addition, the energy of the Dragonize Gem, along with the energy of his lineage, when coming together, were silently transforming Linley’s body.

From his skin to his flesh to deep within his cells, a transformation was occurring.

An intrinsic metamorphosis.

As this silent transformation occurred, Linley allowed his body to change unimpeded, just using his consciousness to sense it.

Not long after Linley stopped absorbing the energy of the Dragonize Gem, the other people throughout the Dragonize Pool began to change dramatically.

“Hoooooowl!” First was a youth in the Dragonize Pool who suddenly opened his eyes, then let out a wild howl. Draconic scales suddenly emerged from his body, and his draconic tail began to thrash about in the pool as well.

Waves were sent splashing everywhere.

“Aaaaaaaaaah!” This Dragonformed youth let out an agonized howl. Moments later, he slowly calmed down, regaining his calm.

At the same time…

“Rumble…” A rippling surge of energy came as the natural Law’s descended.

A black-colored stone that glowed with an azure-greenish aura appeared, hovering above his head. It was a water-type divine spark!

“This kid is going to become a Demigod.” The silver-haired youth chuckled. All those who entered the Ancestral Baptism would naturally become Deities of water, and would also gain their innate divine ability.

“Hmph. The first one to transform is the one who absorbed the least amount of energy from the Dragonize Gem, and has the least potential.” The bald, black-robed man couldn’t help but snicker disdainfully.

“You…geeze. This junior just completed his Ancestral Baptism. Say something nice instead, can’t you?” The silver-haired man laughed calmly. He, too, knew that although the other had said some unpleasant words, these words were true. The lesser the lineage, the lesser the elemental affinity to water, and the weaker the innate divine ability.

As time flowed one, one person after another in the Dragonize Pool became Deities. The vast majority of them completed the process in just two days. The second and third to last required three days before becoming a Deity. After the two of them became Deities…in the entire Dragonize Pool, only Linley remained, still ‘slumbering’.

The twenty seven had gathered at the sides of the Dragonize Pool and were watching Linley within it.

“Wait slowly. From the looks of it, this Linley will need at least quite a few days before he will complete his transformation.” The silver-haired youth said.

“I expect he’ll take more time than Baruch did.” The bald, black-robed man said.

Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, eleven days had passed since Linley had entered the Dragonize Pool. Very, very few members of the Azure Dragon clan would take eleven days for the transformation. Linley

remained the only person in the Dragonize Pool.

“Aaaaaaah!” Linley suddenly let out an agonized howl.

Immediately, the group of black-robed men surrounding the Dragonize Pool, as well as those twenty seven others, felt their hearts tremble. They immediately looked over. At this moment, draconic scales completely covered Linley’s entire body, and savage spikes had sprouted out as well.

A terrifying aura drifted out.

“So painful!” Linley gritted his teeth. He felt as though every single cell in his body was exploding with terrifying power, and countless surges of energy were constantly merging inside his body. This exploding energy caused Linley to be unable to refrain from transforming.

The latent energy inherent in his mighty body continuously flowed out and merged like countless rivers that were flowing upwards.

Up, up, up!

Up into his mind!

At this moment, that soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was completely ineffective. This soul-protecting Sovereign artifact would defend against enemy attacks, but wouldn’t defend against Linley’s own energy.

This massive flood of energy poured directly into Linley’s sea of consciousness, completely surrounding the souls of Linley’s four clones.

In the sea of consciousness, that bizarre azure light began to glow like a halo. On multiple occasions, even as far back as when Linley was a Saint, this azure halo had saved him. But this time, the glowing azure halo was constantly growing more and more powerful!

The glowing azure halo grew more and more powerful, until it seemed to have transformed into the sun, illuminating the entire sea of consciousness.

The people by the side of the Dragonize Pool stared with wide eyes at this scene.

Around Linley's body, the phantom of an enormous Azure Dragon appeared, filling nearly the entire palace hall as it coiled around him. This Azure Dragon phantom hovered directly around Linley, and its illusory eyes actually swept the group of people by the side of the Dragonize Pool with its gaze.

"The Azure Dragon Phantom! It's actually the Azure Dragon Phantom! And what an incredibly clear Azure Dragon Phantom."

The black-robed men stared, slack-jawed.

As for Linley, he was currently opening his mouth, and as he did so, that Azure Dragon Phantom also opened its mouth, emitting a terrifying draconic cry….and as it did, a blurry azure energy halo suddenly spread out in every direction, filling the entire palace hall.

Every God and Demigod present suddenly froze, as though having lost all consciousness.

Even those black-robed Highgods could feel their souls be trapped in a very peculiar state.

The bald, black-robed man instantly regained his clarity of mind, then said in astonishment, "Innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', at such a terrifying level of power…and he is only a God. If he were a Highgod…"

"Rumble…"

The natural Laws suddenly descended.

Linley had become a Deity in water as well!

Chapter 12 – The Might of the Dragon Roar

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 12, The Might of the Dragon Roar

These black-robed figures had long since grown accustomed to the sight of people becoming Deities at the Dragonize Pool. Naturally, it wouldn't surprise them. However, they currently were still astonished by the enormous Azure Dragon Phantom which had appeared behind Linley.

"Azure Dragon Phantom. A God is capable of manifesting the 'Azure Dragon Phantom'." These black-robed men were utterly dazed.

Much like the divine beasts 'Godeater Rat' and 'Suanni Lion', the divine beast 'Azure Dragon', when using its innate divine ability, would also have an illusion of its true form appear behind it. If they were true divine beasts, then when using this innate divine ability as a Demigod, the illusory phantom would still appear.

But the Azure Dragon clan was different.

This was because in the entire Azure Dragon clan, only the ancestor, the 'Azure Dragon', was a true divine beast, a true 'Azure Dragon'. As for his descendants, such as the clansmen of the second or third generation, all the way down to Linley…they only had the 'bloodline' of the Azure Dragon, but they weren't the true divine beast 'Azure Dragon'.

The power of their innate divine ability was far inferior to that of their ancestor.

But although it was inferior to their ancestor's, there were still varying levels of strength with regards to this innate divine ability amongst the descendants of the Azure Dragon clan.

This was because the innate divine ability was linked to one's spiritual energy. Thus, generally speaking, clansmen who had extremely powerful

innate divine abilities would only just barely manifest the ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’ upon reaching the Highgod level, when their souls became more powerful.

As for those with weaker innate divine abilities, even after becoming Highgods, they still wouldn’t be able to form an ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’.

Only Gods with exceedingly powerful innate divine abilities were capable of forming an ‘Azure Dragon Phantom’.

For example, the second generation members of the Azure Dragon clan, as Gods, were able to manifest the Azure Dragon Phantom. As for the third generation, only part of them were able to manifest the Azure Dragon Phantom as Gods.

“A God who is capable of manifesting the Azure Dragon Phantom.” The black-robed men looked at each other, their gazes filled with shock.

“Rumble…”

To the side of Linley’s original body, another Linley had appeared, hovering in the air, dressed in an azure-green robe and with a head full of azure-green hair, who emanated an aura of water. This was Linley’s divine water clone, and it immediately entered Linley’s original body.

The Azure Dragon Phantom had disappeared long ago.

“So this is what the Ancestral Baptism is all about.” Linley, his eyes closed, was sensing his sea of consciousness and his soul.

Deep within his mind, seated above that soul sea was his divine earth, fire, wind, and water clones. In the center of those four clones was that black stone, and above the black stone was the soul of Linley’s original body.

At the same time…

The entire soul sea was flooded with a thick, azure light.

In the Yulan continent, when Linley had only been a Saint, this azure light had saved Linley on multiple occasions. But afterwards, when Linley's power had grown, the strength of this azure light had become far inferior to the soul attacks of others and unable to withstand them.

However, after this Ancestral Baptism, the power of this azure halo had increased ten-thousand-fold.

"So the innate divine ability is as marvelous as this." Linley was incomparably surprised. "It isn't just pure divine power, nor is it pure spiritual energy. When the spiritual energy and this azure aura combines, only then can this 'innate divine ability' be executed."

Only now did Linley understand the reason why innate divine abilities could only be used by divine beasts, and why others couldn't learn how to use them.

For example, Bebe's 'Godeater'.

For example, Dylin's 'Heaven Devourer'.

They were all divine beasts, causing their souls to have unique properties. The unique property of the Azure Dragon clan was this 'azure halo'. Linley was unable to understand what source of energy this azure halo was, exactly.

It wasn't divine power, nor was it spiritual energy.

After undergoing the Ancestral Baptism, Linley naturally gained insight into this innate divine ability, and naturally gained insight into one of the profound mysteries of the Laws of Water.

"This innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', has some similarities to my 'Blackstone Prison'. They both have an impact on the soul, rather than being killing techniques." Linley, after acquiring the 'black stone' at the Amethyst Mountains, was capable of using the black stone to exert a power

that impacted the soul, causing enemies to enter a dazed state.

This ‘Dragon Roar’ also affected the soul.

“My innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, isn’t as strong as the ‘black stone’ with regards to affecting the enemy.” Linley had discovered the second difference now. Aside from the impact on an enemy’s soul, his innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, had another, unique impact.

“Impacting speed?” Linley shook his head. “Wrong. It impacts…time. Right. It’s time!”

The innate divine ability of the Azure Dragon clan, the ‘Dragon Roar’, didn’t just impact the soul; it also contained the ability to impact ‘time’. Although the strength of the effect on souls wasn’t too great, the power it had to influence time was utterly monstrous.

Neither the Seven Elemental Laws nor the Four Higher Edicts had an impact on time.

Time was something which was utterly inviolable.

And yet…

The innate divine ability of the divine beast, ‘Azure Dragon’, had an impact on time. Most likely, only this sort of innate, intrinsic divine ability could have an impact on time.

Bebe’s ‘Godeater’ allowed the direct devouring of divine sparks.

The Azure Dragon’s ‘Dragon Roar’ influenced time.

Neither could be trained. Unfortunately, Linley wasn’t a true Azure Dragon, and so the true power of the ‘Dragon Roar’ couldn’t be fully unleashed.

“When I use the ‘Dragon Roar’, the impact on time is very minute, virtually neglible.” Linley thought of the ancestor. “However, if it were the ancestor,

a true ‘Azure Dragon’ who used this divine ability, the effect would definitely be terrifying.”

Although his blood was very pure, it was still far from being comparable to his ancestor.

“Currently, the power of my soul isn’t very great, so when I use this innate divine ability, the impact on others is very limited. Once I reach the Highgod stage and absorb a large amount of amethysts, my soul will strengthen by tens of times over, and the impact on time this innate divine ability has will definitely become more noticeable.”

Linley knew very well how terrifying the power to influence time was.

“However, this Ancestral Baptism has already had a tremendous effect on my power.” Linley’s heart was filled with joy.

The greatest benefit Linley had reaped from this increase in power was that azure halo. The azure halo, combined with his spiritual energy, could not only execute his innate divine ability, it could also…be used for soul defense!

For example, even at the Saint-level, the azure halo had blocked soul attacks.

But now, after the Ancestral Baptism, the power of that azure halo had been multiplied ten thousand times over. Once it fused with his spiritual energy, the power of Linley’s soul defense was now extremely shocking.

“Given my current soul defense with the damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact assisting it, most likely only Seven Star Fiends who specialize in soul attacks are able to pose a threat to me. But whether or not they can kill me is another story.”

Linley was completely confident.

Within the Dragonize Pool, Linley opened his eyes. Those black-robed men

as well as the twenty seven others were all staring at him in amazement. Linley looked around the Dragonize Pool, realizing that he was the only one left within it.

“I didn’t realize I was so slow.” Linley laughed calmly, then flew out.

Only now did the bald, black-robed man wave his hand, and that Dragonize Jewel immediately levitated out of the Dragonize Pool. Currently, only half of the Dragonize Jewel was azure in color, with the other half being translucent.

“Half of the energy was used up.” The bald, black-robed man glanced in surprise at Linley.

“Make the arrangements to have these people be sent back.” The bald, black-robed man said to the silver-haired man.

“Fine.” The silver-haired man nodded.

Linley was quite delighted. Smiling, he followed after the silver-haired man, preparing to leave alongside him.

“Linley, hold it.” The bald, black-robed man suddenly said.

“Huh?” Linley turned to look at him, puzzled.

The bald, black-robed man forced out a smile. “During the Ancestral Baptism, all by yourself, you absorbed half the energy of a Dragonize Jewel over the course of one night and half a day. As a God, when utilizing our innate divine ability, you were able to form an Azure Dragon Phantom. You are indeed a genius of our clan…make a trip with me. Later, the Elders will definitely want to meet you.”

“Oh.” Linley laughed as well.

Baruch had told him as well that after his Ancestral Baptism, because his bloodline was almost as pure as those of the third generation clansmen, he

had been received by an Elder, and thus learned many things regarding the clan."

The twenty seven were immediately led away, while Linley followed the bald, black-robed man forward, passing through a walkway into a palace hall, then through yet another corridor before arriving at the eastern palace hall.

Within a private room that was deep within the eastern palace hall.

"Wait here for me." The bald, black-robed man said.

Linley nodded.

The bald, black-robed man immediately walked out.

Linley had a hint of a smile on his lips. The Ancestral Baptism definitely had been a great boon to him. His soul defense had received an unexpected, delightful increase in power, and as for the 'Dragon Roar', in the future, when his soul grew more powerful, he would be able to truly unleash its might as well.

"I hope that the Elder won't chat with me about all the various issues pertaining to the clan." Linley said to himself. "It will be quite boring to listen to it a second time."

In the hidden room, the bald man and the handsome youth were currently seated in the meditative position, awaiting the bald, black-robed man. Only when he entered did they open their eyes.

"You are so slow." The bald man said coldly. "Give me the Dragonize Jewel."

"Yes, Elder." The bald, black-robed man offered the Dragonize Jewel.

Upon seeing it, the bald man and the handsome youth were both shocked.

“Only half remaining?” The handsome youth immediately said.

“Right. This Ancestral Baptism had a genius named Linley. He took half a day and a night just to absorb the energy from the Dragonize Jewel, and only now did he complete the Ancestral Baptism.” The bald, black-robed man said hurriedly.

The handsome youth and the bald man exchanged shocked glances.

“Emanuel [Yi’man’niu’er], yet another person with potential has appeared in our clan.” The handsome youth sighed in praise.

“Quick, have him come over.” The bald man shouted hurriedly.

“Yes.” The bald, black-robed man immediately left.

Soon, Linley, dressed in a sky-blue robe and with his long brown hair casually flowing down his shoulders, walked in with a smile. Upon seeing these two people, Linley immediately bowed respectfully. “Linley greets the Elders.”

“So it is you.” The two had some recollection of Linley. It would be strange if they couldn’t remember a God-level Deity participating in the Ancestral Baptism.

The handsome youth laughed, “Linley, your bloodline is very pure, completely comparable with our third generation clansmen. You absolutely cannot squander such excellent innate gifts. The clan needs you.” As he spoke, he flipped his hand and produced a fairly thin book.

“The fall of our clan ten thousand years ago as well as our current crisis. Once you read this book, you will understand it all.” The handsome youth, with a toss, made the book fly straight towards Linley.

Linley let out a secret sigh of relief. So he was just given a book. He had been worried he would have to listen to the story once again.

“It makes sense…” Linley said to himself. “If this has to be told to every single person with high potential or every single person who becomes a Highgod, wouldn’t the Elders grow tired of it?” Linley took the book, pretending to flip through it.

“You can go back and read it later.” The handsome youth laughed. “Remember, after reading it, destroy it. Don’t allow those ordinary Demigods and Gods to learn of it. For now, it’s best to let them worry less.”

“Yes, Elder.” Linley immediately responded.

“Linley.” That bald man, ‘Emanuel’, also laughed. “Innate talent is one thing, but working hard and training is very important as well. Enough, you can go back and train. Remember…you are not permitted to use a divine spark. You have to rely on yourself to become a Highgod.”

If a genius like him was to use a divine spark, that would be an utter waste.

“Yes.” Linley immediately bowed, then turned and began to walk towards the outside.

“Emanuel, it’s quite rare for us to be able to encounter such a genius.” The handsome youth, ‘Garvey’, sighed in praise.

“Yes, it is quite rare. Let’s go.” The bald man, ‘Emanuel’, laughed as well, and then he rose to his feet. But as his gaze unconsciously swept across Linley, who had already reached the doorway, Emanuel’s gaze suddenly turned sharp!

A look of astonishment appeared on his face as well!

He stared unblinkingly at Linley’s right hand. As Linley was walking away, the movements of his hand occasional revealed a glimpse of a black ring… the Coiling Dragon ring.

“That’s…the ring of the ancestor. A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!”

The balding man's face instantly turned purple, and his entire body was shaking, his mind lost in a fog. "A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. That's a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!!!"

"Emanuel, what is it?" Garvey was rather puzzled.

By now, Linley had already pushed the door open and was walking out.

Only now did the bald man come to his senses, and he immediately shouted, "Linley, halt!!!"

Chapter 13 – Greed!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 13, Greed!

Linley was currently walking outside the door. His power had risen after the Ancestral Baptism, so naturally, he was quite happy.

“He’s calling for me?” Linley, hearing the shout, couldn’t help but be puzzled.

However, Linley still turned to look behind him, only to see the bald Elder’s face was completely red, and even his eyes had turned scarlet. The man now looked like a rapacious wolf. Linley couldn’t help but grow cautious, while at the same time, he opened his mouth and spoke, “Elder, please let me know what you need?”

“Emanuel, what’s going on?” The handsome youth said.

What’s going on?

Only now did Emanuel awaken from his excitement and regain his clarity. His face returned to normal, and he looked at Linley in front of him. In his heart, he knew: “The appearance of the Azure Dragon ring of the ancestor cannot be made public. I can’t let this Garvey learn of this.”

Emanuel was a member of the Assembly of Elders of the Azure Dragon clan.

He himself was a fourth generation member of the clan, and had lived for countless years. However, in terms of status, quite a few members of the Azure Dragon clan were higher than him.

“If the appearance of the ancestor’s Azure Dragon ring was made public, there’s no way it would become mine.” Emanuel’s thoughts whirled about in his mind, and then he made up his mind, laughing coldly in his heart.

“Fortunately, this Garvey had never met the ancestor, and doesn’t know what the Azure Dragon ring looks like.”

Their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, as a Sovereign, naturally didn’t meet very often with his descendants.

In the Azure Dragon clan, only the sons and daughters of the Azure Dragon, those second generation members, were very close to the Azure Dragon. The third generation members had met him a few times as well. A few fourth generation members had met him as well. As for the others…only a very few genius-level clansmen had been granted an audience by the ancestor.

Garvey had never even seen the ancestor. Naturally, he didn’t recognize the Coiling Dragon ring.

After all, those who joined the Assembly of Elders had reached the Seven Star Fiend level, but that didn’t mean they were born very early on.

“Emanuel, what are you thinking about?” Garvey asked.

“Oh. There’s something I wish to discuss with Linley.” Emanuel said with a laugh.

Linley couldn’t help but grow puzzled. “I’ve never met him. What does he want with me?”

“If you want to chat with him, then just chat with him here.” Garvey laughed, but Emanuel shook his head and said solemnly, “Garvey, I have something very important I wish to discuss with Linley. Garvey, please go back on your own for now. Let me speak with Linley alone.”

“Not only do you want to chat, you want to chat with him alone?” Garvey was rather curious now.

Emanuel couldn’t help but frown.

“Fine, fine.” Garvey laughed. Since Emanuel had made the request, it wasn’t convenient for Garvey to persist. “Then I’ll head out first. Right, Emanuel. We need to have a good discussion regarding the upcoming visit of the Indigo Emissary. I’ll wait for you outside the hall. Hurry up.”

Emanuel immediately beamed. “Fine. I’ll just chat right here in the hall. After I’m done, I’ll immediately come out.”

“Right.” The handsome youth, ‘Garvey’, grinned towards the puzzled Linley. “Kid, work hard. I’ll be waiting for you to join us in the Assembly of Elders.” As he spoke, he left the private room, closing the door as he left.

“Hmph, hmph, now that Garvey is gone, the ancestor’s ring will be mine.” Emanuel couldn’t help but feel excited. As he viewed it, this Linley was just a God. Even if a God had a ‘soul-protecting Sovereign artifact’, Emanuel could use a material attack to kill Linley. Naturally, he would then acquire the Sovereign artifact.

“Linley.” Emanuel smiled in a very warm, friendly manner.

“Elder.” Linley was highly suspicious. Why did this person want to speak with him alone?

As the saying went, men of talent were men of courage. Linley had fused three profound mysteries and fused with the ‘black stone’, and was very formidable to begin with. After the Ancestral Baptism, his one and only weakness, soul defense, had been improved upon significantly.

He had no fear of a Seven Star Fiend. Naturally, he was able to face this Emanuel calmly.

“Crackle…” Emanuel immediately set up his ‘Godrealm’, surrounding the entire private room with it.

Linley’s face couldn’t help but change. “Elder, what are you doing?”

Emanuel just smiled. “The conversation between us is very important.

That's why I set up my Godrealm, to prevent others from eavesdropping."

"Elder, might I ask what matter you have to discuss with me, Linley?" Linley's attitude remained very meek and humble.

"Linley, first take a read through the book we just gave you." Emanuel smiled.

Linley was deeply puzzled, but he still flipped through that book discussing the history of the Four Divine Beasts clan. In front of Emanuel, Linley pretended to be astonished while flipping through it, but in his heart, he was pondering. "Previously, Emanuel had me leave, but now, suddenly, he asked me to stay. And have a private conversation? What is this about?"

While pretending to read and pretending to be astonished, he continued to ponder.

Linley currently had five souls, and so he could focus on doing five things at the same time. This pretense was thus quite simple for him.

"There's nothing about me that should have attracted his interest."

As Linley closed the book, he looked towards the bald Emanuel, then pretended to be 'astonished' and said, "Elder, our ancestor was a Sovereign? And all four Sovereigns died? How is this possible?"

"This is the truth." Emanuel said with certainty. "Linley, you now understand the danger our clan is in."

"Right. I understand." Linley's face was solemn.

This wasn't a pretense. Linley was indeed very worried for the clan's situation. After all, those eight great clans were staring at them like hungry tigers.

Emanuel said solemnly, "Linley, our Four Divine Beasts clan is facing this enormous crisis. Currently, what we need are true experts! True experts,

aside from their own innate power, also need good divine artifacts. Linley, tell me, am I right?"

Linley nodded in agreement. "Divine artifacts are indeed important."

Emanuel looked at Linley. "Linley, you have a Sovereign artifact, right?"

Sovereign artifact?

These words struck Linley like a bolt of lightning. The look on Linley's face couldn't help but change as his head trembled. Only Bebe and Delia knew about his possession of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

Linley immediately regained his clarity.

"Elder, you are joking with me." Linley stared at Emanuel.

Emanuel let out a chuckle. "Linley, in front of me, you can stop pretending. I'll tell you this – I am a fourth generation member of the Azure Dragon clan, and I have personally met the ancestor.

"So what if you have?" Linley was extremely cautious right now.

Emanuel looked towards Linley's finger, and Linley's face couldn't help but change. Emanuel laughed. "Linley, I'll tell you that the ring you have on your finger is the ring which the ancestor previously wore, a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact…the Azure Dragon ring!"

"Azure Dragon ring?"

One thing after another flashed through Linley's mind like lightning. In the blink of an eye, Linley understood so much.

"I had always suspected that the previous owner of this Coiling Dragon ring is a Sovereign. So it was my own ancestor. Right. Ten thousand years ago, the ancestor died, and the Coiling Dragon ring was thus lost." Linley now completely understood. "And that drop of blood which allowed my body to

transform…so it was the blood of the ancestor."

The blood essence used to refine this Sovereign artifact was, without question, the blood of the Azure Dragon himself.

That drop of blood had caused Linley's blood to become very pure as well.

"No wonder there were three drops of water-type Sovereign's Might. The ancestor himself was a water-type Sovereign." Linley now completely understood what Emanuel wanted, and he looked at him. "This Emanuel had met with our ancestor, and so most likely he had seen the Coiling Dragon ring and was able to immediately recognize it."

Linley's thoughts spun rapidly, but his facial expressions had returned to normal.

"Oh, Azure Dragon ring?" Linley laughed. "Elder, since you recognize it, then I won't deny it. This is indeed a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, but that was just in the past. It no longer is! Elder, think about it. The ancestor died. If his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact wasn't broken, would he have died?"

Emanuel chuckled. "Hmph. When a Sovereign artifact is broken, it definitely won't be completely destroyed. Otherwise, this Azure Dragon ring would be completely shattered."

"Elder, you've said so much. What do you want?" Linley said solemnly.

Emanuel said solemnly, "Linley, given the rules of our clan, this Azure Dragon ring is one of the treasures of our Azure Dragon clan! A communal possession of the clan! If news that you are in possession of the Azure Dragon ring were to spread out, the clan would definitely confiscate it from you."

Linley frowned.

"Confiscate?" After knowing that this was the Sovereign artifact of their

ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, Linley was indeed worried about this possibility. This Coiling Dragon ring wasn’t just a guarantee of his own strength; it was also a keepsake which cherished the memory of Grandpa Doehring.

There was no way Linley would give it up.

“Right. The clan is currently in a state of crisis. This sort of treasure definitely cannot be left on you, where it is wasted.” Emanuel said solemnly. “A good treasure has to be matched with an expert. Only then can its full power be drawn out.”

Linley let out a cold snort.

Emanuel continued, “If it is confiscated, this sort of treasure would be given to someone of at least the Seven Star Fiend level, and a formidable one. The Azure Dragon ring, in the hands of an ultimate expert…can cause a powerful Seven Star Fiend to become an Asura level expert.”

Linley naturally understood this logic.

It was precisely because he himself had this Coiling Dragon ring that he could ignore the difference which Gods and Highgods had in terms of the soul.

“Therefore, Linley, for the sake of the clan, and for your own sake, please give me this Azure Dragon ring.” Emanuel said.

“Do you think that is actually going to happen?” Linley chuckled.

Emanuel said hurriedly, “I understand that you can’t bear to part with it. This is very understandable. How about this…I guarantee that so long as you give me the Azure Dragon ring, I will bestow upon you enormous wealth. A trillion inkstones. What do you say?”

A trillion inkstones?

This person really was taking him for an inexperienced God.

“No need.” Linley shook his head.

Emanuel’s face sank. “Linley, you should know that for me, killing you is simplicity itself.” In his heart, however, Emanuel knew that first of all, it was forbidden for the Azure Dragon clansmen to casually kill each other, and secondly, he was worried that he wouldn’t be able to kill Linley in one blow.

This was because Linley had a Sovereign artifact, hence his worry.

If Linley were to flee from this private room, things would be complicated. After all, outside the private room, there was Elder ‘Garvey’, as well as the black-robed men.

“Killing me is simplicity itself? Didn’t you just say I have a Sovereign artifact?” Linley snickered. “I have a Sovereign artifact, but you’ll be able to kill me in one blow? What’s more, the rules of the clan state that clansmen are not permitted to kill each other.”

“Hmph.”

Emanuel let out a cold snort. “If I, an Elder, were to kill you, who would dare interfere? Linley, I’ll give you a final chance. I am willing to use a drop of Sovereign’s Might to trade for your Azure Dragon ring. In addition, I am also willing to create a contract bond with you and guarantee that I won’t kill you to prevent the secret from being exposed. What do you say?”

“Sovereign’s Might?” Linley glanced at Emanuel in surprise. “This baldy is actually willing to part with it?”

Linley knew very well that although Sovereign’s Might was precious, it was far inferior to a Sovereign artifact. Sovereign’s Might was a one-use item. Almighty Sovereigns were able to easily bestow more Sovereign’s might. To Sovereign’s, Sovereign’s Might was something that they could provide as much of as was needed!

But Sovereign artifacts were different.

Sovereign artifacts were to Sovereigns what divine artifacts were to Deities. To create a Sovereign artifact, the Sovereign had to expend both time and effort. It was very difficult, which was why Sovereign artifacts were incomparably precious.

“Right. Sovereign’s Might.” Emanuel laughed coldly. “This drop of Sovereign’s Might is one of my most important treasures. Linley, I hope you won’t force me.”

An attempt to cow him through threats?

Most likely, an ordinary God, when faced with this circumstance, would have surrendered in fear long ago and offered the Sovereign artifact. But Linley was different. Because…even if he had to fight Emanuel head on, Linley wouldn’t fear him at all.

“Force you? How am I forcing you?” Linley smirked as he spoke.

Emanuel’s gaze instantly grew cold, and rage began to fill his chest. The angry Emanuel let out a furious snort. “You are looking for death!” Ignoring all else, Emanuel sent a backhand blow directly towards Linley.

He was hoping to kill Linley with a single blow, then seize the Sovereign artifact.

“Boom…”

The power of this slap caused Linley to feel the whole world was turning dark.

Linley’s right hand immediately transformed into a draconic claw, colliding with that palm.

“BANG!” Linley was sent flying outwards, smashing viciously against the

door of that secret room. The door blew apart, and Linley immediately flew out. “Save me, Elder Garvey, save me!” Linley’s voice was like a thunderclap, echoing throughout the main hall.

Emanuel’s face instantly turned exceedingly ugly to behold. “He’s going to die!”

“Swish!” Emanuel immediately flew out from the private room.

Chapter 14 – The Challenge

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 14, The Challenge

As Linley was sent smashing to the corridor outside, a hint of blood appeared at the corner of his lips.

He immediately launched himself from the ground, transforming into a ray of light and scurrying towards the main hall. Linley laughed coldly to himself, “Emanuel thinks he can kill me? However, unless it becomes necessary, there’s no rush for me to reveal my power.” At the same moment Linley was fleeing, he was also shouting, “Elder Garvey, save me!”

The explosion of the door, and Linley’s loud shout…given the hearing prowess of Highgods, how could they not hear this?

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

From afar, multiple figures flew over at high speed, with the handsome youth, Garvey, at their head.

“Don’t even think about escape!” An angry voice rang out, and Emanuel’s body flashed out in pursuit of Linley, as fast as an arrow.

Linley, seeing Garvey and the black-robed men, immediately fled behind them. Only now did he say, “Elder Garvey, Elder Emanuel wants to kill me!” When Garvey heard this, his handsome face became filled with anger.

“Emanuel, what are you doing!” Garvey thundered.

The bald Emanuel came to a halt, staring angrily at Linley, then looked at Garvey. “Garvey, step aside.”

“Linley is our clansman. Why do you want to kill him?” Garvey was extremely upset. “So the reason you wanted to speak to him privately was

so you could kill him."

"No, that's not it."

Emanuel said hurriedly. Emanuel, seeing Garvey appear, knew that this situation had just grown complicated. This was what he had feared the most. But he was astonished as well. "That palm blow of mine actually didn't kill Linley. Sovereign artifacts truly are powerful and useful in protecting one's life."

Linley had blood dribbling from his lips, and his face was ashen.

Emanuel had believed that the reason he wasn't able to kill Linley with one blow was because of the Coiling Dragon ring.

He didn't realize…

That the blood leaking from the corner of Linley's lips and his ashen face were all part of Linley's pretense.

"A simple palm like that, given my defense, won't be able to harm me at all." Linley snickered internally. "However, it's best to hide my true strength for now." After having arrived in the Four Divine Beasts clan, he had decided to first spend some time quietly accompanying his family and friends. After he became a Highgod, he would then go out to do battle.

In addition, after he became a Highgod, he would be of greater use.

He couldn't reveal his strength for now. Once he did, his peaceful days would be over.

"Linley, tell me, what is this about?" Garvey looked at Linley.

"Elder Garvey, I didn't offend Elder Emanuel at all, but for no reason at all, he wants to kill me." Linley said. The matter regarding the Coiling Dragon ring definitely couldn't be revealed. By now, Linley had also changed the appearance of the Coiling Dragon ring.

Even divine artifacts could be changed in appearance, and so Sovereign artifacts naturally could as well.

Linley regretted not having changed the appearance of the Coiling Dragon ring in the past. First of all, nobody had ever discovered it, and so he had not been vigilant. Secondly, as his power had increased, so too had his self-confidence. But who would have imagined that this would happen?"

"Emanuel?" Garvey looked towards him.

"Garvey, do you believe me or believe him?" Emanuel's rage was rising, and his face was exceedingly ugly. "This Linley offended me. Today, I will definitely kill him. Garvey, out of the way."

The black-robed men at the corridor were all surprised. This Emanuel really had lost his self-control.

"Emanuel!" Garvey barked coldly. "We are in the Skyrite Mountains! The rules of the clan are that we are not to wantonly slaughter each other. What are you doing!"

"Elder Emanuel, I truly wish to know why you want to kill me." Linley stared at Emanuel as he spoke.

"Right. Why do you want to kill him?" Garvey also looked at him.

Emanuel stared furiously at Linley, his eyes spitting fire. He was angry. Angry that Linley didn't know what was good for him. "I was willing to offer a drop of Sovereign's Might, but he still wasn't willing. He forced my hand." Emanuel had already made his decision.

"Elder Emanuel, why are you so angry? It seems as though I should be the angry one." Linley laughed coldly. "If push comes to shove, we can just fight to the end, until 'either the fish dies or the net breaks'!"

Emanuel's heart clenched.

What did he fear, right now?

Not Garvey's interference. He was afraid that Linley would publicly announce the fact that he had the Azure Dragon ring. Once this was made public…even if the clan didn't confiscate it, there was no way it would go to Emanuel.

"Fine, Linley." Emanuel snickered. "Aren't you the fierce one."

"Me, fierce? It is that you go too far." Linley replied.

The nearby Garvey as well as the black-robed men were mystified. They didn't know what Linley and Emanuel were talking about.

"Elder Emanuel, I, as a junior, would like to offer you a few words!" Linley stared at Emanuel, a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips. "Sometimes, it's best not to be too greedy. Greed can cause you to lose your life. What belongs to you is yours. What doesn't belong to you will never be yours."

Emanuel began to laugh from rage.

"Kid, I'll send your words right back to you." Emanuel said furiously. "Don't be too greedy. Greed can cause you to lose your life!"

"Oh? Lose my life?" Linley began to laugh. "Most venerable Elder, you are a powerful Seven Star Fiend, while I am just a mere God. I admit that my power is inferior to yours, and it wouldn't be hard for you to take my life, but you can't go too far and be too abusive."

"What are you two talking about!" Garvey said angrily.

"Emanuel." Garvey said, "If Linley truly has acted untowardly, you can go ahead and speak to the Assembly of Elders, who will definitely carry out a punishment against Linley."

Emanuel took a deep breath, then said slowly, "Linley, the offense you have

given me is unpardonable. I…issue you a challenge to a life-and-death duel!"

"Life-and-death duel?"

Garvey and the black-robed men on the corridor were all stunned. Garvey stared, astonished, at Emanuel, then sent with divine sense, "Emanuel, what are you doing? He's just a God. If you really want to kill him, just report this to the Assembly of Elders. Why a life-and-death duel?"

But how could Garvey know that Emanuel wanted to personally kill Linley and rob him of his Azure Dragon ring?

Those black-robed men all looked at Linley, a hint of pity in their eyes.

"Can I ask, what is this life-and-death duel?" Linley's voice rang out.

Immediately, Elder Garvey and the others were all amazed. Linley didn't even know what a life-and-death duel was?

Garvey let out a secret sigh, feeling grief for Linley. In the end, he explained, "Linley, there are many people in the clan. With so many people together, it's impossible for there to be no conflicts at all. Once the conflicts reach a certain level where neither side will rest until the other is dead, then these conflicts will have become irreconcilable. Although the rules of the clan state that clansmen are not permitted to kill each other, when the hatred grows too great, sometimes even the mediation of the clan is useless."

"At this time, the only option is a 'life-and-death duel'!"

Garvey said solemnly, "The life-and-death duel is a brutal duel, with two people taking part and the duel only concluding upon one side's death. But of course, if the winner spares the loser's life, that's permitted as well. However, generally speaking, in a life-and-death duel, both sides won't end it until the other is dead."

Hearing this, Linley now understood.

He couldn't help but feel his rage grow. "This Emanuel really doesn't want to leave me any options at all."

"Can it be that I have to accept his challenge?" Linley asked.

"You can refuse it." Garvey said. "However, even if you refuse it, he can still make an application to the Assembly of Elders. Once the Assembly of Elders approves it, even if you refuse…you still have to take part in the life-and-death duel."

"Haha…" Linley began to laugh. "Assembly of Elders?"

Emanuel himself was a member of the Assembly of Elders. If Emanuel went to apply for a life-and-death duel, how could it not pass?

"Linley, if you regret it, it isn't too late yet." Emanuel laughed coldly. "My conditions haven't changed. I can spare your life." Emanuel's request was to use a drop of Sovereign's Might in exchange for the Coiling Dragon ring.

Linley looked at him. Simply looked at him, with eyes as cold as ice.

"It isn't too late for me if I regret it?" Linley had a hint of a satirical smile on his face.

"Right." Emanuel nodded.

"Emanuel, I'll tell you this." Linley snickered. "I refuse your life-and-death challenge!"

"Your refusal is futile." Emanuel said.

Linley snickered. "I'm refusing right now. As for whether or not the Assembly of Elders will approve your request, I can't be bothered to care. I'll tell you one thing as well…Emanuel, if you regret it now, it isn't too late for you. In the future, even if you regret it, it will be too late."

After speaking, Linley turned his head and left, his face a frozen mask.

Linley truly had the urge to kill now!

“Originally, I wanted to continue my peaceful life until becoming a Highgod. Emanuel, you forced me!” Linley wouldn’t hesitate any longer. If he truly had to participate in a life-and-death duel, he would definitely kill Emanuel!

Seeing Linley’s back as he walked away, Emanuel laughed coldly.

“Refuse? Will your refusal matter?” Emanuel chuckled. “When the time comes, it won’t matter even if you regret it.” Emanuel shook his head, then left, not paying any attention to Garvey.

Garvey let out a sigh.

“What a pity for this genius. He is going to die.” Garvey didn’t think Linley had any chance at life. Emanuel was a fourth generation member of the clan. His father was a third generation member, while his paternal grandmother was of the second generation.

In the entire Azure Dragon clan, there were only two members of the second generation, a pair of siblings, brother and sister. The first was the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, the son of the ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’. The other was the sister of the Patriarch.

In the clan, Emanuel’s status wasn’t that high, but his influence was significant.

As for Garvey? He had come countless tens of thousands of generations later. Although he was also a Seven Star Fiend, his influence was naturally inferior.

Late at night. The Violet Moon hung high in the sky.

Linley flew by himself on Dragon Avenue. He clearly remembered the way

back home.

“This Coiling Dragon ring.” Linley lowered his head, glancing at it. In his mind, he couldn’t help but think back to so many scenes from his childhood.

Because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he had met Grandpa Doehring.

Because of Grandpa Doehring, he had become a powerful expert.

Over the many years, because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he was able to compensate for the difference in his soul when compared to Highgods. Because of the Coiling Dragon ring, he dared to do battle against Seven Star Fiends. Unconsciously…

His entire life had become intertwined with the Coiling Dragon ring.

“Nobody should even dream of trying to take my Coiling Dragon ring from me.” Linley said softly.

“If I truly am forced to take part in a life-and-death duel.” Linley’s gaze was cold and clear. “I will definitely kill that Emanuel. Right now, he is the only one who knows that I have this Coiling Dragon ring. He definitely won’t be so stupid as to spread the news. If I kill him, no one else will know about it.”

That very day, Emanuel returned and immediately went to find the three Elders who were in charge of managing the ‘life-and-death duels’.

Ordinary duels could be agreed to by three Elders.

“Emanuel, why did you summon the three of us in such a rush?” Two men, one woman. The three were dressed in resplendent azure armor with golden patterns, and a billowing cape covered with complicated magic runes.

Three Elders.

“There’s a God who has offended me. He holds me in no regard at all.” Emanuel said angrily. “I am going to kill him. I’m applying for a life-and-death duel. The three of you, help me out and approve this request.” As he spoke, he handed over a piece of paper.

The three Elders glanced at the paper, then looked at each other.

This was a joke, right?

An Elder was going to engage in a life-and-death duel to kill a God?

The golden-haired woman laughed. “Emanuel, as someone who has a revered position as an Elder, how can you possibly squabble with the likes of a God?”

“I am definitely going to kill him.” Emanuel said.

Another Elder, a silver-haired old man, laughed. “Emanuel, if you really want to kill him, just tell us the reason he offended you. We’ll send people to go arrest him. In accordance with the rules of the clan, we can execute him for having offended an Elder. Why the need for some life-and-death duel? You, a venerable Elder, are going to duel a God. Isn’t this laughable?”

“The three of you, just consider this being me, Emanuel, asking the three of you to help me out. Alright?” Emanuel said.

The three exchanged glances.

“Fine. We agree.” The three Elders each withdrew a feather quill, recording their names on the paper.

Emanuel, seeing this, laughed. In his heart, he said to himself, “Linley, it’s now too late for you, even if you regret it.”

Chapter 15 – Life-And-Death Duel

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 15, Life-And-Death Duel

The morning sun had just risen, and the sanguine light of the Blood Sun could be seen peeking through the thin mists of the gorge. Linley walked out from his room as well.

“The weather’s not bad.” Linley took a deep breath, letting the cool air fill his chest.

“Swoosh!” A human figure jumped down from above. “Boss, it seems you are in a good mood.” Bebe laughed. Bebe lived on the second floor of this building.

“Yes, a pretty good mood. It’s been eighty two years since we came to the Skyrite Mountains, and I haven’t had a good battle this entire time, nor have I killed anyone. But I’m about to go kill someone and about to have a good battle. Of course my mood is good.” Linley laughed.

Bebe was puzzled. “Boss, what do you mean by this?”

“No rush. You’ll know soon enough.” Linley said.

Bebe, seeing that Linley was intentionally being mysterious, couldn’t help but purse his lips. At this time, Delia also walked out from the room, and Bebe immediately went to greet her. “Delia, the Boss says that he is about to engage in a battle and kill someone. Do you know what this is about?”

“Is that so?” Puzzled, Delia turned her head to look towards Linley.

Linley chuckled. Suddenly, the sound of the wind could be heard. He immediately raised his head to look.

Multiple figures flew down from the skies, all dressed in the battle armor

uniform of the Azure Dragon clan. Linley laughed calmly. “They are here.” Bebe and Delia raised their head to look, puzzled. They saw three azure armored warriors fly over.

“Linley!” The leader recognized Linley right away. Clearly, the Assembly of Elders, when giving the order, had provided a clear description of Linley’s appearance as well.

“Everyone, is there something you need?” Linley said.

The leader of the azure armored warriors sighed inwardly. He, too, didn’t understand how a God could have offended one of the lofty, high-ranked Elders. But he still said, “Linley, Lord Emanuel has issued a life-and-death challenge. The Assembly of Elders has already approved it. Come with us.”

“Right now?” Linley was rather surprised.

The approval of the application by the Assembly of Elders was something which Linley had predicted long ago, but for the duel to start immediately was outside of Linley’s expectations.

“The life-and-death duel will be held today during noon. Right now, you just need to get there in advance.” The azure armored warrior said. In his heart, he still felt some sympathy for Linley. After all, as he saw it…

Linley was a bottom-ranked figure of the clan, not too different from patrol warriors like them.

But although they sympathized for Linley, there was no way they could help out.

“Boss, what is it?” Bebe said frantically.

“Linley, what is this ‘life-and-death duel’?” Delia said urgently as well.

Linley laughed, “In our clan, an ‘Elder Emanuel’ insists on killing me. Fortunately, at that time, Elder Garvey was present, but in the end, Elder

Emanuel still issued me a ‘life-and-death duel’. Either he dies or I die.”

“Elder?” Delia began to worry.

“Boss, are you confident?” Bebe asked.

They were certain of Linley’s strength, but the opponent was one of the clan’s Elders, after all. In the past eighty years, they had gained an understanding of the Assembly of Elders. To enter the Assembly of Elders, the first requirement was to reach the Seven Star Fiend level.

Linley sent mentally, “Delia, Bebe, don’t worry. If this was before my Ancestral Baptism, I wouldn’t be completely certain, but after having undergone the Ancestral Baptism, I have confidence.”

Delia immediately relaxed. She trusted Linley.

“Linley, is the reason he wants to kill you…because of the Coiling Dragon ring?” Delia sent through divine sense.

Linley nodded, sending back through divine sense, “I myself learned just now that this Sovereign artifact, the Coiling Dragon ring, had actually belonged to the ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan. Emanuel recognized it at a single glance.”

Bebe and Delia now both understood.

They both could understand the powerful allure of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. No wonder Emanuel was acting this way.

“Linley, can you leave now?” The azure armored warrior said.

These azure armored warriors actually weren’t in a rush. The life-and-death duel would only be held at noon. For Elder Emanuel, he would just come over from his residence when the time came. But Linley, as the person of lower status, had to arrive earlier.

“It doesn’t start until noon. Why the rush?” Bebe said unhappily.

“The three of you, what are you doing?” Several figures flew over at high speed. It was Baruch and several other clansmen. They, too, had begun to worry after seeing the azure armored warriors fly over. These azure armored warriors’ arrival definitely portended an important matter.

“Elder Emanuel is about to initiate a life-and-death duel with Linley. The Assembly of Elders has already approved it.” An azure armored warrior said.

Baruch and the others were stunned, their eyes filled with disbelief.

“The Elder and Linley?” They couldn’t accept this.

“A revered, venerable Elder…how can he challenge Linley to a life-and-death duel?” Hazard said furiously. Linley’s arrival had caused the status of their Yulan branch to rise considerably in recent days. In addition, all of them were fond of this descendant of theirs, Linley.

An Elder, challenging a God? This was too unfair!

“The Assembly of Elders has already approved it. There’s no way to change it.” The leader of the azure armored warriors said. “Unless you can ask the Patriarch to intervene.”

In the Azure Dragon clan, without question, the person of the highest status was the Patriarch. He was the son of their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’. When the Azure Dragon had been alive, he had naturally expended enormous amounts of effort in training and cultivating his son. One could imagine how powerful the Patriarch was.

In the clan, his word was supreme.

“Linley, what is it?” Tarosse, Dylin, and the others flew out. Others immediately began to explain the situation to them. Tarosse and the others were astonished as well that an Elder of the clan was actually challenging

Linley to a life-and-death battle."

"Don't worry, everyone." Linley said calmly, then looked at the azure armored warrior. "Let's go."

The leader of the azure armored warriors nodded.

"Can we go watch the duel?" Delia immediately asked.

The leader of the azure armored warriors glanced at the crowd, then nodded. "This is Linley's last battle anyways. You can go watch it if you want." As he spoke, the three azure armored warriors took Linley with them, flying into the air.

Delia, Bebe, Baruch, as well as even Tarosse, Dylin, and the others all immediately followed.

An Elder of the clan was going to initiate a life-and-death duel with a God. This news wasn't actually known by many throughout the various levels of the clan. At the higher levels, however, this news spread very quickly, especially amongst the Elders themselves, who quickly learned of this.

"Emanuel, that kid…he's going to engage in a life-and-death duel with a junior? Did I mishear something?" A muscular man with short azure hair said with a frown.

"Uncle, there's no mistake. Emanuel really is going to have a life-and-death duel with a God." The other person, a tall man with brown hair, spoke out. The two of them were dressed in that azure armor with golden embroidery, as well as the cape with unusual magic runes.

Both were Elders of the clan.

"Let's go take a look." The azure haired man said.

"Today, quite a few people will be watching." The brown-haired man laughed.

“Will the Patriarch attend?”

“The Patriarch most likely doesn’t even know about this. I hear that today, he is together with the Indigo Emissary. This visit by the Indigo Emissary seems to be regarding a rather weighty matter.” The brown-haired man said, rather puzzled.

“An important affair? Could it be that we are about to start fighting with the eight great clans?” The azure-haired man was rather worried.

“I’m not sure. We’ll know when the Patriarch returns.” The brown-haired man shook his head.

While chatting, the two flew towards the direction of ‘Death Valley’, the place which the Azure Dragon clan used for carrying out ‘life-and-death duels’.

Quite a few people had arrived at Death Valley today. Aside from the high level members of the clan and Linley’s people, there were also a large number of patrol warriors who knew about this matter. Bored, they came to watch this battle.

This was an Elder against a God!

Something like this was something which they wouldn’t see even in a hundred million years within the clan.

“That Emanuel really does put on airs.” Bebe said unhappily. “We’ve already arrived, but he still hasn’t shown himself. Perhaps it really will be like what the azure armored warriors said and that he won’t come out until noon.”

Linley laughed as he stood above Death Valley. “Bebe, don’t be impatient.”

“Linley, you seem completely confident.” Tarosse laughed.

“I had wanted to live the peaceful life for a bit longer, after having returned to the Azure Dragon clan. It seems that won’t be possible any longer.” Linley swept his gaze across Death Valley. Currently, quite a few Elders of the clan had already arrived. But of course, most of the spectators were azure armored warriors.

There were thousands of azure armored warriors present, and they were all chatting amongst themselves.

“I hear that today, the God who is being challenged by the Elder to a life-and-death duel is named Linley. Which one of those guys is Linley?”

“That one, the one with brown hair. The one standing next to the kid with the straw hat.” Someone immediately pointed him out. Amongst the patrolling guards who had come to watch this duel, information regarding Linley had quickly spread out.

“What a pity. A God is going to die today.”

“I wonder why Elder Emanuel is acting this way towards a God. If he wants to kill a God, he doesn’t need to go to all this trouble.”

“The Elder is going a bit too far. Linley is quite impressive as well, that he actually has the courage to come.”

It was natural for people to pity the weak, and of course the patrolling guards were also considered commoners within the clan, those of the lowest rung. In the bottom of their hearts, they were filled with both fear as well as respect for those venerable, lofty Elders. It was only natural for them to feel sympathy for Linley and stand on his side.

But of course, although in their hearts, they stood with Linley, they wouldn’t dare display it.

“Elder Emanuel has arrived!” Someone suddenly called out.

Immediately, everyone turned to look. Linley, hearing the commotion, also

turned his head to look. From mid-air, the bald Emanuel, dressed in the garb reserved for Elders, came flying down alongside several other Elders.

“They finally came.” Linley looked at him.

Emanuel looked back at him. “He’s bold at least.” Emanuel had a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips. He swept his gaze across Linley, and saw the flash of light from the ring on Linley’s finger. He couldn’t help but grow excited.

He knew that was a Sovereign artifact!

“Fortunately, he didn’t flee last night.” The previous day, Emanuel had ordered that the gorge be completely sealed off from above, precisely to defend against Linley fleeing.

“In accordance with the rules of the clan, once conflicts reach an irreconcilable level, a life-and-death duel will be initiated. No regrets in death! Today, the parties to this life-and-death duel are Emanuel and Linley!” An Elder hovered in midair and said in a loud voice.

The entire Death Valley became silent, with no one saying a word.

“Gentlemen, make your preparations.” The Elder said calmly.

Emanuel flew over gracefully to the center of Death Valley, immediately looking arrogantly towards Linley.

“Boss, go kick that Elder’s ass and kill him.” Bebe sent through divine sense.

“Linley, be careful.” Delia said.

Linley just laughed calmly, then flew straight to the center of Death Valley as well, staring directly at the distant Emanuel. In the entire Death Valley, everyone, Elders and patrolling warriors alike, had fallen silent.

“Begin, then.” The Elder shouted.

Linley’s face instantly turned solemn.

“Linley, as long as you admit defeat, I can spare your life.” Emanuel floated down, laughing calmly as he spoke, as though he held Linley’s life in his hand.

“Admit defeat?”

Linley let out an emotionless chuckle. “Today is a life-and-death duel. Either you die or I die.”

Immediately, there was an enormous commotion. The Elders and the patrolling warriors were all rather astonished. As they saw it, Linley was going to die for certain. For Emanuel to be able to say what he had just said could already be considered quite benevolent and merciful. But Linley had actually refused.

“Hmph. It is you who is asking for death.” Emanuel’s face immediately turned cold.

Suddenly, Emanuel frowned. From the corner of his eyes, he noticed Delia, Bebe, Cesar, and the others standing at the corner of Death Valley.

“These people look rather familiar. It seems I’ve seen them somewhere before.” Emanuel had this sudden thought, but instantly, the thought disappeared. After all, a battle was about to begin. He couldn’t lose his concentration.

“BOOM!” An explosion of energy.

Linley’s entire body was instantly covered with a large number of draconic scales. Those azure-golden scales stretched across his entire body as those fierce spikes erupted from his forehead and spine. His draconic tail, flashing with metallic light, began to sway gently.

“Come!” Linley stared coldly with his dark golden eyes towards his opponent.

“It’s him?” Elder Garvey was shocked.

“It’s him!” The faces of the ten or so Elders who were watching from afar instantly changed.

The scryer recording which had spread to them from Miluo Island. All of the high level members of the Azure Dragon clan had viewed it. They all knew…that in the Infernal Realm, there was an expert of the Azure Dragon clan whose body emitted sharp spikes when Dragonformed.

The members of the clan had never before seen this sort of transformation. After all, in normal circumstances, how could the descendants of the Four Divine Beasts clan be forced to drink the dragon’s blood of a magical beast of the ninth rank, an Armored Razorback Wyrm, in order to activate Dragonblood in their veins?

The formerly confident Emanuel’s face immediately changed as well.

“It’s him! That powerful, mysterious clansman of ours who appeared in Miluo Island!” Emanuel’s mind was in a state of chaos now, and then he glanced sideways at Delia, Bebe, and the others. “Right. Now I remember where I saw them. In that scryer recording! When that enormous cube was chopped apart, those people were by the side of that clansman of ours!”

Chapter 16 – No Mercy!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 16, No Mercy!

In the air above the Skyrite Mountains. A tall, powerful figure slashed through the skies, his long robe fluttering as he arrived to a high point above Dragon Avenue, at the 'Dragonhead' location, where there was an enormous castle.

His azure hair fluttered in the breeze. His cold, grim face appeared to have been chiseled out by knives. This person descended directly in front of the castle gates.

The patrolling soldiers in front of the castle gate, upon seeing this person, immediately bowed with respect. "Patriarch!"

The person was the awe-inspiring Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, the number one expert of the Azure Dragon clan…Gislason [Gai'si'lei'seng] Redding! The son of the Sovereign 'Azure Dragon'. Gislason's power was simply unfathomable.

"Mmm. Why are none of the Elders present in the castle?" Gislason frowned. He had been able to instantly tell that the castle had no Elders within it.

"The Elders all went to Death Valley to watch a life-and-death duel." A patrol warrior immediately replied.

"Life-and-death duel?" Patriarch Gislason frowned. "A single life-and-death duel attracted so many Elders? What's this about?"

"Elder Emanuel initiated a life-and-death duel against a God named Linley." The patrol warrior said.

"Linley? A God?" Gislason was utterly confused. "A venerable Elder,

engaging in a life-and-death duel with a God? Hmph." A cold snort. The Patriarch 'Gislason' transformed into a streak of light, flying at high speed towards Death Valley.

At this moment, the situation at Death Valley was very peculiar.

The duel had begun, but Elder Emanuel, who clearly should have had the upper hand, was actually hesitating. He hadn't attacked yet, and his face was filled with shock, fear, anger, and regret!

"It's actually him! It's actually him!!!"

Emanuel was utterly enraged. "He has the Azure Dragon ring. His soul defense is definitely very powerful. But his body…" Emanuel had originally been planning to use 'material attacks' to gain victory. He was very confident, as his own body was very powerful. But he had seen the scryer recording…

Emanuel knew very well that Linley's body was even tougher than his!

Who would have imagined that Linley was actually that expert who had appeared at Miluo Island.

"Emanuel, what is it? You want to let me go first?" Linley laughed coldly.

Instantly, the entire Death Valley buzzed with conversation. Those patrol warriors, in particular, were puzzled as to why Emanuel still hadn't attacked.

"Linley…" Emanuel wanted to say something.

"Since you are letting me go first out of courtesy, Elder, then I'll go first." Linley said coldly, and then he exploded with speed, transforming into a blur that slashed through the skies. Emanuel immediately let out an explosive shout…

"Rumble…" The world suddenly gave birth to enormous watery waves, and

these waves swept down towards Linley. And then, instantly, the wave transformed into mist, ensconcing Linley within. For a moment, Linley wasn't able to see what was going on in front of him.

"Swish!" "Swish!" "Swish!" …..

Sharp icy bolts suddenly emerged from the mist, all of the icy bolts arcing in curved lines. The countless icy arrows were actually all arcing in different curved lines towards Linley, and as the icy arrows drew near, they actually tore the skies apart…

Multiple tears in space appeared.

"He lives up to being an Elder." Linley said to himself.

Linley didn't even dodge. He just stood there in mid-air, like a celestial divinity.

Rays of divine earth power emerged from Linley, sweeping outwards with Linley at the center. Immediately, that dim earthen yellow light spread out, forming an enormous sphere that was five hundred meters in diameter. Emanuel was unable to dodge, and he was immediately trapped within.

Blackstone Space!

The terrifying gravitational pull, when applied to those icy arrows, caused their direction to change slightly. This slight change in direction caused the vast majority of the icy arrows to very naturally miss their mark, and be unable to converge on the target.

"Crunch!" "Crunch!" "Crunch!"

Eight icy arrows struck Linley, but a clear sound like metal clashing on metal rang out. The icy arrows immediately shattered, while only a few white spots were left on Linley's draconic scales.

"What!" Emanuel's face changed dramatically.

Although he had been mentally prepared already, he was still astonished at Linley's defensive power.

"Terrible!" Emanuel could feel that his body was under the effect of that inexhaustible gravitational power. He immediately wanted to throw it off, but in an instant, the downwards gravitational pull suddenly transformed into a pull towards Linley's direction.

"You want to flee?" Linley let out an angry laugh, then threw himself towards Emanuel.

Emanuel's speed was naturally inferior to Linley, now that he also had to fight off the gravity.

"How did this come to pass?" The thousands of patrol warriors were all flabbergasted. This life-and-death duel which they had been certain was going to be one-sided was indeed one-sided, but the person who had the advantage was that 'God'."

"This Linley, how can he…" These people only stared, their tongues tied.

"Linley. He isn't a God. He definitely isn't."

For now, let's ignore the stupefied patrol warriors. Those Elders who were watching the battle from the side, after seeing Linley's transformation, grew certain in their hearts.

"Emanuel is doomed, this time!"

"He's kicked a steel board this time."

Those Elders all maintained their silence. After all, Emanuel was participating in a life-and-death duel. It wasn't appropriate for them to intervene.

"Bastard." Trapped in the gravitational sphere, Emanuel was like an

ordinary person trapped in quicksand, finding movement incredibly difficult. Linley, however, was drawing near at astonishing speed. Emanuel didn't dare to engage in close-quarters combat with Linley.

"Aaaaaah!"

Emanuel seemed to have gone insane as he let out a bellow.

"Crackle…" Strangely, a large amount of ice appeared out of nowhere, forming an enormous, thick wall of ice directly in front of Emanuel, the blocks of ice flashing with dazzling light. This wall of thick ice was also affected by the powerful gravity…

And they flew at high speed against Linley!

Not only was the wall of ice affected by the gravity, Emanuel himself also intentionally sent the ice wall flying towards Linley.

In an instant, the ice wall reached Linley's body.

"Break!" Linley let out a low growl. His right fist, carrying boundless power, utilized the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength' of the Laws of the Earth, smashing down viciously against one point on the icy wall.

"BANG!" The entire icy wall trembled, then exploded into countless shards of ice.

As Linley was flying past those shattered shards of ice, Emanuel had managed to flee to the edges of the gravitational field. But right at this moment, Emanuel actually stopped fleeing, turning and letting out a low roar…

Suddenly, an Azure Dragon Phantom appeared behind Emanuel, which stared at Linley with a pair of icy eyes, preparing to let loose a low roar.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed.

A blurry azure light instantly shot towards Linley, who felt his head grow numb for a moment before he instantly regained clarity. But Linley discovered…that both Emanuel as well as the countless distant spectators suddenly began to move much faster.

“Time?” Linley immediately understood.

In that instant, the region where Linley had been had its time slowed down. For every ten seconds which passed for others, one second would pass for Linley. This allowed Emanuel to flee from Linley’s gravitational field.

“I finally escaped.” Emanuel immediately flew to the far end of Death Valley.

“Emanuel, you won’t be able to flee.” Linley flew over.

“Halt!” Emanuel furiously shouted.

Linley was startled, but he still halted. With a cold laugh, he said, “Emanuel, what, you have something you want to say?”

“I acknowledge your strength. I admit defeat. Let’s just bring an end to this life-and-death duel.” Emanuel sent through divine sense. “It’s my fault for being blind. I didn’t realize you were an expert. Let’s just leave it here.”

“Leave it here?” Linley threw himself forward once more.

“Linley, I don’t want that Azure Dragon ring anymore.” Emanuel said hurriedly. “I originally thought you were a God. Who would have imagined…that this Azure Dragon ring, when carried by you, can still unleash such tremendous power. I won’t try to take it.”

Linley just laughed coldly.

When Emanuel had thought he was weak, Emanuel wanted to kill him. But

now he was submitting tamely. However, without a doubt, currently the only outsider who knew that Linley was in possession of the Coiling Dragon ring was Emanuel. If he killed Emanuel, then there was no longer any danger of outsiders finding out.

Kill!

“I admit defeat!” Emanuel’s voice rang out throughout Death Valley.

“Eh?” Linley was stunned.

Emanuel was actually so shameless as to directly admit defeat in the midst of a life-and-death duel. “Can it be that this Emanuel doesn’t know that there are only two possible outcomes of a life-and-death duel? One is fighting to the death, while the other is the victor sparing the life of the loser!”

Admitting defeat in a life-and-death duel was meaningless!

“He admitted defeat?” The many patrolling warriors and Elders were all astonished. As for Delia, Bebe, and the others, they grew excited.

“Linley, since Emanuel has admitted defeat, just spare him.” An Elder said loudly. But even he couldn’t break the rules of a life-and-death duel. Only Linley could make the decision to spare Emanuel.

“Right, Linley. He’s admitted defeat. Just forget it.” The other Elders spoke out as well.

At present, in their hearts, they had already begun to consider Linley as an expert on the same level as them.

Although Emanuel felt humiliated in his heart, he still knew very clearly: “This Linley’s body is so incredibly powerful, and he has a Sovereign artifact for soul defense. Although the Sovereign artifact is damaged, it still isn’t something I can break through.”

Emanuel couldn't see any hope of victory for himself.

He didn't want to die!

"Spare him?" Linley's dark golden eyes had a cold light flash through them. Suddenly, a terrifying howl rang out, and Linley's body slashed through the skies, charging towards the distant Emanuel. Showing no mercy at all!

"You forced me into a life-and-death duel, and now you want me to spare you? In your dreams!" Linley's furious roar echoed nonstop throughout Death Valley.

Emanuel immediately turned and fled, but Emanuel didn't leave the confines of Death Valley. If a person was to truly violate the laws of a life-and-death duel and flee out of Death Valley, the entire Azure Dragon clan would chase after him, and he would, without any question, die.

Thus, he could only dodge and evade within Death Valley.

Linley pursued at high speed.

"You won't be able to escape." Linley, seizing the opportunity, once again unleashed his Blackstone Space, directly capturing Emanuel within the pull of his gravitational sphere. Emanuel's speed immediately slowed dramatically, and Linley laughed coldly as he charged over.

But right at this moment…

"Swoosh!" Emanuel threw out a ray of white light from his hand.

"Crackle…" Where the white light passed by, space split apart.

Linley didn't dodge at all, directly sending a palm to smash towards that light. "BANG!" Linley just felt his right hand completely go numb. His draconic scales split apart, and fresh blood began to leak out. That white light, however, was completely destroyed as well.

Despite this, Linley didn't slow down.

"Linley, you can't kill me." Emanuel was growing frantic now, but within that Gravitational Space, his speed was far inferior to Linley's.

"Die, then." Linley came for him.

"STAY YOUR HAND!" A furious roar sounded out. Linley felt as though this roar bored directly through his mind, causing his head to grow slightly dizzy. Linley couldn't help but pay attention to the air above him. And in the air above…

A man dressed in an azure robe with many embroidered patterns was descending, his long azure hair fluttering in the wind.

His gaze was like thunder, and he was staring directly downwards.

"Patriarch!" Emanuel was overjoyed. He wouldn't have to die.

"Patriarch!" Those Elders, upon seeing this person, all immediately bowed respectfully.

"Patriarch!" Those thousands of patrolling warriors all immediately bowed in respect as well.

Linley's heart trembled. "Patriarch?" However, seeing that Emanuel was not too far away, and how he had already relaxed, the murderous intent emerged once more in Linley's heart. "This Emanuel cannot be spared!" With a 'swish', Linley charged over.

Emanuel's face changed dramatically. "Linley, you…" He never imagined that Linley would dare disobey the orders of the Patriarch.

What he didn't realize was…

Linley had joined the Azure Dragon clan less than a century ago, and so he didn't have a clear idea of what the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan

represented, nor did he feel much fear towards the man. He wasn't like Elder Emanuel and the other Elders. In their eyes, the Patriarch was an invincible expert.

The commands of the Patriarch were not to be disobeyed.

Linley's right draconic claw landed mercilessly towards Emanuel, and within the range of that gravitational pull, Emanuel couldn't dodge at all.

"CLANG!" Suddenly, another draconic claw appeared, clashing directly with Linley's scale-covered right hand. Linley just felt his entire right arm tremble violently, and his fingers immediately lost all feeling. That draconic claw, with a flipping movement, trapped Linley's own right hand.

Linley raised his hand to look. It was the awe-inspiring Patriarch!

"Wasn't he over there just now? How could he be so fast?" Linley didn't dare believe that the Patriarch's speed could be so incredibly fast.

"I told you to stay your hand, and yet you still attack? What audacity!" The Patriarch's gaze was like ice as he stared at Linley. The Patriarch's draconic scale covered right hand grabbed Linley, and Linley actually had the feeling that wasn't able to resist at all.

This was the first time…

The first time Linley had encountered a person whose body and physical strength completely, utterly outclassed his own!

The number one expert of the Azure Dragon clan…the Patriarch, 'Gislason Redding'!

Chapter 17 – Prestige

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 17, Prestige

Everyone in Death Valley was utterly silent. The prestige and aura emanating from the Patriarch, Gislason, caused everyone present to feel pressure.

“What tremendous strength.” Linley’s right hand was numb and trembling slightly. He was like a little chick who had been seized by a great eagle, completely unable to fight back. In fact, the arm which the Patriarch had seized was actually slightly throbbing with pain. The power of this Patriarch was tremendous!

“Patriarch, this Elder Emanuel challenged me to a life-and-death duel. The Assembly of Elders approved it.” Linley said in a neither hostile nor submissive manner.

“The Assembly of Elders approved it?” The Patriarch, Gislason, glanced sideways at the distant elders, none of whom dared to make a sound. In their hearts, they felt misery, especially those three who had approved this application. How could any of them have known that Linley was so strong?

“So what if they approved it? Didn’t you hear my order just now?” Gislason stared fiercely at Linley.

Linley was stunned.

Emanuel also said, “Linley, in our Azure Dragon clan, nobody can disobey the commands of the Patriarch. What the Assembly of Elders has approved, the Patriarch can, with a word, forbid. You actually dared to disobey!”

From the corner of his eyes, Linley noticed the look on the faces of those distant Elders, then glanced at the look on Emanuel’s face. He couldn’t help but sigh to himself. “It seems within the Azure Dragon clan, the power of

this Patriarch is extremely high, vastly outstripping that of the Assembly of Elders."

When a person's power reached a certain level, an entire clan would easily become a place where his word alone was supreme!

In the Azure Dragon clan, the word of Gislason reigned supreme!

"Patriarch, I've arrived in the Azure Dragon clan less than a century ago. There are many things regarding the clan which I am not aware of." Linley said directly.

"Oh. Less than a century." The Patriarch, Gislason, frowned.

"Linley, you dared to disobey the orders of the Patriarch. This has nothing to do with how long you have been in the Azure Dragon clan. The commands of the Patriarch are not to be disobeyed…you ignored the order of the Patriarch, which means you have no respect for him." Emanuel angrily barked.

After saying these things, Emanuel didn't continue to speak. He knew that disrespecting the Patriarch was a tremendous, grave sin.

Linley, hearing this, couldn't help but feel his anger surge yet again.

"Whoosh!" A flickering blur.

"WHAP!" A palm slapped heavily against Emanuel's face, and Emanuel was hit so hard that his entire body was twisted. Blood flew everywhere as Emanuel fell to the ground, and then, terrified and confused, looked at the Patriarch, Gislason. He didn't understand why the Patriarch had struck him!

"Shut your mouth!"

Gislason stared at him coldly. "You, a venerable Elder, are actually still not aware of the mistake you have made? Today, even if he killed you, you would have no one to blame but yourself. I haven't even punished you yet,

and yet you are here babbling. Do you really think I'm afraid to kill you?"

Emanuel shuddered, not daring to say another word.

Linley couldn't help but be surprised. "It seems as though this Patriarch isn't just one-sidedly supporting this Emanuel. Given this Patriarch's temper, it seems as though no matter who you are, you'd best not offend him." Linley wasn't a rash person either.

This was the only son of their ancestor, the Azure Dragon. The man who had been the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan for countless years! The person in the clan whose word was law, the leader of the entire Four Divine Beasts clan!

How could authority like his be violated?

Gislason glanced sideways at Linley and Emanuel, then at the distant group of Elders. He couldn't help but let out a cold snort. "The two of you, and you Elders. Follow me!" As he spoke, Gislason flew into the air.

"Kid, you are in for it." Emanuel glanced at Linley. "The Patriarch hates it when people challenge his authority." And then, he flew into the air as well.

Linley also glanced into the distance. Those Elders all followed behind, not one of them daring to make any sound.

"I wonder what type of person this Patriarch is." Linley had no choice but to fly along as well. In that short exchange he had just had, he was able to tell that the power of the Patriarch far outstripped his own. For the Patriarch to kill him definitely wouldn't be difficult.

Right now, he was here in the Skyrite Mountains along with all of his friends and family. It was best just to swallow his anger at present.

Linley turned to glance at Delia, Bebe, Tarosse, and the others, all of whom were back at Death Valley staring at him, their eyes filled with worry.

“Boss, be careful. Don’t anger that Patriarch. I have the feeling he’s not a good person to piss off.” Bebe sent through their spiritual link worriedly. “That Patriarch’s gaze caused even me to feel terror. Honestly.”

“I know. Don’t worry. You all go back for now.” Linley sent back spiritually.

At the same time, Linley also followed Emanuel and the Patriarch together. Gislason himself flew up in front by himself, not saying a single word, while the Elders and Linley also followed without making a single sound, feeling quite pressured.

“Linley, in a while, when chatting with the Patriarch, be careful of what you say. Don’t make the Patriarch angry.” The handsome youth, ‘Elder Garvey’, drew near to Linley and sent through divine sense.

“Thank you.” Linley sent back through divine sense.

“Don’t think this is a small matter. Let me tell you this. The Patriarch hates it when clansmen kill each other. In addition, he will not accept anyone disobeying him. In the entire clan, only the Grand Elder is able to sway the Patriarch.” Garvey said solemnly. “If you disobey his will just a single time further, even if the Grand Elder comes, she won’t be able to rescue you.”

Linley nodded gratefully.

“Elder Garvey, how do you think the Patriarch will deal with me?” Linley wasn’t confident. After all, he had never met or spoken to this Patriarch. Although in this short period of time, he was able to tell that the Patriarch was extremely domineering, he didn’t know anything else.

“Given that our clan is currently in a state of crisis, I expect that the Patriarch probably won’t kill you. He’ll just punish you.” Garvey sent back.

Linley felt slightly more settled.

Moments later, the Patriarch Gislason as well as the various Elders reached

the top of the Azure Dragon clan's 'Dragon Avenue', where a large castle stood. This ancient castle's doors were open, and the guards all bowed respectfully.

This group, with the Patriarch leading them, slipped into the castle.

The main hall of the castle. The Patriarch sat high up above them on the throne, while the Elders and Linley stood beneath the throne.

"He's like an emperor meeting with his subjects." Linley, seeing this, became all the more aware of the status the Patriarch had in the clan. In some clans, the elders of the clan would have tremendous power. But in the Azure Dragon clan, it was completely different.

"Hmph!" The Patriarch, Gislason, stared downwards. He couldn't help but let out a cold, icy snort. "I said long ago that given the crisis our clan is in, what we need to do is work to eradicate those eight great clans. Our clansmen should not be committing fratricide against each other. Even if you are to die, you should die in battle against the eight great clans!"

"For two of the clan's experts who are at the Seven Star Fiend level to battle each other requires the agreement of the entire Assembly of Elders, or my agreement, before the application can be approved. What? Has the entire Assembly of Elders agreed to their life-and-death duel?" Gislason said furiously.

Immediately, a silver-haired elder who was standing in the front said clearly, "Father, this Linley had hid his power quite deeply. We had all previously viewed him as being just a God. Thus…"

To the clan, a God was nothing much.

But Seven Star Fiends were precious to the clan. Permitting two Seven Star Fiends to kill each other was something which the clan definitely would not do. If they wanted to engage in a life-and-death duel, they had to get permission from either the Patriarch or the entire Assembly of Elders.

This was also the primary reason why Gislason was so enraged when he saw Linley and Emanuel engaged in a life-and-death duel.

If one was to die, one had to die in a worthwhile manner, in battle against the eight great clans.

“Enough.” Gislason said coldly.

The Elder immediately fell silent. Although he was an Elder, he was also Gislason’s son. So what if a father rebuked his son! In the Azure Dragon clan, the two longest living members were Gislason and his sister. The others were all junior to them.

This was also one of the reasons why Gislason’s word was law.

“This doesn’t need to be discussed any further.” Gislason said calmly. “In the past, you weren’t aware of Linley’s power. Since it is now obvious that Linley has the power of a Seven Star Fiend, then this life-and-death duel can no longer proceed.”

“Linley. Emanuel. Do you have any objections?” Gislason swept the two with his gaze.

“No objections.” Emanuel hurriedly said.

“No objections.” Linley said as well.

“Very good.” Gislason continued to stare at the two of them. “Emanuel, you previously believed Linley was just an ordinary God. I want to know, why would you, an Elder, engage in a life-and-death duel with a God? Tell me the reason!”

Linley glanced sideways at Emanuel. The reason Emanuel wanted to kill him was for his Sovereign artifact. Would Emanuel dare admit it now?

Emanuel began to sweat, large beads appearing on his forehead. “Patriarch, this Linley didn’t show me any respect at all. He went too far. In my anger,

I thus…”

“Hmph.” An icy snort shook the entire palace.

Emanuel’s body couldn’t help but tremble.

“You dare to lie to my face?” Gislason chuckled. “I gave you a chance to tell the truth, but you didn’t take it.”

Emanuel’s face instantly turned white.

“I won’t kill you.” Gislason stared coldly at him. “The Grand Elder is currently in need of assistances. Starting tomorrow, go to the Grand Elder’s side. As for what the Grand Elder will arrange for you to do, that’s for her to decide.”

Emanuel’s body trembled, his heart filled with terror.

“Yes, Patriarch.” Emanuel still replied.

“Now, scram. Go stand over there.” Gislason snapped with disgust. Emanuel immediately retreated to one side of the main hall. Gislason’s gaze now turned to Linley. The corner of his lips curved upwards slightly. “Linley, right?”

“Yes, Patriarch.” Linley replied.

“Over all these years, those people who dared to directly ignore my orders…do you know what happened to them?” Gislason said.

Linley trembled slightly. He couldn’t help but have a bad feeling. Could it be that this Gislason was going to kill him? However, Linley still spoke out. “Patriarch, it was less than a century ago that I returned to the Azure Dragon clan. I still know very few things regarding our Azure Dragon clan.”

Gislason’s face instantly sank down. “You really know how to equivocate.”

Linley suddenly found, to his amazement, that Gislason suddenly moved forward from the throne, walking directly in front of him. After inspecting Linley carefully, he immediately turned and walked to a side room by the side of the main hall. “Linley, follow me. Everyone else, wait here!”

“Yes, Patriarch.” Linley immediately followed.

After the Patriarch and Linley left, the other Elders finally dared to let out sighs of relief.

“The Patriarch wants to speak privately with Linley. What do you think will happen? A private meeting with the Patriarch is definitely nothing good.” Immediately, an Elder spoke out with concern. The members of the Azure Dragon clan all held the Patriarch in dread and awe.

“If this were the past, Father would kill Linley.” The silver-haired Elder said. “However, at present, Father probably will not kill him. However, although he won’t kill him, his punishment definitely won’t be a light one. It won’t be any lighter than the punishment he gave Emanuel.”

Immediately, the other Elders looked towards Emanuel.

“Emanuel, by the side of the Grand Elder, you’ll have a chance to truly serve the clan.” Someone laughed.

“Hmph.” Emanuel just let out a low snort.

“Emanuel, tell the truth. What’s the real reason why you insisted on killing Linley?” The Elders began to ask. Nobody believed that just because of a simple offense, Emanuel would have gone so wild.

“Stop asking.” Suddenly, a golden-haired Elder barked out.

“Father.” Emanuel looked towards the golden-haired elder. This golden-haired elder was a third generation expert of the Azure Dragon clan, and a figure who commanded great respect amongst the Elders. After all, his

mother was the ‘Grand Elder’.

“Tell me, what’s this about?” The golden-haired elder sent through divine sense.

Emanuel knew that his chance to gain the Coiling Dragon ring was most likely lost. If he couldn’t gain it, he couldn’t let an outsider gain it either. Thus, he sent back through divine sense, “Father, that Linley is carrying a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, the ‘Azure Dragon ring’ of our ancestor.”

The golden-haired Elder was instantly stunned.

“What did you say?” The golden-haired Elder didn’t dare to believe it.

“It’s true. It is the Azure Dragon ring. There’s no mistaking it. That Linley truly is just a God. The reason he was able to withstand a Highgod soul attack was because of that Azure Dragon ring.” Emanuel hurriedly sent through divine sense.

Many thoughts immediately flashed through the mind of the golden-haired elder.

Emanuel looked at his father. “The Azure Dragon ring won’t end up in my hands. However, Father, as long as you strive to seize that Azure Dragon ring, it shouldn’t be too hard for you.”

“Kid, you should’ve told me sooner.” The golden-haired elder glanced at him. “But telling me now isn’t too late either.”

Chapter 18 – ‘Punishment’

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 18, ‘Punishment’

In the quiet side room, Gislason was seated on a chair, while Linley was standing off to one side. Gislason just looked at Linley, looked at him quietly, not saying a word. The pressure that filled this side room caused Linley to unconsciously feel fear.

“The Patriarch summoned me here, but he isn’t saying anything. What is he going to do?” Linley was panicking.

After standing in the side room for a long time, Linley finally couldn’t resist from speaking out. “Patriarch…”

Gislason, startled out of his pondering, looked at Linley. He let out a low sigh, that icy, tyrannical aura that had been present in the main palace hall now gone from his face. The only thing left was grief. Gislason sighed, “Linley, where are you from?”

“From another plane.” Linley said.

“The Yulan Plane, right?” Gislason said casually.

Linley was startled. How did this Gislason know? Could it be that he had already investigated Linley’s background?

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“The Yulan Plane. It really is.” Gislason raised his head. Silently, a tear dripped down his face, landing on the ground. “Drip!” As it hit the ground, the teardrop broke apart.

“The Patriarch…is crying?” Linley was completely stunned.

The leader of the Azure Dragon clan, this ultimate expert, Gislason…was crying? Linley could even understand it if Gislason wanted to kill him, but why had Gislason just shed a tear?

“Let me take a look at your Azure Dragon ring. There’s no need to remove the blood binding.” Gislason let out a low sigh.

“Azure Dragon ring?” Linley stared in astonishment at Gislason. After the Emanuel affair, he had already changed the appearance of the Coiling Dragon ring. From outside appearances, there was no way anyone could tell that his ring was a Sovereign artifact.

Gislason’s forehead furrowed. Raising his head up, he looked at Linley. “I told you to give me your Azure Dragon ring and let me take a look at it. Don’t worry. I’m not being greedy for your Azure Dragon ring. I have my own!” As he spoke, Gislason stretched out his right hand.

Linley looked at it. Indeed, on his right hand, there was a ring that was completely identical to the Coiling Dragon ring. Only, the color was azure.

“Originally, Father refined two soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts, one for himself to use, and another which he gave me.” Gislason said softly. Linley, astonished, stared at the ring on the Patriarch’s hand.

That Azure Dragon ring was a complete, undamaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

“Patriarch, go ahead and look.” Linley immediately tossed over his Coiling Dragon ring.

Gislason’s eyes lit up, and he immediately accepted the Coiling Dragon ring. Even the right hand which he used to hold this ring began to tremble slightly, and faint tears appeared in his eyes. “Father! Father!!!” Gislason stared at this Coiling Dragon ring as though it were an unsurpassingly holy object.

“This is the material it was made of. Right…” Gislason stroked it, his eyes

closed.

Linley had never been certain as to what the Coiling Dragon ring was made of. In the Yulan Plane, Linley didn't know, and even now, he still didn't know.

"This Sovereign artifact is damaged, right?" Gislason opened his eyes, then tossed the Coiling Dragon ring back to Linley.

"Right." Linley nodded.

"What's the situation on the damage?" Gislason asked.

"The soul-protecting Sovereign artifact appears as a membrane. On the surface of it, there is a small hole. Just a single hole. The other parts of it are completely undamaged." Linley didn't lie.

"A single small hole?"

Gislason frowned. "Capable of killing my father and the rest of the four Sovereigns, and also break through a Sovereign artifact…just a small hole?" Gislason's mind raced through many possibilities. Just from the hole in the Sovereign artifact, Gislason had already come to a conclusion regarding the killer.

"It was definitely one of those people!"

As soon as Gislason thought of who the enemy was, he felt helpless. "The enemy definitely doesn't care at all about little people like us. Even the most powerful of Highgods is nothing in front of a Sovereign." Gislason already stood at the very precipice of Highgods.

Unfortunately…

Compared to a Sovereign, he didn't have any ability to fight back at all. The enemy was able to kill four great Sovereigns. What was a few Highgods?

“Patriarch, is the clan going to confiscate my ring?” Linley asked, worried.

Gislason glanced at him, then said, “Since Father chose you to be the inheritor of this Azure Dragon ring, then you being in possession of this Azure Dragon ring is Father’s will. Father’s will is something which nobody, no matter who they are, is qualified to change!”

Linley’s heart calmed down.

As Gislason looked at Linley, he couldn’t help but think of his father. In the past, their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’, had been very caring towards his son and daughter. As for the grandsons and future generations of the clan, the Azure Dragon hadn’t cared too much.

“Patriarch, I am puzzled about one thing.” Linley couldn’t help but ask.

Linley was extremely puzzled as to how this Gislason had recognized the ‘Azure Dragon ring’. He had changed the appearance of his Coiling Dragon ring, and it didn’t emit any aura at all. How could Gislason tell just by looking at it that this Coiling Dragon ring was special?

Could it be the material?

But from the outside, unless one looked at it closely, there was no way to discover anything unusual about the material.

“Puzzled? Speak.” Gislason revealed a rare hint of a smile.

“Patriarch, how did you discover that my ring is the Azure Dragon ring? I don’t understand.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Haha…” Gislason began to laugh. “As a Sovereign artifact, once its aura is hidden, there’s no way one can recognize it from the surface. You’ve also changed the appearance of the ring. How could I tell, just by looking at it?”

Linley was mystified. “Patriarch, then why did you say that I definitely had the Azure Dragon ring?”

“Because of your body.” Gislason laughed.

“Body?” Linley was puzzled.

“Your body is extremely powerful. Even in our Azure Dragon clan, your body’s power should rank as the fourth most powerful.” Gislason said. “Even the third and fourth generation members cannot compare to you in terms of body strength.”

If a person’s body was powerful, that meant they had a Sovereign artifact?

Linley still didn’t understand. However, he was indeed proud of how powerful his body was.

“Is the power of your body related to the absorption of a drop of water-type Sovereign’s Might?” Gislason asked.

Linley, rather surprised, nodded. “It is.”

“Linley, think about it. The ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan was a Sovereign. How could our clan possibly be lacking in water-type Sovereign’s Might?” Gislason asked him.

Linley couldn’t help but nod. Sovereign’s Might, to Sovereign’s, was like divine power to Deities. Naturally, it wouldn’t be too precious. However, this drop of liquid Sovereign’s Might still had to be formed through the compression of quite a bit of gaseous divine Sovereign power.

Gislason continued, “Every single Elder of the clan is in possession of a drop of water-type Sovereign’s Might! But why is it that virtually none of them have bodies as strong as yours?”

Linley was immediately stumped.

Right.

These Elders were all descendants of the Azure Dragon clan as well, and they all had the lineage of the Azure Dragon. They also all had Sovereign's Might. Why hadn't their bodies become as powerful as Linley's?

Gislason sighed. "Using Sovereign's Might to strengthen and transform the body…this was the ultimate technique which Father developed only after he himself became a Sovereign."

"Father is a Sovereign, but he didn't create a Sovereign artifact level armor. This was because the draconic scales of his body, in defensive power, were already comparable to Sovereign artifacts." Gislason said with great pride.

Linley couldn't help but be stunned.

Sovereign artifacts, the most terrifyingly powerful artifacts of legends.

But their ancestor, the 'Azure Dragon', actually was so powerful that his body was like a Sovereign artifact.

"To strengthen one's body to the level of our ancestor, there was only one way. This way, however, had three preconditions!" Gislason said. "First, you have to be a member of the Azure Dragon clan. Second, you have to have the most precious 'blood essence' of our ancestor himself. Third, you have to have Sovereign's Might."

"Blood essence?" Linley was surprised.

"Right. And it must be 'blood essence' from after our ancestor became a Sovereign." Gislason sighed. "This 'blood essence' is the distilled essence of his blood. Only descendants of the Azure Dragon clan are capable of absorbing this distilled blood essence. Only after absorbing it can one become like the ancestor, to naturally absorb Sovereign's Might and strengthen one's body."

"The amount of 'blood essence' you absorb also determines how much Sovereign's Might you can absorb." Gislason said.

Linley thought back to that golden drop of blood. “I didn’t realize that was actually the blood essence of my ancestor, the distilled essence of his blood!”

“Your body is so powerful, you definitely absorbed a drop of distilled blood essence. However, where did that drop you absorbed come from?” Gislason continued, “When our ancestor created those Sovereign artifacts, in order to make the Sovereign artifacts possess semi-sentience, he dripped a single drop of his blood essence into them.”

“Thus, I was certain that you had acquired a Sovereign artifact. Aside from this, there was no other possible explanation.” Gislason said.

Linley now understood.

“Our ancestor had two Sovereign artifacts. One was a weapon-type Sovereign artifact, while the other was a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Because I already know where the weapon-type Sovereign artifact is, thus I was certain that the Sovereign artifact you were carrying could only possibly be that soul-protecting Sovereign artifact…the Azure Dragon ring.”

Hearing these words, the many questions which had puzzled Linley over these years were finally answered.

“No wonder I was unable to absorb the other two drops of Sovereign’s Might.” Linley said to himself. He had absorbed a single drop of that blood essence, and so he was only able to withstand a single physical transformation from Sovereign’s Might.

“Alright. Let’s go out now.” Gislason said.

“Yes, Patriarch.” Linley, in his heart, didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

So the reason Gislason had summoned him for a private meeting was because he wanted to look at the Coiling Dragon ring and ask about the

damage it had sustained. As for punishment? Gislason hadn't said a single word. But what Linley himself didn't understand was…

When Gislason had seen him, he had thought of his father, the 'Azure Dragon'. Naturally, he wouldn't punish Linley much.

In the main hall.

"He's coming. The Patriarch is coming." These Elders all immediately stopped talking and rose to their feet with respect. Gislason's face returned to its usual icy expression, and he walked to the throne at the front of the palace and sat down. As for Linley, he stood alongside with the Elders.

Linley glanced sideways at Emanuel, who just sneered coldly at him.

"This Emanuel definitely has some bad ideas. If I find an opportunity, I have to kill him." Linley had encountered countless waves and storms in his life. Naturally, he could determine that between himself and Emanuel, the conflict was now at a level where it would only end with one party's death.

"I already know clearly what has happened." Patriarch Gislason swept his gaze across the people below.

Emanuel and the golden-haired Elder, hearing this, couldn't help but be shocked.

"Linley disobeyed my orders. This was a pardonable misunderstanding. However, it can be considered that I have already punished him." Gislason continued. Linley was stunned. Punished? It seemed as though although they had chatted for quite a bit, he hadn't been punished at all.

"However, everyone is now also aware of Linley's power. According to the rules of the clan, once a clansman has reached the Seven Star Fiend level of power, he will be bestowed the position of Elder." Gislason continued.

Emanuel's eyes immediately turned red.

The many Elders in the hall couldn't help but turn to look at Linley.

"Elder?" Linley had been pondering about Gislason lying about punishing him, but in the blink of an eye, the 'punishment' had indeed come.

The Patriarch, 'Gislason', waved his hand, and instantly, a neatly folded cape as well as a set of azure armor, along with quite a few scattered objections such as medallions, drifted towards Linley. Linley was stunned, but he immediately bowed respectfully. "Thank you, Patriarch."

Linley immediately accepted those items.

"From today onwards, Linley is the thirty-sixth Elder in the Assembly of Elders!" Gislason announced.

Quite a few Elders nodded in a friendly manner towards Linley.

Elder Garvey immediately sent through divine sense, "Linley, congratulations. However, you'd best immediately put on those clothes on immediately. Generally speaking, Elders are required to wear their uniform within the clan. But of course, your own residence is an exception."

Linley immediately bound it all with blood. Linley's body flashed, and that azure armor with the complicated golden embroidered suddenly appeared on Linley's body, while that gleaming, multicolored cape also appeared on his back.

After having put the uniform on, he now appeared identical in outfit to the other people in the main hall.

"Alright. Everyone can leave now." Gislason said.

"Yes, Patriarch."

The group of Elders all bowed, then left.

"Forhan [Fo'er'han], Emanuel, you two, father and son, stay behind!"

Gislason suddenly said. Immediately, Emanuel and that golden-haired Elder looked at each other, halting their steps. As for Linley and the rest, they all flew out.

Linley bid farewell to each of the Elders, then immediately flew towards the gorge where he lived.

Chapter 19 – Elder

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 19, Elder

Dragon Avenue. Linley was flying at high speed through the curving path.

“Previously, because of the life-and-death duel, I angered the Patriarch. As I left with him, I was worrying if I would face a dangerous situation. But who would have imagined that not only would I not be punished, in the blink of an eye, I would become an Elder of the clan!” Linley looked at the gold-patterned azure armor he was wearing, and couldn’t help but laugh.

“The changes in the world are quite marvelous indeed.” Linley sighed.

“Elder!” Many of the patrolling soldiers on Dragon Avenue, upon seeing Linley, immediately saluted respectfully.

Linley glanced at these patrolling soldiers and nodded slightly.

Linley flew past the many saluting patrolling warriors.

Watching Linley fly past, one patrolling warrior frowned. “This Elder… seems to be that Linley who took part in the life-and-death duel. Captain, you went as well. That was Linley, wasn’t it?”

“I didn’t see too clearly. It did seem to be Linley.” The captain of the squad said.

“It was Linley. I saw him clearly.”

“What, that Linley, the one who took part in the life-and-death duel, became an Elder?” Quite a few patrolling warriors who hadn’t watched the life-and-death duel were puzzled.

“Is it strange that he became an Elder? If it hadn’t been that the Patriarch

had hurried over in time, Elder Emanuel would have been killed. That Lord Linley definitely has the power of a Seven Star Fiend!"

After all, thousands of patrolling warriors had watched that duel. Thus, as Linley flew along Dragon Avenue, he was recognized by quite a few people. Soon, the news that Linley had become an Elder was spread quite quickly amongst those patrolling warriors.

"Here we are." Linley looked at the gorge in front of him. His body transformed into a streak, and he charged straight into it.

Linley flew directly towards the Yulan branch. In mid-air, Linley saw that at the door to his residence, a group of people were gathered. Baruch, Tarosse, Olivier, and tens of others were there.

"I hope Linley is fine." Hazard sighed softly. "It's so rare for our Yulan branch to produce an expert like him. If he is…ugh!" Unconsciously, everyone in the Yulan branch had considered Linley as the 'flagbearer' for their branch.

How could their flagbearer be allowed to fall?

"Who knows how the Patriarch will punish Linley." Cesar said with concern as well.

"From what I saw at Death Valley, the Patriarch is very severe." Olivier said with a frown.

"Don't worry. The Patriarch won't kill him, at least." Baruch said. He knew very well the danger which the Four Divine Beasts clan was currently in. At a time like this, the Patriarch wouldn't be willing to kill any of their experts.

Delia just continued to frown, quietly waiting.

"The Boss is coming." Bebe suddenly said while raising his head to look upwards.

“Linley is coming?” The group of people immediately followed Bebe’s gaze, staring into the sky. From above that faint fog, a human figure was descending at high speed. Baruch and the others only saw a blurry, indistinct multicolored light.

The figure landed. It was Linley!

Baruch, Tarosse, and the others all stared at Linley, slack-jawed.

Linley’s entire body was clad in azure armor, which in turn was covered with complicated golden embroidery patterns, giving off an ancient, noble aura. That cape which Linley wore over his shoulders, in peculiar, had unfathomably mysterious runes atop it and had all colors of light flowing atop it.

It was the uniform of an Elder!

“Lin…Linley?” Baruch, Ryan, Dylin, and the others all stared in astonishment at Linley.

“Clan leader.” Linley laughed as he looked at everyone.

“Linley, you’ve become an Elder?” Hazard’s eyes were bulging.

In the Azure Dragon clan, Elders were definitely the true, high level members of the clan. Every single Elder was a Seven Star Fiend, capable of making the countless members of their clan venerate and worship them. They all knew that Linley’s power was formidable, but who would have imagined…

That Linley would become an Elder!

“Everyone, don’t stand outside. Let’s talk inside.” Linley laughed as he spoke.

“Right. All into the living room.” Baruch came to his senses and said hurriedly, “Linley, when you left with the Patriarch and the Elders, what

exactly happened? You have to explain clearly to us. We've been puzzled for so long."

"Clan leader…" Linley was just about to speak.

"You can just address me as Baruch." Baruch looked at the Elder's uniform which Linley was wearing. "Linley, you are an Elder now. There's only one person whom you can now address as clan leader or Patriarch."

Linley understood what Baruch meant, and he laughed. "Within the gorge, I'll still address you as clan leader."

Baruch, seeing the look on Linley's face, knew that arguing would be pointless. All he could do was assent.

All the important members of the Yulan branch gathered around. They listened to Linley explain, and Linley naturally just gave a brief explanation, skipping over some secrets. While hearing what had happened, everyone celebrated on behalf of Linley, while at the same time feeling proud of him.

Linley, the thirty-sixth Elder of the Assembly of Elders!

The Yulan branch's status in the Azure Dragon clan was very low. However, now that their branch had produced an Elder, the status of the Yulan branch had just completely changed. After all, the entire clan only had so many Elders.

For their branch to have an Elder meant that their clansmen of their branch would be more confident while in the Skyrite Mountains.

The next morning. Dawn. Linley's room.

"Delia, I had been planning to quietly train until I became a Highgod, but… I'm sorry. Now that I'm an Elder, most likely, our peaceful life won't last for much longer." Linley held Delia and said apologetically.

Delia laughed, then raised her head to look at Linley. “You don’t have to say sorry.”

“Linley!” A voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley was startled. He smiled apologetically towards Delia. “I didn’t expect it would come so fast. I just became an Elder yesterday, but today, someone has already come looking for me.”

“Go, then.” Delia said.

Linley nodded slightly, then immediately transformed into a blur, flying out of the room and into the skies above the gorge. A handsome youth dressed in Elder’s garb was standing there in mid-air. It was Elder Garvey.

“Linley.” Garvey smiled as he spoke.

“Garvey, is there something you need?” Linley asked.

“Yesterday, you became an Elder. I imagine you don’t know anything about the powers and responsibilities of Elders.” Garvey laughed calmly. “The clan leader thus ordered me to come and give you a detailed explanation.”

Linley’s eyes lit up. “Thank you.”

“Are you going to make me just stand here as I talk?” Garvey laughed.

Linley glanced around. At present, he and Garvey were standing in mid-air above the gorge. This was indeed a rather poor way to treat a guest. He immediately laughed. “Garvey, let’s go. Come to my residence. We’ll have a good chat.” As he spoke, Linley and Garvey, the two Elders, flew directly downwards.

At this time, a human figure descended towards the gorge. It was the person whom Linley had met on his first day in the Skyrite Mountains, the person who wanted to embarrass the Yulan branch: Asru.

“These past few days have been so boring. Those eight great clans are always vigilantly watching our Four Divine Beasts clan, and when we patrolling warriors are off duty, we still can’t leave. We have to stay in the mountains.”

“Fortunately, in half a month, it’ll be time for my next thousand-year assignment. It’ll be my turn to go patrol. Patrolling is better than always being here in this gorge.” Asru was in an excellent mood. But suddenly, Asru turned his head to stare into the distance. Two blurry figures had suddenly flickered and vanished.

“Eh? Elders?” Asru was shocked. “Two Elders. Why did they come to an out-of-the-way place like our gorge?”

This gorge was a fairly remote place within the Azure Dragon clan’s territory. How could an Elder come here, normally?

“One of those two Elders seems so familiar from the back…” Asru frowned. Because half of the great valley was covered by fog, and given that the two Elders moved too quickly, Asru hadn’t seen them clearly. “That one…seems a bit similar to Linley!”

But then, Asru laughed. “How is that possible? Linley belongs to the Yulan branch. Although his power is excellent, how can he compare to an Elder, much less become one. That bit of ability he has is only enough to let him show off here in our gorge.”

Asru laughed disdainfully, then flew out of the gorge.

Within the living room. Linley and Garvey were chatting with each other.

As they chatted, Linley began to get a clearer and clearer picture of many of the clan’s affairs. He couldn’t help but sigh in his heart. “The power of the Assembly of Elders truly is enormous. In the entire Azure Dragon clan, virtually all affairs are managed by the Elders. Although the Patriarch is powerful, he normally never takes part in matters.”

“Garvey, I’ve heard you say so many things. In the clan, the Elders really are responsible for quite a few things.” Linley laughed. “I wonder what I will be assigned to manage?”

“Don’t be impatient. Right now, all tasks within the clan already have supervisors handling them. There’s no lack or opening right now. Thus, for now, there’s nothing you have to do.” Garvey laughed. “Right now, you can simply enjoy the perks and powers of being an Elder without having to take on any responsibilities.”

“Your residence and some other things have already been arranged.” Garvey said. “Also, you can also now apply for your Yulan branch to be moved to a nicer place.”

“No need. I’m fine living here.” Linley frowned. “Garvey, from what you are saying, it seems that right now, I have nothing I have to do?” The clan was currently in a period of crisis. How could he be allowed to be so leisurely?

“Of course you have things to do. Only, it isn’t now. Wait for the Conclave of Elders!” Garvey said. “The Conclave of Elders is held once every thousand years, and during each Conclave, different assignments will be meted out to each Elder. As an Elder, by then, you’ll be assigned some tasks as well.”

Linley now understood.

“Thus, for now, continue enjoying your leisurely life. After the Conclave, you won’t be able to, even if you want to.” Garvey chuckled. “The sort of leisurely life you currently have is something which the other Elders all dream of but can’t have.”

Linley chuckled as well. “Oh, right. Garvey, how long will it be before the next Conclave of Elders?” Given that they met every thousand years, perhaps he would have centuries of leisurely time remaining.

“Fifteen days!” Garvey said.

“Fifteen days?” Linley was astonished.

A thousand years between Conclaves…but it just so happened that he was only fifteen days off from the next one?

“Right. That’s why I told you to treasure these leisurely days.” Garvey laughed as he stood up. “Alright, I need to go. When the Conclave of Elders begins, there will be someone who will come invite you to attend.”

Linley stood up as well, escorting Garvey as he left.

Within the gorge.

“That Linley of the Yulan branch, he became an Elder? Impossible!”

“It’s true. Those members of the Yulan branch said it so smugly. From the looks of it, it shouldn’t be false. But to tell the truth, the smugness which those Yulan branch members have right now is really irritating.”

“They’re just blowing hot air, I wager.”

The gorge was quickly filled with variations on this sort of conversation. The Yulan branch had hundreds of members. These clansmen, after knowing that Linley had become an Elder, immediately went to brag and show off in front of the other branches within the gorge.

All people care about face.

Deities were the same. Linley was able to become an Elder of the clan. The formerly perpetually-snubbed Yulan branch’s clansmen naturally wanted to show off for a bit.

Asru was walking towards his own residence. He was preparing for his rotation.

“Lord Asru, I heard that Linley became an Elder. Is it true?” Several people

came to ask Asru. Asru was a Highgod, a formidable figure within the gorge.

“Don’t believe the braggadocio of those Yulan branch people. Linley, become an Elder? How could that be possible?” Asru snickered. “Also, just yesterday, I saw Linley. He was wearing ordinary clothes.” What he didn’t know was that in the gorge, Linley didn’t want to be wearing his Elder’s uniform all day long.

Suddenly, he stared. He suddenly remembered how some time ago, he had seen those two Elder’s figures from afar. A suspicion began to arise within his heart.

“I told you it was impossible.” Several people immediately began to speak out. “The Yulan branch, produce an Elder?”

“In a bit, I’ll rotate and be on duty. I’ll go ask the other warriors of the clan and I’ll know then.” Asru said. The gorge was simply too remote and its experts too few in number. It thus also took a long time for those of them within to learn news regarding the clan.

Those people all immediately and respectfully escorted Asru away.

But right at this moment…

“Elder Linley!” A bright voice suddenly echoed throughout the gorge. Immediately, within the gorge, every person, whether those in training or those chatting in pairs, or those who were flying in the air, was stunned.

Asru was stunned as well.

Immediately, a large number of figures flew towards the source of that voice. They all looked carefully…

Three black-robed figures were flying downwards respectfully, while Linley himself was flying out as well.

“Is the Conclave of Elders beginning?” Linley said.

“Yes, Elder.” The three black-robed men bowed.

“Let’s go, then.” Linley immediately flew in the air, and those three black-robed figures followed behind respectfully.

The many people in the gorge all stared, slack-jawed, at this scene. After seeing Linley dressed in an Elder’s uniform, with that flashing, gleaming cape, quite a few people were truly stunned.

Chapter 20 – Conclave of Elders

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 20, Conclave of Elders

As he strode into the large hall, Linley swept it with his gaze. “Only twelve Elders have arrived?” The Azure Dragon clan had thirty-six Elders. The other Elders in the hall, upon seeing Linley, all laughed while greeting him.

“Linley, sit over here.” Elder Garvey beckoned towards him.

Linley walked over and sat down by Garvey’s side.

This Conclave of Elders was held in a large hall, where a very large, dark red circular table was placed in the center, with a ring of chairs around the table. Linley swept it with his gaze and discovered: “Eh? Just sixteen chairs?”

The round table was very large, and there was more than enough space for forty chairs. But they had only sixteen chairs prepared.

“Garvey, there’s only sixteen chairs? Aren’t there supposed to be thirty-six Elders?” Linley said softly.

“The Elders of Bloodbath Gorge do not attend.” Garvey explained.

Linley sighed to himself.

Bloodbath Gorge was the most central area of the entire Skyrite Mountains. It was also the place where the most powerful experts of the Azure Dragon clan, the Vermillion Bird clan, the White Tiger clan, and the Black Tortoise clan gathered. The Azure Dragon clan had twenty Elders stationed there.

“They won’t even attend the Conclave of Elders.” On the day that Linley had become an Elder, there had only been ten or so Elders present in the palace. Not a single one of the Elders who had been in the Bloodbath Gorge

had come on that day either.

“The Elders at Bloodbath Gorge truly are risking their lives to battle for the clan.” Fifteen days ago, Linley had chatted with Garvey, and had discussed the responsibilities of Elders. At that time, Garvey had explained Bloodbath Gorge to him.

The eight great clans were always watching like rapacious tigers. The Four Divine Beasts clan were faced with great danger, and although they could hide in the Skyrite Mountains and live their lives there like turtles hiding in their shells…

Given the arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan, how could they possibly forever hide?

In addition, how could a large clan like theirs be perpetually cut off from the outside world? The Four Divine Beasts clan was connected to the outside world, but the people who connected them would be slaughtered and attacked by the eight great clans.

Would the Four Divine Beasts clan just quietly accept this?

Impossible!

The Four Divine Beasts clan would counter-attack, deliver vicious counter-blows to its enemies. Thus, the ‘Bloodbath Gorge’ was formed.

Bloodbath Gorge was where more than half of the experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan were gathered. The Azure Dragon clan had twenty-plus Elders, and of course, many Six Star Fiends were present as well. The requirement for one to enter Bloodbath Gorge was having the power of a Six Star Fiend.

Bloodbath Gorge. The gathering spot for the true elites of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“The sixteen Elders are all present.” A silver-haired Elder at the side of the

round table said clearly. “This millennial Conclave of Elders, compared to the previous one, has an additional Elder present. This is something worthy of celebration.”

Quite a few Elders grinned towards Linley.

Linley smiled back at each Elder in a show of friendliness, then glanced at the silver-haired Elder. Linley recognized this silver-haired Elder; he was the Second Elder of the Assembly of Elders, the son of Patriarch Gislason.

“With regards to everyone’s assignments, let’s set that aside for now.” The Second Elder said solemnly. “Let me first explain to everyone the final battle results of our twenty-plus Elders of our Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge, over the past millennium.”

The faces of all the Elders turned solemn.

Bloodbath Gorge was a representation of the constant slaughter and warfare between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans.

“Our twenty-plus Elders of the Azure Dragon clan, in the past millennium, killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends and thirty-six enemy Six Star Fiends! The number of other Highgods slain was not recorded.” The Second Elder said forcefully.

So many?

Linley was secretly shocked. A thousand years, to Deities, was a very short period of time. But in a thousand short years, the Azure Dragon clan alone had killed two of the enemy’s Seven Star Fiends, and thirty-six of their Six Star Fiends.

How many enemies, then, had they killed in Bloodbath Gorge in total?

“The battle between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans truly is vicious.” Linley said to himself.

“However, amongst our twenty-plus Elders, two of our Elders had their power dramatically reduced. They were the twenty first elder, ‘Bangden’ [Bang’dun], and the ninth Elder, ‘Jeffs’ [Ji’fo’si]. Elder Bangden’s divine water clone was destroyed, and he no longer has the power of a Seven Star Fiend. He is currently in closed door training. As for Jeffs, his most powerful clone, the divine water clone, was destroyed as well. Luckily, however, his original body has never fused a divine spark. His original body thus once more fused with a divine water spark and his strength is thus returned…but from this day forward, he will most likely find it incredibly hard to advance a single step.” The Second Elder said solemnly.

Immediately, the atmosphere in the hall became depressed.

“Two Elders. One no longer has the power of a Seven Star Fiend, while the other won’t be able to advance at all in the future.” Linley sighed to himself.

Linley knew what the rules of Bloodbath Gorge were. Those Elders who went out to do battle all left their weaker divine clones within Bloodbath Gorge. That way, even if they died in battle outside, they would still have a surviving divine clone.

Most likely, the enemies were doing the same.

Although they described the battle accomplishment as being the killing of two Seven Star Fiends, most likely, the divine clones of those two Seven Star Fiends had similarly been left back at their own bases.

“So for the original body not to fuse with a divine spark actually has a benefit like this.”

The Elder named ‘Jeffs’ had his most powerful divine water clone destroyed, but his original body had never fused with a divine spark, just like Linley. Thus, the Elder could use his original body to constantly fuse with water-type divine spark, all the way to becoming a Highgod.

This was because he already had the necessary insights into how to fuse the

Laws of Water.

Thus, even if he became a Highgod through fusing a divine spark this time, his power wouldn't be much different from in the past. Only…in the future, it would be very hard to advance further.

For example, if Linley's divine earth clone was destroyed, he would become unable to use the Blackstone Space. However, Linley absolutely could let his original body continue to fuse a Demigod divine earth spark, a God divine earth spark, and a Highgod divine earth spark.

When the time came, Linley would still be able to execute the 'Blackstone Space'. Only, he wouldn't be able to make any further improvements.

"This time, aside from the two aforementioned Elders retiring from Bloodbath Gorge, there are also six Elders who have fought in Bloodbath Gorge for three thousand years already who will be retiring from Bloodbath Gorge! Thus, of our group of sixteen, there needs to be three who will fill the positions."

Immediately, the Elders began to chat with each other through divine sense or ponder to themselves.

"Three Elders need to go to Bloodbath Gorge?" Linley also knew what going to Bloodbath Gorge represented.

"Because of the order of the Patriarch, punishing Emanuel to go serve with the Grand Elder, thus of the sixteen of us, Emanuel absolutely must go to Bloodbath Gorge. Two more must therefore be chosen out of the remaining fifteen."

Linley couldn't help but glance at the distant Emanuel out of the corner of his eyes. Emanuel remained silent, his face unchanging. Clearly, he already knew about this.

"Everyone, let's choose two Elders to participate." The Second Elder looked at everyone.

“Me!” A voice rang out from next to Linley. It was Elder Garvey. Elder Garvey laughed, “I wanted to go last time, but in terms of power, I was weaker than the others, so I was excluded. This time, it is my turn, right?”

“I nominate myself for a slot!” Immediately, another Elder spoke out. “The other Elders are battling for the clan outside, while I am remaining within the mountain. I feel miserable!”

“Garvey, it’s not your turn yet.” Yet another Elder spoke out. “I nominate myself.”

There were differences in power amongst the Elders as well. Garvey was clearly a fairly weak one. As for Bloodbath Gorge…the more powerful one was, the better it was when they entered.

“I’ll go as well.” Of the sixteen Elders, one of the three females, a jade-haired woman, laughed. “I truly wish to emulate the Grand Elder and to serve with her fighting for the clan.”

“For the sake of the clan, I’ll go as well.”

Linley, quite surprised, watched this scene. Originally, he thought that people would try to push it off onto others. However, Linley now discovered that eight of the sixteen were so valiant as to volunteer themselves, casting concerns regarding life and death to the side.

“Enough.” The golden-haired Elder shouted with a frown.

Linley turned to look. The golden-haired Elder was the Third Elder of the clan, the son of the Grand Elder. His name was Forhan. Forhan had another status…he was the father of Emanuel.

The golden-haired Elder, Forhan, said in a low voice. “I understand that everyone wishes to do battle for the sake of the clan. But in battle, the more powerful a person is, the better! Thus, in my heart, I have made two choices. The first is…”

Forhan suddenly pointed at Linley. “Elder Linley!”

Linley was slightly startled.

“Forhan, the question of who goes is a decision each person individually. It isn’t a matter for others to decide upon.” The Second Elder said.

Forhan furrowed his forehead stubbornly, then said in a clear voice, “As members of the clan, and with the clan facing danger, how can any of us ignore this? Look at the twenty Elders in Bloodbath Gorge. The vast majority of them have been battling there for thousands of years. According to the rules, every thousand years, they can retire. But they have not!”

“It is all for the sake of the clan! For the sake of making it so that our Azure Dragon clan’s prestige will not lower!”

Forhan looked at Linley. “The reason I choose Linley is because Linley’s Gravitational Space is very unusual, with the power of the gravity being miraculously great. Even Seven Star Fiends will generally have their speed greatly reduced within his Gravitational Space. When experts do battle, if Linley were to coordinate with several Elders, his power can definitely be unleashed to an extremely great effect.”

The Elders in the hall all immediately understood.

If Linley were to coordinate with several Elders while using his Gravitational Space, it would indeed be a tremendously effective supporting measure.

“Linley’s own power has been made clear to everyone as well. He vastly surpasses Emanuel. As I see it, just based on the power of his body, in our clan, Linley should rank number four! Even I feel I am inferior.” Forhan looked at Linley. “Linley, why don’t you speak for yourself. Are you willing to go?”

Linley laughed as he looked at Forhan. “Third Elder, I want to ask, who is

the other person you have chosen?"

Forhan said solemnly, "The two people I selected…one is Linley, while the other is myself! I believe that in terms of strength, nobody here dares to say that they have definitely surpassed me. Last time, I didn't go to Bloodbath Gorge…I've regretted it for a long time now. This time, I insist on going!"

Linley frowned.

The other person Forhan had chosen was actually Forhan himself?

"Linley?" The Second Elder looked at Linley. "What are your own thoughts?"

These Elders all admitted that in solo combat, some of them would dare say that they were not inferior to Linley. But in terms of group combat…none of them dared to say that they were superior to Linley. In group combat, the effect of Linley's Blackstone Space truly was too good.

Once his Blackstone Space appeared, his own power would not be impacted, but the opponent's speed would drastically drop. Even Seven Star Fiends, in a battle situation like this, would be defeated lopsidedly.

"I'll go!" Linley nodded.

"Linley, not bad." Forhan laughed as he spoke.

Linley just smiled back at him, while musing suspiciously to himself, "This Forhan seems to want to force me to go to Bloodbath Gorge. The way he acted just now…if I were to refuse to go, most likely the other Elders would look down upon me. Why does he want to force me to go? Can it have to do with his son, Emanuel?"

"Alright. The people have been chosen. Forhan, Emanuel, Linley, the three of you, after the conclusion of this Conclave, can go directly to Bloodbath Gorge." The Second Elder looked at Linley and the other two. "The three of you, take care of yourselves."

“Take care of yourselves.” These four words caused Linley to feel relieved of a sense of pressure he hadn’t realized he had been bearing.

“Bloodbath Gorge?” For some reason, Linley suddenly felt a hint of anticipation.

Ever since he had learned that the clan was in a crisis, Linley had known that one day, he too would battle on behalf of the clan. Only, he hadn’t imagined that the day would come so quickly.

Linley and the other two selectees were going to Bloodbath Gorge. Naturally, they wouldn’t be assigned any other activities. After the Conclave of Elders concluded, the other thirteen Elders all bade farewell to and sent off Linley, Forhan, and Emanuel.

“Linley, I truly want to go with you.” Garvey laughed. “Remember. Help kill a few extra enemies for me.”

Linley smiled and nodded.

Garvey’s face suddenly turned solemn. “Remember, you need to be careful. Protecting yourself is most important. Killing enemies is secondary to that.”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“Enough. The three of you, you can head off. After arriving in Bloodbath Gorge, obey the commands of the Grand Elder.” The Second Elder said. Linley, Forhan, and Emanuel immediately made their farewells to each of the Elders, then immediately started to fly into the heart of the Skyrite Mountains.

The Skyrite Mountains were divided into four major areas, which each of the Four Divine Beasts clan were in control of.

In the core of the Skyrite Mountains, deep within a mountain valley, was Bloodbath Gorge. The place where the elites of the Four Divine Beasts clan

gathered.

“The security here truly is tight.” Linley looked at the air above the gorge. There was an enormous number of roving warriors on patrol. Not just the azure armored warriors of the Azure Dragon clan, but also the golden armored warriors of the Vermilion Bird clan…

There were patrolling warriors from all four of the Four Divine Beasts clans. When these people saw Linley’s group of three fly over, they immediately saluted.

Linley, Emanuel, and Forhan flew directly into the depths of the gorge.

Chapter 21 – The Grand Elder

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 21, The Grand Elder

Within the quiet, gloomy depths of Bloodbath Gorge.

Three human figures were descending at high speed landing on the ground.

Linley inspected his surroundings. Bloodbath Gorge was sparsely populated. As he stared straight forward, the only thing he could clearly see was an erect stone monument. As for the other buildings that could vaguely be seen through the mist, there was no way to see them clearly.

“There are so many soldiers of the Four Divine Beasts clan above the gorge, but so few people within Bloodbath Gorge itself. That makes sense. After all, everyone in here is at least a Six Star Fiend.” Linley continued to carefully inspect Bloodbath Gorge. As for Emanuel and Forhan, they strode forward with large steps.

Just as they walked away, Emanuel turned his head to look at Linley. “Linley, you’ve never been here before, right?”

“No, I’ve never been here before.” Linley didn’t have any goodwill towards Emanuel at all.

“Whoooooosh.” Suddenly, a cold wind began to howl. Linley felt his body turn cold, and he couldn’t help but be startled. “The wind is actually so icy, here in Bloodbath Gorge.”

Forhan couldn’t help but laugh. “Linley. Bloodbath Gorge is at the heart of the Skyfire Mountains, and is an extremely cold location. The cold wind within the gorge would cause any Demigods who came here to immediately be frozen. However, to you, Linley, this cold wind naturally doesn’t have much impact.”

“Elder Forhan, let’s continue to move forward.”

Linley couldn’t be bothered to chat too much with this father-son pair in front of him. He immediately advanced deeper into the gorge. There were quite a few round stones located within Bloodbath Gorge, as well as some wild grass. However, the center of it was a neatly paved stone road.

In front of Bloodbath Gorge, on one side of the stone road, there was a tall, massive stone monument.

The stone monument was covered with two dark red words that were written in cursive, like flying dragons or dancing phoenixes. The two words were, ‘Blood Bath’. Linley, upon seeing these two words, sensed a bloodthirsty, murderous aura emanate from it, and he couldn’t help but feel his own murderous desires rise in response.

“Forhan, Emanuel, so it’s actually the two of you this time. Haha…” A straightforward, clear laugh rang out. Linley turned to look, and saw an amiable, friendly-looking middle-aged man laugh as he walked over. This man had long sideburns, but they were very neatly trimmed, giving him quite a fresh, sharp appearance.

Linley looked at the newcomers.

“Arhaus [Er’hao’si]!” Forhan laughed and went to greet him, giving the man with the sideburns a big hug. “Long time no see.”

“It really has been quite some time since we’ve met.” This man named ‘Arhaus’ beamed towards Forhan as well, then looked at Linley. Rather puzzled, he said, “I knew that this time, three Elders were coming, but I’ve never met this one before…oh, I know!”

Arhaus had a look of sudden understanding on his face, and he laughed as he said to Linley, “In Bloodbath Valley, I’ve heard that our Azure Dragon clan has a new Elder.”

“I am Arhaus. Elder Linley, right?” Arhaus laughed as he extended his

hand.

“Right. Elder Arhaus, greetings.” Linley laughed and extended his hand as well.

Linley had a good impression of Arhaus, but as for Forhan and Emanuel, Linley, from the bottom of his heart, disliked this father-son pair. Both Emanuel and Forhan made him feel as though they were sinister and vicious. Emanuel’s actual actions, in turn, had confirmed Linley’s judgment.

“We warmly welcome the three of you. Come, let’s go meet the Grand Elder.” Arhaus laughed.

“Mother?” Forhan’s eyes couldn’t help but light up.

Linley glanced sideways, seeing the looks on Forhan and Emanuel’s faces. The two clearly were very eager to meet the Grand Elder. The Grand Elder and Patriarch ‘Gislason’ were actual siblings, brother and sister, and in the clan, her power was second only to that of the Patriarch’s.

“Linley, it’s been a long time since our clan has had a new Elder.” Arhaus said warmly. “I’ve heard that you’ve previously sparred with Emanuel, and that you are incredibly strong. In the future, when you do battle for the clan, you definitely have to win some glory for our Azure Dragon clan.”

“Definitely.” Linley laughed and nodded.

Forhan, seeing how Arhaus was continuously chatting with Linley, couldn’t help but interrupt. “Arhaus, what’s the current situation in the struggle between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans?”

“How good can it be?” Arhaus shook his head and sighed. “The eight great clans are simply relying on superior numbers to win. All combined, their eight clans have more Seven Star Fiends than we do. If we continue fighting like this…most likely in just ten or twenty thousand years, our entire Four Divine Beasts clan will have less than ten Seven Star Fiends.”

Hearing this, Linley was shocked.

“In ten or twenty thousand years, we’ll lose that many?” Linley couldn’t help but say. “Currently, our Four Divine Beasts clan should have nearly a hundred Seven Star Fiends.”

The Azure Dragon clan alone had thirty-six. The four clans, combined, should have more than a hundred Seven Star Fiends. How could it be possible that in as short a period of time as ten or twenty thousand years, only ten would be left?

“Linley, I hear that you just joined the clan recently.” Arhaus said resignedly. “You aren’t too familiar with the situation. However, I trust that at the Conclave of Elders, you should have learned of our losses in the past thousand years.”

Linley nodded.

In the past thousand years, they had killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends, while two of their own Seven Star Fiends had been weakened as well.

“Our Azure Dragon clan alone has lost two Seven Star Fiends in the past thousand years. Of course, Jeffs, when using his original body to fuse with a divine spark, will be able to recover his strength. But still, he’ll have lost any chance to gain in strength in the future.”

Arhaus said, “In a thousand years, our Four Divine Beasts clan, all combined, has lost five. In especially brutal periods, it’s normal to lose as many as ten Elders. You do the math. How many will we lose in ten thousand years?”

Linley did the math, and he was stunned.

In ten thousand years, at least seventy or eighty Elders would be doomed.

“That’s why I said that if this continues, in ten or twenty thousand years,

our clan will have lost almost all of our Seven Star Fiends." Arhaus said bitterly. "Nothing we can do. The eight great clans…even if we exhaust all of our Elders against them, they will most likely still have half of their Seven Star Fiends remaining!"

Linley nodded.

As soon as he had arrived in the Azure Dragon clan, Linley had heard that any one of those eight great clans were comparable to the Azure Dragon clan. The number of Seven Star Fiends in the eight great clans, all combined, definitely was far greater than the number the Four Divine Beasts clan had.

"Linley, do you know how many Elders we had before the ancestor died?" Arhaus said.

"How many?" Linley asked.

"More than sixty. And that was just our Azure Dragon tribe." Arhaus said, and Linley couldn't help but sigh in shock. "No wonder it was said that the Four Divine Beasts clansmen dominated each of the major planes. Not only did we have a strong supporter, we ourselves had tremendous power."

"Only, while we were regrouping, enemies attacked from every direction. Linley, you must understand that the clans which pursued us all the way to the Infernal Realm just represent the minority. We have many enemies in the other planes." Arhaus said resignedly.

The Four Divine Beasts clan truly had too many enemies.

As many as eight clans were still in pursuit of them. Most likely, when the Four Divine Beasts clan had been spread across each of the major planes, the number of enemies they had was far more than their current number.

"All we can do is go all out." Forhan said solemnly.

"Right. We can only go all out!" Arhaus said as well. "If we just hide in the

Skyrite Mountains like turtles in a shell and don't even fight back, most likely we'll become the laughing stock of the major clans of the Infernal Realm. Our Four Divine Beasts clan cannot be humiliated like that!"

While they were chatting, Linley and the others were heading deeper into Bloodbath Gorge.

Within Bloodbath Gorge, there was an organized array of buildings that were arranged in rows like soldiers, divided into various areas. On the way over, Linley encountered small groups of experts as well, all of whom were at least of the Six Star Fiend level of power.

Linley couldn't help but sigh in amazement.

"This is the true foundation of a great clan. And a great clan which has fallen, at that." Linley was amazed, while at the same time, stunned by the savagery of the warfare between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans.

"We've arrived at the Azure Dragon Palace!" Arhaus said.

Linley lifted his head. In front was a building that was at least thirty meters tall, completely dark red in color. At the tip of the building, there was something that was dimly glowing with azure light. There were four buildings of this appearance within Bloodbath Gorge.

"The Grand Elder is on the fifth floor of the Azure Dragon Palace. This palace is the place where we normally gather together." Arhaus said.

He led Linley, Emanuel, and Forhan directly to the fifth floor. The entire Azure Dragon Palace actually didn't even have a single maid or servant within.

The main hall on the fifth floor appeared to be rather wide and empty.

"Where is the Grand Elder?" Linley stared around the main hall, puzzled.

Linley suddenly had a feeling, and he turned to look towards the side of the hall. He saw a tall, slender human figure fly over, her entire body enveloped in a long black robe. Her graceful, jade-green hair fell down past her waist, and her face was covered by a silver mask which had a strange light flowing atop it.

As this person entered the main hall, Arhaus and the others all fell silent.

“She is the Grand Elder?” Linley looked at this person carefully.

“Whoosh!” The mysterious woman’s long robe rustled as she sat down on the head seat in the hall. She swept everyone present with her icy gaze, pausing momentarily on Linley, and then she said in a cold, clear voice, “You can all be seated.”

“Yes, Grand Elder.” The four replied respectfully.

Linley, puzzled, glanced at Forhan. Supposedly, Forhan was the son of the Grand Elder. But he, too, addressed her as ‘Grand Elder’? In his heart, he was puzzled, but Linley still sat down alongside Forhan and the others.

“Linley.” The Grand Elder suddenly said while looking at Linley.

“Grand Elder.” Linley bowed fractionally.

“I heard that you defeated Emanuel, then became an Elder.” The Grand Elder said coolly.

“Correct.” Linley immediately responded, but in his heart, he was puzzled. “What does the Grand Elder mean by this? Is she warning me, or…? Emanuel is her grandson, after all.” Although he didn’t understand, Linley remained calm.

“I know that you and Emanuel have some misgivings about each other. However, I hope that the two of you will be unified and will be able to work with each other.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley was startled. He couldn't help but turn to look at Emanuel, who was also currently looking towards Linley.

"Work together with him?" Linley felt that this was a huge joke.

The Grand Elder's voice was like clashing steel. "Ever since Father fell, our Four Divine Beasts clan has been in unprecedentedly dire straits. Although we are now all assembled in Indigo Prefecture, we still meet with constant challenges and provocations."

"However, we are the Four Divine Beasts clan! We, the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, will not allow ourselves to be humiliated!"

"Although we can hide in the Skyrite Mountains like a turtle in its shell, our proud clansmen will not submit and be humiliated. One Elder after another, leading the elites of our clan, has gone out to do battle against the enemy. Any who challenges or provokes our clan will be punished!"

"The experts of our Four Divine Beasts clan are not as numerous as those of those eight great clans. Thus, we absolutely must be unified."

The Grand Elder swept her gaze across the people present. "Linley, I don't care what sort of problems you and Emanuel have had in the past. From today onward, you two are not permitted to battle against each other. If such a thing happens…I will be the first to kill both of you!"

"Yes, Grand Elder."

Linley and Emanuel replied in unison.

"Our Azure Dragon Palace has, in total, twenty squads. Currently, there are three squads that do not have a captain. They are Squad Thirteen, Squad Fifteen, and Squad Nineteen." The Grand Elder said calmly. "I will make the arrangements. Linley…"

Linley took a step forward.

“From today onward, you will be the captain of Squad Thirteen of the Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge!”

“Yes.” Linley acknowledged respectfully.

The Grand Elder’s gaze turned to Forhan, her voice as cold as ever. “Forhan, from today onward, you will be the captain of Squad Fifteen of the Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge!”

“Yes.” Forhan took a step forward as well as he acknowledged respectfully.

“Emanuel, from today onward, you will be the captain of Squad Nineteen of the Azure Dragon clan in Bloodbath Gorge!”

Emanuel also strode forward and assented.

“Very good.” The Grand Elder nodded slightly, then looked at Arhaus. “Arhaus, you can now lead Linley to the location of Squad Thirteen. Afterwards, come back. I have an assignment for you.”

“An assignment?” Arhaus’ eyes lit up.

“First take Linley to his place.” The Grand Elder ordered.

“Yes.” Arhaus immediately turned and looked towards Linley, who nodded, then followed Arhaus away. As he left, Linley heard the Grand Elder’s voice. “Forhan, Emanuel, you stay here. There’s something I will discuss with you!”

And then, Linley and Arhaus left the Azure Dragon Palace.

Chapter 22 – Comfort

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 22, Comfort

“Why did this Grand Elder have Forhan and Emanuel stay behind?” Linley felt suspicious. “The Grand Elder, on the surface, said that we have to be unified, but in the end, Forhan is still her son and Emanuel is still her grandson. It’s unlikely that she’ll be completely impartial.”

“Whoosh!” A cold wind blew past, interrupting Linley’s pondering.

Linley and Arhaus walked together on the stone road. There were quite a few courtyards on each side of the stone road, all seeming quite plain. Linley and Arhaus were both thinking on their own matters, and so didn’t speak to each other.

“Ah, Linley.” Arhaus suddenly laughed. “I’m sorry. I was thinking about my assignment. I’ve been neglecting you.”

“It’s fine.” Linley said with amusement. “As long as you don’t lead me the wrong way.”

“Bloodbath Gorge is only so large. There’s less than a thousand people here, all combined. How could I get lost?” Arhaud laughed. “Your Squad Thirteen has a total of ten squad members, all experts of the clan. They are all at least at the Six Star Fiend level, and some of them are approaching the Seven Star Fiend level.”

Arhaus warned, “Linley, don’t underestimate them. After all, there isn’t a huge difference between Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends.”

Linley nodded.

For example, that ‘Learmonth’ he had encountered in the Redbud Continent was a Six Star Fiend, but he was very nearly at the level of a Seven Star

Fiend in power.

“Some are skilled in soul attacks, others specialize in material attacks, while still others specialize in escaping. Everyone has their own special techniques as well. Some rely on sound, others rely on venom…in short, Six Star Fiends aren’t necessarily weaker than Seven Star Fiends. As long as you lead them well and give good guidance and seize the weaknesses of the enemies, it’s not impossible to overcome a deficit in power.” Arhaus said.

“Well spoken.” Linley nodded in approval.

For example, before he himself had undergone the Ancestral Baptism, he was capable of defeating a Seven Star Fiend who specialized in material attacks, but was afraid of Six Star Fiends who specialized in soul attacks.

Power wasn’t an absolute concept.

“Arhaus, look. The aura those warriors have is extraordinary.” Linley saw that in the distance, there were three blood-robed warriors walking on the road. These three had callous, grim faces. Even when smiling, they made others feel great pressure.

This was because experts like them were brimming with killing intent.

“The warriors of Bloodbath Gorge have all encountered countless life-and-death battles. Naturally, they will carry the aura of those battles with them.” Arhaus said in praise.

“We arrived at Squad Thirteen.” Arhaus suddenly said.

Linley saw as well that up ahead, there was a stone pillar, atop which was carved the word, ‘Thirteen’. At the sides of the stone pillar were carved names, quite a few of which were red.

“The names on top are those of the members of Squad Thirteen over the past ten thousand years.” Arhaus said solemnly. “A single squad usually has

ten squad members. Each time a squad member dies, they will be replaced. The deceased squad members will have their names turn red."

Linley looked carefully at each of the names.

"Squad Thirteen!" Arhaus suddenly roared.

Instantly, people came flying out from rooms nearby the stone pillar, each of them dressed in a blood-colored war-uniform. In the blink of an eye, the ten Six Star Fiend squad members had all arrived. Linley carefully looked at them.

Eight men, two women.

"These ten, just judging from their aura alone, are all extraordinary. They feel like ten Learmonths." Linley said to himself.

When he had just entered the Infernal Realm, how could Linley have imagined that today, he would be commanding ten Six Star Fiends?

"Elder Arhaus?" A woman with short jade hair said. "Who is this person by your side?" The other Six Star Fiends also looked at Linley in puzzlement. They clearly didn't recognize Linley.

"This is our Azure Dragon clan's newest Elder, 'Linley'." Arhaus said. "He is also the captain of your Squad Thirteen."

"Captain?" The ten Six Star Fiends looked at each other.

"He really is an Elder?" A man asked.

Laughing, Linley flipped his hand, revealing a medallion. This was the Elder's medallion he had received after becoming an Elder. Upon seeing this medallion, the ten squad members were no longer dubious. They all said respectfully, "Captain!"

Any of the battle squads within Bloodbath Gorge had an Elder as the

captain.

Thus, when they saw that Linley was an Elder, they naturally recognized him as their captain.

“Captain, my name is Melina [Mei’li’na].” The jade-haired woman laughed. “I wonder, Captain, if you can demonstrate your ultimate technique to us?”

Linley was slightly startled, then glanced at the other Six Star Fiends. None of them said anything, but from their gazes, it was apparent that they wanted Linley to give a demonstration. Linley mused to himself, “It seems that soldiers in both the material planes as well as the higher planes are all the same; to be a good commander, you first have to be able to impress your subordinates.”

How could Six Star Fiends not have their own pride?

If they didn’t personally witness Linley’s power, how could they possibly submit willingly?

“You guys…” Arhaus laughed.

“Then I’ll let you experience it for yourself.” Linley laughed calmly. Immediately, a blurry, earthen yellow light sprang up, instantly forming a large globe of light that covered all ten of the squad members within.

Blackstone Space!

The sudden appearance of the Blackstone Space caused the ten Six Star Fiends to be caught completely off guard. Three of them even swayed, nearly falling before hurriedly using their hands to push off the floor in order to stand back up. In the Blackstone Space, even Six Star Fiends would still sense that astonishing gravity.

“When you are under such tremendous pressure, tell me…would it be easy for me to kill you?” Linley laughed calmly.

The ten squad members, having experienced that terrifying gravity, looked at each other then laughed.

“Captain!” The ten simultaneously fell to one knee, paying their respects to him.

They completely submitted.

Linley laughed, then withdrew his Blackstone Space. “You can all rise.”

“Captain, this is wonderful. With your Gravitational Space, when fighting against enemies, we will have a huge advantage.” A muscular man said excitedly. “In the Gravitational Space, the enemy’s movements will be restricted, but ours will not. Even if the enemy is a Seven Star Fiend, I’d still dare to give them a good fight.”

That the personal strength of the captain was strong wouldn’t cause these squad members to be too excited. After all, the strength of the captain was a personal matter.

What truly made them was when a captain was skilled at supportive techniques and able to assist all the squad members. Like Linley! As long as Linley didn’t apply the Gravitational Space to them, they could easily battle against more powerful Seven Star Fiends.

“What is your name?” Linley laughed as he looked at the muscular man in front of him.

“My name is Shanda [Shan’ta]!” The muscular man immediately laughed.

“All of you, introduce yourselves to me.” Linley laughed as he looked at his subordinates. From today onwards, as long as he wasn’t dead, he would be the leader of this squad. They would battle together and share life and death together!

Linley deeply valued these subordinates of his.

These squad members were very excited as well, now that they had a captain whose ultimate technique was a supportive ability. They naturally were very exuberant in chatting with Linley.

“Linley.” The nearby Arhaus finally spoke out.

“Oh. Apologies.” Linley immediately said. “While chatting with them, I forgot that you, Elder Arhaus, were still here.”

Arhaus shook his head and laughed. “It’s fine. However, I can’t stay here much longer. The Grand Elder has an assignment for me. I have to make a trip.”

Arhaus parted with Linley, who moved into the residence for the captain of Squad Thirteen. From this day onward, Linley had to lead these ten Six Star Fiends into battle against the eight great clans.

Time passed quickly, and in the blink of an eye, more than a year had passed.

Within that gorge in the Skyrite Mountains.

Delia was resting against Linley’s arm, leaning against him while the two took a stroll together. Linley looked at Delia by his side, and in his heart, a slow, gentle feeling emerged. Linley deeply enjoyed this sort of warm feeling.

“Linley, at first, I thought that when you became a captain at that Bloodbath Gorge, you would immediately go engage in battles and not have time to accompany me. So as it turns out, the battles are actually quite rare.” Delia especially valued the time she and Linley had to spend together.

The clan was in a crisis. Delia knew this, and she wouldn’t force Linley to do anything. It was enough for her to value what they had.

“I’ve been a captain for a year now, but I haven’t engaged in a single battle.” Linley laughed calmly. “Actually, the number of battles each squad

in Bloodbath Gorge engages in is fairly low. Only, every single battle is against the top-tier experts of the enemy clans, and in each battle, life and death are separated by only a hair. We have Seven Star Fiends, but they do as well, and in fact, they have even more! We are in a position of weakness!"

Linley felt the pressure as well, while at the same time, he felt that he also wasn't doing right by Delia.

Whether it was in the Yulan Plane or here in the Infernal Realm, Delia had always quietly supported him. Even as they roamed in every direction and faced one crisis after another, Delia had never complained.

"As long as I don't have any missions, I'll always be by your side." Linley said gently into Delia's ear, while at the same time he kissed her by her earlobe.

Delia's face instantly turned slightly rosy.

"We're outdoors." Delia immediately looked around. She couldn't help but glare at Linley, her cheeks flushed.

Linley just laughed.

No matter what sort of battles or difficulties he encountered, when he was with Delia, Linley felt incredibly relaxed. With Delia here, his soul had a harbor to return to.

The second year Linley was serving as the captain of Squad Thirteen.

Bloodbath Gorge didn't have too many requirements of its captains, who normally were able to live in other places throughout the Skyrite Mountains. If there was an assignment, they naturally would be informed. As for those ordinary squad members, each year, they were permitted one month outside of the gorge.

"Elder.

“Elder.”

As Linley walked on the stone road within Bloodbath Gorge, quite a few blood-robed warriors called out to him respectfully upon seeing him. This was true for not just the Azure Dragon clan, but also the White Tiger clan, or the other two clans. In Bloodbath Gorge, they were all the same.

After such a long period of time, they all recognized Linley.

“Arhaus.” Linley saw, to his surprise, that in the distance, there was a familiar figure. Arhaus. Only, Arhaus had a terrible look on his face. Linley immediately walked over, and Arhaus saw Linley as well.

“Linley.” Arhaus forced out a smile.

“Arhaus, it’s been a year since I saw you. Your mission is complete?” Linley laughed.

“The mission is complete.” Arhaus let out a low sigh.

“What is it?” Linley had a bad premonition.

Arhaus glanced at Linley, a bitter look in his eyes. “Linley, didn’t you notice that this body is a divine wind clone?”

“Uh…right.” Linley carefully scrutinized him, and Arhaus sighed. “The enemies for this mission were too powerful. Only four out of the ten members of my Squad Six are alive. The rest died. My most powerful clone, the divine water clone, was destroyed as well.”

Linley was stunned.

The most powerful type of divine clone for the vast majority of the Azure Dragon clansmen was a divine water clone. If Linley had lived within the Four Divine Beasts clan ever since he was young, he too would have undergone the Ancestral Baptism at an early age, and most likely he too

would primarily train in water, and not in the earth, as he currently did.

“Then you…” Linley didn’t know what to say.

“My divine water clone is finished. What can I do?” Arhaus shook his head. “In the future, I won’t be an Elder any longer. I don’t have that level of power. The reason I came today was to report this to the Grand Elder.”

When Elders went forth to do battle, they would leave their useless divine clones behind.

One reason was to be able to quickly provide intelligence reports to Bloodbath Gorge; the second was to preserve a life.

“Arhaus, don’t be too dispirited.” Linley didn’t know what to say.

Arhaus took a deep breath. “What’s there to be dispirited about? When I go back, I’ll train hard. The day will come when my divine wind clone will become equally powerful. When that day comes, I’ll go seek out that group of bastards once more!” A savage light appeared in Arhaus’ eyes.

Linley, seeing the look on Arhaus’ face, couldn’t help but be astonished.

Linley suddenly realized that with this constant cycle of revenge, the hatred between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans was growing deeper and deeper. The experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan were dying, but so too were the experts of the enemies. If this continued…

The end result definitely would be a case where one side would be wiped out.

“Linley, in battle, you cannot show any mercy. These are not ordinary battles. Between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, there will never be a day of reconciliation. As soon as they have a chance, they will mercilessly kill you.” Arhaus warned.

“Don’t worry.”

Linley had come all the way from the Yulan Plane. He knew what was an appropriate time to show mercy, and what was an appropriate time to be ruthless! To be merciful to the members of the eight great clans was the same as being ruthless to his own clansmen.

“Elder Linley!” A blood-robed warrior came running from afar.

Linley turned to look. “What is it?” Linley didn’t recognize this blood-robed warrior.

The blood-robed warrior bowed respectfully. “The Grand Elder is asking you to see her, Elder Linley.”

Linley felt a surge of excitement. He had been the captain of this Squad Thirteen for almost a year now, but this was the first time the Grand Elder had summoned him.

Chapter 23 – Receiving the Order

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 23, Receiving the Order

“Has a mission finally come?” Linley turned to look at Arhaus, saying apologetically, “Arhaus, I need to go speak with the Grand Elder.”

Arhaus, his face solemn, immediately said, “Linley, the Grand Elder won’t summon you without a reason. For her to be summoning you now, there’s a 90% chance it has to do with having you go do battle against the eight great clans. Linley, you must be careful. The eight great clans truly are formidable.”

They had been able to force the Four Divine Beasts clan into a situation like this. If it hadn’t been for the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, the Four Divine Beasts clan might even have been eradicated. How could the eight great clans not be powerful?

“I will be careful.”

Linley laughed, then immediately turned and moved at high speed towards the Azure Dragon Palace of the Grand Elder. The blood-robed warrior immediately followed as well.

Arhaus watched as Linley left, then softly said, “Brother Linley, you have to make it back alive!”

Every single clan of the Four Divine Beasts clans and the eight great clans could be ranked amongst the top twenty clans of the entire Infernal Realm. So many ancient clans had moved here from other planes, gathering here to engage in a wild battle.

This sort of large-scale battle between supreme clans was something which the Four Higher Planes might not see even once in countless years.

Experts against experts!

In this sort of war, the true battles were primarily carried out by Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends. Battles at this level…generally speaking, how many experts on this level could a single clan have? After all, in the Infernal Realm, any clan that had a single Seven Star Fiend would be considered a formidable clan.

However, in the battles between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans…one Seven Star Fiend after another was killed, while Six Star Fiends were killed in batches!

This sort of vicious battle between supreme clans had stunned the countless clans of the Infernal Realm. They could do nothing but watch! Even a clan as powerful as the Bagshaw clan wouldn't dare to get involved. After all, the war was simply too brutal.

As for someone as powerful as Linley, in this sort of large-scale war with no retreat, he would be one of the Seven Star Fiends that would engage in blood-soaked battle for the Azure Dragon clan.

The Azure Dragon Palace. The fifth floor's main hall.

A long black robe. Loose azure hair. A silver mask. This was the Grand Elder of the Azure Dragon clan! The Grand Elder's body seemed quite tall and slender. She sat there quietly, not moving at all. There was no way to tell what she was thinking.

A long time later…

"It's time to let him gain some experience." The Grand Elder let out a slow sigh.

Suddenly, the Grand Elder turned her head to look at the door. Hearing footsteps ring out, she then saw Linley stride in. Upon seeing the Grand Elder, Linley immediately saluted respectfully. "Linley greets the Grand Elder."

“Linley. Sit!” The Grand Elder said calmly.

Linley immediately saluted, then sat down.

“Linley, you have been the captain of Squad Thirteen for more than a year now, right?” The Grand Elder said.

“Yes, Grand Elder.” Linley replied.

The Grand Elder’s voice turned gentle. “Do you know that after you defeated Emanuel and were promoted to the rank of Elder by the Patriarch, the Patriarch and I have been in earnest discussions regarding you.”

Linley was stunned.

At this moment, the voice of the Grand Elder was very friendly. This couldn’t help but cause Linley to feel puzzled. The Grand Elder was usually always quite cold and emotionless; why was she like this today? “Can it also be because of the Coiling Dragon ring?” Linley said to himself.

The Coiling Dragon ring was the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact of the Sovereign ‘Azure Dragon’.

“Originally, the Patriarch wanted to let you continue to train. After all, given your current accomplishments, if you reach the Highgod level, you will definitely become yet another trump card our clan has!” The Grand Elder sighed. “Currently, you are only a Seven Star Fiend. You can’t be considered a trump card yet.”

“Trump card?” Linley looked at the Grand Elder.

If he were to train to the Highgod level, first of all, his soul would undergo a qualitative change. Not only would his soul defense strengthen yet again, even his ‘Blackstone Space’ and his ‘Dragon Roar’ would rise dramatically in power.

“When we say ‘trump cards’, we refer to experts who have surpassed ordinary Seven Star Fiends, and are comparable to the Asuras of the Infernal Realm or the Commanders of Purgatory.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley nodded.

The Infernal Asuras and the Purgatory Commanders were indeed far mightier than most Seven Star Fiends.

For example, ‘Reisgem’. Linley had just learned the ‘Blackstone Space’ from him, and had consequently become so powerful. But if Reisgem himself had used the technique? Also, the Purgatory Commander who was behind the Bagshaw clan, ‘Mosi’. He was able to easily defeat ‘Lomio’, whose power had already approached the Asura level. The Infernal Realm’s Asuras, the Commanders of Purgatory…each and every one of them was a terrifyingly powerful opponent.

They were all very close to being at the very peak of possible power for Highgods.

“In our Azure Dragon clan, only three people, throughout all these countless years, have been considered ‘trump cards’.” The Grand Elder said. “Aside from myself and the Patriarch, the only other one is that ‘Genius Elder’, Blue [Bu’lu].”

“Elder Blue?” Linley knew this person as well.

He himself had been publicly acknowledged by the many Elders as having the fourth most powerful body in the Azure Dragon clan. The first and the second most powerful bodies naturally belonged to the Patriarch and the Grand Elder. As for the third, that was their ‘Genius Elder’, Blue. Blue’s might was utterly unquestionable.

“A true trump card cannot have any weaknesses, be it in material defense or spiritual defense! On this foundation of having no weaknesses, one then needs to have an ultimate technique that can allow one to dominate the Infernal Realm. This is what a trump card is!”

The Grand Elder shook her head. “You are currently just a God. Although by relying on the Azure Dragon ring, you are able to make up for the difference in soul strength, I imagine that the Azure Dragon ring should be a damaged one, and so you still have a flaw.”

Linley nodded.

“Thus, your weakness is your soul defense. After all, in terms of quality, your soul strength is just at the God level.” The Grand Elder shook her head as she spoke. “Only once you become a Highgod can you be considered as flawless.”

“When the Patriarch saw you!” The Grand Elder’s voice contained a hint of joy. “He knew that our clan would in the future have our fourth trump card!”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Naturally, he felt happy upon being hearing praise. Only, Linley also knew that he would only ‘in the future’ become the fourth trump card.

The Grand Elder glanced at Linley, then sighed softly. “Unfortunately, you aren’t a Highgod.”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. He said to himself, “Grand Elder, do you know that if it hadn’t been for your grandson Emanuel, I would only have gone out to do battle after training to the Highgod level.” In addition, it had been Forhan who had used verbal traps to force him to go to Bloodbath Gorge.

Linley had no choices.

“Linley, how is your soul defense?” The Grand Elder asked.

“Even if I encounter Seven Star Fiends skilled in soul attacks, I would dare do battle against them.” Linley said very proudly, but then he said with

resignation, “But of course, if I were to encounter a super-expert who is extremely skilled in soul attacks, then I won’t be able to fight.”

For example, the Purgatory Commander ‘Mosi’.

This person was able to control the souls of even Seven Star Fiends. Soul attacks as powerful as his definitely weren’t manageable for the likes of Linley.

“If that’s the case…that’s good enough.”

The Grand Elder’s voice contained a hint of exuberance. “In order to make things safer, you can go ambush the forces of the Barbary clan. Actually, only against their forces will you have an above 90% chance of survival.”

Above 90% chance of survival? And only against the Barbary clan?

Linley couldn’t help but feel speechless.

His body was tough, and his soul wasn’t weak either. There shouldn’t be many capable of killing him.

“Linley!”

The Grand Elder’s forehead furrowed, and she shouted, “You must be careful, careful! You can’t be the slightest bit negligent or lax. Every single Seven Star Fiend which engages in battle in this war between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans can be considered one of the top experts of the entire Infernal Realm! We have our trump cards, but the eight great clans have their own as well!”

“The Patriarch and I are both confident in our ability to easily kill you.” The Grand Elder said coldly. “The eight great clans also have supreme experts who are comparable to us in power!”

Linley’s heart trembled.

This was a rude awakening! Ever since his Ancestral Baptism, he did seem to have been a bit excessively over-confident.

He forgot the old saying; no matter how tall a mountain is, there is always a taller one somewhere!

Who were his foes?

They were supreme clans who had come in pursuit from other planes, and there were eight of them in total! Behind the Bagshaw clan was the Purgatory Commander, 'Mosi'. The Azure Dragon clan also had the Patriarch, the Grand Elder, and other such supreme experts.

Could it be the eight great clans didn't?

How powerful did their foes have to be, to be able to force the Four Divine Beasts clan to the point of needing the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture to intervene?!

"Your potential is tremendous. Thus, I don't dare send you to carry out the most dangerous tasks. In the eight great clans, only the 'Barbary' clan that comes from the Divine Water Plane is unspecialized in soul attacks." The Grand Elder said. "The others, such as the Boleyn clan from the Celestial Realm, or the Chanel clan of the Divine Fire Plane, or the Ashcroft clan of the Netherworld…many of the experts of these clans are extremely proficient in soul attacks."

Linley's forehead began to be matted with sweat.

Most of the experts of the Boleyn clan trained in the 'Edicts of Fate'. When Linley had just arrived in Indigo Prefecture, he had personally watched those experts of the Boleyn clan easily kill a group of Highgods.

"Can't be overconfident. Can't be overconfident. The enemies are extremely strong, this time." Linley reminded himself.

Against ordinary clans or the ordinary experts of the Infernal Realm, he was

indeed strong enough to be arrogant and proud.

A Seven Star Fiend? Yes, he was quite powerful.

But in this war between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, this bit of power he had was only enough for him to participate! There were many who were more powerful than he was!

“The Barbary clan stems from the Divine Water Plane, and thus specializes in the Elemental Laws of Water. The Elemental Laws of Water are not very suited for soul attacks, but their soul defenses and physical defenses are all exceedingly powerful.” The Grand Elder said. “But as I see it, you have an advantage over them.”

Linley nodded.

As long as the opponents didn’t specialize in soul attacks, he still had some degree of confidence.

“But you cannot be too overconfident. For example, our Azure Dragon clan also produced someone like you, who specializes in the Laws of the Earth. It is possible that perhaps this Barbary clan has also produced an expert who specializes in soul attacks.” The Grand Elder warned yet again.

“Understood.” How could Linley dare to continue to be overconfident?

With a flip of her hand, the Grand Elder retrieved a large map, and began to point out directions on the map…

As the Grand Elder continued to explain, Linley completely understood what this mission was about.

“Linley, leave behind a divine clone here at Bloodbath Gorge, just in case.” The Grand Elder said.

“Right.” Linley nodded. “Then Grand Elder, I’ll go summon my forces.”

“Go.” The Grand Elder nodded.

Linley directly flew out from the fifth floor’s window, leaving the Azure Dragon Palace and heading to the residences of Squad Thirteen. The Grand Elder watched as Linley flew away, and then she said softly, “The clan doesn’t have enough time. We have to let Linley go participate in battle. Perhaps in the middle of the war, he will make breakthroughs faster.”

…….

“All members of Squad Thirteen, assemble. We have a mission.” Linley flew to a location directly above the residences of Squad Thirteen, then shouted.

Immediately, one figure after another shot out. Instantly, all ten of them were assembled. Those people who saw from afar that Squad Thirteen was assembling all silently prayed for them. Every single time a squad was sent out for a mission, they were dancing between life and death.

Currently, Squad Thirteen was fully manned, but after this mission was concluded, who knew how many would remain?

“Captain, we have a mission?” That jade-haired woman said in surprise.

“Right. Make your preparations. We’re about to head out immediately.” Linley said. At the same time, another ‘Linley’ flew out from his body, entering the captain’s residence. It looked like just a single divine clone, but in reality, this divine clone had two other divine clones within it.

Linley was only taking a single divine clone on the mission.

“We’re about to start again.” The ten squad members all had solemn looks on their faces, and most of them also made their divine clones fly out from their bodies and return to their residences.

Linley looked at these ten, then said calmly, “Remember. On this assignment, you must completely obey my orders. I hope that just like how

there were eleven of us when we set off, when we return, we will still number eleven."

"Yes, Captain." The ten replied in unison.

"Move out!"

Linley immediately took to the skies, flying directly south. The ten Six Star Fiends followed tightly behind him. The first mission for Squad Thirteen after Linley had become a captain was finally beginning!

Chapter 24 – Give Me a Ride

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 24, Give Me a Ride

Linley was dressed in a sky-blue robe. As he moved through the skies, the long robe fluttered, ruffled by the wind. Behind him, those ten Six Star Fiends were also dressed in uniforms of various colors. While engaging in battle outside, if they were all dressed in the same uniform, it would be too obvious and would result in them being easily discovered by the enemy.

“Everyone, be careful. Our target this time is a squad of the Barbary clan. No matter what, don’t let them discover us. Just fly close to the ground.” Linley instructed, while at the same time, he himself flew downwards, moving close to the surface of the ground. The ten squadmates followed suit.

“Don’t worry, Captain. We won’t go out of our way to engage in battle. They won’t be able to find out.” Melina laughed.

Go out of their way to engage in battle?

Linley couldn’t help but think back to some information the Grand Elder had given him before battle had begun. Both the Four Divine Beasts clan as well as the eight great clans used ambushes, and also laid in wait for the enemy to draw near.

If, for example, the Four Divine Beasts clan didn’t want to fight, they would simply hide in the Skyrite Mountains, and there would be nothing the eight great clans could do about it.

If the eight great clans remained in their own territory and didn’t come out, the Four Divine Beasts clan wouldn’t go to them either.

However…

The eight great clans hated the Four Divine Beasts clan to the core, and the reverse was true as well! Thus, they intentionally challenged each other to battle, time and time again! Neither side would hide. Both sides knew that this was a war of attrition, but the eight great clans were willing to engage in this sort of war, while the Four Divine Beasts clan was too proud and unwilling to submit.

“The eight great clans is quite interesting. Each time, they’ll take predefined routes. This is just a naked challenge.” Linley said to himself.

Of the eight great clans, four of them were located at the eastern edges of Indigo Prefecture, while four were at the western edges of Indigo Prefecture. They were all very unified. They were worried that if they split up, the Four Divine Beasts clan would break them one by one.

But by dividing up in this manner, there was no way the Four Divine Beasts clan would be able to do so.

In addition…

The eight great clans on each side of Indigo Prefecture would often send squads of experts on round trip patrols. Each trip, they would take one of two predefined routes. Any members of the Four Divine Beasts clan they met on the way would be killed!

Sometimes, they would even engage in ambushes at the outer perimeter of the Skyrite Mountains.

“How could my Four Divine Beasts clan possibly swallow this sort of provocation? They are so arrogant as to take predetermined routes. If we just accept this, the Four Divine Beasts clan will become a laughingstock.” Linley understood that in their battles, the enemies were the proactive challengers. After all, their experts were simply too numerous.

After flying for roughly three days, Linley’s group reached their destination, an intelligence outpost located near the predetermined route. Linley glanced at a distant sand dune, which wasn’t very remarkable in this

desolate, barren area.

“You can come out.” Linley said calmly.

This intelligence outpost had been provided by the Grand Elder.

The sand dune twisted, and then a figure emerged from within it. It was a very slender, yellow-robed youth. The yellow-robed youth, momentarily puzzled, glanced at Linley, who with a laugh, extended his hand, revealing the Elder’s medallion within.

“Greetings, Elder.” The youth said hurriedly.

“When will the forces of the Barbary clan arrive?” Linley asked.

This intelligence outpost relied on using some special methods, as well as two divine clones in separate locations, to be able to quickly provide intelligence reports. This allowed intelligence reports to be transmitted very quickly. Even over a distance of a hundred million kilometers, the receiver would have the information as soon as the sender sent it.

“To be precise, it is presumed forces of the Barbary clan.” The intelligence agent said. “The presumed forces of the Barbary clan are still millions of kilometers away. Based on their advancing speed, in one or two days, they will arrive here.”

Linley nodded.

“You said, presumed? Can it be that you are not yet completely certain that it is the forces of the Barbary clan?” Linley asked, rather concerned.

“There’s no way to be absolutely certain. That squad, according to our intelligence reports, is primarily made up of water-type experts, but there are two who are not. We are only able to provisionally identify them as members of the Barbary clan, but it is also possible that this is a joint squad formed from two clans.” The youth said.

Linley frowned.

A mixed squad? This was exceedingly rare.

This was because the Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan generally carried a drop of Sovereign's Might on them. Once they no longer cared about life and death and activated that drop of Sovereign's Might and went all out, even a Seven Star Fiend opponent would be doomed.

Thus, the enemy preferred to fight one-on-one. Only in a special circumstance, for example when the target was a Patriarch or Grand Elder level figure, would they send out a joint squad.

"You can stand down for now." Linley instructed.

"The rest of you, follow me." Linley flew into the air, and the ten Six Star Fiends followed.

The intelligence agent raised his head, watching them fly away. In his heart, he murmured, "Clansmen, you must win." As an intelligence agent, he too walked that fine line between life and death. If he were to be discovered by the enemies, the enemies wouldn't hesitate at all to kill him.

In addition, most of these intelligence agents were very weak.

Their only hope was that experts like Linley would avenge them if they were killed!

A few thousand kilometers away from the intelligence outpost, Linley's group came to a halt, hiding themselves within a mountain forest. Everyone had very grave expressions on their faces. They all knew that once the battle started, they would very possibly die.

"Captain. When the enemies come, what is our plan?" The big fellow, 'Shanda', asked. The other squadmates looked at Linley as well.

"The first target is the enemy's Seven Star Fiend." Linley laughed calmly.

“Ambushing is pointless. Given their divine sense, they’ll be able to locate us. You just need to wait here. Once the enemies draw near, you can fly into my Blackstone Space and begin battle against them.”

“Us, fly in?” Immediately, some squadmates grasped Linley’s meaning. “Captain, you aren’t going to attack alongside us?”

If they were to remain together, Linley would naturally include them within the Blackstone Space, and thus there was no need for them to ‘fly in’.

“Right. I’ll go ambush them.” Linley laughed.

“What?” The ten people were shocked.

“Captain, you can’t risk yourself like that. It’s better if we stay together. How can you attack by yourself? It is too risky. Even if the ten of us die, you can’t die, Captain.” A skinny man said hurriedly.

Seven Star Fiends were extremely precious to the clan. They represented a mighty pillar supporting the clan.

“Don’t worry. By attacking by myself, I have more than 90% confidence of success.” Linley laughed.

“Huh?” The ten squadmates were stunned.

“As I will be hiding my aura, they’ll only take me to be a God. They won’t be on guard against me.” Linley said. Indigo Prefecture was like other places; there were many tribes to be seen everywhere.

Gods were very common in the Infernal Realm.

Linley’s group, while flying over, had encountered quite a few Gods and Demigods. Naturally, they didn’t pay them any mind.

“They won’t care about me, but when I draw near to them, I’ll launch a sudden attack against them. This will definitely have an extraordinarily

good effect.” Linley said confidently.

“Captain.” That Melina said worriedly. “Based on what we can see, you are indeed just a God. Your aura-hiding abilities are indeed formidable. But the enemies are Seven Star Fiends as well. There might be one of them who is capable of detecting your true power, that you are a Highgod.”

The fact that Linley really was just a God was something which only a very, very small number of people in the entire Azure Dragon clan knew about.

For example, the Patriarch and the Grand Elder had discovered this on their own. As for others, even Emanuel believed Linley to be a Highgod who had previously been hiding his power.

“Discover my true power? Discover that I’m a Highgod?” Linley laughed.

He himself really was a God. Why would he need to hide his aura?

“Don’t worry. The enemy won’t find out.” Linley said with supreme confidence.

Immediately, another squad member said worriedly, “Captain, you can’t risk yourself like this. We should join forces and attack together. If we work together, we can still…”

“Enough.” Linley frowned. “I’ve made up my mind. Stop talking.”

The ten squadmates looked at each other, but they had no choice but to accept resignedly. Linley was the captain. At a time like this, they had to obey the orders of their captain. This was a basic requirement.

“You stay here. I’ll be ten kilometers away.” Linley instructed. “At such a short distance, once the battle starteds, you’ll notice it right away. You can immediately hurry to my location. In addition, their divine sense won’t be able to locate you.”

Generally speaking, the divine sense of a Highgod only extended to a

thousand meters or so.

Even a Seven Star Fiend was limited to just a few thousand meters. But normally, would they extend their divine sense to the maximum range? Even in a battle squad, the Seven Star Fiend leader would generally just extend his divine sense to a thousand meters, to guarantee a degree of safety.

“Remember. Once battle begins, immediately come. But before it begins, you are not to draw near.” Linley snapped.

The ten were all worried for Linley.

“Do you understand?” Linley roared.

“Yes, Captain.” The ten affirmed.

Linley then flew towards a section of the road in front of them. “Captain, be careful.” A voice rang out from behind. Linley couldn’t help but chuckle. He immediately flew over ten kilometers, where there was a small, squad mountain. Linley dug a cave into the side of the tunnel, then entered it.

Within the cave, he was able to stare at the skies outside through the cave entrance.

“I’ll just pretend to be an ordinary God.” Linley laughed.

Linley was completely confident in this ambush. It would be a strange thing if they were able to see through it. After all, he really was a God.

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, a day had gone by.

“Swoosh!”

Linley discovered a human figure flying over at high speed. It was that intelligence agent. In the short span of a day, the intelligence agent had already made multiple reports regarding the location of the enemy.

“Elder, the enemies are about to arrive. They are currently less than ten thousand kilometers from here.” The youth said hurriedly. “Elder, remember clearly that the enemies are riding a metallic lifeform shaped into a jade-green serpent.”

“Less than ten thousand kilometers?” Linley was startled into full alert.

A metallic lifeform of a squad of the eight great clans advanced fairly quickly, capable of travelling four or five million kilometers in a day. Less than ten thousand kilometers would be traversed in a short period of time.

“Hurry up and inform the others.” Linley immediately instructed.

“Yes, Elder.” The intelligence agent, knowing that battle was coming, immediately flew away.

Linley immediately flew out of his cave. Walking in the mountain forests by one’s self was a fairly dangerous thing in the Infernal Realm, because other Deities would often be encountered. But Linley wanted this to happen… because this made him all the more unremarkable in the Infernal Realm.

An enormous green serpent flew through the air. It was the metallic lifeform.

“Elder, do you think the Four Divine Beasts clan will dare ambush us this time?” The metallic lifeform had more than ten people.

“Ambush us?”

The Elder was a bald man, very tall and powerful, at least three meters in height. The other squad members were all very tall, the shortest being 2.5 meters. This was caused by the special lineage of the Barbary clan. The eyes of the Elder gleamed with green light, and he laughed, “This time, we have Mr. Mosley [Mau’si’li] accompanying us. I am specialized in material attacks, while he is specialized in soul attacks. No matter who comes, there is no way they will escape with their life.”

“Cole [Ke’luo], I trust that your Barbary clan will be able to dispose of anyone without needing me to interfere.” The speaker was a balding old man who was dressed in a plain gray robe. His ear had two little serpents coiled through them.

……

“Kid, you, a mere God, dare to roam about in the Infernal Realm? Hurry up, hand over your interspatial ring.” In front of Linley, more than ten bandits had appeared. There were simply too many bandits in the Infernal Realm. Even though Linley had worked hard to avoid them, in the end, he had still run into some.

“Interspatial ring?” Linley pretended to be terrified. “Okay, okay, I’ll give it to you.”

“Haha, not bad.” Those bandits, seeing how obedient Linley was, were very happy. One of them laughed, “We are in a benevolent mood and will spare your life. However, you have to join us. If you do not…”

“I’ll join.” Linley hurriedly nodded.

Right at this moment, in the distant skies, an enormous green serpent was flying over at high speed. Linley was overjoyed. This was the metallic lifeform of the enemy.

“Eh…why haven’t you handed the interspatial ring over yet?” A bandit shouted.

“Swoosh!” Linley suddenly charged into the skies.

The bandits were astonished, but then, enraged, they chased into the skies as well.

The metallic lifeform flew past, and as Linley rose into the heavens, he just so happened to draw near as well. The Six Star Fiends and Seven Star

Fiends within couldn’t help but be rather unhappy.

“Motherf*cker, a group of bandits are causing trouble. They actually charged all the way over to us.”

They had already discovered that the people below them consisted of Gods. They weren’t worried at all.

“Milords, please, save me. Help give me a ride. These people want to kill me.” Linley immediately flew to the side of that metallic lifeform, his face filled with terror and panic.

“F*ck off!” A Six Star Fiend immediately shouted.

Chapter 25 – Blood Splattering the Skies

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 25, Blood Splattering the Skies

The experts within the metallic lifeform were all frowning. They felt annoyed at a God coming and begging them for help. How could they be bothered to pay attention to minor figures like this?

“Save me!” Linley said frantically, but his gaze pierced through the metallic lifeform, seeing the people within clearly.

“If you stay here, we’ll kill you.” One of the Six Star Fiends shouted angrily.

“Haha, punk, you won’t be able to escape.” The group of bandits flew over as well. Only, they didn’t dare to disturb the metallic lifeform, for fear that the experts within would vent their anger on them.

“Let’s go. Stop paying attention to them.” The bald captain said calmly.

“BANG!” Suddenly, the metallic lifeform blew apart violently! All of the experts within the metallic lifeform were immediately shocked into wakefulness, while at the same time an earthen yellow light spread out, encapsulating a spherical region with a diameter of five hundred meters… Blackstone Space!

A powerful gravity that was pulling towards Linley!

“Whoosh, whoooosh.” The shattered metal scraps of the metallic lifeform flew out wildly towards Linley as well. During the explosion, everything was in a state of chaos, and none of the experts within the metallic lifeform had any idea what was going on.

In particular, that bald captain. He saw, to his amazement, that a clawed hand covered with draconic scales had appeared in front of his eyes!

“Not good, the Azure Dragon clan!” The bald captain only had enough time to be shocked and know what was about to happen.

“Slash!”

Linley’s sharp claws moved as fast as lightning, piercing directly into the bald captain’s head. “Bang!” The skull exploded, sending fresh blood flying everywhere and colliding with the shattered remnants of the metallic lifeform. A single Highgod spark fell into Linley’s palm.

In an instant, a Seven Star Fiend had died!

This Seven Star Fiend really had died an unfair death. When Linley had flown next to the metallic lifeform’s window, the distance between him and the captain was less than five or six meters. Five or six meters, to experts on Linley’s level…

In but an instant, like the striking of a flint, he had killed the opponent!

The only thing the Seven Star Fiend had done wrong was that he had been not been on guard at all. He didn’t suspect that the God who had been begging for help was actually a Seven Star Fiend!

“One.” Linley’s dark golden eyes swept the people in front of him. Previously, he had seen everyone within the metallic lifeform, but was only able to tell that the bald person was apparently their leader. He couldn’t tell what everyone else’s position was.

Thus, Linley’s first target had been that man.

“Whoooooosh.”

Within the powerful gravitational field of the Blackstone Space, the enemy experts frantically tried to resist the gravity, while at the same time, they discovered to their amazement that their captain had already been killed in an instant.

“Captain!” Quite a few of the Fiends called out in alarm.

“So he was their captain.” Linley was overjoyed. His guess had been correct. By relying on a sneak attack, he had killed a Seven Star Fiend. Thus, he had accomplished more than half of this mission.

Only now did those Fiends understand!

“So he is an expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” They now noticed Linley’s Dragonformed body.

“Mr. Mosley.” They hurriedly sent to the other Seven Star Fiend.

Mosley was from the Ashcroft clan, and was specialized in soul attacks. He was the other Seven Star Fiend in this squad. As the captain, ‘Cole’, had already died, he naturally became the commander of these people.

“His ability to hide his aura was actually at such an amazing level.” Mosley was amazed as well. “Not even I was able to notice that he was actually a supreme expert.”

Mosley had been trapped into the same erroneous line of thinking. As he wasn’t able to sense Linley’s Highgod aura, he thus took Linley for someone whose ability to hide his aura was tremendously strong, and therefore as an expert who specialized in soul attacks. “Given his ability to hide his aura, he must be an expert who specializes in soul attacks.”

“Use material attacks to kill him.” Mosley hurriedly ordered those Six Star Fiends.

“Yes!”

The Six Star Fiends immediately acknowledged.

……..

“Boom!” The terrifying energy wave spread out, and the ten Six Star Fiends located ten kilometers away from Linley instantly were shocked into wakefulness. Not long ago, they had just receive the report from the intelligence agent, and so they have been on high alert this entire time.

“Battle!” Their ten faces all changed.

“Captain.” Melina was frantic.

“Quick, attack!” Shanda let out a low growl, and was the first to fly out, with the other nine Six Star Fiends immediately charging out at high speed as well.

Although they were more than ten kilometers away, to Six Star Fiends, that sort of distance could be traversed in a twinkling.

“Captain, you have to be able to hold.”

The ten Six Star Fiends silently prayed as they moved. To traverse ten kilometers, Six Star Fiends only needed a second. However, a second, in a battle between supreme experts, was enough for many attacks to be exchanged.

When Six Star Fiends or Seven Star Fiends did battle, every thousandth or ten-thousandth of a second, a person could die.

“Material attacks!”

All of the Six Star Fiends, after receiving the order, trusted in Mosley’s judgment. This was because they all knew that in the Four Divine Beasts clan, the clan with the most powerful physical defense was the Black Tortoise clan, while the Azure Dragon clan’s physical defense wasn’t too powerful; only those three famous figures amongst them had truly powerful bodies.

But Linley…

Clearly wasn't one of those three, nor was he on the list of high-danger individuals that their intelligence reports had provided him. His body shouldn't be too tough.

Not hesitating at all, the Six Star Fiends all forcibly attempted to resist that gravitational pull while simultaneously attempting to launch their most powerful material attacks. Shattered metallic scraps flew out at high speed from within that Blackstone Space, and a white fog was beginning to spread out.

It was like a phantom, a bizarre illusion…

"Swoosh!" A completely translucent icy awl tore through the air, shooting towards Linley.

"Haaargh!" His clothes exploding, a muscular expert of the Barbary clan brandished a giant icesword, the edge of the icesword gleaming with light. Clutching that giant icesword, he chopped down it with from mid-air in a dominating manner against Linley.

"Crackle!"

One slender icy needle after another shot out, translucent and thin, the size and shape of embroidery needles. If one wasn't paying special attention to them, one wouldn't even be able to see them clearly.

Seeing this response from the enemies, the corner of Linley's lips curved upwards.

"The second one!" Linley flew directly towards the man who was chopping down at him with that icesword, completely ignoring the icy needles shooting at him from behind. With a series of 'crunch' 'crunch' sounds, the icy needles struck Linley's draconic scales, then immediately disintegrated, leaving behind just some white residue on the scales.

"Not good." The Six Star Fiends who were surrounding and attacking Linley couldn't help but have their faces change in worry.

In particular, that man who was chopping downwards with his icesword. His heart trembled.

“You won’t be able to flee.” A voice rang out in his mind. The Six Star Fiend realized that a pair of dark golden eyes was staring at him. He could sense that astonishing gravitational pull, and knew that he wouldn’t be able to escape. He let out a bellow. “Die!”

The muscular man’s face was savage, and as he bellowed, he chopped downwards with full force with his blade.

Where the icesword passed, voids in space appeared. Clearly, those were made from torn rips in space.

“Whoosh!” A blur suddenly came chopping over. He only sensed that the air seemed to tremble, then explode. A draconic tail lashed viciously against his icesword, and the terrifying power of that draconic tail was actually completely focused on the sword.

The muscular man only felt his arms go numb, and the icesword was sent flying away. Immediately afterwards, tears in the palm of his hand appeared, created by the shock of the impact, and blood flowed out.

“You can follow your captain now.” The voice rang out in his mind.

“No!” The muscular man roared angrily, his entire body instantly emitting streams of water that completely surrounded him.

“Whoosh!”

After whipping the icesword aside, Linley’s draconic tail whistled through the air as it shot backwards, slashing directly against the muscular man’s head. It must be said that Linley’s body was simply too powerful, and that his strength was simply too terrifying.

“Bang!” A powerful tremor. The muscular man’s head immediately

exploded, and a divine spark fell out.

Yet another Six Star Fiend had died!

That group of bandits just stared, slack-jawed, at this scene. Linley's Blackstone Space was made in a way which specially focused his divine earth power against his opponents, and thus didn't have much of an impact on these bandits.

After all, if he drew the bandits over, they'd just get in his way.

The bandits all immediately flew out of the Blackstone Space's range, but the battle that was going on above them caused them to be utterly dazed.

The speed of this battle was too fast!

The power was too terrifying!

"Those are spatial tears. Spatial tears." One of the bandits, a God, called out numbly like an idiot. Only the material attacks of someone who was at least at the Six Star Fiend level of power was capable of creating spatial tears. These bandits normally would never have a chance to see such a thing.

To the likes of them, creating spatial tears in the Infernal Realm was something out of legends.

"When those icy needles that created spatial tears hit that God, they didn't do anything!" The bandits stared dumbly.

For a body to be able to withstand an attack that could create spatial tears was…too terrifying.

"He…he…" The bandits stared disbelievingly at the Dragonformed Linley.

"That God, we were actually…"

"What 'God'? He's an expert. A Six Star Fiend. No, a Seven Star Fiend! A

true, supreme expert. He was just hiding his power just now." The leader of the bandits immediately shouted. "Quick, let's run farther away and watch from a distance. Let's not get hit by any shockwaves. In battles like this, the slightest shockwaves can take our lives with ease."

"Right, right."

The bandits were completely stunned, and all of them hurriedly ran farther into the distance.

From Linley's killing of the captain to the execution of the Six Star Fiend, barely any time had actually passed, perhaps just as long as it took for the sparks of a flint to emerge when struck. But that instant had caused the ten-plus enemies to be completely stunned.

"Lord Mosley, his body is very powerful." The Six Star Fiends hurriedly sent through divine sense.

"We used our full force against him in material attacks, but weren't able to hurt him at all."

Just now, Linley had only dodged slightly. Even if a few attacks landed on him, he wasn't too concerned. He didn't even fear the material attacks of Seven Star Fiends. How could he fear the material attacks of Six Star Fiends?

"He's a soul expert, and his material defense is so powerful as well." Mosley had a bad feeling, but then he made his decision. "Since material attacks are useless, I'll have to test a soul attack. I want to see if he'll be able to endure my soul attack."

Mosley had no other options.

"Soul attacks, en masse!" Mosley gave the order.

Mosley knew that no matter how tough one's soul was, if one was hit by a large number of soul attacks from many experts, one would still be doomed.

This was because when a true expert was dealing with group attacks, the way to successfully deal with them wasn't to take them all head on, it was to make sure that each time, only a few attacks would actually land.

"The third!" Linley instantly stared at Mosley.

Based on quick reaction from the other side, Linley became certain that this devilish man with serpents hanging from his ears should be a tough opponent.

"Swoosh!" Linley immediately flew over.

Mosley was resisting the gravitational pull; there was no way he could escape Linley's attack. Mosley didn't try to escape either; his right palm stretched out, and his eyes shot out with a hazy black light as his lips began to move as he mumbled some strange words.

"Captain!" Right at this moment, Melina and the others flew over at high speed.

Linley felt a surge of jubilation in his heart. His right hand flipped out, and a devilish violet light flashed. Bloodviolet, carrying Linley's force, chopped directly towards Mosley.

His powerful physical strength, when matched with the Profound Truths of Velocity, caused Bloodviolet's speed to reach an extreme.

Where the sword passed by, space cracked apart.

Mosley's right palm struck out towards Linley, and instantly, a pitch-black, semi-translucent hand seal shot out towards Linley. Linley's face changed, and at just this moment, the other Six Star Fiends all launched their own soul attacks as well.

"Haaargh." Linley hurriedly changed the direction of his Gravitational Space.

He made gravity pull downwards!

Caught by surprise, those Six Star Fiends couldn't help but drop, and their soul attacks were impacted as well.

"Crunch." The translucent hand seal covered by that black light shot directly into Linley's body. There was no way to block it at all, and Linley himself hurriedly pulled away from the enemy while whole-heartedly focusing on defending against this soul attack.

The black hand burrowed its way into Linley's body, then dug towards Linley's mind.

"Not good." Linley's face changed dramatically.

He immediately flew into the sky, striving to put some distance between him and his opponents, for fear that another attack would come.

"BANG!" When that black hand seal entered his mind, it struck directly against that 'translucent membrane'. It trembled slightly, as though it was about to disperse, but then, strangely enough, the energy of the black hand seal actually spread out, covering Linley's entire consciousness, instantly discovering the weak spot.

Amazingly enough, the dispersed energy then reformed, actually transforming into a needle, piercing directly towards the flaw in the membrane…

Chapter 26 – Spiritual Chaos

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 26, Spiritual Chaos

The ‘bandage’ over the flaw in the membrane managed to resist for only a moment before being punctured straight through by that black needle. The black needle entered the most important part of Linley’s mind…the area above his sea of consciousness.

“Rumble…”

The entire sea of consciousness began to swirl, and countless rays of spiritual energy danced about, merged together with that ‘azure light’ and swept towards that black needle, which had no place to hide.

“Crackle…” That spiritual energy which glowed with azure light surrounded the black needle and stalemated it, with the two slowly grinding each other down.

Mosley and the other fourteen Six Star Fiends raised their heads, staring at Linley.

“Lord Mosley, what should we do?” They looked at Mosley.

“Keep attacking. His soul defense isn’t exceptionally strong. Otherwise, he wouldn’t need to spend so much time to resist my attack.” Mosley immediately ordered. “Remember. Use soul attacks against him.”

“Yes!”

The experts immediately rushed into the sky.

Linley’s ashen face returned to its normal appearance. At this moment, Melina, Shanda, and the other ten Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan had gathered here as well.

“Captain, are you alright?” Melina hurriedly asked.

“I’m fine.” Linley shook his head, but in his heart, he still felt a surge of fear. “Luckily, I’ve undergone the Ancestral Baptism, and the primal energy of the Azure Dragon clan intensified and merged with my soul. In the end, I was able to endure it.” The primal energy of the Azure Dragon clan, that azure light, was very unusual. It was capable of fusing with spiritual energy in order to execute their innate divine ability.

At the same time, it could also be used to protect the soul.

“They are attacking.” A member of the squad suddenly said frantically.

Linley lowered his head to stare at the fifteen people flying towards them at high speed. He immediately ordered through divine sense, “That bald, gray-robed man is a Seven Star Fiend who specializes in soul attacks. In a little bit, Shanda, you and the other five who are specialized in material attacks should go deal with him. As for the other four, accompany me in killing the other Six Star Fiends.”

“Captain, just Shanda and the other five? Are they enough?” Melina said with concern.

“Don’t worry. I still have a card up my sleeve I have yet to play.” Linley looked down at the fifteen people charging from below.

The reason he hadn’t used his ultimate technique was because his forces hadn’t arrived yet. Another reason was that he was afraid that the enemy would panic and immediately flee. This was why he hadn’t used that technique…Spiritual Chaos! Spiritual Chaos was a technique which could only be used with the assistance of the ‘black stone’.

At Miluo Island, Linley had relied on this technique to force a large number of Highgods to enter a dazed state.

Even Seven Star Fiends would be slightly affected. But when experts did

battle, just a slight effect would be enough!

“Eleven of them?” Mosley narrowed his eyes.

“Ignore the others. Kill that leader!” Mosley shouted through divine sense. “When we kill that Seven Star Fiend, we can be considered as having avenged your captain.”

“Kill!”

At this time, nobody was going to retreat. Nobody who dared to join their clan’s war-squads would cower. Mosley led his fourteen Six Star Fiends in an upwards charge, directly into Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’. These fifteen people were clustered together, for fear of being targeted and killed individually.

The fifteen flew together, as though they were one unified body, directly towards Linley.

The ten Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan were next to Linley as well, and Linley gave the order coolly. “Let’s go!” According to their plan, Linley’s group of eleven would also charge downwards. After all, the distance between them was less than a few hundred meters.

They would fight in close combat in just a moment!

“Kill!” Linley’s side seemed to care not one whit for their own lives.

“Kill!” Mosley’s side, as well, seemed to be utterly fearless towards death.

Linley’s eyes suddenly flashed and turned cold.

In his sea of consciousness, his spiritual energy, centered around the ‘black stone’, began to turn, and strange rays of spiritual energy instantly spread out, surrounding the entire Gravitational Space. This ‘Spiritual Chaos’ effect was immediately applied against those fifteen people.

“Whoooosh.”

Mosley’s group of fifteen simultaneously heard a very strange, unique wind sound reverberate in their minds. This sort of wind sound caused their minds to uncontrollably feel dazed for a moment. But that moment of being dazed was also the most critical moment in this battle…

“Slash!” “Slash!” “Slash!”

Just like slicing watermelons, more than half of the Six Star Fiends of the Barbary clan who were affected by the ‘Spiritual Chaos’ were killed. Linley was like a tiger or like a pack of wolves, instantly killing three of the Six Star Fiends.

Shanda and the other five who were specialized in material attacks launched their assaults directly against Mosley.

Mosley just felt his head go slightly dizzy, but his mind was still clear. As a supreme expert who specialized in the soul, this sort of soul effect didn’t impact him too much. But when he saw how many people on his side had been killed, he was instantly enraged.

Mosley let out an explosive howl.

A translucent, fan-shaped ripple burst out from Mosley, spreading out towards those six attackers coming from in front of him. Shanda and the other Six Star Fiends only had enough time to unleash a single fierce material attack before they themselves were hit.

The translucent ripple passed through the bodies of Shanda and the other five. Their bodies trembled, and then three of them collapsed from the skies.

The three had died!

“Shanda!” Melina called out frantically.

“Big Brother!” Another squad member, a female one, howled bitterly as well.

Shanda was one of the three who had died.

“Not good.” Watching this from behind, Linley was deeply shocked. “This person was actually unaffected by my Spiritual Chaos technique.” In Miluo Island, he had battled against Seven Star Fiends before, and that time, his opponent had been affected.

However…

Mosley clearly was highly specialized in the soul, and thus his endurance in taking these attacks was greater as well.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

The material attacks which Shanda’s group of six had launched had transformed into the shapes of sabers, needles, awls, threads…and all of them shot out towards Mosley. Although Mosley’s soul was strong, his material defense was average.

The gravity was too strong. Mosley didn’t have enough time to dodge.

“Aaaaaargh!” Mosley let out an angry roar, a deep, rumbling roar.

Immediately, the illusory image of an enormous long, black, coiling serpent appeared behind Mosley. This black serpent naturally emanated a heart-shaking aura. Its entire body was as black as tar. It only had a single eye, and this eye was vertical, as red as blood.

“Slash!” “Slash!”

The material attacks slashed down on Mosley’s body. His armor shattered, and his body was cut into. Mosley, knowing that he didn’t have enough time to dodge, had focused on allowing the energy attacks to strike non-lethal parts of his body, guaranteeing that his head was undamaged.

This was the problem with material attacks; they weren't like 'soul attacks', which could be aimed at a specific weakness, making it so that there was no real way to protect an 'important part' of the body. Material attacks were generally only effective in close combat.

"Die." Mosley stared at Linley.

That enormous coiling black serpent behind him also stared at Linley with its solitary, blood-red eye. "Not good." Linley hurriedly controlled his 'Blackstone Space', making the direction of the gravity orient downwards, wanting to impact his opponent.

"Rumble…" A translucent ray of light shot out from the center of Mosley's forehead, piercing directly towards Linley.

Innate divine ability: 'Soul Extinguisher'!

"Captain!" The other Six Star Fiends were greatly shocked.

"No time." The attack of this innate ability was simply too fast. He wasn't even able to dodge. Linley couldn't help but just grit his teeth, planning to take it head on.

"Swish!" An arm suddenly appeared in front of Linley, blocking for him just as that translucent ray of light was about to hit him. That translucent ray of light shot directly into the arm. Linley turned to look. Shocked, he said, "Scar [Si'ka'er]!"

Scar, one of the ten Six Star Fiends under Linley's command. Scar normally was a man of few words, but he had never hesitated with regards to Linley's orders. Who would have imagined at this moment, Scar would suddenly sacrifice himself to save Linley?

Scar fell directly the skies. "Kill!" At the same time, the other squad members transformed into rays of light, attacking directly towards Mosley's head.

“Roaaaaaaar!” Mosley once more emitted that furious roar.

But before he was able to launch that soul attack yet again, the sound of the air exploding could be heard, and his head transformed into a pile of mud-like flesh as a divine spark flew out.

Mosley, dead!

The world suddenly turned quiet. In mid-air, Linley and the others remained quiet for quite some time. In this battle, they had killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends and twelve Six Star Fiends, with three Six Star Fiends escaping.

“Three still managed to flee.” Melina said unhappily.

“It’s my fault. I didn’t expect that Mosley would be completely unaffected.” Linley said. Although they had killed the vast majority of the enemy’s Six Star Fiends, when Linley and Mosley had been fighting, those remaining Six Star Fiends had known that there was no hope of victory, and so had immediately fled.

“Scar. Thank you.” Linley turned to look at a Six Star Fiend. It was Scar, who had just saved him. Scar himself had a total of three bodies. During this battle, he had left only one divine clone back in Bloodbath Gorge, keeping another one in his body.

Just now, when Mosley had used his innate divine ability, ‘Soul Extinguisher’, Scar had immediately separated his two clones, allowing his divine clone to stretch his arm out and block that attack.

“Captain, it doesn’t matter too much that I lost a divine clone. Seven Star Fiends are the true pillars of our clan. You can’t die.” Scar said.

“When we came, there were eleven of us. Now, three of us have lost our most powerful divine clones.” Linley looked around, then sighed. The three had been killed by Mosley. “It was my miscalculation.”

If Mosley had been affected by the Spiritual Chaos, then Shanda and the others would have been able to kill him.

“Captain, this is already a major victory.”

“Right, a tremendous win!”

“Scar only lost a weak divine clone. It isn’t a huge loss to him. Our only true losses are those three Six Star Fiends. However, today, we actually killed twelve Six Star Fiends, and even Seven Star Fiends.”

“We killed Seven Star Fiends. Two of them! And Captain, you didn’t die yourself. We didn’t lose much.”

“Using my divine clone to trade for the most powerful body of a Seven Star Fiend? Worth it.”

Hearing the words of his squad members, Linley felt slightly calmer. According to the historical accomplishments of his clan in battle, it was indeed a grand victory for their side to only lose three Six Star Fiends while killing so many enemy experts, especially given that there were two Seven Star Fiends amongst them.

“In our battle against the eight great clans, our normal casualty ratio is close to one-to-one. It is quite rare for us to gain a complete victory like this.” Melina hurriedly said.

“Let’s go back.” Linley took a deep sigh.

This was the first time he had engaged in this brutal clan war, and Linley himself felt that this battle was a very brutal one. But he looked at the other squad members. “None of them seem to care that three of our squad members lost their most powerful divine clones. Clearly, they’ve experienced too much.”

Linley thought back to those red lettered names written on the stone pillar outside Squad Thirteen’s residences.

Those names represented dead squad members.

“The war between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans is nothing more than a war of attrition. Many in our clan have died, but the same is true for theirs.” Linley sighed to himself. At the same time, he flew into the air alongside the other seven squad members.

“Captain, your ambush was truly formidable. You immediately killed one of the Seven Star Fiends.”

“Ambush? It was a one use-strategy. In the future, the enemy won’t give us such a good opportunity.” Linley understand that both Mosley as well as the Seven Star Fiend he had killed at the very start would most likely have divine clones back in their base.

By now, the enemy clan was definitely aware of his ambush.

From today onwards, the enemy squads would definitely be very vigilant against enemy Gods. They wouldn’t be caught off-guard again.

In the distant mountain forests, a group of bandits watched as Linley’s squad flew away. For a long, long moment, they remained speechless and terrified.

“Leader, what was that enormous black serpent just now? It was so terrifying.”

“That was the innate divine ability of a divine beast. I’ve seen a divine beast use an innate divine ability before. However, compared to what we just saw…that great black serpent was thousands of times more terrifying. The aura of it alone made me feel as though I couldn’t breathe.”

The battle just now had utterly terrified these God-level bandits.

“And we actually had dared to try and rob that supreme expert…” The bandits were overcome with endless regret. After having witnessed this

battle, they knew that for Linley, killing them was something that could be accomplished in the blink of an eye.

Most likely, this memory would remain with them for the rest of their lives.

They would never forget that they once tried to waylay a supreme expert.

Linley led his squad of seven, quietly sneaking back towards the Skyrite Mountains. They were very careful on the way back, afraid that the eight great clans might discover them. After flying for a long time, Linley's group finally arrived at the Skyrite Mountains.

They flew directly to the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

"Why are there so many people?" Linley stared in astonishment. There were quite a few people in the air above Bloodbath Gorge, with the leader of the group including the Patriarch, the Grand Elder, and some others. Patriarch Gislason currently had a hint of a smile on his face.

Chapter 27 – Bestowal

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 27, Bestowal

Above Bloodbath Gorge, at the edges of the cliff. A large group of people was standing here, with the leader being the Patriarch and the Grand Elder.

“What are they doing here?” Linley was somewhat puzzled.

Linley immediately flew over, but before he even had the chance to salute, the Patriarch, ‘Gislason’, laughed and said, “Welcome back, Linley!” By the side of the Patriarch was the Grand Elder, dressed in a long black robe and wearing that silver mask.

“Well done, Linley.” The Grand Elder spoke as well.

“Linley, quite impressive. You killed two Seven Star Fiends. Admirable, admirable!” The nearby Elder Garvey laughed loudly as well.

“Elder Linley’s very first act is so impressive.” The golden-haired Elder, ‘Forhan’, laughed brightly as well.

Faced with the praise of the Patriarch and this group of Elders, Linley was rather stupefied. “My clones as well as clones of the other squad members left behind in Bloodbath Gorge haven’t gone to inform the Patriarch or the Grand Elder of this matter yet.”

Because the trip back wasn’t too long of a trip, Linley had been planning to make the report upon returning.

Who would have imagined that the Patriarch and the Grand Elder already knew about it?

What he didn’t know…was that this sort of wonderful news pertaining to their clansmen would also be very quickly reported back to the Four Divine

Beasts clan by their intelligence agents.

“Enough. Everyone, don’t just stand here. Come. I’ve already ordered for a grand banquet to be prepared for celebration.” Gislason laughed loudly, then looked at Linley. “Linley, come, walk with me.”

Linley immediately flew over.

Gislason slapped Linley on the shoulders, his face wreathed in smiles. “Well done.”

“Just luck.” Linley immediately said. If he had fought them head on, those two Seven Star Fiends definitely would have been stronger than him. Thus, he succeeded only because he suddenly killed one, and then gathered his forces to join together to kill the other one.

“Why so humble?” Gislason laughed.

“This time, I really was quite worried about him. I didn’t expect that the mission would be completed even more perfectly than I could have hoped for.” The Grand Elder said.

Immediately, Gislason, the Grand Elder, and Linley flew together in front of that group of Elders, as well as the lucky survivors of Squad Thirteen, straight into the depths of the Skyrite Mountains. After a long time, Linley’s group arrived at a lavishly, gray crystal palace.

Quite a few maidservants of the clan were carrying platters in a steady stream into the palace.

The palace was very wide, and it was tens of meters high as well. Within the palace, there were nine stone pillars that were holding the ceiling up. The Patriarch and the Grand Elder flew straight to the front of the palace, then sat down together. In the clan, the status of the Patriarch was just slightly higher than that of the Grand Elder.

However, in the clan, the Patriarch and the Grand Elder were considered the

highest level figures, while the other Elders were subordinate to them.

“All of you, take your seats.” Patriarch ‘Gislason’ waved his hand and laughed.

“Linley, you can take the seat of honor to the left.” Gislason pointed to a seat, then laughed. “After all, today’s celebratory banquet is held in your honor.”

“Me?” Linley was stunned.

There were quite a few Elders more powerful than him, and his record of accomplishments was still quite low.

“Linley, since the Patriarch told you to sit, then sit!” A silver-haired, cold-faced youth walked over, a rare smile on his face.

“Elder Blue.” Linley nodded, then sat.

As for this Elder Blue, he sat down directly next to Linley, in the secondary seat of honor on the left. Nobody dared say anything when he took this spot. After all, this Elder Blue was the clan’s ‘Genius Elder’!

According to legend, his power was only inferior to that of the Patriarch and the Grand Elder, and was vastly superior to that of the other Elders. One of the three ‘trump cards’ of the clan!

In addition, when their ancestor, the ‘Azure Dragon’ was still alive, he doted dearly on Blue, and had spent a large amount of effort to strengthen Blue’s body, making Blue’s body extremely powerful.

“Our Four Divine Beasts clan has battled with the eight great clans for ten thousand years, but such major victories have been very rare.” Seated at the front of the palace, Gislason let out a sigh. Normally speaking, if one side felt they would be unable to win, they would immediately flee.

To kill a Seven Star Fiend who was trying to flee was very difficult. Killing

two Seven Star Fiends in a row, with one's own side suffering only minimal losses, was extremely rare.

"It's rare to have such a magnificent victory. If we can kill two of their Seven Star Fiends every time, no matter how many experts the eight great clans have, they won't be able to last against us." Immediately, some Elders began to laugh.

The entire palace became filled with the sound of laughter.

"Linley, what is it?" Blue, seated next to Linley, realized that Linley wasn't laughing.

"I'm fine. I'm just thinking about Elder Arhaus, and the sacrifices of the many other Elders." Linley sighed softly.

Immediately, quite a few Elders in the hall fell silent.

Over the past ten thousand years of nonstop battle, when they had slaughtered the enemy Seven Star Fiends, their own side's experts had been steadily dwindling as well. Six Star Fiends died in entire batches. The foundation of power which the clan had built up over countless hundreds of millions of years was being steadily whittled away.

"What sort of attitude is this, all of you!" The Grand Elder barked.

Everyone couldn't help but look at the Grand Elder.

The Grand Elder said coldly, "Even if our entire Four Divine Beasts clan dies out, we won't permit those eight clowns to besmirch the reputation of our clan! When our ancestors were present, did those eight great clans dare to resist us? But now that the ancestor is dead, they'll come for revenge? Hmph. How can clowns like these possibly make our Four Divine Beasts clan submit?"

"For the sake of the clan, so what if we die?" Elder Blue said arrogantly as well.

“For the sake of the clan!”

Linley, too, could sense the arrogance and pride of the many Elders in the palace. That they would rather die than submit.

As they saying goes, better to be a shattered piece of jade than an undamaged tile of brick!

“For the sake of the clan?” Linley said quietly in his heart. When he was young, Linley had always wanted to retrieve the ancestral heirloom of the Baruch clan, the warblade ‘Slaughterer’. Linley had a deep sense of belonging towards the Baruch clan.

Nowadays, although he had joined the Azure Dragon clan and met countless clansmen who had the same draconic lineage as he did, and thus had a sense of belonging…

…Linley still couldn’t completely understand that sort of pride and arrogance.

If Linley was in control of the clan, he probably would have his clansmen all hide themselves within the Skyrite Mountains and wait for the day when they had a 90% chance of success in gaining revenge before going and battling with the enemy.

“Perhaps…it’s because I never experienced the glory days of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Linley said to himself.

The arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan came from countless years of being mighty. Countless years of glory. The illustriousness of the clan had long ago been embedded in the hearts of every single Elder.

“Enough.” Gislason laughed loudly. “Just look at those looks on your faces. Today is a day of celebration. Why are we all discussing those things? Come, let’s have a toast. Enough of that topic. Today, let’s just drink to our heart’s content and have a good celebration, a celebration for Linley’s

victory!”

“Yes, let’s celebrate!” All of the Elders raised their wine glasses while looking towards Linley.

Linley couldn’t help but feel the blood boiling in his veins. He, too, raised his glass, and each and every single member of Squad Thirteen, seated at the margins of the palace, all raised their cups as well.

“Cheers!” Gislason said brightly.

“Cheers!”

Everyone in the palace replied, and they all downed their wine in one gulp.

During this banquet, nobody else raised any dispiriting matters. There had been far too many brutal, vicious happenings over the past few years. A good celebration was long past overdue. But this sort of happiness only made Linley feel all the more aware of the dreary sadness hidden behind this formerly unsurpassably powerful Four Divine Beasts clan!

The dreary desolateness of an ancient clan which had fallen.

But although they had fallen, the clan still had their pride! Even in the face of despair, they wouldn’t compromise at all! Anybody who wanted to attack the clan in their moment of weakness would have to pay an enormous price as well!

The celebratory mood of the banquet finally came to an end, and each of the Elders left. Linley and the members of Squad Thirteen were about to leave as well.

“Linley. Stay.” The voice of the Patriarch came from the front of the palace.

Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled, but he immediately instructed the members of Squad Thirteen, “You can go back first.”

“Yes, Captain.” Melina and the others all flew back.

Linley returned to the palace. The many platters within the palace were currently being taken away by the serving maids at high speed. Patriarch Gislason walked down from his position at the front of the palace, then instructed, “Linley, let’s chat inside.”

“Yes, Patriarch.”

Linley followed Gislason into a side room next to the palace.

The side room wasn’t very large. After Linley walked into it, he only heard a ‘squeak’ as the door actually closed automatically.

“Sit.” A hint of a smile was on Gislason’s face.

Linley sat down, then asked, “Patriarch, is there something you need?”

“I made you an Elder, but I didn’t expect that during the Conclave of Elders, they would actually have you go to Bloodbath Gorge. By the time I found out about it, I couldn’t order you to come back.” Gislason sighed. “You are only a God. It isn’t very appropriate to have you in Bloodbath Gorge.”

Gislason valued Linley very highly. One reason was because of Linley’s connection to his father, the ‘Azure Dragon’, while the other reason was because of the power which Linley had displayed.

“I originally thought that my younger sister wouldn’t give you any assignments, but who would’ve thought that she did?” Gislason continued.

“The other Elders are all fighting on behalf of the clan. How can I be an exception?” Linley said.

Gislason’s eyes lit up. Laughing, he nodded. “Actually, my younger sister and I were both mistaken about each other. I had thought…that my younger sister wouldn’t send you to do battle. But my younger sister thought…that I

had already given you Sovereign's Might, and so you would be able to protect yourself. That's why she sent you off."

"Sovereign's Might?" Linley said, puzzled.

"Right."

Gislason nodded as he spoke. "Generally speaking, anyone who can become an Elder of our Four Divine Beasts clan would soon afterwards be bestowed a drop of Sovereign's Might. But there must be an explanation given for this bestowal of Sovereign's Might. You have to have accomplished some sort of meritorious deed, at least. That matter between you and Emanuel? That was just causing trouble. Although you became an Elder, it wasn't appropriate for me to bestow a Sovereign's Might upon you right away."

"But this time, you can be considered to have rendered great merits."

With a flip of his hand, Gislason revealed a drop of azure 'water'. Contained within that azure water drop was a power that made one's heart tremble.

"Today, I bestow upon you this drop of water-type Sovereign's Might." Gislason said. As he spoke, the drop of Sovereign's Might floated towards Linley. Linley, watching that drop of Sovereign's Might float towards him, was utterly stunned.

Bestowing Sovereign's Might to him?

He himself already had two drops. But of course, at a time like this, Linley couldn't refuse.

"Thank you, Patriarch." Linley hurriedly stretched his hand out, accepting this drop of Sovereign's Might.

Gislason laughd and nodded. "Now that you have a drop of Sovereign's Might, even if you run into some sort of critically dangerous situation,

you'll be able to stay alive. But Linley, unless the situation is truly critical, you cannot waste this drop of Sovereign's Might. If you are forced to use it, you need to wipe out the enemy."

Linley lowered his head to look at the drop of Sovereign's Might.

This was a drop of the power of a Sovereign, but could it truly be used to save his life? Would it be able to defend against the soul attacks of others? Linley still clearly remembered that scene of how that Mosley executed his innate divine ability.

"Patriarch, can it be that Sovereign's Might can be used to defend against soul attacks?" Linley hurriedly asked.

As Linley saw it, a Sovereign's power should be to a Sovereign what divine power was to a Deity. It shouldn't have much to do with the soul.

"Of course it can." Gislason laughed.

"How?" Linley said, puzzled. "It shouldn't be possible for ordinary material force to block soul attacks, right?"

Gislason laughed even harder. "Linley, are you under the impression that a Sovereign's power is just the 'advanced' version of 'divine power'?"

"Isn't it?" Linley said, puzzled.

"Wrong." Gislason shook his head. "Sovereign's Might is very unique. For example…it can actually strengthen our bodies."

Gislason took a deep breath, then said seriously, "Linley, that year, my father explained to me that after he became a Sovereign…his body only contained a single type of energy. Sovereign power!"

"What do you mean?" Linley said, puzzled. "Of course a Sovereign would have Sovereign power."

“What I mean is…Sovereigns don’t even have spiritual energy!” Gislason said.

“Wha?!” Linley was stupefied.

The soul was a person’s foundation. Anyone who had a soul would naturally have spiritual energy.

“Or, to be more precise, Sovereign power is the same as spiritual energy!” Gislason laughed. “Thus, Sovereign’s Might is capable of not just being a material energy source, it can also be used an energy source for the soul.”

“Ah!?” Linley was shocked.

“You can rely on it to unleash material attacks, but you can also use it to unleash soul attacks. Naturally, you can also rely on it to block against soul attacks.” Gislason said.

Chapter 28 – Freedom

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 28, Freedom

In the past, Linley had known very little regarding Sovereign's Might. Thus, he had taken it for an advanced form of 'divine power'. But now, it seemed, it was completely different. Sovereign's Might was actually capable of being used like spiritual energy.

"Sovereign's Might also has one other benefit." Gislason laughed. "When you use Sovereign's Might, for a short moment, both your body and your soul will be uplifted."

"Eh?" Linley was surprised.

"This is the truth." Gislason sighed. "However, the amount of uplifting isn't very great. If one was willing to be wasteful and consecutively use hundreds of drops of Sovereign's Might, both the soul and the body will be tremendously transformed."

"Hundreds of drops? Who has that many?" Linley laughed.

"Even if someone does have that many, they wouldn't be willing to waste it like that." Gislason said.

"Our Four Divine Beasts clan's one and only advantage over the eight great clans is that we have quite a bit of Sovereign's Might." Gislason sighed. "By relying on Sovereign's Might, we are able to be at the level where even when under group assault, we can still fight back. This is the only reason why we've been able to keep the death ratio at one-to-one."

Linley nodded. After this recent experience, Linley realized how powerful the enemy was.

For example, Mosley's innate divine ability truly was terrifying.

“Now that our ancestors have died, the more Sovereign’s Might we use up, the less we have.” Gislason warned. “Linley, you cannot waste this Sovereign’s Might. Unless the situation is critical, using it simply isn’t worth it.”

“Yes, Patriarch.” Linley replied.

Even the Four Divine Beasts clan had a dwindling stockpile of Sovereign’s Might.

“Enough. You can go back for now. In the upcoming period of time, my younger sister shouldn’t assign you any more missions. After all, after this experience, the eight great clans will be very much on their guard against you. In the future, it won’t be so easy for you to kill two Seven Star Fiends.” Gislason laughed.

Linley nodded, then immediately left.

…….

Indigo Prefecture, the eastern borders. Four of the eight great clans were located here, amongst them the Barbary clan which had moved here from the Divine Water Plane.

Deep within a dark estate, a giant was standing within a flower garden.

He was 3.5 meters tall, and his face was covered with a green beard, each hair looking like a steel needle. He was dressed in a plain, unadorned set of armor, and on his shoulders, there was a black, serpent-patterned cloak attached. This person was staring directly at Cole, who was standing before him.

“Cole, you were killed without even being able to fight back?” The giant said, frowning.

“Patriarch, I, I didn’t expect…” Cole’s face was filled with rage. “He

clearly was just a God, but who would have imagined that he was just hiding his aura? When he was very close to me, he suddenly ambushed me…I didn't have any chance to react at all."

Currently, Cole only had his divine wind clone remaining.

"Not just me. Even Mosley wasn't able to detect that this person was hiding his aura." Cole said hurriedly.

This Patriarch of the Barbary clan frowned even more deeply.

"Patriarch, based on what the clones of my subordinates told me, the person who killed me didn't have an extremely powerful soul defense." Cole said hurriedly.

"Eh?"

The Barbary clan's Patriarch couldn't help but grow puzzled. He swept his gaze towards the outside of the garden, and instantly, a black shadow flitted in from outside, standing there respectfully.

"Quickly go investigate if there is a new Elder within the Azure Dragon clan who is skilled at hiding his power." The Patriarch of the Barbary clan instructed.

"Yes, Elder."

The black shadow vanished once more.

……..

After having completed the last mission, the Grand Elder wouldn't possibly send Linley into battle once more in the near term. Thus, Linley rejoined Bebe, Delia, Cesar, and the others in the gorge, enjoying some rare, peaceful days.

More than two years had passed since the last assignment. In the past two

years, not many things happened. On this day, Linley and Delia were currently eating some food together.

“Delia, she…seems to have something she wants to say.” Linley laughed to himself. Today, Delia was very absent-minded as she ate, as though she wanted to say something but didn’t.

“Linley.” Delia hesitated a long time, then finally spoke.

Linley chuckled. He had been waiting a long time for her to speak. “Delia, what is it?”

Delia paused a moment, then said, “Linley, we’ve been here in the Skyrite Mountains for quite some time. It’s been eighty years now, right?”

“Right.” Linley nodded. “What of it?”

“Linley, we rushed all the way here to Indigo Prefecture, then entered the Skyrite Mountains. Right, we’ve returned to your clan, but…are we just going to stay in the Skyrite Mountains forever?” Delia asked him instead.

Linley couldn’t help but frown. “Delia, you want to leave? You want to depart from the Skyrite Mountains?” Linley felt this came out of nowhere.

“No, that’s not what I mean.” Delia said hurriedly. “Actually, I want to follow the forces of the clan to go on a trip to the cities.”

“No.” Linley refused decisively. “It’s too dangerous. No.”

“It’s not dangerous.” Delia said hurriedly. “In fact, it’s not just me. Bebe, Dylin, and the others all want to go on a trip outside. Linley, we’ve been in this same place without going anywhere else this entire time. It’s not as bad for you. You can train and you can go battle. But the rest of us are just here in this gorge every day. After a long period of time, we all feel rather stifled.”

Linley was stunned.

He understood what Delia meant. To be in a single place with no contact with the outside world…it wouldn't be so bad at first, but after more time passed, one would feel terribly depressed. If a very long period of time passed…one would be accustomed to being depressed and lonely, at which point one's very temperament would change.

Delia, in particular, had accompanied Linley on their long journey over here. Her heart, like his, was a free one, which couldn't endure this sort of restrictions.

"Delia, I understand your feelings." Linley nodded.

In the past, when he had entered the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts for training for three years, he only had Bebe by his side for those three years. That sort of solitary, lonely life was indeed quite stifling. He himself had only been able to hold on and persevere because of his hatred, which had let him endure it all.

"Delia, I'm sorry." Linley reached out to take Delia's hand.

At this moment, Linley came to a realization.

He had been too selfish!

He always thought of things from his own viewpoint. He wanted to return to his clan. He wanted to battle in Bloodbath Gorge for the clan. But he hadn't considered the situation from Delia and Bebe's viewpoints. He himself could live a very exciting life. But what about them?

Always in their little gorge, living a leisurely, dull life. Bebe was the lively sort, and Delia enjoyed her freedom as well. Linley himself liked an exciting, lively life. Nobody liked to live a flavorless, boring life. He had completely neglected Delia and Bebe.

Thinking of this, Linley couldn't refrain from saying, "Delia, I truly am sorry."

“Say no more.” Delia laughed and shook her head. “It’s fine. I just want to go for a slight change in atmosphere. Once I’m in a better mood, I’ll be fine.”

“I want you to go out and relax as well. Only, it really is very dangerous.” Linley said nervously.

“Linley, it really isn’t dangerous.” Delia said hurriedly. “Actually, the Azure Dragon clan has quite a few clansmen who often go to the nearby cities to go sightseeing and shopping. It truly isn’t dangerous.”

“It isn’t dangerous?” Linley didn’t understand.

“Linley, if you don’t believe me, you can ask the other Elders.” Delia immediately said.

“Oh?” Linley nodded. “How about this. Delia, you wait here. I’ll go ask the other Elders. If there really isn’t much danger, I’ll let you go.” Linley didn’t want his wife to be too stifled either.

Linley immediately flew up through Dragon Avenue, constantly pondering in his mind Delia’s words. The more he thought of it, the more he felt that he had neglected Delia, Bebe, and the others. They had all accompanied him to the Skyrite Mountains.

But in the end?

They had to stay in that gorge and didn’t dare to leave it at all. This sort of life, akin to living in a prison…was this what he had to offer for Delia and Bebe?

From afar, through the corner of his eyes, Linley saw a person flying in the air. It was the familiar figure of ‘Elder Garvey’. He hurriedly shouted, “Elder Garvey.”

Puzzled, Elder Garvey turned to look, then laughed and flew over. “Linley,

what a coincidence." Linley laughed, "Elder Garvey, there's something important I want to ask you about. Come, let's chat over there."

Linley and Garvey flew together to a nearby location halfway up the mountain.

"Linley, what is it?" Garvey asked, puzzled.

"Our clan often has people who go to the cities?" Linley asked.

"Oh. Yes, we do, actually." Garvey laughed. "First of all, our clan needs to buy some things on occasion. Secondly, our clansmen are always trapped here within the Skyrite Mountains. Quite a few of them can't stand this type of restriction, and so they'll go out to improve their mood. However, each time, the number of people permitted to leave is limited."

"Is it dangerous?" Linley asked.

"There's not much danger." Garvey laughed. "In the past ten thousand years, there hasn't been a single incident."

"Aren't we in a state of war against the eight great clans? How can it be that our clansmen are in no danger when heading out?" Linley didn't understand.

"Linley, think about how vast the Infernal Realm is. Do you think running into someone is a simple matter? The battles which occur between us and the eight great clans occur because both of us are consciously seeking them out. It's only because they travel on predetermined routes and because we have intelligence agents constantly monitoring those routes that we are able to so easily run into them."

Linley nodded.

"As for our clan, when a group of us ride a single metallic lifeform and go to a city, there's no way we can be on a predetermined route." Garvey said. "This world is incomparably vast, and we can go anywhere we please. In

addition, on our way over, even if the eight great clans see a metallic lifeform, there's no way they would know that it belongs to our Azure Dragon clan."

Linley began to understand.

"More important, they can't send Seven Star Fiends just running around randomly everywhere. Even if an intelligence agent of theirs discovers that we are aboard a metallic lifeform, the metallic lifeform will quickly fly off into the distance, and because the route is not predetermined, there's no way the enemy can possibly guess where the metallic lifeform has flown to." Garvey laughed.

Linley nodded to himself as well.

The chances of both being encountered as well as being recognized really was one in a hundred million.

"Most importantly of all…each time our clansmen go a group, an Elder will be the escort." Garvey laughed. "This to guard against any unforeseen circumstances. If we really are so unlucky as to encounter an enemy Seven Star Fiend within this vast area, then we'll just have to engage in battle."

Linley, hearing this, felt relieved.

The chances of being encountered really were too low. It was virtually impossible, in fact. And even if there was an encounter…his side had a Seven Star Fiend on guard.

"What, do you have family or friends who want to go out and relax?" Garvey asked.

"Right." Linley suddenly thought of the limitations Garvey had mentioned with respect to how many people could participate. "How many people can go each time?"

"Five hundred people per trip." Garvey nodded. "Don't worry. As an Elder,

it will be very simple for you to arrange some family and friends to be included. In addition, if you really are worried, you can escort them yourself as well. If a problem occurred even when two Elders are escorting, that would truly be quite bizarre, wouldn't it?"

Linley's eyes lit up.

Linley himself was interested in accompanying Delia into the city for a nice stroll. "The Elders of Bloodbath Gorge are cyclically assigned to missions. I'm not doing anything right now anyhow." Linley immediately flew back towards Bloodbath Gorge and asked to meet with the Grand Elder.

In the Azure Dragon Palace, the Grand Elder stared at Linley through her mask.

"What? You want to go out?" The Grand Elder said coldly.

"Grand Elder, I just want to accompany our clansmen on a trip to the city." Linley said.

"I can't permit it right now." The Grand Elder shook her head. "Recently, the battle between us and the eight great clans has been fairly fierce. I might need to send you out on a mission at a moment's notice. Linley, the clan is more important. After your thousand years are up and you retire from Bloodbath Gorge, you can go where you please."

Linley was stunned.

He, too, knew that the battles had been very fierce, but he hadn't been sent on a mission in the past two years, after all. Going to a city was a trip of just a few months.

"For now, stay within the Skyrite Mountains. Based on how our intelligence reports develop, I might have a mission for you very soon." The Grand Elder said.

"Yes, Grand Elder."

Linley didn't particular want to go visit the city himself anyways. The only reason he wanted to go was to protect Delia better.

"It's within an area of a trillion square kilometers…and why would a Seven Star Fiend be so bored as to just wander about randomly? And the chances of them recognizing that this was a group of our clansmen? And also being to defeat one of my clan's Elders?" Linley considered it, then set his mind at ease.

The chances of something going wrong were virtually zero!

Chapter 29 – Joining Forces

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 29, Joining Forces

Deep within the Skyrite Mountains. An enormous metallic lifeform in the shape of a black phoenix was hovering there. The giant metallic lifeform was like a little mountain hovering in the skies. Currently, quite a few people were entering into this metallic lifeform.

In the cliffs beneath the metallic lifeform, there was a large group of people who were travelling together, sending off their family and friends.

Amongst them were Tarosse, Dylin, O'Brien, Bebe, Delia, and others, all of whom were standing next to Linley.

"Tarosse, Dylin, Olivier. Be careful in your travels. After you arrive at the city of Meer [Mi'er], whenever you have a chance, you have to come visit. I'll miss you all very much." Linley looked at these people and laughed. After he returned and told Delia that they could go to the cities, Linley came to understand…

That although Delia and Bebe were just going for a visit and would come back, Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, and the others were preparing to immigrate to that city.

"Definitely!" Dylin said very apologetically. "Linley, actually, we originally wanted to stay here at your place, but the control and supervision within the Skyrite Mountains is very strict, and we also aren't members of your clan, so we normally aren't even allowed to leave the gorge and wander around. So…"

"I understand. Say no more." Linley laughed.

In his heart, he couldn't help but sigh.

Due to the struggle with the eight great clans, the Four Divine Beasts clan, to guard against the possibility of spies entering, was always very strict. Unless there was a special circumstance, the clansmen weren't permitted to wander about freely. As for Tarosse and Dylin, they weren't even members of the clan, so the patrolling warriors kept an even tighter watch on them.

Tarosse and the others had nothing to do, yet they couldn't wander about either. Naturally, it was like sitting in prison for them.

"It was my fault for being inconsiderate." Linley said apologetically.

"Linley, don't say that." Tarosse said hurriedly. In their hearts, Linley had saved their lives, and so they were filled with gratitude towards Linley. "Linley, in the future, when you have time, you need to come to Meer City to visit us."

"Definitely." Linley nodded.

"Then we'll head out for now."

Tarosse, Cesar, Olivier, Dylin and his children…these people bade farewell to Linley, then flew towards the distant metallic lifeform. As for Delia and Bebe, they remained by Linley's side.

"Linley." Delia looked towards Linley.

Linley smiled as he looked at Delia. He couldn't help but give her a hug, then said gently, "Safe journeys."

Delia couldn't help but feel a warm feeling surge in her heart. Nestling into Linley's arms, she acknowledged softly, and then lifted her head up to look at Linley. "Linley, don't worry about me. I won't be in any danger. It's you who I worry about. The battle between our clan and the eight great clans is so fierce. When you fight for your clan, you need to remember…that I'm waiting for you."

Linley stared at his Delia.

“Don’t worry. Your husband is quite strong.” Linley laughed.

“Narcissist.” Delia laughed as well.

“Oh man, I refuse to watch this any longer. I’m leaving.” Bebe suddenly called out.

Linley couldn’t help but glance sideways at Bebe, who just grinned wickedly.

“Alright. Delia, Bebe, safe journeys. I’ve already had a chat with the Elder who is in charge of escorting you on this trip.” Linley said. Delia and Bebe nodded, then bade Linley farewell as they too flew towards the metallic lifeform in the air.

Linley raised his head, staring at the enormous metallic lifeform begin to move. In but an instant, it turned into a blur, disappearing into the horizon.

He loved her, but he couldn’t forcibly detain her. Everyone needed their own space.

Linley turned and headed back towards Bloodbath Gorge. Halfway there, however, Linley saw clearly those many roving patrol soldiers, all of whom had stern looks on their faces as they cautiously kept watch on every place.

“The atmosphere within the clan really is too tense. These soldiers are always on patrol, for fear that a spy might slip in.” Linley sighed.

No wonder Tarosse and Dylin were unable to stay here, within this extremely tense atmosphere.

“It’s not their fault. After all, the clan is currently in a state of crisis. Who knows if we’ll be able to last another ten thousand years.” Linley knew very well that although he was able to kill two of their Seven Star Fiends, the enemy was also capable of killing two of his side’s Seven Star Fiends.

A constant, never-ending battle.

After ten thousand years, what would be the situation for the Four Divine Beasts clan?

Within that large quiet gorge in the Skyrite Mountains. Linley was currently in his study, flipping through some books that introduced various places of the Infernal Realm. Linley suddenly closed the book, looking through the window to the outside world. “Delia’s group has been gone for over a month now. But I keep on having this restless feeling in my heart.”

Linley shook his head. “I’m just thinking too much.”

Based on the distance between Meer City and the Skyrite Mountains, a roundtrip would take three or four months. There was still quite some time before Delia would return. Even if they encountered any danger, the intelligence agents would definitely send the news back as well.

“This gorge is actually one of the most peaceful places in the entire Skyrite Mountains.” Through the window, Linley looked towards the distant grass. The descendants of the Yulan branch were all gathered there, chatting and laughing, seeming very leisurely.

The reason they were blissful was because they were ignorant!

They didn’t know what sort of crisis the clan was currently facing, and the clan wasn’t planning to inform these Demigods and Gods of the real situation. As for the Highgods who knew what the clan’s situation as, they were all worrying and training hard.

They all wanted to enter Bloodbath Gorge and battle for the sake of the clan!

“Elder Linley.” Suddenly, a voice rang out from outside.

“Enter.” Linley frowned. The person was dressed in a blood-red robe, the uniform of a Bloodbath Gorge warrior.

Someone had been sent from Bloodbath Gorge?

“What is it?” Linley asked.

“Elder Linley, the Grand Elder has ordered that you make haste to the Azure Dragon Palace.” The blood-robed warrior said respectfully.

“The Grand Elder is summoning me?” Linley immediately stood up. Not saying another word, he immediately flew outside.

The blood-robed warrior followed close behind Linley as well. The two of them immediately flew into the skies, out of the gorge. Linley’s departure, in turn, attracted the attention of quite a few people in the gorge.

“Whoooooosh.” The cold wind howled, slicing against them like knives of ice.

In Bloodbath Gorge, Six Star Fiend were clustered together in groups of three or five, while occasionally, a Seven Star Fiend could be seen. Linley’s face was emotionless. He was hurrying towards the Azure Dragon Palace at high speed. Upon entering it, he immediately headed to the fifth floor.

Linley swept the fifth floor with his gaze. Within this hall of the Azure Dragon Palace, there was the Grand Elder, dressed in that long black robe and with her face covered with that silver mask, who was seated on her throne. But in the main hall, aside from the Grand Elder, there was one more person…

The balding Elder Emanuel.

Elder Emanuel was currently standing to one side respectfully. Upon seeing him, Linley couldn’t help but feel puzzled. “He’s here also?”

“Elder Linley.” Emanuel smiled towards Linley.

“Elder Emanuel.” Linley greeted him as well, then saluted respectfully.

“Grand Elder!”

The Grand Elder, seated up above, said calmly, “Linley, in the war between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, the eight great clans will occasionally send people out on predetermined routes, letting us attack them. Generally speaking, the attacking side has a slight advantage.”

Linley nodded.

Attacking out of ambush could catch someone off-guard. Naturally, they had an advantage.

“How can our Four Divine Beasts clan always engage in this sort of sneak attack?” The Grand Elder said coldly. “Thus, our Four Divine Beasts clan will often send our own squads out on predetermined routes, to await the attacks from our enemies.”

Linley sighed to himself.

He knew that the clan did this. Originally, Arhaus had led his squad out on a predetermined line to await the attacks of the enemy. That time…Arhaus had engaged in a fierce battle with the enemy, with the result being that Arhaus’ most powerful divine clone had been killed.

“Once again, it is because of the ‘glory’ of the clan!” Linley sighed to himself.

The Four Divine Beasts clan, for the glory of the clan, wouldn’t even deign to always engage in sneak attacks. One could imagine how arrogant they were!

“This time, I was planning to just send Emanuel to lead the squad out on the predetermined route.” The Grand Elder said. “However, this is Emanuel’s first assignment, and he himself isn’t confident…so he recommended you to me.”

Linley was startled.

What was this supposed to mean? The assignment tasked to Emanuel, Emanuel could shift to someone else?

“Grand Elder, he ‘recommended me’? What does that mean?” Linley said, rather irritated. At the same time, he couldn’t help but glance sideways at Emanuel.

Emanuel hurriedly laughed, “Linley, I know that you are very powerful, and so…I recommended that the Grand Elder allow you to accompany me on this assignment.”

“Together?” Linley was stunned.

The Grand Elder nodded. “Right. Normally, when our squads are on assignment, we have one Elder leading each squad. Only occasionally will we send two. This time, I want you to accompany Emanuel.”

Linley glanced at Emanuel. He couldn’t help but feel a hint of dissatisfaction in his heart.

After all, this was supposed to be Emanuel’s mission.

“Linley, it’s been two years since you’ve been out on a mission. It’s about time for you to have one anyhow.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley felt a surge of resignation. Going out to fight wasn’t the issue. It was that this mission had come in a very unfair manner.

“What, you aren’t willing?” The Grand Elder asked.

Emanuel sighed emotionally, “Linley, if you aren’t willing to accompany me, then I’ll go by myself to do battle. Even if I’m alone, I won’t let the forces of the eight great clans have an easy time of it. If push comes to shove, I’ll just lose my divine water clone.”

Linley glanced sideways at Emanuel.

At a time like this, how could he refuse?

“Grand Elder, I’m willing to go.” Linley said.

Emanuel’s eyes lit up, and a smile unconsciously crept onto his face.

“Grand Elder, there’s one thing.” Linley said.

“Speak.” The Grand Elder said.

Linley said respectfully, “Grand Elder, when our clan normally has an assignment, we just send out a single squad, with just a single Seven Star Fiend. I was hoping…that on this mission, we can put on a façade.”

“Façade?” The Grand Elder stared at Linley, puzzled. “Linley, after their last experience, I imagine the experts of the eight great clans won’t be so incautious as to let a God draw near again.”

Linley chuckled. That sort of trick was a one-use trick only.

“Grand Elder, what I mean to say is, Elder Emanuel and his squad should ride their metallic lifeform forward, while I will take just a single Highgod with me. The two of us, by ourselves, will ride on a metallic lifeform, pretending to be ordinary travelers.”

Linley laughed. “A Highgod travelling with a God in the Infernal Realm is very common. It won’t arouse the suspicion of the enemy intelligence agents.”

“Oh?” The Grand Elder was beginning to understand.

“Elder Emanuel will be in the front, while I will be behind. We’ll maintain some distance between the two of us. The enemies will believe that Elder Emanuel is there by himself, and so they’ll send less people over. Once they attack Elder Emanuel, I’ll be able to catch them off-guard.” Linley laughed.

Elder Emanuel's face had become rather ugly to behold

Linley was treating him as 'fish bait'.

"Normally, a clan will just send out a single squad. The enemies won't suspect anything." Linley said.

"Fine. That's what we'll do." The Grand Elder said.

Emanuel didn't know how to dispute this.

"Make your preparations. You'll head out immediately." The Grand Elder said.

"Yes, Grand Elder." Linley and Emanuel both bowed, and then Linley and Emanuel both left.

"Linley." The Grand Elder suddenly said.

Linley, puzzled, turn to look at the Grand Elder. A voice entered his mind. "Linley, you are still just a God. You still have a lot of room for improvement. If you are to truly encounter any dangers on this mission, immediately use that drop of Sovereign's Might. Your life is far more valuable than a drop of Sovereign's Might."

Linley felt a warm feeling in his heart, but he was puzzled as well.

When the Grand Elder assigned this mission, it seemed as though she was showing partiality towards Emanuel. And yet, here she was, saying this to him.

"Yes, Grand Elder."

Linley didn't continue to ponder it, and just acknowledged. Emanuel and Linley thus immediately left the Azure Dragon Palace.

"Linley, this time, we'll be joining forces. I hope that when we do battle, we

won’t have any suspicions of each other.” Emanuel sent to Linley through divine sense. Linley glanced at him sideways, then chuckled and sent back, “Naturally.”

As he spoke, Linley flew directly towards the residences of Squad Thirteen.

Emanuel watched as Linley left. He let out a cold laugh, then he flew towards his own squad as well.

Chapter 30 – Surrounded And Attacked

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 30, Surrounded And Attacked

Within Indigo Prefecture's borders. Within the vast, empty skies, a serpentine, dragon-shaped metallic lifeform was flying through the air. Moments later, another metallic lifeform in the shape of a black panther followed from behind.

Within the dragon-shaped metallic lifeform, there were twelve people in total.

To be precise, there was Emanuel's group of eleven, along with a Deathgod Golem. Emanuel looked at the Deathgod Golem, and he couldn't help but feel rather uncomfortable in his heart. This Deathgod Golem belonged to Linley. By placing the Deathgod Golem here, Linley would be able to accurately determine the location of the metallic lifeform at all times.

"Elder Linley, your metallic lifeform had best not be too far away from mine. Otherwise, if battle begins and you were unable to make it over, that would be terrible." A yellow light flashed through Emanuel's eyes as he said in a low voice.

The Deathgod Golem's eyes opened, and it looked towards Emanuel.

"Elder Emanuel, don't worry. Although the location of the metallic lifeform that I am on is constantly changing, the distance between us won't become too great. Once battle starts, I'll immediately hurry over." Linley's voice came out of the Deathgod Golem.

"That would be good." Emanuel said.

By having the Deathgod Golem ride on Emanuel's metallic lifeform, Linley was able to easily locate Emanuel at all times, which naturally allowed him to more easily control the location of his own metallic lifeform. It might be

more than ten kilometers away from Emanuel's, or it might be within ten kilometers, or it might even fly up ahead of Emanuel's.

In short…

He was trying not to arouse anyone's suspicions.

"Whoosh!"

The dragon-shaped metallic lifeform suddenly passed through a very wide river, and the waters of the river rolled about turbidly. Suddenly, a head suddenly appeared from within the waters, and this person stared up at the metallic lifeform as it flew past. "Hmph. The Azure Dragon clan's men truly are daring. They still dare to so arrogantly follow these predetermined paths…all of them are just looking for death!"

When clansmen of the Four Divine Beasts clan were intentionally challenging their enemies to a fight, they would change the shape of their metallic lifeforms into the shape of one of the four divine beasts. That way, the intelligence agents would immediately be able to recognize it. Adding a divine sense sweep…they would thus be certain.

"I need to immediately report this back to the clan." This person didn't even glance at the other metallic lifeform.

This was because the metallic lifeform Linley was on was more than seven or eight kilometers away, and it wasn't following in a direct line. After all, the line of sight for a Deity was limited, and so too was their divine sense. Given that he was seven or eight kilometers away, and that there were many mountain forests blocking the line of sight, how could anybody notice?

The intelligence network of the eight great clans was extremely efficient. That very day, the news made its way back. Although the eight great clans were separated into two different areas, the exchange of information between them was still very fast, and they immediately came to a conclusion.

This time, the assignment of assaulting the Azure Dragon clan's squad was assigned to the Ashcroft clan and the Barbary clan. This was because last time, each of the two clans had lost a Seven Star Fiend to the Azure Dragon clan. This time, it was their turn for revenge.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

Twenty people were currently flying at a low altitude through the air.

"Last time, we lost two Seven Star Fiends, but they didn't lose a single one. This time, we definitely have to kill that Seven Star Fiend belonging to the Azure Dragon clan." The leader, a tall, green-eyebrowed man, said in a solemn voice.

"Elder Brother, this time, Elder Bulo [Bu'lo] will be with us. There definitely won't be any problems." Another person, a somewhat skinnier, green-eyebrowed man, laughed.

These two siblings were both three meters tall, a typical example of a Barbary clan member. The only thing remarkable about them was their green eyebrows. 'The Green Eyebrow Brothers' of the Barbary clan were a pair of very famous Seven Star Fiends, and were exceedingly strong.

As for Bulo…

His fame was widespread in the Netherworld, and he was one of the supreme experts of the Ashcroft clan. For three commanders to be sent on this mission was because this time, the clans were determined to avenge the previous humiliation.

It didn't matter if their people died.

But two Seven Star Fiends of theirs died without killing a single Seven Star Fiend of the enemy? There was no way the eight great clans would accept this!

The tall, powerful green-eyebrowed man turned to look at the person next

to them. He couldn't help but feel his heart tremble. This person was just 1.7 meters tall, and in the eyes of the Barbary clan, such a person was just a 'tiny little fellow'.

But…nobody dared to look down this person.

His entire body was covered in a long gray robe. He was bald, and his dry, wavy hair was slick against his head. His hair seemed yellow and dry, as though it had no life in it at all. His face was covered in frowns and wrinkles, giving him an ancient appearance, at in his ears hung a pair of green serpents.

"Hiss…" Those two green serpents were speaking in the serpentine language.

"I hope that this time, the Azure Dragon clan sent out that person named Linley!" Bulo opened his eyes, which were of a very muddy color, with some occasional yellow light flashing through them. He said in a hoarse voice, "Last time, it was he who killed my grandson."

"If Linley goes, then Elder Bulo, we will definitely let you personally deal with him." The skinny, green-eyebrowed man said hurriedly. Mosley had been Bulo's grandson.

"Right." Bulo nodded.

The green-eyebrowed siblings, although powerful members of the Barbary clan, in terms of status…were just middling amongst their Assembly of Elders. But this Bulo was different; Elder Bulo's status in the Ashcroft family was extremely high.

In terms of power, he was within the top three for his clan as well. For the Ashcroft clan to send him out meant that, clearly, this time they were determined to kill the Azure Dragon clan's forces.

"I wonder how this Linley compares with that Genius Elder, 'Blue', of the Azure Dragon clan." Elder Bulo chuckled.

“He’s definitely inferior.” The tall, green-eyebrowed man said. “Although that Linley has a tough body, it seems his soul defense isn’t that great…far weaker than that Genius Elder. For you to kill him, Elder Bulo, he should feel honored.”

Bulo, as a member of the Ashcroft clan, was a soul attack specialist to begin with. At the same time…his body was also extremely powerful.

Anyone capable of being in the top three of one of the great clans was a person of terrifying power.

That year, when Bulo had battled with the ‘Genius Elder’, Blue, neither had been able to kill the other.

If Linley and Emanuel had known that this time, the enemies had sent out this many experts, and especially that Bulo was amongst them, they probably would have retreated long ago. But Linley and Emanuel didn’t know…so naturally, they continued to advance.

Within that black panther shaped metallic lifeform. Linley was currently drinking wine with a Highgod.

“It’s been half a year. The eight great clans really are inefficient.” Linley sighed.

“Captain, the eight great clans live at the borders of Indigo Prefecture. They are hundreds of millions of kilometers away from us. Even if they are efficient and fast, they’ll still need half a year before making their way to us. If they are slow, it might even take them one or two years.” That squad member said.

Linley glanced at this squad member.

This squad member was named ‘Isadore’ [Yi’sa’duo]. During the last attack, some members of Linley’s Squad Thirteen had been lost. Although Shanda and the others still had divine clones, the power of those divine clones was

insufficient, and so they retired from Bloodbath Gorge.

Isadore was one of the replacements.

“Isadore, be careful during the battle.” Linley laughed. When he had gone and informed Squad Thirteen that this time, he only needed to bring one person, Isadore had very excitedly convinced the others to allow himself to be the one to accompany Linley.

“I know, Captain.” Isadore’s eyes were gleaming. “But Captain, although I have to protect myself, I need to kill our enemies as well. Over the past ten thousand years, I’ve been waiting for this day the entire time…the forces of the eight great clan were merciless in their pursuit of us that year. When our Four Divine Beasts clan was powerful, they all cowered before us, but now that our ancestors are dead, they begin attacking like wild dogs. Men, women, the elderly, the young…they’ll wipe out any member of our Four Divine Beasts clan!”

Isadore’s heart was filled with anger and hate.

Linley couldn’t help but sigh. “This hatred and enmity truly has become a great one!” That year, each of the great clans had wildly pursued and attacked, all the way to Indigo Prefecture. This had been a very major event. When Linley had just arrived in Indigo Prefecture and been buying books, even that staff member had known that the Four Divine Beasts clan was engaging in a major battle.

Within the dragon-shaped metallic lifeform.

“Everyone, be careful. The enemy can appear at any moment.” Emanuel said quietly. “Remember. Don’t permit anyone to draw near our metallic lifeform. Anyone who draws near, be it Demigod or God, will be executed.”

Last time, Linley had relied upon drawing close to the metallic lifeform before launching a sudden ambush, thus causing Emanuel to be wary as well.

“Haha…” Nearby, Linley’s Deathgod Golem began to laugh. The Deathgod Golem had Linley’s consciousness within, and it could thus be considered one of Linley’s clones, in a way.

“There’s nothing funny about it, Elder Linley. You were able to hide your strength. Perhaps others can do the same. It’s best to be cautious.” Emanuel said.

“Yes. It’s best to be cautious.” The Deathgod Golem spoke in Linley’s voice.

Right at this moment…

“Not good! The enemy arrived!” Emanuel’s face changed, and he instantly collected this metallic lifeform. Immediately, the eleven of them and the Deathgod Golem were now hovering in mid-air. Linley, through the Deathgod Golem, was able to see everything clearly. On the ground below them, twenty-plus figures were charging up at high speed.

“So many?” Emanuel’s face changed dramatically.

“Elder Linley!” Emanuel immediately urged. “Hurry over.”

“Don’t worry.” The Deathgod Golem said.

“Haha…child of the Azure Dragon clan, you can die now.” Amidst the loud laughter, two tall, powerfully built green-eyebrowed men who looked similar charged up, wielding double-edged greatswords in their hands. Behind them, twenty five Six Star Fiends attacked as well.

Emanuel’s face became ugly to behold.

The difference in power was too great.

“Roaaaaaar!!!”

Emanuel let out a fierce roar, and his entire body became covered in

draconic scales. Instantly, he entered Dragonform, while at the same time, a white mist spread out from around his body, covering the entire area and making all sorts of illusions appear.

“We aren’t weaker than you in the Elemental Laws of Water.”

The Green Eyebrow Brothers laughed loudly as they surrounded and attacked Emanuel.

“Slash!” “Bang!”

The twenty five Six Star Fiends of the eight great clans attacked the ten Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan. The difference in numbers was simply too great…the Six Star Fiends wildly battled against each other, and exploding sounds thundered nonstop. The air trembled, blood splattered everywhere, and one figure after another fell from the skies.

“Bang!” Emanuel’s right arm exploded, and he was knocked flying backwards.

“Die!” An indistinct, freezing light flashed towards him.

Right at this moment, Emanuel suddenly opened his mouth. The strange thing was, behind him appeared an enormous coiling illusion of an Azure Dragon. The enormous Azure Dragon Phantom was like the size of a mountain, and it stared at the two Seven Star Fiends with its illusory eyes.

“Not good.”

The faces of the Green Eyebrow Twins changed.

“Retreat!” The two retreated towards different directions at the same time at high speed.

But at the same time, an indistinct azure light rippled outwards through space as though it were water, and the ripples instantly struck the two Green Eyebrow Brothers, and their bodies both trembled.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Captain!” The Six Star Fiends of the eight great clans saw that their captains were in danger.

“Raaaaaargh!” All of them hurriedly charged towards Emanuel. There was a difference between a Six Star Fiend and a Seven Star Fiend, but when several Six Star Fiends joined forces against a Seven Star Fiend, the Seven Star Fiend couldn’t be complacent either.

Emanuel had no choice but to retreat, while at the same time, he cursed mentally, “Why hasn’t Linley arrived yet?”

The Green Eyebrow Brothers had retreated towards different directions, trying to put some distance between each other, so as to force the scope of the innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, to be wider, and thus lessen the power of the attack. At this moment, that larger, taller green-eyebrowed man laughed angrily. “This innate divine ability really is powerful.”

And then, they charged over as well.

But right at this moment…

The green-eyebrowed man noticed one of his subordinates was frantically messaging him through divine sense, “Captain, careful!”

The green-eyebrowed man hurriedly turned to look. He saw a Dragonformed figure flying towards him at high speed, with a pair of dark golden eyes staring fixedly at him. What shocked this green-eyebrowed man was, the newcomer actually had fierce, sharp spikes on his back!

“He is Linley!” The green-eyebrowed man was immediately shocked to his senses.

Linley’s unique Dragonform, after he had killed those two Seven Star Fiends, had been made known to the high level members of the eight great

clans.

“Flee!” The green-eyebrowed man immediately turned to flee.

At this time, an earthen yellow light spread out, forming an enormous sphere of earthen yellow light. The green-eyebrowed Seven Star Fiend, just a hundred meters away from Linley, was naturally trapped within that area, and a terrifying gravity was applied to his body.

His speed slowed drastically!

“Aaaargh!” Knowing that he wouldn’t be able to flee, the green-eyebrowed man turned and delivered a full force sword blow towards Linley.

An illusory, translucent sword shadow flew out of his greatsword, shooting straight towards Linley. Linley didn’t have any time to dodge, and he didn’t try to dodge! He still charged straight towards that green-eyebrowed man. As that translucent sword shadow pierced into Linley’s body, Linley also delivered a vicious, smashing fist blow against the head of the green-eyebrowed man.

“BANG!”

The head was shattered, and the divine spark flew out.

“Big Brother!” The distant, skinnier green-eyebrowed man, upon seeing this, couldn’t help but call out in agony.

On a distant mountaintop, Elder Bulo, who hadn’t been planning to get involved, couldn’t help but raise his head and stare, his eyes gleaming. “So he is Linley. Hmph. Those idiots from the Barbary clan. As soon as they meet someone with a tough body, they are useless.”

Elder Bulo’s lips trembled slightly.

Instantly…

An enormous phantom in the shape of a black serpent appeared behind Elder Bulo. This enormous black serpent covered the entire mountain. Its body was so enormous as to be astonishing. A terrifying aura suddenly filled the skies.

After having just killed a Seven Star Fiend, Linley, for some reason, felt a sense of fear in his heart.

Linley turned to stare below him, and he saw Elder Bulo staring at him coldly. The shadowy illusion of that enormous black serpent, in particular, caused Linley to unconsciously think about what he had seen last time.

“Not good. This is the innate divine ability, ‘Soul Extinguisher’.” Linley’s face changed dramatically.

Last time, his subordinate had rescued him, but this time, there was nobody near him.

Chapter 31 – A Battle of Sovereign's Mights

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 31, A Battle of Sovereign's Mights

The speed of this innate divine ability, 'Soul Extinguisher', was simply too fast. On the ground, that balding Elder Bulo stared coldly as his lips moved slightly. Behind him hovered that enormous illusion of a black serpent, which only had a single, solitary red eye, and the eye was staring fixedly at Linley.

A crack appeared in Elder Bulo's forehead, between his eyebrows, and a translucent light instantly slashed through the skies, piercing into the range of the 'Blackstone Space', shooting directly into Linley's body. The speed was so fast that Linley wasn't able to dodge at all.

The innate divine ability of the Ashcroft clan – Soul Extinguisher!

"Elder Linley!" The surviving Six Star Fiends of the Azure Dragon clan, upon seeing this, were all stunned.

"Bastard." The skinny, green-eyebrowed man ground his teeth as he stared at Linley, rage still burning in his heart. Just now, it had been Linley who had killed his older brother. "It's your luck that I wasn't able to kill you myself."

From afar, as Emanuel saw this, his eyes lit up. "The Azure Dragon ring!"

Emanuel immediately flew towards Linley at high speed.

Within the limitless space in Linley's mind, outside his sea of consciousness, there was that protective membrane of scales which was a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. This enormous membrane had a single tiny flaw, and that flaw was its weakness.

On the surface of the soul sea.

Beneath the seven-colored sword-shaped soul, a Linley dressed in a light green robe was standing. This was Linley's 'divine wind clone'. When battling, Linley only brought out a single one of his divine clones.

In the hands of his divine wind clone, there was a drop of azure water… water-type Sovereign's Might.

"Let's see if you can break through. If you can break through, then I'll be forced to use this Sovereign's Might." Linley had been prepared long ago, and he had his divine wind clone carry that drop of Sovereign's Might at all times. As for the divine wind clone, within the soul sea, it was standing right next to that sword-shaped soul.

Once danger came, his divine wind clone would immediately activate the drop of Sovereign's Might and use it to protect the soul, as well as counter-attack.

"Crunch!"

That translucent ray of light shot out at incomparable speed, as straight as an arrow, piercing forward, drilling down with vicious precision against that semi-translucent scaled membrane. It was so fast and so vicious…that it was definitely the most powerful attack that Linley had ever encountered.

Crack!

Like an egg striking a stone, the ray of light struck directly atop the scaled membrane, and then it completely shattered apart.

"Eh? This is the Soul Extinguisher?" Linley was stunned. "How come it didn't hurt me at all. Even that simple soul attack which Mosley had used was more dangerous to me than this innate divine ability."

"It seems as though this attack doesn't have any sentience at all."

Indeed. Innate divine ability were very rigid, fixed types of attacks. For

example, the ‘Godeater’ ability could only be used to devour divine sparks. If it succeeded, it succeeded. If it failed, it failed. The ‘Soul Extinguisher’ could only shoot forward, using raw, brute force to shatter anything that blocked in its path, then extinguished the enemy’s soul.

It was the same for Dylin and Tarosse’s innate divine abilities. The power was great, but the abilities were very rigid.

Once these innate divine abilities were activated, they would consume quite a bit of spiritual energy. You couldn’t use less spiritual energy if you wanted to. They were extremely rigid.

For soul attacks, sentience actually didn’t matter too much.

This was because generally speaking, if a Highgod had a ‘soul-protecting divine artifact’, it would protect all parts of the soul. For example, Bebe. His soul-protecting divine artifact protected every part of his soul. There were no ‘weak spots’…and thus, sentience didn’t matter.

One simply had to use raw power to break through. That was enough.

This was true for the ‘Soul Extinguisher’ as well. Unfortunately, what Linley possessed was a damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Aside from that flaw, the defensive strength of the other areas was exactly the same as a normal soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

A Highgod, break through the defense of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact with his attack?

In his dreams!

Thus…this technique by a supreme expert, ‘Bulo’, failed.

Linley stood there in the boundless skies, in the center of a sphere of earthen yellow light that was five hundred meters in diameter. On the ground, that balding, ancient Elder ‘Bulo’ raised his head to stare at Linley. That originally cold, sinister expression of his gradually changed into

astonishment.

“Swoosh!” Emanuel flew towards Linley at high speed, laughing mockingly in his heart. “Those idiots. They killed Linley, but they didn’t immediately go take the spoils of battle. But how could they know that Linley had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact?”

Emanuel was exceedingly delighted with himself.

“Linley, now that you are dead, this belongs to me.” Emanuel was very smug, but as he entered the region of the Blackstone Space, he couldn’t help but be puzzled. “Why hasn’t Linley’s Blackstone Space collapsed?”

If a person died, his space should collapse.

“Emanuel.” A cold, emotionless voice rang out.

“Uh?” Emanuel was stunned. He turned to look, and saw Linley’s dark golden eyes staring at him.

“Why have you come over? To help me out?” Linley stared at Emanuel, who had a look of astonishment on his face. Linley couldn’t help but laugh coldly in his heart, “This Emanuel has never given up on acquiring my Coiling Dragon ring.”

Emanuel immediately recovered from his shock. He couldn’t help but laugh awkwardly, “Elder Linley, you really are formidable. I…I saw that you were in a dangerous situation just now, Elder, and so I wanted to come help. But it seems, Elder, you don’t need my assistance. I’ll go deal with some other people. I’ll hand that old fellow down below to you. I trust, Elder Linley, that you’ll be able to easily deal with him.”

Emanuel immediately flew away, retreating.

“Despicable fellow!”

“Hmph!” Linley felt contempt in his heart, then turned to look at the bald

fellow who had attacked him. “Easily deal with him? It would seem that it won’t be very easy to kill this old fellow.” Linley could had a sense of danger.

But Linley wasn’t afraid either.

He currently had three drops of Sovereign’s Might, and his divine wind clone was right there in his sea of consciousness, ready to activate it at any moment.

“Haha…”

Ancient-sounding laughter rang out from the mouth of the old, bald figure below him. The wrinkles on his face contorted like serpents. “Linley, it now seems that last time, when you killed Mosley and the other one, you were still hiding your power! Admirable, admirable!”

Linley stared at this old man, and as he did, one person’s biographical data floated up to his mind.

When in Bloodbath Gorge, the Azure Dragon clan had provided him with a very clear explanation of some of the particularly dangerous individuals of the eight great clans. The danger these individuals posed was vastly greater than that of ordinary Seven Star Fiends. They were comparable to the clan’s ‘trump cards’!

The old man in front him was one of them!

What Linley didn’t know was that his accomplishments in the previous battle had brought him to the attention of the various great clans, and they too had put his information into their list of ‘dangerous figures’.

“If my guess is correct, you should be Elder Bulo of the Ashcroft clan.” Linley said in a clear voice as he stood there, high up in the air in the middle of that enormous sphere, staring down at Bulo.

“Correct.”

Bulo smiled, but because his face was covered in wrinkles, this smile made him look all the more savage. “You were able to resist my innate divine ability, which means your soul defense is truly quite formidable. But you intentionally pretended that it was your weak spot. Hmph. Hmph. Admirable.”

That ancient voice echoed in the skies.

“However, today, I want to see how your physical defense is, in comparison to your ‘Genius Elder’, Blue!” The bald old man said, and then his entire body began to hiss as tiny, dense black scales appeared, covering his entire body. A fierce, slender serpentine tail emerged from behind him as well…

The Ashcroft clan descended from a supreme divine beast of the Netherworld, the ‘Nether Serpent’.

Their strength was no less than that of the Azure Dragon clan’s.

“Linley!” A furious bellow rang out, and a pale, ashen shadow tore through the skies, charging towards Linley.

Linley turned and saw that a seemingly blurry white figure was coming towards him. It was a savage-faced, green-eyebrowed man. The man immediately charged into the Blackstone Space, and as he did, Linley instantly changed the direction of the gravity.

Made it go downwards!

The skinny, green-eyebrowed man strove to resist that downwards pull, but his speed still slowed dramatically.

Right at this moment, he heard a furious shout. “Hales [Hei’er’si], leave Linley to me. You go kill the other one!”

The skinny, green-eyebrowed man turned to look at the already Serpentformed Bulo, then said in a hateful voice, “Fine, Elder Bulo, I’ll

hand this Linley to you. You absolutely must kill him and avenge my elder brother!"

"Don't worry." Buler was completely confident.

The skinny, green-eyebrowed man, 'Hales', glared hatefully at Linley, then with a cold snort turned and charged towards the distant Emanuel. Emanuel had been watching this entire time. When he saw that Hales went to attack Linley as well, his joy was indescribable.

Who would have imagined that with but a single word from that bald old man, Hales had come to attack him instead.

"Motherf*cker…" With a low curse, Emanuel had no choice but to charge towards Hales.

Linley stared up in front, at the 'freak' located outside his Blackstone Space. Elder Bulo's entire body was densely covered by the tiny black scales of the Nether Serpent. Only his chest still had a patch of large violet scales.

His slender serpentine tail quivered slightly, while in the center of Elder Bulo's forehead, a single red eye had appeared from a crack.

"So this is the transformation of the Nether Serpent clan?" Linley was secretly astonished.

In truth, Linley's Dragonform was just as bizarre as Bulo's. He had multiple fierce spikes radiating out from his spine, while his elbows and knees had sharp spikes jutting out as well. Linley's entire body looked akin to a human-shaped weapon.

Freak against freak!

"Linley, today, you absolutely will die." Elder Bulo said in his hoarse voice. "Only, I want to see how long you can hold out for!"

“Bulo, today, you too must die. I, too, want to see how long you can hold out!” Linley said coldly. Linley had already made his plans in advance. First, he’d rely on his body to battle. If he wasn’t able to hold out…then even if he had to sacrifice a drop of Sovereign’s Might, he had to kill this Bulo.

An expert of this level was worth sacrificing a drop of Sovereign’s Might for.

“Bang!” Elder Bulo suddenly shot forward, charging directly into the Blackstone Space, and as he did, his speed couldn’t help decline.

“In my Blackstone Space, you will be at a great disadvantage.” Linley charged towards Elder Bulo.

But right at this moment…

Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that Elder Bulo’s entire body wriggled forward like a serpent, easily and agilely gliding forward. Even within the Blackstone Space, although Elder Bulo’s speed wasn’t that fast, he was still incredibly agile.

“How…how is this possible?” Linley was shocked.

This was the first time a person within his Blackstone Space had been affected so weakly.

“Haha…” Elder Bulo laughed wildly, and suddenly, he transformed into a black shadow, piercing through the skies and charging directly towards Linley. Linley, astonished, released a backhand palm blow, carrying within it the ‘Profound Truths of Velocity’ as he smashed towards that black shadow!

Two terrifying surges of energy collided.

“WHAP!”

A sound that was so clear and sharp, it caused space itself crack apart. Spatial ripples spread out in every direction, while Linley himself was sent flying backwards from the vibrations of the clash. His already Dragonformed right hand was uncontrollably trembling, and the palm of his hand was filled with a heart-boring pain.

“Your body’s strength really isn’t bad.” Elder Bulo snickered.

“Why the smugness?” Linley gritted his teeth. “In my Blackstone Space, although the effect on you isn’t great, it isn’t small either.”

Linley flashed forward like a bolt of lightning, while Elder Bulo didn’t show any weakness either, immediately moving forward to welcome him.

“Spiritual Chaos!” Linley instantly used his spiritual energy through the black stone to affect Elder Bulo, while at the same time, his twin fists struck out mercilessly…

Although Elder Bulo was able to resist the Spiritual Chaos technique, he still was slightly distracted.

“Whap!” “Bam!” “Bang!”

Linley’s fists, legs, and even his draconic tail struck viciously in succession against Elder Buler.

“Eh?” Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that Elder Bulo’s body was very slippery. It felt as though only half of the power of his blows had been applied. Elder Buler, with a somersault, flipped far away, then recovered in mid-air. He began to laugh from his rage. “Your soul really is quite formidable.”

“However…”

Elder Bulo’s body actually began to lengthen, as though he was transforming into a serpent, becoming soft and boneless as his serpentine tail extended as well. Elder Bulo, normally just the height of an ordinary

person, had now transformed into a serpentine shape that was dozens of meters long.

“Haha…” Suddenly, from afar, a wild burst of laughter erupted, and a surge of terrifying power blasted out. Even Linley and Elder Bulo, in the midst of their battle, couldn’t help but be distracted and turn to look…

“You want to kill me? In your dreams!”

Emanuel’s entire body was encased in azure light, and every part of his body was emanating with that heart-shaking aura. As for that green-eyebrowed Hales, he was already dead, the shattered remnants of his corpse having already fallen to the ground.

“Emanuel used his Sovereign’s Might?” Linley was shocked.

“Sovereign’s Might?” Elder Bulo’s face changed dramatically as well.

Because the person who had used the Sovereign’s Might…belonged to the enemy!

Chapter 32 – Wanting to Steal a Chicken, Instead Losing the Bait

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 32, Wanting to Steal a Chicken, Instead Losing the Bait

“Wonderful.” Linley rejoiced. “Although Emanuel and I have some conflicts between us, we are of the same clan, after all.” Emanuel, upon having used his Sovereign’s Might, had gained tremendous power.

As for the enemy, the two Green Eyebrow Brothers had both died, leaving behind only Elder Bulo!

It was easy to see who held the advantage.

Elder Bulo suddenly let out a savage growl, and the eye in the center of his forehead turned so red, it seemed as though it was about to drip blood. Suddenly, he swiped out with his arm, and that soft, boneless arm actually elongated, slashing through the air and clawing towards Linley. The space which the arm danced through began to tremble.

“Swish!” A devilish violet light flashed.

Where the devilish sword light flashed past, space split apart, revealing tears. Bloodviolet chopped directly against that black scaled-covered arm.

“Hiss…” An ear-piercing sound suddenly came from long, slender arm. The scales split open, and Bloodviolet plunged into the flesh. However, it wasn’t able to cut any deeper, as the flesh was incomparably tough.

“Haaaargh!”

Linley, with a savage right fist, swung directly at that long arm, but with a ‘bang’ sound, the arm actually twisted, clawing towards Linley’s elbow.

Linley wasn't able to dodge in time at all, Elder Bulo managed to seize his right arm.

Elder Bulo's fingernails suddenly turned black, and as sharp as daggers. At the same time, Elder Bulo suddenly applied pressure through his left arm, using those sharp fingernails to try and pierce into Linley's right arm. Linley let out a low growl, and the muscles on his right arm instantly bulged.

"Ah!" Linley kicked out mightily, smashing directly towards that long arm.

"Bang!" When the tip of his foot connected with the flesh on that long arm, it was like having kicked a wad of cotton.

Elder Bulo's arm trembled slightly, but he had actually managed to deflect Linley's attack. "Swoosh!" Elder Bulo borrowed the counter-forced to come charging closer, and as he did, this giant that was tens of meters long came hurtling towards Linley.

A bloody aura was throwing itself towards Linley at the same time as well.

"This Elder Bulo's defense is not only powerful, it is also as slippery and soft as a serpent. How odd." Linley began to sense how hard to deal with this person was. This Nether Serpent clan, capable of stalemating the Azure Dragon clan, really did have its own unique abilities.

"Emanuel, hurry up and join up with me to kill him." Linley hurriedly sent through divine sense.

After having used a drop of Sovereign's Might, Emanuel was now extremely powerful.

But Linley discovered, to his amazement, that Emanuel was pretending to have heard nothing, and was instead chasing after and pursuing those fleeing enemy Six Star Fiends.

"Join forces with you?" Emanuel laughed coldly in his heart. "In your

dreams. I'll first let that Bulo kill you, and then I'll take that Azure Dragon ring. Although you have clones, and I won't be able to bind it with blood right away, but…your remaining divine clones are so weak. How will you fight against me?"

It was only because Linley was powerful that he was able to maintain ownership of the Coiling Dragon ring.

As Emanuel saw it, if Linley's most powerful divine clone was destroyed, how could Linley continue to keep the Azure Dragon ring?

"Bastard!" Linley cursed in his heart. He was cursing both Emanuel as well as this Elder Bulo who was right in front of him. In a physical close-combat, Elder Bulo occasionally hit hard and occasionally was soft and slippery, causing Linley to be at complete disadvantage.

"Bang!"

The two separated once again.

"This Linley really is tough to deal with." Elder Bulo felt a headache coming as well.

Just based on close-quarters combat, he was stronger than Linley. But…in that Blackstone Space, he was at a disadvantage to begin with. In addition, Linley would constantly, randomly change the direction of the gravity, sometimes upwards, sometimes downwards, sometimes towards Linley, sometimes away from Linley.

The bizarre changes of the gravity's direction caused Elder Bulo a headache, causing him to be unable to have any advantage at all.

"Emanuel, come over and kill him together with me!" Linley called out loudly.

"Emanuel?" Elder Bulo was shocked.

“Eh?” Emanuel couldn’t help but turn over.

Just now, when Linley had used divine sense, Emanuel could pretend that he didn’t hear. But now that Linley was shouting so loudly, even the surviving Six Star Fiends of the clan heard the call. Naturally, those distant, spectating intelligence agents probably heard the call as well.

If he still didn’t act, then if Linley were to die, when the intelligence agents made their report, Emanuel would be in trouble!

“This Bulo is such an idiot.” Emanuel cursed to himself.

Shouting was something that required time. During a furious battle such as this, Linley didn’t have any chance to shout at all. If Bulo was able to seize an advantage and to hold Linley down while beating upon him or just kill Linley, then Emanuel’s plot would have succeeded.

But now that Linley and Bulo were battling to a virtual standstill, Linley naturally had the chance to shout out loudly.

“Alright, Linley, let’s kill him together.” Emanuel intentionally shouted back loudly as well.

These words frightened Bulo so much, he immediately went to his last resort…using Sovereign’s Might!

“You want to kill me? Haha…” The ancient-sounding laughter shook the heavens, and Elder Bulo’s body once more returned to his normal size. At the same time, his entire body became covered with a layer of a black glow, which at the same time also emanating a terrifying aura, completely comparable to Emanuel.

“He also used Sovereign’s Might?” Linley was shocked. “The Elder said that the advantage our Four Divine Beasts clan has is that we have some more Sovereign’s Might. I didn’t expect that this Bulo has Sovereign’s Might as well. Terrible.”

The ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan were Sovereigns. Naturally, they had an excess of Sovereign's Might, giving virtually every single one of their Elders a drop.

As for the ancestors of the eight great clans, they weren't that formidable. Sovereign's Might was extremely rare, and only the most supreme of Elders would be in possession of a drop. And thus, Bulo had one!

"Emanuel, hurry over." Linley sent through divine sense, shouting frantically. Emanuel just stood there in mid-air, not in a hurry to charge over at all. Linley instantly understood. "This Emanuel…actually has this sort of plot!"

Emanuel laughed coldly in his heart. "He used Sovereign's Might? Excellent. Then first kill Linley."

"Linley!"

A low growl, and Elder Bulo charged directly towards Linley.

Linley's face changed. "Rumble…" The direction of the gravity of the Blackstone Space suddenly changed, transforming into a repulsive force! The powerful repulsive energy forced Elder Bulo outwards.

However, the power of Sovereign's Might was simply too great.

Even when trapped within the 'Blackstone Space', Elder Bulo was still able to forcibly resist that repulsive force, and his speed was still very fast. He wildly chased after Linley, who turned and ran directly towards Emanuel.

"If you won't come to me, I'll go to you!" Linley said to himself.

In an instant, Linley charged over to him.

"Hmph. I might as well kill you first, actually." Elder Bulo, seeing the nearby Emanuel, could sense the aura of Sovereign's Might emanating from him, and thus he immediately turned to attack Emanuel instead.

After all…

Emanuel was more of a threat to him!

Linley couldn't be bothered to care about Emanuel. "This Bulo is too powerful. When trapped in the Blackstone Space, he was still able to fight me to a draw. As for his soul attacks…it's only because he used his innate divine ability that he became deceived into thinking my soul defense is strong. Once he begins to use soul attacks, I definitely won't be a match for him."

This misunderstanding had caused Elder Bulo to not use any soul attacks at all.

But Linley could tell that even if he used Sovereign's Might, he still probably wouldn't be able to overcome Bulo. After all, in a normal situation, he was weaker than Bulo. If the two of them were both to use Sovereign's Might, the ratio of power between the two of them wouldn't change.

"Flee!"

Linley directly fled towards the north.

"Bang!" A terrifying explosive sound rang out. The battle between two experts who had both used Sovereign's Might was fierce and terrifying.

"Whoosh!"

Linley flew at high speed, while at the same time, he could sense the terrifying explosive vibrations from behind.

"This is too high profile." Linley was secretly shocked.

If he was able to defeat the opponent by using Sovereign's Might, Linley definitely would use it. But since he knew he wouldn't be able to win, it

was best to flee.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Two figures, one after the other, actually suddenly appeared in the skies above him. At the same time, a voice entered Linley’s mind. “Linley, hurry up and use your Sovereign’s Might. The two of us can join forces and kill him together!”

Linley raised his head to look.

He saw, in mid-air, an azure ball of light fleeing for his life, with a black ball of life in pursuit.

“Linley!” The azure ball of light suddenly turned, flying over to Linley once more.

Linley was now in the same situation that Emanuel had been in. He didn’t want to help Emanuel, but Emanuel was now running towards him… forcing him to intervene.

“Linley, if you still refuse to act, once my divine water clone dies, I will definitely go tell the Grand Elder of this. Definitely!!!” Emanuel sent to Linley frantically through his divine sense.

A drop of Sovereign’s Might contained an astonishing amount of energy.

After all, it was liquefied Sovereign power.

Generally speaking, in a battle, it could only last for a while. But Emanuel had used his Sovereign’s Might earlier on, and it was quite some time ago. Once the energy of the Sovereign’s Might was used up…he would definitely die.

“Hurry up, Linley!” Emanuel called out frantically.

“BANG!”

The azure ball of light once more exchange blows viciously with that black ball of light, and the azure ball of light was actually sent smashing down towards the ground. Emanuel clearly was at a disadvantage.

“Hey, what an exciting battle, eh?” A carefree voice suddenly shook the skies, entering the ears of these three. Unconsciously, Emanuel, Elder Bulo, and Linley all turned to stare towards the source of that voice…

A muscular man, three meters tall, dressed in fiery red armor, with long, scarlet red hair fluttering freely in the breeze. His tiger-like eyes swept the area, and a smile was on his face.

“Oh, Linley!” The muscular man laughed as he looked towards Linley. “Long time no see. I heard that you became an Elder of the Four Divine Beasts clan? Haha, it seems as though it’s been less than a thousand years since we parted, but you’ve become so strong.”

Linley stared at this person. He was stunned for a long moment, then finally, Linley said, “Phusro!”

“Haha, you still remember me.” Phusro began to laugh loudly.

This man in front of him, amazingly enough, was that Volcano Titan. That person who had been subject to a master-servant bond, and so had been forced to transform into a small kitten and endure countless years of servitude and humiliation. That supreme expert, ‘Phusro’. Even a Seven Star Fiend, in front of Phusro, could only choose to flee.

“Swoosh!” The azure ball of light scurried towards Linley’s side. Linley turned to look towards ‘Emanuel’, only to see the azure light covering Emanuel’s body grow weaker and weaker, then completely vanish.

“My Sovereign’s Might is all used up.” Emanuel stared at him. “It’s up to you, now.”

But Elder Bulo, his entire body still covered with that black aura, was

hovering not too far away. “Used up your Sovereign’s Might? Haha, the two of you can die now.” As he spoke, he transformed into a ray of black light, shooting directly towards Linley.

“BANG!”

A ray of fiery light collided with the black light, and the black light was actually sent flying backwards.

Phusro stretched out his arm, retrieving that fiery, giant red awl. Elder Bulo stood there in mid-air, staring at Phusro in shock. “You…you…” Just now, Phusro’s awl-blow had smashed him backwards.

Even an Asura couldn’t so easily send him flying backwards after he, Bulo, had used Sovereign’s Might.

“Hey, what’s going on here?” Phusro frowned, staring at him.

“Who are you?” Elder Bulo growled softly.

“That’s none of your business. This Linley is my friend. You want to kill him…” Phusro grinned. “After getting this weapon of mine, it hasn’t really killed any supreme experts yet.” The fiery red awl in Phusro’s hand was more than two meters long.

Sharp at one end, blunt at the other. It was like a massive bull’s horn.

Linley just watched all this happen in disbelief.

Phusro was powerful, true, but…Bulo had used Sovereign’s Might. Currently, even if an Asura came, the Asura probably wouldn’t be able to so effortless force him to retreat.

“Linley, he…who is he?” Emanuel was tongue-tied as well.

“A friend of mine.” This was the only answer Linley could give. At the same time, Linley was puzzled. Phusro’s weapon, in the past, had been a

massive axe. Since when did it become this fiery red awl? This awl…

Seemed to be quite extraordinary!

“Then you are looking for death!” Elder Bulo bellowed furious. A long black whip appeared in his hand, and the long black whip, filled with Sovereign power, lashed out directly towards Phusro. Where the long whip passed, space itself split open.

But Phusro just grabbed his giant awl, then gave it a toss…

Like a dagger being thrown, the big, fiery red awl transformed into a ray of fiery light, soaring outwards. With a ‘bang’ sound, the black whip actually shattered. At the same time, a large hole appeared in Elder Bulo’s chest.

The fiery red awl flew back into Phusro’s hand.

“Are you still refusing to f*ck off? I injured you this time, but next time, I’m going to kill you.” Phusro said, holding that giant, fiery awl.

“That…that’s…”

Elder Bulo stared in disbelief at that red awl. “A Sovereign artifact?”

“Haha, not bad. Good eye.” Phusro laughed smugly.

Sovereign’s Might, to a Sovereign, was a commonplace thing. But a Sovereign artifact….that was something which a Sovereign had to spend countless amounts of time, effort, and Sovereign power to nurture and develop. The power of a Sovereign artifact vastly exceeded Sovereign’s Might!

In particular, weapon-type Sovereign artifacts. Using them to kill Highgods would result in an utter massacre.

Chapter 33 – Bulo – Unwilling to Give Up

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 33, Bulo, Unwilling to Give Up

Given how the situation had developed, in his heart, Bulo was filled with unwillingness to accept this outcome. “Hales and his brother both died. On this assault, our side lost a pair of Seven Star Fiends, but not a single one of the Seven Star Fiends of the Four Divine Beasts clan perished. And I even used up a drop of Sovereign’s Might!”

Humiliation!

Once the results of this battle became widely known, this would definitely result in the other members of the clan looking down at him, and the Patriarch would definitely be unhappy as well.

“But this person has a Sovereign artifact.” Bulo looked towards Phusro. Although his heart was filled with rage, he could only choose to submit. After all, resisting meant death! There was no question about this.

“Based on your transformation, you should be from the Netherworld’s Ashcroft clan.” Phusro stared down from up above, then said casually, “When you go back, convey some words back to your Patriarch. Just say that this time, I’m giving your Patriarch face and so I’m not killing you. But if next time, you guys still dare to do anything to my friend ‘Linley’, then hehe…haha…well, you can go imagine what the repercussions will be. Just remember, the only thing that matters is that you don’t do anything to Linley. As for the others, I don’t give a damn.”

Bulo’s heart trembled.

As for Emanuel, his face turned ugly to behold. He glanced sideways at Phusro. “This big fellow seems to have some sort of friendship with Linley, rather than some sort of friendship with my clan.” Phusro’s words made it very clear…

He wouldn't get involved in the battle between the eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Linley's heart was filled with questions.

"Phusro and I…in actuality, the only time we met and chatted was that time when he escaped. In truth, the relationship between us isn't that deep. For my sake, he would be willing to set turn his face in opposition against the eight great clans?" Linley didn't understand.

Could it be that he was just that charismatic?

It was easy to understand why Phusro would save him, but threaten the enemy's Patriarch? This was very hard to understand.

"Right. I will definitely convey your words." Bulo's heart still held rage within it, but on the surface, he still lowered his head in submission. At present, Bulo had already completely reverted back to his human form, and even the two serpents hanging from his ears didn't dare to hiss.

"Well, f*ck off, then!" Phusro waved his hand.

Bulo immediately transformed into a ray of light, moving towards the depths of the mountain forests, then disappearing.

After flying twenty or thirty kilometers, Bulo landed to the ground. His wrinkle-covered face began to twist and contort with rage, and his pair of viperous eyes became filled with a sinister light.

"Am I supposed to go back? Say that I failed to kill a single Seven Star Fiend, but that two of ours died?" Bulo was livid.

It wasn't a major issue if any of the other Elders of the clan failed in a mission. But…he was Bulo! A 'trump card' level figure within the clan. For him to meet with a result such as this on a mission…the other members of the eight great clans would definitely discuss this behind his back.

He couldn't accept being embarrassed like this!

When one possessed unlimited lifespan such as these supreme experts, one would care deeply about their 'face'.

"No. That Phusro is very possibly going to leave. Once he leaves…I can absolutely intercept them and kill them enroute." Bulo's eyes lit up. Even though he didn't dare to kill Linley, he still dared to kill Emanuel.

"Whoooooosh."

His Sovereign's Might turned transparent, and immediately spread out to a distance of tens of kilometers, encapsulating Phusro, Linley, and Emanuel, the three of whom were still engaging in conversation.

Sovereign's Might could be used for material attacks and could also be used for spiritual attacks.

Using divine sense to investigate, in turn, was in reality just spreading out one's spiritual energy.

This Sovereign's Might, since capable of being transforming into spiritual attacks and spiritual barriers, naturally was also capable of being used for 'divine sense scouting', and the effectiveness of it was very great. Even the distance and area at which it could be used was greatly expanded! But of course, how could an ordinary supreme expert possibly be willing to use up Sovereign's Might for divine sense scouting?

The effect of using Sovereign's Might to do scouting was akin to a Sovereign himself scouting. Naturally, Phusro, Linley, and Emanuel didn't notice it at all.

"Hey, little fella, you can go back now." Phusro gestured disdainfully towards Emanuel. "It's been a long time since Linley and I met, and there's some things we have to say to each other. Hurry on back. What, do you want to eavesdrop on our conversation, kid?"

Emanuel didn't dare to say anything.

"Linley, I'll head back for now, then." Emanuel smiled towards Linley while also making a respectful, fractional bow towards Phusro. But Phusro simply snorted, causing Emanuel to be rather embarrassed.

"Elder Emanuel, have a safe trip." Linley laughed calmly.

"Elder Linley, you'll be going back by yourself. You need to be careful of the enemy as well." Emanuel said, seemingly in a very friendly way. And then, Emanuel immediately flew away.

"Travelling by himself?" Bulo, who was using his Sovereign's Might to watch this, couldn't help but reveal a smile on his ancient, withered face. And then, his muddy yellow eyes narrowed. "I need to hurry. My Sovereign's Might has almost been used up. I need to seize this bit of remaining time to kill that fellow named Emanuel."

Bulo immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying in pursuit.

A drop of Sovereign's Might in liquid form could be used for a fairly long period of time. Even if Bulo didn't use the Sovereign's Might, he would be able to easily kill Emanuel. Given that he had in fact used it…at present, Emanuel had no ability to fight back at all.

Emanuel travelled back by himself towards the direction of the Four Divine Beasts clan, his face extremely sinister and gloomy.

This time, he had wanted to let Linley's strongest clone be killed. That goal had become a failure. But that was secondary. More importantly…he not only hadn't had any gains, he had even used up a drop of Sovereign's Might!

"A drop of Sovereign's Might…I only had one drop!" Emanuel felt great unhappiness in his heart.

If one had to use up Sovereign's Might, one had to at least have some gains to show for it. But what had he gained?

"The ancestors are dead. The clan's stockpile of Sovereign's Might has continuously dwindled, and is in fact personally overseen by the Patriarch. The Patriarch has always been biased against me…how can he possibly give me another drop of Sovereign's Might?"

While flying back, Emanuel continued to consider what to do.

"It's all Linley's fault. He didn't use his Sovereign's Might to join forces with me in killing that Bulo. If we killed Bulo…the Patriarch definitely would have bestowed another Sovereign's Might upon me for rendering such a great merit." Emanuel's heart remained filled with discontent.

But right at this moment…

"Eh?" Emanuel suddenly felt his heart clench in fear. He couldn't help to turn and look, and as he did, a black bolt of lightning seemed to strike towards him. The terrifying aura which emanated from that black flash caused Emanuel's face to change, instantly turning white!

"Sovereign's Might!" Emanuel's eyes turned round and huge.

"Bang!"

Emanuel's entire body was blown apart, and his divine spark fell down.

At this moment, a figure appeared in mid-air. Bald. Ancient. The figure was Elder Bulo.

"Hmph. At least I've killed a Seven Star Fiend. When I go back, I'll be able to defend myself." Elder Bulo had been very unwilling to accept this outcome, but after killing Emanuel, he immediately felt much better. When he went back to make the report…

He could completely explain that the reason why Linley didn't die was

because of that Phusro. He himself didn't have the ability to do anything about it. But at least he had killed the other Seven Star Fiend.

"Whooosh."

With a wave of his hand, Elder Bulo collected the interspatial ring, then let out a low snort. "So he really did have a divine clone staying in the Skyrite Mountains. This ring is pointless to me, then." Applying a bit of force to it, he made the interspatial ring shatter.

As for that divine spark hovering in front of him, Elder Bulo couldn't even be bothered to grab it. He didn't care about such a thing.

"Eh?"

Elder Bulo lowered his head to look at himself. The black aura surrounding him had almost vanished.

"Better leave." Elder Bulo seized the remaining moments to immediately fly towards the east, vanishing. And, just moments after Elder Bulo left, two figures pierced through the skies and appeared here. It was Linley and Phusro.

Linley lowered his head, looking down carefully at the ground.

He had been chatting idly with Phusro, but suddenly, he had sensed an astonishing energy ripple, and so he had immediately hurried over. The remnants of Emanuel's shattered corpse were still on the ground, and his divine spark and divine artifacts were hovering there as well.

"I still came late." Linley said. "Emanuel's already dead." With a flip of his hand, Linley collected the divine spark and the divine artifact.

"If he died, he died. What's the big deal." Phusro said disdainfully.

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

Died?

Linley didn't feel the slightest bit of grief for Emanuel's death. Earlier, at that dangerous moment, Emanuel had intentionally pretended that he didn't hear Linley's divine sense. He hadn't helped, hoping to use Bulo to kill Linley.

"However, with him dead, I'll have quite a few difficulties once I return." Linley frowned. Emanuel, in the clan, was connected to quite a few people. "Hmph. We'll wait and see. It was Bulo who killed him, after all."

Upon sensing the aura of Sovereign's Might from this place, Linley was able to guess that this was Bulo's doing.

"Hey, Phusro. You weren't finished speaking just now." Linley turned to look at Phusro and laughed as he spoke.

"Oh. Right. That year, when I arrived at the 'Muja Continent', I acquired my Sovereign artifact." As Phusro spoke, he began to laugh so happily that his eyes half-closed. Clearly, he felt quite delighted.

Muja Continent? Linley knew that this was one of the five continents of the Infernal Realm.

"Linley, have you ever seen a Sovereign?" Phusro said in an intentionally mysterious manner.

Linley shook his head. "No. I've only seen a scryer recording of a Sovereign. However, all I saw was an enormous blurry face formed from energy."

"That's just an illusion the Sovereign generated. It isn't the Sovereign's true body." Phusro said smugly. "Linley, there's something you don't know… when I arrived at the Muja Continent, I met a supreme expert and engaged in a competition with him!"

"Competition?" Linley was stunned.

“Whatever we competed in, I lost!”

Phusro said resignedly. “We competed in material attacks. I lost. We competed in spiritual attacks. I still lost. We competed in speed. I lost… even when we competed in the aspect I am proudest in, my physical strength, I still lost.”

“You lost in everything?” Linley was shocked. At the same time, he couldn’t help but guess what the truth was.

“Only later did I discover…”

Phusro laughed. “He was a Sovereign!”

Although Linley had guessed this, upon hearing this, he was still shocked. After a moment, he laughed loudly, “Haha, Phusro, you actually competed against a Sovereign? Haha…”

“How was I supposed to know that he was a Sovereign? He hid his true power. I only took him to be another Highgod.” Phusro said resignedly. “He didn’t reveal off any of his majestic Sovereign’s presence…only at the end, when he asked if I was willing to be his Emissary or not, did he show off his majestic Sovereign’s presence. Only then did I realize he was a Sovereign.”

“A Sovereign of what element?” Linley asked.

“A fire-type Sovereign!”

Phusro laughed. “I am a fire-type expert. When I competed with him in attacks, we both competed in using fire-type attacks. Linley…I have the feeling that ever since I met you, my luck has been excellent!”

“The first time I met you, I escaped from my countless years of bondage.”

“And then, just a few centuries later, I became a Sovereign’s Emissary.”

Phusro was quite delighted with himself. “This is the Sovereign artifact the Sovereign bestowed upon me. My power was comparable to the Infernal Asuras to begin with. Now that I have a Sovereign artifact…haha, in the entire Infernal Realm, there are very few people capable of surpassing me.”

“Very few who can surpass you? You mean to say, there’s still some people stronger than you?” Linley laughed.

“A few, I suppose.”

Phusro said. “After all, in the Infernal Realm, there’s a number of Sovereign’s Emissaries. There’s also a few extremely rare divine beasts who have extremely powerful innate divine abilities…but actually, the most powerful of all are those Highgods who have become Paragons.

Linley nodded as well.

Paragons had completely mastered and completely fused all of the profound mysteries of one of the Elemental Laws. Fusing five profound mysteries and fusing all six profound mysteries to mastery…although it was only a difference of one profound mystery, the difference in power was tremendously great.

“I’ve been in the Infernal Realm for so long, but I haven’t seen a single Paragon yet.” Linley laughed.

“Neither have I.” Phusro shook his head helplessly. “Based on what the Sovereign said, these Paragon-level Highgods, although in terms of power are of course inferior to Sovereigns, are actually even fewer in number than Sovereigns…”

Linley agreed with this as well.

“I wonder…if one were to fuse all profound mysteries into one and become a Paragon, the most invincible of Highgods…what sort of power one would have.” Linley sighed to himself.

“Linley, I have some things to attend to. I’ll leave for now.” Phusro laughed. “As for your Four Divine Beasts clan, don’t just stupidly go battle for them nonstop. Protect yourself and improve your own power first.” After speaking, Phusro flew away.

Linley chuckled, watching Phusro leave.

“Time to go back.” Linley lowered his head, glancing at Emanuel’s corpse on the ground, then flew towards the Skyrite Mountains.

Chapter 34 – The Eight Great Patriarchs

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 34, The Eight Great Patriarchs

Bloodbath Gorge.

“Whoosh!” Emanuel was currently flying at high speed through Bloodbath Gorge. The other warriors within Bloodbath Gorge couldn’t help but stare, puzzled, as Emanuel flew past at high speed.

“Isn’t this that Elder Emanuel of the Azure Dragon clan? Why is he in such a rush?”

“No idea. Must be something urgent.”

The warriors within Bloodbath Gorge all couldn’t help but comment to themselves.

Currently, Emanuel couldn’t be bothered with the idle chatter of others. A ball of fire was blazing in his heart, and fury had filled his mind. He charged directly to the residence of his father, ‘Forhan’.

“Smash!” The door was pushed open.

Forhan had been seated in his room, quietly drinking tea. He couldn’t help but raise his head in amazement. “Emanuel, what are you doing here?”

Emanuel didn’t say anything. Turning, with a ‘creaaaak’ sound, he slammed the door shut.

“Bang!” Emanuel fell to his knees, his kneecaps smashing hard against the ground. Even the tough ground cracked apart from the force of it.

“Emanuel, what are you…” Forhan immediately stood up.

“Father!” Emanuel called out with grief and fury.

“What on earth has happened?” Forhan had a bad feeling…

“My…my divine water clone died! It was because of that Linley! Because of him!!!” Emanuel said, his entire body trembling. “It was all because of him! First, he intentionally refused to participate, and then, he parted ways with me!”

“Your divine water clone died?”

Forhan’s mind went momentarily blank. His son only had two bodies in total, one a divine water clone, the other a divine wind clone. The power of his divine wind clone was ordinary, and he hadn’t been able to fuse any of the profound mysteries.

His son wouldn’t even have the chance to refine a water-type divine spark and recover his former level of power.

“What exactly happened? Explain clearly.” Forhan said hurriedly.

“Yes, Father.”

Emanuel’s face was covered in rage. Now that he had found someone to complain to, he immediately began to speak in detail. Only, once the words came out from Emanuel’s mouth, the story had changed. It seemed as though everything Linley had done, he had done to try and harm Emanuel.

The Azure Dragon Palace. The fifth floor. A side room.

The Grand Elder was seated in the meditative position on a prayer mat, quietly training. Suddenly, the Grand Elder’s forehead furrowed, and she opened her eyes. “Why are the two of them here?” The Grand Elder immediately stood up and walked towards the main hall.

“Grand Elder!” Forhan’s voice rang out.

And then, Forhan and Emanuel entered the main hall on the fifth floor.

“What are you doing, rushing in here like this!” The Grand Elder shouted in a cold, unhappy voice.

“Grand Elder, Emanuel’s divine water clone died.” Forhan said frantically.

“Eh?” The Grand Elder was shocked. She couldn’t help but look at Emanuel. “Emanuel, didn’t you and Linley go together to carry out this mission? Also, you and Linley both had a drop of Sovereign’s Might.”

“Bang!” Emanuel knelt down heavily.

“Grand Elder, Linley and I encountered three Seven Star Fiends, all of whom were extremely strong. One of them was Elder Bulo of the Ashcroft clan.” Emanuel said hurriedly.

The Grand Elder’s face changed. “It was actually him? Given his status, he should have had a drop of Sovereign’s Might.”

“However, if you and Linley had both used your Sovereign’s Might and joined forces, even if Bulo used Sovereign’s Might, the two of you, when joining forces, should’ve been able to escape with your lives.” The Grand Elder said.

“That Linley just watched me die without helping!”

Emanuel said hurriedly. “When I was in danger, he didn’t help out at all. Afterwards, an expert suddenly appeared and ordered that Bulo to temporarily halt his attacks. That expert ordered Bulo to leave, and so I thought that I was safe. Linley then said that he had something to discuss with that expert, and so I was to leave by myself first.”

“I didn’t suspect anything, and thus left by myself. But who would have imagined…” Emanuel was filled with both rage and grief. “Grand Elder, just as I left, I was ambushed by that Bulo again and killed by him. Grand Elder…it must have been arranged by Linley. He definitely must have

secretly used his divine sense to speak with that Bulo and told that Bulo to ambush me. Otherwise…how could Bulo have left, then returned to attack me?"

The Grand Elder, hearing this, frowned.

"For Linley to not assist earlier does show that he had the intention of harming you. However, as for Bulo's later attack…there's no way to be certain as to whether or not Linley used his divine sense to collude with Bulo." The Grand Elder said in a low voice. "Although Linley didn't assist you, you didn't die, after all. Your death was caused by Bulo's attack. It can't be counted as being caused by Linley."

"Grand Elder!" Emanuel was frantic.

Although the Grand Elder was his paternal grandmother, she was too obstinate and unfeeling. Even her son, 'Forhan', had to address her as 'Grand Elder.'.

"Grand Elder, think about it. If Linley didn't have the intention of killing Emanuel, how could Emanuel's divine water clone have died?" Forhan said frantically. "Why wouldn't he return alongside Emanuel? Why would he insist on them taking separate paths? Even if he wanted to speak in private, couldn't he just have Emanuel wait off to one side?"

"Also. That Bulo, having been ordered off by that mysterious expert…why would he dare return and attack? He definitely colluded with Linley." Forhan said frantically.

But they all forgot about something…

Bulo, after having used Sovereign's Might, was able to use a Sovereign's power for scouting.

"Grand Elder." Forhan said frantically.

The Grand Elder couldn't help but look towards Emanuel.

“Bang!” Forhan suddenly knelt down as well. Frantically, he said, “Mother!!!”

The Grand Elder’s body trembled. Ever since she ordered Forhan to address her as ‘Grand Elder’, it had been many years since her son had addressed her as ‘Mother’ again.

“Mother, Emanuel is my only son. His divine water clone is now dead. For his divine wind clone to grow in power will be difficult, even after the passage of countless years! Mother, the future of your grandson has been shattered by that Linley. How can you…not even a little…”

As he spoke, Forhan began to shed tears.

The Grand Elder felt her heart clench.

If she wanted to penalize Linley, just by being slightly partial, she could indeed penalize him.

“Mother!!!” Forhan said frantically.

The Grand Elder looked at the two men kneeling in front of her. One was her son, and the other was her grandson. The Grand Elder took a deep breath, then said softly, “Child, rise.”

The Grand Elder rarely displayed her emotions, and within the clan, she always gave the impression of being callous and emotionless.

However…

She was still a mother. Deep within her soul, there was still a very soft place. She wasn’t completely stone-hearted and unfeeling.

Forhan and Emanuel, hearing this, were overjoyed.

“Mother. Linley’s divine clone is at the Skyrite Mountains right now. We

can interrogate him right away." Forhan said hurriedly. "Our Azure Dragon clan should be unified and work together, but Linley actually dares to act in such a way. Even if we don't execute him, we have to punish him heavily."

"Right. Punish him heavily."

Emanuel said hurriedly. "In addition, by what right does he, a junior, hold the Azure Dragon ring of the ancestor? The Azure Dragon ring should be in your possession, grandmother. Even if you don't need it, it should be given to Father."

The Grand Elder was silent.

"Mother, shall we send someone to summon Linley over?" Forhan said hurriedly.

Linley's original body and divine wind clone were currently in the battlegrounds outside, while his fire, water, and earth clones remained in the Skyrite Mountains. They could be interrogated immediately.

"What's the rush?"

The Grand Elder glanced sideways at each of them. "Even if I am to punish him, can it be that I am supposed to punish those clones? Linley's original body isn't even back yet."

Forhan and Emanuel both came to their senses.

"Right. We shouldn't interrogate him now. Otherwise, if we interrogate his clones, he might be so frightened that his original body flees. That won't be worth it." Emanuel said hurriedly. As Emanuel and Forhan saw it, the value of Linley's clones was far inferior to the value of his original body.

After all…

Generally speaking, there were differences in power between the clones of an expert. The most important one was the one which mattered the most.

Within the borders of Indigo Prefecture. A place where four of the eight great clans were stationed.

The leader of the Ashcroft clan, which had moved here from the Netherworld, was currently chatting with Bulo's divine water clone. After all, Bulo's divine Death clone was still on the way back.

"Bulo, did you say he has a Sovereign artifact?" This Patriarch's eyes were scarlet red, and his eyebrows appeared very devilish. His long black hair which glowed with a green light extended to his knees, and the two green serpents hanging from his ears were currently staring at Bulo.

This person…

Was the leader of the Ashcroft clan, and the ancestor of the Nether Serpent clan! The most powerful expert of the Nether Serpent clan.

"Yes, Father. That fire-type Sovereign artifact is very formidable." Bulo said respectfully. "He also asked me to deliver a message to you. He said that he didn't kill me because he was giving you face, but if in the future, we dare touch Linley, then the repercussions…we can imagine them for ourselves."

"Hmph. Impudence."

This Patriarch let out a cold snort.

"His Sovereign artifact is fire-type. He should thus be the Emissary of a Sovereign of Fire." The Patriarch of the Nether Serpent clan considered this, then he couldn't help but bark, "Pay a visit to the Boleyn clan with me."

"Yes, Father."

Immediately, the Patriarch of the Nether Serpents led Bulo directly towards the nearby Boleyn clan.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was led by the ‘Azure Dragon clan’, while the eight great clans was a temporary alliance. Currently, the most powerful of the clans, the ‘Boleyn clan’ of the Celestial Realm was their leader.

The Boleyn clan. The Radiant Palace.

The Radiant Palace was over a hundred meters tall, with multiple pillars that were emanating a soft white light supporting it. Currently, outside this palace, Bulo was there, standing alone in a respectful manner. As for within the palace, there were eight figures seated.

These eight were the eight Patriarchs of the eight great clans!

To be more precise, four of them were the true bodies of the Patriarchs, while the other four were the ‘golem clones’ of the Patriarchs of the other four clans, who were far away on the opposite end of the Indigo Prefecture. These ‘golem clones’ were ‘Deathgod Golems’, and held a hint of consciousness within them.

The reason they had Deathgod Golems here was so that they could discuss things in a group.

Bulo was respectfully narrating what had occurred in this battle. After he finished speaking, he said formally, “That’s all!”

The voices of the eight great Patriarchs could be heard from within, engaging in conversation.

“Reinales, your clan has always been in the Infernal Realm. You should be familiar with its experts. Have you heard of this ‘Phusro’?”

“Phusro? I’ve never heard of a person in the Infernal Realm who went by this name.”

“No matter what, if he has a weapon-type Sovereign artifact, he is definitely a Sovereign’s Emissary!”

“So what if he is a Sovereign’s Emissary? If he dares act wildly against our eight great clans and really forces us, we can just kill him…as long as we aren’t the first to attack, the Sovereign behind him won’t blame us!”

Bulo, hearing this, couldn’t help but be secretly startled.

However, Bulo also knew that of the eight Patriarchs of their eight great clans, seven of them were Sovereign’s Emissaries, with the eighth not being a Sovereign’s Emissary but still being in possession of a Sovereign artifact. In fact, the eighth was actually the most powerful of them all.

After all…

The Patriarchs of the Four Divine Beasts clan also had Sovereign’s artifacts.

Given that the eight great clans to dare act against the Four Divine Beasts clan, how could they not have sufficient power of their own?

“How long will it be before I, too, have a Sovereign artifact?” Bulo thought to himself. However, he understood that even if the eight Patriarchs didn’t have Sovereign artifacts, they were still incredibly strong. It was precisely because they were so strong…

That they were noticed and valued, and received Sovereign artifacts.

In Bulo’s mind…

The eight Patriarchs were high and lofty figures. Indeed, it was only natural for a Sovereign’s Emissary to be far above other people.

“Don’t rashly make new enemies!” A somewhat hoarse voice rang out in a rebuke from within the palace. “There’s no need for us to fear that Phusro anyhow. Right now, I’m more suspicious about another person.”

“Bulo.” The voice came from within.

Bulo immediately bowed.

“Let me ask you this. When you saw that Linley, you, too, believed him to be a God? You didn’t sense any hint of a Highgod aura?” The hoarse voice in the palace said.

“Yes. I couldn’t sense a thing. I sent out my divine sense, but could only sense that he was a God.” Bulo said.

That hoarse voice rang out again. “Right. I am very familiar with Bulo’s power. Your Ashcroft clan specializes in the soul to begin with, while Bulo is one of the supreme members of your clan, and has reached a very high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul. The number of people in the entire Infernal Realm who could hide their strength and prevent Bulo from realizing it can be counted on one hand. Someone with this level of power…shouldn’t be weaker than me. If Linley really was this formidable, it would be simple for him to kill Bulo.”

“But he didn’t! And in fact, it was that Phusro who saved him.”

“I have a suspicion! I suspect that this Linley really is just a God! The reason why his soul is so tough is that he has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!” The hoarse voice said.

“He really is just a God? Patriarch Boleyn, don’t jest like that.” Someone immediately said.

Chapter 35 – A Tremendous Threat!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 35, A Tremendous Threat!

“That he really is a God?” Bulo, hearing this from outside the hall, also felt that this was unbelievable.

The voices of the eight Patriarch’s continued to ring out from within the hall.

“I’m not joking. Think about it closely. Over the course of all these years, since when has anyone in the Four Divine Beasts clan been capable of using this technique of aura hiding for launching sneak attacks? It has never happened! It wasn’t that they didn’t want to do it; it was that they weren’t capable of it!”

That hoarse voice continued, “My Boleyn clan, the Ashcroft clan, and the Edric clan are all famous for our extremely high level of ability pertaining to the soul. To hide one’s aura to a level where even we can’t discover it… hmph, how many experts in the entire Infernal Realm can be capable of it?”

“If Linley was at such a level, there is no way Bulo could’ve returned to us alive!”

The hoarse voice continued, “Thus, there’s only a single explanation. Linley himself really is a God. Naturally, there’s no way anyone would discover a ‘Highgod’ aura coming from him.”

The other clan leaders weren’t fools either. They had all been stunned by the astonishing strength Linley had displayed, so none of them had dared to pursue this line of thought. But now that Patriarch Boleyn was pointing it out, as they carefully considered this line of reasoning, they felt they suddenly understood as well!

All of the clan leaders were stunned.

“Linley is most likely a God. However, how can his attacks be so powerful? I hear that his Gravitational Space ability is so strong that most Highgods are completely unable to resist it. Even Six Star Fiends will have their souls affected, resulting in them being easily slaughtered!”

“Right. In battle, Linley is not weaker than a Seven Star Fiend.”

An ancient voice rang out, “Then the only explanation is that this Linley’s level of comprehension with regards to the profound mysteries of the Laws is too powerful. I predict…that he has already mastered and fused five of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth! Otherwise, there’s no way a God could have this level of power.”

The amount of power Linley had displayed was, indeed, at this level.

But what they didn’t know was that Linley had actually only fused three types. However, through the assistance of the ‘black stone’ as well as the unique method of utilizing the Law possessed by the violet amethyst beast, allowing his gravitational pull to become more than a hundred times stronger…Linley’s power naturally was comparable to someone who had fused five types of profound mysteries.

“A God who has fused five profound mysteries?”

All of the clan leaders in the hall were completely stunned.

“I expect that the reason this Linley hasn’t become a Highgod is because he wants to fuse the mysteries, one step at a time. I imagine that he is currently slowly fusing the sixth profound mysteries. The day he becomes a Highgod will also be the very same day that he finishes completely fusing all six profound mysteries!” The hoarse voice rang out. “This Linley, I must admit…has tremendous willpower and tremendous ambition!”

The result of their discussion was…the eight Patriarchs were all stunned.

After all, generally speaking, when experts trained, fusing the profound

mysteries of a Law was simply too hard. Thus, they all decided to become Highgods as soon as possible, then slowly fuse the profound mysteries.

A sharp voice rang out, “He is only a God, and yet already possesses such astonishing power. If he reaches the Highgod level, and reaches the level of perfection in the Laws….then he will be at the peak of his power! If one of the Patriarchs of the Four Divine Beasts clan is courageous enough to bestow a Sovereign artifact upon him, then this person, with his Sovereign artifact, could dominate us all!”

When a person reached perfect and became a Paragon of a Law, that person would have terrifying power!

When matched with a Sovereign artifact…that person could be said to be undefeatable by all aside from Sovereigns.

“This Linley…is actually this formidable.” Bulo, still listening from outside the hall, was terrified as well. “But it makes sense. If he, theoretically, is just a God, and yet is still capable of using such a terrifying Gravitational Space, he has to have fused at least five profound mysteries. He definitely is currently gaining insights on the sixth. Once he fuses them and becomes a Paragon…”

The number of Highgod Paragons was even lower than the number of Sovereigns.

Every single one of them was a glorious person of their generation, supreme amongst supreme experts!

“This Linley cannot be allowed to live!” A low, rumbling voice shouted angrily. “As we can now see, this Linley might break through at any moment and fuse six profound mysteries. By then…it would be perfectly normal for the Patriarchs of the Four Divine Beasts clan to be willing to give up one of their Sovereign artifacts to him. By then, we will be doomed!”

“If that really happens, even the Sovereigns wouldn’t be willing to help us!”

The eight Patriarchs were immediately filled with shock and rage.

Sovereigns were lofty beings. The Emissaries of the Sovereigns were nothing more than their ‘subjects’, and Sovereigns usually didn’t care too much about the affairs of their Emmisaries. As long as an Emissary was capable of carrying out the duties assigned, that was enough.

But there was one type of person who was different!

A Highgod Paragon. Even Sovereigns would be willing to lower themselves to solemnly ask a Paragon to be an Emissary.

The Patriarchs of the eight great clans all felt their hearts clench slightly. Good heavens. They had never imagined that the Four Divine Beasts clan, silently and soundlessly, would actually produce such an incredibly talented figure. If this was permitted to continue, the repercussions would be unthinkable!

“This Linley must be killed!” A furious shout came from within the hall.

“The war between us and the Four Divine Beasts clan cannot be permitted to continue like this. We must accelerate it!”

“There’s no need to pay any attention to that other Sovereign’s Emissary. Our greatest threat right now is Linley. We have to seize the opportunity to execute him. No matter what the cost, no matter what sacrifices we must make, we must execute him!”

Originally, the eight great clans hadn’t truly spent much time thinking about Linley. Now that they did, they realized that he was a tremendous threat to them, a threat so great as to cause them to panic. After all, even throughout all four of the Higher Planes, the birth of every single supreme Paragon was an event that would shake all the planes.

The Skyrite Mountains. Bloodbath Gorge.

Emanuel and Forhan were waiting at the Azure Dragon Palace. Right at this moment, a figure streaked past the skies, flying directly into the Bloodbath Gorge and landing in front of the Azure Dragon Palace. This man with long, unbound azure hair was the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, 'Gislason'.

"Eh?" The Grand Elder looked outside the window, puzzled. Emanuel and Forhan immediately turned to look as well.

Gislason strode in with a smile. "Little Sister."

"Patriarch." Emanuel and Forhan immediately saluted.

"You are here as well? Good. Then there's no need to send someone to find you." Gislason chortled as he walked to the throne, seating himself. He grinned towards the Grand Elder, "Little sister, do you know that in the battle Linley and Emanuel engaged in, two Seven Star Fiends of the other side died."

Gislason chortled as he looked at Emanuel. "Emanuel, I heard that afterwards, yet another Seven Star Fiends attacked you and Linley. Tell me about the results."

The news Gislason had received had come from their intelligence agents.

Because both sides had used Sovereign's Might in that battle, the three Six Star Fiend survivors of the Azure Dragon clan had immediately scattered and fled. Bulo had pursued Emanuel and had also chased towards Linley…

Naturally, the Six Star Fiends had fled in the opposite direction.

And thus, only Linley, Emanuel, Bulo, and that Phusro knew what had happened between them afterwards.

"Patriarch." Emanuel immediately knelt down, sobbing, "My divine water clone was destroyed. Our enemy was Bulo…I used a drop of Sovereign's Might, but Linley didn't use his, nor did he help me."

“What’s this all about?” Gislason couldn’t help but frown.

“Patriarch, back then, Linley and I…” Emanuel immediately began to retell the story in detail anew. However, he naturally changed some of the details in the words, making it sound as though Linley wanted to harm him.

“What did you just say? A Sovereign artifact!” Gislason said, shocked.

“Emanuel, did you say a Sovereign artifact?” The Grand Elder was shocked as well.

“Ye…yes?” Emanuel was stunned.

“Why didn’t you tell me earlier?” The Grand Elder said angrily.

Prior to this, when Emanuel had been telling this tale to the Grand Elder, he had only said that an expert had stopped Bulo. He didn’t mention the Sovereign artifact.

“Is…is that very important?” Emanuel didn’t understand.

“What was his name?” Gislason asked hurriedly.

Emanuel still clearly remembered the conversation between Linley and Phusro. He immediately said, “That person was named Phusro.”

“Phusro?” The Grand Elder was somewhat puzzled.

Gislason was momentarily stunned as well, but then he began to laugh. He immediately said, “Little sister, come, make a trip with me.”

“Yes, Elder Brother.” The Grand Elder immediately followed him. Patriarch Gislason and the Grand Elder immediately left the Azure Dragon palace, leaving Emanuel and Forhan behind in the palace, completely confused.

“Father, what’s this all about?” Emanuel said.

“Could it be that the Patriarch knows that person?” Forhan didn’t fully understand either.

The Skyrite Mountains. Within the gorge.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were currently together. Linley’s original body was still on the way back, and so this was naturally just a clone Linley. As for Delia and Bebe, they had already gone and come back from the city of Meer.

“Bebe, how did it feel, to go out on an excursion? From the looks of it, it seems as though you had quite a bit of fun.” Linley laughed.

“Of course I feel great after going out for a trip.” Bebe rubbed his nose and laughed. “However, the reason I look so happy isn’t because I went on a trip. Rather…Boss, I’ve already mastered the fifth profound mystery of the Laws of Darkness.”

Linley was startled.

“Boss, you and I were competing, y’know. How about you?” Bebe asked smugly.

“Uh…” Linley couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh. “I fell behind. I’m still trapped at the bottleneck for the ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’, and have yet to break through.”

“Hmph. Hmph.” Bebe laughed smugly.

“Look at the two of you.” Delia cover her mouth, starting to laugh as well. “You are even going to compete in this. You are like a pair of children.”

“Well, we have nothing better to do.” Bebe smirked in response.

Linley laughed, “Delia, Bebe, the two of you viewed Emanuel with disfavor, yes?” As Linley spoke, he set up his Godrealm, completely sealing off sound from the outside.”

“Right. I hate that guy.” Bebe said hurriedly. “Last time, he wanted to steal your Coiling Dragon ring.”

“And he wants to kill you.” Delia couldn’t help but turn grave. “Also, didn’t you say that for this mission, he forced you into accompanying him?”

Linley began to laugh. “You don’t need to worry any longer. Even if he wants to kill me, he doesn’t have the ability to do so. Delia, Bebe, it’d be hard for him to even kill the two of you.”

“What’s this?” Bebe and Delia were both shocked.

“This time, on our mission, the one he wanted me to go on…the result was that he died.” Linley laughed. “His most powerful divine water clone was finished. The body that he has left is very weak.”

“He’s really dead? Woohoo!” Bebe shouted out excitedly.

“You encountered a powerful foe? How about your clone? Are you alright?” Delia asked hurriedly. Delia was worried each time Linley went out on a mission. After all, the war between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans meant that during every single mission, the squads were dancing between the edges of life and death.

“Of course I’m fine.” Linley laughed.

Linley suddenly frowned, then turned and looked towards the skies. He saw that in mid-air, there were four figures flying over at high speed. Linley released his Godrealm, and the four landed directly in front of Linley.

“Elder Linley.” The four bowed as they spoke.

“What is it?” Linley asked.

The leader said respectfully, “Elder Linley, we have come on the orders of the four clan leaders to summon you to the Grand Palace of the Four Divine

Beasts."

"The four clan leaders?" Linley was stunned.

He had been in the Infernal Realm for so long, but he had only met Patriarch Gislason of his own Azure Dragon clan. As for the other three clan leaders, he had never seen them before. Now, the four Patriarchs were summoning him? Why?

"Elder Linley, please hurry. The four clan leaders are all waiting for you at the Grand Palace." The leader urged.

"Right." Linley nodded.

Linley immediately turned towards Delia and Bebe, laughing as he nodded towards them. "I need to make a trip." And then, he immediately flew into the air. Those four warriors followed directly behind Linley, as the five of them flew in a line towards Bloodbath Gorge.

Moments later.

Linley arrived at Bloodbath Gorge. He immediately saw the distant Azure Dragon Palace. "It's actually the Grand Palace. I've never been to the Grand Palace before." Bloodbath Gorge had five palaces in total. The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts was the place where the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan went to discuss major matters with each other.

But today…

The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts had especially opened its doors for Linley.

The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts was more than a hundred meters tall, and its four walls were filled with carvings of four different divine beasts. The entire Grand Palace was an extremely stately, solemn place. At the gate to the Grand Palace, there were warriors of Bloodbath Gorge standing guard.

“Elder Linley.” The guards saluted respectfully.

Linley laughed and nodded, then strode into the Grand Palace. “Rumble…” Behind Linley, the gates to the Grand Palace shut themselves.

Chapter 36 – Decision

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 36, Decision

Linley looked about carefully, but there wasn't a single person present in this main hall of the first floor of the Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.

"Linley, come to the second floor." A voice rang out in Linley's ears.

"Patriarch." Linley recognized this voice as being Gislason's, and he immediately entered a side room to the main hall, which had a staircase that led upwards into the second floor. Climbing up the staircase, Linley arrived at the second floor of the Grand Palace.

The second floor was clearly much smaller than the main hall on the first floor.

There was an enormous round table placed in the center of the hall, and there were a total of six figures seated around the table. Linley recognized only two of the six figures; one was the Patriarch, while the other was the Grand Elder.

"Judging from their clothes and their aura, the other woman seated around the table should be the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan." Linley inspected them one by one.

Azure Dragon clan. Vermillion Bird clan. White Tiger clan. Black Tortoise clan. All four clans, without question, had their own unique, bizarre auras and appearances. He could recognize them at a single glance. At the round table, the Azure Dragon clan had two representatives, the Black Tortoise clan had two representatives, and the White Tiger and Vermillion Bird clans also had one each.

"Linley, sit." Suddenly, the beautiful woman from the Vermillion Bird clan

laughed calmly.

The others all revealed smiles towards Linley as well, and Gislason laughed, “Linley, no need to stand on ceremony. When meeting with you here, we can be a bit more casual. Go ahead and sit.”

“Yes.” Linley couldn’t help but feel a warm feeling in his heart.

Linley knew that these people were the highest level figures of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the sons and daughters of those four Sovereigns.

“Linley, the reason we asked you to come was to ask you regarding that Phusro.” Gislason said.

“Phusro?” Linley was startled.

So the clan had found out about the relationship between himself and Phusro so quickly!

One of the men present wore a white robe, and on the white robe, there were some unusual patterns that made it look as though it was made from the fur of a tiger. This man had a grim, callous face, but he currently had a hint of a smile as well. “Phusro has a Sovereign artifact, but we’ve never heard of him…”

Linley laughed to himself.

Up until a few centuries ago, Phusro had been just a pitiable little kitten in Elquin’s arms. Who would have known him?

“Linley, this Phusro is a Sovereign’s Emissary. There should be no mistaking this, right?” A large man said in a low, rumbling voice. This man’s body was even taller than the members of the Barbary clan. Linley knew that this person had to be one of the two leaders of the Black Tortoise clan.

“He is indeed a Sovereign’s Emissary. He should have only become one a

few centuries ago." Linley replied.

Around the circular table, the leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan all stared at each other, excitement in their eyes.

"Which Sovereign?" Gislason asked hurriedly.

"I'm not certain. However, it is a Sovereign of Fire." Linley said.

The Grand Elder, by Gislason's side, also asked hurriedly, "Linley, do you know why this Phusro saved you? Was it because the two of you have a relationship with each other, or because he was acting on the orders of the Sovereign?"

"Actually…I'm puzzled about this as well." Linley said.

"Oh?"

The six looked at Linley, listening attentively.

Although Linley didn't understand what the six were interested in with regards to this conversation, there were some things which didn't need to be kept secret and which he could reveal. "In truth, this Phusro and I have only met a single time. Although we can be considered friends, our relationship isn't that deep."

"I can understand why he saved me when he happened to be there, but he actually threatened Bulo and threatened Bulo's clan, saying that they were not permitted to act against me." Linley laughed.

The six people around the table all frowned.

"He has a pre-existing friendship with you?" Gislason was somewhat frustrated. "It seems he wasn't acting on the orders of a Sovereign to protect Linley. There isn't much of a connection between the Sovereign and Linley."

“Hard to say.” The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan rebutted. “Phusro threatened them. Perhaps…”

“Enough. Don’t have any extravagant hopes.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan let out a long sigh. “If the Sovereign had the intention of protecting Linley, he would have sent someone directly to the eight great clans and convey his Decree. With a Sovereign’s Decree…the eight great clans definitely wouldn’t dare to touch Linley. There’s no need for him to go to as much trouble as this Phusro has. Clearly, Phusro’s rescue of Linley didn’t have much to do with the Sovereign.”

“Alas…” Gislason couldn’t help but lower his head and sigh.

The looks on the faces of the others turned unhappy as well.

Linley, seeing this, couldn’t help but feel astonished. However, listening to their words, Linley began to understand. “So they were actually hoping that I had some sort of a relationship with a Sovereign.” When Linley thought of the situation of his clan, he fully understood.

Ever since those four ancestors of theirs had died, the Four Divine Beasts clan had lacked a Sovereign to rely on. Thus, even those eight great clans dared to abuse them.

They knew that a Sovereign’s Emissary had rescued Linley, and so they had hoped…that this Sovereign’s Emissary had come on the Sovereign’s orders to rescue Linley.

If that were the case, then it would also be possible that in the future, the Sovereign might, for Linley’s sake, help out the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“Their hopes were just extinguished.” Linley said to himself.

“Forget it. Everyone, don’t be discouraged. At least we have a Sovereign’s Emissary as our ally now.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed calmly. “In addition, it isn’t completely impossible that the Sovereign’s Emissary came on the orders of his Sovereign.”

Linley looked at those six people around the round table, and he couldn't help but feel a surge of grief in his heart.

How could the Four Divine Beasts clan have fallen to such dire straits?

These clan leaders were all pining for a Sovereign to stand behind them! However, the four ancestors were all dead now. As for the other Sovereigns, why would they be so bored as to go help the Four Divine Beasts clan for no reason?

"Linley, I'd like to ask you something. Are you a God, or are you a Highgod?" The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed as she looked at Linley. "To be honest, I can't detect any hint of a Highgod aura coming from you."

Linley couldn't help but look at his Patriarch.

Quite a few people had already asked this question.

"Linley is a God." Gislason said hurriedly. "This is a secret. It's enough that we know this secret. Do not spread it out." The people present were all the highest level members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, so it didn't matter if they knew.

"Still just a God? Haha, how is it that you, a God, are able to kill Seven Star Fiends?"

The atmosphere of the room grew lively again as everyone began to discuss Linley.

Linley, faced with the questions from these clan leaders, was only able to give some general answers.

"Gravitational Space?" The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan said in amazement, his sword-shaped eyebrows rising. "With a simple Gravitational Space, you are actually able to make it so that most Highgods

are unable to fly?" A Gravitational Space was normally a very ordinary technique.

Linley had only developed his own version, thanks to the intentional guidance provided by the juvenile amethyst beast.

"Gravitational Space?"

Suddenly, the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan let out a cry of shock, then stared at Linley, asking hurriedly, "Linley, are you capable of changing the direction of gravity within your Gravitational Space?" The astonishment of the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan caused the other people present to be mystified.

"Quick, tell me." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird urged.

Linley felt completely puzzled. This was a very simple thing. Why had the Matriarch lost her cool like this?

"Right." Linley nodded and admitted it.

"Haha…"

The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan began to laugh, laugh with exceeding happiness. She looked at Linley. "Linley, you should have learned your Gravitational Space technique from the Amethyst Mountains, right?"

Linley was shocked.

How did she know?

Seeing the look of shock on Linley's face, the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan began to laugh smugly again.

"Elder Sister, hurry up and tell us what is making you so happy." The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan urged, and the others looked towards her

as well.

The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird was all smiles as she responded. “Everyone, there is no way that this unique Gravitational Space which Linley knows can be developed simply through training. When my mother was alive, she had once mentioned a Sovereign of Destruction to me!”

“Sovereign of Destruction?” Everyone’s eyes lit up.

Linley stared at her as well.

“Right.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan nodded. “This Sovereign of Destruction had the innate ability to control and change the direction of gravity, and also exert control over a person’s soul. This Sovereign is extremely powerful…and my mother said that this Sovereign of Destruction was the Sovereign of the Redbud Continent!”

Everyone was stunned.

Linley stared, slack-jawed.

“Aside from this Sovereign of Destruction, there shouldn’t be anyone else capable of utilizing Linley’s type of Gravitational Space.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan said confidently. “Oh, right. I also heard that this Sovereign of Destruction has a son. Aside from her and her son, no one else knows it.”

Linley was completely stupefied.

“Sovereign? Son?”

Many things flashed through Linley’s mind, and many things he didn’t understand were suddenly made clear. “That juvenile amethyst beast… could he be the son of the Sovereign?”

Immediately, the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan stared towards Linley.

They were like people who were drowning that had seen a stalk of straw they could clutch onto for survival!

They were incomparably arrogant, and felt themselves to be the favored ones of the heavens. However, after their four Sovereigns had fallen, they discovered…that the Four Divine Beasts clan had instantly fallen into dire straits, and could be wiped out at any moment.

They were hoping that a Sovereign would be willing to step forward and help them! But none ever had!

“Linley!” Gislason’s face was covered with smiles. “You know the Redbud Sovereign?”

“No…I don’t know her.” Linley shook his head.

“How could you not?” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan began to laugh. “You learned your Gravitational Space technique from the Amethyst Mountains, right?”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“That’s right. The Amethyst Mountains is the place where the Redbud Sovereign was born. That’s her home!” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan sighed in amazement. “The power of that Sovereign is exceedingly strong. If she is willing to stand out and say but a single word, those eight great clans will immediately be so terrified that they would flee.”

Linley still felt completely stunned. So the Amethyst Mountains was the resting place of a Sovereign.

“My Gravitational Space was taught to me by a juvenile amethyst beast named ‘Reisgem’.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Reisgem?”

The clan leaders all shook their head, indicating they hadn't heard the name before.

"I haven't heard of him either." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed. "But from the sound of it, he's most likely that son of the Sovereign."

"This Reisgem is a Commander of Purgatory. You don't recognize him?" Linley was puzzled.

"A Purgatory Commander?" The six people around the table were all startled.

"A person who becomes a Purgatory Commander does so to participate in the Planar Wars." Gislason said. "Our Four Divine Beasts clan doesn't get involved in the Planar Wars, so we don't pay too much attention to it. In addition, Purgatory Commanders often change. No one knows who is currently a Commander."

Linley nodded.

"Linley, you can go back for now." Gislason laughed.

"Right. You can go back. From today onwards, you don't need to get involved in the matters of Bloodbath Gorge. Go back and train hard, and then, after you reach the Highgod level, we'll see." The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed as well.

Although Linley was still rather puzzled, he still bowed. "Yes." And then, he left by himself."

After Linley left.

"Haha…" Gislason began to laugh.

"Haha…" Immediately, everyone else began to laugh as well, their faces

covered in smiles.

The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan sighed emotionally, “It’s been so many years. Our Four Divine Beasts clan finally sees a ray of hope!”

“Right! We finally have a ray of hope!” Gislason sighed as well.

Given the glorious former days of the Four Divine Beasts clan, how could they be willing to forever hide within the Skyrite Mountains? Although the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture had entered into an agreement with the eight great clans, causing them to be forbidden from attacking within the Skyrite Mountains…all this meant was that the roots and foundation of their clan was protected.

As for returning to their former glory…

They had to have the support of either an invincible Highgod Paragon, or that of a Sovereign.

“The Redbud Sovereign.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed. “Over the past ten thousand years, we haven’t seen any signs of hope at all. But today, we finally do…given that the Redbud Sovereign was willing to pass his ultimate technique to Linley, the relationship between her and Linley has to be a deep one.”

“Elder Brother.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan laughed as she looked at Gislason. “You have to protect this Linley and take care of him. We need to rely on him to connect with the Redbud Sovereign.”

“Don’t worry.”

Gislason began to laugh as well. “I guarantee that nothing will happen to Linley.”

Chapter 37 – Calmness and Savagery

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 37, Calmness and Savagery

Bloodbath Gorge.

Emanuel and Forhan were together.

“I have a bad feeling…” Forhan said with a frown.

“Father, what is it?” Emanuel said hurriedly.

Forhan said, “Look at how much the Patriarch cared about that Sovereign’s Emissary. Most likely, he wants to draw that Sovereign’s Emissary closer to us. After all, our Four Divine Beasts clan is currently in dire straits. If that’s the case…Linley most likely won’t be punished.”

“Won’t be punished?” Emanuel was frantic.

He had wanted to deal with Linley this entire time. This time, he ‘wanted to steal a chicken, but instead just lost the bait’. Even his most powerful divine water clone had been destroyed. The sort of rage this engendered had all immediately and naturally been transferred onto Linley.

He wasn’t strong enough to deal with Linley, so he wanted to find some other methods.

“How can Linley not be punished?” Emanuel said hurriedly. “The Grand Elder already agreed.”

“Shut your mouth.” Forhan frowned and shouted.

Emanuel immediately didn’t dare to make a sound. Forhan took a deep breath. After being quiet for a moment, allowing the room to fall into silence, Forhan finally said in a soft voice, “As I see it, it’s not too likely

that the clan will punish Linley. It'll be up to us."

"What method do we have?" Emanuel said hurriedly.

"There are many methods." Forhan couldn't help but narrow his eyes, and he laughed coldly. "This time, someone rescued Linley. I refuse to believe that in the future, he'll be so lucky as to be rescued again."

"Father, are you saying…" Emanuel laughed.

"I know each and every one of the Elders of the clan. It won't be too hard to set up a trap for him to fall into. There will be plenty of opportunities!" Forhan said confidently. "During a battle, if we play a few tricks…hmph! When experts are battling each other, even the slightest distraction can be enough to take his life!"

"In particular, if our side loses all of our Six Star Fiends in a battle and there are no eyewitnesses remaining, we can kill him directly." Forhan laughed coldly. "Even if he cries out at the injustice of it all, who will believe him?"

Emanuel's face immediately broke out into a smile.

"How can a junior descendant like him be worthy of the Azure Dragon ring of our ancestor?" Forhan snickered. "Even with the Azure Dragon ring, he's only an ordinary Seven Star Fiend. If I were to hold the Azure Dragon ring…I would be much more useful to the clan than he is!"

Indeed. If Forhan were to fly out with Linley, Linley wouldn't suspect that Forhan would suddenly attack him. When flying normally, Linley would be in his human form…once Forhan truly attacked, the results would be easily imagined.

Linley could cry out at the injustice, but without any witnesses, so what if he did?

Forhan could simply maintain that it was an enemy who had done it. There was nothing Linley could do at all.

“Forhan. Emanuel.” A voice rang out.

“Mother’s here.” Forhan hurriedly rose to his feet, and Emanuel rose, standing to the side respectfully.

“Creaaak.” The hall door swung open. The Grand Elder, wearing that silver mask, directly walked in. She looked calmly at the two of them. “Forhan, Emanuel. The matter of punishing Linley comes to an end, here and now.”

Emanuel felt shock in his heart. “It really as Father predicted it. However… although it might not be possible now, in the future, we’ll still have our chance.”

Carrying out missions involved walking a fine line between life and death.

If one’s partners were to secretly cause trouble, the chance of survival would be very low.

“From today onwards, Linley will depart from Bloodbath Gorge. He will not take on any assignments from Bloodbath Gorge.” The Grand Elder said calmly.

Forhan and Emanuel were stunned.

They were utterly stupefied!

“Mother, how can that be?” Forhan said hurriedly. “The rules of our clan state that each person can only retire after a thousand years. Linley hasn’t been in Bloodbath Gorge for very long. He’s far from reaching the thousand year mark.”

“Right. The rules of the clan can’t be broken.” Emanuel said frantically as well.

If Linley weren’t to take on assignments in Bloodbath Gorge, and instead remained in the Skyrite Mountains, there was no way at all for them to

make Linley die…after all, no private battles were permitted within the Skyrite Mountains.

“This is the decision of the four clan leaders!” The Grand Elder said coldly.

Forhan and Emanuel, hearing these words, couldn’t help but be stunned. The Patriarch was the leader of their clan. The joint orders of the four clan leaders were completely unchangeable!

From that day onwards, Linley no longer needed to go to Bloodbath Gorge. He was able to calmly leave a peaceful life. Delia and Bebe, upon hearing this news, were extremely happy…and so, in such a peaceful manner, their life proceeded.

In the eyes of the Four Divine Beasts clan, Linley was their hope of a connection to the Redbud Sovereign!

But what Linley didn’t know was…to the eight great clans, he was their greatest threat!

The Skyrite Mountains. Within the gorge.

There was a grassy yard in front of Linley’s room, which had a stone table placed in the middle of it. The stone table had a bottle of wine atop it, and Linley was currently holding a book in his hands. Linley’s four clones were all training, while his original body was enjoying the peace.

Delia walked out from her room, holding two plates of food in her hands. Seeing Linley reading, she couldn’t help but chuckle. She walked over, gently placing the plates down on the stone table.

“Eh?”

Linley suddenly smelled a fragrant odor, and he turned to look at the platter. His eyes couldn’t help but to light up. “Delia, haha, it smells so delicious. Your culinary skills have improved greatly.” As he spoke, he flipped the book shut.

He immediately went to go for a taste, and ate while praising, “Not bad, not bad. The taste is comparable to that of the restaurants in the cities.”

“Far from it.” Delia laughed, her face blushing. “This is based off of one of several cooking recipes I bought on my last trip to the city. The ingredients for these dishes, I acquired by asking those who went to the cities to buy for me.”

Delia sat down across from him, resting her chin on her hands as she watched Linley eat.

As Linley ate, he suddenly began to chuckle.

“Why are you laughing like an idiot?” Delia couldn’t help but smile as well.

“I’m just thinking!” Linley let out a sigh. “Training in the Laws, adventuring in the boundless Infernal Realm…then, when free, reading some books, drinking some fine wine, then eating the delicious food prepared by my wife. This sort of life is simply…haha, perfect!” Linley laughed, absolutely delighted.

Delia laughed as well.

“Linley, if you always want to live such a comfortable life, you can, you know.” Delia said. “As long as in the future, you don’t go to Bloodbath Gorge, that’ll be enough. I keep on having the feeling that the Four Divine Beasts clan care too much about their face…if it was me, I would’ve ordered the Four Divine Beasts clan to remain locked in the mountain. The members of the clan would all live quiet lives. Why go battle against those eight great clans?”

Linley put down his chopsticks.

“Enough, Delia.” Linley laughed. “Life, especially for those who possess unending life, is all about face. The glory of the clan is particularly valued. Unless it is absolutely necessary…the clan won’t choose to retreat into the

mountains and completely turtle up."

Delia laughed. "It doesn't matter to me, as long as you don't have to go to Bloodbath Gorge." In Delia's heart, she didn't feel too much of a sense of belonging to the Four Divine Beasts clan. All she cared about was…that Linley had to be safe.

"Hehe…" Linley chuckled.

"Come, you have a taste as well. This flavor really is excellent." Linley laughed as he spoke.

In the blink of an eye, a hundred years of this sort of life passed. With Linley by her side, Delia naturally didn't feel bored at all. Every day, her face was wreathed in smiles, and she also learned how to cook one delicacy after another, to Linley's great delight, as he could now often taste new food.

As for Bebe…

He occasionally would be with Linley, or joke around with the members of the Yulan branch, but when bored, Bebe would still join the clan's squadrons and head out to the city for a stroll.

Bloodbath Gorge. The Grand Palace of the Four Divine Beasts. The four clan leaders were assembled there.

"It's only been a century!" Gislason's face was gloomy.

"In the past century, it seems as though those eight great clans have gone mad! They don't care about casualties at all, nor about wasting Sovereign's Might. They insist on killing our people!" The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan said furiously.

"In the past century, our Vermillion Bird clan has lost three Elders. The rest of you?" The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan said, a long, gloomy look her face.

“Our White Tiger clan has lost four Elders!” The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan’s words held boundless rage. “Third Brother, how about your Black Tortoise clan?”

The Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan let out a low sigh as well. “Our Black Tortoise clan’s losses have been severe as well. We lost two Elders. It has only been a century!”

“Elder Brother.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan looked towards Gislason.

“Our Azure Dragon clan has lost three Elders.” Gislason sighed. “By my calculations, in a short century, our Four Divine Beasts clan has lost a total of twelve Elders!”

Based on how things had previously progressed in their war of attrition, the loss of twelve Elders was something which would happen in a thousand years.

But now, they reached that number in a mere century.

“Those eight great clans have gone mad.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan said angrily. “In the past century, each time, they’ll send out three or four Seven Star Fiends. And each time, one of them will be holding a Sovereign’s Might! They don’t begrudge using the Sovereign’s Might at all, if it means they can kill all our people.”

“They’ve lost quite a bit in their madness as well.” Gislason said. “Our Azure Dragon clan alone has killed four of their Elders.”

“Our Vermillion Bird clan has killed three.”

The four clan leaders all reported their results.

“In the past thousand years, the losses of the eight great clans have been even greater than ours. They lost fifteen of their Elders.” Gislason said.

“But the eight great clans have the advantage of numbers.” The Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan said in a low voice. “Ever since our four ancestors died, our Four Divine Beasts clan has lost, in total, nearly a hundred and twenty Seven Star Fiends…now, our entire Four Divine Beasts clan has, all combined, roughly around a hundred surviving Seven Star Fiends. But the enemy? They have more than three hundred Seven Star Fiends in total!”

Any of the eight great clans could compare with the Azure Dragon clan in terms of experts.

Early on, the Azure Dragon clan had over sixty Seven Star Fiends as well.

The eight great clans originally had nearly five hundred Seven Star Fiends as well. After so many years of warfare, they had killed nearly a hundred and twenty Seven Star Fiends of the Four Divine Beasts clan, while they themselves had lost more than a hundred.

But despite that, the combined forces of the eight great clans still numbered more than three hundred Seven Star Fiends?

If this sort of attrition continued…

Even after all of the experts of the Four Divine Beasts clan were dead, the enemy would probably still have two hundred or more Elders. In addition, the enemy also had many supreme experts. The Patriarchs of the eight great clans were all extremely powerful figures!

“Madness. Madness! They ignore the cost in Sovereign’s Might and in deaths of Seven Star Fiends. They’ve all gone mad!” The Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan said unhappily.

“What’s going on? In the past ten thousand years, they’ve never been as wild as this. Why have they gone so mad in the past century?” Gislason simply couldn’t understand it.

But how could the leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan have imagined…

that the reason these eight great clans had gone mad and sent out three or four Elders to join forces each time was, first of all, in the hopes that when they ran into Linley, they would be able to kill him.

And the second reason was, they wanted to speed up the pace! They didn't dare to waste more time, for fear that as time went on, Linley might suddenly break through and become that which they feared the most; a 'Highgod Paragon'.

Although the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans had entered a wild state, the Skyrite Mountains were still very quiet and calm. Linley lived this sort of calm life with no struggles, while his four clones constantly improved as well.

After his retirement from Bloodbath Gorge, two hundred years had passed.

In the past two hundred years, Linley had made the greatest improvements in his divine water clone, which could in fact be described as having made 'monstrous gains'. The speed at which he gained new insights into the profound mysteries was absolutely 'astonishing'. It was on a full level faster than even his divine earth clone and his divine wind clone.

Naturally, it was countless times faster than his divine fire clone.

By now, his divine water clone had already reached the God level long ago, and had mastered three profound mysteries and was currently working on the fourth…but actually, if one closely considered it, this wasn't too astonishing. After all, after the Ancestral Baptism, Linley had naturally understood one of the profound mysteries.

His divine wind clone had gained mastery into a sixth profound mystery, but since the Laws of the Wind had nine profound mysteries in total, it was harder to advance in.

As for his divine fire clone, it was still working on the third profound mystery, advancing at a slow pace.

“Linley, your life is quite comfortable.” A loud laugh rang out.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were seated around a table, eating while chatting.

Linley turned to look. The person who had walked in was Elder Garvey.

“Garvey seems to have a rather unhappy look on his face. He’s worrying about something.” Linley could tell this at a single glance. For an expert such as Elder Garvey to so easily reveal his thoughts meant that something major had definitely occurred.”

“Elder Garvey.” Bebe was the first to welcome him happily. “Hurry on over. This is the first time my Boss cooked. Have a taste…it is so delicious, you could die!”

“Bebe.” Linley couldn’t help but feel his face heat up.

He clearly had done exactly as the cookbook described, but the difference in flavor between what he had cooked and what Delia cooked was…simply too vast. However, it wasn’t so bad as to cause someone to ‘die’.

Chapter 38 – Most Powerful Attack

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 38, Most Powerful Attack

“Haha…” Elder Garvey couldn’t help but laugh. He immediately pointed at Linley and said, “Elder Linley, I didn’t imagine that you are able to cook. I have to taste your dishes.” Garvey walked over as he spoke.

Elder Garvey was going to eat?

If Elder Garvey was to eat, the terribleness of the food would definitely be spread throughout the clan.

“Elder Garvey.” Linley hurriedly stood up, blocking in front of Elder Garvey. Laughing, he said, “Elder Garvey, this is my first time cooking. There’s no need to taste it. Right. Judging from your face, it seems as though you are worrying about something?”

Linley hurriedly changed the topic. And indeed, as Linley did, Elder Garvey couldn’t help but let out a long sigh, then sit down to one side.

“What’s happened?” Linley asked.

Elder Garvey laughed bitterly. “Elder Linley, in the past two centuries, you haven’t gone to Bloodbath Gorge, have you?”

“Right.” Ever since he had been summoned by the four clan leaders and then instructed not to participate in Bloodbath Gorge, he hadn’t gone there a single time.”

“It’s only been two hundred years!” Elder Garvey seemed to have a belly full of resentment and pain. “Linley, do you know? In these two short centuries, our Azure Dragon clan has lost five Elders!”

“Five?!” Linley was shocked by this number.

The Azure Dragon clan usually lost two or three Elders in a thousand years. To lose five in two centuries…this was too significant.

“Factoring in what happened to Emanuel and Arhaus…our Azure Dragon clan only has twenty or so Elders who truly have the power of a Seven Star Fiend!” Elder Garvey said, his eyes turning moist. “My teacher lost his most powerful clone just yesterday on a mission. He no longer has a Seven Star Fiend level of power either.”

Linley couldn’t help but fall silent.

As for Delia and Bebe, it wasn’t appropriate for them to interject right now either.

“It’s only been ten thousand years. Ten thousand years ago, the Elders of the clan numbered more than sixty. In ten thousand short years, we’ve lost more than half!” Elder Garvey sighed. “Based on this sort of speed, the number of Elders in Bloodbath Gorge definitely won’t be enough. We’ll probably be recruited earlier this time.”

Normally, the Elders of Bloodbath Gorge were swapped out every thousand years.

However…

They were losing them at too fast a pace. As this continued, the number of Elders available in Bloodbath Gorge would be insufficient. Those idle Elders such as Garvey would have to go make up the numbers.

“What is going on? How could there be so many casualties?” Linley couldn’t understand it. “Defeating a Seven Star Fiend is easy, but killing a Seven Star Fiend is very hard.”

“The eight great clans have gone mad!”

Elder Garvey snorted angrily. “In the past two centuries, they’ve gone

completely mad. Each battle, they'll send out three or four Seven Star Fiends, and one of them will definitely be holding a Sovereign's Might! Our Elders have barely any chance to survive each battle.

As Linley heard this, the look on his face couldn't help but change.

"Why are the eight great clans acting like this?" Linley felt rather puzzled.

The eight great clans had never gone so mad before, but ever since that last battle of his, the eight great clans had gone mad.

"Could it be that it has something to do with me or Phusro? Or was this the original plan for the eight great clans all along?" Linley couldn't help but speculate.

"Alright, Linley. I won't disturb you any further. You need to train hard… originally, I thought that this battle between ourselves and the eight great clans would keep on dragging out. But now, it seems, the final battle between us will come soon!"

Elder Garvey finished his words, then immediately flew into the air and left, departing.

"The final battle?" Linley couldn't help but mumble.

"Boss, what 'final battle'?" Bebe's eyes were shining.

"Don't ask. Based on your current power, you aren't qualified to participate. When one day you become a Highgod, then we'll talk." Linley laughed.

Once Bebe became a Highgod, given his innate divine ability, 'Godeater'… he would be an absolutely monster.

"Uhhhh…." Bebe couldn't help but pout. "I've only mastered five profound mysteries. I haven't even gained a basic understanding of the sixth profound mystery. Grandpa Beirut is really…ugh. Why didn't he give me that sixth soul slice fragment to me early on? Wouldn't that be much easier?"

Both Linley and Delia laughed.

Bebe had currently mastered five profound mysteries. The first one was one which he had naturally understood upon becoming an adult. As for the other four, he had gained them from soul slice fragments that contained understandings of profound mysteries that was at the bottleneck level.

He had succeeded in taking this shortcut. To have Bebe gain insights on his own? Unlikely!

“Bebe, if you can’t gain any insights, you can go try fusing other mysteries.” Delia chortled as well. “Once you successfully fuse something, your power will improve greatly.”

“That’s not a bad idea. Although it’s a bit harder, I might just succeed.” Bebe grew animated. He immediately flew towards his own residence, and Linley and Delia both laughed.

“I wager that Bebe will be able to hold on for one year at most.” Linley laughed.

“A year? He might not even be able to hold on for half a year.” Delia laughed.

“I will definitely persevere for two years!” Bebe’s voice rang out from above. Linley and Delia glanced at each other, then both began to laugh. Linley then said solemnly, “Delia, just now, from what Garvey said, I feel some pressure…I plan to have my original body begin training again, starting today.”

“Alright.” Delia’s eyes became filled with worry as well. “I feel rather worried as well. The situation is growing worse and worse. Train hard. I won’t disturb you.”

Linley nodded and chuckled.

The eight great clans continued to act with wild abandon. One Elder after another of the eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan fell, while rows on rows of Six Star Fiends died as well…the situation was unbearably grim. As for Linley's four clones and his original body, they were all quietly training.

As he trained, time flowed on like water…

Ever since acquiring the 'black stone', Linley had treated his divine earth clone as his primary divine clone, whole-heartedly focusing on the Laws of the Earth.

When fusing profound mysteries, the further one advanced, the harder it became.

With regards to the Laws of the Earth, Linley had fused three types. He had attempted to fuse a fourth, but was completely unable to fuse the 'Worldwalking' technique with the other three profound mysteries. At the same time, Linley had also attempted to fuse the not-yet-mastered 'Profound Mysteries of Strength' with the other three as well.

Within the gorge. Linley was currently together with Delia. Linley looked into the distance, clearly able to see quite a few clansmen. It had been three centuries since Linley had left Bloodbath Gorge.

"I've finally made a breakthrough." Linley's face was all smiles.

"Look at how pleased you are." Delia laughed.

The greatest breakthrough he had made on this training session was that he had begun to link together and fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the Throbbing Pulse of the World. However, to fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the other three required that they had to all become as one.

"Of course I'm happy. Delia, this Profound Mysteries of Strength is something that can allow me to unleash my power more effectively." Linley said hurriedly. "The Throbbing Pulse of the World can allow me to unleash

material attacks as well. Once I fuse them…I can unleash the strength I have in Dragonform in a much more effective manner."

His greatest advantage was his body!

The power of his body in Dragonform was such that with a single fist, he could block the most powerful sword attack of a Six Star Fiend. And that was just by relying on a simple punch. Once he included the might of the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength', the power would greatly increase.

But if he were to then fuse the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', the power would increase still further!

"Different profound mysteries are suited to different types of attacks. Thus, generally speaking, after fusing certain profound mysteries, one will develop an attack that allows one to best unleash one's power."

Linley sighed. "Seven Star Fiends have generally fused four types of profound mysteries, but some are specialized in fleeing, some are specialized in soul attacks, and some are specialized in material attacks. This is because…their fusion of profound mysteries is different!"

Delia nodded.

Prior to this, Linley had fused the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', the 'Essence of the Earth', and 'Gravitational Space', these three types of profound mysteries. These three profound mysteries, when combined with the 'black stone', created the 'Blackstone Prison', his most powerful technique.

But as for material attacks?

The profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth most suited for material attacks were the 'Profound Mysteries of Strength' and the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'.

The most suitable were the best.

“When these two profound mysteries are fused, my attacks in Dragonform will reach a new level.” Linley said confidently. His strength in Dragonform was tremendous to begin with. He had a very good base. Once he fused these two profound mysteries…

It was frightening just to think about how powerful he would be.

Linley’s ‘Blackstone Prison’ could be used to trap people, but his attack was too weak, and the energy in his body was only at the God level. He had to rely on his Dragonform…but although his strength was great, he still wasn’t able to kill someone in one blow.

“Once I fuse these two profound mysteries, I’ll first use my ‘Blackstone Prison’ to trap the enemy, and then give him a punch. Even if he doesn’t die, he’ll be badly injured.” Linley was completely confident.

Delia laughed as she watched Linley grow so animated as he spoke.

“Boss!” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Linley and Delia both turned, only to see Bebe fly over, beaming merrily. “Boss, I need to go out on a trip.”

“Go out on a trip? To Meer City?” Linley laughed.

“Right. It’s been quite a while since I’ve seen Tarosse, Dylin, and the others. I’ll go visit them.” Bebe mumbled. “I hear that Olivier has already left Meer City. He’s gone out for an adventure. Who knows if he’s still in Meer City.”

“Fine, go then. Have a safe trip.” Linley laughed.

“Heh heh, no worries.” Bebe chortled and waved, then flew into the skies.

Linley suddenly had a thought. Ever since he had returned to the gorge, Delia hadn’t made a single trip. Linley couldn’t help but turn to look at

Delia. “Delia, do you want to go out as well? How about this time, we’ll go to Meer City together?”

“No rush.” Delia shook her head. “Linley, you’d best focus on your training. After you’ve mastered your fusion of the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World, we can go together.”

“Thank you.” Linley said gratefully.

Delia just smiled at him.

Linley ignored the chaos that was happening in the outside world, focusing solely on his training. Occasionally, his original body would pause for a while to spend some time with Delia. After beginning the fusion of the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World, he continued to advance and improve…

As he trained, he barely noticed the passage of time.

In the blink of an eye, five hundred years had passed since he had left Bloodbath Gorge.

In the great gorge, the place where Linley lived.

Delia was seated quietly within her room, flipping through a book in her hands. Right at this moment…

“Haha…” Suddenly, loud laughter rang out from within the room.

Delia was startled, but then turned to look, overjoyed. She saw Linley, his long hair fluttering loosely, walk in with great strides. As soon as he saw Delia, he laughed, “Delia, I finally broke through. After five hundred years, I’ve finally broke through.”

“What did you break through in?” Delia hurriedly stood up.

“I’ve finally mastered the Profound Mysteries of Strength. And, I’ve

completely fused the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World." Linley was exceedingly delighted.

After this day, Linley had mastered a total of five of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, with only one remaining – Vitality.

"However, fusion really is hard. The Profound Mysteries of Strength have only been fused with the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World'. I haven't fused it at all with the 'Gravitational Space' or the 'Essence of the Earth', Linley said with a sigh.

He had originally hoped to be able to fuse it with the other two as well, so that he could strive to fuse four profound mysteries.

But from the looks of it, the path of fusion was indeed an extremely long one.

"You are already doing quite well." Delia laughed encouragingly. "Didn't you say that after you fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World, that you will have a powerful material attack?"

"Of course." Linley laughed as he thought of this.

The Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World were both suited for material attacks.

"However, although I've fused these two profound mysteries, I still need to carefully analyze them and develop an attack technique suited to these profound mysteries." Linley said. "Still, it won't take too long. At most half a year or a year, but perhaps as little as two weeks."

Linley himself was rather eager.

Once he developed it, he could pair this attack with his 'Blackstone Prison'. Even if he were to encounter Bulo again, he wouldn't just launch a simple

fist without injuring Bulo at all. Even if he was unable to kill Bulo, he'd still be able to heavily wound him.

Chapter 39 – Firmament Splitter

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 39, Firmament Splitter

The Skyrite Mountains. At the borders of the great gorge.

“Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!” “Boom!”

One massive vibration after another shook the earth. Many of the residents within the gorge could clearly sense these vibrations. They all felt puzzled, and quite a few headed to the place where the vibrations were emanating from. When they did, they saw…

That Linley was sending one punch after another into the ground.

Although his fist didn’t actually impact the ground, the pulsating power of his blows still spread into the ground, causing it to tremble.

“It’s Elder Linley!”

Those clansmen who had been somewhat annoyed, upon seeing that it was Linley training, didn’t dare to say anything.

“Still not right.” Linley shook his head, then unleashed yet another heavy punch.

Although the punches seemed to be coming out at an extremely slow speed, they gave off the sensation of carrying the force of a mountain. When Linley’s fist stopped at the end of each punch, vibrations passed through space.

But Linley just frowned, once more changing his style of attack.

When testing techniques, Linley wasn’t in Dragonform. After all, once he was in Dragonform, the power of each fist would be simply too terrifying.

Linley was completely absorbed in his training, constantly testing. In his mind, one type of attack after another arose, and then was quickly discarded.

Constant improvement…

“Patriarch, Elder Linley is currently in his gorge, punching the ground repeatedly, as though he is testing out some sort of technique. Elder Linley has already been training like this for a month.” A black-robed figure said respectfully.

Patriarch Gislason couldn’t help but laugh. “Oh? Punching the ground? It seems he must be testing out a material attack. He’s been wasting his advantage of having such a powerful body. He should’ve started training a more powerful material attack long ago.”

Relying on one’s advantages was the intelligent choice.

Since Linley’s body was powerful, he naturally had to focus on it.

“I want to see what he’s developed.” Gislason immediately walked out of his residence.

In the past five centuries, Gislason had been worrying about the future of the Four Divine Beasts clan. He was also in a very bad mood. For him to go out and take a look was also a way by which he could relax.

Gislason flew at a very fast speed, soon arriving in the air above the gorge.

“Rumble…”

Gislason could clearly sense the ripples in air.

“It seems he’s doing quite well.” Gislason flew over at high speed, arriving at a place in the sky directly above Linley’s training location. Linley was currently completely absorbed in launching one attack after another, gaining insights and improving with each blow, and so he didn’t notice that anyone

had arrived.

Linley's right fist once more struck out…

His fist seemed like a giant millstone that was grinding slowly, and yet actually moved as fast as lightning. This punch actually created ripples in space that could be seen with the naked eye.

"Oho." Gislason's eyes lit up.

"Not right. Still not right…" Linley was shaking his head.

Each time he discarded a technique, he did so because he had gained a better understanding of it, and so he had made new breakthroughs. As he discovered flaws…he would once more seek an attack with greater power.

One technique discarded after another. One breakthrough after another…

A look of surprise slowly appeared on Gislason's face.

"Strange. Why has the ground stopped trembling?" Everyone had gotten used to the ground trembling. When the ground stopped trembling, the clansmen who lived in the gorge were actually surprised, and quite a few hurried towards Linley's training area.

"Can it be that Elder Linley has stopped training?"

The clansmen all hurried over, but as they did, they saw that Linley was still repeatedly punching towards the ground.

"All of you, leave." A voice rumbled and echoed throughout the minds of the spectators. "Don't disturb Elder Linley."

These clansmen were all shocked. Only now did they discover that there was a person standing there in the air above. This person was their Patriarch, Gislason. But these ordinary clansmen had never before met their Patriarch.

“That person…seems to be an expert of some sort.”

The clansmen didn’t dare to disturb Linley, and so they all left.

Gislason turned to look at Linley, a hint of a smile being revealed on his face.

Linley struck out with his fist yet again, and at the edges of his punch, many spatial ripples appeared. The strange thing was, these spatial ripples all folded upon each other, rather than emanating outwards.

It was as though all of those spatial ripples were connected and building onto each other.

“Break!”

Linley had been training for more than three months. After three months of silence, Linley suddenly let out a growl, striking out with a massive punch. At the edges of this punch, a large number of spatial ripples appeared, and then they vanished.

“I finally succeeded!” A look of surprise and joy appeared on Linley’s face. With a ‘crackle’ sound, draconic scales immediately tore apart his clothes as they appeared from his body. Those savage spikes jutted out as well…

Dragonform!

“Let’s see how my most powerful material attack does.” Linley wanted to give it a test and see how he could do with a full force attack.

“Eh?” Linley suddenly turned and stared behind him, only to see Gislason watching him while grinning. Linley was shocked, and he hurriedly said, “Clan leader!”

“Haha, go ahead and test your attack.” Gislason laughed. “Given the strength of your body in Dragonform…I am quite eager to see what the

power will be like, myself."

"Yes, Patriarch." Linley couldn't help but feel itchy in his heart as well, and he immediately prepared for a test blow.

Linley's draconic scale covered right fist suddenly swung out, and in the instant that it did, with a sudden rumble, the sound of space itself exploding could be heard. Wherever his right fist swung past, space trembled violently.

The power of this punch was akin to a flood dragon leaving its lair!

As the punch struck out, a large number of spatial ripples appeared at the edges of his draconic scale covered fist, causing the space around his fist to form a rippling half-sphere that was like a bubble of ripples…

And then, the explosion!

"BANG!"

A sound which caused the soul to tremble. The space surrounding the fist all blew apart, revealing a large black hole in space. Through this hole in space, one could clearly sense the vibrations from the region of chaotic space.

In an instant, the hole in space disappeared.

"Haha, good, good!!!" Gislason's loud laughter rang out.

Linley was filled with joy as well. Although he had developed this attack in human form, that was just hypothetical. There was no way he could be sure what the power of the attack would be like when he was in Dragonform. But now it appeared…the power exceeded his expectations.

"Linley, what's the name of this technique of yours?" Gislason laughed loudly.

Linley paused for a moment, then said, “This attack was formed from the fusing of the Profound Mysteries of Strength and the Throbbing Pulse of the World. Its name is ‘Firmament Splitter’!” This blow was capable of shattering space with a single punch. One could imagine how great its power was.

“Come, have a spar with me.” Gislason laughed loudly.

“Patriarch?” Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished.

“Hurry up!” Gislason couldn’t help but frown. “What, do you think you can actually beat me?” As he spoke, Gislason’s body became covered with azure draconic scales as well. The color of the scales was identical to Linley’s, but he didn’t have any sharp spikes on his body.

Linley began to laugh. “Patriarch, so you have this desire, then I will accompany you in a spar.” Linley was very confident right now as well.

“Linley, even just by comparing bodies, I’m more powerful than you. You have to use all your force.” Gislason laughed.

Linley laughed, and then immediately set up his ‘Blackstone Space’. Instantly, a blurry earthen yellow light sprang up, trapping Gislason within. Even the body of Patriarch Gislason couldn’t help but tremble, and he couldn’t help but let out a low curse, “This punk is really…”

But before he finished his words, Linley came flying at him.

“Patriarch!” Linley laughed loudly, his right fist flashing forward like thunder.

“Hmph!” A low snort. Gislason, his long azure hair fluttering, also sent his own right fist forward.

“BOOM!”

Two draconic scale covered ‘metal fists’, carrying countless tons of force,

collided. Space itself was immediately torn open like a thin piece of paper. Gislason's right fist couldn't help but shake, and Gislason hurriedly move backwards, a hint of blood having actually appeared on his fist.

"Not bad, kid!" Gislason's eyes were shining. "It seems as though it's not enough for me to just use raw force against you."

Linley, looking at the Patriarch who seemed to have gone berserk, was shocked inwardly. "The Patriarch's body truly is tough. I used my most powerful blow, but the Patriarch only used raw strength." But of course, the result of the Patriarch just using raw strength was that the draconic scales atop his fist had shattered.

From this exchange of fists, Linley was made clearly aware that Patriarch Gislason's reputation of having the most powerful body in the Azure Dragon clan was indeed a solid one.

It only made sense. When he had his arm captured by Gislason that time, he hadn't been able to resist at all.

"What technique is this?" Linley was somewhat astonished as he saw that a layer of frost had actually appeared on Gislason's entire body, completely covering the Patriarch, including even his fist.

The ice-clad Gislason, under the glow of the sun, gleamed with beautiful light.

"Kid, I'll just use half my strength." Gislason laughed as he flew directly towards Linley. He was trapped in the 'Blackstone Space', but thanks to Gislason's powerful body, his speed was still astonishing.

Linley didn't retreat either, excitedly charging forward to meet him.

When drawing nearer to Gislason, Linley felt a freezing aura invade his body, so cold that Linley was astonished.

"Bang!"

Neither of the two dodged. Their fists slammed against each other, and where their fists passed, space itself directly collapsed. Linley couldn't help but fly backwards after the collision.

"Haha…" The Patriarch immediately chased after him.

"Swoosh!" Linley immediately retreated.

"Kid, don't run." The Patriarch shouted.

Within the 'Blackstone Space', although the Patriarch was still very fast, he was still slightly slower than the Dragonformed Linley. Linley, relying on his speed, was dodging by relying on his speed, occasionally unleashing a powerful punch or kick.

"Whap!"

"Bang!"

"Boom!"

One enormous, world-shaking vibration after another. These vibrations attracted quite a few spectators from the gorge, and this battle between Linley and the Patriarch caused them to stare, slack-jawed. Every single exchange of blows caused space to collapse.

If these blows had landed on them, how many of them could withstand it?

Linley and Gislason finally came to a halt.

"Haha, Linley, your material attack is now at Blue's level, at least." Gislason was very satisfied.

But Linley discovered that just now, when he was exchanging blows with the Patriarch, even though the Patriarch was using only half of his might, he was still able to fight the Patriarch to a standstill. "Patriarch, your body is

far more powerful than mine. How is it that your attack…?”

Linley didn’t understand. The Patriarch, in terms of profound mysteries, shouldn’t be weaker than him.

“This is a difference in the Laws.” Gislason said resignedly. “I primarily train in the ‘Elemental Laws of Water’. The defense of the Elemental Laws of Water isn’t bad, but it’s ability to unleash power isn’t that great.”

Linley nodded as well.

Of the Elemental Laws of Water, only the ‘Profound Mysteries of Ice’ allowed one to use one’s physical strength.

“In terms of physical strength, I’m no weaker than the Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan. But if we were competing in power attacks, he vastly outstrips me. This is because he trains in the Laws of the Earth.” Gislason said.

Linley laughed.

The Laws of the Earth even had the specialized ‘Profound Mysteries of Strength’. Thus, it was only natural that those who trained in the Laws of the Earth were able to easily bring out the power of their bodies.

Every single Law had its own areas of specialization.

The four Edicts, as well, had their own differences.

The Elemental Laws of Water had superb defenses, with exceedingly strong defense against both soul attacks as well as material attacks. The Elemental Laws of Fire, by contrast, was different; it was weak in defense, but specialized in offense.

The Edicts of Fate, meanwhile, specialized in the soul, while having some deficiencies on the material side.

It was hard to be truly perfect.

“The power of your fists is already very great. It even poses a bit of a threat to me.” Gislason praised. “In the past, your fleeing abilities were excellent. But now, you will pose a great threat to your foes.”

Linley knew very well that when he clashed fists with the Patriarch, in truth, Linley’s own ‘Firmament Splitter’ had ablated much of the force of each of the Patriarch’s punches. Only an extremely small amount of power remained from the Patriarch’s punches.

Otherwise, each blow from the Patriarch would have been able to easily smash Linley’s fist.

Similarly…

In receiving each blow of Linley’s, the Patriarch had to rely on his profound mysteries to ablate the force. Otherwise…it would have been like their first exchange, with the results being shattered draconic scales and a hint of blood.

“Even someone like you, Patriarch, with such terrifyingly strong defense, was injured. How can ordinary Seven Star Fiends resist it?” Linley laughed.

In the past, Linley, thanks to his Blackstone Space, was very proficient in fleeing. His attacks, however, were far weaker than those which Seven Star Fiends normally possessed. However, the situation now was different. Even if that Elder Bulo once again encountered Linley, it would be very hard for him to win.

Deep within the Skyrite Mountains.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe were at the edges of a cliff. Above the edge of the cliff, there was a large metallic lifeform in the shape of a black phoenix.

“Delia, I haven’t accompanied you on a single trip since arriving in the clan. This time, I definitely will accompany you.” Linley held Delia’s hand.

They had agreed that once he fused the profound mysteries, the two would go on a trip together."

Delia couldn't help but reveal a smile of true happiness. "Right. This is our first trip…we've been here at the clan for almost six centuries now, but I barely noticed anything. I wonder how Sasha and Taylor are doing."

"Taylor?" Linley couldn't help but think of his children.

However, Linley still felt that the decision he had made that year was wise. The Infernal Realm truly was too dangerous. Wharton and Taylor, back at the Yulan continent, would at least be able to enjoy peaceful lives.

"Elder Linley." A soft voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. The person who had come was Elder Tewila [Te'wei'la] of the Azure Dragon clan. Elder Tewila was a very good-tempered person who had never before entered Bloodbath Gorge. Not only was he not strong enough, he also preferred hiding like a turtle.

Linley actually felt very positively towards Tewila. Tewila, at least, wasn't as sinister and vicious as Emanuel and Forhan.

"Elder Tewila, you are the escort this time?" Linley laughed.

"Right." Tewila laughed so hard, his eyes creased into slits.

"Then I'll be troubling you to protect us this time, Elder Tewila. I'm going to Meer City on this trip as well." Linley laughed.

A look of delight and joy immediately appeared on Tewila's face. "Elder Linley, you are going as well? Haha, this is wonderful. With the two of us present, even if anything dangerous appears on this journey, we won't have anything to fear."

Linley laughed, then nodded.

“Oh, Elder Tewila, Elder Linley, you are here as well.” A familiar voice rang out. Linley turned to look. The person who had just arrived was Forhan. Forhan’s golden eyebrows raised up, and then he laughed. “This time, Elder Tewila is the escort, right?”

Tewila nodded. “Right. Elder Linley is going to Meer City this time as well.”

“Oh.” Forhan nodded. “Then, Elder Tewila, Elder Linley, have a safe journey. However, I imagine that with both of you present, there’s no way anything untoward will happen.”

“Elder Tewila, let’s go.” Linley couldn’t be bothered to pay attention to Forhan.

For some reason, Linley always felt as though there was something in Forhan’s gaze that made him feel uncomfortable.

Elder Tewila nodded in acknowledgment towards Forhan, and then flew alongside with Linley into the metallic lifeform, entering it. Quite a few people were hurriedly flying into the metallic lifeform.

As for Forhan, he just stood there at the cliff, looking upwards at the metallic lifeform, watching until it flew away.

“Hmph. This Linley remains so brash?” Forhan’s face sank, his heart filled with rage.

He had always viewed Linley with some disfavor. As he saw it, in their clan, only the second and third generation members of the clan were the noble figures of it. Even if Forhan’s mother didn’t want to use the ancestor’s Azure Dragon ring, he, Forhan, should be the one using it.

What was Linley?

Forhan’s son, Emanuel, had lost his most powerful divine clone, and would never be able to advance again. He wanted to act against Linley, but…the

four clan leaders had ordered that Linley not be required to carry out any missions.

Forhan's heart had been smoldering with rage this entire time without any place to let loose. The more time passed, the angrier he became!

"Going to Meer City, eh?" Forhan's gaze was growing cold. "Hmph. Then I'll let the forces of the eight great clans deal with you. When you die, you'll be able to kill a few of their people as well. It won't be a waste at all. Sadly…others will have to accompany you to the grave as well."

Chapter 40 – Betrayal

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 40, Betrayal

The Skyrite Mountains. In the ground beneath the palace where Forhan lived. A dark, lightless underground hall.

The hall was chilly and forbidding. Currently, the only person within it was Forhan. Forhan was seated upon the throne in the hall, slouched over it like a beast in ambush, his eyes flashing with dim light, thinking thoughts only he knew.

“Inform the forces of the eight great clans?” Although Forhan did want Linley dead and to have the eight great clans do it, it was nothing more than a thought. As he seriously considered it, however…he began to hesitate.

This was because the only way to let the forces of the eight great clans know was to inform them.

As for the act of informing them, there was no way someone else could carry out this task, nor could anyone else be allowed to know of it. This was because this act would be considered a ‘betrayal of the clan’, a grave crime! Forhan, as an Elder, was confident that he would be able to easily pass this information regarding Linley to the eight great clans. If it were to leak out that he had done so, however, he, Forhan, would never have a place again amongst the Four Divine Beasts clan!

“Betrayal of the clan…is punishable by execution of all bodies.” Forhan remembered this punishment very clearly.

“For the sake of taking revenge upon Linley…to take such a great risk…is it worth it?” Forhan wanted to do it, but he still hesitated.

Without question, Forhan was deeply proud of the fact that he was a descendant of the Four Divine Beasts clan. He wouldn’t betray the clan. But

he also wanted to kill Linley and worry about the consequences later!

“The Azure Dragon ring belonged to our ancestor! This Linley, of a generation that is so many times removed from us…by what right does he hold it?” Forhan’s eyes were cold. Jealousy constricted his heart, causing him to dislike Linley all the more.

“If Linley is permitted to continue to grow, there will come the day when he will be riding on my head.” Forhan still clearly remembered the conversation he had with his mother, the Grand Elder.

That time, the four clan leaders had ordered that Linley was to no longer participate in Bloodbath Gorge missions. Forhan was puzzled, and so later on, he went by himself to speak with the Grand Elder to ask her about this in detail, to try and understand why the clan leaders had made this decision.

The Grand Elder didn’t want to discuss the Redbud Sovereign, and so this is what she had said to Forhan: “Forhan, are you aware that Linley is just a God? A God who has the power of a Seven Star Fiend…when he becomes a Highgod, how powerful do you think he will be? He is the future hope of our clan. He can’t be put in danger for now!” Forhan, upon hearing the Grand Elder’s explanation, was shocked.

He had always believed that Linley was hiding his ability, but unexpectedly, Linley actually really was just a God.

Within that dark, cold, underground hall.

Forhan suddenly stood up, his gaze cold and sinister. In a low voice, he said, “This Linley is already a Seven Star Fiend. If this continues, once he becomes a Highgod, he will definitely become a trump card of our clan. His status will be even higher than mine, and he’ll be riding on my head! Can it be that in the future, I’ll have to forever watch him act so arrogantly in front of me?”

When Forhan imagined how glorious and influential Linley would be in the future, the look on Forhan’s face became all the uglier!

“No!” Forhan bellowed in a growling voice. “Absolutely not. Be beneath him for the rest of my life? I’d rather die.”

“Linley must die. He must!”

Forhan’s body was trembling slightly. “Right. I’m just getting rid of Linley. I’m not destroying the clan. This can’t be considered betraying the clan. It can’t! Also, I’m not personally killing him, I’m just letting the eight great clans kill him. Linley can be considered to have died in service to the clan, battling the eight great clans!”

“That Azure Dragon ring…”

Forhan couldn’t help but frown. “If Linley dies, wouldn’t that mean that the Azure Dragon ring would end up in the hands of the eight great clans?” Forhan was rather worried. The Azure Dragon ring was, after all, a precious treasure of the clan.

“No. It’s fine. It’ll only be Linley’s most powerful clone that dies. The other clones will remain alive in the Skyrite Mountains. Even if the eight great clans acquire the Azure Dragon ring, they won’t be able to bind it.” Forhan convinced himself. “Afterwards, when I have the chance, I’ll seize it back. And what’s more, Linley’s death won’t have a major impact on the clan. Our Four Divine Beasts clan was in a position of weakness to begin with… at most, we’ll just stay in the Skyrite Mountains. Our clan won’t be destroyed.”

After frantic pondering, Forhan finally came to a decision.

“A clan with Linley in it is a place I cannot live in, no matter how powerful the clan is. A clan without Linley in it, no matter how weak, is a place I can live comfortably.” Forhan quirked his lips. He had already made up his mind.

“Whoosh!” Forhan’s cloak fluttered as he walked out from his underground hall. He had already decided on what he was going to do.

A shadow appeared out of nowhere in the mountain villages, solidifying into a Forhan's figure. However, this was just a divine clone of Forhan's. Forhan let out a low chuckle, then his appearance changed, from that of a golden-haired old man to a bald youth.

Forhan, in his disguise as a 'bald youth', flew directly outwards…

"Rumble…" The waters of the river roiled about, and the 'bald youth' Forhan stood there, hovering in mid-air, sweeping the area below with his icy gaze. In a low voice, he said, "Men of the eight great clans. Come out."

On the pre-determined routes, the people who were hidden belonged to either the intelligence networks of the Four Divine Beasts clan or of the eight great clans. Forhan knew exactly who his own clan's agents were and where they were. If someone was present who didn't belong to the Four Divine Beasts clan, then naturally they belonged to the enemy!

"Who are you?" A low voice transmitted down from below the river.

"Remember this. An Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan has already mounted an azure, phoenix-shaped metallic lifeform, and is heading to Meer City. If you want to kill him, then seize this opportunity. There's another Elder travelling with him!" Although the metallic lifeform was in the shape of a black phoenix when they left, Elder Forhan knew that each time, when it headed out, the metallic lifeform would change to a different color and appearance. And so, Elder Forhan had investigated in advance.

This time, the transformation would be to the appearance of an azure phoenix.

At the same time, Forhan waved his hand, and a crystal ball fell down from the skies.

"In this crystal ball, there is stored the appearances of Linley's wife Delia, as well as his good friend, 'Bebe'."

When the crystal ball fell to the surface of the water, a ray of azure energy appeared, wrapping around the crystal ball and pulling it underwater. Forhan, seeing this, smiled coldly, then turned and flew away at high speed.

Long after Forhan left, a green-haired figure emerged from the surface of the river.

“Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan?” A look of disbelief was on the face of this intelligence agent. “I didn’t expect I’d be able to render such a meritorious deed today.” The eight great clans had issued the order to find and kill Linley long ago. Naturally, they had ordered their intelligence agents to be on the lookout for him as well.

However, all these years, there had been no one who was successful in locating him.

The news from the intelligence agent came very quickly. That very day, the eight great clans were made aware of this, and immediately, the leaders of the eight great clans were all excited. None of them had expected this news to come so suddenly.

After a discussion, this mission was assigned to the Edric clan and three other clans.

The eight great clans were, after all, separately located at two different sides of Indigo Prefecture. The four clans on the west were the Edric clan who had come from the Higher Plane of Life, the Venna clan from the Divine Plane of Wind, the Dean clan from the Divine Plane of Earth, and the Reinales clan, native to the Infernal Realm.

The western borders of Indigo Prefecture. The Edric clan and the other three clans were gathered together. Below the main palace, there were eight figures dressed in gray robes.

“Although this Linley is only a God, he has the power of a Seven Star Fiend. In a few short missions, he has caused our eight great clans to lose multiple Seven Star Fiends.” A graceful, gentle voice came from a

handsome, rather elfin-looking man who stood within the hall.

His long green hair fell to his waist, and his eyes seemed to glow like stars. This was Patriarch Edric, in the flesh. He had led his clan here from the Higher Plane of Life. It was he who had founded this clan.

“He isn’t a major threat to us yet, but if a few more years pass and he becomes a Highgod, then it will be terrible.”

“Thus, the eight of you must execute this Linley, no matter what the cost.” The voice was as gentle as ever.

“Yes, Patriarch.” Outside the main hall, two handsome gray-robed men bowed, while the other six gray-robed men hurriedly followed.

Within the hall, another Patriarch said calmly, “Here are three drops of Sovereign’s Might. Of the eight of you, Elder Zabu [Zha’bu], the strongest, will naturally carry one. As for the other two…Elders Tempah [Tan’pu] and Nice [Ni’si] will carry them.”

“Yes!”

The three immediately bowed respectfully. Of the three men, one was of the elfin-looking race.

“Remember. You must be successful in this endeavor. Even if you have to spend all three drops of Sovereign’s Might. Even if all eight of you have to die. You must kill Linley!” Another voice, a forceful, hard one, rang out.

“Yes!”

The eight Elders below couldn’t help but feel their hearts tighten.

Although they knew that this target of theirs, ‘Linley’, was just a Seven Star Fiend who was accompanied by a single other Seven Star Fiend, and that given the power the eight of them possessed, killing Linley shouldn’t be a problem…hearing the words from the Patriarchs, they couldn’t help but feel

the pressure.

“Go, then! Move quickly, so that you might arrive at Meer earlier.” The gentle voice said.

The eight gray-robed Elders bowed fractionally, then immediately left.

Within the hall, the four Patriarchs began to chat amongst themselves. “This is an excellent opportunity. Failure is not an option. Only after we kill that Linley will we be able to relax slightly. I refuse to believe that the Four Divine Beasts clan will be able to produce yet another genius who has the potential to become a Highgod Paragon.”

“Don’t worry. These eight Elders are the elites which we have selected from our four clans. Linley will unquestionably die!”

“Eight mighty Elders, equipped with three drops of Sovereign’s Might. Even if I had to face them, I wouldn’t dare to resist head on.”

……

The metallic lifeform in the shape of an azure phoenix was currently soaring through the horizons. Within this metallic lifeform, Linley and Delia were currently holding hands, seated in front of a window, staring at the outside through the translucent metal.

“We’ve flown for so long. We should arrive at Meer City soon.” Linley laughed.

Delia looked at the window, carefully inspecting the outside area. “I came here last time. If I remember correctly…we should arrive at Meer City in half an hour.” And then, Delia glanced at Linley, saying with resignation, “Elder Tewila really is cautious. He insisted on you changing your appearance.”

Linley currently had a beard, and even his height had been reduced slightly.

Linley chuckled. “It’s not as bad for you, but for us Elders, our enemies generally know exactly what we look like…although the chances of encountering them are low, it’s always better to be careful.”

“What, do you feel uncomfortable, seeing me like this?” Linley laughed and asked.

Delia shook her head, then closed her eyes. “Even with my eyes closed, I can still sense your aura. How could I feel uncomfortable?”

Linley laughed.

On the way over, Linley and Delia enjoyed a quiet, calm life as a couple. Soon, Linley and Delia saw an ancient city appear in the distance, and an endless flow of people entering and exiting the gates of the city.

“Wow, we finally made it!” Bebe was the first to jump up, sprinting outside.

Linley and Delia stood up together, following their clansmen out of the metallic lifeform. They followed Elder Tewila towards the gates of Meer City. Because Linley was a Fiend, he didn’t have to pay the city entrance fee.

“It’s been so many years since I’ve seen Tarosse, Dylin, and the others.” Linley laughed as he strode into the city.

But what he didn’t notice was that not far away, there were people maintaining a nonstop watch on the city gates. The arrival of the metallic lifeform of the Azure Dragon clan, in particular, caused these people to grow excited.

“The Azure Dragon clan’s metallic lifeform has arrived. Have you found Linley?”

“We haven’t.”

“We haven’t seen anything either!”

“I haven’t seen Linley, but I saw that Delia and Bebe. They have a man next to them. He looks like a God. That should be Linley!”

“A God? Then that should be him!”

The intelligence agents of the eight great clans conversed amongst themselves through divine sense, having already located Linley’s group.

There was no way they could be certain of the route the Azure Dragon clan’s metallic lifeform would take. The intelligence agents of the eight great clans were unable to find out, and so they had to wait at the gates of Meer City, like waiting for a rabbit to fall into their trap. After all, sooner or later, Linley’s group would have to arrive at Meer City.

Now that they entered the city, there was naturally no way for them to do anything.

But when Linley’s group exited to return to the Four Divine Beasts clan, the eight great clans would be able to make their move.

Chapter 41 – A Mysterious Visitor

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 41, A Mysterious Visitor

On the wide streets, people were coming to and fro.

Within the city, battle of any kind was absolutely forbidden. It didn't matter if you were a member of a strange race, and it didn't matter if were a Highgod or were a Demigod. Here, you could comfortably, peacefully enjoy life, without any fear or danger.

"I haven't gone to a city a single time ever since the return to the clan." Linley looked at the two sides of the street, at the various stores.

"Boss, the city is far more interesting than the mountains. There's many places for entertainment, and also many places for watching scryer recordings. Boss, last time, when watching scryer recordings in the city, I discovered…" Bebe's eyebrows were dancing animatedly as he spoke, and at this point, he switched to divine sense. "There was one scryer recording that was of the battle at Miluo Island between you and those many island warriors, as well as a scryer recording of the battle against the red-robed elder afterwards." Bebe said.

"Places for watching scryer recordings?" Linley was rather surprised.

The Bagshaw clan considered some precious scryer recordings to be treasures.

"How are the scryer recordings, in those places within the city where they are available for viewing? Are there many recordings of experts doing battle?" Linley asked.

"Not many. Although there's quite a few Highgod battles, the skill level is roughly on par with the 'Arena' at Miluo Island. On occasionally, there will be a battle at high skill levels, but the price for watching those is quite high

as well." Bebe was rather unhappy. "Boss, when they show the scryer recording of your battle at Miluo Island, they should give you a share of the money."

Linley began to laugh loudly.

The nearby Delia began to laugh as well. "Bebe's words are well-spoken. They are releasing those scryer recordings without your permission." Delia, Bebe, and Linley chatted about scryer recordings while walking. Moments later, from up ahead, Tewila and the others turned around and started walking towards Linley.

Elder Tewila sent through divine sense, "Elder Linley, we'll stay here in Meer City for roughly a month. A month from today, we will head out once more to the Skyrite Mountains. During this month, Elder Linley, you can roam around in the city as you please. Remember, one month. If you miss it…then Elder Linley, if you want to return, you'll have to wait for the next group. Or go back by yourself."

"Don't worry. I know." Linley nodded. "Elder Tewila, please don't mind us, go do what you want to do."

After walking for a while further, Linley's group separated from Tewila and the others, and then Linley, Delia, and Bebe headed directly for Tarosse and Dylin's residence. When Tarosse, Dylin, and the others had arrived in Meer City, Bebe and Delia had been present as well. Naturally, they knew exactly where Tarosse and the others were living.

"Boss, Tarosse and the others purchased a large estate. They spent over a billion inkstones." Bebe said hurriedly. "As for Dylin, Cesar, O'Brien, and the others, they are living there as well."

Hearing this, Linley nodded. Tarosse's group didn't lack for money. It was right that they should buy a large estate in the city. As he thought about purchasing property, Linley couldn't help but begin to laugh. "Bebe, Delia, do you still remember that year when we first went to Royalwing City? That time, when we saw those houses, the cheapest one was around sixty or

seventy million, right? Back then, we were shocked when we saw those prices."

Delia and Bebe, hearing this, began to laugh as well.

The cheapest houses in Royalwing City were around eight million, but people would seize the opportunity to buy houses like those. Normally speaking, empty houses would be worth nearly a hundred million. Generally speaking, only some fairly powerful Highgods were able to buy these things.

"At that time, I thought that only the 'true elites' of the Infernal Realm would be able to buy houses in cities. But now, it seems…" Linley shook his head and laughed. Indeed, those capable of buying houses in cities could be considered elites, but these so-called 'elites' were only elite in comparison to the many ordinary Deities of the Infernal Realm.

The true experts of the Infernal Realm, such as Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends, primarily lived outside of the cities, taking over a piece of land for themselves. They would build their own castles and collect a large group of subordinates. Although it was safe inside the cities, life wasn't filled with as many challenges and as much excitement.

"Linley, we are here at Tarosse's residence." Delia pointed towards the front, and Linley followed Delia's pointing finger as he looked. He saw a large estate, hundreds of meters long. Within a city, where every inch of ground was utterly preciously, purchasing such an enormous estate for the price of just over a billion inkstones was a fairly good bargain.

Within the residence. In the front courtyard, there was a round pool of water, by the side of which there were trees, shrubs, grass, and flowers. A cobbled, wide stone floor that was shaped in a curve led from the gate to a residential area.

"Elder Brother, why are you dawdling in the room? Hurry up." Currently, a muscular youth was shouting from below the residence. This was Dylin's third son, 'Clervaux'. He had gone with his elder brother that year along

with Dylin to the Infernal Realm. As for his second brother, he had been killed on the eleventh floor of the Necropolis of the Gods by those Abyssal Blade Demons.

“Coming.” A figure jumped down from the floor above, moving like lightning.

But right at that moment…

“Bang!” “Bang!” A loud, world-shaking knocking sound, joined by a thundering shout, “HEY, OPEN UP! Cleo, Clervaux, hurry up and open the door!”

“It’s Bebe.” The two siblings glanced at each other, then ran over.

“Rumble…” A rumbling sound, followed by the gates suddenly swinging open. There were three figures standing behind it.

“Linley.” Cleo and Clervaux couldn’t help but feel shocked. This was Linley’s first time visiting them in five centuries. And then, Clervaux excitedly called out, “Father, Uncle Tarosse, Linley has arrived!”

“Linley came?” From the distant residence, multiple figures immediately flew over, with the first one being Cesar.

Linley, upon seeing his fellows from his homeland, laughed and greeted them, directly embracing Cesar in a tight hug. “Cesar, long time no see.” “It has indeed been a long time. Elder Linley has a high rank, great power, and countless responsibilities each day, and thus has forgotten us minor figures.” Cesar teased deliberately.

Linley, seeing Cesar be so irreverent, couldn’t help but feel happy.

Cesar had finally returned to the way he had been in the Yulan continent; irreverent and uninhibited. It seemed as though the effects of what had happened in Miluo Island were wearing off.

“Linley.” Tarosse, Dylin, and O’Brien came to welcome him as well.

“Eh?” Linley saw that Olivier wasn’t amongst them, but there was a golden-haired beauty. Linley stared in surprise at the beauty who was at the back of the group. “She is…?”

Tarosse laughed devilishly. “Linley, she’s one of us. Why don’t you have a guess as to whose wife she is?”

“Wife?” Linley was stunned.

“Hey, someone’s gotten married? That hadn’t happened last time when I was here!” Bebe stared as well.

Tarosse began to laugh loudly. “When marrying a wife, of course you have to be fast. Have a guess as to whose she is?” Linley, Delia, and Bebe all turned to stare towards Cesar, Dylin, O’Brien, and Clervaux.

“Could it be Clervaux?” Bebe was the first to guess. “Or O’Brien’s? Wait, that can’t be right, O’Brien has that affair going on with the High Priest.” The War God O’Brien couldn’t help but feel awkward.

Immediately, Tarosse, Cesar, and the others all began to laugh. Dylin said hurriedly, “Alright, enough of that. Linley, Delia, I’ll make the introductions. This is my wife, Kamina [Ka’mi’na].”

“Mr. Linley, they’ve often spoken about you to me.” Kamina said with a laugh.

“Greetings, Kamina.” Linley and Delia both greeted Kamina as well.

Linley’s arrival caused the normally tranquil lives of Tarosse, Dylin, and the others to be slightly disrupted. Tarosse and the others immediately prepared a sumptuous welcome banquet that very day. Linley thus began to chat at the banquet table with Tarosse and the others regarding the affairs of the clan.

After knowing what had changed within the clan during the past five centuries, especially the viciousness of the battles that had occurred, Tarosse, Dylin, and the others couldn't help but sigh. Kamina was truly shocked; she was just an ordinary God, and in the past, although she had heard Dylin say a few things regarding Linley, it had always felt like hearing stories regarding legendary figures.

Right now, when she heard from Linley himself speaking of the deaths of so many Seven Star Fiends, there was a different feeling.

Those were Seven Star Fiends!

Generally speaking, only the master of a city was a Seven Star Fiend. But the ancient Four Divine Beasts clan and those eight great clans who had come from all the various planes, in their battles against each other, had lost one Seven Star Fiend after another.

"Did you just say that Olivier left?" Linley said, surprised.

"Right." Tarosse nodded. "Perhaps he's not accustomed to the peaceful life within cities. He went to accept Fiend missions. Generally speaking, he'll perhaps make a trip back here every ten years or every few decades."

Fiend missions?

Linley nodded slightly. At the same time, he suddenly remembered…it seemed as though he was only a One Star Fiend! Although he had taken on two missions, neither had been successful.

"Olivier, in the Yulan continent, had also desired to live an exciting life in the Infernal Realm. Thus, he was the first to come here. His temperament makes him unsuited for living forever in a city." Linley sighed.

Suddenly…

"Bang!" Suddenly, the sound of knocking against the door rang out yet again.

“Hey, someone is knocking at this time of the day? Everyone’s here though. Nobody’s outside.” Tarosse was puzzled. “Can it be that Olivier is back?”

“It can’t be such a coincidence, can it?” Linley laughed. Could it be that as soon as they discussed Olivier, he would arrive?

“Clervaux, go get the door.” Tarosse said, and Clervaux immediately rose and ran outside.

“Hey, hurry up and open the door.” A deep voice came from beyond the door, the voice shocking Linley. This was actually the voice of Phusro, the person who had saved him. Linley was very surprised to hear him.

Why had Phusro come here?

“Who are you?” Clervaux’s voice rang out. Clervaux didn’t recognize Phusro at all. As for Tarosse, Dylin, and the others, they quickly left the courtyard, seeing the big, red-haired man standing far away outside the gate.

But they didn’t recognize Phusro.

“Haha, Phusro! Boss, it’s Phusro!” Bebe called out, and Linley walked over as well, laughing, “Clervaux, he’s my friend.” Linley discovered…that Phusro actually had two subordinates trailing him.

“Kid, the first time we meet we are strangers, but the second time, we’ll be acquaintances. In the future, you’ll know who I am.” Phusro slapped Clervaux on the shoulders, causing Clervaux’s body to sway. Laughing loudly, Phusro walked in. “Linley, I knew you were here.”

Linley, hearing this, was shocked.

He had changed his appearance when he had arrived. How could Phusro have known he was here?

“Don’t be so surprised. The Governor of Meer City is my friend!” Phusro laughed. “When Delia accompanied these people to buy an estate, I arranged for people to pay attention.”

Linley now understood. So they had seen Delia and Bebe, and thus had been able to guess at his presence. But Linley was still astonished at Phusro’s connections; he actually was a friend of the Governor of Meer City!

“However, it wasn’t me who discovered you this time.” Phusro laughed. “It was another friend of mine who told me that you had arrived at Meer City.”

“Another friend?” Linley was surprised.

Phusro nodded. “Right. That friend of mine is extremely strong. My friend knows that I’m familiar with you, and so asked me to come. My friend’s wish is very simple…to meet with Bebe.”

Linley frowned.

Phusro was very powerful, and thus his friends were no doubt impressive as well. One friend was the Governor, while the other friend had actually discovered that Linley had arrived in Meer City. And this other friend wanted to see Bebe?

“Meet me?” Bebe was shocked.

“Who is this person?” Linley asked.

Phusro shook his head and laughed. “I can’t really say. If you want to ask, wait for Bebe to come back, then ask him. Right…do you agree for Bebe to make this trip?”

“To where? Is it within the city or outside?” Although Linley trusted Phusro, he was still worried about Bebe’s safety.

“Don’t worry. It is inside the city.” Phusro laughed.

Linley finally relaxed. Not even Seven Star Fiends would dare to do anything inside the city. After all, the rule that no battle was permitted within cities was a rule that was shared throughout the Infernal Realm, a rule set by Sovereigns. Who would dare violate it?

“Bebe, what do you think?” Linley turned to look at Bebe.

Bebe’s eyes were gleaming, and he laughed, “I very much want to see which mysterious person wishes to meet with me.”

Chapter 42 – Nobody There

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 42, Nobody There

Phusro laughed and said, “Since Bebe agrees to meet that friend of mine, then how about this? You can follow my two servants. They’ll take you there.” Phusro looked towards Bebe, who was rather surprised. “Right now?”

“Of course. That friend of mine is currently waiting for you.” Phusro said.

“Boss, then I’ll head out now.” Bebe turned to look towards Linley.

Although Linley was puzzled as to who this mysterious figure was, since the meeting spot was within the city, Linley felt very much at ease. He thus nodded and laughed, “Go quickly and return quickly. Phusro is intentionally hiding that person’s identity. I’ll be waiting for you to tell me who it is.”

“Right.” Bebe nodded solemnly, and then glanced sideways at Phusro. “I’m not like some people, trying to act so mysterious.”

“You punk.” Phusro couldn’t help but begin to laugh.

Bebe strode outside while saying, “The two of you, hurry up and lead the way. I have no idea where this mysterious person who wants to meet me is living.” Phusro’s two servants immediately sped up the pace, leading Bebe away.

Linley watched as Bebe departed, the questions in his heart growing more and more numerous.

“Phusro.” Delia chuckled as she looked at Phusro. “Since Bebe’s already gone, there’s no need for you to keep the secret any longer. Who is this mysterious friend of yours?” Linley turned to look towards Phusro as well, awaiting Phusro’s answer.

But Phusro just laughed and didn't respond.

"Do I know this person?" Linley asked.

Phusro paused a moment, then said, "You…shouldn't know this person."

Linley looked at Phusro, puzzled. Shouldn't know this person? Knowing was knowing. Not knowing as not knowing. But Phusro's words were so… hesitant.

"Linley, has it been ten thousand years since you were born?" Phusro asked.

"Ten thousand years?" Linley couldn't help but laugh. "Up till now, I've only trained for a bit over a thousand years. I'm still quite a ways off from my second thousand years."

"So short?" Phusro was rather surprised, and then he said, "Then I'm certain that regardless as to whether or not you've heard my friend's name, you definitely haven't met my friend in person. This is because…ten thousand years ago, this friend of mine left your Yulan continent and came to the Infernal Realm."

Linley and Delia glanced at each other, astonished.

A person from the Yulan continent?

"Someone from the Yulan continent?" Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, and the others, standing behind Linley, were surprised as well.

Phusro, seeing the looks of astonishment and confusion on their faces, laughed delightedly. "Haha, you can keep guessing. I refuse to tell…when Bebe comes back, you'll know. But I imagine that it'll be very hard for you to guess."

Linley couldn't help but shake his head and laugh. Phusro really did like to toy with people.

“Linley, how long will you be here?” Phusro suddenly asked.

“A month.” Linley said.

“Oh, so long? Then I’ll stay here for two days. If you have any free time, you can talk to me about the affairs of your Four Divine Beasts clan. I’m very curious about your Four Divine Beasts clan.” Phusro chortled.

And just like that, that very day, Phusro moved in. Fortunately, the estate which Tarosse’s group had purchased was large and had enough rooms.

Night.

Linley and Delia were still lying on the bed. After a passionate session, the night was now quiet, and the two of them, husband and wife, began to discuss that mysterious person.

“I had thought Bebe would be able to return the same day. I didn’t expect him to take so long.” Linley stroked Delia’s hair, laughing as he spoke.

“Perhaps Bebe, after meeting that mysterious person, not only chatted but also had some other matters to take care of.” Delia said. “This mysterious person actually came from the Yulan continent ten thousand years ago. We’ve never met this person before. I truly wonder who it is.”

“At first, I thought it was Lord Beirut. Afterwards, when Phusro said that I had never met this person before, I no longer had any idea who it is.” Linley was still puzzled.

And then Linley laughed and lowered his head, looking towards Delia.

“What is it?” Delia had the feeling that something was strange in Linley’s gaze.

“The two of us have just a pair of children. Although the Four Divine Beasts clansmen have very few progeny, I refuse to believe that we won’t

have a third child." Linley laughed softly, and then lowered his head to kiss Delia.

"Mmmph…"

Delia's face flushed slightly. She couldn't help but give Linley a 'glare', and then she stretched out her jade-like arms, embracing Linley's neck. The two flipped over and entangled each other…

Who would have imagined that even by the time Phusro had left, Bebe still hadn't returned? Linley couldn't help but be rather nervous. How could a meeting with someone end up taking three days? Linley asked Phusro, but Phusro just told him not to worry.

After waiting five days…

"These scryer recordings I saw today were excellent. The ways in which those experts from the Higher Plane of Life do battle are quite peculiar. The ways in which they fly and the poses they adopt when attacking all seem so beautiful and alluring." Delia laughed as she praised.

Linley nodded. "Those in the Higher Plane of Life primarily train in the Edicts of Life. Those attacks are so beautiful to behold, yet their power is so astonishing."

While in Meer City, Linley and Delia would go wandering about in some of the more interesting parts of the city. It had to be said…that in Meer City, where so many people passed through, there really were many more interesting things than in the Skyrite Mountains.

Linley and Delia, laughing and chatting with each other, returned to their residence.

Upon reaching the gate, Delia let out a sigh. "I wonder if Bebe is back or not. This is the fifth day." Although Delia was often thinking about this, she still wasn't too worried. Firstly, Bebe was within the city and nothing would go wrong. Secondly, Linley and Bebe had a spiritual connection, and thus

they could sense each other's locations.

Linley just grinned, not saying anything as he looked towards the gate of the residence.

His soul had sensed long ago that Bebe was within the estate. A jubilatory cry was heard. "Boss!" The gates swung open, and Bebe, wearing his straw hat, was standing right there in front of them, beaming towards Linley and Delia.

"Bebe's back?" Delia was startled, and then she turned to glare at Linley. Linley had to have sensed Bebe's return, but he hadn't said a thing on the way back

Linley began to laugh loudly.

"Bebe, you really are something. When you went to meet with that mysterious figure, you ended up spending so much time. This is the fifth day." Linley laughed while walking with Delia into the estate.

Within the estate, Tarosse, Dylin, Cesar, O'Brien, Kamina, and the others were all present. Upon seeing Linley and Delia enter, Tarosse laughed loudly, "Linley, you finally returned. We were asking Bebe who he had gone to visit, but he refused to tell us. He insisted on waiting until you were back and telling us all together."

Bebe wrinkled his nose and snorted.

Linley and Delia immediately laughed, walking over and sitting down. Linley looked towards Bebe. "Bebe, stop teasing everyone. Just spit it out. If you don't tell them today, Tarosse, Dylin, and the others will get angry."

Tarosse and Dylin began to laugh as well. This was just a small matter, and they were simply curious. How could they actually grow angry?

"Fine, I'll tell." Bebe raised his head. "This person originally came from our Yulan continent."

“We know this. It’s precisely because this person is from the Yulan continent, that we are all curious.” Tarosse immediately replied.

Bebe stared at everyone, then said smugly, “This mysterious person is…the wife of my Grandpa Beirut. My Grandma Carolina!”

“Carolina?” Linley immediately remembered that back in the Yulan continent, that year Bebe had indeed told him that Beirut’s wife was ‘Carolina’.

While at the Yulan continent, Linley had met Harvey, Hart, and Harry, the three brothers, but he had never met Carolina. When chatting with Harry and the others, Linley had heard that Carolina had long ago left the Yulan continent.

“It’s her?” Tarosse let out a sound of surprise, and then began to laugh loudly. “I should’ve thought of her long ago. Lord Carolina is the wife of Lord Beirut. It’s only natural that she comes to meet Bebe.”

“Lord Carolina is the wife of Lord Beirut?” O’Brien was rather surprised.

When O’Brien and Cesar were born, Carolina had already left the Yulan continent. Naturally, they had never heard of this person. In fact, they didn’t even know that she was Beirut’s wife.

“My Grandma Carolina is very formidable.” Bebe said smugly.

“Bebe, why did Grandma Carolina seek you out this time? And it took so much time as well.” Linley was still puzzled.

“She was helping my Grandpa bring me something.” Bebe chortled. “The fifth soul slice fragment.”

Dylin, Tarosse, O’Brien, and the others had faces filled with puzzlement.

But Delia and Linley were rather surprised. Bebe had spoken to them

regarding the ‘soul slice’ matter. Originally, it was because Bebe had absorbed those four soul slices, which contained memories of souls which held insights on profound mysteries, which was why he had been able to learn four types of profound mysteries in such a short period of time.

“In recent years, Grandpa finally helped me find the last one.” Bebe said smugly. “Boss, you need to work hard. I might become a Highgod before you.”

Linley chuckled. By now, he had already mastered a fifth profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth, with one remaining. He trained extremely quickly in water as well, and had already mastered four.

“Haha, who knows which one of us will be Highgod first?” Linley laughed.

“What are you two talking about. What’s a soul fragment?” Dylin, Cesar, and the others were all puzzled. If a soul was shattered, it would be destroyed. How could there be ‘soul fragments’? What were soul fragments used for?

They couldn’t understand at all.

Time flew by very quickly. Life in Meer City was very relaxed, and in the blink of an eye, a month passed. On the day of departure, the Azure Dragon clan’s forces had already gathered outside the city. Everyone had arrived very early.

“Milord, the forces of the Azure Dragon clan are over there.”

“Do you see Linley and his family?”

“No! Most likely, they’ll arrive soon. The Azure Dragon clan’s people are still gathering.”

“Hurry up and notify the eight Elders. Let them make their preparations.”

“Don’t worry, milord. The eight Elders already know of this. Once the

Azure Dragon clan's forces head out, the eight Elders will be ready to strike at a moment's notice."

"Good. The eight Elders care deeply about killing Linley. There can't be any mistakes made."

An intelligence agent of the eight great clans was currently monitoring the gathering of Azure Dragon clansmen. These intelligence agents had memorized the appearance of these Azure Dragon clansmen when they had passed through the city gates.

Those ordinary clansmen hadn't changed their appearance. Thus, when gathering together, they were immediately recognized.

Elder Tewila, his appearance changed, was currently waiting impatiently. Every so often, he would look towards the city entrance. "What's going on with Linley? He still hasn't arrived."

"Elder Tewila." A Highgod subordinate of Tewila sent through divine sense, "The other clansmen are all ready. We're only waiting for Elder Linley and his group of three. What should we do? Wait here?"

Tewila frowned.

"No. Since Elder Linley's group hasn't come, they'll most likely go back with the next group, or perhaps by themselves. We don't need to concern ourselves." Tewila immediately ordered, "Prepare to move out."

Tewila immediately produced his enormous metallic lifeform, in the shape of a black tiger, and the Azure Dragon clansmen immediately boarded.

"Milord, the Azure Dragon clan is about to head out. Only that Linley, his wife, and his friend haven't appeared."

"Still haven't appeared? Wait a while longer. That metallic lifeform will probably wait for some time before heading out."

However, the black tiger-shaped metallic lifeform took the clansmen and left, not hesitating at all, immediately embarking and disappearing into the horizon. This sight caused quite a few intelligence agents to be stupefied.

“Milord…now what? Linley’s group of three truly has not arrived. There are three fewer people in that metallic lifeform than had arrived in the city.”

“Three fewer? Then it seems as though Linley’s group of three has yet to leave. Hurry up and inform the eight Elders…eh. Let the eight Elders rest for now, and continue to wait patiently.”

Chapter 43 – Wade

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 43, Wade

Linley and his group of three hadn't departed, causing the intelligence agents of the eight great clans to have wasted their efforts, and causing those eight Elders, who had been preparing for so long, to have become excited for nothing.

Meer City. The residence of Tarosse and the others.

"Tarosse, I'm afraid we'll have to disturb you for a while longer." Linley's face was covered in smiles. He couldn't help but glance at Delia. He had been planning to return to the clan, but the previous night, Delia had actually told him…

That she…was pregnant!

"We were in the Skyrite Mountains for so long without her becoming pregnant. Who would have expected that now, she would?" Once Linley knew this news, he was unbelievably happy. Since Delia had become pregnant, Linley was no longer in a hurry to return to the Skyrite Mountains. After all, in terms of living environment, Meer City was much habitable than the Skyrite Mountains.

The plan was to first let Delia rest here. After giving birth to their child, they could go back.

"Haha, you can stay here as long as you like." Tarosse was puzzled. "But Linley, just yesterday, didn't you say that today was the day for you to head out? Why did you suddenly change your decision?" Cesar, by Tarosse's side, looked towards Linley as well, puzzled.

"Delia's pregnant." Linley said happily. Delia, by his side, couldn't help but blush.

Tarosse and Cesar immediately stared, and then began to laugh loudly.

“Haha, this is wonderful news. We have to celebrate!” Tarosse said hurriedly.

The news that Delia was pregnant caused everyone in the residence to be overjoyed. When Phusro came over, he discovered to his surprise that Linley actually hadn’t left yet. When he asked, he learned about Delia being pregnant. He, too, was happy for Linley, and so the entire residence was filled with joyous sounds.

With Delia pregnant, Linley spent every single day by her side, watching as her belly grew bigger by the day. He grew more and more excited, and every so often, he would press his ear against Delia’s belly, listening to the sounds.

When he drew near to Delia, Linley could even sense the blood pulsing through the veins of the unborn child, which seemed to reverberate slightly with his own lineage.

“Milord, our people have discovered Linley’s friend, ‘Bebe’, within Meer City. We’ve quietly tailed him and finally discovered Bebe’s residence. Our brothers plotted and schemed…and finally discovered the estate where Linley and Delia are living in!”

Meer City was a large city with a circumference of a thousand kilometers.

But to Deities, especially to the intelligence agents of the eight great clans, who stayed in Meer City for a long time, it wasn’t hard for them to find Bebe, given how often Bebe went out. Upon finding Bebe…given the abilities of the eight great clans, finding Linley and Delia wasn’t too hard.

“Excellent! Now that we’ve found their residence, everything else will be simple. Now, always have someone watching that place. Remember, you can’t let Linley’s group discover us. Whenever Linley heads out, immediately report it to us.”

“Yes, milord!” “But, milord, what if Linley’s group just remains in Meer City without leaving? What should we do?”

“Then…”

Fighting within the cities was forbidden. Even the eight great clans wouldn’t dare to violate this rule.

“We’ll just watch for now. I refuse to believe Linley will remain forever in Meer City. As for if Linley will really stay there without coming out…the Elders will decide what to do.”

The eight great clans’ intelligence agents continuously watched that residence. However, despite their careful attention, Linley just spent his time happily accompanying his wife, seemingly not intending to leave at all.

……

Linley was seated outside, holding a cup of wine. He was rather rattled, occasionally turning to look back into the room. This was because Delia was in the room, and Delia was already close to the point of birth.

“Whew…” Linley couldn’t help but take a deep breath.

He hadn’t been as nervous as this, even when he was fighting against Seven Star Fiends.

“I wonder if it’s a boy or a girl. I wonder if the child has been born yet or not. I wonder if Delia is…” Countless thoughts flitted through Linley’s mind in a jumbled fashion. The hand holding the wine cup was trembling slightly.

“Boss, it isn’t as though you haven’t had any experience. Still so nervous?” Bebe, by his side, was snickering.

Linley couldn't help but glance at him, then forced out a smile. "Bebe, when one day you are about to become a father, you'll know. Each time you wait…the tension isn't any less than when battling against ultimate experts."

While waiting outside, Linley felt as though his heart was tight against his chest.

Next to him was O'Brien, Dylin, Tarosse, and the others. Even Phusro had come over today, and was chatting with the others while teasing Linley. Linley didn't spend any time chatting with them.

His attention was focused on the room.

"Waaaaaaaaaa!"

An ear-piercing infant's cry broke the silence of the entire estate. It was like a ray of sunlight flashing within Linley's mind, causing all the countless doubts and worries to vanish. At this moment, he had only a single thought…

The child had been born!

"Whoosh!" Linley charged towards the door, and at this moment, the door was opened. Dylin's wife, 'Kamina', laughed as she walked out. "Linley, congratulations. Delia's given birth to a son!"

Linley, not caring whether it was a boy or a girl, immediately entered the room.

Within the room, a faint sheen of perspiration could be seen on Delia's forehead. She was seated on the bed, cradling an infant. Seeing Linley enter, she immediately stood up then walked over. "Linley, look. He's very quiet. Just now, he was crying, but now he's calmer."

Linley took a careful look at the infant in Delia's arms. That pouting face, that tiny body and head…he looked so similar to how Taylor and Sasha had

been.

“Let me hold him.” Linley’s heart was beating rapidly.

No matter how powerful an expert was, upon becoming a father and holding his son for the first time, he would feel excited, nervous, and agitated.

Holding the infant in his arms, he could feel the slight weight of his son against him. Although infants were very light, especially to a powerful expert like Linley, to whom this sort of weight was nothing, Linley felt as though this light weight was pressing down against his heart.

“Son. My son!” Linley couldn’t help but shout in his heart, “This is my son!!!”

Holding his son, Linley had that sensation of his blood being passed down, of life continuing.

“Linley, what’s the child’s name? Have you come to a decision?” Delia said.

“We’ll call him Wade.” Linley looked dotingly at the child in his arms.

“Wade…Wade…say ‘Father’?” Linley said, gently stroking his son’s little nose. The skin was so soft. But perhaps Linley hurt him as he touched him, as Wade, who had just stopped crying moments ago, began to bawl loudly again.

Delia immediately stretched her arms out to take him back. “He’s just a newborn, and yet you want him to call you ‘Father’. The child’s crying already. Quick, let me hold him.”

“It’s fine. The son of Linley doesn’t need to be pampered that much.” Linley said. “Let me hold him for a while longer.”

Holding his son ‘Wade’ in his arms, Linley felt utter joy in his heart. The

feeling of holding his son in his arms was even more exciting and happy for him than the feeling of holding a Sovereign artifact.

Seeing how reluctant Linley was to part from Wade, Delia couldn't help but laugh.

Linley lowered his head to look at his son. He felt as though he could never get tired of looking at him.

"Waaaaaaa…." Wade cried for a while, then stopped crying. His big guileless, pure eyes, containing no artifice at all, stared at Linley. This was the first man he had seen after his birth!

He didn't know yet that this was his father!

He was the son of Linley! It was guaranteed that his life would not be an ordinary one!

"Linley, why haven't you come out yet?" Cesar's voice rang out.

"Boss, hurry up and carry your son out. We uncles want to hold him too!" Bebe called loudly. At this moment, Linley and Delia, within the room, came to their senses. They couldn't help but grin at each other, then walked out while holding the child.

As soon as they walked outside, Bebe, Clervaux, and the others all rushed forward.

"Lemme hold him!" Bebe said jubilantly.

Their son was born. Linley and Delia felt utter bliss as they played with their son. They were in no rush to return to the Skyrite Mountains at all. But although they weren't in a rush, the intelligence agents of the eight great clans, especially those eight Elders, were frantic.

None of them had any idea how long Linley would stay here before returning.

However, they obviously couldn't go and tell him to hurry up. They just had to watch as Linley spent every day enjoying his time with his son.

"Milord, our men are always in wait and always watching. But it's been a year already. When will this come to an end?" The intelligence agents of the eight great clans were watching day and night, not daring to slack off at all.

"Linley is currently holding that infant right now. Are we supposed to just watch and wait until the infant grows up to become an adult?"

Just watching every day was indeed tiring, especially since they didn't even know how long they would have to keep doing it.

"Don't be impatient. I've already reported this to the Patriarchs, and the eight Patriarchs sent back a single word in response; 'Wait'! No matter what, we are not to arouse Linley's notice. He can't always stay in Meer City. There will be a day when he comes out!"

"Yes, milord."

The intelligence agents had no choice but to grit their teeth and keep watching.

On the streets of Meer City. Linley and Delia were walking shoulder to shoulder, with their son 'Wade' being taken care of by Kamina. The reason they had come out today was to buy some nutritious foodstuffs. Wade was still young. When he started to grow, he would need to eat many things.

"When we return later to the Skyrite Mountains, there won't be so much food available for sale." Linley laughed. "We should have bought enough this time."

"Of course we bought enough. These things we bought cost us tens of millions of inkstones. It's more than enough for Wade to eat for over ten years." Delia laughed. "Compared to Sasha and Taylor, the food which Wade will eat while growing up will be much better."

“Wade doesn’t know that he has an older brother and sister right now. When he grows up and knows more, we’ll tell him.” Knowing that he had his son by his side, he felt full of energy in everything he did, be it training or eating!

Just as Linley and Delia were chatting mentally on the way back, they suddenly saw someone…

“Eh?” Linley stared, astonished, at a distant figure. It was a member of the Azure Dragon clan. All of the clansmen had emblems of the clan, and they could all sense each other’s presence. This was why Linley sensed this person in front of him.

In Meer City, Linley had already run into quite a few members of the Azure Dragon clan. But this was the first time Linley had run into someone he knew.

“Elder Linley.” The other person had discovered Linley as well, and hurriedly reached out with divine sense.

“Elder Tewila.” Linley immediately responded with divine sense.

Linley and Tewila had both changed their appearances, but they looked exactly the same as they had when they last left. Naturally, the two could easily recognize each other.

Tewila smiled while walking over and saying through divine sense, “Elder Linley, you didn’t return with us last time. Did something happen?”

“I’m truly sorry. I really didn’t expect that in the month I had been at Meer City, my wife would become pregnant.” Linley laughed while sending back. “At that time, I came to the decision that I would return after my child was born.”

“Ah! Congratulations, congratulations.” Elder Tewila hurriedly sent back.

Linley was all smiles as well.

“Right. Elder Tewila, are you escorting the metallic lifeform this time?” Linley asked. “The clan sends a batch every half year. It’s only been a year and a half, but it’s your turn again?”

“Nothing for it. In the past four, five hundred years, we’ve lost too many Elders. The clan has too few Elders now, and most have entered Bloodbath Gorge.” Tewila said helplessly. “Thus, there’re only a few Elders on rotation for escorting the metallic lifeform.”

Linley now understood.

Linley knew that the clan had suffered tremendous losses over the past five centuries. As for exactly how many Elders had been lost, however, Linley had never asked in detail. However…in the first two hundred years, they had lost five Elders. Most likely, over five hundred years, more than ten Elders had been lost.

“Tewila, when will you head back? We were just preparing to head back ourselves. Let’s go together.” Linley laughed.

“Oh. We’re heading out in two days.” Tewila was very happy as well. “Elder Linley, if you head out with us, then it will be much safer with us having joined forces.”

“Very well. We’ll meet in two days at dawn.” Linley said.

“Definitely. However, when the time comes, make sure you show up this time.” Tewila laughed.

“That won’t happen again.” Linley laughed.

Two days later. Dawn. The gates of the estate. Delia was holding little Wade, bidding farewell to Tarosse and the others, Linley and Bebe by her side.

“Tarosse, no need to send us off.” Linley laughed.

“In the future, you must often come visit. I love this little Wade.” Tarosse laughed.

Bebe laughed as well. “By the time you come again, Wade will be all grown up.”

After bidding farewell to their friends, Linley, Delia, and Bebe took little Wade to head directly towards the gates of the city. This scene, in turn, was noticed by a figure located within a distant, tall building who was watching through a window. “Linley’s group…seems to be preparing to head out.”

Chapter 44 – Catching a Ride

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 44, Catching a Ride

The gates of Meer City. The intelligence station for the eight great clans' intelligence agents.

"Milord, Linley's group of three, along with an infant, have already headed out. They will reach the city gates soon."

"Oh? They even brought the infant out? It seems they really are prepared to leave the city. However, there's no rush. Let's take it slowly. After you see Linley's group reach the city gates, only then should you make the report to the eight Elders." The speaker was a seemingly honest-looking youth.

This honest-looking youth was standing in front of a window, a casual look on his face as he glanced downwards.

He could very clearly see the gates from his current position.

A long time later…

The pupils of the honest-looking youth contracted. Within his field of vision, amidst the massive, thronging crowds, Linley's group had appeared.

"Oh, Linley, Linley, Linley. You finally show yourself. I thought you'd end up spending millions of years in Meer City, but it seemed as though you decided to just spend a year or so." The honest-looking youth narrowed his eyes, a very innocent-looking smile appearing on his face.

"Quick. Spread this news to the Elders." The honest-looking youth immediately sent through divine sense.

"Yes!"

In a mountain forest roughly a thousand kilometers away from Meer City, there was a very ordinary stone house constructed there. This stone house was very wide, and it had eight prayer mats within the building. Eight gray-robed men were seated in the meditative position on those prayer mats, quietly awaiting.

It had been more than a year!

They had brought with them a murderous intent as they had prepared to kill Linley. However, they had ended up waiting here the entire time. Slowly, their killing aura had decreased.

“If Linley doesn’t want to leave the city, who knows how long it will take? Ten years, a thousand years, ten thousand years?” A gray-robed man with long black hair and a beard said, rather upset.

Without a specific timeframe, it would be easy for anyone to grow impatient while waiting.

“Tempah!” A graceful voice rang out. “The members of your Reinales clan are still unable to be calm, it seems.”

The bearded gray-robed man let out a snort, saying nothing else.

“Someone is coming.” Suddenly, a sharp voice rang out. As soon as the words finished, a figure flew in at high speed. This person was one of the intelligence agents assigned to this place, who would be able to bring news to the eight Elders at any time.

“Eight Elders, Linley, Linley is leaving the city!” An excited voice rang out.

“Boom!” The eight gray-robed figures immediately rose to their feet. Even the most stolid of the eight, their leader, ‘Elder Zabu’, revealed a look of joy on his face. He immediately said, “Linley has finally shown himself. Everyone…remember, when attacking, immediately use your Sovereign’s Might. We must use full force and immediately kill Linley.”

Outside Meer City. The Azure Dragon clan's clansmen were gathering together. Because of the clan's seal, everyone could clearly sense everyone else.

"Elder Linley, you came fairly early today." Tewila said through divine sense.

Linley laughed and nodded. "I was afraid that if I came late, Elder Tewila, you would be angry with me." Tewila's gaze swept towards Delia and the infant 'Wade' in her arms, then he sent, "Linley, this is your son, right? He's so pretty."

"When Wade was born, he looked like an old man." Linley said. When someone praised his son, he naturally would be pleased.

"Right. When are we heading out?" Linley asked.

Tewila glanced around himself. "From the looks of it, we are almost all here. Let's just wait a while longer. Right, Linley. Today, on our metallic lifeform, we have a very special guest."

"Oh, a special guest?" Linley was rather surprised.

"Right. The Patriarch personally entrusted me with this task, ordering me to bring him to the Skyrite Mountains." Tewila laughed. "Follow me. I'll introduce you to him."

Linley, rather curious as to who this special guest was, followed Tewila's lead. Linley saw that this special passenger was a seemingly skinny-looking youth with short golden hair, and a guileless smile on his face.

However…when Linley looked at him, he had a familiar feeling.

"Haha, Linley." A clear and straightforward voice echoed in Linley's mind. Linley was shocked into awareness. This was Phusro! This voice was Phusro's voice!

“You?!” Linley stared in amazement at the skinny youth in front of him, and the skinny youth winked, sending mentally, “There’s nothing for it. Your Patriarch said that due to my actions last time, the eight great clans probably know my appearance by now. I have to change my appearance, even when I’m riding on your metallic lifeform. Geeze…what’s there to fear? Even if a few Elders come, I’ll dispose of them by myself.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Phusro was a Sovereign’s Emissary. Linley had personally witnessed his might before, and even Bulo, after using a drop of Sovereign’s Might, was far from being a match for Phusro. It would be very simple for him to kill several Elders.

“Haha, the Patriarch is doing this for the sake of the clan.” Linley laughed. “Right. How did you get involved with the Patriarch?” Last time, when Phusro had intervened and saved him, he hadn’t known the Patriarch.

However, five centuries had passed. Anything could have happened in the mean time.

“You don’t need to worry about that.” Phusro sent through divine sense. “My meeting with your Patriarch will be beneficial to you, not detrimental. That’s all that you need to know.”

Linley laughed and nodded. “Everything else aside, you accompanying us back to the Skyrite Mountains alone is a great benefit.” With Phusro present, along with himself and Tewila, they were a force of sizable power.

Phusro by himself was equal to multiple Seven Star Fiends.

“In addition, I’ve never even see Phusro unleash all of his power.” Linley thought to himself.

“Linley, who is this?” Delia and Bebe looked at the skinny youth, puzzled. Linley chuckled. “When we board the metallic lifeform, I’ll introduce you to him.”

Phusro just winked deliberately.

“Uh….waaaaa….” Wade, in Delia’s arms, reached out his pudgy fingers towards Phusro. Phusro had held Wade quite a few times before as well. Although Phusro’s appearance had changed greatly, Wade, who had been born less than a year ago, seemed to possess some special sense.

“Wade, be good.” Phusro beamed towards Wade.

Delia and Bebe were shocked. How did the skinny little youth in front of them know Wade’s name?

“Everyone’s here. Let’s head out.” Tewila walked over, and as he did, an enormous silver metallic lifeform in the shape of a silver wolf appeared. A tunnel appeared in its flank, and the clansmen of the Azure dragon clan all entered the metallic lifeform.

Linley, Phusro, Tewila Bebe, and Delia boarded as well.

“Swoosh!”

The metallic lifeform slashed through the air, turning into a blur and disappearing into the horizon.

“The metallic lifeform is flying towards position two. It is flying towards position two!” The intelligence agents of the eight great clans quickly relayed this information.

In mid-air, there were nine figures flying at high speed. Eight of them were dressed in long gray robes, while the last one was dressed in a long green robe. The green-robed man said hurriedly, “Eight Elders, Linley’s metallic lifeform was originally headed towards position two, but now they’ve changed directions slightly. They should be passing through position four. We’re still a few hundred kilometers away from that location. We’ll be there soon!”

The eight great clans' intelligence agents had expended an enormous amount of effort on this.

With the gate as the center, they had fanned out and set up many gathering points within thousands of kilometers. No matter what direction the Azure Dragon clan's metallic lifeform headed towards, they would be easily detected by those intelligence agents.

As for that green-robed man, one of his divine clones was at the headquarters, and so he knew the location and route of the metallic lifeform at all times.

"Excellent." Elder Zabu laughed calmly and spoke mentally. "Everyone, we're only a few hundred kilometers away. We'll reach the metallic lifeform soon. When we do, immediately cover it with your divine senses and locate Linley. At that time…Annecy [An'ni'xi], you'll be responsible for covering the Elder who is protecting the metallic lifeform. Everyone else, myself included, will all attack simultaneously, joining forces to kill Linley. We can't give him any chance at all.

"Yes." The seven Elders assented.

Of these eight Elders, three were in possession of Sovereign's Might. Annecy was one of the 'ordinary' Elders without it.

On this joint mission to kill Linley, three Elders would use their Sovereign's Might, with four other Elders joining them. With such a tremendously powerful squad…even if Patriarch Gislason came, it would be hard for him to endure such an attack, much less Linley!

"Actually, Elder Zabu, if you use your Sovereign's Might, you'll be more than strong enough to kill Linley by yourself. Even if we don't use Sovereign's Might, the joint attacks of seven Elders against Linley will result in a surefire victory." The bearded Elder sent mentally.

"We can't be the slightest bit incautious!"

“Remember. Immediately use your Sovereign’s Mights. Don’t entertain any notions of being frugal. Kill Linley. Nothing is permitted to go wrong.” Elder Zabu ordered solemnly yet again. “Nice, Tempah, the two of you must use your Sovereign’s Might right away when attack.”

It was like killing a chicken with a blade meant for slaughtering cows. It was an utter waste.

Using three drops of Sovereign’s Might to kill a single Linley? It was indeed extravagant.

The enormous wolf-shaped silvery metallic lifeform was speeding forward at a fast pace. The clansmen within the metallic lifeform were chatting amongst each other. Linley, as an Elder, naturally had his own room.

Linley and Delia were within the room, while Delia was holding little Wade.

“Wade, Wade.” Linley teased his son.

“Wuuu, wuuuuu….” Wade, not yet able to speak, could only stare with his big, clear eyes at Linley, mumbling something incomprehensible.

Delia watched this scene, watched as her husband teased her son. As she did, Delia’s face couldn’t help but reveal a smile. She felt surrounded by bliss, and celebrated once more her decision to steadfastly wait ten years for Linley, so long ago in the past.

Linley turned to look and smile towards Delia. “Delia, what are you laughing about?”

“I’m just looking at you and our son.” Delia’s smile was so brilliant.

But right at that moment…

Eight divine senses simultaneously spread out, covering the metallic lifeform and everyone within it. The faces of many clansmen couldn’t help

but change, and Delia, as a Highgod, felt the divine senses as well.

Eight divine senses had suddenly swept out? This definitely couldn't be a good.

"Linley, eight Highgod divine senses just swept through this metallic lifeform." Delia immediately said through divine sense. There was no time to talk.

Shocked, Linley's face changed. He immediately spread his divine sense towards the outside…

And in mid-air, eight gray-robed figures were charging at high speed towards the metallic lifeform. Three of them, in particular, were emanating a terrifying, heart-stopping aura from their entire bodies. Linley could instantly recognize the aura for what it was. Sovereign's Might.

"Sovereign's Might!" Linley's face changed dramatically.

One of the eight gray-robed men was moving fairly slowly.

As for the other seven, especially the three whose bodies were completely covered by a layer of Sovereign's Might, charged straight for the metallic lifeform, directly towards the room which Linley was staying in.

"Die!"

"Linley, quick, flee!!!"

The voices of Phusro and Tewila instantly rang out in Linley's mind. They clearly noticed the enemies before Linley had.

But…there was no time!

"BANG!"

A terrifying energy wave struck the metallic lifeform, and in the face of that

frightening energy wave, the surface of the metallic lifeform blew apart as though it were paper. The shards were sent flying wildly every which way by the explosion. Linley let a deep growl, and his draconic scales emerged as he entered his Dragonform.

“Slash!” Shards of metal flew about everywhere, and Delia immediately lowered her head, tightly embracing her son protectively.

“Delia, flee.” Linley pushed Delia away powerfully, then shouted through divine sense, “Tewila, protect Delia!” The enemies were clearly here for him. This battle was one in which Phusro and Linley would play the primary roles.

“Linley!” Delia, pushed aside, shot backwards like an arrow. Her body immediately became covered with a shield of divine power, protecting little Wade. But Delia still turned to look back…

A blurry, earthen yellow light had suddenly spread out. Gravitational Space!

An azure light had also burst forth. Water-type Sovereign’s Might!

In an instant, Linley had unleashed all of his power!

A fiery red form charged over while shouting through divine sense, “Delia, hurry up and flee, leave the battle to us!”

“Roaaaaar!” A ferocious draconic howl shook out!

“Bang!”

A terrifying, soul-shaking explosive vibration blasted out from the center of that earthen yellow light. Space itself cracked open in multiple areas, and wild blasts of energy emanated in every direction. Some of the weaker clansmen who were hit by it immediately exploded and died.

Chapter 45 – A Frantic Battle

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 45, A Frantic Battle

Within the blurry, earthen yellow field, Linley, his entire body covered by that azure light, had just suffered the combined attacks of seven Elders. The seven mighty Elders had all unleashed the attacks they were most proficient at, either material attacks that tore through the air or invisible spiritual attacks.

Because this all happened within such a short time frame, and because he chose to first push Delia out of the danger zone, Linley wasn't able to dodge at all.

"Rumble…"

Seven bursts of terrifyingly powerful attacks all struck Linley, three of which were attacks which contained Sovereign's Might. The air around Linley blew apart, and his draconic scales shattered as blood splashed everywhere. Linley's ravaged body fell down like a meteor, plunging from the skies, smashing hard against the ground.

"BANG!"

The earth trembled, and a crater that was two or three meters wide and so deep that the bottom couldn't be seen appeared.

A dazzling, fiery red light slashed through the skies. "Aaaaaah!" A desolate, miserable scream. At the same instant that Linley fell from the skies, Elder 'Nice', his entire body filled with Sovereign's Might, fell down from the skies as well. His head had already been completely disintegrated and could no longer be seen.

In but an instant!

Linley's status was unknown. On the side of the eight Elders, an Elder who had used Sovereign's Might, Elder Nice, had died.

"You…"

The eight Elders, who had been radiating such an indomitable, martial spirit, were stunned by Phusro's sudden attack. The seven remaining ones stared in astonishment at this red-haired man whose entire body radiated fire-type Sovereign's Might, who was wielding a long awl in his hands.

In a single blow, he had killed Elder Nice, who had used Sovereign's Might!

"Linley!" Phusro immediately sent his divine sense into the ground.

"Linley!" Delia's face turned ashen, and at the same time, she howled desperately through divine sense, "Elder Tewila, quick, quick, go help Linley, quick!"

"Alright, but you have to be careful and stay far away. Don't be hit by the shockwaves." Tewila replied urgently through divine sense. Although he had experienced hundreds of battles, upon seeing the sudden, terrifying attacks just now, Tewila was tense as well.

Good heavens!

Phusro was himself a Sovereign's Emissary. It was only normal for him to have a drop of Sovereign's Might. But unexpectedly, the enemy had used three drops of Sovereign's Might as well!

"It seems that after hiding for so many years, it is time to let the eight great clans know the power that I, Tewila, possess!" Tewila said to himself. And then, not hesitating at all, he used his drop of Sovereign's Might as well.

A wild burst of water-type Sovereign's Might blasted forth.

This immediately caused the seven Elders in the distance to glance towards

him, their faces changing dramatically.

“Elder Zabu, that person in the distance should be an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan. The person in front of him should be that Sovereign’s Emissary named Phusro who saved Linley five centuries ago.” Tempah’s entire body was emanating the aura of Sovereign’s Might. He hurriedly asked, “The enemy is more powerful than we expected. What should we do now?”

The seven surviving Elders had a bad feeling!

An ugly look was on Elder Zabu’s face. He had heard of Phusro’s power. If Phusro didn’t have a Sovereign artifact, he wouldn’t be afraid of Phusro, but Phusro had not only used his Sovereign artifact, but also Sovereign’s Might…

He had to admit that he was one level weaker than Phusro.

Elder Zabu’s eyes flashed with a decisive look, and he immediately gave the order. “The Patriarchs have given us our orders. In this battle…we must kill Linley, no matter what. Even if all eight of us die, we must kill Linley. Let me deal with this Phusro. I’ll contain him for now…Annecy, you do what you have to do in order to contain that Elder of the Azure Dragon clan. The other five Elders…Tempah, I entrust Linley to you. Even if you die, you must kill him!”

“Yes!”

The other six Elders immediately became resolved.

Although this took time to describe, in truth, the communication through divine sense by these seven Elders happened in the blink of an eye. In that blink of an eye, there was only enough time for Tewila to begin to charge over…and as he did, Phusro laughed!

“Haha…you are so audacious. All of you, die.” Phusro laughed wildly, and was the first to charge over.

“Remember, at all costs, kill Linley!” The elfin-looking ‘Elder Zabu’ shouted through divine sense, while he charged forward to meet Phusro. As for Elder Annecy, he went to go deal with Tewila.

“Swish.” “Swish.”

With Elder Zabu at the center, ten million strands of green branches erupted forth, sweeping towards Phusro. Those ten million green branches were filled with a green aura, encasing Phusro within.

This was Elder Zabu’s ultimate technique…

The ‘Dance of Life’!

The goal wasn’t to kill the enemy, just to contain the enemy!

…….

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang”! “Bang!”

The five Elders led by Elder Tempah charged directly into the ground. The tough, unyielding ground, in the face of these Seven Star Fiends, seemed to be made out of tofu, and giant tunnels in the earth were created by each of them.

“What is going on, what in the world is going on?” Many of the Azure Dragon clansmen were hovering in midair in the distance. This sudden attack had made them all numb.

“It must be the forces of the eight great clans.”

The Azure Dragon clansmen could only come to this conclusion. They all stared worriedly at the two battles going on in mid-air, while there was a massive battle going on below as well.

Delia, holding little Wade and with Bebe by her side, stood there in mid-air,

staring worriedly towards the ground.

“Delia, don’t worry. The Boss is fine.” Bebe hurriedly said through divine sense. “I can sense that the Boss is still alive.” But although this was what Bebe said, a hint of worry could still be seen in his gaze.

This was because…

Shattered draconic scales and a severed arm were lying on the distant ground. This was what Linley had left behind from the sudden attack just now, which had injured him badly.

Even though he used Sovereign’s Might and even though his body’s defense was tough, in the face of the combined attack of seven Elders, he was lucky to stay alive.

“Linley, you have to be fine.” Delia’s body was trembling.

Right at this moment, a metallic lifeform hovering in the distance came to a halt, and quite a few people flew out from within it, all of them staring at Phusro, Elder Zabu, Elder Tewila, Elder Annecy, and the two battles going on between these combatants.

“A battle between Seven Star Fiends, and they’ve even used Sovereign’s Might!”

Shocked cries rang out.

“Quick, record it down. We can’t miss a battle on this level.”

Quite a few experts who trained in the ‘Elemental Laws of Water’ hurriedly set up ‘Scryer Recordings’, recording down the distant, incredibly rare battle between supreme experts. Not just them; even quite a members of the Azure Dragon clan were recording this battle.

Right at this moment…

“Rumble…” Beneath the ground, an enormous serpent seemed to be slithering about. The entire ground was rippling in waves, and wild bursts of energy were spreading about wantonly.

“There’s a battle underground!”

The many spectators all lowered their heads to watch.

“Linley!” Delia was extremely worried.

Deep within the ground, Linley was tunneling at high speed. The draconic scales around his chest were still shattered, while his entire right arm had been severed. The water-type Sovereign’s Might was currently slowly repairing Linley’s body.

After all, the more powerful a body, the slower the repair would be!

“Those three who used Sovereign’s Might are too strong!” Linley still felt that his head was in a daze. At the most dangerous juncture, he had used his Dragonform as well as the Sovereign’s Might for defense.

Of those seven, two specialized in material attacks while the other five used spiritual attacks!

The physical attacks were used by Tempah and Nice, two Elders who had used Sovereign’s Might. By joining forces, not only had the two been able to break through Linley’s armor formed from Sovereign’s Might, they had also shattered Linley’s draconic scales…

If Linley’s defense had been just slightly weaker, he probably would’ve been finished.

“Fortunately, that person isn’t pursuing me.” Linley still clearly remembered how that elfin-looking gray-robed man who had used a drop of Sovereign’s Might had been able to, with a single spiritual attack, easily locate the weakness in Linley’s Sovereign artifact. Luckily, Linley had gone all out, and by using both the Sovereign’s Might as well as his hereditary

azure light to defend, he had been able to withstand it.

“If that elfin-looking gray-robed man attacked again along with those four behind me with another barrage of spiritual attacks, I wouldn’t be able to take it.” Linley was truly stunned.

“Rumble…”

An enormous black claw suddenly emerged, effortlessly slicing through the impeding earth and clawing towards Linley.

“Haaaargh!” Linley turned and swept outwards with his left arm, which struck out as though it were an enormous millstone slowly grinding away. Space itself seemed to turn sluggish, until that moment when it clashed against the enormous black claw…“Bang!” The colliding blows caused space itself to be torn apart.

“Linley, you won’t be able to escape!” A furious roar echoed in Linley’s mind.

Linley turned to look.

The earth behind him was roiling as five figures sped over quickly.

Linley’s face couldn’t help but change. “So fast!”

Because Linley had just launched an attack, the five Elders had immediately hurried over and followed him. The leader was the big-bearded Elder Tempah, and currently, his entire body was covered with a black light which emanated the aura of Destruction.

The power of his material attack, when paired with Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might, wasn’t weaker than Linley’s at all!

“Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might and Death-type Sovereign’s Might truly are troublesome.” Linley still felt the pain in his shattered arm. The joint attacks from those two had left vestige’s of Sovereign’s Might in his

body.

This was causing the healing speed to be even slower.

“If the only one present was this big-bearded fellow, I could still battle. But these other four…” Linley felt his head hurt. The five were in constant pursuit in a group, not giving him a chance to deal with them singly.

“Swoosh!” Linley suddenly burst into the skies.

“Bang!” Tempah and the other five Elders all immediately charged upwards as well.

The many clansmen of the Azure Dragon clan, as well as the spectators in the other metallic lifeform, were all watching this battle. Right at this tense moment…with a ‘Bang!’ sound, the ground exploded. Linley and five Elders charged outwards in rapid succession.

“Five on one?” Quite a few people called out in shock.

“Quick, record it down.” Those people immediately set up more scryer recordings.

As for Delia, when she saw Linley, her tears began to fall. “Linley!” This was because she saw that Linley’s arm was severed, and that blood was still flowing out. There was an even more astonishingly large hole in his chest, and the whiteness of his bones could be seen.

There was a black, foggy aura covering his chest. Linley wanted to repair himself, but the speed was very slow.

“Why haven’t you caught Linley yet? Why haven’t you killed him?” Elder Zabu, currently battling Phusro, saw that Linley and those five Elders had just emerged. He couldn’t help but feel frantically angry, and he immediately sent out his divine sense and shouted towards them.

“Elder Zhabu, the power of Linley’s Gravitational Space is simply too

great. I have to help the other four Elders to jointly resist the power of that gravity. Otherwise, we'll be taken on one at a time by him!" Elder Tempah hurriedly sent back through divine sense as well.

But just as his words were finished…

"BANG!"

Elder Annecy's body collapsed from the skies. She was dead!

Elder Tewila shouted, "Linley, I'll come help you!" As he spoke, he charged over and attacked.

"Perfect timing." Linley was overjoyed. Although he had used his Gravitational Space, his Gravitational Space was an earth-type ultimate technique. When using water-type Sovereign's Might to execute it, although the power was still great, it wasn't too extravagant.

It was indeed hard for him to battle five others on his own.

"Haha, your Sovereign's Might has almost been used up. I want to see how you'll continue to contain me!" Phusro's loud, delighted laugh echoed forth. The 'Dance of Life' was a trapping technique, after all.

Filling all those ten million branches with Sovereign's Might exhausted it very quickly, as the technique consumed an astonishing amount of energy.

"Tempah, you must kill Linley!!!"

A fierce bellow rang out. The elfin-looking Elder Zabu roared, and his entire body suddenly emanated countless specks of green light, which shot out in every direction at an astonishing speed.

"BOOM!" Phusro had finally, with great effort, used his long awl to kill Elder Zabu, the most powerful person on the enemy side!

However…those countless green specks of light still shot out at high speed,

and many people who weren't able to dodge in time had the green specks of light shoot into their bodies, and they all fell down from the skies, one by one.

"Delia, careful." Bebe hurriedly pushed Delia aside as countless specks of green light directly entered Bebe's body.

"Wade." Delia didn't care about herself. Using her own body, she completely covered up Wade, and as she did, two specks of green light directly entered Delia's body.

Right at this moment…

"Bang!" Linley and Elder Tempah clashed against each other fiercely, and their bodies were sent flying apart. However, just as their bodies flew apart, Linley saw from the corner of his eyes…

Silently, soundlessly…

Her long hair was dancing in the wind. Delia had covered up Wade with her entire body, protecting him completely. She still had tears in the corner of her eyes, which caught and reflected a ray of sunlight. Just like that, Delia slowly, gently drifted down from the skies…

"Waaaaaaaa!" Wade suddenly began to sob.

This sob was like a knife cutting into Linley's heart. In stunned silence, tears rolled down Linley's cheeks.

"No…" A desolate sound echoed in the heavens.

Chapter 46 – Spare No One!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 46, Spare No One!

Linley felt his heart be instantly ripped apart!

When Linley was together with Delia, he felt as though he were a lonely boat who had found his harbor, with his heart at peace. Their souls had become deeply intertwined, and neither could leave the other!

“No…no…no way…” Linley couldn’t accept it.

He would rather die than see what he just saw.

How many years had it been? From that first time when he had learned of his father’s death…when he had watched as Grandpa Doehring sacrificed himself for him…those two events had caused Linley to sink into an abyss of despair. Ever since those two times, Linley had buried hatred deep into his heart and then encased it in ice.

But because of Delia…

Linley once more felt the warmth of family. In front of Delia, Linley didn’t have to hold back anything. His heart and Delia’s heart were completely joined. Linley felt that he was blissful, that the heavens had treated him generously…

Because he had Delia, his partner in life!

But today…

His father had died. Grandpa Doehring had died. Those two blows had caused Linley to nearly collapse. But the blow he suffered today was even fiercer than the previous two. Delia had been together with Linley for simply too long!

A thousand years of taking care of each other. Their lives had become one!

“This…” Phusro was stunned as well.

“Delia!” Bebe was stunned as well. He, linked together spiritually with Linley, could feel the despair and deathly loneliness radiating out from Linley’s soul. Bebe couldn’t help but feel his own soul quiver.

What sort of despair was this?

“Boss!” Bebe was about to cry as well.

“Rumble…” Tempah, his entire body covered with that black aura, once more violently charged towards Linley, while Linley just stood there stupidly.

“Die.” Tempah was shaking from excitement.

He sent a full-force fist smashing towards Linley’s head. Before his fist arrived, the spatial ripples it generated arrived, striking at Linley’s head. Linley, rather numbly, turned to look, but all he saw in front of his eyes was a fist glowing with flowing black light.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!” Linley seemed to have gone insane, as he let out a terrifying howl!

His undamaged left arm suddenly swung out, snatching the oncoming fist, delivering it into his own chest. “Bang!” The fierce punch cracked the Sovereign’s Might covering Linley’s body, smashing against his chest.

“CRUNCH!” His ribs shattered and his chest caved in.

“Eh?” Tempah was completely stunned. What was Linley doing?

“Whoosh!” Linley’s draconic tail suddenly swung over, stretching out towards Tempah and wrapping itself around him. Linley’s left arm was

clutching Tempah's right arm, while his draconic tail was binding Tempah, pulling him into a tight embrace.

Tempah wasn't able to break free!

The two stared face to face, right next to each other!

"Aaaaaaaaaaah!" Linley seemed like a madman. He suddenly turned his head, ramming it viciously against the opponent. That fierce, azure-golden spiked horn in Linley's forehead, covered with that azure light, stabbed down viciously.

"F*ck off!" Tempah wanted to break free.

But Linley's Sovereign's Might was on full power, and water-type Sovereign's Might was durable to begin with. Even worse, Linley's body was more powerful than his to begin with. Tempah, break free? Unlikely!

"Die!!!" Linley howled ferociously like a madman! His head savagely, repeatedly slammed towards his enemy's, and so too did that fierce horned spike, covered with Sovereign's Might!

What was the toughest, sharpest part of Linley's body?

It wasn't his fist. It wasn't his scales. It was these spikes!

They were just like the spikes of an Armored Razorback Wyrm, which before death would unleash its most powerful attack by blasting out these spikes. An 'Armored Razorback Wyrm' of the ninth rank was able to use these spikes to pierce through the body of a Saint-level magical beast. Linley's spikes, in turn, had been strengthened and intensified by the blood essence of the Azure Dragon, as well as that drop of Sovereign's Might.

The sharpness of those spikes was utterly terrifying.

For Tempah to have his head struck by Linley's…and especially given that Tempah's body was inferior to Linley's to begin with…

After his protective barrier of Sovereign's Might was broken through after three successive 'stabs', Tempah only had enough time to let out a bellow, and then stopped making any noise.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

In the blink of an eye, Linley's head had smashed into the opponent's countless times.

Bebe, Phusro, Tewila, and even those other four enemy Elders were staring in disbelief. Tempah's entire head had been slammed into pulp. His divine spark had been knocked flying…but Linley continued to smash.

Smash his head. Smash his body!

Blood flew everywhere. Muddy bits of flesh flew everywhere. The sight was utterly unbearable! Linley's eyes were as crimson as blood, and he was utterly wild.

"Boss…" Bebe had never seen Linley go so berserk before. Through their soul connection, he could feel that Linley had completely descended into a mindless savagery, the throes of which caused Bebe to tremble.

"This…" The four Elders were stunned as well.

How could a battle between Seven Star Fiends end up like this?

Linley didn't block Tempah's attack, but rather grappled Tempah, then used his own head to smash him to death?

As they looked at Linley, whose arm was severed, chest was caved in, and whose face was covered with blood, they felt their hearts grow cold.

"Linley, stop, stop!" Phusro shouted through divine sense. "Stop immediately!" Phusro rushed over, giving Linley a vicious punch, and Linley's body couldn't help but tremble.

This punch brought Linley back to sanity.

“What am I doing?” Linley felt as though he had gone completely insane. He then looked sideways at the distant Delia, lying on the ground. His eyes couldn’t help but immediately turn red once again, and then he turned to look at the other four Elders.

Those four Elders hadn’t used Sovereign’s Might!

The four Elders had been stunned by Linley’s display of savagery. Only now did they come to their senses.

“Elder Zabu and the others died. We aren’t of any use here. The appearance of this Phusro was completely out of our expectations. Let’s flee.” The four Elders hurriedly spoke through divine sense, and then they fled in every direction.

But Linley just let out a bellow.

“Rumble…”

Azure light spread out everywhere to a diameter of hundreds of meters, trapping all four of those Elders in the distance who had sought to flee within. The azure light then transformed into an enormous cube!

Blackstone Prison!

A Blackstone Prison formed from Sovereign’s Might!

This was water-type Sovereign’s Might. Although it wasn’t earth-type, it was still far more powerful than Linley’s own ‘God-level divine power’. The ‘durability’ was extremely powerful in particular. These four Elders, in turn, didn’t have Sovereign’s power.

Trapped within this Blackstone Prison, there was no way they could flee at all.

“Linley…” Phusro wanted to speak.

“Phusro. Tewila. Don’t interfere. Leave this Blackstone Prison. Let me handle the four of them!” Linley growled, and a corridor split open from above. Phusro and Tewila let out sighs, then flew out.

Within the Blackstone Prison, Linley could defeat them one by one.

Given that the enemies were not in possession of Sovereign’s Might, this was a battle between two people on completely different levels.

Darkness. Not a single hint of light could be seen.

The four Elders were trapped into different parts of the ‘cube’. All of them wildly struck the walls, but how could they possibly break through this cube formed from Sovereign’s Might?

Within one of the rooms.

“It’s all over.” The gray-robed Elder was in complete despair.

“Whoosh!” The wall suddenly split open, and a person walked in.

The gray-robed Elder’s heart trembled as he looked at the Dragonformed Linley, his entire body covered with blood.

“It’s all because of you.” A growling voice.

“Whoosh!” Linley charged forward. Shocked, the gray-robed Elder wanted to resist, but a ray of spiritual energy spread forth. This was the ‘Spiritual Chaos’ formed from Sovereign’s Might, and the gray-robed Elder instantly fell into a stunned state.

When Linley had dealt against Tempah and the rest of the five, he could have used this technique to put the other four into a stupor. However, Elder Tempah had Sovereign’s Might to protect himself, and so Linley wouldn’t

have been able to influence him at all.

Tempah naturally would protect the other four in turn.

This was the reason why Linley hadn't used this technique yet. But now… the gray-robed Elder, under the effect of the 'Spiritual Chaos', was nothing more than a ragdoll target!

"Hello, Linley. My name is Delia…" In Linley's mind, that scene of his first meeting with Delia in the wind-style magic class at the Ernst Institute drifted to his mind. At that time, Delia was just an adorable little girl.

"BANG!" Linley's draconic scale covered fist smashed the gray-robed Elder's head.

Linley's form moved towards the direction of another room with an Elder.

"Linley, before I leave, can I hug you?" When Linley's father had died that year…that dark night in Wushan township…Delia had said that she wanted to give Linley a hug before she left.

But that time, Delia had kissed him instead.

"BANG!" Yet another gray-robed Elder died.

Linley walked forward, completely emotionless. In front of him, another corridor appeared within the wall.

"Milord, there's a person named Delia outside. She says that she was your classmate and that she wishes to see you." That first time they had met again after their ten years of separation. At that time, Linley had already become the world-renown Master Linley, while Delia was the Envoy of the Yulan Empire.

"Haaaaargh!"

A fist swung out like a mountain, smashing against the body of a gray-

robed Elder. Immediately, with a ‘bang’ sound, space itself exploded as a large hole appeared in space. Half of the gray-robed Elder’s body was blasted apart.

Linley, his face expressionless, took a few more steps forward, entering another wall.

“Delia, what is it?”

“I cried.” Delia clutched at Linley’s chest. “I want to cry. When I think about how in the past, you were together with Alice, I want to cry. When I think about how I waited for you for ten years, I want to cry. Wuuu….”

The night of their wedding. Delia had been in his arms, throwing a tantrum.

After Linley killed the final gray-robed Elder, the Blackstone Prison vanished. That drop of Sovereign’s Might had been completely used up as well.

“Delia…” Linley murmured.

His tears fell down, mixing in with the blood on his face.

The entire world was silent. The members of the Azure Dragon clan and the distant spectators didn’t dare make any sound. They could all sense a terrible, deathly pressure. They just watched quietly as Linley flew towards Delia.

“Waaaaa….waaaaaa……..” Wade’s sobbing echoed in the mountains and forests.

Linley, hearing his son’s sobs, couldn’t help but tremble.

Linley quietly sat down next to Delia’s body. Delia’s face was still wet with tears. These were the tears she had shed upon seeing Linley be in dire straits during the battle. Linley reached his hand out, gently examining her. As of this moment…Delia’s body didn’t have any aura at all.

“Waaaaaaaa….” Wade was sobbing nonstop.

Linley returned to human form as well. He stretched his arms out, picking up Wade. Wade, in his father’s arms, continued to sob.

“Don’t cry, Wade.” Linley said softly.

“Boss, it’s all my fault.” Bebe was agonized as well.

“Linley, Delia isn’t dead!” A sound rang out. Linley’s entire body shuddered, and he suddenly rose to his feet, hurriedly turning to look towards Phusro. In disbelief, he said, “Phusro, what did you say?”

Phusro said seriously, “Linley, I’ll tell you this. Delia isn’t dead. Not only is she not dead, all of the other people who were struck by that elfin-looking Elder’s dying blow aren’t dead either.”

“But…but…” Linley couldn’t sense any aura from Delia at all.

Phusro said with certainty, “That elfin-looking Elder’s dying blow sent out nearly a million green specks of light flying out. Many of those who were hit by just a single speck of green light all fell. Can it be that you think… that elfin-looking Elder was capable of killing a million Highgods with a single technique?”

Linley came to his senses.

Right. No matter how powerful an Elder was, he would at most be able to kill a hundred or nearly a thousand people with a technique. But to kill a million Highgods? Impossible! Utterly impossible!

In truth, when the elfin-looking Elder had released those green specks of light, although he had sent nearly a million, in reality, because the people in the area were tightly clustered together, most of the green specks of light were ‘blocked’ by the people standing in front.

It would be amazing if even ten thousand died.

“Then Delia isn’t dead…but why doesn’t she have any aura at all?” Linley turned to look at Delia. He sent a ray of spiritual energy out, slowly sending it into Delia’s mind.

Within Delia’s sea of consciousness, her divine spark was still there. Her sea of consciousness, however, wasn’t moving at all. It was deathly still, without any hint of a living aura.

“That elfin-looking Elder should have been an expert of the Edric clan, which moved here from the Higher Plane of Life. He trained in the ‘Edicts of Life’.” Phusro said solemnly. “Although the people hit aren’t dead, there isn’t much of a difference between their state and death.”

Linley hurriedly shook his head.

And then, he looked at Phusro. “Phusro, tell me. What is going on with Delia? Can she be saved?”

Phusro let out a low sigh. “Linley, the most powerful healing stems from the ‘Laws of Life’, but it is also experts of the Edicts of Life who have the most bizarre ways of attacking and harming the soul. That elfin Elder was an elite amongst them. Before dying, he released that technique, spreading out countless specks of green light, each of which is actually just a ‘seed’.”

“Seed?” Linley didn’t understand.

“Linley, a person’s foundation is the soul!” Phusro explained. “That green light burrows into the soul and begins to devour the energy of the soul, converting it to energy for its own use.”

“Devour…convert?” Linley began to understand.

“A single speck of green light is very weak. Compared to the entire soul, it is miniscule. However, the single speck of green light, with each devour, will duplicate and result in two specks of green light. And then, those two

specks of green light will continue to devour and become four specks. Four will then become eight…and as this continues…" Phusro's eyes were filled with awe as well. "It is very terrifying! Although the soul of a Highgod is very strong, under this sort of devouring, the soul will constantly weaken. There will come the day when one's soul will completely transform into green specks of light, at which point, Delia will die!"

Linley felt that this was unbelievable.

Souls could be described as strong, but also as fragile. Once they were shattered, they would be finished. But this devouring…it wouldn't immediately cause the soul to be destroyed. Because, to be precise, the green light was merging with the soul and was part of it.

Actually, this was a sort of soul transformation process. Once the transformation was complete, the soul would be finished.

"Then is there a way to save her?" Linley immediately asked. This Phusro had a very high degree of attainment in the soul as well.

"This has reached deep into her soul. Saving her will be very hard." Phusro shook his head. "I only train in the Laws of Fire. My attacks are powerful, but my healing…alas!"

Linley's face immediately changed.

"However, supreme experts who train in the Edicts of Life should be able to save Delia. However, we have to hurry to the Skyrite Mountains." Phusro said. "But in the Skyrite Mountains, the Four Divine Beasts clan does not train the Edicts of Life. If we go to other places to find experts…there's no time, there's no time!!!"

There was no time!

These words caused Linley's entire body to sway.

"There's no time?" Linley was frantic.

“There’s too few people in the Infernal Realm who train in the Edicts of Life. The eight great clans do, but they are your enemies. How could they possibly help?” Phusro shook his head and sighed.

“No. We can go to another place.” Linley said hurriedly.

“Impossible. There’s no time. Based on the rate at which the devouring occurs…in a year or so, Delia’s soul will be completely devoured.” Phusro said resignedly. “In Indigo Prefecture, I have no idea of any other power aside from the eight great clans that has supreme experts who specialize in the Edicts of Life.”

Linley lowered his head to look at Delia.

Delia was lying there quietly.

“No…no…” Linley couldn’t accept it.

Although she didn’t die, in the future, she would?

But in a short year, even at maximum speed, he would still be within Indigo Prefecture. But within Indigo Prefecture, the strongest forces were the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans, while only the Edric clan from the Higher Plane of Life possessed supreme experts who trained in the Edicts of Life.

The other powers?

The Four Divine Beasts clan didn’t have any such experts, at least.

What to do?

“Delia…” Linley was going completely mad.

Phusro looked about, seeing many Azure Dragon clansmen lying on the ground. “So many people!” He let out a sigh. “Although those green specks

of light are weak, they are very hard to deal with. Ordinary Highgods aren't able to resist them, unless they have soul-protecting artifacts or have extremely powerful souls. But of course, one can block it if one had Sovereign's Might. This elfin Elder truly was vicious."

Linley, lost in his grief, suddenly heard those words, 'Sovereign's Might'.

"Sovereign's Might?" Linley's body trembled.

"Sovereign's Might can resist it!" Linley's heart shook!

"Linley, what is it?" Phusro looked at him. Linley suddenly turned to stare at him. "Phusro, did you just say that Sovereign's Might can block it? Are you saying that if I had given Delia a drop of Sovereign's Might and she had been struck, she wouldn't die?"

"Right. The elfin Elder's attack is powerful, but once it encounters Sovereign's Might, it will still dissipate. How could it possibly break through the defense of Sovereign's Might?" Phusro nodded. "However, don't be too heartbroken. After all, you need to use Sovereign's Might while battling as well."

Linley was stunned.

Battle? Battle?!

But he had three drops of it!

"Why didn't I give any to Delia? Why?" Linley's face turned ashen. "Why didn't I give it to her? Why? Why?!" With a flip of his hand, Linley retrieved a drop of Sovereign's might. Beneath the light of the sun, it seemed so resplendent.

"This…" Seeing this drop of Sovereign's Might, Phusro was stunned as well.

"Waaaaaaa…." Wade's sobbing cries continued unabated.

Linley lowered his head to look at the sobbing Wade, then at the ‘slumbering’ Delia, and then at this drop of Sovereign’s Might. His gaze turned more and more savage, and the flesh on his face slowly began to twitch as his face slowly turned purple. And then, a hint of blood slowly began to leak from his mouth.

“Aaaaaaaaaaah!!!!” A howl of incomparable agony ripped forth from Linley’s mouth, shaking the world.

Chapter 47 – Begging for Salvation

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 47, Begging for Salvation

“It’s me. It’s my fault. If I had given a drop of Sovereign’s Might to Delia, she wouldn’t die!”

“Why didn’t I give it to Delia. Why. WHY!!!”

Endless guilt wracked Linley’s chest, with regret striking viciously at his soul. Linley’s entire mind was in a state of chaos, and had sunken into a state of endless remorse.

Bebe, Phusro, and Tewila look at each other, worry appearing on their faces.

“Waaaaa….waaaaaaaa!” Little Wade continuously cried, and his sobs seemed to be more ear-piercing than ever before in that utterly silent mountainous area. Linley felt that each cry from Wade stabbed against his heart!

“Don’t cry, Wade, don’t cry.” Holding Wade, Bebe was growing frantic as well.

“Boss!” Bebe said frantically.

“Linley!” Phusro called out worriedly as well.

But Linley didn’t seem to hear anything. He was completely lost in his regret and grief. The look on his face was one which made others tremble upon beholding.

“Right!” Linley let out a sudden growl. “It was my selfishness! I always thought about my own safety, and I didn’t think about Delia. I kept the Sovereign’s Might on my own person this entire time. It was my selfishness. I was too selfish!!!”

Self-criticism. Self-hatred!

Linley, his thoughts in a jumble, had pushed the blame squarely onto his own shoulders, due to his ‘selfishness’.

Actually, Delia was too weak. Even if she had Sovereign’s Might, she wouldn’t be able to defeat a Seven Star Fiend. It was only natural that Linley should be the one to use Sovereign’s Might to protect Delia.

If Linley truly was selfish…

Then when facing the combined strike of those seven Elders, he wouldn’t have pushed Delia aside at that critical moment, thereby wasting precious time. After all, at that time, he could have dodged instead.

All seven of those attacks had landed.

Linley had nearly died. Although he hadn’t died, the protective armor of Sovereign’s Might had been broken through, and even his body had been crippled.

However, Linley’s thoughts had entered a state of confusion, and others were completely unable to dissuade him.

“It was my selfishness. It’s all my fault. If I had given Sovereign’s Might to Delia, she wouldn’t die.” Linley’s mind was utterly chaotic. These words were the only thing that consistently echoed within his consciousness.

“Linley!” Phusro suddenly roared. “Hurry up and seize every moment to save Delia. By wasting time here, YOU ARE KILLING DELIA!!!”

These words suddenly brought Linley back to his senses.

He looked at Delia, lying there on the ground. Phusro’s words suddenly brought Linley back into clear-mindedness. “Every moment, Delia’s soul is being devoured and transformed. I can’t waste any time, I can’t!”

By now, Linley's right arm had already grown out to the elbow. The more powerful the body, the slower the recovery.

"Phusro." Linley turned to look at Phusro. "My mind is in shambles right now. Tell me, what should I do? What are my best options for saving Delia?"

Linley, in his current state, truly wasn't suited for making decisions.

Phusro let out a mental sigh of relief. For Linley to be able to say this meant that his mind was clear, at least. Phusro immediately said solemnly, "Linley, neither you nor I are as familiar with the experts of the Indigo Prefecture as your Patriarch, Gislason. Gislason is the leader of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and he knows far more than we do! Your Patriarch will know more than anyone else as to who will be able to save Delia. Perhaps the Four Divine Beasts clan itself has someone capable of rescuing Delia."

Linley's eyes immediately lit up.

"Right. The Four Divine Beasts clan has existed for so long. Perhaps it truly does have a supreme expert capable of saving Delia." A hint of hope appeared in Linley's mind.

"Right now, we need to hurry back to the Skyrite Mountains. Normally, metallic lifeforms will take nearly two months, but if we travel by day and by night without resting, we should be able to get there in ten days or half a month. Once we reach the Skyrite Mountains, there'll be more people and more ideas." Phusro said hurriedly.

Linley made up his mind as well.

"That's what we'll do, then." Linley's body once more Dragonformed. In terms of flying speed, his Dragonform's flying speed was indeed much faster.

Linley lowered his head to look at Delia, lying there on the ground. Delia

looked as though she were asleep. Linley said gently, “Delia, you have to hold on.” Stretching out his left hand, he took Delia into his arms.

“Phusro, please hold Wade.” Linley said. “We’ll immediately head out.”

“Alright.” Phusro took Wade from Bebe’s arms.

“Boss, don’t be too heartbroken. Delia will definitely recover.” Bebe said consolingly. Linley forced out a smile, then nodded slightly. “Right. Bebe, you stay with the others. Phusro and I will go back first.”

Bebe nodded, and then he watched as Linley and Phusro pierced through the skies, disappearing into the horizon.

Bebe’s eyes had tears within them as well. Raising his head upwards, he looked at the sky. “Overgods…the Boss has already lost his father and his Grandpa Doehring. No matter what, you can’t let Delia die as well. If Delia dies, then the Boss…”

Bebe and Linley had lived so many years together. He understood Linley very well.

No matter what sort of difficult circumstances or dire straits Linley was in, he wasn’t afraid at all and would face them head on. But…when those close to him left, Linley suffered terrifying emotional blows.

“Alright. Everyone, hurry into the metallic lifeform. We’ll make haste back home.” Tewila’s voice rang out. “All of you, stop being sad. Move all of our unconscious clansmen into the metallic lifeform. We will hurry backwards.”

It wasn’t just Delia who was unconscious. There were quite a few clansmen lying on the ground, while quite a few onlookers were injured as well. When they learned that these people weren’t dead yet, they too felt a hint of new hope.

The Azure Dragon clansmen entered the metallic lifeform, and then it once more pierced through the skies, also making haste and flying towards the

Skyrite Mountains.

When the Azure Dragon clansmen left, the only people remaining were those who were in that other metallic lifeform.

“Too powerful. Especially that expert from the Azure Dragon clan. He was actually able to fight five other experts by himself…and slaughtered them all!” These people weren’t saddened for Delia, only stunned by this battle.

“That gray-robed who died was powerful as well…the one who sent all those terrifying green specks of light out.”

“Did anyone hear what that expert of the Azure Dragon clan is named? I thought I heard that big fellow with long red hair shout ‘Linley’ loudly.”

“Right. He is named Linley. I heard it as well.”

“This Linley, judging from his power, has to at least be an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan.”

A hubbub of conversation…but then, these spectators who had watched the battle and recorded it down with scryer recordings all returned to their own metallic lifeform and left.

Moments later…

Multiple figures flew over at high speed to the battlefield.

“Even Elder Zabu died. The eight Elders are all dead!”

……

In mid-air, a fiery light instantly streaked in from the southern horizon, arriving at the northern skies.

Linley and Phusro were currently flying at maximum speed. However, even Dragonformed, in terms of flying speed, Linley was still far inferior

compared to Phusro. Thus, Phusro spread out his energy, enveloping Linley within it and ‘carrying’ him.

This caused their speed to rise to a higher level.

Linley lowered his head, looking at Delia. Delia’s eyes were closed, and she was in a state of complete unconsciousness. Linley’s arms were now completely healed.

“Delia, you have to be fine.”

Linley spoke very softly. He felt boundless grief and regret towards Delia. If Delia truly were to die, Linley didn’t know what he would do in the future. He wouldn’t be able to accept it at all.

Phusro, seeing Linley like this, couldn’t help but sigh.

“Can love truly cause a person to become like this?” Phusro said in his heart. He had been captured and tamed by Elquin when he was a Saint, and had always been used as a little golden kitten, without being given any chance to experience love.

“Linley, don’t worry. Given my speed, we’ll reach the Skyrite Mountains very soon.” Phusro consoled.

“Right. Phusro, thank you for this. Truly.” Linley, although frantic, still spoke with gratitude.

“Thank me for what? It’s my fault, in a way. I let that elfin Elder have the opportunity to release that final attack.” Phusro said guiltily. In truth, that Elder Zabu was the most powerful of those eight Elders.

He was so powerful that he nearly had the strength of an Asura. Once he also used a drop of Sovereign’s Might, his strength was indeed terrifying.

“It isn’t your fault. That person truly was powerful.” Linley still remembered how, when he had suffered the combined attacks of those

seven Elders, the most dangerous one of them had been that elfin Elder. With but a single attack, he had nearly caused Linley to be finished.

“I’m still not strong enough.” Linley stared into the distance.

The two of them, transformed into that ‘fiery light’, continued to fly towards the horizon at high speed.

And finally, they arrived at the Skyrite Mountains!

After having flown for six days and a night, they arrived at the Skyrite Mountains just as nightfall came.

Linley, upon seeing the distant Dragon Avenue of the Skyrite Mountains, felt his heart tremble. While flying forward at high speed, he immediately called out frantically, “Patriarch, PATRIARCH!!!” Linley’s roars shook the air above the entire Skyrite Mountains.

“Who is it? Halt!” The patrolling warriors of the Skyrite Mountains hurriedly shouted.

Linley and Phusro were flying too quickly. Their bodies were surrounded with fiery light as well, making it even harder for those patrolling warriors to see them clearly.

“Whoosh!” Phusro immediately retracted his fire-type divine power, and those patrolling warriors were immediately able to see the two of them clearly. One of them was in Dragonform, and clearly was a member of the Azure Dragon clan. They all couldn’t help but feel relieved.

“It is Elder Linley!” Immediately, some patrolling warriors recognized him.

That savage, spike-studded Dragonform had become Linley’s trademark.

“Linley, what is it?” A figure flew over at high speed. It was Elder Garvey. Elder Garvey, seeing Linley look so frantic, with his entire body stained with blood, couldn’t help but ask in a hurry, “What happened? What’s

wrong with Delia?"

"Delia, she…" Before Linley even had a chance to reply…

"Linley!" A voice rang out, and a powerfully built figure with azure hair flew out at high speed. It was the Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, Gislason. Gislason immediately saw Phusro. "What happened?"

"We were attacked. Delia is now in critical condition." Phusro said hurriedly.

Gislason, seeing the situation, immediately said, "Come to my place right away." As he spoke, he immediately led Linley and the others towards his residence.

Within the residence of the Patriarch. The main hall.

Linley gently placed Delia onto a seat, and then turned his head to look at Gislason. "Patriarch, Delia suffered a spiritual attack from an Elder of the Edric clan, of the eight great clans…"

"The Edric clan? The Edicts of Life?" Gislason's face changed, and he immediately used his spiritual sense to probe Delia's situation.

Linley, keeping hope alive in his mind, watched this scene. Not only was the Patriarch physically powerful, he was also extremely formidable with respect to the soul. Perhaps the Patriarch might have some method for saving Delia. Linley waited, and as he did, his heart was trembling.

Elder Garvey and Phusro just stood there, not daring to say a word.

"Formidable, formidable!" Gislason sighed in amazement.

"What is it?" Linley said hurriedly.

Gislason turned to look at Linley. He said solemnly, "The devouring transformation in Delia's soul isn't too bad right now. However, the

devouring will grow faster and faster…I've never imagined that the Edicts of Life contained a technique like this. With regards to this, I…alas…" Gislason shook his head and sighed.

Linley was stunned.

"But don't grow frantic. I can't save her, but that doesn't means others can't either." Gislason said hurriedly.

Right at this moment, two people charged in, one of which was Forhan.

"What on earth is going on?" Forhan said frantically. When he saw Linley in the corner of his eyes, his face couldn't help but change. Linley was actually still alive…this was completely out of his expectations.

"Forhan, it's good that you are here. You and Garvey, hurry over to Bloodbath Gorge and have the Grand Elder and the others come. Oh, right, hurry and ask the other three clan leaders to come as well. Hurry!" Gislason shouted.

Chapter 48 – Their Proposals

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 48, Their Proposals

“Yes, Patriarch!”

Elders Garvey and Forhan didn’t dare to dawdle, immediately departing towards Bloodbath Gorge. The entire main hall immediately became silent, and even Wade had fallen asleep in Phusro’s arms.

“Wade…give me the child.” Linley said.

Phusro handed the child to Linley. Linley, holding his son in his arms, looked at the nearby unconscious Delia, a sour feeling in his heart.

“Swoosh!” “Swooosh!” Multiple other Elders hurried over. Just as they were about to speak, Gislason immediately sent out his divine sense and barked, “Be silent. Linley’s wife has just suffered an attack from an expert of the ‘Edric’ clan of the eight great clans. All of you who specialize in the soul, go take a look and see if you can save her.”

“You all came?” Linley looked in surprised delight at these Elders.

“Hurry over and take a look and see if you can save Delia.” Linley was at the point where whenever he saw someone, he would want them to go take a look.

The many Elders glanced at each other, and then they all walked towards Delia’s side. A silver-haired Elder said, “Then I’ll give it a try first.” As the Second Elder, he had reached an exceedingly high level of accomplishment with regards to the soul.

“Phusro.” Gislason led Phusro to one side. “The Lord Prefect’s…”

“This isn’t the time for discussing that.” Phusro couldn’t help but frown.

Gislason was startled. He then glanced sideways at Linley, then nodded towards Phusro. “I understand. Right. What happened? You, Tewila, and Linley were present on this journey. How could this have happened to Delia? Tell me this story in detail.”

As the Patriarch, Gislason knew that something was off.

“Hmph. It’s all due to the situation between your Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans.” Phusro let out a low snort. Clearly, he was very dissatisfied. As Phusro saw it, Linley had been harmed by the Four Divine Beasts clan.

And then, Phusro described what happened in detail. “At first, Linley and I were riding in that metallic lifeform as we left Meer City…” Phusro gave a detailed description of what had happened, from start to finish.

At the same time, those Elders standing next to Delia were all using their own spiritual energy to enter Delia’s mind, investigating the situation.

“How is it?” Linley held Wade as he looked at these Elders. He felt his heart trembling nonstop.

“Nothing I can do.” The silver-haired Elder shook his head and sighed. “These green specks of lights are too obstinate. They constantly devour, and as they do, they also become part of the soul itself. To use brute force to kill and eradicate these green spots of light will cause Delia to die immediately! To cure Delia will be hard. Very hard!” When he said those two words, ‘very hard’, the silver-haired Elder stopped speaking.

Linley hurriedly looked towards the other Elders.

The other Elders shook their heads as well.

“Linley, don’t be impatient. In our Four Divine Beasts clan, the most proficient at the soul are those members of the Vermillion Bird clan. They possessed the ‘Flames of Rebirth’, and perhaps…they’ll have some method

for curing Delia." The silver-haired Elder said.

"Right. Flames of Rebirth!" A hint of hope appeared in Linley's mind.

Right at this moment, Linley felt space shudder. He couldn't help but turn to look, and he saw multiple figures descending from the air. There were dozens of figures!

"Elder Brother!" A deep voice rang out. It was the Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan.

The other three clan leaders, along with the Grand Elder, had all hurried over. Because of the commands of Gislason, a large group of people now filled this main hall, surging towards and looking at Linley and Delia.

"Phusro." These people noticed Phusro as well.

"Hurry and take a look at Linley's wife." Phusro just said.

"What's wrong with Linley's wife?" An Elder of the Vermillion Bird clan asked hurriedly.

Holding his son, Linley immediately stood up. Looking at the throng of people, all of whom were the most elite members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, he immediately said, "My wife suffered a spiritual attack from an Elder of the Edric clan. As for her situation…everyone, come take a look. I hope that someone who has the ability to rescue my wife will do so."

These Elders all noticed the look on Linley's face and in his eyes. They could all sense that Linley's heart had torn to pieces from worry.

"Everyone, go take a look. Perhaps someone will be able to do something." Gislason said hurriedly.

The entire Four Divine Beasts clan had, in total, just seventy or eighty Elders. More than fifty of them were present here; clearly, the majority of them had hurried over. The first to take a look were the three clan leaders,

who all investigated Delia's situation.

And then, one Elder after another used their spiritual energy to investigate Delia's situation.

Seeing the large group of people, Linley felt a hint of confidence in his mind. "With so many people present…much like how I can train in other Laws, the Elders of the clan might include someone who trains in the Edicts of Life. Perhaps someone will be able to rescue Delia. In addition, the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan is present. The Vermillion Bird clan possesses the 'Flames of Rebirth' ability. They can save themselves with it; perhaps they'll also be able to save Delia."

Holding his son, Linley just watched hopefully at these Elders.

He was like a drowning man staring at floating logs of wood.

Phusro, seeing the look on Linley's face, couldn't help but think back to the first time he had met Linley. At that time, although Linley had been in dire straits, he hadn't lost his composure like he currently had. "Alas…" Phusro sighed to himself.

Soon, the Elders completed their inspection. Some of them were extremely skilled with regards to the soul, but they all couldn't help but frown and shake their heads. Linley, seeing the looks on the faces of the Elders, especially when they shook their heads and sighed, felt his heart ache.

"How is it?" Linley's voice was hoarse now, but his gaze was firmly fixed upon the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan.

The Matriarch just turned to look at the others. "Everyone, do you have any solutions? Fourth Brother, your soul is very powerful. Do you have a solution?"

"This is too bizarre. I've never seen an attack like this." The muscular, brown-haired man said with a frown. "To save Delia, there must be a step-by-step treatment process, much like the devouring process itself. There

must be a slow counter-devouring, converting the green spots of light back into spiritual energy. In addition…during the treatment process, there can't be any mistakes at all. If any energy ripples strike the soul, the soul might collapse. Difficult. Difficult. Difficult!"

Hearing these words, Linley's heart fell into an abyss.

"Vermillion Bird Matriarch, how about you?" Linley hurriedly looked towards her.

But the Matriarch just said: "Linley, I'm truly sorry. Our Vermillion Bird clan's ability to save ourselves isn't bad…but even if we save ourselves, it takes a tremendous amount of energy. Save others? We don't have that ability."

Linley couldn't help but look at each of the other Elders.

However, all of the Elders either sighed or shook their heads. None of them had any solutions.

"To quickly and yet methodically advance and counter-devour those green lights…it's too hard!" That brown-haired man shook his head. "As I see it, in the entire Infernal Realm, there are only a few people who train in certain other Laws and Edicts who can rescue her, but I can count those off on one hand. Other than them, only supreme experts who train in the Edicts of Life can save her."

Not just Edicts of Life. A supreme expert in the Edicts of Life.

If one trained in the Edicts of Fate, the Edicts of Death, it would also be possible. Only, the requirements for those people would be even higher. They would have to be at the absolute pinnacle of their fields, with their souls nearing the point of perfection.

The requirements for an expert in the Edicts of Life would be lower; generally speaking, anyone who had reached the level of that elfin Elder would be enough.

“Are there none amongst you who train in the Edicts of Life?” Linley asked, unwilling to give up.

The Patriarch of the White Tiger clan nodded. “There are. However, to reach the level of the person who launched that attack is difficult…just being able to execute an attack like this requires an astonishing level of understanding with regards to the soul.”

“Ah!” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan suddenly cried out. “My clan has a person who trains in the Edicts of Life, and his level of accomplishments is very high.”

Linley immediately looked at her.

Gislason and Phusro all looked towards her as well.

The Matriarch said confidently, “His name is Kestrel [Kai’si’tai’er]. He’s not an Elder; he’s a Six Star Fiend. However, his level of accomplishments in the Edicts of Life is very high. I can’t say for certain as to whether or not Kestrel will be able to save Delia, but…he has a teacher whose name is Alfonsus [A’fang’sa’si]. Alfonsus is not a member of our Four Divine Beasts clan. He is a supreme expert who trains in the Edicts of Life. Last time, I heard from Kestrel that his teacher was right here in Indigo Prefecture! Kestrel might not be able to save Delia, but Alfonsus definitely will!”

Linley’s eyes immediately lit up.

Two experts in the Edicts of life had suddenly appeared.

“Hurry and summon Kestrel over.” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan ordered a subordinate Elder of hers.

“Yes, Matriarch.” That Elder flew out at high speed.

Phusro laughed as he walked over. “Haha…Linley, I told you, right? At the

Four Divine Beasts clan, there will definitely be a way to save Delia. If this Kestrel can't do it, then his teacher definitely can. Don't worry."

Linley felt as the world, which had lost its color, suddenly became so bright and vivid once more, filled with hope!

Linley lowered his head to look at Delia. He said gently, "Delia, you have to hold on. There are two experts who train in the Edicts of Life. They will definitely save you. Definitely."

He then looked at his son in his arms. Linley's heart was filled with hope. "Everything will be well."

In the midst of the Elders, Forhan looked at the expression on Linley's face. In his heart, he snorted, "You really are lucky. You didn't die. But it's all for the best. Your wife is in such a state, causing you to be in such despair…I feel absolutely joyful to see you like this!"

"Linley." A deep voice rang out, and Gislason walked over. "This time, not long after you left Meer City, you actually suffered an ambush from eight enemy Elders, and three of them immediately used Sovereign's Might at the very beginning…this clearly was a premeditated ambush. How could the enemies have known about your whereabouts?"

Linley raised his head to look at Gislason.

"Patriarch, are you saying…?" Linley had a thought.

"A year or so ago, you rode that metallic lifeform to Meer City. In the past year, there have been three groups of visits on metallic lifeforms, but the eight great clans haven't launched any attacks. But as soon as you leave Meer City, they attack? Clearly, they were tracking your whereabouts, resulting in them being able to arrange for their forces to lie in wait." Gislason said. "How can the enemies know your whereabouts so clearly?"

Linley couldn't help but nod.

“Perhaps someone in your clan revealed the secret.” Phusro snorted coldly. “Otherwise, how could they have found Linley so easily?”

“Phusro.” Gislason couldn’t help but frown and bark at him.

When Forhan heard these words, his pupils contracted. At this moment, Linley suddenly turned to look towards Forhan. Their gazes just so happened to meet, and Forhan couldn’t help but be surprised. “Is Linley suspecting me?”

“If someone revealed the secret…it had to have been him or his son.” Linley said to himself.

After all, in the clan, only the two of them had any grudges against him.

Right at this moment, two figures flew in from outside at high speed. Linley immediately turned to look, and his gaze immediately focused on a black-haired, handsome youth. This black-haired youth immediately walked towards the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan and said, “Matriarch!”

“Hurry over and take a look at Elder Linley’s wife and see if you can rescue her.” The Matriarch said.

“Yes.” The black-haired youth first nodded towards Linley, then looked towards Delia before closing his eyes in thought.

Linley watched this scene nervously.

But then, the black-haired youth opened his eyes, and he looked at Linley frantically. “Elder Linley, your wife’s situation is very terrible. There’s nobody in our clan capable of saving her.”

“But don’t you have a teacher…” Linley said worriedly.

“My teacher should be able to save her, but…although my teacher is within Indigo Prefecture, to go from the Skyrite Mountains to my teacher’s place is a roundtrip of half a year, even for Seven Star Fiends who are making haste.

I’m worried that based on the speed at which this devouring is occurring, your wife won’t be able to hold on for that long!”

Chapter 49 – Three Months

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 49, Three Months

After Kestrel finished speaking, the entire hall immediately fell silent.

Linley was frantically pondering. “Although the teacher of this Kestrel is in Indigo Prefecture, the distance is too far. I don’t have enough time right now. If we make a round trip, there definitely won’t be enough time! Can it be that I’ll have to send Delia over there?”

If they sent Delia over, the amount of time it would take would definitely be much shorter.

But if they did that, then there wouldn’t be enough time to find anyone else who might also be able to save her.

“Kestrel!” Linley stared at him. “Tell me. If I send Delia to your teacher’s place, how likely is it that your teacher will be able to save Delia?”

Kestrel frowned. Hesitating momentarily, he stared at Linley then said with certainty, “If my teacher intervenes, although I can’t say he will definitely be successful, he has at least a 90% chance of success!”

“90%?” Linley turned, looking at the unconscious Delia.

Linley then turned his head to look at Patriarch Gislason. “Patriarch, I have no other options. I’ll have to send Delia to Mr. Alfonsus.”

Gislason was frowning, and he slowly shook his head. “Linley, don’t be impatient. There’s another way.”

“Another way?” Linley was stunned.

“Elder Brother.” That cold, arrogant-looking Patriarch of the White Tiger

clan spoke out. “How about this. I’ll personally pay a visit and bring that Alfonsus over. A round trip for a Seven Star Fiend would normally take half a year, but if I go…the total time of the trip, including bringing Alfonsus back, will be just three months.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of joy.

In the Four Divine Beasts clan, the White Tiger clan was that of a wind-type divine beast. In terms of speed, the White Tiger Patriarch was definitely the fastest expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and was far faster than most Seven Star Fiends.

“No need.” Gislason shook his head.

“Patriarch?” Linley said frantically.

Gislason laughed calmly. “Linley, don’t worry. I just used my divine sense to give the order to an intelligence agent of our Four Divine Beasts clan to inform the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture regarding your situation…and soon, we’ll have an answer.”

Linley was astonished. In fact, everyone in the hall was astonished.

The Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was getting involved?

“Linley.” Phusro walked over, slapping Linley on the shoulders and laughing, “Don’t worry. The forces of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture are spread throughout the entire Indigo Prefecture. If he were to reach out to Alfonsus, it would be done very quickly! And perhaps the Lord Prefect even knows some other experts who can save Delia.”

Linley’s eyes couldn’t help but to light up.

The Lord Prefect, as the lord of Indigo Prefecture, had a level of influence in Indigo Prefecture that vastly surpassed the Four Divine Beasts clan. It must be understood that even the eight great clans dared not invade the Skyrite Mountains, all because of the Lord Prefect.

One could imagine how powerful the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was.

“Will the Lord Prefect be willing to help me?” Linley was rather nervous as well. After all, he was neither friend nor family to this person.

“Don’t be impatient. Wait a while. Our intelligence agents will soon send an answer.” Gislason laughed, and Linley nodded. All he could do was swallow his impatience, burying it in his heart as he quietly waited.

Moments later…

“We have a response.” Gislason’s smile became brilliant. Clearly, the intelligence agent had communicated with him through divine sense.

Everyone in the main hall immediately looked towards Gislason.

“Haha, good news, Linley! The Lord Prefect has spoken.” Gislason laughed as he looked towards Linley, extremely happy. “Alfonsus is one of his friends, and in two or three days, his subordinates will reach and notify Alfonsus, who should be able to arrive here within three months.”

Linley felt relieved.

“Not just that!” Gislason laughed. “The Lord Prefect himself will come over as well. He says he will personally help treat Delia.”

“Elder Brother, the Lord Prefect is capable of treating the soul?” The Grand Elder asked, rather astonished. “I thought the Lord Prefect isn’t very specialized with regards to treating the soul.” The Grand elder and the others clearly remembered the scene, that year, of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture intervening and stopping the eight great clans.

That could be described as utterly terrifying!

Precisely because of that event, even figures as exalted as Gislason would

respectfully address him as ‘Lord Prefect’. After all, if it weren’t for the Lord Prefect, their Four Divine Beasts clan would most likely have been annihilated.

“Haha, I’m rather surprised as well. However, since the Lord Prefect has already spoken, he definitely won’t fail to live up to his word!” Gislason laughed as he looked towards Linley. “Linley, now both Alfonsus and the Lord Prefect will come, one after the other. Don’t worry.”

“I truly didn’t expect that the Lord Prefect would be so incredible with respect to treating the soul as well!” The Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan sighed in amazement as well.

Linley felt a surge of excitement in his heart.

“Thank you, thank you all.” Linley looked at everyone and spoke solemnly. “Since it will be a long time before Mr. Alfonsus comes, I’ll go back for now.”

“Alright.” Gislason nodded and laughed. “Linley, go back and get some rest. Don’t worry too much. With the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture himself intervening, given his ability and influence, he can easily invite quite a few people to come. Delia will definitely be successfully saved.”

Linley forced out a smile and nodded.

And then, he let the earth-type divine power swell from his body, which naturally formed a soft, cloud-like floating ‘bed’ which Linley placed Wade upon. And then, he took Delia into his arms, nodding towards the Elders, and flew out of the main hall.

“Alright. Everyone can go back now.” Gislason said clearly.

The Four Divine Beast clan’s Elders all bade farewell, and then flew away in small groups. Moments later, the only ones remaining in the main hall were Gislason and Phusro. The two looked at each other.

Gislason immediately set up his ‘Godrealm’, separating the sound within from the outside world, then said urgently, “Phusro, last time we were discussing…”

———————-

Linley returned to that gorge within the Skyrite Mountains. He spent every day either by Delia’s side or taking care of Wade. But of course, Linley would occasionally let some of the other members of the Yulan branch take care of Wade.

A thin fog billowed about. Baruch was currently standing in an empty spot of land, staring towards Linley’s distant abode.

“Father.” Ryan walked over. “Are you worried about Delia and Linley?”

Baruch let out a sigh. “Right. Linley has already been back for half a month, but during this past half month, he’s never dined with us. He’s always remained within the room, hiding inside. In his eyes, the only person he can see right now, aside from Delia, is probably his son.”

“Linley’s sunken in too deeply.” Ryan frowned.

“Love…is very complicated. It’s something which is hard to explain.” Baruch shook his head.

Right at this moment, a figure descended from the skies at high speed. “Clan leader Baruch, how is my Boss doing?” The newcomer was Bebe. Bebe’s group had arrived after Linley.

“Bebe?” A hint of a smile appeared on Baruch’s face. “It’s good that you’ve returned. Go speak with Linley. Even if you aren’t able to persuade him to come out, if you can chat with him, perhaps Linley’s mood will improve.”

“Right.” Bebe nodded, then immediately ran over towards Linley’s residence.

Gislason's residence. The main hall.

"Patriarch, nearly a hundred of our clansmen are unconscious. What should we do?" Tewila said frantically. "So many of our clansmen are sobbing!" Tewila's return had resulted in the return of a large group of unconscious clansmen as well.

Gislason, frustrated, frowned as well.

"Enough of this subject." Gislason ground out. "I know their situation well. They are just like Linley's wife. We aren't even able to save Linley's wife; how are we going to save anyone else?"

Tewila's face was full of worry as well.

"Let the clansmen make their preparations." Gislason said. "Fortunately, most of our clansmen have divine clones. But Linley's wife became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark. She doesn't even have a clone. If she dies, she'll truly be finished!"

Tewila nodded, letting out a sigh.

He had personally watched as Delia was hit by the technique and saw how Linley had reacted. "Most likely, in Linley's mind right now, his wife's life is more important than even his own. His wife is unfortunate as well, to have become a Deity through fusing with a divine spark!"

"Tewila." Gislason instructed. "These unconscious clansmen…you go make the arrangements. Most likely…some of them fused with divine sparks as well."

"Yes, Patriarch. I'll make all the arrangements." Tewila said.

"Fine. You can go now." Gislason said.

After Tewila left, Gislason's face became filled with exhaustion. To him, the matter of Delia and the other clansmen being unconscious was still a

minor matter. What truly had him frustrated was the news which Phusro had brought him.

“Can it be…that there really is no hope?” Gislason raised his head, closing his eyes. A glimmer of tears flashed from between his eyelashes, like a gleaming, brilliant little jewel.

Gislason took a deep breath. The exhaustion disappeared from his face, and that resolute self-confidence once more appeared.

“Now…”

Gislason’s eyes were hard and firm. “All we can do is entrust our hopes to the Redbud Sovereign who stands behind Linley, as well as the Bloodridge Sovereign who stands behind the Lord Prefect. Unfortunately, the Lord Prefect isn’t willing to go all out for our clan’s sake. Otherwise…”

In the blink of an eye, three months passed.

“Why isn’t he here yet?” Linley stood outside his room, his head raised towards the skies. Ever since the three month mark approached, he had been watching the skies every single day, hoping that Alfonsus would descend into the gorge.

However, there had been no news of Alfonsus.

Bebe walked out from behind, looking at Linley’s back. Bebe felt miserable for Linley as well. He spoke. “Boss, don’t worry. He said three months, but that was just an estimate. It won’t be exactly three months, but it shouldn’t be too far off either. Most likely, Alfonsus will be here tomorrow.”

Linley turned to look at Bebe and nodded slightly. “Right. He’ll definitely arrive tomorrow.”

“Linley! Linley!” A frantic cry rang out from the air.

Linley seemed to have been struck by lightning, and he immediately turned

to look towards the skies, only to see a figure descending at high speed while saying excitedly, “Linley, Mr. Alfonsus has arrived. He’s arrived!!!”

“Arrived?” After having waited so long, Linley’s heart seemed to have suddenly been set ablaze. All the hairs on his body stiffened, as though he had been hit by electricity.

The newcomer was Elder Garvey.

“The Patriarch told me to notify you. Hurry and make your preparations. He is currently accompanying Mr. Alfonsus, and they will arrive soon.” Elder Garvey’s face was filled with delight. “Linley, your wife will be saved.”

A look of joy was on Linley’s face as well.

“Right. Delia will be saved.” Linley turned and rushed into his room.

Delia was quietly lying on a bed in the room, as though she were asleep. By Delia’s side, there was a smaller bed, where Wade was quietly slumbering as well. Fortunately, by the time they had left Meer City, Wade was already able to eat liquid foods.

“Delia, Alfonsus is here. You’ll definitely recover.” Linley said softly.

“Boss, they’re here!” Bebe’s voice rang out from outside.

Linley hurriedly ran out, looking towards the skies. He saw that within the mist, more than ten blurry figures were flying over at high speed, and they soon landed on the ground. It was Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, Kestrel, and a group of Elders.

There were two non-Elders; one was Phusro, while the other was a silver-haired old man with a ruddy complexion and with skin as tender as an infant’s.

“He must be Alfonsus.” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“Linley, this person is Mr. Alfonsus.” Gislason laughed, and the silver-haired, baby-faced old man laughed as well, nodding towards Linley. “You are Linley, right? And your wife?”

Only now did Linley come to his senses, and he hurriedly said, “Mr. Alfonsus, please follow me.” He immediately led them in.

The group entered the room.

“Mr. Alfonsus.” Linley pointed towards his wife. “Please help save my wife!”

“I will try.” Alfonsus smiled. He walked to the bed, standing there for a moment as he used his divine sense to investigate. His expression gradually grew solemn. This caused Linley’s heart to clench. And then, Alfonsus reached out with his right hand, pressing it against the top of Delia’s head.

A blurry green light flowed out from Alfonsus’ hand, encapsulating Delia’s head.

Immediately, the entire room fell completely silent, with no one daring to make a sound. Linley held his breath as well as he watched this scene. “Since Alfonsus is acting, he definitely must have confidence in his ability to succeed.”

Chapter 50 – Between Life and Death!

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 50, Between Life and Death!

Within the room, everyone was watching Alfonsus treat Delia. Linley was the most nervous of them all, and his forehead became matted with sweat. Linley, however, didn't even notice.

"Crackle…"

That green energy circulated, emanating a very faint sound. Alfonsus, his face solemn, suddenly let out a low growl, and the speed at which the green light circulated suddenly increased dramatically, constantly pouring into Delia's brain.

"Uhhh…." Delia, seemingly in pain, let out a soft sound, and her forehead creased slightly.

This soft sound, to Linley, was like a clap of thunder. His eyes lit up as though he had been hit by lightning. "Delia has regained consciousness! She's responding!" Linley was so excited, his entire body was trembling.

Looks of joy had appeared on everyone else's faces as well.

"Boss, Delia is going to be saved." Bebe hurriedly said through divine sense with joy as well.

"Right." Linley nodded. He felt as though he were filled with life and energy.

Gislason, Phusro, and the others began to chortle as well. Linley continued to stare at Alfonsus as the man treated Delia, and the hope in his heart continued to swell. "Delia, you absolutely must get better, you must."

Right at this moment…

Alfonsus took back his right hand, concluding the treatment.

“Mr. Alfonsus, is my wife treated?” Linley asked hurriedly. Alfonsus turned to look at Linley. He could clearly see the hopes and expectations held within the eyes of this youth. However, Alfonsus just let out a soft sigh. “Linley…make your preparations.”

“Preparations for what? What preparations?” Linley immediately had a bad feeling.

“Mr. Alfonsus, what is going on?” Gislason, whose face had been all smiles, hurriedly asked as his face changed as well.

Alfonsus shook his head. “All I can do is tell you quite openly…I am not able to save this woman. In addition, I recommend that you give up. To save this woman is virtually impossible.”

Hearing these words from Alfonsus, Linley felt his entire mind go blank.

“No!”

Linley suddenly growled, staring fixedly at Alfonsus, like a savage, maddened lion. “Mr. Alfonsus, you must be lying to me. Just now, Delia had a reaction. She was conscious. How can you suddenly said that you can’t treat her?”

“Right. Didn’t she improve just now?” Gislason said as well.

Seeing the savage, wild look on the face of the youth in front of him, Alfonsus let out a low sigh. “Linley, just now, your wife didn’t actually regain consciousness. Rather, while I was treating her, her soul pushed at mine strongly, causing a slight involuntary response in her body.”

“But…but didn’t Kestrel say that you had a 90% chance of saving my wife? How can…now…” Linley couldn’t accept this.

He truly couldn't accept it!

Three months ago, Linley had been convinced that Delia would definitely be cured. Over the past three months, Linley had been waiting constantly for this day. Just now, Linley had believed that Delia had already been cured.

But now…

Alfonsus let out a sigh. "Three months ago, if I were to treat your wife, I would definitely have been able to save her. But now, it's too late."

"What do you mean? You could save her three months ago, but not now?" Linley said frantically.

Alfonsus looked around at everyone, then said, "Everyone, this sort of spiritual attack is a very insidious, vile type. Those green spots of light invade the soul, then constantly devour and transform it. One spot becomes two, two becomes four, four becomes eight…"

"Although the souls of Highgods are powerful, and to devour and transform them is very difficult…as the multiplicative effects continue, the more time passes, the more extravagant the rate of devouring becomes." Alfonsus said solemnly.

Everyone present nodded.

"I know these things. But why are you unable to save Delia?" Linley said frantically.

Alfonsus looked at Linley, then sighed. "Linley, you still don't understand? The devouring and transforming speed continues to grow faster and faster. Three months ago, the speed of devouring and transforming…was a million times slower than it is now!"

Linley was stunned.

One becomes two, two becomes four, four becomes eight…as time went on, after a just a few dozen rounds, the numbers would become astronomically large.

“What I need to do in order to save your wife is to counter-devour and counter-transform those green spots of light!” Alfonsus said.

Linley knew this as well; that the treatment method was to counter-devour and reverse the transformation process.

“Only when my counter-devouring speed surpasses the devouring speed will I be able to save your wife.” Alfonsus said, and Linley completely understood.

“Right now, my treatment speed is far too slow, compared to the devouring speed. Even if I go all out, at most I’ll be able to slow the devouring speed and slightly extend your wife’s life.” Alfonsus sighed. “Three months ago, I could have easily saved your wife. But now…forgive my inability.”

Linley stood there, stunned.

He completely understood. This sort of devouring speed was like a spark of flame that had become a prairie fire. The more time passed, the wider the burned area would become. A single spark of fire was enough to char the entire grassland. The same was true for these green spots of light.

The more time passed, the faster the devouring speed…and the more distant the hopes for saving Delia would be.

“Boss. Boss.” Bebe called out repeatedly.

“Linley.” Phusro called out as well.

But Linley stood there like an idiot, completely silent.

“Alas.” Alfonsus let out a sigh as well.

Within the room, Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Patriarch, and the various Elders all looked at each other, speechless. The entire atmosphere was extremely tense and gloomy.

“Mr. Alfonsus.” Linley suddenly said frantically. “I beg of you, please help treat my wife and extend her life. Let me have enough time to ask someone else to help treat her. Is that acceptable?” Linley looked hopefully towards Alfonsus.

Linley understood that Alfonsus’ treatment speed was inferior to the devouring speed. Then…if Alfonsus wanted to extend Delia’s life, he would have to constantly treat her. This request of his was indeed rather excessive.

But…he had no choice!

“Linley.”

Alfonsus said solemnly. “Both because of your Four Divine Beasts clan as well as because of the Lord Prefect, I would definitely help extend your wife’s life if I had the ability to. But…I have to tell you. Even if I help out, I’ll at most be able to extend her life for a day or two.”

“A day or two?” Linley was stunned.

He had been hoping the extension would be for several years. The longer the better.

“This sort of soul treatment…it isn’t as simple as you think it is. To treat your wife…as I just said, because your wife’s soul rejected my energy, even her body physically reacted.” Alfonsus continued, “The soul is a very central part of a person. When treating someone, I have to be extremely, extremely careful. If just the slightest bit of energy spills out, I’ll have injured your wife’s soul and she will die.”

“I can maintain this sort of peak performance for a short period of time, ensuring that I don’t make any mistakes. But if the amount of time I spend in that state is just a bit too long, given how much spiritual energy that takes

up, errors will naturally occur. And once an error occurs, your wife will…" Alfonsus said apologetically.

Linley was silent for a moment.

"Linley. The Lord Prefect will soon arrive. Perhaps the Lord Prefect will be able to save your wife." Gislason said hurriedly.

Linley's eyes lit up. "Right. There's still the Lord Prefect."

But Alfonsus said, "Linley, I already told you to make your preparations. Although I deeply admire the Lord Prefect, to be honest…I don't believe that the Lord Prefect has the ability to heal her."

"Mr. Alfonsus!" Linley was growing angry.

"To save your wife, there are only three methods." Alfonsus said.

Linley immediately started to listen attentively.

"The first is to have an expert who has trained to the utmost limits of the Edicts of Life come. Most likely, his treatment speed will be able to surpass the devouring speed. A person like this will be able to save your wife…but of course, you must understood that if three more months pass and the process reaches the late stages, most likely even the most powerful expert of the Edicts of Life will be unable to rescue her." Alfonsus said. "However, this type of person, who has trained to the utmost limits of the Edicts of Life, is extremely rare even in the Higher Plane of Life, much less in the Infernal Realm. The second method is to use Life-type Sovereign's Might. Devouring speed at this level, considering how powerful Life-type Sovereign's Might is, can be quickly cured!"

Gislason said frantically, "Our Four Divine Beasts clan does have Life-type Sovereign's Might!"

"Right, we have Life-type Sovereign's Might!" Linley said hurriedly as well.

“You didn’t let me finish!”

Alfonsus shook his head. “Life-type Sovereign’s Might is extremely powerful. Naturally, its restorative speed is astonishing. But…Life-type Sovereign’s Might is in fact TOO powerful. There is no way a Highgod can control it perfectly. I imagine that those of you who have used Sovereign’s Might know that it will leak out, right?”

Linley was stunned.

Right…

Sovereign’s Might was too powerful. The spiritual strength which a Highgod could exert over it was not enough to perfectly control it. This would cause the user of Sovereign’s Might to emanate an azure aura or a black aura or some other aura over their body.

This was caused by the natural leakage of Sovereign’s Might.

It was said that Sovereign’s Might could only be used a single time! This was because once a Highgod used Sovereign’s Might, there was no way the Highgod would be able to prevent the Sovereign’s Might from leaking out and dissipating. Even if he stopped fighting, the Sovereign’s Might would still naturally disperse.

“Even if I used Sovereign’s Might to save Delia by delving deep into her soul…if there was the slightest bit of imprecision, Delia’s soul would be impacted and would die. To say nothing of the leakage of energy from the Sovereign’s Might!” Alfonsus said. “Remember, to save Delia, there can’t be a single hint of leakage of Sovereign’s Might, or a single mistake!”

Linley’s face couldn’t help but turn ashen.

He understood this principle. Sovereign’s Might was the energy of a Sovereign. He had never heard of a Highgod who could control it perfectly, to the point where not a hint was wasted or dispersed.

Gislason said, “There are indeed Highgods who are capable of controlling Sovereign’s Might so perfectly…according to legend, Highgods who have reached the Paragon level are able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might. Unfortunately, I’ve never heard of a Highgod Paragon who resides within Indigo Prefecture.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh bitterly.

“Mr. Alfonsus, didn’t you say there was a third method?” Linley immediately asked.

Alfonsus said resignedly, “The third method is to ask a Sovereign to intervene! If a Sovereign is willing to intervene, no matter which Sovereign! Your wife would be easily saved. But…will you be able to convince a Sovereign to help?”

“Your third method is a waste of words.” Bebe said unhappily.

But Linley was silent for a long time.

“Mr. Alfonsus, are there truly no other methods?” Linley asked again.

Alfonsus nodded with absolute certainty. “Given my understanding of the soul, I daresay that I am completely certain that aside from these three methods, there are no other methods available.”

The first method was to find an expert who had reached the utmost limits of insight into the Edicts of Life, a supreme expert who vastly surpassed Alfonsus. But where in Indigo Prefecture would they go to find someone like that?

The second method was to find someone who was able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might, without allowing for any leakage or making any errors. This amount of spiritual control was something which only those legendary Paragons were capable of.

The third method…

The only Sovereign which Linley had a connection to was the Redbud Sovereign. But even aside from the question of whether or not she would help out, the amount of time it would take to go from the Bloodridge Continent to the Redbud Continent was far, far too long!

Delia couldn't wait for that long!

"Everyone…I've troubled you all in recent days." Linley forced out a smile. "You can all go back now. There's no need to worry yourselves over my affairs. Mr. Alfonsus, I wish to truly thank you for having hurried such a distance to come save my wife."

Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, Phusro, and the others, seeing the look on Linley's face, all sighed in their hearts.

"Linley, we'll leave for now." Gislason and the others wanted to console him, but they didn't know what to say. All of them simply left.

Although they all knew that the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture would arrive soon, after hearing Alfonsus' explanations, they all understood…that the Lord Prefect probably wouldn't be able to save Delia, unless his spiritual control was able to perfectly control Sovereign's Might. But unfortunately, according to legends, only Highgod Paragons were capable of this.

"Boss…"

Bebe looked at Linley's forlorn figure. He had the sudden urge to cry.

Linley turned to look at Bebe, forcing a smile out. "Bebe, you head out as well. Let me accompany Delia by myself." Linley patted Bebe on the shoulders. Bebe made a sound in acknowledgment, nodding repeatedly.

And then, Bebe left the room as well.

Within the room, the only figures now present were Linley, Delia, and that slumbering Wade, who had no idea what was going on.

Linley quietly looked at Delia, countless scenes flashing through his mind. Grief filled his breast, and he couldn't help but raise his head. "Heavens! Why must you punish me so!!!"

His hoarse voice echoed and reverberated within the silent room. It was filled with regret, anger, grief…and despair!

Two streams of tears fell down from Linley's face.

Linley slowly walked to the bed, kneeling in front of it and looking carefully at Delia. He stretched his hand out, gently stroking Delia's face. A hint of a smile appeared on Linley's face as well, a peaceful smile. "Delia, I'll accompany you on the final leg of the journey. Never to part…ever!"

Time flowed on. In the blink of an eye, many days had passed.

Bebe stood outside the room, staring in from outside the window. At this moment, Baruch walked past. Afraid of disturbing Linley, he said softly, "Bebe, how is Linley doing right now?" Everyone knew Delia's situation, and they all understood…

That there was most likely no hope for Delia. Only, everyone feared that because of this, Linley would collapse and perhaps even do something which would cause everyone regret and pain.

"See for yourself." Bebe sighed. There wasn't a hint of a smile on Bebe's face right now. He didn't have any mood to laugh or joke around any longer.

Baruch looked in through the window.

He saw, within the room…

Linley was currently holding Wade, feeding Wade some liquid food. Every

so often, Linley would look towards Delia and say softly, “Delia, Wade’s been very good today. He hasn’t caused any fuss at all.”

Seeing this from outside the window, Baruch couldn’t bear to watch any longer.

“I really hope!” Bebe said softly. “I really, truly hope, that Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture who is arriving soon will be able to save Delia! He has to!”

“Right.” Baruch nodded as well.

Right at this moment, a figure suddenly descended from the skies. It was Phusro. Phusro said in a soft voice as well, “Bebe, Linley, he…”

“Phusro, you came?” A gentle voice rang out. Smiling, Linley walked out of the room, carrying Wade. “I came to take Wade out for a walk. Come, Phusro, you can hold Wade for a while as well. It’s been so long since you last came. Wade has missed you.”

Phusro, seeing the smile on Linley’s face, couldn’t help but feel stunned.

He hadn’t expected that at a time like this, Linley would be smiling? But for some reason, he had this feeling…that Linley’s smile caused him to feel even more miserable than a look of grief.

“Alright, I’ll hold him…” Phusro immediately walked over.

“Hug…” Wade, seeing Phusro walked over, immediately reached out with his little hand while saying, “Hug…hug…”

Linley laughed. “Wade can say a few simple words already. He knows how to say ‘mother’.”

Right at this moment…

A figure descended from the skies at high speed. It was Elder Garvey. Elder

Garvey flew over, hurriedly saying, “Linley, the Lord Prefect has arrived!”

Linley was stunned.

“The Lord Prefect came?” A hint of color appeared in Linley’s lifeless eyes. Although Linley no longer held much hope in the ability of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture to save Delia, at least it was worth a try.

“Right. The four clan leaders and the Grand Elder immediately went to greet him. It’ll be a while before he arrives!” Elder Garvey explained.

The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were naturally very arrogant, but they sincerely admired the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, admired and respected him. The great kindness this person had shown to their clan, as well as this person’s power, was more than enough for them to act this way towards him.

“Oh, Linley lives right here?” A friendly voice rang out.

Ten figures descended from the skies. Linley, Phusro, Bebe, and the others all raised their heads to look. The person flying at the head was the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, while Gislason and the four clan leaders followed by his side, their attitudes very humble and meek.

But Linley just stared fixedly at that figure who was escorted by those four clan leaders, like the moon surrounded by four stars.

The person was dressed in a long black robe. His long black hair fluttered in the breeze, and his long black beard hung down to his chest. His eyes were very small, but they looked as lively and energetic as the stars. A hint of a smile was at the corner of his lips, and a very friendly look was on his face.

“Linley!” That person laughed while greeting him.

“Linley, this is the Lord Prefect.” Gislason introduced.

But Linley just stared in disbelief. “Be…Lord Beirut?!”

“Grandpa!” Bebe called out as well, shocked. He excitedly charged forward, and Beirut opened his mouth and laughed loudly. “Haha, Bebe…” And as he spoke, he drew Bebe into his arms.

“Grandpa!” Bebe called out excitedly once again.

“Haha…you’ve missed Grandpa, eh?” Beirut laughed very happily.

As for Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, and the rest of the four clan leaders, as well as the Grand Elder and the other Elders, and even Phusro… they all stared with wide eyes in disbelief at this scene.

“The Lord Prefect? ‘Grandpa’?”

Looks of utmost amazement were on the faces of Gislason and the others.

Chapter 51 – Beirut's Abilities

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 51, Beirut's Abilities

Linley had originally sunk into despair. He believed that Delia had no hope for life, and he didn't place much hope into the arrival of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture. But he had never imagined that the person who had saved the Four Divine Beasts clan from the flames and the floods, the Lord Prefect whom Gislason constantly praised as unspeakably powerful, was actually Bebe's grandfather…Beirut!

When he saw Beirut, Linley couldn't help but feel hope surge within his breast.

Beirut, in Linley's mind, was unfathomably profound and powerful.

"Perhaps Lord Beirut truly will be able to save Delia." Linley, in his heart, began to feel rather eager.

Outside the door of the room, a large group of people stared in astonishment at Bebe and the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, Beirut, and at how close they appeared. They had no idea…that this unremarkable youth who had always been by Linley's side had actually had such a close relationship with the Lord Prefect!

"Beirut…you are his grandfather?" Phusro spoke out in amazement.

Grinning, Beirut glanced at him sideways, then nodded slightly. "Phusro, I truly do apologize. I lied to you previously. I was afraid that if you knew the real relationship between myself and Bebe, that you would go out of your way to take care of this little fellow…you have no idea how lazy a temperament this Bebe has. He absolutely has to be made to learn to take care of himself."

Phusro began to laugh as well.

When he had been just a little kitten in Elquin's arms, that first time he had met Linley and Bebe, he had guessed that Bebe had some sort of relationship with Beirut, especially after seeing Bebe use that godspark weapon.

Afterwards, when he had met Beirut, he had asked Beirut about this. But Beirut just gave a casual answer and had thus deceived him.

"Haha, yes, this little fellow does need a bit of forging in the crucible of life." Phusro laughed, looking at Bebe.

Bebe couldn't help but let out a snort. "Grandpa, I already have mastered five profound mysteries. It has only been a thousand years. My speed is already quite fast."

"How can you be so shameless!" Beirut didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Of the five profound mysteries which Bebe had mastered, one came naturally from when he, as a divine beast, reached the age of maturity. As for the other four, they came from those soul slice fragments which Beirut had asked his friend to create.

But of course…

Bebe's comprehension ability wasn't bad, as he was able to break through four bottlenecks in a row.

Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, the other clan leaders, and the Elders were all completely stunned. They truly had not imagined that Linley and Bebe actually had such a deep relationship with this unfathomably powerful Lord Prefect.

"Lord Prefect, Bebe is already quite impressive to have mastered five profound mysteries in a thousand or so years." Gislason said as well.

"You don't know the truth of the secrets within." Beirut said, his eyes half-lidded in amusement.

“Grandpa!” Bebe was rather unhappy.

Beirut chortled, “However, compared to the Yulan continent, you have indeed made great improvements. At least your patience has improved a bit…haha…”

Only now did Bebe smile as well.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley finally spoke. “My wife, Delia, she…”

Beirut turned to look. Seeing Linley, his expression grew slightly more solemn. He nodded. “I heard of your wife’s situation, which is why I hurried over. Back then, when the two of you were getting married, I even sent my son with a divine spark to your wife. Who would have imagined… that this would happen. Alas. Come, let me take a look.”

“Right.” Linley immediately led the way forward, and the two stepped into the room, with Phusro and Bebe following behind.

In the past, Beirut had given her a divine spark out of good intentions. After all, the chances of becoming a Deity on one’s own in a material plane were extremely low. Although there were many benefits to becoming a Deity on one’s own…Delia, become a Deity without assistance? Forget about becoming a Deity; even becoming a Saint would be difficult. Who knew how long it would take for her to become a Deity?

The same was true for Wharton.

If Wharton didn’t undergo the Ancestral Baptism, it would also be very hard for him to become a Deity by relying on his own abilities.

“Linley actually has such a relationship with the Lord Prefect.” Gislason and the others were all outside the room, looking at each other. They were still stunned by this news. At the same time, Gislason set up his Godrealm, blocking out sound and not letting those inside the room listen to them.

“Didn’t you hear? When Linley got married in a material plane, the Lord Prefect even sent him gifts. Their relationship is an extremely close one.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch’s lips crooked upwards in a smile, and she began to laugh. “To our Four Divine Beasts clan, this is a good thing as well.”

“Right. If the Lord Prefect truly decides to help us, the eight great clans won’t dare to be so arrogant!” The Black Tortoise Patriarch nodded as well.

“The abilities of the Lord Prefect truly are frightening.” Gislason sighed in amazement as well.

They all remembered that scene, from when Beirut had appeared to stop those eight great clans. He had wielded that long black staff in his hands, and moved like lightning as he roamed about in the midst of the many experts of the eight great clans. Not a single Seven Star Fiend who was touched by that staff had any chance at survival.

However, the experts of the eight great clans weren’t able to harm Beirut in the slightest with their material attacks, and when their spiritual attacks landed on Beirut, there was apparently no effect at all.

In the blink of an eye, Beirut had laid waste to and slaughtered more than twenty Seven Star Fiends, terrifying the forces of the eight great clans so badly that they had immediately paused their attacks. Even when Patriarch Boleyn of the eight great clans had exchanged a blow with Beirut, he had been heavily injured, even though he hadn’t died.

It must be understood that Patriarch Boleyn also had a Sovereign artifact. But when compared to Beirut…

They were on different levels!

Beirut was reputed to be the most powerful figure in the Bloodridge Continent, aside from the Bloodridge Sovereign himself! Not only did he have such a reputation; nobody even dared to question it. The other Asuras all tacitly accepted it. From this, one could tell how powerful he was.

“Back then, if the Lord Prefect had forcibly demanded the eight great clans to all f*ck off, even though they wouldn’t have been willing to do so, in the end, they still probably would have.” Gislason sighed. “However, it seems as though the Lord Prefect doesn’t want to offend the eight great clans too much. Most likely, he wants to give face to the Sovereigns behind the eight great clans. Thus, he just forbade the eight great clans from entering the Skyrite Mountains.”

“It already is very good for the Lord Prefect to be willing to do this for us.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said with a solemn look on her face. “Back in the day, when the four ancestors were all present, how many experts had aligned themselves with our clan? Our four ancestors had quite a few Sovereign’s Emissaries as well. But after the four ancestors died? Not a single one of those Emissaries cared about our clans.”

The other Elders all sighed quietly.

Indeed. As the saying went, ‘When the people are gone, the tea grows cold!’

Once the ancestors died, even their Emissaries simply watched, not assisting at all as the Four Divine Beasts clan tottered step by step towards annihilation. But fortunately, the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture had finally intervened. Although he hadn’t completely shooed away the eight great clans, at least he had allowed the Four Divine Beasts clan to survive and not be annihilated.

A person couldn’t be too greedy.

The Lord Prefect had already been very benevolent towards them. The Lord Prefect had done so much for them, but the Four Divine Beasts clan had been unable to do anything to repay him.

“Let’s go. We’ll go in and take a look.” Gislason was the first to walk in, and the various Elders all followed him.

As soon as Gislason entered the room, he saw that Linley was standing there to the side, waiting quietly. As for Beirut, he was standing with his eyes closed. Moments later, his eyes opened and he let out a sigh. “Delia’s situation is even more terrible than I expected!”

“Lord Beirut, can it be that even you are unable to save Delia?” Linley said frantically.

“Grandpa.” Bebe said hurriedly as well.

“Haha…” Beirut began to laugh loudly. “I only said the situation is terrible. I didn’t say I’m unable to save her! However, in order to save your wife, I’m going to have to waste a drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might!”

As he spoke, Beirut extended his palm, and a green drop of liquid appeared within it.

“Lord Beirut.” As soon as Linley saw this drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might, he was worried. “In treating the soul, one has to delve deep into the core of the soul. If there’s even a hint of energy leakage from the Sovereign’s Might or a single error, then…”

Although Linley wanted to save Delia, he didn’t want to watch as Delia died due to an accident.

“Lord Prefect, using a drop of Sovereign’s Might…” Gislason interjected as well.

“Hey, do you think that I actually don’t have common sense?” Puzzled, Beirut turned to look towards Linley and the others. “It’s just a drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might. Although it is indeed hard to use a drop of it without letting any leak out, who says I’m not capable of it?”

As Beirut spoke, the drop of Life-type Sovereign’s Might in his hand entered his body.

And then, Beirut pointed out with a finger from his right hand, and a green

blurry illusion formed.

“Sovereign’s Might!” Linley was stunned.

“How is that possible?” Gislason, Phusro, and the others were all stunned. Beirut had clearly already used his Sovereign’s Might, but Beirut’s body wasn’t emanating a hint of it at all.

Normally speaking, after a person used Sovereign’s Might, a colored aura would emanate from that person’s body.

That light was the leaking Sovereign’s Might. But Beirut didn’t leak out any at all. From the outside, one wouldn’t be able to tell at all…that Beirut was using Sovereign’s Might.

Linley was overjoyed. “She’ll be saved. Delia will be saved. I didn’t expect Lord Beirut to be so formidable. He’s able to wield even the heavy power of Sovereign’s Might with precision, not letting a hint leak out.”

Sovereign’s Might was simply too overpoweringly strong for Highgods.

Using it was like letting an ordinary mortal wield a heavy sword that weighed fifty kilograms. Due to its great weight, it would be hard for the mortal to wield it accurately, agilely, and without any errors.

The same was true for a Deity who used Sovereign’s Might.

It exceeded the bounds of control of their spiritual energy, and thus it would leak out. According to legend, only Paragon Highgods were able to perfectly control Sovereign’s Might. But today, Beirut had accomplished it.

“Lord Prefect, can it be that you have already reached the Paragon…” Gislason said in shock.

“Quiet!”

Beirut frowned, his face growing solemn. “While I am treating Delia, none

of you are permitted to speak. If you disturb me, then you will bear the consequences!" Beirut, for once, decided to show his fierce side.

Immediately, everyone in the room fell silent.

Linley's heart was pounding, and he watched everything nervously. He saw Beirut extend his right hand, clasping the top part of Delia's head with it. Immediately, that blurry, illusory green light began to flood into Delia's head.

As for Beirut, he closed his eyes, completely focused on healing her.

The entire room was completely silent. Not even breathing could be heard.

"She'll definitely get better. She'll definitely get better." Linley stared unblinkingly as he prayed nonstop. He was truly afraid. Prior to this, when that Alfonsus had treated Delia, he had also acted in a similar manner. Linley had believed that Delia would get better, but the result had been…

Utter silence…

Time passed, one second at a time.

Healing the soul was a very detailed, careful project. The insides of a soul were extremely complex, and the innermost core of a soul was extremely fragile. The slightest error would cause the soul to be finished. Even Beirut had to be very careful and slow in his treatment.

After a long time…

The sweat which had poured out of Linley's forehead had already dried.

"All done!" A long sigh shook the room. This sudden noise within the silent room caused Linley to feel shocked. He hurriedly looked towards Beirut. The moment of judgment had arrived!

"Lord Beirut, how is it?" When Linley said these words, his heart was

trembling.

“How is it? Take a look for yourself.” Beirut laughed.

Linley immediately looked towards Delia, only to see the slumbering Delia’s eyelids tremble slightly. In that moment, Linley felt as though flames were scorching his chest, and a look of joy couldn’t help but appear on his face.

Delia opened her eyes, a lost, uncomprehending look within them. She looked around herself. There were so many people here.

“Lord Beirut.” Delia breathed in astonishment, then immediately looked at Linley. “Linley, what happened?” After Delia had been hit by the technique, she had lost all consciousness. She had no idea what had happened in the following period of time.

“Linley, why are you crying?” Delia felt completely baffled.

Why was it that as soon as she had woken up, there were so many people present, including the Patriarch. And even Beirut had appeared!

Tears uncontrollably fell down Linley’s face. The moment Delia woke up, Linley felt as though the world, which had turned dark, had suddenly regained its brightness. It had regained its color!

“Delia!” Linley embraced Delia, hugging her tightly, afraid that he might lose her again.

“Lord Prefect, you…you are a Paragon Highgod?” Gislason said.

“Beirut, you…” Phusro said in astonishment as well.

Beirut simply began to laugh loudly. “What are you people talking about? Can it be that if I’m not a Paragon Highgod, I won’t be able to control Sovereign’s Might?”

Chapter 52 – Two Drops of Sovereign's Might

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 52, Two Drops of Sovereign's Might

Phusro, Gislason, and everyone else were momentarily speechless.

"Grandpa!"

At this moment, Bebe immediately spoke out, his face filled with delight. "I know why they are puzzled. It is because everyone says…that according to legend, only a Highgod who has become a Paragon is able to perfectly control Sovereign's Might."

Beirut looked around at the people within the room.

"Legend…all of you know that is just a legend, right?" Beirut laughed calmly. "Paragon Highgods are able to do it, but does that necessarily mean that no other Highgods are able to do it? All of you are too rigid in your thinking!"

Legends were nothing more than legends, after all!

Reality wasn't necessarily the same as legends.

"Beirut…admirable, admirable. No wonder your almighty Sovereign values you so much." Phusro laughed. Generally speaking, Emissaries were mere subordinates to their Sovereign. The death of a Sovereign's Emissary just meant that the Sovereign could go find another one.

But some Emissaries were exceedingly valued and held in high regard by their Sovereign.

For example, Highgod Paragons. Although Beirut wasn't a Highgod Paragon, his Sovereign still held him in extremely high regard.

“Forget about me; your Sovereign values you greatly as well.” Beirut laughed.

Phusro, hearing this, couldn’t help but laugh as well. That fire-type Sovereign had personally competed against him, starting with material attacks and spiritual attacks and moving to other aspects. Only at the very end did the fire-type Sovereign reveal his identity. For a Sovereign to lower himself to spar with Phusro…naturally, he didn’t view or treat Phusro as an ordinary chess piece.

As Phusro and Beirut chatted, the four Patriarchs and Elders just stood there and listened, not daring to interject. After all, the two were both Sovereign’s Emissaries.

Beirut turned to glance at Linley, and then instructed Gislason and the others, “Enough. Everyone, no need to keep crowding the two of them in this room. Linley and his wife undoubtedly have quite a few private words they want to share with each other. You can go out for now.”

Only now did Gislason and the others come to their senses, and they hurriedly nodded.

“Lord Prefect, Linley’s wife has been treated and cured thanks to your arrival. Tonight, our Four Divine Beasts clan will host a celebratory banquet for her cure and your arrival. What do you say?” Gislason said.

“Alright then. Tonight, you can send someone over. For now, I want to chat with Bebe for a time.” Beirut laughed as he looked at Bebe, rubbing Bebe’s head.

Bebe just cocked his head sideways, immediately dodging.

“Lord Prefect!” Suddenly, a clear voice rang out. “There’s something I want to beg of you, Lord Prefect.”

“Little Sis.” Gislason couldn’t help but hurriedly send through divine sense, “Let’s hurry up and leave.” Clearly, upon seeing that Beirut had already

asked them to leave, it would be imprudent for them to stay.

Beirut couldn't help but frown, dissatisfied. He turned to look, and he saw that the speaker was the Grand Elder of the Azure Dragon clan. The Grand Elder clan said solemnly, "Lord Prefect, this time, quite a few others aside from Linley's wife had also fainted, and their situation is the same as hers! I wonder, Lord Prefect, if you would be willing to help…"

"Hmph!" Beirut let out a cold snort. His thick black eyebrows suddenly turned stiff, and his gaze turned cold as he looked at her.

"Little Sis!" Gislason barked as well.

"Laughable!"

Beirut's gaze drilled down towards the Grand Elder. "Saving a person uses up Sovereign's Might! Uses up my own energy! It is easy for you to say… and what's more, what do the lives of your people have to do with me? By your line of reasoning…whenever anyone in the entire Infernal Realm is wounded or in danger, I, Beirut, should appear and rescue them!"

Seeing Beirut angered, the clan leaders and Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were shocked.

Good heavens. The only reason why their Four Divine Beasts clan was able to survive here within the Skyrite Mountains was all because of Beirut. If Beirut simply stopped helping them, the entire Four Divine Beasts clan, under the combined attacks of their enemies, would be finished.

Faced with Beirut's anger, the Grand Elder didn't dare to say another word either.

"Lord Prefect, I apologize. My little sister is just worried about her clansmen." Gislason said apologetically, and then immediately led everyone away.

"Beirut, when you lost your temper, you frightened that female Elder so

much, she didn't dare say another word. Jeeze, Beirut. You could've just said no. Why lose your temper?" Phusro laughed. Beirut's face returned to its normal, pleasant smiling expression as well.

"Phusro, there's no need to receive outsiders like them with a smile at all times. Otherwise, some people will go farther and farther out of bounds." Beirut said with a calm laugh

Beirut wasn't the soft-hearted type. In the battles in the Yulan continent, no matter how many people died, Beirut hadn't cared at all. As he saw it, life and death were both part of the laws of nature.

Each person would eventually die.

Deities would theoretically have an unlimited lifespan, true. But in the entire Infernal Realm, countless Deities were dying in battle each day. If they didn't have a connection to him, why would he care about them and why would he intervene?

"Grandpa, let's go back." Bebe urged.

Beirut began to laugh. "Right. We're disturbing Linley and his wife."

"Lord Beirut, thank you, truly." Linley held Delia's hand as he spoke words of gratitude towards Beirut. Beirut had saved Delia this time, yet there was nothing Linley could do to repay this.

"Haha…." Beirut began to laugh. "Alright. I won't disturb you two, husband and wife, any further."

Beirut immediately led Phusro and Bebe away, and in the entire room, only Linley and Delia remained.

Within the room.

Linley began to slowly explained what had happened in recent days to Delia. Delia just sat there listening. Although Linley was very calm when

speaking, Delia could sense from Linley's words how much terror and despair Linley had felt, as well as the excitement he had felt when hope had been birthed from despair.

"Delia, if Lord Beirut hadn't saved you this time…I really cannot even begin to imagine what the future would be like, after you died." Linley sighed emotionally. "Training? Training for what? Even if I become powerful, what's the point? Without you, no matter how powerful I am, what's the point?"

Delia's death, to Linley, would have caused his future to fade to utter black.

He wouldn't have any hopes!

He wouldn't have any motivation!

Hearing his words, Delia's eyes glistened with moistness. She immediately stretched her arms out, hugging Linley. She hurriedly said, "Linley, say no more. I'm already healed now. I'm fine!"

"Right. You are fine!"

Linley stroked Delia's face and nodded. "Delia, I have never been so excited, so happy, so energetic before! When I saw you open your eyes, when I saw the colors in your eyes…I felt as though my entire body was filled with life!"

"For your sake, for our child's sake, I will continue to strive hard to continuously improve myself, to become powerful!" Linley looked at Delia. "With you by my side, I fear nothing!"

The tears began to roll down Delia's face as she listened, but her face was covered with a smile of contentment and bliss.

"Delia!" Linley stretched his hand out, and a drop of water-type Sovereign's Might appeared. "This is water-type Sovereign's Might. This time, if I had given you a drop of Sovereign's Might early on, you wouldn't have been in

any danger. Fortunately, you are fine now, but I don't want this sort of event to occur again. Take this drop of Sovereign's Might!"

"Linley, no…" Delia, upon seeing the Sovereign's Might, immediately refused.

"Take it!"

Linley said solemnly, "Delia, after this event, I now understand that there will be times when I cannot protect you. By holding a drop of Sovereign's Might, at a critical point in time, you will be able to preserve your own life. This Sovereign's Might is highly effective in both soul defense and material defense. Delia, don't refuse!"

Delia looked at Linley. She knew him very well and understood his temper.

"Fine. I'll take it." Delia didn't refuse any further.

Only now did a smile appear again on Linley's face. He stretched his arm out, pulling Delia closer, and she nestled into his embrace. "After having lost something, one values it all the more. I've tasted loss once. I don't want to taste it again!"

"You won't, you won't." A smile was on Delia's face.

"Right."

Linley said in acknowledgement. For a moment, both fell silent.

And just like that, the two leaned against each other, sensing each other's breathing, enjoying that warmth, that peace…

That very night. The Skyrite Mountains. The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan, a large group of Elders, and even many Elders who had lost their most powerful bodies were gathered together for a banquet. After all, the guest of honor this time was the savior of their Four Divine Beasts clan, the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture!

When they knew of the relationship between Beirut, Bebe, and Linley, all of them were shocked.

Exchanging toasts and celebrating joyously, everyone drank together happily.

“Elder Linley!” Gislason, seated on the throne at the front of the hall, said in a loud voice, “This time, you battled against eight Elders. Although you used up a drop of Sovereign’s Might, you also killed fully five of the enemy Seven Star Fiends.”

Linley couldn’t help but look towards him..

“I know that you specialize in the Laws of the Earth. This time, I had a meeting with the Patriarch of the Black Tortoise clan. Killing five enemy Elders is a major accomplishment. The clan thus bestows upon you two drops of Sovereign’s Might; one drop of water-type Sovereign’s Might, and one drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might.” Gislason laughed as he spoke.

“Linley, by using this earth-type Sovereign’s Might with your Gravitational Space technique, the power will be much greater.” A deep, rumbling voice rang out. It was the Black Tortoise Patriarch

Linley hurriedly stood up, moving to the center of the hall.

At the same time, Sovereign’s Might floated out from the hands of Gislason as well as the Black Tortoise Patriarch. One was a blue drop of water, while the other was an earthen yellow liquid. Linley immediately accepted them, storing them into his Coiling Dragon ring.

“Thank you, Patriarchs.” Linley bowed.

“After having rendered merits, one must be rewarded. This is the rule of the clan.” Gislason laughed. “Alright. Take your seat again. Everyone, keep drinking.”

Phusro and Beirut, also seated in the front of the main hall, exchanged glances, then laughed.

Below them, however, the unassuming Elder Forhan felt unhappiness in his heart.

“Father.” Emanuel sent through divine sense.

This was a major celebratory event, and so many people had come. The clan still held in great esteem those warriors who had lost their most powerful divine clones in battle and who in terms of power were no longer worth of being called ‘Elders’. These people still had a fairly high status within the clan, and they were invited to attend this banquet as well. Emanuel was one of them.

“The Patriarch seems to be too biased.” Emanuel sent through divine sense. “According to the rules of the clan, if an Elder uses up a drop of Sovereign’s Might in battle, generally speaking, he’ll just receive another one in compensation. Even if the Elder rendered a significant amount of merit, at most he’ll just receive some words of praise. After all, the clan no longer has much Sovereign’s Might left.”

“Hmph.” Forhan replied through divine sense. “It’s all because of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture. Otherwise, how could they give Linley two drops of Soveriegn’s Might? I really don’t know how Linley has such bullshit luck. He actually even has a relationship with the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture!”

Forhan was extremely unhappy.

Linley being in possession of the Azure Dragon ring was something which Forhan was already rather unhappy about. And now, it seemed as though Linley’s relationship with the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was incredibly strong as well. Naturally, Forhan was smoldering. But although he was angry, he didn’t dare show it on his face.

On his face, he was still smiling. He even raised his glass in a toast. “Elder

Linley, truest congratulations. Come, cheers!”

Linley was seated on the left seat of honor, fairly close to Beirut, who was seated in the front of the hall. Beirut looked towards Linley, then said through divine sense, “Linley, I heard that on the way back, you suffered a joint attack from eight enemy Elders?”

“Right.” Linley was puzzled by this as well. He sent back through divine sense, “This is indeed fishy. First of all, I changed my appearance. Second of all, as soon as I exited the city, they attacked en masse. And third, the enemy sent out eight Elders! They wouldn’t do that without complete certainty.”

Beirut was momentarily silent, then sent back through divine sense, “Phusro discussed this with me as well. I’ve carefully analyzed the situation, and I suspect…that someone within the clan probably leaked out your information.”

Linley was stunned.

“Linley, tell me, is there anyone you suspect?” Beirut sent mentally.

Linley naturally had someone he suspected.

“Lord Beirut, I have no proof at all. And there’s no way to be absolutely sure if there is even a traitor involved at all! Empty suspicions are useless to voice.” Linley sent.

“Don’t worry about if it is ‘useless’ or not. Just tell me, is there someone you suspect! Tell me who the person you suspect is!” Beirut said.

Linley hesitated, then said, “There is a person. That time, when I mounted on my metallic lifeform and left, he saw me leave as well. Within the clan, the only people I have a conflict with is him and his son.”

“Who is it?” Beirut asked.

“Forhan!” Linley finally said the name.

“Which one is he? Is he within the hall?” Beirut asked.

“Yes.” Linley replied. “He’s the fifth one on the row in front of us.”

Beirut followed Linley’s gesture. Turning his head, he saw that Forhan was currently exchanging toasts with another Elder while saying, “The clan’s situation is growing tougher and tougher. Last time, when I encountered an enemy Elder, I was nearly finished.”

“Oh, the one with gold hair?” Beirut sent back through divine sense and asked.

Linley replied, “That’s the one!”

Chapter 53 – Putting on a Performance

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 53, Putting on a Performance

“What exactly is Lord Beirut going to do?” Linley was puzzled. Whether or not the clan had a traitor and whether or not Forhan was that traitor…there was no evidence for it. Why was Lord Beirut asking so many questions?

Just as Linley was puzzled, Beirut, seated at the front of the hall, suddenly slammed his cup against the long table in front of him. That ear-piercing sound couldn’t help but cause the four clan leaders and Phusro to all look towards him.

“Hmph!” Beirut let out a cold snort.

Instantly, the entire main hall went silent. Everyone understood that this Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture seemed to be rather upset about something. It didn’t matter if they offended others, but they couldn’t offend this person who was supporting their clan. Gislason let out two chuckles, then said, “Lord Prefect, is something amiss?”

Beirut glanced sideways at him, and then looked at the surrounding people, his gaze clear and fierce.

“Linley’s group was assaulted by eight enemy Elders. He killed several of them; he rendered merits, and so he was rewarded. I must praise your clan for the way you handled this part…but, can it be that your Four Divine Beasts clan isn’t preparing to investigate how this matter of a simultaneous attack by eight Elders came about?!”

Beirut let out a cold snort. “From what I know, when these eight enemy Elders attacked, three of them used Sovereign’s Might! Clearly, they wanted Linley dead! And the shockwaves of battle even impacted my grandson, Bebe. Fortunately, I had forged a soul-protecting divine artifact for him long ago, which is why he was able to resist those green spots of

light. Otherwise, he would have ended up just like Delia!"

"This was such a major affair, but your clan isn't investigating it? Hmph!" Beirut let out an angry snort, then didn't say anything further.

After these words came out, all of the Elders in the hall began to secretly speak to each other through divine sense. Even the four clan leaders seated at the front of the hall began to speak amongst themselves through divine sense. As they saw it…

The real reason why Beirut was so angry was probably because Bebe was impacted as well.

Although Bebe wasn't harmed, Beirut was clearly upset by this affair. The four clan leaders could completely understand this.

"Lord Prefect." The Vermillion Bird Matriarch immediately said apologetically, "We, too, feel that there must have been a plot behind the attack of the eight Elders. Otherwise, how could the eight Elders have suddenly appeared as soon as Linley's group left Meer City? But…there's no way to investigate!"

"No way to investigate?" Beirut said calmly. "It's simple. Your clan has a traitor."

"Traitor!"

This word caused the entire hall to descend into a cacophony of noise.

Forhan was so shocked that even the hair on his body stood up. His heart clenched tightly…but then he immediately calmed down. "It's fine. It's definitely fine. Aside from myself, there's no one at all who knows that I notified the eight clans. If I don't admit it, who would know? Even if Linley suspects me, does he have proof?"

Forhan's thoughts immediately firmed and coalesced around one thing – No matter what, he wasn't that traitor!

But as the saying went, a thief would always be nervous. Forhan knew that no one else knew, but he still felt rather tense.

“Father, do you think there really is a traitor?” Emanuel asked Forhan through divine sense as well.

“Possibly.” Forhan put on a pretense of calm as he sent back through divine sense. “Perhaps there is a traitor. However, it’s also possible that the eight great clans truly do have a way to clearly locate Linley’s whereabouts.”

The main hall was in a state of chaos. The Elders were all stunned.

As for Linley, he was in a state of shock as well. “Lord Beirut is being perhaps a bit too…” He didn’t know what he should say. He didn’t have any proof at all, but Beirut had actually acted in such a manner. Still, as Linley saw it, Beirut’s behavior had always been different from that of normal people.

“Linley, is there really a traitor?” Delia, by Linley’s side, asked through divine sense.

“There probably is.” Linley replied.

“Who? That Forhan?” Delia glanced at Forhan as well. When thinking of possible traitors, the first person that came to mind for Delia was Forhan as well.

“If there really is a traitor, he is almost certainly the person.” Linley replied.

Only now did Gislason, seated in the front of the hall, say hurriedly in response, “Lord Prefect, you say there is a traitor. Can it be that you have proof?”

“Of course I do!” Beirut laughed calmly.

Immediately, chaos erupted once more in the hall. Even Linley was

stunned.

“He has proof?” Even Linley himself didn’t know what proof there was.

“Proof?” Forhan, seated below, was shocked. “Impossible. Absolutely impossible. My divine clone sent the message after changing its appearance. There’s definitely no one who knows about this situation.”

“What is the proof?” Gislason immediately said. “If there really is a traitor who has betrayed the clan…Lord Prefect, worry not. No matter who the person is, our Four Divine Beasts clan will destroy all of the person’s bodies, not leaving a single one behind!”

Gislason’s words were firm and resolute.

“Right, the person must be executed!” The White Tiger Patriarch also said fiercely.

“Lord Prefect, what’s the evidence?” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said. Everyone in the hall turned to look at Beirut, while Linley and Forhan stared at Beirut as well. They all were wondering…

What the proof was!

“I can’t say, I can’t say!” Beirut laughed calmly.

Everyone was stunned.

“Lord Prefect, what are you…” Gislason and the others were stunned, and Linley frowned in bewilderment as well.

Beirut laughed calmly, “There’s no point to me saying it. Only two individuals know about this. One is myself! The other is an almighty Sovereign! Do you think that a Sovereign will come bear witness about a matter like this? As for the details…it involves some of the secrets of the Sovereign. I dare not reveal them.”

Everyone was stupefied.

Linley was dazed as well. How did a Sovereign get involved in this?

“Lord Prefect, are you saying that you are unable to provide any proof?” The voice of the Grand Elder rang out in the hall.

“Right. I am unable to provide any proof.” Beirut nodded.

The Grand Elder said respectfully, “Lord Prefect, if you don’t provide any proof, then there’s no way this matter can be addressed. It’s uncertain as to whether or not there is a traitor! In a situation where there is no proof, it is best not to cause everyone to worry.”

“Laughable!”

Beirut stared at the Grand Elder. “What, can it be that you think I am lying?”

The Grand Elder was speechless.

“Little Sis.” Gislason hurriedly shouted at her through divine sense, “This Lord Prefect clearly wants to pursue this matter to the end. Let him pursue it if he wishes to. If he wants to find a traitor, in the end, he’ll still have to provide us with evidence that we find compelling. If he just randomly points at someone, our Four Divine Beasts clan won’t accept it either! It is best not to irritate him just yet.”

Gislason asked solemnly, “Lord Prefect, dare I ask, do you know who the traitor is?”

Immediately, the entire hall fell silent.

Linley listened carefully as well. Beirut laughed calmly, then stretched out his right hand, pointing down at Forhan, seated in front of them. “The traitor of your Four Divine Beasts clan is him! Forhan!!!”

“Forhan!!!” When Beirut barked out this name, it echoed throughout the hall, and Forhan’s face immediately became exceedingly unsightly to look at.

Linley felt astonished and surprised. He immediately asked through divine sense, “Lord Beirut, what are you…?”

“Don’t worry about it. I have my own plans. All you need to do is watch.” Beirut replied through divine sense.

All of the Elders within the hall turned to look at Forhan, who immediately rose to his feet, a look of anger on his face. In a sonorous voice, he said, “Lord Prefect, I, Forhan, am a third generation member of the clan. In the past ten thousand years, I have killed two enemy Seven Star Fiends! My son lost his most powerful divine clone while battling the enemy as well. And you say I am a traitor? Haha…”

Forhan actually began to laugh loudly, from his ‘grief and rage’. The anger and grief within that laugh caused many of the Elders present to believe Forhan.

Clearly, this Beirut hadn’t been able to provide any real evidence at all, and yet he pointed to Forhan as being the traitor. If it was a junior member of the clan, or a member who had joined the clan just recently, the Elders might believe it.

But this was Forhan. The son of the Grand Elder!

They didn’t believe Forhan would betray the clan!

“Lord Prefect.” The Grand Elder stood up, those eyes of hers behind that silver mask radiating an angry look. In a fierce voice, she said, “This Forhan is my son. Over the course of countless years, I have always understood him very well! I dare to guarantee that he definitely is not a traitor! And he can’t possibly be the traitor!”

A calm smile was still on Beirut’s face.

“Oh, you don’t admit it?” Beirut looked sideways towards Forhan.

“Forhan, you think that since you acted stealthily and secretly, as long as you don’t admit it, no one would find out, right?” Beirut laughed calmly. “But you forgot something. There is no way for you to notice when a Sovereign is paying attention to you!”

Forhan’s heart trembled. “Can it be that a Sovereign was aware of everything I did? Impossible, impossible! How could there be such a coincidence, that a Sovereign just so happened to notice what I was doing?” Forhan repeatedly tried to convince himself.

But on the surface, Forhan still had his head proudly raised, and he said firmly, “Lord Prefect, I, Forhan, dare to proclaim that I definitely have never betrayed the clan. Never!”

“I won’t waste words.” Beirut looked towards him. “You believe you are innocent, right??”

Forhan raised his head proudly, then nodded. “Of course!”

Beirut nodded slightly. “Very well, then. If you truly are innocent, then don’t resist. I will use a hypnotic technique against you. While hypnotized, you will tell the truth to everyone.”

Linley, by now, understood what Beirut intended. “Forhan is a Seven Star Fiend, after all, and even amongst the Elders, he is ranked amongst the most powerful. And he is also a member of the Azure Dragon clan, with that innate azure glow protecting his soul. Most likely even Lord Beirut isn’t capable of hypnotizing him against his will.”

Hypnotizing a Seven Star Fiend was very hard.

A Seven Star Fiend who also had, as an innate ability, that azure light protecting his soul…the number of people in the Infernal Realm capable of hypnotizing him could probably be counted on one hand.

“Hypnotize?” Forhan said angrily. “Lord Prefect, I am no traitor! You even want me to undergo ‘hypnotism’. Although you are a lofty and mighty figure, Lord Prefect, I dare say that you are going too far in abusing others!”

“Impudence!” Gislason barked.

Forhan took a large step forward.

“Bang!” He fell to his knees.

“Patriarch!” Forhan said furiously. “Given the situation, there’s nothing I have to say for myself. The Lord Prefect sullying me is one thing, but he even wants to hypnotize me and wants me not to resist. I, Forhan, am an Elder of the mighty Four Divine Beasts clan! I am also a Seven Star Fiend! I won’t accept an insult like this!”

Forhan raised his head proudly. “Patriarch, if you are afraid of the power and authority of the Lord Prefect, then today, I, Forhan, will grant the Lord Prefect his wish and accept death! The Lord Prefect can do as he pleases and execute me if he wishes! But you, Beirut…even though you are the Lord Prefect, even though you have shown great benevolence to the clan, I refuse to allow you to insult me any further! Even if you kill me, I won’t let you sully me!”

Forhan closed his eyes. “If you want to kill me, then do so!”

Immediately, the Elders in the hall all began to speak through divine sense.

“Forhan, just accept the hypnotism. When the time comes, the Lord Prefect will naturally know that you are innocent.” Gislason said.

“I’ve already suffered enough insults. To suffer hypnotism without resisting?” Forhan’s tears began to fall down, and he said in a high-pitched voice, “Patriarch…when the ancestor was alive, who would have dared to treat an Elder of our clan in such a way?”

These words struck right at the hearts of quite a few of the Elders who were present.

When the ancestors had been alive, the Four Divine Beasts clan wouldn't have even held the Asuras of the Infernal Realm in much regard.

Beirut laughed.

"Haha!"

Beirut's laughter echoed in the main hall, and he stood up and walked downwards.

"If you want to kill me, then kill me." Forhan shut his eyes, kneeling there, the picture of rage and grief.

"Lord Prefect." Gislason said hurriedly.

Beirut just walked out of the hall, laughing calmly. "Kid, your acting abilities aren't bad. Fine. Today, I won't force you to die. You say that I sully your reputation? Then I will permit you to live a few more months… and in a few more months, I'll see what else you have to say for yourself!"

After finishing his words, Beirut, with a swirl of his cloak, exited.

"I, Forhan, am not a traitor. Several months from now, I still won't be a traitor!" Forhan knelt there, but his head was held high.

Chapter 54, Nowhere to Run

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 54, Nowhere to Run

Beirut's sudden departure caused the atmosphere at the banquet to become rather awkward. This celebratory banquet thus ended very early. Gislason and the other clan leaders bade farewell to Phusro, Bebe, and Linley, and then Linley's group left as well.

Most of the Elders were gone now, while Forhan still stood there in the main hall.

"Forhan." A cold, fierce voice.

Forhan raised his head. The Grand Elder was walking towards him, and she stared at him with a clear gaze. Through divine sense, she asked, "Forhan, I ask you, did those eight enemy Elders go kill Linley because of you?"

"No!" Forhan didn't hesitate at all. "Mother, I definitely am not a traitor! Mother, you must believe me!"

The Grand Elder stared at him, but since Forhan had decided to put on an act, how could he let her see anything amiss?

The Grand Elder seemed to relax slightly. In a slightly softer voice, she said, "Fine. I believe you. As long as you aren't the traitor, the clan won't permit any outsiders to kill you." After speaking, the Grand Elder left as well.

Within that cold and gloomy underground hall.

Forhan was there by himself. "Judging from Beirut's words, it seems as though he really is certain that I am the traitor? Can it be that a Sovereign truly was watching? But although Sovereign's are high and mighty, they have their own personalities and human characteristic. They'll often wander

about as well. Perhaps one really did find out."

Forhan was currently pondering nonstop.

"Hmph. Who cares if a Sovereign found out or not. How could a mighty Sovereign intervene personally in a minor matter like this?" Forhan made up his mind. "As long as I confidently assert that I am not a traitor, then that means I am not!"

Forhan only had to do one thing; deny it, no matter what!

Within that gorge in the Skyrite Mountains. Beirut hadn't gone to live in the place which the Four Divine Beasts clan had arranged, instead electing to live in the gorge, with Linley and Bebe as his neighbors.

Within Linley's living room. Linley, Bebe, Phusro, Beirut were present and seated, while Delia was outside with Wade.

"Grandpa, since you and the Sovereign already know everything and know that Forhan is the traitor, just go ahead and kill him." Bebe snorted. "I've never liked that Forhan."

Linley laughed, "Bebe, deep within the hearts and minds of the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan is a certain pride. If Forhan is killed without any evidence of his guilt, although the clan leaders and Elders might not immediately have a falling out with Beirut over this, they will remember it and harbor hatred in their hearts."

"Right." Beirut nodded and laughed. "Don't be fooled by how respectful those four clan leaders act towards me. They are, after all, the sons and daughter of four Sovereigns. In their hearts, they are still quite prideful. I can't go too far."

Linley felt rather grateful towards Beirut.

Actually, why would Beirut care about if the Four Divine Beasts clan hated him or not? The reason Beirut was acting in this manner was because he

was worried that Linley would be ostracized afterwards, and that his life in the clan would become miserable.

“Lord Beirut, you said that in a few months, you would make it so that Forhan would have nothing more to say for himself. What’s the plan?” Linley immediately asked.

“Right, Grandpa, what is your plan?”

“Haha…” Beirut laughed.

Phusro laughed as well. “Bebe, have you forgotten that a year ago, you met your grandmother in Meer City? What did you acquire on that visit?”

“The soul slice fragment. What about it?” Bebe said, puzzled.

Beirut laughed, “That soul slice fragment was delivered by an old friend of mine. I had your grandmother give it to you because I was busy accompanying my friend, so I didn’t have time to go find you.”

“That Forhan is a descendant of the Azure Dragon clan. With that innate ability protecting him, I’m unable to forcibly hypnotize him. However, that old friend of mine can.” Beirut was completely confident.

A supreme expert capable of making soul slice fragments?

“If this person is willing to help.” Linley rejoiced in his heart. “There’s no way Forhan will be able to escape!”

“This time, for Delia’s sake, I had to hurry over here. I was worried that my old friend might have left, but just now, I managed to reach him. That friend of mine is still in Indigo Prefecture. He’ll arrive here in a few months.” Beirut laughed calmly.

“Grandpa, are you sure about this?” Bebe said, rather worried. “Forhan has the protection of his innate ability.”

“Absolutely sure!” Beirut said.

Hearing this, Linley felt jubilant, but at the same time, he sighed to himself: “The friends which a supreme expert like Lord Beirut makes…are all supreme experts as well. Even someone like Forhan, protected by his innate ability, will still be mesmerized. What an amazing level of accomplishment does one have to be at, to be so skilled with regards to the soul?”

They waited leisurely, but as the days passed, the news that the Lord Prefect had accused Forhan of being a traitor quickly spread throughout the entire Skyrite Mountains. Quite a few clansmen were secretly furious, feeling the Lord Prefect to be abusing his power.

In the blink of an eye, several months passed. On this day, Linley and Delia were currently playing with little Wade in front of their house.

Wade was already able to walk wobblingly.

While supporting her son, Delia suddenly raised her head. “Linley, news about that affair from last time has spread quite far. Even the people in our valley know about it. Just now, when I was taking Wade out for a walk, I heard clansmen from the other branches in our valley say that the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture was sullying Elder Forhan. But of course, there were others who said that the reason Forhan refused to accept the hypnotism was due to fear borne out of guilt…still, the majority seem to support Forhan.”

“Don’t worry about it. When that expert comes, all shall be made clear.” Linley said, then half-knelt. “Wade, you can do it. Take a few more steps. Come to your father.”

“Uh…uh…”

Wade beamed, his dimply mouth curving upwards as he tottered forwards with small steps. Finally, he made it to Linley’s arms.

“Father.” Wade said sweetly.

“Come, give me a kiss.” Linley said dotingly.

While holding his son, Linley glanced sideways at Delia. Just a few months ago, he had been lost amidst his despair. But now, everything had changed. All because of Beirut. “I will never, ever forget the kindness he has shown me.”

Just as Linley’s little three-person household was in the midst of their joy…

“Beirut!” A clear voice echoed in the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

“Eh?” Linley and Delia all raised their heads, surprised.

Beirut, Phusro, and Bebe immediately flew out, and Beirut laughed towards Linley, “Linley, that good friend of mine is here. Let’s go. It is time for Forhan’s true face to be revealed.”

Linley and Delia, carrying their son, followed them out of the great gorge.

In the air above the Skyrite Mountains. A single, solitary figure hovered there in mid-air, his entire body covered with a bluish-black robe. His wavy, bluish-black hair was unbound, and his thick black eyebrows were shaped like two swords.

He just stood there, standing in the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

Not a single one of the patrolling warriors dared to go close to him. Gislason, leading a number of Elders, hurried over.

“Patriarch, this strange fellow flew there, shouted ‘Beirut’, then stood there without moving. We wanted to shoo him off…but all of our brothers who approached him lost their consciousness and plummeted to the ground. Only after landing did they regain consciousness.” The captain of the patrolling warriors hurriedly reported.

Gislason, hearing this, couldn’t help but frown.

Gislason immediately flew over and said sonorously, “I am Patriarch Gislason of the Azure Dragon clan. Might I ask who you are?”

Only now did this strange fellow open his eyes, glancing sideways as Gislason approached. Gislason couldn’t but feel his heart tremble. He actually had the feeling as though within the strange man’s eyes were a pair of illusory serpents.

“Gislason?” The strange man said calmly. “I’m waiting for Beirut.”

Gislason frowned. Although the person in front of him was very powerful, Gislason wasn’t afraid of him…‘soul defense’ was Gislason’s strong point. After all, he had a perfect, undamaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

“Then please come to my place to rest while we await the Lord Prefect.” Gislason laughed.

“No need.” The strange man said.

“Haha…Dunnington [Dan’ning’dun], you were rather slow.” A loud laugh rang out, and Beirut’s form appeared in the distance. In but a moment, he arrived. As for Linley and Bebe, they flew over from behind as well.

“Beirut.” The strange fellow began to laugh, immediately going to greet him.

Linley and Delia flew over as well. They couldn’t help but look carefully at this person. But as Linley looked at him…he felt as though the wavy hair of this strange person had transformed into countless tiny serpents.

“Eh?” Linley was shocked. “What a strange feeling.”

“Lord Prefect, this is Dunnington? The legendary ‘Dunnington’ of the Chaotic Sea?” Gislason said disbelievingly.

The Infernal Realm had quite a few legendary figures, which even the likes

of Gislason had only heard of, not met. As for this Dunnington, in the Infernal Realm, he was a legendary figure on the same level as Beirut, or perhaps who had even surpassed Beirut!

“Right.” Beirut laughed. “This friend of mine is the number one expert of the Chaotic Sea, aside from the Chaotic Sea Sovereign. Dunnington!”

The Infernal Realm was divided into five continents and two seas. The ‘Chaotic Sea’ was the largest region, with the most experts. Dunnington’s name, for countless years now, had reverberated in the Infernal Realm.

Dunnington was strongest in the Edicts of Death.

Each of the Seven Elemental Laws all had their own specialties and mysteries, which were all divided up clearly and thus could be fused clearly. But the Four Edicts were different. The Four Edicts didn’t have specific ‘profound mysteries’; as to whether or not a person had mastered enough of them to become a God or a Highgod, the natural Laws themselves would judge.

Nobody could be certain as to whether or not Dunnington had reached the stage of being a Paragon or not.

But…

If one was to discuss who, in the entire Infernal Realm, had the most impressive accomplishments with regards to the soul, the vast majority would say the name, ‘Dunnington’. A freakishly, monstrously powerful figure.

In describing Beirut’s power, one could use the phrase ‘sudden rise to prominence’ in describing the manner in which he proved his power through blood-soaked battle.

But the power of Dunnington…had been publicly acknowledged through countless years through countless trials.

Many people believed that Dunnington had already reached the utter pinnacle of power in the Edicts of Death and had become a Paragon. But of course, Dunnington himself wouldn't tell anyone…and there was no way for others to be completely certain.

"Gislason, go arrange for Forhan to be found and brought here." Beirut laughed.

Gislason already could guess what was going on, but he still instructed that Forhan be brought over.

Beirut and Dunnington flew together, side by side, while Gislason, Phusro, Linley, Bebe, and Delia followed from behind.

"Phusro, this Dunnington, the number one figure of the Chaotic Sea aside from the Sovereign…he is very strong?" Linley asked through divine sense. Linley simply hadn't trained for long enough; he didn't know anything about some of the legendary figures of the Infernal Realm.

"Very strong? Are you joking?" Phusro sent back through divine sense. "This Dunnington is probably a Highgod Paragon. You tell me, is he strong?"

Linley was badly startled. He couldn't help but take a closer look at Dunnington. While flying, Dunnington's long, wavy, bluish-black hair billowed casually in the wind, but as it did, it gave off a very strange impression, as though each strand of hair had turned into a long serpent, or arrows of ice…

As he stared at Dunnington, Linley felt his head grow dizzy.

"How terrifying." Linley was secretly shocked.

"Boss, I keep on having the feeling as though the robe which Dunnington is wearing is actually a strange monster of the deep sea. So strange." Bebe sent through divine sense. It wasn't just Linley who felt strange things when looking at Dunnington.

Within the main hall of Patriarch Gislason's residence. Everyone sat down. Linley raised his head, looking towards the outside. The Grand Elder was walking in. "Elder Brother, which person was the one who had been loudly shouting for the Lord Prefect?"

Gislason rose to his feet, introducing, "Little Sis, this gentleman is Mr. Dunnington of the Chaotic Sea."

The Grand Elder was shocked.

"Mr. Dunnington." The Grand Elder said in a friendly manner. They addressed Beirut as 'Lord Prefect', because they felt grateful towards him for his kindness. As for others, even if they were as powerful as Beirut, they would at most address others as 'Mr.'.

As soon as the Grand Elder sat down, footsteps rang out from outside as well.

"Haha, they finally came." Beirut laughed.

"Which one is it?" Dunnington spoke out calmly.

"The one with the yellow hair." Beirut said. Forhan and several other Elders walked in together. When Forhan entered the main hall and saw Beirut, the look on his face turned rather ugly.

"Oh?" Dunnington said.

Very suddenly…

Twin illusory blurs shot out from Dunnington's eyes, which suddenly surrounded and enveloped Forhan. Forhan wasn't able to react at all, and Linley's eyes couldn't help but light up. "Dunnington's actions appeared simple, but there definitely must have been a struggle within Forhan's mind."

Forhan's facial muscles twitched slightly, but then he calmed down.

"All done." Dunnington laughed, turning his gaze towards Beirut. "The innate ability of this Azure Dragon clan really is formidable. I had to use some real power."

Beirut laughed back. "Stop showing off and help me interrogate him."

"What are you doing?" The Grand Elder said frantically.

"Just hypnotism." Beirut laughed calmly. "You can see for yourselves if he is innocent or not"

Gislason gave the Grand Elder a meaningful look. Since the hypnotism had already been used, then they might as well let this thing come to a conclusion. "Hmph." The Grand Elder let out a low snort, but in the end, still sat down. "I want to see what you'll have to say for yourself after it is proven that my son is no traitor."

"That's Beirut's responsibility, not mine." A hint of a smile appeared on Dunnington's face.

"Forhan, tell me, were you the one who leaked information about Linley's whereabouts to the eight great clans, resulting in the eight Elders attacking Linley?" Dunnington said calmly.

Immediately, everyone in the hall, including Gislason, the Grand Elder, the various other Elders, and Linley all looked nervously towards Forhan. Linley stared at the dazed Forhan. "If it wasn't him, this will be very awkward."

A calm look was on Forhan's face, and his eyes were lifeless. He said mechanically, "Yes!"

"Yes!"

The voice echoed in the hall. Instantly, everyone fell silent. The Grand

Elder wore her customary silver mask, and there was no way to see the look on her face…but disbelief could be seen filling her eyes.

“Did you hear that?” Beirut laughed as he looked towards the Grand Elder and Gislason.

“How is that possible?” The Elders in the hall were all stunned.

“Ask him….ask him why!” The Grand Elder’s entire body was trembling. The Grand Elder didn’t want to believe it. She truly didn’t understand… why had her son come to this decision? When a person was hypnotized, they wouldn’t tell any lies. This was an ironclad rule.

Dunnington continued, “Why did you leak the information and want Linley to be killed?”

“He deserves to die!”

Forhan said mechanically, “He is a junior descendant of the clan. By what right does he hold the Azure Dragon ring, the Sovereign artifact of our ancestor!?”

“Sovereign artifact?” Dunnington couldn’t help but look at Linley with surprise. The other Elders all were looking towards Linley in surprise as well.

Forhan continued, “Acquiring the Sovereign artifact was one thing, but my son lost his most powerful divine clone because of him. And he’s just a mere God…and yet he’s already so powerful. When he becomes a Highgod, his status in the clan will definitely be higher than mine. I, Forhan, look up at him and live beneath him, day in and day out? This sort of life is nothing but torture…and so he must die.”

“A God?” Quite a few Elders in the hall all looked towards Linley, astonished.

They didn’t know Linley was a God! They also didn’t know that Linley had

a Sovereign artifact.

“So that’s what this was all about. So that’s what this was all about.” The Grand Elder stood up, murmuring softly.

“Whoosh!”

The Grand Elder’s body suddenly appeared next to Forhan’s. With a vicious palm blow, she smashed down at Forhan’s head. With a ‘bang’ sound, Forhan’s head exploded, then two divine sparks fell out as well.

Linley sucked in a sudden breath. “The Grand Elder…”

The entire hall instantly fell silent. Even Beirut and Dunnington stared at the Grand Elder in shock.

“All the clones of those who betray the clan are to be put to death!” The Grand Elder said in a low voice. Her eyes turned moist…but in an instant, they dried out.

Chapter 55 – Beirut's Craftiness

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 55, Beirut's Craftiness

It had been Forhan who had leaked the information. This had already shocked quite a few people, but the sudden attack by the Grand Elder, who had personally executed Forhan…this caused the entire hall to fall completely, utterly silent.

"I didn't expect that it really was him!" A long, low sigh echoed in the main hall.

The speaker was Gislason. At this time, Linley was looking very carefully at the Grand Elder. "The Grand Elder actually straightforwardly executed her own son!" Linley was completely astonished.

"Elder Brother, Forhan has already been punished in accordance with the rules of the clan!" The Grand Elder said in a cold, calm voice. "This matter is concluded. I'll leave for now."

"Alright. You can go back and rest." Gislason understood that his little sister was feeling terrible right now.

"Wait a moment." A voice suddenly rang out.

The Grand Elder had already started to leave, but now she came to a halt, turning to stare at the seated Beirut. In a low voice, she said, "Lord Prefect, is there something else you need?" Although her voice was very calm and tranquil, Linley could sense the unbridled anger that was hidden within that calm!

Her son was already died, but Beirut still wouldn't give it a rest?

Linley couldn't help but look towards Beirut, who had a calm smile on his face. Beirut said, "According to the rules of the Four Divine Beasts clan,

those who betray the clan shall have all their bodies and clones destroyed, correct?"

"Correct." The Grand Elder raised her chin, looking towards Beirut. "Lord Prefect, why do you ask this?"

"I simply would like to ask, how many clones did Forhan have?" Beirut laughed calmly.

The Grand Elder was silent for a moment. The mask on her face prevented others from seeing her expression, but Linley could see that the Grand Elder's entire body was trembling slightly. Clearly, she was already utterly livid.

"Including his original body, three clones in total." The Grand Elder said in a low voice. "However, my son's original body was still at the Saint level. Thus, when I killed him, only two divine sparks came out. Lord Prefect, I wonder if my answer is satisfactory for you?"

"Little Sis." Gislason reproved softly.

The Grand Elder's words and attitude were clearly hostile.

Beirut let out a calm laugh. "It's fine. She just killed her own son with her own two hands. I can understand why she is in a poor mood. But…Gaia [Gai'ya], I hope that you will remember that your son was a traitor to the clan. He deserved his death!" Beirut spoke with no mercy or remorse.

The Grand Elder's body shuddered once.

"Alright." Beirut stood up. "This matter is at an end! Dunnington, Phusro, Linley, come, let's all go back."

Linley's group immediately rose.

As Beirut walked past the blood-stained corpse, he glanced sideways at it and said calmly, "Hurry up and dispose of the body. It is foul to behold!"

After speaking, Beirut left, while Dunnington and the others followed.

As Linley left, he glanced at the Grand Elder. The Grand Elder just waved her hand, and the corpse on the ground transformed into dust.

“Let’s go. Let’s go. I didn’t expect that Forhan was a traitor.” The Elders left, all disgusted. In but a few moments, the only ones remaining in the hall were Gislason and the Grand Elder.

The Grand Elder stood in the center of the hall, not moving at all.

“Little Sis, Forhan was a traitor to the clan. He deserved to die!” Gislason walked over, resting his hand on the Grand Elder’s shoulder. Once a person became known as a traitor to the clan, the other members of the Four Divine Beasts clan would hold that person in contempt. Even though Forhan was dead, nobody felt pity for him.

“I know.”

The Grand Elder’s voice was very low. “But I still feel miserable. Alright, Elder Brother. I’ll go back now.” The Grand Elder didn’t say anything else. She turned and immediately left. Her son had become a traitor to the clan and had been killed by her with her own two hands. Perhaps the person hurt the most by Forhan’s affair, in the entire Skyrite Mountains, was the Grand Elder.

Linley and the others flew down, entering their gorge.

“Haha, awesome, awesome!” Bebe laughed loudly. “I never liked that father-son duo. They lusted after the Boss’ Coiling Dragon ring from the very beginning, and I suspected them long ago regarding this event as well. So it really was them. An excellent death! An excellent death!”

Linley laughed as well.

He, too, had suspected Forhan, but he wasn’t sufficiently certain. Why, however, had Beirut dared to act in such a way? Wasn’t Lord Beirut

concerned…that Forhan might have been wrongly accused? How would Lord Beirut have resolved the situation, if that had been the case?

Linley was puzzled about this the entire time.

Beirut, Dunnington, Phusro, and Linley sat down within Linley's home, around that stone table. Linley hesitated for a moment, but in the end still voiced his puzzlement. "Lord Beirut, how could you be so certain that Forhan was the traitor?"

Beirut looked at him, a hint of satire in his gaze. "You were the one who told me that it was he!"

"I told you that I didn't have any evidence, just suspicions." Linley said hurriedly.

"Haha…" The nearby Dunnington seemed to have heard something enormously funny as he began to laugh loudly.

Linley couldn't help but feel lost. What was so funny? The nearby Bebe spoke out. "Grandpa, can it be that you really did learn about this early on from a Sovereign?"

"How could I have known about this early on?" Beirut laughed. "If I had known early on, I would have sent someone to warn Linley long ago. In truth, before today, I wasn't completely certain either."

Linley was stunned. Not completely certain?

"But Lord Beirut, you even invited Dunnington over, then did a forcible hypnotism. If Forhan hadn't been the traitor, wouldn't that have been embarrassing?" Linley immediately said.

"Haha…" Dunnington once again started to laugh loudly as he glanced sideways at Beirut. "Beirut, stop intentionally teasing Linley. I'll tell him!" Dunnington immediately began to explain the truth.

As for Linley, he listened intently.

“This Lord Beirut of yours wasn’t sure at all about whether or not Forhan was the traitor.” Dunnington laughed. “That’s why he invited me over. After I hypnotized Forhan, I first did a quick review of Forhan’s memories!”

Normally speaking, there was no way to review a Deity’s memories.

But once a person was hypnotized and completely unable to resist, a terrifying figure like Dunnington was able to easily review the memories of the hypnotized person.

“After reviewing his memories for just a moment, I knew!” Dunnington laughed. “That he was the traitor!”

“But what if he wasn’t?” Bebe immediately asked, and Linley looked at Dunnington as well, puzzled.

Dunnington laughed. “If he wasn’t? Easy!”

“Then I would have immediately allowed Forhan to regain consciousness.” Dunnington glanced sideways at Beirut. “Afterwards, I would say a few words of praise, along the lines of, ‘The Azure Dragon clan really does live up to its name. Even I am unable to forcibly hypnotize him.’”

Dunnington’s words completely flabbergasted Linley, Delia, and Bebe.

Indeed, when a person was hypnotized, they would lose their consciousness. If Dunnington was successful in his hypnosis attempt, he could let Forhan regain his consciousness after investigating Forhan’s memories. Even Forhan himself would only have felt that his head had gone dizzy for a moment. He wouldn’t feel much else.

“Formidable.” Linley sighed to himself.

If Forhan wasn’t the traitor, Dunnington could just deliberately lie and claim that he had been unable to hypnotize Forhan. The end result would

simply be that Gislason, the Grand Elder, and the others would feel that they had gained a great deal of face. After all…even a supreme expert such as Dunnington had been unable to forcibly hypnotize an Elder of the clan.

“This really was an excellent idea.” Bebe sighed in amazement as well.

“Excellent my ass.” Dunnington stroked his beard. “If Forhan truly hadn’t been the traitor, then I, Dunnington, would have suffered a blow to my reputation.”

“Stop worrying.” Beirut began to laugh. “Your reputation wouldn’t have suffered anything. Even if you publicly acknowledged that you were unable to hypnotize Forhan, others would just think that this innate ability of the Azure Dragon clan is incredible. They wouldn’t think that you are weak.”

Dunnington raised his eyebrows, laughing.

His power was something that was publicly acknowledged, after countless shocking, world-shaking battles. The number one expert of the Chaotic Sea, aside from the Sovereign. Who would dare belittle him?

“Linley, Bebe.” Beirut suddenly said. “After this affair, although the Grand Elder has nothing to say for herself, in her heart, she certainly is unhappy. I think you’d best leave the Skyrite Mountains and come to my place.”

Leave the Skyrite Mountains? Linley couldn’t help but turn and look at Delia.

“Excellent!” Bebe said jubilantly. “The Skyrite Mountains are rather boring. I haven’t even gone to Grandpa’s prefectural manor. I want to go and have some fun.”

“Delia, what do you think?” Linley looked towards Delia as he spoke to her through divine sense.

Delia looked at Wade, nestled in her arms, then replied through divine sense, “Wade is still young. It’s best not to make him tired by running all

over the place. When Wade can take care of himself, we can go out wandering again."

"Right." Linley nodded. After their discussion through divine sense, Linley had come to his decision.

"Boss, wanna go?" Bebe immediately asked through divine sense.

Linley laughed, then shook his head. "Lord Prefect, Bebe, I won't go for now. Wade is still young…and with Delia and myself living in the gorge with the other members of the Yulan branch, life is still fairly comfortable. As for what the Grand Elder will do…I won't go to Bloodbath Gorge. Even if she isn't happy, what can she do?"

"Fine, then I won't pressure you to come." Beirut laughed calmly and nodded.

"Alas." Bebe let out a sad sigh. "Boss, you accompany Delia and your son, then. I'll head there for now."

Linley laughed and nodded. He could tell that although Bebe had always stayed here with him, Bebe's heart wasn't here. "Most likely, Bebe is still missing Ninny." Linley sighed to himself. "However, Nisse is in the Jadefloat Continent."

That very night, Beirut, Dunnington, Phusro, and Bebe all left the Skyrite Mountains. The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan as well as a large group of other people came to send them off. Afterwards, Linley's life returned to a rare calm.

Linley spent the calm days accompanying his wife, his son, and training.

In the blink of an eye, three years passed.

Linley was currently in his room, reading a book, while his four divine clones were all in the midst of training.

“Father, the snow is so thick. Quick, come look!”

Suddenly, a bright, clear voice rang out in the room. Hearing it, Linley couldn’t help but grin as he stood up, walking towards the outside. A youthful, tender-looking lad was outside, grabbing fistfuls of snow, while Delia was there playing with him.

“Father, look. That’s the snowman that I made.” Wade, seeing Linley come out, immediately ran over while calling out to him.

As Wade ran over, he leapt off the ground, giving Linley a flying hug. “Father, the snowman is over there. Look.” Wade’s little face was tender and ruddy, so soft, it seemed as though one would be able to squeeze water out of his face with a pinch.

Linley liked Wade very much.

By contrast, when he had been in the Yulan continent, Linley had always been training when Sasha and Taylor had been growing up. He hadn’t spent any time with his children.

“Oh, Wade. This is the snowman you made?” Linley turned to look. The snowman was just a pair of snowballs, one large, one small, with a few gems serving as the eyes and nose. There were actually a total of three snowmen; two large ones and one smaller one.

“Right..” Wade nodded solemnly, as though this were a weighty matter. “Father, look. That one is you. That one is Mother. That one is me.”

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but start to laugh.

“Wade, stop hanging on to your father. Come down.” Delia said.

“Oh.” Wade obediently let go of Linley and fell down, but the ground was slick. As he landed, he slipped and fell, and Delia couldn’t help but immediately go help him back up.

Linley chuckled, then casually, leisurely began to walk forward on the snowy ground. With each step, he left a footprint behind. The snow had come to a halt long ago, but the snow on the ground was fairly thick. Everything within his field of vision had turned a silvery white color.

“Father, Father.” Wade’s call rang out from behind.

Linley turned to look, but as he did, he saw out of the corner of his eyes his own footprint. He had left a deep impression in the snow, but a hint of green grass was still forcing its way out from within it. In that instant, when Linley saw that hint of green…

And when he heard his son calling from afar, ‘Father, Father!’…

Linley’s mind suddenly swept through the various events of recent years, from Delia’s life-threatening crisis to his own despair, then his escape from that despair, followed by last few years of calm, blissful life.

“BOOM!”

A green spot of light suddenly sprang into existence within Linley’s mind, and in the next instant, it transformed into a green sun, illuminating his entire mind.

Chapter 56 – Vitality

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 56, Vitality

Delia was by Wade's side, but she noticed that Linley wasn't moving at all. Even his eyes had closed. "What's going on with Linley? Can it be…" Seeing Linley in such a state, Delia naturally would suspect…

That he had gained a sudden insight and broken through!

This was indeed the case. At this moment, Linley finally moved through the initial threshold of gaining a basic understanding of the Profound Mysteries of Vitality. Training in a profound mystery always had two major barriers; the first was the initial threshold, while the other was the bottleneck before mastery. Although there might be some difficulties encountered while training, as long as one persevered, one would be able to overcome them.

But that initial threshold as well as the bottleneck before mastery couldn't just be overcome through effort. It required talent, luck, and that instant of sudden enlightenment.

Once that moment of sudden enlightenment came, the speed at which one gained understanding would be astonishingly fast, allowing one to advance very rapidly. However, moments later, the speed at which Linley gained comprehension began to slow down. After all, that moment of insight only allowed a person to gain a portion of understanding. The rest required training.

Linley opened his eyes, and as he did, he saw Delia.

"You made a breakthrough?" Delia said softly.

Linley laughed and nodded. "I've finally passed the initial threshold for understanding the Profound Mysteries of Vitality…and indeed, understanding this profound mystery isn't an easy task. I had to experience

many things first, and have my entire mentality change…only after all of these things was I able to grasp that sudden moment of spiritual awakening and enlightenment."

Delia couldn't help but reveal a smile on her face.

"Linley, didn't you say that after becoming a Highgod, it would become much harder to fuse profound mysteries?" Delia couldn't help but ask.

When fusing profound mysteries, the difficulty level was lessened if one fused the mysteries while gaining insights to them. This was much like how if a large tree was crooked when it was young, if it kept on growing crookedly until it reached maturity, it would naturally become a crooked tree. But if you were to have a straight tree begin to grow crooked only after it reached maturity, it would be hard.

"Fusing is far more difficult than gaining initial insights into a profound mystery." Linley shook his head. "Otherwise, there wouldn't be so few Paragons, despite the passage of countless years."

"The further one advances, the harder fusing becomes." Linley sighed. "Look at me. It took me less than a thousand years to fuse three profound mysteries, but to fuse the fourth…although six centuries have passed, I have still only been able to fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the Throbbing Pulse of the World. I haven't been able to improve at all."

He hadn't made any improvements; was he supposed to just keep on wasting time?

Based on the historical pace of advancement by other people, even the greatest of geniuses would find it virtually impossible to fuse a fourth profound mystery in under ten thousand years.

"In addition, once I become a Highgod, my power will increase tenfold." Linley said confidently. "By then, even if I encounter an Asura, I will at least be able to stay alive."

When his soul was improved to the Highgod level, he would be able to absorb more amethysts and reach a new peak.

In addition, Linley's 'Blackstone Space' had previously used God-level divine earth power. Once he became a Highgod, he would be able to use Highgod-level divine earth power to execute it. The power of his Blackstone Space would therefore rise once again!

When Purgatory Commander Resigem set up his Gravitational Space, he used Highgod-level divine earth power.

Once Linley became a Highgod, the 'Spiritual Chaos' component of his Blackstone Space would also become more than ten times stronger! The gravitational pull would also rise to a terrifying new level. By then, even Seven Star Fiends would find it hard to move freely within the Blackstone Space.

By then…

Linley's Blackstone Space wouldn't be too far off from Purgatory Commander Reisgem's.

"In addition, only after becoming a Highgod will I have any hope of being able to repair the Coiling Dragon ring." Linley sighed. "Although spiritual energy can be used to repair it, this is a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, after all. My current spiritual energy is too weak. Once I become a Highgod, I can rely on amethysts to strengthen my soul to the limits of spiritual strength for a Highgod. Even if I'm not able to completely repair it, I can still make it so that it recovers a portion of its power."

If one was too greedy, one would be like a python who attempted to swallow an elephant. The consequences would be obvious.

At present, as soon as Linley broke through to become a Highgod, his strength would become terrifying. Thus, it was best for him to become a Highgod as quickly as possible.

Time flowed on like water, advancing silently and soundlessly. Linley quietly trained within the gorge, slowly advancing step by step. As for Wade, he grew up and became an adult as well. When the hundred year event came, Wade went to undergo the Ancestral Baptism and became a water-type Deity.

“Wade’s power is too weak. In the Infernal Realm, a Demigod’s power is absolutely insufficient for roaming about.” Although Linley wanted Wade to experience some hurdles and hardships, he didn’t wish for Wade to throw his life away.

Wade normally remained within the Skyrite Mountains, sparring with the other Deities.

More than a century had passed since Forhan had been killed. However, the higher level members of the Four Divine Beasts clan felt tremendous pressure! This was because the enemy eight great clans had become more and more savage, while the Four Divine Beasts clan had lost too many Elders.

The residence of Patriarch Gislason.

“Patriarch!” Garvey said frantically. “We can’t let this continue. If this continues for another millennium, our Azure Dragon clan will probably not have Seven Star Fiends left!”

Gislason’s back was turned towards him, and he was silent.

“Patriarch.” Garvey called out frantically.

“Then you tell me. What should we do?” Gislason said in a low voice.

Garvey hesitated slightly, then gritted his teeth. “Patriarch, order all of our forces to be withdrawn. Forget about those forces of the eight great clans and their arrogant patrols…we should just stay quietly within the Skyrite Mountains and build up our strength!”

Gislason was silent.

In the past, how glorious had the Four Divine Beasts clan been? Their fame had spread throughout all the Higher Planes and Divine Planes. Not a single clan dared to underestimate them, and the lives of the clan leaders of ordinary clans wasn't worth as much as the lives of ordinary members of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

The glory of the clan was utterly inviolable.

For countless years, although the descendants of the Four Divine Beasts clan might die, they had never lowered their heads. This was because these descendants all understood that even if they died, the clan would avenge them! The descendants of the Four Divine Beasts clan were proud and arrogant!

"Let our Four Divine Beasts clan lower our heads? Hide like turtles within the Skyrite Mountains and not go out?" Gislason said in a low voice. "Garvey, do you know what people will say about us in the outside world? They will say…that our Four Divine Beasts clan was beaten so badly by the eight great clans that we are hiding like turtles, afraid to show ourselves. That we are a pack of cowards! I am absolutely certain that this is how the eight great clans will spin the story, and that they will spread this news throughout the Infernal Realm, as well as the rest of the Four Higher Planes!"

To ordinary people, Gislason's line of thought was laughable.

That was because ordinary people had never reached the heights that Gislason had. Even in material planes, ordinary people would be willing to sacrifice their lives for the glory of their clan, much less Deities who possessed eternal life. To them, the glory of their clan was even more important!

"Garvey, you can go back for now." Gislason sighed.

"Patriarch." Garvey couldn't help but feel frantic.

“I told you to leave!”

Gislason growled. Stunned, Garvey had no choice but to leave, resigned. In the hall, the only remaining person was Gislason. His entire face was furrowed with wrinkles as he frowned, his heart filled with frustration.

He had never imagined that the incomparably firm mountains behind their clan, the ancestors, would all die.

With the ancestors dead, all the pressure now came crashing down upon the clan.

Within the gorge.

Linley, Delia, and Wade were eating together. But of course, Wade was now a handsome young man, slightly taller than even Linley, albeit somewhat thinner.

“Linley!” A voice suddenly rang out.

Linley raised his head and saw Garvey’s figure appear in mid-air, then descend. Seeing Linley’s family happily eating, Garvey let out a sigh.. “Linley, your life really is carefree and worry-less.”

“Sit.” Linley pointed in front of him. “What, are you feeling frustrated over the clan’s matters?”

“Right!” Garvey sat down.

“Uncle Garvey.” Wade called out.

Garvey laughed and nodded. “Time moves so very fast. Linley, I still remember how, over a century ago, you held Wade and Delia and hurried back. That really was a major event.”

Laughing, Linley nodded. “Right, Garvey. What happened within the clan?”

Upon hearing this subject, Garvey said bitterly, “Just today, yet another Elder of our clan lost his most powerful clone! Currently…our Azure Dragon clan, including you, Linley, only has seventeen Elders who truly possess the power of a Seven Star Fiend.”

“Seventeen?” Linley was stunned.

He still remembered how when he had accepted the position of Elder, the clan had more than thirty Elders. But now, only seventeen remained.

“After I learned this, I thought for a long time, then went to find the Patriarch. I advised the Patriarch that he should order the Elders to no longer go out and do battle, and that we should all return to the Skyrite Mountains.” Garvey clearly felt very miserable for having given this advice.

After all, he too valued the glory of the clan, did he not?

“What did the Patriarch say?” Linley asked.

“He didn’t agree.” Garvey raised his head, gulping down a cup of wine. “Every ten years, sometimes every few years, our Four Divine Beasts clan loses yet another Elder. If this continues, in a few centuries, how many Elders will our Four Divine Beasts clan have left?”

Linley felt resigned as well.

In this sort of clan war, the strength of any individual was simply insufficient.

“Enough of that. Come, drink.” Garvey raised his cup.

“Drink.” Linley responded.

Delia and Wade left the table shortly, leaving behind Linley and Garvey to chat and drink wine.

“Eh?” Linley raised his head, a hint of a smile on his lips. “He’s finally back.”

“Boss!” A figure descended from the skies, wearing a straw hat on his head. It was Bebe. Ever since he had left with Beirut, Bebe hadn’t returned a single time in the past hundred-plus years.

Linley rose to his feet.

“Boss, I missed you to death.” Bebe rushed forward, giving Linley a bearhug.

Linley and Bebe were as close as real siblings. After not having seen Bebe for so long, he naturally felt extremely happy.

“Bebe, long time no see.” Garvey greeted as well. After that affair nearly a century ago, all the Elders of the Skyrite Mountains had learned that Bebe was the grandson of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture.

“Elder Garvey.” Bebe greeted as well.

“What have you been doing for the past century?” Linley laughed as he spoke. Bebe rubbed his nose, then laughed smugly, “In the past century, I’ve roamed the entire Indigo Prefecture and visited many secret locations. Indigo Prefecture really is large. In the past hundred-plus years, I’ve only managed to visit some of the more important areas.”

“Oh, so why didn’t you continue touring?” Linley said.

Bebe pursed his lips, saying in an unruly manner, “I got bored. Didn’t want to continue.” But although he was acting in a seemingly unrestrained manner, Linley could sense a desolate aura.

At this moment, Delia and Wade hurriedly walked over from afar. Delia laughed and said from far away, “Bebe, it’s been so long since you left. Look at this fellow next to me. Do you know him?”

“The fellow next to you?” Bebe was stunned.

“Wade.” Delia laughed. “Remember now?”

“Ah?! That little fellow?!” Bebe immediately began to laugh.

Linley watched as Bebe immediately begin to chat warmly with Wade, but could still sense that within Bebe’s heart…

“Bebe’s too lonely! Once the affairs of the clan have been resolved, I’ll immediately accompany Bebe on a trip to the Jadefloat Continent. Let’s go find Ninny.”

The Infernal Realm. The Jadefloat Continent. Coldcalm Prefecture . The city of Bayfay [Bei’fei].

The streets of Bayfay City. A man and a woman were walking side by side.

“Ninny, I’ve come out for the express purpose on a stroll with you. Smile, won’t you?” The man and woman were Salomon and his little sister, ‘Nisse’. Ever since that event at the volcano range, Nisse had believed Bebe to be dead, having perished after diving into that golden magma pool.

Bebe’s death had come as a tremendous blow to Nisse.

It had also caused her attitude towards her elder brother to change.

“Alright.” Nisse just responded with a single word of acknowledgement.

A passerby on the street was chatting with another person.

“That scryer recording really was exciting. It’s been so many years since I’ve seen supreme experts like that do battle. Wow. There were actually more than ten Seven Star Fiends, and six of them used Sovereign’s Might. And that Azure Dragon clan’s Elder named Linley, he killed five Seven Star Fiends by himself. Too terrifying!”

That year, when Linley had suffered an attack from those eight Elders, many people had recorded scryer recordings of the battle. The recordings of such an enormous battle very naturally spread very widely. Since Linley's name had been verified, it also spread with the battle.

In the past hundred years, it had finally spread from the Bloodridge Continent to the Jadefloat Continent.

Hearing this conversation, both Salomon and Nisse were stunned.

"Linley?" Nisse was stunned. She had always believed that Linley and Bebe had both died. "Someone of the same name?"

"Linley? Six people who used Sovereign's Might?" Salomon was stunned as well.

Chapter 57 – Dangerous

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 57, Dangerous

The contents of that conversation had simply been too stunning. More than ten Seven Star Fiends in a single battle, six of whom had used Sovereign's Might? This sort of group battle between supreme experts was simply too rare. Even if they occurred, scryer recordings of such battles would rarely spread out.

"How could it be Linley?" Salomon was completely stunned.

But from the contents of that conversation, Salomon had learned that the 'Linley' these people were discussing as a member of the Azure Dragon clan. The Linley which he knew was also a member of the Azure Dragon clan! "Can it really be him?" Salomon didn't dare believe it. "He was just a God. How could he kill five Seven Star Fiends? No way. No way!!!"

A single person, kill five Seven Star Fiends? This sort of accomplishment was simply too terrifying.

As Salomon viewed it, no matter how powerful Linley was, there was no way he could've reached such a level.

"Big Bro, did you hear that? They said 'Linley'!" Nisse turned to look at her elder brother, Salomon. Her eyes were filled with disbelief. At the same time, a hint of hope appeared in her heart…

She had believed that both Linley and Bebe had died.

But Linley was alive. Bebe, perhaps, was still alive as well! When she thought of the possibility that Bebe was alive, her heart, dormant for a thousand-plus years, began to come to life again.

"They might just be two people of the same name." Salomon chuckled,

intentionally saying disdainfully, “You know how strong our Linley was. He was just a God. It would be hard for him to face even an ordinary Highgod. Kill five Seven Star Fiends by himself? Do you believe it?”

Nisse was stunned.

“Alright. Don’t pay any attention to the idle chatter. Most likely, it’s just a supreme expert who also shares the name Linley.” Salomon laughed calmly. “Let’s go. We’re shopping for clothes today. Pick whatever you like.”

Salomon didn’t want Nisse to go look at the scryer recordings. It wasn’t an issue if it wasn’t Linley, but if it really was Linley…given Nisse’s temperament, she would definitely immediately go look for Bebe. That would be terrible.

“Let’s go look at scryer recordings.” Nisse said.

Salomon shook his head. “Why look at scryer recordings? What? Do you think Linley is still alive?”

“I don’t know…but regardless of whether or not it is the Linley we know, a scryer recording of a battle including more than ten Seven Star Fiends is worth watching, no matter what.” Nisse turned and immediately walked away.

Salomon had no choice but to follow, and he secretly consoled himself, “That Linley died long ago. And he was very weak! This supreme expert, in turn, is very strong. It definitely isn’t him. It has to just be someone with the same name!” Salomon had unjustly accused Linley in the past. Naturally, he didn’t want to see Linley grow strong.

There were three locations in Bayfay City that were dedicated to viewing scryer recordings.

Large groups of people were gathered in front of the gates of all three locations today, all of them handing over strips of inkstone and azurite to go in and watch the scryer recordings. By the time Salomon and Nisse arrived,

they were shocked by how many people were present.

At the same time, those who had finished watching the scryer recordings were coming out from a side door.

“Truly astonishing. That Azure Dragon Elder was simply too terrifying!”

“Right. That azure prison of the Azure Dragon Elder appeared, and when it vanished, all of the enemy Elders were dead!”

Listening to this discussion, Salomon and Nisse felt all the more curious. They immediately handed over the entrance fee of a hundred inkstones and entered. There were six halls for viewing scryer recordings.

“Go to hall number five. The last viewing just completed, and will start anew soon.”

Salomon and Ninny both entered the fifth hall, looking for places to sit. The number of people within the fifth hall rose rapidly, but Nisse just stared at the front of the hall, her body trembling slightly.

“Ninny, relax.” Salomon said consolingly. “Don’t have too much hope.”

But Ninny didn’t say a single word.

Suddenly….

A large amount of water-type elemental essence coalesced in the front of the hall in mid-air, transforming into a recording. At the same time, a voice rang out. “Everyone, this battle occurred in Indigo Prefecture, at the Bloodridge Continent, in a mountain forest that was a few thousand kilometers outside of Meer City.

Everyone in the hall fell silent.

The explanatory voice continued, “These battling experts are eleven Seven Star Fiends! Based on my calculations, in Indigo Prefecture, only the Four

Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans have such a high number of experts. The two just so happen to be in a state of war…and now, everyone, please watch. When the scryer recording started, a Seven Star Fiend had already died, and his corpse is on the ground, still emanating the aura of Sovereign's Might. Everyone, if you look carefully, you can see it.

After speaking, the recording in the front of the main hall began to play.

Everyone in the hall went silent. Ninny and Salomon held their breaths as well.

Within the enormous scryer recording, one battle scene after another appeared; these were the scenes of Phusro and Tewila battling their enemies. However, just by watching these two battles, the people watching this recording for the first time were already stunned.

Their bodies were all covered with light, and with each punch and kick, space itself split open.

"Three of these four are using Sovereign's Might!" Salomon was stunned.

"Where is Linley?" Nisse was searching desperately. "And Bebe?"

However, at present, the scryer recording was primarily focusing on these two battles. At the same time, the scryer recording also recorded gray-robed corpse that lay on the ground, also emanating that aura. It was the Seven Star Fiend who had been killed by Phusro at the very beginning.

And then…

The scryer recording switched the point of view to the ground. The ground was roiling like the waves of the sea. Moments later, the ground suddenly exploded, and someone suddenly charged to the skies, blood matting his scales…but Nisse and Salomon were both shocked.

Those ferocious spikes, that tail, those dark golden eyes…they were so familiar!

Afterwards, five Seven Star Fiends pursued and attacked Linley. Linley's body was emanating that blue light; it was water-type Sovereign's Might. As for the five Seven Star Fiends behind him, one of them was emanating a black aura.

"It is Linley!" Nisse felt excited in her heart.

"This…" Salomon was stunned as well.

They had both seen Linley's Dragonform.

"Big Bro, it's Linley, it's Linley." Nisse could no longer suppress her excitement, and her divine sense reached out again and again to Salomon. "It's definitely him. There's no mistake."

"Nisse, that's not necessarily the case." Salomon tried to equivocate through divine sense. "The Azure Dragon clan has many people, and their Dragonform appearances are all quite similar. In addition, in a thousand years, do you think Linley would become so powerful? It's impossible."

Nisse was stunned. Could it be true that there was someone with a Dragonform similar to Linley's?

Nisse didn't know too much about the Four Divine Beasts clan, and didn't understand how unique Linley's Dragonform was.

And then, Salomon and Nisse continued to watch. In the scryer recording, Linley began to go insane, actually using his spiked forehead to batter a Seven Star Fiend to death. The other four remaining Seven Star Fiends wanted to flee, but they were all trapped within that massive blue cube.

After the blue cube vanished, the four Seven Star Fiends were dead as well.

The scryer recording was focused on Linley now, and after killing those four Seven Star Fiends, Linley actually flew to the ground. The recording showed how Linley knelt down by the side of a woman who was lying on

the ground.

The recording clearly captured the image of that woman's appearance.

"Delia!!!" Nisse's eyes instantly turned round.

"It is Delia!" Salomon was stunned as well.

And then, in the scryer recording, Linley returned to his human form, clutching his infant child by his wife's side. Phusro and Bebe walked over as well, also entering the recording zone.

"Linley, Bebe!!!" Nisse instantly felt so overjoyed that her head went numb.

Linley, Delia, and Bebe; the three of them were all within the recording range.

There was no question about it! This mighty Azure Dragon clan Elder was that Linley which they had met.

"How can this be? How is this possible?" Salomon didn't dare to believe it, but the truth was plainly visible for anyone to see.

"Big Bro, it really is them. It really is them. They didn't die, didn't die!" Nisse excitedly sent through divine sense. The scryer recording was almost over now. Linley took Delia in his arms while Phusro held the infant, and the two flew away side by side.

The scryer recording ended!

"That Azure Dragon clan Elder, based on the descriptions of the person who made this scryer recording, is named Linley. The woman on the ground should be a family member of Elder Linley's. That woman died, which is why Elder Linley was so grief-stricken."

Salomon and Nisse walked out to the street. Nisse's face was filled with irrepressible excitement.

“Big Bro, they didn’t die, they really didn’t die.” In the past thousand years, Nisse had never been as happy as she was now. “Bebe is still alive. Still alive!”

“Right. This is good news.” Salomon responded.

But Salomon’s mind was currently in a state of chaos. Originally, he had mistakenly believed that Linley had exposed his secret, and thus in his rage had wanted to kill Linley. Afterwards, Linley and his wife had both plunged into that golden magma pool. But who would have imagined…

That Linley not only was still alive, he had become so very powerful!

“But what happened to Delia?” Nisse said, rather worried. “Did Delia die in that scryer recording?” Nisse still clearly remembered how, in the scryer recording, Linley had let out that howl of grief and rage by Delia’s side.

Although Nisse couldn’t actually hear any sound, she could already sense his agonizing grief just from watching.

“Big Bro!” Nisse suddenly said.

“Eh?” Salomon looked towards her. Nisse looked at Salomon. Determinedly, she said, “Big Bro, I have decided…I am going to the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent!”

“Nonsense.” Salomon couldn’t help but grow impatient. This was exactly what he feared . “Ninny, going from the Jadefloat Continent to the Bloodridge Continent is no joke. How would you, a God, make it there? It is too dangerous. Unacceptable. Completely unacceptable!”

Nisse just glanced at her elder brother, not saying another word. She had already made up her mind. She was just letting her elder brother know of her decision.

Seeing the look on his little sister’s face, Salomon grew frantic.

“Ninny, you are too weak, and to go from the Jadefloat Continent to the Bloodrige Continent, you have to pass through the sea…the trip truly is too dangerous.” Salomon said frantically.

“It’s pointless for you to say anything.” Nisse wasn’t going to listen to her elder brother this time.

Salomon, seeing how his sister was acting, felt helpless in his heart. They were within the city, and within the city, there was no way he could possibly act to imprison his little sister. If his little sister truly wanted to go, there was nothing he could do about it at all.

“Ninny, are you really going to make me worry about you like this??” Salomon said, worried. “How about this. Train to the Highgod level, then go!”

Nisse glanced at him, not saying anything.

Nisse had already made up her mind, and there was nothing Salomon could do about it. Although Salomon kept a careful watch on her after the day they viewed the scryer recording…the next month, Nisse left.

Within his room.

Salomon stared at a piece of paper. It was a letter which Nisse had left him.

“Alas!” Salomon threw the paper to the table hatefully. “The journey from the Jadefloat Continent to the Bloodridge Continent will be so dangerous… why won’t Ninny listen?”

Salomon was frantic, but there was nothing he could do. He didn’t even know where Nisse had gone.

As he thought of this, Salomon couldn’t help but somewhat blame Linley. It was because he had wrongly accused Linley and Bebe that the relationship between himself and Nisse had fractured, and he rarely would be able to see

her smile these days. And now, this time…she left on her own.

“How is it that Linley didn’t die, and instead became so powerful?” Salomon couldn’t understand it either. How had Linley risen to such a level?

At the same time that Nisse departed from Coldcalm Prefecture , Linley and Bebe, in the distant Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent, were living peaceful lives in the Skyrite Mountains. In the blink of an eye, a few decades passed.

“Linley!” A deep voice rang out.

“Father, Father!” Wade called out. “The Second Elder is looking for you.”

Linley walked out from within his room. From the corner of his eye, he saw that in the distant, the Second Elder was walking over with a very complicated expression on his face. “Linley, come. Our Four Divine Beasts clan is about to hold a joint Conclave of Elders.”

“Now?” Linley was rather surprised. “It hasn’t been a thousand years yet. In addition, the four Divine Beast clans, hold a joint Conclave?”

“Right! It will be in Bloodbath Gorge, at the Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.” The Second Elder sighed. “This time, the reason why all the Elders are being summoned is to discuss what our Four Divine Beasts clan should do with respect to the eight great clans.”

Linley’s heart trembled. “It seems though the clan is finally unable to keep fighting like this!”

Chapter 58 – Unwillingness

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 58, Unwillingness

The Skyrite Mountains. Bloodbath Gorge. The Palace of the Four Divine Beasts.

When Linley entered alongside the Second Elder into the palace, he saw that quite a few people had already arrived. Linley swept them with his gaze. “Including me, a total of forty two Elders!” But of course, as time passed, more Elders entered, one by one.

“Linley.” Elder Garvey had a good personal relationship with Linley, and so he walked over. “The clan leaders are finally willing to lower their heads.”

Linley was stunned. “Garvey. Are you saying…?”

Garvey let out a low sigh. “Last month, our Four Divine Beasts clan suffered yet another severe setback. The clan leaders primarily aren’t able to endure it any longer either. Thus, they organized this Conclave. Or perhaps the clan leaders are also irresolute and so they wish the Elders to come discuss it. If the Elders agree, then…”

Linley understood as well.

Once the Conclave concluded, most likely the Four Divine Beasts clan would choose to turtle up within the Skyrite Mountains, no longer leaving. Although by doing so, the Four Divine Beasts clan would be able to preserve its strength, the reputation of the clan, built up over countless years, would suffer a huge blow.

To the many clansmen, the honor of the clan was more important than life itself. This was a hard choice for the four clan leaders to make.

“We suffered a severe setback last month? What happened?” Linley

hurriedly asked.

“You never pay attention to anything!” Garvey shook his head. “A month ago, our Four Divine Beasts clan lost another three Elders. One of the Elders belonged to our Azure Dragon clan. Factoring in the last event twenty years ago…our Azure Dragon clan has only fifteen Elders who truly possess the power of Seven Star Fiends.

Linley’s heart couldn’t help but clench in worry.

“Rumble…” The main door to the palace slowly slid closed.

Linley couldn’t help but feel startled. Garvey said in a low voice, “The Elders are all here. Soon, the four clan leaders will arrive.” Linley took a careful look about. In the hall, there were a total of fifty three Elders, including the Grand Elder.

From a side room, four figures walked out in a line, sitting down together at the front of the palace. It was Gislason and the other clan leaders.

The entire hall immediately fell silent for a time.

Gislason and the other three clan leaders swept everyone with their gaze, then looked at each other. In the end, it was Gislason who spoke. His deep, rumbling voice echoed in the hall. “Everyone, today, we have invited all of you over. I trust that all of you have already guessed what the purpose of this meeting is!”

As soon as these words came out, everyone felt misery in their hearts, and even Linley felt a surge of grief.

They no longer had the strength to save the situation!

“Ever since our four ancestors died, our Four Divine Beasts clan has suffered one heavy setback after another. Fortunately, thanks to the assistance of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, we were able to find our footing here in the Skyrite Mountains. Otherwise, our Four Divine Beasts

clan would most likely have been turned into ash and disappeared like smoke, more than ten thousand years ago.

The palace was completely silent.

“Over the past ten thousand years, the Elders of our Four Divine Beasts clan have all fought fearlessly against the enemy for the sake of the glory of the clan. Ten thousand years ago, our Four Divine Beasts clan had a total of over two hundred Elders! But today, we only have fifty three remaining! It has only been ten thousand short years, but we’ve lost nearly two hundred Elders! Two hundred!!!” A moist light flashed in Gislason’s eyes.

The Elders below, thinking back to the other Elders who had perished over these years, all felt grief in their hearts.

Linley, as well, thought of the various members of his own Squad Thirteen who had died, as well as the forlorn image of Elder Arhaus, who had lost his most powerful clone.

For the sake of the clan, far too many Elders had sacrificed their most powerful divine clones. They had previously been Seven Star Fiends, lofty and mighty individuals. But after having lost their most powerful divine clones, they were now perhaps just ordinary Highgods.

“All these years, the other three clan leaders and I have been pondering… how long will we hold out for?” Gislason’s voice was hoarse. “Especially in the past few centuries. The eight great clans seem to have gone insane. They want to kill our Elders at all cost, even if they have to die with us. According to this current rate, in another few years, our Four Divine Beasts clan will most likely not have many Elders left.”

The Vermillion Bird Matriarch spoke out as well. “Right. One month ago in particular, we lost another three Elders! We four clan leaders have discussed this carefully…if this continues, we will only be able to endure for a few more centuries at most.”

The White Tiger Patriarch spoke out in a cold voice. “Since even if we

continue to hold out, the only result will be that everyone will die, what's the point?"

The Black Tortoise Patriarch rumbled, "This is why we wish to make sure that at least some of our elites will survive. After all, it isn't so easy for someone to become a Seven Star Fiend and an Elder."

Gislason said in a strong, forceful voice, "And so, we four clan leaders are united in agreement that we are to no longer fight against the eight great clans…all of the members of the clan are to enter the Skyrite Mountains. We will build up our strength!"

The Elders below were all stunned.

They had thought that the clan leaders would let them discuss this matter and vote on it, but who would have thought that this came as a simple declaration?

"Patriarch!"

"Matriarch!"

Instantly, quite a few Elders grew frantic.

"Patriarch!" A rushed voice rang out, and a youth with silver hair and a callous-looking face raised his head towards the four clan leaders. He frantically said, "Are we supposed to just surrender, just like that? Just admit defeat?"

Linley glanced at this silver-haired, callous-looking youth. It was the 'Genius Elder' of the Azure Dragon clan, Elder Blue.

"You can consider it as us admitting defeat!" Gislason no longer had the imposing, majestic aura that he previously always had.

"Blue." The Vermillion Bird Matriarch looked down at him. "Even if we continue to fight, how much longer will the forces of our Four Divine

Beasts clan be able to hold out for? Can it be that you want the remaining, final fifty three Elders of the clan to also be lost?"

Blue's gaze was unyielding.

"Four clan leaders!" Blue raised his head slightly. "I, Blue, have submitted and surrendered to others, but that was because I was too weak. Ever since I became a Seven Star Fiend, I have never surrendered to anyone. The eight great clans are worthless! When our Four Divine Beasts clan was in the height of our power, they didn't dare to oppose us in the slightest. But now? Hmph. Have me, Blue, surrender to them? Never!"

"Blue!" Gislason felt heartsick.

In their hearts, they not only hated the eight great clans, they also looked down on them. For them to surrender…they naturally didn't wish to, given their pride. But Gislason and the other three were acting in the best interests of the clan.

"Patriarch, I understand that this is a hard decision for you. But I am just a single person. I am willing to go out and do battle…and to die on the field of war! After I die, the Infernal Realm will no longer have the Seven Star Fiend Blue, only the ordinary Highgod Blue. By that time, even if I want to do battle, I wouldn't have the ability to." Blue laughed softly as he spoke.

Linley, hearing this, couldn't help but tremble.

At this moment, a black-haired Elder stood out and said in a somber voice, "Patriarch, for our clan to flourish again, what we need is a supreme expert like Beirut or Dunnington. I know that I have no more hopes for improving…I hope that you will let me go die in battle, Patriarch! Even if we lose, I refuse to let those eight great clans get off lightly."

"Patriarch, in my life, I've given many things a try, but lowering my head? Never! Not even in death!" Yet another Elder stood up.

"Matriarch…"

Linley watched this scene quietly. Although to ordinary people, these Elders might appear to be too rigid and inflexible, Linley understood…these Elders had lived for countless hundreds of millions of years.

They weren't afraid to sacrifice themselves, but they cared deeply about certain beliefs and values which they held.

Fifty three Elders. Amongst them, there were more than twenty who were willing to sacrifice their most powerful divine clones, just for the sake of making the enemies suffer. The other Elders were silent, but Linley knew that so long as the clan leaders gave the order, they wouldn't hesitate in the slightest.

"Linley!" Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Linley was stunned.

The Grand Elder was looking at him, her eyes filled with panic. "Linley, you are on very close terms with the Lord Prefect. Can't you just…discard your pride and go beg the Lord Prefect for him to help us? Given the Lord Prefect's power, he is more than strong enough to force the eight great clans away. Linley, go beg him…for the sake of the clan, go beg him, just this once!"

Quite a few Elders immediately looked towards Linley.

Just now, these Elders had been in a state of despair, and many of them had been willing to throw away their most powerful divine clones in an attempt at vengeance. Even if their clan was submitting, they would make the eight great clans suffer. But hearing the words of the Grand Elder…

It seemed as though they had one last straw to clutch at for survival!

"I…" Linley didn't know how to respond.

"Little Sis." Gislason, seated at the front of the hall, let out a deep shout.

“Having Linley do this would just make the Lord Prefect feel awkward. The Lord Prefect has already done many things for our Four Divine Beasts clan, and he has never asked for anything in return. You actually want the Lord Prefect to intervene yet again? Can it be that you think the Lord Prefect has an obligation to help us?”

The Grand Elder couldn’t help but fall silent.

“We’re able to preserve the clan, and it won’t be destroyed. We should know when to be content with what we have.” Gislason let out a sigh.

The Elders below all fell silent.

“Elders, I am unable to forcibly prevent any of you from deciding whether or not you wish to go do battle with the enemy. I just want to say…let the clan preserve a bit of power.” Gislason rose after speaking, then looked towards Linley. “Linley, no matter what, don’t go beg the Lord Prefect.”

Linley couldn’t help but raise his head and look towards Gislason.

“I know what sort of temper the Lord Prefect has. If we go too far and anger him by our actions…he doesn’t even need to personally do anything. All he needs to do is to stop caring about our Four Divine Beasts clan and allow those eight great clans to freely attack us. That…would be disastrous!”

Quite a few Elders seated below, upon hearing those words, felt their hearts tremble.

Whether or not to surrender and submit, that was a question of the clan’s honor and glory.

But angering the Lord Prefect…that was a question of the clan’s survival. If the entire Four Divine Beasts clan was eradicated, there would no longer even be a question of honor or glory.

Ever since that decision was made, the Four Divine Beasts clan no longer openly battled against the eight great clans. Even though the forces of the

eight great clans continued on their predetermined patrol routes and acted provocatively, they were ignored.

The clan only needed to preserve its strength.

But although this was the order of the clan, there were still quite a few Elders who weren't willing to accept it. They chose to go out to fight, causing the battles with the eight great clans to rise to a new crescendo… and the eight great clans, seeing that the Four Divine Beasts clansmen dared to act so brashly, couldn't help but feel enraged and send even more people out.

A wild, savage, brutal war!

The most eye-catching of them all was the Genius Elder, Blue. Elder Blue travelled by himself, and he actually managed to kill eight enemy Elders. Afterwards, the eight great clans were enraged, and they actually sent out one of their Patriarchs, along with multiple experts.

In that battle…

Elder Blue's most powerful divine clone…died!

Elder Blue, in those ten short years, accomplished the feat of killing nine enemy Elders.

But of course, although some did well, others did poorly. Other Elders went out to do battle as well, but some Elders weren't able to kill anyone at all, as they were set upon by many others or were killed by enemies using Sovereign's Might.

This sort of wild slaughter persisted for thirty years.

Twenty two Elders lost their most powerful divine clones in battle! As for the eight great clans, their losses were even greater. Thirty eight of the Elders perished. After all, the Four Divine Beasts clansmen were fighting with the intention of killing as many as they could in exchange for their

own lives.

But after that, the Four Divine Beasts clan went silent, no longer seeking out battle.

For a short period of time, this actually threw the eight great clans into a period of wild speculation. After all, in thirty short years, they had lost thirty eight Elders, causing some shock to the eight great clans…after all, the Elders of their clans were the elites of their clans as well.

They, too, felt heartache at the losses!

The Skyrite Mountains returned to calmness. The roving patrols continued their patrols, but normally, very few people would come to the Skyrite Mountains. But today, a female youth flew out from a metallic lifeform.

Afterwards, that metallic lifeform flew away, while that young lady drew closer and closer to the Skyrite Mountains.

“These are the Skyrite Mountains. Outsiders are forbidden entry.” Immediately, more than ten patrolling warriors flew over from above, and one of them shouted at her.

This young lady had her hair tied into a ponytail, and she appeared very attractive. The strange thing was, she was wearing a straw hat on her head. The young lady hurriedly replied, “Hello. I am the friend of your Elder Linley. I’ve come to find him!”

“Elder Linley?” The patrolling warriors were all puzzled.

“Do you have any proof?” A patrolling warrior asked.

“Uh…” The young lady hesitated. What proof could she provide? But then, she immediately said, “How about this. Just go tell Elder Linley that my name is Nisse. He’ll know who I am.”

“Nisse?” The leader of the patrolling warriors glanced at her, then nodded. “Wait here.” After speaking, he flew away.

Chapter 59 – Suspicion

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 59, Suspicion

Although life within the gorge was peaceful, Linley's heart was not at peace. He had continually been paying attention to Elder Blue and the others. These Elders all had chosen to sacrifice their most powerful divine clones for the sake of one last act of defiance. After hearing of their accomplishments in battle, Linley's blood couldn't help but boil, while at the same time, he felt rather saddened.

"Power. The problem, in the end, is still that our power is inferior to theirs!" Linley stood in front of his room, staring towards the sky, sighing in his heart.

From the Yulan continent to the Infernal Realm, Linley had experienced many things. Naturally, he understood that honor and glory wasn't something which others would 'give' you; it was something you had to fight for and obtain for yourself by relying on your own power! The Four Divine Beasts clan was much weaker than before now, but they still wanted to have as much glory as they had in the past? This was nothing but a dream!

When you had power, others naturally would revere you.

For example, Beirut. He alone was enough to strike terror into the hearts of the eight great clans. A single order from Beirut resulted in the eight great clans not daring to make a single incursion into the Skyrite Mountains!

The Four Divine Beasts clan was in dire straits. Linley, in his heart, wanted to help his clan, but his current level of power was a good deal weaker than Patriarch Gislason. How was he supposed to help the clan? The final conclusion of all that pondering was…Linley still wasn't strong enough.

"How long will it take for me to train to Lord Beirut's level?" Linley's heart was filled with desire…but then he shook his head and laughed.

Beirut and Dunnington could both be said as having reached the very peak of Highgod power. To reach the same level as Beirut was too hard!

“Once I train to the Highgod level, my power should begin to approach the Patriarch’s.” Linley was rather eager. Once he became a Highgod, although his body would still be physically weaker than the Patriarch’s, Linley had his Blackstone Prison.

If a Highgod Linley was to use the Blackstone Prison, the power of the technique would be very close to the level of the technique used by Purgatory Commander Reisgem. Only then would the true power of the Blackstone Prison be put on display!

Linley turned to look towards a nearby area. Bebe was lying on the grass.

“Bebe, what are you doing?” Linley laughed.

“Sky watching.” Bebe lay there, not moving at all. His gaze was focused on the skies. Through the mist, he could see the winding Dragon Avenue.

Bebe would often lie there and stare dumbly at one place, or perhaps at his straw hat. Occasionally, he would go out and have fun with others, but given how well Linley knew Bebe, he understood how Bebe was truly feeling. As more time passed…

Bebe longed for Nisse all the more.

“Bebe.” Linley walked over, sitting on the grass as well, laughing as he looked at Bebe. “Are you thinking about Ninny?”

Bebe was slightly startled, but he still nodded lightly. “Right. I…kind of can’t keep myself from thinking of her. Whenever I’m not focusing on something, I’ll begin to think random, foolish thoughts, at which point I’ll often think of her. However, what’s the point of thinking? Ninny thinks I am dead.”

“Bebe, in a little while, once you become a Highgod, or perhaps once I become a Highgod…let’s make a trip to the Jadefloat Continent.” Linley said.

“Whoah!” Bebe immediately sat up, turning to stare at Linley in shock.

“What, you don’t want to go?” Linley laughed.

Bebe had a rather awkward look on his face. “Boss, this is a rather complicated subject. I…do somewhat want to see her. But think about how her elder brother Salomon treated you. Treated us. If Phusro hadn’t shown us mercy, you and Delia would most likely be dead.”

Linley and Delia truly had nearly died, back then.

If they truly had died, Salomon would indeed have been the instigator and cause of their deaths.

“Whenever I think of Salomon, my belly fills with rage.” A savage light flashed in Bebe’s eyes, but then he said resignedly, “Tell me, if I go see Ninny, if I see Salomon, what should I do?”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh. So this was what sticking in Bebe’s craw, eh?

“No matter what, Bebe, in the end, Delia and I are still alive. In addition, the person you like is Nisse, not her elder brother. Just ignore her elder brother.” Linley urged.

“Ignore? Do you think I’ll be able to ignore him just because you said so?” Bebe pursed his lips resignedly.

Linley suddenly turned to stare towards the skies. A patrol warrior was flying towards him, and as he saw Linley on the ground below, he immediately landed next to Linley. Bowing, he said, “Elder Linley. There’s a woman at the borders of the mountains. She says that she is your friend. Her name is Nisse, and she wants to see you!”

Linley was stunned.

“Nisse?” Bebe immediately stood up, his eyes huge and round. He hurriedly said, “You said that woman is named Nisse, right?” “Right.” The patrol warrior was rather annoyed.

“Tell me, what is she like? Anything special about her?” Bebe said.

The patrol warrior paused momentarily. Describe a woman? This was rather hard. But then, the patrol warrior noticed the straw hat which Bebe was holding. His eyes lit up, and he hurriedly said, “Right. That woman was also wearing a hat on her head that looked identical to yours.”

Bebe was so excited, his face instantly turned red.

Linley felt both extremely shocked and delighted as well. How did Nisse end up coming over here?

“Boss!” Bebe hurriedly turned to look towards Linley. “Quick, slap me twice. See if I’m in a dream or not!” Bebe’s mind was completely numb right now, and he felt as though his body was light and airy, as though he wasn’t completely in touch with reality.

Linley acted quite simply. “WHAP!” He landed a palm blow on Bebe’s shoulder, knocking him straight to the ground.

“Haha, I’m not dreaming, I’m not dreaming.” Bebe instantly crawled back up.

Linley, seeing that Bebe was so excited that he was beginning to tremble, sighed to himself. It had been many years since Bebe had been excited to the point of going crazy.

The outside activities drew Delia out from the room as well. As she walked out, she said, “What just happened?”

“Nisse came. Bebe and I are going to go welcome her.” Linley laughed, then he grabbed Bebe and immediately flew into the air.

“Nisse came?”

Delia was slightly shocked, but moments later, she recovered. “Ninny actually came all the way from the Jadefloat Continent?”

The base of the Skyrite Mountains. Nisse was constantly staring into the depths of the mountains, her heart filled with worry. “What if Bebe doesn’t want to meet me? Will Bebe and Linley still be angry at what had happened in the volcano range that time?”

Worried. Panicked.

Nisse knew that her elder brother had wrongly accused Linley, and even wanted to cause the deaths of Linley and the others.

“Haha, Nisse!” A clear voice rang out.

Nisse couldn’t help but turn her head to look, and as she did, she saw two familiar figures fly towards her, shoulder-to-shoulder. Bebe, like her, wore a straw hat on his head. When Bebe saw Nisse, his eyes immediately lit up, and he was so excited that his speed instantly rose to a new level.

“Swoosh!”

“Bebe!” Nisse excitedly flew over as well.

But just as he drew near her, Bebe’s body suddenly trembled and his speed lessened. But Nisse ignored everything, rushing straight over to Bebe, clutching him in her arms. “Wuuuu…wuuuuu…I thought you wouldn’t want to meet me…wuuuu….” As she spoke, she actually began to cry.

Bebe opened his mouth a few times. In the end, his first words were…“Where is your elder brother?”

Hearing this, Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Bebe actually asked such an awkward question?

Nisse's body trembled, and she released Bebe. She stared into Bebe's eyes, as though she wanted to learn something from them. "My brother is still in the Jadefloat Continent." Bebe seemed to have realized something, and in a low voice, he said, "This time…you came here by yourself? From the Jadefloat Continent?"

"Right!" Nisse nodded lightly.

"I almost…I almost…almost never would have been able to see you again." As she spoke, tears once more began to appear in her eyes.

Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but suck in a cold breath. Nisse was just a God. From Coldcalm Prefecture of the Jadefloat Continent to Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent required passing through the Starmist Sea. One could imagine what a difficult journey this was, but Nisse had actually come by herself.

"You…" Bebe was completely stunned.

He had thought that Salomon had escorted Nisse here. The uncomfortable feeling that had been present in Bebe's heart instantly vanished.

"You…did you want to die?!" Bebe instantly took Nisse into his arms.

Nisse was crying so hard that both her eyes had turned red. But her face was filled with a beautiful, overjoyed smile. Linley just stood there to the side, beaming as he watched. He felt very happy for the two of them, that they were able to have a reunion like this.

"Haha, the two of you have been holding each other for some time now. Do you want to continue to allow all those patrol warriors to watch this little drama?" A while later, Linley finally spoke with a smirk. "Come. Let's go back first."

Only now did Nisse and Bebe come to their senses.

Their reunion after a thousand years…they had both been so excited that they hadn't noticed the passage of time.

Time flowed on. Nisse and Bebe, having reunited, naturally wouldn't separate again. Bebe changed, once more becoming full of jokes and laughter, and spent every day with a delighted smile on his face. He was so happy he could die.

But although life for Linley and Bebe was comfortable, the eight great clans were frustrated.

Within the main hall of the Boleyn clan.

Four Patriarchs as well as four Deathgod Golem 'clones' of four other Patriarchs were gathered together. This meeting of the eight great Patriarchs had just begun.

"In the past few decades, the Four Divine Beasts clan has actually turtle up and refuse to come out. No matter how our clans' forces challenge and provoke them, they don't respond at all. What's going on? Can it be that the Four Divine Beasts clan is admitting defeat?" A deep voice rumbled out.

"Impossible." A hoarse voice rang out. "Everyone should still remember how savage and insane those Four Divine Beasts clansmen were, thirty years prior to this. It won't be so easy to make them turtle up and submit."

"Patriarch Boleyn, that's not necessarily the case." A devilish voice rang out.

"Nether Serpent. In the past countless years, have the Four Divine Beasts clan ever submitted? Don't think so simplistically." Patriarch Boleyn's hoarse voice rang out once more.

The Four Divine Beasts clan had always been arrogant, prideful, and unyielding. They had never submitted. This was the impression that the

Four Divine Beasts clan had always given others, throughout the countless years. Because the arrogance of the Four Divine Beasts clan had already been deeply engraved into everyone's hearts, within a short period of time, there were quite a few members of the eight great clans who were unable to believe that the Four Divine Beasts clan would lower their heads and submit.

"As I see it, the Four Divine Beasts clan must be plotting something." A forceful, unyielding voice rang out. "Their recent reactions have been too bizarre. Everyone, it is best to be careful."

"Plot. What sort of plot could they have?" A high-pitched voice rang out.

"Enough, everyone." A gentle voice rang out. "For now, it doesn't matter whether or not the Four Divine Beasts clan has surrendered, or if they are plotting something. Let's wait a while and take a good look. After a century, we will know for sure…if they have submitted, or if they are plotting something."

"Right. I concur." Patriarch Boleyn said as well.

"I concur."

The hiding of the Four Divine Beasts clan, for a short period of time, caused the eight great clans to feel suspicious. However, once the Four Divine Beasts clan remained in hiding for a longer period of time, the eight great clans would be completely certain as to what the situation was, at which point, they had other options at hand.

The Skyrite Mountains. Within the gorge.

Today, the gorge was filled with the sounds of celebration and laughter. The surviving Elders of the clan, as well as the four clan leaders, and even many former Elders who had lost their most powerful divine clones had all gathered here on this day.

Because today…

Was the day of Bebe and Nisse's wedding. Even Beirut, Carolina, and Phusro had hurried over. Today, Bebe was dressed in a very sharp manner, and for once, he was very humbly and courteously greeting every single guest who came.

"Getting married is exhausting." Bebe secretly grumbled to the nearby Linley.

Linley couldn't help but laugh. Suddenly, he noticed that Beirut was walking over. "Your grandfather is coming."

"Haha…" Beirut weighed Bebe with his gaze, nodding in satisfaction. "You look proper today. But Linley, you and Bebe really are something. Bebe and Nisse have been together for a few decades now, but you didn't even tell me. You only notified me after arranging the wedding."

Linley could only chuckle.

Nisse had indeed been within the gorge for decades. Originally, Nisse and Bebe weren't even planning a wedding, but…just a few months ago, Nisse suddenly discovered that she was pregnant!

Bebe and Nisse were both stunned. Having a child while not married? They frantically discussed this matter, then they came to a decision…they had to get married right away!

The two of them immediately wanted to notify everyone. However, Beirut was simply too far away, which was why they had decided to get married half a year later!

Today was the day of the wedding, but Nisse was already quite a few months pregnant and had a big belly. Each time Linley thought of this, he couldn't help but want to laugh.

Chapter 60 – A Major Event

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 60, A Major Event

The day of the grand wedding. The gorge was filled with the nonstop sound of laughter.

Due to having chosen to submit and to retreat, the four clan leaders had been feeling quite depressed. Today, they seized the opportunity to have a good celebration. Beirut and Carolina were very happy as well, and so they happily chatted and drank with the four clan leaders and the various Elders.

“Lord Prefect, congratulations!” Gislason raised his cup to Beirut.

“Haha.” Beirut laughed as he looked towards Gislason, then lowered his voice. “Gislason, your Four Divine Beasts clan has truly retreated, and will no longer do battle?” Beirut paid attention to the struggle between the two sides as well.

Gislason was startled. He nodded.

“How have the eight great clans reacted?” Beirut asked.

“No reaction yet.” Gislason shook his head. “Most likely, in the near term, they will be unable to believe that we have truly submitted.”

“Right.” Beirut nodded. “But you still need to be careful. Once the eight great clans realize that you have retreated, even though they won’t dare to invade the Skyrite Mountains, they will think of ways to take their revenge upon you nonetheless.”

Gislason said self-mockingly, “We’ve already decide to hide in the Skyrite Mountains and not come out. What more can they do?” Gislason’s words had an undertone of grief and desolation to them.

Beirut didn’t say anything else.

“Hey.” The nearby Carolina laughed. “Tell me, will that Nisse of Bebe’s give birth to a boy or a girl?”

“How should I know?” Beirut laughed. “However, I can guarantee that it won’t be a Godeater Rat!”

If both husband and wife were Godeater Rats, their children would definitely also be Godeater Rats. Unfortunately, throughout the countless planes, only Beirut and Bebe were Godeater Rats. Generally speaking, especially terrifying divine beasts were also especially rare.

For example, the Azure Dragon, the White Tiger, and even the Nether Serpent were all unique divine beasts. There was only an extremely low probability that if their descendants married each other, they might be able to produce a true divine beast. But the chances were too low, far too low. As for the likes of the Ba-Serpent and the Suanni Lion, there were quite a few of them spread throughout the countless planes.

The more powerful a divine beast’s innate ability was, the rarer the beast was as well.

Those with weak innate abilities would be more common.

In the blink of an eye, months passed. Within the gorge. Outside Bebe’s room.

Linley, Beirut, Carolina, and the others were all present. Delia and Nisse were in the room. Nisse was about to give birth. The most nervous, restless person present was, of course, Bebe.

“She’s giving birth. She’s giving birth!” Bebe stood outside the room, mumbling to himself while walking back and forth, completely unable to come to a halt.

“Bebe, just sit down.” Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“How can I sit down?” The muscles throughout Bebe’s entire body were taut and quivering. He glanced at Linley. “Boss, I’m so nervous, my heart’s about to leap out of my body. You want me to sit? Ugh. Why isn’t it out yet? It’s been so long.”

Beirut laughed. “Bebe, Nisse just went in. It’s going to be a good while longer.”

Bebe had no choice but to endure it. Right now, the passage of every single second, to Bebe, felt very long and slow.

“Waaaaa!” Suddenly, a high-pitched sobbing sound rang out.

Bebe seemed to have been hit by lightning, and he stood there stupidly.

“Creaaak!” The door swung open, and Delia walked out. She glanced sideways at Bebe. “Bebe, why are you standing there like an idiot? Aren’t you going to go in?” Only now did Bebe come to his senses, and his body transformed into a blur, entering the room.

Delia laughed. “Bebe actually went numb.”

“When you were giving birth to Wade, Bebe was telling me I was too nervous. But he’s even more nervous than me!” Linley laughed.

Delia glanced at him grumpily. “Don’t be so smug. When Taylor and Sasha were born, I heard that you were so nervous, you were sweating everywhere. You, a mighty, venerable Saint-level expert. So nervous that you were sweating?”

Linley could only laugh awkwardly.

Moments later, Bebe and Nisse walked out from the room. Bebe was beaming so widely, his mouth threatened to split apart. He was holding an infant in his arms. Nisse was a human, and so her baby was naturally a humanoid as well. However, this infant….

Was like Gislason. Although it had the lineage of a divine beast, it wasn't a true divine beast.

"Boss." Bebe looked excitedly at Linley. "Look, this is my child. This is the child of me, Bebe! Haha…I, Bebe, have a child of my own as well!" Bebe was so excited, his entire body was shaking.

"Come, let me hold the child." Beirut laughed.

"Right." Bebe very carefully handed the child over to Beirut.

Beirut took a careful look at the child. "Oh, so it's a girl. The lineage of the Godeater Rat in her veins isn't bad. Still, to activate the divine beast lineage in her blood will be rather difficult." Up till now, Beirut still had yet to find a perfect way to draw out the innate divine ability of his descendants.

The Four Divine Beasts clan had their 'Ancestral Baptism', allowing their descendants to possess the ability to Dragonform and even have the innate divine ability of a divine beast. But of course, the strength of the innate divine ability was connected to the purity of the lineage.

"Girls are good. Girls are good." Bebe continued to beam, his lips wide.

Today he was simply too excited.

Bebe was a divine beast, the Godeater Rat. With such a monstrously powerful innate ability, naturally he wouldn't have too many progeny. For example, although Beirut had three sons, they were triplets; that was the only reason why he had three. After that one time, Carolina never gave birth to any more children.

As for Linley, although he wasn't a divine beast and thus wasn't restricted as tightly by the universe, Taylor and Sasha were a 'dragon-phoenix' pair of twins as well who were born together. As for Wade, he was only born after they came to the Infernal Realm.

From this day onwards, Bebe eagerly devoted himself to raising his daughter.

The skies were clear and the air was fresh. Linley walked out of his room, and as he did, he saw that in the distance, there was a young woman seated in the meditative position on a patch of grass, training. This young woman had black hair, and her skin appeared crystalline, like jade.

This was Bebe's daughter, Ina [Yi'na].

"It will be very hard for Ina to even become a Deity." Linley sighed to himself. Although Ina had the lineage of a divine beast, she wasn't a divine beast, after all. As for Beirut, he did not yet have a method which would have the effect of the 'Ancestral Baptism'.

For now, Ina had to rely on herself. This was why, despite having trained for over a century, Ina was just a Saint.

"Uncle Linley." Ina's clear voice rang out. She had already stood up, and her lively, agile eyes looked just like her father's. "You seem to be in an excellent mood. Do you have good news?"

Linley couldn't help but laugh, "Ina, good eye. Right. I made a breakthrough."

"Oh?" Ina's eyes immediately lit up. "In which Elemental Law?"

"Fire." Linley didn't hide it.

Linley improved the slowest in fire. Although he had trained in it for over a thousand years by now, by now, Linley had only mastered four profound mysteries. In addition, Linley hadn't even gotten a basic understanding of the other two profound mysteries.

By comparison, as for water, in which Linley had only trained for six or seven hundred years, he had already reached the late stage in his fifth mystery.

As for the wind, although he had mastered seven profound mysteries, he hadn't gained any insights into the last two at all.

He still trained fastest in the Laws of the Earth.

The Laws of the Earth had six profound mysteries. Linley had already trained to the 'bottleneck' level in 'Vitality'; with but a final step, he would reach the level of Highgod. In addition, he had begun to fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength as well as the Essence of the Earth.

"One's mentality really does have an impact on the speed of one's training." Linley side to himself.

"Uncle Linley, you are too amazing. Alas, I still haven't become a Deity. In the entire gorge, I'm the only non-Deity. Last time, when I went to great grandfather's place, everyone I saw was a Deity as well." Ina said helplessly.

Beirut and Carolina both doted on Ina, and often invited her to visit them at their place.

"Don't be dispirited." Linley said consolingly. "When training in the Elemental Laws, one must be fully absorbed in pondering them and focus in training them. If you do that, you will improve. I have faith in you. You are much more patient than your father."

"Right." Ina nodded and laughed. "Father has no patience for training."

"Hey, are you people talking about me?" A voice rang out from nearby, and Bebe walked out from his own room, staring at Ina. "Nana, are you saying bad things about me?"

Ina let out a lovable snort, turning her head and ignoring Bebe.

Bebe just rubbed his nose. "This kid isn't as obedient as she used to be when she was young."

Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. He originally had thought that since Bebe had a daughter, she would become the center of attention. But he was wrong…even after having a daughter, Bebe remained the same.

"Rumble…"

A spatial tremble suddenly swept out.

Linley's face changed. He couldn't help but turn his head. Although the spatial tremble came from far away and was already very weak, Linley could still sense it.

"What just happened?" Bebe's expression grew focused as well, and he looked towards Linley.

"What is it?" Delia, Nisse, and Wade ran over as well.

"Come. Let's take a look." Linley led the way, flying into the air. Immediately, Bebe, Delia, Nisse, Ina, and Wade all followed, but as they flew out of the gorge, Linley's group saw…

"This…" Linley stared, slack-jawed.

In the southern skies of the Skyrite Mountains, the entire area was clustered with people, who flew about like a horde of locusts. Quite a few people were launching attacks towards the mountain forests below.

"Boom!" "Boom!" "Boom!"

Those tree trunks exploded, and crevices in the ground appeared. Those spatial tremors from earlier had been caused from these attacks. However, these people were quite careful; despite attacking downwards, their attacks didn't actually cause any harm to the Skyrite Mountains at all.

"So many people?" Linley felt his heart turn cold.

“Uncle Linley, how many people are there? There must be at least a few hundred thousand.” Ina stared dumbly.

“Not just a few hundred thousand!” Linley muttered.

At this moment, it wasn’t just Linley who felt his heart growing cold; throughout the Skyrite Mountains, members of the Four Divine Beasts clan were flying over, staring at the terrifying scene of countless people in the skies south of the Skyrite Mountains. Those people were currently attacking the mountain forests south of the Skyrite Mountains.

“Stay here. Don’t move.” Linley shouted. “If there’s any danger, immediately hurry back to the gorge. I’ll go to see the Patriarch first.”

“Don’t worry.” Bebe nodded.

Linley nodded slightly. He immediately flew at high speed towards the ‘dragon’s head’, the end of Dragon Avenue. And not just Linley; a good number of Elders were flying towards the Patriarch’s residence at high speed as well. On the way over, Linley met the Second Elder.

Linley saw Patriarch Gislason and some others in the distance. They, too, were looking towards the south.

“Patriarch.” Linley flew over.

“Linley, you came.” Gislason chuckled towards Linley. “Take a look and see the sort of game the eight great clans up to!”

“They really are the members of the eight great clans?” Linley had suspected this long ago.

“See for yourself.” Gislason turned his head to look towards the south.

Linley looked towards the south as well. Many experts were attacking the mountainous forests, and moments later, Linley understood as well. “They…they are setting up a foundation!” Within a large area, the trees

were all destroyed, while at the same time, a solid foundation was being laid.

Soon…

Many of the clansmen belonging to the forces of the eight great clans came bearing giant stones, and they began to build one castle and estate after another! Given the power Deities possessed, especially when such an astonishingly large number of Deities worked together, in but half a day…

One castle and another was finished in the area to the south of the Skyrite Mountains.

The area in which these many castles were built was extremely close to the Skyrite Mountains. In addition, one could clearly tell that these castles were divided into eight areas.

Seeing this, the Four Divine Beast clansmen were stunned.

“What are they doing?” Elder Garvey couldn’t believe it.

“What are they doing? Setting up house next to us!” Gislason said gloomily.

Suddenly…

“Cowards of the Four Divine Beasts clan!” A wild, savage sound echoed throughout the air above the Skyrite Mountains. “Haha, I didn’t expect that the descendants of four Sovereigns would actually turtle up here in the Skyrite Mountains and be afraid to come out. Haha…”

All the clansmen living within the Skyrite Mountains heard this laughter.

All the clansmen were enraged.

“You fellows are quite good at hiding, aren’t you? Fine, then. Hide. Our eight great clans will just live right here next to you! As long as a single member of your clan exits the mountain, we will kill him or her! If you

want, you can forever hide in there like cowards and never come out!”

“Haha…Four Divine Beasts clan? More like Four Pests clan! Haha…”

“Anyone with courage, step out. Our eight great clans will welcome you at any time! If you don’t have any courage…then just keep hiding!”

Waves of laughter continued to echo out from outside. Their voices shook the heavens like thunder, echoing within the Skyrite Mountains.

Chapter 61 – Group Battle

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 61, Group Battle

The countless members of the Azure Dragon clan who lived in the Skyrite Mountains all heard these insults and the mockery. Many clansmen were infuriated. Fierce looks flashed through their eyes, and they could no longer endure it. Bellowing, they flew out from throughout the Skyrite Mountains.

“Kill!”

“Kill these bastards!”

A large number of figures rose from within the Skyrite Mountains. Moving as fast as lightning, they wildly charged towards the south. Many of them were patrol guards. Many of them were so angry that their eyes had turned crimson, and quite a few other warriors charged towards the east as well.

They had gone mad!

The Four Divine Beasts clansmen had been enraged to the point of insanity! Being killed was nothing more than their severed heads falling to the ground, but the insults the other side was hurling caused these clansmen to go wild. Countless years of pride made it so that these tribesmen weren’t able to endure it any longer.

“Bastards!” Elder Garvey, standing by Linley’s side, was staring angrily, his eyes crimson as well.

They had elected to retreat, because they had realized the hopelessness of the clan’s situation. But now, the enemy had come right up to them, cursing them out while pointing their fingers towards the Four Divine Beasts clansmen’s noses. Everyone found it hard to endure this. All of the Elders were growing utterly enraged. Even Linley, upon hearing the mocking laughter, felt fury rise in his heart. “These eight great clans are forcing us to

go battle them!”

“Return! All of you, return!” Gislason roared loudly.

Those reproving shouts echoed throughout the Skyrite Mountains, but many of the ordinary clansmen had never even met the Patriarch. In their rage, how could they possibly recognize their Patriarch’s voice? They didn’t care who was ordering them to stop; they still charged towards the south. All of them wanted to drink the enemy’s blood and devour the enemy’s flesh!

“Rumble…”

More than ten thousand clansmen filled the skies. They threw themselves towards the outside. Even though they were still quite some distance away, they attacked wildly, causing material attacks and spiritual attacks to instantly fill the heavens.

“Kill!” Many clansmen within the Skyrite Mountains who hadn’t flown out yet attacked savagely as well.

“Rumble…”

The skies shone with all sorts of lights, which rushed towards the south in a wave.

“Rumble…”

The many clansmen of the eight great clans all unleashed their terrifying attacks. The color of the sky itself changed. The countless attacks clashed and intersected in mid-air, causing an ear-piercing, rumbling sound. Many attacks, however, passed through to the other side.

“Bang!” “Boom!”

The Four Divine Beasts clan. The eight great clans. The bodies of their clansmen exploded in mid-air or tumbled directly to the ground.

“Kill them!”

Their blood boiling, these enraged clansmen attacked, ignoring all else. However, because many of the clansmen had halted after being ordered to stop, only ten thousand or so had truly charged over. All of those clansmen who had charged over immediately Dragonformed. They would either kill their enemies, or they would themselves die!

The world shook with countless rumbles.

Surrounded like this, those clansmen who had originally elected to remain within the Skyrite Mountains felt their own rage rise as well. They weren’t able to endure any longer. Even Linley felt a murderous intent rise in his heart.

“Quick, all of you, go stop our clansmen. Quick!” Gislason roared angrily towards Linley and the others. “They are just throwing their lives away!”

“Yes, Patriarch!”

Linley and the group of Elders were enraged, but all of them had no choice but to forcibly swallow their anger. They scattered everywhere throughout the Skyrite Mountains, loudly shouting, “Stop. All stop!”

“Stop. Stop!”

After all, it was the clan leaders and the Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan who had made the decision to stop fighting against the eight great clans. The high level members of the clan knew, but the ordinary clansmen didn’t know. The ordinary clansmen were as proud and arrogant as they had been, ten thousand years ago. They weren’t able to endure this sort of humiliation.

Thanks to the shouts and roars of the Elders, as well as the shouts of the many patrolling warriors who were following the commands of the Elders, the insanity slowly began to fade away.

In that short while…

Tens of thousands of Four Divine Beasts clansmen had died. But of course, the losses of the eight great clans weren't light either.

"All of you, back!" Linley roared at one clansman after another.

Many of those clansmen had unwilling looks in their eyes, which were filled with rage. They all stared towards the south. After so many years, quite a few members of the Four Divine Beasts clan had gotten to know Linley. The prestige and authority of the Elders was still very effective. All of them thus refrained from charging over.

"Elder Linley, are we supposed to just take it without fighting back?" A youth looked at Linley frantically, his face completely red with rage.

Linley was stunned.

"Just let them ride roughshod over us. To just let them insult us like this?" The youth's body was trembling. "I would rather die and take a few of them with me, rather than accept this sort of humiliation!" "Elder Linley…are we really not going to fight back?" Quite a few clansmen looked towards Linley, their eyes filled with a hint of despair.

Being insulted and cursed at by others, but not fight back? This was more agonizing to the Four Divine Beasts clansmen than killing them.

"We will have our revenge!" Linley growled. "Don't worry. We will have our revenge!"

Only now did the clansmen feel slightly better. They all listened to Linley and began to return, but as Linley stared at the surrounding area…he saw that most of the infuriated clansmen had been stopped by his shout.

When Linley had just arrived at the Four Divine Beasts clan, he hadn't felt too strong a sense of belonging towards the clan.

This was because, deep in Linley's heart, he had always considered himself to be Linley Baruch! He had a very strong sense of belonging towards the Yulan branch, but that wasn't the case for the Azure Dragon clan as a whole.

However…

Much time had passed. He had lived here with the Four Divine Beasts clansmen for eight or nine centuries. Over the past eight or nine hundred years, Linley had met too many of his clansmen, all of them who were capable of Dragonforming, and who would all greet him as 'Elder Linley' upon seeing him. Unconsciously, without even realizing it…in the Infernal Realm, Linley had already grown to completely consider himself a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"The eight great clans!" Linley stared towards the south, his eyes narrowing.

And then, Linley flew back to the residence of Patriarch Gislason. But right at this moment, yet another wave of mockery and derisive insults rang out.

"Haha, what? Your Four Divine Beasts clan only has this much courage?"

"Just keep hiding. I daresay that even though the Four Divine Beasts clan has people at their very doorstep mocking them and insulting them, they still don't have the courage to fight back. This news, without a doubt, will spread throughout the Infernal Realm in just a few centuries, and even the rest of the Higher Planes. Haha…we will make sure that the people of the various planes all know what cowards you Four Divine Beasts clansmen are. How spineless!"

The voices continued to echo in the skies.

The Elders had already returned to the side of Patriarch Gislason, all of them utterly enraged.

"I didn't expect the eight great clans would be this despicable!" The Second

Elder was so angry that even his beard was trembling. “When they spread this news throughout the other planes, the various clans will look down upon them as well.”

“Look down upon them?” Patriarch Gislason laughed coldly. “You are wrong. The eight great clans, when spreading this news, will definitely make it all the more colorful. They’ll say that it was the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture who forbade them from attacking the Skyrite Mountains, which is why they were forced to remain outside the borders of the mountain range. This news will perhaps enhance the reputation of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture. It won’t have much of an impact to the eight great clans. But to our Four Divine Beasts clan…”

Linley understood as well. Once this spread out, the reputation of the Four Divine Beasts clan would forever be tarnished. Others would say that all they were capable of was hiding behind the protection of the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, and that even when others came to their gates to insult them, they still didn’t have the courage to fight back!

“Patriarch Gislason of the Azure Dragon clan. You are a Patriarch and the son of a Sovereign, and yet you are so spineless and cowardly. You really are an embarrassment to your father. Why don’t you just kill yourself? Haha…”

“You, Gislason, are an embarrassment to the almighty Sovereign. Haha…”

Laughter rang out continuously.

Even after the four Sovereigns died, these people wouldn’t dare to casually besmirch the Sovereigns themselves. After all, even a dead Sovereign was still a Sovereign. The prestige of a Sovereign was inviolable…and if it was violated, if any of the other Sovereigns were to hear their words, be irritated by them, and decide to punish them, they would be doomed.

Gislason’s gaze was like ice.

“Patriarch.” The nearby Elders couldn’t help but look at him.

“These bastards.” Elder Garvey let out a growl, and he immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying towards the north.

“Get back here.” Gislason’s face changed. He immediately flew in pursuit, and Linley and the other Elders followed him.

Although Gislason was far faster than Elder Garvey, the Skyrite Mountains were only so large. By the time they caught up, Gislason and the others had already reached the borders of the Skyrite Mountains.

“Garvey. What are you doing?” Gislason grabbed Elder Garvey.

“Patriarch.” Garvey stared at Gislason.

“Oh. You finally found the courage to come out?” Ten or so figures were hovering there in mid-air, and they glanced over. They clearly had noticed Gislason and the others. “Gislason, what are you doing? Not only are you not fighting back, you aren’t going to let others fight back either? Haha…”

Gislason turned to look at them.

“And who the hell do you think you are?” Gislason’s eyes radiated frost. “Let the Nether Serpent, Edric, and the others come over!”

The leader was a big fellow that was more than three meters tall. Snickering, he said, “Gislason, a hundred years ago, I might have asked the Patriarchs to come over upon hearing your words. Unfortunately…you are not nothing more than a coward who doesn’t even dare to fight back. What right do you have to invite my Patriarch over? I feel ashamed just speaking with you!”

“Impudence.” Gislason’s face seemed to have been covered by ice.

“Bastard!” Garvey, furious, gnashed his teeth, charging forward once more.

“Hold it.” Gislason grabbed Garvey and shouted at him.

“Patriarch!” Garvey turned to look at Gislason, shouting angrily.

“Hey, kid.” The muscular fellow glanced disdainfully at Garvey. “From the looks of you, your rank in the Four Divine Beasts clan should be fairly high. But in all these years, in all the battles between our eight great clans and your clan, I’ve never seen you.”

Garvey’s body trembled.

Indeed. Over the many previous years, because Garvey was one of the slightly weaker Elders, he had never gone to Boodbath Gorge, nor had he fought on behalf of the clan. He had watched as the other Elders sacrificed themselves for the clan, and as he did so, he had always felt guilt in his heart.

“Patriarch. I, Garvey, am an Elder, but in all these years, I’ve never had the chance to do battle.” Garvey’s eyes were bloodshot, and he stared savagely at the Patriarch. “I imagine that in the future, I won’t have the chance to battle the eight great clans either. Today…just grant me my wish.”

Gislason was stunned.

“Elder Garvey…” Linley hurriedly spoke out as well.

“Garvey, don’t…” Gislason hadn’t even finished his words before Elder Garvey let out a low laugh.

“BANG!” Suddenly, a terrifying azure aura emerged from Elder Garvey’s body, and he immediately broke through Gislason’s grip as his body split into two. One was an ordinary divine earth clone, which remained. As for that body which was brimming with azure light, it seemed to have transformed into an illusory dragon, bellowing as it charged towards the south.

Sovereign’s Might!

“Retreat!” The face of that burly warrior changed dramatically.

The ten-plus people by his side had changed as well. They hurriedly scattered in each direction, while the leader let out a low growl. His own body became covered with an azure aura as well; this man was an expert of the Barbary clan, skilled in using water.

“Garvey…” Linley watched, stunned.

Garvey opened his mouth, and instantly, an enormous illusion of an Azure Dragon that was more than ten thousand meters long appeared. An enormous Dragon Roar shot out, immediately enveloping all of the ten-plus people who had wanted to flee. Their bodies stiffened, and they became paralyzed.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Swoosh!”

Elder Garvey immediately scurried over, attacking those people who had been affected by the Dragon Roar in quick succession. “Bang!” “Bang!” Garvey only had the chance to kill two of them, before that man who had also used Sovereign’s Might interposed and blocked him.

The two experts began to battle wildly, exchanging multiple blows. Garvey’s thigh was torn open, and blood splattered everywhere. In terms of power, Elder Garvey was still quite a bit weaker than this muscular man of the Barbary clan.

“Patriarch, quick, save him!” Linley let out a low growl, and he charged forward as well. At the same time…

“BOOM!”

An earthen yellow light surged out from Linley’s body. It was a drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might.

But right at this moment…

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Six more figures flew out from the eight great clan’s forces, their bodies also radiating that terrifying, powerful aura of Sovereign’s Might. Clearly, they had come to jointly attack and kill Linley. Linley was by himself; how could he possibly overcome these six enemies?

Gislason’s face changed dramatically. He shouted loudly, “Quick, retreat!” At the same time, an azure aura burst forth from his body, and he too transformed into an azure ray of light, streaking through the skies.

Chapter 62 – The Thorn in Their Side

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 62, The Thorn in Their Side

Elder Garvey's battle against the enemy expert resulted in the aura of Sovereign's Might filling the area, causing the other three clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan to hurry over. When they saw those six figures simultaneously attack Linley, their faces all changed.

"Not good. All six of them are using Sovereign's Might, and two of them are Patriarchs!" The Vermillion Bird Matriarch recognized the enemy experts from far away.

"How can this be?! The eight great clans have gone mad!"

The White Tiger Patriarch, the Black Tortoise Patriarch, and the other Elders couldn't understand what they were seeing. No matter how powerful Linley was, he was just a Seven Star Fiend. How could he have angered the eight great clans to the point where without hesitating at all, six enemy members would immediately use Sovereign's Might to attack him, with two being Patriarchs!

Of the eight Patriarchs, seven were a Sovereign's Emissary, while the eighth was the most powerful of them all.

What sort of status did the eight of them have? And yet, two of them, not hesitating at all, immediately joined forces to shamelessly attack a junior like Linley? This was inconceivable!

"Linley, quick, flee!!!" A furious shout echoed in Linley's mind. At this moment, Linley also noticed out of the corner of his eyes that six enemy experts were attacking. He couldn't help but feel shocked. "Six? All using Sovereign's Might?"

Murderous looks were in the eyes of the six, and they looked like six tigers

that wanted to devour a little lost sheep. “Haha, Patriarch, this Linley actually flew out of the Skyrite Mountains. This really is an opportunity which the heavens had gifted us with.” An extremely muscular man whose entire body was covered with a white robe sent through divine sense.

“We have to seize this opportunity. We must kill him, no matter the cost!”

“He won’t be able to run!”

The six stared at Linley fixedly. Over the past thousand years, their eight great clans had wildly attacked the Four Divine Beasts clan, precisely because they were afraid that that they might take too long and allowed Linley to become a Highgod. They wanted to force Linley out.

But…over so many years, Linley had never come out.

Linley’s existence was a thorn in their side, a bone sticking in their craw. Even in their dreams, they dreamt of destroying this disaster waiting to happen. And now, today, heaven had given them the opportunity to do so! How could the six of them show any mercy? They didn’t show mercy…

But as for Linley, he was no fool. He knew his own limits.

Seeing the six of them charge over, Linley hurriedly retreated while shouting frantically with divine sense, “Garvey, retreat!”

In the same instant as he hurriedly retreated, with Linley at the center, an earthen yellow light sprang out in waves, immediately extending to create an enormous spherical region with a diameter of five hundred meters. It immediately caught the distant Elder Garvey and his opponent, still locked in battle.

Blackstone Space!

The Blackstone Space was the ultimate technique of Reisgem. Today, Linley actually used earth-type Sovereign’s Might to unleash this technique, which was an earth-type attack to begin with. Using earth-type Sovereign’s

Might to unleash it…the power of this Blackstone Space had been lifted to an unprecedented, powerful level.

The divine power of a God, when using this Blackstone Space, was capable of affecting weak Seven Star Fiends.

The divine power of a Highgod, when using this Blackstone Space, was capable of affecting even experts who were close to the rank of Asura; Reisgem's level.

But when using earth-type Sovereign's Might to execute this Blackstone Space…the enemy would have to use Sovereign's Might and also be a supreme expert in order to be able to resist it even slightly…as otherwise, within the Blackstone Space, there would be no way for them to fight back at all.

"Ahhh!" The Barbary clan's warrior who was battling against Elder Garvey, when affected by the gravitational pull, was caught off guard and sank down. In a battle between experts, the slightest flaw was enough to cause one's death!

"BANG!" Elder Garvey seized the opportunity to launch a palm slap against the head of the Barbary clan warrior, whose head exploded as a divine spark flew out.

The Barbary clan Elder had died!

But right at this moment…

"Swoosh!" Six figures charged straight into the Blackstone Space. The Blackstone Space was simply too large. If they wanted to kill Linley, they would have to draw close to him. Even though they knew how powerful the Blackstone Space was, they still had to charge in first.

But the power of the Blackstone Space was even greater than they had expected!

Blackstone Space – Repulsive Force!

The six figures that had been charging into the Blackstone Space suddenly slowed down. Caught off guard, two of the figures even were pushed backwards by the repulsive force of this Blackstone Space. They had charged straight in, but then suddenly were thrust out by the repulsive force. These two conflicting momentums caused their bodies to tremble, and their faces couldn't help but turn red. Just like that, they were injured.

This was the terrifying power of a supreme Blackstone Space!

"How is that possible?" The other four, although just barely able to resist from being repulsed outwards, were also slowed dramatically.

There was no way they would be able to catch Linley!

"Attack!" The leader, Patriarch Boleyn, roared through divine sense. At the same time, white, glowing wings appeared from his back, and a white, holy aura of Fate-type Sovereign's Might emanated from his entire body. The expression on Patriarch Boleyn's face was incomparably emotionless as he stared at Linley!

"Swish!" A semi-translucent white arrow pierced through the air, shooting towards Linley.

"Hmph!" A low growl.

A man with two icy blue eyes swung out his right arm, his blue eyebrows fluttering. A blue scimitar instantly shot out. The spatial fabric of the Infernal Realm was cut open like a piece of paper, wherever that blue scimitar sliced past.

If a blade was very sharp, when you sliced it through someone's head, the only thing that would happen would be that a red line would appear.

This scimitar cut through space in the same manner; when it sliced through space, it just left behind a thin crack, one which was almost invisible if not

examined carefully. However, the power of this scimitar had reached an astonishing level.

The white arrow and the blue scimitar shot out simultaneously.

“Hmph!” With but a thought, Linley suddenly made layers upon layers of earthen yellow walls appear out of nowhere, blocking in front of that white arrow and the scimitar. But the gliding speed of that scimitar was simply too fast; it was even faster than the white arrow, and it easily sliced through one wall after another.

Linley was shocked. “This scimitar…”

This earthen yellow wall was formed from earth-type Sovereign’s Might, and its defensive power was very terrifying. But this powerful defense, in the face of that scimitar, was like nothing more than wet paper, unable to block it in the slightest.

“Can it be a Sovereign artifact?” Linley continuously retreated.

“Whoosh!” The scimitar sliced through the air, and had already arrived in front of Linley. Only now did Linley clearly see…that as the scimitar slashed towards him, a neat cut in space itself could be seen at the edge of the scimitar. “Too fast. Too fast!” Linley wasn’t able to dodge at all.

Right at this fatal moment…

A black fist slammed down in front of Linley like a mountain. This enormous black fist lightly brushed past the scimitar. There was a clear, ringing sound, and the direction of the blue scimitar was changed. “Swish!” It slashed past Linley’s chest, effortlessly piercing past it.

“Quick, back!” That black hand snatched Linley, then dragged him backwards.

“Patriarch.” Linley saw from the corner of his eyes who this person was, and he felt gratitude in his heart. The person who had saved him was

Patriarch Gislason.

The half-translucent white arrow was slightly slower than the ‘scimitar’, and it landed on Gislason’s body. Gislason didn’t seem to even notice it, nor did he counter-attack; he just grabbed Linley and flew back into the Skyrite Mountains.

Although this took time to describe, the time it took between Linley flying out, Elder Garvey killing his enemy, and then Linley and Gislason both fleeing back was nothing more than the time it took to blink one’s eye. But such a heart-palpitating series of events had occurred in that blinking of an eye!

The Skyrite Mountains.

Gislason and Linley both flew back. Only now did they let out sighs of relief. Elder Garvey had been lucky enough to flee back as well. In truth, the enemies had considered Linley to be their real target, and so Elder Garvey had seized the chance to flee back.

“Patriarch, thank you for saving my life.” Linley looked at his chest, terror flashing through his mind at what almost happened.

“You really are audacious.” Gislason let out a long breath, then looked towards the front. “Just now, the enemy actually sent out six people at once, all using Sovereign’s Might. Even I was shocked…in particular, the Patriarch of the Venna Clan even attacked with his weapon-type Sovereign artifact!”

Linley was shocked. That had actually been a Sovereign artifact!

“However.” Gislason laughed as he looked at Linley. “The power of your Gravitational Space truly is terrifying, especially after you used a drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might. Those two weaker individuals, even after having used their Sovereign’s Might, were actually repelled outwards. As for Patriarch Boleyn and the other Elders, they weren’t able to chase after and attack us at all.”

Indeed!

After Linley set up his ‘Blackstone Space’, the enemies could only attack from afar; they weren’t able to pursue at all.

“Linley, thank you.” Elder Garvey, his face ashen, drew near and said gratefully.

“Linley!” A deep, rumbling voice echoed out. The Black Tortoise Patriarch, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, the White Tiger Patriarch, and a number of other Elders flew over as well. “What is going on? Why is it that as soon as you attacked, the eight great clans would suddenly attack you like mad? Even two Patriarchs joined forces. Is there some sort of huge enmity between you and them?”

Linley felt completely baffled as well.

“I don’t know either. I only fought for the clan on a few occasions and killed a few enemy Elders. Nothing else.” Linley stared into the distance. He didn’t understand why the eight great clans wanted to kill him this badly. Their madness had already reached an all-encompassing state, and they viewed him as the greatest thorn in their side.

“What a wonderful chance that was…” Patriarch Boleyn shut his eyes, unwilling to accept what had just happened.

“The two of you joined forces, and yet you still weren’t able to kill Linley. What a waste of a wonderful opportunity!” A cold, insidious man, dressed in voluminous black robes and with vipers hanging from his ears said in a low voice. “Patriarch Venna, how could you have missed with your blade?”

The man with the long, blue eyebrows let out a cold snort, not explaining.

“There’s no point to discussing this now.” A gentle voice rang out. Patriarch Edric. “What is done is done. What we now need to do is come up with a way…to find another chance to kill Linley. Linley’s Gravitational Space is

simply astonishing. It isn't so bad if he doesn't use Sovereign's Might, but once he does…only we Patriarchs have a chance to kill him."

"It doesn't matter who kills him. What matters is forcing him out to fight again." A growling voice rang out.

"I'll give it a try. Let's see if I can force Linley out." Suddenly, an elfin-looking Elder flew out.

The clan leaders and Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were all together. The actions of the eight great clans had caused them to be utterly enraged, but all they could do right now was to endure it. After all, the number of experts the enemies had was simply too overpoweringly greater.

"Boss, you were too rash." Bebe hurried over as well.

Linley could only chuckle. "I didn't expect that the eight great clans would attack me so madly." Linley had thought that when he attacked, the enemy would at most send out a single Elder to stop him…and in that sort of situation, Linley was confident he would be able to save Elder Garvey. But the reaction of the enemy side was simply too astounding; even he was terrified by it.

Right at this moment, a mocking voice rang out from the other side.

"That should have been Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan just now, right? Oh, excuse me, the Azure Pest clan's Elder. I had thought that you, Linley, were an impressive figure. But from the display you just put on, Elder Linley…haha, you really disappoint me!" The snickering laugh rang out. "I, an ordinary Elder of the Edric clan, am here right now. Elder of the Azure Pest clan, dare you fight me?"

This mocking laugh echoed throughout the Skyrite Mountains.

Azure Pest clan?

The Four Divine Beast clansmen were all enraged, and many stared

hatefully at the enemy clansmen.

Linley couldn't help but look towards the gray-robed, elfin-looking Elder. In his heart, he was pondering. "What is going on with the eight great clans? They want to make me step out and fight again? Why are they focused on me?" Linley felt that there was something amiss.

"Linley, don't go." Gislason immediately instructed.

"Hey…!" Bebe shouted loudly. "You claim to be eight 'great' clans? Just now, six of you attacked Linley, and two of you were Patriarchs. The eight great clans truly are great; two Patriarchs and four Elders jointly attacked Elder Linley, and yet Elder Linley wasn't even injured in the slightest!"

On the side of the eight great clans, all of the Elders were pondering on how to make Linley fly out of the Skyrite Mountains. They viewed Linley as being the member of the Four Divine who was a true thorn in their side, a burr in their paw.

Chapter 63 – A Turn Of Events

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 63, A Turn Of Events

The borders of the Skyrite Mountains. The clan leaders and Elders of the Four Divine Beasts clan were all gathered together, holding a secret meeting. This tactic of the eight great clans wasn't a particularly brilliant one, but it really was vile, venomous, and vicious!

When the Four Divine Beasts clan had decided to withdraw from battle, this decision had already caused them teeth-gnashing agony.

But now the eight great clans came and openly mocked them and satirized them. This was like pouring oil onto a flame. The battle that resulted caused the Four Divine Beasts clan to feel angered, enraged, hate-filled. The four clan leaders and Elders were discussing how to resolve this matter, while Linley was pondering this matter as well. "Why exactly do the eight great clans want to kill me so badly? To the point where even two of their Patriarchs would be so shameless as to join forces to attack me?"

Linley was filled with confusion.

At the same time, Linley also looked towards the outside, but as he did, Linley suddenly frowned in puzzlement. "Hey, what are they doing?" The eight great clans had actually sent out several warriors who, working together, were shifting over a small mountain that was a thousand meters wide and nearly a hundred meters tall. The mountains of the Higher Planes were astonishingly heavy; given the size of this dwarf mountain, one could imagine how much it weighed.

"Why did they move a mountain over?" Bebe looked over, puzzled.

Gislason and the other clan leaders, as well as the Elders, all looked over as well. Everyone was rather puzzled.

Those warriors sent out their strengths in unison, directly tossing the dwarf mountain in front of them. It landed to the ground with a massive ‘boom’ sound, striking heavily down at the demarcating region between the Skyrite Mountains and the base of the eight great clans.

That arrogant looking man with the long green eyebrows flew towards the dwarf mountain.

“Him?” Linley wouldn’t forget this man. It was he who had used the weapon-type Sovereign artifact to attack Linley.

The green-eyebrowed man flipped his hand, and instantly, a large amount of green energy knives flew into the air, slashing past the dwarf mountain. Immediately, large amounts of rocks and stones were smashed apart. The wind howled and pebbles blasted everywhere. In but a few moments, the appearance of the dwarf mountain had changed.

It was now eight hundred meters in diameter and fifty meters in height.

An enormous dueling platform!

“Swoosh!” A skinny youth with cold, insidious eyes suddenly flew over to the dueling platform. He swept everyone with his gaze, then said brightly, “You say that we are fighting you in groups? Fine. Today, let’s fight one on one. Nobody will be permitted to interfere in a duel. Linley, you killed my older brother. Today, I challenge you, Linley. Linley, dare you accept my challenge?”

“Linley, dare you accept my challenge?”

This voice echoed throughout the Skyrite Mountains, reverberating in the heavens. Even Delia and Wade, originally in the gorge, heard this voice calling out to Linley. Worried, they all flew out.

Everyone looked at Linley, waiting for Linley to respond.

“Linley, don’t go fight.” Gislason said softly.

“Linley.” Delia had already flown out. Linley nodded towards Delia, then smiled.

At this time, the voice turned satirical. “You don’t even have the courage to fight one on one. Hmph!” Mocking, disdainful words. Despite that, however, quite a few people on the enemy side were staring at Linley, waiting to see his reaction.

“Bebe, Delia, Wade. Let’s go back.” Linley just smiled calmly, then turned and left.

Linley could tell that the eight great clans clearly wanted to incite him to go out and do battle. But after the previous experience, where six major experts had attacked him en masse, Linley had come to an understanding. The eight great clans wanted to kill him very much. “If I go accept a challenge now, that isn’t valor, that’s idiocy.”

Seeing Linley fly into the inner regions of the Skyrite Mountains, the Patriarchs and Elders of the enemy clans couldn’t help but feel resigned. “Just now, when all of you attacked without killing Linley, I knew that Linley would definitely grow cautious. To force him to come out now… difficult!” A deep, rumbling voice rang out.

“There’s no point to saying these things now!”

The eight Patriarchs were filled with regret. They had the perfect chance just then, but they had missed it. Kill Linley now? Linley wouldn’t be so impulsive as to give them the chance!

Within the Skyrite Mountains. The great gorge. Three days had gone by since the eight great clans had moved over. During the past three times, the eight great clans had especially arranged for a group of people who, working in shifts, spent their entire time cursing, insulting, and mocking the Four Divine Beasts clan. Of course, they would occasionally have to rest, but the majority of the time in each day was spent cursing and mocking.

It seemed as though mocking the Four Divine Beasts clan was a source of amusement for them.

And of course, they would call out some Elders and clan leaders by name, including Gislason and the other three clan leaders, as well as Linley. These names were often singled out for ridicule. Even though Linley knew that this was a treacherous plot by the enemy side, Linley still grew infuriated upon hearing it.

“Linley, during this period of time, you must not go out, no matter what.” Gislason instructed him solemnly.

Linley laughed bitterly and nodded. “Patriarch, don’t worry. I understand. Only, to tell the truth…” Linley could still clearly hear the constant mockery and insults drifting down from above. The eight great clans had already spent three days here at the borders of the Skyrite Mountains.

“To be insulted like this…anybody, no matter how good their temper is, will be furious.” Linley said somberly.

“In the past few days, quite a few of our clansmen were unable to endure it any longer, and they went to battle the eight great clans on the dueling platform.” Gislason let out a sigh. “When one’s rage reaches a certain level, one might not be able to endure it. These clansmen will even ignore the orders of their Patriarch and go do battle. But the eight great clans have held to their word as well; the fights have all been one against one. However, the results of the duels have actually been slightly favorable to our side.” Gislason, when saying these words, felt rather helpless as well.

The clansmen were going all out, but the experts of the clan weren’t able to overcome the enemy.

The battles of the Infernal Realm relied on supreme experts.

Linley understood that this was a gloomy subject, so he changed the topic. “Right, Patriarch. That day, when you saved me, you were able to block that Sovereign scimitar artifact. Are those black gloves of yours also Sovereign

artifacts?”

“No.”

Gislason shook his head. “I don’t have any weapon-type Sovereign artifacts. The Lord Prefect gifted me with this set of black gloves. They are godspark weapons.”

“Godspark weapons?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

Bebe had a godspark weapon as well. Divine sparks were indestructibly tough, and so godspark weapons naturally were extraordinary.

“Sovereign artifacts are nourished by Sovereigns. Sovereigns contain astonishing levels of energy in their body, and so Sovereign artifacts have terrifying attack power. Godspark weapons, however, don’t actually have much energy in them. But they do have one strong point; their toughness!” Gislason laughed. “By relying on this godspark weapon, I am able to block even Sovereign artifacts. Still, that day, that wind-type Sovereign scimitar really was too frighteningly powerful. Even I only dared to rely on knocking it sideways and borrowing its own momentum, rather than taking it head on. After all, godspark weapons, compared to Sovereign artifacts, are still slightly inferior.”

Linley nodded.

Perhaps in terms of toughness, godspark weapons weren’t inferior to Sovereign artifacts. But Sovereign artifacts were formed from large amounts of Sovereign’s power nurturing them over countless years. Their attack power was simply too frighteningly great.

“If you have the chance, you should ask for a godspark weapon from the Lord Prefect as well. I trust the Lord Prefect would give you one.” Gislason laughed. “The power of your ‘Blackstone Space’ is indeed great, but your attack power is still a little weak. With a godspark weapon, you will be much stronger.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel stirred.

He had already witnessed the toughness of a godspark weapon for himself; it was far harder than even his own draconic scales.

“Don’t these people grow tired?” Gislason frowned, raising his head to stare into the distance.

“Four Pests clans, why is it that you have only sent ordinary Highgods? Where are the Elders? You let all these minor figures come out to fight, while the Elders all hide like cowards. Haha…” Mocking laughter drifted in from outside.

Linley couldn’t help but furrow his brow in anger.

Although he was able to forcibly restrain his anger, he was still annoyed when hearing these things. When one grew annoyed, one would become irritable as well.

“Endure for a few more days. The clan is currently carving out an enormous magic formation that will form a giant elemental barrier. By then, all sound will be blocked out between the outside world and us.” Gislason said helplessly. Being constantly assaulted by those voices was a form of torture.

……

In the air above the Skyrite Mountains, an enormous elemental barrier had taken form. No matter what the forces of the eight great clans were saying, the clansmen were unable to hear it. But although they couldn’t hear it… everyone still felt unhappy.

This sort of action was akin to just holding their hands over their ears. They felt humiliated!

“The final bottleneck of the Profound Mysteries of Vitality truly is hard to break through.” Linley sat in the meditative stance atop a grassy area. Linley had been seizing every moment, wanting to reach mastery in the

Profound Mysteries of Vitality, so as to become a Highgod."

In the past few days, although at first, the eight great clans had continued their insults and mockery, the clan had erected that enormous magic formation, sealing off all sound.

These things caused Linley to constantly feel a suppressed rage in his heart.

"Boss." Suddenly, Bebe's voice rang out. "Grandpa came."

Linley opened his eyes. He saw that in mid-air, Beirut, Bebe, and Phusro were flying down. Beirut had that perpetual smile on his face. Linley immediately stood up, walking forward to greet them.

"Linley, you are actually able to keep calm, eh?" Beirut chortled.

"What other choice do I have, other than keep calm?" Linley said helplessly.

"Aren't they holding one-on-one duels outside? Why don't you go?" Phusro asked with curiosity, while Linley said resignedly, "Phusro, those eight great clans are definitely fixated on killing me. In addition…I'm still a bit too weak. I'm not a match for those eight Patriarchs."

Phusro laughed. "I have to tell you, if you don't go now, in the future, it'll be hard for you to find another opportunity like this."

"What do you mean?" Linley asked disbelievingly.

In the future, he wouldn't have a chance to go out and fight? Linley looked suspiciously at Beirut and Phusro. "Lord Beirut, what are you two…?"

"It is about time for this noisesome performance to come to an end." Beirut laughed calmly. "Come. Take me to your Patriarch."

"Grandpa, the Patriarch doesn't know that you are here?" Bebe was rather astonished.

Phusro laughed resignedly. “Your Grandpa wanted to see you right away, so he flew over here directly…those patrolling warriors recognize myself and Beirut, so they didn’t dare stop us.” Just as they spoke, several whooshing sounds rang out.

“Lord Prefect.” Gislason and several others flew over.

“Lord Prefect, you should have informed me that you were coming. I would’ve gone to welcome you.” Gislason said with a laugh.

Beirut just laughed calmly. “Enough, Gislason. Hurry up and give the order to your Elders as well as important clansmen. Have them all be summoned here. Today, I will help your Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans resolve the bonds of enmity and hatred that have ensnared you.”

Gislason was stunned, and the Elders behind him were stunned as well.

In recent days, especially after the eight great clans had moved to the Skyrite Mountains, Gislason and the others had long ago begun to feel exhausted from the ongoing mental pressure. None of them knew…when this would come to an end.

Sometimes, they too wanted to act as those ordinary clansmen had. To go crazy, and to go battle against the enemy!

But they were clan leaders and Elders. They had to consider what was in the best interests of the clan!

The pressure of carrying these heavy burdens had nearly driven them mad.

“Lord Prefect, you…what did you just say?” Gislason stuttered.

“Isn’t this what you’ve always wanted me to do?” Beirut laughed calmly.

A look of wild joy appeared on Gislason’s face. With a ‘bang’ sound, he actually fell heavily to his knees, his eyes glistening with tears. “Lord

Prefect, I…our Four Divine Beasts clan will never forget the kindness you have shown us!" Involuntary tears came to the eyes of the Elders behind him as well.

"Hurry up and go invite the other three clan leaders. Have the Grand Elder and the others come as well." Gislason hurriedly instructed.

"Yes, Patriarch!"

These Elders were moving with vigor and purpose now.

Linley just stared sideways at Beirut, who turned and looked back at him. "Linley, why are you looking at me like this?"

"I…I somewhat can't believe it." Linley still felt as though he were in a dream.

Although nobody in the eight great clans was capable of overcoming Beirut, still…the clan had multiple Sovereign's Emissaries. If Beirut was going to force them to resolve their hatred with each other…wasn't this going to cause a huge amount of trouble for him?

"Patriarch! Terrible news!" A figure flew over at high speed. "The Grand Elder, the Grand Elder, she's gone to the dueling platform. She's currently battling against the forces of the eight great clans!"

"What?!"

Gislason instantly grew frantic.

"Let's go have a look." Beirut just laughed as he spoke.

Chapter 64 – Supremacy

Book 17, Indigo Prefecture – Chapter 64， Supremacy

“The Grand Elder went to the dueling platform?” Linley was very puzzled as well.

He immediately followed Beirut, Phusro, and the others as they flew out of the great gorge. After flying out of the gorge, Gislason glanced sideways at the elemental barrier covering the entire Skyrite Mountains, then shouted towards a group of patrolling warriors above Dragon Avenue, “Convey my orders. The entire elemental barrier is to be withdrawn and dispersed!”

“Uh….yes, Patriarch!”

These patrol warriors were rather surprised, but then they immediately came to their senses.

Linley stared at the elemental barrier covering the entire Skyrite Mountains. “This is an insult. A humiliation for the clan!” Others were insulting them, but all they could do was hold their hands over their ears, not daring to fight back? If this wasn’t humiliating, what was?

The dueling platform between the Skyrite Mountains and the eight great clans. After multiple battles, it was filled with countless holes already, and dark red blood stained the entire dueling platform.

“Haaaargh!”

An illusory draconic claw pierced through the enemy’s skull, then retracted. The Dragonformed Grand Elder glanced calmly into the distance. “Hmph. Next!” This was the third person she had killed on the dueling platform.

The first person she had killed had been an ordinary Highgod who had won a previous battle.

The second person she had killed was just a Six Star Fiend.

But the third she had killed, that was an Elder-level expert.

“Gaia! It seems today, you are looking to die.” The experts of the eight great clans hastened over as well.

“Looking to die? I want to see which of you members of the eight great clans will be capable of killing me today.” The Grand Elder’s icy gaze swept through them, no fear in her eyes at all. The past ten thousand years had already pressured the Grand Elder to the point of madness.

Her father had died, causing the Grand Elder endless grief.

The clan had been unable to escape from this disaster, and as they had fled and been pursued, her husband had died.

And now, a few centuries ago, her one and only son, Forhan, had died as well. And she herself had been forced to kill him with her own two hands.

Who could understand the level of grief, pain, and depression in the Grand Elder’s heart? Still, in her heart, she always remembered the clan, and that she had to remain strong for the clan. But in the past few days…

The eight great clans had been like mosquitoes, constantly mocking and insulting the Four Divine Beasts clan to the point where the clan had even been forced to set up an enormous elemental barrier. This sort of action caused the Grand Elder to feel humiliated.

She wasn’t able to endure it any longer. She didn’t want to continue suppressing herself either. She was afraid that she would go insane!

Kill, then!

Kill to her heart’s content! Only in slaughter would she be able to vent the rage and grief in her heart.

The Grand Elder stood there arrogantly on the dueling platform, her silver masked smudged with a hint of blood. “Who will come fight against me? No matter who comes, I will accept the challenge.” The Grand Elder’s gaze swept past the eight Patriarchs as she snickered.

The eight Patriarchs all felt that this was rather troublesome.

The second generation members of the Four Divine Beasts clan all had Sovereign artifacts. Gislason, for example, had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. As for the Grand Elder, Gaia, she had an armor-type Sovereign artifact that was fused with her draconic scales.

Although the eight great clans didn’t fear her, the Grand Elder was very hard to deal with, given that she had an armor-type Sovereign artifact.

“Patriarch Barbary, it should be easier for you to deal with her. You go.” Patriarch Boleyn said.

Patriarch Barbary swept his tiger-like gaze forward towards her. Nodding slightly, his body suddenly flickered as he flew atop the dueling platform.

“I knew that it would either be you or Venna. None of the other six dare.” The Grand Elder snickered. This armor-type Sovereign artifact made it so that the Grand Elder could ignore the material attacks of the enemies, while she herself could use her powerful body to attack.

The Grand Elder’s soul defense was also very strong; after all, she had that azure glow that was her innate ability, as well as an ordinary soul-protecting artifact.

But of course…

Although she was powerful, the eight enemy Patriarchs were also powerful.

“Gaia, today is the day of your death.” A deep voice rang out, which seemed to reverberate within that mighty chest. Patriarch Barbary, more

than three meters tall, extended his right arm. A long blue whip suddenly appeared, tens of meters in length, like an enormous blue serpent.

“Who knows which of us shall be the one to die!”

The Grand Elder said in a fierce voice. And then, her body suddenly shot forward, instantly passing through the dueling platform. Patriarch Barbary leapt forward as well, his long whip lashing out, forming multiple circles that sought to wrap themselves around the Grand Elder.

By the time Beirut, the Patriarch, and the others hurried over to the borders of the Skyrite Mountains, the Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary had already been locked into fierce combat. Still, in this battle, the Grand Elder was at a disadvantage.

That long whip was too monstrously powerful.

“This…this is the power of the Grand Elder?” Linley stared, amazed, at the scene before him. The Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary had completely transformed into two balls of dancing shadows, but the low sound of hammer-like blows and the spatial explosions that could be seen everywhere caused Linley to stare in disbelief.

Beirut glanced sideways at Linley, then laughed calmly. “Don’t be so surprised, Linley. Gaia’s draconic scales includes an armor-type Sovereign artifact in them. Naturally, her punches and kicks are formidable. As for her opponent, that long whip is a weapon-type Sovereign artifact. Sovereign artifact against Sovereign artifact…the collisions will naturally be very powerful.

Linley took a deep breath.

“Linley, the power of your weapons are a bit weak. Would you like a weapon that is a bit more powerful?” Beirut laughed calmly.

Linley turned to look towards Beirut, his eyes filled with amazement. No matter how stupid he might be, he could tell that Beirut seemed to be

offering him a powerful weapon. What sort of weapon? The first thing Linley thought of was…a godspark weapon!

“It isn’t easy for me to make a godspark weapon either.” Beirut laughed calmly. “So you work hard first. Once you become a Highgod, I’ll make one for you.”

Linley’s heart surged with excitement.

With a godspark weapon, he would at least have some capability of resisting the attacks of an enemy with a Sovereign weapon.

“Work hard and become a Highgod soon.” Beirut chortled.

Linley turned his head to stare at the platform. The Grand Elder’s battle against Patriarch Barbary had already reached a feverish point, and that long whip seemed to have transformed into countless giant serpents, surrounding the entire dueling platform.

“How could it become like this?” Linley stared at the dueling platform in surprise. The longer Patriarch Barbary fought, the more relaxed he seemed to be. That long whip had already reached the level of seeming to have a million branches, constantly and endlessly encircling the Grand Elder.

The more he watched, the more Linley realized how truly limitless the profound mysteries were.

“He’s trained quite well in the Laws of Water.” Beirut said in praise.

“Eh?” Beirut glanced sideways at Linley. “This kid…he really does get absorbed so easily.” Beirut finally began to understand why Linley trained so quickly.

While Beirut’s group was watching the duel, the Patriarchs and Elders of the eight great clans were staring towards them in shock. “That Beirut came. He actually came!”

“Beirut won’t interfere, will he?” A hint of panic flashed through Patriarch Boleyn’s eyes.

“We didn’t violate his orders. He won’t interfere.” Patriarch Reinales said with certainty, but despite saying that, he still felt worry in his heart.

The eight great clans felt a hint of dread towards Beirut.

When one reached the level of the clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Patriarchs of the eight great clans, or the Grand Level, it could be said that their power was comparable to the Asuras of the Infernal Realm! But although they were powerful, they weren’t monstrously powerful.

Soul defense, material defense…they had no weaknesses.

At their level, they had no need to fear each other. For someone on the other side to kill them would be difficult. But for them to kill someone else on the same level? Also difficult! It was much like how right now, Patriarch Barbary and the Grand Elder found it very hard to make this battle a life-and-death battle!

But Beirut was different!

Monsters like Beirut and Dunnington stood at the very peak of Highgods. They were capable of killing Asuras of the Infernal Realm. The power of individuals such as them was on a terrifyingly strong level.

If Beirut truly wanted to unleash a bloodbath, he could massacre the eight great clans. One could imagine how terrifying he was!

“Life without end, in a constant cycle…life without end, in a constant cycle…” Linley murmured to himself. He actually closed his eyes, and in his mind appeared the blurry shadow of that whip, and the profound mysteries held within it…

Seven Elemental Laws. Four Edicts.

Although they had different names, they all had some commonalities; for example, earth had the Essence of the Earth, while fire had the Essence of Fire. Some soul mutants, in turn, were capable of fusing and simultaneously using profound mysteries from different Laws.

Why were they able to fuse them?

Because they had commonalities and shared characteristics!

Different Laws weren't completely separate; their profound mysteries were all interconnected. The Elemental Laws of Water had a hint of a connection with the 'Profound Mysteries of Vitality' of the Laws of the Earth. At this moment, Linley just so happened to seize that connection…

Linley was completely absorbed in his insights, but Gislason and the others were growing somewhat frantic. "Lord Prefect, my little sister's situation is becoming worse and worse. Let's pause it." Gislason wanted to pause it, but he didn't have the ability to.

Two Sovereign artifacts were clashing against each other. He didn't dare to intervene!

"This sort of battle is indeed pointless." Beirut laughed calmly.

"Swish!"

He moved so quickly, it seemed as though he had teleported!

Beirut instantly inserted himself into the center of the dueling platform. With a low thudding sound, the entire battle suddenly ground to a halt. Beirut was gripping one end of the long whip in one hand, while clutching the Grand Elder's draconic claw in the other.

"Whoah…" Bebe stared, wide-eyed.

"Too powerful." Gislason, the Vermillion Bird Matriarch, the other clan leaders, and even the Patriarchs of the eight great clans couldn't help but

feel their hearts clench tightly. The Grand Elder's punches were comparable to the attacks of a Sovereign artifact, while the long whip really was a Sovereign artifact, and had transformed into countless movements.

But Beirut had effortlessly grabbed each with a single hand.

He dared to actually grab Sovereign artifacts with his bare hands…the power and might of Beirut caused Gislason and the others to be completely stunned. Although Beirut was also an Asura of the Infernal Realm…he vastly outstripped the other Asuras.

"Enough. Let it be finished." Beirut said calmly.

The Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary were both stunned. The Grand Elder silently retreated, while Patriarch Barbary opened his mouth as though he wanted to say something, but he didn't dare to. In the end, all he could say was, "Since the Lord Prefect has made the request, I will spare her life." After speaking, all he could do was fly back.

The eight great clans on one side. The Four Divine Beasts clan on the other. And between them, standing in the center of the dueling platform, surrounded by countless experts, was Beirut.

"Lord Prefect, why didn't you tell us that you were coming?" Patriarch Boleyn laughed merrily, seeming to be quite friendly. There weren't many clans that would dare offend monstrous individuals such as Beirut or Dunnington.

Even when the Four Divine Beasts clan was at the height of their power and glory, with the four Sovereigns behind them, although the clan didn't fear Highgod Paragons, they wouldn't want to offend figures on that level either.

"Oh. Today, I came to help your two sides resolve your differences with each other." Beirut laughed calmly.

The Patriarchs and Elders of the eight great clans couldn't refrain from having stiff looks appear on their faces.

“It has been more than ten thousand years now. You have been battling in my Indigo Prefecture this entire time, and I have been watching everything. By now, the Four Divine Beasts clan have lost enough of their Elders, and their reputation has been badly damaged as well. This punishment is sufficient! As I see it, your eight great clans should return to the places from whence you came.” Beirut said elegantly and lightly.

Return to the places from whence they came?

The eight Patriarchs were so furious, their faces reddened. The Elders of the eight great clans were also so angry that they could die.

“Lord Prefect.” Unable to restrain his fury, Patriarch Edric spoke out. “In all these years, our eight great clans have never disobeyed your orders. We have never attacked into the Skyrite Mountains. Back then, you said…that as long as we do not attack into the Skyrite Mountains, you will not interfere. So why is it that today you are interfering?”

The eight Patriarchs felt hatred.

Hatred for Beirut for not honoring his promises. They were indeed afraid of Beirut, but no matter how powerful Beirut was, he couldn’t just ignore his promises.

Beirut just let out a calm laugh. He didn’t say a word.

Patriarch Boleyn’s hoarse voice rang out as well. “Lord Prefect, it is true that many members of the Four Divine Beasts clan have died. But over these years, haven’t our eight great clans also lost many people? What’s more, when the four Sovereigns were alive, the Four Divine Beasts clan’s actions left behind one blood debt after another. My own son was killed by the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and the reason? That person took a fancy to my son’s wife!”

“Lord Prefect.” The Nether Serpent Patriarch also said in a low voice. “I had nine sons and daughters, but now? Only one is left! The other eight all

died, and all of them died unjust deaths. Even if our Barbary clan ignores the other blood debts which were incurred…if it weren't for the fact that we hate them so much, why would we be willing to sacrifice even our Elders, for the sake of eradicating them?"

"Beirut." Reinales said in a low voice. 'You and I are both Emissaries under the command of the Bloodridge Sovereign. I imagine you know my story… you tell me. Can I possibly so easily give up the enmity I hold against them?"

"Lord Prefect…"

All eight Patriarchs spoke out angrily.

They had killed many members of the Four Divine Beasts clan, yes…but had it been easy for them? Their Elders had died as well, one after the other. In addition, the stockpile of Sovereign's Might which their eight great clans held was smaller than the stockpile held by the Four Divine Beasts clan. In fact, over the course of revenging themselves upon the Four Divine Beasts clan, the eight great clans had actually lost slightly more Elders.

It was only because those losses were evenly spread amongst their eight clans that they had been able to withstand these losses.

Over all these years, they too had lost around two hundred Elders! Their Elders were also the pillars of their clans. Did they want their Elders to die? They weren't willing for it to happen…but over the course of countless years, from ancient times till now, the amount of hatred that had accumulated was simply too great!

They were willing to move their entire clans and willing to spend the lives of their Elders in order to fight. They were even willing to use words to insult and mock. These actions were very despicable, and they cared about their face as well. Did they want to do these things?

No…but they had no choice!

The Four Divine Beasts clan had retreated into the Skyrite Mountains. This was their only way to get them to come out!

“I know that your eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan have great enmity. But the Four Divine Beasts clan has lost nearly ninety percent of their Elders, and their reputation has suffered greatly as well…I expect that the entire Infernal Realm will come to learn of these things. The glory of the Four Divine Beasts clan is over, and many of their Elders died…it is enough!”

Beirut said calmly, “And what’s more, in the past, they didn’t exterminate your clans either.”

“Lord Prefect, originally, you said that if we didn’t attack the Skyrite Mountains, you wouldn’t interfere. But today!” Patriarch Boleyn couldn’t help but speak out. The other seven Patriarchs as well as a large group of Elders were all staring at Beirut as well.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was staring at Beirut as well.

The members of the Four Divine Beasts clan had nearly been pushed to the brink of madness. Each of them was filled with the utmost agony. They now hoped…that the issues between the two sides would come to an end!

“I did indeed give my word!” Beirut laughed calmly. “And it is true that you have never attacked the Skyrite Mountains. However…today, I’m not the one interfering in this matter. Rather…the almighty Sovereign is!”

Beirut waved his hand, and a piece of lambskin parchment with complicated magic runes appeared within it.

“Crackle…” The lambskin suddenly ignited, and a strange energy ripple spread out.

The eight Patriarchs were stunned.

“Sovereign?” They didn’t dare believe it.

But right at this moment, a very unique sort of energy appeared in the world. A black energy quickly began to coalesce in the skies, and this black energy was the awe-inspiring 'Destruction-type Sovereign power'. To coalesce Sovereign power out of thin air…what sort of ability was this?

A large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might took form in mid-air, coalescing into an enormous black face that was tens of meters high.

A terrifying, awe-inspiring aura of supremacy spread out.

"Sovereign!" Reinales was the first one to sink to his knees in supplication. He could immediately recognize…that this was the Bloodridge Sovereign whom he served.

The enormous black face floated there in mid-air, staring down at the various Patriarchs and Elders, as well as the millions of clansmen of the two sides. Everyone felt as though they couldn't breathe. "Whoooosh." Countless people fell to their knees, all of them incomparably nervous.

"Sovereign." Beirut bowed.

The enormous black face revealed a hint of a smile towards Beirut, and then said in a voice that echoed like thunder, "Let the matter between the eight great clans and the Four Divine Beasts clan come to an end. Return to the places from whence you came."

"Yes!" Reinales was the first to respond.

Although the other seven Patriarchs were reluctant in their hearts to do so, they still said in a respectful voice, "Yes!"

Beirut alone was enough to engender terror in them, to say nothing of a Sovereign. It would be utter simplicity itself for a Sovereign to annihilate all eight of their clans. The supremacy of a Sovereign…was inviolable and irresistible!

“Beirut.” The enormous black face turned to look towards Beirut, his gaze like pillars of light.

“Sovereign.” Beirut bowed.

“Who is that youth standing over there?” The enormous black face said. “In this place, aside from yourself, only that youth remains on his feet.” The Sovereign’s gaze was focused towards the distance. When a Sovereign descended, who would dare to be so wild and arrogant as to remain on his feet? Puzzled, Beirut turned his head to look, and Gislason and the others did so as well…

And they saw that Linley was standing there, his eyes shut, not moving at all. It seemed as though he even had a hint of a smile on his face.

“Linley?” Beirut felt rather amazed as well.

Just now, when they saw the Sovereign appear, Gislason and the others had all immediately knelt down nervously to await the Sovereign’s edict. Who would pay attention to Linley? Even if they had noticed anything, they wouldn’t dare to make a sound.

“Boss.” Bebe said frantically through their soul connection, but Linley didn’t react at all.

“Sovereign, he’s Linley, the one I mentioned to you before.” Beirut said in a low voice.

“Oh.” The Sovereign looked towards Linley curiously, and the beam of light emanating from his eyes fell upon Linley. “Someone is actually absorbed in gaining insights during the moment when I descend. In all my years, I’ve never seen this sort of situation happen before.”

And right at that moment…

“Rumble…”

A unique ripple surged out as the Laws of the universe descended. This sort of Law-ripple was one which everyone here was all too familiar with. These were the ripples of the Law which appeared when one became a Deity, or when one's divine spark transformed. From within Linley's body, a divine spark emanating an earthen yellow aura flew out.

The Laws of the Earth were transforming this divine spark, and at the same time, the soul was being transformed as well…

A Sovereign. The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan. The Patriarchs of the eight great clans. Hundreds of Elders. Countless clansmen. They all watched as Linley became a Highgod. This perhaps had never before happened in the entire history of the Infernal Realm.

Some time later…

Linley opened his eyes.

"What's going on?" Stared at by countless people, Linley couldn't help but feel badly startled.

And then, Linley suddenly sensed a terrifyingly powerful presence. He couldn't help but raise his head to stare into the air, where that enormous black face was staring at him. The twin beams of light emanating from those enormous eyes caused Linley's heart to clench.

Linley, having seen a scryer recording of a Sovereign, instantly understood in his heart.

"Sovereign? When did this Sovereign come?" Linley was completely awestruck.

The lips of that enormous black face crooked upwards. "Amusing. Amusing." And then, the enormous black face suddenly vanished. That enormous swirl of Destruction-type Sovereign power suddenly vanished, as though it had never existed.

Beirut flew over, staring at Linley, not knowing whether he should laugh or cry. “Linley, I told you that I’d make a godspark weapon for you when you became a Highgod, but there was…there was no need to make your breakthrough right away.”

“I…”

Linley didn’t know what to say.

He himself hadn’t known that he would suddenly gain that moment of insight.

Chapter 1 – What Type of Weapon?

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 1, What Type of Weapon?

Linley had suddenly gained an insight and broken through, right at that critical moment when the Sovereign had descended, and became a Highgod. This caused Beirut and a few others to snicker in amusement, but quite a few others present were completely shocked. The most stunned of all were the experts of the eight great clans.

“This Linley…became a Highgod?” Patriarch Boleyn stared at Linley.

“He actually became a Highgod!” Patriarch Edric and the others all had very complicated looks on their faces.

“Even if the Sovereign hadn’t descended, we probably would still have to leave.” The Nether Serpent Patriarch sighed.

The reason behind their thousand years of savagery was because they were worried about Linley. They believed that the God-level Linley had to have fused at least five profound mysteries for him, given his power. And once Linley became a Highgod, he probably would have fused all six types and become a Highgod Paragon!

The terrifying power of a Highgod Paragon would be no lower than Beirut’s!

“Fortunately, he didn’t make his breakthrough earlier.” Patriarch Reinales whispered.

“Right.” The various Patriarchs all had very chaotic, mixed emotions right now.

The descent of the Sovereign had caused them to make an unwilling decision. But now that Linley had become a Highgod, they were frightened

at the ‘close call’ they had.

Once a Highgod Paragon began a slaughter, the experts of their eight great clans would be like ragdolls for dismembering. Just look at Beirut! He even dared to block attacks from Sovereign artifacts head on. Who could resist such a monster?

“The Four Divine Beasts clan is so lucky, for such a genius to have appeared in their ranks.” Patriarch Barbary said in a low voice. “Let’s hurry up and leave.”

“It really is time to leave.”

The various Patriarchs all turned and left. They didn’t dare to violate the orders of a Sovereign, and Linley’s presence made it so that they left of their own accord as well. No matter what…today, the matters between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans had come to an end.

The members of the Four Divine Beasts clan were all completely delirious with excitement and joy. Quite a few clansmen began to weep on the spot. From this day onwards, their Four Divine Beasts clan would no longer have to experience countless dangers and live a life of humiliation.

“It’s over!”

“Haha, it’s finally over!”

Celebratory voices rang out in the air above the Skyrite Mountains. Many clansmen were so excited that they fell to their knees, sobbing. The constant insults and taunts they had suffered in recent days from the eight great clans had been a sort of psychological torture to the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Finally…it was over!

“The forces of the eight great clans have left.” Bebe said.

Linley turned to look as well. The Patriarchs and Elders led the way, and the

clansmen of the eight great clans, like a massive, roiling flood of locusts, flew into the air, then boarded multiple metallic lifeforms and left at high speed, leaving behind only those many empty castles and buildings.

“It’s all over.” Gislason had a very complicated look on his face.

The White Tiger Patriarch let out an emotional sigh as well. “Ten thousand years. Ten thousand nightmarish years. Finally, it’s over! Our clansmen won’t have to hide in the Skyrite Mountains, and won’t have to always be afraid.”

Every single member of the Four Divine Beasts clan felt extremely relaxed now.

“Lord Beirut. We will forever remember your great kindness!” Gislason was the first to bow, and then all of the other three clan leaders and Elders all bowed respectfully as well.

Beirut laughed calmly. “If you want to thank someone, thank the Sovereign.”

But Gislason and the others all understood that the Bloodridge Sovereign and the Four Divine Beasts clan didn’t have much of connection. If the Bloodridge Sovereign had truly wanted to save the Four Divine Beasts clan, he would have shown himself long ago. But he had only done so today…

Most likely, the reason for this had something to do with Beirut.

“Everyone!”

Gislason’s voice suddenly rang out, and it echoed in the air above the Skyrite Mountains. Instantly, the countless clansmen all turned their gazes towards him. Gislason said in a sonorous voice, “Today is a day of rejoicing. Over the past ten thousand years, our Four Divine Beasts clan has always been under tremendous pressure, and one Elder after another has perished in battle for the clan…today, we members of the Four Divine Beasts clan have finally once more regained our freedom to roam the skies

of the Infernal Realm. We absolutely must celebrate this wonderful event. All clansmen will celebrate for three days!"

"Wonderful!"

"A three day grand celebration!"

Instantly, countless joyful voices rang out, reverberating throughout the air above the Skyrite Mountains.

"Lord Beirut, Phusro, the two of you absolutely must attend our celebration." Gislason looked towards Beirut.

"Definitely." Beirut laughed calmly and nodded.

"Haha." Phusro chortled, then glanced sideways at Linley. As he did, he couldn't help but laugh loudly. "Linley, you made a breakthrough just as you saw the Sovereign. I, Phusro, have lived countless years, but I've never seen such a thing."

Linley could only grin rather awkwardly.

"You did see the Sovereign, right?" Beirut laughed.

"As soon as I saw him, he left." Linley still felt rather stunned. Actually, at the moment of the Sovereign's descent, Linley had already become absorbed in the insights he had gained upon watching the battle between the Grand Elder and Patriarch Barbary.

Linley had no idea as to when the Sovereign had arrived and what he had said.

However…from what everyone else was saying, Linley realized that the departure of the eight great clans was due to them obeying the orders of the Sovereign.

"Sovereigns really are Sovereigns. With but a single sentence, the eight

great clans were forced to obediently leave." In Linley's mind, he could still see that massive black face, tens of meters high, that stood in mid-air. He also remembered the terrifying gaze of those two eyes.

The supremacy of a Sovereign. Linley, having experienced it, would never forget it.

"Let's go. Your clan is going to have a huge celebration." Beirut laughed, then flew into the air.

Linley, Bebe, Phusro, Delia, and the others all followed Beirut into the air. As for Gislason and the other clan leaders, they had left early on to go arrange the banquet. This celebration would be one that was held throughout the Skyrite Mountains.

While flying, Beirut suddenly began to laugh at himself.

Linley couldn't help but to turn and look at him. Beirut glanced at him, then said resignedly, "Linley, I really did make more work for myself. I wanted to give you some encouragement, so said that I would give you a godspark weapon after you became a Highgod, but who would have imagined that a few moments later, you would suddenly break through?"

Indeed…

Linley really was a bit too efficient.

"Grandpa, you have to forge a good godspark weapon for my Boss." Bebe said hurriedly.

"Since I've given my word, of course I'll do it." Beirut nodded, then looked at Linley. "Speak, Linley. What sort of weapon do you want me to make for you?"

Even Phusro began to laugh loudly. "Linley, although Beirut's godspark weapons aren't Sovereign artifacts, in terms of toughness and hardness, they are comparable to Sovereign artifacts. In the Infernal Realm…the

godspark weapons of Beirut are priceless treasures that can't be bought."

"I want…"

Linley pondered for a moment. He had the Coiling Dragon ring, and his soul had just improved greatly. After he refined more amethysts in the future and repaired the Coiling Dragon ring, his soul defense would rise to an extremely high level. What he lacked right now…was defense against material attacks.

"Lord Beirut, you can go ahead and forge a set of godspark armor that can fuse with my scales, just like the one the Grand Elder has. That'll let my punches and kicks become tremendously powerful as well." Linley said eagerly. With a set of armor, he could use it for both attack and defense.

A dual-purpose artifact!

The smile on Beirut's face suddenly turned stiff and forced.

"Boss…you want a set of armor?" Bebe stared at Linley as well.

"Linley…you really are something." Phusro stared at Linley, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry.

Linley was rather amazed, and he looked at them in confusion. "What? Is this request of mine very excessive?"

Beirut had a very strange look on his face. For a moment, he didn't know what to say. In the end, it was Bebe who explained. "Boss, forging godspark weapons is an ability inherent to and unique to us Godeater Rats. It requires us to devour divine sparks, then refine the essence within, then coalesce the essence into the shape of a weapon."

"But every single divine spark is very small, and the amount of essence that can be refined from each one is tiny. Digesting a divine spark takes a long time as well…thus, to forge a large weapon, just think about how many divine sparks will be needed, how much time would be needed, and how

much effort it would take! It's very hard. That's why godspark weapons are generally very small." Bebe explained.

Linley began to understand.

He also remembered how the godspark weapon in Bebe's possession was just a dagger. As for Gislason's set of godspark weapons, it was a pair of gloves. They were all very small weapons.

But what he requested was a set of armor that could cover his entire body. In terms of size, it was probably dozens of times, perhaps even a hundred times larger than Bebe's dagger.

"A set of armor that can cover your entire body…to make this, I'll probably have to work for thousands of years without resting." Beirut felt quite a bit of pressure.

But he had already given his word.

"Lord Beirut, I apologize. I didn't understand much about the forging of godspark weapons." Linley said hurriedly. He didn't want to make things too hard for Beirut. "Just make a sharp sword for me. It just needs to be comparable to Bloodviolet in length."

What Linley lacked right now was attack power. With an extremely sharp godspark sword, his attack power would rise significantly.

"Comparable to Bloodviolet?" Beirut let out a sigh of relief.

Perhaps the amount of divine spark essence needed to make a longsword was somewhat more than what was needed for a dagger or a set of gloves, but…what Linley needed right now was, quite clearly, that sort of thin, sharp sword. The amount of divine spark essence needed would just be a few times more than what was needed for a dagger.

"Lord Beirut, what I lack right now is attack power, and so the sharper this godspark weapon, the better." Linley said.

Beirut said confidently, “Forging something as hard as a godspark weapon and making it sharp is very easy…however, to forge this godspark weapon, I’ll still need to spend roughly a hundred years. You have to wait for a time.”

“No rush, I’m in no rush.” Linley laughed.

The Four Divine Beasts clan was in a state of peace now, and he himself had become a Highgod. Linley couldn’t think of anything he had to do right away. The only thing he ‘had’ to do was spend time with his family, and continue training as much as he could.

The members of the Four Divine Beasts clan all went wild. They all celebrated madly, and be it at the Patriarch’s residence or remote areas such as that great gorge, banquets could be seen everywhere. Everyone from the Patriarch to recently born Saints were all celebrating.

Linley, as an Elder, naturally was toasted by many people.

After three days passed…

Within the great gorge.

“The clansmen have all gone crazy with joy.” Linley laughed as he looked outside the window. The three days of mad celebration had caused the entire Skyrite Mountains to be filled with a festive aura. The stifled, depressed aura that had been present for so many years had been wiped away all at once.

Everyone was exceedingly happy.

“You’ve been smiling non-stop for the past three days.” Delia couldn’t help but laugh.

Linley laughed and nodded. “Right, Delia. That day, when I became a Highgod, I didn’t have the chance to carefully inspect myself, and I’ve been

too busy the past three days as well. You go take care of something else. I'm going to spend some time investigating myself." Linley said, then sat down in the meditative position on their bed.

Delia, seeing this, just laughed, then walked out of the room.

After having reached the Highgod level, he had been baptized once more by the natural Laws. The soul of Linley's Highgod earth clone had increased in power nearly tenfold. Although the other souls weren't strengthened much, still…

Linley's five souls were in reality all one soul. Under the influence of his divine earth clone's soul, the other four souls were slowly improving as well.

Actually, as long as Linley took his divine earth clone into his original body, then the spiritual strength of the divine earth clone would become the spiritual strength of his original body. After all…they were one to begin with.

"A little while later, I'll need to spend some time refining some amethysts." With a thought, Linley reached out and connected with the plane of the Elemental Sea.

The Elemental Sea.

This was a vast, roiling, endless, boundless sea of earthen yellow light. The deeper into the sea one looked, the higher level the quality of the energy of the 'seawater'.

By now, Linley had become a Highgod. He could already see very deep into the sea, and deep within the sea, a large amount of liquefied Highgod-level divine earth power was present.

"What a thick, dense layer of Highgod-level divine earth power. When I had become a Highgod earlier, I was too worried about the clan, so I didn't spend much time examining this bottom layer, and to see what it has!"

Linley controlled his divine sense to delve still deeper into the Elemental Sea.

An incredibly dense and incomparably powerful aura spread out as waves of earthen water swirled about at the bottom.

The earthen yellow water was clearly different from the ordinary liquefied divine power.

“That should be…?” Linley’s divine sense wasn’t able to go down any further, but he was able to vaguely sense…“The aura of Sovereign’s Might? Right. It is Sovereign’s Might!” After having seen Sovereign’s Might for so long, Linley completely understood.

After all, the depths at which he could investigate was still a ways off from the deepest reaches.

“The bottom of this Elemental Sea is filled with Sovereign power?” Linley was rather stupefied.

The bottom of the Elemental Sea was boundless and limitless. So much Sovereign power made one grow desirous just looking at it…but Highgods had a limit to the depths at which they could investigate. There was no way they would be able to actually acquire any of it!

Chapter 2 – Mirage

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 2, Mirage

Deep within the Elemental Sea, invisible currents of power swirled about, and the endless waves of water formed from Sovereign power rolled forth.

“I can see it, but I can’t get it.” Linley felt an itchy feeling in his heart.

So much Sovereign power! However, the Elemental Sea was something which every single Deity could sense. Highgods had more powerful souls, and thus were generally all able to sense the region containing Sovereign power. “The souls of Sovereigns are far more powerful than the souls of us Highgods.”

Linley quickly cast it aside.

If he couldn’t get it, there was no point obsessing over it.

“Who knows if there is perhaps a region of even more powerful energy beneath the region of Sovereign power?” This thought suddenly appeared in Linley’s mind, but moments later, Linley shook his head, no longer considering it. “I don’t even have Sovereign power. Why think of other things? But it really is odd. Divine power is divided into Demigod-level divine power, God-level divine power, and Highgod-level divine power. But I have never heard anyone say that there are different levels of Sovereign power.”

After having lived in the clan for many years, Linley had come to learn…

The Seven Elemental Laws and Four Edicts each had seven Sovereigns, with one being a High Sovereign, two being Intermediate Sovereigns, and four being Lesser Sovereigns. Clearly, Sovereigns were divided into levels as well.

“But why is it that I’ve never heard of there being different levels of Sovereign power?” Linley was very puzzled.

The Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans all had Sovereign’s Might. In addition, Linley had never before gotten the feeling that one person’s Sovereign’s Might was more powerful than another’s. It seemed as though they were all the same.

“Can it be that different levels of Sovereigns all have the same type of Sovereign power? But why then are they divided into High, Intermediate, and Lesser Sovereigns?” Linley couldn’t understand it, and so he stopped thinking about it. After all…each Law had only seven Sovereigns.

Every single Sovereign was a lofty figure. Even the most powerful of Highgods was incomparably weak in the face of a Sovereign.

Linley then inspected his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. He saw rays of spiritual energy circulate throughout it, and a small membrane had appeared over the flaw as well. As spiritual energy continued to circulate through the artifact, the bandage over the flaw was slowly transforming.

“Indeed…only after becoming a Highgod can I truly begin to repair this soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.” Linley sighed in amazement.

The repairing speed was now far faster than it had been when he was a mere God.

It was like a situation where floodwaters were bursting through a broken dam. If you threw little pebbles down into the hole, even if you threw many pebbles nonstop, they would be effortlessly wiped away by the floodwaters. But if you threw large numbers of boulders down, boulders which were dozens of times larger, then the effect would immediately be much better.

The same was true for repairing this artifact. The spiritual energy of a God was, qualitatively, too inferior to a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Thus, repairing with it was too difficult.

Ever since the Sovereign's descent, the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans had ended their struggles against each other. The lives of the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan had returned to tranquility. Linley's family and Bebe's family thus began to live a peaceful life within the gorge as well.

Linley constantly consumed amethysts, strengthening his soul.

Towards the end, Linley actually used up all of the amethysts which he had. He had to end up asking Bebe for many amethysts, allowing himself to continue refining them. Bebe had said magnanimously: "Boss, you just keep refining. I'll give you as many as you want."

In the past, Bebe had spent ten full years harvesting amethysts in the Amethyst Mountains. The number of amethysts he had collected was truly astronomical.

In the blink of an eye, a century passed.

Within the gorge. Linley's room. A long table was covered with food. Linley's family of three and Bebe's family of three were all gathered here. Delia, Nisse, Wade, and Ina were all handing plates of food back and forth, while Linley and Bebe were seated comfortably.

"Boss, how much more can your soul absorb?" Bebe asked. "You've already absorbed so many amethysts."

Upon reaching the Highgod level, Linley's amethyst refining speed had increased tens of times over as well. As his soul had risen in power, his refining speed had only grown even faster. The number of amethysts he had absorbed over the past century was an astonishingly high figure. But clearly…the soul of a Highgod truly was capable of absorbing a great deal of power.

"What, jealous?" Linley pursed his lips. "Bebe, as I recall, in the past, you wanted to compete with me in seeing who would become a Highgod first."

Bebe rubbed his nose. All he could do was manage a resigned laugh.

That time they had gone to Meer City, Bebe had acquired from his grandmother that final soul slice fragment. After absorbing it, Bebe only needed one final step before reaching the Highgod level. But Bebe's speed clearly was much slower than Linley's.

Linley had gained his sudden insight, but Bebe had not.

"Boss, you are amazing. Happy?" Bebe said resignedly, a sour look on his face. "Still. Grandpa told me that once I become a Highgod, my power will be close to Grandpa's power in strength. Boss, you are powerful right now, but when I become a Highgod, I might end up being even more powerful than you."

"Being more powerful than me is a good thing." Linley laughed.

Linley knew well what innate gifts Bebe had. This innate divine ability, 'Godeater', could be described as something which made Bebe invincible amongst his peers. Once Bebe reached the Highgod level, who would be able to resist his Godeater ability?

Perhaps only Highgod Paragons would be able to resist it.

In addition, as a Godeater Rat, Bebe's body was frightfully strong. Just by watching how Beirut dared to use his hands to block Sovereign artifacts, one could imagine how astonishing a Godeater Rat would be at the Highgod level. Bebe hadn't fused any profound mysteries at all…but by relying on his innate gifts, he would still be comparable to Linley after he became a Highgod..

Still, Linley wasn't jealous in the slightest.

Over all these years, Linley and Bebe truly were like siblings, and they were happy for each other as they grew strong.

"I want to break through and gain a sudden insight too. Why is it so hard?"

Bebe let out a long sigh.

Right at this moment, Wade walked over, carrying a platter of food. Hearing these words, he couldn't help but say, "Uncle Bebe, I want to make a breakthrough also. When I became a Deity, I only did so thanks to the Ancestral Baptism. It's hard for me to even become a God by myself."

"Hmph."

A low, dissatisfied snort. Ina walked in, carrying a plate of food as well. "Big Bro Wade, in the future, can you not complain about your situation? I'm still…not even a Deity yet." Immediately, Linley and Bebe both began to laugh.

"Daaaad! Uuuuncle!" Ina couldn't help but stare at them, but Linley and Bebe only laughed all the harder.

"Haha, what has all of you laughing so happily?" A loud, clear laugh rang out, and two figures descended from the skies. Linley turned his head to look. It was a black-robed Beirut and a red-robed Carolina.

Beirut's appearance made Linley's eyes light up.

This was because when he saw Beirut, he thought of that godspark weapon. Beirut hadn't come to visit a single time over the past century. This time… had he come because he had finished forging the godspark weapon

"Grandpa." Bebe was extremely happy as well.

Beirut just laughed, then turned his head to look at Ina. "Ina, come over here." Beirut and Carolina both doted dearly on Ina. Ina immediately walked over to greet them and chatted with Beirut and Carolina for a while.

"Grandpa, is this visit of yours because the godspark weapon is finished?" Bebe went straight to the point.

Beirut, hearing this, looked towards Linley, then laughed loudly. "Linley,

for the sake of this godspark weapon of yours, I spent a full hundred years. I've finally finished now. Take it!" As he spoke, Beirut waved his arm…

And suddenly, an illusory black blur sliced through the air.

Linley stretched his hand out, directly snatching that sharp sword. But the illusory shadow of the sword was too blurry, and Beirut had thrown it out too quickly, with the intention of making Linley look bad. When Linley caught it, he grabbed it by the blade instead of the hilt.

"So sharp." Linley felt pain in his hand, and a line of blood sprang out from his palm.

He lowered his head…

The sword was long and slender, as thin as a butterfly's wings. This longsword was actually translucent. If one took a close look at the sword, one would see that a black energy was circulating inside of the sword. It was very bizarre. Generally speaking, divine swords would have energy circulating on their surface, but this sword had black energy circulating inside of it, causing one to be stupefied.

In particular, the sharpness of the sword was so terrifying as to make one's heart grow cold.

Although Linley hadn't transformed, he was a Highgod; his body was fairly tough. This sword wasn't bound by anyone, but just by its sharpness alone, it had cut through the palm of Linley, a Highgod.

"This sword…" Linley couldn't believe it.

"Sharp enough for you?" Beirut laughed.

Linley hurriedly nodded. "It truly is sharp. I've never seen such a sharp weapon before."

"Grandpa, how did you make it? Why isn't my dagger this sharp?" Bebe

said hurriedly.

Beirut laughed and said, “Actually, I myself am puzzled as to how this sword ended up like this.” These words caused Linley, Delia, Bebe, and everyone else to be puzzled. Beirut continued, “I knew that Linley trained in earth, wind, fire, and water; four types of Elemental Laws. Thus…when I forged this sword for you, I consciously only chose to devour and digest Highgod divine sparks of earth, wind, fire, and water.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of gratitude.

Actually, when making a godspark weapon, one could just pick some divine sparks at random for the forging. However, Beirut had gone out of his way to be very detailed and careful in this forging for Linley, and so had only used those four types of divine sparks.

“I was very careful in the forging. In the later stages, though…” Beirut laughed. “This sword actually somehow became like one solid whole. Those four different types of divine sparks essences actually fused to become a perfect whole. The power of this godspark weapon is such that it is the finest godspark weapon I have ever made in all these years.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of excitement.

“Lord Beirut. Thank you.” Linley said gratefully. Beirut truly had expended significant effort in forging this weapon for him.

“Bebe, as for your dagger, I only used darkness-type divine sparks to forge it. After all, you have only become a Deity in darkness.” Beirut laughed calmly. “As for Linley’s sword…I’m not too clear as to why the power of it is so great, myself.”

Sometimes…one might end up creating a perfect masterwork, for reasons one might not even understand.

Perhaps a true masterwork required a bit of luck as well.

Linley carefully stroked this sharp sword. The blood from his cut palm fused into the sword, and this sharp sword which had never before had an owner soon became wholly accepting of Linley, becoming Linley's personal sword.

"Curious. Curious." Linley discovered, after taking complete control of the sword…

That with but a thought, the energy flowing within the sword could suddenly become hidden, resulting in the entire sword becoming translucent. Someone looking at it would think that Linley wasn't even holding a sword at all.

"Linley, pick a name." Beirut laughed.

Linley stared thoughtfully at this incredible weapon. "When using this sword at high speed, even experts will just be able to see a blurry shadow… so let's just call it 'Mirage'." Linley's third weapon…

Mirage! Had arrived in this world!

After acquiring this precious weapon, 'Mirage', he naturally would often use it to train. The more he used it, the happier Linley became. Once this precious weapon was filled with Highgod-level divine power and matched with Linley's tremendous physical strength in Dragonform…

Even Linley was astonished by the power of each sword stroke.

Linley had originally used his fist to execute the 'Firmament Splitter' with enough power to punch a hole in space itself. But…when this incomparably sharp and tough 'Mirage' used the technique…

Space itself would tremble, and wherever the shadow of the sword passed, a tear in space would be left behind.

Within the gorge. On the grassy field outside of Linley's house. Linley was currently wielding Mirage, casually twirling it about. His entire body

seemed to have become a gust of wind, fusing with it. One could only see the blurry shadow of an illusory sword, also as agile and untraceable as the wind.

“Slash!”

“Swish!”

Wherever the sword passed, rips in space appeared. It must be understood…this was Linley in his normal, human form. But of course, this was Linley as a Highgod and in possession of a godspark weapon. Nonetheless, one could still imagine how powerful Linley had become now, thanks to these factors.

“Great. Uncle, you are so powerful!” Ina stood off in the distance, her eyes shining as she watched Linley train with the sword.

Right at this moment…

“Rumble…”

Ripples born from the descent of the natural Laws suddenly descended. Even Linley, in the midst of training with his sword, came to a halt. He turned his head to stare towards the location where the ripples were emanating from. “Huh? Bebe’s residence? Can it be that Bebe has made a breakthrough?”

Linley still remembered the words that Bebe had spoken to him…“Once I become a Highgod, maybe I’ll be even more powerful than you.”

Chapter 3 – Goals

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 3, Goals

The descent of the natural Laws attracted attention from many of the dwellers within the gorge. The members of the Yulan branch all hurried over, looking towards the building where Linley, Ina, Delia, and the others lived.

The clansmen watched as Baruch walked over as well, and they immediately parted for him.

Baruch walked towards Linley. “Linley, who made the breakthrough? Is it Bebe?” Baruch knew that this building was one where Bebe lived in, and so it was very normal for him to come to this conclusion. Linley was in an excellent mood, and he laughed while nodding.

“Bebe actually became a Highgod? He’s even faster than me.” Baruch shook his head and laughed. Baruch had also reached a bottleneck in the Laws of Water, and would become a Highgod with one more step.

“Clan leader, perhaps tomorrow, you’ll become a Highgod as well.” Linley said consolingly.

How could Baruch compete against Bebe?

Bebe had those soul slice fragments, and thus rose in power at an unnatural speed.

“Uncle, my father is now a Highgod as well. Is he going to be as powerful as you?” Ina’s eyes were shining as she looked towards Linley.

“Not so fast.” The nearby Wade said confidently. “Uncle Bebe just reached the Highgod level; he’s going to need time for training, whereas my father was able to kill Seven Star Fiends even before he reached the Highgod

level. He's much more powerful now." Wade clearly felt very proud of Linley.

"But Father himself said…" Ina didn't really understand.

"He'll be a match for me." Linley laughed calmly.

"Father…" Wade looked towards Linley, puzzled.

"Wade, even I don't feel confident in my ability to resist your Uncle Bebe's innate divine ability." Linley explained.

Once Bebe reached the Highgod level, his normal attacks might be ordinary in power, but his innate divine ability, 'Godeater', was without question an absolutely dominating ability. How many Highgods would be able to endure the 'Godeater' attack? After all, there wasn't even a way one would be able to counter the Godeater technique.

"Boss, stop boasting about me." A voice rang out, and Bebe, wearing that straw hat, walked out of the room with a chortle.

"Father." Ina immediately ran over.

Linley just laughed in surprise. "Bebe, being so modest? How rare." This was completely different from Bebe's normal temperament. Linley could sense…that Bebe had indeed reached the Highgod level.

"Come inside and sit." Nisse welcomed everyone warmly.

Linley, Baruch, and the others all immediately entered the living room. Nisse quickly prepared beverages for everyone. Bebe's face was all smiles, and he was so delighted that even his eyebrows were jumping up and down. Laughing loudly, he said, "Boss, don't boast about me any longer. After having become a Highgod, I know what level of power I now have."

"Oh?" Linley said, puzzled.

“I finally understand that Grandpa Beirut…tricked me!” Bebe said resignedly.

Beirut had once told Bebe that once Bebe became a Highgod, his power would be close to Beirut’s.

“My most powerful attack is indeed comparable to Grandpa Beirut’s. But that’s just my innate divine ability. I’m at most able to use my innate divine ability twice before my spiritual energy is essentially used up. Without my innate divine ability, all I’m good for is taking hits…I’m pretty much an unkillable humanoid golem.” Bebe clearly was rather unhappy. “Compared to Grandpa, I’m still a long way off.”

Linley laughed.

“Bebe, with that innate divine ability, within a short period of time, you’d at least be able to kill two supreme experts. That’s enough.” Linley said. “Your grandfather didn’t lie to you. When you execute that innate divine ability, how many Highgods can possibly overcome you?”

Bebe sighed emotionally, “I heard that when Grandpa blocked the eight great clans in the past, he only used a single black staff. Every single Elder of the eight great clans who was struck by that staff immediately died, and even the Patriarchs who used Sovereign artifacts against it were badly injured. Grandpa never even used his innate divine ability…”

Linley couldn’t help but shake his head.

“Bebe, your grandfather has fused quite a few profound mysteries.” Linley said. “You haven’t even fused one. How can you compete against your grandfather?”

Lord Beirut’s punches and kicks already possessed such tremendous power…but as for Bebe, he had to use his innate divine ability to fight at that level. Clearly, Bebe was rather unhappy about this.

The nearby Baruch said in a booming voice, “Bebe, innate gifts is one

thing, but hard work is necessary as well…I, too, have heard that the strength of your body is even greater than Linley's Dragonform. But you haven't fused any of the profound mysteries at all. I imagine that given how Lord Beirut can be one of the ultimate figures of the entire Infernal Realm, he surely must have fused quite a few profound mysteries."

"Right." Bebe nodded.

Linley could guess, however, that the toughness and strength of a Highgod Godeater Rat's body was probably comparable to a divine spark. Most likely, it was tens of times or even a hundred times more powerful than his Dragonform. As for Lord Beirut, most likely, even if he only fused four or five profound mysteries, he would still be more than powerful enough to dominate the continents.

With a powerful body as the base, matched with four or five fused profound mysteries…Beirut definitely had the ability to trample all comers in the Infernal Realm, especially since he had a Sovereign artifact…

"Who knows how many profound mysteries Lord Beirut has fused." Linley was curious.

In the past, from the conversation between Linley and Beirut, Linley had learned…that Beirut hadn't reached the Paragon level. However, his innate gifts were simply too powerful; even if he 'only' fused four or five profound mysteries, he would be comparable to a Highgod Paragon.

"I need to work hard to fuse profound mysteries as well." Bebe clenched his teeth.

Seeing the look on Bebe's face, Linley couldn't help but laugh. "Then Bebe, I'm just going to wait and see how well you do in your fusing."

"Bebe." Suddenly, the nearby Nisse spoke out.

"Hm?" Bebe looked towards her.

“Have you forgotten something?” Nisse stared at Bebe. “Something very important!”

Nisse’s stare caused Bebe to feel rather puzzled. He couldn’t help but scratch his head. “What are you talking about?” Nisse was so upset, she didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. In the end, she explained, “Back then, you told me that after you became a Highgod, then…”

“Oh…are you saying, go pay a visit to your brother, Salomon?” Bebe immediately realized what she was talking about, and his face went sour. “You were serious about that?”

Nisse’s face immediately became unsightly, and she fell silent.

That look on Nisse’s face caused the atmosphere of the entire hall to become rather awkward. Linley frowned, then immediately sent through divine sense, “Bebe, what’s this about?”

Today clearly was a festive day; how did it end up being so unhappy?

“Boss, Nisse’s been here all these years, and has always wanted to go visit her elder brother, Salomon. But you know as well as I do…Salomon, that fellow who forgets the kindness of others, should feel lucky that I don’t go kill him. Go pay a visit to him? But at the time, I didn’t want Nisse to feel so awkward, so I coaxed her and told her that I wasn’t strong enough yet, and that the trip back would be dangerous. I said that after I became a Highgod, I would have enough strength to escort her to the Jadefloat Continent. I just spoke casually, wanting to make her feel better, but who would’ve imagined…that she always kept these words in her heart.” Bebe had a sour look on his face.

Linley completely understood.

Bebe hadn’t been serious about it, but Nisse had always remembered it. After all, after the death of her parents, all she had left was her elder brother. Although Salomon hadn’t treated Linley and the others with sincerity, he had always been devoted to his younger sister.

“In the past…you just said that to make me feel better?” Nisse finally spoke, a hint of moisture in her eyes.

Bebe was stunned…but he was the obstinate sort.

Back then, he used his ultimate attack with that godspark weapon, wanting to kill Salomon with that dagger. Afterwards, the Seven Star Fiend, Elquin, blocked his attack to save Salomon, resulting in Elquin even losing a divine artifact of his own.

Given the situation, how could Bebe willingly lower his head and go ‘pay a visit’ to Salomon? Most likely, in Salomon’s heart, he also felt a hint of hatred towards Bebe.

“Ninny, the way your elder brother acted towards me that year…and the fact that he tried to get my Boss and Delia killed…” Just as Bebe said these things, Nisse’s tears actually began to uncontrollably leak outwards.

Nisse only had this one brother, after all.

Delia, seeing this, knew that things were headed in a bad direction. She immediately said through divine sense, “Bebe, stop saying these things. Although Salomon’s actions back then could be considered unrighteous, it was because he falsely believed Linley had betrayed him. For Nisse’s sake, make the trip. Otherwise, Nisse will forever have a thorn in her heart… Linley agrees with me on this.” Delia simultaneously sent the divine sense into Linley’s mind as well.

Clearly, Delia knew that Linley’s words were the most effective for persuading Bebe.

“Forget it, Bebe. Give Salomon a chance. If Salomon refuses to show regret and change his ways, then you can act accordingly.” Linley sent mentally.

Linley could imagine how Nisse felt.

After all, Nisse hadn't done anything wrong. She was blameless in this matter.

"Fine, Boss. I'll give that fellow one chance!"

Bebe glanced at Linley, then said towards Nisse, "Your elder brother really was a bastard for doing what he did!"

"My brother has regretted it ever since. He really didn't know. He mistakenly accused you, which is why he acted that way. Afterwards, he really regretted it." Nisse said hurriedly.

Bebe reached out with his hand, taking Nisse's. "Ninny, fine then. For your sake, I'll accompany you on a visit to see your elder brother…but with regards to the question of whether or not I'll give him face when I see him, that will depend entirely on his attitude! If he still acts that way…then you can't blame me."

Bebe still couldn't swallow his anger.

"My elder brother will definitely apologize." Nisse said hurriedly, and a hint of a smile appeared on her face once more.

"Father, Mother." Ina finally dared to speak out. "I want to go with you as well!"

"No way." Bebe frowned. "Ina, you haven't even become a Deity. We'll be going to the Jadefloat Continent. The journey will be a long one, and if we encounter any danger on the way over, the slightest shockwave will kill you."

Nisse agreed. "Nana, wait for the future."

Seeing that both her father and her mother were of one mind, Ina felt helpless as well.

The next day, as per Nisse's request, Bebe accompanied Nisse. The two left

the Skyrite Mountains, heading towards the Coldcalm Prefecture of the Jadefloat Continent. This was a very long trip, and the roundtrip would most likely take nearly a century.

As for Linley and Delia, they accompanied Wade and Ina in a tour of Indigo Prefecture.

Despite having been in Indigo Prefecture for so many years, they hadn't had a chance to visit many of the famous places of Indigo Prefecture. While they encountered some difficulties when adventuring in the Indigo Prefecture, given Linley's power, he was able to effortlessly resolve them.

In the blink of an eye…

A hundred years of roaming about had passed. During these hundred years, Linley's four divine clones had focused on their training, with the fastest gains being made by his divine water clone, which finally started on a sixth profound mystery. His divine wind clone was working on the eighth profound mystery as well…but his divine fire clone was doing terribly, still stuck on four mastered profound mysteries, and not having made any progress in gaining even a basic understanding of the other two."

Clearly, Linley's talent with regards to fire was significantly weaker.

Within the metallic lifeform. Linley was seated on a chair.

"Linley, you've reached the sixth profound mystery in water. Look at how happy you are!" Delia brought over a plate of food and wine."

Linley's eyes were gleaming. "Wrong. I'm not happy because I've reached the sixth profound mystery in water. Rather…it's because my Profound Mysteries of Strength and Gravitational Space have started to connect just slightly." Linley was indescribably happy. "It's been two hundred years. More than two centuries have passed since the affairs between our Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans have come to an end. I've finally made a small improvement in the Laws of the Earth! This improvement signifies…that I have hope of fusing four profound

mysteries."

"Fusing four? How long will it take?" Delia asked.

"Not sure. Although the Profound Mysteries of Strength are fusing with the 'Essence of the Earth' and 'Gravitational Space', it's just a connection; they aren't completely fused yet. Fortunately, it is completely fused with the Throbbing Pulse of the World. After the other two are completely fused… I'll have four profound mysteries, fused into one." Linley knew very well that in order to have four mysteries fused, he would have to separately fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the other three profound mysteries.

And then, he would begin a final, complete fusion.

"But how long will it take?" Delia asked again.

"If I'm fast, a few centuries or a thousand years. If I'm slow, ten thousand years." Linley laughed.

"So long?" Delia laughed as well.

Linley said solemnly, "Delia, I've been training for roughly two thousand years now, in total. If I continue to train at this rate…to be able to fuse four profound mysteries within ten thousand years is a cause for celebration." Linley stared out at the Infernal Realm from outside the window.

"I no longer have any regrets. I only hope that one day, I will reach the peak of training. Whether it be in ten thousand years, a million years, or even longer…I will continue to pursue my goals." Linley's eyes were filled with a hopeful light.

That year, Doehring Cowart had set him on the path of training. Although Linley's number one priority had been revenge, while training to gain his revenge, Linley had fallen in love with training, and the feeling of constantly exceeding his own limits.

"Linley, you will definitely succeed. I will accompany you the entire time,

and wait for you to reach that peak!" Delia couldn't help but take Linley's hands into her own and say in a soft voice.

Chapter 4 – Ironknife Gorge

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 4, Ironknife Gorge

Linley tightly held Delia's hand as well.

"The pinnacle…right. That day will definitely come, one day." Linley, in his heart, would forever remember the figures of Beirut and Dunnington. They were his goals!

Suddenly, a snicker from his side.

Linley turned to look, only to see Wade and Ina secretly looking towards them. Upon seeing that Linley had noticed them, the two quickly retreated to their own rooms. Linley couldn't help but laugh. "Wade, Nana, hurry up and come over. Right, Nana…your father and your mother have already returned to the Bloodridge Continent. They are now heading to Indigo Prefecture. Most likely, in a year or so, they'll have returned."

"Father is about to return?" Ina stuck her head out, a look of surprise and delight on her face.

Linley laughed and nodded. As he and Bebe were spiritually linked, the two could sense the rough location of each other.

"Oh, that was pretty fast." The nearby Delia said. "Bebe and Nisse, on this round trip, just spent a bit more than a century. It seems they didn't stay too long in the Coldcalm Prefecture . I wonder how Bebe and Salomon acted towards each other."

Linley laughed calmly. "No matter what, Bebe won't let himself get the worst of it."

Given Bebe's current level of power, how could Salomon be a match for him? Although Salomon was Nisse's older brother, given Bebe's temper,

Linley knew very well that if Salomon went too far, even if Bebe didn't kill him out of consideration for Nisse, he would still punish Salomon.

"Linley, how about let's go visit Lord Beirut? It's been so many years since we have visited. We can wait for Bebe there as well." Delia advised.

"Great, great. Let's go to Great-Grandfather's place!" Ina was the first to react.

The Lord Prefect's residence of Indigo Prefecture. Linley, indeed, had never visited this place before. He immediately laughed and nodded, "Fine, then. Let's go to Lord Beirut's place. Bebe knows exactly where I am, so he'll head directly there as well.""

Linley's group immediately turned the direction of their metallic lifeform, sending it towards the Lord Prefect's residence.

Indigo Prefecture. The Lord Prefect's residence. This was located in the northern part of the northern district of Indigo City, the chief city of the ten great cities of Indigo Prefecture. The more than half of the entire northern district seemed to reserved for the Lord Prefect, while the personal soldiers and servants of the Lord Prefect numbered in the tens of thousands.

Linley's arrival naturally resulted in a warm welcome from Beirut. Linley's group thus settled down here for now.

In the blink of an eye, nearly a year passed.

Linley and Delia were currently strolling through a flower garden, which was filled with all sorts of fresh flowers. Red ones, blue ones, yellow ones; flowers were spread everywhere. The couple strolled while enjoying the fragrance of the flowers. This was indeed a very enjoyable thing. But suddenly…

Linley turned to look towards the west, smiling slightly. He then turned his head to look at the nearby Delia. "Delia, Bebe and Nisse have already reached Indigo City. I imagine that they'll arrive soon."

“They’ll arrive soon?” Delia couldn’t help but reveal a hint of joy, but then she was rather puzzled.

“Delia, what is it? Speak.” Linley and Delia had been together for so long that Linley could tell from a single glance or a look on Delia’s face what she was thinking. Delia hesitated, then said, “Linley, we’ve been in the Infernal Realm for nearly two thousand years. The Four Divine Beasts clan has already solved its crisis, and you have become a Highgod. I think…that it might be time for us to return to the Yulan continent, right? Sasha and Taylor, our two kids…I really want to see them.”

Linley was stunned.

Return to the Yulan continent?

Instantly, Linley’s mind became filled with countless scenes. Going to study when he was young at the Ernst Institute. Playing around with Boss Yale, George, and Reynolds. Bitter training within the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. And the many friends and family he cared about.

Before they discussed the topic of returning, Linley hadn’t felt anything, but now that Delia raised it…Linley actually suddenly felt as though a pressing fire was burning in his heart, surging and charging through his emotions and filling his chest with ardor. “Right. It is time to return to the Yulan continent to have a look. After so many years, I wonder how Boss Yale is doing. And Wharton and the others. Sasha and Taylor, those two…I wonder how they are doing.” Linley was filled with eagerness.

“Right. Let’s go back together.” Delia, seeing that Linley had agreed, couldn’t help but feel overjoyed. As a mother, the care and concern she felt for her children came from the deepest recesses of her heart. “I wonder how my elder brother is doing…”

Linley also remembered Dixie. Back then, when he had just entered the Ernst Institute, Dixie had been proclaimed its number one genius. But afterwards, due to Linley learning from the Straight Chisel School of

sculpting, Linley's spiritual energy had rapidly improved, allowing him to make constant breakthroughs until he had finally surpassed Dixie.

"It has been a long time since Bebe's been back as well. Now that he's returning, let's have him accompany us on a trip to the Yulan continent." Linley said eagerly. "To tell the truth, up till now, I remain quite curious as to what the Necropolis of the Gods within the Yulan continent holds. This time, we can take a look."

After having trained for so long, Linley no longer felt too much interest in the Necropolis of the Gods, but he was still curious, after all.

He still clearly remembered how, that year, Olivier and the others had risked their lives in adventuring through the Necropolis of the Gods. But of course, to the current Linley, the Necropolis of the Gods no longer posed much of a challenge.

"The Necropolis of the Gods?" Delia sighed. "You spent ten full years on that trip to the Necropolis of the Gods. I was worrying about you the entire time in Dragonblood Castle." Hearing this, Linley felt rather ashamed of himself.

"Boss!" Bebe's voice suddenly rang out from afar.

"Bebe arrived. Come, let's go." Linley immediately headed with Delia towards the outside. Once Linley and Delia reached the outside, they discovered that Beirut, Wade, Ina, and the others were already there waiting.

Bebe and Nisse were warmly chatting with Beirut and Ina.

Seeing Linley walk over, Bebe immediately walked towards him and laughed, "Boss, long time no see." As he spoke, he gave Linley a firm hug. Linley just grinned. "How was your trip to the Jadefloat Continent?"

"What do you think?" Bebe quirked his lips.

Linley couldn't help but look at him in puzzlement.

"That Salomon hurriedly apologized, of course. Hmph, fortunately, he knew to act. If it hadn't been for that…hmph. Hmph." Bebe let out two snorts, and Linley couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief. It seemed as though Salomon cared about his younger sister as well, and so had been rather meek in his attitude.

In reality…

After Salomon had seen Linley's performance in the scryer recording, and after Nisse had let him know about the relationship Bebe had with the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture, Lord Beirut…how could he dare to have a poor attitude?

"Haha, everyone, let's chat inside." Beirut laughed.

While walking towards the inner halls, Linley quietly discussed with Bebe, "Bebe, Delia and I have come to an agreement that we are planning to travel to the Yulan continent. We've been in the Infernal Realm for so many years, but have never gone back. Do you want to go back with us?"

Bebe's eyes lit up upon hearing this.

"Yes, of course, yes!" Bebe immediately sent mentally. "Boss, let me discuss this with Nisse. She'll definitely agree."

Everyone sat down in the main hall.

Some servants walked over, carrying all sorts of fine delicacies and offering them. Linley said directly, "Lord Beirut, we've been in the Infernal Realm for so long…Bebe and I have decided that we are planning to return to the Yulan continent."

"Returning to the Yulan continent? I'm going too!"

"I'm going as well."

Wade and Ina simultaneously called out.

Beirut let out a surprised sound, but then laughed and nodded. “Makes sense. It has indeed been quite some time since you came to the Infernal Realm. If you want to return to the Yulan continent, you need to be transported back through the ‘Ironknife Gorge’ of our Bloodrige Continent.”

Linley knew that there were teleportation portals scattered throughout the five continents and two seas of the Infernal Realm.

But the price of each trip through these portals was very high.

“Lord Beirut, how much is the transport fee?” Linley asked.

“Generally speaking, moving between the Higher Planes or Divine Planes isn’t as expensive. But moving from the Higher Planes or Divine Planes to material planes…now that is exceedingly costly. From material planes to the Higher Planes or Divine Planes, however, is free.” Beirut explained.

Linley understood this as well. He knew that it was expensive…but how expensive, exactly?

“I don’t know if I have enough money on me.” Linley was rather nervous.

Beirut laughed. “But when you go for your trip, as long as you show this medallion, you will be able to use the teleportation portals for free.” With a wave of his hand, Beirut pulled out a blood red medallion which emanated a heart-stopping aura.

Linley and the others looked at it.

“Teleport for free?” Bebe’s eyes lit up. “Grandpa, give it to us as a gift.”

“Hey, I’m just loaning this to you for a single use.” Beirut said hurriedly. “This medallion was given to me by the Sovereign himself. In the past,

when I casually roamed throughout the countless planes, I relied on this toy. Otherwise, no matter how much money I might have, I wouldn't be able to afford all those teleportations. I'm only giving it to you for a single use. After you use it, you have to return it to me. In the future, if you need it again, I can loan it to you again."

Bebe couldn't help but pout.

Clearly, he was unhappy at how 'stingy' his grandfather was.

"Thank you, Lord Beirut." Linley said hurriedly.

"Haha…" Beirut laughed. "Once you reach the Yulan continent, if there's anything you need, feel free to come to the Forest of Darkness to look for me. My clone has remained in the Forest of Darkness this entire time."

"Clone?" Linley was surprised.

Beirut laughed and nodded.

Linley couldn't help but feel rather surprised…because the 'Beirut' he had met in the Yulan continent looked absolutely identical to this one, in both aura and clothing. Was the 'Beirut' which he had met the person in front of him now…or the clone that was currently in the Forest of Darkness?

"I'm giving this medallion to you. Don't lose it." Beirut said solemnly, then tossed it to Bebe.

Bebe caught it. "Don't worry. How can I lose it?"

On this trip back to the Yulan continent, Linley's family of three and Bebe's family of three headed out together. On the second day after they acquired the medallion, Linley's group of six headed directly towards Ironknife Gorge.

Ironknife Gorge. The teleportation formation for the Bloodridge Continent was located here.

Linley's group flew over, and saw Ironknife Gorge from far away. Ironknife Gorge was an extremely easy-to-recognize landmark, but of course, what sealed its status was the large number of patrolling Bloodridge Soldiers which surrounded the area.

"Newcomers, halt!" The Bloodridge Soldiers called out loudly.

Linley's group immediately landed, and the leader of the Bloodridge Soldiers, a man with short, golden, metallic-looking hair swept Linley's group with his icy gaze, then barked, "Why have you come to Ironknife Gorge?"

"We are going to return to a material plane through the teleportation portal." Linley said.

The golden-haired man couldn't help but be surprised. Quite a few people passed through the portal to the other Higher Planes and Divine Planes, since the price was much cheaper, but returning to a material plane? The price was terrifyingly high.

"Oh. Then come with me." The golden-haired man led the way forward.

Linley's group of six immediately followed after the Bloodridge Soldier, heading deeper into Ironknife Gorge. Moments later, Linley's group arrived at the castle situated at the peak of Ironknife Gorge, where the teleportation array was located. The magic formation which formed the teleportation portal was identical to the one Linley had seen when he had arrived in the Infernal Realm.

"There's actually six of you!"

There were quite a few Bloodridge Soldiers present. One of them weighed Linley's group with his gaze. "Three Highgods, one God, one Demigod, one Saint. According to the rules…returning to a material plane will cost each Highgod one trillion inkstones, and each Highgod can bring ten Gods with them…"

Linley, hearing this, was badly shocked.

He finally understood why it was that almost no Deities had returned to the Yulan continent, despite the passage of so many years. This price was too extravagant. A trillion inkstones…that was most likely the entire networth of most Seven Star Fiends. There was no way an ordinary Highgod could possibly afford it.

“So in total, you need to pay three trilli…uh…” The Bloodridge Warrior only finished half his sentence before seeing the medallion in Bebe’s hands.

“Hurry up and activate the transportation magic array.” Bebe said calmly.

“Yes!” The surrounding Bloodridge Soldiers, seeing the medallion, instantly stood up ramrod straight, then quickly flew to the various parts of the array, starting to activate it. Suddenly, one of them turned to look at the group. “Milords, where are you heading to?”

“The Yulan continent plane.” Linley said.

Chapter 5 – Back to the Yulan Continent!

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 5, Back to the Yulan Continent!

A cold, desolate wind swept across the world, carrying countless shards of ice and snow and hurling them randomly about. Within this icy world, multiple icebergs rose into the skies. After countless years of being 'carved' by the freezing wind, the icebergs had become completely smooth. If one stared into the surface of the icebergs, one could even see one's reflections.

Within one of the tall icebergs.

Eleven mystical hexagram-shaped magic formations were set here, and next to them, not far away, was a house of ice. Currently, an old man with a white beard and white robes was walking out from within the house of ice, his blue eyes sweeping through the surrounding area. "It's so rare to encounter someone, here in the Arctic Icecap! In recent years, the Saints that have come here to the Arctic Icecap are fewer and fewer in number. It seems I should go on a trip and roam the Yulan continent as well."

This person was Hodan, the Planar Overseer of the Yulan Plane.

Just as Hodan was preparing to fly away, suddenly…

Hodan couldn't help but turn and look. He saw that one of the eleven magic arrays suddenly began to glow with light. Rays of light rose into the heavens in an eye-catching manner, seeming so illusory and dreamlike. Hodan couldn't help but be greatly shocked. "The Infernal Realm. Someone is coming from the Infernal Realm back to the Yulan Plane, a material plane?"

Hodan knew exactly how astonishing the teleportation fee was. Even most Seven Star Fiends probably wouldn't be willing to pay for such a trip.

Originally, his clan's forces had sent out a group of people led by Sadista.

Amongst that group, Sadista was the only Highgod present. Because of the cost of the teleportation fee, and how expensive it was to teleport a Highgod, a certain number of Gods and Demigods who teleported alongside the Highgod would be permitted to come for free.

That time, when his clan had sent Sadista and the others, they had spent a trillion inkstones!

"I wonder which wealthy, extravagant person it is." Hodan wondered to himself. He unconsciously bowed from the waist. How would Hodan dare to be disrespectful to a figure who came from the Infernal Realm to the Yulan Plane? Although Hodan bowed, he still looked carefully into the magic array. He wanted very much to know who this person was.

Blurry rays of light formed, slowly coalescing into six figures.

The six figures solidified, and the light of the array faded away.

"Lin…Linley!" Hodan stared with disbelief at the six figures before him.

"Hodan, it's been nearly two thousand years since I saw you. You look the same as always." Linley laughed calmly.

Hodan swept Linley's group with his gaze, shock in his heart. "There are three amongst these six whom I cannot sense the auras of at all. There's actually three of them who are Highgods. Based on the teleportation fee… they spent three trillion inkstones." Hodan was terrified by this figure. "Linley's only been in the Infernal Realm for two millennia. How did he become so powerful?"

More than two centuries ago, the Reinales clan and the rest of the eight great clans had ceased their struggle against the Four Divine Beasts clan.

But Hodan was just a minor figure of the Reinales clan, and was assigned here as the Planar Overseer. He didn't know too much regarding the situation of the clan in the Infernal Realm. Naturally, he didn't understand…what sort of status Linley now had! If he knew that Linley was

an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan, Hodan probably would have been stunned.

“Lord Linley, you, on the other hand, are far more powerful than before.” Hodan was very respectful. He was just a God; how would he dare to be anything but respectful?

Linley turned to look at the endless world of ice and snow. The vast world was frozen and desolate, but Linley felt warmth in his heart. Because this was his home!

“Wade, this is the Arctic Icecap!” Linley clearly was rather excited. “The Arctic Icecap of the Yulan Plane! The Yulan Plane…my homeland! After two thousand years, I’ve finally returned! Finally returned, haha…” Linley was so excited that he couldn’t help but laugh loudly.

Delia’s eyes were moist as well. She was weeping from joy.

“We’re back. I wonder how my Leon clan is doing. If my older brother is doing well or not.” Delia was incomparably excited.

In the Infernal Realm, nearly two thousand years of time had passed. But the longer they had stayed in the Infernal Realm, the more they had longed for their homeland.

“So this is Father’s homeland?” Wade looked everywhere, also quite curious.

“Not even close. The Yulan continent is to the south.” Linley laughed. “Come. Let’s go to the Yulan continent. Hodan, we’ll leave now.” Laughing, Linley summoned a surge of earth-type divine power, sweeping them all up to fly away alongside him at high speed, departing from the Arctic Icecap and flying towards the Yulan continent.

As for Hodan, he stared into the distance as Linley left. “That year in the past, I kept on feeling as though Linley was a genius. But who would have imagined…in less than two thousand years, he would have returned from

the Infernal Realm. Terrifying. Terrifying!”

To be able to return from the Infernal Realm was a proof of power. How could ordinary Highgods possess a fortune of a trillion inkstones?

Flying was restricted and cumbersome in the Infernal Realm. Upon returning to a material realm, Linley felt his flying speed rise dramatically, and he was now ten times faster than when he had been in the Infernal Realm. He used his divine earth power to wrap everyone up, so as to help Ina, Wade, and the others move more rapidly as well.

After flying a short period of time, Linley saw, off in the distance, the sinuous, coiling northern shorelines off the North Sea.

“Boss, we’re at the Yulan continent!” Bebe called out excitedly.

“So this is the Yulan continent?” Ina looked around curiously.

Linley and Delia’s faces were slightly reddened. Clearly, both were very excited. It had been two thousand years since they had left, after all. Delia turned to look towards Linley. “Linley, where should we go first? To the Forest of Darkness? Or to Dragonblood Castle?”

Linley let out a low sigh.

“It’s been so many years since I’ve paid my respects to Father. Let’s go to Wushan township.” For some reason, Linley missed Wushan township the most. Perhaps it was because that was where his roots were. His youth had been spent there. That was where he had met Grandpa Doehring. And that was where he had met Bebe.

“Wushan township. Right. Let’s go to Wushan township.” Bebe said as well.

“I was born in Wushan township.” Bebe turned, explaining to Ina and Nisse.

Wushan township was a place of tremendous meaning for both Linley and Bebe. That was the start of their life.

“Right. To Wushan township. I want to see it.” Ina said jubilantly.

“Wushan township is probably covered with magical beasts.” Linley sighed. “After nearly two thousand years…I wonder what it has become like.” Two thousand years was too long a period of time, after all. It was enough for many things to occur.

“Father, I want to see our ancestral manor as well.” Wade was very eager as well.

“Then, let’s go.”

Linley immediately led everyone directly to the western side of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, pressing forward towards Wushan township at a fast pace. Given that he was now a Highgod, he flew hundreds of times faster than in the past, when he was a Saint. Flying through this material plane, where the restrictive forces were much weaker, Linley quickly arrived at the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

“When I was young, when I travelled from the Holy Union to the O’Brien Empire, I spent more than half a year. But now, from the North Sea to here, I only spent as much time as is needed to drink a cup of water…oh, and there’s Wushan township!” Just as Linley finished his words, he arrived in the air above Wushan township, emerging from the mountains.

But in the air above Wushan township, Linley’s group came to a pause, puzzled.

“Uncle, you said there must be many magical beasts here. But when we flew over here from the mountains, we saw many buildings and many people.” Ina didn’t understand. “Also, is this Wushan township? Why is it so densely populated? There has to be tens of thousands of people here.”

“Right. This is the former Wushan township.” Linley was certain about this.

As a Highgod, how could he be mistaken about the geography of such a place?

“Look, that’s Mt. Wushan over there! Mt. Wushan is still there. So this is Wushan township.” Linley pointed to the east, where there was indeed a large mountain. Although nearly two thousand years had passed, Mt. Wushan hadn’t changed much. The western side of Wushan township had, however. Because…

There was an extremely beautiful educational institute built here, with an astonishing number of people.

This institute, in terms of size, was far larger than the former Wushan township.

“What’s going on here?” Linley was completely confused.

Delia was puzzled as well. “In the past…this place should have been covered with magical beasts. We just flew past the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts. We saw so many buildings on the way over. Look…there are humans in other places nearby as well, but no magical beasts.” After that ‘Apocalypse Day’, the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance had much of their territory taken over by magical beasts.

However…

After nearly two thousand years, this area was actually reclaimed by humanity.

“Two thousand years. Too many things have occurred.” Linley sighed. “Come. Let’s go to my ancestral manor.” As Linley spoke, he flew forward.

Although Linley’s group of six flew through the air, the people below didn’t notice them at all, partially because they were too high up, and also because Linley used elemental energy to form a cloud around them. Linley slowly flew forward while looking down below carefully. Linley’s vision was

extremely good…

And he instantly found the centermost location of the institute; his ancestral manor!

“My ancestral manor remains standing?” Linley was surprised.

“Boss, the ancestral manor is actually in perfect shape. In fact, it seems to be in much better shape than it was in the past.” Bebe said in surprise as well.

The other areas in this enormous institute were newly constructed, but Linley’s former ancestral manor had been preserved and even renovated. Although it had been only two millenia, due to long-term caretaking, it wasn’t damaged in the slightest. Linley and Bebe, seeing it, couldn’t help but feel excited.

They had so many beautiful memories from this place.

“Let’s go down.” Linley said softly.

And then, with a ‘swish’ sound, their six shadows flashed through the skies, landing directly within the courtyard of the ancestral manor. Because they were too fast, they dropped down in less than the twinkling of an eye from the skies. There was no way ordinary people could possibly catch Linley’s movements with their eyes.

Within the manor.

“Everything is fine…everything is fine.” Linley stood there in the courtyard, looking around carefully. Suddenly, he saw that there was a chair in the courtyard. His eyes instantly turned red. “This chair is still…?” Linley couldn’t believe it. Staring at the chair, Linley’s memories returned…to when his father, Hogg, had often reclined on this chair, reading books.

Linley took a deep breath.

He could instantly tell that the chair had been recreated in that style; the original chair, after two thousand years, had probably rotted away long ago.

“Wade, this is the chair which your grandfather often sat in.” Linley pointed towards the chair as he spoke. “And there…that place. I used to study and learn culture from your grandfather there.” Linley still remembered how, every day, he intensively flipped through books and studied, and often had to go through Hogg’s strict tests.

“Wow…” Wade stared, wide-eyed, at every location.

“This is the place where I used to sleep. Bebe lived with me as well.” Linley pointed to a nearby room.

Bebe couldn’t help but grin as well.

“Come. In the back yard is the ancestral hall of our clan. In the past, Bebe was born in a courtyard near the ancestral hall.” Linley’s face was all smiles, and Bebe laughed as well. “That year, the Boss seduced me by cooking ducks and wild hares for me. Poor me. I was so young and naïve back then.”

Linley and Bebe laughed as they headed towards the inner courtyard.

As they walked through the ancestral manor, Linley and Bebe’s hearts were filled with warmth.

Right at this moment…

“Eh? Someone is coming.” Linley, Bebe, and the others moved away, instantly scurrying into the rear courtyard.

Creaaak! The door to the ancestral manor swung open.

An old man led dozens of youngsters and youths into this room. “Everyone, this is the place. It was here that the mighty genius grandmaster sculptor,

also a genius warrior-magus double-expert, also the founding emperor of the Baruch Empire, and also the master of the sacred place ‘Dragonblood Castle’, used to live in his youth. The legendary Deity, Linley Baruch. Be careful. You are only allowed to look, not to touch.”

The old man explained. “This room was the place where Grandmaster Linley used to live.”

“Wow…Grandmaster Linley used to live here. It’d be so awesome if I could go sleep there as well.” A youth said softly, his eyes bright.

“Hmph.”

The old man couldn’t help but frown as he swept these students with his gaze. “Pay attention. This is the ancestral manor of Grandmaster Linley. During your studies here, this will be the only chance you have to come visit. In the future, you won’t have another chance! Enough. Let’s go to the study now. That’s the place where Grandmaster Linley used to read when he was young.”

Chapter 6 – After Two Thousand Years, Even Seas Can Become Plains!

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 6, After Two Thousand Years, Even Seas Can Become Plains!

Within the rear courtyard of the ancestral manor, Linley listened to the voice coming from the front, rather amazed.

“Boss.” Bebe laughed as he looked at Linley, then gave him a big thumbs up.

Wade and Ina looked worshipfully towards Linley. Ina even repeated, ‘The mighty genius grandmaster sculptor, also a genius warrior-magus double-expert, also the founding emperor of the Baruch Empire, and also the master of the sacred place ‘Dragonblood Castle’…the legendary Deity, Linley Baruch!’ Uncle, you have so many titles. You are amazing.”

“There’s one missing, actually. The Dragonblood Warrior of the Supreme Warrior clans!” Bebe grinned.

Linley could only laugh.

Those visiting students in the front courtyard only viewed some areas in the front, and then left in a group. Clearly, the rear courtyard of the ancestral manor was not open to these students. It made sense….the rear courtyard had always been in a state of disrepair. Only the ancestral hall had always remained protected.

But how could these ordinary students be allowed to view the ancestral hall?

Of course, the true ancestral hall of the Baruch clan had already been moved to Dragonblood Castle, and so there wasn’t anything within the ‘ancestral hall’ in this ancestral manor.

“Just now, I believe they mentioned the words, ‘sacred place’ and ‘Dragonblood Castle’. So Dragonblood Castle has become a ‘sacred place’.” Linley let out a moved sigh.

Delia chuckled, “It has quite a few Deities. If it isn’t a sacred place, what is it?”

“Father.” Ina said to Bebe. “Where were you born?” Laughing, Bebe led Ina and Nisse to the side, while Linley headed towards the ancestral hall, with Delia and Wade following him as he pushed open the door to the hall and went into it.

Creaaaak. The door opened, and Linley carefully inspected the ancestral hall.

Compared to the past, the ancestral hall was virtually unchanged. Clearly, it had been maintained very well. But of course, the many spirit tablets that had been placed here had been moved long ago to Dragonblood Castle. The counter was completely empty.

Linley stared at the ancestral hall. His mind thought back to the first time his father, Hogg, had introduced the background of their Baruch clan. “The Four Supreme Warriors actually represent four ancient clans. Our Baruch clan is the ancient clan which contains the exalted bloodline of the Dragonblood Warriors!”

In the ancestral hall, his father had explained these things to him excitedly. This seemed to have happened just yesterday.

But now…

His father was dead!

“Father. Do you know? I’ve gone to the Infernal Realm, and met with our clan leader, ‘Baruch’. Ryan. Hazard. And the other ancestors of the clan as well…they are all doing very well, very well!” Linley felt sourness in his

heart. His father had always hoped for his clan to return to glory. His clan had indeed flourished, but…his father would never be able to see it again.

Wade and Delia stood there quietly, just watching, not daring to disturb Linley.

Linley suddenly frowned and turned. “Someone is coming?”

“Who are you people!” A voice rang out from not too far away.

“Let’s go take a look.” Linley, Wade, and Delia all walked outside. By the time they reached the outside, they saw that a middle-aged man dressed in gray magus robes was staring at Bebe, Nisse, and Ina. When Linley’s group walked out, the middle-aged man said, stunned, “There’s actually six of you?”

This middle-aged man was the chancellor of this institute, the Saint-level expert, Hamelyn [Ha’mu’lin].

Chancellor Hamelyn was already a peak Saint. While he just so happened to walk past the courtyard, he sensed the presence of outsiders within the ancestral hall. Normally, it was forbidden for outsiders to enter this hall, and so Hamelyn naturally shouted at them. Actually, Hamelyn had only sensed Ina’s presence; he hadn’t sensed the other five.

He had thought there was only one person present. Who would have imagined that there were actually six!

Clearly, the other five were more powerful than him!

“Who are you?” Linley looked at him.

Hamelyn said composedly, “This is a core area of my Linley Institute. How did you come in? As for me, I am this institute’s chancellor, Hamelyn!”

“Hey, what did you say this institute is called?” Bebe immediately said.

Linley was badly startled upon hearing this. It seemed as though this Hamelyn had just said the words, ‘Linley Institute’.

Hanelyn, puzzled, looked at these six. “What? Can it be that you’ve never even heard of the Linley Institute, one of the three great institutes of the continent? Can it be that you didn’t see the sculpture of Grandmaster Linley which lies right past the main gates to our institute?” This was common knowledge, but the looks on the faces of Linley’s group did indeed make Hamelyn feel puzzled.

“Linley Institute?” Wade’s eyes widened, and he turned to look at Linley. “Father, did you hear that? The Linley Institute.”

Linley was speechless.

Although Hamelyn had seen the sculpture of Linley, first of all, the sculpture wasn’t at the grandmaster level of accuracy, and second of all, compared to when he was a Saint, Linley’s aura had completely changed. Thus, Hamelyn didn’t make any mental connection at all between the person in front of him and the legend of the continent, Linley.

“We just came for a look.” Linley laughed calmly. “Enough. We will leave now.”

Linley spread out his divine earth power, including Ina and Wade within it. An earthen yellow light flashed, and Linley’s group of six disappeared into the horizon.

“This speed…”

Hamelyn stared, stupefied. “He’s far faster than even my teacher…and Teacher Reynolds is a Deity-level expert. Who on earth are these people?”

The Baruch Empire had existed for nearly two thousand years now, and the holiest site in the empire was Dragonblood Castle. The successive generations of emperors, upon giving up the throne, almost all moved to live here at Dragonblood Castle. Dragonblood Castle had quite a few

Deities, and also quite a few Saint-level magical beasts who guarded it.

Nobody dared to act wildly in Dragonblood Castle.

Dragonblood Castle had expanded long ago. By now, it was many times larger than it had been in the past. The ‘Adamantine Garden’ of Dragonblood Castle was where Wharton lived. Currently, in a grassy area of the Adamantine Garden, two young-looking men were seated in the meditative position, facing each other while drinking wine and chatting.

“Taylor, what? You don’t want another woman??”

“Uncle Wharton, I’m tired.” The thick-eyebrowed, muscular youth was Tyalor. Although nearly two thousand years had passed, Taylor’s appearance had barely changed compared to the past. Right now, Taylor was sighing. “Uncle Wharton, we have eternal life, but our spouses? We have to just watch as our spouses age, then die. This sort of feeling is too painful.”

In the past two millennia, Taylor had taken two women as his wives in succession.

But these two wives had both died of old age, filling Taylor with the utmost of pain.

“Alas.” Wharton let out a low sigh as well. “I still remember how, that year, my big brother, for the sake of letting me marry Nina, did everything he could, even going so far as to duel Olivier in the arena. After a few centuries, even Nina was unable to resist the flow of time…and it’s been nearly two thousand years since my big brother went to the Infernal Realm. Nina died more than a millennium ago.” Wharton laughed at himself. “Sometimes, eternal life is a painful thing.”

Only upon becoming a Saint would one possess eternal life.

But becoming a Saint required talent and luck. To most commoners, it was too difficult.

“Gates and the others were lucky.” Wharton let out a sigh. Of the five Barker brothers, Barker and Gates had married Rebecca and her sister, both of whom had very pure souls and thus were extremely suited and talented for training in Necromantic magic. After a hundred or so years, they had reached the Saint-level.

Only when both members in a couple were both in possession of eternal lifespan would things be ideal. If only one side possessed an eternal lifespan, then the result would be watching the other slowly age and die. This was indeed agonizing.

“Uncle Wharton, as I see it, we should go to the Infernal Realm sometime as well.” Taylor said.

“Go to the Infernal Realm?”

Wharton nodded slightly. “In the Yulan Plane, although we have a great enmity against the Odin Empire, there’s nothing we can do. It can be said that there is nothing holding us here…after some more time passes, let’s go visit the Infernal Realm. It has been a long time since I’ve seen Big Bro. I truly wish to see him.”

“I want to see Father as well.” Taylor said softly.

“WHARTON! TAYLOR!” A voice echoed in the minds of Wharton and Taylor.

Wharton and Taylor seemed to have both been struck by lightning, staring at each other in disbelief. At the same time, they too sensed a powerful aura spreading out from the war training grounds in the front courtyard of Dragonblood Castle. Although this aura was powerful, it had such a familiar feeling to it. This was Linley’s aura!

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Wharton and Taylor simultaneously transformed into streaks of lightning,

flying out at high speed.

Dragonblood Castle. The war training grounds.

Linley's group of six was standing here. Linley was actively emanating his aura while greeting one familiar figure after another through his divine sense. However, when he used his divine sense to investigate, Linley discovered that many familiar figures of the past had disappeared, such as Grandpa Hiri, Uncle Hillman, Wharton's wife Nina, Jenne…

"Are they all dead?" Linley wondered to himself.

Just because they weren't at Dragonblood Castle didn't necessarily mean that they were dead. But Linley, too, understood that the lifespan of normal humans who didn't reach the Saint-level would generally reach at most three or four centuries. Five centuries was the utmost limit. Only by reaching the Saint-level would one possess eternal life.

One figure after another flew over at high speed from places throughout Dragonblood Castle.

"FATHER!" A deep voice rang out. Linley's eyes lit up. It was Taylor.

"BIG BRO!" It was Wharton.

"Lord Linley." The incredibly muscular Barker.

A large group of people flew over at high speed, and in an instant, nearly a hundred had gathered here in the training grounds. Linley only recognized less than half of these people, and didn't recognize the majority. However, upon seeing all those familiar faces, Linley couldn't help but feel excited. These were his comrades, his friends, his family!

"Big Bro!" Wharton immediately gave Linley a tight, vicious bear hug.

"Wharton." Linley hugged his little brother as well, unable to refrain from feeling regretful.

“MASTER!” Linley turned to look. There was a man dressed in a long black robe. It was the transformed Haeru. Haeru was staring at Linley in excitement as well. So many years had gone by. As a King amongst magical beasts, Haeru felt extremely grateful towards Linley for what he had given him.

Wharton and Linley released each other. Wharton was completely unable to suppress his excitement. “Big Bro, I really didn’t expect you’d be back. We were just talking about going to the Infernal Realm to look for you. Big Bro…there are many people here you don’t recognize, right? Let me introduce them…this is Arnold’s son…”

Wharton, in one breath, introduced more than ten important people.

These people all stared at Linley, their eyes filled with shock, awe, and veneration. It was like they were staring at a titan from legends.

“Wade, come, meet your uncle. Also, this is your older brother, Taylor…” Linley was incomparably overjoyed right now.

Right at this moment…

“THIRD BRO!” A voice suddenly rang out from behind.

Linley turned to look.

It was a Demigod, dressed in a long black robe. Those intelligent eyes looked the same as they always had, only they appeared slightly older than before. This was the man who had been one of Linley’s closest friends…his Fourth Bro. Reynolds.

“Fourth Bro.” Linley immediately went to welcome him, tightly embracing his ‘Fourth Bro’, Reynolds.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds couldn’t help but shed tears as well.

They hadn't met for nearly two thousand years. He had thought that they would never be able to meet again. Now that they saw each other, how could he not feel excited?

"Third Bro, it's been so many years." Reynolds was so excited, his entire body was trembling.

"Right." Linley nodded repeatedly as well.

Linley immediately thought of Yale and George. He hurriedly asked, "Right, Fourth Bro, where's the Boss and Second Bro? How are the two of them?" Linley had a hint of hope in his heart. After all, Yale and George were very talented as well. Maybe…maybe they had reached the Saint-level as well.

The chance was low, but Linley held out hope in his heart.

"All dead." Reynolds voice sank.

Linley was stunned.

"Dead…" Linley sighed.

Actually, Linley had mentally prepared himself in advance for this return. After all, he hadn't come back in nearly two thousand years. Anyone not at the Saint-level would age and die, just from the passage of time. Becoming a Saint was extremely hard, after all. In the past, it was only because Delia had received Beirut's gift, that divine spark, that she was able to become a Saint and then a Deity.

In truth, only a Saint should have been able to fuse with a divine spark. As for those who were not yet Saints, divine sparks weren't of much use.

The reason why Delia's training speed had risen so rapidly didn't have anything to do with the divine spark itself. In truth, it was due to some special materials which coated that divine spark!

Because…

That divine spark was no ordinary divine spark.

It must be understood that wind-type divine sparks should emanate a faint green aura. But on the day of the wedding, the divine spark which Delia received had no color at all. It was very ordinary! Actually, that divine spark was something which Beirut had refined and reforged after using up quite a few treasures. The core of that spark was a divine spark, but the outside layer was of some precious materials which allowed Delia to more easily sense elemental essences.

And thus, she was able to quickly rise in power.

“However, they didn’t die of age.” Reynolds said in a low voice.

Linley was stunned. “What?”

“Big Bro, it’s best for us to go inside to talk about this.” Wharton said hurriedly.

Linley stared at Reynolds, who let out a sigh as well. “Third Bro, let’s go into the hall to slowly discuss this.”

Linley felt that things were a bit strange, but he tamped down his disquiet and questions, following Reynolds and Wharton into the castle, to the hall for discussing major events. Only twenty or so people actually entered the hall.

The other juniors were stopped and kept outside.

Within the great hall.

Linley’s family, Bebe’s family, Wharton, Taylor, Sasha, Zassler, and the Barker brothers were all present.

“Fourth Bro, what happened, exactly? You said the Boss and Second Bro

didn’t die normal deaths?” Linley couldn’t help but speak out.

“Right.”

Reynolds said in a low voice, “Third Bro, let us finish. Don’t grow impatient. You have to be calm!”

“Hurry up.” Linley couldn’t endure any longer.

Reynolds nodded. “Third Bro. At present, in the Yulan continent, there are only two Empires remaining. One is the Baruch Empire, while the other is the Odin Empire. As for the land west of the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, where the Holy Union and the Dark Alliance used to rule, that has devolved into various duchies and kingdoms that aren’t worth mentioning.”

“Odin Empire?” Linley frowned.

“Right. The former O’Brien Empire, Yulan Empire, Rhine Empire, and Rohault Empire, as well as the great plains of the far east, have all been unified into the Odin Empire.” Reynolds said.

Linley couldn’t help but feel startled.

This Odin Empire took up more than half of the entire Yulan continent.

“Actually, not long after you left, Lord Beirut sent us a message through his divine sense, informing all Deities of some information. After that, those Deities gave up their plans of entering the Necropolis of the Gods and left to the Higher Planes or Divine Planes.” Reynolds said slowly. “As for the Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire, they were restored. Second Bro, ‘George’, became a pillar and an important official of the Yulan Empire, while Boss Yale worked hard for the Dawson Conglomerate…with our help, the Dawson Conglomerate truly absorbed the other two major trading unions, become the number one trading union of the Yulan continent.”

Linley just listened quietly.

“But…our calm and peaceful lives lasted for just two centuries. And then, a person appeared!”

Reynolds said in a low voice, “His name is Odin. In just a single short year, he unified the various other Empires, and even wanted to annihilate our Baruch Empire. But when he attacked…fortunately, Lord Beirut appeared and stopped him with a rebuke. Ever since then, he’s not invaded so much as a single inch of the territory of our Baruch Empire. Based on the information we received from Lord Beirut, this Odin was also one of the five Kings of Gebados, and was nicknamed the ‘Vile King’.”

Chapter 7 – Parting Words

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 7, Parting Words

“One of the five Kings?” Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes. Each of the five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison was a supreme expert. Bluefire was one of the five Kings. Since Odin was titled the ‘Vile King’, on par with Bluefire, then Odin’s power was definitely at an astonishing level as well.

“The deaths of the Boss and of Second Bro have to do with him?” Linley couldn’t help but ask.

“Yes, Third Bro! You know that our Second Bro, George, was very talented in magic. In addition, he was fairly diligent in his training…a century after you left, he reached the Saint-level. He should have had eternal life, but…”

Reynolds’ face turned dark. Clearly, this filled his heart with boundless rage. However, Reynolds forced it down, so that he could continue to speak. “The first time Odin attacked, he struck at the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. With just a flip of his hand…that Odin destroyed half of the imperial capital. In addition, he had a group of subordinates, all of whom were Deities!”

“Odin issued an order. Everyone within the imperial capital at or above the Saint level was to be killed. No one was to be spared!”

“Second Bro, ‘George’, was killed there.” Reynolds continued to speak, but as he did, his tears began to fall.

Although Linley had mentally prepared himself, he still felt his head go dizzy. He still clearly remembered how of the four brothers, George was amiable, good-tempered, and yet always willing to share in the shouldering of any burdens. “Second Bro died, just like that?” Linley couldn’t believe it. George, who had always had such distant, lofty goals, had died?

How could Linley swallow his rage, after his close friend had been killed like this?

“Odin…must die.” Linley’s face was like iron.

“Big Bro.” Wharton said hurriedly.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds hurriedly called out as well.

“Reynolds, you, you said…” A trembling voice rang out. Delia, standing next to Linley, stared at Reynolds nervously, her eyes filled with fear and worry. “You said that everyone at or above the Saint level in the imperial capital was killed? What about my elder brother? How is my elder brother?”

In the Leon clan, aside from Delia, the only person to reach the Saint level was Dixie.

Over the course of two thousand years, those previous family members of hers had turned to dust long ago.

Delia truly hoped to see her elder brother, Dixie, on this return. The genius elder brother who had always taken care of her.

“Dixie?” Reynolds was stunned.

“Right, my brother! Is my brother still alive?” Delia’s entire body was trembling.

“Delia…” Linley couldn’t help but take Delia’s hand in his own. He could clearly sense how her hand was shaking.

“Dixie is dead!” Wharton said. “The ten Saints who were at the imperial capital were all killed, and Dixie was one of them! Odin and his subordinates were too vicious, and he even had Highgods serving him. There was no way such a powerful force could be resisted at all. How could

any Saints flee?"

Delia's face instantly turned pale.

"My brother died?" Delia lowered her head, two streams of clear tears falling down her face.

"Delia.." Linley said hurriedly.

Delia suddenly opened her eyes, grinding her teeth. "Odin. I must kill him!" Delia turned to look at Linley. "Linley…I must kill him, I must!!!"

"We must. We must." Linley felt his own killing intent surge as well.

"No, don't." Taylor was absolutely frantic. "Mother, Father, don't go! This Odin is truly too powerful. Back then, Odin even attacked Dragonblood Castle. It took Lord Beirut making an appearance to stop him. Lord Beirut said…that even in the Higher Planes, this Odin would be considered a top-tier expert."

"Right." Reynold said frantically as well. "Third Bro, no matter what, don't put yourself at risk."

"I remember Lord Beirut said something about a Seven Star Fiend. That this Odin could be considered a Seven Star Fiend." Sasha said hurriedly as well.

It was evident that they clearly remembered the scene of how Lord Beirut had appeared when Odin had attacked. They, too, were filled with the utmost of hatred towards Odin, but Lord Beirut had solemnly warned them of how powerful this Odin was, and that they would die if they fought him.

"Seven Star Fiend?" Linley's gaze flashed with cold light.

The nearby Bebe said angrily, "Even if he is an Asura, he will still die!"

Reynolds and the others didn't understand the meaning of this. They didn't

understand what the terms ‘Seven Star fiend’ and ‘Asura’ entailed.

“Right. Boss Yale?” Linley suddenly thought of Yale.

Yale was a member of the Dawson Conglomerate. Odin had unified an empire, but what did Yale have to do with that?

“Third Bro, first calm down. Don’t act rashly out of anger.” Reynolds said hurriedly. As Reynolds and Wharton saw it, their biggest concern was that Linley would go insane and go try and make trouble for Odin. As they saw it…although Linley was a genius, he had only trained for two millennia, while that Odin was someone who was far more monstrously powerful than even the now-deceased Adkins.

“Fine. I won’t act impetuously. Speak, hurry.” Although Linley said these words, rage was blazing within his chest.

The death of Second Bro as well as that of Delia’s elder brother…they had to be avenged!

“Fine. I’ll speak.” Reynolds shut his eyes. He took a deep breath before opening them again, but tears began to uncontrollably appear within them nonetheless. “When Boss Yale was young, he didn’t work hard in his training, and he was also the least talented of us four brothers…and so he became stuck as an eighth rank magus. However, this didn’t prevent his becoming as the Chairman of the Conglomerate.”

Linley nodded slightly.

He remembered that Yale had once said that he dreamed of becoming the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate and swallowing up the other two trading guilds, becoming the single largest trading guild of the entire Yulan continent.

“That year, although the Yulan Empire and the O’Brien Empire were restored to power, they had too few experts and were too weak. In the entire Yulan continent…only the Baruch Empire could be considered a

powerhouse." Reynolds said slowly. "With our help, the Dawson Conglomerate naturally expanded nonstop, moving as easily as a fish does in water. The other two trading guilds were squeezed and nibbled down. In the end, they completely collapsed and were swallowed up by the Dawson Conglomerate. Boss Yale accomplished his goal and was extremely happy. Myself and Second Bro, along with Boss Yale, even had a special get together and celebration for this event."

A drifting look was in Reynolds eyes.

"That year, the three of us celebrated together. We even sighed that it was unfortunate that you, Third Bro, weren't here. Otherwise, the four of us would've been able to have a good get-together."

Linley couldn't help but feel a deeply buried part of his heart tremble. It was the deep recesses of his heart, where the love he bore for his brothers lay.

"When the three of us were together, everything was fine. But…after we separated and went about our own business, not long afterwards the 'Vile King' Odin appeared. He first showed off his brutal, domineering, unstoppable power by forcefully uniting the various empires into his 'Odin Empire'. Reynolds said in a low voice. "But Odin wasn't satisfied with just that. He took a fancy to the Dawson Conglomerate! Although the Dawson Conglomerate was just a merchant conglomerate, as the largest one in the continent…it had astonishingly great power secreted throughout the continent."

Linley's face became ugly to behold.

In the past, when the Dawson Conglomerate was just one of three major trading guilds, it was already very powerful. By the time it swallowed up the other two…Linley could imagine how formidable the hidden power of the Dawson Conglomerate was.

"One of Odin's clones trains in the Edicts of Death." Reynolds said somberly. "He easily took control over several major empires because he

was able to spiritually dominate quite a few critical members of the various empires, and so he was able to easily unify the nations. As for Boss Yale… his soul was dominated as well."

Linley couldn't help but feel pain in his heart.

Boss Yale had been dominated once in the past as well. That time, Linley had rescued Boss Yale, but…this time, he wasn't there. Nobody was there to rescue him.

"In a short year, with Boss Yale's cooperation, the management structure of the Dawson Conglomerate was completely changed and replaced with Odin's people. It can be said…that aside from Boss Yale, not a single member of the Dawnson clan remained, out of all the important, high-level members of the Dawson Conglomerate. They were all replaced by Odin's men." Reynolds' voice was hoarse.

Reynolds suddenly stared at Linley, letting out a grief-stricken laugh. "Third Bro, do you know why Odin is known as the Vile King?"

Linley was stunned.

"why?" Linley said.

"Because he truly is vile! Not only does he have all sorts of evil techniques, he himself is an evil, vile person!" Reynolds was unable to control his voice. "After the Dawson Conglomerate fell under his control, that bastard actually controlled Yale and made him personally kill one member of the Dawson clan after another. These people included Boss Yale's son, his wife, his descendants, his brothers…they all died. And Boss Yale personally killed them all."

Linley's heart grew cold.

"Boss Yale no longer held any more value for him, but he didn't just kill Boss Yale. He let Boss Yale regain his mind and his freedom!" Reynolds said in a low voice.

“This…that, that bastard! He has to die!” The nearby Ina couldn’t help but growl out as well.

Linley’s face was ashen.

“When Boss Yale regained his senses, he knew what he had done. Perhaps only an extremely few members of the Dawson clan were still alive; those who were in very distant, remote regions. The central members of the clan, however…Boss Yale’s relatives…he had killed them all, sparing none. Boss Yale was in such agony, he went insane…”

Reynolds’ body was trembling slightly.

Linley already felt as though countless knives were stabbing into his heart.

“But that Odin sealed up Boss Yale’s mageforce, and then bound him and strung him up on a tree in the Odin Palace.” Reynolds sobbed, his tears pouring forth. “When bored, Odin would often go sit beneath the tree, drinking wine and enjoying the services of the palace made. When he listened to Boss Yale’s insane curses, he seemed to rather enjoy it…as though he enjoyed Boss Yale’s madness, his despair!”

Linley felt as though his head was about to explode.

Vile?

This wasn’t just ‘vile’. This was utterly perverted! Odin was a pervert!

After having stolen away the Dawson Conglomerate, which Yale had worked for all his life, he then had Yale kill his own relatives, then gave Yale his mind back! And Odin enjoyed listening to Yale’s curses, enjoyed Yale’s madness…

“When I learned this, I frantically hurried to that place.” Reynolds said bitterly. “Boss Yale barely had any life left in him. Odin was too powerful; he could’ve killed me with a single finger. So all I could do was secretly use

my divine sense to enter Boss Yale's mind and speak with him!"

"By then, Boss Yale's mind was at the point of collapse! I am unable to imagine what sort of mental torment he must have felt during the time he had been hung up there. All I knew was that Boss Yale, ever so graceful and vigorous and carefree, was at the point of collapse."

Linley was so angry, he could no longer speak. He just stared at Reynolds.

"When I sent out my divine sense, Boss Yale reacted, very slightly. But he just repeated the words, 'I have sinned!' 'I have sinned!'" Reynolds' voice trembled. "He begged me to kill him. He was hung there and his mageforce was sealed; he was unable to kill himself. He wanted me to kill him! To release him from it all!"

Linley's body shook.

"I agreed." Reynolds said in a low voice. "Boss Yale was already insane. I had never seen him like that before."

"Before he died, Boss Yale told me that Odin was extremely strong, far more powerful than the last Highgod, Adkins. Afterwards, he said one thing to me…'Fourth Bro, no matter what, you and Third Bro are not to avenge me. Do not try to avenge me!" Reynolds' face was covered with tears now.

Linley just stood there, stunned.

"You and Third Bro, no matter what, are not to avenge me. Do not try to avenge me!!!"

Boss Yale's dying shout seemed to echo in his ears. "BOOM!" Linley's mind was utterly blank, but he felt as though an explosion had gone off within it.

"Aaaaaaah!" Linley knelt down on the ground, agonized, releasing a growling, agonized cry from his throat.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds went to go lift Linley up.

He could imagine how agonized Linley was…because when Reynolds had seen Boss Yale and what terrible shape he had been in, Reynolds was utterly agonized as well. He had even killed Yale with his own hands, so as to grant Yale release.

Linley, kneeling there on the ground, lifted his head up. His eyes were red, and his entire body was shaking. He growled out, “Odin!!! I will definitely make him go insane from agony as well! I will make him go hysterical!!! Make him die!!!” Linley’s voice seemed to have been ground out from every single tooth in his mouth.

Chapter 8 – Marvelous Treasures

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 8, Marvelous Treasures

“Third Bro, calm down!” Reynolds immediately shouted.

“Father!” Sasha and Taylor called out in terror as well.

They were afraid that after Linley learned of this matter, he would be unable to contain his rage and go attack Odin. Wharton, Reynolds, and the others all knew what it meant to be a peak Highgod expert. This was why despite Yale dying heartbroken and furious, before his death, he had instructed that Linley and Reynolds were not to avenge him!

It wasn’t that he, Yale, didn’t want revenge. It was that he was afraid that Linley and Reynolds would die because of him as well!

“Boss, let’s go kill him.” Bebe immediately charged outwards.

Linley suddenly stretched out his right hand, snatching Bebe. Staring at him, Linley said, “Bebe, don’t be impetuous!”

“Right. Don’t be rash.” Wharton said frantically as well. “Bebe, you and my brother need to calm down first. If revenge was possible, we would’ve taken it long ago. But if we aren’t able to do so, the end result would just be that our lives are lost as well. It isn’t worth it. We have to endure. Endure!”

“Endure my ass!” Bebe roared furiously. “So what if he’s a Seven Star Fiend? Centuries ago, before the Boss made his breakthrough, he killed five Seven Star Fiends by himself, much less now! Forget Seven Star Fiend… even if that Odin is an Infernal Asura, the Boss and I don’t fear him!”

When Linley had advanced from being a God to a Highgod, his power had risen by several levels.

He now not only had a godspark weapon, he also had Sovereign's Might to use in the event of any danger! And aside from Linley himself, Bebe's innate divine ability, 'Godeater', was a monstrously powerful technique. Although Bebe wasn't strong in his normal attacks, when executing his supreme, divine ability, his power was comparable to Beirut's!

If Linley and Bebe joined forces…how many people could possibly stop the two of them?

"What…what did you say?" Wharton was stunned.

"Before making a breakthrough? Killed five Seven Star Fiends?" Reynolds and everyone else was stunned.

Although they didn't know much about what a 'Seven Star Fiend' truly represented, based on the way Beirut had said it, they all understood that Seven Star Fiends should stand at the peak of power amongst Highgods.

"Don't worry. I'm confident in being able to kill Odin." Linley said in a low voice. "If Bebe and I are incapable of killing Odin…Lord Beirut probably would've warned me about him back when we were in the Infernal Realm." Beirut knew exactly what had happened back here in the Yulan continent. But Beirut hadn't said anything about it.

Linley didn't blame Beirut for Odin having tortured Yale. After all, Beirut couldn't possibly have his divine sense spread out every moment of every day, paying attention to everything.

Nor did Linley blame Beirut for not having killed Odin in revenge!

"The reason he didn't kill Odin was to let me do it myself." A killing look appeared in Linley's eyes.

"Third Bro, you are confident in being able to kill Odin?" Reynolds looked towards Linley disbelievingly.

"Big Bro." Wharton was stunned as well, and he looked at Linley in

amazed joy.

“Completely confident.” Linley’s voice was like ice. He then turned to look at Bebe. “Bebe, this Odin is nicknamed the ‘Vile King’. He tormented Boss Yale to the point of madness, to the point where life was worse than death. How can I allow this Odin to die so easily?” Only when a person was still alive would he feel terror and despair.

Once a person died, that person would no longer feel a thing.

But how could a bit of fear be enough to cause the blazing embers of rage in Linley’s heart to subside? How could it allow Yale’s tormented soul to be at peace?

“Third Bro!” Reynolds suddenly said loudly.

Linley turned to look. Reynolds’ face was covered with tears, and in his eyes was an extremely complicated mixture of rage and delight. “Third Bro, you must avenge the Boss and Second Bro! You must! Let their wronged souls, in the Netherworld, find peace!” Reynolds had wanted to take revenge for all these years, but he didn’t have the ability to do so.

He wasn’t willing to accept this!

But all he could do was hate himself for his inability!

What could he do? With the little bit of power he possessed…he would probably die before even reaching Odin.

“Get revenge!” Reynolds stared at Linley, placing his hopes upon Linley’s shoulders.

“Don’t worry.” Linley suddenly turned to stare at Wharton. “Wharton, immediately go make some arrangements. Have all of our intelligence reports on Odin be sent over, including those regarding his subordinates. Have everything sent over.”

“Alright.” Wharton hurriedly went to make the arrangements.

Turning his head, Linley stared at the nearby Delia, whose face was covered in tears as well. In a low voice he said, “Delia, don’t worry. That Odin will definitely die, and his death will be agonizing. I swear it!”

The Baruch Empire had been founded nearly two thousand years ago, and so its intelligence agents were now spread throughout the entire Yulan continent. They even know what was going on within the Odin Empire’s imperial palace. In the past, the Baruch Empire had constantly been collecting intelligence reports regarding the Odin Empire. Now that Linley had given the order…

The many intelligence reports were organized, collated, then delivered to Linley’s table.

In but a single night, Linley made his preparations for vengeance.

Odin Empire. The capital city of Ides province. A lavish estate.

Within a flower garden, a young noble youth dressed in luxurious robes was resting on a reclining sofa. Although it was a ‘sofa’, in reality, it was more like a bed. A beautiful maid was curled up on the bed as well, her clothes half-removed, revealing her snowy-white skin. As for the noble youth, his head was resting within the maid’s bosom.

“So slow.” The noble youth snorted unhappily.

Right at this moment, one beautiful young lady after another entered the flower garden, along with a middle-aged man who looked like a housekeeper who barked, “Hurry up. Over there. Five of you in each line. Stand straight.” Twenty five attractive, slender young women.

These twenty five young women all stood there in lines, rather nervous.

“Your Highness, they are all present.” The housekeeper immediately walked over humbly and said in a respectful voice.

“Fine.” The young noble replied, but his gaze was fixed on the twenty five women.

A wicked little smile appeared on his face. “They are indeed quite young, unlike those old maids of the Planar Prison who didn’t have any womanly airs at all.” With a wave of his hand, a flying dart flew out as he laughed loudly, “My pretty ladies, I’m going to play a game with you today. I’m going to blindly throw out this dart and whoever it hits, that person shall remove an article of clothing. Understood?”

The bodies of the twenty five women trembled, but none of them dared to resist.

“The dart won’t kill you.” The noble youth laughed softly.

He gave it a toss….

“Swoosh!” The dart flew out like lightning, striking towards the group of twenty five young women. But in the blink of an eye, it then returned into the hand of that noble youth.

“Ah.” A weak, surprised cry. A hint of blood appeared on the chest of one of the young ladies.

“What fresh blood.” The noble youth extended is tongue, licking the fresh blood from the flying dart, then laughed softly. “Undress.” He was confident in his skills. The darts would just barely slash open the skin of these ladies. Although it would hurt, at most there would be a hint of blood. Nobody would die.

The young lady’s body was trembling, but she still took off an article of clothing.

“Continue.” The noble youth once more threw out the flying dart.

This ‘game’ continued nonstop. In but a few moments, each and every one

of the twenty five women had undressed, all of them standing there, slick and naked, amidst the flower garden. The housekeeper had quietly left long ago. He knew…that his Imperial Highness hated it when other men looked at his female playthings. His Imperial Highness could play with them, but if others were to watch…they would die.

The twenty five women stood there, naked and trembling, thin lines of blood flowing from their bodies.

The strange thing was, the bloody lines actually formed words.

“Whore.” “Love.” “Slut.”

Bloody words were on the bodies of every single woman.

This strange scene made it so that these women were all the more frightened, and unable to resist.

“Oh!” Seeing this, the noble youth suddenly grew so excited that his entire body began to tremble. “How wonderful. This is absolutely a work of art. Alright, ‘whore’, you come over. Yes, you, the one with the character for ‘whore’ on your body.” The noble youth played with the dart, which danced in the air as though it were alive.

The naked woman, terrified, walked over one step at a time.

Right at this moment…

“Whoosh!” Suddenly, a wild wind stirred, and the clothes on the ground suddenly flew up, wrapping themselves around those twenty five women. At the same time, the twenty five women, along with the serving maid next to the noble youth, entered a dreamy, dazed state, losing all consciousness.

“Eh?” The noble youth turned to look, his gaze growing sharp as a dagger.

A brown-haired man had suddenly appeared, dressed in a white suit and with white ribbons wrapped in his hair. He was walking forward, one step at

a time.

“Who are you?” The noble youth’s face changed.

“Odin is your father, right?” Linley said calmly.

“If you know this, how dare you be so arrogant?” The noble youth said, but his body was already moving.

“Rumble…” A strange soul ripple spread out. The eyes of the noble youth instantly became dull and lifeless as he entered a dazed state. This was the supreme support technique, the ‘Spiritual Chaos’ component to Linley’s Blackstone Space. When Linley had been a God, he was already capable of making ordinary Highgods enter a stupor.

And now?

“A kid who relied on fusing with a divine spark to become a Highgod thinks that he can run from me?” Linley cast him a calm glance.

Linley stretched his hand out. With a ‘slash’ sound, he drove his hand into the youth’s skull, and a surge of divine earth power instantly reduced the contents of the youth’s skull to mush.

“Time for the next one.” Linley picked up the noble youth’s corpse. With a flicker, his body disappeared.

Not long after Linley left, the women regained their consciousness, but they were completely lost and puzzled. That housekeeper wasn’t too concerned; he knew that his Imperial Highness was a Highgod, and that in the entire Yulan continent, there wasn’t much who could threaten him. He thought that his Imperial Highness had suddenly gone to take care of some business.

The Odin Empire. The imperial capital. This was a city that had been rebuilt atop the ruins of the former imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. The imperial palace was particularly majestic and tightly guarded. Today, the imperial capital of the Odin Empire was particularly rowdy…because a

delegation of Envoys from the Baruch Empire had come to pay their respects to his Imperial Majesty, Odin. Ever since the founding of the Odin Empire a thousand years ago, the relationship between the two Empires had been extremely tense.

But now, Envoys had actually been sent to pay their respects to Emperor Odin. This was quite a rare occasion.

The Odin empire. The imperial palace. The main hall.

The senior ministers of the empire were all standing below the throne, smiles on their faces. As they saw it, for the Baruch Empire to send Envoys here was a show of subservience. This gave them a feeling of having dominated the Baruch Empire.

“Your Imperial Majesty, the Envoys are already outside the palace.” The palace attendant said respectfully.

“Haha…let them enter.” Odin, seated on the throne, laughed loudly as he spoke. Odin was someone who cared deeply about face, who cared greatly about perfection. He liked being above everyone else, liked making countless others look up to him. He liked the feeling of controlling someone’s fate in his hands…and he loved to toy with people.

To be able to control the joy, the rage, and the grief of others…this was something that made him very delighted and very happy.

“Almighty Emperor Odin, we are here representing the Emperor of the Baruch Empire and conveying his most sincere greetings.” The leading Envoy of the Baruch Empire bowed slightly, then continued, “On this visit, our Baruch Empire has prepared two marvelous treasures to offer you, Emperor Odin!”

A hint of a smile appeared on Odin’s face. “Bring it up for me to look at.”

Immediately…

The envoys brought two large chests in from outside the main hall, letting them rest heavily against the floor of the palace.

“Open them.” Odin laughed calmly.

“Emperor Odin, please take a look.” The Envoy opened one of the large chests, and as he did, shocked gasps could be heard throughout the main hall. As for Emperor Odin, seated on his throne, when he saw the ‘treasure’ within the chest, his face immediately changed. “Niemoller [Ni’mo’la]! No!” Niemoller was Odin’s one and only brother.

“This…this…” The ministers in the hall were all shocked, not knowing what to say.

The Envoy just laughed cold as he opened the other chest.

“Clang!” The lid of the chest swung upon, then clanged against the floor.

Odin felt his heart clench violently, and he stared fixedly at the corpse within the chest. “Son! My son!” Odin couldn’t believe it. He shook his head repeatedly.

Life in the Gebados Planar Prison was extremely dangerous. When Odin had entered it, he was a weakling as well. Although he was wild, although he liked to toy with others, although he liked to kill…he didn’t wish for his loved ones to die. Throughout all those years he had spent in the Planar Prison, he had always protected his son and his brother!

This time, they had passed through that dangerous weakness in the spatial walls and had returned to the Yulan continent.

Passing through a weakness in the spatial walls was something which had to do with the amount of energy one possessed. The strength of the spatial bindings was variable, and the more energy one had, the stronger the spatial bindings were and the harder to break through them. The spatial bindings didn’t have much to do with insight into any profound mysteries; after all, insight was illusory and immaterial.

The strength of the bindings facing ordinary Highgods and Seven Star Fiends was the same, when they attempted to pass through a spatial weakness.

He had only taken two Highgods with him.

One was his son. The other was his brother. He had risked his life to take the two of them with him, and they had managed to flee the prison. As for his other subordinates he had brought, they were only Gods and Demigods. For him to be willing to risk his own life to bring these two with him made it obvious how much he cared about them. But today…

Both his brother and his son had died!

Their corpses were right here in front of him.

He had been very careful in the Planar Prison, but in the Yulan continent, aside from his own forces, the only Highgod present was Beirut. There were no other Highgods. He didn't believe his brother and son would ever be in any danger. But today…their corpses were in chests in front of him.

"No…no…." Odin bellowed in rage.

"Seize him!" Odin stared viciously at that Envoy.

Immediately, many soldiers flooded forward, surrounding those Envoys.

With but a flicker, Odin's body appeared next to the two chests. He stared at the corpse in the right chest, then at the corpse in the left chest, his face like iron. "Niemoller! Chester [Qie'si'te]! You…how could you…" His entire body was trembling, and not a hint of blood could be seen in his face.

"My brother. My son! Don't worry. I will definitely avenge you. Definitely!!! I will make them regret it. I will make their lives worse than death!!!"

Odin turned suddenly, staring at the Envoy.

“Tell me who killed them.” Odin roared. He knew very well that only a Highgod could have killed his son and brother.

“Hmph!” The Envoy just let out a cold snort.

“Me!” An icy voice rang out in the main hall.

Instantly, everyone in the main hall, Odin included, turned to look.

A figure had suddenly appeared outside of the main hall. This person was striding into the hall, one step at a time, the soldiers by his side completely unable to block him. He wore white mourning ribbons in his hair, and was dressed in ceremonial white robes. Seeing this, the ministers in the hall were all stunned…this clearly was a ceremonial mourning outfit meant for mourning deceased family members.

Odin stared at Linley, his eyes spitting fire.

“Who are you?” Odin growled.

“If you have decent memory, you should remember that you once killed two people. One was my second brother, while the other was my elder brother!” Linley said in a soft voice.

He hadn’t appeared for nearly two thousand years. There was nobody who recognized him today.

Odin frowned, completely unable to tell who this person was.

“It seems you really have killed quite a few people.”

Linley stared at him coldly. “Listen up. I…am Linley Baruch!”

The ministers in the great hall were all shocked. They stared at Linley in disbelief. This youth dressed in ceremonial mourning robes was actually the

founding emperor of the Baruch Empire, a figure of legend in the history of the Yulan Empire…Linley!

Chapter 9 – Battle!

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 9, Battle!

“Linley Baruch?” Odin immediately knew who this person was. Linley’s reputation in the Yulan continent was simply too great. In terms of status, he was on a higher level than even the War God and the High Priest had been on in the past. After all, Linley’s accomplishments were simply too legendary.

Odin’s face was ashen, and he stared fixedly at Linley, grinding out one word at a time, “You dare to come!”

“If I don’t come, how am I going to kill you?” Linley’s voice was like ice.

“Ha..haha…” Odin laughed from sheer rage.

The deaths of his brother and his son had caused Odin’s rage to rise to the heavens. In addition, he knew what Linley had accomplished. Nearly two thousand years ago, Linley had just become a Deity. As Odin saw it, no matter how great a genius Linley was, he would at most be able to become a Highgod. To fuse profound mysteries?

That wasn’t something that could be done in such a short period of time.

In the instant in which Odin laughed from rage, his entire body transformed into a blur, instantly appearing before Linley. With a ‘crunch’ sound, Linley’s body was struck and sent flying outside of the palace. Odin let out a cold laugh towards the outside of the palace, then flew out as well.

“Linley and Emperor Odin are battling…”

Immediately, all of the ministers within the hall flooded outwards. Even many of the palace maids and attendants ran out as well. All of them looked about wildly and also towards the skies, hoping to see Linley and Odin. But

they saw nothing.

“His Imperial Majesty against Grandmaster Linley…who do you think will win?” The ministers discussed this amongst each other.

“With a wave of his hand, his Imperial Majesty destroyed half of the imperial capital of the Yulan Empire. Given his power…he will definitely win.”

“Grandmaster Linley has disappeared for two thousand years. Given his dominating talent, he’s definitely grown even more powerful.”

Just as the many ministers were chatting amongst each other, suddenly, a terrifying explosive sound rang out from the corner of the imperial palace.

BOOM!

From afar, a palace suddenly blew apart, sending countless pieces of rocks and tiles shooting everywhere at high speed. When these pieces of rocks smashed into the palace walls hundreds of meters away, they smashed giant holes into them. Countless miserable cries could be heard as well as many helpless maids and attendants were struck by then. Some had their heads smashed apart, others had their limbs severed…

But the ministers continued to stare into the skies.

As for those Envoys who were being guarded by the palace guards, they were watching as well.

In the air above the Odin Empire’s imperial palace, Linley and Odin had come to a pause. Linley was in full Dragonform, his entire body covered with draconic scales. He stared coldly at Odin with his dark golden eyes. As for Odin, a look of disbelief was on his face. “Imp…impossible. Impossible!”

The exchange of blows from earlier had completely stunned Odin.

“Material attacks?” Linley said coldly. “I understand that you are specialized in the Edicts of Death. Why don’t you use those attacks?” Linley realized through the exchange of blows with Odin that this person was only using wind-type Laws, and was emanating a wind-type aura as well, with no hint of a Death-type aura.

Based on what Linley knew…

This Odin, reputed to be the ‘Vile King’, was an expert who specialized in the Edicts of Death.

Odin gritted his teeth, staring fixed at Linley. “Against you, I don’t need it! I’ll let you know…what regret is!” After speaking, his body suddenly moved as a tornado sprang into being out of nowhere. Odin, in the center of the tornado, charged towards Linley with an aura of power that seemed capable of destroying the world, landing a powerful knife-edge palm blow against Linley…

“Crackle…”

A clearly visible crack in space appeared…but this was a material plane. Highgods were capable of easily shattering space here.

“Laughable.” Linley didn’t even dodge. He just charged at Odin, allowing this ‘knife-edge palm’ to land on his body.

“CLANG!”

When the knife-edge palm blow landed on Linley’s body, a metallic ringing sound could be heard. A faint white smudge appeared on Linley’s draconic scales, but that was it. This absolutely stunned Odin, leaving him gaping. But Linley seized the opportunity to reach out with his draconic claws, grabbing Odin by his right shoulder and giving it a vicious twist…

Riiiiip.

Blood and flesh flew everywhere, as the right arm was directly ripped off.

“Whoosh!” The draconic tail came sweeping over as well, moving as fast as lightning.

Odin hurriedly dodged, but despite how fast he moved, a deep wound was left upon his waist, with fresh blood dripping out of it. Odin stared at Linley, stunned. “How can your body be so…” He muttered, as his wounds quickly healed. Only, it took a bit of time for his severed arm to grow out.

“Too weak. Too weak!”

Linley said calmly. At the same time, he released his right hand, allowed the torn-off right arm of Odin’s to fall down from the skies, smashing into pieces on the surface of the imperial palace. The material attack Odin had launched, the one which had created the tornado, had caused quite a bit of destruction in the imperial palace. Those ministers had their faces smudged with dirt and ash, and they were hiding behind the protection of the palace guards.

“Impossible!” Odin bellowed, charging forward once again. Odin’s entire body transformed into a blurry sword-shape, and the illusory greatsword chopped directly at Linley.

Linley let out a cold, calm laugh. His speed suddenly increased dramatically as he dodged this sword attack, while at the same time delivering a mighty blow with his claws to Odin’s face. A large chunk of flesh was ripped off of Odin’s face, and he was knocked flying backwards.

“Too slow as well.” Linley continued. After having become a Highgod, Linley’s speed had improved dramatically as well, especially given how powerful his draconic body was. His speed was vastly superior to Odin’s divine wind clone. Odin wasn’t able to fight back at all; after all, Odin was only using his divine wind clone at present, not his strongest Death-type clone.

Odin turned to stare at Linley, his eyes filled with shock and rage. He wasn’t able to accept this!

“How can he be so strong?” Odin couldn’t believe it.

“Where is your Death-type clone?” Even as Linley’s words came out, Linley himself appeared before Odin, launching out his right leg in a kick that was like a decapitating blade towards Odin’s neck. Terrified, Odin frantically dodged backwards, but although he was able to dodge the kick, and before he even had the chance to take a breath, with a ‘bang’ sound, Odin was slashed by Linley’s draconic tail, which slammed against his waist.

Odin’s body was bisected into two. His bones and his organs all came flooding out from his upper torso.

The upper half of his body was knocked flying back.

“Aren’t you supposed to be very powerful?” Linley’s voice rang out.

“Bang!” Linley’s fist smashed against Odin’s chest, which split open like mud, caving in at Linley’s blow, fresh blood spewing out. However, Odin’s lower torso quickly began to grow out, and his left arm swung violently against Linley’s body.

“Aren’t you supposed to be the ‘Vile King’?”

“Bang!” A leg landed against that left arm, sending Odin flying away yet again.

“Aren’t you supposed to make me know what regret is?”

Linley landed a palm against Odin’s head, and Odin was shot out like an arrow, smashing downwards with a ‘bang’ into the stone floor, causing the entire ground to shake and split apart, while Odin himself was completely submerged into it.

Linley slowly descended, landing on the ground.

“Come on. If you aren’t dead, that is.” Linley said calmly.

From the very beginning, Linley had refrained from using killing blows. If Odin were to die so easily, that would be too merciful towards him. Linley clearly remembered how Odin had tormented his Boss Yale.

There were quite a few people watching this battle, and there were tens of Deity-level experts in the imperial palace of the Odin Empire. These were all Odin’s subordinates. They were watching in disbelief…their invincible ‘Vile King’ was being utterly trampled, without being able to fight back at all.

“His Imperial Majesty….” The senior ministers were all stupefied as well.

“Hmph. Your Odin Empire is finished!” Those surrounded Envoys of the Baruch Empire raised their heads high.

At this moment, a group of people watching this battle from afar in the sky flew over as well. It was Bebe, Wharton, Delia, Taylor, and some others. They all flew into the imperial palace. To them, the imperial palace was a place where they could roam about as they pleased. Nobody was able to stop them.

Reynolds, watching this battle, couldn’t help but shed tears. “Boss. Second Bro. Odin is going to die. Your deaths will be avenged!”

Right now, in the center of this ‘arena’, the earth lay cracked and shattered. A figure slowly crawled out from within. It was Odin. Odin’s body was now completely repaired, but his eyes were still filled with rage and disbelief.

“Any other ‘ultimate attacks’?” Linley laughed coldly.

As he spoke, Linley’s body suddenly advanced at such speed that although Odin struggled to dodge, Linley’s leg flashed out and kicked him viciously in his crotch. An explosive, ripping sound could be heard, followed by Odin’s anguished howl as he was sent flying upwards before landing on the ground again.

“Where is your Death-type clone?” Linley stared at him emotionlessly. “What, would you rather sacrifice your divine wind clone than let your Death-type clone come out?” As Linley saw it, this clone of Odin’s wasn’t very strong. Linley’s true target was Odin’s Death-type clone.”

“You…you…” Odin stared towards Linley with utter hatred.

He wanted to kill Linley, but he wasn’t able to.

“Linley. You are vicious. You are a piece of work!” Odin said with fury. “But you won’t be able to kill me!” With a bellow, Odin instantly transformed into thousands of doppelgangers, all of which fled wildly every which way. This was the ‘Doppelganger’ technique of the Laws of the Wind. Seeing this, Linley didn’t even move.

Suddenly…

A blurry earthen yellow aura instantly spread out to a diameter of a thousand meters, and a terrifying gravitational pull was instantly applied to all of Odin’s doppelgangers. But of course, the other people within this area, such as the maids, servants, Reynolds, Bebe, and the others weren’t affected by it at all. “Bang.” “Bang.” A series of explosions could be heard as those doppelgangers began to implode from the terrifying pressure! Explosive bursts of energy rocked the grounds of the imperial palace, and the palace walls were once more damaged by it. The scene was one of utter chaos.

Linley’s most powerful technique…Blackstone Space! The gravity was centered towards Linley!

The only one of Odin’s bodies which had yet to explode was his divine wind clone.

This was normal. After having become a Highgod, Linley’s Blackstone Space had risen tenfold in power, far greater than it had been in the past. In such a terrifyingly powerful area of gravity, even Seven Star Fiends would

find it hard to resist. If a body was too weak, it wouldn't just sink downwards. It would…

Collapse and implode!

Bodies that were formed purely from energy had to be stable; if the stability was impacted and unable to withstand such a powerful gravity, the only result was collapse and explosion.

"Crackle…" Odin frantically tried to resist the gravitational pull, but his body continued to be drawn towards Linley's.

"This…this…" Odin didn't dare believe it.

"What, you still aren't going to reveal your Death-type clone?" Linley laughed coldly. He had already sent out his divine sense, encompassing the entire Yulan continent. But Linley wasn't able to find or sense the aura of Odin's Death-type clone.

"I admire you." Odin returned to his icy calm. "In two thousand years, you've become so very powerful. Your Gravitational Space is indeed formidable. Go ahead and kill me…" Odin actually chose not to fight back. It wasn't that he didn't want to; it was that he understood he wasn't able to.

Thus, he chose death!

"You want to die?"

Linley snickered. "Have you forgotten what you did to my big brother, Yale?"

Odin's face had a stunned look on it.

"Rumble…" Spiritual energy came sweeping out, and the 'Spiritual Chaos' affect was applied to Odin's soul. Linley's 'Spiritual chaos' technique was extremely monstrous by now…as a Highgod, he was able to cause ordinary Five Star Fiends and Six Star Fiends to enter a state of stupor.

And indeed…

Odin's eyes grew dim and lifeless.

"So indeed, he only has the power of a Five Star Fiend. At most, he just barely approaches the power of a Six Star Fiend." Linley's appearance changed as he returned to human form, while at the same time, those white funeral robes appeared around him once more.

Odin just stood there dumbly.

Linley turned to look, sweeping the imperial palace with his gaze, then said in a clear voice, "Odin is no longer able to fight back." As he spoke, Linley gave Odin a kick, and Odin, like a puppet, was kicked into the ground, not moving at all.

The experts who saw this all felt stunned. Clearly…Odin was unconscious.

"Now…the eighty two Deities within the imperial palace are all to come out. If you do not, the next to die will be you!" Linley's cold voice rang out, while he also spoke out with his divine sense, allowing it to enter the minds of those eighty two. Those eighty two were originally the subordinates of Odin. Now, terrified, they immediately flew over.

Linley's gaze turned towards Odin.

"Die? I will make sure you die in agony and humiliation." Linley's gaze was as cold and emotionless as ice.

Chapter 10 – The Manner of Death

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 10, The Manner of Death

Dozens of figures flew over in the air in an impressive host, and the tens of Deities already present in the imperial palace flew over as well, terrified. In a short period of time, all eighty two Deities were assembled. Frightened and nervous, they stared at Linley. They didn't know…what Linley was going to do to them.

They were frustrated as well. How could Linley be so powerful? They had come with Odin from the Planar Prison to the Yulan continent, but they had never held the 'legendary' Linley in any regard.

But it seemed…as though Linley was unreasonably strong.

"Lord Linley, these things have nothing to do with us. We just obeyed the orders of Lord Odin." One of them, a green-haired, middle-aged man said hurriedly.

"It had nothing to do with us. Lord Linley, spare our lives."

The eighty two all begged for mercy. Having seen Linley's power, they understood that Linley was completely capable of just using his divine sense to attack all eighty two of them. Not a single one of them would escape.

"Shut your mouths." Linley said emotionlessly.

Immediately, all of the eighty two Deities fell silent, not daring to say a word. The entire devastated imperial palace was deathly silent. Those ministers, palace attendants, maids, and guards who stood in the distance were in a state of panic as well. All these years…they had known that the experts under the control of Odin were all exceedingly strong.

But today, Odin had been beaten like a dog and was now lying on the ground. Those eighty two figures were standing there like a pack of slaves, not daring to make a sound. And the person who had caused all this was that brown-haired man!

“Fourth Bro. Delia. If you want to take revenge, do what you please to him.” Linley sent mentally.

Linley had no other options. He was unable to seal this clone’s divine power, because this person was a Highgod! Linley had to rely on the black stone in order to send Odin into a dazed stupor.

“This bastard!” Reynolds bellowed, and he flashed forward, moving like lightning. His entire body began to blaze with flames, and his right leg spun out like a tornado. “Bang!” It violently clashed against Odin’s waist, smashing Odin and sending him rolling forward on the ground into the distance, colliding with a distant stone pillar of the devastated palace. As Odin’s body smashed into the stone pillar, the stone pillar collapsed as well.

“Bastard. Bastard!” Reynolds muttered, his eyes crimson as he stared at Odin. He flew over once more, stepping on Odin repeatedly.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Reynolds was giving vent to his rage.

As for Linley, he just emotionlessly watched this happen. At the same time, a ball of water floated out from Linley’s forehead, and a blurry blue light reflected the events in the distance. Linley was using his divine water clone to execute the scryer technique, and was recording these events.

“Reynolds.” Delia growled.

Reynolds took a breather, turning to look at Delia, then stepping away to make way for her. As for Delia, she held the Spear of Cortez in her hands, then stabbed it viciously at Odin’s body. Chest, legs, thigh, arms, waist… Delia savagely used the spear to stab him while cursing nonstop at him, and

as she did, her tears began to fall as well. “Big Brother…”

Dixie had died. No matter what sort of revenge she took, Delia still was unable to accept it.

“Delia, she…” Linley could completely imagine what sort of pain Delia was in…because he was suffering that same pain! Death wasn’t frightening, in and of itself, but to die the way Yale had, after having been tortured to the point of insanity? That was terrifying. “No matter what we do to torture this Odin, it won’t be enough. Won’t be enough!!! And his Death-type clone…I will definitely destroy it as well!”

“How vicious.” Those eighty two distant Deities watched as Delia and Reynolds took their vengeance, and their hearts quailed as they watched.

Reynolds and Delia were both taking a breather.

“The eighty two of you.” Linley turned to look at them.

“Lord Linley.” The eighty two were extremely respectful.

Linley said icily, “Each of you, come up with a method to humiliate Odin. Remember – humiliate! Just stabbing him with a sword isn’t enough! If someone is unable to come up with something…I will kill that person.”

The eighty two Deities were stunned.

“Oh?” Linley’s gaze was like an icy dagger as he swept them with his eyes. “Would you prefer death instead?”

The eighty two Deities stared at each other. Odin was their leader, after all. But after hesitating slightly, they all began to walk towards Odin. They knew their own limits…and they could tell that Odin was definitely going to die. Since he was going to die, humiliating him wasn’t a big deal.

“Odin, who would’ve thought that you’d have a day like this?” One of the Deities said, stabbing Odin viciously in the throat.

“Don’t kill him!” Linley growled.

The most important part was the head, as that was where the divine spark was located.

“Remember. Humiliate him!” Linley said coldly. “You call that humiliation! Not enough!”

These Deities looked at Linley, and then, gritting their teeth, they began to use all sorts of methods to humiliate him, either using the spears to stab at Odin’s nether regions, or even tearing his clothes off. Moments later… Odin’s body had become utterly horrific to behold. But seeing this, Linley didn’t feel satisfied at all.

His eyes were still like ice.

“Big Bro, everything’s ready.” A voice rang out from behind. It was Wharton.

“Bring those people over.” Linley ordered.

Immediately, a group of people began walking over from the various shattered walls of the palace. They were…beggars! These were beggars that had been summoned over from all over the imperial capital. Although the imperial capital was fabulously rich, it had its poor regions as well, along with a large number of beggars. Hundreds of filthy beggars had entered the imperial palace.

“Oho, so this is the imperial palace.” The eyes of the beggars were all shining.

“Go. Please, use your imagination to come up with ways to humiliate that person on the ground. Each of you will receive a gold coin, and whoever does well will be gifted with a hundred additional gold coins.” The youthful looking man leading these beggars said in a clear voice.

“A hundred gold coins?”

The eyes of the beggars lit up.

“Haha, humiliate someone? Easy.” A big fellow rushed forward.

“Those hundred gold coins are definitely mine.”

The hundreds of beggars, all wanting to be first and none wanting to be last, charged forward. They had no idea that the person on the ground was a Highgod. No idea that this was the emperor of the Odin Empire. All they knew…was that if they performed well, they would receive a hundred gold coins. To these beggars, a hundred gold coins was a sum of money which could make them go crazy.

“All of you, come.” The youthful leader immediately barked.

“Haha…” The first beggar immediately urinated into Odin’s mouth.

“That’s nothing.” The second beggar sneered, walking to Odin as well.

One beggar after another came forward, summoning all of their imaginations in their desire to win the hundred gold coins, and using all sorts of ways to humiliate this person.

“This…this…” Seeing this, the eighty two Highgods were in shock, and their faces turned white.

Compared to these beggars, they were simply too gentle; what they did could only be considered ‘punishing’. What these beggars were doing truly caused one to be in a state worse than death.

“Hey, this fellow’s skin is so tough. I’m not able to cut it open no matter what I do!” One beggar called out. This beggar was holding a needle, as though wanting to do something to punish him, but unfortunately…this was the body of a Highgod, after all. Although Odin didn’t specialize in body training, his body was still made from divine power.

How could an ordinary beggar possibly pierce the skin of a body formed from divine power?

“Next.” The young man said emotionlessly.

“I should be the winner. Those hundred coins should be mine. I haven’t even had the chance to use my skills.” The needle-holding beggar immediately called out.

“F*ck off.” A beggar in the rear pushed him aside. “Haha, it’s daddy’s turn now.” As he spoke, he flipped Odin’s body over…

“That’s…going a bit too far.” Some of the ministers weren’t even able to watch any further.”

But Linley just watched this emotionlessly, not a single hint of an expression on his face. Linley had to admit…these techniques did go a bit too far, and were enough to make a person go insane from humiliation. But he was only humiliating a single person, Odin. As for Odin? He destroyed all of the core members of the Dawson Conglomerate, forcing Yale to kill his own family.

In addition, he didn’t even let Yale die; he tormented Yale instead.

Compared to this, what was happening to Odin was quite ‘benevolent’.

“Let them go.” Linley said calmly.

“Yes.” The youth said respectfully, immediately leading the beggars away.

Linley stared at the filthy, naked, bloodstained body wearing tattered clothes, but felt no pity in his heart at all. At the same time, Linley retracted his spiritual power, but expanded his Blackstone Space once more, trapping Odin within.

Odin’s eyes opened!

“Eh?” Odin looked at himself. His face immediately changed.

“Bang!” Divine wind power swirled, and Odin’s body became completely purified, and a new set of robes appeared as well.

Odin forced himself to his feet, staring at Linley. “What did you do to me?”

“What did I do?” Linley laughed calmly. “Why don’t you watch for yourself as to what was done” With but a thought, Linley made the crystal ball above his head shoot out rays of blue light, forming a massive image in the air above them. The images began to move, replaying what had just happened.

Linley naturally had recorded it all.

After all, Odin had been in a state of spiritual stupor. If he didn’t know what had happened, how could Odin be tormented by it?

“This…” Odin’s face changed, and he couldn’t help but look towards Reynolds and Delia.

The scryer recording had finished displaying the images of what Delia and Reynolds had done. Next, it began to broadcast what the eighty two Deities had done. The tactics the eighty two Deities had used were far more excessive. Odin’s face was ashen, and he couldn’t help but turn to stare at those eighty two men. “You had the gall!”

The group of Deities couldn’t help but feel startled…but then they recovered, and one laughed, “Hmph, Odin, you are about to die. What are you being so arrogant for?”

“You…” Watching the various events occur, Odin grew speechless from rage.

“Odin, keep watching. The best part has yet to start.” Linley said calmly.

In the scryer recording, the beggars had appeared.

Odin's eyes turned round. "Beggars?" He, Odin, was a venerable, exalted Highgod. To Highgods, even Saints were like ants. As for ordinary mortals, they were to be killed as he pleased…people as lowly as these beggars, Odin couldn't even be bothered to look at.

He, a Highgod, to be spat on by mortal beggars? He thought he might go insane.

But the scryer recordings showed something even worse than he imagined.

The first beggar had urinated into his mouth.

Odin's fists were clenched, and his face first turned ashen, then turned black, before turning red. His eyes seemed to spit fire at the images.

Those beggars, for the sake of the hundred gold coins, had used up all of their imagination, each one more excessive than the last. The scenes were utterly depraved and utterly disgusting. Odin was a person who pursued perfect and who cared deeply about his face. But what was happening in the scryer recordings was even worse to him than killing him. Odin's entire body was trembling, and his mind was in a state of chaos.

Humiliation!

Incomparable humiliation!

Worse than death!

"Linley, you will definitely die in my hands. Definitely!!!" Odin stared at Linley with a deathly gaze.

"Odin, today's just the first day. We'll continue tomorrow." Linley said calmly.

Odin was so angry that a hint of blood came out from his lips.

But then, Odin suddenly turned his head to the skies, laughing wildly. "Haha…you are vicious. Vicious!" Odin stared at Linley, as though he wanted to skin Linley alive. "Linley, I have to say though…your skill in humiliating someone is still rather lacking. Compared to what I did to your older brother, Yale? You are a long way off! Do you know how I tortured him, when I hung him up on that tree in the palace? Haha, I imagine…that he wouldn't dare tell anyone of it. He wouldn't even dare think about it. Haha…" Although he was saying this, Odin had already been tormented to the brink of madness.

Linley just stared at him coldly.

"No matter how incredible you are, all you will be able to do is destroy my divine wind clone. My most important body is my Death-type clone. If my divine wind clone is destroyed, it is destroyed. It doesn't matter. If my son dies, I'll have another one. Haha…let me tell you this. My Death-type clone went to the Netherworld long ago. If you have the ability to do so, come find me in the Netherworld! Haha, as for further humiliating me…haha, in your dreams!"

"BANG!"

While wildly laughing, Odin's body suddenly exploded.

"Self-explosion?" The surrounding group of experts were all stunned. None of them had imagined that Odin would actually choose to die like this. Clearly, Odin was no longer able to withstand this sort of torment and humiliation, and had chosen suicide instead.

Linley's gaze was like ice.

"The Netherworld?" Linley murmured to himself.

Chapter 11 – A Pleasant Surprise

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 11, A Pleasant Surprise

Odin's sudden self-detonation caused the eighty two Deities to be shocked. They all waited nervously.

Suddenly…

Linley turned to look towards them. The eighty two Deities immediately said, "Lord Linley, we completely obeyed your orders. Please spare us." "What we did in the past, we did at the orders of Lord Odin. We had no choice."

They were all begging for mercy.

"Father, you cannot spare them!" Taylor's frantic shout came from behind.

"Hrm?" Linley turned to look.

Reynolds, by Taylor's side, said in an equally frantic voice, "Third Bro, these eighty two absolutely cannot be spared. When those Saints were killed, it wasn't Odin who personally did the deed; it was these 'claws' of his. George was killed by this group of people as well, and Dixie was killed by them as well!"

"It was them." Delia couldn't help but turn and look, her eyes filled with hatred.

What sort of status did Odin have? How could he possibly lower himself to kill Saints? All of these vicious acts had most likely been carried out by these 'claws' of his.

The eighty two began to panic. "Lord Linley, we can't be blamed. It was Lord Odin's orders."

Linley swept them with a cold look. One of the Deities, terrified, actually began to flee while frantically calling out through divine sense, “Flee, quick!” He could already sense that things were growing grim from Linley’s gaze. As he fled, immediately, the other eighty two began to flee as well.

Some flew into the skies, others drilled into the ground.

“Rumble…”

An earthen yellow aura instantly spread out in every direction, forming an enormous sphere that was thousands of meters in diameter. It even sank two thousand meters into the ground. Within this sphere, the eighty two Deities were completely trapped. Even Seven Star Fiends would find it hard to resist this gravity.

“Bang!” A minority of them, those who had weak bodies, crumbled and collapsed from the gravity alone.

Fortunately, as long as a Deity’s soul wasn’t destroyed, death would not come. The eighty two Deities, although controlled by that powerful gravity and being pulled towards Linley, didn’t die at least.

“Lord Linley.” The Deities who had been trying to flee were frantically begging for mercy.

“Father. Kill them. Avenge Uncle.” Taylor said frantically.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds said as well.

Linley swept the eighty two with his cold gaze. “True, you were the subordinates of Odin and had to obey his orders. But in the past thousand years, none of you have departed from the Yulan Plane. You willingly remained behind…and so you were serving Odin and obeying him out of your own free will. You cannot blame others for your death!”

If these Deities had wanted to escape Odin's control, they could've simply gone to the Arctic Icecap and departed to the Higher Planes. Odin wouldn't have cared.

"Linley, you, you…"

The eighty two Deities began to beg for mercy in terror, curse in rage, or just mumble. But under that gravitational pull, they flew at high speed to Linley's side. Linley sent out a surge of divine earth power like arrows into the eighty two.

A low rumbling sound could be heard. The eighty two figures transformed into dust.

"Wharton, you take care of these things." The floor was littered with divine sparks, interspatial rings, and divine artifacts. They were caught up in a surge of divine power and floated towards Wharton. These Demigod sparks and God sparks, in a material plane, were still very precious.

Wharton immediately collected all of the things.

"Let's return." Linley didn't have a hint of a smile on his face. He just charged into the skies.

The forces of Dragonblood Castle immediately flew into the skies as well, leaving behind only two Saints. These two Saints immediately headed towards the surrounded and bound Envoys of the Baruch Empire. Seeing the situation, the soldiers around the Envoys were so frightened, they hurriedly loosened the bonds.

"Haha, your Odin Empire is finished." An Envoy said in a clear voice.

The ministers of the Odin Empire all looked at each other. They understood as well…that in front of the overwhelming power of the Baruch Empire, the Odin Empire had indeed been finished.

"The Empire is finished."

This battle in the imperial capital of the Odin Empire and Linley's sudden appearance and killing of Odin as well as eighty two Deities caused the entire Yulan continent to once more enter a state of chaos. Those experts who previously had been subjugated by Odin's power…how could they remain loyal to the Odin Empire now? They immediately rebelled against the Odin Empire.

In the space of a single night, the entire Odin Empire collapsed.

Although Odin had more than eighty two Deities under his control, with a few more scattered throughout the Yulan continent, once they learned that Odin and the eighty two Deities had died, they were so terrified that they immediately fled to the Arctic Icecap, all of them leaving the Yulan Plane.

The Odin Empire disintegrated at an astonishing speed.

And the Baruch Empire? It expanded at an astonishing speed. The entire Yulan continent once more knew of Linley's presence.

Grandmaster Linley, who had disappeared for nearly two thousand years, had suddenly reappeared.

That Emperor Odin had been killed.

The entire Yulan continent was rocked by the news of this battle.

Dragonblood Castle.

It had been nearly half a month since the killing of Odin. During this half month, Linley and Bebe had remained within Dragonblood Castle. Although Linley knew that Odin's Death-type clone was in the Netherworld, the Netherworld was simply too vast. How could he find him? It was like searching for a needle in the sea.

"Third Bro, drink less." Reynolds said.

At this moment, Linley and Reynolds were seated facing each other within a courtyard, drinking wine. None of them wanted to discuss Odin or Yale. Linley was actually just drinking nonstop, gulping down one bottle after another of wine into his belly.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds grabbed Linley’s arm, forcing Linley to halt.

Linley slammed the bottle to the side, then looked bitterly at Reynolds, sighing softly, “Fourth Bro, I feel miserable!”

Linley raised his head, tears in his eyes. “When I think of what happened to Boss Yale, I feel miserable. Have I ‘avenged’ him? With all my power, all I did was kill Odin’s divine wind clone. To Odin, his divine wind clone wasn’t nearly as important as his Death-type clone. And that clone is in the distant Netherworld.”

“And Boss Yale? He was so shattered that you had to go kill him, Fourth Bro.” When Linley thought about what Yale had experienced, he couldn’t help but feel the rage build in his heart, making it ache. “I want to go to the Netherworld and kill Odin, but…finding Odin is too difficult. The Netherworld is simply too vast, too vast!”

The Netherworld was like the Infernal Realm; both were Higher Planes.

Just by looking at the Infernal Realm, one could imagine how if Odin had secreted himself into a corner of the Netherworld, that Linley could spend countless years without being able to find him.

“Third Bro.” Reynolds was heartsick as well, but he consoled Linley, “This isn’t your fault. Boss Yale did die an unjust death…and extremely unjust one! But if you hadn’t returned, we wouldn’t have been able to kill even as much as Odin’s divine wind clone. You’ve already done very well. I think… if Boss Yale knew of this, he would also feel slightly consoled.”

Linley laughed bitterly.

At most, ‘slightly consoled’.

In terms of pain, in terms of humiliation, in terms of torment…Yale had suffered far more than Odin had. The loss of his divine wind clone didn't have too great an impact on Odin. He was still a Seven Star Fiend, and was still a powerful figure in the Netherworld. Whenever Linley thought about how Odin was free to roam the Netherworld, Linley felt the unjustness of it all.

He wanted to torment Odin, but in terms of what he was capable of, he had done all that he could.

"Odin truly deserves to die." Linley couldn't help but say this yet again.

"He does deserve to die. Ten thousand deaths wouldn't be enough." Reynolds said viciously as well. "If he had simply killed Boss Yale, I wouldn't hate him as much as I do right now. But he…" Whenever Reynolds thought of the last time he had seen Yale and had seen how Yale was at the point of collapse, of that dispirited, tormented body…

Yale had been too pitiable!

He had already gone insane.

"Alas!" Linley was still furious. He couldn't help but slam the table, and with a 'bang', the table split apart.

"Boss, Boss!" A voice rang out from afar.

Linley turned to look, only to see a black robed Beirut and Bebe enter together, with Wharton, Delia, Nisse, Wade, and the others following from behind. Beirut looked at the shattered table in surprise. "Oh, Linley, what is it? Why'd you smash the table?"

"Lord Beirut." Linley forced a smile out. He was indeed in a terrible mood.

"Feeling angry and upset over what happened to your friend?" Beirut laughed calmly.

Linley didn't say a word. Actually, deep in his heart, Linley was still slightly upset at Beirut. Beirut definitely had known that Odin's Death-type clone had left the Yulan Plane. But Beirut hadn't stopped him at all. Still… Linley didn't say anything.

Because…

Why should Beirut help him? The fact that he occasionally helped out was enough. He couldn't always be looking after Linley's affairs.

"I know exactly what happened." Beirut let out a low sigh. "Originally, I was planning to leave Odin for you to handle. But on one occasion, I was on a visit to inspect the Necropolis of the Gods. During that period of time, Odin's Death-type clone left to go to the Netherworld." Beirut voluntarily explained, making Linley feel a surge of gratitude.

Actually, Beirut hadn't needed to explain.

The reason he explained was because he now considered Linley as a member of his family.

"The Netherworld." Delia shook her head. "The Netherworld is too vast. Finding Odin will be too hard."

"Unfortunately, yes." Beirut sighed as well.

Bebe said resignedly, "Grandpa just so happened to be in the Necropolis. Jeeze!" Suddenly, Bebe's eyes lit up and he looked at Beirut. "Grandpa, my Boss said that this time, we should go adventure in the Necropolis of the Gods. Help us open it up sometime." This was something which Linley and Bebe had already discussed in the Infernal Realm.

On this return trip, investigating the Necropolis of the Gods was indeed something they had planned. But after the Odin event, Linley was no longer in the mood.

“Investigate the Necropolis?” Beirut raised an eyebrow, then shook his head. “Bebe, there’s no point for you going to the Necropolis. As for Linley…” Beirut looked towards Linley.

Linley couldn’t help but listen carefully, musing to himself, “When I went to the Necropolis of the Gods, I sensed that deep within it, something was beckoning to me. I wonder what lay hidden deep within.”

“Linley, you should indeed make a trip to the Necropolis of the Gods.” Beirut laughed calmly. “However, your strength isn’t sufficient yet.”

“Not yet sufficient?” Linley was startled.

In terms of power, he should be decent by now. He was definitely approaching the Asura level. But Beirut actually said his strength wasn’t sufficient yet?

“Based on what I know, the reason you are at such a level of power has something to do with the Redbud Sovereign.” Beirut laughed gently. “Your true power is far weaker.”

“Lord Beirut, when will it be enough?” Linley asked.

Beirut laughed softly. “When you reach Bluefire’s level.”

Bluefire’s level?

Linley was slightly puzzled, but then he understood. Actually, he wasn’t in the mood to investigate the Necropolis of the Gods either. Yale’s affair had caused him to feel mentally exhausted and worn out. He had no interest in going right now.

“Alas, your friend did indeed die an unjust death.” Beirut let out a sigh. “Unfortunately, I’m not the Emissary of a Netherworld Sovereign. Otherwise, I could go beg a Netherworld Sovereign to have him help you find the undead which your friend’s spirit was transformed into after dying and being drawn into the Netherworld. If a Sovereign were to intervene,

then it would be easy for the undead to regain its former memories."

Linley was stunned.

"Spirits are drawn into the Netherworld?" Linley's mind seemed to suddenly explode. "Right. If a soul isn't destroyed, then a person hasn't truly died. Even if one is drawn into the Netherworld and becomes an undead…the soul will remain! They can regain their memories as well! Right, Boss Yale, Second Bro, Dixie, and…and my father!!!"

Linley's face instantly turned red.

Red from excitement!

Linley's greatest regret was his father's early death, and the unfairness of it. His father didn't know that he had gotten revenge and killed their enemies, and also didn't know that the Baruch clan had been restored to glory.

And Yale, who had died so unjustly. His friend.

"Lord Beirut…" Linley hurriedly spoke out.

"Lord Beirut, my elder brother, he…" Delia spoke out hurriedly as well.

"Lord Beirut, then Boss Yale, he…" Reynolds spoke out as well.

Instantly, everyone began to ask questions frantically and excitedly.

Chapter 12 – Entering the Netherworld

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 12, Entering the Netherworld

Linley was so excited, he felt his heart was about to explode. He had never been so excited before. “Father can regain his memory, and can come back to life! And Yale, George, Dixie…” The depressing emotions he had felt the past few days suddenly disappeared. Linley was incomparably excited. He felt as though the world had instantly become colorful and beautiful.

“Don’t be hasty. All of you, don’t be hasty.” Beirut quickly urged.

Everyone forcibly repressed their excitement.

“I was speaking casually, just now.” Beirut said hurriedly. “After ordinary mortals die, their souls will enter the Netherworld and become undead. There’s no way for a Highgod to find the specific undead which a person’s spirit became. Only the seven Netherworld Sovereigns who rule the Netherworld can find them! However, Sovereigns are Sovereigns; do you think that they’ll help you just because you ask?”

Immediately, everyone fell silent. Linley felt his heart tighten as well.

Sovereigns were lofty, proud individuals. They most likely wouldn’t pay any attention to the request of a Highgod.

“If I don’t try, how would I know what the result is?” Linley said hurriedly.

Whether it was for the sake of Yale, George, Dixie, or his father, Linley wasn’t willing to give up.

“Give it a try. Maybe you’ll succeed.” Delia said hurriedly as well.

Beirut shook his head helplessly. “To do this, there’re two great difficulties. The first is to find and see the Sovereign, while the second is to have the

Sovereign agree to help you. These two difficulties are tremendously hard to overcome. Linley, I know you want to see your father and your brothers. But do you know where the Netherworld Sovereigns live?"

Linley was stunned.

Where a Sovereign lived? That was a deeply guarded secret. For example, the Redbud Sovereign. Although Linley had visited the Amethyst Mountains, he only later learned that place had been the residence of the Redbud Sovereign.

"To find a Sovereign…even if you find the right location and the Sovereign happens to be there at that moment, if the Sovereign doesn't wish to meet you, what will you do?" Beirut said. "In addition, even if you see the Sovereign, why would the Sovereign so easily accede to the request of yourself, a mere Highgod?"

It was too difficult!"

"I want to give it a try." Linley said determinedly. "No matter what, I will not give up. There are a total of seven Netherworld Sovereigns. I'll go searching for them. If the first one doesn't work out, I'll find another one."

Beirut, hearing this, couldn't help but shake his head.

"You really are stubborn."

"Fine, then." Beirut nodded. With a wave of his hand, he made a ten centimeter thick book appear. "Linley, this book describes the Netherworld. Take a look. It will help you understand the Netherworld better."

"Thank you." Linley accepted the book.

While in the Infernal Realm, he had never paid much attention to the affairs of the Netherworld. He had thought that he would never go there, but who would have imagined that all of these things would have occurred?

“If you truly are going to go to the Netherworld, then let me give you this bit of advice.” Beirut said resignedly. “This isn’t really advice; I imagine you can think of it as well. When you go find the Netherworld Sovereigns, first find the Emissaries of the Sovereigns…there are quite a few Emissaries, and you should be able to find them. If you aren’t able to find them, then find a Lord Prefect of a Prefecture. Those Lord Prefects might know where the Sovereign that manages them is located.”

Linley nodded.

Although it might be possible to find a Sovereign through seeking out a Sovereign’s Emissary or a Lord Prefect…would the Emissary or Lord Prefect be willing to tell him?

“Continue carrying that medallion I gave you.” Beirut said. “The medallion, after all, represents the Bloodridge Sovereign. With that medallion, perhaps it’ll be a bit easier for you.”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

Right, the medallion! It had been bestowed upon Beirut by the Bloodridge Sovereign. That thing might convince a Netherworld Sovereign to at least listen to what he had to say.

“Grandpa, thank you.” Bebe beamed with wide eyes.

“If I didn’t do this, you’d say that Grandpa is being stingy.” Beirut laughed loudly.

Bebe beamed. There was no question that he was going with Linley to the Netherworld.

“Thank you, Lord Beirut.” Delia said gratefully as well. Beirut laughed, “Alright then. You have your plan. I’ll go back now. If there’s anything else you need, go to the Forest of Darkness and look for me there.” After he spoke, Beirut transformed into a black blur, disappearing into the distance.

In mid-air.

Beirut turned to glance at Dragonblood Castle, a hint of a secret smile appearing at the corners of his lips. “Just as I predicted! Only…I don’t know if this kid is going to live up to my expectations or not.” And then, chortling to himself, he flew back to the Forest of Darkness.

After learning this news, everyone in Dragonblood Castle was in a state of excitement. But immediately afterwards, they felt a sense of pressure. To go ask for a Sovereign to assist them…this was simply too hard. Everyone was worried about whether or not Linley would be able to succeed. They also feared…that the Sovereign might be enraged and kill Linley!

“Sovereigns…shouldn’t have bizarre, violent personalities, right?” Wade said, worried.

“Don’t speak rashly.” Delia immediately scolded.

Bebe laughed in a very certain manner. “Don’t worry. After the Netherworld Sovereigns see the Bloodridge Sovereign’s medallion which the Boss and I have, they shouldn’t kill us.” Bebe, although appearing outwardly confident, was still very nervous in his heart. After all…would a Netherworld Sovereign necessarily give face to the Bloodridge Sovereign?

In fact, it might be possible that the Netherworld Sovereign might just so happen to have a grudge against the Bloodridge Sovereign.

Nobody could be certain!

“Sovereigns view themselves as far above us. As long as we don’t offend them, they won’t lower themselves to kill us.” Linley said calmly. “As for this trip to the Netherworld, only Bebe and myself will go.” Linley and Bebe had already discussed this through their spiritual connection. There was no telling what would happen on this trip to the Netherworld.

If he and Bebe headed out by themselves, they would have nothing to fear. But if they brought others along…they wouldn’t be able to protect them in a

dangerous situation.

“Right.” Delia, hearing this, nodded as well.

“Bebe.” But Nisse was rather reluctant.

“We’ll return soon.” Bebe chortled. At this time, Linley’s body split into two, as a fiery red haired Linley walked out.

“Delia, my divine fire clone will remain here. And Nisse…if there’s anything you need, you can just tell my divine fire clone. I will immediately know and notify Bebe.” Linley laughed calmly. By leaving behind a divine fire clone, communication became easier.

Nisse and Delia both felt slightly mollified. With Linley’s divine fire clone present, they would know Linley’s situation in the Netherworld at all times.

The second day after Beirut’s departure from Dragonblood Castle, Linley and Bebe decided to head out. In but a single night, Linley finished reading the book on the Netherworld, and gained a basic understanding of the place.

The Netherworld. Sacred Undead Mountain.

This was a great mountain, tens of thousands of meters high. The entire mountain was the color of white bones, and white skeletons could be seen throughout the mountain. At the peak of the mountain, there was an enormous, ancient castle that was entirely black and surrounded by black fog. This castle had already existed for countless years.

Occasionally, metallic lifeforms would fly out from the castle, with some voices coming from within as well.

The Infernal Realm had seven teleportation locations. But the Netherworld only had two. Sacred Undead Mountain was one of them!

“Hey, all of you, stand there obediently.” A group of white-robed warriors shouted out casually.

Within the enormous teleportation array, rays of light were shooting everywhere, with some figures appearing on occasion. These figures stared in surprise around them. These people were Saints or Demigods, with a very few Gods. As for Highgods…the chance of a Highgod coming was very low!

“Only at the Saint-level, and yet they came to the Netherworld. They really have come to throw their lives away.” A black-haired, young-looking warrior in white robes kicked a middle-aged Saint away, sending him flying out of the teleportation array into the corner of a wall.

The person who had been kicked turned around angrily. “What are you looking at, kid. Do you want to fight?” The white-robed warrior smirked as he spoke. The middle-aged Saint just gritted his teeth, lowering his head and leaning against the corner of the wall, not daring to make a sound. Seeing this person didn’t resist, the white-robed warrior couldn’t help but shake his head and chuckle. “Saints are everywhere in the Netherworld. If you don’t learn to endure, you will probably die on the very first day!”

“Bucher [Bu’si’er], you always like to tease them.” A white-robed warrior in another corner laughed while drinking wine.

The black-haired youth, Bucher, laughed as well. “If we don’t help them learn the rules now, when they really enter the Netherworld, they’ll die even faster.”

Quite a few people had already been teleported in by now.

“More coming.” The black-haired, white-robed youth immediately turned to look. The enormous teleportation array once more lit up with that hazy glow, and two figures emerged from within. After the glow disappeared…

“Highgods!”

The surrounding white-robed warriors immediately turned to look. Even the white-robed warriors who had been seated all came to their feet. It was very

rare for Highgods to come through the teleportation array. If one appeared, it generally meant someone was coming from another Higher Plane, and an extraordinary individual at that.

The group of white-robed warriors stared carefully at these two figures.

One was a brown-haired youth, while the other was a skinny youngster wearing a straw hat. The brown-haired youth's body suddenly lifted into the air, glancing around himself before saying, "This is the Sacred Undead Mountain! It seems we will need to move to the south. Still, before leaving, let's take a trip around the 'Undead Realm'."

Hearing the words 'Sacred Undead Mountain', these white-robed warriors immediately grew certain that these two came from other Higher Planes.

"Fine, Boss."

The brown-haired man nodded slightly towards the nearby white-robed warriors, then led the youngster with the straw hat into the air, flying away from Sacred Undead Mountain.

"Adventuring through the Higher Planes…how long will it be before I, too, am able to do this? But the teleportation cost truly is high! I've been here so many years, but I still haven't earned enough netherstones for a single teleportation." The black-haired youth in the white robes let out an admiring, praising sigh.

The horizons were vast and endless. Dark black clouds covered the world, and tongues of lightning would occasionally flash out from the dark clouds, like dragons of lightning dancing about within.

This was an empty, desolate plains.

Two endless hordes of undead which stretched as far as the eye could see were arrayed into two camps, staring at each other. There were many skeletons, foul zombies, drifting, translucent wraiths, and also grim, forbidding black knights. There were also strange wights and ancient liches,

all of which were separated into different levels.

There were weak skeletons, but also skeletons at the Saint-level.

“Kabuser [Ka’bu’si’er], you only have two choices…” A booming voice shook the heavens. “Submit to me or die!”

But the reply was just a cold laugh.

“Attack!” Immediately, the booming voice roared in anger.

“Attack.” Another voice, a cold, fierce one, howled as well.

Immediately, the vast swarms of undead in the two camps attacked the other side wildly. A battle between undead was like waves crashing against each other. The entire world was filled with skeletal dragons, and skeletal griffins howled through the skies, while venomous fogs billed out, filling the world. Large numbers of undead on both sides died.

Right at this moment…

The two armies of undead came to a sudden halt, as their leaders both stared towards the skies, stunned.

In mid-air, two figures flew past at high speed. The terrifyingly powerful aura they emanated was causing the countless undead below to feel terror in their hearts. This was an aura that was countless times more powerful than the auras of the two undead who ruled them. They didn’t dare to resist it at all. But moments later, the two figures disappeared into the horizon.

“We just released a hint of our aura, but they were so terrified they wouldn’t even dare move.” Bebe laughed with a chortle.

“You really are bored, aren’t you.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Just now, when they had departed from Sacred Undead Mountain and began

to fly towards the northern part of the ‘Undead Realm’ to take a look. Bebe realized that his Highgod aura would cause these undead to be extremely terrified, and so he constantly released his aura, intentionally frightening those undead. As for Linley, there was nothing he could do with regards to Bebe’s trouble-causing antics.

The Netherworld was different from the Infernal Realm. It was just a single, terrifyingly enormous continent. This vast continent was even larger than the five continents of the Infernal Realm put together!

The northern part of the continent had countless undead populating within it, and so this area was known as the ‘Undead Realm’.

As for the southern part of the continent, this was the real, so-called ‘Netherworld’.

As for the Sacred Undead Mountain, it was located at the borders between the Netherworld and the Undead Realm.

“Large numbers of undead are dying at every moment in the Undead Realm. Undead grow in power by devouring the spirits of other undead! What I fear the most is that the undead which Yale, George, and my parents have become have already been devoured by others.” Linley was rather worried. Still, he flew with Bebe away from the Undead Realm, flying south towards the border it shared with the Netherworld.

Chapter 13 – Northbone Prefecture

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 13, Northbone Prefecture

The vast continent of the Netherworld was filled with undead in the north, and thus it was known as the 'Undead Realm'. The weak undead who lived there were at most Saint-level undead. Generally speaking, upon becoming Deities, the vast majority would fly to the south, entering the world of experts…the Netherworld.

South of Sacred Undead Mountain. That was the place which was viewed as the true Netherworld.

As one of the four Higher Planes, the management structure of the Netherworld was quite similar to that of the Infernal Realm; the Netherworld had a total of eighty one prefectures. As Linley and Bebe flew into the Netherworld from Sacred Undead Mountain, the first prefecture they entered was the number one prefecture of the northern Netherworld… Northbone Prefecture!

Currently, in the air above Northbone Prefecture, a metallic lifeform that was less than ten meters long was flying forward at high speed. Linley and Bebe were within it, but right now, Linley was frowning in concern. Just now, Linley and Bebe had gone to the borders of the Undead Realm to take a look. After doing so, Linley began to worry.

The slaughters happening in the Undead Realm were even more terrifying and even more common than the Infernal Realm's! The undead constantly battled each other, devouring each other's souls to strengthen their own, increasing their own power! "Father died nearly two thousand years ago, while George, Yale, and Dixie died a thousand years ago. So much time has passed…have they, too, died within in the battle between undead?"

Linley was worried about this.

Once the undead creature a departed soul was formed into was killed, the soul would be devoured, and the person would truly be dead! Even if Linley managed to find a Sovereign, it would be useless.

Linley couldn't help but feel concerned. Too much time had passed, after all, and the battles in the Undead Realm were too vicious!

"Boss…don't worry!" Bebe said hurriedly. "Your father, George, and Yale…none of them have weak souls. Even if they were transformed into undead upon entering the Netherworld, they would be powerful undead. The chances of a powerful undead surviving are much better."

"That's all I can say to myself." Linley nodded slightly.

But Linley understood that with each passing moment in the Undead Realm, countless powerful undead were being killed and devoured.

"What we need to do is make use of every moment." Linley frowned. "If I want to find a Sovereign, I can't just run about blindly. It's best to find a Sovereign's Emissary or a Lord Prefect and make an inquiry."

"Boss, do you know who the Emissaries are, here in the Netherworld? Or where the Lord Prefects live?" Bebe asked.

Linley shook his head.

"Best I find a Highgod and ask, first." Linley only knew some basic information regarding the Netherworld. As for where the various Lord Prefects of the Netherworld lived, that was hard to say. Some lived within their prefectural palaces, while others lived in cities. But some Lord Prefects lived in very distant, remote mountain ranges.

Since he had to find a Highgod, Linley began to pay attention to the outside world.

He couldn't just scan every single metallic creature that flew by for Highgods, then stop them and force them out and ask them. That would just

anger them, and although they might be afraid of Linley's power, they might lie to Linley out of enmity.

While flying, Linley paid close attention to the outside.

On the third day, while drinking fruit wine and staring through the translucent window, Linley's eyes suddenly lit up.

Several kilometers away, there were nearly ten thousand Gods under the command of tens of Highgods who were in pursuit of ten or so people.

"Bebe, here's our chance!" Linley said.

"Chance?" Bebe glanced sideways casually. "What chance? It's just a group of bandits fighting outside." On the way over, Linley and Bebe had encountered quite a few scenes of bandits fighting people. However…the forces involved were small, and the conflicts were also small-scale.

"Just follow me." Linley said in a low voice. The metallic lifeform immediately vanished, giving Bebe no choice but to follow Linley and fly towards the distant battlefield.

The many bandits were attacking in every which way as those ten or so people wildly tried to flee in every direction. However, the Highgod leaders of those bandits were chasing after two Highgods in particular.

"Which bastard revealed our information! Almost as soon as we entered Northbone Prefecture, the bandits of eighteen mountain ranges joined forces to attack us!" A three meter tall, red-skinned man with a single horn on his forehead sent through divine sense, his ox-like eyes bloodshot with rage.

"Big Bro, don't be angry. Fleeing is more important." The other, a younger man, said.

"Once we escape, we definitely must investigate." The ox-headed man was extremely angry, but he still flew away at high speed. "We'll be lucky if we

can escape.” The youth glanced back sideways. Those who had been slow to flee were all dead now, and of those who had fled to the south, only the two of them remained.

But of course, they had some comrades who had fled in other directions. By now, nobody was able to take care of anybody else.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Eight figures suddenly appeared in front of the ox-headed man and the youth. The eight stared at them coldly. “Not good!” The ox-headed man and the youth immediately came to a halt. As they looked to the other sides, they found out that the other directions also had people barring their path.

“The two of you still want to flee?” A deep voice rang out, and a muscular, bearded dwarf who was 1.5 meters tall said. The dwarf floated there in mid-air, staring at them with his emotionless golden eyes.

“Big Bro, we’re finished!”

The youth and the ox-headed man looked at each other, feeling powerless.

Surrounded by bandits. Their losses were catastrophic this time!

“If you are able to kill us, then do so.” The ox-headed man swept the surrounding bandits with his gaze, then laughed coldly with anger. “Even if you kill us, you won’t be able to obtain our things.” Generally speaking, people with valuable possessions would keep clones in their headquarters. If this ox-headed man was killed, his clones would remain alive…and thus, his interspatial ring would still be inaccessible.

The dwarf laughed coldly.

As the general commanders for the bandits of the eighteen mountain ranges, these people had done this more than a few times before. They were quite experienced. They knew that others had clones in other places, and so even if they killed these people, they wouldn’t be able to acquire the treasures

within.

“I’ll give you two choices.” The dwarf’s deep voice echoed in the heavens. “Choice number one, you hand over these treasures and give us the interspatial rings’ contents. We’ll let you two leave. Choice number two… you don’t hand them over. Then none of us will gain anything, while the two of you will die!”

“Then you die first.” The ox-headed man bellowed, and his entire body instantly transformed into that of a mighty black bull, surrounded by blazing flames. He shot out towards the dwarf like a flaming mirage.

The dwarf just laughed disdainfully, and in his hands, a two-meter long black greataxe appeared. Hefting the black greataxe, the dwarf gave a casual chop towards the flaming mirage, and where the greataxe passed, space itself trembled like ripples in water.

Suddenly…

An earthen yellow aura descended from the heavens, spreading out to a diameter of a thousand meters, forming a hemisphere of earthen yellow light and trapping all of the Highgod bandits within, as well as the ox-headed brothers. In addition, beneath that hemisphere of earthen yellow light, a round ‘plate’ formed from divine earth power was formed, ‘covering up’ this hemisphere.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

In an instant, the thirty three Highgod bandits and the two ox-headed brothers trembled as their bodies irresistibly were drawn downwards, smashing heavily against the ‘round plate’ formed by divine earth power. The group stood there in terror, unable to take to the air.

They all raised their heads, looking towards the skies in terror.

A brown-haired youth dressed in a sky-blue robe was there, along with a youngster wearing a straw hat. They stood in the air, side by side.

“Milord!” The big-bearded dwarf immediately bowed respectfully. “My name is Kleopatra [Ke’li’ao’pa’te’le], the overall leader of the eighteen northern mountain ranges of the Northbone Prefecture. I don’t know what you need, milord. Our eighteen mountains will definitely comply!” Instantly, the other thirty-two Highgod bandits bowed as well.

Within this field of gravity, they could already sense the terrifying power of the gravitational pull. “Good heavens, there’s actually such a powerful Gravitational Space. If he wanted to kill us, he could slaughter us with ease.”

In this sort of area, killing them would be utter simplicity for Linley.

“Milord, my name is Amos [A’mo]. I’m willing to serve you, milord.” The ox-headed man immediately bowed as well, and the youth by his side also bowed. In the Netherworld, they all knew when to be arrogant and when to be respectful. Clearly, the person who had just appeared was an invincible expert.

A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

“I have a question, gentlemen.” Linley asked.

“Milord, pray tell.” The big-bearded dwarf immediately said, and the ox-headed man was listening carefully as well.

Linley laughed calmly. “I want to know if a Sovereign’s Emissary lives in Northbone Prefecture!”

“I know the answer to this. The Lord Prefect of our Northbone Prefecture is himself a Sovereign’s Emissary.” The big-bearded dwarf immediately replied, while the ox-headed man also said, “The Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture is one of the supreme experts of the Netherworld, and he is indeed a Sovereign’s Emissary.”

Linley felt a surge of delight.

It seemed as though this Northbone Lord Prefect should know quite a bit about the Sovereign.

Bebe immediately asked as well, “Where does the Lord Prefect live? You, speak!” Bebe pointed at the ox-headed man.

The ox-headed man said respectfully, “The Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture lives in a grassland located thousands of kilometers to the east of the city of Hide [Hai’de]. Ordinary people aren’t able to enter…but of course, given your statuses, milords, it will be very easy for you to pay a visit.”

“Outside the city of Hide?” A map instantly appeared in Linley’s mind. Linley already knew the general locations of the cities of the Netherworld like the back of his hand, and currently, Linley had already focused on a specific location.

“Is he outside of Hide?” Linley looked towards the dwarf, who hurriedly nodded as well.

Only now was Linley certain.

“Fine. You can leave now.” Linley said calmly, retracting his Blackstone Space.

The group of bandits and the ox-headed brothers were stunned, looking at each other.

“Thank you, milord!” The ox-headed brothers immediately bowed, then fled to the south at high speed.

Quite a few bandits immediately prepared to give chase.

“You still want to kill them?” Bebe barked. Instantly, the group of bandits halted. Linley glanced at them, then at the dwarf and said calmly, “Perhaps you should just forget about this particular business transaction.”

“Right, right.” The dwarf immediately acknowledged the other.

“Kleopatra. A fine name.” Linley laughed calmly, then flew with Bebe into the skies, disappearing into the horizon.

“Boss, should we chase or not?” The other bandits looked at the big-bearded dwarf.

“Chase my ass. We won’t be able to catch up. And…if we really chased just now, I imagine that lord would’ve been able to kill us all with the wave of a hand.” The dwarf snorted coldly. The other bandits couldn’t help but feel a surge of fear. “Enough. Let’s collect the interspatial rings from the battlefield, then go back.”

The dwarf immediately led the vast host back to their headquarters.

The bandits of the eighteen northern mountains of Northbone Prefecture were indeed a powerful force, and their leader, Kleopatra, was someone who was nearly at the Six Star Fiend level of power.

The bandits had eighteen chiefs, but of course the dwarf was the overall leader. In one of the eighteen mountain ranges, a bald man dressed in black battle armor flew into a castle, and the bandits at the gates of the castle all bowed and said, “Chief!”

“Hmph.” The bald, black-armored man just strode into the hall, filled to the brim with rage.

“Chief, why are you so angry?” A gentle voice rang out.

“Ugh!” The bald man sat down upon his throne in the main hall, grumbling unhappily, “You have no idea. Today, we brothers of the eighteen mountain ranges all joined forces, and were at the verge of success. But who would have imagined that a pair of supreme experts would suddenly appear out of nowhere, and ask us questions about the Lord Prefect and Sovereign’s Emissaries? And they even forced us to let those two fat sheep escape.”

“Then our luck really was terrible.” The gentle voice said.

“Ugh.” The bald, black-armored man stood up again. “Enough, George. Quite a few of the brothers of our mountain range died this time. The squads need to be rearranged. Help me handle it. I’m not in the mood.”

“Yes, Chief.” The reply came from a youth with a very friendly smile on his face.

If Linley was here, he would have immediately recognized that this was his brother…George!

Chapter 14 – Sayant

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 14, Sayant

The bald, black-armored warrior glanced sideways at George, then went to rest. He was very satisfied with George's performance as his housekeeper. First of all, George was a Demigod, and thus didn't pose any threat to him. Second of all, George was indeed talented, and made suitable arrangements for all of the forces throughout the mountain range. He now believed that his decision in the past to not kill George was one of his wisest decisions.

This time, there weren't many casualties, and so George quickly finished the arrangements.

Night. Within the mountain castle. George stood in front of a window, staring through it at a curved, devilish red moon. This curved devilish red moon reminded him…this was the Netherworld! Not his homeland, the Yulan continent.

"How much longer will this sort of life continue for?" George mused to himself. "I wonder what has happened to the Yulan continent in the past thousand years. According to the tyrannical actions of that Odin, most likely Boss Yale and even Dragonblood Castle suffered greatly."

George was a very calm and cool-headed person. No matter what sort of environment he encountered, he would quickly adapt to it.

In the Netherworld, there was something that everyone knew – undead wouldn't possess memories of their past lives. Only after they evolved and transformed into Deities would their souls be baptized by the natural Laws, and in that moment, the dusty memories of their past life would be restored to them as well.

When George died, he had been a Saint.

When his soul had been drawn into the Netherworld and had been transformed into an undead departed soul, his power had been determined by his soul's power. George's soul had been that of a Saint, and so when he had become an undead, he had become a Saint-level undead. When George had been a Saint-level undead, George hadn't had any memories regarding his past life; all he knew was to kill other undead, to devour their souls, and to strengthen himself!

As he strengthened himself, his soul constantly grew in power. And then, as he continuously, slowly gained insights…suddenly, he had broken through and become a Deity!

In that instant of becoming a Deity, George had regained all of his memories.

He knew that in the past his name had been…George.

As a senior minister of the former Yulan Empire, George's diplomatic skills and interpersonal relationship skills were far superior to Linley. When they were young and at the Ernst Institute, George made friends very easily, and in the government of the Yulan Empire, he had been at home as a fish in water.

Now, he was in a base for bandits.

Perhaps bandits were talented in training and battle, but with regards to management, they were far inferior to George. Thus, everyone acknowledged whole-heartedly George's talents as housekeeper.

"Right now, my first goal is to gain enough money in order to buy a house within a city." George had already made a plan for himself. "Afterwards, I will train within the city in safety! By then, I won't have to spend so much energy." As housekeeper for this mountain range, George's status was very high, second only to the leader of their mountain range. He could have easily acquired a God-level divine spark and fused with it, but he didn't want to.

He wanted to independently become a Deity!

Thus, although he didn't dare to openly embezzle, given his abilities, if he were to secretly secrete a large amount of wealth into his own interspatial ring, how would others be able to find out?

If someone had enough money, why would they want to stay in a bandit's nest?

"Unfortunately, Third Bro is in the Infernal Realm. It will be very hard to see him again." George sighed to himself.

Northbone Prefecture was indeed vast. The metallic lifeform Linley was riding flew for several months before reaching the grasslands outside the city of Hide.

"This residence of the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture feels like a city." Bebe stared through the window and spoke out in praise. "The forces stationed here station in the hundreds of thousands, and they are arranged into rows of houses. They really do seem quite imposing. And that tall castle in the center…that must be the actual residence of the Lord Prefect."

Linley looked over as well. That tall castle was over a hundred meters tall, and was an ivory white color.

"I hope the Lord Prefect is at home." Linley sighed to himself. "If this Lord Prefect isn't present, we would've made this trip for nothing." Linley immediately stored away his metallic lifeform, and then he and Bebe flew towards the distant residence.

The residence of the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture was naturally under heavy guard, and many prefectural soldiers were on patrol.

"Who goes there!" The distant soldiers shouted from far away, before Linley even drew near.

But Linley and Bebe continued to fly over. Tens of prefectural soldiers

immediately flew forward, with the leader being a soldier with a single horn on his forehead. The leader barked, “This is the residence of the Lord Prefect. Outsiders are not permitted to wander about freely here. The two of you had best leave immediately.”

“Please go report to the Lord Prefect that Elder ‘Linley’ of the Four Divine Beasts clan wishes to pay his respects.” Linley laughed calmly.

“And are we supposed to believe that you are an Elder of the Four Divine Beasts clan just because you say you are?” The leader of the soldiers snickered.

Linley laughed calmly. An earthen yellow aura spread out from his body, immediately capturing the soldiers within it, catching them completely off-guard. Their bodies trembled, and they fell down to the ground. Gritting their teeth, they just barely made it back to their feet.

“Now do you believe me?” Linley laughed calmly, while at the same time withdrawing the earthen yellow light.

“I believe you, I believe you.” The soldier said hurriedly.

He had been completely stunned. The power of the Gravitational Space made him completely convinced that this person in front of him was definitely someone of the Seven Star Fiend level. “The two of you, please wait here a moment…I’ll go make the report.” The horned soldier said, and then immediately turned and flew towards the tall castle.

“Is your Lord Prefect present?” Linley queried the other soldiers.

These soldiers all understood that the two in front of them were extraordinary figures. One of them, a big-bearded soldier, laughed in response, “Milord, We are just ordinary soldiers. If the Lord Prefect was to leave, we probably wouldn’t be made aware of it. Soon, when the captain returns, we’ll know.”

Linley could only wait there quietly, while Bebe mumbled, “I hope the Lord

Prefect didn't head out."

Moments later…

"Lord Linley, Lord Linley." The soldier who had made the report shouted from far away as he flew back, moving like a flash, his face covered in smiles. "When the Lord Prefect learned that you had arrived, milord, he was extremely happy. He's already ordered a feast to be prepared for you. Lord Linley, please follow me this way."

Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but exchange glances with Bebe.

"So friendly?" Bebe mumbled.

"That's a good thing." Linley laughed, then immediately flew forwards. "Lead the way!"

While hurrying towards the castle, Bebe asked through divine sense in a puzzled manner "Boss, it seems as though this Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture is being very courteous upon knowing that you are here. Can it be that he has heard of you? Can it be that your fame, Boss, has spread all the way from the Infernal Realm to the Netherworld?"

"We'll know when we see him." Linley felt very joyful right now. "Also, when we meet the Lord Prefect, don't cause any trouble. We're here to ask him for help."

"I know. If necessary, I will just." Bebe rubbed his nose.

Linley couldn't help but chuckle. This trip to the Netherworld seemed to be going rather smoothly. He was able to so easily meet with the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture.

"Lord Linley, here we are." The soldier stood outside the castle gates.

Linley could already see quite a few maids moving towards the castle with platters of food. Linley and Bebe immediately entered this castle.

A few hundred meters away from the Lord Prefect's castle, there was another, slightly smaller castle. At this moment, a man dressed in long gray robes was standing on the veranda, casually enjoying the scenery. If Linley were to see this person, Linley would immediately recognize him. This was the person he dreamed about killing…the Vile King of the Gebados Planar Prison, 'Odin'.

When Odin had arrived in the Netherworld, he had been transported here by the Sacred Undead Mountain as well.

Thus, his first stop was to Northbone Prefecture. While journeying through Northbone Prefecture, he quickly understood that given his current level of power, although he could be considered a supreme expert in the Netherworld, he hadn't truly reached the pinnacle of power. There was no way he could compare to the Lord Prefects of the Netherworld. And while journeying, he had encountered the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture.

After sparring multiple times with the Lord Prefect, he wholeheartedly submitted to the other man's power, and so had become the Lord Prefect's subordinate, becoming the third Envoy controlled by the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture.

"Eh?" Odin looked into the distance in surprise.

He saw two figures be led into the Lord Prefect's castle.

"Them!" Odin's pupils suddenly contracted, and his face changed dramatically. "How has Linley come to the Netherworld as well?" How could Odin forget the humiliation his divine wind clone had suffered, back in the Yulan continent? Even though that sort of humiliation, to him, was quite basic…

But to Odin, it was still the greatest humiliation he had ever suffered!

He hated Linley!

Back then, he had viciously snarled at Linley, telling Linley to come to the Netherworld to find him.

But who would have thought that Linley would actually come to the Netherworld! “It seems he is fixated on killing me.” Odin’s gaze was cold. “He even dares to come meet with the Lord Prefect. Does Linley know that I’m here, or is he here on other business?” Odin was still rather puzzled as to whether or not Linley knew he was here.

If he did, would Linley dare to so openly meet with the Lord Prefect?

It must be understood that Odin was the Lord Prefect’s subordinate.

“I had wanted to just let things be done with. Who would have imagined that you would chase me into the Netherworld? Hmph.” Odin was so angry that he suddenly moved, flying out of his own castle towards the Lord Prefect’s castle.

His divine wind clone had gotten a complete sense of Linley’s power. Odin understood…that in terms of material attacks, Linley far surpassed him. Even in soul attacks…Linley had enough power to make him, Odin, enter a dazed state and lose consciousness. Through this, Odin had become certain…

That Linley wasn’t weaker than him in terms of soul attacks either!

“To kill Linley…by myself, I won’t be able to do it. I’ll have to ask the Lord Prefect to help.” Odin immediately flew in through a side door, entering the Lord Prefect’s castle. The guards all knew who Odin was, and so didn’t block him.

Within the guest hall.

A long table was covered with all sorts of delicacies, and bottles of precious wine had been prepared as well. Linley and Bebe were seated off to one side, while facing them was a blue-robed, graceful woman. In the host’s seat, there sat a handsome, middle-aged white-robed man with a white

beard, beaming so widely his eyes were creased.

This middle-aged man was the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture.

“Linley, although I’m of the Netherworld, I’ve heard of the famous name of Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan. For you to come visit me today, Linley, is truly a joyous occasion.” The middle-aged man said in a very gentle voice. “Let me make the introductions. This is my wife, Anita [A’ni’ta]! Oh, and I forgot to introduce myself. My name is Sayant [Sai’yin’te]!”

“Mr. Sayant. Madame Anita.” Linley smiled. “This is my good friend, Bebe.” Bebe immediately squeezed out a smile.

Linley was still quite happy. Given the reaction of the Lord Prefect, it should be easy to negotiate with him.

“I just heard of you not too long ago, Lord Linley, and now you are here in my prefecture. This truly is a joyful surprise. Lord Linley, might I ask if there’s a special reason for your presence?” Sayant beamed, his eyes twinkling. “If there’s anything you need, just speak. If I, Sayant, can help, I will.”

Linley felt relieved, and the nearby Bebe immediately laughed, “You’ll definitely be able to help. You are a Sovereign’s Emissary, after all.”

Sayant was startled, then laughed and nodded.

“Mr. Sayant, the main issue is that I have some very important business, and so I need to meet with a Netherworld Sovereign. Only…I have no idea where they live. I’d like to ask you, Mr. Sayant, to give me some guidance as to where I should go in order to meet with a Netherworld Sovereign. It doesn’t have to be a specific one of the seven; any of the seven will suffice.” Linley said hurriedly.

“You wish to see a Sovereign?” Sayant was shocked, and his nearby wife also stared at Linley and Bebe in surprise.

“Can you tell me why you are going to meet with a Netherworld Sovereign?” Sayant asked.

Linley hesitated slightly.

Sayant immediately laughed, “I’m just asking. Right…if you want to meet a Netherworld Sovereign, this will be rather tricky. I do know where a Netherworld Sovereign lives, but even if you go there, if the Sovereign isn’t willing to meet you, your trip will have been in vain. Sovereigns are proud and lofty individuals.”

Linley felt overjoyed. So Sayant did indeed know!

“Mr. Sayant, please tell me where a Sovereign resides. As for whether or not the Sovereign is willing to meet with me, that’ll be up to my own luck.” Linley said hurriedly.

Sayant hesitated momentarily, then nodded slightly.

Right at this moment…

“Lord Prefect!” A voice echoed in Sayant’s mind. Sayant couldn’t help but frown, then sent back in response through divine sense, “Odin, what is it?”

Chapter 15 – Throwing One's Life Away

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 15, Throwing One's Life Away

Odin's interruption did indeed irritate Sayant.

"Lord Prefect, there is currently a person named Linley present visiting you, correct?" Odin sent through divine sense.

"Right, that is indeed the case." Sayant was rather surprised at how quickly Odin had found out.

Odin hurriedly sent back through divine sense, "Lord Prefect, why has Linley come?"

"Linley wishes to meet with a Sovereign, and asked me where a Sovereign lives. Why?" Sayant was rather puzzled.

Odin was shocked as well. "Meeting with a Sovereign?" Odin thought it had to do with him, but he still immediately responded frantically, "Lord Prefect, this Linley and I have an irreconcilable enmity between the two of us. My son and my brother were both killed by him! Even my divine wind clone was humiliated and tortured to death by him. Lord Prefect…please, help me get revenge. So long as we can kill Linley, I, Odin, will never forget your benevolence, Lord Prefect."

As Odin saw it, Lord Prefect Sayant was a Sovereign's Emissary who had a Sovereign artifact. He was definitely a truly supreme expert.

He should be absolutely confident in being able to kill Linley!

"Kill Linley? Out of the question." Sayant was rather angry now.

"Lord Prefect." Odin was frantic. "Lord Prefect, if I was able to kill him, I would have killed him long ago. But I'm not able to. Lord Prefect, I beg

you, kill Linley. So long as you kill him, if you have any orders for me, Lord Prefect, even if it costs me my life, I will carry them out."

Sayant sent back angrily through divine sense, "Listen clearly. It isn't that I don't wish to help you gain revenge. Only…I'm not confident in being able to do so either!"

"Not confident?" Odin didn't dare believe it. "How can you not be confident?"

"Odin, you should be aware that not long ago, I went to visit an old friend and that I just returned not long ago." Sayant said.

"Right." Odin knew of this.

"I had gone to visit the Patriarch of the Ashcroft clan. It was the Nether Serpent himself who told me about Linley. Do you know…that when Linley was a God, he was able to kill multiple Seven Star Fiends by himself!" Sayant barked back through divine sense.

Odin was stunned. "God? How is that possible?"

"Based on the projections of the eight great clans, now that Linley is a Highgod, it is very likely that he has reached the level of being a Paragon! Even if the projections of the eight great clans are incorrect, given his amazing performance as a God, now that Linley is a Highgod, his strength is such that even I am not certain of victory against him!" Sayant sent back.

Not to mention, 'victory over' and 'killing' were two different concepts.

Sayant wasn't confident of even being able to defeat Linley, much less kill him.

"Tell me, am I supposed to go kill a presumed Paragon-level expert?" Sayant sent back.

Odin was stupefied.

He knew that Linley was powerful, but not even in his wildest imaginings would he have thought that the Ashcroft clan's Patriarch would acknowledge Linley's power, and even suspect him to be a Paragon. This was an extremely high-level appraisal! After all, there was no way to judge from the surface if someone was a Highgod Paragon or not.

For example, Dunnington. Others only 'suspected' him of being a Paragon.

Even after someone fused all six profound mysteries, others wouldn't be able to judge that just from looking at the person.

It was precisely because he knew Linley to be incredibly powerful that Sayant was so courteous. Otherwise, given his status as a Sovereign's Emissary, why would he act in such a manner? Unfortunately…none of them knew that Linley had the 'black stone' which the Redbud Sovereign had bestowed upon him, which was why he had such astonishing power.

"Lord Prefect. Lord Prefect!" Odin sent back frantically. "Linley is fixated on killing me. Lord Prefect, I beg of you, please help me come up with a way to kill Linley. Oh, right…Lord Prefect, Linley wants to meet a Sovereign, right? Have the Sovereign kill him."

"Have you gone stupid?" Sayant was truly beginning to grow angry now. He immediately sent back, "Do you think the Sovereigns will act at your beck and call?"

Only now did Odin come to his senses.

"But your suggestion does remind me of a method." Sayant said.

"You have a method?" Odin was overjoyed.

"Enough. Don't speak to me through divine sense again. Wait there." Sayant barked.

Conversations through divine sense occurred at lightning speed. Although

they had exchanged tens of sentences, in truth, not even a second had passed. In the banquet hall, Linley and Bebe were looking at Sayant, awaiting Sayant's answer.

"I do know where a Sovereign lives, but Linley." Sayant said with a solemn expression. "The residence of a Sovereign is set up to prevent others from disturbing them. Thus, their residences are in very dangerous locations… even Seven Star Fiends wouldn't dare to casually go barging in. Thus, Linley, I urge you to reconsider it."

"Mr. Sayant, no need for you to be concerned. Please tell me where to go." Linley said urgently.

"Tell us where it is. We're growing really impatient." Bebe mumbled to the side.

Sayant hesitated momentarily, but then nodded. "Fine, then. Our Netherworld has a very dangerous location; the number one mountain peak of the Netherworld, the Abyssal Mountain! Everyone in the Netherworld knows that the Abyssal Mountain is an extremely dangerous place, but what they don't know…is that within the Abyss Mountain lies the residence of a Sovereign!"

Sayant's wife, 'Anita', glanced towards Sayant in surprise upon hearing this. Clearly, this response by her husband caused her to feel surprise!

"Abyssal Mountain?" Linley frowned.

In the book provided him by Beirut, the descriptions of the various places had also included a description of the number one tall mountain of the Netherworld…Abyssal Mountain. According to what the book said, the Abyssal Mountain was the most dangerous location of the Netherworld, and that no matter what, no one was permitted to barge in.

"I want to see how dangerous it can be." Linley made his decision.

"Madame Anita, what's that look on your face?" Bebe's eyes were keen,

and he noticed that Anita's expression seemed strange. "Can it be that the Lord Prefect's words are incorrect?"

"That's not it." Madame Anita laughed in response. "I'm just surprised. Abyssal Mountain actually has a Sovereign living there? I didn't know about it prior to this either."

"Oh." Bebe nodded as though suddenly enlightened.

"Boss, I feel as though something is off." Bebe sent through divine sense to Linley. "When Madame Anita heard Sayant say 'Abyssal Mountain', the look in her eyes was very strange. Something is off." Although Bebe had a rather childish disposition, as a Godeater Rat, his senses were very keen.

"Don't guess rashly." Linley sent back.

Sayant then urged, "Linley, Abyssal Mountain is far too dangerous. I urge you not to go. How about this…why don't you stay here with me? As a Sovereign's Emissary, although I'm not able to actively reach out to the Sovereign, perhaps at some point, the Sovereign will summon me…at which point, I'll be able to help you convey the message to the Sovereign."

"Unable to actively reach out to the Sovereign?" Linley frowned.

How long would he have to wait?

"That's not necessarily so." Bebe snorted. "I saw a Sovereign's Emissary burn a sheet of sheepskin parchment covered in magic runes, and the Sovereign appeared."

This was what Beirut had done, and then the Bloodridge Sovereign had appeared. With but a single word, he had sent the eight great clans away, dispersing them.

Sayant glanced at Bebe in astonishment, then laughed. "Bebe, I didn't imagine that you'd even know about this. Indeed, this is a type of method by which one can summon a Sovereign. Only, that paper with magic runes

isn’t something that I can create; the Sovereign has to personally create it. That’s the only reason why the Sovereign would sense the paper being burned.”

“However, the Sovereign didn’t bestow one upon me.” Sayant said apologetically.

And Linley understood that even if Sayant had one, why would he use up such a precious item on behalf of Linley?

“Mr. Sayant, I am already extremely grateful to you. But Abyssal Mountain is deep within the Netherworld, and it will take me thirty or forty years to travel there from here. It will take too long. I wonder…if you know any of the residences of the other six Sovereigns?” Linley asked.

Linley wanted to waste no time in saving his father and brothers.

Abyssal Mountain was indeed a bit too far.

“I’m not.” Sayant shook his head regretfully. “Linley, although I’m a Sovereign’s Emissary, I don’t know where the Sovereigns live. The only reason I know of Abyssal Mountain as being one such place is because I once heard the Sovereign speak of it. As for the others…I truly have no idea. I imagine the Sovereigns don’t wish to be disturbed.”

Linley felt rather resigned.

Still…

He had already gained something on this visit. At least he now knew that Abyssal Mountain was the residence of a Sovereign.

“Abyssal Mountain!” Linley had made up his mind.

His father and brothers had spent nearly two thousand years in the Undead Realm. If they had been able to last for so many years, lasting a few more decades probably wouldn’t be too hard.

“Linley, let’s not just chat. Come, taste some of the special delicacies of the Netherworld.” Sayant laughed while speaking.

Linley and Bebe continued to chat casually with Sayant and his wife while drinking wine…spending quite a bit of time in the process.

Afterwards, Lord Prefect Sayant of Northbone Prefecture and his wife, Madame Anita, escorted Linley and Bebe all the way out to the perimeters of the guard camp.

“Mr. Sayant, Madame Anita, no need to see us any further.” Linley said gratefully.

Sayant let out a sigh. “Linley, to be honest, I truly do not wish to see you go to Abyssal Mountain. Abyssal Mountain truly is dangerous…although I haven’t gone deep into it myself, I’ve heard others speak of how dangerous it is long ago. Watching you head to Abyssal Mountain, I…alas! Linley, I urge you to just wait. In a few hundred thousand years or a few million years, perhaps the Sovereign will summon me.”

Hundreds of thousands of years? Millions of years?

If his father and siblings hadn’t transformed into Deities, they would die in the battles between undead. No matter how hard Linley worked, by then, it would all be fruitless.

“No need.” Linley laughed.

Bebe, standing there to one side, seemed rather unhappy.

Linley suddenly thought of something. On this trip to the Netherworld, aside from helping his father and his brothers regain their memories, which was his primary goal, he had another goal…if he had the chance, he would kill Odin!

As Linley saw it, since Sayant was the Lord Prefect of Northbone

Prefecture, he should know quite a few experts.

“Mr. Sayant, Madame Anita. I would like to ask you if you’ve heard of a person. This person is roughly at the Seven Star Fiend level of power. His name…is Odin!” Linley looked at Sayant and Madame Ania. Sayant raised an eyebrow, but Anita began to laugh.

“Haha, Odin. Of course we’ve heard of him.” Madame Anita laughed as she spoke.

Linley’s eyes immediately lit up, and Bebe turned to look as well.

“You know him?” Linley said in surprised delight.

Madame Anita let out two chuckles. “Yes. When Sayant and I were roaming within the borders of Northbone Prefecture, we once ran into Odin. Odin’s power was indeed not bad…but compared to my husband, ‘Sayant’, he was still quite a ways off. He lost multiple times, and submitted whole-heartedly, and so chatted with us for a time. We asked him to stay with us for a while, but he said that he had just arrived in the Netherworld, and wanted to roam about the other regions of the Netherworld and do some adventuring. We didn’t stop him. I have no idea where in the Netherworld he is now.”

“Oh.” Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but feel disappointed.

“Then we won’t disturb you any further.” Linley and Bebe bade them farewell, then entered their metallic lifeform and flew to the south, disappearing into the horizon.

“Why did you want me to deceive them?” Anita turned to look at her husband. When she said these words, Anita also vigilantly set up a Godrealm, preventing others from hearing.

Sayant laughed calmly, “Do you know that between Linley and Odin, there lies a tremendous and irreconcilable hatred?”

“Ah?” Anita said, surprised. “Then just now, when you said that the Sovereign was at Abyssal Mountain, it was also because…?”

“Right.” Sayant laughed calmly. “Odin is one of us, after all. In addition, Linley and the Nether Serpent can be considered antagonistic…although Linley isn’t an enemy, he can’t be said to be a friend either! However, Linley is very powerful. It isn’t worth offending Linley for the sake of Odin. Still…all I did was give him a location.”

“But you are having him throw his life away.” Anita said.

“He is indeed throwing his life away.”

Sayant laughed. “However…Abyssal Mountain is indeed the residence of a Sovereign!”

“Huh? It really is?” Anita looked towards him in surprise.

“Right. And not an ordinary Sovereign; the most powerful of the seven Sovereigns of the Netherworld. It is the residence of the Chief Sovereign of Death!” Sayant laughed calmly. “I urged Linley not to go, but he insisted. If he dies, it has nothing to do with me.”

“The Chief Sovereign of Death…”

Sayant let out a sigh.

Chapter 16 – Abyssal Mountain

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 16, Abyssal Mountain

That eerie, crescent red moon hung up high in the void.

A metallic lifeform flew through the skies, bathed in that eerie red glow. Linley peered through the window towards the outside, seeing the occasional castle pop up in the distant mountain forests. Surrounding those rare castles were some massive flying dragons, immortal phoenixes, and other Saint-type magical beasts. These enormous magical beasts were reared in captivity.

Within the metallic lifeform.

“Boss.” Bebe was holding a goblet of wine. Sipping from it, he frowned. “Are we really going to the Abyssal Mountain? The book Grandpa gave us spoke of it, and said that it was the most dangerous location in the entire Netherworld. Although I want to adventure as well, I keep on having the feeling that Sayant’s words are unreliable.”

“Whether his words are reliable or not, we can’t be certain for now.”

Linley put down his goblet, laughing calmly. “We’ve just spoken to a single Lord Prefect. The Netherworld has more of them than just Sayant himself. When we reach the next Prefecture, we’ll ask again. After having spoken to a number of Lord Prefects, we can make our decision!”

Speaking with a Lord Prefect would only take a day or two, but travelling to the Abyssal Mountain would require decades.

Nursing his goblet while walking to the front of the metallic lifeform, Linley stared through the window again, into the ancient night-time scenery of the Netherworld. Linley sighed emotionally, “I hope that the souls of Father, Yale, George, and Dixie were able to stay alive in the Undead

Realm."

From Northbone Prefecture to the Abyssal Mountain was a journey that entailed crossing through six other prefectures. In two of them, the Lord Prefects were situated in rather remote, distant corners. If Linley was to go visit with them, he would have to deviate significantly from his route by hundreds of millions of kilometers…and so Linley gave up and didn't go visit them.

He went to visit the other four Lord Prefects instead.

Of the other four, two of the Lord Prefects were not present within their residences. It was possible that they were outside adventuring, and so Linley left empty-handed. But Linley did, in fact, meet the other two. One of the two was present in his prefecture and received Linley, but this Lord Prefect didn't know a thing about the residences of the Sovereigns.

As for the other Lord Prefect, this one did indeed know a bit regarding the Sovereigns.

He said to Linley, "Linley, based on what I know, deep within the Nether Sea, in the Azurewave Island, there lies the residence of a Sovereign. But of course, based on what I know, the 'Abyssal Mountain' which Sayant mentioned also does indeed have the residence of a Sovereign. Only, Abyssal Mountain is far too dangerous. It is best if you go to the island instead!"

Upon hearing this, Linley immediately expressed his gratitude and leave.

The entire Netherworld was formed from one enormous continent which was vaster than the five continents of the Infernal Realm put together. At the ends of the Netherworld was a vast, endless sea which was known as the Nether Sea. The Nether Sea was truly endless, and the Azurewave Island was deep within it.

"Go to Azurewave Island?"

Linley shook his head internally. “Traversing the entire Netherworld alone will take nearly two centuries. To then venture into the Nether Sea and travel to Azurewave Island will most likely take another century or two. The trip to Azurewave Island will take at least three or four centuries!” Linley sighed to himself. “In addition, who knows if I will even be able to meet the Sovereign once I reach Azurewave Island? If I’m not even able to meet the Sovereign, I’d have to leave and head to the Abyssal Mountain and spend another three or four centuries! This round trip would take seven or eight centuries. Not worth it. Not worth it!”

The danger level of Azurewave Island was much lower, but it was too far.

Time. Time was precisely what he couldn’t afford to waste right now. The sooner he could save his father and the others, the better. If too much time passed, his father, Yale, and the others might have truly died.

“Boss, you made your decision? We are going to the Abyssal Mountain?” Bebe asked.

“Right. We’re going to the Abyssal Mountain. So what if it is a bit dangerous? At least I am now certain that the Abyssal Mountain is indeed the residence of a Sovereign. If we fail in our journey to the Abyssal Mountain, we can then hurry to Azurewave Island. No matter what, we can’t waste any time on roundabout trips!” Linley said.

“Hey, Boss, take a look outside.” Bebe suddenly said in astonishment.

Linley looked through the translucent metal to the outside as well. He saw that far in the distance, above a tall mountain, in the air above an ancient castle, two men were standing in mid-air, staring at each other. Both were dressed in long black robes, while one had long silver hair and the other had long violet hair. The violet-haired man’s entire body was crackling with lightning.

The two flashed like lightning across the skies, exchanging blows.

BANG!

A large crack in space appeared.

“These two are both fairly strong. They should be at the Seven Star Fiend level of power.” Linley evaluated.

“This journey was so boring. All we saw were some Gods or some weak Highgods fighting amongst themselves. It’s rare to see supreme experts battle. Boss, let’s take a break and see who wins!” Bebe’s eyes were shining as he spoke. Bebe was rather interested in battles between supreme experts.

Linley was helpless.

“We’ll only stop for a short period of time.” Linley still brought the metallic lifeform to a halt.

In the distant horizon, those two supreme experts exchanged multiple blows, their power causing the skies to split open time and time again. But a few moments later, the body of the silver-haired man suddenly vanished like an illusory shadow as he fled at high speed into the distant skies. As for the violet-haired man, he pursued at high speed.

“Hey…that’s boring. They ran away before anyone died.” Bebe said resignedly.

“Enough. It doesn’t matter who lives or dies. We aren’t too far from the Abyssal Mountain by now. We’ll be there in a few months. Let’s make haste.” Linley once more controlled the metallic lifeform, sending it flying forward.

“A few more months? Whoaaaah. I look forward to it. They say the Abyssal Mountain is dangerous, but how dangerous, really?” Bebe’s eyes were gleaming.

“We’ll know when we get there.” Linley laughed, while his mind thought back to the descriptions of the Abyssal Mountain the book he had read.

The Abyssal Mountain was the greatest of the mountains of the Netherworld. It was more than a million meters tall, with a circumference of over ten thousand kilometers. The Abyssal Mountain was constantly surrounded by tri-colored fog clouds, which actually formed Heaven-Earth Chains around the entire mountain. The wall of fog was not to be touched, as any who touched it was almost guaranteed to perish. The Abyssal Mountain was filled with dangers, and people were not to casually enter it!

“Tri-colored fog clouds? Heaven-Earth Chains?”

Linley’s mind was filled with questions. The descriptions the book had regarding the Abyssal Mountain was very sparse. It just repeatedly warned that the Abyssal Mountain was not to be entered, and that it was very dangerous. As for the tri-colored fog clouds and the Heaven-Earth Chains, it didn’t describe them in detail.

Linley spent the next few months in quiet training, and time passed quickly. On the thirty-plus years of this journey, Linley’s divine clones remained constantly in training, while his original body assisted his divine earth clone in meditating on the Laws of the Earth. However, the amount of improvements he made in thirty years wasn’t that significant. For example, his divine water clone had reached the bottleneck in the sixth mystery long ago, but despite so much time having passed, he had yet to make any breakthroughs and reach the Highgod level.

“Boss, Boss!” Bebe’s jubilant cries rang out. “Hurry, hurry, look, look! Abyssal Mountain. Abyssal Mountain!!!”

Linley, who had been seated in the meditative position within the metallic lifeform, absorbed in training, suddenly opened his eyes.

Swoosh!

Linley hurried to the front of the metallic lifeform, staring out through the metallic metal. In the distance, a towering, dazzling mountain spire had appeared, surrounded by a layer of faint blue light. It looked like a blue mountain, but upon taking a closer look, Linley realized that the blue light

was constantly flashing.

“It lives up to its reputation as being the greatest mountain of the Netherworld.” A smile appeared on Linley’s face.

Bebe rubbed his chin, then said in praise, “The Abyssal Mountain really is tall. The books say that it is a million meters tall, and before seeing it, I doubted if that was true!”

Seeing this tall mountain, Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

The mountains of his homeland, the Yulan continent, were tens of thousands of meters high at most. In the Infernal Realm, he had seen some extremely tall mountains that were hundreds of thousands of meters tall, but he had never once seen a mountain that was a million meters tall.

“The Abyssal Mountain. We’re here!” Linley let out a sigh.

“Woo, we’re here!” Bebe called out jubilantly. “Goshdarnit, the past thirty years have bored me to death. We finally made it! Everyone says the Abyssal Mountain is very dangerous, but I want to see what exactly is so dangerous about this place. I want to see what it can do me, Bebe.”

Linley glanced sideways at Bebe, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry.

It truly was quite hard for Bebe to feel as though he was in any danger!

Bebe’s body was so tough that it could be said to be even tougher than godspark weapons. His material defense could be said to be invincible. As for his soul defense…although Linley wasn’t certain, given that Bebe was capable of executing an innate divine ability such as the ‘Godeater’, Bebe’s soul was definitely not weak, and he also had a soul-protecting artifact.

“Don’t be incautious! The Abyssal Mountain is the residence of a Sovereign. No matter how mighty you are, can you be mightier than a Sovereign? Be low-key, be low-key!” Linley laughed.

“Sovereigns wouldn’t lower themselves to attack me, and as long as it isn’t a Sovereign, what have I to fear?” Bebe laughed.

Although they were able to see the Abyssal Mountain from far away, in truth, Linley and Bebe were still more than a hundred thousand kilometers away from the mountain itself. It was precisely because the Abyssal Mountain was incredibly high that they were able to see it from such a distance. However, a hundred thousand kilometers…given the flying speed of the metallic lifeform, they were able to traverse it in less than an hour.

The nearer they drew to it, the harder Linley and Bebe found it to breathe.

“Boss…it really is ridiculous!” Bebe was completely stunned.

“Heaven-Earth Chains, tri-colored fog clouds…so this is what the book referred to!” Linley couldn’t help but feel astonished as well.

The Abyssal Mountain, as they saw when they drew near, gave off the feeling of being so tall that it pierced the very heavens.

But it wasn’t the height of the Abyssal Mountain which was the most astonishing.

The Abyssal Mountain was completely wrapped in fog. The lower half of the mountain was wrapped in a white fog, while the top half of the mountain was wrapped in gray fog. As for the very peak of the mountain, that area was wrapped in a violet fog. Because fog of three different colors surrounded it…there was no way to see deep into the Abyssal Mountain.

The strange thing was, Heaven-Earth Chains had appeared!

They saw…

That like waterfalls, from the top of the Abyssal Mountain to the bottom, countless chains of lightning snaked downwards. These countless chains of lightning were as thick as a normal-sized person, covering the surface of the fog. There was roughly just one or two meters between each chain of

lightning.

“Good heavens…every single chain of lightning has to be a million meters long.” Bebe said in praise.

Linley sighed in praise as well. “No wonder they are described as Heaven-Earth Chains! These countless lightning chains that cover the entire mountain…where in the world do they come from? Only a place like this could possibly form such oddities. How marvelous.”

“Let’s go in.”

Linley and Bebe flew out of the metallic lifeform. After storing it away, Linley headed directly to the base of the Abyssal Mountain, flying at high speed. Although they were already quite close, they still had to fly for some time before reaching the base of the mountain.

“Boss, let’s go in.” Bebe began to fly inwards as he spoke.

“Hey, you two, milords, halt, halt!” A cry suddenly rang out from nearby.

Bebe couldn’t help but come to a halt, and Linley turned to look as well. A youth dressed in a long green robe flew out, his face filled with tension. He hurriedly said, “Milords, this area is covered with Heaven-Earth Chains. No matter what, don’t go inside. If you run about inside wildly and touch any of the Heaven-Earth Chains, you’ll die for sure.”

“We know that the Heaven-Earth Chains cannot be touched. We’ll go in from between them.” Bebe laughed.

Linley nodded as well.

Although countless chains of lightning descended from the peak, there was still one or two meters between each pair of lightning chains. This space was more than enough for people to fly through.

“It seems you two don’t know anything.” The youth picked up a rock from

the ground, then casually tossed it towards the ‘crack’ between a pair of lightning chains. As the rock passed through the space between the lightning chains…

“CRACKLE!”

Between the chains of lightning, a semi-translucent membrane suddenly formed, which completely blocked the space between them. In addition, it had countless electric spark snaking across its top, flowing between the two ‘chains’. These electric sparks reduced the stone into nothingness.

Linley and Bebe were both stunned.

“Under normal conditions, the translucent membrane between the chains of lightning are invisible. But they are always present. Thus…if you want to go through, you’ll suffer attacks from countless sparks of lightning. This lightning is no ordinary lightning…even powerful Highgods will instantly be reduced into ash by those lightning bolts!” The green-robed youth repeatedly warned.

Chapter 17 – Abyssal Fruit

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 17, Abyssal Fruit

Linley and Bebe both couldn't help but feel stunned.

"If I truly were to fly through, I probably would have died!" Linley felt seized by terror. He hadn't been in Dragonform, and had been planning to Dragonform upon entering the Abyssal Mountain. But who would have imagined that the safe 'cracks' between the chains of lightning would be so dangerous as well? If he wasn't in Dragonform, he definitely wouldn't be able to take it. Still…

Since Bebe was flying in front of him, once Bebe drew near and was struck by the sparks of lightning, Linley would've been able to react in time.

Linley turned to look towards the green-robed youth, saying gratefully, "Thank you, truly. Right. If I may ask, why are you in the Abyssal Mountain region?"

Linley couldn't be blamed for feeling puzzled, because this green-robed youth was just a God.

The danger level of the Netherworld was no less than that of the Infernal Realm. For Gods to roam about in the outside world was as good as courting death.

"I live right over there." The green-robed youth pointed with a laugh to a nearby location.

Linley followed the pointing finger, only to see that a few thousand meters away, there were a number of constructed courtyards, in front of which was a three-story building. The three-story building had some words in front of it: 'Abyssal Inn'!

“Someone opened an inn here?” Linley was rather astonished.

“Abyssal Inn?” Bebe said, puzzled. “Who opened this inn of yours? Someone is capable of opening an inn here in the wilderness…how formidable.” In such a desolate area, opening an inn was the equivalent of giving bandits a place to be robbed. Only a supremely powerful being would dare to open an inn in such a desolate area.

The green-robed youth said proudly, “Our inn belongs to Greenleaf Castle. Who would dare cause trouble here?”

“What’s Greenleaf Castle?” Bebe asked, and Linley looked at the green-robed youth in puzzlement as well.

The youth was startled, and looked towards Linley and Bebe as though he was looking at a pair of strange creatures. “Can it be that you haven’t even heard of Greenleaf Castle? You are both Highgods. You’ve spent so many years in the Netherworld; can it be that you’ve never interacted in the outside world?” The green-robed youth didn’t dare believe that these two had never heard of Greenleaf Castle.

“We came from the Infernal Realm.” Linley said.

“Oh, so that’s the case. I didn’t expect you two came from the Infernal Realm.” The green-robed youth said, now understanding.

“Let me tell you, then!” The green-robed youth said with a laugh. “Our inn is owned by Greenleaf Castle. Greenleaf Castle, in our Netherworld, is extremely famous! Our Greenleaf Castle has a total of three castle lords, and these three castle lords…are all powerful Sovereign’s Emissaries!”

Linley and Bebe, hearing this, couldn’t help but feel startled.

The three castle lords were all Sovereign’s Emissaries? No wonder Greenleaf Castle was so mighty.

“Where is your Greenleaf Castle located?” Linley asked. He had read that

book, which had some rough geographical information regarding the Netherworld, and which included descriptions of some of the more famous areas of the Netherworld. If Greenleaf Castle truly was so famous, why hadn't the book described it?

"I don't know."

The green-robed youth shook his head. "The exact location of Greenleaf Castle is one of the secrets of the Netherworld."

Linley laughed, then no longer discussed this subject, going to the main point. "Might I ask, do you know…how one would enter the Abyssal Mountain?"

"Enter the Abyssal Mountain? Oh…at the base of the Abyssal Mountain, roughly a thousand kilometers from here, there is a mountain entrance. All who enter the Abyssal Mountain must pass through this entrance." The green-robed youth laughed. As he lived here, he understood everything clearly.

"Oh. Thank you." Linley laughed, then prepared to leave with Bebe.

"Hey, wait a moment." The green-robed youth saw Linley was preparing to leave, and hurriedly called after him.

"Eh?" Linley and Bebe turned to look at him.

The green-robed youth said, "The two of you are in such a hurry. It seems as though you really don't know anything about the Abyssal Mountain at all! The Abyssal Mountain is very dangerous…"

"We know it is dangerous." Bebe snickered. "Danger is nothing to be afraid of."

The green-robed youth said resignedly, "I know the two of you are powerful, milords, but…the layer of fog clouds covering the Abyssal Mountain are extremely bizarre. However…on the night of each full moon,

the fog of the Abyssal Mountain will grow sparse and the danger will dramatically decrease as well. Generally speaking, those who enter the Abyssal Mountain will enter at that time!"

"The night of each full moon?" Linley did some mental calculations. "Five more days!"

"Milords, if you truly insist on entering, I advise you to do so after waiting five days. By then, the danger level will lessen as well. You can enter then." The green-robed youth said.

Linley and Bebe looked at each other, coming to a decision.

"Fine then. We'll wait five days. Then for now, we'll stay at your Abyssal Inn." Linley said with a laugh.

"Wonderful. I'll lead the two of you there." The green-robed youth said with a laugh. Actually, as soon as he had seen Linley and Bebe fly towards the Abyssal Mountain, he had immediately hurried over towards them…he had already used this sort of method to pull in customers on many occasions.

The Abyssal Inn was right next to the Abyssal Mountain.

The main door of the inn was situated on a grassy area, at the center of which was a pool of water. Once Linley and Bebe flew over, under the guidance of the green-robed youth, the first thing which drew Linley's attention was the young, pretty, red-haired girl who was fishing by the side of the pool. The pretty young lady even gave Linley and Bebe a glance, then continued fishing as though completely uninterested.

"How interesting." Linley chuckled.

"Hey, who is that lady over there?" Bebe asked the green-robed youth.

The green-robed youth immediately responded with a laugh. "The two of you need to be careful. That lady is the boss of our inn. She was sent over

by Greenleaf Castle. I don't know much about her either…but I hear that she, our boss, has an extremely close relationship with one of the three castle lords of Greenleaf Castle. The Boss is extremely powerful as well."

"Quin [Ke'win], don't be a blabbermouth!" A cold, sharp rebuke rang out.

"Ahhh! Sorry, Boss!" The youth bowed, then said with a laugh to Linley and Bebe, "Our boss is very cold towards outsiders, but she's very good to us."

While speaking, the green-robed youth led Linley and Bebe into the inn.

The main hall of the inn was extremely large, and it was divided into two parts. The first part was for welcoming guests, while the other part was the restaurant. The restaurant had tens of tables within it, and there were roughly ten or so people in the restaurant right now, drinking and chatting.

"Gentlemen, how long will you be here for?" A green-robed woman seated behind the counter.

"Five days." Bebe said.

"Ten thousand netherstones each day! Five days, fifty thousand netherstones." The green-robed woman said.

Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but to turn his head and look at her. Ten thousand netherstones a day? The netherstones of the Netherworld were comparable to the inkstones of the Infernal Realm. In the Infernal Realm, even the inns and hotels within the city would usually only charge a few hundred inkstones for an entire year. But this Abyssal Inn actually had a much higher price that was more than ten thousand times greater!

"This is robbery." Bebe said rather angrily.

The green-robed woman just laughed calmly. "That's the price of our inn. We can guarantee the safety of anyone who stays within our inn. Every year, quite a few experts will stay here…ordinary inns wouldn't dare

entertain such experts."

"Experts?" Linley lifted an eyebrow.

He noticed that the people chatting within the hotel were all Highgods. As for what level of power they were at, without fighting, it was hard to judge within a short period of time. But from what the green-robed woman was saying, these people should all be quite powerful.

"We only have inkstones." Linley said. Immediately, quite a few people drinking wine in the restaurant turned to look at them. Someone who only had inkstones had to have come from the Infernal Realm. To travel from the Infernal Realm to the Netherworld…this was enough to draw quite a bit of attention.

"Our Abyssal Inn welcomes guests from all planes." The green-haired woman wasn't surprised in the slightest. "The same price. Ten thousand inkstones a day…fifty thousand inkstones in total. Right. If you want to eat and drink, you have to pay extra."

Laughing Linley waved his hand, paying the fee.

"How is it that this place of yours has so many customers?" Bebe looked towards the woman, asking in puzzlement. "The Abyssal Mountain is in such a desolate location. Can it be that so many people have come here to enter the Abyssal Mountain and throw their lives away?" These words caused quite a few people in the restaurant to look at Bebe, with quite a few unkindly looks.

"Hmph, throwing our lives away? Aren't the two of you coming to 'throw your lives away' as well?" A cold voice rang from nearby, within the restaurant.

Linley glanced calmly at the speaker as well.

"Bebe, stop causing trouble." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Although he didn't fear them, Linley didn't want to cause trouble either.

"You had all best remember that here in our Abyssal Inn, you are not to fight." The green-robed woman said.

"Don't worry." Linley laughed as he spoke.

And then, Linley led Bebe into a corner of the restaurant and sat down. Immediately, a waiter came to greet him and brought over a menu. "These prices are extraordinarily high." Bebe muttered. Still, Linley and Bebe were mentally prepared. They casually ordered a few dishes and two bottles of fine wine, with the cost being near ten thousand inkstones.

"Boss, why do you think these people are here? Can it be that they are like us, here to meet the Sovereign?" Bebe sent mentally. He didn't understand why these experts had come.

"Sovereign? There's not many who know that the Abyssal Mountain has a Sovereign here." Linley sent back.

He had met with three Lord Prefects after coming to the Infernal Realm, one of whom hadn't known at all that the Abyssal Mountain held a Sovereign. And Sayant had said…that he head only learned it from his own Sovereign. Clearly, the fact that Abyssal Mountain held a Sovereign was a secret.

"Don't worry about other people's business." Linley laughed calmly.

Linley was in quite a good mood after arriving here. Linley and Bebe began to drink the fine wine and eating while chatting leisurely.

"Motherf*cker, even people from the Infernal Realm have come over here to fight over the Abyssal Fruit!" A grumbling, unhappy voice rang out from another side of the restaurant, and the words attracted the attention of Linley and Bebe.

"Abyssal Fruit?" Bebe looked towards Linley. "Boss, do you know what the

Abyssal Fruit is?"

"No idea. Never heard of it." Linley shook his head, puzzled.

Because this wasn't a secret, Linley and Bebe continued to chat.

"Friends from the Infernal Realm, you've come for the sake of the Abyssal Fruit, and yet you won't admit to it? This is a bit too laughable. You've come all the way from the Infernal Realm to our Netherworld and now are at the Abyssal Mountain. If it isn't for the sake of the Abyssal Fruit, what is it for?" A calm voice rang out from nearby.

Linley turned to look. The speaker was a silver-haired, seemingly quite soft and feminine looking youth.

"Hey, what's so amazing about the Abyssal Fruit? Tell me about it." Bebe said, raising an eyebrow.

Quite a few of the other guests in the restaurant gave Bebe an unfriendly look. None of them said anything.

"The Abyssal Fruit is a legendary treasure." A cold, fierce voice rang out. The red-haired woman who had been fishing walked in, carrying her fishing rod in one hand and a bucket in another. "It is a priceless treasure which only the Abyssal Mountain has. Anyone who acquires and eats an Abyssal Fruit will not only become a supreme expert of the Netherworld, this person will also…be met by a Sovereign and become the Sovereign's Emissary!"

Linley's eyes turned round upon hearing this.

Someone who acquired and ate the Abyssal Fruit would become a Sovereign's Emissary?

"Truly?" Bebe didn't quite believe it.

"Of course it's true."

The pretty red-haired lady cast her cold gaze across Linley and Bebe. “Over the course of countless years, three Abyssal Fruit have appeared here, in the Abyssal Mountain. If this news was false…why would there always be groups of people coming here to try their luck?” As she spoke, she glanced at the people in the restaurant. And then, the red-haired beauty headed upstairs, her footsteps ringing out against the stairs.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances, still unable to believe it.

“Friends from the Infernal Realm, can it be that you truly don’t know that the three castle lords of Greenleaf Castle were the three lucky fellows who acquired Abyssal Fruits? Upon eating an Abyssal Fruit, one’s power will grow rapidly and one will become a supreme expert on par with a Lord Prefect. In addition, one will have a Sovereign artifact bestowed upon them and become a Sovereign’s Emissary!” The soft, feminine-looking youth laughed coldly as he glanced at them. “If you want the Abyssal Fruit, no need to pretend you don’t know what it is.”

Bebe couldn’t help but grow angry.

“Bebe, drink.” Linley said with a calm laugh, while sending mentally to Bebe, “Bebe, there’s no need to waste your time on these people.”

Linley and Bebe, in truth, had never heard of the Abyssal Fruit. Still, Linley and Bebe weren’t too interested in it either. Since only three had appeared in countless years…they clearly were far too rare. But of course, the allure of the Abyssal Fruit was quite great, as it allowed one’s power to dramatically increase and even become a Sovereign’s Emissary.

Suddenly…

Footsteps rang out, and someone entered from outside.

Linley turned to look. “Him?”

The person who had come wore a long black robe and had long violet hair. This was the person whom Linley and Bebe had seen on their journey here

to the Abyssal Mountain; the victor of the battle between those two supreme experts who had fought high up in the air.

Chapter 18, The Young Red-Haired Lady

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 18, The Young Red-Haired Lady

The black-robed, violet-haired youth had a calm look on his face. He swept the others in the restaurant with his gaze, then directly paid the fee at the service counter and followed the waiter to his room.

“More and more intriguing.” Linley’s face was all smiles. Nursing his cup of wine, he took a small sip. “Bebe, this Abyssal Fruit does seem to be rather enticing to people.” While chatting, Linley voluntarily set up his Godrealm, preventing others from hearing the conversation between himself and Bebe.

Otherwise, these words would definitely irritate the others.

“All of them dream of suddenly increasing in power, acquiring a Sovereign artifact, and becoming a Sovereign’s Emissary, I suppose.” Bebe snorted. “I don’t understand it. What exactly is this Abyssal Fruit, anyhow? Why is it that if you eat it, you’ll increase in power so much, and even be granted an audience by a Sovereign and become an Emissary? I don’t get it. I don’t get it!”

“I don’t get it either.” Linley shook his head. But then, Linley suddenly thought of something…his black stone!

The black stone he had acquired in the Amethyst Mountains!

“That single precious black stone caused my power to advance greatly. If I didn’t have the ‘black stone’, given that I am a Highgod who has completely fused three profound mysteries, as well as possess the Coiling Dragon ring and have the innate divine ability ‘Dragon Roar’, I would at most be at the level of ordinary Seven Star Fiends. But with the black stone…I’m able to easily kill Seven Star Fiends.”

Linley began to wonder whether or not the Abyssal Fruit was something similar to his own ‘black stone’.

“It is quite possible!”

“Over the passage of countless years, there have only been three Abyssal Fruit.” Linley had come to a conclusion regarding this.

Linley and Bebe finished their meal in the restaurant, then left and entered their own reserved residences as well.

Life in the hotel was very peaceful. In the blink of an eye, five days had passed. On the fifth day, early in the morning, Linley and Bebe made a rare trip to the restaurant and ordered some dishes as well as two bottles of wine. Linley and Bebe sought out an empty corner of the restaurant, sat down, then chatted while eating, waiting for night to come.

“Boss, there’s quite a few people in the room.” Bebe swept the room with his gaze.

“Everyone is preparing to enter the Abyssal Mountain tonight, so they all came today.” Linley also noticed that many people were in the room today, more than thirty in total. In addition, every single person present was a Highgod. As for what level of Highgod, that was hard to say.

Linley had to sigh in amazement at how enticing the Abyssal Fruit was to people.

“However, we are different from them.” Linley sent mentally. “Reaching the peak of the Abyssal Mountain and meeting with the Sovereign is our goal.” Abyssal Fruit? It held no interest for Linley. Although it was a treasure, there had only been three found in countless years. One could imagine how hard it was to acquire one.

“Creak…” A nearby seat was pulled aside, and the black-robed, violet-haired youth sat down.

Linley glanced sideways at the black-robed, violet-haired youth who was only four or five meters away from him. “Him again!”

This youth only ordered some wine and nothing else. He sat there alone, quietly drinking. Although he just sat there, Linley had the feeling…that although this person was like a glacier, if someone were to anger him, however, he would explode like a volcano.

“Big Sis, we have a guest.” The green-robed youth ran in, and behind him was a muscular youth with a single, cyclopean eye. The muscular youth strode in, sweeping the group of people in the room casually with his single eye.

But when he did so!

“Huh?” The youth’s face suddenly sank, and a two meter long blade suddenly appeared in his hands, brimming with fiery flames.

“Swish!”

From the counter to the restaurant was a distance of twenty meters. The muscular cyclopean youth left behind only a fiery red shadow as he swept forward, that blade of his chopping down directly at the head of the black-robed, violet-haired youth. Wherever the blade passed, tears in space could be seen.

This sudden attack caused everyone else in the restaurant to feel startled.

“Hmph!” The black-robed youth, who had been drinking his wine, let out a low snort. He suddenly threw out the winecup in his hand, and that tiny winecup, wreathed in an electric light and howling desolately through the air, flew out and smashed directly against the edge of the blade. With a low, shuddering sound…

The winecup transformed into dust.

As for the black-robed youth, he disappeared, transforming into a bolt of

lightning and retreating backwards at high speed.

“Halt!” The fee-collecting green-robed lady at the counter shouted angrily.

But the cyclopean youth didn’t pay her any mind. Wielding his blade, he charged into the skies like an ascendant divine dragon, continuing to pursue and attack the violet-haired youth. Because he was too fast, cracks in space began to appear, and the earth itself trembled. These ripples caused the tables, chairs, winecups, and plates touched by it to transform into dust.

“You are looking for death!”

A low, gravelly voice echoed in the restaurant, and a devilish electric light flashed.

“Bang!” The fiery red shadow and the electric shadow collided within the restaurant.

“Whoosh!” The two shadows instantly exploded backwards, both retreating!

The fiery red figure was just about to smash into the counter, but the green-robed woman behind the counter, her face like ice, stretched out with that ‘weak’, soft right hand of hers. The entire arm suddenly turned jade-green, and almost as translucent as jade as well. The jade-green hand slapped against the back of the fiery red figure.

“Bang!” The explosively retreating fiery red figure was brought to a sudden halt by that palm slap.

As for that electric figure, when it retreated, it was clearly being sent flying towards Linley and Bebe. Linley frowned. He continued to nurse his wine, but an earthen yellow aura suddenly emanated from his body, forming a hemisphere that extended only as far as was necessary to protect himself and Bebe.

Blackstone Space – Repulsive Force!

The electric figure, as soon as it fell into the Blackstone Space, was pushed outwards by that astonishingly strong repulsive force. His body swayed for a moment, and then he found his bearings. The violet-haired youth, his body wreathed in lightning, turned to glance at Linley, his eyes filled with surprise and ardor.

“So powerful!” A desire for battle had actually awoken in the heart of this violet-haired youth.

“You dare fight in our Abyssal Inn. How truly audacious of you two.” An angry roar rang out, and the green-robed woman walked out from behind the counter, staring angrily at the two combatants. However, the two combatants were staring at each other, not paying any attention to that green-robed woman.”

“Bloan [Bu’long]!” The cyclopean youth stared angrily at the violet-haired youth. “What a coincidence for us to meet here!”

“You are still too weak. Come find me when you grow stronger.” The violet-haired youth said emotionlessly. And then, the violet-haired youth gave the nearby Linley a sidelong glance, his cold eyes filled with a powerful desire for battle. The black-robed youth clearly had noticed Linley’s power, and wanted to have a tussle with Linley.

As for the other Highgods in the restaurant, they just watched this all happen in astonishment.

“How powerful.” These people were all stunned.

The cyclopean youth. The violet-haired youth. The green-robed woman. Linley. In that split second, they had all revealed a hint of their power. That hint, however, was already enough to make these people quail.

“The two of you!” The green-haired woman’s face seemed to be covered with frost. “You are going too far!”

“Swoosh!”

The green-haired woman charged directly towards the cyclopean youth, while at the same time, green palm shadows appeared, seeming to cover the sky, each of them seeing so soft and weak. The cyclopean youth, with a growl, swung his blade in a vicious chop against the green-robed woman, a merciless chop!

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

When those green palm blurs collided against the blade, that blade which was enough to create tears in space seemed to have been trapped and surrounded by many of them while still other palm blurs came smashing down towards the chest of that cyclopean youth. “Crunch!” The cyclopean youth’s chest caved in, and he spewed out a large mouthful of blood as he was sent flying backwards.

This scene caused the entire restaurant to fall silent.

“Oh!” Linley’s eyes lit up. “An expert of water!”

This green-robed lady, who collected fees for the Abyssal Inn, was actually an expert who was very nearly at the Seven Star Fiend level of power.

“And you!” The green-robed woman turned to stare at the black-robed youth. “I’m going to ask you to leave as well!” The green-robed woman thrust out her hand, and a jade-green whip appeared, which instantly transformed into countless willowy branches, sweeping and swirling towards the black-robed, violet-haired youth.

The violet-haired youth’s eyes lit up.

“Wonderful!” An explosive shout, followed by a dazzling bright violet electric light. A devilish sword shadow chopped directly through the countless willowy branches, then continued to chop down towards the green-robed woman.

“Bang!” Her many willowy branches shattered, the green-robed woman had to retreat.

“You aren’t a match for me yet.” The black-robed youth said arrogantly.

“Boss, this fellow is quite powerful.” Bebe sent mentally in praise, while Linley nodded slightly as well. “His lightning-type swordplay is quite devilish, very similar to my own Bloodviolet.”

Right at this moment…

“Tap, tap…”

The sound of footsteps from the stairs rang out. The fishing pole carrying, bucket-holding red-haired beauty walked down the stairs, her eyebrows creased in a frown. The red-haired beauty gave the black-robed, violet-haired youth a cold look. “What’s this all about?”

“Boss!” The green-haired woman immediately bowed slightly. “This violet-haired youth and the person outside were fighting. However, this violet-haired youth is very strong, slightly stronger than me. I’m not able to handle him.”

“Tap, tap…”

Still carrying her fishing pole, the red-haired beauty walked towards the violet-haired youth, a hint of a smile on her face. “You dare fight in my inn? You really are audacious! There’s no need for you to pay compensation for these things, but…I still need to give you a bit of a punishment.” The beauty said, while the violet-haired youth just smiled coldly.

“Swish!”

The red-haired woman suddenly whipped out her fishing pole, which arced bizarrely through the air towards the violet-haired youth.

“Hmph!” An icy snort. The violet-haired youth’s body suddenly shot

forward, while that electric longsword in his hands arced out, piercing through the air and causing space to slightly crack apart.

“Rumble…” In the instant when the electric longsword and the fishing pole collided, the electric longsword actually slid to one side, while the violet-haired youth’s own body flew forward with it uncontrollably. This sliding of his longsword, however, caused it to slide towards the nearby guests who were drinking wine and watching this scene.

These people, frightened, hurriedly dodged, but the longsword was too fast. This off-base slash caused ripples of power to strike the guests within ten or so meters, including Linley’s group. The other Highgods all dodged, but Linley did not, because…

“Crunch!” A palm suddenly stretched out, clamping onto the electric sword’s blade.

The violet-haired youth was stunned, while the red-haired beauty looked over in amazement as well.

Bebe, gripping the electric longsword in his right hand, said in a discontented manner, “Hey, we aren’t here in this inn to watch you fight. If you want to fight, then fight, but don’t interfere with me and my Boss in drinking wine!” As he spoke, he casually tossed the electric longsword aside. This scene caused everyone in the room to be stunned.

To use one’s hand to snatch the sword of a Seven Star Fiend who was attacking with it?

Linley just shook his head and laughed. Even in Dragonform, if he were to use his hand to snatch or black the longsword, he would have been injured. He couldn’t have acted as Bebe had, and Bebe’s hand was completely uninjured.

“Oh…formidable.” The red-haired beauty laughed. “Well-spoken. We shouldn’t disrupt you.”

As she spoke, the red-haired beauty once more swung out with her fishing pole, which sent out a fishing line which constantly danced in the air. The strange thing was…with each twirl of the fishing line, it was as though a wave of power was emanating from it, forming a strange vortex which surrounded the violet-haired youth.

Linley and Bebe's faces instantly changed.

"A supreme expert! A supreme expert of water!" Linley was stunned.

The swirling of the fishing line was causing space itself to form into a vortex. In an instant, Linley could sense countless rays of invisible spatial matter swirl about in a vortex like a dense fishing net, surrounding the violet-haired youth. The violet-haired youth was the fish!

Even though he frantically struggled, those countless strands of space surrounding him grew tighter and tighter!

In but the blink of an eye…

The 'fishnet' had completely bound up the violet-haired youth, and it seemed to shine with a green light. The violet-haired youth was completely immobilized, and his eyes were filled with amazement. He stared at the red-haired beauty in disbelief. "You? Who are you?" The youth had the power of a Seven Star Fiend, but compared with this red-haired beauty, he was far weaker.

"There's no way you are a member of Greenleaf Castle. You…right…you must be…one of the castle lords of Greenleaf Castle!" The violet-haired youth said hurriedly.

Chapter 19 – Warning, Snakes and Trees!

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 19, Warning – Snakes and Trees!

Everyone in the restaurant had fallen silent. The technique displayed by the red-haired woman had stunned them all. The dancing fishing line had seemed to take control of the surrounding space, forming countless vortexes that transformed into a spatial fishnet. This was simply too bizarre!

“So powerful!” The Highgods in the restaurant all understood why it was proclaimed…that nobody was permitted to fight within this inn.

“Hmph!” The violet-haired youth let out an angry snort. His entire body flashed with explosive electric light, while he himself transformed into a bolt of lightning, seeking to escape from this fishnet. But the fishing line which bound him flashed with green light, completely surrounding and sealing off this violet-haired youth’s movements. No matter how he struggled, he wasn’t able to escape!”

“Causing trouble in MY inn? You really are audacious.” The red-haired beauty said with a cold snort. “There’s no need for you to pay me for the things you broke, but you’ll have to serve as my fishbait.”

As she spoke, the red-haired woman lifted up the fishing pole, with the violet-haired youth trundled up at the other end of the fishing line. And, just like that, the red-haired woman walked out of the inn, towards that grassy area. Once she arrived by the side of the pool, with a flick of the pole and a ‘plonk’ sound, the violet-haired youth was sent flying into the water of the pool.

“He really is being used as fishbait.” Bebe said in surprise. “Boss, that woman…hey, Boss!”

At this moment, Linley was currently processing the astonishing scene he had just seen. The waves formed by the fishing line, which had twisted into

countless swirling vortexes in a never-ending stream. Linley had trained for so many years in the Elemental Laws of Water. He had reached the bottleneck in the sixth Profound Mystery, ‘Circular Softness’, and had been unable to break through.

The Profound Mystery of Circular Softness was one of the easier profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of Water to begin training in, but it was hard to master.

Water…was extremely soft!

Something as soft and gentle as a fishing line was capable of causing space itself to move like a wave of water, forming countless spatial lines that entangled a person like a spatial fishing net, trundling them up. This sort of technique required a person to have reached a terrifying level of power in the Elemental Laws of Water. And when Linley saw this, he suddenly understood something.

He suddenly gained an insight!

“Rumble…”

A surge of natural Law ripples descended into the hotel, and a large amount of water-type elemental essence gathered in the air above Linley, forming into a watery fog. A terrifying presence descended. This awe-inspiring presence was lofty and noble. Faced with this presence, everyone would choose to submit to it.

Within Linley’s body. Suddenly, Linley’s divine water clone flew out…that ‘green-haired Linley’.

“Boss, you made a breakthrough?” Bebe was delighted.

By the pool outside the hotel, the red-haired beauty who was currently using a person as fishing bait frowned, turning to glance towards the restaurant in surprise. “Hey? After seeing that technique of mine, he was able to make a breakthrough? This person’s comprehension abilities is quite

astonishing." At the same time, the red-haired woman gave the fishing pole a flick, causing the 'fishbait' to be whisked out and tossed to one side.

The violet-haired youth rolled on the ground, then immediately stood up.

"Enough. I'm not in the mood to punish you!" The red-haired beauty said coldly. "Remember. You had best not cause trouble in my inn. This time, I'll spare you, but if there is a second time…I will just kill you!"

The black-robed, violet-haired youth looked at her silently, then walked to a nearby area, closed his eyes, then sat down and began to meditate.

As for the red-haired woman, she put down the fishing pole, standing up and heading towards the inn.

Within the inn, the waiters were currently cleaning up. Quite a few Highgods in the restaurant were chatting amongst themselves, discussing either the red-haired woman, Linley, or the violet-haired youth.

"It seems we have no chance this time. Even if we are lucky and the Abyssal Fruit appears, we won't be able to overcome them."

"Those two from the Infernal Realm are truly strong."

"Let's not give up. The insides of the Abyssal Mountain are shrouded in fog, and everyone will be spread around searching. Just because a person is strong doesn't mean that this person will acquire the Abyssal Fruit! Perhaps we will be lucky and be the ones to acquire it instead."

Those people, after seeing how strong Linley and the violet-haired youth were, knew they wouldn't be able to out-fight them. They still didn't wish to give up, however. In searching for the Abyssal Fruit, strength was one part of it, but luck was very important as well. In countless years, only three Abyssal Fruit had ever emerged. Although their chances of acquiring it was low, they still wanted to give it a try.

If they didn't even try, they would remain ordinary Highgods in the vast

Netherworld.

But if they gave it a try, perhaps they might suddenly gain in power and become Sovereign's Emissaries, and stand at the peak of the Netherworld.

"Boss, congratulations." Bebe happily raised his goblet while setting up his Godrealm, preventing others from hearing their conversation.

"It seems my luck is excellent." Linley was all smiles. "My divine water clone actually reached the Highgod level at a time like this. It seems as though our visit to the Abyssal Mountain tonight will be a successful one!"

"Right, it definitely will be a successful one!" Bebe said as well.

To enter the Abyssal Mountain and to see the Sovereign! This was indeed too difficult. Even the likes of Linley and Bebe felt worried.

"Eh?" Linley turned to look.

He saw the red-haired beauty walk towards his table, then pull out a chair and sit down at their table. The red-haired woman pulled out a goblet, pouring herself a glass with Linley's wine. Not saying a single word, she drained it.

Linley and Bebe couldn't help but look at the red-haired woman, puzzled.

"Kid." The red-haired woman looked at Linley, her lips curving upwards. "You just became a Highgod in water. Shouldn't you thank me?"

"Right." Linley laughed, raising his own winecup. "I do indeed need to thank you. Otherwise, who knows how long it would have been before I made a breakthrough?"

"Boss, what does this woman intend?" Bebe sent mentally, puzzled. Linley was puzzled as well, and he sent back, "Bebe, I also have the feeling that this woman is very weird. An expert who seems to be at the level of power of an Asura of the Infernal Realm is actually here running an inn? This

really is unfathomable."

The red-haired woman drained a few more cups of wine, tilting her head back.

"The two of you are here for Abyssal Fruit as well?" The red-haired woman laughed calmly. "From the power you revealed, you two are at least at the Seven Star Fiend level of power, or perhaps even stronger. It seems to me as though the two of you don't need this sort of lucky break or the Abyssal Fruit, right? The power you already wield is already enough to allow you to become heroic, renowned figures in either the Netherworld or the Infernal Realm.

"Nobody ever complains about being too strong." Linley laughed calmly.

Linley didn't wish to let others know that he wanted to meet a Sovereign.

"Oh, that's true." The red-haired woman nodded. "But let me give you some advice. It's best if you don't enter the Abyssal Mountain."

"Why is that? Because it is dangerous inside?" Linley asked.

The red-haired woman laughed gently. "It is indeed dangerous! Only three Abyssal Fruit has ever appeared in the Netherworld. Countless billions of years will pass between each fruit. These people who have come in search for it…" The red-haired woman glanced sideways at the others. "These are all people whose lives in the Netherworld are not to their satisfaction, and so they have come to try their luck. But trying one's luck comes with a cost! Even someone as strong as you two, in the Abyssal Mountain, might lose your lives if you aren't careful!"

Linley couldn't help but narrow his eyes.

"The power you wield is more than enough to allow you to roam about and dominate the Netherworld. Why risk your lives for a single Abyssal Fruit that only appears once in countless years?" The red-haired youth said.

Linley nodded.

Although ordinary Highgods, Five Star Fiends, and Six Star Fiends were powerful, it was impossible for them to stand at par with the peak experts of the Netherworld. These people would thus risk their lives and hope that their destinies would be changed by it. But for experts who were nearly at the Asura level, it wasn't worth it. Their lives were precious!

"We are willing to go risk it." Bebe just laughed. "I'm very curious as to what is so dangerous about this Abyssal Mountain."

"I'm just giving you some advice. It's none of my business whether or not you go in and whether or not you die." The red-haired woman laughed calmly. "Only, far, far too many people have gone into the Abyssal Mountain without being able to come out!"

"Can you tell me what is so dangerous about the Abyssal Mountain?" Linley asked.

Since this young woman owned and operated an inn next to it, and seemed to be connected to the three castle lords of Greenleaf Castle, and perhaps was one of them…she definitely knew things about the situation in the Abyssal Mountain.

"Why should I tell you?" The red-haired woman asked.

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

The red-haired woman giggled as she stood up. "The higher up you go in traversing the tri-colored fogs of the Abyssal Mountain, the more dangerous it is! Remember. Beware the snakes, and the trees!" After speaking, the red-haired woman turned and left, leaving behind Linley and Bebe, both of whom were befuddled.

Linley had been prepared for the higher parts of the Abyssal Mountain to be dangerous.

But…

“Snakes? Trees?” Bebe muttered. “Of course there’s going to be trees in mountain forests. Can it be that we need to beware every single tree? Then how are we supposed to go up the mountain?”

“Don’t worry about it. Let’s just remember to be wary regarding ‘snakes’ and ‘trees’. Still, we can’t be incautious about other things either.” Linley said after reflecting. “That woman might know many things about the Abyssal Mountain, but she doesn’t necessarily know everything about all the dangers of the Abyssal Mountain.”

The night of the full moon. An eerie red moon, as round as a plate, hung there in the skies. Under the light of the moon, the Abyssal Mountain, always crackling with faint electric light, seemed to have a red aura emanating from it as well.

The northern base of the Abyssal Mountain.

The vast, endless chains of lightning fell down from the peak of the mountain like waterfalls. At the northern base of the mountain, there was an enormous gate that was ten meters long, and the gate was covered in carved runes as well. Large amounts of electricity crackled and flowed around the mountain gate, but the gate itself didn’t have any electricity present.

Tens of figures were at the gate.

“This is the only entrance.” Bebe murmured. “I really want to enter from other areas and see how powerful that lightning is, exactly.”

“It’s always best to be careful.” Linley raised his head as well.

The entire mountain was covered in the tri-colored fog, but the density of the fog was now a bit lower.

“My four brothers!” Next to them, five Highgods were gathered together, one of whom had a very solemn look on his face. “For many years, we’ve

lived a dazed, blurred life…let's go in and give it our best shot. At worst, we might just fail and die! But if we succeed…the brother who succeeds has to help the others take care of their matters."

"Don't worry, Elder Brother."

Those people all had steely, resolved looks in their eyes. They stepped forward, passing through the gate and entering the Abyssal Mountain.

"They are just throwing their lives away!" An effeminate, soft voice rang out.

The speaker was the silver-haired, effeminate man. "They think they are worthy of acquiring the Abyssal Fruit?" The silver-haired man entered the Abyssal Mountain as well. The other Highgods were speaking to each other as well, and they all entered the Abyssal Mountain. Those who dared to enter it…had already decided to risk their lives for it.

"Abyssal Fruit?" The black-robed, violet-haired youth entered as well.

"Boom!" Linley instantly Dragonformed. Azure-golden draconic scales covered his entire body, and savage spikes appeared on his back, forehead, and other areas. With a flip of his hand, a nearly translucent longsword appeared as well. "Let's go, Bebe." Linley and Bebe entered the Abyssal Mountain.

Linley's sudden Dragonforming badly startled the others.

"So this person was concealing his strength!" Those people felt their hearts quail.

"That sword seems to be a treasure as well."

Although the other Highgods were stunned, they still passed through the gate.

Moments later, only two people were left outside the gate; the red-haired

beauty and the green-robed woman.

“Boss, those two from the Infernal Realm really are powerful.” The green-robed woman said.

The red-haired beauty had a hint of a smile at the corner of her lips. “If my guess is correct, that weapon from the Azure Dragon clansman should be a godspark weapon made by Beirut! It really is extremely rare to see such a large godspark weapon. The relationship between this youth and Beirut is definitely quite special. As for that youngster, he was able to grab the sword of a Seven Star Fiend with his bare hands without suffering any wounds at all, but his body doesn’t have any Sovereign artifact’s aura…as I see it, he most likely is that legendary successor to Beirut, the second Godeater Rat.”

“Oh. Let’s go back.” The red-haired woman turned and left.

“Boss, how many of them do you think will make it out alive?” The green-robed woman asked.

“Based on past precedence…the strength of this group isn’t bad. Several of them should be able to return. But if they get too greedy and attempt to go to the peak of the Abyssal Mountain? Quite possibly, not a single one of them!” The red-haired beauty said calmly. “Don’t worry about them. The Netherworld is filled with people. So what if a group of people die?”

The green-haired woman followed the red-haired woman, heading back to the hotel.

Chapter 20 – Lost

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 20, Lost

As soon as Linley entered the Abyssal Mountain, he felt a heart-palpitating presence spread out from it.

“What a powerful presence!” Linley’s face turned solemn. “Even in the Infernal Realm, when I faced the Bloodridge Sovereign, I didn’t feel such a terrifying pressure!” After having been pressured by this presence as soon as he entered the Abyssal Mountain, Linley had a feeling…as though he had returned to his childhood years in Wushan township, and was once more facing that magical beast, the ‘Velocidragon’ for the first time. It was that sort of terror and shock that he now felt.

His heart was shaking! This sense of pressure pressed down on his soul!

“Boss, I can’t even spread my divine sense out.” Bebe turned to look at Linley. “This pressure is too powerful, even more powerful than that of the Bloodridge Sovereign.”

“That’s because when the Bloodridge Sovereign appeared, it was just an energy construct, rather than his true form.” Linley carefully inspected his surroundings.

Behind him was the Abyssal Mountain gate. For now, none of the Highgods who had entered dare go any deeper into the mountain, as they were all carefully inspecting and getting accustomed to their new surroundings. The Abyssal Mountain was filled with danger. Even Seven Star Fiend level experts who entered might perish. Such a dangerous area…how could any of them dare to be incautious?

“Within the Abyssal Mountains, even gravity is gone. It is as though this place is completely cut off from the outside world.” Linley just hovered there.

“This white fog can even cause people to go dizzy. However, for myself and Bebe, the influence is negligible.” Linley was still constantly weighing his surroundings.

There were many trees, bushes, and other types of vegetation growing atop the Abyssal Mountain, which was completely covered by the white fog. Outside of the white fog was the ‘Heaven-Earth Chains’. The power of the endless chains of lightning was something which Linley had heard of long ago. Linley didn’t want to touch them or to personally experience how powerful that lightning was.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s body sank down, and he descended until he stood atop the mountain stone.

“Bebe, within the Abyssal Mountain region, let’s advance while on the ground.” Linley sent mentally, speaking solemnly. “If we fly, the white fog will completely block our field of vision. If we aren’t careful, we might run into the lightning chains. That would be terrible.”

“I rather want to give them a try.” Bebe laughed, but he still descended until he stood atop the mountain stone as well.

“Remember, beware the snakes and the trees!” Linley sent, while at the same time, he stared vigilantly at the trees nearby. The trees who were living in this unique environment of the Abyssal Mountain were all fairly short, and had unusual shapes as well. “Perhaps these trees are capable of attacking people.”

Linley didn’t dare to be incautious.

“Don’t worry.” Bebe looked at the nearby trees as well. “These trees won’t be able to hurt me.”

The other Highgods had gotten a good sense of their surroundings by now as well, and they all began to head out.

“Let’s move out.” Linley gave the order.

Linley and Bebe, sticking close to the surface of the Abyssal Mountain, began to fly forwards. However, they didn’t dare to fly too quickly…for fear that the trees might suddenly attack them mid-journey. In addition, Linley had yet to see a single ‘snake’ which the red-haired woman had warned him about.

Moments later…

“Swish!” Linley and Bebe came to a halt, puzzlement in their eyes.

“Boss, which direction should we advance towards?” Bebe stared around himself.

“This damn place.” Linley was frustrated as well.

Linley was surrounded on all four sides by endless fog. Despite Linley and Bebe’s ocular prowess, they were at most able to see to a distance of a few dozen meters. In addition, given the terrifying pressure emanating from the Abyssal Mountain, they weren’t able to make their divine sense leave their body. And given that the Abyssal Mountain had no gravity within its borders…

These things combined to make it impossible to determine a direction!

Although the mountain did have slopes and inclines, given that there was no gravity at all, even though Linley and Bebe might be standing atop the mountain they wouldn’t be sure which direction they were standing. The trees that grew in this gravity-less region also grew in strange, distorted directions.

“It’s impossible to even tell directions clearly within this Abyssal Mountain. There’s no way to tell which way is ‘up’ the mountain and which way is ‘down’!” Linley carefully inspected the surroundings, but everywhere around him were those bizarrely shaped trees and some ordinary plants. As well as that thick, endless white fog…

Bebe had a sour look on his face. “All I know is that if we leave the surface of the mountain and fly upwards, we’ll encounter those lightning chains. As for front, back, left, right…I have no idea where to go.”

Linley and Bebe had encountered the first difficult trial of the Abyssal Mountain…

The loss of a sense of direction!

“Forget it. Let’s just move forward.” Linley gritted his teeth. “The white fog only extends for a few hundred thousand meters, a distance of less than a thousand kilometers. We’ll just charge forward blindly…and perhaps we’ll be able to charge out.” By now, the only option left to them was a foolish method such as thing; by relying on their speed to burst out of it.

“Right.” Bebe said in approval.

The two immediately began to advance in the direction they considered ‘forward’!

But Linley and Bebe didn’t dare to run forward at full speed. They still had to be vigilant of the nearby trees, as well as the heretofore unseen ‘snakes’. Thus, of course they moved a bit slower.

“Someone’s there!” Bebe sent mentally.

Linley and Bebe immediately came to a halt. From afar, there was a blurry figure in the white fog, which was also drawing closer to their direction. Only now did Linley and Bebe clearly recognize who this person was; it was the black-robed, violet-haired youth. He, too, had noticed Linley and Bebe, but with a low snort, he simply continued to move forward.

Suddenly…

“CRACK!”

A bolt of lightning suddenly descended from the heavens, smashing directly against a large tree that was only ten meters or so away from Linley. The tree was instantly transformed into ashes.

“What’s going on?” Bebe was badly startled.

“You two, be careful!” The violet-haired youth, who by now was fairly close, said in a cold voice. “Within the Abyssal Mountain, lightning will occasionally descend from on high. This lightning is the lightning contained within the Heaven-Earth Chains, and the power of it is exceedingly great! When flying forward, best pay attention to what is going on above you. If you are struck…hmph…”

His voice slowly grew distant, and then faded away.

The reason why the Heaven-Earth Chains were always filled with endless amounts of electric power was because the Heaven-Earth Chains were constantly absorbing the natural surrounding lightning-type elemental essence to nourish itself. But once the Heaven-Earth Chains absorbed a certain amount of lightning-type elemental essence, it would begin to randomly cast down bolts of lightning as some energy began to leak out.

This was why…

Even if you didn’t go touch the Heaven-Earth Chains, sometimes, the Heaven-Earth Chains would still strike you.

Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but raise their heads, staring upwards.

“This damn place.” Bebe gritted his teeth. “This is ridiculous. Lightning bolts that will suddenly descend for no reason? If we aren’t careful and end up getting hit, that would have been such an unfair death.”

“Anyone who dares to enter the Abyssal Mountains has to be mentally prepared for death.” Linley laughed calmly. “Let’s go. Let’s continue to move forward.”

Both Linley's group and the other groups which entered the Abyssal Mountain knew that since they had chosen to enter the Abyssal Mountain… if they died, they couldn't blame others. The Abyssal Mountain was the residence of the mightiest of the seven Sovereigns of the Netherworld, the Chief Sovereign of Death. How could it be a place where others could easily enter?

Linley and Bebe felt as though their path forward was a straight line.

After advancing for a long time…

"Hmm…we haven't reached an end yet?" Bebe said, puzzled. "We should've advanced for more than a thousand kilometers by now."

"It seems as though we went the wrong way." Linley said.

There were no other possibilities. If they had gone the right way, they would've left the region of white fog long ago.

In an ordinary place, Linley and Bebe would've been able to walk out of it by now, even if their eyes were closed. But the Abyssal Mountain constantly radiated that terrifying pressure, and the white fog was somewhat impacting their souls. Thus, Linley and Bebe's senses of direction were inaccurate, and so, unknowingly, they had gone off-track and begun to move in a circular manner as opposed a straight one.

"Forget it. Let's just keep going forward." Bebe said.

Linley nodded as well, and the two immediately advanced deeper into the white fog. On the way over, Linley still didn't discover any 'trees' or 'snakes' that were able to attack. Aside from the occasional bolts of lightning that descended down and the disorienting loss of direction, the Abyssal Mountain didn't see to hold any other dangers.

"Hm. The white fog is growing sparse." Linley was immediately excited.

The tri-colored fog clouds of the Abyssal Mountain represented that the

mountain was divided into three regions. The borders of the three regions were areas with fairly sparse fog. The sparseness of the fog here was an indication that they had reached the borders!

“We made it!” Bebe said with surprise and delight, but then Bebe’s expression changed. “How can this be?!”

Linley and Bebe walked out of the white fog, but within their field of vision, the Heaven-Earth Chains once more appeared. The thick chains of lightning had that invisible membrane between them, and through the membrane, Linley could see that on the opposite side…was the vast, endless plains.

“We…returned to the base of the mountain?” Linley couldn’t help but laugh bitterly.

After entering the mountain through the gate, they had blindly wandered for so long, but in the end, they had actually walked back to the base of the mountain. Still, at least they hadn’t walked back to the gate.

“Let’s go. This place is only one or two thousand kilometers in size. In an hour, we should be able to criss-cross it several dozen times. I refuse to believe that we won’t be able to make it in an hour.” Linley turned and immediately re-entered the white fog, while Bebe followed from behind.

“CRACK!” From not too far away, yet another bolt of lightning descended.

Linley and Bebe didn’t slow down, continuing to advance forward.

Linley had believed that leaving the white fog region would be fairly simple, but three times in a row, he ended up returning to the base of the mountain. Even by taking a circuitous route, however, the distance was just a few thousand kilometers. Given Linley’s speed, each trip was a very fast one, and so Linley had more than enough patience to continue advancing.

“There is someone up ahead.” Bebe’s eyes lit up.

Linley had noticed the person up ahead as well. It was a muscular man with short golden hair, who was carefully advancing forward. As though he sensed something, he turned to look towards them, and when he did, he was badly startled…Linley's Dragonform made him think that he had encountered some sort of monster. But he quickly realized who it was.

At the mountain gates, they had all seen Linley's Dragonform.

"The two of you haven't made it out yet, either?" The man with the short golden hair actually moved towards them as he spoke.

"There's no sense of direction in this damn place." Bebe said.

"The white fog region of the Abyssal Mountain is actually the safest place here." The golden-haired man laughed calmly. "It's just an inability to tell directions, right? If we try a few extra times, we might get lucky and make it out. It's just a matter of time. If once isn't enough, then ten times, a hundred times…we have plenty of time."

Linley said with a laugh, "Then good luck to you in being able to make it out. We won't disturb you any further. Bebe, let's head out."

Linley and Bebe immediately advanced forward.

The golden-haired man had a hint of disappointment flash past his eyes. He had come to chat with Linley because he wanted to travel alongside Linley and Bebe. This was because at the hotel, they had all learned that Linley and Bebe were supreme experts. It would be much safer if he travelled alongside them in the Abyssal Mountain.

"They are ignoring me?" But then, the golden-haired man's eyes lit up, and he actually chased after Linley and Bebe while saying, "The two of you came from the Infernal Realm, and so I imagine you aren't familiar with the Abyssal Mountain. I know a few things about this place."

As he spoke, he caught up.

Linley and Bebe couldn't help but turn and glance at the golden-haired man.

"Boss, this guy is really annoying." Bebe sent mentally.

"Just let him follow if he wants to." Linley didn't mind. But suddenly, Linley saw a hint of a green blur flash past from the corner of his eyes, shooting out from a nearby tree. Linley instantly grew guarded, and the semi-translucent godspark sword, 'Mirage', appeared in his hands. But that green blur shot towards the golden-haired man behind Linley instead.

Linley and Bebe immediately turned.

"Haaaargh!" A bellow rang out, and the golden-haired man's hands suddenly became filled with a warblade, which he swung directly towards the green blur. At the same time, a black aura sprang up, ensconcing the golden-haired man in layers of defense.

"Swish!" The green blur twisted in mid-air, dodging past the golden-haired man's blade chop.

The green blur slammed directly onto that black aura, which actually wasn't able to block it at all. The green blur instantly broke through the black aura, and also shot directly towards the golden-haired man. The strange thing was…the green blur actually merged into the man's body. The layer of light surrounding the golden-haired man vanished, and the warblade in his hand fell to the ground as well.

"Ah…ahhhh!" A terrifying sound rang out from the man's mouth, and his entire body trembled. But an instant later, the man's body became stiff, and no more sound came from his lips.

"Thud!" The man fell down to the ground, smashing against a nearby tree, and then floating up into the air and drifting about randomly.

Linley and Bebe stared carefully at the man's corpse.

“Hiss…”

From the forehead of the corpse, a hole suddenly appeared, and a thin green serpent that was only the size of a man’s palm wriggled out from the hole. The green serpent’s body suddenly trembled, then it transformed into a green flash of light, disappearing into the white fog.

Linley and Bebe’s facial expressions turned solemn.

“Snake!”

Chapter 21 – Green Snakes

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 21, Green Snakes

That red-haired beauty had warned Linley about the ‘snakes’ and the ‘trees’, and so Linley and Bebe had been on their guard the entire time. But only now did Linley realize that the so-called ‘snakes’ referred to that extremely slender green snake.

“Crunch!” Linley and Bebe walked forward, stepping on thick layers of fallen leaves and branches as they walked towards the corpse. Linley and Bebe both carefully inspected the golden-haired man’s corpse. Linley first inspected the corpse’s chest, from whence the green serpent had entered the man’s body.

“As I thought!” Linley realized that there was a tiny hole in the man’s chest, identical to the hole in the man’s skull.

“And I had originally believed that the green serpent had truly merged into his body. So the snake actually bit a hole into the body, then entered it. Only, the green snake really was quite fast, and its burrowing abilities are very powerful!” Linley said with a sigh. “That man was a Highgod, but his divine power defense wasn’t able to block the snake at all.”

The divine power that had surrounded and protected the Highgod had been as weak as paper in front of the green snake.

“That green snake’s fangs really are sharp.” Bebe laughed.

“Don’t be careless.” Linley looked at the corpse in a weighing manner. “That green snake was extremely fast, and it was able to easily change direction in midair.”

“Right.” Bebe had seen the earlier scene as well.

“Boss, that green snake killed that man, but why didn’t it continue to attack us next? Instead, it fled.” Bebe asked.

“The green snake most likely wants to rely on ambushes.” Linley said. “We were already on guard against it, and so it gave up attacking us. Be careful…perhaps that green snake might return to attack us again.”

“Don’t worry. If it comes back, I’ll just squeeze it to death!” Bebe said confidently.

“Let’s keep moving.” Linley laughed. At this point, Linley and Bebe both felt slightly relieved. Before this, they didn’t know how the ‘snakes’ and the ‘trees’ would attack, and so were extremely nervous. The more mysterious something was, the more frightening it was. But now they knew that the ‘snakes’ referred to that sort of small green snake.

Even though the small green snakes were dangerous, Linley and Bebe now at least knew what they were up against.

On the path forward, Linley and Bebe paid careful attention to whether or not there were any little green snakes in the surrounding areas. But of course, Linley and Bebe were very careful when they saw those short dwarf trees as well.

“Whoosh, whoosh!”

Linley and Bebe moved as fast as lightning as they passed through the white fog. On a green leaf of a nearby dwarf tree, a strange green energy suddenly emerged from the leaf, transforming into a green serpent. This little green serpent was currently staring at Linley and Bebe’s backs.

Suddenly…

The green serpent once more merged into the leaf, disappearing. A few hundred meters away, on the leaf of a large tree close to Linley and Bebe, a green energy once more appeared, forming into a green serpent. The green serpent stared towards Linley and Bebe. Its stealth abilities really were

quite impressive.

Although it didn't immediately attack, it continued to stare, ready to attack at any moment.

It quietly, stealthily followed them. Linley and Bebe didn't notice it at all. In fact, Linley and Bebe didn't even sense that there were any energy signatures near them.

"Eh?" Linley turned to look up ahead.

A human figure appeared. It was that silver-haired, effeminate youth. That effeminate youth gave Linley and Bebe a cold look, then continued to advance, disappearing into the white fog.

"Hey, that fellow always looks so cocky, but he's not able to make it out either, eh?" Bebe snickered. "I'm irritated just looking at him. He always has that ugly look on his face, as though someone owes him something…if he gets close to me, I really want to teach him a lesson. How dare he be so arrogant without the power to back it up?"

At this moment, on a leaf of a tree that was ten meters or so behind Linley, the green serpent was staring at the grumbling Bebe. A light suddenly flashed through its oily green eyes.

"Don't get distracted. Focus on the road." Linley growled.

"What's there to be afra…" Bebe was in mid-sentence, but suddenly…

"Swish!"

The green serpent shot out from behind at high speed towards Bebe, its speed so fast that it left behind only a green blur in the air. The animatedly talking Bebe only noticed the green blur when it had already drawn close to him, and Linley noticed it now as well, but…it was too late!

Bebe sent a backhand slap directly towards the green blur.

The green blur strangely twisted in mid-air, easily dodging past the blow, then biting straight towards Bebe's waist..

"Crunch…"

The green snake had used this technique to chew through the bodies of countless people, burrowing through their organs and killing them. It had felt certain that the same would happen to this handsome-looking youngster, but when it bit down, it discovered…that this youngster's skin was so tough that it made his fangs go numb.

It knew that the situation was bad, but before it had a chance to escape…

"WHAP!" A large hand descended, seizing it!

"Your mother…you bit me?!" Bebe stared with furious wide eyes. "I'll squeeze you to death!" As he spoke, he suddenly applied force with his hands, and darkness-type divine power coalesced. With an explosive 'bang' sound, the little green snake blew apart from the force of the squeeze, and a strange violet blood flowed out.

With a toss of his hand, Bebe pushed out some more divine power and got rid of the vestiges of blood on his palm.

"Hmph. It dared to bite me. It really wanted to die!" As he spoke, he gave the shattered remnants of the serpent's corpse on the ground a few stomps for good measure.

Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but start to laugh. "Enough, Bebe. You already killed the green snake." Linley sighed in praise as well. Bebe's physical toughness was indeed astonishing. Since the green serpent lived on the Abyssal Mountain, it was capable of threatening many Highgods and so its attack power was certainly tremendous…but in front of Bebe, it wasn't even able to break his skin."

"Hey, green snakes, little green snakes…I'm right here. If you have the

ability to bite me, come bite me! Bite me!" Bebe intentionally shouted to the surrounding area.

"Hurry up. Let's leave." Linley couldn't help but urge.

Bebe chortled, then followed Linley from behind. Clearly, Bebe was very self-delighted at how easily he had squeezed the green snake to death.

On their fourth trip…they still ended up returning to the base of the mountain!

"I have a premonition that we'll succeed on the fifth try for sure." Bebe gritted his teeth as he spoke. Ending up at the base of the mountain four times in a row had clearly caused Bebe to become rather unhappy.

"Be patient! We spent thirty-plus years just travelling to this Abyssal Mountain. What's a little bit of extra time?" Linley had an excellent attitude regarding this situation. Not flustered and not in any haste, he continued to advance forward while carefully inspecting his surroundings, giving it yet another attempt…within the Abyssal Mountain, although not many green snakes attacked, quite a few bolts of lightning descended.

"Boom!" Occasionally, the sound of a thunderbolt could be heard from afar.

"Fortunately, the Abyssal Mountain is so large that the chances of being struck are very low." Linley laughed as he spoke.

"If we get hit, we get hit. But Boss, tell me, how do you think the lightning bolts of these Heaven-Earth Chains are formed? How can they be so powerful?" Bebe asked, not understanding.

Linley laughed calmly, "This is the number one tall mountain of the Netherworld, the residence of a Sovereign. It'd be strange if there was nothing special about it."

While chatting, Linley and Bebe continued to advance forward.

On the leaf of a dwarf tree a few dozen meters behind Linley, a green mass of energy appeared, then formed into a small green snake. The green snake stared fixedly at Linley and Bebe's backs, and then merged into the leaf once more.

As Linley and Bebe advanced at high speed, the little green snake constantly moved forward as well, as though it was following Linley and Bebe.

Only, the green snake was choosing to wait for an opportunity.

"Boss, this…" Just as Bebe was speaking, he suddenly sent mentally in astonishment, "Boss, careful!"

"BANG!" From high up above, a bolt of lightning came crashing down towards Linley. The speed of the lightning bolt was simply too astonishing, but since Linley had been vigilant this entire time, as soon as he noticed it, without hesitating at all, he launched off from the ground, his body dodging away to one side at high speed.

"BOOM!" The lightning bolt hit the ground, and the branches and leaves on the ground instantly turned into dust, and a large hole in the ground appeared.

Right at this moment…

"Swish!" The green serpent that had been following them the entire time suddenly shot out, and a green blur appeared in midair, charging straight towards Linley.

Linley was in mid-dodge, having just avoided the dangerous lightning bolt. His attention was all on the lightning bolt as well, and so the amount of attention he was paying to rest of his surroundings had lowered. When the green snake reached a distance of five meters from Linley, its speed suddenly lessened dramatically, and only now did Linley suddenly turn to look at it.

“Fortunately, I kept up my Blackstone Space this entire time.” Linley, upon seeing it, was badly startled.

After Bebe had suffered that last attack, Linley had immediately set up his Blackstone Space within a range of five meters. Although the green serpent had seen that earthen yellow glow, it thought that it was the ordinary divine power protection which normal Highgods used, and so it hadn’t paid it any heed…but that earthen yellow aura had caused it to suffer a major disadvantage now!

Blackstone Space – Repulsive Force!

This repulsive force was proportional to an object’s size. The little green snake’s speed slowed down dramatically when affected by the repulsive force, but it was still able to fly forward towards Linley at high speed. From this, one could imagine how astonishing its original speed had been.

“Die.” A calm look on his face, Linley swept out with his godspark sword, ‘Mirage’.

His divine power filled Mirage, when instantly turned completely translucent as it swung towards the serpent, and wherever it passed by, a clear tear in space appeared. The green snake, its speed lessened, was unable to dodge easily. It strove to turn its body, but Linley’s ‘Mirage’ sword still chopped down towards it.

One sword blow. Two pieces!

“Swoosh!” The remaining half of the green serpent, its speed not lessening in the slightest, charged directly towards Linley.

“Oh? It’s fine?” Linley was shocked.

They were too close, and Linley wasn’t able to use his sword to block. He immediately swept out with a draconic claw, clawing down towards it.

The green serpent delightedly charged straight towards Linley’s draconic

claw, and then ‘bit down’ towards the ‘palm’ of Linley’s claw. With a ‘crunch’ sound, Linley’s draconic scales in the palm of his hand split apart, but at the same time, Linley squeezed down with his claws. A terrifying energy pressed down, instantly reducing the green serpent into mush.

Violet blood flowed everywhere.

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed.

Linley felt a strange, numb sensation that instantly passed through his entire body. The strange energy poured directly towards his head.

“Hmph.” Linley’s spiritual power in his mind flowed out like repeated waves, completely obliterating that strange energy.

“Boss, are you alright?” Bebe asked hurriedly.

“I’m fine. Fortunately, it was just a little bit of serpent’s venom that entered my body. If this green serpent had entered my body, however, it would have been troublesome.” Linley was still very nervous. That strange energy had indeed been quite powerful. The only reason why he had been able to defeat it so easily was because after becoming a Highgod, he had been absorbing amethysts for centuries and strengthened his soul tens of times over, compared to when he was a God.

But if the entire snake had entered his body…

Even Linley felt rather apprehensive.

“His fangs really are sharp.” Linley lowered his head to look at his palm.

A small patch of draconic scales in the palm of his hand had been split apart, revealing two very small ‘spots’.

The defensive power of Linley’s draconic scales was simply too powerful. When the green serpent had bitten down upon them, although its fangs had broken through at those two points, it hadn’t been able to completely bite

out a hole which it could burrow through. Naturally, the green snake was then crushed to death. Only…as the fangs of the serpent had pierced the draconic scales, its venom had passed into Linley's blood and flesh.

"And this is the white fog region, the 'safest' region! What of the gray fog region, or the highest violet fog region?" Linley couldn't help but feel a sense of pressure. "No wonder anyone who acquires the Abyssal Fruit will become a Sovereign's Emissary! Given the danger level of the Abyssal Mountain, anyone capable of acquiring the Abyssal Fruit should be at an impressive level of power already. With the help of the Abyssal Fruit, the victor would indeed have enough power to become a Sovereign's Emissary."

Linley and Bebe continued to advance.

Moments later…the white fog grew sparse.

"We returned to the borders again. Hopefully, we reached the base of the mountain." Bebe no longer was calling out in celebration as he had previously.

But then, Linley and Bebe's eyes both lit up. As they walked out of the white fog region, they saw that up ahead, there was an empty area of no fog. And further up ahead…was a dark, gloomy region of gray fog.

"We made it out?" Bebe said in delight.

"Haha…" Linley couldn't help but start to laugh. "Bebe, your premonition was an accurate one, it seems. We really did succeed on our fifth try."

Just as Linley and Bebe were celebrating, a series of angry bellows rang out from the gray fog region.

"Eh?" Linley and Bebe couldn't help but feel puzzled, and they looked towards the gray fog region. What was within this gray fog region?

Chapter 22 – The Gray Fog Region – Slaughter!

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 22, The Gray Fog Region – Slaughter!

The white fog region and the gray fog region had an empty region between it which encircled the mountain. Linley and Bebe were in no hurry to enter the gray fog region. They remained outside, carefully listening to the sounds emanating from within.

“Humans, shouting angrily.” Linley frowned.

“What’s going on inside this gray fog?” Bebe was puzzled as well.

Even if the gray fog held danger within, only a few people had entered it, most likely. In addition, those people should have been spread out throughout the area. “Even if they are fighting, the fighting shouldn’t go on nonstop. Why are those angry shouting sounds ringing out again and again? And we are here at the borders, but can still hear them!” Linley’s forehead was creased.

The gray fog region was similar in size to the white fog region.

Given the enormous amount of surface it took up, battles that went on within it from afar shouldn’t be hearable by Linley and Bebe, who were only at the border.

“Eh?” Linley suddenly turned his head.

In the distant white fog region, two male figures suddenly emerged. These two had azure armor formed over their bodies, and when they emerged, they looked vigilantly towards Linley and Bebe. Seeing the two of them, they relaxed slightly. “Haha, I didn’t expect to run into you two here. It seems we two brothers are meant to encounter you.”

The man who spoke was a skinny man who had a smile on his face. The

other man by his side seemed rather sturdy, and had some stubble on his chin.

“Indeed.” Linley said. “I am Linley, and this is my brother, Bebe. Who are you??”

“Lache [La’qi]!” The skinny man laughed.

“Valette [Wa’li’te]!” The bearded man said emotionlessly.

“Lache, Valette, we come from the Infernal Realm and don’t know much about the Abyssal Mountain. Listen…there are angry bellows and roars constantly ringing out from the gray fog region. Do you know what is going on in there?” Linley immediately asked. The reason why he was conversing with these two was for the sake of gaining information.

Lache and Valette both listened carefully, frowns appearing on their faces.

“Hey, that is rather queer.” Lache said with a frown. “There were a few dozen people who entered the mountain this time, and there should have been less than ten people who entered the gray fog region ahead of us. Such an enormous region…if ten people entered, they would be like drops of water in the sea. How could the sounds of angry shouts and battle ring out nonstop?”

Bebe said helplessly, “You don’t know either?”

“No idea. The affairs of Abyssal Mountain are very mysterious.” Lache explained. “The outside world has some rumors, at least, of the white fog region, but no one knows anything about the gray fog region or the violet fog region. Most likely, even if someone knows something, they wouldn’t tell anyone. What do the two of you plan to do?”

Linley and Bebe looked at each other.

“Wait!” Linley said.

“The same decision as we two brothers.” Lache chortled. “Most likely, the people who go in will come back here due to having no sense of direction within. When they emerge, we’ll ask them and so be better prepared.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Lache laughed, “Then we two brothers will go over there to that part of the mountain. You two can move over there. That way, the two of us can keep watch over a region of a hundred kilometers. We’ll easily see anyone who emerges.”

“Fine.” Linley nodded.

And then, Linley and Bebe immediately hurried to a prominent, arching spot on the mountain. They stood there, able to see to a great distance.

“Boss, we’re just going to wait here?” Bebe was rather impatient.

Linley swept the gray fog region with a glance, then shook his head and said, “Let’s wait half a day. If we don’t find anyone in half a day’s time, we’ll go in! The white fog region we passed through just now was already rather dangerous. This gray fog region will most likely be even more troublesome. It is best if we go in after finding out what the situation inside is like!”

They had hurried for thirty years to get to this place. Linley had the patience to wait here for half a day. Rashly running inside might result in them suffering for it.

They waited quietly.

The distance between Linley’s group and Lache’s group was roughly ten kilometers. But because there was no fog here, they were still able to see each other at a glance. Roughly half an hour of quiet waiting went past, and the result was…Linley’s ‘squad’ grew more powerful!

Another person had walked out from the white fog region; the effeminate-

looking silver-haired man.

The effeminate-looking man was patient as well. He was in no hurry to enter, and began to wait quietly.

A long time later…

“Eh?” Linley, who had been seated atop a rock in the meditative posture with his eyes closed, suddenly opened his eyes, turning to look into the distance. That black-robed, violet-haired youth emerged from the gray fog. Seeing that the black-robed youth was about to turn and re-enter the gray fog region, Linley immediately called out, “Bloan!”

During the battle in the inn, Linley had heard the violet-haired man’s name be called out.

“Swoosh.” Linley and Bebe immediately flew over, while more than ten kilometers away, the three other Highgods also saw them and immediately flew over.

“Eh?” The violet-haired youth, Bloan, turned his head.

“Hello, Bloan.” Linley greeted him.

“Oh…is there something you need?” There was no expression on Bloan’s face. At the same time, he noticed that the other three were hastening here as well. Lache laughed and said, “So it’s Bloan. I knew that given your power, Bloan, you would be able to easily emerge from the white fog region. Right, my friend Bloan, we aren’t familiar with the gray fog region. Can you tell us a bit?”

The violet-haired youth, Bloan, glanced at them, seeming rather concerned about Linley and Bebe. He still said calmly, “I can tell you, but there’s a price!”

“Pray tell.” Lache laughed.

“In the gray fog region, I will travel with you two!” The violet-haired youth, Bloan, looked towards Linley and Bebe..

Linley, hearing this, raised an eyebrow. Travel with them? Although he wasn’t too familiar with the violet-haired youth, in the short period of time they had known each other, Linley had come to understand that this Bloan should be a very cold, arrogant person. But…Bloan was asking to travel alongside Linley. Clearly, the gray fog region was very dangerous!

Lache and the other two immediately looked towards Linley and Bebe.

“Fine.” Linley nodded.

The violet-haired youth said calmly, “The ‘fog’ in this gray fog region is actually a type of unusual energy. If your soul is weak, the gray fog region will ensnare you in countless, endless illusions! By then, you won’t be able to tell friend from foe, and you’ll constantly slaughter others…you will never be able to emerge from the gray fog region, and will forever be trapped in illusions!”

Everyone who heard this felt their hearts tremble.

Forever be trapped in illusions?

They had eternal life, but if they were eternally trapped in illusions…that would be more miserable than death.

“There are many, many Highgods within!” The violet-haired youth, Bloan, said emotionlessly. “Over the course of countless years, I imagine that on each trip, there are Highgods who are trapped within the gray fog region. Because Highgods will not starve to death, the only possibility for death is in battle. Thus…over the course of countless years, an astonishingly high number of Highgods have accumulated within this region. Once we encounter those Highgods who have become trapped in illusions, they will consider us to be their mortal foes and immediately battle against us.

The faces of Linley and the others grew ugly.

“On each night of the full moon, some people will go in.” Lache said with a frown. “This Abyssal Mountain has existed for who knows how many years…how many Highgods are there in this gray fog region?!”

Linley couldn’t help but look towards the gray fog region as well.

Angry shouts. The sounds of slaughter. Bellows. They continued to ring out nonstop from within. Linley’s group now understood why these angry roars were continuing unabated; it was because the number of Highgods within was far too great!

“I want to warn you of something; don’t underestimate the Highgods who have been trapped in illusions.” The violet-haired Bloan said with a cold laugh. “In training, there are those who specialize in the soul and those who specialize in material attacks. Those who were trapped in illusions were just a bit weak in terms of the soul, but their material attacks might be terrifyingly strong, even at the Seven Star Specter level.”

Linley couldn’t help but take a deep breath.

“In addition, slaughter goes on unabated within this region. Over the course of countless years, this has resulted in the deaths of many Highgods, but those who remain alive are virtually all exceedingly powerful in terms of material attacks.” The violet-haired Bloan said solemnly. “Just now, when I entered, if it hadn’t been for the fact that I am fast, I probably would have…”

Lache and the other two had ugly looks on their faces now.

They knew how strong Bloan was. A Seven Star Specter! And yet, he had almost been destroyed as well.

“However, don’t worry. Those who were trapped within and still alive are roughly at the Six Star Specter level of power. Seven Star Specters are rare.” Bloan said.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other.

“Boss, the experts within the gray fog region are most likely even more numerous than within the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Bebe said.

Linley nodded slightly. Who could say how many experts had been attracted to the Abyssal Mountain over the course of countless years?

Bebe sent mentally, “No wonder he wants to go with us.”

Linley swept the others with his gaze, all of whom felt the pressure. “Everyone, prepare to enter. Those who enter should enter together. If you feel that you don’t have the power to do so, wait outside.”

“I’ll go.” The effeminate looking man was the first to speak.

“Enter.” Valette nodded.

“I…will go in as well, then” Lache hesitated momentarily before speaking.

“Big Brother.” Valette immediately barked. “It’s best if you don’t enter. Your soul…” Lache just shook his head and said, “Don’t worry. Although I’m somewhat weaker than you in terms of the soul, I’m not actually weak. I should be able to handle it!”

Linley gave this Lache a calm look.

“Let’s head out.” Linley said calmly.

This squad naturally accepted Linley and Bebe as their leaders. In a dangerous situation, everyone, mortal or Deity alike, would naturally follow the most powerful individuals around.

As soon as he entered the gray fog region, Linley felt his head go slightly dizzy, while at the same time, Linley noticed….that a misty layer of gray energy was already beginning to accumulate atop the translucent membrane that was his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. The gray fog energy was

currently trying to invade his soul, but Linley was able to resist it.

“Halt!” Linley barked.

After having just entered the gray fog region, everyone was now under the influence of the gray fog. Bebe had a soul-protecting artifact and so was able to resist it as well. As for the violet-haired youth, he had prior experience. The effeminate man was frowning, but he maintained his clarity of mind. Valette, that sturdy-looking fellow, remained clear-headed as well. But that Lache…

Lache’s face began to change, and his entire body was quivering.

“Aahhhhh!” Suddenly, a furious, insane roar rang out. A warblade appeared in his hands, and he angrily chopped down towards the nearby Valette. Valette was too close to him, and didn’t even have enough time to dodge.

“Bang!”

An azure-golden light flashed past, and Lache was knocked bodily backwards, flying out of the gray fog region.

“Eh?” The violet-haired youth and the others couldn’t help but look towards Linley’s draconic tail, flashing with azure-golden light. In that instant, Linley had actually used his draconic tail to strike out and knock Lache out of the region.

“Big Brother, are you alright?” Valette said frantically.

Having left the gray fog region, Lache had regained his presence of mind. His chest was caved in, and blood stained his clothes, but he immediately called out, “I’m fine. Mr. Linley, thank you for your kindness in saving me!” If it hadn’t been for Linley, he probably would have killed Valette, and would have forever been trapped here?”

“Know your limits.” The effeminate-looking man let out a chuckle.

“Let’s go.” Linley said calmly.

“Valette, be careful. I won’t be able to accompany you inside.” Lache called out from outside.

“Right.” Valette immediately bade his brother farewell, and then immediately followed Linley and the others as they truly entered the gray fog region.

Within the gray fog region, Linley’s squad advanced very carefully, always paying attention to their surroundings. The sounds of constant battle and slaughter and angry shouts continued to ring out nonstop in their ears. Suddenly, Linley saw from the corner of his eyes a ray of black light shoot towards them.

“Swish!”

The black light was shooting towards the seemingly-weak Bebe.

“Crackle….” Wherever the black light passed, space itself split apart. This sight caused the violet-haired youth, Bloan, to be secretly amazed as well. Bebe just let out a loud laugh and went forward to welcome it. Bebe used his left hand to block and the dagger in his right hand to stab forward…

“Clang!” A ray of black light chopped down across Bebe’s chest, but Bebe grabbed the enemy, ensnaring him while stabbing down into the enemy’s head with the dagger in his right hand.

The person died. Even in death, he had a crazed, bloody look in his eyes… but then, his eyes dimmed and lost all life.

“Madman.” The effeminate-looking man said in a low voice.

A madman who would ignore the attacks of the enemy if it meant being able to kill the enemy. These were the actions of a madman, but when Bebe did it, it was actually perfect…because Bebe didn’t have even a hint of a scar on his body.

“Boss, what do you think?” Bebe delighted glanced at Linley.

“Let’s hurry!” The violet-haired youth suddenly shouted explosively.

“Eh?” Bebe and Valette couldn’t help but glance at him. Similarly, the look of puzzlement on Linley’s face suddenly changed, because he could sense tremors coming from the surrounding areas. Clearly, quite a few people were making haste towards them. Linley didn’t understand why these Highgods who had been trapped in illusions could be so sensitive and perceptive to their presence.

But…

They were attacking!

“Flee!”

No one knew how many Highgods had been trapped in the gray fog region over the years. Linley’s group immediately fled, but what they didn’t realize was that atop the leaf of a tree, a green snake was staring at them.

The green snake merged into the leaf, disappearing.

Chapter 23 – A Strange Situation

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 23, A Strange Situation

Multiple blurs shot through the mountain forests of the gray fog region of the Abyssal Mountain.

“Halt.” Linley growled.

Linley’s squad of five realized that no one had been able to catch up to them. “Those Highgods trapped in illusions…why are they chasing after us like madmen?” Bebe said, rather discontented. That effeminate man snickered, “They ARE madmen!”

“They are trapped in illusions!” The violet-haired youth, Bloan, barked rather angrily.

“I called them madmen, not you. Why are you so upset?” The effeminate man said with some surprise.

The violet-haired youth just gave a cold snort.

“Stop arguing.” Linley stared at the surroundings, then said in a low voice, “Regardless of whether they are madmen or just trapped in illusions, their souls are already abnormal thanks to the influence of this gray fog region. I didn’t expect that as soon as a battle started, they would be drawn here. It seems…we have to move faster and quickly leave this gray fog region.”

“No rush.” The effeminate man laughed. “Perhaps this gray fog region will have Abyssal Fruit within it.”

Linley glanced sideways at him.

The Abyssal Fruit might be at any place within the Abyssal Mountain, but of course, the chances of it being within the violet fog region was the

greatest, while the chances of it being in the white fog region was the smallest.

“If you want to remain here in the gray fog region, I won’t oppose it.” Linley said calmly. “Let’s head out!” Immediately, Linley and Bebe continued advancing. Valette and the violet-haired Bloan didn’t hesitate either, immediately following after Linley. As for the effeminate man, he frowned unhappily, but after glancing at the surroundings, he still followed as well.

On the way over, gray fog swirled as far as they could see.

Linley’s squad of five carefully advanced. If they sensed that battles were occurring ahead of them, they would take a roundabout path and maneuver past it. Linley’s group realized that in the Abyssal Mountain, if they tried to walk in a straight line according to their senses, it would actually be impossible to reach their destination. If, however, one just walked about randomly and made multiple attempts, one might succeed.

One step at a time.

Although it seemed as though they were advancing slowly, in truth, all of them were very fast.

“Whoosh!”

A fiery blur suddenly descended from the skies, and space itself instantly began to boil and froth. An unstoppable aura suddenly pressed down towards Linley; the fiery blur had chosen to throw itself directly at Linley, the leader. Linley’s dark golden eyes swept towards the blur coldly, and from his body, an earthen yellow aura suddenly spread out, capturing the blur within it!

Blackstone Space – Repulsive Force!

At the same time, Linley swept out with his wrist. The completely translucent ‘Mirage’, with a slash, cut a large tear through the space above

Linley, as easily as cutting through paper.

As for the figure which had been trapped within the Blackstone Space, his speed immediately lessened, and he was caught off-guard. Linley's sword slashed directly through his skull.

One sword. Two halves!

He died!

The violet-haired youth Bloan, the effeminate man, and Valette couldn't help but feel astonished. The aura of the ambushing attacker had caused even space to tremble violently; one could imagine how powerful the person was. But the attacker hadn't been able to withstand a single stance of Linley's!

"Let's hurry." Linley said calmly while accelerating! The others accelerated as well. After each battle within this gray fog region, they had to immediately leave the scene of the battle, as otherwise, in the blink of an eye, the crazed Highgods of the surrounding area would all immediately charge and attack.

"He really is powerful." The effeminate man looked at Linley, frowning. "Given his strength, if I follow him, even if I encounter the Abyssal Fruit… I won't be able to obtain it." Although it was safer following Linley, if they ended up fighting over the Abyssal Fruit, they wouldn't be able to overcome Linley. After all, even ordinary Seven Star Fiends who fell into the Blackstone Space would be slaughtered by Linley.

After having become a Highgod, Linley's power was now close to that of an ordinary Asura of the Infernal Realm.

"Whoosh!" Linley's group continued to advance. As soon as they sensed any spatial ripples, they would immediately change directions. This strategy resulted in them not encountering any more crazed Highgods for a time.

…….

With the mountain forests of the gray fog region of the Abyssal Mountain.

Beneath an enormous tree that would need five or six men holding hands to embrace its trunk, dozens of figures were seated in the meditative posture. These people had bloodshot eyes which held madness in them, but they didn't fight against each other. They were seated in different locations beneath the trees. When they looked at each other, they seemed like wild animals vigilantly watching other wild animals.

"Whoosh!"

Multiple blurs suddenly flashed past at high speed.

In almost an instant, those dozens of people silently seated in the meditative posture all looked over. And in that moment….the gazes of these people and of Linley's squad of five intersected.

"Eh?" Linley's squad of five was stunned.

The expressions on the faces of these dozens of figures became twisted, and they all shot out from the ground, flying forward as fast as lightning.

"Let's go!" Linley immediately bellowed.

It wasn't that he feared these people; rather, he was afraid that these people would slow them down, with the resulting battle attracting hundreds or thousands of crazed Highgods who would attack. That would be truly disastrous! To be able to survive here meant that these crazed Highgods were all powerful experts, most approaching at least the Six Star Fiend level of power.

"Haaa!" A violet-haired woman wildly brandished a scythe, chopping down with it. A circular arc of black light immediately sprang out towards Linley's group at high speed.

"Grr!" A muscular, armored warrior also wildly struck out with his fist.

When his fist punched out, round ripples of power sprang forth from his hand, piercing out in a straight line at high speed towards Linley's group.

In that instant, those dozens of figures had all launched their most powerful attacks. And, without question, these were all material attacks.

These varied, beautifully multicolor types of material attacks caused multiple cracks in space to appear. Other attacks were translucent or blurry…the attacks completely surrounded Linley's squad of five. No matter how fast they were in fleeing, they weren't faster than the speed of these attacks.

The dozens of attacks, because they were focused on a region rather than a person, were rather spread out. Thus, each person only had to face three attacks. In this group, Bebe naturally had it the easiest. He just casually used his fist to smash apart the oncoming attacks. As for Linley, by relying on his godspark weapon, he was also able to easily resist.

But the other three were in terrible shape.

"Flee!" The violet-haired youth just barely managed to block two attacks, with the third attack injuring his left arm. He bellowed while flying forward at high speed.

"Bastards!" The effeminate man let out a growl as a black blur flashed in his hands as he chopped apart a ray of black light that was attacking him.

The effeminate man's chest had been pierced through as well, but he still gritted his teeth and fled.

The worst off was poor Valette! Valette specialized in soul attacks, and clearly he found it rather difficult to defend against these material attacks. He was barely able to defend against the first one, but of the two successive attacks, one slashed past his lower body while the other slashed past his shoulder. Instantly, one of his legs was torn off and sent flying, while his right arm was severed as well.

But Valette continued to frantically fly forward at high speed.

“Faster.” Linley barked, while at the same time setting up his Blackstone Space. Linley’s squad of five advanced forward at high speed. As for tens of maddened Highgods, they continuously howled as they chased after the squad of five without resting, as though they were chasing after their most hated enemies.

Giant trees could be seen everywhere throughout the Abyssal Mountain. On the leaf of one large tree in particular, a green serpent suddenly appeared, staring at Linley’s fleeing squad of five.

Moments later, Linley’s group of five re-emerged in the space between the white fog region and the gray fog region. Clearly…the route they had taken was wrong, and they had not reached the violet fog region.

“We’re back.” Bebe said helplessly.

“It’s fortunate that we made it out.” Valette let out a sigh of relief. He hurriedly seized the opportunity to heal the wounds on his body. The violet-haired Bloan and the effeminate man also began to heal themselves. That wild flight had indeed caused them to be extremely nervous. If they had been surrounded by a second group of Highgods, it would have been disastrous.

Fortunately, as they fled frantically, they had quickly emerged from the gray fog region.

“Make your preparations. In a while, we will re-enter.” Linley said.

“You can go in. I’ll travel by myself.” The effeminate man said with a calm laugh. “Thank you for your assistance, Mr. Linley…but I’m still more used to being by myself. In addition, a squad of five is too large a target and easily attracts more enemies.”

“Eh?” The violet-haired Bloan and Valette both looked at him.

“As you wish.” Linley said calmly.

Bebe glanced at him, snickering. “Oh, by yourself? As I see it, you want to find the Abyssal Fruit.”

The effeminate man’s facial muscles twitched, but he still said with a laugh, “Abyssal Fruit? That’s completely a matter of luck. I can’t find it just because I want to find it.”

Bebe let out a snort, not saying anything further.

Moments later, Linley looked towards Valette and the violet-haired Bloan. Their wounds were already healed. Linley spoke out. “The two of you should be ready now. Then let’s head out!” Valette and the violet-haired youth both followed Linley and Bebe, once more advancing into the gray fog region.

When Bebe entered the gray fog region, he even turned his head to glance at the effeminate looking man, chuckling disdainfully.

The effeminate man maintained his smile, watching the four leave.

“Hmph!” The effeminate man let out a cold snort. “Finding the Abyssal Fruit isn’t just a matter of strength, but also luck. You are currently more powerful than me, but if I end up finding the Abyssal Fruit, my power will greatly improve. Once I acquire a Sovereign artifact…then at that time…!” The effeminate man became covered by a layer of swirling black energy, causing him to become very indistinct and blurred.

Like an illusion, the effeminate man silently slipped into the gray fog region.

Linley’s group continued to advance carefully, not daring to move too quickly.

“So these maddened Highgods aren’t always fighting. Sometimes, they will quietly hide somewhere.” Linley vigilantly watched his surroundings.

“These maddened Highgods are just like the magical beasts of the Yulan continent’s Mountain Range of Magical Beasts, savage and ruthless.”

As he moved through the Abyssal Mountain, Linley suddenly felt as though he were in his younger days, adventuring through the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts.

Only, back then, what he had to deal with were magical beasts. But now, what he faced was…a group of maddened Highgods! And the place he was at was the number one mountain of the Netherworld, the residence of a Sovereign…Abyssal Mountain!

“Look!” Bebe suddenly let out a low breath.

Linley’s group immediately looked over. Right in front of them, a corpse was hovering there, caught by some branches. On this journey over, Linley’s group had seen quite a few corpses. But…this corpse was of a familiar person. That effeminate man!

“Him?” Linley frowned, drawing closer.

The effeminate man’s face was ashen, and there was a hole in his forehead.

“It was the green snakes!” Linley instantly deduced, and Bebe snickered, “This fellow always had an incredibly arrogant attitude about him. He thought he was so amazing, and wanted to go find the Abyssal Fruit for himself…hmph, I didn’t expect that he wouldn’t even be able to deal with a single green snake!”

Linley secretly shook his head as well.

If he hadn’t even been able to deal with a green snake by himself, why travel alone? He was perhaps too self-confident.

“Let’s go. Be careful on the way.” Linley continued to advance.

Valette and the violet-haired Bloan also gave the effeminate man’s corpse a

vigilant look as they, too, shook their heads inwardly. And then, they advanced as well.

But what Linley's group hadn't noticed was…

There was more than just a single hole on the effeminate man's body. His chest and thigh had them as well. Three holes in total! If they had noticed all three holes, Linley's group probably would have become even more vigilant.

"Boss, I feel as though something is off." Bebe sent mentally.

Linley's expression was solemn. "I have the same feeling. There're no sounds of slaughter in this region." After having become accustomed to the angry shouts of battle, now that everything was silent, it did indeed feel strange. As for the black-robed, violet-haired youth, Bloan, as well as Valette, they too looked around vigilantly as they continued to follow Linley in slowly advancing.

In the surrounding area…

On the green leaves of one large tree after another, one green snake after another was secretly staring at Linley's group. The number of green snakes was so high…that Linley's group would have gone numb in fear had they known. Unfortunately, Linley's group wasn't able to detect the presence of the green snakes in the slightest.

"Boss, a green snake!" Bebe suddenly sent mentally, his gaze staring towards an unremarkable tree in front of them. A green snake was stealthily staring at them from it. But when the green snake realized that Bebe was staring back at it, it instantly vanished, transforming into green energy which merged into the leaves of the tree and disappearing.

"It disappeared? It was able to merge into the leaves?" Linley couldn't help but feel astonished.

Linley had a sudden suspicion, and he instantly turned to look. His gaze

flashed lightning-fast towards the leaves of the surrounding trees, and as he looked carefully, what he saw caused his face to change dramatically…

This single visual sweep turned up more than ten green snakes!

Chapter 24 – Fortune? Misfortune?

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 24, Fortune? Misfortune?

“Hurry, let’s go!” Linley’s face was savage as he barked furiously.

The others, hearing Linley shout so frantically, didn’t dare to dawdle and see what was going on. All of them, like Linley, quickly fled, advancing forward.

“There were actually so many green snakes. What is going on?” While flying forward, Linley was frantically pondering this question. “In addition, when we entered the gray fog region originally, we didn’t see so much as a single green snake. But here, there’s so many! These green snakes….how are they able to merge into the green leaves without causing any energy ripples at all?”

When Deities used techniques such as Worldwalking or the Flamebody technique, they too would transform their bodies into energy. But these sorts of techniques would result in energy ripples. There was no way they would be like the green snakes, so silent and stealthy that those nearby wouldn’t be able to notice anything.

Linley felt that this was extremely bizarre!

But at this moment, he didn’t have any time to think carefully.

“It should be about time now. Those green snakes won’t be chasing after us.” Bebe sent back mentally. “Continue, faster.” Linley didn’t hesitate at all.

As Linley’s group of four fled forwards, suddenly…

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

In an instant, dozens of green blurs shot out into the sky. They seemed to be primarily coming from both the sides as well as from behind, with only a small number of green blurs coming from the front. The green snakes flew forward at an astonishing speed…they were like green arrows, instantly slashing through the skies. The number of them was too great!

The faces of everyone in Linley's group changed dramatically.

"Rumble…" The Blackstone Space suddenly expanded.

It expanded from a diameter of five meters to fifteen meters.

Every single green snake which entered this Blackstone Space slowed dramatically, but they still charged at Linley's group of four. The strange thing was…not a single one of these dozens of green snakes attacked Bebe. They all attacked Linley, Bloan, and Valette instead. Each person suffered an attack from nearly ten green snakes.

Linley's eyes turned cold. Instantly, with a 'crackle' sound, the space around him formed into an earthen wall.

"Crunch!" The green snakes easily pierced through the earthen wall.

Linley wielded Mirage in his hand, and it instantly transformed into a gust of wind, consecutively slicing countless times towards the green snakes like multiple sword blurs. After having battled the green snakes, Linley knew… that to kill them, he had to completely obliterate their heads. However, the green snakes were too agile, and their heads were too small. To kill them and crush their heads was very hard!

One green snake after another entered the Blackstone Space, and they too felt the tremendous impact of it.

"Crackle…" The countless rays of sword light were like a meat grinder, instantly crushing one serpent after another.

Within the Blackstone Space, the green snakes were 'slower', yes, but that

was comparatively speaking. Their original speed was simply too astonishing…and within the space of less than ten meters, they still worked hard to dodge past Linley's sword blur. In an instant, of the nine green snakes attacking Linley, six of them had their heads smashed to a pulp, and they immediately fell to the ground.

As for the other three green snakes, although they were wounded, they still charged towards Linley.

"Swish!" Linley's draconic tail flashed out, smashing two of the green snakes into pulp.

The remaining green snake…just as it was about to bite Linley, it was smashed to death with one palm blow!

"The two of them…" Linley turned to look.

That violet-haired youth, 'Bloan', had actually been able to deal with the green snakes very easily, given how their speed had been dramatically lessened. The violet-haired youth had first relied on his devilish longsword to slaughter five of the green snakes, and then set up a field of lightning fog around his entire body.

Those green snakes had already been slowed down within the Blackstone Field. Once they entered the lightning fog field, they had been slowed yet again.

The violet youth naturally found it very easy to slaughter the remaining green snakes.

"Valette…" Linley frowned.

Valette was an expert who trained in the Edicts of Death, and he dispatched a few green snakes as well. But there was still a single green snake which broke through Valette's hand, tunneling into Valette's body.

"Is he alright?" Bebe and the violet-haired Bloan all looked as well.

Valette was still standing there, not moving at all.

Moments later…

“Everyone, I’m fine now. Let’s continue.” Valette laughed, but his face was somewhat ashen.

“The snake entered your body. What’s it like?” Bebe asked.

Valette nodded and replied, “When the green snake entered my body, I immediately grew frantic and used both divine power and spiritual energy to simultaneously attack!” Linley laughed to himself; if the green snake had entered his body, he probably would have hastened to use the same methods.

“But who would have imagined…the green snake actually transformed into a ray of green energy and threw itself at extremely high speed towards my mind? Still…the green snake constantly weakened under my spiritual attacks. I had to go all out in order to just barely, completely obliterate all of that green energy!” Valette said with a hint of fear.

Linley nodded to himself.

“So these green snakes, when under spiritual attack, will constantly weaken!” Linley began to somewhat understand. The ‘green energy’ which formed the green snakes should be something akin to spiritual energy based constructs.

“Alright. Everyone, be even more careful!” Linley said. “I’ve done all I can to help out. Whether or not you’ll be able to survive is up to you.” Linley continuously maintained the Blackstone Space, and with it present…Bloan and Valette were under much less pressure as well.

Otherwise, the two would have died long ago in that earlier situation.

“Linley, thank you.” Valette and Bloan both felt rather grateful. After all,

Linley was absolutely capable of just discarding them.

“Let’s continue.” Linley said.

Shortly after Linley left, a brown-haired man slowly emerged from the ground, his gaze as cold as the deep sea. He carefully inspected the surrounding area.

“So many green snakes…” The muscular man’s eyes slowly brightened. “It’s been so many years. I’ve forgotten the very existence of time itself. But this day has finally come!” The muscular man was so excited that his body trembled. He then carefully inspected the surroundings, and then, as though he sensed energy ripples from up ahead, he hurriedly advanced forwards.

Linley’s group never would have imagined that after having fought with such a large number of green snakes not too long ago, after having travelled for a short period of time, they actually suffered yet another attack from a large number of green snakes. In addition…the scale of the attack from the green snakes was clearly much greater than last time. There were more than a hundred green snakes.

And it was just the same as last time…

The green snakes didn’t attack Bebe, only attacking Linley, Valette, and the violet-haired Bloan.

“Hiss…”

A large group of green snakes threw themselves towards Linley in mid-air, utterly crazed.

“Boss!” Bebe scurried over as well to help Linley.

“These snakes are insane!” Linley’s godspark sword, ‘Mirage’, began to move. In an instant, Linley had created countless sword blurs, and those green snakes which were struck by Mirage were all crushed into pulp. Of

the nearly fifty snakes, only a single one broke through Mirage's block.

And this one was captured by Bebe.

"Hey, Boss, why is it that your sword is so much faster than last time?" Bebe asked in astonishment.

Linley let out a calm laugh. "Because this time, I used the Elemental Laws of the Wind!"

Linley, too, had to sigh emotionally. All these years, because his insights in the Laws of the Earth surpassed his insights in the Elemental Laws of the Wind, Linley almost exclusively used the Laws of the Earth…it had become a matter of habit. But just now, when faced with so many green snakes, Linley finally came to his senses! Given how powerful his body was and how sharp his godspark weapon was, his attacks were more than strong enough to slaughter the green snakes.

If he used the Laws of the Earth, the only effect would be to make his attacks even stronger, to the point of causing space to tear apart!

But against these green snakes, his Dragonformed strength and Mirage was more than enough! Further strengthening his attacks would be a waste.

His swordplay with the Laws of the Earth was indeed powerful, but it didn't improve his speed much.

As for the Elemental Laws of the Wind…although each sword attack with Mirage wasn't improved in power, the speed of each attack was thousands of times greater. Even though there were many more green snakes this time, almost all of them were crushed into pulp.

"Only, my rate of improvement in the Elemental Laws of the Wind is too slow. It has been nearly two thousand years, but I've only been able to fuse the Profound Truths of Velocity with the Profound Mysteries of Spatial Wind just slightly." Linley sighed to himself. There were nine profound mysteries in the Elemental Laws of the Wind, and he had only managed to

master the Profound Truths of Velocity back in the Yulan continent, when he merged the ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ profound mysteries together.

The Profound Truths of Velocity and the Profound Mysteries of Spatial Wind were somewhat close in nature, which was why Linley was just barely able to begin fusing them.

But he was still far off from completing fusing them.

“Still, against this sort of group attack, using the Elemental Laws of the Wind is already enough.” Linley let out a relieved sigh.

In terms of attacks, his attacks with Earth were clearly more powerful, but against this sort of group attack by green snakes, it clearly gave him some trouble.

Still, only someone like Linley was capable of using a method like this!

This was because each individual green snake had very strong defense as well. It was fairly hard to kill them. One had to have enough attack power! How could Bloan and Valette be like Linley, who could kill the green snakes just based on physical strength and the sharpness of his weapon?

“Those two…” Linley turned to look.

The violet-haired Bloan and Valette were still standing there.

“Valette died.” Bebe said with resignation.

In that dangerous situation, Linley had to completely focus on himself, and Bebe naturally helped Linley. Valette and Bloan had to rely on themselves.

“Whew!” Bloan opened his eyes, his forehead covered with cold sweat.

“Valette died?” The violet-haired youth, Bloan, was stunned.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

Bloan looked at Linley, a complicated look on his face. “Linley, where should we go next? I keep on having the feeling that something is off. The first time, we were attacked by tens of snakes, and this time, by more than a hundred. I’m worried…that next time, there will be even more!”

Bloan had lost his confidence as well.

This was because just now, a green snake had entered his body. Luckily, Bloan’s soul defense was very strong, and so he had just barely managed to extinguish it.

“Where should we go?” Linley looked at the surroundings.

The area was surrounded by fog, dwarf trees, and mixed bushes. Linley didn’t know where to go either.

“Straight forward.” A voice rang out.

Linley, Bebe, and Bloan immediately turned to look. A muscular, brown-haired man emerged from the ground. The brown-haired man glanced at Linley, whose aura and posture in Dragonform caused the muscular, brown-haired man to unconsciously frown slightly.

“Bloan!” The muscular man turned to look at Bloan, his face wreathed in smiles.

The violet-haired youth, Bloan, upon seeing this man was completely dazed.

“Big Brother…” Bloan called out in disbelief.

The muscular man immediately laughed.

“You…you are still alive, Big Brother?” Bloan’s formerly cold face was now filled with excitement, and even his tears began to fall uncontrollably. Bloan would never forget…those days he had spent by his elder brother’s

side as they had roamed the Netherworld. When the two of them had been together, he had relied on his elder brother!

He had never feared anything, because his elder brother had been with him!

But on the very day he became a Highgod, his elder brother had gone to the Abyssal Mountain! But then…countless hundreds of millions of years had passed. Bloan couldn't even be sure as to how much time had gone by. He had thought his elder brother had died long ago, but…

"Haha."" The muscular man laughed and immediately walked over, embracing Bloan.

The icy, cold Bloan seemed to have become a child. He tightly clutched the muscular man. "Big Brother, you didn't die. This is wonderful, wonderful!"

"Big Brother, let me make the introductions. These two came from the Infernal Realm. He is Linley, while this other one is Bebe. I was only able to just barely stay alive here in this gray fog region thanks to Mr. Linley." Bloan said.

The muscular man gaze Linley an astonished glance, then said, "Mr. Linley, my name is Bailey [Ba'le'lei]. Thank you for looking after my little brother."

Linley nodded.

"Bloan, follow me." Bailey grabbed Bloan, wanting to move forward.

"Big Brother?" Bloan just looked at him, puzzled.

Bailey glanced at Linley, then laughed straightforwardly. "It can be said that you showed kindness to my little brother, so I'll tell you…normally, there's no way so many green snakes would appear within the gray fog region. Countless years ago, when I first arrived here, I encountered the very same situation. That time…the Abyssal Fruit appeared within the gray fog region. However, that time, someone else acquired it. Based on my predictions,

most likely, the reason there are so many green snakes is because the Abyssal Fruit is about to appear once again. You showed kindness to my little brother, so I'll give you this chance. The Abyssal Fruit will belong to whoever acquires it!"

"The reason the snakes are attacking you is because you are headed the right way. If my predictions are correct, a thousand meters or so up ahead is where the Abyssal Fruit lies!" Bailey said.

Bloan was stunned.

"Big Brother…" He wasn't surprised at the presence of the Abyssal Fruit; rather, he was puzzled at why his big brother would actually tell this secret to Linley and Bebe.

"Let's go. It can be considered that we've repaid your debt." Bailey immediately strode forward. "However, if you encounter the Abyssal Fruit, that can be said to be both a stroke of fortune as well as misfortune. If you want to acquire the Abyssal Fruit…you need to be prepared to lose your life."

Linley gave Bailey's retreating back a curious glance.

"Bebe, should we go?" Linley laughed calmly. Originally, Linley hadn't planned to go after the Abyssal Fruit, as the chance was too low, but…it had now appeared.

"Of course we have to go take a look." Bebe laughed.

Linley and Bebe, not hesitating at all, hurried forward.

Chapter 25 – The Abyssal Fruit Appears

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 25, The Abyssal Fruit Appears

Bailey and his brother, Linley and his brother; the two groups walked in a line, striding forward. However, the four of them didn't advance at too high a speed, and on the way over, they continued to vigilantly watch the surrounding areas.

"Boss, tell me, what do you think that power-increasing Abyssal Fruit looks like?" Bebe's eyes were filled with curiosity as he sent mentally.

Linley looked at the surroundings as well. "Abyssal Fruit…Abyssal Fruit… it might look like an ordinary fruit. Hmm…something feels weird!" Linley sniffed the air, and as he did, he felt a very unusual odor waft by, entering his body. His mind instantly grew clear, and the bewildering effects of the fog, which had always been present, dissolved away greatly as well.

"Boss, the gray fog is much fainter up ahead." Bebe said hurriedly.

Linley had a thought. "It seems we are almost there. Let's go!"

He strode forward hurriedly, and Bailey and his brother did the same. Linley advanced by roughly another hundred or so meters, then discovered that the fog had completely dissipated. "What sort of tree is that?" Linley stared towards the center of the empty area up ahead, and saw that an extremely large and flourishing dwarf tree was present.

The main trunk of the dwarf tree was large enough to need two people holding hands to wrap their arms around it, and was less than thirty meters tall.

However, the tree had ten million branches, each of which was at least one or two hundred meters long. These extremely long branches also had many more twigs extending from them. This resulted…in this single large dwarf

tree to take up an area with a diameter of hundreds of meters.

“Boss, look, what’s that?” Bebe called out in surprise.

Linley’s pupils contracted.

At the crown of that dwarf tree, on a particularly large branch, within the leaves, there was a fruit that was slightly larger than the size of a fist. This fruit was almost completely spherical, with a violet skin that was crystalline and translucent, swirling with brilliant light, dazzling to behold. At the same time, it continued to faintly emanate that hazy fog.

“What a refreshing feeling.” Linley took a deep breath, and his mind felt all the clearer, and his soul felt very comfortable as well. “This…? Is this the Abyssal Fruit?”

Linley couldn’t help but glance at the nearby Bailey and his brother. Bailey’s eyes were shining as he stared at the Abyssal Fruit, but he didn’t charge forward. Instead, he said in a clear voice, “Linley, that’s the Abyssal Fruit! However, I must warn you, Abyssal Fruit isn’t so easily harvested. The Spirit Snake which guards the Abyssal Fruit has yet to appear.”

Having already undergone the Abyssal Fruit harvesting process countless years ago, Bailey clearly knew how dangerous it was.

Linley knew as well…

That although it looked as though the Abyssal Fruit was simply placed there, if he were to rashly charge forward, he would undoubtedly suffer for it.

“Boss, I’ll go.” Bebe very confidently prepared to charge forward.

“Bebe, don’t be rash.” Linley barked.

“Eh?” Bebe looked towards him.

“Just watch for now.” Linley stared appraisingly at his surroundings. Suddenly…

“Rustle…” The green leaves on the branches of the tree with the Abyssal Fruit, as though stirred by the wind, began to tremble. That sound instantly disrupted the surrounding, quiet calm. At the same time, the leaves which were spread out over that space of hundreds of meters all began to glow with a green energy. And slowly…

One green snake after another, each the size of a palm, began to form atop the green leaves.

“So many!” Bebe sucked in a breath of cold air.

Although he didn’t fear the green snakes, upon seeing so many of them, he still felt his scalp crawl. Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes; with but a single sweep, he saw thousands on thousands of green snakes. The countless green snakes were visible on virtually every single part of the tree.

“And that’s just the opening course.” Bailey said coldly.

“Spirit Snake, you might as well come out.” Bailey’s voice rang out. “What, do you want me to come over for you to ambush?”

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

Spirit Snake? Could it be that these green snakes weren’t the Spirit Snake?

“Haha, I didn’t expect that you would be aware of my existence!” A clear, evil sound rang out from amidst the branches. “This is absolutely too intriguing. I wanted to play with you a bit more first. For me to reveal myself now…spoils the surprise.” As the voice continued to ring out, it slowly began to reveal its true form atop the Abyssal Fruit tree!

Linley, Bebe, and Bloan couldn’t help but feel startled.

A large green snake that was nearly ten meters long and as thick as an arm suddenly, slowly emerged from a branch of the tree. This large snake coiled around the tree trunk, its head raised and its cold, insidious eyes flashing with a violet, serpentine light as it stared at the distant Linley, Bailey, and the other two.

The serpent's violet gaze seemed to stab at them!

Linley and Bebe couldn't help but narrow their eyes, not willing to stare directly into the green snake's gaze.

"Linley, what we need to do is…while being attacked by countless green snakes, and also being blocked by the Spirit Snake, acquire the Abyssal Fruit." Bailey said calmly. "Let me warn you of one thing; the Spirit Snake is capable of controlling the Abyssal Fruit Tree to attack and constrict you! Alright…whoever gets the Abyssal Fruit is whoever it will belong to."

After speaking, Bailey's entire body slowly began to emanate an earthen yellow aura.

"Divine earth power?" Linley frowned.

Bebe excitedly licked his lips. "Boss, watch me get that Abyssal Fruit! I have no fear of those little green snakes. The Abyssal Fruit…will definitely be mine!" That godspark dagger appeared in Bebe's hands, and he gave Bailey a careful look as well.

Bailey was clearly building up his power…

"Haaaargh!"

With a sudden, explosive shout, the earthen yellow aura on Bailey's body suddenly coalesced around his right leg. Bailey lifted up his right leg, and then smashed down in a vicious, straight line towards the ground. "BOOM!" The entire earth roared with a terrifying explosive sound as an earthen yellow light emanated outwards from his feet through the earth.

The strange thing was…

The ground beneath Bailey's feet wasn't damaged at all.

"An explosive burst of the Throbbing Pulse of the World?" Linley could guess at what profound mysteries were contained within this attack, but for now, Linley himself wasn't capable of it. Linley immediately looked towards the tree.

"Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!" "Bang!"

In the ground beneath the giant tree, one explosive rumbling sound after another rang out, and a large hole appeared in the rocky mountain terrain as shattered rocks flew everywhere. The smaller branches of the Abyssal Fruit Tree were also smashed and flattened and sent flying, as many green serpents hurriedly dodged as well.

Even the main trunk of the Abyssal Tree trembled, but the main trunk and the larger branches weren't damaged much. Clearly, they were very sturdy; only the smaller branches and leaves were damaged.

Chaos!

The shattered small branches and many leaves were flying everywhere, causing the Abyssal Fruit Tree to turn into a picture of chaos.

"Let's go!" Linley's eyes lit up, and he shot forward like an arrow from a bow.

"This is the moment!" Bebe simultaneously charged out as well.

But Bailey had reacted slightly faster than even Bebe and Linley. He charged forward at high speed, his body once more beginning to emanate with that earthen yellow aura which was constantly emanating ripples. Bailey's gaze was firm, and in his hands, a pitch-black warblade appeared.

"Haha…" An evil laugh rang out from the tree.

Instantly…

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Countless green snakes rained down from the green leaves of the tree like raindrops in a storm. The countless green snakes simultaneously attacked Linley, Bebe, and Bailey. As for the violet-haired youth, Bloan, he stood far away and didn’t charge forward.

Linley, seeing so many green snakes fill the skies and charge towards him, was forced to go all out as well.

An earthen yellow light suddenly emanated from Linley’s body as well, instantly encapsulating both himself and Bebe and forming into a hemisphere that was fifteen meters across in diameter. When those green snakes, moving like arrows, fell into the Blackstone Space, their speed suddenly dropped and they became much slower.

Under the command of the Spirit Snake, these green snakes were aware of the repulsive power of the Blackstone Space.

But if they didn’t enter the Blackstone Space, they wouldn’t be able to harm Linley at all. Thus, they had no choice but to charge in.

“Haha, come bite me, all of you come bite me.” Bebe bellowed loudly as he charged in front of Linley, where a large number of green snakes were gathered and charging. At the same time, Bebe’s body transformed into dozens of figures, and with banging sounds, his dagger began stabbing into the bodies of the snakes, while his palm began to crush their bodies…these sounds rang out unabated!

With Bebe up in front, the pressure on Linley was greatly reduced.

The dispersed green snakes began to cluster around them from all sides. Linley calmly began to brandish about Mirage, filling it with wind-type elemental essence and causing it to transform into countless sword blurs,

filling the surrounding space. The drifting, agile movements of the sword blurs were so fast as to seem devilish, and even space itself seemed to constrict and tighten around those green snakes.

“Hiss….”

The green snakes, their speed greatly lessened within the Blackstone Space, when faced with Mirage…a dense cluster of sounds could be heard as one snake after another was instantly ground apart by those countless sword blurs and transformed into pulp. Last time, Linley didn’t have experience, but this time, Linley was prepared in advance, and so his execution of this technique became all the more relaxed.

The vast majority of the thousand-plus tightly clustered snakes which flew towards Linley were all struck.

However, there were still three which were only slightly wounded and thus fearlessly charged towards Linley, wanting to bite him.

“Hmph.” Linley just instantly changed the direction of the gravity.

Blackstone Space…the gravity suddenly changed to go downwards!

The sudden change in the direction of the gravity caused the three green snakes to be caught off-guard and sink downwards, not able to bite Linley at all.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!” Those three fast sword blows cleaved down upon the green snakes which had sank down to the ground, instantly killing them.

Sometimes, suddenly changing the direction of gravity was an extremely effective tactic.

“That Bailey…” Linley glanced at him out of the corner of his eyes, and couldn’t help but feel startled. The layer of earthen yellow light on Bailey’s body was constantly trembling. When the many green snakes attacked,

Bailey just let them strike at him, but as soon as they entered the range of that earthen yellow light, their bodies would begin to tremble and then, moments later, with a ‘bang’ completely crumble into pulp.

“The Throbbing Pulse of the World, the never-stopping ‘Vitality’, as well as the Essence of the Earth.” With a single glance, Linley realized which three Profound Mysteries were being used by Bailey.

Different fusions of profound mysteries had different results.

What Linley didn’t know was that this was the best technique Bailey had come up with, after countless years of painstaking pondering, for dealing with these green snakes. He had spent nearly a hundred million years coming up with this technique. But in terms of flying speed…Bebe, who didn’t have to pay the green snakes any mind at all, was a bit faster than even Bailey. Bebe moved like lightning, scurrying to the side of the tree trunk.

“Haha, the Abyssal Fruit is mine!” Bebe called out jubilantly as he snatched towards the Abyssal Fruit.

“Hiss…” A strange sound entered Bebe’s mind, and Bebe couldn’t help but feel his head grow dizzy.

Suddenly, the giant head of the large green snake suddenly emerged from next to Bebe. It opened its mouth wide and bit downwards towards Bebe. The emergence of this snake head happened as fast as lightning, and Bebe, his head dizzy, wasn’t able to react in time. The giant green snake landed a vicious bite against his head, and the giant green snake bit down with full force…

“CRUNCH!”

“Bebe!” Linley was shocked.

“F*ck off!” Bebe bellowed, furiously shaking it off and escaping from that giant maw.

But that giant green snake stared towards Bebe in shock. A black, illusory object fell out from within the mouth of the giant green snake. Linley glanced at it…and saw that, amazingly enough, it was a shattered poisonous fang!

“When the green snake bit Bebe, it broke its tooth?” Linley couldn’t help but feel speechless.

While the giant green snake was dealing with Bebe, Bailey scurried towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree. But just as Bailey was about to seize the Abyssal Fruit…

“Swoosh!”

The Abyssal Fruit Tree violently twisted, flashing past and dodging Bailey’s snatch while many branches suddenly swept towards Bailey, clutching at him like countless arms.

Bailey’s face couldn’t help but change.

“Big Brother!” The violet-haired Bloan, watching this from afar, couldn’t help but feel shocked. Bailey instantly roared angrily, using full force with the pitch-black warblade in his hands. Instantly, a booming sound rang out, and spatial ripples and cracks were given birth to as the warblade chopped towards the surrounding, encoiling tree branches.

Right at this moment…

“Swoosh!” Linley also charged towards the Abyssal Fruit.

“Bastard.” Bebe, bellowing, charged forward once more as well.

“Raaaaaawr!” The giant green snake angrily opened its maw, emitting a thick black fog towards Linley and Bebe, and the poisonous black fog instantly trapped Linley and Bebe once more within it.

Chapter 26 – Choice

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 26, Choice

The black fog instantly invaded Linley's sea of consciousness, and even began to invade and corrode the repaired part of the 'flaw'. The level of the current repair work was something which Linley had accomplished after spending nearly two hundred years after becoming a Highgod. If it was broken, then the efforts of two centuries would have all been for naught!

"Hmph." Linley's spiritual energy instantly surged out in waves against the black mist.

His spiritual energy, glowing with that azure light, moved as fast as lightning, constantly clashing against the poisonous black fog and extinguishing it.

"Boss, this big snake is rather tough to deal with." Bebe sent mentally.

"Raaaaaaaaaaaaawr!" The large green snake's tail swung about angrily, transforming into multiple blurs which struck towards Linley and Bebe.

Linley's gaze turned cold.

"Swish!" Linley's draconic tail swung out viciously as well, intersecting with the snake's tail. With a 'whap!' sound, Linley couldn't help but be knocked back by a few dozen meters, while the giant green snake once more coiled itself around a branch of the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

"This large snake's skin really is tough." Linley was secretly surprised. "And quite slippery!"

"Hmph." After Linley was sent flying backwards, Bebe charged straight towards the Abyssal Fruit. The giant green snake naturally struck out with its tail again, which twirled about like a tornado, causing the nearby space

to twist and distort as it lashed out towards Bebe. Bebe just gave a sinister grin, and the godspark dagger suddenly appeared in his hands. He gave the oncoming serpentine tail a vicious swipe!

“Slash!”

The dagger, when meeting the serpentine skin, couldn’t help but slip aside. It only left behind a fairly deep white impression, and only managed to crack three of the thin scales.

“Hey?” Bebe was surprised, and at the same time he also sent mentally, “Boss, this big snake’s body is much stronger than those of the little green snakes, and it is also quite slippery. Not even my godspark weapon was able to break through it at one blow! Right, Boss…you hurry up and get the Abyssal Fruit, and let me tie down this big snake! He’s not able to do anything to me!”

“Punk, I’m going to make you die!”

The giant green snake, seeing that three of its serpentine scales had been cracked, was instantly enraged. Bellowing, it once more coiled towards Bebe. Its venomous fangs were sharp, but they weren’t that tough; in terms of toughness, its skin was the toughest. Over the course of countless years…nobody had ever been able to leave behind any wounds on its body.

“Swoosh.” Linley was very confident in Bebe, and so he charged straight for the Abyssal Fruit.

“Rumble…”

Bebe was surprised. As soon as the giant green snake touched Bebe, it instantly began to wrap around and constrict Bebe, as though wanting to crush him to death. “Hey, you are pretty strong. But if you want to crush me to death with this bit of strength…keep dreaming.” Bebe raised his head proudly, staring directly at the giant green snake’s head, not afraid at all.

The giant green snake was exerting pressure with every part of its body as it

sought to crush Bebe to death.

Constriction was one of its innate talents. It was very easy for it to rely on its body to constrict Highgods to death. Even Highgod artifacts, when gripped and ground down upon by its body, would begin to twist and distort. But today, it discovered…that the youth it was currently constricting was like an incomparably tough and resilient chunk of metal.

“Hey, use more strength.” Bebe chortled. Bebe was happy to be keeping the giant green snake occupied, and he also paid attention to Linley’s situation..

“Eh?” Bebe was suddenly startled.

When Linley drew near the Abyssal Fruit, many soft, willow-like branches suddenly coiled towards Linley. Irritated, Linley lashed out with Mirage, filling it with divine earth power and raising its attack power to the limit. With a gentle sound, tears in space began to appear.

“Slash!” Mirage chopped down upon one of the branches.

This branch was as thick as a person’s thighs, but when Linley’s Mirage godspark sword chopped down, it was only able to cut to the center of the branch and no further. “Eh?” Linley suddenly had the feeling…that when the branch of the Abyssal Fruit Tree and Mirage collided, a surge of powerful, rippling force was transmitted through.

It was attacking his mind!

“Rumble…” Linley’s mind couldn’t help but go momentarily dizzy, but he was still able to endure the attack. At this moment, many other branches swung towards him as well.

“Retreat!” Linley hurriedly pulled his sword out, retreating at high speed!

At the same time, an earthen yellow aura emerged from his body, immediately forming into his Blackstone Space. The powerful repulsive force immediately activated against those branches. Although the branches

now moved much more slowly, they still came wrapping around towards him from every direction. Linley could only choose to run even farther away.

Linley was in a tough situation, but it wasn't easy for Bailey either. He, too, was unable to do anything against the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

"Bailey, you said the Spirit Snake controls the Abyssal Fruit Tree? Then how is it that the tree is capable of using spiritual attacks?" Linley couldn't help but bark. He had already retreated a hundred meters, while Bailey had also retreated to a distance of a hundred meters. Shaking his head, Bailey replied, "Back then, when I first encountered the Abyssal Fruit Tree…there were simply too many green snakes, so I couldn't draw near at all. I didn't know the Abyssal Fruit Tree was capable of spiritual attacks. Now, it seems, the Abyssal Fruit Tree itself possesses sentience!"

Linley suddenly realized…

What the 'tree' and 'snake' the red-haired beauty was referring to.

"The 'snake' should be this sort of large snake, while the 'tree' should be this Abyssal Fruit Tree." Linley was now aware of the power of this Abyssal Fruit Tree. A single branch…was actually able to endure his full-force sword blow. Despite using a godspark sword, he was only able to chop to the center of the branch.

"Eh? It already repaired the damage?" Linley discovered to his surprise that the damage he had done by chopping down against the branch was already repaired.

"This Abyssal Fruit Tree is just like normal Deities; its body can easily repair itself when damaged." Linley felt a headache oncoming.

"Haha…nothing left? Then it's my turn!" Bebe's voice suddenly rang out.

Linley couldn't help but to turn and look…

Bebe was currently still being constricted by the giant green snake, which seemed to want to crush Bebe. But suddenly…

“SHKREEEEEEEEE!”

With an ear-piercing, savage sound ringing out, Bebe opened his mouth, while at the same time, around his body an enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat appeared, which stared coldly at the giant green snake.

The giant green snake was stunned. It couldn’t help but have a bad feeling!

A cold look flashed through Bebe’s eyes.

“Aaaaaah!” A miserable scream rang out, and from the head of the giant green snake, a black divine spark flew out, entering Bebe’s mouth. As for the giant green snake, it fell down lifelessly, dead!

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

In the same instant of the giant green snake’s death, the surviving little green snakes which had remained on the leaves of the Abyssal Fruit Tree all transformed into green energy, then disappeared from the world. They, too, had died!

“Oh?” Linley suddenly understood.

Those little green snakes should have been a part of the giant green snake. Or perhaps their lives were linked to the giant green snake’s soul. Now that the Spirit Snake was dead, the little snakes perished as well.

“How dare you be arrogant in front of me!” Bebe snorted.

The distant Bailey and Bloan both stared towards Bebe in disbelief. Just now, they had both seen Bebe use the ‘Godeater’ divine ability. This innate divine ability didn’t belong to any sort of Law or Edict. It surpassed them, and once it was used…Bailey and Bloan were completely stunned.

In the face of this technique, what could they do against it?

This technique acted directly against one's divine spark. Most likely, even if you had incredibly deep understandings of the Laws, you still wouldn't have any chance to use your techniques!

"The Abyssal Fruit is mine!" Bebe once more charged towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

"Rustle, rustle…" The Abyssal Fruit Tree seemed to have gone mad, and many of its branches began to swing about, encircling and wrapping towards Bebe. Linley, seeing the situation, activated his Blackstone Space with a thought, instantly spreading it out to a circumference of hundreds of meters.

Gravity, downwards!

Those branches couldn't help but drop downwards, but they all strove to rise up and go snatch Bebe.

"Swish." Linley charged forward as well.

"Swoosh." Bailey didn't hesitate either, hurriedly seizing the chance to charge forward.

The Abyssal Fruit Tree's movements were indeed now much slower, and it found it hard to catch Bebe and Linley, but…the tree branches didn't try to seize Linley. Many of the branches actually easily began to twist and distort, completely wrapping up the Abyssal Fruit.

Linley, Bebe, and Bailey were stupefied.

Now that the Abyssal Fruit was wrapped up in branches, how would they acquire it?

"Last time, the Abyssal Fruit Tree just casually blocked for a time. It wasn't as savage as this!" Bailey said uncomprehendingly.

Linley and Bebe floated in the air, staring at the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

“Boss, what should we do?” Bebe asked.

“This is rather tricky.” Linley frowned, and then immediately launched Mirage against the Abyssal Fruit Tree. Mirage was already translucent, and as the sword ripples lashed out, one tear in space after another appeared. Mirage struck at the trunks multiple times, but each sword blow found it hard to break through.

Hundreds of consecutive blows! But after each blow, the branches immediately healed.

“Whoosh!”

Suddenly, many branches exploded forward, attacking the nearby Linley.

Linley’s face changed, and the direction of his Blackstone Space suddenly changed to be…repulsive!

The branches couldn’t help but slow down, and Linley flew back, retreating.

“Bebe, these branches are simply too tough, and there are too many of them. As soon as I launch one blow with my sword, the branch has already healed the damage before my second blow arrives. And it is also capable of a powerful soul attack. I’m not afraid of a blow from a single branch, but if hundreds of them strike me with the great power they possess…or if they constrict me, it’ll be even tougher to deal with than the constriction of that giant green snake.” Linley sent mentally.

“Looks like there’s only one option.” Bebe flew forwards.

Suddenly…

The illusion of a Godeater Rat that was tens of meters tall appeared before

Bebe. That powerful aura caused Bloan and Bailey to both feel shock in their hearts, and a unique energy was applied to the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

“Yet again. After using it this second time, Bebe will need some rest.” Linley couldn’t help but say to himself.

Linley was very confident in Bebe, but the result caused Linley to feel astonished. “How is that possible?” No divine spark flew out from the Abyssal Fruit Tree, and it wasn’t damaged at all. As for Bebe, he landed back on the ground, looking puzzled. “Boss, I…I can’t sense its divine spark!”

“Can’t sense it?” Linley was stunned.

“This Abyssal Fruit Tree has no divine spark.” Bebe was completely certain.

“If that’s the case, then this will be troublesome. This Abyssal Fruit Tree… no wonder it is capable of nurturing and creating a holy object such as the Abyssal Fruit. It is indeed hard to deal with.” Linley frowned. “But from what Bailey said, last time the Abyssal Fruit appeared, the Abyssal Fruit Tree didn’t prove to be such an obstacle. It just went through the motions of defending before allowing someone to harvest the fruit. Why is it that this time…?”

Right at this moment…

“Swoosh!” Bailey transformed into a blur, once more charging towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree. Linley and Bebe were in no rush, allowing Bailey to go make the attempt.

“There’s no way he’ll be able to deal with the Abyssal Fruit Tree.” Linley said to himself.

He didn’t believe that Bailey had any hope!

“Whoosh!” Those protective branches surrounding the Abyssal Fruit

suddenly opened up, while at the same time reached out towards Bailey in an embrace…and Bailey suddenly struck hard against a nearby branch, relying on the counter-force to propel himself forward towards the Abyssal Fruit. As for those surrounding branches, their speed seemed to have been lowered significantly…

Bailey managed to just barely escape the embrace of those branches, and immediately plucked the translucent, crystalline Abyssal Fruit.

“It is mine!” Bailey was wildly overjoyed.

At the same time, without hesitating at all, Bailey chomped down, swallowing it into his stomach in a matter of seconds.

Linley and Bebe seemed to have been thunderstruck.

“What’s going on?” Bebe didn’t dare to believe it.

“Why didn’t the Abyssal Fruit Tree try to block it?” Linley couldn’t understand it either. Given how many branches the Abyssal Fruit Tree had, it was completely capable of blocking Bailey. Even if it didn’t block him… it could do the same thing it had done to Linley and Bebe, just wrap up the Abyssal Fruit Tree. Bailey naturally wouldn’t be able to acquire it.

But…

The Abyssal Fruit Tree had voluntarily opened its branches, just blocking him slightly.

“It seems as though the Abyssal Fruit Tree was partial towards Bailey.” Linley said, not understanding.

“Rustle…” Suddenly, the entire Abyssal Fruit Tree began to tremble. The main trunk of the Abyssal Fruit Tree sank downwards into the ground, and then its many branches sank into the ground as well. It also pulled the corpse of the giant green snake into the ground. In but the amount of time necessary for a few breaths, the Abyssal Fruit Tree had completely gone

underground.

The Abyssal Fruit Tree had departed!

“Haha…” Sudden, excited laughter rang out. Bailey once more opened his eyes.

“Eh?” Linley had the feeling as though Bailey’s very aura had changed.

“Thank you, you two.” Bailey looked towards Linley and Bebe, while Bloan excitedly ran over as well. “Big Brother, you succeeded?” Bloan knew exactly how much suffering his elder brother had endured for the sake of this Abyssal Fruit. The first time he entered the Abyssal Mountain, although he had seen it, he hadn’t acquired it.

And then, he had waited resolutely while training, preparing for the next time.

Countless years of loneliness. He had successfully endured and also succeeded.

“Gentlemen, last time, the Abyssal Fruit Tree just did some cursory blocks as well. This time, it clearly acted with intent against you two.” Bailey laughed as he looked at Linley and Bebe. “I think…it should be because Bebe killed that Spirit Snake!”

“Spirit Snake?” Linley and Bebe both felt shock in their hearts.

“This Spirit Snake and the Abyssal Fruit Tree were always together. After countless years, they definitely must have formed an extremely strong emotional bond. Tell me…how could the Abyssal Fruit Tree possibly be willing to give you the Abyssal Fruit which it nurtured?” Bailey said, laughing.

Chapter 27 – Sovereign's Emissary

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 27, Sovereign's Emissary

Because they had killed the Spirit Snake, the Abyssal Fruit Tree felt enmity towards them?

Linley and Bebe couldn't help but look at each other, not knowing what to say.

"Haha." Bailey laughed as he spoke. "But of course, that's just my deduction! Otherwise, I have no other explanation for why the Abyssal Fruit Tree would act in such a manner towards you two, while differently towards me. But no matter what…this matter is at an end, and I need to thank both of you for me being able to acquire the Abyssal Fruit."

Linley laughed calmly.

Linley still felt a hint of goodwill towards Bailey. No matter what, Bailey had at least informed him of the appearance of the Abyssal Fruit. If Bailey didn't want for Linley to know…he didn't have to tell Linley at all. In addition, Bailey had toiled for countless millions of years for the sake of this Abyssal Fruit.

Such perseverance made him worthy of acquiring this most precious of treasures, the Abyssal Fruit.

"Wasn't it said that after acquiring the Abyssal Fruit, one would be received by the Sovereign and become a Sovereign's Emissary?" Bebe muttered. "So where's the Sovereign?"

Linley's eyes lit up, and he hurriedly swept the surrounding area with his gaze.

If the Sovereign appeared, his goal would be accomplished.

“Whoooosh.”

Because of the departure of the Abyssal Fruit Tree, the gray fog once more filled this region. Suddenly, not too far away, a humanoid figure suddenly appeared, causing Linley and Bebe’s eyes to light up. “”Could it be that the Sovereign has come??” Linley and Bebe were both very eager.

In but an instant, that figure appeared before them.

The person was very skinny but very tall, and he had a head of unbound, long silver hair. His eyes swept past Linley’s group like the eyes of a hawk, finally halting on Bailey’s body. Laughing calmly, he said, “Bailey, congratulations on acquiring the Abyssal Fruit! Come with me now to the Sovereign’s palace and await the Sovereign’s summons.”

“It’s you!” A look of astonishment appeared on Bailey’s face. “Arthurs [A’se’si]!”

“Right.”

The silver-haired man laughed calmly. “It’s been so many years, but you still remember me. You’ve remained at the Abyssal Mountain all these years. I know all these things. I, too, was surprised…that you actually managed to endure all these years of loneliness and the countless years of waiting. I have to say, I admire you!”

Bailey began to laugh loudly. “That year, when we entered the Abyssal Mountain together, I swore an oath as we entered! That I, Bailey, would either die in the Abyssal Mountain or emerge as the Sovereign’s Emissary!”

Linley and Bebe now completely understood.

So this person wasn’t a Sovereign; rather, it was the person who had acquired the Abyssal Fruit on Bailey’s first trip to the Abyssal Mountain.

“So this person is a Sovereign’s Emissary!” Linley had a thought. “Since he

lives at the Abyssal Mountain, his relationship to the Sovereign should be fairly close. Perhaps through him…"

The goal of Linley's trip to Abyssal Mountain was to meet the Sovereign.

"Big Brother, congratulations." The violet-haired youth, Bloan said with whole-hearted sincerity.

Bailey beamed towards his little brother as well.

"Bailey, let's go. Come with me to the Sovereign's palace." Arthurs urged.

"Arthurs." Bailey said. "How about this. Let me send my little brother out of the gray fog region, and then I'll accompany you."

"No rush." Arthurs laughed calmly. "Come with me, and bring your little brother as well. He can first wait at the border region between the gray fog region and the violet fog region. He'll just wait there a day or so. After you see the Sovereign and have the arrangements made for you, you can send your little brother away at that point. Your little brother is in no particular rush, right?"

"Big Brother, it's just a day." Bloan said very excitedly. "The next time we meet, you'll be a Sovereign's Emissary."

"Actually, the power your big brother now wields after having eaten the Abyssal Fruit is already comparable to that of ordinary Sovereign's Emissaries." Arthurs said calmly. "However, the reason why your big brother is so powerful is because of the Abyssal Fruit. After having acquired the Abyssal Fruit, he has already, naturally become the Emissary of the Netherworld Sovereign."

Bailey laughed and nodded. "Then Arthurs, let's go."

"Wait a moment." Only now did Linley speak.

"Eh?" Arthurs and Bailey both looked over, and Bailey hurriedly

introduced, “Arthurs, this is Linley, who came alongside me. The two of them are reputedly from the Infernal Realm, and also exceedingly powerful.”

“The two of them, even without Abyssal Fruit, are already quite powerful.” Arthurs had a calm look on his face, and he said unhurriedly, “I know exactly what happened in that grand battle. Linley, you are an expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and yet you came to the Netherworld for this Abyssal Fruit? I rather don’t believe it. What other business do you have?” Linley’s Dragonformed appearance already caused quite a few experts to easily guess his status.

Linley’s heart clenched.

This Arthurs seemed to have a rather poor attitude towards him.

“Mr. Arthurs.” Linley said hurriedly. “It is indeed true that the purpose of my visit to the Abyssal Mountain was not for the sake of the Abyssal Fruit. I have an important matter which I wish to ask the Netherworld Sovereign regarding. I would like to ask for your help…to lead me forward to see the Sovereign! I have something extremely, extremely important to discuss!”

Linley’s attitude, appearance, and manner of speech all gave voice to his sincerity.

“Arthurs.” Bailey looked towards Arthurs. Clearly, he too wished for Arthurs to help.

Arthurs just let out a calm laugh, then said casually, “You’ve come an unimaginable distance from the Infernal Realm to the Netherworld, and charged into the Abyssal Mountain without any care for your own life. To do this…of course I know that you must have an important matter to discuss with the Sovereign. However, over the countless planes, there are also many people who wish to see the Sovereign! Can it be that just because you wish to see the Sovereign, that I must lead you? What sort of status does the Sovereign have? Why would the Sovereign be willing to see all of you? In addition, I’m not qualified to lead you there!”

Linley couldn't help but say frantically, "Ar…"

"Enough."

Arthurs said calmly, "I'm simply a Sovereign's Emissary. Don't make things hard for me. If you truly have made up your mind to meet the Sovereign, then continue adventuring forward. After exiting the gray fog region, enter the violet fog region! After you reach the violet fog region, you'll be able to reach the Sovereign's palace. By then, whether or not you will see the Sovereign is a decision for the Sovereign to make."

Linley understood now as well. Arthurs was just a Sovereign's Emissary; in other words, a servant. How could he be qualified to lead Linley over?

When he understood this, he no longer tried to persuade Arthurs.

Arthurs glanced at Linley, then shook his head and said, "Linley, I'll offer you one more word of advice. Just give it up and leave the mountain! The path up ahead isn't so easily walked. Bailey, let's go." As he spoke, Arthurs, Bailey, and Bloan all flew away at high speed.

Linley and Bebe didn't follow. They just stayed there.

"Boss?" Bebe looked at him.

"Continue forward." Linley said calmly. "Arthurs advised me to go down the mountain, yes, but I knew long ago…that the violet fog region is definitely dangerous. But no matter how dangerous it is…I will still go through it!" Whether for the sake of his father or for the sake of his dead friends, he had to go deeper into the Abyssal Mountain.

Bebe nodded slightly. "Wherever the Boss goes, I go."

Linley glanced at Bebe. He couldn't help but laugh, but in his heart, he felt a hint of apology. For now, no one could say exactly how dangerous the violet fog region was. Bebe, however, ignored it all and continued to loyally

follow Linley deeper in. Still, over the course of thousands of years, there was no need for Linley and Bebe to say words of thanks to each other, as though they were outsiders.

“Let’s go.” That’s all Linley said.

“Right.” Bebe followed as well.

The two fearlessly advanced into the gray fog region. In the gray fog region, since they were no longer affected by the gray fog, it was just a matter of luck for exiting it. Linley and Bebe spent nearly half an hour searching, encountering and battling quite a few maddened Highgods on the way. Linley and Bebe didn’t dare to engage in battle for too long, fleeing each time. After half an hour, they finally exited the gray fog region.

While they had been at the base of the mountain, they had seen that the white fog region and the gray fog region took up more than ninety percent of the entire Abyssal Mountain. When Linley and Bebe arrived at the empty space where the gray fog region and the violet fog region intersected, they discovered that, upon taking a closer look, the violet fog region was also fairly large.

“The two of you made it out?” A voice rang out.

Linley and Bebe, who had just made it out of the gray fog region, turned to look. They saw the violet-haired youth, Bloan, laugh while walking towards them. “The two of you came faster than I expected.”

“We can’t compete with you. You had a Sovereign’s Emissary guiding you.” Bebe pursed his lips.

Bloan laughed calmly.

In the past, Bloan had always been frost-faced, but now he often laughed and smiled. There was nothing for it…his only family member, his big brother, was still alive. To Bloan…this surprise was an even greater and better one than acquiring an Abyssal Fruit!”

“Linley.” Bloan looked at Linley. “My big brother and the Sovereign’s Emissary, when leaving, asked me to once more warn you that this violet fog region is very dangerous, far more so than the gray fog region. Although the two of you are very powerful, you killed the Spirit Snake… once you go in, you will have virtually no chance of making it out again.”

Linley frowned.

“Killed the Spirit Snake?” Linley said.

“What does killing the Spirit Snake have to do with the violet fog region?” Bebe asked.

Bloan said, “That Arthurs told me that the Abyssal Fruit Tree normally remains within the violet fog region. Only once in countless years will it enter the gray fog region! Those Highgods have a chance in the gray fog region to acquire the Abyssal Fruit, but there’s no way they will make it in the violet fog region. Now that you’ve killed the Spirit Snake, it’s best if you don’t go to the violet fog region.”

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

They couldn’t help but feel the situation was bad!

So over the course of countless years, the Abyssal Fruit Tree always resided within the violet fog region.

“Thank you for your warning. However, we will still go make the attempt.” Linley said.

“Of course we’ll go. Why should we fear the Abyssal Tree?” Bebe said disdainfully. Although he said this, however, in his heart, Bebe wasn’t confident either. This was because earlier, when he used his innate divine ability against the Abyssal Fruit Tree, he hadn’t been able to find its divine spark.”

Bloan, seeing they wouldn't be dissuaded, had no choice but to say nothing further.

Linley and Bebe flew directly into the violet fog region. Bloan watched them fly in, then let out a sigh. "I hope the two of you will make it out alive." On this trip to the Abyssal Mountain, Linley helped him and also let him see his big brother. Bloan felt quite a bit of goodwill towards Linley and Bebe.

The violet fog region!

"Hey, it feels really nice." Bebe looked suspiciously around, while Linley also vigilantly kept watch. The surrounding area was filled with endless violet fog, and indeed, it was very different from the white fog and the gray fog. Within the violet fog region, not only were there no negative effects to the violet fog, the two felt refreshed and relaxed.

It was much like…

That refreshing feeling they had when they smelled the Abyssal Fruit.

"This violet fog region is so quiet!" Bebe sent mentally. "Boss, it seems as though the violet fog region doesn't have much danger."

"Don't be careless. Advance with caution." Linley said with a frown as he advanced.

Tri-colored regions. From the white fog region to the gray fog region, then to the violet fog region! Linley didn't believe that the violet fog region would really be as calm and peaceful as it seemed on the surface. That Arthurs had also repeatedly warned him as well; clearly, this violet fog region was extremely dangerous!

Large amounts of dwarf trees and bushes were growing on the ground.

There were no other lifeforms present.

Linley and Bebe didn't dare to relax at all, but after advancing for quite some time, they still didn't sense anything.

"Can it be that we are going to just be allowed to advance like this?" Bebe murmured.

Linley's pupils suddenly contracted as he stared to the front.

"What's that!" Bebe called out in shock.

From afar, a large number of branches and leaves could be seen at an astonishing density. The violet fog region had much greater visibility than the other regions, allowing nearly a thousand meters of vision, but despite that, all they could see up ahead was those dense clusters of leaves.

"Let's take a closer look." Linley said in a low voice.

Linley and Bebe advanced forward. Once they drew closer to the trunks of these trees, Linley discovered to his astonishment that…"This…this branch is actually the branch of an Abyssal Fruit Tree!" Linley could recognize it at a glance. The Abyssal Fruit Tree was not like ordinary trees; the branches were very unusual.

An enormous, sturdy branch of multiple meters was present, and not just one; many branches of similar thickness were present!

The many branches all intersected, giving birth to countless smaller branches.

"This is the crown of a tree! An astonishingly large tree crown!"

Linley couldn't help but feel stunned.

Originally, when they had been in the gray fog region, they had seen that the Abyssal Fruit Tree stretched out to hundreds of meters, with the main trunk being just two or three meters. But this same exact type of tree present here…the branches alone were multiple meters thick. What they saw was

nothing more than the crowns of the tree. They hadn't even seen the main trunk yet. How enormous must this tree be?!

"There's more than just one Abyssal Fruit Tree?" Linley couldn't help but feel breathless.

Chapter 28 – Repercussions

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 28, Repercussions

Clearly, the revealed portion of the Abyssal Fruit Tree was like the tip of an iceberg; this definitely wasn't the one which had appeared within the gray fog region. This tree was terrifyingly large, and its branches were sturdier than the trunk of the first Abyssal Fruit Tree.

"Boss, such an enormous Abyssal Fruit Tree." Bebe was somewhat numb.

He hadn't been able to do anything to the Abyssal Fruit Tree earlier.

"Continue forward." Linley growled. At the same time, he immediately set up his Blackstone Space, forming it into a hemisphere that was twenty meters in diameter. A powerful repulsive force was in effect within the Blackstone Space, and any outside objects that entered it would suffer from it.

As they walked…

After having walked for thousands of meters, as far Linley and Bebe could see, there was only that terrifyingly enormous tree crown. That astonishingly large tree crown was formed from countless thick branches in a titanic coil, which was why it was supportable.

"Boss, look up above." Bebe suddenly said.

Linley couldn't help but follow Bebe's gaze. Within the scattered green leaves, a small green snake had appeared atop one of the leaves.

"Green snake!" Linley was astonished. "This small green snake represents that a giant green snake must be here as well! These small green snakes all rely on the lifeforce of the giant green Spirit Snakes. In other words…aside from the Spirit Snake which Bebe killed, there are other Spirit Snakes

present!" Linley felt his heart begin to clench.

Suddenly…

Linley couldn't help but narrow his eyes. On many of the tree leaves above, one green snake after another began to emerge. These palm-sized, finger-wide green snakes all stared at Linley and Bebe, but they didn't attack.

"So many!" Bebe sent mentally in alarm.

"Keep going forward." Linley ignored the green serpents, continuing to advance forward.

While advancing forward, Linley discovered that a large number of green snakes were appearing everywhere. On the road over alone, hundreds of thousands of green snakes had appeared, far more than the number which had appeared within the gray fog region. Linley felt astonished and shaken as well.

There were so many little green snakes…then what of the Spirit Snake?

"There's the main trunk!" Linley and Bebe couldn't help but stare into the distance.

After first having seen the tree crowns, they had walked for nearly ten thousand meters. Linley and Bebe now finally saw the main trunk of this Abyssal Fruit Tree, and when they saw it…good heavens, how could this be a 'trunk'? This was a wall! A tall, towering wall! The main trunk of this Abyssal Fruit Tree's diameter was hundreds of meters long!

The main trunk had a diameter of hundreds of meters!

As for the crown, it reached nearly ten thousand meters!

How enormous a tree was this? And more importantly…it was an Abyssal Fruit Tree! In the Netherworld, there were other thick trees like this! But the material those trees were made of was inferior. It must be understood…the

branches of these trees, which served as their arms, were unbreakable even for Linley, who only managed to chop halfway through with a full strength blow.

The more precious something was, the rarer it was.

This sort of large tree was far too sturdy, and so it should be a bit smaller. But this was too enormous.

“The trunk alone is hundreds of meters thick. There’s no way I would be able to chop through it.” Linley sighed to himself. The material a tree’s trunk was made out of was generally of higher quality than even the branches. And given how thick the trunk was? How could it be destructible?

“Boss, look above, look, quick! Abyssal Fruit!” Bebe cried out in alarm.

Linley raised his head to look.

Above this Abyssal Fruit Tree, spots of violet light could be seen flashing through the branches. Although they were very far away and covered up by branches, making them hard to see, the dots of violet light were flashing like precious gemstones and so were very eye-catching. “Abyssal Fruit! And…there’s dozens of them!” Linley couldn’t help but draw nearer, and Bebe did the same.

After drawing closer, they were able to see it more clearly as well.

That crystalline skin, that tender, watery violet fruit…the Abyssal Fruits was amidst the green leaves. These fruits were like little lanterns hanging in the sky. There were dozens of them.

“So much Abyssal Fruit!” Bebe was stupefied.

“But in countless years, there’s only been four Abyssal Fruit to appear in the Netherworld, including the one Bailey just acquired! But here, there are actually so many!” Linley was still calm, because Linley understood…that these Abyssal Fruits wouldn’t be easily taken by him, as if they were, others

would have taken them away long ago.

After entering the violet fog region, he hadn't met with any danger yet.

"Haha, Abyssal Fruit. So there are so many of them." Bebe's eyes were shining.

"Spirit Snake, where are you? Emerge." Linley said coldly. At the same time, his gaze flashed past the crown of a nearby tree, where the tightly clustered green snakes were all staring at Linley and Bebe. Bebe immediately laughed loudly, "Hey, why have so many little snakes pop out? Are you trying to scare us? Hurry up and have your main form pop out as well."

"As you wish!" A cold, fierce voice echoed out from within the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

Linley and Bebe immediately turned to look.

"Hisssss…"

A giant green snake that was as thick as an arm but which was tens of meters long slithered out from within the leaves. That soft, serpentine body coiled around one of the thick branches, its serpentine head raised and staring coldly at Linley and Bebe.

"You…" Bebe was about to say something, but he came to a sudden halt.

Because next to this giant green snake, yet another giant green snake appeared, its body slightly larger. This giant green snake also coiled around a branch, but its body drooped downwards slightly as it rested against it. Its twin eyes glowed with violet light as it also stared at Linley and Bebe, its gaze filled with a killing intent.

"Hissssss…"

The leaves constantly trembled as one giant green snake after another

emerged from the depths.

Bebe kept counting aloud. “Three, four, five…eight, nine!”

He finally stopped counting. There were nine giant green snakes which coiled about, close to each other, wrapping themselves either around the trunk or the branches. These nine giant snakes all stared angrily at Linley and Bebe. In terms of size, these giant green snakes were all roughly comparable, and were similar to the giant green snake in the gray fog region as well.

“There’s nine of them. This is a bit tricky.” Bebe frowned.

These giant green snakes were very hard to deal with. If Bebe wanted to kill them, he would have to rely on his innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’. After such a long period of time, Bebe’s spiritual energy had recovered, true, but there were nine of the giant green snakes here.

“Nine of them!” Linley felt that this was rather nettlesome as well.

“Bebe, we don’t want the Abyssal Fruit. Let’s go now.” Linley sent mentally. After so many years, nobody had been able to acquire so many Abyssal Fruit. Forget about the nine troublesome Spirit Snakes for now; what was truly terrifying was that frighteningly thick and enormous Abyssal Fruit Tree. If such an enormous Abyssal Fruit Tree were to attack the two of them, that would be troublesome.

It was best to leave quickly and depart the violet fog region.

“We don’t want it?” Bebe was stunned.

“Hurry and go.” Linley glanced at him, and Bebe acknowledged, “Fine, then.”

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Linley and Bebe simultaneously transformed into two blurs, fleeing to the

side at high speed.

“Running?”

Those nine giant green snakes instantly shot out from the Abyssal Fruit Tree. They were like nine bolts of green lightning, streaking directly towards Linley and Bebe. Unfortunately, Linley and Bebe were fleeing at high speed, and the space around them had the Blackstone Space set up. Those nine giant snakes weren’t able to catch up to Linley at all.

“You want to chase us? In your dreams.” Bebe laughed as he spoke.

“Rustle…” Suddenly, many branches from the tree crown up above lowered, pressing down like a mountain and falling to the ground. Linley and Bebe only felt the ground ahead of them turn black; the road was completely sealed off.

“The Abyssal Fruit Tree will block us when we flee?” After having previously tested the toughness of these branches, Linley and Bebe turned without even hesitating.

And as they did, they saw that the nine giant snakes had already come to a halt and were coiling on the ground in front of them.

“You want to flee! Haha…” A deep, rumbling voice echoed out from the mouths of one of the green snakes. Its insidious violet eyes flashed as it stared at Linley and Bebe. “Let me tell you this. The violet fog region of the Abyssal Mountain will be your tomb!”

A cold voice rang out from another giant green snake. “The two of you are called Linley and Bebe, right? You are quite formidable. You actually killed our elder sister! Over the course of countless years, we ten siblings have always been happily together. Our elder sister went to deliver the Abyssal Fruit to you, but you actually killed her! Haha…even if all nine of us have to die, we will kill you and avenge our elder sister!”

“Right, avenge our elder sister!” Another giant green snake howled angrily

as well.

The nine giant snakes all had rage and hatred flashing in their violet eyes.

Linley couldn't help but feel that his head hurt.

"So that Spirit Snake really did have a connection to these nine Spirit Snakes. It was actually their elder sister?" Linley had known long ago that there would be trouble, but he hadn't expected that the Spirit Snake had nine siblings.

"Hey, what are you talking about? Your elder sister went to 'deliver' the Abyssal Fruit to us?" Bebe said angrily. "You all have mental issues. Your elder sister was 'delivering' us Abyssal Fruit? Then why did she do everything she could to impede us? If your elder sister hadn't gone too far, why would I be so bored as to kill her?"

Actually, acting as a guardian was the mission of the Spirit Snakes. It was the same each time.

By using the Spirit Snakes as guardians, a person with sufficient power would be selected.

As the other nine siblings of the first Spirit Snake saw it, their elder sister had indeed gone to deliver the Abyssal Fruit to these outsiders. That 'impeding' she did was nothing more than a test. She went to deliver Abyssal Fruit, but ended up being killed? How could her nine siblings not be infuriated?

"Second Brother, don't waste words with them. Kill them!" A giant green snake said.

"Kill!" The deep voice rang out again.

Instantly, the nine giant green snakes split up into nine directions, forming a spherical trap around Linley and Bebe. However, Linley's Blackstone Space was twenty meters in diameter, while this 'trap' was also very large. The

nine giant green snakes were all outside of the Blackstone Space. The nine giant green snakes began to slither about, and nine pairs of three-star violet pupils stared unblinkingly at Linley and Bebe.

“Hiss…” They slithered about at high speed, forming countless blurs.

Linley and Bebe weren’t able to clearly see the snakes at all, just nine streaks of violet light. The streaks of violet light actually started twisted about, seeming like strings which began to constrict the space between them, like a fishnet compressing down towards Linley and Bebe.

“What sort of technique is this?” Linley couldn’t quite understand, but he didn’t overthink things. His immediate response was…the sudden expansion of the Blackstone Space, which instantly expanded to trap the nine giant green snakes within. The powerful repulsive force was applied to the green snakes, and the speed of the green snakes couldn’t help but drop, and their bodies couldn’t help but be moved as well.

Their joint attack was disrupted!

“Attack that Linley!” A furious shout rang out.

Instantly, those nine giant green snakes almost simultaneously shot out, transforming into nine green streaks of light as they charged towards Linley, biting down towards Linley with their fangs bared. But because of the Blackstone Space, their speed wasn’t that fast. Actually, the most powerful attack of these Spirit Snakes was to use their venomous fangs to bite others, but they knew…

Bebe’s body was too powerful. Their elder sister’s fangs had shattered, and yet she still wasn’t able to harm Bebe.

Thus, they temporarily chose to deal with Linley first!

The venomous fangs of these Spirit Snakes were on a completely different level from the venomous fangs of the little green snakes. A bite from the venomous fangs of these Spirit Snakes was even more terrifying than the

little green snakes wriggling in one's body!

Linley saw those nine giant maws swing open and bite towards him. He couldn't help but be stunned. "Given how troublesome it was to be bitten by those little green snakes, if these Spirit Snakes bite me…I'm not Bebe!" The defense of his draconic scales was indeed powerful, but even the draconic scales of Patriarch Gislason wasn't as powerful as the defense of Beirut and Bebe…the level of godspark weapons.

"Hmph." Linley, with a thought, made the repulsive force of his Blackstone Space transform into a downward pull!

The nine serpentine heads bit down, but as they did, they suddenly sank downwards. Linley instantly activated his 'Spiritual Chaos' technique. Linley's current Spiritual Chaos technique would somewhat affect even Seven Star Fiends.

"Eh?" Linley discovered, to his surprise, that these nine giant snakes weren't affected by the Spiritual Chaos at all. The nine giant green heads once more rose up, biting towards Linley. Linley wielded the godspark sword, Mirage, and delivered a full force blow using the Laws of the Earth. Where Mirage slashed past, space trembled and split apart.

In the Blackstone Space, the giant green snakes found it hard to dodge.

"Slash!" One of the giant green snakes was struck. Its entire body trembled, and a large wound appeared on its body, with violet blood oozing out of it.

"What tough skin." Linley was secretly surprised. His attack contained the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and in terms of attack power, was much stronger than Bebe's strikes. But he was only able to wound the giant green snake.

"Raaaaaaaaaargh!" The giant green snake howled in agony, biting down in rage as its two sharp fangs glistened with a strange black light.

"Swoosh." Linley instantly retreated, lightning-fast.

Nine in pursuit, one fleeing while occasionally delivering a few sword blows.

“Second Brother, the gravitational power of this bastard’s Gravitational Space is too strong. We aren’t able to catch up to him within the range of his effect.” A giant green snake said frantically. These nine green snakes realized what the problem was now.

“Rustle…” Right at this moment, the Abyssal Fruit Tree began to tremble violently.

Chapter 29 – Invincible

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 29, Invincible

“Boss!” Bebe was alarmed.

Linley’s face changed dramatically as well. From the leaves of the Abyssal Fruit Tree, those truly innumerable little green snakes all shot out towards him, whether from close by or from afar. They formed a vast web in the sky, filling Linley’s field of vision as they shot out towards him from within. The number of little green snakes was so great, they were more than enough to completely bury Linley alive!

The nine giant green snakes laughed coldly as they watched.

“First kill that Linley, then deal with the other one.” They were very confident, because Linley’s draconic scales were not yet so powerful as to allow him to ignore the bites of those little green snakes.

“Hrm?” Linley, with a thought…

“Rumble…” A thick earthen yellow light sprang up, and large amounts of earth-type divine power wildly spread out. With Linley at the center, in a range of a hundred meters, an earthen yellow cube of a hundred meters in length suddenly appeared.

Blackstone Prison!

Many little green snakes had already entered the Blackstone Prison, while many other green snakes threw themselves against the walls of the Blackstone Prison, attempting to bite through and charge in. But when they charged in, they discovered that they were separated into yet another little room. Immediately, the little green snakes began to wildly bite everywhere and fly everywhere.

Every single sealed room was cube-shaped and was 2.5 meters long.

There were 64,000 little sealed rooms within this hundred-meter long Blackstone Prison.

“Raaaaaawr!” A furious roar rang out as the nine giant green snakes all twirled their bodies, biting through and smashing one room after another. But as soon as they shattered one wall, it would quickly reform. At the same time, the Blackstone Prison was constantly changing and moving about, quickly separating the nine Spirit Snakes.

Within the Blackstone Prison.

Linley suddenly emerged from within one of the sealed rooms, easily killing the little green snakes present within this room, then quickly departing. The other little green snakes, knowing that Linley had appeared, all hurried over, but by the time they arrived, Linley had moved elsewhere long ago.

In the Blackstone Prison, Linley was able to move about at high speed!

And given that the sixty four thousand rooms were all filled with a powerful gravitational pull, the green snakes were completely unable to surround him and attack en masse.

“You want to kill me with one move?” Linley laughed calmly as he slaughtered these little green snakes. “These little green snakes possess tremendous amounts of energy as well. By killing them, I am definitely injuring the nine Spirit Snakes as well.” Linley didn’t mind working a little harder and killing a few more of the little green snakes.

Linley began to wildly slaughter and massacre the little green snakes. The Blackstone Prison was under Linley’s control, and Linley knew exactly where there were numerous little green snakes and where there were few of them. The little green snakes suffered, but were unable to group up en masse to surround and attack Linley. In the Blackstone Prison, they could do nothing but wait as though they were blinded.

The nine giant green snakes, now outside the Blackstone Prison, were already furious.

“What is this damn thing?” A clear voice rang out from the mouth of one of the giant green snakes. She stared angrily at the enormous earthen yellow cube. “It repairs as soon as we break it!”

“If this continues, we’ll lose a great deal of energy.” A hoarse voice rang out. “We won’t be able to kill Linley within those rooms.”

Immediately, under their control, the many green snakes began to wildly flee, biting through one wall after another before escaping the Blackstone Prison. All of the green snakes fled, returning to the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

“Rumble…” The Blackstone Prison transformed into energy, then vanished.

Linley and Bebe appeared.

“Haha, you wanted to kill us, right?” Bebe laughed from rage. “Come, then. Let me see what other tricks you have?”

Linley stared coldly at the nine giant green snakes as well.

“You are indeed very strong!” A deep, hoarse voice rang out. Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but turn to stare at the crown of the Abyssal Fruit Tree. The sound came from there. With a ‘rustle’ sound of leaves parting, a serpentine form covered in golden scales and which was more than two meters thick slowly slithered out.

A powerful aura emanated forth from it.

Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but hold their breaths.

“My heavens…” Bebe stared with wide eyes.

“This…” Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes. The colossal golden

snake continued to slither out from the crown of the trees. The part of its slithering, serpentine body that appeared was already more than two hundred meters long. Moments later, the entire body of the colossal golden snake was completely revealed. This was an enormous golden snake that was nearly five or six hundred meters long and two meters thick.

The golden snake coiled around the branches of the Abyssal Fruit Tree. Its ice-cold pupils were jade-green, and it stared down towards Linley and Bebe.

“Father.” The nine giant green snakes immediately scurried over.

“Father, it’s the two of them! You have to avenge our elder sister!” The nine giant green snakes all spoke in the human tongue.

“Don’t worry.” A low, hoarse voice rang out from the giant golden snake’s mouth.

“Leave one of them for me.” An icy cold voice rang out from behind. Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but stare, then immediately swivel to look. A giant silver snake whose body was comparable in size to the giant golden snake flew out from afar. The thing which astonished about Linley about this giant silver snake was…

It had nine heads!

And each head of this nine-headed silver snake had black pupils, as black as the deepest recesses of the abyss itself.

“Mother.” The nine giant green snakes immediately called out.

“You returned?” The colossal golden snake said.

“My daughter died. How could I not?” The nine-headed silver snake said coldly.

Bebe let out a snort. “No wonder you gave birth to a pack of little freaks.

The parents are both freaks as well!" The aura emanating from these two colossal snakes was simply too terrifying, to the point where the aura alone made Linley and Bebe feel their heads go slightly dizzy. Linley and Bebe both understood that this gold-silver snake pair was far more powerful than their children.

"Hmph, aren't you a freak as well, you little creature?" The colossal golden snake stared at Bebe, its jade-green eyes filled with a cold look.

"The one who killed our daughter was him?" The nine-headed silver serpent stared at Bebe.

"Right." The colossal golden snake said.

"Then…let me deal with that little creature." The nine-headed silver serpent said in its hoarse voice.

The colossal golden snake's giant head turned slightly as it stared at Linley. "Fine, then hand this punk from the Four Divine Beasts clan to me! Hmph…even when his ancestor, the Azure Dragon, was still alive, they wouldn't dare act in this manner towards our Abyssal Mountain. But now, the Azure Dragon's descendants actually dare to kill our children!"

"Enough of that." The nine-headed silver serpent said emotionlessly.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

With Linley at the center, an earthen yellow aura instantly spread out, encompassing an area of nearly a thousand meters, swallowing up the colossal golden snake and the nine-headed silver serpent. The two giant snakes, suffering the sudden attack of the gravitational pull, couldn't help but have their massive serpentine bodies droop down slightly. Moments later, however, they recovered and adjusted to compensate.

"What powerful gravity!" The colossal golden snake looked towards Linley. "You actually have some sort of a connection to the Redbud Sovereign of the Infernal Realm. However…despite that, you still must die!"

“What, you think you’ll be able to kill us just because you say so? Do you have the ability?” Bebe said coldly.

Very suddenly…

The colossal golden snake opened its mouth, and instantly, a thick, jade-green light shot out from within the colossal golden snake’s mouth, enveloping towards Linley. This jade-green light wasn’t impacted at all by the Blackstone Space. Linley wasn’t able to dodge in time, and was completely covered by the jade-green light, which instantly invaded Linley’s body.

Within Linley’s mind.

The green light formed into countless specks of green, wildly corroding, striking against, and chewing against Linley’s soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Much like attacking a city, the many green spots were dispersed everywhere, with quite a few of the green spots wildly attacking the ‘bandage’ over the flaw.

Linley had spent two hundred years of work on the bandage, and as a result of his repair work, the bandage was now exceedingly sturdy.

Although it couldn’t compare to the other parts of the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, it was still comparable to most ordinary soul-protecting artifacts.

“Crackle…” The bandage was quickly being depleted.

“Not good.” Linley felt that things were going wrong.

He immediately controlled his spiritual energy to help defend as well. As those jade-green spots ravenously slammed against the bandage, with a ‘bang!’, the bandage was finally broken through. Only a sliver of green spots remained, however. Linley’s spiritual energy wildly charged through, finally extinguishing the remnants of the energy.

Linley's defense had held.

But…the repairs he had carried out on the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact over the course of two centuries were completely wiped out in this single attack.

At the same time…

The nine-headed silver serpent used its supreme technique as well. The black eyes in its nine enormous silver heads stared at Bebe, while at the same time, its body began to form into an enormous illusion. The nine-headed silver serpent began to activate its awe-inspiring innate divine ability…

"Swish!" "Swish!"

The nine-headed silver serpent's nine pairs of eyes simultaneously shot out with nine rays of pitch-black light.

Eighteen rays of light shot towards Bebe. Bebe dodged, but the black light curved as though sentient, then pierced into Bebe's pupils.

"Arrrrgh!" Bebe let out an agonized call.

Linley just finished his defense. Turning to look, Linley was shocked. "Bebe!"

"Not dead?" The colossal golden serpent, seeing that Linley had taken his attack without dying, couldn't help but feel amazed. It knew very well how powerful this technique of his was…even ordinary soul-protecting divine artifacts wouldn't be able to resist it.

"Haha…that was rather powerful." Bebe suddenly began to laugh loudly as he stared furiously at the nine-headed silver serpent.

Linley couldn't help but feel relieved.

“Impossible.” The nine-headed silver serpent couldn’t believe it. “This…his body is already so powerful. How could his soul be so powerful as well?” The heavens were equitable. Bebe’s body was already so tough that even the nine-headed silver serpent was jealous of him. With his body so powerful, logically speaking, his soul should be a bit weaker.

But…

Bebe had actually been able to endure her innate divine ability.

“I don’t want to kill you. Don’t go too far.” Linley shouted. He had come this time to ask the Sovereign for help. Linley had the feeling that these two giant snakes should have some sort of connection to the Sovereign, and so didn’t want to unleash killing attacks.

“Roaaaaaaaaaaaar!” The colossal golden snake wasn’t the slightest bit receptive to this. With a bellow, it suddenly shot forward, spreading wide its maw and biting viciously towards Linley.

“His speed is actually so fast.” Linley was inwardly surprised.

However, Linley didn’t dare to allow himself be bitten by this colossal golden snake.

“Boss, let’s do it.” Bebe sent mentally.

“Hmph.” Linley stared at the attacking colossal golden snake. His eyes grew cold.

Behind Linley and Bebe, illusory blurs simultaneously appeared. Behind Linley was a coiling Azure Dragon Phantom, which was staring coldly at the colossal golden snake. As for Bebe, behind Bebe appeared the enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat, which was also staring at the nine-headed silver serpent!

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

“BOOM!” Suddenly, the earth split apart, and large amounts of slender, long tendrils shot outwards, blocking directly in front of Linley and Bebe. The energy which Linley and Bebe had expended in using their innate divine abilities was directly blocked by these tendrils. Or, to be more precise…were all expended upon the tendrils.

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

The many branches and tendrils which were hit by these two mighty innate divine abilities weren’t affected at all. “Why is there no response?” Bebe couldn’t believe it. Suddenly, one of the tendrils shot backwards, landing upon Bebe’s body. Although it passed through the Blackstone Space, the speed at which this tendril struck out still was enough to make it impossible for Bebe to dodge.

“WHAP!” Bebe was struck and sent flying far away.

Red blood splattered out into the air.

“BANG!” Bebe slammed into the ground. He stared at his chest, where a wound that was so deep that bones were visible had appeared. Blood was dripping out of it. Bebe stared at his wound, stupefied.

Linley stared at this in disbelief as well.

Bebe was actually injured?

His body was comparable to a godspark weapon…but he was actually injured?

“Bebe.” Linley immediately moved to Bebe’s side. Bebe’s wound was naturally closing, but Bebe still stared at the branches in front of him in disbelief. These branches were clearly those of the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

“Enough. Killing their daughter was one thing. There’s no need to kill any further.” A deep voice rang out from within the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

Atop the main trunk of the Abyssal Fruit Tree, an enormous face suddenly appeared, hovering there and staring towards Linley and Bebe.

“This is…?”

Linley and Bebe both felt a powerful aura.

“Sovereign!” The colossal golden serpent and the nine-headed silver serpent immediately looked towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree and said hurriedly, “He killed our daughter. Sovereign, you cannot pardon them!”

“Sovereign?”

Linley and Bebe stared, stunned, at the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

Chapter 30 – Unable to Help

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 30, Unable to Help

Linley now completely understood everything. No wonder the Abyssal Fruit Tree which had appeared within the gray fog region was able to so easily deal with Linley and Bebe, and Bebe's innate divine ability, 'Godeater', wasn't able to locate the divine spark of the Abyssal Fruit Tree either. Now, it seemed, the former Abyssal Fruit Tree was nothing more than a small part of the Abyssal Fruit Tree before them. It wasn't strange for a part of a Sovereign to have such power.

The connection between the Abyssal Fruit Tree in the gray fog region and this Abyssal Fruit Tree was like the relationship between the green snakes and the Spirit Snakes. The green snakes didn't have a soul, and that small Abyssal Fruit Tree naturally had no soul either.

"Sovereign!"

Linley hurriedly called out, while at the same time, he sunk to his knees with a banging sound.

The colossal golden snake and the nine-headed silver serpent stared angrily at Linley and Bebe, then the colossal golden snake begged, "Sovereign, these two harmed my daughter. Sovereign, you know very well what occurred. Sovereign…you must avenge our daughter!" The colossal golden snake pressed its enormous head against the ground as well.

"Bang!" Bebe fell to his knees as well, saying urgently, "Sovereign, we can't be blamed. Back then, we didn't know." Bebe was afraid that the Sovereign wouldn't assist Linley.

"Hmph." The nine-headed silver serpent and the colossal golden snake stared angrily towards Bebe and Linley.

Linley didn't interject further. He just knelt there, awaiting the Sovereign's words.

"Enough." A hint of jade light flashed through the eyes of the enormous face atop the main trunk of the Abyssal Fruit Tree as the face stared at this group of people. Everyone its gaze swept past, whether currently nervous or enraged, instantly fell silent. "Gold, although it is true that they are at fault in this matter, their sins do not warrant death…as they didn't actually know the truth."

The Sovereign had branches present. Naturally, the Sovereign had seen everything clearly.

He, too, had wanted to save the Spirit Snake, but the power of the branches present was unable to block Bebe's innate divine ability.

The nine-headed silver serpent immediately glanced at the colossal golden snake.

She knew that her husband was on very good terms with the Abyssal Fruit Tree Sovereign.

The colossal golden snake hurriedly said in supplication, "Sovereign, my daughter, Tina [Ti'na]. You watched her grow up. Can it be that you truly won't avenge Tina's death?" Others wouldn't dare to speak to a Sovereign in such a matter, but he did! This was because he had slowly grown up over the course of countless years along with the Abyssal Fruit Tree, from antiquity until present.

"Gold!" The Abyssal Fruit Tree's enormous face frowned. "Leave it at this."

When these words came out, the nine giant green snakes, the nine-headed silver serpent, and the colossal golden snake didn't dare say anything further. Since the Sovereign had already made his proclamation, there would be no good result if they continued to persist.

“Linley, the two of you can leave.” The giant face said emotionlessly.

“Sovereign!”

Linley knelt there and said in supplication, “I have come from the Infernal Realm to the Netherworld for the sake of meeting with you, Sovereign. I have something to beg of you. I hope…” As soon as Linley’s words came out, and before he finished speaking, the nearby colossal golden snake and nine-headed silver serpent instantly breathed through their nostrils in rage.

“In your dreams!” The colossal golden snake bellowed. “The Sovereign has already shown grace and kindness to you by not killing you. You still dream of having the Sovereign help you? F*ck off! Immediately f*ck off!”

“Immediately f*ck off!” The nine green snakes also bellowed out in succession.

As for the nine-headed silver serpent, she was so angry that her serpentine scales began to shine as she stared at Linley. “Hurry up and leave, and we two, husband and wife, will spare you. If you stay here and futilely hope for the Sovereign to help you, then I, Yennaway [Yin’na’wei], will today kill you, even if it costs me my life!” The reason why she didn’t immediately attack Linley and Bebe was first because of their power, and second because of the Sovereign’s command.

Linley dared to ask the Sovereign for help? Naturally, they were no longer able to suppress their rage.

“The Sovereign hasn’t even spoken, and yet all of you interject?” Bebe bellowed angrily.

It was indeed very impolite to interject in front of a Sovereign, but Bebe clearly had no idea about the nature of the relationship between the Abyssal Fruit Tree and the Spirit Snakes. The giant face atop the Abyssal Fruit Tree’s trunk swept everyone with its gaze. “All of you, quiet. Let’s listen to Linley speak first.”

“Sovereign.” The colossal golden snake stared in surprise towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

The Abyssal Fruit Tree glanced sideways at him, and he immediately fell silent.

Linley said gratefully, “Sovereign, the reason I have come to beg you for your help is that I hope you can help me…help me find my family and friends, who have become undead within the Netherworld. To let them regain their former memories! I know that you, Sovereign, are able to do this. I hope you will take pity on them, Sovereign.” Linley pressed his forehead against the ground.

Bebe, seeing this, couldn’t help but feel his eyes turn moist.

When had Linley ever acted in such a manner?

“I hope you will take pity on them, Sovereign.” Bebe also knelt down, his head pressing against the ground.

Linley and Bebe both begged, while the Abyssal Fruit Tree was momentarily silent. Linley, on his knees, felt restless nervousness in his heart. He had come all this way for the Sovereign’s response. What Linley feared the most was…the Sovereign’s refusal. Linley didn’t wish for his hope to be destroyed!

“You can leave.” The deep voice rang out anew.

Linley’s entire body trembled.

Bebe also raised his head in disbelief as he looked towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree.

“Sovereign, can’t you just help out?” Bebe stuttered.

Linley raised his head to look at the Sovereign as well, his eyes filling with tears. He begged earnestly, “Sovereign…”

“Enough. There’s nothing I can do to help.” The deep voice rang out.

“Nothing you can do to help?” Linley raised his head, staring at the Abyssal Fruit Tree. Not a hint of emotion could be seen on the giant face atop the Abyssal Fruit Tree. Linley said frantically, “How could you be unable to help? I know, Netherworld Sovereign, that any of you are able to find the undead which the souls of the dead are transformed into, and to restore their memories to them.”

“Hmph.” The nearby nine-headed silver serpent let out a cold snort, while the colossal gold snake and the nine giant green snakes all stared coldly towards Linley and Bebe.

“You are begging the wrong Sovereign.” The colossal golden snake snickered.

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

A deep voice rang out from atop the Abyssal Fruit Tree. “It is indeed a fact that I cannot help you in this. Because…I am not a Netherworld Sovereign. I am a Sovereign of Life.”

Linley and Bebe, hearing this, were stunned.

The Sovereign of the Abyssal Mountain wasn’t a Netherworld Sovereign?

“You’ve come to the Abyssal Mountain. If you wish to find a Netherworld Sovereign, it’s still simple…continue forward, to the Sovereign’s palace within the violet fog region and wait patiently. However, let me give you a word of warning…the Sovereign of Death’s temper isn’t as good as mine. This Sovereign of Death might just kill you because of Tina’s death.” The Abyssal Fruit Tree said.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

So this Abyssal Mountain actually had two Sovereigns!

One, a Sovereign of Life. The other, a Netherworld Sovereign of Death!

Linley was able to guess why this Abyssal Fruit Tree said he had a good ‘temper’. He had stayed here for countless years, and trained in the Edicts of Life. It was normal for him to be good-tempered. But the Sovereign of Death trained in the Edicts of Death. In the Infernal Realm and the Netherworld, Linley hadn’t met a single practitioner of the Edicts of Death who had a good temper.

Most of them were resolute and violent!

“Boss, should we go?” Bebe sent mentally.

“Of course.” Linley didn’t hesitate.

Bebe hurriedly sent mentally, “Didn’t you hear what the Sovereign of Life just said? That Sovereign of Death has a temper, and isn’t as good-natured as this one. If he kills the two of us because that Spirit Snake died, then that would be such a stifling, unhappy death. As I see it, there are seven Sovereigns in the Netherworld. Let’s go somewhere else and try.”

Linley frowned.

Linley was prepared to make the attempt for the sake of saving his father and friends. Too much time had already passed, and so he definitely had to try. But if Bebe were to suffer for it…

“Bebe.” Linley looked towards Bebe, then sent mentally, “Don’t go see the Sovereign of Death. I’ll just go by myself.”

“Boss.” Bebe stared at Linley.

“Don’t go.” Linley’s mentally transmitted words carried the weight of an order. “I still have my divine fire clone, but if you were to die, you would have no divine clones left.”

But Bebe hurriedly said, “Boss, say no more. If the Sovereign of Death truly wishes to kill me, even if I flee from the Abyssal Mountain, the Sovereign will easily be able to find and kill me. As I see it, it’s best I don’t run. I can’t be completely blamed for what happened anyhow. That Spirit Snake tried to kill me, after all. Can it be that I am not permitted to fight back? I imagine that the Sovereign of Death will listen to reason.”

Linley said helplessly, “Bebe, you think a Sovereign will listen to you reason with him?”

“We have the medallion from the Bloodridge Sovereign. The Sovereign of Death, for the sake of the Bloodridge Sovereign’s face, probably wouldn’t kill us.” Bebe said hurriedly, “And if he wants to kill me, there’s no point in running.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Indeed. If a Sovereign wished to kill someone, there was nowhere to run.

“The two of you actually dare to go see the Sovereign of Death?” The nine-headed silver serpent snickered.

Linley and Bebe genuflected once more towards the Abyssal Fruit Tree. “Thank you for your guidance, Sovereign. Might I ask, how can we exit the violet fog region?”

“Just go straight, that will be enough.” The Abyssal Fruit Tree’s deep voiced echoed, and then the branches began to tremble. Instantly, the violet fog up ahead began to roil and billow. It parted into two sides, revealing a clear path with no fog at all. “Follow this path and walk straight forward. You will be able to reach it.”

The Abyssal Fruit Tree had already given its advice.

Although it was good-natured, it wouldn’t repeatedly warn them.

“Thank you, Sovereign.” Linley and Bebe said gratefully.

The enormous body of that Abyssal Fruit Tree moved slightly, and then transformed into a hazy azure blur before vanishing. That enormous Abyssal Fruit Tree, which took up a space of ten thousand meters or more, vanished just like that. Linley and Bebe just stood there, immediately advancing forward along the designated route.

The colossal golden snake and the nine-headed silver serpent just laughed coldly.

“You really are useless.” The nine-headed silver serpent snickered. “You’ve been with the Sovereign for so many years, but you still can’t persuade him.”

“Alas, the Sovereign is simply too good-natured.” The colossal golden snake said resignedly.

“Watch me.” The nine-headed silver serpent stared coldly at Linley and Bebe’s backs. “Given my Sovereign’s temper, as long as I say something… these two will definitely die!”

The colossal golden snake was on good terms with the Abyssal Fruit Tree, while the nine-headed silver snake was on good terms with the Sovereign of Death.

On the way over, Linley and Bebe moved extremely quickly, and they didn’t encounter any dangers on the way over. Very soon, Linley and Bebe saw that in the distance, there was an empty area where there was no violet fog at all. Linley and Bebe immediately sped up, transforming into two blurred streaks and exiting the violet fog region!

“We finally arrived.” Bebe said jubilantly.

Linley raised his head to look as well.

In front of them was an empty area filled with grass and flowers.

“Up above!” Linley couldn’t help but look upwards, as in the skies above, a violet-black palace was hovering in the air. This violet-black palace was hundreds of meters tall, like a small mountain. The top of the violet-black palace was a tower-styled tip, and at the top of the tip was an enormous sphere.

The sphere flashed with countless bolts of lightning.

With the sphere as the origin, large amounts of lightning chains scattered downwards in every direction.

“So this is where the Heaven-Earth Chains come from.” Bebe’s eyes lit up.

“It seems this is the Sovereign’s palace.” Linley took a deep breath.

Right at this moment, outside the Sovereign’s palace gate, two figures flew out. Linley immediately recognized that it was Arthurs and Bailey. The two of them, seeing Linley and Bebe, immediately flew over.

“Linley, you really came!” Bailey said in surprise.

Arthurs said in disbelief as well, “Yennaway and her husband, those two great snakes, didn’t attack?” Arthurs knew exactly how strong those two were. Even he would find it hard to act against them.

“Of course they did, but they weren’t strong enough and couldn’t do anything to us.” Bebe said with a snort.

Arthurs and Bailey couldn’t help but feel surprised.

“Arthurs, Bailey, the Sovereign, he…” Linley just was about to speak.

“Hmph!” A cold snort rang out.

Linley and Bebe couldn’t help but turn their heads to look back. Arthurs and Bailey looked over as well. Two skinny figures, a male and a female, were walking over. The grim-looking man was dressed in a long golden robe,

while the woman with black pupils wore a long silver robe. Behind them were nine young men and women, all dressed in long green robes.

“We weren’t able to do anything to them, true.” The silver-robed woman snickered. “However…very soon, they will still die.”

Chapter 31 – The Chief Sovereign of Death

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 31, The Chief Sovereign of Death

From the aura alone, Linley could clearly tell that this silver-robed woman in front of him was that nine-headed silver serpent. The others were her husband and her nine children transformed into human form.

“Arthurs, is the Sovereign back yet?” The silver serpent, Yennaway, said.

Arthurs shook his head. “Not yet. Bailey acquired the Abyssal Fruit and is awaiting the Sovereign as well. However, the Sovereign should know that Bailey acquired the Abyssal Fruit and should arrive soon.” Linley and Bebe, upon hearing this, had no choice but tamp down their franticness and wait to one side.

“Linley.” Bailey walked over, saying in a low voice, “You’d best hurry up and leave.”

“Eh?” Linley raised his head, looking towards him.

“Bailey, he isn’t willing to leave. Why get involved in something that is none of your business?” The silver serpent, Yennaway, snickered.

Bailey didn’t pay any mind to that silver serpent. He continued, “Linley, this Yennaway is very close to the Sovereign, and when this Sovereign wants to kill someone…the Sovereign will do so without a second word. Nobody can disobey a Sovereign’s will.” Bailey clearly had learned quite a bit from Arthurs regarding the Sovereign of Death.

Linley frowned as he glanced sideways at the silver serpent, Yennaway.

A green-robed woman laughed coldly, “Now you are panicking? Let me tell you this. You won’t even be able to flee! The Sovereign will quickly arrive…and by then, as long as you are within the Netherworld, the

Sovereign will be able to quickly find and kill you two! You dared to kill my elder sister…hmph!"

The nine green serpent siblings were all furious, but they had tasted Linley and Bebe's power.

"What have you to be smug about?" Bebe let out low, muttering curse.

"Bebe, ignore them. We'll just wait over here." Linley sent mentally. And then, he and Bebe immediately walked to a fairly remote area in this grassy, flower-filled region, awaiting the return of the Sovereign.

Linley saw that in the distance, the snake couple and their nine children were all discussing something softly, occasionally looking over towards Linley and Bebe. As for Bailey and Arthurs, they just stayed there, silent. Clearly, Linley and Bebe wouldn't listen to their entreaties at all…so all they could do was await the Sovereign's return.

In the blink of an eye, three hours passed.

"The Sovereign still hasn't returned." Bebe sent mentally, rather impatient. "What's the Sovereign doing?"

"You and I can't possibly understand a Sovereign's mind." Linley had waited for three hours, and he felt as though he were steaming with impatience as well. "Bebe, judging from what that silver serpent Yennaway said, her relationship with the Sovereign must be excellent. Tell me…will the Sovereign be unwilling to help us because of this?"

Bebe gave Linley a glance.

Bebe had very few memories of Linley looking nervous, but right now, Bebe could completely sense how nervous Linley was.

"Boss, the Sovereign will definitely help out. Definitely." Bebe sent back.

Linley took a deep breath, feeling slightly calmer.

“Linley!” A voice suddenly rang out. Linley turned to look, and saw Arthurs flying over. As he looked at Linley, he couldn’t help but secretly shake his head while saying solemnly, “The Sovereign just mentally spoke to me and ordered me to bring you and Bailey to the Sovereign’s palace. The Sovereign should be returning soon.”

Linley’s eyes instantly lit up.

“The Sovereign’s back?” Linley felt as though heart was about to leap out of his chest.

“Follow me in.” Arthurs warned with a solemn expression, “You must remember, this Sovereign’s temper is very poor. If the Sovereign takes a liking towards you, you might be treated very well, but if the Sovereign takes a disliking to you…you might die in a heartbeat. Thus, you and Bebe must not be the slightest bit disrespectful.”

Linley hurriedly nodded. “Understood.”

“I won’t anger a Sovereign.” Bebe said hurriedly as well. Bebe knew very well that at this point, they couldn’t afford even the slightest mistake.

Linley could already tell from Arthurs words…that this Sovereign of Death should be the sort of person with an odd, unusual personality who might very well kill someone for no reason at all. It was very hard to deal with this sort of person. Sometimes…one might die without even knowing why.

Arthurs glanced at Linley and Bebe. He couldn’t help but sigh to himself.

Arthurs knew very well that the silver serpent, Yennaway, was on very close terms with the Sovereign. Once Yennaway complained and indicted Linley, it was very possible that the Sovereign would kill Linley and Bebe without even giving them a chance to speak.

“Let’s go.” Arthurs immediately flew in front, while Linley and Bebe followed from behind. Bailey was waiting in midair. The four gathered

together, then began to fly towards the palace that was floating above the peak of the Abyssal Mountain. The gates of the palace were open, as the colossal golden snake and the nine-headed silver serpent and their children had already entered.

The palace was made out of a violet-black material, and a bone-piercing chill slowly emanated from the palace.

“Follow me. Don’t disobey in the slightest.” Arthurs said in a low voice.

“Understood.” Linley said.

“Don’t worry.” Bailey clearly was rather nervous as well. This was his first time meeting the Sovereign of Death as well.

Linley, Bebe, and Bailey immediately followed Arthurs, passing through the large front platform and entering the palace itself. Linley, Bebe, and Bailey didn’t even dare to raise their heads to look, for fear of angering that Sovereign of Death.

“Boss, the cold aura of this palace is really oppressing.” Bebe sent mentally.

At this moment, Arthurs knelt and said, “I pay my respects to the Sovereign!”

“I pay my respects to the Sovereign!” Linley, Bebe, and Bailey all knelt as well. After having entered the palace, the three of them didn’t even dare to raise their heads without the Sovereign’s permission. Or, to be more precise…to look directly at a Sovereign without permission was also quite presumptuous. Linley naturally didn’t dare to act in such a way right now.

Right at this moment…

“Sovereign!” A grief-filled voice rang out. “Tina died. It was that person called Bebe. He was the one who killed her. That Bebe wanted to kill me as well. If it hadn’t been for the Sovereign of Life interfering, most likely I would never have been able to see you again. You must avenge Tina,

Sovereign!”

Hearing this, Linley felt his heart shake.

So the silver serpent was indeed complaining.

“Motherf*cker, I really want to kill her!” Bebe sent mentally. “Boss, that nine-headed silver serpent really makes me feel disgusted.”

“Bebe, listen to what the Sovereign says.” Linley continued to kneel there.

“Yen!” An icy cold voice rang out from above. “I will deal with this matter.”

Linley and Bebe, upon hearing this, were both stunned.

The Sovereign of Death was a woman?

“The three of you can lift up your heads.” The icy voice echoed in the palace. Only now did Linley, Bebe, and Bailey dare to lift their heads up. Only now did Linley discover that the interior of the palace was empty; not even pillars could be seen. Linley swept forward with his gaze, looking up until he saw the Sovereign of Death, seated on her throne!

A pitch-black throne.

Seated atop the throne was a woman dressed in long violet robes. The long violet robes were embroidered with branches and vines and a silver snake. This Sovereign of Death had long, blood-red hair, exquisite features, and a pair of eyes that seemed to flash with a bolt of lightning that struck into Linley’s heart.

As soon as Linley saw the Sovereign of Death’s face, he was stupefied.

Bebe was stupefied as well.

Bailey was stunned as well.

“You…” Bebe didn’t know what to say.

“What, very surprised?” An icy voice rang out.

Linley, Bailey, and Bebe were momentarily speechless. This Sovereign of Death…her facial features looked completely, absolutely identical to the red-haired beauty who was the boss of the Abyssal Inn at the base of the Abyssal Mountain! Even the look in her eyes was the same. Linley and the other two immediately recognized…that this Sovereign was the owner of the inn!

“The Sovereign of Death…is the boss of the Abyssal Inn?” Linley felt his head go numb.

A Sovereign would actually go run an inn?

“Haha…” The Sovereign of Death let out a peal of utterly delighted laughter. “Those looks on your faces really make me feel quite happy. Over the course of all these countless years, I’ve remained at the Abyssal Inn, watching you people go in, one by one, in search of the Abyssal Fruit. I’ve watched you all risk your lives and die, and it was indeed quite interesting. But what really makes me happy…is this moment! Right, that look on your faces! Haha!”

Linley and the other two were completely stupefied.

The Sovereign of Death…acted like this?

She intentionally concocted the story of the Abyssal Fruit to entice countless experts of the Netherworld to adventure here, while she herself, a Sovereign, opened an inn and became the boss of it, happily watching one person after another enter and perish.

“The Sovereign of Death…really has nothing better to do?” Linley said to himself.

But indeed; the Sovereign of Death possessed an eternal lifespan. The Abyssal Fruit matter most likely really was nothing more than a game to the Sovereign of Death. And, to the Sovereign of Death…when she sat there in her Sovereign's palace and granted an audience to those who acquired the Abyssal Fruit and came to pay homage to her, when she saw the stupefied looks on the faces of those who saw her, she was indeed very happy and delighted!

The nearby Arthurs didn't dare to make a single sound either.

That year, he had been the same. When he had lifted his head up and looked at the almighty Sovereign of Death and saw that it was the hotel owner, he too had been stupefied. All Arthurs could do was think to himself, "This is how this Sovereign of Death is…this is a hobby of her, despite her being so powerful as to be invincible."

"Bailey! You wait over there for now." The Sovereign of Death looked with curiosity towards Linley and Bebe. "It really is surprising. The two of you actually managed to make it past 'Yen' and 'Gold'. Linley, for you to be able to take Gold's attack head on was within my expectations. But Yen's power is far greater than Gold's. Bebe, for you to be able to endure Yen's attack…I truly am astonished."

Bebe, hearing this, was rather smug, but he didn't dare to act too wildly, just revealing a hint of a smile instead.

"Don't be smug. The reason you were able to endure it should have something to do with that Beirut." The Sovereign of Death let out an emotional sigh. "I have to admit, that kid Beirut, to you, really is…"

Linley was secretly puzzled.

"Bebe?" Linley sent mentally.

"Boss, I don't know either. I just relied on myself to endure it." Bebe sent mentally.

“Linley, I hear that you have come on this trip for the sake of finding the souls of your family and friends, who have become undead. You wish for them to regain their memories, correct?” The Sovereign of Death said.

Linley raised his head to look at the Sovereign, saying with hope, “Yes, Sovereign. Please help me, Sovereign.”

“Based on the rules which I myself laid down, since the two of you charged all the way to this place from the base of the Abyssal Mountain, I should grant a request of yours.” The Sovereign of Death said. Linley and Bebe both stared at the Sovereign of Death, who continued, “However, you killed Tina. Logically speaking, I should also kill the two of you and avenge Tina!”

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

“I should reward you for making your way here. I should punish you for killing Tina! So then…the reward and the punishment cancel each other out. I will not agree to your request, but I won’t kill you either. The two of you, leave immediately. When I think of the look on your face just now, you really…haha…” The Sovereign of Death couldn’t help but begin to laugh again.

She refused?

“Sovereign!” Linley and Bebe immediately called out.

“Sovereign!” Yennaway also called out urgently.

Neither side was willing to accept this.

“What, you have an objection?” The formerly laughing Sovereign of Death suddenly turned cold as her face sank. She swept the three with her gaze. This sweep of her gaze alone caused Linley and Bebe to feel as though their souls had been shaken. As for Yennaway, she too was so frightened that she no longer dared to say a word. She knew very well what sort of temper the Sovereign of Death had.

Although she had been laughing happily, it was very possible that in the next instant, she would fiercely punish someone.

Yennaway didn't dare to say a word, but how could Linley be willing to give up?

"Sovereign." Linley hurriedly called out, while at the same time, he flipped out the medallion of the Bloodridge Sovereign. Linley once more knelt down and begged, "Sovereign, for the sake of the Bloodridge Sovereign, please give me a chance. Let me save my parents and my brothers. I just need a chance!"

"Laughable!" A cold voice rang out.

Linley raised his head to look.

The nearby Yennaway was snickering, "Linley, what's the big deal about the Bloodridge Sovereign? Do you know…that my mistress is the most powerful Sovereign of the entire Netherworld. The Chief Sovereign of Death! In the countless planes of the universe, only the other three Chief Sovereigns of the other three Higher Planes are equals who are on par with my mistress! And you mention the Bloodridge Sovereign to her? Even if you mentioned that Redbud Sovereign of yours, it would be useless!"

Chapter 32 – The Netherworld Heart

Book 18, Highgod – Chapter 32, The Netherworld Heart

Linley's heart trembled.

Chief Sovereign of Death?

Linley knew that each Law or Edict had seven mighty Sovereigns, with one High Sovereign, two Intermediate Sovereigns, and four Lesser Sovereigns! Seven Elemental Laws and four great Edicts. In total, there were only eleven High Sovereigns, and these eleven High Sovereigns were also termed Chief Sovereigns! They were the supreme kings of their Laws and Edicts, chief-like figures!

They were the greatest of existences beneath the Overgod level.

As for the Overgods, they were the personifications of the Edicts. They had no human emotions, nor would they interfere in struggles and battles. They couldn't be counted as people. Thus, the eleven Chief Gods could absolutely be considered the most supreme existences of the universe.

And, from what Yennaway was saying, it seemed as though the four Chief Sovereigns of the Four Higher Planes were the most powerful of the eleven Chief Sovereigns. One could completely imagine what sort of status this Sovereign of Death, seated on her throne, possessed! It was indeed laughable for Linley to mention the Bloodridge Sovereign to her!

"Sovereign." The nearby Bebe said frantically as well. "My Boss, he…"

"Shut your mouth." The Sovereign of Death, seated atop her throne, said calmly. Bebe instantly felt a tremendous pressure crush down on him, preventing him from speaking. "The decisions I have made are definitely irreversible. The reward and the punishment cancel each other out. I will not help you."

Linley raised his head to look at the seated Sovereign of Death.

She still was dressed in that long violet robe, and her hair was still long and blood-red. This woman had that beautiful, graceful face…but the aura she naturally emanated caused Linley to feel powerless. This was one of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Four Higher Planes…the Chief Sovereign of the Netherworld! A powerful, supreme, invincible existence!

“Sovereign, then my brother and I will depart.” Linley rose to his feet, still bowing.

“Mm.” The Sovereign of Death acknowledged calmly.

Bebe couldn’t help but turn to stare at Linley, transmitting mentally with franticness, “Boss, are we leaving now?”

“Right, we’re leaving right now! The Sovereign’s decision is irrevocable. What we need to do is seize every moment and hurry to find the other Netherworld Sovereigns.” Linley sent mentally. He had begged the Sovereign of Death repeatedly, but hadn’t been able to move her in the slightest. “This Sovereign of Death isn’t willing to help us, but I refuse to believe the other six will be the same!”

There was no way Linley would give up!

When he thought of how his father, Yale, George, and the others were in a life-and-death danger, Linley felt panicked! They had died in the Yulan continent, but that wasn’t a true death, as their souls had survived. But dying in the Netherworld meant their souls would disperse, just like his Grandpa Doehring, never to come to life ever again!

Linley wasn’t willing to stand by and watch their souls disperse!

Even if he risked his life, he would have to rescue them!

Linley glanced at the Sovereign of Death, seated on high. “Right. Let’s go.”

Linley and Bebe still bowed very courteously towards the Chief Sovereign of Death, then turned and strode outwards towards the outer palace. As for the gold snake and the silver serpent, as well as Arthurs, Bailey, and the others, they watched as Linley and Bebe left, the expressions on their faces varied. The gold snake and the silver serpent, husband and wife, just laughed coldly.

“Wait a moment.” A cold voice suddenly rang out.

Linley and Bebe, who had already reached the doorway of the palace, suddenly came to a halt. Linley turned his head to look towards the Chief Sovereign of Death with surprise and joy in his eyes. Linley’s eyes were blazing. “The Sovereign called out to me…can it be that she changed her mind? Why would the Sovereign change her mind? But then again, the Sovereign was once an ordinary person. Perhaps she might really change her mind. There’s still a chance!”

Linley grew tense.

Bebe raised his head to look at the Chief Sovereign of Death as well, both puzzled and expectant.

“Linley, let me warn you that you do not need to go find the other Sovereigns of the Netherworld. You can go directly back to the Infernal Realm.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly, but her eyes continued to look with interest at the expression on Linley’s face.

“Why?” Linley’s heart trembled. He had a bad feeling.

“When ordinary people die, their souls will enter the Netherworld and form into an undead. This is part of the natural Laws, while control over the management of this Law was transformed into a treasure, the supreme treasure of my Netherworld, the ‘Netherworld Heart’. If one wishes to find out which undead your father and friends transformed into, this Netherworld Heart must be used. And this Netherworld Heart…is under my control.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said coldly.

Linley couldn't help but stare at the Chief Sovereign of Death.

Netherworld Heart?

So it was the Netherworld Heart which controlled everything. This supreme treasure was under the control of the Chief Sovereign of Death. This was indeed reasonable.

The Chief Sovereign of Death stared down towards Linley, her lips curving upwards slightly. "I told you. As punishment, I will not save your father and your friends. Thus…forget about saving them. Even if you go beg other Netherworld Sovereigns, I will not permit them to use the Netherworld Heart. I imagine…they wouldn't have the gall to disobey me. And you aren't qualified to make them wish to disobey me!"

"Thus, you can go straight back to the Infernal Realm." The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly.

"BANG!"

Linley felt as though an explosion had gone off inside his brain. 'Netherworld Heart'. 'Father'. 'Boss Yale'. 'George'. All sorts of things chaotically jumbled together within his mind. Linley's mind had completely lost all logical thought. He was completely stunned. It seemed a long time passed…Linley felt as though he were in a dream, as though his mind was in a stupor!

And suddenly, he awoke!

"No!" Linley suddenly raised his head, staring at the Chief Sovereign of Death. "Sovereign, you cannot do this, you cannot do this! Sovereign, if you aren't willing to save them, I, Linley, won't say a single word of complaint. But you cannot stop the other Sovereigns. You cannot. You cannot!" Linley had already sunk into despair.

Faced with the Chief Sovereign of Death, he was completely unable to

resist her power or to require her to do anything. All he could do was speak powerlessly. In his despair, he even forgot to speak with respect. If he were clear-minded, he would never have errored in such a way.

Bebe stared at the Chief Sovereign of Death as well, his eyes also filled with disbelief.

“This is your punishment.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly.

“Sovereign!” Bebe suddenly strode forward.

“Impudence!” There were two maids standing at the two ends of the upraised dais of the palace. One of them barked coldly, “Stand back!”

Bebe stood there, his head raised as he stared at the Chief Sovereign of Death. “Sovereign, you are an invincible Chief Sovereign! Right, I did kill a Spirit Snake. As to whether or not that was ‘Tina’, I have no idea.” Bebe held his head up high. “Sovereign, you arranged for people to test us. How was I supposed to know it was just a test? She was trying to kill me. Was I not allowed to fight back?”

“Bang!”

Bebe suddenly fell to his knees, but his head was held high as he stared at the Chief Sovereign of Death. “I don’t believe that I was wrong. If the Chief Sovereign of Death feels I was wrong, then punish me. Just punish me directly, and not my Boss. It was I who killed the Spirit Snake. I did the deed, and I will accept the punishment for it. Don’t get my Boss involved! Come, if you want to kill me, then kill me!” Bebe, head held high, stared straight at the Sovereign with an unruly, untamed look.

Linley, hearing this, was stunned.

Arthurs and Bailey, at the front of the palace, stared at Bebe in amazement. Even the golden snake and the silver serpent, that husband-and-wife couple, were rather stunned.

“Excellent.” The Chief Sovereign of Death looked downwards calmly at Bebe.

“Bang!”

A terrifying presence swept out, and with a ‘whap’ sound, Bebe was crushed downwards, smashing into the floor of the palace. However, Bebe still pressed his fists against the ground, forcing his waist straight. He continued to hold his head high as he stared at the Chief Sovereign of Death.

“Swish!”

Linley suddenly moved in front of Bebe. He raised his head high, staring at the Chief Sovereign of Death. “Chief Sovereign, it was I who ordered Bebe to kill that Spirit Snake. At that time, we wanted to acquire the Abyssal Fruit. But that Abyssal Snake was preventing us, so I ordered Bebe to kill him, while I would seize the chance to acquire the Abyssal Fruit! Bebe was just obeying my orders.”

“Bebe.” Linley mentally shouted at him, “Are you insane? Once you die, you won’t even have a divine clone left behind. You’ll truly be dead. What will Ninny do? What will your daughter, Ina, do? And Beirut will be heartbroken as well.”

“Boss.” Bebe looked at Linley.

“Shut your mouth. Don’t say a thing.” Linley shouted mentally.

Bebe stuttered, but in the end, maintained his silence.

Linley raised his head to look at the Chief Sovereign of Death, seated high above him. That invincible aura was indeed enough to inspire dread. Linley stared at the Chief Sovereign of Death. “Sovereign, punishment is punishment, reward is reward. How can they cancel each other out? I am willing to take my punishment! I only ask you, Sovereign, to save my father and brothers. Even if you want to kill me, I won’t say a single word of

complaint!”

Kill Linley?

Bebe suddenly turned, staring at Linley, who was standing there with his back ramrod straight.

“What?” Arthurs and Bailey stared in disbelief. As for the colossal golden snake and the silver serpent, they and their nine children all stared in Linley in amazement.

“Boss, what are you doing?!” Bebe shouted back frantically.

“Bebe, if I’m killed, I’ll still have my divine fire clone back at the Yulan continent. Although I won’t be able to become a supreme expert by relying on my divine fire clone, for the sake of my father and my brothers, so what if I’m not able to be a supreme expert?” Linley sent mentally. “But if my father and brothers end up having their souls dispersed and destroyed in the Netherworld, even if I become an expert on Beirut’s level, I will never be at peace and regret it my entire life! Grandpa Doehring once, for my sake, allowed his soul to be dispersed. My brothers, my father, they still have hope. I can’t give them up just for the sake of becoming a supreme expert!”

Bebe was stunned.

“If I can let my family and friends all be alive and well, even if I give up glory and power, so what?”

Linley raised his head, looking towards the Chief Sovereign of Death.

“Reward is reward, punishment is punishment?” The Chief Sovereign of Death repeated these words, and then stared downwards at Linley. “Linley, your future is limitless. Are you willing to give up your future potential for the sake of those weak little undead?” The Chief Sovereign of Death’s words caused Linley’s body to tremble.

Clearly…

The Chief Sovereign of Death also knew that Linley had a divine clone in another plane.

“I am willing.” Linley held his head high.

Sometimes, a person should maintain his pursuits. Sometimes, a person had to give them up.

Today, giving up his pursuits might mean he would never become a supreme expert. However, he would have his family and have his lifelong friends. This was enough to satisfy Linley. After all, it was hard to achieve perfection in everything!

The Chief Sovereign of Death stared at Linley, then said calmly, “You are willing to give it up, but…I’m not going to agree.”

Linley, who had already prepared himself, was stunned.

“You feel that rewards and punishments cannot cancel each other out, but… as far as I’m concerned, they should. This is a rule which I have set. What you need to do is to obey my rules!” The Chief Sovereign of Death laughed coldly as she stared down towards Linley, as though she were looking at a maddened ant.

Bebe suddenly rose to his feet.

“Sovereign…”

Linley stretched his hand out to stop him while shouting mentally ,”Bebe!” Bebe’s face was purple. He turned to stare at Linley.

“The result of offending a Sovereign is to die for nothing. Understood?” Linley sent mentally.

Linley raised his head, looking at the Sovereign. He said, one word and sentence at a time, “Sovereign, really…is there really no hope at all?” When

Linley thought of the grief his father had lived in for so many years, and how he had died without even successfully avenging Linley's mother…and how Boss Yale had collapsed to the point of begging for Reynolds to kill him…Linley felt heartsick when he thought of his father and friends.

"Boss." Bebe looked at Linley, sensing his grief.

"Sovereign!" Suddenly, the nearby Arthurs spoke out. "Sovereign, aren't the Planar Wars starting soon? Didn't you say that if a Commander is killed…why not just change that a bit?"

"Oh?"

The Chief Sovereign of Death actually let out a rare laugh. "Arthurs, you really are clever. I nearly forgot." And then, she turned to stare at Linley and Bebe. "Linley, I have wonderful news for you. You wish to save your father and friends, yes? There is hope. There is still a little bit of hope."

Linley and Bebe both immediately raised their heads to stare at the Chief Sovereign of Death up above.

"Hope?" Linley felt a blaze of eagerness in his heart.

The Chief Sovereign of Death said, "Seven Divine Planes, Four Higher Realms. Between them, there is an extremely rowdy event that will occur every trillion years. The Planar Wars."

Linley's heart trembled.

Planar Wars. He had heard of them long ago, but all he knew was that the battle between two planes was extremely fierce. A war which resulted in an extremely high number of experts falling.

"And now, the Divine Darkness Plane and the Divine Light Plane are currently undergoing a Planar Wars battle! The Divine Darkness Plane belongs to my Netherworld side! The Netherworld's Lords of Tartarus are qualified to participate. To encourage them, the rules of the Planar Wars

state…that if they are able to kill ten enemy commanders, they would be able to make a request of a Sovereign of their side. You could ask the Sovereign to make a Sovereign artifact for you; attack, material defense, spiritual defense, you can choose for yourself what you want. The Sovereign will definitely accomplish it for you!"

"But of course, you can make an earlier request." The Chief Sovereign of Death said. "You can now go assist the Divine Darkness Plane's side. If you kill a commander, I will help you find one of your family or friends and allow them to regain their memories. If you kill two, I will help you save two. If you want to save many people, work hard to kill the enemy commanders."

Linley's eyes instantly lit up.

"Done." Linley hurriedly said.

"Don't be impatient. I forgot to warn you; in the Planar Wars, commander-level experts are all at the Lords of Tartarus level, which is what the Infernal Realm calls 'Purgatory Commanders'." The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly. "The weakest amongst them should be comparable to you, while the strongest…are Highgod Paragons."

Linley's facial expression instantly froze.

They were all Purgatory Commander level experts? Those who were commanders…were the likes of Reisgem, or the castle lord of Miluo Island, 'Mosi'. For Linley to kill experts like them?

"In the Planar Wars, 'commander' is a position of high rank. Naturally, they consist of the supreme experts of the various planes." The Chief Sovereign of Death said slowly. "If you wish to become a commander, the prerequisite is that you are a Lord of Tartarus, or a Lord Prefect of a prefecture. Only by doing so are you qualified to enter. You can imagine what level of strength is needed. If you go kill them, but end up meeting someone who is stronger…you'll be finished."

Linley felt as though a massive boulder was crushing down upon his chest, making it hard to breathe.

He wanted to go fight!

But…did he have the ability to? Those weren't mere Seven Star Fiends; they were Purgatory Commanders, Lords of Tartarus, the most supreme of experts, and they included amongst them invincible figures comparable to Beirut and Dunnington. To kill them?

The Chief Sovereign of Death stared down at Linley. "This is the 'hope' which I spoke of. Originally, killing an enemy commander came with a reward! But you can use it to instead save your loved ones. For each commander you kill, I will save one of your loved ones!"

Bebe stared angrily at the Sovereign.

This was too unfair! Killing a commander was a tremendous merit, but the Chief Sovereign of Death would only save a single person? However, if Linley wished to save his loved ones, this was the only path. There were no other options!

"If you are afraid, you can leave now." The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly.

"I accept!" Linley raised his head, staring up at the Chief Sovereign of Death.

Even if he had to climb up a mountain of knives or descend into a sea of flames, Linley would make the attempt!

Chapter 1 – Desire

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 1, Desire

The Planar Wars. Just by listening to the Chief Sovereign of Death describe it, Linley knew how dangerous it had to be. However, Linley still chose to go! After all, aside from the Chief Sovereign of Death, the other Sovereigns wouldn't be able to help him!

"Whether or not you accept has nothing to do with me." The Chief Sovereign of Death stared down at Linley. "Everyone who represents the Netherworld who has accomplishments in the Planar Wars will be rewarded by me. No matter who! I'm just acting according to the rules, not just for your sake. I'm simply telling you about this."

Linley took a deep breath.

"Sovereign, what must I do in order to go participate in the Planar Wars?" Linley raised his head and asked.

The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly, "The 'Purgatory' of the Infernal Realm or the 'Tartarus' of the Netherworld all have interspatial doors that lead directly to the Planar Battlefield. The Planar Battlefield is connected to all seven of the Divine Planes and all four of the Higher Realms. Hurry up and come up with a way of going to my Netherworld's Tartarus. By travelling through the interspatial gate, you'll arrive at the Planar Battlefield!"

Linley frowned.

Tartarus?

The book which Beirut had given him regarding the Netherworld hadn't mentioned a 'Tartarus' region. Actually, it was the same for the Infernal Realm's books; there had been no mention of a 'Purgatory'.

“Sovereign, might I ask where Tartarus…” Linley was about to speak out.

“Hmph.” The Chief Sovereign of Death waved her hand.

Immediately, a very thin book covered in black light flew down, landing in front of Linley. The Chief Sovereign of Death stared down at Linley and said, “Since you have the courage to go to the Planar Battlefield, then I too am interested in seeing…if you, Linley, will survive to kill some commanders, or if you will be killed by other commanders who will then be rewarded for it!”

Linley wasn’t angry at all. Accepting the book, he bowed slightly. “Thank you, Sovereign.”

And then, Linley immediately began to flip through the book. The book was very thin, just ten pages long. Given Linley’s memory, all he needed to do was sweep through it with a few glances. A few seconds later, the contents of these ten pages were imprinted deep within his mind.

“So this Tartarus is deep within the Nether Sea?” Linley couldn’t help but raise his head to look towards the Chief Sovereign of Death.

It was too far away!

If he wished to go to Tartarus, he would first have to completely leave the Netherworld’s continent and enter the Nether Sea, then venture deep into the Nether Sea before reaching Tartarus. If he rode on a metallic lifeform and hurried forward, he would probably need three centuries or so. This took up far too much time, and…even if he hurried there, the Planar Wars might have concluded already. He couldn’t accept this.

“Sovereign, how long will the Planar Wars go on for.” Linley asked hurriedly.

The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly, “Each Planar Wars goes on for a thousand years! This time, the battle between the Divine Light Realm and

the Divine Darkness Realm has already gone on for nearly a hundred years. More than nine centuries remain. You have plenty of time to go!"

Plenty?

There was more than enough time to take part in the war, but Linley didn't wish to waste any time. The more time he wasted, the greater the danger his father and brothers were in of dying a final death. In addition, the more time he took, the more of the weaker commanders would die in the Planar Wars. By the time he arrived, most likely the surviving commanders would be the exceedingly powerful ones.

Such as Beirut…Dunnington…Reisgem…Mosi….

The images of these figures appeared in Linley's mind!

"Sovereign, then Bebe and I will head out immediately." Linley said, bowing.

Bebe had to swallow his discontent and bow before leaving as well.

"Go then." The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly. "But I advise you that before heading to Tartarus, you should first become a Lord of Tartarus. That will also be very helpful to you in actually entering the Planar Wars. Arthurs, you lead the way for Linley. Send them out of the Abyssal Mountain!"

"Yes, Sovereign!" Arthurs bowed.

"First become a Lord of Tartarus, and then enter the Planar Wars?" Linley was rather puzzled.

But Linley didn't ask any more questions. Linley and Bebe looked meaningfully at Bailey in an expression of goodwill, and then strode out of the Sovereign's palace, following Arthurs and flying away.

"Mistress, that Linley seems to be quite confident. It seems he knows

almost nothing about the Planar Wars." By now, the silver serpent Yennaway was all smiles, quite delighted. Yennaway knew a great deal regarding the savagery of the Planar Wars, and the struggles between the commanders. In addition, this was a war! Not a one-on-one duel!

Sometimes, multiple commanders of one side would join forces to attack another!

"Thank you, Sovereign." The silver serpent, Yennaway, laughed while bowing. She believed that the Sovereign had done this for the sake of letting Linley go and lose his life there as a way of helping Yennaway get revenge.

"Thank you, Sovereign." The colossal gold snake and his nine children all bowed in gratitude as well.

The Chief Sovereign of Death glanced calmly at them. "Enough. You can all leave now. Bailey!"

Bailey's eyes lit up, and he hurriedly walked forward to the center of the palace. The Chief Sovereign of Death finally was going to allow him to become an Emissary.

At the base of the Abyssal Mountain.

Linley and Bebe parted with Arthurs.

"Linley, before leaving, I must tell you something." Arthurs said solemnly. "Perhaps you aren't aware of this, but the Sovereigns all have an agreement. At most, they will give their Emissaries or their children a single Sovereign artifact! Regardless of which Sovereign's Emissary it is, they will at most receive a single Sovereign artifact."

"A single one?" Bebe frowned.

Linley was stunned. "Just one?"

But yes, that was indeed true!

For example, the Azure Dragon clan's Patriarch, Gislason, only had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. The Grand Elder, Gaia, only had that armor-type Sovereign artifact that merged with her scales. Given how much the Sovereign Azure Dragon cared about his children, why would he give them just a single one each? Linley finally began to understand.

"The Sovereigns don't wish for too great of an imbalance to appear amongst Highgods either." Arthurs explained. "If, hypothetically, a Highgod not only had an armor-type Sovereign artifact that merged into his body, but also a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and an attack-type Sovereign artifact, then tell me…even if this sort of Highgod was weak in terms of understanding the Laws, wouldn't he be terrifying?"

Linley was stunned.

If one's material defense, soul defense, and attack power was all powered by Sovereign artifacts! This sort of person would indeed be monstrous.

"That'd…be invincible." Bebe muttered.

"Supreme experts who acquire one Sovereign artifact will naturally desire a second one! But Sovereigns can't just give them one. But if they want to kill an Emissary and seize the Sovereign artifact…even if you kill the Emissary and the Sovereign doesn't deign to lower himself to killing you in retaliation, the Sovereign will still take back his artifact!" Arthurs said.

"What? Take it back?" Bebe stared, wide-eyed.

Linley felt surprised as well.

Still, it made sense.

Each Sovereign artifact was the product of countless labors of a Sovereign, who then gave it to an Emissary. Not avenging the death of an Emissary was one thing, but how could they not take back their artifact?

“Thus, if you want to acquire a Sovereign artifact without being obstructed by a Sovereign, there’s only one method; to participate in the Planar Wars, and to have accomplishments in battle! If you kill ten commanders, you’ll be able to trade for a Sovereign artifact you want. If you kill twenty, you can trade for two!” Arthurs said.

“Arthurs, are you saying…” Linley frowned.

Arthurs said seriously, “The more powerful a person is, the more one seeks perfection! The Planar Wars only happen once every trillion years! Some supreme experts who, because of their prowess in battle, have obtained a second Sovereign artifact will then wish to acquire a third one. These experts are extremely powerful! Thus, you must be extremely careful. You cannot be the slightest bit incautious. There might even be Highgod Paragons amongst them! After all, although they have perfected their mastery of the Laws, they might not have a perfect set of Sovereign artifacts!”

Linley had a sour taste in his mouth.

This was completely understandable. If he were to have become a Highgod Paragon, he too would then desire to simultaneously wield three Sovereign artifacts! If he went to participate in the Planar Wars and encountered this sort of freakishly powerful individual, he wouldn’t be able to fight back at all.

“These people are too greedy.” Bebe felt frightened as well.

“It isn’t greed, it is desire!” Arthurs laughed calmly. “Only by having a desire will one have the motivation to move towards that goal! For those who have reached the peak…which one of them didn’t have a firm goal in mind? Which one of them didn’t have a desire? Everyone who can roam about in the Planar Wars is a supreme expert, the true kings of battle! Although I am a Sovereign’s Emissary, I haven’t participated in the Planar Wars a single time. That place…is a slaughter field! The place where experts fall! But also the place where experts are born!”

Linley shook his head and laughed.

“Haha…Arthurs, thank you for telling me these things. I’m mentally prepared now.” Linley laughed.

“Don’t worry.” Bebe said. “If someone wishes to kill my brother, we’ll first have to see if he’s qualified to do so! When my Boss and I simultaneously use our innate divine abilities…hmph!”

Arthurs glanced at Linley and Bebe.

“Just remember! It’s not just the two of you who have innate divine abilities. In the vast, myriad planes, there are quite a few other unique divine beasts who also possess extremely terrifying divine abilities. The others who have reached the pinnacle without a divine ability also have their own powers to rely on.” Arthurs chuckled. “Alright, I’ll say no more. I wish the two of you good luck.”

“Thank you.”

Linley and Bebe immediately bade Arthurs farewell, then transformed into two rays of light, flying away into the distance.

From the Abyssal Mountain to Tartarus, the distance truly was too great. After flying for some time, Linley said apologetically, “Bebe, if we ride the metallic lifeform to Tartarus, we’ll probably need two or three centuries. I don’t have any time to waste, so…I’ve decided to fly forward at full speed on my own power. I’m going to have to ask you to fly with me.”

“Haha, I love flying anyhow.” Bebe understood what Linley was thinking.

It would be rather tiring and taxing on his spiritual energy to whole-heartedly fly forward at high speed, especially on such a long journey. Very few people would rely on their own bodies to fly. It was indeed much faster to fly on one’s own, and one would travel far faster than a metallic lifeform, true, but it was too tiring. Still…what Linley needed right now was time.

This was his only choice.

“Crackle…” Linley instantly Dragonformed.

And then, activating the Laws of the Wind, Linley flew towards the northern skies like an azure streak of light. If he were to fly at full speed, Linley would outstrip even Bebe, but Linley also used his divine wind power to help Bebe slightly.

“Boss, have you told this to my grandpa yet?” Bebe asked while flying.

“My divine fire clone has already gone to the Forest of Darkness to ask your grandpa. We will have some results soon. I don’t know what your grandpa will say.” Linley wasn’t confident about this journey either. Fortunately, his divine fire clone remained in the Yulan continent, and so he could go ask Beirut about this.

Moments later…

“Your grandpa has a reply for us.” Linley said.

“What did he say?” Bebe immediately asked. “He should allow us to participate in the Planar Wars, right? Actually, it doesn’t matter even if he refuses. He isn’t in the Netherworld.”

“Your grandpa agreed.” Linley chuckled. “Based on what your grandpa said…we need to be careful and not be greedy. He also said that you, Bebe, should go experience some real danger and so hopefully gain some insights. This would be of assistance to you in improving your understandings of the profound mysteries of the Laws.” Linley still remembered the tone in which Beirut spoke.

According to what Beirut had said…

Men were supposed to adventure. If they were always hiding and afraid of danger, it would be very hard for them to be successful.

“Right. Grandpa has already done enough for me. It’s time for me to work hard.” Bebe pursed his lips.

An azure streak of light flashed through the skies of the Netherworld, travelling at such speed that no bandits who saw them would dare to stop them. Even if they were hotheaded, they still wouldn’t dare to stop them, nor would they be able to catch them.

“Rumble…” A vast, endless sea of water was undulating slightly. Staring into this deep, fathomless sea was like staring at a titanic, man-eating beast.

This was the Nether Sea! The Nether Sea which was even greater than the Infernal Realm’s ‘Chaotic Sea’!

Suddenly…

A streak of azure light flashed past the skies above the sea, then in the blink of an eye disappeared from sight.

“Boss, we’re almost at the Tartarus region.” Bebe said.

“Based on the islands we saw earlier, we’ll need just a bit more time before arriving at Tartarus.” Linley couldn’t help but feel much better as well. After having flown at full speed for more than thirty years, Linley’s original body hadn’t rested at all for those thirty years. Fortunately, he was able to withstand this sort of exhaustion.

And in the past thirty years, Linley’s divine clones were all focused on training. However, in thirty short years, his power didn’t improve that much.

Fortunately, the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, which had the ‘bandage’ over the flaw be broken through by the colossal golden snake, had been re-repaired quite a bit, after thirty years of effort.

“Boss, look! An island!” Bebe called out jubilantly.

Linley looked over, and saw that extremely far in the distance, land could be seen. “We’ve finally reached Tartarus!”

Chapter 2 – Flamebone Mountain

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 2, Flamebone Mountain

Tartarus was divided up into a total of eighty one territories.

Although they were called territories, in actuality, they represented eighty one enormous islands. In the past, when the Overgod of Death had created the Netherworld, he had left behind this unusual region deep in the Nether Sea; Tartarus. These eighty one islands were all comparable in size and very close to each other. If one looked at a map of them, one would see that they were arranged into a round shape.

“Tartarus, the gathering place for the experts of the Netherworld!” Linley stood there in midair, stared at the distant islands.

Tartarus was just like the Infernal Realm’s ‘Purgatory’; many experts who loved to do battle gathered there. They were arrogant and unyielding, and they loved to fight. After the passage of countless years, the eighty one territories of Tartarus had given birth to eighty one Lords! The Lords of Tartarus were thus supreme experts!

Upon becoming a Lord of Tartarus, one would then have to face the challenges of other experts. Upon being defeated, the new, stronger expert would take the position!

“Swoosh!”

An azure streak of light flashed past the skies, quickly descending on the nearest island. Although it was described as an ‘island’, that was just in comparison to the vast Netherworld continent. If the Yulan continent were to be compared to it, the entire Yulan continent would be but a speck! Every single one of these eighty one ‘islands’ had a circumference of millions of kilometers.

As soon as they landed, Linley and Bebe stared at their surroundings.

This was a desolate, dreary land with almost no people.

“After having flown for so long, I still have no idea which of the eighty one islands this island is!” Linley frowned slightly. The Nether Sea was too vast. Linley had relied on some unique waypoints to sketch out a rough journey. But the vastness of the Nether Sea meant that even the slightest deviation in direction would result in one ending up in a different island.

Their only choice was to first figure out which of the eighty one islands they were currently on.

That way, Linley would be able to be certain of the locations of the other islands and so go find that interspatial gate.

“Boss, that’s simple. Find someone and ask. However, there really are so few people here, completely different from the Netherworld continent.” Bebe said with a frown. Linley laughed, “Everyone who dares to come to Tartarus is an expert. Even if ten million or a hundred million people were present, given how large the island is, that still would be a small figure. I imagine everyone would be clustered towards the center. Oh, hey, someone’s over there!”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

From afar, a golden-haired male was flying forward at high speed.

“Let’s go ask!” Linley and Bebe flashed forward like lightning, piercing through the skies in pursuit.

The golden-haired man turned back to look and was shocked. “What fast speed! Not easy to deal with!” Killings occurred in Tartarus at every moment. This golden-haired man didn’t dare to flee, for fear of angering them. He came to a halt, waiting for Linley and Bebe to arrive and halt in front of him, then forced out a smile. “What do the two of you need?”

However, he looked with especial surprise towards Linley, who was currently in Dragonform.

“Don’t worry.” Bebe said soothingly. “We aren’t here to cause you trouble, just to ask you a question. Which of the eighty one islands of Tartarus is this island?”

The golden-haired man let out an inwards sigh of relief, then replied, “This island is the Lotuscliff Island of Tartarus.”

“Lotuscliff Island? It seems in our haste to get here, we did indeed go slightly off our mark. We were originally planning to head to Willowshu Island.” A map of the eighty one islands of Tartarus appeared in Linley’s mind, and he immediately knew where he was located, and where they should head next.

“Thank you.” Linley said to the golden-haired man, then said, “Bebe, let’s go.”

Linley and Bebe, without resting, immediately flew into the air once more, flying directly eastwards at high speed.

“Whew.” The golden-haired man, watching Linley and Bebe leave, finally let out a sigh of relief. The aura from the Dragonformed Linley was enough to cause him to be nervous.

The centermost island of Tartarus…Flamebone Island!

Flamebone Island’s most famous location was ‘Flamebone Mountain’. Flamebone Mountain didn’t have any supreme experts living there, but it was the place which held the interspatial gate leading to the Planar Wars. Each time a Planar War was about to begin, large numbers of people would pass through from here to the Planar Battlefield.

Flamebone Island. The vast land of this island had a few occasional ancient stone buildings scattered throughout it.

“Second Brother, today, the bald man at the ‘Bloodbath Arena’ really was powerful. He has at least fused three profound mysteries in lightning.” Two black-robed youths were flying in midair while chatting amongst themselves about what the battles they had just seen in the Bloodbath Arena.

“He was indeed fairly strong. He has already won sixty battles, including today’s. I wonder if he’ll be able to win a hundred.” The other, slightly skinnier black-robed said with a sigh.

“So what if he does win a hundred battles? Do you think he’ll have the courage to go challenge the Flamebone Lord?” The slightly fatter black-robed youth snickered. “The two of us have been here in the Flamebone region for a hundred million years, and have seen quite a few victors of a hundred battles, yes? But there have been only three who dared to challenge the Flamebone Lord, and on those three occasions, you saw the Flamebone Lord’s power as well. Those who challenged him definitely had the power of Seven Star Specters or even higher. They were far more powerful than that bald man, but…they all died within one exchange! They didn’t even have the chance to fight back.”

“However, no one will have the chance to challenge the Flamebone Lord for now, even if they want to. I hear the Flamebone Lord entered the Planar Battlefield.”

“Right, right. The Planar Battlefield! That’s a place where even Seven Star Specters will end up being slaughtered. However, if they manage to make it out alive with some accomplishments, then it’ll be incredible. I hear that one can acquire Sovereign’s Might, or at the higher levels, even a Sovereign artifact!” The two black-robed men chatted amongst each other, rather jealous.

The greater the danger, the greater the rewards.

However…

The vast majority of people would turn green with fear when discussing the

Planar Battlefield and not dare to enter.

“Eh?” The black-robed brothers suddenly turned to stare into the distance.

Two blurs streaked across the sky in a flash, advancing forward at high speed. They were so fast that the two black-robed brothers immediately grew alert. They came to a halt, and saw that it was a youth dressed in a long, sky-blue robe and a youngster wearing a straw hat. The youth said with a smile, “Apologies. There’s something I would like to ask. Do either of you know where Flamebone Mountain is?”

Linley knew that the Flamebone Island had a Flamebone Mountain, but had never been there before.

“Flamebone Mountain?”

The two black-robed brothers felt their hearts tremble, and they forced smiles onto their faces.

“Flamebone Mountain. Just head in that direction for a few hundred thousand kilometers, and you’ll see an enormous mountain blazing with fire from afar. That is Flamebone Mountain.” The slightly fatter black-robed youth said with a laugh.

“Thanks, you two.”

Linley chuckled, and then he and Bebe immediately flew towards the direction the black-robed youth had pointed towards at high speed.

“Whew.” The black-robed brothers glanced at each other, shock in their eyes.

“Heading to Flamebone Mountain at a time like this? It seems they are headed for the Planar Wars. However, it won’t be so easy for them to get in.” The slightly fatter black-robed youth’s eyes lit up. “Second Brother, tell me, which of those two is someone on the level of a Tartarus Lord?”

Linley and Bebe flew in the designated direction for a short while. They soon saw, in the distance, an enormous mountain which was covered by swirling, dim, dark red flames. This mountain was tens of thousands of meters tall. Although it wasn't as tall as the Abyssal Mountain, it was quite high for an island.

"Flamebone Mountain!" Linley's eyes narrowed.

"We've hurried all the way over here. At least we finally have reached Flamebone Mountain." Bebe revealed a smile as well.

Linley immediately returned to human form. For now, there was no need for them to hurry. After staring at Flamebone Mountain for a short period of time, Linley and Bebe immediately flew straight to the base of the mountain! Flamebone Mountain was pitch-black, and there was no hint of any vegetation about it. It seemed as though it was completely made from black stones.

The surface of the mountain was covered with swirling, dark red flames.

These dark red flames had never been extinguished, despite the passage of countless years. Even at the base of the mountain, Linley could sense the strange, bizarre aura emanating from those dark red flames.

Linley raised his head, staring towards the tip of the Flamebone Mountain.

At the tip of this Flamebone Mountain, which was perpetually covered in flames, an extremely large black castle was constructed. This black castle was also surrounded by swirling, dark red flames.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

Linley and Bebe rose into the sky. Within a few moments, they arrived at the gates to the black castle. The castle was completely black, but the main gates were a dazzling bloody red color. Just looking at the door, Linley sensed a killing aura flooding towards him.

There were more than ten people standing at the entrance to the castle, all dressed in black armor.

“Newcomers, halt!” One of the guards barked.

“We are entering the Planar Battlefield.” Linley said directly.

“Hurry up and get out of the way.” Bebe barked coldly.

The ten-plus guards looked at each other, rather stunned. The look on the face of the first guard who had shouted immediately turned friendly. He immediately laughed, “So milords are entering the Planar Battlefield. Might I ask which of you two lords is a Lord of Tartarus?”

“Lord of Tartarus?” Linley and Bebe were stunned.

Seeing the look on their faces, the guard frowned slightly, but he immediately said, “Then…of the two of you, milords, which is a Lord Prefect of the Netherworld?”

Linley and Bebe were both lost.

“Hey, we’re going into the Planar Battlefield! Why mention the Tartarus Lords or the Lord Prefects of the Netherworld?” Bebe barked impatiently. “Hurry up and lead us to the interspatial gate and let us enter the Planar Battlefield. We’re in a hurry and have no time to waste with you!”

The ten-plus guards, who had been all smiles earlier, suddenly had cold looks on their faces.

“F*ck off!” One of the guards barked coldly. “Don’t cause trouble here! If you keep causing trouble, don’t blame us for being merciless!”

Linley and Bebe, hearing this, were both stunned. Bebe couldn’t help but grow enraged. “What did you say?! If you let us in immediately, I won’t quibble about what you just said, but otherwise…”

“I told you to F*CK OFF!” The guard roared coldly. A long black spear suddenly appeared in his hands, and he casually pierced towards Bebe with it. The long black spear, when stabbing out, flew forward like a black dragon, causing ripples in space to appear. But Bebe just stretched out with his hand, easily clamping onto the tip of the spear.

The guard was stunned. Enraged, he wanted to pull free, but he wasn’t able to.

The other guards were stunned as well.

“Bebe, don’t get in over your head. They are the soldiers of a Sovereign, after all.” Linley sent mentally.

Bebe stared angrily at this guard. “Speak! If it wasn’t for the sake of the Sovereign, I would’ve killed you long ago. Speak! Why won’t you let us in?”

The guard finally realized how powerful the person in front of him was. Although he was a Sovereign’s soldier, if he really did end up infuriating this person and being killed by him, that would be a terrible death. He hurriedly said, “Milords, it isn’t that we won’t let you in, it is that you truly cannot enter! This is the rule which the Sovereigns set. There has always been this rule, over countless years.”

“What rule?” Linley barked.

“To activate the interspatial gate and enter the Planar Battlefield, one person in the group must be a Lord of Tartarus or a Lord Prefect of the Netherworld; they are allowed to bring people in. But ordinary Highgods are not qualified to enter on their own.” The guard hurriedly explained.

Linley frowned. He suddenly understood.

The highest ranked individuals in the Planar Wars were the ‘commanders’, figures on the Lord Prefect and Tartarus Lord levels. Only commanders were allowed to bring people in. Ordinary Highgods were not granted entry.

“No wonder the Sovereign said that you were to first become a Lord of Tartarus before entering.” Bebe looked towards Linley.

Linley thought back to what the Chief Sovereign of Death had said to him as well.

“Are you saying that I must find a Lord of Tartarus to bring me in, and that’s it?” Linley asked again.

“Right, right.” The guard said hurriedly.

“Are there any other rules?” Linley asked.

The guard added, “The Planar Battlefield is occupied by two warring planes. There are only ‘commanders’ and ordinary soldiers. Thus, ordinary Highgods who entered are just soldiers who must obey the commands of the commanders. They aren’t permitted to run about wildly in the Planar Battlefield! Milords, when you enter, you must obey as well. Only commanders are allowed to independently lead their forces to rove about and do battle within the Planar Battlefield as they chose.”

Chapter 3 – Target

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 3, Target

Linley now understood.

“No wonder the Sovereign advised me to first become a Lord of Tartarus before entering. If I entered with the status of a common soldier, I would have to follow orders. There’d be no way I would have the chance to go kill enemy commanders.” Linley understood that only by travelling on his own would he be able to quickly kill enemy commanders.

To be controlled by others…how could that be acceptable?

“Aside from these, are there any other rules?” Linley asked.

“None.” The guard said hurriedly. “The rules are very simple. Commanders are qualified to take others into the Planar Battlefield. In the Planar Battlefield, the various commanders are allowed to move about as they please, while the soldiers follow orders. That’s it! As for how many war merits need to be accumulated for how many rewards, it is written on the stone stele by the side of the interspatial gate!”

Linley nodded slightly.

Military merits and rewards, Linley didn’t care too much about for now. After all, he wasn’t even qualified to enter; it was too early to bother about the other things.

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley sent mentally.

Linley and Bebe immediately flew away from this Flamebone Mountain. In midair, Bebe said frantically, “Boss, what should we do now? If we want to go in, we have to rely on either a Tartarus Lord or a Lord Prefect of the Netherworld. We only have these two options; either to find one of them to

lead us in, or we ourselves become one of the two!"

"The first route is unacceptable." Linley shook his head. "First of all, in Tartarus, the Lords who are not already inside the Planar Battlefield are the ones who did not wish to go inside and risk their lives. Why would they lead us in? In addition, if we go in as ordinary soldiers, we have to follow orders. My goal in entering is to kill enemy commanders."

Bebe looked at Linley, then began to laugh. "Boss, are you saying…?"

"We have to come up with a way to become a Lord of Tartarus!" Linley said slowly.

"Haha, I approve." Bebe's eyes were shining, but then he frowned. "But it won't be that easy."

"No, it won't. There are no weaklings amongst the Lords of Tartarus." Linley also knew that every single one of the Tartarus Lords, when defeated, would be replaced by another expert. This process, over the course of countless years, had resulted in the eighty one Tartarus Lords being individuals of terrifyingly great power.

He himself knew Reisgem and Mosi, two Purgatory Commanders of the Infernal Realm. Beirut, in turn, was the Lord Prefect of Indigo Prefecture.

"There should still be strong members and weak members amongst the eighty one Tartarus Lords. The strong would be like Beirut and Dunnington, but even the weaker ones shouldn't be weaker than me." Linley said. "If I were to challenge an individual on the same level as your grandpa, Beirut, that would be throwing my life away!"

Bebe nodded as well. "If we find a weak one, we'll still have a chance."

"But who is strong and who is weak?" Linley frowned as he spoke. "The other tricky thing right now is that we don't even know what the rules are for challenging the Tartarus Lords. Also, which Tartarus Lords are already in the Planar Battlefield, and which are still in Tartarus? I have to learn this

as well."

"Even if we have decided already to do battle, we still need to find a target first. Not a single one of the eighty one Tartarus Lords will be easy to deal with." Linley didn't know anything about these Lords of Tartarus.

Bebe had a sour look on his face as well.

He, too, had no idea, but he then said, "Boss, in the eighty one regions, there are cities in each region, right? There must be many people in the cities. It will be easy for us to investigate there." Bebe said.

"That's our only option." Linley nodded.

In the central region of Flamebone Island, there was a city. Things clearly were much more lively within the city.

In a restaurant.

Linley and Bebe were seated facing each other. Linley glanced at his surroundings, discovering that just as expected, there were many Highgods present here in Flamebone City. But there were Gods and Demigods present as well! "It seems as though they are the children left behind by those Highgods of Tartarus." Linley guessed.

"The two of you, this is our restaurant's menu." A smiling God delivered the menu.

Linley looked at him while setting up his Godrealm. The look on the waiter's face changed, and he looked warily at Linley, who just laughed. "Don't worry. I just want to ask you a few things."

"Please speak." The waiter was still able to maintain his calm.

"Are there any rules in Tartarus to challenging the Lords of Tartarus?" Linley asked.

The waiter gave Linley a puzzled look, but then said, “That’s easy. In the eighty one regions, every single regional capital will have a ‘Bloodbath Arena’. As long as one consecutively wins a hundred battles within the Bloodbath Arena, then…the victor of the hundred battles will be qualified to issue the local Lord of Tartarus a challenge!”

“Oh?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“Isn’t that the same as Miluo Island?” Bebe began to laugh as well.

Perhaps Miluo Island was copying the way things were done here in Tartarus.

“I wish to know if there are any peculiarities about the eighty one Tartarus Lords? Who is strong? Who is weak? And also, which of them are here in Tartarus, and which of them have gone to the Planar Battlefield?” Linley asked in succession.

The waiter said resignedly, “Milords, this…how should I know?”

Linley chuckled. Waiters generally knew a great deal of information. Linley thus asked again, “Then tell me, who does know? Who knows the most?”

The waiter said hurriedly, “In our city, there are intelligence reports regarding the various Tartarus Lords for sale.”

“Intelligence reports for sale?” Linley’s eyes lit up.

It made sense. Wherever there was a demand, there would be a market. Most likely, many people had the desire to challenge one of the eighty one Tartarus Lords. Naturally, many people would want to know some details regarding the eighty one Tartarus Lords.

“Where are they sold? Take me there, and I’ll give you ten thousand inkstones.” Linley said calmly. “Here are five thousand inkstones. Afterwards, I’ll give you five thousand more.” Linley immediately gave him the money.

Inkstones could also be used here within the Netherworld.

“Ten thousand inkstones?” The waiter’s eyes instantly lit up. He wasn’t worried that Linley would attack him within the city limits either. He immediately said, “Fine, but might I ask, when do you wish to go, milords? After eating, or…?”

“Right now.”

Linley and Bebe both stood up.

“Alright. Please wait a moment. I’ll go speak with the boss.” The waiter was very friendly.

“Boss, it really was simple.” Bebe laughed as he looked at Linley.

“In a place like this restaurant, where the dragons mingle with the fish, these waiters will hear many things and learn many things. It is convenient to ask them.” Linley let out a sigh of relief in his heart as well. So this city actually had intelligence reports devoted to the eighty one Lords. This made things much simpler.

“Milords, follow me.” After having taken their five thousand inkstones, this waiter became very friendly, immediately leading the way.

While walking on the streets, Bebe said, puzzled, “Could it be that the eighty one Lords of Tartarus are not opposed to this sort of intelligence report sales?”

“The Lords of Tartarus are experts who are far above us. What could they possibly fear?” The waiter said hurriedly. “They don’t care about this at all. Actually, even in our city’s official castle, there are also reports regarding the eighty one Lords of Tartarus for sale. However, the price is too high! You need a million netherstones for a copy. The place I am taking you two will be much cheaper; you only need ten thousand netherstones for a copy.”

Linley laughed.

For this sort of intelligence report, once a single person bought a copy, that person could reproduce tens of millions of copies and sell them. This was a good line of work to get into.

“Most people don’t know about these secretive places, but I’ve been in this business since I was a kid.” The waiter said.

“Since you were a kid?” Bebe said in surprise.

The waiter nodded. “Tartarus has no transportation arrays. Virtually everyone who originally came to Tartarus was a Highgod. We Demigods and Gods were all born here in Tartarus. I am weak, and am only capable of surviving in the city. It’s not bad. There aren’t too many people in Tartarus, so the prices of the houses are quite low.”

Linley laughed as well.

In the continents of the Netherworld and Infernal Realm, the prices of the city houses were extremely high. However, here in Tartarus, there were many remote areas which were completely unpopulated. Clearly, each island had a fairly low population, and so naturally, the housing prices were much better.

But although there weren’t many people here, there were many experts.

“This fellow really is familiar with this city.” Linley sighed to himself. The waiter led Linley and Bebe forward in a very practiced manner, passing through various small alleyways and remote paths in a constant advance. In but a few moments, they arrived in front of an ordinary little courtyard. “Here we are. Right here.”

Linley glanced at the courtyard. He couldn’t see anything special about it.

“Open the door!” The waiter immediately knocked on the door.

Soon, the courtyard door opened. A muscular, silver-haired man walked out, giving them a glance. After seeing the waiter, he laughed. “So it’s you, kid. What is it? Did you help me bring a customer?”

“We need a set of reports regarding the eighty one Lords of Tartarus.” Linley said.

“Please enter, you two.” The silver-haired man said hurriedly.

The waiter immediately looked towards Linley and Bebe. Linley laughed, then very casually pulled out five pieces of azurite, handing them to the waiter. The waiter immediately accepted them. “Thank you, milords. I’ll leave now.”

“You just made quite a bit, kid.” The silver-haired man chortled. “The two of you, please come in.”

Linley and Bebe followed him into the courtyard. There were actually more than ten people seated there, three of whom were Highgods, the others all Gods or Demigods. One of them, a red-haired youth, rose to his feet, smiling as he came to welcome them. The silver-haired man said, “Second Bro, they want a copy of the intelligence reports on the eighty one Lords of Tartarus.”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“Oh, do you want the concise version, the detailed version, or…the secret version?” The red-haired youth said.

Linley was startled.

The intelligence reports were divided into three levels?

“I imagine there must be a difference in price as well.” Bebe laughed.

The red-haired youth nodded. “Naturally. The concise versions are ten thousand netherstones. The detailed versions are a hundred thousand

netherstones. As for the one with all the secrets, that costs a million netherstones." The nearby silver-haired man said hurriedly, "But of course, you can also use inkstones to trade."

"Describe the differences." Linley said with curiosity.

"The ordinary version introduces the eighty one Tartarus Lords, what Laws they specialize in, and how many battles they have been in and won, as well as their living locations." The red-haired youth said.

"The detailed version has the Laws they specialize in, their ultimate techniques, and whether or not they have gone to the Planar Battlefield. It also has detailed descriptions of each and every public battle they have been in. Every single one of them!" The red-haired youth smiled.

Bebe's eyes lit up, and Linley laughed as well.

This was good!

It even had the ultimate techniques and Laws which the Lords specialized in, as well as descriptions of each battle. This was indeed excellent.

"And the secret one?" Linley said, curious.

"The secret one includes information on the family and friends of the eighty one Tartarus Lords, what they often do, what sort of temper they have, and whatnot. But of course…because this information is too closely held, I can't guarantee its accuracy. Aside from these written materials, many scryer recordings are also provided, all of them of the public battles of the eighty one Tartarus Lords!" The red-haired youth said.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other.

Good heavens, this was too detailed.

Written information, paired with large amounts of scyer recordings. This would definitely allow for one to gain a clear understanding of those

Tartarus Lords.

Bebe laughed, “Then we want the secret version.”

The red-haired youth and the silver-haired man all began to laugh. “Excellent. We’ll arrange for a copy to be brought over.”

A million inkstones, to Linley, was nothing. And for this red-haired youth, these intelligence reports could be duplicated, and so their own costs were quite low as well. They, too, knew…that many experts would choose the secret level version. And, to experts, a million was nothing.

“Here they are!” The silver-haired man walked out of a room, carrying a large chest. Within the chest, there was a large amount of written material, as well as quite a few crystal balls.

“Excellent.” Linley walked over, sweeping them with his gaze.

“Lotuscliff Region. The Lord here is ‘Crimsonmight’, and he lives within Lotuscliff Region’s…” Seeing a line of words atop one of the written documents, Linley nodded slightly.

“Fine. Here are a million inkstones.” Linley handed over a large piece of azurite.

“If the two of you need to know other information regarding the Tartarus region, just come find us. We give a 10% discount to repeat customers.” The red-haired youth chortled.

Linley just laughed and, with a wave of his hand, drew the entire chest into his interspatial ring.

With such detailed information, he could now determine exactly who he should select!

Chapter 4 – Redcliff Lord

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 4, Redcliff Lord

Flamebone Region. Within an upstairs, private room in a restaurant.

“Enough. Unless we call for you, no need to enter.” Linley instructed.

“Yes, sir.”

The waiter carried the platter out of the room, shutting the door on the way out.

“Boss, hurry up and bring out those documents and those scryer recordings.” Bebe immediately urged. After acquiring the materials, Linley and Bebe had yet to carefully inspect them, as there had been no suitable place to read them. After all, they couldn’t just start flipping through them on the streets, right? “Don’t be impatient.” Linley laughed. With a thought, he made the large chest materialize, and it hovered above the table.

Linley moved the three dishes and the wine on the table to one side, then placed the thick stack of materials onto the table.

“So many.” Bebe stretched his hand out, grabbing the documents.

“Let’s not waste time. Bebe, you and I will each take half. Let’s all do a quick read-through of these documents and see which Tartarus Lord is suitable to be our target.” Linley said. While speaking, Linley began to flip through a large pile of documents, first reviewing the ones related to the rules of challenging the Lords of Tartarus.

If he was going to challenge a Lord, it would be very important for him to know the rules.

While reading, Bebe suddenly looked towards Linley and asked, “Boss,

should you go challenge, or should I?"

Linley lifted his head to look at Bebe, then laughed. "Bebe, not just anyone can go challenge a Lord of Tartarus. The prerequisite is that you have to be a victor of a hundred battles in the arena, winning ten consecutive battles each day for ten days. Bebe…do you think you will find it easy to win ten battles in a row?"

"Of course. With my innate divine ability, 'Godeater', I refuse to believe anyone will be a match for me." Bebe said confidently.

"What if you didn't have access to the innate divine ability?" Linley laughed while asking.

Bebe was speechless.

If he didn't have the innate divine ability 'Godeater', he, Bebe, simply had tough defense, but in terms of offense, the only thing he had to rely on was a godspark weapon. He would be able to use it to defeat ordinary Highgods, but not a single person who dared to participate in the Bloodbath Arena would be a weakling; weaklings would simply be going to their deaths. It would indeed be hard for Bebe to win.

"I…but I DO have my innate divine ability. Boss, your hypothetical is meaningless." Bebe argued.

Linley wiped the smile from his face, then said solemnly, "Bebe, if you want to rely on your innate divine ability to win a hundred battles in a row, then first of all, your soul is only able to use it twice in succession; for the remaining battles, you'd have to rely on using amethysts and Golden Soul-Pearls to replenish your spiritual energy. It will be very taxing. And secondly!"

Bebe raised an eyebrow.

Linley continued, "Secondly, we are going to go challenge a Lord of Tartarus. Thus, it's best if we don't reveal our trump cards right away. Bebe,

think about it. When you are at the Bloodbath Arena, if you reveal your innate divine ability, then…the Lord of Tartarus would definitely learn of it as well. By then, he would definitely come up with a way to deal with your ability!"

"Deal with my ability?" Bebe was stunned. "What sort of method could he come up with?"

"Preemptively kill you." Linley said with a calm laugh.

"I'm not afraid." Bebe said.

"If he isn't confident in being able to kill you, perhaps that Lord of Tartarus would secretly leave the island, and then publicly say that he has gone out on an important matter. He would let you wait for a thousand years or ten thousand years. Are you able to wait that long?" Linley asked him. "My understanding is that challenges…can be deferred by up to ten thousand years." Linley just saw this in the rules.

Bebe was speechless.

Indeed, issuing a challenge to a Lord of Tartarus wasn't something which could be carried out immediately.

If the Lord of Tartarus wasn't even in the Netherworld, even if you challenged him…you'd have to wait for him to return and receive word of the challenge before you could fight.

"Bebe, we can't waste any time!" Linley said solemnly.

"Oh." Bebe said helplessly.

If Bebe were to fight, what Linley feared was…the Lord of Tartarus, upon seeing Bebe use his innate divine ability, 'Godeater', would be so terrified that he wouldn't even dare to fight, and would secretly slip away. This was actually quite normal. If a person knew that he had no chance of winning but still went to fight, that would be tantamount to suicide.

But just admitting defeat was very humiliating.

Thus, quite a few Lords of Tartarus would choose…to secretly slip away and delay by ten thousand years.

If he didn't accept the challenge within ten thousand years, then the position of Tartarus Lord would immediately be transferred to the challenger.

This was a method by which the challenger would receive the position of Tartarus Lord, and the former incumbent would also be able to save a bit of face. Logically speaking, this was a win-win proposal, but to Linley, it was not, because he had to seize every minute of time so that he could enter the Planar Wars. The Planar Wars, however, only had eight hundred years remaining. He wasn't able to wait that long!

"Right." Bebe nodded slightly.

"Bebe, when I attack, I am capable of completely hiding my power. For example, if I don't Dragonform and don't use my innate divine ability! But of course, I still have to show one thing off slightly; my Blackstone Space! But I'll weaken even the gravitational power of my Blackstone Space. It will be more than enough against those Five Star Fiends, Six Star Fiends, and Seven Star Fiends." Linley said with a calm laugh.

He would lower the power of the Blackstone Space to the level at which it was at when he was just a God.

Linley's full-force Blackstone Space was something which ordinary Seven Star Fiends might just barely be able to resist, even if they went all out, resulting in them being slaughtered at will.

If he only exerted a tenth of the power of the Blackstone Space, that was already enough as far as Linley was concerned.

"Just by showing a bit of my power, I'll be strong enough to win a hundred consecutive battles. I trust the Lord of Tartarus wouldn't be afraid to fight

me just because I revealed a little bit of power. By then, when the time comes, I'll use all my strength. Bebe, what you need to do is carefully look through the materials and see who amongst them has a supreme technique that is perfectly countered by me." Linley said.

Bebe laughed and said, "Heh heh, Boss, you want to win in a back-handed way, eh? Fine, I'll take a look and see whose strengths are countered by you."

Linley began to carefully flip through the materials as well.

In total, there were eighty one Tartarus Lords, and of course, they couldn't all be perfect, invincible experts with no weaknesses. Perhaps some of them would just so happen to be countered by Linley's strengths.

"So powerful." While flipping through the materials, Linley couldn't help but suck in a cold breath. "The Lotuscliff Lord, the lord of the first island I arrived at, has actually not been challenged in countless years for his position. His supreme technique creates a translucent flame which kills anyone it touches, without exception?" Linley felt his heart turn cold as he read through the materials.

Each of the experts who dared to challenge a Tartarus Lord possessed confidence as well as their own supreme techniques.

But without exception, each of them touched by that translucent flame was killed.

"Boss, this Flamebone Lord is so powerful. In the past hundred million years, three people came to challenge him, all of whom were killed in a single blow." Bebe called out in surprise as well.

"Bebe, these people have held their positions unshakably firm for countless years, and the challengers were all easily killed. For now, let's put these especially strong Tartarus Lords off to one side." Linley said immediately. Linley didn't have confidence in being able to defeat those Tartarus Lords who had never had their positions threatened and who had never been

forced to reveal too much of their power.

While reading through the many documents, Linley felt his blood beginning to stir.

So many experts. One challenge after another, one death after another. However, the Netherworld had countless experts in pursuit of perfection. In their hearts, becoming a Lord Prefect or a Tartarus Lord was their dream. For the sake of their dreams, they wouldn't be afraid to sacrifice their lives.

Occasionally, some would succeed and become a new Lord of Tartarus!

"So indeed, amongst the Lords of Tartarus, there are a few who are monstrously powerful, but some who aren't too terrifying." Linley, when reading through the materials introducing some of the other Lords of Tartarus, felt slightly more relaxed. The eighty one Tartarus Lords did indeed have invincible figures akin to Beirut or Dunnington.

No one dared to challenge these people!

"Hm, this one isn't bad." Linley's eyes lit up as he carefully read through some more documents. "Oh, an expert in the Laws of Water. Extremely strong spiritual defense. When he uses his divine power, his material defense can also reach a virtually undefeatable level. And his material attacks are extremely powerful as well!" Linley carefully read through this person's description, and he began to feel a bit of confidence in his heart.

He was choosing an opponent!

Linley completely ignored the Tartarus Lords who were legendary for their soul attacks. Linley had some degree of confidence in his ability to deal with material attacks, and in addition, this Lord of Tartarus he had taken an interest in had developed a monstrously powerful defense through using 'divine power' in forming a constant, unbreakable layer of armor.

"If I were to use my innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', to change his flow of time…with time changed, the defense he controls with his divine power

will definitely no longer be perfect, especially given that I'll also be using powerful gravitational powers on him through my Blackstone Space." Linley couldn't help but begin to laugh, and he hurriedly began to review the documents regarding other details of this individual.

But then, his face froze, because he saw a line of words on the second page.

"What? He went to the Planar Battlefield?"

"Next one." Linley had no choice but to do this.

There was nothing he could do…

The eighty one Tartarus Lords were almost all proficient in soul attacks. Even if they weren't proficient, their soul defenses were generally quite strong. Linley's soul defense was actually quite strong as well. Given his spiritual energy was at the Highgod level, that he had fused three profound mysteries, and that he had that innate azure glow surrounding his soul as well as the damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, he was already beyond the level of most Seven Star Fiends.

But his opponents were the Lords of Tartarus, after all. Truly supreme experts.

"Boss, I have one here." Bebe suddenly called out.

Linley raised his head and looked over. "Where is he? Not in the Planar Battlefield, I hope."

"Nope. The intelligence report says that he is still within his realm." Bebe said hurriedly.

"Tell me about him." Linley's eyes lit up.

"He's the same as you, Boss. An expert of Earth." Bebe laughed.

"Oh?" Linley's eyes lit up. Linley actually preferred to deal with earth-type

experts, because he had thoroughly analyzed the Laws of the Earth, and so it would be easier for him to deal with it.

Bebe continued, “This person’s soul defense is extremely strong. The recorded battles state that he didn’t seem to be impacted at all by any soul attacks. His soul defense is absolutely monstrous! But he isn’t specialized in soul attacks, nor has anyone ever seen him use any powerful soul attacks. The intelligence report hypothesizes that he probably has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Although the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ was related to the soul, the Laws of the Earth still weren’t that strong in soul-related matters.

It was the Edicts of Life, the Edicts of Death, the Edicts of Fate, and the Elemental Laws of Fire which were strongest in the soul.

“His strength is material attacks. He is able to easily break apart Highgod artifacts with one blow! His fists and his warblade are exceedingly, terrifyingly powerful. Also…he specializes in speed. He is monstrously fast! On quite a few occasions, those who challenged him were sent smashing backwards by his fist before even touching him. They admitted defeat.” Bebe explained.

Linley began to laugh.

Speed? Material attacks?

No matter how fast a person was, within Linley’s full-force Blackstone Space, how fast could he be?

Material attacks?

In Dragonform, when using the godspark weapon Mirage in executing the ‘Firmament Splitter’, Linley wagered that the power of his sword blows shouldn’t be much weaker.

“And I also have my innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’.” Linley laughed.

“Boss, I’ve gone through this entire pile of documents. I feel that this particular Lord of Tartarus just so happens to be countered by your strengths. You should have a better than 80% chance of victory. Only, I’m not sure…if this Lord of Tartarus was hiding anything in reserve.” Bebe said resignedly.

Hiding something in reserve?

Someone who trained in the Laws of the Earth, even one who understood spiritual attacks well, wouldn’t possibly be as powerful in that aspect as someone who trained in the Edicts of Death or Laws of Fire. After all, much of the Edicts of Death pertained to the soul, and the Edicts of Fate were almost completely linked to the soul.

“Anybody is capable of holding something in reserve. However, since he is of the Laws of the Earth, I have some confidence in dealing with him.”

“Let me look.” Linley immediately received the materials, taking it over from Bebe.

He began to carefully review these materials. While reviewing the battles undergone by this Tartarus Lord, Linley began to feel more confident. The specialty of this Lord of Tartarus was his ‘speed’ and his material attacks. The two synergized well, making him almost invincible. Unfortunately…he just so happened to be countered by Linley.

Perhaps this Lord of Tartarus would be able to easily defeat supreme experts who specialized in soul attacks, but upon encountering Linley…

“Redcliff Region, eh?”

Linley nodded slightly. “Him it is!”

Chapter 5 – Sudden Emergence

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 5, Sudden Emergence

Linley and Bebe walked forward, shoulder to shoulder. Linley had a rare hint of a smile on his face. There, in the restaurant within Flamebone City, Linley and Bebe decided that their target would be the Redcliff Lord, and also carefully reviewed the detailed reports regarding this Redcliff Lord, and also viewed his scryer recordings.

Seeing the scryer recordings, Linley sighed in amazement…

The speed of this Redcliff Lord was indeed monstrous. Linley had never seen anyone as fast as this individual. However, Linley was still completely confident. Those who specialized in speed, upon encountering the Blackstone Space…even if they were originally as fast as a hare, they would become as slow as a tortoise!

“Battles are forbidden within the cities. Only in the Bloodbath Arenas are battles permitted.” Linley and Bebe quickly arrived outside the Bloodbath Arena.

The Bloodbath Arena, in size and scope, was comparable to the arenas which Linley had originally encountered at Miluo Island. However, this Bloodbath Arena was round; even standing outside of it, Linley could sense powerful energy ripples emanating from within this Bloodbath Arena.

“Whaaaaaaaaaa!” A wave of excited roars rang out.

“It’s quite lively here.” Linley laughed. “Bebe, let us go take a look.”

“Right.” Bebe’s eyes were shining. “I can sense the atmosphere from all the way out here. It’s even livelier than Miluo Island’s arena.”

Similarly, to view the battles in the arena, one had to pay a fee, but the cost

was lower than Miluo Island's. Each person only needed to pay ten netherstones. Linley and Bebe paid the fee, then followed the corridor and quickly arrived within the Bloodbath Arena. But just as they drew near, they felt a surge of heated calls ring out.

"Hm, there should be nearly a million people here." Linley stared at the viewing platforms.

The viewing platforms were occupied by a large number of spectators. Because the platforms took up a very large amount of space, from Linley's current position, what he saw was a tight cluster of people, like countless ants. There was an extremely high number of people here. The viewers included muscular men, callous and skinny youths, as well as some ancient-looking old people, along with icy ladies or energetic lasses.

They were either calling out in excitement or just watching calmly and appraisingly.

There were humans, as well as quite a few other races with strange appearances. There were three-eyed figures, four-eared individuals, six-armed people…etcetera.

"It really is lively! The battles in the Bloodbath Arena should be the most exciting things in the entire Tartarus." Linley understood that virtually everyone who came to Tartarus loved to do battle and wanted to pursue perfection. In addition, the Bloodbath Arena just so happened to be a necessary route for challenging a Tartarus Lord.

This caused the Bloodbath Arena to have a very special status within Tartarus and thus have many spectators.

Only now did Linley look towards the center of the Bloodbath Arena.

Two figures were battle in the air above the Bloodbath Arena. A streak of red flame slashed through the air as a blurry saber flashed through the skies, slamming against the body of the black-robed man in front. The black-robed man was knocked backwards by the blade chop. Blood splattered

everywhere, and then his head exploded into tiny fragments.

The black-robed man landed heavily on the ground, not moving at all.

“Dead.” Linley frowned.

“Raaaaaaawr!” The red-haired figure landed on the ground, revealing his form. This was a youth with a head of unbound black hair. His fists waved in the air as he howled excitedly, then shouted with confidence, “Next, next!”

The entire Bloodbath Arena was filled with joyful calls as well, although there were also many spectators who howled, “Kill him, friend! Go kill him!” Linley, watching this, smirked slightly. The atmosphere in this Bloodbath Arena really was explosive. And indeed…the Bloodbath Arena was perhaps one of the few entertainment areas in the entire Tartarus region.”

“That person’s power isn’t bad.”

Bebe turned to glance at Linley. Laughing, he said, “Boss, you preparing to make him your first?”

“Bebe, wait here. I’ll go register.” Linley rose.

“Right.” Bebe nodded repeatedly. He was completely confident in Linley.

“Oh?” The two spectators seated next to Linley and Bebe, hearing these words, turned to stare at Linley in surprise. Clearly, they knew that Linley was going to fight in the Bloodbath Arena.

“Hey, you are bold.” Immediately, a nearby woman with black hair and red eyes stared at Linley, her eyes flashing. “Fight a few extra battles. I, your Big Sis, will support you!” Linley glanced at the surrounding figures, and instantly, quite a few people began to call out towards Linley, most of them supporting and encouraging him.

Just because Linley had chosen to sit around them, they all supported Linley.

But of course…

In the end, what mattered in the Bloodbath Arena was how strong a person was.

Registering for the Bloodbath Arena was free, but the manager still looked at Linley in surprise. “Mr. Ley, what did you say? Ten battles in a row?”

“Right.” Linley nodded with a smile.

“You can’t do this in a rush. You can’t just arrange for ten battles in a row. After you win one battle, you can choose whether or not to continue with the next.” The manager said. This was a rule as well. If the challenger died during the first challenge, how could the other nine challenges be carried out?

Linley glanced at the manager. “Then just watch and wait.”

However…quite a few people would go participate in the arena.

Linley had to wait for his turn. By the time Linley’s turn came, seven or eight more battles had already occurred. That red-haired youth had left long ago. He had already won ten consecutive battles. As he walked out from the corridor, he even swept Linley’s group with an arrogant look.

Linley just laughed calmly.

Suddenly…

An ocean of jubilant roars swept out from within the Bloodbath Arena, while a thunderous voice echoed out: “Our expert, ‘Wood’ [Wu’te], has already won three battles in a row. Now, please allow the challenger, ‘Ley’, to step forward!”

Linley's eyes lit up.

'Ley' was the name he had used to register himself.

"Mr. Ley, faster." The managerial staff hurriedly called towards Linley, who just laughed. With a flicker, he appeared within the challenger's corridor, passing through and arriving at the Bloodbath Arena, still reeking of fresh blood.

The many people in the spectator platforms at the Bloodbath Arena all called out in celebration. They saw a person dressed in a long, sky-blue robe, who looked like an ordinary neighborhood youth, emerge from the tunnel and arrive at the Bloodbath Arena. He slowly rose into the air, and his opponent…was a man with two scarlet eyes, dressed in a black uniform and wielding a long whip. They stared at each other.

The entire Bloodbath Arena was filled with an explosive atmosphere.

But Linley maintained his calm, as though he didn't feel anything at all.

"Boss, kill that kid!" Suddenly, a clear sound rang out, echoing throughout the entire Bloodbath Arena.

Linley couldn't help but grin as he turned to look. It was Bebe.

Just as Linley turned his head, a hint of disdain flashed through the crimson eyes of the black-robed man. "He dares to be distracted during a life-and-death battle!" At the same time, he moved. "Swish!" He arced out through the skies like a ray of black light, instantly appearing in front of Linley. Linley had yet to react, and the black-robed man attacked without showing any mercy…

A ray of dark light sprang out from the black-robed man.

"Rumble…"

Suddenly, an earthen yellow light instantly sprang out. "Ah!" The black-

robed man, caught off-guard, uncontrollably descended. “BANG!” He slammed hard into the Bloodbath Arena, sending shattered rocks flying everywhere.

“Swoosh!” Linley descended lightning-fast.

The black-robed man, trapped within the Blackstone Space, wasn’t even able to stand stably. Linley kicked out at his chest, sending him flying into the air. “I admit defeat!” His voice rang out, echoing throughout the entire Bloodbath Arena. Only now did the black-robed man stare towards Linley in amazement. Having felt the Blackstone Space, he was terrified.

“I am almost at the Six Star Fiend level of power, but I’m not even able to control my speed.” The black-robed man was nervous. “So this fellow wasn’t being overconfident; he was prepared early on…that kick of his, if it was aimed at my head, I’m afraid I’d be dead already! This person is too strong, too strong!”

But he had no idea…

Linley had only exerted a tenth of the power of the Blackstone Space. If he had used it full force, even Seven Star Fiends wouldn’t be able to take it, much less him, a kid who wasn’t even at the Six Star Fiend level yet.

“Thank you.” The black-robed man bowed gratefully, then immediately chose to depart through the tunnel.

Linley continued to hover there in the air above the Bloodbath Arena. He had no grudge for that person. As Linley saw it, for him to be here in the Bloodbath Arena…was already a case of him bullying his lesser. If he were to kill them, that would be going too far. Fighting to kill…should be done against those who were at roughly the same level of strength, as there would be no way to hold back.”

“Ley!”

“Ley!”

Immediately, the entire viewing platform exploded with cheers, especially those Demigods and Gods who had grown up in Tartarus. Their cheers were the loudest. For Linley to be able to so easily trample that opponent…his power was easy to behold.

“Our expert, Ley, said earlier that he wants to fight ten in a row. I didn’t believe it at first, but from the looks of it…he really is going to fight ten in a row. The next battle begins. Reed [Lei’te], step forward!” That ringing voice once more echoed throughout the entire Bloodbath Arena.

Upon hearing that Linley wished to fight ten battles in a row, the spectators who had managed to maintain their calm and silence also called out in excitement now.

Only this sort of expert would cause people to be truly excited.

The second battle!

One exchange. The Blackstone Space was spread out, and Linley kicked the person down, embedding him into the Bloodbath Arena’s ground. Linley won!

The third battle! Still just one exchange. Linley won!

The fourth battle…

The Blackstone Space, even at 10% power, was still very powerful. And these challengers weren’t even at the Seven Star Fiend level. All of them were easily defeated by Linley.

“Bang!”

The adamantine heavy sword struck heavily against a silver-haired man’s chest. Instantly, with a ‘boom’ sound, cracks in space appeared and the silver-haired man was knocked backwards, a large hole in his chest. In midair, before he even landed, he hurriedly called out, “I admit defeat!”

The difference between them was too great!

“You aren’t bad.”

Linley laughed calmly, looking at him. “You forced me to use my sword.”

Linley had decided long ago that in the Bloodbath Arena, even if he had to use a weapon, he would just use his adamantine heavy sword or Bloodviolet. As for his godspark weapon, ‘Mirage’, that would only be used against the Lord of Tartarus.

“A victor of ten battles!!!” The officiator for the Bloodbath Arena called out in a high, clear voice. “Ley said he would fight ten in a row, and he has indeed won ten! Ley’s power is indeed very great. As I see it, perhaps he will win a hundred battles!” It was much harder to win a hundred battles in a row. After all, many experts normally couldn’t even be bothered to fight.

Only after meeting other experts would they fight.

Quite a few people throughout the massive viewing platforms howled jubilantly and excitedly.

“Ley!”

“Ley!”

Their jubilant cries rose up and crashed down like waves, but Linley just chuckled.

“Tomorrow, we continue.” Linley said calmly to himself, then turned and left through the challenger’s tunnel.

The Bloodbath Arena was a place which the experts of the Redcliff Region paid very close attention to. Within the Redcliff Region, generally speaking, it was rare for even a single expert to win a hundred battles despite the passage of many years. This was because, each time, after a challenger won

a few dozen battles in a row, some true experts would feel their hands get itchy and they would come to participate in the battles. These experts wouldn't just come singly; often, they would come out in succession, causing the end result to be that very few would win a hundred successive battles.

As time moved on…

The name 'Ley' began to be known to quite a few truly powerful experts of the Redcliff Region.

One day after yet another day of consecutive victories.

On the fifth day, he still won ten victories.

On the sixth day, he still won ten victories!

Linley's successes clearly didn't require too much effort. This caused quite a few people to understand that 'Ley' definitely had to have more power than just this! Thus, the past few days, a very large number of people came to watch at the Bloodbath Arena. Many of them had come to watch Linley! Many of them waited eagerly…hoping that Linley would to be able to continue and cause some truly powerful experts to come and battle him.

And finally…an expert whom Linley would take seriously appeared.

Chapter 6 – Unstoppable

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 6, Unstoppable

Redcliff Region. The Lord's estate.

Currently, the Redcliff Lord was reclining on his chair, his eyes shut.

The Redcliff Lord was only 1.7 meters tall, and in the Netherworld, he would indeed be considered a very small fellow. He looked very thin, and he was currently dressed in a sleeveless shirt, revealing his wiry arms. Although the shirt was over his body, it wasn't able to cover up the heroic, mighty aura that emanated from him.

This was the Redcliff Lord, one of the eighty one Lords of Tartarus.

"Your Lordship." A black-robed, silver-haired youth walked to his side and bowed.

"Mm?" The Redcliff Lord opened his eyes. His pupils were vertical, and they were violet! They gave off a disturbing feeling.

"Your Lordship, an expert has appeared within the Bloodbath Arena of our Redcliff region." The black-robed, silver-haired youth said respectfully. "This person is called 'Ley', and he has already won sixty battles. From his performance in these sixty battles, I expect that this person already has the power of a Seven Star Specter. He specializes in the Laws of the Earth. Your Lordship, will you go watch him battle?"

"Laws of the Earth?" The Redcliff Lord raised a black eyebrow, but then with a calm laugh shut his eyes again. "Since he is an expert in the Laws of the Earth, there's no need for me to go in person. You, Ganmoly [Gan'mo'lei], can go handle this matter. At the same time, record it all down with scryer recordings. If anything appears that causes you to feel surprised, bring it for me to watch."

“Yes, your Lordship.” Ganmoly bowed.

Ganmoly knew very well that although the Redcliff Lord had yet to reach the stage of being a Paragon in the Laws of the Earth, the Redcliff Lord already knew all the various types of attacks of the Laws of the Earth.

However, what the Redcliff Lord didn’t realize was…

Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’ had already exceeded the bounds of the profound mysteries. This was the innate divine ability of Reisgem, and Linley had to rely on the ‘black stone’ in order to use it.

The seventh day Linley was at the Bloodbath Arena.

On this day, the Bloodbath Arena had an unusually high number of people watching. It had been a long time since someone in the Redcliff Region had consecutively defeated so many people. Many people wanted to watch… and see how far this man named ‘Ley’ would be able to go, and if he really had the power of a Seven Star Specter or not.

“This battle is over now. Haha, everyone has been waiting for a long time, I’m sure. Next will be our victor of sixty consecutive battles; ‘Ley’!” The voice echoed brightly.

Suddenly…

The entire watching platform began to ring out with jubilant cries. The previous battles were fairly low level, and some people were too bored to watch. But upon hearing that ‘Ley’ was about to appear, all of their eyes lit up and they called out nonstop. And at this time, in an unremarkable corner of the watching platform, a black-robed, silver-haired youth and a middle-aged black-haired man were sitting, shoulder to shoulder.

“Ganmoly.” The middle-aged black-haired man laughed calmly. “Are you here at the orders of his Lordship?”

“I’m just watching.” Ganmoly laughed. “This person trains in the Laws of the Earth. He’s not yet shown himself to be worth his Lordship’s attention. Right, Sheppard [Xi’ao’bo’er’de], are you interested in this Ley?”

“I just came today to watch. However, my old friend, ‘Pam’ [Bo’mu] has already gone to register. If he is able to defeat Pam, then I will go test to see how strong this kid is!” The black-haired Sheppard said with a calm laugh. Ganmoly, hearing this, said with gleaming eyes, “Pam is going to participate?”

As the two chatted…

“Bang!” The adamantine heavy sword slammed into the opponent, sending the person flying back.

“I admit defeat!” The man called out hurriedly.

Linley retracted his sword, still standing there in midair. He shook his head mentally. “I have to win a hundred battles to challenge a Lord of Tartarus. This does indeed waste a good bit of time.” Linley had already undergone seventy one battles, but he had yet to feel even a hint of danger. The strongest of these opponents were at most at the Six Star Fiend level.

When Linley was a God, he was already capable of killing ordinary Seven Star Fiends.

Now that he was a Highgod, he already had the power of an ordinary Asura. Against these people, of course he found it very easy.

“Everyone! Let me announce some news that will shock and please all of you! Ley’s next opponent is a former victor of a hundred battles here at the Redcliff Region; our very own Mr. Pam!” Excited cheers swept the entire Bloodbath Arena, but then, the entire arena went silent.

Even the chatting Ganmoly and Sheppard turned to look.

“Pam is entering the field of battle.” The black-haired Sheppard began to

laugh.

The momentarily quiet Bloodbath Arena suddenly once more turned raucous. The cheers rang out unabated, and many of the viewers bellowed, “Ley, defeat that Pam!!!”

“PAM!!!”

“LEY!!!”

The entire Bloodbath Arena was at a boiling point of activity. Even many formerly calm individuals were now shouting to the point of hoarseness, each screaming their support for one of the two. Clearly, the shouts for ‘Ley’, who had recently won everyone’s admiration, were somewhat louder. But Pam was also a former victor of a hundred battles.

A battle against two experts?

Who would win?

Such a large battle…the level of activity in the Bloodbath Arena reached a fevered level.

“Oh, a former victor of a hundred battles?” Linley raised an eyebrow, turning to look. At this moment, Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind as well. “Boss, this is a former victor of a hundred battles. Don’t be reckless. If you were to lose…then it’s my turn. I’ll go challenge the Tartarus Lord.”

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but laugh.

“Swoosh!” A gray blur suddenly shot out from the tunnel, then hung there in midair. Linley looked carefully…

This Pam was dressed in a long green robe. He had a pair of downwards drooping white eyebrows. Although his hair and eyebrows were white, his face was like that of a youth’s. Pam had a perpetual smile on his face, and he was currently staring at Linley with narrowed eyes. “Ley? It’s so hard to

find a good opponent, here at the Redcliff Region. Don't disappoint me."

Linley laughed calmly.

"Make your move." Linley said.

"Oh, quite arrogant, eh?" Pam laughed calmly. He suddenly swept out with his hand, and a green light sprang up.

Linley and Pam's battle caused quite a few people on the watching platform to focus their attention. Even Bebe stared fixedly at the arena. Only Sheppard and Ganmoly continued to chat silently through divine sense while watching as the great battle was about to begin.

"Ganmoly, who do you say will be the victor?" Sheppard sent mentally.

"It should be Ley." Ganmoly sent back. "This Ley…I have the feeling that his power is at least on your level. As for Pam, although he has reached the Seven Star Specter level, he is just barely at that level. Although both his physical attacks and his spiritual attacks can be considered strong, they aren't monstrously strong. However, he trains in the Laws of Water. It won't be easy to defeat him. Pam should be able to hold on for a period of time."

"I was thinking the same."

Sheppard laughed as well. "Originally, when I beat Pam, I had to spend quite a bit of effort. An expert who trains in the Laws of Water is very hard to deal with."

But as the two were discussing this matter, their facial expressions suddenly froze.

The entire Bloodbath Arena had turned silent. And then, an explosion of raucous noise. Many people began to chat amongst themselves, and the entire Bloodbath Arena turned cacophonous. Nobody could understand what they had just seen. It wasn't just them who didn't understand it…

Even Ganmoly and Sheppard didn't understand it.

"How could that have happened?" Ganmoly said in disbelief.

"Pam…did he lose on purpose?" Sheppard didn't understand either.

Just now, what happened during the battle was this. First, Linley had used his Blackstone Space to entrap his opponent. Pam was indeed strong; he was able to force himself to stay up and not crash downwards. But his speed was now incomparable to Linley's. Linley, relying on superior speed and Bloodviolet, began to attack.

But clearly, Pam's defense was extremely strong. Without being able to Dragonform, he was unable to breach Pam's defense with his attacks.

Linley's Dragonform was one of his trump cards. Linley wasn't willing to use his Dragonform, and so he used his 'Spiritual Chaos' instead. After reaching the Highgod level, Linley's Spiritual Chaos technique, once used, would cause even the likes of Pam, a Seven Star Fiend level expert, to have his soul enter a bewildered state.

In that brief instant, Linley used a single blow of the sword to sever Pam's head.

Pam's head flew upwards into the air, hurriedly reconnecting with the body.

"Thank you!" Pam said gratefully. If Linley had struck his head instead of his neck, Pam would have died.

He didn't lose unfairly. The Spiritual Chaos of the Blackstone Field was the supreme technique of Purgatory Commander Reisgem. It was natural for him to lose to this technique.

In the viewing platform.

"Whooosh!" Sheppard suddenly stood up, but one of his clones sat down. He stared at the distant Linley, standing there in the air above the Bloodbath

Arena. “Ganmoly, I’ll go test him.” He left behind his divine spark, as he was worried that Linley might use a killing technique. Although prior to this, Linley had shown mercy, that didn’t mean he would always show mercy.

“Be careful!” Ganmoly said hurriedly.

“Don’t worry. It won’t be so simple for him to beat me.” Sheppard said, and he walked forward.

In the Bloodbath Arena, many people began to call out in joy.

Many of them were now treating Linley as a model for themselves! A target for them to surpass!

“Everyone, today, Ley has already consecutively won nine times in a row, and one of his opponents was Pam! However, even Pam lost to Ley. And now, the tenth challenger for today is standing right beside me. To be honest, I am already excited over the battle that is about to begin. The person by my side, is an expert even more powerful than Pam! Everyone, can you guess who he is?”

Immediately, everyone in the Bloodbath Arena turned to look, and many of them began to call out excitedly.

It was already very rare for them be able to watch a single battle between Seven Star Specter level experts. But today, there would be a second? It seemed as though this one would be even more powerful!

“He…is Sheppard!” The host’s voice rang out.

In the air above the Bloodbath Arena.

Linley still stood there calmly in midair, looking at the many spectators and how they were excitedly shouting. Linley was rather curious. “Sheppard? How powerful could he be?” Linley looked towards the entry passage, and saw a black-haired, middle-aged man drift over. As soon as he flew into the

Bloodbath Arena, he looked towards Linley.

“I didn’t expect that you were capable of soul attacks, and such unusual ones at that.” The black-haired, middle-aged man said. Just now, outside the challenger’s tunnel, he had already met Pam and chatted with him. However, Pam only thought that Linley had used some sort of strange soul attack to cause him to enter a dazed state.

Linley smiled slightly. “Enough chitchat. Let’s fight.”

Sheppard frowned.

“Hmph.” Angered, he narrowed his eyes slightly.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Two rays of black light suddenly shot out from Sheppard’s eyes, striking directly towards Linley. Linley couldn’t help but retreat, flying at high speed. “What an unusual spiritual attack.” The speed of the spiritual attack was too fast. Linley wasn’t even able to dodge before the two black rays of light entered his body.

“Crackle…” Linley’s spiritual energy struck out like the Voidwave Sword, blocking in the area of the flaw.

As for the black light, the majority of it exhausted itself against the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, while the remaining bit of power wasn’t able to threaten Linley at all.

The Blackstone Space and the Spiritual Chaos almost instantly encompassed the enemy.

Sheppard’s spiritual prowess wasn’t particularly impressive. He, too, fell into a dazed state, and just stood there, letting Linley slice off his head with one blow.

“You lose!” Linley said calmly.

The entire Bloodbath Arena once more fell silent.

“What happened?” Ganmoly asked repeatedly.

“What a powerful soul attack.” Sheppard shook his head. “I was instantly bewildered as well and defeated.”

“Soul attack?” Ganmoly felt relaxed now. “This Ley is indeed strong, but if he encounters his Lordship, he will definitely lose.”

His Lordship, the Redcliff Lord, feared no spiritual attacks. Actually, this was one of the reasons why Linley displayed his ‘Spiritual Chaos’ attack. When seeing Linley use this technique…the Redcliff Lord wouldn’t feel the slightest bit of fear towards Linley.

After the two major battles of the seventh day, no one further was able to hold Linley back from winning. Linley consecutively passed through the eighth, ninth, and tenth days. A complete success! He became the only victor of a hundred battles which the Redcliff Region had seen in recent years.

Chapter 7 – A Blaze

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 7, A Blaze

Above the Bloodbath Arena.

Many people were chatting amongst themselves, and the topic was virtually all related to Linley, currently standing above the Bloodbath Arena. Because just now, Linley had successfully gained his hundredth victory. But his success caused them to all understand…that most likely in the future, it would be hard for them to see Linley fight again.

“Hey, just now, you were shouting so excitedly, ‘Boss’, ‘Boss’. Do you know Lord Ley?” A silver-haired young lady glanced sideways at Bebe.

“Of course I know him. He’s my Boss.” Bebe rubbed his nose and said confidently.

“Yeah, sure. And he’s my elder brother.” The silver-haired woman snorted, and then continued to look at Linley with a rather worshipful gaze. The silver-haired woman grew up in Tartarus and was affected by the local environment. The admiration the people here felt towards experts was even stronger than in the other parts of the Netherworld.

“She doesn’t believe me.” Bebe was speechless in the face of the silver-haired woman’s disbelief.

Right at this moment…

A deep voice echoed in the Bloodbath Arena. “Everyone!” The voice continued to ring out as the person’s figure flew to the air above the Bloodbath Arena, standing next to Linley. This person was dressed in a long golden robe, and had a head full of long, dazzling gold hair. He was laughing while saying clearly, “Today, yet another victor of a hundred battles has emerged from our Bloodbath Arena. He is…Ley!”

Linley smiled and made a nodding gesture towards the golden-haired man.

Linley was waiting to be given his proof of having won a hundred battles… the ‘Bloodbath Emblem’. With the Bloodbath Emblem, he would truly have the qualifications to go challenge a Lord of Tartarus.

“Everyone, quiet!” The golden-haired man said in a clear voice.

Instantly, the spectators of the Bloodbath Arena all halted their conversations and looked over.

“Right now, I will give this medal of honor, the ‘Bloodbath Emblem’, to our victor of a hundred battles, Ley!” As he spoke, the gold-haired man withdrew a six-pointed star-shaped red emblem and, with a smile, gave it to Linley. “Ley, from today onwards, your name and your victories will be displayed within our Bloodbath Arena.”

Linley laughed and accepted it.

“So this is it?” Linley lowered his head to give it a glance. The reason he had fought these hundred battles was for the sake of becoming qualified to challenge a Lord of Tartarus.

“But of course, this Bloodbath Medallion also represents that you now are qualified to go challenge our mighty Lord of the Redcliff Region!” The golden-haired man said with a loud, clearly laugh. “Mr. Ley, I ask you this. Are you going to go challenge our Lord of Redcliff Region?” These words caused the entire Bloodbath Arena to once more turn rowdy.”

“Challenge his Lordship!”

“Challenge him!”

“Ley, challenge his Lordship!”

Many of the spectators in the Bloodbath Arena began to cry out. However,

everyone understood that this was a question that would be asked each time the Bloodbath Medallion was handed out. As for the spectators, they were just shouting to be rowdy. Everyone hoped to see a battle over the position of Lord of Tartarus. But they all understood…

This was just a formality.

It was extremely rare for someone to actually challenge a Lord of Tartarus. Generally speaking, it would happen only a few times every hundred million years. Each time someone dared to challenge a Lord of Tartarus, that person generally had a certain degree of confidence as well as some special skills to rely on. Although Linley seemed quite good, as the spectators saw it, he was still quite a ways off from the level of a Lord of Tartarus.

After all, whether it was Pam or Sheppard, compared to a Lord of Tartarus, they were like infants compared to an adult.

“You said Ley is your Boss. Then tell me, will Ley challenge the Tartarus Lord?” The silver-haired lady laughed while looking at Bebe, and Bebe nodded with absolute certainty. “Without question, my Boss will definitely challenge the Tartarus Lord!”

“Haha…” The silver-haired lady immediately began to laugh softly. “You don’t even know how to lie properly.”

“If you don’t believe it, just watch.” Bebe said.

“To tell the truth, the reason I have come to the Bloodbath Arena to fight…!” Linley’s voice suddenly rang out.

The conversations around the Bloodbath Arena suddenly lowered in volume.

Linley had a smile on his face. “…was precisely for the sake of becoming qualified to challenge the Redcliff Lord!”

Instantly, everyone fell silent.

Everyone looked towards Linley. The golden-haired man by Linley's side looked at him in disbelief. "No way. This Mr. Ley…can it be that today, he really is going to challenge the Redcliff Lord? Too crazy, too crazy!" Although victors of a hundred battles were powerful, there would be one every so often.

But someone who would challenge a Lord of Tartarus? This was something which would happen a few times every hundred million years.

"No way." The silver-haired lady grew nervous. She couldn't help but glance sideways at Bebe, who just laughed confidently towards her.

Everyone listened carefully and eagerly.

"Now, I have finally acquired the necessary qualifications." Linley stared at them. "Today, in front of everyone, I publicly proclaim! That I…am formally issuing the Redcliff Lord…a challenge!"

"CHALLENGE!!!"

His voice echoed throughout the Bloodbath Arena. Everyone was silent for a long time.

This was the first time in the past ten million years that someone within the Redcliff Region had issued a challenge to the mighty Redcliff Lord!

The Redcliff Lord was exalted and powerful!

Everyone who challenged him had perished.

But the many experts amongst the spectators wouldn't give up. For the sake of their dreams, their goals! Even if they had to die, they would constantly challenge themselves, constantly clash…there would eventually come the day when they would defeat the Redcliff Lord and become the next Redcliff Lord. However, on this road…many, many would die!

More than a million spectators were present, and they were staring at Linley, in the center.

In their eyes, Linley was a fearless warrior, a new challenger for the position of Lord of Tartarus!

“Ley!” The silver-haired elder was the first to call out solemnly.

“Ley!” Immediately, a large number of people in the surrounding area called out as well.

“LEY!” The entire Bloodbath Arena reverberated with this unified chorus.

It was like a thunderclap splitting the world. These people used whatever methods were available to them to express encouragement to Linley! In their eyes, everyone who dared to challenge a Lord of Tartarus was a hero! A fearless hero!

Everyone in the Redcliff Region wished to challenge a Lord of Tartarus and become the next one, but they all knew that their own level of strength was insufficient, and so they didn’t have the courage to do so. But deep in their hearts…they still had this desire. For Linley to now go make the challenge…this group of people very naturally came to feel that Linley was their representative.

They hoped to see Linley win!

Even though deep in their hearts, they believed that Linley would die, just like the previous challengers to the Redcliff Lord.

Within the Bloodbath Arena, in front of more than a million people, the winner of a hundred consecutive battles, ‘Ley’, thus publicly issued his challenge to the Redcliff Lord! This news quickly swept through the entire Redcliff Region, like a blazing wildfire burning through a desolate, dry prairie. The hundred million people populating the Redcliff Region all were discussing this.

They were all eager to watch it!

Eager for Linley to duel the Redcliff Lord!

Redcliff City. Within a hotel's courtyard.

Linley and Bebe were casually sipping wine.

"Bebe, tell me, the Redcliff Lord should have heard of my public challenge by now, right? There's no need for me to go in person to his door to challenge him again." Linley said with a hint of uncertainty.

"Enough, Boss. Just wait." Bebe said casually. "The Lords of Tartarus… what sort of status do they have? They are like the Lord Prefects or Purgatory Commanders of the Infernal Realm. They are exalted figures. In terms of status alone, they are beneath only the Sovereigns themselves. How could someone with that sort of status possibly ignore your open provocations?"

Linley laughed as he looked at Bebe. "The way you put it is really…"

Linley suddenly turned, looking towards the courtyard door. Bebe looked as well.

"Knock!" "Knock!" The sound of the door being knocked.

"I imagine his Lordship's men have arrived." Bebe hurriedly ran over and opened the door. A black-robed, silver-haired youth was standing outside, looking towards the courtyard. When his gaze fell upon Linley, he revealed a smile on his face. "Mr. Ley, I am Ganmoly, the steward for the Redcliff Lord."

"Please come in." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Bebe laughed while winking towards Linley and sending mentally, "Boss, I was right, eh? His people have come."

Ganmoly laughed while walking in, then said, “Mr. Ley, I have come to represent the Redcliff Lord in issuing you an invitation to make a trip to the his estate and discuss your challenge to him.”

“Discuss?” Linley raised an eyebrow. “Discuss the time and place?”

“That’s part of it.” Ganmoly laughed.

“No need to discuss it. You can just proclaim a time and a place. That will suffice.” Linley said with a calm smile.

“Mr. Ley, there are other matters as well. It’s best to make a trip.” Ganmoly said.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances, and then Linley rose to his feet, smiling. “Since Steward Ganmoly and the Tartarus Lord invite us, then we two brothers will follow you, Steward Ganmoly, to make this trip.” Bebe revealed a smile on his face as well while sending to Linley, “Boss, the Redcliff Lord isn’t going to try and assassinate us secretly, is he?”

“He shouldn’t. If he wants to kill us, it is better to kill us publicly. To secretly assassinate us would not be keeping with his stature.” Linley sent back.

“Right.” Bebe sent in reply. “Boss, your words make sense. Forget it. If he does try anything funny, I’ll immediately use my ‘Godeater’ against him.”

Under Ganmoly’s guidance, Linley and Bebe quickly arrived at the residence of the Redcliff Lord. The Redcliff Lord’s estate was surrounded by a large number of Highgod patrols. Linley swept them with his gaze. “Quite a few people. The outer perimeter has nearly ten thousand people, all Highgods!”

The population of Tartarus wasn’t very high.

The vast majority of the people here, however, were Highgods. The

patrolling warriors at the Redcliff Lord's estate naturally were all Highgods as well.

The Redcliff Lord's estate was extremely large. Linley and Bebe followed for quite some time before they arrived at an empty martial training field. Here, a muscular youth dressed in a short-sleeved shirt and long trousers was standing, ramrod straight. Although he was a 'youth' whose height and body shape seemed similar to Bebe's…

However…

This person seemed o emanate a vigorous, mighty aura.

"Your Lordship, they have come." Ganmoly said respectfully.

Linley couldn't help but narrow his eyes as he looked carefully at this short-sleeved, muscular youth. "So he really does look just like he did in the scryer recordings."

"Whoosh." The Redcliff Lord turned to look at them. His two vertically oriented, violet pupils caused Linley and Bebe to feel startled. Although they had seen scryer recordings, there was a limit to the clarity of the recordings. Linley was only able to see two figures fight, and wasn't able to see the pupils clearly.

"Your Lordship." Linley said.

The Redcliff Lord, just by looking at Linley and Bebe, had the feeling that these two shouldn't be weak. He said calmly, "Today, I have invited the two of you over because I can't be bothered to go enter some battle for them to watch. At the same time, I have no interest in killing you, 'Ley'. Thus, it's best for you to openly proclaim that you are giving up your challenge. Go back and keep training."

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

"Hey…why are you saying this?" Bebe couldn't help but speak out.

“Redcliff Lord, no need to say anything further. I am eager for the chance to battle you.” Linley said.

The Redcliff Lord frowned as he looked at Linley.

“Hmph.” The Redcliff Lord thrust his hand out.

“WHAP!” It seemed as though a whip had viciously lashed the air, striking space itself. This simple swipe of the hand, where the fist just punched into empty space…

“BOOM!” “BOOM!” “BOOM!” “BOOM!”

One hole in space after another exploded forth, repeatedly giving birth to more, like a series of rings, one ring after another. Dozens of holes exploded forth into space, creating a giant tear in space which was more than ten meters long. Only after some time did they fade away.

“What a terrifying punch.” Linley’s pupils suddenly contracted. “Throbbing Pulse of the World. Essence of the Earth. Profound Mysteries of Strength. Vitality…from this simple punch alone, I can sense at least four types of profound mysteries. I can’t be certain whether there weren’t actually five profound mysteries. Too powerful. No wonder he was able to easily shatter Highgod artifacts with a simple punch.” Linley had to admit, the level of understanding the Redcliff Lord had with regards to the Laws exceeded Linley’s.

“If you are confident in being able to withstand this punch of mine, then choose to continue challenging me.” The Redcliff Lord said calmly.

The nearby Ganmoly was chortling while watching this. He believed that Linley would definitely give up.

“Then Redcliff Lord, please tell me the time and the place for our battle.” Linley gave his response.

Chapter 8 – The Storm Gathers

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 8, The Storm Gathers

“Oh?” The Redcliff Lord suddenly turned, his sharp gaze shooting towards Linley.

“He…” Steward Ganmoly stared in surprise at Linley as well. Just now, the Redcliff Lord had revealed his extraordinary power. But this mysterious ‘Ley’ actually still had the courage to challenge him. Was this stupidity, or was this courage? Ganmoly took another, closer look at Linley.

“But of course, I can give up my challenge as well.” Linley suddenly changed the direction of the conversation.

“Oh?” The Redcliff Lord looked at Linley.

“Boss…” Bebe said, rather frantic.

Linley said calmly, “Redcliff Lord, the reasons I am challenging you are twofold. First of all, I wish to reach the peak of perfection in training, and becoming a Lord of Tartarus can be considered a way of verifying my current abilities. The second reason, however, is so that I will be qualified to enter the Planar Battlefield! If you, Redcliff Lord, are willing to allow us two brothers to enter the Planar Battlefield, while at the same time follow us two in accordance with our wishes in roaming about the battlefield, then I can choose to forgo my challenge.”

Linley’s original desire was to enter the Planar Battlefield.

If this Redcliff Lord was willing to bring himself and Bebe within and also obey his orders, wouldn’t that be much less troublesome?

“Planar Battlefield?” The Redcliff Lord swept the two of them with his cold gaze. “The two of you would dare go to the Planar Battlefield, for the sake

of the Sovereign's Might? This courage alone makes you worthy of my admiration." Linley, hearing this, understood that the treasures one could acquire in exchange for accumulating military merits weren't just limited to Sovereign artifacts. Sovereign's Might was also possible.

"They are looking for death." The nearby Ganmoly said in a low voice.

"Whether we are or aren't, isn't something for you to worry about." Bebe snorted.

"There is no way I can agree to your request." The Redcliff Lord said calmly.

"Then I will continue my challenge." Linley said very straightforwardly.

The Redcliff Lord's violet pupils were locked onto Linley. In a low voice, he said, "Punk, you are looking for death!"

"Hey, you haven't even fought yet. Nothing is certain." Bebe raised his head proudly as he spoke, and Linley laughed calmly as well. "Redcliff Lord, you have the honored status of a Lord of Tartarus. I have trained for many years, and in my dreams, I too desire to one day become one of the Lords of Tartarus. I trust, your Lordship, you won't be afraid of my challenge."

"Boss, as I see it, he is afraid." Bebe immediately said.

The Redcliff Lord glanced at Bebe, but wasn't angered in the slightest. He instructed calmly, "Ganmoly, send them away."

"Yes, Lord." Ganmoly bowed, and then said to Linley and Bebe, "The two of you, please follow me."

Linley and Bebe were both stunned, while at the same time, Linley noticed that the Redcliff Lord had actually turned and left. Linley immediately felt frantic. "What does this Redcliff Lord intend to do? Is he trying to avoid doing battle?" Today, when the Redcliff Lord had invited Linley over,

Linley had a strange feeling about it.

“Your Lordship, you can’t possibly be afraid, can you?!” Linley’s voice rang out, but the Redcliff Lord’s figure had already disappeared from Linley’s field of vision.

Just as Linley and Bebe were feeling puzzled and somewhat frantic, a cold, calm voice rang out. “One month from now, in the desolate wilderness east of the city. Since you seek death, I will give you what you desire.”

Hearing this voice, smiles immediately appeared on Linley and Bebe’s faces.

“Mr. Ley, you really…ugh.” Steward Ganmoly shook his head and sighed. “I admire your spirit and energy, but you have no hope in challenging his Lordship. Although your Gravitational Space is impressive, his Lordship is extremely skilled in the Laws of the Earth. You won’t be able to affect him. As I see it, he completely counters your strengths.”

Linley, hearing this, just laughed calmly.

Generally speaking, when two experts who trained in the same Laws fought, generally speaking, the person with a higher level of understanding would be able to counter the weaker one. However, there was one exception; if one side had an innate divine ability.

Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’ was, in reality, the innate divine ability of Reisgem. The Redcliff Lord didn’t understand it at all.

“Let’s go, the two of you.”

Ganmoly led the way while continuing to speak. “It was so rare for his Lordship to be in such a good mood as he was in today. He saw that you were talented. The reason he summoned you today, in truth, was that he wanted to accept you as his subordinate! When the time came, you would become the left and right arms of the Redcliff Lord. In the Redcliff Region, you would be subordinate to only the Redcliff Lord himself. But you…alas,

why must you do this!”

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances. They couldn’t help but laugh.

“Boss, his Lordship wanted to recruit you as a subordinate.” Bebe laughed.

Linley now began to understand the purpose behind the invitation. But clearly, his reaction had caused the Redcliff Lord to be extremely angry. He hadn’t even said anything about inviting Linley to be his subordinate; he just immediately left.

“I truly am sorry for having disappointed his Lordship.” Linley said, his lips pursed in a smirk.

Ganmoly, seeing Linley’s reaction, just shook his head.

As he saw it, Linley was the type of warrior that loved to do battle and pursued perfection. Ever since Linley stated that he wanted to enter the Planar Battlefield, Ganmoly had taken him to be that sort of madman. Without enough courage, without enough of a spirit for adventure, no one would dare enter the Planar Battlefield.

On the way back, Linley and Bebe chatted casually on the streets. Having recently become famous within the Redcliff Region, Linley noticed that as soon as he appeared, many people would stare at him. Linley had to change his appearance and also make his robe an earthen yellow one, allowing him to be relatively unmolested.

“Fortunately, we got things done rather quickly this time.” Linley laughed.

“Right. Based on what our intelligence reports said, generally speaking, a challenge might be extended for a few years, or even a few centuries or longer.” Bebe nodded as he spoke. This was just a month; it wasn’t that long.

But suddenly…

“Everyone!” A voice suddenly rang out from behind. “Wonderful news, excellent news!!! Just now, word came from his Lordship’s estate. His Lordship and Lord Ley will, one month from now, engage in a formal duel in the eastern wilderness. This is the first time his Lordship has publicly battled in ten million years!”

Linley and Bebe both looked over.

In the center of the street, there was a golden-robed man speaking loudly. Instantly, virtually everyone flooded forth, surrounding him.

“What? In just one month? The eastern wilderness outside the city? Are you sure?”

“In one month, his Lordship will battle Lord Ley?”

Countless voices rang out.

In Tartarus, every single Lord of Tartarus was a supreme figure. Every single public challenge between a Lord of Tartarus and a challenger would attract a frenzied crowd to gather, and virtually 90% of the entire population in a particular region would hurry over to watch the battle.

“Hey, if you don’t believe it, you can go to his Lordship’s estate. This news is carved onto a stone tablet placed outside, next to the estate.” The golden-robed man said hurriedly.

“It’s true! I saw it as well.”

“Let’s all go to his Lordship’s residence to look.”

The vast majority of the people who had been strolling on the streets now surged towards the Redcliff Lord’s estate. As Deities who had virtually unlimited lifespans, the emergence of a victor of a hundred battles was already enough to excite them, but ten million years might pass without a single challenger to a Tartarus Lord’s position.

This was a major event for the entire region!

Within the restaurant.

The disguised Linley and Bebe were seated in a corner, drinking wine.

“Mad. They’ve all gone mad.” Bebe muttered.

Linley glanced sideways at the other people in the restaurant. The other people in the restaurant were, without exception, discussing the upcoming battle between Linley and the Redcliff Lord. Quite a few were so excited that their faces were red, and others were discussing the previous accomplishments in battle of the Redcliff Lord.

“Boss, this speaks to your charisma and magnetism.” Bebe snickered.

“They care about this battle, not because of me, but because of the Redcliff Lord.” Linley laughed. The two chatted in their corner with their Godrealms set up to block out the sound.

“The Redcliff Lord has a high, exalted status. His open, public battles naturally will arouse everyone’s excitement. For example, back in the Yulan continent, the battles between Saints would cause the ordinary people to become frenzied.” Linley said with a calm laugh while continuing to listen to these Deities discuss the upcoming battle with the Redcliff Lord.

He couldn’t think back to that year when he dueled Olivier or Haydson. That, too, had attracted the attention of countless experts.

“Right. If Grandpa was to publicly announce a duel with someone, I would excitedly go watch as well.” Bebe chortled.

“There aren’t many who would dare challenge Beirut.” Linley said with a sigh.

If he himself could have Beirut’s level of power, he wouldn’t have needed to spend so much time to painstakingly select an opponent who he just

happened to counter perfectly. For someone like Beirut…he could just casually choose any opponent and then easily achieve victory.

Time flowed on like water, passing by quickly.

In the blink of an eye, a month passed. The streets and restaurants of the entire Redcliff City were almost completely empty. Unless they had something extremely important to attend to today, virtually every denizen of the Redcliff Region hastened to the eastern wilderness outside the city, awaiting the earth-shaking battle that was about to occur.

The eastern wilderness.

This area lived up to its name; it was completely barren and desolate. There wasn't even any grass. There was nothing on the ground aside from earth and stones. Normally, very few people would come here. Today, however, an ocean of people was present.

"Look. That's the challenger, Lord Ley."

"Forget about the Redcliff Lord for now; if one day, I was as powerful as Lord Ley, I would die a happy man." A man and a woman chatted with each other, and a the youth dressed in a blue robe said, his eyes flashing with desire, "I, too, wish to one day be watched by countless Deities and duel one of the Lords of Tartarus! If I can achieve that, even if I die, I would have no regrets."

"Stop dreaming." The woman next to him said dismissively.

There was an ocean of people present in the eastern wilderness, standing on the ground. In midair, there was only one person; Linley! None of these spectating Deities had flown into the air. They all watched from below on the ground, as a way of showing respect to Linley and the Redcliff Lord.

"There are quite a few people here." Linley swept the ground below with his gaze. "There are people in an area with a circumference of nearly a hundred kilometers! There has to at least a hundred million people present,

or perhaps even more."

"Boss." Bebe's voice suddenly rang out in Linley's mind. "Today, those who have come to watch are not just the people of the Redcliff Region. Even the people of the surrounding regions who were able to make it in time have come. Boss…with so many people watching, you have to win beautifully."

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

Suddenly, Linley's gaze swept to the east.

A blurred yellow shadow flew over at high speed, so fast that even Linley couldn't help but feel his heart clench.

"So fast! This flying speed is at least several times greater than mine…and this isn't his absolute limit."

The previously chattering spectators seemed to, in harmony, lower their voices. In just three seconds, the hundred-million plus Deities in the desolate wilderness turned completely silent. The only sound that could be heard was the constant howling of the wind. Everyone raised their heads to look towards the only two people in midair…

Linley and the Redcliff Lord!

"Swoosh!" The blurred yellow form suddenly came to a halt, revealing the Redcliff Lord's body.

His figure was physically small, but inspired dread in all who beheld him. He stood there in midair, dressed in a form-fitting short-sleeved shirt and long trousers. His strange violet pupils stared coldly at Linley. With a snicker, he said, "You came quite early. Even if you want to die, you don't need to be in such a rush."

"It's too early to say who will be the one to die." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Just like that, with a hundred million Deities watching them, Linley and the Redcliff Lord casually chatted with each other.

“Hmph.”

The Redcliff Lord snorted coldly, his voice suddenly turning fierce and ringing out, “No need to waste any time. The battle starts now. I’ll give you one chance. Make your move!” The Redcliff Lord clearly intentionally spoke these words very loudly. His voice travelled to a distance of many kilometers, and all of the Deities below within the area heard his words very clearly, especially given how acute their hearing was.

“The battle is beginning!”

All of the Deities instantly held their breaths, staring at these two figures. Everyone was wondering…

Would this earth-shaking battle be like the other ones, with the challenger dying and the Redcliff Lord winning? Or…would a new Redcliff Lord appear!

Chapter 9 – A Battle Between Supreme Experts of the Earth

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 9, A Battle Between Supreme Experts of the Earth

“As you wish, then.” Linley’s body suddenly emanated an earthen yellow aura, which instantly spread out to form a spherical space that was a thousand meters long, immediately enveloping the Redcliff Lord within. This time, Linley still didn’t use his Blackstone Space at full force; he only increased the Blackstone Space to half power!

But although it was only half power, it was still enough to startle the Redcliff Lord.

The Redcliff Lord’s body sunk downwards slightly, but then he maintained his position in midair. He gave Linley a surprised glance. “Gravitational Space. What a strange Gravitational Space!” But the Redcliff Lord still stood there in midair, not moving. He said calmly, “Your Gravitational Space is excellent. Whatever techniques you have available, show them all off! If you wait for me to attack, you won’t have the chance to.”

Confidence!

The Redcliff Lord was qualified to be arrogant. He didn’t fear soul attacks at all, and as for material attacks? As an expert of the Laws of the Earth, the Redcliff Lord was most confident in material attacks. His soul and material defenses were both powerful. This was the reason why the Redcliff Lord was qualified to be confident.

Linley smirked, saying to himself, “Just keep being smug. In a bit, you will be dead before you even have the chance to feel regret.”

“Rumble…”

The ‘black stone’ within Linley’s sea of consciousness instantly spread outwards, quickly surrounding the Redcliff Ruler.

Spiritual Chaos!

“Hrm?” A hint of a smile appeared at the corners of the lips of the Redcliff Lord. He mused to himself, “So indeed, just as Ganmoly discovered, this powerful Gravitational Space is paired with a spiritual attack. It is indeed rather formidable. But against me…” Linley had first used his Gravitational Space and then his spiritual attack, which had indeed caused the Redcliff Lord to feel slightly numbed.

But right at this moment…

“Die.” A killing intent surged from Linley’s mind, and he immediately moved.

“BOOM!”

It was as though space had exploded. Linley’s entire body shot towards the Redcliff Lord as fast as a bolt of lightning, and while shooting towards the Redcliff Lord’s, the robes covering Linley’s body exploded apart as azure-golden draconic scales instantly covered his entire body. Those savage spikes and that whip-like draconic tail all sprouted out as well.

Instant Dragonform!

“What!” The Redcliff Lord was still in a state of shock, and his body suddenly sank downwards.

Blackstone Space – Supergravity!

The power of the gravitational pull of the Blackstone Space increased from half power to full power. This sudden increase in power did indeed throw the Redcliff Lord off-balance, especially combined with Linley’s Dragonform, which astonished him as well. No matter how foolish he might be, he now understood…that this Mr. ‘Ley’ in front of him had been hiding

his true power this entire time! How laughable it was that he had wanted to recruit ‘Ley’ as a subordinate!

“He’s looking for death.” The Redcliff Lord howled angrily in his heart.

The Redcliff Lord’s entire body flickered. Like a crab, his shoulders suddenly expanded outwards, and the strange thing was, the space around him, with a ‘boom’, began to tremble as well. The gravitational power generated by Linley’s Blackstone Space, in the area next to the Redcliff Lord, actually began to distort and weaken. The Redcliff Lord stared at Linley with a cold face. Seeing Linley charge towards him, he just swung out with right fist, whip-fast…

The counteracting of the gravitational pull to the counter-attack happened instantaneously. The Redcliff Lord’s reaction time was extremely fast!

“Crackle!”

“Eh?” Right after the Redcliff Lord swung out with his fist, his face suddenly changed.

“Swish!” A giant tear in space suddenly appeared, as though space itself was only made of power. An invisible, shadowless sword instantly arrived at the Redcliff Lord’s forehead, between his eyebrows. The Redcliff Lord, frantic, opened his mouth and let out a furious howl as though he were a trapped beast. A clear earthen yellow aura spat out from his mouth, striking directly against the invisible sword.

“Eh?” Linley was stunned. “This Redcliff Lord is indeed even more powerful than I was aware of.”

Linley had suddenly Dragonformed, suddenly increased his Blackstone Space to full power, and then in the final moment, suddenly revealed and attacked with his godspark sword, ‘Mirage’. Especially given that Mirage left behind no traces and was completely invisible…this sort of sudden, powerful attack would be undiscoverable unless someone was paying very close attention. But clearly, the Redcliff Lord was simply too strong.

Only when Mirage drew close to the Redcliff Lord did Linley realize that a strange, unique ‘Gravitational Space’ had formed around the Redcliff Lord’s body.

“This Gravitational Space is actually centered around his forehead.” Linley was completely unable to understand this technique. The vibrations which rippled out from the Redcliff Lord formed into a unique Gravitational Space that was like two loops of power with different strengths. This caused Linley’s sword to be affected.

Despite that, however…

Linley had hidden his power too deeply; the explosive triple combination of his Dragonform, the Blackstone Space, and Mirage caused the Redcliff Lord to not have enough time to fully react.

“Slash!”

When Mirage was struck, it changed directions slightly. Suddenly, the Redcliff Lord’s right arm slashed over, seeming to attract Linley’s sword towards it like a magnet. Linley just laughed coldly while exploding forth with his full power, and with a ‘slash’ sound, Mirage instantly pierced through the Redcliff Lord’s right side of the chest, penetrating straight through to the Redcliff Lord’s lungs.

“BANG!”

The Redcliff Lord’s furious punched landed towards Linley.

“Rumble…” Space instantly exploded forth and blasted towards Linley.

“Swoosh!” In Dragonform, Linley moved as fast as lightning, instantly scurrying into the distance. As for the Redcliff Lord, his eyes seemed to spit violet fire as he stared angrily at Linley. When he breathed, he was forced to cough, as his lungs had been slashed through. But of course…he quickly recovered.

“You…hid your powers very deeply!” The Redcliff Lord stared at Linley.

“I’m just average. I trust, your Lordship, that you too have a supreme attack that you’ve hidden away.” Linley said calmly.

“Tell me your true name! Which Elder of the Azure Dragon clan are you? I’ve never heard of the Azure Dragon clan having an expert named ‘Ley’.” The Redcliff Lord said coldly. By now, after having seen Linley’s Dragonformed appearance, it would be strange indeed if he wasn’t be able to guess that Linley was a member of the Azure Dragon clan.

Linley’s dark golden eyes stared into the Redcliff Lord’s violet ones.

“Let me re-introduce myself. I, an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan…am Linley!!!” Linley said in a cold voice.

Utter silence!

The hundred million Highgods watching this in the eastern wilderness were all stunned. Although in their heart, they knew that this sort of duel could result in the birth of a new Lord of Tartarus, they also knew that the possibility was very small. Almost everyone here believed…that this battle was just a performance for the Redcliff Lord!

Perhaps this Mr. Ley’s performance might bring some unexpected surprises for everyone, but virtually all the spectators had come for the sake of watching the Redcliff Lord. But as soon as the battle had begun, they had become stupefied.

In midair, there was a man whose entire body was covered in draconic scales, with his knees, elbows, and spine all covered with sharp, savage spikes, and with a draconic tail waving behind him. The former ‘Mr. Ley’ now looked completely different, and their Redcliff Lord, after the first clash in the battle, now had a huge hole in his chest as well as blood flowing out.

In the very first exchange…

The Redcliff Lord had been injured!

“Lin…Linley?” Everyone stared, wide-eyed.

“Linley, Elder of the Four Divine Beasts clan! I’ve heard of him. He once killed five Seven Star Fiends by himself.”

“It’s him. I saw his scryer recording before.”

Instantly, the entire eastern wilderness exploded with noise. Everyone became excited and agitated. They had all believed that this one be a one-sided show, but now, it seemed…this person was an amazing figure of legend, Elder Linley of the Azure Dragon clan of the Four Divine Beasts clan, and he was the one who would be engaging in this thrilling duel with their Redcliff Lord!

The cacophony suddenly faded away, as everyone once more focused their attention on the scene in midair.

Because…the Redcliff Lord had already revealed his weapon.

A completely pitch-black knife. The Redcliff Lord hefted the knife, staring coldly at Linley. “So it is Linley! I was wondering how such an expert would suddenly emerge in our Redcliff region. I must admit that based on our exchange just now, you are qualified to be my opponent. To show respect to you, I will attack with all my might.”

Linley just watched all of this coldly.

“It seems as though beating this Redcliff Lord won’t be so easy.” Linley’s thoughts spun through his mind. He had a tremendous advantage earlier; he had suddenly revealed his Dragonform, his true Blackstone Space, and Mirage; only then had he been able to wound his opponent. From this, one could tell how powerful this enemy was.

“What a bizarre Gravitational Space.”

The Redcliff Lord shook himself, as though seeming rather uncomfortable and needing to get accustomed to this Gravitational Space. But that simple movement suddenly…

“Hrm?” Linley was startled.

He could clearly sense how the strange Gravitational Space emanating from the Redcliff Lord’s forehead transformed as well. Although in terms of power, it was vastly inferior to Linley’s Blackstone Space, it was still able to ablate the influence of the Blackstone Space. It was as though the Redcliff Lord had been trapped in quicksand, but a protective layer of energy had suddenly surrounded him, allowing his movements to quicken.

“Swoosh!” The Redcliff Lord suddenly flashed forward in an arc, pouncing towards Linley.

This strange arcing movement lanced at an incredibly high speed.

“He is indeed fast, but not as fast as me!” Linley’s speed reached a limit as well. Clearly, Linley was almost twice as fast as the Redcliff Lord. The Blackstone Space was the supreme technique of Reisgem, after all. Linley had spent five hundred years entrapped before gaining insight into it, and after having acquired the Black Stone, the power of his technique was already comparable to Reisgem’s.

Although the Redcliff Lord adapted much more quickly than others to it, his speed was still dramatically lessened.

“Swish!”

It moved as fast as a bolt of lightning. A tear in space suddenly appeared as the completely invisible ‘Mirage’ pierced directly towards the Redcliff Lord. The only thing the Redcliff Lord was able to sense was a terrifying power oncoming, a power that could easily rip apart the spatial walls of the Netherworld. Faced with this attack, the Redcliff Lord’s body suddenly

paused.

“WHAP!”

He threw out his arm, and his fist suddenly shot forward like a rock from a catapult. That faint, earthen yellow light was emanating from his fist, while also flowing with a black light.

“BANG!”

The fist collided directly against the tip of the godspark sword, Mirage.

And just as the fist shot out, the Redcliff Lord actually borrowed the powerful surge of force, swiveling slightly as he stabbed with the black knife in his left hand towards Linley’s head. “Swish!” Where the black knife passed, space itself blew apart. This attack was so terrifying as to make a person’s face change color from fear.

But Linley seemed to instinctively strike back with his own left fist!

The clenched draconic claws pressed down like an entire mountain, as the terrifying divine earth power completely exploded forth – Firmament Splitter!

“BANG!”

The black dagger and the fist collided, and space instantly blew apart.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Linley and his opponent were both knocked backwards.

“What a powerful fist.” Linley stared coldly at his opponent. The Redcliff Lord had actually dared to use his fist to fight against Linley’s godspark weapon.

“What a sharp sword.” The Redcliff Lord glanced at his right fist. The

sword had pierced through the bones of his right fist. His fist was comparable to a Highgod artifact, but it had actually been wounded. Actually, he couldn't be blamed; it was a godspark weapon which he faced, after all. The Redcliff Lord then glanced at Linley's fist. "Your fist is pretty tough as well."

Some of the draconic scales covering Linley's fist had been shattered as well.

That short exchange of blows had caused both Linley and the Redcliff Lord to understand something; they couldn't let the enemy hit them in their vital points. Linley had to rely on his fist executing an attack with his understanding of the Profound Mysteries in order to block that dagger. If the enemy managed to strike him in the head, the draconic scales would definitely not be able to block them.

And the opposite was true as well.

If Linley's sword was to stab into the enemy's forehead, he would definitely pierce through and kill the enemy.

The countless people watching this duel in the eastern wilderness were completely breathless. Above them, two supreme experts were battling, and they were absolutely too powerful.

"That Elder Linley has an invisible weapon. His Lordship is incredibly powerful; he dared to use his fist to accept that blow."

"Lord Linley is powerful as well. He too dared to use his fist to block his Lordship's knife."

The hundred million spectators were completely cowed by the might and strength of these two experts. All of them watched unblinkingly, wanting to see what would happen.

"Ahhhh, look, what's going on?"

“What’s going on? How is that possible?”

Many people’s faces suddenly changed dramatically. “His Lordship, his Lordship can transform as well?”

Linley’s face changed dramatically as well. He had never watched the Redcliff Lord transform in any of the scryer recordings he had seen.

“In the past, when I challenged the previous Redcliff Lord, he wasn’t able to force me to transform. Congratulations…you are the very first person I have encountered since becoming the Redcliff Lord capable of making me use my full power.” The Redcliff Lord’s violet eyes stared at Linley. His entire body was undergoing a sudden change. His shoulders began to bulge, and his entire body began to emanate a black light…”

Chapter 10 – The Final, Supreme Technique!

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 10, The Final, Supreme Technique!

“Crackle…”

A black aura surrounded and swirled around the body of the Redcliff Lord. His shoulders began to bulge more and more extravagantly, until with a ‘crunch’ sound, two black, knife-like shoulder blades spread out like a pair of black wings that folded against each other. It was like a black cape was hanging from the Redcliff Lord’s back.

From the forehead of the Redcliff Lord emerged a pair of sharp black horns as well.

The Redcliff Lord’s entire body was now pitch black, and he stared at Linley with those violet pupils.

“Those vertical violet pupils looked different from an ordinary person’s. I should’ve guessed long ago.” Linley, seeing the Redcliff Lord before him, mused to himself. This Redcliff Lord was actually able to transform. Naturally, his power had increased as well. Linley felt some pressure now as well. Would he be able to win this battle?

Linley wasn’t completely certain.

All he could do was to sigh to himself that not a single person capable of becoming a Lord of Tartarus could be underestimated.

“Linley!” The Redcliff Lord stared at Linley with his violet eyes, smirking. “No matter what the results are, I will forever remember you!” As soon as the words fell, the Redcliff Lord’s knife-like blade wings suddenly trembled, and the surrounding area was instantly formed into a bizarre, double-ringed gravitational field.

“Swoosh!”

Moving like a flying bird, the Redcliff Lord gracefully glided at high speed forward.

“His speed did indeed increase slightly. However, it’s far from being enough.” Linley didn’t back down in the slightest. He, too, transformed into an arcing blur, his translucent Mirage sword mercilessly piercing towards the Redcliff Lord’s skull. This stab caused a hole to be torn through space.

The Redcliff Lord thrust out his arm.

“Clang!”

That black knife, flowing with an earthen yellow knife, collided with Linley’s ‘Mirage’.

“BOOM!”

The two were both knocked backwards by the collision once again but then the two instantly charged towards each other at high speed yet again. In terms of speed, Linley clearly held the advantage. The Redcliff Lord wouldn’t possibly be able to dodge every time. However, the strange gravitational field surrounding the Redcliff Lord caused it so that each time Linley’s sword drew near, it would be affected just slightly.

But that slight affect was enough to change the outcome.

“Swish!” An incredibly fast sword blow.

The Redcliff Lord was, after all, slightly slower. However, once the Mirage fell into the strange dual looped gravitational field, it couldn’t help but change direction slightly. The Redcliff Lord’s wings once more trembled, as though he was going to block once again.

“Hmph!” Linley instantly caused the divine power within Mirage to explode forth.

“Boom!”

Mirage stabbed directly into the Redcliff Lord’s left shoulder, sending fresh blood flying everywhere. After having landed this blow, Linley didn’t hesitate; he immediately retreated. And as he did, Linley once more relied on his speed to launch an attack. Although…in terms of material attacks, it could be said that by relying on his godspark weapon, Linley was able to fight to a standstill, Linley wasn’t able to take the counter-blows head on.

He had to rely on Mirage and his speed to repeatedly leave wounds behind on his enemy’s body.

As for the Redcliff Lord, even though he had transformed, he was still much slower. He could just barely protect his vitals and ensure that his head wasn’t struck, but he was unable to protect the other places on his body.

There, in midair, within an enormous gravitational sphere formed of earthen yellow light, their two figures clashed repeatedly, as fast as lightning. Linley’s invisible Mirage sword occasionally left behind wounds on the Redcliff Lord’s body. The Redcliff Lord appeared to be in rather bad shape, but he didn’t look the slightest bit discouraged, continuing to go all out against Linley.

As soon as Linley backed off, he might immediately receive a strong counterattack.

“This looks troublesome. It seems victory and defeat won’t be determined within in a short time frame.” Bebe said with a frown.

“It is a bit troublesome. Although the Redcliff Lord’s speed increased after transforming, Elder Linley clearly doesn’t dare to fight against him head on, and so not a single one of his attacks has landed on Elder Linley. But Elder Linley is able to wound him. Elder Linley clearly has the advantage.” A burly, green-robed man by Bebe’s said spoke out. The entire eastern wilderness held more than a hundred million people. Because the battle above was simply too absorbing, discussions once more rang out from

below. Linley currently had the slight advantage, as the Redcliff Lord's body continued to shed blood every so often.

However, small wounds like these didn't impact his strength much.

Who would win, and who would lose?

For now, it was hard to say.

"If things continue like this, how long will it take?" Quite a few people were puzzled.

What these spectators like to see were those true, all out, frontal assaults. Those sorts of battles might only last an instant, but generally speaking, life and death would be determined within a few blows. Those battles would cause the spectators to feel nervous and to feel their blood pumping.

But now…

Linley and the Redcliff Lord clearly weren't fighting in such a way.

"Hey, that's weird. It seems as though the Redcliff Lord is getting a bit faster." Someone suddenly said.

"Right. He did speed up. It seems as though it no longer is so easy for Elder Linley to wound the Redcliff Lord." Quite a few spectators slowly discovered this.

Bebe noticed this as well. He instantly grew nervous.

The spectators below were leisurely watching Linley and the Redcliff Lord battle, but they themselves didn't dare to slacken off in the slightest. If they did, they might end up being killed in that instant.

"That sword is too bizarre." The Redcliff Lord's mind was constantly in a state of tension. The godspark sword, 'Mirage', would constantly stab towards him. If it wasn't for the fact that he could rely on using gravity to

change its direction and block it, Mirage would've pierced through his head long ago. All he could do was hold on…"

"Keep waiting, just keep waiting…in a bit, it'll be time for you to be in trouble." The Redcliff Lord mused to himself.

Linley had a bad feeling as well.

"His speed is continuously rising. Or, to be precise…the gravitational field around his body is transforming." Linley discovered that the Redcliff Lord's wings were filled with divine power, and were trembling at high speed, creating two surges of unique vibrations. These two unique vibrational surges were influencing each other.

This was causing the gravitational field to transform as well.

As time went on, the constant transformations caused by the two vibrations caused the ability of the gravitational field to resist Linley's 'Blackstone Space' more and more effectively.

A Gravitational Space was actually created by relying on divine power transformed into gravitational power. If an opponent was also skilled in it, the opponent would be able to ablate its effects. Although the Redcliff Lord didn't understand this 'Blackstone Space', while within it, he could sense and slowly adjust his own gravitational field, continuously perfecting it in its ability to deal with Linley's Blackstone Space.

This made it so that as time went on, his speed became faster and faster!

"Linley, time for you to have a taste of what it feels like to be trampled!" The Redcliff Lord let out a furious howl. He transformed into a ray of black light, shooting towards Linley at high speed. Although his speed was currently still slower than Linley's, the gap was low enough now that he could rely on his attack techniques to make up for it. The difference wasn't as great as it had been previously.

Linley let out a calm laugh. "It is indeed time for things to come to an end."

Linley charged forward to welcome him.

“Whoooooosh.” The black knife struck directly at Linley’s head. Linley didn’t hesitate at all; Mirage pierced forward at high speed as well.

“Clang!”

In the instant when the black knife and Mirage clashed.

“Swoosh!” The Redcliff Lord’s wings trembled, and he suddenly increased in speed, and his right fist swung out towards Linley in a straight line. However, at the same instant of his attack, there was a bizarre, unique ripple.

‘Rumble’…

A spatial whirlpool suddenly seemed to form, with that fist being at the center of the whirlpool.

In an instant…

The space around the fist seemed to have been trapped and activated, and even the direction of gravity was twisted. Linley felt his own body be impacted as well.

“Eh? This punch!” Linley’s face changed dramatically.

The effect of this punch made Linley think of the ‘Abyssal Inn’. There, he had seen the Sovereign of Death use the Laws of Water to attack and achieve this effect. At that time, the Sovereign of Death had used a fishing line to distort space, capturing and binding that Seven Star Fiend level expert. And now, this punch of the Redcliff Lord had the same effect.

Linley wasn’t able to dodge in time at all!

“Whoosh!” Linley gritted his teeth, then swept out with his left arm, his

draconic claw filling with divine earth power and smashing down like a mountain. Firmament Splitter!

“BANG!”

Linley just felt a bone-piercing pain in his left hand before he was knocked flying backwards.

“What a powerful punch.” Linley lowered his head to look at his fist. The draconic scales atop his fist were almost completely shattered. Fresh blood was leaking out, and the bones of his hand were faintly visible. Even when using ‘Firmament Splitter’, he had still fallen into such a state.

“I can’t use my fist to take his head on.” Linley immediately came to this conclusion. “I have to use my godspark weapon against his fist.”

“Haha…”

Wild laughter rang out. The Redcliff Lord stared at Linley with his violet eyes. His wings suddenly trembled, and he once more swooped forward. Linley’s ‘Mirage’ struck out as well, so fast as to cause even the Redcliff Lord’s laughter to come to a sudden halt. He immediately wanted to use his black knife to block it.

But Linley suddenly withdrew his sword.

“Rumble…”

The Redcliff Lord laughed coldly. The black fist covered by that flowing earthen yellow light once more struck out, causing that spatial whirlpool to form once more, distorting the nearby space and gravity. Linley could sense the power of that fist.

“Swish!”

Mirage came stabbing straight out.

“Hmph.” The Redcliff Lord was very confident. He didn’t dodge at all, allowing his right fist to smash straight against Mirage. But as Mirage drew close to the fist, it actually became uncontrollably affected by the spatial whirlpool and was attracted to it. The Redcliff Lord’s fist struck right against the flat of Mirage.

And then, it glided forwards, straight towards Linley’s head.

“BANG!”

Suddenly…

The downwards gravitational direction of the Blackstone Space changed into…a repulsive force!

The originally downwards gravitational pull suddenly disappeared, causing the Redcliff Lord to uncontrollably surge upwards. Right at this moment, the repulsive force swept outwards, causing the Redcliff Lord’s body to uncontrollably be pushed backwards.

“Swoosh!” Linley seized the opportunity to charge forward, sending Mirage out in a straight stab.

The sudden change of the gravitational direction caused the ‘upwards’ gravitational field the Redcliff Lord had previously created to be ineffective, and his speed once more slowed greatly. This, followed by the sudden attack by Linley’s sword…by the time the Redcliff Lord reacted, the sword had already appeared in front of his eyes.

“Not good!” The Redcliff Lord’s face changed dramatically, and he hurriedly retreated.

When impacted by the repulsive force, his retreating speed was still very fast.

Linley smirked. “GET OVER HERE!”

The gravitational pull once more changed! The repulsive force transformed into an attractive force, centered towards Linley!

The Redcliff Lord's body couldn't help but sway.

"Slash!" As he frantically dodged, Linley's sword only managed to pierce through the Redcliff Lord's chest.

"Impossible, impossible!!!" The Redcliff Lord frantically tried to resist the gravitational pull. He hurriedly retreated, staring towards Linley in disbelief. "Your Gravitational Space….how can it casually change directions? How can it…can it be?!" The Redcliff Lord suddenly thought of a person.

"Reisgem!" The Redcliff Lord stared at Linley in disbelief.

This sort of Gravitational Space which allowed for casual control of the direction of the gravity was the supreme technique of Reisgem. Even a supreme expert like the Redcliff Lord, when faced with this sort of constantly changing directional pull, would find it hard to control his movements perfectly.

Given this sort of situation, all he could do was struggle to preserve his own life.

"Swoosh!" Linley once more shot forward at high speed.

The Redcliff Lord immediately flew backwards, but the gravitational pull acting on his body once more changed directions, into an 'upwards' gravitational pull. Caught off-guard, the Redcliff Lord's body couldn't help but sway upwards. "Bastard, bastard…this is the innate supreme technique of Reisgem. How could someone else learn it? How?!" The Redcliff Lord still couldn't believe it.

"Rumble…"

A strange, powerful ripple suddenly spread out.

“What?” The Redcliff Lord’s face suddenly changed.

Linley was currently staring at him, while an enormous Azure Dragon Phantom that was ten thousand meters long lay coiled behind Linley. The Azure Dragon Phantom was hovering behind Linley, staring emotionlessly at the Redcliff Lord. Suddenly, a unique sound began to echo in the Redcliff Lord’s mind…

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

Linley’s final, supreme technique had finally been unleashed!

Chapter 11 – Victory and Defeat

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 11, Victory and Defeat

The Dragon Roar contained a spiritual attack component, but it wasn't able to affect the Redcliff Lord at all.

However…

The most monstrous property of the innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', was the impact it had on time. There was no type of Law or Edict that was able to change the rate of time. Only this sort of unearthly innate divine ability was capable of it. Innate divine abilities were things which surpassed the limits of the Laws! As for the Azure Dragon clan, their innate divine ability was able to change the speed of time. In the region where the Redcliff Lord's soul was located, the speed of time began to change!

"Swish!"

Linley, while executing his innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', also shot forward like a blur of light, the godspark sword Mirage mercilessly piercing straight towards the forehead of the Redcliff Lord. His most powerful blow…

Firmament Splitter!

"BANG!" A hole appeared in the Redcliff Lord's forehead, and Mirage passed straight through it, piercing against his soul!

Silence! Utter stillness!

The enormous Azure Dragon Phantom in the sky had yet to vanish. The hundred million-plus spectators on the ground, upon seeing the enormous Azure Dragon Phantom appear, felt shock and awe in their hearts. But when Linley's 'Mirage' sword pierced straight through the Redcliff Lord's

forehead, everyone below was truly stunned.

“The Redcliff Lord…died?”

Although they couldn’t see Mirage, even the weakest of the spectators below was at the Demigod level. After having watched for so long, they were able to guess that Linley was wielding an invisible sword in his hand. Judging from Linley’s posture, they were able to guess that the invisible sword had stabbed into the Redcliff Lord’s forehead.

Caught in a patch of slow time, the Redcliff Lord only felt that before he even had a chance to react, Linley’s ‘Mirage’ had come stabbing straight into his forehead. The Redcliff Lord felt as though Linley’s attack speed had suddenly increased tenfold, perhaps even twentyfold. This sort of speed was something he couldn’t react to at all.

Mirage pierced into his sea of consciousness.

An invisible black barrier was currently protecting the Redcliff Lord’s soul. This was the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact which the Redcliff Lord possessed. By relying on this soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, the Redcliff Lord was able to stably sit on his throne as a Lord of Tartarus.

However, a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact only protected against soul attacks.

It was much like how…

A soul attack could ignore the body and ignore all physical barriers, passing through to attack the soul, or be blocked by a soul-protecting artifact.

It was the same principle.

Material attacks would ignore soul-protecting artifacts. If someone used a soul attack to try and block a material attack, that would be an utter joke.

A soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was, by its very nature, formed to be

used against soul attacks. Against an incoming material attack, it might as well not be there. Mirage pierced directly through the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact's protection, and the artifact itself wasn't damaged in the slightest.

They didn't even touch.

Although time had slowed, the Redcliff Lord still knew, at the moment that Linley's sword came stabbing in, that the moment of his death had come. But his thinking speed was simply too slow; there was no way he could react in time. The only thing he could do was…

"Bang!"

Deep within his sea of consciousness, within the hands of a divine clone…a drop of Death-type Sovereign's Might exploded forth! A terrifying surge of Sovereign power spread out, according to the Laws of the Earth, forming into countless blades and swarming towards Linley's 'Mirage', smashing against it! By now, the Redcliff Lord had almost gone insane.

All he knew was…

He had to block it!

Thus, he now used his most powerful attack while relying on Sovereign's Might to block Mirage.

"BOOOM!"

As he stabbed down, Linley sensed a terrifyingly powerful force surge out from the Redcliff Lord's sea of consciousness, and then surges of power slam against Mirage. In addition, the power of every single surge was tremendous. Linley couldn't help but be shaken, and he flew backwards while staring at the Redcliff Lord in surprise.

"What's going on?" Linley didn't understand.

“Rumble…” Powerful Death-type light emanated from the Redcliff Lord, and the wounds on his body quickly repaired.

The Redcliff Lord’s eyes suddenly lit up as he stared angrily at Linley. “Linley!” With the might of Sovereign power filling his body, if he were to attack using the profound mysteries, he would clearly now be much stronger. The impact of Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’ would be greatly lessened as well. “Bastard.” After having nearly been killed, the enraged Redcliff Lord prepared to charge forward.

“Do we have to continue?”

Linley’s voice rang out.

“Eh?” The Redcliff Lord’s body trembled, and he came to a halt.

Although his body was brimming with black light, and although his power had indeed risen tremendously after using that Sovereign’s Might, to a level that was indeed enough to kill the current Linley….he wouldn’t be able to kill what Linley was about to become. Because currently, in Linley’s hand, there was floating a drop of earthen yellow liquid…earth-type Sovereign’s Might!

“Do we have to continue?” Linley’s voice still echoed in the air.

The Redcliff Lord stared at the drop of Sovereign’s Might hovering in Linley’s palm, his heart filled with resentment.

But if this continued, the result was obvious!

When an expert of the Laws of the Earth used a drop of earth-type Sovereign’s Might, the power unleashed would be at a peak.

Without using his Sovereign’s Might, Linley, by relying on his Blackstone Space and his innate divine ability, these two supreme techniques, was already at a slight advantage.

If he were to use his Sovereign's Might, even though the Redcliff Lord had used a drop of Death-type Sovereign's Might, against Linley's earth-type Sovereign's Might, the result was obviously…that Linley's advantage would rise dramatically. By then…the Redcliff Lord would definitely perish!

"AAAAAARGH!" The Redcliff Lord suddenly bellowed, face towards the skies.

A wild blast of Death-type Sovereign's Might blasted out in every direction, and the surges of wild, powerful might caused multiple tears in space to appear around him. The aura was so powerful as to cause the countless spectators below to feel shocked. None of them knew what the results of the battle were yet.

"I admit defeat!" A hoarse, growling voice rang out.

Linley laughed.

This was all as he had expected. If they were to continue to fight, Linley was completely certain that by relying on his earth-type Sovereign's Might, he would be able to win and kill this opponent. But if he did that…although his opponent would be dead, he would have used up his only drop of earth-type Sovereign's Might. It absolutely wasn't worth it. And, perhaps the enemy might have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, true, but even if he acquired it, in the future, it's Sovereign would come reclaim it.

Thus, Linley didn't wish to continue this battle. He chose to preserve his one and only drop of Sovereign's Might.

This drop of earth-type Sovereign's Might had been awarded to him after he had used up the previous drop in order to save Elder Garvey during the final battle between the Four Divine Beasts clan and the eight great clans. The clan had naturally replenished Linley with another drop, if for no other reason than to show gratitude for Beirut having helped the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“Linley.” The Redcliff Lord stared at Linley. “To be honest, I’m very reluctant to admit defeat in this battle! In terms of profound mysteries, you are far inferior to me. As I see it, you have at most fused three or four different profound mysteries.” The Redcliff Lord, based on his astuteness, naturally was able to tell that how many profound mysteries each of Linley’s attacks held.

“I admit this.” Linley nodded.

“However, you have Reisgem’s innate divine ability, as well as your Azure Dragon clan’s innate divine ability. With those two matched up with your decent understanding of the Laws…” The Redcliff Lord let out a self-mocking chuckle.

Linley was a single individual, but he actually possessed two powerful, supreme innate abilities.

“Reisgem’s supreme innate ability. In all the countless planes, he’s the only person I know capable of this.” The Redcliff Lord sighed. “This sort of supreme innate ability that allows him to constantly change the direction of a gravitational pull does indeed make others feel envious. This alone makes it so that virtually no one can surpass him in close-quarters combat.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“I lost. Having lost to two such supreme innate abilities, I have nothing to say.” The Redcliff Lord sighed.

Linley laughed calmly.

He could tell how reluctant to admit it the Redcliff Lord was. But so what if he was reluctant? Innate divine abilities were a part of a person’s power. For example, Bebe…he had fused no profound mysteries at all, but once he unleashed his innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, how many could resist him?

There was nothing for it. This was an innate ability!

As for Linley, he had two powerful innate abilities. Because he had fused a low amount of profound mysteries, this made it so that…Linley's potential was tremendous! But as for the Redcliff Lord, he had already tapped out all his potential.

"Redcliff Lord, let's publicly announce the results." Linley laughed calmly.

Just now, the conversation between the two of them after the battle came to an end had intentionally been separated from the spectators through Godrealm, so that no one below could hear them.

"Fine." The Redcliff Lord nodded.

The Redcliff Lord looked down at the countless spectators, then said in an emotionless voice, "This duel is concluded. From today onwards, Linley is the next Lord of this region." After speaking…he transformed into a black blur, streaking towards the west. Clearly, he was going to leave the Redcliff region.

Silence!

The countless spectators below instantly fell silent…and then erupted into a cacophony of cheers and chatter. Actually, when they saw Linley's sword stab through the Redcliff Lord's forehead, they had already expected this. Now that the Redcliff Lord had openly announced it, the results became confirmed.

"Linley!" Someone cheered jubilantly.

"LINLEY!" The cheer seemed to be infectious, and the countless people below all began to cheer in celebration. They all knew…

Yet another miracle had occurred!

Having defeated the previous Redcliff Lord, a new Redcliff Lord, Linley, was born!

“Swoosh!” Bebe flew into the skies.

He flew to Linley’s side, excitedly looking at Linley. “Boss, you succeeded! Haha! A Lord of Tartarus. That’s someone on the same level as a Purgatory Commander or a Lord Prefect of the Infernal Realm.” Linley stared down at the scene of the countless thronging, celebrating masses. He couldn’t help but have a feeling as though he was apart from the rest of the world.

He still remembered how…

When he just entered the Infernal Realm, he had hidden within the Black Dragon tribe.

How nerve-wracking the Fiend trials had been.

It seemed as though, in the blink of an eye, he had somehow become a Lord of Tartarus!

“Bebe, we are finally qualified to enter the Planar Battlefield.” Linley laughed.

“Right.” Bebe laughed happily as well.

Linley and Bebe, these two brothers, were currently high in midair chatting. They didn’t notice whatsoever that an old, familiar face was currently amongst the countless thronging masses below them.

A man dressed in a white robe, with long, unbound black hair, and a pair of scarlet eyebrows!

He was smiling as he looked at Linley and Bebe in the air. This person, amazingly, was the supreme expert who had provided guidance to Linley when Linley was young…Bluefire!

“It seems Beirut was worried over nothing. Linley’s power is even greater than I had imagined. There’s no need for me to remain here…oh, and the Planar Wars are currently proceeding. I need to come up with a way to enter

the Planar Battlefield and watch." Bluefire immediately turned and left.

His body was very real, but when he walked away, it seemed to become like a mirage.

In the blink of an eye, he easily traversed the massive, dense crowd of a hundred million Deities. When exited the crowd, his body seemed to transform into a blurry, fiery illusion. Transforming into red flash of light later, he disappeared into the horizon.

In terms of speed alone…

He was, amazingly enough, even faster than the former 'Redcliff Lord', who had shocked Linley with his speed.

From today onwards, the estate of the Redcliff Lord was now Linley's estate.

"Your Lordship." Ganmoly said respectfully. Ganmoly now had the feeling as though there truly was no such thing as permanence in this world; not long ago, he was leading Linley to pay his respects to the former Redcliff Lord, but in the blink of an eye…Linley had become the current Redcliff Lord. But of course, he knew…that Linley was actually an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan.

Linley glanced at Ganmoly, then said, "Ganmoly, I wish to ask you something. If I wish to enter the Planar Battlefield, do I need to bring any proof of my status?"

"No need." Ganmoly laughed immediately. "Your Lordship, don't worry. Once a person defeats the previous Lord and replaces him, the news will, within a single day, become known throughout the various estates of the Lords of Tartarus. At the same time, information regarding you will also spread to Flamebone Mountain."

Linley nodded slightly.

“All you need to go is head over there, your Lordship. They will naturally recognize you, your Lordship. At most…your Lordship, you might just simply reveal that legendary sword of yours, which can become invisible.” Ganmoly laughed.

“A single day?” Linley nodded slightly.

“Bebe.” Linley turned to look.

“Eh?” Bebe was currently seated on a distant chair, chomping on some of the fruit that was local to the Netherworld. “What is it, Boss?”

“In a day, Flamebone Mountain will have my information. Tell me, when should we head out?” Linley laughed.

“A day?” Bebe immediately leapt to his feet. “Damn, flying over to Flamebone Mountain a long period of time as well. Boss, let’s hurry up and head out right away!”

“Right away?” Linley was stunned, but then he laughed.

Ganmoly was rather surprised as well.

“Right.” Bebe suddenly turned to stare at Ganmoly, then instructed, “Ganmoly, these fruits aren’t bad. Prepare some extras and bring them over. I plan to eat them on the way.”

“Uh….yes!” Ganmoly acknowledged.

Chapter 12 – Four Badge Colors

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 12, Four Badge Colors

Flamebone Mountain. The entire mountain swirled with flame.

Two blurs streaked through the horizon, pausing in the air above Flamebone Mountain. It was Linley and Bebe.

“Crunch!” Bebe viciously bit into a fruit, lowering his head to stare down at the mountain peak below. “Boss, last time we came to this place, we were blocked by those guards. It was because we weren’t Lord Prefects or Lords of Tartarus. It’s only been two or three months, right? Boss, you are a Tartarus Lord now. I wonder what sort of looks those guards will have on their faces.”

As he spoke, he casually tossed the core of the already-eaten fruit off to one side.

“Let’s go.” Laughing calmly, Linley flew into the skies, with Bebe following behind.

Atop the mountain peak, there was a completely pitch-black, ancient-looking castle. It, too, was wreathed in flames. There were still many guards patrolling outside, and at the front gate, there were more than ten people, divided into two lines, standing there. Upon seeing Linley and Bebe, one of the black-armored guards stepped forward slightly. “Eh? Them again?”

This black-armored guard, amazingly, was the guard who had received Linley last time.

It had only been a few months, after all. The guards here were very rarely changed.

“Hey, why did you two run over here again?” The black-armored guard

couldn't help but frown as he spoke. "Last time, I told you two already. We can only open the interspatial gate to Lords of Tartarus or Lord Prefects."

Linley and Bebe landed.

"Boss, these guards don't seem to know your status." Bebe said, puzzled. "Didn't that guy say that in one day, your information would spread to Flamebone Mountain? Why don't these guards know? We spent quite a few days flying from Flamebone Mountain to this place. Boss, your information should have arrived here long ago."

Linley glanced at the guards, then laughed calmly. "Information regarding me should have made its way to the high level members of Flamebone Mountain, but these ordinary soldiers haven't gotten the word yet." Linley didn't want to waste words with these ordinary guards, and so he immediately strode forward. His sudden movement forward naturally caused these guards to all feel surprised.

"Halt!" More than ten guards stared at Linley.

"The two of you, this is no ordinary place. You can't just barge in. We aren't able to stop you, but you don't dare offend the Sovereign either, right?" The leader of the black-armored guards stared at Linley and Bebe with his blue eyes. Last time, they already learned of Linley and Bebe's power, and so they didn't dare to act too wildly.

"I am the Redcliff Lord." Linley said calmly.

"Eh?"

The ten-plus black-armored guards were instantly stupefied.

"You must be joking." The black-armored guard couldn't believe it. Laughing, he looked at Linley. "It's only been a few months."

First, a hundred victories in the arena. Then, the challenge to a Lord of Tartarus…resulting in victory! All in just a few months? This sort of speed

was far too fast. The black-armored guards didn't dare to believe it.

"Stop wasting words." Bebe shouted impatiently. "If my Boss tells you that he is, then he is! Hurry up and find your leader. He will definitely know the news regarding the new Redcliff Lord, Linley."

"Eh?"

The black-armored guards looked at each other, then studied the looks on Linley and Bebe's faces carefully.

"Captain, they seem to be telling the truth." The black-armored guards whispered to each other secretly through divine sense.

"But it's only been a few months. This is too wild."

Although the black-armored guards all felt it was crazy, the leading black-armored guard still said, "Fine, I'll go make the inquiries. Please wait here, the two of you." After speaking, the black-armored guard immediately flew into the depths of the castle, while Linley and Bebe waited patiently outside.

The remaining black-armored guards continued to stare at Linley and Bebe in surprise.

These black-armored guards clearly didn't dare believe it.

Quite a while later…

"Redcliff Lord, Redcliff Lord!" A deep voice rang out. Linley and Bebe turned to look, only to see a muscular, blue-armored man who was slightly taller than even Linley stride out with big steps. The black-armored guard behind him stared at Linley in amazement. The blue-armored man's gaze fell directly upon Linley, and his eyes immediately lit up.

"Redcliff Lord, we just received word not long ago, and we weren't in a hurry to pass it down. Who would have imagined that you would come here

so quickly, Redcliff Lord?" The blue-armored man chortled as he spoke. "Oh, let me introduce myself. I am Dilas [Ji'la'si]!"

"Linley." Linley laughed in acknowledgment.

Hearing Linley report his name, the muscular, blue-armored man nodded and laughed, "Given that we received information regarding you already, we are certain of your status, especially upon seeing this youth by your side. However, your Lordship, please still provide some small bit of proof for us. You can either Dragonform or show off that invisible, godly sword you possess."

Linley just stretched out his right hand.

Azure-golden scales instantly covered his hand.

"That's more than enough." The muscular, blue-armored man laughed. "Please pardon us. We do indeed need to be cautious. Let me lead the way, your Lordship. Please follow me."

Linley and Bebe followed this muscular, blue-armored man inwards.

Bebe turned his head to glance sideways at the black-armored guards, intentionally letting out a sniff.

"He really is a Lord of Tartarus!" The leader of the black-armored guards rubbed his nose, sighing in disbelief. "How long has it been? Last time, we waved them off, but in the blink of an eye, he's a Lord of Tartarus."

"This Lord Linley is fairly good-tempered. If it was the likes of the Flamebone Lord, Captain, and you dared to be so disrespectful, you most likely would have been killed in a fit of anger." The nearby black-armored guards smirked and laughed. Although…this castle belonged to the Sovereign, the normal affairs of the castle were carried out by a Sovereign's Emissary.

The Sovereign's Emissary was the one who arranged for these guards to be

present. If a Lord of Tartarus killed a petty guard, would the Sovereign's Emissary get into a dispute with a Lord of Tartarus, for the sake of the petty guard?

"When I think about it, it is rather frightening. Still, I continue to feel as though I'm in a dream." The black-armored guard couldn't help but look towards the direction in which Linley and Bebe had just walked, shaking his head and sighing.

Linley and Bebe, under the guidance of the blue-armored Dilas, continued to advance down a wide corridor. This wide corridor actually slowly went deeper into the ground. Although it went downwards, it was still wide enough for more than ten people to traverse simultaneously, and was at least ten meters high.

Only, given that they were underground, it was rather dark.

"The interspatial gate was built in the heart of the Flamebone Mountain." The muscular 'Dilas' walked while laughing and explaining. "The Planar Battlefield is connected to the Seven Divine Planes and the Four Higher Realms. In total, there are eleven interspatial gates. According to legend… this great work was completed by the four Overgods working in unison."

"In unison?" Linley said, amazed.

Indeed, only the likes of an Overgod could construct interspatial gates of this level. However, Linley hadn't imagined that the four Overgods actually joined forces for it.

"Hehe, your Lordship, that's just what I've heard." Dilas chortled.

"Overgods…Overgods…they are so powerful, but I've never seen one." Bebe muttered.

Dilas just said with a laugh, "Never seen one? The Overgods are always around you."

“Oh?” Bebe stared.

“We are always surrounded by and live within the Laws and the Edicts. The four Overgods are the embodiment of the four great Edicts. Naturally, they are always by your side.” Dilas said with a smile, and then he glanced towards the front. “Oh, we’re almost there! The interspatial gate is just up ahead. His Lordship is there awaiting you two.”

Linley looked forward. He could faintly sense a unique aura from up ahead.

At the end of the corridor was an extremely wide, heavily guarded chamber. In the center of the chamber, there was a black pool that was around ten meters in diameter. In the center of the pool, there was a ‘gate’ that was five meters long, ten meters high. This gate stood there in the center of the pool, emanating a black light. Linley could sense that the unique aura was coming from within it.

“Lord Linley.” A voice rang out.

Linley turned and saw that in the left side of the hall, there was a silver-haired elder as well as a group of blue-armored guards.

The silver-haired elder smiled as he walked over. “We just saw the news regarding you not long ago, Lord Linley. So you are a member of the Azure Dragon clan. I am old friends with Patriarch Gislason of your Azure Dragon clan. Oh, I forgot to introduce myself. I am Gallen [Gao’lun]!”

“Mr. Gallen.” Linley smiled. “I wish to enter the Planar Battlefield. I’m not sure what I need to do?”

“This is simple.” The silver-haired elder made a pair of palm-sized badges appear in his hand. These two badges emanated a black aura, but although both were covered with black light, they were made from different materials. One was made from a completely blood-red material, while the other was made from a completely black material. “Of the two badges, the blood-red one represents a ‘commander’, while this black one represents an ordinary soldier! At the same time…it also represents that you two belong

to the side of ‘Darkness’ in this battle.”

As he spoke, he delivered the two badges, which flew to Linley and Bebe.

Linley accepted the blood-red badge, while Bebe accepted the black one.

“Please bind them and take them into your body.” The silver-haired elder laughed calmly as he spoke. “After you enter the Planar Battlefield, if you encounter someone on the same side, once you draw near, you’ll be able to sense each other’s badge’s aura.”

Linley laughed. This was the same concept as the badges of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Linley and Bebe immediately bound the badges by blood and took them into their bodies.

“The two of you, the stone tablet over here has some information regarding military merits carved into it. Please take a look.” The silver-haired elder pointed to a nearby stone tablet that was erect against the wall, roughly one meter wide and three meters tall.

“Military merits?”

Linley and Bebe’s eyes lit up. This time, Linley had come especially for the sake of accumulating military merits. He immediately walked to the stone tablet, looking through it carefully.

The information on the stone tablet was quite simple, but upon seeing it, Linley took a deep breath.

“How brutal.” Linley said to himself.

The rules of the Planar Wars…

Each war was divided into two sides. One side’s commanders would have red badges, with the soldiers having black badges. The other side’s

commanders would have gold badges, with the soldiers having white badges. To become a commander, one had to be a Tartarus Lord, a Lord Prefect, an Asura, or someone on the same level. As for soldiers…they had to be Highgods.

For example, Linley and Bebe.

If they killed someone on their own side, they wouldn't have rendered any military merits.

Only by killing enemies and acquiring a hundred white badges would they acquire a single drop of Sovereign's Might. Upon acquiring ten thousand white badges, they would be able to acquire a Sovereign artifact. But of course, if they gained ten gold badges, they could also trade for a Sovereign artifact.

However, there was one thing…gold badges couldn't be traded for Sovereign's Might! To trade for Sovereign's Might, one had to acquire white badges.

This destroyed any chance of one being able to acquire a large amount of Sovereign's Might.

In addition, if one managed to kill five enemy commanders during the Planar Wars, after the battle concluded, the military merits could be recorded. Once the next Planar Wars began, if one killed five more commanders, the total military merits rendered would be ten, and by then, one could still trade for a Sovereign artifact.

"So it is cumulative?" Linley sighed. "And one has to kill ordinary soldiers? Isn't that…just butchery?"

"Although it seems simple, the ordinary soldiers are all gathered in one place. To kill a hundred of them? You'd most likely suffer the attacks of ten thousand soldiers. Most Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends possess spiritual attacks that are a tenth the power of a Lord Prefect's. But an attack from ten thousand…even a Lord of Tartarus would have to flee, and would

be killed if he didn't flee fast enough." The silver-haired elder, Gallen, said with a calm laugh.

Linley couldn't help but nod.

If a commander encountered ten or perhaps a few dozen soldiers, it wouldn't be too hard to massacre them.

But if the commander encountered a thousand or more than ten thousand soldiers…attacking would be suicide.

"Every single commander is hard to kill. Everyone who dares to enter has their own ways of preserving their lives. Thus, that's why military merits can be accumulated over time!" The silver-haired elder, Gallen, said with a calm laugh. "If you take part in several Planar Wars, you'll be able to accumulate enough military merits. But of course, you also might lose your life in the Planar Wars, resulting in all your efforts being for naught."

Linley nodded slightly.

"Mr. Gallen, we'll head in, then." Linley immediately said.

Chapter 13 – Dangerous

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 13, Dangerous

“Then let me wish you, Mr. Linley, a successful venture and return for the two of you.” The silver-haired elder, Gellen, laughed calmly. Suddenly, he thought of something and said hurriedly, “Right, Lord Linley, I don’t know if you know or not, but once you participate in the Planar War, you will only be permitted to depart once this Planar War concludes.”

“Eh?” Linley turned to look at him.

“Lord Linley, so you really didn’t know.” The silver-haired elder, Gellen, laughed. “This is a rule. You can choose to enter at any time, but everyone who enters…must wait for the war to conclude before leaving. You are not permitted to leave in the middle, nor is it possible for you to leave in the middle.”

“I have to wait eight centuries?” Linley frowned.

His original plan had been for him and Bebe to seize every available moment to complete their mission early on, then hurry back.

“I’m thinking too highly of myself. How could commanders be easily killed? Eight hundred years…I’ll have to just fight for eight hundred years within then.” Linley now understood why so many Lord Prefects, Tartarus Lords, and others weren’t willing to enter the Planar Wars.

Even if you rendered military merits, you would have to wait until everything concluded, and even if you didn’t attack others, others might attack you.

“Boss, let’s go on in.” Bebe was completely fearless.

Linley nodded, then flew with Bebe towards the interspatial gate.

Five meters wide, ten meters tall, and emanating with that black aura. Linley and Bebe flew through the interspatial gate, and as they did, it was like entering a pool of water. The two disappeared from the wide hall.

“I wonder if they’ll return alive.” Gellen shook his head slightly.

When Linley had been in the Yulan continent, he had passed through an interspatial gate to arrive at the Necropolis of the Gods plane.

But this time, the passage through the interspatial gate was a completely different experience.

“This interspatial door is actually an extremely long corridor.” Linley was rather surprised, while Bebe also stared at their surroundings in surprise.

The five meter wide, ten meter high corridor had walls which were covered with flowing streaks of light. Everything seemed so beautiful and dazzling. Linley and Bebe followed the direction of the interspatial corridor, flying towards the front. Linley was stunned. “This corridor seems to distort space itself.”

While flying, Linley had the sense of space being distorted.

“Boss, tell me, if I were to attack this corridor, would it collapse?” Bebe said.

Linley couldn’t help but feel his heart clench, and he gave Bebe a glare. “Bebe, don’t cause trouble. If this interspatial corridor really collapses, you and I will be trapped within a region of chaotic space. That would be disastrous.” Linley knew very well that even the most powerful of Highgods, upon entering a region of chaotic space, might be finished.

“I’m just saying.” Bebe mumbled.

Suddenly…

Linley noticed that there was a faint glow coming from the front of the tunnel. “Eh? We made it?”

Linley and Bebe immediately exited the tunnel.

“Welcome, milords.” A voice that was neither humble nor loud rang out. Linley and Bebe turned to look towards the voice before even having a chance to inspect the battlefield. The ground in front of them was dark and gloomy, and standing atop the ground was a large group of people. Linley swept them with his gaze. “Hundreds!”

Only, Linley also noticed the aura from their badges as well now.

They were on his side!

Only now did Linley let out a sigh of relief. The person who had just spoken was a red-haired, grim-looking woman. She continued, “Milords, is this your first time in the Planar Battlefield, or have you had previous experiences?”

Linley couldn’t help but frown.

“Milord, please don’t be upset.” The red-haired, grim-looking woman hurriedly smiled. “We are under orders to guard the interspatial gate that leads to the Planar Battlefield from the Netherworld. Our Lord has instructed us that if there is anyone who is new to the Planar Battlefield and isn’t familiar with it, that his Lordship can receive you and also provide you with some information, milords.”

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

“Boss, let’s go. What’s there to fear?” Bebe sent mentally.

Linley, too, felt that given how they were completely unfamiliar with this Planar Battlefield, it was best to get a better understanding of it.

“Fine, then. You lead the way.” Linley said.

“Please follow me.” The red-haired woman said, then immediately led Linley outwards.

Linley and Bebe, when advancing, carefully applied his senses to his surroundings. When he did, he sighed in astonishment. “The gravity in this battlefield is actually even greater than that of the Netherworld and the Infernal Realm! This is the plane with the greatest gravity I have ever seen. In addition, divine sense is restricted to an incredible extent as well.

Linley realized that his divine sense was now constrained to a range of just a hundred meters or so.

“My two Lords, according to the legends, this battlefield was created jointly by the four Overgods.” The red-haired woman laughed as she spoke. “Even the Higher Realms, such as the Netherworld or the Celestial Realm, were created by the four Overgods separately. This battlefield, in terms of stability, is far more stable than even the Higher Realms. In this place, it is hard for even commanders to be able to tear open space.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel secretly surprised.

The more stable a plane was, the more powerful gravity generally was in it, as well as the restrictive, binding force.

Linley glanced at the air.

In the air above this plane, there were no stars. Extremely high in the sky, there were some wild, chaotic, multi-colored regions of chaotic space. The entire plane was covered in darkness, and only those multi-colored patches of chaotic space were able to provide some illumination. This caused the battlefield to always seem dark and gloomy.

“Hey, what’s going on up there?” Bebe spoke out.

The red-haired woman laughed. “The space above the Planar Battlefield is very dangerous. As you fly upwards, once you reach a certain height, you

will occasionally encounter spatial tears. If you go up even farther, the spatial tears will become more dense…until you enter the region of chaotic space. Thus, when battling, be careful not to let yourself fall into the chaotic space.

Linley and Bebe glanced at each other.

It seemed as though the environment in this damnable place was quite vile as well.

“The battles of the Planar Wars have one proscription; one cannot fly too high, or too deep into the ground! The red-haired woman said with a calm laugh. “If you dig deep into the ground, if you go a bit too deep, you will very possibly encounter more spatial tears. The deeper you go, the more numerous the spatial tears will be.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“How troublesome.” Bebe mumbled.

While chatting, Linley noticed that the surrounding soldiers were growing more and more numerous. Clearly, they had arrived at a headquarters. The red-haired woman, in a very familiar manner, led Linley to an ordinary tent, then instructed Linley and Bebe, “My two Lords, please wait here for now.”

Linley and Bebe were rather puzzled. They couldn’t even go close to the tent? But they didn’t ask.

The red-haired woman said respectfully towards the tent, “Your Lordship, just now, two Lords have arrived from the Netherworld. I brought them over.”

“Oh?” A figure strode over from within the tent.

This was a muscular bald youth, dressed in a thick black robe. His forehead had a red spot on it. He gave Linley and Bebe a glance, then said, rather puzzled, “I don’t seem to have met you two before.”

“My Boss is the new Redcliff Lord.” Bebe said directly.

“Oh.” The black-robed, bald youth glanced sideways at Linley, not fully convinced. He said calmly, “Since you have come over, it would appear that this is your first time. I have a map of this Planar Battlefield here, with descriptions of various areas. You can take a look.” As he spoke, he waved his hand, tossing a very thin piece of parchment with black seals atop it.

Linley laughed calmly while accepting it. “Thank you!”

“Boss, this baldy seems to be on guard against us.” Bebe said. “In fact, he even maintains some distance from us and doesn’t invite us in. We just arrived from the Netherworld and are on his side. Why is he so guarded against us? I don’t get it”.

“He is indeed guarded, but let’s not worry about that. We’ll leave soon.”

Linley, as well, had noticed that this black-robed, bald youth was wary of the two of them. Although he didn’t understand why, he still said, “The two of us have some other matters to take care of. We won’t tarry here. We’re leaving now.”

“Then be careful on your journey.” Only now did the black-robed, bald youth reveal a hint of a smile on his face. “Neana [Ne’an’na], you represent me in escorting these two away.”

“Yes, your Lordship.” The red-haired woman bowed.

And then, under her guidance, Linley and Bebe left the headquarters. At the borders of the headquarters, the red-haired woman bade farewell to Linley and Bebe. She watched as the two left. “How strange. His Lordship should have invited them over for the purpose of allying with them! But…his Lordship actually didn’t recognize them. What a pity, what a pity!”

For them to enter the Netherworld on their own meant that one of the two definitely had to be someone on the Tartarus Lord or Lord Prefect level.

The black-robed bald youth had wanted to show them some hospitality, but unfortunately, he didn't know Linley at all, nor did he offer to work together.

Atop the vast earth, Linley and Bebe were currently seated shoulder-to-shoulder, in the valley of a mountain, flipping through some information which gave a basic introduction to the Planar Battlefield.

"This Planar Battlefield really is small, with a circumference of just a million kilometers. However…it is separated by the 'Stellar River' and divided into two parts. Our Divine Darkness Plane is on this side of the Stellar River, while the Divine Light Plane's armies are on the other side." Linley, after reading, learned many things.

Bebe sighed in amazement, "Boss, so the most dangerous places aren't the skies; the most dangerous places are deep underground. And the Stellar River!"

"Right." Linley nodded as well.

In midair, one could still fly to a certain height. Only after flying even higher than that safe height would one occasionally begin to encounter some spatial tears, with the higher regions growing increasingly dangerous. Because there was an orderly increase in the danger, everyone was prepared, and they would be careful not to exceed the safe height.

But the Stellar River was different.

There were very few 'safe zones' in the Stellar River. The vast majority of it was extremely dangerous.

"This Planar Battlefield seems like two smaller planes that were joined together. This Stellear River is the line at which the juncture was made. Some 'juncture points' are safe, but the areas around most juncture points are wild, chaotic space." Linley shook his head. The description given by this book seemed to be rather frightening. But Linley and Bebe had never

before seen the place, and so weren't able to tell for now how dangerous the Stellar River really was.

"We're going to go kill commanders. It seems we have to go past the Stellar River." Bebe murmured.

"No." Linley shook his head. "Just like us, there must be many commanders who have come to help out. Perhaps there are many who are moving independently as well. They want to kill our people, and so they too will cross the Stellar Side and arrive here on our side. There's no need for us to go there for now. We'll run into them here."

Bebe, hearing this, couldn't help but nod.

"Boss, these Planar Wars have been going on for a hundred years now." Bebe suddenly said.

"Right, thus, the enemy leaders have sent probably quite a few who have come to this place." Linley looked around himself vigilantly. "Now that we are in an unfamiliar place, we need to constantly be on guard. This is a battlefield, after all, not an arena for challenges. They won't necessary act openly and honestly."

"What is there to fear? I want to run into them." Bebe was completely confident.

"Then let's head out for now."

Linley and Bebe immediately stood up. There were no stars in this Planar Battlefield. If one wanted to differentiate between the directions, the only way was to use some tall mountains and rivers as landmarks.

"Then let's head that way." Linley saw a squad mountain in the distance, and immediately spoke out.

Linley and Bebe both carefully made their way through the Planar Battlefield. Aside from some army camps which seemed quite active, the

other places were all extremely quiet. What they didn't know…was if that behind the quiet silence, there was a hidden expert commander or not. Or perhaps an expert on the level of Beirut.

"Eh?" Bebe suddenly turned his head and looked towards the distance. "Boss, there's someone there!"

Linley stooped down, carefully relying on the grass to block his presence as he stared from afar. Roughly a thousand meters away, a blurred, black-light suddenly appeared and was advancing straight for them.

Chapter 14 – Ambushed

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 14, Ambushed

They had only been flying in the Planar Battlefield for less than half a day, but ended up actually encountering a lone traveler. Linley knew that ordinary soldiers couldn't possibly be travelling alone.

"Move closer!"

Linley said mentally. What Linley now had to do was…discover if this was someone on their side, or an enemy. Linley and Bebe quietly advanced through the grass, drawing closer, not daring to release even the slightest hint of energy, for fear of enemy discovery. Moments later, the distance between the two was reduced to two hundred meters.

"Eh? I can't sense the badge aura from him." Bebe sent.

Linley couldn't help but feel excited. "An enemy!"

People on the same side would be able to sense their allies' badges. Being unable to sense the badge…meant it was an enemy!

"Haha, I didn't expect that as soon as we arrived in the Planar Battlefield, we'd encounter an enemy. It is probably a commander." Bebe's eyes lit up. "Boss, hand this one to me. I'll get rid of him."

"Right." Linley suppressed his excitement.

"Swoosh!" Bebe suddenly flew into the air.

A blurry, enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat suddenly appeared behind Bebe. At this moment, Bebe, not hesitating at all, used his supreme technique – his innate divine ability, 'Godeater'! But the strange thing was that the figure didn't collapse; it turned to look towards Bebe.

“Boss, I can’t sense his divine spark or his soul!” Bebe said frantically. “Right, there’s another person nearby. I can sense the aura from his badge. He’s not too far from us. He belongs to our side.”

Right at this moment, someone suddenly appeared in the distance. This person knew that he had been discovered.

“The two of you!” The gray-robed figure said clearly. “Stop attacking that black-robed figure. That’s my Deathgod Golem.”

“Golem?”

Bebe and Linley were stunned.

“So it was a golem. No wonder I couldn’t sense its aura. No wonder, when Bebe used his innate divine ability, he failed.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. The gray-robed man turned and was about to leave, but Bebe called out, “Hey, don’t leave in such a hurry!” As he spoke, he flew over.

“Swoosh!” The Deathgod Golem immediately flew over, wanting to block Bebe while speaking in the human language, “What are you intending to do?”

“We are on the same side. Can’t I ask a few questions?” Bebe stared at the Deathgod Golem.

The gray-robed figure himself was already far away. The Deathgod Golem he left behind naturally wasn’t something he was worried for; even if he lost it, that just meant he had one less golem.

“The two of you…” The Deathgod Golem said calmly. “How do I know if you are on my side? Perhaps the two of you killed some ordinary soldiers of my side, and then bound the badges with blood and used them to disguise yourselves. Who can be certain as to whether or not you two are fakes?”

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

It was possible to be imposters?

But when he thought about it carefully, it made sense. All they had to do was come up with a way to kill an ordinary soldier, then remove their own badge before binding an enemy badge. Thusly done, they would have a disguise. Once the Planar War ended, they could simply put their own badges back on. Linley and Bebe hadn't thought of this yet.

"Even if you aren't imposters, people on the same side can still kill each other!" The Deathgod Golem said, then left.

Linley and Bebe didn't try to stop the Deathgod Golem.

"Boss, I'm starting to understand why that allied camp commander was so wary of us." Bebe said. "He was just like that previous person; afraid we would act against him." Bebe also understand that it wasn't that they were afraid of the two of them; rather, they couldn't be bothered to kill people on the same side.

This was because even in success, there would be no military merits gained.

But in failure, one's life would be lost. Naturally, the gray-robed man had chosen to leave.

"He was afraid we'd kill him?" Linley said helplessly. "But I won't gain any military merits for killing him. Oh, wait!" Linley had a sudden thought, and he finally understood why it was possible for people on the same side to want to fight each other.

"Eh?" Bebe looked at Linley, puzzled.

"People on the same side…might kill each other as well." Linley sighed emotionally.

"How can that be?" Bebe didn't understand.

“It’s simple. Two people who are close friends. One enters the side of the Divine Darkness Plane, the other enters the side of the Divine Light Plane. For example, Bebe, you and I might be located in opposing camps. I’ll kill people on my side and obtain red badges, which are useless to me, but I can give them to you! And when you kill someone on your side and acquire a golden badge, you can give it to me to use.” Linley smiled bitterly.

Bebe now understood as well.

The Lord Prefects, Tartarus Lords, and others who were supreme amongst Highgods had many friends at the same level. For example, Beirut; he might even have friends of the same level in the Celestial Realm. They absolutely could join different camps and use this strategy.

“Thus, we can’t trust people on our side, unless we know them well.” Linley said with resignation.

No wonder the black-robed, bald youth, upon realizing that he didn’t recognize Linley, immediately had Linley leave.

“It seems we need to be careful as well.” Bebe pursed his lips. “Even if we encounter allies, we can’t be too careless.”

“Right.” Linley, too, began to feel how dangerous these Planar Wars were.

Aside from true friends, outsiders were not to be trusted. And the status imparted by a badge might not be true!

“Just now, that fellow was quite clever to use a Deathgod Golem as bait.” Bebe said with a chortle. “Boss, we can do this also. Nobody, regardless of the side, will be able to sense the aura of a badge on a Deathgod Golem. They’ll take the golem to be an enemy and ambush it! We’ll hide nearby and counter-ambush them instead.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

This was indeed a good method.

The Planar Battlefield was a million kilometers in diameter. If one flew at high speed, it wasn't a very long distance, but in this sort of place, where attacks and battles occurred in secret…in such a large area, the few dozen or a few hundred commanders would be like drops of water in the sea. If they were hidden somewhere, it would be very hard to find them.

Within a mountain cavern. Linley and Bebe were within the cavern, while each of them also controlled a Deathgod Golem, flying not too far away from them.

"We encountered a person when we first entered the Planar Battlefield, but now it's been another month, and we haven't encountered anyone." Bebe mumbled. "Based on what you said, Boss, we have to be careful even when just travelling around. This sort of slow, plodding pace…how long is it going to take for us to reach the Stellar River."

"Don't be impatient."

Linley laughed as he spoke. He was very patient. "It is possible for battles to occur between commanders in any location here in the Planar Battlefield. We don't need to run around wildly. Doing so would be very dangerous, and the chances of encountering someone isn't that high either. If we occasionally set up an ambush, our chances might be higher.

"But if everyone is waiting in ambush, then nobody will encounter anybody." Bebe rebutted.

"That's why we'll advance a little bit every few months, changing every so often." Linley said calmly. "We have eight centuries! Plenty of time!"

What was most critical in a place like this Planar Battlefield was patience. Whoever became impatient and revealed their traces would most likely be observed by others, which would make things dangerous. Linley knew how much power he had…a commander specialized in soul attacks would make things tough for him. And….most commander-level experts were skilled in

soul attacks!!!

“If you aren’t able to keep waiting, you start training.” Linley said with a laugh.

“Got it.” Bebe pursed his lips.

Linley, too, had his true body in a state of maximum vigilance, while his divine clones were focused on training.

Who amongst the commanders weren’t elites? In addition, quite a few of the commanders had been in the Planar Battlefield before. All of them had their own strategies.

Linley’s cautious, guarded approach produced no results in the first three months. Although they did encounter one person, that person was on their side as well, and so Linley and Bebe didn’t attack.

“Let’s change places! Most likely, there are very few enemy commanders who will pass through this place.”

“Boss, you should’ve made this decision long ago. As I see it, let’s go to the other side of the Stellar River. I imagine that the enemy camp must have quite a few enemy commanders!”

After having waited for three months, in the end, Linley still decided to leave this mountain cave. That very day…Linley and Bebe slept away, advancing forward towards the Stellar Sea.

Within a squat but large mountain, there was actually a spacious room.

A violet-robed, black-haired man was currently seated in the meditative position, while three people were seated next to him. Suddenly, a figure emerged from the stairs below. Bowing, he said, “Milord, our people outside have discovered the forces of the Divine Plane of Darkness. One is a youth, while the other is a youngster! Master, these two people aren’t in the documents you provided.”

“Oh, strangers?” The violet-robed, black-haired man opened his eyes, a hint of violet light flashing through them.

“Yes, Master.” The figure bowed.

“Very good. It’s time to go hunting.” The violet-robed, black-haired man’s body swayed, then disappeared from the secret room.

In the Planar Battlefield, Linley wanted to ambush others, but others wanted to ambush Linley as well. It all came down to whose detection skills were better, whose stealth skills were better, whose strategies were better! This was Linley and Bebe’s first time in the Planar Battlefield. They had too few experiences to rely upon, and so it really was quite hard for them to attempt to ambush others.

But now…

They had been locked onto by others!

“Boss, which place should we set up camp? How about let’s head directly to the side of the Stellar Sea, right over there…hmph, if someone comes over, we’ll go fight them.” Bebe sent mentally. He had no hesitation in his eyes; rather, he had a hint of excitement.

“If we just set up camp by the river, we’ll be treated by others as a punching bag.”

Linley’s forehead suddenly creased.

“What is it?” Bebe said, puzzled.

“Swoosh!”

Linley suddenly turned his head, only to see a blurry, translucent white arrow instantly arrive in front of him. Linley’s first reaction was…

“Rumble…” An earthen yellow light exploded forth from his body, instantly encapsulating a region of a thousand meters. This was Linley’s supreme technique…Blackstone Space!

The direction of the gravity was towards Linley!

“Crunch!” The translucent white arrow entered his body.

The speed was too fast. Linley wasn’t able to dodge at all.

“Bebe, kill that assailant!” Linley only had the chance to give this single shout through divine sense, then whole-heartedly focused on defending against the soul attack.

“BANG!”

The translucent arrow continued to inexorably strike towards Linley’s soul, but when it smashed against the translucent scaled membrane, it instantly shattered, transforming into white specks of light. These specks of light instantly discovered that the defensive power at the damaged hole was weaker, and immediately attacked there.

“Crackle…” Linley’s azure spiritual energy transformed into rays of invisible sword-ripples, repeatedly smashing against the white spots of light.

“Who is this? Reisgem? The appearance is completely off, but the gravity is so strong…fortunately, I started far away.” The violet figure was originally within a few hundred meters of Linley when he launched his ambush. If he had been closer, Linley and Bebe would have discovered him.

Although Linley’s Blackstone Space was set up to cover a large distance, the violet-robed figure was very fast. While resisting the power of the gravity, he managed to flee the Blackstone Space region. But as he fled from the region, Bebe reached a distance of just two or three hundred meters from him.

“SHKREEEEEEEEE!”

The enraged Bebe once more used his innate divine ability.

“Eh?” The violet-robed man, who had continuously paid attention to the space behind him, was terrified upon seeing the enormous phantom of a Godeater Rat. “Just now, that was Reisgem’s supreme technique, but this one is Beirut’s!” The violet-robed man’s body suddenly exploded with white light. It was Sovereign’s Might!

His speed instantly increased to a new limit.

“Rumble!” The strange ripples of Bebe’s innate divine ability flew towards him at high speed!

“Dammit, I let him get away!” Bebe said discontentedly.

His innate divine ability was executed through relying on his spiritual energy, and there was a process of waves, as well as a distance limit. Bebe had been two or three hundred meters away to begin with. Given that in this moment of crisis, the enemy had also used up a drop of Sovereign’s Might to flee at full speed, the enemy had managed to put enough distance between them.

“What is going on? Those two young strangers…one actually had Reisgem’s supreme technique, while the other had Beirut’s supreme technique. What incredibly bad luck. Today, I, Oona [Wu’a’na], very nearly died in their hands. I didn’t get anything, but ended up using a drop of Sovereign’s Might. Jeeze!” The violet-robed man felt extremely discontent as well. “Not good…as my Sovereign’s Might continues to leak outwards, it’ll definitely attract the attention of other commanders. Terrible, terrible!

Chapter 15 – A Choice

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 15, A Choice

Bebe was still staring unhappily towards the direction in which the violet-robed man had ran. Unfortunately, the violet-robed man's speed was normally above his to begin with. After using Sovereign's Might, he vastly outstripped Bebe. Bebe could do nothing besides just watch as the man fled. If it hadn't been for the fact that he was slower, Bebe wouldn't have used his innate divine ability at the earlier distance of two or three hundred meters.

"Just consider yourself lucky!"

Bebe glanced warily at the surrounding area, then turned and shot back towards Linley like an arrow.

"Boss, are you alright?" Bebe asked, worried.

Linley opened his eyes and glanced at the surrounding area. "The battle just now might have drawn the attention of others. Bebe, let's move first and talk later!" Amongst the commanders of the Planar Battlefield, Linley could only be considered a low-level one, while Bebe at most would be a mid-level one. The two weren't yet powerful enough to be able to openly welcome challenges from others!

"Swoosh!" The two transformed into blurs, disappearing from the skies.

Moments after they left, a black-robed figure suddenly appeared in midair. It paused here for a moment, glanced around, and then left.

In the Planar Battlefield, only high-ranking commanders would dare to fly in the air, as they were confident in being able to fight any opponent. After all, it was easy for people on the ground to see those of them in midair. For example, Linley and Bebe only moved about on the ground.

After hiding in a deep cave, Linley and Bebe let out sighs of relief.

“Bebe, you weren’t able to catch him?” Linley said with a laugh.

“Nope! That fellow was hidden really far away. Boss, when you spread out your Blackstone Space, he quickly escaped from it. I used my innate divine ability, but I wasn’t able to reach him with it in time.” Bebe said unhappily. “That fellow really is a bastard. He hid so far away when he attacked. He didn’t even dare to draw too close!”

Linley shook his head. “This is the Planar Battlefield, not a dueling ground. Everyone’s strategies are different! In addition, there are more experts here than just those of the Divine Darkness Plane and Divine Light Plane. Even supreme experts from other planes have decided to come in support of one side. Thus…the experts here are from throughout the Four Higher Realms and the Seven Divine Planes. This is a terrifying battleground. It makes sense for everyone to be so cautious!”

Bebe felt the pressure now, as well.

Aside from the Planar Battlefield, what other place could possibly attract these supreme experts to all gather in one place and think of ways to kill each other?

“I wonder how many commanders are here.” Bebe mumbled.

“As I see it, the Divine Darkness Plane and Divine Light Plane each have at most twenty or thirty commanders. The other planes, all combined, should have more! If ten come from each Higher Realm and from each Divine Plane, more than a hundred would be present.” Linley sighed. “In addition, that’s a conservative estimate. Aside from commanders, there are some other experts who previously were Lord Prefects or regional lords who might have retired long ago, but who have only grown in power. They might come as well!”

Bebe nodded.

Indeed…those people came in as ordinary soldiers.

For example, Linley and Bebe. Bebe was here as an ordinary soldier, but in terms of power, was Bebe weak? It was the same principle. In the Planar Battlefield, there were perhaps only a hundred or so true 'commanders', but there were more who held commander-level power.

Over the course of countless years, quite a few supreme experts had given up their positions, possibly because they knew that they were weaker than their challengers. Some couldn't be bothered to fight over power, and so gave up their positions. As for others…well, it wasn't good to underestimate anyone.

"Only very few dare to act arrogantly in the Planar Wars." Linley shook his head and laughed. Those who were arrogant without sufficient strength died early on. The only people who dared to be arrogant now were the likes of Dunnington. "Thus, that person who attacked me can be considered to have used an excellent method. If the first blow was unsuccessful, immediately flee."

"Too diabolical." Bebe muttered.

"It is diabolical, but it is also safe." Linley took a deep breath. "Bebe, as I see it, we should use his method in seeking out targets! We'll launch sneak attacks…and if we fail, immediately leave without any hesitation."

"Heh heh, it feels bad being ambushed by others, but pretty great ambushing them." Bebe's eyes lit up.

Linley laughed resignedly.

Who wanted to be ambushed? But there was nothing they could do. If they fought openly, they would die upon encountering more powerful experts.

"When ambushing, the two of us will work jointly." Linley had been planning this on the way back. He immediately said, "When we find a

target, Bebe, use your innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’. I’ll immediately execute a material attack! There are very few people capable of blocking my Mirage sword!”

Linley was very confident.

Bebe’s ‘Godeater’ ability acted on a person’s soul and divine spark, while Linley used material attacks.

“Bebe, against what sort of person would your ‘Godeater’ ability fail?” Linley asked.

He had to know the power of Bebe’s ‘Godeater’ ability in order to plan things out.

“Oh. Grandpa mentioned a few things before. Those who are at the Paragon level should be able to resist my innate divine ability.” Bebe said.

Linley nodded. “Anyone else?”

“Those who have soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts should be able to block as well.” Bebe said, then began to laugh. “But don’t worry. Very few people have Sovereign artifacts. Most likely only a portion of commanders have Sovereign artifacts, which are divided into three types. There are very few soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts, and also very few people in possession of them.”

Linley wasn’t too surprised by Bebe’s response.

Soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts were made by Sovereigns to protect their own souls! It was natural that an artifact which a Sovereign used to protect his own soul would be effective against Bebe’s technique.

“Bebe, if the enemy uses Sovereign’s Might, would he be able to block it?” Linley asked. This was the real question which he cared about.

“Heh heh, someone who uses Sovereign’s Might…won’t be able to block

me.” Bebe said confidently. “My innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, will go through any possible opening. Unless the soul protection is completely flawless, as soon as it encounters any opening, it will seep through, locking onto the soul and divine spark!”

Linley nodded slightly.

“It seems that it would be hard for me to block this technique as well.” Linley laughed.

“Heh heh.” Bebe nodded smugly. “Unless, Boss, you completely repair that soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!”

“Completely repairing it…how difficult a task it is!” Linley laughed in response.

During the course of this conversation, Linley had come to understand how terrifying Bebe’s innate divine ability truly was. Any commander who was not a Paragon or who did not possess a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, upon encountering this technique, would probably find it hard to escape! The only method was to do what that violet-robed man had done; immediately pull away.

Once one was attacked within the range of the technique, one would be finished.

“Amongst the commanders, only a portion of them possess Sovereign artifacts. Even fewer have soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts.” Linley was filled with confidence. “Bebe, just by relying on this technique, should be able to deal with the vast majority of commanders. No wonder Beirut said that by relying on this technique, Bebe’s attack power would be close to Beirut’s own.”

Linley was already filled with confidence regarding the Planar Battlefield.

After all…it wasn’t just Bebe who had a supreme technique. Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’ and innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Roar’, when

combined with his godly weapon ‘Mirage’…this was also a very frightening triple threat.

In the blink of an eye, two months passed.

Within the cave.

“Boss, it’s been two more months. We only found a single person, and it was someone on our side. This rate is really low.” Bebe was rather impatient.

They wanted to hunt enemy commanders, but they hadn’t even found any targets. They had power stored up but nowhere to spend it.

Linley nodded. “Bebe, there should be enemies on this side of the Stellar River as well. But although they have come over, all of them are extremely careful. Finding them is very hard. As I see it…let’s go straight to their base!”

“Boss, are you saying…?” Bebe’s eyes lit up.

“Pass through the Stellar River and go to the other side!”

The Planar Battlefield didn’t have a sun, a moon, or stars. Upon raising one’s head, all one would see was the multicolored patches of chaotic space high in the skies. Although it was beautiful, it was also very dangerous. The only reason the battlefield had any light at all and wasn’t steeped in utter darkness was because of the chaotic space high up above.

The Stellar River!

It divided the battlefield into two sides, and was one of the danger zones of the Planar Battlefield.

“Boss, so this is the Stellar River? How can you call this a river?” Bebe and Linley were currently standing amidst the grass, staring towards the distant Stellar River.

The Stellar River was extremely long. According to the descriptions on the map, it divided the entire Planar Battlefield in two, and so naturally it was a million kilometers in length. There was no way one would be able to see to the end of it with the naked eye. And its width…

"It must be a thousand kilometers wide." Linley looked towards it.

The Stellar River was a thousand kilometers wide. At a glance…it seemed incomparably brilliant and beautiful. But upon taking a closer look, they discovered…that the brilliance wasn't generated from 'river water'. Rather, it was from countless spatial flows. The Stellar River was filled with countless spatial tears, which could be seen everywhere.

The spatial tears were so common that they formed into a thick, dense 'river', a river completely formed from chaotic spatial tears!

"How are we supposed to go past this damn place?" Bebe said with a frown.

Linley looked carefully as well. The number of spatial tears that appeared and disappeared here were innumerable. But of course, given that it was a thousand kilometers wide, there were some safe zones as well. There were some meteors, mountains, and hills that floated throughout the Stellar River. They just hovered there. Clearly, the regions in which they resided had no spatial tears.

However, they were in the center of this 'river'. Linley couldn't just teleport there.

"The Stellar River has two wide corridors!" Linley said. "Only, these two corridors both have army headquarters stationed at each end and are under guard. Our side isn't so bad; our people guard it and won't attack us. But if we pass through the wide corridor to reach the other end, we will suffer enemy attacks!"

The two sides of the Planar Battlefield were actually connected to each

other solely through those two corridors.

“Boss, are we really going to…?” Bebe raised an eyebrow.

“Right! All we can do is find a safe corridor through the regions of chaotic space and spatial tears.” Linley looked forward carefully as he spoke. “Bebe, some places have no spatial tears. Let’s look carefully for them.”

“No other choices.” Bebe mumbled.

Linley and Bebe both focused their attention on the Stellar River.

Linley quickly discovered that within the Stellar River, there were some places with neither spatial tears nor chaotic space. By connecting these safe spaces…a sinuous pathway could be traversed. What Linley had to do was to find a small pathway that would allow him to reach the other side.

“Boss, look over there. It seems that place is passable.” Bebe pointed and said. “However, I can only see to a distance of a few hundred kilometers. It gets blurry after that. The small spatial tears can’t be seen clearly past that distance.”

Linley gave it a look, then shook his head. “Doesn’t work. The path that I found is the same; there’s no way to be certain as to whether or not the latter half is passable. How about this, Bebe…let’s head to those floating boulders in the center. Once we reach those spaces, we’ll look for a path that reaches the opposite shores.”

“Alright.” Bebe had no options as well.

“Then let’s follow that path. It just happens to lead to the millstone-like boulder over there in the center.” Linley immediately decided.

Linley and Bebe, while paying attention to their surroundings, transformed into two rays of light, quickly advancing to the sides of the Stellar Sea. But upon reaching the sides of the Stellar Sea, Linley and Bebe felt pressure from what they were going to do. The ‘river path’ they had selected was

filled with countless spatial tears above and below it, as well as regions of chaotic space.

“Let’s go.” Linley sent.

Linley and Bebe instantly passed through the Stellar River. The two agilely and nimbly threaded their way through, moving up, down, left, and right at high speed, avoiding one dangerous region after another.

At this moment, it was as though Linley and Bebe were dancing atop the blade of a knife. The situation was extremely dangerous.

But at their level, their self-control was at a very high level as well. They didn’t make a single error in any of their movements. Sometimes, they all but pressed against those spatial tears as they moved past them, but they still managed to dodge one danger after another.

“Up ahead.” Linley said, delighted.

Up ahead, there was an enormous floating boulder that was tens of meters wide. It hovered there, and despite having been there for so long, there were no cracks on it. Clearly, this region didn’t have much danger.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Linley and Bebe advanced, one up ahead, one behind. They landed on the surface of the millstone-like boulder.

“Whew.” Only now did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

He looked at his surroundings. The surrounding area was filled with spatial tears and chaotic space. Linley couldn’t help but say with a laugh, “Bebe, this…I feel as though we are back in the Yulan continent, in the secret room below Dragonblood Castle. However, that secret room had that membrane which blocked out the spatial tears and the chaotic space. Now, however, we don’t have any protection.”

“Boss…” Bebe suddenly said. “Do you think there might be commanders hidden within the central boulders of the Stellar Sea?”

Chapter 16 – Murderous Blows!

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 16, Murderous Blows!

In the center of the Stellar River. Atop the giant, millstone-like floating boulder. Linley and Bebe were standing there.

“If we were to be surrounded and attacked, it would be dangerous.” Bebe looked at their surroundings.

“Hiding around the central boulders of the Stellar River?” Linley couldn’t help but look at the surrounding areas, then laughed. “Bebe, stop imagining things. I think no commander would be willing to battle within the center of the Stellar Sea. If you aren’t careful, you’ll immediately fall into the spatial tears or the chaotic space, and be finished.”

“Oh. Makes sense.” Bebe couldn’t help but rub his nose and chortle.

“Enough. If we stay here in the center of the Stellar River, we’ll easily be discovered. Let’s hurry up and find a way out and arrive at the opposite side in a hurry.” Linley said quickly.

“Right.” Bebe also began to immediately inspect the surrounding spatial tears and chaotic space.

If someone from the other side was paying attention to the center of the Stellar River, Linley and Bebe would be easily discovered.

“No, this route doesn’t work either.” Linley shook his head, negating another pathway he had just discovered. Sometimes, a pathway seemed promising, but after a hundred meters, spatial tears and chaotic space completely blocked it off, providing no chances for advancing.

Linley and Bebe continued to search rapidly.

“Boss, I found a path.” Bebe said in surprised delight.

“Oh? Which one?” Linley couldn’t help but feel delighted.

“Right over here. Look, follow this line, then there…take a big turn. The route after that is fairly clear.” Bebe said excitedly.

Linley’s gaze quickly swept down and followed the route, all the way to the other end. He wanted to make sure this route was passable.

“Let’s go.” Linley immediately gave the order.

Tarrying too long in the center of the Stellar River would make it easy for those on the other side to find them. Generally speaking, the easiest time for others to discover and ambush you would be during the process of travelling from one shore to another.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Two figures flashed through the Stellar Sea like bolts of lightning, occasionally curving and occasionally shooting forward, then curving again…in short, constantly dodging past one dangerous region after another.

“Captain, look, over there! Two people.” On the other side of the shore, a group of soldiers had discovered Linley and Bebe, advancing at high speed.

“Just two of them?” The leader, a silver-haired, sharp-eared, callous looking youth looked over, then gave the instructions. “These two definitely are commanders, or perhaps just one of them is. Let’s immediately move out, while at the same time…Second Bro, you go make the report to the Lord Commander. Should we let them go, or should we attack?”

“Understood.”

A figure left, flying at high speed.

Linley and Bebe had no idea that there was a camp located right at the part of the shore they had selected as their destination. Unfortunately, the camp was blocked by a small hill, and so Linley and Bebe didn't discover it at all. Linley and Bebe's attention was completely focused on the dangerous path they were traversing, and didn't realize at all that people in the distance were staring at them.

"My brothers, all of you, step back. Don't fight head on. The few dozen of us present won't be able to stop them." The silver-haired, sharp-eared youth instructed. "When the main army arrives or the Lord Commander arrives, then we'll see." They were nothing more than a small patrol of the camp, and were more than ten kilometers away from the headquarters.

They were no fools. The few dozen of them, go fight head on against a commander-level expert? That would be suicide.

If there were hundreds or a thousand of them present, then they might be confident.

"They've almost arrived." The soldiers stared. They had retreated long ago, drawing close to the tall grass close to the hill next to the headquarters.

"The commander orders them to be killed!" The order from the commander came.

"Brothers, let's go!" The silver-haired, sharp-eared youth immediately shouted. It wasn't just them, now; a large number of people had arrived from the main camp as well.

"Rumble…"

The soldiers of the camp located in other areas had all come, and they too charged forward, attacking alongside the patrols. There were more than a thousand attacking soldiers.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!" Linley and Bebe landed on the shore, moving lightning-fast.

“Boss, there are people here! Many!” Bebe said, stunned. Linley now noticed as well that in the distant grassy area, a large number of figures had suddenly emerged and were moving towards them at high speed. At the same time, more than ten meters away, in the distance, there was a short tent, with other tents blocked by the hill. “Not good. This is an enemy camp. We need to hurry and leave.”

Linley didn’t dare to hesitate, immediately fleeing alongside Bebe.

“Attack!” The order came. There was nothing they could do; in terms of speed, these soldiers couldn’t compete with Linley and Bebe. If this continued, the distance would only grow greater and greater. It was better to immediately attack. With that order, instantly…

“Rumble…”

“BOOM!”

All sorts of rays of light, translucent soul attacks, and other things shot forward at high speed, traversing the kilometers of distance and attacking Linley and Bebe.

But Linley and Bebe fled very quickly as well.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

The various attacks rained down, covering Linley and Bebe. Multiple attacks landed on Linley and Bebe’s bodies.

Within the exploding sounds, Linley and Bebe continued to flee quickly, soon disappearing from the field of vision of the pursuing soldiers.

“Commander!” The thousand soldiers suddenly all turned and bowed towards a single person.

This person was a man with long golden hair as brilliant as the sun, a face

that was as white and pure as a woman's, and who was dressed in a long golden robe. He casually glanced at them. "You let them escape?"

"We didn't catch up to them." The military officer who gave the order to attack said.

"If you didn't catch up to them, then forget it. We were already quite lucky to even encounter them, given the close distance to the Stellar Sea and how fast commanders move. If we were able to so easily kill one or two commanders, then my luck would have been too great. Enough, let's return!" The golden-haired commander laughed calmly as he gave his orders.

In a patch of grass, Linley and Bebe were hiding.

"What bad luck." Bebe twisted his lips. "Boss, you alright?"

"I'm fine. Just four material attacks landed on me, along with one soul attack. There wasn't much of an impact." Linley felt they were unlucky as well. The Stellar River was a million kilometers long. They had randomly chosen a place to come over, but who would have imagined that the opposite side would have a camp?

Linley then laughed. "Still, we at least made it safely to the enemy side."

"Right." Bebe's eyes lit up. "Boss, are we going to search for our target now?"

"Let's start to set up camp. I imagine on this side, things will be much better than at our side."

Linley and Bebe set up the same camping strategy they had on the other side. They dug a fairly shallow hole into the ground, then calmly began to train in the hole. At the same time, they each controlled a Deathgod Golem, which began to sneak around, with the goal of attracting nearby commanders.

A muscular man dressed in short sleeves and long trousers who was three meters tall was currently stealthily moving forward. He had a head of golden, lion-like hair, an upwards hooked nose, and a large mouth. His golden eyes paid constant attention to the surrounding areas, searching for a target.

“Oh?”

The golden-haired man’s eyes lit up. He saw that in the distance, there was a figure that was stealthily advancing. He couldn’t help but let a huge smile appear on his face. “I didn’t expect I’d actually encounter one. Right. No badge aura. An enemy!” The golden-haired man immediately shot forward as though he were a bolt of lightning.

Right at this moment, that figure just so happened to turn, spying the golden-haired man charging at him.

“Swoosh!” Not hesitating at all, the figure immediately fled.

“Fleeing? But your speed is inferior to mine!” The golden-haired man’s eyes lit up.

In the underground cave, Linley and Bebe were quietly seated in the meditative posture.

“Boss, we have a target. He’s chasing after the Deathgod Golem I am controlling.” Bebe suddenly opened his eyes.

Linley, excited, opened his eyes as well. “The encounter rate is much higher on the enemy side. This is only the seventh day, but we’ve found someone.”

“Let’s hurry up and move out.”

Linley and Bebe didn’t hesitate at all, immediately moving out from underground. If the enemy discovered the ‘target’ was just a Deathgod Golem, he would definitely know that it was just bait, making the chances of their ambush being successful much lower.

Linley and Bebe had been controlling the Deathgod Golems at a close distance. Because they were keeping them close, that made it easier to control them, and it was currently fleeing towards the two of them.

Within the grass.

Linley and Bebe laid there in wait, staring at the two distant, running figures. The Deathgod Golem was a Highgod artifact level Deathgod Golem, and it was still quite fast. However, normally speaking, a commander level expert should be far faster than this Deathgod Golem.

“This golden-haired fellow isn’t that fast.” Linley immediately came to this judgment.

“Boss, I don’t sense any aura from his badge. He should be an enemy.” Bebe said, delighted.

Linley’s eyes lit up as well.

Good heavens! They had lain in wait for half a year on their own side without anything to show for it, but after having waited here for just seven days, they had encountered an enemy. The efficiency rate here really was much higher.

“Bebe, prepare to act.” Linley sent mentally.

“Don’t worry, Boss.” Bebe grew excited as well.

Linley and Bebe just watched as the golden-haired man continued to chase after the Deathgod Golem. Finally…the golden-haired man caught up to it. The muscular man, his head wreathed in large amounts of golden hair, let out a large howl as he swept forward with his right palm. With that blow, space itself rippled as though spacetime was water.

“So powerful.” The faces of Linley and Bebe changed. The stability of the Planar Battlefield was far greater than even the Higher Planes.

The Deathgod Golem struck back as well. Their fists met!

“BANG!”

The Deathgod Golem’s right arm immediately transformed into shattered pieces, while the entire body then began to tremble before immediately collapsing.

This scene badly startled Linley and Bebe. To break through a Highgod artifact sword with a punch wasn’t frightening; however, when this golden-haired man had broken the Deathgod Golem’s arm, then somehow caused a powerful vibration that made the entire Deathgod Golem collapse. This sort of attack was simply too awe-inspiring.

“Eh?” The golden-haired man stared. There was no divine spark on the ground, nor any badge.

“Not good!” The golden-haired man suddenly raised his head.

HE saw that a hundred meters away, an enormous Godeater Rat phantom had suddenly appered in midair. A youth was staring at him coldly. “Rumble…” A strange ripple instantly spread out. The golden-haired man wasn’t able to dodge at all, and was immediately struck by it. A strange energy pressed down on his mind…

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

“Rumble…” An earthen yellow light instantly vibrated outwards, pressing down on the golden-haired man.

“Swish!” An azure-golden blur shot forward as well.

Based on Linley and Bebe’s plans, regardless of whether or not Bebe’s technique succeeded, Linley would still use his most powerful sword attack in that moment. Someone capable of blocking ‘Godeater’ wouldn’t necessarily be able to block Linley’s sword.

“Raaaaaaaaawr!” The golden-haired man let out an angry roar.

“He’s actually still alive.” Bebe couldn’t help but curse to himself. The enemy was either a Highgod Paragon or possessed a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. The enemy camp they had encountered when they had just arrived had been a thorny problem, and now here came another one. What horrible luck.

“Swish…”

The invisible godspark sword, Mirage, shot out…Firmament Splitter!

This most powerful technique was executed through the invisible ‘Mirage’ sword, and the sword pierced straight towards the man’s forehead.

“Bastard!” The golden-haired man sensed the sharp aura and hurriedly moved his head aside to dodge.

“Slash!”

Mirage stabbed directly into the right side of the golden-haired man’s face, but as it stabbed down, with a ‘crackle’ sound, Mirage just barely managed to cut through the golden-haired man’s face, and it was unable to go any further.

“What sort of defense is this!” Linley was stupefied.

Aside from Bebe and Beirut, Linley had never before encountered such powerful, terrifying defense. Most likely, even Patriarch Gislason of the Azure Dragon clan was far inferior. His most powerful sword attack was aimed at the enemy’s face, not the enemy’s fist. He had only been able to cut slightly into the skin of the face. This was too ridiculous.

“Die!” The golden-haired man let out a bellow, smashing out at Linley with an angry fist.

Linley, terrified, retreated with explosive speed.

That attack just now had been launched from just half a meter away from Linley. However, just as Linley thought he had dodged it, a golden yellow light suddenly shot out from the golden-haired man's fist. As it shot out, it actually caused space itself to tremble.

There was no way to dodge!

"BOOM!"

The golden light struck Linley on his chest, and with a 'boom' sound, it shot straight through Linley's chest, creating a large, fist-sized hole within it.

Chapter 17 – Hemmers

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 17, Hemmers

“His material attack is actually this powerful!” Linley felt stunned in his heart. “Even the former Redcliff Lord’s material attack wasn’t as monstrous as this. An attack passing through empty space is actually able to penetrate my body.” Linley was very confident in the defense of his Dragonform, but today, this punch had stunned him!

That man’s eyes were filled with rage, and his messy golden hair began to tremble.

“You dare to injure me, Hemmers? Die!” A deep voice echoed in Linley’s mind, and the golden-haired man’s right leg lashed out…

That thick right leg was flowing with a golden yellow light. As it lashed out, it created ripples in space, as though it were moving through water. The power of this kick was so great that even before it reached Linley, Linley already had a bad feeling. “Given the power of that fist, which didn’t even directly hit me, just passed through the air…if I’m hit by this kick…”

Linley didn’t dare to hesitate.

“Blackstone Space – Repulsive Force!” Linley willed it, and a powerful repulsive force was applied to the terrifyingly powerful body of that ‘Hemmers’.

At the same time, with a ‘whap!’ sound, Linley’s whip-like draconic tail slapped the ground hard, borrowing the counterforce to retreat hurriedly!

“Bang!” This kick of Hemmers missed.

“BOOM!” Although it missed, a surge of golden ripples still shot out from his leg, shooting towards Linley. This material attack was simply too fast! It

wasn't bound by the Blackstone Space, and its speed vastly outstripped Linley's fleeing speed. However, live and learn; after having suffered last time, Linley was prepared this time.

Linley's godspark sword, 'Mirage', unhurriedly swung out to meet it.

It seemed to move slowly but was actually fast. The flat of Mirage struck directly against the golden yellow ripple.

"BANG!" A powerful collision. Mirage was knocked backwards, slapping against Linley's body, while Linley's sword-wielding right arm actually had its draconic scales shatter and blood leak through.

"Swoosh!"

Linley once more borrowed the counterforce to retreat.

"What a monster!" Linley cursed in his heart. "The power of kick, when passing through a godspark weapon, is capable of shattering my draconic scales. So in the planes of the universe, there is someone besides Beirut who is so monstrous!" Previously, Linley had seen Beirut use his bare hands to stop a Sovereign artifact.

One could imagine how much strength that took. But it seemed as though this golden-haired man was about the same.

The distant Bebe's eyes instantly grew wide and round. Not hesitating at all, he transformed into a blur, shooting towards the golden-haired warrior while sending mentally in a frantic voice, "Boss, hurry and flee, I'll block him!"

"Bebe, don't waste time, let's hurry up and leave! You won't be able to block him." Linley hurriedly sent back.

At the same time, Linley increased his fleeing speed. Bebe had no choice but to follow Linley in fleeing.

“You want to escape?!”

The golden-haired man stared furiously at the two fleeing figures, then violently stomped forward. “BANG!” “BANG!” Every single step was like a meteor striking the ground, and the golden-haired man’s speed thus reached his limit as he pursued and attacked towards the fleeing Linley and Bebe.

“Boss, that big fellow is in pursuit!” Bebe called out in alarm.

“He’s actually this fast.” Linley glanced backwards. Originally, when the golden-haired man had been in pursuit of the Deathgod Golem, he hadn’t been this fast. Clearly…this person called ‘Hemmers’ was utterly enraged now.

“It’s fine. Once he enters my Blackstone Space, he won’t be able to catch up to us.” Linley said with certainty.

Indeed!

As soon as the golden-haired man entered the ‘Blackstone Space’ region, he sensed a powerful repulsive force. Speed was never his forte to begin with, and although when going all out, he could compare to Linley and Bebe, as soon as he entered the Blackstone Space region, he became vastly inferior to Linley and Bebe.

Linley and Bebe were fleeing in front, hurriedly pulling away.

This caused the golden-haired man to once more escape the ‘Blackstone Space’, and as soon as he did, his speed increased again, allowing him to close in on them once more.

In short…the two sides maintained a distance of roughly five hundred meters.

“Boss, that big fellow keeps chasing us. What should we do?” Bebe said frantically. “Can it be that we will have to use Sovereign’s Might?”

“Not for now.”

Linley didn’t want to waste a drop of Sovereign’s Might. The situation wasn’t critical yet.

“Bebe, within a few hundred meters, this Hemmers is able to clearly see us. How about this. We will immediately enter the ground and tunnel downwards. He won’t be able to see us, and will probably find it hard to find us.” Linley sent mentally. Unless the situation was life-threatening, Linley wouldn’t easily use up his Sovereign’s Might.

“Enter the ground? Fine.” Bebe agreed.

“The two of you, don’t even think of escaping!” The angry bellows continued to echo and shake the world.

“This big idiot. Isn’t he afraid of attracting attention, by bellowing like this?” Bebe couldn’t help but sent angrily.

“Bebe, I imagine this Hemmers really isn’t afraid of others coming. He didn’t even fear your ‘Godeater’ ability. He should have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. And look at his material defense! This is absolutely an opponent who has no weaknesses. His only weakness, actually, is that he has no long distance attacks and no soul attacks. Enough, let’s go underground!”

Linley and Bebe, in virtually the same instant, with a ‘swoosh’ dove underground.

“Hmph, fleeing underground?” The yellow-haired man let out a cold laugh.

And then…

The yellow-haired man lifted up his thick leg, viciously stamping on the ground. With a thunderous sound, the ground trembled and a ray of golden light rippled out from his leg and entered the ground, spreading outwards in

every direction.

“Over there!” The burly golden-haired man’s eyes lit up.

He moved towards the left in hot pursuit, then lifted his feet up once again and viciously stomped on the ground. That golden light once more entered the ground and rippled out.

Although by fleeing underground, one couldn’t be seen, in terms of fleeing speed, the blocking dirt naturally made it slower than fleeing aboveground.

“What sort of weird technique is this?” Bebe could clearly sense how the golden energy ripples were like ripples of water, with each ripple landing on himself and Linley. However, the energy of these ripples didn’t possess much power to harm.

“BANG!”

A violent tremor came from above.

“This fellow knows where we are.” Linley said frantically. “There’s no way to escape his pursuit from underground.”

“Boss, what should we do?” Bebe said frantically.

“There’s one final option! If this method doesn’t work, then we’ll just have to use up our Sovereign’s Might.”

Right at this moment, a powerful golden ripple shot downwards, charging straight through the obstructing dirt.

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed.

“BANG!” Bebe viciously threw a punch straight towards it.

“Bebe, are you alright?” Linley was rather nervous.

“I’m fine. This attack was pretty strong though; my fist feels numb. But I’m not injured.” Bebe sent back. Linley, hearing this, let out a sigh of relief, and then a sigh of praise; Bebe’s defense really was terrifying, comparable to or exceeding the hardness of a godspark weapon.

Bebe, upon reaching the Highgod level, had only been injured by the Abyssal Fruit Tree Sovereign. Others weren’t even able to scratch Bebe’s skin.

Unfortunately, Bebe’s attack power was too weak, inferior to even Linley’s. It was only because of his innate divine ability that he was able to threaten commander-level experts.

“Bebe…let’s go aboveground together!” Linley said hurriedly.

That expert named Hemmers clearly had a method to determine where they were. If they were underground, they would be moving slowly and would be beaten around like punching bags. Linley and Bebe immediately transformed into rays of light, quickly emerging from underground.

“Haha, you finally came out.”

Loud laughter rang out, and the golden-haired man drew closer.

“So close!” Upon leaving the ground, Linley and Bebe discovered that this golden haired man was less than a hundred meters away now. Linley was so startled, he immediately set up his Blackstone Space, once more repulsing the golden-haired man. By relying on his speed, he was once more able to pull away.

“Bastard! This damn thing again. Just like Reisgem…how damn annoying!” The golden-haired man howled furiously.

He was currently filled with rage.

In the Blackstone Space, he wasn’t able to draw near Linley at all.

Right at this moment…

“Eh?” The golden-haired man stared.

Linley, while running at full speed, suddenly turned to stare at him. At the same time, an enormous, sinuous, coiled illusion of an Azure Dragon suddenly appeared behind Linley. The Azure Dragon Phantom’s golden eyes were staring coldly at the muscular ‘Hemmers’, while at the same time, the sound of a dragon’s roar began to ring out in Hemmers’ mind.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

Time drastically slowed down in the region Hemmers’ soul was in.

“Uh…” Hemmers was stunned. Within his field of vision, he watched as Linley and Bebe seemed to suddenly move tens of time faster, and with a ‘swish’ disappeared from his field of vision. But of course, it wasn’t that Linley and Bebe actually moved faster; it was that Hemmers himself had slowed down by tens of times.

The effect of the Dragon Roar had finally brought an end to this pursuit.

“Dragon Roar? The Dragon Roar of the Azure Dragon clan? What terrible luck.” Hemmers rubbed his big nose. “Still, I really am too slow. Given the repulsive force of the Gravitational Space of that kid of the Azure Dragon clan, even if I used Sovereign’s Might, I would only be able to barely maintain parity with him while under the effects of that repulsive force.”

Hemmers couldn’t help but shake his head.

In pure fleeing speed, Linley and Hemmers were roughly the same, and when going all out, Hemmers actually held the advantage.

But by relying on the Blackstone Space, Linley made it so that even if Hemmers used Sovereign’s Might, the two would still roughly be on par.

“Still, speed was never my forte. There’s nothing I can do!” Hemmers

shook his head. “The best thing for me to do is to beg a Sovereign to create a long-distance Sovereign weapon for me. For example, something like a javelin…and by then, given my attack power, who would be able to block it? This is my third time participating in the Planar Wars. Altogether, I’m still missing three commander badges…I have to work hard and see, after the conclusion of this Planar War, if I’ll be able to come up with enough military merits.”

Hemmers shook his head, leaving with large strides.

“HEY!” Hemmers shouted towards the distance while leaving. “You people, stop watching over there! If you have the ability to do so, come closer to me!”

“Hemmers, looks like you failed again, haha…”

A loud laugh rang out from afar, and then the laughter faded away.

“A group of cowards.” Hemmers snorted, then left.

In the distance, three people were together. Two male youths, along with a violet-haired, violet-robed girl. The violet-robed girl laughed softly. “Hey, did the two of you see that? There was someone who was so foolish and hotheaded as to go offend that fellow Hemmers. Don’t they know…that Hemmers is one of the top-ranked experts of the entire Divine Earth Plane?”

“Most likely, those two aren’t familiar with the various commanders yet.” One of the three, a black-horned, silver-haired youth, laughed calmly.

“But those two aren’t weak either; they were able to battle Hemmers without dying. Unfortunately, we came too late and weren’t able to find out where the two ran off to.” The other male youth of the three, a person with dazzling golden hair and strange silver-white eyes, said. “Let’s go. Let’s leave this place. If Hemmers makes trouble for us, that will be a pain in the neck.”

The three immediately slipped away.

Amidst the grass, Linley and Bebe were lying down and resting.

“Boss, where did that freak come from? Your full-force sword blow was only able to barely pierce his skin. And his punches! They went straight through your body.” Bebe sent mentally.

“And that’s because my body is very strong.” Linley said with a self-mocking laugh. “Bebe, you don’t know this, but when that punch pierced through my chest, a strange, rippling power seemed to shake my entire body. Fortunately…my Dragonformed body is far tougher than a Deathgod Golem. Otherwise, I would have ended up the same way, just like the Deathgod Golem; my entire body would have collapsed.”

When Linley had seen that, he had felt shocked.

“Alas. Boss, although there are quite a few commanders we can deal with here in the Planar Wars, there’s also a good number we can’t. We weren’t so bad off this time; this one was weak in speed. But if next time, we really slam into a metal wall, that would be terrible.” Bebe said with a frown.

Chapter 18 – List of Names

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 18, List of Names

“If we really slam into a metal wall?” Linley was rather worried now as well.

Amongst commanders, there were indeed a number of figures who could be described as being ‘invincible’. If they ran into such a figure, he and Bebe would be in true danger. This universe was capable of giving birth to a terrifying divine beast such as the Godeater Rat, as well as a divine beast capable of altering time such as the Azure Dragon. It could also give birth to other terrifying divine beasts. Beirut was only reputed to be the number one figure beneath the Bloodridge Sovereign. There were most likely some people who were comparable to him.

Linley didn’t dare to underestimate any commander.

“Forget it. In the Planar Battlefield, for commanders to slaughter each other is what happens anyhow.” Bebe mumbled. “It comes down to luck, I suppose.”

“We are at a major disadvantage.” Linley shook his head. “The commanders who have come to participate in the Planar Wars are all very familiar with the other commanders. We know too little…this will cause us to blindly attack enemies. For example, that Hemmers. If we knew who he was in advance, we could’ve just let him pass and not anger him.”

Linley was resigned.

After all, he had just barely reached the ‘Asura’ level.

“We are indeed at a disadvantage. We know too few people.” Bebe said helplessly.

Linley's eyes suddenly lit up.

Linley slapped himself on the head, hard, then laughed at himself. "Bebe, look at me. My mind's gone muddled. You and I don't know them, but can't we ask others?"

"Eh?" Bebe was startled.

"My divine fire clone is at the Yulan continent. I can go ask your Grandpa Beirut." Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

Bebe instantly began to laugh as well. "Right. Grandpa definitely knows a great deal. Why didn't I think of this?"

After having come to the Planar Wars, Linley and Bebe had completely focused on the dangerous, warlike environment. They had only been thinking of hunting and killing other commanders and so hadn't thought about other things.

"Bebe, let's not go out for now. First, let me get a clear picture of the various commanders of the other planes, and get a sense of who is hard to deal with, who is easy to deal with. Then we'll make our choices." Linley laughed. Bebe nodded as well. They did indeed have plenty of time, and weren't in a rush.

The Yulan Plane. The Forest of Darkness.

"Whoooosh." The world was bathed in white. Drifting plumes of snow fell down from the skies, while a fiery blur was currently passing through the air above the Forest of Darkness at high speed. At this moment, a fiery, red robed Linley with fiery red hair was flying at high speed towards Beirut's metallic castle. This metallic castle was very familiar with Linley, and didn't bar his way at all. As Linley landed, he directly entered into the metallic castle.

Within the front courtyard of the metallic castle.

A black-robed Beirut was standing there, holding a book and seated beneath a great tree formed from the metallic lifeform. The thick leaves completely blocked out the falling snow.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley bowed respectfully.

Beirut turned and laughed calmly while giving him a glance. “Oh, Linley, is there something you need? Did you encounter some difficulties in the Planar Battlefield?” After speaking, Beirut once more lowered his head to flip through the book in his hands.

“Lord Beirut, Bebe and I are doing pretty poorly in the Planar Battlefield. We found a target, but who would have imagined…the target was so powerful that even Bebe and I combined weren’t a match for him. Fortunately, speed was not one of his strengths, nor was he skilled at long distance attacks, so we managed to escape with our lives.” Linley said ashamedly.

Beirut, surprised, closed his book.

“You and Bebe combined weren’t a match for him?” Beirut asked. “The two of you against one person; one uses an innate divine ability against the soul and divine spark, while the other uses a material attack. You two complement each other very well…there aren’t many commanders who can block that.”

“His name is Hemmers.” Linley reported the name.

“Him?”

Beirut couldn’t help but start to laugh. “Haha…you two really are fearless. You even dare go irritate that big, boorish fellow! Others run as fast as they can when they see him. The material attack of ‘Hemmers’ can be ranked in the top ten of the entire universe. Even your Patriarch, Gislason, can’t withstand a punch from Hemmers.”

“I only learned that afterwards.” Linley said, laughing bitterly.

“Lord Beirut, how can Hemmers’ punches be so powerful?” Linley was completely confused. “I, too, train in the Laws of the Earth, and saw the attacks of the Redcliff Lord. But I don’t understand why Hemmers’ punches and kicks could be so…” Linley shook his head, indicating his confusion.

The previous Redcliff Lord was skilled in material attacks as well, and he had fused five profound mysteries. His power was extremely great. When Linley and him had exchanged punches, Linley had been slightly inferior.

“That’s his innate gift!” Beirut began to chortle.

“Innate gift?” Linley was startled.

“Do you know how many profound mysteries he has fused?” Beirut laughed.

“No idea.” Linley shook his head. “Is it high, or is it low?”

“He has fused four.” Beirut laughed calmly. “This is something I heard from the Sovereign when I was by his side.”

Linley was stunned. Fusing four profound mysteries put him at the Seven Star Fiend level, but the power which Hemmers had displayed was terrifyingly strong.

If one could be so breathtakingly strong after having fused just four profound mysteries, the strength of his innate gifts could be easily imagined!

“This Hemmers was born and blessed with incomparably great strength, and his defense is tremendous as well! According to legend…when the Divine Earth Plane was first created, a small golden mountain was formed. After countless years of nurturing, it eventually transformed into a living creature. Hemmers.” Beirut laughed. “Do you know? As soon as he transformed upon reaching the Demigod level, he became a Sovereign’s Emissary and was given a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.”

“Uh…” Linley was speechless.

A Sovereign’s Emissary as a Demigod?

“His body is indestructible. Given that he also has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact…to kill him is virtually impossible. Because his body was formed from that unique golden mountain that was formed alongside the plane itself, his power was extremely great from birth. Even without using any profound mysteries, a punch from him can shatter space. Now that he has fused four profound mysteries, there aren’t many people who can take a punch from him.” Beirut said in praise.

Linley couldn’t help but feel speechless. Some innate divine abilities really were ridiculous.

“I, a Godeater Rat, refine divine sparks to strengthen my body. But Hemmers was born with such a powerful body.” Beirut laughed calmly. “However, purely in terms of physical toughness, Hemmers is still slightly inferior to us Godeater Rats.”

Linley understood this as well. The bodies of Godeater Rats were comparable to divine sparks, after all.

“Lord Beirut, we were at a huge disadvantage this time! Thus, I want to ask you, Lord Beirut, if you can give me some information regarding the Asura-level experts of the various major planes. Let me get an understanding of them. That way, we won’t rashly compete against some truly supreme experts again.” Linley said hurriedly.

Beirut nodded slightly.

“I guessed that you would come find me.” Beirut waved his hand, and a bluish-copper colored chest suddenly appeared in front of him. “This chest has a great deal of information within it, as well as scryer recordings. Take a close look and get a good understanding of the various supreme experts of the various planes.”

Linley couldn't help but look excitedly towards the bluish-copper chest.

With this thing, he would be prepared to deal with the enemies.

"Read it here. If there are any questions, you can ask me." Beirut laughed calmly.

"Thank you, Lord Beirut." Linley immediately went over and opened the chest.

Inside were a large number of scryer recordings, as well as thick realms of documents. Linley immediately moved the chest to one side and then began to read carefully, right there in the courtyard.

"Magnus [Ma'ge'nu'si], Celestial Realm. A supreme expert who ranks in the top five. Trains in the Edicts of Fate. Seems to be a Highgod Paragon…" Linley began to truly read in earnest. The information regarding one supreme expert after another entered Linley's mind, and Linley now truly began to understand…

So each of the eleven great planes had such a high number of experts hidden in reclusion.

It must be understood that the seven Laws and four Edicts alone had a total of seventy seven Sovereigns. How could the number of supreme Highgod experts be lacking?

In but a single day's time, Linley finished reading all of the materials and viewed all of the scryer recordings.

Linley now truly had the feeling…that there were so many experts in the universe!

"The eleven great planes…it seems as though there are less than thirty Highgod Paragons." Linley was secretly amazed. "In other words, each plane has, on average, just two or three Highgod Paragons. And these are

only those who are suspected to be Paragons! As for the Sovereigns, the eleven planes each have seven Sovereigns." Linley finally realized how truly rare Highgod Paragons were!

As for commander-level experts? There were far more!

For example, in the Infernal Realm, there were 108 Lord Prefects and 108 Purgatory Commanders! The Infernal Realm alone held 216 commander-level experts, and that didn't include many retired experts or supreme experts who never formally held the title of Lord Prefect. It was truly hard to calculate how many had retired, in fact.

The Infernal Realm alone had hundreds, perhaps nearly a thousand experts who were at the commander-level of power.

And the other three Higher Realms and the other Seven Divine Planes?

"There really are so many!" Linley said to himself in amazement. "Only, the vast majority of them won't participate in the battles at all."

This was because the eleven great planes had existed for too long. When Linley had been with the Azure Dragon clan and encountered some of the Elders of the clan, he realized that these Elders had lived for unknowably long periods of time already. From this, one could imagine…how long the histories of the various planes were.

It made sense that after countless years, many experts had arisen.

"Thud." Linley shut the chest.

At this time, Beirut walked over from the courtyard. With a calm laugh, he said, "Oh, done reading?"

"Yes." Linley took a deep breath.

This list of names of powerful experts allowed Linley to truly understand the concept of 'a heaven beyond heaven'. Although he had just barely

crossed the threshold of an ‘Asura’, there were many Asura-level experts, after all. The Infernal Realm alone had 216, not even counting the retired or hidden experts.

“After learning these things, don’t be overconfident in the future.” Beirut said with a calm laugh. “The Planar Battlefield is a place of life and death! Thus, commanders who aren’t very confident generally won’t show their real faces to people.”

“Won’t show their real faces?” Linley was stunned. “Then isn’t it pointless for me to read these things?”

After having viewed the materials and scryer recordings, Linley learned what these people looked like and what their supreme techniques were. But if they changed their appearances, how would he tell them apart?

“Don’t worry too much. It is only the weak who change their appearances. As for the experts who are truly, completely confident in themselves, they can’t be bothered to change their appearances, because they fear no one.” Beirut said.

Linley couldn’t help but nod.

It was hard to judge superiority or inferiority amongst the truly high-level, supreme experts amongst the Asuras. For example, some Highgod Paragons could only be said to be in the top three or the top five of a particular plane; there was no way of saying if he was definitely the best. After all, after training to the very peak…even if there were slight differences in power, it would be hard for one of them to kill the other.

“Lord Beirut, in other words, as long as I encounter someone I don’t recognize, I should attack.” Linley laughed.

“Right.” Beirut laughed as well.

“Actually, the Planar Wars are very pointless.” Beirut suddenly shook his head. “It’s simply a charnel house meant for reducing the number of

supreme experts…but of course, it will also give birth to a few supreme experts."

"Eh?" Linley was startled.

Charnel house?

"Lord Beirut, what are you saying?" Linley couldn't help but speak out.

Beirut said with a calm laugh, "There are too many people and too many experts in the various planes! In addition, these planes have existed for countless years. Their long existences have resulted in countless experts! The Planar Wars are a tool meant to be used to reduce the number of experts. Every trillion years, every plane will undergo a Planar Wars, thus reducing the number of experts."

"A single Planar War will continue for a thousand years! In the course of those thousand years, it is virtually only the commanders who will fight against and slaughter each other, while those who don't wish to battle hide in their camps! At the very end of the Planar War, the armies of both sides will fight each other at the 'bridges' through the Stellar Sea and engage in a wild slaughter!" Beirut said with a chuckle. "To the vast majority of people, this is suicide. But to a few people, this is an excellent opportunity."

Chapter 19 – An Untended Willow Grows

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 19, An Untended Willow Grows

Linley now understood!

When he originally entered the Planar Battlefield, Linley had discovered that many army camps were situated at each side of the Stellar River, and yet there were no signs of activity. Linley didn't understand why. Only now did he understand…that at the final part, the two armies would begin to kill each other.

"That's too vicious. It's tantamount to suicide." Linley couldn't help but say.

"Although it is vicious and cruel, it's also a good chance to earn military merits." Beirut said with a calm laugh. "In that sort of chaotic battle between two great armies, even commanders might die. And if one is lucky, one might be able to instantly acquire a large number of soldier badges and even commander badges! That is the time when the rewards are greatest, but yes, also when the danger is greatest."

In Linley's mind instantly floated an image of countless Highgods launching attacks against each other, with commanders amongst them.

Indeed, that was a terrifying scene.

"It'd be best for you to acquire enough commander badges prior to this event." Beirut laughed calmly.

Linley nodded. When the two armies battled chaotically, that was indeed a time of great reward, but also a time of tremendous danger.

"If, within a thousand years, I don't collect enough commander badges, then I'll have to go participate in the mass battle." Linley said to himself

silently. For the sake of his family and friends, Linley wouldn't cower.

The Planar Battlefield, within a fairly black mountain. Linley and Bebe were together. This sort of lifeless black mountain could be seen everywhere throughout the Planar Battlefield.

"Crunch." Bebe was eating some fruit.

Linley, seated in the meditative posture, suddenly opened his eyes.

"Hey, Boss? Did you get the news from my grandfather?" Bebe's eyes immediately lit up. Linley smiled and nodded. "Right. I now have an understanding of most of the commander-level experts of the various planes. From today onwards…how about this. I'll control the Deathgod Golem by myself to draw in commanders."

They had enough time. Linley was in no rush.

"Right." Bebe chortled, then nodded. "Alright. I was wanting to take more naps anyhow. When you find a target, Boss, call me." Bebe, even in the Planar Battlefield, was always in the mood for napping.

"More than eight hundred, close to nine hundred, years are left before this Planar War concludes. We need to put this long period of time to good use. Perhaps during this period of time, I'll fuse my fourth profound mystery of the Laws of the Earth." Linley said with a sigh.

"Eh? Four? Right, Boss, didn't you already combine the Throbbing Pulse of the World, the Profound Mysteries of Strength, the Essence of the Earth, and Gravitational Space? Finishing the fusion should be fairly quick." Bebe mumbled.

"I've combined them, but what I now need to do is to separately fuse the Profound Mysteries of Strength with the Essence of the Earth and Gravitational Space as well. Only after I complete this will all four have been completely fused. Most likely, in another century or so, the separate fusions will be finished." Linley said with a calm laugh. Actually, Linley

had already improved significantly in the past sixty or seventy years he had spent here in the Netherworld.

After all, once the fusion had started, fusing up to the bottleneck was just a matter of time.

“Hey, Boss, once you fuse four profound mysteries, your attack power will rise greatly once again.” Bebe said excitedly.

“Actually, I already have a direction in my mind.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

After having seen the attacks of the previous Redcliff Lord and of Hemmers, Linley had already gained some insights.

Bebe either napped or trained; in short, he was always just waiting. Linley’s divine clones focused on their training, while his original body controlled the Deathgod Golem outside. Time flowed on…and in the blink of an eye, two more months passed.

“It’s only been one month, but I’ve lost a Deathgod Golem already.” Linley shook his head helplessly as he spoke. “Half a year ago, when I saw that supreme expert of the Divine Light Realm, I wanted to control my Deathgod Golem to make it flee, but that person pursued and attacked, forcibly destroying my Deathgod Golem as well as the surrounding area. Fortunately, I hid deep enough…and his divine sense didn’t extend all the way down to me.”

Bebe opened his eyes and laughed, “It is just a Deathgod Golem. It is cheap. It’s nothing.”

“If I knew, I would’ve brought some more here with me.” Linley said.

At this moment, Linley was controlling another Deathgod Golem, patrolling outside.

“In two months, we haven’t seen a single suitable opponent.” Bebe let out a

sigh.

“Don’t sigh. If we hadn’t gone to your Grandpa Beirut and found out some information, most likely against that previous person, we would’ve gone to go fight against that supreme expert of Light. Fortunately, we avoided that disaster.” Linley laughed. Just as Linley and Bebe were sighing, suddenly…

“BOOM!”

The entire mountain trembled violently, and quite a few rocks smashed down atop Linley and Bebe.

“What’s going on? What’s happening?” Bebe said with a frown.

“Wait a moment. The Deathgod Golem that I’m controlling is thousands of meters away…oh, the Deathgod Golem sees it. Two experts are battling!” Linley said, surprised.

Next to the mountain where Linley and Bebe were residing, there were two figures clashing. One was a violet blur, while the other was a white blur. One violet saber flash after another flew out of the body of the violet blur, with one of them landing viciously against the nearby small mountain.

“BANG!”

An explosive collision. The two were both knocked flying back by the collision. The violet blur was actually a green-eyed, violet-robed, vicious-looking youth, while the white blur was a handsome, silver-haired, blue-pupiled youth. The silver-haired youth’s face was filled with rage.

“Lancelot [Lang’si’luo]! Don’t go too far! You and I are on the same side. Why must you insist on killing me?” The silver-haired youth roared.

“Hmph, so what if we are on the same side? You should have been prepared for death the moment you entered the Planar Battlefield.” The violet-robed youth let out a cold laugh. He said nothing else, immediately beginning to fill the surrounding area with violet bolts of electricity, and it seemed as

though lightning bolts were beginning to fill the skies as well.

The silver-haired youth's face changed.

In terms of speed, he couldn't compete with the lightning-element Lancelot. He wouldn't be able to flee! Battle was the only option!

He knew that he was weaker, but all he could do was fight it head on. With a low growl, he said, "Lancelot, if you don't give me any chance, then I won't let you have an easy time of it either!" The silver-haired youth's body began to glow with a white aura, and then, with a cold shot, a white spear suddenly appeared next to him, along with a translucent spear.

The material attack and the spiritual attack converged into one!

"Swish!"

The two spears folded onto each other, and the illusory white spear shot straight towards the front.

"Die, then." The green-eyed, violet-robed youth said emotionlessly.

"Rumble…" The lightning bolts in the skies suddenly crashed down in the form of an enormous lightning serpent. At the same time, a green bolt of lightning emerged from the body of the violet-robed youth, also in the form of an enormous serpent. These two enormous lightning serpents attacked from opposite directions, encircling the silver-haired youth.

Right at this moment, the spear arrived before the violet-robed youth's body.

"Hmph!" The violet-robed youth let out a cold sneer.

He stretched out his right hand, and between his fingers formed a ball of violet light, which he smashed directly onto the illusory spear.

"BANG!"

That illusory white spear was a combination material attack and spiritual attack. And now, the illusory white spear completely shattered. The material attack…wasn't even able to damage the violet-robed youth's fingers. The spiritual attack was broken as well.

"Crackle…"

The violet and green electric serpents swirled around the silver-robed youth, whose face changed. The two different electric serpents actually created an unusual spatial electric field, causing the space itself to become electrified. That unusual electric field rippled throughout the silver-haired man's body.

"Ahhhhhh!" The white-robed, silver-haired youth raised his head, roaring angrily.

A powerful aura swept out from his body, and the white glow strengthened.

"At a time like this, you want to fight by using up Sovereign's Might? You use yours, and I'll use mine. Isn't the result the same?" Lancelot laughed in his heart. His body also emanated forth a powerful aura, and the violet light began to fill his entire body as well.

As the two experts both began to use their Sovereign's Might, Linley and Bebe also quietly slipped out of the mountain, moving underground until they arrived at a place with a large amount of random vegetation. The two hid there, staring at the experts battling in the distance.

"They are both so strong." Bebe said in praise.

"The white-robed youth is a commander of the Divine Light Plane, Roland [You'lan'de]. That green-eyed, violet-robed youth is a commander of the Divine Lightning Plane, 'Lancelot'. According to the information provided by your Grandpa Beirut, this Lancelot is an extremely hard to deal with commander." Linley said mentally. "Roland is specialized in spiritual attacks, while Lancelot is skilled in both spiritual and material attacks, and he is also extremely fast. In addition, he's also fused a defensive Sovereign

artifact into his body."

Bebe couldn't help but feel startled.

"Fused a defensive Sovereign artifact into his body? Isn't that the same as the Grand Elder?"

Linley nodded slightly, continuing to watch the two battle in the distance. "That Lancelot should be unbeatable in terms of material defense, due to possessing a defensive Sovereign artifact, and he is also extremely skilled in soul defense. Thus, to break through his soul defense is also very hard. This person…is a very powerful commander."

Lancelot was, indeed, virtually flawless.

He trained in the Laws of Lightning and was thus very fast. He was strong in every single aspect. Even amongst the many commanders of the universe, he was considered a high class one.

"However…" Linley laughed. "Bebe, you perfectly counter him."

To resist Bebe's innate divine ability, 'Godeater', one had to either be a Paragon or have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. This Lancelot had met his black star! Normally, Lancelot's soul defense should be considered incredibly powerful, but unfortunately…Bebe's innate divine ability wasn't something which a normal soul attack could compete with.

"Haha, Boss, leave'm to me." Bebe grew excited.

"The battle is about to end." Linley sent mentally.

Indeed, the white-robed youth, 'Roland', was in a completely inferior position. The violet-robed Lancelot launched a final material attack, causing Roland's entire body to blow apart.

"Haha…" Lancelot laughed as he walked over, snatching up a golden badge as well as an interspatial ring from the ground.

Right at this moment…

“Who!” Lancelot barked irritably while turning his head. He could already sense that there were movements nearby, but he didn’t care too much. There were very few, even amongst the commanders, capable of killing him.

“Eh?” What Lancelot saw stunned him.

He saw a black blur flying towards him at high speed, while at the same time, in midair, the enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat appeared. The Godeater Rat illusion was staring coldly at him, and when Lancelot saw this, his face couldn’t help but change. “Beirut?! Ah!!! NO!!!”

Lancelot had gone completely mad.

He had almost no weaknesses, but that was only against the vast majority of commanders. It didn’t mean he was completely flawless. If he was completely perfect and flawless, why would he even need to come to the Planar Battlefield? Beirut’s innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, was extremely famous, and it perfectly countered people like Lancelot. Against this technique, all would perish, save those who had soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts and Paragons.

This was how dominating innate divine abilities were!

Lancelot didn’t understand. The legendary Beirut had a body which was even tougher than divine sparks, could use his bare hands to clash against Sovereign weapons, and who had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. He was that sort of completely flawless supreme expert with no weaknesses. Someone like him…already stood at the very top of the universe.

Why did he have to come to the Planar Battlefield?

Lancelot didn’t understand!

But…he wouldn’t have a chance to understand in the future either!

A unique rippling power spread across his soul, and in the face of this attack, his soul defense wasn't able to do a single thing.

Lancelot stood there, stunned. That sinister look would never again flash past his green eyes. He seemed completely wooden…and then, with a 'bang' sound, he collapsed against the ground. A divine spark drifted out, along with a golden badge which emerged from his body, along with a dark golden armor.

"A gold badge and a defensive Sovereign artifact." Linley's eyes lit up.

Linley and Bebe transformed into two blurs, immediately collecting the golden badge, the defensive Sovereign artifact, and the interspatial rings.

"Let's hurry and leave. We can't tarry here."

Linley and Bebe didn't stay to do a thorough investigation, instead immediately leaving.

Chapter 20 – A Tranquil Heart

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 20, A Tranquil Heart

“Rustle…”

A cold wind howled, and the grass swayed, bending down in supplication.

Lancelot and Roland’s corpses lay there on the ground, with no hint of life. Prior to this, they were both supreme experts of their respective planes, commander-level experts who imposed their will on their world! The reason they entered the Planar Battlefield was because they hoped to rise to yet another level; to accumulate enough military merits so as to trade for a Sovereign artifact, allowing them to become high-level experts even amongst commanders.

Unfortunately…

For some to succeed, others had to fail.

One commander’s success represented the deaths of ten commanders, or a hundred thousand Highgod soldiers! This was the price of success! Unluckily, Lancelot and Roland had just become failures.

“Whoooooosh!”

The wind arose, and then stopped!

Two figures appeared within the battlefield. These two were dressed in long green robes, and had long green hair. Even their faces and body shapes were similar. From the surface, the only difference between the two was that… one had golden eyebrows while the other had white eyebrows. Someone who didn’t recognize them, upon seeing them, would take the two to be a single person’s clones.

If Linley was here, he would recognize these two as being the legendary twin commanders of the Divine Wind Plane.

“Elder Brother, did you see that?” The man with the white eyebrows said solemnly.

The youth with the golden eyebrows took a look at the two corpses on the ground as well, nodding slightly. “I saw it. Although I’ve never personally seen the legendary innate divine ability of Beirut, based on the scryer recordings that I saw, I can affirm that just now, that illusion should’ve been one of a Godeater Rat!” Prior to this, when Bebe had used his innate divine ability, the illusion of a Godeater Rat had been a hundred meters tall, allowing others to see it from far away.

This was the reason why Linley and Bebe had immediately left.

The youth with the white eyebrows nodded. “Lancelot…even if we joined forces against him, it would be a hard fight. He was hard to deal with. Lancelot’s soul defense was exceedingly strong, and to kill him, a Highgod Paragon would be needed. But of course, there is also Beirut, who possessed such a terrifying innate divine ability. Beirut’s innate supreme technique ignores all ordinary soul defenses. The person who attacked just now…was most likely Beirut!”

Beirut had become famous just a bit more than ten thousand years ago!

As for Bebe, too few people knew of him. Bebe hadn’t done anything particularly breathtaking yet after having become a Highgod. How could these experts of other planes know about him? Thus, they all believed that it had been Beirut who had attacked!

“Beirut…why has he come to the Planar Battlefield?” The youth with the white eyebrows said, frowning. “Given his power, he doesn’t need to come to this place. His punches and kicks are already comparable to Sovereign weapons. The Planar Battlefield is already a chaotic enough place. With him joining the mix…this is absolutely unfair!”

“So what if it is unfair? Dare you go and have a grand battle against Beirut?” The youth with the golden eyebrows said with a laugh.

It was precisely because they had seen the illusion of a Godeater Rat that they had intentionally waited quite a while before returning. They were afraid they might run into Beirut.

“Enough, Second Brother. Let’s go. Be careful. If we see that Beirut, let’s make sure we stay far away from him.” The youth with the golden eyebrows glanced at the two corpses on the ground, and then transformed into a blur and departed, with his younger brother following him. This empty area now only had those two lifeless corpses remaining.

Within that small black hill was an empty cave.

Linley and Bebe had emerged from underground and dug out this giant cave from within the hill.

“Haha, Boss, what great rewards, what great rewards!” Bebe excitedly called out, while tossing out one item after another; the violet armor, the interspatial rings, and everything else. Just as Bebe was about to excitedly say a few things, he suddenly froze.

“Boss!” Bebe looked at Linley, stunned.

Linley was currently staring at the golden badge in his hands. His eyes were filled with excitement, and even tears.

“Finally. I finally have a golden badge.” Linley clenched his hand tightly around the golden badge, pressing it against his heart. In this moment, Linley felt as though this golden badge had transformed into his father, into George, into Yale. He couldn’t help but think of those precious memories from back when he was a toddler or when he was a youth.

The golden badge, to Linley…did it represent a Sovereign artifact?

No!

This was something which would allow the father he had lost in his youth to return. To let his brothers who had died such unjust deaths to return.

“Father. Boss Yale. George.” Linley shut his eyes and murmured. “I…can save at least one of you now! My father, my brothers…you have to wait for me. Wait for me to emerge from the Planar Wars. You’ve already endured for nearly two thousand years. Just endure a little longer!”

“Wait for me…”

Tears unconsciously began to seep out from the corners of his eyes.

Ever since he had entered the Netherworld, over the past few decades, Linley had been under great pressure. He felt as though a giant stone was constantly pressing against his heart! First, he had to go to the Abyssal Mountain to meet the Chief Sovereign of Death, from whom he just barely saw a glimmer of hope. He then went to Tartarus to challenge the Redcliff Lord, finally succeeding and becoming qualified to enter the Planar Battlefield.

But that had only been the beginning.

After entering the Planar Battlefield, Linley was under constant pressure, and he had a lost feeling in his heart. Deep in his heart, he even felt a hint of dread.

This seemingly peaceful Planar Battlefield had too many powerful experts hiding within it! Linley was afraid that he could encounter a truly supreme expert who would kill himself and Bebe. He wasn’t afraid of dying himself, but if Bebe were to die, Linley would forever regret it. And…if that happened, he would never again be able to save his father and his brothers.

After having been in the Planar Battlefield for more than half a year, and after repeated failures, Linley had even begun to doubt himself.

Nervousness, restlessness! These emotions had constantly ensnarled Linley!

Although on the surface, it appeared as though Linley had lain in wait calmly, in his heart, Linley was frantic. This was because he hadn't killed a single commander. He had begun to doubt if he would be able to acquire a single commander's badge. This was the sort of nervous restlessness in which Linley had been living. But now…just now, such a huge battle had suddenly erupted.

And it had brought such an unexpected delight.

"I finally succeeded. A gold badge." Linley said to himself. "Bebe and I, working together, will definitely succeed. It hasn't even been a year, but I've already acquired a gold badge. In addition, there are nearly nine centuries left to this Planar War. I will definitely acquire enough gold badges."

This success had allowed Linley's heart to calm down greatly!

No matter how vicious and dangerous the future days would be, Linley would confidently face them!

"Right. There's another gold badge." Linley suddenly turned to look towards Bebe, saying hurriedly, "Bebe, that interspatial ring. Hurry up and open it and take a look. When Roland was killed, that gold badge was placed into the interspatial ring." Linley was feeling rather excited.

Bebe had been paying attention to Linley's facial expressions this entire time, and he immediately laughed. "Alright, I'll open it up right away." Bebe understood that the tears Linley had just shed were tears of joy.

A single drop of blood flew out from Bebe's skin, landing atop the interspatial ring.

"Eh?" Bebe stared.

Linley couldn't help but frown.

The drop of blood actually splashed onto the interspatial ring, then rolled off and fell to the ground, striking it with a ‘whap’ sound.

“Damn! That Lancelot has a divine clone that is still alive!” Bebe said angrily.

“So it really was the case!” Linley had been mentally prepared for this all along.

Generally speaking, the vast majority of commanders who entered the Planar Battlefield would leave a divine clone outside. After all, the chance of death in the Planar Battlefield was simply too high. As for Lancelot… clearly, he had left a divine clone outside as well, causing Linley to be completely unable to open this interspatial ring.

“Aaaargh!” Bebe immediately called out furiously. “The defensive Sovereign artifact! The defensive Sovereign artifact is also useless!”

If even the interspatial ring couldn’t be bound, then the same would naturally be true for the defensive Sovereign artifact.

Linley glanced at the dark golden armor, then laughed and said, “Bebe, don’t worry about that. You should know…this defensive Sovereign artifact was given to Lancelot by a Sovereign. Even though we killed him, the Sovereign will still take back the Sovereign artifact. At most, we’d be able to use it temporarily for a time.”

“I know this principle, but we should’ve at least been able to wear it for a time, right?” Bebe said helplessly.

“For a time? Who knows when the Sovereign would come and take back the Sovereign artifact.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Linley even suspected that Sovereigns were monitoring the Planar Wars at all times. The Sovereigns might immediately take back their artifact, or they might wait…wait for a bit of time to pass before taking it. But one thing was certain; a Sovereign artifact acquired through killing someone would

definitely be taken away by the Sovereign in the end.

“To me, what I really feel is unfortunate is the loss of that badge.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“Right. We can’t take the badge out either.” Bebe said resignedly.

According to the rules of trading for military merits, once the Planar War concluded and the combatants exited through the interspatial gate, they would immediately receive military merits based on the number of badges acquired. Even if Linley found Lancelot’s clone in the future and forced him to withdraw the gold badge, it would be useless.

“So some badges actually end up going to waste like this.” Linley said with a bitter laugh.

Perhaps an expert might kill seven or eight other commanders and acquire seven or eight badges. But if the expert was in turn killed, that person would only acquire a single badge. As for the seven or eight badges in the interspatial ring, there was no way to retrieve them. They had to go to waste.

“There must be many that go to waste. For example, during the final battle in the Stellar Sea corridors.” Bebe said with a sigh. “That’s a place where you gamble with your life. Perhaps you’ll end up fighting all the way into the chaotic space regions of the Stellar Sea. Also, some badges will fall into the chaotic space regions or the spatial tears of the Stellar Sea.” Bebe said.

Linley nodded slightly.

“It seems as though relying on taking advantage of the work of others isn’t a simple thing. Unless the person has no divine clone outside, of course. But the number of people who would do that is too little.” Linley said, shaking his head.

Acquiring enough military merits wasn’t a simple task. It had to be done step by step.

“Boss, what should we do with the interspatial ring? Destroy it, or keep it?” Bebe said.

“Keeping it will only result in problems and no benefits. Destroy it.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Whap!” Bebe exerted some force, completely crushing the interspatial ring in his fingers. The items within the interspatial ring all transformed into nothingness as well.

“This Sovereign artifact…leave it here for the Sovereign to collect.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Haha, actually, even if we wanted to destroy it, we wouldn’t be able to.” Bebe said, then he gave the dark golden armor a few kicks. “Damn, it’s pretty hard. Hmph…my body hasn’t reached its limits yet. In the future, I definitely won’t be weaker than any Sovereign artifact.” Bebe harrumphed.

Although Bebe’s defensive power was great, each time he devoured a divine spark, he continued to use the essence of the divine spark to strengthen his body.

It was a process that took some time. The amount of time Bebe had spent at the Highgod level was a million years less than what Beirut had spent. There was still a difference between the two of them.

Linley calmly trained there in the cave, while his original body continued to control his Deathgod Golem as bait.

The Planar Battlefield was the same as it previously had been. On the surface, it was calm, but in the shadows, battles and massacres occasionally erupted. Although the Planar Battlefield was very dangerous, Linley, having succeeded once, was now confident in himself. He had acquired a gold badge in less than a year. If he could acquire one every ten years, much less every year, he would easily accomplish his goal.

He calmly waited. Waited for a big fish to bite on his bait.

“With my heart at peace…my training has increased in speed as well.” Linley laughed calmly, opening his eyes.

“Eh?” Bebe, as though sensing it, opened his eyes to look at Linley as well. “Boss, what is it?”

“Bebe, make your preparations. I’ve already discovered people nearby.” A hint of light flashed through Linley’s eyes.

“We have a target?” Bebe instantly grew excited, jumping to his feet. “Haha, it’s been less than half a month, but we have a new target. It’s time for me to show my skills off yet again. Haha!” Bebe was extremely energetic.

“Don’t be impatient. Let’s see if they are enemies first. Let’s go!”

Linley and Bebe immediately, quietly slipped through the underground tunnels, leaving the mountain.

Chapter 21 – Flee on Sight

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 21, Flee on Sight

A short, black-robed figure flew out, moving like dark smoke through the cold, clammy underground earth of the Planar Battlefield.

“Eh?”

The figure suddenly came to a halt, staring stealthily into the distance. His eyes were as sharp as an eagle’s, but the strange thing was that he was bald, but a layer of dark black light was atop his bald head, like a thin layer of black metal. This dark black scalp also had a round rune atop it.

“Someone is actually here?” The bald youth stared into the distance. “An enemy!”

After ascertaining the enemy’s status, the bald youth didn’t hesitate at all. “Swoosh!” Very suddenly, the bald youth accelerated explosively, shooting out like a meteor towards the black-robed man.

The black-robed man suddenly turned his head, clearly seeing him. Not hesitating at all, the black-robed man immediately fled with a ‘whoosh’.

“You won’t be able to escape!” The bald youth’s body flashed forward bizarrely.

The surrounding area saw the formation of a spherical, earthen yellow glow which completely ‘surrounded’ the black-robed man, who was trying to flee. Stuck within the earthen yellow light, the black-robed man’s speed dropped dramatically. The bald youth seized the chance to immediately charge forwards, mercilessly striking out with his right hand.

The bald youth was wearing a black glove on his right hand.

His hand stretched out like the claws of a divine dragon, and as the space it passed through rippled and trembled. His claws instantly landed on the black-robed figure's shoulder. "F*ck off!" The black-robed man growled, and then he struck back with his right leg, kicking towards the youth.

"Crunch!" A very clear sound. The black-robed man's shoulder was completely ripped apart.

"How tough." The bald youth felt slightly startled, but he didn't show any mercy.

As the right hand claw smashed down against the shoulder, it also then struck directly towards the black-robed man's head. As the right claw struck out, it actually formed a bizarre, spherical ball of light, causing even the nearby space to be bound, making it impossible for the black-robed man's head to dodge to any great degree.

"Slash!" The five fingers of the bald youth's right hand pierced directly into the black-robed man's skull, and the man's head immediately exploded. The bald youth was very confident. "This kick of yours won't be able to land on me." As the bald youth saw it, once the black-robed man died, he naturally wouldn't be able to continue to attack.

"BANG!" The force of the black-robed man's right kick didn't lessen at all, crashing straight against the chest of the bald youth.

The bald youth was knocked backwards, and he landed on the ground.

"Wait. That's a Deathgod Golem!" The bald youth came to a shocked awareness. "This is a trap!"

"Bang!" The bald youth kicked off furiously from the ground, and as he did, that spherical glow emanated from his right foot, the foot which kicked downwards. Instantly, he rocketed away, moving at high speed. As he moved, he would occasionally kick off from the ground again, each time creating that spherical glow, causing his speed to rise to a terrifying level.

Moving as fast as lightning, in two or three leaps, he disappeared from the field of view.

“This fellow ran too fast!”

By the time Linley and Bebe emerged from the ground, all they could see was the departing back of the bald youth. Linley and Bebe had no choice but to vent their anger on a nearby boulder. “As soon as the Deathgod Golem discovered him, he almost instantly discovered that it was a Deathgod Golem and that it was a trap! After discovering it was a Deathgod Golem, he didn’t even pause and instead immediately fled. Jeeze!” Linley couldn’t help but shake his head.

“Nothing to show for it.” Bebe pursed his lips and said, then turned to look at the distant, headless Deathgod Golem. “And we even lost a Deathgod Golem. Boss, who was that person?”

“Cloyd [Ke’luo’yi’de]! An extremely strong commander who belongs to the Divine Earth Plane. He likes to travel alone.” Linley said with a laugh. Through the Deathgod Golem, Linley saw Cloyd’s attack, and just by seeing Cloyd’s attack, Linley became completely certain of who Cloyd was. “However, Cloyd doesn’t have a single Sovereign artifact. We are completely capable of killing him.”

Linley felt rather regretful.

It was an excellent opportunity. Unfortunately, Cloyd was too cautious. Upon discovering that it was a trap, he had immediately fled without hesitating at all.

“He doesn’t have a single Sovereign artifact, and yet he’s strong?” Bebe said with a frown.

“That’s what the intelligence reports your Grandpa Beirut provided to me said. Cloyd simply doesn’t wish to be restricted and so doesn’t wish to become a Sovereign’s Emissary, which is why he has no Sovereign artifacts. But despite that…killing him is extremely difficult.” Linley let out

a sigh. “An expert of the Laws of the Earth! He must have fused at least five of the profound mysteries.”

The clawing blow he had delivered which had shattered the Deathgod Golem’s shoulder contained five profound mysteries.

The Deathgod Golem was torn through like mud.

Just as Linley and Bebe were chatting mentally, from the corner of his eyes, Linley saw a distant figure suddenly appear. He immediately turned to look…only to see that roughly two or three hundred meters away, a black figure was lying in hiding, seeming to inspect the Deathgod Golem that was lying on the ground.

Linley suddenly grew excited. “Bebe, we have a target. Three hundred meters to our left.”

“Target?” Bebe turned to look as well.

Just at this moment…

The distant black-robed figure, also vigilant, discovered that there were two figures not far away who were lying against the corner of a mountain boulder. Right at this moment…the gazes of Linley and the black-robed man met.

Linley was suddenly startled, and he immediately sent through divine sense to Bebe, “Bebe, this black-robed man…I can’t sense the badge aura on him. He is an enemy. Let’s attack!” The closer one was, the more easily one could sense the badge aura. Linley and the enemy were less than three hundred meters away.

Logically speaking, even if he didn’t have a clear sense, he should still sense a bit of the badge’s aura.

But if he didn’t sense anything at all…

“Haha, one ran away, but another one was drawn close. Haha.” Bebe was extremely excited.

This black-robed person was indeed drawn here by the earlier actions of the bald youth. He had snuck over and watched quietly to the side. But Linley and Bebe were in a fairly hidden location, from which they just so happened to be able to clearly see the black-robed figure.

“Hmph.” The black-robed figure very calmly turned and fled.

“He’s running?”

Linley’s first reaction was to unleash his Blackstone Field. An enormous earthen yellow aura instantly sprang out, with Linley at the center, expanding to a radius of five hundred meters. This Blackstone Space spread out far faster than the black-robed man ran; as soon as the man moved, he fell within the Blackstone Space.

The gravity pulling was towards Linley!

“Gravitational Space? What a powerful gravity, and it is pulling to the rear!”

The black-robed man was now shocked. He couldn’t help but turn to look, and the already Dragonformed Linley and Bebe had transformed into a pair of azure and black blurs, advancing towards him rapidly.

“Pursuing me?” The black-robed man didn’t resist, instead choosing to flee.

But attempting to flee while completely pulling against the gravitational force…how fast could he move?

“You want to run?” Linley stared fixedly at the black-robed man, pursuing at high speed. In Linley’s eyes, this black-robed man definitely had a gold badge. Every single gold badge represented that he would be able to save another one of his family or friends. While in hot pursuit, the distance between the two quickly shrank to less than a few dozen meters.

In the Blackstone Space, the black-robed man's speed was reduced by simply too much.

The black-robed man was angry now!

"I don't want to fight with you two. Let me leave." A divine sense rang out, echoing in Linley and Bebe's minds. "Otherwise, don't blame me for being discourteous!"

"You want to leave? And be discourteous?" Linley laughed.

"Bebe, you can act now. He won't be able to escape at this distance." Linley sent mentally.

"Don't worry, Boss." Bebe laughed delightedly.

Right at this moment…

"You are looking for death." The black-robed man, who had been suppressing his temper, suddenly stabbed backwards with a dagger.

"Swoosh!"

A black light suddenly shot out, shooting towards Linley, so fast…that Linley wasn't able to dodge at all.

"So fast!" Frantically, Linley stabbed out powerfully with the godspark sword, 'Mirage', which was in his hands.

"BANG!"

The tip of Mirage collided with the tip of the dagger.

Linley only felt a terrifying powerful force press towards him, going through Mirage and into his arms. "Crackle…" The draconic scales covering his right arm, which was gripping Mirage, instantly shattered.

Blood began to flow out, and Linley was knocked backwards as well.

When Linley retreated, the Blackstone Field centered around him moved backwards as well, allowing the black-robed man to escape the perimeter of the Blackstone Field!

“A Sovereign artifact!” Linley was shocked.

The black-robed man had pulled away from Linley, but not from Bebe!

“Boss!” Bebe was instantly enraged.

Immediately, a colossal phantom of a Godeater Rat once more appeared behind Bebe. The black-robed man turned to look, and what he saw terrified him so greatly, his face changed. “How…how can this be?! Beirut’s innate divine ability!!!” Beirut’s technique was famous throughout the universe. Even many people who had never seen Beirut use this technique in person had seen scryer recordings of Beirut using his supreme attack.

“No….!” The black-robed man wanted to once more speak with his divine sense.

Unfortunately, the speed of an innate divine ability was comparable to the speed of using divine sense to communication.

As for Bebe, he used his innate divine ability first, and so the black-robed man didn’t even have a chance to plead his case!

“Rumble…”

A strange ripple wrapped around the black-robed man’s head, and immediately, a divine spark floated out from it. As for the black-robed man, he lifelessly slumped downwards, while the black dagger that had been flying back towards him fell to the ground as well. At the same time, a white badge fell out of his body.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Linley and Bebe landed before his body.

Linley was stupefied. “What? A white badge?” Linley stared at the white badge, not daring to believe it.

Of the two sides in this battle, the Divine Light Plane had gold badges for commanders and white badges for soldiers.

“It’s actually a soldier badge?” Linley couldn’t believe it.

A person who had a Sovereign artifact…was a soldier?

“Boss, hurry up and leave. We can’t stay here any longer.” Bebe said hurriedly.

Only now did Linley come to his senses. Not hesitating any further, Linley and Bebe hurriedly collected the interspatial ring, Sovereign dagger, and white badge, then immediately flew away.

Within a cave that was inside a large mountain.

“All of these people have divine clones outside. Even though we killed them, we still aren’t able to bind their interspatial rings or Sovereign artifacts with blood.” Bebe said, angry and helpless. “The Sovereign artifact is one thing; the Sovereign will take it back eventually, after all. But the interspatial ring definitely has quite a few things inside. What a pity, what a pity.”

Linley just stared at the white badge. “He was actually a soldier!”

“It really is very odd. A soldier who had a Sovereign artifact?” Bebe muttered.

Linley suddenly had a thought, and many things instantly made sense. He couldn’t help but shake his head resignedly and say, “Bebe, I understand now. We found the wrong target.”

“What is it?” Bebe said, puzzled.

Linley sighed. “Bebe, didn’t you notice? When the black-robed person discovered us, his first reaction was to flee. When we pursued him, his second reaction was to warn us that he didn’t want to fight us, and that if we kept on bothering him, he would attack. Why didn’t he want to fight? He had a Sovereign artifact, so why flee? I think…the reason was because he was on our side.”

“On our side?” Bebe was stunned.

“Right.” Linley said helplessly. “I think this person should be a commander on our side, but he removed his commander badge and instead bound with blood this enemy’s soldier badge and became an enemy ‘soldier’. He bound an enemy’s soldier badge by blood. Once he gets close to an enemy commander, he would sense their aura, and so find them easily. In addition, he would be able to launch an ambush attack. Two birds with one stone! The only flaw, however, is that he will be attacked by the people on his own side!”

Disguising one’s self as the enemy had benefits but also costs.

That poor, black-robed man. He fell to Linley and Bebe’s deadly hands.

Chapter 22 – Sixty Years in the Planar Battlefield

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 22, Sixty Years in the Planar Battlefield

“This fellow was pretending to be an enemy. I was happy for nothing.” Bebe waved his hand, withdrawing a red fruit which he viciously ‘crunched’ into with crisp chewing sounds. “Boss, all of these commanders are incredibly sly and careful. Finding a suitable target is tough. How infuriating.”

“If you feel irritated, calm down and train.” Linley just sat down into the meditative position, beginning to train silently.

This sort of life would last for another eight centuries. Linley hoped to make yet another major improvement within these eight hundred years.

Atop the vast, desolate earth, three figures of different heights were staring into the distance, looks of shock on their faces. Bebe’s usage of his innate divine ability had created an illusion that was over a hundred meters tall, and so these three saw it from hundreds of kilometers away. Although the three knew that someone was present a few hundred kilometers away, they didn’t dare go over.

“Hey, that Beirut really did come to the Planar Battlefield.” The shorter man raised an eyebrow, speaking with disbelief.

When Bebe had used his innate divine ability to kill Lancelot, other commanders had seen it, resulting in the rumor of Beirut having arrived in the Planar Battlefield. Although Bebe had also used his innate divine ability on the other side against a violet-robed figure and was seen doing so, that news had only circulated amongst the commanders on that side and hadn’t made it to the enemy side.

“Judging from that illusion, it really was Beirut’s innate divine ability. I thought that the rumor was fake, but it was real! Why has Beirut run over to

the Planar Battlefield along with us? Does he want to fight over military merits with us? He has no need of it!" A white-haired, white-browed man with a single horn let out a sigh.

The third was a black-robed, black-haired woman.

"What are you afraid of? We won't go antagonize that Beirut. But…if we join forces, we don't need to be afraid of him either." The black-robed woman said in a gravelly voice.

"Anya [An'ya]! Don't be too self-confident. According to legend, Beirut is even harder to deal with than a Highgod Paragon." The white-haired, white-browed man said seriously. "He doesn't fear the attacks of Sovereign weapons at all, nor does he fear soul attacks…he is completely flawless. In addition, his material attacks and soul attacks are both incredibly powerful! If the three of us fought against him, he would defeat us one at a time."

The black-robed woman gave the white-browed man a glance.

"Don't doubt me." The white-browed man said solemnly.

Beirut had been famous for too short a period of time. Although he had become a Highgod long ago, Beirut had been able to endure being by himself and had remained in the Yulan continent. It was only ten thousand years ago that he had sprang to sudden prominence. Over the course of that rise to fame, he had become known as an invincible figure.

"He has no flaws, and is strong in every aspect." The shorter man said helplessly.

His innate divine ability, 'Godeater', could be described as the most powerful soul attack in existence.

Beirut's material attacks were executed through a Sovereign weapon. Even the Patriarchs of the eight great clans who had Sovereign artifacts of their own were heavily injured by a single blow of Beirut's staff. One could imagine how terrifying his material attacks were.

Who could possibly oppose someone like this?

“Let’s go. The three of us need to be careful during this Planar War.” The white-browed man said calmly. “If necessary, we can just acquire fewer military merits during this Planar War. We can participate in the next one! I imagine Beirut wouldn’t be so bored as to participate in the next one as well. And the next Planar War will arrive shortly!”

“Right.” The other two nodded in agreement as well.

The three immediately left.

Beirut. Highgod Paragons. They were at the very top of the world of Deities. Only Sovereigns were capable of easily dealing with them. The difference between them and normal Highgods was simply too vast.

In addition, the three-person squad of experts was in no hurry.

Because…

Although the Planar Wars were carried out only once every trillion years, there was more than one war in each session of the Planar Wars.

It must be understood that there are Seven Divine Planes and Four Higher Realms. The ‘Life Realm’ did not participate in this sort of war, and so the other ten engaged in battles against each other, over the course of five sessions of the Planar Wars. The Divine Darkness Plane against the Divine Light Plane was just one, and after it concluded, a short period of time later, other Divine Planes would battle against each other, and even the Higher Realms would participate.

There would be five consecutive sessions of Planar Wars.

Generally speaking, if they were carried out quickly, the entire thing would be concluded in ten thousand years. Even if they were carried slowly, the Planar Wars would still conclude within a million years. After the five

battles concluded…they would restart after a trillion years passed!

A trillion years was a very long period of time. If an expert had latent potential, a trillion years was more than enough time for him to completely bring his latent potential to the surface.

If a person remained an ordinary Highgod after a trillion years, then even if you gave him ten times or a hundred times the amount of time, he still probably wouldn't increase in power any further. In addition, during each Planar Wars, a large number of Highgods and commanders would die. This mechanism ensured that the number of supreme experts in the various planes didn't rise to an excessively large figure.

But of course, it also made the strong even stronger!

Beirut had arrived at the Planar Battlefield!

This news quickly spread amongst the various commanders. The commanders all knew each other, and although many of them didn't quite believe it the first time they heard it, when Bebe had once again used his innate divine ability to kill that black-robed man, others had witnessed it in addition to those three.

This news was now completely verified!

This caused an earthquake in the entire battlefield!

Within a military camp.

A beardless, middle-aged man with silver hair and elegantly drooping eyebrows was seated facing a golden-haired youth. The two were drinking wine.

"Mr. Magnus, you don't believe me?" The golden-haired youth laughed.

"I believe you." The silver-haired, middle-aged man raised a long eyebrow, then shook his head uncomprehendingly. "However, Beirut is someone who

can be said is at the peak of Deities. He should care more about his status. Even if he decided to take a stroll about the Planar Battlefield, he should remain within one of the military camps and smile while watching the other commanders kill each other. He shouldn't lower himself to go butcher those commanders."

"Mr. Magnus, that's just your own viewpoint." The golden-haired youth laughed.

Magnus was also someone who stood at the very peak of the world of Deities! Although he stationed himself at a military camp, this was simply out of boredom. It was a game to him.

There was still a gap between ordinary commanders and Highgod Paragons or the likes of Beirut. For Beirut or Magnus to go attack those ordinary commanders really was an act of butchery.

"No. Although I've never met this Beirut, I've heard some stories of him. He's the type of person who is extremely capable of enduring and hiding. He's definitely not the sort of person who would be bored and lower himself to slaughtering ordinary commanders." Magnus shook his head. "I suspect…that perhaps it isn't Beirut who used that technique."

"Not him?" The golden-haired youth was startled.

"Right. Perhaps in the universe, there is another person who also possesses Beirut's supreme technique as well." Magnus said meditatively.

Bebe had only become a Highgod two centuries ago.

The members of the Four Divine Beasts clan only knew that Bebe was Beirut's 'grandson'; they didn't know that Bebe was like Beirut, someone capable of the 'Godeater' innate divine ability…much like how the children and descendants of the Azure Dragon didn't all necessarily have the Azure Dragon's strength. They didn't think that Bebe had that sort of power.

Bebe's reputation had yet to spread.

The Planar Battlefield. At the top of a tall mountain peak.

A white-robed man with crimson eyebrows was currently leaning against the mountain. The wind rustled past his long black hair, but he simply leisurely held his cup of wine, lowering his head to take a sip. It was Bluefire, who had entered the Planar Battlefield not long ago.

In the Planar Battlefield, the various commanders all hid their tracks. Who dare to reveal himself, much less stand at the top of a mountain?

At the top of the mountain peak, staring down at the endless world, Bluefire laughed and shook his head. “Innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’? Mm, it seems Bebe and Linley had arrived at this side of the Stellar Sea as well.” Bluefire casually stood there at the top of the mountain, drinking his wine, but if someone were to stare at him from afar, they wouldn’t see anyone there.

The strange thing was…

The space surrounding Bluefire was distorted.

“The Planar Wars…ten commanders must die for someone to have enough military merits for a Sovereign artifact. In addition, quite a few commanders who are killed had badges in their interspatial rings, which go to waste! For each Sovereign artifact to be acquired, far more than ten commanders will die.” Bluefire let out a light sigh.

“Whoosh!”

Bluefire slid down the mountain, moving like a comet and quickly disappearing from that space.

Time flowed on, and in the blink of an eye, sixty years passed.

Inside a mountain cave within the Planar Battlefield.

“We lost yet another Deathgod Golem.” Bebe mumbled.

Linley, who was training nearby, opened his eyes. “Nothing to show for it?”

“Nothing.” Bebe said resignedly.

Controlling the Deathgod Golems was originally meant to be Linley’s job, but Bebe was bored and so he would occasionally take over. Only, Linley hadn’t imagined…that ever since he had acquired that gold badge and that white badge, he had not acquired a single extra badge despite the passage of sixty years. In addition, Linley discovered that the commanders he did in fact find were ones whom he couldn’t take action against.

Because…

If they encountered solo experts, those experts were either too cautious or too strong.

The other possibility was a team of two or three experts, or sometimes even four. With them moving together, even if Linley and Bebe attacked and killed one of them, the others would make sure that Linley and Bebe wouldn’t be able to flee.

“How did this Deathgod Golem end up being destroyed?” Linley laughed.

“Boss, this time, we actually encountered Hemmers.” Bebe said helplessly. “How could we end up running into that big idiot again?”

Linley could only laugh bitterly.

“Be patient. The Planar Wars will go on for a thousand years. As it goes on, the survivors are increasingly those who have certain abilities to rely upon. It won’t be so easy to find someone to kill. What I hope for is that in the next eight hundred years, I’ll be able to fuse a fourth profound mystery. At that time, I won’t have much to fear.”

Linley knew very well that although he was fairly powerful, in reality, in

terms of soul defense and soul attack power, he was inferior to other commanders. However, after he fused a fourth profound mystery, given his innate azure aura in his sea of consciousness, his soul defense would rise nearly tenfold, while his material attack would also increase nearly tenfold.

By then, aside from a few people like Beirut, others wouldn't be capable of making Linley feel afraid.

"I need more time!" Linley closed his eyes, his original body and his divine earth clone focused on training.

But after just three months…Linley broke through! But of course, the breakthrough wasn't in the Laws of the Earth; Linley was still a long ways off from finishing his fourth fusion. This breakthrough was…in his divine wind clone!"

"Eh?" Bebe suddenly glanced at Linley.

An enormous surge of the natural laws descended upon Linley, and a large amount of wind-type elemental essence began to swirl above him. From within Linley's body, yet another body flew out…one with long green hair and a green robe. His divine wind clone. Just then, Linley had finally, completely mastered a ninth profound mystery in the Laws of the Wind.

"Wow, Boss, you mastered the Laws of the Wind as well." Bebe began to laugh.

"Yes, I've finished them." Linley's original body flew to one side. His elemental affinity for earth and wind were both 'exceptional'; only, over the course of his training, he had favored earth more. Who would have imagined that of the four elements, wind would actually end up being his third slowest, behind both earth and water?

However, he had finally become a Highgod!

Now, only 'fire' was missing.

“Not good!” Linley’s face suddenly changed.

“What is it, Boss?” Bebe was still feeling excited and happy at Linley’s breakthrough.

“The descent of the natural laws. Such a major, noticeable event will definitely attract quite a few people.” Linley said hurriedly. Linley was instantly frantic; other commanders might come over while his divine wind clone’s divine spark was in the middle of the transformation process, which made him temporarily unable to move, albeit for just a short period of time…

But that short period of time was enough to allow other experts to come over.

“What is there to fear!” Bebe’s eyes actually lit up. “If one comes, we’ll kill one. If two come, we’ll kill two. If we can’t kill them…we’ll flee!”

Linley couldn’t help but feel helpless. Still, Linley immediately set up his ‘Blackstone Space’, which passed through the stones of the mountain, creating a hemisphere five hundred meters in size.

Chapter 23 – Three Person Squad

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 23, Three Person Squad

“Hopefully, no one will come. However, given how savage the commanders are to each other, I imagine they won’t give up a chance like this.” Linley said quietly in his heart, while at the same time, his body became covered by those azure-golden draconic scales. He immediately Dragonformed! Mirage appeared in his hands as well. As for Bebe, he was by Linley’s side. The two were prepared for a fight.

The sudden descent of the natural Laws was simply too obvious. Virtually everyone in the entire plane noticed it.

“A breakthrough? There’s actually a God or Demigod level clone in the Planar Battlefield?”

“How bizarre. Can it be that someone actually brought his Demigod or God clone into the Planar Battlefield? To bring a weak divine clone in instead of leaving it outside…this person is just throwing his life away.”

“The descent of the natural Laws means this person’s position is exposed. Nine out of ten, that person will die.”

The Planar Battlefield was filled with discussions regarding this. Everyone in the Planar Battlefield should be a Highgod. The descent of the natural Laws was a very bizarre occurrence here. However, because people were at varying distances from Linley, it was only the extremely close commanders who immediately flew at high speed towards the origin point of the descent of the Laws!

The cold, grim Planar Battlefield. A gray-robed figure was flying towards the mountain.

“This is a rare, superb opportunity. Perhaps I’ll be able to acquire a badge.”

The gray figure flew at very high speed, but by the time he flew to the base of the mountain, he suddenly came to a halt. His form was revealed as that of a violet-eyed, gray-robed youth with long hair.

He was currently staring at a nearby white-clothed figure.

“Benfield [Ben’fei’er’de] of the Celestial Realm?” Terrified, the violet-eyed, gray-robed youth’s face changed. “Benfield. That means his other two companions must be present as well. If they surround me, I’ll definitely die. Since those two have come, that idiot in the mountain who actually brought a God-level divine clone into the Planar Battlefield definitely won’t be able to survive!” Not hesitating at all, the violet-eyed, gray-robed youth immediately retreated at high speed.

He flew over, saw the white-robed figure, then immediately retreated.

This process happened in an instant.

“Eh?” The white-robed figure seemed to have felt something. He suddenly turned his head and saw the gray-robed figure disappear. The white-robed man let out a calm laugh. “He ran fairly fast.” The white-robed figure had long, silver-white hair. His face was as beautiful as a woman’s, and his eyes seemed to contain the stars within them as he stared upwards into the sky.

“Swoosh!”

The white-robed man flew into the sky, towards the midway point of the mountain.

“Boss, we are already halfway up the mountain, close to the point where the natural Law ripples descended.” A deep voice echoed out in the white-robed man’s mind.

“Elder Brother, I arrived as well.” A clear voice rang out in his mind as well.

Right at this moment, suddenly…

The natural Law ripples suddenly weakened at a fast pace. The transformation upon breaking through was a fairly fast process. Clearly, Linley's divine wind clone's divine spark transformation had already concluded.

"We didn't make it in time for the best opportunity." The clear voice said discontentedly.

"Third Brother, let's do it." The white-robed man gave the order.

"Haha, watch me!" The white-robed man was less than a hundred meters away from a black-armored man, who was standing there in midair. This muscular, black-armored man was nearly three meters tall, and he had a pair of thick, curved horns on his forehead. His hammer-like fists were covered with a crimson pair of gloves.

The muscular man give a low growl, bending as he suddenly smashed downwards with his fists towards the mountain.

Soundlessly, the two giant crimson hammer-fists slammed against the mountain.

"Rumble…"

Space itself trembled, and instantly, at the location where the two fist blows landed, a deep round crevice that was a meter in diameter suddenly appeared. A large number of shattered stones fell out from this new 'cave', and the entire side of the mountain cracked as well, as one savage-looking crevice after another appeared.

The muscular man stared, then roared furiously, "Motherf*cker, break!!!"

This time, he swung down with open palms, like two giant fan-shaped objects, smashing down upon the cracked mountain. Instantly, the upper part of the mountain, with a 'boom', completely crumbled, and countless stones of various sizes fell down from high above.

The white-robed man, the black-armored man, and a red-robed, jade-haired woman stood there in midair.

Linley hadn't imagined that the enemy would be so powerful. Almost as soon as he had collected his divine wind clone back into his body, such a terrifyingly powerful tremor had gone through the mountain, which actually shattered. Although it didn't crumble, the insides of the mountain were already damaged.

The first blow had damaged the insides.

The second blow seemed to have the power to shatter the heavens and the earth, causing the entire upper half of the mountain to completely collapse.

"What a powerful material attack." Bebe couldn't help but sigh in astonishment. "I imagine this attacker has a Sovereign weapon." The mountains of the Planar Battlefield were exceedingly tough, on a higher level than even the mountains of the Netherworld and the Infernal Realm. To destroy half of a mountain was something which even most commanders would find difficult.

"However, they clearly are afraid to come in." Bebe snickered.

Linley and Bebe didn't care about the crumbling mountain per se.

"Not only are they strong, they are cautious as well. They will be hard to deal with." Linley held Mirage in his hand as he watched the surrounding boulders come cascading down. As the mountain crumbled, Linley was able to see the outside world, and indistinctly, he was able to make out the figure of a muscular man who had two horns on his forehead.

"Bebe, let's flee." Linley hurriedly shouted through divine sense.

"Right." Bebe didn't hesitate either.

Linley and Bebe flew directly towards the direction opposite from the

muscular man, while at the same time Linley spread out his Blackstone Space. But just as they began to flee, Linley was shocked to find…"There are two people on this side!" Linley's Blackstone Space easily discovered…

That a white-robed man and a red-robed, jade-haired woman were standing on each side.

The white-robed man, the jade-haired woman, and the black-armored man were situated in a triangle.

No matter where Linley and Bebe fled, the three would still be able to attack in unison.

"The two of you, don't even think of running." The white-robed man swept them with a calm gaze. Although the Blackstone Space was applied to his body, the white-robed man just swayed slightly before counteracting the gravitational pull.

"Benfield!" Linley's face was exceedingly ugly to behold right now.

Linley never would have imagined that the person who had to stop them was actually the legendary 'Benfield'. He would rather encounter Hemmers than encounter this 'Benfield', because…Benfield was a supreme expert who was close to Beirut himself in power!

Beirut's book had one bit of advice for someone who encountered Benfield; flee! Think of nothing else, just flee!

"Bebe, quick, flee towards that red-robed woman. Hurry, flee!" Linley immediately made his decision.

They had to break out from the direction of the red-robed woman, then escape.

"Got it, Boss. I didn't expect it would be Benfield. What horrible luck!" Bebe recognized him as well. Over the past sixty years in the Planar Battlefield, Linley had already provided Bebe with all of the information

regarding the supreme experts through their spiritual link.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Linley and Bebe were like two bolts of lightning, shooting towards the jade-haired woman.

“Hmph, you want to flee?” The white-robed man and the black-armored man flew towards the red-robed woman at virtually the same instant. Clearly, they wanted to join forces with her and to stop Linley and Bebe.

Suddenly…

Linley and Bebe changed directions, fleeing towards the original direction.

The black-armored man, white-robed man, and red-robed woman reacted very quickly, hurriedly attacking towards and chasing after Linley and Bebe. Unfortunately, Linley had already spread out the ‘Blackstone Space’ around himself. Upon entering the Blackstone Space, Benfield and the other two weren’t able to catch them at all.

“They actually aren’t willing to give up.” Bebe turned to give them a glance. He couldn’t help but feel frantic.

“This looks bad.” Linley had a hint of worry in his eyes.

This was because the white-robed man and the black-armored man had actually flown out of the Blackstone Space. They accelerated from the sides, seemingly planning to block Linley and Bebe from the front.

“Haha, Third Brother, Second Sister, watch how I’ll block them.” The white-robed man let out a loud laugh. His body moved as fast as lightning from the side, speeding past Linley and Bebe. And then, he suddenly charged into the Blackstone Space region, his body having transformed into white spots of light.

Spots of light?

No. It was multiple extremely thin white lines. Countless extremely thin white lines exploded forth from Benfield's body, appearing at first glance to be a dazzling radiance. Those countless thin white strands shot out from every direction, surrounding Linley and Bebe, giving them no way to flee.

Linley and Bebe's faces instantly changed.

"Bebe, careful. A soul attack." Linley hurriedly sent through divine sense.

"Bastard!" Bebe bellowed, and suddenly he flew out from the side.

Behind Bebe, an enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat appeared. Bebe's expression became cold and grim, and he stared unblinkingly at the black-armored warrior. At present, the black-armored warrior was less than two hundred meters away, and he was charging towards Linley and Bebe. He hadn't imagined that Bebe had a supreme technique such as this.

"No…!" The black-armored warrior was badly shocked.

He recognized this. This was Beirut's supreme technique!

"Not good! This is Beirut's innate divine technique!" Previously completely confident, Benfield's face changed, and he called out nervously, "Second Sister, protect Third Brother!" Bebe's innate divine ability was simply too fast, and he wasn't able to stop it. He knew…that right now, only his second sister was able to save his third brother.

Unfortunately, the red-robed woman was currently a bit too far away. They were unable to communicate by divine sense, only by voice, but how could a vocal shout make it in time? However, clearly the red-robed woman needed no warning. She too knew that her third brother had encountered a dangerous situation. Not hesitating at all, the red-robed woman's body suddenly transformed…

"Rumble…"

Suddenly, the red-robed woman's body disappeared, and instead, an enormous crimson serpent that was more than a thousand meters long appeared. When it's coiled body appeared, it naturally was located in front of the black-armored warrior. Its enormous serpentine body easily protected the black-armored warrior's entire body.

"Rumble…"

Bebe's spiritual energy surged towards the enormous serpentine body, but it was unable to reach the black-armored man.

"Damnit, yet another one who has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact." Bebe sent furiously through divine sense.

Linley, upon seeing this happen, had already guessed what the result would be. For the red-robed woman to dare act in such a way definitely meant that she was confident this would work against Bebe's technique. Otherwise, wouldn't it be as good as suicide?

"Bebe, quick, flee. Stop wasting time with them." Linley sent frantically through their mental link. Using his Blackstone Space at full force, Linley hurriedly fled.

Fighting against Benfield was a no-win proposition.

"Swoosh!" Bebe hurriedly followed Linley in fleeing at high speed.

Within the Blackstone Space, the three weren't able to catch up to Linley and Bebe.

"Damnit, I thought that it was only Benfield who would be formidable, but who would've imagined that the two he brought with him are so powerful as well? That horned fellow's material attacks are very powerful, while that red-robed woman actually has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact." Bebe sent mentally to Linley, complaining. "These three together, with the powerful Benfield leading them…Boss, how are we supposed to fight against them?"

“Don’t even think of fighting. Flee, and be thankful if we are able to.” Linley said hurriedly.

The two fled at high speed.

However, Benfield didn’t want to let the two of them off!

“You two!” The white-robed Benfield was now truly angry. He cared deeply about his little sister and little brother. “BANG!” Suddenly, a wild surge of energy blasted forth from his body, and an aura of light instantly appeared on his form. Benfield’s speed suddenly increased dramatically!

“Whoosh!”

After charging into the Blackstone Space, although Benfield’s speed dropped dramatically, he was actually still faster than Linley and Bebe.

Linley could clearly sense that this person was quickly catching up to them within the Blackstone Space; he was actually faster than them. Linley turned to look, and was badly startled. “Not good. This Benfield has gone crazy. For the sake of catching us, he’s actually used up a drop of Fate-type Sovereign’s Might!”

Chapter 24 – A Dead End? A New Beginning!

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 24, A Dead End? A New Beginning!

Benfield's speed was far faster than theirs to begin with!

Linley had the Blackstone Space, but Benfield had used Sovereign's Might. Now, his speed was still faster than Linley's! If they just let him chase like this, in just a few hundred meters, they would be caught!

"Hmph!" Linley willed…

…his Blackstone Space to suddenly change. The repulsive force transformed into an upwards gravity!

"Eh?" Benfield's body couldn't help but sway, and he actually shot upwards.

"My Blackstone Space isn't as simple as that." Linley thought to himself. At the same time, he began to frantically change the direction of the Blackstone Space's gravity, from up to down to repulsive. It must be understood that the power of this gravity was tremendous to begin with, and this sort of constant changing caused even Benfield to be affected tremendously.

Benfield couldn't help but feel furious.

"All of you, die!" Benfield's voice was icy.

"Whoosh…"

One translucent arrow after another shot out from Benfield's body, shooting directly towards Linley and Bebe. Ten translucent arrows sliced through the air towards Linley and Bebe. The speed of this soul attack was extremely fast. Linley and Bebe were only able to dodge very slightly, and four

translucent arrows still shot into Linley's body.

As for Bebe, his body was struck by three arrows as well.

Shocked, Linley's face turned white. "Bebe, use Sovereign's Might!" Benfield's soul attack was described in the materials which Beirut had provided. It was extremely terrifying. Now that Benfield was using Fate-type Sovereign's Might to attack…one could imagine how mighty it was.

"Rumble…" An earthen-yellow aura instantly spread out from Linley's body.

Without hesitating at all, Linley used his earth-type Sovereign's Might!

Within Linley's mind.

"BANG!" "BANG!" "BANG!" "BANG!" Four translucent arrows struck viciously against the translucent membrane, but shattered like eggs striking against a rock. After shattering, however, they transformed into a large amount of translucent threads which spread out to surround the entire translucent membrane. And then, a large number of threads coiled about, attacking the flaw.

Countless invisible 'Voidwave Swords' shot out, clashing against the translucent threads.

"I have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and used earth-type Sovereign's Might, but the patch over the opening was still more than half-broken through." Linley was stunned.

Linley had rebuilt and repaired the patch over the flaw in his soul-protecting Sovereign Artifact after leaving the Abyssal Mountain. Including the sixty years they had spent in the Planar Battlefield, it had been nearly a century. A hundred years of work was half-wrecked in an instant, and that was after Linley had used earth-type Sovereign's Might. If he hadn't used earth-type Sovereign's Might, he wouldn't have been able to resist at all.

“How terrifying. Without this soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, even if I used Sovereign’s Might, I probably wouldn’t be able to endure.” Linley’s face suddenly changed. “Bebe!”

Bebe had been struck as well.

“Boss, I’m fine.” Bebe’s voice rang out in Linley’s mind.

Linley discovered, to his amazement, that Bebe hadn’t used his Sovereign’s Might. However, somehow, Bebe had still been able to endure the blow despite not using Sovereign’s Might. If he had only relied on a soul-protecting artifact, there was no way he should have been able to do this. “Can it be that what Bebe has isn’t a soul-protecting artifact, but a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact? Or perhaps…Bebe’s soul is very unusual and his soul defense is extremely powerful?”

This thought flashed through Linley’s mind.

Right now, however, he couldn’t ponder it in depth, because…things had gotten dangerous!

“Elder Brother!”

A deep voice rang out. The black-armored figure was currently standing atop the giant, coiling crimson snake, which was flying over at high speed. The giant crimson snake had already flown to the area in front of Linley and Bebe.

“Boss, the situation looks bad.” Bebe said frantically.

“I know.” Of course Linley knew the situation was bad.

The front was blocked by the giant crimson snake and the black-armored warrior, while Benfield was behind them. They could neither go forward nor go back!

“How is it that Benfield has two allies such as them? And they aren’t even

in the same alliance." Linley cursed angrily. In the course of his flight, Linley had discovered that Benfield and the other two weren't in the same alliance; Linley wasn't able to sense Benfield's badge's aura. Clearly, he was an enemy!

But Linley could clearly sense the auras of the 'red-robed woman' who had transformed into a giant crimson snake, along with the black-armored man. Clearly, they were on Linley's 'side'.

People on different sides who had joined into a single squad.

"Bebe, follow me to flee this way. Hurry!" Linley surrounded Bebe with his earth-type Sovereign power, flying at maximum speed. Linley and Bebe flew towards the side at high speed. By moving in this direction, Benfield wouldn't be able to attack them easily.

The power of the Blackstone Space had increased nearly a hundredfold as well, and the terrifying gravitational power made it hard for Benfield to catch them.

"Swoosh!" Benfield flew out of the Blackstone Space. Within the Blackstone Space, he wasn't able to catch up to Linley as well. "You two punks, listen up. Today, I, Benfield, will definitely kill you two. Definitely!" His furious voiced echoed in the air.

As for Benfield, he flew virtually parallel to Linley and Bebe.

The two were separated solely by the Blackstone Space.

The red-robed woman and the black-armored man were frantically trying to catch up as well.

"We can't keep wasting time with this Benfield. Just now, he simultaneously attacked myself and Bebe, and I found it very hard to endure it. If he continues to entangle us and unleash powerful attacks, I won't be able to hold." Linley wasn't worried about Bebe, because Bebe had been able to endure the attack without using Sovereign's Might.

“Boss, we have to throw this guy off.” Bebe sent mentally.

“I know.” Linley suddenly turned to look at the nearby Benfield.

Behind him, an illusion of an enormous coiling Azure Dragon that was a thousand meters long suddenly appeared. The draconic head of the Azure Dragon hovered above Linley, staring at Benfield. In Linley’s mind, his earth-type Sovereign power fused with his innate azure light, shooting directly towards the nearby Benfield…

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

This innate divine ability, when used with earth-type Sovereign power, was extremely powerful!

“Eh?” Benfield couldn’t help but feel his body slightly stiffen.

“Quick, flee!” Linley and Bebe hurriedly seized the opportunity to flee.

Benfield was a supreme expert who was particularly skilled in soul attacks, and he also had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and was protected by Sovereign’s Might. He quickly managed to throw off the restrictive bindings.

“You want to escape?” Benfield saw Linley and Bebe’s figures disappearing, and he hurriedly chased after them.

As Linley and Bebe flew away at high speed, Bebe cursed mentally, “Boss, that Benfield really is annoying. He has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and a defensive Sovereign artifact. There’s no flaw to attack, and he’s hard to kill, while his own soul attacks are so powerful. He really pisses me off!”

“I’m pissed too, but there’s nothing we can do.”

Linley had expected that the breakthrough of his divine wind clone would arouse some interest, but he didn’t imagine that it would attract the attention

of someone as hard to deal with as Benfield. Benfield was definitely a perfect counter to Linley; he had two powerful Sovereign artifacts, giving Linley no way to fight back, and he was also skilled at soul attacks.

How could Linley deal with such a person?

Even by using his innate divine ability, 'Dragon Roar', the only thing Linley could do was buy himself a little time for fleeing!

"Damnit, Boss, he's chasing after us again!" Bebe said furiously.

Linley turned to look, and saw a blurry form fly over at high speed.

"This bastard really moves fast." Linley was extremely frantic right now, but since the two had both used Sovereign's Might, there was no way he would be able to outspeed this person. "It seems the only thing I can do is use my innate natural ability, 'Dragon Roar', to stop him yet again." Linley mused to himself, but right at this moment…

Linley suddenly discovered that two figures appeared in front of him. Only high class commanders would dare to hover in the air of the battlefield.

"This direction is closed off to you!" A calm voice rang out.

Linley and Bebe could sense the threat the person in front of them posed, and they came to a halt. Linley looked at the two of them and had the feeling…that these two were no less dangerous than Benfield.

The two were very odd. One was nearly four meters tall, his entire body a bronze color, exceedingly muscular and with a solemn, granite face. On the shoulder of this enormous, four-meter tall fellow, an adorable bald youth sat, chewing on some fruit. This youth was a size smaller than even Bebe.

But this youth…made Linley's heart tremble.

"The two of you, please help stop them. I, Benfield, will owe you two for it." Benfield said hurriedly.

Favors were hard to repay!

Benfield's words caused Linley and Bebe's hearts to sink.

"Swoosh!" Linley and Bebe fled towards another direction.

"Whoosh!" A figure suddenly appeared in front of Linley and Bebe. It was the adorable bald fellow who was eating the violet fruit.

"So fast." Linley felt shocked in his heart.

"Why are you in such a hurry to run?" The bald youth cracked his lips into a grin. 'Crunch' 'Crunch'. With two bites, he disposed of the fruit, then tossed the pit to one side.

"Elder Brother. The red-robed woman and black-armored man finally arrived as well."

"The two of you, don't even think of escaping." The red-robed woman stared angrily at Linley and Bebe. Linley and Bebe looked at each other, having a bad feeling in their heart. "Boss, three behind us, two ahead of us. If the five attack us together, there's no way we'll escape."

Linley and Bebe didn't dare to move for the moment.

Because…as soon as they moved, most likely the bald youth and the big fellow would attack.

"Thank you, you two." Benfield laughed.

Just now, the bald youth had blocked Linley and Bebe. Clearly, this made him feel as though he had been given face, but at the same time, Benfield also felt rather puzzled. "This youth and this big fellow…I've never seen them before. When did these two experts suddenly appear?" The movement speed the bald youth had displayed just now had caused Benfield to feel amazed."

“Hey, Benfield, you got some problems with your brain.” The bald youth began to laugh.

Benfield’s face couldn’t help but change.

“Just because I stopped Linley didn’t mean that it was because I’m helping you.” The bald youth mocked.

“Linley?” Benfield and the other two looked towards Linley. Up till now, they hadn’t known who Linley was.

“You know me?” Linley stared in astonishment towards the bald youth.

The bald youth began to roar with laughter. “Alas, it’s only been a few years, but you no longer recognize me, your teacher.” The bald youth let out an emotional sigh.

“Teacher?” Linley and Bebe were both stunned.

Suddenly, a violet light sprang out from the bald youth’s body, instantly stretching to thousand meters, encompassing Linley and Benfield both. This powerful, yet familiar gravitational force caused a look of shock to appear on Linley’s face. “Can it be that you are…” In Linley’s mind, that adorable juvenile amethyst beast suddenly sprang to mind. That little juvenile beast who had called out in a high-pitched voice while pointing at and commanding countless amethyst beasts.

And Linley himself had, under the ‘torment’ of the juvenile amethyst beast, gained insight into the basics of the ‘Blackstone Space’.

“You!”

Benfield frowned. “Reisgem!”

“Harhar…yes, it is me.” The bald youth laughed loudly. “What, are none of you able to recognize me when I’m in human form? Oh, it makes sense…

my control over my soul is too powerful. I can completely hide my soul's aura, and you aren't able to sense it at all. It is understandable that you don't recognize me. It is understandable."

The bald youth waved his hand. "Benfield, you turtle, hurry up and leave. Otherwise…I wouldn't mind playing a bit with you."

Benfield stared at Linley and Bebe, then clenched his teeth.

"Let's go." Benfield had no choice but to swallow his anger as he led his two companions to fly away.

Linley and Bebe both let out sighs of relief.

Reisgem rubbed his bald head, glancing sideways at Linley. Shaking his head, he said, "You are so useless! You learned my supreme technique, but were forced into such a sorry state. You really lost the face of myself, your teacher!"

"Teacher?" Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"And you two really are stupid. If your power is weak, then in the Planar Battlefield, you need to join forces. Didn't you see how so many people are in groups of three or four?" Reisgem said casually. "Mm…how about this. The two of you, join my hunting squad. We'll join forces and roam about the Planar Battlefield. What do you say?"

"Join your squad?" Linley couldn't help but look towards Reisgem, as well as the big, towering fellow behind him.

"If you join us, in the future, we'll evenly divide the military merits we gain into fourths. We men should be straightforward and keep things simple!" Reisgem puffed his chest out as he spoke, as though he wanted to show what a man he was.

Linley couldn't help but laugh. Linley and Bebe exchanged glances, nodding slightly.

“We will join!” Linley said.

And so, Reisgem’s hunting squad was expanded from two to four. Their strength had increased tremendously now!

Chapter 25 – Innate Divine Ability

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 25, Innate Divine Ability

Over the course of the past sixty one years in the Planar Battlefield, Linley had already gained a deep appreciation for the dangers it contained. If he wanted to simply rely on his own power to both acquire sufficient military merits as well as protect his life, it would be incredibly difficult! Now that Linley had joined Reisgem's hunting squad, Linley actually felt relieved.

"That's nice and straightforward! Let's go. We're preparing to find a place to rest, first." Reisgem said with a laugh.

As for that tower-like figure next to Reisgem, he didn't say a single word, just following behind.

"Reisgem became a Purgatory Commander long ago, and was able to frighten off Benfield!" Linley felt very certain of Reisgem's strength "In addition, according to the descriptions of Reisgem in Beirut's book, Reisgem is a supreme expert who ranks in the top five of Purgatory Commanders."

Reisgem's reputation was quite extravagant.

Not only was he himself powerful, his mother was the Redbud Sovereign!

"Boss, in the future, things will be much simpler for us. We'll probably be able to easily acquire military merits." Bebe began to laugh, and with a flip of his hand, he retrieved another red fruit, biting into it viciously. The nearby Reisgem sniffed the air, then turned to look at Bebe and immediately laughed. "Bebe, right? This fruit seems pretty appetizing. Give me one?"

"Take it." Bebe, very magnanimously, pulled out another fruit and tossed it to Reisgem.

Reisgem's eyes lit up. Accepting it, he immediately began to eat, then nodded in praise. "Crispy and flavorful. Eating it is a pleasure. Thanks, bro." As he spoke, Reisgem stretched his hand out, and a violet fruit appeared. "This is something I like to eat. It only exists in the Life Realm. Have a taste."

Bebe and Reisgem, two people who both had childlike hearts, quickly began to grow close to each other.

Linley just smiled calmly while following them, as the tower-like big fellow just followed silently.

"Hey, Reisgem, I'm not just boasting. My innate divine ability, hmph, hmph." Bebe actually started to brag in front of Reisgem.

"Yours is pretty powerful, but mine isn't weak either." Reisgem said very confidently. "But Bebe, I have to warn you, no matter what, you can't use that innate divine ability of yours against me…I heard from my mother that the innate divine ability of you Godeater Rats is absolutely supernatural. Only someone with a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact or who is a Highgod Paragon can resist it; otherwise, there is no way."

"Don't worry." Bebe snickered. "We're on the same team."

Hearing this, Linley had a thought; it seemed as though Reisgem was rather afraid of Bebe's innate divine ability.

Reisgem took a bite of the fruit, then said helplessly, "I, Reisgem, am skilled in soul attacks! I don't even fear the soul attacks of Highgod Paragons, but that 'Godeater' ability of yours, Bebe…there's nothing I can do against it. That technique of yours is definitely the most powerful soul attack which a Highgod is capable of!"

Linley laughed as well. Reisgem's words were very reasonable.

Bebe's technique devoured the divine spark and destroyed the soul. It was indeed the most powerful of soul attacks.

“According to what my mother said, the innate divine abilities of divine beasts, in terms of fearsomeness…Bebe, you Godeater Rats are considered one of the top! As for the departed Azure Dragon, Vermillion Bird, and the rest of the Four Divine Beasts, their innate divine abilities were very terrifying as well! That Tree of Life from the Life Realm is also a monster…and the Abyssal Fruit Tree of the Netherworld, and…well, most of those extremely monstrous divine beasts all ended up becoming Sovereigns.” Reisgem said with a praising sigh.

Divine beasts were divided into tiers of power as well.

Godeater Rats stood at the very peak of divine beasts, but so too did the Abyssal Fruit Tree. These divine beasts and their innate abilities were absolutely unnatural in their power.

“Hey, what is so powerful about those other divine beasts? Tell me about them.” Bebe said excitedly.

Linley was intrigued as well.

Although they were walking on the surface of the battlefield, the four were very much at ease. Linley and the tower-like figure kept a constant watch on their surroundings, but clearly, there weren’t many people who would be so ignorant as to try to attack their group of four.

“In terms of pure attack power, the ‘White Tiger’ of the Four Divine Beasts had an innate divine ability that was even more powerful than your ‘Godeater’ ability.” Reisgem said with a sigh. “My mother said that when the Four Divine Beasts joined forces and combined their four innate divine abilities, it was utterly monstrous! They were an extremely powerful force amongst the Sovereigns, but unfortunately, they have now all fallen. What a pity.”

Linley was stunned.

The innate divine ability of the ‘White Tiger’ of the Four Divine Beasts was

even more powerful than the ‘Godeater’ ability? Unfortunately, he would never have the chance to see it. After all, not a single one of the successors to the Four Divine Beasts was an actual divine beast; they just carried the bloodlines of the divine beasts. Their innate divine abilities were only unleashed after undergoing Ancestral Baptisms, and despite that, were incomparable to those of their original ancestors.

“Even more powerful than we Godeater Rats?” Bebe muttered, clearly not willing to accept it.

Reisgem chortled. “There are 77 Sovereigns, and a number of them are divine beasts! In addition, these divine beasts are almost all unique ones. You’ll never see them fight, but even if you do, there is no need for them to use their innate divine abilities. Of course you have no idea as to how terrifyingly powerful their innate divine abilities are. But of course…the combination of the four great innate divine abilities of the Four Divine Beasts is the most powerful divine ability of all. There is no question at all regarding this.”

While chatting casually, they arrived at a squat dwarf mountain.

“Hey, Hom, make a cave for us.” Reisgem said.

“Yes.” The big fellow finally spoke.

Linley couldn’t help but look over. He watched as the big, taciturn giant walked forward to the face of that small mountain, hundreds of meters high. The big fellow placed his giant, fan-sized hands atop the surface of the mountain, and instantly, the stone of the mountain seemed to turn to liquid, slowly flowing outwards.

In the blink of an eye…

A square cave had appeared, and the walls of the cave even had some patterned carvings.

“What sort of technique is this?” Linley and Bebe were stupefied.

“Don’t be so shocked.” Reisgem laughed delightedly, then strode inwards, with the big fellow following Reisgem into the cave.

“This big fellow is both mysterious and powerful.” Linley sighed mentally in praise. In addition, Linley had never seen anything in Beirut’s book regarding this big fellow.

“Whoosh!

Shortly after they entered the cave, a stone board actually slammed down at the entrance, completely sealing it off from the outside world.

The insides of the cave had actually been divided into several rooms, as well as a large living room.

“What do you think? Stunned by the technique of Hom, eh?” Reisgem laughed as he sat down on a stone bench within the living room. “Let me make the formal introductions. Hom’s full name is Reihom Stonebreaker [Lei’hong]. He’s my good friend, and a trusted Emissary of my mother. Don’t be fooled by his silence; he’s quite clear-minded about things.”

A rare hint of a smile appeared on the face of the big, tower-like fellow.

Reihom Stonebreaker?

Linley glanced at him, then laughed and said, “Linley Baruch.”

“Hello, Linley.” Reihom’s voice thundered out, seeming to thrum and reverberate in that giant chest.

“Haha, from today forward, the power of our hunting squad will have increased dramatically.” Reisgem excitedly slapped the table. “Bebe, your innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, is definitely the sharpest attack our squad possesses! Linley, how about your own innate divine ability? What percentage of the power of the Azure Dragon’s original innate divine ability does it possess?”

Linley said with a calm laugh, “I can’t give you percentages. All my innate divine ability can do is to make time move tens of times slower for the enemy.”

“Good. Haha, wonderful!” Reisgem excitedly rose to his feet, his eyes glowing with violet light.

“Formidable.” The big, towering fellow rumbled in praise as well.

“Linley, with this technique of yours, our hunting squad is going to be much more powerful.” Reisgem was very excited.

Reisgem then grumbled unhappily, “This really pisses me off, actually. Over the years, Reihom and I encountered quite a few commanders, but they weren’t able to beat us and so they immediately ran away. Even when I use my Amethyst Space, if they wholeheartedly focus on fleeing, I’m unable to stop them. But if, at the critical moment, you were to use your innate divine ability on them, and then Reihom attacks, then we’ll definitely be able to kill the target.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

He and Bebe both had extremely powerful innate divine abilities. Their only weakness was…their own, personal level of strength was rather lacking. Their attack power and defense power was insufficient. But after joining this squad, each made up for what the other lacked.

“Haha…with the two of you! Our hunting squad will be able to dominate this Planar Battlefield! If anyone dares gets close to us, into the range of that innate divine ability of yours, Linley, they will be finished.” Reisgem was very happy. Actually, originally, he cared more about Bebe’s innate divine ability; it was that, combined with the fact that he had a pre-existing relationship with Linley, that made him extend the invitation.

But now, he discovered that Linley’s innate divine ability was definitely the most superlative of supreme support abilities here on the Planar Battlefield.

The Planar War would go on for nearly a thousand years. Linley's group was in no rush. They stayed in the cave for three days before heading out, and during these three days, Linley also learned from Reisgem a few things regarding the commanders of the Planar Battlefield.

"How many commanders would possibly dare to roam about the Planar Battlefield as they please? Only those with enough power would dare do a thing; otherwise, it would be lunacy."

"As for the weaker commanders, all of them are incredibly crafty. Many of them hide, not daring to reveal themselves, and rely on Deathgod Golems to scout. Upon encountering weak opponents, they'll fight; upon encountering strong ones, they won't come out."

"But of course, most form small squads of perhaps two, three, or even four or five. The most important thing in a squad is…mutual trust. Otherwise, if the squadmates begins to fight amongst themselves, that would be disastrous."

"Linley, Bebe, our target here in the Planar Battlefield is other squads! As for lone travelers? Heh heh. We won't be able to kill the powerful ones, while the weak ones will be hiding and not dare reveal themselves. It will be very hard to kill one of them. It is best we engage in group battles against other squads. That will be more exciting, and also make it easier for us to gain badges."

Reisgem and Linley discussed quite a few things, and Linley now understood that their earlier strategy of hiding and ambushing was a very low efficiency strategy. This was because virtually everyone who dared to travel about alone was exceedingly powerful. Fortunately, Bebe had been able to use his innate divine ability to kill Lancelot! Otherwise, Linley wouldn't have even a single badge.

Linley, Bebe, Reisgem, and the silent Reihom continued to move forward.

"Haha, there are very few people who know what the four of us look like.

This will make it easier for us to catch some big fish." Reisgem chortled. "Linley, once the enemy reaches a certain distance from us, your sole mission…will be to use your innate divine ability and make it impossible for him to flee for a period of time. The killing part? Leave that to us."

"Understood." Linley let out a calm laugh.

Linley had to admit, his soul attack, amongst commander-level experts, could only be considered ordinary. When Linley was fighting alongside Bebe, they used a similar strategy.

"It's hard to find people though." Bebe stared at the surroundings and muttered.

The Planar Battlefield was always so dark and cold. Raising his head, Linley looked at the multicolored spatial tears in the sky. That cold, howling wind swept through the battlefield as the four of them stealthily advanced. They didn't hide, nor did they use Deathgod Golems; they just walked straight across.

Linley frowned.

"Reisgem, I think we'd best split up and maintain some distance from each other. Otherwise, if the four of us are always together, most likely the other commanders will not dare approach us and stay far away." Linley said.

"Split up? Then how would we coordinate?" Reisgem asked.

Linley laughed. "How about this. The two of us will divide into two squads. Bebe and I will separate, but the two of us have connected souls and will be able to sense each other's presences. Even if we can't see each other, we will still be able to find each other."

"Good idea." Reisgem nodded repeatedly.

"Then…right, Linley, you follow me. Reihom, you go with Bebe. Our two squads will maintain a distance of three kilometers. If battle begins, we'll

be able to quickly cross this short distance." Reisgem made the arrangements, and Linley and Bebe had no objections. They immediately split up.

Linley and Bebe were able to sense each other's locations, and thus, they were both able to sense the direction the other was headed.

Less than half a day after they separated…

"Boss, we found a target." Bebe's surprised, delighted voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Chapter 26 – The First Battle

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 26, The First Battle

Linley's eyes instantly lit up.

"Reisgem, they found a target!" Linley sent through divine sense, while transforming into a blur that flew at high speed towards Bebe's location. "A target?" Reisgem was startled and delighted as well. His speed also increased, and he was actually a level faster than Linley. The distance of three kilometers was crossed in the twinkling of an eye.

But by the time Linley and Reisgem arrived, they discovered that Bebe and Reihom were just standing there.

"Bebe, what's going on? The target?" Linley had a guess as to what happened.

"That person was too crafty. As soon as I saw him, he immediately turned tail and fled instead of fighting back!" Bebe said helplessly, a bitter look on his face, while the nearby Reihom said in a deep voice, "The young master and I encountered this person not too long ago. As soon as this person saw me, he was so frightened he instantly fled."

"We encountered him before?" Reisgem shook his head. "Forget it. He can just consider himself lucky."

"As I see it, Reihom, you should slightly change your body. Your appearance is simply too easily distinguishable." Linley said with a laugh. The big fellow nodded slightly, then with a sound of acknowledgment, began to shrink from being a giant of four meters in height to an ordinary person two meters tall.

Reisgem winked and laughed, "Hey, Hom, in this shape, it's going to be quite hard to sit on your shoulders.

Linley immediately thought back to how, when he had first seen Reisgem, Reisgem had been sitting on the giant's shoulders.

"Reisgem, let's continue to head out." Linley said with a laugh.

"Right." Reisgem nodded, then gritted his teeth. "Hmph. Hom and I have been in the Planar Battlefield for many years now, but we only have a single gold badge. This time, we have to get some more." Reisgem and Reihom had both come from the Infernal Realm, and so belonged to the side of the Divine Darkness Plane.

They, too, had crossed the Stellar River and arrived on this side.

"You guys only have one as well?" Bebe couldn't help but laugh.

"Hmph, if I had your innate divine ability, I would've killed quite a few commanders already." Reisgem said with a sniff. "Enough, let's head out. Linley, the two of us will go this way!" Their forces separated once again. Because the geography of the Planar Battlefield was varied, with tall grass and hills everywhere, at a distance of three kilometers, it was generally not possible to see someone else.

"Whoooosh."

A cold wind howled drearily, and two figures advanced, one in front, one in the back. The leader was a white-robed man with long jade hair that drooped all the way to his waist. He had an astonishingly, breathtakingly beautiful face, and his skin was almost crystalline and translucent, as though he were a jade statue. In addition, in the center of his forehead, there was the seal of a crescent moon.

He quietly walked, casually glancing at his surroundings, as though this Planar Battlefield was his garden.

Behind him was a female warrior dressed in armor.

“Milord, should we be looking for a place to rest? All of those commanders have hidden themselves deeply. When they see you come, milord, all of them are so terrified they all scamper away.” The brown-haired female warrior said with a laugh.

The jade-haired, white-robed handsome youth strolled forward and said, “Fine, then let’s just look for a place up ahead to rest. Mm? It seems as though we don’t need to be in a hurry to rest. We have some prey.” The white-robed youth’s lips crooked upwards, and the crescent moon in his forehead began to glow with green light.

Linley’s group had been traveling for half a month now. Although they had encountered a few targets, when they took a close look, they found that the targets were just Deathgod Golems. They ran into five Deathgod Golems, but not a single person who had dared to reveal himself. But Linley’s group wasn’t discouraged at all.

After all, there were only so many commanders to begin with. Some were in the army camps, while others were in hiding. There weren’t many who dared to roam around outside.

“Those supreme experts…all of them are indeed almost flawless.” Linley chatted with Reisgem quite often over the course of their journey.

Only now did Linley realize…that Reisgem actually only had a single Sovereign artifact; a Sovereign weapon! Only, Reisgem naturally possessed an extremely powerful body and powerful soul. Although his body was inferior to Bebe’s, his soul was far, far more powerful!

Reisgem’s true body had 108 spikes atop it, and the Amethyst Mountains, which contained vast quantities of amethysts, also had 108 caves.

Linley’s guess was…“The Redbud Sovereign and the Amethyst Mountains definitely have a unique connection to each other. Reisgem is pretty much the same! I can understand why his soul is so powerful. After all, the Amethyst Mountains are a place where countless amethysts are generated.” The Amethyst Mountains also had a large number of amethyst beasts,

whose bodies were exceedingly tough. Naturally, Reisgem's body was also tough.

On the whole, Reisgem was very balanced!

Even if he didn't have a Sovereign artifact, he would still be very powerful. Combined with a Sovereign artifact, he was able to dominate the Planar Battlefield.

"Those Sovereign's Emissaries who acquire Sovereign artifacts use them to cover up their flaws." Linley understood this principle.

While Linley and Reisgem made their way through the Planar Battlefield, staring at their surroundings and looking for a target, Linley suddenly stared towards the front…up ahead, two figures had appeared, one in front, the other behind. The two had discovered Linley and Reisgem as well, and they simply stood there fearlessly, staring at them.

"Oh, them?" Reisgem laughed.

"Occluar [Ao'ke'lu'wei'er] of the Life Realm?" Linley was startled.

Occluar was the genius of the 'Divine Moon Elves', and one of the highly ranked supreme experts of the Life Realm. He trained in the Edicts of Life, and was skilled in soul attacks. He could be considered a perfect counter for Linley!

"Bebe, we have our target. Hurry over." Linley hurriedly send through the soul bond.

Linley and Bebe were able to communicate at a very great distance.

Even here in the Planar Battlefield, where divine sense would only stretch for a hundred meters, he was still able to easily chat with Bebe at a distance of many kilometers. It must be understood that when Linley was not even a Saint yet and was trapped within the Radiant Temple of the Radiant Church, he was still able to communicate spiritually with Bebe. At that time, Linley

wasn't even capable of making his spiritual sense leave his body. This was one of the benefits of a spirit bond.

The Planar Battlefield. Atop the desolate earth.

Linley and Reisgem on one side, Occluar and his companion on the other. The two stared at each other. They paused slightly, but in the next instant, the two sides attacked without hesitation!

"Linley, use your innate divine ability against that woman!" Reisgem sent out excitedly, while at the same time, without hesitating at all, Reisgem transformed into a streak of violet light, shooting towards the front.

"Understood."

Linley hurried forward as well, flying towards the enemies at top speed.

"Hmph. They are looking for death." Occluar, seeing the two charge towards him, couldn't help but let out a cold laugh. He just stood there, waiting for them to come. He had planned to attack them, only because he was afraid they would flee. But seeing Linley and Reisgem attack, he naturally was more than happy to just wait. Wouldn't it be excellent to just sit here and wait for them to come and be killed instead?

Reisgem was in front, Linley was behind.

When Linley was at a distance of 150 meters from the enemies, Linley's eyes suddenly flashed with azure-golden light, while at the same time, an enormous coiling Azure Dragon Phantom that was a thousand meters long appeared behind Linley. That Azure Dragon head hovered above Linley, staring at its target…

The brown-haired woman!

"Eh?" The white-robed elfin youth, Occluar, was startled. "Azure Dragon clan?" He now realized that Linley was using this technique against his servant.

However, he still disdainfully stood there. “The innate divine ability of the Azure Dragon clan can at most impact the passage of time. I simply need to make it so that they won’t be able to draw close for a short period of time. They can forget about harming my subordinates.” The white-robed elfin man’s body blurred, and he came attacking towards Reisgem!

Reisgem cracked his lips into a grin.

“Down!”

“BANG!” A violet light exploded forth from Reisgem, creating an enormous sphere of hundreds of meters across. A terrifyingly powerful gravity instantly took effect on the body of the elfin man, Occluar. Occluar suddenly felt as though his body had become countless times heavier, and he couldn’t help but sink downwards.

As for Reisgem, he waved his hand out…

“Swish!”

A blurry light shot out, striking towards the brown-haired female warrior. The brown-haired female warrior seemed to have just recovered from the field of slow time. Faced with this attack, she wasn’t able to resist at all, and the blurry light shot directly into her body. The brown-haired female warrior’s body trembled slightly, and then collapsed to the ground.

“Whap!” A white badge floated out from her body.

“So she was this weak.” Reisgem shook his head disdainfully.

“Reisgem!” The elfin man, Occluar, stood there staring coldly at Reisgem, his eyes seemingly filled with rage. “You killed my servant…what, do you think you are able to overcome me?”

“No, no, I don’t think I can.”

Reisgem chortled and just stood there, facing the elfin man. Reisgem knew how strong Occluar was. If Linley and Bebe weren't with him, there was no way he would be able to kill Occluar. At their respective levels…they wouldn't be able to really do anything to each other.

Occluar was only certain of who Reisgem was after Reisgem spread out his Amethyst Space.

Otherwise, if he had known in advance, Occluar would've retreated long ago.

"Although I don't think I can beat you, today, I really want that gold badge of yours, so…sorry." Reisgem chortled.

Occluar's face sank, but then he snickered as well. "Oh, so you want to kill me and get my gold badge? By relying on who? That Azure Dragon punk behind you?" Occluar didn't care at all about the death of his servant; after all, he had only brought the servant to the Planar Battlefield to attend to him. For battle, he himself was sufficient.

Occluar looked carefully at Linley, as though wanting to tell how strong Linley was. After all, it seemed as though no one within the Azure Dragon clan had ever been able to threaten his life.

"No, I don't have that power." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Linley knew as well that this Occluar was far more powerful than that elfin Elder of the eight great clans who had nearly killed Delia when he had sent her into that coma. In addition, Occluar had a defensive Sovereign artifact.

"Boss, we're here." Bebe sent mentally.

"Wait for your chance, then make your move." Linley sent.

"Reisgem, I don't have the time to waste with you. I'm leaving now." Occluar let out a cold snort, then turned to leave.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Two figures landed on the path behind him, one tall figure and one short figure. It was Reihom and Bebe.

Occluar’s eyes narrowed. As he saw it, there were far too few people capable of killing him. He didn’t believe the four of them were capable of it. He couldn’t help but grow rather angry as he let out a low snort. “Reisgem, there’s no point in us battling. Your behavior, however, makes me very angry. Today, let’s have a little fight. Let’s see if your soul attack is stronger, or if mine is.”

Linley’s face changed.

He was able to see quite clearly how suddenly, two translucent wings suddenly appeared from Occluar’s back, while at the same time, a dazzling green light shot out from the center of his forehead, instantly transforming into sixteen green crescent moons. In a place as dark as this Planar Battlefield, the light of these green crescent moons was quite dazzling to behold.

The sixteen green crescent moons shot out in a devilishly arcing line, striking towards Reisgem. Clearly, Occluar only considered Reisgem to be a threat, and didn’t care about the other three at all. This wasn’t his fault; he didn’t fear any material attacks, and as for soul attacks…

That was his specialty. What was there to fear? Over the course of countless years, he had never suffered in a competition in the soul.

“Hey, elf punk, are you looking down at me?”

Occluar didn’t even look at Bebe, but suddenly, from the corner of his eyes, he saw an enormous illusion appear. He couldn’t help but turn to look, and as he did, the formerly completely confident Occluar had his face instantly turn white and his eyes become full of terror. “How…how can this be? That’s…”

The enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat had appeared behind Bebe.

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

“Heh heh, even I can’t block it. You? Block it? Go die.” Reisgem, seeing this, laughed. He felt all the more certain that having Linley and Bebe join forces with him was an extremely wise decision.

With the Godeater technique having emerged, Occluar instantly slumped to the ground.

“Clink!” A gold badge fell out of his body, and a beautiful set of green armor also emerged, falling out of Occluar.

The first battle of their hunting squad…was a complete success!

Chapter 27 – A Change

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 27, A Change

Occluar's corpse just lay there on the desolate earth.

"He died!" Linley sighed in his heart. "Occluar was an expert on the level of Reisgem. Even Highgod Paragons would find it hard to kill him. Aside from a Sovereign acting against him, generally speaking, it would take a group of experts to kill an expert like him. But Bebe's innate divine ability, 'Godeater'…" Linley couldn't help but look towards Bebe.

At this moment, Bebe was by the side of the corpse of the elfin Occluar. He let out a snort. "You actually ignored me!"

"Haha, Bebe, you really are the perfect counter to soul specialists who aren't at the Paragon level yet!" Reisgem laughed while walking over, slapping his arm around Bebe's shoulders. "It seems we are a perfect match! Your soul attacks are number one, and while my material attacks aren't number one, they are still at the very top. With us joining forces, who can stop us?"

Reisgem glanced sideways at the corpse on the ground, then snickered. "Hey, experts, experts…this is what happens. Now that his most powerful body is dead, even if he has divine clones remaining, how much value could they possibly hold?"

Right at this moment…

"Hmph!" A cold snort rang out. Reisgem suddenly moved, transforming into a violet blur which streaked across the skies.

"What's going on?" Linley hurriedly turned to look as well, only to see Reisgem chasing towards a certain direction, with a black blur fleeing from him. Linley couldn't help but feel shocked. "There was someone else

nearby? It seems just now, I was so focused on Occluar that I didn't even notice that someone was snooping nearby."

Linley carefully watched Reisgem pursue and attack the fleeing person.

Mid-pursuit, Reisgem suddenly emanated a violet light from his body, which formed into his Amethyst Space. The fleeing black figure immediately began to move much slower, after having been caught by it.

"Swish!"

A violet light shot out from Reisgem's hand, shooting forward like a meteor, so fast that the black blur wasn't able to dodge at all. "Crackle…" The violet light instantly traversed the less than hundred meters of distance that separated Reisgem and the black blur. The nearby space began to ripple like water, and some faint spatial cracks could be seen as well. With a 'bang' sound, the violet light drove into the black blur's body, and it immediately exploded, sending fragments shooting out in every direction, while that violet light finally solidified.

This was a fairly short, 1.5 meter long cavalry lance that was completely covered with a dark violet color.

But of course, it could also be used as a javelin, or for close quarters combat.

"A Sovereign weapon!" Linley understand that this was Reisgem's one and only Sovereign weapon. "When Reisgem throws this as a javelin, the power is as terrifying as this! It created spatial fractures!"

Linley clearly remembered how very minute fractures in space had appeared upon the lance being thrown.

This was the first time Linley had ever seen someone capable of causing spatial cracks appear, here in the Planar Battlefield! "This Reisgem trains in the Edicts of Destruction, and his understanding in its profound mysteries is formidable to begin with. He is also very strong as well. Matching that with

a Sovereign weapon…it truly is as he said; his material attacks, amongst commanders, might not be the best, but it is at the very top."

Linley now completely understood how powerful Reisgem was.

Soul attacks and material attacks; he approached perfection in both. If one had to point out a weakness…most likely, it was that he was a bit afraid of Bebe. Bebe's 'Godeater' technique was the perfect counter to him, unless Reisgem went and acquired a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Unfortunately, although his mother was a Sovereign, she couldn't just give him another one; he needed to acquire more military merits.

"Motherf*cking…it's a Deathgod Golem!" Reisgem burst into a torrent of curses as he walked over.

"It is indeed a Deathgod Golem. No point in being angry." Linley said. "Who knows where the person behind it is hiding. After realizing how powerful you are, he probably fled long ago."

"Each time I see a 'target', kill it, and find out afterwards that it was a Deathgod Golem, I feel pissed."

Reisgem pointed towards the gold badge on the ground with one finger. "There's only a single gold badge, while there are four of us. How should we divide it, everyone?"

Linley and Bebe couldn't help but look at each other.

A commander badge!

To Linley, every single commander badge represented that he would be able to save another one of his family or friends! Linley deeply desired to acquire this commander badge, but Linley also understood that since the four of them had set up this four person hunting squad, they had to abide by the rules of it. He couldn't demand that others give up their spoils of war to him as well.

“Linley, what do you two think?” Reisgem looked over.

As Reisgem saw it, there was no need for him to divide between himself and Reihom, as the two were very close to each other. Although Bebe and Linley had just joined the hunting squad, although they were acquaintances, they actually didn’t have a very deep relationship yet, and so he couldn’t just make a casual decision.

“Let’s do as we said originally.” Linley said with a laugh. “The four of us will divide any rewards equally. However, clearly, we only have a single gold badge here right now. How about this? Reisgem, you and Reihom will each have one share, while Bebe and I will have one share. I imagine you two won’t have any objections to this, right?”

“Of course not.” Reisgem laughed as well.

Reisgem and Reihom wouldn’t quibble over military merits, much like how Linley and Bebe wouldn’t either.

“As for this commander badge, either of our two sides can take it. If you take it this time, then we’ll take the next one. If we take it this time, then next time, you’ll take it.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Fine then.” Reisgem very straightforwardly reached out with his arm, snatched up the commander badge, then tossed it to Linley. “You two just joined our squad, so we’ll let you take the first one. The next commander badge we get is ours though.”

Linley accepted it, not standing on ceremony, and laughed while nodding. “Fine. Next one is yours.”

Linley clenched the gold badge. He couldn’t help but feel excited in his heart. “Yet another one!” Linley wanted to rescue his father, Yale, George, and Dixie, who had also died an unjust death. Dixie was Delia’s one and only elder brother, after all. As for those who had died normal deaths, who had died deaths with no regrets, Linley didn’t see the need to make them regain their memories.

After all, the likes of Uncle Hillman had lived for centuries, with a full house of children and grandchildren. They had lived carefree lives, then died of old age.

Since they had died with no regrets, why disturb them in their rest?

But as for Yale, George, and his own father 'Hogg', they had all died miserable, unjust deaths.

"Linley, it's just a commander badge. Is it really worth you having such a look on your face?" The nearby Reisgem couldn't help but smirk while speaking.

"Uh." Linley awoke from his trance. He immediately laughed, then collected the gold badge. "I was just thinking about a few things."

The nearby Bebe sighed emotionally as well, "Reisgem, you've come here to get enough badges so as to trade for a Sovereign artifact, but although the Boss and I also have come to acquire enough badges, our purpose is different. You don't understand how important these badges are to my Boss."

"Oh?" Reisgem immediately grew surprised. "What's so important?"

Bebe immediately began to chat in secret with Reisgem, while Linley just shook his head and laughed.

"Reisgem, what should we do with this Sovereign artifact?" Linley said.

"What should we do? Just toss it there." Reisgem said.

Linley and Bebe were both stunned.

"Toss it?" Bebe said, startled.

Reisgem gave it a casual kick, then snorted. "Of course. What, do you think

we should take it with us? The Sovereign will come to reclaim it eventually, anyways. There's no point to taking it with us. In addition, Occluar clearly had other divine clones outside, so there's no way for us to use the Sovereign artifact either. There's no point to bringing it."

Linley and Bebe, upon hearing this, couldn't help but trade glances. Still, they had to admit that Reisgem's words were reasonable.

"Let's go. Keep moving." Reisgem said with a laugh. "Given the power of our hunting squad, haha…what have we to fear, here in the Planar Battlefield? Haha."

Linley couldn't help but to laugh as well. Their four man hunting squad once more headed out, dividing once again into two squads, traveling at a distance of three kilometers or so.

Next to a short hill within the Planar Battlefield.

A golden-haired, black-robed man had a look of astonishment on his face. "Who would have imagined that the news which has been circulating amongst the commanders about Beirut having come is false! The person who used that innate divine ability isn't Beirut; it is someone else. Aside from Beirut, there's actually someone else capable of that technique! This is terrible. And, by the look of it, that youngster with the straw hat is completely unrestrained and has no taboos, unlike Beirut who cares greatly about his status."

The person who had used the Deathgod Golem and had seen Bebe kill Occluar was this man.

"I have to tell my friends about this news!"

The golden-haired man gritted his teeth, immediately fleeing.

Most of the commanders in the Planar Battlefield, especially those who were within the same alliance, had some degree of pre-existing relationships with each other. They would all share some important news

with each other. For example, when Bebe and Linley had arrived in the Planar Battlefield, that commander in the headquarters had planned to join forces with Linley and Bebe, and also provide them with some news. Only, because he didn't recognize the two of them, he didn't do it.

The news that the person who used the innate divine ability 'Godeater' was a youngster who wore a straw hat rather than Beirut quickly spread through the commanders at an astonishing speed.

At the sides of the Stellar Sea, within an alliance base. Within an estate formed from elemental essence, a man dressed in sky blue robes was walking forward with large strides towards the gates.

"Milord."

The guards at the gates immediately opened it. They all knew…that this person was a commander-level expert and a good friend of their own lord.

"Bray [Bu'lei], why did you return?" A red-robed woman within the courtyard was drinking some wine. She smiled as she glanced at the blue-robed man who had walked in. "Didn't you go out to kill a few commanders, so as to acquire a few extra badges?"

"Not anymore. I didn't expect that yet another variable came into play." The blue-robed man let out a snort, then sat down. Grabbing a bottle of wine, he raised his head and chugged it down.

"Variable?" The red-robed woman was puzzled.

The blue-robed man grumbled unhappily, "Wasn't there a rumor prior to this that Beirut had come? If it really was Beirut who had come, I wouldn't be afraid; Beirut and I have met before, and we can be considered to have something of a relationship. If I encounter him, he wouldn't act against me. In addition, someone as proud and arrogant as Beirut generally wouldn't lower himself to kill ordinary commanders, so long as they didn't offend him.

“It’s precisely because I was under this impression that I went roaming about the Planar Battlefield! But who would have imagined that just now, a good friend of mine sent me the news that the person who used the ‘Godeater’ innate divine ability wasn’t Beirut. It was a youngster wearing a straw hat!” The blue-robed man shook his head. “Forget it. I don’t have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. It’s best if I don’t run around outside wildly. If I encounter that youngster, I’ll die a damnably unfair death!”

Hearing this, the red-robed woman understood.

“There’s a second divine beast, ‘Godeater Rat’?” The red-robed woman also understand how grave this news was.

Amongst Highgods, there were many people who understood how important it was to gain a high degree of insight into the soul, and there were many who were extremely skilled in soul attacks and defenses. Additionally, even amongst Sovereign artifacts, soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts were the hardest to forge. Generally speaking, even if a Sovereign was to give an Emissary an artifact, it would only very rarely be a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

Thus, soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts were exceedingly rare.

Additionally, many commanders were extremely confident in their soul defense abilities. For example, the likes of Reisgem and Occluar would still be able to hold on, if just barely, against the soul attack of even a Highgod Paragon. As they saw it, there was no point to acquiring a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. It was thus better to acquire a different type of Sovereign artifact.

But after Beirut suddenly rose to prominence, many people learned…that the most terrifying soul attack amongst Highgods wasn’t that of a Highgod Paragon; rather, it was Beirut’s innate divine ability.

But given the status which Beirut possessed, he would rarely lower himself to go massacre ordinary commanders.

Thus, no one was worried about him.

But now, yet another person had emerged who was capable of the ‘Godeater’ ability, a person no one knew. Those experts who were neither Highgod Paragons nor had soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts…they now began to worry.

They no longer dared to confidently wander outside as they previously had. Those who did go outside hid, using Deathgod Golems to scout for them.

“Haha…the appearance of this youngster…” The red-robed woman began to laugh. “There weren’t many commanders who dared to freely wander the Planar Battlefield to begin with. Now, with people like you bowing out as well…most likely, the only people wandering the Planar Battlefield will either belong to extremely powerful squads or be truly invincible, unbeatable figures.”

“Forget it. Wait for the final battle. I’ll acquire the military merits during the final battle. If push comes to shove, I can even wait for the next Planar War to finish acquiring enough military merits. Where on earth did this youngster come from? After leaving the Planar Battlefield, I’ll need to make some investigations.” The blue-robed man said with a sigh.

Chapter 28 – Five Hundred Years

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 28, Five Hundred Years

In the desolate wilderness, Linley and Reisgem, one tall, the other short, were advancing side by side.

“What’s going on? There’s almost no one around.” Reisgem couldn’t help but grumble and curse, his eyes filled with anger as he looked around. “It’s one thing for those weaker commanders to be hiding, but those fairly powerful ones…when Reihom and I were together, we ran into quite a few of them. But now, all of them are missing.”

The nearby Linley was silent.

Linley was beginning to feel frantic as well. He couldn’t help but look about at the battlefield, but there was nothing to see, not a single person. “The Planar Battlefield seems to have suddenly grown much more barren. There’s not many people visible now. When Bebe and I used Deathgod Golems to lure people in, we still discovered a few people.” Linley couldn’t understand either what was going on either. It had been three years since they had killed that elven male, ‘Occluar’.

It had been three full years, but Linley’s group hadn’t acquired another gold badge!

It wasn’t that Linley’s group had grown soft-hearted; they didn’t find any targets they could attack at all!

During these three years, Linley’s had encountered quite a few ‘people’, but all of them were either Deathgod Golems or truly supreme experts whom the four wouldn’t be able to handle at all. But of course, there was also one time when they ran into another squad. That time, Linley’s group had prepared to attack, because there were only two of them.

But just as they were about to attack and to call Bebe to come over, they discovered…that three more helpers rushed over to join the enemy squad.

This squad was actually a five person squad! And, in terms of power, two were on the same level as Reisgem. Once the battle began, perhaps they might be able to kill one or two of them, but their own side would also lose one or two people. It wasn't worth it.

"Linley." Reisgem suddenly said amusedly. "Hypothetically, if we were to be unable to acquire any commander badges during the remainder of the duration of this Planar War, then Reihom and I really would have suffered a loss! After all, we gave you the first commander badge."

Linley was stunned. All he could do was let out an awkward laugh.

"I'm kidding." Reisgem pulled out a violet fruit, then began to eat it. "How could we not acquire any more commander badges? Hmph…if push comes to shove, we can wait for the final battle of the Planar War. The four of us will join forces to kill a few more enemy commanders. Given our power, it won't be too hard if we join forces during the chaos of that battle and take advantage of some people." Reisgem was clearly quite confident.

Linley nodded slightly as well.

Although he now had two commander badges, he was still some ways off from his target.

"Boss, we have a target!" Bebe's voice suddenly echoed in Linley's mind. Linley's eyes lit up, and he grew excited.

"Reisgem, we have a target." Linley immediately flew towards Bebe's direction.

"Oh!" Reisgem hurriedly flew after him as well.

But by the time Linley and Reisgem got there, they discovered that Bebe and Reihom were standing in front of a black-robed figure, whose arms

were already torn off, revealing a metallic color beneath his shattered shoulder blades. Bebe, seeing Linley and Reisgem arrive, turned and said resignedly, “Boss, it is a Deathgod Golem.”

Linley and Reisgem were rather disappointed, but they had already been prepared for this.

After all, the number of times this had occurred over the past three years was far too many.

“This Deathgod Golem actually isn’t fleeing.” Linley began to laugh.

“Why flee? It won’t be able to escape anyhow. It’s just a Deathgod Golem, after all. I have plenty of these toys. In addition, I’m quite curious about the second Godeater Rat to appear in the countless planes of the universe.” The metallic golem spoke out, and then looked towards Bebe with curiosity. “Might I ask, what is your relationship with Beirut?”

Linley was startled.

How did others know that Bebe was a Godeater Rat?

“How did you know?” Bebe said, surprised.

The Deathgod Golem said, “Of course I know. You used your innate divine ability several times, causing that Godeater Rat illusion to appear. Quite a few people have seen it already. At first, everyone thought it was Beirut, but afterwards, they learned that it was a youngster who wore a straw hat. When I saw you wearing a straw hat, I naturally recognized you.”

“Ah.” Bebe was rather stupefied. So it was his straw hat which had betrayed him.

“Now I get it! No wonder they all went into hiding and didn’t dare to show themselves.” Reisgem said angrily.

“Of course nobody dares to show themselves. Everyone knows what

Beirut's temperament is like; even if he came in, we wouldn't be too worried. But this youngster who no one knows is also capable of that technique…nobody wants to treat their own life and future like a joke." The Deathgod Golem said casually.

Once one was hit by that technique, one would be finished. Even if they had divine clones in the outside world, they would still topple down from their honored position at the peak of the world of Deities.

"Hurry up and f*ck off. I won't wreck your Deathgod Golem." Reisgem said irritably. "This really pisses me off. It's hard for me to locate these people, but I didn't expect all of them would hide away. They really are cowards!"

It wasn't cowardice, though; it was caution.

The various commanders had all expended countless amounts of effort to reach their current levels of power. Even if they didn't acquire any military merits in this Planar War, they could still go participate in the next one. After all, it occurred every trillion years, with five battles each time. To them, military merits were secondary concerns; their lives were the most important!

Once their most powerful clones died, they would be finished.

"What should we do now?" The normally taciturn Reihom knew that the situation looked bad as well.

"What can we do?" Reisgem chewed on his lips. "It was such a rare stroke of fortune for me to get Bebe's assistance. I really wanted to dominate those people, but all of them went into hiding. Hmph…fine, then. Let's all find a place to rest as well. After we are finished resting, when the final battle occurs, we'll all emerge and slaughter them viciously! We'll acquire more military merits then."

"That's all we can do." Bebe said resignedly.

Linley frowned slightly. Although other commanders might not care too much about how many military merits they acquired, as they could acquire more in the next Planar War, Linley had no time to waste. Linley had to acquire sufficient military merits during this Planar War.

But, with so many people in hiding, what could he do?

“As I see it, let’s go find a place to rest while at the same time, use our Deathgod Golems to lure people close. If we can lure in one or two commanders, that’d be good.” Linley said.

“Right, makes sense. There are another eight centuries from now till the end of this Planar War. It really is possible for us to attract some people over the next eight centuries.” Reisgem nodded in approval.

“Alright, enough thinking about it then. Let’s go find a place to rest.” Bebe was the first to move forward.

Linley’s group casually selected a tall mountain. By relying on Reihom’s supreme technique, they set up a cave estate. Linley’s group of four thus began to live here peacefully. As for controlling the Deathgod Golem to attract people, this mission was handed over to Bebe and Reihom, while Reisgem completely focused on training.

As for Linley, naturally, he was more than happy to seize the opportunity to train hard.

The Planar Battlefield fell into a period of strange tranquility. Aside from a few rare squads of extremely powerful experts, virtually all of the other solitary commanders went into hiding. Most were waiting for the final battle! Some were waiting to leave after the final battle, while others were waiting to participate. Although the final battle would be dangerous, if the commanders were cautious, they would have a survival rate much higher than that of ordinary soldiers.

Five hundred years silently slipped away peacefully!

The tall, desolate mountain. Within the quiet cave estate.

Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom were seated next to each other, drinking wine, eating fruit, and chatting casually.

“Linley really is too hard-working in his training.” Reisgem couldn’t help but glance outside towards a distant courtyard, where Linley was currently seated in the meditative position. “It’s good to be hard working, but you have to take a rest.” As Reisgem spoke, he took a huge bite of the fruit.

“My Boss? Of course he is hard-working when training. Naturally, his training speed will be fast as well.” Bebe said smugly.

The habitually taciturn Reihom gave a rare nod and said, “This Linley’s training speed really is astonishing.”

“It really is. Nearly four centuries ago, when Linley woke up, he said that he had already begun to completely fuse four profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. And how many years has this kid been training for? Just two thousand years. How many years have I been training for? I’ve only fused five profound mysteries, myself.” Reisgem said with a smirk.

Bebe just rubbed his nose, not saying a single thing.

In their four-person hunting squad, he was the only one who had no right to say a single thing when the topic of conversation was fusing profound mysteries.

Reisgem and Reihom had both fused five profound mysteries; naturally, though, this was related to the fact that they had been training for far too long a period of time. Linley had trained for just two thousand years, but had nearly fused four profound mysteries as well.

But him?

He hadn’t fused a single thing!

“Hmph. Hmph. My innate divine ability is powerful though.” This was how Bebe mentally consoled himself.

Right at this moment…

A terrifyingly powerful divine sense swept past their cave estate. Reisgem, Reihom and Bebe’s faces changed. Even the training Linley opened his eyes, staring towards the outside in amazement.

“Whoosh!” Reisgem and the other two immediately flew to the outside courtyard.

“Someone was able to use his divine sense to investigate inside. How terrifying.” Reisgem said in a low voice.

“It is either a Soul Mutate expert or a Highgod Paragon.” Reihom said.

Linley was stunned as well. It must be understood that this cave estate was in the heart of this tall mountain. Even the corridor which led from the cave to the outside was a hundred meters long. For someone to sweep the cave estate with divine sense meant that the divine sense stretched to hundreds of meters. Linley had refined countless amethysts, but his divine sense only stretched to a hundred meters.

At such a great distance…

There were only two possibilities. A Soul Mutate or a Highgod Paragon. Of course, a Sovereign could also use his own sense, but Linley’s group wouldn’t be able to sense it at all if that had happened.

“Right!” Linley’s group of four emerged from the estate and looked towards the corridor that led to the outside world.

In the vast, empty corridor, there was a single figure who was walking in towards them. This person was dressed in a long white robe, had white hair, and white brows. His white brows were nearly vertical, and his eyes were extremely long and slanted, and seemed to shoot out a freezing light. Just

by walking forward, this white-robed, white-browed man made others feel an unconscious veneration towards him.

“Him!” Linley’s face turned ugly.

This person had once roamed the Infernal Realm, and had been known as the ‘Bloodwind’ Fiend. The meaning of this nickname was that when the wind arose, blood would fly into the air, and people would die.

“Bayer [Bei’e]! What are you doing here?” Reisgem frowned, and a violet light emerged from his body.

“Oh, Reisgem.” The white-robed, white-browed man let out a calm chuckle.

Although Bayer had adventured through the Infernal Realm in the past, the many experts of the universe all believed that Bayer had come from the Divine Plane of Wind, and that he was one of the supreme, king-like figures of that plane. Because…this person had already reached the ‘Paragon’ level!

“What has a Highgod Paragon come for?” Linley felt rather nervous.

Highgod Paragons were truly frightening.

“I didn’t expect you’d come to the Planar Battlefield as well, Bayer.” Reisgem said with a calm laugh.

“Originally, I had no plans to come here. The Planar Wars hold no meaning for me. However…I owed Occluar a favor.” This Bayer said calmly. “Occluar’s most powerful Life-type divine clone was killed by you, so he asked me to help him get revenge!”

Bayer said calmly, “I don’t like owing favors! And so…I came to the Planar Battlefield!”

The faces of Linley and the other three changed greatly.

So Bayer had actually come at the request of Occluar!

“You actually owed him a favor?” Reisgem frowned. Highgod Paragons had already reached the peak of the universe. It was very rare for them to owe someone a favor, but once they did, they would definitely repay it.

“The three of you don’t matter. I only need to kill one person.” Bayer calmly stretched out his right hand, his crystalline finger pointing towards Bebe. “Him! He was the one who killed Occluar. I will only kill him.”

Linley instantly grew frantic.

Reisgem just laughed calmly. “Bayer, do you know what sort of relationship he has to Beirut?”

“Beirut?” Bayer said calmly. “Although he is hard to deal with…even if I do kill his grandson, what will he, Beirut, be able to do to me?”

Chapter 29 – Four Against One

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 29, Four Against One

In terms of fame, Bayer's fame had shaken the various realms countless years before Beirut had appeared. As a Highgod Paragon, he was someone whom even the Sovereigns would fight over to make an Emissary. After having been at the very peak of power for so many years, how could he possibly fear Beirut?

More importantly, deep in his heart…Bayer actually somewhat looked down upon Beirut.

Beirut hadn't reached the Highgod Paragon level, but because his body was simply too powerful and his innate divine ability was too monstrous, even if he encountered Paragons such as Bayer, Beirut wouldn't be any weaker. Many commanders, in fact, feared Beirut even more than Bayer.

"He just relies on his innate divine ability." That's what Bayer believed.

Within the mountain cave estate.

Bayer was there by himself, against Reisgem, Linley, and the other two. The atmosphere, however, clearly seemed to indicate that Bayer held the advantage.

"This is trouble." Linley was extremely panicked.

"Boss, if we can't beat him, then run! Perhaps we'll be able to throw him off." Bebe sent mentally. "But Boss, this Paragon is very terrifying. Don't try to hold on if you can't; what matters is preserving your own life."

Linley gave Bebe a glance. When Linley had been eight years old, Bebe had begun to follow him. Even if he had to die, Linley wouldn't abandon Bebe.

“Bayer!”

Linley stared at Bayer, feeling resentment in his heart. If he had the power that Beirut had, then today, he wouldn’t be so helpless.

“What the hell is Occluar doing? He was killed in the Planar Battlefield, and then asked someone to get revenge for him? He really motherf*cking…!” Reisgem cursed, his violet pupils still staring fixedly at Bayer. He called out in a shrill voice, “Bayer, listen up. The person you want to kill belongs to my squad. It was my squad which worked together to kill Occluar. If you want to kill, then you’ll have to kill all four of us!”

Bayer’s forehead creased slightly. Those two forceful white brows seemed as sharp as knives, and a baleful aura began to gather between them.

“Reisgem, don’t get involved!” Bayer said coldly.

To kill an entire squad? Kill all four of them?

No matter what, Bayer wouldn’t have the courage to kill Reisgem. That was the only child of the Redbud Sovereign. If the enraged Redbud Sovereign truly wished to kill him, although he, Bayer, as a Highgod Paragon, had the ability to stay alive and flee, his only option would be to flee into a material plane. He didn’t want to have to forever hide within a material plane.

“Occluar was killed by this Godeater Rat. Today, I am only killing him as well. The three of you, off to one side.” Bayer’s voice was fierce, and his narrow eyes seemed like the savage, sinister eyes of a lone wolf.

“Crackle…” Linley’s body suddenly became covered with azure-golden draconic scales, while at the same time, his body moved slightly to stand in front of Bebe. Linley just stood there, staring at Bayer fixedly.

“Boss!” Bebe actually laughed.

He wanted to make Linley leave, but Linley’s reaction was exactly what

Bebe had thought it would be; over the course of countless years, during each life-and-death crisis, neither the two brothers had had ever fled and left the other behind.

Reisgem and Reihom moved slightly as well to block in front of Bebe.

“Thank you.” Bebe laughed.

“For what? We’re bros. You and me, together, form a powerful team. We can’t possibly do without you.” Reisgem chortled. Bayer couldn’t help but frown. The three in front of him had clearly already made their decisions. They clearly weren’t willing to just think of their own good!

“I always hear people talk about how incredible Paragons are, but I’ve never given one a try.” Reisgem snickered.

The other three were prepared to fight at any moment as well.

“Very well!” Bayer said calmly. His lips were very thin, making him look very mean and sinister.

Linley was staring at Bayer the entire time, but suddenly, Linley felt his vision grow blurry. The white-robed man that had been tens of meters away suddenly turned into a blur. Linley, Reisgem, and Reihom weren’t able to react before the white-robed man’s figure charged into their midst.

His speed was incredible! He was definitely the most terrifyingly fast person Linley had ever seen!

The wind element specialized in speed to begin with. One could only imagine how fast a Paragon of Wind was!

“Too fast. I couldn’t see his body clearly at all.” Linley’s face changed. He couldn’t even see the enemy movements; how, then, was he supposed to fight back or to block?

“Blackstone Space!” Linley had no other choice. The only thing he could

do was to execute his Blackstone Space, and a blurry earthen yellow light instantly filled the courtyard. Not just him; actually, Reisgem was also badly startled by Bayer's speed, and had also hurriedly set up an Amethyst Space.

The two spaces intersected, but the gravitational power didn't multiply; rather, the stronger Amethyst Space held sway.

"Hrm!"

Bayer's terrifying speed suddenly slowed down.

However…

Currently, Bayer had already reached Bebe's side. Because of the Amethyst Space and Blackstone Space, Bebe was now able to clearly see that Bayer had already reached him. Bayer himself couldn't help but frown slightly as his speed slowed drastically, but he still struck out with the edge of his right palm like a blade, casually chopping down towards Bebe!

"Bebe!" Linley, Reisgem, and Reihom weren't able to rescue him at all at this moment!

It seemed like a very ordinary palm blow. That crystalline, almost jadelike palm landed towards Bebe, but the strange thing was, space didn't even ripple. It seemed as though the air itself had calmed down. Bebe was so terrified, his face changed dramatically. "Boss, I can't move! What a powerful restrictive force!" Bebe's body was unable to make any large movements; he was just barely able to raise that godspark dagger, but the powerful restrictive force made it so that he wouldn't be able to block with it, even though it was in his hand.

Bebe's voice rang out in Linley's mind. "What? Can't move?" Linley wasn't able to react in time.

Watching the palm blow descend, Bebe only had one option; using his supreme technique, his innate divine technique. An enormous illusion of a

Godeater Rat appeared behind Bebe, and the effects of his innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, immediately took effect on Bayer. “Even though I won’t be able to kill you with it, at least I’ll make you suffer a bit.” This was what Bebe thought.

At the same instant he used his technique, Bayer’s palm blow landed as well!

“CHOP!”

That jade-like palm chopped down at the center of Bebe’s chest. With a tremendous ‘BANG!’ sound, a very low sound rumbled. Like a bubble being popped, when the palm blow descended, the formerly stilled space suddenly tore apart, and right in front of the palm, a terrifying spatial rip that was multiple meters long suddenly appeared!

This was the Planar Battlefield!

And yet, such an enormous spatial tear had been created!

“BANG!” Without being able to resist at all, Bebe was knocked flying backwards, smashing into the rocky mountainside. With a ‘boom’ sound, the rocky mountain terrace suddenly had a meter-wide crevice appear, and the entire side of the mountain cracked as large amounts of rubble flew out.

As for Bebe, the force of this palm blow had knocked him completely out of the hundred-plus meters thick mountain.

“Hurry up, let’s go!” Reisgem hurriedly sent mentally.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” Linley, Reihom, and Reisgem flew out through the ‘tunnel’ at almost the same instant towards the outside.

Bayer didn’t stop them. He just laughed calmly, and then his body swayed before he too disappeared from the courtyard.

As Linley’s group of three flew out, then saw the distant Bebe. The clothes

Bebe wore, formed out of energy to begin with, had all blown apart, and a terrifying, clearly visible white scar was on Bebe's chest. Linley, seeing the situation, couldn't help but feel relieved. "Bebe's material defense truly is formidable. Bayer, although powerful, isn't as powerful as the Sovereign had been."

A casual blow from one of the branches of the Abyssal Fruit Tree had caused Bebe's skin to split and his flesh to tear.

Clearly, Bayer was a bit weaker.

However, that palm blow of his had actually caused Bebe to be bound and unable to move, and had even created such an enormous rift in space. One could imagine how terrifying the attack power had been. Fortunately, the recipient of that palm-edge blow was Bebe; if it had been someone else, that person probably wouldn't have been able to take a single blow.

"That freak. We aren't able to hold him off. Let's hurry and flee." Reisgem hurriedly sent through divine sense.

In the past, they had heard talk of how formidable Highgod Paragons were, but hadn't personally seen one in action. That simple blow, however, had caused Reisgem to no longer have any confidence to fight. His material defense wasn't as monstrous as Bebe's.

"The material defense of Godeater Rats really lives up to its name." A calm voice rang out.

Linley and the other three were stunned. They realized that Bayer's white-robed figure had appeared in midair. Linley's heart sank. "It makes sense. Given the power which Bayer displayed, even if we use Sovereign's Might, we would at most be able to fight on par with him. There's no way we would be able to escape his attacks."

Bayer's speed was a source of tremendous pressure for the others.

"My material attacks in the wind-style and the Destruction-style can both be

considered to be at the pinnacle." Bayer calmly swept the four with his gaze. "I didn't expect that blow of mine wouldn't be able to break through the defense of a Godeater Rat. Very well, then…Godeater Rat kid, I rarely use my Sovereign weapon. Today, I will use my Sovereign weapon to send you on your way. I refuse to believe that your defense will be able to withstand my most powerful sword attack!"

Linley, Bebe, Reishom, and Reisgem were all stunned.

Bayer waved his hand, and within it, a longsword that was as thin as the wings of a cicada appeared, glowing with green light.

Linley's heart clenched. Bayer wasn't a divine beast; his body was ordinary. But by relying on his understanding of the profound mysteries as a Paragon, Bayer's casual palm blows had already reached such a terrifying level. If he then used a Sovereign artifact to use his most powerful attack…would Bebe's defense still be able to withstand it? Linley didn't have any confidence in that at all!

"Sovereign weapon?"

Reisgem's eyes instantly turned as round as the moon, and then he shouted explosively through divine sense, "Flee, quick, flee!!!" Reisgem's body once more emanated his Amethyst Space, covering Linley, Bebe, and Reihom. Immediately, their four-person squad, ignoring all else, frantically fled towards the Stellar River.

"Fleeing?"

Bayer let out a disdainful laugh. Flee by relying on speed? That was impossible.

"Whoosh!" Bayer's body flickered, and he immediately moved to pursue.

A dazzling Amethyst Space spread out. Linley, Reisgem, and the other two were at the center of the Amethyst Space and continue to flee into the distance. Reisgem also helped Bebe increase his speed.

“Reisgem, we are just going to flee, like this?” Linley sent frantically through divine sense.

“The only method now is to flee to the Stellar River. And then, we’ll find a safe path through the Stellar River to the center, then hide in one of the giant floating boulders. At that time, when Bayer comes over, we’ll knock him directly into one of the spatial tears. We won’t be able to kill him, but we’ll be able to make him disappear forever within the spatial tear.” Reisgem sent mentally. “However…I don’t know if we’ll make it to the Stellar River.”

Linley had no other ideas either. Reisgem’s method was indeed their only option.

“Haha…Reisgem, using your Gravitational Space against me is useless.” Wild, confident laughter rang out in Linley’s mind.

Right at this moment…

Linley and the other three, who were keeping a close watch on Bayer at all times, realized that he had flown in front of them. A wild burst of energy blasted forth from Bayer, instantly causing an area within a thousand meters to instantly begin to spatially distort as the wild energy waves lashed about.

Linley’s group of four could feel the effects of this technique as space itself seemed to constrict them.

“How is this possible!” Linley also trained in the Laws of the Wind, and knew that of the nine great profound mysteries, there were the Profound Mysteries of Spatial Wind, but that sort of restrictive power was negligible for Highgods. But who would have imagined…that when a Highgod Paragon used this technique, even Reisgem would be affected.

Their speed slowed dramatically!

“Swoosh!” Bayer flew directly into the Amethyst Space. Although his speed

dropped, he was still much faster than Linley's group of four now was while under the spatial binding.

Bayer flew at high speed towards Bebe, but he lowered his head to look down at the Sovereign artifact in his hand, as though it was a dear lover of his. Bayer very casually swung out with his Sovereign weapon, and instantly, the already distorted space tore apart like a piece of rotten cloth!

A terrifying spatial tear that was a hundred meters long suddenly appeared. This hundred meter long spatial tear was a rip in space that was a finger thick. Following the movements of the Sovereign weapon, it landed directly on the body of Bebe, who had been unable to dodge. At the same time, the Sovereign weapon shot out in every direction with arrow-like rays of energy, each of which caused minute spatial fractures.

"Slash!" A thin fracture slashed past Linley, who wasn't able to dodge.

It very easily tore through Linley's draconic scaled defense. A large chunk of flesh and bone was directly torn from Linley's arm.

But Linley's attention was completely focused on Bebe. His face changed dramatically. "Bebe!" Linley was only hit by the side effects of the attack, but Bebe was hit by the Sovereign weapon head on!

Chapter 30 – Canteen?

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 30, Canteen?

“What a terrifying fellow!”

Bebe was utterly frightened as well. That palm-edge blow from earlier had already made him feel great danger. Bebe himself knew that this full-force sword blow from a Sovereign weapon was something which Beirut might be able to deal with bare-handed, were he here, due to his insights into the profound mysteries. But Bebe was no Beirut! He definitely wouldn’t be able to take it head on so easily.

“My insights into the Laws are far too inferior to Grandpa’s! I’d best not try to push it.” Bebe didn’t hesitate at all. As that sword chopped down, within his sea of consciousness, an adorable little Godeater Rat instantly activated a drop of Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might. Bebe had two bodies as well…

One was his divine darkness clone, while the other was his Saint-level original body. Only, the Saint-level original body remained in the shape of a Godeater Rat; it was much like how Beirut’s three sons all had original bodies that were in the form of rats. Normally, the original bodies were merged into the divine clones. Bebe understood that if his divine darkness clone died, his original body would unquestionably die as well.

“BOOM!”

A black light emerged, covering Bebe’s entire body as he was once more knocked away at high speed, smashing viciously into the ground. With a “BANG” sound, a deep crevice appeared in the earth. But his body wasn’t damaged at all.

“Thank goodness.” Linley let out a sigh of relief.

Reisgem, Reihom, and Linley all flew towards Bebe at high speed.

“Bebe.” Linley hurriedly helped Bebe up.

“Heh heh, Boss, I’m fine. He wasn’t even able to scratch me.” Bebe chortled. However, Linley, Reisgem, and Reihom didn’t relax their vigilance; Bebe had used up a drop of Sovereign’s Might in order to escape the earlier tribulation. Linley couldn’t help but to look back towards Bayer, who stood there not moving.

Bayer was looking at Bebe with curiosity.

“Sovereign’s Might?” Bayer wasn’t angry at all. “Godeater Rats really are an incredible type of divine beasts. One worthy of me using a drop of Sovereign’s Might as well!”

“BANG!”

A faint green light suddenly erupted forth like flames from Bayer’s body, but then retracted back into it. Not a single hint of it was dissipating! Clearly, as a Highgod Paragon, he could perfectly control Sovereign’s Might. This scene caused Linley and the other three to feel terror in their hearts.

“He is using Sovereign’s Might as well!” Linley called out mentally in alarm.

“Not just a Sovereign weapon, but also using Sovereign’s Might!” Reisgem was so angry, he wanted to curse. For Bayer to do this was absolutely too abusive!

Bayer actually had a hint of a smile on his lips. He looked at Bebe. “To let me use both a Sovereign weapon and Sovereign’s Might…even in death, you should feel proud.” After speaking, his body once more flickered forward. Although Reisgem’s Amethyst Space was always active, Bayer’s speed was still so fast…that Linley and the other two weren’t able to block at all.

Although no aura of Sovereign power emanated from Bayer's body, he clearly had already used it.

"He used Sovereign's Might. Bebe won't be able to hold on." Linley worried mentally.

Immediately, an enormous coiling Azure Dragon Phantom appeared in the air behind Linley. At this critical moment, not hesitating at all, Linley used his own innate divine ability…Dragon Roar!

Bayer's soul heard the roar of the dragon as well.

Unconsciously, Bayer's body paused for a moment, but afterwards, Bayer's speed returned to normal. That bit of influence was negligible for him. Linley felt sourness as well. "Bebe's innate divine ability isn't capable of doing anything to a Highgod Paragon, and it seems this technique of mine is also negligible for him."

Linley had a certain feeling…

That when he used this technique against Bayer, it was like he was an ant trying to shake a tree. Perhaps this was a very special ant, but the only result was that the leaves of the tree trembled slightly.

"BEBE!!!!" Linley felt agonized at his helplessness, and his soul howled in misery.

"SHKREEEEEEEE!" An exceedingly ear-piercing howl rang out, carrying a certain wild savagery.

"BANG!"

Space twisted and coiled about, and then multiple spatial tears appeared. Bebe was once again knocked backwards, blood flying everywhere. Seeing the brilliant blood, Linley's face instantly turned white. Before this, he had still held some hope…but Linley didn't actually despair yet either.

Because he could still feel Bebe's existence!

"Haha, you want to kill me!? Grandpa's words really were correct! We Godeater Rats have the number one defensive strength in all the planes of the universe! If I don't use Sovereign's Might, my body is like a divine spark. After using Sovereign's Might…there is no Highgod capable of killing me!" Bebe called out, seeming to be rather crazed.

Linley discovered, to his astonishment, that although Bebe's chest did indeed have a wound carved into it, with fresh blood flowing…the wound wasn't too deep.

"How can that be?" Bayer stared at Bebe in astonishment.

His full strength sword blow still wasn't able to kill him?

"Hmph. My muscles and my skin are equally tough, but the hardest part of my body is my bones! The bones throughout my body are infused with a large amount of divine spark essence! Haha…just now, I was afraid, because in the past, when that Sovereign badly injured me with one blow, my bones were broken. I thought that after using Sovereign's Might and with a Sovereign weapon, your attack would be comparable to that Sovereign's attack." Bebe boasted.

Although Beirut had previously told Bebe how terrifyingly great the defensive power of a Godeater Rat was, and although Bebe had always been very self-confident…

At the Abyssal Mountain, his defenses were easily shattered by the Abyssal Fruit Tree, and even his bones had been broken. This caused Bebe to begin to doubt himself.

As he saw it…

A Highgod Paragon, using a Sovereign weapon with Sovereign's Might, should be comparable to a casual blow from a Sovereign. But now, it

seemed, that although the attack power of a Highgod Paragon was indeed terrifying, compared to a Sovereign, he was still vastly inferior.

“Haha…formidable, formidable!” Reisgem began to laugh delightedly as well. “Bebe, you thought just because he used Sovereign’s Might and a Sovereign weapon that he would be comparable to a Sovereign? Then you are ridiculously mistaken. Highgods, compared to Sovereigns, are far, far too weak. Bebe, what makes Sovereigns so powerful isn’t their Sovereign artifacts or their Sovereign power; rather, it is their Will! An attack that contains a Sovereign’s Will is a truly terrifying attack.”

Linley and Bebe were both stunned. A Sovereign’s Will?

Will was something that was incorporeal; how could it be powerful?

“Aside from Highgod Paragons, if a Sovereign wishes to kill a Highgod, there’s no need to even lift a finger. The Sovereign only needs to wish it. That’s what a Sovereign’s Will is!” Reisgem laughed loudly. “A Highgod that uses Sovereign’s Might and a Sovereign using Sovereign’s Might…the difference in power is more ten thousand times, because of the Will of the Sovereign!”

Linley now understood.

He had heard long ago that a Sovereign could kill a Highgod with but a thought, and that only Highgod Paragons could slightly resist. At that time, Linley hadn’t understood…how could a Highgod be killed by a mere thought? Why?

So it seemed…that there was something known as the ‘Sovereign’s Will’ which existed.

“The Will of a Sovereign is this powerful?” Linley didn’t understand why.

But Linley didn’t have time to ask Reisgem.

Because at this moment, Bayer’s face finally grew solemn. He stared coldly

at Bebe. “Godeater Rats refine divine spark essences to strengthen their own body. As far as material defenses go, amongst all the varied divine beasts, you Godeater Rats truly can be ranked number one. I admit that I won’t be able to injure you with material attacks. Then…listen to a song of mine!”

As soon as his words fell…

Linley, Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom began to hear a certain melody in their minds. That song constantly echoed throughout their mind, carrying with it a strange, magical power. When he first heard it, Linley was able to resist for a second or two, but after that, he became entranced by the music and entered a dazed state.

And…as soon as he heard that song…

Linley’s divine clone had immediately, unstintingly, used up a drop of water-type Sovereign’s Might! Linley’s earth-type Sovereign’s Might had been used up long ago, and he only had two drops of water-type Sovereign’s Might. By using up a drop now, he would only have one more remaining.

Of the group of four, only a single person immediately regained his faculties after being momentarily dazed.

That was Reisgem!

His accomplishments in the soul were exceedingly great. Linley, Reihom, and Bebe had all entered a dazed state, but fortunately enough for Linley and Reihom, Bayer didn’t want to kill them, just make them dazed. As for Bebe…just as his soul entered a dazed state, he also began to suffer a strange soul attack.

Logically speaking…

In a dazed state, one wouldn’t know to use Sovereign’s Might to resist. Generally speaking, when faced with the soul attack of a Highgod Paragon,

the result would be death.

However…

“Bayer, enough.” Reisgem growled, launching a soul attack towards Bayer as well.

“How can this be!” Bayer paused his attack as well.

Linley, Bebe, and Reihom regained their mental clarity, and Linley felt cold sweat drip down his back. “Even after using Sovereign’s Might, I wasn’t able to resist. However, I didn’t die. It seems he didn’t attack.” Linley understood that without him actively controlling his damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, it definitely wouldn’t be hard for this person to kill him.

But he hadn’t died. Clearly, Bayer didn’t want to kill him.

“How can this be? You…you have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact?!” Bayer looked at Bebe.

“Uhh….” Bebe shook his head. “I just have a soul-protecting artifact.”

“Impossible! A soul-protecting artifact capable of blocking my ‘Soul Nirvana’ melody? You…you definitely have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!” Bayer wasn’t willing to believe it. Bayer now had finally lost his earlier confidence. He stared at Bebe. “How can you have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact? You are a Sovereign’s Emissary?”

Bebe shook his head.

“Soul-protecting Sovereign artifact? Grandpa told me that it was a soul-protecting artifact.” Bebe didn’t understand it.

Linley finally relaxed. Whether it was a soul-protecting artifact or a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact…clearly, Bayer wasn’t able to do anything to Bebe. Although Bayer was terrifying, and most likely would be able to

easily kill Linley, Reisgem, or Reihom…

He wasn't able to kill Bebe!

Bebe's material defense and soul defense had both reached monstrous levels.

"According to legends, the Bloodridge Sovereign bestowed a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact to Beirut. I didn't expect that he would actually transfer it to you." Bayer laughed coldly. Everyone knew that Beirut had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, but Bayer now believed that Beirut had actually transferred the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact to Bebe.

"Hey, what else are you going to do? You aren't able to kill Bebe. Aren't you going to leave?" Reisgem snorted.

Bayer took a deep breath, regaining his calm.

"If I'm not able to kill him, then I…will push him into a region of chaotic space!" Bayer said coldly, while stretching out his hands. He was standing in midair, and suddenly, with him at the center, multiple strands of faint green energy ribbons sprang out from his hands. Those hundred-plus hundred-meter energy ribbons all coiled towards Bebe.

"Push him into chaotic space?" Linley was stunned as well.

"ROAAAAAAAAAR!"

Reisgem suddenly let out an absolutely enraged growl, and behind Reisgem, the illusion of an enormous monster that was over a hundred meters tall suddenly appeared. This monster had 108 spikes on its back, and was a monster that Linley was very familiar with; it looked just like the 'juvenile amethyst beast' Linley had previously seen.

Instantly, 108 rays of violet light exploded forth from Reisgem's body, each filled with black-colored Sovereign power.

With Reisgem at the center, those rays of violet light completely covered and surrounded Linley, Bebe, and Reihom, actually forming a black, spherical cocoon which was covered with violet light.

“Amethyst Rampart!” Bayer frowned.

The Amethyst Space was actually just an innate supreme technique of Reisgem’s; in truth, it couldn’t be considered a ‘divine ability’. Divine abilities consumed a tremendous amount of spiritual energy! This ‘Amethyst Rampart’ was Reisgem’s true, innate divine ability! Once this technique appeared, there was no way for Bayer to break through the Amethyst Rampart for now as well.

Moments later…

The Amethyst Rampart disappeared. The Amethyst Rampart couldn’t actually be sustained for very long.

“Reisgem, it seems you insist on protecting this Godeater Rat.” Bayer said coldly. “Fine, then. I admit that with this Godeater Rat having used Sovereign’s Might, I’m unable to kill him. However…once his Sovereign’s Might dissipates, I refuse to believe that he’ll be able to escape my sword again. Given the speed of my sword, I trust that you won’t be able to block at all.”

Linley frowned.

Bayer’s words were reasonable. Although Bebe had used a drop of Sovereign’s Might, it was constantly dissipating. Soon, it would be completely gone.

Bebe’s material defense was indeed strong, but when he used Sovereign’s Might, his defense was still breached. He had to rely on his bones to take the blow head on.

But if Bebe didn’t have any Sovereign’s Might left, while Bayer was still

able to perfectly control his own Sovereign's Might without wasting it… given that Bayer would be able to use it for a very long time, when Bebe's ran out, would Bebe be able to block?

"Boss! I've been eating divine sparks for many years, but the number that I've eaten isn't enough yet. My bones aren't as tough as Grandpa's yet. If I don't use Sovereign's Might, while that Bayer uses both a Sovereign weapon and Sovereign power, my skull probably wouldn't be able to resist that sword of his." Bebe sent frantically.

Linley began to feel nervous as well.

Bebe's Sovereign power was constantly dissipating. But Bayer? Not a hint of it was leaking out. How were they supposed to compete against him?

"Eh?"

Reisgem stared. "What…you want to compete with ME in seeing who has more Sovereign's Might?"

Bayer was startled.

Reisgem turned towards Linley and Bebe and laughed, "Linley, Bebe, I forgot to tell you something after you two joined my hunting squad. Since you two are members of my squad now, I, as the captain, should treat you without holding anything back." As he spoke, Reisgem made a tossing motion, and two rays of violet light flew towards Linley and Bebe.

Linley and Bebe immediately stretched their hands out to receive it.

Linley lowered his head to look at it. It was a 'canteen' that was completely made out of carved amethysts. This sort of canteen, although quite intricately designed, was familiar to Linley. When he had been in the Yulan continent, ordinary soldiers would always carry these types of canteens with them.

"Is this a water canteen?" Linley was puzzled.

Linley reached out with his divine sense, passing through the obstruction of the amethysts, to inspect the insides of the canteen. And when he did…he was badly shocked.

“Gaaah! Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might?! This…an entire canteen?!” Bebe called out in shock as well.

Linley was similarly stunned.

He, too, realized that this canteen was actually filled with liquefied Sovereign’s Might. An entire canteen full of it!

“Take it. The young master gave me a canteen as well.” Reihom said.

Linley and Bebe stared towards Reisgem, stunned.

Reisgem snickered, then waved his hand. “Just take it. It’s just Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might. My mother has plenty of it. She has an entire lake filled with it, so I filled a few canteens with it. I have plenty. You keep it. Those Redbud Army soldiers have a salary. You guys are my squadmates, and this can be considered your salary.” To Reisgem, the only son of a Sovereign, of course this was something that didn’t matter much.

Sovereigns agreed amongst themselves to only give a single Sovereign artifact to Deities, but there was no limit to the amount of Sovereign’s Might they could bestow.

“A…canteen?” Linley felt his head grow dizzy.

Sovereign’s Might was normally measured out by the ‘drop’.

“A canteen of Sovereign’s Might? How many drops is that?” Linley couldn’t even imagine it.

Bayer felt a headache as well. Good heavens. He was a Highgod Paragon, true, but although a Sovereign might give him some Sovereign’s Might, the

Sovereign naturally wouldn't treat him as she might treat their her own son, filling an entire lake with Sovereign's Might and letting her son take as much of it as he wanted. "Compete with the son of a Sovereign in Sovereign's Might?" Bayer felt resigned.

Reisgem rubbed his nose. "Bayer, my divine clone had already informed my mother of what is going on here. Although my mother won't be able to make it here immediately, she can arrange for some people to come. I imagine that as time goes on, my mother will personally come to the Planar Battlefield."

Sovereigns generally wouldn't interfere in the matters of Highgods.

But it was only natural for a Sovereign to interfere when her own son was in danger.

And not all Sovereigns were the same; generally speaking, if an ordinary person became a Sovereign, that person might have countless children and so wouldn't care too much about them. But the Redbud Sovereign was like a divine beast, an exceedingly rare, unique individual. She had only a single son.

"Whew." Bayer shook his head and laughed bitterly.

"This Godeater Rat's defense is indeed powerful. Although I'm not able to kill him, I don't consider is as being a loss of face. As least I tried. There's nothing Occluar will be able to say to me." Bayer gave Reisgem's group a final glance, and then his body flickered and disappeared as he left.

Linley and Bebe each held a canteen, staring as Bayer departed.

"Ah, he finally left." Reisgem let out a long breath. "A Highgod Paragon. I was afraid that this fellow would go crazy. Fortunately, I managed to scare him off." Reisgem was frightened as well. If Bayer really did go crazy and decide to kill them all, Reisgem wouldn't even have time to cry. At worst, Bayer would just have to hide in a material plane and never go to the Divine Planes or the Higher Realms again.

Chapter 31 – The Number One Clan

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 31, The Number One Clan

After Bayer left, Linley let out a sigh of relief as well.

“Compared to a Highgod Paragon, I most likely would only be able to preserve my life if I had a defensive Sovereign artifact and a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.” Linley had been rendered speechless by Bayer’s attack power, and the constrictive power of it had been able to cause space itself to twist and distort. The disruptive power exceeded even Reisgem’s ‘Amethyst Space’.

Upon encountering a Paragon, only someone like Bebe whose material defense and soul defense were both at the very peak would be capable of staying alive.

“Wait. Even if my defenses are powerful, Bayer would probably still be able to throw me into a field of spatial chaos.” When Linley thought of this, he felt all the more terrified by the might of a Paragon. Previously, Linley had seen quite a few experts who had fused five profound mysteries. Linley had thought a Paragon would be powerful, but not ridiculously so.

But upon encountering one, Linley realized…

Paragons, just by waving their hands, could easily cause space to twist and distort, and tear the world apart. Between fusing five profound mysteries and becoming a Paragon, there was a massive, qualitative rise in power.

“Bayer won’t come again, will he?” A low voice rang out.

Linley turned his head to look. The speaker was the big fellow, ‘Reihom’. Bebe, some dirt and dust on his face, said quickly, “Of course not! He is a Paragon, after all; since he left, how could he come back? Even if he came back, I’m not afraid of him.” Bebe’s words caused Linley, Reisgem, and

Reihom to all look at him.

“You aren’t afraid?” Reisgem had a rather disbelieving tone to his voice.

Actually, Reisgem himself was afraid. If Bayer truly went insane, he could kill Reisgem, Reihom, and Linley, then drag Bebe into a region of chaotic space. The price would just be that he would face the pursuit and attack of the Redbud Sovereign, and would have to forever hide within a material plane.

Reisgem was afraid, and Linley and Reihom felt the same way. In front of Bayer, they weren’t able to resist at all.

Bebe…unafraid?

Stared at by the other three, Bebe let out an awkward laugh. “Fine, to be honest, of course I’m a bit scared. In front of that Bayer, I feel as though all I can do is stand there and be beaten. I’m not able to resist at all. That strange song of his made me lose consciousness. Enough, he’s left, so this is at an end. I hope in the future, I won’t run into that Bayer again. Unless I’m at Grandpa’s level of power…”

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but laugh. He then looked towards Reisgem. This time, they truly had to thank Reisgem.

“Fortunately, Reisgem, you used the Sovereign to threaten him.” Linley laughed with a sigh.

“Hmph. That was all talk. By the time my mother actually made it here, Bayer would’ve fled long ago.” Reisgem pursed his lips. “Fortunately, Bayer wasn’t willing to go all out for the sake of Occluar.”

Linley nodded slightly as well.

If Occluar and Bayer had a relationship that was as close as Linley and Bebe’s, most likely, Bayer really would’ve ignored all else to kill them. Fortunately, the two didn’t have a relationship at that level yet.

“Reisgem, this Sovereign’s Might…” Linley only now thought of the canteen of Sovereign’s Might in his hand.

Good heavens…a full canteen! What a terrifying fortune this was!

“Reisgem, just now, you just wanted to shock Bayer and let him know that there was no way he would be able to kill Bebe, which is why you brought out this canteen of Sovereign’s Might. Now that this is at an end, you can take it back.” Linley immediately handed the amethyst canteen back to Reisgem.

It wasn’t that Linley didn’t want the Sovereign’s Might. If it had only been one or two drops, Linley would’ve accepted it.

But this was an entire canteen…

This was too precious, something Linley felt was too hot to hold. While working together with Reisgem, Linley hadn’t made any great contributions, so how could he receive a canteen of Sovereign’s Might? As the saying goes, if no merits were rendered, none should be recorded. To receive a treasure without having accomplished anything? Linley felt uneasy.

“Eh?” Bebe was startled.

“Here you go.” Bebe did the same thing.

“HEY!” Reisgem stared at Linley and Bebe, then said angrily, “Linley, Bebe, what are you two doing? Hmph, if you are going to be so insincere, we might as well just split up the squad. You go your way, and Reihom and I will go ours. You two don’t treat me as bros anyhow. As for the canteen of Sovereign’s Might? I, Reisgem, have never taken back something I gifted out. If you don’t want it, then toss it!”

Linley felt speechless and resigned.

“Haha, Boss, Reisgem isn’t the stingy sort.” Bebe snickered, slapping his arm around Reisgem’s shoulders. “Just take it.” Bebe was rather unwilling to part with it to begin with; only, having seen Linley give it up, he had to do the same.

“Hear that?” Reisgem delightedly raised an eyebrow. “Why don’t you just toss this Sovereign’s Might and go your own way, while the three of us go ours. Or…just keep it.”

Linley wasn’t the overly polite sort to begin with; only, this canteen of Sovereign’s Might was simply too valuable, and so he wasn’t able to accept it right away, which is why he had acted in such a manner. But now that Reisgem had responded in such a way, what else could Linley do? All he could do was, with a flip of his hand, store the canteen of Sovereign’s Might into his interspatial ring.

“That’s more like it.” Reisgem chortled merrily. “To be honest, earlier on, when I just reached the Highgod level and hadn’t fused that many of the profound mysteries, I probably wouldn’t have been willing to be generous, even if you asked me to.”

“Eh? What’s that about?” Bebe said.

Linley just laughed while listening. With Bebe and Reisgem standing together, it was like a pair of youths. Their eyes were both so lively and agile; they looked like two siblings.

The four of them chatted while walking forward.

“What my mother said is that I needed to be tempered!” Reisgem laughed. “Without me having reached a certain level of power, if she were to give me a large amount of Sovereign’s Might, I would never feel as though I were in any danger, which would make it harder for me to make any breakthroughs. Thus, only after I fused five profound mysteries did my mother stop restricting me in terms of how much Sovereign’s Might I could have.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Without a sense of danger, it would be fairly hard to rise in power. Linley could completely understand the actions of the Redbud Sovereign.

“Oh…you have so much Sovereign’s Might. Boss’s Four Divine Beasts clan rarely hands out even a single drop of Sovereign’s Might.” Bebe said with a sigh.

Reisgem laughed loudly. “The Four Divine Beasts clan? How can they compare to me? An enormous clan like that has millions of people, scattered throughout the four great planes. The four great Sovereigns did indeed bestow a huge amount of Sovereign’s Might to them! But did the people of the Four Divine Beasts clan learn to treasure it? They did not! Those four clan leaders probably never imagined that their four Sovereigns would perish. When the four Sovereigns died…the time came that they no longer had access to unlimited amounts of Sovereign’s Might! They were completely dumbfounded.”

“Once the four Sovereigns died, they no longer had a source for Sovereign’s Might. It would be hard for them to acquire any more. Of course they would hand it out sparingly, one drop at a time.”

Linley, hearing this, nodded to himself.

The deaths of the four ancestors did indeed strike a heavy blow against the clan.

“An enormous clan like that, whose fame shook the various planes, fell just like that.” Linley let out a sigh. Originally, when Linley had entered the Azure Dragon clan, Linley had sighed at how much Sovereign’s Might the clan had. But now, he understood that giving each Elder a single drop was a way of being thrifty in using it.

When the four Sovereigns were still alive, most likely the manner in which the Azure Dragon clan divided up Sovereign’s Might was completely different.

“The Four Divine Beasts clan originally was very strong. However, in the countless planes of the universe, they still cannot be considered the number one clan.” Reisgem said.

“Eh? There was a clan even more powerful than the Four Divine Beasts clan?” Linley was rather surprised.

“The number one clan is the Augusta [Ao’gu’si’ta] clan of the Divine Light Plane.” Reisgem said with a calm laugh.

Linley knew a few things about the Infernal Realm and the Netherworld, but very little about the other planes.

“The Augusta clan?” Three names drifted into Linley’s mind. These three names came from Beirut’s intelligence reports on commanders. All three were commanders, and the three of them…all shared the surname ‘Augusta’. Clearly, they were of the Augusta clan.

Back then, Linley hadn’t paid much attention. After all, there were quite a few siblings who were commanders. For three to share one surname wasn’t too surprising.

“The first generation member of the Augusta clan is the Chief Sovereign of Light.” Reisgem said, pursing his lips.

Linley now understood. “No wonder the clan is so powerful. They are the descendants of the Chief Sovereign of Light.” As a Chief Sovereign, one could imagine how exalted a status and how great the power the Chief Sovereign of Light possessed.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light has many descendants. The second generation of the clan has 182 members.” Reisgem said with a sigh.

Linley and Bebe were both stupefied.

“Reisgem, are the second generation members all the sons and daughters of the Chief Sovereign of Light?” Linley didn’t dare believe it. In the Four

Divine Beasts clan, the Azure Dragon only had a son and a daughter, while the Vermilion Bird had only a single child. The White Tiger had one child, while the Black Tortoise had two.

But this Augusta clan's second generation had 182 members?

"Right." Reisgem nodded. "The Chief Sovereign of Light was originally a member of an ordinary race before he became a Chief Sovereign. Thus, unlike the divine beasts who have few children, he had 182. However, these 182 children are not all on the same level. Still, because the population of the Augusta clan expanded very rapidly, and because they had sufficient resources, they naturally produced quite a few experts. However, the Augusta clan has only expanded in the Divine Light Plane. They aren't like your Four Divine Beasts clan, which scattered throughout the planes."

"The Augusta clansmen are very arrogant." The always taciturn Reihom suddenly spoke out.

"Eh?" Linley looked towards Reihom. He could feel the anger within Reihom's words.

Reisgem sighed and said, "One of my mother's Emissary's, Reihom's good friend 'Bosley' [Bu'si'li], was killed by the forces of the Augusta clan. Bosley now only has a weak clone remaining. I imagine this time, the Augusta clan's people came to the Planar Battlefield as well. If we encounter two of them, we have to kill some of them to vent our anger. Hmph. Forget it. Enough about that clan of bastards. They ruin the mood."

As Linley's group of four left the battlefield, they didn't run, just casually walked forward. In the Planar Battlefield, aside from Paragons like Bayer, their hunting squad feared no one.

But that battle had, indeed, attracted quite a few people.

On the desolate earth, five figures emerged. The leader was a youth who was dressed in a beautiful silver robe, and who had long, dazzling hair.

“Oh, the Amethyst Rampart. Hey, that’s Bayer!” The golden-haired youth’s eyes lit up. He saw, in the distance, Bayer standing in the sky like a celestial divinity. With Bayer present, the five hadn’t dared to go near. But after watching from far away for a time, they saw that Bayer actually left.

“Young master Montelo [Meng’te’lo], this is a good opportunity.” Next to him was a callous, short silver-haired man who was dressed in a golden robe.

The golden-haired youth’s eyes lit up.

Right at this moment, the golden-haired youth suddenly turned his head to look nearby. There were actually two people, a man and a woman, walking over. “Montelo, long time no see.” The leader, a black-haired, silver-robed woman said with a light smile.

“Ranessa [La’na’sha]!” Montelo laughed as well.

“You saw that battle just now, right? Bayer went to act against Reisgem’s group. I wonder what the results of that battle were.” The silver-robed woman, Ranessa, said with a laugh. “But I’m certain that Reisgem remains alive.”

“I’m certain about this as well.” Montelo said with a calm laugh, and then his eyes lit up. “Ranessa, how about we join forces and go teach that Reisgem a lesson?”

“Teach him a lesson?” Ranessa frowned slightly. “I know that a grudge exists between your clan and Reisgem, but…” Ranessa also knew Montelo’s status. Montelo was a third generation member of the Augusta clan. The second generation had 182 members, and the third generation had more than a thousand.”

Montelo relied on his innate talent and his ability to have a fairly high status within his clan. But compared to Reisgem, his status was far inferior. After all, the Chief Sovereign of Light had too many children. Montelo was just a grandchild, while the Redbud Sovereign only had a single son.

There weren’t many who would dare to kill Reisgem.

“Don’t worry, we won’t kill Reisgem.” Montelo said with a light laugh. “I’ll be responsible for entangling Reisgem, while the other three of you, along with my other four, seven in total, will act against Reisgem’s comrades. If you can kill one, do so. It’s best if you kill them all! Hmph, if we can’t kill Reisgem, we can still kill his comrades.” Montelo’s eyes flashed with cold light.

Ranessa turned to discuss this with the two youths by her side, then laughed.

The Sovereigns were lofty individuals. As long as one didn’t commit any forbidden acts, there wouldn’t be any problems. Even if they badly injured Reisgem, there wouldn’t be a problem. The Sovereigns actually hoped that their children would suffer setbacks while growing up. As long as they didn’t kill Reisgem, it was fine. As for Reisgem’s comrades and their lives, the Sovereign didn’t have the time to bother with them, nor would the Sovereign lower her status to bother with them.

The world of Deities had its own rules. Sovereigns generally wouldn’t casually interfere.

“Fine. However, the badges we get from killing them are mine.” Ranessa said.

“Fine.” Montello immediately agreed.

“Let’s go, then. Reisgem and the others have most likely gone far away by now.” Ranessa said.

Immediately, the two forces merged and the eight of them stealthily slipped forward at high speed.

Chapter 32 – What's This?

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 32, What's This?

The Planar Battlefield was as quiet and icy as ever.

The wind blew and sand flew everywhere.

Linley, Bebe, Reisgem, and Reishom walked forward casually, preparing to find a good place to rest.

"Eh?" Reisgem suddenly turned his head to look behind.

"What is it?" Bebe said, puzzled. Linley, seeing the situation, turned his head to look behind them as well, but behind them, the scene was still one of desolate, wild grass. There wasn't a single person present.

But Reisgem furrowed his brows. "It seems someone is present."

As soon as Reisgem spoke, Linley sensed how from behind, the aura of two badges from their alliance could be sensed. Those two auras were flying forward towards them at high speed. Linley gave a suspicious look, and amidst the wild grassy growth, eight figures suddenly appeared, flying straight for Linley's group.

Two belonged to the Divine Darkness Plane's side, while six belonged to the Divine Light Plane's side.

However, for the purposes of this battle, they were on the same side.

"Montelo!" Reihom's voice boomed out.

"Montelo!" Reisgem's face changed. "BANG!" A wild surge of black energy emerged from his body. He had immediately used his Sovereign's Might, while at the same time, that longspear appeared in his hands. Not

hesitating in the slightest, Reisgem bent back, like a powerful longbow that was being pulled, and then threw out the Sovereign longspear in his hands forward.

Crackle…

Filled with Sovereign power, the weapon blasted forth explosively. That amethyst longspear flowed with black light. Moving at high speed, it transformed into a black blur, creating cracks in space as it flew forward.

The Sovereign longspear was aimed at a solitary, arrogant-looking middle-aged man by Montelo's side.

"Hmph!" By the arrogant fellow's side, a petite little green-haired lady suddenly exploded with white light. She moved like a gust of wind to receive the blow in front of the arrogant fellow. Her right fist, covered by a black glove, actually came smashing against the Sovereign spear's tip.

"BANG!"

The fist and the speartip collided.

"Rumble…" That petite green-haired lady was knocked back explosively by the collision, and several cracks in space appeared as well. As for the amethyst Sovereign longspear, it flew back towards Reisgem at high speed.

"Reisgem, you killed the members of my Augusta clan. Today, we'll punish you a bit for it." Montelo laughed loudly, while at the same time, his body began to blaze with white light as he flew towards Reisgem like a giant bird. While flying through the air, his entire body actually began to shoot out with strands of white 'silk', which wound their way towards Reisgem.

Reisgem was furious as well, and he called out through divine sense, "Go all out and kill them! Use your Sovereign's Might, kill!"

"BANG!" Reihom suddenly stomped on the ground viciously.

“Rumble…” The earth beneath the feet of the enemies suddenly rose upwards as the land instantly rose up, then pressed down towards the seven, blocking their line of vision as well.

“Kill.” Reihom’s eyes were filled with a murderous intent as well, and he too charged forward.

Right at this moment, seven enemy figures were shooting towards them as well. “What terrible luck. One is the Augusta clan, while the other is Reisgem. They immediately used Sovereign’s Might as soon as the battle started. They have no idea of what the concept of being ‘thrifty’ is.” The silver-robed woman, Ranessa, muttered in her heart. Still, her body glowed with a blue light as well.

The battle had instantly exploded!

Linley instantly Dragonformed as well, and Mirage appeared in his hands. He immediately activated a drop of Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might! Linley sighed mentally with praise, “Having an entire canteen of Sovereign’s Might really does change things!” If he only had two or three drops, how could he use it so wantonly as he just did, at the very start of battle?

Linley now understood why the Four Divine Beasts clan could be spread throughout so many planes but still be so powerful. Most likely, the Four Divine Beasts clan of then was much like he was now; they had no reservations about using Sovereign’s Might.

“Oman [Wu’man], you go deal with that Azure Dragon clan fellow! You just so happen to counter the Azure Dragon clan.” Montelo gave the order while shooting forward towards Reisgem.

Actually, there was no need to give the order. Because Reisgem’s side only had four people in total, and because Montelo was dealing with Reisgem, the other seven were more than enough to deal with Linley and the other two.

“Don’t worry!”

That arrogant-looking silver-haired, gold-robed man launched himself off from the ground, instantly arriving by Linley’s side.

Actually, it wasn’t just Oman who attacked Linley. As the saying goes, there were many monks, but only so many alms to go around! Before Oman arrived, a whip wielding youth who belonged to Ranessa’s side attacked Linley. When that long whip struck out, it actually transformed and elongated, coiling towards Linley like a giant serpent slashing out with its tail.

Linley’s form retreated at high speed.

“BANG!”

Mirage blocked the whip. Linley’s body instantly radiated a black aura, forming an enormous ‘Blackstone Space’. Although the power of this technique when fueled by Destruction-type Sovereign’s power wasn’t as great as when it was fueled by earth-type Sovereign’s power, the strength of the gravitational power still vastly exceeded that of Highgod power.

Right after Linley blocked the whip, the golden-robed man descended from the heavens.

“Eh?” Linley saw, to his astonishment, that a three-meter long mace suddenly appeared within the golden-robed man’s hands. The golden-robed man smashed directly towards Linley with the mace.

“Crackle…”

As the spikes of the mace tore through the air, it actually caused spatial fractures to appear.

“Not good.” Linley hurriedly controlled the direction of his gravity. Previously, it was downwards, which made this golden-robed man move even faster. “Repulsive force!”

However, although he was slowed by the gravity, it was too late, because the golden-robed man had already arrived!

That spiked mace was already in front of him. Linley could even sense a powerful gravitational field. “This golden-robed man trains in the Laws of the Earth.” Linley felt a powerful threat from him, and Mirage flipped outwards, filled with Destruction-type Sovereign power, exploding forth.

The tip of Mirage was smashed head-on by the spiked mace.

“Clang!”

Linley only felt a terrifying force surge from Mirage to the center of his palm. “Rumble…” That terrifying force caused the draconic scales in the center of Linley’s palm to shatter, and blood oozed out. Mirage was smashed towards Linley’s shoulders, while the spiked mace continued to descend.

Pressing down with Mirage, it smashed heavily against Linley’s shoulder.

And this was after Linley had frantically used Mirage to block; otherwise, the mace would have smashed into his head.

“A Sovereign weapon!” Linley was completely certain that the spiked mace was a Sovereign weapon!

“BANG!”

Draconic scales shattered, bones splintered, and blood flew in the air. Linley’s left arm was broken off, while Linley himself smashed towards the ground like a meteor at high speed. With a ‘swoosh’ sound, he entered the ground, leaving behind just a large tunnel. As for the golden-robed man with the spiked mace, he didn’t hesitate at all, immediately following into the tunnel.

“BOSS!” Bebe, seeing this, stared with a changed look on his face.

Linley's power had reached the commander level, but he was considered one of the weakest commanders. Against a powerful commander who had a Sovereign weapon and who was extremely strong in the Laws of the Earth, Linley was going to be trampled to death.

"Bang!" Bebe was knocked flying as well.

But Bebe was completely uninjured, and he couldn't be bothered to use his innate divine ability to take revenge on his attacker. Bebe's first reaction was to dive into the tunnel which Linley was smashed through. "Boss, no matter what, you can't die!" Bebe hurriedly flew underground.

Actually, from the start of the battle till now, Montelo's side had no idea that Bebe was the Godeater Rat! After all, during that moment of crisis when Bebe used his innate divine ability earlier, he had been within the mountain. No one outside could see it. In addition, Bebe's 'signature', his straw hat, had been destroyed during the battle with Bayer.

Although Bebe could use divine energy to form another one, Bebe had just finished a life-and-death battle and wasn't in the mood to make another one yet.

Without having a straw hat, Montelo and the others weren't able to recognize him.

If they knew that Bebe was a Godeater Rat, perhaps Montelo would have changed the plan. After all, they had people with soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts. But unfortunately, they didn't know who Bebe was.

"BOOM!" That enormous spiked mace came smashing down once more.

Linley's Mirage sword once more blocked.

"BANG!" Linley was once more smashed downwards, but fortunately, during the past five centuries of training, Linley had made some improvements with regards to the Laws of the Earth. He had reached a

bottleneck in fusing the four profound mysteries, and although he had yet to make a breakthrough, his power had already increased significantly. Thus, faced with the attack of such a powerful expert, he didn't immediately die.

Instead, he was able to just barely rely on Mirage to preserve his own life.

Unfortunately…

In terms of weapons, his was slightly inferior.

Both he and the enemy used Sovereign's Might.

As for the Laws, clearly the enemy surpassed him! Although within the Blackstone Space, the enemy was simply too close. Linley was continuously descending, while the enemy continuously smashed downwards with his spiked mace from above.

"BANG!"

Yet another smash.

Linley just barely blocked, but he was once more smashed downwards, his body blasting through the earth and the rocks, continuing to go deeper.

"I can't go any deeper! If I go any deeper, I'll encounter spatial tears." Linley knew very well that the underground of the Planar Battlefield was very dangerous. Once one reached a certain depth, one would encounter spatial tears. The deeper one went, the more spatial tears there would be, until one finally fell into chaotic space.

"Haha, your ability to resist isn't bad! If I can't kill you, then I'll send you into chaotic space." A savage voice rang out in Linley's mind.

"BANG!"

Yet another mace blow smashed downwards!

Linley was barely able to block, but his palm was already covered with blood, and his body was covered by it as well. Although this was slow to describe, in truth, from the moment Linley's began fell into the ground until now, only a moment had passed. After all, the golden-haired man was constantly smashing down with his mace, giving Linley no chance to rest at all. At this dangerous moment…

Around Linley's body suddenly appeared an enormous Azure Dragon Phantom. The golden eyes of the Azure Dragon stared towards this golden-robed man, Oman.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar.

But just as he used his innate divine ability, that Oman launched yet another vicious mace blow downwards. "BANG!" Linley's body once more sank downwards. Given Linley's current level of power, all he could do was ensure that he wouldn't be smashed to death. There was no way he could prevent himself from being knocked downwards.

"Crackle…"

A long spatial tear that was tens of meters long and half a meter wide slashed past Linley's body. Quite a bit of earth disappeared before the tear vanished.

Linley couldn't help but feel cold.

"Not good. I'm almost at the limit." Linley instantly understood that if he went down any further, the spatial tears would become even more common. In addition, with each vicious downwards blow of the spiked mace, Linley would be smashed at least a few dozen meters or even a hundred meters. He was already at the limits; if he sank another few dozen meters or a hundred meters, he probably would have truly been pushed into chaotic space.

"You really are able to resist. But…down you go."

The golden-robed man, who had already escaped the temporal impact, once

more sank downwards, the spiked mace in his hand once more mercilessly smashing down towards Linley.

“Rumble…” A strange energy instantly surrounded the golden-robed man.

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

“Motherf*cker, die!” An enraged bellow rang out. Bebe, at this critical moment, had finally arrived. At the same time, he gave a vicious kick towards the golden-robed man, who launched a backhand blow. With a ‘bang’ sound, Bebe was smashed through the nearby earth.

“Bebe.” Linley hurriedly flew towards Bebe.

“What sort of attack was that?” The golden-robed man was disdainful. “How come I didn’t feel a thing?” The golden-robed man had been staring at the below Linley when Bebe had used his innate divine ability. He didn’t see the illusion of a Godeater Rat, so he naturally didn’t know how powerful this attack was.

As for the ‘Godeater’, in the face of the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact of the golden-robed man, it was like an egg smashing into a rock. It was useless.

The golden-robed man didn’t understand how powerful that attack had been. He thought it was an ordinary strike.

“Swoosh.” Linley already arrived by Bebe’s side.

“Boss, this person isn’t affected by my innate divine ability.” Bebe sent mentally.

“Haha, the two of you, die together.” That sound rang out in Linley and Bebe’s mind, while his figure arrived in front of them.

Suddenly…

“Rumble!” Out of nowhere, a ten meter long, one meter wide, terrifying spatial fracture appeared between Linley, Bebe, and the golden-robed man. Terrified, the golden-robed man didn’t dare to draw any closer. If he were to charge into the spatial fracture, then he really would enter chaotic space.

But the strange thing was…

A tiny black shadow actually flew out from the spatial fracture, moving as fast as lightning. This black shadow flew out of the spatial fracture towards the direction of Linley and Bebe.

Linley’s first reaction was to stretch his hand out and grab it.

“Eh?”

After grasping this black blur, Linley felt a surge of unusual energy enter his body. As for the nearby Bebe, he clearly saw what this black blur was; this was a seemingly ordinary, but very beautiful crown. Only, the crown had lost its luster long ago, and the sunken cavities for the jewel settings of the crown were all empty. Clearly, the jewels were long gone, and the crown had lost its beauty.

Chapter 33 – A Battle

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 33, A Battle

If this tattered crown had been lying on the ground, Linley wouldn't even have given it a glance.

It was incredibly tattered, and the gemstone settings of the crown were all empty. It had no particular aura either. At first glance, it looked like nothing more than an ordinary crown made in a material plane. Deity artifacts or Sovereign artifacts…all artifacts that had been nurtured by power would generally have some unique auras.

Even cheap items such as inkstones and netherstones had unique auras.

But this crown was as ordinary as a material item.

But when Linley took the crown into his hands, a unique energy was transmitted into Linley's body. This energy was very unusual; it was like spring rain falling over Linley's wounds. Instantly, Linley's shattered arm as well as many of his upper body wounds began to heal and close at an astonishing rate.

In an instant!

Aside from a small wound which remained on his chest, the other parts of Linley's body, including his shattered arm, were all completely healed.

"How can that be?" Bebe was shocked as well. He too felt that this was inconceivable.

The stronger a body was, the harder it was to repair it. Linley's Dragonformed body, although inferior to Bebe's, far surpassed the power of most Highgod artifacts. How could it be so easily healed?

“Boss, what’s going on? How did your wounds suddenly heal so quickly? Also, that small wound on your chest, why didn’t it heal?” Bebe hurriedly sent through divine sense. “Is it connected to that weird, tattered crown?”

Linley was feeling stunned as well.

“Bebe, I’m not sure either. Within this tattered crown, there was a strange energy which entered my body. Indeed, in an instant, it healed my wounds. But it seemed as though there was only a little bit of energy; it was all used up before fully repairing the damage done to my chest.” Linley sent back through divine sense.

After having finished transmitting energy, the tattered crown no longer had any more energy remaining.

Resting in Linley’s hand, this tattered crown once more appeared completely unremarkable. But Linley still clearly remembered that feeling when the tattered crown had transferred energy to him. “This tattered crown flew out from that spatial tear. Clearly, it flew out from chaotic space. For something to be able to remain within chaotic space without shattering… this tattered crown should be made from a material that is stronger than Highgod artifacts.”

Linley knew how dangerous chaotic space was. Spatial tears abounded, and that sort of tearing power would destroy Highgod artifacts, transforming them into dust.

But the tattered crown hadn’t been destroyed.

This alone was proof that it was unusual.

“What’s that?” The golden-robed Oman stared at the crown in Linley’s hand, then let out a loud, cold laugh. “Haha…your luck isn’t bad. This crown actually passed through a spatial tear and arrived here. It should be a Sovereign artifact. I imagine that in the past, when commanders battled here, a commander died in a spatial rift and the Sovereign artifact was lost within. But from the looks of it…this Sovereign artifact is damaged.”

With a flip of his hand, Linley stored the tattered crown into his interspatial ring.

This wasn't the time to analyze the tattered crown.

"Bebe, seize the opportunity. Let's hurry up and flee. Don't waste time with this fellow." Linley once more controlled his Blackstone Space, filling it with Destruction-type Sovereign power and generating a powerful repulsive force that was applied to the body of that golden-robed Oman. "This big, golden-robed fellow isn't even phased by my innate divine ability. He really is hard to deal with."

Bebe didn't want to tussle with this big fellow either.

Linley and Bebe hurriedly flew into the air, while at the same time changing the direction towards which they were flying.

The repulsive force changed to be an upwards force!

Oman couldn't help but move, although he quickly became accustomed to this gravity.

"You want to escape?" Oman stared at the enormous spatial rift in front of him. He first flew upwards, wanting to fly up and over the spatial rift. In the Planar Battlefield, especially at such a depth, even an expert such as Oman had to be careful. Otherwise, if he slipped and fell into a spatial rift, that would be terrifying.

But just as he flew up towards the space above the spatial rift…

The upwards gravitational force suddenly transformed into a downwards force!

"Die!" Linley, who had been preparing for this the entire time, howled furiously in his mind.

One can imagine how powerful the gravity of this Blackstone Space that was formed from Sovereign power was. Although Oman was one of the powerful Emissaries of the Chief Sovereign of Light, he had originally been resisting the upwards gravitational pull; naturally, the energy in his body was pointed downwards, so as to cancel out that force.

But the gravity suddenly changed from upwards to downwards! Instantly, his own internal downwards energy joined forces with the downwards gravity!

Oman had held the upper hand this entire time. Although he was careful, this sort of sudden, contrasting change caused Oman's body to suddenly sink as well!

What was below him? An enormous spatial rift!

"Uh!" The golden-robed Oman was caught off guard. His face couldn't help but change. He, too, could sense the astonishing attractive power of that spatial rift. Instantly, a white light exploded forth from his body. "BANG!" The spiked mace trembled violently, causing the nearby space to distort.

By relying on the counterforce, Oman was able to escape the spatial rift.

"Those two bastards." Although Oman had escaped in a short period of time, Linley and Bebe had already fled more than two or three hundred meters away.

"I swear I'll kill you two." Oman bellowed furiously, then chased in pursuit.

Linley and Bebe had, for now, escaped one tribulation, but on the earth above them, Reisgem and Reihom were in absolutely dire straits.

"Haha…"

Montelo's loud laughter echoed in the air, while at the same time, thousands of tough strands of silk snaked outwards from him, entangling Reisgem. The greatest problem wasn't just that these strands were tough; they were

fast! Every single strand was as fast as a ray of light when it shot out.

They constantly entangled towards Reisgem.

“Montelo, if you have any ability, fight me head on. All you can do is rely on this sort of detestable technique. How can that be considered proof of ability?” Reisgem’s longspear also danced about in a blur, constantly shattered and breaking many of the strands.

Unfortunately, although he might destroy a thousand strands, ten thousand more would emerge from Montelo’s body.

As long as Montelo’s Sovereign power wasn’t used up, he was in no danger of running out of strands. Although Montelo didn’t have as much Sovereign’s Might as Reisgem did, an inexhaustible supply, he was still a member of the Augusta clan, and as a talented expert of the clan, he naturally was treated very well and had quite a bit of Sovereign’s Might.

“I don’t have the ability to kill you.” Montelo hovered there in midair, smirking as he sent mentally. “On my side, in one-on-one combat, only Oman poses a major threat to you. But we aren’t prepared to kill you. Our mission is to kill your three comrades. Haha…I imagine that those two comrades of yours who went underground are already dead.”

Reisgem’s face turned rather white.

He understood how powerful these experts of the Augusta clan were. The Augusta clan’s experts were divided into the actual members of the Augusta clan, as well as the Emissaries of the Chief Sovereign of Light. These Emissaries would assist the Augusta clan as well. As for Oman, he was himself an Emissary of the Chief Sovereign of Light, and an exceedingly strong one at that.

“GRAAAAAAAWR!”

A furious bellow rang out.

“BOOM!” Suddenly, the entire earth trembled and rose upwards, as large amounts of boulders emerged from the ground, shooting everywhere.

“Reihom.” Reisgem’s face changed.

Oman went to pursue Linley and Bebe, while Montelo was tying up Reisgem. Then…there were six people against Reihom! Although the six were not commanders, they clearly had the power of commanders. Even Reisgem would find it hard to endure the combined assault of those six.

“Hey, that fellow of yours is quite powerful.” Montelo smirked.

“It won’t be so easy for you to kill Reihom.” Although Reisgem was worried, he still held hope in his heart, because Reihom was the most powerful Emissary in service to his mother. Although Reihom was always quite taciturn, his strength…was extraordinarily frightening.

And right now, Reihom had entered a berserk state!

“GRAAAAAWR!” Yet another growl, and Reihom’s body suddenly expanded dramatically.

Standing on the ground, Reihom had actually transformed into a tower-like brute that was ten meters tall. His fists were like two meteors, wildly smashing in every direction. Every single fist carried exceedingly terrifying power, and even the six attacking him didn’t dare to casually block those fists.

Space twisted as every single punch caused explosive tears in space to appear.

The power was so great as to make one’s face change.

Reihom’s entire body was glowing with a bizarre, golden yellow tattooed glow. Someone close to Reihom would realize that these golden tattoos actually formed into a strange shape that looked like a fist. Upon seeing this, the six attackers couldn’t help but frown, and their hearts sank as well.

The countless planes had given birth to some truly strange lifeforms.

For example, metallic lifeforms or plant lifeforms. In turn, Volcano Titans and World Titans were exceedingly rare; they were all extremely strong races. As for Reihom, he was one of the extremely rare ‘kings’ of the World Titan race. Generally speaking, the creatures known as ‘World Tyrants’ were born with the ability to control the earth and to control stones, and were able to absorb all sorts of mineral essences to strengthen their body.

“So there was an expert like him present!” The six only now grew cautious.

Reihom was a person who never revealed himself. Ever since his friend, ‘Bosley’, had been killed, he had begun to accompany Reisgem in the Planar Battlefield. Neither Linley nor anyone else knew much about this Reihom.

“All of you, die.”

Reihom’s eyes glowed with yellow light, and his enormous fists smashed heavily towards his foes, each fist containing the power to tear space apart and cause it to shatter. He had been born with limitless brute strength, and he had fused five of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. He also had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact; he truly was very powerful.

“Haha, everyone, let’s see who is the first to kill him.” That silver-robed woman, ‘Ranessa’, laughed loudly.

Although Reihom was mighty, the six enemies weren’t weak either. And, there were six of them! All supreme experts.

“Hmph!” A green-haired maiden suddenly moved at exceedingly fast speed, dodging the heavy blows of the ‘titanic’ Reihom, but just after she dodged Reihom’s fist, Reihom’s right arm suddenly twisted, and his elbow smashed heavily towards the green-haired woman. This attack was so fast that the green-haired maiden only had enough time to use her own fist to block.

Her dainty little fist, covered with a black glove, collided with the hammer-like elbow!

“BANG!” The green-haired maiden’s body was smashed underground, creating a deep hole.

As for Reihom, a large tear suddenly appeared in his elbow as well. It looked terrifying, but it didn’t shed a drop of blood, and in the blink of an eye, it was repaired.

“Swoosh.” The green-haired woman flew out from underground.

“This fellow’s body is too tough. My Sovereign weapon is only able to wound him. Everyone, be careful.” The green-haired maiden sent mentally. Instantly, the other five began to launch attacks wildly. Although multiple wounds and holes began to appear on Reihom’s body, Reihom instantly healed them all.

It wasn’t just material attacks; the six launched soul attacks as well!

“It’s useless. This big fellow probably has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.” A white-robed man sent mentally.

For the moment, no one knew what to do.

“Everyone, I’ll tie up this big fellow momentarily. I’ll leave the part of killing him up to you five.” Ranessa sent mentally, a hint of a cold smile on her face. Ranessa’s formerly beautiful maiden’s figure suddenly became surrounded by the blurry illusion of an enormous octopus.

Suddenly, her innate divine ability descended.

“Ah….” Reihom felt as though his entire body was suddenly constricted by an incomparably sturdy rope. Space twisted and distorted, pressing down upon him. Reihom howled angrily, and his steel-like muscles bulged violently, seeking to break free from his restraints.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Two figures struck virtually simultaneously towards Reihom’s head; these two were the green-haired maiden and a cyan-robed youth. The green-haired maiden used her fists, while the cyan-robed youth used a broad warblade.

The green-haired maiden’s fist struck out with full power….

“Crackle…” The broad warblade glowed with water-type Sovereign power, easily tearing through space and chopping towards Reihom’s head.

“GRAAAAAAWR!” Reihom roared furiously.

“BOOM!”

The fist and the warblade landed on Reihom’s head. With a ‘boom’ sound, Reihom’s head was struck head on by two mighty Sovereign artifacts, and it finally blew apart, sending shattered fragments everywhere. But strangely enough, no divine spark fell out.

“Careful!” A panicked cry rang out in the minds of the two.

Reihom’s two terrifying fists were already swinging at them!

Chapter 34 – A Battle of Attrition?

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 34, A Battle of Attrition?

The green-haired maiden and the cyan-robed youth weren't able to dodge in time. Their first reaction was to use their Sovereign artifacts to block. The two massive fists slammed over, pressing down like two small mountains.

"BOOM!" "BOOM!"

Two weighty smacking sounds. The green-haired maiden and the cyan-robed youth were both smashed underground, but immediately afterwards, the two flew out from underground, hovering in midair close to their four companions.

"We were wrong." Ranessa somberly sent mentally to the other five. "This big fellow is a World Tyrant, not a human! If he was in human form, then his head would indeed be his weak point, where his soul would be. But he is currently in World Tyrant form, and his weak point is his 'core'! The soul is within his core, and his divine spark is within it as well!"

It was just like the Flame Tyrant which Linley had originally encountered in the Necropolis of the Gods in the past. Even though the Flame Tyrant's entire body had been shattered, he still didn't die. The Flame Tyrant's weak spot was that translucent stone; that was the core!

This sort of metal or rock-based lifeform all had an important 'core' component.

The soul was contained within it, and after becoming a Deity, their divine spark would be added to it as well! As long as the core was destroyed, they could be killed!

"Haha, so that's the case." The cyan-robed youth began to laugh loudly. "Since we know where his weakness is, killing him will be easy now."

“I’ll use my innate divine ability one more time. The rest will be up to you.” Ranessa sent mentally to the other five. Actually, even if Ranessa didn’t use her innate divine ability, the six would still be able to kill Reihom; after all, Reihom only had two fists, and wouldn’t be able to block six people at once. Those six were entirely capable of smashing a giant hole into his chest, then charging in and destroying the core!

However, using the innate divine ability to bind Reihom, then kill him would be much easier.

“That comrade of yours is quite powerful. A World Tyrant. For this sort of monstrous lifeform to reach such a level in profound mysteries is quite rare.” Montelo clearly was quite amused. He was completely confident that his side would be able to easily kill Reihom; they just miscalculated earlier, that was all.

“Not good!” Reisgem felt that the situation was bad as well.

Last time, they had smashed apart Reihom’s head; the next time, the six would definitely attack Reihom’s core.

“GRAAAAAAAWR!” Reisgem couldn’t help but release an enraged roar, and behind him, the illusion of an enormous amethyst beast suddenly appeared behind him.

Innate divine ability – Amethyst Rampart!

Rays of amethyst light filed with black Sovereign power spread out, forming a black cocoon. However, this giant black cocoon wrapped itself around Montelo. Actually, the shape of the Amethyst Rampart, as well as the target it wrapped around, was completely up to Reisgem. Just like that, for a moment, Montelo became trapped within the Amethyst Rampart and unable to break out.

Reisgem regained his freedom!

“Reihom, quick, flee!” Reisgem sent through divine sense.

At the same time, Reisgem shot out like an arrow, and as he did so, that amethyst longspear once again appeared in his hands. His right arm swung out in an arc, throwing the longspear forward. The amethyst light flashed forward at an astonishing, terrifying speed, striking towards that silver-robed woman, ‘Ranessa’.

Ranessa had no choice but to swing back with her two arms.

“Clang!” The violet light smashed against Ranessa’s arms, and Ranessa was knocked flying into the air.

Ranessa dared to block like this, because she had something to rely on; she had a single Sovereign artifact, a defensive Sovereign artifact.

Although Ranessa wasn’t killed, since she was knocked aside, her innate divine ability was disrupted midway through.

“Reihom, quick, let’s go!” Reisgem said frantically.

“Out of the way!” A keening howl. The green-robed maiden’s body flashed forward, and she appeared before Reisgem. She seized the opportunity to attack Reisgem, while Reisgem’s Sovereign weapon was still flying back towards him. He could only let out a low growl as he stretched his hand out, viciously smashing forward…

Reisgem’s crystalline palm was covered with black light. It looked like a casual blow, but it swept forward towards that tender little fist like a tornado.

“BANG!” A low, echoing sound. Reisgem was knocked backwards, while at the same time, with a ‘crunch’ sound, bones snapping could be heard.

“Crackle….” Reihom’s body quickly shrank.

A blurry black light shot out from Reisgem’s body, forming an Amethyst

Space that was a thousand meters across, and a powerful gravitational force was generated, causing the seven enemies to unconsciously tremble.

“Don’t let himi escape. Kill him!” Ranessa shouted mentally.

“Let’s hurry and leave.” Reisgem couldn’t be bothered with anything else, immediately fleeing with Reihom frantically.

“WHAP!” A long whip snaked out, striking onto Reihom’s body; the others were already in pursuit.

“Don’t even think of escaping!” By now, Montelo had broken out of the Amethyst Rampart, and countless white strands of light once more shot towards Reisgem.

“Grrr…..”

Reisgem turned his head and let out a furious roar. Instantly, a large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign power spread out, forming an enormous web. This was, once again, his innate divine ability, ‘Amethyst Rampart’. This enormous Amethyst Rampart spread out towards the seven pursuers, but unfortunately, the seven maintained some distance from each other, and so it couldn’t completely envelop them. It only surrounded four of them, while three fled, one of whom was Montelo.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!”

Reisgem and Reihom fled at high speed.

“Chase!” Montelo shouted.

Reisgem knew that the situation was bad, but he knew…“Linley and Bebe are underground and are being attacked by Oman. Although Oman is very powerful, Bebe’s defense is strong as well. He definitely won’t die.” As Reisgem fled, he also raised his head and howled loudly, “Linley! The two of you, hurry and flee for your lives! If we have the chance, we’ll meet again!”

That furious roar shook the heavens!

Underground, Linley and Bebe were fleeing in sorry shape as well. Oman clearly was an expert who trained in the Laws of the Earth, and his underground senses were quite accurate. Although by relying on the Blackstone Space, Linley and Bebe were able to maintain a distance of a few hundred meters, Oman was still able to easily locate where the two of them were.

Oman was fixed on Linley and Bebe, unwilling to let them go.

“Linley! The two of you, hurry and flee for your lives! If we have the chance, we’ll meet again!” This thunderous roar echoed even underground, and both Linley and Bebe heard it.

“Boss, it seems like Reisgem isn’t doing that well either.” Bebe sent mentally.

“There’s only a single person chasing after us. There are seven others after them! Perhaps the seven don’t dare kill Reisgem, but they’ll dare to kill Reihom. Let’s go. Let’s not just stay in this region.” Although Linley was currently fleeing, he was consistently running around in circles. He had been hoping to be able to escape alongside Reisgem and Reihom.

But now, it seemed, the situation was already terrible and that there was no choice but to have everyone split up.

Whoosh…

Linley and Bebe didn’t care which direction they had to flee towards; they selected one and accelerated, flying outwards in a straight line.

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” The two suddenly emerged from the ground.

“The two of you, don’t even think of escaping.” Oman surged out from underground at almost the same instance.

Linley and Bebe turned to look. Oman was actually following from just a few hundred meters behind. That distance could be traversed by commanders, given their speed, in just the blink of an eye. Linley and Bebe were unable to escape Oman's field of vision; now that they were aboveground, Oman could track them with his eyes.

Underground, Oman was able to rely on his senses and attunement to the earth to locate where Linley and Bebe were.

Bebe bellowed, "Hey, Oman, aren't you tired, chasing us like this?"

"I'm bored to death here in the Planar Battlefield anyhow. I'm in no rush. Even if I have to chase for two more days, I'll catch up to you two." Oman seemed to be quite relaxed, and snickered, "In terms of speed, you two are much slower than me! If it weren't for the fact that you are able to rely on something similar to Reisgem's Amethyst Space, how would you be able to shake me off?" As he spoke, Oman drew parallel to Linley and Bebe; only, the two maintained a distance of a few hundred meters.

Oman's natural speed was indeed faster than Linley and Bebe's.

But in the Blackstone Space, there was no way Oman was able to draw close to Linley.

"If you just chase like this, you'll never be able to catch us." Bebe said loudly.

"Once you run out of Sovereign power, even if you have this gravitational space, it won't be able to stop me." Oman snickered.

Indeed. Without Sovereign power behind it, the power of the Blackstone Space would drop dramatically. Oman, by relying on his own Sovereign power, was completely capable of resisting the Blackstone Space to draw closer to Linley and Bebe.

"Haha…you want to use up our Sovereign power?" Linley couldn't help

but laugh loudly. “Mr. Oman, just keep chasing.”

Linley was in no rush either. He continued to flee in a straight line, moving farther and farther away from the original site.

Moments later…

Linley’s Sovereign power finally was used up, and the black aura emanating from Linley’s body vanished.

“Haha!” Oman laughed loudly, moving lightning-fast into the Blackstone Space’s zone. Indeed, the power of the gravity of the Blackstone Space was now much weaker, and although Oman was slowed down, he was still a good deal faster than Linley and Bebe. “Prepare to die.” Oman was currently in an excellent mood. He was finally going to kill these two hard-to-deal-with punks.

But right then…

“BANG!” Linley’s body once more radiated a black glow, and instantly, the power of the Blackstone Space increased yet again. Linley and Bebe both increased in speed as well.

“More Sovereign’s Might.” Oman was stunned, and his speed lessened.

“Oman, you want to compete with us in Sovereign power attrition?” Bebe snickered. “Go for it. We’re happy to oblige.”

At the same time, the scope of the Blackstone Space shrank, down from five hundred meters to one hundred meters. This scope was enough to guarantee their safety; although the size was less, the rate at which it used up Sovereign power was slower as well.

“It seems you have quite a bit of Sovereign’s Might.” Oman was rather hesitant now.

“Of course. My bro Reisgem is the son of the Redbud Sovereign.” Bebe

snickered. “Come, I want to see how much Sovereign’s Might the Chief Sovereign of Light gave you.”

Oman was stunned.

He knew how much Sovereign’s Might Reisgem possessed. As Sovereigns saw it, if an Emissary died, they could find another one; they didn’t care at all, unless it was someone who was a Paragon or at Beirut’s level. Thus, they couldn’t possibly give their Emissary’s that much Sovereign’s Might. To give a few dozen drops at once was a sign of great favor already.

But for the Sovereign’s children?

Oman knew that the second and third generation members of the Augusta clan each had large amounts of Sovereign’s Might, and that was despite the fact that there were more than a thousand members in the second and third generation. As for Reisgem, there was just him; how much Sovereign’s Might did he have, then? As many commanders saw it, Reisgem was an absolute tycoon. They envied him! But Reisgem was no fool; aside from his friends and brothers, he would never hand out Sovereign’s Might to others.

“Can it be that Reisgem gave a large amount of his Sovereign’s Might to these two?” Oman wondered.

Prior to this, he hadn’t considered this possibility, because in his heart, he always viewed Sovereign’s Might as being precious. He had considered things from his own viewpoint; he wouldn’t be willing to give it to his friends. He had forgotten, however…that from Reisgem’s viewpoint, the situation was different.

“Continuing after these two is nothing more than a waste of Sovereign’s Might.” Oman frowned. “I’m not going to compete with them!” Oman didn’t say a single word; he very straightforwardly turned and left. In virtually the blink of an eye, he disappeared into the horizons of the battlefield.

Only now did Linley and Bebe come to a halt.

“He left?” Bebe began to laugh.

“He wasn’t willing to use up his Sovereign’s Might.” Linley sighed. It really was different, having so much Sovereign’s Might. In the past, he was extremely careful in how he used it; unless it was a life-or-death situation, he wouldn’t use it.

“We’ve used two or three drops, but the canteen is virtually unchanged.” Linley sighed to himself.

Two or three drops, to a canteen, was like a single hair on the skin of an ox.

“Boss, we’ve split up with Reisgem and Reihom.” Bebe said with a frown.

Linley stared at his surroundings; it was silent and desolate.

“It’s up to luck. We’ll see if we encounter them again.” Linley said with a frown. “Right now, we need to find a place to rest. I haven’t had a chance to carefully inspect that crown yet. Let’s go!”

Chapter 35 – A Rock

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 35, A Rock

Two black blurs were moving forward at high speed, while right behind them were seven other blurs, chasing and attacking. Only, the seven behind the two were some distance apart from each other.

“This Reisgem’s speed is too fast. Only you, young master, are just barely able to keep up. The others aren’t able to keep up. What should we do?” A silver-haired elder followed Montelo while sending frantically. The two of them both trained in the Laws of Light, and were specialized in speed. As for the others, they trained in water and Fate, and they weren’t skilled in speed.

“Chase!”

Montelo stared fixedly at the two forms up ahead.

“Rumble…” Suddenly, the earth rose up, and a large number of boulders shot up out of the ground. Every single boulder flowed with black light; clearly, every single boulder contained Destruction-type Sovereign power.

Montelo and his people didn’t care about the boulders, but they didn’t dare to underestimate the power of Destruction-type Sovereign power.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

Montelo and the rest of the seven either dodged aside or smashed the boulders apart. These weren’t too much of a threat to them, but it did slow them down.

“They pulled away yet again!” Montelo narrowed his eyes, anger roiling within his chest. “This Reisgem actually has a helper like him, and is willing to use up a large amount of Sovereign power to use these

techniques…" Suddenly, Montelo noticed that the Sovereign power in his body had already slowly dried up. He couldn't help but sigh to himself. "Forget it. It is enough that we were able to put Reisgem in such a bad situation, this time."

"Halt!" Montelo barked.

After he halted, the other six halted as well.

Although Montelo had used up a drop of Sovereign's Might, the other six hadn't used it all up yet. After all, Montelo had immediately used those countless white strands to entangle Reisgem from the very beginning, and had been constantly using up his Sovereign power. Previously, he had used up too much, and so it was only natural that he was the first to exhaust it.

"Stop chasing. This is just a waste of Sovereign's Might. I don't have enough Sovereign's Might to just throw it away on Reisgem." Montelo snickered. "Reisgem, that punk. He's always so arrogant, but this time, we made him flee in such a sorry shape. That's enough."

The silver-robed Ranessa snorted. "It's enough for you, but we three don't even have a single badge to show for it."

Montelo glanced at Ranessa, then chortled, "Ranessa, there will be more chances in the future. Right, in a bit, Oman will return. He definitely must have killed those two people. If he acquired any badges, we'll give them to you. What say you?"

"I'll take you at your word." Ranessa finally revealed a hint of a smile.

Right at this moment…

"Montelo, I, Reisgem, will remember this!" Reisgem's bellowing voice could be heard from far away.

Hearing the resentment and anger in that bellow, Montelo wasn't frightened at all; instead, he began to laugh loudly. He said to the other six, "Haha,

everyone, hear that? Reisgem is utterly furious! Last time, we killed that Bosley, but he wasn't able to do anything to us either. This time, we gave him yet another lesson. Even if I stood right in front of him, he wouldn't be able to do anything to me."

"Young master, you have a defensive Sovereign artifact. At most, Reisgem will be able to just rant. What can he actually do? Can it be that the Sovereign will interfere for a minor matter like this?" The green-haired maiden laughed.

Montelo and Reisgem weren't able to do anything to each other.

However, Montelo clearly had more assistants than Reisgem did. Thus, it was normal for Reisgem to suffer more losses.

"Mm, Oman's returning." Montelo suddenly turned to look.

Montelo's side currently had six people emanating the aura of Sovereign's Might. Six auras of Sovereign's Might was as brilliant a beacon as the sun, here in the Planar Battlefield. Who wouldn't be able to sense it? Oman was easily able to follow the aura to arrive at high speed to this place.

"Montelo, remember your promise." Ranessa laughed lightly.

"Of course." Montelo nodded very confidently.

"Oman." Montelo smiled as he welcomed him. Although Oman followed him, he was the Sovereign's Emissary, a wielder of two Sovereign artifacts. He was exceedingly powerful.

Oman landed. "Young master."

"Right. Earlier, Ms. Ranessa and I agreed that after killing Reisgem's people, the badges we acquired would go to Ms. Ranessa. Hand over those two badges to me." Montelo said with a laugh.

Oman shook his head. "I didn't acquire the badges."

Hearing these words, Montelo's face went blank, while the face of the nearby Ranessa turned cold. With a snicker, she said, "Oh. We all know very well how powerful Mr. Oman is; can it be that you weren't able to kill those two kids? I imagine you killed them and took their badges, but aren't willing to hand them over."

Two commander badges were indeed items of great preciousness.

"Hm?" Oman let out a cold snort, turning his head to stare hard at Ranessa. "What did you say? Did you call me, Oman, a liar?"

Ranessa raised an eyebrow, then chuckled, "What, Mr. Oman, are you trying to use your power to suppress us?"

"If I say I didn't acquire them, then I didn't acquire them! Don't go too far!" Oman snorted coldly. There was no way he could prove something like this.

But clearly, as far as Ranessa was concerned, Oman was an extremely formidable commander, while Linley and Bebe were people who Ranessa had never seen before; they shouldn't be too powerful. Thus, she was certain that Oman must have killed them.

"Haha…" Ranessa let out a calm laugh. "Since that's what you say, Mr. Oman, then of course I will believe your words. Let's leave!"

Ranessa clearly knew that there was nothing here for her; how could she be willing to stay?

The other two youths immediately flew away with Ranessa as well.

"They left." Montelo turned to look at Oman, then laughed, "Oman, now you can tell me; did you kill those two or not?" Montelo believed that Oman had lied earlier as well.

"I really did not." Oman shook his head. "Those two weren't weak either.

That Azure Dragon clan youth was able to take several of my blows head on without dying. As for that other youngster, his body took a blow head on with my Sovereign weapon, but he didn't die either. Afterwards, I chased them, but the youth of the Azure Dragon clan had a Gravitational Space ability that was similar to Reisgem's; I wasn't able to catch them, so I had to give up.

Montelo frowned.

"That youngster took a blow head on with his body? It seems he must have a defensive Sovereign artifact. That youth of the Azure Dragon clan is also capable of the Amethyst Space technique? His relationship with Reisgem must be quite deep. Forget it. Let's find a place to rest, first." Montelo immediately led his group of five in departing from this place.

In the desolate wilderness, Linley and Bebe were stealthily advancing. Currently, their Sovereign power was already depleted. Earlier, when Linley was radiating Sovereign power, others would easily find them, and so Linley naturally had flown forward quickly. Now that the Sovereign power was exhausted, Linley chose to carefully advance.

"Boss, what should we do in the future?" Bebe sent.

"There are two or three more centuries before the final battle of this Planar War. I hope that before that, I'll make a breakthrough and fuse a fourth profound mystery." Linley knew that every single person who dared to roam across the Planar Battlefield was a top-tier commander. "After I fuse my fourth profound mystery, I'll go out roaming again. By then, I'll be strong enough to do so."

A person's power was dependent on their base strength, their profound mysteries, and their weapons.

For example, Hemmers, whose original form was that of a golden mountain which had been nurtured for countless years by the Divine Earth Plane itself, then birthed. His body's strength was enormously great, and even without fusing any profound mysteries, he surpassed most Seven Star

Fiends and was close to the power of an Asura. This was a reason why he was made a Sovereign's Emissary immediately upon being born.

After having fused four mysteries, Linley didn't dare to block his fists at all.

Even an empty-air punch was capable of penetrating Linley's chest. The terrifying power of his strikes were already comparable to Highgod Paragons. His base level of strength was simply too great.

Linley's own base power naturally couldn't compare to Hemmers. Still, he was still vastly superior to ordinary Highgods.

"Once I increase in strength tenfold, I won't fear those people any longer."

Linley and Bebe were looking for a place to rest. They didn't pay attention to or notice that a piece of rubble that was less than a hundred meters away in the desolate wilderness. The ground had too many of these pieces of stone; who would pay attention to one in particular?

"Someone is finally coming this way. From the looks of it, the youth is the leader. I'll first ambush and kill him, the strong one, then dispose of the weak one."

Very suddenly…

"Swoosh!" The rock shot towards Linley at high speed.

Linley, while walking forward, found to his amazement that a rock had suddenly shot towards him. "Someone's here!" Linley immediately grew cautious. He instantly Dragonformed, while at the same time spread out his Blackstone Space, spreading it to a distance of five hundred meters. Instantly, the rock that had entered the Blackstone Space sank down, but it was already very close to Linley.

"Bang!"

The rock suddenly disappeared, transforming into a person.

“Another expert of the Laws of the Earth.” Linley was startled as well.

Originally, Linley had thought that someone had shot the rock out towards him…but the rock was actually a transformed expert of the Laws of the Earth. Linley had to sigh in praise at the ability of his ambusher in concealing his aura; it was already on nearly the same level as Reisgem.

A ray of blinding saber-light slashed out, traversing the distance of less than ten meters. In an instant, Linley’s field of vision became filled with nothing but that dazzling saber light.

When that saber chopped out, space itself twisted!

“Clang!”

This dominating, unstoppable blade suddenly emitted a bizarre clanging sound, and its strength weakened as well.

“Eh?” The assassin was stunned. “An invisible sword?” Prior to this, he hadn’t noticed it, but now, with his divine sense spread out, he realized that Linley was holding a sword in his hand, a sword that couldn’t be seen with the naked eye!

“Swoosh!” That assassin, having failed with his first saber-chop, immediately turned to flee.

“Lupe [Luo’pu], you are going to flee after failing on the first attack?” Linley’s loud, clear laughter rang out. “Better for you to stay here!” After having seen that saber attack, Linley, who had gone through Beirut’s documents, already knew who it was. This was an expert of the Laws of the Earth, Lupe. At the same time, Linley felt a surge of fear; if it hadn’t been for the fact that his Blackstone Space had caused Lupe to reveal his true form a bit earlier and slowed him down, that earlier attack most likely would have put Linley in grave danger.

As soon as Linley’s words came out, the Blackstone Space changed the

direction of gravity!

The downwards gravity transformed to pull towards Linley!

“Eh?” The figure’s speed immediately lessened greatly.

Linley knew what this Lupe’s abilities were; Lupe specialized in subterfuge and stealth! He was also extremely fast! However, now that he was trapped within Linley’s ‘Blackstone Space’, Lupe had met his perfect counter; his speed and his stealth abilities could no longer save him.

“Eh?” Feeling the changing direction of the gravitational pull, Lupe was instantly shocked.

“Not good!” Lupe had already begun to feel regret after seeing Linley’s transformation; he was certain that as a member of the Azure Dragon clan, Linley was definitely capable of the clan’s innate divine ability. “I wouldn’t necessarily be able to defeat this expert of the Azure Dragon clan, and he has a subordinate with him. If we really start to fight…not good!”

He didn’t hesitate any further at all.

“Bang!” Gritting his teeth, Lupe used up his precious, sole drop of Sovereign’s Might. Instantly, a strong earthen yellow glow emerged from his body.

Seeing the situation, Linley didn’t hesitate at all; his body, as well, exploded forth with a black aura. Lupe, amongst commanders, was considered below average in strength; only, he was fairly famous for his stealth abilities, and also extremely fast.

“What? He is using up Sovereign’s Might as well? This Azure Dragon clan punk is really willing…” Lupe, seeing the situation, felt his heart shake.

“This sort of opponent is perfect for practicing against!” Linley sent to Bebe. “Bebe, don’t interfere. This Lupe’s attack power is comparable to mine, but he’s fused more profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth than

I have! He’s perfect for training against. I might even gain an insight.”

Bebe snickered back, “Fine, Boss. I’ll just watch.” Bebe intentionally retreated to a distance of a hundred meters, giving Linley and Lupe more than enough space to fight.

Knowing that it was Lupe, Bebe was no longer worried.

“Hmph.” Lupe, seeing the situation, felt rage in his heart. He could tell that the opponents didn’t feel him as being worthy of concern. “If it wasn’t for this Gravitational Space, you wouldn’t even be able to touch me.” Lupe felt the power of the Gravitational Space increase greatly as well; he wouldn’t be able to escape. Since he wouldn’t be able to escape, his only option was to fight!

Chapter 36 – Blood Binding, Crown

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 36, Blood Binding, Crown

Lupe trained in the Laws of the Earth, and had fused five of them.

Of the six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, the only one he had not been able to fuse with the others was ‘Gravitational Space’. He had completely fused the other five. After having fused ‘Vitality’, ‘Worldwalking’, ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, ‘Strength’, and ‘Essence of the Earth’, he created an extremely powerful Worldwalking technique, while devising a way so that his spiritual energy would form a continuous loop within his mind, not letting a single hint of his aura leak out.

He had reached an exceedingly high level in stealth and fleeing.

However, whenever there is a gain, there is a loss; his saber attacks contained only four fused profound mysteries. As for ‘Worldwalking’, there was no way for him to fuse that into his saber.

“Whoosh!” Lupe moved through the ‘Blackstone Space’ like a slippery fish, constantly moving about at high speed.

But Linley easily moved to follow him, always blocking in front of him.

“It’s uncertain who will be the one to die.” Lupe growled mentally, and the warblade in his hand silently sliced through the air, chopping towards Linley’s skull. In the instant that Linley’s ‘Mirage’ godspark sword collided with the warblade, with a ‘bang!’, the saber’s energy exploded outwards.

“Bang!”

One saber, one sword!

Linley’s body trembled slightly as he retreated. “Haha, excellent!” Linley

laughed loudly, then charged forward again, but unfortunately for Lupe, his weapon was slightly inferior to Linley's godspark sword.

"He's relying on his weapon." Lupe also realized that Linley's weapon was extraordinary. Feeling resentment, Lupe's eyes turned cold, and suddenly, his index finger and middle finger of his left hand suddenly struck out, and a translucent sword-finger ray shot towards Linley, at a speed so fast that it directly entered Linley's mind.

This was a soul attack!

"Haha…Lupe, it's best if you don't show off that bit of soul attack prowess you have." Linley didn't even care about it. Experts of the Laws of the Earth were never skilled in soul attacks to begin with, and Lupe himself didn't specialize in soul attacks either. How powerful could his attacks be? Linley, just by relying on his spiritual energy alone, was able to defeat the attack.

Lupe had only attacked in such a way due to having no other options.

"Is that so?" Lupe laughed coldly, his attacks becoming all the wilder. Linley was more than happy to accompany him in the fight.

"Clang!"

Linley and Lupe's forms constantly exchanged blows, but clearly, the two were on par. As Linley saw it, Lupe's power amongst commanders really was towards the lower end as well. "He doesn't even have a single Sovereign artifact; indeed, his only option is to rely on ambushes. However, it is worth my time to learn his sort of stealth techniques."

Linley could guess that Lupe had definitely fused 'Worldwalking' amongst his profound mysteries.

In addition, that saber blow which held the power in abeyance, then made it all explode forth at once.

“This saber blow can be said to have mastered and executed the Profound Mysteries of Strength to a perfect level.” Linley continued to exchange blows with Lupe, with the intentions of training his swordplay. As for Lupe, his goal was to seize any opportunity to kill Linley and thus get a chance of escaping this battle.

“Slash!”

Linley’s sword shot out.

Lupe actually delivered a backhanded blow with his saber, sliding his saber against the flat of Linley’s sword and pressing down with a blow towards Linley’s body.

“Oh? He’s really going all out.” At this critical moment, only a ‘swish’ was heard and an azure-golden blur seen as Linley’s draconic tail, carrying a terrifying surge of force, smashed viciously against the warblade. In terms of toughness, Linley’s draconic tail wasn’t weaker than Highgod artifacts at all.

The warblade was knocked off-balance. “Slash!” It originally would have struck Linley on his head, but now, it slashed Linley on the chest. After having been struck by the draconic tail, the blow of this saber was now weaker; it just barely broke through the scales, drawing forth a hint of blood.

“Slash!”

Linley’s Mirage sliced through Lupe’s head, severing it from his body.

Once one’s head was separated from one’s body, that was virtually a guarantee of death! After all, even though the spirit might be present, the body could no longer be controlled to fight back; it was as good as defeat.

“You were pretty vicious, but the end result was your death.” Linley looked at the flying head.

“If I had a Sovereign artifact, the result would definitely be different.” Lupe’s head bellowed. He knew that he had to die.

“Swish!” Linley’s Mirage flashed with light, and Lupe’s voice came to a halt, and a thin red line appeared through his head.

At this moment, Lupe’s Highgod artifacts, interspatial ring, and a gold badge all fell out.

“If you had a Sovereign artifact, the results would be different?” Bebe flew over, chuckling. “Everyone can say that. If my Boss had a Sovereign-level soul protecting artifact, defensive artifact, and weapon, aside from Paragons, who would he fear?”

Linley shook his head and sighed to himself.

This world was a world where the strong devoured the weak. Strength was exalted. People had to rely on their own abilities to acquire Sovereign weapons as well!

Only the strong would be valued and be made Emissaries, and be bestowed a Sovereign artifact. Only the strong would acquire sufficient military merits and be able to trade for a Sovereign artifact. Everything depended on individual effort. As for the children of Sovereigns, they did indeed have a great advantage, but sometimes luck, too, was part of one’s power.

“This Lupe’s ambushing abilities weren’t bad. Unfortunately, once the battle really begins, he’s definitely one of the weakest commanders. It makes sense that a Sovereign wouldn’t select him as an Emissary.” Linley shook his head and sighed. “Thus, as far as the profound mysteries go, even amongst those who have fused five profound mysteries, there are still differences in power.”

There were six profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. Upon fusing five of them, there were six possible fusion results, with the different fusions resulting in different specialty areas.

“This commander badge was fairly easy to acquire.” Linley collected the gold badge, feeling joy in his heart. “I now have three badges. I’m only lacking for one more.”

“Bebe, let’s go.”

Linley and Bebe moved at high speed, leaving the scene of the battle.

A place like the Planar Battlefield was a place where the experts who entered had to be mentally prepared for death. Some experts had to die in order for others to live.

Deep within the heart of an ordinary, large mountain in the Planar Battlefield. Linley and Bebe had carved out a cave for them to temporarily live in. This cave was separated from the outside world by hundreds of meters of mountain rocks; generally speaking, commanders wouldn’t be able to use their divine sense to scan inside here.

But of course, there were three exceptions.

One was if they used Sovereign power to do the scanning.

The second was a Highgod Paragon. They had very large scanning ranges as well.

As for the third, that was Highgod Soul Mutates. Soul Mutates had very special souls, and their souls were generally far stronger than the souls of ordinary Highgods. But of course, there were differences amongst Soul Mutates as well. The chances of a successful soul mutation with two different types of divine power was decent; the vast majority of soul mutates were in possession of two types of divine power, with Olivier being on this level as well. But virtually all individuals who had three types of divine power and yet underwent a soul mutation would die. In the entire Infernal Realm, there was only a single person who successfully underwent and survived a soul mutation with three types of divine power. And as for the soul power of three-power Soul Mutates, it was extraordinarily great!

As for those who underwent a soul mutation while having access to four types of divine power, in the countless planes of the universe, over the countless years, there had never been a single successful case. No one had any idea what the result would be, if a person with four types of divine power underwent a soul mutation.

Within the cave.

Linley was hefting that tattered crown, staring carefully at it and inspecting it. The crown didn't have a hint of luster to it; if he tossed it into a rubbish pile, even if a Deity noticed it, they wouldn't pay it any attention.

The nearby Bebe stared at it as well. After a long time, he mumbled, "Boss, is there something special about this tattered crown? Why can't I see anything special about it? It makes me feel as though it is just an ordinary item."

"It isn't."

Linley shook his head. "Still, I can't see anything special about it either."

When Linley had received that surge of unusual energy from the crown, it had healed his wounds. In addition, this thing had flown out from chaotic space; Linley naturally was certain that it was extraordinary.

"I know it's not ordinary; anything that can survive in and fly out of chaotic space is either a godspark weapon or a Sovereign artifact." Bebe stared carefully at the crown. "But for it to be in the shape of a crown…as I see it, it should be a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact." This was Bebe's judgment.

"If it really is a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, given how tattered it is, it should be a damaged Sovereign artifact." Linley laughed.

If the master of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was still alive, there was no way that the Sovereign artifact could be damaged! A damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact meant that the defenses of the artifact had been

breached, and the master had died!

“There’s only one option right now.” Linley nodded slightly as he spoke.

“Boss, quick, give it a try.” Beb urged.

The only option was…to bind it with blood!

Linley stretched out his index finger. With but a thought, a drop of fresh blood oozed out of his skin, then dripped down onto the crown.

“Eh?” Bebe stared.

“Eh?” Linley frowned.

The drop of blood hit the crown…and it then it splattered and rolled down onto the ground.

“It wasn’t absorbed?” Linley was puzzled.

“What’s going on? This thing has an owner?” Bebe frowned.

Linley pondered for a moment, then nodded. “There’s one possibility. The owner of the crown might have been fighting in the Planar Battlefield, and then died, with the Sovereign artifact falling into chaotic space. However, the owner of the crown still has a divine clone outside, and so there is no way to bind it with blood.”

“Makes sense! Ah, wait! Boss.” Bebe suddenly said. “This crown is damaged, but there is no way for chaotic space to damage a Sovereign artifact, right? There is no way for Highgods to damage Sovereign artifacts either.”

Linley was stunned. He couldn’t help but nod slightly.

When Highgods did battle, generally speaking, after one died, the Sovereign artifact would be completely undamaged. There was no way for

the power of a Highgod to damage a Sovereign artifact.

“Can it be that the owner of this crown was a Sovereign?” This was Linley’s guess. “This crown was then damaged in a battle between Sovereigns, just like my Coiling Dragon ring?”

“If it was a Sovereign, then, the Sovereign definitely must have fallen.” Bebe said. “If the Sovereign fell, the other Sovereign who killed him definitely wouldn’t have spared his clones; he definitely would have pulled up the grass by the roots. This crown should then be an ownerless item. It should be bindable by blood.”

Linley didn’t understand either.

He was able to bind the Coiling Dragon ring with blood, but not this crown.

Still, for now, this was all speculation.

“Forget it.” Linley shook his head. “Bebe, if we can’t figure it out, let’s not worry about it. Long story short, there’s no way to bind it with blood. Perhaps…this crown isn’t a Sovereign artifact at all.”

“What else, besides a Sovereign artifact, can survive in chaotic space?” Bebe mumbled.

Linley and Bebe couldn’t understand it. Based on the knowledge available to them, the only thing that could survive in chaotic space, aside from Sovereign artifacts and godspark weapons, was perhaps divine sparks! As for ordinary materials made of ores or metals, there was no way they would be able to survive in chaotic space.

Unable to get a clear understanding of the crown, Linley had to give up for now. He stored it back into his interspatial ring, and then, based on his earlier line of thoughts, began to train. Only three hundred years remained from now until the final battle of the Planar War. Linley wanted to make a breakthrough in advance.

“That blade blow of Lupe’s…”

Completely storing up all the power, and then letting it all explode forth with amazing force.

“The fists of Hemmers…”

That utterly unblockable punch…it continued to swirl about Linley’s consciousness.

“That spiked mace of the golden-robed man…”

Linley carefully pondered the attacks of that spiked mace as well.

Over the past few years, he had encountered many experts of the Laws of the Earth, such as the Redcliff Lord or Bailey…

Every single one of those experts of the Laws of the Earth had analyzed and developed a supreme technique that belonged to them. But those were their techniques, not his! Still, Linley wanted to discover some of the secrets behind those supreme techniques, hoping to find something which would help him suddenly break through the bottleneck he was facing. And just like that, Linley began to tirelessly analyze them.

Bebe, utterly bored, just rested there within the cave, his eyes half-lidded as he occasionally munched on fruit. He was currently controlling a Deathgod Golem outside. “It has been three years, but we only encountered a single person. And that person wasn’t someone that was easy to deal with. The weaker people have all hidden away, as cowardly as rats. Uh…wait. I’m a rat as well.”

Bebe suddenly turned to look at Linley.

“Huh?” Bebe’s eyebrows rose slightly.

A large amount of earth elemental essence suddenly appeared around Linley’s body. Slowly, with Linley at the center, it formed into an earthen

yellow sphere.

“What’s going on with the Boss?” Bebe didn’t understand.

“Whoosh!”

Very strangely, the earthen yellow aura suddenly contracted, from a size of three meters to just a tiny dot. This sort of high-speed contraction actually caused a spatial tremor, and the ripples from this tremor caused the stones nearby which were within the cave to instantly transform into dust. The entire cave had just transformed into a giant sphere.

At this moment, Linley opened his eyes, a hint of a smile on his face.

“Boss? You…broke through?” Bebe guessed.

Linley looked at Bebe. He nodded slightly.

Chapter 37 – Supreme Technique

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 37, Supreme Technique

Bebe was stunned…and then, he was wildly overjoyed. He tossed the half-eaten fruit in his hands to one side. “Haha, Boss, I knew you would definitely make a breakthrough within three centuries. I was right, wasn’t I? It’s only been three years, but you broke through the bottleneck!” In fusing profound mysteries, the farther one went along, the harder it was.

Once one broke through, it represented that one’s power would rise exponentially!

“I did indeed break through. I broke through before the final battle.” Linley felt very excited, from the bottom of his heart. The rise in difficulty from fusing three types of profound mysteries to four types was simply too hard. Now, in the Planar Battlefield, he finally was no longer a bottom-level commander. If he encountered some formidable commanders, he’d be able to give them a fight.

A commander who truly feared no challengers had to be completely flawless. In the past, Linley’s soul defense was weak, but now, in terms of soul defense, he was no longer a weakling, having fused four profound mysteries and also having the support of his innate azure soul glow, as well as that damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. In fact, Linley no longer even feared the soul attacks of experts on the level of Reisgem and Montelo.

But of course…if he ran into any Highgod Paragons, Linley would still have to run. Not just Linley; even if Reisgem encountered a Highgod Paragon, he wouldn’t be able to fight back.

“I wanted to go out and have a wild battle long ago. Now that you made a breakthrough, Boss, let’s head out.” Bebe was absolutely delighted. “We’ve been in this damn place for nearly six centuries. It’s time for we two bros to

show our might.” Bebe was utterly brimming with confidence.

Linley just laughed, then shook his head. “Don’t be impatient.”

“How can I not be impatient? I’m impatient!” Bebe pursed his lips intentionally. “You’ve increased your power. Do we still have to hide here?”

“No. Although I’ve successfully fused four profound mysteries, I haven’t developed an attack which suits me yet.” Linley laughed.

Fusing different types of profound mysteries would result in different types of powerful attacks.

Some were skilled in support techniques, while others were skilled in soul attacks or material attacks or stealth and subterfuge…in short, after fusing profound mysteries, they would develop techniques suited to them.

In the past, Linley’s primary skills were the ‘Blackstone Space’ and the ‘Firmament Splitter’.

However, Linley had risen in power. His supreme techniques would naturally have to change as well.

“Oh, develop a supreme technique?” Bebe chortled, then sat down by the side of the cave. “Boss, develop as much as you want. I’ll just watch here without saying a thing! Right…it won’t take you too long to develop a technique, will it?”

“I already have some ideas. It should be fairly fast.” Linley said with a laugh.

And then, Linley began to develop his supreme technique. Days passed in constant testing. Linley, for fear of damaging the cave, created a miniature Blackstone Prison, constantly testing within it. Even if energy leaked out from him, it would be kept within the Blackstone Prison.

Utter darkness. Not a hint of light could be seen from the Blackstone Jail.

Linley stood there, his mind flickering through one image after another.

“This material defense should begin with my former ‘Pulseguard Armor’, then modify it…” Linley, in the past, didn’t care too much about material defense, because his Dragonformed body was already powerful enough. However, now that he had fused four profound mysteries, once he used that and Sovereign’s Might to reinforce his supreme defensive technique, the defensive power would be comparable to his Dragonformed body. Naturally, Linley wouldn’t mind adding an extra layer of defense.

Within the dark, lightless Blackstone Prison, Linley continuously analyzed.

“Crackle…”

Divine earth power continued to flow out from Linley’s body. In Linley’s mind, one mechanism after another for using power sprang to mind, and the divine earth power surrounding his body continued to change methods nonstop.

His original body and his divine earth clone joined together in training. After spending eleven days, Linley finally developed a supreme defensive technique that he was satisfied with.

“This armor, if formed from divine earth power, is inferior in strength to my Dragonform. However, when relying on Sovereign power, the power exceeds that of Dragonform. Right. This armor formed from divine earth power…I’ll just call it my ‘earth armor’.” Linley couldn’t be bothered to think too much about it, so he casually picked a name, then continued to analyze his soul defense techniques.

Linley cared deeply about his soul defense.

After all, a person’s soul was his foundation. In Linley’s sea of consciousness, a large amount of spiritual power roiled about, and one sort of technique for using energy after another was being tested by him.

The Laws of the Earth were extremely deep and profound. They were divided into six profound mysteries, and mastering each of them individually was nothing more than gaining a basic understanding of the Laws of the Earth. Only by fusing them…could one truly gain a deeper understanding of the Laws.

For example, the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' started with increasing to a total of 256 layers, and then was constantly fused and simplified down into a single wave. It was the same principle…the more one fused the mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, the more thoroughly one understood them. Linley had fused four of them, and this resulted in a major increase in power for him, in both soul defense and material defense.

"A constant, unbroken cycle, advancing on one side, continuing on the other…this sort of soul defense is enough."

After spending nine days, Linley's soul defense reached a limit as well. Unless Linley was able to gain an even greater understanding of the profound mysteries, his methods for using the Laws had reached a limit.

"In twenty days, I've mastered a way for soul defense and for material defense. Now…I need to focus on the most important of all. A material attack."

Linley knew very well that as the mysteries he had fused were the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', 'Essence of the Earth', 'Strength', and 'Gravitational Space (Geomagnetism)', the fusion of these were suited most for material attacks. In addition, in Dragonform, his body was incredibly strong; to not use it for material attacks was a huge waste.

Linley immediately began to focus on developing a supreme attacking technique.

Analyzing supreme techniques was quite complicated.

For example, soul defense; it had nothing to do with any part of the 'Essence of the Earth'. As for material defense, it had nothing to do with

‘Gravitational Space’. Thus, it was much easier to develop techniques.

But supreme attack techniques were different. This would involve all four mysteries.

Time flowed on like water, moving past silently. In the blink of an eye, Linley had spent two full months working in the Blackstone Prison.

Within the cave.

“Hmph!” Bebe wrinkled his nose, glancing sideways at the still-present Blackstone Prison. “The Boss said it would be ‘very fast’, but it’s been sixty three days, and he’s still not done.”

Suddenly…

Silently, noiselessly, the Blackstone Prison dissipated, the energy returning to the world and leaving behind a Linley who was dressed in a blue robe and whose eyes were closed. He stood there, still holding Mirage in his hand. Clearly, Linley hadn’t filled it with his divine power, as one could still clearly see Mirage in his hand.

“Haha!” Bebe immediately hopped over.

Linley opened his eyes and glanced over, his face filled with smiles.

“Boss, you succeeded?” Bebe chortled.

“Right. I succeeded.” Linley laughed and nodded.

“How strong is it?” Bebe said with anticipation.

“Much stronger than before, of course.” Linley said with a calm laugh. “That ‘Firmament Splitter’ of mine only fused two profound mysteries; the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and ‘Strength’. This was because there was no way for me to add the ‘Essence of the Earth’ into it. But…now that I fused ‘Gravitational Space’, I am able to add the ‘Essence of the Earth’ into

my attack as well. It now has four types of profound mysteries. The power of this sword is tens of times more powerful than in the past!"

Linley was extremely confident. In the past, his sword had relied primarily on the strength of his Dragonform, which was why he was able to threaten other commanders.

But now, just by relying on his mastery of the profound mysteries, Linley was able to be on roughly the same level as other commanders. With the added strength of his Dragonform as well as Mirage, Linley was now qualified to be confident.

"Hoho, Boss, give it a try, give it a try." Bebe called out excitedly, staring at Linley.

Linley smiled and nodded.

"When battling, I will first set up my Blackstone Space, then use this sword blow." Linley laughed as he spread out his Blackstone Space and a powerful gravitational. Just as Linley was about to execute his sword blow, upon seeing the earthen yellow aura that was glowing due to his 'Blackstone Space', Linley suddenly came to a halt, standing there stupidly.

Bebe was startled, immediately asking, "Hey, Boss, what are you doing?"

But Linley seemed to not have heard him.

"What's the Boss doing? Didn't he say he was going to show it off for me?" Bebe didn't understand.

"Haha…"

Linley suddenly began to laugh loudly.

"Boss, what is it, what is it?" Bebe said frantically.

"So I can do it as well. So I can do it as well! I'm too foolish, too foolish!"

Linley's face was filled with wild joy.

"Boss?" Bebe hurriedly called.

Only now did Linley think of Bebe. Turning his head, he laughed. "Bebe, just now, I suddenly thought of something, which is why I was rather excited."

"Thought of something?" Bebe frowned.

"Right!" Linley nodded and laughed. "Do you remember how, when we encountered that Highgod Paragon, 'Bayer', his attack against you locked your movements, right?"

"Right." Bebe thought back to that scene and felt helpless once more. "That attack of his…when it came, I felt as though space itself was squeezing me. My speed dropped dramatically. Actually, I was able to move; only, my speed dropped so much, tens of times slower than normal. At such a slow speed, in a real fight, it meant I would be slaughtered."

Linley chortled. "Just now, when I saw my 'Blackstone Space', I suddenly thought of that person, I too can make the enemy feel as though space is compressing him, and make him feel like a fish who was trapped in mud, his speed lowered greatly."

"Eh?" Bebe didn't understand. "Boss, your Blackstone Space; the gravity of it faces one direction. How can you compress someone?"

Indeed; the power of the Blackstone Space's gravity would be upwards, downwards, repulsive, or attractive towards Linley.

There was only a single possible direction!

For example, a downwards gravity that trapped the enemy would result in an enemy who, when facing Linley's sword, would find it hard to fly upwards but easily be able to dive underground. Even if he was unable to go underground, his movements forward, backwards, and sideways

wouldn't be impeded much.

But the spatial compression was different.

It made one feel as though one was being compressed from all directions. No matter how you moved, the restrictive power was still astonishingly great, just like being caught in a net.

"Haha…" Linley suddenly started to laugh. "Bebe, I had a taste of that restrictive power back in the Amethyst Mountains."

Linley still clearly remembered how, when he had used Worldwalking in the Amethyst Mountains, he had encountered Reisgem inside the mountain. Afterwards, Reisgem trapped Linley within the Amethyst Space, causing powerful gravity to press down upon and squeeze Linley. Even his bones began to uniformly splinter, and blood flowed outwards. This was a pressure that came from all directions!

"My current sword blow is just like those of other experts of the Laws of the Earth, containing some basic gravitational pull to it. What I need to do is to make it so that the Blackstone Space no longer treats me as its core, and for it to merge into the sword itself." Linley knew that this would be very hard.

If Linley didn't understand the principles of 'Amethyst Space', and was only able to operate on the basis of his 'black stone' in executing the 'Blackstone Space', there was no way at all that he would be able to infuse this ability of the Amethyst Space into it.

After all, the 'black stone' was within Linley's body, which guaranteed that if Linley relied on the black stone, the Gravitational Space would only be centered around Linley.

But Linley had a degree of understanding regarding the Blackstone Space.

When he had spent five centuries in the Amethyst Mountain, Linley had already gained some degree of understanding regarding how to use the 108

rays of divine power. Although the power of him using those rays of power wasn't as powerful as the 'black stone' itself, the difference wasn't too extravagant.

"Bebe, keep waiting. Wait for me to come up with my next technique! When battle starts, once my sword gets close to someone, it will cause that person to feel as though they are being pressed down upon from all sides! Even if I'm still inferior to Bayer, I wouldn't be that far off." Linley was eagerly anticipating his new technique.

Linley immediately once more created his 'Blackstone Space', then entered it and resumed his studies.

This technique….would trap any enemies in a certain way and compress them.

Once Linley once again used up the Blackstone Prison to analyze this technique, he immediately began to inspect it closely.

This was because his technique used the enemy as the target for compression; thus, there was no way he could rely on the 'black stone' to execute this technique. He had to rely on himself!

In addition…

This technique was a perfect match for Linley's swordcraft.

This developmental cycle was very long. Bebe heard the walls within the 'Blackstone Prison' constantly tremble, but fortunately, Linley had blocked off all sound.

Within the Blackstone Prison.

Linley, absorbed in his training, had lost all sense of time.

"Slash!"

Linley stabbed out with a simple sword thrust, but Mirage emanated an earthen yellow glow. Immediately, at the location the sword was pointing towards, a three-meter long earthen yellow sphere formed. As Mirage stabbed out, the earthen yellow globe began to, amazingly enough, shrink at high speed.

“BANG!”

An explosion of destruction!

Chapter 38 – An Inch of Land, A Foot of Sky

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 38, An Inch of Land, A Foot of Sky

“This space which compresses the enemy can change to be greater or smaller as needed. I finally mastered this technique.” Linley felt a surge of wild joy in his heart.

The piercing power of this sword was comparable to his original one, but the difference was a sort of binding, restrictive power! This would bind the movements of the enemy, and possibly make it so that they weren’t able to block Linley’s sword at all.

The Blackstone Prison vanished. Bebe immediately turned and ran over with surprised delight. “Boss, you spent nearly half a year coming up with this technique. Give it a try and see how powerful it is?”

“Fine. Let’s give it a test, then.” Linley was rather eager as well.

“Don’t hold back. My defense doesn’t even fear Highgod Paragons. Hit me hard.” Bebe raised his head and puffed out his chest as he stood there, even giving Linley a wink.

Linley knew how astonishing Bebe’s defense was. Nodding, he said, “Fine. However, there’s no need for me to Dragonform for now. Give it a try and see if you can use your weapon to block this sword of mine.” As Linley spoke, Mirage appeared within his hands, while that dagger appeared within Bebe’s.

“Come.” Bebe’s eyes were gleaming, and he focused his attention on Linley’s Mirage, staring at it.

“Swish!”

Mirage suddenly became translucent and leisurely stabbed outwards. Bebe

raised an eyebrow. He could clearly see 108 rays of earthen yellow divine power emerge from Linley's godspark sword, Mirage. It was like 108 howling dragons that were engulfing him; before he even had a chance to react, the elemental energy of the world began to coalesce at high speed. 108 rays of divine power instantly merged into the surrounding earth elemental essence, forming a sphere that was five meters in diameter that had him trapped within.

"The constrictive power is quite great." Bebe felt the tremendous pressure as well.

This was a gravitational force that most Seven Star Fiends would find hard to endure; it pressed down from all sides. Even Bebe felt uncomfortable.

Mirage was formless and invisible.

But the spatial ripples that it created impacted Bebe.

"Eh?" Bebe could clearly sense that Mirage was striking towards him. He immediately wanted to move his arm to use his dagger to block it. "This restrictive power really is troublesome." Bebe felt as though he had a rope tied around his arm, making his speed much slower."

"Slash!"

A sword blow landed straight across Bebe's chest, and Bebe's body trembled violently.

"How is it, Bebe?" Linley laughed, then retracted his sword.

"The restrictive power really is pretty large." Bebe nodded and sighed in praise. "Although it isn't as terrifying as Bayer's, it's far more powerful than a single-direction gravitational force."

Linley discovered as well that Bebe actually hadn't been able to use his godspark dagger to block his own blow.

When experts exchanged blows, they generally used a weapon to strike against or block the other weapon. To use one's own body to take the blow? Aside from a minority of people, most commanders weren't capable of it.

"But the power isn't strong enough. It just makes me itchy." Bebe snickered. Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. "Bebe, I'm not in Dragonform! After I Dragonform, my power increases dramatically, and the power of this attack will increase dramatically as well! But of course… despite that, I still won't be able to injure you." Linley knew his own limits.

Bebe chortled. "I'm kiddin', Boss. What's the name of this technique of yours?"

"To compress the person within a small world, like an inch of land and a foot of sky…making him unable to dodge and thus be forced to receive my blow…right. Let's call it 'Microcosm'." Linley selected a name for his most powerful sword blow.

Microcosm!

Linley believed that in Dragonform, the power of this sword blow of his should be considered above average amongst commanders. Combined with the 'restrictive' force, this technique should be considered a high-class technique amongst commanders. Perhaps in raw attack pure, it couldn't compare to the Sovereign weapons of others, but this technique of Linley's…made it hard for the enemy to block.

For example, Oman. When he smashed down with his spiked mace, the power was great, true! But by relying on his godspark weapon, Linley was still able to block and just barely hang on. If Oman was capable of Linley's technique, and to create a powerful restrictive force to make it impossible for Linley to block, he probably would have killed Linley with a single blow.

"Bebe, it's time for us to go out and take a look." Linley said with a calm laugh.

The Planar Battlefield was as calm and quiet as ever.

This was a place where there was never any sunlight. No warmth. There was only the endless, cold howling wind. Linley and Bebe quietly moved about the Planar Battlefield. However, after advancing for seven full days, they didn't see a single figure. Clearly, the number of people roaming the Planar Battlefield had grown less and less.

"Boss, look. There seems to be someone up ahead." Bebe suddenly said.

Linley carefully looked forward. That figure was still a few kilometers away from them, and the luxurious wild grass between them that was being blown about by the wind made it hard for Linley to see that person.

Moments later…

"Him!" Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"It's actually Hemmers." Bebe stared as well. They both clearly remembered that freak who had such terrifying defense and attack power, as well as a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Hemmers…he was someone who had become a Sovereign's Emissary as a Demigod!

"Haha, you two. Don't run." Loud laughter rang out.

Linley and Bebe just stood there, not moving at all.

"Bebe, later, just stay over there. Let me spar a bit with this big fellow." Linley's gaze was heated, and his battle-hungry blood began to boil. "Although this Hemmers is powerful, his speed is average, and he doesn't know any distance attacks. He's perfect for a spar and for me to test out my own might."

"Fine." Bebe chortled. "Boss, don't lose face by fleeing after being unable to take more than a few blows."

Linley and Bebe had both sparred with Hemmers before. If they wanted to

flee, they would be able to.

Three meters tall. A body like that of a tower of steel. Wild gold hair. A towering nose. A tiger-like mouth! A pair of golden eyes which stared at Linley and Bebe. This was Hemmers. Hemmers frowned and snorted, “The two of you are quite bold. Last time, I let you two run off. This time, you actually dare to stay here upon seeing me?”

“Hemmers, I’ve made some slight improvements this time, and want to ask you to provide me with a few pointers.” Linley said with a smile.

“Provide you with a few pointers?” Hemmers rubbed his towering nose, grinning and revealing a mouth filled with golden teeth. “Letting me give you two a few pointers will cost you your lives.”

“Not us two. Just me.” Linley said with a calm laugh. “Hemmers, if you truly do want my life, then come at me.”

Hemmers furrowed his forehead, musing to himself, “Can it be that this kid wants to die? Screw it. If he wants to die, it isn’t my fault.” Hemmers didn’t waste any more words. He violently stomped the ground with his right leg, causing it to tremble. A golden glow sprang out from Hemmers’ entire body, and like a towering golden god of war, he charged towards Linley.

With a ‘bang!’, Linley instantly Dragonformed. He, too, kicked off powerfully from the ground, dodging at high speed.

“He’s increased in speed?” Hemmers instantly noticed Linley’s transformation. His increased insights into the profound mysteries had caused his speed to naturally increase as well.

“Still, he hasn’t increased enough!” Hemmers let out a growl, his legs suddenly flashing with an eye-piercing golden glow.

“Bang!” “Bang!” Hemmers stomped viciously against the ground, which cracked from his stomps. But because the terrifying power of this stomp resulted in a powerful counterforce, Hemmers increased in speed once

more…but welcoming him was an earthen yellow aura that spread outwards. Blackstone Space!

Hemmers' speed lessened dramatically.

Linley knew quite well that he wouldn't be able to kill Hemmers; this battle between them was only meant for him to familiarize himself with his new supreme technique.

"Hemmers, taste this sword blow of mine." Linley's voice echoed out in Hemmers' mind, and Mirage pierced out…

Hemmers turned to look. He saw 108 rays of earthen yellow light suddenly appear out of nowhere, surging towards him simultaneously. Hemmers just snickered. "Your sword is pretty special. It can actually go invisible." Hemmers, through his divine sense, was clearly able to sense that Mirage was stabbing towards him at high speed.

But as Hemmers wanted to use his fist to smash it, he suddenly felt a powerful, uniform restrictive force. A semi-transparent earthen yellow sphere that was five meters long had suddenly enveloped him.

"What a powerful restrictive force." Hemmers furrowed his brows.

Hemmers still swung his fist, slamming it towards Mirage. It had to be said that Hemmers' innate gifts were inordinately powerful. His strength was truly endless. Even under such incredible pressure, his fists didn't slow down too much. In the last instant, his fist, covered with golden light, smashed against Linley's 'Mirage'.

"BANG!" The full power of Linley's blow finally exploded forth from the sword.

Linley's most powerful sword attack…Microcosm!

"BANG!" A tear in space appeared.

Linley was knocked backwards, while Hemmers' body trembled as well. And then, he lowered his head to look at his fist in astonishment. The metal-like skin atop his fist had already split apart, and a hint of blood was leaking out. However, it immediately healed.

Linley stood not too far away, his heart filled with joy.

Last time, when that golden light had shot out from Hemmers' fist and struck against Mirage, Linley's hand had been shaken so badly that his draconic scales had split open, while Mirage had been knocked back to chop against Linley's own body.

"That time, it was just a golden ball of light. This time, it was with his actual fist! My power increased dramatically, but I only feel as though my hand is going numb. If I were to encounter that Oman again, I wouldn't be in such a sorry state when I block his spiked mace." Linley's confidence surged.

"In addition, my full-force sword attacks are capable of causing the spatial walls of the Planar Battlefield to tear open now." Linley rejoiced.

Hemmers raised his head to look at Linley solemnly. "You have indeed risen dramatically in power. You are capable of injuring me." Hemmers knew very well that his fists had been utilizing the profound mysteries, and how much power they held. If even the skin on his fists had been broken open…if Linley's sword had hit another part of his body, he would indeed have been injured."

"But you aren't truly wounded, right?" Linley's eyes lit up. "Just now, you were actually able to block my sword. Again!"

Linley's body suddenly disappeared, and a blur charged towards Hemmers.

"Bang!" "Bang!"

The two clashed repeatedly, and each time they exchanged blows, Linley's blur-like form continuously moved to retreat, then advance! As for

Hemmers, he just stood there; whenever Linley attacked, he used his fists and his two legs to block. Each time they exchanged blows, Linley was knocked flying backwards.

Neither Linley nor Hemmers used Sovereign's Might.

"Boss, keep it up!" Bebe called loudly from the side.

But as for Linley, he became all the more aware of how terrifying Hemmers was. "Hemmers is absolutely too strong. It's fair to describe him as possessing endless, inexhaustible might! Even with my restrictive force pressing down on him, he's actually still able to just barely block my sword." And in a situation like this, with each blow, the counterforce caused Linley's hand to go numb.

The strength in those fists were indeed frightening.

"It's not very likely that I'll be able to kill this Azure Dragon clan kid." Hemmers pondered to himself. "I don't have a Sovereign weapon! Else, I would've disposed of him long ago."

"Hey!"

Hemmers suddenly shouted angrily, "Kid, if you are so tough, then use that sword of yours to take one of my punches head on! Stop using that restrictive power to affect me." Hemmers felt very uncomfortable; while constantly under that powerful pressure, there was no way he was capable of fully releasing his power in his punches. If he were to release a punch under optimal conditions…

How could Linley be able to block so easily?

"I'm not that stupid." Linley said with a loud laugh.

"As I see it, you two should just come to a halt!" A clear voice rang out, while at the same time, a fierce, powerful ripple shot towards them at high speed, striking simultaneously against Hemmers' fist and Linley's Mirage.

This powerful force knocked both Linley and Hemmers back by a few dozen meters.

Linley and Hemmers both turned to look.

They saw that, not too far away, a white-robed man was currently strolling over. His crimson eyebrows drooped downwards, and his gaze was fathomlessly deep. He currently gave Linley and Hemmers each a glance.

“Where did someone so powerful suddenly come from? There’s nobody who is like him amongst the various supreme experts of the planes of the universe!” Hemmers’ face changed dramatically. He was very confident in his own power, but just now, he had actually been knocked backwards by the collision force.

“Mr. Leylin!” Linley couldn’t help but call out in delight.

“Bluefire?!” Bebe stared in disbelief, his eyebrows jumping upwards.

This person was indeed, Leylin ‘Bluefire’.

Chapter 39 – Bluefire

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 39, Bluefire

“Mr. Leylin?” Although surprised and delighted, Linley was puzzled as well. Although in the past, Bluefire had given him some guidance, and he had viewed Bluefire as being very powerful, that was because when Linley was young, he had been too weak. “I’m above average even amongst commanders now! Ordinary commanders aren’t able to do anything to me. But that attack from Mr. Leylin just now…? What level of power has he reached, exactly?”

Linley didn’t know if that attack was a casual attack, or a full-power attack from Bluefire!

“Linley. Bebe. Long time no see.” Bluefire smiled as he strolled over.

“Haha.” The nearby Hemmers suddenly let out a loud, carefree laugh. His laughter echoed like thunder, and he stared at Bluefire with those golden eyes and a scorching gaze. Two rays of golden light that could be seen by the naked eye shot out from Hemmers’ gaze. “What an expert! Here in the Planar Battlefield, when everyone sees me, Hemmers, they all slink away and hide in the distance. It is so rare for me to meet an expert like you. Fighting with this Azure Dragon clan kid is no fun; I feel like my arms and legs are tied. It’s not pleasurable! Your power seems to be decent. Come, let’s have a contest!”

Linley and Bebe were both stunned.

“Is Hemmers crazy?” Linley blinked twice.

What he didn’t know was that Hemmers was the sort of person with a straightforward disposition who loved battle.

As soon as Hemmers finished speaking, he made his move! His steel-hard

leg, flashing with golden light, slammed hard against the ground. “BANG!” The ground instantly split apart, with hundreds of cracks appearing. Hemmers transformed into a golden flash of lightning, charging straight towards Bluefire!

“What a boorish man.” Bluefire raised a crimson eyebrow, saying with a soft laugh.

His robes were as white as snow. Bluefire just stood there, not dodging at all.

“BANG!” Hemmers’ right leg, flashing with golden light, struck out towards Bluefire like a meteor. This kick caused the world to tremble, space to distort, and dozens of twisted spatial cracks to appear.

“What a terrifying kick.” Linley’s face changed.

“Boss ,just now, when he fought you, he wasn’t this powerful.” Bebe said.

Linley knew this all too well. He had relied on his gravitational compression to make it so that Hemmers was unable to bring his full force to bear. Otherwise, given how monstrous Hemmers’ innate strength was, how could Linley have exchanged so many blows? “Bebe, carefully watch and see how Mr. Leylin receives the attack.” Linley stared at the battle, not daring to be distracted at all.

Bebe stared as well.

“Not bad.” Bluefire just stood there, but very strangely, that golden leg-blur actually moved through Bluefire’s body.

Bluefire’s body vanished, reappearing three meters away.

“Teleportation?” Linley’s face changed. “No…speed! Astonishing speed, speed comparable to Bayer’s! For him to dare to dodge only at the last moment against Hemmers’ kick, his speed is absolutely…” This was the second time Linley had seen such terrifying speed.

Hemmers had missed with his kick, but he let out an explosive shout. "Good!" At the same time, Hemmers suddenly twisted his thick torso!

He spun about like a tornado, and his golden leg instantly began to spin about as well. With almost no pause, he continuously kicked out towards Bluefire, who still had that calm smile on his face with not a hint of fear or concern.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

In Linley, Bebe, and Hemmers' eyes, Bluefire's body seemed to teleport about, consecutively creating multiple after-images, then appearing a hundred meters away, standing there calmly.

"Boss, this Bluefire…what sort of speed is this? What profound mysteries is he using?" Bebe didn't understand.

Linley trained in the Elemental Laws of Fire, so he had some ideas. "Fire is different from wind. Bayer's body became agile and illusory; although his speed was very fast, he was also as formless and invisible as the wind. Mr. Leylin is different though; watch, he's just like the fire. Flames erupt violently and with energy! There's nothing illusory about Mr. Bluefire's speed; he explodes with it! His speed instantly explodes forth to a limit, making it so that even you and I feel as though he is teleporting."

Linley couldn't stop sighing in amazement.

For a person to reach such a level in speed…this alone would make Bluefire a high class commander.

"What's going on with you?" Hemmers bellowed angrily. "You keep dodging! This is no fun at all. I, Hemmers, had a favorable impression of you, which is why I wanted to fight you. If you have any ability, fight against me, Hemmers, head on!" Hemmers howled unhappily to one side, clearly knowing that his speed was far inferior to this person.

Actually, Hemmers was very angry. His attacks were very powerful, and his defenses were also very powerful. Unfortunately, he was too slow and he wasn't skilled in distance attacks.

Thus, when many experts encountered Hemmers, they would immediately flee. This was same for the first two people he had encountered; it was also the same for the next few hundred he had encountered. This, Hemmers absolutely detested people who relied on speed to dodge."

"You are an amusing fellow." Bluefire still had a smile on his face.

"Amusing my ass!" Hemmers raised his head and shouted. "Shorty, if you have any skill, come fight me, Hemmers, head on!" As he spoke, Hemmers viciously smashed his two sandbag-sized fists against each other. With a 'BANG' sound, it was as though a mountain had just collapsed. The terrifying collision caused spatial cracks to appear even between his fists.

"Shorty, do you dare?" Hemmers raised his head proudly.

Bluefire's height was quite normal, but given that Hemmers was three meters tall, it wasn't unfair for him to describe Bluefire as being 'short'.

"Haha…"

Bluefire couldn't help but start to laugh. "I've been in the Planar Battlefield for so long, but I haven't actually fought a single time. Fine, then. Today, I'll exercise a bit…come!" After Bluefire finished speaking, with a 'bang!' sound, Bluefire's entire body began to swirl with flame. Those eyes beneath his crimson eyebrows began to burst forth with fiery light.

He was like a fiery divinity of war!

"Good!" Hemmers laughed loudly, and after speaking, he charged towards Bluefire, the earth trembling with each step he took.

Linley and Bebe continued to watch, focusing their attention on this scene. "Boss, who will win? I mean, if they fight head on, who will win?" Bebe

asked mentally, while Linley shook his head. “I’m not too sure. According to your grandfather’s intelligence reports, Hemmers has an innate, massive strength, and his attack power is comparable to that of Highgod Paragons! If Mr. Leylin chooses to fight with him head on…hard to say.”

Bluefire, his entire body swathed in flames, watched calmly as Hemmers charged over.

“HAAARGH!”

His face savage, Hemmers gave a low growl, and his right fist, carrying an inexhaustible, massive force and flowing with the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, smashed directly towards Bluefire. With a ‘rumble’ sound, spatial began to tremble everywhere the fist went past.

In an instant, the fist arrived before Bluefire.

“Good!” An explosive shout.

Bluefire, who had been calm this entire time, lifted his eyebrows. His right hand, formerly hanging down by his side, suddenly shot out lightning-fast. Linley and Bebe only sensed an eye-piercingly brilliant, fiery red light shoot out. This ray of fiery light slammed directly against Hemmers’ fist, a head on collision…fist against fist!

There was no trick to it at all; it was a complete, head-on collision!

“CRACK!” When their fists intersected, space shattered apart like glass, as dozens of spatial rips appeared!

Hemmers and Bluefire both trembled slightly. Hemmers took three steps back, while Bluefire took one step back as well.

“Uh?” Linley and Bebe, stunned, stared with completely round eyes.

“How terrifying. Bluefire didn’t use a Sovereign artifact or Deity artifact at all.” Linley had been focused on Bluefire’s fist; that was a fist that was as

white and pristine as white jade. “Hemmers was birthed from the Divine Earth Plane itself; he was a golden mountain, who after countless years of being nurtured by the plane, gained sentience, which is why his body has such incredible strength. But Bluefire…”

Linley was stunned.

“Superb! Hemmers, you really live up to your reputation!” Bluefire laughed calmly, letting out a praising sigh.

Hemmers stared at Bluefire, stunned, then at his own fist. He didn’t dare believe it. “How is that possible? How is that possible? He fought with me head on, but he actually had a slight advantage?” Hemmers knew very well that just now, in that instant when his fist collided with the fist of the man before him, a sharp, boring force had surged towards him.

That sharp, boring force was like the explosion of a volcano; it had charged forward fiercely!

In the face of that explosive power, Hemmers felt his undefeatable fist… tremble.

“Who are you?” Hemmers said in a low voice.

“Me? You can address me as…Bluefire!” Bluefire said with a calm laugh.

Hemmers narrowed his ox-like eyes, then nodded slightly and said in sonorously, “Fine, Bluefire. I’ll remember you! Even in the past, when I encountered that Highgod Paragon of water, Borhaus [Bo’er’hao’si], when we exchanged punches against each other, I still wasn’t at a disadvantage. You…are very powerful!” After speaking, Hemmers turned and immediately walked away.

Bluefire laughed softly as he watched Hemmers leave. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh of praise. “He really lives up to the reputation of being an expert who was chosen to be a Sovereign’s Emissary, even as a Demigod.”

“Mr. Leylin.” Only now did Linley walk over.

“Leylin, you are so powerful!” Bebe’s eyes were shining, and he hurriedly ran over. “How did you become so powerful? How is it that Odin, one of the other five Kings of the Gebados Planar Prison, was so much weaker than you? Right…is your increase in strength related to your entry into the Necropolis of the Gods?”

Bluefire’s true name, after all, was ‘Zacharias Leylin.’ Bluefire was just a moniker. It was enough for outsiders to know his nickname, but of course people he knew would address him by his name.

“Necropolis of the Gods?” Bluefire let out a chuckle. “It had a bit to do with it, but it wasn’t all because of that place.”

And then, Bluefire turned to look towards Linley, laughing. “Linley, long time no see. I didn’t imagine that you would have already fused four profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. When I first met you, I had the impression that your comprehension ability was excellent…but I didn’t expect that in just two thousand years, you would have reached such a level, and be standing at the peak amongst Highgods.”

Of course commanders would all be considered as being peak Highgods.

But of course, only figures at the level of Highgod Paragons could truly be considered the ‘peak’.

“If it hadn’t been for your guidance in the past, Mr. Leylin, I probably wouldn’t have been so fast in my training.” Linley said modestly.

“Alright, it’s been so long since we’ve met. Let’s sit down and drink some wine and have a good chat.” Leylin said with a soft laugh.

Of course Linley wouldn’t refuse. It would be another three centuries before this Planar War would conclude. He had more than enough time, and he was happy to accompany Bluefire. At the same time, Linley was rather stunned by Bluefire’s power, as well as puzzled. “He was able to fight Hemmers

head on with his bare hands, and have a slight advantage? Can it be…that Bluefire has become a Paragon?"

Linley knew exactly how rare Paragons were!

There were many material planes, but over the course of countless years, the number of Highgod Paragons, or to be precise, the number of people suspected of being Highgod Paragons, was less than thirty. "Can it be that my Yulan Plane has produced one as well?" Linley felt quite eager.

Bluefire used a punch to create a cave, and then withdrew from his interspatial ring a table, wine, and food. The wine and food had all been kept chilled, but of course, Bluefire quickly defrosted them. Linley, Bebe, and Bluefire all sat down, eating and drinking and chatting casually.

"I didn't expect you to come as well, Mr. Leylin." Bebe grabbed a haunch of Demon Dragon meat and began to chew on it. "I imagine you must have killed quite a few commanders over the past few years in the Planar Battlefield, Mr. Leylin. How many?"

Bluefire held a cup of wine. He took a sip, then laughed and shook his head. "Not a single one."

"What? Not even one?" Bebe stared. "Mr. Leylin, everything else aside, the speed you showed off as well as that terrifying attack strength of yours, comparable to Hemmers…these two things alone make it so that you can kill many commanders! When those commanders encounter you, they won't even be able to run!"

Given how fast Bluefire was, how would anyone be able to escape him?

"Do I have to kill people just because I came to the Planar Battlefield?" Bluefire shook his head and laughed. "I came here for two reasons. First, I've never taken part in a Planar War, and wanted to come in for a look. As for the second…you don't need to ask."

Bebe, knowing that Bluefire didn't wish to discuss it, asked no more.

Linley, unable to repress his curiosity, asked, “Mr. Bluefire, just now, that speed of yours…as far as I can tell, only that Highgod Paragon, ‘Bayer’, is comparable to you. And your attack power is comparable to Hemmers’. I want to ask you, Mr. Leylin…have you reached the Paragon level in fusing the profound mysteries?”

Bluefire was startled.

“If you can’t tell me, then don’t.” Linley said hurriedly. Linley, too, knew that many Highgod Paragons hid their power and didn’t publicize it. This was why many people were only ‘suspected of being Highgod Paragons’.

“There’s no need for me to keep any secrets from you.” Bluefire nodded slightly. “Indeed. A thousand years ago, I reached the level of Paragon.”

Chapter 40 – Will

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 40, Will

“You really are a Paragon!” Linley, despite being mentally prepared, couldn’t help but suck in a breath.

What did it mean for someone to be a Paragon? It meant that one had completely, thoroughly mastered one of the Laws. The number of people who were able to become Paragons was even fewer than the number who were able to become Sovereigns. From this, one could tell that without exception, every single person who reached this level was a glorious figure who possessed astonishing innate abilities, comprehension, luck, and who was hard-working!

One couldn’t be lacking in any of these aspects. Only in perfection could a Paragon be born.

Bebe’s eyes turned round. He stared at Bluefire for a long time, unable to say anything.

“What’s with those looks on your faces? There’s no need to be like this.” Bluefire said with a laugh.

“What do you mean, no need to be like this? Paragon!!!” Bebe called out in shock. “Mr. Leylin, including you, the planes of the universe only have, all combined, less than thirty Paragons! The material planes are numerous beyond count, but in the course of countless years, how many Paragons have been birthed from them? Most likely, our Yulan Plane only has you!”

Bluefire began to laugh. Although his heart was as calm as water, when he thought of these things, he couldn’t help but feel slightly proud as well.

Upon reaching the level of Paragon, it was true that a person could be proud for the rest of his life.

“Mr. Leylin, admirable, truly, admirable.” Linley felt a surge of heat in his heart as well. How long would it be before he would reach the same level?

Bluefire couldn’t help but laugh, while Bebe suddenly said, “Boss, didn’t Grandpa say that once you reach Mr. Leylin’s level, you can go to the Necropolis of the Gods? Uh…he’s a Paragon, Boss. When will you become a Paragon? Doesn’t that mean that entering the Necropolis of the Gods is something for the distant future?”

“That’s what Beirut said?” Bluefire was startled.

“Right. He did say that.” Linley said, resigned.

Previously, Linley still had some hope, but now that he knew Bluefire was a Paragon…“Can it be that I am going to have to reach the Paragon level before entering the Necropolis of the Gods? How long will that take?” Linley knew his own limits. The further along one went in fusion, the more time it took. Linley even suspected that even if he spent countless years, he still might not be able to become a Paragon.

After all, there were many people who initially trained very quickly, but upon reaching a certain level, could no longer rise. They had reached their limit.

“Haha…” Bluefire shook his head and laughed. “When I entered the Necropolis of the Gods, I had only fused five profound mysteries. I imagine what Beirut meant was that when you, Linley, are at the level I was back then, with five mysteries fused, you’ll be allowed to enter! There’s no way he is requiring that you be a Paragon. That’s too stringent.”

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but nod. Right. When Bluefire had entered, he hadn’t become a Paragon yet.

Bebe mumbled, “Even fusing five profound mysteries will take very, very long. The farther along one goes, the harder it is.”

“What’s the rush?” Linley said with a calm laugh. “Bebe, given my current power, I already am able to stay alive against other commanders. Once this Planar War concludes, we will return to the Infernal Realm! When we no longer have any important business to attend to, we can slowly spend a few billion years in training.”

Bluefire smiled and said approvingly, “Not bad. You aren’t arrogant and you aren’t impetuous. Only then can you allow things to reach their natural conclusion. The more impatient you are, the harder success will be.”

“There’s no need to over-think matters regarding the Necropolis of the Gods.” Linley said with a laugh.

Right now, Linley didn’t really have any burdens; after having spent all these years in the Planar Battlefield, he had acquired three badges, and lacked only one more. Given that his power had increased greatly, Linley was confident that if he and Bebe joined forces, it wouldn’t be hard for them to acquire one more. After accomplishing this matter, he would truly be relieved, and would be able to calmly continue his pursuit of perfection.

“Mr. Leylin.” Linley looked at Bluefire and said solemnly, “I have a question in my heart.”

“Speak.” Bluefire sipped some wine and said with a calm laugh.

“I am very confused regarding Highgod Paragons.” Linley said with a frown. “There are quite a few commanders who are exceptionally, innately talented, such as Reisgem or Reihom. They were born with tremendous power. In addition, they have fused five of the profound mysteries of their Laws! Logically speaking, given how powerful their bodies are and the fact that they have fused five profound mysteries, I feel that they should be on par with Highgod Paragons. But previously, when they fought Bayer, I discovered…the difference was tremendous. They were toyed with.”

“Right. That Bayer was too powerful. He was easily able to compress space. That restrictive power was too terrifying.” Bebe said hurriedly.

“In addition, soul attacks. Wind is suited for material attacks, and not for soul attacks. Although it has ‘Music’ and ‘Sound Waves’, the power isn’t extraordinary. But why is it that when Bayer executed a soul attack, I fell into a dazed state without being able to resist at all?” Linley didn’t understand at all.

Even Paragons had differences amongst themselves.

Wind-element Paragons were extremely strong in material attacks. Water-element Paragons had exceptional material defenses. Previously, Hemmers said that a water-element Highgod Paragon was slightly weaker than him in a frontal clash.

But Bayer was a Highgod Paragon of wind. Why was it that his soul attack was so terrifying?

Linley truly didn’t understand!

“Haha…” Bluefire began to laugh.

“What’s so funny?” Bebe muttered. “Paragons truly are monstrously powerful. It seems as though they are mighty in every aspect.” Different Highgod Paragons of different elements would have different specialties, but although they might be weaker in one aspect, they still far surpassed commanders in might.

For example, although that Highgod Paragon of water was weaker in material attacks, he was still close to being on par with Hemmers.

“Highgod Paragons have no weaknesses.” Bluefire said with a calm laugh.

Linley and Bebe immediately perked up and began to listen carefully. Naturally, when a Highgod Paragon spoke on this subject, they spoke with authority.

“Highgod Paragons are extremely powerful in every aspect! Different Laws and Edicts only result in Paragons being stronger in certain aspects; for

example, I am strongest in soul attacks! Actually, Highgod Paragons are powerful in all aspects…because of a certain secret." Bluefire said.

"Secret?" Linley and Bebe were stunned.

"Right." Bluefire sighed in praise. "Linley, I can tell you two this, but…the secret about me being a Paragon, as well as this secret? You can't tell anyone else."

"Of course." Linley and Bebe both nodded.

Bluefire nodded slightly, then said, "That year, when I was fusing the six profound mysteries of the Laws of Fire, I reached a bottleneck! I was only one step away from becoming a Paragon. I was already extremely powerful by that point in time. However, once I took that final step and became a Paragon, do you know…how great the difference in power was?"

Linley shook his head. "I'm not sure. However, breaking through bottlenecks, generally speaking, wouldn't result in too ridiculous an increase in power."

"When I took that final step, I felt myself transformed!" Bluefire sighed. "A qualitative transformation. The difference between heaven and earth!"

"Heaven and earth?" Linley and Bebe were startled.

"I trust you know that generally speaking, any Highgod, even a very powerful one, who hasn't reach the Paragon level, upon annoying a Sovereign, can be destroyed by the Sovereign with a thought. There is one type of Highgod which is an exception; Paragons! A Sovereign's Will cannot kill a Highgod Paragon!" Bluefire laughed.

Linley nodded slightly. He knew this.

"Why?" Bluefire said with a laugh. "This has to do with the secret of Paragons! Upon becoming a Paragon, in an instant, one is transformed."

Linley and Bebe listened carefully.

“In that instant of transformation upon becoming a Paragon!” Bluefire seemed to be reminiscing about that feeling he had. “A very unique sort of natural Law surrounded my soul! My soul underwent a sort of qualitative transformation. After the transformation completed, I understood how powerful Paragons were.” Bluefire began to laugh.

A qualitative transformation of the soul? Linley was stunned.

From Demigod to God to Highgod, the soul rose in power each time. But he hadn’t imagined that upon reaching the Paragon level, the soul would rise again.

“This sort of soul transformation caused the natural Laws to bestow upon me a sort of authority which Paragons have!” Bluefire smiled. “An authority which included the Will of the natural Laws of the world! A Paragon’s Will!”

Linley was stunned.

Everyone had a will, but the will of ordinary Highgods was an insubstantial thing, containing no attack power. “The Will of a Paragon…contains the Laws of the world?” Linley couldn’t refrain from asking.

“Right!” Bluefire laughed. “Actually, the increase in power from fusing the profound mysteries, in and of itself, is limited. But even an ordinary attack from us, upon being infused with our Will, will cause the power to rise to a terrifying level! This is a sort of authority! An authority bestowed by the universe itself! And this is what we rely upon to resist the Will of a Sovereign!”

Linley and Bebe began to understand.

They, too, had heard that a Sovereign’s Will was inviolable. Sovereign power wasn’t that special; however, Sovereign power infused with a Sovereign’s Will was terrifyingly, ridiculously powerful. The most

terrifying thing about a Sovereign was their Will.

“It is like an Emperor! He doesn’t have to act himself; an order from him can cause countless people to lose their heads. To an ordinary person, an Emperor’s will is inviolable!” Bluefire laughed calmly. “This is a sort of power. The force of his will! The will of ordinary Highgods cannot be used to attack, but for Highgod Paragons, they have this sort of authority, bestowed upon them by the universe itself!”

Linley and Bebe now understood.

Good heavens!

So this was the situation. Will? Amongst the countless Highgods, Highgod Paragons were like ‘Emperors’ who were far above the others. The Will of Highgod Paragons contained the natural Laws, and so even an ordinary attack by a Highgod Paragon contained terrifyingly powerful force!

“No wonder! A casual movement by Bayer caused the four of us to feel such tremendous restrictions.” Bebe sighed in praise. “An empty-handed attack was comparable to a Sovereign weapon attack.”

“What about the Will of a Sovereign?” Bebe said hurriedly. “How much stronger is it than a Paragon’s Will?”

“Much stronger!” Bluefire laughed. “It is the same principle! Sovereigns have a Sovereign spark, and they too have been bestowed by the natural laws of the universe with tremendous authority! This causes their Will to possess even greater power. Sovereigns, from trillions of kilometers away, can use their Will alone to control their Sovereign power to attack us. We Highgod Paragons can just barely hold them off and preserve our lives. However, if a Sovereign was to come in person to attack us, there’s no way we would be able to resist.”

Linley and Bebe now completely understood.

The Will of a Sovereign was bestowed by the natural Laws of the universe

with far more authority than the Will of Highgod Paragons.

If they were trillions of kilometers away, a Sovereign wouldn't be able to kill a Paragon. But if they were close by, the Paragon would still die. But of course…amongst Highgods, Paragons were already invincible figures.

"A Will which possesses tangible power and might." Linley sighed.

Bluefire stayed with Linley and Bebe for three days. During these three days, the three of them chatted and drank. Linley told him some of the stories about the attacks they had suffered here on the Planar Battlefield, and Bluefire had sighed when listening. Still, after three days, Bluefire still parted from Linley.

After all, Bluefire had come to the Planar Battlefield for a purpose that was different from Linley's; Bluefire disdained from killing people.

Currently, they were outside the cave. Standing on the desolate earth, Bluefire was bidding Linley and Bebe farewell.

"Haha, Linley, let me wish you luck in acquiring your fourth commander badge, then." Bluefire said with a calm laugh. "Right. Tell me. Before this, you stayed with Reisgem for a time. Half a month before I met you, I discovered Reisgem and that Reihom you described in a cave.

"Oh?" Linley and Bebe were instantly overjoyed.

"Where are they?" Linley immediately asked. Linley still felt very grateful towards Reisgem.

Bluefire looked around, then pointed towards a direction. "Go straight in that direction. Roughly a hundred and ten thousand kilometers away, you'll discover a mountain with two peaks, like a ram's horn. The two of them are staying there at the base of the mountain, in a cave. But of course…I can't be sure if they are still there."

"Thank you, Mr. Leylin." Linley was overjoyed.

Generally speaking, they would stay in one place for many years. As Bluefire had seen them there recently, Reisgem should still be there.

“It seems as though you want to reunite with them as well. Then we’ll each part ways now.” Bluefire laughed.

Linley and Bebe immediately bade Bluefire farewell, then, without returning to their cave, flew towards the direction Bluefire had pointed towards at high speed. Actually, upon hearing the description of a ram’s horn shaped mountain, Linley already had an idea. He had a map of the Planar Battlefield. Naturally he knew where the mountain was located.

Bluefire watched as the two disappeared into the desolate wilderness, then couldn’t help but laugh. He then sighed, “Beirut really spared no expense and no effort! However, now that Linley has fused four profound mysteries, it can be said that Beirut has accomplished his goal. As for the fusion of the fifth profound mystery, that’s quite far off. It seems, for now, there’s nothing more for me to do here! Mm, I’ve never seen a Planar War. I can’t miss the final battle that will happen in three hundred years.” Bluefire gracefully departed.

Chapter 41 – High Spirits

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 41, High Spirits

The cold wind howled, stabbing like knives as it swept across the vast, desolate earth. Sand and pebbles flew about wildly, and two blurry forms continued to advance.

Not too far away from them, up ahead, there was a large, twin-peaked mountain. The mountain was thousands of meters high, and the peak of the mountain was split, all the way from the top to the halfway point. From a distance, it looked just like the horns of a ram. In the maps of the Planar Battlefield, this mountain, the 'Ramhorn Mountain', was something of a landmark.

"Here we are!" Linley, dressed in a deep green robe, glanced about, his eyes flashing like lightning as he stared at every 'suspicious' looking part of Ramhorn Mountain.

"It seems there's no cave here." Bebe mumbled.

"Even if Reisgem is here, how could he allow others to tell just by looking? Let's do a good investigation of the entire Ramhorn Mountain." After speaking, Linley and Bebe transformed into two blurs, flying at high speed towards Ramhorn Mountain.

With Reihom present, even the most desolate of mountains could be transformed into a luxurious cave estate.

Within that estate inside Ramhorn Mountain, there was a large estate hall that seemed to have been formed by nature. Reihom, that big fellow, was currently seated in the meditative position in the corner of the hall, quietly training. The slow passage of time, to these supreme experts, was generally spent in training. As for Reisgem, he was seated on a chair, his legs resting atop a table which was covered with all sorts of fruits and foods.

“Montelo, that bastard.” Reisgem grabbed a haunch of leg meat from an unknown beast, giving it a savage bite. “He’s so cocky. All he has is strength in numbers.”

Reisgem, when thinking back to what happened three years ago, still was quite angry and discontent.

Reisgem turned to look at the meditating Reihom. He couldn’t help but call out, “Hey, Reihom, stop training like an idiot. There’s no need to train so frantically. It’s not so easy to reach the level of Paragon. Come over here and drink and chat with me.”

The towering, wargod-like Reihom opened his eyes, and it was as though corporeal light emanated forth.

“Yes.” Reihom rose to his feet, then moved to sit down across from Reisgem.

“I asked you to chat with me, so why aren’t you saying anything?” Reisgem couldn’t help but feel resigned. Seeing how Reihom was acting, though, all he could say was, “Alright. Ugh. If I’d known it’d be like this, I would’ve brought a few more people as well. Even if they aren’t able to help out in a fight, they’d help me relieve my boredom. Speaking of fighting…if I become a Paragon, I will definitely make it so that that Montelo would suffer so much that he would beg for death.”

“He…needs killing.” Reihom growled as well.

Reisgem immediately laughed. “Right. Needs killing!”

“Reisgem!” A clear voice rang out from the corridor up ahead. “Hey, Reisgem, we’re here!” A joyful sound echoed forth from the cave tunnel-corridor. And then, with a ‘bang’ sound, clearly the mountainous slab of rock that covered the tunnel was broken through.

Reisgem and Reihom reacted by instinct. “Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” They

hurriedly rose to their feet and glanced at each other, their eyes filled with surprise, delight, and laughter.

“Linley and Bebe came.” Reihom said.

“Haha…let’s go welcome them, quick.” Reisgem was the first to fly out, with Reihom close behind. Once the two arrived at their front courtyard, they saw that the gates to the courtyard had already been broken through. Linley, dressed in a deep green robe, and a black-robed Bebe were smiling, walking over shoulder-to-shoulder.

“Reisgem.” Bebe called out jubilantly.

“Ohoh, Bebe!” Reisgem excitedly charged over, grabbing Bebe into a bearhug. “We’re finally reunited again.”

“Linley.” Reihom revealed a hint of a smile towards Linley as well, and Linley laughed and nodded.

Reihom was currently transformed into a size of just two meters in height, comparable to Linley. As for Bebe and Reisgem, their heights were similar as well…the four members of this hunting squad, standing together, made for quite an interesting scene.

“His mommy!” Reisgem turned his head to look at Linley, then punched Linley on the chest and snorted, “Linley, kid, you worried me to death! When you were being attacked and chased by Oman, I wasn’t worried about Bebe; I was only worried about you! Oman wouldn’t be able to do anything to Bebe, but you were a different story. You are my one and only disciple, y’know? If you die, I’ll be very sad.”

Linley let out an awkward laugh.

Disciple?

“Hey, Reisgem, we’re bros!” Bebe slapped his arm around Reisgem’s shoulders and cocked his head. “We’re on the same level, so how can you

consider yourself my Boss' 'master'?"

"Uh…" Reisgem was startled.

"Fine then." Reisgem gave Linley a sideways look. "It was you who comprehended the profound secrets of my Amethyst Space on your own, and it was my mother who asked me to do what I did! You can be considered my mother's disciple, then, which means you and I are on the same level as well." As Reisgem spoke, he began to snicker. Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but have a thought. "Hm? So Reisgem did what he did, teaching me while claiming to 'punish' me, was at the behest of the Sovereign. But why did the Sovereign make that decision? I've never before met the Redbud Sovereign."

Bebe said, puzzled, "Hey, Reisgem, that was all arranged by your mother, the Sovereign?"

"Right. My mother even gave an important Soulstone to Linley." Reisgem mumbled. "I really didn't want to part with it."

"Soulstone? You mean the black stone?" Linley hurriedly asked.

"Right." Reisgem nodded very confidently. "I feel sick at heart just talking about it. That Soulstone…my mother has never given it to any outsider before. You were the first! Do you know? Even Sovereigns have asked for a Soulstone from my mother, but my mother wasn't willing to give it to them."

"Sovereigns wanted it?" Linley said, puzzled. "This is useful for Sovereigns?"

"It isn't very useful for a Sovereign." Reisgem shook his head. "But if it was given to a Highgod, it would be very useful!"

Bebe said in surprise, "Reisgem, if we compare this 'Soulstone' to the 'Abyssal Fruit' of the Netherworld, which one is better?"

“Abyssal Fruit?” Reisgem chortled. “The Abyssal Fruit truly is a treasure as well, but even ten Abyssal Fruits aren’t as valuable as a single Soulstone. Perhaps it has limited impact on Sovereigns, but…for Highgods, a Soulstone is a true treasure. Linley, don’t look at me that way. In the future, you’ll know how valuable that Soulstone is! Although in the countless planes of the universe, there are only two Amethyst Godbeasts, myself and my mother, my mother is the only person capable of giving someone a Soulstone.”

Linley and Bebe looked at each other.

From the sounds of it, this ‘Soulstone’ really was quite remarkable. Indeed, in battle, it was remarkably useful, but Linley didn’t yet see how it could be as amazing as Reisgem was claiming it to be.

“My mother probably gave one to you out of guilt. Otherwise, how could she possibly give it to you?” Reisgem said with a sigh.

“Guilt?” Linley asked hurriedly.

“Uh…” Reisgem covered his mouth, looked around, then hurriedly shook his head and said, “Don’t ask, just pretend I didn’t say anything. Don’t ask!”

Linley and Bebe were both rather astonished, but then Reisgem hurriedly changed the topic. He started to laugh. “Haha, Linley, Bebe, now that you are back, our chance for revenge has come! In the past three years, I’ve always wanted to find Montelo and gain revenge, but myself and Reihom, without anyone else, are far from being enough. If we went, we’d just be taken advantage of by them. But now that you are here, things are different.”

“What do you mean?” Bebe raised an eyebrow. “We’re going to find Montelo and get revenge?”

“Of course!” Reisgem said, rather angrily. “I’ve been thinking about revenge every moment of the past three years. Now that my chance has

come, how can we not go?"

"Right. Let's go kill Montelo and the others." Reihom's gaze was cold, containing powerful hatred.

Linley frowned, worried about one thing. "Reisgem, last time, we exchanged blows with them. There were eight of them and only four of us. In addition, that Oman who fought with me was particularly strong. Even Bebe, using his innate divine ability, wasn't able to do anything to him. We're going to get revenge?"

"Right. Oman is really hard to deal with." Bebe said.

"Haha…" Reisgem began to laugh smugly. "If there are eight, there are eight. What's to fear? Only two of the eight have soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts. One is Oman, while the other is Chauswey [Xia'si'wei]. Although five of the other six have Sovereign artifacts, they don't have soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts! Last time, we were attacked and caught off guard. This time, as long as we prepare, Bebe, you use your innate divine ability and deal with two of them from the start! Once your innate divine ability recovers, we'll continue to exterminate them…hmph, it won't be hard for us to deal with eight of them!"

"It's a bit tough to deal with eight people." Linley said with a frown.

"Unfortunately, I can't use my innate divine ability nonstop." Bebe said resignedly.

Linley nodded slightly. The same was true for him. Using an innate divine ability and a soul attack were different concepts!

Soul attacks only took up spiritual energy; even if you used it all up, you could use Golden Soul-Pearls to quickly replenish it. Or, by relying on Sovereign power, one could use the attack repeatedly without worrying that one's own spiritual energy would be used up.

But innate divine abilities, aside from using up spiritual energy, also used

up their innate energy.

For example, Linley's usage of 'Dragon Roar' used up that 'azure light' which was his innate energy. Although the innate azure light replenished very quickly, it still needed time! Bebe was able to execute two 'Godeater' innate divine ability attacks in succession, but for the third time, he had to wait for a while. Only after his innate energy replenished to a certain degree was he able to use it again.

"Eight people. We have to dispose of two of them at the very start." Reisgem immediately began to plan it out. "Bebe, once we encounter them, first deal with that silver-robed woman, Ranessa! Afterwards, then deal with Montelo! Once we deal with those two supreme experts, there are only two people capable of threatening us."

Although the enemy side had eight experts, they only had four truly supreme experts, with the other four being slightly weaker, below-average commanders.

"Linley, Bebe, are the two of you tired? Should we rest for a bit, or head out right away?" Resigem asked.

"Let's head out now." Linley said with a laugh. He and Bebe had parted from Bluefire not too long ago, and they had been resting previously as well. They weren't the slightest bit tired; on the contrary, they looked forward to this battle. "If this battle goes as smoothly as predicted, I'll have enough commander badges by the end."

According to Linley's calculations, only one was needed.

"Fine, then. Let's head out." Reisgem's eyes were shining, and he snorted. "That Montelo. I'll teach him to be so smug. And so cocky! Hmph, he has no idea that we have a trump card like Bebe."

Montelo, as far as the soul went, was on the same level as Reisgem. Even Highgod Paragons would have to work hard to kill them through the soul. But…upon encountering Bebe's innate divine ability, he would definitely

die.

“Let’s go.” Reihom, who whole-heartedly wanted to avenge his brother, and Linley, who wanted to acquire enough commander badges, as well as Bebe and Reisgem directly left the cave.

Upon leaving the cave, they were in extraordinarily high spirits. But three days later, Reisgem became rather depressed and resigned.

The desolate wilderness. A wild wind howled drearily.

Four figures were striding side by side. Reisgem said helplessly, “I thought that the Planar Battlefield wasn’t that large, but now, it seems, it’s huge. Finding Montelo within it is too hard.” The Planar Battlefield had a circumference of a million kilometers, and the restrictive power of it was a level higher than the Infernal Realm and Netherworld’s.

Even for Linley, to travel a million kilometers would take a day or two, and that was if they were walking in a straight line. They weren’t doing that; they were searching one place after another for Montelo.

“Even if we used Sovereign’s Might to search, it would take a few dozen years or even upwards of a hundred years to find Montelo.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

To find someone in the Planar Battlefield, one would have to rely on Sovereign’s Might and use it in the form of divine sense. By doing so, the range would be much greater.

“Right. There’s one other way.” Bebe mumbled.

“What way?” Reisgem said, startled. “What’s another way for us to find Montelo?”

“Actually, we don’t have to find them. They can find us; that’s fine as well.” Bebe said with a snicker. “We want to take revenge on Montelo, but he wants to make trouble for you as well. Reisgem, all you need to do is start a

battle which causes a bit of a ruckus, and even use that innate divine ability of yours! Make it so that people ten thousand kilometers away will know that the person causing this ruckus was you, Reisgem! As long as Montelo isn't too far away, he'll soon hurry here to deal with you.

Reisgem's eyes immediately lit up.

"That's so simple! Why didn't I think of it?!" Reisgem immediately began to laugh. "This time, I'm going to make it so that Montelo throws himself into my net!

Chapter 42 – A Nightmare Descends

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 42, A Nightmare Descends

“What we need to consider is where we should fight, so as to draw them here.” Bebe said with a frown. “After all, the Planar Battlefield is too large. Even on just this side of the Planar Battlefield, the region has a circumference of a million kilometers. If we don’t pick the right place and are too far away from Montelo, wouldn’t that make it hard for them to find us?”

Reisgem nodded slightly. “So where exactly is Montelo?”

If they knew the answer to that, there would be no need for all these complicated maneuvers.

“I think,” Linley said reflectively, “That after Montelo’s group of eight failed to kill us, they probably found a place to rest as well. And the place they chose to rest shouldn’t be too far away from the scene of the last battle.”

“I’ve already searched the area within a circumference of ten thousand kilometers around that place.” Reisgem shook his head.

Before this, they had spent three times and completely searched the area within ten thousand kilometers, and had even used Sovereign’s Might. One could imagine how hard it was to find them.

“I expect that their resting place is within a hundred thousand kilometers of the previous battle.” Linley guessed. “How about this. Let’s make this place right here the scene of the battle. It is within hundred thousand kilometers of the last battle scene. Let’s make some noise! If we use Sovereign’s Might, they might just find us.”

Reisgem hesitated momentarily, then nodded slightly. “Fine. That’s what

we'll do, then! If we don't succeed, we can try two or three more places that are a few tens of thousands of kilometers away."

"Given Montelo's temperament, once he discovers us, he'll definitely come." Reisgem revealed a smile on his face.

"Reihom, you'll put on the play with us." Reisgem laughed while looking at Reihom.

Roughly twenty thousand kilometers away from this location, within the base of a squad mountain that was less than a thousand meters high, a cavern had been dug. Montelo's group of five was there.

Within the cave.

The muscular golden-robed man, Oman, was seated silently in the meditative stance to one side of the cave, his eyes closed. That arrogant-looking middle-aged man was nearby quietly training as well. As for Montelo and the green-haired maiden, they were seated facing each other, chatting and laughing. "Young master, last time, we gained quite a bit. If we can be this lucky during the final battle, young master, you might end up having enough military merits."

Montelo laughed softly. "How about….Lowe [Lu'yi], you give me your military merits. That way, I won't have to worry about coming up with enough."

"How can we do that?" The green-haired maiden's laughter was as clear as a bell. "Young master, if you give me some of your military merits, I might be able to come up with enough as well."

"Jeeze." Montelo shook his head and laughed.

Montelo knew very well that although everyone addressed him as 'young master', in reality, in this group of five, only the silver-haired elder who stood by his side was his old servant. This silver-haired elder was the weakest of the five, without any Sovereign artifacts. He came to attend to

Montelo's needs.

As for the other three, each of them, be it Oman, Chauswey, or Lowe, although they gave him face by addressing him as young master, the military merits they gained were divided in accordance with their earlier agreement.

"Rumble…" An extremely weak ripple of energy made it towards them.

Montelo, Lowe, and the silver-haired Elderway immediately turned to look towards the tunnel. Even the meditating Oman and Chauswey opened their eyes to look outwards.

The Planar Battlefield wasn't that large to begin with. Given that battles were normally rare, the occasional major battle attracted quite a bit of attention.

"Energy ripples! It is Sovereign power." Montelo was the first to fly out.

"Perhaps we'll acquire some more commander badges." The green-haired maiden laughed enchantingly as she flew out as well, immediately followed by the silver-haired elder, the golden-robed 'Oman', and the arrogant middle-aged 'Chauswey'. The three transformed into three blurs and flew outwards.

Upon flying out from the tunnel, Montelo and the other four immediately flew at high speed towards the origin of the energy ripples.

Because the Planar Battlefield was flat, as long as there were no mountains blocking one's line of vision, commander-level experts would be able to see things from ten thousand kilometers away, despite the distance. But of course…the larger something was, the more clearly it would be visible.

"Whoooosh." The wind howled drearily as the five of them flew at high speed.

Moments later, Montelo's group of five clearly saw a black, heaven-

encompassing web-like rampart hanging high in the skies. The black rampart was hundreds of meters in size, and covered with a layer of flowing violet light. A black rampart that was hundreds of meters in size…for commanders, it would be bizarre if they weren't able to locate it.

The silver-haired elder said in surprise, "Amethyst Rampart? Reisgem's Amethyst Rampart?"

A look of surprise and delight appeared on Montelo's face. He couldn't help but begin to laugh loudly. "It really is Reisgem's innate divine ability. Last time, he fled. I didn't expect that I'd encounter him yet again. Everyone, hurry up to the location of the fight. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity."

"The distance is too great!" Oman said, stone-faced. "Given the great distance, by the time we fly over, the battle might have concluded and Reisgem might have left."

Montelo understood this as well. A distance of twenty thousand kilometers…if they flew over at maximum speed, it would still take some time.

"We can't let this opportunity to go waste! Everyone, use your Sovereign's Might!" Montelo immediately sent mentally. "A drop of Sovereign's Might is enough for us to make it in time. In addition, if we are lucky, perhaps we'll be able to kill Reisgem's comrades. I wonder if Reisgem has one person with him or is in a group of three."

Montelo turned to look at Oman. "Oman, last time, you didn't kill those two. This time, don't miss again."

"Don't worry." Oman said confidently.

"Let's go!"

Montelo, with a 'bang', set his Sovereign's Might ablaze. Immediately, the other four also set their own Sovereign's Might ablaze. An ordinary

commander might cherish their Sovereign's Might more, but Montelo came from the 'Augusta' clan, and was one of the clan's strongest experts. Although the amount of Sovereign's Might he was allotted wasn't as ridiculous as the amount Reisgem had access to, it was still quite a bit.

Montelo was still capable of wasting a few drops liberally as needed.

After having used their Sovereign's Might, the five figures instantly rose in speed by an extravagant amount.

They were like five blurs, instantly piercing through the skies and moving towards the location of Reisgem's battle.

Reisgem and Reihom were currently battling nonstop. Thunderous booms could be heard unceasingly, and the earth had shattered. Wild bursts of Sovereign power constantly emanated forth.

"Five surges of Sovereign power are headed towards us at high speed." Linley noticed.

"Light-type Sovereign power." Bebe said.

Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. "Not eight. Five. Still, for them to be coming so arrogantly and brazenly…it should be Montelo's group." Linley knew very well that ordinary commanders who were going to attack someone would never cause such a huge stir. Only Montelo, who knew exactly how strong Reisgem's team was, would dare to hurry over in such a manner at high speed.

"I didn't think that just after battling for a short while, they would arrive." Reisgem and Reihom stopped fighting.

"They are probably afraid that you will stop fighting and they won't be able to make it." Linley said with a laugh.

And just like that, Linley, Reihom, Bebe, and Reisgem just stood there, shoulder-to-shoulder, looking towards the direction of Montelo's group of

five, quietly awaiting their arrival.

“Rumble…” With Sovereign power blazing forth from them, their high speed movements did indeed cause quite a commotion.

With Montelo at the lead, the group of five, covered in foamy white light, appeared within the dark environment of the Planar Battlefield like stars flashing across the sky. The five quickly arrived at the scene of the earlier ‘battle’. The five of them looked forward, only to see the already-prepared Linley and his group.

“Montelo, it really is you.” Reisgem snickered. “There’s only five!” Linley felt relaxed as well. He had thought there would be eight of them, which would be rather pressuring, but now that there were only five, they were completely confident in their chances.”

“Heeeey.” Montelo, seeing the situation, felt puzzled. “The four of them aren’t fleeing?”

Last time, during their fight, Montelo came to believe that this four-person’s squad was only so-so. The five of them were completely capable of overcoming these four. However, Montelo didn’t know…that he had miscalculated Bebe’s strength. Bebe only had one powerful technique; his innate divine ability. Although Bebe’s technique couldn’t do anything to Oman, it could easily deal with the others.

However…

Montelo didn’t know. Oman didn’t know either! When Bebe had attacked him from behind, Oman, in possession of a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, thought that it had only been an ordinary soul attack.

“Oman, last time, you didn’t kill those two. This time, let’s see how you do.” Montelo said with a soft laugh.

“Don’t worry.” Oman swept Linley and Bebe with a cold gaze.

Linley looked straight at Oman as well. Suddenly, he began to laugh loudly. “Oman, last time, I didn’t enjoy the fight. This time, let’s have a good tussle.”

Oman, to this, just responded with a snicker.

“You asked for this.” Montelo was absolutely delighted. Only by knowing one’s friends and enemies would one be guaranteed of victory. Montelo felt that he clearly knew what his enemies were like.

“Haha, let’s fight!” Reisgem just laughed loudly.

“Attack.” Montelo barked as well.

Montelo gave the order, and instantly, those five blurs shot forward, with the nimblest being the green-haired maiden with the Sovereign glove.

But when Reisgem gave the order, the four of them didn’t move. Suddenly, behind Bebe appeared the enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat. The black Godeater Rat hovered there in midair, and instantly, the five figures charging towards them were so terrified that their faces changed.

“Beirut?” Oman said, shocked. “That’s not right!”

“Godeater Rat? Impossible!” Montelo, who had given the order, said, his face instantly turning ashen. Since he had given the order, he naturally was in the rear, and now he was the first to flee. “Everyone, flee!” He hurriedly sent frantically.

If they didn’t flee now, when?

Faced with the supreme technique of the Godeater Rat, anyone who wasn’t a Paragon or had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact would definitely die.

“Reisgem asked me to kill that woman, ‘Ranessa’, and Montelo. Montelo is a bit farther away though. I’ll kill this green-haired maiden, then.” Bebe, wanting to be certain of his kill, made his target the green-haired maiden.

She had charged to the very front, and was at the rear of the pack while fleeing.

“No…” The green-haired maiden’s eyes no longer held any luster or slyness, only terror.

However, it was too late!

The unique energy ripples of the innate divine ability instantly swept through her, locking onto the green-haired maiden’s soul and divine spark!

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

Immediately, a divine spark flew out from within her body, and the eyes of the green-haired maiden instantly became lifeless. She collapsed from the skies, and her glove and a gold badge fell out onto the ground.

A commander-level expert had just died in an instant!

The supreme technique of Godeater Rats…the nightmare of many commanders!

“Flee, flee!” Montelo was completely scared stupid by now. He only knew that he had to run. He knew very well that if today, he moved one step too slow, he would be finished! Although he was confident in his soul’s prowess, upon encountering the innate divine ability, ‘Godeater’, he would still be finished.

“That youth…how can he be a Godeater Rat. How?!” Montelo didn’t dare believe it.

“How did it end up being like this?” Oman was completely mystified. He wasn’t afraid of this technique, but he also knew…“The other three of our five-person squad, in the face of that Godeater Rat, will definitely perish. Chauswey and I, against them four, will only barely be able to flee and stay alive.” Oman understood that Reisgem was more than strong enough to tie him down.

As for Reihom, Linley, and Bebe, it would easy for them to kill Chauswey. After killing Chauswey, Linley and the other two could join forces with Reisgem to kill Oman, which would also be simple.

In the same instant that Montelo's group of four began to flee…

"Boom!" "Boom!" "Boom!" "Boom!"

Destruction-type Sovereign power began to blaze forth from the bodies of Linley and the rest of the four. At the same time, a blurry black light instantly spread out, surrounding and enclosing the four who wanted to flee. Montelo's group's speed drastically lowered, and Montelo himself was so terrified that his face turned white. "Amethyst Space!"

Black light had completely surrounded Linley's group of four, and white light surrounded Montelo's group of four.

Four pursued four!

"Flee separately!" Montelo shouted mentally.

"Haha…" Reisgem's wild laughter rang out, and at the same time, behind him, an enormous illusion of an Amethyst Godbeast that had 108 spikes on its back appeared. At the same time, 108 rays of violet light, carrying Destruction-type Sovereign power, shot out, instantly sweeping towards the four fleeing figures.

Innate divine ability – Amethyst Rampart!

With the descent of the Amethyst Rampart, the escape paths for Montelo's group of four was blocked.

"Bebe." Reisgem sent smugly.

"Got it. Just watch me!" Bebe, seeing the opportunity, once more executed his innate divine ability!

Chapter 43 – Attacked and Killed

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 43, Attacked and Killed

“Flee, flee!” Montelo had no intentions of trying to fight back. After realizing that Bebe was a Godeater Rat, he only knew one thing: He had to flee! “Flee separately. Make them pursue us separately, and we might have a chance.” Just as Montelo felt as though he had a hint of hope, the Amethyst Rampart suddenly descended from the heavens!

It was like an enormous, sky-covering net that swept towards them!

“No…” Montelo’s face instantly turned ashen.

The Amethyst Rampart swept towards them, hundreds of meters long, enveloping Montelo, Oman, and the other four within it, and also wanting to seal them within a closed cocoon.

“Break, break!” Oman frantically brandished his spiked mace, viciously smashing against the Amethyst Rampart. Unfortunately, the Amethyst Rampart just rippled a few times like water, completely undamaged. This was the innate divine ability of the Amethyst Godbeasts; how could it be so easily broken? Oman and Chauswey still had at least a bit of confidence; they weren’t afraid of the ‘Godeater’ ability.

But as for Montelo and the silver-haired elder, they were afraid. They didn’t dare to waste a single moment.

“The road ahead is blocked. All we can do is turn and charge backwards. Perhaps we’ll still have a chance!” Montelo and the silver-haired elder turned their heads to discover that the Amethyst Rampart had already ‘closed’, forming into a sealed ‘cocoon’.

There was nowhere to run!

“Haha…” Reisgem was utterly delighted as he stared at Montelo.

As for Bebe, the divine beast’s illusion had already taken form behind him. An enormous phantom of a Godeater Rat was right behind Bebe, staring at Montelo with a pair of cold eyes. Bebe cracked his lips open in a grin, chortling as that unique energy ripple surged forth.

Innate divine ability – Godeater!

“We’re finished.” Montelo and the silver-haired elder felt utterly powerless.

“No!” Montelo suddenly growled, and then from his body, thousands of strands of white silk appeared, shooting out like spiderwebs towards the nearby silver-haired elder, instantly wrapping him up and giving him a strong pull! It pulled the nearby silver-haired elder to Montelo’s side, just as the energy of the ‘Godeater’ arrived!

The silver-haired elder, unable to react in time, was struck head on.

The thousands of white strands of silk disintegrated, while the silver-haired elder dropped down from the skies. From his body, out rolled a white badge as well as a Highgod artifact, an interspatial ring, and a divine spark which flew out of his head towards Bebe.

“This…” Bebe was stunned.

The nearby Linley, Reisgem and Reihom had been certain that Montelo was going to die, but the scene just now had caused them to be stunned. “He used his own ally as a shield?” Linley was rather puzzled as to whether or not that silver-haired elder had surviving clones in the outside world, and if he would feel hatred for Montelo because of this and go make trouble for him.

What Linley didn’t know was…

The silver-haired elder’s status amongst the five was the lowest; he was an old servant of Montelo’s. The silver-haired elder might feel resentment in

his heart for Montelo's actions, but he wouldn't dare take revenge.

"Boss, I can only use my innate divine ability twice in a row. We have to wait for a good while before I can use it again." Bebe sent helplessly to Linley.

"Montelo really is lucky." Linley couldn't help but laugh bitterly.

Reisgem, knowing that Bebe wouldn't be able to use his innate divine ability for now, just began to laugh loudly as he pointed towards Montelo. "Haha, Montelo, you really are decisive, ruthless, and vicious. You sacrificed your own partner. I really admire you. But unfortunately, today, you will still die."

Oman and Chauswey couldn't help but give Montelo a sidelong glance as well.

Using one of them as a shield. This sort of action did indeed make others feel repulsed and angered. However, as the silver-haired elder was Montelo's old servant, Oman and Chauswey couldn't really say anything.

"Haha, an innate divine ability can only be used twice in a row." Montelo began to laugh loudly. "It seems you won't be able to kill me."

As soon as Montelo's words finished, the 'Amethyst Rampart' suddenly dissipated, its energy returning to the universe. The innate divine ability was only able to persist for a limited time.

"Haha…Oman, let's go." Montelo sent.

"You want to run?" Reisgem said with a snicker. "We'll chase!"

He had spread out his Amethyst Space to a circumference of nearly a thousand kilometers long ago, and a powerful gravitational force caused Montelo, Oman, and Chauswey to move much slower. Reisgem, Linley, Bebe, and Reihom transformed into four black blurs, chasing after them at high speed. And of course, they also scooped up the white badge of that

silver-haired elder.

“In this battle, we only acquired a single gold badge. Last time, Reisgem gave us the gold badge, so this time, we’ll definitely have to give the badge to Reisgem.” Linley understood that if they only gained a single gold badge this time, it would go to Reisgem, and his goal would not be accomplished.

“I have to kill one!”

Linley stared fixedly at Montelo. “Given Montelo’s status, he has to be a commander.”

“Of the three of them, Oman is the hardest to deal with. Let me handle Oman!” Reisgem sent mentally towards the other three. “Reihom…you go deal with that Chauswey. Given your strength, you should be completely certain of success. As for Montelo, Linley, you said your power increased greatly. You should be able to tie him down. If you can kill Montelo, kill him; if you can’t, tie him down. We just need to wait a while, and Bebe will be able to use his innate divine ability a third time, and we’ll kill Montelo!”

“Don’t worry. Leave Montelo to me.” Linley sent mentally.

Having made a breakthrough not too long ago, Linley felt extremely confident.

At this moment in time, the three enemies up ahead who were trapped and slowed down within the Amethyst Space were feeling uneasy as well. “Oman, Chauswey, we definitely won’t be able to escape like this. The three of us need to flee in three directions. They don’t have three Amethyst Spaces!”

“Fine!”

“Fine!”

Oman and Chauswey both acknowledged, and each of the three began to fly in a different direction at high speed; one continued to flight straight

forward, while the other two began to fly to the left and to the right, respectively.

“Attack them separately!” Reisgem gave the order.

Linley’s group of four, long prepared, didn’t hesitate at all. Linley and Bebe charged straight towards Montelo, while Reisgem chased after Oman and Reihom chased after Chauswey.

“I hope that Godeater Rat won’t chase after me.” Montelo felt hope in his heart. He fled at high speed, and soon escaped the Amethyst Space. “I finally flew out of the Amethyst Space. Now, it’s time for me to flee.” Just as he was rejoicing, however, a white light suddenly descended once more from the heavens.

A powerful gravitational force instantly wrapped around him, the power of it comparable to that of the Amethyst Space.

Blackstone Space!

“What’s going on?” Montelo turned, only to see the Dragonformed Linley and Bebe in pursuit. “How could I have forgotten about them? That brat of the Azure Dragon clan is also skilled in the Amethyst Space.” He had heard Oman mention this before. “And that’s the Godeater Rat. Terrible!”

Montelo feared the Godeater Rat the most! At his level, it would be very hard to kill him, but unfortunately, the innate divine ability of Godeater Rats was simply too terrifying. If it failed, that was one thing, but if it succeeded, the opponent would definitely die.

“Whoooosh.” Space itself seemed to emit a keening screech.

Linley and Bebe continued to draw closer and closer to Montelo.

“This kid is going to die, no questions.” Linley was completely confident.

“Boss, don’t worry. Once my innate divine ability’s energy replenishes to a

certain degree, I'll be able to kill him with ease." Bebe sent with a chortle.

Still flying up ahead, Montelo felt panic in his heart. "If this continues, I'll only be getting closer and closer to them. I definitely won't be able to escape! Even if I'm able to delay for a time, once the Godeater Rat recovers, he'll still be able to easily annihilate me." Montelo understood that there was no way for him to run.

"Swoosh!"

Montelo suddenly halted.

Linley and Bebe halted as well, and Linley looked with amusement at Montelo. Laughing softly, he said, "Oh, no longer running?"

Montelo cursed mentally, "Within the Amethyst Space, how can I flee? The more time I spend, the slimmer my chances for survival." Linley and Bebe weren't in any hurry to attack; they were happy to drag this out. Once Bebe recovered, he would easily defeat Montelo.

"The two of you….why must you kill me?" Montelo said hurriedly. "As long as you two don't kill me, I will be willing to satisfy any requirements that you two desire."

"No need." Linley snickered.

"I have Sovereign's Might. A large amount of Sovereign's Might." Montelo said hurriedly.

Bebe said mockingly, "We don't lack for Sovereign's Might.'

"Oh, right. My commander badge. I will give you my commander badge." Montelo said hurriedly.

"According to the rules of the Planar Battlefield, when leaving the Planar Battlefield, one must be holding a commander badge. Someone who is still alive who doesn't have a commander badge will have violated the laws of

the Planar Battlefield, and will be executed by the Sovereigns." Linley snickered.

This rule of the Planar Battlefield was made to ensure that people wouldn't just swap badges with others.

For example, if two commanders entered two separate camps, and then just handed their badges to each other as military merits! This was a sort of cheating. Thus, upon the conclusion of the Planar War, if someone alive didn't have their commander badge, they would be executed. Executed by a Sovereign!

After all, that was the time for military merits to be rewarded, or for military merits to be exchanged for a Sovereign artifact. The Sovereigns would create energy-clones.

Those who violated the rules would die.

"I'm willing to do this. Don't worry. As long as you spare me." Montelo said frantically. "I will immediately give it to you. As for the commander badge, in the future, I'll kill someone of my own alliance."

"Boss, just wait a bit. My innate divine ability's energy is almost replenished. I just need a little more time." Bebe sent.

"Sparing you…isn't necessarily out of the question." Linley suddenly changed his tone.

But Montelo said frantically, "If you agree, then agree. If you refuse, then refuse. The two of you, hurry up." He too knew very well that Bebe's innate divine ability energy was replenishing.

"About that…!" Bebe drawled.

"Die, then!" Montelo suddenly exploded forth, and the white energy aura around Montelo instantly bounded towards Bebe like lightning. "These two are clearly just wasting time. I have only one option right now! That's to

kill this Godeater Rat. If I kill him, I still have a chance to live!”

Montelo knew what the situation was; if they wanted to let him leave, why would they hesitate? Hesitation was to waste time; wasting time was to kill him!

“His reaction is quite quick.” Linley hurriedly went forward to welcome him.

“Swoosh!” A white, semi-translucent arrow shot out from Montelo’s body, shooting towards Bebe.

The speed was so quick that Bebe wasn’t able to dodge at all. It directly entered his body.

“The material defense of Godeater Rats is too strong. I’ll have to try soul attacks.” Montelo knew this point very well, but before he even had a chance to see whether or not Bebe had died, Linley’s attack arrived.

“Crackle…”

Montelo only saw 108 rays of black shadows surge towards him like dragons. Montelo’s divine sense instantly noticed one thing. “A divine sword? An invisible, divine sword?” While still in a state of amazement, those 108 black blurs solidified into a hole, forming into a sphere that completely enveloped him, and a powerful compressive force instantly affected his entire body.

Pressure, compression!

“Slash!”

As fast as lightning, as a ray of light, a sword split through the heavens, piercing towards Montelo’s head.

However, above Montelo’s head, a strange protective layer appeared. With a ‘clang!’ sound, the attack had to withdraw without any results.

“Defensive Sovereign artifacts truly are incredible.” Linley sighed in mental praise. Linley knew that it would be hard for him to kill this person, but he was still able to tie him down for a time. “However, the power of ‘Microcosm’ when using Sovereign’s Might is truly tremendous. Even Montelo isn’t able to react to my sword.”

Linley retreated at high speed.

“He isn’t dead?” Montelo turned to look at Bebe, then immediately turned to flee.

“Haha, don’t be in such a rush.”

Linley’s body once more swept forward, and the invisible ‘Mirage’ once more struck out. That blurry black sphere once more surrounded Montelo, and the enraged Montelo’s body once more exploded forth with large amounts of white silk.

“Crackle…”

When the sword struck out, the nearer white strands of silk were all shattered.

“Boss, I’m ready.” Bebe sent mentally.

Linley’s sky-shattering sword thrust landed on Montelo’s body, knocking him backwards slightly. At this moment, Montelo noticed that behind Bebe had appeared the enormous illusion of a Godeater Rat.

“NO!!!” Montelo stared, wide-eyed.

“This time, there’s no one present to be your shield.” Linley watched this scene.

The innate divine ability’s unique energy swept outwards towards Montelo. Montelo wasn’t able to resist at all. He collapsed to the ground, dead!

“Clink!” A gold badge fell out from his body.

Chapter 44 – Results

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 44, Results

Montelo's corpse lay there on the ground. This area was utterly silent and still, with only the constant howling of the cold wind.

Linley collected the gold badge, a smile on his face. "This is the second gold badge we acquired in this battle!" In this moment, the only thing Linley could see was this gold badge. As for Montelo's defensive Sovereign artifact, Linley's glance swept directly past it. This defensive Sovereign artifact would be reclaimed by the Sovereign later.

Bebe ran over, saying excitedly, "Boss, the second one! Earlier, when that green-haired woman died, the badge was Reisgem's. This one is ours. Now, we have a total of four commander badges!"

"Right, four! My father, Boss Yale, George, and Delia's older brother. We have enough already!" Linley let out a long sigh of relief.

Bebe grinned as well.

"Boss, do you think Grandpa Doehring can be brought back to life?" Bebe suddenly said.

Linley was stunned.

"Grandpa Doehring?" Within Linley's mind, the events from two thousand years ago suddenly reappeared. At that time, he was just an ordinary child, a youth whom Grandpa Doehring gave guidance to, helping him to steadily grow.

In Linley's life, Grandpa Doehring and Bebe held extremely important places. Whether thousands of years, ten thousand years, or even more time passed, Linley would never forget Grandpa Doehring. The death of

Grandpa Doehring was a scar embedded deep within Linley's heart, an eternal regret.

"Grandpa Doehring's soul dissipated." Linley said with a sigh.

"If a person's soul dissipates, does that mean they can't come back to life again?" Bebe was rather unwilling to accept this.

"Only when the soul remains alive can one reform into an undead." Linley shook his head. "Bebe, enough of this. Let's go find Reihom and Reisgem."

Grandpa Doehring's death…each time this scab was picked at, Linley felt agonized and miserable.

"Alright." Bebe stopped discussing this, immediately following Linley towards the direction of a powerful surge of Sovereign power.

Next to a desolate mountain, Reihom and Chauswey were undergoing a major battle.

Reihom had already transformed into a ten meter tall giant, his entire body like steel. A king amongst the race of World Titans!

Reihom's fierce, sharp gaze stared towards the little fellow before him. His two arms were like meteors, crashing down again and again. Or he stomped down, or kicked, or stepped…simple motions, but each one caused space to tremble and fracture. The earth itself was constantly rising up and sinking down, obeying Reihom's wishes.

"Whooosh." Chauswey continuously dodged, flashing about.

"This big fellow's attacks are too strong, in particular after he transformed. My speed is inferior to his." Chauswey was extremely panicked, and the white light around his body continuously flowed out, like strands of silk, protecting him perfectly. "I'll only have one chance. I have to succeed."

Suddenly…

Six white ribbons of light shot straight towards Reihom's chest. Reihom's giant hand suddenly slapped over in a dance, and of the six ribbons of white light, five of them coiled around Reihom's right elbow, while the one remaining white ribbon transformed from being as soft as lace to as sharp as a the tip of a sword. It shot towards Reihom's chest!

"RAAAAAAAAAAWR!"

The enormous Reihom suddenly let out an enraged bellow, his howl causing space itself to visibly ripple. The 'fist' on his body suddenly became filled with all sorts of golden magical runes which suddenly lit up. A brilliant golden light spread out from every single magical rune, and Reihom suddenly swung his fist over, smashing through this white ribbons.

Chauswey's face instantly changed. "How is that possible?"

"Clang!" The white ribbon piercing towards Reihom's chest only went in slightly, but at a certain depth, it was unable to penetrate any further.

"RAAAAWR!" The furiously roaring Reihom slammed both his arms together in a pincer strike against Chauswey.

Still stunned, Chauswey retreated frantically. Just as he was about to escape Reihom's attack range, suddenly, Reihom's two giant palms suddenly shot out with pillars of white light. These two pillars of white light had flecks of golden light on their surfaces, and shot at high speed towards the distant, retreating Chauswey.

"No!" Chauswey instantly generated a large number of white ribbons from his body, forming into layers of protection.

"BANG!"

The two pillars of gold-flecked white light struck directly onto Chauwey's body. The many layers of protective ribbons surrounding Chauswey's body were shattered inch by inch, then the two pillars of light flashed forward as

Chauswey watched in terror, entering his body. With a terrifying, thunderous sound, Chauswey was transformed into dust.

Reihom's body shrank.

"Whew. Whew!" Reihom's chest heaved like a bellow, letting out a few heavy pants, his face ashen. The supreme technique he had used just now was something that he wouldn't use, save at a critical moment. Once he used it, for a short period of time, his power would drop dramatically, and it would be quite some time before he recovered.

"I didn't expect that this Chauswey would be so hard to deal with." Reihom had to rest for quite a while before he recovered. "Fortunately, we got another commander badge."

Reihom, from the corner of his eyes, saw a commander badge lying on the ground. As for the two rings, Reihom didn't even look at them. He knew that one was an interspatial ring, while the other was a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

Two auras were moving close rapidly.

"Eh?" Reihom turned his head to look, then let out a sigh of relief. The newcomers were Linley and Bebe.

"Reihom, you killed Chauswey?" Linley, seeing the rubble on the ground, couldn't help but laugh.

"I had to spend quite a bit of effort to kill him." Reihom had a rare smile on his face. "That Chauswey trained in the Laws of Water and was skilled in defense. Despite my attack power, I nonetheless actually had to use a forbidden technique to kill him. Right, did you kill Montelo?" Reihom had a hint of anticipation in his eyes. Originally, it was his dear friend who had been killed by Montelo.

“Killed’m.” Linley flipped his hand over. “This is his commander badge.”

“Good!”

Reihom couldn’t help but feel wildly overjoyed.

Right at this moment, another aura drew close at high speed. Linley’s group of three turned to look. The newcomer was Reisgem. Reisgem glanced at the commander badge in Linley’s hands, and he couldn’t help but start to laugh. “Haha, Montelo, that bastard. He finally died! That fellow has pissed me off for the last time. I want to see how he’ll continue to be so boastful in the future. Reihom, you killed Chauswey?”

“Yes.” Reihom took out a commander badge as well.

“Hey, Reisgem, what about you?” Bebe chortled, and Linley also laughed as he looked towards Reisgem. Everyone was in a very good mood.

“Me?” Reisgem couldn’t help but let out an awkward laugh. “Well, uh… this is a bit embarrassing. Although I was able to surpass him in speed, Oman really is hard to deal with. He was able to block my attacks, and then the two of us went underground into a major battle. That fellow actually ran deep into the underground region, to the place where spatial rifts randomly appear…that place is too dangerous. In the end, I had to give up.”

Battling deep underground was indeed very dangerous.

“For Oman to have been forced by you to do that is already pretty catastrophic for him.” Linley understood that unless he had no other options, Oman wouldn’t have made that choice.

Although Oman’s strength was excellent, when trapped in the Amethyst Field, he was indeed at a disadvantage. Given Reisgem’s Sovereign weapon, Oman would be able to block, but as time went on, if he slipped a single time, it would be the end. For him to dive deep underground meant that Oman was desperately trying to find a hope of life in a sea of death.

“Haha, most importantly of all, we killed Montelo. No matter what, we’ve had a major victory.” Reisgem began to laugh. “This time, we got a total of three commander badges. Linley, last time, we gave you a badge. This time, of the three badges, two should be mine and one yours. No objections, right?”

“No objections.” Linley said with a laugh.

One badge was enough.

“But next time, if there are any more commander badges, they’ll be ours.” Bebe chortled.

“Of course.” Reisgem raised his eyebrows and laughed. “Our four-person squad is all but invincible. Uh, but of course, we’d best not encounter any more Highgod Paragons.” Linley’s group felt nervous when they thought of Bayer. Highgod Paragons really were overly powerful.

The Divine Light Plane. Deep within the Godsgaol Sea, within the Aumight Island.

Aumight Island was the headquarters of the number one clan of the universe, the Augusta clan. The Augusta clan was extremely large, because the Chief Sovereign of Light was himself just of an ordinary race. Naturally, his reproductive abilities were great, and his progeny were numerous. This caused the Augusta clan to vastly outstrip the Four Divine Beasts clan in number.

Aumight Island had nearly a million people. And this was just the place where the elites of the Augusta clan lived!

The Augusta clan’s true population was spread out throughout the eighty one islands nearby Aumight Island. They numbered in the hundreds of millions. Although numerous, many were only of ordinary talent…but of course, with such a large base, a few geniuses would occasionally appear.

Many of the members of the Augusta clan desired to join Aumight Island.

“Rustle…” The waters of the sea slapped against the shores of Aumight Island.

Atop Aumight Island, the elites of the clan were separated from each other. Most of them were rather solitary and arrogant. As the elites of the number one clan of the universe, they naturally had much to be proud about. However, once they looked towards the center of Aumight Island, to that towering white temple completely made out of marble which was more than ten thousand meters tall, they had envy in their eyes.

Within the Temple of Augusta.

A figure strode forward through a corridor, which had paintings hanging on each sides of it. The guards standing at the sides of the corridor all immediately bowed.

“Your Highness!” “Your Highness!”

The figure just strode forward past them.

“What’s wrong with his Highness? Why does he have such an ugly look on his face?” Two Emissaries discussed softly amongst themselves.

Before a ten-meter tall, unadorned violet gate. The figure came to a halt here and said in a low voice, “Send the message that I wish to see the Patriarch.”

“Yes, your Highness. Your Highness, please wait a moment.” The two violet-robed guards said, and one of them bowed, then retreated into the corridor.

“How did this happen! Reisgem…and that Azure Dragon clan punk. And that Godeater Rat!” This ‘Highness’ was Montelo. However, now that Montelo had lost his most powerful clone, he was no longer one of the most powerful, towering figures of the Augusta clan. But of course, the people in the clan didn’t know it yet.

Moments later, the violet-robed guard came out.

“Your Highness, please enter. The Patriarch is within, waiting for you.” The violet-robed guard said respectfully.

Montelo directly entered.

This was the residence of the Patriarch. It had a dining hall, a meeting hall, beautifully adorned rooms, and more. Montelo saw the figure standing atop a balcony, and upon seeing it, even someone as arrogant as Montelo had to lower his head. “Patriarch, my most powerful divine clone died!”

“Hm?” The white-robed figure couldn’t help but turn. He had a pair of sharp, sword-shaped eyebrows, and a fiery red dot in his forehead.

This person was the Patriarch of the Augusta clan, and the most successful of the 182 children of the Chief Sovereign of Light. He was the strongest of them all. Although the Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t give him too many Sovereign artifacts, by making his other Emissaries work together, he was able to ensure that the Patriarch acquired sufficient Sovereign artifacts.

The Augusta Patriarch had three Sovereign artifacts! Given that he was extremely powerful to begin with, even a Highgod Paragon would at most be able to push him into chaotic space.

But even if he was pushed into chaotic space, the Chief Sovereign of Light would probably be able to save him.

“What happened?” The Augusta Patriarch said in a low voice, and the fiery red spot in his forehead expanded slightly.

Montelo lowered his head, his words filled with resentment. “Patriarch, it was Reisgem! I wasn’t afraid of him, but who would have imagined that he brought a youth. That youth was actually a Godeater Rat!”

“Godeater Rat?” The Augusta Patriarch instantly understood.

It was very hard to kill this nephew of his. But a Godeater Rat could indeed accomplish it.

“Patriarch, the ones who killed me were a youth of the Azure Dragon clan and that Godeater Rat. They are currently with Reisgem.” Montelo said with pain.

“Reisgem?” The Augusta Patriarch shook his head. “That’s the only child of the Redbud Sovereign. I definitely will not agree to Reisgem being killed.” The Augusta Patriarch was quite decisive about this. He knew that even his father, the Chief Sovereign of Light, wouldn’t easily fight with the Redbud Sovereign.

Yes, the Chief Sovereign of Light was strong enough to deal with the Redbud Sovereign. Unfortunately, the Redbud Sovereign belonged to the seven great Sovereigns of Destruction. Their leader, the ‘Chief Sovereign of Destruction’, surpassed the Chief Sovereign of Light.

More importantly, the Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t possibly go deal with another Sovereign for the sake of a grandchild.

“Patriarch, it will most likely be very hard for me to regain my former power. I know this puts you in a difficult position, but I hope you will consider the contributions I have rendered to the clan over all these years and get revenge for me.” Montelo’s face was filled with indignation, and he said in a low voice, “I didn’t plan to kill Reisgem. I only hope, Patriarch, that we can kill that Azure Dragon clan’s brat, and that Godeater Rat!”

Montelo deeply hated Linley and Bebe. If it hadn’t been for Linley entangling him, he would have fled long ago. After all, Bebe didn’t have the ability to stop him.

The Augusta Patriarch was silent.

Montelo said hurriedly, “Patriarch, our clan has suffered major losses this time. Lowe and Chauswey both died. Actually, my personal grudge is a

small matter, but we lost four experts. Can it be that the Augusta clan isn't going to respond at all? What about our clan's face? If our clan doesn't respond, others will secretly laugh at us."

"Hm?" The Augusta Patriarch lifted an eyebrow. Clearly, he was moved by these words.

Chapter 45 – Arrangements

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 45, Arrangements

The Augusta Patriarch was frowning. He stood there on the balcony, actually turning to stare into the distant Godsgaol Sea. He was silent.

“Patriarch.” Montelo said hurriedly. But the Augusta Patriarch didn’t agree. Montelo knew…that the Patriarch would definitely consider things carefully, and so he no longer rushed him. In his heart though, he felt frantic. “Given the Patriarch’s temper, it’s quite possible that the Patriarch won’t get involved in this matter. If that’s the case, who can I ask to kill the Godeater Rat and the other one?”

“No. I have to kill those two.” Montelo continuously pondered what he should do.

Although Montelo was an important member of the Augusta clan, he didn’t have any important relationships with Highgod Paragons.

It was very difficult to gain revenge after being killed in the Planar Battlefield. After all, commanders capable of killing other commanders in the Planar Battlefield were all powerful. Only Paragons would be completely certain of success in killing them.

There were only a few Highgod Paragons, and they were scattered across the planes. Some Highgod Paragons lay hidden within material planes, while others lived in seclusion in other places. To invite a Paragon was a very difficult task.

Not everyone was like the elven expert, ‘Occluar’, who had a Paragon in his debt.

Forget about Montelo; even the Augusta Patriarch, the Patriarch of the number one clan, was not completely certain he would be able to invite a

Paragon.

“Describe the power of Reisgem’s squad in detail.” The Augusta Patriarch continued to stare towards the Godsgaol Sea as he spoke calmly.

“Yes.”

Montelo was overjoyed. He hurriedly said, “Their squad has four people. Reisgem, an expert close to Oman in power, a youth of the Azure Dragon clan, and that Godeater Rat! Of the four of them, Reisgem is the strongest. But of course, the Godeater Rat is terrifying as well. That innate divine ability is too formidable.”

“Oh…” The Augusta Patriarch suddenly turned, staring at him with awl-like eyes. “That expert close to Oman in power; there’s nothing special about him?”

“Oman is enough to deal with him.” Montelo said with certainty.

If Oman were to fight Reihom, indeed, as Oman had a Sovereign weapon, he was a counter to Reihom…although the fight would be a tough one, Oman would still be able to kill Reihom.

“To kill that Azure Dragon youth and that Godeater Rat will not be easy.” The Augusta Patriarch shook his head slightly. Actually, he was rather hesitant on whether or not to send out any forces. In truth, Lowe and Chauswey didn’t belong to the Augusta clan. Although they died, the clan’s power hadn’t been impacted much.

If a Sovereign’s Emissary was lost, the Sovereign could accept another one.

Montelo was frantic. He hurriedly said, “If they just killed me, that’s one thing. But this time, they killed four of our people. And, Patriarch, you know what Reisgem is like. He’s the sort that loves to cause trouble. He’s had problems with our clan for a long time now. Now that he’s gained a victory, he’ll definitely go bragging to everyone about it. If our clan doesn’t react at all, then…”

The Augusta Patriarch frowned, that fiery dot in his forehead seeming to emit a flaming light.

The Augusta Patriarch immediately gave the order. “Montelo, go ask Oman to come. At the same time, please ask someone to invite Chegwin [Qie’ge’wen] as well.”

Although Oman’s most powerful divine clone was in the Planar Battlefield, he still had a clone that remained within the clan. As for ‘Chegwin’, he also lived in the Godsgaol Sea. He was also an Emissary of the Chief Sovereign of Light, and was fairly close to the Augusta clan.

“Yes.” Montelo couldn’t help but feel overjoyed.

“It seems there is hope.” Montelo was incomparably excited. Although he didn’t know what arrangements the Patriarch would make, since he already had inquired about Reisgem’s squad’s strength, Montelo believed that the Patriarch would send out a squad that would definitely be successful.

Not attacking was one thing, but if they were to attack, they must be successful.

The Planar Battlefield was as desolate as ever.

“Whoooosh.” The wind howled, and sand flew everywhere. The cold wind blew, and two figures were walking shoulder-to-shoulder within it. At a closer distance, it could be seen that one was a short silver-haired, golden robed, hard-faced man. This was the single survivor of the earlier battle, Oman.

Next to Oman was a tall, skinny man in a green robe. There was a closed third eye in his forehead. This person was Chegwin.

“The Patriarch really dotes on Montelo. He actually intends to get revenge for this matter.” Oman snickered. “And he even invited the two of us to work together.”

Chegwin let out a calm laugh which seemed quite eerie. “Oman, the Patriarch is the most beloved son of the Chief Sovereign. The Patriarch personally asked me to come; how could I not give him face? But Oman… for Reisgem’s group of four to slaughter you to such a degree means they definitely are quite strong.”

“I told you, the only one hard to deal with is that Godeater Rat.” Oman said self-deprecatingly.

If the results of that battle were to be spread out, it would affect Oman’s reputation as well.

“But this time, we are completely certain of victory.” Oman smiled.

“Not necessarily, unless that person agrees.” Chegwin shook his head. “He won’t necessarily agree.”

“If he doesn’t agree, then just the two of us alone will find it rather hard.” Oman looked towards the front.

While chatting, the two of them had already arrived at a military camp. The guards of the camp immediately stared at them vigilantly. Generally speaking, only supreme experts would dare to roam the Planar Battlefield like this. Oman immediately said, “Go report to your commander. Say that I, Oman, have come to pay my respects to him.”

“Milords, please wait a moment.” One of the soldiers bowed slightly, then retreated inside to report.

Moments later…

“The two of you, the Lord Commander has invited you in.” The soldier returned.

Oman and Chegwin smiled as they walked in, shoulder-to-shoulder. They quickly arrived at an ancient, unadorned courtyard. Currently, at the gates of

the courtyard, there was a handsome, golden-haired youth. The golden-haired youth looked at Oman and Chegwin, then immediately began to laugh. “Oman, ah, I didn’t expect that Mr. Chegwin would come as well. It’s quite rare for the two of you to come visit me. Please, come in, come in!”

Oman stepped forward, saying in a soft voice, “Ramson [La’mu’seng], is Mr. Magnus here?”

“Him.” The golden-haired youth was stunned. “You came to see him?”

“Right.” Oman nodded slightly.

Right at this moment, a calm voice rang out from within. “Oman, Chegwin, since the two of you have come to see me, just come in. It’s been quite some time since I’ve seen you two as well.”

Oman and Chegwin didn’t hesitate any further, immediately following the golden-haired youth inside.

Within the courtyard, there was a stone table and a pitch-black chair, atop which was a man who was casually flipping through a finger-thick book. This man had silver-colored, straight, flowing hair that fell to his waist. It was hanging loose, seeming quite relaxed. The man’s skin was crystalline, and his face was completely clean, without any stubble.

The only facial hair was two silver eyebrows which drooped downwards to his ears.

“Mr. Magnus.” Oman and Chegwin bowed slightly.

Magnus placed the book on the table, then laughed calmly as he gave them a sidelong glance. “Sit.”

Oman and Chegwin both sat down. They unconsciously glanced at each other, both feeling a hint of pressure. This ‘Magnus’ who was in front of them was a true ultimate expert of the Celestial Realm. The outside world

was rife with rumors that Magnus was supposedly a Highgod Paragon, but Oman and Chegwin actually knew for certain…

That Magnus was indeed a Paragon.

As a Highgod Paragon who trained in the Edicts of Fate, it could be said that Magnus' expertise in the soul could be described as the highest amongst Highgods.

"It seems as though the two of you have something you want to discuss, but find hard to." Magnus laughed calmly.

Chegwin took a deep breath. "Mr. Magnus, let me first describe this matter for you. Not long ago, Reisgem led a small squad, which in the Planar Battlefield exterminated the squad Montelo was leading. Four members died, leaving only Oman as the sole survivor."

"That formidable?" Magnus was rather surprised. He couldn't help but look at Oman.

Oman said, awkwardly, "Their squad has a Godeater Rat."

Magnus now understood, and the nearby golden-haired youth laughed. "I heard of this Godeater Rat long ago. So he belongs to Reisgem's squad. Montelo's squad lost four people; only Oman escaped? So Montelo himself died as well?"

"Right." Oman nodded.

"It was Patriarch Goldman who invited you to come, yes?" Magnus laughed calmly.

Oman laughed helplessly, "Mr. Magnus, you've guessed everything. We'll be straightforward. Indeed, the Patriarch asked us to invite you to assist us. After all…there aren't many people in the Planar Battlefield who would listen to the Augusta clan, and even fewer who can deal with Reisgem."

“Does Goldman have mental issues? He wants to act against Reisgem?” Magnus couldn’t help but frown.

There weren’t many who would dare say that Goldman had mental issues. Magnus was one of them. In addition, Magnus and Goldman had a rather deep relationship between the two of them; in the past, when the two of them were weak, they had roamed the Divine Light Plane together. To invite a Paragon to help, relying on the backing of a Sovereign was useless. The only thing you could rely on was friendship and debts.

“No, no.” Oman chortled. “Don’t worry about that. The Patriarch doesn’t intend to act against Reisgem. The Patriarch wants to deal with the other three.”

“I can’t kill the Godeater Rat.” Magnus shook his head.

“Right. Mr. Magnus, you are worried about Beirut?” Oman said.

The nearby golden-haired youth, ‘Ramson’, laughed. “Mr. Magnus doesn’t worry about that, of course. Only, can it be that you don’t know that some time ago, Mr. Bayer personally went to go kill that Godeater Rat? He wasn’t able to. Mr. Bayer even stayed here for a few months to discuss this.”

“Bayer?” Oman and Chegwin looked at each other.

“The Godeater Rat’s defense is incredibly strong, and he has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. The only method is to push him into a spatial rift; otherwise, there is no way to kill him.” Magnus shook his head. “Even in chaotic space, given his material defense, he will probably be able to survive. At most, he’ll be lost. If Beirut asks for his Sovereign to help find him in chaotic space, it’s very possible the Sovereign will.”

Oman and Chegwin only now understood how hard Godeater Rats were to deal with.

“If you want to attack, you can only kill the youth of the Azure Dragon clan

and that other person." Magnus said with a calm laugh.

"Mr. Magnus, if you personally get involved, there definitely won't be any problems." Oman said hurriedly. Chegwin looked expectantly towards Magnus as well.

Magnus let out a chuckled. "What did that kid Goldman say to you?" Magnus looked at Oman.

"He said that if you help him out this time, Mr. Magnus, he will give you, sir, a mutated cloudstone." Oman said rather uncomprehendingly. He didn't have any idea what the Patriarch's words meant; although mutated cloudstones were fairly rare in the Divine Light Plane, they weren't that valuable either, less than a Highgod artifact.

Was a mutated cloudstone enough to ask Magnus to intervene? How could that be made to happen so cheaply?

"That kid, Goldman….he's always so sly." Magnus laughed and rose to his feet. "Then I'll accompany you on this trip."

Oman and Chegwin couldn't help but feel surprised. They hadn't expected that this offer would successfully result in Magnus helping out.

"However, I'll only be responsible for holding off Reisgem. You can kill the other two. As for the Godeater Rat…you can just ignore him." Magnus laughed calmly. This 'Chegwin' who the Augusta Patriarch had asked to come was also a supreme expert who didn't fear the 'Godeater' ability.

The three of them, together, would be able to easily deal with Reisgem's group. In truth, Magnus by himself was more than enough.

"Ramson, I'll make a trip for now." Magnus said with a laugh.

"I'll wait for your victorious return, sir." The golden-haired youth laughed.

Magnus immediately led Oman and Chegwin to leave the military camp.

Watching the three depart, the golden-haired youth let out a sigh. “I hadn’t imagined that the Augusta Patriarch would actually be able to invite Mr. Magnus. It seems as though there are no doubts at all about how this battle will end up.”

Chapter 46 – The Unfinished Battle

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 46, The Unfinished Battle

The desolate landscape. Three figures were striding across it, shoulder-to-shoulder.

“Mr. Magnus, right here.” Oman said.

Magnus looked about, then nodded slightly. “When Reisgem’s group of four chased after you three, they separated and attacked separately. Then with this place at the center, let’s start searching out in a circular area.” Magnus believed that Reisgem’s group shouldn’t have gone too far; they should have found a nearby place to rest.

“Sorry to trouble you, Mr. Magnus.” Chegwin laughed.

“I’ll just consider it as going out for a walk.” Magnus said with a calm laugh. “But if we are going to do this, you’ll have to make your preparations. It might take a very, very long time.”

If things were fast, it might just take a day or two, but if Reisgem was resting more than a few hundred thousand kilometers away, they’d probably have to spend more than a century.

“Mr. Magnus, if you have the patience to wait, how can the two of us be impatient when accompanying you?” Chegwin and Oman immediately followed Magnus, carefully inspecting their surroundings. Generally speaking, the radius of a commander’s divine sense was fairly small, but for the likes of Soul Mutates and Paragons or those who used Sovereign’s Might, the radius would be much larger.

After all, Highgod Paragons had evolved souls as well.

The three began from this point and spread out in an ever-increasing circle.

This was really quite boring, but Magnus wasn't impatient in the slightest, leisurely carrying out his stated plans, as though he was on a walking tour of the Planar Battlefield.

Time moved on silently, and in the blink of an eye, three months passed.

During their journey, each time Magnus encountered a mountain or a hill, he would go deep in for a search. Today, they arrived at Ramhorn Mountain!

"Ramhorn Mountain is fairly large. I'll need to spend a bit of time to do a detailed inspection." Magnus instructed them, and then he flew closer to Ramhorn Mountain. He first stood at the base of Ramhorn Mountain, giving it a careful inspection, but moments later, his voice entered Oman and Chegwin's minds. "Haha, the two of you, come over. I found them."

After having searched for three months, even Magnus felt happy at having found the target.

"Found them?"

Oman and Chegwin revealed looks of delight and laughter on their faces as they immediately flew over.

"The two of you, don't make any moves." Magnus instructed mentally.

As a Highgod Paragon, his soul had evolved once more. Unless a Highgod Paragon intentionally wanted to reveal his soul aura, as long as he was careful, commanders wouldn't be able to sense him at all. Originally, when Bayer had located Linley and them, he had used the same method.

Only after Bayer had voluntarily revealed his aura did Linley and the others realize he was present. By then, Bayer had already entered the corridor.

"The four of them are gathered together in one place and chatting. Reisgem and the other four really know how to enjoy themselves. They actually built a quite impressive estate for themselves inside." Magnus laughed mentally

towards them. Moments later, Magnus said in an understanding tone, “Oh, so the Godeater Rat is ‘Bebe’. The two others are called Linley and Reihom.”

Clearly, he had learned their names from their conversation.

“Linley, Bebe, Reihom?” Chegwin and Oman memorized the names. Prior to this, they didn’t know the names of the enemies.

“Prepare to act.” Magnus said with a calm laugh. “Do as I instruct…” Magnus gave missions to Oman and Chegwin for them to carry out.

In the estate within Ramhorn Mountain.

After the complete victory they had won, Linley’s group had once more returned to the cave estate within Ramhorn Mountain. Linley’s group of four was extremely happy here. Linley’s other divine clones were focused on training, while his main body accompanied Bebe and Reisgem in idle chatter.

“Come, cheers.” Reisgem chortled as he raised a cup.

Linley, Bebe, and Reihom all laughed and raised their cups as well, downing it together.

“Bebe, as your elder bro, I don’t want to put you down.” Reisgem slapped Bebe on the shoulders, then laughed, “But look at me. Over the past three months, I’ve still spent most of my time training, while occasionally having some fun with everyone. But you? As soon as you train for a day or two, you lose the patience to train any further. How long will it take for you to make a breakthrough in fusing like this?”

“Fusing?” Bebe rubbed his nose, then chortled, “Forget it. I had better just eat more divine sparks and strengthen my body to the limit first. Based on what Grandpa said, I’m still quite far off from the limit. It’s still hard for me to even start to forge godspark weapons.” As he spoke, Bebe grabbed a Highgod spark, then tossed it into his mouth.

Bebe had acquired many Highgod sparks from Beirut. Highgod sparks, to Beirut, were nothing at all. After all, normally speaking, divine sparks were indestructible. Aside from Godeater Rats, who were able to destroy them, others weren't able to do it at all. Thus, the number of divine sparks in the Netherworld, Infernal Realm, and other places was constantly growing.

But of course, Sovereigns collected divine sparks as well, so as to reduce the number of divine sparks in the various places. Otherwise, if there were too many divine sparks, they would become worthless. What the Sovereigns did was to collect large amounts of divine sparks, and at a certain number, the Overgods would come collect them.

If Beirut wanted divine sparks, he naturally was able to easily acquire a large number of divine sparks from the Sovereign for Bebe to eat.

"Eating divine sparks. How badass is that." Reisgem sighed in praise. "I want to do it as well, but I can't."

Bebe was startled, then lowered his head to look at the divine spark he was holding. He immediately began to laugh. "Reisgem, I didn't notice it before you said anything, but now that you say it, I really do feel…as though eating divine sparks is a unique trait that no one else but me possesses. Uh, and my grandfather as well." As he spoke, Bebe intentionally tossed a divine spark into the air, and as it descended, it just so happened to fall into his mouth.

After eating, Bebe smugly raised an eyebrow towards Linley and Reisgem.

Linley, seeing this, couldn't help but laugh.

Prior to this, Linley had always carried many great burdens, but now, Linley's life was quite simple. After all, he had already acquired four commander badges. "Now, what we need to do is to slowly wait, until the conclusion of the final battle." Linley wasn't preparing to participate in the final battle at all.

Having already acquired enough commander badges, Linley would at most watch the final battle to its conclusion. Linley didn't believe that he would be able to acquire ten more commander badges and trade for a Sovereign artifact.

Right at this moment…

"Eh? Divine sense?" Linley's group of four rose to their feet, stunned. They sensed a powerful divine sense sweep towards them. What Linley's group had no idea was that…this was the divine sense which Magnus had only intentionally revealed after watching for a long period of time and after having finished his combat preparations.

"Either a Paragon or a Soul Mutate Highgod." Linley instantly came to this conclusion.

"BANG!" An explosive sound blasted forth.

"Reisgem!" A gentle voice rang out. Linley's group of four looked through the courtyard gate. They were able to clearly see three figures flying in, instantly arriving within the front courtyard. Linley's group looked closely at the group. The leader was a pale-faced, beardless man with drooping silver eyebrows. Upon seeing this person, Linley's group of four was terrified.

"We meet again." Oman laughed coldly.

"It's actually the three of them." Linley knew something about the supreme experts. "The leader is Magnus, a suspected Highgod Paragon. Judging from the divine sense he sent out just now, he probably really is a Paragon. Next to him is Oman and Chegwin. Chegwin's true body is that of a divine beast, the 'Suanni Lion'. Terrible!"

Chegwin was even harder to deal with than Oman! As for Magnus, he was undefeatable.

The arrival of these three figures utterly terrified Linley's group of four.

“Hey, what are you doing?!” Reisgem strode forward and shouted loudly, while hurriedly sending via divine sense to Linley and the others, “The situation is bad. That Magnus is a Highgod Paragon. Chegwin has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, and Bebe won’t be of any use. If we fight against them, we have no chance at all. The only method is to flee! Immediately, we’ll scatter in all directions. The more of us who escape, the better.”

“What are we doing?” Magnus let out a calm laugh.

“BANG!” The flat gray marble floor of the courtyard suddenly rippled like in a tempest, sweeping towards Magnus and the other two, blocking their vision.

“Flee!” Reisgem called out frantically.

Linley, Bebe, and Reihom didn’t even think of fighting; not hesitating at all, they turned and fled, boring through the nearby stone walls.

“Boss, quick, flee. Right now, you and Reihom are in great danger.” Bebe sent frantically. Bebe also understood…that of the four, he had the most monstrous defensive and others wouldn’t be able to kill him. As for Reisgem, others wouldn’t dare to kill him. Thus, Linley and Reihom were in the worst situation.”

Linley’s body merged directly into the stone wall, and then passed through it at high speed, fleeing.

Worldwalking!

“None of you will escape!” A calm voice barked out. At the same time, in a circumference of hundreds of meters, the mountain stones began to rumble, then collapse into dust. Very bizarrely, a part of the entire Ramhorn Mountain disappeared, and quite a few stones fell into the opening. The fleeing figures of Linley and the others were revealed.

“What power is this?” Linley was stunned.

This was a sort of restrictive power, a power that made it hard for others to resist. Linley’s face changed. “The Edicts of Fate!” Linley knew that amongst the four Edicts, the Edicts of Fate were the strangest, most terrifying of Edicts. The Edicts of Fate were also exceedingly hard to train in. ‘Oracular Magic’ was nothing more than a simplified version of employing the Edicts of Fate; it couldn’t even be considered a basic form of it.

A Highgod Paragon that trained in the Edicts of Fate was even harder to deal with than other Highgod Paragons.

Two figures flew over at high speed. “Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” These two charged to the edges, staring coldly at Linley and the others.

“You won’t be able to escape. I told you already.” Magnus said calmly.

“Magnus, what are you going to do.” Reisgem said angrily. Someone who trained in the Edicts of Fate was very hard to deal with. Magnus was far harder to deal with than Bayer!

“Don’t worry. I’ve only come to deal with these two…” Magnus pointed with a calm laugh towards Linley and Reihom. “Linley and Reihom. Once we kill those two, this matter will be over. Reisgem, you other two can continue to remain here in the Planar Battlefield.”

“In your dreams!” Bebe stood next to Linley and howled angrily.

Linley stared cautiously at Oman, then at the nearby Magnus. Linley also knew that this time, things were truly grim! Magnus was a Highgod Paragon, while Oman and Chegwin were also very powerful. To leave alive…would be too hard.

“If Mr. Leylin was here, there would still be hope. But even if Mr. Leylin knew that I was in danger, he wouldn’t be able to cross that great distance and arrive in time.” Linley knew very well that even Sovereigns were

incapable of teleportation, much less Paragons.

This time, it was very dangerous.

“Magnus, you…” Reisgem was just about to speak.

Magnus just barked, “Reisgem, you’d best not interfere. Give my accomplishments in the soul, it wouldn’t be too hard to kill you. Just stand and watch.”

Reisgem’s response to Magnus was a flashing violet spear that flew towards him.

“How boring.” Magnus waved his hand, and a long silver whip appeared. The long whip coiled through the air, wrapping around the spear, and then it coiled further down the spear towards Reisgem, so fast that just as Reisgem was about to use his innate divine ability, he was bound by the long silver whip.

Instantly, Reisgem was tightly bound by the long silver whip.

“You are no match for me.” Magnus said calmly.

“Do it.” Magnus said to Oman and Chegwin.

Linley and Reihom didn’t flee, because they knew…that in front of Magnus, they wouldn’t be able to escape. In terms of both techniques and speed, they were vastly outstripped. When they fled from Bayer’s attack, they were able to do so only because Bayer’s sole target was Bebe; he didn’t want to kill the others.

But this time, it was the opposite; Magnus didn’t want to kill Bebe or Reisgem, just Linley and Reihom.

Linley and Oman stared at each other.

“He wants to kill me. Even if I die, I’ll take this Oman down with me.” The

Dragonformed Linley, with a ‘bang’, caused black Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might to suddenly blaze about him.

Oman’s body also blazed with light-type Sovereign’s Might. Oman laughed coldly at Linley. “So you are Linley. Last time, I let you escape. This time, you won’t be able to.”

“Our last battle wasn’t finished. This time, let’s continue.” Linley stared coldly at Oman. Prior to this, Linley was far from being Oman’s match, but now that Linley had fused four profound mysteries, what would the results to this battle be?

Chapter 47 – Suicidal?

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 47, Suicidal?

Within the ruins of the cave, Reisgem's side was clearly at a disadvantage.

"Bastard, bastard!!!" Reisgem bellowed, struggling wildly, but that long silver whip was coiled tightly around him like a python. Reisgem even wanted to transform his body into energy to escape, but the divine power of the long silver whip completely sealed the area around Reisgem. Even if Reisgem transformed into energy, he wouldn't be able to escape.

"Magnus, I will make you regret this!" Reisgem howled.

Magnus glanced sideways at Reisgem, then laughed calmly. "Reisgem, save your strength." After speaking, he glanced sideways towards Linley and Oman. The two appeared to be about to start fighting.

That thick spiked mace, flashing with cold light, appeared in Oman's hands. He grinned savagely. "Linley, I will use this to smash your head in and make your soul dissipate. You should feel proud to die by my hands, and by my Sovereign weapon."

"Bebe." Linley growled.

"Boss." Bebe hurriedly moved to Linley's side.

"What, you want to ask a helper?" Oman laughed. Oman knew exactly how strong Bebe was. Although his innate divine ability was indeed frightening, aside from it, Bebe's attack power truly wasn't capable of threatening him. "The two of you can join forces. I don't mind at all."

In actual combat, he could completely ignore Bebe.

Linley stretched his hand out, handing the four commander badges to Bebe,

then sent mentally, “Bebe, remember, even if I die, you need to go find the Chief Sovereign of Death.”

“Boss.” Bebe looked worriedly towards Linley, while at the same time he stored the commander badges into his interspatial ring.

After completing this action, Linley let out a sigh of relief. If his death resulted in even these four badges being lost, that would be horrible.

“Boss, don’t do anything stupid. Don’t fight with this Oman to the death.” Bebe sent, trying to persuade him. “In a bit, try and come up with a way to flee. I’ll go tie down that Magnus! That Magnus won’t be able to kill me, at most push me into chaotic space. Others might die in it, but my body is comparable to a defensive Sovereign artifact, and I won’t die in chaotic space. Boss, our souls are connected. So long as you survive, afterwards, you can find Grandpa Beirut and, through our soul link, you’ll bring me out one day.”

Right at this moment, explosive sounds could be heard from nearby.

Reihom had already begun to fight against Chegwin.

“Linley, you really are long-winded.” Oman let out a low snort, then came charging over like a mountain.

“Whoosh…” That spiked mace smashed through the air, slamming down towards Linley’s head. Suddenly, a hundred meter diameter sphere of black light appeared, and a powerful gravity was applied to Oman’s body.

Blackstone Space!

“Hmph.” Linley’s dark golden eyes stared at his opponent, and his draconic scale covered legs launched off the ground, shooting him upwards.

Mirage easily slashed a long tear through space. This sword contained Linley’s most powerful attack, but for now, he didn’t use the spatial compression part of it. Seeing this, the nervous Bebe couldn’t help but

frown. “Boss isn’t using Microcosm; he’s giving up the spatial compression part of the attack. The enemy is completely capable of blocking this attack.”

This attack, aside from lacking the spatial compression aspect, was as powerful as the normal ‘Microcosm’ attack.

“Clang!”

Mirage struck head on against the spiked mace, and Linley couldn’t help but move backwards.

“Eh?” Oman looked in astonishment at this. In the past, when Linley had exchanged blows with him, he was able to injure Linley with each smashing blow, to the point of knocking Mirage back onto Linley’s body. The advantage was quite obvious. But now, his attack was only able to hold a slight advantage.

Linley grinned coldly. “You’re just so-so, it seems.”

“It’s too early to start talking!” Oman’s body moved, transforming into an illusory blur as he charged once more towards Linley.

Reisgem was bound, and he worriedly watched the two sides battle. Linley against Oman wasn’t so bad; by relying on his ‘Blackstone Space’, he was able to just barely hold on. But as for Chegwin against Reihom, the situation was much more dangerous. Reihom had already transformed into a ten meter giant.

“Rumble…” The mountains trembled and the earth shattered.

Linley and Oman’s battle was fierce and vicious, but the amount of ruckus caused wasn’t that great. As for Chegwin and Reihom, those two were like a pair of bizarre beasts, one huge, one small. The two only used material attacks against each other. Each of Reihom’s punches and kicks carried mountain-splitting force, but Chegwin was even more terrifying; each punch and each kick was as sharp as a knife, leaving deep wounds on Reihom’s body.

“BANG!” Reihom’s giant body was smashed backwards, hard, flying like a meteor. The side of the mountain shattered and stones were sent flying everywhere.

Reihom’s chest was caved in.

“The situation looks bad.” Reisgem said frantically. “Reihom specializes in material attacks, but this Chegwin is infamously hard to deal with. He has a defensive Sovereign artifact as well as a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. Others aren’t able to injure him at all! Reihom is being treated by him as a punching bag. If this continues…”

Reihom had indeed becoming a punching bag.

Reihom himself had already sensed this. He wanted to move closer to Linley, hoping to enter the range of the Blackstone Space. “If I’m in the Amethyst Space, I’ll have a major speed advantage.” But the pace of the battle was being controlled by Chegwin, and Chegwin had already beaten him out of the cave to the outside wilderness, where the duel continued.

“Reihom is going to die if this continues!” Reisgem stared fixedly at Magnus, his eyes red. He said savagely, “Magnus, you bastard! Let me tell you, if a single one of my friends die, I swear to you, I will never forgive you, never!!! Make Chegwin stop right now, RIGHT NOW!!!”

Magnus just laughed calmly.

“Reisgem, just rest for a while.” Magnus didn’t pay any attention to Reisgem’s threats at all.

Sovereigns and Deities were on completely different levels.

Unless a Sovereign had a truly necessary reason, there was no way a Sovereign would lower himself or herself to act against a Deity. This was a custom formed over countless years.

“Linley, hurry up and flee. Think of a way to escape!” Reisgem was frantic, and he sent mentally, “Bebe and I are fine. You need to hurry and run!”

But Linley didn’t respond. His battle against Oman only became even fiercer, and explosive sounds continued nonstop. The stones at the base of Ramhorn Mountain were all blasted into smithereens. Linley clearly was at a disadvantage, as his body was already covered with many wounds. Over the course of their battle, they had left the cave as well.

“What is the Boss thinking? Why hasn’t he used his supreme technique?” Bebe didn’t understand. He hurriedly flew out as well.

“Let’s go out to take a look.” Magnus also lifted up his long whip and carried Reisgem towards the outside.

In the wilderness, a few thousand meters apart, two savage battles were underway.

Unless the difference in power was too great, to kill an enemy would be quite hard.

For example, Paragons generally weren’t able to kill each other. For Reihom and Chegwin, Reihom’s transformation was simply too powerful, and although Chegwin was at an advantage and was able to kill him, it wasn’t something he could accomplish right away.

“This Linley’s fairly strong. He won’t be able to hold on for too long.” Magnus laughed while giving his evaluation. “That Reihom will most likely die before Linley does.”

“Hmph.” Bebe gave a sideways glance at Magnus. In his heart, he still felt some hope for Linley. “The Boss will definitely have a way. Up till now, the Boss still has not used his supreme technique. At a critical moment, I’ll definitely have to help the Boss.” Bebe made his preparations to assist in blocking Magnus.

In the desolate wilderness.

A white-robed, black-haired, crimson-eyebrowed figure. It was Bluefire. Bluefire was currently moving at high speed, so fast it was as though he was teleporting. With each movement, he crossed multiple kilometers. In the blink of an eye, he disappeared from one's field of vision.

"Magnus! Linley, you have to hold on."

Bluefire's movements were at an extremely high speed as he hastened towards Linley. Given Bluefire's strength, he was able to perfectly control Sovereign power. Originally, Bluefire would often use his Sovereign power to investigate Linley's situation, but after Linley made his breakthrough, he relaxed slightly.

He would just do an occasional investigation.

Just now, he saw that Linley was in grave danger, and he immediately hurried over. But…a battle between commanders was simply too fast. Would Bluefire make it in time?

Linley and Oman. One was completely wreathed in an aura of black light, while the other was covered with a blazing white aura. They wildly battled each other. Oman, exploding forth with full power, was clearly holding an advantage over Linley. "Haha, Linley, your power did indeed rise slightly. But compared to me, you are still quite a bit inferior!"

"Bang!"

The spiked mace clashed once more with Linley's 'Mirage'.

"Swish!" "Swish!" The dozens of spikes on the mace suddenly shot outwards. Linley strove to dodge, as well as using his left arm and draconic tail to bat aside some of the spikes, preventing them from stabbing into his head. The power of these spikes wasn't too great, but with so many spikes shooting over, Linley's body was still riddled in bloody holes.

Linley's entire body was covered in blood. Faced with this attack, each time

Linley was struck by some.

Wounds were slowly accumulating. Linley's body was covered with holes, and blood poured out nonstop.

Although his body was powerful, its repair speed was slow. Given that new injuries were constantly being inflicted, Linley wasn't able to heal in time.

"A Sovereign was actually willing to forge a Sovereign weapon like this." Linley cursed mentally. When they had first started fighting and when Oman had discovered that Linley had grown strong, he had begun to use this technique. However, the shooting of the spikes relied on brute Sovereign power as well as the fact that the spikes were part of a Sovereign weapon; they contained no profound mysteries.

Attacks that didn't contain any profound mysteries, compared to each smash of the mace, were very weak. But although they were very weak, they were still enough to cause Linley's body to be riddled with bloody holes.

"We're at a sufficient distance now." Linley glanced out of the corner of his eyes at Magnus.

"Linley, your body's defensive power is really quite strong. For most commanders, their bodies aren't able to take my spikes when they shoot out, and they'll die. However, with so many wounds on your body, even each block of yours is increasingly weaker. You won't be able to hold." Oman sent with a snicker.

A battle needed to be carried out by the body.

It would be a strange thing if a person's body wasn't weaker with hundreds of holes on it.

"Rumble…" Oman smashed down violently.

This strike with the spiked mace was seemingly quite powerful, and as it

danced out, it caused multiple cracks in space to appear.

“This is the moment!” Linley once more struck out with his sword.

Oman’s face changed. He clearly saw 108 rays of black Destruction-type Sovereign power sweep towards him, instantly enveloping him. A powerful gravitational surge suddenly pressed down from all directions upon his body, and the powerful, compressive power caused him to feel quite miserable.

And right at this critical moment, Linley’s sword arrived!

“Ah!” Terror flashed through Oman’s eyes. “No…” Under such heavy compression, his spiked mace wasn’t able to block in time.”Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

A large quantity of spikes suddenly shot out from the mace. At the critical instant, they struck Mirage and caused it to move slightly off-center, slicing straight towards Oman’s ear.

“Clang!” And that momentary off-balance strike allowed the spiked mace to clash against Mirage.

“This is the moment!”

Linley’s gaze was sharp, and he retracted his sword as his body instantly went into the earth.

“I was nearly finished. This Linley actually held such a technique in reserve.” Oman was so terrified, cold sweat matted his back. The sword had slashed past his ear, and he clearly felt it as it did so. But he quickly then recovered. “Linley…he fled?”

“Fled?”

Magnus had been watching the battle. The look on his face changed, and he paid Reisgem no more attention. Retracting his long silver whip, his body

transformed into a ray of azure smoke as he instantly swept forward into the distance. Just as Reisgem realized what had happened, Magnus had already flown into the distance, but Bebe was now barring his path.

“Don’t even think of catching my Boss.” Bebe howled angrily in his heart as he threw himself towards Magnus. He had been waiting for Magnus in Linley’s direction all this time.

“F*ck off!”

Magnus didn’t even dodge, knocking Bebe flying with a single whip lash.

“Eh?” Magnus, who wanted to pursue at high speed, discovered that Bebe actually seized the long whip, clutching it tightly. Bebe was like a madman, staring at Magnus.

“Do you want to die?” Magnus’ face turned cold.

The whip trembled violently. No matter how tightly Bebe clutched it, he was still knocked flying. Still, Bebe had managed to buy Linley some time.

“He fled from my pursuit? He actually escaped the range of my divine sense.” Magnus said with a calm laugh. “It seems I’ll have to use Sovereign power.”

Chapter 48 – The Death of Linley

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 48, The Death of Linley

Magnus was a Highgod Paragon. The range of his divine sense was quite wide, far surpassing that of ordinary commanders. But in terms of distance, it was still incomparable to that of a person using Sovereign's Might! In particular, when a Highgod Paragon used Sovereign's Might, the reach was astonishingly great.

"So there he is!" Magnus revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

"Swoosh!" Magnus drilled into the ground.

Bebe, who saw this from far away, clenched his fists tightly, his eyes red. He knelt on the desolate ground, powerless, as he said in a low voice, "Boss, Boss! You have to live! You swore that you would reach the pinnacle of training. Don't die just like this!"

Reisgem, freed from his bonds, discovered that Reihom was already near the brink of death. "Reihom!" With a furious howl, Reisgem's body completely arched backwards, and then he shot the violet spear in his hands forward with full power.

"Swish!" Space tore apart as the violet blur, covered with black light, shot towards Chegwin.

"Eh?" Chegwin had to relinquish giving Reihom a final deathblow and instead hurriedly block the spear.

"Clang!"

Chegwin's body was knocked backwards, but he was completely uninjured.

"Don't even think of killing Reihom." Reisgem hurried over, staring

furiously at Chegwin. Chegwin just leisurely smirked at Reisgem. "Reisgem, you want to protect this Reihom? Yes, if you protect him, I really am not able to kill him. However, it's pointless. You aren't able to protect someone whom Mr. Magnus plans to kill."

Reisgem knew this all too well; once Magnus returned, Reihom would be finished.

"Reihom, hurry and run." Reisgem sent mentally. "The farther, the better. It'd be best if you fled across the river, to the other side of the Planar Battlefield."

"Alright." Reihom didn't mince words. His body immediately shrank, and he flew at high speed towards the Stellar River.

"Hm?" Chegwin wanted to block him, but Reisgem stood in front of him.

"Hmph." He won't be able to escape." Chegwin laughed calmly. Oman was by Chegwin's side as well. Oman and Chegwin, together, feared neither Reisgem nor Bebe.

The Planar Battlefield. Deep underground.

Linley was burrowing underground at high speed.

"I ran so far. He shouldn't be able to catch me. However, using Sovereign power to sense is quite troublesome." Linley said to himself. "Still…why are there two people using Sovereign power to track me?" Linley didn't understand. Given that he himself was using Sovereign power, Linley naturally could easily detect that others were using Sovereign power to search for him.

"Linley, you won't be able to escape." A voice rang out in Linley's mind.

Linley's face changed. "Magnus!"

Linley, who had used Sovereign's Might, could sense Magnus searching for

him.

“One of the auras of Sovereign power belongs to Magnus. Then the other one?” Linley murmured to himself.

But at this moment, another voice echoed in Linley’s mind. “Hurry up and turn left. Move in a straight line towards the left.” Linley was startled. This voice was actually Bluefire’s! Clearly, Bluefire had also used Sovereign power to send him a message through divine sense. Hearing Bluefire’s voice, the hope in Linley’s heart swelled.

“Don’t drop your guard. That Highgod Paragon is fairly close to you. I’m quite a distance away. Hurry and turn left!” Bluefire sent frantically.

Linley didn’t hesitate any further, immediately moving at high speed to the left.

As for Bluefire and Magnus, the two both began to chat through divine sense fueled by Sovereign power.

“Halt, Magnus. Why don’t you release Linley.” Bluefire said.

“Impossible!” Magnus didn’t hesitate at all, continuing to pursue after Linley at high speed. His speed was far faster than Linley’s. Bluefire could clearly sense that Magnus was constantly drawing closer to Linley, making Bluefire even more frantic. He worried that he wasn’t going to make it in time.

“If I want to kill someone, no one can stop me.” Magnus didn’t give Bluefire any face at all.

Highgod Paragons didn’t fear other Highgod Paragons. Although they were all powerful, they also weren’t able to do anything to each other. As for Sovereign’s…unless it was absolutely necessary, they wouldn’t get involved in the affairs of Highgods.

With but a thought, Linley made his Sovereign power become translucent,

drifting outwards like spiritual energy. The scope of this spiritual energy was very great, and it easily detected the location of Magnus. “Not good. He’s actually just three kilometers away from me. Bluefire?” He expanded the scope to fifty kilometers, but still didn’t discover Bluefire.

Linley was frantic.

Although Linley was prepared to die, he wouldn’t so easily die.

“Two kilometers.” Linley could clearly sense how the other was continuously drawing closer at astonishing speed. “One kilometer!”

Five hundred meters. Given Magnus’ speed, even if he was trapped within the Blackstone Space, he would still be able to catch up to Linley. Linley gritted his teeth. “No other options. This is my only option!” Bluefire was clearly too far away and was still on the way. Linley could only grit his teeth and suddenly dive downwards.

“Oh, suicidal, aren’t we?” Magnus laughed calmly, his speed not slowing at all.

The deeper one went into the underground of the Planar Battlefield, the more dangerous it was. At a certain depth, spatial rifts would appear. These places were places which even Highgod Paragons were rather leery of. Once one broke through into a spatial rift which transported you into ‘chaotic’ space, one would be lost within. That was a terrifying thing indeed.

Linley making this arrangement was akin to diving into death in search of life!

“Three hundred meters, two hundred meters, one hundred meters…” Linley could clearly sense how Magnus was still drawing closer to him, even within the Blackstone Space.

“Whoosh!” Linley’s body continued to dive underground.

“Whoosh!” Suddenly, a spatial tear that was multiple meters long appeared, slicing past his body, causing a patch of earth and rock to disappear.

“Here we are.” Linley understood that he was already at the borders, while at the same time, Linley also discovered through his divine sense that a hundred meters below, there were many spatial rifts.

“If you are able to do so, keep going down.” A disdainful sound rang out.

Linley used his divine sense to scan. He clearly sensed that Magnus was just twenty meters above him. But suddenly, Linley became overjoyed. “Bluefire!” Bluefire was less than ten kilometers away. Earlier, when Linley fled and Magnus pursued, they were moving in the same direction. Magnus naturally had to waste quite a bit of time while chasing him.

But as for Linley and Bluefire, they were moving in opposite directions towards each other.

“He’s quite fast.” Magnus noticed Bluefire’s astonishing speed as well. “He seems to be a level faster than me.” Magnus instantly understood that the newcomer possessed a terrifying level of power.

“Still, he won’t make it in time.”

Magnus gave the below Linley a cold look.

“Linley, there’s actually someone who appears to be a Paragon who has come to save you. However, he won’t make it. To show my respect for him, I will let you die under my most powerful attack.” Magnus’ voice rang out, while at the same time, a translucent globe of light appeared in his hand. This fist-sized globe of light actually had a lotus petal hovering within it.

Linley didn’t dare go down any further. He just frantically flew forward, wanting to pull away from Magnus.

“Stay your hand!” Bluefire thundered.

“Hmph.” Magnus just let out a cold sneer.

“Swish!”

The translucent globe of light shot out like lightning, tens of times faster than even Magnus himself. Linley was only able to move half a meter before that translucent globe of light entered Linley’s body, at a speed which made Linley completely unable to dodge. The translucent globe of light directly entered Linley’s mind.

“Break!” Linley, through his Sovereign power, wildly attacked that translucent globe of light.

This translucent globe of light violently expanded, encompassing the entirety of Linley’s damaged soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. And then, like pushing through rotting garbage, it broke through the bandage, and the lotus petal charged directly into Linley’s sea of consciousness.

It was like a meteor smashing into water.

Linley’s spiritual energy was completely unable to block it.

This translucent lotus petal slowly swiveled, emitting blinding light, like a small sun illuminating Linley’s sea of consciousness. It rapidly shot towards Linley’s soul, as well as the souls of Linley’s three divine clones! Linley frantically used his Sovereign power to clash against it, but it was like an egg smashing into a stone; he wasn’t able to do anything to it at all.

The swiveling translucent lotus petal emanated thousands of rays of light, which stretched out to the four souls in Linley’s body!

“Father. Boss Yale. Second Bro George…and Delia, your elder brother. They will all return. I didn’t disappoint you!” This was Linley’s final thought, and at this moment, the corner of Linley’s lips curved upwards slightly, revealing a hint of a smile. And then, his consciousness was completely exterminated.

Highgod Paragons…even a Highgod Paragon of wind like Bayer who used a soul attack was able to make Linley dazed and unable to respond. When a Highgod Paragon of Fate like Magnus made his move using Sovereign power to execute his supreme attack?

If Linley was able to resist an attack such as this, then Highgod Paragons really wouldn't live to their reputations.

"You thought you'd go deep underground and find life from death?" Magnus glanced into the distance, where Linley's body lay there in the earth, with no hint of life at all as Sovereign power leaked from him. "This sort of method is effective against experts who specialize in material attacks, but useless against experts who specialize in soul attacks."

Soul attacks could be executed at long range.

Deep in the Planar Battlefield, there would be no place to run!

"Eh?" Magnus suddenly turned to stare in the distance.

"Crackle…" The surrounding earth was instantly burned into nothingness, and Linley's body lifted into the air. A white-robed figure descended from the skies. Upon arriving by Linley's body, he stretched his hand out, gently resting it on Linley.

"Eh?" Bluefire's forehead creased slightly.

"Yet another Paragon has appeared in the universe?" Magnus lifted an eyebrow, looking towards Bluefire.

Bluefire just let out a cold snort. His body rose upwards, and the earth that blocked him all transformed into nothingness. "Interesting." Magnus rose into the skies as well.

Reisgem and Bebe both cared about Linley; they, too, hurried towards this direction. Oman and Chegwin also hurried over. The four of them all used Sovereign power; naturally, they discovered Bluefire's presence.

“Bluefire, Bluefire.” Bebe held a hint of hope in his heart.

But moments later, when Linley suffered the soul attack, Bebe clearly sensed that Linley’s soul began to weaken at an astonishing speed. The souls of Highgods were very powerful. Bebe could sense it like a sun. But now, Linley’s soul aura was growing weaker and weaker, until finally…

It could no longer be sensed!

Bebe’s tears silently began to drip down.

His Boss…had died?

Died?

“Aaaaaaaaah!” Bebe howled in utter misery, but just as he started howling, the sound cut off.

The nearby Reisgem, seeing this, knew that the situation was bad. In addition, he too reached out with his Sovereign power divine sense, only to find that there was no hint of life within Linley at all.

“Dead?” Reisgem was stunned. “Im…impossible!”

Soon, Reisgem and Bebe saw in the distance a white-robed figure. As for Linley, his body lay there on the ground, without any hint of life. His Sovereign power had completely dissipated as well. As for Magnus, he stood there calmly.

“Magnus!” Bebe’s eyes were crimson, and his tears streaked downwards. He bellowed, “Remember me, I will definitely kill you, definitely!!!”

“I’ll wait for you.” Magnus gave a calm laugh.

Kill a Paragon? If a Paragon wanted to flee, even a Sovereign wouldn’t dare say claim complete confidence in being able to kill the Paragon.

“Let’s go.” Magnus said calmly.

Oman and Chegwin nodded slightly. Magnus immediately led Oman and Chegwin to leave. Suddenly, Magnus turned to look towards Bluefire. “What’s your name?”

“You aren’t worthy of learning it.” Bluefire said calmly.

Magnus raised an eyebrow, gave a cold snort, then turned and led Oman and Chegwin away.

On the desolate ground, Linley just lay there, not a hint of life coming from his body. Bluefire stood to one side, while Reisgem and Bebe flew over. Reisgem said in disbelief, “Impossible. He couldn’t have died, just like that. He has the Soulstone my mother gave him. How could he have died, just like that?”

Bebe, who was moving towards Linley, suddenly sensed something. “Eh? The Boss’ soul?”

At a closer distance to Linley, Bebe could faintly detect the existence of Linley’s soul. Only, Linley’s aura was so weak as to be at the absolute lowest limit. Even Bebe, whose soul was linked to his, had to draw near in order to just barely detect it.

“The Boss is alive!” Bebe called out in delight.

“I already scanned him.” Bluefire shook his head and sighed. “Linley is indeed not yet dead, but, his soul is like a tiny flame flickering in the cold wind, about to go out at any point. And that’s only because he has this ‘Soulstone’ which is constantly providing him with energy, giving him a chance at life. Otherwise, he would have died long ago.”

Chapter 49 – The Line Between Life and Death

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 49, The Line Between Life and Death

“The Soulstone is providing a hint of life?” Bebe hurriedly asked.

Bluefire nodded slightly. “This isn’t a big secret. According to legend, the Redbud Sovereign was born from the Amethyst Mountains themselves.” As he spoke, Bluefire looked towards Reisgem.

Reisgem didn’t mind either. He nodded. “Right. This is the truth. The amethysts of the Amethyst Mountains all contain spiritual energy. The Amethyst Godbeasts which are born from the Amethyst Mountains naturally contain powerful souls. And Amethyst Godbeasts are able to give birth to a purified form of energy…Soulstones! The process of producing a Soulstone is a very arduous one, and so it is an important treasure of us Amethyst Godbeasts. For example, although I myself have produced a Soulstone, I use it to protect my life; of course I’m not willing to give it to others.”

“My mother is a Sovereign. With Sovereign power surrounding her and with the passage of countless years, she’s able to hand out one or two Soulstones.” Reisgem sighed. “This Soulstone is an absolute treasure for protecting the soul. Perhaps it isn’t able to help in protecting against the attack of a Sovereign, but…with a Soulstone, there shouldn’t be any reason to fear the soul attacks of Highgods.”

Reisgem looked towards Linley as he spoke.

Bebe understood as well.

Amethyst Godbeasts were born from the essence of the Amethyst Mountains themselves. As for the Soulstone, it was the energy essence of the Amethyst Mountains. A single Soulstone was trillions of times more valuable than an amethyst. One could imagine how powerful it was.

“But my Boss…?” Bebe said frantically.

“Linley, he…” Reisgem said helplessly. “Alas, that Magnus is a Paragon of Fate, and his soul is very powerful. He also used Fate-type Sovereign power to execute that attack. The strength of that attack has already exceeded that of ordinary Deities! Even the Soulstone…” Reisgem was rather uncertain as well.

He had bragged so much about how powerful the Soulstone was, but the enemy was too powerful this time.

“This time, Linley’s situation is dire.” Bluefire said solemnly. “Magnus’ soul attack has already penetrated into all four souls of Linley’s body. The energy of the Soulstone is constantly reinforcing Linley, making it so that his souls aren’t completely destroyed. This situation is too dangerous, too dangerous.”

Unconscious and fainted.

Bebe had memories of both Delia and Olivier experiencing this.

“Delia and Olivier encountered this in the past as well. They both came back to life.” Bebe said hurriedly. “And Olivier, when he fainted, his soul mutated.”

Bluefire sighed and shook his head. “I know about Delia. That expert was just an expert of Fate who wasn’t even at the commander level. But the one who attacked Linley was Magnus! I can put it to you like this…amongst Highgods, there is not a single person who is superior to Magnus. At best, they are on par with him.”

“As the saying goes, hurting is easy, healing is hard. There is no one who can save someone who Magnus attacked.” Bluefire shook his head.

“Sovereigns?” Bebe said hurriedly.

“Useless.” Resigem shook his head. “Actually, Sovereigns are more powerful than Highgods, primarily because their Will is formidable, which makes them powerful and undefeatable. But in terms of profound mysteries, they aren’t necessarily comparable to Paragons.”

Reisgem’s mother was a Sovereign, so Reisgem knew this very well.

The Sovereigns also trained in the profound mysteries of the Laws.

The process of becoming a Sovereign had very little to do with the profound mysteries. Of the 77 Sovereigns, only a very small number of them had been able to become Paragons! However, the power of Sovereigns still vastly outstripped that of Highgod Paragons. The reason was that one was a ‘Sovereign’ while the other was a ‘Highgod’.

They were simply on different levels.

The power of a Sovereign was simply too great. This was an authority which the universe bestowed upon them that couldn’t be bridged.

“In addition, Magnus is a Paragon; his attacks are also infused with his own special ‘power’, the power of a Paragon’s Will. Although it isn’t as powerful as that of a Sovereign, when it comes to healing, it’s not a matter of a power competition.” Reisgem said helplessly. “To save a soul is a very meticulous task. In addition, Magnus himself is a Paragon…there’s no one who can save Linley.”

Bebe was completely frantic.

“Indeed, we cannot save him.”

Bluefire shook his head. “Unless an Overgod intervenes. But Overgods are the personifications of the Edicts. How could they intervene to save someone? That’s completely impossible.”

Bebe was rather helpless.

“But that Olivier, he was fainted for so long. He still came back to life.” Bebe said hurriedly. “And his soul mutated.”

“Indeed, when one is in this sort of unconscious state, it’s more common for soul mutations to occur.” Bluefire couldn’t help but laugh bitterly. “But Bebe, do you know…that the chances of dying in the unconscious state is even higher!”

Bebe was terrified.

“Then why will some people have their souls mutated when they are unconscious?” Bebe asked hurriedly.

“Even I don’t understand the true reason.” Bluefire shook his head. “However, there is one thing. If that Olivier had only trained in darkness and light when he fainted, once he fainted…when he successfully underwent his soul mutation, he ended up fusing these two types of energy. But if his soul mutation failed, he would have died.”

“Very few people can become Soul Mutates.” Bluefire sighed. “People who have two divine clones use two types of divine power, and can become Soul Mutates. There are some who survive, but the chances of surviving are still terrifyingly low! Only a single person in the endless history of the entire Infernal Realm has survived a soul mutation with three divine clones.”

Bluefire looked at Bebe. “Think about it. How many people does the Infernal Realm have? And how long has it existed for? Over the course of the countless ages, the Infernal Realm has only produced a single person who succeeded in a soul mutation with three clones. How high are the chances of death?”

Bebe’s body was shaking.

“Then what about four divine clones?” Bebe was now truly frightened, because Linley had four divine clones. Linley was able to use four types of divine energy.

“Throughout the countless years of the universe, throughout the countless planes, there hasn’t been a single person who held four divine clones who successfully underwent a soul mutation.” Bluefire’s expression was solemn. “The chance of success…is zero!”

Bebe’s face instantly turned completely white.

“But just because a person is unconscious doesn’t mean they will undergo a soul mutation.” Reisgem hurriedly consoled him. “Like you said, that Delia fainted as well, but came back to life without undergoing a soul mutation, right?”

“That’s because Delia only has a single divine clone.” Bluefire said somberly. “But of course, it’s also possible that someone with divine clones who faints won’t necessarily undergo a soul mutation. Only a very small number do.”

Reisgem wasn’t able to say anything else. All he could do was laugh bitterly.

Linley’s original body had suffered the attack, along with his three major divine clones. Of the four divine clones, the only lucky ‘survivor’ was the divine fire clone back in the Yulan Plane. If the original body and the three clones were all finished…Bebe understood that it would be virtually impossible for Linley to once more reach the pinnacle of power. Bebe understood very well that in the bottom of Linley’s heart, he still desired to reach the pinnacle.

This was Linley’s most primal desire.

Actually, it was also the desire of Doehring Cowart.

When Doehring Cowart had provided Linley with guidance, he had also entrusted his own hopes and desire to Linley. He hoped that Linley would one day reach the pinnacle of power. What Doehring Cowart had hoped, back then, was that one day, Linley would reach the same level as the War God and as the High Priest. But now, Linley had vastly surpassed them.

Still, the desire to pursue perfection had been engraved into Linley's bones.

"Then…then what should we do?" Bebe was panicked.

"There's nothing we can do." Bluefire shook his head. "The supreme technique of a Paragon. No one can save someone hit by it. We'll just have to wait and see what Linley can do. If Linley's soul doesn't undergo a soul mutation, there's still a chance of survival. But…as soon as Linley's soul begins to change, then…it can be said that he is dead for sure."

Bluefire sighed.

For someone who had four divine clones to undergo a soul mutation…the chances of success were zero!

"Others might not succeed, but that isn't necessarily true for my Boss." Bebe said hurriedly.

Bluefire shook his head slightly. "Let's find a place to rest. As to whether or not Linley's soul will mutate successfully or fail, that's up to fate."

The Yulan Plane.

Dragonblood Castle.

"Linley, what is it?" Delia looked at a red-robed Linley.

The fire Linley had a terrible look on his face. Shaking his head, he said, "My original body and my three major divine clones have already lost their consciousness." His soul was divided into five parts, each of which could sense the other. But right now, his divine fire clone could no longer sense the consciousness of his original body and his other divine clones. The situation was very dire.

"What!" Delia's face changed.

“Just now, even I thought that my original body and three divine clones had died, but the strange thing was, after suffering that attack from Magnus, they didn’t die. The situation is still terrible, though. Those four souls are very weak; they could be extinguished at any moment.” The fire ‘Linley’ had a solemn look on his face. His original body and his three major divine clones had lost consciousness. Linley naturally didn’t know that this was because the Soulstone was providing him with a hint of life.

Delia’s face was ashen. She was extremely worried.

“Linley, you and your three divine clones won’t die, right?” Delia knew very well that if that happened, that represented that Linley’s future was destroyed. The surviving divine fire clone was just a weakling. Delia understood…that Linley had a heart which wanted to pursue personal strength. He wouldn’t be willing to be a weakling.”

“I don’t know.”

The fire Linley closed his eyes and said, “Whether it is life, or death…”

The Planar Battlefield was as silent as ever, with the occasional sounds of battle peppering it.

Within a desolate mountain.

Reihom had been contacted by Reisgem through Sovereign power long ago and had returned. Bluefire, Bebe, Reihom, and Reisgem were all together in the living room, while Linley was in a nearby room, lying on a bed quietly, not a hint of life in his body.

“It has been seven full days. Linley hasn’t moved at all.” Reisgem said, frowning.

“Mr. Leylin, take another look.” Bebe said hurriedly.

Of the four, only Bluefire dared to go investigate Linley’s soul; after all, Linley’s soul was currently extremely weak, weaker than even an ordinary

person's soul, so weak that if someone was not careful, it was possible that Linley's soul would be completely erased.

"I'll take a look."

Bluefire stepped into the room.

"I hope the Boss can improve. I hope the Boss can improve." Bebe said repeatedly.

Moments later, Bluefire stepped out, his forehead furrowed.

"What is it?" Bebe hurriedly asked.

Bluefire shook his head slightly. "The Fate-type Sovereign power which has flooded Linley's soul has weakened greatly already. But similarly, that Soulstone has shrunk dramatically as well." The Soulstone was formed from the distilled spiritual essence of the Redbud Sovereign. The more of its energy was used up, the smaller it would naturally become.

Once its energy was used up, the Soulstone would vanish.

"The Soulstone has shrunk dramatically?" Bebe lowered his head, chewing on his lips, not knowing what to think.

The Fate-type Sovereign power which permeated Linley's soul was disappearing, but the Soulstone was shrinking as well.

The fifteenth day of Linley's coma.

Within the cave.

"The Fate-type Sovereign power is almost gone." Bluefire had a rare hint of a smile on his face. "But there's still a bit of the Soulstone left. It will definitely be able to persevere to the very end. I expect that the Sovereign power of Magnus' soul attack will dissipate today."

Bebe's face had a rare, surprised smile on it.

"However, even after the Fate-type Sovereign power dissipates, it is hard to say if Linley will wake up or not. With the soul having lost consciousness, it is hard to say how long this sort of situation will last." Bluefire shook his head.

Bebe nodded slightly.

"Everyone, let's be happy. At least there's hope for Linley to wake up." Reisgem laughed merrily.

"Right. There's a hint of hope." Bebe nodded heavily.

Just as Reisgem and Bebe were waiting expectantly, suddenly, everyone sensed a hint of a ripple from Linley's room. "Can it be that the Boss is waking up?" Bebe was delighted.

"What's going on?" Bluefire was the first to charge into the room.

Bebe, Reisgem, and Reihom followed him in. Within the room, Linley himself was lying there calmly, not a hint of life coming from his body.

But his body was now covered with all sorts of elemental essences. Earthen yellow earth essences, blazing red fire essences, faint green wind essences, azure-green water essences…a large amount of elemental essences of these four types were being attracted by Linley's body, and they swirled around him.

Although Bebe didn't know whether or not Olivier's body had attracted large amounts of two types of elemental essences when he was unconscious, Bebe knew one thing…Linley was most likely undergoing a soul mutation.

"A soul mutation?" Bluefire had never seen a soul mutation either, but seeing this, he had a guess.

Bebe stared at the unconscious Linley, tears welling in his eyes.

Undergoing a soul mutation with four divine clones? To date, not a single person had ever succeeded.

Chapter 50 – A Terrifying Tenacity

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 50, A Terrifying Tenacity

Within the quiet stone room, Linley lay there silently, four types of elemental essences lovingly swirling around his body. In the quiet stone room, aside from Linley, only Bebe was present. As for Bluefire, Reisgem, and Reihom, they didn't disturb Bebe. They knew very well how deep Linley and Bebe's affections for each other were.

Bebe quietly stood by Linley's side, his little face covered in tearstains.

"Boss." Bebe forced out a smile. "Two thousand years. In my heart, the person I've always admired the most was you. Honest! When we were young, I always slept or fooled around, but, you, Boss, always worked hard to train, never relaxing at all. I know that part of this had to do with your father, and also with Grandpa Doehring, but you never gave up, right?"

"In addition, on our journey together, we've met with many seemingly intractable problems. That King of Fenlai was powerful, right? You were just a youth, but you ended up killing that King, right?"

"Even the then-seemingly all-powerful Radiant Church was destroyed by you. You pulled it out by the root and destroyed it, right?"

"In the Necropolis of the Gods, when we encountered so many difficulties, and even seemingly fatal dangers, we made it all the way through, right?"

"We adventured together through the Infernal Realm, and we never fell down. We even fought our way through the Planar Battlefield, this most terrifyingly dangerous of places! And haven't we acquired four commander badges?"

Bebe gnawed his lips, staring at the 'slumbering' Linley. "Boss, you won't fall down now! It's just a soul mutation, right? After overcoming so many

challenges, you aren't going to fall down on me now, right? I trust, Boss, that you will definitely succeed, because…you are my Boss. The Boss that I trust and admire the most."

As Bebe spoke, his tears began to well up in his eyes once more. He forced himself to not let them fall.

The more confident his words were, the more panicked he felt.

In truth, Bebe had no confidence whatsoever! This was because Linley had four major divine clones. His soul mutation would thus be impacted by four types of elemental essences. This sort of situation was very terrifying. If he was to succeed…Linley would be, in the course of countless years and countless planes, the one and only person to have undergone a soul mutation with four clones.

But would he be able to endure?

Not a single person had done so in all of history!

"Boss, you'll definitely succeed. Definitely." Bebe murmured in his heart.

Everyone who knew Linley's situation had no confidence in Linley being able to succeed. They didn't even see Linley as having a 10% chance. Even Reisgem, Bluefire, and the others, upon learning that Linley was undergoing a soul mutation, felt their hearts sank. All they could do was to pray to the heavens and hope that Linley would struggle through.

The Yulan Plane. The Forest of Darkness. The metallic castle.

Two people were seated opposite from each other, one dressed in a long black robe, the other in a long white robe. One had drooping whiskers and small eyes; Beirut. The other had crimson eyebrows; Bluefire! The looks on the faces of both Beirut and Bluefire weren't too pleased right now.

"What is the situation? Is there a chance of improvement?" Beirut said, frowning.

“The situation is very dire.” Bluefire let out a long sigh. “I really don’t have much faith in a soul mutation. If Linley is able to succeed, then it will be an unexpected surprise. But if he fails…Linley will never be able to reach the peak again.”

Beirut shook his head and sighed. “I was too impatient to reach my goals.”

“It has nothing to do with you.” Bluefire shook his head. “After my original body entered the Planar Battlefield, I originally stayed quite close to Linley, but after Linley made his breakthrough, I relaxed. Who would have imagined that Magnus would suddenly appear. Alas. It was my mistake. I didn’t get there in time to save him.”

A hint of a bitter smile was on Beirut’s face. “It was so hard to encounter an appropriate person. If Bebe were to learn the truth, he would probably hate me!”

“This isn’t your fault either. Who would have known this would be the case?” Bluefire shook his head.

“If my plans succeeded, Linley and Bebe would have been grateful to me. But given the current situation…” Beirut shook his head. “Once Linley’s original body and his three clones perish, then he will have lost his future potential. My plans would have completely failed as well. I will have no options but to find another suitable candidate.”

Bluefire sat there, a hint of unwillingness in his eyes.

“Beirut, don’t be in a rush to render your verdict.” Bluefire frowned. “The results aren’t out yet. Linley might be able to survive this.”

“If he really does survive it and successfully completes his soul mutation, then this will be a major cause for celebration.” Beirut lifted an eyebrow. “But if Linley truly becomes a Soul Mutate, then I’ll have to change my plans.”

“Are you saying…?” Bluefire was startled.

Beirut nodded slightly. “Right!”

“This…is this doable?” Bluefire was stunned. “It seems as though in the countless years of the existence of the universe, no one has ever succeeded.”

“Why isn’t it doable!” Beirut’s eyes flashed with a crafty light. “To be honest, if Linley were to succeed in his soul mutation, then my plans will have a high chance for success. And once we succeed…I feel excited just thinking about it. If the experiment is a failure, it won’t impact Linley much, nor will it impact me much, but if it is successful…”

Bluefire’s eyes revealed an eager light as well.

“But of course, we’re just talking right now. We’re just daydreaming.” Beirut laughed bitterly. “It’s still far too early. It’ll be good if Linley even manages to survive this current situation.”

“Right. Let’s see if he can survive this!” Bluefire nodded as well. “Success means Linley’s future prospects are limitless! Failure…you and I will have no choice but to ensure that Linley’s future life will be a peaceful one. He’ll never be able to rise to the top again, at the level of being able to causes tempests and waves in the world.”

“Nobody can help him now.” Beirut nodded slightly. “He will have to rely on himself!”

“It’s too late for regrets. We have to face reality!” Beirut’s gaze was hard and calm. “If he succeeds, his potential will be limitless. If he fails…that will not be our fault.”

Time flowed on. The Planar Battlefield was very quiet, with a few rare major battles. Almost everyone was awaiting the final battle’s arrival.

The thirty third day of Linley’s coma Reisgem and the others were gathered

within the cave.

Bluefire walked out from Linley's stone room. Reisgem, Reihom, and Bebe hurriedly went to welcome him. "What is it, Mr. Bluefire?" Bebe was the first to ask. Bluefire glanced at them, then shook his head and said, "Although the Fate-type Sovereign power of Magnus' attack is gone, it used up a large amount of the energy of the Soulstone. Today, the Soulstone's energy was completely used up!"

"Are you saying…?" Bebe was shocked.

"From today onwards, no outside force can help Linley." Bluefire sighed. "In the past, with the assistance of the Soulstone, he was able to hold on. But now that the Soulstone is unable to help him…he will have no one but himself to rely on against the soul mutation."

"But the Boss' soul is so weak. Will he be able to hold?" Bebe was so worried, he was about to cry.

Bluefire, Reisgem, and Reihom were all silent.

Not long ago, when Bluefire had investigated Linley's soul, he discovered that during the soul mutation, Linley's soul was like a tiny flame that encountered a mighty wind time and time again. Fortunately, the black stone's energy constantly replenished him, restoring energy to Linley's soul, allowing him time and time again to hold fast against the clashing powers of the soul mutation process.

"Who knows?" Bluefire shook his head.

The atmosphere within the cave seemed so cold, so gloomy…

The thirty fifth day of Linley's coma.

Bluefire emerged from the stone room. He shook his head somewhat disbelievingly. "I didn't dare believe it. Linley's soul, even without the assistance of the Soulstone, has been able to endure for three full days…but

it seems as though the process is still quite early. Who knows how long the soul mutation process will take!”

Bebe, however, knew.

Originally, when Olivier had undergone the soul mutation process, he had been unconscious for multiple months. And Olivier had only two types of energy; there was no way his soul mutation could be compared to Linley’s. A soul mutation involving three types of divine clones was far more complicated than Olivier’s. As for a soul mutation involving four divine clones…

It probably wouldn’t end in just a matter of a few short months.

Bluefire and Bebe, along with Beirut, Delia, and the others in the Yulan continent, had been prepared all along, but the amount of time Linley spent in this coma surpassed their expectations.

Olivier had succeeded within a few months, but Linley would probably need several years.

Several years?

Linley remained in this coma…and quite quickly, more than ten years passed.

The eighteenth year of Linley’s coma.

Within the cave in the Planar Battlefield. Bluefire inspected Linley once every seven days now. Linley’s long coma had caused Reisgem and Reihom to no longer be as constantly worried about Linley as they had been; they were able to calm their minds and train and rest. As for Bebe, he paid attention to Linley’s situation every day..

“The situation is not good. Over the past eighteen years, Linley’s soul has been weakening slightly this entire time. Although he’s been able to resist this entire time, the weakening process has never slowed.” Bluefire said

with a frown. “Although Linley’s soul is incredibly tenacious, and has never given up and has continued to endure…his soul is now too weak. I have the feeling that if this continues, he won’t be able to last for more than three more days.”

Bebe’s face instantly turned ashen.

“Three days. Just three days. Either the situation will improve, or he will die if it does not. Let’s see how things are these next three days.” Bluefire said, shaking his head.

Bluefire had the feeling that eighteen years ago, if Linley’s weak soul could be described as an ‘tiny flame’, then now, it was barely an ember.

“He definitely will be fine. Definitely.” Bebe said repeatedly.

These three days were quite hard for Bebe to endure. Originally, Bluefire thought that Linley would only be able to resist for three more days, but who would have imagined…that despite his soul having been weakened exceedingly, he was able to hold for eighteen days. Bluefire, too, felt that this was inconceivable.

On the eighteenth day.

“Bebe, come quickly, quickly.” Bluefire called out.

Bebe, Reisgem, and Reihom immediately entered Linley’s stone room. Bebe, terrified and nervous, looked at Bluefire. “What is it? What’s going on with my Boss?”

Bluefire turned his head, staring at Bebe and Reisgem in disbelief. “Inconceivable. Inconceivable! Linley’s soul is now beginning to strengthen. To strengthen! It is like an infant which is growing up. It is strengthening at a speed that I can palpably sense! It is growing!”

Bebe, Reisgem, and Reihom had looks of amazement in their eyes.

“Ahhhhhhh!!!” Bebe jumped up violently, so high that his head smashed into the stone roof, so hard that several rocks were knocked loose. Bebe hurriedly stretched his hand out, moving it in a blur and preventing the stones from falling.

“Wonderful, wonderful!” Bebe was utterly overjoyed.

The Yulan continent. Dragonblood Castle.

Delia and Sasha were together.

“Mother, is Father alright?” Sasha said, rather worried. “It is quite rare for Father to go into solitary meditation. Why is it that this time after he went into solitary meditation, he didn’t come out?”

“He’s fine.” Delia forced out a smile.

Linley’s situation was something he and Delia had not told their children. They didn’t want their children to worry.

“Huh?” Delia suddenly saw a figure emerge from the courtyard gate and walk towards them. It was the fire-type ‘Linley’.

“Father.” Sasha said hurriedly.

The fire ‘Linley’ smiled and nodded, and Delia looked expectantly towards Linley. “Are you done?” The nearby Sasha, hearing this, was puzzled and confused.

“I can sense…that things are improving.” The fire ‘Linley’ had a rare smile on his face. Divine clones could sense each other’s souls. Although the other four souls had lost consciousness, Linley was still able to sense that they still existed. Over the past eighteen years, they had constantly weakened, weakened to the point where even the fire-type soul was almost unable to sense them. But today, however, the four souls were growing stronger.

Linley's souls had been weakening for eighteen years, and were extremely fragile. Now that they began to strengthen, however, the strengthening speed was far greater than the previous weakening speed. They rapidly gained in strength.

The Planar Battlefield. The cave estate. Linley's thirty fourth year in a coma.

"Mr. Leylin, why hasn't my Boss woken up yet?" Bebe was rather impatient now. Bebe was now no longer too worried, because he could clearly sense how powerful Linley's soul had become. It was far greater than Linley's soul had been prior to his injury. If Linley's soul, prior to his injury, could be described as a lake of water, his soul now was a fathomlessly deep ocean.

His soul was so powerful, but Linley still didn't wake up.

"Don't be impatient!" Bluefire laughed. "He will definitely wake up." Actually, Bluefire had a hint of worry in his heart as well. Linley's soul was already so terrifyingly great; would it actually suddenly collapse at a critical moment? No one knew what a soul mutation with four divine clones would be like.

That same point in time, within the stone room.

Outside the room, Bluefire and the others were chatting. Within the stone room, Linley lay there quietly by himself. He had already quietly lain there for thirty four years, and his body no longer had elemental essences surrounding it.

Suddenly…

Linley's closed eyes…

Opened!

Chapter 51 – Metamorphosis, Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly!

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 51, Metamorphosis – Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming a Butterfly!

At this moment, Linley's original body and his three divine clones all regained their consciousness. Linley's first thought was: "What happened? I'm not dead?" He had no awareness of what had happened in the past thirty four long years. Actually, to Linley's original body and three divine clones, it was as though just a second or two passed."

But in the next instant, when Linley communicated with his divine fire clone, he understood that he had already been in a coma for thirty four years.

"Where am I?" Linley looked at his surroundings, then sat up.

When he sat up, Linley sensed that he had changed.

"Huh? What's going on?" Linley could clearly sense the spatial ripples around him, and he could clearly visualize Bluefire, Reihom, Reisgem, and Bebe, who were seated in the nearby room. This was a sort of feeling of control, a feeling that made Linley feel as though he had control over his own destiny.

He felt like an emperor. It was a feeling of absolute control.

"Linley!"

"Boss!"

A series of overjoyed cries rang out. The movement Linley made when he sat up caused the four people outside to notice him as well. These four simultaneously entered the stone room. Linley looked at the four in front of

him. Reisgem, Reihom, and Bluefire were all overjoyed, while Bebe was so excited that tears were gathering in his eyes.

“Boss.” Bebe threw himself right into Linley’s arms.

“Haha, Bebe, stop crying. You are like a kid.” Linley rose to his feet, leaving the stone bed and standing up. He chuckled.

Bebe laughed through his tears, then wiped his nose and snorted. “Boss, it’s all your fault. You’ve been in a coma for thirty four years. You tell me, isn’t that terrifying?”

“How did I end up in a coma for thirty four years?” Linley didn’t understand.

The nearby Bluefire laughed, “Linley, thirty four years ago, you were struck by a full force attack from Magnus, but luckily, the Soulstone helped you stay alive. But who would have imagined that during the coma period, your soul began to mutate. The energy of the Soulstone was quickly used up. We were all worried that you wouldn’t be able to hold on, but you managed to survive.”

“A Soul Mutate?!” Linley was badly startled. “Me?!”

“Right. You. Why don’t you give it a test and see what you can find?” Bluefire laughed while urging him. “Some changes can’t be seen from the surface. Only you yourself can sense them.”

“Right, Boss. Give it a try. Let’s see how your soul has become.” Bebe said, excited. “You are the very first person with four divine clones who underwent a soul mutation.”

“What is it like, for someone with four divine clones to become a Soul Mutate?” Reisgem’s eyes were burning with curiosity as he looked at Linley.

“I have four divine clones, but was able to undergo a soul mutation?”

Linley himself could barely believe it, but he still shut his eyes, beginning a careful investigation of his current soul!

Within his sea of consciousness.

Above the enormous sea of consciousness floated an illusory, rainbow-like light. His spiritual energy was like an ocean of water, with waves of it rolling about. This spiritual energy seemed translucent and dreamlike, almost like glass. The most unique thing was that sword-shaped soul!

The sword-shaped soul hovered above the sea of consciousness.

But the current sword-shaped soul had become translucent. Only, a layer of gray energy covered that sword-shaped soul. It looked rather ordinary, and not as eye-catching as the original, rainbow-colored sword-shaped soul.

“What a powerful, unique sensation.” Linley murmured silently to himself.

Others, even Bluefire, who ventured into Linley’s soul, wouldn’t discover anything unique about Linley’s current soul. Only Linley himself could sense it.

“The feeling of control. It is quite unique.” Linley said to himself.

And then, Linley stopped thinking about it as he began to inspect other things carefully.

“Ah, my soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!” Linley found, to his astonishment, that the hole in the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was currently being repaired at an astonishing speed, thousands of times faster than in the past when he first became a Highgod. And this repairing process was a true ‘repair’ of the Sovereign artifact!

In the past, what he was doing was essentially putting a bandage over it, not truly reparing it.

But now, the hole of the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact was slowly shrinking.

When the day came for the hole to vanish, the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact would be completely restored.

“How…how can this be?” Linley didn’t dare believe it.

The speed at which a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact could be repaired was correlated to the strength of one’s soul and one’s spiritual energy. Linley could sense how powerful his soul had become, but for it to be able to repair the soul-protecting Sovereign artifact at such an astonishing rate? He still felt this was inconceivable. “Given this speed, most likely in just a few years, it will be completely repaired.”

Linliey discovered that the other souls of his other three clones had also transformed.

“Unfortunately, my divine fire clone wasn’t here to transform as well. Still, the results will be the same; in the future, when the divine fire clone merges with my main body and joins with the other four souls, they will exchange energy with each other and it will slowly transform as well.” Linley understood that it was like his original body’s soul; actually, his original body’s soul was just the soul of a Saint.

But it was with together his other souls. His main soul and the souls of the other divine clones were a part of a whole, and over a long period of time, the various souls replenished each other, causing his original body’s soul to naturally grow powerful as well. After all, they were all one to begin with.

“A Soul Mutate? Doesn’t that mean that I can fuse four types of divine power?” Linley couldn’t help but begin to test it. He first used three types of Highgod power; earth, wind, and water.

Within Linley’s body, three surges of divine power began to swirl around like watery dragons. Once they touched each other, it was as though they were one family; there wasn’t a hint of repulsion at all. The three surges of

Highgod power, under Linley's control, merged into a fused whole, and then as they did, the color changed as well.

Formerly, they were earthen yellow, light green, and azure-green; now fused together, they were an inky jade color, so dark as to be nearly black.

This inky jade divine power roiled about within Linley's body.

"So powerful." Linley grew excited.

At the same time, Linley also used a hint of God-level fire-type divine power to fuse with it. Once the fire divine power touched that powerful surge of inky jade divine power, it too fused with it!

"Eh? The power actually grew weaker?" Linley could sense that after the inky jade divine power fused with the divine fire power, it seemed to have become internally impacted, with the power weakening slightly. "Can it be because I have yet to reach the Highgod level in fire?" This was Linley's guess.

It wasn't just random, as though fusing more would be better.

It was like an army; if an elite corps had some weaker soldiers added to it, it would actually lower their combat effectiveness.

"Right. When Olivier reached the God level, he said that when both of his divine clones reached the God level, only then did his power increase greatly." Linley now completely understood.

In fusion, a balance was necessary.

Earth, wind, water; these three sources of divine power were at the Highgod level. As for fire, it was only at the God level, rather weak.

"Linley, Linley!" Reisgem's voice rang out, interrupting Linley's line of thought.

Within the stone room, the other four were staring at Linley. Reisgem urged, “Hey, Linley, what’s going on? Stop just standing there like a fool; tell us what happened.”

“Let’s talk in the main hall.” Linley laughed as he spoke.

Linley’s group of five entered the main hall, surrounding the long table and sitting down.

“Linley, you successfully mutated your soul?” Bluefire said with a calm laugh.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

Bluefire’s eyes lit up, and he sighed in praise. “According to legend, if two types of divine power fuse, the power would increase tenfold. If three types fuse, the power will increase a hundredfold! If four types of divine power fuse…no one knows for sure, but it probably will strengthen a thousandfold. Even using Sovereign’s Might only allows a person to be a few hundred times stronger than when using Highgod power.”

“Linley how about you? You fused four types of divine power. How is your strength? Is it even stronger than when you use Sovereign power?” Reisgem asked expectantly.

Sovereign power was strong, but there was a limit to it. It made someone a few hundred times stronger than when they used Highgod power.

“I feel…” Linley said with a laugh. “That after fusing three types of divine power, my strength is indeed a hundred times greater. I sense…that it is comparable to when I use Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might!” Linley was skilled in the Laws of the Earth, and so when he used Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might, it naturally wasn’t completely effective, only increasing his power a hundred-fold or so. It was comparable to a triple fusion of divine power.

Bluefire nodded slightly. It was all as Bluefire had expected.

“Then four kinds?” Reisgem said hurriedly.

“I’m not sure either.” Linley laughed.

“How can you not be sure?” Reisgem stared, and the nearby Bebe began to laugh. “Reisgem, my Boss’ divine fire clone is only at the God level. If God-level divine power fuses with Highgod divine power, I imagine the strength wouldn’t increase that much.”

Reisgem was startled, then gave a few embarrassed chuckles. “I forgot. Linley, you’ve only been training for two thousand years.”

It was true. For someone who had been training for just two thousand years to possess three divine clones was already very terrifying. But of course, the Infernal Realm had many geniuses, some of whom trained even faster than Linley, but…one thing was for certain. There was definitely not a single person in the universe who was able to undergo a soul mutation successfully with four divine clones.

At least for now, Linley was absolutely one of a kind.

“Formidable, formidable.” Bluefire sighed in praise. “Soul Mutates are indeed terrifying. Once your divine fire clone reaches the Highgod level as well, and you fuse four types of divine power, your strength will far surpass that of someone using Sovereign’s Might! But the rewards you reaped were commensurate to the danger you faced; this time, you just barely survived.”

“It really was a close call.” Bebe nodded as well.

“Mr. Leylin.” Linley suddenly frowned.

“What is it?” Bluefire asked, puzzled.

Linley shook his head. “I have a feeling right now. A unique feeling! A feeling of control! A feeling of control of material things, and even of the surrounding space.” As Linley spoke, he lifted his fist. “I have a strange

sense, as though I could punch a hole in space with a full-strength blow." As Linley spoke, he smashed out with a full-strength punch.

Linley wasn't in Dragonform, nor did he use Sovereign's Might. As far as Laws went, he was far weaker than Paragons.

"RIIIP!"

As his punch smashed outwards, space seemed to explode forth like a massive explosion on the surface of a lake, and a meter-long, giant spatial rift appeared.

"This…"

Bebe was stupefied, and Reisgem and Reihom were speechless as well. Bluefire's eyes lit up.

Prior to this, Linley had to be in Dragonform, use Sovereign's Might, and use his godspark weapon to tear open a spatial rift. But by comparison…the power wasn't as great as this fist.

"Boss, you, your fist…it's almost on par with the palm blows of that Highgod Paragon, Bayer."

Bayer had used a simple palm chop to tear a giant spatial rift open.

"I…I'm not sure." Linley was rather stupefied. "I just have this feeling of control, as though I can easily split space apart. But I didn't expect I could actually do it."

"Linley!" A voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. The speaker was Bluefire. Currently, Bluefire's face was covered in laughter. "Haha…Linley, that's your Will, infused with the natural Laws! Since your Will encompasses the natural Laws, naturally you are able to control the world. This is a special power you now possess! The power that only Paragons and Sovereigns possess! Any attack, once infused

with your will, will rise to a ludicrous level."

"Will…power?" Linley was stunned.

"The power which only Paragons and Sovereigns possess?" Bebe and Reisgem were stunned as well.

Linley tested out this feeling of control and indeed, he felt as though he had power over the surrounding spatial ripples and movements.

This was something he never had before!

In the Planar Battlefield, Linley had previously only sensed danger. But now, he had the feeling that he was in control of his own destiny. The feeling of standing above all other lifeforms and looking down upon them!"

"I didn't expect this. I truly didn't expect this." Bluefire could hardly believe it. "The previous Soul Mutates had more powerful souls, but even those extremely rare triple-power Soul Mutates who are scattered throughout the universe did not develop this power! Who would have imagined…that a Soul Mutate with four divine clones would actually gain this sort of power!"

"It makes sense. A Soul Mutate with four divine clones has a soul which is far more powerful than a Soul Mutate with three divine clones! For a person's soul to reach such a height in power…it only makes sense for the natural world to bestow this power upon that person." Bluefire was very excited.

And then, he turned his scorching hot gaze towards Linley. "Linley, come, come, attack me, try and attack me. Let me have a test and see how great your power is! Let's see if you, a till now 'impossible' four-way Soul Mutate, is more powerful, or if a Paragon is more powerful!"

Chapter 52 – The Path to the Peak

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 52, The Path to the Peak

Linley, in his heart, also wanted to get a clear understanding of his current strength. A Highgod Paragon like Bluefire was an incredibly rare ‘whetstone’ for testing himself. How would anyone else dare to exchange blows with the current Linley?

“Fine, then.” Linley laughed and nodded.

The nearby Reisgem and Bebe were very excited. Reisgem was the sort who loved to spread chaos. “Haha, a Paragon on one side, and a never-before-seen quad-power Soul Mutate on the other. Don’t hold back, you two, have a huge battle. Even if you destroy this cave, that’s fine.”

Linley just laughed. “No need. This battle is just for testing my strength. Mr. Leylin, for this battle, let’s only use our physical strength as well as the power of our Will. Let’s not use divine power or Sovereign power.”

“That’s a good idea.” Bluefire agreed with Linley’s suggestion. If Linley was too powerful or if Bluefire was too powerful and something occurred that was out of their expectations, that wouldn’t be good.

Outside the mountain, on the desolate landscape.

Linley and Bluefire were a hundred meters away from each other, while Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom were gathered to one side, filled with eagerness. Bebe’s eyes were shining. “Reisgem, I’m willing to bet that my Boss isn’t weaker than Bluefire at all. He might even be stronger.”

“Who wants to bet with you?” Reisgem let out a snort. “Look, they are starting.”

Linley was dressed in a sky-blue robe, while Bluefire was dressed in a long

white robe. The two beamed at each other, then began to attack!

Linley glided forth as agilely as the wind, almost dream-like, as multiple blurs emerged from him. As for Bluefire, he moved about so fast it seemed as if he was teleporting. As the two began to move, the three onlookers were badly startled. “Bebe, they are only using physical strength? Linley’s speed has reached such a ridiculous level.”

At this moment, Linley and Bluefire were moving at speeds slower than when Bluefire rushed over to save Linley, when he had hastened and even used Sovereign’s Might. Back then, with each movement, Bluefire had traversed multiple kilometers.

The current Linley was not relying on Sovereign power or divine power, just on his physical strength and the power of his Will.

“What a wonderful feeling.” Linley felt joy in his heart. “Just by relying on my physical strength and Will, my speed is so much faster than it was before. If I were to use divine power, most likely I wouldn’t be much weaker than Bluefire.” Linley’s control over the surrounding world made movement through it incomparably simple.

His speed was shocking. As the two moved, they began to exchange blows. The two simultaneously struck out with their fists…

“Rumble…” Linley’s fist shot out like a thunderbolt, slashing through the skies, resulting in that rumbling sound. Space was thrown into chaos, and one twisted spatial rift after another appeared.

“Smash!” Like a detonation, Bluefire struck out with his fist, and the power of it instantly exploded forth. The speed of his fist was much faster than even Linley’s punch, and a blurry flash of red light could be seen.

Two seemingly ordinary punches. Neither dodged at all; they clashed head on.

“Bang!” A deep yet soft sound.

“Rumble…” At the point of the clash, space itself was completely unable to further endure such terrifying power, and seven or eight spatial rifts instantly appeared.

Linley and Bluefire both couldn’t help but take a step back.

They were evenly matched!

“Haha, wonderful, wonderful. Linley, there’s no need for us to hide our divine power. Let’s have one wonderful, all-out battle.” Bluefire, who had always been so graceful and poised, for once was feeling excited. His eyes were shining.

“Then be careful.” Linley said with a bit of a smirk. “My fused divine power isn’t much weaker than Sovereign power.”

“I’m not necessarily the one who needs to be careful.” Bluefire said with a laugh. “You have fused divine power, but I will directly use Sovereign power.”

From their earlier exchange of blows, Linley understood that there wasn’t a huge difference between them; since that was the case, there was no need for them to not even use divine power. Without using divine power, this battle wouldn’t be fun enough.

The cold wind of the Planar Battlefield howled past, rustling Linley’s clothes. Linley’s gaze, however, was completely focused on Bluefire in front of him. “It has been so many years. Grandpa Doehring, I’ve finally reached the true peak of Deities. The true peak. The person in front of me is a Highgod Paragon.” His desire to battle increased to the limit, and Linley felt an irrepressible excitement.

“Rumble…” The inky jade divine power in Linley’s body began to roil about like dragons swimming in the sea.

Linley’s gaze suddenly became fierce.

“Swoosh!” In midair, a series of blurred figures appeared, while Linley himself had already began exchanging blows with Bluefire.

The space of the Planar Battlefield began to tremble, as one terrifying spatial rift after another was torn open. Previously, when Linley and Bluefire had only used their physical strength and Will to fight, the spatial tears were small ones. But now, every single spatial rift was like an enormous gouge. Two virtually invisible blurs were constantly interacting, and around them, spatial rifts occasionally opened and occasionally closed.

Reisgem, Reihom, and Bebe watched numbly.

Two Paragons fighting full force against each other with no reservations? This was quite rare.

“This…this…” Bebe, stunned, didn’t know what to say.

The space in front of them seemed to be quaking, constantly tearing apart and healing, due to the battle between Linley and Bluefire, these two supreme experts. It seemed as though in this area of battle, space itself was about to collapse. Reisgem and the other two now realized the huge distance between them!

Linley and Bluefire were titans. They were just infants.

“So powerful.” Reisgem cleared his throat, his eyes round.

“The power of Paragons!” Reihom held his breath as well, his gaze locked on that region. “And Linley. He isn’t weaker than Mr. Leylin at all.”

“No wonder Paragons treat fighting with me as a game.” Reisgem let out a soft sigh. Previously, when the four of them met Bayer, Bayer completely toyed with them; he wasn’t able to fight back at all. Fortunately, Bebe’s defense was simply too monstrous, which was why they were lucky enough to survive. But if Reisgem hadn’t insisted on protecting Bebe, Bayer would have driven Bebe into a spatial rift.

Irritate a Paragon?

Even if you had three Sovereign artifacts and were seemingly invincible, a Paragon could still drive you into a spatial rift. Unless a Sovereign were to intervene, you would be done for, and even if a Sovereign did want to intervene, it would be no simple task.

“A battle between Paragon-level experts. Only against each other can they completely unleash their power.” Bebe sighed in amazement. “Boss, you are too strong.”

“And this is quite bizarre.” Bebe suddenly frowned. “That region of space is fractured so badly, but it can still instantly repair instead of completely collapsing. How bizarre. The weird thing is…the Boss and Bluefire are actually not affected by the gravitational pull of those enormous spatial tears near them at all. They didn’t go into chaotic space.”

Reisgem and Reihom nodded slightly.

Normally, when experts battled, the spatial rifts wouldn’t be too ridiculous; if spatial rifts did appear, experts would avoid them slightly.

But Linley and Bluefire completely ignored the spatial rifts, and even battled at the very borders of them.

“That must be what their Will permits.” Reisgem said in a low voice. “When one’s Will is as strong as a Sovereign’s, even chaotic space poses no threats; they can roam it as they please.” After being trapped in chaotic space, only someone on the level of a Sovereign could save you. Paragons weren’t at that level yet. This was the Will of a Sovereign.

Their guesses were correct.

Linley could clearly sense that the control he had over the universe made it so that the devouring power of the spatial rifts were completely unable to affect him.

“Rumble…” He punched out, and 108 inky jade ‘dragons’ of power emerged from Linley’s fist, instantly covering Bluefire. A powerful gravitational force pressed down from all directions on Bluefire. This gravitational compression also contained the power of Linley’s Will, and was exceedingly strong.

For the pre-metamorphosis Linley, this technique was effective against ordinary commanders but was child’s play for a Paragon. But now…this technique was very dangerous against even Paragons.

“Swish!” Like a bolt of lightning, a red light flashed.

Bluefire’s fist was always astonishingly fast.

“Bang!”

Their fists collided. Linley felt as though a volcano had exploded forth, as an irrepressible explosive power passed towards him. As for Bluefire, he felt as though the layers of strikes were like mountains hammering down towards him.

The two were knocked backwards and retreated.

“The battle should end here.” Bluefire sent mentally.

Linley laughed, then nodded.

This battle had attracted the attention of some nearby commanders, but when they saw what was going on here, and saw from afar how these apocalyptic spatial rifts that were over a hundred meters long were appearing, they were so terrified that none of them dared draw near. This battle was simply too terrifying.

They were also puzzled.

Which two Paragons would be so bored, or have such irreconcilable

differences, as to battle like this?

Within the cave. The five sat down to celebrate.

“Boss, haha, I am so happy.” Bebe smugly laughed loudly. “From today onwards, damn, who will dare to make trouble for us? They should be grateful if we don’t make trouble for them. I’ve had to swallow too much crap here in the Planar Battlefield. Now, at least, we’re about to turn the tables.” It seemed as though Bebe wanted to give vent to an entire belly full of anger.

“Haha, drink.” Linley was extremely happy as well.

The breakthrough he had made today made it so that he would no longer have to look up to others.

What did it mean, to be on the Paragon level? It meant…that amongst ‘Deities’, there was no one capable of threatening him. As for Sovereigns? Unless absolutely necessary, Sovereigns wouldn’t interfere in the battles of Deities. What’s more…it wouldn’t be that simple for even Sovereigns to kill Paragons.

If something went wrong, Paragons could immediately flee to a material plane.

In addition, Sovereigns would generally try to pull Paragons to their side. The Sovereigns all wanted to have a Paragon become their Emissary, but the Paragons themselves were naturally quite choosy. They would only pick someone they liked, or someone who was extremely strong as their Sovereign backer. For ordinary commanders, it was the opposite; the Sovereigns would pick them.

As for Paragons, they picked their Sovereign.

Or, for some of the more arrogant ones, they wouldn’t become Emissaries at all. They didn’t want to listen to the orders of others. That was fine. Paragons were qualified to act like this!

“Linley.” Reisgem began to chortle. “Have you ever considered becoming a Sovereign’s Emissary?”

Linley was startled.

The nearby Reihom nodded in approval. “Right. Linley, your strength has reached such a high level. Very few people know this, but once your strength becomes publicly known, you will definitely attract the interest of some Sovereigns. They will definitely work to try and make an expert like you become their Emissary.”

“A Sovereign’s Emissary?” Linley was rather hesitant.

Bebe nodded repeatedly. “Right. Grandpa said it as well. There are very, very few Paragons, and most of them are quite arrogant. They don’t wish to become an Emissary. Paragons who become Emissaries of a Sovereign are rare; there’s only so many to begin with, while there are 77 Sovereigns. Boss, I imagine people will be fighting over you.”

Reisgem hurriedly said enticingly, “Linley, actually, my mother is a very powerful Sovereign, and she’s treated you quite well. She gave you that Soulstone. How about, you come be my mother’s Emissary?”

Linley was rather hesitant.

“Mr. Leylin?” Linley looked towards Bluefire, awaiting Bluefire’s advice. After all, Bluefire was himself a Paragon.

“Why be an Emissary?” Bluefire laughed calmly. “If you refuse to be an Emissary, the Sovereigns can’t possibly act against you for such a reason. After all, after your power is put on display, quite a few Sovereigns will come invite you. You can’t possibly accept them all. More importantly… after becoming a Paragon, what’s the point of becoming an Emissary?”

“We train to pursue the peak of perfection. Although by becoming an Emissary, our Sovereign will also respect us and won’t order us around or

force us to kneel to them, I still feel as though being free is better." Bluefire said calmly.

In his heart, Linley agreed with Bluefire's way of thinking.

"A Sovereign's Emissary isn't necessarily a servant." Reisgem stared at Bluefire, hurriedly rebutting him. "Of course Sovereigns won't care about ordinary Emissaries, but Paragons…they are people who possess a Will. Sovereigns will respect them and treat them as friends, rather than servants."

Bluefire couldn't help but laugh. "Reisgem, let's talk about others. This is Linley's decision to make."

"Linley, what do you think?" Reisgem turned to look at Linley.

Linley smiled. "No rush. For now, I have no intentions of becoming a Sovereign's Emissary. More importantly…Paragons have already reached the peak of fusing profound mysteries, with no further possible areas of improvement. Perhaps they might become a Sovereign's Emissary out of boredom. But as for me, I have many things to do. After all, as far as the Laws go, I haven't reached my limit. I am just imagining, after countless years, becoming a Paragon of a Law as well. What would that be like? I am quite eager to find out."

Chapter 53 – Spiritual Power!

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 53, Spiritual Power!

Hearing Linley say this, Reisgem could only rub his nose, not saying another word.

“Linley.” Reisgem suddenly began to laugh loudly. “If you don’t want to be an Emissary, then don’t. But Linley…if I, Reisgem, ran into any problems that I needed your help with, you have to help out. Just like how when we ran into that Montelo fellow. When I ask you to help out, you can’t put on airs of being a haughty expert.”

After having seen Linley and Bluefire battle, Reisgem had already come to view Linley as a ‘Paragon’ level expert.

“Reisgem, if there’s anything pressing, you can just send a message and I will definitely hurry over.” Linley said decisively.

Although Reisgem liked to joke about and was as arrogant as Bebe, he also treated friends sincerely and was a decent fellow. He had helped Linley before as well.

“That’s all I need to hear.” Reisgem instantly began to grin. “I can’t be bothered to care about whether or not you want to be a Sovereign’s Emissary. All that matters is that in the future, if we run into those bastards, I’ll finally have a method for dealing with them. Hmph. Sovereigns won’t lower themselves to intervene, but Linley, although you are powerful, you are still just a Deity. It won’t be too inappropriate for you to deal with them.”

Although Reisgem had the backing of the Redbud Sovereign, the Redbud Sovereign allowed Reisgem to suffer his own setbacks without intervening. Reisgem felt quite stifled by this, but today, he, Reisgem, finally had a Paragon to call friend.

“Hmph. Hmph!” When Reisgem thought about how, in the future, he would have Linley’s assistance, and how he would have such a powerful backer, he couldn’t help but laugh delightedly.

“Reisgem, if you encounter any enemies, don’t always be in a hurry to have my Boss intervene. It’s enough for me to intervene against ordinary figures.” Bebe said, and then tossed a divine spark into his mouth.

“We’re bros. No need to stand on courtesy.” Reisgem slapped his arm around Bebe and laughed loudly.

Bluefire smiled as he watched this, but he suddenly thought of something. He said seriously, “Everyone, no matter what, don’t reveal the fact that Linley is a Soul Mutate! A four-power Soul Mutate has never before existed. For now, it’s best to keep this a secret.” Hearing this, Linley nodded in approval as well.

“We know to keep this a secret. Don’t worry.” Reisgem nodded and said, “As for Reihom, don’t worry about him. He barely talks anyways.”

The nearby Reihom revealed a rare hint of a smile.

“Yo, Boss.” Bebe frowned. “But in the future, if you fight others and reveal your power…”

“Then we’ll just publicly say…that Linley has become a Paragon as well.” Bluefire laughed. “Although the reputation of Paragons is formidable, there’s still a number of Paragons in the countless planes of the universe. Linley adding to their number won’t cause too tremendous a tumult in the world.”

Linley nodded. “Then I will listen to your advice, Mr. Leylin. Actually, as I see it, there’s no need to explain. If others see me reveal my power, they will only describe me as a ‘suspected Paragon’. As long as we don’t mention the fact that my soul mutated, and as long as I don’t use fused divine power, it won’t be revealed.”

Bluefire laughed as he looked at Linley. “Linley, normally, it is enough for you to use standard Highgod power. In a critical moment, you can use a drop of Sovereign’s Might. Your soul is so powerful that you can completely control Sovereign’s Might without wasting it at all. You can use just a portion of a single drop of Sovereign’s Might in a battle, and then, in the next battle a few centuries later, use the rest.”

This was the benefit to Paragons using Sovereign’s Might.

Normal commanders, when using Sovereign’s Might, would constantly emanate Sovereign power and constantly waste it. But Paragons didn’t waste any. If they didn’t want to use it, they would store the Sovereign’s Might back into their body, to be used during the next great battle.

“That’s for the best.” Linley was moved.

Instantly, a drop of Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might swelled within Linley’s body. However, the constrictive power of Linley’s will was now too great, and the Destruction-type Sovereign power coalesced within Linley’s soul quite obediently.

“In the past, when I used Sovereign power, I felt as though I was carrying a mountain, unable to wield it as I pleased. But now, it feels so light and easily lifted.” Linley remembered how Beirut had been able to perfectly control Sovereign power to rescue Delia that year.

“Linley, it seems as though your Will is even stronger than that of a Paragon’s.” Bluefire suddenly said.

“Eh?” Linley was stunned.

“Even more powerful?” The nearby Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom all looked towards Bluefire. Bebe said, “Mr. Leylin, when my Boss fought against you, you were evenly matched.”

“Actually, I was at a disadvantage.” Linley said with a laugh. “Mr. Leylin’s

attacks are very powerful. Fortunately, that technique of mine contains a spatial compression aspect. After infusing it with my Will, the power of that compression is far greater than that of ordinary spatial compression. Mr. Leylin was affected by that compression, which is why we were on par. In addition, Mr. Leylin didn't use fire-type Sovereign power, but Destruction-type Sovereign power, and so his full power wasn't unleashed."

Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom were rather surprised.

However, during the battle, Bluefire's power was either contained within his body or focused on his fist, without any of it leaking out. From the outside, no one could tell what sort of Sovereign power he was using. But Linley was fighting against him; naturally, he knew.

Bluefire laughed. "You didn't use the earth-type Sovereign power you specialize in either. How could I take advantage of you like that?"

The conditions were similar; the two were both using types of Sovereign power they weren't proficient in.

"Given this sort of situation, you were still able to fight with me to a standstill. I was very surprised. Because…I have already fused six types of profound mysteries. You have only fused four." Bluefire said. "Thus, I believe that your Will should be even stronger than the Will of a Paragon."

A deeper level of understanding into the profound mysteries could raise one's power.

But Linley and Bluefire fought to a standstill. Although this had to do with the spatial compression, in the end, one had fused four while the other had fused six. The difference was very great.

"How can you tell if one's Will is weak or strong?" Linley said.

"Simple." Bluefire laughed. "Linley, control your Sovereign power and transform it into divine sense. See how far it extends to."

The limits to which one could use Sovereign power to investigate was a test of the strength of one's soul. In addition, once it was infused with one's Will, the scope would increase greatly!

"Ordinary Paragons, when emanating Sovereign power on the Planar Battlefield, can reach to a distance of eight thousand kilometers." Bluefire continued, "Linley, don't use your spiritual energy; just rely on Sovereign power to form a divine sense. See how far you can stretch."

Eight thousand kilometers! This number caused Reisgem and the others to be frightened.

Ordinary commanders, who didn't use Sovereign power and just their own divine sense, were only able to reach to a hundred meters in the Planar Battlefield. If they used Sovereign power, they would be able to reach perhaps a hundred kilometers. But Paragons were able to reach out to eight thousand kilometers. It was nearly a hundredfold difference!

"I will give it a try." Linley, with a thought, caused the formless, colorless Sovereign power to spread out as divine sense.

Moments later, he reached his limit, unable to extend any further.

"Thirty six thousand kilometers!" Linley felt stunned. "My Will is actually far greater than that of a Paragon." No wonder earlier, he was able to fight Bluefire to a standstill. His Will far surpassed that of his opponent. Given that he also had the spatial compression to help out, he was able to make up for the difference in profound mysteries.

With a thought, Linley retracted his Sovereign power, and then Linley released his own spiritual energy! Linley had the feeling that after his soul mutation, his soul had become very powerful. Just by looking at the speed at which it repaired his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, one could understand how great it was. How far could he stretch, just by relying on his own spiritual energy?

It stretched outwards…

A thousand kilometers. Ten thousand kilometers. Thirty thousand kilometers. Sixty thousand kilometers. A hundred thousand kilometers.

Linley himself was shocked. After his soul mutation, he had yet to truly experience the true power of his spiritual energy, used at full strength.

“Magnus. Hemmers. Oman…” Linley clearly discovered every single familiar figure, but these people didn’t notice Linley’s investigations at all. In the end, Linley’s spiritual energy finally reached a limit.

“512,000 kilometers!” Linley was terrified by this astronomical figure.

“My spiritual energy is even more powerful by itself than when using Sovereign power? That much more powerful?” Linley was stunned, but then he understood.

His divine power, with three types fused, was already close to that of Sovereign power. Once his divine fire power reached the Highgod level, he would fuse four types of divine power, and his divine power strength would vastly surpass that of him using Sovereign’s Might!

But in terms of the soul, the metamorphosis was already complete. There was nothing to ‘fuse’.

A Soul Mutate with four clones. This made it so that Linley’s own spiritual energy was more than ten times stronger than using Sovereign power.

“I imagine that a person with three clones who underwent a soul mutation would have spiritual energy and Will comparable to that of using Sovereign power!” This was Linley’s guess. He himself had four clones and underwent a soul mutation, making his spiritual energy even more terrifying.

“By the looks of it, my supreme technique should no longer be a material attack; it should be a spiritual attack.” Linley now understood that given his terrifyingly strong spiritual energy, even if his understanding as far as the

profound mysteries went was lacking, when infused with his Will, the power would still be astonishing. “No…my, my innate divine ability!”

Linley suddenly thought of his innate divine ability. His innate divine ability was connected to his spiritual energy and that innate azure light.

“When my innate divine ability is infused with my spiritual energy and my Will, how strong will it be?” Linley was rather eager.

At the door to the cave estate.

“Linley, no need to send me off.” Bluefire said with a calm laugh.

Linley and the other four could only watch as Bluefire walked away leisurely. Given Linley’s current level, Bluefire didn’t feel any more pressure at all. If Linley was to meet with a problem he couldn’t resolve, Bluefire wouldn’t be able to assist either.

“Let’s go back in.” Linley said, then returned with Bebe into the cavern estate.

When Bluefire had inquired as to the strength of Linley’s Will, Linley admitted that his Will was indeed somewhat stronger than that of a Paragon’s. However, as no one asked him how strong his spiritual energy was, Linley didn’t discuss it.

Within the stone room. Linley was seated meditatively atop a stone bed.

“My Will, compared to a Sovereign’s, is still far weaker.” Linley sighed to himself. The Will of a Sovereign was very terrifying. It could effortless stretch across the entire Planar Battlefield. In fact, if a Sovereign truly desired to do so, a Sovereign could stretch his will across the entirety of the Infernal Realm or Netherworld, much less a Planar Battlefield.

One could imagine how great this Will was.

Once a Sovereign came face-to-face with a Paragon, the Paragon wouldn’t

be able to resist at all.

“The will of a Sovereign is too terrifying.” Linley let out a sigh. “They far surpass Paragons. Although at a distance, they might not be able to kill a Paragon with a thought, in close quarters, Paragons aren’t able to fight back at all. My spiritual energy might be a bit stronger, but my Will is far from being a match for a Sovereign’s. They are able to spread it across the entirety of the Netherworld or Infernal Realm. What sort of Will is this?”

Linley felt terrified just thinking about it.

“No wonder. Sovereigns and Deities are on completely different levels. This is a qualitative difference.” Linley sighed to himself.

One was like heaven while the other was like earth. Paragons or Soul Mutates; they were all ‘Deities’. Deities weren’t able to overcome Sovereigns. This was the ‘gulf’ between these two levels.

“Forget about the Sovereigns. As long as I don’t kill a Sovereign’s son, I’m fine. Even if I beat a Sovereign’s son or daughter senseless, the Sovereign won’t intervene.” Linley no longer thought about it.

The Yulan Plane. The Forest of Darkness. The metallic castle.

“Haha…” Beirut began to laugh loudly. “He actually succeeded? Utterly unimaginable. Four divine clones, and yet he successfully mutated his soul. I didn’t even dare imagine it. But he succeeded!”

By his side, Bluefire replied with a laugh. “Right. He succeeded.”

“Originally, when I talked about changing our plans, I was just speaking casually. I didn’t dare truly imagine it, because it wasn’t too realistic. But who would have imagined…now, it seems, a miracle is very likely about to be born from our hands!” The formerly ever-somber Beirut was now so excited that his eyes were shining.

“As I see it, let’s not be in a rush to tell Linley just yet.” Bluefire advised.

“Right now, Linley needs to focus on fusing the different profound mysteries of different Laws.”

Fusing mysteries from the same Law would result in an increase in power, but it generally wouldn’t be too extravagant, just a tenfold increase or so.

But the fusing of profound mysteries of different Laws would result in an increase in power that was ridiculous; at least a hundredfold! For example, that ‘Learmonth’ which Linley encountered so many years ago had only fused two types of profound mysteries from different Laws, but was able to kill the master of Phusro, that ‘Elquin’.

Given that Linley trained in four types of Laws, if he was able to fuse one profound mystery in each of the four Laws into a whole, then the effect would vastly surpass an ordinary six-way fusion!

“His power…the stronger he grows, the better.” Beirut’s smile was utterly incandescent.

Chapter 54 – Disappearing In a Blink of an Eye

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 54, Disappearing In a Blink of an Eye

The Planar Battlefield. Within a stone room in the cave estate. Linley was seated quietly in the meditative position.

Linley was indeed focusing on his training, desiring to fuse the mysteries of four Laws. His original body and his three major clones were all focused on this; as for his divine fire clone, it remained focused on the Laws of Fire.

Suddenly, Linley opened his eyes.

“How peculiar.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his face, but he didn’t understand. “The souls of my original body and three divine clones have all undergone a soul mutation, so why is it that the souls of my clones aren’t as strong as that of my original body? In addition, as far as the power of my Will goes, the Will of the original body is still the strongest.”

The stronger one’s soul was, the faster one gained insights and trained as well.

After undergoing a soul mutation, one could sense all four elements, and so Linley had his original body and his three divine clone souls focus on all four elements, but clearly, his original body’s speed far surpassed that of the other three clones.

“They underwent the same soul mutation, so why is there a difference?” Linley thought about it but didn’t understand. Shaking his head, he shut his eyes, once more focusing on his training.

What Linley didn’t know was that the reason a soul mutation occurred was that after one suffered a major wound and was sent into a coma, during that period of unconsciousness, the weak soul would rely on absorbing all sorts of nearby elemental essences. When Linley’s original body and three divine

clones were in the coma, the three comas were only able to sense the nearby elemental essences of their respective elements, while the original body was simultaneously absorbing all four types of elemental essences.

Thus, the soul of the original body was the first to begin to mutate.

Because the original body's soul began to mutate, and because it was linked to the other souls of the four divine clones, the original body's soul caused the other three souls to slowly mutate as well. But the original body was still the primary mover; naturally, it was the strongest after the mutation! The other three souls of the other divine clones were a bit weaker.

It was all one principle.

For example, Sovereigns. The Will of a Sovereign is exceedingly powerful, but Sovereigns generally had divine clones as well. The divine clones of Sovereigns, thanks to the original body, also contained Will, but the Will of the divine clones of Sovereigns was far, far weaker than the Will of the original body of the Sovereign. This was a primary-secondary issue.

The primary body for a Sovereign was their clone which became a Sovereign, with the other ones being secondary.

As for Linley, his original body was the primary body, while the other ones were secondary.

There were nearly three hundred years left before the final battle. Linley's group of four lived a leisurely life, either training or congregating and chatting.

A century was spent in this leisurely training.

Linley and the others were seated together. Reisgem asked eagerly, "Linley, judging from that happy smile on your face, you must have made some breakthroughs in fusing different Laws, right?"

"I'm a long ways off." Linley laughed calmly.

“Linley is very modest.” A low sound rumbled out. The speaker was the nearby Reihom.

“He’s begun to learn to hide his strength. Only someone who is too powerful will choose to hide his strength. Hmph. For weaker people like us, we’d prefer to frighten others. A four-clone Soul Mutate. Whew, whew. I am aware that the fusing of different Laws will result in a huge increase in power. Fusing two profound mysteries from two different Laws is comparable to fusing three profound mysteries of the same Law. Fusing three profound mysteries from three different laws is comparable to fusing five profound mysteries of the same Law. Fusing four profound mysteries from four different Laws….is equivalent to fusing seven profound mysteries of the same Law. This is a level more powerful than even Paragons!” Reisgem said with a sigh.

The potential of a four-clone Soul Mutate truly was much higher than even that of Paragons.

“If my Boss isn’t formidable, who is?” Bebe said smugly. He had no idea what ‘humility’ meant.

“The power of fused Laws is great, but so too is the difficulty.” Linley shook his head and laughed. “I know a person. I met him when I was adventuring in the Redbud Continent; Learmonth. He was the one who killed Phusro’s master, ‘Elquin’. Despite Learmonth’s talents, he was only able to make his breakthrough at a dangerous point in the battle against Elquin. He was a Soul Mutate who only had two types of divine clones! It was so hard for him to fuse even just two different types of Laws.”

Bebe just chortled. “Boss, don’t be modest. You were even able to successfully undergo a four-way soul mutation. If you could do that, what can’t you do?”

Linley chuckled, then drank a cup of wine.

“But Boss, your soul is now mutated. Your training speed should increase

greatly as well. Are you confident in being able to help your divine fire clone to train faster and more quickly reach the Highgod level?" Bebe asked. "By then, with four types of divine power fused together, your strength will surpass that of when you use Sovereign's Might."

Linley's original body's soul was now thousands of times more powerful than before his mutation.

The rate at which he comprehended and visualized had also become much faster. If his original body's soul also focused on analyzing the Laws of Fire, the rate at which his divine fire clone would increase in power would rise dramatically. When the Planar Battlefield concluded, he would reach the level of Highgod.

"No rush." Linley shook his head and laughed. "For now, I don't wish to reveal that I am a Soul Mutate, and so I'm not in a hurry to make my divine fire clone reach the Highgod level. Right now, what I need to do is fuse the different Laws; that matters more. My energy is all focused in this direction." Linley knew very well.

His divine fire clone trained very slowly, true!

But he had spent nearly seven hundred years in the Planar Battlefield. Over these seven centuries, his divine fire clone had nearly mastered a fifth profound mystery. Although it was fairly slow compared to his other divine clones, Linley was in no hurry.

However, Reisgem's guess was a correct one; in the century after Linley's soul mutation, Linley had connected the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World' of the Laws of the Earth with the profound 'Circular Softness' mysteries of the Laws of Water. But of course, this was just a connection.

As time flowed on, the final battle drew closer and closer.

Within the stone room.

Linley was quietly seated in the meditative position, his four souls

simultaneously visualizing and comprehending.

Within his mind, there was an illusory image of the vast, boundless earth. The throbbing pulse of this land was continuously emanating forth, but one line of energy tangled through and wrapped around it, much like the lines of energy the Chief Sovereign of Death had used at the Abyssal Inn. The lines wove throughout the ripples of the Throbbing Pulse of the World, influencing the pulse.

Slowly, the Throbbing Pulse of the World began to mutually influence and be influenced by this endless, circular soft stream of energy. The two connected with each other…

“Boss, Boss!” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Within the stone room, Linley opened his eyes and saw Bebe. “What is it, Bebe?” Linley laughed.

“Boss, have you been training so much that you’ve gone dumb? Have you forgotten what time it is? This year is the 1000th and final year of the Planar War. I heard from Reisgem that most likely, in a month or two, the last battle will begin. Aren’t we even going to go watch the final battle?” Bebe asked.

“The final battle?”

Linley immediately rose to his feet and laughed. “Of course we are going to go watch! I’ve been training for so long. It is time for a break.”

The ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’ and ‘Circular Softness’ profound mysteries…Linley’s four souls had been training on for three centuries after his soul mutation, but he wasn’t able to completely fuse them. He was still trapped in a bottleneck. No wonder the power of fused Laws was so great; the difficulty was incredibly high as well.

He exited the stone room and arrived in the main hall.

Reisgem and Reihom were already standing there in the main hall. Reisgem laughed cheerily, “Linley, I was worried that you wouldn’t go. I know that you have enough commander badges, but I don’t have enough yet.”

“We’re a squad. If you’re going, how can I not go?” Linley said with a laugh.

“Then let’s go. Head out!” Reisgem and Bebe were in front, while Linley and Reihom followed from behind. The four of them exited this cave estate.

Although three hundred years had gone by, the Planar Battlefield was as cold and desolate as ever. When striding forth from the cave tunnels, that knife-like, icy wind scraped against their faces. It only caused Linley’s vigor to stir, however, as he stared at the desolate wilderness. “This trip to the Planar Battlefield is almost over! The final battle…the last ‘banquet’ to this event!”

This trip to the Planar Battlefield, to Linley, was indeed a truly life-changing journey.

Linley’s group of four headed straight for the Stellar River.

The desolate wilderness. Wild grass grew everywhere.

There was a person lying on the ground. At first glance, one might take him for a corpse left behind by a battle. This person had wild, grass-like hair, and a pair of hungry, man-eating golden eyes. It was Hemmers!

“I only need one commander badge! It’s been two centuries, and I haven’t run into a single person.” Hemmers lay there on the ground, grumbling to himself. “All of them rely on their speed; if they can’t beat me, they flee. Hmph. That Azure Dragon clan punk in particular. I ran into him twice, but he relied on his Gravitational Space.”

Hemmers had a belly full of fire, but no place to vent it.

“The final battle is about to arrive.” Hemmers muttered.

“It seems I’ll have to take part in the final battle in order to acquire a commander badge. After acquiring a final commander badge, I will definitely ask the Sovereign to make me a spear! I can throw it and use it for long range combat, or for close combat. Hmph, given my material attack power, I’ll be able to throw it a great distance. By then, I want to see if those bastards will have any chance of fleeing again!”

Indeed, a material attack strength comparable to Highgod Paragons, when combined with a ranged Sovereign weapon, would make it so that Hemmers would be a threat comparable to Paragons.

“Hmph. Hmph. I hope that Azure Dragon clan kid will participate in the next Planar War. By then, I’ll have a ranged Sovereign weapon. I’ll definitely teach him a lesson.” Hemmers never forgot about that person who had escaped from him twice.

Suddenly…

“Huh?” Lying on the ground, Hemmers raised an eyebrow. “Someone is coming. Roughly ten thousand meters away!”

Hemmers himself was formed from part of the Divine Earth Plane. He was its first golden mountain, which the plane nurtured over countless years. He was born with an innate, supernatural connection to the earth and the ground. When lying there on the ground, he could clearly sense the ground within a certain area, and if there was anyone stepping on the ground.

“Haha.” Hemmers sat up, staring into that direction, his golden eyes gleaming. “Perhaps this will be the last military merit. I won’t have to participate in the final battle after all.”

And then, Hemmers immediately merged into the earth itself. Worldwalking!

On the desolate ground, Linley and the other three were walking shoulder-to-shoulder, chatting and laughing casually. Given the power of this group

of four, there was no one they feared here in the Planar Battlefield. Anyone who made trouble for them was courting death.

Linley's gaze suddenly sharpened, and he laughed calmly. "Someone is coming over. Be careful, everyone."

"Someone is coming?"

Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom were startled. They didn't sense anything. But Linley, after his soul mutation, had an extremely strong control over the universe; as soon as anyone drew near, Linley would easily notice them.

"An expert of the earth, using Worldwalking." Linley said, spreading out his divine sense.

"Oh, him?" Linley had a hint of laughter on his face.

Hemmers thought that he was being stealthy; generally speaking, a person using Worldwalking would only be detected upon reaching a distance of a hundred meters or so. This was common knowledge, but for Paragons and people like Linley, this wasn't true. Hemmers' usage of Worldwalking was detected by Linley from far away.

"Rumble…" Suddenly, a hundred meters away, an enormous figure erupted forth from the earth, bounding forward like lightning towards Linley.

"It is you, you Azure Dragon clan brat!" Hemmers realized who Linley was now. "This Azure Dragon clan brat is able to transform, and also use Gravitational Space. Killing him is rather hard!"

He charged towards them, bounding forward like lightning.

"Eh, he didn't transform or use his Gravitational Space?" Hemmers was amazed. Having fought several times with Linley, he knew how strong Linley was; why was it that when he charged in front of them, Linley didn't react at all?

Hemmers, who had been preparing to attack ‘Reihom’, chose to attack Linley instead!

“You yourself are courting death. Don’t blame me.” Hemmers smashed out with his fist, causing a deep, thundering sound as cracks in space appeared.

Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom just watched and laughed. Linley very casually swept out with a punch, and instantly, 108 rays of earthen yellow light swept out, instantly forming a Gravitational Space that trapped and compressed Hemmers within it. Linley swept out with his space-shattering punch…

Microcosm!

“This…what’s going on?” Hemmers felt as though the surrounding space was compressing powerfully around him, slowing him down significantly and making him feel miserable. He had tasted this technique of Linley’s before, but the power was far, far greater than it was last time!

His fist was extremely slow, completely unable to block Linley’s punch.

“Bang!” The fist rose upwards in an uppercut, connecting with Hemmers’ lower jaw and sending Hemmers flying into the air.

Chapter 55 – The Experts By the Banks of the Stellar River

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 55, The Experts By the Banks of the Stellar River

A bone-shattering sound rang out, and Hemmers was knocked flying backwards.

“This…what is this?” Hemmers was completely stunned. “The Azure Dragon clan brat, what’s going on with him? The first time I met him, he wasn’t able to fight back at all. He had to rely on Sovereign power, his Gravitational Space, and his innate divine ability in order to escape. The second time I encountered him, the brat was able to fight me head on. This third time…I’m completely unable to fight back?”

Stupefied!

Completely stupefied!

“No matter how much of a genius a person is, this is ridiculous.” Hemmers landed on the ground, staring at the distant Linley, his mind a mess.

Blood dribbled down his face. Hemmers shook his head, then muttered to himself, “Impossible. Something must be wrong.” Hemmers still hadn’t reacted, but he hurriedly began to cure his wounds. “This Azure Dragon clan punk’s fist actually broke my lower jaw and shattered my teeth.”

Hemmers possessed terrifyingly strong material defense. When Linley had first met him, a full-force sword blow was only able to barely scratch his skin.

Hemmers’ skin possessed weak defense. His muscles were strong and bones were stronger!

Linley's casual punch was able to shatter his jaw?

"Hey, Hemmers, why are you just standing there like an idiot? Didn't you want to kill us to get our commander badges?" Bebe smugly began to laugh loudly towards him.

"Impossible. Something must be wrong!!!" Hemmers howled furiously.

"BOOM!" Hemmers' entire body suddenly began to glow with an earthen yellow light, and a brilliant golden light flooded through him as well, making his fists and legs especially bright. Hemmers was like a crazed bear, transforming into a ray of lightning as he charged once more towards Linley.

Hemmers clearly had gone mad.

"He really is a big dumb idiot." Linley said with a calm laugh.

Hemmers was howling furiously. His full-strength punch smashed through the skies, and he moved like a dragon as he attacked Linley. "Rumble…" Where his fist passed, the space of the Planar Battlefield was constantly torn asunder like fragile glass. Multiple spatial tears that were tens of meters long were created.

"Although he's a bit stupid, he really is quite strong." Linley still smiled.

The same response!

A fist struck out, and over a hundred black dragons of energy swept towards Hemmers. This time, Linley actually used Destruction-type Sovereign power. "This Hemmers used Sovereign power; to subdue him, I really will have to use Sovereign power." Although he was able to easily defeat Hemmers, Linley had to acknowledge his opponent's strength.

"Crackle…" The hundred-plus dragons formed into a cage, binding Hemmers within…Microcosm!

That compressive power that was far greater than before once more formed, making Hemmers feel very uncomfortable throughout his entire body. In this situation, his speed slowed drastically, and he could only watch as Linley's fist smashed against his body.

"BANG!"

A fist landed on Hemmers' chest, and a bone-splitting sound rang out yet again as Hemmers was knocked flying backwards, his legs being driven deeply into the ground.

"What is going on?!" Hemmers stared at his chest, where a large, bloody hole had appeared, with blood leaking out. This injury was even more severe than the previous one; his ribs were completely shattered. Fortunately, Hemmers' body was tough enough that the punch didn't go straight through his chest.

But a blow of such power…if it landed against his head, he definitely would have died!

Hemmers was shocked to his senses!

"Hemmers, do you want to come again?" Linley chortled.

"Hey, Hemmers, aren't you really tough? What, are you stupefied now?" Reisgem laughed teasingly, and as he spoke, Reisgem voluntarily released his aura.

"You are…Reisgem?" Only now did Hemmers recognize him.

"My aura-hiding abilities are too great. Unless I wish it, someone like you, Hemmers, would never be able to recognize me." Reisgem said smugly. His aura-suppressing abilities really were formidable, but against the likes of Linley or Magnus, he would still easily be detected.

Hemmers looked carefully at Linley.

“You…in the past, were you intentionally toying with me?” Hemmers said in a low voice.

“No.” Linley laughed and shook his head.

Hemmers stared at Linley. He couldn’t help but grow a bit angry. “Azure Dragon clan brat, your strength is so great; why did you toy with me like that? Although I, Hemmers, am a bit slow to react, I’m not so stupid to the point where I’ll believe that a brat who wasn’t able to fight back a few centuries ago could, a few centuries later, easily trample me!”

Hemmers didn’t flee, because he knew…

Given his pitiful speed, there was no way he could flee.

“Why would I deceive you?” Linley laughed calmly. “You can leave now. I don’t want to kill you.”

“Not kill me?” Hemmers was stunned.

In the Planar Battlefield, if you couldn’t beat someone, you would generally be killed. But today…

“Fine. I believe you when you say you weren’t previously toying with me.” Hemmers gave Linley a long look. “Can you tell me, how long have you been training for?”

“Less than three thousand years.” Linley didn’t hide anything.

Hemmers was stunned, and he blinked twice. “Less than three, three, three…thousand years?” Hemmers stared at Linley in disbelief. “I really want to ask you something. Are you toying with me, or did I hear incorrectly? Or perhaps you meant less than three thousand millennia.”

Hemmers was able to believe three million or thirty million years, but three thousand? This was a bit too frightening.

“You didn’t mishear.” Linley laughed while shaking his head. “Bebe, let’s go.”

Linley, Reisgem, Reihom, and Bebe chortled as they walked away. Bebe turned and look at Hemmers. “Haha, big idiot, don’t just stand there like a fool. Even if you stand there for three millennia, you still aren’t comparable to my Boss.”

“Less than three thousand years? The Planar War has only been going on for a few centuries, and he’s fought with me three times. But each time…”

Hemmers, previously stupefied, was finally starting to come to his senses. He stared with a bit of trepidation as Linley left. “What a truly terrifying person. In less than three thousand years, he’s constantly advanced. He’s also a member of the Azure Dragon clan. For his material attack to be this strong…he should be a Paragon.”

“Three thousand years. Paragon?”

Hemmers suddenly sat down on the ground, then lay down casually, his head still woozy.

“Ah.” Hemmers suddenly slapped himself against the head. “Forgot to ask’m. What’s his name! Forget it, I’ll just refer to him him as that ‘Azure Dragon clan brat.’” Hemmers, in his mind, had firmly memorized this Azure Dragon clan brat, who apparently had the terrifying power of a Paragon.

“It seems this final battle will be very exciting.” Hemmers mumbled. “So many experts. Mm. I have to go watch.” Hemmers rose to his feet as he spoke, also moving towards the Stellar River.

Only, he was still rather leery of Linley. Thus, the route Hemmers took was slightly different from Linley’s.

The Stellar River was a thousand kilometers wide, and more than a million kilometers long. The entire Planar Battlefield was divided into two.

The wide Stellar River was extremely brilliant, and the rainbow-colored regions of spatial chaos flowed about, but the experts of the Planar Battlefield all understood that although the chaotic space was beautiful, they contained terrifying levels of energy. If one became trapped within, they would quickly be lost. Even Paragons didn't dare enter spatial rifts.

One could imagine how terrifying they were.

At present, Linley's group of four was standing by the banks of the Stellar River.

"So many years have passed. I've always been on this side of the Stellar River. Our military headquarters is located on the opposite side." Reisgem said with a laugh. "Let's go…it's time to visit our main camp. On this side, there is no way we will be able to participate in the final battle. I want to acquire a few extra commander badges."

As he spoke, Reisgem was the first to enter the Stellar River.

It was much like when Linley had first come; they had to fly through crooked little paths of safety!

Reihom, Bebe, and Linley all immediately followed.

Originally, when they passed the Stellar River on the way to other side, Linley and Bebe were both rather nervous, afraid that they might accidentally slip into a spatial rift. This time returning, however, Linley himself felt quite relaxed.

"The Stellar River is indeed beautiful." Linley could even leisurely enjoy watching the surrounding spatial rifts, as well as the giant boulders and small mountains that hovered in the middle of the Stellar River.

As they passed through the river, given Linley's control over space, he was able to clearly sense which places were safe and which parts were dangerous. Even if he touched a spatial rift, given Linley's current power,

there was no way he would be sucked within.

Linley's group of four quickly passed this distance of a thousand kilometers.

Every single Planar War would last a thousand years. For the vast majority of this period of time, ordinary soldiers had no assignments; they could safely stay in their side's headquarters. But when a thousand years passed, the soldiers began to grow busy. At this moment, in the Planar Battlefield, in each side's headquarters, everyone began to move towards the banks of the Stellar River.

They gathered around at each side of the two corridors of the Stellar River. The two sides arrayed themselves by the banks.

The camps stationed alongside the Stellar River were fairly long. At the same time, there were quite a few patrolling soldiers who moved about nearby. Their current mission was…receive commander-level experts!

After all, during the final battle, some scattered commanders would also regroup with them. The armies would naturally welcome the commanders to join them; after all, the strength of a commander was far greater than an ordinary soldier, and they would be of great use during the final battle.

A hundred or so soldiers were casually seated in the meditative position next to an earthen hill. Others were resting lazily against the hill, or standing and watching their surroundings. This was one of the patrol squads for one of the military camps of the Divine Darkness Plane's side.

"Captain, someone just came to our side of the Stellar River. There are four in total." A silver-haired, violet-eyed soldier called out hurriedly.

"Oh? Probably a commander. Let's get a closer look." This captain of his hundred-man squad was a bald, hook-nosed man. He immediately led his squad to move closer. They weren't too worried, because not too far behind them was their military camp. In addition, they didn't go too close to the four.

When they reached a distance of two or three hundred meters.

“They belong to our side!” The captain let out a sigh of relief. They could sense the badges of the four.

Immediately, the hundred-man squad drew closer.

“Hey, who are you?” A youth wearing a straw hat called out.

The bald, hook-nosed captain immediately bowed respectfully. “Milords, we are here at the orders of the commanders to receive you.”

“Let’s go, Linley.” Reisgem laughed. “It was like this in the past as well. Towards the end, the military camps would all invite us to join them, whether to watch or to actually participate. Within the military camps… there are groups of commanders who are familiar with each other. It also makes coordinating easier.”

Linley nodded. “Then let’s go.”

“Please follow me, milords.” The captain said humbly.

Linley’s group of four, following the captain, moved forward, with the hundred soldiers following. They arrived at the nearby military camp. This military camp had many stone houses built, and soldiers could be seen everywhere.

“This is our headquarters, and these are the houses that were made just for commanders. Commanders can select any vacant house.” The captain pointed to the front. “There are twenty houses, three of which are occupied and seventeen of which are empty. Just by looking at the courtyard gate, you’ll know if there is anyone present. Vacant houses have locked gates.”

One plain, unadorned stone manor after another had been built in the empty space up ahead. There were twenty of them.

“Someone else came?” Two figures emerged from one of the courtyards, one a youth who was as skinny as a bamboo rod with strange, sinister, cold eyes. By his side was a white-haired, white-bearded elder whose face was wreathed in smiles.

“Oh, Reisgem.” The skinny youth said with a light laugh.

“Woodridge [Wu’te’li’qi], didn’t know you came as well.” Reisgem snickered, then said to Linley, “Linley, don’t pay this fellow any mind. Let’s go in.” Reisgem seemed to be very disdainful towards this skinny youth.

“Right.” Linley couldn’t be bothered to pay attention to this person either.

“Linley? I heard that a Linley emerged within the Four Divine Beasts clan in the Infernal Realm. So that’s him?” Woodridge looked towards Linley and chuckled. “I looked at that scryer recording. Your strength is quite average. It’s one thing for you to kill a few ordinary Seven Star Fiends, but coming to the Planar Battlefield is just suicide.”

Linley turned to give him a sideways glance. Woodridge was startled, but then Linley immediately followed Reisgem into the courtyard.

“Woodridge, the genius expert of the Goldeye Bats? What’s that look on your face?” Bebe glanced at him, giving him a disdainful smirk, then followed Linley into the courtyard.

Chapter 56 – Bebe's Request

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 56, Bebe's Request

If Woodridge was unhappy with the way Linley looked at him, he was absolutely livid with the disdainful look Bebe had given him and the way Bebe had spoken to him.

"That straw hat wearing brat!" Woodbridge's face sank, and he was about to bark back at him.

"Woodridge, don't be impulsive." The nearby white-haired elder sent mentally.

"What is it?" Woodridge turned to look at the white-haired elder. "It's one thing for Reisgem to be so arrogant in front of me, but that brat with the straw hat, who the hell does he think he is? I've never even heard of him." For someone to survive in the Planar Battlefield until now was proof of one's strength. Woodridge wouldn't so easily allow others to insult him.

If he heard a single displeasing word, he would want to kill the speaker!

"You didn't go to the other side of the river, so you have no idea who that youngster with the straw hat is." The white-haired elder said solemnly. "The reputation of that youngster with the straw hat is known throughout the headquarters of the Divine Light Plane!"

"Oh?" Woodridge's pupils contracted. "Who is he?"

"The second Godeater Rat, aside from Beirut!" The white-haired elder said solemnly.

Woodridge's face changed. "What? Godeater Rat?! How can that be? Isn't Beirut the one and only Godeater Rat? Where did another one come from?"

“I was adventuring on the other side of the river. Of course I know this news. You can ask anyone; any of the commanders who went adventuring on the other side of the river will definitely have heard of this Godeater Rat, a youngster who wore a straw hat. You had best be careful.” The white-haired elder gave him a sideways glance. “If something goes wrong, don’t say no one warned you!”

After speaking, the white-haired elder returned to his own residence.

“Godeater Rat?” Woodridge watched Linley’s group enter their courtyard, and then, with a low snort, departed.

The manors which the military camp arranged for each commander were all very large, with many rooms.

“Not bad, not bad!” Reisgem stepped into the main hall, glancing around before sighing with satisfaction. “It as though the members of this military camp bought quite a few decorative items before entering.” The main hall had a number of decorative items; even the tables and chairs were made of wood. At a single glance, one could tell that they weren’t made from the materials of the Planar Battlefield.

“Linley, we no longer need to do anything. Just rest. Later, I imagine the commander of this military camp will come pay us a visit. The commanders living nearby will probably come visit as well. All we have to do is accompany them! As for the final battle, there’s more than a month left before it arrives.” Reisgem immediately headed to a nearby room. “During this period of time, I’ll live here.”

Linley and the others all selected their own residences.

Indeed, as Reisgem predicted, soon after they moved in, the commander of this military camp came to pay them a visit. Afterwards, Linley’s group received visits from the nearby commanders as well. But of course, Reisgem and the others didn’t openly publicize Linley’s strength.

In the blink of an eye, half a month passed.

Within the courtyard. Linley and Bebe were seated, facing each other.

“Bebe, why the frown? If there’s something you want to say, why hold back? Just say it.” Linley could immediately tell that Bebe had something on his mind.

Bebe took a deep breath.

“Boss, actually, I feel quite conflicted.” Bebe looked at Linley.

“Eh? About what?” Linley asked.

Bebe lowered his head, resting it against the table, staring at it. In a soft voice, he said, “Boss, actually, there was another reason why I wanted you to come participate in the Planar War. In my heart, I’ve been hesitating… about whether or not to let my mother and father come back to life as well.”

Linley was stunned. How could he have forgotten?

The ever-carefree appearance Bebe had put on over all these years had caused Linley to not think about certain things…but Bebe’s thoughts weren’t necessarily the same as Linley’s.

“I’ve never met my parents. I don’t know what they are like. My mind is very chaotic right now. I have no clear image of them in my mind. I don’t really think about them that much. I became accustomed long ago to not having parents, but…I still feel regret over it.”

Bebe mumbled softly to himself, “I didn’t think too much about it, but Boss, for the sake of saving your family and friends, you came to the Planar Battlefield. That moved me. Should I find my parents as well? But I know that it’s really hard for you to collect commander badges, Boss. I don’t want to add to your burden. And so, I’ve been hesitating about whether or not I should search for my parents, which is why I didn’t plan on saying anything.”

“But, Boss, now you are so powerful. It shouldn’t be too hard for you to collect two more commander badges. That’s why I am starting to think about this again.”

Bebe lifted his head up to look towards Linley.

“Bebe. I’m sorry.” Linley said apologetically.

He truly felt ashamed. He and Bebe were lifelong brothers, and Bebe had risked his life to battle with him here in the Planar Battlefield. But he himself had actually forgotten Bebe’s parents!

“Boss, don’t say that.” Bebe shook his head. “Actually, I’m still a bit hesitant over whether or not I should look for my parents. After all, I’ve never met them…and I have no idea if the undead my parents were transformed into are dead or alive. If I were to be able to meet my parents, what should I say to them? They probably wouldn’t even recognize me if they saw me!”

Bebe’s mother didn’t get to see Bebe grow up and transform into human form. Even if she regained her memories, she wouldn’t recognize Bebe on sight.

“To meet again without recognizing each other…” Bebe had very complicated, mixed emotions in his heart.

Bebe had planned on just saying ‘forget it’; his parents had their own fate, and there was no point trying to force things. And, originally, it was indeed hard for Linley to collect enough commander badges. But now, things were different.

“Don’t worry about it. Let me handle this. I’ll get two more commander badges!” Linley promised.

“Right.” Bebe nodded.

“Whew!” Bebe sat up straight, letting out a breath. “Damn, forget it! They

are my parents. I'll meet them! Heh heh, I imagine that if they knew that they had a Godeater Rat for a son, they would be very proud." Bebe seemed to have shrugged off his annoyances, becoming carefree once more.

Linley chuckled. In his heart, he had already made up his mind that during the final battle, he would acquire two more commander badges.

Linley and Bebe had travelled together their entire lives. Bebe was willing to sacrifice his life for Linley, and the opposite was true as well. In addition, given Linley's current level, it would actually be quite hard to make him die.

"Knock!" "Knock!" Suddenly, a knocking sound.

Linley waved his hand, and a surge of divine power swept forward, pushing the courtyard door open. In walked a person, a black-haired youth with black-colored, gold-edged robes. "Linley. Bebe. Are Reisgem and Reihom here?" This was the commander of this military camp, 'Walnut' [Wo'nuo'te]. The commanders who came to the Planar Battlefield included both solitary commanders as well as commanders responsible for military camps.

"Hey, what is it?" A voice rang out from the main hall, then Reisgem flew out.

Linley and Bebe looked towards Walnut as well.

"Here's the situation. Before the final battle begins, the commanders of the military camps and the roving commanders will all gather together once to discuss our strategy for the final battle. At the same time, everyone can get familiar with each other." Walnut said with a laugh.

"When is it?" Reisgem asked.

Linley knew about this as well. A meeting before the final battle was a custom.

“Today!” Walnut nodded and laughed. “There are already commanders waiting outside. Reisgem, the four of you can go out as well. I’ll go inform each of the other commanders, and then we’ll head out together.”

“Fine.” Reisgem nodded, and Linley and the others all walked outside as well.

There were indeed three people outside already. When the three saw Linley’s group of four, then laughed and greeted him. “Reisgem, Bebe, Reihom, Linley!” They all walked over. Linley’s group of four welcomed them. As others saw it, Linley’s four-man squad should have been formed around Reisgem and Bebe as the core.

As for Reihom and Linley, they were somewhat ignored. After all, Reisgem’s reputation and Bebe’s reputation as a ‘Godeater Rat’ were simply too great.

Soon, the commanders of this military camp had all gathered here.

Including Walnut, there were a total of ten commanders.

“Alright, everyone, let’s head out.” Walnut said with a laugh.

“There are dozens of military camps. Each camp actually has ten or so commanders. Then the dozens of military camps combined…how many commanders is that!” Bebe said with a sigh.

“Not that many.” Walnut said with a calm laugh. “That’s because most of the military camps are centered around the ends of the two corridors connecting each side of the Stellar River. Thus…it’s always the outermost military camps which welcome commanders back! The military camps located deeper inside don’t receive any commanders.”

Bebe now understood.

“Thus, our Divine Darkness Plane’s side has a total of at most fifty or so surviving commander-level experts, all combined.” Walnut gave an

estimated figure.

Over a thousand years, quite a few commanders had died.

The surviving commanders weren't that numerous, but of course, amongst those who went roving about, the survivors weren't necessarily all commanders; just commander-level experts. For example, although Bebe and Reihom were very powerful, they entered with the status of ordinary soldiers, and followed by the side of Linley and Reisgem, which is why they were allowed to rove about.

The military camp was divided into two wings, and Linley's group was currently moving alongside the banks of the Stellar River, towards the direction of the Stellar River's 'port'.

The gathering place for this meeting was close to one of the corridors.

This was an estate that was slightly larger than the one in which Linley's group was living in. The courtyard had multiple chairs and tables situated within it, and there were around twenty or thirty people located within the courtyard.

"Walnut, you came!" As Walnut's group moved forward, quite a few people immediately noticed them.

"Haha, Ouville [Wu'wei'er], aren't you the lucky one. Still alive, eh?"

"Barnsley [Ba'en'si'li], you came to the Planar Battlefield this time? Haha…"

"Reisgem!"

Immediately, the group of commander-level experts began to call each other's names out, chatting and laughing with each other. These supreme experts of their respective planes were fairly familiar with each other, and many were even friends.

Linley, Bebe, and Reihom knew very few people. And so, they moved to a corner of the courtyard, found three seats, and sat down. Taking out some cups and some wine, they began to drink.

A while later, after Reisgem was done socializing with some old friends, he returned as well.

“How festive.” Bebe said with a laugh.

Reisgem said with a smirk, “Festive? Some are happy, others are mocking. Those who are friends with you hope you will live; those who don’t like you hope you will die. You know very few people. In a bit, I imagine some people will come chat with you, and you’ll quickly become familiar with them.”

Linley smiled calmly, lifting his cup and taking a light sip.

“Woodbridge, you came with them as well. Who are the three next to Reisgem?” Commander-level experts also needed to know information about each other; the more details they knew about other commanders, the better.

Before Woodbridge had a chance to speak, a big bald fellow nearby said in a whisper, “I don’t know the other two, but that one wearing the straw hat… his name is widespread on the other side of the river, in the camps of the Divine Light Plane’s side. That’s the second Godeater Rat, aside from Beirut!”

“Godeater Rat?” Quite a few people were stunned.

Too few of them had soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts. Without one, anyone who met Bebe would die. After all, Paragons were extremely, extremely rare.

These people looked towards Reisgem and Bebe in surprise. “And which two incredible figures are currently seated next to Reisgem and the Godeater Rat?”

Woodbridge laughed. “Those two are quite ordinary. That icy-looking fellow is Reihom, an Emissary of the Redbud Sovereign. The brown-haired kid next to him is fairly famous in the Azure Dragon clan; his name is Linley!”

“Linley?” Indeed, there were some, especially in the Infernal Realm, who had heard of Linley. However, in the eyes of these commanders, Linley’s performance in the scryer recordings showed that he was only a powerful Seven Star Fiend, not yet at the level of commanders. They didn’t care about him.

As time flowed onwards, more and more commander-level experts entered, quite a few of whom knew the others present and began to chat with them. Very few people, however, came to chat with Linley; after all, Linley’s status as a ‘Lord of Tartarus’ was only gained after the Planar War had already begun. Linley himself couldn’t be bothered to chat up these people; he actually preferred the peace and quiet.

Chapter 57 – The Final Battle

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 57, The Final Battle

Within the courtyard, fifty-plus commander-level experts were gathered together. Linley's group of four was seated in the corner, while servants walked about, carrying platters and delivering wine, food, and fruit.

"This gathering is completely boring!" Bebe went 'crunch' 'crunch' as he chomped through a round, slick, violet-skinned fruit. The juice dribbled down. "What's the point of having us come? This gathering is centered around those commanders with military camps discussing their strategies for the final battle. The rest of us are just sitting around and watching like idiots."

Linley laughed, then glanced at the commanders located closer to them within the courtyard.

This group of commanders was consisted of commanders who managed military camps. Clearly, they were discussing some of the details of the final battle. As for Linley and the other solitary commanders, they didn't participate in the discussions.

"We didn't bring any soldiers. What is there to discuss?" Reisgem glanced at the commanders, then at the other commanders who, like them, were bored and chatting in the corners of the room. "The others are like us. They are just sitting there, bored, right? The purpose of us coming is to familiarize ourselves with the other commanders. This is just a gathering. Nothing else."

Clearly, the discussion regarding the details of the final battle was a fairly simple one, as a short time later, that group of commanders finished their conversations.

"Everyone." One of the commanders, a man with three eyes, stood up and

looked at them. Smiling, he said, “There isn’t much time left between now and the final battle! Everyone, whether you choose to participate or to spectate is up to you! If you plan to participate, it will be the same as it always has been; you’ll be mixed in with the soldiers! I trust there’s nothing more that I need to say!”

The Planar Wars had been carried out many, many times now. Many things had become customs already.

When intermixed in with ordinary soldiers, it would be hard to tell commanders apart from ordinary soldiers. That helped guarantee that the enemies wouldn’t focus their fire on one commander in particular. It would increase the odds of survival, but of course, if someone’s performance was too impressive, it would still be dangerous.

“The side of the Divine Light Plane, do they have any particularly powerful experts? If they do, please let us know, so that we will be prepared.” The three-eyed commander said.

“I know that the Divine Light Plane has Magnus in their camp!” A commander-level expert said loudly.

“Magnus. We do indeed have to be careful.” The three-eyed commander nodded solemnly.

Reisgem, seated in the corner, laughed loudly. “I know of another person, the Paragon of Wind, ‘Bayer’. He is here as well. In addition, he is on the side of the Divine Light Plane.”

“Bayer?” This name attracted everyone’s attention.

Although though quite a few more names were listed, clearly, what everyone was truly concerned about was the presence of ‘Magnus’ and ‘Bayer’. After all, Paragons already stood at the very tip of power. If Paragons wished to kill ordinary commanders, it would be a slaughter. In addition, if one tried to use group attacks, given how astonishingly fast Paragons were, using such a tactic would just be laughable.

“Bluefire, why hasn’t Bluefire revealed himself?” Reisgem secretly chatted with Linley. “He belongs to our side. He should show himself.”

Linley shook his head, puzzled. “I’m not sure either. He prefers to travel alone, I suppose.”

This gathering was a chance for the various commander-level experts to meet each other; after all, outside of the Planar Battlefield, it wasn’t too practical to arrange a meeting of so many commanders. This sort of gathering was also a community; a community of the highest level Deities.

Although Linley didn’t want to chat much with these people, there were still many who came and said a few words to him. They were all acquainted now, and at least these people all knew who Linley was.

“I’ve already arranged residences for everyone.” The three-eyed commander then laughed. “Everyone, you can choose any of the residences nearby. This place is fairly close to the banks of the Stellar River. Once the final battle begins, all of you commanders will be able to easily enter the battle.”

No one stood on ceremony; they each selected a residence and moved in, quietly awaiting the final battle.

This was the situation on the side of the Divine Darkness Plane, and the side of the Divine Light Plane had its own gathering as well. However, of the Paragons belonging to the Divine Light Plane, only Magnus appeared; as for Bayer, he didn’t participate in the gathering.

“Mr. Magnus.” All of the commanders, over the course of this gathering, greeted Magnus in a very warm, friendly manner, unconsciously acting in a meek, humble manner.

Although they were commanders and very arrogant, in the face of a Paragon…it was very natural for them to act like this. They felt like commoners meeting an emperor. Although the commoner might be

arrogant, they would naturally grow modest in this situation. And this sort of modesty…didn't make them feel ashamed, because it was only appropriate.

For example, if one knelt upon seeing a Sovereign; this was something which their subconscious told them was only proper.

The reception Magnus received in his camp was completely opposite from the one Linley received in his.

But Magnus couldn't care less about these people; he too went into a corner, and by his side was Oman, Chegwin, and Ramson.

"Everyone, are there any formidable experts on the side of the Divine Darkness Plane whom we need to be aware of? If you know of any, speak up and let us mentally prepare for them." A white-browed, white-haired youth spoke out.

Immediately, all of the commanders began to list out some names, with the likes of Reisgem and Bebe being discussed.

"We encountered an expert who should be a Paragon." Oman said. "He is a Paragon of Fire! He belongs to the enemy camp, but his name…we aren't sure. All we know is that he has crimson eyebrows!"

The commanders immediately all fell silent. Compared to a Paragon, neither Reisgem nor Bebe were even as remotely as threatening.

"I have a name!" Hemmers said loudly. "I suspect he, too, is a Paragon!"

These words caused everyone to look towards Hemmers. Everyone knew who Hemmers was; given Hemmers' strength, his words should be true.

"This person is a member of the Azure Dragon clan, of the Four Divine Beasts clan. His power is very bizarre; at first, he was very weak, but afterwards, he grew to be even stronger than me. He's made vast improvements over just a few centuries, and he said that he has trained for

less than three thousand years. I don't dare believe it, but one thing is certain; his power is greater than mine!" Hemmers said unhappily. "I suspect that he has already reached the level of Paragon!"

Instantly, a unison of laughter.

Everyone knew that Hemmers was a thick-headed fellow who wasn't very clever. Hearing Hemmers' words, however, they all laughed hard.

"Hemmers, less than three thousand years, and a Paragon, you say? If he became a Paragon in less than three thousand years, then the rest of us no longer have any face to stay here. Haha." Clearly, not a single member of these experts believed him.

"Hemmers, don't believe this person's lies." The commanders didn't believe it at all.

"That expert of the Azure Dragon clan, 'Gislason'? He's only on par with us; how could they have a Paragon? If they did, they wouldn't have been abused to such an extent by the eight great clans."

The discussion made it clear that no one believed Hemmers.

"Impossible!"

Magnus, seated in the corner of the room, said slowly, "Become a Paragon in less than three thousand years? Absolutely impossible! Forget about three thousand years; even thirty thousand years or three hundred thousand years is far too short for someone to reach the Paragon level! To reach the level of Paragon in under a million years is something which isn't possible."

Magnus, as a Paragon himself, was an authoritative source.

"Can it be that I, Hemmers, would lie to you!" Hemmers was furious. Steam came from his nostrils, and his eyes turned absolutely round, like a pair of copper gongs as he stared at the others. These commanders unconsciously began to lower the volume of their laughter. They still truly

did not wish to irritate this fellow, Hemmers."

"If you don't want to listen, then don't. When you die, don't blame me." Hemmers snorted, then sat down, grabbing a roasted leg of meat on the table and chewing it with large bites.

The Divine Light Plane's camp and the Divine Darkness Plane's camp were both waiting quietly at each end of the stellar River. They were awaiting the arrival of the final battle. Compared to the commanders, though, it was actually the soldiers who were the most eager!

The mortality rates amongst soldiers in the Planar Battlefield was simply too high.

These soldiers all wanted to earn military merits and perhaps trade for Sovereign's Might. And many of these soldiers…had lived for far too long. They wanted to experience the legendary, truly terrifying…Planar War! Thus, they allowed their divine clones to come up. They were willing to sacrifice a divine clone, so as to experience the legendary Planar Wars for themselves.

Was this foolishness or insanity?

Hard to say. But after a Deity had been alive for countless years and no longer had any emotional attachments, they were capable of doing anything.

The Planar Wars were savage, crazed battles to begin with!

The Divine Darkness Plane's camp, where the commanders lived. Linley's group was living within their courtyard.

Reisgem and Bebe were seated across from each other, chatting casually.

Suddenly…

"Rumble…" A terrifyingly powerful rumble filled the skies. It was as

though an energy ripple capable of causing the heavens to collapse and the earth to shatter was wildly spreading in every direction.

“Whooooooosh.”

The buildings on each side of the Stellar River, when encountering this energy ripple, were instantly converted into dust, revealing the soldiers and commanders within. In almost the same instant, the countless soldiers and many commanders on each side of the Stellar River turned to look towards the ‘Stellar Corridors’.

This vast sea of people all stared towards the Stellar Corridors.

Linley stared into the distance, only to see the two corridors of the Stellar Sea emit a rainbow aura. This aura rose to the skies, causing the space above to tremble. In this instant, the two corridors of the Stellar River were more eye-catching than they ever had been.

“The final battle is finally about to begin!” Linley, seeing this, couldn’t help but murmur to himself.

According to the rules of the Planar Wars, after a thousand years passed, the Stellar Corridors would explode forth with a rainbow aura that would cause the world to tremble. This was the sign that the final battle was to commence! According to some legends, this was designed by Sovereigns, but according to other legends, it was designed by the Overgods. But one thing was for certain…

The final battle was beginning!

There was no unified deployment, nor was there any hesitation.

“Kill!” A cacophony of bellows shook the heavens.

The soldiers who had been waiting this entire time on each side of the Stellar Corridors immediately flooded into the corridors, charging towards the opposite side. As for the soldiers of Divine Light Plane’s camp, they

didn't hesitate either, also flooding into the Stellar Corridors and attacking their foes.

"Haha…the battle has begun!" Reisgem laughed loudly. "Let's head out!"

"Move out!" Bebe called in jubilation as well.

Linley's group of four moved lightning-fast towards the Stellar Corridor's opposite side.

The various commanders didn't need to be organized into squads; they all moved as they pleased. As for the soldiers of the military camps, they immediately formed into squads and then, like a long, sinuous dragon, had begun to wind their way through and flood through the corridors. The mission for each camp was arranged during the previous gathering.

The slaughtering instantly began!

The dreamy Stellar River's two Stellar Corridors were now both emanating a rainbow glow, making it appear even more illusory and dreamlike. But the two sides on the Light camp and the Darkness camp were beginning to slaughter and butcher each other in the two corridors.

Linley, Bebe, Reisgem, and Reihom stood at the sides of the Stellar Corridor.

"It really is madness." Linley was watching.

The air above the Stellar River was filled from top to bottom with countless soldiers, with each unit numbering in the thousands. They collectively launched material attacks or soul attacks against each other, unleashing their most powerful attacks towards the enemies in front of them. These long-distance attacks went on for only a few instants, and then, the two massive armies, like a pair of behemoths, clashed into each other. The chaotic battle had begun!

Blood flew everywhere, divine sparks rolled out, and badges descended.

A battle that was utterly crazed!

“According to the rules of the Planar Wars, if one side wins the battle within both corridors, that is considered a victory. If they only win in one corridor, it is considered a draw.” Reisgem’s eyes were shining. “Haha, Linley, let’s not hesitate. The other commanders have already charged out!”

Linley personally witnessed one white badge and black badge fall after another. Some soldiers, with a single swipe, were able to acquire ten or twenty soldier badges. In this sort of wild slaughter, accumulating military rewards really was quite quick. But it was also dangerous and crazed.

“Let’s go!”

Linley’s group of four charged into the Stellar Corridor as well, merging into the crazed flood. Behind them was an endless stream of soldiers, as well as the various commanders who had charged in as well.

Chapter 58 – Linley's Power

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 58, Linley's Power

The two corridors of the Stellar River. Rainbow light surged forth from them, filling the skies.

The soldiers belonging to the camp of the Divine Darkness Plane and the camp of the Divine Light Plane were now battling each other in savage earnest. If one stared into the skies, one would see how, at the two sides of the Stellar Corridors, one squad after another was flooding like dragons into the Stellar Corridors. The Stellar Corridor was a meat grinder. A meat grinder for Highgods!

In this wild battle, there was no way for a thousand men or more to move in unison. The only option was to use divine sense to organize, and make squads of a hundred soldiers act together.

Currently, Linley's group of four was there as well.

In the sea of tens of thousands of figures, Linley's group of four was very unremarkable, but some enemies still noticed them.

"Soul attacks! The target, those eleven who are thirty meters ahead of us!" The captain of this squad of a hundred soldiers gave the order through divine sense, and instantly, the eighty two remaining survivors of the squad collectively launched soul attacks. Those translucent soul attacks flew out like dozens of white knives towards the eleven people in Linley's area.

Reisgem just chuckled.

"They are looking for death!" Reisgem's forehead suddenly emanated a violet light.

The violet light suddenly rippled out, striking towards that hundred-man

squad. However, there were simply too many people packed in too densely nearby, and so Reisgem's attack even affected two soldiers on their own side, as well as fifty three enemy soldiers. That was just half of an enemy squad; it was that hundred man squad.

From this, one could tell how tightly clustered the combatants were.

This single attack struck fifty five people, fifty three of whom immediately died and only two of whom survived.

Fifty three badges immediately fell.

"Badges!" Immediately, quite a few of the nearby soldiers began to fight over them, and in the blink of an eye, all of them were taken. Everywhere throughout the battlefield, badges were constantly falling, with the fall of each badge signifying a person's death.

"Not good. Quick, let's go." The captain was so frightened, his face changed, and he hurriedly led his squad to flee in another direction.

"Pretty powerful." Bebe laughed.

"Most of those weren't even at the Seven Star Fiend level. Of course killing them is utter simplicity. The power of that attack of mine wasn't that great; it was just meant for a group assault." Reisgem said disdainfully. "Everyone, watch carefully. See who are the commanders! We can't just stand here. We will draw attention to us. Just now, that was a single hundred-man squad. After we attract attention, most likely it will be a group of hundred-man squads who will join forces against us."

Reisgem was very experienced. He knew that they couldn't stay in one place for long.

"Follow me." Linley said.

When Linley spoke, Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom didn't argue at all, immediately following by Linley's side as they advanced.

Although the Stellar Corridor was filled with blood and savagery, Linley seemed to be strolling through a garden as he walked through it. Any squads that charged towards him suffered a powerful repulsive force that would push them aside.

“Reisgem, your Amethyst Space is really quite powerful.” A nearby laugh rang out.

Linley’s group turned to look. The speaker was Woodridge, who today was dressed in a long, dark golden robe. Woodbridge clearly moved through the chaotic battle with ease. He glanced sideways at Linley. “Reisgem. Take care of your friends. This place is quite dangerous! A Seven Star Fiend will die, just like that.”

After speaking, Woodridge turned into a blur and disappeared into the distance.

Woodridge moved through the chaotic battle like an agile fish in water.

“This Woodridge…what sort of vision does he have? He didn’t even notice that it was you, Boss, who set up the Gravitational Space.” Bebe snorted.

“Don’t mind him.” Linley stared to the front. “Up ahead is the center of the Stellar Corridor. This is the place where the battle is the most savage. I’ve found quite a few enemy commanders up ahead already. Let’s go.” Linley was as calm as ever. One’s mental fortitude was linked to one’s strength.

The weak would be nervous and edgy, advancing carefully. For example, those ordinary soldiers; they could die at any moment.

But for the strong, such as Woodbridge, they felt relaxed and at ease. As long as they were careful not to draw too much attention and wary of enemy commanders, and as long as they weren’t attacked by massive groups, they would be fine.

And, for someone on Linley’s level, it was as though he was going out for a

walk.

“Linley, look up ahead!” Reisgem suddenly called out in surprise.

Linley turned his gaze over. Several kilometers away, he saw a black-robed man actually attract a joint attack from more than a thousand soldiers from the Divine Light Realm’s camp. The combined soul attack thundered down, and there were some who used their innate divine abilities as well. The combined attack of over a thousand figures rained down, and although the black-robed figure dodged quickly, he was still hit by over a hundred attacks.

The impact on him wasn’t that great…but right afterwards, the thousand-plus soldiers launched a wave of material attacks.

“Rumble…” This group attack from more than a thousand Six Star Fiend level experts, along with some Seven Star Fiends, was like a tempest of annihilation as it swept towards the black-robed man. The black-robed man immediately transformed into dust, and some of the ‘innocent’ surrounding bystanders were reduced to ash as well.

A divine spark, a black necklace, an interspatial ring, and a blood-red badge fell down.

Linley, watching this from afar, secretly shook his head.

“This fellow Naboth [Na’bo’te] truly is unlucky.” Reisgem snickered mentally towards Linley and the other two. “He definitely must have drawn the attention of the enemies, but Naboth himself didn’t realize it. Given how many people are on the side of the Divine Light Plane, it was easy to muster ten squads of a hundred men to launch a joint attack against him. In just two strikes, one spiritual, the other material, he was annihilated! Although he had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, it was of no use.”

Soul attacks and material attacks were all extremely fast.

Generally speaking, no matter how fast most commanders were, they were

far from being as fast as a soul attack or a material attack. They would only be able to dodge one or two meters. Only Highgod Paragons, who were able to dodge several dozen meters in a single movement, and even cause space to twist and distort, were unafraid of group attacks.

“It’s quite dangerous for commanders in the battle as well.” Bebe said with a sigh.

Whether in the Netherworld or in the Infernal Realm, it was quite hard for a thousand Six Star Fiends to be summoned to one event and launch an attack. But here, in this battle, everyone was a Highgod, and so it was quite easy to link up a thousand soldiers to launch a joint attack. Thus…one couldn’t be too impressive. If you attracted attention, you had to immediately flee!

“Forget about others.” Linley’s gaze was locked on someone in the distance. “I found an excellent target!”

“Oh?” Reisgem, Bebe, and Reihom looked over as well.

“Them!” Reisgem’s eyes lit up, and a savage look flashed through them. “This time, we can’t let them escape!”

“Kill them all!” Bebe stared furiously at them as well.

Roughly three kilometers away from them, three figures were chasing at high speed after a gray-robed figure. Two of them were familiar figures; one was a golden-robed ‘Oman’, while the other was a violet-robed ‘Chegwin’. The person by their side was Ramson, who had joined with them.

Although Ramson was a commander who controlled a military camp, when the savage battle began, the hundred-man squads would move by themselves. There wasn’t much point for their commander to stay with them. He had one of his subordinates take charge of the squads, while he himself went with his two friends to go hunt and kill enemy commanders. Oman’s three-person team was very confident in their power.

“Haha, you want to run?” Ramsom flew over at high speed.

“Swish!” A golden light shot out from Ramson’s finger, and space instantly tore apart as the light shot towards the fleeing gray-robed figure. “BANG!” The gray-robed figure’s body instantly erupted with a black light, and he launched a vicious return punch against that golden light before continuing to flee.

But in the instant he had paused to strike back, Oman and Chegwin had surrounded him.

“You won’t be able to escape!” Oman laughed loudly, his body blazing with a white aura as his spiked mace smashed down towards the gray-robed man.

“Clang!” The gray-robed man raised his arms together, smashing head on with his two arms against the spiked mace.

But immediately afterwards, the spikes atop the mace shot out towards the gray-robed man’s skull. With a metallic clanging sound, they drove into the gray-robed man’s face, but didn’t strike a lethal blow.

“Bang!” A golden light then pierced through the gray-robed man’s head.

Ramson stretched his hand out, and the golden light flew back to his hand. This was an ancient, unadorned spear which was covered with strange magical runes.

“Haha, getting badges here is too fast. This is the third.” Ramson stretched his hand out and snatched the blood-red badge, while the nearby Oman said very confidently, “Ramson, who can stop the three of us united?”

“Oman, our old friend is coming.” Chegwin sent mentally with a soft laugh.

Oman and Ramson instantly followed Chegwin’s gaze, only to see four figures fly over, with Linley at the lead.

“That Linley didn’t die?” Oman was shocked.

“Haha…” Oman’s gaze turned savage. “It’s good that he didn’t die! The last two times, we weren’t able to kill him. This time, I’ll dispose of him!”

“Hand that Reihom fellow to me. Last time, I didn’t kill him. This time, we should end it.” Chegwin stared at the distant Reihom while sending mentally, “Ramson, you hurry up and leave. Go find Mr. Magnus. If you encounter Bebe, you will die. Of the four, Reisgem is the hardest to deal with. Ask Mr. Magnus to come; only he can deal with Reisgem.”

“Alright.” Ramson knew that Bebe was a Godeater Rat, and didn’t try to push it.

But just as Ramson turned to leave!

“There is no need to run!” A cold voice instantly echoed in their minds.

Ramson, Oman, and Chegwin stared in astonishment up in front. Linley, who had been flying alongside Reisgem, Reihom, and Bebe, suddenly sped up dramatically. “Whoosh!” Like a gust of wind, he moved through the densely clustered groups of people in the Stellar Corridor like a blur. Linley had arrived before the three of them!

“This…” Oman and the other two were stunned.

Reisgem and the other two were still far away, but Linley had already arrived. Linley’s speed was so terrifying…it was far beyond what they could endure.

Oman and the other two instantly thought back to what Hemmers had told them at the meeting. Hemmers was clearly referring to this expert of the Azure Dragon clan.

“Could it be him?” Oman’s group of three didn’t dare believe it, but at the same time, the three of them frantically used their supreme techniques!

“Rumble…”

Linley’s fist swept out, and it was as though the universe was pressing down upon them. 108 rays of black light swept out and surrounded them, sucking them in as a terrifyingly strong compressive force instantly reduced the speed of these commanders a thousandfold. They could only watch as Linley’s fist swept towards them, unable to block at all.

“BANG!” The fist smashed into Oman’s head.

Oman’s body trembled slightly. From the surface, it seemed as though he wasn’t injured at all, but…the insides of his head had already been shaken into pulp. A gold badge fell out from his body, while at the same time, his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact fell out as well.

“Linley, stay your hand.” A rebuking bark rang out in Linley’s mind.

“Magnus?” Linley’s lips curved upwards.

“Halt!” Magnus was frantic.

“Rumble…” Linley’s fist ground down inexorably. In the instant after he killed Oman, he also swept his arm towards the nearby Chegwin and Ramson. These two, also bound by that terrifying compressive force, weren’t able to resist at all.

Ramson’s body immediately collapsed lifelessly, and a gold badge fell out from his body.

As for Chegwin, his body suddenly trembled and he retreated explosively, staring at Linley in amazement. “He…how can he be so strong?!” Just now, when he had suffered that compressive power, he had the feeling that he couldn’t even resist. This caused Chegwin to feel tremendous terror.

“You live up to being someone reputed to have two protective Sovereign artifacts. Killing you really is tough.” Linley glanced at the retreating Chegwin, then collected the two gold badges.

“Boss!” Only now did Bebe, Reisgem, and Reihom arrive.

“We have two badges.” Linley turned and smiled towards Bebe.

“Boss, careful.” Bebe suddenly warned mentally.

Linley turned, only to see a bewildering blur advance at high speed, so fast that it was on par with Linley’s earlier movements. It was the infuriated Magnus! Magnus landed next to Ramson’s body, cradling it in his arms, so furious that the muscles on his face were twitching.

Magnus didn’t care that Oman had died.

But Ramson, that was his good friend! A true friend!

Magnus raised his head, staring coldly at Linley. In a low voice, he said, “Just now…I told you to stay your hand!”

Linley stared back calmly at Magnus. In a gentle voice, he responded, “If I want to kill someone…you are unable to stop me!”

Chapter 59 – The Duel Above the Stellar River

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 59, The Duel Above the Stellar River

Those who became Paragons were all incomparable geniuses filled with tremendous willpower. They, who stood at the top, were accustomed to the respect and reverence of others. Even when they met a Sovereign, they didn't have to kneel; they only had to bow slightly. One could imagine how much lofty arrogance filled their hearts.

"If I want to kill someone…you are unable to stop me!"

Linley's calm words and the look in his eyes when he spoke caused Magnus, already infuriated by the death of his friend, to grow so angry that his eyes turned crimson.

Magnus released Ramson's corpse, slowly standing up and staring coldly at Linley.

Linley didn't fear him at all, looking back calmly at Magnus.

"Rumble…" Thunder began to echo unceasingly around them. The battle was continuing to progress, and the soldiers of the Divine Darkness Plane and Divine Light Plane were butchering each other in methodical fashion. Blood splattered everywhere, and Highgod sparks rained everywhere as one badge after another was seized by survivors. This was how wild and savage the Stellar Corridor was.

But amidst this savagery, Linley and Magnus stood there, staring at each other, not moving at all.

It seemed as though the battles of thousands of soldiers around them, to them, was nothing more than the air.

"The target is that unmoving, white-robed figure. Soul attack!" A hundred-

man squad clearly noticed Magnus, and as the captain gave the order through divine sense, instantly, the seventy five survivors of the squad instantly emitted all sorts of translucent attacks, instantly shooting them towards Magnus!

Magnus, who had been staring angrily at Linley, couldn't help but turn to look back.

"Hmph!" Magnus let out a low snort, his gaze turning cold.

Magnus' cold gaze swept out like a blurry sword light, creating more than a hundred white 'arrows' which shot out. "Swoosh!" "Swoosh!" They instantly crossed the skies, striking against those soul attacks. While destroying the soul attacks, the translucent arrows didn't slow down at all as they dove into the bodies of the members of that hundred-man squad, whose eyes became filled with terror.

And then, silence.

Seventy five corpses fell from the skies, their divine sparks and badges falling as well.

A single glance had killed seventy five Highgods!

"How is that possible?" Some soldiers noticed this, and they were so terrified their faces changed. But…the battle at the Stellar Corridor was simply too chaotic. Only a few dozen people noticed Magnus display his might, with the rest not noticing at all. After all, people were dying constantly throughout the corridor. No one would notice if seventy five people suddenly died at once.

"Boss." Bebe and the others were rather worried as well.

"Don't worry. You all step back for now." Linley sent mentally. "Against Magnus, although I'm not completely certain of victory, I definitely won't lose!"

“Linley, this Magnus is a Paragon, after all. Don’t be careless. In addition, he, too, has Sovereign artifacts.” Reisgem sent mentally. As he spoke, he, Bebe, and Reihom all retreated, because they also knew…that once Linley and Magnus began to fight, the scene would be completely different from the one where Linley and Bluefire sparred.

When two Paragon experts battled each other, the slightest backlash from their attacks could threaten the lives of ordinary commanders.

At present, Linley and Magnus paid no attention to any others. It was as though this entire world only contained the two of them!

Magnus stared at Linley. In a low voice, he said, “You actually didn’t die!”

“What, do you regret it?” Linley smiled calmly, a hint of mockery in his smile.

“I don’t regret it.” Magnus had already regained his clarity of mind. “Because I know that although you didn’t die last time, this time, you will.”

“You are quite confident.” Linley looked at Magnus, speaking as he would to an equal. “But last time, you were also quite confident that after I suffered your most powerful attack, I would definitely die. But the real result? Last time, I destroyed your confidence. This time…I’ll break it again!”

Magnus’ face grew sinister.

“Haha…” Magnus suddenly began to laugh coldly. “Anyone can engage in braggadocio! Today, I will let you know the difference between you and a Paragon.” Magnus didn’t actually believe that Linley had become a Paragon, because last time, when he had sparred with Linley, he could tell…that Linley was still quite far off from the Paragon level.

Ordinary commanders, in front of a Paragon, would definitely perish.

“Bang!” While laughing, Magnus began to move. His speed instantly rose

to the limit, and he moved like a dreamlike blur, throwing himself towards Linley. At the same time, Magnus' right hand, covered by a black glove, transformed into a claw, and he clawed at Linley's head. "Hiss…crackle…" Multiple holes in space constantly exploded forth.

When the claw struck out, it was as though space had become very weak.

"You think too highly of yourself!" An explosive roar echoed forth in the Stellar Corridor.

"BANG!"

A black sword light flashed out, piercing directly into Magnus' palm. The universe seemed to tremble, while Magnus himself was unable to prevent himself from being knocked backwards. In the space where the exchange of blows had taken place, multiple black, gaping spatial chasms had appeared, and the terrifying spatial chasms were like monsters, devouring dozens of nearby soldiers before vanishing.

"A spatial rift? How could a spatial rift be so large?" The formerly savage soldiers, especially the ones around Linley and Magnus, finally understood that two supreme experts were present.

But that was of no use to them. After all, the soldiers behind them on both the sides of the Divine Darkness Plane and the Divine Light plane continued to push forward, throwing themselves against their enemies in battle!

"You…you…" Magnus stared in amazement at Linley. "You became a Paragon?"

"You truly think too highly of yourself!" Linley couldn't help but chuckle.

Given Linley's control over the world, he could clearly sense that Magnus, just now, hadn't used Sovereign power when attacking! A Paragon, even one who didn't use Sovereign power, was generally able to easily slaughter a commander. But…to act in such a way against Linley was indeed a bit too

arrogant.

“You truly have become a Paragon?” Magnus didn’t dare believe it…but the power which Linley had just displayed was real.

“I need to thank you for that full-force attack you launched back then.” Linley let out a soft laugh. “If you hadn’t wanted to kill me, causing me to fall into a life-and-death situation, I probably wouldn’t have made such a large advance.” Linley didn’t admit that he had become a Paragon, but upon hearing Linley’s words, Magnus took it for admission.

“No wonder you are so arrogant. So you have become a Paragon.” Magnus’ face sank. “But Linley, even though you are a Paragon, I, Magnus, will teach you today…that you aren’t qualified to kill my friends!”

When his words were spoken, Magnus moved once more.

“Rumble…”

In the blink of an eye, Linley saw a black fist cover his entire field of vision, and a powerful blast of Fate-type Sovereign power. It seemed as though the entire surrounding space was compressing him, and this punch seemed to contain enough power to destroy the world. It was unstoppable!

“Not using soul attacks, but a material attack?” Linley didn’t hesitate at all, immediately launching a backhanded sword stab with full strength.

“Raaaaaaaargh…” 108 rays of black light shot out like dragons from Mirage, swallowing Magnus within them. In that instant, Magnus felt as though he heard the roar of a dragon, and then felt a powerful, oppressive compression. This compressive force caused even his attacks to be affected.

The sword of Linley. The fist of Magnus!

They collided!

“Thud…” It was a deep sound, like a drum being struck.

Space instantly shattered. Hundreds of spatial rifts appeared, and that Sovereign power, infused with the power of Will, washed out in every direction. This burst of energy was infused with the power of Will, and like sharp arrows, it instantly pierced through the bodies of each of the surrounding soldiers.

A hundred soldiers who were fairly close to Linley and Magnus were doomed. Their bodies instantly transformed into dust! As for some of the soldiers behind them, they were either pierced through the chest or the legs. Some unlucky ones were pierced through the head. Unfortunately, the energy rays was simply too vicious and too dense.

In the blink of an eye, within a circumference of a hundred meters, hundreds of corpses fell from the skies.

“What…what is this?” The formerly savagely battling soldiers here were completely stunned. They couldn’t help but lower their weapons, turning to stare and see what exactly had caused so many people to die simultaneously. There were no living people in the area where Linley and Magnus were battling.

In the Stellar Corridor, this was a rare, empty area. This caused the soldiers to instantly notice the two people battling energetically within.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

Two exceedingly, unspeakably fast blurs collided time and time again, and space repeatedly shattered as spatial tears were created. The backlash from the Sovereign power they used caused quite a few soldiers to die in succession.

“Retreat, quick, retreat!” The terrified soldiers couldn’t help but all retreat frantically, pulling far away from Linley and Magnus.

“What terrifying speed!” The soldiers felt their hearts tremble. “Can it be that they are…”

These soldiers could be considered experts in the Infernal Realm or the Netherworld, and they were all highly experienced. But the incredible effects generated by Linley and Magnus' blows still caused them to feel terrified. Even the remnant energy could effortlessly kill Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends? What sort of power was this?

The space of the Planar Battlefield…actually had more than a hundred giant spatial rifts torn open? What level of attacks were being used?

Stupefied. Scared silly!

There were two corridors in the Stellar River, and the two corridors engaged in battle simultaneously. The goal was to defeat the opponents and to reach the opposite shore; that was a sign of victory. If victory was gained in both corridors, one side of the Planar War would be considered victorious. If victory was gained in one corridor but lost in the other, it was a draw.

But right now, battle between Linley and Magnus caused simply too much chaos.

They occasionally rose into the skies, and then they would descend, moving at frightful speeds.

Nobody dared to go within a thousand meters of them!

And so, at the center of one of the two Stellar Corridors, an empty field naturally was formed. This forced a halt to the battle on this Stellar Corridor, as quite a few soldiers and commanders focused on the duel of peak experts here.

"Them? Magnus…and that friend of Reisgem's?" The three-eyed commander's face changed.

Quite a few commanders had noticed the distant disturbance.

"How is that possible? It's that person called Linley?" Woodridge also

stared, stunned, at the terrifying scene of the distant battle between Linley and Magnus. “Magnus and Linley, they are fighting to a standstill?” Watching the world-shattering battle going on in the distance, Woodridge didn’t dare believe that the Linley whom he had looked down upon was actually able to fight a Paragon to a standstill. Shaking his head vigorously, Woodridge still didn’t dare believe what he was seeing.

“Linley?”

Although those people on the side of the Divine Darkness Plane had never paid Linley any attention, most of them knew Linley’s name. Now that they saw that it was Linley who was causing this huge disturbance, they couldn’t help but feel shocked.

“This Linley is too terrifying.”

Chegwin, the only one who had survived in his squad which fought for the Divine Light Plane, still felt terror in his heart.

“Who is this?” Quite a few commanders on the side of the Divine Light Plane didn’t recognize Linley.

“Haha…I told you all long ago that he is very powerful, possibly a Paragon.” Hemmers stared at the distant battle. He couldn’t help but start to laugh loudly. “None of you believed me! Haha…do you see it? Do you see it?!”

Of the two Stellar Corridors, the battle on one of them had been forced to grind to a halt.

“Quick, hurry up and change directions. Move to support the other corridor! Seize the opportunity to first achieve victory in the other corridor!” Some commanders reacted more quickly; knowing that the battle at this corridor was halted, they immediately arranged for their forces to go assist the other corridor instead. They’d first gain victory in that corridor, then talk.

Linley and Magnus continued to battle in the center of the Stellar River. As

they continued, the nearby soldiers of both sides who had disposed of their opponents all temporarily paused their battling.

No one dared to approach Linley or Magnus.

Sovereign power infused with the power of Will…when it washed out, even commanders wouldn't dare to easily approach it. Who, then, would?

For a time, countless soldiers and many commanders watched this terrifying battle in amazement. For many of them, only today did they understand how terrifying Paragons were!

"WHAP!"

The commanders and soldiers only saw blurred figures move. One of the two rose into the heavens, while the other stood there on the ground; the two split apart. Magnus hovered there, high up in the air, a hint of blood at the corner of his lips. Almost immediately, however, he recovered.

And on the ground stood an expert whose entire body was covered with azure-golden scales, and who had spikes emerging from his back – Linley! Linley's dark golden eyes stared upwards. "Magnus…you, a Paragon of Fate, want to compete against me in material attacks? You aren't quite up to it!"

Chapter 60 – The Most Powerful Technique!

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 60, The Most Powerful Technique!

The countless soldiers on the Stellar Corridor, along with some of the commanders, were stunned as they watched this battle.

Human wave attacks might be useful against ordinary commanders, but against Paragons…it was useless. The Paragons battled there, in the center of the corridor, and the surrounding soldiers had no choice but to stop fighting and not even dare draw within a thousand meters.

“The Sovereign power doesn’t match up.” Linley shook his head. Just now, although they had only battled briefly, Linley hadn’t Dragonformed at the beginning. But the non-transformed Linley was actually at a disadvantage when fighting Magnus! Magnus used Fate-type Sovereign’s Might which was very effective, while Linley was only able to use Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might.

He was weaker in this aspect, and so even though he used his supreme technique of spatial binding, he was still at a disadvantage.

Linley was forced to Dragonform!

Upon Dragonforming, Linley’s attack power instantly jumped, allowing him to actually press down against his foe using material attacks.

“Last time, when I sparred with Leylin, I didn’t Dragonform. After Dragonforming, things are exactly as I thought they would be.”

The power of Will was very special.

As long as Linley applied his Will, his power would increase dramatically. The defensiveness of his draconic scales and his attacks all increased; the power of his Will had the power to transform something rotting into

something magical. Paragons didn't need Sovereign artifacts to easily defeat commanders who had Sovereign artifacts.

"To kill a Paragon truly is hard." Linley raised his head, looking up at Magnus.

Magnus didn't have a defensive Sovereign artifact, but the protective barrier formed from pure Sovereign power, when infused with his Paragon's Will, made it so that Linley's draconic tail, fists, and legs were unable to injure him heavily.

Paragons had no weaknesses. This wasn't just talk!

Defenses and attacks; they were exceedingly strong in all aspects, even without Sovereign artifacts!

"Swoosh!" Linley's body moved like a blur, rising to the skies until he stood level with Magnus. The two stared at each other.

The two mighty experts hovered there in the air.

"Members of the Azure Dragon clan, after Dragonforming, truly do increase in power greatly!" Magnus laughed clearly. "However, don't be smug. That was just the beginning!" After speaking, Magnus seemed to transformed into the sun, emitting blurry rays of light in every direction as a powerful aura began to spread out.

As for the midair Linley, his draconic tail swayed behind him slightly as he stared at his opponent, not nervous at all.

Magnus stretched his hands out, and instantly, around him appeared a man-sized globe of light. This enormous globe of light contained within it a brilliant, crystalline lotus flower. Above the lotus flower, there even seemed to be some mist swirling. The Stellar Corridor glowed with rainbow light which shot upwards, making it seem all the more beautiful.

"You really are going all out!" Linley let out a chuckle.

Last time, Magnus had used this same attack and had nearly killed Linley, but Linley had not only escaped from death, he had also transformed. Still, that time, the light globe was only fist-sized, while this time, it was man-sized! Actually, it was the exact same technique as last time; only, there was a huge difference in how much spiritual energy was being used up!

Actually…this man-sized light globe could be treated as hundreds of the fist-sized light globes!

"Hmph!"

Magnus' gaze grew cold, and the enormous light globe hovering in front of his chest suddenly shot towards Linley.

"Haha…" Linley just laughed loudly. His body seemed to transform into a human-shaped porcupine, as from within shot out a translucent sword ripple. Instantly, countless sword ripples shot out which simultaneously struck against that two-meter tall globe of light.

One advanced, the other marched forward. The countless sword ripples charged against the light globe.

"Bang!" The surface of the light globe cracked, revealing that blooming, translucent lotus flower. For a moment, the lotus flower seemed to be a sculpture of ice.

The countless translucent sword ripples shot towards the translucent lotus flower!

"Swish!" The enormous lotus flower continued to shoot towards Linley while constantly swiveling, using up one sword ripple after another, but at the same time…the lotus flower was being used up, and it was physically shrinking.

"Hrm?" Magnus' face changed. "What a powerful soul attack!"

Linley's Voidwave Sword ripples caused Magnus to be astonished.

In a short period of time, the lotus flower actually shrank dramatically.

Actually, it wasn't strange. Even after having fused four types of profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, Linley's understanding regarding profound mysteries which impacted soul attacks was still much weaker than this attack of Magnus'. Only, Linley's spiritual energy was ten times greater than even when he used Sovereign power, and the power of his Will was also nearly ten times greater than Paragons. These two aspects made it so that Linley's soul attack wasn't much weaker than Magnus'.

"Hmph." Magnus willed it, and instantly, the dramatically shrinking lotus flower began to swivel. One flower petal after another separated, transforming into more than ten lines that shot towards Linley. Linley's Voidwave Sword ripples were only able to block part of them; the rest of the lotus petals still shot into Linley's body.

"Magnus, this supreme attack of yours is only as strong as this?" Linley looked at Magnus.

"How can it be like this?" Magnus was secretly shocked. "Even if Linley was able to endure it, it shouldn't be as though nothing had happened to him."

Indeed, Linley didn't care at all, because his soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, the 'Coiling Dragon ring', had more than two hundred years ago been completely repaired! Ever since his soul mutation, Linley had been using spiritual energy to repair it at an astonishing rate, and less than ten years after his soul mutation, the Coiling Dragon ring had been completely repaired.

With a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, would he fear a small attack like this?

"Haha, Magnus, so that's all you are capable of." Linley laughed clearly, and his laughter echoed in the air above the Stellar River. "Then it is my

turn!”

As the sound echoed in the air, Linley himself wielded Mirage as he charged towards Magnus. In addition, a large number of Voidwave Swords shot out from Linley’s body, shooting towards Magnus.

“Don’t boast. What can you do to me?” Magnus didn’t want to appear weak, and so his laughter echoed forth as well.

It must be understood that there were simply too many spectators to this battle. They were commanders and soldiers who came from each of the Divine Planes and Higher Realms. If he lost, then this news would quickly spread across all of the universe. If he appeared weak now, where would he, Magnus, be able to hide his face?

“Whoosh!” Linley’s draconic tail unpredictably lashed out.

“Can’t let him draw close!” Magnus retreated explosively.

As soon as Linley drew near, he would be able to attack from all angles. Even the spikes on his elbows, his draconic tail, and other parts were capable of threatening Magnus.

Although this was slow to describe, in reality, it happened as fast as a spark erupting from a flint. The two supreme experts amongst Deities exchanged multiple blows against each other, clashing multiple times, and each time causing the heavens to shatter and split apart. Even their soul attacks… caused the surrounding soldiers and commanders to be vigilant. Perhaps a single Voidwave Sword ripple of Linley’s might hit them, or a single petal of Magnus’ lotus flowers; they were more than enough to kill them.

Battle was completely halted here in this Stellar Corridor, but the battle on the other side had reached a crescendo in savagery.

“Enemies straight ahead. Launch a joint material attack!”

One hundred-man squad after another launched one joint attack after

another. Countless soldiers fell and perished, as though a new epoch had crushed down upon them. Many commander badges fell. Clearly, the Divine Darkness Plane's side's forces held the advantage in numbers, and were currently pressing forth to victory.

Ten hundred-man squads launched a material attack!

And then, they retreated, with ten more hundred-man squads moving forward, launching a blast of soul attacks!

The soldiers of the Divine Light Plane had been charging forward, but this sequence of arrayed attacks from the forces of Darkness had completely suppressed their spirits.

Once a complete advantage was established, a very simple battle would result.

From the initial stalemate, to a retreat, to total collapse…

Faced with this massive advance and the repeated joint attacks, the forces of the Light alliance were finally, completely dispersed. Although some of them were courageous, it wasn't worth it for them to throw away their lives for nothing.

"Haha, we won!" The commanders of the military camps, watching this, laughed loudly.

"This time, our Darkness alliance had a slight advantage in numbers to begin with. In addition, on the other side, those two battling Paragons caused the battle to come to a halt, so I immediately arranged for those soldiers to move here. When they all charged together, given our absolute advantage in numbers, we were able to crush them in one blow. Once the enemies were broken apart, even if some more support came, it was too late.

Soon, the soldiers of the Darkness alliance in this corridor reached the other side, while the survivors of the Light alliance completely retreated.

“Rumble…” The rainbow aura emanating from this Stellar Corridor which rose to the heavens suddenly retracted, then vanished.

The Darkness alliance had won a victory.

“Haha…victory! Victory!” Cries of jubilation. The many soldiers of the Darkness alliance cried out in joy.

“We won!” These military commanders in charge of the battle were also rather excited.

“Let’s go. Let’s hurry to the other corridor and keep battling. Perhaps we might make it in time to watch the two Paragons fighting.” The commanders immediately ordered their forces to quickly flood towards the other corridor.

Countless soldiers were watching the battle going on at Linley’s corridor.

“By the looks of it, they are at a standstill. Paragon against Paragon; it’s hard for one to win and the other to lose.” The watchers couldn’t help but have this feeling.

Suddenly…

“Bang!” A powerful explosion ripped out between the two combatants, who quickly separated.

Magnus stood there on the ground, staring at the distant Linley. He said in a clear voice, “Linley, if the two of us keep fighting, we will just be wasting time! Pardon me for not accompanying you in continuing this!” Magnus let out a cold snort, then turned and flew away. Although Magnus had a belly full of anger, he clearly wasn’t able to kill Linley. He also believed that Linley wouldn’t be able to kill him!

Although he was angry and filled with hatred, Magnus had to admit that Linley was already an expert on his level.

“Wasting time? I don’t feel that way!” Linley’s voice rang out. “Or, are you afraid?”

“Mm?” Magnus, embarrassed and angered, turned his head to stare furiously at Linley.

He was angry at Linley for not understanding the rules; since there could be no result to this battle, they should’ve ended it. But Linley actually used words to keep him here. If he were to leave today, it would mean that he was afraid!

Cold wind blew through the Planar Battlefield. Linley stood there, ramrod straight, his draconic tail swaying.

“You know that I am of the Azure Dragon clan! Then prepare to receive… the innate divine ability of my Azure Dragon clan!” Linley said in a bold, clear voice. As soon as his words fell, behind Linley’s body appeared an enormous, coiling Azure Dragon Phantom which was more than ten thousand meters long. The Azure Dragon’s golden eyes stared at Magnus.

Innate divine ability – Dragon Roar!

“Rumble…” A unique energy ripple instantly spread out!

The power of the innate divine ability was linked to spiritual energy as well as the innate azure glow. Now that Linley’s spiritual energy was more than ten times as powerful as when he used Sovereign power, and when combined with a Will that was even mightier than that of a Paragon’s…the power of this innate divine ability of Linley’s could most likely only be surpassed by his ancestor, the Azure Dragon himself!

“Swoosh!” Linley’s speed reached an extreme level as he charged towards Magnus.

“Eh?” Magnus’ face changed. He felt as though the flow of time around him had already changed!

He was powerful, but Linley, who used this technique, had a level of spiritual energy and Will that was stronger than him. The effect of his ‘Dragon Roar’ was now on display!

The flow of time changed, but that didn’t mean he was no longer capable of thought.

Magnus still knew that he had to defend himself. He knew that he wouldn’t be able to block in time, so all he could do was…work hard to control his Sovereign power to form a powerful defense!

“Bang!” Linley’s ‘Mirage’ stabbed against Magnus’ head at full force.

“Crackle…” Linley felt a terrifyingly strong blocking force. Although Mirage was just able to break through the skin, it remained impacted by that powerful blocking force. Paragons, even without Sovereign artifacts…still had no flaws. This was not just an empty boast! Magnus, however, was knocked flying backwards by the blow.

“If I can’t kill you, then I will drive you into chaotic space!”

Linley’s gaze turned cold.

“Bang!” Linley’s right leg slashed through the skies, landing on Magnus’ stomach.

He was moving as fast as lightning, and his kick sent Magnus flying upwards like a meteor towards the boundary between the Stellar Corridor and chaotic space. “No!” Magnus finally recovered from the temporal displacement, but it was too late. He only had enough time for a final, furious howl before he was completely enveloped by rainbow colored chaotic space.

It was as though he had been swallowed by the ‘water’. Magnus thusly disappeared within chaotic space!

Silence!

Stillness!

The spectators watching this were all stunned. A Paragon…had been driven away like that?

Linley glanced at the multicolored chaotic space, then turned and walked towards Bebe, returning to human form. Bebe stared at Linley, stunned as well. Linley smiled. “Bebe, let’s go.”

Chapter 61 – Gathering Point

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 61, Gathering Point

The rainbow light above the Stellar River glowed as beautifully as ever, but everyone was silent. They were speechless. As for Linley, he simply walked calmly towards the Darkness alliance's side, under the gaze of countless experts.

A Paragon…had just been driven into chaotic space!

"He drove a Paragon into chaotic space. He's of the Azure Dragon clan. His name is Linley!" The surrounding soldiers and commanders all firmly memorized this scene. The words Linley had exchanged with Magnus had resulted in Linley's name being revealed. Naturally, these surrounding people all knew it now.

Suddenly…

"Quick, material attacks!" One of the captains belonging to the Darkness alliance suddenly came to his senses, and he hurriedly spoke through divine sense to his allies.

"Crackle…" Nearly a hundred rays of brilliant light shot forth from the side of the Darkness alliance, thundering towards the enemy.

"Material attacks, forward!" At almost the same instant, the soldiers on both sides came to their senses. Only now did the soldiers of the Darkness alliance and the Light alliance awaken from the stupor having watched the astonishing battle between two Paragons, and they immediately began to battle again! The countless soldiers of the two sides flooded forward and clashed against each other.

Linley, Bebe, and the other two just stood there amidst the human flood.

There was no longer anyone foolish enough to launch attacks against Linley.

“Boss!” Bebe looked at Linley, incomparably excited. “That was Magnus! Boss, just now, the person you drove into chaotic space was MAGNUS. Someone on the same level as Bayer! Too powerful, haha, too powerful!” Bebe delightedly beamed, his smile so large that his eyes became half-lidded.

Reisgem and Reihom’s faces were covered in smiles as well.

“Reisgem, you should be lacking some military merits, right? Do you need me to help you?” Linley turned his head, looking at Reisgem.

“No need.” Reisgem intentionally let out a snort. “Linley, although I’m a bit weaker compared to you, acquiring enough military merits isn’t too difficult for me. I already acquired a certain number during the previous Planar Wars, and this time, I only need a few more. Reihom, let’s go.” Reisgem and Reihom flew out into the flood of people as well.

People were everywhere, filling the corridor as they constantly slaughtered each other.

Linley and Bebe were amongst them, but they just watched the distant Reisgem and Reihom. Linley nodded slightly. “Bebe, let’s go. Given Reihom and Reisgem’s strength, unless they encounter a Paragon or an assault by multiple commanders, they won’t be in any danger. Let’s go to the shores of the Stellar River to watch.”

“Alright. Let’s go to the shore.” Bebe chortled and nodded.

Everyone was charging towards the enemy shores…but Linley and Bebe actually turned.

“Linley!”

The commanders of the Darkness plane stared at Linley from afar, sighing

mentally. They regretted not having made good use of the earlier gathering to chat with Linley. There were very few opportunities to establish a relationship with a Paragon, and it was very hard to do so.

"Prior to this, Mr. Linley was hiding his status, and so it would have been easy to make friends with him. But now…he's revealed his power. There will definitely be many who want to befriend him. The difficulty level will be much greater." The commanders all understood this principle, and it was indeed the case; if earlier, during the gathering, they had come over and acted in a friendly manner towards Linley, Linley would indeed have been kindly disposed towards them.

But now…

Given that he had revealed his power, those who now came to befriend him clearly did so in order to ingratiate themselves with him. Linley wouldn't even want to bother with them.

The Darkness alliance had already gained victory earlier in the other corridor. Given that Linley had defeated Magnus, the Darkness alliance's morale was at an all-time high!

Morale was an invisible, illusory thing.

But it was also true that whichever side in the corridor had the bravest, fearless, and more numerous soldiers would be the side to win. When Linley and Magnus had battled, they very naturally became viewed as representatives of the Darkness alliance and the Light alliance. The forces of each side were naturally cheering for their experts.

Linley had won. Magnus had lost!

The impact of this on the Light alliance soldiers was quite large, and the impact on their commanders was quite large as well. This was because in their heart, they couldn't help but constantly reflect on the fact that the enemy had a Paragon in their ranks. Those commanders simply didn't dare to go all out and charge forward with abandon, for fear that Linley might

intervene to act against them. These commanders had no confidence at all in their ability to deal with Linley.

Given their depressed morale, and how the commanders didn't dare to lead the way, the soldiers of the Light alliance were being repeatedly driven back!

"Haha, kill. Kill!"

The commanders of the Darkness alliance, upon seeing this, were absolutely delighted.

As the soldiers of the Darkness alliance roared heroically, under the leadership of their commanders, they inexorably ground forward like the wheels on a chariot, constantly advancing and attacking. The greater the advantage they held, the easier the battle became. The morale of the Darkness alliance had risen to a crescendo!

By the banks of the Stellar River. Linley and Bebe were watching the battle atop the Stellar Corridor.

"Boss. Our side will win for sure." Bebe said, very confident.

Linley watched the slaughter within the corridor, then nodded. "That's how the battles in the Stellar Corridors are. Once one side begins to cower and retreat, even if there are fresh troops ready to support them from behind, it is useless. Once the front lines collapse, the rear will be affected as well. They've definitely lost!" As soon as Linley's words came out, the rainbow radiance emanating from the Stellar Corridor suddenly faded away.

The Darkness alliance had gained victory!

They were victorious in both corridors, and so for this Planar War, the side of the Divine Darkness Plane was the victor.

The soldiers of the Darkness alliance all began to turn and depart en masse.

“Second Brother, the Boss died. Alas. Still, we weren’t too misfortunate; things were much better than we had anticipated. The two of us are both still alive!” Two soldiers flew shoulder-to-shoulder, laughing loudly.

“We three brothers have finally adventured through the Planar Battlefield, and have had the chance to witness so many commanders do battle. We even saw two Paragons fight. I regret nothing. To be able to leave this place alive is an unexpected plus. Haha…right. I even acquired seventy six soldier badges. You?”

“I have fifty as well. When the two of us add them together, we will have enough to swap for a drop of Sovereign’s Might.”

“Haha, yet another gain.”

The surviving soldiers were all very happy, chatting and laughing amongst themselves. Those soldiers who dared come here to the Planar Battlefield had all been living for countless years; they wanted to see for themselves the Planar Battlefield and perhaps watch a group of commanders battle amongst themselves. They felt no regrets. For them to survive it? It was an unexpected, pleasant surprise.

“Boss.” Bebe suddenly said.

“Hm?” Linley looked towards him, and Bebe continued, “Boss, if you were a Six Star Fiend who had trained for countless years without making any progress, would you have made the same choice as them?”

“Trained for countless years with no progress?”

Linley was stunned.

If he truly was unable to make any further progress, and had to live a long, endless life…when he grew tired of everything, perhaps he truly would choose to give up his divine clone and enter the legendary Planar Battlefield to experience it personally.

“I would make the same choice.” Linley said in a low voice. “If I cannot reach the peak, then I must at least see for myself the place where peak experts gather; the ‘Planar Battlefield.’”

Anyone who had the heart of an expert would be filled with eagerness towards the battlefield of the supreme experts, the ‘Planar Battlefield’.

“Haha, Linley!” A joyful call rang out.

Linley and Bebe turned, only to see Reisgem and Reihom fly over at high speed. Linley laughed and said, “Reisgem, from that look on your face, you acquired enough military merits, yes?”

“Naturally!” Reisgem raised his eyebrows, saying smugly, “But it really was dangerous. The Light alliance was defeated too quickly, resulting in the commanders of the Light alliance fleeing quite quickly as well. If Reihom and I hadn’t joined forces and moved fast enough, we probably wouldn’t have been able to gain enough badges.”

“Linley, look. Quite a few people are paying attention to you.” Reisgem said in a lowered voice.

Linley turned his head to look.

Many amongst the thronging masses of returning soldiers were looking towards Linley.

“That one dressed in the sky-blue robes is Linley. Him, over there!”

“He defeated a Paragon?”

“I personally witnessed it. How could it be false? That was so motherf*cking incredible. In my lifetime, I’ve seen all sorts of experts fighting. I’ve even seen two Paragons exchanging blows. This was worth it.”

“Linley is too powerful…after this battle, I am going to return to my

material plane. The treasures that I've accumulated over all these years are worth enough to teleport me back. It's time to go back to my homeland. Haha, from the material plane to the Netherworld, and then countless years adventuring in the Netherworld…I've seen many things. It is enough for me. It is time to go home. I wonder what has happened to my homeland in the countless years since I've been gone."

Every single soldier had their own thoughts, their own plans.

Actually, every single person capable of participating in the Planar Wars was an expert. After all, generally only experts at or above the Six Star Fiend level would be chosen as soldiers. But of course, as long as it was approved by a commander, even Five Star Fiend level experts could enter. These soldiers…all had their own dreams. Many of them had come to the Planar Battlefield in pursuit of their dreams.

Earlier, only a portion of the soldiers had witnessed Linley battle Magnus. The news of that battle now spread orally at high speed, and quite a few soldiers turned to look at Linley, wanting to take a look at this Paragon. It wasn't just the soldiers who were paying attention to Linley; even the commanders were staring at Linley from far away.

"He…is actually a Paragon." Woodbridge stared at the distant Linley, not daring to draw near. "If Linley remembers and hates me and kills me when he sees me, that would be terrible." Woodbridge hurriedly made his way towards the planar gateway along with the rest of the army.

There were some who made haste towards the planar gateway, but also some who wanted to make friends with Linley.

"Mr. Linley, during our last meeting, I had no idea that you were this capable."

"Mr. Linley…"

Some commanders walked over, all of them appearing quite friendly.

Linley just said a few polite words, then said towards Reisgem, “Reisgem, Bebe and I are going to the Netherworld. Let’s part ways here.” The Planar Battlefield was connected to eleven planes, and so there were eleven corridors, each of which led to a different location. Linley and Bebe were going to return to the Netherworld, while Reisgem was returning to the Infernal Realm.

“You are returning to the Netherworld?” Reisgem was stunned.

“Right. We still have something to take care of.” Bebe nodded and laughed as well. “Reisgem, after we return to the Infernal Realm, when we have some free time, we’ll pay a visit to your Amethyst Mountains and have a stroll.”

“Fine, then.” Reisgem said with resignation. “Then let’s part ways here. When we return to the Infernal Realm, we’ll meet again.”

Linley, Bebe, Reisgem, and Reihom went their separate ways. Linley just said a few more words of courtesy to the other commanders, then flew with Bebe at high speed towards the Netherworld corridor. Those other commanders could only watch from afar as Linley flew away, not daring to continue bothering him.

The corridor linking the Planar Battlefield and the Netherworld. Linley and Bebe descended from the skies, instantly drawing quite a bit of attention.

“Hm?” As Linley landed, he saw a black-robed figure fly towards him.

“Boss, another one who wants to make friends with you.” Bebe sent mentally.

Linley felt rather repulsed by all this; he recognized this black-robed figure, who was indeed a commander. The black-robed figure had a rather pale face, and his eyes glowed with a faint, oily green light. Upon seeing Linley, the black-robed figure bowed slightly, then sent mentally, “Mr. Linley, on behalf of my master, the Flameforge Sovereign of the Netherworld…I would like to invite you to consider becoming the Emissary of my master.”

“Netherworld. Flameforge Sovereign?” Linley couldn’t help but chuckle.

After revealing his power, he would soon receive invitations from various Sovereigns; Linley was prepared for this. But he hadn’t expected…that he would be invited even before he left the Planar Battlefield. Sovereigns truly did work quite quickly.

“Mr. Linley, as a Paragon, I’m sure that the Sovereign will agree to provide you with any sort of Sovereign artifact you desire. But of course, there is a one artifact limit. As for Sovereign power…we won’t be stingy with it.” The black-robed figure urged.

“Pardon me. At present, I haven’t considered becoming a Sovereign’s Emissary.” Linley smiled.

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley immediately led Bebe to move towards the corridor.

“Mr. Linley…” The black-robed figure wanted to say a few more words of persuasion.

But Linley and Bebe didn’t slow down at all. They flew directly into the corridor, disappearing from the black-robed figure’s field of vision.

Seeing this, the black-robed figure couldn’t help but shake his head. “After he leaves the Planar Battlefield, there will definitely be many Sovereigns who will invite him. My master probably has no hope of succeeding.” There were differences between Sovereigns as well. For someone at the Paragon level, it was indeed up to them who they wanted to serve as an Emissary for.

Chapter 62 – Who Is Alive – Who Is Dead?

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 62, Who Is Alive, Who Is Dead?

The planar corridor was filled with countless people, and the walls of the corridor flowed with rainbow-colored light.

Linley and Bebe were amidst the crowds, flying towards the exit.

“Almost there!” Linley felt his heat trembling.

“Dixie. Boss Yale. George…and, and my father!” Although he had reached the peak of power, Linley was currently extremely nervous. “I hope they are still alive!” The constant slaughter going on amongst the undead, and the fact that his father had died close to three thousand years ago, meant that the chance his father had truly died was very high.

Linley turned to look at Bebe, who clearly was rather nervous as well.

“Bebe, it’s fine. Everyone will be alive and well.” Linley sent.

“Right.” Bebe hurriedly nodded. As they chatted, they saw that up ahead, a gateway that was completely filled with a black, netherworldly light had appeared.

They advanced into it alongside the crowds of people. Bebe and Linley entered the gateway, arriving at a vast, wide hall.

Flamebone Mountain. At the dimensional gate.

When Linley had come from here to the Planar Battlefield, there had been very few people here, but now, the entire hall was filled with people. A shouting voice could be heard. “Everyone, come here to turn in your badges and have your military merits recorded! Soldiers, all of you, line up and go over there! Commanders, come to me!”

Linley and Bebe turned and saw that the speaker was that Sovereign's Emissary, the silver-haired elder, Gallen.

Within the hall, there were multiple tables, each of which had scribes seated behind them. The scribes were constantly recording military merits, and within the corridors, there were now long lines; everyone had to turn in their badge and have it recorded before they were permitted to leave. Only the space in front of the Sovereign's Emissary, Gallen, was empty.

Commanders were quite rare, after all.

"Mr. Gallen." Linley called out with a light laugh as he flew over.

"Lord Linley, congratulations. You were able to return alive." Gallen, upon seeing Linley and Bebe, began to smile. That stern-faced shout of his was meant for the ordinary soldiers; to commanders who were of similar rank to him, he was still quite friendly.

"How'd it go? Did you acquire enough military merits this time?" Gallen chortled.

"I have enough." Linley nodded.

Gallen looked at Linley in surprise. To acquire a Sovereign artifact required ten enemy commander badges. "I had no idea. Impressive! Mr. Linley, give the badges to me. I will take care of this comrade of yours by your side as well. If he goes to my subordinates, he will spend a very long time in line."

Linley turned and glanced at the line. Indeed, the line had already formed a series of circles within the main hall, and many had to wait in midair.

Linley and Bebe each withdrew their blood-red badges and their black badges, handing them over.

This was a very strict rule; if they weren't in possession of their badges, they would be put to death.

“Since you already have enough military merits, there is no need for me to record them. You can go visit the Sovereign directly and have them make a Sovereign artifact for you.” Gallen said with a laugh. “The Sovereigns all have a copy of the records indicating how many military merits the commanders who went through the Planar War possess. You only need to go provide the enemy badges you acquired, and the Sovereign shall know.”

As he spoke, Gallen pointed towards a long, open corridor behind him.

“You can leave by this private exit and go see the Sovereign.” Gallen laughed.

“See the Sovereign? See the Sovereign in person?” Bebe said, astonished.

Gallen laughed. “Of course not. Sovereigns aren’t going to waste time coming. The Sovereign you will be seeing will just be an energy construct. The Sovereign’s true body is still far away, in another part of the Netherworld.”

“Mr. Linley!” A warm greeting rang out. Linley and Bebe both turned to look; the speaker was a violet-robed, black-haired man.

“Worthington [Wo’sen’te]!” Linley nodded slightly. Linley had met this commander before and remembered him.

Gallen, upon seeing him, immediately laughed. “Oh, Lord Worthington. Congratulations.” Everyone who survived a Planar War deserved to be congratulated. Gallen continued, “Lord Worthington, did you acquire enough military merits this time? Tartarus Lord Linley has enough, and he entered a hundred years after you did.”

“I’m not quite there yet. Here are three commander badges. Record them down.” Worthington took out three golden commander badges and his own blood-red badge, then chortled, “Gallen, it is perfectly natural for Mr. Linley to have acquired enough military merits. How can I compare to Mr. Linley? Mr. Linley is a Paragon, after all.”

A look of astonishment instantly appeared on Gallen's face as he turned to stare at Linley.

"Paragon?" Gallen was very stunned.

"Naturally." Worthington laughed loudly. "Mr. Linley had a grand duel with the Paragon 'Magnus' in the air above the Stellar Corridor of the Planar Battlefield. The other commanders and countless soldiers present had no choice but to step back and stop fighting! Magnus was even driven by Mr. Linley into chaotic space."

Gallen couldn't believe it.

"You two can keep chatting. I'll go visit the Sovereign." Linley said with a smile, and then went towards the corridor behind Gallen alongside Bebe. Linley could still hear the conversation going on behind him…

"Linley became a Paragon? What's this about. Tell me about it in detail."

"I'll discuss this with you later. Just now, you referred to Mr. Linley as a 'Tartarus Lord'; what's this about? Isn't he an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan?"

Linley didn't hear the following words, because he had already moved deep into the tunnel. This tunnel was very wide, at least five meters or so, and nearly four meters high. The walls of the corridor were all faintly glowing with a blurry green light, causing it to seem very dreamlike and illusory. After walking for a few moments…

In front of Linley, a four-way intersection appeared.

"Now where should we go?" Bebe was rather baffled.

Linley carefully looked at the tunnels, but there was no one else here. Suddenly, a voice rang out in Linley's mind. "Linley, the two of you, enter the tunnel on the left. After walking for a bit, you'll see me."

“The Chief Sovereign of Death!” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“Bebe, come this way.” Linley immediately led Bebe towards the tunnel on the left. After walking just a hundred meters, they exited the tunnel and arrived at a wide, shining hall.

Linley swept the area with his gaze. There was no one seated on the throne within the hall, but by the sides of the hall, there was a lithe, graceful figure dressed in a violet robe, with long blood-red hair cascading down her shoulders. Suddenly, this figure turned, and as she swept Linley with her gaze, he couldn’t help but feel his heart tremble.

“Sovereign.” Linley bowed slightly.

This person was the Chief Sovereign of Death, but Linley now had the feeling that although the Chief Sovereign of Death was emanating a perceptible aura of majesty, the aura wasn’t that strong. Linley could tell… that this figure should have been a mere clone which the Sovereign created from energy.

“Admirable.” The Chief Sovereign of Death looked at Linley, the corners of her lips crooking upwards slightly. “Linley, it’s quite rare for me to admire someone. However…I now quite admire you. After all, although I am the Chief Sovereign of Death, in terms of the Laws, I have yet to become a Paragon. But you have! Formidable!”

Linley was stunned.

When chatting with Reisgem, Linley had learned that becoming a Sovereign didn’t have anything to do with whether one was a Paragon or not. Many Sovereigns had yet to become Paragons. But Linley hadn’t imagined…that even someone as powerful as the Chief Sovereign of Death was yet to be a Paragon.

However, Linley himself wasn’t a Paragon, just a Soul Mutate.

Still, Linley temporarily didn't wish to publicize this. Thus, he accepted others calling him a Paragon. After all, a four-clone Soul Mutate was simply too astonishing.

"It's been just a thousand years or so, but you've actually reached such a level." The Chief Sovereign of Death let out a sigh of praise.

"Sovereign." Linley bowed slightly, then said respectfully, "According to our earlier agreement, for each commander badge I acquired, you would help me find one person and allow them to regain their memories. I've come now to ask you, Sovereign, to carry out this agreement." Linley went straight to the heart of the matter!

The Chief Sovereign of Death gave Linley a sidelong glance. She still naturally emanated a high, lofty aura of looking down at all other creatures.

"Be my Emissary." The Chief Sovereign of Death said casually.

Linley was slightly startled.

Linley didn't want to become a Sovereign's Emissary, but the speaker was the Chief Sovereign of Death. If the Chief Sovereign of Death were to use saving Linley's family and friends as leverage, there really would be nothing else Linley could do.

"Sovereign." Bebe said unhappily. "Can it be that you are going to threaten my Boss, Sovereign?"

The Chief Sovereign of Death glanced sideways at Bebe, and that clear, icy gaze caused Bebe's heart to tremble. The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly, "Of course not! As the Chief Sovereign, whatever I have said, I will naturally uphold. For each enemy commander badge, I will find a person for you and allow that person to regain his or her memories. As for inviting you to become my Emissary, that's something else. You can choose to decline."

Linley bowed slightly, then refused in a roundabout way. "Forgive me,

Sovereign. For now, I'm not yet prepared to become someone's Emissary."

"That's fine as well." The Chief Sovereign of Death's voice turned icy. "Per our agreement, take out your commander badges. Let me warn you in advance; the chances of death are very, very high…if the person you are looking for is already dead, you can't blame anyone else. I'm only responsible for searching for them and restoring their memories."

"Of course." Linley took a deep breath, then took out four commander badges, with Bebe taking out two.

"Six?" The Chief Sovereign of Death raised an eyebrow. "Speak, then. Who are you searching for."

"The first is my good friend, also from the Yulan Plane. Yale Dawson!" Linley said quickly.

The Chief Sovereign of Death nodded slightly. "Wait a moment. My true body will search through the Netherworld Heart." After all, even the Chief Sovereign of Death, just by relying on her own powers, couldn't possibly search the entire Netherworld for a single undead with just a name. But the 'Netherworld Heart' was different; this was the solidification of the Laws which controlled the Netherworld itself, in material form.

This was the Heart of the Netherworld!

Through the Netherworld Heart, one could easily find any person who had been transformed into an undead after death.

"I hope Boss Yale is still alive." Linley felt nervous, while Bebe couldn't help but clutch at Linley's hands.

"Found him." The Chief Sovereign of Death nodded. "Hm? Strange. He's actually a netherblood spirit."

"Netherblood spirit?" Linley said, startled.

“Right. There are many types of undead; generally speaking, when an ordinary mortal dies and becomes a netherblood spirit, it is because they were filled with tremendous hatred, anger, and a desire to kill. Naturally, this means that netherblood spirits are fairly common amongst undead.” The Chief Sovereign of Death gave Linley a sidelong glance. “Your luck isn’t bad. Not only is he alive, he is also a Saint-level undead. Next.”

Linley took a deep breath, then said, “My Second Bro, George.”

“Oh?” A hint of a smile played at the corners of the Chief Sovereign of Death’s lips.

Linley stared at the Chief Sovereign of Death. “Your ‘Second Bro’, George, is alive as well. In addition, he’s a Demigod. There is no need for me to restore his memories.”

“He became a Deity?” Linley couldn’t help but feel delight.

It made sense. Dixie and George both died as Saints; a Saint-level undead did indeed have the chance to become a Deity.

“The third.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly.

“The third one is my wife’s elder brother, Dixie.” Linley said hurriedly. Linley had to admit, this Netherworld Heart was truly miraculous; with just some basic information, it was able to find his family and friends. Linley had no idea…that in reality, just based on the name ‘Linley’, the Netherworld Heart would be able to instantly find everyone connected to him.”

To the Chief Sovereign of Death, finding one person and finding ten people was almost the same. Still…the Chief Sovereign of Death wouldn’t possibly tell Linley this.

“Dixie? Hey, he became Deity as well.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said. “However, his divine clone is dead, while his Saint-level body remains hiding within the Undead Realm. He doesn’t need me to restore his memory

either."

Linley felt a surge of joy in his heart. Although Dixie had become a Deity, then lost his divine clone, he was still alive. Now, only four were remaining. Next was his father…Hogg!

His father…

"My father, Hogg!" Linley said slowly.

The Chief Sovereign of Death searched for a moment, then nodded and said. "The four you searched for are all quite decent. Two became Deities, while the other two became Saints. Your father is currently a Saint-level undead…mm. No wonder your father is still alive. He's a member of the Azure Dragon clan. His soul is decent."

Although Hogg hadn't regained his memories, he was still a member of the Azure Dragon clan. His soul was still far more powerful than the souls of most undead.

"Father…is still…" Linley was wildly overjoyed.

He had been quite afraid, but the end results had been miraculous. All four of the people he had been searching for were alive.

Actually, this had to do with the four of them themselves. The stronger one was, the higher the chances for survival; two were Saint-level undead to begin with, and thus naturally had higher chances for survival to begin with. Yale had died in hatred and had become a netherblood spirit, and was quite powerful when alive. As for Hogg, his soul was also very powerful.

"Two others. My brother Bebe's parents." Linley said hurriedly. Linley realized that aside from the first person, 'Yale', the Sovereign was able to almost instantly reply to him with regards to the status of the others. It was as though the searching process was quite fast.

"Right, my father and my mother." Bebe said hurriedly. "But I don't know

their names."

"I don't need the names. Still, you'll have to wait a time." The Chief Sovereign of Death glanced sideways at Bebe.

Linley looked encouragingly at Bebe. He sent mentally, "Don't worry, Bebe. Your parents were magical beasts of the ninth rank; they were quite powerful when alive, and they were also of Beirut's clan. Their souls should be fairly powerful as well. There is a good chance they are alive!"

"Right." Bebe took a deep breath, then nodded.

Linley could sense that Bebe was currently very nervous. Bebe had never met his parents before, after all. They waited a time, and then…

"Your luck is excellent." The Chief Sovereign of Death looked at Bebe in surprised. "Your parents are both Saint-level undead, and fairly powerful ones at that."

"Wonderful!" Bebe clenched his fist, so excited his face was completely red.

Linley was happy for Bebe as well. Ever since he had undergone his soul mutation, it seemed as though his luck had improved. Every single person he had searched for was still alive.

Suddenly…

A thought flashed past Linley's mind. "Bebe's parents. Then…my mother?" Bebe had never seen his parents, but Linley had no memories of his mother either; although he had never met his mother, she was still his mother. His own mother!"

"Sovereign, can you search for one more person for me?" Linley said nervously.

"No. Six badges, six chances." The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly,

not budging at all.

The nearby Bebe said hurriedly, “Sovereign, two of the people my Boss asked you to search for are Deities; there’s no need for you to restore their memories. They shouldn’t count, right. Or let’s just say that those two just represented a single chance.”

“And who are you to make that decision?” The Sovereign glanced sideways at Bebe. “The six chances are all used up.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a bit frantic.

“But of course…if you are willing to become my Emissary, as your Sovereign, I would be willing to search a few more times for you, free of charge.” The Chief Sovereign of Death suddenly said.

Linley was stunned.

Did he have to become a Sovereign’s Emissary?

“Boss?” Bebe couldn’t help but look at Linley.

“Sovereign.” Linley frowned as he spoke. “Actually, a single commander badge isn’t that valuable. Given my status, if I were to leave…I could find another commander and borrow a badge from him. It can be said that I would owe that person a favor. I trust others would agree to my request.”

A favor from Linley, in exchange for a commander badge? Many commanders would be willing to engage in this sort of a deal.

“True.” The Chief Sovereign of Death nodded.

“Then Sovereign…how about this. If you are able to find the person I am looking for, then I am willing to become your Emissary. If you aren’t able to find this person, or if she is already dead, then let’s drop the matter of becoming your Emissary.” Linley looked at the Chief Sovereign of Death.

The Chief Sovereign of Death looked at Linley, pausing momentarily, then laughed and nodded. “Fine. I accept.” Doing another search, as far as the Chief Sovereign of Death was concerned, didn’t require much effort. The Chief Sovereign of Death knew that if she didn’t agree, Linley probably really would go borrow another badge.

“I want to search for my mother…” Linley said slowly.

Chapter 63 – Return

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 63, Return

“Your mother?” The Chief Sovereign of Death gave Linley a surprised glance.

As the Chief Sovereign of Death saw it, it would’ve made sense if Linley had immediately wanted to locate his parents. To first search for his father…and then leave his mother for later.

“Wait a moment.” The Chief Sovereign of Death shut her eyes.

Linley felt nervousness in his heart. “Mother…I’ve never before met my mother!” In Linley’s memory, ‘mother’ was a word that was very distant from him. He had no recollections of that word in his mind. But Linley was able to see the parents of others, and occasionally would think of his own mother. What was his own mother like?

“Strange.” The Chief Sovereign of Death opened her eyes, her cold, gloomy gaze falling on Linley’s face.

“What is it?” Linley said hurriedly. Linley was worried about his mother; after all, compared to his father or his friends, when she was alive, she was very weak. Although her soul was very pure, her strength wasn’t very great.

“You weren’t able to find her?” The nearby Bebe couldn’t help but feel worried for Linley.

The Chief Sovereign of Death just frowned, looking at Linley with some irritation. “Linley, are you trying to prank me?”

Linley didn’t understand. He hurriedly said, “Sovereign, how would I dare prank you? Sovereign, please tell me, what is the situation with my mother? Is she undead? Regardless of whether she is alive or dead, please tell me

directly.” Linley felt nervous, but the look on the face of the Chief Sovereign of Death became even more unsightly.

“Hmph, Linley, your mother isn’t dead at all, nor has she become an undead! And yet, you ask me to search for her?” A hint of a baleful look was in the eyes of the Chief Sovereign of Death.

Of course the Chief Sovereign of Death would feel irritated!

Linley had made a bet with her earlier; if Linley’s mother was dead, then at least the Chief Sovereign of Death had a chance for winning the bet. But if Linley’s mother wasn’t even dead, how could the Chief Sovereign of Death possibly find her? If his mother was alive, and yet Linley asked the Chief Sovereign of Death to search for her…then that meant Linley was just toying with her!

“My mother isn’t dead?” Linley couldn’t believe it.

The nearby Bebe stared, wide-eyed. “Not dead? No way. That King of Fenlai said it himself. It shouldn’t be false.”

“Your mother isn’t dead.” The Chief Sovereign of Death had a dark look on her face. “Or, she might have died with her soul being destroyed as well. One thing is for certain; your mother’s soul isn’t in the Netherworld at all, nor has she transformed into an undead. There is a record in the Netherworld Heart of every single person who was transformed into an undead. There’s no way it wouldn’t find her if she was here!”

Linley frowned.

What sort of status did the Chief Sovereign of Death have? There was no way she would lie! And yet, his mother clearly had passed away. What was going on?

“Sovereign.” Linley hurriedly said. “My mother did indeed pass away long ago. Based on my investigations, when my mother died, her soul was offered by the Radiant Church of a material plane to the ‘Radiant

Sovereign', the Chief Sovereign of Light. The Chief Sovereign of Light is a Chief Sovereign; would he care about a common soul? Is it possible that the soul would actually be transferred through the planes to the Divine Light Plane?"

Linley didn't believe this at all.

The Chief Sovereign of Death, upon hearing this, completely understood. She gave Linley a cold glance. "If things transpired as you stated, then your mother's soul should indeed have gone to the Divine Light Plane. It is under the complete control of the Chief Sovereign of Light, now. In short, her soul isn't under my control."

"The Divine Light Plane?" Linley was frantic. He said, "Is there any way for me to bring my mother back?"

"Impossible!"

The Chief Sovereign of Death said this with absolute certainty. "All the souls collected by the Chief Sovereign of Light will never regain their free will. I will tell you this…the Angels of the Divine Light Realm are completely loyal to the Sovereigns of Light; there is no way they will ever be disloyal. Even if you find the Angel which your mother was transformed into, there is no way she will return."

"Angels?" Linley knew a few things about these Angels.

The Angels were a powerful military race controlled by the Sovereigns of Light. According to the legends, the Sovereigns created the Angels, and although they were intelligent, they were described as 'human-shaped war machines'. His mother had become an Angel?

"Why else would the Sovereigns of Light collect pure souls? The purpose is to strengthen their Angel Armies." The Chief Sovereign of Death snickered.

"There's no way for me to bring my mother back?" Linley didn't understand.

“Reincarnated undead at least have their freedom. But Angels…” The Chief Sovereign of Death glanced sideways at Linley. “Linley, you have heard of ‘Deathgod Golems’, human-shaped weapons of war, yes? Angels are a bit more special than Deathgod Golems; they have their own intelligence, after all. But there is one thing that they share; Angels will never betray their masters, the Sovereigns of Light. In addition, given the temper of the Chief Sovereign of Light? Forget about you; even if other Sovereigns personally visited him and asked him to give one of his Angels freedom, it still wouldn’t be very likely.”

Hearing this, Linley’s heart sank.

The Chief Sovereign of Light was a Chief Sovereign, after all!

“Is there anything else? If there is nothing else, I am going to leave.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly.

Linley didn’t think about it any longer, hurriedly saying, “There’s one more thing I would like to ask about.”

“You really are a lot of trouble.” The Chief Sovereign of Death nodded slightly. “Speak, then.” The Chief Sovereign of Death’s attitude towards Linley was clearly much better now than back on the Abyssal Mountain. Clearly, Linley’s becoming a ‘Paragon’ had improved her view of him greatly. This was only normal…Sovereigns generally admired people who were able to become Paragons.

After all, becoming a Sovereign was a matter of fate and luck.

But Paragons? That was a matter of true skill and ability.

“I’d like to ask, if a person’s soul is dissipated, is there any way to bring that person back to life?” Linley said nervously. The nearby Bebe couldn’t help but glance at Linley. “For Boss to discuss this…he must be thinking about Grandpa Doehring.” Bebe knew very well how deep Linley’s affection for Doehring Cowart was.

The Chief Sovereign of Death chuckled. “Are you joking? Once a person’s soul is dissipated, that person is definitely dead. How can that person be brought back?”

“Oh…” That final hint of hope in Linley’s heart was shattered.

He hadn’t held much hope to begin with, just a tiny bit of it.

The Chief Sovereign of Death raised an eyebrow, and then a hint of a smile appeared on her face. “Actually, Linley, there might be one small chance for a person whose soul was dissipated to come back to life.”

“Eh?” Linley’s eyes suddenly turned bright and sharp, and he stared fixedly at the Chief Sovereign of Death. “Sovereign, what method is that?”

The Chief Sovereign of Death was startled by the look in Linley’s eyes, but her amusement only grew. “A person whose soul is dissipated will definitely die. This is the view of the Sovereigns. But according to legend, the ‘Overgod of Life’ is the personification of the Edicts of Life; she, herself, is the Edict of Life. The way the universe functions is controlled by the Edicts. I’m not able to save a person whose soul was dissipated…but perhaps the Overgod of Life is.”

“Right. Right.” Linley couldn’t help but feel filled with excitement. “The functioning of the universe is controlled by the Edicts. The Overgod of Life, as a personification of the Edicts, would definitely be able to save that person.”

“This is just my opinion. I’m not an Overgod. I can’t be completely certain as to whether an Overgod can save such a person or not.” The Chief Sovereign of Death laughed calmly. “However, as I see it, Overgods are completely omnipotent. It would appear that there is nothing in the boundless universe which they cannot accomplish. They are the Edicts, after all!”

This was just a guess of the Chief Sovereign of Death, but this guess was

something Linley felt was plausible!

The Overgod of Life had control over life; perhaps rescue truly was possible.

“I have no more time to waste here with you.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said calmly. “The six people you mentioned are all spread out throughout the Netherworld. I will arrange for them to be brought to the Abyssal Mountain. You should now make haste to the Abyssal Mountain… and reunite with your family and friends.” As soon as these words were spoken…

The Chief Sovereign of Death’s body disappeared, the energy returning to the world.

This was just an energy clone, after all.

Linley and Bebe looked at each other.

“Boss, congratulations.” Bebe chortled.

Linley was all smiles. All of Linley’s doubts had been resolved upon hearing this news from the Chief Sovereign of Death. His father and friends were able to return…and as for his mother, she had become an Angel of the Divine Light Plane. As for Grandpa Doehring, perhaps if he were able to meet the Overgod of Life, Linley would be able to ask for him to be revived.

This slender hope filled Linley with will and energy!

“Everything will work out.” Linley said quietly to himself.

“Bebe, let’s go. We’ll go to the Abyssal Mountain.” Linley didn’t want to stay here at Flamebone Mountain. He immediately left with Bebe, and then entered their metallic lifeform, quickly advancing towards the Abyssal Mountain.

The Netherworld. Northbone Prefecture. The lair of the bandits of the eighteen mountain ranges. One of the mountain ranges.

Dark clouds swirled in the air above like a black dragon, covering the night sky. The bloody, devilish moon could faintly be seen.

George was currently seated before the window to his room, his head raised as he stared towards the eerie, bloody moon.

“The wealth I have accumulated should be enough to buy a house within the city.” George was musing to himself. “More importantly, I need to find a chance to go to the city. Right…three months later, a caravan will be sent to the city to sell off some things that we’ve robbed. Three months from now, then!”

This entire time, George had been slowly, unhurriedly waiting. Although he was a steward for these bandits, in charge of dividing up the wealth, George didn’t dare to embezzle too much. Still, having spent so many years as an official, he was in charge of the wealth for these experts, most of whom only knew how to train and to kill but knew nothing about financial management. Thus, it was a fairly relaxed position for him. Over the years…the bandits had become quite fond of George.

As they saw it, this steward was generous and kind, and divided things up fairly. Everyone agreed with his judgments.

Suddenly…

“Twelfth Bro!” A bellow echoed out.

“Who is it?” George frowned, immediately heading to the living room.

Quite a few people emerged from within the castle. The leader of this mountain branch, a big, bald fellow, strode out as well. “Hey, Boss. What’s the rush?” As he spoke, he took his guards to go welcome the person. He could tell that the speaker was the chief of the eighteen mountain ranges.

The light of the eerie, bloody-red moon seemed to cover the entire mountain range with a layer of blood.

“Twelfth Bro, hurry up!” A deep voice echoed.

George was behind the big, bald fellow. By now, George also recognized the bearded dwarf who arrived, alongside a violet-robed, golden-haired man. The bearded dwarf was the chief of their eighteen mountain ranges, ‘Kleopatra’. “Who is the person next to the chief?” George was rather puzzled. How was it that there was a person amongst their ranks he didn’t recognize, and yet held a high rank?

“The person next to me is the Seven Star Specter, Lord Beverly [Be’wei’li].” The bearded dwarf said.

The bald man immediately bowed. “Milord.”

The violet-robed, golden-haired man gave him a calm glance, but then his gaze fell upon George who stood behind the bald man. George, seeing this, was secretly shocked. “Why is this Seven Star Specter staring at me?” As George saw it, an expert on the level of a Seven Star Specter was definitely one of the supreme experts of the Netherworld.

“You are George, yes?” The violet-robed, golden-haired man said calmly.

“Uh…yes.” George was shocked.

“In your previous life, did you come from the Yulan Plane?” A rare hint of a smile appeared in the eyes of the violet-robed, golden-haired man.

George was stunned, but he still nodded in acknowledgment.

“Very good. Follow me.” The violet-robed man said.

“Milord Beverly, dare I ask, why are you taking George away?” The bald man said hurriedly. He had been very satisfied with George being his steward over these many years; George carried out all tasks fastidiously,

making it so that he hadn't had to worry about anything. He truly didn't want to let George leave.

The violet-robed man couldn't help but frown.

"Twelfth Bro." The big bearded dwarf couldn't help but bark in rebuke.

"Chief, let me follow him." George felt grateful to the bald man for standing up for him right now, but he also knew that the request of a Seven Star Specter was something which these bandits wouldn't dare refuse.

"George…" The bald man looked at him, then slapped George on the shoulders.

George squeezed out a smile as well, but his heart was filled with a sour feeling. "I had prepared for so many years. We were about to go to the city…why did this person suddenly appear to take me away? It's hard to predict what will happen on this trip. By the looks of it, my reunion with Third Bro and the others will become even more difficult."

"Don't worry, this isn't a bad thing for you." The violet-robed, golden-haired man gave him a sidelong glance, then said calmly, "The Sovereign made these arrangements."

"The Sovereign?"

George and the surrounding people were shocked.

"You. Follow me." The violet-robed man looked at George and spoke in a calm voice.

"Yes." George didn't dare to disobey, but in his heart, he was utterly mystified. "I'm just a minor figure. Why would I attract the interest of a Sovereign to the point of sending someone for me?" George didn't understand, but all he could do was follow this Seven Star Specter and depart.

Chapter 64 – Gathered From Many Places

Book 19, Metamorphosis – Chapter 64, Gathered From Many Places

The skies were dark, and the vast earth seemed dry and barren.

This was the northern part of the Undead Realm, the ‘Ashbelle’ [A’she’bei’er] Drylands. Group of skeletons were scattered throughout the drylands, along with groups of zombies. Undead generally moved in groups; very few dared to move about by themselves.

Suddenly, those slowly shambling zombies suddenly turned to look towards one direction.

A rhythmic sound could be heard coming from the ground. “Graaaaaaawr.” A gold-furred zombie raised its head, releasing a howl. Instantly, the group of zombies all began to move at high speed, but moments later, more than ten black blurs emerged from the ground at high speed. These ten blurs were ‘Black Knights’, fairly powerful undead in the Undead Realm.

Even the weakest Black Knight was at least an undead of the fifth rank.

This squad of Black Knights had a total of nineteen members, with the leader being dressed in blood-red armor. His face was covered by a visor, but his cold gaze swept out through it towards the surrounding area. Those weaker undead were all so terrified that they hurriedly fled, but the Black Knights were able to easily catch up to them.

“Aaaaaaaah!” The leading Black Knight raised his head, letting out a furious roar, as though giving vent to his anger.

The eighteen Black Knights didn’t understand; their lord was a very powerful Saint-level Black Knight, a monarch of the Undead Realm who had his own castle and a large number of Black Knights under his control. But today, their monarch had led his Black Knights to randomly, furiously

gallop throughout the drylands.

Gallop around senselessly while venting!

“Enough. Let’s return.” The Black Knight leader said calmly.

“Yes, milord.”

The nineteen Black Knights once more began to gallop backwards. In the Ashbelle Drylands, every single Saint was considered a supreme expert, and this Black Knight was one of the ranked experts of this region.

“I…I suddenly regained my memories from my previous life. What is going on?” The Black Knight leader’s heart was filled with confusion and shock.

“I…will I ever be able to return to the Yulan Plane?” The Black Knight leader said quietly to himself.

“My sons. Linley. Wharton. How are they? It has been over two thousand years. Are they Saint-level Dragonblood Warriors now, or have they yet to reach the Saint rank? Did they become undead instead?” The Black Knight leader’s heart was filled with complex emotions. Ever since he regained his memories, his mind had never stopped pondering.

This Black Knight leader was Linley’s father…Hogg!

Ever since gaining his memories from his past life, Hogg was no longer able to remain calm-minded. He missed his sons. He also wanted to get revenge for his wife. But he understood that given that more than two thousand years had passed, Duke Patterson of the Kingdom of Fenlai had probably died of old age long ago.

In the blink of an eye, forty years passed since the day Hogg regained his memories.

The castle of the Black Knights. Hogg was still dressed in that bloody red armor. He stood at the very peak of the castle, his head raised as he stared

into the dark skies. Suddenly, a figure flew over at high speed.

“Huh?” Hogg was startled.

“Whoosh!” The person charged straight downwards at extremely high speed.

“Who is it!” Hogg let out a low growl.

“Clang!” At the same instant, the many armored Black Knights within the castle all rose to their feet.

“Haha…” The person let out a loud laugh, and then a terrifying majestic presence spread out. A powerful divine presence covered the entire castle, and all of the Black Knights within felt as though the end had come. All of them knelt in terror; this was an absolute difference in levels.

Hogg raised his head to look at this person. This was someone who looked like a youth, with short silver hair and a baby’s face.

“Hogg?” The youth said casually.

Hogg was shocked!

Before regaining his memories, he had no idea that his name was ‘Hogg’. As Hogg saw it…in this world, aside from himself, there shouldn’t be anyone else who knew who his true identity was. But this person before him had just addressed him by his name. “Who are you?” Hogg stared at this person. “Was it you who gave me my memories back?”

“I don’t have that power.” The youth laughed softly. “Only Sovereigns are capable of restoring your memories. Come with me!”

“Sovereign? I…” Hogg didn’t even have the chance to argue before a surge of divine power swept out and bound him. The youth thus forcibly carried Hogg off, and the two flew towards the south. That youth even mumbled, “This undead was actually so far away. I had to go from the Netherworld to

this place, and now go all the way back to the Abyssal Mountain. This really is quite a journey."

The many Black Knights of the castle stared, speechless, as their monarch was thus dragged away. They weren't able to do anything about it.

Linley's father. Yale. George. Dixie. Bebe's father and mother. The Chief Sovereign of Death arranged for people to take them all away.

The Netherworld. The base of the Abyssal Mountain. Within the Abyssal Inn.

Linley was seated in a chair, while Bebe was standing and frowning. "Boss. We've been here for more than ten years now, but no one has arrived. How much longer are we supposed to wait for?"

Linley and Bebe had arrived at the Abyssal Mountain long ago, but as there were no other residences here at the Abyssal Mountain, the Chief Sovereign of Death had permitted Linley and Bebe to remain within the Inn. But who would have imagined that despite the passage of more than ten years, Linley had yet to see a single person arrive?

"Keep waiting." Linley sat there calmly on his chair, flipping through a book. "The Sovereign arranged for people to find Boss Yale and the others and bring them back. They are all in different locations. My father is in the Undead Realm, and from there to here is quite a journey. It's not that they are slow; rather, it's that we were too fast in flying from Tartarus to the Abyssal Mountain."

Although they rode on a metallic lifeform, Linley had been able to infuse his Will into the metallic lifeform and make it move much faster. In less than ten years, they had travelled from Tartarus to the Abyssal Mountain.

Suddenly…

Linley raised his head to look towards the skies. Bebe looked at Linley in surprise. "Boss, what is it?"

“A powerful aura.” Linley said in a soft voice. In the Netherworld, Linley had incredible powers of control over the surrounding area; after all, the spatial walls of the Netherworld were far weaker than in the Planar Battlefield. Upon sensing an expert draw near, Linley spread out his divine sense…

A hundred kilometers away, a metallic lifeform shaped like a golden fish flew towards the inn, with George and that violet-robed, golden-haired man within it.

George glanced at the violet-robed man. “This Seven Star Specter, Beverly, said that he came to receive me at the orders of the Sovereign, but says he has no idea why the Sovereign wishes to see me.” George himself didn’t understand; he was a Demigod, a minor figure. People like him within the Netherworld were beyond count. Why would the Sovereign want to see him?”

“Here we are.” Beverly said.

The metallic lifeform suddenly disappeared, with Beverly and George appearing in midair.

“Second Bro!” An utterly delighted voice rang out, while at the same time, a figure suddenly appeared in front of George and Beverly.

“What sort of speed is this? I am a Seven Star Specter, but I wasn’t even able to react!” Beverly was completely stunned. He had no idea; even commander-level experts, when faced with the speed of a Paragon, would find it hard to react, much less him, an ordinary Seven Star Specter.

George’s body trembled as he stared at the person in front of him.

That familiar figure, that familiar face, that familiar smile…

“Third Bro!” George was so excited that his face instantly turned red, and he charged forwards, wrapping his arms tightly around Linley.

“Haha, Second Bro, I’ve finally found you.” Linley tightly embraced his friend for a long while before releasing him. Linley was incomparably moved upon seeing George, his lifelong friend since youth.

“Third Bro, you…why are you here?” Only now did George finally think of this question.

As for Beverly, he bowed slightly towards the direction of the Abyssal Mountain, then turned and left. George, seeing this, couldn’t help but feel surprised. “Beverly, this Seven Star Specter, was supposed to take me to see the Sovereign. He’s leaving?”

“I asked the Sovereign to arrange for you to be brought here.” Linley laughed merrily.

“Third Bro, you asked the Sovereign…?” George was stunned.

After having lived in the Netherworld for a long time, George had learned of the various tiers of power within the Netherworld. Even the highest level experts like Lord Prefects, however, were but ants in the eyes of the Sovereigns. To ask a Sovereign to help out…the difference between a Deity and a Sovereign was like the difference between an ordinary mortal and a Deity. A mortal, ask a Deity to help out? This was utterly inconceivable.

“Haha. What’s the big deal?” Bebe suddenly appeared from nearby, chortling. “George, in a little bit, Yale and Dixie will come as well.”

“Boss Yale?” George looked towards Linley in disbelief. “Third Bro, you actually asked a Sovereign to arrange for so many people to be found and brought over? This…what’s the relationship between you and this Sovereign?”

“Come, let’s go inside first.” Linley said with a laugh.

George’s starting location had been fairly close to the Abyssal Mountain, and so of course it hadn’t taken too long for him to arrive. Shortly after

George's arrival…Dixie arrived as well! And then came Bebe's parents, with Yale coming next.

Yale had arrived!

George and Dixie had died before Yale. They didn't understand how terrible Yale's death had been, but after arriving in the Abyssal Inn, they had learned from Linley and Bebe about what had happened after their deaths in the Yulan continent. After hearing the details, they couldn't help but blaze with rage as well.

"Third Bro! Second Bro! You are here?"

As soon as Yale arrived, upon seeing Linley and George, he was utterly overjoyed.

"Boss Yale." Linley and George couldn't help but rush forward. The three friends tightly embraced each other. When Yale thought of all the suffering he had endured over the years, and how today, he was meeting his dearest friends yet again, he couldn't help but shed tears.

That night, at the banquet.

"I really didn't imagine it!" Yale's eyes were moist, but his face was filled with an excited smile. "I thought that after dying, it all would have ended, but who would have imagined…that I, an undead, would actually regain my memories from my past life, and also be brought here. We three brothers are reunited once more! Third Bro, I have to thank you. You let me once more feel hope. Hope for continuing the lineage of my Dawson clan. Hope for revenge!"

The nearby Dixie sighed as well. "The Netherworld is incredibly dangerous. I had originally managed to train to the point of developing a divine clone, but soon after entering the Netherworld, I died. Fortunately, I was cautious and left my Saint-level original body within the Undead Realm. I had thought that I would have to continue to live and die in those fields of slaughter. Linley, thank you."

In the past, in the Ernst Institute, Linley and Dixie had been acclaimed as the two stars of the Institute.

But now…

That young magus held incredibly powerful influence, to the point of being able to ask a Sovereign for help.

“Enough about these matters. What matters is that we are all together again.” Linley lifted his wineglass in a toast. “Come. What’s past is past. Come, cheers!”

“Cheers!”

Bebe called out happily as well. Next to Bebe was a man and a woman. Bebe’s mother looked very kind, and she was dressed in a long, violet robe. As for Bebe’s father, a strong, baleful aura emanated from him, making him look very cold and remote. But in this situation, even he revealed a smile.

Yale, Dixie, and Bebe’s parents. On the way over, Yale had been given a Demigod spark and refined it to become a Deity. The same had happened for Bebe’s parents. Only Dixie…remained a Saint. Dixie still wanted to rely on his own efforts and continue to train.

For Saint-level undead, as long as they devoured enough souls, once their own soul reached a certain level of strength, they would become Saints.

But to go from being a Saint to a Deity required an understanding of the Laws. For Yale and Bebe’s parents, they held no understanding at all regarding these matters, and so naturally they chose to fuse with a divine spark to become a Deity.

Linley was anxious and impatient by now. Everyone else had arrived, but his father, ‘Hogg’, had yet to come. Linley had even gone to ask the Chief Sovereign of Death, but the Chief Sovereign of Death had only told him to keep waiting.

“Swish!” A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform flew over at high speed.

Within was the Saint-level Black Knight, ‘Hogg’, as well as the silver-haired youth. Hogg had already become a Deity, but of course, he had done so by fusing with a divine spark. Hogg had a very low level of insight into the Laws, and he would probably spend countless years without being able to become a Deity on his own.

“We are arriving up ahead.” The silver-haired youth said with a calm laugh. “This mission is finally at an end.”

“Thank you.” Hogg still bowed gratefully.

“Why thank me?” The silver-haired youth made the metallic lifeform disappear with a thought. Hogg and the silver-haired youth appeared in midair, not too far away from the Abyssal Inn, and right at this moment, a blur suddenly moved through the skies, so fast as to badly startle the silver-haired youth. The blur solidified in front of them.

“Hm?” Hogg looked carefully at the person before him.

The man in front of him was dressed in sky-blue robes, and had long brown hair. His face looked exactly as it had in the past. “He is…?” But Hogg still didn’t dare believe it. He had the feeling…as though the person in front of him had just teleported to him. Even this Seven Star Specter by his side was not capable of such speed. How could this expert be his son?

“You…you are…?” The silver-haired youth was rather frightened. But Linley’s gaze was locked on Hogg!

In Linley’s mind, one scene after another appeared.

His father’s resoluteness and loneliness. Back then, he had protected Linley and Wharton, those two children.

His father’s request to him. His hope that Linley would acquire the

warblade ‘Slaughterer’.

His father’s bitterness, hidden within his heart, which he had borne alone.

His father’s death. Only a letter had been left behind, and only when reading it had Linley learned how tragic his father’s life had been.

…….

Linley stared at the man in front of him, so excited his eyes turned moist.

“Father!” Linley called out.

Hogg stared in disbelief at the person in front of him. When he died, Linley was just a youth. Although Hogg could somewhat see traces of the features of the young Linley in the face of the man before him, in terms of demeanor as well as everything else, the current Linley, one of the supreme Deities of the universe, was far too different from when he had been a child.

“Linley? It, it is you?” Hogg couldn’t help but feel stunned and excited as he looked closely at Linley.

“It’s me, father!” Linley was no longer able to control himself, and his tears came falling down.

Yale, George, Bebe, and the others just watched from afar, smiling as they saw father and son reunite again, after three thousand years had passed.

Chapter 1 – Father and Son

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 1, Father and Son

Hogg's eyes were moist. His body trembled from excitement as he carefully looked at this familiar-feeling youth.

He looked at those eyebrows…those two eyes…that nose…

At the same time, he compared them to the memories he had of the young Linley.

"Linley, it really…really is you?" Hogg's voice was hoarse, and his eyes were red.

"It's me, Father. It really is me!" Linley impatiently wanted to prove himself. "Father, do you remember how, back when we were in our ancestral hall, you asked me to pay my respects to the ancestors of our clan? Do you still remember how you tested me for the Dragonblood in my veins? And…I told you that I had three good friends at the Institute. Two of them are here!"

Linley immediately pointed towards the nearby Yale. "Look. That's Yale, of the Dawson Conglomerate. And there; that's George of the Yulan Empire!"

"And me!" Bebe flew out as well, staring at Hogg. "Uncle Hogg, remember me? I'm that little Shadowmouse." As he spoke, Bebe's body flickered as he transformed into a little black mouse, hopping onto Linley's shoulders while still speaking in the human tongue. "It was Boss who raised me!"

Hogg repeatedly nodded.

"Father, look, the Coiling Dragon ring! You know about it, right?" Linley stretched out his ring.

Hogg, hearing this, began to weep from joy. “Right. Right!” He couldn’t help but stretch his arms out, taking Linley into his embrace. He clapped his hands against Linley’s back repeatedly. “Haha, it really is you. Linley. This is wonderful. Haha. This really is wonderful.” Hogg was so excited that he was stammering.

He had died, then been transformed into an undead. He had spent two thousand-plus years as an undead, then suddenly regained his memories and been brought here.

And then, his son had suddenly appeared in front of him.

How could he not be excited? Not be happy?

“Father, come. Let’s go inside. Let’s go inside and chat.” Linley wiped his tears dry, then immediately took his father by the hand and led him flying towards the rear courtyard of the Abyssal Inn.

To be able to see his father was a sort of joy which surpassed the joy and excitement Linley had felt upon finding out that he had become a Soul Mutate. Linley felt like he had returned to his youth, when he learned from his father regarding culture and more. Whenever he didn’t do well, he would be hit on the palm. Back then, he felt it was quite painful, but thinking back to it now gave him a warm feeling.

The death of his father had caused Linley to sink into an abyss of darkness. He was willing to give up everything for revenge.

But now…

Everything was better!

Within the room.

A group of people were seated around two tables, while Hogg was still feeling completely mystified. He hurriedly asked Linley, “Linley, what is going on here? Before, I was a Saint-level Black Knight. How did I

suddenly regain my memory and be brought here, then see you?"

Hogg had never heard of an undead regaining its memories.

"The Boss asked the Sovereign to do it." Bebe chortled.

"Haha." The nearby Dixie sighed, then said, "Uncle Hogg, in the past two thousand years, Linley has gone beyond just being a genius student at the Ernst Institute. He is an expert who stands at the very peak of the Netherworld, the Infernal Realm, and the other Higher Realms. It was he who asked the Sovereign to restore all of our memories and send for people to find us, then bring us here. Myself, Yale, and George; we were all brought back by Seven Star Specter level experts.

"He asked the Sovereign to find us, and even arrange for people to bring us?"

Hogg couldn't help but look at his son, who stood before him. In the Yulan continent, Hogg knew that his son had potential, but Hogg only believed that Linley would one day become a powerful magus, or perhaps even bring back their family's ancestral heirloom. But…ask a Sovereign for favors? Hogg felt his head spin, just thinking about it.

"Linley, how are you…" Hogg didn't even know what to ask.

Ask about his son's level of power? What his son had been doing these years?

"Boss is a Highgod Paragon." Bebe said proudly. The nearby Yale and the others, over the past few years, had learned this as well.

"What's a Paragon?" Hogg asked.

Bebe was startled.

Previously, Yale and Bebe's parents were also unaware of what being a 'Paragon' meant. Only after hearing an explanation did they understand.

Bebe's mother, that violet-robed woman, said with a laugh, "Hogg, being a Highgod Paragon means…amongst Deities, your son is an unmatched individual! Even Sovereigns would warmly invite him to become an Emissary for them."

"Amongst Deities…he's unmatched?" Hogg blinked several times, staring at Linley in astonishment.

Hogg had the sense that everything that had happened today – seeing Linley, hearing all these things – was all a dream.

Hogg's reaction was what everyone had thought it would be. When Yale and George had asked about Linley's abilities, after they were given clear answers, they had also been stunned for a long time. Everyone knew exactly how many Deities there were in the Netherworld and Infernal Realm. They were counted in the trillions.

There were countless Deities in the countless planes. How terrifyingly powerful must one be, to stand at the very top of this pyramid?

Hogg had experienced two thousand years of life in the Undead Realm, and his mental fortitude was now much greater than before. He quickly recovered, then his eyes lit up and he asked hurriedly, "Linley, your mother's death. It was that Duke Patterson of the Kingdom of Fenlai…were you able to get vengeance?"

"He died. I personally killed him." Linley said solemnly.

"And the person behind him? Did you find out who it was?" Hogg said frantically.

Hogg had found out that behind Duke Patterson, there was yet another figure controlling things from behind the scenes. However, he was attacked and pursued by Patterson's forces before he was able to figure out who that person was, and then Hogg had died.

"I did. Behind him was the King of Fenlai, 'Clayde'." Linley nodded.

“Afterwards, in the city of Hess, I killed Clayde!”

“It was King Clayde?” Hogg was stunned.

“Although I killed Clayde, this matter still wasn’t finished. Mother had been offered by Clayde to the Radiant Church. It was the Radiant Church which killed my mother, then offered Mother’s soul to the Chief Sovereign of Light.” Linley’s voice was very low. Linley still harbored tremendous hatred for the Radiant Church. It could be said that Doehring Cowart also died due to the Radiant Church.

Hogg, hearing this, frowned. A baleful aura gathered on his face, and he said in a low voice, “The Radiant Church?”

“Afterwards, I eradicated the Radiant Church, pulling them out by the roots.” Linley continued.

Hogg glanced at his son, startled. In the Yulan continent, the Radiant Church had been an enormous entity. Still Hogg knew that, logically, given that his son was now at the peak of power, it made sense that in the past, he would be capable of eradicating the Radiant Church.

“Everything has been resolved!” Hogg let out a long sigh, then shook his head and laughed self-mockingly. “I was too stubborn. It has been two thousand years, but I still haven’t been able to forget these matters. Still, what’s the point of thinking of them? Lina died long ago.”

“Father. Mother didn’t truly die.” Linley said.

“Eh?” Hogg’s eyes instantly lit up, and he appeared full of energy as he stared towards Linley with hope in his eyes.

Linley nodded solemnly. “Father, when Mother was killed, her soul was offered to the Chief Sovereign of Light. She should currently be one of the Angels of the Divine Light Plane! Only, those who have been transformed into Angels are absolutely loyal to the Sovereigns of Light…to help Mother acquire her freedom and have her be with us again will be very hard.”

“You…even you cannot accomplish it?” Hogg asked hurriedly.

Currently, as Hogg saw it, given that his son was one of the most powerful of Deities, and that even Sovereigns would fight over having Linley be an Emissary for them, his son’s status should be enough for an Angel to be restored to her free will. Hogg felt that this shouldn’t be hard.

“I have no confidence in being able to do so.” Linley shook his head.

The nearby Bebe said, a sour look on his face, “The Chief Sovereign of Death said that even if she personally went to speak to the Chief Sovereign of Light about this, it still would be unlikely. For even the Chief Sovereign of Death to be unable to accomplish this…the chances of Boss going and succeeding are most likely very, very low.” Bebe didn’t have any confidence in Linley either.

Linley himself felt rather guilty over this!

“Haha, forget it.” Hogg let out a long sigh, then laughed, “Linley, we should thank the heavens that the two of us, father and son, are able to meet again. To reunite with your mother as well? That’s just a vain hope. Don’t worry about it. That’s just looking for trouble.”

“Father…” Linley looked at his father, astonished.

From the final letter his father had left before his death, Linley understood how deep his father’s love for his mother was. His father was willing to die for her; why was he now willing to give up so easily?

“Forget about it. How can everything in the world truly be perfect and as we desire?” Hogg said with a soft laugh.

That very day, Hogg, Linley, Yale, George, and the others began to energetically discuss the various matters that had happened to their homeland, the Yulan continent. Afterwards, Hogg began to discuss his life as an undead, while Linley discussed his experiences over the past three

thousand years. Hogg now truly understood how long a journey Linley had embarked on. He felt worried each time he listened to Linley narrate one of his dangerous experiences, but at the same time, a feeling of pride swelled within his chest.

In front of the Abyssal Inn. Linley's group was preparing to depart.

"Wait a moment. I'll come over in a bit." Linley said to his father and friends, then walked to the pool which was in the center of the grassy area close to the Abyssal Inn. Next to the pool, there was a beautiful, red-haired maiden who was fishing happily. Others didn't know who the red-haired maiden truly was, but Linley knew.

She liked to personally witness one expert of the Netherworld after another come here in search the Abyssal Fruit, then die. The Chief Sovereign of Death.

Putting aside her fishing rod, the red-haired maiden turned to glance at Linley. "What, you are leaving?"

Linley could notice the spatial distortions nearby; the Chief Sovereign of Death had created a spatial barrier, preventing others from listening in and preventing their words from leaking out. Linley sighed inwardly at the terrifying strength of the Chief Sovereign of Death, then replied, "Yes, Sovereign. The six people I was waiting to receive have already arrived. Thank you, Sovereign, for the pains you have taken over during this period of time."

The red-haired maiden smiled slightly, revealing pearly, pristine white teeth. "The first time I saw you, you were just a little fellow who had just barely reached the level of a commander. In the blink of an eye, you've become a Paragon."

"Sovereign, there is one last thing I would like to ask you to help me with." Linley hesitated slightly, then spoke out.

"You really are troublesome. Speak." Over the past few years, Linley often

met the Chief Sovereign of Death around the Abyssal Inn, and so their relationship had improved significantly.

“Sovereign, I wish to find a Seven Star Specter named ‘Odin’. I don’t know if you have any method by which you can accomplish this?” Linley asked expectantly. During this recent time period, Yale had always wanted to go find Odin, but unfortunately, the Netherworld was endlessly vast. Although Linley was powerful, looking for Odin was like searching for a needle in the sea.

“Find a Seven Star Specter? Odin?” The red-haired maiden frowned slightly. She couldn’t help but give out a faint snort. “Do you really think that I’m bored and have nothing better to do? I have no idea what sort of spiritual aura this ‘Odin’ of yours has. All you give me is a name; how am I supposed to find him? Unless, of course, he was once undead. Only then can I use the Netherworld Heart to look for him. Otherwise, there is no way.”

Linley could only laugh awkwardly.

It was indeed hard to find someone with just a name. It was precisely because it was hard that Linley had come to bother the Chief Sovereign of Death about this. Linley thought that the Netherworld Heart would be able to find him, but from the sound of it, only those who had once become undead could be found through the Netherworld Heart.

“To find a single person shouldn’t be too hard, given your current status.” The red-haired maiden laughed softly. “Just find a Specter Castle and issue a mission. Say that you want to find a Seven Star Specter named Odin. The missions that you, Linley, issue? I imagine there will be some commanders and Lord Prefects who would fight over the chance.”

Perhaps few ordinary Highgods would have heard of Linley, but amongst the commanders and Lord Prefects, within a thousand years, most likely all of them would have learned of his name.

The red-haired maiden then turned her head and went back to her fishing.

“Enough. You can leave now!”

“Thank you, Sovereign.” Linley bowed slightly, then turned and left.

“Let’s go. Let’s go to the Sacred Undead Mountain!” Linley smiled towards his father and his friends, then released an enormous metallic lifeform. It hovered there in midair, and then this group of experts boarded it. With a flash, the metallic lifeform transformed into a speck of light, disappearing into the horizon.

Chapter 2 – An Inescapable Calamity

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 2, An Inescapable Calamity

The metallic lifeform advanced at high speed, and within it, laughter rang out uninterrupted.

"Boss Yale, don't worry. Third Bro gave you his word. Odin is definitely going to die." George snickered nearby. Yale's hatred towards Odin had sunk into Yale's very soul. Unless and until he truly killed Odin, Yale would forever feel a thorn in his heart.

Yale nodded, then chuckled towards Linley. "Sorry to trouble you, Third Bro."

"From the Abyssal Mountain to the Sacred Undead Mountain will take quite some time." Linley said with a laugh. "On the way over, I'll use my divine sense to search, and also control the metallic lifeform to fly by some important areas. Perhaps on our journey, I will find Odin."

Linley's spiritual power was more powerful than even when using Sovereign's Might.

The spatial bindings controlling the Netherworld were far weaker than those which controlled the Planar Battlefield. In the Netherworld, through using his divine sense, Linley was able to reach to a distance of eight million kilometers! The metallic lifeform which Linley controlled could roughly fly roughly ten million kilometers each day. At this speed, Linley only had to search once a day.

Searching personally, and issuing a mission; these were two methods.

If searching failed, then he would issue a mission. Given Linley's prestige and power, finding Odin wouldn't be hard!

“If we find him on the journey, that would be wonderful.” Yale said with a smile.

Linley, seeing Yale like this, couldn’t help but sigh mentally. In the past, Yale had always been dissolute, free, and easy. But now, Linley realized how great a mental pressure Yale felt. Hatred had gnawed away at Yale’s soul, and although Yale wanted to relax and be dissolute once more, he wasn’t able to.

Under Linley’s control, the metallic lifeform flew at high speed. In three years time, it reached the borders of Northbone Prefecture.

“After this prefecture, we will be very close to the Sacred Undead Mountain.” George chortled.

Bebe mumbled, “Northbone Prefecture is the northernmost prefecture of the Netherworld. We still haven’t found Odin. It seems that Boss is going to have to go to the Specter Castle to issue a mission…hmph. We’ll just let Odin live a bit longer.”

Linley saw that Yale’s face was rather ugly right now.

“The impact of Odin’s actions on Yale truly are severe.” Linley sighed to himself.

Linley could completely understand. If, when Linley was a Saint, a Highgod were to control him to kill his wife, kill his son, kill his brothers, kill his friends…then torture him to death? Most likely, Linley would also go insane with the need for revenge! He would rather die than not get revenge.

Linley patted Yale on the shoulders. “Don’t worry. He won’t be able to escape.”

“Right.” Yale squeezed out a smile. “It’s fine. I can wait. At least I have a chance for revenge now.”

The Netherworld. Northbone Prefecture. The grasslands outside the city of Hide.

There were many soldiers stationed here, and quite a few castles. The number one expert of Northbone Prefecture here was Sayant, a Sovereign's Emissary and the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture. Sayant had quite a few experts under his command, one of whom was the Seven Star Specter, Odin.

A black-robed blur descended from the skies.

"Milord!" The soldiers immediately bowed.

"Mm." The black-robed man nodded calmly, then strode inside.

Moments later, the black-robed figure saw Sayant.

"Lord Prefect, the matter is dealt with." The black-robed figure said respectfully to Sayant. Sayant was dressed in a white robe, and was reclining against a chair, holding a book and leisurely flipping through it. Hearing the report from the black-robed figure, he smiled and nodded. "Mm. Very well. Right, Odin. Have you heard any news regarding the Planar Wars while traveling outside? Nearly a century should have passed since this Planar War."

Sayant himself didn't participate in the Planar Wars. Given how far away Northbone Prefecture was, news came here at a much slower rate.

"Your subordinate ran into a few people, most of whom were fairly average in strength. I didn't run into a single Lord Prefect or Tartarus Lord level expert. I didn't hear any news regarding the Planar Wars; or, perhaps the news simply takes too long to arrive here. Still, on this trip, your subordinate did find out something else."

"What news have you?" Sayant raised his head, glancing at Odin curiously.

The black-robed Odin revealed a hint of a smile. "Lord Prefect. The news

has been made public from the Abyssal Mountain that a fourth person has acquired the Abyssal Fruit! According to my investigations, the name of the person is Bailey."

"Bailey? It seems Linley failed." Sayant laughed as well.

"The Abyssal Mountain is incredibly dangerous." Odin laughed smugly. "Bailey succeeded, so I imagine that Linley must have died within the Abyssal Mountain. Even if he didn't die, given it has been a thousand years, he has probably left the Netherworld by now."

"If Linley knew what was good for him and so retreated, he might still be alive. But from what I saw, he definitely wouldn't easily give up his goal of meeting the Sovereign. Nine out of ten, he died there on the Abyssal Mountain." Sayant laughed calmly. "Enough. Odin, you should now be completely at ease."

Indeed, Linley was Odin's nightmare.

"I feel much more relieved. I won't disturb you any further, Lord Prefect." Odin bowed slightly, then departed.

In the air above Northbone Prefecture.

Just like before, Linley was using his divine sense to search while chatting casually. "We are about to reach the place where the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture, Sayant, lives. Sayant was the one who told me to go to the Abyssal Mountain. To be honest, I need to go thank him for his role in my current accomplishments. Eh?" Linley's face suddenly changed.

"What is it, Boss?" The nearby Bebe said, puzzled.

"Third Bro, did you find Odin?" Yale immediately asked. Whenever he saw any changes on Linley's face while Linley was searching, Yale would suspect that it was Odin. But prior to this, every single time Yale had made this guess, he was wrong.

Linley looked towards Yale. He couldn't help but laugh loudly. "Odin. It's Odin! Haha, Odin has finally revealed himself, and he's right there with Sayant…" A hint of a cold light flashed through Linley's eyes. "It seems that Sayant and his wife intentionally deceived me back then."

Linley was no fool. Upon discovering Odin, he realized that Sayant had lied and was able to guess a few other things.

"Odin is right at Sayant's place?" Bebe understood as well, and he said furiously, "Boss, I told you that Sayant and his wife seemed a bit strange when they spoke with us. They told you go to the Abyssal Mountain, most likely with the intention of letting you die there."

"You still need to thank them." George laughed. "Third Bro, because of them, you had this extraordinary run of luck, allowing you to break through to become a Paragon. If Odin and them were to know, they would regret it endlessly."

Linley hadn't yet publicized the fact that he was a Soul Mutate, as when too many people knew a secret, it would easily slip out. He only said that he was a Paragon.

"Right. I really do need to thank them." Linley swept his gaze towards the northeast, then growled, "Let's go. Let's go pay a visit to Sayant and Odin!"

"Odin!" Yale ground his teeth, his eyes sharp.

Instantly, Linley controlled his metallic lifeform to fly forward at top speed.

The Seven Star Specters under the control of the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture all had their own castles.

Odin was currently on the balcony of his castle, leisurely enjoying the sunlight and staring at the vast grasslands.

"Hrm?" Odin raised an eyebrow. There was a metallic lifeform flying over at high speed. The metallic lifeform flew so quickly that Odin was

astonished. “Such speed. This metallic lifeform must be a top-tier one. The person who is controlling it must be a supreme expert as well.”

“ODIN!”

The growling voice instantly echoed throughout the region in an area of ten thousand kilometers. Many soldiers of Northbone Prefecture, as well as Sayant himself, were startled by it.

“Who is it?” Odin’s face changed slightly.

Within Odin’s field of vision, the metallic lifeform disappeared, revealing a group of people, with Linley at the lead.

“Linley!” Odin’s face changed from terror. “How…how is Linley still alive? Even if he is alive, why did he come back?”

“Swoosh!” The group of figures flew down from the skies.

“Who goes there!” A furious shout rang out. Instantly, the soldiers all rose into the skies, and over a hundred prefectural soldiers moved to block Linley’s group.

“Beat it.” Linley growled.

An invisible ripple spread out, and instantly this group of soldiers were impacted by it and sent flying back. Fortunately, Linley showed mercy, as otherwise, all of these soldiers would have died instantly.

Linley’s group acted as though they were moving into an unpopulated region as they flew downwards, ignoring everyone else. All the soldiers who wanted to block them were sent flying back.

“This…what is this ability?” Odin was stunned.

It was easy to kill Highgods, but the technique Linley had used was truly astonishing.

Linley's group hovered there in midair, staring coldly at Odin.

"Odin. Do you recognize me?" A furious, hateful, teeth-grinding voice rang out. Yale stared death at Odin.

Odin turned to look, and upon seeing Yale, laughed coldly. "Haha, and here I was, wondering who it was. So it is the Chairman of the Dawson Conglomerate. I didn't imagine that after becoming an undead, you would then become a Deity. This really was outside my expectations. For you to be able to meet again with your brother after becoming a Deity; how rare!"

Odin didn't seem to be afraid at all.

"Linley." A gentle voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. From afar, five figures were flying over at high speed, with the leader being the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture, Sayant, along with his wife, Anita. By their sides were three other subordinates, who were most likely experts at the Seven Star Specter level.

"Sayant." Linley greeted him.

"Linley, you should've let me know that you were coming. I would've gone to welcome you." Sayant said with a laugh. As he spoke, Sayant's group of five flew next to Odin, while Linley didn't move to block him at all.

The two sides stared at each other there in midair, with many prefectural soldiers watching.

Most likely, once Sayant gave the order, these prefectural soldiers would all charge en masse.

"Let you know in advance?" Linley let out a calm laugh. "Sayant, I imagine that if I let you know, you would've had Odin hide…haha, I really didn't expect that you, Sayant, a noble Lord Prefect, would play this sort of trick on me. This is a bit too laughable."

Sayant's face sank.

Linley's words made him feel very uncomfortable!

"Hmph. He's just an Elder of the Azure Dragon clan." Sayant snickered mentally. "Prior to this, I was worried that Linley was a Paragon, but since he didn't acquire the Abyssal Fruit at the Abyssal Mountain, he's definitely not a Paragon." Sayant had only been worried about Linley's level of strength due to the intelligence reports he had received from the eight great clans.

But the results of Linley's trip to the Abyssal Mountain had put Sayant at ease.

Indeed…if Linley had already been a Paragon, acquiring the Abyssal Fruit would have been very easy.

"Sayant, stand aside. This has nothing to do with you." Linley said calmly. "My target is just a single person. Him. Odin." Linley stared at Odin.

Odin looked at Sayant.

Sayant chuckled as he looked at Linley. "Linley, I've been fairly courteous to you. Why must you act so brazenly? Odin is my subordinate. If I were to allow you to kill him just because you asked me to, then how would I, Sayant, be able to hold onto my position as Lord Prefect? Since he is my subordinate, I definitely won't permit you to take him away. Linley…if you are wise, you will leave immediately. Otherwise, if we shed all pretense of cordiality, it won't be good."

Sayant was completely confident in himself.

"Sayant." Bebe began to curse furiously. "Last time, you intentionally lied to us to have us go to the Abyssal Mountain. We haven't even settled accounts with you about that; we are already giving you face. You are simply a Lord Prefect; who do you think you are, to put on airs in front of

me and my Boss? Are you qualified to act like this?" After having experienced the Planar Wars, Bebe held Sayant in no regard at all.

Bebe was completely confident in being able to kill Sayant.

"Impudent!" Sayant's face turned ugly, and he let out a growl.

Suddenly, a long black spear appeared in Sayant's hands, and a terrifying aura spread forth from the spear. The nearby Odin, seeing this, laughed.

"Swoosh!" Sayant charged straight towards Bebe. Clearly, Bebe's words had infuriated him.

The strange thing was…

Linley's body didn't move, but a blurred figure had appeared in front of Sayant.

"Bang!" A kick landed directly across Sayant's chest. Sayant was like a sandbag, and was knocked back downwards. "Boom!" He smashed into the corner of the castle, and then landed on the ground. At this moment, Linley's 'body' slowly disappeared, while that blurred figure reformed into Linley's true body.

Odin, the other Seven Star Fiends, Lady Anita, and the watching prefectural soldiers were all stunned.

"Ugh." Sayant spat out a mouthful of blood. He lay there on the ground, staring at Linley in terror.

What sort of speed was this?

Linley stood there in midair, staring down at the prone Sayant. Calmly, he said, "Be a good boy and stand over there. If you continue to act so arrogantly, I will show no more mercy." After speaking, Linley turned to stare at Odin, his gaze cold.

Odin’s face turned ashen, and his body began to tremble.

Chapter 3 – Power

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 3, Power

Odin lowered his head, staring in terror at Sayant, who lay stricken on the ground. He sent mentally, "Lord Prefect, Lord Prefect!" Odin was now truly frantic. Having seen Linley's displayed power, Odin now knew…there was no way he could resist at all. In his desperation, all he could do was place his hopes on Lord Prefect Sayant.

"Shut your mouth!" Sayant snarled angrily through divine sense.

Sayant's eyes were red, and his heart was filled with rage. He had been kicked to the ground with so many soldiers watching. This was an insult! For someone of Sayant's status to suffer this sort of humiliation was something that had to be avenged. But he didn't have the ability to do so at all!

The surrounding soldiers all stared at Linley, stunned, then at Sayant, who lay there on the ground, covered in blood.

"To attempt to gain revenge will only result in one thing. Death. I have to endure it. Endure it!" Sayant felt all the more humiliated with so many people staring at him. "If I die, then everything is finished. Linley probably really is a Paragon. Even if others hear of this story, it's not embarrassing for me to have lost by his hand." This was how Sayant consoled himself.

He, Sayant, worried about his face. Odin, however, was worried about his puny little life.

"If I don't run now, I'll have no hope." With a 'whoosh', Odin dove underground, wanting to hide himself underground and flee.

"Hmph."

Linley smiled calmly, and then his body transformed into a blur as he moved to stand below Odin.

“Whap!” Linley delivered a slap directly to Odin’s face, knocking him flying into the air. Odin slammed into the side of the castle wall like a sandbag. With a low, thudding sound, the castle wall split apart. “How terrifyingly fast.” Odin had yet to recover from his terror, but Linley was already once more in front of him.

Odin looked at Linley, his face filled with terror.

Linley just reached out calmly while sending out 108 surges of earthen yellow energy which formed into a cocoon, completely binding Odin within it. The terrifying compressive power made it so that Odin wasn’t able to move at all.

Even Hemmers, an expert whose material attack power was comparable to Paragons, was dramatically impacted by this technique of Linley’s.

How could a mere Seven Star Specter possibly have the power to resist against the oppressive power of Linley’s Will?

He was paralyzed!

“Yale, you choose how he dies.” Linley turned to look at Yale, who flew over, his eyes filled with savagery.

“Ahhhhhhhh!” Odin howled, frantically trying to break free from the oppressive power binding him.

It must be understood that even when Linley had just become a Highgod, his Gravitational Space was already capable of making it hard for ordinary Seven Star Fiends to resist. Now that it was infused with the power of his Will, it was increased more than a hundredfold in strength. Odin was like a trapped beast in a cage; although he howled with savagery, he wasn’t able to extricate himself at all.

“You want to kill me? Haha…kid, you think you are worthy of killing me?” Odin’s eyes were scarlet red as he stared at Yale, contempt in his gaze.

“Linley, if you are so tough, kill me yourself!” Odin howled.

By now, Odin realized that there was no hope.

Sayant, Anita, their subordinates, and the soldiers all quietly watched from far away as Odin struggled like a trapped beast. Earlier, they wanted to intervene, wanted to attack and drive Linley back, but after Linley made his move, they no longer had any thoughts of fighting back.

“Kill you myself?” Linley laughed calmly. “In your dreams.”

“Hmph.” Odin suddenly laughed coldly, and a translucent ripple shot out from Odin’s eyes, shooting towards Yale.

“Crunch.” The earthen yellow cocoon which surrounded Odin spat out a translucent sword-shaped ripple which destroyed this soul attack. Linley gave Odin a disdainful, calm look. “Odin, now that you are trapped within my Gravitational Prison, you aren’t able to fight back at all. Don’t try to be tricky.”

“Make your move.” Linley looked at Yale.

Yale nodded slightly, a deep azure spear appearing in his hands.

“My brothers. My wife. My children. My parents…” Yale’s body was trembling, and his lips were white as he stared at Odin. And then, Yale suddenly bent backwards like a greatbow being pulled, then savagely exploded forth, throwing the spear in his hand forward with endless power and sending it piercing towards Odin.

Swooosh…

“Clank!” The deep azure spear pierced towards Odin, but it wasn’t even able to break through his skin.

Yale was stunned.

“Ha…haha…” Odin raised his head, laughing loudly, laughing wildly. “Linley, oh, Linley. You want your friend to kill me? Haha. He’s a Demigod! I’m a Seven Star Specter, a Highgod! My energy defense alone is comparable that of a Highgod artifact. His bit of attack power isn’t even capable of breaking through my skin. Haha, kill me? In his dreams!!!”

Yale’s face turned pale.

“I…I…” Yale’s body trembled. “I want to get revenge, but I…”

Linley had already captured Odin and gave him to Yale for Yale to kill, but Yale’s attack power was simply too low; Odin was, after all, a Seven Star Specter. Even if he didn’t use his fused profound mysteries in activating his divine power, his material defense was still close to a Highgod artifact in strength. In terms of soul defense, Odin, who trained in the Edicts of Death, was even mightier. Yale wasn’t able to harm him at all.”

Odin glared savagely at Yale, as though he wanted to eat him alive. “Punk, you want to kill me? In your dreams! The power you possess isn’t enough to even harm a single hair on my body!”

“Odin.” Linley gave him a calm glance.

“Linley, what are you being so arrogant about?” Knowing that he was about to die, Odin actually became fearless, and he stared at Linley, laughing loudly. “Didn’t you want your brother to kill me? Unfortunately, he’s too weak. Even though you captured me and gave me to him for him to kill, he still isn’t able to do it. It is fated that he will never be able to personally take revenge! Haha…I still remember the look on the faces of Yale’s family members when they all died. How delightful!”

“Bastard!” Yale bellowed.

“You aren’t able to kill me. There’s no way you’ll be able to personally take

revenge.” Odin laughed delighted.

A layer of frost appeared on Linley’s face.

“Absorb this into your body, then activate it.” With a flip of his hand, Linley produced a drop of black liquid, which floated towards Yale.

“Huh?” Odin’s face changed.

“Aren’t you very powerful? You are only an ordinary Seven Star Specter, and one who trains in the Edicts of Death. I want to see if your body is tough enough to withstand a strike which uses Sovereign power!” Linley laughed calmly.

Yale’s eyes lit up.

“Third Bro, thank you.” Yale immediately absorbed the drop of Sovereign’s Might into his body, and then, with a ‘bang’ sound, black light exploded forth from Yale’s body as a terrifying aura spread out from it. Yale held that deep azure spear, which swirled with black light. Yale let out a deep growl…

“DIE!”

Yale struck out as fast as lightning, stabbing wildly with that deep azure spear towards Odin.

“NO!!!!” Odin only had enough time for one final, miserable scream.

Yale didn’t stab directly into Odin’s head; he wildly, randomly stabbed, leaving more than ten bloody holes throughout Odin’s body before finally piercing through his head!

“Huff, huff…” Yale panted wildly as he launched several more stabbing blows, then began to tremble.

Odin just lay there limply, not responding all. His divine artifacts fell out of

his body, but because of the repulsive force, they remained next to him.

“Dead. Odin’s dead. I personally killed him.” Yale raised his head, laughing wildly, but his tears flowed downwards. Yale seemed to be gripped by madness.

But seeing this, Linley only let out a sigh of relief.

Yale was releasing the hatred that had been pent up deep within his heart. Afterwards, he would be much better.

A long while later, Yale finally regained his former calm. He turned his head to look towards Linley. A grateful look; that was it. Linley laughed, then walked over and patted him on the shoulders. “Let’s go.” They were brothers who had played together since they were youths. Some words simply didn’t need to be said.

George and the others felt happy for Yale as well.

And then, Linley’s group of experts boarded their metallic lifeform and left.

As for Sayant, the Lord Prefect of Northbone Prefecture, he and his men all looked at each other, letting out mental sighs of relief.

“Lord Prefect, this Linley is too, too powerful.” A nearby azure-robed man said in a low voice. “Odin was a Seven Star Specter, but he was trapped by Linley to the point of not being able to fight back. What sort of technique is this? Also, Linley’s speed is utterly inconceivable.”

Given how fast they were, when ordinary commanders encountered Paragons, they weren’t able to fight back at all.

“Given how fast he was, and how he could use energy to trap a Seven Star Specter…while only using ordinary divine earth power…” Sayant’s face was solemn. “This Linley most likely truly is a Paragon.”

The people by his side were all stunned.

Paragon?

“Let’s go. All of you, go back!” Sayant’s face was sinister, and his voice was dark.

“Whoooooosh.” A wild wind howled, and the wind slashed across the land like knives.

Ironknife Gorge. Within the castle.

Within the wide, empty area, there were two giant teleportation arrays. Suddenly, one of them flashed with countless sparkles of light, and the surrounding Bloodridge soldiers couldn’t help but to turn their heads to look.

The light dissipated, and a group of people merged.

One of the Bloodridge soldiers recognized them, and his eyes lit up. He hurriedly bowed. “Greetings again, milord.” Last time, when Linley had used this teleportation array to depart, this soldier had clearly seen Linley and knew that Linley had the Bloodridge Sovereign’s medallion.

“Mm.” Linley nodded slightly. “We will wait here momentarily. We will leave in a bit.”

“Please feel free, milord.” The Bloodridge soldier smiled.

Linley’s group waited there in the air above the vast, empty area. Bebe mumbled, “Boss, it should be fairly fast for you to arrive from the Yulan continent. Why haven’t you arrived yet? It’s been a thousand years since I’ve seen Ninny, and Nana…” Bebe missed his wife and daughter.

“We are almost here.” Linley said with a laugh. “It takes a bit of time for us to all fly from the Yulan continent to the Arctic Icecap…”

“Linley, little Wharton is coming as well, right?” Hogg was rather nervous

and excited.

“Yes, Father.” Linley laughed and nodded.

His father hadn’t seen Wharton in a very long time. Wharton had been sent off to the O’Brien Empire very early on, and when his father had died, the last mental impression he had of Wharton was most likely the toddler Wharton. Linley said with a laugh, “Father, I imagine once you see Wharton, you won’t be able to recognize him right away.”

“I will definitely be able to recognize him.” Hogg was completely certain.

“Oh, we just entered the teleportation array. We are coming.” Linley said. His divine fire clone was coming alongside this large group of people.

Immediately, everyone turned to look at the teleportation array, only to see it once more flash with countless specks of light. Moments later, the light finally, completely vanished. A large group of people was gathered there, with the leader being Linley’s divine fire clone and Delia. The divine fire clone flew towards Linley, merging into him.

Upon merging in, the five souls intermixed.

Instantly…

Linley’s four mutated souls began to send surges of spiritual energy towards the divine fire clone’s soul, which slowly began to change. After all, the five souls were one to begin with.

“Father.” Wade, Taylor, and Sasha all ran towards Linley.

“FATHER!!!!” Wharton stood there, staring at Hogg, stunned.

Hogg stared at this burly, muscular youth in front of him. Wharton had a hint of Hogg in his face, and was fairly similar in appearance to Linley as well. But more importantly…when Hogg looked into Wharton’s eyes, it was as though he was looking back into the big eyes of toddler Wharton.

“Wharton?” Hogg said softly.

“It’s me, Father.” Wharton ran forward, tightly embracing Hogg.

“Wonderful. Wonderful.” Hogg couldn’t keep his eyes from turning red.

After a long while, the two, father and son, separated.

“Father, look. This is your grandson, Wade. This is Taylor. This is your granddaughter, Sasha…” Linley walked forward, laughing as he made the introductions.

Wharton hurriedly made some introductions of his own. “Father, this is your grandson, Cena…and him. Arnold, quick, come over here. This is your great-grandfather. Father, this chubby-faced fellow is Arnold’s son.” Many people had come on this trip. Everyone who had reached the Saint-rank had come, leaving behind only a few people.

“Wonderful. Wonderful.” Hogg nodded repeatedly. All he could do was repeatedly smile.

“Alright, Father, let’s head to the Skyrite Mountains first.” Linley laughed.

This giant group of people immediately boarded the metallic lifeform and flew out from Ironknife Gorge.

Those Bloodridge soldiers all stared there, stupefied. They glanced at each other.

“Important people really are different! In one breath, he brought an entire family of more than a hundred people to the Infernal Realm. Grandfathers, grandchildren…there really were quite a few people.”

“Right, Captain. Why did you address that brown-haired man as ‘milord’. Who is he?”

“You don’t know this, but last time, when I was on duty, that brown-haired

man came bearing the medallion of the Sovereign, using it to activate the teleportation portal for free! Even most Emissaries don't possess that medallion. Only a person with a certain status will be able to acquire a treasure like that." The Bloodridge soldiers, bored, chattered amongst themselves.

As for Linley's family, they all made haste towards the Skyrite Mountains.

Chapter 4 – The Clan's Changes

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 4, The Clan's Changes

The Bloodridge Continent. Indigo Prefecture. The Skyrite Mountains.

The Patriarch of the Azure Dragon clan, Gislason, was seated in his estate's living room. Gislason was currently accompanying a skinny bald elder. They were chatting and laughing.

"Gislason, why be modest? Haha, back when we were in the Chaotic Sea, when you, me, and those several other fellows took on that Fiend mission to go kill that Valentine [Wa'lun'ding]. Me and the others, we were just there to serve as props. It was you, Gislason, who released your might and unleashed that innate divine ability of your Azure Dragon clan, as well as that supremely powerful material attack to slay Valentine in one blow. That memory has always stayed with me." The bald elder said with a laugh.

"Haha, Bagleaf [Bai'ge'lei'fu], that was so many years ago." Gislason said modestly, but his face was still covered with a smile.

"Yes, it was long ago. Still, you were so incredible all those years ago; I imagine that by now, Gislason, your strength is so great that I am no match for it." The bald elder's words clearly contained flattery within them.

However, flattery depended on the speaker.

If an ordinary Highgod were to say such things, Gislason would be annoyed just listening to it. But the current speaker was a supreme expert whose power was no less than Gislason's, and one of Gislason's older friends. Flattery from a person like this naturally made Gislason feel quite happy.

"Haha, don't say that." Gislason grinned widely.

The bald elder, Bagleaf, said with a sigh, "This time, I've come to visit you,

old friend, partially because I want to visit that Paragon your Azure Dragon clan produced. It seems my luck is quite poor."

Gislason, hearing this, immediately laughed. "Bagleaf, the Planar Wars concluded just a century ago. Linley probably hasn't returned from the Netherworld yet. Don't worry. After Linley returns, when you come visit, I will definitely introduce you to Linley. Linley…although he is a true genius of our Azure Dragon clan, he is quite a decent fellow and likes to make friends." As he spoke, Gislason let out a sigh of approval.

The bald elder stood up, then laughed. "Fine, then I'll wait for next time. I've disturbed you for so long…I should return as well. In the future, when I have time, I'll definitely seek you out and we can reminisce together."

"You are always welcome." Gislason stood up as well, then escorted the bald elder away.

"No need to escort me away." The bald elder smiled and nodded. Gislason stood there at the door to the hall, watching as the bald elder flew away.

Moments later, someone entered from outside. It was Elder Garvey.

"Patriarch, Commander Bagleaf left?" Garvey laughed as he walked in.

"Right." Gislason smiled back.

Garvey couldn't help but laugh. "Patriarch, this seems to be the ninth supreme expert who has come to visit in the past few decades."

Soon after the Planar Wars concluded, commander-level experts began to come to the Four Divine Beasts clan to pay their respects. The person these experts truly wished to see was Linley. Even if they weren't able to meet Linley, however, they still worked to improve their relationships with the four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan. The current Four Divine Beasts clan…now had a different status, in the eyes of these commanders.

"Hmph." Gislason snickered. "Nine of them! These commanders all saw

that our Four Divine Beasts clan produced a Paragon, and so all of them came to express their friendliness towards us. But when our Four Divine Beasts clan was in such dire straits and forced to flee and hide by the eight great clans, aside from Mr. Beirut, none of them came to help us!"

"That Bagleaf, just now." Gislason snorted. "In the past, we had a good relationship, when our ancestor was alive. He would often come to visit. But after our clan fell, and when our Four Divine Beasts clan was forced by those eight great clans to the point of annihilation…I didn't see Bagleaf appear. But now, he wants to talk about our past friendship?"

There were few who would come to send coal in the snow, but many who would add flowers to a wreath.

Now that the Four Divine Beasts clan had a Paragon, its status naturally was different.

Paragons represented true supremacy amongst Deities! For example, the eight great clans that had been attacking the Four Divine Beasts clan; although they were powerful, a Highgod Paragon was more than enough to slaughter all of the experts within their clan.

"This is understandable." Garvey laughed. "Only…I still find it unbelievable that Linley has become a Paragon."

Hearing this, Gislason's eyes lit up as well, and he laughed loudly. "You aren't the only one. I find it inconceivable as well! Almost no one in our Four Divine Beasts clan dares to believe this news. When Linley left the clan, he was nothing more than a fairly powerful Seven Star Fiend, close to commander-level. But who would have imagined that a thousand years later, he would become a Paragon? If it hadn't been for the fact that so many people came and said the same thing, and that they were all supreme experts who couldn't possibly be lying, even I probably wouldn't believe it."

"A Paragon." Garvey let out a sigh of amazement.

Ever since the news that Linley was a Paragon had spread, the various commander-level experts began to discuss this amongst themselves, and so quite a few had come to pay their respects to the Four Divine Beasts clan.

This naturally caused the members of the Four Divine Beasts clan to feel as though the status of their clan was rising!

They had given birth to a Paragon! The status of the Four Divine Beasts clan was now far greater than before. Aside from Sovereigns, nobody would dare to offend the Four Divine Beasts clan. As for Sovereigns…how could they possibly lower themselves to go deal against a clan?

"Garvey." Gislason suddenly said.

"Patriarch?" Garvey looked towards him, puzzled.

Gislason said hurriedly, "Have the communications teams been assigned to the borders of the mountains?"

"They have all been assigned." Garvey laughed. "Patriarch, don't worry. If Linley returns from the Netherworld, as long as he reaches the borders of these mountains, the news will quickly be communicated to you and the other three clan leaders. All of the arrangements for Linley's return have been made as well, including the construction of his mansion."

"Very good." Gislason laughed and nodded. "Nothing can go amiss! Linley came from the Yulan Plane, and so he never had an extremely strong sense of belonging here in the clan. After those things happened with Forhan and his son…although Linley still treats the clan quite well because of Baruch's group, we still need to make up for the past!"

"I understand." Garvey nodded.

As far as Gislason and the Grand Elder were concerned, the current Paragon-level Linley was even more important to them than Beirut!

Beirut was powerful, but he was still an outsider. If the clan were to face a

crisis, Beirut might not necessarily intervene.

But Linley was one of their own!

Although in the past, there were some misunderstandings, in the end, he was still a member of the Azure Dragon clan. What needed to be done now…was to remove those misunderstandings in Linley's heart and let Linley feel a true sense of belonging, here within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Indigo Prefecture. An enormous dragon-shaped metallic lifeform was flying at high speed in the air above the mountains and forests.

Within the metallic lifeform was a rowdy scene of joy.

"Grandpa!"

"Great Grandpa!"

A group of youths surrounded Hogg, constantly discussing various matters. Hogg looked at his grandchildren, his face wreathed in smiles.

"Big Bro, look at how happily Father has been laughing." Wharton and Linley were at the edges of the central room of this metallic lifeform. The two brothers were chatting amongst each other.

Linley glanced at his father, who was smiling calmly while accompanying his descendants, then nodded. "In the past, when we were young, our Baruch clan had already sunk to a very low point. In Father's entire life, aside from Mother and the two of us, the only thing he cared about was the clan! Father cared deeply about the ability of the clan to thrive. Now that more generations have appeared in the clan…of course Father is happy."

Right at this moment, three people walked over.

"Third Bro!"

Yale, George, and Reynolds walked over. Reynolds had hurried over from the Yulan continent as well.

“Boss Yale, Second Bro, Fourth Bro. Come, sit over here.” Linley laughed as he pointed. Yale and the other two all sat down. Reynolds chortled, glancing outside the window and sighing in praise. “The Infernal Realm, one of the Higher Realms. This is my first time here. Indeed…the density of the elemental aura here is very great. Only, it is filled with constant slaughter.”

From within the metallic lifeform, they were able to see the constant battles going on below.

“That’s what the Infernal Realm is like.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“It is the same in the Undead Realm. Experts live, experts die. Fourth Bro, I’m impressive, aren’t I? I survived in the Undead Realm for so many years.” Yale raised a smug eyebrow.

Seeing the look on Yale’s face, Reynolds, George, and Linley all felt very happy. This was the real Yale. After killing Odin, Yale no longer felt as heartsick as he previously had.

In the entire central room, there were more than a hundred people scattered about, idly chatting.

Seeing this scene, Linley couldn’t help but smile slightly.

Linley enjoyed this happy, content feeling.

“This world…in many cases, it is power which speaks loudest!” Linley looked at the warm scene, and he spoke softly to himself. “I worked hard to train. Only because my power reached a certain level is my father, my friends, and family able to reunite once more. I’m able to bring the entire clan over from the material plane!”

By now, Linley finally had the feeling…

That the bitter efforts he had put into his training over these years had been rewarded.

After flying for a period of time.

“We are about to arrive at the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Bebe was within the main room inside the metallic lifeform, and he spoke out in a clear, laughing voice. “Everyone, make your preparations. Right, Uncle.” Bebe looked at Hogg. “The ancestors of your Baruch clan are there, Uncle. Baruch, Ryan, the others…”

“The ancestors of the Baruch clan…” Hogg stood up, rather excited. He walked to the sides of the windows, staring through the translucent metal ‘windows’ to the outside.

He could already vaguely make out the Skyrite Mountains.

“The ancestors of the clan!”

Taylor, Sasha, and the other members of the clan all began to chatter about this. Ever since they were young, they were always, repeatedly reminded that they were members of the ‘Baruch clan’. They were filled with great veneration towards the legendary figures of the clan, but didn’t actually feel much towards the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“It’s right up ahead.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

The metallic lifeform instantly vanished, while Linley and more than a hundred people hovered there in midair, flying towards the Azure Dragon clan’s location within the Skyrite Mountains.

“What a long carving. I can’t even see the end of it.” The sturdy Arnold sighed in praise.

Linley laughed. “That’s not a carving. That’s Dragon Avenue! It passes through almost a fourth of the Skyrite Mountains and is more than ten

thousand kilometers long. It is the primary avenue which the soldiers of the clan guard."

Linley's group of more than a hundred flew over. The soldiers below naturally saw it, and the communications personnel, prepared long ago for this eventuality, were overjoyed. "Elder Linley is returning!" These communications personnel had divine clones stationed elsewhere, and many of them instantly relied on their divine clones to provide this news to various locations within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"Patriarch, Elder Linley has returned."

"Oh, Linley returned?" Gislason instantly flew out.

Not just Gislason; the other three clan leaders, along with many other Elders, who had received this news hurried over as well.

Linley and his group of more than a hundred flew over, and as they did, the warriors of the clan all saluted.

"Elder Linley." The warriors were very respectful.

Linley smiled and nodded, then led his group towards the Dragon Avenue of the Skyrite Mountains. At the same time, he introduced the place to Wharton and the others. "The rules of the clan are fairly strict. You have just arrived. In a bit, I'll acquire identity badges for you all. Eh?" Linley suddenly frowned, staring into the distant.

"What's going on?" Bebe glanced at him.

Delia, Nisse, Yale, and the others all looked into the distance. From afar, a large, impressive group of people was flying, with the leader being Gislason, the Black Tortoise Patriarch, and the other two. Behind them was the Grand Elder and other figures.

"Why are all the high level, important members of the clan coming?" Linley was startled. "Even the Vermillion Bird Matriarch is coming. If they

flew over from their residences, it should take quite a while. How were they so fast?"

The reaction time of the clan was simply too fast.

As soon as he had arrived, and just as he had reached Dragon Avenue, this large group had arrived as well. Even when Beirut came, only the clan leaders and the Grand Elder would go welcome him.

"Haha, Linley!" Gislason laughed loudly as he flew over.

"Patriarch." Although Linley was somewhat confused, he still went to greet him.

Linley swept the group with his gaze. The Black Tortoise Patriarch, Vermillion Bird Matriarch, and others, including even the Grand Elder who held a grudge for him…their faces were all smiles. They seemed so warm and friendly.

"Although we are in Indigo Prefecture, we've heard long ago of your exploits in the Planar Battlefield. Haha…our Four Divine Beasts clan has produced a Paragon. This is worth us organizing a banquet, to celebrate this joyous event." Gislason seemed quite pleased and excited. "The banquet is already prepared. We've been waiting for you. Haha, Bebe…and oh, these must be Linley's friends. Come, all of you you! Haha."

Chapter 5 – Refusal

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 5, Refusal

Gislason's words were very correct. Indeed, the entire clan rejoiced!

Not just the high level members of the clan; even many of the ordinary clan members located throughout the Skyrite Mountains gathered together in various places, drinking, chatting, and laughing gaily. For the clan to have produced such an expert was something which made even the ordinary clansmen feel proud!

When the four ancestors had been alive, the clan had been in such a flourishing, vigorous state!

After they died, the clan had decayed, to the point of being loudly insulted by the eight great clans at the borders of the Skyrite Mountains. This was a humiliation! This caused the members of the clan, who had experienced those glory days, to feel very lost in their hearts!

Linley's sudden rise to prominence caused these clansmen to once more feel proud and arrogant.

It was a very wild celebration. Even the patrolling soldiers drank wine and celebrated. With a Highgod Paragon in the clan, the patrolling soldiers weren't concerned; no one would dare to come and make trouble for the Four Divine Beasts clan.

Late night. The Violet Moon hung high in the skies.

The Skyrite Mountains. Within a mountain controlled by the Azure Dragon clan. There was a large estate which stretched over an enormous amount of land built here. In terms of size, it was even larger than the residence of the Patriarch's. It seemed quite simple and plain from the distance, but if one took a close look…one would see that even the walls were covered with

intricate, minute carvings. Given Linley's vision, he could instantly tell that these carvings were only accomplishable by someone who was at least at the grandmaster level in sculpting.

And right now…

In front of this mansion stood only two figures; Linley and Gislason.

Linley couldn't help but look towards the nearby Gislason. He mused to himself, "The Patriarch truly has prepared quite a few things for me."

"Patriarch, I'm going to live here?" Linley asked.

"Linley." Gislason laughed. "You are now the number one expert of our Four Divine Beasts clan! When people in the outside world discuss the Four Divine Beasts clan, the first person they will think about is you. Your residence has to match your stature. In addition, this place is fairly large, and you have many family and friends. It is enough."

Linley couldn't help but nod.

The size of this estate was similar to the 'Dragonblood Castle' of the Yulan continent. Even a thousand people could fit inside, much less a hundred.

"Then I will accept it." Linley was quite straightforward.

Gislason laughed and nodded. "Tomorrow, you can move your family and friends over here." Wharton and the others were currently staying within the large gorge already. Hogg went to go visit his ancestors in the Baruch clan. To Hogg and Wharton, seeing the ancestors of the clan was what mattered the most.

"No rush." Linley said. "My family members will want to spend some time with the Yulan branch and their ancestors."

"Fair enough." Gislason laughed and nodded. "Linley…look." As he spoke, Gislason produced a little jade bottle in his hands.

This jade bottle had a small opening. It was generally used for keeping items like already-refined Golden Soul Pearls or other small pills.

“This is…?” Linley frowned. “Sovereign’s Might?”

“Right. Earth-type Sovereign’s Might.” Gislason laughed. “Linley, I know that you primarily train in the Laws of the Earth. Thus, it is better for you to use earth-type Sovereign’s Might. That is why we prepared this for you! You are the number one expert of our clan; naturally, you have to use the most suitable type of Sovereign’s Might.”

Although this little jade bottle of Sovereign’s Might was far from being comparable to the flask Reisgem had given Linley, it still had to have at least a thousand drops in it.

“Patriarch.” Linley didn’t accept, instead shaking his head. “This jade bottle has far too much Sovereign’s Might. Ever since the four ancestors of our clan perished, our Four Divine Beasts clan lost our source for more Sovereign’s Might. Each drop we use is a drop lost forever. It is best if you keep them and let the other Elders of the clan use them.”

Linley knew that given his own power, even if he used Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might, he had nothing to fear from Paragons, and in Dragonform even held a slight advantage.

“Haha…”

Gislason laughed. “Linley, you are worrying too much. In the past, our clan had to be stingy in using Sovereign’s Might, partially because we no longer had a source for it, but partially because we were being put under great pressure by the eight great clans. We used up Sovereign’s Might too quickly; each battle represented the loss of a drop of Sovereign’s Might, and generally, we would engage in tens of battles before being able to kill an enemy Elder. Because they were being used up too quickly, the clan didn’t dare to hand them out freely. After all, at that time, we had no idea what the future would hold for the clan…and so we had to be a bit more thrifty.”

“But now, Linley, you are a Paragon. Who would dare come offend our Four Divine Beasts clan?” Gislason’s laughter was very happy.

Linley, hearing this, was somewhat persuaded by Gislason.

Indeed, given his level of power, there would be few people who would be so blind as to come irritate his clan. There would no longer be that many situations where the clan would use up much Sovereign’s Might.

“Take it, Linley.’ Gislason urged.

Linley hesitated slightly.

“Let’s do this, then!” With a flip of his hand, Linley instantly controlled his divine earth power to draw in earth elemental essence from the surrounding area, which formed into the shape of a little black flask in Linley’s hands. Linley pointed with one finger, and immediately, a stream of black water appeared out of nowhere in Linley’s palms, flowing towards the black flask.

This black ‘water’ was actually Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might.

Linley truly had a very large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might.

Moments later, the flask was filled with it. This flask was roughly ten percent of the canteen in volume.

“What are you…?” Gislason stared.

“Patriarch, let’s swap this flask of Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might of mine, for that flask of earth-type Sovereign’s Might of yours. It is indeed true that if I have earth-type Sovereign’s Might, I will be more effective.” Laughing, Linley offered the little black flask.

If the clan had a tremendous amount of Sovereign’s Might, Linley would have accepted it. But the clan didn’t actually have that much; most likely,

that little flask represented a large fraction of the clan's reserve of Sovereign's Might.

"Linley." Gislason said hurriedly. "This isn't acceptable. You…"

"Take it, or else I won't take yours." Linley shook his head.

Gislason could only laugh helplessly, then nod. "Fine." He accepted the flask of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might, while Linley accepted the flask of earth-type Sovereign's Might. As Linley was concerned, he had a large amount of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might, but given his power, there would be very few cases in which he would have to use it. To trade it for earth-type Sovereign's Might was beneficial for him.

Time flowed onwards, and in the blink of an eye, more than ten years had passed since Linley's return to the clan.

Linley could sense that the attitude of his clansmen, including the clan leaders, had changed. Linley understood…that after having become a Paragon, he had already become the spiritual leader of the entire Four Divine Beasts clan. His position was now akin to what the War God had held in the O'Brien Empire or the High Priest had held in the Yulan Empire.

The estate in which Linley resided had become a holy ground for the clan.

Within the vast, grassy plains of the estate's courtyard, there was a large group of people gathered. Linley, Reynolds, Yale, and George were seated in a circle, drinking wine and chatting idly about various things. But of course…it was Linley's divine water clone that was chatting with them. The other clones, including his original body, were all training.

It was still Linley's original body that trained the fastest, after all.

"Elder Linley." A gate guard ran over and bowed.

"Hm?" Linley looked at him.

“Elder Linley, the Patriarch has sent word that a Lord Prefect from the Jadefloat Continent wishes to meet you, Elder.” The guard bowed as he spoke.

Linley laughed and nodded calmly, then swept out with his divine sense, instantly encompassing the entire Skyrite Mountains within it. Naturally, this included Gislason and that Lord Prefect. Linley sent mentally. “Patriarch, just tell this Lord Prefect that I am currently training and unable to meet with any guests. Unless something important happens, please help me cope with them.”

Gislason was startled.

He actually hadn’t detected Linley’s divine sense at all. He couldn’t help but sigh. “Paragons really are incredible. The strength of their spiritual energy vastly surpasses mine.” Gislason understood Linley’s temperament as well; Linley couldn’t be bothered to engage in meetings like this, which were solely for the purpose of people trying to befriend him.

“Alright, I’ll help you deal with them.” Gislason replied. “Then, in the future, unless there is an important matter, you won’t meet with any figures like these?”

“Right.” Linley sent mentally. “Aside from people I am familiar with, such as Reisgem. If I’m not familiar with them and have no connection to them, unless there is an important matter, I won’t meet with any of them.”

Linley’s decision was quite wise, because after the arrival of this Lord Prefect from the Jadefloat Continent, every few months or every few years, someone would come. Some wanted to befriend Linley, while others wanted to ask Linley to help them with something. Still others wanted to take Linley as their teacher.

In short, many came to disturb him.

Fortunately, the Four Divine Beasts clan stopped them, making it so that no one could see Linley.

Actually, it was normal for many people to come see Linley. After all, Paragons rarely publicized their residences. It was very hard for people to locate Paragons.

Within his estate.

“Uncle.” Ina looked suspiciously at Linley. “Just now, that person who wanted to come visit you thought up a method to deliver this letter. And indeed, the letter states quite clearly the nature of the injustice done to him, and he really is quite pitiable. Uncle, why can’t you be so kind as to help him?”

Linley couldn’t help but chuckle as he glanced sideways at Ina.

“Nana.” Bebe stared at his daughter. “Who knows how many grudges and how much hatred the Infernal Realm holds? You want your uncle to help one person, but what about the countless other grudges? In the Infernal Realm, people are being killed at every moment of every day. Do you think every person who died deserved to die? They died unjust deaths as well. Do you want your uncle to make the entire Infernal Realm his enemy, and go get revenge for every single person who died?”

Ina was stunned.

Ina and Wade lived under the protection of Linley and Bebe, and so they had almost never suffered. They weren’t like Linley, who had walked a fine line between life and death to his current level. They saw the affairs of the world so simply.

“If I were to help people who are neither family nor friends, then I would need a trillion clones.” Linley chuckled.

Ina let out an adorable sniff, her nose wrinkled.

“Forget about the affairs of others; there are many personal matters that I haven’t carried out very well.” Linley shook his head and sighed.

“Eh?” Ina looked at Linley, puzzled.

Linley chuckled, not going into detail.

Although these days had been peaceful and happy, Linley noticed how his father, Hogg, would occasionally stare blankly into space when he was by himself. Linley understood that his father was missing his mother. Linley had always been thinking to himself…that one day, he should go pay a visit to the Divine Light Plane and ask for the Chief Sovereign of Light to restore his mother’s freedom.

Time flowed on, and in the blink of an eye, a hundred years passed.

Quite a few people were gathered within Linley’s estate.

“Third Bro suddenly shut himself inside a few days ago. All of his clones are in training. He said that he reached a critical moment…but a sudden flash of insight should be very fast. Why hasn’t he come out yet?” Reynolds couldn’t help but glance at a distant corridor, while George just laughed calmly, “Why the rush? You have eternal life now.”

Reynolds, hearing this, couldn’t help but laugh.

Indeed, to Deities who were untouched by time, ten years or a hundred years was nothing.

“Eh, Third Bro is coming?” Yale said.

Reynolds and the others all turned to look. Even some of the chatting, laughing people located in the grassy area some distance away noticed that a figure had emerged from the corridor, a figure with long, unbound brown hair. It was Linley. Linley was in a fairly good mood today. “I’ve trained for a hundred years. I’ve finally fused these two types of profound mysteries.”

It was exceedingly hard to fuse profound mysteries of different Laws.

After becoming a Soul Mutate, his soul had increased in power enormously, and yet he still had to spend so many years before making a true breakthrough.

“And this is just the beginning. Next I will fuse three kinds…and the amount of time I will have to spend will increase exponentially. My goal is fusing four.” Linley was quite eager as well. If he was able to fuse four types of profound mysteries from different Laws, how powerful would he become? Most likely, he would be able to kill even Paragons.

“Boss.” Bebe ran over.

“My father?” Linley asked.

“Uncle’s in his room. I haven’t seen him today.” Bebe said.

“Right. I’ll go find my father.” Linley glanced towards the others, then moved towards his father’s residence. After completing his training, Linley’s first thought was that it was time to go to the Divine Light Plane. “Regardless of whether or not I will be successful, I still at least need to go see the Chief Sovereign of Light and try asking.”

Chapter 6 – Overgod Artifact

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 6, Overgod Artifact

"Father!" Linley stepped into the room.

Hogg, currently reading a book, lifted his head. Seeing Linley, he couldn't help but smile. "Linley, I heard you were in closed-door training. What, did you make a breakthrough?"

"Right." Linley nodded, then sat down to the side. "Father, in two days, I plan to head to the Divine Light Plane to go visit the Chief Sovereign of Light. I want to see if there is any hope of finding mother and letting her regain her freedom."

"Huh?" Hogg's hands trembled. The book fell to the table as he stared at Linley, stunned. "Linley, you are going to the Divine Light Realm? But… last time, didn't you tell me that in the Planar Wars, you killed members of the Augusta clan? Isn't the Chief Sovereign of Light the ancestor of the Augusta clan? For you to go will be very dangerous." Hogg was frantic.

Hogg knew about virtually all of Linley's experiences over the years.

"Father, don't worry. The Chief Sovereign of Light has 182 children, and that's just in the second generation. The one I killed was a third generation member. The Augusta clan has more than a thousand individuals in the second and third generations. The Chief Sovereign of Light won't care about it." Linley was absolutely certain about this.

If the Chief Sovereign of Light cared, Reisgem wouldn't have dared to have organized them to attack.

"But he is still a Chief Sovereign. It would be utter simplicity for him to kill you." Hogg was very worried.

“Precisely because he is a Chief Sovereign, he wouldn’t lower himself to kill me.” Linley said comfortingly. “Don’t worry, Father! The Chief Sovereign of Light and I don’t have a grudge against each other. If he wants to kill me, he has plenty of methods to do so. But he’s done nothing!”

“Didn’t you say that there is no hope?” Hogg asked.

“I said the chances were very low.” Linley laughed bitterly. “But if I don’t at least try, I can’t be sure. If I give it a try, I might be successful. Sovereigns wish for Paragons to be their Emissaries. Perhaps, given my status, there’s a slight sliver of a chance that the Chief Sovereign of Light would restore my mother to freedom.”

“A slight sliver of a chance…” Hogg nodded slightly

Hogg looked at Linley, then said solemnly, “Linley, you are no longer a child. You have your own ideas and thoughts about what to do…but as your father, I must warn you that if this will be dangerous, you had best not go! I admittedly don’t know much about Sovereigns and Paragons, and thus can’t say much on that subject. I’ll let you make your own decisions. But safety first! You and Wharton…the two of you are just as important as your mother to me.”

“Right.” Hearing this, Linley felt…as though he were a child again, listening to his father instruct him.

Linley’s decision was to go find Patriarch Gislason the next day.

Within the hall.

“What?” Gislason, who had just sat down, couldn’t help but stand in shock. “Linley, you say you are going to go to the Divine Light Plane to visit the Chief Sovereign?”

“Right.” Linley laughed calmly. “I’m just coming to let you know that this trip of mine will take at least ten years and perhaps up to a hundred. All I can do is to go beg the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

Gislason hesitated, then said, “Linley, based on what I learned from Father in the past, the Chief Sovereign of Light isn’t a very amiable person. The Chief Sovereign of Light is extremely arrogant, and extremely domineering. If you go beg him…the chance for success truly is very low. In addition, I’m worried that if you say a single word not to his liking, he will kill you.”

“Arrogant and domineering?” Linley frowned.

Gislason nodded. “Right. The countless planes of the universe have a total of eleven Chief Sovereigns. The strongest are, of course, the Chief Sovereigns of the four Edicts! As for the other seven, the Chief Sovereign of Light is the strongest.”

Linley understood. The Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were indeed mighty.

But he hadn’t expected…that of the Chief Sovereigns of the seven Elemental Laws, the Chief Sovereign of Light was the mightiest.

“Why is the Chief Sovereign of Light more powerful than the other Elemental Chief Sovereigns?” Linley asked, puzzled.

Gislason was the son of the Azure Dragon, after all. He knew many secrets. He laughed and said, “This involves a certain treasure…an Overgod artifact!”

“Overgod artifact?” Linley’s eyes instantly lit up.

Just from the term alone, Linley understood what it represented. Divine artifacts. Sovereign artifacts. Overgod artifacts! Clearly, there were three levels of artifacts.

“Overgod artifacts are created by the Overgods themselves! Because there are only four Overgods, the Overgods of Fate, Destruction, Death, and Life, there are also only four kinds of Overgod artifacts. The four most powerful Sovereigns are the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction, Death, Fate, and Life. They all have Overgod artifacts. This is why they are the most powerful

Chief Sovereigns!”

Linley nodded slightly.

No wonder those four Chief Sovereigns were powerful. So it was because they had Overgod artifacts.

“Eleven Chief Sovereigns…five of them have Overgod artifacts. Aside from the four Chief Sovereigns I just mentioned, the last one is the Chief Sovereign of Light! Although the Chief Sovereign of Light has an Overgod artifact, it isn’t a match for him, and so he’s unable to use all of its power. Thus, he is weaker than the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, but more powerful than the other six Chief Sovereigns of the Laws!”

Linley sighed to himself.

The power of Overgod artifacts must truly be tremendous. There were only four Overgods to begin with, and they were the personifications of the Edicts to begin with. It was only natural that the Chief Sovereign of Light wouldn’t be suited to handling an Overgod artifact. It was only reasonable that he would thus be weaker than the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

“Overgod artifacts…where do they come from, and how did these five Chief Sovereigns acquire them?” Linley asked.

“I’m uncertain.” Gislason shook his head. “This happened long, long ago. Even my father and the other three didn’t know the details, much less me. The Chief Sovereign of Light’s is arrogant and domineering, but he has the power to be domineering. After all, he has an Overgod artifact!”

“Overgod artifact…” Linley let out a sigh. “Can it be that despite the passage of so many years, there hasn’t been a second Overgod artifact?”

“No. If there was one, wouldn’t the Chief Sovereigns and Sovereigns go wild over it and fight for it? The Chief Sovereign of Light has one, but the Chief Sovereigns of the other six elements do not. I imagine that in their hearts, those six Chief Sovereigns of the Laws feel very unhappy about this.

If they had any chance to acquire one, would they give it up?" Gislason laughed as he spoke.

Linley couldn't help but laugh. "I wonder what an Overgod artifact looks like. I probably wouldn't recognize one even if I saw one."

"Overgod artifacts? Only someone at the level of a Sovereign can make use of them. There's no point in us acquiring them; in fact, acquiring them would only invite disaster upon ourselves." Gislason changed the topic. "Enough about Overgod artifacts. That's a very distant topic. Linley, you say that you wish to go to the Divine Light Plane, but I urge you not to go. Truly, don't go!"

Linley chuckled. "He might be powerful, but he is still a Sovereign. Would he lower himself to act against me?"

Gislason let out a low sigh, then suddenly spoke through divine sense. "Linley, I will tell you a secret."

Linley was stunned!

The two were chatting in the hall, but Gislason actually used divine sense to speak? Could the secretly be so great?

"Patriarch, what is the secret?" Linley was puzzled.

"Linley." Gislason's expression was solemn. "I've always suspected something about the deaths of the four ancestors of our clan!"

"Suspected something?" Linley didn't understand.

"I suspect…that the killer was the Chief Sovereign of Light!" Gislason sent.

Linley was badly shocked. Gislason continued to speak through divine sense. "Although the four ancestors of our clan were merely Lesser Sovereigns, their innate divine abilities were very strange; their four divine abilities could actually combine into one, with their four types of divine

ability energy able to fuse as well and result in an exceedingly powerful supreme technique. Even High Sovereigns such as the Chief Sovereigns were quite apprehensive."

Combine four innate divine abilities into one?

Linley knew that the divine abilities of the Four Divine Beasts clan were rather unusual, but he had no way of understanding what they would be like when used by the four ancestors. There was one thing he did know; without question, it would have been far more powerful than when Linley and his peers used them. After all, Linley and the others only carried the lineage of the divine beasts in their veins; they weren't true divine beasts.

"You say…that you suspect the killer was the Chief Sovereign of Light? Why would it be him?" Linley asked.

"First of all, very few people were capable of killing the four ancestors! The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts…the Chief Sovereign of Fate doesn't get involved in worldly affairs. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was on excellent terms with our ancestors. The Chief Sovereign of Death…as long as someone doesn't offend her, she wouldn't do anything to them. The Chief Sovereign of Life is said to be quite kind-hearted and rarely kills mortals, much less Sovereigns. In addition, our four ancestors didn't have any conflicts or opposing interests with the Chief Sovereign of Life. Thus… the only one left is the Chief Sovereign of Light!" Gislason sent mentally.

Linley frowned.

"The Chief Sovereign of Light has an Overgod artifact. He has enough power to resist the combined innate divine ability of the four ancestors." Gislason's eyes held anger and hatred within them. Although there were eleven Chief Sovereigns, since the other six didn't have Overgod artifacts, there was no way they would be able to kill the four ancestors when they were fighting together."

"Did he have conflicting interests with our four ancestors?" Linley asked mentally.

“Not a conflicting interest per se, but…back then, our Four Divine Beasts clan was spread throughout the planes of the universe. We were extremely powerful, and there were quite a few people who believed that our Four Divine Beasts clan was the number one clan of the planes of the universe. But the Augusta clan…there were also many who believed that they were the number one clan. If there was a conflict…I imagine the only conflict was one of conflicting reputations.” Gislason couldn’t find anything else either.

After all, the four ancestors wouldn’t have gone out of their way to go offend the Chief Sovereign of Light either.

“Fighting over the title of the ‘number one clan’? That can’t be right.” Linley couldn’t believe it. “The so-called struggle over the title of ‘number one clan’ was a reputational struggle. The Chief Sovereign of Light would kill our four ancestors because of it? This reason doesn’t make much sense.”

“I…I’m not sure either. But logically speaking, he’s the only possible culprit.” Gislason clearly also felt that his reason wasn’t very convincing. “Linley, if he really was the one who killed them, then he definitely has malicious feelings towards the Four Divine Beasts clan. He didn’t kill us because he didn’t care about us, but now that you are a Paragon…I’m afraid that he would…”

“Patriarch, he might very well be the killer, but he also might not be.” Linley sent. “Also, you said that the other Chief Sovereigns wouldn’t be able to kill the four ancestors when they joined forces. But what if they were killed one by one? If someone truly intended to kill them, it’s possible that they didn’t give our four ancestors a chance to join forces.”

Gislason was startled. He immediately sent back, “The four ancestors were extremely close to each other. They rarely separated.”

“Rarely separated? That doesn’t mean they were always together.” Linley sent back. “Don’t worry, Patriarch. Even if the Chief Sovereign of Light

was the killer, would he act against me, a Deity? Even if he was nervous, he wouldn't be nervous of me, a Paragon. After all, a Paragon is still just a Deity."

Gislason, hearing this, let out a bitter laugh. "Linley, it seems you have set your mind on going."

"Right. If I don't make the trip, I won't be satisfied." Linley nodded.

After all, this involved his mother!

Both he and Wharton wanted to meet the mother who had given birth to them! As for his father, his father had always been thinking about his mother.

"If you want to go, you should at least let Lord Beirut know. Lord Beirut is on fairly close terms with the Bloodridge Sovereign, and he knows many things. It would be good for you to ask him his opinion." Gislason didn't want Linley to go, but clearly, he wasn't able to convince Linley. All he could do was entrust his hopes to Beirut.

Linley, upon hearing this, had to admit that this was a good idea.

"Then, Patriarch, please help me make some inquiries. I know that our clan should have a method to communicate with Lord Beirut, right?" Linley laughed.

"Right. In the past, my clone was there. However, now that the crisis is over, my clone has returned. Still, we still have intelligence agents there." Gislason nodded. "I will make the arrangements. I imagine that in a little while, Beirut's response will arrive."

Linley nodded slightly. He couldn't go wrong listening to Beirut.

"Then I'll go back now." Linley laughed. He planned to leave tomorrow.

"Patriarch." Right at this moment, a guard from outside the door ran in.

Linley and Gislason both turned to look. The guard bowed, then reported, “Patriarch, Elder Linley, someone has arrived asking to meet with Elder Linley.” Gislason frowned. “Ordinary guests can be instructed to leave.” Very many people wished to meet with Linley.

Linley wouldn’t meet with any commander-level experts, but Gislason would.

For those who were too weak, however, they would be refused entry outside the mountain.

“But, Patriarch, this person says that he is Linley’s old friend. His name is…Olivier!” The guard said hurriedly.

“Olivier?” Linley was rather surprised. “Come, I’ll go with you.”

Chapter 7 – Olivier

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 7, Olivier

Linley traversed Dragon Avenue, flying downwards and quickly arriving outside the Skykrite Mountains. He saw Olivier there, floating in the air outside the mountain range.

Next to the location where Olivier was hovering, there was also a flourishing ironbark tree. Its lustrous, knife-like metallic leaves, under the light of the Blood Sun, seemed terrifying. As for Olivier, his black and white hair was tousled and rather mussed. His face was ashen. He seemed quite dispirited. In front of him was a black-haired youth.

"What happened to Olivier?" Linley, seeing this, couldn't help but frown. "He seems quite depressed."

In Linley's mind, Olivier was an expert who always strove to reach the peak and who wasn't afraid of loneliness. Even when in the most dire of situations, Olivier shouldn't be the sort of person to grow depressed and give up. Thus, the scene in front of Linley puzzled him.

"Elder Linley, that's the person who claims to be your friend, 'Olivier.'" The warriors of his clan reported respectfully.

"He is indeed my friend." Linley smiled then flew towards Olivier.

Olivier had noticed Linley as well, and he couldn't help but fly towards Linley while squeezing out a smile. It was still quite a stroke of karmic luck for two people of a similar age from the same homeland to meet each other here in the Infernal Realm.

"Linley." Olivier forced a smile.

"Haha, Olivier…after the last time we parted, a thousand years has passed

without us meeting again." Linley said with a laugh, and then looked towards the youth next to Olivier. "Oh, Olivier, the youth next to you is…?" Linley realized that there seemed to be a rather baleful aura coming from the youth's forehead, and he seemed quite cold and emotionless.

Olivier took the youth's hand, then turned and glanced sideways at Linley. "This is my son. Deia [Dai'ya]."

"Son?" Linley was slightly startled.

Olivier had actually gotten married? Olivier had always pursued perfection, and he had never had a wife.

"Uncle Linley." The cold youth, 'Deia', bowed fractionally as he spoke.

"Excellent." Linley laughed and nodded, then said to the nearby Olivier, "Olivier, don't just stand there. Come, come to my place. Let's chat slowly once we get back. Haha, it has been so many years since I have seen you. You even have a son…and you've become a Highgod. Excellent."

Linley laughed as he spoke, then flew alongside Olivier back to his own residence.

Moments later, they arrived at Linley's residence.

"Elder!" The guards in front of the residence's gates all saluted respectfully, their eyes filled with a hint of veneration. There were many warriors who were willing to be a guard for Linley's residence. To be a guard for a Highgod Paragon? This was something one could feel very proud of.

"Deia, come in." Linley laughed as he spoke to the cold youth.

Seeing how Deia acted, Linley sighed in his heart. "In the past, Olivier was quite cold as well. I didn't expect that his son would be even colder than him, with such a strong, baleful aura, as though he is about to kill someone." Still, Linley understood that it wasn't that Deia was being disrespectful to him; it was that Deia had been like this ever since he was

born, and so it was only natural that he had become like this at all times now.

After entering the residence.

“Heeey…Olivier?!” A large group of people was in the grassy courtyard, and Bebe, who was chatting loudly with everyone else, called out in surprise as he saw Olivier.

“Olivier. Long time no see.” Reynolds laughed as he walked over to greet him.

“Olivier.” Wharton and the others who were on friendly terms with Olivier all walked over. In the past, Olivier had stayed at Dragonblood Castle for quite a long period of time, and he was quite familiar with many of the people who lived there. “You all came?” Olivier was very surprised as well. All he could do was continue to force a smile as he greeted these people.

A large group of people immediately surrounded Olivier and Deia.

Linley watched this calmly, musing to himself, “Olivier seems to be rather…off.”

Surrounded by so many people, Olivier had no choice but to chat with them.

“Father.” Deia tugged at Olivier’s hand slightly, clearly not accustomed to being surrounded by so many people.

“Enough, everyone, let’s break it up. There will be plenty of opportunities to see Olivier in the future. Olivier just returned. Let him rest a bit.” Linley said with a laugh. Immediately, the group slowly broke apart, and Linley then walked to stand next to Olivier. He asked softly, “Olivier, is there something on your mind?”

Olivier glanced at Linley, then shook his head. “Nothing.”

Olivier clearly didn't want to discuss it!

Seeing the response, Linley didn't pursue this line of questioning. Laughing, he said, "Then stay here at my place. We have many people here…it will be more lively."

"Fine." Olivier laughed and nodded.

And then, Linley left as well.

Within a large, empty courtyard. Deia was seated at the corner of a stone table. The stone table was covered with fruit and food, and Deia was silently eating some of it, not chatting with the others at all.

Wharton, Reynolds, and Olivier were all seated together.

"That's the way Deia is. He likes the quiet." Olivier explained.

"This is a problem with your child raising methods." Wharton chortled.

Olivier forced out a laugh, but didn't discuss this any further. He suddenly looked around, then said, puzzled, "Wharton, Reynolds…when I originally came to the Four Divine Beasts clan, didn't Linley's group live in that large gorge? But on this visit, I can tell that Linley's estate is now incredibly luxurious and takes up a large space. It is quite eye-catching. What's going on?"

A person's residence would be commensurate to their status.

Naturally, Olivier would be puzzled as to why someone would have such a large residence within the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"You haven't met with my Third Bro in over a thousand years. The past thousand years, however, Third Bro has gained strength faster than ever before." Reynolds laughed.

"Oh?" Olivier was very surprised.

“I’ll tell you.” Reynolds laughed, then began to explain. “Let’s start from when the Four Divine Beasts clan escaped their crisis. The eight great clans were pressing down upon the Four Divine Beasts clan from right outside the mountains…” Reynolds explained everything, including the events in the Netherworld, the events in Tartarus, and even what Linley had done in the Planar Battlefield. He explained it all in one go.

“Paragon?” Hearing that Linley had become a Paragon, Olivier’s eyes turned completely round.

Wharton added, “But of course. During the Planar War, my big brother actually dueled another Paragon named Magnus, right there in the center of the Stellar River’s corridor. While being watched by countless soldiers and many commanders, my big brother gave Magnus a kick and forced him into chaotic space. Hey! Olivier, why are you leaving?”

Olivier, hearing this, actually rose to his feet and hurriedly walked away.

“That’s weird…” Reynolds didn’t understand.

Olivier walked right next to Bebe, saying frantically, “Bebe, where’s your Boss?”

Bebe laughed and pointed to the distance. “He’s in that building over there. My Boss is right there.”

“Thanks.” Olivier hurriedly moved in that direction, his body flashing forward, reappearing before the building.

Bebe, puzzled, frowned. “My Boss is right there, just a few hundred meters away. Why use divine power to fly? It would only take a few seconds to walk that distance. What’s the rush?”

Olivier pushed open the door to the study of that building, then walked in. He immediately saw Linley, who was currently reading a book. Linley, puzzled, lifted his head, then laughed, “Oh, Olivier?”

Olivier took three steps forward, walking to the center of the study.

Suddenly…

Olivier knelt down, his knees striking hard against the stone floor with a ‘bang’ sound. Olivier’s face was solemn, and his eyes were filled with entreaty. “Linley, you have to help me!”

“Rise, quick, rise.” Linley was completely stunned by Olivier’s actions. Waving his hand, he sent a surge of Will-infused divine earth power forward, lifting Olivier up. Olivier looked straight at Linley, who hurriedly said, “Don’t be like this. If there’s something you need, just tell me. I will definitely help you.”

Linley walked out from behind the reading table, hurriedly moving to stand in front of Olivier, then pulling Olivier to sit down at a nearby chair. Linley sat as well. “What is going on? Tell me.”

Linley had known as soon as he had seen Olivier today that Olivier seemed to be a bad situation. But Olivier wasn’t willing to discuss it, and so there was nothing Linley could do.

“This matter…when speaking of it…” Olivier smiled bitterly as he spoke. “Linley, in the past, when I left Dylin and the others to adventure alone, I did indeed make a breakthrough while walking that line between life and death. My divine light clone reached the Highgod level. And then, while taking on a Fiend mission, I met Diana [Dai’na]! Diana was also a lone traveler who had taken on multiple missions. During that dangerous mission, the two of us quickly grew close, and then Diana and I became husband and wife.”

Linley nodded slightly.

It was indeed quite normal for two lone travelers to marry each other and become husband and wife.

“Roughly twenty years ago, Diana and I had children. A pair of twin boys; Deia and Leya [Lei’ya].” Olivier sighed. “Everything was beautiful. The four of us lived a life of peace. Diana and I were both Highgods, and so we were able to guarantee that Deia and his brother would live safe lives…but when Deia was five years old! A man named Bonin [Bo’ning] led a group of subordinates over. When he found us, do you know what he said?”

Olivier’s eyes were filled with rage. “He said…Diana was his wife!!!”

Linley was stunned.

“This man named Bonin told Diana to go with him! Of course we weren’t willing, but he had tens of subordinates, all of them Highgods. My wife and I weren’t able to resist at all! But Diana and I would rather die than agree. But this Bonin threatened Diana…he said that if Diana left with him, he would spare me and our two sons! If Diana refused, then he would kill me and our sons.” Olivier’s eyes became filled with murder as he said this.

“This Bonin….he gave me a chance to fight him by myself. If I was able to beat him, he would let us go.” Olivier clenched his fists. “But…I lost! I was far from being a match for him!”

Linley sighed in his heart.

Olivier explained it in a very simple manner, but Linley could completely imagine what that scene was like. A man who wasn’t even able to protect his wife and children, and had to watch as others took them away, that sort of pain and grief…

“For the sake of myself and my two sons, Diana left with him!” Olivier’s tears began to fall.

There were many unjust things in this world. If he, Olivier, was a supreme expert, he could have effortlessly killed this enemy. But he wasn’t a supreme expert. Or at least…he wasn’t for now! Thus, all he could do was watch as his woman left with someone else!

“But Diana was wrong!” Olivier said furiously. “That Bonin was a bastard!!! He actually didn’t spare me and my children. After taking Diana away, he sent people to kill us.”

Linley’s face changed.

Bonin had first promised to spare Olivier and his children, so as to coax Diana away. But then, he had sent people to kill Olivier? This was indeed excessively vile.

“Haha…” Olivier just laughed coldly. “What he didn’t know…was that after he took Diana away, I immediately left with my sons, and then I began to fuse with a darkness-type Highgod spark!” By then, Olivier had already reached the Highgod level in his divine light clone, but his divine darkness clone was still at the God level. Of course, he had already comprehended five profound mysteries, and was only missing the final one.

If he were to train normally, in just a few more centuries, Olivier would’ve broken through on his own.

But…

He wasn’t able to wait any longer!

Olivier needed to get revenge! In addition, he was a Soul Mutate; even if he fused one divine spark, the other divine clone was one which had broken through on its own. Given that he had the soul of a Soul Mutate, he would still have a chance to fuse profound mysteries in the future.

Because Olivier had already comprehended five mysteries, the process of fusing with a divine spark was naturally quite fast. In a few short months, he had succeeded.

“Those people were able to locate me, though, and they pursued me and my children and attacked us. By then, I had already fused the divine spark. By using fused divine power and two profound mysteries I had fused long ago, I killed them! Kill them all!” Olivier growled. Even before becoming a

Deity, Olivier had already sensed that there were areas in the Laws of Light and Laws of Darkness that were compatible, and had fused a profound mystery from each.

Centuries earlier, Olivier had succeeded.

After fusing with a divine spark, Olivier had access to fused divine power and fused Laws. Olivier's power had increased exponentially, and he became comparable to a Seven Star Fiend.

Chapter 8 – Whither To?

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 8, Whither To?

"However…" Olivier said bitterly. "Although I killed all of those people, there were too many of them. I had to protect Deia and Leya, my two sons, at the same time. I was only able to block two or three of them, not all of them! Clearly, that person named Bonin had given the order to kill me and my two sons! In the battle, Leya died! My power was only enough to permit me to protect Deia."

Linley sighed in his heart.

Even though his power had risen exponentially, Olivier was by himself, while he had two burdens to shoulder! Meanwhile, the enemy consisted of a large group of Highgods. Once they launched mass attacks…it was quite impressive that Olivier was even able to protect a single son.

"Olivier, you had months. Why didn't you deliver your children to a city?" Linley couldn't help but ask.

If Olivier had left the children in a city, wouldn't they be safe?

"I didn't have enough time." Olivier said bitterly. "I wanted to. If I was travelling alone, I definitely would have been able to make it to a city, but I had to bring the two of them as well. They weren't even Deities, just Saints. Their flying speed was too fast. My speed was impacted because I had to help bring them along. In addition, Diana and I lived in a distant gorge. Given our power, bandits wouldn't dare to come make trouble for us, but that gorge was more than a year and a half away from the nearest city."

Linley sighed to himself.

Olivier's speed was simply too slow! Prior to fusing with a divine spark, Olivier was only an ordinary Highgod. How fast could he possibly move,

given that he was burdened with two children?

“After killing those people, I finally managed to make it to a city with my son. I put Deia in a hotel, and then, by myself, I charged straight for the Yustone Mountains of the Skymount Prefecture!” Olivier growled.

“Skymount Prefecture?” Linley frowned.

Bloodridge Continent was extremely vast. Skymount Prefecture was located towards the center of Bloodridge Continent, and was hundreds of millions of kilometers away from Indigo Prefecture.

“Right. That person named Bonin was located in Skymount Prefecture.” Olivier nodded. “Bonin had been extremely arrogant. When he took Diana away, he told me…that if I had any ability, I should go seek him out at the Yustone Mountains of the Skymount Prefecture. He would be waiting for me there.”

Linley nodded slightly as he listened to this. He could imagine how arrogant Bonin had acted.

“The city I had entered wasn’t too far away from the Yustone Mountains of Skymount Prefecture. Given that my speed increased dramatically after I fused those two types of Highgod power, in but a single year, I made it to the Yustone Mountains. After investigating secretly, I learned that this Bonin was actually the son of the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture.” Olivier laughed coldly. “I couldn’t care less that he was the son of the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture. All I cared about was killing this Bonin and saving my wife, Diana.”

Linley understood that at that point in time, Olivier was at the brink of insanity.

“Bonin was untameably unruly, and was not on good terms with his father. Thus, he didn’t live with his father, instead living within the Yustone Mountains, where he built a castle for himself.” Olivier growled. “I stealthily made my way in, planning to find Bonin and then kill him. And,

indeed, after fusing a divine spark, my power surpassed his by a level! I was almost able to kill him…"

"But…he…he actually had a drop of Sovereign's Might!"

Olivier laughed bitterly as he spoke.

Linley now understood. That drop of Sovereign's Might was most likely what the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture had given to his son as a protective measure to save his life if needed.

"After using Sovereign's Might, his power vastly surpassed mine! All I could do was flee, and at that time, my wife, Diana, came out to block Bonin as well, threatening to kill herself. Bonin was disturbed, and in that moment, I made my escape." Olivier said bitterly. "After that failure, I understood that I wouldn't be able to kill him by myself. Thus, I had no choice but to secretly slip away. I returned, taking away Deia, and came to Indigo Prefecture. I was planning that since you, Linley, were quietly training here, I would do the same."

Although Olivier had grown far more powerful, the trip over to Indigo Prefecture had still taken more than ten years, as he was carrying his child with him. That child had grown into a youth as well.

Linley understood, now, why Deia was so cold, so remote, so baleful.

Clearly…Deia had grown up in the midst of hatred.

"I understood that after that battle, Bonin would only stay in the Yustone Mountains if he still had more Sovereign's Might and thus had nothing to fear. If he didn't, he would probably be afraid of my return and thus take Diana and leave. His father is the Lord Prefect. Even if I train for ten million more years, I won't be able to avenge my son or find Diana!"

He had been in the grips of despair. All he wanted to do was train quietly, but then…Olivier had heard others say that Linley had become a Paragon.

“I had already given up all hope. But…but I heard, Linley, that you have become a Paragon.” Olivier looked towards Linley.

Olivier knew that Linley was very powerful, at the Seven Star Fiend level, but behind Bonin was the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture. Thus, Olivier hadn’t told Linley about this, as he didn’t want Linley to get dragged into this.

“Skymount Prefecture?”

Linley nodded slightly.

Olivier’s grief and misery caused Linley to feel quite moved. His wife had been taken, and one of his sons had been killed, yet he didn’t have the power to fight back or even take revenge.

“Olivier, don’t worry. I will accompany you.” Linley nodded.

“Thank you.” Olivier, upon hearing Linley’s response, couldn’t help but immediately thank you, then say, “Then Linley, when should we head out?”

“This…” Linley hesitated.

“How about we head out tomorrow?” Olivier couldn’t wait at all. His wife had been taken and his son had been killed. Hatred festered in Olivier’s heart, gnawing at his soul like locusts. Now that the flames of vengeance had been kindled within his heart once more, Olivier didn’t want to waste any more time.

“Tomorrow?” Linley frowned.

Tomorrow, Linley was planning to go to the Divine Light Plane!

Actually, Linley felt a hint of nervousness about this trip to the Divine Light Plane, after what Gislason had said. He was afraid that the almighty Chief Sovereign of Light really would stoop to killing him. But he had no choice if he wanted to save his mother. He had only one option; to ask the Chief

Sovereign of Light to release her!

Thus, although it was dangerous, Linley was still going to go.

Linley had originally planned to allow his divine earth clone to head to the Divine Light Plane.

His divine earth clone was just one clone, but it too had a mutated soul, and it too was infused with his Will. Although the power of the Will wasn't as great as that of Linley's original body, the power of his divine earth clone was also comparable to the power of Paragons.

Linley's original body was more powerful in terms of power and Will than Paragons.

As for his divine earth, wind, and water clones, the power of their Will was slightly weaker, and so they were slightly weaker than Paragons.

For the sake of his mother, Linley was willing to send his divine earth clone over. Even if the Chief Sovereign of Light was so shameless as to kill him, Linley would at most lose a divine earth clone. Linley would still be a Paragon-level expert.

But…with Olivier's request, Linley was now put in a hard position.

Indeed, Linley could allow his divine earth clone to go to the Divine Light Plane and his original body accompany Olivier to the Skymount Prefecture.

But…if both clones simultaneously revealed Paragon-level power in the Divine Light Plane and in the Infernal Realm, anyone with deductive reasoning abilities would immediately understand that Linley was a Soul Mutate!

This was because Paragons generally had one element they specialized in. It was virtually impossible for a person to be in a Paragon in one element, and then also become a Paragon with his other divine clones. It was already quite terrifying for someone to become a Paragon in one element; a person

who had two divine clones at the Paragon level was something utterly inconceivable.

If Linley revealed Paragon-level power in two different planes with two different bodies, of course others would find it bizarre and investigate!

The secret of his soul mutation…for now, Linley didn't want to reveal it!

"Linley, you…you are busy?" Olivier asked.

"I…" Linley hesitated.

"If you have an important matter to attend to, then my matter can be delayed. There's no need to rush it." Olivier said hurriedly.

But Linley understood that given Olivier's son had been killed and his wife had been taken, Olivier was undoubtedly thinking about revenge every moment. He wanted to rescue his wife.

"Boss, Boss, the Patriarch is coming." The voice of Bebe, from outside.

"Patriarch?" Linley turned his head and saw Gislason striding in, clearly in a hurry.

"Patriarch." Linley hurriedly rose to his feet to welcome him, and the nearby Olivier hurriedly dried his tears and rose as well.

Upon entering the room, Gislason hurriedly said, "Linley, just now, I did what you asked me to do and sent someone to deliver a message to Lord Beirut. Lord Beirut's response came immediately. He asked me to tell you…no matter what, don't go to the Divine Light Plane!"

Linley was stunned.

"Divine Light Plane?" Olivier now understood as well. Most likely, the reason why Linley had hesitated earlier was because he had to go to the Divine Light Plane on business.

“Why did Lord Beirut say this?” Linley was completely puzzled.

“Lord Beirut said that when your divine fire clone was on the Yulan continent, you had discussed with him the matter of saving your father, friends, and mother. He thus made a trip to the Divine Light Realm and sought out the Chief Sovereign of Light to help you make the request. After all, there are no grudges between Lord Beirut and the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel a surge of gratitude. His divine fire clone had merely mentioned this matter, but Beirut had actually made a personal visit to see the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“But…the Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t agree!” Gislason said with a sigh. “Lord Beirut also asked the Bloodridge Sovereign, and the Bloodridge Sovereign responded…that it was impossible to force the Chief Sovereign of Light to restore an Angel’s freedom. Even if a Sovereign went and asked in person, the chances would be low. If you went…there would be no chance at all.”

That look in his father’s eyes appeared in Linley’s mind.

“Father…there’s nothing I can do.” Linley felt powerless.

The Chief Sovereign of Death had said this as well; that even if she went in person, the chances would be low. Now, the Bloodridge Sovereign had said the same thing, and Beirut had actually gone in person.

“Linley, when Lord Beirut was discussing this matter with the Chief Sovereign of Light, he also said that you were willing to be the Chief Sovereign’s Emissary, in exchange for your mother’s freedom. But the Chief Sovereign of Light still would not agree.” Gislason said.

Even becoming a Sovereign’s Emissary was useless?

Linley no longer had any cards left to play.

“In addition, Lord Beirut told me that I had to stop you, that you absolutely could not be permitted to go to the Divine Light Plane. It’s fine if you don’t go, but if you were to come face to face with the Chief Sovereign of Light, it was very possible that the Chief Sovereign would immediately kill you. This isn’t just because of the issue between you and the Augusta clan; there’s another reason as well.” Gislason said in an urging manner.

“Another reason?” Linley couldn’t think of anything he had done to offend the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Was it because he had driven Magnus into chaotic space?

But Magnus was a Paragon of Fate, and an emissary of the Chief Sovereign of Fate, not the Chief Sovereign of Light! The only reason he had chosen to help Montelo was because he had a long, close relationship with the Augusta Patriarch.

“What is the reason?” Linley asked.

“Lord Beirut said that for now, this reason could not be made public, which is why he didn’t tell the messenger.” Gislason said.

Linley nodded.

After so many years, Linley had developed great trust for Beirut.

“Then for now, I’ll give up the notion of going to the Divine Light Plane…” Linley murmured to himself, and then turned to look at Olivier. “Olivier, tomorrow, I will accompany you. We will head out and go to the Skymount Prefecture!”

A look of surprise and joy appeared on Olivier’s face.

The very next day. At the gates to Linley’s estate.

“Boss, just let me go with you. I’m bored to death.” Bebe chortled. Linley

wasn't able to dissuade Bebe, and so Bebe tagged along as well. This trip to Skymount Prefecture, as far as Linley was concerned, held no dangers or challenges. Although, according to legends, the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture was fairly powerful…

Compared to a Paragon, he was still much weaker!

This was a trip for Linley, Bebe, Olivier, and Deia. Deia was only a Saint. Although they hadn't planned to bring him along, Deia himself had steadfastly insisted on going. His mother was at Skymount Prefecture, after all!

And thus, Olivier had asked Linley his opinion on whether or not they should bring Deia along…and Linley, being completely confident, had nodded and permitted Olivier to bring Deia.

"Let's go. We will be able to reach Skymount Prefecture in under a year." Linley smiled, and then, in midair, an enormous black sword-shaped metallic lifeform appeared.

Linley's group of four immediately entered the metallic lifeform.

Under Linley's control, the metallic lifeform slashed through the skies, transforming into a black blur as it disappeared into the horizons of the Skyrite Mountains and flew towards the east.

Chapter 9 – Bonin

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 9, Bonin

In the air above Skymount Prefecture. A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform was hovering there.

Linley, Olivier, and the other two were standing at the front cabin within the metallic lifeform, staring through the translucent metal to the mountains ahead of them.

"Right. The Yustone Mountains are up ahead!" Olivier's eyes were shining.

While flying here, Olivier had been astonished at the speed of Linley's metallic lifeform. Within one short year, they had actually arrived at Skymount Prefecture from Indigo Prefecture. What he didn't understand… was that when Linley had gone from Tartarus of the Nether Sea to the Abyssal Mountain, a distance of tens of billions of kilometers, he had spent less than ten years travelling.

"Describe Diana's appearance to me." Linley said.

Olivier nodded. "Diana is slightly shorter than me, standing roughly up to my eyebrows. She has straight, shoulder-length hair which is a deep jade color, almost black. Within the castle inside the Yustone Mountains, she is the mistress. Finding her should be easy."

"Right." Linley nodded.

At the same time, the metallic lifeform disappeared, and Linley's group of four stood there in midair, with Olivier holding his son, Deia, by the hand.

"Wait momentarily." Linley willed his divine sense to spread out, instantly encapsulating nearly half of the entire Yustone Mountains, which naturally included that castle.

In the castle, there were 1556 individuals, mostly men, with a few women.

As for someone like Olivier had described, a woman with shoulder-length hair that was deep green, there was only one!

Within the castle. The balcony of a small room. A woman was staring into the distance, dressed in an ink-jade dress. She was the mistress of this castle…Diana!

“Leya, my child…mother is so sorry.” Diana said softly, a hint of sadness in her eyes.

Ever since that day more than ten years ago, when Olivier had attacked the castle and informed her of Leya’s death, Diana began to hate Bonin all the more! Originally, she hated Bonin for tearing her apart from her family, but now, she hated Bonin for not honoring his promise and for attacking her sons and husband, resulting in Leya’s death.

“How could it have come to this? Why did all of this have to happen?” Diana shut her eyes, tears rolling down her face.

Right at this moment…

“Are you Olivier’s wife, Diana?” A voice rang out in Diana’s mind.

Diana was startled, and she hurriedly opened her eyes.

“Who is it?” Diana hurriedly looked around, but she was unable to see a single possible ‘suspect’. And then, that voice continued, “Don’t worry or be suspicious. I am Olivier’s friend. He invited me to take you out of here.”

Diana continued to stare around herself, but wasn’t able to find the person who was sending her the message. She calmed down, then responded, “Right, I am Diana! But…I cannot leave.”

“Cannot leave?”

“Right. If I were to leave, then the lord of this castle, Bonin, would definitely kill Olivier and our son.” Diana said.

“He doesn’t have that ability.” That calm, yet assured voice echoed in her mind.

Diana wanted to say something else, but suddenly, a raucous series of noises could be heard from the distance. Diana couldn’t help but stare towards the distant disturbance, confused. She saw a group of guards fly out from the walls of the castle, with one shouting rebukingly, “This is Castle Yustone. If you want to enter the castle, wait for us to send a message first!”

The shouts rang out repeatedly, and some people even pulled out divine artifacts as they flew over to block the newcomers.

But the four blurs didn’t hesitate at all, flying straight past.

“Olly…and Deia?” Diana opened her eyes wide, stunned.

Linley’s group of four flew past in awe-inspiring fashion, completely ignoring the blocking guards. Most of those guards were Gods, and only a few were Highgods. A gust of earthen yellow energy rippled past them, and it seemed as though those guards were like pellets of sand, carried away by the waves of the sea. All of them were knocked flying.

“Eh?” Diana couldn’t help but feel surprised.

The other guards of Yustone Castle were all stunned as well.

“Milord, those four are too powerful. We aren’t able to stop them.” Those guards hurriedly reported to a black-robed man.

The black-robed man’s face changed. “Olivier!” Last time, Olivier had secretly snuck in, and then battled with Bonin. Many of the people at Yustone Castle thus recognized Olivier. The black-robed man ordered, “Hurry up and find the master of the castle. He is elsewhere in the Yustone

Mountains. Hurry and find him."

"Yes, milord."

Immediately, twenty nearby guards flew out of Yustone Castle in search of Bonin.

"The four of you, please halt." The black-robed man called out in a clear voice.

At the same time, many of the guards gathered together behind the black-robed man as he flew towards Linley's group of four. In addition, a large amount of guards continued to fly out from places throughout the castle, wishing to block Linley's advance.

"Rumble…"

Linley's group of four flew forward, and it was like a mountain was sweeping through. All of the guards who wanted to block them were knocked flying backwards by waves of earthen yellow energy. Linley's group of four…was completely unstoppable!

Seeing this, the black-robed man's face became exceedingly ugly to behold. He could tell…that the enemies were powerful indeed.

"Unless you want to die, stay away." Bebe called out smugly in a loud voice.

"The four of you, if you advance any further, then I will attack." The black-robed man said in a clear voice. Although he spoke quite boldly, after having seen Linley's power…the black-robed man knew very well that if these enemies wanted to kill them, it would be simplicity itself. After all, killing Highgods was very easy, but to do what Linley had done, to knock them backwards without injuring them…that was quite difficult.

Linley's group of four flew directly for Diana.

Diana stared as these four flew over, the castle guards completely unable to stop them. She couldn't help but feel stunned.

"Mother." Deia was the first to call out as he flew towards Diana. Olivier flew over alongside him as well.

"Deia." Diana's eyes instantly turned red. She hurriedly went over and tightly hugged her son. Although her son was already an adult now, that familiar spiritual aura…Diana instantly recognized him.

"Diana." Olivier said softly.

Diana turned to look at Olivier. She couldn't help but throw herself into Olivier's arms. These two, husband and wife, felt both excited and heartsick.

Linley stood there in midair. Bebe, seeing this, couldn't help but smile.

"Olly, why did you come back?" Diana raised her head, looking at Olivier. She said frantically, "Last time, when you came, it was because you didn't know how powerful Bonin was. And Bonin is very tyrannical…you were lucky to be able to escape last time. This time, you…alas!" Diana was very worried.

Bonin was extremely powerful, after all. And behind him was the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture.

"Don't worry." Olivier revealed a smile.

"Mother, don't worry. We have Uncle Linley." Deia urged as well. That cold, emotionless youth, upon seeing his mother, seemed to have become a child again.

"Linley?" Diana raised her head, looking at the distant Linley and Bebe in confusion. "You mean them?"

"Right." Olivier smiled and nodded.

“But Bonin has his father, who is terrifying. He isn’t just the Lord Prefect of the Skymount Prefecture, he is also a Sovereign’s Emissary with a Sovereign artifact. He is extremely powerful.” Diana said hurriedly. The Infernal Realm had 108 Lord Prefects, but not all of them had a Sovereign artifact.

Olivier couldn’t help but laugh as he reflected on Linley’s power.

A Sovereign artifact?

Even an expert with three Sovereign artifacts, much less one, was no match for a Paragon. The Paragon might not be able to kill such a person, but would still be able to drive that person into chaotic space.

“Uncle Linley is a Paragon.” Deia said hurriedly.

“Pa, Paragon?” Diana blinked, stunned. She was completely stunned by this word, ‘Paragon’. Paragon…these were legendary figures who represented invincibility amongst Deities!

“Diana, where is that bastard, Bonin?” Olivier’s eyes had a savage light in them as he spoke.

“He…” Diana was somewhat hesitant, but she still answered. “He went to gather bloodmist flowers. He should still be within the Yustone Mountains.”

“Bloodmist flowers? What’s that?” Olivier didn’t understand.

“There’s nothing special about them. They are just a type of flower.” Diana clearly didn’t want to discuss it. “Forget about that. We need to go find Bonin, but the Yustone Mountains are so large. How can we find him?” The divine sense of a Highgod only stretched to a thousand meters or so. To rely on it to search an entire vast mountain range was indeed impractical.

Linley, hovering there in midair, finally spoke. “Olivier, I’ve already found that Bonin fellow.”

Diana, Deia, and Olivier all stared at Linley, astonished.

“The castle guards have already located Bonin…” Linley laughed calmly. He had noticed the conversation between that squad of guards and Bonin, and so naturally he knew which one Bonin was, now. Actually…it was easy to tell who Bonin was. This was because although there were quite a few people within the Yustone Mountains, Bonin was travelling with ten subordinates, all Highgods.

In the Yustone Mountains, most likely only Bonin alone would be able to do such a thing.

“Follow me.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Olivier immediately led Diana and Deia to follow as Linley and Bebe flew out of the castle. As for the maids and guards of the castle, all they could do was watch as the mistress of the castle left. They weren’t able to do a thing about it.

In a separate region of the Yustone Mountains.

Bonin was a big fellow, with a back as muscular as a tiger’s and a waist as thick as a bear’s. He was nearly two meters tall, and his face was fairly handsome. He had thick black eyebrows and a pair of energetic, lively eyes. Currently, Bonin was holding a flower in his hand. This flower seemed rather blurry, while at the same time it had a hint of red color swirling about it.

The bloodmist flower was a very pretty type of flower. But of course, it had no practical use, save for being admired aesthetically.

“What did you say?” Bonin’s face changed.

“Master, that man named Olivier, he came back. And he brought someone!” The guard said hurriedly. “The person he brought is very powerful. All those guards were unable to stop him. We could only watch as he stormed

into the castle. Per orders from his lordship, we came to notify you, master!"

"Bastard!" A savage light appeared in Bonin's eyes. "That useless piece of trash. I spared his life last time. Who would've thought that instead of being smart enough to f*ck off, he would actually return."

"Follow me." Bonin gave the order.

"Master." The leader of Bonin's personal guard, a white-browed, grim looking man, said hurriedly, "Last time, Olivier saw your power, and yet this time, he dares return. Clearly, he is prepared for you. The guards just now also said that all the guards of the castle combined were unable to stop them…this person's power is most likely comparable to a Lord Prefect's. If you go, the repercussions…"

Bonin couldn't help but come to a halt.

He clenched his fists, and the stalk of the bloodmist flower in his hand was twisted as well.

"Can it be that I'm supposed to just watch as someone takes my wife away?" Bonin said frantically.

"Master, your life is more important. As for the mistress, she…let's go find the Lord Prefect and then come up with an idea." The guard urged.

But right at this moment…

"Don't try to talk him out of it. It is too late for that." A calm voice echoed in everyone's mind.

"Hm?" Bonin's face changed dramatically, and he raised his head, staring into the distance.

Five figures flew over at high speed. Bonin instantly recognized Diana and Olivier. Diana and Olivier were currently holding hands, appearing quite

intimate. Upon seeing this, Bonin couldn't suppress his rage from building. His face turned red, and his eyes began to blaze as he pointed into air and howled, "Olivier, release my wife!"

"Your wife?" Olivier was so furious that his eyes were filled with a ferocious light as well.

"Nana." Bonin roared angrily. "All these years, have I ever been the slightest bit disrespectful to you? Why are you always like this…I've always done whatever you wanted, and I've always given you whatever you wanted! You wanted to see bloodmist flowers, so I personally led my people to search the entire mountain range for bloodmist flowers! But you…"

Diana was stunned, but then she replied in a cold voice, "Bonin. I…am Olivier's wife. Not yours! Also, you sent people to kill Leya…do you think I could possibly forgive you after that?"

"But, but you and I were married first!" Bonin roared back angrily.

Diana shook her head, saying nothing further.

Bonin lowered his head, looking at the bloodmist flower. He had searched the entire mountain range for this flower, all because he wanted to coax Diana and make her happy. When he finally found the flower, he had been longing to bring it back and see her smile.

"Haha, women…haha…" Bonin began to laugh from sheer rage.

"I…my heart is dead towards you, now!" Bonin stared fixedly at Diana and Olivier. "So the two of you are quite close to each other, eh? Then I…I will let you two die together!"

"BANG!"

Bonin's body began to emit a black aura.

Chapter 10 – Right and Wrong

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 10, Right and Wrong

The aura of black energy swirled around Bonin, making him look like a savage fiend.

Bonin suddenly leapt forward, and the ground beneath him instantly split apart, with a deep crevice in the earth appearing beneath where his feet had been. Rocks and sand flew everywhere, while Bonin himself charged forward lightning-fast towards Linley's group of four. A long black spear appeared in Bonin's hand, and his longspear shot out like a giant python that was ravenously attempting to devour Linley's group.

Bonin's eyes were bloodshot, and he was filled with a murderous intent.

The adamantine heavy sword appeared in Linley's hand. An earthen yellow aura swirled around it, and quite casually, Linley swept it towards Bonin. Although his movements seemed slow, the adamantine heavy sword's speed was actually several times faster than that of the longspear, and it struck Bonin directly on his body.

"WHAP!"

Bonin, who had been charging upwards, was knocked down to the ground, smashing against the rocky mountain and shattering it.

"Impossible." Bonin looked at Linley, stunned. And this, his face steadied. Letting out a deep growl, he sent the longspear in his hand flying towards Linley…

"Swish!"

A translucent ripple shot out from the longspear towards Linley.

From the center of Linley's forehead, an extremely minute Voidwave Sword ripple shot out, effortlessly shattering that translucent spear ripple attack. However, because the Voidwave Sword was too small, after destroying that translucent spear ripple, it too collapsed.

The nearby Bebe gave Linley a puzzled glance. "Boss' soul is incredibly strong. When he uses his own spiritual energy, the effect is more than ten times more powerful than when he uses Sovereign's Might. When infused with his Will…although it might be a bit weak in terms of profound mysteries, the soul attacks of my Boss isn't much weaker than the likes of Magnus. To kill someone like Bonin is simplicity itself. So why is it that Boss intentionally spared him?"

Bebe had been with Linley for far too long. He knew exactly how powerful Linley was.

If that Voidwave Sword ripple had been just slightly larger, it would have killed Bonin. But Linley had chosen not to do so.

"Not good." Those guards all grew very tense.

But they were clearly far too weak. They couldn't even compete against Bonin, much less challenge Linley.

"Haha…" Seeing the situation, Bonin began to laugh wildly. "No wonder, no wonder! So you two adulterers managed to invite such a powerful expert to help out. Most likely, even amongst Lord Prefect level experts, this person would be ranked quite highly. Haha, if you want to kill me, then kill me. To die in the hands of an expert like you isn't shameful!"

Bonin actually stopped fighting.

"Eh?" Linley was rather surprised.

But as soon as Bonin's words came out…

"Whoosh!" He suddenly dove into the ground, fleeing so fast that even

Linley was somewhat surprised. This was because the speed at which Bonin moved was actually even faster than the speed at which he had attacked just now. Linley secretly sighed in praise. “This Bonin seemed to have gone berserk, but he actually is quite the schemer.”

Linley was in no rush, instead simply descending.

Linley’s left foot stepped heavily onto the ground. “Rumble…” An invisible rippling surge of power spread out through the ground. Bonin who was currently fleeing for his life at high speed underground, wasn’t able to dodge at all. This invisible ripple grew larger and larger, until it finally struck him!

“Bang!” Bonin’s body trembled, and he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood.

Linley himself disappeared, then reappeared right next to Bonin. It was Worldwalking!

“You won’t be able to escape.” Linley stretched his hand out, grabbing Bonin by the shoulder, then charging upwards, preparing to leave the underground.

“Hmph.” Bonin sent his longspear stabbing towards Linley’s chest.

“Clang.” A ripple spread out from Linley’s body. The spear thrust didn’t harm Linley at all.

“This…how is this possible?” Bonin’s face changed dramatically.

He was still a Six Star Fiend, and one who was using Sovereign power. Linley didn’t use any sort of armor at all, and yet, the defense he was using formed from divine earth power alone was able to block the blow. This was too terrifying.

“Even your father would be unable to harm me, much less you.” Linley gave Bonin a calm glance while at the same time dragging Bonin aboveground.

Defenses infused with Will were quite frightening indeed. Even Linley wasn't able to kill Magnus, and was only able to drive him into chaotic space. From this, one could imagine how powerful that sort of defense was.

Linley's Will was even more powerful than the will of Magnus. Although he was somewhat weaker when it came to defensive profound mysteries, he wasn't that much weaker. It was indeed as Linley had said; the energy defense he created was impenetrable to Lord Prefect level experts. Linley could let them attack freely, and they still wouldn't be able to do anything to him.

"He…who is he?" Bonin was now completely stunned.

This sort of power was too vast. He was like a tiny creek who had encountered a vast, endless ocean. He no longer had any thoughts of fighting back.

Linley tossed Bonin towards the ground, sending him flying towards Olivier and Diana.

Bonin, who had been feeling dispirited, instantly was once more enraged upon seeing Olivier and Diana. He rose to his feet, wanting to charge forward and attack again. Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but frown. He stretched his hand out…and immediately, 108 rays of earthen yellow light flew out, surrounding and trapping Bonin within them.

A spherical prison was formed, with Bonin crushed inside it.

"Aaaaaaaaaah!" Bonin bellowed ferociously, wanting to burst it apart.

"It is useless." Linley said calmly. "You are a Six Star Fiend. Even using Sovereign power, you are unable to escape."

Originally, this technique only had a compressive effect, but Linley had changed it and combined it with his Blackstone Prison ability. The spherical prison, aside from possessing a powerful compressive effect, also created an

energy cage that was extremely tough to break. There was no way for a person to escape.

“So a day like this came for even you, Bonin.” Diana said angrily.

“Father, kill him and avenge my older brother.” Deia said frantically.

The corners of Olivier’s eyes were twitching, and he angrily walked towards Bonin.

Bonin, trapped in the cage, began to bellow. “Diana, have I, Bonin, ever mistreated you? Whatever you wanted, I gave you. Whatever you disliked about me, I changed! In order to make you happy, I was willing to lower my head and bend the knee to my father, and ask to borrow money from him so that I could buy whatever you wanted! Diana, tell me, tell me…why did you betray me?!?”

Diana just stared at him coldly.

“Haha, you left our home, and I searched the entire world for you. This Bloodridge Continent is an enormous place, and by the time I found you, I saw that you had actually gotten married to this useless piece of garbage named Olivier. And you had children?” Bonin was so angry, he was laughing. “I didn’t kill you. I took you back home, and I tried to coax you to come back to me, to change your mind. But you?” Bonin was in an utterly berserk state now.

“When we married, did I force you into it? You married me willingly!” Bonin bellowed with rage.

Diana stared furiously at Bonin. “Bonin, yes, I did agree to marry you, but what did you do? You kept on taking a fancy to other women, and you’d bring them back. And…you didn’t even spare my little sister! Before marrying you, you had me completely fooled, but after marrying you, I saw what type of person you truly are. Of course I was going to leave. The farther I could go, the better!”

Bonin looked like a caged, berserk tiger. His eyes flashed with ferociousness.

“Right. I took a fancy to those women, but that was just out of lust, understand!?” Bonin howled angrily. “So what if I, Bonin, took a fancy to some women and snatched them, bringing them back to serve me? I only had a single wife! I wasn’t like my father and those others, who married multiple women. I only had one wife. You! As for those other women, that was just lust. Understand?! Look at those women! Did I keep any of them for more than a month? Is it wrong for me to be a bit lusty?”

“You are too domineering and tyrannical.” Diana shook her head. “You feel that you did nothing wrong, but I can’t accept what you did. Especially the way you treated my little sister.”

“Fine, I admit it, I’m domineering and tyrannical!” Bonin laughed angrily. “But after I brought you back this time, I didn’t touch another woman again, right?”

“Too late.”

Diana said coldly. “Just because you didn’t touch any women this time didn’t mean that what you did in the past didn’t happen. I’ve already seen through you. And what makes me the angriest…is that when I agreed to go back with you, you said that you would spare Olly and my two children. But in reality?”

“Haha…”

Bonin laughed loudly, savagery flashing in his eyes. “Spare them? My woman was together with another man, and even had children with him. You tell me. Could I possibly let that man live and let those two spawns of sin live? Nobody can touch that which belongs to me. If someone does, I’ll make sure he dies!!!”

The black aura had already disappeared from Bonin’s body. His Sovereign’s Might had been used up.

Linley dispelled the prison part of his technique, leaving behind only the compressive power. This pure compressive power alone was enough to bind Bonin.

Olivier walked forward coldly. “Bonin, you killed my son, Leya. Today, you will pay with your life.” Olivier didn’t waste any words, and that mystic icesword appeared in his hands.

“Kill me?” Bonin snickered as he looked at Olivier. “Come then. Let me tell you something, Olivier! I, Bonin, always have a backup plan. The body I have been keeping at Yustone Castle is just one of several. My other bodies aren’t even here; they are training in seclusion. It is no big deal if you kill one of my divine clones. There will come the day when I will let you know…what the consequences for angering me are!”

Bonin looked towards Diana. “Diana…you whore, since you are determined to leave me, then I’ll tell you this…there will come the day when I will destroy you, I swear it! I will personally destroy you!”

Diana, hearing this, couldn’t help but feel her heart tremble.

Olivier just stared coldly at Bonin. In an emotionless voice, he said, “Destroy her? If you have the ability to do so, then have your other divine clones come over. I’ll be waiting for you.”

“Fine. I’ll come find you.” Bonin had a man-eating look in his eyes.

As for Olivier, his gaze was as cold as his sword.

“I’ll be respectfully awaiting your arrival at all times. Today, though, I’ll first destroy this clone.” Olivier finished his words, and then stabbed out with his mystic icesword. The compressed Bonin was completely unable to fight back. In reality, without the aid of Sovereign power, Bonin wasn’t a match for Olivier at all.

A sword pierced through Bonin’s skull.

Bonin's eyes dimmed.

"This is indeed just one of Bonin's divine clones. His other divine clones are not present." Olivier realized, through divine sense, that only a single divine spark was knocked out.

Linley and Bebe just watched these events occur. In their minds, they sighed.

Who was right? Who was wrong?

From Bonin's perspective, he was indeed sincere in his love towards Diana. But there was nothing that could be done; Diana's feelings for him were dead. As Bonin saw it, it was Olivier who had taken his wife. Of course he had to kill him.

But from Olivier's perspective, he and Diana loved each other and had children together. Their calm, blissful life was destroyed; Bonin had stolen his wife and killed his son. Of course Olivier had an irreconcilable hatred for Bonin.

As for Diana, she wasn't able to stand Bonin any longer and had left him in search of a new life. But Bonin had then killed her son.

Who was in the right? Who was in the wrong?

"Olivier, where is Leya buried?" Diana asked. "I want to see him." Leya's death had been a huge blow to Diana.

"Alright." Olivier nodded.

"Then let's go." Linley and Bebe immediately led Olivier's family of three into the metallic lifeform, then departed. Only, this time, they didn't head back to Indigo Prefecture, instead first paying a visit to the place where Leya had been buried. Linley didn't kill the members of Bonin's personal guard either.

“Master…” The guards had watched everything happen without being able to resist.

The white-browed leader of the guards furrowed his brows…

Skymount Prefecture. Blackcloud Mountains.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture lived here. The prefectural soldiers stationed here numbered in the millions.

“Lord Prefect, young master Bonin’s most powerful divine clone has died.” The white-browed man suddenly appeared here. Actually, he also played the role of message relayer, and would often inform the Lord Prefect about what was happening to Bonin.

The Lord Prefect, who had been seated, suddenly rose to his feet, his eyes flashing savagely. “He died. And what did you do?”

“Lord Prefect, that person was too powerful.” Terrified, the white-browed man fell to his knees.

In terms of being domineering and tyrannical, this Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture was even more terrifying than his son. The white-browed man was terrified that, in his rage, the Lord Prefect would kill him.

“Tell me what happened.” The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture growled.

“Yes, Lord Prefect. That day, young master Bonin…” The white-browed man began to explain in detail. He even gave a rough description of the ‘battle’ between Linley and Bonin. Listening to this, the Lord Prefect began to frown deeply. After the white-browed man finished speaking, he gave the order while frowning, “Oh, left after boarding a black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform? Fine. Per my orders, every single intelligence agent within Skymount Prefecture needs to be on watch. If any of them find a black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform fly past them, especially one with

five individuals inside, they must report it."

"Yes." The white-browed man, upon hearing this, instantly understood that the Lord Prefect was going to take revenge.

But the white-browed man felt puzzled. "After hearing what I said, the Lord Prefect should understand how terrifying that person was. Why is it that he still dares to seek revenge?"

From watching that earlier battle, the white-browed man was able to guess…

That the brown-haired man's strength should be ranked amongst the top-tier Lord Prefects. The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture shouldn't be confident in his ability to win.

After the white-browed man departed, the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture waved his sleeves, and a surge of Destruction-type divine power swept out, closing the door.

"Bonin. This child is too arrogant and solitary. He never listens to me. I had wanted to let him go out and adventure a bit, but who would have imagined…ugh…" A faint, baleful aura appeared on his face. "Bonin's most powerful divine clone is dead. His future is now uncertain! Hmph, you killed my son…hmph, a thousand years ago, I would've had to just let this stand. But now…I want to see who did it!" The Lord Prefect hesitated a moment, then waved his hand…

A jade green box appeared in his hand.

He opened the box, which had a sheet of green paper within it. Atop the sheet of paper, there was a bracelet, and atop the bracelet there were nine green beads inlaid into it.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture looked at the bracelet. He couldn't help but take a deep breath, and then his eyes began to glow.

“It is time to use it.” The Lord Prefect placed the bracelet on his right arm.

Upon wearing this bracelet, it seemed as though the Lord Prefect’s very aura had changed.

The Lord Prefect pondered for a moment, and then his body divided into two. One had long black hair, while the other had long silver hair. The one with long silver hair took the jade green box, storing it away, then left the room through the door. As for the Lord Prefect with long black hair, this one remained standing within the room.

“Once I use this…”

The Lord Prefect with black hair frowned. Instantly, the Lord Prefect with silver hair who was already next to the door came to a halt. He retrieved the jade green box, removing that slip of green paper from within it.

“Crackle…” A surge of terrifying energy emanated from his palms.

The green paper trembled momentarily, but didn’t shatter.

“It is hard for even me to destroy this sheet of paper.” The silver-haired Lord Prefect waved his hand and retrieved an interspatial ring, bound it with blood, then stored the green sheet of paper into the interspatial ring.

“Hmph.” Applying a bit of force, he crushed the interspatial ring with his fingers.

That sheet of paper was gone now.

“Haha…from today onwards, no one else will know this secret.” The silver-haired Lord Prefect laughed as he left. As for the black-haired Lord Prefect, he lowered his head to look at the bracelet around his arms, then smiled slightly.

Chapter 11 – The Lord Prefect of Skymount

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 11, The Lord Prefect of Skymount

The black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform sped through the skies of the Infernal Realm.

Within the metallic lifeform, Linley's group of five was seated around a table.

"Linley, the reason Diana and I are able to be together once more is all because of you. Thank you." Olivier raised his cup of wine, then took a sip.

"Haha…" The nearby Bebe laughed loudly. "Olivier, on the way over to Skymount Prefecture, I never saw you truly smile a single time. Even if you did smile, it seemed quite forced. But now it seems…you are smiling so widely, your eyes have turned into slits." Bebe teased him intentionally.

Olivier, hearing this, just laughed and glanced back at the nearby Diana. The two, husband and wife, glanced at each other. It was quite sweet.

Linley, seeing this, couldn't help but laugh as well, but suddenly he then frowned.

"How irritating!" Bebe let out a dissatisfied mutter as well.

Olivier, who was in an excellent mood, just laughed. "Don't worry about them. Our metallic lifeform is flying through the air, and the Infernal Realm is filled with countless bandits. It is very normal for them to use their divine sense to investigate us. Although they are rather irritating, there's nothing we can do about it. What, are we supposed to go out and chastise them, one by one?"

Just now, a divine sense had swept through the metallic lifeform.

The Infernal Realm did indeed have countless bandits. Although this sort of thing happened quite often, each time one was scouted out through divine sense, one would still feel rather uncomfortable.

“Hmph, all those bandits dare to do is to scout us out. Upon discovering that we are Highgods, they no longer dare make trouble for us.” Bebe said disdainfully.

“Olivier.” Linley said. “How much farther are we from that place you spoke of?” This trip they were making was to the place where Olivier’s eldest son, Leya, had died. Her son had died, but Diana had yet to go see his grave. How could she feel at ease unless she went?

Olivier let out a sigh. “Soon. Given the speed at which this metallic lifeform that you control flies at, Linley, most likely in just five or six days, we will arrive. Linley…when the time is right, lessen the speed. I want to take a good look as well, as I need to verify the location. That place was in a mountain, after all.”

“Don’t worry. We were in a hurry to get to the Skymount Prefecture, but there’s no need for us to be in a hurry on our return.” Linley laughed calmly.

Linley had been planning to go to the Divine Light Plane, but after Beirut arranged for that message to be delivered to him, Linley temporarily gave up that notion.

Within the vast, boundless mountain range, there were two figures who were standing atop a mountain.

“A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform, with five people inside, one a Saint. That’s right, the one that just flew past.” One of them, a man with short golden hair, stared towards the direction the metallic lifeform had flown. The bald youth next to him laughed, “This matches perfectly with the report that was sent to us by the communications squad earlier. However, this metallic lifeform flies quite fast. The last report came from tens of millions of kilometers away. It’s only been two short days since that

report. On average, this means they are able to travel ten million kilometers or so each day."

This speed truly was stunning.

After all, for most metallic lifeforms, travelling even a million kilometers a day was impressive.

What they didn't know…was that this rate of ten million kilometers a day wasn't even Linley going all out. In addition, this metallic lifeform was just an ordinary one, not a high level one.

"Given how fast it is moving, this metallic lifeform must be an extremely high level one. In addition, the controller of it must be extremely powerful." The intelligence agent came to this conclusion.

While tracking Linley's movements, they continued to immediately report back to their headquarters.

Their headquarters then transmitted this information to each of the other outposts.

Linley's journey was being tracked.

A solitary, sickle-shaped black metallic lifeform was hovering in the air above a mountain range.

Within the metallic lifeform.

The black-haired Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture was standing at the front, staring through the translucent metal to the land ahead of him. Three people were standing respectfully by his side, one of whom was the white-browed man.

"Hm? Based on your calculations, didn't you say that this group should be passing through this location?" The Lord Prefect said coldly.

One of the three men by his side, a silver-haired elder, bowed and said, "Lord Prefect. Based on the projected trajectory of this group, they should indeed pass by this location. In addition, not too long ago, a report came from an intelligence agent that the metallic lifeform was headed in this direction."

"But I don't see them." The Lord Prefect gave him a sideways glance.

The silver-haired elder couldn't help but tremble, then hurriedly said respectfully, "Lord Prefect, don't worry. Even if they changed their arc slightly, given our many intelligence agents, we will definitely discover them."

"Lord Prefect." Right at this moment, the white-browed man suddenly spoke.

The Lord Prefect couldn't help but glance at him, and the white-browed man immediately bowed and said, "Lord Prefect, I suddenly thought of something."

"Speak!" The Lord Prefect said calmly.

"Lord Prefect…in the past, young master Bonin sent people to pursue and kill that 'Olivier' and his two children. Back then, the warriors that were sent out managed to encounter Olivier within a few hundred thousand kilometers of this location. In that battle, all of the warriors died. However, they also killed one of Olivier's children! Now that Diana and Olivier are together once again, and given that Diana has never gone to visit her dead son, I think…she might perhaps be going now?" The white-browed man said.

Actually, after Linley and Olivier had killed Bonin, Diana had spoken aloud regarding her desire to go visit the place where her son had been killed. Although the white-browed man and the guards were fairly far away from Diana, they were still able to make out her words.

But the white-browed man also understood…that if he immediately

provided this information to the Lord Prefect, and they went there to set up a trap, like a hunter waiting for a rabbit, and then Linley's group changed their plans for some reason…the Lord Prefect would probably, in his rage, kill the white-browed man after waiting in vain!

For him to now bring it up, however, meant that he was rendering a great merit!

For the sake of his life, he had to choose to act this way.

"Oh?" The Lord Prefect, hearing this, immediately felt that this made sense.

When a mother's son died, of course the mother would want to go see him one more time. This made perfect sense.

"Excellent." The Lord Prefect nodded slightly towards the white-browed man. "Let us now go to the place where Diana's son died."

"Your subordinate will guide you." The white-browed man said respectfully.

"Mm."

The Lord Prefect was quite satisfied with the white-browed man's cleverness. That sickle-shaped metallic lifeform instantly pierced through the skies, moving like a giant wind knife as it flew towards the direction of the location where Olivier had battled against his enemies.

This nameless mountain range was quite vast in scope, and its peaks and valleys extended off into the distance.

Actually, the majority of mountain ranges in the Infernal Realm were far larger than the Mountain Range of Magical Beasts of the Yulan continent, and they had far more experts as well. But of course, in the eyes of Linley and Olivier, those so-called 'Demigods' and 'Gods' truly weren't worth mentioning.

Within one mountain gorge.

There was a lake of black-colored water, and at the sides of the lake, there was a tomb that was made from an enormous stone sculpture.

Olivier, Diana, and Deia were standing in front of this tomb. As for Linley and Bebe, they stood to one side.

“Leya, my son…” Diana couldn’t help but kneel down, her tears flowing. That cold, distant youth, Deia, began to cry as well. The death of his elder brother was clearly something that had been etched deep into his memories.

Linley and Bebe looked at each other. They could do nothing but remain silent.

From the reactions of this family of three, Linley could sense how they must have all been on very close terms with each other. Diana truly did love Olivier and her children. “Perhaps Diana didn’t like Bonin’s type of person, and preferred this sort of warm, gentle home.” Linley sighed to himself.

Olivier, Diana, Bonin…their story was indeed a tragedy.

Bonin’s most powerful divine clone had died, but he had sworn to destroy Diana.

“Given Olivier’s abilities, I don’t need to worry about him.”

Linley couldn’t help but walk over to the side of the lake, and Bebe followed him. Bebe sent mentally, a bitter look on his face, “Boss, I feel quite depressed as well, seeming how saddened Olivier’s family is.”

“Let’s just wait over here.” Linley sent back.

A long time later.

“Linley, we’re fine now.” Olivier led his wife and son over. “Apologies. We made you wait quite a long time. Let’s return to Indigo Prefecture.”

“Right.” Linley nodded.

And then, Linley frowned and glanced off into the distance. He saw an enormous sickle-shaped metallic lifeform fly over at high speed. It looked like a giant wind knife, and was flying straight towards this gorge, so fast that it caused wild air currents to erupt, sending quite a few trees and branches flying everywhere within the gorge.

“Who is it?” Bebe frowned.

“Looking for us?” Linley mused to himself.

Since they had flown into the gorge, clearly they people inside were looking for them.

At this moment, Linley willed his divine sense to spread outwards, sending it into that sickle-shaped metallic lifeform to investigate within. “Oh, four Highgods! One of them, that grim, black-haired elder…that should be the Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde [Mo’er’de].”

Linley had previously received a book from Beirut regarding the experts of the various planes. Molde was listed in that book.

“Can it be that Molde has come to avenge his son?” Linley sighed mentally. He sighed at how Molde was not amenable to reason. Although Linley had yet to use his full power, the power Linley had displayed at Yustone castle, and then yet again when Linley had dealt with Bonin, was at a level beyond that which ordinary Lord Prefects might be capable of.

Molde should have predicted that Linley’s true power was greater than this. Why was it that he still dared to come?

Was Molde very powerful?

Based on what Linley knew, though, although Molde was an Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign, and in possession of a Sovereign artifact, in

terms of power, he was a good deal weaker than the likes of Reisgem, Hemmers, and the like.

“Linley, what’s going on?” Olivier walked over, worried.

“It is the Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde.” Linley said softly. “No need to worry.”

“Him?” Hearing this, Diana was startled, but when she thought about how powerful Linley was, she relaxed.

The enormous metallic lifeform that had been hovering roughly ten meters above them suddenly vanished, revealing four individuals hovering there in midair. The leader, that black-haired elder, had a cold, hard face, and eyes that flashed like knives. Just by standing there, he gave off the aura of being an enormous, growling beast, prepared to attack at any moment.

On his right arm, he was wearing that bracelet, which had those nine green pearls studded into it.

“Eh? Carrying a bracelet?” Linley rarely saw people wearing bracelets. After all, when experts battled, they would generally wear some sort of armor, so a bracelet wouldn’t be of much use. Still, there was still a very small minority of people who wore them…some, because of ancestral customs; others, because of local styles. Others just liked them.

In short, Linley was slightly surprised, but then he paid no more mind to it.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde, swept Linley’s group with his cold gaze. He looked like a mighty lion staring at five little sheep. The white-browed man behind Molde bowed respectfully and said, “Lord Prefect, of the five, that man with long white-black hair is Olivier. It was he who killed young master Bonin. The most powerful person in that group, however, is that brown-haired man. It was he who bound the young master, giving Olivier the chance to kill him. I don’t know his name.”

Lord Prefect Molde of Skymount gave Olivier a glance, then turned to stare

at Linley.

“Do you know that Bonin is my son?” Molde growled.

“I know.” Linley said calmly.

Molde’s aura was astonishing, but to Linley, he was like a small dog yipping and baring its fangs at a giant.

“Hey, you are that Lord Prefect ‘Molde’ of Skymount?” Bebe began to laugh. “We spanked the young one, and now the old one comes! The Boss and I are about to go back right now. If you don’t plan on doing anything, then beat it. If you want to get revenge for your son, then stop wasting our time and attack already. After dealing with you, we’ll need to hurry home. We’re in a rush!”

“Impudence!” Molde was focused on Linley; he held Bebe in no regard. But these words by Bebe instantly enraged him.

“Rumble…”

The air seemed to explode as Molde charged leisurely towards Bebe, his right hand forming a claw which slashed through the air, easily ripping space itself apart.

“Crackle…” The claw howled through the air as it struck.

Linley frowned slightly. Instantly, a blurry, indistinct figure appeared in front of Molde. At the same time, with a ‘bang!’ sound, Molde’s head was viciously kicked, and Molde himself was sent flying away by this kick, moving like a meteor as he smashed into the side of the mountain, several tens of meters away.

With a booming sound, a giant spiderweb of cracks appeared on the mountain side, with a large, human-shaped hole at the center of the spiderweb.

Chapter 12 – Not Dead

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 12, Not Dead

"Haha, you old fart, what makes you think you can act so arrogantly?" Bebe bent over in laughter, clutching at his belly.

As for the three subordinates of Molde, they turned their heads, staring, stunned, at the human-shaped hole in the distant mountainside. Their Lord Prefect had actually been knocked flying in an instant?

"Rumble…" The mountainside trembled, and rocks fell everywhere. A human figure flew out, emerging from the mountainside, then landed on the ground of the gorge.

Molde's body wasn't damaged at all. His focused gaze fell on Linley, and he said in a low voice, "I didn't act against you, and yet you sneak-attacked me? Hmph…your speed isn't bad. But your power is a bit weak."

Power, weak?

Linley knew that Molde was just engaging in braggadocio, because the Sovereign artifact Molde was in possession of was a defensive Sovereign artifact. Naturally, Linley wouldn't be able to kick him to death with one kick.

Molde knew very well that Linley's kick was extremely powerful, but he believed that Linley sneak-attacked him because Linley wasn't that much stronger than him. Even if Linley was a bit stronger, that was fine, because he was in possession of that miraculous bracelet. This bracelet filled him with boundless confidence.

"Let's not waste any more time. Go ahead and attack." Linley was still smiling calmly, not feeling the slightest bit of concern or nervousness.

Molde frowned, his eyebrows turning steely. He laughed coldly, “Since you want to die, I’ll grant you your wish.”

“Bang!” A surge of black light erupted out of Molde’s body, exploding forth. It was Destruction-type Sovereign’s Might! After using Sovereign power, Molde could sense power swelling in him, which made him feel all the more confident. Molde gave a confident, cold laugh, then suddenly moved.

He was like a bolt of black lightning…

“Haaargh!” Molde’s right leg viciously chopped down towards Linley like a hatchet.

“Riiiiip.” Space itself was ripped apart by this kick, and wherever Molde’s leg passed by, a terrifyingly large spatial tear appeared. Molde, being in possession of a defensive Sovereign artifact, could use his entire body as a weapon.

Linley just smiled, then charged forward, his body moving like an illusion.

“Die!” Molde’s kick pierced directly through Linley’s body, but in the instant that it did, Molde’s face suddenly changed. “Wait, that’s not his body!” Molde’s guess was correct; that was just an after-image Linley had left behind after moving.

Linley’s body was actually directly behind Molde.

Linley stretched out his hand, forming it into a claw as he grabbed directly at Molde’s left leg.

“No!” Molde felt a terrifying power suddenly constrict around the joints of his left leg, and his face couldn’t help but change.

“Your speed is too slow!” Linley’s voice echoed out within the gorge, and as it did, Linley grabbed Molde by his left leg, then, like snapping a whip, sent Molde smashing against the ground! He whipped Molde into the

ground time and time again, smashing him down viciously.

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

The floor of the valley trembled violently, as one giant, deep crater after another appeared. The collision force was so powerful that it even caused the rocky ground to transform into dust, down to a depth of ten meters or even deeper. Multiple enormous tears in the ground appeared, joining together and resulting in a terrifyingly deep crevice being formed.

“How can this be…” Linley’s power wasn’t held back at all. After having been whipped about lightning-fast like this, Molde was beginning to grow dizzy.

In an instant, Linley had smashed Molde into the ground more than a hundred times, and then, with a powerful sideways toss, he sent Molde flying, like a rock from a slingshot. Molde shot deep into the mountainside, creating yet another man-shaped hole.

The white-browed man and the other two watched, stupefied.

“Uncle Linley is so powerful.” Deia’s eyes were shining.

“He is indeed terrifyingly strong.” Olivier’s eyes were gleaming. He, too, was a person who sought perfection. Upon seeing the power that Linley had displayed, he too felt stunned.

“That, what’s his name, Molde? I’m puzzled. What the hell was he thinking? He dared to fight my Boss? Although my Boss didn’t reveal much of his power, the speed he displayed earlier should have made it so that Molde would’ve known to retreat.” Bebe mumbled. “He just has a defensive Sovereign artifact. What is there for him to be smug about?”

Bebe was puzzled by the fact that Molde hadn’t retreated.

“Bastard!” A furious bellow rang out from the mountainside. “BANG!” Molde once more charged out. After having been thrown about earlier,

Molde's rage had risen to a breaking point. His eyes were scarlet, and he stared angrily at Linley while growling, "Punk, do you rely merely on speed alone? Hmph. That bit of attack power you have isn't able to wound me at all!"

Molde was growing frantic, but up till now…he still believed that Linley was just relying on his speed.

Linley's attacks weren't necessarily stronger than his.

"Oh?" Linley's face sank. "Since you want to die, don't blame me."

After reaching his current level of power, Linley would rarely act to kill ordinary commanders. This was because…for Linley to act against commanders would be an absolute massacre! It would be a form of abuse. Linley had simply wanted to teach Molde a lesson and have him f*ck off, but Molde seemed to be quite confident in his power. Linley couldn't help but begin to grow angry.

"Haha…if you are able to kill me, then do so!" Molde laughed wildly, and then, launching himself from the ground, he charged towards Linley, carrying the power of a mountain.

Molde's right hand was like a sword, piercing through space and shooting towards Linley.

"Whap!" Linley struck out, lightning-fast.

Fist against fist!

Molde was knocked flying back. After landing, he stared at Linley in disbelief. "You…how can you…you didn't use Sovereign's Might. How could you have blocked my punch?" Molde was very confident in his own strength, and he had also used a drop of Sovereign's Might. And yet, he was actually knocked flying back by Linley.

"Your punch? Compared to Hemmers, you are quite lacking." Linley said

calmly.

“Hemmers?” Molde frowned, but then he seemed to think of something, as he began to laugh coldly. “Your power isn’t bad. Then taste my soul attack.”

Molde’s face turned solemn, and then he opened his mouth…

“Swish!” A translucent ripple, shaped like a blade of wind, shot at high speed towards Linley.

“Die, then!” Linley no longer showed any mercy, and he growled as he attacked.

A single Voidwave Sword ripple shot out from Linley’s body, the size of an ordinary longsword. It smashed onto that translucent wind blade, and with a ‘bang’, tore through it like rotting wood. The translucent wind blade disappeared, while Linley’s Voidwave Sword ripple just decreased a small bit in size.

Molde’s face changed dramatically. He seemed to want to say something, but it was too late.

The Voidwave Sword ripple silently and soundlessly entered Molde’s body. Linley’s most powerful type of attack was his soul attacks; even compared to a Paragon of Fate, he could be said to be on roughly the same level. How could an ordinary Lord Prefect possibly block Linley’s soul attack?

Molde’s body trembled, and then his gaze grew dim as he slowly collapsed.

“Lord Prefect…” The white-browed man and the other two were shocked. Their Lord Prefect…had died, just like that?

“This Molde didn’t know his own limits. He really was seeking death.” Bebe snorted.

Linley turned and walked towards Olivier and the others. Laughing calmly, he said, “Let’s go!”

“Linley!” Olivier’s face changed as he let out a cry of alarm, staring behind Linley, stunned.

“Hrm?” Linley turned his head, puzzled.

Lord Prefect Molde, who should have been dead, actually once more rose to his face. His eyes were flashing as he stared at Linley, stunned. “You…who are you?”

Linley looked back at him, also stunned. “You didn’t die?” Just now, he had clearly seen Molde be struck by his attack, and then collapse. His eyes had turned glassy and lifeless. How had he come back to life?

“Boss, this old fellow didn’t die. That’s odd.” Bebe called out.

It was indeed quite odd. If Molde had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, then he shouldn’t have reacted at all to Linley’s soul attack. But just now, Molde had clearly collapsed, and yet, moments later, he had completely recovered and was completely fine. This was indeed bizarre.

“His soul attack is this powerful…and his material attacks are so strong as well…and he is so fast…he has no weaknesses at all.” Molde was stunned.

“You are a Paragon? Which Paragon of the Infernal Realm…” Molde said. Aside from Paragons, Molde couldn’t think of any other possibilities. “You are Mr. Linley?” Molde actually guessed the truth right away.

Truthfully, that wasn’t surprising. There were only three individuals in the Infernal Realm who were suspected of being Paragons.

Molde had acquired information on the other two long ago. As for Linley, he had just risen to prominence two centuries ago after the Planar War. The Infernal Realm was simply too vast, and so in the past two centuries, news about him hadn’t spread everywhere just yet. Although Molde had run into an old friend who had informed about Linley, all Molde had learned was Linley’s name, and the fact that he was a member of the Azure Dragon clan

who was capable of Dragonforming.

As for Linley's appearance, he had no idea.

"Yes, I am Linley." Linley laughed calmly.

"Paragon Linley?" Molde's three subordinates were utterly terrified as well. Their Lord Prefect had actually attempted to take revenge upon a Paragon. Wasn't this suicide? They were stunned, but Molde was both stunned and enraged.

"That punk, Bonin, is just a Six Star Fiend. No matter how much trouble he causes, how could he have gotten a Paragon involved?" Molde was incomprehensibly angry and shocked. He knew that the enemy was fairly powerful, but Bonin was just a Six Star Fiend, after all. Molde believed… that at most, the enemy would be a Lord Prefect level expert. A Paragon? Using a Paragon to deal with his son was a waste of talent.

How few Paragons did the entire Infernal Realm have? Just three, and that was including Linley! How could there be such a coincidence?

If it had been Dunnington or the other one, Molde would have immediately recognized him and given up. Unfortunately, it just so happened to be Linley. Linley was a Paragon who had just recently risen to sudden prominence ,and he didn't have any accurate information about Linley at all.

His son had actually managed to offend a Paragon. Molde's luck really was quite terrible.

"This…Mr. Linley…I apologize." Molde forced out a smile. "Since it is you, Mr. Linley, then I'll leave now."

"Leave now? If my Boss was weak, he would've been killed by you, and the rest of us would have as well, right?" Bebe barked. "It's too late for you to leave now!"

“I am quite curious. How is it that you were hit by my technique but didn’t die?” Linley looked at this Lord Prefect, Molde.

Molde’s face changed dramatically. Not hesitating at all, with a ‘swish’, he rose into the skies, intending to flee! Against a Paragon like Linley, even if Linley wasn’t able to kill him, he would be able to control a spatial tear and shove Molde into it. Molde didn’t believe that his Sovereign would waste any time or effort in entering chaotic space to save him.

Linley blinked, and two Voidwave Sword ripples shot towards Molde, who was in mid-flight.

No matter how fast he moved, how could he move faster than a soul attack?

The two Voidwave Sword ripples entered Molde’s body, and instantly, Molde’s formerly flying body became powerless. He once more fell down from the skies, smashing onto the ground. But just an instant later, Molde actually once more flipped to his feet.

“Queer. How queer.” Linley began to laugh. “If you have a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, you shouldn’t feel a thing from my soul attack. But clearly, you don’t have one. But if you don’t have one, how could it be that you are able to survive repeated soul attacks from me?”

Linley didn’t understand.

“Mr. Linley, no, Lord Linley!” Molde’s face changed dramatically. He was confident in his ability to escape anyone besides a Paragon, but Paragons… they were strong in every aspect, without any flaws.

“It really is strange.” Linley frowned, puzzled.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Two more Voidwave Sword ripples shot out, once more entering Molde’s body. Molde’s eyes immediately became lifeless, and he once more fell onto the ground. This time, Linley used his divine sense to keep a close

watch on Molde, carefully inspecting Molde for any changes. Linley's divine sense thoroughly filled every single part of Molde's body; it was extremely forceful and dominating.

Molde's eyes opened, and he once more regained consciousness.

"So that's how it is." Linley finally discovered where the secret lay.

"Lord Prefect…" The white-browed man and the other two, seeing the situation was turning grim, hurriedly fled, leaving behind only Molde himself.

After regaining consciousness, the first thing Molde saw was Linley walking towards him. His face changed dramatically, and he suddenly tunneled underground.

"Haha, you won't be able to escape."

Linley laughed loudly, and then his body suddenly appeared next to Molde, and he grabbed Molde by the shoulders.

Linley's other hand then grabbed at Molde's 'bracelet'. "No!" Feeling Linley grab the bracelet, the Lord Prefect of Skymount instantly grew frantic, but Linley gave his left hand a forceful tug, and with a 'crack', the bracelet shattered as the nine green pearls flew into Linley's hand.

"The reason why you were able to survive despite being hit by me multiple times has something to do with these nine soul pearls, yes?" Linley glanced at him.

Seeing that Linley held the soul pearls in his hand, the Lord Prefect's face instantly turned ashen.

Chapter 13 – The Secret of the Nine Pearls

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 13, The Secret of the Nine Pearls

"Boss, the reason why you weren't able to kill him was these nine soul pearls? What are these nine soul pearls?" Bebe flew next to Linley as well, inspecting the nine soul pearls hovering in Linley's hands with curiosity. "Boss, I don't feel anything special about these nine pearls?"

Linley chuckled. "When I first saw the Lord Prefect of Skymount, I didn't sense anything special about these soul pearls either; I thought that wearing a bracelet was just personal habit of his. Only when I tried to kill him multiple times with no success did I notice that these soul pearls were rather unique."

How keen was Linley's judgment now?

He was able to immediately tell, at a glance, that the Lord Prefect of Skymount's bracelet wasn't a divine artifact, and so Linley had taken it for a mere trinket with no value. And, indeed, the bracelet wasn't a divine artifact. Linley was able to crush the bracelet with his fingers with ease. The truly valuable items were those nine soul pearls.

"Lord Prefect of Skymount, is my guess correct?"

"Lord Linley!" The Lord Prefect of Skymount's face was ashen. He hurriedly said, "Correct. Your guess is correct. These nine soul pearls are a precious treasure that were naturally formed, and they contain an incomprehensible life force within them. As long as you are wearing these nine soul pearls, an inexhaustible, endless amount of life energy will fill your entire body and soul. Although your soul attack was powerful, Lord Linley, the energy of the soul pearls continuously protected me, and so even though my soul was damaged, it was quickly healed."

Molde no longer had anything left he could rely on.

He had thought that by relying on his soul pearls, others wouldn't be able to kill him. And Molde's power was indeed quite great. Matching that with the soul pearls…meant that he could be considered one of the topmost commanders. This was why Molde had so confidently come to fight.

After seeing Linley's unfamiliar face, he had felt all the more confident.

But who would have imagined…that this was Linley, the Paragon who had risen to sudden prominence in the Infernal Realm! A Paragon…they were the most powerful entities amongst Deities. The soul pearls could protect Molde, but they weren't able to increase his attack power. In front of Linley, Molde was nothing more than a punching bag!

Now that he lost those nine soul pearls, he had nothing left at all.

"Oh, these soul pearls are so special?" Bebe mumbled in surprise.

"Molde. Did you bind these soul pearls?" Linley said calmly.

"No." Molde said hurriedly.

Linley willed a drop of blood to emerge from his finger, which then flew towards one of the soul pearls hovering above his hand.

"Drip!"

The blood fell atop this jade green soul pearl, splattered, then rolled down and fell onto Linley's palm.

"It actually didn't go in?" Linley said with a frown.

"Lord Linley, these soul pearls are a miraculous treasure which was naturally formed by the heavens, rather than a divine artifact. There is no way to bind them with blood." Molde said hurriedly. Linley gave Molde a sidelong glance, then held the nine soul pearls within his palm. Instantly, he felt a surge of unique energy fill his entire body. Under Linley's control, this

surge of energy even flooded into his soul.

Comfortable!

Linley felt as though his soul was being protected by this very unique type of energy.

“How curious. This sort of treasure…only the heavens themselves could give birth to such a thing.” Linley sighed in praise.

“Right. Right.” Molde hurriedly said.

“Boss, these soul pearls are quite unique, but how can you be certain that the reason why Molde was struck by your soul attack without dying was because of these pearls?” Bebe pursed his lips. “Perhaps the soul pearls are unique, but they aren’t necessarily the true treasure which protected Molde from dying. Perhaps he might have another treasure as well.”

Molde’s face changed dramatically.

“The best way to test it, Boss, is to give this Molde yet another soul attack. If this time, Molde dies, then that proves that it really was the soul pearls which were protecting him. If he doesn’t die, then it means he was lying.” Bebe laughed as he spoke, but in the eyes of Molde, Bebe’s laughter was so evil, so terrifying!

“Molde, what do you think? Is my reasoning correct?” Bebe looked at Molde and laughed, but he didn’t even attempt to hide the killing intent in his eyes.

These words were like the pronouncement of a death sentence upon Molde.

In terms of mentality, Bebe, a divine beast, still had a stronger desire to kill than Linley. Anyone who posed a threat to Linley or who had ever attacked Linley…as far as Bebe was concerned, such a person deserved death.

“Boss, if Molde doesn’t die, he will cause problems in the future,

eventually. He is currently the Lord Prefect of Skymount, and won't dare to take his revenge on you, Boss. That's only because he isn't strong enough. But if, one day, he were to make a breakthrough and become a Paragon, he probably would no longer fear you, Boss. Even if he isn't able to take revenge on you, Olivier will be in danger." Bebe sent mentally.

Bebe was farsighted. Anything that might pose a threat should be killed!

"Lord Linley…" Molde stammered in terror.

Molde's current attitude was completely opposite to his earlier, brash, murderous attitude.

"When you thought you were strong, you attacked; when you discovered that the enemy was too strong, you submitted." After having experienced the savagery of the Planar Wars, Linley wouldn't be as soft-hearted as a woman. "Swish!" A Voidwave Sword ripple shot forth from Linley's forehead, so fast that Molde wasn't able to react at all as it drove into his body.

Molde's body trembled, and then the light disappeared from his eyes as he slumped down.

"Clink!" A blood-red set of armor fell out from his body onto the ground. This was his defensive Sovereign artifact.

"This time, he's really dead." Bebe laughed.

Olivier, Diana, and their son, 'Deia', walked over now. Olivier looked at the deceased Lord Prefect, then looked towards Linley with gratitude. "Linley, thank you. You helped me yet again." If the Lord Prefect didn't die, Olivier definitely would have been unable to rest easy.

"Thank you, Uncle Linley." Deia said as well, and then he gave the corpse of Molde a vicious look, as though placing the blame for the death of his older brother upon the Lord Prefect.

“When I dealt with Bonin, I prepared myself for the possible eventuality of having to deal with Molde as well. Only…I didn’t expect that Molde would actually be in possession of this sort of miraculous natural treasure.” Linley looked at the nine soul pearls in his hand and sighed.

“How unfortunate. Molde, as suspected, has clones somewhere.” Bebe dripped a drop of blood onto the armor, but it didn’t go in.

“Forget it. Just leave it there.” Linley said with a calm laugh. “After having lost his most powerful divine clone, Molde is no longer much of a threat.” Without his most powerful divine clone, even if Molde had a Saint-level clone somewhere who was able to fuse with a divine sparks all the way to the Highgod level, he wouldn’t be able to make any more advances. This meant that there was no hope for Molde to reach the level of Paragons. Anyone not at the Paragon level, as far as Linley was concerned, could be slaughtered easily by him.

“Hmph. I’m not going to let him get anything back.” Bebe waved his hand, drawing Molde’s interspatial ring towards him, and then with a vicious clench and a ‘crack’, Bebe shattered the interspatial ring.

If he couldn’t get it, he wouldn’t let Molde get it either!

As for that Sovereign artifact…it was made by a Sovereign, and Bebe didn’t dare do anything to it. Sovereigns wouldn’t care about you killing an Emissary, as that was the fault of the Emissary for being too weak. But destroying a Sovereign artifact or tossing it into chaotic space? The Sovereign would be angered. The artifact was something which a Sovereign had spent a tremendous amount of time and effort on, after all.

“This treasure isn’t bad, but it’s not very useful for me.” Linley glanced at the nine soul pearls.

“Let’s go.”

With a thought, Linley stored the nine soul pearls into his interspatial ring.

“We’re off to Indigo Prefecture!” Bebe laughed. Olivier looked at his wife and son, then laughed as well, content. Linley’s group of five once more boarded their metallic lifeform and began to fly at high speed towards Indigo Prefecture, in the west.

Within Linley’s interspatial ring.

This was a lifeless space. A large number of items was hovering there within it, including that canteen filled with Sovereign’s Might, the adamantine heavy sword, Bloodviolet, inkstones, azurite…and atop a little mountain formed from inkstones and azurite, there was a tattered, tarnished, unremarkable crown.

The tattered crown just lay there.

Suddenly…

The nine soul pearls appeared within that lifeless space. The nine crystalline jade-green soul pearls seemed so brilliant and beautiful.

The strange thing was, that tattered crown actually levitated into the air and flew towards the nine soul pearls, which also flew towards the tattered crown.

The nine soul pearls formed into a circle around the tattered crown.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

The nine soul pearls suddenly shot towards the tattered crown from each direction, instantly merging into the ‘settings’ of the crown. And then, everything turned calm again. A green light flowed atop the tattered crown, causing it to emanate a faint green aura. It was no longer as tattered and tarnished as it was before.

There were nine small settings and one large setting to this crown!

The nine small settings looped around the crown from front to back, while

the center-front of the crown had a large, rhombus-shaped setting. This rhombus-shaped setting was completely empty.

Linley had no idea as to what had just happened within his interspatial ring. Previously, Linley had spent quite some time inspecting the tattered crown, and after becoming a Soul Mutate, Linley had inspected it yet again. But he couldn't find anything special about it, and thus, he had tossed it into his interspatial ring and stopped paying attention to it.

Perhaps, one day, Linley would take out the crown or the pearls, only to discover the secrets of the crown.

But when would that happen? No one could say.

A metallic lifeform shaped like a vicious tiger floated there above the mountains. This enormous metallic lifeform had more than a hundred people within it, with the leader being a silver-haired, silver-robed Molde.

He was standing at the front of the metallic lifeform, staring through the translucent metal towards the distant mountains ahead.

"Go there and reclaim the armor." The silver-haired Molde said coldly.

"Yes, Lord Prefect." The white-browed man knew exactly where the battle had taken place. He immediately led a squad of ten people towards that gorge, flying at high speed.

The silver-haired Molde stared coldly at the distant mountains, his heart filled with a murderous intent. He could still sense the presence of the Sovereign artifact. Clearly…Linley's group didn't take it away or destroy it.

"My power is now much weaker. If someone were to challenge me…" This was what Molde was concerned about now. As a Lord Prefect and one of the 108 Asuras of the Infernal Realm, he had to face challengers, with the loser giving up the position and the winner becoming the new Asura or Lord Prefect. Thus, Molde had to reacquire that Sovereign artifact.

With a defensive Sovereign artifact, Molde was confident in his ability to maintain his position.

A long time later…

The figures of the white-browed man and his squad flashed forward, with the white-browed man holding that blood-colored armor in his hands.

“Hmph.” The silver-haired Molde’s eyes flashed, and a large corridor instantly appeared within the metallic lifeform. The blood-colored armor flew through the corridor towards Molde, then entered Molde’s body.

“Move out. We’re going back.” Molde said calmly.

“Yes, Lord Prefect.” The group replied in chorus.

And then, Molde strode to a private room deeper in the rear cabins of the metallic lifeform. The door to the rear cabin shut. There was no hint of light within this room.

The silver-haired Morde sat down quietly in the meditative position. Within the gloomy, dark room, Morde’s face appeared equally gloomy and dark. His wolf-like eyes, in this dark room, appeared all the more terrifying and heart-shaking.

“You ruined my son, then also ruined my future prospects!” In that room, Molde didn’t need to conceal in the slightest his killing intent. A wild, savage aura filled the room, but because of Molde’s Godrealm, the aura didn’t leak outside at all, and so those subordinates outside had no idea what was occurring within.

Molde’s eyes flashed savagely. “Fine. Since you ruined me, then I will ruin you as well!”

“Unfortunately, I’ve already destroyed that sheet of special paper. Otherwise, it would be much easier for me to convince the Sovereigns. With just a simple plan, I could easily cause Linley to die! But now that I

destroyed that paper, it will be a bit tricky!" Molde pondered silently for a moment, considering what to do, then laughed coldly. "Still, it doesn't matter. Although the paper was destroyed, at least I still know what the secret is. Since the soul pearls are no longer in my hands, there's no point to keeping this secret."

When Molde thought about what was going to occur, he couldn't help but feel a hint of eagerness in his heart.

"You ruined me. So I'll ruin you!" Molde growled. "I will publicize this secret…I will make it known to everyone, make it known to all of the Sovereigns!!!" His voice, filled with rage, made this secret room feel so sinister, so cold…

Chapter 14 – True – False

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 14, True, False

Although he wanted to make the secret public, this wasn't actually an easy thing to do.

If Linley were to learn of this secret before it made its way to the Sovereigns, then Linley would probably immediately return and immediately kill Molde! Molde pondered for a moment, then came up with a simple scheme.

Skymount Prefecture. The Lord Prefect's estate. The main hall.

A hundred Highgod warriors were standing respectfully before the main hall, awaiting the Lord Prefect's arrival.

"I wonder what the Lord Prefect summoned us all here for!"

They all mumbled to themselves, but then, moments later, a person emerged from a side door of the main hall. It was the silver-haired Molde. Molde's cold, sinister gaze swept across these Highgods, and all of them instantly stood up straight, not daring to look around or seem the slightest bit indolent. Molde strode to the front of the hall.

Seating himself atop his throne, Molde swept the people before him with his cold gaze. "I have a secret assignment for all of you! If you reveal this assignment…hmph, whoever reveals it will have his entire clan put to death." Military order was quite strict in the prefectural armies. Still, annihilating an entire clan because of revealing a secret was unheard of.

The hundred Highgods all felt their hearts tremble. They felt misery in their hearts. How was it that they were the ones to end up with this mission?

"But don't worry. As long as this mission isn't revealed, nothing will

happen.” Molde said calmly. “In addition, once you accomplish it, every single person will be awarded a billion inkstones!”

All of the Highgods were shocked.

These Highgods spent countless years building up their wealth, and yet still probably only had a few hundred million inkstones. They weren’t Seven Star Fiends; they didn’t have an extravagant amount of money. A single assignment with a reward of a billion inkstones? This was an astronomical amount of money.

Molde waved his hand, and one piece of black paper after another appeared in front of him.

“Whoosh!”

These pieces of paper suddenly flew downwards towards each person. Every single one of the hundred Highgods received a piece of paper. These Highgods couldn’t help but look towards the paper, and with but a single glance, they completely memorized the contents of it.

At the same time, the faces of the hundred Highgods completely changed.

This secret…was truly terrifying.

“Did you see it?” Molde let out a cold laugh. “You don’t need to worry about if this information is true or false, but you must remember one thing! You cannot leak it out! If you leak it out…hmph.” Molde swept the group below with his gaze.

“Your subordinates do not dare.”

After one person fell to a knee, the other ninety nine soldiers all hurriedly knelt as well.

“Excellent.” Molde said calmly. “Fifteen of you, stand over there. You fifteen, go over there…”

….

"…and that leaves twenty five of you. You will form six squads!" Molde's divine power flew out, easily spreading out across six people in the six groups. The first five groups had fifteen, while the last one had twenty five.

"Squad one, you will head to the western part of the Infernal Realm, to the Karol Continent. The fifteen of you will hand those sheets of paper to fifteen different people. This is the list of names and addresses! Remember, on the journey, no matter what, do not let this information be leaked out." Molde once more instructed, then sent a black parchment flying towards squad one.

"Squad two, you will head to the eastern part of the Infernal Realm, to the Jadefloat Continent. This is the list of names and addresses."

"Squad three, you will head to the southern part of the Infernal Realm, to the Muja Continent. Squad four, head to the northern part of the Infernal Realm, the Redbud Continent. Squad five, the five of you, head to the Starmist Sea…and squad six, you head to the Chaotic Sea."

Molde delivered the lists of names and addresses to these people. These names were primarily names of Sovereign's Emissaries. But of course, there were also many Lord Prefect level figures. The wider the net, the greater the chances of attracting interest from Sovereigns.

Six of the seven major regions of the Infernal Realm had squads assigned. The only region not assigned was the Bloodridge Continent!

Molde knew very well that if he spread this news out to the Bloodridge Continent, it would most likely quickly spread to Linley's ears.

"Each of you, leave a divine clone here in my estate." Molde said calmly. "You have to keep a tight watch on each other. If anyone leaks the secret, immediately report it to me." The reason Molde selected these individuals was because they were all fairly loyal, and because they all had divine

clones.

“Yes, Lord Prefect.”

A hundred clones emerged.

“Then head out.” Molde didn’t wish to waste any time. The hundred Highgods assented, and then separated into six squads and left. With the members of the squads keeping an eye on the other members, and given how deadly the consequences of exposing the secret was, as well as the rich reward of a billion inkstones for successfully completing the mission, Molde felt confident that nothing would go amiss.

Molde laughed calmly. “Bloodridge Continent? I’ll go make that notification.”

Molde was still an Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign. It wasn’t hard for him to go pay a visit to the Sovereign. If he went in person, there was no way that Linley would learn the secret.

That very day, Molde flew out of the castle and headed towards the residence of the Bloodridge Sovereign.

The Bloodridge Continent. Cloudlink Mountains.

Deep within the Cloudlink Mountains, there was a lake that was a thousand kilometers in circumferences. The air above the lake was perpetually covered with mist and fog. This sort of scene was actually quite common in the Infernal Realm, and many few people would pay attention to it. As for those people who lived near the Cloudlink Mountains, they all knew that anyone who entered deep into the middle of the lake would disappear into the mist, and then, dazed, reappear on the shore.

No one knew what was in the center.

“Splash…” The waters of the lake gently rolled out in waves, lapping at the shore.

A figure descended from the skies at high speed, landing at the edges of the lake. It was Molde. Molde stood there at the side of the lake for a moment, then flew into that endless fog.

At the center of the lake, there was a small island. The island was filled with all sorts of beautiful flowers, and all sorts of flying birds that lived here peacefully.

On the island, there was a plain, unadorned, cone-shaped palace. In the rear side of the palace, amidst the flowers, there was a stone table, where two men were seated, facing each other, staring raptly at the many chess pieces on the table. Behind these two men, there were two maids, whose faces were covered in smiles.

One of the two men had long, blood-red hair. This man had a wavy, blood-colored tattoo on his face. He was currently smiling, his eyes gleaming as he stared at the chess pieces.

Opposite him was a silver-haired, hawk-nosed man. This hawk-nosed man had two long, narrow eyes. Occasionally, a hint of a cold aura would flash within his eyes, capable of causing one to to tremble.

“Teresia [Te’lei’xi’ya], you lose again, haha.” The blood-haired man said with a loud laugh.

“Another one, another one! I just learned this game!” The hawk-nosed man said hurriedly. “Boson [Bo’shen], you’ve been playing for years.”

“Fine, let’s play again. You’ll still lose though.” The blood-haired man said with a laugh.

This was a game with 256 pieces, representing soldiers and generals. Although it seemed to be simple, it actually contained within it many different ways of mobilizing armies. It also required a person to be adaptive and act based on the opponent’s situation. The more powerful one’s soul was, the more complicated one’s thought patterns would become, and the

more interesting this game would be. In addition, one side would only win after all of the pieces of the other side were completely eliminated.

Even if one was slightly losing at the beginning, one still had a chance to win by using fewer numbers to overcome superior numbers.

Different situations required different resolutions. If one managed to calculate things out thoroughly, a single game could last for a very long time. These two people could spend several years playing a single game.

This was a war simulation game that a general in a material plane had developed to be used to help train military officers. But Sovereigns with eternal life who had no real pursuits loved to find and play these time-consuming games.

“This game of the 256 Soldiers and Generals…where did you find it?” The hawk-nosed man laughed.

“This? I discovered it from the ‘Siya’ material plane. I must say, this game is far more complicated and exciting than those games I played in the past. It’s quite fun!” The blood-haired man laughed as he began to control his pieces and make them move.

Those two women smiled as they watched, quietly chatting through divine sense.

“Sovereigns feel bored as well.”

“Lord Teresia, Sovereign of Wind, probably won’t be able to win. Last time, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction competed against our Sovereign for a thousand years without winning a single match.”

Right at this moment, a maid flew over from afar, then bowed and said, “Sovereign, Molde has come. He has an important matter to discuss with you, Sovereign.”

“Molde? Why is he coming at a time like this?” The Bloodridge Sovereign,

Boson, frowned.

The hawk-nosed man laughed. “Haha, Boson, hurry up and deal with him.”

“Don’t try to rearrange the pieces and don’t try to cheat. I’ve memorized all of the pieces’ locations.” The Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, gave Teresia a glance, and then walked away.

Within the Sovereign’s main hall.

The Lord Prefect of Skymount, Molde, was standing respectfully in front of the main hall. He saw a bloody mirage suddenly appear, and then, there in the main hall, the Bloodridge Sovereign took form.

Molde raised his head. Seeing the Bloodridge Sovereign, he couldn’t help but feel his heart tremble, and he hurriedly knelt down.

“Is there something you need from me?” The Bloodridge Continent said calmly.

The Bloodridge Sovereign was a lofty, exalted Sovereign, after all. He might jest and jape with with the other Sovereigns, but in front of Deities, he, a Sovereign, was far beyond them.

“Sovereign, I just learned of a tremendous, heaven-shaking secret.” Molde said respectfully.

“Oh?” The Bloodridge Sovereign couldn’t help but give Molde a careful look. “Speak!”

“Sovereign, please look at this.” Molde produced a black piece of parchment. The Bloodridge Sovereign’s gaze fixed upon it, and instantly, that black parchment flew over towards him, then hovering in front of him. Sweeping it with a glance, the Bloodridge Sovereign’s face changed slightly as he then looked downwards towards Molde in surprise.

Molde remained on his knees, not daring to speak.

“Where did you obtain this information from?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said in a low voice. “How could a scroll containing such information possibly be made from such ordinary paper?”

“I acquired it by accident.” Molde said hurriedly.

He didn’t dare say that he had already acquired the nine pearls previously. If he did…the Sovereign might be so infuriated at the fact that he hadn’t offered it right away that he might kill Molde.

There was nothing Molde could do. He had already destroyed that original piece of paper.

Would Sovereigns necessarily believe it when they saw an earth-shaking revelation on an ordinary piece of paper?

If that green paper was still here, the Sovereign would definitely believe it! Because Sovereigns, at a glance, would know exactly where that green paper came from. Naturally, they would believe the words it contained. But the words on an ordinary piece of paper…would the Sovereigns believe it?

“You claim that Linley has those nine soul pearls?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

“I’m not the one making the claim. It is this piece of paper which states it.” Molde didn’t dare say anything else. This secret was simply too great. If he got involved, then he, a Lord Prefect, would probably lose his little life.

“Your most powerful divine clone is dead? Who killed it?” The Bloodridge Sovereign suddenly asked.

Molde was stunned. It was Linley who destroyed his most powerful divine clone. If the Sovereign wished to investigate, this would be fairly easy to discern. If one was to lie to a Sovereign, one would have to consider what sort of lie one was going to tell. If one was going to tell a lie that would be easily discovered, it would probably be better to tell the truth instead. But if

the lie couldn't be discovered, then never admit it, even under threat of death!

"It was Linley who killed it." Molde admitted it.

The Bloodridge Sovereign suddenly rose to his feet. Molde couldn't help but feel startled.

"Hmph…" The Bloodridge Sovereign icily swept Molde with his gaze, then barked, "Molde, if an Overgod issued a mission, the paper on which the mission was written would definitely not be ordinary paper. How is it that you dare counterfeit information of such gravity?"

"I didn't." Molde said hurriedly terrified.

The Bloodridge Sovereign stood there in his hall, staring down at the kneeling Molde. In a calm voice, he said, "Molde, you made three mistakes. First of all, a mission issued by the Overgods would definitely not come on a piece of paper like this. Second, if an Overgod issued a mission, even if it involved three talismans, the Overgod would at most give a basic description of the three talismans. The Overgod would definitely not name someone in specific as carrying a talisman! Even if the Overgod was going to do so, the Overgod would clearly state the locations of all three talismans. Why would the Overgod just mention one? And third, your most powerful divine clone, Molde, just so happened to have been destroyed by Linley! This information states that Linley acquired the nine soul pearls? How could there be such a coincidence? And you are the first person to bring me this information? This is all too coincidental, isn't it?"

Molde's face changed.

"Hmph. Molde, because you have served me sincerely and diligently for so many years, I will spare your life. Begone." The Bloodridge Sovereign said calmly.

"No rush, no rush. Talismans from the Overgods? Let me see?" A figure suddenly appeared in the main hall. It was that hawk-nosed man.

“Go ahead and look. You heard what I said earlier, right?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said calmly.

The hawk-nosed man swept the parchment with his gaze, then nodded slightly. “The likelihood that the information your subordinate provided is true…is quite low. The paper is wrong, and the information only mentions a single person, Linley. And your subordinate just so happens to have a great enmity with Linley? It is quite odd. In addition, it has already been countless years since the last time the Overgods issued a mission.”

“However…”

The hawk-nosed man laughed calmly. “If your subordinate wanted to harm Linley, how could he come up with something like this on his own? Ever since the universe was created, the Overgods have only issued six missions. There are very few Deities who even know that such a thing exists. Thus, I believe there is a chance that this is real.”

“That’s just the first point. The second point is, based on how long it has been since the sixth mission…I have the feeling that it is about time for the Overgods to issue another mission. It has been countless years.”

“Haha, Boson, I’m not busy anyhow, so I might as well go take a look. Haha…”

The hawk-nosed man disappeared from within that hall.

Chapter 15 – The Sovereign Descends

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 15, The Sovereign Descends

Within the main hall, Molde remained on his knees.

But upon seeing the Sovereign of Wind suddenly depart, he felt a surge of wild joy in his heart. "Based on the conversation they had, it seems this person was a Sovereign as well! Good. Although the Bloodridge Sovereign didn't believe me, at least one Sovereign has gone…this Linley, hmph, even if he hands over the nine soul pearls, he will find it hard to avoid death!"

When Molde thought about what that parchment had written on it, he couldn't help but feel smug. If he had described things clearly, perhaps Linley would simply hand over the nine soul pearls, and the Sovereign would release Linley. But…in disseminating the news, Molde had changed things slightly.

Although he wasn't able to make his scheme perfect in such a short period of time, as Molde saw it…it was enough to make Linley die.

"Linley, oh, Linley…a Paragon is going to die, just like that." Molde mused to himself.

"Molde!" A cold voice suddenly rang out.

"Sovereign." Molde hurriedly pressed his forehead against the floor, kowtowing.

The Bloodridge Sovereign's cold gaze fell down upon Molde from up high. "I ask you this. Is the information contained in the parchment true or false. Are you certain of the information?" The Bloodridge Sovereign was still quite surprised that Molde was able to deliver a piece of paper like this. The words of the Sovereign of Wind were correct; how long ago had it been since an Overgod had issued a mission?

Very few people even knew about such a thing. Even if Molde wanted to make something up, how would he even know about it?

“Sovereign, your subordinate doesn’t know if it is true or false.” Molde said respectfully. “Your subordinate simply came in possession of this parchment. Because the information it contained was simply too astonishing, I knew…that you, Sovereign, would probably be intrigued by it. And so I immediately came to give it to you, Sovereign.”

Molde wouldn’t dare testify as to whether it was true or false.

If he dared to testify regarding its veracity, then it meant that he, Molde, had seen the true original!

“Hmph. Scram.” The Bloodridge Sovereign snapped.

“Yes.” Molde hurriedly bowed with respect, then left.

But there, at the front of the main hall, the Bloodridge Sovereign began to furrow his brows while standing there. “Why did Molde have to come now, instead of earlier or later? Teresia just so happened to be here when Molde came. Now that Teresia knows this, things will be tricky.” As he pondered, the Bloodridge Sovereign stretched out his divine sense.

Soon, the Bloodridge Sovereign’s divine sense spread out to cover the entire Bloodridge Continent.

Moments later, the Bloodridge Sovereign retracted his divine sense. Shaking his head and laughing, his body also flickered, then disappeared from the main hall.

As for Molde, he traversed the hazy white mist, then quickly departed.

“Hmph. As soon as I retrieved my Sovereign artifact, I immediately began to plan this out, and then I delivered this news to the Sovereigns. Even as fast as Linley travels, I imagine he probably hasn’t reached Indigo

Prefecture yet.” Molde was very efficient in carrying things out. He was afraid that if too much time passed, there would be new variables.

Thus, he had travelled here by himself at top speed to notify the Sovereign.

As for the Sovereigns, if they were to chase after Linley, their speed would be terrifyingly fast.

Mountains rose, one after the other in a never-ending chain.

A metallic lifeform was traversing the skies.

“We’ve already passed through the Indigo Prefecture border. In a short period of time, we will reach the Skyrite Mountains.” Linley, standing at the front of the metallic lifeform, stared at the outside world through the translucent metal. He laughed while speaking.

“Indigo Prefecture.” Diana and Olivier both stood there as well, staring into the distance.

Suddenly…

“Whooosh.” A terrifying tornado suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the skies, surrounding Linley’s metallic lifeform, causing the world to suddenly grow dim and hazy.

“What’s going on?” Bebe was shocked.

“Not good.” Linley’s face changed dramatically. The sudden descent of this tornado caught even him completely off-guard. The person who had just come was too terrifying. Linley didn’t have any reservations; with a thought, he instantly spread out earth-type Sovereign power, forming a protective barrier around the five of them.

The entire metallic lifeform trembled, then was blown into smithereens.

Linley’s group of five were still completely dazed, but right at this moment,

the tornado vanished.

“Eh?” Linley looked in front of him. There was a man currently standing in midair in front of them. This person had long silver hair, a hawk-nose, and pair of slender eyes. The man’s gaze was like a knife, making those who saw his gaze feel coldness in their hearts. This silver-haired man looked calmly at Linley’s group of five.

“Boss, who is he?” Bebe sent mentally.

The faces of Olivier, Diana, and their son Deia changed dramatically.

“Who else could it be? Aside from a Sovereign, who could possibly suddenly appear in front of us without me sensing anything?” Linley sent back. And then, smiling, Linley bowed towards the man in front of him. “Linley of Indigo Prefecture greets you, Sovereign!” After having met with the Chief Sovereign of Death and the Abyssal Fruit Tree, Linley understood one thing!

Sovereigns might appear as an energy construct or with their true bodies, or in the shape of a human.

In short, one couldn’t judge a Sovereign through appearance, only by power. A girl might appear before you, but that girl could very well be a Sovereign. There was no way at all to judge such a person’s strength from the outside.

The silver-haired man revealed a hint of a smile on his face as well. “Oh, you are able to infuse Will? You really are a Paragon. You were able to ascertain my identity so soon.” This Sovereign of Wind could tell from the barrier Linley had created with earth-type Sovereign power that there was a surge of Will infused within it.

More importantly…

Linley didn’t waste a single bit of his Sovereign power. This made it simple to judge Linley’s power.

“Sovereign, might I ask why you have stopped us?” Linley smiled as he bowed. “Please instruct me!”

“The rest of you, step aside.” The Sovereign of Wind gave a calm glance to Bebe and the others.

As Sovereigns saw it, the fewer Deities who knew about Overgod talismans and missions, the better. Sovereigns felt that Deities weren’t even qualified to know about these things. Linley was a Paragon, and so he could speak amiably with Linley, but the Sovereign of Wind didn’t want the other four nearby to listen in.

“Leave for now.” Linley glanced at them.

Knowing that this person was a Sovereign, Bebe didn’t dare say anything. He, Olivier, and the other two immediately flew away. Olivier’s son, Deia, stared in amazement and disbelief at the Sovereign of Wind. Clearly, Deia was very curious about the legendary Sovereigns.

Moments later, Bebe and the others were thousands of kilometers away.

“Sovereign, there is nobody nearby aside from us now.” Linley looked at the silver-haired man in front of him.

“My request is very simple!”

The Sovereign of Wind laughed calmly as he glanced at Linley. “A Overgod talisman, in the hands of a Deity, is completely useless. It’s best if you hand over the Overgod talisman you possess to me!”

Linley couldn’t help but feel completely lost.

“Overgod talisman? What Overgod talisman?” Linley asked.

The silver-haired man’s eyes had a hint of coldness flash through them. With an icy snort, he said, “What, do you want to lie to my face and deceive

me?" Actually, the Sovereign was now rather puzzled as well. "By the looks of it, it seems as though this Linley really has no idea what an Overgod talisman is. But then again, who knows. If a Paragon wants to put on an act, I wouldn't necessarily be able to see through him."

"Sovereign, I am willing to swear an oath in the name of the Overgods that I truly have no idea what an Overgod talisman is." Linley said hurriedly.

The silver-haired man felt puzzled now.

"Sovereign, what is this Overgod talisman of which you speak?" Linley said, puzzled. "Based on what I know, the four Overgods are the personifications of the four Edicts. They shouldn't have any human emotions. Why would there be Overgod talismans?" But as soon as he spoke, Linley knew that he was wrong.

If they didn't have human emotions, did that necessarily mean they couldn't issue talismans?

Where did Overgod artifacts come from, then? Since there was such a thing as an Overgod artifact, then naturally there could be Overgod talismans as well.

But this silver-haired man thought that Linley didn't know about the existence of Overgod talismans and Overgod artifacts. He said calmly, "Since Overgods are able to take the form of a person if they choose, why is it that you think you can understand them? Based on what I know, of the three talismans, the 'nine soul pearls' are in your hands, correct?"

"The 'nine soul pearls' of the three talismans?" Linley couldn't help but say, startled.

Linley was indeed startled, because he knew what this person was speaking of. "This Sovereign has come to find me for an Overgod talisman. So…he is referring to those nine soul pearls which allowed Molde to stay alive. That's the Overgod talisman. No wonder it is so unique and has such incomprehensible power. So it is an Overgod talisman…but what are they

used for?”

At this moment, Linley truly wanted to send his divine sense into his interspatial ring to investigate those nine soul pearls.

However, with the Sovereign in front of him, Linley didn’t dare act in such a way. Linley didn’t know what sort of detection powers a Sovereign possessed. Given the divine powers of a Sovereign, however, most likely they would be able to pay attention to anything he did. If Linley was to immediately investigate his interspatial ring, wouldn’t the Sovereign connect it all together?

“There are a total of three Overgod talismans?” Linley had a completely stunned look on his face.

The Sovereign of Wind looked closely at Linley, then let out a cold laugh. “Linley, although you have become a Paragon, you are still a Deity. An Overgod talisman is useless to you. I urge you to hand over this Overgod talisman. Don’t say that you don’t have it. I know…that the nine soul pearls are in your hands!”

“I will give you just a single chance.” The Sovereign of Wind said calmly. “If you hand over the nine soul pearls now, I will spare your life. But if you try to dissemble even the slightest bit, then don’t blame me for killing you, then taking the Overgod talisman from you.”

The Sovereign of Wind actually wasn’t completely confident about whether or not Linley had those nine soul pearls either.

In fact…

Whether the Overgods had even issued a mission, or if there were even three Overgod talismans, was unverified. However, to these Sovereigns who possessed eternal life, there were very few things capable of drawing their interest. Overgod talismans, however, were things which were more than enough to drive them insane with excitement.

If there was even the slightest chance of it being true, the Sovereign of Wind wanted to try and 'trick' Linley into admitting it. He pretended to be completely confident. If Linley did actually have the nine soul pearls, he might be nervous and thus hand it over.

Linley's heart clenched. "Can it be that the Sovereign knew that I acquired those nine soul pearls from Molde? Only my people know about this, and Molde himself. Can it be that it was Molde who told the Sovereign? But Molde and I have a huge enmity between us. If he wanted to entrap me, it shouldn't be as simple as this!"

Linley hesitated.

"Sovereign, just now, I told you that I am willing to swear an oath in the name of the Overgods. Why are you saying such things? Can it be that I would dare lie to the Overgods?" Linley said hurriedly. "I, Linley, swear by the Overgod of Fate that before the Sovereign told me about Overgod talismans, I knew nothing whatsoever about Overgod talismans. If I say a single false word…let my soul be shattered and dispersed!"

Linley looked solemnly at the Sovereign of Wind.

Indeed, the Sovereign of Wind frowned. An oath to the Overgods wasn't something a person would casually make. After all, the universe itself was controlled by the Edicts.

"Can it be that Linley really has no idea? That the news was false?" The Sovereign of Wind mused, puzzled.

"Teresia!" A voice rang out.

Linley saw that in the distance, a blood-robed figure had suddenly emerged. A blood-red robe, and blood-red hair. The newcomer's aura was even more overbearing and tyrannical than the Sovereign of Wind's. He flew over unhappily. "Teresia, Linley belongs to my Bloodridge Continent. You can't act wildly. Molde spouted some rubbish, and so you believed him? Overgod talismans? How many years has it been since they appeared? How could

they now have appeared out of nowhere?"

Teresia was startled.

The words of the Bloodridge Sovereign as good as told Linley that they weren't completely sure either.

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, sent mentally, "Boson, what's going on with you? How could you tell the truth in front of Linley? Aren't you as good as trying to help him out? He's just a Deity. Why act like this?" The Sovereign of Wind was very unhappy. He didn't understand why the Bloodridge Sovereign was helping Linley.

As he saw it, the Bloodridge Sovereign should join forces with him to make Linley hand over the talisman.

"I heard everything Linley said." The Bloodridge Sovereign swept Linley with his gaze, and then looked back at Teresia. "He swore an oath by the Overgods. How can this be false? In addition, the news stated that the nine soul pearls were placed alongside the Overgod decree. If Linley had both the nine soul pearls and the Overgod decree, how could he not know what an Overgod talisman is? Clearly, Molde was lying. Or, to put it another way, the news he brought was false."

The Sovereign of Wind had to admit that the Bloodridge Sovereign's words made sense.

"Overgod decree? What's that?" Linley was secretly startled.

But then, Linley suddenly understood…

"This Molde really wanted to kill me!" Linley was shocked. "If I was caught off-guard and immediately handed over the nine soul pearls, most likely this silver-haired Sovereign would then demand the Overgod decree. And if I didn't hand it over!? The Sovereign, after acquiring the nine soul pearls, would definitely believe that the information he had received was

real and might very well then, for the sake of acquiring the Overgod decree, kill me and then inspect my interspatial ring.”

Chapter 16 – A Tribulation

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 16, A Tribulation

Linley secretly celebrated.

Fortunately, he had suspected Molde of plotting against him, and that this scheme shouldn't be a simple one. Thus, from the very beginning, he had staunchly insisted on swearing an 'Overgod oath'. And indeed, there were no problems with Linley's oath to the Overgods; although he had the nine soul pearls, prior to this, he truly knew nothing whatsoever about the Overgod talismans.

But the Sovereign of Wind didn't realize this.

This was because, according to that sheet of paper, Linley had acquired both the nine soul pearls as well as the Overgod decree. As Teresia, Sovereign of Wind, viewed it, if the information was true, then Linley should know what Overgod talismans are. But if the news was false, then Linley wouldn't know.

By the looks of it, Linley truly didn't know. That meant the news should be false!

This logic seemed flawless!

Actually, what the Sovereign of Wind didn't realize was that Molde was a victim of his own cleverness. The news on that sheet of paper contained both truths and falsehoods! Molde's actions were intended to make it so that even if Linley handed over the soul pearls, he would still be pursued by the Sovereigns. Since Linley wouldn't be able to hand over the Overgod decree, then the Sovereign would probably kill Linley to 'seize it'.

The information was partly true and partly false, so as to cause Linley's death.

What he didn't realize was that, precisely because the information was partly true and partly false, Linley actually managed to dodge this tribulation. It truly was a case where one was a victim of one's own cleverness!

"It seems this information is probably false." The silver-haired Sovereign, Teresia, said calmly.

"Only you would be so bored as to believe in it." The Bloodridge Sovereign snickered.

Linley finally let out a mental sigh of relief.

But then, the corners of Teresia's narrow eyes once more turned to Linley and the interspatial ring on his finger. Laughing calmly, he said, "However, Linley, given how confident you are in your innocence…fine, then. Hand over your interspatial ring to me and let me look through it. If there is nothing inside, then this news is clearly false…oh, and bring all of your divine clones out as well. Let me inspect all of their interspatial rings."

Linley's heart lurched.

Inspect his interspatial rings? Linley knew very well that those nine pearls were right inside his interspatial ring.

"If I hand over those nine soul pearls, he will be absolutely certain that the information he gained was real, and would definitely try to force me to hand over the Overgod decree. I won't be able to hand it out, and this Sovereign will probably mercilessly kill me." Linley understood this. By now, even though he had the nine soul pearls, he definitely couldn't hand them over.

In addition, Overgod talismans…one could tell just from the name that these things would surely attract the attention of many Sovereigns.

If he were to admit having the soul pearls, even if this Sovereign of Wind

didn't kill him, most likely one of the other Sovereigns would. He would never again be able to live a peaceful life.

"Sovereign." Linley had a look of anger and humiliation on his face. "I, Linley, have trained for so many years and finally become a Paragon! You are a Sovereign, yes, but even common mortals can grow angry…much less me, Linley! Faced with your repeated questions, Sovereign, I, Linley, provided you with repeated answers. I even swore an oath by the Overgod of Fate. What else do you want?"

The Sovereign of Wind was stunned.

Linley stood there in midair. He stared at the Sovereign of Wind, not shrinking back at the slightest. Instead, he started to laugh. "You want my divine clones to come out? Fine!" With a thought, Linley transformed into five different people as his other four divine clones all emerged."

"Four divine clones!" The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, was startled.

Generally speaking, most Deities trained in one type of Law, with a few who trained in two. There were very few who trained in three types of Laws, but Linley actually trained in four. This was indeed astonishing.

"You are quite wise." Teresia said emotionlessly.

Linley and Teresia stared at each other. Linley showed no hint of subservience or humility as he said calmly, "Sovereign, my five clones have, in total, five interspatial rings! But I, Linley, feel that I have already demonstrated sufficient sincerity. I've even swore an oath by the Overgods, and yet you still want to investigate my interspatial rings? Fine then. Investigate away. The five interspatial rings are all there. However, pardon me, Linley, for not removing my binding from them. I, Linley, am a Highgod Paragon, not your slave. If you want to investigate my interspatial rings…then just go ahead and kill me!"

Linley stared at Teresia.

Linley's intentions were clear…

You are powerful! You are a Sovereign! But I'm not something that you can toy around with as you please. If you truly want to be shameless, fine, then. Come and kill me!

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, stared at Linley, puzzled, like a viper staring at his prey.

Sovereigns cared about face as well. Highgod Paragons were 'emperors' amongst Deities. They too cared about face. Given that Teresia wasn't completely certain of the situation, for him to treat Linley in this manner, forcing him to swear an oath and then still insisting on checking all of his interspatial rings, was indeed rather excessive.

Most likely, a Paragon who had even a bit of a temper would rather die than suffer this sort of humiliation.

"Teresia!" The face of the Bloodridge Sovereign sank as he watched this happen. He said angrily, "Linley has already sworn an oath by the Overgods. In addition, the information you received came on a piece of ordinary paper, rather than through an Overgod decree. You intend to search through all five of his interspatial rings? Once word of this spreads, hmph!"

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, began to worry. "Although Linley said that he will let me search, he meant for me to kill him, then search. He's clearly forcing my hand. It wouldn't be an issue if I found those nine soul pearls; I would be proven right. But if I kill him and don't find them…then I would have unjustly accused him! Once this news spreads out, I would truly lose face."

Teresia was hesitating.

"Sovereign, if you want to investigate, then please do so. I, Linley, have something to attend to. I can't accompany you any longer." Linley said solemnly. "As for that 'Molde' you mentioned, Sovereigns, not long ago, I killed his most powerful divine clone! He clearly came up with this

information so as to unjustly accuse me. If you don't plan to investigate any further, Sovereign, then I'm going to go find Molde. Hmph, I didn't 'pull up grass by the roots' and exterminate all his clones; I didn't expect he would repay me by doing this."

Teresia frowned.

Right. In the palace of the Bloodridge Sovereign, he had learned that Linley had killed Molde's most powerful divine clone.

The Bloodridge Sovereign sent secretly, "Teresia, you need to pay more attention to your status. You are a Sovereign! Given what has happened, are you still going to insist on investigating?"

"Boson, are you going to stop me? By the looks of things, it seems you are standing on Linley's side." Teresia sent back.

"I'm not the one stopping you. Let me tell you something. The Redbud Sovereign, she asked me to take good care of Linley." The Bloodridge Sovereign sent back. "In addition, based on what I know, Linley was in the Planar Battlefield not long ago and just recently returned. Where would he have acquired an Overgod talisman from? This information is clearly false. Even if an Overgod talisman exists, Linley isn't necessarily the one carrying it. And let's say that there really is one, and Linley really is the one carrying it! What, do you want to try and fight over the Overgod talisman?"

"What, why can't I?" Teresia sent back.

"I know that you are a Paragon in your Laws. But you are simply a Lesser Sovereign. Later, when the storm comes…you should know that in each of the past six missions, it was a Chief Sovereign who succeeded. Over the course of the Overgod mission, Sovereigns fell. You truly want to get involved?"

Teresia hesitated.

"In addition, this news is completely false." The Bloodridge Sovereign sent.

“If it was true, how could it be that there was no hint of it before this? How could there be such a coincidence, that we just so happened to be the first to learn of it? How could there be such a coincidence, that the news was sent over by Molde? Who just coincidentally happened to have had one of his clones killed by Linley? And Linley…he’s a Paragon, yet would rather die than hand it over? Do you really think this is possible? Overgod talismans are useless to him!”

Teresia was convinced.

“Linley has a relationship with the Redbud Sovereign?” Teresia sent back.

Teresia was just a Lesser Sovereign, while the Redbud Sovereign was an Intermediate Sovereign. More importantly, the Redbud Sovereign was birthed from the Amethyst Mountains, and was the first Amethyst Godbeast. She was countless times more powerful than Reisgem. Even Teresia was somewhat afraid of the Redbud Sovereign.

“Of course he does. You can ask around. Linley specializes in using her Amethyst Space. The Amethyst Space technique is the supreme technique of the Redbud Sovereign.” The Bloodridge Sovereign sent back.

The Bloodridge Sovereign was right there. There was no way Teresia would be allowed to act against Linley.

In addition, the preponderance of the evidence and facts available indicated that the news was false!

He, Teresia, had the exalted status of Sovereign. He couldn’t embarrass himself like this.

Teresia swept Linley with his slitted gaze, then said calmly, “Since you’ve sworn an oath, I naturally believe you.” He swept his gaze past the interspatial rings belonging to Linley’s five clones, and then, with a flicker, he suddenly disappeared from Linley’s field of vision, his movements far faster than what a Paragon-level expert like Linley was capable of.

“Is this a Sovereign’s speed? No wonder it is said that a Paragon facing a Sovereign isn’t able to fight back at all.” Linley felt secretly astonished.

“Thank you, Sovereign.” Linley bowed towards the Bloodridge Sovereign in front of him, showing his gratitude.

“Heh heh…” The Bloodridge Sovereign let out a calm chuckle. “Linley, your Four Divine Beasts clan resides within my Bloodridge Continent, and Beirut is my Emissary. The relationship between you and Beirut is not a shallow one. And, you are in the right in this matter. Of course I should protect you. If you have some time in the future, you can pay a visit to my Bloodridge Island. Bloodridge Island is in the Cloudlink Mountains.”

“Yes, Sovereign.” Linley said gratefully.

“Are you planning to go kill Molde?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

“Yes.” Linley nodded. “This Molde tried to scheme against me. How can I spare him?”

It was Molde who had acquired an Overgod talisman. Molde hadn’t publicly announced that he had acquired it, and now, he was trying to use it to scheme against Linley, and even mentioned some ‘Overgod decree’. He was quite insidious.

“No need. You can head straight back to the Skyrite Mountains.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

Linley was stunned.

What? The Sovereign was going to stop him?

Based on Linley’s understanding, Sovereigns generally wouldn’t interfere in battles between Deities. Over the course of countless years, quite a large number of Sovereign’s Emissaries had perished.

“Given his current level of strength, Molde is no longer qualified to be my

Emissary.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed calmly. “More importantly, it now seems as though Molde lied to me and deceived me. Hmph!” The Bloodridge Sovereign’s face sank. To deceive a Sovereign…that was punishable by death!

Within city of Lucliffe, close to the Skymount Mountains. Within a secluded courtyard.

“Everything has been prepared. All I need to do is wait for news of Linley’s death.” Molde sat there in the garden, quite anxious.

Although he felt 90% certain that Linley would die, he was still worried. Worried that somehow Linley would be lucky enough to survive this tribulation, then come for revenge. Thus, he no longer dared to return to his estate, instead coming to this city. Killing was forbidden within the limits of a city! This was the rule the Sovereigns had established! Even Paragons wouldn’t dare to violate it.

Suddenly…

A terrifyingly powerful aura suddenly appeared within the garden, and then an inky black energy began to gather, forming into a silver-haired man.

“Sovereign.” Molde, seeing this, was terrified and instantly knelt down.

This was a body formed from energy into the shape of the Bloodridge Sovereign. The Bloodridge Sovereign’s own body was ten million kilometers away, but through divine sense, he was still able to form an energy clone. The energy clones of a Sovereign were more than enough to kill the vast majority of Highgods. But of course…it wasn’t enough to kill a Highgod Paragon.

This was the reason why that Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, had to make his true body hasten to Linley’s location.

“You dared to deceive me.” The Bloodridge Sovereign gave Molde a calm look.

“Swish!” A dark, red, illusory arrow suddenly shot out from the energy clone’s forehead.

“No, I…” Molde, seeing the situation, wanted to say something, but the dark red arrow shot into his body, and then his eyes grew dim. He fell, never to rise again.

“Clang!” The Sovereign artifact, that armor, fell out.

The energy clone picked up the Sovereign armor, then transformed into a ray of light, leaving the city.

Yes, it was forbidden to fight in cities.

But that was a rule made by the Sovereigns! Sovereigns weren’t prevented from killing people.

A black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform was flying at high speed within Indigo Prefecture.

“Boss, just now, I was worried to death.” Bebe began to laugh. “Right, Boss, what did the Sovereign want you for?”

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but think of those nine soul pearls.

There was no Sovereign nearby right now. With a thought, Linley sent his divine sense into the interspatial ring, in search of those nine soul pearls.

Within that lifeless region.

A faint green aura surrounded the crown, which was adorned with nine soul pearls.

“This…this…the nine soul pearls…that tattered crown…?” Linley was completely stupefied.

Chapter 17 – Too Hot to Handle

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 17, Too Hot to Handle

Within the metallic lifeform. Because of Bebe's words, Linley used his divine sense to investigate the nine soul pearls within his interspatial ring. But what Linley saw was something he had never even imagined…those nine soul pearls had actually fused with that tattered crown. That crown was currently glowing with a faint aura that swirled around it. It was no longer broken and tattered looking.

Seeing this, a look of astonishment appeared on Linley's face.

"Boss, what is it?" Bebe, seeing this, couldn't help but ask.

"Nothing." Linley hurriedly reclaimed his equanimity and laughed, while at the same time he spoke spiritually with Bebe. "Bebe, those nine soul pearls are connected to something very important. That Sovereign who came earlier came for the sake of those nine soul pearls. From now onwards, no matter what, don't discuss those nine soul pearls with anyone. Even after we return to the Skyrite Mountains, don't discuss it."

Bebe had endured countless trials by Linley's side. He knew a grave situation when he saw one, and he hurriedly spoke back through their spiritual bond, "Don't worry, Boss."

"Olivier, Diana, Deia." Linley looked towards Olivier's group of three, then said through divine sense, "From today onwards, you must completely forget about those nine soul pearls. Understand? If you ever mention them, you will definitely cause a storm of blood. I will probably suffer for it, while you, as people with some inside knowledge, will probably be seized and questioned."

Linley didn't even dare imagine how many people would suffer once they became connected to the nine soul pearls.

Aside from Molde, only Olivier's family of three and Bebe knew that Linley had acquired the nine soul pearls. Once this news leaked out, Olivier, Bebe, and the other two would definitely be pursued.

"The nine soul pearls?" Olivier didn't ask anything further as he sent back, "Don't worry. We'll act as though we never saw anything."

"Don't worry, Uncle Linley." Deia said as well.

Olivier and Diana were both Highgods. They knew how important this matter was. Deia was an adult now as well, and as he saw it, for someone like Linley, an invincible Paragon, to say such a thing meant that this definitely was a serious matter.

"Molde should be dead now, so as long as you don't tell anyone, in the future, there shouldn't be any major issues. Even if there are, at most it would involve me." Linley sent. He understood that although that Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, had departed, that didn't mean the other Sovereigns wouldn't suspect anything.

Linley frowned while pondering to himself. "Molde most likely didn't just spread this news to just one or two Sovereigns. It took me less than a year to go from the Skymount Prefecture to Indigo Prefecture. The Bloodridge Sovereign and that Sovereign of Wind were both fast, but most likely the other Sovereigns haven't received this information yet. But shortly afterwards, they will learn it. They will come looking for me…"

As long as he had to deal with it by himself, it would be fine.

He was a Soul Mutate Highgod with the power of Will. Sovereigns wouldn't be able to hypnotize him.

But Olivier, Deia, and the others…they were different. It was best to separate them from this matter early on.

Skyrite Mountains. Linley's residence.

Reynolds was seated on the ground. He was lying against a tree, holding a book in his hands, while Yale and George were seated facing each other.

“Third Bro is too studious when it comes to training. As soon as he returned, he immediately went into closed-door training. Not even his original body is resting. Given his current level, why is he training so frantically?” Reynolds sat there on the ground, his gaze on his book while he mumbled aloud. “His original body and his four divine clones…he should leave at least one of them to accompany his bros in chatting. He can tell us about his journey, but he didn’t even chat with us. He went straight into closed-door training.”

George shook his head, giving Reynolds, seated on the ground, a sideways glance. He laughed, “Fourth Bro, can it be that you believe that if Third Bro was as lazy as you, he would have been able to reach his current level? No matter how talented you are, you still have to work hard.”

“I understand.” Reynolds replied, and then he suddenly saw the distant Bebe. He hurriedly called out towards him, “Hey, Bebe, c’mere.”

“I’m busy. I’ll come later.” Bebe quickly ran away.

Bebe flew down the stairs, and as he did, the corridor grew cold and dark.

Soon, Bebe arrived at a private room.

“Creaaaak.” The stone door was pushed open. Linley was there, seated in the meditative position within that stone room, his long hair hanging loosely. Linley opened his eyes and glanced at Bebe, then laughed and nodded. “Bebe, sit.”

The stone door was shut.

Bebe looked at Linley, puzzled. “Boss, something you need?”

“Bebe.” Linley spoke to him through their spiritual link. “Previously, you

asked me about the nine soul pearls, right? I'll tell you now, but our conversation must be through our spiritual link. This is because…I can't be sure if there is currently a Sovereign using his divine sense to monitor me!"

Linley was unable to detect the divine sense of a Sovereign, which was why, to be safe, Linley didn't dare to bring out the crown a single time.

"But of course, it is still early on. Most likely, most Sovereigns don't know about this. Thus, the chance that we are currently being investigated is quite low. Nonetheless, to be safe, we need to be vigilant." After having experienced that last trial, Linley didn't want to rely on luck alone.

"It seems this is a serious problem." Bebe's eyes lit up as he sent back.

"It is indeed quite serious. Those nine soul pearls are an Overgod talisman. That's something even Sovereigns want. But, I can't hand it over, because once I hand over those nine soul pearls, the Sovereigns will definitely keep asking me for an 'Overgod decree'. Handing them over would just cause a disaster! Right now, the most important thing is to hide those nine soul pearls."

Linley had pondered over this for a long time. Although he had quite a few good ideas, in the end, he chose one which required Bebe's help.

"Boss, tell me." Bebe sent back.

Linley said aloud, "Bebe, you need to eat divine sparks, right? This interspatial ring has more than enough within." As he spoke, he took out an interspatial ring and gave it to Bebe. While he said those things aloud, he simultaneously said mentally through divine sense, "Bebe, the Overgod talisman is inside this ring. I can't open it up. What you need to do is to swallow the ring. You should now be able to make godspark weapons, right? Hide this ring inside of a godspark weapon and fuse it into it. I trust you are able to do this."

"Don't worry, Boss. I am currently making a godspark artifact." Bebe was completely confident.

When Bebe had just become a Highgod, he wasn't able to forge godspark weapons.

But it had been more than a thousand years. After having eaten so many divine sparks, Bebe already had the power to forge godspark weapons.

"In a bit, I'll swallow this ring into my stomach, but I won't digest it. I'll cover it with a godspark weapon. Heh heh, a godspark weapon…even Sovereigns aren't able to see through them and see what is inside them. Even if a Sovereign comes to investigate us, how would the Sovereign end up suspecting my godspark weapons?" Bebe was completely confident.

"Even if he wanted to search, he would probably search me first." Linley sent back with a faint smile.

Items like Overgod talismans, to Deities, were quite dangerous.

Because of the trick Molde had played, Linley didn't dare to hand over the nine soul pearls at all. If he didn't hand it over, it wouldn't be so bad; most likely, the Sovereigns would believe that Molde was trying to harm Linley. But if he handed them over…it would be strange if the Sovereigns didn't then demand Linley hand over the Overgod decree as well. If Linley handed over the 'tattered crown', the Sovereigns probably would go mad and most likely suspect Linley to be in possession of all three items.

By then, Linley would be at the heart of a vortex of battles between Sovereigns.

"If they aren't able to find it on me, the Sovereigns will probably give up. Unless a Sovereign was absolutely certain that the Overgod talisman exists…only then would they frantically search for it." Linley was very confident, because based on the information, he could tell…that the Sovereigns didn't know whether or not the news about the Overgod talismans was true or not.

Perhaps the Overgods hadn't even issued a mission.

Linley's predictions were correct. This matter wasn't finished. Molde was dead, but the 100 soldiers he had sent out didn't know that. They still hastened to places throughout the Infernal Realm.

The Starmist Sea was fairly close to the Bloodridge Continent.

Starmist Sea. Deep within the sea.

A nine storied tower. The farther down one went, the more space it took up. This nine storied tower that was located deep within the Starmist Sea took up a hundred kilometers, and was nearly five thousand meters high. The nine storied tower was completely, pitch-black, but the outside layer was faintly glowing with light, keeping the water of the sea at bay.

Within the nine storied tower, at the main gates. Two horned warriors were there, standing guard.

Within the tower. The first floor. Within the eastern hall.

At the front of the hall, there was a throne glowing with illusory light. The figure atop the throne seemed so blurry, but the awe-inspiring, heart-shaking aura which manifested from this man caused a violet-robed man at the back of hall to kneel in terror, not even daring to raise his head.

"Sovereign." The violet-robed man knelt down before the throne. "Your subordinate just received this news, and then I rushed over here, not even daring to look back."

"Sovereign." The violet-robed man knelt there on the floor of the hall. "Your subordinate received some news. There is word regarding an Overgod talisman."

"Overgod talisman?"

A deep, hoarse voice echoed forth.

Instantly, that black piece of paper flew towards the figure seated upon the throne, pausing momentarily before the throne. And then, the piece of paper began to burn before transforming into ashes

“It was actually an ordinary piece of paper that contained this news? Laughable.” The hoarse voice rang out. “Where did you hear this news from?

“Sovereign, a Highgod delivered it to us. When I saw it, I immediately found that Highgod and began to interrogate him. At first, the Highgod insisted that he gained it by accident and wanted to offer it to me. But I didn’t believe it and intensified the questioning. In the end, I learned that this news came from Lord Prefect ‘Molde’ of Skymount Prefecture, of the Bloodridge Continent. He was the one who sent this person here. I didn’t dare to ponder this, and instead immediately came to report it to you.”

“A Lord Prefect of the Bloodridge Prefecture?”

The Sovereign, seated on his throne, pondered silently for a moment. “You did very well. Alright, then, you can leave now.”

“Yes, Sovereign.” After hearing the words, ‘you did very well’, the violet-robed man’s eyes flashed with delight as he immediately left.

“This news didn’t come on an Overgod decree. The chances that this is real is rather low, but for the Lord Prefect to dare act in such a way, perhaps… there really might be a chance.” That blurry figure immediately vanished, disappearing from the throne.

The bloody sunlight shone down upon the Skyrite Mountains.

The carvings of the Four Divine Beasts clan within the Skyrite Mountains all appeared so eye-catching. There were people visible everywhere throughout the mountains.

“Whoosh!”

A blurry human figure suddenly appeared before the Skyrite Mountains, seeming to have just teleported here. This man was dressed in a dark violet robe, which had stars embroidered atop of it. His long, deep violet hair hanged loosely to his shoulders. His features were almost devilishly handsome, but there was a very fine, small horn in his forehead.

This new arrival swept the Skyrite Mountains with his gaze, then revealed a hint of a smile. “Those four divine beasts died. I didn’t imagine that their progeny would produce a Paragon.”

And then, with another movement, he once more disappeared.

In the air above Linley’s estate. That dark-violet robed man once more appeared out of nowhere.

“Who is this?” Reynolds, upon seeing someone suddenly appear out of nowhere in the air above him, was badly startled.

The guards surrounding this empty space were all stunned as well. Before they even noticed it, someone had appeared above them. In addition, there had been quite a few people staring into the skies. The person seemed to have teleported here, as he had appeared immediately.

“Who is this?” Yale sent mentally, stunned. “I…I can’t see him clearly. He seems to be completely wrapped in a layer of fog.”

“I can’t tell either.” Bebe also mumbled, astonished.

This figure descended, landing on the ground. He calmly released his aura, making it so that everyone nearby did not dare to approach him.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!” Two figures charged out from the main hall.

“Greetings, Sovereign.” The two figures simultaneously bowed.

“Linley…Beirut…” The newcomer glanced at him with his violet pupils. “Let’s chat inside the room.” As he spoke, his body flickered, then vanished

from that location. His speed was countless times faster than that of a Highgod Paragon.

Linley and Beirut exchanged a glance.

“Linley, your predictions were quite accurate.” Beirut sent with a laugh.

“It was easy to understand. Only, I didn’t imagine that someone would come so fast.” Linley sent with a sigh. “Lord Beirut, which Sovereign is this?”

“The Starmist Sovereign! He’s the one who controls the Starmist Sea. In terms of power, amongst the seven Sovereigns of Destruction, he is only weaker than the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. He is far more powerful than that Sovereign of Wind who came last time. Come, let’s go inside.” Beirut sent, and then Linley and Beirut immediately stepped into the main hall.

Chapter 18 – Joke

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 18, Joke

Within the main hall. All the outsiders had departed.

The Starmist Sovereign was seated on his throne, and his dark, violet gaze landed upon Linley. "Linley, based on what I know, you have acquired an Overgod talisman, the 'nine soul pearls', as well as the 'Overgod decree' which describes these three items. The Overgod talisman and Overgod decree are useless to you. You had best hand them over directly to me. Of course, I will not make you hand them over for nothing."

"Forgive me, Sovereign." Linley bowed as he spoke. "I do not possess the Overgod talisman or the Overgod decree."

"Rumble…"

A gloomy, cold, black aura that didn't contain a hint of light wafted out from the Starmist Sovereign's body. It instantly filled the entire main hall. Linley only felt his body grow cold, and his legs were even turning soft. He felt like he had back then, when he was an infant and seeing the 'Black Dragon', a magical beast of the ninth rank, for the first time.

The difference between Deities and Sovereigns was simply too vast!

"Sovereign." The nearby Beirut said hurriedly. "Can it be that you are unaware that a Sovereign of Wind and the Bloodridge Sovereign have already sought Linley? Linley has already sworn an oath by the Overgod of Fate, and the Bloodridge Sovereign himself testified that this was nothing more than a trap intended to harm Linley."

"Boson and the others came as well?" The Starmist Sovereign's gaze fell upon Beirut.

“Yes, Sovereign.” Beirut hurriedly explained. “This news was transmitted by the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture, ‘Molde’. Just prior to this, Linley killed his most powerful divine clone. Molde was unable to take revenge, and so he came up with this idea. Otherwise, how could there be such a coincidence, that right after Linley killed his most powerful divine clone, he would immediately receive information about this Overgod talisman?”

“Molde…” The Starmist Sovereign knew that this information did indeed come from someone named Molde. “Does he want to die?” That low voice contained a hint of anger.

“Molde probably wanted to take revenge against Linley, even if it cost him his own life.” Beirut said hurriedly. “After losing his most powerful divine clone, Molde was no longer worth anything. But Linley is a Highgod Paragon. The difference between the two is simply too great. For Molde to be willing to trade his crippled life for Linley’s life…it makes sense.”

“Where is Molde?” The Starmist Sovereign said coldly.

“He has already been executed by the Bloodridge Sovereign.” Beirut explained. “Both the Sovereign of Wind, Lord Teresia, and the Bloodridge Sovereign were angered by this. Linley wanted to go pursue and kill Molde, but Molde was the Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign, after all. In the end, it was the Bloodridge Sovereign who personally killed him.”

The Starmist Sovereign was silent, and he stared at Linley.

Linley felt tremendous pressure from this Sovereign’s gaze.

Suddenly…

The Starmist Sovereign frowned as he looked towards the main hall’s door. A blurry figure suddenly took shape, transforming into the appearance of the Bloodridge Sovereign.

“Boson, you came?” The Starmist Sovereign said.

The Bloodridge Sovereign smiled, then bowed slightly. Laughing while walking over, he said, “Of course I came. You came to my territory; how could I not come to accompany you? Shinji [Xing’yi]. It seems as though the Overgod talisman truly is quite alluring. Previously, Teresia also chased after Linley and wanted to force Linley to hand it over. Linley had no other choice but to swear an oath by the Overgods.”

And then, the Bloodridge Sovereign sat down as well.

The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed as he looked at Linley and Beirut. “Don’t worry. The Starmist Sovereign isn’t like that madman, Teresia.”

“Enough.” The Starmist Sovereign couldn’t help but glance sideways at the Bloodridge Sovereign. “Since Linley has already sworn by the Overgods, and with you bearing witness on his behalf…I trust what you have said. But Boson…your Emissary, ‘Molde’, actually dared to falsely generate news like this? There are only waves when the wind blows; I imagine that the Overgods might have truly issued a mission.”

The Bloodridge Sovereign nodded. “It makes sense. But if there really was such a mission, we have to at least see one of the three Overgod talismans, right? The most important thing is the Overgod decree. The Overgod decree described the requirements of the mission, but the information on the decree was clearly altered. This is because even if there is an Overgod mission, there is no way the Overgod decree would have information on who is carrying one of the talismans.”

The Starmist Sovereign nodded.

Suddenly…

“Rumble…” The Starmist Sovereign’s terrifying divine sense suddenly swept out…

“Shinji, why did you use your divine sense to cover the entire Infernal Realm?” The Bloodridge Sovereign said, surprised.

Hearing this, Linley felt his heart shudder. Cover the entire Infernal Realm? The distance one's divine sense could reach was related to the strength of one's soul and the power of one's Will. Linley was only able to stretch to eight million kilometers or so, and that was because his spiritual energy was especially strong. But Sovereigns? They were able to cover the entire Infernal Realm.

One could imagine how much stronger the Will of Sovereigns was, compared to his own Will.

No wonder once a Sovereign came in person to deal with a Paragon, that Paragon would have to die. Unless, of course, the Paragon had already fled and avoided encountering the Sovereign, instead fleeing into a material plane.

"Naturally, we have to discuss this matter with the other Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm. Otherwise, every ten years or every few centuries, another one of them will arrive. And we don't know for sure whether or not this news is real or not." The Starmist Sovereign said calmly.

Linley's heart lurched. "A discussion with every single Sovereign of the Infernal Realm?"

The distant Redbud Continent, the eastern Jadefloat Continent, the vast Chaotic Sea…

The Sovereigns, scattered across the distant lands, were now all connected through divine sense.

"Shinji, why have you reached out to everyone?" Deep in the distant Chaotic Sea, an incredibly powerful presence spoke, with the voice echoing in the minds of every single Sovereign present."

"Chief, I have reached out to everyone because news has spread within the Infernal Realm regarding Overgod talismans. Soon, you will all learn of this, which is why I thought it best to reach out to you all directly to discuss

this.” The Starmist Sovereign’s voice echoed in the minds of the other Sovereigns as well.

Sovereigns were capable of covering the entire plane with their divine sense. There was no need for them to gather together to converse at all.

“Overgod talisman?” A cry of surprise and delight. This voice came from the Sovereign of the Muja Continent.

“The Overgods have issued another mission?”

“What is the mission?”

Multiple voices echoed out in succession.

But of course, only Sovereigns were able to hear this. Even Linley and the others weren’t able to hear it.

“Hmph. This news originated from that Emissary of Boson’s.” The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, spoke out. The Four Higher Planes, including the Infernal Realm, were all far larger than the other Divine Planes, which was why many other Sovereigns lived here as well.

The Infernal Realm wasn’t restricted to just the Sovereigns of Destruction.

For example, there might be one or two Sovereigns of Wind, Earth, or Fire living here. And thus, the Sovereigns currently engaging in this discussion included those of other elements as well.

“Everyone.” The Bloodridge Sovereign immediately spoke out. “I am very sorry. This news truly did originate from an Emissary under my control, ‘Molde’. Based on my investigations, he wanted to gain revenge after his most powerful divine clone was killed by a Paragon, and so he came up with this lie. Teresia and I have already looked into this. This indeed is nothing more than a joke.”

“Who is the Paragon?” A clear voice echoed in each Sovereign’s mind.

“His name is Linley, the Paragon of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Teresia’s voice rang out.

“Linley?” A soft, graceful voice rang out. This voice originated from the powerful figure who resided within the Amethyst Mountains. “Linley and I have a bit of a connection to each other. He has only been training for a few thousand years, but he is indeed a genius; he has already reached the level of Paragon.”

“Paragon?”

“He became a Paragon after just a few thousand years? Impossible!!!”

“I also am aware of someone named Linley who has become a Paragon. I was watching during the final battle of the Planar Wars. He defeated Magnus. But, I had no idea that he had been training for just a few thousand years.”

One voice after another rang out from locations spread throughout the vast Infernal Realm. The Sovereigns chatted amongst themselves, all of them quite stunned.

After all, even most of the Sovereigns had yet to become Paragons. Most Sovereigns were powerful lifeforms that were formed by the natural world shortly after the universe was created. The reason they were able to become Sovereigns was a matter of luck and power; it had almost nothing to do with whether or not they were able to become Paragons.

In their hearts, quite a few Sovereigns felt admiration for those who were able to become Paragons.

After all, becoming a Paragon was completely related with one’s abilities, while becoming a Sovereign was more a matter of luck and fortune.

“Linley just returned a short time ago from the Planar Wars. Perhaps he had a grudge against that person named Molde, and so he killed Molde’s most

powerful divine clone. Molde didn't have the power to get revenge, and so he came up with this idea." This was the Redbud Sovereign's judgment. "Linley spent only a few thousand years to become a Paragon, and the Overgod talismans are useless to him. I imagine that he wouldn't be so stupid as to try and hide the Overgod talismans."

"True." The Bloodridge Sovereign's voice rang out. "Linley, before Teresia, swore an oath. Teresia, am I right?"

Teresia's voice didn't immediately ring out in response. Only after some time did he reply, "Yes. Linley swore an oath by the Overgods that before I told him about this, he knew nothing at all regarding the Overgod talismans."

"I need to tell you one more thing, everyone." The Bloodridge Sovereign concluded. "This news came on a sheet of ordinary paper, not an Overgod decree."

"No Overgod decree? Why are we even discussing this?"

"Without an Overgod decree present, even if an Overgod talisman was placed in front of us, we probably wouldn't be able to ascertain if it is an Overgod talisman or not. The natural world can give birth to some unique items as well."

Quite a few Sovereigns chatted about this, clearly believing this to be nothing more than a joke.

Teresia's voice rang out. "But this piece of paper did describe three items."

"Only the descriptions on an Overgod decree can be truly believed. Teresia…what, just based on your power, you want to get involved as well? Even if an Overgod truly issues a mission, given your strength, I imagine if you get involved, the end result will simply be that you will fall." A deep voice echoed forth from the powerful figure located in the distant Karol Continent.

Teresia fell silent.

This was because the Sovereign who said that was far more powerful than him.

“That Molde, he truly was daring.” This voice came from the Chaotic Sea. “However, for him to dare make such a claim means that while it may be true that he wanted to get revenge against Linley, even at the cost of his life…he might truly have received some information and might truly have seen the Overgod decree. Forget it. For now, let’s not pay attention to this matter. Only when the Overgod decree appears in the world will there be proof that the Overgods have truly issued a mission.”

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s words were effective. As soon as his words came out, the other Sovereigns no longer said anything.

Within the main hall of Linley’s estate. Linley just stood there to one side quietly. He knew that the Sovereigns were currently engaging in a conversation through divine sense.

“They are scattered throughout the Infernal Realm, and yet able to instantly chat amongst each other with divine sense. Truly terrifying.” Linley sighed to himself.

Suddenly…

The Starmist Sovereign rose to his feet, and Linley hurriedly turned his attention towards him. The Starmist Sovereign glanced sideways at Linley, a rare hint of a smile on his face. “You become a Paragon after just a few thousand years? Linley…this is utterly inconceivable. Excellent, excellent.” After speaking, the Starmist Sovereign disappeared.

Only now did Linley let out a sigh of relief.

“How did he know that I became a ‘Paragon’ after a few thousand years?” Linley was puzzled.

Very few people, even amongst the Four Divine Beasts clan, knew how long he had been training for. Only a few people he was on particularly good terms with, such as Reisgem, knew this.

“Haha, a Paragon after only a few thousand years.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed as he looked at Linley. “This news came from the Redbud Sovereign. Linley, I imagine that within a short period of time, the Sovereigns of the various major planes will all know this. Alright, this affair of yours is now concluded. You don’t have to worry about more Sovereigns coming to search for you.”

“Thank you, Sovereign.” Linley bowed as he spoke gratefully.

Linley knew that the Bloodridge Sovereign was clearly standing on his side, and had most likely spoken out on his behalf as the other Sovereigns had discussed this. Without this Sovereign helping out, most likely, other Sovereigns would have come to make trouble for him long ago.

“You can leave for now. There’s something I wish to discuss with Beirut.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

“Yes.” Linley immediately retreated, leaving behind only Beirut and the Bloodridge Sovereign in the main hall.

Chapter 19 – Parchment

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 19, Parchment

Linley walked out of the main hall, then walked past the corridor to arrive at the empty grassy area.

He took a deep breath, feeling the gentle wind blow against him. A smile appeared on Linley's face, as though he had been released of a heavy burden. "Molde actually struck such a blow at me before dying. It really did cause endless problems. However, now that the various Sovereigns have discussed it, this matter should come to an end. Unless that third talisman appears, or the Overgod decree appears!"

"Boss!" Bebe ran over, surprised and delighted.

"Father." Taylor, Sasha, and the others all walked over from far away as well.

Linley looked at his family and friends. "No matter what, the Overgod talisman is something which will attract the interest of Sovereigns. Because of the news Molde spread, the Sovereigns have all come to make trouble for me. But they shouldn't be so shameless as to go pressure my family." Since ancient days to the present days, there had never been, as far as Linley was aware of, a case of a Sovereign going to go apply pressure to the family members of a Deity.

"Boss, everything fine?" Bebe walked before Linley.

"Bebe, look at Third Bro's face. You should know just looking at him." Yale laughed.

"Where is my Grandpa Beirut? He's in the main hall by himself?" Bebe said, confused.

“He’s discussing something secret with the Bloodridge Sovereign.” Linley said.

Bebe and Yale were all shocked. Bebe said, “The Bloodridge Sovereign came as well?” Nobody else had seen the Bloodridge Sovereign arrive, because the Bloodridge Sovereign had directly created an energy clone within the main hall. Thus, the people outside had no idea.

“Your Grandpa Beirut is coming.” Linley laughed as he spoke to Bebe. Beirut was currently walking out of the main hall, a smile on his face.

After coming out, Beirut locked his gaze upon Linley, then walked over.

“Grandpa.” Bebe went to welcome him.

Beirut laughed as he rubbed Bebe’s head, then looked at Linley. Laughing, he said, “Everything is resolved, Linley. I have some business to attend to. I’ll leave now.” After speaking, Beirut then actually spoke to Linley through divine sense. “Linley, remember, regardless of whether or not you acquired those nine soul pearls, do not admit it. If you acquired it, make sure you hide it safely.”

Beirut’s divine sense caused Linley to be badly startled.

“Lord Beirut?” Linley sent back in surprise. Linley felt gratitude towards Beirut, and also viewed Beirut as he would an elder member of his own family.

Beirut had that smile on his face, but his mental message was solemn. “Don’t worry about anything else. If you didn’t acquire it, that’s fine, but if you did, you have to hide it. Don’t admit it, even if someone threatens to kill you! As long as you do that, you’ll be fine.” After sending his message, Beirut chortled as he said a few words to everyone, then left on his own.

Linley watched as Beirut left, the puzzlement in his heart becoming all the stronger.

“What did Lord Beirut intend by these words? He shouldn’t know that I have the Overgod talisman, but his words…” Linley didn’t understand.

Time flowed on.

In the blink of an eye, a century passed.

In the past hundred years, Linley had used his divine water clone to relax and accompany his family members, while his other three divine clones, along with his original body, focused painstakingly on their training. He had long since begun to train in the sixth profound mystery in the Elemental Laws of Fire, but unfortunately, this sixth profound mystery was the most mysterious, most powerful ‘Explosion’ profound mystery. Linley’s training speed was thus exceedingly slow.

The Profound Mysteries of Explosion…they were like the explosion of a volcano. A large amount of power would be collected, then instantly released. Its power was tremendous.

For example, Bluefire was able to move about as though he were teleporting, and his soul attacks and material attacks could be described as supreme. This had to do with the Profound Mysteries of Explosion. Although profound mysteries were easily described, once one advanced deeper into them and tried to completely master them, they would become incredibly difficult to understand.

His training in the Elemental Laws of Fire was slow.

But the path of fusing the Laws of the four elements was even slower. The Profound Mysteries of Circular Softness of the Laws of Water and the Throbbing Pulse of the World of the Laws of the Earth were fused, but Linley’s speed dropped drastically after that. He wasn’t able to make any advances at all.

“Whoooosh.”

The wind howled. Snowflakes covered the skies.

The Skyrite Mountains seemed to be dressed in a layer of silver finery, appearing so dreamlike and beautiful. The number of patrolling guards around the Four Divine Beasts clan had dropped dramatically as well. This was because they now had a Paragon guarding them. Who would dare come make trouble for them? Naturally, there was no need to have so many guards standing about on alert.

The Skyrite Mountains. Dragon Avenue. A few sparse gatherings of guards could still be seen here.

A metallic lifeform, shaped like an enormous hammer, was flying over from far away. It came to a halt outside the perimeter of the Skyrite Mountains and the domain of the Four Divine Beasts clan, then vanished, revealing a tall, large figure. This person was 2.5 meters tall. He was dressed in long black trousers, while his upper body was covered with nothing more than a tunic, revealing his muscular arms.

His red hair was only an inch in length, but appeared as hard as nails.

“Who is it?” One squad of the guards of the Azure Dragon clan flew over.

The muscular man laughed and said, “Go inform your Elder Linley that his old friend, Mosi, has come.” This voice was very soft, and was quite comfortable to listen to. It didn’t appear the slightest bit brash or uncouth.

Those guards all looked at each other.

An old friend of Elder Linley’s? They, too, could tell that this newcomer had a remarkable aura.

“Please wait a moment. I will go make the report.” One of the guards said, then immediately turned and flew towards the Skyrite Mountains.

“Who is Mosi? Have you heard of him?”

“By the looks of it, he should be a powerful expert. A friend of Elder

Linley's…he should be a commander or a Lord Prefect level expert."

Those guards all secretly chatted through divine sense regarding this big fellow in front of them. There had been countless experts who had come to visit Linley in recent years, and these guards all knew…that none of these guests were people the likes of them could offend. Thus, the guards were all quite well-behaved to those who came to see Linley.

A long time later.

"Haha, Mosi!" Laughter rang out as two figures flew over from far away.

Mosi took a close look, then laughed as well. "Linley, long time no see."

The two were Linley and that earlier patrol guard. Linley, upon learning that Mosi had come, hurriedly went in person to welcome him. Laughing, he said, "Long time no see indeed. Mr. Mosi, come, let's chat inside." Mosi immediately advanced with Linley, shoulder-to-shoulder, through Dragon Avenue. Together, they flew deeper into the mountains.

"It has been two thousand years since we met, but I never would have imagined that you, who had been only a God, would have become a Paragon. Upon hearing this news, I didn't dare believe it." Mosi chortled. "Only after this was verified to me by my Sovereign did I believe it. I truly admire you."

Mosi was an extremely powerful Purgatory Commander of the Infernal Realm.

Linley had only learned some time later, from Beirut's materials, how powerful Mosi was!

Mosi himself trained in the Edicts of Destruction and the Edicts of Death. In addition, he had reached an exceedingly, terrifyingly powerful level in both these Edicts. As far as the Edicts of Death went, Mosi himself was very nearly at the very peak of perfection, just a tiny step away from becoming a Paragon. Mosi was able to easily mentally dominate Seven Star

Fiends!

The number of people capable of doing this in the Infernal Realm could be counted on one hand.

Even if Linley truly did become a Paragon in the Laws of the Earth, he wouldn't be able to accomplish this. After all, each Law had its own specialties; experts of the Edicts of Death were skilled in the soul.

As for 'Destruction', because Mosi was of the Bloodrune Titan lineage, he was innately gifted in Destruction. In the past, Mosi had used a hammer to effortlessly defeat and send feeling 'Lomio', someone who was very nearly at the Asura level. And that was with Mosi not having used his supreme technique!

He was very nearly at the peak of perfection in both material and spiritual attacks.

It could be said that aside from Paragons, Mosi was invincible. No wonder, in the past, the Bloodrune Titan clan was able to effortlessly set up 'Miluo Island' and develop it into a city which none dared to cause trouble for. What could you do? How could any ordinary Lord Prefects be a match for Mosi?

"I only managed to make my breakthrough due to luck, and it nearly cost me my life." Linley said with a calm laugh.

"I, too, dream of becoming a Paragon. But this last step…there's nothing I can do about it." Mosi shook his head and laughed.

While laughing and chatting, the two entered Linley's residence. Because Mosi wasn't too familiar with the others, Linley gave a simple introduction of the more important members of the residence, then led Mosi into the living room. Mosi and Linley began to chat privately.

Mosi was a very smooth speaker, and as they chatted and laughed, he made Linley's opinion of him grow.

“Linley, after having chatted with you for so long, I almost forgot about the reason why I came here today.” Mosi said with a smile.

“Oh? What is it?” Linley said, surprised.

He had thought Mosi had come to reminisce with him. But now, it seemed, there was a special reason for the trip.

“Look at this.” Mosi waved his hand, and a sheet of black paper appeared. “This was sent to me by a Highgod warrior. Upon seeing this news, I immediately had a bad feeling! I felt as though someone is trying to harm you, which is why I dominated that Highgod. Only then did I learn that this was all arranged by Molde.”

Linley’s eyes lit up. “This is the paper which Molde sent to be delivered?” Linley hurriedly accepted it.

Linley wanted very much to learn what this piece of paper described. Back then, he had asked Beirut, but unfortunately, Beirut didn’t have a copy of it either. Molde had only sent his subordinates to the other six regions. As for the Bloodridge Continent…he didn’t give it to any other Lord Prefects or commanders.

“The information on this paper is clearly meant to kill you. That is why I immediately hurried over to deliver it.” Mosi said solemnly.

It would have taken quite some time for that Highgod warrior to travel from the Bloodridge Continent to Miluo Island, and then more time for Mosi to hurry over. One could understand why so much time had passed.

Linley carefully read through the information on this paper.

“Three talismans…the nine soul pearls, the pentametal crown, and the red caltrop diamond. These three Overgod talismans will join together into the ‘Crown of Life’?” Linley’s eyes lit up. “Once these three talismans fuse together and the Crown of Life forms, one can then offer it to the Overgod

of Life and make a request of the Overgod of Life."

That was the most important bit of information included on the paper.

At the same time, it also included descriptions of these three Overgod talismans.

"So that tattered crown was this so-called 'pentametal crown'? Three talismans…I already have two of them." Linley rejoiced in his heart. "Now, I only lack for one thing. The red caltrop diamond."

The red caltrop diamond was a blood-red, caltrop-shaped diamond.

As for what special power it had, this piece of paper didn't say.

This piece of paper also said that the Overgod decree which had information about these three talismans, as well as the nine soul pearls (the first of the Overgod talismans), were in the hands of Linley, of the Four Divine Beasts clan of the Indigo Prefecture!

"I've never seen the Overgod decree." Linley mused to himself. "But of the three talismans, I already have two of them. If I were to acquire the third, then I would be able to make a request of the Overgod of Life."

"Make a request of the Overgod of Life?" Linley couldn't help but mumble to himself.

Suddenly…

"Bang!"

A light suddenly flashed in Linley's mind, and his eyes lit up.

Mosi, by Linley's side, couldn't help but laugh at Linley's shock. "I know a little bit regarding the Overgod missions. Over the course of countless years, the Overgods have issued several missions. I also seem to recollect that each time a Sovereign succeeded, the Sovereign requested an 'Overgod

artifact', which the Overgods agreed to provide."

The Overgods would satisfy any request.

"The Overgod of Life is the manifestation of the Edicts of Life, which control the lives and destinies of the countless living creatures of the universe! The Sovereigns aren't able to save Grandpa Doehring, but it is very possible that the Overgod of Life is." Linley still clearly remembered what the Chief Sovereign of Death had said to him.

Once a person's soul is scattered and dispersed, Sovereigns would be unable to rescue them.

Overgods?

Although she wasn't sure, the Overgods, being the personifications of the Edicts, were simply too powerful. Perhaps they would be able to.

"Grandpa Doehring…" Countless scenes flashed past Linley's mind.

On that day, a white-bearded, white-haired old man had flown out from his ring…

On that day, that bearded old man had guided him, a youth, into the Straight Chisel School of sculpting, allowing the youth to rise dramatically in power…

On that day, the bearded old man had given up his own life to execute a forbidden-level spell…

"Grandpa Doehring…" Linley, who had reached the very peak of power, felt his heart trembling. "As long as I am able to find the three talismans, I can make a request of the Overgod of Life. Now, I only lack for one thing. Just one thing! Grandpa Doehring, I, I will definitely bring you back to life. Definitely."

Linley's heart was aflame. His hopes were blazing!

Chapter 20 – After A Millennium, An Astonishing Change!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 20, After A Millennium, An Astonishing Change!

Many years ago, the Bloodridge Sovereign had executed Molde in the city of Lucliffe, within the Skymount Prefecture.

That disturbance had naturally drawn the attention of the governor of Lucliffe City, as well as many Highgods. But the Bloodridge Sovereign had only ordered the city governor to pay no attention to the matter. In addition, the Bloodridge Sovereign had completely disintegrated Molde's body. Given that the Sovereign had issued an order…naturally, no one in Lucliffe City dared to get any further involved in this matter.

And so, this matter came to an end.

Molde had been afraid that Linley would pursue and kill him, which was why he had privately snuck out and hidden himself within Lucliffe City. He had rented an estate there. Even after he had died, the soldiers of Skymount Prefecture naturally still believed that he was still perfectly fine and alive.

Skymount Prefecture. Molde's former estate. Many soldiers were stationed here.

The Blood Sun hung high in the sky. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning flashed through the skies, then halted in the air above the Lord Prefect's manor, transforming into a human figure. This person stood there in midair, his waist ramrod straight. Although he was a bit thin, a dominating aura wafted out from him. His head was covered with long black hair which casually undulated in the breeze, falling all the way to his waist.

On his back was a single warblade.

This person was the expert Linley had met in the Starmist Sea – Lomio. In the past, Lomio had had the terrifying power of a near-Asura level expert.

“This is the Lord Prefect’s residence. Hurry and depart.” A large number of prefectural soldiers flew over, with the leader shouting angrily towards Lomio.

Lomio actively spread out his aura, remaining in the air above the Lord Prefect’s estate. He was clearly acting in a provocative manner.

Lomio swept the people beneath him with his gaze, then said calmly, “From today onwards, I, Lomio Bornesen, am the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture!” His voice echoed out like thunder, reverberating in the skies. The hundreds of thousands of soldiers stationed nearby, as well as some tribes located farther away, all heard his words clearly.

“Impudence!” An emaciated old man dressed in a black robe barked out in anger. “The Lord Prefect of our Skymount Prefecture is Lord Molde. If you wish to be the Lord Prefect, then you must follow the rules. First become a Seven Star Fiend, then issue the challenge.”

The prefectural soldiers below were all angered as well.

Could a person become a Lord Prefect just because he said he was? To simply appear above the Lord Prefect’s residence and declare one’s self the Lord Prefect? This was utterly laughable.

“Rumble…”

A thick, black, terrifying surge of energy descended from the heavens, causing the prefectural soldiers below to be astonished. One of the soldiers in particular, that emaciated elder dressed in black robes, stared with a changed look on his face. “So much Sovereign power…”

And then, the Sovereign power that filled the heavens coalesced into an enormous face that was tens of meter high.

“Whooosh…”

The terrifying presence of a Sovereign.

“Sovereign.” All of the prefectural soldiers landed on the ground, kneeling and trembling.

“Sovereign.” Lomio landed on the ground and knelt as well.

“The previous Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture, Molde, committed a capital offense and has been executed. From today onwards, the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture shall be this ‘Lomio’ who stands before you.” A voice like thunder which rang in every person’s ears and mind. The aura and presence of the Sovereign pressed down on the terrified prefectural soldiers, and not a single one of them dared to raise their heads.

And then, that giant face, tens of meters high, suddenly vanished. The world once more returned to normal.

Only now did the prefectural soldiers dare to raise their heads. Upon seeing that the Sovereign had departed, they rose to their feet.

“We pay our respects to you, Lord Prefect.” The more nimble-minded of them hurriedly fell to one knee, paying their respects to Lomio.

“We pay our respect to you, Lord Prefect!” Instantly, the hundreds of thousands of other soldiers also fell down to one knee and called out in unison.

Lomio’s sharp, cold gaze swept across all of them, but a hint of a smile came unbidden to his face. After so many years of painstaking training, he had finally become a Lord Prefect. He was now one of the 108 Asuras of the Infernal Realm.

However, Lomio had been assigned to this position by the Sovereign. He hadn’t acquired it through the usual way of defeating the previous Lord Prefect, then assuming the position. Thus…quite naturally, many people

weren't convinced of Lomio's power. One could imagine how, in the future, quite a few Seven Star Fiends would come challenge him.

"Come, then. The more, the merrier." Lomio's eyes were shining.

The Infernal Realm. The Karol Continent. A black, dragon-shaped metallic lifeform was flying above it.

"The Lord Prefect actually died! Didn't that make our trip pointless?" Within the metallic lifeform, there were fifteen Highgods gathered together.

The ones who had gone to send the information to the Starmist Sea had made the trip in a fairly short period of time, but not a single group of the Highgod soldiers who had been sent to the Karol Continent had arrived yet. Actually, of the hundred Highgods, during the past century, only forty or so had successfully delivered the news. The others, especially those assigned to more distant locations, naturally weren't able to make it in time.

Only after Lomio had arrived and then released the hundred divine clones of that were held hostage within the prefectural manor did these soldiers realize that Molde was dead.

"Molde's dead. There's no reward for us, even if we deliver the message. Brothers, let's go. Time to go home."

"We travelled for a century, but it was all for nothing."

These soldiers clearly seemed quite disgruntled.

"Hey, how about we sell this news off? This information is still fairly important. If we sell it to the intelligence agents of the Fiend Castles, we will still receive a high price for it. Molde's dead anyhow. He's unable to kill us for leaking out this information."

"Right. This news is definitely valuable."

"This news even mentions Lord Linley. As I see it, Molde intended to harm

Lord Linley." These soldiers didn't believe this news to be real.

Soon, those soldiers who had made a trip for nothing and who would never receive Molde's promised reward came to a decision. They would sell off this astonishing information to the Fiend Castles. The Fiend Castles had many different departments; escort, assassination, treasure-hunting…and of course, they also bought intelligence reports and information.

After the Fiend Castles purchased this information, those soldiers who no longer feared Molde's reprisals also informed the Fiend Castles that it was Molde who had instructed them to deliver this news to the various Lord Prefects and Sovereign's Emissaries.

After acquiring this information, the Fiend Castles would naturally sell it off at a high price to the interested experts. Naturally, this news was quickly made known to the other experts of the Infernal Realm.

The vast majority of experts believed that Molde was trying to harm Linley.

But there were a few who believed it, and so they filled the lands in search of the three talismans, so as to be able to offer them to the Sovereigns and thus be rewarded.

Of course, this news also quickly made its way to the ears of the Sovereigns as well. But after the previous conference, the Sovereigns no longer paid much heed to this. And yet, at the same time…the Sovereigns were rather irritated. How could this sort of information be spread all over the place in such a manner? The Sovereigns instantly gave the order for the Fiend Castles to no longer sell this information.

And yet…

Since this information had already been publicized, the order of the Sovereigns came too late to do any good.

This didn't have any impact on Linley. Linley's life was still as tranquil and peaceful as ever. However, the many descendants Linley had brought over

from the Yulan Plane, after having spent centuries in the Infernal Realm, were beginning to grow restless.

The Infernal Realm had too many experts.

Most of the descendants of the Baruch clan were merely Saints. After the Ancestral Baptism, they became Demigods. In the Infernal Realm, the only thing they could do was be abused.

By relying on the power of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the descendants of the Baruch clan from the Yulan continent were able to wander around a few of the cities of the Infernal Realm. However, they found life to be boring, and many still decided to return to the Yulan continent. Linley didn't stop them, and by relying on the Sovereign's insignia, he was able to send a group of them back.

In the blink of an eye, a thousand years had passed since Mosi had delivered him that information.

A thousand years, to Deities, wasn't much.

During these thousand years, Linley had advanced quite a bit in his four Laws. He had managed to begin fusing the Throbbing Pulse of the World and the 'Dimensional Attack' profound mysteries of the Laws of the Wind. In fact, he was halfway through fusing them. He had also begun to fuse the 'Dimensional Attack' mystery and the 'Circular Softness' mystery of the water. Only, he had yet to completely master either of these two fusions.

As for fire…

His training speed in fire truly was slow, and the more he trained, the slower it went. He had spent a thousand years after mastering the first five profound mysteries of the Laws of Fire, and had spent that entire time training in the Profound Mysteries of Explosion, and yet still hadn't mastered it.

The Skyrite Mountains. Linley's estate.

Beneath a thick, gnarled, twisted willow tree that was within a courtyard. This green willow tree had been living for more than eight hundred years, and its myriad branches drooped down and danced about, appearing so beautiful.

“Yale, although you became a Deity through fusing with a divine spark, don’t give up. Perhaps someone who fused with a divine spark also has a chance of fusing profound mysteries. Look at me. I don’t have any confidence in my ability to fuse profound mysteries, and yet…I, Bebe, still ended up fusing two of them, right? Haha.” Bebe’s loud laughter could be heard coming from below the willow tree.

Beneath the willow tree, there was a black wooden table, with three people around it. These three were Bebe, Yale, and Wharton.

“I don’t have such extravagant hopes.” Yale chortled. “Look at me. I’m a Highgod now. Although I reached this level through fusing with divine sparks, the difference between where I am at now and where I was at back at the Ernst Institute is as great as the difference between the heavens and the earth. What’s more, I’ve already reformed the Dawson Conglomerate, and we have a huge pile of descendants. I’m satisfied. Haha, the only thing left for me now is to enjoy life. I’ll occasionally go to some material planes and undergo a few simple adventures. I’m just a Highgod who fused with divine sparks, but in the material planes, I have nothing to fear. And…I even have the ‘Sovereign’s Might’ which Third Bro gave me.

After becoming a Deity, he had gone back to the Yulan continent and lived there for over two centuries.

During the course of those two centuries, Yale had sired nineteen sons and daughters. By relying on the power of the Baruch Empire, he had effortless reconstructed the Dawson Conglomerate. His nineteen sons and daughter had carried on his work, and the Dawson Conglomerate once more flourished. And then, bored, Yale had taken his third wife with him and returned to the Infernal Realm.

But of course, that time, Yale had been quite unlucky; while holding the Sovereign's medallion, he had to go from the Yulan continent to the Infernal realm, then back, eight times in a row before arriving at the Bloodridge Continent.

Teleportation was free for holders of the Sovereign's medallion, after all.

"Yale, Bebe…I wonder how long it will be before I, too, will go to some other material planes for a stroll." Wharton laughed while musing to himself.

Beirut had given Linley a Sovereign's medallion, but hadn't taken it back. Since Linley didn't use it, he let Bebe and Whaton often borrow it.

"Why the rush? Next time, we'll let the Boss take us all together." Bebe said.

Just as they were chatting…

"Rumble…" A surge of rippling power, born from the natural Laws, descended. The location was somewhere within Linley's estate.

Bebe, Wharton, and Yale all immediately rose to their feet.

"That's coming from the place where Third Bro is training…" Yale said hurriedly.

"Haha, the Boss made a breakthrough. The Boss' divine fire clone has finally reached mastery as well." Bebe called out in celebration.

It was exactly as Bebe had said. Linley's divine fire clone had, indeed, made a breakthrough.

Red light was currently bathing the entire room.

The long, brown-haired Linley was currently seated in the meditative position, but next to him floated a Linley with long, fiery red hair. A black

gemstone, covered with fiery red light, was floating above this Linley's head. It was his divine fire spark. Dense amounts of fire-type elemental essences swirled around the divine spark, carrying within them the Laws of the natural world.

Moments later…

"Finally. Success." Linley, seated in the meditative position, opened his eyes. His divine fire clone entered his body.

"My divine fire clone really was far slower than the other clones in training. Fortunately, since my divine fire clone was able to share energy from my other four souls, it slowly transformed as well, making my training speed much faster. Otherwise, I probably wouldn't have broken through and mastered a sixth profound mystery this quickly." Linley rose to his feet, his face wreathed in smiles. "By using three types of divine power, my strength is comparable to when I use Sovereign power. Then with four types…?"

Linley was finally able to begin testing out the feeling of using four fused types of divine power.

His heart was filled with eagerness. His face all smiles, Linley fused his power…and upon doing so, his face froze.

"Crackle…" A bizarre sound rang out from Linley's body, and all the muscles of his body turned taut.

His azure-golden draconic scales suddenly emerged, and spikes appeared on his forehead and his spine. That metallic, whip-like draconic tail trembled and emerged as well, and a terrifying energy roiled about Linley's entire body.

"This…this is utterly unbelievable." Linley's eyes were filled with astonishment.

Chapter 21 – Four Divine Powers Fuse

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 21, Four Divine Powers Fuse

Savage pain wracked Linley's entire body. It felt as though countless little bugs were gnawing away at him. That bone-deep pain was so great that even someone like Linley wasn't able to endure it expressionlessly. All he could do was to grit his teeth and struggle to endure it. At the same time, Linley's divine sense filled each part of his body.

Pure darkness, which didn't contain a hint of anything else.

A dark flood swirled about throughout Linley's body. There was no rhythm or order to it. The large tide of black energy filled every single muscle, every single blood vessel, every single bone. Those specks of black energy seemed to have found their 'home' as they sank into his bones, muscles, and organs, causing every single part of Linley's body to undergo a heaven-shaking transformation.

"Rumble…"

All of his bones were trembling to the point of emitting clattering sounds.

"The fusion of four types of profound power actually results in this pure black color. This black divine power is actually this much more powerful than Sovereign power!" Linley hadn't expected this either.

Prior to this, for Linley, using the fusion of three types of divine power had been comparable to using Sovereign power. But for example, although it was comparable to when Linley used Destruction-type Sovereign power, it was still significantly weaker than when Linley used earth-type Sovereign power.

As Linley saw it, the four-way fusion would result in a tenfold increase in power, making it so that it would only be a few times stronger than when he

used earth-type Sovereign power.

But now that he had actually fused four types of divine power, a remarkable, unique transformation had occurred. Amazingly, it had transformed into this pure black color, and Linley could clearly sense how powerful this black energy was.

Despite the passage of countless years, no person had ever possessed four divine bodies and still successfully undergone a soul mutation!

Linley had succeeded, and thus he was able to fuse four types of divine power.

Earth, fire, water, wind; the fusion of these four types of divine power gave birth to this ‘black divine power’. And it was so powerful as to make Linley tremble.

Suddenly…

The azure-golden scales covering Linley’s body began to be covered with fine lines of black energy. Even his spikes were being covered. The black lines criss-crossed his draconic scales, his spikes, his draconic tail, and even dug deep into his body. Anyone looking at Linley would feel as though Linley’s entire body was covered with a large amount of black runes.

“Rumble…”

The draconic scales on Linley’s body were shuddering. Because the frequency of the shuddering was very high, they emitted a rumbling sound, causing even spatial ripples to occur.

“How could this black divine power have such a bizarre effect?” Although his entire body was wracked with pain, Linley, having trained to the peak of power, was able to maintain complete clarity of thought. He could clearly sense that every part of his entire body was transforming. His muscles were strengthening at an astonishing rate, and his bones were rising in hardness repeatedly.

This terrifying rate of advancement caused even Linley to be terrified.

“According to legend, the ancestor of my Azure Dragon clan, the ‘Azure Dragon’, was able to use Sovereign power to strengthen his body, to the point where it was comparable to a Sovereign artifact. Most likely, this was because water-type Sovereign power and his own water-type divine beast body was a perfect match. As for the fusion of these four types of divine power, they too are strengthening my body. This sort of strengthening feels similar to when one uses divine power to nurture a divine artifact.”

Linley knew a few simple ways by which one could strengthen one’s body.

The fundamental underpinning of strengthening one’s body was simply to allow one’s body to constantly absorb energy and constantly grow strong. But although this was easy to describe, the amount of energy needed was tremendous. How could one completely absorb it? This was difficult. This was partially related to innate abilities; for example, divine beasts like Godeater Rats and Azure Dragons all had their own ways to strengthen their bodies.

Clearly, this fusion of four types of divine power also had the special effect of strengthening one’s body.

When cultivating a divine artifact, what one actually did was to constantly absorb divine power into the artifact, slowly making it harder and sharper. At the same time, one would infuse it with some spiritual energy, so as to slowly give it sentience.

“Eh?” Linley sent his divine sense into his body. He discovered that beneath his skin, a special change was beginning to occur. The same was true for his draconic scales.

“It seems as though this strengthening process should take a fairly long period of time.”

Linley understood that actually, this strengthening process could be

completely guided by the strength of his spiritual energy. If, however, he allowed the fused divine power to strengthen his body as it pleased…what would the results be?

“Father made his breakthrough. Why hasn’t he emerged yet?” Taylor stared at the distant end of the corridor.

Generally speaking, after making a breakthrough, Linley would emerge from his study and walk into the wide, grassy expanse outside. If he were to do so, he would have to pass through this corridor. At this moment, aside from Taylor, others such as Bebe, Reynolds, and Yale were also paying attention to this corridor. Even Delia, along with her daughter ‘Sasha’, was staring at the corridor while chatting.

“Mother, can it be that Father’s breakthrough was not in relation to his divine fire clone?” Sasha said softly.

“It should be his fire clone. Your father’s other three divine clones reached the Highgod level long ago.” Delia frowned as well. “But after making a breakthrough, he should come out.”

Right at this moment…

“Delia.” A clear voice echoed in Delia’s mind.

“Linley, how are you doing?” Delia, surprised and delighted, conversed with him through divine sense.

“I have indeed made a breakthrough, but right now, I am in the process of gaining some insights into strengthening my body and am currently analyzing them. Thus…for now, I won’t come out. Don’t worry about it. As to this breakthrough, it can last anywhere from one year to a few decades, or even a century.” Linley was worried that his friends and family would be concerned, and so sent a message out through divine sense.

“Alright. Focus on your training.” Delia was actually quite happy. After all, Linley hadn’t made many improvements in the past thousand years.

Delia laughed as she looked at everyone present. “Enough, everyone. All of you, hurry up and take care of your own affairs. Linley is still training.”

“He’s still in the midst of training?” Bebe mumbled.

“I was hoping that Third Bro would come out and go on a stroll with us.” Yale stretched lazily, then sat back down, resting his legs atop the table and speaking in a casual manner.

“Do you think Third Bro is as lazy and bored as you?” Reynolds mocked.

But enough of them for now. Linley, in his room, was completely absorbed in the process of his entire body being strengthened. In addition, through his powerful spiritual energy, he was able to guide the process and direction of this strengthening. On the very first day, Linley’s body strengthened to a ridiculous amount, but as time went on, the strengthening speed slowed as well.

Still, although it slowed, that was just in comparison to the first day. In reality, each day, Linley’s body was growing stronger. If others knew how much his body was strengthening by, most likely they would stare with blank gazes.

Nearly ten years silently, soundless passed. During this period of time, Linley’s focus never wavered. He continued to focus on guiding and controlling the strengthening process, and as he did, he discovered better ways for strengthening himself. Slowly, as he tested more method, he managed to develop a body-strengthening method that was suitable for fused divine power and suited for his body.

In the mortal world, there were all sorts of battle-qi manuals.

But in the world of Deities, Deities only focused on analyzing the fundamental underpinnings; the Elemental Laws and the Natural Edicts. Those so-called ‘manuals’, to them, were nothing more than jokes. For example, Linley could come up with any sort of battle-qi manual he

wanted!

Everyone understood this!

Even when it came to strengthening the body, there was no such thing as a secret manual. There were only techniques that were suited to one's self. Only personalized, customized techniques were the best. Different bodies and lineages, different types of energy…they all had matching, effective training methods.

The method that was effective for the Azure Dragon wouldn't necessarily be effective for Linley. After all, the energy within Linley's body was this 'black divine power', formed from four different types of fused divine power, which had never before been seen since the creation of the universe.

"I've more or less mastered this process."

Linley stood up.

At this moment in time, Linley's body was covered with a layer of inky green scales. Actually, given the strengthening process of the black divine power, Linley's draconic scales should be black in color. However, Linley's original draconic scales were azure-golden, and so, after this transformation, they had become this inky green color. Linley's draconic scales had become even denser and even more tightly clustered together.

If one drew close to Linley, one would discover…

That atop Linley's draconic scales, there was an exceedingly thin membrane of translucent muscles. These muscles were created by the flesh beneath Linley's skin, after Linley's draconic scales had been strengthened by his 'black divine power'. However, the muscles were so thin as to be translucent. If one was slightly farther away, one wouldn't be able to notice them at all.

As for the spikes covering Linley's forehead, spine, elbows, and knees… they could be said to have undergone the most dramatic changes.

This was because these spikes, incomparably sharp and hard to begin with, after the strengthening process, had become completely black! In addition, they had slightly shrunk just a little bit in size.

Linley's draconic claws…previously, his fingernails had been both long and sharp. They were retracted now. In Dragonform, Linley's hands were now completely black, and his fingernails just appeared a bit sharp. That was it.

The results of this strengthening process made it appear so that, from the outside, the savagery of the Dragonform had been somewhat reduced.

However, although the appearance was reduced in savagery, the power had increased greatly. The power of his body, compared to before, was much more than a hundred times or even a thousand times stronger!

"However, the greatest increase in power was still this…"

Smiling, Linley stretched out his right hand. Out of nowhere, a black longsword suddenly appeared. This was his godspark weapon. Mirage!

Divine power could be used to nurture a divine artifact. According to legend, Sovereign artifacts were thus formed by Sovereigns nurturing an artifact with Sovereign power. But of course, the creation of a Sovereign artifact also required a Sovereign to infuse it with his Will, which was why they reached such terrifying levels of power.

As for this godspark weapon, 'Mirage', it was made from incredibly powerful materials to begin with.

Most likely, even most Sovereign artifacts, in terms of material quality, were inferior to this godspark weapon. Over the past ten years, Mirage had been constantly nurtured by that black divine power, and it had constantly transformed as well. However, the amount of time needed for a divine artifact to be nurtured was very long.

"Mirage has yet to reach its limit. However, even now, I imagine Mirage

isn't the slightest bit weaker than any Sovereign weapon." Linley had seen Sovereign artifacts before, which was why he was able to make this judgment.

Forget about Mirage; Linley felt that even his Dragonformed body should be close to Sovereign artifacts in power.

"I truly didn't imagine that a four-way fusion of divine power would have this sort of effect." Linley willed his draconic scales to disappear into his body, and then formed a set of inky-jade robes out of energy. Actually, after this strengthening process, Linley's skin and muscles alone were now far stronger than the draconic scales had been in the past, to say nothing of his current Dragonform.

"So four types of divine power, when fused, has this sort of effect. It makes sense…our ancestor, the Azure Dragon, was able to do this. It is only normal that I am also able to strengthen my body."

Linley stretched out his right hand. With but a thought…

"Whooosh!" His hand transformed into a blade, and with a blade-chop, Linley casually swiped his arm forward in accordance with the principles of the 'Dimensional Decapitator'.

"Rumble…" An enormous tear in space occurred.

"After this strengthening process, the power of my body has risen to a terrifying level. Even if I use simple profound mysteries, the power of my attacks is tremendous." Linley finally was able to sense Beirut's advantage for himself! His base power was simply too formidable. Even without needing to use too many profound mysteries, he was still powerful enough to be invincible.

Smiling, Linley pushed open the door to the hall.

Within Linley's estate.

Linley walked out of the corridor, then stared towards the empty earth outside. Only ten or so figures were there.

Wharton, who was chatting casually with others, accidentally noticed Linley from the corner of his eyes. He immediately called out in surprised delight, “Big Bro.” At the same time, he hurriedly ran over. Wharton’s call attracted the attention of many people, and they all immediately ran over to watch, while at the same time engage in an excited chorus of shouts and cries. This caused the people in other rooms or even outside to be attracted over as well.

“Linley.” Delia, delighted, walked over.

“Haha, there should now be no further need for all five of my divine clones to remain in training.” Linley laughed calmly. This strengthening process didn’t just impact Linley’s original body; even his other four divine clones had been strengthened. Actually, although his other four divine clones were unable to Dragonform, their bodies were still incredibly powerful now.

Delia’s eyes couldn’t help but light up. If Linley didn’t stay in meditation, that meant he would have time to accompany her.

“Third Bro, I wanted to go out for a stroll for some time now. We’ve been waiting for you.” Yale chortled as he hugged his wife.

“Right. But Boss, you’ve always been training.” Bebe teased intentionally as well.

Linley began to laugh. “Haha, fine, then I’ll accompany you all on a stroll. However, to tell the truth, there are many places in the Infernal Realm that I haven’t been to. The Infernal Realm has quite a few unique places, you know. Let’s go…let’s wander throughout the entire Infernal Realm, and then go visit the material planes, one by one.”

After having reached the pinnacle of power for Deities, Linley was no longer under any pressure. He was more than happy to accompany his family in wandering the Infernal Realm and the various material planes.

Chapter 22 – Real and Fake

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 22, Real and Fake

Linley, Bebe, Reynolds, Yale, and their relatives had joined into a squad of nearly twenty people. Linley's group thus began their wanderings over the Infernal Realm.

They went to the mysterious depths of Lake Punisi…

They went to Firecrow Mountain, of the Takkak Mountains…

They occasionally made a detour to visit some Purgatory Commanders or Lord Prefects of the Infernal Realm…

However, the Infernal Realm was simply too vast. Despite having journeyed for dozens of years, Linley's group had only managed to travel from the western part of the Bloodridge Continent to the eastern part.

The eastern part of the Bloodridge Continent. Within the Fogmount Prefecture. Fogmount City.

The streets were teeming with people. Linley's group strolled forward while looking about.

Bebe's wife, 'Nisse', made a suggestion. "We've come to adventure in the Infernal Realms, but to be honest, the places with the most unique items are the Blacksand Castles. Let's go pay a visit to the local Blacksand Castle. There definitely will be countless queer items within it." Women loved to shop.

"Blacksand Castle is essentially a black market. It holds more items than the Bloodridge Castle does. Linley, let's go take a look." Delia's eyes lit up as well.

Bebe nodded hurriedly. “Let’s go straight to the Blacksand Castle, Boss, what do you say?”

Laughing, Linley nodded, then led them towards the Blacksand Castle.

The Blacksand Castles scattered throughout the Infernal Realm were all identical. They appeared to be made from flowing black sand. Although the surface of every single Blacksand Castle was covered with flowing black sand, the castles themselves had remained erect for countless years. Linley’s group casually intermingled into the crowds and entered the Blacksand Castle.

The counters of Blacksand Castle were clearly teeming with more people than that of the Bloodridge Castle.

“There’re quite a few little trinkets.” The females all quite happily began to stroll about while purchasing some small trinket.

“The items on this floor are all ordinary merchandise items. Let’s go higher up. The more precious items will be there.” Linley advised.

The first floor of the Blacksand Castle contained items that were worth ten thousand inkstones or less. The items on the second floor were worth a million inkstones or less. As for the third floor, the items there were worth more than a million inkstones. And this was just a general range. Still, Blacksand Castles were most famous for their fourth floors!

The items on the fourth floor were truly rare curios. Some were valuable, others weren’t.

The precious items of the Redbud Castles and Bloodridge Castles were all real items, and thus the prices were clear as well.

But Blacksand Castle was ‘a black market’, after all. First of all, the prices would thus be lower than places like the Bloodridge Castles. And yet, many of the sellers of Blacksand Castle were all private sellers. Blacksand Castle made no guarantee regarding the authenticity of the items within. This was

a matter for the buyer to determine.

Linley's group finally arrived at the fourth floor.

"The countless curios of the fourth floor are divided into costly and cheap items. The most important thing is one's judgment. In addition, one can bargain." Nisse laughed while speaking. "If you end up being tricked into buying a useless item for an astronomical price, all you can do is blame yourself. But if you have a good eye and are able to buy a precious item for a low cost, then you'll have made a fortune."

Linley's interest was roused by Nisse's words.

"Come, let's take a look at what treasures are here." Linley laughed as he walked towards the nearest counter.

"Amusing." Linley looked at many of the items and their listed prices, then secretly laughed. Given Linley's spiritual energy, he was able to gauge the authenticity of these items with fairly good accuracy.

Bebe followed behind Linley as well.

"Hey, Boss, what sort of rock is this rock of yours?" Bebe pointed at a black rock on the counter that was tinged with a hint of blood and which faintly emanated a fiery aura. Linley gave a glance at it. This stone's listed price was five million inkstones, an astonishing price.

The person responsible for this counter was a fairly skinny, white-haired elder who was wearing a felt cap. He gave Bebe a sideways glance with his faint blue eyes, then said coldly, "This stone is tinged with a hint of the blood of the fire-type divine beast, the 'Vermillion Bird' of the legendary Four Divine Beasts."

"Vermillion Bird?" Linley was startled, and then he laughed involuntarily.

If this truly was the blood of the divine beast 'Vermillion Bird', then even five hundred million inkstones would be a low price for it, to say nothing of

five million! In addition, Linley had noticed that although the aura emanating from this stone was strong, there was no way it could compare to that drop of Azure Dragon blood essence he had acquired in the past. The Vermillion Bird and the Azure Dragon were both divine beasts. The aura of their blood should be at the same level.

“Vermillion Bird? Don’t you know that the Vermillion Bird was a Sovereign?” Bebe pursed his lips. “Forget about divine beast Sovereigns; even a drop of blood from ordinary Sovereigns would contain ridiculous levels of power. This rock of yours was probably stained by the blood of an ordinary fire-type divine beast.” Bebe himself was a divine beast, and so naturally he could speak authoritatively on this subject.

The old man gave Bebe a sidelong glance, then said calmly, “The blood long since seeped deep into the stone. Thus, the aura it is emanating is very weak. If you don’t want to believe it, there’s nothing I can do. I’m not begging you to buy it.” The old man was putting on airs.

A weaker person might truly be hoodwinked by him.

“Let’s go.” Linley and Bebe continued onwards to other counters.

“Boss, there really are real and fake items here.” Bebe sighed in amazement while looking at the other items.

“Right.” Suddenly, Linley’s face changed. He saw an item located atop one of the counters, and his gaze focused on it intensely. This was a caltrop-shaped red gem, and it was quite eye-catching to behold.

“A red caltrop diamond? One of the three major talismans, the red caltrop diamond?” Linley was shocked. He felt his head grow dizzy and he looked at it carefully.

Of the three Overgod talismans, Linley had already acquired the ‘pentametal crown’ and the ‘nine soul pearls’; he now only lacked the red caltrop diamond.

“Good sir, are you interested in this red caltrop diamond?” The young, bald, silver-eyed caretaker of this counter laughed while speaking.

“I am interested.” Linley saw the price right away; a billion inkstones!

“A billion inkstones? You really dare to list a price like this?” Bebe, seeing this, let out a cry of surprise. A decent estate within a city was only a billion inkstones or so. Bebe weighed the bald, silver-eyed youth appraisingly, then snickered, “Tell me, what sort of treasure is this, that you value it at a billion inkstones?”

Linley had seen the black parchment, but Bebe had not. Thus, Bebe didn’t know about the red caltrop diamond.

The bald, silver-haired youth let out a low laugh. “The two of you, have you heard of the Overgod missions? One of them was to collect three talismans, which are the pentametal crown, nine soul pearls, and this red caltrop diamond. Although I dare not say that this is definitely the legendary red caltrop diamond, but look; this diamond definitely wasn’t man-made. There is a chance that it is the legendary Overgod talisman.”

“If it truly is a red caltrop diamond, why wouldn’t you offer it to the Sovereigns?” Bebe pursed his lips.

Linley laughed while looking at the youth as well.

“I’m just an ordinary Highgod. By what right would I ask for an audience with a Sovereign? In addition, I’m not certain as to whether or not it is real either.” The bald, silver-eyed youth said. “If I was certain of it, how could the price be merely a billion inkstones?”

It must be understood that drops of Sovereign’s Might started at a hundred trillion inkstones.

An Overgod talisman, by contrast, would definitely be worth an astronomical sum. No amount of inkstones would be worth more than an Overgod talisman.

“Perhaps this red caltrop diamond of yours truly wasn’t forged by human hands.” Linley said.

“Of course.” The silver-eyed youth said.

“Would you dare allow me to try and give your red caltrop diamond a squeeze? If it doesn’t break, I will buy it. If it breaks, I won’t pay.” Linley pursed his lips, glancing at the silver-eyed youth. Given how powerful Linley’s spiritual energy was, he was able to see through to the corner of the red caltrop diamond long ago, and found that within it, there was a hint of fire-type elemental energy.

The Overgod of Life had issued three talismans. Linley was in possession of two of them.

The pentametal crown carried a surge of energy that was able to heal his wounds. The nine soul pearls were able to protect the soul. They were all Life-aligned.

Thus, this red caltrop diamond before him was definitely fake.

More importantly…

Linley held the pentametal crown, and so he knew the size of the ‘caltrop-shaped setting’. Just based on the size of the setting alone, Linley was completely certain that although the caltrop being sold on the counter was quite similar, it was different; it was slightly larger.

There was nothing for it…

Lord Prefect Molde of Skymount Prefecture had never seen the red caltrop diamond himself either. He had only seen its appearance on the Overgod decree, and thus had drawn it out. It made sense that the size wouldn’t be an exact match.

“No way.” The silver-eyed youth let out a snort. “If you want to buy it, then

buy it. If you don't, then forget it."

"The two of you, stop looking at that 'red caltrop diamond'. I have the pentametal crown here." A voice rang out from nearby.

Hearing these words, Linley couldn't help but laugh involuntarily. He turned his head to look. "You have the pentametal crown?"

"Of course. You decide whether it is the real one or not." The speaker, a gold-haired youth, spoke with confidence.

Linley glanced at it sideways, then he couldn't help but feel astonished.

This pentametal crown was actually identical to his own pentametal crown; even the settings were completely identical! In fact, even the coloration of the pentametal crown was identical. As Linley looked at it, he felt as though he were looking at his own crown.

It must be understood that the scroll only had a picture of the talismans, and so there were some differences between the picture and the real thing. There was no way the colorations could be the same as the real item's colorations.

"This one is fake." Linley laughed calmly.

"Boor [Bu'er], stop trying to cheat people." The seller of the 'red caltrop diamond', that silver-eyed youth, snickered. "This person is clearly an expert. He clearly is quite insightful."

The silver-haired youth snorted.

"A few years ago, when your elder brother was here, he boasted to me about how he had once acquired the pentametal crown. I asked him where it had gone, and he said that while he was heading on a trip to sell some items, he was waylaid by bandits and lost his divine clone. He said that the pentametal crown was in his interspatial ring, which was shattered. And thus, the pentametal crown was lost!" The silver-eyed youth snickered. "I'm willing to boast as well. I can say that I acquired a talisman, then lost it."

“Who told you to believe it?” The golden-haired youth snickered back.

Linley, hearing this, had a sudden thought. He laughed, “I imagine this pentametal crown was made in accordance with the one your elder brother acquired, right?”

The golden-haired youth glanced at Linley in surprise, but didn’t say anything.

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley could tell from the look in the golden-haired youth’s eyes that the youth’s elder brother had indeed acquired the pentametal crown. “Only someone who had previously acquired the pentametal crown would be able to replicate it with such accuracy. Only, he said that the interspatial ring was shattered. How could the pentametal crown then have emerged from chaotic space?”

Linley’s heart trembled.

“Can it be…that after an interspatial ring is shattered, the items within the ring aren’t actually lost; they just return to chaotic space once more?” Linley mused to himself.

Linley’s guess was correct.

Nothing would suddenly appear out of nowhere for no reason.

And nothing would something disappear into nowhere!

No matter where you were, once a spatial tear was created, anything that entered the tear would fall into chaotic space. If an interspatial ring was shattered, the contents of the shattered ring would also be swept into chaotic space. Only, virtually all items would be destroyed by the energy flows of chaotic space.

Only a small minority of items would survive.

For examples, Overgod talismans, the Overgod decree, Sovereign artifacts, divine sparks…even if they were in a shattered interspatial ring, they would simply fall into and be lost in chaotic space, rather than truly disappear.

If items in interspatial rings were truly disappear, then if an Overgod talisman was in an interspatial ring that was destroyed, didn't that mean that the Overgod mission would be uncompletable?

"Boss, there really are quite a few fake items here." Bebe mumbled.

"They are quite numerous. Still…the news about the Overgod missions have spread quite quickly. Even these merchants have begun to take advantage of it to make money." Linley laughed calmly. Linley had been planning to just casually stroll about, but after this latest experience, Linley had another thought.

"I need to do a thorough investigation in the Infernal Realm. Perhaps someone might have found the real red caltrop diamond, then sold it off as merchandise."

Linley understood that given how many fake red caltrop diamonds there were, most likely even if a real red caltrop diamond were to appear, few would believe it.

But Linley had two of the items at hand. He would be able to easily judge if the third was real or not.

Chapter 23 – Red Caltrop Diamond

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 23, Red Caltrop Diamond

As Linley's group was leisurely romping its way through the Infernal Realm in a carefree manner. In the distant Muja Continent. The Goodson [Ke'de'seng] Mountains.

Night descended.

A nameless, mysterious mountain cave within the Goodson Mountains. A sloppy-looking man with long, loose hair was seated in the meditative position. In the darkness of the cave, his terrifying, scarlet eyes could still be seen.

"Allott [A'luo'te], I, Brodie [Bu'luo'di], swear that one day, I will make you die. Make you die!!!" A low growl emanated from the throat of this sloppy-looking man, filled with immeasurable anger. The sloppy-looking man's fists were clenched so hard that they shook.

The sloppy-looking man swallowed his anger, then slammed a fist against the stony ground.

"Crack…" A crack appeared in the ground.

Although Brodie's rage rose to the heavens, he was still cautious. He had set up a Godrealm long ago, making it so that the area within ten meters of him was separated from the outside realm. Even if he shattered rocks and howled here, the outside world wouldn't hear a thing.

"That Allott was a Highgod. How will I take revenge? How will I be able to rescue Vidonica [Wei'duo'ni'ka]?" Brodie's mind was in a state of chaos. In the past, he and his wife Vidonica had been curious about the Infernal Realm, and had entered it, filled with eagerness towards what the future held!

In his material realm, Brodie was without question a supreme expert, because he was a God! In addition, he had two God-level divine clones, and a Saint-level original body!

A God, in a material realm, could be said to be invincible. But once he led his Demigod wife into the Infernal Realm, they were casually tossed aside by the Muja Army's soldiers and thus landed in the Lotte tribe. Brodie dreamed of struggling hard and training while earning some money, so as to go to the cities. After all, life in the tribes was filled with constant danger.

Everything had progressed as he had planned…

But who would have imagined that the leader of the Lotte tribe, Allott, had actually taken a fancy to Brodie's wife, Vidonica, upon seeing her! Without saying anything, he had seized her!

The two, husband and wife, had been together for countless years, and they had arrived together from a material plane. In Brodie's heart, his wife was more important to him than life itself! Although he had heard that some powerful people would forcibly take away some weak women, Brodie had never imagined this would happen to him.

Actually, after one became a Deity, appearances no longer mattered.

Deities could change their appearances. But the nobility and aura that came from the soul was different for each person. Some female Deities looked ordinary on the outside, but had a particular charisma or aura which would attract some experts. If these experts were reasonable, they might slowly woo them. But if the women were to encounter tyrannical, domineering experts, they would simply be taken away.

That year, when Linley, Delia, and Bebe had arrived in the Infernal Realm, others had warned Linley to be careful.

Only…Linley hadn't been as unlucky as Brodie.

“What should I do?” Whenever Brodie thought about his wife had been taken away, he felt so agonized he could go mad.

He had once thought up a way to bring his wife back and rescue her. But his plans…in the face of the tribal leader’s power and forces, they were nothing more than a joke. Afterwards, Brodie had risked his life before escaping. And that was only because the tribal leader, Allott, hadn’t cared about him, a God.

“There is no moonlight today. Everything outside is dark. It is time to head out.” Brodie’s plan was very simple.

He would hurry to a city, then use the meager resources he had accumulated over the years to go take the Fiend trials. Upon becoming a Fiend, he, Brodie, would roam the Infernal Realm and train himself at the edge between life and death!

“There will come the day when I become a true expert and once more return to the Lotte tribe.” Brodie said silently to himself, and then he suddenly moved, exiting the cave like a black shadow and entering the black night, beginning to advance at high speed.

Training at the precipice between life and death, until the point at which he could defeat Allott?

Brodie himself knew that the chances of success were nearly zero! Allott was the leader of a tribe, after all. In terms of strength, he was most likely at the Five Star Fiend or Six Star Fiend level. Brodie was a God. To want to one day be able to defeat Allott? The chances were too low.

Brodie executed the Shadowshape technique, cleaving close to the ground as he constantly advanced. He didn’t dare to make any noise at all, for fear of attracting attention from bandits. He was a God. In a material realm, he was an expert, but in the Infernal Realm…he was like a paper boat that would be overturned and annihilated by the smallest of waves.

Suddenly…

A red light seemed to flash past.

“Eh?” Brodie had been advancing at high speed, but he suddenly halted and frowned as he turned back to look.

“What was that?” Brodie felt his heart clench, and he couldn’t help but draw closer to that faint red light which had just flashed past.

There, hidden within the dry grass, a caltrop shaped red diamond was lying on the ground.

Upon seeing this red caltrop diamond, Brodie felt as though his soul had been mesmerized by it. He couldn’t help but reach out to grab it. Once the red caltrop diamond entered his hand, instantly…a unique energy instantly swept through Brodie’s entire body and soul!

“What a comfortable feeling! It seems as though this power can protect the soul.” No matter how foolish Brodie might be, he instantly understood that he had acquired a treasure just now.

“What sort of a treasure is this?” Brodie felt quite mystified.

He had arrived in the Infernal Realm long ago, and had only stayed in this tribe. He hadn’t even gone into any cities. How could a God like him know about the news regarding the Overgod talismans? And how could he know what the item in his hands was! The only people who knew this information were either Asura level experts or information brokers like the Blacksand Castle merchants.

“My soul seems to have become powerful.” Brodie couldn’t help but feel shocked.

Just as Brodie was feeling stunned by the red caltrop diamond, a figure suddenly flashed past through the skies, then came to a sudden halt. This was a muscular man whose face was covered with green scales. “My luck isn’t bad. I found some prey while on patrol!”

Bandit groups had patrols as well. Most of the patrolling guards had divine clones back at the headquarters; upon finding any prey, their clones would immediately send news back to the headquarters.

“Kid, you grabbed that red diamond. Whatever for?” A snicker rang out from above.

The red diamond was quite clearly visible in the dark night.

However, Brodie was too stunned by the special effect of this red caltrop diamond. After all, he hadn’t lived for too long in the Infernal Realm by himself; he simply wasn’t cautious enough. He hadn’t imagined that a wandering patrol would just so happen to arrive at this moment.

“You…” Brodie lifted his head, and his face changed.

In the darkness, Deities would still be able to see to a certain distance.

“Flee!” Brodie didn’t hesitate at all, transforming into a blur as he fled at high speed.

“Too late.” The patrolling warrior above snickered. He was in no hurry to go kill Brodie alone; instead, he awaited his comrades. The other members of this lair of bandits, under the guidance of the muscular man’s clone, was swarming on this position.

“Haha, kid, you came to our mountain. You think you can just leave whenever you want?” Loud laughter rang out.

Brodie raised his head to look.

“You won’t be able to leave.”

Brodie turned his head to look.

In the blink of an eye, more than ten bandits had surrounded him. Brodie’s

face turned ashen.

“Why. Why did it end up this way?” Brodie was in such pain that he wanted to howl in agony. He had just escaped the tribe, and his scheme of revenge had yet to even begin. And now, he had encountered bandits.

“I…I’m willing to join you.” Brodie said hurriedly.

“You are just a God. One more or one extra makes no difference.” The leader laughed coldly. These dozens of bandits were led by a man in a violet robe, who was a Highgod. This bandit group numbered nearly a thousand in total and had three Highgods. They might be interested in a Highgod, but generally speaking, they couldn’t be bothered about recruiting Gods.

Although they had quite a few people, for just a single one of the three leaders to lead some people over was enough to kill Brodie.

“No, I…” Brodie wanted to say something.

“Brothers, kill him.” The violet-robed figure gave the order calmly.

“Haha…”

“Accept death.”

The bandits were completely confident. Each of them launched their soul attacks or material attacks against Brodie.

“No. No…” Brodie bellowed in rage.

His revenge was incomplete. He had yet to rescue his wife. He wasn’t willing to just die here!

In the Infernal Realm…the number of people like him, who were unwilling to die, who had revenge left unfinished…were beyond number!

“Bang!” “Boom!”

Tens of bandit attacks descended. Brodie frantically dodged, but he was still struck by five material attacks and three soul attacks, which struck his body.

“He’s dead for sure.” The violet-robed man and the other experts all believed this. A Highgod would be able to endure it, but this was a God.

“I?”

Brodie had a look of astonishment on his face. He had been shattered, but in that same instant his body had been shattered, it had quickly reformed at a speed that exceeded the shattering speed. As for the soul attacks…those three attacks only made his soul tremble slightly. The red caltrop diamond contained a unique energy which effortlessly deflected those soul attacks.

This red caltrop diamond was located at the ‘core’ of the Crown of Life.

In terms of power, it was more powerful than the nine soul pearls. As for the pentametal crown, it was the least useful of them all.

When Linley had attacked Molde, those nine soul pearls had allowed Molde to stay alive. How could ordinary bandits kill Brodie?

“Eh?” The bandits were all stupefied.

Brodie lowered his head, looking at the red caltrop diamond in his hands. When he had encountered this earlier crisis, he had thought that the red caltrop diamond had a particular power which was capable of protecting his soul, which was why he was gripping it. But the effects of the red caltrop diamond vastly exceeded his imagination. “I didn’t expect that this treasure would be, would be so powerful.” Brodie’s eyes instantly lit up.

In fact, Brodie now felt as though the entire world was filled with light and color.

“With this, I’ll be able to get revenge. I definitely will!” Brodie was wildly overjoyed.

“What’s going on?” The violet-robed man frowned. “All together, kill him.”

“Yes.”

The bandits, hearing the command of their third leader, immediately charged down and attacked Brodie.

“Die.” Brodie held the red caltrop diamond in one hand and a short dagger in the other, wanting to kill the bandit ahead of him, so as to flee.

“You won’t be able to flee.” The bandits were completely confident as they launched their most powerful attacks.

Brodie completely ignored the enemy attacks, and his dagger split a bandit’s head in twain.

“This kid’s defense is so tough.” The violet-robed man, watching this, frowned, then with a flicker, also joined the fray.

Brodie’s speed was far inferior to this violet-robed man’s.

“Scram!” Brodie forced back yet another bandit. He wanted to break out of and escape from this encirclement, but what he didn’t realize was that a stream of violet light had already appeared in front of him. “God. Too weak.” The violet-robed man murmured to himself. At the same time, his violet glove covered right hand gently smashed down on Brodie’s head.

“Smash!”

Only now, in the instant that he was struck, did Brodie realize what had happened.

“Crackle…” The violet-robed man’s body actually began to tremble.

“Aaaaaaah!!!” The violet-robed man began to howl in agony. In but an instant, the violet-robed man collapsed, completely lifeless.

A Highgod…had died!

“This…what happened to the commander?” The bandits were completely stupefied.

“This diamond…” Brodie felt wild joy in his heart. He himself knew very well what had happened. When the enemy had struck him on his head, the red caltrop diamond had instantly generated a bizarre, freezing pulse of energy that had wildly devoured the enemy’s spiritual energy, instantly draining the enemy’s soul dry and shattering it.

“This diamond harms enemies but not me.” Brodie tested using his spiritual energy to activate the red caltrop diamond, but as he thought, the surge of cold energy once more spread out.

In addition, under Brodie’s guidance, it actually covered his black dagger.

“Haha…” Brodie seemed to have gone insane as he charged against the bandits. All the bandits who were so much as nicked by the dagger or who were touched by Brodie’s body all collapsed, quivered, then died!

In but an instant, aside from five bandits who were so terrified that they immediately turned tail and fled, all of the bandits perished!

“With this diamond…why should I fear Allott?” Brodie was extremely agitated. He glanced at the distant mountain, then moved as fast as lightning, departing at high speed.

Chapter 24 – Status

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 24, Status

Ever since that trip to the Blacksand Castle, where Linley saw the fake 'red caltrop diamond' and 'pentametal crown', he had an additional goal in his mind. While adventuring through the Infernal Realm, every few years, Linley would make a trip to the Fiend Castle while in a city and investigate the intelligence reports regarding the Overgod talismans.

Each investigation cost him ten million inkstones.

This price seemed to be high, but generally speaking, only true experts would be interested in this sort of report, as well as a few powerful Highgod merchants. Ten million inkstones, to such powerful experts and such wealthy merchants, wasn't a very high price.

Jadefloat Continent. Coldcalm Prefecture. Goodhope City.

Linley's group was wandering the streets of Goodhope city. Linley laughed as he glanced at Bebe. "Bebe, Goodhope City is Nisse's old home. Supposedly, her elder brother, Salomon, resides here within Goodhope City, and is in charge of managing the entire city's administrative matters. Now that Nisse has taken Yina to go see Salomon, why don't you go as well?"

"Hmph. Salomon? I can't be bothered to go visit him." Bebe said disdainfully.

"Are you still holding a grudge over what happened that year at the volcano range?" Delia laughed with a wry twist to her lips.

Salomon's behavior back then did, indeed, cause Linley, Delia, and Bebe to cease considering Salomon a friend. Not long after Bebe and Nisse had wed, however, Bebe had accompanied her to meet Salomon.

“Last time I went to see Salomon, it was because I was worried that Nisse would feel unhappy. Unless it is necessary, I can’t be bothered to go see him. I look down on his sort of person.” Bebe said.

“That Salomon is indeed unworthy of befriending.” Yale spoke as well. Yale and Reynolds both knew of some things that had happened in the past.

“Let’s go. The Fiend Castle is up ahead.” Reynolds chuckled.

Everyone knew that upon entering a city, Linley would generally insist on going to the Fiend Castle.

The Fiend Castle was fairly empty, and even in the main hall on the first floor, there were few people present. Linley, in quite a familiar manner, headed straight to the stairway towards the third floor.

“Help me make an investigation into any news regarding the Overgod talismans.” Linley walked to a nearby counter on the third floor, then handed over his Fiend emblem. In the Fiend Castle, whether one wished to accept a mission or to engage in an investigation, one had to first be a Fiend. An ordinary person, even a rich one, wouldn’t be qualified.

“News regarding the Overgod talismans?” The skinny elder with short black hair who stood behind the counter raised his head, glancing sideways at Linley, then snickered, “One Star Fiend. ‘Linley’. You are a merchant?”

The short-haired elder had investigated and realized that Linley was a ‘One Star Fiend’. Naturally, he came to this conclusion.

“No need to concern yourself.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Kid, making a fake Overgod talisman to swindle others won’t be that easy.” The short-haired elder snickered, then pulled out a scroll. “This is the most up-to-date collection of information on the Overgod talismans in the entire Infernal Realm. The price to read it once is ten million inkstones.”

Linley casually tossed out ten fist-sized azurites.

These large azurites were equivalent to a million inkstones.

“When reading through this scroll, if you desire a scryer recording which pertains to something in the scroll, just tell me.” The short-haired elder was quite lazy; he didn’t even bring out the scryer recordings.

Linley didn’t mind, instead flipping through the scroll.

The scroll was divided into sections pertaining to the ‘pentametal crown’, the ‘nine soul pearls’, the ‘red caltrop diamond’, and the ‘Overgod decree’. They were arranged by date. Linley flipped directly to the section on the ‘red caltrop diamond’ and began to read, starting from the latter sections. After all, he had read much of the earlier parts previously.

“While holding the red caltrop diamond, this person’s wounds instantly healed? And there’s a scryer recording?”

“When holding the red caltrop diamond, this person was able to sense the Edicts of Fate and was able to immediately become a Highgod? There’s a scryer recording proving this as well?”

Linley, seeing these reports, couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh.

There were many fake stories.

For example, while holding a fake red caltrop diamond, one might swallow a pill concocted by an expert of the Edicts of Life, then allow others to attack one’s self. At the same time one was being injured, the effects of the pill would activate, and one’s wounds would naturally heal. From the scryer recording, however, it would appear as though it was being done by the fake red caltrop diamond.

“This one is interesting. While holding the red caltrop diamond, one would have an indestructible body. Only, there is no scryer recording.”

Linlgy glanced at the last one, then laughed. “This report is really

ridiculous. While holding the red caltrop diamond, not only does one have an indestructible body, but anyone who touches him will die?" As Linley saw it, the Crown of Life should be a healing, curative item. After all, that was the type of energy held within the pentametal crown as well.

The nine soul pearls were also designed to save others. Linley thus came to the subconscious conclusion that the same was true for the red caltrop diamond.

But he had forgotten…

Experts of the Edicts of Life were able to save others, but also able to harm others. Since the Crown of Life was able to save others, of course it was able to harm others as well.

"Oh, and this doesn't even have a scryer recording. This comes from the Muja Continent? A God who wielded this red caltrop diamond was able to kill a group of Gods and a Highgod? There isn't even a scryer recording. Anyone can make this sort of story up, and there is no way to verify it. Not credible." Linley's gaze swept past it, then he continued to read the reports below.

Only if Linley felt a report to be credible would he bother to see the scryer recordings.

"Hey, are you done yet?" The short-haired elder said with a frown.

"Why are you rushing us?" Yale, not too far away from Linley, couldn't help but snap back as he stared at the short-haired elder.

"I'm just asking you all to hurry up." The short-haired elder glanced sideways at Yale. "Also, this is the Fiend Castle. Don't make a fuss here." The short-haired elder was a Highgod as well. Given that it was forbidden to fight within the castle, generally speaking, this elder didn't treat customers with a great deal of courtesy.

Given that Linley was a One Star Fiend, he would be all the more looked

down upon.

“Don’t be in a rush. Wait a while.” Linley glanced calmly at the short-haired elder, then continued to leaf through the intelligence reports.

Right at this moment, footsteps rang from upstairs, making their way down below.

“Oh, quite a few people have come to buy intelligence reports today.” A gentle voice rang out from far away. Linley turned his head to glance at the speaker, and in total there were three figures walking over. The leader was a gold-haired, blue-eyed middle-aged man, who had two green-robed women following behind him.

The short-haired elder behind the counter, upon seeing this person, was badly startled and hurriedly bowed. “Governor!”

“Sit.” The gold-haired, blue-eyed man laughed calmly. “Right. Give me a report and scryer recordings regarding the various challenges to the Lord Prefects the Infernal Realm has recently seen.” In the Infernal Realm, for Seven Star Fiends to challenge Lord Prefects was a commonplace event.

“Yes, Governor.” The short-haired elder was very meek.

The gold-haired, blue-eyed man glanced at Bebe, then frowned, somewhat puzzled. Then he walked to the counter and accepted the scroll that the short-haired elder handed him, along with the many scryer recording crystal balls that were now on the counter.

At this moment, Linley and the governor were reading shoulder-to-shoulder.

The gold-haired, blue-eyed man glanced at the nearby Linley out of the corner of his eyes. His face suddenly changed, and he cried out in surprise, “Are you Lord Linley?”

“Hrm?” Linley turned to glance at him. “Who are you?” Linley didn’t

recognize this person at all.

“Governor…” The short-haired, skinny elder, upon seeing the governor act so respectfully towards Linley, couldn’t help but say hurriedly, “His name is Linley, but he is only a One Star Fiend.”

“Shut your mouth.” The gold-haired middle-aged man gave an icy glance to the short-haired elder.

“One Star Fiend?” A look of surprise flashed through the gold-haired man’s eyes, then he looked at the Fiend emblem in the short-haired elder’s hands. “Seiya [Sha’ya], hurry up and go exchange that Fiend emblem for a Seven Star Fiend emblem!”

The short-haired elder was shocked.

A One Star Fiend…had just become a Seven Star Fiend?

Based on the rules of the Fiend Castle, one could only be promoted through taking on missions. How could it be changed by a whim?

“Governor…” The green-robed woman behind him, ‘Seiya’, couldn’t help but feel puzzled. The governor of a city’s Fiend Castle was exceedingly strong, true, and an individual at the Seven Star Fiend Level. But that didn’t mean he was qualified to directly hand out Seven Star Fiend emblems.

“Don’t worry. If even the Paragon-level expert, ‘Lord Linley’, isn’t qualified to be a Seven Star Fiend, who in the Infernal Realm would be?” The gold-haired man laughed.

“Oh, you recognize me?” Linley gave him a surprised glance.

The gold-haired man smiled. “Information regarding supreme experts such as Paragons are under the personal control of the governors of the Fiend Castles. I even have detailed information regarding the events of the Planar Wars, and I even have scryer recordings of the several battles you engaged in, Lord Linley, before you became a Paragon. More importantly, I myself

participated in that Planar War, and I saw you, Lord Linley."

Linley was startled.

"But of course, a Seven Star Fiend like myself was nothing more than a captain in the armies. Lord Linley, when you and Lord Magnus were engaging in that great battle, we were all watching. It is only normal for me to recognize you but for you not to recognize me, Lord Linley." The governor laughed.

In the Planar Battlefield, he was nothing more than a simple soldier.

"Just now, when I first saw Lord Bebe, I was startled and felt he looked familiar, but I didn't react in time. I didn't even dare imagine that you, Lord Linley, would be here. But upon seeing you in person, Lord Linley, I came to my senses." The governor laughed while speaking.

Linley couldn't help but chuckle as well.

Intelligence reports were divided into levels. Although Overgod missions sounded important, and should be ranked as top-grade intelligence reports, in reality, there were simply too many fake reports, and so they would naturally be ranked lowly and be managed by ordinary Highgods.

Information regarding Paragons or Sovereigns, or regarding some ancient secrets, however, weren't purchasable with money alone.

"Pa, Paragon?" The short-haired elder stared nervously at Linley.

A One Star Fiend? Was actually one of the legendary, invincible Paragons?

Linley and the governor chatted for a while, then Linley took his Fiend emblem and left. By now, however, he had a new Seven Star Fiend emblem.

"What a pity. There is too much fake information. A few sounded plausible, but they didn't even have scryer recordings." Linley left regretfully.

After Brodie had acquired the red caltrop diamond, given how completely destitute he was, he naturally had taken the interspatial rings of the bandits and their divine sparks as he left. After countless trials, Brodie discovered that as his spiritual energy grew more powerful, the amount of that unique energy he could summon from the red caltrop diamond increased as well.

Thus, Brodie decided to fuse with a divine spark.

He had two divine clones. In order to gain revenge, he was willing to allow one of them to fuse with a divine spark! Rising from God to Highgod, even through fusing with divine sparks, meant that the soul would skyrocket in power.

The Muja Continent. An ordinary tribe. The Lotte tribe!

“Allott, come out!” This bellow echoed throughout the air above the Lotte tribe.

The warriors of the Lotte tribe stared in surprise and terror at the fiendish, godlike figure who stood there in the air. That formerly weak ‘Brodie’ had become so powerful and terrifying upon his return! The corpses currently littering the ground were the results of the earlier battle against him! No one was able to touch Brodie and survive!

“Brodie, you became a Highgod so quickly? I imagine you fused with a divine spark. You didn’t run far away, but instead dared to return? You really are looking for death.”

A figure suddenly floated up into the air above the castle. Dressed completely in black armor, this man’s entire body, including face, was covered. Only a pair of golden yellow eyes could be seen. This was the number one expert of the Lotte tribe, the leader of the tribe…Allott!

“Barriman [Ba’li’man], let’s continue our discussions on cooperating later. I’ll go deal with this punk first.” Allott lowered his head and smiled towards an old man with curly brown hair.

“Chief Allott, feel free to go take care of your internal matters. I’m in no rush.” Old man Barriman laughed calmly.

Allott was very confident, because he was a Six Star Fiend level expert. As he saw it, although Brodie was able to kill many warriors, the reason was primarily because he was a Highgod, and also because…he had probably come up with some sort of unusual attack. But Allott didn’t care about that, because as he saw it, the difference in power between them was too great. There were no tricks Brodie could use.

In battle, one had to rely on true ability. If he, a Six Star Fiend, was unable to kill a Highgod who had just fused with a divine spark, that would be quite bizarre.

“My wife?” Brodie growled.

“Your wife?” Allott laughed. “Your wife is pretty obstinate. She’d rather die than submit. Still, I’m in no rush…I’ll slowly train her. And now…I’ll kill you first.” Allott waved his hand, and a two meter long blood-red giant sickle appeared.

The Six Star Fiend, Allott. The Highgod who had become one through usage of a divine spark, Brodie. They stared at each other in midair.

“I should be able to see Allott’s power in this battle.” The old man with the curly brown hair looked at the two men above the castle, smiling while using the ‘scryer technique’ to record this battle.

Actually, not just him; many of the tribal experts who trained in the Laws of Water were all recording this battle.

“Feel honored to die beneath my supreme technique.” Allott let out a calm laugh, and then his body flashed out in a red arc as that giant red sickle slashed down…

“Slash…”

A giant spatial rift appeared. For a Six Star Fiend to be able to tear a hole in space represented that the strength of his attack power was fairly high amongst Six Star Fiends.

“Hmph.” Brodie just used his black dagger to block it.

“Clang!”

The black dagger was actually shattered.

“Too weak.” Allott laughed disdainfully as the red sickle in his hands chopped towards Brodie’s skull.

“Crackle…”

As the red sickle chopped into Brodie’s skull, Allott suddenly felt his blow become powerless, because the damaged head was actually healing at a rate so rapid that the red sickle wasn’t able to chop any further.

“What, what is going on?” Allott was shocked.

“Die.” Brodie discarded the dagger in his hand, then stretched his hand out, snatching at Allott’s sickle-wielding right hand.

As their hands touched…

“Eh?” Allott felt a terrifying powerful energy ravenously devour at his soul. The devouring power was simply too strong.

“Im…impossible?” Allott frantically tried to resist. “Die.” Allott wildly chopped at Brodie with his sickle, but each blade was only able to leave a scar on Brodie’s body and go no further in. In the blink of an eye, though, even the scar would disappear. It could be said that Brodie…

Had an indestructible body!

“Impossible? Completely impossible?” Allott had never heard of something

like this before.

“You are actually able to endure.” Brodie’s face changed. “This is because my soul is too weak, so the amount of energy I am able to control is too low…”

“Rumble…” The red caltrop diamond emitted a trembling sound, and a bizarre, icy cold green light surged forth, filling Allott’s body. As this surge of icy energy joined as well, Allott was no longer able to resist, and his soul was instantly devoured.

The many tribal warriors below were all stunned.

They just saw a green light flash, and then, Allott died!

“That…that is?”

The face of the curly brown-haired elder, ‘Barriman’ changed. He was an expert on par with Allott, and his divine sense discovered…that the green light was emanating from a red caltrop diamond. “A red caltrop diamond? Can it be…?” Barriman suddenly thought of something he had once heard of. He couldn’t help but feel shocked.

“Swoosh.” Barriman didn’t stay in the tribe any further, immediately, stealthily fleeing.

“Vidonica!” Brodie grew agitated as he excitedly flew towards the castle.

Chapter 25 – A Sudden Shockwave

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 25, A Sudden Shockwave

The hazy light of the Blood Sun seemed to cover the entire Lotte tribe with a layer of bloody gauze.

The entire Lotte tribe was deathly silent!

The battle with Brodie had caused nearly ten percent of the God-level warriors of the tribe to perish. Although this didn't sound like a large number, ten percent represented the lives of hundreds of Gods. Fortunately, this was the Infernal Realm, and everyone was accustomed to slaughter and death. Thus, the Lotte tribe quickly returned to normal, and the former 'number two expert' of the tribe, the escort captain 'Bolan' [Bo'lin], became the new chief.

"I don't understand. How could that kid Brodie have become so powerful? Last time, when he fled the tribe, he was just a God. Even I could've killed him with ease! His strength was quite average. But after ten short years… just ten short years! Inconceivable. How could he have grown so powerful? Just before starting the battle, the chief himself said that Brodie was nothing more than a divine spark Highgod. But the chief, a Six Star Fiend, died to him!

All sorts of discussions were currently going on within the Lotte tribe.

"Some of those dead brothers of ours have some surviving divine clones. They all said that Brodie's body contained an unusual energy that was able to devour souls!"

"I saw it as well. It was a ray of green light which killed the chief! I used the scryer technique to record it down."

"Hey…let me tell you something. I was fairly close to Brodie, and I was

able to find through divine sense the source of that green light. It was a caltrop-shaped red diamond he was holding in his hand. As I see it, the reason Brodie became so strong has to have something to do with that unusual diamond which emanated that green light!"

Brodie had already taken his wife and flown away long ago. This was the reason why these tribesmen now dared to discuss these things.

"I heard that curly brown-haired elder was named 'Barriman', and that he wanted to buy the scryer recordings of Brodie massacring the tribesmen earlier?" A tall, skinny, white-haired youth asked.

"Right. Just yesterday, Lord Barriman returned once more to buy the previous scryer recordings. He was willing to pay a million inkstones for each recording. He really does live up to his reputation as a true expert who even Chief Allott received with sincerity. He really is generous in his actions. Right, tell me, why do you think Lord Barriman purchased the scryer recordings from us?"

"Hmph." The tall, skinny, white-haired youth let out a chuckle. "Doesn't that go without saying? He definitely wants to accumulate enough scryer recordings, the more detailed the better, and then auction them off to the Fiend Castles! Brodie, a Highgod who fused with a divine spark, while holding that unusual diamond, was able to kill a Six Star Fiend. I've never heard of such a terrifying treasure. That diamond definitely is an incredible treasure. For Brodie to have such power when wielding it…if it was a Seven Star Fiend or a Lord Prefect who had the treasure, how mighty would it be? As I see it, Lord Barriman wants to rely on this information to earn a huge fortune."

Few idiots were able to become Deities. The guesses of the tribesmen were correct; the Six Star Fiend, 'Barriman', could be considered an expert in the Infernal Realm. He knew about the Overgod missions, and he understood… that this red diamond might be the legendary Overgod talisman, the 'red caltrop diamond'!

An Overgod talisman! What sort of treasure was this!

But Barriman also knew that whether the Overgod mission was real or false was hard to say. Thus, Barriman collected as much detailed information as he could, totaling tens of scryer recordings, then offered them at a sky-high price to the Fiend Castle! In addition, he actually dared to guarantee that the red caltrop diamond which he, Barriman, had located, was as valuable as a Sovereign artifact, even if it wasn't an Overgod talisman.

The price…

Was one trillion inkstones!

This price, to the Fiend Castles, wasn't worth mentioning. But a fairly wealthy Seven Star Fiend's entire net worth might be only around a trillion inkstones or so. And what's more, it was uncertain as to whether or not the 'Overgod mission' was even real. If he set a price which was too high, the Fiend Castle could simply send its own people to investigate independently.

The deal was made!

The Fiend Castle spent a trillion inkstones and purchased this intelligence report.

The Fiend Castle's staff members verified the report, and then were convinced that the red caltrop diamond which emanated that green light was definitely a unique treasure. All of the Fiend Castles of the Infernal Realm thus received a copy of this report.

The Redbud Continent. The third floor of a city's Fiend Castle.

"What sort of intelligence report do you need?"

The staff member behind the counter said calmly.

"Information regarding the Overgod mission. Ten million inkstones, right?" A silver-haired, cyclopean youth said coldly while handing over ten million inkstones and his Fiend emblem.

The intelligence agent behind the counter verified the Fiend emblem. His attitude instantly became more respectful, and he immediately brought out a scroll and scryer recordings.

After viewing the scryer recordings and the scroll, the silver-haired cyclopean youth turned and prepared to leave. But the staff member suddenly said, “Mr. Sigu, our Fiend Castle just received some information regarding the Overgod talisman, the ‘red caltrop diamond’. This information is absolutely real. The diamond mentioned by the report, even if not an Overgod talisman, is definitely a spiritual treasure comparable to a Sovereign artifact.”

“Oh?” The silver-haired cyclopean youth turned his head suddenly. “Either an Overgod talisman or a treasure comparable to a Sovereign artifact?”

“Right.” The staff member nodded with complete confidence. “This is absolutely true.”

“What is the price of this report?” The silver-haired cyclopean youth said coldly.

“To someone like you, Lord Sigu, the price isn’t that high. Only ninety billion inkstones!” The staff member said with a smile.

This price….caused the silver-haired cyclopean youth to frown as well.

The Fiend Castle was quite clever in setting prices. Ninety billion inkstones meant that the price was within the tens of billions. If they set the price at a hundred billion, that would be on a different level and give people a different type of feeling. The report that they had purchased for a trillion inkstones would thus only have to be sold at ninety billion inkstones for eleven or twelve times in order for them to recoup their investment.

“Fine.” The silver-haired cyclopean youth waved his hand and removed an interspatial ring, then tossed it over. “There are ninety billion inkstones within this.”

“Lord Sigu, please wait a moment. This sort of important report is being carried by the governor himself, who carries it with him. I will ask him to provide it. Please wait.” The staff member was very courteous. Sigu was a Seven Star Fiend.

Generally speaking, the intelligence agents would only recommend this sort of information to someone who reached the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level. Those who were too weak didn’t have the money to buy information of this level.

Moments later, the silver-haired cyclopean youth received the intelligence report.

He flipped through the contents of it while also viewing the dozens of scryer recordings.

“Something which allows a Highgod who fused with divine sparks to defeat a Six Star Fiend?” The silver-haired cyclopean youth was shocked. He didn’t hesitate at all, immediately flying out of the Fiend Castle at high speed.

As a Seven Star Fiend, the silver-haired cyclopean youth instantly raised his speed to the highest limit as he flew towards the Muja Continent!

The Fiend Castles were spread throughout the Infernal Realm. The Infernal Realm had many experts, and quite a few of them were able to purchase this sort of information. Many of them, upon seeing the detailed contents of this report, began to converge towards the Muja Continent. Unfortunately…the Infernal Realm was simply too vast!

It would take too long for people from other continents to hurry to the Muja Continent.

But fortunately, the experts also travelled quite quickly.

Jadefloat Continent. Graceseal City.

Linley's group was leisurely wandering about the city. Afterwards, they habitually arrived at the third floor of the local Fiend Castle, and Linley once more purchased information regarding the Overgod talisman.

Linley flipped through the intelligence report, then turned to leave.

"Lord Linley, I have another set of valuable information regarding the red caltrop diamond in specific." The intelligence agent said hurriedly. After having inspected Linley's Fiend emblem, he already knew that Linley was a Seven Star Fiend.

"Oh, valuable information? Regarding the red caltrop diamond? Why did you separate it from the other related reports?" Linley laughed as he looked at the intelligence agent.

"Boss, the Fiend Castle really knows how to make money." Bebe sighed.

"All businessmen are evil, you know." Yale chortled merrily. Yale had been the manager of the Dawson Conglomerate; he knew quite a bit about business.

The intelligence agent laughed awkwardly, "Lord Linley, ordinary people aren't qualified to view this intelligence report, and the price we paid to acquire it was astronomical as well. We can't operate at a loss, you know. Our Fiend Castle has already verified the information in this report, and we are able to vouch…that this red caltrop diamond, even if it isn't an Overgod talisman, is something comparable to a Sovereign artifact."

"Oh?" Linley's eyes lit up.

"Lord Linley, are you willing to buy it? The price isn't high, just ninety billion inkstones." The intelligence agent said hurriedly.

Ninety billion inkstones, to the current Linley, truly was nothing.

It must be understood that even an ancient clan like Salomon and Nisse's

had hundreds of trillions of inkstones. And the price of a single drop of Sovereign's Might far surpassed a hundred trillion inkstones.

In addition, although the Four Divine Beasts clan which had previously spread its power throughout the greater planes had retreated from those planes, the wealth that they had acquired over the years hadn't declined. Their wealth was truly astronomical. As the number one expert of the current Four Divine Beasts clan, Linley naturally wasn't treated stingily by the Four Divine Beasts clan. They gave him with an interspatial ring filled with wealth. As to how much it held, Linley didn't even try to calculate it.

To the current Linley, wealth didn't mean anything any longer.

"Alright. I will buy this intelligence report." Linley nodded.

"Lord Linley, please wait momentarily. I will immediately go make the request of the Lord Governor." The intelligence agent was overjoyed, and he hurriedly left while speaking.

Linley's group waited momentarily, and as they did, Bebe mentally spoke to Linley. "Boss, the price the Fiend Castle requested is so high, and they hid the report in such a secretive manner. Do you think that the red caltrop diamond they found might really be the Overgod talisman?" Bebe also knew that Linley was in possession of two of them.

"Possibly." Linley nodded.

Although on the surface, he looked calm, in his heart, Linley was unable to repress his excitement and anticipation!

"I already have two of them and only lack a single one. Once the three come together, I can offer them to the Overgod of Life and make a request." Linley knew that he could request an Overgod artifact, and that his request would definitely be granted. But Linley didn't want it. He just wanted Grandpa Doehring to once more appear before him!

Footsteps rang out once more.

Several figures suddenly walked out, with the leader, a handsome, black-robed youth, hurriedly striding forward and bowing upon seeing Linley. “Greetings, Mr. Linley!”

“Governor…” His subordinates, including the intelligence agent, were all stunned.

The power level of the governors of the Fiend Castles were not all the same, but generally speaking, they were at least at the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend level.

“I heard that you wanted to take a look at this report, Mr. Linley. Lord Linley, please feel free. As for the fee? No need to mention it.” The black-robed youth behaved very modestly. Those ordinary staff members of the Fiend Castle, upon inspecting the Fiend emblem, would only take Linley to be a Seven Star Fiend. The governors of the Fiend Castles, however, all knew of Linley’s famous name.

Which of them would dare charge a Paragon-level expert ninety billion inkstones?

“Thank you, then.” Linley laughed calmly as he accepted the intelligence report. He understood that since they insisted on letting him view it for free, if he insisted on paying for it, it would actually make them feel awkward.

“These are scryer recordings pertaining to this intelligence report.” The governor, seeing that they hadn’t been laid out yet, couldn’t help but feel quite excited as he personally placed down one crystal ball after another.

Linley carefully read through the intelligence report, then viewed the scryer recordings.

After gaining a deeper level of understanding…Linley’s heart began to tremble!

“Nine out of ten says this is real! In addition, the size is completely

identical.” Linley was incomparably excited, because the information he just saw from Barriman and the Lotte tribe had come from quite a few people using their divine senses to inspect the red caltrop diamond. These people knew how large the diamond was, and so naturally they had described it. “The size perfectly fits that caltrop-shaped indentation. And the power of it…”

When Linley thought about how he was going to acquire the third talisman and complete his task, he felt incomparably excited.

“Not good.” Linley’s heart trembled. “If I manage to acquire all three Overgod artifacts and the Overgod shows himself, the Sovereigns will definitely know the truth. Perhaps, in their rage, they might come to deal with me!” Linley began to worry.

“Bebe.” Linley sent mentally.

“Yes, Boss?” Bebe was startled.

“Hurry up and lead everyone out from the Jadefloat Continent’s teleportation array. Return to the Yulan continent for now. Afterwards, ask Lord Beirut to help out and arrange for those family and friends of ours who are living in the Skyrite Mountains to immediately return to the Yulan continent.” Linley instructed solemnly.

“Boss, what are you…?” Bebe was shocked.

“I’m just preparing against all possibilities. Given the status Sovereigns have, they probably wouldn’t be so shameless as to vent their anger against my family and friends, but I’m not willing to take that risk. Thus, it’s best to plan things out early.” Linley made his decision quite firmly. “After rescuing Grandpa Doehring, I will immediately return to the Yulan continent! At worst, in the future, I’ll just remain in the Yulan plane and never go to any of the Higher Planes or Divine Planes again.”

Chapter 26 – The Struggle

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 26, The Struggle

"Sovereigns, vent their anger?" Bebe, hearing Linley's words, understood how grave this was.

"Boss, you are a Soul Mutate. There is no need for you to bring all of your divine clones to this battle." Bebe sent mentally.

Linley, hearing this, immediately felt these words made sense. "That's true. I'll just bring my original body and divine wind clone. As for the other three divine clones, they will return to the Yulan Plane." After becoming a Soul Mutate, each of Linley's clones were roughly on par with each other. Aside from his original body, which had a stronger Will, his water, earth, and wind souls were on par, with his fire clone being weaker.

In addition, since he was a Soul Mutate, his divine wind clone could also, for example, use earth-type divine power to attack.

Linley only needed to bring his original body and one divine clone, and he would thus still be able to unleash his maximum power.

"Bebe, give me that godspark weapon you forged." Linley sent mentally.

It must be understood that the other two talismans were hidden within that godspark weapon.

"Boss, it is best if I stay with you here." Bebe sent. "If you were to take this godspark longstaff and leave, others would find it suspicious. After all, Boss, you aren't skilled in using staff-type weapons. But if I hold the weapon, others won't be suspicious."

Linley hesitated momentarily, then agreed.

Prior to this, the plan was to have Bebe lead everyone away, but now his divine clones would naturally play that role. Whether or not Bebe led everyone away no longer matter.

“Fine, that’s what we’ll do! I’ll head out right now.”

Linley’s divine fire, divine water, and divine earth clones merged into one, leading Delia’s group towards the Jadefloat Continent’s teleportation array and returning to the Yulan continent.

As for Linley’s original body, divine wind clone, and Bebe, they departed from the Jadefloat Continent and made haste towards the Muja Continent!

The Jadefloat Continent was located in the eastern part of the Infernal Realm, while the Muja Continent was in the southern part! The distance between the two was far closer than the distance between the Redbud Continent and the Muja Continent.

Given Linley’s current level of power, the speed at which he closed in on the Muja Continent was extremely fast.

“Whoosh!”

A metallic lifeform pressed against the surface of the Starmist Sea, advancing at high speed. Two years had passed since leaving the Fiend Castle.

“Based on the intelligence report we received, eight years have passed since Brodie killed the Lotte tribe’s chief.” Linley frowned. “Eight years…where has Brodie fled to?”

“Boss, do you think Brodie is like you? He’s just a Highgod who fused a divine spark. He won’t be able to make it that far.” Bebe was extremely confident. “The Muja Continent is so vast. Based on the location of that tribe, Brodie definitely hadn’t flown from the Muja Continent yet.”

“That’s not what I’m worried about. It’s…the teleportation arrays!” Linley

said, worried. “The Lotte clan was roughly a billion kilometers away from one of the teleportation arrays of the Muja Continent. A billion kilometers, for a Highgod, even one traveling with his wife….eight years is more than enough to get there.”

“Boss, are you saying…?” Bebe was startled.

“Right. If he paid money to teleport to another plane, then things will be difficult.” Linley was worried about precisely this.

If he teleported away through the transportation arrays, especially to another one of the Divine Planes or Higher Planes, such as the Netherworld, he would be randomly assigned to one of the two teleportation arrays of the Netherworld.

“Uh…” Bebe frowned. “Boss, we heard this news a bit late. Without question, quite a few people learned of this before we did. The Muja Continent has quite a few experts as well, and their movements will have definitely been faster than ours. I imagine that they would have surrounded his region. Brodie wouldn’t be able to flee as easily as he wishes to.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“But Boss.” Bebe suddenly said with a frown. “I’ve discovered a problem. Although I saw Brodie in the scryer recording, I don’t know anything about his aura. However, if Brodie changes his appearance, even if he stands before us, we wouldn’t be able to recognize him.”

Linley let out a resigned laugh.

“I thought of this issue long ago. Indeed, this is the case; we’ve never seen him before! Thus, if he changes his appearance, we wouldn’t recognize him even if he stood right in front of us! But we can do a few things. First, we can go to the Lotte tribe and invite someone who lived there to accompany us. The Lotte tribesmen definitely should recognize Brodie and know his aura. Upon seeing Brodie himself, the tribesmen will definitely know who he is. Secondly, we can wait for others to catch Brodie first. After all, quite

a few people are in pursuit of him, and all of them are quite cunning. They will surely have many methods by which they can spread out their web of influence to catch him."

"That's all we can do." Bebe nodded.

By now, the metallic lifeform had already entered the Muja Continent region. Only, the Lotte tribe was in the center of the Muja Continent.

On the way over, Linley and Bebe travelled for a total of three years. They were now finally nearing one of the cities close to the Lotte tribe. The governor of the Fiend Castle of this city knew who Linley was, and began to immediately and warmly assist him.

"Mr. Linley, during this recent period of time, many experts have come in search of that Brodie. More than a hundred Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends have come to visit our Fiend Castle alone. All of them went to invite members of the Lotte clan to assist, and they also set up their influence webs to search for him on a large scale."

"Have they tracked down Brodie?" Linley asked.

"Three years ago, Brodie made a return trip to the Lotte tribe before departing once more." The bald, silver-robed man said hurriedly.

"Three years ago?" Linley couldn't help but feel a surge of delight.

A Highgod who had fused with a divine spark wouldn't be able to travel too far in three years.

"Aside from that visit three years ago, did no one else find any trace of Brodie during these past three years?" Linley asked.

"Some have. It was just two months ago. A Six Star Fiend found him, but that Brodie was too sly; he managed to escape." The governor laughed while speaking.

Linley nodded slightly. Two months ago? It seemed as though Brodie shouldn't have been able to run too far away.

"Tell me the exact location of the Lotte tribe." Linley said.

"Mr. Linley, how about I personally accompany you on a visit to the Lotte tribe?" The governor was very friendly.

"That won't be necessary." Linley laughed calmly.

After learning the precise address, Linley and Bebe immediately made haste to the Lotte tribe.

In recent years, the Lotte tribe had been visited quite a few times by Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends, who had invited tribesmen to accompany them for a very high price.

"All of them are standing on the mountain, hoping for an expert to take them in search of Brodie. They are all doing this for money." A grim, black-faced old man glanced at the tribesmen who were standing atop the tall mountains. He couldn't help but let out a cold snort.

"The payment those experts offered is exceedingly high. Generally speaking, ten million inkstones or more. Just recently, our chieftain himself received a hundred million inkstones in remuneration. Our chief's divine clone immediately took this wealth to a city to live a peaceful life. If someone were to invite me and give me a hundred million inkstones, I would accept, even if it cost me a divine clone." A round, chubby-faced, adorable-looking youth spoke out eagerly.

Indeed, the lives of many of the tribesmen of the Lotte tribe had changed dramatically.

After all, only a single divine clone was needed for going to recognize a person.

"In your dreams. Do you think that those experts truly don't care about

money?" The black-faced elder snickered. "The vast majority were only given ten million; only a single person was given a hundred million. Kid, you want someone to give you a hundred million? How laughable. Focus on your training. In the end, personal power speaks loudest!"

"Hmph." The chubby-faced youth, upon hearing this, couldn't help but let out a low snort, no longer speaking with the grim elder.

"Whoosh!"

A blur flashed past, and two figures appeared before them.

The round-faced youth and the grim elder were both badly startled. This speed was simply too fast. They carefully looked at the person in front of them. The newcomers were a brown-haired youth and an adorable, skinny youngster.

"You are…?" The grim elder couldn't help but speak in surprise. He had never before seen someone as fast as these two.

Linley swept them with his gaze. Nodding, he said, "Do the two of you recognize Brodie?"

"I do, I do." The round-faced youth immediately came to his senses and called out, "Brodie and I were neighbors for nearly a thousand years."

"Don't listen to him spout rubbish." The grim elder said hurriedly. "That kid just lived with Brodie on the same mountain. Although Brodie and I weren't neighbors, we often met. I would recognize him at a single glance." Although earlier he acted as though everything was beneath him, when opportunity came knocking, the grim elder grew excited as well.

Laughing calmly, Linley nodded. "Fine, then. The two of you, follow me. On this trip, there will be many experts who will be fighting over the treasure, and I will be one of them. I might not be able to protect you two. How about this. If you follow me, each of you will receive five hundred million inkstones."

“Five hundred million inkstones?”

The round-faced youth and the grim elder exchanged glances, then stared around themselves, quite cautious

“There is nobody nearby.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Hey, old fellow, we’re now on the same boat. Don’t go running around bragging wildly. Wait for us to enter the city, then brag.” The round-faced youth sent mentally.

“Don’t worry about me. Worry about yourself.” The grim elder said.

“Prepare to head out.” Linley immediately paid each person five hundred million inkstones. As Linley saw it, to give them five hundred million inkstones wasn’t that much, given that he was causing two Gods to face such danger. But to these low-level denizens of the Infernal Realm, upon acquiring five hundred million inkstones, they would be able to live an extremely comfortable life in the Infernal Realm in the future.

The black, sword-shaped metallic lifeform was advancing at high speed.

“So fast.” The round-faced youth and the grim elder were both quite stunned.

They had both released their divine clones and had them take their newfound wealth and keep it peacefully within the Lotte tribe. They were waiting for their opportunity; for the Lotte tribe’s metallic lifeform to head to a city. Only then would they leave together.

“Boss, according to the intelligence reports of the city, two months ago, Brodie appeared in this region.” Bebe said.

“I know.”

Linley had already completely extended his divine sense, and everything

within eight million kilometers was now within Linley's range of inspection.

"There are no powerful experts nearby." Linley continued to hasten forward.

Given the speed at which Linley was able to control the metallic lifeform, in but a few days, he would be able to completely investigate the hundred million kilometer area surrounding this place. Given Brodie's speed, in two months, he would at most be able to move a hundred million kilometers or so. The other Seven Star Fiends who relied on Sovereign power to investigate, however, would have a far smaller reach than Linley did.

In addition, given how fast Sovereign power leaked out, they wouldn't be able to search for too long.

This made it that these people would find it hard to find Brodie!

However, Linley didn't recognize Brodie either. What he needed to find was a place where many experts were gathering. That would be the place where Brodie was!

"Lord Chegwin, that Brodie fled into these Neville Mountains [Ne'wei'er]."

A dragon-shaped metallic lifeform flew through the skies. There were six individuals within it, with the leader being someone with long green robes, violet lips, and a closed eye-slit in the middle of his forehead. This devilish-looking man was the person who had just barely escaped dying in Linley's hands not long ago; Chegwin!

In the Stellar Corridor of the Planar Battlefield, Linley had killed two people at one go, but Chegwin had been able to escape thanks to his two protective Sovereign artifacts.

"The two of you, lead one of the Lotte tribesmen inside to search for Brodie. No matter what, I must acquire that red caltrop diamond."

“Yes, milord.” The two Seven Star Fiends bowed, then each led a group of people into the Neville Mountains. At the same time, they left behind a divine clone within the metallic lifeform, so as to be able to report back to Chegwin at all times.

Two months had passed. As time had gone on…Brodie, no matter how crafty he was, found that the area in which he could hide in was growing smaller and smaller. By now, the only place left for him was the Neville Mountains!

“Lord Chegwin, I have discovered Brodie. However, there is another Seven Star Fiend who has also located him.” One of the Seven Star Fiend’s divine clones said hurriedly.

“Let’s go.” Chegwin’s eyes lit up and he barked hurriedly.

He immediately collected his metallic lifeform. Chegwin didn’t even pay any attention to those Lotte tribesmen, instead immediately following the Seven Star Fiend’s divine clone to advance forward rapidly.

“Chegwin, where are you rushing towards?” A familiar voice rang out in Chegwin’s mind.

Chegwin turned his head, only to see four figures fly over.

“You…Linley?” Chegwin’s face changed dramatically.

“I discovered quite a few people moving in this direction. It seems as though that darkness-element Highgod being chased is Brodie.” Linley laughed calmly. As soon as his divine sense had located Chegwin, he had immediately hurried over. Given Chegwin’s power…he definitely had a chance to seize Brodie.

Unfortunately…

Linley had arrived!

Chapter 27 – The Critical Point

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 27, The Critical Point

"Lord Chegwin, the struggle going on up ahead for the red caltrop diamond is extremely tight. We need to go there right away." One of the two Seven Star Fiends by Chegwin's side sent frantically to Chegwin.

"Shut your mouth." Chegwin sent back.

Although these two Seven Star Fiends were Chegwin's subordinates, they didn't participate in the last Planar War. Chegwin hadn't told anyone about Linley either, and so these two didn't recognize him.

"I didn't expect that Linley would come as well." Chegwin began to worry. "According to the intelligence reports regarding this red caltrop diamond, it is very likely that this is an Overgod talisman. Even if it isn't, it is a Sovereign artifact level treasure. If I can acquire it, I would offer it to the Chief Sovereign! Perhaps the Chief Sovereign would think of a way to help me acquire a third Sovereign artifact."

The Overgod talisman was within his grasp! How could Chegwin bear to give it up?

"I didn't expect that you, Mr. Linley, would come as well." Chegwin laughed calmly. "Might I ask what you have come here for, Mr. Linley?"

"Recently, there has been much rumor regarding this 'red caltrop diamond' treasure. I'm quite curious about it." Linley said with a calm laugh while flying forward. "Chegwin, let us travel together."

"It would be my honor." Chegwin wasn't impatient, instead opting to follow behind Linley.

Chegwin had seen Linley's power, and he knew that if he were to fight

against Linley head on, Linley would be able to kill his subordinates with the flip of a hand. As for Chegwin himself…although he had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact and a defensive Sovereign artifact, making it hard for even Linley to kill him, it wouldn't be too hard for Linley to drive him into chaotic space.

Chegwin didn't have any divine clones located elsewhere. If he were to be driven into chaotic space, it would be hard for even a Sovereign to locate him.

After all, chaotic space was so boundlessly vast that it was comparable to nearly almost all of the other planes combined.

How would a Sovereign search for someone in such a vast expanse of space? The only way it could be done was if a divine clone accompanied the Sovereign to point the Sovereign in the correct direction.

"Lord Chegwin, the experts over there are more and more numerous. If you don't intervene, then Leer [Li'ya] and I won't be able to hold on by ourselves." The Seven Star Fiend sent frantically.

"Don't be impatient." Chegwin sent back. "Linley arrived. It won't be so easy for others to acquire the red caltrop diamond."

"Linley. Who is he?" The Seven Star Fiend sent back while giving a glance at Chegwin. Chegwin had never mentioned Linley to him in the past…after all, the story was an embarrassing one for Chegwin. Why would he discuss it with his subordinates?

"A Highgod Paragon." This was Chegwin's sole response.

The Seven Star Fiend was badly frightened.

As for Linley, he was puzzled. "Chegwin is the Emissary of the Chief Sovereign of Light. Can it be that he is here because the Chief Sovereign of Light has asked him to search for the Overgod talismans?" What Linley was worried about was that the Sovereigns were paying attention to this matter.

Linley swept Chegwin with his gaze. Chegwin was currently behaving extremely respectfully.

The two Highgods behind Chegwin were fairly average in strength. Linley had never heard of them, nor did he care about them.

As far as the current Linley was concerned, ordinary Seven Star Fiends were indeed nothing. Even Lord Prefects and Asuras would just attract a bit of attention from Linley. After all…he already stood at the true peak. Amongst Deities, there were none capable of defeating him!

“Chegwin, I plan to speed up. Come with me.” With but a thought, Linley sent divine earth power surging out, surrounding the group of people.

“Swish!”

A ray of earthen yellow light shot through the air, and a heartbeat later, Linley’s group had already arrived at a location deep within the Neville Mountains.

Deep within the Neville Mountains. A hundred figures were flocking here.

“Haha, I didn’t imagine that I, Brodie, would actually draw attention from and be surrounded by so many experts.” Laughter rang out from one mountain forest, and then, in midair, multiple figures suddenly appeared. There was a single figure within the forest as well. Clearly, these people had already completely surrounded Brodie.

Only, nobody dared to go seize it.

“So many people have actually come for it.” A big-bearded muscular dwarf mumbled, his green eyes sweeping the others with his gaze. “I recognize fifty six Seven Star Fiends, and the others are probably Six Star Fiends. In addition, there are even one or two Asura-level experts mixed in.”

Everyone understood that the red caltrop diamond was a hot, yet hard-to-hold item.

Most likely, if anyone went to seize it, that person would suffer the attacks of the rest of the group. Nobody was confident in being able to seize it, then survive an array of attacks from this huge group of Seven Star Fiends.

Right at this moment…

A black-robed, loose-haired man slowly flew out from the mountain forest. His eyes were filled with amusement, and he casually glanced at the group of people surrounding him. “Haha…unexpected, truly unexpected. I, Brodie, was actually able to cause so many experts to join forces in pursuing me. Such an honor this is! Even if I, Brodie, were to die, it would be worth it.”

This person was Brodie. Surrounded by multiple layers of people, he no longer ran and revealed himself instead.

“Swoosh!” Just as Brodie spoke out, a green figure suddenly flew towards him, clearly wanting to seize the initiative.

“Hmph!” A cold snort rang out.

“Rumble…” A fiery red blade shadow rose from the heavens, shattering through space and instantly chopping down upon that green figure’s body. A blurry light suddenly flashed in the green figure’s eyes, and he managed to resist the power of this terrifying attack. Still, he was knocked flying away.

Instantly, all of the other foolish, impulsive people retrained themselves, not daring to attack.

At this moment…

The loose-haired Brodie stood there in the air above the mountain forest, surrounded by a large number of supreme experts. Brodie, however, didn’t seem to know that he had reached the end of the line. He actually smiled as he looked at them, then said in a clear voice, “Everyone, tell me, with so many of you here, who should I actually give the diamond to?”

The many Seven Star Fiends and Six Star Fiends all looked at each other, not making any sound.

“That’s the easiest question ever.” A clear voice rang out. “Just give it directly to my Boss.”

A large sphere of earthen yellow light suddenly appeared in midair. The earthen yellow aura dissipated, revealing seven people. It was Chegwin and his two subordinates, along with Linley, Bebe, and the two tribesmen they had brought with them.

“What incredible speed.” Chegwin’s two subordinates were stunned.

“Lord Chegwin.” Upon seeing Chegwin, quite a few of the Six and Seven Star Fiends called out in surprise. They were all stunned. After all, compared to Linley, Chegwin had been famous for far long, for countless years. Even amongst ‘commanders’, he was a supreme expert ranked close to the top. Chegwin’s information had been public for a long time now.

But Linley had only participated in a single Planar War very recently. News about him had yet to truly spread.

Although there were a group of Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends here, while Chegwin was in alone, in truth, he could still fight them all. Because he had two Sovereign artifacts!

“It looks like we have no hope.” The big-bearded dwarf said with a snicker.

“No hope at all.” A callous, silver-haired youth gave a sidelong glance at the distant Chegwin as well.

Chegwin was able to fight against everyone here. Even if they all fought over the red caltrop diamond, Chegwin would be able to seize it. In addition, these Six Star Fiends and Seven Star Fiends were no fools. All of them knew that if one had to compare the value of their lives with the value of a treasure, their lives were still more important!

“You…you are Lord Linley?” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

Linley turned to look, only to see a Six Star Fiend staring at Linley in surprise.

“What, you recognize my Boss?” Bebe winked at this Six Star Fiend.

“Ah, Lord Linley. I just participated in the previous Planar War. I was fortunate enough to see Lord Linley and Lord Magnus battle. I didn’t imagine that you would come as well!” This Six Star Fiend was very excited. He then glanced at the surrounding people and said loudly, “Everyone, now that Lord Linley has come, there’s no point to fighting. This red caltrop diamond will go to Lord Linley.”

“He’s Lord Linley?”

Of the hundred-plus people present, there were two or three others who knew of Linley. Only, they didn’t know what he looked like or what his aura was like, and so they weren’t able to recognize him at a glance.

Chegwin smiled as well. “Everyone, the person by my side is the number one expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan, the Highgod Paragon, Lord Linley. Everyone, do you still want to fight over the red caltrop diamond?” Hearing these words, the other Six and Seven Star Fiends were simultaneously shocked and began to repeat the same words.

“Highgod Paragon?”

That was an invincible individual who was able to execute commander-level experts as easily as cutting grass. If he wanted the red caltrop diamond, who would be able to take it from him?

Linley couldn’t help but glance at Chegwin. Chegwin was actually speaking on his behalf?

“Lord Chegwin?” Brodie, hearing those surprised calls, had begun to

understand that Chegwin was probably a supreme expert. But now, it seemed, that next to Chegwin was a legendary Highgod Paragon. “Linley?” Brodie gave Linley a close look.

“Brodie, hand over the red caltrop diamond and offer it to Lord Linley. His Lordship might spare your life. If you don’t hand it over…” Immediately, a Seven Star Fiend who stood far above him snapped out in a cold voice.

“Shut your mouth, punk!” Brodie raised his head and bellowed angrily.

“You…” The Seven Star Fiend was enraged.

“Hmph. I don’t give a damn if you are a Seven Star Fiend, a Lord Prefect, a Sovereign’s Emissary…and even if you are a Highgod Paragon, so what?” Brodie raised his head to stare at the surrounding area, then intentionally stared straight at Linley. “Let me tell you this. The red caltrop diamond is in my interspatial ring! If you want to seize it, then I will crush it!”

An interspatial ring was being held between Brodie’s fingers.

If he applied force to it, it would definitely shatter.

Linley felt anxious. “If Brodie really does go berserk and breaks the interspatial ring, although the red caltrop diamond inside it won’t be destroyed, it will be trapped into chaotic space. How will I then find it?”

“Brodie, don’t be too hotheaded. If you break it, you will definitely die.” Chegwin barked coldly.

“Do you think I don’t dare to?” Brodie stared straight back at Chegwin.

“Shut your mouth.” Linley gave Chegwin a cold glance, and all Chegwin could do to respond was to laugh awkwardly, then step back. In his heart, though, he felt extremely bitter. Linley, in turn, understood: “Chegwin isn’t able to acquire it for himself, so he probably actually wants Brodie to destroy it so that I won’t be able to acquire it either.”

“All of you, listen up.”

Brodie laughed smugly. He suddenly felt as though what he was doing right now, barking orders at a large group of Six Star Fiends, Seven Star Fiends, and a Paragon, was quite an impressive accomplishment. Paragons…what untouchably lofty figures were they! But today, he, Brodie, was able to put on airs in front of a Highgod Paragon!

“You’d best not piss me off. If you do, I’ll shatter this interspatial ring, and none of you will be able to acquire it.” Brodie snickered.

The Seven Star Fiends and Six Star Fiends didn’t dare to make a sound. They were afraid of angering Brodie into shattering the ring, thus causing Linley, who would be angry at having lost a chance to acquire the red caltrop diamond, to vent his rage upon them. That would be terrible.

Linley looked at Brodie, then laughed. “Brodie, speak. What do you want in exchange for giving me this red caltrop diamond?”

“Paragons really are Paragons. You are so straightforward.”

Brodie smiled. “Simple. First of all, you need to guarantee my survival, and that I’ll live to teleport through a transportation array and leave the Infernal Realm! Second, you need to give me tens of trillions of inkstones. I trust this sum isn’t anything for a Paragon like yourself. Third, you have to give me some Sovereign’s Might. I don’t need too much, just a few dozen drops. I need to stay alive as well. If you agree to my three conditions, I will give you this red caltrop diamond!” Brodie said it all in one breath. This was a price he felt was very, very high!

“Whoah…”

Instantly, deep breaths could be heard from everywhere.

Letting Brodie leave safely wasn’t an issue, but the next two requirements were too wild.

Tens of trillions of inkstones? Generally speaking, the total net worth of a Seven Star Fiend was just a trillion inkstones or so. As for Sovereign's Might…ordinary Seven Star Fiends would dream of acquiring so much as a single drop! Yet this Brodie said he didn't want too much, 'just' a few dozen! What a greedy demand this was!

"Fine. I agree." Linley smiled and nodded, the look on his face unchanging.

Brodie was stunned.

He had made extravagant demands with the goal of making Linley bargain with him…but Linley had just straightforwardly agreed.

"Paragons are this wealthy?" Brodie mused to himself.

Chapter 28 – Toyed With

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 28, Toyed With

Brodie was a God to begin with. He acquired the red caltrop diamond by accident, then killed quite a few bandits, acquired a darkness-element Highgod spark, fused it, and became a Highgod. His experiences were quite limited! He had only lived in a single tribe. How much wealth had he seen?

After killing the tribe's chief, 'Allott', and acquiring his interspatial ring, Brodie had instantly acquired a fortune of hundreds of millions of inkstones, which had completely stupefied him.

Just now, he was just listing an extravagant sum for negotiating purposes. He was just talking.

"There are fifty trillion inkstones and fifty drops of Destruction-type Sovereign's Might inside this." Linley removed an interspatial ring, smiling as he looked at Brodie. "As long as you give me the red caltrop diamond, it is yours."

Fifty trillion inkstones, fifty drops of Sovereign's Might?

The gazes of the surrounding Six and Seven Star Fiends grew heated. In truth, a single drop of Sovereign's Might was worth far more than fifty trillion inkstones. Unfortunately, Brodie didn't understand how much Sovereign's Might was worth in terms of inkstones. He had only used inkstones before, so that was naturally what he wanted. As for Sovereign's Might, he had only heard of it.

"Wonderful." Brodie laughed as he looked at Linley. "You really are a Highgod Paragon. It seems my asking price was too low."

Those surrounding Six Star Fiends, Seven Star Fiends, and guides from the Lotte tribe couldn't help but stare at Brodie. He had asked for an

astronomical sum already; could it be that this Brodie didn't feel satisfied and wanted more?

"But I, Brodie, live up to my word. If I asked a low price, then I asked a low price." Brodie laughed as he looked at Linley. "Lord Linley, I originally made three requests. The first one was that you have to safely escort me away from the Infernal Realm."

"I, Linley, swear by the Overgod of Life that if you, Brodie, hand me the red caltrop diamond, I will send you safely away from the Infernal Realm." Linley said straightforwardly.

Brodie was startled.

"Excellent." Brodie lowered his head, looking at the interspatial ring, a pleased smile on his face. "Then Lord Linley, this interspatial ring is now yours!" As he spoke, he tossed it out.

Right at this moment…

"Swish!" "Swish!"

Two rays of translucent light shot towards Brodie from behind.

"Soul attacks?" Linley's face changed.

Highgod Paragons were fast, but they weren't faster than soul attacks!

"The ring." Linley flew forward.

Suddenly, an arm stretched out, grabbing Linley by the shoulder. Linley turned, only to see that it was the nearby Chegwin who had grabbed him. Linley's gaze instantly turned cold. He stared coldly at Chegwin, then sent furiously, "Chegwin, you are looking for death." At the same time, Linley's shoulder vibrated, knocking Chegwin's hand aside.

"Haha, Mr. Linley, don't be impatient."

Right at this moment…

A surge of terrifying, devouring force was applied to Linley's body. Linley wanted to fly towards Brodie, but wasn't able to move that quickly.

"This is…?" Linley turned to look. Behind Chegwin had appeared the enormous illusion of a gigantic divine beast, the Suanni Lion! Chegwin was like Dylin; his original form was that of the divine beast, 'Suanni Lion', and he had a third eye. Only, Linley had never cared, because although the gravitational pull of Chegwin's innate divine ability might be strong, he wouldn't be able to devour Linley!

But Chegwin had suddenly used Sovereign's Might first, then used his innate divine ability, 'Heaven Devourer'.

The power of the pull of this technique was so great that although Linley was able to resist it, he wasn't able to move quickly.

"This…" Those Six and Seven Star Fiends were stunned. Had the Sovereign's Emissary, Chegwin, gone stupid? He actually dared to act against a Highgod Paragon? Bebe was stunned as well…but two people didn't hesitate; the two Seven Star Fiends Chegwin commanded.

The two Seven Star Fiends, while launching their soul attacks, also threw themselves towards Brodie.

Everyone was situated fairly close to Brodie to begin with, while Linley was tied down by Chegwin, who had used both Sovereign's Might and his innate divine ability. In that short period of time, Brodie's 'interspatial ring' fell into the hands of one of the two Seven Star Fiends; that callous, green-haired man.

The effect of the 'Heaven Devourer' ability wore off.

"Chegwin!" Linley, enraged, moved to grab Chegwin by the arm.

“Mr. Linley…oh, that is, ‘mighty Highgod Paragon, Lord Linley’. Please let go of me. Otherwise, my subordinates will shatter that interspatial ring.” Chegwin wasn’t nervous at all.

Linley stared coldly at Chegwin.

“I have two Sovereign artifacts. You won’t be able to kill me. At most, you will drive me into chaotic space.” Chegwin laughed calmly.

Chegwin didn’t fear Linley.

Chegwin currently had leverage over Linley. If Linley were to attack, Chegwin’s subordinates would immediately shatter the interspatial ring.

“Excellent.” Linley began to laugh from rage.

The red caltrop diamond did in fact impact Linley’s mindset. In Linley’s heart…this last talisman, the red caltrop diamond, represented the life of Linley’s grandpa. Perhaps if it was something else, he would have mercilessly driven Chegwin into chaotic space and killed those two Seven Star Fiends. But for this…he was not!

The air above the Neville Mountains. More than a hundred experts were watching as Linley released Chegwin.

“Has Chegwin gone insane? He is offending a Paragon. Can it be that Chegwin believes that in the future, the Sovereign will always be protecting him?”

“It would be impressive if a Sovereign lowered himself to help defend against a Deity even once. He can’t always do that.”

Those Six and Seven Star Fiends all believed that Chegwin had gone stupid. After all, in the Infernal Realm, virtually everyone believed that the grudges of Deities was a matter to remain between Deities. Sovereigns were lofty and far above Deities; they might occasionally intervene, but if they did so often, most likely they would be secretly criticized.

But no matter what, the interspatial ring was in Chegwin's hands.

"Boss." Bebe said frantically.

"It's fine." Linley stared coldly at the distant Chegwin, then sent mentally, "Perhaps the situation won't be too terrible."

"Eh?" Bebe looked at Linley, puzzled.

"Boss? What are you saying?" Bebe didn't understand Linley's words.

"I saw those two people suddenly attack Brodie." Linley sent. "I was worried…but not that they would seize the ring. It was that Brodie would instantly shatter the ring. Although a soul attack is fast, an automatic response by a Deity, a clenching of the fingers, is unquestionably faster."

Bebe nodded as well, agreeing to that.

One might not be able to dodge a soul attack, but one would still be able to react. It would be simple to crush a ring.

"But Brodie didn't crush it. He was killed, but he still didn't crush this ring." Linley sent.

"Boss, are you saying…?" Bebe began to guess what the answer was.

"Actually, when I only saw Brodie and didn't find his wife, I began to suspect…that this Brodie was nothing more than bait! Only, I had thought that perhaps Brodie separated from his wife in order to protect her. I didn't think too much about it." Linley looked carefully at the distant Chegwin and the other two. "But now…even at the point of death, Brodie didn't crush the interspatial ring. And so, I truly have some suspicions about it."

"Boss, are you saying that there is no red caltrop diamond within the interspatial ring?" Bebe sent.

“Possibly.” Linley sent back. “But it’s hard to say. If Brodie still has a surviving divine clone, then the ring shouldn’t be accessible.”

The two Seven Star Fiends serving Chegwin merged with their clones, and then offered the interspatial ring to Chegwin. Chegwin held the ring, then laughed mockingly towards Linley. “Linley, in the Planar War, you were quite incredible, but now…this treasure is mine.”

Although this was what Chegwin was saying, he felt puzzled as well. He couldn’t help but glance at the corpse of Brodie which lay in the mountain forest. “This Brodie actually didn’t crush the ring before dying.”

Chegwin’s earlier actions hadn’t been intended to acquire the interspatial ring for himself. Rather, Chegwin wanted Brodie to destroy the ring and make it so that no one could acquire it!

“Drip!”

A drop of fresh blood fell down from Chegwin’s finger, landing atop the interspatial ring.

“If the Boss guessed accurately, then this ‘Brodie’ was just bait. He must have had other divine clones that fled, and so there’s no way to open this interspatial ring.” Bebe stared closely at it. Linley stared as well…and the surrounding hundred experts all watched as Chegwin bound it by blood.

The drop of blood fell atop the interspatial ring. Under everyone’s gaze, the blood slowly seeped into it, then was absorbed by it.

“Eh? What just happened.” Bebe was shocked.

“Strange.” Linley didn’t understand. Logically speaking, the interspatial ring shouldn’t be bindable!

Only if all of Brodie’s clones were dead would the interspatial ring be bindable by blood.

“Can it be that I guessed wrongly. Brodie was struck from behind by soul attacks and was caught off-guard, and so didn’t have time to crush the interspatial ring?” Linley frowned.

“Haha…”

Chegwin laughed smugly towards Linley. “Linley, I didn’t expect it either. This interspatial ring actually fell into my hands. And I was actually able to bind it with blood…but unfortunately, this interspatial ring is mine now. Even if you drive me into chaotic space, I will take it with me. The Sovereign will definitely save me…and your actions will make it so that the Sovereign has a reason to kill you.”

Linley’s face sank.

“Haha…are you very angry, very enraged? Too bad. It’s useless.” Chegwin was very smug, very happy!

“Aren’t you very powerful? What, you don’t dare attack now?” Chegwin laughed jubilantly.

He had two protective Sovereign artifacts. Even Linley wasn’t able to kill him.

“Chegwin, you are formidable.” Linley was very calm. “I haven’t personally seen the red caltrop diamond. Can you take it out to let us see it?”

“Of course I can!” Chegwin’s laughter became positively evil. “Even if I hold the red caltrop diamond on my hand, would you be able to take it from me?” Chegwin wasn’t Brodie; there was no way he would be killed via ambush. In addition, with but a thought, Chegwin could store the already bound interspatial ring into his body.

Bebe stared coldly at Chegwin.

“Everyone.” Chegwin glanced at the surrounding people. He wanted to

make it so that this surrounding group of people would spread the word of how he had held down Linley today. “This red caltrop diamond, according to legend, is an Overgod talisman. But of course, it’s uncertain as to whether it is real or not. Since Mr. Linley wishes to see it, I’ll satisfy his wish.”

As he spoke, Chegwin inserted his divine sense into the interspatial ring.

Chegwin’s smile bloomed onto his face as the red caltrop diamond suddenly appeared in his hands. Chegwin smiled as he looked at everyone. “This is the red caltrop diamond! Mr. Linley, have you seen it clearly?” Chegwin smirked towards Linley.

“It really is the red caltrop diamond.” Bebe was shocked.

Linley frowned, but he immediately spread out his divine sense…and then a hint of a smile appeared on his lips. “Chegwin, the legendary red caltrop diamond possesses the power to make a Highgod who fused a divine spark to defeat a Six Star Fiend. Have you discovered some particular power in your red caltrop diamond?”

Chegwin was stunned.

In the midst of his joy, he hadn’t thought about this at all. And now, he too realized…that this red caltrop diamond didn’t contain any unique energy at all.

“Impossible. This came from Brodie’s interspatial ring. It is definitely real.” Chegwin didn’t want to believe it.

“Hmph. There are far too many fake items like this. Brodie’s counterfeiting abilities were mediocre; just by checking it with divine sense, one can discover hints that it was manmade.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Haha, Linley, stop talking rubbish. You weren’t able to get it, so you want to trick me? Nobody has ever seen this red caltrop diamond. Who knows if it is real or not? Perhaps this red caltrop diamond’s unique energy needs a

special method to guide it out." Chegwin said confidently. "In addition, this is an Overgod talisman. One thing is for certain; Overgod talismans are indestructible. Watch; see how tough it is…."

As he spoke, he applied a bit of force to it with his finger. He was just putting on a show, and didn't actually use much strength.

"Crack!"

The fragile 'red caltrop diamond' shattered at that slight touch! It transformed into countless gemstone shards, falling to the ground.

"This…" Chegwin was instantly stupefied, and he stared with round eyes.

The hundred surrounding experts were all abuzz. They, too, were stunned. So the 'Brodie' they had surrounded and chased for so many years had actually produced a fake 'red caltrop diamond'.

"It is actually fake!"

"Can it be that there was no such treasure to begin with?"

"Lord Chegwin did all that for nothing."

These experts were all chatting amongst themselves. As they saw it, the news that the red caltrop diamond was fake was even more interesting than it would have been if it were real! Even if it was real, they wouldn't have been able to get it! But for it to have been fake…this was just priceless!

Linley gave Chegwin a cold glance, then he turned to look at the round-faced youth by his side. He sent, "Do you know how many divine clones this Brodie had?"

"Although Brodie hid his strength, I am certain that he definitely had more than one divine clone." The round-faced youth sent with certainty.

Linley nodded slightly. He glanced at the corpse of Brodie on the ground.

Linley had already noticed via divine sense that this Brodie only had a single divine spark in his corpse. “Brodie has at least another divine clone somewhere else. In addition, it seems as though he intentionally did not destroy the interspatial ring before dying. This was because this interspatial ring was to be left by him to fool everyone here.”

Linley understood that most likely, Brodie had never bound this interspatial ring by blood!

That was the only explanation for why Chegwin was able to bind the ring with blood after the death of Brodie’s divine clone.

“Brodie played an entire group of supreme experts for fools.” Linley glanced at Brodie’s corpse below. “And then he left behind an interspatial ring with a fake red caltrop diamond inside. Clearly…he wanted to use this method to mock this entire group. For a Highgod who fused with a divine spark to toy with so many people…impressively vicious.”

Linley sighed internally.

“It seems as though Brodie wasn’t quite willing to give up his red caltrop diamond treasure.” Linley now completely understood what Brodie had been thinking.

This divine clone of his was nothing more than bait to attract the attention of many people. Most likely, years ago, when he made a return trip to the tribe, the goal was to draw these people over.

“Most likely, Brodie’s original body has taken the red caltrop diamond and his wife to flee somewhere else long ago.” Linley shook his head.

Still, Linley could accept this outcome.

If the red caltrop diamond had fallen into the hands of the Chief Sovereign of Light, Linley would never have access to it. But for it to be in Brodie’s hands…meant there was still hope.

“Haha…” Chegwin began to laugh from rage. He lowered his head to look at Brodie’s corpse. “I didn’t expect that I, Chegwin, would actually be tricked by you, a Highgod who used a divine spark.” Chegwin was no fool either. Upon learning that the red caltrop diamond was fake, he immediately extrapolated quite a few things.

Quite a few surrounding experts looked at Chegwin.

For the sake of this red caltrop diamond, Chegwin had thoroughly offended Linley! Just now, he even satirized and arrogantly mocked Linley in a smug manner. But after finding out that diamond was fake…he had lost tremendous face. Quite a few experts had secretly used the scryer recording technique to record it down.

“Let’s go.” Linley didn’t want to stay here.

“This Brodie really is crazy.” Bebe glanced at Brodie’s corpse. He had looked down on Brodie, but now…Bebe actually felt that this Brodie had a bit of ability.

Chapter 29 – Begging to be Spared

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 29, Begging to be Spared

"This red caltrop diamond is actually a fake!" Chegwin hovered there in midair, his long green robes fluttering. The muscles at the corners of his eyes were twitching. He couldn't help but lower his head to look at the corpse of Brodie amidst the mountain forests. "Information which the Fiend Castle guaranteed as being real…definitely wouldn't be fake. I made my own investigations as well, and the dwellers of the Lotte tribe had proof as well! Thus, the red caltrop diamond definitely was a treasure. Where is the real one, then?"

Chegwin had collected quite a bit of intelligence.

"Your Lordship, Brodie's corpse only had a single divine spark inside it. We investigated earlier. He had more than just a single divine clone. The true red caltrop diamond must have been taken away by his original body." A Seven Star Fiend standing behind Chegwin sent mentally to him.

"I know!" Chegwin's eyes were filled with insidiousness as he let out a cold snort.

Chegwin wasn't a fool. Of course he knew what Brodie had schemed. The Infernal Realm had countless Demigods and Gods; for some of them to use divine sparks to become Highgods was nothing. There were many Deities who wanted to be dazzlingly glorious for a brief instant, even if it meant dying, so long as it was in an explosive manner!

They didn't want to die silent, unknown deaths to bandits or in battles. Deaths of no value.

Indeed, Brodie's death had caused the many Seven Star Fiends here to all remember him!

“He produced a divine clone and toyed with an entire group of experts. Hmph. He probably did so in order to draw our attention here and keep us here, while his original body took his wife and fled somewhere else.” Although Chegwin was enraged, he also deeply embedded the name ‘Brodie’ into his mind.

Actually, if Brodie’s divine clone had shattered the interspatial ring, given Chegwin’s strength, once he calmed down, he probably would’ve still been able to guess at the truth! In addition, the news that Brodie had divine clones could be easily verified by the Lotte tribe. Thus, it would be easy to extrapolate that Brodie’s original body had taken the red caltrop diamond and fled. If he knew he had to die, would he carry the red caltrop diamond with him and waste it?

Since he wouldn’t be able to avoid them, why not intentionally leave behind a ring and use it to mock these experts?

“I’ve been harmed catastrophically by this Brodie.” Chegwin felt bitterness in his heart. He couldn’t help but glance at the distant Linley and Bebe. “If I really did acquire the red caltrop diamond, then it wouldn’t matter if I offended Linley. But I didn’t…given Linley’s temper, he probably won’t let me off easily.”

Previously, although Linley and Chegwin had some disputes in the Planar Battlefield, the main players on that stage were Linley and Magnus, with Chegwin and Oman just being supporting characters. Thus, prior to today, Linley didn’t feel much of a grudge towards Chegwin, and couldn’t be bothered to act mercilessly towards him.

Chegwin understood this as well, which was why when he saw Linley, he didn’t flee.

But now…the situation was different!

“I mocked him directly and insulted him…what is he going to do?” Chegwin felt nervous. He wanted to immediately flee, but right now, Linley and Bebe clearly weren’t paying any attention to him. If he were to

immediately flee, he would probably draw Linley's attention and be captured by Linley.

Thus, Chegwin just stood there quietly, hoping Linley wouldn't pay attention to him. He would wait for Linley to leave!

And just like that, Chegwin stealthily kept a watch on the distant Linley and Bebe.

Not just Chegwin; all of the hundred-plus Six and Seven Star Fiends were keeping a watch on Linley as well. They all wanted to know…how Linley would take his revenge on Chegwin!

"Let's go!" Linley's words caused Chegwin to feel overjoyed.

"Your Lordship, those two are going to leave now." The two Seven Star Fiends were overjoyed as well. They, too, let out relieved sighs.

"Boss, we're going to leave, just like that?" Bebe couldn't help but say.

"Oh…right. I almost forgot about something." Linley was about to leave, then smile and turned and looked towards the distant Chegwin. "Bebe, it's good that you reminded me. I might've forgotten about this, otherwise. Bebe, just now, who was it that said to me, if I have any ability, I can go ahead and try to drive him into chaotic space?"

Bebe, hearing this, let out an 'emotional' sigh and explained cooperatively, "Boss, who else could it be? Of course it is our fearless, intrepid Mr. Chegwin…aside from him, how many others would dare enter chaotic space?"

Linley and Bebe's question and answer session caused Chegwin's distant group of three to have changed looks on their faces.

"Flee!" Chegwin instantly sent the mental message.

Immediately, there in the skies above the Neville Mountains, Chegwin and

the two Seven Star Fiends serving him scattered in every which way at high speed.

“Swoosh!”

Multiple blurry, dream-like figures flashed about in the skies, and then a single blurred form appeared next to Chegwin. With a ‘bang!’ sound, Chegwin’s fleeing body was brought to a halt, then knocked flying backwards. But then, in a flash, the blurred figure once more appeared in front of Chegwin.

“Mr. Chegwin, where are you planning to go, and without saying a single word?” Linley’s face still had that smile on it as he looked at Chegwin.

But Chegwin saw the cold look in Linley’s eyes!

How could Linley let Chegwin off, given what Chegwin had just done? If he could let even something like that pass, where would Linley’s face go?

For example, Sovereigns might not want to interfere in the matters of Deities, but if a Deity dared to mock a Sovereign or interfere in a Sovereign’s important matters, or violate a Sovereign’s majesty in some manner, that Sovereign probably wouldn’t easily spare the violator either! Linley’s status alone, as a supreme being amongst Deities, made it so that he would not allow others to so easily insult him!

“Lord Linley.” Chegwin forced out a smile. “I…I was muddleheaded for a time.”

“You aren’t muddleheaded.” Linley shook his head repeatedly. “What were you muddleheaded about? You are quite intelligent! Didn’t you say so yourself? Even if I drive you into chaotic space, the almighty Sovereign of Light will intervene and rescue you.”

Chegwin’s face turned ugly.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, save him?

That would be because he was holding the ‘red caltrop diamond’, supposedly an Overgod talisman. For the sake of a possible Overgod talisman, the Chief Sovereign of Light would intervene and expend tremendous efforts in chaotic space to save him! But if he didn’t have the red caltrop diamond, the Chief Sovereign of Light wouldn’t necessarily immediately go save him.

What sort of status did a Chief Sovereign have?

Perhaps, one day, when he was in the mood, he might go save Chegwin. But by then, perhaps a hundred million years or a trillion years would have passed.

“Lord Linley, you have the exalted status of Paragon. I’m not worthy of your anger.” Chegwin said hurriedly. “I, Chegwin, am willing to offer you, Lord Linley, all my wealth and all my Sovereign’s Might. Lord Linley, please spare me this time.” Chegwin looked hopefully at Linley.

But Linley only looked back silently at Chegwin.

Chegwin’s heart clenched.

“Wealth? Sovereign’s Might? Tell me…do I lack for these things?” Linley finally said.

“Lord Linley, what do you wish me to do? Just tell me!” Chegwin said hurriedly.

Chegwin no longer cared about his face. He knew very well…that he had no divine clones outside, and so once he became trapped in chaotic space, even if the Chief Sovereign of Light went to find him, given how enormous chaotic space was, how would the Chief Sovereign of Light locate him? The amount of effort needed would be very great!

Would the Chief Sovereign of Light roam the endless tides of chaotic space for him?

If he were a Paragon, perhaps the Chief Sovereign might do so despite the exhaustion of it. But Chegwin wasn't yet qualified to make the Chief Sovereign do this for him yet!

"If I become trapped in chaotic space, I might be trapped there forever. Nobody would speak to me, and I wouldn't be able to see anyone else. I would just be constantly brought by the tides of chaotic space from one place to another. A life worse than death." Chegwin understood this in his heart.

"Lord Linley?" Chegwin was currently very obedient, very respectful.

"Boss, why waste words with him?" Bebe snorted coldly, then glanced at Chegwin. "Chegwin. You want to just leave, as though nothing happened? You really are a dreamer! If you, Chegwin, were to offend a Sovereign and even seize something belonging to the Sovereign, can it be that just because you begged for mercy, the Sovereign would spare you? Although my Boss can't compare to Sovereigns, he's not so easily abused either."

Linley smiled, then extended his hand, chopping to the side with it…

"Riiiiiiip!"

It was like cloth being torn apart. A hundred meter long spatial tear suddenly appeared, several meters wide. An astonishingly strong suction power filled the surrounding area.

"Linley, the Chief Sovereign won't spare you!!!" Chegwin began to bellow as he moved to flee.

"Swish." Linley seemed to have teleported as he suddenly appeared and grabbed him by the neck. He tossed Chegwin backwards, casually, as though he were tossing an animal, sending Chegin flying into the spatial rift. Chegwin bellowed with rage, "The Chief Sovereign won't spare you!!!" His voice continued to echo in the area, but the astonishing spatial rift had already completely vanished.

Linley glanced backwards.

“This Chegwin…if he didn’t have Sovereign artifacts protecting him, I would really want to kill him.” Bebe said hatefully. “Now that we’ve driven him into chaotic space, I imagine the Chief Sovereign of Light will eventually go save him.”

Clearly, everything Chegwin had done had caused Bebe to be extremely unhappy.

“Saving him won’t be that easy, unless he has a divine clone in the outside world.” Linley glanced at the group of Six and Seven Star Fiends who had stupefied looks on their faces. Then he said, “Bebe, there’s no point staying here. Let’s go back. Oh, let’s send those two back first.”

Linley and Bebe immediately led the round-faced youth and the grim-looking elder onto their metallic lifeform and left.

In midair, a hundred-plus experts and members of the Lotte tribe sighed in amazement at what they had seen.

“How truly powerful. That is what a Highgod Paragon is like! With a casual swipe of the hand, without using any Sovereign’s Might, he was able to create such a terrifying spatial tear. When will my material attack be a tenth the strength of Lord Linley’s?”

“Supposedly, that Chegwin is comparable in strength to the 108 Asuras of our Infernal Realm, and would be ranked amongst the more powerful ones. Chegwin alone was more than enough to slaughter all of us, but in front of Lord Linley…did you see that? Chegwin was like an infant; when he was grabbed, he wasn’t able to resist at all. With a casual toss, he was thrown into that spatial tear. This Lord Linley…he’s too strong!”

“Earlier, Chegwin was behaving so arrogantly. Haha. That’s what he gets!”

“He deserved it! He should’ve thought about his own status. For someone

like him to offend Lord Linley? Isn't that like delivering a sheep to the mouth of a tiger? He was looking for death."

In the eyes of this group of experts of the Infernal Realm, it was only reasonable for Linley to teach a lesson to and punish Chegwin in such a manner. If Linley hadn't done so, he would've actually been questioned by people behind his back.

Linley's group wanted to locate Brodie's divine clone's whereabouts, but there was no way to do so. The most likely possibility was that Brodie had left through a teleportation array! There was no need for someone to record his name or other information when using the array, and each year, there were many people in the Infernal Realm who, for the purposes of trade or something else, would travel through a teleportation array.

How would they search for him?

In addition, Linley wasn't qualified to search for him, because the soldiers who were in command over and guarded over the teleportation arrays belonged to the Sovereigns.

The Divine Light Plane. The Godsgaol Sea!

"Rustle…." Countless waves of deep blue seawater lapped forward. As the number one sea of the Divine Light Plane, the Godsgaol Sea was vast and deep. Deep within it, there was dazzling number of islands, scattered like stars in the skies.

In the air above the sea, there were currently two figures battling against each other, causing space to constantly shatter.

"Screeeech!"

An illusory phantom of an enormous Fire Phoenix that was thousands of meters long had suddenly appeared behind a short red-haired man. And then, the red dot at the center of the man's forehead suddenly lit up, and a red ray of light shot out, instantly piercing through the skies and shooting

towards the long-haired, black-robed man in front of him.

The black-robed man let out a growl, and then layers of watery curtains appeared around him.

“Clash…”

The watery curtains were pierced through, and then the red light entered the black-robed man’s body. The black-robed man’s body trembled, then he spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Blunner [Bu’lun’er], let’s just stop it here.” The black-robed man said hastily. In terms of speed, he was inferior to the man in front of him. Someone fast could flee from a stronger opponent, but someone slow had no choice but to just take more blows and beg for mercy.

“In your dreams.” The red-haired man let out an angry snort, the fiery red sickle in his hand chopping down slowly…

“Riiiiiip.” A tear in space formed yet again.

But right at this moment…

“Whoosh!” A green blur suddenly shot out from the spatial tear, and it flew straight towards the red-haired man. The red-haired man was shocked. “Something flew out from the spatial tear? There’s something that can survive, undamaged, in chaotic space?” The red-haired man couldn’t help but reach out to grab it.

A green piece of paper thus appeared in his hands.

Chapter 30 – Overgod Decree

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 30, Overgod Decree

When the fiery haired man swept the green piece of paper with his gaze, his face immediately changed dramatically.

The black-robed man, seeing the situation, immediately flew away, fleeing at high speed.

"Just count yourself lucky this time." The fiery haired man glanced at the black-robed man, but his face was still filled with an excited smile. "This… this is an Overgod decree?" The fiery haired man stroked the Overgod decree. He could sense that this green paper contained an unusual aura, and he couldn't help but feel wildly overjoyed.

He was nothing more than a Seven Star Fiend, not yet at the commander level.

"For it to remain undamaged in chaotic space…this paper is definitely extraordinary. Most likely, only Overgods are capable of creating this sort of unusual paper." The fiery haired man pondered. "It seems the information on it is true. Mmm. If I were to offer this to a Sovereign, I need to choose the most powerful one. The ancestor of the Augusta clan is the Chief Sovereign of Light. Right. That's where I will go!"

The Overgod decree was useless to him, but if he gave it to a Sovereign, it would be of great use.

He no longer hesitated. The fiery haired man headed straight for the Aumight Island of the Godsgaol Sea.

Aumight Island. The ten thousand meter tall Radiant Temple.

"Whitefire stone. It is completely built from whitefire stone! The Augusta

clan really does live up to its reputation as being the number one clan of the universe. This temple alone is a priceless treasure." The fiery haired Blunner sighed in amazement as he viewed the heart of the Aumight Island; the Radiant Temple.

The warriors of the Augusta clan were leading the way from the side.

"Blunner, once you enter the Radiant Temple, don't look around everywhere. There are quite a few major figures who live within the temple. If you irritate one of them, they might kill you." A nearby silver-haired warrior guard said in a low voice. "Also, you said you have an important treasure to offer the Patriarch that you need to personally offer…if you deceive the Patriarch, you will be doomed."

In the Augusta clan, there were a good number of Lord Prefect and commander level experts.

As for Seven Star Fiends, it had many. Even the Four Divine Beasts clan, during its most flourishing era, had two or three hundred Seven Star Fiend level Elders. But the Augusta clan was on a level higher than even the Four Divine Beasts clan; after all, aside from clan experts, they also had many associated experts.

"Don't worry. No matter how bold I might be, I wouldn't dare deceive Patriarch Augusta." Blunner chortled.

He was very confident. If even the Overgod decree couldn't be considered precious, what could?

Everything was as Blunner had expected. The Patriarch of the Augusta clan, Goldman, had originally been very arrogant and icy, but upon seeing the Overgod talisman, he became incomparably excited. He immediately swore that the Augusta clan would definitely reward him. While doing so, Patriarch Goldman immediately burned a piece of paper covered with unusual magic runes, notifying the Chief Sovereign.

"Remember. In a short while, make no sound. When the Chief Sovereign

lets you speak, speak. Also, while kneeling, don't raise your head to stare at the Chief Sovereign." After burning the runed paper, Goldman hurriedly began to give instructions.

"Yes. Your Lordship." Blunner was both nervous and excited. This was his first time seeing a Sovereign!

Right at this time, rays of powerful light-type Sovereign power appeared within the main hall of the Radiant Temple. The solidifying light-type Sovereign power quickly condensed into a human shape, then transformed into a person. This person was dressed in loose white robes which were covered with gold patterns.

"Sovereign." Blunner immediately knelt down, pressing his forehead against the ground in a very respectful manner.

"Father." Patriarch Goldman just bowed in respect.

"Goldman, is there something you need?" A warm, clear voice rang out.

"Is the speaker a Sovereign? What does the Sovereign look like?" Blunner felt very nervous as he constantly pondered.

Goldman just looked respectfully at his father. The Chief Sovereign of Light was tall and strong. His loose white robes only revealed his musculature, and his long, golden hair seemed as dazzling as the sun. His skin was extremely white, almost crystalline and jadelike. He had no facial hair. His lower jaw was completely slick, but his eyebrows were as golden as his hair.

Golden eyebrows dropped down from his temples.

The Chief Sovereign of Light's gaze was as warm and soft as jade, seemingly quite gentle. But just by standing there, he gave others the feeling that they were facing the universe itself.

"Father, this is Blunner. He wishes to offer to a treasure. When I saw this

treasure, I immediately summoned you, Father." Goldman produced that green sheet of paper. "This sheet of paper should be the Overgod decree."

"Overgod decree?"

The formerly soft, mild gaze of the Chief Sovereign of Light instantly sharpened. They focused upon that green paper like two sharp arrows.

"Clash, clash!"

Invisible swords of light struck upon that green paper, sending it flying away, but the green paper itself remained unharmed.

"Haha, Goldman, you've done well. This is very possibly the Overgod decree." As he spoke, the Chief Sovereign of Light stretched his hand out, and the green sheet of paper landed onto his hand. The Chief Sovereign of Light read through the green paper, and as he read, a smile appeared on his face.

"So it truly is real."

The Chief Sovereign of Light had seen Overgod decrees several times before; he was easily able to determine that this was real.

The Chief Sovereign of Light swept his gaze towards Blunner, who was kneeling there on the ground. Smiling, he said, "Rise and speak." "Thank you, Sovereign." Blunner was so excited that he was trembling. He hurriedly rose to his feet, but his body remained slightly bowed.

"Where did you acquire this Overgod decree from?" The Chief Sovereign of Light asked.

"To answer your question, Sovereign, when I was battling someone, a spatial rift occurred and this Overgod decree flew out from the rift. I just so happened to acquire it. The location of our battle was the air above the Godsgaol Sea." Blunner didn't dare to raise his head and stare directly at the Sovereign. Thus, he kept his head lowered, his gaze only able to see the

long white robe.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, upon hearing this, began to smile even more widely.

“Haha, almighty Overgod of Life…so you intentionally delivered the Overgod decree to my Divine Light Plane. It seems this Overgod mission will be for me to complete yet again.” The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t help but laugh.

The Chief Sovereign of Light knew very well!

Given how boundless chaotic space was, if someone or something were to fall into it, it would be virtually impossible for that thing or person to move in any direction through its own volition. Unless one had the abilities of a Sovereign; only then could one move about. As for Highgods, even Highgod Paragons, when they fell into chaotic space, they would find it hard to move freely.

Since that was the case, it would be extremely difficult for them to once more draw close to the edges of a plane.

Even if they drew near, how could they be so lucky as to appear right next to a spatial rift?

Thus, normally speaking, when supreme experts were exiled into it, even if a trillion years passed, they still probably wouldn’t be able to escape!

However, the Overgod missions were designed by the Overgods. How could the Overgods allow their decree to perpetually remain within chaotic space? Thus, the Overgods could arrange for it so that even if the Overgod decree fell into chaotic space, they would quickly reappear in other planes. And now…the Overgod decree had appeared in the Divine Light Plane.

It was only natural for the Chief Sovereign of Light to believe that the Overgod had the intention of helping him!

“You did very well.” The Chief Sovereign of light looked at Blunner, then smiled. “Oman died. I just so happen to lack a Sovereign’s Emissary. Let it be you, then.”

Blunner was so excited that his face turned red. “I’ll become a Sovereign’s Emissary? I’ll become a Sovereign’s Emissary?” Blunner still felt as though he were in a dream. He couldn’t believe it. From an ordinary Seven Star Fiend to an Emissary under the control of the almighty Chief Sovereign of Light…his status would rise greatly, and he would definitely also receive a Sovereign artifact!”

“Hurry and kneel.” Patriarch Goldman hurriedly sent mentally.

Blunner came to his senses, then hurriedly knelt down. “Thank you, Sovereign.”

“Mm.” The Chief Sovereign of Light nodded slightly.

“Father.” Patriarch Goldman bowed and said, “Actually, news of the Sovereign decree had already begun to spread some time ago.”

“Oh?” The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned in puzzlement.

“The news was only spread about within the Infernal Realm. I just learned it recently myself.” Goldman said hurriedly. “That information described three items in detail; there are no differences between that information and the Overgod decree. Only, there were a few extra points; the news said that one of the three talismans, the ‘nine soul pearls’, as well as the ‘Overgod decree’, was in the hands of the Highgod Paragon, Linley. This news caused a huge stir in the Infernal Realm, but afterwards, it was believed to be false.

The Chief Sovereign of Light lifted an eyebrow. “Linley?”

“Right, Linley.” Goldman said hurriedly.

“It seems that there are indeed some problems with the veracity of this news.” The Chief Sovereign of Light laughed calmly. “That information

said that the Overgod decree was in Linley's hands, but in reality, it flew out from chaotic space into the Divine Light Plane and into my hands. It seems the person who made up this news probably wished to harm Linley."

But Goldman said hurriedly, "Father, I, on the other hand, believe that it is very possible that the Overgod decree was in Linley's hands, but he created a spatial rift and intentionally threw it into chaotic space. There's no point to keeping the Overgod decree, after all, once one knows the information within it."

The Chief Sovereign of Light nodded slightly.

"Your suggestion is also possible." The Chief Sovereign of Light pondered momentarily.

Goldman immediately said, "Father, information regarding the Overgod talismans has already spread throughout the Infernal Realm…but it has been viewed as false. Now, it seems, the information is clearly true. That means that perhaps Linley truly did acquire the nine soul pearls and the Overgod talisman. But of course, the Overgod decree is definitely not in Linley's hands right now. Those nine soul pearls, however, are."

"I didn't expect that we were able to find a clue about one of the three talismans so soon." The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled and nodded.

"Father, I have some more news to tell you. Just a few months ago, Chegwin was also driven by Linley into chaotic space." Goldman said hurriedly. "But it's quite problematic. Chegwin had no divine clones in the outside world." The speed at which the Augusta clan's intelligence agents shared information was quite fast.

"What's this about? It involves this Linley yet again?" The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn't help but frown.

"It involves the third talisman, the 'red caltrop diamond'." Goldman said hurriedly.

“Oh, yet another item?” The Chief Sovereign of Light grew intrigued.

He didn’t care about Chegwin’s life or death, but all three of the talismans were of interest to him.

“Although Chegwin seized the red caltrop diamond, even at the cost of angering Linley, it was discovered that the red caltrop diamond was a fake one. Because Chegwin had offended him, Linley, in his anger, exiled Chegwin into chaotic space.” Goldman said hurriedly.

“Oh.” The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t be bothered to care about that.

Sovereigns wouldn’t casually interfere in the battles of Deities.

“Goldman, what sort of a person is Linley?” The Chief Sovereign of Light suddenly asked.

Goldman immediately said, “Father, Linley can be considered a genius. He is also the number one expert of the Four Divine Beasts clan. Soon after becoming famous in the Infernal Realm, he entered the Planar Battlefield. He was nearly killed by Magnus, but Linley made a breakthrough at the border between life and death and became a Paragon. During the final battle of the Planar War, he actually exiled Magnus into chaotic space. In addition, Linley is on extremely good terms with Beirut. One of Beirut’s descendants, ‘Bebe’, is as close to Linley as a true brother.”

“On good terms with Beirut?” The Chief Sovereign of Light said coldly, “As soon as I hear Beirut’s name, I want to kill him.” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s eyes had a hint of a murderous intent appear within them.

“Even if you gave Beirut ten times as much courage, he would never dare enter our Divine Light Plane. He only dares to hide in the Infernal Realm.” Goldman immediately laughed.

If Linley heard these words, he would definitely be stunned. Clearly, Beirut hadn’t paid a trip to the Divine Light Plane at all. He had lied to Linley when he had said he had went to see the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“The Infernal Realm. It’s been quite a while since I’ve gone there.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light immediately prepared to leave.

“Father. Although Linley might very well have acquired the nine soul pearls, the other Sovereigns have already investigated. This says that Linley might not have them.” Goldman said hurriedly.

“Even if there is a hint of a chance, we cannot let it slip. I would rather kill a thousand by mistake than spare a single one erroneously.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly, “What’s more, he belongs to the Four Divine Beasts clan and has a deep relationship with Beirut.” After speaking, the Chief Sovereign of Light’s body completely vanished.

Goldman couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a smile on his face. He murmured to himself, “Better to kill a thousand by mistake than spare a single one erroneously?”

Chapter 31 – The Chief Sovereign Descends

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 31, The Chief Sovereign Descends

Indigo Prefecture. The foremost of its ten cities; Indigo City. The northern district.

This was where the Lord Prefect, Beirut, lived. Because it was within the city, there was no need for many prefectural soldiers, but despite that, there were still tens of thousands of maids, servants, and guards. These days, Linley and Bebe remained within Beirut's estate, paying attention to any news which came from the Infernal Realm regarding the red caltrop diamond.

Linley and Bebe's estate. Linley was seated atop a stone chair, flipping through an intelligence report.

"Boss, any news about the red caltrop diamond?" Bebe came out from the door, asking with a smirk.

Linley finished the report, tossing it to the table and shaking his head with a laugh. "There's no news at all. These intelligence reports are as useful as catching the wind or chasing after shadows; there isn't a single report that comes close to that report regarding Brodie. Unfortunately, the soldiers in control of the Muja Continent's teleportation array belong to their Sovereign and can't be ordered about by normal people. The Muja Army has countless soldiers. It truly is too difficult to discover where Brodie might have been teleported to.

Up till now, Linley still believed…

The red caltrop diamond which Brodie had acquired was probably real! The divine clone he had left behind was done to entangle pursuers and draw their attention. As to where Brodie's true body had gone? Linley very much wanted to know.

“It is tricky.” Bebe sat down, then grabbed a red, slick fruit on the table. He began to chomp it down, and juice dribbled from the corner of his lips. “The soldiers in charge of the Muja Continent’s teleportation array are constantly changing. This month, one squad is in charge of sending people away from the Infernal Realm; next month, it’s another squad. The number of soldiers that one would need to speak to in order to thoroughly investigate several decades worth of events will most likely be quite high! If you were to go openly and boldly, you will definitely draw attention from the Muja Sovereign!”

Linley nodded slightly.

Last time, he had many excuses for as to why he went to catch Brodie. He could just say that he was interested in this treasure and wanted to see it for himself. After all, even ordinary Lord Prefects and Seven Star Fiends who saw that intelligence report and scryer recordings were moved to find it. Actually, many of those who went in search of the red caltrop diamond didn’t actually believe it was an Overgod talisman.

They only went in search of it because of the unusual abilities it had displayed.

But for now, that matter was temporarily on hold. If Linley were to openly go to the Muja Continent and investigate in such a thorough manner, others would certainly feel suspicious! After all, given the status of a Paragon, the red caltrop diamond shouldn’t be too useful. If one occasionally investigated, that was one thing, but if one constantly investigated, it was indeed suspicious.

Bebe pursed his lips and snorted. “Brodie really was a bit greedy.”

“A Highgod who fused with a divine spark, and a treasure that allows him to easily defeat Six Star Fiends. He knows what matters.” Linley laughed calmly. “In addition, I imagine that after passing through the teleportation array, he paid the fee several times and teleported through multiple planes. Who knows where he ended up?”

Bebe nodded in agreement as well.

“So we won’t be able to get it?” Bebe said unhappily.

“One day, we will.” Linley said with a calm laugh. Still, his words lacked conviction.

Linley had already sent his other three divine clones to lead his family and friends back to the Yulan continent. Linley remained here because he indeed to acquire the red caltrop diamond at any cost! To Linley, the red caltrop diamond represented the only chance Grandpa Doehring had of coming back to life! There was no way Linley would give up!

Bebe, seeing the look on Linley’s face, nodded as well. “After Brodie acquired the red caltrop diamond, of course he wouldn’t be willing to be ordinary again. There will come the day when news of him once more spreads out.”

Linley laughed and nodded in agreement.

“Whooosh…” The cool wind of the Infernal Realm blew past the white phosphorous tree within the courtyard. The leaves of it, already yellow, floated down in the breeze, covering the courtyard within a layer.

“Eh?”

Linley and Bebe’s faces turned grave. They couldn’t help but stare upwards, and upon doing so, Linley couldn’t help but narrow his eyes. “What an eye-piercing brilliance.” That figure in midair seemed like a scorching white sun. The light emanating from his entire body was simply too brilliant, forcing others to narrow their eyes.

A powerful aura emanated forth from the dazzling ‘sun’.

Linley took a close look. Only then was he able to tell that there was a human figure within the ‘sun’. This person had long golden hair, golden

eyebrows, and a pure white face that was devoid of any hair, aside from the golden eyebrows that drooped down past his ears. A loose golden robe embroidered with gold covered his entire body, but it only enhanced his powerful physique.

The eyes of the man seemed like two miniature suns. They were eye-piercingly brilliant, and made others feel as though they couldn't stare directly at this man.

"A Sovereign?" Linley instantly came to this conclusion. "Light-type aura. It seems this is a Sovereign of Light. Why has a Sovereign of Light come?" Linley didn't understand.

"Greetings, Sovereign." Linley bowed and said.

"Greetings, Sovereign." Bebe immediately bowed as well.

The Chief Sovereign of Light gave an emotionless downwards glance to Linley and Bebe. His gaze was calm, like that of an emperor staring down at lesser creatures. After some time, the Chief Sovereign of Light finally spoke. "Are you Linley?"

"Yes." Linley looked very respectful, but his heart was filled with confused thoughts.

Why had this Sovereign come? Could it have been for the Overgod talisman? Or was it for the sake of Chegwin? When faced with this situation, Linley instantly began to think of many possible responses. Although he came up with quite a few, Linley still felt nervous and uneasy. After all, with the Sovereign here in person, if the Sovereign wanted him dead, he only had to wave his hand.

After he had arrived, the Chief Sovereign of Light had set up his Godrealm, making it so that Linley and Bebe were placed in a region separated from the outside world. Nobody in the outside world could see what happened here.

“This is…a Sovereign?”

The Lord Prefect, ‘Beirut’, turned to look towards the air above Linley and Bebe. His face couldn’t help but change. “Why did a Sovereign of Light come to my place?” Beirut hesitated slightly, then gritted his teeth and flew at high speed towards Linley and Bebe. He feared Sovereigns of Light, but he cared deeply about Linley and Bebe. He couldn’t just stay uninvolved!

Linley was currently speaking with the Chief Sovereign of Light, who hovered there in the air.

“This did indeed happen! Because of what had happened, many of the Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm paid attention to this matter, but clearly, this information was falsely made. I have no nine soul pearls, nor do I have an Overgod decree.” Linley raised his head and looked at the Chief Sovereign of Light as he spoke calmly.

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s glowing gaze expanded, making it so that Linley couldn’t help but feel his eyes hurt as he stared upwards.

“Linley, I give you one chance. Hand over the nine soul pearls. Otherwise, die!” The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly.

Linley felt shocked. “Why is the Chief Sovereign of Light so certain that I hold the nine soul pearls? No; only Bebe, Olivier’s family, and Molde knows this for sure. Molde died long ago, and Olivier has returned to the Yulan continent. There shouldn’t be any problems.”

“Sovereign, I truly don’t understand.” Linley raised his head, pretending to speak in anger. “Last time, the Sovereign of Wind also questioned me in this manner, but the results were clear; that news was fake. Most likely, there might not even be an Overgod mission. Why, Sovereign, must you insist that I have the nine soul pearls?”

Right at this moment, a violent ripple emanated from the surrounding area. Someone was passing through the Sovereign’s Godrealm, entering within.

“Hrm?” The Chief Sovereign of Light turned to look.

“Whoosh!” A figure flew in at high speed. When Linley looked closely, he saw that it was Beirut!

“Grandpa.” Bebe was overjoyed.

The Chief Sovereign of Light looked down at the figure before him. Upon seeing Beirut, his face couldn’t help but sink. With a cold snort, he said, “Beirut. You actually dare come see me?”

Beirut, hearing this voice, couldn’t help but feel startled. Upon raising his head, his face changed and he called out in shock, “Chief Sovereign of Light!”

“Chief Sovereign of Light?” Linley was secretly startled.

Based on the information Linley had available, there were eleven Chief Sovereigns, with the four Chief Sovereigns of the four Edicts being the most powerful. Second only to those four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts was this Chief Sovereign of Light!

“Chief Sovereign of Light, why have you come to my place?” Beirut said in a low voice.

“Why?” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s gaze turned very cold when he looked at Beirut. “This friend of yours, ‘Linley’, claims that he does not have the nine soul pearls, and that the information regarding the Overgod mission is false as well. Unfortunately…I now know very well that your friend is lying!”

Beirut stood next to Linley.

“Lying?” Linley said solemnly. “Chief Sovereign, even though you have the exalted status of Chief Sovereign, you can’t just casually besmirch my reputation.”

“Besmirch?”

The Chief Sovereign of Light waved his hand, and a green piece of paper appeared within it. Afterwards, the Chief Sovereign of Light used divine power, causing rays of power to shoot out from that green paper which then formed into lines of words and pictures which hung there in midair. It was a power akin to a ‘scryer recording’; this was just a simple usage of power.

Linley, Bebe, and Beirut all looked at the words and images in midair.

“Overgod decree?” Beirut was stunned.

“That…that’s the Overgod decree?” Linley was startled.

The words described the Overgod mission very carefully, and the contents of it were identical to the contents of the paper which Molde had sent out.

“Linley, I acquired this Overgod decree, which is proof that the information is true. It seems that information wasn’t just wildly made up. As I see it, you had best no longer dissemble. Just hand it over.” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked down at the three of them and spoke in a cold voice.

“Boss, that’s the Overgod decree. This is going to be trouble.” Bebe said hurriedly.

Linley just raised his head and said, “Chief Sovereign, I congratulate you very sincerely for acquiring the Overgod decree! It seems the Overgod mission is a real one. But I must say…just because the Overgod mission is real, does that have to mean that the nine soul pearls and the Overgod decree are all truly in my hands? But clearly, the Overgod decree is in your hands, Chief Sovereign.”

“Stop lying. I have no interest in hearing your lies. Will you or won’t you hand it over? If you don’t, then don’t blame me for acting.” The Chief Sovereign of Light gave his final warning.

“Mr. Augusta.” A voice rang out.

The Chief Sovereign of Light swept his gaze across. Within his Godrealm, a figure slowly began to materialize. This man had long, blood-red hair, and was dressed in a blood-colored robe. Linley, seeing this, felt secretly delighted. “The Bloodridge Sovereign!”

“Boson?” The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned.

“Mr. Augusta.” The Bloodridge Sovereign smiled. “I already heard the news. Everything was caused by false information. But not long ago, it was already determined that the Overgod mission wasn’t necessarily real, and that the news that Linley was in possession of the nine soul pearls was also false.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light gave him a cold glance, then waved his hand and made the green paper face the Bloodridge Sovereign.

The Bloodridge Sovereign gave it a glance, seeing the words on it. He couldn’t help but feel shocked. “This is the Overgod decree?”

“Is it still false? Clearly, the information is real. I imagine that this sort of news wouldn’t be randomly made up. Linley definitely has the nine soul pearls.” The Chief Sovereign of Light stared coldly towards Linley. “Linley, I’ve already told you that you have only two choices. Hand it over or die. You decide.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light completely ignored the Bloodridge Sovereign’s presence!

“Chief Sovereign.”

Linley raised his head and said, “I told you that I don’t have the nine soul pearls, yet you refuse to believe me. And so you will kill me? But I have to tell you something; I have other divine clones in other places. Even if you kill me, you won’t be able to open my interspatial ring. Thus, even if I have the nine soul pearls and you kill me, you still won’t be able to acquire it. What’s more, I don’t have them!”

“Divine clones?” The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned. “Where?”

“A material plane.” Linley said honestly.

“My Yulan Plane.” Beirut smiled.

“Hmph.” The Chief Sovereign of Light gave Beirut a cold glance.

“Excellent. You actually hid your divine clones in a material plane. You are quite clever.” The Chief Sovereign of Light said coldly. “You claim that you don’t have the nine soul pearls. Remove the binding you have over your interspatial ring and let me investigate it. Do you dare?”

“If you search it and don’t find it, will you leave, Chief Sovereign?” Linley asked.

“Don’t waste my time.” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s face sank.

“Fine. Since you, Chief Sovereign of Light, insist on searching my interspatial ring just based on your suspicions…then I, Linley, will today let you inspect it.” With but a thought, Linley divided his body into two, simultaneously retrieving two interspatial rings. After removing the bindings, Linley raised his head to look at the Chief Sovereign, then laughed calmly, “I imagine, Chief Sovereign, you know that I currently only have these two divine clones present. You can go ahead and investigate these interspatial rings.”

Linley then tossed them towards the air, towards the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Chapter 32 – I'd Rather Die! A Change of Events

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 32, I'd Rather Die! A Change of Events

Linley had so straightforwardly handed over his interspatial rings that the Chief Sovereign of Light was rather suspicious. "Can it be that it truly is as I suspected; Linley had taken the nine soul pearls back to the Yulan Plane?" When he had heard Linley say that Linley's divine clones were not present and had returned to the Yulan Plane, the Chief Sovereign of Light had a bad feeling.

But the Chief Sovereign of Light still bound the rings with blood and inspected them both. "There really is nothing here!"

"Chief Sovereign, are the nine soul pearls that you seek within?" Linley said in a clear voice, his head raised.

"Hmph."

After removing his binding, the Chief Sovereign of Light casually tossed the two interspatial rings to Linley. Right at this moment, energy once more began to tremble and swirl about in the surrounding area as a blurry figure appeared, then solidified. Clearly, yet another Sovereign had created an energy clone.

The Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm were scattered everywhere. For them to arrive in a short period of time was unlikely. Still, given that their divine sense covered the entire region, the Sovereigns could form energy clones at any time.

"Augusta." The newcomer was dressed in a long, silver robe. He stared at Augusta with his violet eyes.

"Shinji." The Chief Sovereign of Light glanced at him.

Upon seeing this person, Linley felt his heart rise. “The Starmist Sovereign!” Linley had seen this person before; this was the Sovereign who controlled the Infernal Realm’s Starmist Sea.

“What a lively place this is. Even you came, Augusta. Shinji, Boson!” A warm voice rang out as a blurry violet energy began to solidify then transform into a human figure. It was a beautiful woman dressed in loose, faint violet robes. A familiar aura emanating from her caused Linley to have a thought.

“This aura seems so similar to Reisgem’s.” Linley mused to himself.

“Linley, long time no see. After you left the Amethyst Mountains, a mere few thousand years passed, but you’ve had such accomplishments.” The beautiful woman smiled as she looked at Linley. Her eyes seemed to contain some sort of astonishing charisma that could move a person’s soul.

“Sovereign.” This time, when Linley bowed, it was with true sincerity and true respect. The Redbud Sovereign had indeed helped him greatly.

“Haha…there really are quite a few people here. Are all of you here for the Overgod mission?” A clear voice rang out, and fiery energy solidified in the air, then condensed into a slightly plump man. His fiery red hair was casually mussed, and fire could be seen faintly flickering and swirling around him. In the center of his forehead, there was the seal of a golden flame.

“Oh, so many have arrived already.” A black energy condensed.

One Sovereign energy clone after another appeared in midair. Linley could only recognize just three or four of them; he didn’t recognize the vast majority of them.

“So many Sovereigns.” Beirut had a hint of a smile on his face as he sent to Linley, “Linley, for so many Sovereigns to simultaneously appear is something which might not be seen in a trillion years.”

“There are indeed many Sovereigns here.” Linley swept them with his gaze. In the air above him, more than fifteen Sovereigns had appeared!

Logically speaking, there should only be seven Destruction-type Sovereigns in the Infernal Realm, but fifteen had appeared. A Sovereign of Fire. Of Water. Of Light. Of Earth…indeed, it was quite lively. With the majestic presences of so many Sovereigns present, even Linley felt some pressure.

“I feel miserable.” Bebe sent to Linley.

“Try and endure it.” Linley himself could do nothing.

The Sovereigns began to chat amongst themselves.

“Mr. Augusta, you have the Overgod decree?” The Sovereign with the golden flame seal on his forehead said hurriedly. The various Sovereigns were all staring at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

The Chief Sovereign of Light let out a calm laugh. He didn’t try to hide it. Waving his hand, that green paper appeared, hovering above his palm. “This is the Overgod decree. There’s no need to hide the information within.” The Chief Sovereign of Light forthrightly allowed all of the Sovereigns to view the green paper. “Clearly, the news that spread in the Infernal Realm in the past was real!”

The group of Sovereigns hovered there in midair, chatting amongst themselves.

An Overgod mission! Although some Sovereigns didn’t dare dream of completing it, others wanted to give it a try! Even if the ones who didn’t dare make an attempt still cared greatly about this matter. After becoming Sovereigns, they no longer had many pursuits. Overgod missions were ones they cared about greatly.

“Chief Sovereign, you’ve already inspected my interspatial ring. Now, Chief Sovereign, do you still doubt my words?” Linley said clearly.

“Inspected? Hmph. Only two of your divine clones are present. Others remain hiding in the Yulan Plane. If you aren’t afraid of Sovereigns inspecting you, why have your divine clones hide there?” The Chief Sovereign of Light clearly wasn’t going to let Linley off that easily.

“Linley’s divine clones went to the Yulan Plane?” Quite a few Sovereigns immediately called out in surprise.

“Perhaps the information in the Overgod decree really is true. Then Linley might truly be holding the nine soul pearls.” This was what some Sovereigns began to believe.

Linley looked at the group of Sovereigns in the air above him, then turned his gaze to the Chief Sovereign of Light. “Chief Sovereign, the Yulan Plane is my homeland. What’s the problem with me returning to my homeland? Can it be that after I successfully became a Paragon, I can’t even go home?”

“You can. Of course you can.” The Chief Sovereign of Light said coldly. “Then would you dare have your other divine clones emerge from the Yulan Plane and come to the Infernal Realm?” As the Chief Sovereign of Light viewed it, there was no way Linley would let someone else carry a treasure like an Overgod talisman. Nine out of ten, Linley carried it on one of his interspatial rings.

Linley stared at the Chief Sovereign of Light, then shook his head. “I will not.”

Hearing Linley’s words, the Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t help but laugh coldly. “Oh. It seems that the nine soul pearls truly are on your other divine clones.”

“Linley doesn’t dare let his divine clones return to the Infernal Realm? It seems there really is something amiss.”

That group of lofty Sovereigns watched and laughed calmly as this unfolded. They couldn’t be bothered to interfere. As for the Bloodridge

Sovereign and the Redbud Sovereign, they just watched silently, not saying a word.

“Chief Sovereign.” Linley laughed calmly. “You are an exalted Chief Sovereign, but just on the basis of a manufactured rumor, you were ready to attack me. Indeed, the Overgod mission might be real. But the information claimed that the ‘nine soul pearls’ and the ‘Overgod decree’ were on me, whereas now, the Overgod decree is in your hands, Chief Sovereign!”

The group of Sovereigns turned to look at the Chief Sovereign of Light, as though they were watching a diverting play.

“The Overgod decree is useless to you. It’s understandable for you to toss it aside.” The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly. “Linley, you will bring your divine clones here. Otherwise…”

“Otherwise what?” Beirut spoke out. Beirut raised his head to look at the Chief Sovereign of Light. “Almighty Chief Sovereign, what, are you planning to threaten a Deity?”

The Chief Sovereign of Light lowered his head, giving Beirut an icy look. Beirut continued to smile.

“Linley, bring your divine clones over and allow me to inspect them.” The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly. “After inspecting, I naturally won’t act against you.” Given how many Sovereigns were watching, for now, the Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t want to shed all pretense of cordiality and attack a Highgod Paragon.

“Chief Sovereign.” Linley raised his head, staring coldly at the Chief Sovereign. “It isn’t that I don’t believe you; only, your words make me unable to believe you. Just now, you threatened me; how could I possibly dare bring my divine clones out? If I bring all of my divine clones but end up being killed by you, I, Linley, wouldn’t even have the chance to curse at you.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s face sank as he heard this.

“There is no way I will bring my divine clones out from the Infernal Realm. However, my divine clones definitely are not in possession of the nine soul pearls.” Linley said clearly. “I, Linley, can swear it! Overgod of Fate, if the divine clones of myself, Linley, which are currently in the Yulan Plane are in possession of the nine soul pearls, then let my soul be dissipated and let me die!”

Linley stared at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Hrm?” The Chief Sovereign of Light frowned slightly.

The surrounding Sovereigns either secretly chatted through divine sense or began to chat openly.

“Can it be that he truly doesn’t have it?” The Chief Sovereign of Light was puzzled.

“Can it be that it is on Linley’s friends or family?” The Chief Sovereign of Light mused. He couldn’t help but glance at Bebe, by Linley’s side. He barked, “Linley, perhaps the nine soul pearls are not on you, but you probably hid them on your friends. Such as the person next to you.”

The look on Linley’s face became ugly.

“Chief Sovereign, if you want to investigate, then investigate.” Linley looked towards Bebe. “Bebe, give your interspatial ring to the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

“Yes. Boss.” Bebe didn’t hesitate.

Seeing how straightforward Linley was, the Chief Sovereign of Light just said icily, “No need to continue with this game of charades. I know that neither he nor you are holding it. If he did, he would probably be in the Yulan Plane as well! Linley, as I see it, those nine soul pearls must be in the Yulan Plane. Either on your divine clones, or on your family members.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light had no idea that those two talismans were right on Bebe!

“Chief Sovereign, you wanted to search me, so I let you search! You suspected my divine clones, so I swore an oath by the Overgods! You suspected my brother, so I let him give you his interspatial ring to search! And now, you suspect my family and friends! I imagine that even if I brought my family and friends before you for you to search, after you were unable to find it, you would probably say that I had hidden the interspatial ring in some location within my homeland, the Yulan continent.” Linley said in a low voice.

The Chief Sovereign of Light was startled.

“For the sake of avoiding all suspicion and trouble, why don’t we just be more straightforward about it. Chief Sovereign, go ahead and send a group of Highgods to my homeland, the Yulan continent, and search for it.” An ugly look was on Linley’s face. “I guarantee that my family, friends, and divine clones will make themselves available for your forces to search. You can even let your people search the entire Yulan continent. I have no qualms about this.”

The Chief Sovereign of Light glanced at the nearby Beirut.

Go to the Yulan Plane?

As a Sovereign, he was unable to enter the Yulan Plane. If he sent a group of Highgods, wouldn’t they have to obediently follow Beirut’s rules?

“Augusta, considering how far Linley is willing to go…forget it. That part of the information regarding the Overgod mission was real, but the other parts were probably false.” The Redbud Sovereign laughed as she spoke.

The Chief Sovereign of Light stared coldly at Linley.

In his heart, he was pondering, “Linley’s words…on the surface, he is asking me to go search, but if I send people there, they will be in Beirut’s

sphere of power. How will they search? He's just putting on an act and saying these things. He definitely wouldn't entrust the nine soul pearls to an ordinary person. It seems the nine soul pearls are on Linley's family or friends." The Chief Sovereign of Light came to this conclusion.

"Linley!"

The Chief Sovereign of Light stared down coldly at Linley. "Don't play these tricks with me. Have all of your family, friends, and divine clones come to the Infernal Realm. I, Augusta, swear that I will not kill you. But if you refuse…then you will die!"

He was going too far!

The Chief Sovereign of Light really was going too far by threatening Linley repeatedly. Quite a few of the surrounding Sovereigns all felt this way, but these Sovereigns weren't willing to casually offend the Chief Sovereign of Light, and so they just watched.

"Chief Sovereign, if I let my family and friends come over while my divine clones remain behind, is that acceptable?" Linley laughed coldly.

"Of course not." The Chief Sovereign of Light didn't hesitate at all.

As he saw it, if Linley's family and friends came, most likely the nine soul pearls would be given to Linley's divine clones.

"Haha…"

Below, Linley began to laugh from 'rage'. "Chief Sovereign and all of the surrounding Sovereigns, my actions have been clear for you all to see. I have, time and time again, held back and allowed this Chief Sovereign to search me. I've even sworn an oath by the Overgods and am even willing to let my family and friends come to the Infernal Realm. But you?"

"Your intentions are clear. You insist on all of my divine clones coming out!"

Linley's rage was beginning to tower. "If I brought all of my divine clones here to see you, then wouldn't my life and death no longer be under my own control? Most likely, by then, you'd kill me if you felt like it! I, Linley, am not that stupid. I, Linley, have already been sufficiently respectful to you today. Everything I've done, all of these Sovereigns have witnessed. If you want to continue threatening me, what more can I do? All I can do is tell you this; I'm not able to comply!"

"If, by relying on your power as a Sovereign, you kill me, I'm not able to fight back. Attack when you please." Linley stared coldly at the Chief Sovereign of Light. "In my heart, Sovereigns are lofty, exalted figures. I deeply respect and venerate Sovereigns, but Chief Sovereign, I just want to say one thing to you…don't make me look down on you!"

When Linley's words came out, the Chief Sovereign of Light's face turned black.

Linley just raised his head, staring at the Chief Sovereign of Light, not willing to lower his head at all.

Linley knew that the more he gave way, the more the Chief Sovereign of Light would advance and pressure him. To Linley…although handing over the nine soul pearls could save his life, he couldn't hand them over! That was his hope of bringing Grandpa Doehring back to life! Even if he died, it would just be the death of his original body and a divine clone.

Could it be that Grandpa Doehring's life was less valuable than one of his divine clones and his original body?

In the past, if it wasn't for Grandpa Doehring, Linley probably would have been an ordinary warrior in the Yulan continent who wouldn't even have the chance to take revenge. If it hadn't been for Grandpa Doehring sacrificing his life, Linley probably would've been killed by the forces of the Radiant Church!

He would rather die! Die, rather than hand it over!

“Excellent. Excellent!” The Chief Sovereign of Light was so furious, he truly did want to kill Linley now.

But Linley’s final words, “don’t make me look down on you,” truly made it so that the Chief Sovereign of Light wanted to act, but couldn’t. So many other Sovereigns were watching him. If he were to truly kill Linley, then he probably really would lose all face amongst Sovereigns.

“I don’t understand.” Bebe, by Linley’s side, mumbled through pursed lips. “Thirty some years ago, a Highgod named ‘Brodie’ who had fused with a divine spark appeared in the Muja Continent. Back then, he acquired a red caltrop diamond, and by relying on it, was able to easily kill Six Star Fiends. Back then, we were all certain that was a true treasure, but we weren’t able to verify if it was an Overgod talisman. Sadly, Brodie himself probably fled through a teleportation array and left the Infernal Realm. Alas. Rather than go search for an Overgod talisman that actually appeared, you’ve come to find Linley, who does not have the nine soul pearls, and insist that he does. I really don’t understand!”

“Brodie? Red caltrop diamond?”

Instantly, the group of Sovereigns began to speak out.

“The red caltrop diamond truly did appear?” Quite a few Sovereigns looked towards Bebe.

“Of course!” Bebe was completely certain. “That Brodie used one of his Highgod clones to tie down a group of people. I imagine that when he left the Infernal Realm, he only took his God-level divine clone and his wife, who was merely a Demigod.” Bebe said with certainty.

“Muja, quickly go investigate.”

The Sovereigns all looked towards the Muja Sovereign. The Muja Sovereign’s energy clone was present, but his original body was in the distant Muja Continent. The Muja Sovereign immediately began to

investigate this matter.

Enough regarding those other Sovereigns, though; the Chief Sovereign of Light now truly felt a hint of a killing urge towards Linley. Unfortunately, with so many other Sovereigns present, he didn't attack.

Suddenly…

"Augusta, why have you come to the Infernal Realm?" A deep, rumbling voice echoed forth.

At the same time, a pure black color appeared in midair and a terrifying aura swept out. It was like an enormous, world-ending behemoth had appeared…but it then condensed into a human figure. This was a figure swathed completely in black light, with an aura so strong that it even suppressed the Chief Sovereign of Light's.

"Chief Sovereign!"

"Chief Sovereign!"

The other Sovereigns all immediately saluted. Clearly, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had tremendous prestige.

Linley was shocked. "This aura of Destruction…Chief Sovereign? The Chief Sovereign of Destruction? One of the Chief Sovereigns of the four Edicts, a figure of legend?" Linley understand that given how powerful this aura was, clearly the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had come in person. If he had wanted to send his energy clone, he probably would've arrived long ago.

Linley looked carefully at the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't see the person in the black light clearly.

"You came as well. Can it be that you are also interested in the Overgod talisman?" The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at him.

“Do you still remember the agreement we made ten thousand years ago?” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly.

“Of course I do.” The Chief Sovereign of Light said calmly.

“Very good. This Linley is my Emissary. Even if you want to pressure him, don’t go too far.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly. These words caused this group of Sovereigns to all look towards the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. Even the Redbud Sovereign and the Bloodridge Sovereign revealed traces of astonishment in their eyes. Even they didn’t know about this.

“His Emissary?” Linley’s heart shook.

“Yours?” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, then laughed calmly and nodded. “Fine, then. This matter ends here.”

But right at this moment, the brown-haired Muja Sovereign laughed loudly. “Chief Sovereign, Mr. Augusta…everyone, I just did a high-speed search, and I really did discover that thirty eight years ago, a God and a Demigod, male and female, used the teleportation array to go to a material plane. It is very rare for a God and a Demigod to use a teleportation array; during the past thirty years, there was only this one instance.”

“Which material plane did they go to?” The Sovereign of Wind, ‘Teresia’, spoke out.

At the same time, many Sovereigns looked towards the Muja Sovereign, including the Chief Sovereign of Light! As for the Chief Sovereign of Destruction…Linley couldn’t even see his true appearance clearly, much less where he was looking towards.

Linley’s heart began to tremble. “A material plane?”

He finally knew where Brodie had gone to! There was hope for him to find the red caltrop diamond!

“Haha, I’m not too interested in the Overgod talismans, so I’ll tell you. The material plane this couple went to is the material plane known as the ‘Okerlund’ [Ao’ka’lun] Plane!” The Muja Sovereign said clearly.

Immediately, the Sovereigns began to chat amongst themselves.

“Everyone, I’m going back now.” A low voice rang out. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s figure turned, then disappeared from sight.

With the departure of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, the other Sovereigns immediately all began to depart as well.

Clearly…this precise information regarding the red caltrop diamond had caused the Sovereigns to all grow excited.

“Linley, are you going to go to the Okerlund Plane?” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked down at Linley.

“Of course.” Linley said solemnly.

The Chief Sovereign of Light let out a cold laugh, then disappeared.

Moments later, the other Sovereigns left as well, not a single one remaining.

“Linley?” Beirut laughed as he looked at Linley. “Are you really going to the Okerlund Plane?”

“Yes, I am going. And…I’m going right now!” Linley said.

After learning the location was the Okerlund Plane, Linley already felt completely confident! Sovereigns weren’t able to enter material planes. Then…who had he to fear? Even if the other Paragons came at the orders of the Sovereigns, now that Linley had fused four types of divine power, his strength was ten times what it was in the past!

In fact, the durability of his body was probably close to a Sovereign artifact

by now.

“The red caltrop diamond is mine.” Linley’s heart blazed with eagerness.

After having embarked on the road to acquire the red caltrop diamond, Linley had already decided that he would sacrifice anything. If Deities came to stop him, he would slaughter them! Paragons, divine beasts…even those with the backing of Sovereigns…if they wanted to stop him, he would show no mercy!

For the sake of Grandpa Doehring…

Linley had already decided to ‘shatter his cauldrons and sink his boats’; he would sacrifice everything. There was no going back!

Chapter 33 – Descent

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 33, Descent

The Divine Light Plane. Deep within the vast, endless Godsgaol Sea, there was a quiet little island…Jadeflower Island.

This island had a circumference of only a few dozen kilometers, but over the course of countless years, the surrounding pirates had all come to a common understanding…no matter what, they were not to draw close to that little island! For countless years, anyone who dared to disturb the peace of Jadeflower Island, aside from old friends of the island master, would all perish.

"Rumble…"

In the air above Jadeflower Island, a wind arose and clouds gathered. A surge of powerful energy coalesced above it, and tens of figures immediately flew out of the island. The leader was a man, while the others were all female. The leading male was dressed in a white robe, had unbound golden hair, and two whiskers that drooped downwards like a pair of eyebrows. His gaze, however, was fathomlessly deep and cold.

The energy in the skies above solidified into a figure; it was the Chief Sovereign of Light!

"Greetings, Chief Sovereign." The white-robed, golden-haired man bowed slightly.

"Chief Sovereign." The women also knelt down as well.

The Chief Sovereign of Light permitted a smile to appear on his face, then walked towards the white-robed man. "Clementine [Ke'lai'men'ting], I've come today because there is something important I wish to ask you to go do."

The white-robed man lifted a surprised eyebrow. “Chief Sovereign, if there is something which you cannot accomplish, how can I, a Highgod, accomplish it?”

“Listen to me first.” The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled. In his heart, though, the Chief Sovereign of Light was rather unhappy. “These Highgod Paragons are all so arrogant. The vast majority of them are unwilling to become Emissaries, and even if they do, they won’t easily be persuaded to go on missions. Linley was so arrogant. This Clementine, despite being my Emissary, is not easily sent on missions either!”

Highgod Paragons were still supreme amongst Deities.

Many of them, in the bottom of their hearts, felt quite dissatisfied towards Sovereigns; what was so amazing about Sovereigns? They were just lucky enough to acquire Sovereign sparks!

Thus, Paragons rarely listened to or obeyed Sovereigns. When Linley had faced the Chief Sovereign of Light’s repeated threats, then finally been enraged and started to snap back, none of the surrounding Sovereigns were surprised…after all, Linley was a Paragon. If he continuously shrank back without fighting back at all, others would look down on him.

The Chief Sovereign of Light began to carefully describe the Overgod talisman matter to this Clementine.

“You now have a clear understanding of what happened here.” The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled. “Now, the red caltrop diamond is probably at the Okerlund material plane. We foreign Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes. Thus, the struggle over the red caltrop diamond in the Okerlund material plane will be up to you Deities! Amongst Deities, Highgod Paragons will naturally…well, you should understand now, yes?”

“Understood.”

Clementine nodded…but he didn’t volunteer himself.

The Chief Sovereign of Light mentally snorted, but he kept a smile on his face. “If you complete the mission, this will be a great accomplishment. There is no way for me to give you another Sovereign artifact, but I can give you ten thousand drops of Sovereign’s Might…” Clementine’s facial expression didn’t change. Clearly, he didn’t lack for Sovereign’s Might.

But there was no way for the Chief Sovereign of Light to give him another Sovereign artifact.

“I can give you the ten thousand drops of light-type Sovereign’s Might right now. If you fail, then forget it. If you succeed in acquiring the red caltrop diamond, when you hand it over to me, then I will give you another ten thousand drops of Sovereign’s Might of another type. What say you?” The Chief Sovereign of Light smiled.

“Don’t worry, Chief Sovereign. I will definitely work whole-heartedly to acquire the red caltrop diamond.” Clementine bowed forward slightly.

“Mm.” Only now did the Chief Sovereign of Light laughed, satisfied. “Go to the Okerlund material plane. If you don’t have enough subordinates, go to the teleportation array and summon a thousand Highgods to follow you.”

“Yes!” Clementine said respectfully. “Then I shall immediately head out.”

Sovereigns, being outsiders, were unable to enter material planes. Although many Sovereigns were intrigued, they could only go ask the various Highgod Paragons to lead their forces to the Okerlund Plane. Battles in material planes relied on Deities! Sovereigns could only wait outside for news.

The Okerlund Plane. The size of this entire plane was comparable to the Yulan Plane.

However, 99% of the surface of the Yulan Plane was covered by water! The South Sea, in particular, took up a region that was a thousand or ten thousand times larger than the Yulan continent! But the Okerlund Plane was

different. A large majority of the Okerlund Plane was covered by land!

The Okerlund Plane consisted of two vast continents.

They were the Fogdeep continent and the Beastgod continent! These two large continents both had a circumference greater than a hundred million kilometers. Aside from these two continents, there was only the endless sea.

The Okerlund Plane's Fogdeep continent was governed by humans, while the Beastgod continent was ruled over by beastmen.

Within the Fogdeep continent. There was a terrifying forest that covered an area of more than ten million kilometers…Fogdeep Forest!

Fogdeep Forest had existed for countless years. Its age was completely unfathomable, and it was simply too vast, causing many who adventured deep within it to be unable to pass to the other side despite spending their entire lives attempting to do so. According to legend, within Fogdeep Forest, aside from many magical beasts, there were also many primordial races, such as elves, sprites, dwarves, mountain giants, and others.

Deep within Fogdeep Forest. Mount Wiesel [Wei'si'er] was the number one mountain of the Fogdeep Forest, and was more than a hundred thousand kilometers tall.

Mount Wiesel's peak had eleven enormous teleportation arrays. Aside from these teleportation arrays, there was also an ordinary boulder which had been shaped into an estate. The Planar Overseer of the Okerlund Plane lived here.

"Nine hundred more years before this assignment to oversee the Okerlund Plane ends." A tall, thin, two-horned man stood at the peak of the mountain, staring at the vast, endlessly Fogdeep Forest. He could easily see that far in the distance, there were two enormous magical beasts that were bellowing at and fighting each other.

Boulders shattered. Trees trembled, then split apart. The two powerful

magical beasts seemed to have gone berserk.

An Azure Steelwing Hawk was currently perched quietly atop an ancient tree that had lived for ten thousand years, stealthily watching the distant battle. It seemed to be waiting for an opportunity to strike after both of these magical beasts were injured.

“It’s been only three years. I didn’t imagine that this kid actually completed fusing with the magicite core of the eighth rank magical beast, ‘Azure Steelwing Hawk’. It seems that he has become a druid of the eighth rank and should become a supreme expert amongst the younger generation within his tribe.” The tall, skinny man smiled as he watched.

Out of boredom, the Planar Overseer had grown to be quite familiar with the eight elven tribes surrounding the area.

There were some elves who were capable of becoming druids.

Even for Deities, druids were considered as rather unique. After fusing with a magicite core, they were actually able to transform into magical beasts. Even Deities would find it hard to find any differences between druids and ordinary magical beasts. This was because…after transforming, druids would become a true magical beast!

This Planar Overseer had become familiar with the soul aura of this elven genius, which was why upon seeing the Azure Steelwind Hawk, he knew it was the elven youth who had transformed.

“I wonder if this youth will become a Deity during my tenure as Planar Overseer, then head to the Higher Planes.” The tall, skinny man mused to himself.

Right at this moment, one of the eleven teleportation arrays suddenly lit up.

“Eh?” The tall, skinny man turned to look. “From the Divine Fire Plane!”

These eleven teleportation arrays were aligned to the four Higher Planes

and the Seven Divine Planes.

“To travel from the Divine Fire Plane to a material plane…the cost is astronomical. A few dozen years ago, that couple returned from the Infernal Realm. Now, someone else comes from the Divine Fire Plane.” The tall, skinny man immediately walked towards the teleportation array, and the brilliant, illusory glow of the teleportation array slowly faded.

The tall, skinny man’s face changed.

He saw a large, dense cluster of people within the teleportation array, with the leader being a grim-looking man who wore a long azure robe and whose long, fiery red hair fell to his shoulders.

“So many people. There are more than a hundred! And these people’s power…I can’t see through any of them.” The tall, skinny man was badly shocked. He was a God. For him to be unable to see through them…meant that all of these hundred-plus people were Highgods!

“For a single Highgod to pass through to a material plane has an astronomical cost. For so many Highgods…” The tall, skinny man took a long, deep breath. Whether they had come after paying an astronomical fee or had come for free through a Sovereign, they were not people who he, a lowly Planar Overseer, could be compared to.

“Milord.” The tall, skinny man hurriedly bowed.

The fiery haired man’s gaze was like thunder. The Planar Overseer just barely looked at him before immediately feeling as though his soul had been struck by a heavy hammer.

The fiery haired man couldn’t be bothered with this God. The hundred Highgods under his command immediately spread out, and the teleportation array once more lit up!

“Someone else from the Divine Fire Plane?” The tall, skinny man was shocked.

Indeed…yet another group of more than a hundred had come!

Because each teleportation array was limited in size, only a hundred could come each time. Even if they squeezed, two hundred was pretty much the limit. But clearly, many people were coming from the Divine Fire Plane! One batch after another…the teleportation array lit up time and time again as more people were sent over…

“How many are there?!” The tall, skinny man was stunned.

Why had so many Highgods come to the Okerlund Plane? What were they here for?

A long time later, the teleportation array finally halted. More than two thousand Highgods had come from the Divine Fire Plane! Although, to the Divine Fire Plane, two thousand Highgods wasn’t much, to an ordinary material plane, two thousand Highgods was simply, incredibly terrifying.

“There are too many people in this material plane. However…aside from the Planar Overseer, there are only two Gods, and one is female, while the other is a beastman-shaped male.” The fiery haired man let out a cold snort.

The tall, skinny man was shocked upon hearing this.

He knew who the two people the fiery haired man mentioned were. One was the number one expert of the Fogdeep continent, the ‘Radiant Goddess’, while the other was the ‘Beastgod’ of the Beastgod continent. But these two continents were extremely far from each other. Even Highgods, in a material plane, were only able to stretch their divine sense to a million kilometers or so. It would be very hard to cover even just the Fogdeep continent.

To be able to stretch and scan the two continents at the same time…what sort of spiritual energy was this?!

“It seems that Brodie has indeed hidden himself quite deeply.” The fiery

haired man glanced at the tall, skinny man. “What are you called?”

“Milord, my name is Ben [Bi’en]. Okerlund Plane’s Planar Overseer.” The tall, skinny man said respectfully.

“Planar Overseer…then you definitely know about Brodie’s arrival.” The fiery haired man suddenly frowned. Yet another teleportation array had begun to shine.

“They are quite fast.”

The fiery haired man immediately gave an order through divine sense to the surrounding Highgods. “Head out!” At the same time, he released a hint of fiery red energy, grabbing the Planar Overseer with it and taking him away as he flew. The two thousand Highgods behind him also followed as they flew away at high speed.

Just as they flew away, another group of Highgods descended. From the teleportation array, it seemed they came from the Infernal Realm.

It was another group of over a hundred Highgods, with the leader being a youth with dark, wavy black hair and a dark black robe. His cold pupils were like the pupils of a venomous viper. If Linley was here, he would immediately recognize…that this grim-looking man in the black robe was that person who had helped Linley once. Dunnington!

“Hmph. I didn’t expect that someone would be even faster than us.” Dunnington swept his gaze into the distance. “Indeed, a Paragon is leading that group.”

The teleportation array once more lit up as one group after another emerged.

Dunnington didn’t lead that many people here, just eight hundred Highgods or so. In reality, though, the fight over the red caltrop diamond would depend on the Highgod Paragons.

“Let’s go.” Dunnington gave the order, and this vast, awe-inspiring group flew out as well.

The armies of the various Divine Planes and Higher Planes, with Paragons at the lead of almost all of them, began to descend! The light of the teleportation arrays flashed nonstop!

The beastmen, elves, gnomes, and other races of Fogdeep Forest, upon seeing these thousands of people fly past high in the sky, were all scared silly.

“So many Saints! More than a thousand Saints. Which power is this? Who possesses such terrifying strength?” Quite a few people who saw this scene believed these people to be Saints. Only the Saints and Deities of the Okerlund Plane knew…to their terror and shock…

That they couldn’t sense the strength level of any of the individuals flying within the vast hordes that filled the skies!

The Okerlund Plane’s experts all knew in their hearts…

“The gods have descended!”

Chapter 34 – Hiding One's Strength

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 34, Hiding One's Strength

At the peak of Mount Wiesel. The teleportation array lit up again and again.

"So many experts have appeared. They all have such terrifying auras! Far more powerful than even our tribe's elder…can they all be Deities?" That Azure Steelwing Hawk quietly hid within the thick foliage, staring towards the distant mountain peak. This elf-turned-hawk, upon seeing the many Deities descended, had been terrified into motionlessness. Those two magical beasts that had been fighting fiercely were terrified into no longer fighting as well.

A group of Highgods appeared once more at the peak of the mountain. Just like before; the group was huge!

"If we add in this group, there has to have been more than ten thousand people already." The young druid murmured silently.

This group of Highgods was led by a man dressed in a long white robe, with white hair and white eyebrows. His brows, however, were nearly vertical, and his eyes were as crafty as a fox's. This person was someone Linley was quite familiar with; the Highgod Paragon of Wind, 'Bayer'!

Just as Bayer began to order the people who had been brought over to advance…

Suddenly, a different teleportation array lit up.

"Eh?" The young druid was surprised.

In the past, each teleportation array saw more than a hundred people pass through. But this time, there were only two! A youth and a youngster.

“Although there are only two, judging from their look…that group of a thousand Highgods seems to be quite terrified of that youth and youngster.” The young druid could clearly see that the newcomer youth was face to face with the white-robed, white-haired, white-browed man. They were chatting about something.

These two were of course, Linley and Bebe.

“Bayer, don’t be so arrogant. It remains to be seen who will be the one to acquire the red caltrop diamond.” Bebe snorted coldly.

Bayer, in the Planar Battlefield, had engaged in a battle with Linley’s squad. It could be said that there was an old grudge between the two.

“Then we’ll just have to wait and see.” Bayer swept Linley and Bebe with an icy gaze. He knew that Linley and Magnus had dueled each other, and that Magnus had even been exiled into chaotic space. Thus, Bayer didn’t dare go too far either.

“Let’s go!” Bayer gave the order.

Immediately, that vast group flew away and departed, leaving behind only Linley and Bebe, who stood there at the peak of the mountain.

“I thought that we had moved quite quickly. I didn’t imagine that so many people would have already arrived at this Okerlund Plane.” Linley smiled slightly, then spread out his divine sense. Instantly, it spread out to encompass not just the two continents, but also the vast, endless sea. “This Okerlund Plane is quite large. Even Highgod Paragons would need to use Sovereign’s Might in order to cover the entire plane with their divine sense. If they don’t, they would at most be able to extend their divine sense to part of a continent, perhaps to a circumference of just a hundred million kilometers.”

Although Highgod Paragons had the power of Will, their souls weren’t that powerful; if they simply relied on their own spiritual strength, the amount of area their divine sense could cover wasn’t that large.

In the Planar Battlefield, if Highgod Paragons relied on their own spiritual energy, the area their divine sense could cover was very small. Only by relying on Sovereign's Might were they able to extend it to eight thousand kilometers! When Linley used Sovereign's Might, he could extend his divine sense to thirty-six thousand kilometers! But if he relied on his own spiritual energy, he could stretch to five hundred and twelve kilometers!

In a material plane? Linley could control his spiritual energy to cover an entire plane!

"Boss, did you find the red caltrop diamond?" Bebe asked.

Linley began to frown. "Huh. Strange!"

"What is it?" Bebe was a bit worried.

"The entire Okerlund Plane has more than ten thousand Highgods already. Bayer, Dunnington…quite a few Paragons have arrived as well. But there are only two Gods. Clearly, they aren't Brodie." Linley was completely puzzled. "In addition, I haven't located the red caltrop diamond despite searching the entire plane. It might be hidden within an interspatial ring, making it impossible for me to find it."

Even Sovereigns wouldn't be able to locate items that were hidden in interspatial rings.

"Boss, Brodie's not here, and the red caltrop diamond isn't here either… could it be that Brodie has already left the Okerlund Plane?" Bebe said, worried. "Could it be that he just passed through here, so as to deceive his trackers?"

Linley frowned. "This is a possibility."

"If we want to investigate as to what happened after Brodie arrived, the easiest way is to ask the Planar Overseer." Linley swept the nearby courtyard atop the mountain with his gaze. "Now where did the Planar

Overseer go?”

“Could it be that the Planar Overseer was already captured by others?” Bebe asked hurriedly.

“Planar Overseers generally aren’t that strong. Most are Gods, while a few are Highgods.” Linley’s divine sense encompassed the entire Okerlund Plane.

After his soul mutation, the strength of his spiritual energy far surpassed that of others using Sovereign’s Might, especially given that he had a Will that was even stronger than that of Paragons.

These other Paragons weren’t able to detect Linley spreading his divine sense out at all.

It was much like how Linley wouldn’t be able to detect it when Sovereigns spread out their divine sense.

“The Okerlund Plane…amongst Deities, aside from a number of Demigods and two Gods, everyone else is a Highgod.” Linley frowned.

As he saw it, the Planar Overseer should be one of the Gods or Highgods.

“Those two Gods…one is female, and her appearance is similar to many sculptures that are located throughout that continent. It seems as though she is that ‘Radiant Goddess’ whom they worship. As for that beastman, he looks like the ‘Beastgod’ carvings that exist in the other continent.” Linley understood that these two shouldn’t be Planar Overseers.

In the material planes…there were some churches that didn’t wholly worship any Sovereigns.

For example, in the Yulan Plane, there were those who worshipped the War God, O’Brien. In the Baruch Empire, there were many who worshipped Linley. Anyone who became a Deity would be able to use and enjoy the power of faith. The power of faith would improve one’s soul, and generally

speaking, when training, one would be able to train much more quickly.

For example, when meditating on the profound mysteries, if one had a great reserve of faith energy, many profound mysteries that were originally very hard to understand might suddenly become clearer and more relatable.

But of course…

Faith energy was still an outside source of help. In training, one's own strength was still the most important. For example, although many Sovereigns enjoyed the benefits of almost unlimited amounts of faith energy, in terms of the profound mysteries, they might spend countless years yet still be unable to become Paragons.

"Boss, that Planar Overseer might be a Highgod." Bebe said.

"That's possible." Linley said with a frown. "But I'm worried about something."

"Worried about what?" Bebe asked, puzzled.

"I'm worried…that the first people who arrived took away the Planar Overseer, acquired some important information from him, and then, to ensure the others wouldn't gain that information, kill the Planar Overseer." Linley had a hint of worry in his brows. He had already come at maximum speed.

But the others had been even faster!

"How could those people have moved so quickly? Boss, your speed far surpasses the speed of most Paragons." Bebe mumbled.

"Most likely, those Paragons were brought by the Sovereigns directly to the teleportation arrays. I'm fast, but I'm far from being as fast as a Sovereign. As for those groups of Highgods, they are probably Highgods who were drawn from the armies stationed around the teleportation arrays." Linley was just guessing, but he felt quite certain about his guess.

And in reality, it really was as Linley suspected.

Sovereigns cared deeply about the Overgod talismans. Thus, it would be normal for them to bring a Paragon with them in making haste to the teleportation array.

“Rumble…” The teleportation array lit up once more.

Linley glanced at it, frowning. “There really are quite a few people here. Bebe, let’s leave.”

A surge of wind-type divine power swirled around Linley and Bebe. The two transformed into green blurs, instantly disappearing into the horizon. Linley, the other Deities, and the Paragons…none of them noticed that not too far away, amidst the trees, there was that Azure Steelwing Hawk.

As they saw it, that was just a magical beast. They wouldn’t even glance at it.

“Wow, what sort of speed is this? Although that group of people was fast, I could at least still see them move. But those two…” The Azure Steelwing Hawk was completely stunned.

More than ten thousand Highgods had descended. Their awe-inspiring presence as they flew through the air completely terrified the Saint-level experts of the Okerlund Plane. Soon, the news regarding the ‘Descent of the Gods’ quickly spread out. The Radiant Temple was the first to receive this news, and the Radiant Goddess personally ordered that the forces of the Radiant Temple were to pay attention to their behavior, and that they weren’t to offend these mysterious figures.

As for the Radiant Goddess herself, she saw that vast group of experts as well.

Good heavens. She was a God! In a material plane, she was invincible! But every single one of those thousand-plus individuals were more powerful

than her. Any one of them could annihilate the Radiant Church.

The territory of the Fogdeep continent was too vast, stretching millions of miles…a continent such as this, in the Infernal Realm, was nothing, but it was still thousands of times larger than the Yulan continent. The number of empires, kingdoms, and alliances within the Fogdeep continent came to a frighteningly large figure, and most people would never be able to traverse the entire Fogdeep continent in their entire lives.

At the eastern region of the Fogdeep continent. Atop Mount Liangya, within the Moulin Empire. A new estate had suddenly appeared out of nowhere atop the mountain.

Quite a few of the more intelligent people who lived around Mount Liangya immediately understood…that perhaps even Saints wouldn't be able to suddenly create a new estate atop the mountain. Immediately, quite a few people began to climb up Mount Liangya, wanting to go meet the mysterious expert within the estate. They hoped to take this person on as their master!

If they could be guided by an expert, their futures would change.

Unfortunately…

The closer they drew to the estate, the more terrifyingly powerful the gravity became. Even the number one expert in the area around Mount Liangya, an expert of the ninth rank who had come in the hopes of taking on a master, found that upon reaching a distance of six hundred meters from the estate, he was unable to advance a single step further. From this, one could imagine how powerful the gravity was!

That expert of the ninth rank immediately sighed, "Such a terrifyingly powerful gravitational technique…this is definitely something which only Deities are capable of!"

Within the estate in Mount Liangya. Linley and Bebe were residing here.

Three full days! Linley could say with confidence that he had thoroughly searched the entire Okerlund Plane!

“I originally thought that Brodie would hide the red caltrop diamond deep in the seas, or deep under the earth. But now, it seems, my guess was wrong.” Linley shook his head. It was easy for him to send his divine sense into the empty air, but the deeper one went into the ground, the harder it became.

When his spirit sense had already stretched to cover the entire plane, not even Linley would be able to make it stretch to more than a million meters into the ground. It was simply too hard.

Linley had spent three days. It could be said that he had inspected every single part of the entire Okerlund Plane!

“Boss, can it be that Brodie really did just transit through here? He intentionally made multiple transits to fool people?” Bebe mumbled.

“Everything is possible! The simplest thing to do right now is to find that Planar Overseer. He definitely knows quite a few things.” Linley had no other options.

“But we don’t know that Planar Overseer.” Bebe’s eyes lit up. “Boss, let’s just ask around and see whose forces were the first to arrive, then go find the leader of that group. Boss, now that you’ve fused four types of divine power, your power should vastly surpass the power of a Paragon. If that Paragon dares to refuse to give you an explanation, then beat the crap out of him or even kill him, then have his subordinates hand the person over. Let’s see if they dare refuse!”

A four-way soul mutation. This had bestowed Linley with a Will greater than a Paragon’s.

In addition, his body was now almost as strong and durable as a Sovereign artifact!

Linley's material attacks, in the past, had already been a bit more powerful than Magnus'. Now his body had dramatically strengthened, and his divine power had also strengthened tenfold! In terms of material attacks…Linley could absolutely lay claim to being the number one Deity!

"I might have the ability to kill Paragons." Linley said with a frown. "However, this isn't the time to reveal my power yet. If I were to pressure them with raw force and make it so that the Paragons of the Okerlund Plane were aware of my power, those Paragons would probably join forces against me out of fear!"

Paragons were invincible amongst Deities. This was a well-known legend!

But in the face of a never-before-seen four-way Soul Mutate, this legend regarding Paragons had been shattered! If the Paragons knew how powerful Linley was, and that they wouldn't be able to fight him one-on-one, they would definitely form an alliance to block Linley! By then, the difficulty level for acquiring the red caltrop diamond would rise greatly.

The largest tree in the forest would attract the most wind.

This was a principle which Linley understood.

"Right now, what I need to do is continue to pretend that I am a Paragon. I can't reveal too much power." Linley laughed calmly. "Once the red caltrop diamond appears, I can show my power. By then, I would have already acquired the red caltrop diamond. It would be too late for them! I imagine…I'm not the only one searching for that Planar Overseer. The other Paragons are searching as well."

"Boss, are you saying…?" Bebe understood.

"Join forces! Join forces with the other Paragons and force the Paragon who captured the Planar Overseer to hand him over and give us his information." Linley's divine sense was continually scanning the Okerlund Plane, and he immediately reached out directly into the mind of Dunnington. "And Dunnington…is the best person for me to join forces with."

Chapter 35 – Coercion

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 35, Coercion

The Okerlund Plane. Fogdeep continent's eastern regions. Within the Wildfang Mountains. Dunnington's forces from the Infernal Realm were stationed here.

Deep within the Wildfang Mountains, multiple palaces suddenly appeared overnight. Deep within one of the palaces, within a dark, gloomy hall that was lit up by flickering green fire light, there was a single person seated quietly. At this moment, someone walked into the main hall.

"Milord, I've already led those five hundred Highgods to do a thorough search of the entire Beastgod continent. We didn't find even a trace of the red caltrop diamond though." A muscular, tall, cyan-haired man dressed in a tunic spoke resignedly. As he spoke, he had a sour grimace on his face.

"The Fogdeep continent…I used up Sovereign's Might and even searched underground, but found nothing."

Dunnington, covered in a dark green robe, had an unpleasant look on his face. "Neither of these two continents holds it. How about this. You lead that group to the seas to continue searching carefully! Don't just search deep in watery regions of the seas; even the mud and earth of the seabed needs to be searched thoroughly, until you reach the ends of the plane."

"Yes, milord." The cyan-haired man nodded, but by the looks of it, he was still acting in a fairly casual way before Dunnington.

"Milord…we don't have that many forces. As I see it, quite a few people have already come, and the other forces have already covered the entire Okerlund Plane. When you agreed to help the Chief Sovereign of Destruction…when you brought us over, you should've brought some more soldiers." The cyan-haired man said, worried.

“You worry about your matters. You don’t need to worry about these affairs.” Dunnington frowned.

“Yes.” The cyan-haired man, seeing that Dunnington was unhappy, immediately left, not daring to say anything else.

Dunnington sat there quietly, but he was quite frustrated as well. Upon arriving in the Okerlund Plane, he knew that the situation was terrible! Because there were simply too many Paragons who had come on this trip. How few Paragons did the countless planes of the universe hold? And yet, including Dunnington, nine had come to the Okerlund Plane!

Although there were twenty or thirty people ‘suspected’ of being Paragons…

Quite a few were hidden in remote areas or even hidden within material planes. Not even Sovereigns were able to locate those Paragons. Normally, it would be very rare for two Paragons to meet each other. Three Paragons being in one place was virtually inconceivable. Nine Paragons…it was only because so many Sovereigns were all interested in this matter, that so many Paragons had appeared in one place.

“With so many Paragons…once the red caltrop diamond appears, how could it be easy to acquire?” Dunnington secretly shook his head.

“Dunnington?” A voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

“Eh? Linley?” Dunnington immediately knew who it was and he chatted back through divine sense, “Linley, we haven’t met each other since you became a Paragon, right?”

“I just reached this level recently.” Linley laughed, then asked, “Dunnington, did you find anything out about the red caltrop diamond?”

“Nothing. Nothing at all. How about you?” Dunnington asked.

These two supreme Deities were thousands of kilometers away, but were able to chat casually through their divine senses.

“Me? You have eight hundred Highgods under your command but weren’t able to find it. Bebe and I are by ourselves. How are we supposed to?” Linley laughed with pursed lips. Linley didn’t want to reveal the fact that he was a Soul Mutate.

“Linley, I don’t want to criticize you, but given your status in the Four Divine Beasts clan, it wouldn’t be too hard for you to summon a few thousand people from the clan. With a few thousand subordinates, it would be much easier for you to search the Okerlund Plane. But you just came by yourself, with Bebe…” Dunnington sighed.

If one considered Linley a Paragon, the Okerlund Plane now had nine Paragons present.

But aside from the Paragons themselves, every single force had brought a large group of Highgods, generally at least a thousand or more.

“To lead forces from the Four Divine Beasts clan to the teleportation array would take too long. Those ordinary Highgods also fly much slower than you and me! If I did that, it would probably take me quite a few extra months to get here. During those months, I imagine the rest of you would’ve already found the red caltrop diamond. Of course I wasn’t going to wait, so I led Bebe and came.” Linley laughed.

Dunnington now understood.

The others had ordered for soldiers stationed around the teleportation arrays to assist them, and so hadn’t taken much time at all.

“Enough about that. Dunnington, do you think Brodie actually, truly left the red caltrop diamond in this Okerlund Plane?” Linley asked.

“I really am a bit suspicious, given that Brodie isn’t here in this plane.” Dunnington said. “Now, I want to find the Planar Overseer, but…I wasn’t

able to. I imagine that the Planar Overseer should have been taken away by the Paragon of Fire, Ballmer [Ba'mo]. That's because he was the first to arrive at the Okerlund Plane." Dunnington said.

"Ballmer?"

Quite a bit of information regarding Ballmer came to Linley's mind.

"Dunnington, the information which the Planar Overseer has is extremely important! How about…we join forces and coerce Ballmer to hand over the Planar Overseer. What do you say?" Linley advised.

"Coerce?"

A smile appeared on Dunnington's face. "Good idea. I'm not confident in being able to act against Ballmer by myself…but if we join forces and pincer attack him, even if Ballmer doesn't die, he'll still suffer quite a bit. It wouldn't be hard for us to exile him. I imagine that Ballmer wouldn't want to suffer like that for no reason."

"Fine, then. When should we join forces and go find Ballmer?"

Linley and Dunnington discussed this matter for quite some time.

Fogdeep continent. The Biers [Pi'er'si] Mountains.

The Biers Mountains were more than ten thousand kilometers long and hundreds of kilometers wide. They were like a sharp knife that just so happened to separate the Moulin Empire from the Bluemaple Empire. However, in the center of the Biers Mountains, there was an extremely deep gorge known as 'Divine Punishment'. This gorge actually pierced through the entire Biers Mountains.

The people of the two Empires could pass through to the other side through this gorge.

The reason why this place was known as the 'Divine Punishment Gorge'

was because, according to legend…two gods had battled here, and then, with one astonishing blade chop, carved a path through the entire mountain range, leaving behind this hundred-kilometers-long Divine Punishment Gorge.

But because the gorge connected these two empires, the two empires both set down many soldiers on each side. These two armies would often engage in battles over various problems!

“Rumble…”

The earth was trembling. Hoofsteps rang out unabated. Under the commands of the military officers, the two armies prepared their formations as they stared at each other.

Because these two empires didn’t share any other borders…this gorge was the only place where they did battle. They would even fight over the smallest of problems. The reason they did this was because both empires had subconsciously come to view the battles within the gorge as a place to train their armies. Only soldiers who had seen blood would truly be able to fight.

Every few months or every few years, there would be a major battle. Each time, tens of thousands of casualties would result. This was very normal.

After all, these two empires, even in the vast Fogdeep continent, were two fairly powerful empires, with populations that were in the tens of billions.

“Vanguard battalions, advance!”

A warrior dressed in golden armor was seated high up on the back of a completely black serpent. He gave the order.

The commanding generals of both armies both understood that there was no way the two empires would actually, truly fight each other. This was just a way for them to train their soldiers. But precisely because they wanted to train their soldiers…it made it so that over the course of the struggles, they

would swear to surpass the enemy's side.

Immediately, the two military formations began to wildly charge against each other.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!" Arrows filled the skies as the vanguards of each army burst towards each other in a flood. Blood immediately began to fly everywhere, and some of the young 'chicklets' who were experiencing war for the first time were so terrified that their legs went soft. Life…death… things were so simple on the battlefield. Only someone who experienced a life-and-death battle would become a true soldier!

Right at this moment…

Two figures appeared, flashing through the skies.

"Eh?" The supreme experts of the two armies all raised their heads, frowning in confusion. "Saints?"

"Linley, what are you sighing for?" It was Linley and Dunnington. They flew through the air, and Linley laughed as he lowered his head to glance at the battle going on within the gorge. "When I see these vicious battles, I think back to my home, the Yulan continent. However, the battles that go on here at the Fogdeep continent are clearly on a much larger scale than the wars of my Yulan continent, be in in terms of the numbers of soldiers or the numbers of experts."

"Material planes…" Dunnington said calmly, "I was born and grew up in the Infernal Realm. I don't know too much about these material planes."

"Material planes are still quite interesting." Linley laughed calmly. "Only, the Okerlund Plane is simply too populated."

A continent that stretched to a circumference of a hundred million kilometers.

And the Yulan continent? It was, what, just thirty thousand kilometers or so.

How vast the difference was!

As for the difference in population, it was perhaps a thousandth, or a ten-thousandth, of this continent's. Naturally, the number of Saints in the Yulan continent was much lower as well. These two continents even had quite a few Deities.

"Ballmer's residence is up ahead." Linley laughed calmly.

"Right. Let me speak with Ballmer first." Dunnington and Linley halted there in midair. Below them, not too far away, were a series of fiery red palaces.

Dunnington immediately spread out his divine sense to negotiate with Ballmer.

"Ballmer!"

"Dunnington!" The Paragon of Fire within a palace, Ballmer, immediately responded.

"Yours was the first group to enter the Okerlund Plane. The Planar Overseer should be with you, yes? We are all here for the red caltrop diamond. Everyone needs to compete fairly. You had best hand over the Planar Overseer. It wouldn't be good for you to keep the information regarding Brodie to yourself." Dunnington urged.

The only response to Dunnington's words was a single, cold snort.

Dunnington's face sank.

"Linley is next to me. We all hope that you will hand over the Planar Overseer." Dunnington then said.

"Linley?" Ballmer sent back a loud laugh. "How laughable. You aren't able to find the Planar Overseer, so you come searching for me? Let me tell you this; when I arrived at the Okerlund Plane, I didn't see the Planar Overseer

anywhere. Most likely, the Planar Overseer is somewhere else in the Okerlund Plane."

The wind howled in the air above the Biers Mountains. Two figures stood tall amidst the wind. Dunnington gave Linley a glance.

"He refuses to admit it?" Linley laughed calmly.

"Right." Dunnington laughed as well.

"I thought Ballmer was quite astute, but it seems…" Linley laughed, and Dunnington laughed as well.

The two had planned this out long ago.

If words wouldn't work, then they would move to actions!

"Watch this." Linley stretched his hand out, and a black sword appeared within it. With but a thought, he made it turn translucent.

"Break!"

Linley stared coldly downwards, then launched a sword attack. A terrifying, enormous azure sword light howled downwards, and the space below twisted, then tore apart like paper. The space and stones below were transformed into nothingness, and the Highgods within the palaces all fled in every direction in terror.

It was a spatial tempest!

What would've been a terrifying sword blow in the Infernal Realm had transformed into a terrifying spatial tempest here in a material plane.

Only a long time later did space return to normal.

But the mountains below Linley had completely vanished. The only thing remaining was a fathomlessly deep gorge.

Countless figures flew into the skies, with the leader being a cyan-robed, fiery-haired man. His eyes were filled with rage, and he stared angrily at the distant Linley and Dunnington. “Linley, why did you destroy my estate for no reason?”

Dunnington just began to laugh. “Why? Don’t you know?”

“Stop playing dumb.” Linley laughed calmly.

Although there were more than a thousand Highgods hovering there in the air, they didn’t dare to interfere. They just quietly watched as this scene unfolded. After all…it was three ‘Paragons’ speaking. Any of the three could effortlessly butcher them all.

“Hand over the Planar Overseer.” Linley said.

“Otherwise…well. You know.” Dunnington continued.

Ballmer’s face was red, and a fiery light flickered in his eyes.

“I told you. The Planar Overseer isn’t here!” Ballmer shouted angrily.

“More lies.” Dunnington shook his head and sighed. “Linley, looks like we have no other options.”

“We really don’t.” Linley laughed, and then, quite casually, he said, “Let’s act!”

Chapter 36 – Nine Supreme Experts

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 36, Nine Supreme Experts

In the air above the Biers Mountains, Linley and Dunnington, not hesitating at all, transformed into two blurs which pincer-attacked Ballmer! The constrictive power of a material plane was far lower than that of the Infernal Realm, and so Linley and Dunnington were able to move at an unheard of speed; it was as though they were teleporting.

"Attacking? Haha…"

Ballmer's wild laughter echoed in the air, while his entire body began to blaze with fiery tongues of flame that swirled about him. The heat around him was so great that even space itself began to crack from it. Balllmer actually paid no heed to Dunnington, instead going straight for Linley.

"Careful." Dunnington sent.

Linley just laughed calmly and watched.

"Whoosh!" Ballmer transformed into a streak of fire, passing directly through Linley's body, then resolidifying into Ballmer's appearance behind Linley.

"The same technique which Bluefire used." Linley laughed and turned.

"How could it be that he didn't react at all?" Ballmer was shocked.

Paragons who trained in the Laws of Fire definitely had the most powerful attacks. Their material attacks and soul attacks were both tremendously strong.

"A soul attack? Too weak." Linley laughed as he looked at Ballmer. In terms of soul strength, how could Ballmer compare to a Soul Mutate like

Linley? And Linley had a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact!

“My turn.” Linley suddenly moved.

That Mirage godspark sword in his hand leisurely chopped down towards Ballmer. Space just trembled slightly; Mirage seemed to teleport, directly appearing in front of Ballmer. The attack speed of a Paragon was far greater than their movement speed; there was no chance for Ballmer to dodge at all.

“Hmph.” Ballmer wasn’t afraid. The attacks of a Paragon of Fire were also exceedingly strong. With a flip of his hand, he revealed a fiery red greatsword.

“Clang!”

The fiery greatsword and Mirage suddenly clashed.

“What great power.” Linley felt his hand tremble, but that was just the flesh in his palm; the remaining strength was dispersed. After fusing with four types of divine power and having his body transformed, Linley’s body was now simply too powerful. Even without Dragonforming, his physical strength would be ranked amongst the top ten in the entire universe!

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact and having a body that was akin to a Sovereign artifact…these were two completely different things.

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact just meant that one’s defense would be strong; it didn’t mean one would increase in physical power.

But for someone whose body was akin to a Sovereign artifact, that person’s brute strength alone would be terrifyingly great.

For example, Beirut or Hemmers…their bodies were simply too powerful. They had too much brute strength. Even without having reached the level of Paragon, their material attacks were comparable to those of Paragons.

As for Linley, his brute strength was no lower than Beirut or Hemmers’. In

addition, he had the power of Will!

This made it so that…

In this clash, Linley's palm just trembled slightly, while Ballmer's entire body was knocked flying backwards.

"Bang!"

Ballmer's body slammed hard against the mountain rocks, and the counterforce of their collision was transmitted to the mountain. A power that was capable of making a Highgod Paragon be knocked back that far… how could the mountains of a material plane withstand it?

"Rumble…"

A layer of rocks transformed into sand, and then a powerful tremor swept through the mountainous rocks like an ocean wave, transforming them into sand. It was like a ripple that swept out to a distance of hundreds of kilometers; it even swept through the air, from one mountain to another mountain.

All of the mountain peaks within hundreds of kilometers seemed to have been sliced through by an enormous greatsword that was hundreds of kilometers long. It was extremely flat and equally distributed.

Divine Punishment Gorge was only a ten or so kilometers away from Linley's battle. Naturally, it was within that region.

The hundreds of thousands of warriors within the gorge only felt the entire space tremble violently, and then…

"Rustle…"

The upper halves of the mountain peaks above each side of the gorge were completely transformed into sand, and then with a rustling sound, the sand began to flow downwards.

“Retreat, quick, retreat!”

These soldiers all began to bellow.

Countless amounts of sand flowed downwards. If they were to be buried under this avalanche of sand…even the most powerful of warriors would suffocate to death.

Moments later, an enormous sand pile that was hundreds of meters high appeared within the gorge.

“Good heavens. A sand dune that is the size of a small mountain. Anyone trapped in it would definitely die. Fortunately, I managed to flee fast enough.” Quite a few warriors stared at the mountain of sand and felt a surge of fear. This terrifying, gigantic dune had already completely sealed off the center of the gorge.”

“What’s going on? Where did all of this sand come from?”

“Good heavens. The mountain peaks are all missing. They’ve been completely flattened. It is as though an invincible celestial divinity used a blade to completely flatten the mountains nearby.”

“Those mountain peaks were still standing just moments ago. Where did they disappear to?”

Many of the soldiers raised their heads to stare, completely stupefied.

The high level military officials and powerful experts of each side were also stunned.

“A miracle!”

Quite a few people stared with wide eyes. At this moment, the two armies had no desire to keep fighting at all. They were too stunned by this ‘miracle’. Actually, even if they wanted to fight, there was no way to; that

sand dune was hundreds of meters high, and it completely blocked off both sides.

“Let’s go up and take a look.” Quite a few people in both armies were mounted on flying magical beasts, and they rose into the skies.

There were also some magi, and even a few rare Saints who were able to rely on their own power to fly into the skies. They all wanted to see what had happened, exactly.

“So many Saint-level experts.” Quite a few people stared, stupefied, at the thronging mass of Highgods hovering in the air.

“Swish!” A figure suddenly shot over, and then smashed hard against the rocky walls of a large gorge. “Rumble…” The entire gorge seemed to tremble, and then a layer of stone that was more than ten meters thick was transformed into sand and flowed downwards.

The fiery figure that had slammed into the gorge once more flew into the air.

“Linley, I told you, I didn’t catch the Planar Overseer.” The fiery red figure began to bellow.

The soldiers below frantically tried to dodge and hide. Fortunately, this time, the sand that fell down was only a few meters thick, and so the soldiers were able to save themselves. Quite a few warriors emerged from the sand, raising their heads to stare at the fiery figure. “What…what sort of people are they!?”

A collision was enough to cause a scene of such devastation?

“You’d rather die than admit it?” A voice echoed in the skies.

“Gods…celestial divinities!”

Those soldiers took the speakers to be celestial divinities. These soldiers

had no idea what came after Saints. As they saw it…'gods' and 'celestial divinities' were essentially the same thing.

Right at this moment, two figures appeared above the gorge, staring at the fiery figure.

"Linley, your material attacks truly are terrifying." Dunnington sighed in amazement.

"My Azure Dragon clan has always specialized in strengthening the body, and so my body was strong to begin with. Now that I have the power of Will and have mastered the profound mysteries, of course I'm a bit stronger than most Paragons in terms of material attacks." Linley smiled.

"A bit stronger?" The nearby Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, felt bitterness in his heart.

That wasn't a 'bit' stronger, it was significantly stronger! This was abusive!

"Fortunately, although I'm not able to completely defend against this sort of attack, it won't kill me either." Ballmer still felt some confidence. What Ballmer didn't realize…was that the power which Linley had just revealed, despite vastly outstripping Ballmer's own, was just a small part of Linley's true power. Linley's true killing technique, the four-way 'fused divine power', had yet to be used.

If he had used fused divine power, his attack power would increase tenfold.

Tenfold. What sort of a concept was that? It would be completely lopsided!

Ballmer looked downwards at the stupefied commoners. He couldn't help but feel angry that these ordinary mortals had seen him lose face like this, which made him both enraged and embarrassed. "A group of ants." Ballmer waved his hand, and instantly, a surge of fiery energy swept out, completely covering the skies and forming into an uninterrupted sea of flame above the gorge.

This sea of flame was hundreds of kilometers long. It covered the entire gorge, rendering it so that those below weren't able to see anything going on above. As for within the gorge…in the future, it would be referred to by the denizens of the Okerlund Plane as the 'Apocalypse Flame Gorge'. The flames which Ballmer had casually created…were flames which even Highgods wouldn't dare touch.

"Linley, Dunnington, it's completely impossible for the two of you to kill me." Ballmer said angrily. "I told you, the Planar Overseer isn't here."

"Haha, Ballmer, stop denying it." With this voice, a figure suddenly appeared.

"Ballmer, your material attacks are far weaker than Linley's." Yet another figure appeared.

"You!" Ballmer frowned. Two more Paragons had arrived. Ballmer stretched out his divine sense…and upon doing so, he frowned. It wasn't actually just two more Paragons who had arrived; the other Paragons were hastening over here as well.

Ballmer had a very ugly look on his face.

"Ballmer, don't deny having the Planar Overseer. Just hand him over." This speaker's entire body was covered with an earthen yellow light. His muscles bulged, and his blue veins were like branches that twined about throughout his terrifyingly muscular four-meter-tall figure.

"Alas, if you insist on just denying it, you'll just suffer more." A snicker rang out. The speaker was Bayer.

In but a twinkling, all of the other Paragons had arrived as well.

"Haha, I ended up being the last one." A shadow flashed forward; the latecomer was the Paragon of Light, 'Clementine'.

Including Linley, there were eight people present. These eight all stared at

Ballmer.

“Hmph. You all came.” Ballmer had a gloomy look on his face, and he snorted angrily, “I told you. The Planar Overseer isn’t here.”

The unending flames blazed above the gorge, and above the flames, nine supreme Deities stood there, eight surrounding one! Ballmer was definitely in a weak position.

“Ballmer won’t admit it. Dunnington, it’s up to you.” The Paragon of Light, Clementine, pursed his lips and laughed.

Dunnington winked at Ballmer. “Ballmer, can it be…that you are going to force me to hypnotize and control one of your Highgods?”

Ballmer’s face instantly changed.

He finally realized what his flaw was!

It was extremely hard to use hypnosis to control a Highgod, but Dunnington was capable of it. ‘Soulseed’, ‘Hypnosis’, creating soul shards…these all belonged to the Edicts of Death. If one didn’t train in the Edicts of Death, and instead trained in fire or water, even if one became a Paragon, one would be unable to use Soulseeds and hypnosis, or create soul shards from scraping away someone’s soul.

Every area had its own specialties. If one didn’t train in the Edicts of Death, no matter how powerful one was, one wouldn’t be able to use ‘Hypnosis’.

“The Planar Overseer truly isn’t here.” Ballmer said.

The looks on the faces of the eight experts, Linley included, sank. Clearly, they felt that Ballmer really didn’t know what was good for him.

“He’s dead. I killed him.” Ballmer then said.

The eyes of the eight experts lit up.

Ballmer chuckled, “I’m now the only person that knows about Brodie. However, since you’ve decided to go this far in forcing me, I can’t make it so that you were did this all for nothing. I’ll tell you. After all…even if you know, it won’t be of much use.”

“You aren’t the one to decide if this information is useful or not.” Bayer narrowed his vertical eyebrows as he said coldly.

Ballmer continued, “Brodie did indeed come to the Okerlund Plane, but just one year later, he took his wife and left the Okerlund Plane. He went to the Life Realm! However, when Brodie left the Okerlund Plane, he once said something to the Planar Overseer…”

The eight experts all stared at Ballmer.

“Brodie said…‘Mr. Ben, if many Deities descend upon this place in search of something called a red caltrop diamond, please tell these Deities something for me. Tell them that the red caltrop diamond is right here in the Okerlund Plane. However, if they want to find it, it will depend on how lucky they are, haha…’” Ballmer finished speaking, then snickered coldly as he looked at everyone.

The eight experts all began to ponder.

Everyone sensed quite clearly that Brodie’s words contained a hint of mockery within them.

“Everyone, you tell me, is the red caltrop diamond in the Okerlund Plane?” Ballmer laughed coldly.

That’s what Brodie had claimed! But the truth? That was unclear.

There were two possibilities. The first was that the red caltrop diamond was truly in the Okerlund Plane; only, it was hidden too well, so it was very hard to find.

The second was that it left alongside Brodie as he went to another plane.

“Haha…think about it at your leisure. Whether you decide to give up and go back or decide to keep searching is up to you. I’ve already given you this information.” Laughing, Ballmer flew away. As he did so, Ballmer gave Linley a sidelong glance. Just now, when he had been fighting Linley, he had been at an absolute disadvantage.

“It seems as though Linley wasn’t just lucky when he exiled Magnus into chaotic space. Just now…he wasn’t even in Dragonform.” Ballmer, in his heart, began to feel a hint of dread towards Linley.

Chapter 37 – Infiltration

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 37, Infiltration

The Biers Mountains. In the air above the sea of flame which hung over the Divine Punishment Gorge. After the Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, departed, the other seven Paragons and Linley all continued to quietly hover there above the sea of fire. After hearing Ballmer's information, they all began to ponder.

"Brodie's message stated that the red caltrop diamond is still in the Okerlund Plane." Linley frowned as he pondered. "Brodie, after having been surrounded by so many experts of the Infernal Realm, should know by now how important that red caltrop diamond is. Perhaps…he has truly decided to give up the red caltrop diamond, in exchange for a peaceful life."

Before being surrounded by so many experts, Brodie might perhaps have been unaware as to just how hot to handle this red caltrop diamond was.

But after that and the loss of a divine clone, Brodie should've begun to wonder as to whether or not he should have continued to hold the red caltrop diamond! Although his power increased tremendously while holding it, it also caused countless experts to descend upon and pursue him.

"Everyone, you all know the message now. What do you all think? Is the red caltrop diamond still in the Okerlund Plane?" The Paragon of Light, Clementine, said with a smile.

"Hmph. If Brodie is playing a trick and has the desire to be greedy and keep the Overgod talisman on his own, he would be courting death." The Paragon of Earth, that four meter tall figure, said in a cold voice.

"If we believe that the red caltrop diamond isn't here, we might as well leave this plane." The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, let out a snicker. He glanced at the surrounding people. "Myself, I'll be staying here. Everyone…I won't

accompany you here any longer. I'll go back now." A wind blew past, and Bayer disappeared from everyone's field of vision.

In a material plane, all Paragons were able to move at a speed that seemed akin to the speed of the Sovereigns in the Higher Planes.

"I won't stay here any longer either." Clementine also disappeared, transforming into a ray of light.

And then, all of the Highgod Paragons left, leaving behind only Linley and Dunnington.

"Linley, are you going to leave the Okerlund Plane or stay?" Dunnington asked.

"There's no rush. Perhaps the red caltrop diamond is still in the Okerlund Plane." Linley said with a slight frown, but then he chuckled. "Dunnington, let's compete and see who will be the one to acquire the red caltrop diamond…mm, let's separate for now then."

"You don't have as many supporters as I do. If someone is to get it, it will be me." Dunnington began to laugh as well.

And then, Linley and Dunnington transformed into two blurs as they flew towards different directions.

Originally, after having thoroughly scoured the entire Okerlund Plane, Linley felt that there was a 90% chance that the red caltrop diamond truly might have departed the Okerlund Plane. The Okerlund Plane was nothing more than a transit location for Brodie! As for that remaining 10% chance…that was just because Linley wasn't willing to just leave like this.

However, after having heard this message, Linley's thoughts had changed.

Given what Brodie had said, the red caltrop diamond might truly be still in the Okerlund Plane.

The eastern part of the Okerlund Plane. The Moulin Empire. Within that estate at the peak of Mount Liangya.

“Boss, what sort of tricks do you think Brodie employed?” Bebe, after listening to what Linley had to say, couldn’t help but frown as he spoke.

“The red caltrop diamond is such a precious treasure that he naturally wouldn’t want to let us acquire it so easily!” Linley said with a frown, “But I’ve already completely searched the entire Okerlund Plane. There is no red caltrop diamond at all. Then…there’s only one possibility.” This was the possibility that frustrated Linley the most.

“My divine sense can easily search the heavens, but it is hard for someone to use divine sense to search inside a person’s body. Thus…the red caltrop diamond is perhaps hidden within the body of some sort of living creature!” Linley frowned.

It was extremely hard for one to send divine sense deep into the body of any living creature with a spirit.

For example, divine artifacts; divine artifacts had their own form of a spirit.

It was impossible for even Linley to send his spiritual energy into a divine artifact and search for something inside of it.

For example, Bebe’s godspark weapon; he had hidden the interspatial ring within the godspark weapon, and even Sovereigns wouldn’t be able to see through it to find the interspatial ring within. But of course, it was virtually impossible to hide a ring within a divine artifact. After all, in the forging and refining process for the divine artifact, any interspatial ring would have been destroyed long ago.

Only someone like Bebe, who completely relied on his own will in creating a godspark weapon, would be able to safely secrete an interspatial ring within it.

Aside from divine artifacts, other living creatures also possessed souls.

Every single living creature had a soul which would repel the spiritual energy of any invading forces! Because some souls were strong while others were weak, the strength of the resistance would vary as well.

Some living creatures were simply too powerful and so couldn't be invaded at all.

For example, Linley!

Generally speaking, Paragons might be able to chat with Linley through divine sense, but they definitely wouldn't be able to extend their divine senses into Linley's body and investigate the secrets it held.

But for weaker people, such as mortals…

If a Deity wanted to investigate a mortal, he would only have to just focus his spiritual energy slightly, and thus would be able to sense into the mortal's body. This, however, still required concentration and focus. One couldn't use too much spiritual energy, as if one did, the mortal's fragile soul might shatter and disperse. But if the spiritual energy was too weak… then it might not be able to go in at all.

Thus, it was hard to investigate into someone's body.

As for searching one's soul, that was even harder!

When Delia had been in a coma, Linley hadn't dared to send his spiritual energy into her to investigate at all. He was afraid that if he wasn't careful, he would shatter her soul.

"The Okerlund Plane is simply too vast. I imagine that Brodie chose this plane precisely because he heard of how populated it is." Linley said with a frown. "Even for me, to search the body of a human being is difficult enough that I can't investigate a few thousand people at once. I have to be very careful and very patient! At most, I can probably only search a thousand people at once."

This didn't have anything to do with how strong one's spiritual energy was; rather, what mattered was one's ability to multitask carefully, because each inspection had to be very careful.

The spiritual energy couldn't be too strong or too weak!

"The Okerlund Plane…although the population is far smaller than the Infernal Realm's, there are still nearly eight quadrillion people." Linley said with a frown.

This sum was simply too enormous.

There was nothing that could be done. The Okerlund Plane's two major continents each had a circumference of over a hundred million kilometers. The Yulan continent's circumference was just twenty or thirty thousand kilometers. The difference between the area of the two was a difference of nearly a hundred million times. Even the Yulan continent had a population of billions; thus, it only made sense for the Okerlund Plane to have a population of nearly eight quadrillion.

Compared to the Infernal Realm, though…

It was just a rounding error.

"Not just humans. There are also all sorts of magical beasts of the land, of the skies, and deep in the seas. The red caltrop diamond might be stored within their bodies as well." Linley said resignedly.

If he wanted to investigate further, it would indeed be a laborious task.

But of course, if he wanted to search quickly, that was also possible!

That was to ignore the ability of these humans and magical beasts to endure his power, and to blast his almighty divine sense out indiscriminately! The result would be that the countless humans and magical beasts with weak souls would always die. If one didn't have to worry about the lives of the

specimens being inspected, of course it would be much faster.

But the number of people who would die would be astronomical.

“To kill eight quadrillion humans for the sake of more quickly finding the red caltrops diamond, and a similarly astonishing number of magical beasts? Make this entire plane a plane of the dead?” Linley couldn’t help but shiver, just thinking about it.

Forget about using that sort of method; even if someone else dared to do it, Linley would stop them!

“Boss, the process of forging a divine artifact requires all sorts of hammering and refining. If an interspatial ring was within it, it would definitely shatter. Thus, it isn’t too likely that the red caltrop diamond was hidden within a divine artifact.” Bebe said. There were only two people in the entire universe who could do what Bebe could do.

Linley nodded. “Our only choice is to begin inspecting the bodies of the humans and beastmen.”

“Brodie. That bastard. He really picked a good plane. If he picked a small plane like the Yulan plane, with a low population, it would be much easier to search. But that bastard had to pick this Okerlund Plane.” Bebe couldn’t help but curse.

“Don’t be impatient. The other eight groups have already begun to search the bodies of the various living creatures here.” Linley laughed calmly.

As for himself, he couldn’t be bothered to go search.

Linley’s divine sense was powerful enough to stretch across the entire plane. Once the red caltrop diamond being discovered, Linley would immediately know.

“I now only lack a single talisman.” Linley lowered his head, staring at the interspatial ring in his hands. He sent his divine sense into it, easily locating

that ‘crown’ within it. The pentametal crown was adorned with the nine soul pearls, and was now only lacking a ‘red caltrop diamond’ in the central setting.

Now that Linley and Bebe were in the Okerlund Plane, they didn’t have to worry about Sovereigns causing problems for them, and so Bebe had given the interspatial ring containing those two items to Linley.

“Bebe, make a trip with me.” Linley suddenly stood up.

“What are you going to do?” Bebe was startled.

“I’ve discovered that the Paragon of Light, Clementine, hasn’t just ordered his Highgod subordinates to carefully search within the bodies of all sorts of living creatures; he himself has led his forces towards the headquarters of the Radiant Temple. It seems he wishes to borrow from the power of mortal organizations in order to search for the red caltrops diamond.” A hint of a smile was on Linley’s face.

This was indeed an excellent method.

When Brodie had arrived at the Okerlund Plane, he might have often taken out the red caltrop diamond. Some mortals might thus have seen it. It was indeed possible that by relying on worldly power, they might find some hints regarding the diamond.

“He sought out the Radiant Temple. Then I will go for…the assassin’s guilds.”

Linley’s divine sense covered the entire plane. He naturally was able to easily discover many of the secrets of the Okerlund Plane.

The Okerlund Plane’s Fogdeep continent was awe-inspiringly vast. Because of how large it was, there was no way for a single empire to arise and unify it. The Fogdeep continent had more than a hundred empires alone, and duchies were as common as ox hair.

The power of some special, hidden organizations, however, surpassed that of any empire.

For example, the number one assassin's guild of the Fogdeep continent, 'Bloodknife'. According to legend, the number one expert who supported this assassin's guild was someone who had reached the level of Deity. It also had hundreds of Saints as well.

Bloodknife didn't have a central headquarter; its bases were divided into class-three, class-two, class-one, and special-class divisons.

Because the Fogdeep continent and the Beastgod continent were too vast, Bloodknife had a total of eight 'special class' bases, two of which were located on the Beastgod continent.

Bloodknife's special-class base in the Mengya Mountains.

"A caltrop-shaped red diamond! Right, send the word to every single base, based on this diagram. Anyone who can provide any information regarding this red caltrop diamond will immediately be promoted to the rank of 'core member', and be awarded a tamed Saint-level magical beast, along with a soulbinding contract!" The number one expert of Bloodknife had already reached the Deity level. Known as 'Elder Shadow', this was the order he gave.

The ranking of this mission was 'Blood-rank'.

It had been more than a hundred years since the last Blood-rank mission. Once the order went out, it was immediately conveyed to the various bases, and all of them immediately went crazy, ordering their forces, external intelligence, and even street-level hoodlums to begin searching for news about the red caltrop diamond.

However, Bloodknife's members were all puzzled. Why would Elder Shadow so desperately want the red caltrop diamond, and even offer a tamed Saint-level magical beast as a reward?!

Within the Mengya Mountains. Inside a secluded, quiet residence.

An old man with blood-red hair and blood-red eyebrows bowed in an extremely respectful manner. “Lord Baruch, with regards to the matter of the red caltrop diamond, I’ve already notified all of the bases within the Fogdeep continent about it. As long as the red caltrop diamond has made an appearance, our organization will definitely locate it for you, milord.”

“However, our organization doesn’t have that much influence in the Beastgod continent.” The blood-haired elder said apologetically.

“You’ve done quite well already.” Linley smiled and nodded.

“Here are eleven God-level divine sparks. There is one for each of the seven Laws and four Edicts. This can be considered your reward.” Linley waved his hand, and eleven God-level divine sparks flew out.

The blood-haired elder’s eyes instantly turned red.

God-level divine sparks! To him, a Demigod, this was an absolutely wondrous treasure.

“Let me remind you that after you fuse with a divine spark, you will find it very hard to make any further breakthroughs on your own.” Linley said calmly.

“Your subordinate is willing to accept this.” The blood-haired elder said hurriedly. Upon becoming a God, he would be on a level comparable to the two formerly supreme experts of the Okerlund Empire.

“If you are able to find anything regarding the red caltrop diamond, I can give you a Highgod spark. Enough. You can leave now.” Linley said calmly.

“Yes, Lord Baruch.”

The blood-haired elder was so excited that his eyes were shining. He didn’t dare to disturb Linley any further, and he immediately departed.

Chapter 38 – Lionheart City

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 38, Lionheart City

As Bebe watched the blood-haired elder depart, he pursed his lips. "That old fellow has remained in the material plane for too long. His viewpoint is too narrow and restricted. He's too foolish. He actually, voluntarily wishes to fuse a divine spark."

He's not foolish. He's intelligent."

Linley laughed. "The Okerlund Plane, having a huge population base, has given birth to quite a few Deities. Most likely, the people here have some degree of understanding regarding the Infernal Realm, Netherworld, Celestial Realm, and other places. Unless they are able to reach the Six Star Fiend or Seven Star Fiend, going to the Infernal Realm is a form of suffering. That old fellow, in the Okerlund Plane, is a supreme expert. He can enjoy life and relax. Why go to the Higher Planes?"

Bebe was startled. Then, he nodded. "That's true too."

"Right, Boss. Did you tell my Grandpa Beirut regarding this Okerlund Plane?"

"Of course I did." Linley laughed. "Your Grandpa Beirut's clone in the Yulan continent is currently living at Dragonblood Castle with my divine clone. I've told him everything about what has gone on here…Lord Beirut has also tapped his connections and investigated into the Life Realm's various locations to see if there has been news regarding the red caltrop diamond."

Bebe nodded. "Right. We do have to pay attention."

The red caltrop diamond. Even in his dreams, Linley dreamed about acquiring it!

Although it was very likely that the red caltrop diamond was in the Okerlund Plane, they couldn't rule out the possibility that it had followed Brodie to another plane.

Thus, Linley had to rely on Beirut's assistance. Beirut had quite a few friends. It wasn't too hard for him to pay attention to news of this nature. However, in recent days, Beirut had uncovered no information regarding the red caltrop diamond.

Fogdeep continent. Beastgod continent. The dwellers of these two continents continued their normal lives. The 'Descent of the Gods' hadn't changed much. The various Highgod Paragons and those ten thousand Highgods began to search the humans, elves, dwarves, beastmen, and other races, but they did so carefully. They didn't harm these creatures.

As for Linley…

He maintained a constant watch on the entire plane. Those Highgods and Paragons…whenever they acted a bit unusually, Linley would pay close attention.

Given how Linley's spiritual energy surpassed that of a Deity using Sovereign's Might, this oversight went completely unnoticed by the Paragons.

Time continued to pass in the midst of this inspection process.

In the blink of an eye, two months passed.

Mount Liangya.

"Lord Baruch." The blood-haired elder had come once more.

Linley and Bebe both looked over.

"Lord Baruch, your subordinate once more gained information regarding

the red caltrop diamond." The blood-haired elder said hurriedly.

"Oh?" Bebe just snickered. "In the past two months, you've brought over a few dozen reports, and even located ten red caltrop diamonds."

In the past two months, the Bloodknife guild had indeed found more than ten red caltrop diamonds, but Linley had discovered through his divine sense that they were 'fake' and he had rejected them before they were even delivered to him.

"This…your subordinate is unable to verify these items." The blood-haired elder laughed awkwardly, then said hurriedly, "But this time, this news does seem rather credible."

"Speak." Linley said calmly.

"Right." The blood-haired elder said hurriedly, "Roughly thirty years ago, a magus who was training and adventuring at the borders of the Fogdeep Forest saw two experts flying through the air. They looked like a couple. The woman had a long necklace, which had a red caltrop diamond fixed into it.

Linley and Bebe's eyes lit up.

Thirty years ago? A couple? Flying in the air?

"And that couple?" Linley said hurriedly.

"That adventuring magus only saw the two pause in midair for a moment to discuss something, and then they flew deeper towards the Fogdeep Forest. As what happened next, the magus didn't know." The blood-haired elder shook his head.

"You can leave now." Linley said.

"Yes." The blood-haired elder left respectfully.

Linley and Bebe began to frown.

“Boss, the situation is bad.” Bebe said.

“It is fairly bad. Brodie and his wife went deep into the Fogdeep Forest. Clearly, they were flying towards the teleportation array. Most likely, they went through it to leave the Okerlund Plane.” Linley began to worry. “If Brodie and his wife really took the red caltrop diamond and left this place, things will grow problematic. Searching for them will be like searching for a needle in the sea.”

Although according to the Planar Overseer’s information, the couple had gone to the Life Realm…

How vast was the Life Realm?

In addition, could it be that the two wouldn’t then pass through the teleportation array of the Life Realm and once more teleport to another plane?

How was one to find them?

“However, there’s another possibility.” Bebe mumbled. “They were flying deep into the Fogdeep Forest. Aside from leaving with the red caltrop diamond, the other possibility is, they hid the red caltrop diamond in some lifeform within the Fogdeep Forest.”

Linley’s eyes lit up.

“This is indeed possible.” Linley couldn’t help but feel overjoyed, but then he let out a sigh.

The Fogdeep Forest was tremendously vast, and the number of magical beasts and primeval races which lived within it was very large. To search for it there wouldn’t be easy either.

“Hrm, the Radiant Temple? That ‘Radiant Goddess’ has actually voluntarily

gone to find Clementine. Can it be that something special happened?" Linley had always kept his divine sense active and covering the entire plane. Naturally, he noticed this.

Within the Fogdeep continent, there was a shining lake that was more than a million kilometers in circumference. In the center of the lake, there was a small island that had a circumference of nearly ten kilometers as well. This island was known as the 'Radiant Island', or the 'Sacred Island'. This was the headquarters of the number one church of the Fogdeep continent, the Temple of the Radiant Goddess.

In the center of the Sacred Island was the Radiant Temple. The Radiant Temple was divided into nine upper stories and nine underground stories.

Ever since the Paragon of Light, 'Clementine', led his forces to descend on this place, he had let the Radiant Goddess suffer just a little bit. She then immediately, terrified, allowed Clementine to live on the top of the ninth floor. As for the Radiant Goddess herself, she remained on the sixth floor.

The sixth underground floor. A silver-haired, silver-eyed, barefoot woman dressed in plain robes was currently frowning. This person was the 'Radiant Goddess', worshipped by countless people in the Fogdeep continent.

"Lord Clementine has been searching for news regarding the red caltrop diamond. Then, should I…"

After hesitating momentarily, her eyes grew determined. She immediately left her residence and headed towards the top of the Radiant Temple.

"Let her in."

Within the vast, wide Radiant Temple's uppermost floor, Clementine was silently seated on his throne, his eyes closed. His divine sense was constantly extended, but of course, there was no way he could compare to Linley. Normally, by relying on his spiritual energy, he was able to just barely cover the Fogdeep continent.

Even Paragons wouldn't be so wasteful as to constantly use Sovereign's Might.

If he did do that, most likely in a single month, he would have used up an astronomical amount of Sovereign's Might.

"Milord." The Radiant Goddess walked in, her feet unclad.

"What is it?" Clementine opened his eyes.

Clementine's stare made the Radiant Goddess feel as though she were a tiny boat in the midst of a wild storm, about to capsize at any moment. The Radiant Goddess trembled slightly, then said respectfully, "Milord, you are searching for a red caltrop diamond. Your subordinate remembers that a friend once told me…if many powerful Deities come in search of a treasure, I am to give this to one of the experts. He said…this is a gift for me. That friend of mine was named Brodie!" As she spoke, she produced a small red box.

In that instant…

A divine light flashed in Clementine's eyes. He immediately spread out his divine sense, wanting to wrap it around the surrounding area and forbid other Paragons from using their divine sense to search this area.

But it was too late!

Four divine senses instantly swept over that box.

"Haha, Clementine, we have to thank you, haha…" A voice rang out in Clementine's mind.

Clementine's face grew ugly to behold. He also swept the box with his divine sense, and then, in an instant, with a 'rumble', the box transformed into dust. The box in the hands of the Radiant Goddess had been completely crushed, and she couldn't help but be badly frightened.

“You’ve done well. Now scram.” Clementine snorted coldly.

“Yes.” The Radiant Goddess didn’t dare to say a word. She immediately left.

“Nine Paragons, five in the Fogdeep continent, four in the Beastgod continent. Only three Paragons should have discovered that secret.” Clementine frowned. “Why didn’t Linley keep his divine sense up at all times?” In reality, there had been four divine senses which had swept through the box, but Clementine had only discovered three.

As for Linley’s divine sense? Clementine wasn’t able to detect it at all.

“Linley has few subordinates and doesn’t place much value on keeping up his divine sense. And yet, he thinks to acquire the Overgod talisman?” Clementine let out a cold laugh.

Five of the nine experts knew the secret of the box. Linley naturally knew it.

“The box actually had a piece of paper inside it. The paper only had three words on it; Lion Heart City!” Linley was very puzzled. Linley didn’t question whether the information was real or false, because the paper was a type of paper that was very commonly seen in the Infernal Realm. It could exist for countless years without being damaged. There was no way a material plane could produce this sort of paper.

In addition, the Radiant Goddess didn’t have the courage to lie on purpose.

“Just three words. Can it be that Brodie means to say…the red caltrop diamond is in Lionheart City?” Linley mused to himself.

“Tell me, what sort of a place is Lionheart City?” Linley directly spoke to Elder Shadow of the Bloodknife organization through divine sense.

Elder Shadow immediately replied respectfully, “Lord Baruch, Lionheart City is an extremely famous city in the Beastgod continent. It is the

imperial capital of the ‘Snowlion Empire’.

“The Beastgod continent. The imperial capital of the Snowlion Empire?”

Linley’s divine sense covered the entire plane. He immediately noticed that within the Beastgod continent, there was an extremely lavish and large city, with the city gates having two giant words affixed to it. ‘Lion Heart’.

“Boss, what is it?” Bebe didn’t know what was going on.

“Bebe, let’s go on a trip to the Beastgod continent.” Linley smiled slightly, then a surge of wind-type divine power surrounded Bebe. The two transformed into green blurs, instantly disappearing into the horizon.

It wasn’t just Linley who was making haste to the Beastgod continent. The other four Paragons of the Fogdeep continent were also hastening over there.

Paragons flew at a very fast speed. They quickly flew out of the Fogdeep continent, traversed the ocean between the two continents, then arrived within the Beastgod continent. In terms of speed, even without using his ‘fused divine power’, Linley arrived at the Beastgod continent at virtually the same instant that Clementine and the others did.

The four Paragons, Linley, and Bebe entered the Beastgod continent, and as they did, the four Paragons in the Beastgod continent immediately noticed.

“Eh? The five of them all flew over, and to the same location. Can it be that they found out something about the red caltrop diamond?”

As long as one wasn’t a complete idiot, upon seeing this, they would be able to guess that something important must have happened.

They didn’t hesitate at all! The other four Paragons of the Beastgod continent immediately flew towards the gathering spot of the five Paragons who had just entered the continent.

“Clementine, where are you headed?” The Paragon of Water, a middle-aged man with loose blue hair, laughed as he followed Clementine. Although they could guess at where Linley, Clementine, and the other three were headed based on their trajectory, they still weren’t certain about it.

Thus, it was quite natural that the four Paragons based in the Beastgod continent elected to follow after the other five Paragons.

“Hmph.” Clementine couldn’t even be bothered to pay attention to them. His speed suddenly increased, and he began to move slightly faster than the Paragon of Water.

“Everyone, you should all be heading towards Lionheart City, right?” The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, was the first to arrive at Lionheart City. He had been in the Beastgod continent this entire time, and he lived fairly close to Lionheart City. Upon seeing the direction towards which Linley’s group was hurrying towards, as they drew closer, he was easily able to recognize where they were going.

“Swoosh!” A ray of light shot towards Lionheart City, then transformed into a person. It was Clementine.

“Whoosh!” A green blur descended from the skies, then resolved into two figures; Linley and Bebe.

“How did Linley know where to go? Did Dunnington tell him?” Clementine looked at Linley, puzzled. Back then, he had no idea that Linley had used his divine sense.

“Lionheart City!” Linley’s divine sense filled the entire Lionheart City, but he didn’t find anything special.

“Bebe, let’s go in.” Linley sent.

And then, paying no attention to the other Paragons, Linley and Bebe directly entered the city of Lionheart.

Chapter 39 – Relief Sculpture

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 39, Relief Sculpture

The Okerlund Plane. The Beastgod continent. The imperial capital of the Snowlion Empire – Lionheart City. The imperial palace's garden.

Linley was seated silently in the meditative position in the midst of a flat, green, grassy area. Bebe was by his side. Linley and Bebe both possessed Godrealms, and so could easily distort the rays of light within their area, making it so that the maids and servants within the palace garden were completely unable to see them.

They had spent a full day in Lionheart City, but during this day, Linley's divine sense had been constantly searching at full strength.

Linley opened his eyes.

"Boss, find anything?" Bebe asked hurriedly.

Linley shook his head slightly. "Nothing! The entire imperial capital of Lionheart City has nearly ten million people. Aside for a few youths and a few juvenile beasts which I didn't inspect, I've inspected all of the other living creatures here. But none of them are hiding interspatial rings in their bodies." Brodie had come thirty-plus years ago.

And so, he couldn't have possibly secreted the interspatial ring into these then-unborn young children.

"It really is hard to find." Bebe frowned and snorted. "The other eight Paragons have already ordered their Highgod subordinates to thoroughly search through the entire Lionheart City. But after a long period of time, they have yet to find anything. Those many subordinates of theirs have probably searched the entirety of Lionheart City by now."

Linley nodded slightly.

“Boss, you’ve already completely searched the ground and the deep seas of the Okerlund Plane. In addition, this is just a material plane; very few people have interspatial rings. Those eight Paragons ordered long ago for every person with an interspatial ring to be searched.” Bebe snorted unhappily. “It seems that Brodie really did ‘that’.”

There were no other possibilities.

The only possibility…was that the red caltrop diamond had been put into an interspatial ring, which was in turn placed within some living creature.

Unfortunately, the population of the Okerlund Plane was simply too great. Eight quadrillion people! And that was just the humans. There were also elves, gnomes, and other races…and the magical beasts that lived in the ground, in the skies, and in the seas were astonishingly numerous as well. In terms of number, in fact, magical beasts vastly outnumbered humans.

Given Linley’s spiritual strength, if he were to carefully search in a manner which caused no soul damage, Linley would have to spend an entire day to search just ten million people.

His personal speed was definitely comparable to the speed of hundreds or thousands of ordinary Highgods searching.

Ten million would take Linley a day.

Then eight quadrillion…how long would that take? And that’s not even mentioning the magical beasts.

The number was astronomical!

This was why the ten thousand Highgods, eight Paragons, and Linley and Bebe had yet to find the red caltrop diamond despite having spent months. In the Yulan continent, this group would have probably searched everyone within just ten days or so.

“Brodie, that bastard…he definitely chose this Okerlund Plane on purpose.” Bebe snorted.

“Be patient. We aren’t able to find it, but others also aren’t.” Linley’s divine sense continuously maintained a watch over the entire plane. “Once they do, I will be the first to know as well.”

“Right.” Bebe said, puzzled, “Boss, then, do you think that the information Brodie left behind for the Radiant Goddess to convey to us…those three words, ‘Lion Heart City’…what do you think those words mean? Boss, I have the feeling…that the hiding place of the red caltrop diamond should have something to do with this information.”

Linley frowned. “Brodie shouldn’t have been so bored as to leave behind some random information to misguide us. The three words, ‘Lion Heart City’, definitely hold a secret within. And that secret will guide us to the red caltrop diamond’s hiding place. But what does ‘Lion Heart City’ refer to?”

All the experts, Linley included, upon seeing the words ‘Lion Heart City’, believed that the red caltrop diamond had to be hidden within Lionheart City.

But after investigating it, it seemed off.

“Bebe, let’s go. I want to go to the magus libraries of Lionheart City and search through it for information regarding Lionheart City. Perhaps I might discover something.” Linley rose to his feet.

“Right. Lionheart City involves these secrets. Perhaps those materials will have information regarding it.” Bebe was overjoyed as well.

Linley and Bebe immediately disappeared from within the palace.

As Linley and Bebe were advancing to the ‘Lionheart Magus Institute’, in a lavish, towering estate within Lionheart City, Clementine was leading his subordinates to set up shop here.

“Milord, we’ve already searched the entire Lionheart City. No person or magical beast has an interspatial ring within them, much less a red caltrop diamond.” A short silver-haired youth bowed and spoke. Those hundreds of Highgods searched quite quickly, but were only comparable to Linley searching by himself.

“You can leave now.” Clementine said calmly.

“Yes.” The silver-haired youth bowed, then left, leaving behind just Clementine himself within the courtyard.

Linley wasn’t the only one pondering. Clementine was pondering as well. “That paper only had three words; ‘Lion Heart City’. No other words. What do those words mean?” Clementine’s gaze flashed, and he immediately activated his Sovereign’s Might!

A powerful divine sense swept out, passing out from the Beastgod continent and stretching deep through the ocean until it encapsulated the entire Fogdeep continent as well.

“Do you know what the meaning of the three words on that paper, ‘Lion Heart City’, refer to?” Clementine sent.

Far away in the distant Fogdeep continent, within the Radiant Temple, the Radiant Goddess felt her heart tremble, and she immediately responded, “Milord, the three words, ‘Lion Heart City’…I am unclear as to the true meaning of those words.”

“How many Lionheart Cities exist in this continent?” Clementine asked.

“Just that imperial capital of the Snowlion Empire of the Beastgod continent.” The Radiant Goddess was completely certain.

“Just one?” Clementine truly did not understand. If there were other Lionheart Cities, perhaps he might go search those places. But now, what was he supposed to do with those three words, ‘Lion Heart City’?

“When Bordie gave that paper to you, did he say anything? Have you told me everything he said in detail?” Clementine said.

“Thirty years ago, when Brodie descended upon the Okerlund Plane, he came with his wife. He once came to my Radiant Sacred Island. Although we were both Gods, he easily defeated me. He lived with me for a time, and when he left, he gave me a gift! He said if many Deities descended on the Okerlund Empire in search of some treasure, I was to hand it to a powerful expert…he said that after the powerful expert acquired the treasure, I would then be rewarded.”

The Radiant Goddess felt extremely resigned.

She had thought that after handing over the paper, she would be praised and rewarded.

But who would have imagined that not only did Clementine not reward her, he even gave her attitude.

Actually, even Brodie himself had no idea…that the ‘red caltrop diamond’ would attract the descent of so many experts, to the point where even eight Paragons and a Paragon-equivalent, Linley, would come! With so many experts, even if she offered up the ‘paper’, the others would notice as well.

If the others hadn’t noticed, perhaps Clementine would have been overjoyed and truly have rewarded the Radiant Goddess.

“After the expert found the treasure, you would thus be rewarded?” Clementine frowned.

From these words, Clementine could deduce…that the red caltrop diamond should truly be in the Okerlund Plane.

“Whoosh.” Clementine withdrew his divine sense from the Fogdeep continent, then gave the order. “Marquis Winter [Wen’te], come over here.”

Marquis Winter was the owner of this estate. However, when Clementine's group came, all they had to do was show off the high-level talisman from the Radiant Temple for Marquis Winter to immediately become extremely respectful.

"Milord." An old man with a head full of silvery white hair, but whose eyes were blue and flashing with life walked over. He saluted respectfully.

"Come with me for a stroll about Lionheart City." Clementine gave the order. "Take me to some of the interesting areas of Lionheart City."

"Yes, milord. I know every single special, historical area or building which exists within Lionheart City." Marquis Winter didn't know Clementine's true status; he thought that Clementine was a high level member of the Radiant Temple. But that was already enough for him to be extremely respectful.

The various experts all had their own thoughts. Linley chose to go to the libraries in search of information regarding Lionheart City, while Clementine let this person lead him to view some of the unique sights of Lionheart City. Although his divine sense was able to cover Lionheart City, with no one to explain for him, even if he found a 'rock' that had existed for countless ages, he wouldn't know that there was any special meaning to that rock.

Under the guidance of Marquis Winter, Clementine learned quite a bit about the classical history of Lionheart City.

At this moment, Clementine and Marquis Winter were located within a history museum. This museum's exhibition hall walls had enormous relief sculptures on them. These relief sculptures were almost all at the same height on the wall. The wide halls only had a few dozen figures located sparsely within them.

"Milord, look." Marquis Winter laughed as he pointed at a relief sculpture up ahead. "The nineteen people in this sculpture are our Snowlion Empire's Founding Emperor, 'Venna' [Wen'na], and his most loyal eighteen knights.

Even the weakest of these eighteen knights had reached the ninth level, while our Founding Emperor, Wenna, was a Saint-level expert."

Clementine just nodded slightly.

Ninth rank? Saint? To a supreme Deity like Clementine, there was no difference.

"Milord, look at this carving." Marquis Winter said as he pointed to a giant carving next to them. This carving was of an enormous, mono-horned lion-type magical beast. In the carving, this enormous lion-type magical beast had a large wound on its lower body. A person was currently flying out from this wound, and that figure was holding something in its hands.

The sculpture had captured that moment.

"Oh, rather interesting." Clementine, upon seeing this sculpture, couldn't help but chuckle.

"Milord, this sculpture describes the greatest danger our Founding Emperor Venna faced; this was also the battle that led to Emperor Venna's rise to fame!" Marquis Winter said hurriedly. "And this battle occurred at the old location of Lionheart City. It was precisely because he wanted to commemorate that battle that Emperor Venna ordered this imperial capital and named it 'Lionheart City'. This is where Lionheart City came from."

"Where Lionheart City came from?" Clementine's eyes lit up. "Explain in detail!"

Marquis Winter had never seen this 'high level member of the Radiant Temple' show so much excitement. He couldn't help but say hurriedly, "That year, Emperor Venna had just reached the Saint-level. But he encountered the Saint-level magical beast, 'Silverhorn Snowlion'. That year, Lionheart City was nothing more than a desolate region. Emperor Venna engaged in a fierce battle with the Silverhorn Snowlion! Back then, Emperor Venna was just an early-stage Saint, while generally speaking, magical beasts who reach the Saint level are comparable to late-stage

human Saints."

Clementine nodded slightly.

"Emperor Venna was at a definite disadvantage and close to the point of death. But at the critical moment, with life and death hanging from a thread, Emperor Venna managed to find life from death; he charged straight into the mouth of the Silverhorn Snowlion. He entered the Silverhorn Snowlion's stomach. None of us know exactly what happened, but what we do know…was that Emperor Venna cut through the Silverhorn Snowlion's stomach when he escaped. And, in his hand, he was clutching part of the Silverhorn Snowlion's heart when he emerged. Clearly, he had already shattered the Silverhorn Snowlion's heart…but of course, the Silverhorn Snowlion died as well." Marquis Winter explained in detail. "That battle resulted in Emperor Venna growing much more powerful. He became the most powerful Saint of the entire Beastgod continent."

Clementine's eyes flashed with a complicated look.

"Lionheart City…no wonder it is named Lionheart City." Clementine had a smile on his face, and in his heart, he murmured, "He broke out of the Silverhorn Snowlion's stomach, grabbed its heart, then emerged."

"Let's go back now." Clementine maintained his calm.

"Go back?" Marquis Winter was startled.

Clementine paid him no mind. He pretended as though nothing had happened as he once more returned to Marquis Winter's estate. Only, just an hour after returning to the estate, Clementine himself silently slipped away from Lionheart City!

Chapter 40 – The Red Caltrop Diamond Emerges!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 40, The Red Caltrop Diamond Emerges!

Moving as fast as lightning, he instantly pierced through the skies.

Clementine's eyes were filled with wild joy. "Haha, I didn't expect that I would be the first of the nine Paragons to discover it! Lionheart City. So those three words were pointing to a story. Pointing to the fact that the red caltrop diamond was hidden within the body of a Silverhorn Snowlion." Clementine was currently completely certain.

Just then, Clementine had stretched his divine sense out to search all of the Silverhorn Snowlions of the entire plane.

In the Okerlund Plane, there were a total of twelve Silverhorn Snowlions. Aside from two which lived together, the other ten were scattered about. It was naturally easy for him to search those twelve magical beasts. Clementine only needed a moment to completely search the bodies of those twelve Silverhorn Snowlions.

Indeed!

There were three Silverhorn Snowlions who lived in the 'Snowy Icecliff Region' in the northern part of the Beastgod continent. The most powerful and largest of the Silverhorn Snowlions had an interspatial ring in its body!

If he had immediately left upon returning to his estate, the other Paragons would have immediately had questions about where he had just gone. Thus, Clementine had waited an hour. Although this made it so that the other Paragons might notice as well, Clementine was impatient now. In addition, he was completely confident.

"Hmph. By the time those eight react, I should have already arrived at the

Snowy Icecliff Region. In addition, in terms of speed, I rank at the front of those nine. I'm the first one to arrive; they won't catch up in time. Once that red caltrop diamond falls into my hands, they can forget about taking it back." Clementine was completely confident.

Paragons of Light specialized in speed!

A ray of light shot straight towards the Snowy Icecliff Region of the Beastgod continent.

Snowlion Empire. Lionheart City. Lionheart Magus Institute. The library.

Tens of thick, heavy tomes were placed on the table. These tens of tomes all described various places and events of Lionheart City. As the imperial capital, there were many, many stories regarding Lionheart City! Some of these books talked about the various heroic figures who had emerged in the countless years of the city's history, as well as some of the legendary secret histories of the imperial palace. They introduced some of the magus institutes and the Founding Emperor…

There was simply too much.

Linley and Bebe had no idea what special meaning was contained within those three simple words, 'Lion Heart City'. Thus, they had no choice but to read through these books. They hoped that while reading one story in particular, they might have a sudden insight and be able to think through the secret.

"Eh?" Linley frowned, and Bebe couldn't help but look towards Linley.

"Why has Clementine left Lionheart City?" Linley muttered.

"Clementine left Lionheart City?" Bebe stared. "Boss, Lionheart City is linked with the red caltrop diamond. Why has Clementine left?"

"Logically speaking, he shouldn't." Linley said with furrowed brows. "Unless…"

“Unless he knows the true secret of the three words, ‘Lion Heart City’. He knows that the red caltrop diamond isn’t within Lionheart City!” Bebe said hurriedly.

“Right. That’s the only explanation.” Linley nodded.

“Boss, are we going to chase after him? If he acquires the red caltrop diamond, what are we to do?” Bebe said frantically.

Linley shook his head and laughed. “Calm down. This isn’t the time to grow impatient yet.”

“This isn’t the time?” Bebe stared.

“Tell me; if we chase after him, even if we catch him, what will Clementine do? He doesn’t have the red caltrop diamond yet. How will we know where to go acquire it, then?” Linley said.

Bebe was startled.

This was indeed true. They didn’t know where the red caltrop diamond was. How would chasing after Clementine change that?

“In addition, Clementine is going north! Even if he acquires the red caltrop diamond, he has to hurry to the Fogdeep continent’s teleportation array. He’ll have to go a long distance. We can intercept him midway.” Linley said. “Clementine doesn’t know my real power. Paragons are believed to be invincible amongst Deities! This is the iron rule…of the past. After acquiring the red caltrop diamond, he will probably head off by himself and take it to the teleportation array.”

If Linley was an ordinary Paragon, then Clementine probably really would have nothing to fear.

“Then we…?” Bebe was startled.

“Sit here and read these books.” Linley said calmly.

“Oh.” Bebe had no choice but to suppress his heart, calming himself.

“Clementine…” Linley’s gaze was dark and icy, with a cold light flashing every so often. Although he looked very calm, how could Linley truly be calm? Doehring Cowart had taught Linley since he was young; he could be said to be Linley’s teacher, but also Linley’s ‘grandfather’. Although his father was important, Linley’s father, ‘Hogg’, hadn’t been with Linley for too long, after all.

But Grandpa Doehring had always accompanied Linley and guided Linley…in Linley’s heart, Grandpa Doehring’s status was definitely comparable to his father’s.

Grandpa Doehring’s death, in particular, was a wound that lingered, deep in Linley’s soul.

Forget about sacrificing one or two divine clones; even at the risk of true death, Linley would want to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life. From this, one could imagine how deeply Linley valued the red caltrop diamond.

“At all costs, I must find the red caltrop diamond…” Linley locked his divine sense onto the distant, flying Clementine. Clementine himself didn’t notice, but he did notice the other seven Paragons paying attention to him. For the sake of avoiding Clementine’s suspicion, Linley would occasionally use Sovereign’s Might to search him as well.

He wanted these Paragons to think that Linley was only occasionally searching.

“Boss, Boss.” Bebe suddenly called out in surprised delight.

“What is it?” Linley was startled.

“Boss, look at this story, quick.” Bebe, excited and surprised, handed over a flipped open book in his hands to Linley. The two pages that were on

display even had an inserted image which was of a Silverhorn Snowlion that had its stomach torn open by a human.

Linley swept it with his gaze, instantly reading the complete story.

“Silverhorn Snowlion. Snatching the already shattered heart, then bursting out from the stomach? This is the origin of Lionheart City?” Linley seemed to have been struck by thunder.

Linley’s group had been pondering about which lifeform was hiding the red caltrop diamond within its body. If they searched them all one by one, it would be like searching for a needle in the sea; how long would it take?

But upon seeing this story, most likely quite a few of the Paragons would understand.

Linley and Bebe were shocked as well.

“Silverhorn Snowlions!” Linley’s divine sense instantly spread out to all of the Silverhorn Snowlions in the northern region. Silverhorn Snowlions liked frigid environments, and the northern part of the Beastgod continent, the ‘Snowy Icecliff Region’, had three right there. In an instant, Linley searched the three Silverhorn Snowlions.

One of them had an interspatial ring within its body.

“That’s it!”

Linley rose to his feet, his eyes blazing like fire. “Bebe, let’s go!”

“Let’s go.” Bebe, after seeing the story, could guess at the secret now.

Linley and Bebe immediately disappeared from the library of the magus institute. And then, Linley and Bebe transformed into a ray of green light, rapidly advancing towards the north.

“Linley’s heading out as well? Can it be that they’ve all discovered the

secret?”

The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, instantly flew out of Lionheart City as well.

Not just him; the other six Paragons no longer hesitated, immediately flying out of Lionheart City and towards Linley and Clementine.

The three words, ‘Lion Heart City’, involved the secret of the red caltrop diamond. Logically speaking, they shouldn’t be leaving Lionheart City. But after being here just a single day, Clementine had left! This had already aroused the suspicions of the other Paragons. But a short while later, Linley had actually left Lionheart City as well.

Two people had left in succession. This had a major impact on the other seven Paragons.

Thus, everyone hurried to leave.

Linley and Bebe flew at high speed in the air above the Beastgod continent.

“Boss, why aren’t you flying over at top speed?” Bebe said frantically. Linley, even now, was just using wind-type Sovereign power. He didn’t use his fused divine power. Linley’s speed with wind-type Sovereign power was comparable to the speed of the other Paragons.

This was because Linley was hiding his power! But even now, Linley still wanted to hide?

“If my speed increases several times over, they will definitely be surprised and confused. By then, problems will occur.” Linley sent back. “More importantly, Clementine started flying much earlier than I did. He’s already reached the Snowy Icecliff Region. Even if my speed increases several times over, there’s no way I can get there before him and reach that Silverhorn Snowlion first.”

Since he wasn’t able to catch up at maximum speed, it would be best for him to temporarily continue to hide his power.

Linley didn't expose his power, and so Clementine would definitely continue to believe the myth that 'Paragons were invincible amongst Deities'. When the time came, Linley would definitely have an opportunity.

If Clementine knew how powerful Linley was, he would definitely be prepared. By then, Linley's chances for acquiring the red caltrop diamond would be even lower.

"Right now, Clementine has reached the Silverhorn Snowlion." Linley was rather uneasy, but for the sake of acquiring the red caltrop diamond, he had to calm himself down!

The Snowy Icecliff Region.

This was the coldest part of the Beastgod continent. This region was extremely large, stretching out to ten million kilometers. According to legend, within this Snowy Icecliff Region, there lived the primeval races of 'Glacier Giants', 'Deep Sea Lions', 'Silverhorn Snowlions', and other terrifying ice-attribute Saint-level magical beasts!

There were almost no people here.

Even experts who wanted to train would rarely come here. It was simply too cold.

"Whoooosh." Snowflakes flew everywhere, and the cold wind howled like knives.

A hill-sized Silverhorn Snowlion was lying in the middle of an enormous cave within a giant glacier. As a supreme magical beast, the area for a hundred kilometers around the Silverhorn Snowlion's lair didn't have a single other magical beast present.

"Swish."

A ray of light shot down from the skies into the cave.

“Hmph…” Two thick streams of white smoke came out from the nostrils of the Silverhorn Snowlion, so thick they seemed like smoky pillars. Its giant silver eyes stare directly at the newcomer…the golden-haired man dressed in loose white robes. Clementine.

“Who are you?” The Silverhorn Snowlion felt that this person was extraordinary.

Clementine smiled, then set up his Godrealm, completely sealing off this location. He also stretched out his Paragon’s divine sense. Given this situation, Clementine had made it so that other Paragons wouldn’t be able to see through his defense and find out what was going on inside.

“Was there a Deity who once gave you an interspatial ring?” Clementine said. As he said this, Clementine released his aura.

A terrifying presence was released!

The Silverhorn Snowlion’s body trembled, and then it went prostrate, its legs buckling. It stared in terror at Clementine, who stood before him. When Clementine had been hiding his aura, that was one thing, but now that he actively released it…the Silverhorn Snowlion felt as though he were an ant in front of a giant.

“Yes. My master once gave me an interspatial ring.” The Silverhorn Snowlion said hurriedly. At the same time, he opened his mouth and a slick black interspatial ring shot out from it.

Some magical beasts were able to keep storage items in their bodies.

For example, giant dragons or behemoths all had a location that was akin to a ‘storage sac’ that was used for transporting items. Generally speaking, items could be stored within. Very few would use interspatial rings, unless they transformed into the form of a human.

“Actually, this interspatial ring isn’t of much use to me. If you wish it,

milord, I am willing to offer it to you." The Silverhorn Snowlion hurriedly removed the binding. He had never been this terrified before.

The 'presence' in front of him was thousands of times more powerful than that of his former master. The Silverhorn Snowlion even had the feeling… that this person was the endless universe itself, capable of killing him with a thought.

"Then I will take it." Clementine accepted the interspatial ring, immediately binding it with blood, then stretching out his divine sense.

"This…" A look of wild joy crept into Clementine's eyes.

Indeed…

This interspatial ring was almost completely empty. It held only one item… a red caltrop diamond. The red caltrop diamond contained a Life-type aura. Given the strength of Clementine's divine will, he could clearly sense it.

"Haha, I finally succeeded. Hmph, hmph, eight of them fought with me over it, but it's still mine." Clementine smiled, and then with a flicker, his body flew out and headed at high speed towards the Fogdeep continent.

Clementine's usage of his divine sense and Godrealm made it so that the other Paragons weren't able to see what had happened, but Linley had seen everything clearly. That look of wild joy that had appeared on Clementine's face removed all doubt from Linley.

"Whoosh!"

Instantly, the seven Paragons, Linley, and Bebe all changed their flying directions slightly, wanting to intercept Clementine midway.

"Clementine definitely acquired the red caltrop diamond. We must not let him escape." A deep voice rang out in Linley's mind.

"Clementine used his divine sense to block us out, but I'd already searched

that Silverhorn Snowlion. The Silverhorn Snowlion did indeed have an interspatial ring in its body, but now…it is gone. It was definitely taken away by Clementine." Linley sent back to the other seven Paragons. "Everyone, let's split up and surround him from multiple directions. We definitely can't let him escape."

The other Paragons immediately assented.

At this moment, all of them were working in harmony to surround Clementine!

Eight rays of light separated, then slashed through the skies, seeking to prevent that single ray of light.

Chapter 41 – Two Preparations

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 41, Two Preparations

As someone who trained in the Laws of Light, Clementine's speed was quite fast, even amongst these Paragons.

"Swoosh!"

Space trembled as a streak of light burst forward.

"Hmph. As expected, the eight of them have come to block me." Clementine stretched out his divine sense and discovered that Linley and the rest of the eight had moved to block off the path ahead of him. Unless he, Clementine, did not choose to go back through the teleportation array, there was no way for him to avoid the blockade of the eight.

The reason why he only considered the number to be 'eight' was because Clementine didn't even take Bebe into consideration.

"What a pity, what a pity. They are simply wasting time by doing this." Clementine crooked a smile, a hint of delighted amusement on his lips. At the same time, he stretched his divine sense into the mind of one of his Highgod subordinates. "Derry [De'lei], hurry up and inform the Chief Sovereign of Light that I have already acquired the red caltrop diamond."

"Yes, milord."

The group of Highgods which Clementine had led over included ones with divine clones still residing in the Divine Light Plane, right next to the Chief Sovereign of Light himself, and were constantly reporting back about the events occurring in the Okerlund Plane.

"At the same time, tell the Chief Sovereign that I am being blocked by eight Paragons, and that the situation is a bit tricky. If I am lucky enough to break

through successfully, I will be able to return through the teleportation array. However…if I am unable to escape the eight of them…" Even Clementine wasn't confident that he would be able to successfully escape from eight experts no weaker than him who were blockading him.

"If I'm unable to escape, I will choose to take the red caltrop diamond with me as I enter chaotic space! Inform the Chief Sovereign, and ask him to enter chaotic space early on and make haste to the Okerlund Plane. If I enter chaotic space, I will need the Chief Sovereign to save me." Clementine sent mentally.

"Yes, milord. I will immediately report this to the Chief Sovereign of Light." The intelligence agent said hurriedly.

Clementine was prepared for both possibilities; it could be said that this was a flawless plan.

If he could break through, he would; if he couldn't, he would enter chaotic space.

The Chief Sovereign would save him. What had he to fear?

Upon entering chaotic space, even Highgod Paragons would find themselves virtually unable to control their own movements. They would instead be swept away by the endless tides of spatial chaos.

But of course, this was all predicated on the fact that 'Paragons were invincible amongst Highgods'. If someone was able to easily kill him, he wouldn't even have the chance to flee. Actually, although Clementine's strategy was rather simple, it could still be considered flawless. After all, over the course of countless years, it had indeed been true that Paragons were invincible amongst Highgods. Most likely even all the Sovereigns believed this.

"Milord, the Chief Sovereign is very happy. He praised you highly, milord, and he has already entered a spatial rift and is currently in chaotic space, making haste towards the Okerlund Plane. However, from the location in

chaotic space of Divine Light Plane to the location of the Okerlund Plane is too far away; even at the Chief Sovereign's speed, some time is needed."

"Excellent." Clementine now felt more assured.

"Everything has been prepared. Now, I'll accompany the eight of you in playing around for a time. Let's see if you'll be able to stop me?" Clementine's lips curved upwards. He didn't believe that anybody would be able to take the red caltrop diamond from him.

Linley's group of eight was flying at high speed.

"Rumble…"

The waves of the sea rolled forward. Linley's group was currently flying above the seas. Clementine was moving straight towards the Fogdeep continent; naturally, he would have to pass through the ocean. The other Paragons, even if they wanted to go all out, would thus have to stop Clementine above the sea.

"Based on the information that I have, Clementine has a defensive Sovereign artifact." A cold, fierce voice entered Linley's mind. "Thus, if we are to act against him, it is best if we use soul attacks! Only, Paragons have very powerful souls. The only way we can kill him is if all eight of us all strike him with soul attacks."

The speaker was the only female in the group, a Paragon of Lightning.

"Kill him? That will be very hard." Dunnington's voice entered everyone's minds. "As I see it, when the time comes, the faster ones amongst us, being Ballmer, Bayer, Linley, Nanessa [Ne'ne'sha], will go slow him down. Don't let him escape. As long as he can't escape, once he faces our group attacks, we will have a chance to kill him."

In recorded history, there had been instances of Paragons being killed by Sovereigns.

However, there had never been a case where a group of Paragons killed a single Paragon. It wasn't that it was impossible; rather, the chances of a large group of Paragons to come to the same spot and join forces was simply too low.

"Our goal isn't to kill him." That cold voice rang out. "Just to force Clementine to hand over the red caltrop diamond."

"Once it is handed over, who will take it?" Bayer's voice rang out.

The discussion through divine sense of this group of Paragons instantly ground to a halt.

Right. If Clementine were to hand over the red caltrop diamond, who would it go to?

"It's far too early to be discussing this." Linley sent to the other seven Paragons. "Do you all think that it will be easy for us to acquire the red caltrop diamond from Clementine? Hmph. Let's think about how we can force him to hand it over. As for who will acquire it, as I see it, nobody will want to give it up, right? When the time comes, it'll be based on who has the ability to take it."

"Right. It will be based on who has the ability to take it."

None of the Paragons were willing to submit to each other; only by relying on ability could one acquire the red caltrop diamond, then flee past the others. Only then would the other Paragons be convinced.

"Boss, you feel confident now?" Bebe sent with worry. "Just now, they were saying that Clementine has a defensive Sovereign artifact."

"Ninety percent confident." Linley's gaze was sharp as he stared into the distance. "He's about to arrive."

Both Linley's side and Clementine were travelling at high speed.

In the face of a blockade by these eight great experts, even though Clementine might want to avoid them, there was no way he would be able to.

“Clementine has arrived.” The cold, sharp voice said. “Let’s just do as Dunnington suggested earlier. I, Ballmer, Bayer, and Linley will be responsible for entangling him and preventing him from escaping. And then, everyone will jointly use soul attacks against him. Hmph, he’s by himself. For him to endure the soul attacks of eight Paragons…probably even he won’t be able to endure it.”

“Bebe, just watch here for now.” Linley sent mentally.

“Right.” Bebe understood that for a battle at this level, if he got involved, he would just be dead weight.

Without hesitating at all, Linley’s group of eight shot out like eight bolts of lightning, forming a net as they shot towards that distant ray of light.

“Clementine…” Linley’s gaze was firmly focused on that distant ray of light. Suddenly, that ray of light distorted, wanting to dodge past Linley’s group.

“In your dreams!”

Linley, Paragon of Fire Ballmer, Paragon of Wind Bayer, and Paragon of Lightning Nanessa suddenly accelerated. The four of them were not slower than Clementine, and as they did a four-way pincer towards him, they easily made it so that there was nowhere Clementine could run to avoid them.

“Clementine, you won’t be able to escape.” Ballmer’s voice rang out in Clementine’s mind.

“Haha, you want to stop me? Keep dreaming!” Clementine knew that there was no way for him to dodge them, but suddenly charged at high speed towards Bayer.

Bayer, as a Paragon of Wind, was most powerful in material attacks, while a bit lacking in soul attacks. As for Clementine, he had a protective Sovereign artifact and so didn't fear Bayer at all.

"HE wants to flee from my side?" Bayer's face turned cold.

"Whooosh."

Suddenly, a wild wind howled and Bayer instantly transformed into a dense cluster of thousands of Bayers. This was the 'Doppelganger' technique of the Laws of the Wind. The strange thing is, the many doppelgangers actually generated strange tornados, with the dense cluster of tornados actually not causing any spatial vibrations at all.

Linley, seeing this, was secretly surprised.

"Thousands of doppelgangers, joining forces to execute the 'Dimensional Wind' technique. This is truly inconceivable." Linley sighed in praise.

Logically speaking, only the true body should be able to use profound mysteries. But Bayer had clearly developed a technique to make it so that all of his doppelgangers would also have access to this technique. In addition, it had a special effect akin to a 'magical formation', making the effects of this 'Dimensional Wind' technique be layered atop each other, completely locking in the surrounding space.

A terrifying restrictive, pulling power instantly enveloped Clementine!

"Bayer actually has a technique like this?" Clementine couldn't help but feel frantic.

Even though the profound mysteries of the Laws were the same, the attacks one could develop weren't necessarily the same. After gaining insight into the profound mysteries, one still had to develop the best method for applying them. Bayer's technique was a fairly clever way of applying the profound mysteries.

“Right at this moment. Soul attacks!” Dunnington’s voice rang out in the minds of everyone, including Linley.

Instantly, the eight people, including Linley, launched soul attacks without hesitating at all.

“Not good.” Clementine’s face changed dramatically.

“Bang!” Clementine’s body suddenly exploded with thousands of rays of golden light, forming a dense cluster of many Clementines. The ‘Doppelganger’ type technique was available to the Laws of the Wind, the Laws of Darkness, and the Laws of Light as well. But of course, the principle behind each was slightly different.

For now, Linley’s group of eight was unable to immediately determine which one was the true body.

Although everyone knew that Clementine’s original body wouldn’t be able to flee too far, and that it was within a few meters of the original location, within those few meters, there were five Clementines!

“Hmph!”

The only woman in this battle, the Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, stretched her hands out. Instantly, within the surrounding area of ten thousand meters, thousands of bolts of lightning appeared out of nowhere. The wild, savage thunderbolts struck down with abandon. Instantly, virtually all of the doppelgangers which Clementine had created had all been destroyed, leaving behind only a single Clementine.

“Stay your hands.” Clementine shouted loudly as he flew backwards, wanting to pull away from Linley’s group.

“Attack.” There was no hesitation at all; as Dunnington gave the order, the eight of them all unleashed their soul attacks.

Eight rays of translucent soul attacks shot through the skies, attacking

towards Clementine. Soul attacks were always terrifyingly fast to begin with. Ordinary Highgods would be completely unable to dodge, but the speed of Paragons was far faster than the speed of Highgods, after all. Even in the face of these impending soul attacks, he was still able to dodge slightly.

Clementine's body suddenly twisted.

He managed to dodge six full soul attacks, but two of them still sunk into his body.

"Hmph." The color of Clementine's face changed slightly.

"Continue." Dunnington didn't hesitate at all.

"Stay your hands. If you keep attacking, I will destroy this interspatial ring." Clementine's voice instantly echoed in the minds of the eight. At the same time, an interspatial ring appeared within Clementine's hands.

The eyes of Linley's group of eight lit up, and they couldn't help but halt.

"Clementine, this red caltrop diamond isn't for you to have. Just hand it over." The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, snickered.

"Hmph." The Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, stared coldly towards Clementine with her violet eyes.

"Hand it over, Clementine." Linley stared at him.

Clementine swept the eight of them with his gaze, then snickered, "I really didn't expect that today's events would occur. If I had known, I would've gone to the Planar Battlefield and earned a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact." A Paragon suffer joint attacks from a group of Paragons? This had never happened before.

The Paragons had never anticipated a day like today, and so aside from a minority of Paragons who did go and acquire three Sovereign artifacts, the

vast majority of Paragons either had no Sovereign artifacts or just one.

After all…

Whether or not they had Sovereign artifacts made very little difference to them. Only when they suffered an attack from a group of Paragons would a Sovereign artifact prove its usefulness.

“The eight of you really are quite vicious. It is just an Overgod talisman, right? Why fight to the death like this.” Clementine rubbed his nose, then snickered, “The reason the nine of us have come for this Overgod talisman is to give our Sovereign some face, and to acquire just a bit of Sovereign’s Might. Why fight to this extent?”

Indeed, the Overgod talisman, to Highgod Paragons, didn’t have that much use. It wasn’t worth them fighting for their lives over it.

However, not worth fighting for their lives was only true if their own lives were on the lines. The Paragons wouldn’t mind taking someone else’s life for it.

“Since you’ve said that, you should hand the red caltrop diamond over.” Dunnington said.

Chapter 42 – Linley's Terrifying Strength

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 42, Linley's Terrifying Strength

Linley stared coldly at Clementine.

Despite being faced with a group of eight experts who were attacking him, Clementine was still all smiles.

"If you want this red caltrop diamond, we can discuss it." Clementine said with a laugh. "However, I must tell you, I have already informed the Chief Sovereign of Light that I have it. If you do this, you will be offending the Chief Sovereign. Consider this carefully."

"What a joke." Dunnington laughed coldly. "Offend the Chief Sovereign of Light? Everyone competed for the red caltrop diamond fairly. If just by fighting over it, the Chief Sovereign of Light will be offended, then you taking it for yourself will be offending the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, the Chief Sovereign of Life, and the other Chief Sovereigns!" Which of these Paragons didn't have a powerful backer?

Perhaps only Linley was here on his own.

Actually, as the other Paragons viewed it, behind Linley was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction of the Infernal Realm.

"Stop wasting time." Bayer laughed coldly.

Clementine's face sank. He swept the eight with his gaze, then laughed coldly. "Fine. You want this red caltrop diamond, right? However, how will the eight of you divide it up? I am quite interested in this."

"Don't worry about that." Dunnington's face sank.

"Everyone, prepare to attack." Linley said.

Clementine's face instantly turned cold. He suddenly swung his hand and threw the interspatial ring out, using so much force that it transformed into a blur and flew into the horizon.

"Did he really hand it over?" Linley was startled. This was beyond his expectations. "Or perhaps…the interspatial ring he threw out was fake?" Linley was suspicious, but despite that, he would still go check it out!"

"The red caltrop diamond!"

The eight, Linley included, all charged together, but Linley's divine sense was activated at all times, and so he clearly noticed that Clementine suddenly charged at high speed towards the Fogdeep continent.

A deep voice rang out. "This interspatial ring isn't necessarily real. Everyone, don't let Clementine escape. Let's stop him first."

But although they said that, who would actually go stop him?

If someone went to stop him, the others would definitely acquire the interspatial ring. After all…Linley's group of eight wasn't truly a cohesive group. Everyone wanted to acquire the red caltrop diamond. This made it so that although everyone knew that Clementine was fleeing, nobody went to stop him.

Everyone went to try and acquire the interspatial ring which Clementine had thrown out.

The closest and fastest were Linley and Bayer. They charged to the front and were about to acquire the interspatial ring. Up till now, Linley still had yet to reveal his true strength.

"Swoosh!" A surge of terrifyingly powerful energy swept towards Linley, and Linley's speed couldn't help but slow down.

"Hmph." Linley willed it, and with a 'whap', behind Linley, a two meter

long metallic, whip-like draconic tail suddenly emerged. After the transformation, Linley's draconic tail and scales were now an inky jade color. Under Linley's control, that draconic tail suddenly extended to nearly four meters long, and as it whipped out…

"Swoosh!" Space was cut through like parchment by a knife, and a very neat spatial rift was created.

"Bang!" Bayer wasn't able to dodge in time. Struck by the draconic tail, he was knocked flying. Not just him; even the Paragon chasing behind them, 'Nanessa', was also knocked aside by Linley's draconic tail.

Linley stretched his hand over the interspatial ring, and in the same instant, sent a drop of blood into it.

"The interspatial ring…the red caltrop diamond…" Linley couldn't help but tremble from excitement.

"Everyone, join forces and attack Linley." Bayer instantly sent to the other Paragons.

Linley's divine sense instantly swept through the interspatial ring. The insides of it were completely empty; forget about the red caltrop diamond, there wasn't even a rock inside. Linley's heart sank, and a surge of rage began to build in his chest. "So this Clementine really wasn't willing to hand over the red caltrop diamond."

The other Paragons were preparing to attack Linley.

"This ring is fake!" Linley sent furiously to the others. "We've been swindled by Clementine!"

"What?"

The faces of the other seven Paragons changed dramatically. They all had thought of this possibility, but when it really played out, all of them grew furious. Eight Paragons had been deceived at one go. How could they not

be enraged?

Everyone had thought of this possibility, and someone had even spoken out to urge them to block Clementine.

But…everyone wanted someone else to do the blocking, while they would go seize the interspatial ring.

Their disunity made it so that Clementine was now able to pull away from them.

“Capture him!” The Paragon of Earth, the big fellow who was four meters tall, bellowed furiously.

The eight, Linley included, charged straight for Clementine.

“Haha, only now did you want to try and capture me? Haha, too late.” Clementine’s voice. It echoed within the minds of Dunnington, Ballmer, Linley, and the rest of the eight. “It really is as I expected; this is the result of your disunity. I just played a simple trick, and all of you were fooled.”

Dunnington, Bayer, and the others had ugly looks on their faces.

Actually, everyone realized that the ring was probably fake, but none of them could resist fighting over it.

“To capture him now is difficult.” A cold voice rang out in the minds of Linley and the others. The speaker was the Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa. “Although we only spent a few moments trying to acquire that interspatial ring, Clementine has already flown more than a hundred thousand kilometers away. Of the eight of us, only four of us are as fast as Clementine, or at most slightly faster. But the distance is too great. It is impossible to catch up.”

Nanessa was quite dispirited.

The other Paragons felt helpless as well. Although they didn’t want to

accept it, it was true.

“Haha, I thought I’d have to use a second trick. It seems that is unnecessary. Everyone, thank you for showing mercy and allowing me to acquire the red caltrop diamond.” Clementine sent with intentional mockery.

Quite a few Paragons began to slow down.

Clearly, they had given up.

“I’m not chasing. I won’t be able to catch him.” Dunnington gave up as well.

Linley stared up ahead, his gaze sharp.

“It’s about time.” Linley suddenly willed it, and the wind-type Sovereign power coursing through his body was instantly retracted into his sea of consciousness. And then, Linley activated his fused divine power! The four types of divine power fused into that black divine power, causing Linley’s energy to increase dramatically. Linley then accelerated just slightly…

“Bang!”

Space itself trembled as Linley’s speed increased explosively!

His speed had increased by roughly 30%.

Actually, by relying on the ‘fused divine power’ that was ten times more effective than Sovereign power, Linley’s speed could increase several times over. But Linley understood something. “If I were to suddenly increase my speed several times over, Clementine would probably be so terrified that he wouldn’t dare do battle. He would go straight into chaotic space. That would be terrible. I’ve only increased my speed by 30% or so. He wouldn’t actually be frightened…and this speed is enough to catch him.”

Linley’s original speed was already quite terrifying. After a 30% increase?

To make a difference of a hundred thousand kilometers after a 30% increase in speed was simply too easy.

“Catch me? In their dreams?” Clementine, fleeing in the distance with a smug feeling, suddenly had a changed look on his face. His divine sense had realized that Linley had suddenly broken away from the other seven Paragons and was advancing towards him at high speed. “How can this be? How can he be so fast? Can it be that he had been hiding his power?”

The other seven Paragons were shocked as well.

“How can this Linley be so fast?” Dunnington stared, stupefied.

“This speed…it is even close to thirty percent faster than mine.” The Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, had a stunned look in her eyes as well.

“He just increased in speed by that much! There is still a distance of more than a hundred million kilometers from here to the Fogdeep continent’s teleportation array. They are only a hundred thousand kilometers away from each other. He’ll catch up in an instant.” Bayer frowned as well. Linley’s speed had stunned him.

This group of Paragons had no idea that Linley had only revealed a hint of his true power. This was because Linley didn’t want to scare Clementine into fleeing into chaotic space.

“So what if he is just a bit faster? By himself, he won’t be able to stop me.” Clementine then calmed down.

He had a defensive Sovereign artifact. As he saw it, Linley’s material attacks shouldn’t be able to harm him.

As for soul attacks?

Generally speaking, unless the difference was large, it wouldn’t be able to kill an enemy.

“His soul attacks definitely aren’t as strong as mine. Even if they were slightly stronger, he wouldn’t be able to harm me; he’s just a bit faster. It makes sense. He is a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan; it only makes sense that he’s a bit special.” Clementine felt very confident. Just now, he had suffered two soul attacks from Paragons, yet endured it; why would he fear Linley?”

Unless it was necessary, he wouldn’t choose to enter chaotic space.

If he did, he would have to suffer for some time as well.

“Clementine, you won’t be able to escape.” Linley had already caught up, and he could now see Clementine within his field of vision.

“Linley, I admit that you are quite fast, but do you think that by yourself, you will be able to stop me?” Clementine chuckled.

Linley just stared silently at Clementine as he drew closer and closer to Clementine. A thousand meters. Five hundred meters. A hundred meters…

Suddenly…

“Bang!”

In that instant, Linley’s speed suddenly tripled! On top of the earlier 30% increase in speed, it increased threefold more!

Threefold!!!

“Impossible!” The seven Paragons were watching this from afar through divine sense. Five of them even cried out involuntarily in shock, while the other two just stared with looks of amazement in their wide eyes! It had been countless years since something was capable of causing these Highgod Paragons to feel amazed.

But Linley’s speed had increased threefold more. This was on a completely different level from Paragons!

To be moving at such high speed definitely required that a person's energy and body were both far stronger than a Paragon's!

From ancient days till now, everyone believed that Paragons were the highest level of existence amongst Highgods. But Linley was definitely on a level stronger than even Paragons. What was this about?!

"Impossible!!!" Clementine's eyes were filled with amazement as well.

Right at this moment…

"BANG!" He wasn't able to react at all before a fist came smashing towards his face!

Clementine's defensive Sovereign artifact trembled violently. It wasn't damaged, but Clementine's skull was actually fractured, and the flesh on his face was split open, causing fresh blood to flow out. Clementine just felt his head grow dizzy. In this instant, he was completely dazed!

Not just him; the seven Paragons watching from afar were dazed as well!

To be able to harm him even through a defensive Sovereign artifact…what sort of an attack was this?

In the past, in the Indigo Prefecture of the Infernal Realm, when the eight great clans had attacked the Four Divine Beasts clan, Beirut had appeared and, wielding his Sovereign longstaff, devastated the experts of the eight great clans. The Patriarchs of the eight great clans had defensive Sovereign artifacts, but were still heavily injured by Beirut's staff blows, to the point of vomiting blood.

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact didn't symbolize that someone would be invincible!

Imagine a child holding a steel shield, while an adult wielding an iron mace smashed hard against the shield. Even though the shield wouldn't be

damaged at all, and although the shield would ablate most of the force, the remainder of the force would still cause the child to be injured.

It was the same principle!

If there was a twofold, threefold, or even fourfold difference in strength, there were no problems at all if one relied on a defensive Sovereign artifact.

But of course, there was a prerequisite.

That was that the attacker also had a powerful weapon. For example, Beirut; when he injured the Patriarchs of the eight great clans, he was able to do so because he had a Sovereign weapon! He had a Sovereign weapon, and given how strong he himself was, he was definitely more than ten times as strong as his enemies, which was why he was able to badly injure them. If Beirut used all of his strength, he would've even been able to kill them!

But if he hadn't had a Sovereign weapon, things would have been troublesome.

Although his attack power was great, if his weapon was ordinary, given the powerful collision that would've resulted, his weapon would've been destroyed.

However, after undergoing the transformation from the four fused divine powers, Linley's fists and kicks were comparable to Sovereign weapons!

"How…how can this be?" Clementine's eyes were filled with shock. And then, he stared hard at Linley. "You…you…how can…?"

"Hmph, Clementine, just now, I didn't use full force." Linley said coldly. And then, his body suddenly began to sprout inky jade draconic scales. Those inky jade spikes emerged as well. Linley instantly went into full Dragonform, then stared hard at Clementine. "Just now, I was able to heavily wound you through the Sovereign artifact. But now, I am able to kill you! You should understand by now."

For the current Linley, even without Dragonforming, he vastly surpassed his former strength in Dragonform, prior to fusing the four divine powers.

Using his fused divine power was more than ten times more effective than using Sovereign power.

This made it so that the even non-Dragonformed Linley was more than ten times as powerful as an ordinary Paragon.

But now, Linley was in Dragonform! His strength once more skyrocketed. His punches contained the power of Will; they were absolutely on the Sovereign weapon level!

“No…how can this be?” Clementine was stupefied.

The other spectating Paragons were completely stunned as well.

How could the world have an expert who was vastly stronger than a Paragon? Paragons were invincible amongst Deities. This was an iron rule!

Unfortunately, they didn’t realize…that this so-called iron rule was only true in the past. A hitherto unseen quadruple soul mutation had been successful, which had changed everything! A Soul Mutate who had four divine clones had never been seen before. After succeeding, Linley’s Will became far more powerful than that of the Will of a Paragon.

This symbolized…that Linley would definitely be stronger than Paragons!

For him to have a powerful Will was one thing, but what was even more terrifying was that after the four types of divine power fused, they actually changed Linley’s body, making it so that it, too, reached the Sovereign weapon level. This terrifying body, combined with his terrifying Will, and the fused divine power that vastly oustripped Sovereign power…

All these things guaranteed that Linley would vastly outstrip any Highgod Paragon!

Prior to fusing four types of divine power, Linley was comparable to Highgod Paragons. After fusing them…Linley was far beyond them!

“My body has divine clones hiding within it, so I admit that yes, after Dragonforming, you have the power to kill me. But that’s just my original body. I can use my divine clones to shatter this interspatial ring.” Clementine said hurriedly. “If you kill me, you’ll acquire neither the interspatial ring nor the red caltrop diamond.”

“That is precisely why, just now, I didn’t try to kill you.” Linley said calmly.

His true power was tens of times greater than that of his opponent, and his body was comparable to a Sovereign weapon. Linley was able to kill his opponent, even through a Sovereign artifact. At most, though, he would be able to kill the original body; the divine clone hidden within it wouldn’t die instantly. The divine clone absolutely could crush the interspatial ring.

“Clementine, it is just a red caltrop diamond. I imagine that you wouldn’t be willing to give up your life for the sake of a red caltrop diamond.” Linley said calmly. “Even if we acquire the red caltrop diamond, we’ll simply offer it to a Sovereign and at most gain some Sovereign’s Might. It isn’t that useful.”

Clementine nodded.

“Your life. Your everything. Compared to a red caltrop diamond that can only be used to trade for some Sovereign’s Might. Which one is more valuable? I imagine that you know what choice to make.” Linley laughed calmly. “Also. Don’t even think about entering chaotic space. Even if you charge in, I’ll follow you in and instantly kill you.”

Earlier, Linley said that he had a 90% confidence because…

Linley believed that unless Clementine went mad, he wouldn’t be willing to, for the sake of a red caltrop diamond that he would simply exchange for some Sovereign’s Might, give up his Paragon clone!

“Fine, you win.” Clementine let out a sour laugh. “I’m not going to give up my life for this bauble. Only, I want to ask you. Are you…a Highgod Paragon?”

Chapter 43 – Utterly Exasperated

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 43, Utterly Exasperated

"Are you…a Highgod Paragon?"

This question was something which puzzled not only Clementine. Even the seven distant Highgod Paragons who were flying over were filled with shock and disbelief! Linley, even without Dragonforming, had actually been able to harm Clementine through a Sovereign artifact.

What sort of power was this?

It was definitely a power gap of more than ten times! To be more than ten times more powerful than a Paragon? Aside from Sovereigns, could someone else be capable of this? In addition, this was when he wasn't in Dragonform. If he did Dragonform, how much stronger would Linley be, compared to a Paragon? Linley's very existence was completely inconceivable.

"Paragon?" Linley raised an eyebrow.

"Can it be…that you've made another breakthrough? Can it be that after we become Paragons, we can make further breakthroughs?" Clementine asked hurriedly. The Overgod talismans weren't that enticing to Paragons; after becoming a Paragon, they had lost all motivation, as they believed that they had reached the very pinnacle. Some lived leisurely lives, others secluded themselves, while still others controlled a side of their own.

But upon seeing Linley, these Paragons discovered that apparently it was possible to continue to increase in strength!

Instantly, their hearts began to blaze once more!

"No. Can it be that just because I'm also a Paragon, I can't possibly be tens

of times or a hundred times stronger than you?" Linley laughed calmly.

"Uh…" Clementine was stunned. "You…is it because of your body?"

"Yes. I am a Paragon, but my body is far more powerful than yours! My body is comparable to a Sovereign artifact." Linley smiled. Even now, Linley wasn't prepared to publicize his secret.

"This…a body comparable to a Sovereign artifact? That's completely…how can that be?!"

Clementine now completely understood!

Paragons who both used Sovereign power should, logically speaking, be equivalent. But Linley's body was comparable to a Sovereign artifact in power; such a physically powerful body made it so that Linley's attacks were tens of times, or nearly a hundred times, more powerful than an ordinary Paragon's!

"Why can't it be possible? Hemmers, even though he isn't a Paragon, is too naturally talented. His material attacks are already comparable to a Paragon's. You tell me; if he became a Paragon and possessed the power of Will, wouldn't his material attacks vastly surpass yours?" Linley laughed calmly.

Given how powerful Hemmers was before becoming a Paragon, if he became a Paragon, Hemmers would definitely surpass the others.

"I understand now." Clementine let out a long sigh.

"Linley, you are now the most powerful person who has ever existed, aside from the Sovereigns." Clementine looked at Linley with a complicated look in his eyes.

Clementine understood what Linley was saying. Not one of the other Paragons had a body comparable to a Sovereign artifact.

It must be understood that in all of history, throughout all the planes of the universe, there were less than ten people whose bodies were comparable to Sovereign artifacts in strength! Hemmers could just barely be considered one, while Beirut was another…there were less than ten in the entire universe. For one of those rare, blessed individuals to also become a Paragon? Was that likely?

The number of living creatures of various races that had existed throughout all of the planes and all of history was an astronomical, unthinkable number. And yet, only twenty-plus Paragons had ever emerged.

The chances were simply too low! It could be said that the chances were virtually nil.

There were less than ten or so figures like Hemmers or Beirut. For one of them to become a Paragon wasn't very practical.

Actually, according to the way the natural laws of the universe worked, for those who were too innately gifted, it would be extremely difficult for them to train. Forget about Beirut and Hemmers; not even the ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan had become Paragons.

The heavens were just!

If Linley had developed normally, there was no way he could have become this powerful, nor could he have acquired a body comparable to a Sovereign artifact!

However, despite having four divine clones, his soul mutation had been a success!

Linley's tough, powerful body wasn't given to him at birth; it was created by that fused divine power!

Ever since his four-way soul mutation had been a success, it was virtually guaranteed that a miracle would take place!

Linley had ‘fused divine power’ and ‘Will’, both of which vastly surpassed that which was available to a Highgod. This made up for Linley’s deficiencies in the mysteries, making him comparable to a Paragon. But his body, as strong as a Sovereign artifact, made him vastly surpass them.

“Clementine, you’ve asked your questions. Now, give me the red caltrop diamond.” Linley stared at Clementine.

“I wanted to offer it to the Chief Sovereign. Forget it.” Clementine waved his hand, and a red caltrop diamond appeared within it. Holding the red caltrop diamond, Clementine laughed as he looked at Linley. “This red caltrop diamond does indeed have a type of unique energy that nourishes the soul. However, to us Paragons, it is useless.”

Clementine casually tossed the red caltrop diamond towards Linley.

A treasure had varying levels of effects on varying levels of people.

If an ordinary mortal were to hold the red caltrop diamond, it would probably cause his soul to quickly become as powerful as the soul of a Saint.

If a God held it, he would also feel his soul change, and he, a God, would even be able to kill an ordinary Highgod. But if a Highgod were to hold it, the soul would no longer strengthen.

The true was same for its released power. The more powerful a person was, the less effective it would be.

The red caltrop diamond was only a talisman, after all. It wasn’t an Overgod artifact. Although it had unusual effects, it wasn’t an invincible treasure.

Brodie, when holding it, could kill Six Star Fiends.

But Morde, when in possession of the nine soul pearls, was nearly finished when facing a Linley who had yet to make his four-way fusion of divine

power.

To him, the increase in strength was already quite limited.

To Paragons, in terms of both body and soul, after they acquired the power of Will, they had already reached a limit amongst Deities. Even if they held the red caltrop diamond or the nine soul pearls, it would at most increase their power by ten or twenty percent. Their regenerative power might increase twofold or threefold, but against someone who was tens of times stronger, it was useless.

“The regenerative effect, as far as Paragons are concerned, is negligible.” Linley stretched his hand out and accepted the tossed red caltrop diamond. A surge of warm energy filled Linley’s body and soul. It was a feeling akin to the feeling he had when he held the nine soul pearls. This sort of nurturing power, to a soul as strong as Linley’s, had no effect at all.

On the surface, Linley looked calm. But in his heart, he was so excited that he was quivering.

“The red caltrop diamond. This is definitely the red caltrop diamond!” Linley wildly celebrated mentally. “Three talismans. I finally have them all!”

In his mind, Linley could still clearly remember those scenes from his youth. That day, a blurry light had flown out from the Coiling Dragon ring, transforming into an amiable, kind old man with a moon-white robe and a white beard. “Hello, kiddo. My name is Doehring Cowart. I am a Saint-level Grand Magus of the Pouant Empire!”

From that day onwards, his destiny had changed.

Linley would never forget how Grandpa Doehring had consumed up his own soul to execute a forbidden magic spell to save Linley. That was the most painful event Linley had ever been through.

“Grandpa Doehring…soon, I’ll be able to see you again.” Linley said

quietly to himself.

Excited, Linley wanted to immediately let the three talismans become one, and to let the Crown of Life summon the Overgod of Life. But Linley didn't let his joy cloud his mind. "This isn't yet the time for fusing the three talismans. If I summon the Overgod of Life now, the Sovereigns will immediately know that I have the three talismans. That will be disastrous!"

If Sovereigns knew that Linley, a Deity, had three talismans…what would the repercussions be?

Linley didn't even dare to imagine it.

"Even if the Sovereigns find out that I have an Overgod talisman, a single talisman wouldn't be enough to make a group of Sovereigns go berserk. But if they knew that I had all three of them, the Sovereigns would definitely go wild with rage. Once I return to the Yulan continent, I can then summon the Overgod. Even if the Sovereigns are filled with hate, at worst, I can just remain at the Yulan Plane and never leave again." Linley came to his decision.

Right at this moment…

In the skies above the vast, endless sea, several other figures were flying over at high speed.

Linley glanced at Clementine, then turned back to look. It was the seven Paragons and Bebe. Bebe had been brought along by Dunnington as well.

"Linley. Congratulations." Loud laughter rang out; the speaker was Dunnington.

"Becoming a Paragon is one thing, but for your body to be so strong that it is comparable to a Sovereign artifact?" That four-meter tall azure-haired fellow's words held a hint of envy in them. All the other seven Paragons, and even Bebe, had heard the words between Linley and Clementine.

“Linley, as I recall, during the Planar War, your body wasn’t this strong. How can you now…?” The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, stared at Linley.

“One can train one’s body to such a level?” All of the Paragons immediately stared at Linley.

Who didn’t want to strengthen their bodies?

Having a defensive Sovereign artifact only meant one had a powerful ‘shield’. But a body like a Sovereign artifact? That had the power to reverse the rivers and overturn the seas, the terrifying power to rip the heavens asunder.

“I had to experience quite a few things to reach this level.” Linley gave a very ‘unclear’ answer as a response.

The other Paragons looked at each other, not wanting to ask anything further.

“Everyone, you don’t still want to fight over this red caltrop diamond with me, do you?” Linley said with a smirk.

“Fight with you? Do we look like we want to die?” The Paragon of Lightning, Nanessa, still spoke with a cold voice, but a hint of laughter was in her eyes. “I don’t have a defensive Sovereign artifact, unlike Clementine. You need to Dragonform to kill him, but against me, you wouldn’t even need to Dragonform.”

“Forget it. After seeing your speed, Linley, and your attack power, I immediately understood that we don’t have any chance of acquiring the red caltrop diamond.” Dunnington laughed as well.

This group of Paragons was actually all smiles.

They had only come to fight over the red caltrop diamond at the request of their Sovereigns. If they were going to fight over it, they would go all out. But upon seeing that there was no hope, they naturally gave up. They didn’t

feel disappointed or bitter; after all, the Overgod talismans weren't of much use to Paragons like them.

"Boss, Boss!" Bebe hurriedly flew to Linley's side, winking towards Linley. "Is it all done? Can we leave, now?"

Linley immediately laughed. "Of course we can go."

Linley swept the eight Paragons with his gaze, then smiled. "Everyone, the fight over the red caltrop diamond can come to an end now. I don't want to stay at the Okerlund Plane for much longer, so Bebe and I will leave now."

Right at this moment…

"Eh?" Linley turned to look.

Above the sea, a surge of terrifying energy began to take form. The colors of the world began to change, and lightning began to ring out. Immediately afterwards, it seemed as though the sun in the sky lost its luster after that terrifying energy began to emit a dazzling light as it slowly condensed into an enormous figure…

That familiar aura…

"The Chief Sovereign of Light!" Linley narrowed his eyes.

"Linley!" A sonorous voice which echoed like thunder rang out. That ten meter tall giant figure appeared, and its appearance was that of the Chief Sovereign of Light. Only, it was larger in size.

"Chief Sovereign." Linley just smiled as he looked at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

"Sorry, Linley. I had already informed the Chief Sovereign of Light that I was in possession of the red caltrop diamond. After this happened, I had to at least let him know." Clementine sent apologetically.

“I understand.” Linley understood why Clementine had to do this.

The Chief Sovereign of Light descended, staring icily at Linley. His gaze also swept across the other eight Paragons and Bebe.

The Chief Sovereign of Light was quite furious. Because Clementine wanted to be prepared for all eventualities, the Chief Sovereign of Light had personally travelled through chaotic space from the Divine Light Plane. He had travelled through the vast, endless tides of chaotic space and hastened towards the Okerlund Plane.

Only, although the Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes were close to each other, the countless other material planes, despite being close to each other, were in a rather remote area.

For even someone like the Chief Sovereign of Light, he had only managed to travel a tenth of the distance. From this, one could imagine how far the distance was.

The Chief Sovereign of Light had been filled with hope and had been very excited. He hadn’t minded how the amount of effort and labor it would take for him to make it over there. But who would have imagined that halfway there, he would receive word of what had just happened; that the red caltrop diamond had been taken by Linley!

If Clementine had never acquired it, that was one thing.

But for Clementine to first acquire it? The Chief Sovereign of Light had been extremely happy, because he had already begun to view the red caltrop diamond as his. Now that it had been seized, of course he was furious. And given that he had already travelled such a great distance in chaotic space, he was even more furious.

“Linley, you…” The Chief Sovereign of Light was about to say something.

“Chief Sovereign.” Linley actually interrupted the Chief Sovereign of Light

and asked curiously, “This is a material plane. Can it be that you are planning to block me here, with your weak little planar projection clone?”

Chapter 44 – Whither To?

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 44, Whither To?

The other eight Paragons looked at each other. Then, by unspoken agreement, they moved back some distance, watching amusedly as this placed out.

"Why has the Chief Sovereign of Light sent a projection clone over here?" Dunnington sent to the other Paragons.

"He probably isn't willing to accept the results." Nanessa sent to the others.

"After I acquired the red caltrop diamond, the Chief Sovereign of Light entered chaotic space and had been hastening here this entire time. He's probably utterly irritated right now." Clementine sent back with a smirk.

Although on the surface, the Paragons behaved with courtesy, in their hearts, they still felt disdainful towards some Sovereigns.

Paragons had become Paragons through ability.

Sovereigns? Luck was what mattered in being able to acquire a Sovereign spark. As Paragons saw it, most Sovereigns were just born earlier in the universe and were a bit luckier.

"Everyone, do you think that Linley will trample all over the Chief Sovereign of Light's projection clone?" The Paragon of Water, the chubby-faced man, sent mentally.

"I don't think so. Although this is just a projection clone, it's the projection clone of the Chief Sovereign. If Linley were to do something, he would be giving the Chief Sovereign no face. To end up at loggerheads against a Chief Sovereign isn't good." The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, sent back.

The Chief Sovereign of Light's Sovereign body wasn't able to enter the Okerlund Plane as well. This was just a planar projection clone. Planar projection clones contained just the barest wisp of the mind of the Sovereign. Projection clones were simply created by that wisp, with power borrowed from the Sovereign.

Planar projection clones understood the profound mysteries, but they didn't possess the power of Will!

"Although this is the projection clone of the Chief Sovereign, the projection clone doesn't have the power of Will. In terms of power, it is just on par with an ordinary Lord Prefect." Linley didn't feel worried at all about this 'Chief Sovereign of Light' before him. This was just a planar projection clone; it was no match for a Paragon, much less Linley.

The enormous planar projection clone stared coldly at Linley.

"Clementine, how did this red caltrop diamond end up being taken by Linley?" The planar projection clone looked at Clementine.

Clementine immediately laughed sourly. "Chief Sovereign, you have no idea what level Linley's power has reached. He isn't just a Highgod Paragon; his body is definitely on the level of Hemmers and Beirut, comparable to a Sovereign artifact. His material attacks are tens of times more powerful than mine; perhaps even a hundred. There was nothing I could do!"

"How can that be?" The Chief Sovereign of Light stared towards Linley in astonishment.

In recorded history, not a single supreme expert whose body was comparable to a Sovereign artifact was able to become a Paragon.

"This is true." The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, laughed. "We personally witnessed it. And not just that; in terms of speed as well, he vastly outstrips us. Clementine wasn't even able to flee. He had no other choice…he had to hand over the red caltrop diamond."

The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at Linley.

“Chief Sovereign, dare I ask, can I leave now?” Linley asked.

“You want to leave?” The Chief Sovereign of Light let out a cold snort, but unfortunately, this was just a planar projection clone. The Chief Sovereign of Light was only able to talk right now.

Bebe, by Linley’s side, spoke out irritably. “Chief Sovereign, the fight over the red caltrop diamond in the material plane is a matter for us Deities. Here in the material plane, we fought over it fairly, and the strongest ended up taking it. My Boss now holds it, so naturally it belongs to my Boss. Chief Sovereign, why have you sent a planar projection clone over here? Do you want to threaten my Boss?”

An ugly look was on the Chief Sovereign of Light’s face.

He was indeed in the wrong in this matter!

The other eight Paragons all had Sovereigns behind them. The struggle in the Okerlund Plane was a struggle for Deities; the Sovereigns shouldn’t interfere.

If he were to intervene and threaten Linley, what if the other Sovereigns did the same? How would the Paragons be supposed to act?

“Linley.” The Chief Sovereign of Light suppressed the anger in his heart as he looked at Linley. “I know that Dunnington was sent by the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. You, then, shouldn’t have been. Perhaps the Redbud Sovereign is your backer. How about this. You hand the red caltrop diamond to me! As for the Redbud Sovereign, I will speak to her on your behalf. If you give it to me, it can be said that I’ll owe you a favor. What do you say?”

If he couldn’t use hard tactics, he would try soft ones.

“A favor?” Linley was about to say something, but suddenly…

“Haha, Augusta, your methods aren’t very good.” A deep, sonorous voice rang out, and an enormous surge of energy once more descended from the heavens. Unlike the light energy, this surge of energy was completely black and seemed to be filled with a murderous aura. It was Destruction-type Sovereign power. And then, it solidified into a blurry figure.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, seeing the situation, couldn’t help but frown.

“The Chief Sovereign of Destruction.” Linley mused to himself.

“Linley. I notified the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.” Dunnington sent.

Linley also knew that these Paragons all had methods by which they could communicate with the Sovereigns who stood behind them.

“Linley and I are engaging in free-willed negotiations. What right do you have to stop us?” The Chief Sovereign of Light said.

“Haha…” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction let out a clear laugh. “How can you call this ‘free will’? You are oppressing him with your power. You, Chief Sovereign of Light are verbally asking Linley to do this. But if I were to do the same? If the Chief Sovereign of Life, the Chief Sovereign of Death, the Chief Sovereign of Darkness, and the other Chief Sovereigns all acted in this matter? Tell me, how could Linley choose?”

The Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t make another sound.

His sudden manifestation of a projection clone had given others an excuse to point at the error in his actions.

Actually, the reason he had done this was because he had believed that this item was already his. He had travelled such a long distance in chaotic space, and yet, he suddenly learned that his item had gone missing. Naturally, the Chief Sovereign of Light had been enraged and, in his anger, allowed a planar projection clone to descend.

“This ‘Chief Sovereign’ isn’t much better than an ordinary person.” Bebe sent mentally to Linley.

“Naturally. A Chief Sovereign is just a living creature who, after becoming a Highgod, was lucky enough to acquire a Sovereign spark then fuse with it, thus becoming a Sovereign. Just because they fused with Sovereign sparks doesn’t mean that their temperaments will change! Normally, these Sovereigns act high and mighty when dealing with us Deities; naturally, they can’t be bothered with us. This is a way of showing their superiority! But once there is a struggle that involves their own interests, such as this struggle over the Overgod talismans, their greedy or tyrannical natures will once more reveal themselves.” Linley sent back.

“This Chief Sovereign of Light really is tyrannical.” Bebe, after having met the Chief Sovereign of Light several times, couldn’t help but come to this judgment.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light is overbearing, but he always has been. Even Patriarch Gislason told me about this.” Linley still remembered the words Gislason had said to him.

Gislason even suspected that the four ancestors of the Four Divine Beasts clan had been killed by the Chief Sovereign of Light. He had also described the Chief Sovereign of Light’s overbearing nature.

While Linley and Bebe were chatting spiritually, the Chief Sovereigns of Light and Destruction were chatting as well.

“Fine. Neither of us will force Linley. Linley will choose for himself, who he wishes to offer the red caltrop diamond to.” The Chief Sovereign of Light couldn’t help but look at Linley.

“Linley, you can choose for yourself which Sovereign you wish to offer it to. You don’t have to take any attitude from any Sovereign. After all, there’s only a single red caltrop diamond, while there are tens of Sovereigns!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction looked towards Linley.

The Chief Sovereign of Light stared at Linley, his eyes containing a silent signal.

“Sorry, Chief Sovereign of Light.” Linley smiled.

The Chief Sovereign of Light’s face immediately changed.

“Hmph. You don’t know what’s good for you.” The Chief Sovereign of Light gave Linley a cold glance, and then his planar projection clone suddenly disappeared. Linley’s face, however, didn’t change. He stood there quietly in midair, and his face once more had a hint of a smile on it.

“Haha, Linley, well done.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction laughed easily. “You can choose who to give this red caltrop diamond to. Naturally, giving it to me would be good, but I won’t force you.” And then, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s planar projection clone suddenly disappeared as well.

The world once more returned to normalcy.

The waves of the sea continued to swell forward, and the other eight Paragons flew over, laughing.

“Haha, Boss, that Chief Sovereign of Light’s face just now was so amusing.” Bebe celebrated.

“I already offended the Chief Sovereign of Light once. Now, I’ve offended him again.” Linley sighed helplessly.

“That’s the sort of temper the Chief Sovereign of Light has.” Clementine laughed. While speaking, Clementine stretched his divine sense out to close off the surrounding area. Clearly, he didn’t want the other Highgods to hear the words between them Paragons.

“Hmph. That group of Sovereigns. Don’t be fooled by that superior attitude they always have. When any minor matter occurs that they care about, or

even something that costs them the tiniest bit of face, they will be enraged." The Paragon of Fire, Ballmer, snickered. "Actually, it's understandable. They are so high and lofty that if anyone was to irritate them, they would probably let their fury descend upon the offender."

"However, only a minority of Sovereigns are so bad-tempered." Dunnington said with a smile. "The majority of Sovereigns are decent fellows."

"Hmph. They were simply born earlier, shortly after the planes were formed. They were just one of the first batches of Highgods, then were lucky enough to acquire Sovereign sparks and fuse them." The Paragon of Life said calmly. "In terms of the profound laws, the vast majority of Sovereigns are inferior to us, even though they enjoy vast amounts of faith energy!"

"I've seen quite a few Sovereigns, but the Chief Sovereign of Light is still the most overbearing of them all." Linley said.

"Haha, the Chief Sovereign of Light is legendary for his overbearing manner. Even in material planes, amongst the various churches, the churches of light tend towards total hegemony. However, the Chief Sovereign of Light is powerful; he's qualified to act so tyrannically!" The Paragon of Earth, that four meter tall azure-haired fellow, laughed.

"The Bonerock Sovereign of Death, before the previous Planar War which occurred countless years before, personally attacked a pair of commander-level experts."

This group of Highgod Paragons leisurely chatted about the various Sovereigns.

This was a material plane; there was no need to fear that the Sovereigns would discover it through divine sense.

After chatting for a long time, Linley learned quite a few things regarding the Sovereigns. The more he heard, the more clearly Linley felt that the

Sovereigns were nothing special; they, too, felt joy, rage, grief, and amusement. It was much like how…to mortals, Deities were creatures who were far above them. But in the Infernal Realm, Deities formed into bandit groups and acted in ways that were even more nakedly selfish and aggressive than in the mortal world.

Perhaps…

Only the four Overgods who were the personifications of the Edicts were truly emotionless and unfeeling.

“Alright, everyone. The matter here in Okerlund Plane has come to an end. I’ll leave now.” The Paragon of Wind, Bayer, laughed.

After this friendly discussion, all of the people present had grown much closer to each other.

“Let’s leave together. We need to leave as well.”

Dunnington and the other Paragons were nearby as well.

“Boss, time to leave.” Bebe said hurriedly.

“Everyone, you can leave first. I have something to take care of.” Linley suddenly said.

The eight Paragons, although puzzled, didn’t say anything. They bid Linley farewell, and then the eight of them began to fly towards the Fogdeep continent.

“Boss, what is it?” Bebe said.

Linley frowned as he sent with worry, “Bebe, when I acquired the red caltrop diamond, I was too excited. I didn’t think about things in detail. But now…now that I’ve calmed down, I’ve realized that I absolutely cannot go back through the teleportation arrays!”

“Can’t go back through the teleportation arrays?” Bebe stared.

“Right. The teleportation arrays will take me to the Divine Planes or the Higher Planes. You should know that the Sovereigns all very much want to acquire the red caltrop diamond. In the Okerlund Plane, they aren’t able to fight with me at all. However, if I teleport to a Divine Plane or a Higher Plane, then perhaps I’ll find…that a Sovereign will be there at the array, waiting for me!” Linley laughed sourly.

If, as soon as he teleported somewhere, he immediately saw a Sovereign…

He would be finished. There would be no chance of escape.

“Each of the planes have a varying number of teleportation arrays. The Infernal Realm has many, but the Netherworld only has two teleportation array locations. There are, however, quite a few Sovereigns in the Higher Planes and Divine Planes. The chances of one of them lying in wait are quite high! Even if Lesser Sovereigns have no need for it, they might give it to a Chief Sovereign so as to gain a favor.” Linley felt quite frustrated.

“Boss, where should we go, then?” Bebe now knew that the situation was, indeed, terrible.

“Right. Where shall we go?” Linley felt completely lost.

It was true that the Seven Divine Planes and Four Higher Planes had many teleportation locations, some of which wouldn’t have Sovereigns nearby. But Linley couldn’t take the risk! If he failed, he wouldn’t even have the chance to feel regret.

“I’ve acquired the red caltrop diamond, but I don’t know how to return to the Yulan Plane.” Linley laughed bitterly.

“Can it be that we’ll have to take the chance?” Bebe muttered.

Chapter 45 – Beirut's True Power!

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 45, Beirut's True Power!

Many colored streams of light flowed about randomly, collectively forming the vast and endless region of chaotic space.

Chaotic space could be said to be the most dangerous place of all!

Even ordinary divine artifacts that were brought in would be torn asunder by the terrifying chaotic energy streams. Only experts who had defensive Sovereign artifacts or Highgod Paragons would be able to just barely stay alive in the face of the repeatedly clashes of energy in chaotic space. But despite that being the case, Highgod Paragons would be completely helpless in chaotic space.

The explosive streams of energy clashed against each other. When trapped within, the only choice was to allow the energy streams to take you where it willed.

Right at this moment…

A hazy white glow covered a large figure and the area around him. This large figure was dressed with a long white robe that was embroidered with golden patterns. His long gold hair fluttered loosely in an eye-catching manner. He stood there in the center of the vast, endless flows of chaotic energy. The rainbow colored chaotic streams clashed against him, but weren't able to budge him at all. This person was the greatest experts amongst the seven Sovereigns of Light…the Chief Sovereign of Light.

The Chief Sovereign of Light's eyes stared coldly into the distance.

"The red caltrop diamond was already in my hands. I didn't imagine…"

The Chief Sovereign of Light's eyes held a hint of anger in them.

“However, even if that woman, the Redbud Sovereign, is the one behind him, when he moves from the Okerlund Plane to the Infernal Realm, he will be randomly teleported to one of the teleportation arrays. Perhaps the red caltrop diamond will fall into the hands of the other Sovereigns.

He immediately send the word through a clone he had left behind in the Divine Light Plane. “Derry [De’lei], keep an eye on Linley. See which teleportation array Linley travels through and which plane he goes to.”

“Yes, Chief Sovereign.”

Although Clementine had led a large group of Highgods away, in truth, those Highgods actually obeyed the orders of Derry, because Derry was one of the two individuals who maintained contact with the Sovereign. Those Highgods immediately spread out their divine senses, locking upon Linley and Bebe, located above the ocean.

They were watching Linley’s movements.

Linley naturally used his own divine sense to prevent the other Highgods from tracking him.

“Take the chance? No way! There are too many Sovereigns paying attention to the Overgod talismans. I imagine that the vast majority of teleportation arrays have Sovereigns nearby. Although I am powerful, in the face of a Sovereign, I won’t be able to fight back at all.” Linley shook his head. “I can’t make any mistakes when it comes to this red caltrop diamond.”

“Then…what should we do?” Bebe was rather irritated and upset as well.

Linley pondered for a while, but still wasn’t able to come up with a completely secure option. Although there were Sovereigns in the Infernal Realm who seemed to be on good terms with Linley, in reality, that was just some special attention that they paid to him, a junior. If it involved the red caltrop diamond…although the planar projection clone of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had spoken quite nicely, things wouldn’t necessarily remain that way once Linley returned to the Infernal Realm.

After all, in the Okerlund Plane, his projection clone wasn't able to do anything to Linley, and so trying to force him was pointless.

But once they arrived in the Infernal Realm, wouldn't the Sovereign want to take the Overgod talisman?

"Boss, let's go ask my Grandpa Beirut. Perhaps he has a way." Bebe suddenly suggested.

"That's our only choice." Linley nodded slightly.

The Yulan Plane. The Baruch Empire. Dragonblood Castle.

In recent days, Beirut had been living in Linley's Dragonblood Castle, while Linley's divine clone would often chat with Beirut regarding the advancement of matters in the Okerlund Plane. They often spent time together recently, causing Linley and Beirut to feel even closer and more friendly with each other.

"Swoosh!"

A figure flashed forward and arrived within the empty garden. It was Linley. Within the garden, Beirut was teasing two young children of the Baruch clan quite happily.

"The two of you, go play over there for now." Linley said while laughing calmly.

"Yes." The two children, upon seeing Linley, didn't even dare to breathe too loudly. They immediately left obediently.

Within Dragonblood Castle, Linley's status had long ago risen to an extreme. In the hearts of the descendants of the Baruch clan, Linley was the most supreme exalted person alive.

"What has you in such a hurry?" Beirut laughed calmly.

Linley said helplessly, “Lord Beirut, the situation right now is quite grim.”

“Oh?” Beirut frowned, staring solemnly towards Linley.

“This is the situation. I’ve already acquired the red caltrop diamond, but I am quite frustrated about how I should return to the Yulan Plane! After all, the Okerlund only has eleven teleportation arrays which lead to the Seven Divine Planes and the Four Higher Planes. There are so many Sovereigns… I’m worried that most teleportation arrays probably have Sovereigns watching them. Once I appear, they will probably come to seize it.”

Beirut nodded slightly.

“Linley, you wish to keep the red caltrop diamond for yourself?” Beirut suddenly said.

“Yes.” Linley nodded.

If Linley had to offer the red caltrop diamond to a Chief Sovereign, for example the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, he could just teleport to the Infernal Realm. Most likely, the other Sovereigns of the Infernal Realm wouldn’t dare fight over something of the Chief Sovereign’s. If Linley lied and said that he gave it to the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, then moved to teleport back somewhere else…

This wasn’t very practical.

First of all, if he were to lie and use the Chief Sovereign of Destruction to deceive others, that would be deceiving the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

Secondly, if there were any other Sovereigns nearby, they surely wouldn’t just watch as Linley arrived, then teleported back to the Yulan Plane right away! Most likely, as soon as Linley told the teleportation staff members where he was going, his lies would be seen through.

“Describe what happened in the fight over the red caltrop diamond in detail

to me.” Beirut said solemnly.

“Alright. Back then, the eight Paragons and I all arrived at Lionheart City. We were all trying to guess at the real meaning of the three words, ‘Lion Heart City’, and what they meant…” Linley began to describe in detail everything, including how the Chief Sovereign had descended a projection clone.

As Beirut listened, he began to frown.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light actually went into chaotic space and was hastening towards the Okerlund Plane?” Beirut said in surprise.

“Right. Clementine told me. This was precisely why the Chief Sovereign of Light was so angry, I suppose.” Linley said.

Beirut fell silent.

“If you are going to take it for your own…then…” Beirut pondered carefully.

“Linley!” Beirut suddenly said. “Let’s do this. Your original body and Bebe shall remain in the Okerlund Plane for now. Pretend to have gained a sudden insight and begin to engage in closed door training. Shut yourself in for ten days or so.”

“Lord Beirut, are you saying…?” Linley was slightly stunned, but then he understood. “You are telling me to delay? As time passes, those Sovereigns will no longer remain by the teleportation arrays? But that’s not necessarily true; if the Sovereigns just go ahead and begin training in the area around the teleportation arrays, they could easily wait for ten million years.”

Sovereigns were in possession of eternal life. What was a ten million year wait to them?

“That isn’t the reason.” Beirut laughed calmly. “A little while later, you’ll know.”

“Alright.” Linley still trusted Beirut greatly.

Only, Linley was puzzled…Beirut asked him to remain in the Okerlund Plane for ten days? Why?

Within chaotic space.

The Chief Sovereign of Light had already embarked on the way back.

“Chief Sovereign, that Linley and Bebe actually are in no hurry to leave the Okerlund Plane. They’ve suddenly begun to train, right there in the air above the sea. Linley seems to have gained some sort of insight. Bebe is next to him, standing guard.” The communications staff reported back immediately to the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“He had an insight? Linley has several divine clones. One reached the Paragon level, and the others are gaining insights as well. His talent is indeed formidable.” Although the Chief Sovereign of Light didn’t have any positive feelings towards Linley, he still had to somewhat sigh in approval in his heart.

Given the Chief Sovereign of Light’s speed, that very day, he returned back at the Divine Light Plane.

The eleventh day after Linley acquired the red caltrop diamond!

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Linley was accompanying his father, Hogg, drinking and chatting. Right at this moment, Beirut suddenly walked over from a nearby door.

“Linley!” Beirut said solemnly.

“Father. I’ll go accompany Mr. Beirut first.” Linley said. Hogg knew that Linley and Beirut had something important to discuss, and so just laughed and withdrew.

“Follow me.” Beirut said calmly, then flew out.

Linley hurriedly followed.

“Swoosh…” Beirut flew forward, with Linley hurriedly following from behind.

“So fast.” Linley was startled that he was actually almost unable to keep up.

Linley’s divine clones had all undergone a soul mutation as well, and his bodies were all very powerful, and also in possession of strong Will. They were all capable of using fused divine power as well. The speed of his divine clones wasn’t that much weaker than his original body’s. And yet, he was almost unable to keep with Beirut!

In the blink of an eye, Linley and Beirut departed from the Yulan continent region and arrived within the South Sea region.

Beirut suddenly came to a halt, and Linley did so as well.

“Lord Beirut you, you are…?” Linley said, puzzled.

“Didn’t you say that you want to know a way to return to the Yulan Plane?” Beirut’s eyes had a special light in them. A smile that wasn’t a smile played on his lips as he looked at Linley.

Linley was completely baffled.

“The way is very simple! Pass through chaotic space and return to the Yulan continent.” Beirut laughed calmly.

“Pass through chaotic space?” Linley was startled. According to legends, even Paragons would be helpless within chaotic space. “Lord Beirut, this… chaotic space is very terrifying. Highgod Paragons that are driven within can do nothing but be carried away by the currents. Although I am stronger than Paragons, I’m not necessarily going to be able to withstand chaotic

space.”

Linley didn’t have much confidence!

“I’m not asking you to go alone.” Beirut said with a smile, and then he opened his hand into a palm.

With a palm blow, he slashed open the air!

“Rumble…” The weak spatial walls of the Yulan Plane ruptured, immediately revealing a massive spatial tear.

Material planes were very weak. At Linley’s level, experts could just use their control over elemental essence to chop out a small pocket dimension within a material plane. But of course, this was something they could only accomplish in a material plane. If it were the Infernal Realm or the Netherworld, there was no way this could be done.

Sovereigns, however, could even create their own independent divine plane through their terrifying control over elemental essence.

Independent divine planes versus pocket dimensions formed from material planes.

From this one, one could tell the terrifying difference in power between Sovereigns and Deities.

“Follow me.” Beirut grabbed Linley, took a step forward, then threw him through the spatial rift.

“This…Lord Beirut!” Linley was shocked.

He was grabbed and pulled by Beirut directly out of the Yulan Plane and into chaotic space.

Multicolored flows of chaotic space spun everywhere in such an eye-catching, beautiful manner. But Linley was now trapped, and one surge

after another chaotic energy clashed against his body. Linley didn't hold back at all, instantly activating the fused divine power within his body to resist the clashing chaotic energy.

"Crackle…" A spatial tear appeared nearby.

Chaotic energy crashed against Linley, wanting to drive him into the spatial rift, but Linley resisted.

"The energy of chaotic space truly is frightening. No wonder even Highgod Paragons are helpless. However, I'm able to just barely move against the current." Linley discovered that, at full strength, he was still able to resist the spatial flows and move forward. Linley felt as though…

He was a toddler who was advancing through rapid river waters.

"Linley, how do you feel?" Beirut's voice rang out.

Linley turned to look.

Beirut stood there with a faint smile within streams of chaotic energy, not paying them any attention at all.

"Lord Beirut, you…?" Linley was surprised.

Even Paragons would be washed away by the chaotic streams of energy. But Beirut just stood there, unmoving.

"Haha, if you move at that slow speed, even thousands of years wouldn't be enough for you to make it from the Yulan Plane to the Okerlund Plane." Beirut, seeing Linley's movement speed, couldn't help but laugh. As he spoke, Beirut released a strand of green light from his body, covering Linley within it.

"It is easy to get lost within chaotic space. Your original body is in the Okerlund Plane, and so you should know the correct direction. Guide the way. I'll make haste."

Beirut led Linley forward. Under the protection of the green light, they transformed into a flash of green lightning and instantly disappeared.

Chapter 46 – Beirut, Sovereign?

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 46, Beirut, Sovereign?

Chaotic streams of energy shot out in every direction at high speed. Linley, under Beirut's guidance, advanced at high speed.

Linley was currently completely stupefied. "How can this be? To be able to move at such a terrifying speed, even in chaotic space; it can be said that he is completely ignoring the chaotic energy flows. Beirut…his power…?" Linley turned his head to look at Beirut, who was by his side. His eyes were filled with disbelief.

There were no other possibilities.

Beirut had definitely surpassed the Deity level. Beyond the Deity level, there was only…the Sovereign level!

"Lord Beirut, you, you are a Sovereign?" Linley asked.

"Haha…" Beirut laughed clearly, and he couldn't help but stroke his black beard. "Linley, I'm able to casually fly at high speed through chaotic space, at a speed which is a hundred times faster than you are able to fly at in a material plane. You tell me. If I'm not a Sovereign, what am I?"

Linley was stupefied.

Beirut was clearly admitted that he was a Sovereign!

"Sovereign, but, this, how can this be?" Linley, for a moment, was completely dazed and confused. "Lord Beirut, there's no way for a Sovereign to enter a material plane. Material planes are completely unable to withstand the terrifying power of a Sovereign's energy."

In the Okerlund Plane, the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction and Light had

only been able to manifest their planar projection clones.

“Haha…amongst Deities, there is indeed the saying that Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes.” Beirut stroked his beard and smiled. “However, to speak more precisely…foreign Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes!”

“Foreign Sovereigns?” Linley frowned.

“Linley, do you know the principle behind why Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes?” Beirut changed to a different topic.

“Principle? Isn’t it simply because Sovereigns possess too much energy, and material planes are unable to withstand them?” Linley said.

“Linley, if it were true that Sovereigns possess too much energy and material planes are unable to withstand them…think about that carefully. If the Sovereigns contract their energy and don’t let it leak out of them, how could a material plane collapse?” Beirut laughed.

“That’s true.” Linley didn’t understand.

If a Sovereign were to contract his energy and his aura, even if Linley was standing before him, Linley wouldn’t sense anything at all.

Given how powerful their abilities at contracting their auras were, why would they cause a material plane to collapse?

“Thus, your earlier words were not completely accurate.” Beirut said with a calm laugh.

Beirut said with a sigh, “I imagine that even if you ponder it until your head starts hurting, you still won’t understand. Let me tell you, then! This has to do with the birth of one’s soul! Every single day, a material plane will give birth to new life, and every single living creature will possess a soul! For example, the living creatures of the Yulan Plane will have souls that are compatible with the Yulan Plane. The Yulan Plane is their home!”

Linley couldn't help but nod.

He felt it as well…when he returned to the Yulan Plane, although the elemental essence in the Yulan Plane was far less dense than the Infernal Realm's, Linley still felt very comfortable. It just felt different. Linley had always thought that this was just a psychological effect, but now, it seemed, it was because his soul had been born in the Yulan Plane.

It made sense!

When mortals died, their souls would enter the Netherworld and they would turn into undead. After an undead died, its soul would shatter and dissipate!

When Deities died, their souls would shatter and dissipate!

Since souls could dissipate, naturally, souls could be born as well!

When each infant was born in a material plane, when each magical beast was born, they would all gain souls! These souls would naturally have a special link to the plane they were from.

"Foreign Sovereigns are unable to enter material planes. This is because of their souls. Their souls were not born from these material planes, and when they enter one, they will naturally be rejected by the material planes! The energy of material planes and Sovereigns will naturally reject each other, but because the energies of the Sovereigns are too powerful, they will cause the entire plane to collapse!" Beirut explained in detail.

Linley now understood.

It was this mutual rejection that caused the material plane to collapse.

"If, however, the Sovereign's soul was birthed within a particular material plane to begin with, then the material plane would be like his home! Even after he became a Sovereign, the material plane wouldn't reject them. Since there is no rejection, Sovereigns would naturally be able to enter this

material plane." Beirut laughed.

"Lord Beirut, are you saying…that if a Sovereign's homeland was a particular material plane, then he would be able to return to that material plane, while being unable to enter any others?" Linley said.

"Right." Beirut laughed calmly. "Of the countless material planes of the universe, my Sovereign body is only able to enter the Yulan Plane. As for the other material planes, I am unable to enter."

Everything was now clear.

"The Yulan Plane. Our home!" Linley let out a sigh.

He was born in the Yulan Plane, and his soul was born from there as well. The Yulan Plane was his home! No matter what level of power he attained, the Yulan Plane, his home, would never reject him, its child.

"Lord Beirut, since you are a Sovereign, then, then why hasn't your Sovereign body entered the Higher Planes, and instead remains here in the Yulan Plane?" Linley said, puzzled. "Also, why did your divine clone become the Emissary of the Bloodridge Sovereign?"

"I had my divine clone become an Emissary because I wished to help the Four Divine Beasts clan." Beirut laughed calmly. "As for the reason why my Sovereign clone hasn't gone to the Infernal Realm or another Higher Plane, and instead remains in hiding in our homeland, that is because…if my Sovereign clone leaves our homeland, the Chief Sovereign of Light will pursue and attack!"

"The Chief Sovereign of Light will pursue and attack?" Linley was shocked.

So it seemed as though Beirut was hiding from enemies, which was why he hadn't left.

Beirut's method was quite effective. The Yulan Plane was Beirut's home,

but not the home of the Chief Sovereign of Light. Beirut could hide there without emerging, but the other Sovereigns wouldn't be able to enter.

"Why would the Chief Sovereign of Light want to kill you?" Linley was very puzzled.

"Haha…of course he wants to kill me. His hatred for me is bone-deep. The only reason why my divine clone is permitted to remain safely in the Infernal Realm is because I managed to persuade the Chief Sovereign of Destruction to assist me, after paying a tremendous price." Beirut laughed loudly. "Forget it. Enough about that. What matters now is to receive your original body and return to the Yulan Plane as soon as possible."

Linley nodded.

Beirut leading him through chaotic space was quite dangerous as well. After all, since Beirut could enter chaotic space, so too could the Chief Sovereign of Light!

"No wonder Lord Beirut asked me to wait for ten or so days. He probably wanted to delay for a bit longer, so as to wait for the Chief Sovereign of Light to return to the Divine Light Plane." Linley now completely understood why Beirut had asked him to wait for ten days.

Linley's original body was within the Okerlund Plane, while his divine clones were with Beirut. Through the connection between his bodies, he was able to easily locate the correct direction, making it so that Beirut didn't make any wrong turns while navigating the chaotic streams of this region.

"Lord Beirut, will the Chief Sovereign of Light pursue and attack us?" Linley was rather worried. Worried for Beirut.

"Don't worry. How would he even know that we are in chaotic space?" Beirut said confidently. "In addition, when I entered chaotic space, I spread out my divine sense. The reach of a Sovereign's divine sense is far beyond what you can imagine. As soon as he enters the range of my divine sense, I

will have ample time to prepare."

Linley nodded slightly.

The divine sense of a Sovereign could easily stretch across the entire Infernal Realm or the entire Netherworld. In addition, that clearly wasn't their limit. From this, one could imagine how vast a distance it could reach. And thus, one could also imagine how powerful a Sovereign's Will was. It was countless times more powerful than a Paragon's will.

The Okerlund Plane.

"Rumble…"

The waves of the sea rolled forward. Linley sat there in the meditative position above the sea, with Bebe standing guard by his side.

Suddenly…

Linley opened his eyes, revealing a hint of a smile on his face. He sent mentally, "Bebe, let's prepare to enter chaotic space."

"Chaotic space?" Bebe was shocked. "Boss, are you preparing to return to the Yulan Plane through chaotic space?"

"Yes. However, not through my own powers." Linley smiled.

"Then, if it isn't you…who? A Sovereign? Which Sovereign is willing to help us?" Bebe was very puzzled.

"You will soon know." Linley was intentionally secretive.

Through the connection between his bodies, Linley could clearly sense that his divine clone and Beirut had already reached the outer perimeter of the Okerlund Plane.

"Let's go!" Linley grabbed Bebe with one hand, while at the same time,

slashed down with his other hand. A gigantic spatial rift appeared, which began to pull on the surrounding area with an astonishing attractive force, swallowing up a great deal of even the seawater below.

“In you go.” Linley stepped forward and pulled Bebe into chaotic space. Immediately afterwards, the spatial tear slowly began to recover.

The air above the sea once more grew calm.

“Linley entered a spatial rift? Entered chaotic space?” The two groups of Highgods who were watching over Linley were greatly shocked.

It wasn’t just the forces of the Divine Light Plane which were watching over Linley. There were also forces from the Infernal Realm, the Divine Earth Plane, the Divine Wind Plane…every single side had left quite a few Highgods behind to watch over the movements of Linley and Bebe. But the fact that they had chosen to enter chaotic space completely stupefied the others.

“He entered chaotic space? Self-exile?” Those Highgods were speechless.

“He probably has a Sovereign who is there to welcome him.” The Highgods were able to guess this as well. “Quick, report it to the Sovereign.”

The various forces, through their divine clones, simultaneously reported back to their Sovereigns!

The Divine Light Plane. Deep within Godsgaol Sea.

“What? He chose to enter the flows of chaotic space?” The Chief Sovereign of Light’s eyes were filled with shock as well. But an instant later, he recovered, then laughed coldly, “The Sovereign behind Linley has definitely gone into chaotic space to welcome him! Who could it be? Redbud? Or is it…” A name suddenly appeared in the mind of the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Beirut?” A hint of a killing desire appeared in the Chief Sovereign of

Light's eyes.

"It is very possibly Beirut!" The Chief Sovereign of Light didn't hesitate at all. Energy trembled from his body, and a spatial rift suddenly appeared in front of him. With a single step, he entered chaotic space, and then the spatial rift disappeared.

Chaotic space. The Chief Sovereign of Light was moving like a ray of light, advancing at astonishing speed.

"Beirut, I hope you move quickly. If I end up catching you…hmph!" The Chief Sovereign of Light, although not certain that it was Beirut, felt that it was reasonable, given the relationship between Linley and him. Beirut was perpetually in hiding within the Yulan Plane; this had caused the Chief Sovereign of Light to long ago feel enraged towards him.

He wouldn't give up even the slightest chance of killing Beirut!

The beautiful, cyclical flows of energy sped past them. Beirut's body constantly emanated that green light, and it covered Linley and Bebe as they flew at high speed towards the Yulan Plane.

"Grandpa Beirut, am I dreaming?" Bebe looked at Beirut in disbelief. "Grandpa, you are actually a Sovereign? This, this is too inconceivable." Earlier, he had followed Linley into chaotic space. Upon seeing Beirut's arrival, Bebe had been completely, totally stupefied!

"Grandpa Beirut, you are a Sovereign. Why have you always hidden your power? Why are you the Emissary for the Bloodridge Sovereign?" Bebe asked questions nonstop.

"Alright, enough of this for now. Your Grandpa Beirut is currently moving at full speed. We can chat slowly once we return." Linley said hurriedly. Linley understood that even for Beirut, travelling through chaotic space posed risks.

On the way over, though, Bebe talked nonstop. Clearly, he was simply too

agitated.

“I just can’t hold it back.” Bebe clenched his fists as he flashed his teeth in a grin, clearly excited.

“Soon. By the amount of time we have spent in flight, we should be more than halfway there. Just wait a bit longer.” Linley consoled.

“Haha…” Beirut suddenly laughed.

“What is it?” Linley and Bebe both looked towards Beirut.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light really did come. I’ve already discovered him.” Beirut chortled merrily.

“You are still able to laugh aloud?” A deep, rumbling voice rang out in Beirut’s mind. It was the voice of the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Why can’t I laugh?” Beirut snickered as he retorted. “I knew that if there was any chance at all of capturing me that you, Augusta, would definitely not give it up. But it is quite unfortunate; your speed is faster than mine, but the distance you have to travel is far greater. You won’t make it in time!”

Chapter 47 – Battle

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 47, Battle

"The Chief Sovereign of Light?" Linley and Bebe exchanged glances. Their hearts clenched as they then turned towards Beirut.

Beirut was leading Linley and Bebe at high speed towards the Yulan Plane, while at the same time chatting with the Chief Sovereign of Light through divine sense. "Haha, Augusta, as I see it, you should go back to your Divine Light Plane. Chasing after me is a complete waste of time. Afterwards, you'll have to go back with nothing to show for your efforts."

Beirut's mocking laughter was hidden within his words.

"Hmph. It's too early to say such a thing. You still have quite a long distance between you and the Yulan Plane. You had best hope that you can enter the Yulan Plane first. If I catch you, then you and those two people with you will both definitely die!" The Chief Sovereign of Light's face was quite sinister. The distance between him and Beirut in chaotic space was quite significant, and he was currently advancing at an astonishing speed. In terms of speed, he was indeed much faster than Beirut.

Unfortunately…

The Higher Planes and Divine Planes were very far away from the material planes to begin with. The vast majority of material planes, however, were located in the same region. The distance between the Okerlund Plane and the Yulan Plane, by comparison, was tens of times less than the distance between the Okerlund Plane and the Divine Light Plane.

"Haha, then keep chasing!" Beirut didn't say anything else.

Within the vast, endless reaches of chaotic space, one side was hurrying forward while the other side was chasing.

The Infernal Realm.

“Linley actually entered chaotic space?” A figure covered completely by a black aura mused in a low voice, then let out a laugh. “It seems Linley actually isn’t willing to give up the Overgod talisman or to give it to any other Sovereigns. That Beirut which stands behind him…he really has quite some courage.”

The Infernal Realm. The Redbud Continent. The Amethyst Mountains.

“Aside from Beirut, there can’t be anyone else.” The Redbud Sovereign could easily judge what had happened as well. “Given how cautious Beirut is, there shouldn’t be any problems.”

The news that Linley had torn open a spatial rift, then entered it alongside Bebe, had been quickly reported back to the various Sovereigns by the Highgods. It wasn’t just the Chief Sovereigns of the various Laws and Edicts; the other Sovereigns had also sent people to watch over Linley’s movements.

The Divine Wind Plane.

“Hmph, from the Yulan Plane to the Okerlund Plane? Excellent. My homeland, the Dylan [Di’lun] Plane, happens to be between them.” A hawk-nosed, silver-haired man, upon receiving this news, immediately began to fly at high speed towards the teleportation array of the Divine Wind Plane. Soon, he reached the array.

“Dylan Plane.” The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, said calmly as he showed his Sovereign medallion.

“Yes.”

The soldiers didn’t dare act sluggishly. They immediately activated the teleportation array, and light began to flash and flicker. In the blink of an eye, the Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, arrived at his homeland…the material

plane known as the Dylan Plane. He immediately tore open a spatial rift, then entered chaotic space. He immediately spread out his divine sense.

A hint of a smile played at the corners of Teresia's lips. "Beirut, what a rare occasion. You actually left the Yulan Plane!"

"You actually left the Yulan Plane!" This voice rang out in Beirut's mind, and Beirut's face couldn't help but sink.

"Grandpa Beirut, what is it?" Bebe noticed that the look on Beirut's face was off, and he hurriedly asked.

Linley looked towards Beirut in concern as well. Beirut had an ugly look on his face. "Linley, Bebe, the situation is quite bad. That Teresia is quite close to us, and is in the way between us and home. Given his speed, he will probably encounter us shortly."

"Teresia?" Linley and Bebe both looked at each other.

The Sovereign of Wind, Teresia, was someone who Linley knew. When the Lord Prefect of Skymount Prefecture, Molde, had released the Overgod mission information, Teresia had threatened Linley to try and force him to hand over the nine soul pearls. If it hadn't been for the Bloodridge Sovereign's intervention, Linley could very well have been killed by Teresia back then.

"Grandpa, that's not a problem, right?" Bebe said, worried.

"This Teresia is a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. I, too, am a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. However…in the Laws, he has reached the level of Paragon. Thus, he is quite troublesome." Although Beirut was concerned, he still led Linley and Bebe in a constant advance.

Linley frowned.

They were both Lesser Sovereigns, but one was a Paragon in the laws. By the looks of it, Beirut wasn't a match for him.

“Fighting with Teresia isn’t a problem. The main problem is…once he ties us down, if the Chief Sovereign of Light makes it over, we will be finished.” Beirut said, rather worried.

“Right. If Grandpa starts to fight with Teresia, there’s no way he will be able to move forward.” Bebe was so frantic that his face turned red. “Once the Chief Sovereign of Light catches us, then…”

Linley looked at Beirut.

Neither he nor Bebe were able to help. They had to rely on Beirut.

“Teresia! Why do you want this Overgod talisman? The red caltrop diamond is just one of the three talismans. There isn’t much benefit to you for acquiring it. Can it be that you, a Lesser Sovereign, also dream of completing the mission and acquiring an Overgod artifact?” Beirut sent.

“If you don’t want me to bar you, that’s fine. Beirut, agree to the request I made last time.” Teresia sent.

“In your dreams.” Beirut couldn’t help but feel enraged.

“Haha, if you refuse, then I’ll stop you. Soon, I imagine, you and I will encounter each other.” Teresia laughed smugly.

Beirut suppressed his range. “Speak. Aside from that, what else do you want in exchange for not stopping us.”

Teresia was a Paragon and a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. In terms of speed, he was slightly faster than even Beirut.

If Beirut wanted to bypass Teresia to return to the Yulan Plane, first of all, he would have to take a very roundabout path that was too distant. And secondly, Teresia could choose to simply travel straight to the Yulan Plane and wait for Beirut there. No matter what…there was no way to avoid Teresia.

“I’ve already told you what I want. Fine, if you aren’t able to satisfy that request, this is also acceptable…hand over the red caltrop diamond, and I’ll let you pass.” Teresia sent.

Hand over the red caltrop diamond? Wouldn’t that have made this journey pointless?

“Teresia, don’t force me too far.” Beirut sent furiously.

“Force you too far? And what will you do if I do force you too far? All you ever do is hide in the Yulan Plane, never daring to come out.” Teresia said arrogantly.

“Hmph. Then why don’t the two of us have a head-on competition.” Beirut sent furiously.

“Haha. So Beirut, who has the cowardice of a mouse, actually dares to speak such bold words! How rare, how rare indeed!” Teresia laughed mentally towards Beirut.

Beirut let out a cold snort, no longer saying anything.

Linley didn’t know what Beirut and Teresia were saying to each other, but he was able to guess what had happened, based on the look on Beirut’s face. “It seems Lord Beirut and Teresia weren’t able to come to an agreement. This…is going to be trouble.” Linley and Bebe had no choice but to wait and watch what was going to happen.

Currents of multicolored chaotic energy swirled about, with spatial rifts occasionally appearing.

Beirut continued to lead Linley and Bebe forward. Moments later.

“Grandpa, Teresia.” Bebe called out in surprise.

Linley stared hard into the distance. That aura of green light. That tall figure

with long, flowing silver hair. Those narrow, slitted eyes that seemed to contain a knife-like gaze. That upwards-crooking cold smile as he looked at Beirut and the other two.

“Beirut.” Teresia spoke out.

“Teresia. You’d best leave right now. Later, you won’t be able to.” Beirut’s gaze was cold.

“Hmph.” Teresia’s face suddenly changed. “You actually notified a helper.”

“Of course. As soon as I noticed you, I made the notification.” Beirut said coldly.

“Just a Lesser Sovereign of Fire. Do you think I am afraid?” Teresia laughed disdainfully. “There are less than ten Sovereigns who have become Paragons. There aren’t many Lesser Sovereigns who are able to beat me. You, at least, aren’t one of them. I imagine your helper won’t be a match for me either.”

Linley rather frantically sent to Beirut, “Lord Beirut, Teresia is clearly delaying. The longer he delays, the worse it will be for us.”

“I know.” Beirut winked towards Linley. “Don’t worry, Linley. Everything is as I expected.”

Seeing how calm Beirut was, Linley couldn’t help but be influenced and feel more confident.

“Linley, last time, the Bloodridge Sovereign let you escape. This time, you will find it hard to.” Teresia waved his hand, and a cold, sharp light flashed as an enormous, thin sickle appeared. The aura that emanated from the sickle caused the surrounding chaotic space to tremble.

His body flashed. Then, like a dragon taking flight, he pierced through the kilometers separating them and chopped down towards Beirut, the sickle seeming to contain the power to shatter the heavens.

“Linley, take Bebe and make haste towards the direction of the Yulan Plane. I’ll be there shortly.” Beirut sent frantically.

“Yes.” Linley didn’t hesitate at all.

A long black staff suddenly appeared in Beirut’s hands. The long staff suddenly expanded to a length of a hundred meters long and many meters wide, and it viciously smashed over.

“Clang!”

The terrifying scimitar tore through chaotic space and smashed directly against the long black staff, but was only able to make it tremble slightly.

“Bebe, let’s go.” Linley grabbed Bebe and immediately worked hard to resist the flows of chaotic space and make haste towards the Yulan Plane.

“Boss, Grandpa will be fine, right?” Bebe said, worried.

“If we stay behind, we will negatively impact your Grandpa Beirut.” Linley understood the situation quite well. “If Teresia were to attack us in order to threaten Beirut, that would be troublesome. Let’s go now. After Beirut’s battle concludes, he will catch up to us.” Although he said this, in his heart, Linley still felt worried.

If Beirut and Teresia fought for too long, and the Chief Sovereign of Light caught up to them, what was to be done?

“Rumble…”

A terrifying surge of wind-type energy suddenly swept over, actually slamming against the body of Linley, who had flown more than a thousand kilometers away.

“Swoosh!” Linley actually borrowed the momentum from that surge and fled even more quickly!

“It really is a battle between Sovereigns. Even remnant energy ripples from a thousand kilometers away are far more powerful than the strikes of Paragons.” Linley was secretly shocked. He continued to hold Bebe as he frantically charged forward.

Linley and Bebe constantly advanced forward. A few moments later.

“Boss, there is someone else up ahead.” Bebe said, stunned.

“Another Sovereign!” Linley’s face instantly turned ashen!

Beirut was already blocking Teresia from behind; if another Sovereign came, how could he or Bebe resist?

A fiery light flashed over from far away. Moments later, it arrived by Linley and Bebe’s sides. Linley and Bebe looked cautiously at this person, and as he slowed down, they were able to clearly see who it was.

“This is…” Linley and Bebe were both stunned.

Long black hair. A long white robe. Scarlet, crimson eyebrows!

“Bluefire.” Linley called out in shock.

They would never have imagined that the newcomer was Bluefire! And, judging from the aura around Bluefire’s body, he was using fire-type Sovereign power…clearly, Bluefire was a Sovereign of Fire!!!

“Mr. Leylin, you…” Linley was completely flummoxed.

“Mr. Leylin, how did you become a Sovereign?” Bebe called out in surprise. Only Sovereigns could possibly move through chaotic space at such speed.

“Bluefire, you came.” A green blur hurried over from behind at high speed.

“Beirut.” Bluefire smiled as he looked at him. “You lead Linley and Bebe and hurry back to the Yulan Plane. I’ll help you ward off this Teresia. I’m more than enough to deal with him.”

“While fighting with him, move towards the direction of the Yulan Plane. No matter what, don’t let the Chief Sovereign of Light catch you.” Beirut instructed.

“Don’t worry. In terms of speed, I’m a bit faster than you.” Bluefire smiled.

“Linley, Bebe, let’s go.” Beirut didn’t waste any words, immediately leading Linley and Bebe once more towards the Yulan Plane.

As for Bluefire, his entire body covered with a blazing aura, he very confidently stood there in the middle of chaotic smile, smiling as he looked at the rather haggard-looking Teresia who was in hot pursuit. “Teresia, you want to seize the red caltrop diamond and offer it to the Chief Sovereign of Light? Give up. You have no chance.”

Chapter 48 – Success

Book 20, The Crown's Riddle – Chapter 48, Success

Within chaotic space. A green blur and a red blur stood in midair, staring at each other.

"You are…" Teresia looked carefully at Bluefire. "That lucky kid?"

"Lucky?" Bluefire smiled, then nodded. "Right."

Bluefire looked carefully back at Teresia. "Judging from the looks of you, it seems as though you didn't gain any advantage in your battle with Beirut? A Lesser Sovereign who is also a Paragon, in the face of Beirut's ultimate attacks, doesn't seem to fare so well."

"He, he's a madman." When Teresia thought back to his earlier battle with Beirut, he couldn't help but feel enraged.

Beirut had launched one staff blow after another, surging forth like the wild, endless waves of the sea.

He was like a madman, just wildly smashing down.

Teresia was only able to just barely prevent himself from losing.

"Beirut has an advantage in terms of his Sovereign weapon as well." Teresia said silently to himself.

Sovereign artifacts were all ordinary artifacts that had been constantly nurtured by a Sovereign's 'Will' and power. After a long period of time, they would then form into a Sovereign artifact.

But the artifacts which were created generally didn't have different levels of power, unless the difference in the original materials for the items were

vastly different in quality.

For example, other Sovereigns' artifacts might be made from ordinary mineral ores, while Beirut's was created from divine spark essence.

Of course there would be a difference in these two Sovereign artifacts!

Beirut, as a divine beast 'Godeater Rat', had an extremely powerful body. That, paired with his Sovereign's Will, made his material attacks extremely terrifying. In addition, thanks to possessing the innate divine ability, 'Godeater', Beirut's soul defense had become incredibly terrifying as well. Although they were both Lesser Sovereigns…even Teresia, someone who had also become a Paragon in the Laws, found it hard to defeat Beirut.

"Beirut's innate gifts are incredible; he is comparable to the former Four Divine Beasts. What of you, then? Do you think that you can stop me?" Teresia stretched his hand out, and that icy sickle once more appeared in his hand.

"Oh?" Bluefire smiled slightly. A fiery long spear suddenly appeared in his hands, and the sharpness of the tip of the spear seemed to cause the surrounding chaotic space to tremble.

"Come, then…" Bluefire suddenly smiled. The right arm which held the long spear suddenly trembled, causing the surrounding space within a hundred meters to begin swirling like a whirlpool…

But enough of the battle between Bluefire and Teresia for now. Beirut's group of three was continuing to frantically advance towards the Yulan Plane at high speed.

"Fortunately, Bluefire was quite fast. Although I still have to carry the two of you over, by the looks of it, the Chief Sovereign of Light won't be able to catch up." Beirut's divine sense informed him as to how far away the Chief Sovereign of Light was. Based the speed at which the two sides travelled at, he could easily tell whether or not the Chief Sovereign of Light would be able to catch up.

“Lord Beirut, how did Mr. Leylin become a Sovereign?” Linley was puzzled. “Back then, in the Planar Battlefield, wasn’t Mr. Leylin a Paragon?”

“If Mr. Leylin was a Sovereign during the Planar War, when Magnus wanted to kill my Boss, why didn’t he arrive earlier?” Bebe said, puzzled.

“Bluefire is the same as me; his Sovereign clone isn’t able to enter the other Divine Planes or Higher Planes.” Beirut said with a sigh.

“The Bluefire who entered the Planar Battlefield was just his original body and his divine earth clone. His divine fire clone remained within the Yulan Plane.” Beirut laughed as he explained.

“Original body?” Linley instantly understood.

Bluefire should have had three bodies as well. One a Saint-level original body, one a fire-type divine clone, and one an earth-type divine clone. Bluefire’s fire-type divine clone had become a Sovereign. When his Saint-level original body joined together with his earth-type divine clone, it naturally possessed the Godrealm of a Highgod. As for Sovereign power… he could borrow from his Sovereign clone.

As for the profound mysteries of the Laws? His Saint-level original body would naturally understand the Laws of Fire.

As for the power of Will…

Upon becoming a Sovereign, given how powerful the Will of his Sovereign clone was, although the Will of his other clones would be much weaker, they would still be comparable to a Paragon’s Will.

“No wonder.” Linley let out a sigh.

“Grandpa Beirut, you haven’t yet explained how Mr. Leylin became a Sovereign.”

“This…” Beirut hesitated momentarily, then shook his head. “This is rather complicated. I won’t be able to explain it all in a brief period of time. Once we return to the Yulan Plane, I’ll discuss it with you in detail…Bluefire and I have been forging Linley this entire time. Given your current strength, Linley, it is about time.”

Linley felt a surge of puzzlement. However, as they were currently fleeing, this truly wasn’t the time to chat in detail.

They continued to fly forward.

“Whooosh.” Chaotic streams of energy flew everywhere, and space constantly ruptured and collapsed.

Linley’s group of three travelled forward at high speed for quite some time. They were drawing close to the Yulan Plane, and at this moment, a surge of energy drew close to them from behind at high speed.

“Linley. Bebe.” That gentle voice rang out as the figure approached them.

“Mr. Leylin.” Linley and Bebe looked over. The newcomer was Leylin ‘Bluefire’.

Bluefire was a Sovereign, and also a Paragon. Experts of the Laws of Fire were specialized in speed…Bluefire’s speed was naturally somewhat faster than Beirut’s. Given that Beirut was also bringing two people with him, Beirut’s speed naturally grew even slower. It only made sense that Bluefire was able to catch up.

“Bluefire, how was Teresia? Annoying to deal with, right?” Beirut laughed as he spoke.

“Of course a Paragon of Wind would be hard to deal with.” Bluefire laughed calmly. “But I’m a Paragon Sovereign as well. I wasn’t able to do anything to him, but he wasn’t able to do anything to me either. Now that both of us are here, that Teresia naturally won’t dare to come over and just

invite more suffering upon himself."

"You are all Paragons, but I…" Beirut sighed. "It truly is hard to become a Paragon."

"It truly is." Linley nodded as well.

To the outside world, the story was that he was a Paragon. But Linley, of course, knew…that his power came not from being a Paragon, but from his four-way soul mutation.

"Haha…" Beirut suddenly laughed. "The Yulan Plane is up ahead. The Chief Sovereign of Light has been hastening towards us this entire time for nothing." Beirut was quite smug. While speaking, the four of them arrived at the borders of the distant, massive plane.

Linley's eyes couldn't help but light up. They flew away from the center of that flow of chaotic space and towards the edges of the plane.

"The Yulan Plane. Here we are!" Linley felt extremely excited.

After reaching the Yulan Plane, he finally would be able to safely summon the Overgod. In addition, his family and friends were in the Yulan Plane as well…

"Haha, Augusta! We've already arrived. You've been hurrying over with no stop and no rest, but alas, in the end, you weren't able to catch up." Beirut, while drawing close to the planar borders, stared into the distant and spoke out through divine sense. "This was a rare chance for you, but you weren't able to grasp it. You really are useless."

A good distance away, deep in chaotic space, the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, simply stood there, an ugly look on his face.

"That Teresia really is useless." Augusta said to himself.

But he understood that once the second Sovereign, 'Bluefire', made his

appearance, it was guaranteed that there was no way Teresia would be able to tie down Beirut.

“Beirut, don’t be so smug. No matter how smug you are, you are limited to the Yulan Plane. If you have any ability…why don’t you let your Sovereign clone come to the Divine Light Plane or to the Infernal Realm.” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, sent mockingly. “A fellow who is as cowardly as a rat, actually dares to talk so brashly?”

But Beirut wasn’t the slightest bit angry.

“As cowardly as a rat? I’m a Godeater Rat to begin with!” Beirut sent back with a laugh. “I, a Godeater Rat, love to eat divine sparks. I even like Sovereign sparks…haha…and I’m quite sorry about what happened that year! Haha…” Beirut was utterly delighted with himself.

Augusta, hearing these words, had an even uglier look appear on his face.

“Linley, Bebe, let’s go. Let’s go home.” Beirut laughed loudly. “Let Augusta slowly stew in his anger. Ideally, he’ll die from it.”

Augusta’s divine sense was spread out; naturally, he was able to hear these words. He became all the more enraged. But him and Beirut were like fire and water to begin with; even if Beirut had spoken kindly towards him, Augusta wouldn’t spare him. Thus, as Beirut saw it, he might as well anger Augusta a bit more.

“Oh, time to go home.” Bebe called out jubilantly as well.

Immediately, Beirut, Bluefire, Linley, and Bebe passed through the planar boundary and returned to the Yulan Plane.

In the air above the vast South Sea of the Yulan Plane. Beirut’s group of four was jubilantly flying through the skies.

“Haha, when I think about the look on Augusta’s face, I feel absolutely tickled.” Beirut laughed loudly.

“We are finally back. It is all over.” Linley felt as though he was in a dream. Everything was so perfect.

“Mr. Leylin, that continent you created is right ahead of us.” Bebe pointed towards a distant continent. This continent had been created by Bluefire through relying on his divine earth clone. After having been shaped and sculpted by Bluefire, it was now far larger than even the Yulan continent.

In addition, in the past, Beirut and Bluefire had jointly moved tens of millions of humans, many magical beasts, and many types of living creatures over to this continent.

In the past three thousand years, this continent had flourished and reached a population of billions as well.

“Lord Beirut, I have to admit something to you.” Linley said honestly.

“Eh?” Beirut looked towards Linley.

“I have three of the Overgod talismans.” Linley didn’t hide anything at all. Linley still felt very grateful towards Beirut. In addition…he was about to prepare to summon the Overgod. There was no way he would be able to hide that now.

“Three?” Beirut and Bluefire were both shocked.

Bebe nodded and chortled as well. “That rumor which Molde had made up back then wasn’t completely false. The nine soul pearls had indeed fallen into my Boss’s hands. As for the pentametal crown…my Boss was lucky enough to encounter it during the Planar War.”

“Haha…the heavens are helping us.” Beirut laughed loudly.

“Haha, wonderful. Beirut, this is absolutely wonderful.” Bluefire couldn’t help but laugh loudly as well.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

What was going on?

Just because he acquired three Overgod talismans, Beirut and Bluefire would lose their composure like this?

“Linley.” Beirut’s eyes were shining. He seemed to be a beggar who was seeing a fortune worth trillions.” You have three talismans. You are about to summon the Overgod, and when you do, remember, you must request a Overgod artifact. As for what type of Overgod artifact…perhaps a defensive Overgod artifact or perhaps an Overgod weapon. Both would be good. You choose for yourself what you want!”

“Right.” Bluefire said hurriedly to Linley as well. “Choose an Overgod artifact! This is a rare opportunity.”

“Linley, you truly are quite formidable, to be able to hide this for so long… yes, you’ve done very well. You’ve acquired an Overgod artifact. Your actions were completely correct. Haha..I originally only thought you’d have, at most, two Overgod talismans. Who would’ve thought that you’d have three?” Beirut clearly was quite excited.

“An Overgod artifact…wonderful.” Bluefire couldn’t but sigh in praise as well.

Linley was rather astonished, but then he said with a forced laugh, “Lord Beirut, Mr. Leylin, I truly must apologize. I’m not planning to ask for an Overgod artifact!”

Beirut and Bluefire’s laughter came to a halt. The looks on their face froze as they stared towards Linley in astonishment.

“Linley, what did you just say?” Beirut was completely stunned.

The nearby Bebe said, “Grandpa Beirut, the reason my Boss has risked his life to acquire the Overgod talismans was because…Boss has always been

wanting a way to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life. Grandpa Doehring is extremely important to him."

"Doehring Cowart?" Beirut couldn't believe it. He frantically urged, "Linley, I know about you and Doehring Cowart, but he's already dead. His soul is dissipated and dispersed. Perhaps the Overgod of Life can bring him back, but…he is only a Saint. To sacrifice such a precious opportunity for him? This is an Overgod mission. You can acquire an Overgod artifact!" Beirut was extremely frantic.

"Linley. You can't waste an opportunity like this. An Overgod mission will be issued only once in countless years. Even if there is a second one, you won't necessarily be able to complete it." Bluefire said frantically as well.

Linley looked at Beirut and Bluefire, forced out a smile, then shook his head.

"I'm sorry…"

Linley let out a sigh. "Lord Beirut, it is true that I wish to train to the very pinnacle of power. However, in my heart, the value of an Overgod artifact can't even compare to Grandpa Doehring. Forget about an Overgod artifact; even if I had to give up my power as a Soul Mutate, I wouldn't hesitate. In my heart…Grandpa Doehring is as important as my parents. He is also my true teacher!"

Family, teacher, guide…

This was what Doehring Cowart was to Linley.

"Linley, you can't act based on sentiment. This is a rare opportunity! It is an Overgod artifact! Even Chief Sovereigns would go crazy for such a treasure." Beirut said hurriedly.

"Linley, you can't give up this chance." Bluefire said frantically as well.

Linley just shook his head stubbornly, then said with apologetic regret,

“Lord Beirut, if it hadn’t been for Grandpa Doehring, I probably would just be an ordinary mortal. Perhaps I wouldn’t even be able to restore my clan. As for the Overgod artifact…it is precious, but I have no other desire, other than for Grandpa Doehring to come back to life. I hope that you will understand, Lord Beirut.” Linley bowed solemnly.

“But…” Bluefire didn’t know what to say.

Bluefire and Beirut exchanged a glance. Beirut just let out a powerless sigh. “Alright, Linley. I understand how you are feeling. You were the one to complete this Overgod mission. I won’t force you! Make your own decision.”

“Apologies.” Linley bowed once more.

When this word came out, Beirut and Bluefire couldn’t help but to laugh sourly. Clearly, Linley had already decided that he would choose to save Doehring Cowart!

“Overgod.” Linley took a deep breath, then began to remove the three talismans. The Overgods were the personifications of the Edicts, and since the countless planes all operated in accordance with the Edicts…naturally, the Edicts were omnipresent. In other words, the Overgods were omnipresent as well.

The material planes held the Overgods. Chaotic space held the Overgods. The Higher Planes held the Overgods. They were truly omnipresent!

The Overgods were neither human nor living.

They were the Edicts!

Thus, they could appear anywhere. A summons to the Overgods could thus occur anywhere as well.

“I hope this is successful.” Linley murmured silently to himself. In his mind, the image of Grandpa Doehring once more sprang to mind, while at

the same time, the pentametal crown, studded with the nine soul pearls, appeared in Linley's hands, along with that red caltrop diamond. The nearby Beirut and Bluefire, seeing this, couldn't help but laugh sourly.

The pentametal crown just hovered there. The red caltrop diamond hovered there as well.

"Swish!" The red caltrop diamond flew into the final, remaining central setting in the pentametal crown. It emitted countless rays of green light, causing even the sun to temporarily seem to grow dim by comparison.

"Rumble…" The world began to shake.

A blurry figure slowly began to appear, and a terrifying aura began to spread out. The pentametal crown immediately flew over towards the head of that blurred figure. The aura was so powerful that even Beirut and Bluefire couldn't help but bow. Linley's eyes lit up. He knew who the person in front of him was.

"The Overgod of Life!"

Chapter 1 – The Overgod of Life

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 1, The Overgod of Life

In the skies above the South Sea, Beirut, Bluefire, and Bebe were standing off to one side as in the air, a blurry figure slowly solidified.

Green robes. Long, jade-green hair. Jade-green eyes. Her smile seemed to cause the entire universe to tremble.

“This is the Overgod of Life?” Linley stared at the woman who had appeared. The woman who was wearing the Crown of Life on her head! His heart couldn’t help but clench with nervousness. In terms of appearance, Linley had never before seen anyone who was more perfect than the Overgod of Life. In terms of aura, the noble, exalted aura of the Overgod of Life was so prominent and pristine.

The Overgod of Life’s gaze fell upon Linley.

“Since the creation of the universe, this is the seventh Overgod mission, and my second time issuing an Overgod mission. Congratulations, Linley Baruch, for completing it.” The Overgod of Life’s voice was very gentle. Not only could it be heard through the ears; it reverberated within his mind as well. “According to the rules of the mission, you can now make a request of me. If I am able to accomplish it, I will do so for you.”

As the sound echoed, Linley completely lost his bearings.

“What request do you have?” The Overgod of Life said.

“Request?”

Only now did Linley come to his senses.

Beirut and Bluefire came to their senses as well. They, too, were stunned.

“Bluefire, with but a faint smile, the Overgod of Life caused us to lose our bearing. This is too terrifying.” Beirut sent mentally. “The Overgods truly are supreme. The power of an Overgod artifact is definitely far beyond that of a Sovereign artifact.”

“Right. Unfortunately, Linley won’t choose an Overgod artifact.” Bluefire secretly sighed as well.

“Almighty Overgod of Life, my request is to have my Grandpa Doehring be brought back to life!” Linley raised his head to look at the Overgod of Life as he spoke.

“Back to life…” The Overgod of Life was momentarily silent.

Linley’s heart grew nervous. “I have to succeed! Grandpa Doehring has to come back to life!” Based on what Linley knew, after someone’s soul was dispersed, Sovereigns became unable to rescue that person. Only Overgods might have that ability, especially the Overgod of Life. She herself was the personification of the Edicts of Life, and controlled the lives of the countless living creatures of the countless planes.

“Forgive me. I am unable to satisfy your request.” The Overgod of Life’s voice was as calm as ever.

“Unable?” Bebe instantly stared.

“Unable?” Beirut and Bluefire were startled as well.

Linley’s mind went blank. The only thing in it was the words of the Overgod of Life, which echoed repeatedly. “Forgive me. I am unable to satisfy your request.”

“Unable to satisfy? Unable to satisfy?” Linley’s gaze grew sharp, and he stared straight at the Overgod of Life. He said frantically, “Overgod of Life, you control the creation and dissipation of the lives of all the creatures of the universe. Why can’t you bring someone back to life whose soul has dissipated?”

He had risked everything to lie to the Sovereigns and fight to acquire the Overgod talismans. He had done all these things to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life.

But the Overgod of Life was unable to do it?

“Forgive me. I am unable to do this.” The Overgod of Life shook her head.

“But you are an Overgod!” Linley called out frantically, his heart filled with unwillingness to accept this.

The Overgod of Life said calmly, “Linley Baruch, according to the rules of the mission, I will satisfy a request of yours. However, this request must be something I can do. The dispersal of one’s soul symbolizes a true death. This is an unalienable part of the Edicts. I am the Edicts of Life. Naturally, I cannot act in a way that violates the Edicts.”

“My very existence is that which allows the Edicts to function in the countless planes of the universe. To bring back to life someone whose soul was dispersed is to break the Edicts. If I were to break the Edicts, then the countless planes of the universe would no longer be bound by the Edicts. By then, without the protection and binding of the Edicts, the countless planes would themselves collapse.” The Overgod of Life said calmly.

Linley’s face turned white. His eyes were filled with despair.

“Boss…” Bebe looked towards Linley, his eyes filled with nervousness.

“So that’s how it is.” Beirut and Bluefire exchanged a glance. They couldn’t help but shake their heads and sigh.

Overgods were seemingly almighty, but in the end, they were the personifications of the Edicts.

Once a person’s soul was shattered and dissipated, they were truly dead. This was part of the Edicts.

How could the Edicts themselves do something which was against the Edicts? After all, the responsibility of the four Overgods was to allow the Edicts to function normally and without interruption.

“I expended countless efforts to seize these Overgod talismans, all for that tiny shred of hope. Who would have imagined…that in the end, it was all for nothing!” Linley lowered his head. Silently, two streams of tears flowed out. “Grandpa Doehring…” The response of the Overgod of Life had settled it. Grandpa Doehring would never come back again.

At most, he would forever exist in Linley’s memories.

“Boss. Don’t be too heartbroken.” Bebe said hurriedly.

“The heavens gave me hope, which allowed me to fight, to work hard, to struggle. But in the end, after I accomplished what I needed to, the heavens smashed that hope that they had given me.” Linley laughed with bitterness.

Beirut and Bluefire walked over as well.

“Linley, don’t be too heartbroken. Life, death, sickness, infirmity…these things are far too common. You can’t have perfection in all things, just because you desire it.” Beirut said consolingly.

“Where there is life, there shall be death! Life and death are determined by the Edicts of the universe.” Bluefire consoled as well. “You and I have surpassed life and death and live indefinitely, but if we were to die, our souls would also be dissipated, and we wouldn’t be able to come back either. There are many, many people in the world who have lost loved ones. Take a wiser view of things.”

“I understand this principle.” Linley took a deep breath, struggling to calm down.

If he had known all along that there was no hope, that would have been one thing. Linley would have kept his pain buried deep in his heart.

But after finding hope and struggling towards it, only to have that hope destroyed…this was like sprinkling salt onto a wound. It truly was painful.

“The existence of the universe requires that the restrictions of the Edicts be maintained.” The Overgod of Life said calmly. “Even though you have completed the Overgod mission, your request must be in accordance with the restrictions of the Edicts. I am unable to fulfill the request you made. Now, Linley Baruch, please change your request.”

“Change my request?” Linley was stunned.

“The successful completion of an Overgod mission means that I must fulfill a request of yours.” The Overgod of Life said calmly.

The earlier request that Linley had made was ineffective, and so naturally he had to be given another one.

“Boss, hurry up and make a request.” Bebe said frantically.

“Linley, there is no way to bring your Grandpa Doehring back to life. For now, I think you had best choose an Overgod artifact.” Beirut’s eyes were shining, and he hurriedly urged Linley, “Perhaps, you might have other dreams, but in this universe, many things depend on one’s own power! Only with enough power will many things be solvable.”

Bluefire said hurriedly as well, “It would be best if you chose an Overgod artifact that suited you. An Overgod artifact that will let you release your power to the greatest extent.”

“I understand.” Linley nodded.

After having experienced so much, Linley knew that only with enough strength would many things be easily accomplished.

“What sort of Overgod artifact should I request?” Many thoughts came to Linley’s mind. “A defensive Overgod artifact? No, that’s not that great an

idea. My personal defense is already quite good. In addition, when I use my hands and feet to attack, I'm unable to unleash my full power." Linley was still the most proficient in swordplay.

Whether when he using the heavy adamantine sword, Bloodviolet, or Mirage…

Linley's supreme attacks had all relied on the sword.

"I will request a sword-shaped Overgod artifact." Linley came to his decision.

Linley raised his head to look at the Overgod of Life, who stood there in midair. "Almighty Overgod of Life, I need a weapon-type Overgod artifact. A sword-shaped Overgod artifact!"

"I…shall satisfy your request." The Overgod Life said calmly, while at the same time, she stretched out her slender right hand. A green sword shadow slowly began to materialize and solidify, and an astonishing, sharp energy began to condense, causing the surrounding space to crack and shatter.

"An Overgod artifact!" Beirut, Bluefire, and Bebe all stared.

According to the legends, only the Overgods were capable of creating an Overgod artifact. In the past, only the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts and the Chief Sovereign of Light were in possession of an Overgod artifact!

"This Overgod sword…" Linley viewed it carefully.

It was a nearly 1.5 meter long green longsword. The guard of the sword was shaped like a flower petal, and the sword's handle had runed etchings in the shape of coiling tendrils that perfectly matched the location where one would grip it. As for the blade of the sword, it was covered with diagrams of all sorts of plants and flowers. Both edges of the sword were extremely sharp. The longsword didn't move, but just by hanging there, it brought the surrounding space to a point of near collapse.

“This is the Life Overgod Sword. Only after reaching the Sovereign level will you truly be able to withstand the terrifyingly powerful energy within this sword. Only then will you be able to truly bind it.” The Overgod of Life gently stroked the longsword with her left hand, and instantly, the luster of the longsword immediately retreated, making it seem plain and unadorned.

At first glance, it looked just like an ordinary sword. The surrounding space quickly returned to normalcy.

“Linley Baruch, I have already satisfied your request.” As she spoke, the Life Overgod Sword flew out of her hands and floated towards Linley.

And then, the body of the Overgod of Life slowly dissipated. In the blink of an eye, the world returned to its normal calm, as though the Overgod of Life had never appeared.

“The Life Overgod Sword.” Linley held the sword, and the coiling vines that were carved atop the handle were perfectly suited for his hand to grip onto.

“Why don’t I feel anything?” Linley wielded the Life Overgod Sword, but couldn’t feel any unusual energy to it. He couldn’t help but turn to look at the nearby Bluefire and Beirut. “Lord Beirut, tell me, what was the use of me requesting this Overgod sword?”

“Haha, of course there’s an important use for it.” Beirut laughed loudly.

“An Overgod artifact. An Overgod artifact!” Bluefire’s eyes were shining as well.

Right at this moment, Bebe sent to Linley, “Boss, my grandpa asked you to acquire an Overgod artifact, but you are unable to bind it. After all, only by using Sovereign power can that be done. Do you think that Grandpa did this because…he wants it for himself?”

Bebe was a bit worried for Linley.

Linley looked carefully at Beirut and Bluefire, then shook his head mentally and said, “I don’t think so. Given Beirut’s power, if he wanted it, he would’ve taken it long ago. Prior to this, when I wanted to ask to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life, Lord Beirut and Mr. Leylin didn’t try to stop me.”

“True.” Bebe nodded slightly.

“I have the Life Overgod Sword in hand now, but…” Linley didn’t feel much joy in his heart, because his goal had been to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life. That hadn’t happened. If Grandpa Doehring could now come to life and appear before Linley, and call out Linley’s name, Linley probably would have gone wild with joy.

Unfortunately, after this, Linley now truly understood that there was no hope at all for Grandpa Doehring to come back to life!

“Lord Beirut. Mr. Leylin. You wanted me to seize this opportunity to request an Overgod artifact from the Overgod of Life.” Linley looked towards Beirut and Bluefire, puzzled. “Now, I have acquired this Overgod sword, but my lack of power makes it so that I cannot bind it. So what do you want me to do with this Overgod sword?”

For him, the Overgod sword probably wouldn’t even be as effective as Mirage.

“Linley, you don’t need to be impatient about this.” Bluefire said with a laugh.

“Linley, don’t worry. Since I wanted you to acquire this Overgod sword, then…I naturally have a way to make it so that you can use it.” Beirut smiled.

Linley was no fool. Upon hearing this, a sudden light flashed in his mind, and he called out in alarm. “Lord Beirut, are you saying…?”

“Do you really need to ask? Linley, tell me, how do you think I became a

Sovereign?" Bluefire chortled merrily.

"Grandpa, can it be that you are intending to let my Boss become a Sovereign?" Bebe called out in shock.

Beirut chortled, but didn't deny it.

Seeing the look on Beirut's face, Bebe was now completely certain. He couldn't help but say in disbelief, "Grandpa, to become a Sovereign, you need a Sovereign spark. You and Mr. Leylin are Sovereigns; can it be that you have other Sovereign sparks as well?"

Linley just looked at Beirut, puzzled. Even if Beirut had Sovereign sparks, would he really let Linley use them?

"No need to ask so many questions. Just follow me." Beirut smiled, then immediately turned to fly back.

Chapter 2 – The Eighteenth Floor of the Necropolis of the Gods

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 2, The Eighteenth Floor of the Necropolis of the Gods

The skies above the South Sea of the Yulan Plane. Beirut and the others were travelling through it at high speed.

“Become a Sovereign?” Linley stared at Beirut, up ahead.

The events which had occurred within this short day had all been too stunning. Linley felt a bit numb. At first, it had been Beirut displaying his power as a Sovereign. Then, Bluefire had also displayed the power of a Sovereign. Right afterwards, he had met the Overgod of Life. Linley truly felt as though he were in a dream.

And now, based on what Beirut was saying, it seemed as though he was going to make Linley become a Sovereign.

Linley struggled to calm himself down. Only then did he speak out. “Lord Beirut, why would you choose me for the precious opportunity to become a Sovereign? Harry, Bebe, and the others…you should choose them.” Linley spoke bluntly. Truth be told, in terms of closeness of relationships, Harry and his brothers were Beirut’s own children.

“Them?” Beirut turned to glance at Linley, then laughed. “I gave them a chance, but they weren’t able to grasp it.”

“Grandpa, what do you mean, couldn’t handle it?”

The nearby Bluefire raised a crimson eyebrow, then laughed as he stared at the vast, endless seawater in front of them. “Alright, we’ll be arriving up ahead.”

“This is…” Linley spread his senses forward. “There should be an interdimensional portal below. A corridor to the Necropolis of the Gods!” In the past, Linley had adventured through the Necropolis of the Gods. Back then, Linley had only been a Saint. After experiencing countless tribulations, he had acquired divine sparks. That time, however, Linley had come to a halt on the eleventh floor.

“Come in.” Beirut said with a smile, then directly flew downwards.

“Rumble…” The formerly placid waters of the sea instantly rose up, then parted like a curtain on two sides, revealing an immeasurably deep tunnel.

Linley and Bebe hurriedly followed Beirut and Bluefire deep into the depths of the sea.

Deep within the sea, it was completely silent. There wasn’t any hint of light. Some enormous deep sea behemoths swam about slowly. Linley’s group of four instantly reached the bottom of the sea, moving so quickly that many of the deep sea magical beasts didn’t even notice them.

The bottom of the seabed was filled all sorts of random sea plants, as well as underwater mountain ranges.

The seabed coral reefs rose up atop each other, reaching heights as great as a thousand meters. Sometimes, they would also sink down into bottomless, unfathomably deep trenches.

Linley’s group of four strode across the bottom of the sea. While striding forward up ahead, Beirut suddenly turned and went into one of the bottomless trenches next to the reefs. Linley’s group of three had no choice but to follow. This fathomlessly deep tunnel was like the bowels of a behemoth; dark, cold, and immeasurable.

“Grandpa, weren’t we going to the Necropolis of the Gods? The interdimensional portal that leads to the Necropolis of the Gods is still up ahead. Where are we going?” Bebe asked while following.

“I need to retrieve something.” Beirut said with a smile.

Linley was filled with questions, but he still maintained his silence, continuing to follow forward. After moving roughly ten thousand meters deeper, they finally reached the bottom. The bottom of this deep tunnel was an empty space that had a circumference of hundreds of meters, but the strange thing was, even the sea water was kept outside.

“Grandpa, what is this, exactly?” Bebe said, curious.

The nearby Bluefire let out a sigh. “Beirut, you prepared this in the past, but it seems your preparations no longer need to be made use of.”

Beirut waved his hand, and a powerful surge of green aura shot out from Beirut’s palm. It instantly separated into ten million strands of fine green light, penetrating into the rocky walls of this deep cave. The walls greedily drank in the green light, and instantly, a large number of magical runes began to slowly appear atop the walls.

“This is a magical formation?” Linley frowned as he spoke.

“This is a very unique sealing magical formation.” Bluefire laughed as he spoke. “In the past, Beirut had schemed to acquire it from the Infernal Realm. This sealing magical formation was altered by Beirut. If you want to activate this sealing magical formation, you must have the power of a Sovereign. Otherwise, there is no way you can open it.”

“Lord Beirut?” Linley didn’t understand. “This sealing magical formation was constructed in the Yulan Plane. But other Sovereigns aren’t able to enter the Yulan Plane. Why be so cautious?”

“I was just preparing against all eventualities.”

Beirut let out a sigh. “I was worried that one day, I would be killed by the Chief Sovereign of Light, and also have my treasures be taken away. Thus, I never carried them on me. Rather, I kept them here in the Yulan Plane. I was worried that the Chief Sovereign of Light would send Highgods to come

seize it, and so it requires that someone have the power of a Sovereign in order to be able to break this sealing magical formation."

"If one day I were to die, this treasure would enter Bluefire's safekeeping." Beirut said. The deep underwater tunnel had already slowly grown brighter, to the point of being eye-piercingly brilliant.

Suddenly…

"Bang!"

The four walls of the cave and the floor all suddenly trembled, and then completely transformed into dust which flowed down.

"The grand sealing formation?" Linley now completely understood. Beirut had used this grand formation to completely seal off a meter-thick layer of rock at the bottom of this underwater cave. Given Beirut's abilities in setting up this grand formation, if outsiders wished to break it, they would have to at least be as strong as him.

But setting up this formation was definitely no simple task.

"Lord Beirut, why did you come to break this grand sealing formation today?" Linley said, not understanding.

"It no longer has any purpose, so I might as well break it." Beirut smiled, then waved his hand. A gust of wind swept downwards, blowing all of the sand to one side and revealing a black box that was just the size of a palm. Beirut's eyes lit up, and he stretched his hand out to grab the black box.

Bluefire, seeing this, laughed as well.

"Grandpa, what is inside?" Bebe said, puzzled.

"Guess?" Beirut chortled.

"Can it be that it was because of this treasure, that the Chief Sovereign of

Light wishes to kill you, Grandpa? Is this treasure the Sovereign spark? Or is it a treasure that is on the level of an Overgod talisman?" Bebe guessed.

"Haha, you are quite clever. Alright, it is time for us to go to the Necropolis of the Gods." Beirut chortled.

Linley followed behind Beirut, flying once more out from that deep tunnel and towards the interdimensional portal. The portal was located atop an enormous, pitch-black stone that was in the center of a deep ocean valley. The strange spatial ripples could be seen and sensed clearly by Linley's group from far away.

"In you go." Beirut willed it, and the interdimensional portal opened.

The four immediately flew in.

They flew through and to the other side of the portal, where they arrived at a different plane.

"The Necropolis of the Gods." Linley had come here before. He could sense the restrictive power of this plane, and he couldn't help but look towards Beirut in confusion. "Lord Beirut, this plane should be on a much higher level than a material plane; how can it be so tightly connected with the Yulan Plane?" Linley had entered this place as a mere Saint.

Even one of the five Prime Saints of the Yulan continent, such as Fain, disciple of the War God, had been limited to a divine sense of just ten or so meters.

"This is a plane that was created by a Sovereign." Bluefire laughed calmly. "This is a so called 'divine plane'. Naturally, its restrictive power will be far greater than a material plane's."

"However, compared to the Infernal Realm, the restrictive power is much smaller." Linley evaluated.

The nearby Beirut laughed, "Linley, upon becoming a Sovereign, one can

create a plane. According to legend, however, the Infernal Realm, Netherworld, Celestial Realm, and Life Realm were created separately and individually by the four Overgods. Of course their restrictive power is great. As for the Seven Divine Planes, they were jointly created by the seven Sovereigns of each element. The Divine Light Plane, for example, was created by the Chief Sovereign of Light and the other six Sovereigns of Light working in concert. It is more stable and powerful than this plane of mine as well. After all, this is a plane that I, a Lesser Sovereign, made by myself."

"Indeed." Linley already had a vague suspicion that perhaps it was Beirut who had created this plane.

"Create a divine plane? Wow, that's incredible." Bebe called out in surprised joy. "But Grandpa, Sovereigns should be able to enter this divine plane, right? Aren't you afraid that the Chief Sovereign of Light will come?"

"Don't worry. This divine plane is connected to the Yulan Plane. If another Sovereign wishes to enter this plane of mine, as soon as they touch the borders of it, I, as the creator of the plane, will know. If the Chief Sovereign of Light comes, I will instantly enter the Yulan Plane." Beirut smiled.

Linley secretly sighed in praise. "Beirut truly is cautious."

"The Necropolis of the Gods is up ahead." Beirut pointed into the distance.

The waters of the deep sea surged forward. Linley could clearly see that up ahead, there was an enormous, sharp-tipped necropolis that was nearly twenty thousand meters tall and which had a circumference of ten thousand meters. At the front of the necropolis was still that enormous carving of a wingless dragon, an enormous dragon that lay coiled. Its aura was truly astonishing.

The other three sides had carvings of the other three divine beasts.

Last time, Linley hadn't understood, but this time, Linley completely

understood. Linley hurriedly asked frantically, “Lord Beirut, of the four carving, this enormous dragon carving is absolutely identical to the Azure Dragon Phantom that appears when I execute my innate divine ability. As for the other three divine beast carvings, they are identical to the other three divine beast sculptures I saw within the Skyrite Mountains of the Infernal Realm. Is there something special about this place?”

“Yes. This four carvings are of the four divine beasts.” Beirut said with a sigh.

“Follow me.” Beirut immediately flew towards the top of the Necropolis of the Gods.

Linley immediately followed. This Necropolis of the Gods had, in total, eighteen floors. Logically speaking, one should have to enter from the first floor, then constantly advance. But this time, Beirut actually led Linley and the others directly to the very tip of the Necropolis of the Gods, and at the top of the wall, a tunnel appeared out of nowhere.

Beirut and Bluefire stepped forward. Although Linley and Bebe felt puzzled, they still followed from behind.

This was a vast, empty space that they had moved into. The entire floor was formed from large pieces of bluestone that were ten meters long. This giant bluestone floor seemed to stretch off into infinity.

The ground was azure.

The sky was azure. Azure with no hint of other colors; it was so clear and bright.

Beirut, Linley, and the others appeared on the bluestone floor.

“This is…?” Linley stared around, puzzled. Logically speaking, each floor of the Necropolis of the Gods should have guardians, but this floor actually had no one in it at all.

“This is the top of the Necropolis of the Gods. The eighteenth floor.” Beirut smiled.

Bebe said in surprise, “Grandpa, why is it that there is no one here at the legendary eighteenth floor? Isn’t it supposed to be the most terrifyingly dangerous?”

“Who said that the eighteen floor is dangerous?” Beirut laughed.

“Doesn’t it get more and more dangerous, the higher up you go?” Bebe mumbled, not understanding. “Hey, Boss, where are you going?” Bebe realized that Linley was actually moving forward.

Beirut, seeing the situation, laughed. “Let’s go. Linley has already discovered it.”

Linley had indeed discovered it. In the past, the very first time he had come to the Necropolis of the Gods, he sensed that something within the upper reaches of the Necropolis of the Gods was calling to him. But, at that time, he didn’t have the power to advance farther up. Now, Linley discovered that it was this eighteenth floor that called to him, that drew him.

“Lord Beirut, this, this bluestone floor…beneath it…” Linley turned to look at Beirut.

“Wait a moment.” Beirut laughed while walking over, his gaze landing on the bluestone floor.

“Creaaaaak.” Countless bluestone floor tiles began to move about in an orderly fashion. Beneath the bluestone floor, an enormous object began to slowly rise. The bluestone tiles that had simply served as a floor, in the blink of an eye, actually formed into a giant platform, atop which lay an enormous Azure Dragon corpse that was more than ten thousand meters long. That close, familiar aura was calling to Linley.

“The ancestor…the Azure Dragon?” Stunned, Linley stared with wide eyes. He was immediately able to recognize it.

Beirut walked over, then sighed, “Right. There are, in total, three Necropolis of the Gods. The other two are only used to store the corpses of ordinary Deities, while this one is the great one. This Necropolis of the Gods, on its eighteenth floor, has the corpse of the Azure Dragon within it. As for the eighteenth floors of the other three directions, they store the corpses of the Vermillion Bird, the White Tiger, and the Black Tortoise.”

Chapter 3 – Ten Thousand Years Ago – The Truth

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 3, Ten Thousand Years Ago – The Truth

“The corpses of the Four Divine Beasts?” Bebe couldn’t refrain from calling out in shock.

Linley stared at the enormous Azure Dragon corpse in front of him. The draconic scales of the Azure Dragon were still so slick, so seemingly sharp. Even after ten thousand years had passed, the Azure Dragon’s aura was still so awe-inspiring. Linley turned to look at Beirut. Puzzled, he said, “Lord Beirut, for you and Bluefire to be able to become Sovereigns…was because of the Sovereign sparks of the four ancestors?”

Azure Dragon. Vermillion Bird. Black Tortoise. White Tiger. They were Lesser Sovereigns of the water, fire, earth, and wind elements.

Although they were only Lesser Sovereigns, the innate abilities of the Four Divine Beasts were simply too powerful, and when their four innate divine abilities were combined into one terrifying supreme technique, they were even able to fight against a Chief Sovereign.

“Yes.” Beirut sighed, then nodded. “After all, there are only so many Sovereign sparks in the world. It truly was a tremendous stroke of luck for me to be able to acquire four at once.”

“Grandpa, how did you acquire the Sovereign sparks? When you acquired them, you were only a Highgod.” Bebe said hurriedly.

“Also. How did you acquire the corpses of the Four Divine Beasts?” Linley was completely puzzled as well.

Beirut gave Bluefire a glance, and then Beirut laughed as he looked towards Linley and Bebe, then said with a sigh, “After so many years, there is no longer a need to hide this from you. Regarding the corpses of the Four

Divine Beasts…I must first tell you about the battle ten thousand years ago. The battle between the Four Divine Beasts and the Chief Sovereign of Light!"

"The four ancestors truly were killed by the Chief Sovereign of Light?" Linley frowned.

"Right. It was the Chief Sovereign of Light who killed them." Beirut nodded.

"That year, I was in my private room, training. Linley…that's the private room beneath your Dragonblood Castle." Beirut laughed, and Linley nodded slightly. He had guessed long ago that it must have been used by a powerful expert for training, and indeed; it had been Beirut!

"While training, I looked through the translucent membrane of the room and saw that far away, in the middle of the chaotic space, a terrifying battle was going on. It was the Four Divine Beasts, who were fighting energetically against the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta." Beirut said solemnly, and Linley listened attentively.

Beirut seemed to become immersed within his memories. "I was completely stupefied, back then. The Four Divine Beasts on one side, the Chief Sovereign of Light on the other. They were all too powerful. During this battle, the Four Divine Beasts were the weaker side, while the Chief Sovereign of Light held the advantage. The Four Divine Beasts had all completely transformed into their original, divine beast bodies. In addition, the four mighty divine beasts worked together to exert their innate divine abilities!"

Linley and Bebe listened breathlessly.

"It was very terrifying, and also very strange. The innate divine abilities of the Four Divine Beasts were actually able to fuse together perfectly, and they seemed to cause the world itself to change. A blurry, spherical light orb shot directly into the body of the Chief Sovereign of Light. At that time, I was certain that the fused innate divine ability of the Four Divine Beasts

should be a soul-focused attack." Beirut said.

Linley's heart clenched.

"Augusta's body just trembled, but right afterwards, he actually drew out an enormous sword of light and wildly pursued after and attacked the Four Divine Beasts. Most likely due to the failure of their supreme attack, the Four Divine Beasts simply couldn't believe it…leading to them losing their will to fight. In addition, they were only Lesser Sovereigns. In terms of speed, they were vastly inferior to the Chief Sovereign of Light." Beirut let out a sigh. "In an instant, the Black Tortoise, Vermillion Bird, and White Tiger were all killed one after the other. Although the Azure Dragon was powerful, he wasn't able to hold on either. But right at that moment…I was moved to action."

Linley and Bebe were stunned.

"This was because the enormous corpses of those three divine beasts, the Black Tortoise, the Vermillion Bird, and the White Tiger were simply floating in chaotic space, being carried away by the streams of chaotic energy. They weren't too far away from me." Beirut's eyes were shining. "Such an opportunity was not to be missed. I would give it my best shot! I used the tail of my 'Godeater Rat' body to stretch into chaotic space. My body was refined by divine spark essences, and so was as strong as Sovereign artifacts. My tail swung over at high speed, then with a loop, curled around the legs of the corpses of those three enormous divine beast corpses. Right at that moment, the Azure Dragon was killed by Augusta as well, and my tail also gave the Azure Dragon a powerful tug, pulling the four of them all into the Yulan Plane."

Linley and Bebe were completely stunned.

Wealth that was acquired through great danger. Linley could imagine the resolve which Beirut had felt back then! He had risked his life to move at high speed to do this!

"I was frightened as well. Those were Sovereigns! Success meant I would

also become a Sovereign! This was a rare chance. I risked everything!" Beirut began to grow very excited when discussing that scene. "I was also very lucky. Most likely, Augusta never imagined that someone would dare 'steal from the mouth of the tiger' like that. In addition, his focus was on the Azure Dragon. When he chased after and killed the Azure Dragon, he used a soul attack that sent the Azure Dragon flying. Before dying, the Azure Dragon was charging towards the Yulan Plane's direction to begin with. I just so happened to be able to take advantage and collect the corpses of all four of the divine beasts!"

Linley was completely unable to breathe.

He could imagine that astonishing, dangerous scene!

However, Beirut had a good chance of success; it must be understood that generally speaking, the tails of magical beasts all moved at astonishing fast speeds. As the 'Godeater Rat', a divine beast, the tail of Beirut's original body, especially when he was going all out…a wrap, and a tug! That was definitely something that could occur within the blink of an eye.

If Augusta reacted just a bit too slowly, he probably wouldn't be able to catch Beirut.

"So my ancestor, the Azure Dragon, truly was killed by a soul attack." Linley understood now why the Coiling Dragon ring had been damaged. If the Azure Dragon had been damaged and killed by Augusta's material attacks, the Coiling Dragon ring should have been perfect and undamaged.

"Haha…"

Beirut began to laugh loudly. "Augusta was completely stupefied. He didn't even react at first…but then, he finally went berserk with fury! After all, he had risked his own life as well to kill the Four Divine Beasts, but I took everything away instead. I, a Highgod, had stolen things from him, the Chief Sovereign of Light. I would have been shocked if he didn't go berserk!"

Linley could completely imagine that scene.

Most likely, even the Chief Sovereign of Light hadn't been completely confident in his ability to deal with the combined forces of the four ancestors. Only, he was lucky enough to be successful in blocking the combined, full force blow of the four ancestors, and so was then able to kill the four ancestors one by one.

"Four Sovereign sparks. That represented four Sovereigns!" Beirut laughed coldly. "There was no way Augusta would be able to enter a material plane, and so, all he could do was to send his planar projection clone into the Yulan Plane, wanting to kill me."

Linley secretly nodded.

A foreign Sovereign was unable to enter a material plane.

As for the four ancestors, there were already dead. Their corpses and Sovereign sparks were mere items and no longer living things; naturally, they could enter a material plane.

"Planar projection clone? That's fairly powerful as well, comparable to a Seven Star Fiend and even close to some Asuras." Beirut snickered. "Unfortunately, even before I was a Sovereign, my power was far beyond that of an ordinary Lord Prefect's. By relying on my godspark weapon, I smashed apart that planar projection clone!"

Linley laughed.

Given Beirut's power and his insights in the profound mysteries of the Laws, it would indeed be quite easy for him to defeat a planar projection clone.

"Since using force had failed, the Chief Sovereign of Light formed yet another planar projection clone. He threatened me and told me what the consequences would be if I didn't hand over the Sovereign sparks. But I couldn't be bothered to listen; I immediately fused with the wind-type

Sovereign spark on the spot!" Beirut said with a smile. "That Chief Sovereign of Light even invited Paragons to come act against me, but unfortunately, before the Paragons arrived, I had already become a Sovereign! Fusing a Sovereign spark happens in but an instant."

"It is that fast?" Linley called out in surprise.

"Fusing divine sparks takes a very long time." Bebe was surprised as well.

Beirut said with a laugh, "Why does it take so long to fuse with a divine spark? Because you are learning and gaining insights into the various profound mysteries. Naturally, this takes time. But Sovereign sparks contain no insights and no profound mysteries. Thus, they can be fused within a second."

"After risking my life, I had become a Sovereign, and also acquired three more Sovereign sparks." Beirut said with a sigh.

"Grandpa…you really are formidable." Bebe's eyes were filled with admiration.

Linley sighed in amazement as well. If he himself had seen that scene, would he have dared to 'steal food from the mouth of the tiger', to steal from the Chief Sovereign of Light? This truly required courage. However, it also required enough power! After all, ordinary Highgods were completely incapable of pulling in the corpses of the divine beasts from chaotic space.

"But of course, this also caused…the Chief Sovereign of Light to hate me to the core. He wanted to force me to hand over the other three divine sparks, but I paid him no heed." Beirut laughed calmly. "I could tell that the Chief Sovereign of Light had the sort of temper where he would definitely avenge any slight. Since I had already offended him, I might as well offend him to the end."

Linley nodded slightly as well.

"Not long afterwards, I intentionally spread the word that a Necropolis of

the Gods had been created, and that within it were the Sovereign artifacts the four divine beasts had left behind after dying! If one wanted to fight over them? They were to come to the Yulan Plane." Beirut laughed. "After a Sovereign dies, if someone was to take away the Sovereign artifacts that they left behind, there would be no other Sovereigns who would come to take them back."

Linley nodded slightly.

There were multiple ways to acquiring Sovereign artifacts. One was to accumulate enough military merits in a Planar War. Another was to become a Sovereign's Emissary and be gifted by the Sovereign. Still another was to acquire a relic Sovereign artifact of a deceased Sovereign. For example, this was where Linley's Coiling Dragon ring had come from.

Only, the chances of a Sovereign dying were simply too low.

In addition, generally speaking, only Sovereigns were able to kill other Sovereigns. They would collect those Sovereign artifacts and not let them just be taken away.

"Sovereign artifacts proved to be too enticing. After the news spread, quite a few people hastened to my Yulan Plane, such as some Seven Star Fiends of the Infernal Realm. Even a Twelve Wing Angel of the Divine Light Realm came, as well as powerful figures of the various planes. A major battle thus began here at the Yulan Plane." Beirut laughed. "But of course, everything was under my control."

Linley laughed.

Beirut had been a Sovereign by then. No matter how fiercely those Highgods had struggled, how could they escape Beirut's control?

"During that battle, I showed just a bit of my power and let my fame and reputation spread out. Immediately, some Sovereigns paid attention to me." Beirut laughed. "Originally, when I had seized the corpses of the Four Divine Beasts, Augusta didn't announce it to everyone. Thus, many

Sovereigns had no idea. After I became famous, some Sovereigns sent their planar projection clones to speak with me, and thus learned of this affair. And so…the Chief Sovereign of Destruction made a request of me."

"What was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction's request? Did he want the Sovereign sparks?" Bebe said.

"No. He requested the 'blood essence' that could be refined from the blood of the Four Divine Beasts. The source of a divine beast's power comes from their blood and lineage. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction probably wanted to develop something from the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts." Beirut sighed. "After all, in all of recorded history, only the Four Divine Beasts were able to fuse their innate divine abilities together."

"I gave half of the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts to the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, in turn, promised me that so long as my divine clone didn't go to the Divine Light Plane, he would guarantee that the Chief Sovereign of Light wouldn't dare to kill my divine clone." Beirut said.

Linley and the others now understood.

"So that's how it is. No wonder the Chief Sovereign of Light didn't dare to act against you in the Infernal Realm, Grandpa." Bebe said.

"Although he is powerful, he isn't a match for the Chief Sovereign of Destruction." Beirut laughed. "After all, the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts are simply too powerful. The Chief Sovereign of Life is a very friendly person, but his power is unfathomable. The Chief Sovereign of Death lives a life of leisure in the Abyssal Mountain, and has never fully revealed her power. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction's hiding abilities are quite deep; I have no idea if he developed anything from the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts or not. As for the Chief Sovereign of Fate, he never gets involved in worldly affairs and always remains within the Celestial Realm."

Linley sighed to himself. This exchange with the Chief Sovereign of

Destruction had been quite favorable for him.

All the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had to do was to go threaten the Chief Sovereign of Light, and thus he was able to acquire half of the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts.

It must be understood…that just by using a single drop of blood essence from the Azure Dragon, Linley's body was able to become incredibly powerful. One could imagine how much energy was contained within the blood essence of a divine beast.

"The blood essence of a divine beast is the essence of its power. I was quite curious regarding the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts, and so I ran a few tests as well. I tested placing a drop of blood essence in the body of an ordinary human to see what would happen. The results of the first experiments were that the humans were unable to endure it, and their bodies collapsed. They died. Afterwards, however, I grew experienced. I finally succeeded!"

Beirut began to laugh. "And so, the very first generation of the Four Supreme Warriors was born."

Linley was completely awestruck.

"The Four Supreme Warriors?" Linley looked at Beirut, stunned. "They were the results of your experiments?"

"Grandpa, you…" Bebe was completely stunned as well.

"What, is it very strange?" Beirut laughed calmly. "Actually, if I didn't interfere in the lives of Baruch, Armand, Hyde, and Prey, they would have become cannon fodder on the battlefield, and wouldn't have had any accomplishments. After my experiments, they became the Supreme Warriors and thus gained great fame in the continent."

Linley now understand. As Beirut had seen it, for a Sovereign to choose mortals for experiments, and especially experiments involving the blood

essence of the Four Divine Beasts…this was an honor for the mortals.

“No wonder the Four Supreme Warriors had suddenly appeared in the Yulan Plane. In addition, nobody was able to find out any reason behind this.” Linley sighed to himself.

“Strictly speaking, Baruch and the rest of the four should be considered of the same generation as ‘Gislason’ of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Beirut laughed. “To be honest, I still felt grateful towards the Four Divine Beasts. After all, it was because of them that I was able to become a Sovereign.”

“Thus, the divine clone that I sent to the Infernal Realm stayed at Indigo Prefecture! The Bloodridge Sovereign knew my true status, and so I asked him to help me by announcing to everyone else that I was his Emissary. This made it easier for me to show up and protect the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Beirut laughed. “If I was merely a Sovereign’s Emissary, how could I have gotten the Bloodridge Sovereign to appear with but a few words, then have him make the eight great clans retreat?”

Linley was sighing.

When Beirut had summoned the Bloodridge Sovereign, the Bloodridge Sovereign had appeared and rebuked the eight great clans, making them retreat. Linley had sighed in amazement back then about how much face Beirut had, to be able to do this! So in reality…it wasn’t that the Bloodridge Sovereign was giving his Emissary face. Rather, it was because Beirut himself was a Sovereign. Naturally, Sovereigns would give other Sovereigns face!

“I also had three Sovereign sparks. Naturally, I would have to choose three people to inherit it. However, I couldn’t just randomly choose them. I had to test them and to select them carefully…Bluefire thus became my first choice.” Beirut then sighed. “In reality, I wanted for Harry and my other two children to become Sovereigns. But the Sovereign sparks were only of earth, fire, and water, after all. Thus, they had to train to the Highgod level on their own in these three Laws in order to fuse the Sovereign sparks.”

“You have to become a Deity on your own in order to fuse with a Sovereign spark?” Linley said in surprise.

“Right. If you don’t rely on yourself and instead rely on fusing with a divine spark, then your foundation will be weak and unstable. Your divine spark and your soul will not be perfectly fused, and so it will be impossible for you to then fuse with a Sovereign spark.” Beirut shook his head. “Those children of mine were only talented in darkness and wind; I tried everything I could, but they still weren’t able to succeed in those three elements.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Afterwards, because Bebe appeared, and especially because of your rapid advancements, Linley, and how astonishingly fast you rose in power, I chose you as one of my potential candidates…” Beirut turned to look towards Linley.

Chapter 4 – Sovereign Linley

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 4, Sovereign Linley

“One of the candidates…”

So Beirut had been keeping an eye on all of his adventures through the Infernal Realm, and had been constantly evaluating him.

“Although I became a Sovereign, I, like any ordinary mortal, wish to be able to give the Sovereign sparks to those people who are close to me. My three children and Bebe…they clearly wouldn’t possibly have any accomplishments in earth, fire, and water. Because of Bebe, it was natural for me to entrust you with my hopes as well. But I also understood that amongst Sovereigns of the same rank, if there was too great a difference in one’s insights into the profound mysteries, that wouldn’t work either. Linley, back then, your comprehension of the profound mysteries of the Laws was simply at too low a level.” Beirut sighed. “After all, even the weakest of Sovereigns has fused five types of profound mysteries! I’m that sort, myself. But of course, the vast majority has fused just five profound mysteries!”

“The weakest have fused five?” Linley was a bit startled.

“Grandpa.” Bebe said, surprised, “You once said that many Sovereigns were amongst the very first batch of Highgods that rose shortly after the creation of the universe, who were lucky enough to seize a Sovereign spark. Their innate talent isn’t necessarily high; how could they have fused five profound mysteries?”

It must be understood that for many experts, fusing three or even four profound mysteries was their limit, and they wouldn’t be able to make any further breakthroughs.

“Haha…” Beirut began to laugh, then he looked mysteriously at Linley. “As

for why even the less talented Sovereigns are able to fuse five profound mysteries…after you become a Sovereign, you will understand."

"After I become a Sovereign?" Linley's heart trembled.

"Although after you become a Sovereign, your future accomplishments will be significant…" Beirut shook his head. "The stronger you are as a Deity, the better. Back then, you had only fused three profound mysteries. You only relied on the 'Soulstone' and the powerful body given to you by your Azure Dragon lineage to defeat Seven Star Fiends."

"The candidates that I considered generally had fused at least five profound mysteries." Beirut shook his head and said, "For example, Bluefire. He was the most powerful of them. He had even reached a final bottleneck, and was just one step away from becoming a Paragon."

Linley sighed in his heart.

Beirut had been keeping watch over a group of people. If he was being completely impartial, Linley wouldn't even be qualified to become a potential candidate.

"But of course, because of Bebe, I still hoped that you would become a Sovereign." Beirut laughed.

This was the nature of human relationships. Who wouldn't hope for the possibility of giving nice things to their closest family and friends?

"However, your improvement speed is indeed fast. Your trip through the Netherworld…made me evaluate you even more seriously." Beirut smiled. "In fact, I even asked Bluefire to have his original body and his divine earth clone follow you in secret that entire time, protecting you if necessary."

"Follow in secret?" Linley and Bebe looked at Bluefire in shock.

Bluefire had been tracking him, but they hadn't realized at all.

“Linley, I was quite surprised, because you actually were able to fuse a fourth profound mystery in the Planar Battlefield! You developed your new supreme technique, ‘Microcosm’.” Beirut laughed. “That technique of yours, especially when combined with the special way of using the Redbud Sovereign’s ‘Amethyst Space’, had already surpassed the techniques of most experts who had fused five types of profound mysteries.”

“In two thousand short years, you had fused four profound mysteries. This sort of speed, even across the entire universe, definitely qualified you as a genius.” Beirut laughed happily. “I was certain that if you continued to train like this, you would absolutely be able to fuse five profound mysteries.”

“And so, then and there, I decided that you would be the candidate to become the Sovereign of Earth.” Beirut said.

Linley let out a moved sigh.

“No wonder.” Bebe mumbled. “No wonder back then, Mr. Leylin appeared.”

“Right. My assignment, by that point, was essentially complete.” Bluefire laughed, and then he looked at Linley. “The Demigod who had received tutelage from me back at Mount Copper Gong had, in two thousand short years, had reached such heights, and was going to be, in the future, my comrade, the Sovereign of Earth. This truly was incredible. Who would have imagined…that shortly after I left, a major problem occurred. I was terrified as well. After all, my Sovereign clone couldn’t leave the Yulan Plane, while my original body wasn’t able to make it in time, even though I hurried back to save you. I was truly worried that you would be killed by Magnus, just like that.”

Beirut let out an emotional sigh as well. “Bluefire told me that you had suffered an attack from Magnus, and that you were a hair away from death. I was very worried as well. Worried that you would die.”

“But who would have imagined that this became your chance to transform!” Beirut’s eyes were shining. “You had four divine clones, yet were able to

successfully mutate your soul. This let you become a supreme expert who surpassed the Paragons! Haha…Linley, you, as a Soul Mutate, are even more qualified than Bluefire and myself!"

The more powerful a person was, the more powerful they would naturally become upon becoming a Sovereign!

"Linley, look…" Beirut waved his hand, and a black stone box appeared.

Linley immediately recognized that this black stone box was the box that had been removed from that giant sealing formation.

"You should have already guessed what is inside." Beirut smiled as he opened the box. He tossed aside the lid, and instantly, two auras of light shot out in every direction, and a heart-shaking aura drifted out from the light. Linley and Bebe couldn't help but stare raptly towards it.

Within the box was a pair of gems that appeared similar to divine sparks.

The gems seemed to be made of a semi-translucent gray glass. At first glance, it seemed like some sort of jewels. These two gems were emanating two different types of light; one was a deep, weighty, earthen yellow color. The other was a soft, slick azure-green color. In addition, the aura and majesty contained within them made even Linley and Bebe's hearts tremble.

"These are Sovereign sparks!" Linley was absolutely certain.

Beirut let out a very emotional sigh. "These two Sovereign sparks are the water-type Sovereign spark that came from the Azure Dragon's corpse, and the earth-type Sovereign spark that came from the Black Tortoise's corpse! I have already safeguarded these two Sovereign sparks for more than ten thousand years. I was worried that on one of my business trips outside of the Yulan Plane, I might be attacked and killed by the Chief Sovereign of Light. What, then, would happen to these Sovereign sparks? And so I decided that even if I died, I wouldn't let Augusta acquire them. Thus, I created that seal."

Linley secretly nodded.

A seal that only Sovereigns could break, and yet was kept in a material plane. The Chief Sovereign of Light truly did have no hope of opening it.

“Alas. How wonderful would it have been if we had a darkness-type Sovereign spark.” Bebe rubbed his jaw twice and mumbled.

Beirut laughed as he glanced at Bebe. “Do you think Sovereign sparks are so easily acquired? Alright, Linley. Let me tell you this. If you want to become a Sovereign, there is only one way, and one way alone; fuse with a Sovereign spark! Regarding Sovereign sparks…ever since the creation of the universe countless years ago, 77 Sovereign sparks naturally descended. Only by training to the Highgod level through your own power can you fuse a Sovereign spark.”

Linley nodded slightly.

Training to become a Sovereign was indeed something which pure effort could accomplish.

“The reason why Sovereigns are so powerful is because of their Sovereign spark. Highgod Paragons, and you, a Soul Mutate, have fused the power of your Will into your souls, yes?” Beirut laughed.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“Sovereigns are different. Virtually all of the power of their Will is in the Sovereign spark.” Beirut said. “When fusing a Sovereign spark, the boundless Will power held within the Sovereign spark will transform your soul. Because the souls of your other divine clones are part of you, they, too, will receive a partial transformation. But that’s secondary; compared to the Will within the Sovereign spark, the power of the Will of the souls of your clones will be less than ten thousandth!”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Lord Beirut.” Linley asked, puzzled. “There are Lesser, Intermediate, and High ranks amongst Sovereigns. If I become a Lesser Sovereign, but in the future acquire an Intermediate Sovereign spark of the same element, will I be able to fuse it?”

“No.” Beirut didn’t hesitate at all.

“If you become a Lesser Sovereign, you will be a Lesser Sovereign for your entire life.” Beirut said. “But of course…if you have two divine clones, you can separately fuse two different Sovereign sparks. This is possible. According to legend, the Chief Sovereign of Lightning has an additional Sovereign clone which is a Sovereign of Earth.

Linley was awestruck.

A single person, take two Sovereign positions?

“Haha, Linley, enough of the Chief Sovereign of Lightning. Even you will be in possession of two Sovereign bodies.” Beirut suddenly said.

“What!” Linley was completely shocked.

“Grandpa, what did you say?” Bebe cried out in shock. “You are going to let Boss…”

Beirut’s eyes were flashing, and he laughed as he spoke. “If Linley was just an ordinary Paragon, there is no way I would let him simultaneously fuse with two types of Sovereign sparks. However…he is a Soul Mutate. He can fuse divine power! I very much want to see how powerful Linley will be, once he is both a Sovereign of Earth and a Sovereign of Water!”

The nearby Bluefire seemed very excited as well. “Originally, Beirut was only planning to let you become a Sovereign of Earth. But then, your soul mutation was a success. Beirut’s plans were changed! He was prepared to let you have two Sovereign clones!”

“I never even dared imagine that one day, I would be able to openly walk out of the Yulan Plane. This was because I had no confidence in my ability to fight against Augusta.” Beirut’s eyes turned sharp. “However, Linley, your soul mutation gave me hope! Ever since the creation of the universe, there have only been so many Sovereigns. The conditions necessary for the creation of a Soul Mutate, however, are very harsh and strict. There has never been a Soul Mutate amongst the Sovereigns.”

“Although there are some who possess two Sovereign clones, because they are unable to fuse their powers, they naturally wouldn’t grow much stronger! But you, Linley, are different!”

Beirut stared at Linley. “You are a Soul Mutate. I very much want to know what level of power you will have, after becoming a Sovereign of two different elements!”

“In fact, I even believe that there is hope for you to be able to lead me out of the Yulan Plane, and for me to no longer fear the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta.” Beirut’s eyes were sharp.

It was precisely because he saw, on Linley, his hope for departing the Yulan Plane! This was why Beirut had been so excited and had lost his composure.

A Fusion Sovereign?

This was definitely unheard of.

“The heavens have treated me with great kindness. I had originally worried about Augusta being in possession of an Overgod artifact, but now, haha, you have an Overgod weapon as well.” Beirut was extremely excited. “Everything has gone perfectly. I can already sense, Linley, that you, a hitherto unseen Fusion Sovereign, definitely will not disappoint me!”

Linley couldn’t help but feel hot blood pumping through him.

Indeed…

Other Sovereigns with two Sovereign clones who were not Soul Mutates wouldn't be able to fuse their Sovereign power. Only Linley could. Only he was a true Fusion Sovereign.

"Linley, fuse them." Beirut tossed the stone box towards Linley.

Linley looked at the two glass-like Sovereign sparks within the stone box, then at Beirut, Bluefire, and Bebe. The three of them all had looks of hope in their eyes.

"Fusing the Sovereign sparks…" Although he felt his blood boiling in his veins, Linley forced himself to calm down. "I'll first fuse with a single spark, then the other one." Linley felt that it would be safer to advance step-by-step.

Drip!

A single drop of blood leaked out from Linley's finger, landing atop the surface of the earth-type Sovereign spark. Instantly, the earth-type Sovereign spark levitated into the air. A dense, earthen yellow aura shot out in every direction. Linley willed it, and instantly his body changed, with his divine earth clone emerging and the other three clones, along with his original body, remaining in his sea of consciousness.

His earthen yellow hair fluttered freely as he stared directly at the earth-type Sovereign spark.

"Rumble…"

The eighteenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods originally had an azure sky and an azure ground. But in this instant…

The universe seemed to instantly change. A terrifyingly dense surge of earthen yellow elemental essences suddenly filled this entire universe. A flood of earthen yellow water suddenly manifested around Linley and swirled around him. This flood of earthen yellow water was liquefied earth-

type Sovereign power, and that earth-type Sovereign spark was slowly sinking itself into Linley's forehead.

"A new Sovereign has been born." Beirut had a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips. Beirut felt very satisfied at having been able to bring about a new Sovereign. At the same time, he was a bit nervous. "A Fusion Sovereign which has never before appeared. What will this be like?"

Chapter 5 – Magic Compilation, Fusion Sovereign!

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 5, Magic Compilation, Fusion Sovereign!

The eighteenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. It seemed to have turned into a sea of earthen yellow elemental essences. As for Linley, he hovered there, eyes closed, an awesome presence emanating from his body. Beirut, Bluefire, and Bebe all watched unblinkingly from nearby.

Within Linley's sea of consciousness.

His original body, wind clone, fire clone, and water clone were seated in the meditative position on the surface of his sea of consciousness. The four bodies just so happened to form a square, and right above them hovered a swiveling, glass-like gemstone. A surge of invisible, untouchable 'Will' was circulating towards Linley's five souls.

The souls of his original body and his four clones were, in reality, one and the same.

At this moment, the soul of his divine earth clone was rapidly improving, while the souls of his original body and his other three divine clones were improving somewhat slower.

"Indeed, it is as Lord Beirut had said. The Will of a Sovereign is virtually inexhaustible, but completely focused within the Sovereign spark. Their actual souls contain very little Will." Linley could sense that although the amount of Will within his five souls had increased somewhat, there was a limit to it.

The soul of his divine earth clone, after having transformed into a Sovereign, had only gained an increase in Will that was comparable to the Will which a Highgod Paragon possessed.

As for his original body and his three other clones, they only gained roughly 80% of the Will which a Highgod Paragon was in possession of.

“No wonder. So this is why even if a Sovereign were to send his clone to enter a material plane, he still wouldn’t be able to kill a Highgod Paragon.” Linley sighed to himself, then mused, “However, even before becoming a Sovereign, my Will had already surpassed that of a Paragon! Now, I’ve only grown stronger!” Right at this moment…

An awe-inspiring flood of gold suddenly entered his mind. This formless golden flood merged into his sea of consciousness and sank into his soul.

“This…”

Linley felt as though he suddenly became tens of times more clear-minded, and that his soul’s analytical abilities were increasing dramatically.

“This is…the energy of faith!” Linley was completely stunned.

Actually, Linley had always been absorbing faith energy, but that bit of faith energy which he received from the Yulan Plane, to the current Linley, was nothing at all. Still, even that bit of faith energy had allowed Linley’s training speed to increase by quite a bit.

Currently, however, it was as though a flood of faith energy had entered his sea of consciousness. The amount he received every instant was comparable to all the faith energy he had built up over the past few thousand years.

The eighteenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. The flood of earthen yellow elemental essences had disappeared. The world once again returned to an azure color.

Linley opened his eyes, staring at Beirut and Bluefire in shock. “Lord Beirut, this faith energy…”

“You are a Sovereign, now. You are no longer weaker than me. There is no need to address me as Lord Beirut. You can just address me as Beirut!”

Beirut just laughed.

Linley felt gratitude towards Beirut. It was Beirut who had given him the Sovereign spark; in fact, had given him two! In addition, for thousands of years, he had constantly been taking care of Linley. Linley couldn't forget any of this. "Lord Beirut, if we didn't know each other, naturally we would use our comparative power to determine our comparative status. But Lord Beirut, even I myself have no idea as to how I should repay the kindness you have shown me…"

After his soul mutation, Linley had become as powerful as a Highgod Paragon.

If they were to determine status through comparing power levels, given that Linley didn't know that Beirut was a Sovereign, logically speaking, Linley should've already started to address him as 'Beirut'. Linley, however, had not.

In Linley's heart…

Beirut was like a patient, helpful elder relative who had always taken care of him.

"Haha, since you say that, then I'll thicken my face for once and ask both you and Bebe to address me as Grandpa Beirut. What say you?" Beirut chortled. When he had discovered Bebe's existence, Beirut had begun to pay attention to Linley as well. Beirut had always been watching Linley, ever since he was a youth.

Unconsciously, the care he felt towards Bebe had naturally been partially transferred to Linley as well.

"Grandpa Beirut." Linley said hurriedly.

"Haha…" Hearing this, Beirut was absolutely delighted. Right now, Beirut's mindset had somewhat changed. Previously, Bebe's existence made it so that between Linley and Beirut, there existed a relationship that was

akin to that of an elder and a junior. This relationship was a bit of a vague one, however, and had never been formalized.

Although one of the reasons why Beirut had chosen Linley was because Linley's power had qualitatively risen greatly, it was also because he wanted to borrow Linley's strength to fight back against the Chief Sovereign of Light.

But in this instant…

When Linley also began to address Beirut as 'Grandpa', Beirut naturally began to feel differently. He understood…that Linley's power was going to vastly outstrip his. For him to have helped raise such a supreme expert, and one who was a junior in his own family…naturally, Beirut felt very gratified.

"Excellent, excellent." Beirut laughed. "Just now, you were speaking of faith energy…"

"Right. As soon as I became a Sovereign, I could sense a terrifyingly dense stream of faith energy flood into my sea of consciousness. What is this all about?" Linley was stunned.

The nearby Bluefire laughed. "Linley, prior to this, weren't you asking about why all Sovereigns have fused at least five types of profound mysteries?"

"It's true that not all Sovereigns are innately gifted. For them to all have fused five profound mysteries or more is indeed inconceivable." Linley suddenly came to his senses. "Are you saying…that this is because of faith energy?" Linley recollected the purpose of faith energy; it allows experts to be able to gain insights faster and train faster.

But of course, there was a limit to how much faith energy could help.

If there wasn't, there wouldn't be so few Sovereign Paragons.

“How could there be so much faith energy? Terrifyingly much…” Linley said hurriedly.

Beirut explained, “Linley, there are countless material planes. Some worship churches of light, others of darkness, others of earth, others of lightning, others of Destruction…there are all sorts of temples that have been built across the countless planes. The amount of faith energy they draw in is terrifyingly great.”

“Let me give an example. In the countless planes of the universe, how many living creatures worship light? The number is incalculable. All of that faith energy will build up, and 99% of it will be acquired by the seven Sovereigns of Light! The faith energy they receive every single instant is a terrifying amount.” Beirut laughed. “Precisely because they are infused with so much faith energy, Sovereigns train much faster and gain insights much more easily. This is why every single Sovereign has fused at least five profound mysteries.”

“So that’s the situation.” Bebe mumbled. “That’s cheating.”

“If it weren’t for that, why would the Sovereigns have made it so that their churches would be founded throughout the planes of the universe? Why would they have to compile all sorts of types of magic?” Beirut laughed.

“Compile magic?” Linley was startled.

“What, is it very odd?” Beirut laughed calmly. “Linley, think about it. What are magical incantations comparable to?”

In executing a magic spell, one had to use spiritual energy to support the magical incantation needed to use one’s own mageforce to activate the elemental essence of the world and form a magic spell. Some powerful magi could even use their powerful souls to instacast spells without needing to rely on magical incantations! For example, a magus of the eighth rank could use incantations to cast spells of the eighth rank, but if he wanted to instacast, he would only be able to instacast lower rank spells.

“Magical incantations lower the requirements for casting magical spells! A magus who relies solely on his own power is only able to cast lower level spells. But by relying on magical incantations, he is able to unleash far more powerful magic!” Linley instantly understood. “By relying on magical incantations, one’s attack power will immediately increase greatly. This is much like how the profound mysteries of the Laws can increase one’s attack power!”

“Right.” Beirut smiled. “Magical incantations are the simplified versions of the profound mysteries of the Laws. Although they aren’t as powerful as the Laws, they are still very useful.”

“Right, right.” Linley suddenly understood it all. “Haha…for example, the wind-type forbidden level spell, ‘Dimensional Edge’. It’s simply a basic version of the ‘Dimensional Attack’ profound mystery of the Laws of the Wind. And the ninth rank spell of the wind, ‘Void Extermination’. This is a simplified way of applying the ‘Spatial Wind’ of the Laws of the Wind!”

The nearby Bebe, hearing this, nodded and said in delight, “Right. The ‘Supergravity Field’ of earth magic is just a simple version of ‘Gravitational Space’. And many ordinary earth-type magic spells are based on the Profound Mysteries of the Essence of the Earth.”

When they did a serious comparison, Linley and Bebe now completely realized that many magic spells were simplified, basic versions of the profound mysteries of the Laws!

Although magi didn’t know a single thing about the profound mysteries, by rote memory and repetition, they could memorize magic incantations and thus unleash powerful magic! As they understood more about the profound mysteries, they would constantly rise in power, to the point where magi would naturally give up the incantations and embark on the true, great path of analyzing the profound mysteries directly!

“Magical incantations actually are a simple, superficial way of applying the power of the profound mysteries of the Laws.” Linley sighed in praise. “One needs to have an extremely deep level of insight into the nature of

elemental essences and the profound mysteries of the Laws in order to develop magical incantations. If I had to develop new spells, it would probably take me very long as well."

The principle behind magical incantations was actually a type of auto-hypnosis; one would adjust one's spiritual energy to better fuse with the elemental essences. But developing new incantations? That was extremely difficult.

Beirut laughed. "For the sake of making sure that their supply of faith energy would continue, it only makes sense that the Sovereigns would spend vast amounts of time developing magic spells."

"However, the Sovereigns are now virtually all at their limit. And so, their control over the material planes has lessened." Beirut laughed calmly. "Naturally, some of the material planes have produced a few churches that solely worship a single figure, who receives all of their faith energy for personal use. This is what is known as 'heresy', which absolutely must be exterminated. The Sovereigns would even go so far as to send their planar projection clones to go eradicate any traces of heresy. However, the Sovereigns are now paying less attention to heretics. It isn't like before, where they would annihilate all heretical churches."

Linley nodded slightly.

The population of the Yulan Plane was tiny; compared to the Okerlund Plane, which had a population of eight quadrillion, how much faith energy could it provide? The amount of planes the universe held, all added up, came to a terrifying figure.

"If…for example, the humans of the Okerlund Plane worship the 'Radiant Goddess'. Where does the faith energy go to?" Linley asked.

"The Radiant Goddess?" Beirut laughed. "If there isn't a clear figure of worship, and just a vague 'Radiant Goddess', more than 99% of the faith energy will be taken by the seven Sovereigns of Light. Only a very small amount will be acquired by the light-type Deities of the Okerlund Plane."

Linley sighed to himself. Sovereigns truly were dominating.

However, this wasn't determined by the Sovereigns; it was part of the Edicts of the world.

"No wonder Sovereigns are so powerful. With so much faith energy, my own training speed will increase explosively as well." Linley mused to himself. And then, he looked towards the second Sovereign spark in the stone box…the water-type Sovereign spark!

Drip!

A drop of fresh blood fell atop the water-type Sovereign spark and was absorbed by the 'jewel'. A dazzling azure-green aura suddenly sprang up.

"Rumble…" The world once more became filled with a thick amount of elemental essences, this time of water. The liquefied water-type Sovereign power flooded towards and swirled around Linley, beginning to enter his body. Just like before, Linley's five souls once more began to increase in power!

Bluefire and Beirut exchanged glances.

"Beirut, what level will Linley reach?" Bluefire asked.

"Uncertain." Beirut said solemnly. "But I know that upon fusing two Sovereign sparks, the power of one's Will in the soul will be quite a bit greater than the rest of us normal Sovereigns have. In addition, he himself is a four-way Soul Mutate to begin with, and already possesses the power of Will. Even if we don't consider other things, the power of his Will should already be comparable to an Intermediate Sovereign's."

The nearby Bebe said hurriedly, "And his fused Sovereign power."

"Right. There has never before been a fusion of two different types of Sovereign power. And his power has still more room to grow." Beirut

smiled and nodded. “Fused Sovereign power should be even more powerful than a normal Intermediate Sovereign’s power. Paired with an Overgod artifact…”

“Paired with an Overgod artifact, he should be comparable to those Chief Sovereigns who do not have an Overgod artifact.” Bluefire said, rather excited.

“Right. But of course…it’s hard to say if something special would happen for a Fusion Sovereign.” Beirut said.

And right at this moment, the levitating Linley opened his eyes.

Chapter 6 – Entrusted

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 6, Entrusted

The eighteenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods. It had grown calm again. Linley's eyes were now open.

Seeing that Linley had fused with the Sovereign sparks, Beirut, Bluefire, and Bebe couldn't help but have their faces covered by smiles.

"Linley, how do you feel?" Beirut asked, rather nervous.

Beirut had never felt so nervous, not once in all these years! But right now…he was truly nervous! What if Linley, after fusing two Sovereign sparks, wasn't as powerful as he had imagined? This would affect whether or not he, Beirut, would be able to openly depart the Yulan Plane in the future. If he would be able to go roam about the Higher Planes and the Divine Planes!

"I feel…" A hint of a smile was on Linley's face. "Not bad at all!"

"Not bad at all?" Beirut, Bluefire, and Bebe all stared at Linley, puzzlement on their faces. What level of power did Linley's 'not bad at all' represent?

"Boss, are you as powerful as a Chief Sovereign yet?" Bebe suddenly asked.

"Uh…?" Linley hesitated slightly.

"Grnadpa Beirut, do you know how great a difference in power there is between Lesser Sovereigns, Intermediate Sovereigns, and High Sovereigns?" Linley asked. Without a clear understanding as to how powerful each level was, Linley was unable to give an accurate accounting of his own power.

Beirut hurriedly explained, “Linley, there is a great difference in power between Sovereigns of different levels! For example, a Lesser Sovereign Paragon, compared to an Intermediate Sovereign who had fused five profound mysteries, is slightly weaker. But they will be fairly close! A similar example; an Intermediate Sovereign Paragon will have power that is fairly close to a Chief Sovereign who has fused five profound mysteries. But of course, he would still be slightly weaker. This is without taking weapons and innate divine abilities into account.”

“I understand now!” Linley nodded slightly.

Lesser Sovereign Paragons were comparable to Intermediate Sovereigns with five profound mysteries.

In terms of profound mysteries, Lesser Sovereign Paragons were more than ten times as powerful as Intermediate Sovereigns. But despite that, they still weren’t superior to Intermediate Sovereigns. This represented that the increase in the power of Will was more than tenfold!

In addition, as far as Will went, Lesser Sovereign Paragons didn’t just possess the power of Sovereign’s Will; they also possessed the portion of Will which the universe had bestowed upon them when they had become Paragons. Despite that, however…the power of their Will was still more than ten times weaker than the Will of an Intermediate Sovereign!

Then…

A normal Lesser Sovereign, compared to an Intermediate Sovereign, should only have a hundredth the amount of Will within his Sovereign spark.

“Logically speaking,” Beirut laughed, “Linley since you already had the power of Will from your four-way soul mutation, and have now fused two Sovereign sparks, the power of your Will should be on a higher level. You should now have a Will which is comparable to an Intermediate Sovereign’s.”

Bluefire looked at Linley, puzzled. “Linley, you are a Soul Mutate. After

fusing the two Sovereign sparks, is the Will within them able to join together as well?"

"No." Linley shook his head. "The power of a Sovereign's Will is almost all within the spark. How can they possibly fuse?"

"Grandpa Beirut's guess is accurate." Linley nodded. "After fusing this water-type Sovereign spark, my five souls gained in Will yet again! According to my calculations, simply in terms of Will alone, I should be comparable to an Intermediate Sovereign."

"But you also have fused Sovereign power." Beirut laughed.

"Right. The two types of Sovereign power can indeed fuse."

Linley sensed that greenish-gray Sovereign power flooding torrentially through his body. He nodded. "This fused Sovereign power, in terms of strength, should be ten times more powerful than ordinary Sovereign power! Now, in terms of Will and Sovereign power, I should be comparable to Intermediate Sovereigns!"

If it had been someone else, even though he might have two Sovereign clones, that just meant he had an additional Sovereign body, and that each soul would have an additional, separate boost in Will.

But Linley didn't just receive an additional boost in Will; more importantly, his Sovereign power could be fused!

"And you have an Overgod artifact!" Bluefire smiled. "With an Overgod artifact, you should be comparable to the six ordinary Chief Sovereigns!"

Linley knew which six individuals Bluefire was referring to; of the eleven Chief Sovereigns, only five had Overgod artifacts.

The eighteenth floor of the Necropolis of the Gods.

"Whooosh."

A gentle wind blew. Beirut, in an excellent mood, waved his sleeve. Instantly, with a ‘creaaaaak’, the many bluestone tiles began to move, and the platform which held the corpse of the Azure Dragon once more sank down. At the same time, a table and four stone seats appeared on the bluestone floor as well.

“Everyone, let’s sit down and chat.” Beirut chortled as he led everyone to be seated. At the same time, he withdrew some fine wine and food from his interspatial ring. “Ten thousand years. I’ve never been so happy as I am today. Haha, I never even imagined…that the one who would lead me to escape from my predicament would be that kid from the Fenlai Kingdom. In the blink of an eye, that magus institute student would become someone comparable to a Chief Sovereign.”

“I’m amazing, right?” Bebe said smugly. “I immediately recognized how great the Boss was and followed him.”

“Immediately recognized?” Linley said with a smirk. “Back then, I baited you. I lured you in with roasted hare meat and roasted chickens…”

Bebe was astonished.

“Haha…” Bluefire, seeing the look on Bebe’s face, couldn’t help but laugh as he drank his wine.

“Come, Linley. Cheers. In the future, whether or not Bluefire and I will be able to fearlessly depart the Yulan Plane will all be up to you.” Beirut laughed.

Linley hosted his cup as well. “Don’t worry, Grandpa Beirut. However, it is only proper for me to do these things. It was you who gave me these two Sovereign sparks. In the end, you are the one extricating yourself from your difficulties. I need to thank you.” Linley said with sincerity.

Beirut laughed, then shook his head. “Haha, you are too modest. I was going to have to find Sovereign candidates anyhow!”

“And where else could I possibly find a candidate like an expert who is a four-way Soul Mutate? This had nothing to do with me; it was all you. Originally, Bluefire and I continuously paid attention to you. When the Soulstone that was keeping you alive was used up, we originally thought that you wouldn’t be able to survive for much longer. Who would have thought that you descended from the precipice of danger and managed to return? You survived your journey to the borders of death.” Beirut sighed in praise.

Linley didn’t quibble any further. He just happily laughed with the people around him.

“However, my comprehension of the profound mysteries of the Laws is still too low.” Linley said with a frown.

In terms of the profound mysteries, Linley had still only fused four of them. The other Sovereigns had fused at least five.

“Don’t be impatient.” The nearby Bluefire laughed calmly. “Linley, given your level of innate talent and the fact that you fused four profound mysteries in just a few thousand years, and with that boundless amount of faith energy, I imagine that in a short period of time, you will reach an extremely high level of insight. However, Linley, let me warn you of something; I recommend that you develop towards material attacks.”

“Why do you say that…?” Linley was somewhat surprised.

“Your body is very strong.” Bluefire sighed. “I’ve heard from Beirut that your body is now comparable to a Sovereign artifact! You must understand that even amongst Sovereigns, the number who are at this level can be counted on one hand.”

“Oh?” Linley was rather surprised. “Is it very hard for Sovereigns to strengthen their bodies? Based on what I know, the ancestor of our Azure Dragon clan, the ‘Azure Dragon’, had a body that was as strong as a Sovereign artifact.”

Bluefire snickered. “The Azure Dragon? Do you think that ordinary Sovereigns can be compared to the Four Divine Beasts, those freaks of nature?”

Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

The Four Divine Beasts…were ‘freaks of nature’?

But Bluefire’s words weren’t wrong either; not only did all four of the Four Divine Beasts possess excessively powerful innate divine abilities, they were even able to fuse their four innate divine abilities into one. This was simply too monstrous.

“Linley, look at me. I’m a Sovereign as well. However, I’m only able to use my Sovereign power to manifest my body; I’m not able to further strengthen it.” Bluefire shook his head. “For my true body to be as strong as a Sovereign artifact? That’s something incredible that you have to be born with. For example, the Four Divine Beasts, Beirut, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, or the Chief Sovereign of Death. That is true for all of them.”

The nearby Bebe called out in surprise, “The Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction aren’t humans?”

“They aren’t humans.” Beirut nodded. “The Chief Sovereign of Death was supposedly the very first living creature which was created when the Netherworld was born. When the Netherworld was first created, the Netherworld continent didn’t have any living creatures within it. Deep within the vast, endless, boundless Nether Sea, the very first living creature was given life…a type of plant! That is the true form of the Chief Sovereign of Death.”

“Plant? What type of plant?” Linley was a bit curious.

“That’s not very clear.” Beirut shook his head. “Nobody has ever been able to force the Chief Sovereign of Death to show her true form. Supposedly, the ‘Abyssal Fruit Tree’ that lives in the Abyssal Mountain was once the

fruit tree partner of the Chief Sovereign of Death.

“Oh?” Linley suddenly understood.

Linley suddenly thought back to the diagrams that had appeared on the robes of the Chief Sovereign of Death. Those tendrils and vines, and that coiling silver serpent. “The Abyssal Fruit Tree and the Chief Sovereign of Death are both plants! As for that pair of giant gold and silver snakes, they should have been two creatures that lived atop those two plants.”

“There is a limit to how much Sovereign power can strengthen one’s body.” Bluefire laughed calmly.

“My fused Sovereign power is unable to further strengthen my body either.” Linley said with a frown.

When he had first fused four types of Highgod power and created his fused divine power, he was able to dramatically strengthen his body and also strength his divine artifacts and godspark weapons! But the power of his fused Sovereign power, in terms of strengthening effectiveness, was inferior to his four-way fused divine power.

It must be understood that the power of his four-way fused divine power was more than ten times greater than ordinary Sovereign power.

As for Linley’s fused Sovereign power, it was also more than ten times greater than ordinary Sovereign power. Compared to his earlier four-way fusion of divine power, there wasn’t much of an increase! Although in terms of attack power, there was almost no different, in terms of having special effects, it was inferior to his fused divine power.

“It seems finding a balance is important. The energy of my four bodies is now unbalanced.” Linley could guess at the reason why.

“Linley, your body is as strong as Beirut’s and the Four Divine Beasts. You have to make use of it.” Bluefire said solemnly. “If you develop your material attacks, then even at your current level, you will be able to

compete against ordinary Chief Sovereigns."

"However…I'm still not a match for the Chief Sovereign of Light." Linley shook his head.

The Chief Sovereign of Light had an Overgod artifact as well!

"Let's not be impatient. Let's take everything slowly." Beirut laughed calmly. "You are a Soul Mutate. Once you successfully fuse four types of profound mysteries from different Laws, the power will be ten times greater than when you fuse six types of profound mysteries of the same Law. By then, you will definitely surpass the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta.

Linley's potential, in terms of the Laws, was far higher than that of an ordinary Sovereign.

The moonlight was like water, flowing across the boundless earth.

Within Dragonblood Castle.

Linley and Delia were lying against each other in bed. This was the third night after Linley had become a Sovereign. The previous day, Linley had returned to Dragonblood Castle and had described everything to Delia. Delia had been stunned. She had never imagined…that Linley could reach such a level.

Just by relying on his Overgod weapon, Linley was now already comparable to a Chief Sovereign.

If he was able to gain greater insights into the profound mysteries, he even had a chance at surpassing the Chief Sovereign of Light.

"Linley, you've become a Sovereign. I feel like I am in a dream." Delia rested against Linley's chest and spoke softly, her gaze passing through the window and staring towards the outside.

"Sovereign…unfortunately, I wasn't able to bring Grandpa Doehring back

to life." Linley sighed to himself.

Delia turned her head to look towards Linley, smiling encouragingly. "If Grandpa Doehring was alive, he would be very happy for you. In addition…life, death, age, infirmity…Grandpa Doehring lived a very long life. Don't be too sad."

"Forget it. Enough of this subject." Linley shook his head.

"Everything is wonderful now." Delia smiled. "There will no longer be any more storms of blood. You won't even leave the Yulan Plane. Let's just live a peaceful life. We'll watch the sun rise, then watch the sun set…for a thousand, for ten thousand years!"

Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but gently pull Delia into his arms.

Linley knew that his future life would indeed be very peaceful.

But of course, even during peaceful times, Linley still needed to train. As time flowed on, his power would continue to grow, to the point where he would catch up to the Chief Sovereign of Light!

"The Chief Sovereign of Light…I must defeat him and even kill him!" Linley said to himself silently.

After all, his mother's freedom was still under the domination of the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Chapter 7 – Dragonblood Continent

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 7, Dragonblood Continent

Within the Yulan Plane, there was no one whatsoever who could kill Linley. No longer under any pressure, his life naturally was quite carefree.

More than three hundred years quietly passed in this peaceful manner. Three hundred-plus years was an extremely long period of time for mortals. During this period of time, countless mortals had died, and countless more had been born.

Dragonblood Castle, however, stood virtually unchanged.

In the world of Deities, the passage of a thousand years was naught but a twinkling.

“Linley, your mood seems to be excellent today.” Delia was taking a walk with Linley through their rear flower gardens.

“Today, I made a slight breakthrough in my training.” Linley smiled.

“Oh? You fused three types of profound mysteries from different Laws?” Delia said in surprised delight.

“No, not that quickly.” Linley shook his head and laughed. “The Throbbing Pulse of the World, Circular Softness, Dimensional Attack; although I’ve trained to the last part of fusing these three, I’ve reached a bottleneck. This final bottleneck will be very hard to break through.”

The more profound mysteries were involved in a bottleneck, the harder it would be to break through.

For example, the bottleneck for fusing six profound mysteries. How many experts had become stuck there, unable to become Paragons?

“Then what sort of breakthrough do you mean?” Delia said, puzzled.

“It was in the Profound Mysteries of ‘Explosion’, of the Laws of Fire. ‘Explosion’ is very hard to fuse, but today, I managed to fuse it with the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’.” Linley said with a calm laugh. “However, I must say, I trained much more slowly during the past three hundred years than I had thought I would.” After all, after becoming a Sovereign, he had an ocean of faith energy to support him.

His visualization and comprehension speed was definitely far faster than in the past.

These past three hundred years were probably comparable to nearly ten thousand years, pre-Sovereign.

“No rush. Your time is unlimited.” Delia said with a calm laugh.

“You are in no rush, but what about Grandpa Beirut and Bluefire?” Linley suddenly stared into a gate of the rear flower garden. He saw a short haired youth laugh while walking over. This youth seemed 60%-70% similar to Linley in terms of looks; it was Linley’s son, Wade.

“Father. Mother.” Wade laughed. “Today is a day of a grand celebration for our Dragonblood continent. Aren’t you going to go?”

“Dragonblood continent?” Linley was startled, but then he laughed and said self-mockingly, “I forgot that today is the day of the Dragonblood Festival.” Shortly after Linley became a Sovereign, he had a conversation with Beirut and Bluefire. When they just so happened to discuss the ‘Yulan continent’ and the ‘Bluefire continent’, Linley, in a fit of excitement, created a continent of his own; the Dragonblood continent.

These three large continents formed a perfect triangle.

Back then, Linley had even exerted his Sovereign power and made it so that the small islands around the Yulan continent and the Bluefire continent

were all moved within the Dragonblood continent. The population of the denizens of the islands, all combined, was close to ten million. In addition, Linley also moved many magical beasts and other living creatures over.

During these three hundred years, because of the vastness of the continent, and because the magical beasts had been released by Linley into the western part of the Dragonblood continent, the humans here faced no natural enemies.

In three hundred short years, the human population thus exploded from ten million to over a hundred million. But of course, during these three centuries of development, the Baruch Empire had provided a great amount of assistance, such as through the sea trade between the two continents. Although it was described as 'trade', in reality, they were providing assistance.

The people who had been moved over to the Dragonblood continent had decided upon September 24th as the day of the 'Dragonblood Festival'

"Linley, the citizens of the Dragonblood continent all worship you. They treat you as a true divinity. Can it be that you aren't even going to go take a look at their Dragonblood Festival?" Delia laughed with pursed lips. "Although the population is just over a hundred million, which isn't that much, the size of the Dragonblood continent is somewhat larger than the other two continents. This sort of nonstop rate of growth will make it so that in a few thousand years, the population here will surpass that of the Bluefire continent."

"Father, quite a few people in our clan are going over." Wade laughed as well.

"Fine, we'll take a look."

The Yulan continent. The Bluefire continent. The Dragonblood continent. The distance between these three continents, to ordinary mortals, was fairly significant. But to Deities, or even to Saints, they were fairly close. There was only a distance of roughly five thousand kilometers of ocean between

each of the three continents. Linley and Delia, in the blink of an eye, left the Yulan continent and arrived at the Dragonblood continent.

The number one city of the Dragonblood continent: Baruch City. This city shared the same name as the imperial capital of the Baruch Empire. This city was close to the eastern sealine of the Dragonblood continent, and was also the closest city to the Yulan continent.

Because it bordered the sea, it developed very quickly.

This number one city had flourished, developing into an extremely large city with millions of citizens. Today was the Dragonblood Festival, and so Baruch City was extremely lively. Large numbers of countryside dwellers had also flocked to the cities, wanting to partake in the festivities. It wasn't just the plazas in front of the temples; even the streets of the city were filled with oceans of people.

Linley, dressed in an azure robe, and Delia, dressed in a white robe. They were walking through the crowded streets. Although the streets were crowded, nobody touched Linley and Delia; in fact, nobody even noticed this odd occurrence.

"This place is becoming more and more crowded. There weren't this many shops the last time I came." Linley laughed calmly.

"Last time you came was more than two years ago." Delia said.

"Two years? That was just a short while ago." Linley's current mentality had already begun to change.

"Right. When are you going to make your own divine plane?" Delia asked, puzzled. "Last time, Grandpa Beirut said that the process of creating a divine plane involves joining your soul with the plane that you are creating. You will gain a clear sense of the Laws, which will be beneficial to you increasing your power. Aren't you at a bottleneck, right now? Why not try it?"

Every single Sovereign had the power to create their own divine planes.

Upon doing soon, they would also gain insight into a portion of the Laws.

For example, a water-type Sovereign who created a divine plane would end up creating a water-type divine plane! During the creation process, they would gain insights into some of the Laws of Water that were involved in the creation of this plane. Creating the plane once, or creating it a hundred times, would involve the exact same portion of the Laws; there would be no differences. In addition, creating a divine plane exhausted a great deal of spiritual energy, Sovereign power, and time.

Thus, generally speaking, Sovereigns would only create a single plane.

“The creation of a divine plane isn’t something which can be completed in just a year or two. Based on Grandpa Beirut’s experience, it will require nearly two thousand years.” Linley said with a sigh.

A plane was simply too vast.

Even Sovereigns would need to spend significant amounts of time creating one.

Beirut had created one, but Bluefire had not. This was because Bluefire had already become a Paragon. He had a thorough understanding of the profound mysteries of the Laws of Fire; even if he created a divine plane, he wouldn’t benefit much.

“A thousand years is, indeed, quite long.” Delia nodded. “When, then, do you plan to go create your divine plane?”

“Soon, after making some preparations.” Linley said with a laugh. “Like Grandpa Beirut, I will create a plane next to the Yulan Plane.”

While chatting, Linley and Delia reached the wide plaza of the main temple of Baruch City. The plaza before the main temple had a circumference of tens of thousands of meters, and it was currently filled with a thronging

horde of people who stood there. Right in front of the plaza was the Holy Emperor of the Dragonblood continent, who was preaching.

“In the name of the almighty true divinity, ‘Linley’…”

A sonorous voice echoed in the air above the temple, and instantly, everyone in the plaza before the tunnel fell silent. Countless worshipful eyes stared ardently towards the Holy Emperor.

“The charismatic power of a religious sect truly is astonishing.” Linley himself truly did not know whether to laugh or to cry.

Previously, he had created the Dragonblood continent and moved so many little islands over. Afterwards, he had allowed the descendants of his Baruch clan to take responsibility for everything else. This so-called church and what not? It had all been developed by the descendants of the Baruch clan. However…Linley was indeed qualified to be worshipped like this.

After all, Linley was already comparable to a Chief Sovereign.

In addition, it was extremely easy to spread his religion, because something like the creation of a continent, in the eyes of mortals, was completely inconceivable. It was an almighty miracle, in fact, and it was countless times more formidable than the ‘Angelic Descent’ miracles that the former Radiant Church had been capable of.

“Linley, the Dragonblood Festival is about to reach its most fevered state.” Delia laughed.

“Just like before! During each Dragonblood Festival, here in the Dragonblood continent, we will select a hundred elites to be sent to the Yulan continent. These hundred elites will join the earlier elites and be trained, with some being weeded out. Those who fulfill the qualifications will be permitted to join the Divine Guard of the Holy Land, ‘Dragonblood Castle’!” An armored, bearded man who stood by the side of the Holy Emperor spoke out in a clear voice. “Now, let the selection tournament begin!”

Seeing this, Linley couldn't help but laugh awkwardly.

"It was Taylor who came up with this thing." Delia laughed as well.

Dragonblood Castle was where Linley lived. That place had many Highgods, Gods, and Demigods; it was definitely the place in the Yulan continent with the most Deities. Even the guards of Dragonblood Castle had become known as the Divine Guard. If you wanted to join the Divine Guard, you would have to participate in the frenzied competitions. After all, if one had the chance to interact with Deities, one might easily be greatly benefited or be given tutelage.

Occasionally, a divine artifact, a divine spark, or a Golden Soul-Pearl would be released from Dragonblood Castle.

Dragonblood Castle was definitely a place which was far more attractive than any institute.

"The selection process for the Divine Guard is far more strict than the student selection process of the former Ernst Institute." Linley let out a sigh. "Back then, we were sent to the Institute in batches of a hundred. Although this selection process also results in a hundred candidates, it requires everyone to gather in the Yulan continent and spend tens of years in the training and elimination process…"

It must be understood that the members of the Divine Guard of Dragonblood Castle would only be changed once every century. Candidates, however, were selected every year. Countless people would go berserk for this chance.

"Actually, there is no need to change the Divine Guard at all." Delia said with a sigh. "All members of the Divine Guard are experts of the ninth rank, with lifespans of nearly five centuries. They can absolutely stay in the Guard for two or three centuries."

"Joining the Divine Guard is, after all, the fastest way to become a Saint."

Linley said with a calm laugh. “That group of people living within Dragonblood Castle is completely made up of Deities. Although quite a few became Deities through using divine sparks, given the understanding they have regarding the profound mysteries, if they can provide just a bit of guidance, those members of the Divine Guard might become Saints.”

“Eh?” Linley lifted an eyebrow.

“What is it?” Delia asked, puzzled.

“Someone came to the Yulan Plane.” Linley laughed. “One of ours.”

In the distant north of the Yulan Plane. The Arctic Icecap. The teleportation array at the top of that mountain of ice.

A blurry light was glowing, and four figures slowly emerged.

“Greetings to the four of you, milords.” The current Planar Overseer of the Yulan Plane, although still a God, had been changed to a beautiful golden-haired woman.

“Mm.” The leader of the four gave her a glance. “Let’s go.”

The four figures rose into the skies, flying towards the south.

“Elder Brother, do you think the words of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction are true or false?” The only woman amongst the four, a lady with long, fiery red hair spoke out. This person was the Matriarch of the Vermillion Bird clan of the Four Divine Beasts clan.

“Consider the Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s status. How could he possibly deceive us?” The White Tiger Patriarch laughed as he spoke.

“That’s not it. Only…I still can’t believe it.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said hurriedly.

“Not just you; even I find it hard to believe.” Gislason let out a sigh. “But

the Chief Sovereign of Destruction can't possibly be lying. But…Linley, a Sovereign? This is too…"

"Enough talk. Whether he is or isn't a Sovereign, soon we shall know." The deep voice of the Black Tortoise Patriarch rang out.

"Have you found Linley through your divine sense yet?" The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said, puzzled. "I've searched all three continents, but have found no trace of Linley. I have, however, found quite a few of his family and friends."

"I can't find him either…can it be that Linley truly has become a Sovereign?" Gislason and the other three looked at each other, all still feeling bewildered.

This news was simply too astonishing, after all. Otherwise, the four clan leaders wouldn't have hastened all the way to the Yulan Plane.

The four clan leaders all moved extremely quickly, and they soon arrived within the borders of the Yulan continent.

"There are many experts in the castle up ahead, and quite a few are descendants of my clan. That should be Dragonblood Castle." Gislason said, and then the four transformed into four blurs, streaking towards Dragonblood Castle.

Chapter 8 – Entreaty

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 8, Entreaty

Dragonblood Castle was guarded very strictly. Multiple patrol squads roved about, the weakest of the guards at the ninth rank. Saints could be seen everywhere.

But these guards weren't able to detect the arrival of Gislason and the other three at all.

Within the rear courtyard of Dragonblood Castle. A quiet field.

"Rustle…" The leaves of the trees swayed in the wind. Beneath a thick, gnarled tree, a gray-robed Olivier was currently seated quietly in the meditative position, his eyes focused ahead of himself. Next to his body hovered an energy sword which constantly flashed about, displaying one type of attack after another.

Two swirls of black and white energy could be vaguely seen.

Suddenly…

Olivier raised his head, discovering that four people were standing shoulder to shoulder nearby.

"Lord Patriarch." Olivier was shocked. He hurriedly rose to his feet.

"Olivier, I just came to ask you a question." Gislason smiled as he spoke. "Do you know where Linley is?" Prior to this, before Gislason's group of four had descended upon the estate, they had searched Dragonblood Castle with their divine sense. They had discovered quite a few people, but the first person they had come to see was Olivier.

"Linley? He should have gone to the Dragonblood continent." Olivier

guessed.

“Milords.” A voice suddenly rang out.

Gislason’s group of four couldn’t help but turn to look, only to see a maid arrive from the doorway. The maid said respectfully, “The lord of the castle has ordered me to invite the four of you, milords, to the rear gardens.”

“Lord of the castle?” Gislason’s group of four was stunned.

“The lord of the castle is Linley.” Olivier immediately explained. Over the course of countless years, although managers had come and gone, the position of lord of the castle was forever Linley’s.

The Vermillion Bird Matriarch’s eyes lit up. She was rather stunned. “Linley is in Dragonblood Castle?”

“It seems the Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s information was accurate.” The white-robed White Tiger Patriarch took a deep breath as he spoke.

Linley was in Dragonblood Castle, but they weren’t able to locate him with their divine sense. Linley had definitely surpassed the ‘Deity’ level. Then, he must be a Sovereign!

The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan followed the maid towards the rear gardens. The four felt very complicated feelings in their hearts. They also felt very nervous. After all, Linley’s status was now different. Sovereigns and Deities were on completely different levels. Sovereigns were lofty individuals who stared down at the countless lifeforms who struggled and battled across the countless planes.

The Planar Wars could only be considered a game for Sovereigns.

Deities, even Paragons, felt powerless in the face of Sovereigns.

“Four clan leaders, come in.” A clear voice rang in from the rear gardens.

“It is Linley.”

Gislason’s group of four looked at each other, then entered the rear gardens. The rear gardens took up a fairly wide amount of space. Gislason’s group entered, then glanced around themselves. Only now did they see that far away, in the center of the garden, stood Linley. Linley was currently drinking wine with Delia and laughing and chatting.

Noticing their arrival, Linley turned his head to glance at them, then laughed calmly, “Four clan leaders, please be seated.”

After his four-way soul mutation, Linley’s status had risen to far surpass that of the four clan leaders within the Four Divine Beasts clan. And now, Linley was a lofty, noble Sovereign.

“He is right in front of me, but I feel as though there is nothing there.” Gislason sent to the other three. “It is like when I saw Father in the past. Rather than any of their awe-inspiring Sovereign’s presence, they would completely contract their auras.” Gislason no longer had any doubts by now.

“Sovereign. He really is a Sovereign!”

The eyes of the other three clan leaders lit up.

Gislason looked at Linley, then immediately bowed. “Sovereign, we…”

As Gislason saw it, in terms of relationships, Linley wasn’t that close to them. First of all, Linley had only joined the Four Divine Beasts clan later in life, and secondly, there had been members of the Four Divine Beasts clan who had desired to seize Linley’s Coiling Dragon ring. Although afterwards, they had done better, that was because of Linley’s power and because of Beirut’s status.

But now that Linley was a Sovereign…

Deities and Sovereigns. The difference between them was like that between

the earth and the heavens. There was an unbridgeable gap between them. Naturally, they had to be respectful.

“Four clan leaders, no need to address me as ‘Sovereign.” Linley interrupted these words, then laughed calmly. “Just act as we previously did. You can just address me as Linley.”

“This…” The four exchanged glances.

“I am quite curious. How did you know that I became a Sovereign?” Linley laughed calmly as he asked the question. How had news that he had become a Sovereign in the Yulan Plane spread to the Infernal Realm?

The nearby Vermillion Bird Matriarch laughed beautifully, bowing slightly in order to show her respect. “Linley, the news that you had become a Sovereign was actually given to us by the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. At first, we couldn’t believe it. After the four of us discussed the matter, we decided to go to the Yulan Plane to investigate. Now, it seems, this really is the case.”

Although Linley chatted and jested with them, the four clan leaders still unconsciously felt pressure.

After all, no matter how much Linley contracted his aura, the four clan leaders still knew, subconsciously, that Linley was a Sovereign.

“The Chief Sovereign of Destruction?” Linley frowned.

“How did the Chief Sovereign of Destruction know?” The nearby Delia said, puzzled.

“Logically speaking, he shouldn’t. After all, this happened in the Yulan Plane.” Linley said with a frown. “There’s one other possibility. Grandpa Beirut chatted with the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.” Beirut was on fairly good terms with the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, and Beirut also had a clone remaining in the Infernal Realm.

But Linley still felt puzzled. “What sort of status does the Chief Sovereign of Destruction have? Even if he knew, why would he tell the Four Divine Beasts clan?”

Linley turned to stare at Gislason, puzzled. “Patriarch, why did the Chief Sovereign of Destruction tell you these things?”

“The Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s energy clone descended upon the Skyrite Mountains.” Gislason explained. “In addition, he requested that our Four Divine Beasts clan loan him a hundred Highgods, who he would return to us some time later. Since he was borrowing our people, he explained that as compensation…he would bestow us with some Sovereign’s Might and give us some guidance. He said that if we wanted to know why the four ancestors died, to ask you, Linley.”

Linley was stunned.

The cause of the deaths of the four ancestors?

The big fellow nearby, the ‘Black Tortoise Patriarch’, said in a booming voice, “We immediately asked, why ask Linley? The Chief Sovereign of Destruction then said, you have reached the Sovereign level in power.”

“So that’s how it is.” Linley nodded slightly.

“What did he borrow people for?”

“Unclear.” Gislason stared at Linley, then went straight to the heart of it. “Linley, we have come for two reasons. First, to investigate if you had truly become a Sovereign. Second…we wish to know why our four ancestors died! Linley. Given that you are a member of clan, please tell us.”

The four clan leaders all looked expectantly towards Linley.

The downfall of the Four Divine Beasts had caused the downfall of the Four Divine Beasts clan. Even in their dreams, the Four Divine Beasts clan dreamed of learning who had done it, and of the true cause of death of the

four ancestors.

Linley frowned. He hesitated a moment, then nodded. “Very well. I will tell you. Because of certain reasons, the four ancestors had engaged in a battle against the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

“The Chief Sovereign of Light?” The eyes of Gislason and the other three lit up.

“A battle between Sovereigns causes tremendous shockwaves in a wide area. They battled all the way into chaotic space. The four ancestors fled while fighting, and the Chief Sovereign of Light chased and attacked. Afterwards, the four ancestors executed their supreme technique…their fused innate divine abilities. The Chief Sovereign of Light, however, managed to survive it and not die. With their most powerful attack having failed, the four ancestors lost their will to battle. The Chief Sovereign of Light, however, seized the opportunity to rely on his Overgod artifact to kill them in succession. By relying on his greater speed, he was able to kill all of the four ancestors.” Linley spoke calmly, but the bodies of Gislason and the other three trembled as they listened.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light!!!” Gislason’s eyes were already filled with faint tears.

“How could the Chief Sovereign of Light have resisted the attack?” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch actually shook her head. “Impossible. When my mother was alive, she said that not even amongst Chief Sovereigns, the ones who could withstand their supreme attack could be counted on one hand. The Chief Sovereign of Light wasn’t one of them.”

“But the reality is that the Chief Sovereign of Light managed to resist it.” Linley sighed.

Gislason and the other three couldn’t accept it. After all, the Four Divine Beasts were their parents.

“Linley…” Gislason hesitated momentarily, then suddenly spoke out.

“Hrm?” Linley looked at him.

Gislason looked at the other three, then turned to look towards Linley. “Linley, I, I want to ask…did you use the Sovereign sparks of the four ancestors to become a Sovereign?” If one wished to become a Sovereign, there was only one way; to fuse with a Sovereign spark. However, there were only a total of 77 Sovereign sparks.

Only after one Sovereign died would another be born.

Linley gave the four of them a glance.

“Yes.” Linley nodded.

“The Sovereign spark, how…” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch opened her mouth and said a few words, but then hesitated.

“Shouldn’t the Chief Sovereign of Light have acquired the four Sovereign sparks? How did you acquire it? In addition, there should have been four of the Sovereign sparks. You used one. There are still…” Gislason looked towards Linley.

Linley smiled slightly.

He could guess that most likely, the four clan leaders also wanted to acquire the Sovereign sparks. Perhaps in the eyes of the four clan leaders, the four Sovereign sparks were their inheritance from their parents; it was rightfully theirs. Only…they couldn’t say it, nor did they have the courage to say such things.

But Linley didn’t feel the same way.

The 77 Sovereign sparks had descended from the heavens when the universe had been created. The powerful would be able to fight over and acquire them. The Four Divine Beasts had relied on themselves to acquire these Sovereign sparks. Beirut had relied on his own courage and had risked

his life to seize these four Sovereign sparks.

“If the Sovereign sparks had fallen into the hands of the Chief Sovereign of Light, how could he have given me one?” Linley said calmly. “I’ll tell you the truth. Beirut, in the past, risked his own life to acquire these four Sovereign sparks. And now, all of the four Sovereign sparks have been used up and fused.”

“Beirut?” The four were stunned.

“He was able to take them away from the Chief Sovereign of Light?” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said, stunned.

Despite their words, upon hearing Linley say that the four Sovereign sparks had all been used up, the four clan leaders still felt a bit disappointed. They didn’t dare to say anything else, however.

“You don’t need to harbor any suspicions regarding this.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Linley.” Gislason said solemnly. “There is one more thing we must beg of you, Linley.”

“Speak.” Linley glanced at him.

Gislason took a deep breath, then said solemnly, “Linley, the four ancestors were the ancestors of our Four Divine Beasts clan. Our Four Divine Beasts clan can’t just be silent and pretend that we know nothing of their deaths. The four ancestors were killed by the Chief Sovereign of Light! We hope that you, Linley…if…I only say if! If in the future, you have the ability or the chance to do so, please avenge our four ancestors!”

“Linley.” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch said hurriedly as well. “We know that this request is a bit excessive, but at this point, you are our only hope.”

“Please.” The big fellow, the Black Tortoise Patriarch, stared at Linley as well.

Linley looked at the four clan leaders. He could feel the sincerity of their entreaties.

“I promise you.” Linley nodded solemnly. “If I’m able to do it, I won’t show any mercy.”

“Thank you.” The four said gratefully.

“You must be tired after rushing all the way here. Rest at my place for some time first. Afterwards, we’ll have a banquet, then we’ll talk.” Linley laughed calmly.

“That’s fine as well.” Gislason’s group of four didn’t try to stay any longer. They immediately allowed themselves to be led away by a distant maid, and they departed the flower garden.

Linley turned his head to look at the nearby Delia. “Delia, you step back for a time as well. I need to chat with Beirut about something.”

“Fine.” Delia laughed, nodded, and left the flower garden.

Moments later, two figures descended from the heavens and arrived next to Linley. It was Beirut and Bluefire. The three immediately sat down around the table.

“Haha, the four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan came?” Beirut laughed as he spoke. “They’ve discovered that you are a Sovereign, eh?”

“They have. It was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction who told them.” Linley said.

“The Chief Sovereign of Destruction?” Bluefire was rather puzzled.

“Right. It’s actually quite odd. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction actually went to the Four Divine Beasts clan to borrow a hundred Highgods. I don’t know why.” Linley said.

Beirut, upon hearing this, couldn't help but frown. He said in a reflective voice, "Most likely, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction's experiments have reached the final stage."

Chapter 9 – The Next Five Thousand Years

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 9, The Next Five Thousand Years

“Experiments?” Linley instantly recollected how the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had acquired more than half of the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts from Beirut.

“The source of a divine beast’s power comes from his blood essence.” Beirut shook his head. “However, executing an innate divine ability requires not just the lineage, but also the soul!”

“The uniqueness of a soul, however, stems from the bloodline as well.” Linley frowned. “It is precisely because the members of my clan have the lineage of a divine beast, that they all have unique souls as well. In addition, I’ve absorbed a drop of blood essence as well; this allowed the strength of my innate divine ability to increase substantially.”

“That is because you are a descendant of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Beirut laughed calmly. “Alright, enough discussion of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction and whether or not he has finished researching the supreme technique of the Four Divine Beasts. That doesn’t have much to do with the two of us. Our greatest target is the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta!”

“Our enemy isn’t the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.” Bluefire laughed as well.

“The Chief Sovereign of Destruction? The power of any of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts is unfathomable.” Beirut let out a sigh.

“Grandpa Beirut, which one is the most powerful, do you think?” Linley was very curious regarding the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts as well.

“That’s quite hard to say! In terms of Will, it should be the Chief Sovereign of Fate!” Beirut said with a frown. “However, the Overgod artifact which

the Chief Sovereign of Fate wields is a soul-protecting Overgod artifact. It isn't a weapon, and so in terms of attack power, he's probably a bit weaker than the other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts."

Linley was surprised.

He hadn't chosen a weapon-type Overgod artifact? The Chief Sovereign of Fate really was quite unique.

"The Chief Sovereign of Fate never gets involved in worldly matters, and is always focused on developing various supreme techniques. Most likely, he feels that he doesn't need any Overgod weapons, that he is already strong enough." Beirut laughed calmly. "Now, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction is developing a supreme technique based on the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts. Right, Linley…you are a member of the Azure Dragon clan as well. Perhaps you will be able to develop something from the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts."

As he spoke, Beirut waved his hand and produced four little azure flasks.

"These four flasks each contain 81 drops of blood essences from the Four Divine Beasts." Beirut said. "This is roughly a quarter of the total amount of blood essence the Four Divine Beasts had."

Blood essences was the distilled essence of blood; even creatures as enormous as divine beasts would have, at most, three hundred or so drops, which was already quite astonishing. Every single drop contained a terrifying amount of energy; if that hadn't been the case, Linley wouldn't have been able to, after using a single drop, strengthen his body so greatly that he would resist the attacks of an average Seven Star Fiend.

"Grandpa Beirut…" Linley was a bit surprised.

"I originally gave the Chief Sovereign of Destruction half, and I used up some in my own experiments. Only a hundred or so drops are remaining. You can take these four flasks of 81 drops each. I hope that you, too, can develop the supreme technique of the Four Divine Beasts. Given your

spiritual energy, if you are able to develop it…you'd have a chance at challenging even the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts." Beirut laughed.

The Four Divine Beasts, when combining their power as Lesser Sovereigns, were able to unite their power into a fused innate divine ability that could threaten even Chief Sovereigns.

Linley's fundamentals were much superior, compared to that of the Four Divine Beasts.

"Alright. I'll accept it. But I am not confident in being able to develop a supreme technique." Linley said, but in his heart, Linley still felt a bit of anticipation.

Perhaps he would be able to develop one.

"Linley, how is your training progressing?" Beirut asked.

"I…in fusing three different profound mysteries of different Laws, I'm only one step away. But this breakthrough truly is difficult." Linley shook his head and laughed helplessly.

"How about this?" Beirut laughed, then said encouragingly, "As I see it, you'd best hurry up and go establish your own divine plane. The process of establishing a divine plane will cause you to gain insights into many things."

"Establishing a divine plane will take a very long period of time. You might make some major breakthroughs." Bluefire laughed as well.

After all, Linley had only been training for three centuries after becoming a Sovereign.

It would take a tremendous amount of time to establish each divine plane.

"It definitely will take a very long period of time, because I plan to simultaneously establish two divine planes." Linley smiled.

“Two divine planes?” Beirut and Bluefire were both startled.

The four clan leaders of the Four Divine Beasts clan stayed at Dragonblood Castle for several months. And then, after once more entreating Linley to take revenge if he could, they left the Yulan Plane and went back to the Infernal Realm. As for Linley himself, he said a few things to Delia and Bebe, then went to establish a divine plane.

He left behind his original body, which focused on analyzing the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts!

Linley’s original body was the physically strongest body out of the five, and it also contained the lineage of the Azure Dragon. Thus, it was quite appropriate to rely on his original body to do the research.

As for Linley’s four powerful clones, they left the Yulan Plane and headed towards chaotic space.

Within the vast, endless void of chaotic space, the streams of chaotic energy swirled and exploded as beautifully as fireworks.

Linley himself stood there within the chaotic streams. A few thousand kilometers away from Linley was the Yulan Plane.

“Linley, to simultaneously establish two different divine planes is something which has never been done before.” Beirut chortled. “We are definitely going to have to watch and learn.”

“I’ve never even established a divine plane.” Bluefire laughed as well.

Although the three were quite relaxed, Beirut and Bluefire both sent out their Sovereign sense, so that if any enemies drew near, they would instantly know and be able to flee into the Yulan Plane.

“Alright. I’m preparing to begin.”

Linley's body suddenly divided into two. An earthen yellow robed Linley and a blue robed Linley now stood shoulder to shoulder. These were two of his divine clones; his earth clone and his water clone.

Seeing this, both Beirut and Bluefire fell silent as they quietly watched this.

"Rumble…" A stream of earthen yellow liquid began to swirl around Linley's divine earth clone, while at the same time, a stream of blue liquid began to swirl around Linley's divine water clone. As time moved forward, the two streams of 'liquid' grew thicker and thicker as the amount of Sovereign power grew greater and greater.

The power to create a divine plane was something which the heavens had bestowed upon Sovereigns.

Everyone who had fused with a Sovereign spark and had become a Sovereign knew that as long as they activated a hint of the Laws contained within their Sovereign sparks, they would be able to create a divine plane. This sort of divine ability wasn't something one could gain through training; it was inherent to a Sovereign spark. Which was to say, it was bestowed by the heavens.

The creation process didn't require the Sovereign to ponder bitterly and tiresomely; the Sovereign only needed to have his soul be completely occupied by pondering the creation process.

The creation of a single divine plane was the same as a session of meditating. It would result in insights!

Different attribute Sovereign sparks would naturally be different.

Linley possessed two Sovereign sparks; thus, he decided simultaneously establish two divine planes.

At this moment, Linley's two Sovereign bodies were more than a thousand kilometers apart from each other.

“The creation of a divine plane truly is exhausting. The process of collecting enough Sovereign power alone will take up centuries.” Linley sighed mentally. At present, the ‘streams’ of energy that were swirling around Linley’s divine clones had already turned into two vast, thick, rivers of water. It was as though two titanic pythons of water that were ten thousand meters long were swirling around them.

Linley finally stirred.

After centuries had passed, he had finally collected enough Sovereign power from the Elemental Sea.

“Rumble…”

Simultaneously and suddenly, the two enormous pythons of earthen yellow liquid and green liquid suddenly contracted, instantly transforming into two giant spheres of liquid that completely surrounded each of Linley’s two divine clones. The two giant ‘globes’ of water trembled, the powerful energy contained within them causing the surrounding space to constantly shatter.

Fortunately, this was chaotic space; there wouldn’t be much damage caused.

“Bang!!!”

After compressing to a certain limit, the two water globes suddenly exploded! “Whoooooooosh.” Instantly, enormous special tears that were a million kilometers long were created. The power of this explosion was simply too great; it was absolutely stunning. But of course, this was because too much Sovereign power had been built up; the true power of this, if unleashed on a Lesser Sovereign, would at most injure them.

Explosions rang out unabated in the void, and spatial tears stretched off into the distance, with no end in sight.

The earthen yellow globe had exploded towards the right side, as it spewed forth its contents.

The green globe had exploded towards the left side, as it spewed forth its contents.

“Rumble…” Earth elemental essences and water elemental essences suddenly began to gather.

The exploding surges of Sovereign power were like generals; each bit of Sovereign power was able to control trillions of elemental essence particles. In the blink of an eye, within a range of more than a hundred million kilometers of the explosion, a large amount of Sovereign power began to take over the vast amounts of elemental essences in this area, and a miraculous, profound change began to occur. The Sovereign power stretched to a hundred million kilometers in scope, and the elemental essences stretched to billions of kilometers.

“These are…the Profound Mysteries of Vitality? And the Profound Mysteries of Gravitational Space are included as well? So Vitality and Gravitational Space can actually fuse in such a perfect manner.

“Ah, ‘Illusory Fog’ and ‘Ice Edge’ and ‘Waterbody’ are able to fuse together so perfectly, merging into space? Utterly inconceivable.”

While establishing these two divine planes, the process involved quite a few profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth and the Laws of Water, as well as miraculous ways of using them. Linley gaped, stupefied. His soul was completely merged with the divine plane he was creating, and they thus contained the imprint of his soul.

Naturally, he would sense everything which was happening with complete clarity.

One insight after another flowed towards him like the endless waters of a flood. Linley was completely shocked and speechless. He couldn’t help but be completely lost in them…

……..

“Riiiiiiip…” A spatial tear from the Yulan Plane formed, and two figures charged out.

It was Beirut and Bluefire.

“Linley has already been creating these two divine planes for 1300 years. Why isn’t he done yet?” Beirut said, rather puzzled. “He is simultaneously creating these two divine planes. He should be more or less finished by now.”

“Perhaps there is something special about the divine planes he is making.” Bluefire said.

The two of them looked carefully at the two large divine planes that were directly ahead of them. The divine planes had already begun to take rough shape.

“What!” Beirut was greatly shocked.

“This Linley…” Bluefire was stunned as well. As they had looked at the two divine planes, they naturally discovered what was special about them…

These two divine planes…actually intersected!

“Has Linley gone insane?” Beirut said frantically. “Within that ten thousand kilometer region of intersection between those two planes, he’s actually fused two types of Sovereign power, and two types of elemental essences… this…!”

Indeed. After spending roughly a thousand years, Linley had already created the two divine planes, and only needed to do some finishing touches. But right at this moment, Linley’s soul was stirred, and he actually began to use his fused Sovereign power to form a small plane that was only ten thousand kilometers in size, at the empty space between the two planes.

This plane was a plane of fused Sovereign power!

After having sensed and watched the two previous divine planes be born, this time, Linley wanted to rely on his own power to give it a try.

But who would have imagined…

Previously, he had completely depended on the methods imprinted into his Sovereign spark, making the creation process simple. Now, however, it was very hard, as he was relying completely on himself to create this plane that was merely ten thousand kilometers in size. In the past three hundred years, Linley had solved one complicated problem after another regarding how to more perfectly use his two types of Sovereign power to control two different types of elemental essences.

Acting according to a blueprint was easy, but creating from scratch was very hard.

The two Sovereign sparks only contained methods for creating a ‘divine plane of earth’ and a ‘divine plane of water’. They held no information on the creation of a fused divine plane. Linley thus had to borrow and test various methods and come up with his own ways based on his own insights in order to build this place.

But this meant that he made repeated mistakes that he would have to correct. Naturally, he would gain insights as well. Although Linley was technically creating a fused divine plane, in reality, Linley was training!

……

“It’s been three thousand years! Linley actually still has yet to complete that fused divine plane.” Beirut and Bluefire looked at each other, not knowing whether to laugh or to cry.

The current Linley was completely absorbed in his work.

He had no sense of the passage of time at all. His current goal was to come up with any measures necessary to perfect and complete this fused divine

plane of merely ten thousand kilometers!

……..

Within the fused divine plane.

One side was filled with water that reached the heavens, while the other side was filled with towering mountains. Linley hovered in the air above.

“Haha…” Linley laughed so hard, his eyes turned into slits. He finally let out a breath of relief.

“I finally succeeded!” Linley stretched his senses out slightly, and immediately knew how much time had passed. “I only spent a thousand years creating those two divine planes, but I spent four thousand years creating this fused divine plane.” Linley felt quite moved. This time… Linley had, amazingly, spent five thousand years of time!

Given how fast Sovereigns trained, five thousand years was indeed enough to make astonishing improvements.

But Linley, absorbed in his high-difficulty work, had gained astonishing insights during the past five thousand years.

“I didn’t imagine that over the course of creating the divine planes, I would end up finishing my fifth fusion of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth. I’ve even fused four profound mysteries of the Laws of Water.” Linley didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry. All of his new insights had come because he wanted to create his own fused divine plane, and so it was normal that he had some accomplishments in the Laws of the Earth and the Laws of Water.

But of course…

In the past five thousand years, Linley’s greatest gains were still in his insights into fusing the profound mysteries of different Laws!

Chapter 10 – Sword Intent

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 10, Sword Intent

Earth, fire, water, wind. Four Laws. The four profound mysteries that Linley had chosen from them were, respectively, the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', the 'Profound Mysteries of Explosion', the 'Profound Mysteries of Circular Softness', 'Dimensional Attack'. Of the four, the hardest to fuse was the 'Profound Mysteries of Explosion'.

During the past five thousand years, Linley had gotten a deeper and deeper understanding of the Laws of Earth and Laws of Water.

This had made it so that Linley had, long ago, completely fused the 'Throbbing Pulse of the World', 'Dimensional Attack', and the 'Profound Mysteries of Circular Softness' into one. As for the Profound Mysteries of Explosion, it had reached a bottleneck in its fusion with the 'Dimensional Attack'. Once the fusion was completed, then only the final step would remain; completely fusing all four of the profound mysteries into one.

"Rumble…" Waves struck against the slopes of the mountains.

Linley hovered there in midair. "Now, I have two steps to go. The first is to completely fuse the 'Profound Mysteries of Explosion' with 'Dimensional Attack'. Then, I need to completely fuse the four together into a whole. By then, with four profound mysteries all fused together, the power of the attack will be so great that surpassing Augusta will be simple."

And then, Linley took a breath to calm himself as he stared around himself. There was not, however, any sun in this world of ten thousand kilometers.

Linley raised his head, then said a single word. "Light!"

Instantly, with Sovereign power serving as the core, countless particles of elemental essences began to gather. They frantically compressed, and then

formed a dazzling sphere that hung high in the sky; a sun! The sun hung high in the skies, wantonly releasing light which illuminated the entire plane.

With but a thought, Linley willed a membrane to form around this sun, protecting it.

“Normally, it will constantly draw in elemental essence, and afterwards, it will release it in the form of sunlight in a perpetual cycle.” Linley smiled calmly, and then used the technique upon the other side of the plane, creating a moon. Within this plane, the sun and the moon swiveled around the plane in a constant rotation.

When the sun dropped beneath the edges of the plane and reached the back side of it, the moon would just so happen to rise.

“Everything has been completed.” Linley looked at his surroundings. There was the earth, the mountains, the seas…but no life. However, Linley wasn’t capable of creating new life; at most, he would be able to bring some living creatures from other places to this place.

“Crackle…”

A giant spatial tear appeared in the distant skies, and two figures flew in. One was a black-robed Beirut, while the other was a white-robed Bluefire. The two were clearly rather surprised and curious.

“Haha, Linley, although this fused divine plane of yours is a bit small, in terms of its spatial stability, it has actually surpassed the Seven Divine Planes and is close to the Four Higher Planes.” Beirut waved his hand, chopping out a spatial tear, then evaluated, “And in this place, both earth and water are fairly dense in terms of elemental essences.”

Linley let out a resigned chuckle. “Don’t make fun of me. I spent more than four thousand years, but was only able to make such a tiny plane.”

“We aren’t making fun of you.” Bluefire looked at the surrounding area,

then laughed. “We can create planes, but alas, we cannot create new life.”

“The creation of new life is not a domain which we Sovereigns can interfere in.” Beirut laughed calmly, then looked towards Linley. Rather expectantly, he said, “Linley, you have spent five thousand years here. Given your training speed, especially after becoming a Sovereign with two Sovereign bodies…I imagine that you now train at least a hundred times faster than before you were a Sovereign. In the past five thousand years, how has your training progressed?”

Bluefire’s eyes lit up as well as he looked eagerly towards Linley.

“I’ve fused five profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and four of the Laws of Water.” Linley sighed with a frown. “However, I’m still somewhat lacking when it comes to fusing four different Laws. The further I go in my training, the harder it becomes. I imagine that in order for me to truly master the fusion of these four Laws, it will take me anywhere from a few thousand years to…an indeterminate amount of time.”

Beirut and Bluefire exchanged a glance.

Linley’s progression was what they had expected it to be. After all, five thousand years of training as a Sovereign was definitely comparable to five hundred thousand years of training as a Highgod.

The three Sovereigns just stood there in the newborn fused divine plane, laughing and chatting.

“Linley, when are you returning to the Yulan Plane?” Beirut suddenly asked.

“I’m in no rush. My original body is still in Dragonblood Castle, so I don’t need to hurry back. I’m preparing to develop what will be my most powerful attack to date.” Linley laughed calmly. “Now that my understanding in the profound mysteries of the Laws has increased, my previous supreme attack, ‘Microcosm’, is no longer suitable.”

“Makes sense.” Beirut and Bluefire both nodded.

“Then we will wait for you in the Yulan Plane. Haha, after you finish developing it, you have to show it off to us.” Beirut chortled, and then he and Bluefire both left as well.

To develop a technique that suited one’s self wouldn’t take too long. Generally speaking, ten days or so would be enough.

Earth, fire, water, wind. These four Laws had a total of twenty seven profound mysteries. To select the four most appropriate profound mysteries out of them was extremely difficult. However, given Linley’s level of understanding regarding them, and the fact that he had decide to develop towards ‘material attacks’, he had chosen the ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, ‘Explosion’, ‘Circular Softness’, and ‘Dimensional Attack’.

Amongst them, ‘Throbbing Pulse of the World’, ‘Explosion’, and ‘Dimensional Attack’ were exceedingly, terrifyingly powerful attack-focused profound mysteries.

To fuse them together by force was virtually impossible. Thus, Linley had selected ‘Circular Softness’ to serve as the chain which allowed the other three profound mysteries to perfectly fuse together.

According to Linley’s plan…

If he selected the most attack-focused aspects of the four Laws and bound them together, the power should definitely reach an inconceivable level.

Within the void. Chaotic energy streamed everywhere, forming countless ‘comets’ that streaked about in a bewildering, beautiful manner.

Linley stood there within the void, holding Mirage in his hands. He would occasionally shut his eyes and ponder, and then occasionally wave his hands to test out his attacks. Every single test caused space to crumble.

“Although I’ve already fused three profound mysteries, with the fourth

profound mystery of ‘Explosion’ not yet being fused in, that’s fine. ‘Explosion’ will simply make it so that the power of my attack will gather together at one point, then instantly blast out.” If countless streams of energy could be focused onto one point, how powerful would that attack become?

Just as Linley continued to perfect his technique, a light suddenly flashed in his mind.

“A sword?” Linley’s eyes lit up. “My spiritual energy is far more powerful than that of an ordinary Sovereign’s. Why don’t I infuse a spiritual attack into the attack. When I strike out with my sword, I will simultaneously launch a material attack and a soul attack!”

Intrigued, he immediately began.

The sixteenth day of research in the void.

After countless setbacks and improvements and reconfigurations…he had continuously perfected his technique, to the point where Linley was now unable to perfect it any further. He had finally created his most powerful, supreme technique!

“I’ve finally perfected it. However, the material attack and soul attack both require me to use all my power to control it. It seems that I will need to use two souls to separately control each aspect.” Both the soul attack and the material attack were supreme techniques; using either of the attacks would force Linley to be completely focused and unable to be distracted.

Thus, his only choice was to have two of his souls separately control each technique.

“It is time to test my most powerful attack.”

With a smile, Linley waved his hand. Mirage vanished, and what appeared was the Life Overgod Sword!

Holding the Life Overgod Sword in his hand, he stared with a sharp gaze towards the void in the distance.

Fused Sovereign power filled the Life Overgod Sword, and instantly, a terrifying aura spread out. “Riiiiiiiiip.” Countless streams of chaotic energy in the void shattered, as countless spatial tears appeared in the surrounding area. Even before the Life Overgod Sword had struck out, its power could already be felt.

“Rumble…”

The sword moved!

It was like a jade-green bolt of lightning that slashed out.

The tip of the Life Overgod Sword emitted countless rays of sharp sword energy, tearing open countless spatial fractures that extended as far as the eye could see. It seemed as though countless giant dragons were coiling about; the countless spatial fractures affected and pulled at each other as well, instantly causing large regions of space in the void to collapse!

The collapsed region was roughly a hundred meters wide, but in length, it was more than a million kilometers. Apocalypse!

When this attack was unleashed, more than just countless rays of sword energy shot out; actually, a tiny, unremarkable, translucent sword shadow that was just the size of a palm shot out as well.

“Sadly, I wasn’t able to add ‘Explosion’ into the fusion as well, and so strike zone of this sword is actually a hundred meters wide! If I could focus it into a single line, then that would be true perfection.” Linley evaluated. But although he said this, a smile was evident on his face, showing that Linley was quite satisfied with himself.

This attack simultaneously contained a soul attack and a material attack.

“Since it simultaneously contains two different types of attacks, then I’ll

name it…‘Sword Intent’!”

Sword Intent. It truly was a ‘Sword Intent’; the ‘Sword’ was the material attack, while the ‘Intent’ was the soul attack.

“I really look forward to the day when I completely, perfectly fuse all four profound mysteries. What level of power will this ‘Sword Intent’ attack of mine reach?” Linley turned and took a simple step, passing through a thousand kilometers of space to enter the divine plane he had created. There was, after all, interdimensional portals that linked Linley’s ‘divine plane of earth’ and ‘divine plane of water’ to the Yulan plane.

He passed through the interdimensional portal and arrived at the Yulan Plane.

The Yulan Plane. Dragonblood Castle.

Dried leaves had been blown everywhere by the wind. It was late autumn. Five thousand years had passed, and the marks of history had been left upon each tree, each tile, and each stone within Dragonblood Castle.

Beneath an ancient tree with a trunk that was so large, ten men would be needed to link hands around it, Linley, Beirut, and Bluefire were gathered.

These three Sovereigns had, quite naturally, formed into a little team.

“Grandpa Beirut, what did you say?” Linley was greatly shocked. “We should head out?”

“Right.” Beirut smiled, then nodded.

“But at my current level of power…I’m not confident in my ability to fight against the Chief Sovereign of Light.” Linley said hurriedly. Augusta had an Overgod artifact as well, after all.

“When you were creating your divine planes and training, Bluefire and I discussed this matter carefully.” Beirut laughed. “You are trying to fuse four

different types of profound mysteries from different Laws. This will be even harder than becoming a Paragon in a single type of Law! Although you have made great improvements in the past five thousand years, I'm worried that even if you spend another five thousand years, you probably won't make any more major improvements."

Linley fell silent.

Fusing four profound mysteries from different Laws. The power was tremendous, but so too was the difficulty level. The difficulty level was, in fact, greater than that of becoming a Paragon in one Law.

"Thus, we decided to do something else." Bluefire joined in.

"To do what?" Linley frowned as he looked towards Bluefire and Beirut.

"You are a Fusion Sovereign." Beirut smiled. "In addition, you have four bodies. Currently, you have only fused two Sovereign sparks. In reality, your potential has yet to be truly unleashed. Our plan is to leave the Yulan Plane and hunt down a Sovereign! We will let you fuse with yet another Sovereign spark!"

Linley couldn't help but feel shocked.

Bluefire nodded as well as he looked at Linley.

"Given your power, after you fuse with another Sovereign spark, your strength will completely eclipse that of an ordinary Chief Sovereign. It will even surpass the Chief Sovereign of Light's power." Beirut's gaze was scorching. "By then, the three Sovereigns of our Yulan Plane will naturally be able to live carefree lives amongst the world of Sovereigns."

"Won't killing Sovereigns attract the wrath of other Sovereigns, who might even stop us?" Linley frowned.

Chapter 11 – Hunt and Kill, A Storm Brews!

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 11, Hunt and Kill, A Storm Brews!

To hunt and kill a Sovereign, then fuse with his divine spark.

To Linley, a four-way Soul Mutate, this was indeed a possible avenue for increasing his power.

“Attract the wrath of other Sovereigns who would stop us?” Beirut paused momentarily, then nodded and said, “Naturally, there is a pact between the Sovereigns. If a Chief Sovereign was to fight a Lesser Sovereign, that would be a slaughter. Thus, if anyone violate the pact, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts will join forces to punish them!”

Linley’s heart clenched.

The Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts jointly punish them?

“It seems as though the Overgods don’t care about fratricide amongst Sovereigns.” Linley suddenly said.

The nearby Bluefire laughed calmly. “The Overgods are only the Edicts. They are only responsible for making sure that the countless planes of the universe function normally. They won’t care about the deaths of the Sovereigns. If a Sovereign dies, there will definitely be another Sovereign born. The main issue is that the Sovereigns themselves worried that if this sort of internal slaughter was to occur, the universe would be too chaotic. Thus, they came together in agreement on a pact.”

“What does this pact entail?” Linley immediately asked.

Beirut laughed calmly, “The pact is simple. There are three ranks of Sovereigns. If a lower-ranked Sovereign did not antagonize a higher-ranked Sovereign, the higher-ranked Sovereign is not permitted to slaughter the

lower-ranked Sovereign. Only Sovereigns at the same ranks are able to battle each other. This point was decided upon jointly by the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts!"

"So only Sovereigns of the same level of power are permitted to fight each other?" Linley nodded to himself.

"If that's the case, then doesn't that mean the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts are permitted to easily slaughter the other Chief Sovereigns?"

"Haha…" Beirut couldn't help but laugh. "Linley, are you an idiot? The Chief Sovereigns can fight against each other, yes, and the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts have Overgod artifacts that suit their nature, true. But just because they have powerful weapons doesn't mean that their speed is greater than that of the other Chief Sovereigns. If the other Chief Sovereigns aren't able to overcome them, can't they run?"

"Oh. Right. Right." Linley said, embarrassed.

Sovereigns of the same rank generally wouldn't be too different from each other in terms of speed, especially since they would be able to discover the enemy from far away through their Sovereign sense.

"But in the past, Augusta killed the Four Divine Beasts. This…doesn't this count as violating the pact?" Linley couldn't help but say, puzzled.

"I told you that only Sovereigns of the same level of power were permitted to fight each other. This pointed towards people at the same level of power; what matters is actual power!" Beirut said. "The Four Divine Beasts, although all Lesser Sovereigns, were comparable to a Chief Sovereign when working together. How could they be treated as Lesser Sovereigns? Wouldn't that allow them to massacre all of the Lesser Sovereigns?"

Linley understood now.

The Four Divine Beasts had been placed on the level of 'Chief Sovereigns' in power.

“Linley. In terms of power, you, too, are at the ‘Chief Sovereign’ level.” Beirut laughed insidiously. “However, nobody knows. We can go hunt and kill one Sovereign, and you can fuse the Sovereign spark. By then, even if the other Sovereigns find you, you can just find an excuse for what you did. That shouldn’t be too hard.”

Linley was moved, and he laughed. “I understand!”

Others didn’t know the secret of him being a Soul Mutate, and thus it shouldn’t be too hard for him to make something up.

“In addition, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction is on fairly close terms with us. He will help speak on our behalf.” Beirut laughed calmly. “As I recall, the Chief Sovereign of Death is on fairly good terms with you as well, Linley.”

The pact was decided upon jointly by the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. Given that the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction and Death were on good terms with Linley’s side, this matter naturally wouldn’t prove problematic.

“Hunt and kill a Sovereign. Who should we hunt and kill?” Linley suddenly asked.

“Linley. You should still require a wind-type Sovereign spark and a fire-type Sovereign spark, right? Is it better to have a Lesser Sovereign spark or an Intermediate Sovereign spark, or even a High Sovereign spark?” Beirut asked instead. Clearly, Beirut understood the principles of balance, which was why he asked.

Linley nodded and said, “Lesser Sovereign spark!”

When he fused four types of divine power, although divine power was much weaker than Sovereign power, because of the balance of the fusion, the four-way fusion of divine power was actually ten times more powerful than Sovereign power. In addition, it also strengthened the body,

strengthened artifacts, and had other miraculous effects.

It wasn't necessarily true that the stronger the Sovereign spark, the better. What mattered more was…balance!

"Very well. We shall now go kill either a wind-element Lesser Sovereign or a fire-element Lesser Sovereign." Beirut paused momentarily, then said, "Amongst the Sovereigns, the one whom we are on the worst terms with is the Sovereign of Wind, Teresia! Originally, when I acquired the four Sovereign sparks, after I went to the Infernal Realm, Teresia tried to threaten me."

"Teresia…"

Linley nodded.

In the Infernal Realm, if it hadn't been for the Bloodridge Sovereign appearing, Teresia might nearly have killed Linley for the sake of the nine soul pearls.

In addition, in the void of chaotic space, if it hadn't been for Beirut and Bluefire successively blocking Teresia, on that occasion as well, Linley probably wouldn't have been able to bring the Overgod talisman back to the Yulan Plane.

"Teresia has acted against me multiple times and wanted to kill me. In addition, there lies an old grudge between Teresia and yourself, Grandpa Beirut." Linley nodded. "Then…let's make him the one!"

"Hmph. Teresia is a mere Lesser Sovereign, and yet he has quite a bit of ambition." Bluefire nodded as well. "He deserves death."

The three Sovereigns of the Yulan Plane, in just a few moments, had determined the fate of a different Sovereign.

Three days later.

Linley bid his family and friends farewell. As for the target of this mission, to hunt and kill a Sovereign? Linley only told Delia, Bebe, and a few others. Delia and the others had all been stunned at the decision of Linley and the other two, but Delia and Bebe were filled with sufficient confidence towards Linley, Beirut, and Bluefire.

“Boss, your actions will determine if I’ll be able to roam about and adventure in the various planes in the future.” Bebe pursed his lips and laughed.

“Just wait and watch.” Linley laughed loudly.

“Linley, be careful.” Delia warned.

“Right.” Linley gently squeezed Delia’s hands, then turned and left.

This mission, according to their plans, wouldn’t take too long. Linley said a few more words to his family and friends, then left alongside Beirut and Bluefire.

The Yulan Plane. The vast, endless North Sea region.

Linley, Beirut, and Bluefire were currently flying leisurely to the north. The three weren’t in the slightest rush at all.

“Linley, have you gained anything from your five thousand years of analyzing the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts?” Beirut asked.

“Not much.” Linley shook his head and laughed. “Because Gates and his four brothers at Dragonblood Castle are of the Black Tortoise lineage, through them, I’ve gained a bit of understanding as to how one should unleash the power of the blood essence of the Black Tortoise. I am also now able to hypothesize at the mechanism by which the ancestor of my Azure Dragon clan, the ‘Azure Dragon’, was able to strengthen his body.”

The Azure Dragon’s body strengthening mechanism was borrowed from the Black Tortoise’s transformation.

“However, my body is already sufficiently powerful. After absorbing part of the blood essences of the four ancestors, it would just rise slightly in power by one level.” Linley laughed calmly. At his level, further strengthening his body was simply too difficult.

“As for the supreme innate divine ability of the Four Divine Beasts, I was unable to develop any insights into it.” Linley sighed. “After all, I never saw the Four Divine Beasts unleash their innate divine abilities. In addition, my understanding and insights regarding the soul were shallow to begin with.”

“Haha, don’t be discouraged. I’ve been researching for much longer than you, and I’ve even seen the Four Divine Beasts unleash their attacks. I also have a deep level of understanding regarding the soul. And yet, I’m still unable to understand it.” Beirut laughed calmly. “To be able to strengthen your body yet another time is something worth being happy over. Unfortunately, those blood essences aren’t able to strengthen me.”

The reason why they were useful for Linley was because Linley was a member of the Azure Dragon clan to begin with.

“Grandpa Beirut, Bluefire.” Linley suddenly smiled in mysterious manner.

“Eh?” The two looked at Linley, puzzled.

“Just now, I used my divine sense to scan both of you twelve times. Did you notice anything?” Linley laughed as he looked at them. Just then, Linley had intentionally scanned Beirut and Bluefire with his divine sense, but Beirut and Bluefire hadn’t noticed anything; they had continued to chat with him normally.

“What? You scanned us with divine sense?” Beirut and Bluefire exchanged glances, shocked.

“Right.” Linley nodded.

“This…” Beirut and Bluefire were truly stunned.

It must be understood that Sovereigns were able to sense it when another Sovereign scanned them. Even if a Chief Sovereign were to scan a Lesser Sovereign, the Lesser Sovereign would still sense it. This was because all Sovereigns, regardless of their level, used Sovereign power as the source of their spiritual energy! Sovereign power was all at the same level.

Differences in the power of their Will would cause slight differences in power, which would result in different scopes and ranges for their senses.

But speaking on a qualitative level, Sovereign senses were all the same.

“Perhaps it is becaused I used my fused Sovereign power to unleash my divine sense.” Linley laughed.

Fused Sovereign power was a full level stronger than ordinary Sovereign power.

For him to be able to scan other Sovereigns without them noticing was what he had expected.

It was much like how, in the Planar Battlefield, when Linley was merely a Deity, the post-mutation Linley could send out his divine sense without other Paragons being able to notice anything.

“Haha, this, this is wonderful.” Beirut was overjoyed. “Linley, with this being the case, even if you discover other Sovereigns through your divine sense, other Sovereigns wouldn’t realize that they were being scanned! Now, even if we want to act against Teresia, Teresia will have no idea that we are scanning him.”

“Right.” Linley was very happy as well.

The strength of his divine sense; this was one of the superiorities of his fused Sovereign power!

Beirut said jubilantly, “Originally, I was worried that Teresia would flee upon seeing us, and so I was planning for us to travel separately and surround him. But now, it seems, there is no need for that at all.”

“Haha, let’s go.” Bluefire laughed clearly. “Let’s prepare to go to the Divine Wind Plane!”

“Let’s head out.” Beirut and Linley both laughed as well as they flew towards the teleportation array.

The three Sovereigns of the Yulan Plane; this was the first time that they had left the Yulan Plane as Sovereigns!

Given that they were going to act against Teresia, Beirut naturally had begun to track Teresia’s movements early on. Through the Bloodridge Sovereign, Beirut had learned that Teresia had, five thousand years ago, already returned to the Divine Wind Plane.

The Divine Wind Plane had been jointly created long ago by the seven Sovereigns of Wind. It was vast and endless.

In terms of how many Deities they possessed, the Seven Divine Planes weren’t too far off from the Four Higher Planes; the figures were similarly astonishing. Countless Deities filled the nine continents of the Divine Wind Plane, and each day, many Deities would die, and many new geniuses would suddenly gain insights and make breakthroughs.

For the sake of survival, fight!

For the sake of glory, fight!

Countless Deities were struggling and battling across the nine continents of the Divine Wind Plane.

As for the Sovereigns? They were far above it all.

It was like watching countless ants struggle and battle. The Sovereigns

laughed as they watched the various battles. As they saw it, this was just a game! Occasionally, they might choose an Emissary and intervene in the games.

The Divine Wind Plane. Qingya Island.

The silver-haired, hawk-nosed man, ‘Teresia’, was standing in front of a beach, staring into the endless sea.

Teresia was a very ambitious person. For the sake of growing more powerful, he was willing to do anything.

He had originally been a surpassing talent of the Dylan Plane [Di’lun]. A true genius, he had easily become a Deity, and then had come to the Netherworld, one of the Higher Planes, and engaged in constant battles and struggles until he had become a powerful Highgod! Back then, the 77 Sovereign sparks had been scattered across the Four Higher Planes. For the sake of the Sovereign sparks, countless experts had perished in miserable ways over the course of the struggles.

He had seized a Sovereign spark and had become a Sovereign of Wind!

After becoming a Sovereign, by relying on the power of faith energy, he had broken through the final barrier and stepped into the realm of Paragon!

He had never before been defeated. He had always been very self-confident!

Even after becoming a Sovereign, Teresia had never given up increasing his strength still further. At his current level, there were only three ways by which he could increase his strength. The first was to acquire an Overgod artifact. The second was to fuse with yet another Sovereign spark, so as to have another Sovereign clone. The third was to make it so that the Divine Wind Plane would win ten consecutive victories in the Planar Wars.

“Eh? What’s going on today. I keep on having a restless feeling in my heart.” Teresia frowned, his narrow, slitted eyes looking about him, his gaze

like daggers.

Unconsciously, Teresia decided to stretch out his divine sense, and in an instant, it covered the entire Divine Wind Plane.

And as it just so happened…

Less than a hundred million kilometers away from him, there were three figures that were flying over at high speed.

A black-robed Beirut, a white-robed, crimson-browed Bluefire, and a sky blue robed Linley!

The three Sovereigns were flying shoulder-to-shoulder!

“Beirut, Linley, and that Sovereign of Fire!” Teresia’s face completely changed.

Chapter 12 – The First Display of Power

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 12, The First Display of Power

Although he was shocked, Teresia then only let out a cold laugh. He sent out through divine sense, “Haha, Beirut, Linley, and that crimson-browed fellow. What, the three of you actually dare to leave the Yulan Plane? Do you now have something up your sleeve that allows you to go dare battle the Chief Sovereign of Light?” Teresia wasn’t afraid at all.

He knew that Beirut had, in total, four Sovereign sparks!

The three in front of him were merely Lesser Sovereigns.

He, Teresia, was a Lesser Sovereign of Wind. Sovereigns of Wind were skilled in speed to begin with, and he was also a Paragon! Amongst Lesser Sovereigns, it could be said that there was no one who was faster than him.

“The only one amongst these three who is comparable to me in speed is that Sovereign of Fire.” Teresia was absolutely confident. “If they join forces, they are indeed stronger than me. Unfortunately, if I want to escape, they won’t possibly be able to catch me.” With this self-confidence, Teresia was naturally in no rush to flee right away.

“The Chief Sovereign of Light? Naturally, we fear him.” Beirut smirked, then sent back with a laugh. “However, you aren’t the Chief Sovereign of Light.”

“Hmph.” Teresia laughed coldly.

At the same time, Teresia sent his divine sense to the number one expert of the Divine Wind Plane, the ‘Chief Sovereign of Wind’. “Chief Sovereign, Beirut is leading two Lesser Sovereigns and charging towards me. From the looks of it, they harbor ill intentions.”

Sovereigns flew at a speed that was hundreds of times faster than Paragons.

Even in a place as vast as in the Infernal Realm, Sovereigns could traverse the plane in half a day. From this, one could imagine how fast they were. A hundred million kilometers? To Linley's group of three Sovereigns, less than five minutes would be necessary!

"Linley, Teresia seems quite confident." Bluefire chortled as he spoke mentally. "He actually isn't fleeing."

"There is no one amongst Lesser Sovereigns who exceeds him in speed." Linley sent back. "However…that was in the past!"

"Now that you, a Fusion Sovereign, have appeared, you have destroyed all the previous rules. If Teresia had immediately fled, there might be hope for him. But now, there won't be enough time for him." Beirut chortled as well. Clearly, they all felt as though they could already see Teresia's end.

Right at this moment…

"Beirut, why have the three of you come here!" A cold, icy voice rang out in the minds of Beirut and the other two.

"Lord Diya." Beirut immediately sent back.

Linley was intrigued. The speaker should have been the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya. According to legend, the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, was a divine beast; a Jadewing Goldlight Hawk! Jadewing Goldlight Hawks were wind-type divine beasts that were born with tremendous innate speed. After becoming the Chief Sovereign of Wind, his speed had reached a truly monstrous level.

Those who had been able to acquire the eleven High Sovereign sparks in the past were all tremendously powerful. The likes of the Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction were born with tremendous, incomparable power. Others were comparable to Paragons as soon as they became Highgods. The eleven Chief Sovereigns all had their own unique strengths.

“Beirut, you are also one of my Sovereigns of Wind.” That cold voice rang out. “I don’t wish for internal warfare to begin amongst my Sovereigns of Wind.”

“Mr. Diya.” Linley sent back. “Teresia tried to act against me on multiple occasions. Back then, if it hadn’t been for Grandpa Beirut and Bluefire, I probably would have died. This time, I have come for revenge. I am only a Lesser Sovereign as well. I trust that this doesn’t violate the pact between Sovereigns.”

The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, hesitated momentarily, but then sent back with anger, “Linley! You have just recently become a Sovereign. You had best act more properly and in accordance with the rules! This is the Divine Wind Plane. I am the master here!”

“Apologies…”

Linley sent back with a smile, and then he stopped paying attention to the angered rebukes that the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, was delivering.

Beirut sent to Linley, “We are still two million kilometers away from Teresia. We should arrive soon.”

“Teresia truly is bold!” Linley swept his gaze forward.

Atop an island mountain. Teresia’s slitted gaze turned cold, and he cursed softly, “Beirut’s group of three is truly insane. Although they won’t be able to catch me, I can’t just wait here for them to attack. Hmph. I’ll first let them be smug for a period of time. Soon, the news that they have appeared in the Divine Wind Plane will definitely make its way to the Chief Sovereign of Light. By then, it’d be strange if Augusta didn’t come!”

When the two were a million kilometers away from each other, Teresia finally fled!

“Swoosh!”

A ray of light shot towards the southeast at high speed! The speed at which it moved vastly surpassed the pursuing speed of Linley's group. Linley and Bluefire, after all, had to accommodate Beirut, who was the slowest of the three.

"Haha, Teresia, so you aren't a fool after all." Beirut sent with a smirk and a laugh.

"Hmph, Beirut, you can be smug for now. In a short while, you won't even have the chance to cry." Teresia replied disdainfully.

Linley and the other two, in hot pursuit, exchanged a glance. Beirut sent mentally, "It's about time. Linley, time to move."

"Linley, we'll just watch from over here." Bluefire sent as well, laughing.

"Don't worry." Linley was completely confident, and his speed suddenly increased.

Right at this moment…

"How can this be?" Teresia's face changed. "Linley is even faster than me? But I'm a Paragon, he…right, he's a Paragon as well. But how could he be so fast?" Teresia pondered momentarily, but then he guessed at a possibility…

"Can it be? Beirut, you madman…you let Linley fuse both of the Sovereign sparks by himself?" Teresia was now truly frantic.

Generally speaking, if a Sovereign was to fuse with two Sovereign sparks, even though the Sovereign wouldn't be able to use fused Sovereign power, the Sovereign's soul would gain another portion of Will.

"He was a Paragon to begin with; given that he has fused with an additional Sovereign spark, he definitely is a bit stronger than me." Teresia was now panicked. He fled at high speed towards the southeast. There was a

teleportation array in the continent to the southeast, and by traveling through it, he would be able to flee at high speed. However, they were still more than a billion kilometers away from the teleportation array.

Linley, however, was only a million kilometers away from him.

In addition, the distance of a million kilometers was rapidly shrinking.

By the time Teresia had flown an additional ten million kilometers, Linley had already appeared within his line of sight.

“Chief Sovereign!” Teresia sent frantically.

“Linley, you want to kill a Sovereign in my Divine Wind Plane?” The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, said angrily.

Linley just sent two words back. “I apologize!” And then, not slowing down at all, he continued the pursuit.

In reality, Linley was still hiding the majority of his true power. If he were to use his fused Sovereign power, his speed would be much faster.

“Beirut is insane, and this Linley is also insane!”

Teresia could tell that he wasn’t going to make it. He let out a low curse, and then slashed one hand backwards…

“Crackle…” An enormous tear in space appeared, and Teresia immediately charged into the spatial rift.

“Hmph.” Linley immediately charged straight into the exact same spatial rift.

From this, one can imagine how close the two were to each other!

Beirut and Bluefire, seeing this through their divine senses, shared a laugh.

“Let’s go take a look as well.” Beirut chuckled as he slashed open a spatial rift, then entered chaotic space alongside Bluefire. Within the void of chaotic space, they were able to effortless find Linley and Teresia through divine sense.

Within the void. Countless flows of energy of random colors fluctuated randomly.

At the moment, one Sovereign was in pursuit, while the other was fleeing!

“Linley, don’t go too far.” Teresia bellowed angrily through divine sense.

“What, you’ve forgotten how far you went in the past?” Linley snickered. If it hadn’t been for the Bloodridge Sovereign and the others, Linley probably would’ve died long ago. Even now, Linley was just toying with Teresia. He had only revealed part of his power, but despite that, he was still able to have Teresia right where he wanted him.

And yet, in the next instant, Linley instantly caught up to Teresia!

Feeling a figure draw close to him from behind, Teresia grew frantic!

“So what if you fused with two Sovereign sparks? I refuse to believe that you are much stronger than me.” Teresia bellowed, and that enormous sickle appeared in his hands. He delivered a reverse-handed blow towards Linley. Silently, soundlessly, the sickle-blade tore through the surrounding space.

A Lesser Sovereign who was also a Paragon was indeed terrifying.

Faced with this heaven-shattering blade, Linley casually launched a chop backwards.

“World…Breaker!”

Linley had fused five of the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth, and had developed quite a few techniques. Since he normally wished to

hide his power, he naturally would end up using these techniques now.

“Clang!”

“Rumble…” The giant sickle in Teresia’s hands trembled, then began to shatter, inch by inch. Teresia himself was knocked flying away by that while explosion of power.

A single blow from the sword had shattered a Sovereign artifact?

“Ugh!” Teresia was shaken so badly that he vomited out a mouthful of blood.

“This is…impossible!” Teresia stared at Linley in disbelief…and then his gaze locked upon the jade longsword in Linley’s hand. That holy, sacred aura that emanated from the sword caused one’s heart to tremble. Teresia instantly identified this weapon for what it truly was, and Teresia all but screeched, “OVERGOD WEAPON!!!”

And then, he stared at Linley in terror.

“Right. This is an Overgod weapon.” Linley smiled as he looked at Teresia.

Teresia stared at Linley in terror. He immediately said, “I understand. It was you! You definitely acquired all three of the Overgod talismans. You accomplished the mission of the Overgod of Life, which is why you received an Overgod artifact.” Teresia had previously wanted to make a fight out of it, but upon seeing the Overgod artifact, he fell into despair.

Even if they were equal in strength, the side that had an Overgod artifact would hold an absolute advantage.

In his case, he was weaker than Linley to begin with.

“Linley, in the past, I was the one at fault. Now that you have acquired the Overgod artifact, I no longer pose a threat to you…” Teresia now, finally, wanted to beg for mercy and ask for forgiveness.

“Linley, no need to waste words with him. Hurry up and eliminate him.” Beirut’s voice echoed in Linley’s mind.

Linley didn’t hesitate at all. His face sank slightly, and the Life Overgod Sword in his hands shot out like a blur, stabbing straight towards Teresia. “Bang!” In the direction where the Life Overgod Sword was pointing towards, a spatial rift suddenly appeared that was only as thick as a fist, but which was infinitely long.

As for Teresia’s head, a small, fist-sized hole appeared within it.

Laws of the Earth – World Disintegrator!

Teresia’s eyes were still filled with disbelief, shock, and rage. And then, he powerlessly toppled over and his Sovereign artifacts fell out. Without the protection of his Will and his Sovereign armor, his corpse was instantly reduced to dust by the chaotic streams of energy. A semi-translucent jewel floated out, emanating a faint green light in every direction.

A Lesser Sovereign spark of wind!

“I’d best fuse it right away. If I delay, other variables might come into play.” Linley’s expanded divine sense had already discovered that the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, along with other Sovereigns of Wind, had entered chaotic space. However, those Sovereigns of Wind were still quite far away from Linley.

Those Sovereigns had clearly discovered that Linley had just killed Teresia as well.

“Linley!” The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, was angry now.

Linley paid Diya no attention. He immediately made a drop of blood fly out from his finger, then drift towards the wind-type Sovereign spark.

“Linley, you…” These Sovereigns of Wind were all rather angry now. He

had killed a Sovereign and was now about to fuse with his Sovereign spark? This sort of behavior was simply going too far!

Right at this moment, the chaotic energy flows around Linley began to change. A limitlessly dense gathering of wind elemental essences began to condense, and large amounts of ‘green liquid’ began to manifest and swirl about Linley. In this moment, Linley had already changed into his divine wind clone, and the wind-type Sovereign spark slowly sank into Linley’s forehead.

The fusing of a Sovereign spark was extremely fast.

Those Sovereigns weren’t able to stop it at all.

“Haha…” Beirut and Bluefire, who had already flown over, simply laughed.

“Previously, Linley was already comparable to a Chief Sovereign, thanks to his Overgod weapon. But now, after having refined another Sovereign spark, Linley’s power should have surpassed that of the Chief Sovereign of Light.” Beirut and Bluefire were both incredibly happy. They now no longer feared even the Chief Sovereign of Light; what, then did they have to worry about?

Finally, the three Sovereigns of Yulan would no longer have to hide within the Yulan Plane.

Within the void. Just moments later, Linley, who had already fused with the wind-type Sovereign spark, smiled and opened his eyes. “Success. My Will grew stronger yet again, and my fused Sovereign power…is now much more powerful!”

By now, Linley had already fused three types of Sovereign sparks!

Chapter 13 – Punishment

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 13, Punishment

Within the vast, empty void of chaotic space.

Two streaks of multicolored light shot through the void, towards a blue-robed figure!

“Grandpa Beirut. Bluefire.” Linley laughed as he looked at the two of them.

“How do you feel, after fusing the Sovereign spark?” Beirut sent while asking urgently. The nearby Bluefire also asked, rather worried, “How much did your power increase?”

This mission’s goal was to allow Linley to become strong enough to surpass the Chief Sovereign of Light!

“I feel…excellent!” Linley had a hint of a smile on his face. “After fusing the third Sovereign spark, the power of my Will grew stronger yet again. After fusing three types of Sovereign power, my fused Sovereign power is a hundred times more powerful than normal Sovereign power. Just via my Will and my fused Sovereign power alone, I surpass an ordinary Chief Sovereign tenfold!”

Indeed. Linley’s four-way soul mutation had bestowed upon him one portion of Will. Compared to ordinary Lesser Sovereigns, Linley had fused two more Sovereign sparks, and so had gained two additional portions of Will. All combined, Linley had gained a total of three additional portions of Will.

Lesser Sovereign to Intermediate Sovereign, Intermediate Sovereign to High Sovereign. Generally speaking, the difference between each level was hundredfold in power, which was roughly equivalent to two portions of Will.

But for Linley, his fused Sovereign power also made him a hundred times stronger!

And thus…

Without even taking the profound mysteries in account, the strength of his Will and his body's energy made it so that Linley was ten times stronger than an ordinary Chief Sovereign!

"The Chief Sovereign of the four Edicts have Paragons among them, and their Overgod artifacts are suited to their nature. I'm not completely confident in being able to defeat them, but I'm at least confident in being able to stay alive in front of them!" Linley sent back. "As for dealing with the Chief Sovereign of Light, 'Augusta', hmph, his Overgod artifact isn't suited to his element. I'm confident in being able to kill him."

Overgods were only divided into four Edicts.

Overgod artifacts were thus only divided into four types as well. But of course, neither Linley nor Augusta were perfectly suited to the nature of their Overgod artifacts.

"Haha…" Beirut and Bluefire exchanged glances, then couldn't help but laugh.

They laughed in a very happy, excited manner!

"Nearly twenty thousand years!" Beirut was so excited, he couldn't control himself. "It has been nearly twenty thousand years since I became a Sovereign. This entire time, I've turtled in the Yulan Plane. Haha…finally, I finally will be able to freely depart."

"There's no need to fear Augusta any further." Bluefire let out a long sigh as well.

"Augusta!" Linley had a hint of killing desire in his heart.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, had to be killed at some point! Augusta's death would make it so that nothing would stop Linley from saving his mother. He trusted that the other Sovereigns of Light wouldn't dare bar Linley's way.

As the three Sovereigns of Yulan were celebrating happily together, the distant Chief Sovereign of Wind, 'Diya', had an extremely ugly look on his face as he was flying over at high speed. Diya had long, blazing golden hair. His long hair flowed with a faint green light, and his eyes were as fierce as a hawk's.

His true form was, after all, the divine beast, 'Jadewing Goldlight Hawk'.

"Utterly impudent!" Diya was enraged. "I shouted at him repeatedly to stop, but this Linley actually dared to forcibly kill Teresia!"

"In addition, that weapon he used just now…"

A dark light flashed through Diya's golden eyes.

Diya's divine sense range was extremely vast. Naturally, he had already discovered Linley's Life Overgod Sword. "That is an Overgod artifact! And it is Life-attribute. There are no other possibilities; the seventh Overgod mission that has been issued since the creation of the universe…was completed by him! The Overgod artifact is in his hands, but it is wasted there. If I had it, given my power…"

Diya couldn't help but feel a desire to seize the treasure.

This wasn't his fault. At the Chief Sovereign level, very few things were capable of attracting their interest. Overgod weapons, however, were chief amongst those things!

"Chief Sovereign, Linley actually killed Teresia and fused his wind-type Sovereign spark! His behavior goes too far!" The other Sovereigns of Wind sent towards Diya.

“Chief Sovereign, as I see it, we should take down Linley and have the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts punish him.”

There were a total of seven Sovereigns of Wind. Diya was the Chief, and so naturally he was the leader of this element.

Generally speaking, when Chief Sovereigns spoke, the other Sovereigns would respectfully obey.

Even someone as unruly and untamable as Teresia was incomparably respectful to the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya. After countless years of this, Diya naturally had grown accustomed to being a high, lofty figure. Only the other ten Chief Sovereigns were his equals. Linley had ignored his command; this naturally caused Diya to feel rather embarrassed.

He had killed Teresia. Fused the Sovereign spark. Without question, Linley’s behavior was akin to slapping Diya in the face.

Given the additional lure of the Overgod artifact…Diya came to his decision.

“Such impudence, such domineering behavior! He slaughtered another Sovereign. His behavior goes too far. The rest of you, hurry and transmit this information to the other Sovereigns, especially the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts! You must deliver the message…this Linley has violated the Pact of Sovereigns. It should be the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts who punish him.” The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, gave the order.

“Yes, Chief Sovereign.” The other Sovereigns all slashed through the void, returning to the Divine Wind Plane. They began to quickly spread the word, informing the various Sovereigns of the other elements.

“Hmph, this Linley…” The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, stared with his golden eyes into the distance as he continued to slash through the void.

The multicolored flows of chaotic energy in chaotic space rushed about wildly at high speed, but Linley and the other two just stood there, laughing and chatting.

“The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, has arrived.” Linley sent to Beirut and Bluefire.

Right at this moment, a green light leisurely shot over from far away. In virtually a single instant, roughly a hundred meters away from Linley, it halted and transformed into a tall human figure. Diya’s entire body was covered with a jade robe that was embroidered with golden threads. His jaw lifted slightly, and he swept his icy gaze towards them, a hint of arrogance in his eyes!

“Linley, do you admit to your crimes?” Diya said icily.

“Admit to my crimes? What crimes have I committed? Even if I did commit crimes, what does that have to do with you, Diya?” Linley stared straight back at Diya, showing not a hint of subservience.

Diya was instantly infuriated.

“Linley, you have fused a wind-type Sovereign spark, and are now a wind-type Lesser Sovereign! As a Sovereign under my authority, what sort of an attitude are you now displaying towards me?” Diya rebuked angrily.

Diya’s words were correct.

Seven Elemental Laws, Four Edicts. Every trillion years, there would be Planar Wars. Each Planar War was arranged by the Chief Sovereigns, and the Sovereigns under their control would be quite obedient. After all, their difference in power was obvious. Any Chief Sovereign of any attribute could be considered the leader of their respective attribute.

Soldiers would naturally need to be respectful to their leaders.

“Sorry. I, Linley, haven’t just fused a wind-type Sovereign spark. I’ve also

fused an earth-type Sovereign spark, and also a water-type Sovereign spark! Doesn't this mean that I'm simultaneously a Sovereign under the control of the Chief Sovereign of Earth and the Chief Sovereign of Water as well? Haha, I, Linley, am a single person, and yet I have to be divided up amongst three Chief Sovereigns?" Linley laughed as he spoke.

"Three Sovereign sparks?" Diya was surprised as well.

Fusing an additional Sovereign spark represented an increase in the power of Will. Linley's strength could thus be imagined.

"After fusing three Sovereign sparks, his Will is comparable in strength to an Intermediate Sovereign. That Overgod artifact isn't aligned to his nature; he won't necessarily be a match for me." Diya instantly came to this conclusion.

"What, after killing a Sovereign, you still dare be so brash?" Diya rebuked angrily. "You had best surrender and give yourself up. Follow me to go see the Chief Sovereigns."

"Surrender and give myself up? Forgive me for not being able to do this…" Just as Linley began to speak, and before he finished…

"Hmph, you've already fused three Sovereign sparks. Given your unfeeling, ruthless personality, as I see it, you will continue to slaughter other Sovereigns. Since you won't surrender, then…" The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, gave a cold snort, then his body transformed into a ray of green light as he shot towards Linley.

Beirut and Bluefire hurriedly parted, moving far away towards two sides, for fear of being struck by any remnant power.

"I'll let you be my first test." Linley mused to himself. He stared calmly as the enemy charged towards him.

The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, wielded a longspear in one hand and a shortspear in another. Moving at tremendous speed, Diya suddenly began to

spin, then the golden shortspear in his hand shot out at high speed. The shortspear spun as well, causing a spinning series of spatial ripples to appear in the space around it.

The strange thing was, space didn't shatter or tear apart.

"His power is focused and not yet released?" Linley was secretly surprised. No Chief Sovereigns could be underestimated.

The Life Overgod Sword appeared in Linley's hands. Not hesitating at all, he moved forward like a dragon leaving his cave. Although the tip of Linley's Life Overgod Sword was very minute, it pressed down like a mountain. Quite precisely, Linley's Life Overgod Sword's tip struck straight against the tip of the shortspear!

"Bang!"

In the instant they collided, the energy contained within the spear instantly exploded forth, but so too did the power of Linley's Life Overgod Sword.

Laws of the Earth – World Imploder!

After five thousand years of training, with respect to the Laws of the Earth, Linley had fused five profound mysteries, then developed three techniques that were able to build off each other in power. Generally speaking, Linley wouldn't use his fused Law attacks; these three techniques were meant for normal use. They covered up his true power! They were: World Breaker, World Imploder, and his most powerful, World Disintegrator!

"Whoosh!" The golden spear was struck and sent flying back, while Linley himself was knocked backwards as well.

"You actually blocked my attack." The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, grinned coldly, then shot forward at high speed. He swiped forward with one hand, seizing that golden shortspear.

A spear in each hand, Diya continued to draw close at lightning speed.

Linley focused his attention.

“Screeeeeeeech!”

Very suddenly, when Diya was roughly a hundred meters away from Linley, he emitted a piercing screech. Behind him appeared the illusion of a terrifying divine hawk that was ten thousand meters in size. That golden, crested divine hawk seemed incredibly arrogant, and it stared icily with its golden eyes towards Linley.

Innate divine ability – Demon Song!

“Ah!!!” Linley felt as though a heavy hammer was smashing viciously against his soul. This attack was so powerful that cracks appeared on even the scaly soul-membrane created by the Coiling Dragon ring.

“Die!”

Diya, after unleashing his innate divine ability attack, appeared in front of Linley, spinning like a tornado and striking towards Linley with both his longspear and his shortspear.

“Annihilator.”

Diya unleashed his most powerful attack.

The two spears bit down towards Linley like a pair of venomous dragons, but right at this moment, Linley, whose gaze had grown dim, suddenly stared back, his gaze instantly becoming as sharp as a knife!

“Ringringring…” The Life Overgod Sword began to shudder.

“What’s going on?” Diya was greatly shocked. He could sense a terrifying restrictive power bind him down.

The most powerful of the three attacks was ‘World Disintegrator’; it could

be said to be the advanced version of ‘Microcosm’. This attack involved five fused profound mysteries; compared with Linley’s Sword Intent attack, it was almost on par.

“Clatterclatter…”

A colliding sound rang out repeatedly.

Within ten meters, the space within a spherical region completely collapsed. Diya was knocked back flying, while Linley himself was also sent flying back.

“You, you actually…” Diya was truly stunned now.

“Hmph.” Linley stared coldly at Diya. “You want to kill me?”

This Diya’s innate divine ability was a very unique, pure sound attack that struck directly against the soul! Especially when paired with a Chief Sovereign’s Will, the power of the attack was so great that even the defensive membrane of the Coiling Dragon ring was cracked. Fortunately, Linley’s spiritual energy came from his triple-fused Sovereign power, and was a hundred times mightier than ordinary Sovereign power.

And so, Linley had withstood it.

An ordinary Sovereign, even a Chief Sovereign, would be in mortal danger from Diya’s attack.

First the innate divine ability, and then his strongest material attack, ‘Annihilator’. The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, clearly had used this double-attack with the intention of killing Linley.

“Hmph. I didn’t imagine that after fusing three Sovereign sparks, by relying on your Overgod artifact, you would be able to block my attacks.” Diya let out a snicker, but in his heart, his thirst for the Overgod artifact grew only stronger.

“Two consecutive techniques. This really is an incredible killing technique.” Linley stared at Diya, then let out a cold laugh. “Diya, you’ve unleashed your supreme attack, but I haven’t displayed mine yet.”

Diya’s face couldn’t help but change slightly. He couldn’t help but flash backwards, retreating a thousand kilometers away.

“Hmph.” Linley calmly watched Diya retreat.

Actually, if he wanted to kill Diya, Linley would have done so long ago. Just now, from start to finish, during his battle with Diya, Linley had only used earth-type Sovereign power, and not his fused Sovereign power. The power that Linley had just displayed was a mere hundredth of his true power.

Chapter 14 – The Gathering of the Sovereigns

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 14, The Gathering of the Sovereigns

“This Diya is indeed cautious.” Linley mused to himself.

At this moment, Beirut and Bluefire flew over from far away. Beirut sent mentally, “Linley, were you holding back your power just now?” Based on what Beirut and Bluefire knew, given Linley’s power, killing Diya should be fairly easy. After all, of the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns, the Chief Sovereign of Light was the strongest.

If he couldn’t even kill Diya, how could he kill Augusta?

“Just now, I didn’t use my fused Sovereign power.” Linley sent back.

“Indeed.” Bluefire and Beirut both let out relieved sighs.

“For now, it is best to hide your power. I imagine that after you killed Teresia, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts will come shortly. Hide your power for now; that will make it easier to bluff your way through later.” Beirut sent.

Linley was planning to do precisely this.

“I don’t want to reveal my power and frighten Augusta into fleeing.” Linley stared into the distance. “Diya has already returned to the Divine Wind Plane. Let us go as well.”

“It is time to face the Chief Sovereigns.” Beirut and Bluefire agreed as well.

He had killed a Sovereign. He had to at least have a reason or an excuse for it. At the very least, he couldn’t violate the Pact of Sovereigns.

If you had an excuse, but fled after committing the killing, even if you did

have a reason for what you did, most likely the Chief Sovereigns of the Four Edicts would be angry. Upon being pursued and attacked by the four mighty Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, that would be disastrous. Even the current Linley wasn't confident he could defeat the four of them.

"Whoooosh."

Linley flew towards the borders of the Divine Wind Plane, then ripped an opening in it. Linley, Beirut, and Bluefire, these three Sovereigns, flew through.

The Divine Wind Plane was vast and boundless. Linley's group of three withdrew a metallic lifeform and changed it into a ship that hovered above the sea. The three thus leisurely chatted aboard the ship, quietly awaiting the arrival of the Chief Sovereigns.

"Linley actually dares to stay here." Diya's divine sense had located Linley, and in his heart, he felt a hint of rage. "Time-wise, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts should have received the news by now. Given the speed at which they travel, in half a day or so, they should arrive in my Divine Wind Plane."

Diya currently had a belly full of fire.

Actually, this was understandable. First of all, he was the Chief Sovereign of Wind. Linley was a Sovereign of Wind, and yet was so unruly. The Chief Sovereign of Wind's dignity had been violated; naturally, he was dissatisfied. Second, before his very eyes, and even as he shouted, Linley had killed Teresia. How could Diya not be unhappy? And third, he wanted the Overgod artifact, and yet hadn't acquired it. Fourth, Linley's power made him feel threatened.

This fourth point is what caused him to feel enmity towards Linley!

Only…

Although he felt enmity towards Linley, Linley didn't care about Diya at

all.

The Infernal Realm, of the Four Higher Planes. Deep in the Chaotic Sea.

“Chief Sovereign of Destruction, that new Sovereign ‘Linley’, Beirut, and a Sovereign of Fire arrived at our Divine Wind Plane. Linley chased after and attacked Teresia, all the way into chaotic space. He killed Teresia, and then fused the wind-type Sovereign spark. Linley has completely violated the Pact we set down previously.”

A voice travelled across ten billion kilometers and directly entered the depths of the Chaotic Sea.

“Linley killed Teresia? Amusing, amusing!” A figure clad in black light shot out, instantly emerging from the depths of the sea. “It has been so long since I’ve met those three. It’s time we had a good chat.”

The blurry figure flew directly towards the closest teleportation array.

The Divine Light Plane. The air above the Godsgaol Sea.

“Swish!” A ray of white light instantly pierced through the heavens, so fast that even Highgods couldn’t see it clearly.

Augusta’s dazzling golden hair fluttered, and a hint of mirth was in his eyes. “Haha, I truly didn’t expect that Beirut, Bluefire, and Linley would dare leave the Yulan Plane, and even dare to chase and attack Teresia! This truly is an opportunity bestowed to me by the heavens.”

Augusta, upon hearing the news, had instantly hurried towards the teleportation array!

“However, according to this news, Teresia actually was killed. This Linley…was strong enough to kill Teresia?” Augusta was rather puzzled.

The news that had come from the Divine Wind Plane hadn’t stated that Linley was in possession of an Overgod weapon.

“Swoosh!”

Augusta shot towards the distant teleportation array.

“Linley became a Sovereign?”

“He actually killed a Sovereign and fused his spark?”

The Sovereigns who received this news were all stunned, one after the other. They all hurriedly moved at full speed towards the teleportation arrays, hastening towards the Divine Wind Plane.

Those who received the news the earliest and who moved the fastest were naturally the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. Next came the other Chief Sovereigns. Lastly came the various Sovereigns.

Sovereigns were normally quite bored. Their long, leisurely lives had made it so that they had unlimited amounts of time to waste. For one Sovereign to kill another Sovereign and then fuse the Sovereign spark? The effect was similar to a murder occurring in a small town of mortals. One could imagine how much attention it drew.

All the Sovereigns who received this information, without exception, hastened towards the Divine Wind Plane.

The Divine Wind Plane. One of the three teleportation array areas – the peak of Windflow Mountain.

“Rumble…” A blurry aura lit up.

A blurry figured emerged from the array, very naturally emanating a terrifying aura.

“Who is this?”

The surrounding soldiers held their breaths, feeling the pressure from this

aura. All of them stared in surprise and terror towards the blurry figure within the teleportation array. As soon as the light of the teleportation array vanished, the blurry figure suddenly soared into the skies, and in a flash, departed, moving so fast that even the Highgod soldiers nearby couldn't see what happened clearly.

"This…was a Sovereign! Definitely a Sovereign!"

"Speed that even I couldn't see clearly…it could only be a Sovereign!"

All of them cried out in surprise.

At this moment, far away, in midair, there was a beautiful young maiden with fiery red hair, whose entire body was covered by a violet robe. She was staring towards the northeast. She laughed, and two little cute dimples appeared on her face. "In a few thousand short years…I didn't expect that Linley would not only become a Sovereign, he would even kill another Sovereign. This little fellow…amusing, amusing!"

"From the day he was born until now, most likely less than ten thousand years have passed. This little fellow's rate of improvement truly is miraculous." The beautiful red-haired maiden smiled as she spoke to herself.

Given the age of the Chief Sovereign of Death, for her to refer to Linley as a 'little fellow' was indeed quite reasonable.

"Eh?" The beautiful red-haired maiden turned to look. "What a coincidence! She actually arrived at the same teleportation array as I did."

"Hurry up a bit." The beautiful red-haired maiden sent mentally.

"Don't be impatient. The other two haven't arrived yet." A gentle voice rang out, and a jade green light instantly appeared by the side of the beautiful red-haired woman. This was a beautiful middle-aged woman dressed in a long green robe. Her eyebrows were shaped like crescents, while her eyes seemed to glitter like the stars. Her smile was more than

enough to intoxicate anyone.

The strange thing was, she didn't emit any spiritual aura at all. Her spiritual aura was completely contracted. One could imagine how profound her accomplishments were with regards to the soul.

She was one of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, the Chief Sovereign of Life.

"Elder Sister." The Chief Sovereign of Life smiled and said, "Long time no see."

"Right, it has indeed been a long time. The last time we met was during the previous Planar Wars, a trillion years ago. Right, Wawaya [Wei'wei'ya], let me warn you in advance. This matter involves Linley…I personally watched this little fellow grow up. Unless it is necessary, don't kill him." The beautiful red-haired maiden said.

"Don't worry." The smile of the Chief Sovereign of Life was always that graceful. "However, if Linley's actions completely violated the Pact, then there's nothing I can do either."

"Right. I won't put you in a bad position. Hey, those two have come as well, one after the other. However, they didn't come through the same array as we did." The beautiful red-haired maiden looked into the distance. "Come, let's head out first."

Immediately, the two females of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts flew at high speed towards Linley's group of three.

Upon discovering that the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts had entered the Divine Wind Plane, the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, naturally immediately went to receive them. In terms of power, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts vastly surpassed the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns. In terms of status, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts also were far above them. When the other seven Chief Sovereigns encountered the four of them, they would all salute.

From this, one could tell how high their status was.

Diya stared into the distance at the four rays of light flying over. He immediately went to salute them. “Greetings, your Excellencies!”

Of the four newcomers, two were women. The Chief Sovereign of Death, who looked like a beautiful maiden, was actually as old as the Netherworld itself. After all, she was the very first living creature of the Netherworld. This was why the Chief Sovereign of Life addressed her as ‘Elder Sister’. Most likely, amongst the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, only the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was comparable to the Chief Sovereign of Death.

“Diya, come along with us.” A white-haired, white-robed elder laughed calmly.

Of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, the Chief Sovereigns of Life and Fate were able to completely contract their auras. If one shut one’s eyes, one would be completely unable to sense these two as being present.

“Yes.” Diya humbly followed behind the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

Above the sea. The metallic lifeform, in the shape of a vessel, was extremely stable.

“The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts have arrived.” Linley stood up and stared into the distance. Beirut and Bluefire raised their heads and looked over as well.

“The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. Were they able to detect your divine sense, Linley?” Beirut sent and asked.

“They shouldn’t have been. Just now, I first used my fused Sovereign power to make a test; the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts didn’t react at all. And then, I used earth-type Sovereign power; only then did they notice me.” Linley sent back. Although he had an advantage in divine sense,

Linley was still very wary of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

As far as power was concerned, not a single one of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts was weak.

“They are coming!” Linley’s gaze was already focused on five figures in the distance.

A beautiful red-haired maiden, a gloomy, black-robed man, a beautiful middle-aged green-robed woman, and a white-haired, white-robed elder.

These four…were the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts!

“The Chief Sovereign of Life and Chief Sovereign of Fate…their auras are completely retracted, and not a hint of them leak out. It seems as though they have both reached the Paragon level in the profound mysteries of the Laws.” Linley felt very vigilant; the current him was most likely not yet a match for them. “The Chief Sovereign of Death was the first living creature to exist in the Netherworld; her innate divine ability probably is not any weaker than Beirut’s. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction…judging from the attitude the other three Chief Sovereigns have towards him, he most likely isn’t the weakest of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.”

Linley’s heart was filled with astonishment.

Every single one of these four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts was unfathomable.

“Greetings to you, Chief Sovereigns.” Beirut immediately saluted.

“Chief Sovereigns.” Linley and Bluefire saluted as well.

When faced with the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, even the Chief Sovereigns of the Seven Elemental Laws would salute. At this point in time, Linley didn’t act with arrogance and try to put himself on the same level as the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

“Linley, we meet again.” The beautiful, red-haired maiden laughed as she looked at Linley. “The first time we met at the Abyssal Mountain, you had just barely reached the commander level. The second time we met, you had already become a Paragon. This third time, you’ve actually become a Sovereign.”

“Linley should have trained for less than ten thousand years by now.” The white-robed, white-haired elder of the four smiled as his gaze fell upon Linley. It seemed so amiable. “You truly are excellent!”

Linley hadn’t expected that as soon as he encountered the four, two of the Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts show him favor. This caused the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, to feel worry and anger in his heart.

“Chief Sovereigns, this Linley killed Teresia…” Diya said hurriedly.

The beautiful red-haired maiden smiled slightly. “More and more Sovereigns are coming. Let’s wait for them to all arrive before we speak.”

Right at this moment…

The other Sovereigns arrived!

First came the Sovereigns of Wind, then the various Chief Sovereigns of the other elements such as Augusta. Then came some other Sovereigns as well. Less than an hour passed between the first and final arrivals, and during this period of time, more than sixty Sovereigns arrived. It must be understood that there were only 77 Sovereigns to begin with; or, to be precise, Sovereign clones. For example, Linley had three Sovereign clones by himself.

Aside from a few Sovereigns who were on material planes or within their own divine planes, all the Sovereigns who had received the news had come.

“So many Sovereigns. In the past, I’ve never seen so many Sovereigns gather together.” Beirut sent with a laugh, and Linley looked around as well.

The Sovereigns were clustered together in groups of two or three, either floating in the air or standing atop boats.

Chapter 15 – Covetous Intent

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 15, Covetous Intent

“Rumble…” The waves of the sea continued to roll forward gently.

Linley raised his head, sweeping it past Augusta and Diya. The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, and the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, both looked back at Linley with gazes that held malice in them. In his heart, Linley just snickered. “Hmph. Augusta probably still has a desire to kill me. After that last battle, Diya probably feels enmity for me as well. Diya I can ignore, but as for Augusta…I’ll let him live happily for a bit longer. After the other Chief Sovereigns leave, I will kill Augusta!”

The other Chief Sovereigns wouldn’t just watch Linley kill Augusta and do nothing about it.

He had already waited for thousands of years. What was another moment?

“Linley. Beirut.” At this moment, the Redbud Sovereign and the Bloodridge Sovereign both flew over, laughing while waving to him.

“Linley, you really know how to make trouble.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed as he spoke mentally to him. “How short a period of time has it been? And yet, you’ve killed Teresia.”

“If you killed him, you killed him. However, Linley, you should have prepared an excuse for when the Chief Sovereigns question you, yes?” The Redbud Sovereign looked at Linley.

Linley laughed and nodded.

“We’ll have to trouble the two of you to help, soon.” Beirut laughed while speaking mentally to them.

“We won’t be able to help out that much. Everything is up to the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. The one right next to you, that’s the ‘Bluefire’ you mentioned to me last time, right?” The Bloodridge Sovereign looked towards Bluefire. “Bluefire, I am called Boson.”

“Mr. Boson.” Bluefire said modestly.

How often did sixty-plus Sovereigns have the chance to all gather together? The conversation between the various Sovereigns right now was quite lively.

“Alright, it is time to discuss Linley’s affairs.” A cold voice descended from on high. The speaker was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

The words of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction instantly caused all conversation to halt. It grew quiet.

“Everyone.” Beirut laughed. “Everyone, please, all of you, sit. After you sit, we can discuss the matter between Linley and Teresia.”

As he spoke, with a crackling sound, the metallic lifeform that had been in the shape of a giant boat began to transform again. The wide, spacious deck suddenly began to grow several chairs. There were sixty five in total, and the chairs were arranged into an enormous circle. Because it was in a circle, there were no differences in terms of status for seating arrangements.

“Everyone, let’s sit.” The beautiful, violet-robed, red-haired maiden gave the order coldly.

The Chief Sovereign of Death’s words caused the sixty-plus Sovereigns to all descend from the skies or fly over from other parts of the boat and move towards the seats. Everyone casually chose their own seats and sat down. Linley, Beirut, and Bluefire were seated next to each other.

“The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts!” Linley swept the four with his gaze.

The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were all seated next to each other as well.

“The three of them are all here. What a coincidence. After the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts leave, I’ll kill all three of them.” Augusta gave Linley’s group of three a glance as he murmured to himself.

Right at this moment, a gentle voice rang out. “Everyone, although the four Overgods have not forbidden us from killing each other, fusing an additional Sovereign spark means gaining an additional portion of Will. If we don’t limit battles amongst ourselves, most likely the Lesser Sovereigns and Intermediate Sovereigns will never have peace. Thus, in the past, the other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts and myself set up the Pact.”

If a lower ranked Sovereign has not offended a higher ranked Sovereign, the higher ranked Sovereign is not to wantonly slaughter the lower ranked one. Those who violate this will be jointly pursued and killed by the four of us!”

“Only Sovereigns as the same level of power are permitted to fight amongst each other.”

The speaker was the jade-robed Chief Sovereign of Life. The Chief Sovereign of Life’s voice was very gentle; even when discussing the Pact, her voice flowed like the waters of a spring, making the listeners feel peaceful.

The sea wind blew, but the ship atop the waves was extremely stable, and the Sovereigns seated atop it were all listening quietly.

“Today, however, Linley killed the Lesser Sovereign of Wind, ‘Teresia’.” The Chief Sovereign of Life swept Linley with her gaze, her tone abruptly changing. “However, Linley is only a Lesser Sovereign as well…”

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but feel delighted. This Chief Sovereign of Life seemed to be helping him.

“Your Excellency.” Suddenly, a voice rang out.

“Hrm?” The Chief Sovereign of Life’s warm, gentle gaze fell upon the speaker. The speaker was the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya.

Diya’s golden gaze was trained upon the Chief Sovereign of Life, but he said with respect, “According to that Pact, the evaluation of a person’s power rank isn’t just divided up into simply ‘Lesser’, ‘Intermediate’, and ‘High’ Sovereign sparks; rather, it is based on true power. For example, any of the Four Divine Beasts of the past were just Lesser Sovereigns on their own, but as a whole, they became referred to as being at the ‘Chief Sovereign’ level. This was because they were powerful!”

When experts battled, joining forces wasn’t always of great use.

Four Lesser Sovereigns that joined forces still wouldn’t be able to overcome an Intermediate Sovereign.

But the Four Divine Beasts were clearly different. Thus, during that Pact, it was specially established that the Four Divine Beasts, as a unit, were at the Chief Sovereign level.

“As for this Linley, in terms of power…” The Sovereign of Wind, Diya, let out a self-mocking chuckle. “I’m afraid that you’ll laugh at me, but not long ago, I intended to go capture this Linley, so as to allow the four of you, your Excellencies, to interrogate him. However, I didn’t expect that after Linley fused the wind-type Sovereign spark, I was unable to do anything to him, even when attacking him at my full strength.”

“How can this be!!!”

Instantly, a shocked uproar of noise.

The Sovereigns who had hurried here from the other planes all knew that Linley had killed Teresia, but they weren’t clear on Linley’s fight against the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya.

The main reason was, when Diya had ordered his Sovereigns of Wind to go spread the news, the battle between him and Linley hadn't started yet!

"Even if Linley fused an additional wind-type Sovereign spark, he would at most have an extra portion of Will. How could he be able to defeat you, Diya?"

"The difference between a Lesser Sovereign and a High Sovereign is very great."

A chorus of disbelieving voices rang out. These Sovereigns couldn't believe Diya's words.

An Intermediate Sovereign was nearly a hundred times stronger than a Lesser Sovereign, a difference of two portions of Will. As for High Sovereigns and Lesser Sovereigns, the difference was even greater.

"Linley didn't just fuse a wind-type Sovereign spark. Prior to this, he had already fused two Sovereign sparks!" Diya said.

"A single person who fused three Sovereign sparks?" Even the white-robed, white-haired elder, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, couldn't help but look at Linley.

"Can it be that Linley has killed other Sovereigns prior to this?" Some people immediately said.

"There are still a number of Sovereigns who didn't come today. Perhaps…"

Linley just quietly watched this group of Sovereigns chatter, while from Linley's side, Beirut suddenly laughed in a clear voice. "Everyone, I am Beirut. I trust that everyone has heard of the events of nearly twenty thousand years ago. Back then, I acquired four Sovereign sparks! I and this gentleman next to me, Bluefire, each used a spark. We let Linley fuse the other two sparks, and so Linley has only killed a single Sovereign, Teresia."

Quite a few Sovereigns looked towards Beirut, and they all fell silent.

News of what Beirut had done nearly twenty thousand years ago had spread quite quickly amongst the Sovereigns.

“Diya, even if Linley fused three Sovereign sparks, he would just have two more portions of Will than an ordinary Lesser Sovereign, and would be comparable to an Intermediate Sovereign. How could he have been a match for you?” A man with long blue hair and fish scales on his forehead laughed while speaking.

“Everyone, don’t forget; Linley is a Paragon.” The Bloodridge Sovereign smiled as he reminded them all.

“Even if he is a Paragon, hmph, would an Intermediate Sovereign Paragon be able to defeat Diya?” The other Sovereigns refuted.

“Everyone!” The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, intentionally let out a sigh. “I unleashed my supreme attack, but still couldn’t injure him. In fact, I wasn’t even able to force Linley to use the innate divine ability of the Azure Dragon clan. The reason why Linley is so powerful is primarily because he has an Overgod artifact!”

An instant uproar!

“An Overgod artifact?!”

The Sovereigns, including the many Sovereigns who had only been watching in amusement and had yet to say anything, were all stunned. The Chief Sovereigns, Augusta included, immediately turned lightning-fast to stare at Linley.

“It is true.” Linley, faced with the gazes of these people, nodded and admitted it.

A single stone which aroused a thousand meter wave!

“He actually has an Overgod artifact!”

The Sovereigns who had been treating this as an amusing diversion now completely changed their attitudes.

“By relying on an Overgod artifact, Linley was only able to have a slight advantage over Diya.” A golden-horned man with a seal of a lightning bolt on his forehead mused to himself. “For the Overgod artifact to fall into his hands is a complete waste! If I were to gain that Overgod artifact, given my power, I would have a chance at becoming comparable to the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts!”

This person was the Chief Sovereign of Lightning.

The Chief Sovereign of Lightning had another Sovereign clone, making it so that the Chief Sovereign of Lightning naturally had an additional portion of Will. His power surpassed the other Chief Sovereigns, but the Chief Sovereign of Light had an Overgod artifact.

Thus, amongst the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns, the Chief Sovereign of Light was number one, while the Chief Sovereign of Lightning was number two. The difference between them, however, wasn’t that great. If the Chief Sovereign of Lightning acquired an Overgod artifact, he would instantly surpass the Chief Sovereign of Light and even be able to pose a threat to the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts!

“Overgod artifact!” The Chief Sovereign of Lightning was already pondering how to take the Overgod artifact away. “This puny little Linley, even relying on the Overgod artifact, only has average power. He is no threat! The greatest problem right now is the other Chief Sovereigns. I want to take the Overgod artifact, but I imagine the other Chief Sovereigns wouldn’t be willing to accept this.”

The Chief Sovereign of Lightning swept his gaze across the other Chief Sovereigns.

Indeed, the other Chief Sovereigns were intrigued as well.

An Overgod artifact!

If they acquired it, they would surpass the other Chief Sovereigns!

“Hmph, all of you want to fight over it?” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, laughed coldly in his heart. “With me here, the only thing the rest of you can do is dream about it. However…the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts will be trouble.” Augusta was also worried; worried about the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

These simple words from Diya, exposing the fact that Linley possessed an Overgod artifact, caused all of the Chief Sovereigns who were qualified to fight over such a treasure to be intrigued!

“Linley, I’m not able to kill you, but the other Chief Sovereigns are.” Diya was very pleased with what he had wrought.

Linley wasn’t worried at all. He swept the eleven Chief Sovereigns with his gaze. “I imagine that quite a few Chief Sovereigns harbor greedy intentions in their heart. However, after I kill Augusta, I imagine that these Chief Sovereigns will be so frightened, they won’t dare do anything afterwards.” Linley didn’t feel the slightest hint of worry.

He had only revealed a hundredth of his true power.

All of the Sovereigns present understood that the seventh Overgod mission that had been issued since the creation of the universe had been fulfilled by Linley. During the previous period of time, the various Sovereigns had all been fooled by him. However, nobody quibbled about this. If a Highgod had fooled the Sovereigns, the Sovereigns would naturally be furious and take revenge.

But Linley’s power was now on the Chief Sovereign level. Who would take revenge?

In addition, the situation was currently quite delicate.

Quite a few of the eleven Chief Sovereigns felt greedy intentions towards Linley's Overgod artifact. But all of the Chief Sovereigns knew how the others felt as well! They were afraid that they would be the first to strike, but in the end, let the benefit go to the others. Thus, all of them were extremely cautious.

"Linley fused three Sovereign sparks, is a Paragon, and has an Overgod artifact. He does indeed have the power to fight Diya. However…" The Chief Sovereign of Life's voice grew cold and fierce. "Just because you are powerful, you can murder a Lesser Sovereign of Wind? This is completely against our original Pact."

Linley spoke out. "Chief Sovereign, before I fused the wind-type Sovereign spark, I wasn't that powerful."

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly, "Even before you fused the wind-type Sovereign spark, you had already surpassed an ordinary Intermediate Sovereign. To kill Teresia was a violation of the Pact."

"Everyone." The nearby Beirut hurriedly rose. "There are two things I must say. Originally, when Linley was still a Highgod, Teresia wanted to attack and kill Linley in the Infernal Realm. Fortunately, the Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, stopped him. The second thing was that when Linley was passing through chaotic space to return from the Okerlund Plane to the Yulan Plane, he was assaulted by Teresia midway through. If it hadn't been for myself and Bluefire going all out, Linley would have been killed long ago. Teresia had repeatedly acted against Linley; for Linley to take revenge shouldn't be considered against the Pact."

The black-robed Chief Sovereign of Destruction gave Beirut a glance. "He assaulted Linley in chaotic space? Who can testify to this."

"Your Excellency." At this moment, a voice rang out. "Although Linley and I have some enmity between us, I have to admit, back then, Teresia did in fact assault Linley's group. I saw this through divine sense; there was definitely no mistake."

Linley couldn’t help but turn to look.

The speaker was, amazingly enough, the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta!

Chapter 16 – The Verdict

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 16, The Verdict

“Augusta is helping me?” No matter how calm Linley was, he was still startled.

But immediately afterwards, Linley understood the reason. He couldn’t help but laugh coldly to himself. “Help me? He probably is worried that I will be judged as being guilty and be killed by the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. By then, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts will decide on what to do with my Overgod artifact. He won’t have the chance!”

Just after Augusta spoke…

“Chief Sovereigns.” Yet another person, a Sovereign of Fire with tousled, straw-like hair, spoke out. “In the Infernal Realm, it is true that Teresia had made trouble for Linley, trying to force Linley to hand over the nine soul pearls and the Overgod decree. Afterwards, it was the Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, who appeared to protect Linley. I can attest to this as well.”

Linley glanced at that Sovereign of Fire, puzzled. “He is a Lesser Sovereign of Fire. I have no relationship at all with him, and he isn’t qualified to try and seize the Overgod artifact. Why is he helping me as well?”

Two Sovereigns had spoken out in a row. The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts looked at each other, engaging in a private discussion through divine sense.

“I was the one to intervene. Naturally, I can bear witness as well.” The Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, laughed.

“Since that’s the case…” The Chief Sovereign of Life was about to pronounce the verdict.

But right at this moment…

“Your Excellency, back then, although Teresia might have gone a bit too far, he was a Sovereign, while Linley was merely a Highgod.” The Sovereign of Wind, Diya, said in an unhappy, icy voice. “Even if a Sovereign applies a bit of force to a Highgod, what’s the big deal? In addition, Linley didn’t even die. What, do we Sovereigns now have to be courteous to Deities? If we offend them a bit, they will be qualified to take revenge upon us?”

“No matter how wrongly a Sovereign treats a Deity, it is only natural and proper.” Diya spoke in a solemn voice.

The Sovereigns fell silent.

They had to admit that this was reasonable as well. In the eyes of Sovereigns, Deities were indeed nothing more than ants. Even if they lowered themselves to kill Deities, it was just a matter of the Sovereign losing face; there was no one who would say the Sovereign was wrong.

“After Linley became a Sovereign, Teresia didn’t offend him any further.” The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, snorted coldly. “Given the situation, Linley had no excuse to kill Teresia.”

Diya understood that his chances of acquiring the Overgod artifact were low.

And so, he wanted Linley to die right away! Dying in the hands of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts would be good!

“Haha…” Linley rose to his feet, staring at Diya. With a snicker, he said, “Diya, what sort of logic is this? A Sovereign killing a Deity is never wrong? This judgment of yours is only from the viewpoint of Sovereigns. But from the standpoint of Deities? If a lofty, exalted Sovereign were to come kill them, wouldn’t they feel hate, feel resentment? It isn’t that Deities refuse to avenge themselves; it is that they don’t have the power to avenge themselves!”

“Hmph. Even wild beasts with low intelligence, at the point of death, will bite back, much less Deities!”

Linley said solemnly, “Deities don’t have the power to take revenge, and so they will naturally die with a heart filled with resentment. But if they have the power to take revenge, they absolutely will!”

“In addition, the Pact of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts also mentioned the issue of whether or not there was enmity between the two sides. I ask you, was there enmity between myself and Teresia or not?” Linley asked.

Diya couldn’t help but fall silent.

“Enough.” An ancient, warm voice rang out. The speaker was the Chief Sovereign of Fate. “Diya’s logic is flawed. Enmity is enmity. How can enmity be divided up according to time or level? When one suffers humiliation when one is weak, can it be that after they grow powerful, they cannot take revenge? This matter comes to an end here. This situation is quite clear to me. I view Linley as not being in violation of the Pact. Not guilty!”

The words of the Chief Sovereign of Fate made it so that the other Sovereigns no longer dared to argue.

“I, too, view him as being not guilty. Everyone else?” The Chief Sovereign of Life smiled as she looked around.

“Not guilty!” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, laughed.

“Not guilty!” A black-haired, black-robed man spoke out.

“Not guilty!”

……..

Of the eleven Chief Sovereigns, aside from Diya, the other ten all viewed Linley as being not guilty! Actually, generally speaking, as long as the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts had pronounced Linley as being without guilt, that was enough. However, face still had to be given. The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts would still give the other Chief Sovereigns a chance to speak.

A clear laughter rang out. It was the violet-robed Chief Sovereign of Death. She swept the area with her gaze, then chortled, "Since everyone agrees, then we have come to a conclusion with regards to the matter of Linley killing Teresia. Linley has not violated the Pact of Sovereigns. Not guilty! This matter is ended. Everyone can leave now."

At this moment, Linley let out a sigh of relief.

"Linley. This was over even faster than I thought it would be. Today, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts didn't make any trouble for you, and aside from Diya, the other six Chief Sovereigns weren't hard on you either. There were almost no voices of dissent." Beirut sent mentally. "You have to thank the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts for how easily this matter was concluded."

"I understand." Linley nodded.

Actually, in a matter like this, whether one was found guilty or not guilty was completely up to the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. Today, it was quite clear that although the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts occasionally spoke in severe tones, in reality, they were partial towards Linley.

This matter was at an end. The sixty-plus Sovereigns bade each other farewell, then left, either on their own or in small groups. However, there was something quite odd; not a single one of the eleven Chief Sovereigns were in a hurry to leave.

Diya was the Chief Sovereign of Wind. For him to remain in the Divine Wind Plane made sense.

But why weren't the other Chief Sovereigns leaving?

"I wonder where Linley is going? I have to follow him and see which teleportation portal he goes through. That will make it easier to follow him." Augusta had this plan, but in his heart, he still didn't feel confident. "However, the other Chief Sovereigns, including the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, are actually still here. None of them are in a rush to leave. Can it be that the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts are also interested in taking the Overgod artifact?"

Of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, the Chief Sovereign of Life, Death, and Destruction all had material weapons as their Overgod artifacts. Only the Chief Sovereign of Fate was in possession of a soul-protecting Overgod artifact.

Atop the deck of the ship, the Redbud Sovereign flew over, then quietly said through divine sense, "Linley, Boson and I will leave now. We won't be able to help much by remaining here. But, by the looks of it…the Chief Sovereigns have remained, most likely because the majority of them have covetous desires upon your Overgod artifact. Thus, you must be careful."

"I understand. Thank you." Linley sent.

"Thank me for what? I'm not able to help you. These Chief Sovereigns… given your power, you will be able to deal with most of them. The ones you need to beware of are the Chief Sovereign of Light, the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, and the Chief Sovereign of Fate! The other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts already have Overgod weapons, and don't need to fight over another one. However, the Chief Sovereign of Fate rarely fights and rarely offends others. He might not engage. And thus, you need to worry more about the other two."

"Understood." Linley recognized this logic.

"Beirut, Bluefire, Linley, we'll leave now." The Redbud Sovereign and the Bloodridge Sovereign bade Linley's group farewell, then left.

Linley and the other two exchanged glances.

“Linley, what will you choose to do?” Beirut sent.

“Can I possibly cower back at a time like this?” Linley sent. “Grandpa Beirut, Bluefire, let’s head towards the teleportation arrays now. You two will first return to the Yulan Plane, just to be safe. After I kill Augusta, I will notify you.”

Beirut and Bluefire exchanged a glance, then nodded and agreed. They understood that by remaining here, they would only impact Linley.

“It’s for the best. However, Linley, your true power truly has surpassed that of the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns. Still, you need to be careful; the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts are truly too powerful. They are staying here as well, and I am worried that something might happen. Thus, even if you want to attack and kill Augusta, you have to be cautious and alert. Once the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts appear to have a desire to kill you, immediately flee.” Beirut sent.

Beirut and Bluefire didn’t want to see Linley being killed by the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

After all, Linley was the pillar of the three Sovereigns of Yulan.

“Don’t worry.” Linley laughed. “Come, let’s go to the teleportation array.”

Linley’s group of three immediately headed out, flying towards one of the teleportation arrays.

“Linley is headed out.” The Chief Sovereigns who had remained here hesitated only slightly, and then two of them began to follow after Linley’s group of three.

Augusta intentionally hesitated for a while longer, then flew towards the teleportation array as well. “Given the flying speed of Linley’s group of

three…they move at less than a tenth of my speed." Augusta, although confident, didn't dare to underestimate the Chief Sovereigns of the other Laws. Those Chief Sovereigns all had their own supreme techniques.

"Of the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns, in terms of speed, I'm the fastest! I will have an advantage in seizing the Overgod artifact." The Chief Sovereign of Lightning turned to glance at the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. "Of those four, three have Overgod weapons already and shouldn't intervene. As for the Chief Sovereign of Fate, given his personality, he probably won't go fight over a treasure."

The Chief Sovereign of Lightning also flew over, trailing after Linley's group.

The Chief Sovereigns all began to fly away, and even the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, began to fly back to his base.

Only the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts remained!

The four of them still didn't leave. At this moment, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were currently chatting privately through divine sense with each other.

"Wodred [Wu'te'lei'de], you are as confident as that?" The Chief Sovereign of Death smiled charmingly towards the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

"Orloff [Ao'fu], do you agree or not?" The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was looking at the white-haired, white-robed Chief Sovereign of Fate. And then, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction let out a cold laugh. "If you are afraid and won't agree, then forget it."

"Haha, if you are going to talk like this, and given how good the conditions we have agreed on are, how can I not accept?" The Chief Sovereign of Fate still had a smile on his face.

"Excellent." The Chief Sovereign of Destruction nodded slightly.

“Elder Sister, it seems we’ll have something fun to watch.” The Chief Sovereign of Life had a smile appear on her face as well.

While the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were discussing this matter, Linley’s group of three had already flown very far away, and were close to the teleportation array at Windflow Mountain.

“Windflow Mountain is up ahead. Grandpa Beirut, Bluefire, we’ll part ways here.” Linley hovered in the air.

“Be careful.” Beirut and Bluefire both felt nervous for Linley.

And then, Beirut and Bluefire both flew towards Windflow Mountain, teleporting through it and returning to the Yulan Plane. Even if battle was to erupt, the two of them weren’t qualified to interfere. Because the only ones who were…were Chief Sovereign level figures.

“Hmph. All six of them are following me.” Linley easily saw through his divine sense that there were six Chief Sovereigns following him. “Fortunately, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts haven’t come.” Linley let out a sigh of relief. The only ones he feared were the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

Moments later…

The first to arrive was the Chief Sovereign of Lightning.

“Linley.” The Chief Sovereign of Lightning smiled as he flew over and greeted Linley warmly.

“Oh, you live up to being the Chief Sovereign of Lightning. Your speed is so fast. I’m busy, though, so I won’t disturb you for now.” Linley smiled as he moved away, flying past the Chief Sovereign of Lightning. The Chief Sovereign of Lightning’s face changed slightly.

Linley just drew away from him, flying directly towards the second figure that was flying over, the Chief Sovereign of Light.

“Linley.” Augusta frowned. For Linley to voluntarily approach him aroused his suspicions, but then, he understood. “Hmph. Who cares what he wants. Linley’s power is just average. Even if he is a bit more powerful than I expected, he won’t be a threat to me.”

“Augusta.” Linley laughed as he went to welcome him.

“Is there something you need, Linley?” Augusta was still quite friendly.

“I want to thank you for your help just now, Augusta.” Linley smiled.

“I did what was proper.” Augusta laughed.

“Augusta, I have something important to do in the Divine Light Plane. By then, I’ll probably need your help. I wonder if you would be willing to help me, Augusta?” Linley said with a laugh.

Augusta’s heart lurched.

“He is going to go with me to the Divine Light Plane?” Augusta was now completely puzzled. “Can it be that Linley thinks that the little bit of power he has is enough to threaten me? Hmph, it makes sense. In his battle against Diya, he didn’t even use his innate divine ability. Since Linley seeks death, I can’t be blamed.”

Augusta immediately laughed. “Haha, of course I can.”

“Then let us go together.” Linley laughed calmly.

Chapter 17 – Tenfold Victor's Reward

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 17, Tenfold Victor's Reward

Linley's method was quite direct, but the effect was superb.

Actually, Linley wasn't worried at all; the chances that Augusta would refuse him were less than ten percent. Even if Augusta was extremely cautious and refused to let Linley go with him, Linley himself could head by himself to the Divine Light Plane and search for Augusta, then kill him.

"Linley, why are you going to the Divine Light Plane?" Augusta laughed and asked.

"When we arrive, you will know." Linley didn't respond.

The two flew at very high speed, arriving in the air atop Windflow Mountain in the blink of an eye.

Augusta also noticed the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, not too far away. He couldn't help but laugh coldly, "Such a pity. Given your power, if Linley wasn't travelling with me, you would have a chance. But now…you have no chance at all." Augusta glanced sideways at Linley.

He was still rather suspicious of Linley voluntarily following him.

However, due to his absolute confidence in his power, Augusta had quite generously allowed Linley to accompany him in departing.

"Augusta really is quite lucky. Linley is actually going alongside him." The other Chief Sovereigns, seeing this, were prepared to give up.

But just as Linley and Augusta flew towards the teleportation array, a voice echoed within Linley's mind.

“Everyone, an extremely important matter is going on. All of you, hurry over.”

Linley, hearing this, couldn’t help but turn and look towards the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. The speaker was the Chief Sovereign of Death. Linley was puzzled. “The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts didn’t chase after me, but instead stood there, discussing something. What, now they want us all to go over?”

“What’s going on?” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, frowned as he muttered something to himself.

“Then I’ll have to wait for a bit before I can go to the Divine Light Plane.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Haha, I’ll welcome you at any time. Come, the matters of the four Excellencies are quite important.” Augusta hurriedly laughed as well.

And just like that, Linley and the group of people all turned and flew back.

“Rumble…”

The waves struck against the shoreline. The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were currently in the air above an island.

“How queer.” Linley saw the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts hovering above the island. His own divine sense clearly saw that aside from himself and the seven Chief Sovereigns who were flying over, no others were present. “The Divine Wind Plane has quite a few Sovereigns. But…why did the Chief Sovereign of Death only summon the eight of us?”

Linley then instantly understood.

Seven Chief Sovereigns. Linley, himself, was at the Chief Sovereign level of power.

“Everyone is here.” The beautiful, red-haired maiden laughed as she looked

at the eight of them.

“Your Excellency.” The eight, Linley included, all saluted.

The Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns generally would refer to the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts as ‘Excellencies’, in order to show respect.

“I still remember how, a trillion years after the universe was created, the various Sovereigns were born as well. The eleven Chief Sovereigns were born, but of those eleven Chief Sovereigns, only eight have survived.” The beautiful red-haired maiden laughed calmly.

“Eh?” Linley was secretly surprised.

So, over the countless passage of years, even several Chief Sovereigns had fallen.

“Roughly a trillion years after the creation of the universe, there was once a battle between the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, and the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff. I trust quite a few people know the results; that time, Wodred was on a slightly lower level.” The beautiful, red-haired maiden laughed.

“Back then, Lord Wodred and Lord Orloff had already reached the Paragon level. That battle was truly astonishing.” The Chief Sovereign of Lightning smiled.

The beautiful, red-haired maiden nodded slightly. “Although they have reached the Paragon level long ago, over the course of countless years, both of them have risen in power significantly. I trust all of you know very well that their power has risen! In addition, today, after countless years, they are going to once again engage in a duel!”

The Chief Sovereigns were all stunned.

“A duel?” Linley was shocked as well.

At the level of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, their duels were no longer just simple spars. If they weren't careful, they might be killed.

"This…your Excellencies…you…?" The only woman amongst the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns, the Chief Sovereign of Water, stammered in surprise.

"It isn't a big deal to tell you." The black-robed Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly. "Orloff and I, aside from that competition long ago, also competed another time, after I acquired my Overgod artifact and he acquired that reward of Will. This will be our third competition."

"The reward of Will?" Linley was puzzled.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, smiled. "This is just a friendly competition. Let's go. We'll go to chaotic space." As he spoke, Orloff slashed his hand down…

A wide, spacious spatial rift instantly appeared ahead of him.

The four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts flew into it, and Linley and the rest of the eight immediately followed and flew in as well. And then, the spatial rift vanished, completely healed.

As the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, these four wouldn't compete casually.

After all, everyone stood at the very peak. Once they fought, it was very possible that one side would fall and perish. They were all wary of each other, and so they didn't want to fight amongst each other. From this, one could imagine how rare it was for two of the Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts to duel each other. The other Chief Sovereigns, including Augusta, all seemed quite eager to watch.

Within the void. Multicolored flows of chaotic energy streamed everywhere.

Twelve figures stood there within the void.

“Haha, Wodred, this time, you are the one who issued the challenge. You are so confident, eh? Don’t lose again.” The beautiful red-haired maiden laughed.

“Hmph.”

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, covered in a black-robe, immediately flew into the center of the void. The white-haired, white-robed elder, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, chortled as he too flew into the void. As for the other ten, they stood far away, watching.

“Your Excellency, after having been rewarded with Will that time, of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, Orloff should be the strongest, right? However, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, has an Overgod weapon. I wonder who won and who lost during their second duel?” The long jade-haired Chief Sovereign of Water asked the Chief Sovereign of Death.

“Couldn’t you understand what I was saying earlier? Naturally, it was Wodred who lost.” The Chief Sovereign of Death chortled.

The other Chief Sovereigns were somewhat in disbelief.

If they didn’t compete using Overgod artifacts, the Chief Sovereign of Fate would be stronger. But if they did…the Chief Sovereign of Fate only had a soul-protecting Overgod artifact. There was no way for him to increase his attack power. Why, then, did the Chief Sovereign of Destruction lose the second round?”

“As for why he lost? Hmph, that old fellow, Orloff…how much of his terrifying power have you truly witnessed?” The Chief Sovereign of Death laughed calmly.

The group of Chief Sovereigns fell silent.

“A reward of Will?” Linley couldn’t help but say. “Your Excellency, what exactly is a ‘reward of Will’?”

“You don’t even know about this?” The Chief Sovereign of Death looked at Linley, puzzled. The other Chief Sovereigns looked at him as well.

“I truly don’t know.” Linley laughed helplessly.

A smile appeared on the small, pretty face of the Chief Sovereign of Death. “Haha, you’ve trained for less than ten thousand years. It makes sense that you don’t know. The ‘reward of Will’ that I spoke of, is the reward that the Overgods will bestow upon those who win ten consecutive victories in the Planar Wars!”

“Ten consecutive victories?” Linley frowned.

“Right. Every trillion years, there will be Planar Wars. Each Planar Wars will have five competitions. The eleven planes, aside from the Life Realm, will all compete. Every trillion years, the ten planes will only compete a single time. The results of the battle have three possibilities; victory, defeat, and draw!

Linley nodded slightly.

He had participated in a Planar War before; he knew that victory and defeat was determined by the results within the two corridors above the Stellar River.

“According to the rules, if one’s plane wins ten consecutive Planar Wars, then the seven Sovereigns of that plane will all receive a reward from the Overgods. They will all be bestowed with an additional portion of Will, comparable to fusing with an additional Sovereign spark.” The Chief Sovereign of Death explained in detail.

Linley couldn’t help but feel startled.

“A portion of Will?” This reward was simply too extravagant.

“Linley.” The nearby Chief Sovereign of Life smiled and said, “Do you think it is easy to win ten victories in a row?”

“No.” Linley immediately understood.

He had undergone a Planar War. A Planar War required one side to dominate two Stellar Corridors simultaneously in order for that round to be considered a victory for that side. If only one corridor was conquered, then it would simply be a draw. Last time, if it hadn’t been for Linley and Magnus fighting, the Divine Darkness Plane probably wouldn’t have won.

“More than half of the Planar Wars end up in a draw!” The Chief Sovereign of Death snickered. “Occasionally, a plane will win a round. However, a trillion years later, the next battle might be a draw, making the earlier win pointless. After all, only by winning ten victories in a row would one be rewarded. Forget about ten consecutive wins; even five consecutive wins is inconceivable. But even if you won five times in a row, if you reached a draw in the next round, or lost the next round, then you would have to start from scratch again!”

Linley nodded slightly.

The various planes were all on par in power. Given the rules for ‘victory’ in the Planar Wars, to win ten rounds in a row…the chances of accomplishing it were so low as to be nearly zero!

“A trillion years each time. From the creation of the universe until now… there has been more than a million Planar Wars.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed.

“More than a million…” Linley’s heart clenched.

A trillion years each time? How long ago, then, had the universe been created? Linley felt astonished. Most likely, the Chief Sovereigns who had unlimited lifespan couldn’t even be bothered to calculate it. It was simply too long. They would just say ‘countless years’.

“But Linley, do you know how many times, over the course of countless years, a side has won ten rounds in a row?” The Chief Sovereign of Death smirked.

“This…I don’t know.” Linley couldn’t be sure.

“Once! Just once!” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. “Over countless years, there have been six cases where a side won nine rounds in a row. But on the tenth round of those six cases, all of the other planes would join forces to prevent that other side from winning a tenth time.”

Linley understood.

The Sovereigns didn’t wish for other Sovereigns to receive the reward of Will.

Thus, even if one side won nine battles in a row, for the tenth battle, the other planes would join forces.

“This sole success was achieved by the Higher Plane belonging to Fate, the Celestial Realm.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed as she spoke. “Precisely because of that, the seven Sovereigns of Fate were all bestowed with an additional portion of Will. Because of that, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, is naturally more powerful than us!”

Linley sighed to himself.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate was a Paragon to begin with. Now, he had gained an additional portion of Will. No wonder he was so powerful!

“In addition, Orloff never gets involved in mortal affairs. He is completely absorbed in training. He researches the fundamental principles behind innate divine abilities, and the reasons why a body can become powerful…” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. “For example…Orloff’s body is definitely ranked as one of the top three amongst the Sovereigns in terms of strength.”

Linley was secretly shocked.

This Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, an old fellow who never cared about worldly matters, was such a terrifying figure.

“Watch. They are about to fight now.” The Chief Sovereign of Death suddenly said.

Linley hurriedly looked over, and the other Chief Sovereigns also focused their attention, watching rapidly.

Within the vast, chaotic void, the white-haired, white-robed Chief Sovereign of Fate was quietly standing there, staring at his opponent…the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

As for the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, a heart-shaking black aura surrounded him. This black aura was so pure and so black that it devoured everything around it. Even the chaotic streams of energy were devoured by the black aura. Slowly, the reach of the black aura expanded until, moments later, it reached a thousand kilometers.

“Orloff is very powerful. However, this time, Wodred has developed a supreme technique as well.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sent towards Linley.

“What sort of supreme technique?” Linley was curious.

The Chief Sovereign of Death gave a meaningful glance at Linley, then sent, “In the past, the four ancestors of your Four Divine Beasts clan had a combined innate divine ability that was extremely powerful, so much so that it could threaten Chief Sovereigns! And now, Wodred has developed a supreme technique that is similar to that combined innate divine ability.”

Chapter 18 – Divine Beast, Sable Leviathan

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 18, Divine Beast, Sable Leviathan

“What? The combined innate divine ability of the four ancestors?” Linley’s eyes turned round.

And then, Linley stared towards the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, who stood there in the void. He mused, “Twenty thousand years ago, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction has obtained half of the divine beast blood essence from Grandpa Beirut. Right. Five thousand years ago, Gislason’s group of four loaned to the Chief Sovereign of Destruction a hundred Highgods of the Four Divine Beasts clan. Most likely, that was also for the sake of analyzing the innate divine ability of the Four Divine Beasts. And now, he has actually succeeded! Inconceivable. This Chief Sovereign of Destruction is indeed a terrifying figure.”

An innate divine ability could never be perfectly learned, but there was hope for mimicking a similar divine ability.

For example, someone like the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, if he analyzed it enough and also utilized the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts, he would still have a chance at mimicking it.

For example, Linley; the ‘Amethyst Space’ of the Amethyst Godbeasts was a very special supreme technique. Under the intentional guidance of the Redbud Sovereign, Linley finally understood the principles behind it. Although the power wasn’t as great as when the Amethyst Godbeasts themselves used the technique, the power was still tremendous.

The ten Chief Sovereign level experts fell silent, staring into the distance at the upcoming duel between the two mighty Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

“Crackle…”

A black light spread out to a thousand kilometers, and within the center of that black light, a blurry, sinister looking figure continued to hover there quietly.

“Orloff! I’ve borrowed from the innate power of a unique race that exists in the Infernal Realm, the ‘Tartarians’. After countless years, I’ve finally further perfected my supreme technique. This technique is now far more powerful than it was last time. This time, take another look at my most powerful attack.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s voice echoed in the void.

“Oh? From the sound of it, it should be excellent. Make your move.” The white-robed, white-haired Orloff continued to simply smile.

His black robe fluttering, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction stared coldly at his opponent. His hand waved…and a pitch-black longspear emerged in his hand. The black longspear was nearly two meters long. Even though he hadn’t attacked with it yet, the fierce aura that it naturally emanated was causing the surrounding streams of chaotic energy to crumble.

Linley and the other distant spectators were all astonished.

Everyone understood that the longspear was a Destruction Overgod weapon!

“Rumble…” The vast amounts of black light in the surrounding area suddenly contract, completely merging into the body of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

This caused a true void to appear within a thousand kilometers, without any energy being left behind at all.

“Rustle…”

A strange sound was emitted from the mouth of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. At the same time, behind the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, an enormous illusion appeared. The illusion was actually an awe-inspiring

ten thousand kilometers in length. This was an enormous, coiling creature that was similar to a serpent. Its soft, coiling body was covered with black scales. In addition, it had more than ten thousand sharp claws.

Ten thousand kilometers, with ten thousand sharp claws, and more than ten thousand sharp wings.

At first glance, the countless scales, claws, and wings seemed to be made out of black steel.

This monster's head was completely bald. It had only a pair of eyes, with one eye having white pupils and one eye having red pupils.

Linley, watching from afar, was completely stupefied. The true form of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was simply too frightening.

"What is this?" Linley whispered.

Linley's divine sense was constantly active. Because of his fused Sovereign power, others weren't able to sense Linley's divine sense at all. However, Linley himself was able to clearly see that after the Chief Sovereign of Destruction unleashed this technique, countless strands of spiritual energy were bizarrely swirling towards the Chief Sovereign of Fate!

The Chief Sovereign of Fate was like prey that had been trapped.

"You didn't know?" The Chief Sovereign of Death glanced at Linley, then sent, "Wodred is the very first creature that was born in the Infernal Realm. He lives in the depths of the Chaotic Sea. He himself named himself the divine beast, 'Sable Leviathan'. This innate divine ability is known as the 'Soul Cage'."

The Chief Sovereign of Death, being the first creature of the Netherworld, was of a similar age to the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, who was the first creature of the Infernal Realm. Of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, the two of them were the oldest.

“The divine beast, ‘Sable Leviathan’. Innate divine ability, ‘Soul Cage’?” Linley’s heart trembled.

Indeed, every single one of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were formidable.

“However, this sort of ability won’t have much of an impact on the Chief Sovereign of Fate. Watch…” The Chief Sovereign of Death laughed softly.

Linley had already seen it!

As the Chief Sovereign of Destruction has unleashed his innate divine ability, ‘Soul Cage’, he also swept over with his Destruction Overgod weapon at a speed so fast, it was akin to teleportation, as he charged at the Chief Sovereign of Fate.

“Rumble…”

The black spear shadow instantly transformed into countless spear shadows, covering an area of a thousand kilometers. They were like countless venomous vipers that spat outwards. Every single spear shadow spat out a ray of black light, and the countless spear shadows actually once more swirled around the Chief Sovereign of Fate. And then, the countless spear shadows seemed to flood towards and deluge the Chief Sovereign of Fate.

“Boom!”

All of the spear shadows vanished.

A single sword shadow pierced straight towards the head of the white-robed elder, the Chief Sovereign of Fate!

His most powerful, supreme attack…

Exterminatus!

From start to finish, the white-robed elder, the Chief Sovereign of Fate,

simply faced it all with a smile. He didn't even fight back. His body was surrounded by countless rays of black light and was under extremely great compression.

"Heh heh." The Chief Sovereign of Fate chuckled slightly, then stretched out his right now.

Strangely, although his entire body was covered and compressed by rays of black light, when he lifted his right hand, he seemed to be moving in a very normal manner. With the flip of his hand, the surface of his entire palm became covered with a strange golden light. His palm rose from his side and simply slapped against the sides of the black longspear. With just a low, rumbling striking sound…

"Whoosh!" The Overgod weapon was knocked flying back.

"How terrifying." Linley had been stunned by the Chief Sovereign of Destruction's attack. Now, he was stunned by the Chief Sovereign of Fate's simple yet strong deflection.

"Your Excellency, how is it that the Chief Sovereign of Fate can use his hand to strike against an Overgod weapon?" Linley couldn't believe what he had just seen. He couldn't help but speak mentally to the Chief Sovereign of Death.

The Chief Sovereign of Death laughed softly. "Orloff has an additional portion of Will compared to the rest of us to begin with. Naturally, his foundation is superb! But that isn't the most terrifying thing; what's truly terrifying is that Orloff is a madman."

"Madman?" Linley didn't understand.

"Right. Him and I have known each other for countless years, and I understand him very well." The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. "He has no desire to fight or struggle against others, nor is he greedy, nor will he abuse the weak…in short, he can be described as a man with an extremely good temperament."

“If he’s so good-natured, why is he a madman?” Linley didn’t understand.

The Chief Sovereign of Death sent with a laugh, “Linley, you tell me. He already stands at the peak, but instead of enjoying the fruits that being at the peak brought to him, he only enjoys a single hobby. That hobby is… increasing his strength!”

“Increasing his strength?” Linley didn’t understand. “How?”

“Research!” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. “This old fellow became the Chief Sovereign of Fate shortly after the universe was created, and became a Paragon as well. From then onwards, he began to research various unique races, research various innate divine abilities and innate powers. He analyzed where these abilities came from, and then…he used many of them on himself in order to increase his own power through such methods!”

Linley, hearing this, was completely stupefied.

“He can research innate divine abilities?” Linley felt speechless.

“Don’t think it strange. All races and creatures are formed from a soul and a body. Innate powers are generally linked to the blood and to the soul. This old fellow, over the course of countless years, has spent his time analyzing various souls in depth.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. “He is a madman. Do you know? His body’s strength was originally quite ordinary, but through his research, he has made it so that his body’s strength isn’t any inferior to mine.”

Linley felt shock in his heart as he heard this.

“A person who has, for countless years, absorbed himself in research. Who never relaxes or slackens, and who never enjoys any form of entertainment, and who never fights with anyone. You tell me, if he isn’t a madman, what is he?” The Chief Sovereign of Death asked.

After listening to this, Linley couldn’t help but turn to look at the distant

white-robed, white-haired elder.

“He has neither a wife nor any kids?” Linley asked.

“None!” The Chief Sovereign of Death shook her head. “I told you. His only goal is to increase his strength.”

“He…really is a madman.” Linley couldn’t help but say to himself.

Even Linley himself would, at most, make his clones train hard. He would at least have his original body accompany his wife, his family, his friends. Although he, too, dreamed of reaching the peak, in his heart, his family and friends were equally important. But this Chief Sovereign of Fate?

“He…probably views increasing his own power as a form of amusement.” Linley mused to himself.

This sort of stubborn, eccentric madman who had spent countless years doing nothing besides raising his own power…how terrifying must he now be?

“Thanks to Orloff’s influene, quite a few Sovereigns have begun to research and analyze some races with unique innate abilities. Only, how could doing this sort of research be easy? It requires both ability and patience. You might spend countless years, only for all of your efforts to result nothing.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sent mentally. “The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, is excellently patient. He has spent countless years deep within the Chaotic Sea. This time, he has come up with a truly supreme technique, and he wishes to truly defeat Orloff for once.”

“A truly supreme technique.”

Linley understood that this should be the attack that was similar to the supreme technique of the Four Divine Beasts.

“Not bad.” The white-robed, white-haired Chief Sovereign of Fate had the aura of a judge evaluating an entry. “Wodred, this ‘Exterminatus’ technique

of yours, by borrowing from the power of the Tartarians…mm, this technique of yours is nearly three times more powerful in terms of attack power than it was last time. Very well done! Alright…unleash the supreme technique you've developed!"

The white-robed elder truly did seem to be an eccentric madman who had seen something he liked. His blazing gaze was focused on the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

The sinister, black-robed Chief Sovereign of Destruction cracked his lips in a grin. "Indeed, I still have to use that technique in order to be able to threaten you." With a flip of his hand, the longspear within the Chief Sovereign of Destruction's hand vanished, and then a similar black longspear appeared. Only, this longspear was slightly longer.

"Sovereign weapon?" Linley said, puzzled. Why had the Chief Sovereign of Destruction put away his Overgod artifact and changed it to a Sovereign artifact?

Although he didn't understand, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction and the Chief Sovereign of Fate were making their moves against each other once again.

The ten Chief Sovereign level experts all focused their attention as they watched. Everyone knew that a terrifying scene was about to appear.

"Orloff." The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said in a slightly smug voice, "This technique of mine was developed after I spent nearly twenty thousand years analyzing the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts. In addition, I was extremely lucky to suddenly have a flash of insight. If it hadn't been for that bit of luck, I probably would've spent countless years fruitlessly. But the power of this technique…"

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction laughed as he looked at the distant Chief Sovereign of Fate. "You must be careful."

"Just come." The Chief Sovereign of Fate's eyes were shining.

The black-robed Chief Sovereign of Destruction immediately raised his head and let out a thunderous roar…and around his body, four phantoms suddenly appeared. An Azure Dragon Phantom, a Black Tortoise Phantom that appeared akin to a Dragonturtle, a Vermillion Bird Phantom that appeared akin to a Phoenix, and a White Tiger Phantom!

The four phantoms were only roughly two or three meters long, but their bodies swirled around the Chief Sovereign.

The Vermillion Bird Phantom was above his head. The Black Tortoise Phantom was beneath his feet. The Azure Dragon Phantom was to his left. The White Tiger Phantom was to his right.

“Rumble…”

The surrounding space within a thousand kilometers suddenly began to tremble!

In this moment…

Within a thousand kilometers, the flowing streams of energy in chaotic space suddenly, completely froze. The constantly fracturing and shattering spatial tears also froze.

“This…!” Linley was shocked.

“Impossible!” The faces of the Chief Sovereign of Death and the others all changed.

The ten Chief Sovereign level experts all sensed that the surrounding area had been completely locked. The ten of them were only affected by the remnant power, and yet all of them felt bound, making their movement speed lessen drastically. From this, one could imagine what sort of situation the Chief Sovereign of Fate, who had suffered 99% of the power from this, was in.

A translucent ray of light shot out at terrifying speed, diving into the Chief Sovereign of Fate's body.

The Four Divine Beasts, all Lesser Sovereigns, were able to threaten Chief Sovereigns with this innate divine ability.

How powerful, then, was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction when he used this technique? Although it wasn't the complete, perfect Four Divine Beasts fused innate ability, the power of this technique wasn't much weaker.

However, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction didn't relax at all. After releasing this technique, immediately afterwards…

"Swoosh!"

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, wielding that black longspear, immediately charged towards the Chief Sovereign of Fate, stabbing directly towards the white-robed Chief Sovereign of Fate with his spear.

Chapter 19 – Orloff's Invitation

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 19, Orloff's Invitation

Within the void, the white-robed Chief Sovereign of Fate continued to stand there calmly.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

Around the torso, the legs, and the shoulders of the Chief Sovereign of Fate, a hazy light swirled and constricted. It seemed like water that was boiling and bubbling around him. The hazy aura of light frothed atop the Chief Sovereign of Fate, but the Chief Sovereign of Fate's gaze was locked upon the spear that was stabbing towards him.

The black spear came piercing over.

In this moment, the Chief Sovereign of Fate's gaze suddenly grew sharp.

"Whoosh…" His right hand suddenly swept out, seemingly sweeping the heavens before him. Even the locked space around him began to tremble.

"Whap!"

The right hand of the Chief Sovereign of Fate actually trapped the long black spear's spearhead.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was awestruck at this. And then, he let out a resigned sigh. "I still lose."

"Wodred." The Chief Sovereign of Fate's eyes were flashing with a strange light, and he hurriedly asked, "What is the name of this technique you came up with?"

"This was borrowed from the supreme technique of the Four Divine Beasts.

The name of it is ‘Spacetime Paradox.’”

“Spacetime Paradox? An extremely powerful attack. After all these years, I finally felt the aura of death stretch towards me.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate let out a sigh.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction let out a forlorn chuckle. “Enough, Orloff. I lost, I lost! This technique, Spacetime Paradox, is definitely the most powerful attack I have ever developed. It increased my power at least a thousandfold. And yet, this technique still is unable to overcome you. Haha…” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s laugh contained some grief and resignation within it.

“Wodred.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate said solemnly, “I can tell you clearly that this technique of yours was primarily focused on attacking the soul! But I, I have a soul-protecting Overgod artifact! Thus, this supreme attack of yours, Spacetime Paradox, is ineffective against me. Aside from a soul attack component, your Spacetime Paradox also impacts both space and time, but over the course of countless years, I have primarily focused my research on material aspects, such as body strengthening and material attacks. Despite that, I still had to use all my strength to be able to able to block your spear, despite that constrictive power.”

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction let out a sigh.

He understood as well.

He immediately understood, as soon as he had developed Spacetime Paradox. The other two Chief Sovereigns definitely were no match for him now!

Given how Spacetime Paradox clashed against the soul, someone who did not possess a soul-protecting Overgod artifact would definitely not be able to resist it. But unfortunately, the Chief Sovereign of Fate just so happened to have one! The Chief Sovereign of Fate had completed the Overgod mission and selected a soul-protecting Overgod artifact. Many felt that he was foolish, that his choice was useless.

After all, how could other Chief Sovereigns possibly pose a threat to his soul?

But who would have imagined that at this point, it proved effective.

“You should remember our agreement.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate’s gaze was hot.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction looked at him, then let out a bitter laugh. “Naturally, I will honor it.”

The other ten Chief Sovereign level individuals who were watching this battle from far away, upon seeing the conclusion, were stupefied.

“How can that be? Lord Orloff…even under that sort of constriction, he was still able to block such a quick attack.” The Chief Sovereign of Water couldn’t believe it at all. Just now, the technique ‘Spacetime Paradox’ had exerted such a powerful constrictive force on the surrounding area that even the distant Chief Sovereigns felt it.

“Lord Orloff actually won.”

The Chief Sovereigns were truly stunned.

“Terrifying.” Linley only said this single word to himself.

The Chief Sovereign of Life smiled. “The combined attack of the Four Divine Beasts had an impact on space and time, but it was still primarily a soul attack! Orloff has a soul-protecting Overgod artifact, and so when this technique was applied to him, all it was able to do was bind him. But despite being bound, he was still able to block that spear.”

“How useless.”

The Chief Sovereign of Death couldn’t help but curse softly.

Linley couldn't help but look towards the Chief Sovereign of Death. He had never seen this adorable, beautiful maiden be so irritated.

"Linley." The Chief Sovereign of Death suddenly sent mentally to Linley.

"What is it?" Linley looked at the Chief Sovereign of Death, puzzled.

"There is something which I hope you can promise me." The Chief Sovereign of Death sent solemnly.

"Please speak." Linley said hurriedly, but in his heart, he still felt puzzled. The Chief Sovereign of Death, ask him for something?

The Chief Sovereign of Death sent, "Remember this. No matter what…the three of you from Yulan, no matter what, are not to give the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts to Orloff!"

"Eh?" Linley was completely puzzled. "Chief Sovereign, can you tell me why?"

"Ugh." The Chief Sovereign of Death let out a sigh. "Linley. Do you know why, just now, Wodred switched his Overgod weapon for a Sovereign weapon?"

"I truly don't." Linley had been puzzled earlier as to why the Overgod weapon had been swapped for a Sovereign artifact. Didn't that mean he was lowering his own attack power?

The Chief Sovereign of Death sent mentally, "Actually, this time, after we four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts rendered our verdict upon you, all of you left. At that time, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, suggested a competition with the Chief Sovereign of Fate. However, the Chief Sovereign of Fate didn't agree, because…the Chief Sovereign of Fate disdains competitions."

"Afterwards, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction mentioned the supreme technique that he had developed, based on the innate divine abilities of the

Four Divine Beasts." The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. "At that time, we were all shocked. As for Orloff, that madman was intrigued. However, he could imagine the power of a supreme technique that was akin to the combined innate divine abilities of the Four Divine Beasts. And so that madman Orloff didn't feel confident either. Thus, they made an agreement."

"What agreement?" Linley asked hurriedly.

"The agreement was, once the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was prepared to release his supreme technique, he was only permitted to use his Sovereign weapon to attack. If the Chief Sovereign of Fate was unable to raise his hand to block the Sovereign weapon, that would be considered the Chief Sovereign of Fate having lost! If the Chief Sovereign of Fate was hit by the attack but still was able to block, then he would be considered the victor." The Chief Sovereign of Death said.

Linley understood as well.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, by relying on his understanding of the Laws and his own power, was able to use his hand to block an Overgod weapon.

However, once he was struck by Spacetime Paradox, the Chief Sovereign of Fate's speed would drastically lessen. If he wasn't able to block the attack, then if the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was using his Overgod weapon, the Chief Sovereign of Fate would perish!

"Thus, when using that technique, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was not to use his Overgod weapon. The two were simply sparring, after all." The Chief Sovereign of Death shook her head and sighed. "But they added a bet to their competition."

"What bet?" Linley said, puzzled.

"If the Chief Sovereign of Destruction won, the Chief Sovereign of Fate would have to explain the principles of his supreme technique to him. But if the Chief Sovereign of Fate won, then the Chief Sovereign of Destruction would also have to explain the principles of his supreme technique." The

Chief Sovereign of Death let out a sigh.

“But…” Linley was rather stunned.

“At first, Wodred was unwilling to accept these stakes, but Orloff clearly wanted to know the principles of the supreme technique very much, and so he said that if Wodred didn’t accept these stakes, he wouldn’t agree to the duel.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sighed. “It was Wodred who wanted to challenge Orloff, after all. In addition, he was very confident in himself, and so he agreed to the bet.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Linley, I know…even if one understands all the principles of an attack akin to an innate divine ability, actually executing it…without the blood essence, the power would be much, much lower, even if the attack could be executed.” The Chief Sovereign of Death looked at Linley. “Thus, Linley, the three of you in the Yulan branch are not to give Orloff the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts, no matter what.”

The Chief Sovereign of Death spoke quite bluntly.

“I understand. I won’t give him the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts.” Linley nodded.

“Alas. Actually, by giving you these instructions…” The Chief Sovereign of Death stared far into the void, at the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction and Fate. “Ever since he came up with that technique, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction has surpassed me and Wawaya. The balance of power between us four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts is gone.”

Linley nodded.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate had a protective Overgod artifact, but the Chief Sovereigns of Death and Life did not. Who could possibly resist the Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s ‘Spacetime Paradox’ attack?

“This…” Linley couldn’t help but look towards the Chief Sovereign of Death.

“Wodred and Orloff are able to counter each other; they shouldn’t go so berserk as to act against me and Wawaya.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sent with a laugh. “It is much like how we four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts wouldn’t go act against the Chief Sovereigns of the Laws. Since we are already at the peak, if we kill everyone else at our level, won’t we feel lonely?”

The words of the Chief Sovereign of Death were actually meant to comfort herself.

“They can research. Why can’t you, Chief Sovereign?” Linley said consolingly.

“I don’t have the patience.” The Chief Sovereign of Death let out a soft laugh. “If we are to actually fight though, so long as Wawaya and I join forces, it’s hard to say who will be the one to perish!”

At this moment, the Chief Sovereign of Death and the Chief Sovereign of Life exchanged a glance, as though discussing something.

Within the void, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction and the Chief Sovereign of Fate were currently chatting through divine sense.

“Haha, how marvelous.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate’s eyes were filled with strange colors. “This ‘Spacetime Paradox’ of yours truly is extremely miraculous. Although the power is inferior to the combined innate divine ability of the Four Divine Beasts, it just so happens to avoid the problem of the differences in the souls. Wodred, I truly admire you.”

“Hmph.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction had an ugly look on his face.

“Unfortunately, this technique can only be unleashed when relying on the lineage of the Four Divine Beasts.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate let out a sigh. After speaking, he couldn’t help but turn to look at ‘Linley’, amongst

the other ten in the distance.

The battle was over. The twelve Chief Sovereign level experts all departed from chaotic space and returned to the nearby Divine Wind Plane.

The cool, clear sea wind blew. There, above the sea, those twelve figures separated as well.

“Swish!” Not far away, atop the sea, a metallic lifeform flew past. The Deities within the metallic lifeform glanced towards the twelve in the distance. They didn’t pay any attention. How could they have imagined that those twelve floating figures were twelve Chief Sovereign level experts?

“Orloff, last time, you said you were going all out. This time, you also said that you went all out.” The beautiful, red-haired maiden looked at Orloff and let out a snort. “Are you hiding part of your power?”

Orloff, that old fellow, let out a resigned chuckle. “This time, I really did go all out. You have no idea…when Wodred used that technique just now, I was badly frightened. That soul attack is so strong that if it wasn’t for my soul-protecting Overgod artifact, I would truly have been finished. Even the distortion on spacetime was enough to make it so that I could just barely deflect that spear.”

“Hmph. Keep acting smug.” The beautiful, red-haired maiden let out a snort.

Linley and the others could only watch quietly.

After all, the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were on good terms with each other. It wouldn’t be appropriate for others to interrupt.

“Linley.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, suddenly turned to look towards Linley. Chuckling, he said, “Are you free? If you are, how about you come pay a visit to my ‘Orloff Gardens’ in the Celestial Realm? What do you say?”

The Orloff Gardens, in the Celestial Realm, was viewed as the most sacred of areas.

This was a massive garden that floated extremely high in the air, and it was also the residence of the Chief Sovereign of Fate. Even ordinary Sovereigns, without Orloff's permission, wouldn't dare to enter the Orloff Gardens at all. Normally, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, spent all his time in the gardens in research.

"Linley, remember what you promised me." The Chief Sovereign of Death sent to him. Not just her; even the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction and Life hurriedly looked towards Linley.

As these three saw it, Orloff's defense could be described as unbreakable.

If Orloff was to then learn the 'Spacetime Paradox' technique, who could be a match for him? Although they all knew that, given Orloff's nature, he wouldn't kill them, but…they still didn't want for Orloff's power to rise too much.

Linley laughed awkwardly, then said helplessly, "Lord Orloff, I truly am sorry. I have something important to do first."

"Haha, no rush, no rush. When you have time, you can come find me later." Orloff smiled. "Alright, everyone. I'll go back now."

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, chortled, then left on his own.

"Linley." The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, who had been silent this entire time, beamed as he looked towards Linley. He sent mentally, "Weren't you going to go to my Divine Light Plane?"

Chapter 20 – Fight, Kill!

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 20, Fight, Kill!

“The Divine Light Plane? Right.” Linley sent back and laughed. “Just now, when we were watching those two Chief Sovereigns battle, we had to delay that slightly.”

“Let’s head out now, then.” Augusta smiled in such a friendly manner, as though he were about to invite his closest friend over.

But between Linley and Augusta, there clearly existed multiple enmities.

The first was that Linley’s ancestors had been killed by Augusta. The second was Beirut and Augusta had enmity between them as well. The third was that when Linley was a Highgod, Augusta had threatened Linley to force him to hand over the nine soul pearls, and had wanted to kill Linley. Fortunately, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had appeared.

But right now, it seemed as though the two of them had forgotten all these things.

“Haha, let’s leave together.”

Linley chortled, and thus accompanied Augusta to fly back towards the distant Windflow Mountain.

“Augusta.” A voice rang out, and a figure suddenly flew over, moving like a bolt of lightning.

Linley turned to look. This person had long, golden yellow hair, with the seal of a lightning bolt on his forehead. It was the Chief Sovereign of Lightning. The Chief Sovereign of Lightning chortled, “Augusta, you are going back? What a coincidence. I just so happen to have an important affair in your Divine Light Plane as well.”

“Oh?” Augusta had a sudden thought, then smiled. “Linley is coming as well. Let’s go together.”

Linley couldn’t help but feel surprised, and he gave Augusta a glance as he mused, “Augusta relies on his Overgod artifact for his power, but this Chief Sovereign of Lightning has a Sovereign clone. In terms of Will alone, he is on a level higher than Augusta. In addition, he is of the lightning-element, and so his speed is exceedingly quick. If he gets involved…can it be that Augusta feels confident in being able to deal with him?”

This Chief Sovereign of Lightning, all smiles, followed Linley and Augusta towards Windflow Mountain.

Halfway over, a voice suddenly rang out in Linley’s mind. “Linley, behind you, there are five other Chief Sovereigns who are following. There are two with you right now. It seems as though all seven of these Chief Sovereigns are rather envious of your Overgod artifact. How about you come to my Netherworld instead.”

The speaker was the Chief Sovereign of Death.

Linley couldn’t help but chuckle. His divine sense surpassed that of all of the Chief Sovereigns, and so he had discovered those five behind him long ago. What shocked Linley was that the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, still dared to follow him as well.

“Thank you, Chief Sovereign. I’m completely able to deal with this matter by myself.” Linley sent back.

“Oh? It seems you are quite confident in yourself. Since you say that, be careful that in the future, you won’t even have the chance to feel regret.” The Chief Sovereign of Death sent, and then no longer paid attention to Linley. She quickly used Windflow Mountain’s teleportation array and left the Divine Wind Plane, returning to the Netherworld.

Linley chuckled.

In terms of power, who did he fear?

Of the eleven Chief Sovereigns, the only one who caused Linley to feel dread was…the Chief Sovereign of Destruction!

“Once I use my fused Sovereign power, my strength will increase a hundredfold. The Chief Sovereigns of the Laws are not worthy of concern. Even the Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts…the Chief Sovereigns of Death and Life wouldn’t necessarily be able to catch up to me when I’m flying. As for the Chief Sovereign of Fate, the reason he can resist ‘Spacetime Paradox’ is because of his soul-protecting Overgod artifact. It isn’t that he himself is particularly powerful. In terms of power, he isn’t that much stronger than the other Chief Sovereigns. After all, he doesn’t have an Overgod weapon! Against him, I still feel confident in being able to stay alive. Only…the Chief Sovereign of Destruction!”

The supreme technique of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, ‘Spacetime Paradox’, was simply too terrifying.

When that technique was unleashed, the power of his soul attack was a thousandfold greater! The other Chief Sovereigns, in the face of that attack, would definitely perish. Only the Chief Sovereign of Fate could resist it.

“However, no need to worry about him.” Linley was very confident. “First of all, in the eyes of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, he most likely only views the Chief Sovereign of Fate as being a match for him. Secondly, once I completely fuse the four types of profound mysteries from four Laws, my power…even the Chief Sovereign of Destruction won’t be able to do anything to me.”

Linley was very confident.

His soul was extremely powerful to begin with. If he then fused four profound mysteries from different Laws, why would he need to fear ‘Spacetime Paradox’?

Actually, Linley's potential was greater than just this, because Linley didn't want to go kill the other Sovereigns! Even if Linley didn't make a breakthrough in the Laws, if Linley were to fuse with a fire-type Lesser Sovereign Spark…then his power would increase a hundredfold! Linley, at one leap, would rise to a level of power that was capable of threatening the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

Only, if others didn't make trouble for him, Linley didn't want to go kill the other Sovereigns for no reason either.

This was because, by relying on his own training, he would still have the ability to surpass all of the Chief Sovereigns.

Windflow Mountain.

Linley, the Chief Sovereign of Light, the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, and three other Chief Sovereigns were standing besides the teleportation array.

"Divine Light Plane." The Chief Sovereign of Light produced a Sovereign's medallion.

Sovereigns generally wouldn't reveal their true identities, even when using teleportation arrays.

A blurry light arose as the teleportation array was activated. In the moment of activation, a smile appeared on Linley's face. Smiles also appeared on the faces of Augusta and the others.

"Whoosh!"

Just a few moments after Linley's group of three departed, five figures descended from the skies. It was the other five Chief Sovereigns.

"Hmph. That Augusta and Hurley [Hu'er'lei], they are stronger than the rest of us five. I imagine all of us have the same idea today. On this trip…if the five of us move separately, most likely, none of us will have a chance to acquire the Overgod artifact." The Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, glanced

towards the other four. “Thus, it’s best if we join forces. Once the opportunity comes, we will rely on our own power to acquire the Overgod artifact.”

The other Chief Sovereigns all nodded in agreement.

They all understood what the others were thinking.

If after acquiring the Overgod artifact, Linley was able to rise in power to the level of the Chief Sovereign of Light, most likely the other Chief Sovereigns wouldn’t dare to have these sorts of thoughts.

But Linley, after possessing the Overgod artifact, was only comparable to the Chief Sovereign of Wind? Naturally, nobody would fear him. The Chief Sovereign of Wind was one of the weakest of the rest of the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns.

“The Divine Light Plane.”

The other five Chief Sovereigns also entered the teleportation array, and the Chief Sovereign of Wind spoke out calmly while revealing his Sovereign medallion.

“Yes, milord.” The soldiers hurriedly once more activated it.

In the blink of an eye, the five Chief Sovereigns were teleported away.

The soldiers at the peak of Windflow Mountain were puzzled.

“How bizarre. The two groups of people that came back to back all had Sovereign medallions. It seems that most of them are Sovereign’s Emissaries. Why have so many major figures gone to the Divine Light Plane?”

“For so many Sovereign’s Emissaries to go there…there must be a treasure of some sort.”

The bored soldiers began to casually chat about this matter.

How could they have known…that the eight people who had just passed were all at the Chief Sovereign level!

Linley's group of three emerged from an island, then flew away from it.

"Linley, where are you going to go?" Augusta laughed in a very friendly manner.

"Me? Haha…to be honest, this is my first time coming to this Divine Light Plane. However, my divine sense has already located the person I am looking for in the south." Linley laughed as he pointed towards the south. "However, this friend of mine is an Angel."

"Angel?" Augusta was startled.

"Right. Thus, I would like to ask you, Augusta, to help out. I hope that you can permit my friend to regain freedom and free will." Linley laughed.

"Angels are all born from the 'Angelic Resurrection Pool'. To have them regain freedom? Hard, hard. Hard!" Augusta frowned, saying the 'hard' word three times in a row.

"Very hard?" Linley laughed and asked.

"What's so hard about it? I know a simple method." The nearby Chief Sovereign of Lightning laughed clearly.

"What method?" Linley turned to look.

The Chief Sovereign of Lightning laughed loudly. "The Angelic Resurrection Pool is connected to the souls of the Sovereigns. As long as you kill the Sovereign, the Angels that are controlled by the Angelic Resurrection Pool will naturally regain their freedom."

"Hurley." Augusta frowned, looking at him. In an icy voice, he said, "Why

have you come to my Divine Light Plane?" How could Augusta not understand what the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, was thinking? Even if he was an idiot, he would know that it was for the Overgod artifact.

"I…" The Chief Sovereign of Lightning raised an eyebrow, then laughed. "I'm here to search for a friend as well. Although he isn't an Angel, he just so happens to be in the south as well." He even pointed while speaking.

Augusta laughed coldly in his heart.

Searching for a friend?

Neither Linley nor Hurley were here to simply search for a friend.

"Hurley." Linley turned to look and said with intentional surprise, "Did you just say that if I want an Angel to regain freedom, all I have to do is kill the Angel's Sovereign!"

"Right." Hurley laughed intentionally as well. "But the Chief Sovereign of Light has seven Sovereigns. Given your power, Linley, it wouldn't be hard to kill the other six. However…the toughest one will be the one in front of you, Augusta. He is very powerful, even more powerful than the Diya that you battled."

Augusta began to feel that the atmosphere was turning dark.

"What's going on today? Aside from the two of you who have come to search for friends, the other five Chief Sovereigns have come as well. Can it be that they are searching for friends as well?" Augusta said with a smirk.

Linley turned to glance backwards.

The other five Chief Sovereigns? Linley didn't care about them at all.

"Augusta." Linley looked towards Augusta, then laughed helplessly. "For the sake of my friend, then…"

“You’ll have to die!”

Linley’s voice rang out, and as it did, a jade green longsword appeared in his hand. It was the Life Overgod Sword. Wielding the Life Overgod Sword in his hand, Linley, not hesitating at all, stabbed straight towards the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, who was next to him. The blow was aimed for the head!

The inky green fused Sovereign power instantly activated!

“Rumble…”

In the instant the fused Sovereign power filled the Life Overgod Sword, the world seemed to shatter.

“Hmph.” Augusta, who had been completely confident when the sword appeared, suddenly had a changed look on his face. He hurriedly pulled out a sword of light as well, and he slashed out in a mysterious arc as he blocked the sword attack.

“Bang!”

It was as though countless mountains were crashing down upon him.

“Crack!” Augusta, who had been caught somewhat off-guard to begin with, actually had his sword of light be smashed backwards and land against his own body. His own body began to bleed from the impact, and he spat out a large mouthful of blood.

“Whooosh.”

The surrounding space within a thousand kilometers had completely collapsed, as a terrifying large hole had appeared. Augusta himself was smashed straight into chaotic space.

“Rumble…” Because of that terrifying sword blow, the space within a thousand kilometers had completely collapsed, while within a hundred

thousand kilometers, because of the spatial ripples that had been created, every single living creature died. Even some of the closer islands were completely reduced to dust, leaving behind nothing whatsoever.

Right as Linley had struck out against Augusta…

“This is the moment!” The Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, was fairly close to Linley. He simultaneously struck against Linley.

He thrust out with a spear.

The spear was crackling with a large amount of lightning, and it shot directly out from the Chief Sovereign of Lightning’s hands. This shooting motion was all but perfect, and as the spear slashed through the skies, it pierced directly towards Linley’s forehead. “Crackle…” Just a hint of a ripple spread out through the surrounding area.

Clearly, the power of this attack was focused to an utmost degree.

Linley had heavily injured Augusta with one blow, and he immediately turned to stare at Hurley.

Seeing that the spear was shooting towards his forehead, and had almost arrived, Linley couldn’t help but frown. He let out a growl. “You are asking for death!” Linley’s voice seemed to thunder outwards and fill the skies.

In the same instant, Linley launched a casual backhanded blow with his sword…

“Whap!”

The Life Overgod Sword, infused with his fused Sovereign power, slammed directly against that spear. “Bang!” The spear was instantly shattered into countless shards which shot everywhere.

“Not good!” The Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, instantly had a changed look on his face. “This isn’t right. Linley’s power isn’t right! If he

is comparable to Diya when he uses his Overgod weapon, how could he shatter my Sovereign weapon? How could he have easily wounded Augusta? He…he was hiding his power!"

Hurley now knew that something was off.

But…it was too late!

How fast did the Overgod weapon move?

"Ahhh!" The Chief Sovereign of Lightning let out a furious howl. His body suddenly separated into two and fled frantically towards two directions.

"Bang!"

Linley's Life Overgod Sword chopped out, and a clearly visible inky jade sword light slashed through one of the bodies. That body instantly transformed into dust, leaving behind only a jewel that emanated an earthen yellow aura.

"Hmph. Count yourself lucky." Linley glanced at the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, who had already fled far away. With a wave of the hand, he retrieved the earth-type Lesser Sovereign spark.

Clearly, the one he had just killed was Hurley's earth Sovereign clone.

The Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, fled extremely quickly. After having lost his earth Sovereign clone, he didn't even dare to turn back and look!

Chapter 21 – Outside of One's Expectations

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 21, Outside of One's Expectations

"Augusta, you still want to flee?" Linley retrieved the Sovereign spark, then swept the five oncoming Chief Sovereigns with an icy gaze before charging directly into that spatial hole, formed by the collapse of the surrounding space, chasing after Augusta.

That savage spatial hole devoured all the surrounding seawater while constantly shrinking.

Off in the distance, the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, and the others all stared with terror in their eyes.

"That…that's Linley?" A black-robed man said, stunned.

"He shattered a Sovereign artifact with one blow? Too terrifying. Hurley is the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, and he also has an earth Sovereign clone. But just now…if he was just slightly slower…he would have lost his life." The Chief Sovereign of Water's handsome face was now ashen as well. These Chief Sovereigns all felt fear. If they had truly gone to fight with Linley for his Overgod artifact, most likely…

It would be hard to say if any of the five would survive.

"Diya, you dared to lie to us?" The other four Chief Sovereigns couldn't help but stare at the Chief Sovereign of Wind.

Diya's eyes were filled with shock as well. He immediately said, "Everyone, have you gone muddle-headed from terror? When Linley fought with me, the power he revealed was comparable to mine. If he was this powerful back then, would I still be alive? Clearly, before this, Linley was hiding his true power!"

The other four Chief Sovereigns, upon hearing this, laughed bitterly.

That sword blow of Linley's truly had scared them out of their wits. Even the Chief Sovereign of Lightning wasn't able to block a single sword from Linley. How could the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, have done so? This wasn't Diya's fault. If they had to blame anyone, they could only blame Linley for hiding his power.

"Whoooooosh."

The sea wind continued to howl drearily.

There were no living creatures within a hundred thousand kilometer. The short battle between those three Chief Sovereign level experts had reduced the area to a wasteland!

The Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, had fled the Divine Light Plane long ago. As for Diya and the rest of the five, upon seeing the barren lands left behind by this battle, they felt as though boulders were resting against their hearts. Linley had suddenly revealed such terrifying power…he was so powerful as to make them panic.

In this moment, they only had a single thought in their minds:

"How could Linley be this powerful?"

Within the void of chaotic space. Multicolored streams of chaotic energy flew about randomly.

How could Linley be this powerful?

It wasn't just the five Chief Sovereigns who were thinking this; it was also the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta!

"Just now, I was caught off-guard and wasn't able to unleash all my power. But…he still shouldn't be this strong." Augusta was completely terrified by Linley's sword. It had been like mountains crashing against him, causing

him to instantly suffer a heavy wound.

Augusta couldn't help but glance at Linley, who was behind him.

His long brown hair fluttering, Linley was currently staring coldly towards the distant Augusta, his gaze as sharp as a blade. He was wielding the Life Overgod Sword in his hand, and was currently charging towards Augusta at astonishing speed.

Linley was like one of the titans who had been born after the creation of the universe. At this moment, he seemed completely unstoppable!

"After victory in this battle, I won't have any more regrets in my life." Linley's desire for battle was at an all-time high.

Since the days when he was a youth at Wushan Mountain, he had grown up, advancing step by step until today, he stood at the peak of Sovereigns. On this journey, his greatest regret was that he wasn't able to bring Grandpa Doehring back to life. Clearly, bringing back Grandpa Doehring was a dream that could never be realized! Linley now had only one goal…

To kill Augusta and bring his mother her freedom. This was also for the sake of Grandpa Beirut and the Four Divine Beasts clan.

"Augusta…must die!"

Linley's battle-intent surged, and the inky jade Sovereign power within his body boiled.

"Boom!" Like a bolt of light, he instantly passed through the flows of chaotic energy and charged straight towards Augusta!

Augusta's fleeing speed was also exceptionally fast. He turned to look and saw that Linley's gaze was filled with a killing intent. He couldn't help but feel shocked, and he hurriedly sent mentally, "Linley, your power is already greater than mine. If there are any problems, we can talk it out. Why must we fight to the death?"

Linley just remained silent, continuing to chase at full speed.

“Linley…” Augusta was going to say something, but Linley’s speed made it so that he had already arrived next to Augusta.

“Hmph.”

Linley swept out with the Life Overgod Sword in his hand, and it shot out like a blazing, fiery comet towards Augusta, carrying that same world-annihilating aura that had terrified Augusta previously. Augusta no longer had a chance to speak; letting out a deep growl, the sword of light in his hands sliced out in a marvelous arc, slamming against Linley’s Life Overgod Sword.

“Clang!”

A low, rumbling sound.

The chaotic space around them shattered, and countless spatial rifts appeared. Augusta was knocked flying backwards like a sandbag, and he spewed blood from his mouth.

Laws of the Earth – World Disintegrator!

“Eh? He didn’t die?” Linley frowned.

World Disintegrator was Linley’s most powerful attack of the Laws of the Earth. In terms of power, it was already comparable to the ‘Sword Intent’ supreme fused technique which Linley had come up with.

“Logically speaking, after I used fused Sovereign power, my strength increased a hundredfold. He shouldn’t have been able to block.” Linley was a bit surprised by Augusta’s strength, and then he let out a calm laugh. “Hmph. He was able to suppress the other six Chief Sovereigns in strength. This Augusta really is quite formidable.”

As he thought this, Linley charged towards Augusta once again.

Within the empty void, only the two of them were present.

“Hmph.” Augusta wiped away the blood from the corner of his lips, then turned to look at the charging Linley. Gritting his teeth, he sent, “Linley, speak. What will you need in order to end this battle between us? What do you need me to agree to? Speak!”

“Oh.”

Linley gave Augusta a glance, then said calmly, “You want me to give you my conditions? My conditions are simple…you only need to permit me to kill your Chief Sovereign clone. As for your divine clones, I can spare them.” Linley stared at Augusta in a weighing manner, awaiting his response.

As he expected…

Augusta’s face sank. “Linley, I sincerely wish to negotiate with you, but for you to speak in such a manner…”

As soon as his words fell, Augusta transformed into a ray of light, and the Fate Overgod Sword in his hands, the ‘Lightsaber’, pierced towards Linley’s head at an astonishing speed. “Crackle…” Where the sword of light passed, countless tiny fractures appeared in the surrounding area.

“How fast.” Linley was greatly shocked.

Linley delivered a backhanded blow with his sword; World Imploder!

Linley only sensed an extremely powerful force come through the Life Overgod Sword in his hands. That clashing power was so strong that Linley felt his hand go slightly numb. The clashing power was transmitted throughout his body, causing his entire body to tremble, and he couldn’t help but feel a mouthful of blood surge through his throat.

“Ugh!”

Linley was sent flying, and spat out a mouthful of blood.

“How can that be? His attack power suddenly increased this much?” Linley was completely stupefied.

“Swoosh!” The cold-faced Augusta launched another stabbing blow towards Linley.

Linley had no time to be stunned; the inky green Sovereign power in his body surged, and his body drifted towards the left, instantly moving a thousand kilometers away. Only then did Linley catch his bearings.

Linley stared at the distant Augusta. He said in a low voice, “Augusta, it seems…I feel as though I am just getting to know you!”

Augusta was wielding that Lightsaber in his hand, and his eyes were filled with a killing intent. He let out a low laugh. “Just getting to know me? Likewise. I’m just getting to know you as well. You, who only fought to a standstill with Diya, are actually almost a hundred times as strong as Diya. A Lesser Sovereign who is this powerful…”

“Augusta, the other Chief Sovereigns all believe that your only advantage over them is that you have an Overgod weapon, and one which isn’t completely compatible with you. At most, your strength would increase tenfold. But, from the looks of it, you are far more powerful than them.” Linley stared appraisingly at Augusta.

Only now did Linley understand that, without question, Augusta was the number one figure amongst the Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns.

In the past, Linley had thought that Augusta was on par with the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, but now, it seemed, the different was vast.

“So there really was a reason why he could behave so boldly for so many years.” Linley mused to himself.

Augusta…forget about Sovereigns. Even many commanders viewed him as a tyrannical, arrogant, barbarous Sovereign. Augusta cared deeply about his face, and he also had many women. One could imagine how many he had, just from looking at how many children he had. And then, one could consider how dominating and tyrannical his Radiant Churches were in the material planes.

After all, the teachings of the church were set by Augusta himself.

For such a person to have the position of Chief Sovereign of Light without being able to be budged at all over the course of countless years, and to even be able to complete an Overgod mission and acquire an Overgod artifact…naturally, Augusta had some true ability to rely on.

“Over the course of countless years, aside from that time I faced the Four Divine Beasts, when I was forced to reveal some of my true power, there has never been anyone who could force me to go all out.” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, wielded his Lightsaber as he laughed towards Linley. “Your power is excellent, and your potential is great. Compared to me, however, there is still a bit of a difference.”

Linley was now rather stunned. “Right. In the past, we were all puzzled as to how Augusta could have resisted the combined supreme attack of the four ancestors. So indeed, Augusta’s true power was even higher than I had expected.”

“Today, either you perish or I die.” Linley said coldly.

“Haha, it seems as though one of us must fall.” Augusta gripped his Lightsaber, his murderous intent skyrocketing.

Linley gripped his Life Overgod Sword, staring back at him coldly.

There, in the void, two mighty Sovereigns stood there opposite one another, within the middle of chaotic streams of energy.

“Crackle…” Extremely minute, dense, bone-crackling sounds emitted from Linley’s body. An astonishing, rapid transformation began to overtake Linley’s body as those inky jade draconic scales instantly covered him, and atop the draconic scales were those ‘muscles’ that were virtually undetectable by the naked eye.

The savage inky jade spikes jutted out from Linley’s forehead, elbows, knees, and spine. A draconic tail quickly emerged from behind, and even oscillated a few times.

Augusta, seeing this, couldn’t help but frown slightly.

“I have a feeling!” Linley stared coldly with his dark, golden eyes at his opponent. “Augusta, today…it will be you who dies!”

As soon as his words fell, Linley, the Life Overgod Sword in his hand, seemed to teleport. He instantly passed through the tens of kilometers of distance between them, and the jade green Life Overgod Sword shot out like a divine emerald dragon, attempting to devour Augusta. Countless rays of inky jade sword light shot out like countless venomous vipers, swirling around and snapping towards Augusta.

A translucent sword shadow was mixed in as well as it shot towards Augusta.

Linley’s supreme attack, with the fused Laws…Sword Intent!

The space of the void was completely shattered by the inky jade sword energy, shattered like glass into countless tiny pieces.

“He should die now.” Linley stared at his opponent.

Suddenly, within the inky jade sword energy, a ray of white light rose towards the heavens.

“He actually didn’t die?” Linley was secretly startled.

This technique of his was infused with both a material attack and a soul attack component. Still, it made sense. Since Augusta was able to withstand even the combined supreme technique of the Four Divine Beasts, his soul defense was clearly very powerful.

“Since you didn’t die…let me give you another one.”

The inky jade light vanished, and Augusta’s body was revealed. Augusta’s body was currently covered with blood, and his clothes, formed from energy, were completely tattered. Clearly, in that earlier situation, he wasn’t even able to keep his clothes stable. Immediately afterwards, however, a white light swirled over his body, and his bloody wounds all vanished, with his clothes being restored as well.

“What a terrifying attack. It even contained a soul attack component.” Augusta was just about to pause to recover.

But when he spread out his divine sense, he suddenly discovered that terrifying, savage, fiend-like inky-jade figure had already arrived in front of him, and a jade green sword was piercing straight for his head.

Sword energy shot out dominatingly.

“Not good.” Augusta waved his hand, sending his Lightsaber forward to pierce directly against the tip of that Life Overgod Sword.

But right at that moment…

“Swish!” Striking like a hammer, the sharp tip of Linley’s draconic tail, flashing with that golden light, slashed out in an arc from behind, stabbing directly towards Augusta’s head.

Chapter 22 – Trump Card

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 22, Trump Card

Linley had acquired the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts. Although he hadn't been able to develop the fused supreme innate divine ability of the four ancestors, he had used part of the blood essence of the Azure Dragon to further strengthen his body. Linley discovered…that his body was clearly too powerful. Even after he used a portion of the blood essence of the Azure Dragon, his body had reached a certain limit, beyond which it didn't strengthen significantly more.

His body was no weaker than a Sovereign artifact, and the tip of his draconic tail was in fact superior.

And thus 'stab' with the tail that contained the Laws of the Earth was something which Sovereign artifacts definitely could not withstand.

"Terrible." Augusta's face changed. He needed to use his Overgod weapon to block Linley's Overgod weapon, and so, in that instant, his only reaction was…

To cover up with his arm!

Augusta's arm swung up like a soft whip in a very simple, snapping motion.

"Whap!" His arm snapped out extremely fast, and in the last moment, Augusta actually managed to strike against the side of the tip of Linley's draconic tail with the palm of his hands. But under Linley's control, the draconic tail twisted and pierced towards Augusta's palm!

"Bang!"

A white, armor-like membrane layer covered Augusta's palm; clearly, it was his defensive Sovereign artifact. But the stabbing pierce from Linley's full-

strength draconic tail attack caused blood to spew out as the sharp draconic tail pierced through Augusta's palm.

"Whoosh!" Augusta's body suddenly flashed backwards as he dodged aside, moving tens of kilometers away.

"That palm of his…?" Linley was shocked. "Augusta's physical strength is actually this powerful as well?"

After his draconic tail had pierced through the defensive Sovereign artifact, Linley had been planning to pierce through the palm and continue to drill through Augusta's head. But who could have imagined…that Augusta's palm was also exceedingly tough. After boring through the defensive Sovereign artifact and the palm, the power of Linley's draconic tail tip had already been spent.

"Augusta, I knew that your soul is powerful, but for your body to also be so powerful? Admirable." Linley's voice echoed in Augusta's mind, and then, not hesitating at all, Linley charged straight towards Augusta again.

"Linley, the two of us should end it here." Augusta fled away, flying at high speed.

Now that Augusta was going all out, he was clearly moving a good deal faster than before.

Even Linley wasn't able to catch up to him right away.

"I'm actually not able to catch up to him, even in Dragonform?" Linley was startled.

Augusta's true power was more than ten times greater than Linley had anticipated.

This made it so that Linley and Augusta were roughly on par in power.

Even though Linley was in Dragonform, since Augusta trained in the Laws

of Light, he specialized in speed. When going all out, even Linley wasn't able to catch him for the time being.

"Wait." Linley's powerful divine sense could clearly sense exactly how fast Augusta was moving. At present, the distance between himself and Augusta was continuing to slowly shrink. "Although our speeds are comparable, they aren't identical. Rather…I'm very slightly faster than him."

This difference in speed was quite minute. If one didn't pay extremely close attention, one wouldn't notice it at all.

But the distance between Linley and Augusta was steadily shrinking. Sooner or later, Linley would catch up.

"Linley, why must you insist on fighting with me to the death?" Augusta sent hurriedly. "I did kill the Four Divine Beasts, but you came countless generations after them. I imagine that you've never even seen them, nor do you feel close to them; why must you do this? In addition, the reason that Beirut and I have enmity for each other is because Beirut stole my four Sovereign sparks. He was the one who acted against me! I can now promise to forget about the grudge between myself and Beirut. What do you say? If you have any additional requests, we can discuss them as well with sincerity."

Linley just laughed coldly.

"Just now, you wanted to kill me, but after I Dragonformed and you discovered that you cannot kill me, you want to negotiate?" Linley didn't pay him any heed.

"Linley, do you insist on doing this?" Augusta was growing angry. "If push comes to shove, I'll charge into the Infernal Realm and annihilate your Four Divine Beasts clan! I imagine that I'll have more than enough time to charge in and do just that."

Although the two were only a few dozen kilometers apart, which was quite close for Sovereigns, the difference in speed between the two was simply

too small. Linley still needed multiple minutes to catch up to Augusta.

“The Four Divine Beasts clan? Augusta, the Infernal Realm has the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. I imagine that you know that the Chief Sovereign of Destruction has a special relationship with Beirut and myself, and in the past, he’s borrowed blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts from us. In addition, he’s also borrowed members of my Four Divine Beasts clan. As long as I speak to him with divine sense, I trust that he will definitely stop you.” Linley sent back.

Augusta had almost gone insane from Linley’s pursuit.

The distance between himself and Linley was continuing to shrink, but there was nothing he could do.

“Linley, your power isn’t that much stronger than mine. The only advantage you have is that your Dragonformed body is comparable to a Sovereign artifact and can be used as a Sovereign weapon. But if I go all out, it’s hard to say who will live and who will die.” Augusta sent back. “Are you truly willing to fight in such a manner?”

After their recent clash, Linley knew this as well.

He wasn’t that much stronger than his foe. In a life-and-death battle like this, it would indeed be hard to say who would win and who would lose. However, in terms of chances, Linley should have an 80% chance while Augusta only had a 20% chance.

“I’m willing!” Linley said calmly.

“Fine, you madman!” Augusta’s face turned savage. “Then don’t blame me for this.”

As he spoke, Augusta suddenly changed directions, flying towards another region at high speed.

“Eh?” Linley’s face changed.

Augusta was now fleeing towards the direction of the Celestial Realm. Although the two were only ten or so kilometers apart from each other now, the amount of time necessary for Linley to catch up was more than enough for Augusta to reach the Celestial Realm.

Linley couldn't help but feel puzzled as to why Augusta was fleeing towards the Celestial Realm.

"According to the stories, the Divine Darkness Plane is aligned with the Infernal Realm, while the Divine Light Plane is aligned with the Celestial Realm. Can it be that Augusta is going to beg the Chief Sovereign of Fate for help?" Linley couldn't help but guess at this possibility. It was normal for Chief Sovereigns to have relationships with other Chief Sovereigns.

"What, you are going to find the Chief Sovereign of Fate?" Linley sent.

While fleeing, Augusta said threateningly, "Right, I'm going to find Lord Orloff! Lord Orloff owes me a favor. Although he never gets involved in worldly affairs, if I call in that favor and have him kill you, that won't be a problem at all. This trump card…I've never been willing to actually use it. Don't force me to do so!"

Linley hesitated.

"Is Augusta telling the truth or not?" Linley mused to himself.

If it was true…given the power of the Chief Sovereign of Fate, for him to kill Linley definitely wouldn't be a problem. Linley wouldn't be able to fight back.

"A favor? Why would Lord Orloff owe you a favor?" Linley snickered.

"Linley, don't doubt it. You can go ask the Chief Sovereign of Destruction or anyone else about this favor which Lord Orloff owes me. They all know about it! Go ahead and ask, and you'll know if I'm lying or not." Augusta wasn't actually willing to use up his trump card in such a manner either.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate wouldn't casually beg someone for help.

A favor from him, in exchanging for having helped him with something… that could be used to save one's life.

If the favor was used up, it would be gone. Unless Augusta was truly at the verge of death, how could he be willing to use it?

Linley pondered rapidly, then let out a cold laugh. "Oh, Lord Orloff owes you a favor? Fine. For Lord Orloff's sake, I'll let this matter come to an end. But I warn you; in the future, don't make trouble for members of my Four Divine Beasts clan. Otherwise…even at the cost of my life, I will kill you."

After speaking, Linley turned and flew towards the Infernal Realm.

"Whew." Only now did Augusta let out a sigh of relief.

Augusta watched as Linley flew towards the distant Infernal Realm, and he couldn't help but curse softly. "How did this Linley suddenly grow so powerful? Fortunately, his speed is roughly equal to mine. If I want to be able to get rid of Linley, I either have to train to the Paragon level, or use the second method."

The second method was naturally to go ask Orloff to dispose of Linley.

"However, there's no need for me to fear Linley either." Augusta stared into the distance and let out a calm laugh. "Linley is a Paragon! He has already maximized his potential, whereas I have only fused five profound mysteries, and am just a step away from becoming a Paragon. When, one day, I too become a Paragon, I will be able to easily deal with him."

"This time, when I go back, I need to calm my mind and focus on my training."

And so, Augusta turned and flew towards the Divine Light Plane.

The Four Higher Planes were all neighbors, while the Seven Divine Planes were close by as well.

These eleven planes were located in the same area, and in their center was the ‘Planar Battlefield’.

“I didn’t expect that Augusta would actually be so powerful.” While flying through the void, Linley frowned pensively. If Augusta had been just slightly weaker, Linley would have killed him long ago. But Augusta’s power was almost on par with his own. Once Augusta fled to the Chief Sovereign of Fate, then there would be no hope.

Linley couldn’t afford to die. If he died, Beirut and Bluefire would be in trouble as well.

The Yulan branch would probably be forever suppressed by Augusta, never to rise again.

Thus, Linley chose to temporarily retreat.

“The Chief Sovereign of Fate owes him a favor? Hmph. I’ll let Augusta live a bit longer for now, then.” Linley mused to himself. “I will go back and focus on fusing the Laws. If I become a Paragon, then even Orloff will be no match for me, much less Augusta.” Linley had already reached the borders of the Infernal Realm.

With a wave of the hand, he tore open a spatial rift.

And so, Linley re-entered the Infernal Realm!

In terms of fusing the different Laws, Linley had currently only fused three of them. It must be understood that with each increase in the number of different Laws, the power of the fusion would increase a hundredfold! In addition, based on what Linley believed, once he fused all four of the Laws, the heavens would probably bestow him with another portion of Will.

By then, who would Linley have to fear?

The Infernal Realm. The air above the Bloodridge Continent.

Linley's figure was soaring through the skies. Compared to Linley, the nearby metallic lifeforms seemed to be slow, crawling ants. They were on completely different levels of speed.

"Whoosh!" His divine sense covered the entire Bloodridge Continent.

Linley instantly discovered Beirut, located within the Skyrite Mountains. This was Beirut's divine clone.

"Grandpa Beirut." Linley sent.

Beirut's divine clone always remained within the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent.

Indigo Prefecture. The Skyrite Mountains. Beirut was temporarily living within the estate that had been built for Linley.

"Hm?" Beirut raised his head, only to a figure descending from the skies, moving towards him at a speed comparable to teleportation. It was Linley.

"Linley." Beirut was overjoyed. "How did it go? Did you kill Augusta?" Beirut's eyes were filled with hope. Upon seeing the look on Beirut's face, Linley couldn't help but laugh bitterly.

"I failed." Linley shook his head and sighed.

"How?!" Beirut was shocked. "Given your true power, you should have been able to easily kill him."

Linley shook his head. "Grandpa Beirut, everyone has been deceived by Augusta. His true power…isn't even close to what we thought it was. His power is more than ten times greater than what I had expected! He isn't much weaker than me at all. Even if I fought with him to the death, it's

uncertain as to who would be the one to perish. More importantly…the Chief Sovereign of Fate apparently owes him a favor. Have you heard of this matter?"

"The Chief Sovereign of Fate owes Augusta a favor?" Beirut shook his head. "I'm not too sure about that. I've only been a Sovereign for twenty thousand years, after all."

"I have the feeling that Augusta wasn't lying." Linley laughed helplessly. "Alright. We've been waiting and enduring for so many years; we'll just wait for a while longer. Now that I've fused with my wind-type Sovereign spark, I'm going to establish a divine plane of wind and increase my insights in the wind as well. Perhaps it will also help me improve my level of understanding with regards to fusing separate Laws as well."

Beirut nodded.

It seemed as though this was the only option.

However, Beirut wasn't worried. Given Linley's potential, he had a chance to surpass even the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, much less Augusta. Only…he needed time!

Chapter 23 – Twelve-Winged Angel

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 23, Twelve-Winged Angel

“Hey, Grandpa Beirut, why are the four clan leaders here?” Linley looked towards Beirut, puzzled.

Linley’s divine sense had easily detected that Gislason and the rest of the four were within his estate. Only, there were in the east gardens of the estate.

“Oh, about that…” Beirut said awkwardly. “Linley, when you went to kill Augusta, I thought that this matter would be resolved without a hitch. And I also knew…that Gislason and the others had always wanted to take revenge for their four ancestors. Thus, I told them in advance, so as to let them be happy about this.”

Linley was stunned. He didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“Are they…waiting for my good news?” Linley truly didn’t know whether he should laugh or do…something.

Beirut tugged at his beard, coughing twice. “After I told them, they were extremely excited. They simply couldn’t wait, so they decided to stay in your estate, so that they could immediately come find you once you returned. I imagine…the guards and the maids of the estate, upon seeing you return, have already informed the four of them. They will be arriving soon.”

Without a quiet hall.

Gislason and the Vermillion Bird Matriarch were both seated. The White Tiger Patriarch was frowning and pacing back and forth, while the Black Tortoise Patriarch was standing at the doorway, anxiousness in his eyes.

“Elder Brother, when will Linley return?” The Black Tortoise Patriarch couldn’t help but turn and speak in a deep, booming voice.

“Sovereigns move extremely quickly. Based on my calculations, it should be soon. Stop standing there at the doorway and sit down. Calm down and wait patiently.” Gislason urged.

“How can I possibly sit down at a time like this?” The Black Tortoise Patriarch had a hint of impatience on his face. Clearly, he was quite frustrated and uneasy.

The Vermillion Bird Matriarch, seated next to Gislason, let out a helpless chuckle. “Elder Brother, stop criticizing Third Brother. Even I, sitting here, don’t feel calm in the slightest. Sovereigns are extremely fast, and so today he will definitely return. I wonder if Linley was able to succeed or not.”

“Lord Beirut said it himself.” Gislason said. “Given Lord Beirut’s temperament…would he say something he wasn’t confident of?”

“Right.” The others all acknowledged this.

Despite that, however, the four clan leaders still felt nervousness in their hearts.

“Patriarch, Patriarch.” Right at this moment, a figure flew over at high speed.

“Whoosh!”

Gislason and the Vermillion Bird Matriarch all suddenly stood up, and the four clan leaders looked towards the maid who was flying over. The maid called out hurriedly from afar, “Lord Linley has returned! He is at Lord Beirut’s estate!”

“Swoosh!”

Streaks of light flashed past, and the four figures disappeared from within

the hall.

Beneath the large tree. Next to the stone table. Linley and Beirut were currently seated, facing each other.

“They are coming.” Linley took a sip of wine, then let out a resigned laugh.

“This is all my fault.” Beirut shook his head, letting out a resigned, awkward chuckle. “To be honest, I still don’t understand. The Chief Sovereign of Light is a Chief Sovereign, but not a Paragon. How could it be that his power was ten times greater than what we predicted it to be? The Divine Light Plane has never won ten consecutive rounds in the Planar Wars.”

“Unless…Augusta has a Sovereign clone.” This was Beirut’s judgment.

Linley pondered for a long time, but could only come to this conclusion as well.

But this seemed to be impossible.

“The chances are quite low.” Linley shook his head. “I’ve met more than sixty Sovereigns by now. Not a single one of them shares the same aura as the Chief Sovereign of Light. If the Chief Sovereign of Light had a Sovereign clone, how could he possibly manage to hide it from the other Chief Sovereigns? The Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction were born with the creation of the planes themselves. Even if others might be fooled, those two would not.”

Beirut nodded as well.

What, exactly, was the reason for the Chief Sovereign of Light to be more than ten times as powerful as they had predicted?

“Linley!” A frantic voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. He saw four streaks of light surge forward, then

solidify into four figures. It was Gislason and the other three clan leaders. The stable, reliable Gislason; the grim, callous White Tiger Patriarch; the wise, intelligent Vermillion Bird Matriarch; the taciturn, reserved Black Tortoise Patriarch. All of them were staring towards Linley with blazing, eager eyes.

“Has the Chief Sovereign of Light been killed?” The Vermillion Bird Matriarch couldn’t help but ask.

Linley and Beirut shared a glance, and then Linley laughed bitterly. “Gislason, I’ve disappointed you. I wasn’t able to kill Augusta!”

Linley didn’t explain further.

Gislason and the other three were stunned. And then, they let out forlorn, awkward smiles.

“Linley.” Gislason bowed. “I know that for Lord Beirut to tell us about it meant that he had felt a certain degree of confidence. This time was a failure…we very much would like to know, Lord Linley, will you kill the Chief Sovereign of Light in the future?” The other three clan leaders immediately looked towards Linley.

Linley’s divine sense stretched across the entire Skyrite Mountains. Given the power of his divine sense, if there were any other Sovereigns watching, they wouldn’t be able to avoid drawing his attention.

“I’m uncertain as to exactly when I will kill him. But once I have enough power, I will.” Linley said solemnly.

Gislason and the other three looked at each other, then smiled gratefully towards Linley.

“Thank you.” The four all bowed slightly.

“No need. I’m a member of the Four Divine Beasts clan as well, after all.” Linley let out a low sigh. Actually, the grateful look in the eyes of Gislason

and the others only made him feel even guiltier. After all, he hadn't killed Augusta yet.

"Alright." Beirut laughed. "The four of you can go back and rest. The Four Divine Beasts clan has been able to wait twenty thousand years for vengeance; there's no need to be impatient now." Beirut could sense that things were a bit awkward right now between the four clan leaders, himself, and Linley. It was best to have them leave for now.

Gislason and the other three immediately left.

"This time…ugh." Beirut laughed self-mockingly. "Their awkwardness just now…that was completely my doing."

"It isn't your fault. After all, I still have yet to understand how the Chief Sovereign of Light could have been more than ten times as powerful as we had anticipated. What caused this?" Linley suddenly frowned. "Grandpa Beirut, I also discovered two particularly special things. The first is that Augusta's physical strength is very powerful. Although it is inferior to mine, he's still very powerful. Secondly, Augusta's soul defense is also very powerful."

Augusta had been struck by Linley's 'Sword Intent', but his soul didn't seem react to it at all.

Beirut, hearing this, felt puzzled as well.

"His body is extremely strong, and his soul is extremely strong as well? Augusta…what is his secret?" Beirut mused softly.

"If we can't figure it out, we might as well stop thinking about it." Linley changed the subject. "Grandpa Beirut. What I'm worried the most about is my mother! However, I have no memories of my mother at all, nor do I know the spiritual aura of my mother. Even if I stretched my divine sense across the Divine Light Plane, I wouldn't know which Angel is my mother."

Even if his mother was standing right in front of him, he probably wouldn't

recognize her.

“This is quite troublesome.” Beirut let out a helpless laugh. “When your mother was alive, I swept her with my divine sense. Only, why would I pay any particular attention to an ordinary mortal? Thus, I have no memories of your mother’s soul aura.”

“Grandpa Beirut.” Linley said, worried. “I know that the Angels are divided into Two-Winged Angels, Four-Winged Angels, and even Twelve-Winged Angels. What sort of angel should my mother be?”

Linley was worried that his mother was already dead.

It must be understood that most low-level Angels were sent to descend upon material planes. Those low-level Angels could die at any time.

“What sort of Angel is your mother? Let me ask you this, when your mother’s soul was offered to the Sovereign, did the Radiant Church receive any sort of reward?” Beirut suddenly asked.

“They did.” Linley’s eyes lit up, and he hurriedly said, “Based on what I heard, the Radiant Church itself received an astronomical reward. Even King Clayde, the one who offered my mother to the Radiant Church, was rewarded by having his strength increased from the eighth rank to the ninth rank.”

“Oh.” Beirut’s eyes lit up, and he immediately laughed. “Linley, Angels are divided into six ranks. The lower three ranks are all Saints, while the higher three ranks are Deities. Generally speaking, they are determined by the purity of the offered soul. Only when a church in a material plane offers a soul that can become a Deity will it be rewarded.”

Linley couldn’t help but nod.

Right. Angels were numerous beyond measure. If the offered soul could only become a Saint, of course there wouldn’t be any reward.

“But the size of the rewards are also determined by the purity of the soul. Generally speaking, Eight-Winged Angels are equivalent to Demigods. Demigods, being the weakest type of Deities, naturally won’t result in significant rewards. At most, the rewards would simply be encouraging in nature. Souls that are able to be transformed into Ten-Winged Angels will result in slightly better rewards. After all, Gods aren’t anything either.”

Linley nodded. The number of Demigods and Gods the Infernal Realm had was simply countless.

“Actually, the most powerful of Angels are the Twelve-Winged Angels, and every single one of them is extremely powerful, generally at the Seven Star Fiend level!” Beirut said solemnly.

“What?!” Linley couldn’t help but cry out in shock.

Highgods didn’t really matter, but Seven Star Fiends and ordinary Highgods were completely on different levels.

“How is it that Twelve-Winged Angels are so powerful?” Linley didn’t understand.

Beirut laughed. “I only learned this when chatting with the Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson. Do you know that Angels are born in the Angelic Resurrection Pools?”

“I’ve heard of it.” Linley said hurriedly. Just recently, when chatting with Augusta, Linley had heard of the Angelic Resurrection Pools.

“There are a total of 128 Angelic Resurrection Pools. They are controlled by and divided up amongst the seven Sovereigns of the Divine Light Plane. The Chief Sovereign holds 64 of them by himself. The two Intermediate Sovereigns control 16 each. The four Lesser Sovereigns control 8.” Beirut explained carefully. “Angels are actually a human-shaped weapon. Their souls, after being reborn through the ‘Angelic Resurrection Plane’, will not have any of their past memories. In addition, they will be absolutely loyal to the Sovereigns of Light! They won’t feel any selfishness at all.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“After the transformation, they will no longer be able to gain any insights into the Laws, nor be able to increase their level of understanding.” Beirut sighed. “If, after the transformation, they are Saint-level Angels, then they will forever be Saint-level Angels.”

“They are unable to gain any insights, and so naturally, the profound mysteries they use to attack do not come from their own insights.” Beirut said. “Every single Angelic Resurrection Pool is linked to the soul of its Sovereign. The Sovereigns will infuse the Angelic Resurrection Pool with some of their own powerful attacks. Only, there are different levels of power for each Angelic Resurrection Pool. Low level Angelic Resurrection Pools can only contain low-level techniques, and so the Angels they produce are weak Angels.”

“The high-level Angelic Resurrection Pools, however, contain attacks that generally involve the fusion of four or five profound mysteries, because that is the sort of attack which Sovereigns themselves use!” Beirut explained, “Thus, the Angels birthed from the high level Angelic Resurrection Pools, the Twelve-Winged Angels, generally will have supreme attacks that involve the fusion of four or even five profound mysteries!”

Linley now understood.

No wonder every single Twelve-Winged Angel was so powerful! It was because they didn’t have to gain any insights; they were born understanding those powerful attacks.

“The Twelve-Winged Angels are very powerful. In the past, when I publicized the existence of the Necropolis of the Gods, I attracted quite a few people, amongst which included Seven Star Fiends of the Infernal Realm and even Twelve-Winged Angels. I imagine that the Twelve-Winged Angels also wanted to seize a Sovereign artifact. After all, the number of Sovereign artifacts which the Sovereign can bestow is limited.”

Beirut sighed, “In that battle, the power which the Twelve-Winged Angels display was absolutely not inferior to that of the Seven Star Fiends!”

“The Angelic Resurrection Pool. How terrifying. It is actually able to directly produce Twelve-Winged Angels that are no weaker than Seven Star Fiends.” Linley sighed.

“It isn’t that simple. The conditions necessary for a soul to be able to support the energy of a Twelve-Winged Angel are extremely stringent! The creation of every single Twelve-Winged Angel is fairly difficult, and thus if a material plane is able to offer a soul that is capable of becoming a Twelve-Winged Angel, the offering church will naturally receive an enormous reward.”

Beirut sighed as he spoke. “The Radiant Church was so happy as to increase the King of Fenlai’s power! I imagine…your mother’s soul must have been truly pure. The type of Angel she was reborn as should be the most powerful type, a Twelve-Winged Angel!”

Chapter 24 – Nine Rounds

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 24, Nine Rounds

“Twelve-Winged Angel?” Linley let out a slightly relieved sigh.

The lower the level an Angel was, the faster they would die.

“It is very hard to birth a Twelve-Winged Angel. The Twelve-Winged Angels which exist have been slowly accumulated over the course of countless years. The Sovereigns of Light won’t casually dispatch Twelve-Winged Angels out to take on missions. Sometimes, a million years will pass without a single Twelve-Winged Angel being activated. Your mother became a Twelve-Winged Angel less than ten thousand years ago. The chances of her death are virtually negligible.” Beirut laughed.

Only now did Linley completely relax.

“Haha, Grandpa Beirut, your logical reasoning has calmed me down quite a bit.” Linley now felt more than enough self-confidence in his ability to rescue his mother.

“Right. Grandpa Beirut.” Linley waved his hand, and an earth-type Sovereign spark, glowing with an earthen yellow light, appeared. “This is an unexpected reward that I acquired.”

“A Sovereign spark?” Beirut was startled.

Linley laughed and nodded. “Augusta and I went together to the Divine Light Plane. Who would have imagined that the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, followed us in as well. Even the other five Chief Sovereigns of the Laws followed us from far away. When I attacked Augusta, Hurley suddenly sneak-attacked me, wanting to kill me and seize my Overgod artifact. I immediately hit him with a back-handed sword attack!”

Beirut instantly started to laugh. “So, you acquired his Sovereign spark?”

“Right. Hurley’s lightning-type Chief Sovereign clone fled quite quickly. I just wanted to teach him a small lesson anyhow, and so I destroyed his earth-type Sovereign clone.”

Linley frowned. “Now, the question is, who should I give this earth-type Sovereign spark to? Grandpa Beirut, what do you think?”

“The earth-type Sovereign spark…”

Beirut frowned. “Bluefire can use it, but if we give it to him, his power will only rise slightly, to the Intermediate Sovereign level or so. It won’t change the overall strategic balance of power much. Ideally, we should find a Highgod. However, a Highgod who trains in the Laws of the Earth…it’s going to be quite hard to find such a person within your Baruch clan for now.”

Linley laughed in resignation.

The Baruch clan had quite a few Highgods, but they fused with divine sparks. A Highgod who had relied solely on himself to train to that level, and in the Laws of the Earth? There really wasn’t a single one yet.

To fuse a Sovereign spark, there was just a single precondition. One had to have trained independently to the Highgod level.

“What’s the rush?” Beirut laughed. “Just keep it for now. When the time comes, if there is a suitable candidate, you can hand it over then.”

“Haha. Alright. I’ll just use this Sovereign spark to serve as a precious ancestral heirloom for the Baruch clan.” Linley laughed loudly. “Grandpa Beirut, make the notifications. Have the people of Dragonblood Castle who are willing to come to the Infernal Realm all come over.” Linley had now completely guaranteed the safety of his family and friends in the Infernal Realm.

The Chief Sovereigns who were more powerful than Linley had no grudges against him.

Even if they did, they wouldn't be so shameless as the Chief Sovereign of Light, who had threatened him with the annihilation of his clan.

"That might be for the best." Beirut laughed and nodded. "During these past five millenia, they've been quite bored in the Yulan Plane. After all, in terms of experts, the Infernal Realm has far more, and there are also many more places to go adventuring in the Infernal Realm."

Linley was in no hurry to establish his divine plane of wind. He stayed in the Infernal Realm, bringing over his family and friends. During this period of time, Linley also focused on his training, and on merging and fusing the separate Laws. Occasionally, he would spend some time with his family and friends.

The year after Linley and Augusta's battle was also the year when Linley's reputation expanded the most extravagantly.

Linley had heavily injured the Chief Sovereign of Light, and with a single sword blow, killed the earth-type Sovereign clone of the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, Hurley, terrifying Hurley into instant, panicked flight.

This battle prowess was naturally spread to everyone else by the five other Chief Sovereigns of the Laws.

This information was simply too astonishing. Soon, virtually all the Sovereigns became aware of it.

Linley's status instantly eclipsed that of the other Seven Elemental Chief Sovereigns, and was only second to the four supreme experts, Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.

And so, in the span of a single short year, more than ten Sovereigns had come to pay their respects to Linley. When Sovereigns met, they too would

eat some fruit, drink some wine, and casually banter.

Roughly a year after the battle with Augusta.

The Infernal Realm. Bloodridge Province. Indigo Prefecture. The Skyrite Mountains. Linley's Sovereign estate.

Within this quiet, secluded estate, soft grass covered the ground. Linley was dressed in a long, loose robe. He sat in the meditative position as the wind blew past him, brushing against the strands of his hair.

A figure slowly took form in front of Linley, as though it had teleported there.

Linley opened his eyes. He saw that this person was a man dressed in long, blood-red robes. It was the Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson. He laughed, "Boson, why have you come to my place?" Not long ago, Boson had met with Linley, and at that time, Linley had wanted to address him as 'Mr. Boson', but no matter what he said, the Bloodridge Sovereign refused to be addressed like that.

He even wanted to address Linley as 'Lord'. After all, Linley's power, even amongst the Chief Sovereigns, was extremely great.

In the end, both took a step back. They viewed each other as friends, and so addressed each other by name.

"Must I have a reason for coming?" The Bloodridge Sovereign smiled as he sat down next to him. "Actually, today, I really did have an important reason for coming."

"Speak." Linley listened attentively.

The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed. "You still have no Emissaries, right?"

"Uh…why are you thinking about this?" Linley didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. "How is it your business, Boson, if I choose to accept

Emissaries or not?”

“That’s not it.” The Bloodridge Sovereign shook his head. “To tell you the truth, every trillion years, there is a session of the Planar Wars, and each of the Planar Wars have a total of five rounds! Three rounds have already passed, and roughly six hundred years in the future, the fourth Planar War is going to begin.”

“Which two planes are doing battle?” Linley asked, curious.

“Our Infernal Realm and the Celestial Realm.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said solemnly. “Linley, the upcoming fourth round of the Planar Wars is extremely important. Because…in the nine previous competitions, the Celestial Realm won nine rounds in a row.”

“What?” Linley was startled.

Linley understood that after becoming a Sovereign, there were three ways for gaining an additional portion of Will. The first was to fuse with another Sovereign spark. The second was to become a Paragon. The third was for one’s side, in the Planar Wars, to win ten times in a row.

But of course, another method was to become a Soul Mutate like Linley. Only, this sort of unique situation wasn’t applicable to all Sovereigns.

“If I remember correctly, long, long ago, the Celestial Realm won ten rounds in a row already.” Linley said with a frown.

“Exactly.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said hurriedly. “The seven Sovereigns of Fate have already received a reward, and so the other Sovereigns don’t want them to see them receive a reward again! In particular, we don’t want to see the Chief Sovereign of Fate increase in strength yet again. He’s already strong enough.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“Ever since the creation of the universe, every time one side wins nine

times in a row, all of the other planes will join together to prevent them from winning a tenth time." The Bloodridge Sovereign said. "Generally speaking, when all the other planes join forces, the chances for success will be extremely high. Over the course of countless years, however, there was one failure. That time, the Celestial Realm won, and thus the seven Sovereigns of Fate received the reward."

The Bloodridge Sovereign said solemnly, "This time, no matter what, we can't let them win again. This is the order that came from the Chief Sovereign of Destruction himself."

Linley couldn't help but laugh.

Most likely, as far as the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was concerned, his only real opponent was the Chief Sovereign of Fate.

"What does not wanting him to win, have to do with finding Emissaries?" Linley laughed.

"If we don't want him to win, then our side needs to find enough experts." The Bloodridge Sovereign shook his head. "But many experts already know how extremely savage this particular Planar War will be. It will be absolutely berserk! Thus, many commander-level experts are not willing to participate in it."

Linley laughed and nodded.

All of the planes would be going all out, and the Celestial Realm would be going all out as well. One could completely imagine how savage this battle would be. Unless one was completely confident in one's powers or unless one was tired of life, one probably wouldn't participate.

"How is it that the commanders know how important this battle is?" Linley said, puzzled.

The reward for winning ten battles should be a secret amongst Sovereigns.

“Based on past precedence.” The Bloodridge Sovereign let out an awkward laugh. “In this sort of berserk battle, both sides will go all out. They will come up with any and all measures that can allow their side to grow more powerful, in a manner which does not violate the Pact of Sovereigns. Thus! Both sides will bestow every single participant in this Planar War with Sovereign’s Might! Every single person will receive two drops!”

Linley was stupefied.

Mad! They had all gone mad!

If every single person who entered the Planar Battlefield was bestowed with two drops of Sovereign’s Might, then even a commander-level expert, upon suffering an attack from ten Highgods, would probably perish.

“Although these commanders don’t know about the secret behind the ten consecutive battles, they do know that all of the Highgods who are participating will be bestowed Sovereign’s Might. How many commanders would dare participate?” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed bitterly. “Originally, we didn’t want to hand out that much Sovereign’s Might either. But if we don’t and the other side does…doesn’t that mean that we will lose for sure? There’s nothing that we can do!”

Linley understood the predicament they were in.

The Sovereigns all knew that giving each participant two drops of Sovereign’s Might was simply too insane, but they had no choice.

“In the battles in the Stellar Corridors, a group of commander-level experts, especially armed with Sovereign artifacts, will be extremely effective.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said solemnly. “Thus, what the Chief Sovereign of Destruction desires is for you to acquire six Emissaries. According to the rules, a Lesser Sovereign can take on two Emissaries, an Intermediate Sovereign can take on four, and a Chief Sovereign can take on eight. Since you have three Lesser Sovereign clones, you can take on six.”

Linley nodded to acknowledge that he understood.

“But I haven’t even made any Sovereign artifacts yet.” Linley said helplessly.

“Sovereign artifacts, to us, are something that we can create every ten thousand years or so. They aren’t that important.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed. “Almost all of the Sovereigns have lived for hundreds of millions of years. Only, the Pact of Sovereigns forbids Sovereigns from giving their Emissaries more than a single artifact, so as to maintain balance amongst the Deities.”

“Linley, if you don’t have any Sovereign artifacts, I can give ten or so to you as a gift.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said disdainfully.

In the Infernal Realm, there were many Deities who made their living by forging divine artifacts.

It was the same principle. To Sovereigns, forging Sovereign artifacts was something that only required a bit of time and effort.

“Fine. Since you’ve said all these things, fine.” Linley laughed, then nodded. But then Linley said, puzzled, “Boson, I truly don’t understand. Given that all of these Sovereigns are joining forces, why are we worried about the Celestial Realm winning? How can they possibly win?”

The Bloodridge Sovereign nodded. “The Celestial Realm has always been the most powerful of the Four Higher Realms. In addition, the Edicts of Fate have strange, bizarre attacks. Thus, during the Planar Wars, the Celestial Realm often gains victory. Normally, we don’t care that much, but once there are nine victories in a row, then we cannot be careless.”

“For the sake of this tenth battle, based on what we know, they have already prepared an extremely powerful tactic.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed bitterly. “In addition, the chances of success for this tactic are extremely high.”

“What sort of tactic?” Linley said, puzzled.

“The Chief Sovereign of Fate will go ask the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, for assistance. He will borrow large numbers of Twelve-Winged Angels.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said solemnly. “Linley, you should know that in the battle above the Stellar River, the main reason one side loses is due to a lack of morale; one side is routed. Anyone with a consciousness is susceptible to fear, can be routed.”

Linley nodded. He knew that an army being routed was like a mountain toppling.

When two sides were fighting in the Stellar Corridor, given the width of the corridor, only so many soldiers could battle at once. Once one side was routed, even if the soldiers in the back had yet to even fight, they would still be affected.

“But Twelve-Winged Angels are different. They are absolutely devoted to the Chief Sovereign of Light. When the Chief Sovereign of Light gives the order, even if the order is for them to throw their lives away, they won’t hesitate at all.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said helplessly. “In addition, these Twelve-Winged Angels all have at least the power of a Seven Star Fiend. Some are even close to commanders in strength!”

“Think about it. This is a group of powerful experts who have no fear of death at all. In addition, they are able to form into all sorts of battle formations and work together in extremely marvelous ways. They don’t harbor any trace of individual desires within them at all. How astonishingly powerful then would an army like this be in the Planar Wars?” The Bloodridge Sovereign sighed. “Fortunately, the birth of every single Twelve-Winged Angel is a laborious affair. To accumulate sufficient Twelve-Winged Angels requires an extremely long period of time. In the past, the Chief Sovereign of Fate asked the Chief Sovereign of Light twice to borrow these Angels. He didn’t want to borrow them too often, because it is simply too hard to create a Twelve-Winged Angel.”

Linley couldn’t help but nod in acknowledgment.

Fearless. Selfless. Good teamwork. Powerful.

In the Stellar Corridor, due to their fearlessness, there was no way that they would be routed. If you wanted to win, you had to annihilate every single Twelve-Winged Angel.

This sort of army was indeed terrifying!

“Because of this, the Chief Sovereign of Fate has, in the past, owed the Chief Sovereign of Light two favors.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed calmly. “In the past, the Divine Light Plane, since it didn’t have many experts, won fairly rarely. Those Twelve-Winged Angels are simply too rare, and so they can only be used as trump cards, and can only be used once or twice. Thus, Augusta isn’t able to use them for himself. He chose to instead exchange them for favors from the Chief Sovereign of Fate.”

The Bloodridge Sovereign sighed, “All I know is that once, he called in one of the favors to ask the Chief Sovereign of Fate to help him. It was because of the Chief Sovereign of Fate’s help, along with his own luck, that he was able to acquire that Overgod weapon.”

Linley now understood.

“So the Chief Sovereign of Fate actually owed him two favors. One was used up, while the other remains.” Linley now completely understood.

It seemed as though the Chief Sovereign of Light hadn’t lied to him at all. Originally, if he truly had chased into the Celestial Realm, the enraged Chief Sovereign of Light probably truly would have asked the Chief Sovereign of Fate to kill him.

“However, this time, the Chief Sovereign of Fate is going to end up owing him yet another favor.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed calmly. “Over the course of countless years, Augusta has accumulated yet another batch of Twelve-Winged Angels. Most likely, he will go participate. Augusta truly is lucky; he took over both of the Angelic Resurrection Pools which are able to give birth to Twelve-Winged Angels. In addition, he accumulates pure

souls from the material realms. By patiently waiting, he is able to slowly build up an army of Twelve-Winged Angels. Alas, this army of fearless, Deity-level Angels…they truly are troublesome."

"Oh, yes, they are quite troub-…" Linley was laughing, but suddenly…

Linley's face froze, and then instantly turned ashen!

"Linley, what is it?" Boson saw that Linley's face was looking strange.

"You, you said…he would accumulate a batch of Twelve-Winged Angels, and then, send them to the Planar Battlefield?" Linley stared at Boson."
"All of them?"

"Yes, essentially all of them." The Bloodridge Sovereign said, puzzled.
"What is it? That look on your face…?"

"I'm, I'm fine. Boson, I need to calm down. You can go back now."
Linley's mind was currently in a state of complete chaos.

"Oh." Although puzzled, the Bloodridge Sovereign didn't ask any more questions, instead leaving.

Within the vast, empty courtyard, Linley was the only person remaining.

"When virtually every member in this batch of Twelve-Winged Angels is sent to the Planar Battlefield…in the midst of that wild, savage battle, most likely nearly all of them will perish. It would be amazing if even 10% survived." Linley's mind was in a state of chaos. "My mother, she…she should be amongst them. If she is sent to the Planar Battlefield…"

Linley was terrified.

"What should I do?" Linley was in a state of complete chaos.

Chapter 25 – Revisiting the Divine Light Plane

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 25, Revisiting the Divine Light Plane

Linley took two deep breaths in a row. His chest rose and fell like the bellows of a furnace…and afterwards, he regained his calm.

“Since Augusta made a promise to the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, he will definitely act with full force. No wonder he has always protected his Twelve-Winged Angels so well, and rarely allows them to go out on missions.” Linley’s gaze was clear. “My mother should be a Twelve-Winged Angel. Six hundred or so years from now, if I don’t interfere, she will definitely be sent to the Planar Wars!”

Linley frowned slightly, then murmured, “Six hundred years…”

With regards to Augusta, Linley definitely wanted to kill him, whether for the sake of Beirut or for the Four Divine Beasts clan. Originally, Linley had been planning to wait until his power increased before he would go and kill Augusta. Not only would he fulfill the wishes of Beirut and the Four Divine Beasts clan, he would also be able to save his mother.

Several birds with one stone!

“But now, I have to give something up!”

“One option. Give up my mother, focus on training, and after I succeed, kill Augusta.”

“The second option. Find a fire-type Lesser Sovereign that I don’t know, kill him, and fuse with his Sovereign spark. After my power increases, go kill Augusta.”

“The third option. Resist and endure for now, and lower my head! Go negotiate with Augusta!”

Linley almost instantly came to his decision.

Giving up his mother? Impossible.

Murder a fire-type Sovereign for no reason? Linley wasn't capable of this either. In addition, if he did, he would be violating the Pact which the Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts had set up.

"Fine, then." Linley took a deep breath, his gaze steely and resolved. "For now, I'll resist and endure!"

"Linley!"

Right at this moment, two figures walked over from the gardens. It was Beirut and Bluefire. Previously, although Linley had not been able to kill Augusta, the power that he had revealed was still slightly greater than Augusta's. If the two had fought to the death, Augusta's chance of death was higher.

Thus, Augusta no longer dared to offend Linley.

Naturally, Beirut and Bluefire were now able to casually wander about in the Infernal Realm with their Sovereign clones! After having spent so many years hiding in the Yulan Plane, they were naturally pleased at having their freedom again.

"Linley, just now, the Bloodridge Sovereign came. Was there something important?" Beirut chuckled while stroking his beard.

As they were both Sovereigns as well, the two of them had naturally noticed the arrival of the Bloodridge Sovereign. Only, the Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, clearly wanted to meet with Linley privately, and so the two of them hadn't shown themselves earlier. They waited for the Bloodridge Sovereign to depart before emerging.

"It is regarding the Planar Wars, and regarding me taking on Emissaries. Six

hundred years from now, a Planar War will begin, and the battling sides will be the Infernal Realm and the Celestial Realm. This particular Planar War is extremely important." Linley said, then repeated the information he had heard in detail.

Beirut and Bluefire listened carefully. Afterwards, they sighed in amazement.

"So Augusta has been so incredibly fortunate. No wonder even the Chief Sovereign of Fate owes him a favor." Beirut said with a sigh.

"The Twelve-Winged Angel army can indeed play a deciding role in a Planar War." Bluefire breathed in surprise. "If they all charge forward together, it is all but guaranteed that they will achieve victory in a Planar War. The reward for winning ten consecutive rounds is breathtaking as well. No wonder the Chief Sovereign of Fate would go ask Augusta for help."

In the previous Planar War which Linley had experienced, the combatants were the Divine Light Plane and the Divine Darkness Plane.

Victory or defeat in that battle didn't matter much; naturally, there had been very few Sovereigns controlling matters from behind.

"Linley, what did you just say? The army of Twelve-Winged Angels is going to the Planar War? Doesn't that mean…" Beirut suddenly realized what this portended. "Your mother, she…"

"Right." Linley gave Beirut a helpless glance. "Tell me, do I have any other choices?"

Beirut pondered for a moment.

Six hundred years…

Linly had spent five thousand years to reach his current level. To make another large breakthrough in six hundred years? Even Beirut himself didn't feel much confidence in Linley.

“Then you…” Beirut looked towards Linley.

“I’ve decided that tomorrow, I will go to the Divine Light Plane!” Linley said calmly as he stared into the distant skies. His gaze seemed to penetrate the walls of reality, seeing the Divine Light Plane from afar.

Beirut was silent for a moment, then nodded. “Sometimes, to accomplish great things, one has to be able to submit and endure. As I see it, to Augusta, you are a Paragon who no longer has any untapped potential. I imagine that in his heart, he doesn’t feel too much fear towards you. If you negotiate with him, the chances of success will be quite high. In the future…you can get rid of him later.”

Beirut was a person who was capable of killing ruthlessly, but also able to endure and hide.

When he discovered the corpses of the Four Divine Beasts, although he knew that seizing them would be extremely dangerous, he also understand that after succeeding, he would go from being a Deity to a Sovereign. In addition, Beirut acted in accordance with the situation; first of all, the Chief Sovereign wasn’t paying him, a Highgod, any mind. Second, he was in a material plane and had the natural protection of a material plane from Sovereign intrusion. Third, he was a Godeater Rat who didn’t fear chaotic space.

He had enough power and enough confidence. He dared to take risks, but also knew how to pull back.

All of those things combined to result in the current Beirut.

Otherwise, how could the Yulan branch produce three Sovereigns?

“I hope things will turn out as you said, Grandpa Beirut.” Linley nodded.

The vast, Divine Light Plane. A ray of light was streaking over from the teleportation array, instantly moving ten million kilometers away.

The wind slashed past like a knife. Below him was the boundless water of the seas. A blue-robed Linley advanced through the air at high speed, staring ahead with a somber, icy calm gaze.

“Eh?” Linley frowned slightly. “I didn’t expect that the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, was here as well!”

After arriving in the Divine Light Plane, Linley had sent his fused divine sense to instantly cover the entire plane, allowing him to maintain a watch over the activities of the entire plane. Naturally, Linley was able to detect the location of the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, but unexpectedly, Augusta was alongside Orloff.

“Him being here…is a good thing.” Linley mused.

Linley didn’t come here for battle, but for negotiation. With Orloff present…Augusta wouldn’t dare to speak too wildly.

Moments later…

Linley’s divine sense changed from being generated by fused Sovereign power to earth-type Sovereign power, much like how an ordinary earth-type Sovereign would use it.

This change to using earth-type Sovereign power for powering his divine sense was naturally detected by the two Chief Sovereigns.

“Haha, Linley, why have you come to my place?” Augusta sent with a laugh, seemingly having forgotten the previous battle with Linley.

“Naturally, I have something important to discuss.” Linley smiled slightly. “I didn’t expect Lord Orloff to be here as well. What a coincidence.”

“Haha, I’m here to discuss some things with Augusta.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate’s gentle voice echoed in Linley’s mind as well. “Not long ago, I invited you, Linley, to come visit me in my Orloff Gardens, but

unfortunately, despite waiting for so long, I never managed to see you."

A person could disguise his basic nature for hundreds or thousands of years, but it was impossible for a person to disguise his character forever.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, didn't get involved in worldly affairs. He treated everyone he considered to be a friend in a very good manner. Linley felt much admiration for the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff.

But of course, Linley couldn't possibly be like the Chief Sovereign of Fate; never getting married, never relaxing, never enjoying himself, and instead spending all of his time in various forms of research and training.

"Lord Orloff, in the endless years to come, you and I will have plenty of time to meet each other. For example, aren't we meeting today?" Linley laughed comfortably.

"Haha, right. We will have endless years to come." Orloff laughed as well.

While chatting through divine sense, Linley had already flown past countless islands.

He was like an arrow, streaking down from the skies.

The island directly below Linley was the residence of the Chief Sovereign of Light!

This was an extremely lavishly built island. The island had a circumference of a few thousand kilometers, and its main structures were made of a white material. Naturally, it had all sorts of rare, unique magical beasts, flowers, and vegetation that had been collected here. The magical beasts had their own regions, while the flowers had their own regions as well. They all had their own private areas.

In the air above this island, there were a large number of Deity-level Angels.

Aside from the Angels, all the other Deities in this island were female. The only males present were Augusta and Orloff!

“Augusta really does know how to enjoy himself. Aside from his loyal Angels, everyone else here is female.” Linley couldn’t help but shake his head and laugh. And then, he stared into the distance, as from deep inside the island, two figures were flying towards him, shoulder-to-shoulder. These two figures were followed by a large number of female servants.

It was really quite an impressive display.

“Haha, Linley!” Augusta called out from far away, as though they were old friends of many years.

“Augusta.” Linley smiled as he greeted him as well.

The white-robed, white-haired elder, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, laughed calmly. “Let’s go inside and sit down. Augusta, I don’t want to criticize you, but we’re inside your island, and yet you put on such a grand show when welcoming guests?” The Chief Sovereign of Fate glanced sideways; the female servants behind them were divided into two rows, with one row of maids dressed in violet and the other dressed in pink. All of them were exceptional in terms of appearance.

“Haha, I will naturally listen to any suggestions that you have, your Excellency.” Augusta laughed, then turned and waved his hand, saying calmly, “You can all retire.”

Those female servants all uniformly bowed with respect. “Yes.” And then, they flew away in an orderly fashion.

“Let’s go to the water garden to chat.” Augusta laughed while guiding the way.

“The person who designed this island and its buildings was definitely at the grandmaster level.” Linley walked forward while viewing the island. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh of praise.

Augusta laughed delightedly, “Haha, Linley, I don’t want to brag, but this island of a few thousand kilometers circumference has 30162 different types of flowers alone, all of varying sizes, colors, etc. The Angels make the arrangements for them. From every single viewing location, they will seem very natural and give one a comfortable feeling. There are also various types of magical beasts…for the sake of building this island, I invited over a thousand exceptional grandmaster-level experts from across countless planes, each of whom specialized in various skills, so as to create a unified, cohesive whole.”

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but shake his head internally.

The rumors were indeed true. Augusta pursued perfection in all of his leisurely enjoyments.

The water garden was a garden erected above a pool of water that had a circumference of a few thousand meters. The waters of the pool rippled with the wind, gleaming like precious sapphires. The entire garden was constructed from wooden materials, and the courtyards and pavilions all floated above the surface of the pool, and within the courtyard, small streams and ‘rivers’ of water flowed about.

“This water garden doesn’t use any magical formations at all; it is completely built from the extremely light ‘fragrant hydrox’ wood, which generates enough floating power as to make the entire garden hover above the pool.” Augusta pointed towards one direction. “Look. That wooden bridge…”

Augusta smugly pointed out one crafted item after another.

Linley listened while enjoying the sights as well.

“Alright, let’s all sit down.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, frowned slightly and spoke out.

“Right, right.” Augusta sensed that he had been showing off just a bit too

much, making Orloff rather unhappy.

The three sat down within an open-air veranda, which was surrounded by the azure waters of the pool.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate laughed as he glanced at Linley. “Linley, I imagine you came today on important business. Speak freely.”

“That is indeed the case!” Linley laughed while nodding towards the Chief Sovereign of Fate, and then looked at Augusta. “Augusta, today I have come to ask your help with something.”

“Whatever it is, speak freely.” Augusta laughed as well.

Linley said solemnly, “I hope you can release a Twelve-Winged Angel and let her regain her free will.”

“Twelve-Winged Angel?” Augusta couldn’t help but glance at the nearby Orloff. The Chief Sovereign of Fate frowned, but then let out a calm laugh. “Just one?”

“Right. Just one.” Linley nodded.

“One won’t make much of a difference.” Orloff laughed calmly.

Linley couldn’t help but then look at Augusta, who frowned and said, “Linley, this…is a bit troublesome.”

Chapter 26 – An Extremely High Price!

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 26, An Extremely High Price!

Troublesome?

Hearing this, Linley couldn't help but frown. Still, he didn't say anything, instead just looking at Augusta, waiting to hear him speak.

"Linley, I will tell you the truth. Even if one of the Chief Sovereigns came and asked me to release a Twelve-Winged Angel, it would be difficult." Augusta said solemnly. "You should know that I have loaned my Twelve-Winged Angel army to Lord Orloff before, but that was just a loan; the Twelve-Winged Angels still belong to me."

Linley nodded slightly.

He had heard from the Chief Sovereign of Death that Augusta probably wouldn't be willing to release a Twelve-Winged Angel, even if the Chief Sovereign of Death herself asked. From this, one could imagine how difficult it would be for a Twelve-Winged Angel to regain freedom.

"It isn't that I don't want to help you, only…" Augusta laughed, then shook his head. "Apologies."

Linley frowned slightly.

"Augusta, it is just a single Twelve-Winged Angel!" Linley said heavily. "If you have any difficulties, just tell me."

Augusta shook his head and laughed, "This involves some secrets that I don't wish to make public. I can tell you this, though…the price of releasing a Twelve-Winged Angel is so high that….hmph, ever since the creation of the universe and ever since I became the Chief Sovereign of Light, I have never released a single Twelve-Winged Angel. From this, you

should be able to imagine how complicated the secrets involved in this are."

"Is there nothing at all that can be done?" Linley was rather frantic.

"There is. Only, it is too difficult, and the price is too great. I don't wish to do this." Augusta shook his head and laughed.

Linley was no longer able to stay calm.

He understood that Augusta was perhaps telling the truth.

"Augusta." The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate laughed calmly, "I can tell that for Linley to come here in person means that he cares deeply about that Twelve-Winged Angel. Otherwise, he wouldn't have come personally. Come up with a way to help out Linley a bit. If the price is high, let Linley compensate you."

"Right. I am willing to compensate you for your loss." Linley gritted his teeth. There was nothing else he could say.

Perhaps Linley would be badly taken advantage of, but Linley had no other choices.

Kill Augusta?

He wasn't powerful enough, and the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, was right there.

"Haha. Compensate?" Augusta sipped some wine, then snickered, "Linley, you have no idea how high the price is for me to release a Twelve-Winged Angel! Let me put it to you like this. The price for restoring free will to a Twelve-Winged Angel is so high that to me, it would hurt as much as having the majority of my sons and daughters being killed!"

Linley felt shock in his heart.

Parents cared deeply about their sons and daughters. Although Augusta had

many children, for him to say that the price was equivalent to losing the majority of this…one could imagine how terrifying the price was.

“Augusta.” The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, frowned. “Any loss and any price, no matter how great, has a limit. You should try and help Linley if you can. Tell him what you need, and I imagine he will compensate you.” Orloff spoke out on Linley’s behalf as well.

Linley could tell…

Ever since the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had executed that ‘Spacetime Paradox’ technique, the Chief Sovereign of Fate’s attitude towards Linley had markedly improved. This time, he was speaking out on Linley’s behalf as well.

“Speak. What do you need me to agree to, in order for you to be willing to do it?” Linley looked towards Augusta.

“Lord Orloff’s words are correct. No matter how high a price is, there is a limit. But this limit is beyond my ability to bear. If, Linley, you are willing to offer me your Overgod artifact, I am willing to accept.” Augusta snickered. “But, Linley, are you willing to give it to me?”

“Overgod artifact?” Linley was startled.

All Sovereigns knew exactly how precious an Overgod artifact was.

“Overgod artifact…mother…” Linley murmured silently to himself.

“Be practical.” The Overgod of Fate, Orloff, frowned. “Augusta, the value of all of your Angels combined is still less than an Overgod artifact. You go too far by suggesting it. Suggest something that is reasonable.”

Augusta laughed calmly. “I can’t think of anything that Linley might have that is enough to make up for my loss…”

Linley felt frantic.

“Augusta!” Linley was just about to say something.

“Hm?” Augusta suddenly looked towards Linley. “Linley, I suddenly thought of something. If you accept, then we can discuss this.”

“Speak.” Linley let out a secret sigh of relief.

The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, couldn’t help but laugh and nod as he saw this.

“I know about the relationship between you and Beirut.” Augusta snorted coldly. “That Beirut. In the past, he seized my…”

“Just go straight to the point.” Linley said. Linley was worried that Augusta wanted him to kill Grandpa Beirut.

Augusta gave him a glance, then snickered. “I can tell that the two of you are close. Don’t worry, I’m not asking you to go kill Beirut. My request is…to give me a hundred drops of blood essence from each of the Four Divine Beasts! If you do so, then I would be willing to release a Twelve-Winged Angel, despite what it would cost me.”

“A hundred drops each?” Linley couldn’t help but cry out in shock. “Augusta, do you know how many blood essence drops the Four Divine Beasts had in total?”

Augusta, seeing this, just laughed to himself.

He had intentionally set a high target, so that they could bargain.

“Even if you killed me and Beirut, you wouldn’t be able to procure that much blood essence.” Linley shook his head. “In the past, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction took away more than half of the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts from Beirut, so as to go and experiment. Only the remaining portion is in Beirut’s hands, and he used up a large amount of it in his own experiments as well. The remaining amount of blood essence is

very small."

Augusta, hearing this, frowned.

He knew that the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had acquired a large amount of blood essence, and he even knew a bit about Beirut's experiments.

"If the amount is too small, I simply cannot accept." Augusta snorted.

"Augusta, to tell you the truth, of the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts, I myself have already used up some of the blood essence of the Azure Dragon to strengthen my own body. I have the least amount of the Azure Dragon's blood essence. As for the other three types of blood essence, I'm able to procure a bit more." Linley said. "Grandpa Beirut and I can give you, at most, eleven drops of the blood essence of the Azure Dragon. As for the other three blood essences, I will try to come up with a way to acquire twenty or thirty drops, but I can't be certain as to the exact number. This is because I need to ask Beirut."

Linley naturally wouldn't report a precise figure.

Beirut had originally given Linley 81 drops of each blood essence. Linley now had less than forty drops of the Azure Dragon's blood essence, but as for the other three, he had more than seventy.

"Eleven drops of the Azure Dragon's blood essence?" Augusta looked closely at Linley, then nodded slightly. "Fine. Eleven drops of the Azure Dragon's blood essence, and thirty of each of the other three Divine Beasts! I can't accept anything lower. If you give it to me, I will release that Twelve-Winged Angel you are looking for."

Linley let out a sigh of relief.

Finally, success.

"Thirty each? Augusta, because I don't have the blood essence on me, I

need to go ask Beirut. I cannot guarantee 100% the exact amount, but the difference shouldn't be that great. Even if there is a difference, I will think of a way to compensate you for it."

"Fine. Bring over the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts." Augusta said.

"Haha…" The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, couldn't help but laugh. "Augusta, isn't cooperation excellent? However, Augusta, why do you want the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts? Why don't you give it to me, and I'll hand over some supreme techniques that I've developed to you."

Linley couldn't help but look at Augusta.

Because the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had lost the battle between himself and the Chief Sovereign of Fate, he had told the Chief Sovereign of Fate the secrets of his technique, 'Spacetime Paradox'. If the Chief Sovereign of Fate then acquired the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts, he would truly become invincible.

"Lord Orloff. I deeply admire Lord Wodred, and also want to try my hand at research." Augusta said with a laugh.

At this same moment in time, in the Indigo Prefecture of the Bloodridge Continent of the Infernal Realm. Within the Skyrite Mountains.

Hogg was together with Wharton.

"Swoosh!" Linley's form suddenly appeared.

"Big Brother." Wharton couldn't help but feel delighted, and the nearby Hogg look at Linley, startled. With a laugh, he said, "Linley, what is it?"

Linley had three Sovereign clones. On this trip to the Divine Light Plane, Linley had left his water-type Sovereign clone and his wind-type Sovereign clone in the Infernal Realm. Actually, Linley was different from the other

Sovereigns, as he was a Soul Mutate, making it so that each of his Sovereign clones had access to fused Sovereign power!

In addition, the soul of each Sovereign clone was comparable in terms of Will.

It could be said that Linley, by himself, was comparable to three Chief Sovereign level experts.

Only, he had just a single Life Overgod Sword, and so whichever Sovereign clone which wielded the sword was the strongest one. This was why Linley didn't use all three of his Sovereign clones to jointly attack the Chief Sovereign of Light. After all, if he did so…most likely, the Chief Sovereign of Light would deliver a sword blow to each and easily kill the Sovereign clones that didn't hold the Overgod weapon.

"Father, make a trip with me. Let's go locate Mother." Linley said.

"What did you say?" Hogg suddenly rose to his feet, his eyes filled with shock.

"Big Brother, did you say, 'Mother'?" Wharton was stunned as well.

"Linley." Hogg gripped Linley's shoulders with his hands, both of which were shaking. His eyes were red as he stared at Linley. "You, you found your mother?" Hogg's love for his wife was so deep that it had sunken into his very soul. In the past, it was for the sake of searching for his wife that he had eventually lost his life."

"Yes, Father." Linley could feel his father's excitement, and he couldn't help but nod.

"Good." Hogg was in a completely chaotic mental state, but then he came to his senses and said hurriedly, "Quick, take me there."

"Let's go! Wharton, you stay here. I'll bring Mother and Father back today." Linley said, and then his wind-type Sovereign clone led his father,

Hogg, away from the Skyrite Mountains.

With Linley's Sovereign clone leading the way, the two naturally travelled very quickly.

Augusta was currently seated in the middle of the water garden, within that luxurious island.

"Ten thousand years ago? A soul originally from the Yulan Plane?" Augusta, hearing Linley's words, nodded. "Don't worry. Sometimes, a million years will pass without a single Twelve-Winged Angel being born. I imagine there has only been one or two in the past ten thousand years. And it was offered from the Yulan Plane? We will find her easily."

As he spoke, Augusta stretched out his divine sense.

"Oh, you are bringing someone as well?" Augusta laughed as he looked at Linley. He saw that Linley's Sovereign clone was bringing Hogg towards them.

"That is my father." Linley laughed and acknowledged it.

"The Twelve-Winged Angels are located in the nearby islands. They will arrive shortly." Augusta said calmly. "My subordinates have completed their investigations. Indeed, on January 1st, year 9987 of your Yulan calendar, there was a female soul that was offered to me. The soul was extremely pure, and after the Angelic Resurrection Pool's transformation, it became a Twelve-Winged Angel."

Linley's heart trembled.

"That's her! That's Mother!" Linley called out in his heart.

Linley was born on year 9982 of the Yulan calendar, while his younger brother, Wharton, was born on year 9986 of the Yulan calendar. His father, Hogg, had taken Linley's pregnant mother, 'Lina', to the city of Fenlai, where medical services were superior. She had given birth there, and then

gone to pray for blessings at the Radiant Temple. Afterwards, that next night in the hotel…

His mother had been seized and taken.

The Radiant Temple just so happened to be offering souls during the Yulan Festival anyhow.

“In a short while, you can give me the blood essence of the Four Divine Beasts. Only then will I let that Twelve-Winged Angel regain her freedom and leave with you.” Augusta said, then suddenly raised his head. “Alright. That Twelve-Winged Angel has already come.”

Linley’s eyes began to grow heated as he raised his head to look…

White robes fluttering. Brown hair, same as Linley’s. A beautiful woman descended from the heavens, with six pairs of pristine, pure white wings outstretched.

“Mother?” Linley held his breath.

Chapter 27 – Memories

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 27, Memories

Linley looked over carefully.

This beautiful, brown-haired Angel, in terms of appearance, did seem rather similar to him.

“Is this Mother?” Linley felt a surge of agitation in his heart.

“Master.”

But the first reaction of this Twelve-Winged Angel, after descending, was to kneel down.

“Hmph.” With but a thought, Linley immediately sent out a surge of Sovereign power to press against the brown-haired Angel, preventing her from kneeling.

Linley couldn’t help but feel a hint of vexation in his heart, and he looked sideways at Augusta, musing to himself, “Augusta must have known that the Angel would kneel upon seeing him, but he didn’t say anything about it at all.” For an ordinary Angel to kneel was one thing, but the woman in front of him was very possibly Linley’s mother!

Linley wouldn’t permit that scene to occur.

Next to him, the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, let out a laugh. “Haha, alright, you can stand over there for now.”

“Yes.” The Twelve-Winged Angel was very obedient. She stood to one side, not saying a single word. Only, every so often, she would turn to look towards Linley with curiosity.

“Is she my mother?” Linley couldn’t help but give her a few glances as well.

When his mother had died, Linley had only been four or five years old. He didn’t have any memories of her at all. However, as Linley looked at this beautiful, pale-skinned woman, he had a certain feeling…as though his soul was shaken slightly. “I’ll still have to rely on Father to make the true determination! Father and mother went through life and death together; he will definitely be able to make a clear determination.” Linley mused.

In the skies of the Divine Light Realm. Linley’s wind-type Sovereign body was hastening this way, bringing his father, Hogg, with him.

“Father, Augusta has already brought out the Angel that seems to be Mother.” Linley said suddenly.

“Already?” A tinge of an excited red blush was on Hogg’s face.

“However, I can’t be completely certain yet.” Linley looked at his father. “Shortly, Father, you will have the chance to take a close look and see if it is Mother or not.”

“I will definitely be able to tell at one glance.” Hogg was completely certain.

At this point in time, a luxurious, dazzling island appeared within Linley and Hogg’s fields of vision. With green light flashing about them, Linley and Hogg entered the island.

Within the water garden.

“Swoosh.” Two figures descended from the skies; it was the green-haired Linley and Hogg. The green-haired Linley walked towards Linley’s original body, and then the two merged into one.

Upon landing…

Hogg seemed to be able to see only a single person; that brown-haired Angel, standing off to the side by herself.

Hogg's mouth opened, but he didn't say anything. His eyes instantly turned red.

"Li…Lina!" Hogg finally called out in a trembling voice.

The Twelve-Winged Angel turned her gaze towards Hogg, looking at him with curiosity. Ever so slightly, she frowned.

"Lina, you don't recognize me?" Hogg immediately charged forward, grabbing the Twelve-Winged Angels hands. The Angel didn't dare to act without permission, and so with a flash, she hurriedly dodged to one side.

"Father, don't be impatient." Linley hurriedly shouted.

"What is going on?" Hogg turned to look at Linley.

"Father, you tell me. Is she my mother?" Linley immediately asked.

"Yes! Absolutely, yes!" Hogg was completely certain. "They look absolutely identical. And her smell…I would never be able to forget it!" Hogg could still remember the scent of his wife, Lina, as she lay against him. Upon seeing the brown-haired Angel, he instantly became certain…

This was his wife!

"Haha, Linley, so you are searching for your mother." Augusta began to laugh. "No wonder you care so much about this matter, Linley. I told you long ago that this was her; no need to be worried! In addition, according to the intelligence reports that my subordinates provided, in the past ten thousand years, there have only been three Deity-level Angel souls provided by the Yulan Plane; two men, one woman. Only one soul became a Twelve-Winged Angel; the woman's! It's actually quite odd. Ten thousand years, the Yulan Plane's church offered that soul, but since then, they haven't offered any at all."

But Linley knew why.

It was because…the Radiant Church had been annihilated. Naturally, it wouldn't be able to sacrifice any more souls.

"For the two of you, mother and son, to be reunited is a joyous occasion." Augusta chortled as he spoke.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, chuckled and nodded slightly as well.

"Right. This is my mother." Linley didn't hide it at all, and he looked towards Augusta and said solemnly, "Augusta, as I see it, let's do this quickly. Give my mother her free will back, and I will give you the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts. Right. Of the blood essences, there are only twenty eight drops of Black Tortoise blood essence; two drops are missing. Thus, I added two drops of Vermillion Bird blood essence to make up for it. Is that alright?"

"That's not too much of an issue."

Augusta looked towards Linley, then said slowly, "Linley, I have to inform you of something. After you hear what I have to say, you can decide as to whether or not you wish to make this trade."

Linley's heart trembled. He sensed that new variables were coming into play.

"Speak." Linley said.

Augusta explained, "Angels are created from souls that were sacrificed in material planes. Through the Angelic Resurrection Pools, they are reborn as Angels! There is another often-heard expression; that Angels are human-shaped weapons, and that they can no longer be considered true living creatures at all. Do you know the true meaning within these words?"

Linley frowned.

Couldn’t be considered true living creatures? What did this mean?

Augusta continued, “For a mortal soul to be instantly transformed into a Twelve-Winged Angel…how could any living creature possibly instantly increase in power by that much?”

“When they are transformed by the Angelic Resurrection Pool, even their souls are slightly changed. Their souls are now no longer contained within their minds, but within their Angelcore; the Angelcore is the nucleus of their existence!” Augusta explained. “In addition, during the transformation, their soul will be changed as well, and all of their former memories will be wiped away. The only thing left to them will be their absolute loyalty to the Sovereigns of Light!”

Linley’s heart trembled.

“Augusta, are you saying…?” Linley had a rather foreboding feeling.

“Right. The Angelic Resurrection Pools, the places where Angels are created, aren’t something that we are capable of creating. The changes they unleash upon the soul are irreversible! Your mother is currently under my control, but even if I give her freedom, your mother would be nothing more than an emancipated Angel. She still won’t have any of the memories from before she became an Angel!” Augusta looked at Linley.

Linley instantly felt somewhat lost.

He had thought that upon gaining her freedom, his mother would also regain her memories.

But now, it seemed, that was completely impossible.

Augusta’s words were quite reasonable. It was the Angelic Resurrection Pool which had transformed her. The only thing which Augusta could do was to give Linley’s mother free will; he wasn’t able to reverse the changes to her soul.

“Father.” Linley turned to look at Hogg.

The nearby Hogg had heard and understood. He knew that there was no way for his wife, Lina, to regain her memories. His face couldn’t help but turn pale as well, but upon seeing Linley turn to him, Hogg still squeezed out a smile. He sent mentally, “Linley, if there is no way to recover her memories, then there is no way. It will be as though your mother and I are meeting again for the first time.”

“Alright.” Linley nodded slightly.

“Linley, if you aren’t able to accept this, then we can just go ahead and put aside our agreement.” The Chief Sovereign of Light looked at Linley.

“No need. You can let my mother regain her freedom.” Linley looked at the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Augusta nodded, then gritted his teeth and closed his eyes.

“Eh?” Linley, through his fused divine sense, could tell that Augusta had sent out a tendril of his own divine sense into the mind of the Angel. Slowly, Augusta’s face began to turn rather pale.

“Hmph.” Augusta let out a low growl.

Suddenly, Augusta’s face turned bone white, and his entire body swayed uncontrollably. The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, waved his hand, sending out a surge of Sovereign power to press against Augusta, preventing him from falling.

“Wait a while. I need to rest a moment.” Augusta said, then immediately closed his eyes to focus internally.

“It seems as though Augusta’s soul has been damaged.” Linley watched this all happen. He had no idea at all as to the price which Augusta had paid to let Linley’s mother recover her free will. However, from what the Chief

Sovereign of Death and others had said, Linley knew that there was definitely a very, very high price to be paid for allowing an Angel to regain free will.

Augusta didn't even ask Linley for the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts; he had first immediately begun to work to recover.

And now, Linley looked towards his mother, Lina.

Lina had only been frowning pensively earlier, but now, a look of surprised delight appeared on her face. Lina looked at Hogg. Slightly puzzled, she said, "Based on the conversation you had, you…were my husband, prior to my transformation into an Angel?" Angels were all capable of logic and rational thought.

They were Angels and had no potential for future advancement, but they were absolutely dedicated to the Sovereigns.

"Lina, I'm Hogg. Do you remember anything?" Hogg immediately walked before her, his eyes shining. "Do you still remember that torrential, pouring storm of rain we weathered together on Mt. Wushan? Do you still remember our home, Wushan township? Do you remember that night when you were taken away from me, at that hotel in the city of Fenlai?"

Lina was slightly startled. A lost look appeared in her eyes, and she shook her head slightly. "I, I don't."

Hogg's eyes couldn't help but darken, but he immediately said, "That's fine. You'll know in the future. I'll take you back to the Yulan Plane."

"I know that I became a Twelve-Winged Angel less than ten thousand years ago." Lina then let out a beautiful smile. "And I also have the feeling…that your aura seems so familiar. Even though, in my memories, I can't find a reason why."

Despite having had her soul transformed, there was still a hint of blurry recognition in her subconscious, with regards to the person she had loved in

her former life.

“Truly?” Hogg couldn’t help but feel wildly overjoyed.

“Yes.” Lina nodded slightly.

Linley, watching this to one side, couldn’t help but feel rather satisfied in his heart. Although his mother had already lost her previous memories after becoming an Angel, perhaps because of what had happened in her previous life, she still had special feelings towards Hogg.

“How terrible.” The ashen-faced Augusta opened his eyes, the light in them slightly dimmer than before. He glanced sideways at Linley. “Although I understood that the price to be paid for allowing an Angel to regain free will would be very high…I have never actually done such a thing in the past. The price was even greater than what I had expected.”

The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, chuckled. “Augusta, since you’ve already done it, what’s the point of feeling regret?”

“Give me the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts.” Augusta looked towards Linley.

Linley didn’t play any tricks either. Waving his hand, he made four small bottles appear. “Eleven drops of Azure Dragon blood essence, twenty eight of the Black Tortoise, thirty of the White Tiger, and thirty-two for the Vermillion Bird.”

Augusta swept the bottles with his divine sense, and a hint of a smile finally appeared on his face.

“I hope this doesn’t disappoint me.” Augusta murmured, and he collected the four bottles. The nearby Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, couldn’t help but look at the four bottles, his eyes flashing with light. He very much wanted to be in possession of those four bottles, and given his power, there was no way at all that Linley and Augusta would be able to resist him.

However, giving his pride, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, just quietly watched as this all happened.

“Augusta, this matter is concluded. I will leave now.” Linley said.

Augusta didn’t try to keep him for any longer. Immediately afterwards, Linley took his father, ‘Hogg’, and his mother, ‘Lina’, and departed, transforming into a streak of green light which disappeared into the horizons.

In mid-flight.

Linley let out a secret sigh of relief as he watched his mother and his father chat. “It is fortunate that Mother seems to have a slight, faint impression of Father. Otherwise, she probably wouldn’t be willing to leave with us. Her memories…alas, the Angelic Resurrection Pool really is…ugh.”

There was nothing which Linley could do at all.

When ordinary mortals died, they would transform into departed souls. The weaker ones would transform into weak undead, while the strong ones would transform into powerful undead. The soul itself wouldn’t change at all, and upon becoming a Deity, the undead would regain their memories.

But Angels were completely different. His mother had been an ordinary mortal, but after her transformation, she had become a Twelve-Winged Angel, comparable to a Seven Star Fiend. For her to have increased in power by that much without her soul being impacted? Not even Linley would believe that.

“Now, the only option is to rely on time. To let Mother slowly grow accustomed to us and accept us.” Although Linley was slightly disappointed, the smile on his father’s face brought him a hint of satisfaction as well.

Chapter 28 – Beginning to Act

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 28, Beginning to Act

A month later. The Higher Plane of the Infernal Realm. Bloodridge Continent, Indigo Prefecture, the Skyrite Mountains.

“Haha…” A three year old toddler was happily running about on the grass. Hogg and Lina were seated to one side, accompanying the toddler in playing about.

Linley, Wharton, and Bebe sat together, watching this scene.

“Big Brother…look at Father. Ever since Mother returned, Father’s been much happier.” Wharton laughed as he spoke. “In the past, although Father would occasionally be happy when seeing us, he would always be thinking of Mother, and he would then seem so dispirited. He’s fine now.”

“He is.” Linley smiled and let out an emotional sigh.

His mother, Lina, had been back for a month now. During this period of time, the relationship between Linley’s father and mother had advanced considerably.

However, Lina clearly found it much harder to accept Linley and Wharton. Although she often smiled when meeting Linley and Wharton, and had grown a bit closer to them, the way she treated Linley and Wharton clearly could not be compared with the way she treated Hogg. Perhaps it was because, when Lina had died, Linley had only been a four year old child, while Wharton had been a mere newborn.

Lina’s subconscious didn’t have any memories of the adult Linley or Wharton.

“After a bit of time, Father will take Mother back to the Yulan Plane. At that

point in time, when she sees Mt. Wushan and our old home, perhaps Mother will start to remember." Wharton said.

Because of Linley's unique stature within the Yulan Plane, their ancestral estate had been kept in very good condition.

"When the time comes, I will return alongside Father and Mother." Linley laughed calmly. "I am also going to begin establishing my divine plane of wind."

"Boss, I want to go as well." Bebe said hurriedly. "I want to see you set up your divine wind of plane as well, Boss."

"I'm only sending my wind-type Sovereign clone over, and not my other clones." Linley said with a laugh.

Right at this moment, Linley suddenly raised his head as he thought to himself, "Eh? Boson came?"

Linley's divine sense had discovered that the Bloodridge Sovereign was hastening towards him.

"Wait here for now. I need to go back to my residence." Linley said, and then with a flicker, he arrived within the residence he used for training. Linley's residence was a place where not even maids could enter without permission.

Liniley sat down next to a stone table for a few moments, and a blood-robed figure descended from the skies. It was the Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson.

"Boson, please sit." Linley said with a laugh.

"Linley, this is my second time coming to your place in just one or two months." The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed. "Right, last time, I chatted with you a bit regarding the tenth Planar War. You seemed to have encountered some problems back then. Have those been resolved?" During their last chat, Linley's face had suddenly turned so ugly, and he had

completely lost his composure. Naturally, the Bloodridge Sovereign had noticed.

This was why he had stopped chatting with Linley and had instead immediately left.

“Apologies. Last time, I did indeed encounter some problems.” Linley laughed, then stretched his hand out and personally poured some wine for himself and the Bloodridge Sovereign. “However, everything has now been resolved.”

“It is good that it has been resolved.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed. “Linley, when will you begin to search for Emissaries?”

“Boson, it appears you care about this matter quite a bit.” Linley tipped his cup slightly towards the Bloodridge Sovereign, who let out a resigned laugh and raised his own cup. The two immediately drowned their cups, and then the Bloodridge Sovereign said helplessly, “I’m not the one who cares. This is an assignment which the Chief Sovereign of Destruction has given me. He knows that we are on fairly close terms.”

Linley nodded slightly.

“In addition, virtually all the other Sovereigns already have Emissaries. Those Emissaries were carefully selected by their Sovereigns, who aren’t willing to just throw them away to their deaths. Even if the Sovereigns were willing, the Emissaries probably wouldn’t be.” The Bloodridge Sovereign explained.

Emissaries wouldn’t necessarily follow every single order of a Sovereign.

If a Sovereign sent an Emissary out to die, could it be that the Emissary would actually accept?

“So what, I’m supposed to send MY Emissaries out to die?” Linley rebutted.

“Linley.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said hurriedly. “That’s not what we mean. You should go casually pick out some Emissary candidates, then tell them that if they want to be your Emissary, they have to be tested; tested in the Planar Battlefield. You will first give them a Sovereign artifact! If they survive, they will become a true Emissary. If they die…then in the future, you can find other Emissaries.”

The Bloodridge Sovereign let out a laugh. “As I see it, there will be quite a few people who are willing to risk their lives for the chance to become a Sovereign’s Emissary.”

“You people…you really are sending them to their deaths, you know.” Linley truly wanted to curse.

“They are naturally going of their own free will.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed smugly. “We aren’t forcing them to go.”

True, they weren’t being forced.

Those people who were already Emissaries naturally wouldn’t go risk their lives for the sake of a bit of Sovereign’s Might.

But it was much more likely for those who had not yet become Emissaries to be willing to risk themselves for the sake of becoming an Emissary and receiving a Sovereign artifact.

The Deities who dared to roam about the Higher Planes and the Divine Planes were mostly an adventuresome lot to begin with. When it was necessary, they would be willing to give the dice a roll. Success meant they would have a Sovereign artifact and become an Emissary, gaining status that was even higher than an Asura’s. They would become one of the most elite Deities in existence. Failure? Naturally, they would perish.

“The other Sovereigns already have Emissaries; they don’t have any spare spots on the roster. But you do, and you have six of them.” The Bloodridge Sovereign let out a sigh. “There will be very, very few commander-level experts who will enter this Planar War! Thus, six Emissaries will be akin to

the edge of the blade, the vanguard for the armies! As long as they aren't so stupid as to just fight head on, the six of them will be extremely useful."

Linley nodded slightly as well.

Commander-level experts would naturally be of tremendous use in the Planar Wars. But the most useful of all would be Paragons!

"Why don't you go find a few Paragons? Paragons are even more effective." Linley said.

"In the past, the Paragons were fearless, but this time…Linley, think about it. Every single person who enters will have Sovereign's Might." The Bloodridge Sovereign couldn't help but laugh. "A group attack, with every single person using Sovereign's Might at full power…even a Paragon would be in mortal danger. Tell me, what can Sovereigns use to persuade those Paragons to enter? Unless they are provided with something sufficiently alluring, they won't possibly enter."

Linley had to nod in acknowledgment.

It was true that Sovereigns didn't have enough they could use to entice Paragons to enter. Sovereign artifacts? They were limited to bestowing a single Sovereign artifact to their Emissaries. Aside from Sovereign artifacts, what else could attract the interest of a Paragon?

"Paragons, when facing an entire army of Highgods who all use Sovereign's Might, will probably have a 50% chance of death." The Bloodridge Sovereign said. "As for commanders, even if they are careful, the chance that they will die in such a terrible situation is probably greater than 90%. If they are so stupid as to try and fight head on, they will definitely perish."

The Bloodridge Sovereign let out a resigned laugh. "Thus, please invite a few Emissaries to enter the Planar War. If this time, we are successful, I imagine that the Chief Sovereign of Destruction will be grateful to you."

Linley understood that although the Bloodridge Sovereign had nominally come to chat with him, in reality, he was here carrying out the orders of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

“Alright. I agree.” Linley nodded.

For the Chief Sovereign of Destruction to owe him a debt was a good thing.

As for Emissaries?

Although this was extremely dangerous for them, it was also an opportunity. The only question was, would they have the skill to survive it.

“Haha, that’s more like it.” The Bloodridge Sovereign was quite pleased. “Right. When will you head out?”

“Head out? No rush. I’m still thinking about it. Where should I go to find Emissaries?” Linley said helplessly. “Even if I send my divine sense out to cover the entire Infernal Realm, I’m only able to tell the difference between Demigods, Gods, and Highgods. There’s no way for me to tell how many profound mysteries a person has fused.”

The bloodridge Sovereign let out a laugh. “I have two methods. I don’t know which one you will prefer.”

“Speak.” Linley’s eyes lit up.

“The first is to go to a Fiend Castle and acquire data on all Seven Star Fiends. Since it is the Chief Sovereign of Destruction who stands behind the Fiend Castle, it will be very easy for you to acquire all the information you want on the various Seven Star Fiends.” The Bloodridge Sovereign said with a laugh.

Linley nodded slightly, but at the same time, he sighed in his heart. So it was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction who stood as the backer for the Fiend Castles? No wonder it was spread throughout the Infernal Realm.

“And the second method?” Linley asked with a laugh.

“Linley, all of the Sovereigns have their own domains of authority.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed. “For example, my domain is the Bloodridge Continent! The Redbud Continent belongs to the Redbud Sovereign. The seven Sovereigns of Light, in the Divine Light Plane, each have seven areas which they have authority over.”

Linley suddenly began to understand.

“Per the same principles, the seven Sovereigns of Wind, the seven Sovereigns of Earth, and the seven Sovereigns of Water all have their own territories.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed. “The domain you rule over in the Divine Wind Plane is the domain which that Teresia, who you killed, ruled over. The same goes for the Divine Earth Plane and the Divine Water Plane.”

“The Lord Prefects and other similarly ranked individuals in each domain, along with the soldiers of that domain, will all obey your commands.” The Bloodridge Sovereign laughed calmly. “You can simply go to one of your domains, then easily learn which experts reside within the bounds of your domains.”

“My domains? Three of them?”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“Sovereigns might die, but the domains do not change, nor will the Lord Prefects. For example, even if someone killed me, Boson, once the next Sovereign of Destruction arose, that person would still be in charge of the Bloodridge continent. All of the Lord Prefects of the Bloodridge Continent, as well as the Bloodridge Army, would obey that person’s orders.” The Bloodridge Sovereign explained.

“Oh…” Linley began to laugh. “I choose the second method! I’ll simultaneously choose Emissaries as well as familiarize myself with my territory.”

This sort of system was very natural. The battles between Sovereigns thus wouldn't affect the boundaries of each domain.

"Linley, I know that you have only recently become a Sovereign, and so you don't have many Sovereign artifacts. I have a few here; three weapon-type Sovereign artifacts, three defensive Sovereign artifacts, and three soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts." The Bloodridge Sovereign casually waved his hand, and nine Sovereign artifacts appeared, hovering in midair.

The defensive Sovereign artifacts were all in the form of armor, while the Sovereign weapons were divided into axe, longsword, and warblade; these three commonly seen artifacts.

As for the soul-protecting Sovereign artifacts, they were divided into a ring, an earring, and a necklace.

"You have quite a few." Linley couldn't help but chuckle.

The Bloodridge Sovereign said disdainfully, "Sovereign artifacts, to Sovereigns, are in plentiful supply. They are to us what divine artifacts are to Deities; how many divine artifacts exist in the Infernal Realm, do you think?"

Linley had to nod in acknowledgment. In the Infernal Realm, divine artifacts were commonplace tools that could be seen everywhere. Even divine sparks were numerous beyond measure, to say nothing of divine artifacts.

"Our fear is that too many Sovereign artifacts would lead to a disaster, which is why the Sovereigns originally created the agreement that each Emissary would only be given a single Sovereign artifact. Similarly, you would only be able to, at most, give a son, a daughter, a wife, or a husband a single Sovereign artifact. Aside from Emissaries and close family, Sovereign artifacts cannot be handed out to anyone else." The Bloodridge Sovereign said.

Linley memorized this as well.

Half a month later, Linley's wind-type Sovereign clone returned to the Yulan Plane along with his father and mother. The two of them naturally went to Wushan Township, while Linley's wind-type Sovereign clone tore through the walls of space and entered chaotic space, right outside the Yulan Plane, beginning to establish his own divine plane of wind.

Only by increasing his insights in the profound mysteries of the Laws of the Wind would Linley find it easier to learn how to travel on the path of fusing four types of Laws.

His wind-type Sovereign clone was establishing a divine plane, while his water Sovereign clone, and divine fire clone remained on guard in the Infernal Realm while accompanying his wife, Delia.

As for Linley's original body and his earth-type Sovereign clone, they left the Infernal Realm.

"Rumble…"

A blurry light flashed as Linley and Bebe activated the teleportation array.

"Boss, this time, as we go searching for Emissaries, you need to leave two slots to me and let me make the choice! Heh he, I want to try out the process of choosing Emissaries and see how it feels." Bebe sent.

"No problem." Linley laughed.

The blurry light which had shot into the heavens slowly vanished. Linley and Bebe had already arrived in another plane.

"We are at the Divine Wind Plane." Bebe's eyes lit up as he sent, "Come, Boss, let's go check out your territory."

Chapter 29 – Windhunter

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 29, Windhunter

The Divine Wind Plane. The Qingya Continent. In the skies, a sword-shaped metallic lifeform was advancing at high speed, moving like a flash of light.

Linley and Bebe were seated opposite of each other.

Next to them, a two meter tall man with black hair that gleamed like iron needles was standing respectfully. The black-haired man said courteously, “Sovereign, based on the intelligence reports of our Qingya Army, in the Qingya Continent, there are more than a thousand supreme experts worthy of your consideration, Sovereign. We can just select a location, then begin to choose from them. But right now, we…”

Linley glanced at the black-haired fellow, then chuckled, “Boo [A’bu], are you in a rush?”

“No, no.” The black-haired fellow instantly shook his head.

The Divine Wind Plane had a total of nine major continents, which were divided up according to the various levels of power of the seven Sovereigns. The ocean was extremely large, but was completely controlled by the Chief Sovereign of Wind, who also had his own continent on top of that. The other Lesser Sovereigns were only in control of one continent each, while the Intermediate Sovereigns controlled two each.

The continent which Teresia had controlled was the ‘Qingya Continent’.

And so, Linley’s territory within the Divine Wind Plane was naturally the Qingya Continent as well.

The Qingya Continent had the Qingya Army, which was directly

subordinate to the Qingya Sovereign. The Qingya Army's commander was this 'Boo'.

"This Sovereign has quite a strange temperament, but he's not a bad fellow." Boo mused to himself. "Still, how powerful is Sovereign Linley, exactly? Why is it that from the earlier conversation between Lord Linley and Chief Sovereign Diya, I seemed to feel as though…Lord Diya was somewhat afraid of Lord Linley? Why did he speak so pleasantly towards him?"

"One is a Chief Sovereign, while the other is a Sovereign. But it seems as though the positions are reversed." Boo was filled with confusion.

Upon arriving at the Divine Wind Plane, Linley had naturally gone to seek out the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya.

Diya, upon seeing that Linley had come to pay him a visit, was so frightened that the look on his face had changed.

Diya still remembered quite clearly the sight of Linley easily using a single sword blow to badly wound the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, eradicating his earth Sovereign clone and frightening him so badly that he had fled without even daring to look back. Given Linley's power, it would be very easy for him to eradicate the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya.

What was worse was that Linley and Diya didn't have a good relationship between them, only enmity. Upon seeing Linley arrive, naturally Diya had been frightened!

However, Linley hadn't attacked, and instead discussed the matter of 'territory' with him.

Diya had immediately offered to gift Linley with the continent he controlled, but Linley had declined.

Afterwards, Diya had personally taken Linley to locate the commander of the Qingya Army, 'Boo', and had told Boo that Linley was now the

controller of the Qingya Continent. Boo, however, had paid close attention to the attitudes and speaking mannerisms of the two as they had chatted, and he had instantly grown puzzled.

After all, while chatting with Linley, Diya would subconsciously act as though he were on a lower level.

“Boo, don’t be impatient. Let us now go to the Bluelion Domain.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Sovereign, are you planning to…?” A thought instantly arose in Boo’s mind.

The nearby Bebe snickered, “My Boss is naturally intending to go to the Bluelion Domain to see that challenge! You must understand that the challenge will take place a month from now. My Boss naturally is in no hurry, so we can just fly there slowly in this metallic lifeform. We should arrive in the Bluelion Domain just in time.”

Given how fast Sovereigns travelled at, they could arrive in the Bluefire Domain in an hour or so.

However, Linley instead chose to leisurely ride aboard his metallic lifeform and roam about slowly.

This so-called ‘leisurely speed’, however, was only leisurely for Sovereigns. To ordinary Highgods, their metallic lifeform was flying about at terrifying speeds.

“Sovereigns really have too much time on their hands.” Boo mused to himself.

“Boss, how much time do you plan to spend on your search for your six Emissaries?” Bebe sent. “It has been many years since we’ve gone out for a stroll. This time, we need to wander around a bit longer.”

Although they were nominally searching for Emissaries, in truth, they were

also relaxing themselves.

“No rush. This Divine Plane is vast and endless…all we need to do is finish finding the Emissaries before the Planar War begins.” Linley said with a laugh.

“Actually, it is fine if we finish after the Planar War begins. After all, during the course of the Planar War, commander-level experts can still enter.” Bebe snickered.

The commander of the Qingya Army, Boo, blinked as he listened.

The Divine Wind Plane. The Qingya Continent. The Bluelion Domain.

“Sovereign, today is the day of the challenge. The Seven Star Windhunter, ‘Russell’ [La’sai’er], will be challenging the Lord of the Bluelion Domain, ‘Ombarafael’ [Wu’mu’bu’la’fei’er]. This Seven Star Windhunter, Russell, is very famous in our Divine Wind Plane, and is legendary for his speed and guile. But of course, his power is tremendous as well.” Boo said respectfully through divine sense.

At this moment, Linley and Bebe were striding up a mountain, shoulder-to-shoulder, while the black-haired Boo followed from behind.

“Russell…”

Linley still remembered the many scryer recordings which the intelligence networks had provided him via Boo. They had describe more than a thousand experts of the Qingya Continent, each of which was at least a Seven Star Windhunter in power, and who all had their own supreme techniques.

‘Windhunter’ was a term of address in the Divine Wind Plane.

This was much like how ‘Fiend’ was a term of address in the Infernal Realm.

A Seven Star Windhunter was the same as a Seven Star Fiend.

“Today’s battle will occur deep within the mountain gorge. Quite a few people have come to watch.” Boo sent mentally.

Linley nodded slightly.

Many figures flew past them in midair. Even this mountain road had quite a few figures on it. Only, the Deities all advanced in a graceful, fast manner, bounding forward a thousand kilometers with just a few steps. Although Linley’s group of three didn’t want to astonish the ordinary people present, they still travelled dozens of kilometers with each step.

“Eh? Boo, unless someone has intentionally transformed himself into the challenger, ‘Russell’, I think he is right behind us.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

“Oh?” Boo was rather surprised.

As a Sovereign, how tremendous was Linley’s divine sense? He could easily detect that a person was agilely flying forwards. Curious, Linley glanced towards this Russell.

Russell was a youth who was handsome enough to make any woman fall for him. He appeared rather weak and soft, and he had a smile that could mesmerize the gods themselves. It could be said that if Russell was a woman, he definitely would have caused countless Deities to go wild for him. But fortunately, he was a man.

Although his soft and feminine looks made many people dislike him, his innate charisma made it so that quite a few people would immediately feel kindly disposed towards him upon seeing him.

“It has been so many years. Given my current power, I should be able to act against Ombarafael by now.” Russell flew across the mountain forests while musing to himself. “It doesn’t matter. After having reached this level in my training, it is virtually impossible for me to advance any further. I’m not

willing to wait any longer either."

There were quite a few figures about this mountainous forest.

While flying over, Russell's gaze suddenly focused, then tightened.

"Is that…" Russell was greatly shocked. "Bebe? And the Paragon, Linley?"

Russell swept the two of them with his gaze. He didn't recognize Commander Boo of the Qingya Army, only Linley and Bebe. Boo, as the commander, rarely showed his face. There were quite a few legends regarding him in the Divine Wind Plane, but very, very few who had actually met him!

As for Linley and Bebe, prior to this, Linley's defeat of Magnus during the Planar War had caused his name to become widespread. Quite a few people had recorded down scryer recordings of that battle, and even Bebe had been recorded down alongside Linley.

Naturally, the information regarding Linley and Bebe had quickly spread to the various planes.

Virtually all figures at the Seven Star Fiend level or higher would know about him, so long as they weren't complete recluses.

"Swoosh!" Russell's body flickered as he flew towards Linley's group of three.

"Eh?" Linley couldn't help but turn to look at Russell.

This Russell revealed a laugh on his face, and he immediately set up a Godrealm, separating this region from the outside world. He said respectfully, "Greetings, Mr. Linley."

"Uh…" Linley was stunned.

"You know my Boss?" Bebe was rather surprised as well.

Russell laughed, “In the past, when Mr. Linley battled Magnus and exiled Magnus into chaotic space, the battle was recorded down. Those scryer recordings have spread quite far, and some of my friends and I have watched them. Ever since that day, I memorized your appearance, Mr. Linley. Naturally, I also memorized Mr. Linley’s good friend, ‘Bebe’ as well.”

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances.

“I overlooked that.” Linley laughed helplessly as his appearance changed.

After becoming a Sovereign, Linley had become much less vigilant. In the entire universe, only the Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were capable of causing him to feel concerned. He had come to the Divine Wind Plane to roam about with the intent of being a tourist, and so he hadn’t really thought things over. Only now did he realize that there was a problem here.

“Mr. Linley, your aura is completely retracted. After changing your appearance, others won’t be able to recognize you.” Russell immediately laughed.

“You were able recognize me just based on appearance?” Linley asked with some curiosity.

“Appearance was part of it. The second part was the fact that your aura was completely retracted. For even me to be unable to sense it…definitely means that this person’s power vastly surpasses my own.” Russell laughed. “Why would someone on this level of power be so bored as to impersonate someone else? That was why I was certain that the person in front of me was definitely you, Mr. Linley.”

Linley couldn’t help but laugh. “You are quite meticulous, it seems.”

“Quite clever. However, today, you are going to go challenge that Lord of the Bluelion Domain, yes?” Bebe let out a chortle. “Kid, are you confident in being able to win?”

“I’m not. However, it won’t be easy for him to defeat me either.” Russell laughed calmly.

Linley and Bebe thus headed off towards the deep gorge alongside Russell. Boo, by their side, laughed secretly, “Russell only knows that Lord Linley is a Paragon, but he has no idea…that Lord Linley is now a Sovereign! If he knew, he most likely wouldn’t act so casually.”

Boo had changed his appearance long ago. Only someone extremely familiar with Boo would be able to recognize him.

In addition, as the commander of the Qingya Army, Boo rarely had to show himself, and so very few people knew him.

Deep within the wide, spacious gorge within the mountains, there was a dense assemblage of more than a million people. All of them chatted quietly, while the many soldiers maintained military order.

Linley’s group of four arrived in the front of the crowd.

A black-robed elder spied Russell from afar. He couldn’t help but feel excited as he hurriedly went to greet him. “Mr. Russell, the Domain Lord has already arrived and is waiting for you.”

“Hmph, he came quite quickly. However, after today, the position of Lord of the Bluelion Domain will be mine.” Russell let out a cold laugh, then turned and glanced at Linley’s group of three. He sent mentally, “Mr. Linley, you’ll have to excuse me for now. I’m going to go fight Ombarafael.”

“We will watch here.” Bebe chortled.

Russell immediately flew into the skies, towards the empty central area.

The handsome, delicate-looking Russell’s eyes were currently filled with a cold, steely, knife-like look. He swept the area with his gaze, then let out a

cold laugh before falling silent.

“Russell!”

“It is Russell!”

Instantly, the million-plus spectating Deities all grew excited. A flood of discourse instantly began to erupt.

“Everyone!” A clear voice rang out, echoing throughout the valley. Instantly, all the spectators fell silent.

The speaker was the black-robed elder who had welcome Russell. The black-robed elder hovered there in midair, saying in a clear voice, “This battle involves the Seven Star Windhunter, Russell, and our Domain Lord. Russell has already appeared. Immediately afterwards, let us welcome his Lordship, Lord Ombarafael!”

Instantly…

The distant group of soldiers suddenly split apart, creating a human corridor. A muscular man who was three meters tall, dressed completely in blue furs, walked over, step by step. This man’s face was covered with fur as well, and his eyes glowed dimly with a fear-inducing green light.

The Domain Lord of the Bluelion Domain…Ombarafael!

At this moment, the bestial-looking Lord of the Bluelion Domain was currently staring towards Russell.

The battle was about to begin!

“Boss, who do you think will win?” Bebe, also watching the battle, sent mentally to Linley.

“Do you truly think me omniscient?” Linley let out a calm laugh. “Let’s just watch. Aside from that challenge I personally issued, after going through

those hundred Arena battles, I've never before seen anyone challenge a Lord Prefect or a Domain Lord."

Chapter 30 – Sovereign's Emissaries

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 30, Sovereign's Emissaries

The million-plus Deities watching all held their breaths. The massive valley was completely silent.

"I didn't expect, Russell, that a coward like you would dare to challenge me." A deep, rumbling voice rang out from the mouth of the Lord of the Bluelion Domain. The Lord stared with bestial eyes towards Russell. "In the past, during the Windhunter Trials, the only thing you were able to do was hide and quiver, you coward."

Upon hearing this, Russell's face turned as cold as ice water. A sharp looked flashed through his eyes as he said, "Don't be smug. After today, the position of Lord of Bluelion Domain will no longer be yours."

"You seem quite confident." The Lord of the Bluelion Domain snickered.

The Lord of the Bluelion Domain stretched out his divine sense. It was only natural; when battle began, relying on one's eyes alone wasn't enough. Using divine sense to keep track of one's surroundings was important. It must be understood that this empty space in midair had a circumference of multiple kilometers. Upon reaching out with his divine sense, the Lord of the Bluelion Domain naturally also encompassed the surrounding spectators with it…including Linley, Bebe, and Boo!

"Bouvier [Bu'wei'er]!" The Lord of the Bluelion Domain was shocked.

As Domain Lords under the command of the Sovereign, all Domain Lords naturally would occasionally gather to pay their respects to their Sovereign. At times like that, they would see the commander of the army, Bouvier. Although Bouvier had changed his appearance, there was no way he could change his soul aura. Thus, this Obarafael, the Lord of the Bluelion Domain, naturally was able to instantly recognize who Bouvier truly was.

‘Boo’ was nothing more than a nickname the Sovereigns had given Bouvier.

The other Domain Lords all generally referred to him as Mr. Bouvier.

“Why is Bouvier here? In addition, he seems to be extremely respectful towards the two next to him. That youngster is a Highgod; I can tell. But as for that brown-haired man…hm. Also, given that Bouvier is the commander of the Qingya Army, he wouldn’t act so respectfully, even towards Paragons.”

The Lord of the Bluelion Domain came to a conclusion. “Can it be that this person is a Sovereign?”

This conclusion…badly shocked the Lord of the Bluelion Domain.

“Obarafel, fight as you normally would.” A voice rang out in the Lord of the Bluelion Domain’s voice. The speaker was Bouvier. Bouvier knew… that this old acquaintance had recognized him.

“Mr. Bouvier, the person next to you…” The Lord of the Bluelion Domain immediately sent back.

“Pretend you didn’t find out.” Bouvier sent to him.

The Lord of the Bluelion Domain was now completely convinced as to who the brown-haired man was.

“I didn’t expect that the Sovereign would actually come to my place! Right…this victory has to be a clean one.” The Lord of the Bluelion Domain, upon learning that his Sovereign was watching, felt his intent for battle surge. He gave the distant Russell a cold glance, laughing in his heart.

Suddenly…

“BANG!” It was as though the air exploded. The Lord of the Bluelion Domain seemed to instantly cross the distance of a hundred meters between

them. His giant, boulder-like fist surged forth, flashing with black light as it slashed out in a strange arc. It was like a meteor flashing through the heavens, piercing through the skies and striking towards Russell.

World Meteor!

This was one of the supreme techniques available to Ombarafael, the Lord of the Bluelion Domain.

“Hmph.” Russell’s face turned cold.

“Swish!” A dazzling blade flashed, releasing a waterfall of power and tearing through the surrounding space.

The cyan saber flash clashed directly head-on against the dazzling, meteoric fist.

Russell, his cyan scimitar in hand, borrowed from the force of the collision to retreat backwards gracefully at high speed. With a cyan flash, he retreated tens of meters away into the skies, but immediately afterwards, Russell’s body actually moved away by another few dozen kilometers, moving so quickly as to astonish all the watchers.

“What astonishing speed.” Bebe sighed in amazement.

“Even faster than most commanders.” Linley’s eyes lit up as well.

The nearby ‘Boo’ sent mentally, “Sovereign, both Russell and Ombarafael are divine beasts. Russell is a ‘Nine-Tailed Windripper Fox’, and is innately gifted with great speed. Given that he also trains in the Laws of the Wind, it is only natural that he is extremely fast. In addition, as a ‘Nine-Tailed Windripper Fox’, he is born with great mesmerizing abilities, and the mesmerizing power of his soul is also quite terrifying. He is very hard to deal with.”

“Not bad. The first candidate I encounter seems to be quite excellent.” Linley had a hint of a smile on his face.

The Lord of the Bluelion Domain stood there, like an unbreakable fortress. As for Russell, he moved about at high speed, constantly changing his location, launching attacks from various angles.

“It has been so many years, but you, you coward, are still only able to run about and flee.” The Lord of the Bluelion Domain let out a snicker, then his gaze slowly turned cold. “Russell, I have no time to waste with you.”

“Bang!” The Lord of the Bluelion Domain’s body suddenly began to blaze with an earthen yellow aura.

Earth-type Sovereign’s Might!

“You have it; do you think I do not?” Russell let out a cold laugh as well, and his body also began to blaze with a faint green aura. Since he had dared to come issue this challenge, Russell naturally had also prepared in advance.

And then…

“Screeeeech!” An ear-piercing sound suddenly rang out from Russell’s throat.

An enormous, cyan-furred fox phantom, hundreds of meters in size, suddenly appeared behind Russell. This cyan-furred fox had nine furry tails, all of which were swaying gently. Anyone who stared at them would actually, unknowingly, begin to grow dizzy. Quite a few of the spectating Deities actually fell to the ground.

Innate divine ability – Mesmerizing Fantasy Domain!

A translucent sword shadow flashed out from Russell’s mouth, shooting directly towards the distant Lord of the Bluelion Domain.

The Lord of the Bluelion Domain, upon receiving this strike, swayed slightly.

“Roaaaaar!” The Lord of the Bluelion Domain suddenly let out an enraged howl.

An enormous, thousand-meter tall, snowy-furred bear suddenly appeared, its jade green eyes staring towards Russell. The bear smote itself on its chest with its two massive, clawed bear paws. “BANG!” With an enormous collision sound, an earthen yellow ripple blasted out from the bear’s chest in every direction, instantly encompassing an area of many kilometers, with Russell naturally being within this field as well.

Innate divine ability – World Collapser!

In the same instant…

That translucent sword-shape surged into the Lord of Bluelion Domain’s body, but the Lord of Bluelion Domain’s body only trembled. It didn’t seem to have much of an impact on him.

“Bastard. How could this fellow’s soul defense be so strong? How could my full-power attack have had such a limited impact on him?” Russell cursed angrily to himself.

“Haha…” The Lord of Bluelion Domain charged towards Russell.

“Not good.” Russell’s face changed dramatically. He could clearly sense that the surrounding area had changed. That constant surge of ripples seemed to have formed into layers of waves that surged around him, and even created a unique ‘Gravitational Space’ type of effect around him. This technique drastically impacted Russell’s speed.

Russell knew that the situation was bad, but…it was too late.

“Haha…” Laughing wildly, the Lord of Bluelion Domain now used his most powerful attack, in conjunction with his unleashed innate divine ability.

A pair of enormous fists pierced through the skies like a pair of horned dragons, causing spatial whirlpools to appear and space to collapse.

“Not good.” Russell retreated frantically, but within the innate divine ability field, his speed was inferior to his opponent’s. All he could do was roar in anger and furiously smash out with his blade.

“BURST!” The Lord of Bluelion Domain let out a furious roar.

The twin fists that had tore through the skies suddenly exploded with power.

“Bang!” The scimitar actually broke apart, inch by inch, and Russell’s body began to shake.

“How could this be…I’m finished.” Russell only felt a sense of powerlessness.

The Lord of Bluelion Domain, Ombarafael suddenly stared towards the front, baffled. “Where…did he go?”

Russell, who had been in a violent battle against the Lord of Bluelion Domain just moments ago, had now disappeared into thin air.

“Where did he go? How could this be?”

“Can it be that the Lord of Bluelion Domain blasted Russell into nothingness?”

The million-plus spectating Deities stared, stupefied. They had watched as Russell had actually disappeared into thin air.

“Domain Lord?” The black-robed elder immediately flew over, looking towards the Lord of Bluelion Domain.

Ombarafael, the Lord of Bluelion Domain, immediately turned to look towards Linley’s direction. Only, Linley and the other two had already

disappeared. “Indeed, it was the Sovereign who intervened.”

Just now, the Lord of Bluelion Domain had only sensed a blur flash past. Before he was even able to react, Russell had disappeared.

“Why did the Sovereign rescue Russell?” The Lord of Bluelion Domain was puzzled, but then he gave the black-robed elder a glance. “Alright. This battle is over. Announce the results.”

And thus, the Lord of Bluelion Domain led his forces to depart in a grand fashion.

The Lord of Bluelion Domain was the victor of this battle.

A million kilometers away, atop a grassland.

“Bang.” With a casual toss, Linley sent Russell landing heavily on the grass.

A million kilometers. Given a Sovereign’s speed, at full power, less than a second was needed to traverse this distance.

Russell had only felt his body tremble. The next thing he saw was that his surroundings had completely changed. There were no spectating Deities nearby, nor was there the Lord of Bluelion Domain, against who he had been battling. The surrounding area was completely empty. Before him was only Linley, Bebe, and ‘Boo’.

“Thank you, Sovereign!” Russell immediately knelt down towards Linley.

“Hey…how’d you know my Boss is a Sovereign?” Bebe laughed, puzzled.

Russell said respectfully, “Just now, I was in dire straits. Everyone else was far away. Not even a Paragon would be able to block the strikes of a commander-level expert from so far away! Only Sovereigns are capable of this!” A Sovereign could kill a commander-level expert from even millions of kilometers away with but a thought, much less from just a few kilometers

away.

Naturally, however, they wouldn't be able to do that to Paragons.

Just now, Linley had simply sent out his Will and released a surge of Sovereign power to help Russell slightly, and then had used it to wrap up Russell, then bring him, Bebe, and Boo here instantly.

"Russell, have you realized what went wrong in that battle?" Linley laughed calmly.

Russell nodded immediately, a hint of puzzlement flashing through his eyes. "It really was quite odd. I had prepared very thoroughly for this battle; even if I lost, I wouldn't possibly die. But…I discovered that my innate divine ability, when combined with my most powerful soul attack, actually didn't have much of an impact on him. This is simply inconceivable."

"This is because he has a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact." Linley laughed calmly.

"Sovereign, he isn't an Emissary." The nearby 'Boo' said, puzzled.

"Right. He isn't an Emissary." Russell said hurriedly as well. "I investigated this matter long ago. In addition, given Ombarafael's arrogant nature, if he became a Sovereign's Emissary, he would definitely announce it right away. He wouldn't be able to hide it for long."

"Do you think that my divine sense was mistaken?" Linley said calmly.

Russell and Boo immediately no longer dared to argue.

"Doesn't that mean I will never be able to defeat him?" Russell couldn't help but laugh bitterly.

Linley said with a casual laugh, "Russell, I have a test for you. If you participate in it, the chances of death are close to 90%, but if you accept, you will become one of my Emissaries. If you are willing…then upon

accepting, even before the trial, I will bestow you with a Sovereign artifact of your choice."

Russell's eyes lit up.

To a Seven Star Fiend-level expert, a Sovereign artifact was extremely alluring.

"Dare I ask, Sovereign, what is the test?" Russell said hurriedly.

"It is a Planar War." Linley immediately began to speak in detail regarding this event. Although he didn't say anything about 'ten successive victories', he gave a full explanation regarding how dangerous this Planar War would be. "Every person will have Sovereign's Might. Upon entering, you will be in great danger. You can give up this opportunity, if you choose."

Russell hesitated momentarily, then laughed. "Sovereign, I accept! I specialize in speed. Given my innate divine ability, my soul is also extremely strong. If I were to acquire a defensive Sovereign artifact, I imagine that I will have at least a 30% chance of survival. I'm willing to take this gamble. If I fail, at most, I will lose my most powerful divine clone. But if I win…"

Linley nodded slightly.

In choosing Emissaries, he had to choose those who particularly excelled in either soul attacks or material attacks. That way, by giving them a Sovereign artifact, he could make up for their deficiency and so increase their chances of survival.

"Then I will bestow you with a defensive Sovereign artifact." Linley waved his hand, and a set of Sovereign armor appeared.

Russell's eyes immediately began to blaze.

"Thank you, Sovereign!" Russell immediately knelt down, accepting this Sovereign artifact.

“Alright. Let’s head out now, in search of the next Emissary.” Linley laughed calmly.

“The next one?” Russell was startled.

“This time, we are preparing to find six Emissaries. You are only the first one.” Bebe snickered.

Linley’s group treated this as a form of tourism as well, touring while choosing acceptable candidates. Upon traveling through the Divine Wind Plane, they would go to the Divine Water Plane, and then would go to the Divine Earth Plane.

Time slowly passed by.

“I bestow upon you a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. You will become the second Emissary under my control!” Linley withdrew a Sovereign artifact in the shape of an earring as he spoke.

“Thank you, Sovereign!”

A bald man whose entire body seemed to be formed from azure rocks fell to his knees.

“I bestow upon you a defensive Sovereign artifact. You will become the third Emissary under my control!” Linley withdrew yet another set of Sovereign armor.

“Thank you, Sovereign!”

A jade-haired woman who had a patch of fish scales on her forehead fell to her knees as she spoke.

Every person Linley selected decided to accept his trial, and so, Linley’s little group was slowly beginning to grow…

Chapter 31 – A Meeting

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 31, A Meeting

Linley had already spent more than five hundred years in establishing his divine plane of wind.

“Whooosh.” A savage wind blew about wantonly, causing the entire area to be in a state of chaos.

In this blurry, indistinct region, not even the skies or the land had yet to be fully formed. Deep within this blurry space, an indistinct figure could be seen, standing in the center, with rays of faint green light emanating towards every direction from his body, causing this blurry region to constantly expand and stabilize.

Linley, his eyes shut, just stood there, his long, light green hair billowing about loosely.

He had stood like this for five centuries now.

“Wind. Invisible. Formless. It can condense to be as sharp as a blade, but dissipate into nothingness.”

Within Linley’s mind, multiple sword shadows were constantly flashing about, executing the various insights he had gained.

An endless torrent of faith power flooded into Linley’s consciousness like a river, causing his understanding of the wind to increase at a shocking rate. In particular, the process of establishing this divine plane of wind had caused Linley to gain many insights, and he had easily broken through many bottlenecks and resolved many difficult questions.

In the past five hundred years, Linley’s level of understanding regarding the Elemental Laws of the Wind had increased at an astonishing rate.

This was because Linley had a solid foundation to begin with.

In five hundred-plus years, Linley had reached the level of fusing five profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. But of course, the Elemental Laws of the Wind had nine profound mysteries. Linley could only be considered to have made some minor accomplishments.

“Haha…”

Suddenly, loud laughter rang out, echoing within this blurry space, causing it to tremble.

“After more than five hundred years, I’ve finally, completely fused the ‘Dimensional Attack’ profound mystery, and the Profound Mysteries of Explosion. Now, the Profound Mysteries of Explosion have already completely fused with the other three profound mysteries.” Linley couldn’t help but let a smile appear on his face. In almost an instant, Linley had begun to completely fuse all four profound mysteries into a whole, within his body.

His understanding regarding the profundities of these four different mysteries began to slowly rise.

“So that’s how it is!”

As he meditated, Linley’s development of his most powerful attack, ‘Sword Intent’, began to change as well.

‘Sword Intent’. Once the sword struck out, the invisible sword energy would strike out a bit too wantonly, unable to completely condense into a single point.

But now that he was beginning to fuse all four of the profound mysteries, Linley was able to begin to slowly condense his strike into a single point.

In the past, when Linley had yet to become a Deity, as his understanding of

the profound mysteries grew, his power had risen as well. Now, as his understanding of this fusion of the four profound mysteries grew, Linley's 'Sword Intent' was beginning to rise in power as well.

"Another four or five centuries will be needed for this plane to be created. This is enough to allow me to rise in power once more." While establishing his divine plane of wind, Linley was training as well. Not just his wind-type Sovereign clone; even his divine fire clone, his water-type Sovereign clone, and his earth-type Sovereign clone were completely focused on training as well.

Linley was completely focusing on increasing his strength!

The Divine Earth Plane. Black Tortoise Continent.

The Black Tortoise Continent was the continent which one of the four ancestors, the Black Tortoise, had controlled. Although the Black Tortoise had perished nearly twenty thousand years ago, the Black Tortoise Continent hadn't changed.

Green grass could be seen everywhere, and a group of people was agilely advancing through it.

The leader was a brown-haired youth, while behind him was four men and two women. This was Sovereign Linley's party.

"So that's how it is."

While walking forward, a smile suddenly appeared on Linley's face. His right hand gestured twice slightly, and an blurred sword ripple shot out from his hands, causing space to instantly shatter.

"The Sovereign is…?"

Everyone, Russell and the rest of the six included, were all puzzled. Recently, over the course of their journey, Linley couldn't help but test out some techniques from time to time. This naturally caused the other six to

feel surprised. However, they didn't dare disturb Linley.

"Boss, if you are going to train, just have your other clones train. Why must you…" Bebe couldn't help but speak out.

Linley, absorbed in the hidden profundities of his new technique, was startled awake. He let out an awkward laugh. "Bebe, I couldn't help myself!" Now, aside from his original body, the other four clones were completely absorbed in the process of fusing the four types of profound mysteries into a completely whole. Every single day, Linley gained some insights into the fusing of these four Laws.

The power of his 'Sword Intent' technique was, day by day, beginning to slowly rise.

Power that was increasing perceptibly, every single day…how terrifying was this?

"Boss, you really are a training fanatic!" Bebe snorted. Then, however, he rubbed his nose and began to laugh. "Still. Boss, don't be impatient. We've already acquired five Emissaries. Only one is missing! The Black Tortoise Continent has more than a thousand Seven Star Fiend-level experts. And didn't you say, Boss, that two of them are fairly close to us, just up ahead?"

Linley nodded.

He turned to look at the six behind him. Of the six, one was the commander of the Black Tortoise Army, Wilhelm [Wei'lian], while the other five were his Emissaries. Of the five Emissaries, three were men while two were women, and they all had their own unique strengths.

One was a ruler amongst the race of mermaids, a Goldcrest Siren. One was a divine beast, Nine-Tailed Windripper Fox. Another was a female Viva Titan…

In short, these five were either extremely strong in physical defense or extremely strong in spiritual defense. When given a Sovereign artifact, their

flaws were perfectly concealed.

This was Linley's prerequisite for his selectees; that he would be able to give them enough power to have a chance to survive in the Planar War.

"Five hundred years passed in the blink of an eye." Linley let out a sigh. "There are two more up ahead. According to our intelligence reports, they are both Seven Star Godhunters. One is named Bresle [Bu'lei'lei], a virtuous, broad-minded fellow. The other, Gansla [Gang'lei'sa], can be considered as being at the peak of power for Seven Star Godhunters."

This intelligence had been provided to Linley by the commander of the Black Tortoise Army, Wilhelm.

"Wilhelm, hand over that detailed report on them." Linley said calmly.

Earlier, Linley had only reviewed a simplified version of the report; he hadn't read the detailed one.

"Bresle trains in the Laws of Light. He is very sincere and kind in his treatment of others, and he is willing to risk his life for his friends. Thus, he has quite a few good friends. Only, I find it strange; despite this sort of temperament, he was actually able to stay alive for so many years. This is inconceivable." Commander Wilhelm laughed.

Linley couldn't help but nod as well.

If the intelligence reports were correct, then this Bresle could be described as a 'perfect' person!

Bebe mumbled, "For such a good-natured fellow to be able to stay alive in a place as murderous and violent as a Divine Plane, and even reach the Seven Star Fiend level of power…it really is inconceivable."

"Let's go. Those two are sparring yet again." Linley laughed calmly.

Immediately, Linley's group advanced at a faster pace. A blurred shadow

flashed, and it was as though they had disappeared into thin air.

On the grassy earth, there was a building formed from elemental essence. Ahead of it, there was a gleaming, rippling lake.

Two figures were in the air above the lake, fighting and moving at high speed.

“Swish!” An azure-robed figure, body crackling with lightning, was constantly moving about at a pace far greater than the other, white-robed figure.

Still, the white-robed figure moved very quickly as well; only, he wasn’t able to catch up to his foe. His defense, however, was extremely strong.

“Hmph.”

With a low growl, the white-robed figure’s body suddenly expanded. His skin instantly turned azure, and his arms and legs increased in size. White runes appeared atop his body as well, and the blue veins on his body bulged out, snaking and twisting across his form, while two sharp horns emerged from his forehead.

“Bang!”

“Bang!”

The azure-robed figure’s attacks landed consecutively atop the body of the white-robed figure, but the leather-like skin of the white-robed figure was protected by that white light, and he borrowed from the force of the collision to retreat.

“The two can only be considered as being near the commander level.” Linley watched the two distant figures flash about above the lake, and he laughed calmly as he came to his conclusion.

“Sovereign.” Commander Wilhelm said respectfully, “This Gansla is

extremely fast, and his attacks can be considered extremely strong as well. He doesn't have any real weaknesses. But at the same time, he doesn't have any real, overwhelming strengths either! As for this Bresle, his uniqueness lies in his body and his defense! His defense is extremely strong, especially after transforming. Even experts at a higher level would generally find it hard to kill him. Look; although that Gansla, by relying on his speed, is able to land multiple blows on Bresle, and yet Bresle isn't affected at all."

Linley nodded slightly.

Although the white-robed Bresle had exceedingly strong defense, in this battle, Gansla clearly held the upper hand.

"Haha, my friend Gansla, let's stop here." The white-robed man laughed. "If you were to unleash your most vicious technique, my soul defense wouldn't be able to withstand it."

"Bresle, your physical defense is simply too strong." The azure-robed man laughed as well.

The white-robed man's figure began to slowly transform back to normal. His two horns on his forehead disappeared, and he changed back into a normal, human appearance.

"The power of my body is part of my innate gifts, but in terms of actual strength, I'm still weaker than you, my friend Gansla." The white-robed figure laughed. Suddenly, he frowned and stared into the distance, while the azure-robed figure by his side did the same. Linley's group was slowly strolling towards them from far away.

Of Linley's group, only the commander of the Black Tortoise Army, Wilhelm, was a native of the Divine Earth Plane.

Given his status, these two had never seen him before.

But of course…

Although these two had no idea as to who the members of Linley's group were, they could sense that this group was not to be easily offended.

"Bresle, be careful. As I see it, they should all be quite strong." The azure-robed figure sent.

"It should be fine, Gansla. We didn't offend them; they wouldn't act against us for no reason." The white-robed figure chortled.

"Don't think that everyone is like you." The azure-robed Gansla was clearly readying himself, as he stared fixedly at Linley's advancing group.

And then, Gansla barked in a cold voice, "Everyone, might I ask why you have come to my place?"

"I want to have a chat with him in private." The leader of the group, a brown-haired figure, pointed at the white-robed Bresle as he spoke.

"My name is Bresle. Who might you be?" Bresle laughed as he walked forward.

"Bresle!" The nearby azure-robed Gansla immediately grew frantic, and he sent mentally, wanting to stop him, "You don't even know them. Don't go near them!"

Linley glanced sideways at Gansla.

With but a thought…

"Rumble…" A surge of earth-type Sovereign power immediately spread out, filled with powerful Sovereign's Will. It instantly separated Gansla and Bresle, forming into a barrier that contained Bresle and Linley's group, with Gansla kept outside.

The azure-robed Gansla was stunned by the earth-type Sovereign power. He couldn't help but be knocked flying backwards, but with a backflip, he immediately rose to his feet again. He stared at the group within the

translucent, earthen yellow barrier, and his face changed dramatically. “Sov, Sovereign…”

The power of Linley’s simple technique was simply overwhelmingly terrifying.

The white-robed Bresle, seeing the situation, immediately came to his senses as well. He hurriedly knelt down. “Bresle pays his respects to the Sovereign. Dare I ask what you need from me, Sovereign? If there is anything you need, just instruct me.”

“Bresle, I have a test for you. If you are willing to participate, you will become my Emissary, and I will bestow upon you a Sovereign artifact of your choosing.” Linley laughed calmly.

“Ah!” Bresle was stunned.

To become a Sovereign’s Emissary? To acquire a Sovereign artifact?

This was a stroke of fortune descending upon him from the heavens! Bresle felt dizzy for a moment. After training for countless years, who wouldn’t seek to reach the pinnacle? Only, even someone at the Domain Lord level or the Lord Prefect level wouldn’t necessarily be able to acquire a Sovereign artifact. After all, there were only so many Emissaries, while the number of commander-level experts was far more numerous.

“Me…a Sovereign’s Emissary?” Bresle couldn’t help but repeat the words.

“Naturally.” Linley nodded. “The prerequisite, however, is for you to attend this trial.”

“Dare I ask, Sovereign, what sort of a trial is this?” Bresle was so excited that his face was starting to turn red.

Linley let out a calm laugh. “Don’t be in a hurry to agree; first, listen closely to the details of this trial! I need you to participate in a Planar War, but this Planar War is different…” Linley explained in detail exactly how

dangerous this Planar War would be.

As he listened, the look in Bresle's eyes only grew even firmer.

He felt that he had a chance at surviving, even within this terrifying Planar War!

"Sovereign, I wish to acquire a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact." Bresle said hurriedly.

"All done. Six of them." Linley felt a surge of delight.

"Lord Linley!" Right at this moment, a voice rang out in Linley's mind.

"Eh?" Linley turned to look, only to see two figures flash towards him from far away, descending upon the ground. "Two Sovereigns?"

Chapter 32 – Gathering Point

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 32, Gathering Point

Linley swept the two with his gaze, ascertaining their identities.

Of the two, one was dressed in a fiery long robe and had long, fiery red hair, with an amiable look on his face. This was a Lesser Sovereign of Fire, Borte [Bo'tie'er]. As for the other, this man appeared rather muscular, and was comparable to Linley in height. He was dressed in a long, gray robe, and had tousled, short hair. This was the Lesser Sovereign of Earth, Manlu.

"Borte, Manlu." Linley laughed calmly. "What a coincidence it is, to run into the two of you here. Why have you two come here?"

The two Lesser Sovereigns, Borte and Manlu, exchanged a glance, and then Borte smiled very modestly and sent, "Lord Linley, to tell the truth, Manlu and I have come to search for an Emissary. This Bresle was one of the individuals we had decided on long ago. We came for the sake of letting him become our Emissary. Lord Linley, please assist us in this."

Not every Sovereign had filled up every slot for their Emissaries. For example, Bluefire only had a single Emissary; Phusro. His second Emissary had yet to be selected.

Because of this upcoming Planar War, the few Sovereigns who had open Emissary slots began to recruit and fill up their slot.

"Hmph." Linley's face couldn't help but sink.

Borte and Manlu couldn't help but tremble slightly in their hearts. Linley was, after all, someone who surpassed the Chief Sovereign of Lightning and Chief Sovereign of Light, a terrifying power. Only the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts surpassed Linley. The two of them, mere Lesser Sovereigns…how could they compare to Linley?

“Borte, I told you to forget it, but you? You insisted on coming.” Manlu couldn’t help but send.

“Don’t worry. As long as we are respectful, Linley wouldn’t dare act against us. If he does, he would be violating the Pact.” The Lesser Sovereign of Fire, Borte, sent back. And then, he smiled towards Linley and said, “Lord Linley, in the Divine Earth Plane, there are many people aside from Bresle who have strong defense. You can easily choose another person.”

Linley swept a cold glance past Borte and Manlu.

Before Linley had said anything, the nearby Bebe grew angry and barked, “My Boss has chosen an Emissary. What makes you think you have the right to take him away?”

“Shut your mouth.” Manlu couldn’t help but bark angrily as he gaze Bebe a cold glance.

The two feared Linley, but they didn’t hold a mere Highgod like Bebe in any regard. In the eyes of a Sovereign…a Highgod like Bebe was but an ant. And now, this ant actually dared to angrily lecture them? How could this be permitted? If it weren’t for the fact that Linley was right there, the two probably would’ve killed Bebe right away.”

“As I see it, it’s the two of you who need to shut your mouths.” Linley growled.

Borte and Manlu’s faces changed slightly.

“Lord Linley, how about, we let Bresle choose for himself. What do you say?” Borte said shamelessly, and then, ignoring Linley’s reaction, he turned to look towards Bresle. Smiling, he said, “Bresle, if you are willing to become an Emissary under my command, I can gift you a Sovereign artifact.”

Bresle was completely puzzled.

“What is going on today? Why are Sovereigns fighting over the chance to make me their Emissary?” Bresle was confused.

Not just him; even Linley was puzzled.

“What is wrong with these two?” Linley didn’t understand. “He’s just an Emissary. There are quite a few Seven Star-level experts in the Divine Earth Plane. They can go find someone else. Why irritate me for the sake of this Bresle? What has caused them to act like this?”

Because of his puzzlement, Linley didn’t immediately shoo off these two Sovereigns. He wanted to figure out exactly what was going on with them.

“I…” Bresle hesitated slightly.

Becoming Linley’s Emissary involved an exceedingly dangerous trial.

But this Sovereign who had just appeared didn’t mention any trial. Naturally, Bresle hesitated.

“Borte. Can it be that you aren’t intending to send him into the Planar Battlefield?” Linley said coldly.

The Sovereign of Fire, Borte, let out a casual laugh. “If one wishes to become an Emissary, one naturally must be tested.”

Bresle couldn’t help but glance at this Sovereign of Fire, Borte. He mused to himself, “This Sovereign of Fire didn’t mention this earlier. Most likely, he would only inform me about it after I agreed. His actions aren’t very honorable.” Not hesitating at all, Bresle said respectfully, “Apologies. I’ve already accepted this Sovereign’s offer.”

Linley laughed.

Borte and Manlu exchanged a glance.

“I want to see what else these two have to say for themselves.” Linley was now truly interested. What caused these two to insist on fight with Linley over Bresle, to the point of even offending him?

Just for an Emissary? Linley didn’t believe it.

They shouldn’t be willing to offend a powerful Chief Sovereign-level expert, even if it meant losing out on an Emissary.

Were these Sovereigns fools? Was something wrong with their heads? That wasn’t likely either.

Then…what was the real reason?

“Lord Linley.” Borte bowed slightly, then sent, “It was Lord Orloff, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, who ordered us to make this Bresle our Emissary. The two of us are simply following orders. There was nothing we could do. Please help us out a bit, Lord Linley.”

Linley was stunned.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff?

Linley knew that each of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts had a group of Sovereigns under their control. For example, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had quite a few Sovereigns he protected, many of whom trained in the Elemental Laws, who had entered the Infernal Realm and stood on his side.

The Sovereigns all knew, after all, that the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were the most powerful, and thus they naturally knew it was necessary to follow one of them.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate was unfathomably powerful, and so there were quite a few Sovereigns who obeyed his orders. The two Sovereigns before Linley were amongst them! In fact, even the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, could be considered someone on the side of the Chief Sovereign

of Fate, although he couldn't be said to be completely subordinate to him.

"Haha, Lord Orloff already has his army of Twelve-Winged Angels. Why would he care about an Emissary or two?" Linley sent back with a calm laugh.

"We aren't able to comprehend Lord Orloff's plans." Borte and Manlu were both very respectful. Borte sent back, "Lord Orloff gave us the order to come here and have someone called 'Bresle' become his Emissary. Although Lord Orloff didn't tell us that we absolutely had to accomplish this mission, we can't disappoint him, right? Thus…we would like to ask you, Lord Linley, to help out."

Linley now began to understand. However, there was still one thing he was puzzled on. "Orloff is the Chief Sovereign of Fate! He is such a high, lofty figure that even the Chief Sovereign of Destruction isn't able to do anything to him. Why, then, would he remember a mere Highgod, Bresle?"

"Lord Linley…" Borte said again.

"Apologies. I've already accepted this Bresle as my Emissary; this is akin to giving Bresle a promise. As a Sovereign, once I've given my word, how can I simply take it back?" Linley gave the two a calm glance. "The two of you had best leave and depart."

Borte and Manlu couldn't help but frown slightly.

"Lord Linley, this is someone the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Lord Orloff, chose personally. If you do this, once Lord Orloff knows…" Borte said fearlessly.

Linley's face sank.

Threats?

His gaze turned icy cold. He looked at the two, and he only said two words: "F*ck off!"

Borte and Manlu's faces changes dramatically. No longer daring to say a word, they bowed slightly, then immediately flew away, fleeing at high speed.

"To use the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, to threaten me?" Linley shook his head mentally. These two Sovereigns were trying to bluff him with threats. Linley knew what type of person Orloff was; he wasn't the sort to avenge every enmity. Sometimes, a superior might a very good person, but because of the frivolous actions of his subordinates, have his own reputation tarnished.

There was indeed a great difference between Lesser Sovereigns and Chief Sovereigns.

Only, because of the Pact of Sovereigns, unless there was a grievance between them, the Chief Sovereigns were not to attack Lesser Sovereigns.

Borte and Manlu had already flown very far away.

"Linley is too wild and arrogant." Borte couldn't help but send. "We even lowered ourselves to beg him for help, and even told him that this was for the Chief Sovereign of Fate. He actually still refuses to give any face at all."

"Borte, today, you went a bit too far as well. Linley is at the Chief Sovereign-level, after all." Manlu sent back.

Borte snickered as he sent back, "Chief Sovereign-level? He's just a punk who got tremendously lucky, and somehow in less than ten thousand years, reached that level. That's only because he fused three Sovereign sparks and has an Overgod weapon. And, Manlu, you don't need to be afraid of him. As long as we don't make a huge mistake, would he dare act against us?"

Borte had a bad impression of Linley.

Linley had suddenly risen to prominence. First, as a Lesser Sovereign, he had fought the Chief Sovereign of Wind, Diya, to a standstill. And then, he

had actually destroyed a Sovereign clone of the Chief Sovereign of Lightning, then heavily injured the Chief Sovereign of Light.

Linley's rise to prominence was simply too fast. Naturally, this would arouse the jealousy of quite a few Sovereigns. Borte was one of them.

"Enough of that. You would only dare to imagine offending him, but would you dare to actually do it?" Manlu couldn't help but laugh and ask him this question.

Borte cringed.

Would he dare? Absolutely not!

"Let's go back to the Celestial Realm. Unfortunately, we weren't able to fulfill Lord Orloff's commands." Manlu said helplessly. "However, Lord Orloff didn't make it a forceful imperative. It isn't a big deal for us to fail to accomplish the order."

After the two Sovereigns left, Linley looked towards Bresle, then laughed calmly. "Since you asked it of me, I shall bestow upon you a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact. From today onwards, you will become the sixth Emissary under my control." Linley waved his hand, and a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact, in the form of a ring, appeared."

"Thank you, Sovereign!" Bresle fell to his knees, excited, as he accepted the Sovereign artifact.

Linley glanced at Bresle, then at his other five Emissaries. Laughing, he said, "From today onwards, the six of you will remain together. Train well and learn to coordinate with each other! If the six of you join forces within the Planar Battlefield, as long as you are cautious, you still have a good chance of surviving."

"Yes, Sovereign."

The six bowed.

“Although some of you have one or two drops of Sovereign’s Might, that isn’t going to be nearly enough in the Planar War.” Linley waved his hand, and six small black jade flasks appeared. Within these six flasks were large amounts of Sovereign’s Might. Two were water-type Sovereign’s Might, one was earth-type Sovereign’s Might, one was wind-type Sovereign’s Might, one was light-type Sovereign’s Might, while the final one was darkness-type Sovereign’s Might.

As a Sovereign, it was naturally quite easy for Linley to collect this Sovereign’s Might.

“These bottles each contain a hundred drops of Sovereign’s. More than enough for you to use within the Planar Wars.” Linley willed the six jade flasks to fly towards the six people.

The six accepted the bottles, utterly delighted.

“Thank you, Sovereign!” The six all knelt down in gratitude.

“Alright. Arise, all of you.” Linley swept the six with his gaze. He knew that after the six entered the Planar Battlefield, they wouldn’t be able to leave. How many would survive this upcoming Planar War? “Remember. In this Planar War, you absolutely must not try to push yourself too far. Learn to hide, to endure. Staying alive is the most important thing; killing the enemies is secondary!”

“Yes, Sovereign.” The six Emissaries couldn’t help but feel a hint of gratitude.

“Prepare to head out.” Linley turned to stare into the distance.

“Five centuries. In less than a hundred years, the Planar Wars will begin.” Bebe stretched lazily. “Ahhhhh. Whew. Finally goin’ back.”

Linley smiled slightly.

Right at this moment…

“Sovereign, can we wait a moment?” The sixth Emissary, Bresle, bowed rather awkwardly.

“What is it?” Linley looked at him.

Linley was rather curious about this Bresle. He was a seemingly ordinary Seven Star Fiend-level expert. What made it so that the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, would remember him?

Bresle said hurriedly, “My divine darkness clone is somewhere else. You are of the Infernal Realm, Sovereign. If I can survive the Planar War, in the future, I naturally will want to remain in the Infernal Realm! Thus, my divine darkness clone is also preparing to head to the Infernal Relam.”

“Divine darkness clone?” Linley was rather puzzled.

It was quite rare for someone to simultaneously train in both the Laws of Light and the Laws of Darkness. Olivier was one such person, while Bresle was another.

Chapter 33 – The Bula Race

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 33, The Bula Race

“Bresle, you have a divine darkness clone as well?” The Black Tortoise Army’s commander, Wilhelm, said in surprise.

Linley laughed calmly as he glanced at Wilhelm, then said, “Wilhelm, as the commander of the Black Tortoise Army, you haven’t been collecting sufficiently accurate intelligence. You didn’t even know that Bresle had a divine darkness clone.”

“Sovereign, your subordinate was remiss.” Wilhelm hurriedly bowed.

Bresle bowed as well. “Sovereign, aside from everyone present, there are less than five people who know about my divine darkness clone, which is indeed a secret. Since I have become your Emissary, I naturally won’t hold this secret back from you.”

Linley nodded while smiling. “How far away is your divine clone? How long will he need to fly here?”

“Not too far away. Ten days or so.” Bresle said.

“Hey, kid, that’s quite easy for you to say. ‘Just’ ten days? That means we have to wait ten days for you!” Bebe suddenly stared.

“But…” Bresle laughed awkwardly, then glanced at Linley. “I need ten days. But if the Sovereign is willing to assist, a moment is all that’s needed.” Bresle didn’t know much about Sovereigns, but he knew that they travelled at astonishing speed.

Linley shook his head and laughed. “Let’s head out! Bresle, you guide the way towards your divine clone.”

“Yes, Sovereign! My divine clone is towards the northeast.” Bresle hurriedly pointed towards that direction, while turning to glance at the distant azure-robed man, his good friend, Gansla. He immediately sent through divine sense, “Gansla, my friend, I am going to accompany the Sovereign and depart now. In the future, we will have the chance to meet again.”

“Bresle, congratulations.” The distant Gansla, staring at Linley’s group, felt delighted for his friend’s fortune.

“Let’s go!” Linley laughed and spoke out.

As he spoke, he sent out a surge of earth-type Sovereign power, which wrapped around everyone present.

“Whoosh!” They transformed into an earthen yellow flash of light which disappeared into the horizons.

Gansla raised his head, watching the light disappear, then sighed. “Before this, Bresle was in the middle of a duel with me. Who would have imagined that in the blink of an eye, he would become a Sovereign’s Emissary?” He glanced at the surrounding grasslands, then a smile appeared on his face. “Fortunately, a few days ago, Bresle managed to finish this magic formation.”

In recent days, Bresle had been staying with Gansla, primarily to help Gansla set up a magic formation.

The profound mysteries of formations differed from the Seven Elemental Laws and the Four Edicts.

They were extremely special. The analysis of formations required sufficient patience, as well as talent in that field. It had extremely high requirements, in terms of both innate talent as well as analytical ability. In the Four Higher Realms and the Seven Divine Planes, formation masters had exalted statuses.

For example, when Linley had entered the Infernal Realm and participated in a Fiend trial, he had entered a castle that was protected by a large, powerful formation.

Only, the Dao of formations was not the true Dao. There was no way in which one could increase one's own strength through them.

"After today, there shouldn't be many who will come make trouble for me." Gansla smiled as he activated the formation.

"Rumble…"

In a circumference of nearly ten kilometers, a blurry light suddenly lit up, then vanished. Instantly, the scenery within this region completely changed; the lake and the building both disappeared, transforming into ordinary grass.

Clearly, this was an extremely powerful illusory magical formation.

Linley had no idea that he had just accepted a formations master as his Emissary.

The world was vast and empty.

Linley's group continued to fly through the air at high speed. Linley frowned as he glanced at Bresle, then said, "Bresle, where exactly is your divine clone?"

"Up ahead. We are almost there." Bresle said.

"Right, right here, Sovereign. You can halt." Bresle suddenly said.

Linley frowned as he halted. This place was nearly a hundred million kilometers away from the earlier grasslands, but a distance of a hundred million kilometers, to Linley, could be traversed in the time it took to say a few words.

“Are you certain? Right here?” Linley couldn’t help but look at him.

“Right. My divine clone is right here.” Bresle laughed as he looked into the distance.

Linley looked towards that direction as well. In the distance, he saw a series of metallic lifeform flying about, as well as a few people moving about by their own. What surprised Linley was…he wasn’t able to locate a person in the surrounding area who had the same aura as Bresle did.

“He’s here.” Bresle laughed.

Indeed…

A figure advanced towards them, flying at high speed. This person was dressed in a long, black robe, and was comparable to Bresle in height. Only, an occasional, fiendish light flashed through his eyes. After drawing close, this person immediately bowed respectfully. “The ‘Darkness’ Bresle pays his respects to you, Sovereign!”

Silence!

The other Emissaries. Army commander Wilhelm. Bebe. Even Linley! They were all stunned!

“They…are the same person?” Linley stared at the two in disbelief.

The white-robed Bresle smiled in a very friendly manner, making others feel friendly towards him.

This black-robed Bresle, however, gave off a vile, evil feeling.

More importantly…the soul auras of the two were completely different!

Logically speaking, upon becoming a Deity, a person’s soul would be split, but each soul would be the same. Memories, emotions, feelings…they would all be the same. In principle, different divine clones should have the

same aura and thoughts, right?

“Sovereign, the two of us truly are the same person.” The white-robed Bresle said respectfully.

“To be more precise, countless years ago, we were one person.” The black-robed Bresle gave the white-robed Bresle a glance.

Bebe looked at the two Bresles, then turned to stare at Linley. He sent mentally, “Boss, what’s going on? The two of them are one person?”

“Bresle, the two of you…” Linley swept the two with his glance. “Truly are the same person? How can you prove it?”

The white-robed Bresle looked at the black-robed Bresle, then said, “The two of us can merge into one.”

“I really don’t want to merge bodies with you.” The black-robed Bresle muttered.

And then, the white-robed Bresle and the black-robed Bresle moved towards each other…and their bodies merged into one, resulting in a single person. Bresle!

“They really are a single person.” Linley was completely stunned.

Only a single person would be able to merge bodies like this.

The strange thing was, after the two merged into one, the soul of the ‘fused’ person had a different aura. Compared to the pureness and gentleness of the white-robed Bresle’s soul aura, as well as the savagery of the black-robed Bresle’s soul aura, it was completely different.

It was a mix, and yet, strangely, it was one.

“Can you tell me what this is all about?” Linley looked at this Bresle, puzzled.

Bresle looked at the surrounding people, then bowed and said, “Sovereign, I, Bresle…imagine that you can tell that I am not of an ordinary race.”

Linley nodded.

His body was so powerful that he could receive blows from Seven Star Fiend-level experts head on; how could an ordinary person withstand such blows? In addition, after transforming, the flesh on Bresle’s body would dramatically swell, and be covered with azure skin and complicated white runes. It actually looked rather like the skin of a serpent. And of course, two horns would emerge from his forehead.

All of this represented that Bresle was not a member of an ordinary race.

“I am a member of the ancient Bula race!” Bresle said respectfully.

“Bula race?” Linley frowned.

“Yes, Sovereign.” Bresle said respectfully. “The innate gifts of our Bula race are no weaker than a divine beast’s!”

Linley knew that the world contained many marvelous creatures, some of which had their own innate divine abilities.

For example, the Amethyst Mountains had given birth to the Redbud Sovereign, and the Nether Sea had given birth to the very first plant-based lifeform, the Chief Sovereign of Death. The Infernal Realm’s very first creature, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction…they all were all unique creatures. There were many creatures such as them, and generally speaking, each material plane would also give birth to one or two divine beasts or unique creatures as well.

The Yulan Plane, for example, had given birth to the Godeater Rat.

The other planes had quite a few as well. Only, everyone was different; although some had incredible innate gifts, their accomplishments were still

meager.

“Although our Bula race is powerful…we don’t have any innate divine abilities!” Bresle said.

“No innate divine abilities?” Bebe couldn’t help but ask, puzzled.

The more powerful a race was, the more likely it should be that they would have an innate divine ability.

“The heavens are fair. We don’t have any innate divine abilities, but we have an innate gift from birth.” Bresle laughed. “Every single person of the Bula race, from their earliest memories, are aware of a very special technique…the technique to allow their souls to transform, and then for them to become two people.”

“Transform?” Linley frowned.

“Right, transform!” Bresle nodded. “Any intelligent lifeform will have personality flaws and weaknesses! For example, I like to research magic formations, and wanted to let myself be completely absorbed in analyzing them. But in my heart, I also hold desires and interests in other things, such as women, power, and more! These things will make it so that I am unable to calm myself down and focus on analyzing magic formations.”

Linley nodded.

This was much like how he himself was unable to completely focus on training without pause. Generally speaking, of Linley’s five divine clones, only four would train at once, with one being in a state of rest.

“We Bulas are able to allow our personalities, bodies, and thoughts be completely separated into two. We put what we want in one, while we can discard the greed and vileness in our hearts into the other! Afterwards, we can allow our souls to transform and divide into two souls. And so, we will have divided into two people!” Bresle laughed. “For example, me. One of my bodies is calm and kind; I can completely focus on analyzing magic

formations. But my other soul is filled with all sorts of venal desires; it can go kill, fight, and plunder."

"The two souls don't want to disturb each other." Bresle laughed. "And because each go to the extreme in their respective ways, I naturally will make great progress."

Linley, hearing this, was completely stunned.

This was a single person who, in many ways, had become two persons.

There was a saying that in the heart of every single person, there was a 'demon'. Even the most noble, exalted of individuals would have, deep in their hearts, a brutal streak; only, those people had extremely powerful self-control and wouldn't let it escape.

But this Bula race, they were actually able to completely separate that brutality.

"A person's soul is very complicated! When a creature is born, they will naturally gain a soul, and as they gain experiences, their thoughts and soul will naturally change as well. Thus, their soul aura will also change minutely." Bresle laughed calmly. "But of course, the change won't be too extravagant. After all, when a person is born, their soul aura has essentially been set."

Linley nodded.

He understood this principle. When he was young, he was a bit different compared to how he was right now. Although others could still recognize Linley at one glance, they would also be able to tell that he had changed.

"After becoming a Deity, the soul is divided into two. That, however, is just a splitting of the soul; the mind and the aura doesn't change. Or, more precisely speaking, it's still exactly the same person, and so the thoughts are completely the same." Bresle laughed. "But we of the Bula race are different. Our two bodies have different thoughts, different souls, different

personalities! We go to two different extremes. Naturally, our soul auras will also change."

As he spoke, 'Bresle' once more transformed, dividing into two individuals once more; the white-robed Bresle and the black-robed Bresle.

"When we are together, we will even get into fights because of our different attitudes and different methods of action." The white-robed Bresle laughed as he looked at Linley. "Sovereign, can you imagine it?"

"Bizarre. Inconceivable!" Linley sighed in amazement.

The natural world truly was a bizarre place. Even these sorts of races could be created by the natural world. Although they didn't have innate divine abilities, they had been bestowed with this unique racial gift.

"How many members are there of your Bula race?" Linley couldn't help but ask.

"Very, very few." The white-robed Bresle shook his head. "In all these years, I've only encountered three. When we Bulas meet each other, we can easily recognize each other."

"So few?" Bebe chortled. "Then if you want to find a Bula female and have a child, wouldn't that be very difficult?"

The white-robed Bresle was startled, but then he laughed and shook his head. "In truth, our Bula race doesn't have 'men' or 'women'; we decide which appearance we wish to take. The process of giving birth, for our Bula race, is actually quite simple. We sacrifice ourselves and use up our life energy to vomit out an egg. Soon after vomiting the egg out, we will perish. The child, in turn, will break through the egg and emerge, descending upon the world."

For one to be born, one must die.

Linley and Bebe exchanged glances. They couldn’t help but sigh. This race truly was unique.

Chapter 34 – Samsara

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 34, Samsara

“For one to be born, one must die. Then how was the first Bula born?” Bebe blinked.

Hearing this, Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

“Bebe, tell me, how was the first Godeater Rat born?” Linley said.

“Uh….” Bebe was speechless.

“We Bulas, along with many other unique races, are all birthed by the heavens.” Bresle laughed. “For example, I was born in the Nala material plane, but the three members of my race that I met were all born from other planes. Although I know that I can sacrifice myself to give birth to a child, for now, I don’t have that desire.”

Linley understood.

This was the rule of the universe; more powerful a race was, the fewer in number they would be.

For example, the Azure Dragon, White Tiger, and the other two of the Four Divine Beasts. For example, the Abyssal Fruit Tree. The Chief Sovereign of Death, and the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. Those were most likely all unique. Although this Bula race had a very unique ability, they weren’t comparable to Godeater Rats or Abyssal Fruit Trees, and so there were quite a few of them by comparison. For example, over the course of the years, Linley alone had encountered, through using divine sense, more than a hundred members of the divine beast race, ‘Suanni Lion’.

Divine beasts were divided into classes as well, after all.

“Haha. I didn’t expect that this time, I had accepted a Bula as my Emissary.” Linley laughed. “And a grandmaster in magic formations, at that. Excellent. Let’s head out.”

Linley released his Sovereign power, bringing the group alongside him as he transformed into a ray of earthen yellow light that flew at high speed towards the nearest teleportation array.

While Linley’s group hastened towards the Infernal Realm, Borte and Manlu, the two Lesser Sovereigns, returned to the Celestial Realm.

The one and only building that hovered in the air in the Celestial Realm… the Orloff Gardens.

This levitating garden was the residence to one of the two most powerful of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts…the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff!

Within the quiet gardens. Orloff was seated in the meditative position atop the grass, his long, white beard past his chest.

“Lord Orloff.” Borte and Manlu bowed as they arrived.

“Oh, you returned.” Orloff smiled.

Borte and Manlu couldn’t help but feel comfortable. As they saw it, choosing to subordinate themselves to the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, had been a wise decision. The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, was extremely powerful. In addition, he treated others very well. Given how icy and cold the Chief Sovereign of Destruction was, submitting to him would have been extremely unpleasant.

But the Chief Sovereign of Fate? He always greeted them with a smile.

Of course they would feel comfortable, and also feel all the more loyal to the Chief Sovereign of Fate.

“Lord Orloff, you asked us to take on that man, Bresle, as an Emissary. But by the time we located and identified Bresle, he was actually with Linley.” Borte said helplessly. “We asked him to give up Bresle to us, but Linley refused. We even mentioned your name, Lord Orloff, but he didn’t care at all. He even barked at us.”

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, upon hearing this, simply laughed. “Forget it. This Linley is a Chief Sovereign-level expert, after all. It isn’t strange that he has a bit of an attitude.”

“Alright.”

Borte and Manlu both bowed.

“Alright. In roughly a century, the Planar War will begin.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, rose to his feet, then stared into the distance. “I have to pay a visit to the Divine Light Plane as well.”

The Infernal Realm. Bloodridge Continent. Within the borders of the Indigo Prefecture.

“Whoosh!”

A ray of earthen yellow light flashed past the skies, descending into the Skyrite Mountains. The ray of light moved so quickly that even many of the Highgod clansmen weren’t able to notice it.

The Skyrite Mountains. Linley’s estate.

Linley’s group suddenly appeared out of nowhere within the empty, grassy field within the estate.

“Elder Linley!”

The maids and guards, upon seeing Linley, were badly startled. They all hurriedly saluted or curtsied.

“Haha, Linley, you were gone for quite long, this time.” A voice rang out. Beirut and Bluefire emerged at the same time.

Beirut swept Linley and Bebe with his gaze, along with the seven behind them. The seven were the five Emissaries, and the black-robed and white-robed Bresles. As for the commander of the army, Wilhelm, upon Linley’s group arriving at the teleportation array, Wilhelm had elected to stay behind with the teleportation array guards instead of accompanying them.

“These are the Emissaries you found?” Beirut laughed.

“Right.” Linley laughed and nodded. “But of course, finding Emissaries didn’t take up too much time. The main thing was, Bebe and I took a nice tour of those three Divine Planes.”

The nearby Bluefire couldn’t resist saying, “You seem to be quite at-ease. Right. Those clones you left behind in the estate…why are they all absorbed in training? I wanted to speak with you, but didn’t find any chance to.”

Linley could only chuckle.

Indeed, of his five major clones, only his original body was relaxed and at-ease. The other three Sovereign clones, as well as his divine fire clone, were all training.

“You can stay here for now.” Linley glanced at the Emissaries behind him, and then looked towards a distant maid. “Make the arrangements for them to have places to stay.”

“Yes, Elder.” The maid said respectfully.

The six Emissaries thus followed the maid away to settle down here.

Linley and the other two sat down around a table. The three began to drink and chat.

“Oh, from what you are saying, in the past five centuries, you’ve improved quite a bit?” Beirut said, surprised.

Linley nodded. “My power is roughly three times as great as it previously was.”

“Three times!” Beirut and Bluefire couldn’t help but feel stunned.

In truth, ever since he had begun to completely merge the four Laws, Linley’s ‘Sword Intent’ had begun to increase in power as well.

The different between the fusion of three profound mysteries of different Laws and four profound mysteries of different Laws was nearly a hundredfold. For Linley to have only improved his power threefold wasn’t much.

But to a Chief Sovereign-level expert, a threefold increase in power was truly terrifying.

“Haha, excellent!” Beirut couldn’t help but slap his hands on the table and sigh, “It seems the days of the Chief Sovereign of Light are numbered.”

“Right.” Linley nodded. “The next Planar War is less than a hundred years from now. During this period of time, the forces that will send people in to do battle will begin to gather. Augusta most likely coordinate with the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, as he did before. This isn’t the time to attack yet. In addition, my power is still, slowly rising. I’ll wait for now. This is the right time to wait, and what’s more, I’m quite confident.”

Beirut and Bluefire couldn’t help but laugh.

Linley had never given up the goal of killing Augusta. The hatred between Augusta and Linley stemmed from multiple causes. Last time, Linley had compromised for the sake of his mother’s life. He had no other choice.

Augusta himself knew that Linley was just biding his time and tempering his rage for now.

But as Augusta saw it, since Linley was a Paragon already, he had no further potential for growth. Linley wasn't someone for him to fear; in fact, Augusta seized the opportunity to give Linley a good fleecing during their negotiations.

Time flowed on, and in the blink of an eye, decades passed.

The six Emissaries under Linley's control were in no rush to head to the Planar Battlefield. They remained within the Skyrite Mountains!

The Skyrite Mountains. Linley's estate.

In an empty area, the black-robed Bresle and the other five Emissaries were organized into a hexagonal star formation. A very unusual surge of divine power was constantly circulating through them. The black-robed Bresle and the rest of the six were constantly moving about at high speed, flashing hither and to, sometimes going into the air, sometimes going into the distance, and sometimes landing back down.

In addition, they often launched attacks towards the air, causing one spatial rift after another to appear.

"Everyone, halt." The white-robed Bresle barked with a frown.

Instantly, all six landed onto the ground.

"What is it, Bresle?" The four men and two women looked at the white-robed Bresle.

"It's wrong. The way the formation currently works…consumes too much energy. More than half the energy is wasted." Bresle couldn't help but shake his head.

"It's already quite excellent." The beautiful lady with fish scales on her forehead said with a laugh. "When the six of us join together, our attack power and defense power all increase dramatically. In addition, those of us

with stronger defenses can help those with weaker defenses take on some more of the burden. When we attack together, we are comparable to eighteen Emissaries fighting separately."

Sometimes, joining forces was a good thing. Sometimes, it was a bad thing. During Planar Wars, for six Emissaries to be gathered in one place was giving the enemy a chance to annihilate them all in one massive attack.

However, if those six Emissaries were able to work within a magical formation that allowed their strengths and defenses to join together, then the situation would naturally be different.

"No. Too much energy is being wasted in the activation of this formation. This is completely different from the 'Samsara Formation' that I envisioned." The white-robed Bresle shook his head.

Right at this moment…

"Samsara Formation?" A voice rang out. Linley and Delia were walking together towards their direction.

"Sovereign." Everyone bowed.

Linley laughed as he looked at the white-robed Bresle. "Bresle, your accomplishments in the art of formations is quite impressive. In recent days, I've been watching you six constantly test out this formation. I have the feeling…that the six of you will becoming marvels to behold at the Planar Battlefield." When a Sovereign's Emissaries did well, the Sovereign would gain face as well.

"Sovereign, this is still quite different from what I had envisioned." The white-robed Bresle shook his head. "Long ago, I spent nearly a hundred million years to develop this Samsara Formation for the sake of allowing myself and 'Black Robes' to join together and release even greater power. This six man formation is something which I devised based on an extrapolation and expansion of the original Samsara Formation. But this formation…six people joining together is much more difficult."

Linley nodded.

To develop a powerful and perfect battle formation was extremely difficult! To develop one in just a few thousand years? It was impossible.

Bresle had spent nearly a hundred million years on the original Samsara Formation. Now, since this new one was based on the same principles, developing it was much faster. Despite that, however, hundreds of years would still be needed.

Delia, by Linley's side, said with a laugh, "As I see it, when the time comes, the six of you should use the same type of Sovereign's Might. That way, when activating the formation, you will waste much less power."

"That is what we were planning as well." The white-robed Bresle said respectfully. "But this battle formation clearly is not yet perfect. Still, Sovereign…we only have a few decades before the Planar War starts. We aren't going to be able to make it in time, I think."

"Don't be impatient." Linley laughed calmly. "The Planar War will go on for a thousand years. The first part of the thousand years consists of people hunting and killing each other. Only the final few moments of those thousand years culminate with the final battle. You only need to enter before the final battle, and so, you still have a thousand years. When the time comes, I will personally send you all to the Planar Battlefield."

Travelling from the Skyrite Mountains to the Infernal Realm's dimensional gateway leading to the Planar Battlefield would take up a tremendous amount of time. But for a Sovereign, less than half a day would be needed.

"Thank you, Sovereign." These people were all overjoyed.

The more they perfected this formation, the more powerful their defenses and attacks would be. Thus, the greater their chances for survival would be.

"You can continue. I won't disturb you." Linley laughed as he led Delia

away.

Silently, soundless, another ten years passed.

The Infernal Realm. Deep within the Chaotic Sea.

“Rumble…”

A long ‘dragon’ formed from a long, winding line of human bodies could be seen, as a steady stream of people flooded towards a distant black castle. Thousands and thousands of experts of the Infernal Realm poured into the black castle. The black castle wasn’t that large, but this torrent of visitors had already been going on for quite some time.

Two people were located before a window within this black castle. They stood shoulder to shoulder. It was Linley and Boson.

“There really are quite a few attendees this time.” Linley couldn’t help but say in surprise.

“There are many participants this time. Although this is a battle between the Celestial Realm and the Infernal Realm, many experts from the other planes, such as the Netherworld and the Life Realm, have come to join our side.” The Bloodridge Sovereign, Boson, was by Linley’s side, and he sighed as he spoke. “In terms of quantity of soldiers, we far surpass the Celestial Realm. But in terms of quality, we are greatly inferior.”

Linley laughed calmly. “The Chief Sovereign of Destruction and the others have gone all out. It will be hard for the Celestial Realm to win this battle.”

“Right, Linley, where are your six Emissaries?” The Bloodridge Sovereign suddenly said. “What’s the rush? Isn’t it enough for them to join together with the army before the final battle?” Linley replied with a laugh.

“As you choose, then.” The Bloodridge Sovereign looked below at the constant, never-ending flow of people. He couldn’t help but let out a sigh. “The Planar War has begun. A large number of people will die yet again.”

Linley nodded slightly as well.

The thousand-year Planar War had begun!

Chapter 35 – Thousand Years

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 35, Thousand Years

The Planar War had begun! But the Sovereigns didn't pay much attention for now.

This was because the results of the war were determined solely by the final battle.

Sovereigns had unlimited lifespans. Thousands of years passed in but the blink of an eye. Quite a few Sovereigns had already begun discussing who was more likely to win or lose this Planar War. As for the youngest Sovereign, Linley? He was going through a period of explosive growth in strength.

At the borders of the Yulan Plane. There was an enormous divine plane being birthed.

Within this plane.

"Whoosh." A wild wind blew. Some mountain rocks were shattered into tiny pieces by this wild wind.

This newly born plane was filled with dense amounts of divine power and elemental essences which solidified into unyielding rocks that couldn't be shattered by the wind.

Tall, cloud-piercing mountains. Vast, endless planes.

The extremely dense elemental essences drifted about, and amongst them, a tall, muscular figure could be seen standing. With a gesture from a single finger, a dazzling green sun suddenly formed out of nowhere, hanging high in the sky.

“After spending 1100 years, this divine plane of wind has finally been completed.” The green-haired Linley revealed a hint of a smile on his face. The past 1100 years of training had caused Linley to advance to the level of fusing six of the profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind. However, the Elemental Laws of the Wind had a total of nine profound mysteries.

Fusing six profound mysteries of the Elemental Laws of the Wind was comparable to fusing four profound mysteries of the Laws of the Earth.

“There are more than five hundred years before the final battle of this Planar War. No need for me to be in a rush!”

The light green-haired Linley once more shut his eyes, continuing to train.

He was currently advancing at a breakneck pace in merging the profound mysteries of the four different Laws. Linley naturally didn’t want to halt now.

765 years after the Planar War had started.

The Infernal Realm. The Skyrite Mountains.

A blurry light was flickering about in the air above the Skyrite Mountains. One spatial tear after another constantly appeared in the skies. Moments later, the blurry ray of light once more descended towards Linley’s estate in the Skyrite Mountains. The light vanished, revealing six figures; it was the black-robed Bresle and the other five Emissaries.

The white-robed Bresle, watching from below, finally smiled. “Haha, success!”

“Quite perfect. We waste less than 10% of the energy.” The long, flaxen-haired female Viva Titan sighed in amazement.

The divine beast, ‘Nine-Tailed Windripper Fox’, Russell, nodded as well. “When the six of us join forces, hmph…even thirty commander-level

experts probably wouldn't be a match for us, if they weren't unified." Six experts who had Sovereign artifacts and were able to perfectly join forces… the power they could unleash was truly terrifying.

"Fortunately, we have two water-attribute and two darkness-attribute members." The white-robed Bresle chortled. "Water is extremely flexible and accommodating, while darkness…is something I understand quite well. This is why we were successful!"

Right at this moment…

Linley appeared, as though by teleportation, in front of the seven.

"Sovereign." Upon seeing him, they all hurriedly bowed and saluted.

Linley's gaze swept past his Emissaries, a surge of joy in his heart. His greatest success in choosing Emissaries was his selection of this Bresle, a formations master.

"With this Samsara Formation operational, I now have a bit of confidence regarding your performance during this Planar War." Linley laughed calmly. "However, don't be too smug. Even Paragons, in that sort of environment, would have a 50% chance of death. The six of you need to be careful!"

"Yes, Sovereign."

The Emissaries all bowed.

They all understood that this would be very dangerous. Even with the Samsara Formation, they would just have a somewhat higher chance for survival; they were far from being able to dominate the battlefield.

"Since you've already essentially completed your cooperative training, today, I will send you to the Planar Battlefield." Linley said calmly. "Bresle…will your divine light clone remain here or go with them?"

"In terms of combat ability, I am a bit weaker than my divine darkness

clone." The white-robed Bresle laughed. "And this battle formation is predicated on having two experts of darkness and two experts of water, along with one expert of earth and one of wind. It is this combination of six experts which makes it work."

Linley nodded slightly.

The white-robed Bresle and the black-robed Bresle had different thoughts and mentalities, but in the end, they were still the same person. The soul-protecting Sovereign artifact which Linley had bestowed the white-robed Bresle could also be used by the black-robed one.

Linley delivered the six Emissaries under his control to the Planar Battlefield, then returned to the Skyrite Mountains.

893 years after the Planar War had started.

"Whoosh!" A figure moved forward at an extremely terrifying speed, instantly arcing out to a distance of ten million kilometers and landing within the Skyrite Mountains.

Linley, who was quietly seated by himself within his courtyard, suddenly raised his head.

The figure that descended from the heavens shot directly into Linley's body, merging into it.

"Finally, all my clones are in one place." Linley revealed a hint of a smile.

"Linley."

Beirut and Bluefire, at almost the same instant, arrived as well. Beirut said, delighted, "Your wind Sovereign clone returned? Does this mean that you have essentially completed your four-way fusion of the Laws?" Previously, after Linley completed his establishment of his divine plane of wind, he had continued to train. If he hadn't succeeded in his training, why would he have returned?"

“Essentially.” Linley laughed calmly and nodded. “I’ve already reached the final bottleneck in fusing the four Laws.”

“With one final step, I will have completely, perfectly fused the four profound mysteries of the four Laws into a whole. However, taking this step is even harder than reaching the level of Paragon.” Linley let out a sigh.

Beirut and Bluefire both understood.

How hard was it to become a Paragon?

Because Linley had three Sovereign clones, his rate of advancement was astonishing, which was why he was able to constantly advance until reaching the final bottleneck. However…to break through the bottleneck had nothing to do with analytical ability. There were many Sovereigns who were at the final bottleneck before becoming a Paragon, but after trillions of years, they still had yet to make that breakthrough.

As for Linley?

Who knew if Linley would be able to break through this final bottleneck. This four-way Law fusion was, after all, ten times more powerful than becoming a Paragon in a Law. Naturally, the difficulty was greater as well.

“I’m at a bottleneck, but my power is still nearly ten times stronger than it was during my last fight against Augusta.” Linley said with a smile.

“Ten times!” Bluefire and Beirut were both overjoyed.

“Hmph. Augusta, that bastard.” Beirut couldn’t refrain from starting to laugh. “Last time, he was lucky enough to survive. But now, Linley, you have grown ten times more powerful. Haha…Augusta’s only chance is to reach the Paragon level. But the chances of that are far too slim.” Augusta hadn’t been able to break through despite countless years having passed.

Actually, this all but guaranteed that Augusta had no hope of becoming a

Paragon.

“Killing Augusta isn’t just our dream. It is also the dream of the Four Divine Beasts clan.” Beirut laughed as he looked at Linley.

“Beirut, don’t be impatient.” The nearby Bluefire smiled. “The Planar War is in its final century now. Augusta is most likely with the Chief Sovereign of Fate. After this period of time passes, Linley will be able to make his move.”

“Perhaps, within the next century, I’ll make another breakthrough.” Linley laughed loudly.

“Stop daydreaming!” Beirut couldn’t help but start to laugh. “Making the final breakthrough is very difficult. However, once you do make that breakthrough, your power in terms of the profound mysteries will instantly increase tenfold. And…perhaps you will be endowed with another portion of Will. Linley. Once that truly happens, you won’t even have to fear the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts.”

“Grandpa Beirut, breakthroughs are difficult, but that doesn’t necessarily mean I won’t be able to break through in the next hundred years or so.” Linley jested.

In truth, the fusion of four different Laws was simply too difficult. By the 999th year of the Planar War, Linley still had yet to make a breakthrough.

The sky was completely dark.

“Whoosh!” “Whoosh!”

Seven figures shot out from the Bloodridge Continent, flying shoulder-to-shoulder in the air above the Infernal Realm. After flying for some time, the seven figures suddenly transformed into eleven figures. But once the squad flew deep into the air above the Chaotic Sea, they suddenly once more expanded into a group of seventeen figures!

“Chief Sovereign!” The many figures all bowed respectfully.

“Everyone, the final battle to this Planar War will come in two days. Let us go there together.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, covered by that black aura, swept the people with his gaze. His gaze paused momentarily on Linley. “Let’s go. We will head out right now!”

As he spoke, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction waved his hand, tearing a rift in space, then charged into it.

The sixteen Sovereigns behind him also charged inside.

“Linley. This Planar War will be viewed by, most likely, even more Sovereigns than came to your earlier trial.” Beirut sent mentally to Linley. Every single Sovereign in the Infernal Realm, Bluefire and Beirut included, was heading out to watch the Planar War.

Linley smiled calmly. “The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, won once before. The seven Sovereigns of Fate all were bestowed with an additional portion of Will. The vast majority of the other Sovereigns are unwilling to see them grow even more powerful.”

Since this involved their interests, they naturally came to watch.

“Linley.” Suddenly, the voice of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction rang out.

Linley’s flying speed increased slightly as he moved forward to stand next to the Chief Sovereign of Destruction’s shoulders.

“Lord Wodred.” Linley sent.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, swept Linley’s face with his deep, dark gray gaze. A hint of a smile was on his face. “You offered six Emissaries this time. Thank you.”

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction just said ‘thank you’ to him?

“Your Excellency, you once saved my life. In comparison, what is this?” Linley said with a laugh. In the past, the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, had threatened Linley to force him to hand over the nine soul-pearls, and was even at the verge of attacking. Fortunately, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction had appeared.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, hearing this, smiled all the more broadly.

“Oh, we are about to arrive at the Planar Battlefield.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction looked forward.

The Four Higher Planes and the Seven Divine Planes were all located quite close to each other. In the region of chaotic space at the center of these eleven divine planes was an extremely small plane; the Planar Battlefield. Thus, to tear open a spatial rift and fly through chaotic space from the eleven divine planes to the Planar Battlefield took very little time.

To go through the dimensional portals to the Planar Battlefield would actually take longer.

Going through chaotic space was the most straightforward, shortest route.

“Linley.” A familiar voice rang out.

Linley turned to look. From afar, a group of people were drawing close to them, with the Chief Sovereign of Death, that beautiful, red-haired maiden, at their head. This squad clearly consisted of the Sovereigns of the Netherworld. Fourteen Sovereigns had come from the Netherworld.

“Rumble…”

The Sovereigns all directly charged into the Planar Battlefield.

Utter silence. Within the cold, forbidding Planar Battlefield, a desolate wind howled.

The Netherworld and the Infernal Realm had brought a total of thirty one Sovereigns, and they all landed atop a mountain. Moments later, nine other figures flew towards them from afar; these were the Sovereigns of the Life Realm. And then, afterwards, small, scattered groups of Sovereigns drew closer as well. Soon, a total of 49 Sovereigns had appeared.

“Now, we are only missing the Celestial Realm and the Divine Light Plane.” The Chief Sovereign of Death revealed a secretive smile on her face as she glanced at the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. “Wodred, Orloff seemed quite confident.”

“Confident? Who isn’t confident? Victory and defeat will only be truly determined once this battle concludes.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly.

Linley, Beirut, and Bluefire stayed together in one corner at the peak of the mountain. As many Sovereigns saw it, Linley’s group of three, the three Sovereigns of Yulan, were like one unit. Their unit, because of Linley’s existence, was even more terrifying than the former unit of the Four Divine Beasts.

“They’ve come.” Linley said with a calm laugh.

Bluefire and Beirut immediately turned to look. The other Sovereigns all noticed the newcomers now as well. From far away, an imposing host was flying towards them, with a total of twenty two members.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, was the leader. The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, was by his side. The other Sovereigns belonged to the various Laws and Edicts.

“Hmph.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, seeing this, turned his gaze towards Orloff.

As for Orloff, he too was staring towards the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

Clearly, these two Chief Sovereigns viewed each other as their most powerful foes.

“Linley, the two of them view each other as their only opponents. They look down on the other Sovereigns. If one day, Linley, you were to surpass them both, what sort of a look would they have on their faces?” Beirut sent to Linley with a smirk.

Chapter 36 – The Final Battle

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 36, The Final Battle

Linley swept his gaze past the Chief Sovereign of Destruction and the Chief Sovereign of Fate.

“To surpass them…even if I perfectly merge the four profound mysteries of those four Laws, I will only be on par with them. Unless…I fuse with a final fire-type Lesser Sovereign spark.” Linley sent back.

Beirut and Bluefire both nodded.

“The final battle is tomorrow. Let’s just wait patiently.” Beirut laughed.

Seventy one Sovereigns. They chatted there, casually, at the peak of the mountain. Meanwhile, the high level commanders of the Celestial Realm and Infernal Realm began to make their preparations for the final battle. This battle could be described as the battle with the least numbers of commanders in many trillions of years.

In the past, the focal point for Planar Wars was the various commanders hunting and killing each other prior to the final battle. But this time, virtually none of those long-famous commanders and Paragons had come.

The entire Planar Battlefield had, in total, less than thirty commanders or Emissary-level experts. The vast majority of those individuals who did come were newly promoted Emissaries, such as the six under Linley’s command. There wasn’t a single Paragon present.

Paragons had a great chance for survival, true.

But if a Paragon had to fight alone against a large number of foes who would focus their fire upon him, he would rather not go risk his life, unless there was some treasure in store for him.

The Chief Sovereign of Death and the rest of the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts stood shoulder-to-shoulder at the top of the mountain, staring at the battlefield that was hundreds of thousands of kilometers away.

“Rumble…”

Very suddenly, at the Stellar River, and endless amount of energy began to gather, which then shot out in every direction, disintegrating the military camps on each side of the Stellar River in but an instant. All of the soldiers in each camp were at least at the Highgod level, and so everyone was able to effortless deflect this energy ripple.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

A beautiful, illusory rainbow-colored light rose towards the heavens. Each of the two corridors of the Stellar River were emanating this dazzling, rainbow-colored light.

“Kill!!!”

The warriors, many of whom had been training or resting, didn’t hesitate at all. They acted in accordance with their pre-arranged plans, and a stream of squads wildly charged towards the Stellar Corridors.

“It has begun!”

The seventy one Sovereigns who stood hundreds of thousands of kilometers away couldn’t help but completely focus their attention on watching this battle.

“Orloff, Wodred, which side will win, do you think?” The Chief Sovereign of Death delighted in causing mischief, and so she asked them this question with a smirk.

The icy-faced black-robed Wodred said calmly, “Win? Our Infernal Realm side doesn’t need to ‘win’. We only need to fight to a draw; that is enough

of a success. I'm not confident in our chances to achieve victory in both corridors, but to gain victory in a single corridor shouldn't be too hard."

"Victory or defeat is up to them." The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, still had a smile on his face, looking like an amiable old man. It was as though there was nothing that could surprise him.

"How insane." Linley, through his divine sense, was able to see the battle go on hundreds of kilometers away, and he couldn't help but let out a sigh.

"Bang!" "Bang!"

All of the countless warriors who entered the Stellar Corridor instantly began to blaze with the aura of Sovereign's Might. A Six Star Fiend who used Sovereign's Might might be able to threaten a commander who wasn't using Sovereign's Might. And now, thousands on thousands of experts were using it together?

What sort of a scene was this? It had never been seen before in the past, but it would be today!

"Madness." Beirut, seeing this sight, couldn't help but shake his head as well. "No wonder even Paragons and commanders aren't willing to participate."

"All this is happening due to the self-interest of the Sovereigns." Bluefire let out a sigh.

Linley continued to carefully watch the battle proceed. The two corridors atop the Stellar Sea had erupted into battle at virtually the same instant.

"Target, straight ahead. Launch a joint attack against the black-horned man standing at the perimeter." A hundred warriors, blazing with Sovereign power of various colors, struck out with their weapons or with kicks in the same instant. A hundred material attacks wildly blasted out towards the area in front of them, and everything within ten meters of that muscular, black-horned man was instantly reduced to nothingness.

“Target, twenty meters ahead of us. Joint soul attacks!” A translucent wave of soul attacks blasted forth. Many of the warriors that had been battling up ahead trembled, then fell from the skies as their divine artifacts departed their bodies.

The Celestial Realm and the Infernal Realm’s experts were viciously, mercilessly slaughtering each other. This was especially true since in this battle, extremely few commanders or Emissaries were taking part. Thus, victory in this battle was determined through sheer slaughter.

“The Twelve-Winged Angels have entered the battlefield.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said with a soft laugh.

“The Twelve-Winged Angel Army truly is formidable.” Beirut sighed in amazement, and Linley, by Beirut’s side, couldn’t help but look over with shining eyes.

At virtually the same instant, on the side of the Celestial Realm, Twelve-Winged Angel battle formations appeared at both of the Stellar Corridors. They were covered with a beautiful aura of white light, and had twelve white, fluttering wings on their backs.

“Straight ahead, material attacks!” Six icy-faced Twelve-Winged Angels, covered with white light, formed each Angel Battle Formation. They unleashed rays of thick white light that instantly shot towards their foes up ahead. Wherever this light passed, space splintered and shattered. The soldiers of the Infernal Realm were very densely packed, and upon encountering the rays of light, tens of soldiers of the Infernal Realm would instantly transform into nothingness.

Each squad of Twelve-Winged Angels were formed from six individuals. Every ten squads formed into a platoon, while every ten platoons formed into a company.

“Whoooooosh.”

Large numbers of Twelve-Winged Angels were advancing in an extremely orderly fashion. On each side, they were supported by many of the soldiers of the Celestial Realm. The Twelve-Winged Angels were the tip of the blade, while the many ordinary soldiers played a support role; they pressed down upon on the Infernal Realm's side, constantly grinding them down.

"Bang!"

Every attack of each squad of Twelve-Winged Angels would annihilate a large number of soldiers. These Twelve-Winged Angels were all, after all, no weaker than the Seven Star Fiend level. Most of the warriors of the Infernal Realm were only at the Six Star Fiend level; there was a difference in power to begin with. Given that these Twelve-Winged Angels were also skilled in combination attacks and formations, they naturally were able to constantly advance, as easily as drilling through rotting wood!

"Up ahead, that Angel squad in front of us. Joint material attacks." More than seven hundred warriors of the Infernal Realm jointly launched material attacks, and the skies were filled with rays of shooting light. The Twelve-Winged Angels weren't able to dodge in time, and instantly, the squad was reduced into dust. But immediately afterwards…

Two successive rays of white light shot towards the Infernal Realm, instantly slaughtering nearly a hundred warriors and once more throwing the Infernal Realm's side into chaos.

"They are on completely different levels." Beirut shook his head with a frown. "A single Twelve-Winged Angel, by himself, is comparable to ten Six Star Fiends. On the side of the Infernal Realm, even if a hundred men in a squad join forces and attack, their attacks are disordered and unable to kill the Twelve-Winged Angels who are in the Angel Battle Formation. The only chance is for hundreds of soldiers to join forces together."

Linley nodded slightly as well. He could tell that these Twelve-Winged Angels were like extremely sharp tip of a blade. They didn't fear death, and they were extremely powerful! To kill six Twelve-Winged Angels, the Infernal Realm would have to lose nearly a thousand warriors. And that was

just the raw numbers; more important was the question of soldier morale!

With the Twelve-Winged Angels serving as the tip of the blade, the warriors of the Celestial Realm felt their morale surge towards the heavens, and they brimmed with confidence.

As for the soldiers of the Infernal Realm, although they didn't fear death, given how vast the gap in power was, quite a few soldiers felt their hearts grow cold. If they continued to die like this…how were they supposed to win? Once morale began to drop, they would easily crumble.

"If this continues, in a short period of time, the Celestial Realm's side will achieve victory in both corridors." Linley said with a frown.

"The Infernal Realm's side shouldn't collapse that quickly." Beirut shook his head, while Linley nodded as well. "Right. The six Emissaries under my command are currently hidden amongst the soldiers of the Infernal Realm; they haven't participated and unleashed their power yet. I imagine that the Infernal Realm's side must have some sort of a plan."

The two corridors each had nearly six hundred Twelve-Winged Angels. There were a total of 1200 Twelve-Winged Angels, which represented 1200 Seven Star Fiend-level experts, all of whom were fearless and able to coordinate with each other perfectly. They were simply too effective.

One of the two Stellar Corridors saw the Infernal Realm be steadily beat back. In the other, although the Infernal Realm was retreating as well, they were doing so much more slowly, and the number of Twelve-Winged Angels they were killing was slightly greater as well.

In the Stellar Corridor where the Infernal Realm was retreating more quickly.

"Swoosh!" "Swoosh!"

One ray of white light after another. These were the combined attacks of the Twelve-Winged Angels, and many of the soldiers of the Infernal Realm

died miserable deaths to them. Although occasionally, they would be able to launch an effective combination attack of their own and kill six of those Twelve-Winged Angels…the losses of the Infernal Realm were simply too great, and too many of them had died.

White light flashed everywhere. It was a slaughter! Countless soldiers of the Infernal Realm were reduced into dust by that light.

“Kill!” The soldiers of the Celestial Realm bellowed with glee as they chased and killed.

The Infernal Realm constantly retreated, until finally, they broke down into a complete rout. Under that sort of wild, pressing assault, they had completely collapsed. And with their collapse, the battle’s outcome was no longer in any doubt. Soon, the Celestial Realm’s side reached the other side of the Stellar Corridor, and the rainbow-colored light disappeared.

The Celestial Realm had gained victory in one of the corridors.

From afar, the many Sovereigns continued to watch.

“Wodred, you’ve lost in one of the corridors.” The Chief Sovereign of Death chortled merrily. “There’s one more left.” Wodred said calmly.

“Oh, so the experts really were all focused on this corridor.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, chortled. Linley and the others had discovered as well that in the other corridor, the Infernal Realm’s side was launching wild attacks now.

“Indeed, the Infernal Realm’s side was able to scrounge up quite a few Seven Star Fiend-level experts. A hundred of them are in each company, and there are three in total.” Linley said with a laugh. The Infernal Realm and the other divine planes still had quite a few Seven Star Fiends present, and many of them were under some sort of domination or control, such as how Purgatory Commander Mosi was able to control quite a few Seven Star Fiends.

Those Seven Star Fiends were under soul domination. Naturally, they were incomparably loyal and fearless. And so, the Infernal Realm, Netherworld, and other divine planes were able to come up with three companies of Seven Star Fiends.

However, although in terms of individual power they were equivalent to the Angels, the Seven Star Fiends of the Infernal Realm were unable to form a marvelous battle formation.

“A wild counterattack.” Beirut began to laugh. “Under the command of these companies of Seven Star Fiends, the Infernal Realm’s soldiers have begun to rise in morale.”

Both the Infernal Realm and the Celestial Realm had gone berserk. Attacks filled the heavens and wildly struck out towards their foes. Many Seven Star Fiends and even many Twelve-Winged Angels began to fall.

Six Twelve-Winged Angels formed each battle formation, and they were unable to resist the combined attacks of so many Seven Star Fiends. But naturally, many Seven Star Fiends of the Infernal Realm died as well.

“Slash!” “Swish!” The strange thing was, one Twelve-Winged Angel after another began to fall as multiple figures stealthily, agilely moved about through the massed soldiers. They were extremely agile, and all of them were astonishingly, terrifyingly strong.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, frowned slightly, and then he turned to look at the Chief Sovereign of Destruction. “Oh? Commander-level experts?”

“I don’t have that many; just those.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said calmly.

Those Emissaries who had chosen to come here were mostly very close to the commander level to begin with. Given that they now possessed Sovereign artifacts, it wasn’t too hard for one of them to ambush and kill a Twelve-Winged Angel.

Because in this battle, the various planes had joined forces to defeat Orloff, the many Emissaries present were virtually all on the side of the Infernal Realm. The Celestial Realm had very few. What's more, every single Emissary was roughly as effective as six of the Twelve-Winged Angels.

"Linley, it seems the Infernal Realm doesn't have much of an advantage." Beirut said with a frown. "Those Twelve-Winged Angels are completely fearless. If a few die, the others immediately reform into a new battle formation. Any six of the Twelve-Winged Angels are able to form into the Angel Battle Formation."

Linley saw this as well. The Twelve-Winged Angels were too berserk; they would rather die than retreat. This made it so that even though the Infernal Realm had sent out three companies of Seven Star Fiends, and even though quite a few Emissaries were launching sneak attacks, there was no way for them to force the Celestial Realm into a retreat.

"What are the six of them planning? Why haven't they acted yet?" Linley stared forward, puzzled.

Chapter 37 – Eye-Catching

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 37 – Eye-Catching

At the peak of the mountain. A wild wind was howling. The Sovereigns were standing there, atop the peak, chatting amongst themselves. The savage battle going on hundreds of thousands of kilometers away was under their complete surveillance.

“Wodred!” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, smiled as he glanced at the nearby Chief Sovereign of Destruction. “So this was what you were relying on. Three hundred Seven Star Fiends, and these Emissaries! I really am impressed that you were able to round up so many fearless Seven Star Fiends. Unfortunately, your Infernal Realm still doesn’t have much of an advantage.”

“Don’t talk until it is all over!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction watched everything with a cold, emotionless gaze.

Hundreds of thousands of kilometers away, atop the Stellar Corridor.

The soldiers of the Infernal Realm and the Celestial Realm were gripped by madness. Under the leadership of the three hundred Seven Star Fiends and the various Emissaries, the soldiers of the Infernal Realm felt their morale swell. The vast majority of them were at the Six Star Fiend level, but a very small number were at the Seven Star Fiend level. They all wildly launched one mass attack after another.

The Infernal Realm’s side thundered forward like a flood, blasting attacks outwards with abandon. As for the Emissaries who constantly flashed about, dodging and launching ambushes, they were like vipers hidden within the floodwaters.

There was no fear in the eyes of the Twelve-Winged Angels. They led the Celestial Realm’s armies in continuous resistance. One Twelve-Winged

Angels after another fell, but with each death of a Twelve-Winged Angels, the Infernal Realm also paid a heavy price.

“These Angels really are hard to deal with.” Beirut said with a soft laugh. “They are completely fearless. Even though the Infernal Realm is fighting in such a berserk manner in the Stellar Corridor, they aren’t able to advance a single step forward.”

“The main thing is, the Stellar Corridor is only so wide and so high.” Linley’s gaze swept past the many soldiers, and he shook his head. “The Infernal Realm, in terms of quantity, vastly surpasses the Celestial Realm in this battle. But the Stellar Corridor is only so large. At most, a thousand individuals are able to fight at once.”

“There are two or three hundred Twelve-Winged Angels, all of whom are in a battle formation. They are able to essentially plug up the corridor, and by their sides there are many soldiers of the Celestial Realm who are supporting them.”

Linley understood that if the situation was changed to a flat area or a grassland, then, with soldiers filling the skies and charging from every direction, even hundreds of elites wouldn’t be able to change the course of battle at all. But this was the final battle within the Stellar Corridors; the two corridors were surrounded by chaotic space! Any of these who fell into the regions of chaotic space would definitely die without question.

“Eh? The six of them are finally moving.” Linley couldn’t help but laugh.

Russell, the black-robed Bresle, and the rest of the six, hidden within the Infernal Realm’s army, were finally making their move. The six Emissaries, even when moving alone, had been able to kill tens of Twelve-Winged Angels. Now, however, the bodies of the six Emissaries suddenly began to blaze with Sovereign power.

“Whoosh!”

These six Emissaries, who had been holding back and lying in wait for a

long time, were like six bloodthirsty beasts, charging towards a flock of lambs.

“Darkness!”

Bresle’s voice transmitted to the other five.

“Rumble…” Six surges of Sovereign power arose, and the six formed into the formation of a perfect hexagram star. Light flashed, and in an instant, a terrifying surge of energy arrived within the black-robed Bresle’s body. Bresle, carrying the combined power of the six, stared coldly at the enemies ahead of him as he slashed out with a blade…

A blade of darkness!

The surface of the blade that flashed out swirled with a dark light, but beneath it was a multicolored light.

“Bang!” Wherever the blade flashed past, space collapsed.

“Not good!” The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, was watching this battle from hundreds of thousands of kilometers away. He couldn’t help but let out a low groan.

Indeed, the situation was grim. The blade light flashed past at an exceedingly high speed. An Angel Battle Formation of six Twelve-Winged Angels that it passed through instantly crumbled into dust, but the blade light continued to surge forward, transforming yet another Twelve-Winged Angel Battle Formation into dust. Only then did the blade light become powerless, dispersing into a rainbow of colors and collapsing.

A single attack had killed twelve Twelve-Winged Angels! This sight caused the situation on both sides, the Celestial Realm’s and the Infernal Realm’s, to change immediately.

Actually, this was par for the course. The Twelve-Winged Angel Battle Formation, with each attack, was able to annihilate tens of Infernal Realm

soldiers, after all. This Samsara Battle Formation, formed from six Emissaries, was naturally also capable of killing twelve Angels. In addition, this was with the Angels being in a battle formation of their own; otherwise, they would've been able to kill tens of them as well.

"Haha, kill!" The Infernal Realm's soldiers felt their morale swell.

"Kill the six of them!" The commanders of the Celestial Realm army immediately gave the order. And at virtually the same instant, six Angel Battle Formations, as well as many soldiers of the Celestial Realm, immediately unleashed their most powerful attacks. Their target? Those six Emissaries!

However, even as the Celestial Realm's warriors began to coordinate, Bresle's group of six executed their second tactic. "Wind!" Bresle sent mentally with a furious roar. Instantly, six surges of Sovereign power once more began to flow amongst the six of them. Only, this time, it fused into a combination of Sovereign power; around them was now an additional layer of light green Sovereign power.

"Whoosh!" The six Emissaries, in virtually the same instant, began as formless as the wind, disappearing into the Infernal Realm's army.

The many attacks of the Celestial Realm came to nothing, not able to harm the six of them at all.

"Haha, excellent!" A muscular, steely Emissary said. "Bresle, the idea you came up with really was excellent."

"Naturally." The black-robed Bresle said with a calm laugh, "After each attack, regardless of what the enemy does, immediately flee back and go deep into our main camp, then go forth and attack again, before once more retreating! Hmph, their attacks might kill some of the ordinary soldiers, but no matter what else we lack for, we don't lack for ordinary soldiers."

And then, Bresle gave the order once more…

“Wind!”

The six Emissaries suddenly dispersed into the four directions, pulling apart from each other as they charged towards the front.

“Earth!”

Bresle issue the order yet again. The six rays of Sovereign power once more coalesced, and a deep, ponderous aura of earth-type Sovereign power embraced the area around them. This extremely powerful energy centered around the body of the muscular Emissary. The big, tall man stared coldly into the distance, then punched out with his fist, sending it crashing down like a mountain towards the foes up ahead, causing the world itself to shatter.

“Wind!”

The six Emissaries once more flew backwards and retreated.

The Angels once again suffered huge losses; twelve more Twelve-Winged Angels once more perished!

Although twelve Twelve-Winged Angels, compared to the total number of Twelve-Winged Angels in the army, wasn’t all that many, these Emissaries moved and attacked too quickly. If they were able to kill twelve Angels in each attack, that meant that in ten cycles, they would kill 120 Angels. There were only two companies of Angels to begin with, numbering 1200 in total. And within this corridor, there were only six hundred Twelve-Winged Angels.

The ongoing slaughter and battles had resulted in more than half of the Angels being killed by now. There were less than 200 remaining.

As for the Infernal Realm’s side, of the three hundred Fiends, less than a hundred remained. As for the Emissaries, more than half of them had been killed by the counterattacks of the Angels.

It was a massacre!

“Quick, hurry over and reinforce them.” The Celestial Realm’s officers were growing frantic. “Hurry. If we are late, we won’t make it in time.”

The Celestial Realm still had reserves; the victorious Twelve-Winged Angels in the other Stellar Corridor. There were six hundred Twelve-Winged Angels in that corridor, and few of them had fallen. More than five hundred Twelve-Winged Angels remained alive. However, battles between Deities could be decided in seconds; most likely, with each second, multiple blows would be exchanged.

Bresle and the rest of the six Emissaries would probably be able to launch more than ten consecutive attacks in less than thirty seconds.

Those five-hundred plus Twelve-Winged Angels, even moving at full speed, would need at least one or two minutes in order to hurry over to this Stellar Corridor, and then pass through their own allies towards the front.

The various Sovereigns fell silent. Everyone could sense what a miserable, deadly encounter this had begun.

“If those five hundred supporting Twelve-Winged Angels are able to make it over before those hundred Twelve-Winged Angels are killed, then the Celestial Realm will win. If the Infernal Realm manages to charge and break through, then they will win.” Linley could tell exactly what was going on.

Bresle and the rest of the six Emissaries, as well as the other nine Emissaries on their side, were constantly hunting and killing Angels. They alone would be enough to annihilate a hundred-plus Twelve-Winged Angels.

“Not good. We have to move faster.” Bresle sent to the other five. “Victory has already been achieved by the enemy in the other Corridor, and in that place, the six hundred Twelve-Winged Angels suffered comparatively low casualties. Once those Twelve-Winged Angels make it over here, we won’t

have any hope."

Russell sent in a growl, "Move faster. Let's charge into the Angel army formations." The other five Emissaries were all shocked. Previously, they had fought like turtles, ambushing then retreating, then ambushing against. Although this was much safer, it was extremely slow in terms of killing the enemies.

"We don't have any choice. If this continues, we will definitely lose." The black-robed Bresle gritted his teeth. "Execute the final plan."

"Fine." "Let's begin." The six Emissaries made their decisions almost simultaneously. Although they might very well die if they charged towards their foes and suffered countless assaults, they also might gain victory.

"Commander General Bell [Bei'er], we are executing the final plan." The black-robed Bresle sent backwards into the crowd, towards the high command of the Infernal Realm's side.

"Haha, excellent. Victory or defeat shall be determined by this final tactic!" That Commander General immediately gave the order to the various managers of the squads. Instantly, the Infernal Realm's army began to move about in a different manner.

The black-robed Bresle and the other five Emissaries all had solemn looks on their faces. "Water!" Bresle thundered. Instantly, six rays of Sovereign power surged forth, and the bodies of Bresle and the rest of the six became like water, flooding everywhere. Silently, soundlessly, the six charged towards the enemy like a flood, going straight towards the base of the Celestial Realm.

The Celestial Realm's forces were instantly enraged. The enemy dared to charge straight for them? "Join forces. Kill them." Not hesitating at all, many of the Celestial Realm's soldiers and Angels immediately cooperated in attacking those six.

Unfortunately, the six seeped through their defenses like water, and the

group attacks actually ended up killing some of their own people. But more importantly, this ‘water’ tactic was the most defensively power technique available to Bresle’s group. In addition, everyone present either had a defensive Sovereign artifact or a soul-protecting Sovereign artifact.

The combined defensive power of the six was simply too powerful, especially after they used the ‘water’ tactic’.

“Haha…” Bresle and the others had weathered the attacks without dying. They immediately began to launch their own berserk attacks. “Earth!” “Darkness!” The six of them, based on their own elements and attributes, had developed a total of four supreme tactics for the formation; Darkness, Water, Wind, and Earth. Earth and Darkness were for attack, Wind was for fleeing and moving about, while Water was the most defensively powerful.

After having charged into the center of the Angel forces, they no longer had anything to fear. Everyone around them was an enemy; they could strike about as they pleased! As for Sovereign power…Linley had given each of them a hundred drops. They had more than enough.

“Kill!” The soldiers of the Infernal Realm, along with some Seven Star Fiends, thundered forward like an unstoppable flood.

Because the Angels had been thrown into a state of complete chaos by those six Emissaries, they weren’t able to mount an effective defense at all to block the Infernal Realm. Instantly, the Celestial Realm finally began to slowly retreat.

The Infernal Realm’s soldiers all struck out towards the Celestial Realm’s side with relentless attacks, which lessened the pressure on Bresle and the other five as well. “Haha, wipe out all of these Angels.” The Infernal Realm’s side was going berserk.

Originally, only a hundred Angels remained, but under the frenetic assault of Bresle’s group, another half of them were killed. Actually, given the combined defensive power of Bresle’s group, most likely nearly a hundred Twelve-Winged Angels would need to join forces to kill them. However, in

the midst of this chaos, when there were only a hundred or so Twelve-Winged Angels to begin with, and with the other Emissaries and Seven Star Fiends causing trouble as well, the Angels were completely unable to join together into an effective group attack that could annihilate Bresle's group of six.

In the blink of an eye…only fifty or sixty Angels remained. In the face of this flood-like surge of soldiers of the Infernal Realm, and against the hammerblows that fell down upon them from the skies, another half instantly died.

Retreat!

A frantic retreat!

The ordinary soldiers of the Celestial Realm were not Angels; they had egos and personal desires. They could make their own choices.

"We won't make it in time." The five hundred Angels from the other Corridor had finally arrived at the borders of this one.

However, it was the crumbling, retreating Celestial Realm army which welcomed them.

"Charge in." The five hundred Twelve-Winged Angels, when faced with this wave of defeated soldiers, found it difficult to advance deeper, especially while the Infernal Realm's side filled the skies with material attacks and soul attacks as they struck out with abandon.

In all but the blink of an eye, the Infernal Realm's soldiers charged all the way to the end of the Stellar Corridor.

"Rumble!"

The rainbow light above the Stellar Corridor vanished.

Both sides had each obtained victory in a Corridor. This Planar War was a draw!

Chapter 38 – Lies!

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 38 – Lies!

“Haha…”

Loud, excited, jubilant laughter rang out from the Stellar Corridor.

“Success!

“It’s over!”

Those surviving Emissaries, including Bresle’s group of six, and the soldiers of the Infernal Realm all revealed smiles on their faces. They were excited, not because they had fought to a draw, but because they were still alive! They had managed to survive this terrifying Planar War.

Of the three hundred Seven Star Fiends, only forty or so remained alive. Naturally, the survivors would rejoice!

Hundreds of thousands of kilometers away, at the peak of the mountain. The Sovereigns were all chatting amongst themselves energetically as well. “Orloff, this time, you lose!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, finally revealed a hint of a smile on his face.

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, chuckled. “Haha…Wodred, since we fought to a draw, it can be said that I lost this round. However, Wodred, the main reason why your Infernal Realm’s side was able to win was because of those six Emissaries who set up a formation. Which Sovereign is in control of those six?”

Orloff didn’t seem dispirited or discouraged by the defeat at all. He smiled, as cheerful as ever.

“Those are the six Emissaries under Linley’s command!” The Chief

Sovereign of Destruction said. “Oh?” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, couldn’t help but turn and look at Linley.

The Sovereigns that were listening to the conversation between these two Chief Sovereigns also turned to look towards Linley. So those six individuals who had such a major impact on this Planar War were Emissaries under Linley’s command.

“Linley, you helped out Wodred tremendously, this time.” Orloff laughed as he looked at Linley. Linley said with a calm laugh, “All I provided was six Emissaries. If you, Lord Orloff, had been able to locate a Highgod Paragon, that person would have been able to kill one or two hundred Twelve-Winged Angels with ease, if going all out. A Paragon would’ve been able to change the results of the battle as well.”

When the six of them joined forces, in the battle, they were indeed roughly as effective as a Paragon would have been.

“Highgod Paragon? How many of those Highgod Paragons would be willing to risk their lives and participate in this Planar War?” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, laughed softly. “If there was no danger involved, they might be willing to assist, but given how dangerous this event was, none of them were willing to enter.”

To Paragons, not even Sovereign artifacts were that important. What else, then, could Sovereigns use to entice Highgod Paragons into participating? Nothing! And so, naturally, none of the Paragons were willing to take place in the battle.

“Linley, I’m quite curious. Which of the Emissaries under your control was able to develop that battle formation?” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, suddenly asked.

“This battle formation is known as the Samsara Battle Formation. It was developed by one of my Emissaries, who spent countless years researching it.” Linley didn’t try to hide anything.

“Samsara Battle Formation…Samsara…Samsara!” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, murmured these words a few times, then nodded slightly to himself. Then, he turned to look at Linley, smiling and nodding towards him as well. “That Emissary under your command is, without a doubt, a supreme master at developing magical formations. He was able to develop such a queer union that wastes so little energy. Even I have to admit feeling admiration for him!”

“Hey, Orloff, how is it that you are so happy, even after losing?” The Chief Sovereign of Death laughed lightly. The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, said with a calm smile, “Victory, defeat? To gain, to lose…these are only comparative concepts. You can’t judge victory or defeat just from the surface of events, haha…” The Chief Sovereign of Fate laughed happily and without worry. “Everyone, I won’t remain here any longer. I’ll return to the Celestial Realm now. Right, Linley…”

Orloff suddenly turned to look towards Linley, then said with a laugh, “When you are free, you must come for a stroll in my Orloff Gardens. I’ve invited you over many times now.”

“Definitely, definitely.” Linley immediately responded. And so, Orloff immediately led the Sovereigns of the Celestial Realm into a spatial tear that he created.

“Orloff…” Linley had to let out a praising sigh in his heart. In recent days, he had interacted with the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, on numerous occasions. Linley was beginning to rather admire this Orloff.

“Regardless of victory or defeat, he appears so calm and collected, as though there is nothing in the world which can enrage him.” Linley let out a sigh of praise. If Orloff had won this Planar War, he would have gained an additional portion of Will as reward. But Orloff didn’t seem to be moved at all by either victory or defeat; he didn’t seem even the slightest bit dispirited.

This sort of mental equanimity was something which none of the other Sovereigns could match.

The Infernal Realm. The Skyrite Mountains.

Half a year had passed since the conclusion of the Planar War. Linley's residence was as peaceful as ever.

"Wade's gone out for adventuring as well." Linley walked onto his spacious balcony, staring towards the distant Baruch clan descendants who were in a grassy area. "All of them have a love for battle. It seems as though they won't be able to stay here for long. Soon, these descendants will all go out and test themselves in adventures."

Linley exited the walkway, turning and entering a quiet, secluded guarded. Bebe and Nisse were chatting about something in one corner of the garden, and the two were both laughing gaily.

"Eh?" Linley turned and saw his father, Hogg, and his mother, Lina. They walked out from the gates of the garden. "Linley." A constant smile was on Hogg's face. "Father. Mother." Linley immediately bowed.

"There's something I want to discuss with you." Hogg said with a laugh. "Recently, your mother and I are preparing to go travelling through some of the material planes for a tour. Would you and Delia like to accompany us?" There were simply too many material planes, and many of them had their own unique attributes. Some had unique races, while others had different, unique cultures.

To go touring the countless material planes of the universe was far more interesting than simply remaining in the Infernal Realm.

"No need." Linley laughed, refusing as he shook his head. "This kid…" Hogg couldn't help but shake his head and chuckle resignedly. His mother, Lina, said with a laugh, "Hogg, don't force Linley. He can go whenever he feels like it."

Linley had a divine fire clone, and was able to enter any material plane he desired.

Linley bade his parents farewell, then left by himself.

Within a secluded courtyard. This was the place where Linley normally trained. He stood there, atop the grass, spreading his fused divine sense across the entire Infernal Realm. “Ten thousand years…such a long journey…” Within Linley’s mind, images of his history, starting from when he was a toddler, began to flash past. “Father. Grandpa Doehring. Bebe. Wharton. Delia. Boss Yale. George. Reynolds…” All of their appearances floated through his mind. These people had imprinted themselves deep within Linley’s soul.

But suddenly, Linley thought of someone. “Mother!” When Linley thought of his mother, Lina, Linley couldn’t help but sigh to himself. Although his mother, Lina, quickly grew close with his father, Hogg, after the passage of countless years, there was still a certain distance between Lina and Linley and Wharton. Lina didn’t truly hold any motherly love towards her two children, Linley and Wharton.

How could Linley and Wharton not tell? “Alas. That’s because Mother lost all of her memories from before she was an Angel.” Linley sighed in his heart. But right at this moment…

“Whoosh!” A figure descended from the skies. “Lord Wodred.” Linley saw that the newcomer was the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred.

The black-robed Wodred had a smile on his face. “Linley, last time, during the Planar War, the six Emissaries you sent out were extremely effective. I know that you spent centuries in your search for the six of them. I’ve never come to thank you for what you did…”

“Lord Wodred, I had to find Emissaries for myself eventually.” Linley laughed. Linley was on excellent terms with the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

“Haha, enough of that, Linley. I definitely owe you a favor.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, said with a laugh, “If there’s anything

you need, as long as I can accomplish it…you can have me do it. In fact, even if you want to learn some supreme secrets, I can reveal them to you. But of course, you can forget about learning my 'Spacetime Paradox'."

Wodred was quite forthright about this. Although 'Spacetime Paradox' was inferior to the fused innate divine ability of the Four Divine Beasts, it still increased one's power a thousandfold. Even someone like Linley, upon learning this technique, would be able to threaten the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. Thus, Wodred couldn't possibly teach it to him.

"Haha, Lord Wodred, even if you didn't say that outright, I wouldn't possibly have asked you to teach me your supreme technique, just because I helped out a bit. You, Lord Wodred, put far too much effort into devising it." Linley laughed calmly. "Right. After the Planar War concluded and Lord Orloff lost, did he have any sort of special reaction?"

"Him? What sort of a reaction could he have? Same as always; he stays in his Orloff Gardens, absorbed in training and research."

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, let out a sigh. "Orloff, that madman. He has no idea what being 'tired' even means. To be honest, of the Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, Orloff is the only one who makes me feel uneasy. You can never know what sort of supreme technique Orloff might come up with, because that madman simply can't be judged in accordance with normal logic."

Linley couldn't help but laugh. He could feel the Chief Sovereign of Destruction's discontent. He had worked so hard to develop his supreme technique, 'Spacetime Paradox', and yet wasn't able to defeat Orloff. But of course, that was only because Orloff had an Overgod artifact.

"Enough about him. Just now, when I came over, I saw that you were in a rather poor mood. You had a rather unhappy look on your face. Did something troublesome occur?" Wodred smiled.

Even Chief Sovereigns had emotions and personalities. Although the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts were rather arrogant and aloof, they, too,

needed friends. After Linley had displayed his power, their attitude towards Linley had changed somewhat as well. In addition, because of the Planar War, Wodred had come to view Linley as the second most powerful figure on his side.

As for who the number one figure was, that was naturally Wodred himself. And so, because they were on somewhat closer terms now, they became more casual in their manner of speech as well.

“Oh? There is indeed something rather troublesome. Only, there’s no point in telling you.” Linley let out a sigh. His mother had become an Angel, but her former memories were lost. There was nothing that could be changed about that.”

“Why don’t you give it a try?” Wodred said with a laugh. Linley let out another sigh. “This has to do with my mother. When my mother was in her material plane, she was seized by the local Light-aligned religion, and her soul was sacrificed to the Sovereigns. My mother became an Angel, and a Twelve-Winged Angel at that! I once sought out Augusta and paid a very high price to have him restore my mother to her freedom. She does have her freedom now, but…my mother’s former memories are forever lost.”

“What did you say?” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, actually frowned.

“What? Is there a way for Angels to regain their memories?” Linley couldn’t help but grow rather excited. “How could he have possibly chosen to let your mother regain her free will?!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction stared solemnly at Linley. “Linley, let me tell you this. To release an Angel and let the Angel regain freedom, there are only two methods…and I daresay that Augusta wouldn’t choose either of them!”

Linley was stunned. “What…what are you saying? But that day, Augusta seemed to have been badly injured…his soul…”

“Haha…”

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction began to laugh coldly. “An injury to his soul? That was nothing more than a pretense! Linley, I can tell you one thing; if an Angel truly regains free will, then that Angel will naturally regain its former memories as well!”

“What did you say?” Linley’s face changed. “This…how can this be?”

“Your mother doesn’t have her memories back, which signifies one thing; your mother is still under control, and hasn’t regained her freedom at all!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction laughed coldly. “As I see it, your mother is just obeying his orders. She’s intentionally putting on a pretense of being free; that way, without having to pay any price at all, Augusta was able to make you pay a heavy price. Why wouldn’t he want to carry out such an excellent bargain?”

Linley’s face changed dramatically as he listened. “And, given how poor the relationship is between you and him, why would he have to worry about keeping his word to you?” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction snickered.

“But, but Orloff was also…” Linley said hurriedly. “Orloff? Orloff had something he wanted from Augusta, and in addition, Augusta has helped out Orloff multiple times. Orloff owed Augusta a favor. You tell me. Would Orloff help him, or help you?” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction laughed coldly. “Orloff doesn’t get involved in any worldly affairs or struggles, but that doesn’t mean he’s this wonderful, altruistic person.”

“Let me put it to you simply. You were completely and utterly deceived by Augusta!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction said.

Chapter 39 – Linley's Fiery Rage

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 39, Linley's Fiery Rage

He had been completely and utterly deceived?

"It was fake? A lie?"

"AUGUSTA!" Linliey felt a surge of nameless fire instantly fill his chest. That BASTARD! Augusta had actually dared to deceive him in this matter!

The nearby Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, snickered. "Linley, can it be that you don't know what sort of a person this Augusta is? Overbearing, greedy, sinister. For the sake of achieving his goals, there's nothing he won't do. You actually trusted him that easily?"

Linley's forehead was deeply furrowed as he frowned. "I know all these things. Only, Orloff was present, and I rather trusted Orloff…however, it's too late. Lord Wodred, why is it that you are so certain that Augusta deceived me? Why is it that Angels will definitely regain their memories upon regaining their freedom?"

For now, Linley couldn't fully believe all these things, as they were just words coming from a single person, the Chief Sovereign of Destruction.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, said with absolute certainty, "Linley, I'll tell you this. One of the seven Sovereigns of Light has allied himself with me, and so I have a great deal of knowledge regarding Angels."

Linley listened quietly, and the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, said with a solemn expression, "Angels are reborn from the Angelic Resurrection Pools! Every single Angelic Resurrection Pool is connected to the soul of its Sovereign of Light! Thus, every single Angel born from the Angelic Resurrection Pools are under the command of their Sovereign of

Light.”

Linley nodded. The Chief Sovereign of Destruction continued, “There are different levels of Angelic Resurrection Pools; there are only two high level ones, and only these two are able to give birth to Twelve-Winged Angels. These two were both taken over by Augusta, who controls them personally.”

“There are two ways to allow your mother, a Twelve-Winged Angels, to regain her freedom. One is to kill Augusta! Once Augusta dies, the Angelic Resurrection Pools will become items without masters, and so the Angels linked to it will have their souls released as well. Naturally, they will regain their freedom.”

Linley nodded. He knew about this method. “The second method is to have Augusta remove his bond with the Angelic Resurrection Pool which is connected with your mother’s soul. Once his bond is released, the Angelic Resurrection Pool will become an ownerless item, and all of the Angels that were born through it will also lose their spiritual connection to Augusta, and thus regain freedom.”

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction laughed coldly. “Linley, once the bond with the Angelic Resurrection Pool is broken, every single Angel that pool has ever created, including your mother, will regain their freedom!”

“Your mother is a Twelve-Winged Angels, while there are only two pools that can give birth to Twelve-Winged Angels. You want Augusta, for the sake of your mother, to relinquish his bond with an Angelic Resurrection Pool for Twelve-Winged Angels? That means he would lose half of his Twelve-Winged Angels. They would regain their freedom and no longer be under his control!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction snickered. “If he really had let your mother regain her freedom, then during the Planar War, how could he have been willing to send out a total of 1200 Twelve-Winged Angels?”

Linley now completely understood. There was, in reality, only one way for his mother to regain her freedom; to make it so that the Angelic

Resurrection Pool linked with her soul became an ownerless item. And there were only two ways to do that; the first, to kill Augusta. The second, for Augusta to relinquish the pool. But how could Augusta possibly give it up? Giving it up meant giving up all of the Angels that pool had ever created.

“Bastard!” Linley couldn’t help but growl and curse. “No point in being angry now.” Wodred laughed coldly. But Linley was frantically calculating certain things in his mind. One thought in particular constantly circulated through his thoughts. Kill Augusta! Kill him right away!

“Lord Wodred.” Linley said hurriedly. “The Angels that the Sovereign controls; can the Sovereign kill them just by willing it?”

“Not necessarily.” Wodred shook his head and laughed. “It depends on where the Angel is. If the Angel and the Sovereign are on different planes, then the Sovereign won’t be able to kill that Angel.”

Linley suddenly understood. It was like the master-servant bond which was used to control magical beasts. Upon the bond being established, the master could easily cause the magical beast’s death. However…if the master and the servant were on different planes, they would at most be able to vaguely sense each other’s location. There was no way they would be able to communicate through the soul, nor would the master have a way to kill the servant.

Linley and Bebe, on different planes, weren’t able to speak through their soul connection either.

“Whew.” Linley internally let out a sigh of relief. On the surface, though, Linley looked quite calm. Bowing, he said, “Lord Wodred, I truly must thank you. If it wasn’t for you, I might have been deceived by Augusta for an extremely long period of time.”

Linley and the Chief Sovereign of Destruction chatted for a while longer, and then Wodred left. Soon afterwards, Linley sent his wind-type Sovereign clone away from the Infernal Realm, to pay a visit to the Chief Sovereign of

Death in the Netherworld. Half a day later, Linley immediately invited Beirut and Bluefire over to discuss something.

“What did you say!?” Beirut and Bluefire were both so shocked, they rose to their feet. “Right. I was deceived.” Linley shook his head. “An Angel who truly regains her freedom and who is no longer under control will regain her former memories.”

“Are you certain?” Beirut and Bluefire both said in unison. “I’m very certain. This news was brought to me by Wodred, and just now, my wind-type Sovereign clone went to the Netherworld to pay a visit to the Chief Sovereign of Death. I personally raised this issue with her, and the Chief Sovereign of Death personally told me that there were indeed only two ways to have an Angel regain her freedom. In addition, upon regaining freedom and upon breaking free from the bewildering soul control of the Angelic Resurrection Pool, they will naturally regain their former memories.” Linley said in a low voice.

Beirut and Bluefire exchanged a glance, a hint of shock in their eyes. “Since even the Chief Sovereign of Death says it is so, then it seems it is true.” Beirut said in a low voice. “I didn’t imagine that we’d actually be deceived like this.” Bluefire frowned.

It was one matter if someone else deceived them, but the deceiver was Augusta! Augusta, with whom they had an irreconcilable grudge to begin with! Beirut and Bluefire both felt this way, and Linley felt this way all the more! After all, he was the one who had handed over the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts!

“Linley. What is your decision?” Beirut asked. Bluefire looked towards Linley as well. “Wait.” Linley growled. “Wait?” The two couldn’t help but be puzzled. “My father and my mother will go for a tour of the material planes. Once they leave, I will make my move.” Linley said calmly.

“Right. For now, your mother cannot be trusted.” Beirut nodded as well. Now that they had a plan, they naturally would carry it out.

Half a month later.

Hogg and his wife, Lina, were personally escorted by Linley to the interplanar teleportation array. Holding the Sovereign medallion which Linley had given them, they were teleported to a material plane and began their touring journey. They had no idea…that upon departing, a terrifying storm would arise in the Higher Planes.

“Father and Mother have departed.” Linley’s gaze was abyssally cold. Beirut and Bluefire, by his side, exchanged a glance. “Mother is not in the Infernal Realm; even if Augusta came here, he wouldn’t be able to kill Mother. As for the people of the Skyrite Mountains…I’d like to ask the two of you to help out. As long as Augusta attacks from trillions of kilometers away, I imagine you two should be able to protect the Skyrite Mountains.” Linley turned to look at them.

Beirut couldn’t help but begin to laugh. “Haha, Linley, Sovereigns aren’t even able to kill a Paragon from trillions of kilometers away. There is a limit to their attack power. How could Bluefire and I be unable to protect the Skyrite Mountains?”

“Then I’ll stop worrying.” Linley finished speaking, then immediately flew towards the teleportation array. “Linley, be careful!” Beirut and Bluefire both sent towards him.

“Stay in the Infernal Realm, and wait for me to contact you.” Linley’s form disappeared from within the distant teleportation array.

Bluefire turned to look at Beirut, then said with a frown, “Beirut, I don’t know why, but…I feel a sense of dread. I hope nothing amiss will occur on Linley’s journey.”

“Nothing will!” Beirut said with absolute certainty. “Augusta is nothing more than the Chief Sovereign of Light. His Overgod weapon isn’t suited to his nature; how strong can he possibly be? As long as he doesn’t run into Orloff, there won’t be any problems. In addition, Linley is a person who knows when to advance and when to retreat. And, most importantly of all…

he has his fused divine sense, which vastly surpasses an ordinary Sovereign's divine sense."

"Right." Bluefire relaxed slightly. With the fused divine sense, Linley would be able to easily locate his enemy, but his enemy wouldn't notice Linley's arrival.

The Divine Light Plane.

"Bang!" A figure suddenly flashed past the skies, advancing forward at such speed that even the divine plane's spatial fabric trembled. A sky-blue robed Linley, his face emotionless, his gaze cold, stared into the distance.

"The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, isn't here!" Linley's fused divine sense was able to easily discover that at the residence of Augusta, the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta was by himself within his lavishly adorned island, enjoying the ministrations of his maids. As for the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, the only one who Linley was concerned about? He wasn't there.

Linley's gaze turned knife-sharp. "That island has a total of two Sovereigns of Light. The other is a mere Lesser Sovereign."

Linley paid no attention to that Sovereign at all. "Augusta!" A killing intent surged within Linley's breast, and his fury continued to blaze.

The hopes of the four clan leaders. The hatred his clan bore. Linley never forgot about these things, not for a single day!

Beirut had been forced to hide in the Yulan Plane, not daring to emerge!

An attempt to kill Linley himself, only for the sake of his Overgod weapon!

And now lying to him, deceiving him to acquire the blood essences of the four ancestors!

Augusta's actions clearly indicated that he had no desire whatsoever to

resolve the grudge between himself and Linley. Similarly, deep within Linley's heart, he had never given up his plans for revenge!

A figure suddenly appeared in the air above the lavish island.

"He really knows how to enjoy himself." Linley lowered his head, staring downwards. His right hand suddenly pressed down towards the island.

"Rumble…" An extremely, terrifyingly powerful aura swept out as the illusion of a palm that was thousands of kilometers long suddenly appeared out of nowhere. This enormous illusory palm crushed downwards, instantly causing the world below to tremble. The lavishly decorated island instantly, silently, was reduced to smithereens.

Instantly, a large number of Angels and other women flew out, into the air. Two figures hung there in the sky; it was the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, and the other Sovereign of Light. Augusta's face was filled with rage, and when he saw the distant Linley, his eyes turned completely round. He roared in anger, "Linley, what are you doing?"

"I felt uncomfortable, looking at your island. So, I destroyed it." Linley said calmly.

It wasn't that Augusta was unable to block Linley's attack; in reality, Linley hadn't infused his attack with much power, as he had dispersed it over a very large area of thousands of kilometers. The main issue was…Linley had used his fused divine sense, and so Augusta had no idea that Linley had arrived.

Linley had suddenly struck out of nowhere with that giant palm, and by the time Augusta was able to react, his island had already been reduced to dust.

"You felt uncomfortable, looking at my island?" Augusta's pupils contracted. He now understood that Linley had come to make trouble for him, and he said in an icy voice, "Linley, you want to fight with me?"

"Whoosh!" Instantly, the many Angels and maids nearby scattered towards

the four directions. Good heavens! Two Chief Sovereigns were able to do battle? If they remained here, they would definitely be courting death.

“Linley is about to battle the Chief Sovereign?” The other Sovereign of Light also hurriedly retreated, a look of shock appearing on his handsome face.

“Fight with you?”

Linley’s abyssally cold gaze stared death at the Augusta, and then, quite bizarrely, Linley cracked his lips into a smile.

This smile made Augusta’s heart suddenly clench.

The Life Overgod Sword suddenly appeared in Linley’s hands. Not hesitating at all, he swept the Life Overgod Sword out, tearing through space with it. “Rumble…” The surrounding area completely collapsed, and a fierce aura of energy, as sharp as an awl, created one massive spatial rift after another. An utterly irresistible, inky jade sword light suddenly stabbed towards Augusta.

“Augusta, today is the day you die!”

Linley’s cold voice rang out like thunder, reverberating within Augusta’s mind.

Chapter 40 – A Battle of Chief Sovereigns

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 40, A Battle of Chief Sovereigns

Augusta's face was savage. Letting out a low growl, he slashed out with the Lightsaber in his hand in a circular arc. "CLANG!" The two Overgod weapons clashed.

The center of the collision created a terrifying series of ripples which spread out in every direction. Countless spatial rifts appeared as the nearby space cracked like the shell of a turtle. Augusta was knocked flying back by the collision. His body swayed in midair, then he once more found his bearings as he stared at Linley in some amazement.

"Linley, no wonder you dare claim you will kill me. So your power actually nearly doubled." Augusta stared at Linley.

"I've grown more powerful, but you haven't." Linley said emotionlessly.

"Haha…who knows which one of us will live, and which one will die." Augusta actually began to laugh. With a 'crackling' sound, Linley's entire body became covered with those inky jade draconic scales. Those savage spikes jutted out as Linley instantly Dragonformed.

"Really?" Linley let out a cold laugh.

Linley's entire body slowly transformed into a streak of light which shot at high speed towards Augusta, who was kilometers away in the sky. For Chief Sovereigns, traversing a distance of a few kilometers, in this sort of frantic battle, required less than a millionth of a second. From this, one could imagine how quickly the two were exchanging blows.

"Clang!" "Clang!" Two Overgod weapons clashed repeatedly against each other, and the surrounding space began to splinter and shatter. Each time, Augusta was knocked flying backwards. It appeared as though Augusta was

at a disadvantage, but clearly, each time Augusta was able to hold on.

“You want to kill me? It won’t be that easy.” Augusta chortled. But there was no smile on Linley’s face.

“It’s about time,” Linley murmured to himself. From the beginning of the battle till now, Linley had only revealed a small part of his true power, because Linley was worried that if he unleashed his most powerful sword blow, if he didn’t succeed on the very first strike, the enemy would be so frightened that he would immediately flee. That would make things troublesome. After all…Linley’s attack power might have increased, but his speed hadn’t.

The fusing of the different profound mysteries had implications for his ‘Sword Intent’ technique, but in terms of speed, Linley hadn’t improved significantly.

“Die!” Linley growled in his mind. After the two exchanged yet another series of blows, Linley’s Life Overgod Sword once more tore through the sky like before, striking towards Augusta. That inky jade sword energy billowed forth in a slightly chaotic manner. As for Augusta, he blocked Linley’s sword attack in the same manner he had previously, but as the two drew close to each other…

The Life Overgod Sword’s rather disorderly, chaotic inky jade sword energy seemed to suddenly organize, like soldiers entering a formation, forming a beam of inky jade sword energy that was as thick as a man’s waist.

His most powerful attack exploded forth!

“BANG!” The sword energy flashed, striking heavily against the Lightsaber. Augusta’s face instantly whitened; he could sense an irresistible force crush down against his Lightsaber, knocking it against his body…

A golden light suddenly flashed. The surrounding area was reduced to nothingness, and Augusta himself had disappeared.

Had Augusta been reduced into dust?

“Eh? He was only heavily wounded?” Linley frowned. His fused divine sense allowed him to clearly see that Augusta, a large hole in his chest and his face ashen, had actually borrowed from the impact of their blows to flee at high speed into a rift in chaotic space. “I didn’t expect that Augusta would be able to take a blow from my most powerful sword attack without dying.” Not hesitating at all, Linley increased his speed to the limit as he too charged into chaotic space.

A battle between Sovereigns simply drew too much attention. Within the Divine Light Plane, four of the other Sovereigns sensed the battle; they naturally spread out their divine sense to encompass the entire Divine Plane, and thus they witnessed this battle.

“The Chief was nearly killed? Fortunately, that ray of sword light only blew a hole through his chest after expending some of its power on the defending Lightsaber. That’s the only reason why he was able to survive.”

“That sword attack is simply too powerful. Lord Linley, in the past, had been hiding his true strength. The power of that attack, just now… inconceivable.” The four Sovereigns of Light were completely stunned.

“Given the Chief’s ability in fleeing, I imagine it will take some time before they can determine who will live and who will die. I imagine that in this battle, one of the two will die. If the Chief dies, that will be a major event!” The four Sovereigns of Light, while chatting amongst each other through divine sense, all began to move as well.

Some of them tore holes through reality and entered chaotic space, so as to use their divine sense to watch Linley and Augusta battle. Others immediately used the teleportation arrays to go to the other planes, so as to inform the Chief Sovereigns they had allied themselves with. It was only natural that they would report such a major affair.

Deep within the Chaotic Sea, there was an underwater city at the bottom of the ocean which was ten thousand kilometers in circumference. This city,

‘Sable Leviathan City’, was one of the three homes for the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred.

“Chief, Linley and Augusta have begun to fight. The two have already battled their way into chaotic space. By the looks of it, Augusta is probably going to die.” A Sovereign of Light had travelled to the Infernal Realm through the teleportation array, then immediately used his divine sense to notify the Chief Sovereign of Destruction regarding this matter.

The death of one Chief Sovereign guaranteed that another one would be born. If Augusta truly were to die, then a free High Sovereign spark would be created.

Within a cold, gloomy estate in the northern area of Sable Leviathan City.

“Linley and Augusta?” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, let out a sigh as his eyes lit up. “I didn’t expect that shortly after I informed Linley, he would immediately go kill Augusta. He really is quite mad.” At the same time, he waved his hand as though he were opening a curtain, tearing a rift in reality. His body flickered, and he entered chaotic space.

A black-robed Wodred stood there in the middle of chaotic space. He spread out his divine sense, easily discovering Linley and Augusta, who were currently battling each other. “By the looks of it, Linley holds an absolute advantage. Augusta seems to be in bad shape.” Wodred laughed. “Oh… Augusta has indeed decided to fly towards the Celestial Realm. However, Linley’s speed is slightly faster than his. Augusta probably won’t survive his attempt to reach the Celestial Realm.”

Within the multicolored bursts of chaotic energy. Linley and Augusta; one fled up ahead, one chased from behind. Linley held his Life Overgod Sword in his hands, his dark golden eyes staring coldly towards the front.

“Augusta’s life-preserving skills are quite formidable. He was actually able to receive two sword blows from me without dying.” Linley couldn’t help but sigh in amazement, in his heart. His attack power was far greater than his opponent’s; logically speaking, he should’ve been able to kill Augusta

with one blow. However, whenever his sword energy struck his foe, Augusta would use his Lightsaber and a special life-saving technique to sacrifice the other parts of his body, while protecting his critical parts and preserving his life.

“In addition, just now, when I executed my innate divine ability, ‘Dragon Shout’, the impact on him was quite small.” Linley, by now, truly had to admit that in terms of soul defense, Augusta was truly too powerful. His ‘Sword Intent’ technique contained both a material and a soul attack component, and yet the soul attack component didn’t appear to do anything at all.

Still, the current Augusta was in quite a sorry shape.

“LINLEY!!!” Augusta, utterly enraged, bellowed angrily, “Don’t go too far. The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, owes me a favor. You should know this. If you force me to use it…then when I arrive in the Celestial Realm, you will definitely die.”

“I’m unable to defeat the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, but that’s only if he is here to save you. You have to at least escape to the Celestial Realm first. But you, Augusta…you want to escape from me and make it to the Celestial Realm? In your dreams!” Linley snickered. The distance between himself and Augusta was measurably shrinking. Very soon, Linley would give him yet another sword blow.

Augusta bellowed furiously, “I withstood your first two blows, and I’ll be able to withstand your third and fourth ones as well! You won’t be able to kill me.”

“Is that so?” Linley laughed coldly. “Augusta, I admit that your life-saving sword techniques are quite marvelous. You are actually able to guide away and dissipate much of my beam of sword energy. However, the difference in power is too great. No matter how marvelous your techniques are, it is useless. Enough. I already told you; you won’t be able to escape!” Linley was now extremely close to Augusta.

But the strange thing was, Linley didn't attack!

"Eh?" Augusta felt puzzled and confused as well. But Linley just laughed coldly, continuing to draw close to Augusta. When the two were less than ten meters apart…

"Haha…" Suddenly, loud laughter rang out. To be precise, three loud laughs rang out. Linley's body suddenly split into three. One was the Dragonformed Linley, the second was the blue-haired Linley, while the third was a green-haired Linley. Clearly, Linley was now completely unleashing the power of all three of his Sovereign clones.

"Swish!" "Swish!"

His wind-type Sovereign clone and his water-type Sovereign clone pincer-attacked Augusta from the side. They were no slower than Augusta himself.

Suddenly, a ray of sword light flashed out from the Life Overgod Sword in the Dragonformed Linley's hands. That thick pillar of sword light carried an extremely fierce power, and Augusta was forced to slow down, so as to focus his energy in dealing with the attack. The Lightsaber in his hand slashed out in a marvelous arc…

"Bang!" The beam of sword energy once more pierced through the right side of his chest, and even his shoulder blade was completely shattered.

"Not good." Augusta looked around himself; indeed, Linley's wind-type Sovereign clone and water-type Sovereign clone, along with his Dragonformed original body, had formed into a triangle, trapping him within.

Because he had slowed down slightly when blocking Linley's sword attack, Linley had enough time to surround him.

"Augusta, where can you go, now?" Linley laughed coldly at him. Augusta looked around himself; very suddenly, he stabbed out with his sword towards Linley's wind-type Sovereign clone, attacking so quickly that he

was like a ray of light flashing through the darkness.

“Clang!”

Within the hand of the wind-type Sovereign clone appeared a Sovereign weapon; the Bloodviolet sword. It clashed viciously against the blade of the Lightsaber.

Augusta’s body trembled, and his face couldn’t help but change.

“Still want to run?” Linley laughed coldly. Last time he had fought Augusta, Linley had been forced to rely on his Life Overgod Sword in order to fight Augusta to a standstill. Back then, Linley hadn’t dared to use his other Sovereign clones to block Augusta; those other clones didn’t have any Overgod artifacts, and so they definitely would’ve been killed by Augusta with one blow each.

But now…

Even without Overgod artifacts, Linley’s Sovereign clones were still able to just barely withstand Augusta’s blows.

Augusta’s formerly savage, berserk, bedraggled appearance suddenly changed. He became icy calm.

“Linley.” Augusta swept Linley’s three Sovereign clones with his gaze. “Why must you go so far and force me to such a state? Last time, you came to ask me to grant your mother her freedom back, and I released her, even though my soul was badly damaged, and gave her will back to her. I truly didn’t imagine that less than a thousand years later, you would actually come kill me.”

Linley laughed. Laughed from utter rage. “Your soul was badly damaged? You gave my mother her freedom back? Augusta, at a time like this, you still are as shameless as to make this claim?” Linley snickered.

Augusta raised an eyebrow…then laughed as well. “Oh, so you actually

already knew." Augusta's laughter was so bright. "You are able to laugh, at a time like this?" Linley sent out his fused divine sense, stretching it out as far as he could. He saw that there were at least six Sovereigns within chaotic space, watching this battle through their own Sovereign sense.

"Linley, aren't you curious as to why I'm able to withstand your most powerful sword blow?" Augusta laughed. At the same time, a golden aura of light appeared on his body, and his revealed skin slowly took on a golden hue.

"Golden?" Linley's heart trembled. He couldn't help but think back to the battle between the Chief Sovereigns of Destruction and Fate. The Chief Sovereign of Fate had relied on his right hand, covered with golden light, to block the Overgod weapon attack from the Chief Sovereign of Fate. But of course…that was also because the Chief Sovereign of Fate had tremendously powerful Will and a deep understanding of the profound mysteries as well.

"Last time, when I collected the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts from you, I knew that there would come a day when you would return for revenge." Augusta laughed softly. "I also knew that it would be very hard for me to become a Paragon. Thus…I made a trade with the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff. I used the favor he owed me and the blood essences, exchanging them for him teaching me his 'Golden Samsara Body' technique, his supreme defensive technique which he had spent countless years researching. Lord Orloff, who now already possesses the supreme technique, 'Spacetime Paradox', no longer cares as much about his 'Golden Samsara Body' technique as he once did."

"Originally, I didn't want to reveal this technique." Augusta laughed as he looked at Linley. "But Linley, you increased in power by far too much."

"Just because your body is tough, you think you can withstand my Life Overgod Sword?" Linley let out a disdainful laugh. "Not even the Chief Sovereign of Fate wouldn't dare to use any other part of his body to withstand a blow from an Overgod weapon."

Chapter 41 – Can He Actually Be…?

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 41, Can He Actually Be…?

“Whoosh…”

Within the multicolored reaches of chaotic space, illusory ‘meteors’ of light and energy flew everywhere, forming the flood of rainbow-colored chaotic energy that filled the region.

More than ten figures were standing there within chaotic space, astonishment on all of their faces.

“I didn’t imagine that Orloff actually taught his ‘Golden Samsara Body’ to Augusta! Hmph, the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts…in the end, they ended up in Orloff’s hands.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, had a sunken, sinister look on his face. “It seems that Linley traded the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts to Augusta, and Augusta then gave it to Orloff!”

The look on Wodred’s face grew increasingly ugly. “Linley, he…ugh!” Wodred felt frustration burning in his chest . Right at this moment, however, a hazy, illusory phantom began to emerge from Augusta’s body.

“Eh?” Linley was startled. He grew cautious, instantly fusing his water-type Sovereign clone and wind-type Sovereign clone back into his main body. “Linley, if you want to stay alive, you’d best depart!” Augusta said coldly.

“If you have any techniques, put them on display. Otherwise, I’m going to strike again.” Linley seemed quite magnanimous, but in reality, he was extremely cautious right now. He no longer felt certain he knew everything there was to know about Augusta; if he continued to attack with abandon, he might be tricked. It was best to be careful and defend, and first investigate the situation.

“Hmph. Die, then.” Augusta let out a cold sneer. Linley grew all the more cautious.

Augusta’s eyes flashed like lightning as he stared coldly at Linley. The illusory images surrounding his body suddenly spread out, forming into an enormous illusion of a golden titan that was a hundred meters tall. The awe-inspiring aura of the titan caused even Linley to grow anxious. “An innate divine ability? What sort of divine beast is Augusta? But he can’t be; he has 182 children!”

Linley had never heard anyone say that Augusta was a divine beast.

“BANG!” A golden blur shot out from Augusta’s moth, shooting at high speed towards Linley. Linley focused his concentration and used his Life Overgod Sword to block. But when that golden, illusory light struck against Linley’s Life Overgod Sword…

“Bang.” It disappeared.

“What?!” Linley was shocked. “That weak?” Just now, judging from Augusta’s attitude, Linley had thought that Augusta was preparing some supreme technique against him. He never imagined that this was just a fake technique. The attack power of that golden illusion probably wouldn’t have been able to scratch Linley, even if it had hit him head on. Clearly, it was just meant to make him nervous.

“Haha, Linley, you really are easy to fool.” Augusta’s wild laughter resonated in Linley’s mind.

“I was tricked again!” Linley’s face changed. By now, Augusta had already moved ten thousand kilometers away.

“Swoosh!” Linley instantly increased his speed to the limit, once more chasing at high speed. But within a short period of time, Linley understood something. “The Golden Samsara Body only allows him to strengthen his body, and make his material attacks slightly stronger! This is much like how my Dragonform strengthens my own body. However, given that I am ten

times stronger than him, that increase in physical power isn't able to change the balance of power by much at all."

"Bang!" The inky jade fused power within Linley's body was wildly bursting forth. Linley, in Dragonform, was constantly, ceaselessly closing the gap between himself and Augusta, as he continued to chase at full speed.

"Linley actually managed to increase in power by this much! That bit of power gained from the 'Golden Samsara Body' technique is completely useless against him." Although Augusta acted arrogant and brash, in his heart, he felt miserable. Glancing backwards, he saw Linley continue to chase after him, and he said to himself…"Orloff, come quickly! Otherwise…"

The Celestial Realm. The Orloff Gardens.

There were eight Sovereigns who lived within the Orloff Gardens. One of them was naturally the master of the Orloff Gardens, Orloff.

"Linley actually managed to increase in power by this much and drive Augusta to such a state?" The white-haired, white-robed Orloff stood straight, his gaze cold and calm. "If he's forced to his wits end, given Augusta's temperament, he will definitely do 'it'…and Wodred and the others will definitely be able to guess…"

"I have no other choice!" The white-robed elder, Orloff, waved his hand. Instantly, the entire Orloff Gardens began to rapidly shrink in size, then transformed into a blurry light that flew into Orloff's body.

"Lord Orloff!" The servants in the garden, along with the other seven Sovereigns, all stared at him, puzzled. Why had Orloff taken away the Orloff Gardens?

"Slash…" Orloff's face was heavy but calm. With a wave of his hand, he tore a rift in space in front of him, then immediately stepped into chaotic space.

These seven Sovereigns were the seven Sovereigns who had chosen to serve Orloff. Manlu and Borte were amongst their number as well. “Lord Orloff seems to be in a bad mood.” Manlu said with a frown. “In the past, no matter what difficulties Lord Orloff encountered, he would face them with a smile. Nothing was able to affect his temperament. But just now…”

A blue-haired, three-eyed beauty said, also puzzled, “What’s more, Lord Orloff rarely takes the Orloff Gardens with him when he travels.”

“Let’s go. We’ll go take a look as well.” The Sovereign of Fire, Borte, waved his hand as well, also tearing a rift in space, then immediately took the lead in entering it. The other six puzzled Sovereigns didn’t hesitate; they immediately charged into chaotic space after him, all wanting to learn what had happened.

But when they spread out their divine sense…

“What!?” The faces of the seven Sovereigns changed. “Linley and Augusta, two Chief Sovereign-level experts…” By the time they entered chaotic space, there were already more than twenty Sovereigns watching this fight. “No wonder Lord Orloff went over there. So it is because Augusta is in trouble.” Those subordinate Sovereigns all knew about the relationship between Orloff and Augusta. “Let’s go. Let’s fly over there, but let’s stay some distance away. Otherwise, if we are hit by any ripples of power, we might die from them.”

The seven Sovereigns also drew closer. Actually, many of the spectating Sovereigns were drawing closer towards Linley and Augusta. Only, at the same time, they maintained a minimum distance of at least a few billion kilometers. At this distance, given a Sovereign’s reaction speed, they should be absolutely safe.

Energy ripples couldn’t possibly travel so far and still have enough power to injure a Sovereign. Linley and Augusta were only a few hundred kilometers apart. To close from ten thousand kilometers to a few hundred; from this, one could tell the difference in speed between the two.

A thousand years ago, Linley's speed was already slightly faster than Augusta's. Because his power had increased tenfold when he fused the four profound mysteries together, although that was primarily in terms of attack power, and his speed hadn't increased by much, it had still increased by a bit. The Profound Mysteries of Explosion did, after all, contain some aspects that would help one move more quickly. Augusta's body was transforming and his speed was increasing, but even so, he was still somewhat slower than Linley.

"Oh, Orloff came?" Linley's divine sense easily located Orloff. Augusta discovered Orloff's arrival as well. Overjoyed, he hurriedly sent to Linley, "Linley, the news that you are chasing after and trying to kill me has already made its way to Lord Orloff. You should know…that after this Planar War, Lord Orloff owes me yet another favor. If you dare attack me, Lord Orloff will definitely kill you."

"Hmph. Augusta, save your strength. There's no point to you threatening me." Linley laughed coldly, and his speed increased once more as he pulled to within two hundred kilometers.

"Linley." A warm, gentle voice rang out. "Lord Orloff." Linley replied with great courtesy. Orloff was currently hurrying over from the Celestial Realm, while Linley and Augusta had just flown out from the Divine Light Plane not long ago. The distance between the two planes was simply too fast. Even if Orloff flew over at maximum speed, he would most likely still need several minutes to arrive. For Sovereigns…a single second was enough to exchange countless blows. Multiple minutes? That was enough for Linley and Augusta to finish their fight to the death.

"Linley, Augusta is my good friend. No matter what sort of hatred you and Augusta bear each other, I would like to urge you, Linley, to temporarily let it rest." Orloff sent. "Impossible." Linley refused. "Give me some face. What do you say?" Orloff was still very calm.

Although in the past, Linley felt good-will towards Orloff, the current Linley couldn't help but feel a hint of anger towards him. In the past, when

Augusta had deceived Linley and taken his Four Divine Beasts blood essences, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, had been his accomplice. And now, Orloff was urging him to spare Augusta!

“My apologies. Today, he must definitely die!” Linley’s attitude became even more unyielding. Linley and Augusta were now less than a hundred kilometers apart.

“Linley, can it be that you insist on killing him right in front of me?” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, finally grew angry. His words became somewhat fierce as well. “I wanted to be friends with you, but you…if you insist on doing this, then in the future, I will have no choice but to kill you! I imagine that if I want to kill you, there’s no one who can stop me!”

Linley’s heart sank. Orloff was going to act? But in the next instant, he made his decision and planned out his retreat.

“Linley, if you give up now, you and I will remain friends.” Orloff sent. “Are you suggesting that we previously were friends?” Linley sneered. “If we were friends, why would you help Augusta deceive me? He said he would return free will to my mother, but that was a pure lie. I refuse to believe that you, the exalted Chief Sovereign of Fate, wouldn’t know about the secrets of restoring free will to an Angel.”

Orloff let out a sigh. “Linley, so that’s what you are so angry about. Originally, I was asking a favor from Augusta, so I had no choice.”

“Linley!” Orloff’s voice suddenly grew sharp. This was because…Linley was now less than twenty meters away from Augusta. “Kill!” Linley showed no mercy at all; the Life Overgod Sword in his hands once more shot out. “Crackle…” The irresistibly sharp sword energy formed into a beam. In the face of that being, the fabric of reality in chaotic space was as weak as tissue paper. It was easily pierced through as the beam of sword energy landed on Augusta’s body.

The sword energy beam was simply too thick; the Lightsaber was unable to completely block it. The beam of energy passed through Augusta’s waist,

actually bisecting Augusta in half as his waist was transformed into dust.

Augusta's speed slowed, and Linley instantly arrived.

"Orloff, I have no other choice!" Augusta suddenly laughed loudly, and madness appeared in his eyes as he stared at Linley. "Linley, in countless years…no one has ever been able to force me to this state. I have no choice but to violate the pact between Orloff and myself. You…shall die now!" The deep, berserk voice echoed within Linley's mind.

But Linley just laughed coldly in his heart. Augusta had tried this trick last time; to frighten him with a bluff. "What, you want to use the same tactic twice in a row?" Linley sent back. "I know exactly how strong you are now. Unless you truly have an innate divine ability or some other unique attacks, there is nothing you can do. Unfortunately, you do not." As he spoke, Linley once again lifted up his Life Overgod Sword. The bisected Augusta was no longer able to dodge as easily as he had in the past.

Augusta's face was just cold and emotionless…and then, he let out a savage howl as he raised his head. "Rumble…" Blurry, illusory images suddenly appeared.

The phantom of a Vermillion Bird appeared from Augusta's head. His left side released the phantom of an Azure Dragon that was three meters long, while his right side released the phantom of the divine beast, White Tiger. Beneath his vanished waist lay the phantom of the divine beast, Black Tortoise.

Augusta stared coldly at Linley.

"Impossible!" Linley howled wildly in his heart. This technique, amazingly enough, was the supreme technique which the Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, had developed after researching the fused innate divine ability of the Four Divine Beasts – Spacetime Paradox!

"Wodred said that he only told the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, about his supreme technique, and that he had Orloff swear an Overgod oath that

he would not teach it to anyone else! The Chief Sovereign of Destruction couldn't possibly have taught it to Augusta. Then…" A light went off in Linley's head.

Linley stared in astonishment at Augusta, who was currently executing 'Spacetime Paradox'. "Can it be him?"

Right at this moment, the surrounding space in chaotic space was already beginning to twist, distort, and change, thanks to this 'Spacetime Paradox' technique…

Chapter 42 – Earth Fire Water Wind

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 42, Earth Fire Water Wind

“Spacetime Paradox!” No matter how calm and collected Chief Sovereign of Destruction Wodred was, upon seeing this, his face completely changed. “How can he know this technique? Orloff swore an oath by the Overgods. He couldn’t possibly violate it.”

“Wodred! What is going on!” A clear voice rang out in his mind. It was the voice of the Chief Sovereign of Death. As time had passed, given how quickly Sovereigns were able to spread information to each other, more and more Sovereigns had come to chaotic space. There were already more than forty Sovereigns who were watching this battle!

“I don’t know either.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was completely stunned. For the moment, he had no idea what was going on. “You said that Orloff couldn’t possibly teach it to anyone else. What about you? Did you teach it to anyone else?” The Chief Sovereign of Death said hurriedly. “How could I teach it to someone else?!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction sent back frantically.

“Then there are only two possibilities. The first is that Augusta developed it himself.” The Chief Sovereign of Death said. “Impossible! How long has he had his blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts for? In addition, I was able to develop it because I long ago became a Paragon in the Edicts of Destruction, and had a thorough understanding of the soul as well. Luck also played a major role. Augusta wasn’t even able to become a Paragon; even if you gave him a trillion years, it would be impossible for him to develop even a fragment of this technique!” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was absolutely certainty of this.

“Then the only possibility is the second one…even though I don’t dare believe it.” The Chief Sovereign of Death’s voice contained a hint of dread. The face of the Chief Sovereign of Destruction changed as well. “Are you

saying that Orloff is…"

"We'll know soon. However, Linley's in danger as well, now." The Chief Sovereign of Death sent to him, rather worried.

"Even if we tried to save him, we wouldn't make it in time." The Chief Sovereign of Destruction frowned. "Augusta unleashed the technique already. Perhaps, because he has very few blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts, the strength is inferior to mine, but…it isn't something which the likes of Linley can withstand. Linley doesn't have a soul-protecting Overgod artifact, after all."

Linley was indeed in dire straits right now. More than forty Sovereigns were spread throughout chaotic space, watching. Through their divine sense, the Sovereigns couldn't help but come to the same conclusion…

Linley, this supreme expert who had, in ten thousand short years, suddenly risen to prominence and eclipsed the Chief Sovereigns of the Laws…could it be that this brilliant, shining star was about to fall, after having released its last burst of light?

When the phantoms of the Four Divine Beasts appeared, a unique, invisible energy spread out in every direction. Within ten million kilometers, all space came to a sudden halt. The constantly shattering and cracking space froze in mid-crack, while more than ninety percent of the invisible energy was fully unleashed on Linley.

"Compressing spacetime…distorting it! The flow of time changes!" Linley, when faced with this technique, suddenly had a familiar feeling. "This…"

Linley's gaze began to blaze as he stared at the phantoms of the Four Divine Beasts surrounding Augusta. Every single phantom was releasing a unique type of energy, and when combined together, they unleashed this full technique. The four unique types of energy actually were able to manipulate the universe to the point of affecting space and time.

"This…isn't this…" Linley's eyes instantly turned round. In this moment,

time itself stood still! Even that ray of translucent light which shot out of Augusta's mouth seemed to have suddenly become very, very slow.

"Right! That's exactly it!" All these years, Linley had always been in pursuit of completely fusing those four profound mysteries from different Laws into a complete whole. However, although he was able to train to the bottleneck, the final step of completely, perfectly fusing the four Laws was something Linley was still yet to be able to do; he wasn't able to overcome this threshold. But now, when sensing the unique, perfect fusion of those four types of energy, and how they manipulated the heavens…

It was as though a master sculptor who had bitterly toiled in pursuit of perfection suddenly saw the sculpture of a grandmaster sculptor, and instantly gained enlightenment. This was the current Linley!

The Azure Dragon was water-attribute. Water was soft and gentle, capable of encompassing and absorbing everything.

The Black Tortoise was earth-attribute. The earth was vast, heavy, and ponderous.

The White Tiger was wind-attribute. The wind was invisible and formless, appearing and disappearing without any pattern.

The Vermillion Bird was fire-attribute. Fire burned and blazed wildly, filled with violent fury which was unpredictable.

This 'Spacetime Paradox' was actually the combination of earth, fire, water, and wind.

When one was stuck at a bottleneck, one might spend a trillion years without breaking through. But it was also possible that one would break through after a few days. This required luck; required a sudden flash of insight. Last time, Linley was just watching the battle, and so he hadn't sensed too deeply into the technique. In addition, last time, he hadn't reached this bottleneck in the fusion of the four Laws, and so naturally he hadn't gained any insights.

But now, when facing this ‘Spacetime Paradox’, Linley, who had been at a bottleneck for so long, benefited from those accumulated experiences. Everything had been prepared for this moment, and now, when the insight came, Linley suddenly understood.

He understood!

Everything was now clear to him!

Although all of this took time to describe, in reality, everything occurred in a flash. This sudden enlightenment required only a fraction of an instant.

“Hmph, hmph, die.” Augusta laughed coldly as that translucent light reached Linley’s body.

“Rumble…”

The world suddenly changed as the natural Laws descended!

Linley smiled as he looked at that translucent ray of light. He let out a gentle breath, and a translucent sword shadow emerged from his mouth. When it clashed against the translucent ray of light, it instantly shattered it into pieces. The remnants of the translucent sword of light turned small and thin. After flying for a bit longer, it vanished from the universe.

Utter shock filled Augusta’s eyes. “Im…impossible!”

“Swish.” Linley’s eyes shot out two translucent sword shadows. Given how fast his soul attack was, Augusta was completely unable to dodge, and the two translucent sword shadows sank into his body.

However, Augusta was completely unharmed!

“His soul defense is actually this powerful?” Linley couldn’t help but exclaim in astonishment, while glancing at the surrounding area. Four types of elemental essences were surrounding him. The natural Laws had already

descended, and were currently transforming his soul. “If I hadn’t personally experienced this ‘Spacetime Paradox’ technique, who knows how long it would have been before I would make this breakthrough.”

This breakthrough was even more difficult than becoming a Paragon. Earth, fire, water, and wind; these four Laws and their profound mysteries were completely different. To perfectly fuse them into a whole was simply too hard.

But Linley had succeeded. “Upon becoming a Paragon, one would be bestowed with Will as a reward. It was even more difficult for me to fuse these four Laws together, and the technical power of the attack is ten times greater than a Paragon’s. I imagine that the amount of Will I shall receive should be greater as well.” Linley could clearly sense that each of his souls was rising in power.

Because Linley was a Soul Mutate, upon making his breakthrough, every single soul would evolve.

“Eh?!” Linley couldn’t help but feel surprised. “This…” Linley’s eyes were filled with wild joy. “I actually gained a portion of Will that was double what a Paragon would gain!”

Although he had expected that the amount of Will he would receive would be more than what Paragons received, he hadn’t expected that it would be double. This truly surprised Linley.

Originally, when he had successfully become a Soul Mutate, although he had been bestowed Will, it wasn’t double that of a Paragon’s. Each increase of a full portion of Will represented a tenfold increase in power.

Linley was able to break through the bottleneck and reach complete mastery; his power had thus increased tenfold in terms of the profound mysteries. But upon receiving two portions of Will as well, that meant that his power had instantly increased a thousandfold! It must be understood that while at the bottleneck, Linley was already ten times as powerful as the Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta.

They were on completely different levels. They were several levels apart from each other; the difference between them was like that of the heavens and the earth.

“Linley actually blocked it? Broke through it effortlessly?” The Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction, along with the various other Sovereigns, were all completely stunned.

“Just now, the natural Laws descended.” The Chief Sovereign of Death suddenly said. “Are you saying…?” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction was stunned.

“Linley definitely made a major breakthrough. Otherwise, the Laws couldn’t possibly have descended for him. In addition, there is no way he could’ve risen in power by so much so quickly. I have a feeling…that the current Linley is no weaker than us!” The Chief Sovereign of Death sent in a low voice.

Indeed, in terms of power of Will, as a four-way Soul Mutate with three Sovereign sparks and two portions of will gained from the perfect fusion of four Laws, Linley was ten times stronger than ordinary Chief Sovereigns! He was already comparable to those Paragons amongst the Chief Sovereigns.

On a technical level, with his fused profound mysteries, he was ten times more powerful than a Paragon. In terms of energy, his fused Sovereign power was a hundred times that of an ordinary Sovereign’s. His only flaw… was that his Overgod weapon was not suited to him, and so he wasn’t able to unleash much of its power. But despite that, Linley’s power was already enough to make it so that he had no need to fear the four Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts at all.

“How…how can you…” Augusta stared towards Linley in disbelief.

Linley had instantly increased in power a thousandfold. This increase in power gave Linley complete confidence in facing even the Chief Sovereign

of Fate, Orloff. Linley felt no fear at all now. Laughing, he looked at Augusta. “I’m quite curious. Why is it that your ‘Spacetime Paradox’ was so weak? It was far weaker than I expected!”

The fused innate divine abilities of the Four Divine Beasts would allow one’s power to increase more than ten thousand times; after all, for Lesser Sovereigns to be capable of exterminating Chief Sovereigns, one could imagine how mighty it was.

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction himself had said that when developing ‘Spacetime Paradox’, although the power was far from the power unleashed by the Four Divine Beasts, it was still a thousand times greater than his own raw power. But Augusta…

“Whoosh!” Augusta’s figure flashed away, attempting to flee.

“Swoosh!” Linley’s figure flashed as well, and he instantly appeared in front of Augusta. With a casual swipe of his draconic tail, he lashed out with it, using it like a whip that struck viciously against Augusta’s body, sending him flying far away.

Blood splattered, but as a light shone over Augusta’s body, his flesh and skin were completely healed. “You…your speed?!” Augusta was completely stupefied. The current Linley was on a completely different level from the former Linley.

“I told you. You won’t be able to flee.” Linley laughed softly. “You haven’t answered me yet. Why is it that your Spacetime Paradox is so weak?”

Augusta, having seen Linley’s speed just now, no longer had any plans to flee. He let out a snicker. “Weak? The strength of this technique has to do with how much blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts one has. Wodred used far more blood essences than I did, so the power of it was naturally greater.”

Linley laughed and nodded. “Alright. It’s about time. If I don’t act now, Orloff will soon arrive.” Hearing this, Augusta’s face changed.

“Linley.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, who was currently hurrying through chaotic space towards them at high speed, sent to Linley frantically, “Isn’t it just a matter of letting your mother regain her free will? Fine. I will make Augusta release his spiritual bond with that Angelic Resurrection Pool.”

“Orloff, you seem to be quite nervous.” Linley sent back. “As far as I can recall, and in fact, as far as any Sovereigns can recall, you, Orloff, as the Chief Sovereign of Fate, always spend your time toiling away with research in your Orloff Gardens in the Celestial Realm. You never get involved in worldly affairs. Nothing can disturb you. But now, you are nervous.”

“Naturally. He is my good friend.” Orloff sent back. “Linley, I hope you won’t act foolishly.”

“Just a good friend?” Linley laughed as he sent back…and the Chief Sovereign of Fate’s face changed slightly.

“Upon seeing Augusta execute ‘Spacetime Paradox’, I realized the truth. You are bound by an Overgod oath; there is no way that you could’ve taught ‘Spacetime Paradox’ to someone else. But there is a loophole; if you and Augusta are the same person to begin with, then naturally any secrets you know, he knows.”

Linley let out a sigh. “Actually, if I hadn’t accepted that Emissary and learned of the existence of the Bula race, I wouldn’t have come to this realization so quickly. Actually, when I fought Augusta for the first time and realized that his power was ten times what I had expected, I began to suspect that he might have other Sovereign clones. Unfortunately, I never imagined, nor did I dare imagine, that you and him truly were the same person!”

The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, was silent for a moment, then said in a low voice, “Since you’ve already guessed it, you should know what to do. I do not wish…for you and I to become enemies!”

“Yes. I know what I should do.”

Linley smiled as he waved his hand. The Life Overgod Sword in his hand lashed out in a beautiful, dream-like arc, and a finger-thick ray of inky jade light shot out. The only thing that appeared within the surrounding space was that finger-thick ray of inky jade light, and a finger-thick spatial tear. There weren’t even any spatial ripples created.

The energy was concentrated to an absolute peak.

Linley’s most powerful technique…Sword Intent!

“Slash.” A hole appeared in Augusta’s head. Augusta’s mouth opened…but he was no longer capable of making any sounds.

Chapter 43 – A New Name (part 1)

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 43, A New Name (part 1)

Augusta's body crumpled down, falling into the flows of chaotic space, being carried away like an inanimate object within the 'rivers'.

The Chief Sovereign of Light, Augusta, was killed by one sword blow!

"Augusta died?"

"Linley killed Augusta?"

The Sovereigns couldn't help but take a deep breath. It had been countless years since a Chief Sovereign had truly perished.

"Good that he died!" The Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction, along with ten-plus other Sovereigns, had already guessed at the connection between Augusta and Orloff. They felt a surge of delight in their hearts!

"Bang!" "Bang!" Two rays of light shot out from Augusta's corpse, moving at extremely high speed. It was a ring and the Lightsaber.

"Stay here!" Linley wasn't able to catch them in time, so he could only use his fused Sovereign power to create a distant 'barrier', wanting to trap these two Overgod artifacts within it.

"Do you think that the likes of you is capable of trapping my Overgod artifacts?" Orloff's low voice rumbled within Linley's mind. In midair, the Lightsaber suddenly expanded dramatically. With a 'boom', it pierced straight through that barrier. Linley only saw two bolts of light flash past, and then the two Overgod artifacts disappeared.

Linley, seeing this, couldn't help but sigh to himself. The Overgod artifacts belonged to the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, to begin with. Under

Orloff's control, given how quickly Overgod artifacts could move, they vastly outstripped any Sovereign's speed.

Ten billion kilometers away from Linley, within the void. A white-robd Orloff stretched his hand out, snatching the Lightsaber that had flown towards him. This Lightsaber was the Fate Overgod weapon; his other clone, 'Augusta', naturally wasn't able to unleash its full power. But in the hands of the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, its power increased dramatically.

The ring slid onto Orloff's finger as well. Orloff was able to control his Overgod artifacts from a distance, and didn't need to bind them with blood before using them. He stared into the distance at the many spectating Sovereigns, especially those who hadn't realized that Orloff and Augusta were the same person, and so were in a state of shock.

No matter how foolish they might be, however, upon seeing this, they understood! Orloff and Augusta had been the same person!

"Ah, Augusta and Lord Orloff are actually the same person! Then…since Lord Orloff became a Paragon long ago, he gained an additional portion of Will. He gained another portion of Will from winning ten Planar Wars in a row. Having an additional Sovereign clone would also transform the Chief Sovereign of Fate's soul, granting him yet another portion of Will! Although his Sovereign clone has perished, the only thing Orloff lost was the portion of Will which was infused in his Sovereign spark; his already-strengthened soul wouldn't lose the Will he had already gained. Then Lord Orloff, he…"

All the Sovereigns were completely stunned. Only now did everyone understand how terrifyingly strong Orloff was! A soul change was irreversible; once one's souls were strengthened, one soul couldn't possibly weaken in power, just because the other one was destroyed.

Thus, Augusta's death didn't actually have much of an impact on the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff. It only represented that Orloff had lost a life.

“So in reality, he had two more portions of Will than I did! No wonder he was able to withstand my Overgod weapon with his bare hands.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction, Wodred, had a look on his face that was as calm as still water. He quietly watched everything happen.

All of the Sovereigns watched and waited to see…how the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, would take revenge upon Linley.

“Whoosh!” The Chief Sovereign of Fate’s speed increased to the limit, passing through a distance of countless kilometers. Less than a minute later, he had traversed the distance of a hundred billion kilometers and arrived within Linley’s field of vision.

Linley hefted his Life Overgod Sword in his hand, standing there in the void, surrounded by chaotic space. “You are really quite fast,” Linley actually was able to laugh while nodding in praise.

“And you are really quite audacious.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, smiled as he looked at Linley. “It seems that you are quite confident.”

“But I, too, feel as though you are quite confident.” Linley laughed calmly. “Do you think that just by relying on that Overgod weapon, you will be able to kill me? Oh, I forgot; you are a Bula. You are able to divide your consciousness in two, and you have spent countless years researching like a madman. I imagine you have a supreme technique of your own.”

Hearing Linley’s words, a smile appeared on Orloff’s face. “I am very fortunate and should celebrate the fact that I am a Bula, because in terms of my physical defense alone, I am inferior to the Four Divine Beasts, the Sable Leviathan, and those other supreme divine beasts. My Bula race, however, has unlimited potential.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, had an indescribable look in his eyes. “Temperament determines one’s destiny! Due to many contradictory thoughts, many geniuses end up limiting themselves. But me? I’m able to give up all of the contradictory, complicated thoughts that hinder me. All my evilness, my avarice…I can shunt them all aside, leaving behind only what I need.”

Linley laughed calmly. “Thus, we end up with a wild, overbearing, avaricious Augusta, as well as the supreme expert, Orloff, who focuses on his research and pays no mind to worldly affairs?”

“Right.” Orloff nodded and laughed. “To tell the truth, we Bulas aren’t that gifted, innately. Originally, as a Paragon, I did have a Sovereign clone, but in terms of power, I wasn’t confident in being able to defeat the other Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. Thus, I had to hide my power and ensure that they wouldn’t fear me. If the three of them were to join forces against me, I would definitely lose. Thus, I couldn’t let them know that Augusta and I were one and the same.”

“And so, I naturally ended up having 182 children! In reality, those children were newborn infants with some excellent talents who I selected from the various material planes. After they grew up, they naturally would have no recollection of what happened when they were one or two years old. Augusta trained them, and so they naturally would believe that Augusta was their father. And thus, there was the Augusta clan. Who, then, would suspect that Augusta and I were one?” Orloff laughed softly.

“In the past, you were extremely cautious. But now, it seems, you have no more concerns?” Linley laughed calmly. The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, smiled and nodded. “To tell the truth, I now hold the other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts in no regard whatsoever. This is because… all these years, I’ve never before revealed all of my power. You were able to destroy one of my clones; you are quite formidable. In order to show my respect for you, today, I will reveal my entire power. Although you will die, I will allow you to die satisfied.”

Linley frowned slightly. For Orloff to laugh and speak in such a manner indicated that his self-confidence was extremely high. “Kill me? Augusta also said that he would kill me, but in the end, I killed him.” Linley smiled, but then, suddenly…

“Crackle…” The Life Overgod Sword in Linley’s hand instantly transformed into a ray of green light. An extremely concentrated line of inky jade light, the size of a finger, shot out through the void, chopping

through it like a knife and leaving behind only an extremely fine spatial tear which not even divine sense could see clearly. Linley's Life Overgod Sword stabbed directly towards the body of Orloff, the Chief Sovereign of Fate.

His most powerful sword attack…Sword Intent! After completely fusing all four profound mysteries, Linley's power had risen a thousandfold. He was now completely terrifying, and one could imagine how strong was the power which this sword attack contained.

"Clang!" A ringing sound. Orloff just smiled as he looked at Linley, not even using his own Fate Overgod Sword to block, allowing Linley to stab him with his sword. "What?!" Linley's face changed dramatically.

"Impossible!" The distant spectators, including the Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction, all couldn't refrain from crying out in shock. They could tell how terrifyingly strong Linley's sword was. Logically speaking, no one should be able to rely on their body to defend against it. Not even Chief Sovereigns!

"Haha…" Orloff couldn't help but start to laugh. "After the creation of the universe, Linley, there have been a total of seven Overgod missions. The other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts and yourself, Linley, each acquired an Overgod artifact. But that just accounts for four completed missions! To the outside world, I have only admitted that I was in possession of a soul-protecting Overgod artifact, while Augusta acquired an Overgod weapon. But what about the last Overgod mission? Who completed it? Do you know, Linley?" Orloff was quite smug.

Linley's heart clenched. "Can it also have been…" "Also have been me." The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, laughed. "This Overgod artifact is a defensive Overgod artifact!" As he spoke, a completely black armor appeared on Orloff's body; this defensive Overgod artifact had already become one with Orloff's skin.

Linley's heart was now ice-cold. The distant, spectating Sovereigns were all completely silent as well. Good heavens! Orloff was a complete monster; he had a soul-protecting Overgod artifact, a defensive Overgod artifact, and an

Overgod weapon. He had three Overgod artifacts. He could probably stand there and do nothing, and the others still wouldn't be able to kill him!

"Orloff…" The Chief Sovereigns of Destruction, Death, and Life no longer had any desire to struggle against him. The three Overgod artifacts guaranteed that anyone, no matter how self-confident they were, would feel their morale plummet into the depths of the sea.

"Normally, I'll just allow this defensive Overgod artifact to be transformed into the appearance of the Orloff Gardens. I've bound it long ago, and under my control, it doesn't emanate any aura at all. Although many people are curious about my levitating gardens and can sense that it is extraordinary, no one knew…that it was actually my transformed defensive Overgod artifact." Orloff laughed.

The Orloff Gardens was actually a defensive Overgod artifact! Orloff seemed to be in an exceptionally good mood; he even publicized such an important secret. "What, after hiding for so many years, have you decided to reveal everything today?" Linley was a million kilometers away from Orloff, but very cautious.

These two stood at the peak of power amongst Sovereigns. They stood there, within the flows of chaotic energy at a distance of a million kilometers, speaking to each other in voices that rang like thunder.

"Haha, I no longer need to conceal anything." Orloff laughed. "As for why that's the case, you will soon know." Orloff didn't seem to be griefstruck over the loss of his Sovereign clone at all; instead, he seemed to be in smug and proud.

"Oh?" Linley chuckled. "Swoosh!" Linley immediately transformed into a stream of light, fleeing at high speed into the distance.

"What horrible luck. Orloff actually has three Overgod artifacts! And he is no weaker than me to begin with. Even if he was weaker than me, with three Overgod artifacts in hand, there's no way I can actually defeat him. I didn't imagine that I would encounter this sort of a monster immediately

after breaking through." Linley's heart was filled with utter resignation.

"Fleeing?" Orloff also transformed into a ray of light, pursuing at full strength. In terms of pure Will, the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, had three more portions than ordinary Chief Sovereigns did. As for Linley, he only had a single additional portion of Will more than a Chief Sovereign. However, Linley had his fused Sovereign power; it could be said that in pure, raw strength, the two were roughly on par.

However, speed was not Linley's forte. As for Orloff, however, he had spent countless years analyzing and strengthening himself. It could be said that he had reached the limits in defense, attack, and speed. When chasing after Linley, Orloff clearly was somewhat faster than him.

"So fast!" "This speed is inconceivable!" The spectating Sovereigns in chaotic space were completely stupefied now. Linley and Orloff, in terms of speed, outstripped all of the other Sovereigns now.

"Linley is actually as powerful as this." The Chief Sovereign of Destruction let out a sigh. As for the violet-robed Chief Sovereign of Death, who had flown to his side, she sighed as well. "Linley is strong, but this Orloff…he hid himself far too well. Now that he has revealed his strength, we are no longer qualified to challenge him for supremacy."

The Chief Sovereign of Destruction nodded helplessly as well. Three Overgod artifacts. Who would dare fight against Orloff?

Some were feeling shocked, while others were feeling delighted. The Sovereigns who had chosen to serve Orloff were naturally feeling delighted. "Haha, so Lord Orloff was as powerful as this. Without question, Lord Orloff is undefeatable amongst Sovereigns." A man with two black horns and long hair couldn't help but laugh.

"Everyone, Lord Orloff is about to kill that kid Linley. Oh, Linley's already fled into the Life Realm. Let's chase after them and continue to watch." The Sovereign of Fire, Borte, said with a laugh. Instantly, these words drew a reaction from quite a few of the surrounding Sovereigns. Everyone already

considered Linley to be a dead man.

He was powerful, and most likely even more powerful than the other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts. But the one chasing after Linley was Orloff! The unfathomable Orloff, who had three Overgod artifacts!

“Swoosh!” “Swoosh!” Within chaotic space, many Sovereigns began to fly at high speed towards the Life Realm.

Within the Life Realm. Linley was fleeing at high speed, while the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, was pulling closer and closer to Linley. Although they had started at a distance of a million kilometers, Orloff had managed to catch up, thanks to his greater speed.

“Not good. That technique again!” Linley’s face suddenly changed. The two were now only ten kilometers apart, and right at this moment, a powerful aura washed over him. Linley’s fused divine sense could easily sense…that phantoms of the Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Black Tortoise, and Vermillion Bird had appeared around Orloff’s head, feet, and sides.

Space within countless kilometers completely froze. On the ground below them, various experts who were either training or fighting were also completely paralyzed by this spacetime compression. All of them were completely shocked, but unable to move.

“Swish!” A translucent light shot out from Orloff’s mouth towards Linley. Spacetime Paradox!

“Hmph.” Linley turned his head, opening his own mouth. Similarly, he shot out two rays of translucent sword shadows from his mouth. This was Linley’s most powerful soul attack.

The translucent ray of light and the translucent sword shadows collided. The first translucent sword shadow trembled, then immediately collapsed, but the translucent ray of light shrank in size as well. It then collided with the second sword shadow head on, and with a ‘bang’, the second sword shadow also vanished. The remaining, greatly weakened translucent ray of

light was dissipated by Linley's spiritual energy as soon as it entered his body.

"Admirable. You actually were able to block this technique." Orloff's voice rang out in Linley's mind. "The power you put into this technique is much lower than when Wodred used it." Linley sent back. In terms of raw power from the profound mysteries, Linley's soul attacks and material attacks were ten times mightier than a Paragon's!

As for this 'Spacetime Paradox' of Orloff's, it was only a few dozen times stronger than a Paragon's, and just a few times stronger than Linley's attack. It wasn't able to kill Linley.

"Haha. That's because both Augusta and myself each only refined and fused with a single drop of the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts." Orloff laughed. "One drop?" Linley was puzzled. He had handed over eleven drops of the Azure Dragon blood essence, and somewhat more of the other three types of blood essence. Why, then, had Orloff and Augusta used only one drop of each?

However, Linley didn't have any time to consider this. "He's catching up." This time, Orloff didn't use a soul attack; instead, he struck out with his Fate Overgod Sword, wanting to engage Linley in close combat.

"Hmph." Linley gritted his teeth, then charged back at Orloff! The two were only a few hundred meters away from each other; given how fast Sovereigns moved, how little time would they need to cross such a distance? But Orloff was a supreme expert amongst Chief Sovereigns; his reaction speed was incredibly fast as well. Only, Linley had actively taken the initiative and had been preparing for it this entire time, and thus he immediately unleashed his 'Sword Intent' attack.

The Infernal Realm. Bloodridge Continent.

"Bluefire, how are things?" Beirut sent mentally. Far away in the Infernal Realm, a figure entered through a spatial rift. It was Bluefire who had arrived in the Infernal Realm.

Previously, when the Sovereigns had begun to spread word amongst themselves that Linley and Augusta were engaging in battle in chaotic space, Beirut had felt uneasy, and so he had arranged for Bluefire to go watch in chaotic space.

“Beirut, Linley killed Augusta.” Bluefire said hurriedly. “Truly? That’s, that’s wonderful.” Beirut was overjoyed. “What’s wrong with you? Why are you looking like that?”

“But…” Bluefire’s face grew ugly to behold. “Augusta and Orloff are actually the same person. Orloff…” Bluefire carefully began to describe everything, and as he did so, Beirut’s face turned ugly to behold as well. By the end, his entire body was beginning to quiver.

“It’s me who has harmed Linley!” Beirut growled. “What should we do now?” Bluefire hurriedly asked. “What can we do?” Beirut let out a sigh. “I have no idea how I’m supposed to let Bebe and the others know about this.”

Right at this moment, Beirut suddenly frowned. “Eh? Why are they back? Bluefire, Linley’s father, Hogg, and his mother, Lina, have already arrived at the Bloodridge Continent’s teleportation array. Immediately go and arrange for them to be escorted here. Linley…we aren’t able to help him, but we must protect his family and friends.”

“Right.” Bluefire noticed Linley’s father and mother through divine sense as well.

Hogg and his wife, Lina, were currently advancing towards the Skyrite Mountains at full speed.

“I know everything. I remember everything.” Lina’s eyes were filled with worry. “My child…Linley, could it be that he went to go kill the Chief Sovereign of Light? Nothing will happen to Linley, will it?” In the very instant Linley killed Augusta, the Angels from the Angelic Resurrection Pool which Augusta controlled all instantly gained their freedom.

Lina remembered everything, everything that happened back at the Yulan Plane, and also everything which had happened after she had been transformed into an Angel. She immediately remembered her son, Linley, whom she had carried for ten months, as well as Wharton. Only now did she truly begin to worry for Linley.

“Whoosh.” Bluefire instantly appeared before them. “Bluefire.” Hogg and Lina immediately recognized him. “Bluefire, what’s happened to my child, Linley?” Lina immediately asked with worry. In the past, although she had met Linley, that that time, she was still under control. She felt no emotion for Linley whatsoever. Only now was she truly Linley’s mother.

Bluefire had an ugly look on his face. He let out a sigh. “Come with me.” Sovereign power swept up Hogg and Lina, who immediately transformed into streaks of red light, disappearing into the horizon and soon arriving at the Skyrite Mountains.

Beirut, seeing them come, went to welcome them and Bluefire. “I’m not sure what’s going with Linley right now. Soon, I’ll discuss it with you two.” Beirut looked at Hogg and Lina as he spoke. For now…Beirut didn’t want to reveal that Linley was fighting for his life.

Hogg and Lina exchanged glances, concern in their eyes.

“Bang!”

Suddenly, a surge of powerful ground ripple swept towards them. Bluefire and Beirut simultaneously turned their heads to stare towards the south, towards the Chaotic Sea.

“Linley!” “Orloff!” Beirut and Bluefire were both shocked. Linley and Orloff were currently wildly battling each other. They had battled all the way out of from the Life Realm, then passed into one of the other nearby Higher Realms, the Infernal Realm. They now appeared in the southern margins, in the skies of the endless, infinite Chaotic Sea.

Almost immediately afterwards, many Sovereigns tore holes through reality

and arrived in the Infernal Realm. The Sovereigns were all watching this unprecedented, spectacular battle! Only, everyone maintained a great distance from Linley and Orloff, because as all the spectators knew…even the other three Chief Sovereigns of the Edicts, to say nothing of the ordinary Chief Sovereigns, might lose their lives in the face of this battle between Linley and Orloff.

“Bang!” “Bang!”

The surrounding fabric of reality repeatedly collapsed. The countless experts of the Chaotic Sea had long ago hidden themselves deep into the bottom of the sea, but the vibrations that transmitted all the way to the bottom still stunned them. How terrifyingly powerful was this energy?

“Haha, Orloff, I thought you were very powerful, but now, it seems, your attack power is only average. To kill me? It’s far from being enough!” Linley’s voice echoed in the skies.

“Linley, your attack and your profound mysteries are indeed extremely powerful. Admirable, truly! If your Overgod artifact matched you, I probably truly would find it hard to kill you.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate’s voice rang out as well.

Linley and Orloff were deep within the Chaotic Sea, staring at each other from a distance of ten thousand kilometers. Although they were far apart, the terrifying aura each radiated was something they could sense, even without using divine sense.

“Kill me? How are you going to kill me?” Linley snickered. Linley’s body was covered with a flowing layer of inky jade light. His bloody wounds were repeatedly, ceaselessly healing. In terms of Will and Sovereign power, Linley and Orloff were evenly matched, but in terms of profound mysteries, Linley was on a higher level than Orloff, while Orloff’s Overgod weapon was utilized at a higher level than Linley.

This made it so that, in terms of raw material attack power, Linley and Orloff were actually on par with each other.

However…Orloff had a defensive Overgod artifact. He could ignore his own defense and focus on attacking. As for Linley, he had to carefully defend. Naturally, this made it so that Linley was at a disadvantage. Still, Linley wouldn't lose his life as a result. After all, the difference in power between the two wasn't that great.

The many Sovereigns all watched nervously. By now, they all realized… that amongst the Chief Sovereigns, Linley and Orloff were the two strongest. But Orloff had three Overgod artifacts…he could be said to be unbeatable, and so, in the eyes of the many Sovereigns, this duel of the two most powerful experts ever created would result in Linley's fall.

Quite a few Sovereigns felt grief for Linley, in fact. "Ten thousand years… for him to reach these heights means that Linley can be described as an absolute marvel. Someone like him…what a pity. He's going to die."

"Even though Linley is going to die, the countless planes of the universe will never, ever forget him. After all, he is the only person qualified to battle Orloff, a supreme Sovereign without peer." The various Sovereigns chatted amongst themselves, many feeling grief for Linley.

And yet, at the same time, they also felt admiration for Linley in their hearts. Generally speaking, when facing a man who was about to die, others would forget about their flaws and feel no jealousy…and so, quite naturally, most of them felt sympathy for Linley. Still, they continued to watch as Linley was driven towards death, one step at a time.

"Haha…Linley!" The voice of Orloff once more rang out in the skies above the Chaotic Sea. A confident smile was on his face. "It has been a long time since I've had such an enjoyable battle. Linley, just now, I was so happy when fighting you. I truly am not willing to let you just die…but I don't want to let you live either."

"Weren't you puzzled as to why I am no longer hiding my secrets?" The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, laughed. Linley turned to look at Orloff, nodding slightly. "Why?"

“That is because, not long ago, or to be precise, during the last Planar War, when I saw the ‘Samsara Battle Formation’ your six Emissaries activated, I had a flash of insight. Afterwards, I spent a few decades and finally completed my previously flaw, unperfected supreme technique.” The Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, smiled.

“Supreme technique?” Linley frowned. At this point in time, Orloff actually reached out to speak privately to him through divine sense. “Yes, supreme technique! Over the course of the countless eons, I didn’t actually spent much time developing my ‘Golden Samsara Body’ technique. My time was actually spent in developing this supreme attack, the greatest of all material attacks – Samsara Transcendence.”

“Samsara Transcendence?” Linley was secretly shocked. Orloff sighed through divine sense. “Linley, you will definitely die, so I wish to tell you some secrets that I discovered! Long, long ago, I discovered that the countless planes of the universe operated in far too orderly a manner. Who created the teleportation arrays? The Overgods? The Overgods are nothing more than the manifestations of the Edicts. Why, then, would they do such a thing?”

“In addition, why would there be Planar Wars? The goal of the Planar Wars clearly is to reduce the number of experts, so as to ensure that the number of experts within the planes would be balanced.”

“All these various established mechanisms…brought a sense to me. A sense that the countless planes of the universe were being guided by an invisible hand.” Orloff said.

Linley was stunned. Orloff’s words were very reasonable. It did indeed seem as though an invisible hand was governing the countless planes.

“I want to break free from this regulation! Break free from this control!” Orloff’s gaze was sharp. “Countless years ago, my goal was to surpass the other Sovereigns. Now, I am invincible, and so my goal is to develop the most powerful material attack, to shatter the universe itself. I will make it so

that neither the heavens nor the earth can stop me, can bind me! I will surpass and transcend the samsara, this cycle of the universe!"

Linley's heart was quivering as he listened. "Countless years of research. I've analyzed countless races and discovered quite a few secrets." Orloff's smile was filled with delight. He didn't want to tell the other Sovereigns about this matters. But as for Linley…as he saw it, Linley was going to die. And so, he would finally speak to Linley these words that he had hidden within his heart for so many years."

"The universe is filled with 'space'. Thus, I paid particular attention to some innate divine abilities that were linked with space. As I saw it, if I were able to develop an attack that could break through and shatter space itself, what would happen? Would the universe collapse? Or would I reach a different universe? I don't know…but I am eager to find out."

"This technique, Samsara Transcendence, remained unperfected, despite countless years of research. Still, I absorbed much experience and constantly improved my own power. And yet, I still felt that something was off. Afterwards, when I learned 'Spacetime Paradox' from Wodred, I realized where the problem lay, and so when you gifted me with the blood essences of the Four Divine Beasts, I spent most of them in research."

Linley finally realized why Augusta and Orloff had each used only a single drop of the many drops of Four Divine Beasts blood essences which Linley had provided.

"Despite that, however, the 'Samsara Transcendence' technique remained rough and disharmonious. But when I saw the 'Samsara Battle Formation' the Emissary under your command had developed, I suddenly understood! A magical formation…this technique of mine could be merged with a magical formation and thus be set up even more perfectly."

Orloff's face was filled with a smile of self-delight. "I finally succeeded. I personally believe this 'Samsara Transcendence' attack of mine to be at the peak of what is possible. In terms of power, it is definitely superior to 'Spacetime Paradox'."

“Linley, to show my respect for you, I will permit you to die under this technique. Experience for yourself…my Samsara Transcendence!”

Orloff’s face began to glow with an almost holy light. He appeared almost like one of those holy figures amongst mortals as he raised his Fate Overgod Sword.

“Rumble…”

Four sword illusions suddenly appeared around Orloff. One was jade-green, one was earthen yellow, one was fiery red, and one was light blue. The four sword illusions swirled around Orloff at high speed, and instantly…

“Rumble…”

The universe began to change. It darkened. All of the spectating Sovereigns were completely stupefied. What sort of terrifying power was this? This technique, ‘Samsara Transcendence’, was the most terrifying technique Orloff had developed, after spending countless years drawing from and analyzing the best parts of various other techniques and powers!

“I only have one chance.” Just as Orloff began to unleash his technique, Linley reacted. And what he did was…

“Swoosh!” Linley frantically fled in into the distance. And as he did, the four sword illusions swirling around the Fate Overgod Sword formed into a gigantic illusory sword that was more than a hundred meters long.

The sword chopped out…

“Crackle…” A terrifying spatial chasm appeared in front of it, stretching off into infinity. It created spatial vibrations for countless kilometers around, causing the deaths of countless living creatures within the Chaotic Sea. This illusory sword that contained four types of sword illusions almost instantly arrived in front of Linley.

When his opponent had launched this attack, Linley actually separated his body into three; a Dragonformed Linley, the water-type Sovereign clone, and the wind-type Sovereign clone.

“Haaargh!” The Dragonformed Linley let out a low growl. Wielding the Life Overgod Sword in his hands, he swung savagely against the sword illusion.

“BANG!” Linley felt as though a mountain was crushing down upon him. In almost an instant, the two hands which Linley was using to wield his Life Overgod Sword completely shattered. His bones split apart, and blood flowed everywhere. The Life Overgod Sword trembled, then slipped out of his hands, with the edge of it being knocked backwards and slicing through Linley’s chest, as easily as slicing tissue.

With a ‘slash’ sound, Linley’s chest was completely chopped open, from shoulder to waist. Linley’s bisected body flashed, and he instantly exchanged it with his earth-type Sovereign clone.

The Life Overgod Sword, due to having been used to block that sword illusion, was actually knocked far into the distance, flying away like a meteor.

“How terrifying.” Everyone was completely awestruck. The three Linley’s were currently fleeing into the distance, but the strange thing was…Linley wasn’t actually in pursuit of his Life Overgod Sword.

“The Life Overgod Sword is indeed quite resilient; by relying on it to block, he was actually able to save his life. However, there will not be a ‘next time’.” Orloff chased after Linley at high speed, also preparing to unleash his supreme technique yet again.

The Chief Sovereigns and the ordinary Sovereigns were all filled with terror. This included Beirut and Bluefire, who were closest to him.

“Too powerful.” Linley, thinking back to that scene, thought to himself. “The attack power was so strong, it actually shattered the draconic scales on

my hand and broke my bones, knocking the Life Overgod Sword onto my body and then sending it flying far into the distance." It must be understood that Linley's body, especially when infused with his Will and when filled with his fused Sovereign power, was far more powerful than most Sovereign artifacts.

And yet, despite that, he had still suffered such a fate. That technique, Samsara Transcendence…it was simply too powerful.

"The fruits of his countless years of research is indeed powerful." Linley's gaze was locked onto a distant figure…the Sovereign of Fire, Borte. Borte was currently alongside the other Sovereigns who served the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff.

"Lord Orloff is too powerful. That technique…is absolutely invincible." The man with two black horns said with a laugh.

"Haha, Linley was actually able to stay alive. However, his Life Overgod Sword was knocked flying. What is he going to use to block the next attack?" Borte laughed disdainfully. He was rather envious of Linley to begin with, and last time, Linley had barked at him. This made it so that Borte had a very negative impression of Linley. Naturally, he hoped that Orloff would kill Linley.

"Everyone, Linley is flying over towards us. Quick, step aside." The Sovereigns all hurriedly moved away, but they weren't in too much of a rush. After all, they believed that Linley was simply fleeing, and just so happened to flee towards their direction.

But the strange thing was…

"Swish." As the Sovereigns flew away, Linley suddenly changed directions as well. Linley's speed was more than a hundred times greater than those Lesser Sovereigns, and he instantly appeared before them.

"What?!" Borte's face changed dramatically. "Bang!" Linley's fist smashed onto Borte's head. A weak little Lesser Sovereign of Fire, in front of Linley,

wasn't able to fight back at all.

"Fire-type Sovereign spark." In virtually the same instant as he struck out, Linley sent a drop of his blood into that Lesser Sovereign spark. His gaze was sharp. "By now, I have no other options. Only by fusing with his fire-type Sovereign spark will I be able to rise in power yet again!"

Linley had no other choices. He didn't want to die. Once he died, Beirut, Bluefire, and even the Four Divine Beasts clan and Linley's family members…who knew what would happen to them?

Thus, Linley had to act. There were quite a few Sovereigns of Fire present, but the only one Linley felt antipathy towards was Borte. Thus, without hesitating at all, he chose that poor bastard.

"Rumble…"

The world began to change yet again. Countless amounts of fire elemental essences swirled about in midair as the fire-type Sovereign spark entered the divine fire clone in Linley's body. It only took an instant to refine a Sovereign spark, and so Linley's souls once more began to transform, and Will once more flooded his soul. Aside from this…

"Four types of Sovereign power…FUSE!"

Chapter 44 – A New Name (part 2)

Book 21, The Peak – Chapter 44, A New Name (part 2)

Within Linley's body, four types of Sovereign power instantly began to bubble and froth.

"Linley, by fusing with a Lesser Sovereign spark of fire, you'll just gain a bit more Will. Without an Overgod artifact, there is no way you are capable of withstanding my blow." The Chief Sovereign of Fate's body once more was surrounded by those four illusory swords, which began to rotate around him.

But Linley only closed his eyes, the muscles on his face twitching slightly. "These, these four types of Sovereign power…"

In the past, the uniqueness of the fusion of four types of divine power made Linley feel certain…that upon fusing four types of Sovereign power, there would definitely be a unique product as well. But the uniqueness of it completely surpassed Linley's imagination.

"Crackle…" After the four types of Sovereign power fused, they instantly transformed into a unique, gray, foggy sort of energy. This gray energy wildly filled every inch of Linley's body. His bones, his skin, his blood vessels, his organs…even his mind and his soul.

Linley's flesh was trembling. His entire body was twitching. "Crackle…" It transformed his muscles, his bones, and every tiny, minute part of him. Earth-shaking changes were occurring in his body, and in virtually every second, Linley's body would be strengthened hundreds of times. He was constantly rising in power and gaining in strength. In front of the gray energy created by the four types of fused Sovereign power, Linley's body seemed to respond by simply growing stronger, stronger, stronger…

"Careful, Linley." Beirut's voice rang out in Linley's mind. Linley opened

his eyes. “Swish!” That Fate Overgod Sword, flowing with four types of colors, had already arrived in front of Linley. “Slash!” Linley’s clothes shattered…and on Linley’s chest, the Fate Overgod Sword left behind a single bloody scratch.

“What!” The eyes of the Chief Sovereign of Fate and the others all widened. “How can this be?” The Sovereigns who were spectating this battle were completely stupefied. The unsurpassed supreme technique of Orloff, ‘Samsara Transcendence’, in front of Linley was only…only able to just barely scrape open Linley’s skin?

“Crackle…” That bloody scratch instantly healed, while at the same time, Linley’s body continued to strengthen. His bones, his muscles…every component of his insides was constantly shattering and reforming, rising in power time and time again. Each rise in power was terrifyingly great, and yet, they seemed to happen without end. Large amounts of gray energy were being used up by Linley’s body.

“I’ve researched for countless years to develop this, my most powerful sword attack. How…how can it be that I’m not even able to pierce into his skin? Impossible, impossible!!!” Orloff couldn’t help but begin to bellow. He actually swept out with his Fate Overgod Sword to attack Linley yet again, and the quad-colored sword illusions once more manifested, resulting into that terrifying sword!

“Slash.” The Overgod sword once more slashed out onto Linley’s body. But this time…it didn’t even break his skin.

Orloff and the others all stared at Linley, stunned. “Rumble…” The space around Linley trembled violently, unleashing a wave of energy that actually knocked Orloff flying away. As for Linley, he stood there silently in the center of that wave of energy, his eyes closed, like an invincible divinity of war.

“Inconceivable. Inconceivable.” Linley, after receiving that blow from his enemy, completely focused on his self-transformation. His body was undergoing a heaven-shaking evolution. Linley had expected this, but he

had never imagined…that his Sovereign sparks would actually melt!

Right. They melted, as though they were ice cubes. The Sovereign sparks were indestructibly tough, and none had ever been destroyed despite the passage of countless years. But they were actually beginning to melt!

Surrounded by that gray energy, Linley's four fused Sovereign sparks actually began to melt. The four sword-shaped souls that were within the Sovereign sparks were revealed, and the four sword-shaped souls, as well as the sword-shaped soul of the main body, also began to transform after becoming submerged into that gray energy. It was as though they were breaking free from a cocoon and becoming a butterfly…

Slowly…the five hovering sword-shaped souls actually fused together, merging like flowing liquids, then finally transforming into a single sword-shaped soul. This sword-shaped soul began to change in color. First, it was azure; then it was earthen yellow; next, it became jade; afterwards, it became red; and in the end, it became completely translucent. A virtually invisible, translucent, sword-shaped soul.

"Bang." Linley's four Sovereign clones, bereft of both Sovereign sparks and souls, completely collapsed. Only one body was now remaining, and a single, translucent sword-shaped soul. This transformation had used up a great deal of that gray energy.

"Completely inconceivable." Although his souls had merged together and he had even lost his Sovereign spark, Linley could clearly sense the existences of all four Elemental Seas. He could effortless pull four types of Sovereign power from them, and not just that; Linley could even sense the Elemental Sea of Light, the Elemental Sea of Darkness…and all the other planes that served as wellsprings for power. Linley, with but a thought, could summon every type of Sovereign power.

"My power of Will is gone?" Linley discovered that after his Sovereign sparks were consumed and his souls were transformed into one, his original Will had vanished. Only…Linley sensed a unique sort of control over the surrounding space. This feeling of control was like…this part of the world

was his own domain. He didn't need Will. He didn't need anything else. He could simply use the power of the world to constrict any enemies and kill them all.

"Im…impossible!" Orloff, who had always been invincible, seemed to have gone berserk. He was repeatedly using his Overgod weapon to strike towards Linley, but the energy wave emanating from Linley's body forced him to stay far away, and he was unable to draw near.

All of the Sovereigns watching this were rendered completely speechless. What had happened just now had completely surpassed their expectations. The power which Linley had revealed surpassed the realm of Sovereigns.

"Has he become an Overgod?" The Chief Sovereign of Death murmured. The nearby Chief Sovereign of Destruction's chin rose, and he blinked repeatedly. "Can it be that living creatures can actually train to the Overgod level?"

"Haha. Wonderful." Bluefire and Beirut, within the Skyrite Mountains, watched as Orloff attacked like a madman, but wasn't even able to get close to Linley. They couldn't help but feel wildly overjoyed.

"Are you done?"

A calm, quiet voice rang out. Linley, surrounded by that energy wave, opened his eyes and looked at Orloff, who stood before him. In this moment, Linley seemed like a sword. After his soul had transformed, a sword intent seemed to burst out from him. Just looking at Linley made their hearts quiver.

"Uh?" The Chief Sovereign of Fate violently swung out his hand with his Fate Overgod Sword, only to realize…he couldn't move. Because Linley's right hand had clutched onto the Fate Overgod Sword.

"This Overgod sword…" Linley let out a sigh. He suddenly had a strange feeling, as though this Overgod sword wasn't all that tough. Linley's right hand applied just a bit of pressure. "CRACK!"

A clear, ringing sound. What it represented…was that the exalted, incomparable Overgod artifact had actually been snapped by Linley in half.

“How ordinary.” Linley tossed it aside casually, and the half of the Overgod sword in his hands fell from the skies, landing into the seas below. “Plonk.” It sank into the seas.

All of the spectating Sovereigns were once more rendered speechless. Even the Chief Sovereign of Fate stared, stunned, at the remaining half of the Overgod sword which he held. “This…how can this…” As soon as his words rang out…

“Swish!” Orloff’s body suddenly transformed into a streak of light, as he fled into the distance at high speed. Even now, Orloff still held a faint hope that he could stay alive…his homeland was a material plane, and he wanted to flee into it. Orloff was going to continue his research, until the day came when he surpassed Linley.

He felt that although Linley’s attack power had increased, his speed hadn’t necessarily increased. Unfortunately…

“You want to flee?” Linley’s body flashed, and he actually traversed countless kilometers in a single instant, arriving before Orloff. His speed was countless times faster than Orloff.

The resolute, unyielding look in Orloff’s eyes turned dim. “I lost. Completely lost.” He understood that Linley, who was able to easily break apart the Fate Overgod Sword, definitely would also be able to easily breach his defensive Overgod armor. The eyes of the Chief Sovereign of Fate, Orloff, suddenly lit up again, and he stared at Linley. “Linley…I hope that you will use your most powerful attack to kill me.”

Although they were enemies, Linley still felt a hint of admiration for Orloff. Admiration for how insane he was. “Fine, then. I will use my most powerful attack to kill you.”

Linley pressed two fingers together, forming a ‘sword’ with them. A blurry gray sword that was around 1.5 meters in length slowly emerged. As soon as this illusion of a blurry gray sword emerged, the surrounding space began to tremble and fracture into countless pieces.

Orloff stared intently at the illusory sword, his attention focused. “Whoosh!” The sword pierced through the air. Linley’s most powerful sword attack was finally unleashed…his ‘Sword Intent’, fused with four types of power!

“BANG!” A terrifying explosion rang out. An unprecedented explosion! Linley’s sword seemed to have created a terrifying change in the world! An enormous, terrifying black hole that was nearly ten thousand kilometers in circumference appeared before Linley. Countless amounts of dense gray energy emerged from this hole, pouring into the Infernal Realm and spreading out towards every direction.

“Not good!” This gray energy spread out so quickly that in virtually an instant, it traversed countless millions of kilometers. The eleven Sovereigns who were just slightly too slow in fleeing were touched by it, and anything the gray energy touched was instantly transformed into nothingness. Even their Sovereign sparks were melted away into nothingness and disappeared. This entire region was completely transformed into a region of death.

“Just now, just now…” The Chief Sovereigns of Death and Destruction, and the various other survivors, were so terrified that their faces turned white. Just now, the terrifying black hole which Linley’s sword had created had spewed out limitless amounts of gray energy, which had represented annihilation. Anything touched by the gray energy, whether ordinary Deities or mighty Sovereigns, and even inanimate rocks and water, were transformed into nothingness.

“One step slower, and we would’ve all died.” The Chief Sovereign of Destruction remained extremely tense. “Just now…what was that?” The surviving Sovereigns were completely terrified. Although they had seen how powerful Linley was, they had never been so terrified as they were now. The black hole that had suddenly vomited forth that gray energy was

simply too terrifying. “The nearer Sovereigns all died. Not even their Sovereign sparks remain.” The Chief Sovereign of Death’s face was ashen. “And that Linley…he, he was surrounded by that gray energy and transformed into nothingness as well.”

The gray energy created a region which Sovereigns couldn’t use their divine sense to scan. These Sovereigns didn’t know as to what had happened, exactly, when the gray energy had spread out within that region. But there was one thing they were certain of; everything within that region had been transformed into nothingness.

“Linley!” Beirut’s face was ashen. Bluefire’s face was completely bloodless as well. They had never imagined…that such an awe-inspiring turn of events would occur. Linley, whose power had suddenly skyrocketed, actually then vanished within that terrifying gray energy and disappeared.

By now, the gray energy was flooding back towards the black hole. It completely vanished, and even the black hole was slowly shrinking, before finally disappearing as well. The terrifying energy wave caused astonishment in the entire Infernal Realm.

“…where is this place?”

Linley stared at his surroundings. The surrounding space was filled with that strange, foggy gray energy. His own four types of Sovereign power had joined together and formed this exact same type of energy, which had then transformed his body and soul. Just now, his sword attack seemed to have shattered the skies, allowing this energy to cause the deaths of the many Sovereigns.

Linley turned to look, then saw a translucent membrane. At the opposite side of the translucent membrane was chaotic space. “I…where am I?”

Linley’s gaze suddenly turned sharp as he stared in front of himself. Because…someone had appeared in front of him. This person was dressed in unadorned hemp clothes. He had a head full of wild, tousled hair. This middle-aged man’s face had an extremely excited smile. “Haha…it has

been a thousand Grand Kalpas, but my waiting is finally at an end."

"A thousand Grand Kalpas?" Linley was completely confused. "Second Brother, come with me." The middle-aged man smiled, then extended a hand. He grabbed Linley by the arm, pulling him forward at high speed.

What astonished Linley was, every single step this middle-aged man took covered a limitless amount of distance. His speed was incomprehensibly faster than Linley's.

"Why do you address me as 'Second Brother'?" Linley looked at him, puzzled. "And who are you?"

"Haha…because you are the very first person, after the passage of countless years, who was able to break through the bindings of the Cosmos and enter this place, this Hongmeng Grandmist." The middle-aged man said with a clear laugh. "What is the 'Cosmos'?" Linley hurriedly asked. "You said I broke through the bindings of the cosmos. Are you saying…that the countless planes I live in comprise the Cosmos?"

"To be more precise, the countless material planes, the Seven Divine Planes, the Four Higher Planes, the various minor planes, and chaotic space; they combine to form a whole, which can be referred to as the Cosmos." The middle-aged man smiled as he spoke. "As for this energy? I refer to it as the Grandmist spirit-energy."

Linley took a deep breath. Indeed…the Chief Sovereign of Fate had sensed that it seemed as though an invisible hand was controlling the countless planes, and had wanted to break free from this control. It now seemed as though the invisible hand was the mysterious middle-aged man in front of Linley.

"Grandmist spirit-energy?" Linley stared carefully at the primal gray energy. "My home is up ahead." The middle-aged man pointed towards the front. In the center of that endless amount of primal energy, there was an island that was only a few dozen meters in circumference. This island had a thatched cottage built atop it, and by the side of the cottage, there was a

thick, gnarled dwarf tree. Beneath the tree was a stone table and two stone benches.

“Let’s sit first, then chat.” The middle-aged man laughed as he sat. Linley, filled with questions, sat down as well.

“Take a look.” The middle-aged man waved his hand, and instantly, a watery mirror formed. A giant sphere emerged from the mirror, and this sphere was surrounded by four much smaller spheres. The middle-aged man laughed as he pointed towards the small sphere on the right. “This is the Cosmos you live in!”

“What?!” Linley stared, slack-jawed. “There are three other Cosmos like mine? And an even larger one?” Linley was truly stunned.

“The Cosmos in the center is the main Cosmos, while the four Cosmos surrounding it are secondary Cosmos. They are only a tenth of the size of the main one.” The middle-aged man smiled. “The various Cosmos all exist within the Hongmeng Grandmist region! As for myself…my name is Hongmeng.”

“Grandmist?” Linley looked at the middle-aged man. “As a matter of fact…” The middle-aged man sighed. “Linley, let me put it to you this way. Long, long ago, this Grandmist region gave birth to me. I was the only living creature within the Grandmist.” Linley nodded slightly.

“After a long, long period of time, I felt bored. I had a sudden flash of insight, and began to build the Cosmos! First, I built up the main Cosmos, but I felt that by itself, it wasn’t stable enough, and so I then built the four much smaller secondary Cosmos, forming a stable whole.” Linley nodded.

“The energy I used to build the Cosmos was this Grandmist spirit-energy.” Hongmeng laughed as he pointed towards the primal gray energy. “In the Cosmos, I created the various living creatures. In order to ensure that the various races would be able to develop in equilibrium, I had to set many rules and edicts.” Hongmeng laughed. “For example, in your homeland, the four Overgods in that secondary Cosmos were actually created by myself,

based on the four Edicts that I set up. All they are able to do is carry out my orders; they don't have a shred of emotion at all."

Linley's heart trembled. So the four Overgods were nothing more than tools which this Hongmeng had randomly created.

"The larger a Cosmos is, the more stable it comes. I allowed part of the Grandmist to transform into the Five Elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. These five types of energy served as the foundation for the primary Cosmos, and then gave birth to Ying and Yang, two opposing types of energy, as well as the tribulation power of lightning." Hongmeng laughed. "As for the four secondary Cosmos…they were small, and so they didn't need the Five Elements. I thus controlled the Grandmist primal energy into four basic types of energy; earth, fire, water, and wind. They then gave birth to light and darkness, as well as the tribulation power of lightning."

"The Grandmist…was transformed into earth, fire, water, and wind?" Linley was stunned. He was beginning to understand. The main Cosmos was formed from a foundation of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth; the Five Elements. As for the secondary Cosmos, they were formed from a foundation of four types of energy; earth, fire, water, wind.

"Although I created the main Cosmos and the four secondary Cosmos, it is very, very difficult for the living creatures within the Cosmos to escape into the outside world." Hongmeng sighed. "Very difficult?" Linley asked, puzzled.

"Right. The main Cosmos is infinitely vast. There are many, many living creatures which are far more powerful than the Sovereigns of your secondary universe! Amongst them are Godkings and even Exalted Celestials, who are capable of sensing the Laws of Space and the Laws of Time. If they were to go into your secondary Cosmos, they would be capable of shattering the binds of that Cosmos."

Linley was stunned. The experts of that Cosmos were actually so numerous? "However, the stability of the secondary Cosmos is inferior to

the main Cosmos, and thus I wouldn't permit lifeforms capable of comprehending the Laws of Time and Space to exist within them. Thus, within the secondary Cosmos, it is impossible to train in space and time; at most, a few innate divine abilities would be able to impact them." Hongmeng laughed.

Linley nodded slightly. "However, Linley, your current level of power has surpassed even the most powerful of Exalted Celestials of the main Cosmos." Hongmeng laughed.

"Oh?" Linley was rather surprised. "Because you have a Grandmist Body!" Hongmeng laughed. "There are two types of powerful bodies. The most powerful is the 'Inextinguishable Xuanhuang Body', while the slightly weaker one is the 'Grandmist Body'. You must understand that the Grandmist energy is the most basic level of energy there is. Even the Exalted Celestials of the main Cosmos who enter this place will be dissolved into Grandmist energy."

"Because a Grandmist Body is formed from Grandmist energy to begin with, the Grandmist energy here won't harm it." Hongmeng explained.

"Then where does this 'Indestructible Xuanhuang Body' come from?" Linley asked. "Afterwards, when you, too, set up a Cosmos and establish a universe, you will naturally begin to generate Xuanhuang energy, which will gather in your body, causing it to once more rise in power. You will then gain the most powerful Indestructible Xuanhuang Body'." Hongmeng laughed.

"Me? Create a Cosmos?" Linley was stunned. "Yes. Like I did." Hongmeng laughed. "I care not one whit for the lives and deaths of the living creatures within the Cosmos. I can create countless living creatures at any time. I only care about those who are able to, on their own, break free of the bindings of their universe and surviving in this place. You are worthy of being the brother of myself, Hongmeng." Hongmeng laughed as he waved his hand, and a single leaf suddenly floated down from the nearby tree.

The leaf flashed with light. "I've imprinted the methods for creating a

Cosmos within this leaf. Use your spiritual energy to look into it, and you'll understand everything." Hongmeng handed the leaf to Linley.

Linley looked at Hongmeng, then accepted it. "This…" Countless amounts of knowledge instantly flooded into Linley's mind. In an instant, Linley's understanding of the Grandmist region reached an extremely deep level. He even fully understood the various ways by which the Grandmist could be used, such as how it could be divided into the Five Elements, or resolved into earth, fire, water, and wind.

"So…for me to break through the Cosmos required so many coincidences. It was so difficult." Linley now completely understood.

"Right!" Hongmeng nodded and laughed. "You just so happened to have four clones of earth, fire, water, and wind. If you had an extra one, it wouldn't have worked; if you had one less, it also wouldn't have worked. And then, you successfully underwent a Soul Mutation! This gave you a chance, but…the four types of energy in the universe are actually four different types of Sovereign energy. You had to be able to control those four types of Sovereign energy and fuse them, and so you had to fuse four Sovereign sparks."

Linley laughed and nodded bitterly. He now understood…he had four clones of earth, fire, water, and wind, then underwent a soul mutation, and then became a Sovereign of all four elements. Only then had he been able to fuse the four types of Sovereign energy into Grandmist energy. The difficulty of every single step was exceedingly great.

"To break free from the main Cosmos is just as difficult." Grandmist laughed calmly. "This is why, despite the passage of more than a thousand Grand Kalpas, you are the only one to emerge here."

"Big Brother Hongmeng, you spoke of more than a thousand Grand Kalpas. How long is a Grand Kalpa, exactly?" Linley could tell that 'Grand Kalpas' represented a unit of time, but how long?

"Each Grand Kalpa represents six quadrillion years!" Hongmeng laughed.

Linley sucked in a deep breath. More than a thousand Grand Kalpas represented more than six quintillion years. In his own Cosmos, a Planar War was carried out every trillion years. It seemed as though there had been millions of Planar Wars.

“How incredible!” Linley sighed in praise. “Big Brother Hongmeng, your four secondary Cosmos all have different cultures. My home Cosmos is the Magic Cosmos. The other three Cosmos are the Machine Cosmos, the Bioform Cosmos, and the Immortal/Devil Cosmos. As for the main Cosmos, it includes everything. Incredible.”

Linley was now completely stunned. Only now did he realize…that aside from the Elemental Laws, there were many other ways of training that were completely different. There were machines, there were bioforms, and there were even Immortal and Devil cultivation paths.

“Haha, in the future, you’ll create your own Cosmos as well. When you have time, you can go to my Cosmos and take a look.” Hongmeng laughed. “Oh. Before this, you must take a look at something.”

“What?” Linley was puzzled. Hongmeng waved his hand, and instantly, a golden banner flew over from countless kilometers away, landing nearby Linley. This golden banner contained an awe-inspiring prestige which made Linley’s heart clench. It was roughly six meters long and half a meter wide.

“Oh, there are words on the back?” Linley saw them right away. Behind this golden banner there was a word that was roughly the same size as the banner. The word was very unique; Linley was certain that he had never seen this language before. But as he looked at it, he understood the meaning of this words.

Meng [Mist]!

“This is the Golden Grandmist Banner!” Hongmeng laughed. “It, too, was born from the Grandmist space. Look at the first line on the Golden Grandmist Banner.” Linley looked at it. The very first line on the Golden Grandmist Banner had a single word on it.

Hong [Grand]!

Or, to be precise, the upper left corner of the Golden Grandmist Banner had just this single word.

“Anyone whose name is on this Golden Grandmist Banner will become a controller of the Grandmist region. Upon being a controller of the Grandmist region, you will be able to freely use the energy of any Cosmos, and will be able to calculate the destinies of virtually all living creatures!” Hongmeng laughed. “But if you wish for your name to be on the Golden Grandmist Banner, you have to, at the very least, break through your Cosmos and come to the Grandmist region.”

“Linley, control a hint of your spiritual energy and send it into the banner.” Hongmeng said. Linley nodded, extending out some of his spiritual energy.

The Golden Grandmist Banner instantly began to absorb that spiritual energy, and on the first line, next to the ‘Hong’ character, another character appeared: ‘Lin’.

Instantly, Linley’s mind was once more flooded with information, as well as quite a few divine abilities. “So…there are different levels of Grandmist controllers as well.” Linley began to laugh. “I’m actually the same as you, Elder Brother; we are first rank Grandmist controllers.”

“Naturally. The Grandmist space is vast and endless, but because of stability reasons, the Golden Grandmist Banner will only, at most, permit us to create a total of four Cosmos like the main Cosmos I created. Naturally, there will only be four first rank Grandmist controllers. The fifth controller will naturally have a lower ranking, and the others will all be limited by us.”

Linley nodded. Only the highest ranking Grandmist controllers would understand everything. “From today onwards, I have a new name of my own, then…Linmeng.” Linley let out a sigh. “Right. Let the Cosmos that you create in the future be known as the Linmeng Cosmos.” Hongmeng

laughed.

A hint of solemnity appeared on Linley's face. "Alas, my Grandpa Doehring…" After becoming a Grandmist controller, Linley understood that there was no way a person whose soul had dissipated could be brought to life. But of course, Linley was capable of creating new life. He could create a new, identical Grandpa Doehring, one who even had the same memories as Grandpa Doehring.

Only, that would only be a duplicate; it wouldn't be the true Grandpa Doehring.

"Grandpa Doehring…" Linley silently engraved Grandpa Doehring into his heart.

After becoming a Grandmist controller, he had learned many things. Linley's mindset had changed, and he had become far more at ease and natural than before. "Oh, Big Brother, it seems I have to make a trip back." Linley couldn't help but laugh.

"Right. Your family members are going frantic." Hongmeng laughed. "Right. Your home Cosmos…in the future, you can help me manage it. You are now a Grandmist controller; your divine abilities aren't much weaker than mine."

"But I have no experience. What if I wreck it?" Linley smirked. "Then you'll have to help me create a new one, that's all." Hongmeng laughed casually.

As a Grandmist controller capable of creating a Cosmos, it was true that many of Linley's abilities were no weaker than Hongmeng's. Only, as he had yet to actually create a new Cosmos, Linley's abilities were slightly deficient.

"Then I'll go back now." Linley turned and took a single step. He crossed an unfathomably long distance with that step, then entered the plane of the Infernal Realm.

In the air above the Chaotic Sea. A sky-blue robed Linley laughed calmly as he stood there. “So many Sovereigns died. I have to replenish the Sovereign sparks.” With a wave of his hand, Linley began to manifest one Sovereign spark after another. One Sovereign spark after another shot out from his hands, and then, Linley turned to look towards the Skyrite Mountains.

Taking but a single step, Linley vanished.

When Linley had originally departed from his home Cosmos, Linley’s family had grown frantic. All of them were now gathered within his estate, and it was so quiet as to cause one to shudder.

“Boss, Boss…” Bebe’s tears were flowing. “I…I can’t sense my Boss’s spiritual aura any longer. I can’t sense it!”

Delia stood there, her eyes shut, her entire body shaking.

Beirut and Bluefire exchanged glances, bitter smiles on their faces.

“Father!” Wade, Taylor, and Sasha were all agonized as well.

“Third Bro.” George, Yale, and Reynolds were together as well. They didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

Everyone had held on to hope, but upon hearing Bebe say that he could no longer sense Linley’s spiritual aura, everyone grew despondent.

“Why did it have to be like this…” Linley’s mother, Lina, was already reduced to a puddle of tears. “It’s all, it’s all my fault, my fault.” The nearby Hogg held her in his arms, sighing to himself, his face ashen.

Just as everyone was gripped by grief. Suddenly…

“Eh?!” Bebe’s eyes suddenly lit up. He originally hadn’t been able to sense Linley’s aura at all, but now, he could. Actually, previously, Linley had left this Cosmos, so how could Bebe possibly sense Linley’s existence? But

now that Linley had returned, Bebe naturally was able to sense him again.

Delia was still lost in her memories and her utter grief. However, within her blurred field of vision, a familiar figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

Delia hurriedly wiped her tears away, looking towards the figure carefully.

“Boss!” Bebe called out jubilantly. He was the first to speak.

The others stared, wide-eyed, at the person who had appeared out of nowhere. A sky-blue robed man, with that familiar face!

“Third Bro!!!” Yale, George, and Reynolds rushed over simultaneously.

“Linley.” “Father!”

“Big Brother!”

……..

FINIS

Afterword – By Author, ‘I Eat Tomatoes’

Afterword – By Author, ‘I Eat Tomatoes’

It’s over. Coiling Dragon is over. Don’t know what’s going on, but after writing this chapter, Tomatoes has a certain feeling, as though the story isn’t finished. As though there is much, much more left. Only, there isn’t much point to it…in the future, Linley and his family will go on various journeys. Linley will accept his disciple, ‘Clayweg’, then go visit and journey through the other, secondary cosmos. The machine intelligence cosmos, the bioform cosmos, the Immortal/Devil cosmos, and even the principal cosmos and the other cosmos.

Many of the eight great clans that later appeared within the ‘Linmeng’ cosmos were actually the original inhabitants of that cosmos.

Everyone should be able to tell by now, right?

Linley is the ‘Linmeng’ of Stellar Transformations, the second controller of the Hongmeng Grandmist. With a Grandmist body, he broke through the barriers of his cosmos and entered the Grandmist Space. Actually, the carvings of the Mountain of Exalted Celestials and some other things in Stellar Transformations were pointing to this long ago, haha.

Right. It’s all over.

Coiling Dragon is over.

Tomatoes currently feels quite torn, haha. This book has brought Tomatoes much joy, but also quite a few frustrations. But, in the end, it has made Tomatoes’ life more interesting. Most important of all has been everyone’s support, reading, bookmarking, etc. And of course, all of the monthly tickets you have been sending. Tomatoes feels very grateful to everyone.

Ah…

It’s over. Coiling Dragon, more than three million characters long, is over. In the end, Grandpa Doehring didn’t come back to life.

……

Stellar Transformations and Coiling Dragon, to be more precise, make up the ‘Grandmist Duology’ which Tomatoes originally envisioned. And now, it’s all over…after having finished Coiling Dragon, Tomatoes really needs to take a good rest. Afterwards, Tomatoes will prepare to work on a new story. This new book is something which Tomatoes had already begun to formulate, even before writing the story ‘Inch of Radiance’, but never dared to actually start moving my pen.

That’s because the material for it is excellent. In the past, however, I felt my mastery over plot wasn’t good enough, but now, I feel…like it is about time.

This new book will be a more Eastern-type fantasy. It involves the most thought and plotting that Tomatoes has ever used.

But of course…for now, Tomatoes needs a good rest. To recover his energy! The plan is to have the first chapter of the new book be uploaded on July 28!

Whew, whew…it’s finished!

Tomatoes, here and now, would once more like to thank everyone for their year of support. Tomatoes bows in thanks…now, let us meet here on July 28, and once more embark, together, on a new, fantastical journey.

Tomatoes.

The night of June 11th.

RWX's Afterword

RWX's Afterword

Been a hell of a ride, hasn't it? Told you guys it would be.

I started this 804 chapter, 3.4 million Chinese character project on May 10, 2014, at SPCNET's forums, where I was (and still am) a moderator. I had been translating there for many years, and when I saw the popularity of he-man's Stellar Transformations translation (currently being continued at translationnations.com, so go take a look after reading the early chapters here!), I fell in love with the genre, and started on this project by the same author: I Eat Tomatoes, expecting it to be a 4-5 year project, like many of the old SPCNET translations were.

At first, I translated basically whenever I felt like it, which would be incredibly slow by today's standards. By December 4, 2014, I had translated up to Book 3, Chapter 8 or so, which was roughly 56 chapters in 6.5 months, ~2 chapters a week; an incredible pace by former standards, although still dwarfed by he-man (bless him, wherever he is). At that time, this lovable, paranoid fellow who named himself TheLeecher (and was anything but) PM'd me on SPCNET, insisting that he wanted to send me a nice donation to both thank as well as 'encourage' me to translate faster. As TheLeecher was afraid of his name/details being seen, he insisted on sending Amazon gift cards rather than a donation…and I basically said, 'sure', and cranked out a bonus chapter or two in order to thank him.

A cycle had begun, and others scrambled to donate as well. This was far more work than I had bargained for…but I did what I promised, and this resulted in a virtuous (albeit exhausting) cycles of more updates=>more viewers=>more donations=>more updates. On Dec. 22, I formally started Wuxiaworld for Coiling Dragon.

And now, 11.5 months and 748 chapters after Dec. 4th, at an average of 15 chapters/week, for eleven months, here we are. At the end of the road.

Coiling Dragon is now complete. For better or worse, it has completely upended the translation scene, in terms of making more people aware of what translators are 'worth', in terms of making taking donations socially acceptable (and thus promoting a virtuous cycle of good translators, but alas, also incentivizing bad ones to jump in for a moneygrub), in terms of bringing the Xianxia/Chinese Fantasy webnovels to the forefront, in terms of changing people's expectations on what a 'fast' translation speed is…and more.

But Coiling Dragon didn't just change the translation scene; it changed my life, both for the better as well as for the worse. As many of you know, I do have a full-time, professional job that I usually spend an average of 50 hours a week on. When you throw in 15 chapters a week on top of that, which averages out to around ~40 hours (earlier chapters took 3-4 hours/chapter, I'm now doing around 2 hours/chapter)…that means I've been doing a 90 hour workweek for nearly an entire damn year, and that's not even counting the amount of time spent on comments, website maintenance, and more.

Honestly…I'm exhausted. Truly, utterly exhausted. Like Tomatoes before him, RWX, too, needs a good rest. The 90 hour workweek for a year has taken its toll; it's been rewarding in many ways, both financial and personal, but at the same time, it's been a killer. I've had no social life for a year, I've gained ~30 lbs from all that sitting in front of a computer, my right hand cramps at the pinky (from continuous stretching to the 'shift') button, I haven't gone out for a date in ages…the list goes on and on. I tried to not make it too apparent to y'all, but for three or four months now, I've essentially been running on fumes, with the main thing keeping me going being the fact that the end was nigh. I giggled hysterically a little each time someone suggested that I was trying to 'stretch it out'. Good lord…hehe.

And now, it's over. It's been an incredible, life-changing year. Thank all of you, each and every one of you, for your love, support, comments, readership, and more. Coiling Dragon is over, but I'm sure there will be other projects I will work on in the future (and I will continue helping out on Desolate Era in IEW's absence), so this is, dear friends, is farewell but

not goodbye. I will take a good, long, rest…and then I'll be back.

But for now, it is time to hibernate a bit.

Ren Woxing (RWX)

3:00 PM of November 24, 2015.

I
无名古戒
我吃西红柿
WORKS
没落家族少年
偶得无名古戒
踏红龙 / 焚江河
毁城池 / 索山岳
天才之路
自此开启
5周年典藏
纪念版